Ultra low thermal conductivity and thermoelectric effects of quasi 1D bulk material

The thermoelectric figure of merit ZT of recently synthesized quasi 1D topological insulator is explored from first principle. The thermal conductivity of this system is found rather low because of the large masses of the elements and large anharmonic scattering of phonons. Detailed analysis of lattice dynamic calculation is applied to explain the origin of the anharmonic effects. The Seebeck coefficients and electron lifetime are calculated from first principle accounting for electron-phonon coupling and then ZT value is given. We found is actually potential for the application of thermoelectric. The result of bulk and single strip are compared.

Keywords: Thermal conductivity,, , thermoelectric, phonons

I.INTRODUCTION

Thermoelectric (TE) materials can directly convert heat into electricity or vice versa and, consequently, have attracted wide attention for applications in energy harvesting, and solid state cooling that does not require refrigerants. The figure of merit for thermoelectric performance is , where S and σ are the Seebeck coefficient and electrical conductivity, and and are the lattice and electronic thermal conductivities, respectively. Controlling of the power factor and the reduction of thermal conductivity due to phonon scattering are available ways to overcome the limits of the current ZT value. However, it is very difficult to significantly improve the thermoelectric performance of conventional materials because the , S and are coupled unfavorably. For instance, a high electrical conductivity usually leads to a low Seebeck coefficient and a high electrical thermal conductivity, both of which are undesirable for thermoelectric applications.

Recently, topological insulators have attracted much attention from thermoelectric communities because of their potential high ZT based on the two reasons: (i) their narrow band gaps associated with band inversion is favorable for large Seebeck coefficients; Besides, the surface state of topological insulator may also help to increase electrical conductivity. (ii) topological insulators usually have complex structures and heavy elements which has large anharmonic scattering and thus reduce lattice thermal conductivity. For example, the traditional thermoelectric materials are based on the chemical compound of bismuth and tellurium (Bi2Te3), with the ZT between 0.8 to 1.0. They already gain some applications in fields such as portable refrigerators and electric component coolers. The high ZT of Bi2Te3 arises partly because of its intrinsically low both in theory and experiment. Ab-initio molecular dynamics (MD) simulations of the low in-plane and cross-plane of Bi2Te3 have yielded values of 1.4 and 0.8 at room temperature, respectively.

It is well known that one of the promising methods for the achievement of highly efficient thermoelectric properties is to construct low-dimensional nanostructures. For example, silicon nanowire has large ZT improvement than bulk systems because the quantum confinement reduce much of the thermal conductivity while has little influence with electronic properties.

is a recently synthesized good topological insulator with quasi-1D structure. It not only possesses the potential of TI to be good TE material, but also has the nature of nanowire which may largely reduce the lattice thermal conductivity of the system. In this work, we have employed first- principles lattice-dynamics calculations of bulk and single strip of . This paper will be arranged as follows: in section I the computational method detail will be introduced and then in section II the results of phonon properties and thermal conductivity will be discussed. Then in section III the electrical properties will be explored.

II. COMPUTATIONAL DETAILS

First-principles calculations are carried out by using the Vienna ab initio Simulation Package(VASP). The exchange and correlation interactions between electrons are described by the Perdew, Burke, and Ernzerhof functional(PBE). The projector augmented wave(PAW) pseudopotential is adopted to model the interaction between electrons and ions. The energy cutoff is chosen to be 520 eV for the expansion of the wave function by plane-wave basis sets. The structure of bulk is fully Relaxed with a k-point mesh of 4×4×4.

Thermal conductivity the system is calculated by using Boltzmann Transportation Equation with relaxation time approximation as implemented in ShengBTE, in which thermal conductivity tensor is given by

(1)

The calculations of , , and require second- and third-order force constants (FCs) as inputs. Both second- and third-order FCs are extracted from density functional theory computations by using the finite displacement method. The FCs are calculated with 4×2×2 supercell with a 3×3×3 Monkhorst-Pack k-point mesh. The phonon dispersion and states density are calculated with Phonopy with second order force constants. The interaction range of third-order FCs is truncated up to 4th neighbor.

The thermoelectric properties including Seebeck coefficients and electric thermal conductivity are calculated with Boltztrap with eigenvectors extracted from VASP with k-point mesh of 14x14x14.

The phonon-electron coupling lifetime is calculated with Quantum-Espresso and EPW developed by Steven Louie.

III.RESULTS AND DISCCUSION

1 结构

Bulk is consist of weakly bounded 1D strips. As shown in Fig. 1, the optimized configuration of the Bulk possesses C2/m symmetry (space group no. 12) with an monoclinic lattice. The obtained lattice constants along the three lattice vectors are 4.445 ,8.122,11.057, and the volume of unit cell is 370.33 which are in reasonable agreement with the experiment1.

1.5 准一维结构的成键基础

2 动力学稳定性

To confirm the dynamical stability of bulk , phonon dispersion is calculated in the framework of the frozen phonon method. The along the high symmetrical path of the Brillouin zone and phonon states density are plotted in Fig. 2a. No appreciable imaginary modes are found in the first Brillouin zone, suggesting that the bulk is dynamically stable.

3 热力学稳定性

To further study its thermal stability at finite-temperature, we performed ab initio molecular dynamics (MD) simulations seconds at typical temperatures and the results of Mean Square Displacement(MSD) are shown in Fig.3. The MSD is defined as

, (2)

where means the average of all the atoms.

For solids the MSD does not change while for liquids and gas it changes linearly with time. Therefore, the bulk is thermally stable in a wide temperature range from 300 K to 800 K. However, the structure starts melting when heated to 900 K. Thus we only concentrated on the trusted temperature range (300–700 K), and choose 300 K as a typical temperature to perform the thermal conductivity calculations.

4 热导率的收敛性

To obtain reliable results of thermal conductivity, the convergence dependence to q points density has to be tested. Fig. 4a shows the convergence of thermal conductivity on q points with N increase from 2 to 8. The TC shows its convergence at N=4, above witch the result changes a little but not the computational effort, so we choose the number of transverse q points to be both 4. Besides, the convergence on q points with N increase from 16 to 1024 is also tested as in Fig. 4b. The result of could be a good estimate of the converged result and we choose it to calculate TC only for the trends of TC on other properties like temperature et. al to save computer resources. Fig. 4c shows the convergence on phonon cut off free path. The exact convergence could not be obtained even at due to the abnormally large lifetime of long wave phonons show in Fig. 4d, which always exist in low dimensional materials. However a lot of research shows the relation of TC and phonon cut off free path obeys the rules of

, (3)

and Fig. 4e verifies that it also make sense in bulk and the calculated results are over estimated. As the conclusion, the calculated results of thermal conductivity are not converged even in extremely dense q points, however they can be used as upper limited estimates of the exact results.

5 热导率的声子分析

Mode localization of phonons is believed to account for low thermal conductivity in this quasi-1D bulk system. To understand the underlying physical mechanism of localization of phonons on thermal conductivity, we have carried out a vibrational eigen-mode analysis. Mode localization can be quantitatively characterized by, the participation ratio2 for each eigen-mode

, (4)

where N is the total number of atoms and is the complex amplitude of atom s for eigen-mode. The participation ratio presents the fraction of atoms participating in a given mode and effectively indicates the localized modes with and delocalized modes with O (1). It can provide a more detailed information about the localization effect to each mode. The eigenvectors and frequencies are obtained using Phonopy3 with and mesh sampling. Fig. 4 shows the participation ratio of graphene,,. A reduction of p-ratio for both low frequency phonons and high frequency phonons comes out compared with graphene. Most of the eigen-modes in regular have p-ratio over 0.98, showing characteristic of delocalized mode, while some of the eigen-modes of the others showing a characteristic of localized mode. The average participation ratio are 1.00, 0.80, 0.86 and 0.95 respectively, which obeys the same trends as the thermal conductivity.

C12N

CN

6 热导的非谐分析

7 Seebeck系数

IV. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, in this work, we propose to study the effects of doping distribution on thermal conductivity of alloys. Our numerical results demonstrate that a random distribution will deduce thermal conductivity rapidly as expected while a regular distribution leads to much slower deduction at room temperature. Moreover, thermal conductivity of will increase abnormally when x is beyond a value. The localization mode analysis demonstrates that the [inequivalent](http://www.baidu.com/s?f=13&nojc=1&wd=inequivalent) of the atoms within the same unit cell is responsible for the change of thermal conductivity in the alloy. To describe the [inequivalent](http://www.baidu.com/s?f=13&nojc=1&wd=inequivalent) for random alloys, we define a quantity named disorder degree and found thermal conductivity depends on it linearly, which is valuable for thermal conductivity manipulation and it maybe a universal scaling for a wide range of nanomaterials. These results would be helpful to the development of nonequilibium statistic mechanics and the theory of heat transportation in nanoscale systems.

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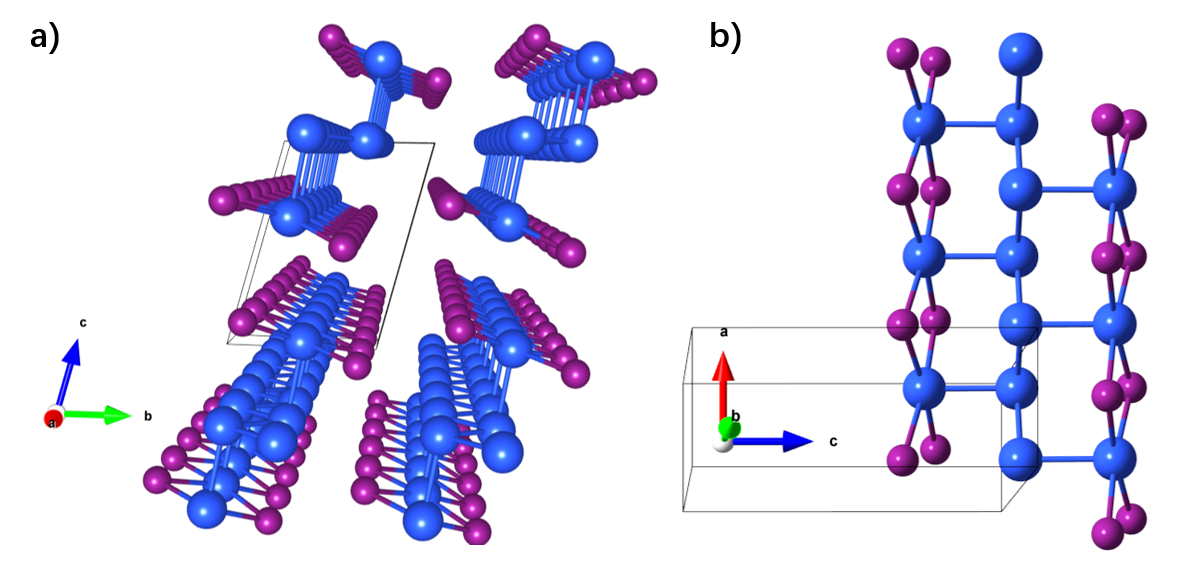
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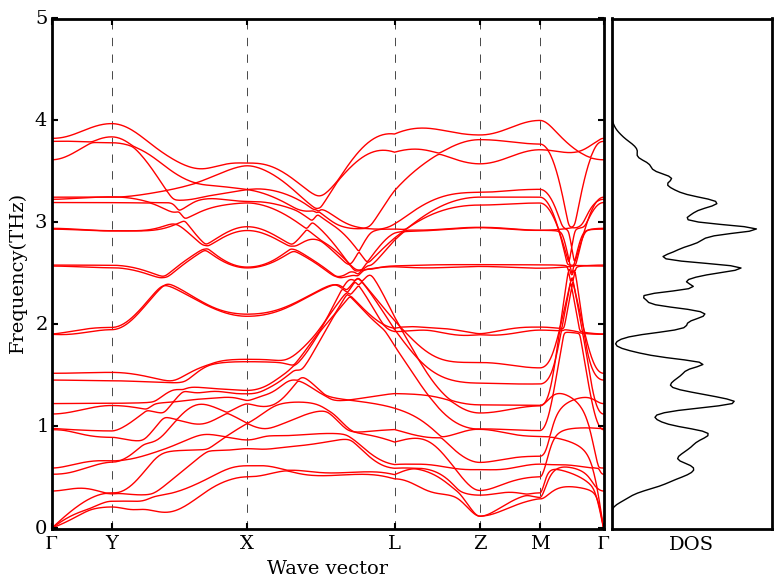
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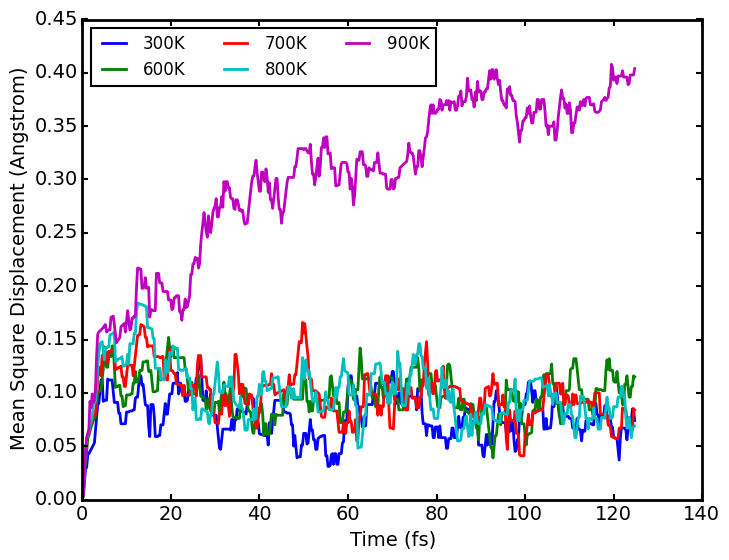
**FIG. 1.** (color online) Crystal structure of . a) the perspective view of the bulk structure. Bi atoms are in blue and I atoms in purple. The crystal axes in the structure are chosen to match the stripe direction, in order to facilitate the calculation of thermal conductivity along the stripe. b) the side view of an individual chain-like stripe.



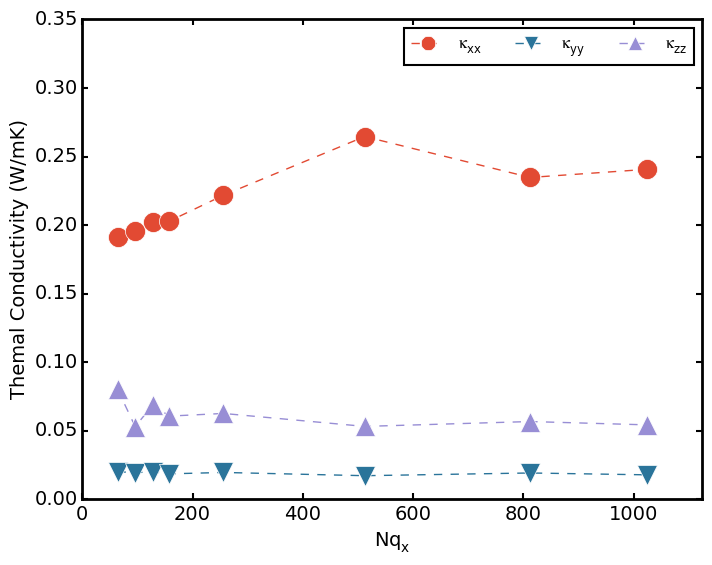
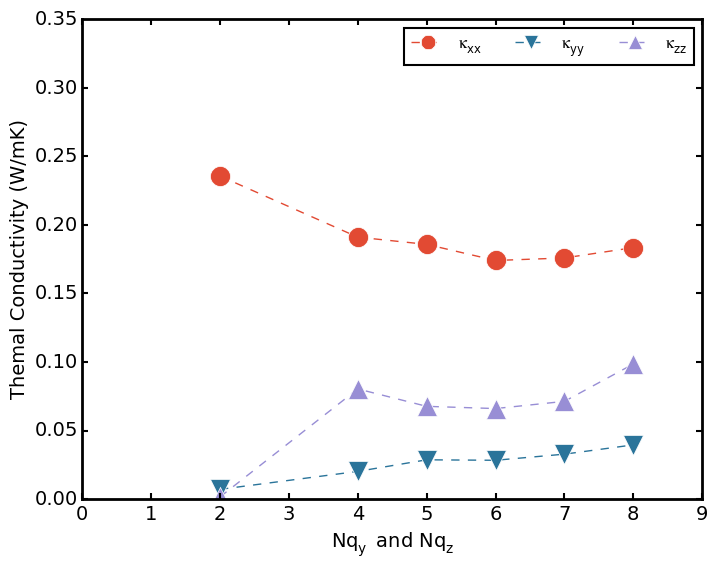
**FIG. 2.** (color online) Phonon dispersion along the high symmetric k-point path in the first Brillouin zone, along with phonon density of states.

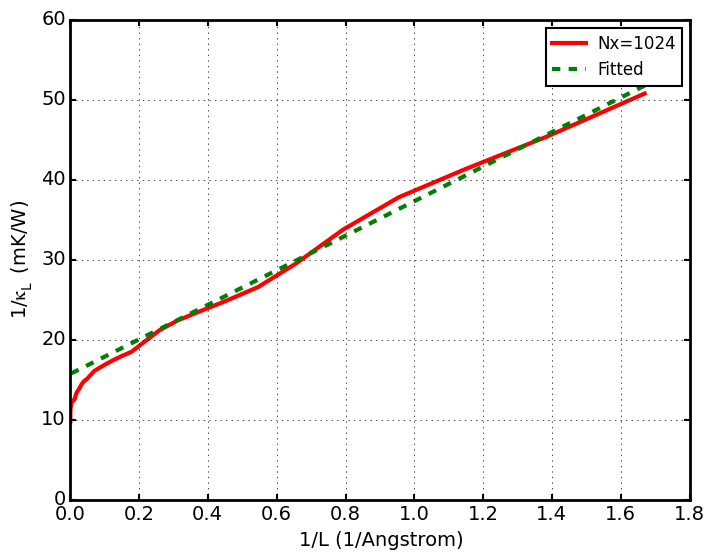
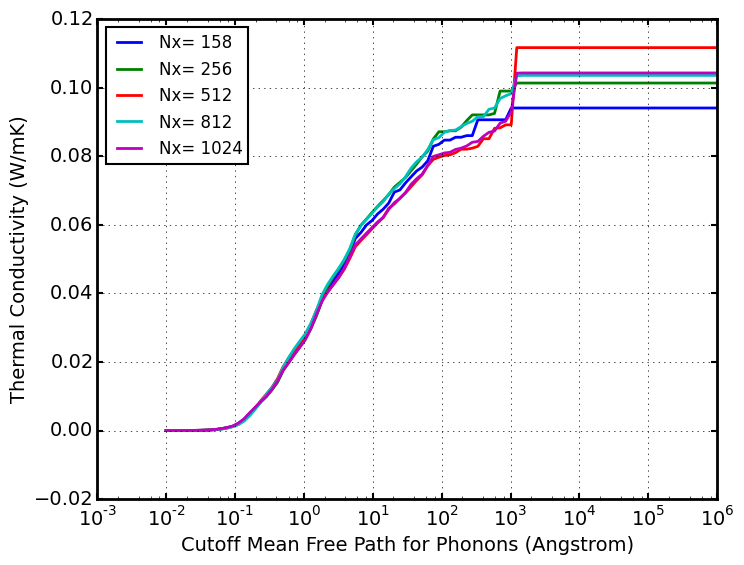


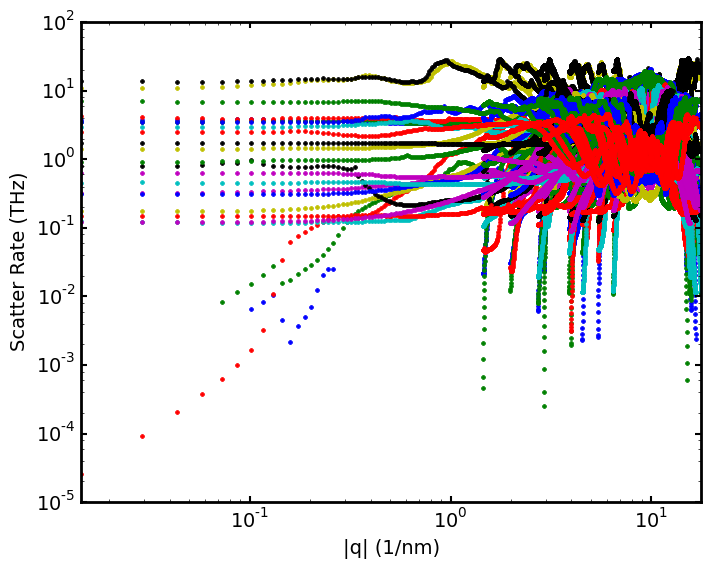
**FIG. 3.** (color online) Mean Square Displacement(MSD) vs. time under various temperature measured through ab-initial molecular dynamics. The continuous increasing of MSD at 900K means a phase transition between 800K and 900K.



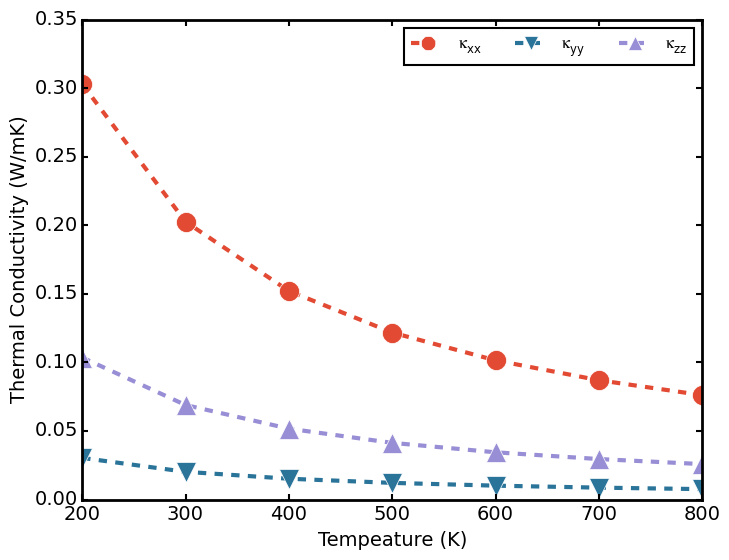
**FIG. 4.** (color online) Thermal conductivity(TC) convergence vs. q points of bulk . a) Thermal conductivity convergence with q points with N increase from 2 to 8. Although not obviously a convergence is reached, the result of N=4 is proved to be a reasonable approximation of convergent result. b) Thermal conductivity convergence with q points with N increase from 16 to 1024. The convergence along the stripe direction is difficult to obtain because of the phonon life time divergence nature of 1D materials and the unreachable mean free path of them.



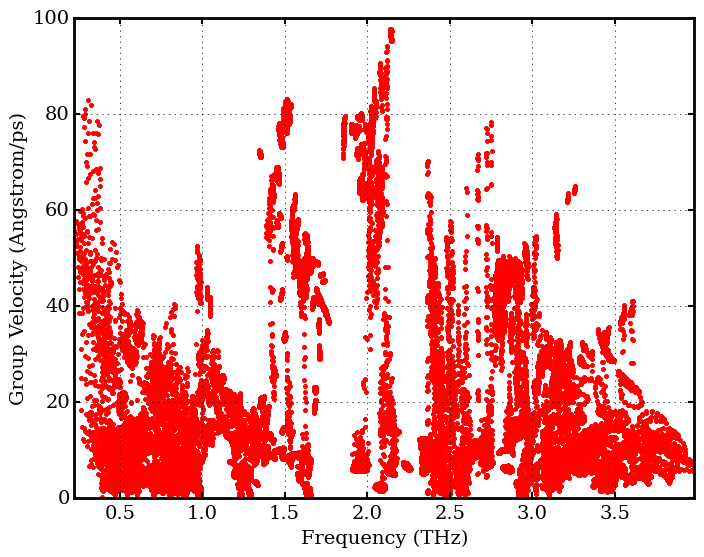




**FIG. 5.** (color online) Thermal conductivity vs. temperature along the three lattice vectors. The TCs are found to be pretty low. The highly anisotropic structure result in the understandable anisotropic but unexpectedly, the TCs along the stripe and along the inter-stripe direction y are pretty close while the TC along the other inter-stripe direction z is much higher.



**FIG. 3.** (color online) Phonon group velocity of bulk . Although the frequencies are pretty low (phonons are pretty soft), the group velocities are not so small witch can be understood by the steep phonon dispersion, for example, along the path ΓM. The maximum group velocity is comparable to that of graphene witch possesses the largest thermal conductivity so far.



**FIG. 6.** (color online) Phonon lifetime caused by three phonon scattering. The phonon with high group velocity however has a much small lifetime, resulting in a not so large mean free path for most of the phonons. However, the phonon of low frequency is found to have pretty large relation time which is a feature of low-dimensional materials. However, they could not contribute enough thermal conductivity because of the small population.



**FIG. 4.** (color online) Phonon participation ratio of bulk .



**FIG. 7.** (color online) Phonon scattering strength vs. frequency of bulk .

