Chemical potential profile

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1 Chemical Potentials at Equilibrium

Consider a reference system with free energy G° over domain Ω. Then, adding one atom of type α yields a system with a new free energy:

$$G = G^\circ + \mu_\alpha \tag{1}$$

Or, adding a type of α' instead:

$$G' = G^\circ + \mu_{\alpha'} \tag{2}$$

Therefore, the free energy difference between the system with one extra α atom and one extra α' atom is:

$$G' - G = \mu_{\alpha'} - \mu_\alpha \tag{3}$$

Assuming 0 K and 0 bar, we can equate this to a difference in internal energy, therefore:

$$\mu_{\alpha'} - \mu_\alpha = \left\langle E_\sigma^{(\alpha')} - E_\sigma^{(\alpha)} \right\rangle_\Omega \tag{4}$$

where $E_\sigma^{(\alpha)}$ is the energy of the lattice with an atom of type α occupying site σ, and $\langle\cdot\rangle_\Omega$ indicates averaging over the domain Ω. Additionally, we have the Euler equation (at 0 K and 0 bar):

$$u = \sum_\alpha x_\alpha \mu_\alpha \tag{5}$$

where u is the potential energy per atom of some reference configuration. If we have a reference configuration defined by a map t, where $t(\sigma)$ is the type occupying site σ in the reference configuration, then:

$$\frac{1}{N}\left\langle E_\sigma^{(t(\sigma))} \right\rangle_\Omega = \sum_\alpha x_\alpha \mu_\alpha \tag{6}$$

where N is the number of lattice sites and x_α is the atomic fraction of type α.

The equations from 4 and 6 form either a perfectly determined system or an overdetermined system, and can thus by solved with least-squares for chemical potentials.

2 Chemical Potentials at Non-Equilibrium

Instead, we assume that the chemical potentials vary over subdomains $\omega \subseteq \Omega$ (where Ω is the entire spatial domain). Then, we can solve for the chemical potential in each subdomain ω with:

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_{\alpha'}(\omega) - \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) &= \frac{|\omega|}{|\Omega|} \left\langle E_{\sigma}^{(\alpha')} - E_{\sigma}^{(\alpha)} \right\rangle_{\omega} \\ \sum_{\alpha} x_{\alpha}(\omega)\mu_{\alpha}(\omega) &= \frac{1}{N}\frac{|\omega|}{|\Omega|} \left\langle E_{\sigma}^{(t(\sigma))} \right\rangle_{\omega} \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where $|\Omega| = \int \mathrm{d}\Omega$ is the volume of the domain Ω. Here, the volume rescaling is necessary or else the cohesive energy of the subdomain ω is overestimated. For large subdomains, we have $|\omega|/|\Omega| \to N(\omega)/N = p(\omega)$, where $N(\omega)$ is the number of atoms in subdomain ω. Therefore, we solve the following overdetermined system in each subdomain:

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_{\alpha'}(\omega) - \mu_{\alpha}(\omega) &= p(\omega) \left\langle E_{\sigma}^{(\alpha')} - E_{\sigma}^{(\alpha)} \right\rangle_{\omega} \\ \sum_{\alpha} x_{\alpha}(\omega)\mu_{\alpha}(\omega) &= \frac{p(\omega)}{N} \left\langle E_{\sigma}^{(t(\sigma))} \right\rangle_{\omega} \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$