Cavity materials engineering: QEDFT electron-photon exchange approximation for solid-state materials applications



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Atomic structure: the fundamental building blocks of materials for many applications

Macroscale



Microscale





Doping, strain (stress), temperature, gating, twisting... \Rightarrow materials phases & properties



$$\frac{1}{I} \frac{Z_I e^2}{|\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{R}_I|} - \frac{\sum_{I=1}^{N_n} \hat{\mathbf{P}}_I^2}{\sum_{I=1}^{I} \frac{2M_I}{2M_I}} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{I\neq J}^{N_n} \frac{Z_I Z_J e^2}{|\mathbf{R}_I - \mathbf{R}_J|}$$

Use external (classical) electromagnetic (EM) fields to engineer materials properties on demand



D. N. Basov, R. D. Averitt, & D. Hsieh, *Nature materials*, 16(11), 1077-1088 (2017)

Atomistic structure + transverse EM field

$$\begin{split} \hat{H}_{M} &= \hat{T}_{e} + \hat{W}_{ee} + \hat{W}_{en} + \hat{T}_{n} + \hat{W} \\ \hat{T}_{e} &= \sum_{i=1}^{N_{e}} \frac{[\hat{\mathbf{p}}_{i} + |e| \mathbf{A}_{\perp}(\mathbf{r}_{i}, t)]^{2}}{2m_{e}} \\ \hat{T}_{n} &= \sum_{I=1}^{N_{n}} \frac{[\hat{\mathbf{P}}_{I} - Z_{I}|e| \mathbf{A}_{\perp}(\mathbf{R}_{I}, t)]^{2}}{2m_{e}} \end{split}$$

Frequency, polarization, pulse (envelope),...



Enhance light-matter interactions using a cavity



Dark cavity - without external driving Weak coupling Strong coupling



P. Forn-Díaz et al., Rev. Mod. Phys. 91, 025005 (2019) F. Kockum *et al.*, *Nat Rev Phys* **1**, 19–40 (2019)



Quantum vacuum fluctuations to modify the energy landscape of materials (molecules) inside an optical cavity



Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. **51**, 1592–1596 (2012) M. Ruggenthaler, J. Flick., C. Pellegrini, H. Appel, I. V. Tokatly, & A. Rubio, PRA **90**, 012508 (2014)



Cavity (QED) materials engineering offers a novel route to control solid-state properties using confined quantum light





| Review papers | I-T. Lu <i>et al.</i>, <i>arXiv:2502.03172</i> (2025); Accepted in AOP T. W. Ebbesen <i>et al.</i>, <i>Chemical Reviews</i>, <i>123</i>(21), 12037-12038 (F. Schlawin <i>et al.</i>, <i>Applied Physics Reviews</i>, <i>9</i>(1), 011312 (2022) J. Bloch <i>et al.</i>, <i>Nature</i>, <i>606</i>(7912), 41-48 (2022) |
|------------------|---|
|------------------|---|

H. Hübener, H., U. De Giovannini, C. Schäfer, J. Andberger, M. Ruggenthaler, J. Faist, & A. Rubio, Nature Materials, 20(4), 438–442 (2021)

• F. J. Garcia-Vidal *et al.*, *Science*, *373*(6551), eabd0336 (2021) 2023) • N. M. Peraca et al., Ch03 in Semiconductors and Semimetals, vol. 105 of Semiconductor Quantum Science and Technology, page 89–151 (2020) • M. Ruggenthaler et al., Nature Reviews Chemistry 2, 1–16 (2018)



Quantum vacuum fluctuations can be used to modify a wide range of solid-state materials properties



J. Enkner *et al.*, arXiv:2405.18362 (2024)

Plasmonics



Ferromagnetism







First-principle framework for matter-only and light-matter coupled systems



Matter + classical
transverse EM field $\hat{H}_{Matter}(\hat{\mathbf{r}}, \hat{\mathbf{R}})$

Matter + quantum
transverse EM field $\hat{H}(\hat{\mathbf{r}}, \hat{\mathbf{R}}, \hat{\mathbf{A}})$

M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, J. Flick, H. Appel, & A. Rubio, Nature Reviews Chemistry 2, 1–16 (2018)

| 1S | First principles framework | Physics |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Â) | DFT | Static phenomena |
| À , A) | TD(C)DFT | Time dependent phenomena |
|)? | ??(C)DFT | Static, time-dependent & temperature from first principles |

The Pauli-Fierz (PF) Hamiltonian serves as the foundation for (quantum) light-matter coupled systems

$$\hat{H}_{\rm PF} = \sum_{i=1}^{N_e} \left[\frac{\left(\hat{\mathbf{p}}_i + |e| \hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\perp}(\mathbf{r}_i) \right)^2}{2m_{e,b}} + \frac{|e| \hbar}{2m_{e,b}} \sigma_i \cdot \hat{\mathbf{B}}(\mathbf{r}_i) \right] + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i \neq j}^{N_e} \frac{e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 |\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j|} - \sum_{i=1}^{N_e} \sum_{l=1}^{N_n} \frac{Z_l e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 |\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{R}_l|} + \sum_{l=1}^{N_n} \left[\frac{\left(\hat{\mathbf{P}}_l - Z_l |e| \hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\perp}(\mathbf{R}_l) \right)^2}{2M_{l,b}} - \frac{Z_l |e| \hbar}{2M_{l,b}} \mathbf{S}_l \cdot \hat{\mathbf{B}}(\mathbf{R}_l) \right] + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{l \neq j}^{N_n} \frac{Z_l Z_j e^2}{4\pi\epsilon_0 |\mathbf{R}_l - \mathbf{R}_j|} + \sum_{\mathbf{n},\lambda} \hbar \omega_{\mathbf{n}} \hat{a}_{\mathbf{n},\lambda}^{\dagger} \hat{a}_{\mathbf{n},\lambda}$$

- Has a well-defined ground state
- Bare mass for electrons and nuclei
 - M. Ruggenthaler, D. Sidler, & A. Rubio, *Chem. Rev.* **123**, 11191–11229 (2023)

 Consistent boundary conditions for both light and matter • Equations of motion for photons obey Maxwell's equations

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M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, J. Flick, H. Appel, & A. Rubio, Nat Rev Chem 2, 1–16 (2018)
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QEDFT extends DFT by including the quantum nature of (transverse) electromagnetic fields



M. Ruggenthaler, arXiv:1509.01417 (2017) (Ground-state QEDFT) M. Ruggenthaler, J. Flick., C. Pellegrini, H. Appel, I. V. Tokatly, & A. Rubio, PRA 90, 012508 (2014) (Relativistic and non-relativistic QEDFT)

Maxwell-KS system
$$\hat{h} = \frac{1}{2} \left(-i\nabla + \frac{1}{c} \mathbf{A}_{\mathrm{KS}}(\mathbf{r}) \right)^2 + v_{\mathrm{KS}}(\mathbf{r}) = v_{\mathrm{ext}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{H}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{xc}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{pxc}}(\mathbf{r}) = v_{\mathrm{ext}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{H}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{H}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{xc}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{pxc}}(\mathbf{r}) = v_{\mathrm{ext}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{H}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{H}}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{\mathrm{xc}}(\mathbf{r}) +$$

$$+ \sum_{l=1}^{N_e} v_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{r}_l) + \sum_{\alpha=1}^{M_p} \omega_\alpha \left(\hat{a}_{\alpha}^{\dagger} \hat{a}_{\alpha} + \frac{1}{2} \right) - \frac{1}{c} \int d^3 r \, \mathbf{j}_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{r}) \cdot \hat{\mathbf{A}}(\mathbf{r})$$
$$\mathbf{r}), \, \mathbf{A}(\mathbf{r})) \qquad \Longleftrightarrow \qquad |\Phi\rangle \quad \Leftrightarrow \qquad (V_{\text{KS}}, \mathbf{j}_{\text{KS}})$$
$$\text{Non-interacting system}$$

Π



Searching functionals for electron-photon interactions: length gauge & energy approach

- **Density** approach: J. Flick, *PRL*, *129*(14), 143201 (2022)
- Photon-RPA (1D model): D. Novokreschenov *et al.*, *PRB* **108**, 235424 (2023)
- Van der Waal corrections: C. Tasci *et al.*, *PRL 134*(7), 073002 (2025)

• Perturbation theory (first functional, OEP): C. Pellegrini, J. Flick, I. V. Tokatly, H. Appel, & A. Rubio, PRL 115, 093001 (2015)

• Linear response: J. Flick, D. M. Welakuh, M. Ruggenthaler, H. Appel, & A. Rubio, ACS Photonics 6, 2757–2778 (2019)





Searching functionals for electron-photon interactions: velocity gauges & force-balance approach

- Velocity gauge (suitable for **extended systems**)

C. Schäfer, F. Buchholz, M. Penz, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, *PNAS*, 118 (41), e2110464118 (2021)

1D Hydrogen with soft Coulomb



I-T. Lu, M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, S. Latini, M. Penz, & A. Rubio, PRA, 109, 052823 (2024)

• Avoids the differentiability issue for energy functionals, the causality issue for action functionals, the numerical costly OEP

The PF Hamiltonian within the long-wavelength approximation (LWA) for electron-photon coupled systems

Coulomb gauge and **long wavelength approximation** ('effective' modes)

$$\hat{H}_{\rm PF} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{l=1}^{N_e} \left(-i\nabla_l + \frac{1}{c} \hat{\mathbf{A}} \right)^2 + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{l \neq k}^{N_e} w(\mathbf{r}_l, \mathbf{r}_k) + \sum_{l=1}^{N_e} v_{\rm ext}(\mathbf{r}_l) + \sum_{\alpha=1}^{M_p} \omega_\alpha \left(\hat{a}_\alpha^{\dagger} \hat{a}_\alpha + \frac{1}{2} \right)$$
where
$$\hat{\mathbf{A}} = \sum_{\alpha=1}^{M_p} \hat{A}_\alpha \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_\alpha \qquad \hat{A}_\alpha = \frac{\lambda_\alpha}{\sqrt{2\omega_\alpha}} (\hat{a}_\alpha^{\dagger} + \hat{a}_\alpha) \qquad \text{vacuum field amplitude (mode strength, light-matter coupling)}$$

M. K. Svendsen, M. Ruggenthaler, H. Hübener, C. Schäfer, M. Eckstein, A. Rubio, & S. Latini, arXiv:2312.17374 (2023)



photon frequency

Electron-electron and electron-photon exchange-correlation functionals from force-balance equation

From the equations of motion for the paramagnetic current operator

$$d\hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(t)/dt = i \left[\hat{H}_{PF}, \hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(t)\right] \xrightarrow{} \rho(\mathbf{r}) \nabla v_{ext}(\mathbf{r}) = \langle \hat{\mathbf{F}}_{T}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Psi} + \langle \hat{\mathbf{F}}_{W}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Psi} - \frac{1}{c} \langle (\hat{\mathbf{A}} \cdot \nabla) \hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Psi}$$

at equilibrium
$$d\hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(t)/dt = i \left[\hat{H}_{KS}, \hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(t)\right] \xrightarrow{} \rho_{s}(\mathbf{r}) \nabla v_{KS}(\mathbf{r}) = \langle \hat{\mathbf{F}}_{T}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Phi} - \frac{1}{c} \langle \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{KS} \cdot \nabla \rangle \langle \hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Phi}$$

M.-L. M. Tchenkoue, M. Penz, I. Theophilou, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, J. Chem. Phys. 151, 154107 (2019) N. Tancogne-Dejean. M. Penz, A. Laestadius, M. A. Csirik, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, J. Chem. Phys. 160, 024103 (2024)

Define mean-field **exchange-correlation** potential
$$v_{\text{Mxc}}(\mathbf{r}) = v_{\text{KS}}(\mathbf{r}) - v_{\text{ext}}(\mathbf{r})$$

 $\nabla^2 v_{\text{Mxc}}(\mathbf{r}) = \nabla \cdot \frac{1}{\rho(\mathbf{r})} \left[\mathbf{F}_T([\Phi], \mathbf{r}) - \mathbf{F}_T([\Psi], \mathbf{r}) - \mathbf{F}_W([\Psi], \mathbf{r}) + \frac{1}{c} \langle (\hat{\mathbf{A}} \cdot \nabla) \hat{\mathbf{j}}_p(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Psi} - \frac{1}{c} \langle (\tilde{\mathbf{A}}_{\text{KS}} \cdot \nabla) \langle \hat{\mathbf{j}}_p(\mathbf{r}) \rangle_{\Psi} \right]$



Electron-photon exchange approximation to capture the quantum fluctuations of transverse photon fields

Define electron-photon exchange-correlation (pxc) potential $\nabla^2 v_r$

Use
$$\hat{A} = \langle \hat{A} \rangle_{\Psi} + \Delta \hat{A}$$
 Breit-type Reduce th

Electron-photon **exchange** approximation

$$\nabla^2 v_{\text{px}}(\mathbf{r}) = -\nabla \cdot \left[\sum_{\alpha=1}^{M_p} \frac{\tilde{\lambda}_{\alpha}^2}{2\tilde{\omega}_{\alpha}^2} \frac{(\tilde{\boldsymbol{\epsilon}}_{\alpha} \cdot \nabla)[\mathbf{f}_{\alpha,\text{px}}(\mathbf{r}) + \mathbf{c}_{\alpha}]}{\rho(\mathbf{r})} \right]$$

C. Schäfer, F. Buchholz, M. Penz, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, PNAS, 118 (41), e2110464118 (2021)

$$\mathbf{r}_{\text{pxc}}(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{c} \nabla \cdot \begin{bmatrix} \langle (\hat{\mathbf{A}} \cdot \nabla) \hat{\mathbf{j}}_{p}(\mathbf{r}) \rangle \\ \rho(\mathbf{r}) \end{bmatrix}$$

approximation

$$\hat{\Delta A_{\alpha}} \approx -c \frac{\hat{\lambda}_{\alpha}^2}{\tilde{\omega}_{\alpha}^2} \tilde{\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}}_{\alpha} \cdot \Delta \hat{\mathbf{J}}_{\mathrm{p}}$$

e Hilbert space and keep photon quantum effect



I-T. Lu, M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, S. Latini, M. Penz, & A. Rubio, Phys. Rev. A, 109, 052823 (2024)

Electron-photon exchange (pxLDA) approximation for strongly light-matter coupled systems



I-T. Lu, M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, S. Latini, M. Penz, & A. Rubio, *Phys. Rev. A*, 109, 052823 (2024)

Electron-photon exchange functional performs well at large light-matter coupling or photon frequency





Time-dependent (adiabatic) QEDFT can reproduce vacuum Rabi splitting of a 3D hydrogen atom

Couple a hydrogen to a photon mode with polarization along x direction & frequency of 10.2 eV



I-T. Lu, M. Ruggenthaler, N. Tancogne-Dejean, S. Latini, M. Penz, & A. Rubio, Phys. Rev. A, 109, 052823 (2024)

Partition wave functions to separate systems at different time scales for light-matter coupled systems

Pauli-Fierz Hamiltonian

Separate '**slow**' and 'fast' subsystems

 $\hat{H}_{\rm PF}(\mathbf{r},\mathbf{R},\mathbf{A})$

Assume that **photons** are coupled **only** to **electrons**

Born-Oppernheimer approximation (neglect non-adiabatic coupling)

$$\left[\sum_{I=1}^{N_n} \frac{\hat{\mathbf{P}}_I^2}{2M_I} + \tilde{\epsilon}_k(\{\underline{\mathbf{R}}\}) - E_i\right] \tilde{\chi}_{ik}(\underline{\mathbf{R}}) = 0$$

$$\hat{H}_{\rm PF}(\underline{\mathbf{r}}, \underline{\mathbf{R}}, \underline{\mathbf{A}}) \Psi_i(\underline{\mathbf{r}}, \underline{\mathbf{R}}, \underline{\mathbf{A}}) = E_i \Psi_i(\underline{\mathbf{r}}, \underline{\mathbf{R}}, \underline{\mathbf{A}})$$

 $\Psi_{i}(\underline{\mathbf{r}},\underline{\mathbf{R}},\underline{\mathbf{A}}) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \chi_{ij}(\underline{\mathbf{R}},\underline{\mathbf{A}})\psi_{j}(\underline{\mathbf{r}};\{\underline{\mathbf{R}}\},\{\underline{\mathbf{A}}\}) = \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \tilde{\chi}_{ij}(\underline{\mathbf{R}})\tilde{\psi}_{j}(\underline{\mathbf{r}},\underline{\mathbf{A}};\{\underline{\mathbf{R}}\})$ (electronic) polaritonic surface





Minimal viable QEDFT toolbox for QED solid-state materials

Electron-photon systems

$$\begin{bmatrix} -\frac{1}{2}\nabla^2 + v_{KS}(\mathbf{r}) \end{bmatrix} \psi_i(\mathbf{r}) = \varepsilon_i \psi_i(\mathbf{r})$$

$$v_{KS}(\mathbf{r}) = v_{ext}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{H}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{xc}(\mathbf{r}) + v_{pxc}(\mathbf{r})$$
e-e interaction e- γ interaction
I-T. Lu *et al.*, *PRA* 109, 052823 (2024)

Density functional perturbation theory (DFPT)

$$\partial_{\nu \mathbf{q}} v_{\mathrm{KS}}(\mathbf{r}) \leftrightarrow \partial_{\nu \mathbf{q}} \rho(\mathbf{r})$$

including $\partial_{\nu \mathbf{q}} v_{\mathrm{pxc}}(\mathbf{r})$

I-T. Lu et al., PNAS 121, e2415061121 (2024)





Cavity-induced electron density redistribution (example: MgB₂)



Electron density difference

out-of-plane

in-plane



The physical mass of electron is modified via the light-matter interaction, and electrons become heavier along the polarization direction; electrons accumulate along B-B bonds

I-T. Lu, D. Shin, M. K. Svendsen, H. Hübener, U. De Giovannini, S. Latini, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, PNAS 121, e2415061121 (2024)





Cavity-modified phonon dispersion (example: MgB₂)

Quantum vacuum fluctuations affect ullet



nd Γ and those that are y IR-active

nulation around the reen the Coulomb een boron-boron nuclei

:e method (from force) **T**, enabling it do not rely on LDA -e interaction

Phonon frequency (cm⁻¹)

(Svendsen, H. Hübener, U. De Giovannini, S. Latini, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, PNAS 121, e2415061121 (2024)









Cavity-modified electron-phonon coupling (example: MgB₂)



I-T. Lu, D. Shin, M. K. Svendsen, H. Hübener, U. De Giovannini, S. Latini, M. Ruggenthaler, & A. Rubio, PNAS 121, e2415061121 (2024)

(Anisotropic) Eliashberg equations for (cavity-modified) phononmediated superconductors in nutshell

Eliashberg Eqs. requires electronic band structure, phonon frequency, e-ph coupling as inputs

$$Z(\mathbf{k}s, i\omega_n) = 1 + \frac{\pi k_B T}{\omega_n N(0)} \sum_{\mathbf{k}'s', n'} \frac{1}{\omega_n N(0)}$$
Mass renormalization
function
$$Z(\mathbf{k}s, i\omega_n) \Delta(\mathbf{k}s, i\omega_n) = \frac{\pi k_B T}{N(0)} \sum_{\mathbf{k}'s', n'} \frac{\Delta(\mathbf{k}'s')}{\sqrt{\omega_n^2}}$$
Superconducting
gaps

 T_{c} can be found when the superconducting gaps vanish, i.e., $\Delta(k_{s},0) = 0$

e-ph matrix element $\lambda(n\mathbf{k}, m\mathbf{k}', l - l') =$

 $\frac{\omega_{n'}\delta(\epsilon_{\mathbf{k}'s'} - \epsilon_{\mathbf{F}})}{\sqrt{\omega_{n'}^2 + \Delta^2(\mathbf{k}'s', i\omega_{n'})}} \lambda(\mathbf{k}s, \mathbf{k}'s', n - n')$ e-ph matrix element $\frac{(\prime, i\omega_{n'})\delta(\epsilon_{\mathbf{k}'s'} - \epsilon_{\mathbf{F}})}{[\lambda(\mathbf{k}s, \mathbf{k}'s', n - n') - \mu^*]}$ $a_{n'}^2 + \Delta^2(\mathbf{k}'s', i\omega_{n'})$ Coulomb screened parameter

$$\int_{0}^{\infty} d\omega \frac{2\omega}{(\omega_{l} - \omega_{l'})^{2} + \omega^{2}} \alpha^{2} F(n\mathbf{k}, m\mathbf{k}', \omega)$$

Summary and future work

- Describe the Pauli-Fierz Hamiltonian as the starting point for light-matter coupled systems and ulletQEDFT as the suitable first principle method (framework)
- Provide the electron-photon exchange functionals and related tools suitable for solid-state materials
- Demonstrate cavity-modified electronic structure, phonon dispersion, and electron-phonon couplings •
- Recover photon fields from QEDFT (current-based density functional)
- Implement cavity-modified stress and search better functionals
- Explore cavity-engineered electrical and thermal transport properties

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