VE320 Introduction to Semiconductor Physics and Devices

Recitation Class 3

VE320 Teaching Group SU2022

University of Michigan-Shanghai Jiaotong University
Joint Institute

June 14, 2022

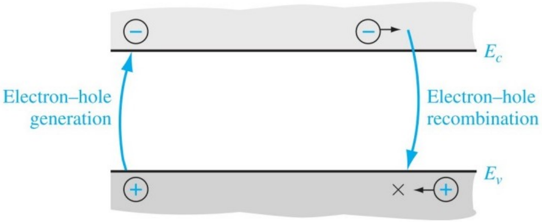
Contents

Notation

Symbol	Definition
n_0, p_0	Thermal-equilibrium electron and hole concentrations (independent of time and also usually position)
n, p	Total electron and hole concentrations
$\delta n = n - n_0$	Excess electron and hole concentrations (may
$\delta p = p - p_0$	be functions of time and/or position)
g'_n, g'_p	Excess electron and hole generation rates
R'_n, R'_p	Excess electron and hole recombination rates
τ_{n0}, τ_{p0}	Excess minority carrier electron and hole lifetimes

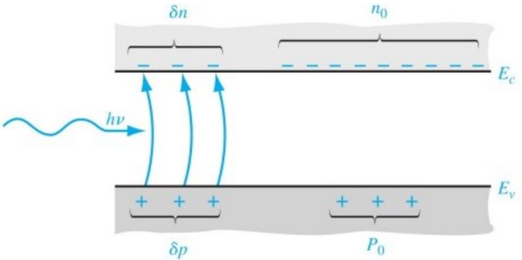
Thermal Equilibrium

- Thermal equilibrium
  - The net carrier concentrations are independent of time.
  - The generation and recombination of electrons and holes are equal.
  - Generation rate = Recombination rate: $G_{n0} = G_{p0} = R_{n0} = R_{p0}$. Unit: $(cm^3 \cdot s)^{-1}$



Non-equilibrium

- Non-equilibrium
  - The semiconductor is affected by time-varying factors like light/current.
  - A higher generation rate: total generation rate $= G_{n0} + g'_n = G_{p0} + g'_p$.
  - A higher amount of n and p: $n = n_0 + \delta n$, $p = p_0 + \delta p$.
  - In normal cases (direct generation), $\delta n = \delta p$.
  - Note $np \neq n_0 p_0 = n_i^2$.
  - Generation rate is only decided by temperature and light/current but not by n or p.
  - Recombination rate is decided by n and p: $R_n = R_p = \alpha_r np$



Case Study 1: Removing the Light

We consider a case where a light is on the semiconductor for a long time so that n and p becomes constant.

$$G_n = R_n = \alpha_r np$$

After removing the light:

$$\begin{aligned} R'_{n/p} &= -\frac{d\delta n}{dt} \\ &= -(G_n - R_n) = -((G_{n0} + g'_n) - \alpha_r np) \\ &= -\alpha_r(n_i^2 - (n_0 + \delta n)(p_0 + \delta p)) \end{aligned}$$

where g'_n is now 0.
We assume the low-injection condition: the maximum of n_0 and p_0 is much greater than excess carriers. But the excess carriers can be much more than the minimum of n_0 and p_0.

$$R'_{n/p} = \alpha_r \max(n_0, p_0)\delta n$$

Case Study 1, Continued

$$\delta n = \delta p = \delta n(0) e^{-t/\tau}$$

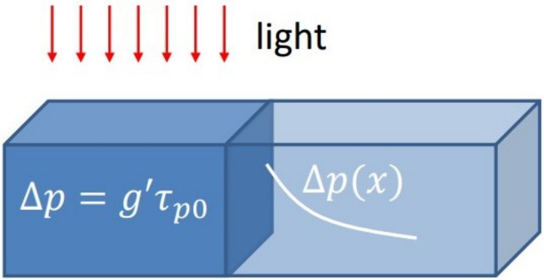
where $\tau = 1/\max(n_0, p_0)$. We call it xxcess minority carrier lifetime.

- Note
  - In p-type, we only care about δn since δp is small compared with p_0. And we use $\tau_{n0} = 1/\alpha_r p_0$.
  - In n-type, we only care about δp since δn is small compared with n_0. And we use $\tau_{p0} = 1/\alpha_r n_0$.
  - Excess carrier recombination rate: $R_n' = R_p' = \delta n/\tau = \delta p/\tau$.

  Summary of case study: when light applied suddenly decreased, excess carriers decrease exponentially with respect to time.

Case Study 2: Diffusion

N-type semiconductor. On the one end, there is non-zero excess carrier generation rate, and on the other end, there is no excess carrier generation.



Case Study 2: Diffusion

$$\frac{d\text{flux}}{dx} = -R_p' = -\frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}}$$

$$D_p \frac{d^2 \delta p}{dx^2} = \frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}}$$

Therefore,

$$\delta p(x) = Ae^{-x/L_p} + Be^{x/L_p}$$

where $L_p = \sqrt{D_p \tau_{p0}}$.
Summary of case study: excess carriers change exponentially with respect to space.

Continuity Equation

$$\text{For p-type: } D_n \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 n}{\mathrm{d}x^2} + \mu_n \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}n}{\mathrm{d}x} + n \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_n - \frac{n}{\tau_{n0}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}n}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

$$\text{For n-type: } D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 p}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \mu_p \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}p}{\mathrm{d}x} + p \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_p - \frac{p}{\tau_{p0}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}p}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

where g_n and g_p are the total generation rates. For homogeneous semiconductor, $n(x) = n_0 + \delta n(x)$, the equation can be simplified to

$$D_n \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 (\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} + \mu_n \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x} + n \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_n' - \frac{\delta n}{\tau_{nt}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

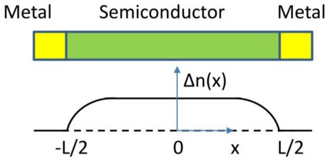
$$D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 (\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \mu_p \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x} + p \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_p' - \frac{\delta p}{\tau_{pt}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

Solving Continuity Equation

Specification	Effect
Steady state	$\frac{\partial(\delta n)}{\partial t} = 0, \quad \frac{\partial(\delta p)}{\partial t} = 0$
Uniform distribution of excess carriers	$D_n \frac{\partial^2(\delta n)}{\partial x^2} = 0, \quad D_p \frac{\partial^2(\delta n)}{\partial x^2} = 0$
Zero electric field	$\mathrm{E}\frac{\partial(\delta n)}{\partial x} = 0, \quad \mathrm{E}\frac{\partial(\delta p)}{\partial x} = 0$
No excess carrier generation	$g' = 0$
No excess carrier recombination (infinite lifetime)	$\frac{\delta n}{\tau_{n0}} = 0, \quad \frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}} = 0$

Example 1

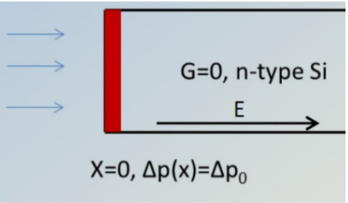
Given a piece of p-type uniformly doped semiconductor in contact with two metal electrodes separated by a length of L, forming a photoconductor device. The light illumination will create electron-hole pairs at a generation rate of g'. The minority carrier recombination lifetime is τ_0. Find the analytical distribution of the excess minority electrons at zero external bias. Note that light illumination will not create excess carriers in metals.



$$D_n \frac{\mathrm{d}^2(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} + \mu_n \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x} + n \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_n - \frac{n}{\tau_{nt}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

Example 2

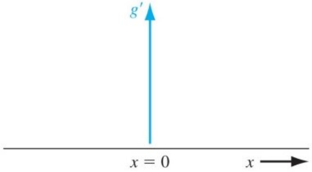
A light beam is illuminated on the surface of a silicon wafer, generating excess carriers Δp_0 at the surface ($x = 0$). The wafer is placed in a constant electric field with a known intensity E. We assume there is no external generation inside the wafer. The thickness of the wafer is infinite. Find the excess minority carriers at equilibrium as a function of the distance away from the surface ($x = 0$). Small injection condition is always maintained and the wafer is uniformly doped as N_d.



$$D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \mu_p \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x} + p \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_p - \frac{p}{\tau_{pt}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

Example 3

Consider a p-type semiconductor that is homogeneous and infinite in extent. Assume a zero applied electric field. For a one-dimensional crystal, assume that excess carriers are being generated at $x = 0$ only, as indicated in Figure below. The excess carriers being generated at $x = 0$ will begin diffusing in both the $+x$ and $-x$ directions. Calculate the steady-state excess carrier concentration as a function of x.



$$D_n \frac{\mathrm{d}^2(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} + \mu_n \left(E \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x} + n \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}x} \right) + g_n - \frac{n}{\tau_{nt}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

Solution Model: Time

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}t} = -\frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}}$$

solution:

$$\delta p(t) = \delta p(0)\mathrm{e}^{-t/\tau_{p0}}$$

$$g' - \frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

solution:

$$\delta p(t) = g'\tau_{p0}\left(1 - \mathrm{e}^{-t/\tau_{p0}}\right)$$

Solution Model: Distance

$$D_n \frac{\mathrm{d}^2(\delta n)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \frac{\delta n}{\tau_{n0}} = 0$$

solution:

$$\delta n(x) = A\mathrm{e}^{-x/L_n} + B\mathrm{e}^{x/L_n}, \quad L_n = \sqrt{D_n \tau_{n0}}$$

special:

$$\delta n(x) = \begin{cases} \delta n(0)\mathrm{e}^{-x/L_n}, x \geq 0 \\ \delta n(0)\mathrm{e}^{+x/L_n}, x \leq 0 \end{cases}$$

$$D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 \delta p}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \frac{\delta p}{\tau} + g = 0$$

solution:

$$\delta p(x) = A \exp(\lambda x) + B \exp(-\lambda x) + g\tau, \quad \lambda = \frac{1}{\sqrt{D_p \tau}}$$

Solution Model: Electrical Field

$$D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \mu_p E_0 \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x} - \frac{\delta p}{\tau_{p0}} = \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}t}$$

solution:

$$\delta p(x, t) = \frac{\mathrm{e}^{-t/\tau_{p0}}}{(4\pi D_p t)^{1/2}} \exp\left[\frac{-(x - \mu_p E_0 t)^2}{4 D_p t}\right]$$

Solution Model: Electrical Field

$$D_p \frac{\mathrm{d}^2 \delta p}{\mathrm{d}x^2} - \mu_p E \frac{\mathrm{d}\delta p}{\mathrm{d}x} - \frac{\delta p}{\tau} = 0$$

solution:

$$\delta p(x) = A \exp(\lambda x) + C$$

$$\lambda = \frac{L_p(E) \pm \sqrt{L_p^2(E) + 4L_p^2}}{2L_p^2}, \quad L_p = \sqrt{\tau D_p}, \quad L_p(E) = \tau \mu_p E$$

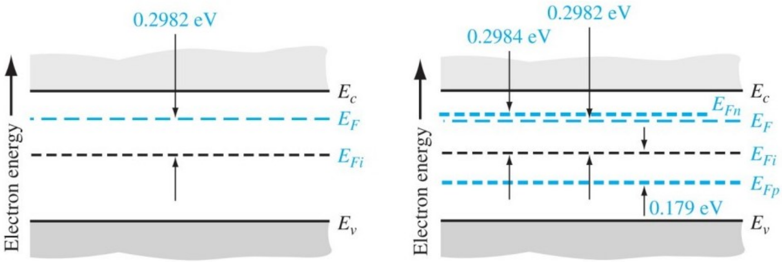
special:

$$\delta p(x) = \delta p(0) \exp\left[\frac{L_p(E) \pm \sqrt{L_p^2(E) + 4L_p^2}}{2L_p^2} x\right] = \begin{cases} \delta p(0) \exp\left(-\frac{x}{L_p}\right), & \text{if } L_p(E) \ll L_p \\ \delta p(0) \exp\left(-\frac{x}{L_p(E)}\right), & \text{if } L_p(E) \gg L_p \end{cases}$$

Quasi-Fermi Energy Level

$$n_0 + \delta n = n_i \exp\left(\frac{E_{Fn} - E_{Fi}}{kT}\right)$$

$$p_0 + \delta p = n_i \exp\left(\frac{E_{Fi} - E_{Fp}}{kT}\right)$$



With excess carriers, quasi-Fermi energy level for minority carriers may vary much.

Excess Carrier Lifetime

$$R_n = R_p = \frac{C_n C_p N_t \left(np - n_i^2\right)}{C_n \left(n + n'\right) + C_p \left(p + p'\right)} \equiv R$$

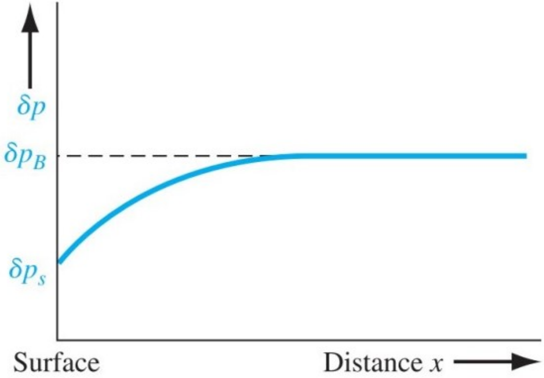
where

$$n' = N_c \exp\left[-\frac{E_c - E_t}{kT}\right], \quad p' = N_v \exp\left[-\frac{E_t - E_v}{kT}\right]$$

Surface Effect

- Periodic potential wells break on the surface.
- Allowed energy levels appear inside forbidden band.
- A lot of traps in the middle of forbidden band.
- Higher recombination rate.
- Lower excess carrier concentration on the surface.

Surface Effect



$$-D_p \left[\hat{n} \cdot \frac{\mathrm{d}(\delta p)}{\mathrm{d}x} \right] \bigg|_{\text{surf}} = s\delta p|_{\text{surf}}$$

Questions?