

# I Many-body physics

## I.1 The electronic structure problem

In solid state physics, the Hamiltonian describing the interacting nuclei and electrons in the solid is well known, as all interactions except Coulomb interaction can safely be ignored at the mass and energy scales at which the electrons and nuclei reside. This very general problem consisting of both the electronic and nuclei degrees of freedom can be simplified in a first step by employing the Born-Oppenheimer approximation. The approximation assumes the nuclei to be fixed point charges which create a potential for the  $N$  interacting electrons, so that the electronic part can be solved independently using the nuclei positions  $\mathbf{R}_\alpha$  as a parameter.

This problem is described by the time-independent Schrödinger equation

$$\hat{H}\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \dots, \mathbf{r}_N) = E\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \dots, \mathbf{r}_N) \quad (\text{I.1})$$

with the Hamiltonian in first quantization ( $i$  running over the electrons,  $\alpha, \beta$  over the nuclei)

$$\hat{H} = \hat{T}_e + \hat{U}_{e-e} + \hat{V}_{n-e} + \hat{W}_{n-n} \quad (\text{I.2})$$

$$= -\sum_i \frac{1}{2} \nabla_i^2 + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i \neq j} \frac{1}{|\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j|} - \sum_i \sum_\alpha \frac{Z_\alpha}{|\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{R}_\alpha|} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{\alpha \beta} \frac{Z_\alpha Z_\beta}{R_{\alpha\beta}} \quad (\text{I.3})$$

where:

- $\hat{T}_e$  is the kinetic energy of the electrons
- $\hat{U}_{e-e}$  is the Coulomb interaction between the electrons and
- $\hat{V}_{n-e}$  is the potential energy of the electrons in the field of the nuclei
- $\hat{W}_{n-n}$  is the Coulomb interaction between the nuclei

The terms  $\hat{V}_{n-e}$  and  $\hat{W}_{n-n}$  can then be combined into an external potential  $V$  for the interacting electrons, so that the Hamiltonian reads

$$\hat{H} = \hat{T} + \hat{U} + \hat{V} \quad (\text{I.4})$$

This Hamiltonian will be used in the further development of the underlying theory for this thesis.

## I.2 Density Functional Theory

A direct solution to the electronic structure problem, this meaning obtaining the ground-state many-body wave function  $\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \dots, \mathbf{r}_N)$  for a given potential is analytically impossible even

for a small number of electrons compared to the number of electrons in a macroscopic crystal. As such, the need for good approximations to obtain results for real world systems is high. One particularly successful approach is **Density Functional Theory (DFT)**. In the following section, the theoretical framework of **DFT** will be developed, the outline of which can be found in any literature on solid state physics [1].

### I.2.1 Hohenberg-Kohn theorems

The starting for DFT is the exact reformulation of the outlined electronic structure problem by Hohenberg and Kohn [2]. This reformulation uses the ground state density of the electronic system  $n_o(r)$  as the basic variable. To achieve this, Hohenberg and Kohn [2] formulated two theorems, which demonstrate that the ground state properties of an electronic system can be described using the ground state density (the proof of those theorems is omitted here, but can be found in the original paper [2] or any publication on **DFT** [1]):

- I The external potential (and via the Schrödinger equation also the ground state wave function and the ground state energy) is a unique functional of the ground state density (except for an additive constant).
- II The ground state energy minimizes the energy functional,

$$E[n(\mathbf{r})] > E_0 \quad \forall \quad n(\mathbf{r}) \neq n_0(\mathbf{r})$$

The proof of those theorems show the existence of the energy functional  $E[n(\mathbf{r})]$ , but a concrete expression for it cannot be given. As the ground state wave function is a functional of the ground state density, a formal definition of the energy functional can be written as

$$\begin{aligned} E[n(\mathbf{r})] &= \langle \Psi | \hat{H} | \Psi \rangle \\ &= \langle \Psi | \hat{T} + \hat{U} + \hat{V} | \Psi \rangle \\ &= \langle \Psi | \hat{T} + \hat{U} | \Psi \rangle + \int d\mathbf{r}' \Psi^*(\mathbf{r}') V(\mathbf{r}') \Psi(\mathbf{r}') \end{aligned}$$

Defining the universal functional  $F[n(\mathbf{r})] = \langle \Psi | T + U | \Psi \rangle$ , which is material independent and writing  $n(\mathbf{r}') = \Psi^*(\mathbf{r}') \Psi(\mathbf{r}')$ , the energy functional becomes

$$E[n(\mathbf{r})] = F[n(\mathbf{r})] + \int d\mathbf{r}' V(\mathbf{r}') n(\mathbf{r}') \quad (\text{I.5})$$

This is just a formal definition, as all the formerly mentioned complication of the Hamiltonian **I.4** now lie in the functional  $F[n(\mathbf{r})]$ . With a known or well approximated universal functional  $F[n(\mathbf{r})]$ , the Hohenberg-Kohn theorems provide a great simplification for finding the ground state properties of a solid state system, as the problem is now only a variational problem with 3 spatial coordinates instead of  $3N$  coordinates when trying to solve the full Hamiltonian.

### I.2.2 Kohn-Sham equations

One way of approximating the functional  $F[n]$  was given by Kohn and Sham [3]. The idea is to use a non-interacting auxiliary system of electrons

$$H_0 = \sum_i^{N_e} \frac{p_i^2}{2m} + v_{KS}(\mathbf{r}_i) \quad (\text{I.6})$$

With a correction potential  $v_{KS}$  such that the ground state charge density for the auxiliary and the interacting system are the same. This introduces a new set of orthonormal wave functions, the solutions to the non-interacting problem  $\Psi_i$ . The kinetic energy of such a non-interacting problem can be easily calculated as sum over all electrons:

$$T_S[n(\mathbf{r})] = -\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{N_e} \int d^3r \Psi_i^*(\mathbf{r}) \Delta \Psi_i(\mathbf{r}) \quad (\text{I.7})$$

With the help of this system and the classical electrostatic energy

$$E_H[n(\mathbf{r})] = \frac{1}{2} \int \int d^3r_1 d^3r_2 \frac{n(\mathbf{r}_1)n(\mathbf{r}_2)}{|\mathbf{r}_1 - \mathbf{r}_2|} \quad (\text{I.8})$$

an ansatz for the universal functional can be written as

$$F[n(\mathbf{r})] = T_S[n(\mathbf{r})] + E_H[n(\mathbf{r})] + E_{XC}[n(\mathbf{r})] \quad (\text{I.9})$$

where now  $E_{XC}[n(\mathbf{r})]$  is a functional of the density accounting for all exchange and correlation effects not present in the non-interacting electron system. The success of **DFT** lies in the fact that  $E_{XC}$  only contributes only a small part of the total energy and can be surprisingly well approximated.

Using that form of  $F[n(\mathbf{r})]$ , from the variational problem (with a Lagrange parameter introduced to ensure the orthonormality of the states  $\Psi_i$ )

$$\delta \left( E[n(\mathbf{r})] - \sum_j \lambda_j \left[ \int d^3r |\Psi_j|^2 - 1 \right] \right) = 0 \quad (\text{I.10})$$

single particle, Schrödinger-like equations can be derived:

$$\left( -\frac{1}{2} \Delta + \frac{1}{2} \int d^3r' \frac{n(\mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|} + \frac{\delta E_{XC}}{\delta n(\mathbf{r})} + V \right) \Psi_i(\mathbf{r}) = \lambda_i \Psi_i(\mathbf{r}) \quad (\text{I.11})$$

Schrödinger-like in this context means, that with the identification

$$v_{KS} = V_H + V_{XC} + V = \frac{1}{2} \int d^3r' \frac{n(\mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|} + \frac{\delta E_{XC}}{\delta n(\mathbf{r})} + V \quad (\text{I.12})$$

eq. I.11 become the **KS** equations:

$$\left( -\frac{1}{2} \Delta + v_{KS} \right) \Psi_i(\mathbf{r}) = \epsilon_i \Psi_i(\mathbf{r}) \quad (\text{I.13})$$

Importantly, the potential  $v_{KS}$  depends on the solutions  $\Psi_i(\mathbf{r})$ , as the Hartree potential  $V_H$  and the XC potential  $V_{XC}$  include the density  $n(\mathbf{r})$ , so the problem becomes a self-consistency problem.

density of KS states

### I.2.3 Pseudopotentials and basis set

In order to represent the states and operators in eq. I.11, a basis set has to be chosen. A natural choice, at least for delocalized (higher energy) orbitals is the discrete set of plane waves  $|\mathbf{G}\rangle$

$$\langle \mathbf{r} | \mathbf{k} + \mathbf{G} \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{V}} e^{i(\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{G})\mathbf{r}} \quad (\text{I.14})$$

expansion of wave  
function in basis  
functions

where  $\mathbf{G}$  is a reciprocal lattice vector. One problem of this approach lies in the fact that the lower energy core electrons are in contrast very localized around the cores and as such need a lot of basis functions. Because the higher orbitals have to be orthogonal to the lower orbitals, they must also have features on the length scale of the core electrons, which means more basis functions are needed to describe them accurately.

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Importantly, the core electrons don't contribute much to the electronic structure problem, so an approach to make the calculations more economically is to introduce an effective screened potential which describes the nuclear potential as well as the states close to the nucleus. These potentials are called **Pseudopotentials (PP)** and the orbitals constructed with them are smooth functions and can be accurately represented with a small number of basis functions. This fact can be used in computation by introducing a *cutoff energy*  $E_{cutoff}$  which limits the number of basis functions by using only expansion coefficients with  $|\mathbf{k} + \mathbf{G}| \leq E_{cutoff}$ .

hate thinking  
about it

## I.3 Density Functional Perturbation Theory