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BLOCH ELECTRONS IN MAGNETIC FIELDS

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Annotation. Blocking electrons in magnetic fields involves understanding how magnetic fields influence the motion and behavior of electrons. This topic is essential in various fields of physics and engineering, including the design of magnetic confinement devices in fusion reactors, the development of advanced electronic components, and space physics.

Keywords: bloch electrons, magnetic fields, Lorentz forces, cyclotron motion, Landau levels, quantum hall effect, band theory, crystal grille, wave function, magnetic boundary, Brillouin zone, electronic mobility, quantum vibrations

The system is spherically symmetric,

$$\hat{m}^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{m^*} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{m^*} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{m^*} \end{pmatrix}$$

The energy is represented by

$$\mathcal{E}(k) = \mathcal{E}(0) + \frac{\hbar k^2}{2m^*}. \quad (1)$$

m^* is called the effective mass. When \hat{m}^{-1} is diagonal but anisotropic, we have

$$\varepsilon(k) = \varepsilon(0) + \frac{\hbar}{2m^*} k_x^2 + \frac{\hbar}{2m^*} k_y^2 + \frac{\hbar}{2m^*} k_z^2 \quad (2)$$

Next, we consider the case when magnetic fields are present. By the analogy from the free electron case where the substitution $p \rightarrow p + eA$ is made, with a substitution

$$\hbar k \rightarrow p + eA \quad (3)$$

for a given energy dispersion $\varepsilon_n(k)$, we obtain the following Schrodinger equation.

$$\varepsilon_n \left(\frac{1}{i} \nabla + \frac{e}{\hbar} A \right) f(k) = \varepsilon f(r)$$

If ε has a parabolic form,

$$\varepsilon(k) = \varepsilon(0) + \frac{\hbar k^2}{2m^*}$$

$$\frac{1}{2m^*} \left(\frac{1}{i} \nabla + \frac{e}{\hbar} A \right)^2 f(k) = \varepsilon f(r)$$

It is known that such a substitution is appropriate in most cases. The substitution is called the Landau-Peierls substitution.

The validity of the Landau-Peierls substitution is shown by Luttinger and Kohn as the effective mass theory [7]. In the effective mass theory, the wave function φ is expanded as a series of the functions

$$\phi_{nk}(r) = \sqrt{\frac{\Omega}{V}} u_{n0}(r) e^{ik \cdot r}$$

which form an orthonormal set,

$$\varphi = \sum_{n'} \int dk' A_{n'}(k') \phi_{n'k'}$$

The function ϕ_{nk} has an orthogonal property

$$(\phi_{nk}, \phi_{n'k'}) = \delta(k' - k) \delta_{nn'}$$

The Hamiltonian in the presence of the magnetic field is

$$H = \frac{1}{2m} (p + eA)^2 + U(r), \quad (4)$$

and

$$H\varphi = \varepsilon\varphi$$

is an equation to be solved. Interband interaction terms $\langle \phi_{n'k'} | H | \phi_{nk} \rangle$ can be taken into the effective mass, and it can be shown that the wave function can have a form

$$\varphi(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_n F_n(\mathbf{r}) \phi_{n0}(\mathbf{r}) \quad (5)$$

Here, the function $F_n(\mathbf{r})$ is an eigenfunction of the following Schrodinger equation

for the n -th band:

$$\varepsilon_n \left(\frac{1}{i} \nabla + \frac{e}{\hbar} A \right) F_n(\mathbf{r}) = \varepsilon F_n(\mathbf{r}) \quad (6)$$

$$\varepsilon = \frac{\hbar^2 k^2}{2m^*},$$

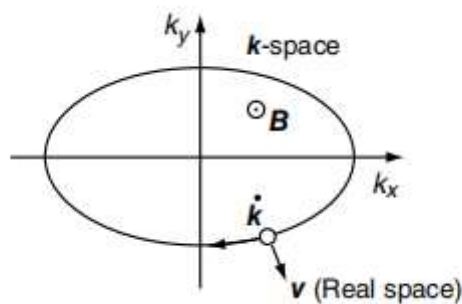
then

$$\varphi(\mathbf{r}) = f(\mathbf{r}) \times u_n(\mathbf{r}). \quad (7)$$

In the Landau gauge, $f(\mathbf{r})$ is an eigenfunction of the same expression as with $m \rightarrow m^*$, so that it is a harmonic oscillator function. The energy is given

$$\varepsilon = \left(N + \frac{1}{2} \right) \hbar \omega_c, \quad \omega_c = \frac{eB}{m^*} \quad (8)$$

Thus we see that the Landau levels in the conduction band, which has a parabolic energy dispersion, have the same energy as free electrons except that the free electron mass is replaced by the effective mass. The wave function is a product of the slowly varying envelope function standing for the cyclotron motion and the rapidly oscillating Bloch part standing for the periodic motion in the crystal. If the energy band is not entirely parabolic, or if a few bands are degenerate, the solutions are more complicated, but we can obtain the Landau levels by properly treating the dispersion or the degeneracy, as shown in later sections. The essential point of the effective mass approximation is that the effect of the periodic potential of the crystal lattice is squeezed into the effective mass, treating the Schrodinger equation without the periodic potential. It should be



noted that the effective mass approximation is valid not only for the electronic states in the presence of magnetic fields, but also for those in the presence of electric potential. Therefore, it can be applicable for treating impurity states, or electronic states in the presence of artificially introduced quantum potentials in heterostructures, as long as the extension of the envelope wave function is sufficiently larger than the period of the lattice potential.

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