

758

Lecture #18 of 20+

758

759

The Double Layer

Chapter 13

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Q: [What's in this set of lectures?](#)

A: B&F Chapter 13 main concepts:

- Section 1.2.3: Double layer structure
- Sections 13.1 & 13.2: Gibbs adsorption isotherm, Electrocapillar(it)y, Surface excess, Lippmann's equation, Point of Zero Charge
- Section 13.3: Models: Helmholtz, Gouy–Chapman (Poisson–Boltzmann), Gouy–Chapman–Stern
- Section 13.5: Specific adsorption

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... data for aqueous NaF from B&F is qualitatively similar...

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RECALL:

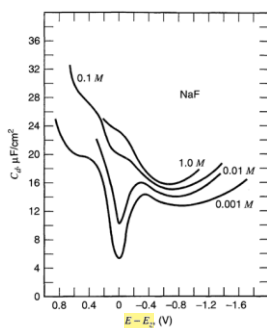


Figure 13.3.1 Differential capacitance vs. potential for NaF solutions in contact with mercury at 25°C. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, 1947, 41, 441

Flat? ... Eh; not really.

Why were both of these measured using fluoride salts?

In order to minimize specific adsorption!

761

RECALL:

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For the purposes of this class, we want to understand the microscopic origin of the *most prominent features* of these C_d vs. E data:

- A minimum in C_d exists at the pzc.
- C_d is quasi-constant at potentials well positive and well negative of the pzc.
- This quasi-constant C_d is larger when E is (+) of pzc than when it is (-) of pzc.
- C_d increases with salt concentration at all potentials, and the "dip" near the pzc disappears.

762

RECALL:

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Three traditional models for double layer structure:

- Helmholtz
- Gouy–Chapman (GC)
- Gouy–Chapman–Stern (GCS)

... let's take a look at each of these...

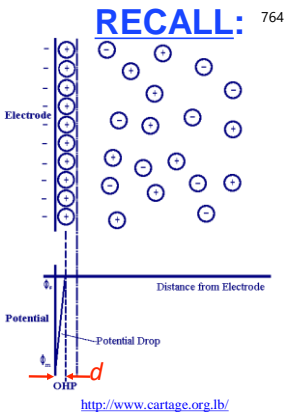
763

Models of Electrical Double Layer:

1) **The Helmholtz Model:** this is the simplest possible model. It postulates that ions (anions *and* cations) occupy a plane located a distance, d , from the electrode surface, and that the effective "dielectric constant" operating in the double layer is potential independent:

$$C_d = \frac{\epsilon\epsilon_0}{d}$$

... for a parallel plate capacitor, C is independent of E because the permittivity of the capacitor, $\epsilon\epsilon_0$, and its spacing, d , are both independent of applied potential...



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... the Helmholtz model says that the electrical double layer acts like, 765
and looks like (*rare in EChem*), a parallel plate capacitor...

RECALL:

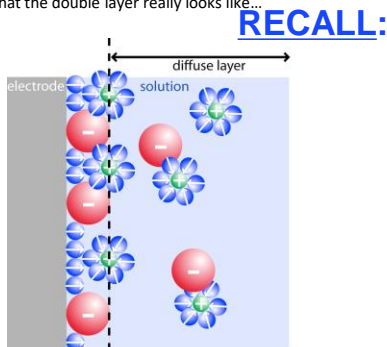
$$C_d = \frac{\epsilon\epsilon_0}{d}$$

... C_d is therefore independent of E because the permittivity of the capacitor, $\epsilon\epsilon_0$, and its spacing, d , are both independent of applied potential...

... Question: *What value for C_d do we calculate by plugging in to this model the known "dielectric constant" (permittivity = IUPAC) of water?*

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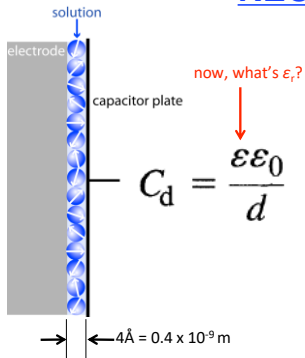
... recall, here's what the double layer really looks like... 766



766

... and here's what the double layer looks like in the Helmholtz approximation... 767

RECALL:



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... first, what's ε_r for water? Well, that depends... *can it rotate?* (BRIEFLY) 768

RECALL:

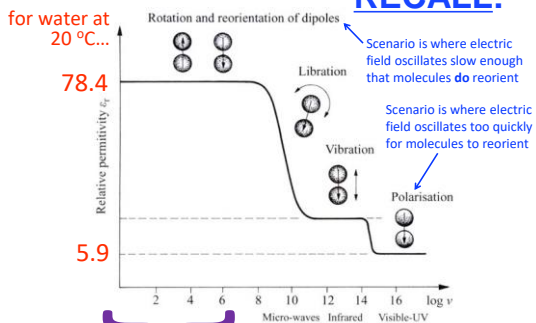
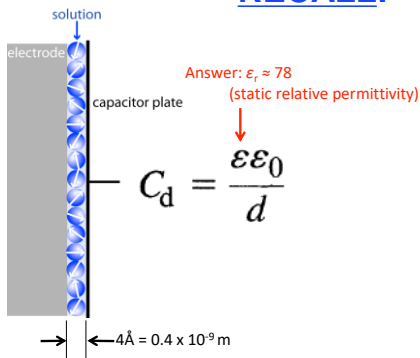


Fig. 1.7 Variation of the relative permittivity of water as a function of the frequency of the applied electric field. *Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy range*

768

... and here's what the double layer looks like in the Helmholtz approximation... 769

RECALL:



769

... and here's what the double layer looks like in the Helmholtz approximation... 770

RECALL:

$$C_d = \frac{\epsilon \epsilon_0}{d}$$

$$= \frac{(78)(8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{ F/m})}{0.4 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m}} = 1.73 \text{ F/m}^2$$

$$1.73 \text{ F/m} \frac{10^6 \mu\text{F}}{\text{F}} \frac{\text{m}^2}{100^2 \text{ cm}^2} = 172.6 \mu\text{F/cm}^2$$

Is this what is observed? Nope!... OK, now what?

770

... now, what if the water dielectric is saturated, and thus fixed? 771
 ... so that water cannot rotate...

RECALL:

$$C_d = \frac{\epsilon \epsilon_0}{d}$$

$$C = \frac{(6)(8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{ F/m})}{0.4 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m}} = 0.133 \text{ F/m}^2$$

$$0.133 \text{ F/m} \frac{10^6 \mu\text{F}}{\text{F}} \frac{\text{m}^2}{100^2 \text{ cm}^2} = 13.3 \mu\text{F/cm}^2$$

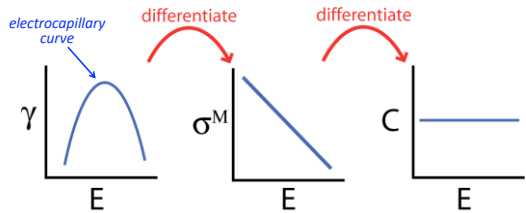
... much more reasonable!

771

... if we can measure γ , we can determine σ_M ... 772
 ... and if we can determine σ_M , we can determine C ...
 ... and all of this only works for liquid electrodes whose surface areas change over time... Crazy!

RECALL:

$$\sigma^M = - \left(\frac{d\gamma}{dE} \right)_{\mu_i} \quad C_d = \left(\frac{\partial \sigma^M}{\partial E} \right)$$

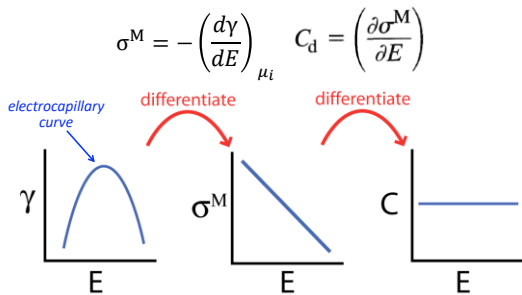


... Aside: One can determine E_{pzc} of a solid electrode using its capacitance

772

... if the Helmholtz model is correct, we'd get this exactly. (BRIEFLY) 773

RECALL:



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... here are electrocapillary data for various electrolytes... (BRIEFLY) 774

... hey, you can already see that the Helmholtz Model fails a little...
... mostly on the left...

RECALL:

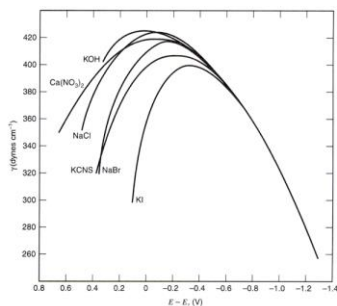


Figure 13.2.2 Electrocapillary curves of surface tension vs. potential for mercury in contact with solutions of the indicated electrolytes at 18°C. The potential is plotted with respect to the PZC for NaF. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

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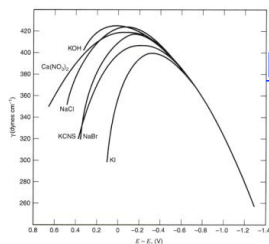


Figure 13.2.2 Electrocapillary curves of surface tension vs. potential for mercury in contact with solutions of the indicated electrolytes at 18°C. The potential is plotted with respect to the PZC for NaF. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

(BRIEFLY) 775

RECALL:

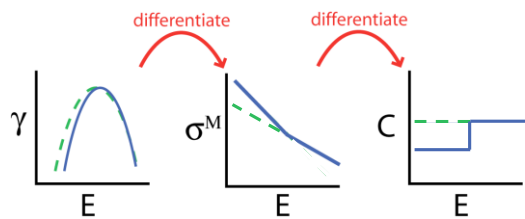
Notwithstanding, notice particularly the following:

- a) the γ vs. E parabola is independent of salt...
... at potentials negative of the pzc...
- b) ... but strongly dependent on salt positive of pzc...
- c) ... and pzc itself depends on the electrolyte...
... we'll get to this shortly...

775

... if C is dependent on potential, then the γ vs. E parabola will be asymmetric... 776

... for example...



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... and a flat C_d is in no way observed... we need a more sophisticated model... 777

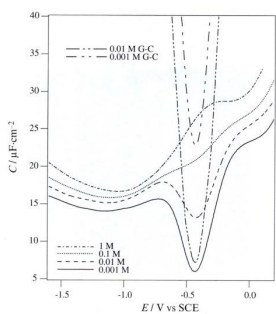


Fig. 5.13 Capacity of a mercury electrode in a KF solution ($z = -0.433V$) with the respective Gouy-Chapman capacity [Paolo Galletto, EPFL thesis].
H.H. Girault, *Analytical and Physical Electrochemistry*, EPFL Press, 2004, Figure 5.13



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... and specifically, one where the model of the double layer captures these elements 778

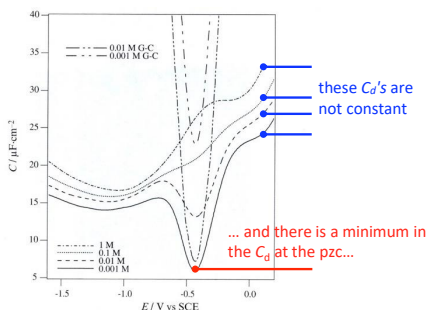


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Three traditional models for double layer structure:

- 1) Helmholtz
- 2) Gouy–Chapman (GC)
- 3) Gouy–Chapman–Stern (GCS)

... let's take a look at each of these...

779

Models of Electrical Double Layer:

780

2) **The Gouy–Chapman Model:** this model adopts all the same assumptions used in Debye–Hückel Theory, which are the following:

- a) ions are considered to be point charges; their polarizability is neglected
- b) interactions between ions, and between ions and the electrode are purely electrostatic (i.e. no specific (chemical) adsorption); thus, the IHP and OHP will **not** exist in this model since these planes explicitly require finite ion size = polarizability)
- c) the metal is considered a planar surface with a surface charge density, σ^M
- d) ions are distributed according to Maxwell–Boltzmann statistics...

780

RECALL: Debye–Hückel equation

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$$\text{(in water at 25 }^\circ\text{C)} \quad -\log \gamma_x = \frac{0.51 z_x^2 \sqrt{I}}{1 + 3.3 \alpha_x \sqrt{I}}$$

α = effective diameter of hydrated ion (nm)

... the derivation is long... but the main idea is that you balance thermal motion (Boltzmann) with electrostatics (Poisson/Gauss)...

Physicist & P-Chemist



Peter Joseph William Debye
(1884–1966)

Physicist & P-Chemist



Erich Armand Arthur Joseph Hückel
(1896–1980)

from Wiki

781

... d) ions are distributed according to Maxwell–Boltzmann statistics...

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$$n_i = n_i^0 \exp\left(\frac{-z_i e \phi}{\epsilon T}\right)$$

where e is the elementary charge, and ϕ is the electric potential relative to the bulk solution

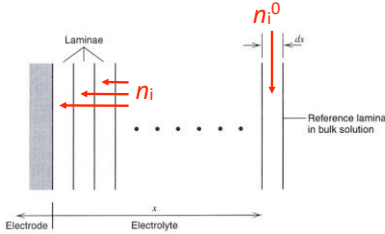


Figure 13.3.2 View of the solution near the electrode surface as a series of laminae.

782

the charge density, i.e. charge per unit volume, $\rho(x)$, is defined as:

783

$$\rho(x) = \sum_i n_i z_i e$$

... so substituting from the last slide...

$$\rho(x) = \sum_i z_i e n_i^0 \exp\left(\frac{-z_i e \phi}{\epsilon T}\right)$$

... and now the Poisson Equation gives us another expression for $\rho(x)$:

$$\rho(x) = -\epsilon \epsilon_0 \frac{d^2 \phi}{dx^2}$$

... substituting, we get the Poisson–Boltzmann Equation (no Maxwell!)

$$\frac{d^2 \phi}{dx^2} = -\frac{e}{\epsilon \epsilon_0} \sum_i n_i^0 z_i \exp\left(\frac{-z_i e \phi}{\epsilon T}\right)$$

783

... if we apply the Poisson–Boltzmann Equation to a 1:1 electrolyte, we obtain the following (see B&F, pp. 547–548):

784

$$\frac{d\phi}{dx} = -\left(\frac{8\epsilon T n^0}{\epsilon \epsilon_0}\right)^{1/2} \sinh\left(\frac{ze\phi}{2\epsilon T}\right)$$

... and if we further assume that ϕ^0 is small, we get...

$$\phi = \phi^0 \exp(-\kappa x)$$

... where

$$\kappa = \left(\frac{2n^0 z^2 e^2}{\epsilon \epsilon_0 \epsilon T}\right)^{1/2}$$

... here, κ has units of 1/distance... we commonly refer to κ^{-1} as λ_D , the "Debye (screening) length" characterizing the solution

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... Does a more sophisticated model of the double layer better capture features observed experimentally? 785

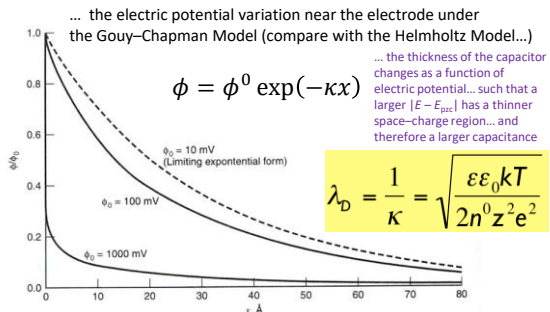


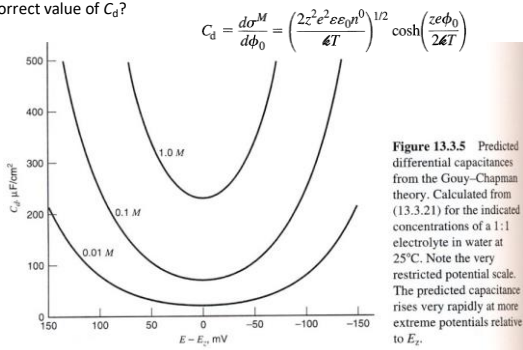
Figure 13.3.3 Potential profiles through the diffuse layer in the Gouy-Chapman model.

Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.3.3



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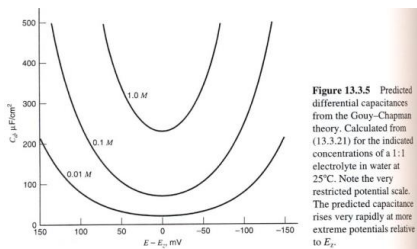
... how does the Gouy-Chapman Model do in terms of predicting the correct value of C_d ? 786



Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.3.5



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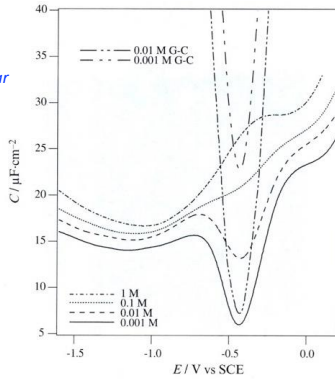
About Gouy-Chapman Theory we can say the following:

- it predicts a "dip" in C_d , that becomes more capacitive with increased ionic strength = **Good!**
- but it predicts a C_d that is WAY too high as the potential becomes far from the pzc = **Bad!**...
- and the C_d is symmetrical about the pzc (why?); this is not what is observed experimentally...



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Getting close?
... Notably, near the pzc?



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Fig. 5.13 Capacity of a mercury electrode in a KF solution ($pzc = -0.433V$) with the respective Gouy-Chapman capacity [Paolo Galletto, EPFL thesis].

788

... example: How thick is the diffuse layer from an electrode in, say, aqueous 0.1 M NaClO₄ solution? 789

Answer: The diffuse layer thickness is approximated by λ_D . Let's calculate it.

$$\lambda_D = \frac{1}{\kappa} = \sqrt{\frac{\epsilon\epsilon_0 kT}{2n^0 z^2 e^2}}$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{(78)(8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{ C}^2 / \text{Jm})(1.381 \times 10^{-23} \text{ J/K})(298\text{K})}{2(100(6.022 \times 10^{23}) / \text{m}^3)(1)^2 (1.602 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C})^2}}$$

$$n^0 = \frac{0.1 \text{ moles}}{\text{dm}^3} \frac{10^3 \text{ dm}^3}{\text{m}^3} \frac{6.022 \times 10^{23} \text{ ions}}{\text{mole}} = 6.022 \times 10^{25} \text{ ions} / \text{m}^3$$

789

... example: How thick is the diffuse layer from an electrode in, say, aqueous 0.1 M NaClO₄ solution? 790

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$$= \sqrt{\frac{(78)(8.854 \times 10^{-12} \text{ C}^2 / \text{Jm})(1.381 \times 10^{-23} \text{ J/K})(298\text{K})}{2(100(6.022 \times 10^{23}) / \text{m}^3)(1)^2 (1.602 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C})^2}}$$

$$= 9.589 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m} = 9.6 \text{ \AA}$$

≈ 1 nm... about the same thickness as the compact layer...

Wow!

790

... example: How thick is the diffuse layer from an electrode in, say, aqueous 0.1 M NaClO₄ solution?

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TABLE 13.3.1 Characteristic Thickness of the Diffuse Layer^a

$C^*(M)^b$	$1/\kappa(\text{\AA})$
1	3.0
10^{-1}	9.6
10^{-2}	30.4
10^{-3}	96.2
10^{-4}	304

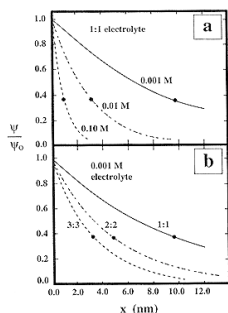
^aFor a 1:1 electrolyte at 25°C in water.

^b $C^* = n^0/N_A$ where N_A is Avogadro's number.

791

... and related, this means that the electrostatic repulsion between charged colloid particles, for example, is *very short range* at high electrolyte concentrations... suspensions of these particles frequently precipitate

792



Paul Hiemenz, Raj Rajagopalan. *Principles of Colloid and Surface Chemistry, Third Edition*. Dekker, New York: 1997, p. 514

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Three traditional models for double layer structure:

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- 3) Gouy–Chapman–Stern (GCS)

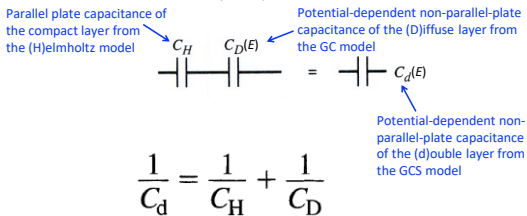
... let's take a look at each of these...

793

Models of Electrical Double Layer:

794

3) **The Gouy–Chapman–Stern Model:** basically, the idea is to use both the Helmholtz Model and the Gouy–Chapman Model in series:

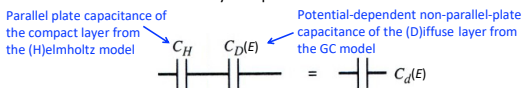


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Models of Electrical Double Layer:

795

3) **The Gouy–Chapman–Stern Model:** basically, the idea is to use both the Helmholtz Model and the Gouy–Chapman Model in series:



But, wait a minute! This is modeling just one interface with two sides, but there are two capacitors (and thus in total seemingly four sides)... what gives?

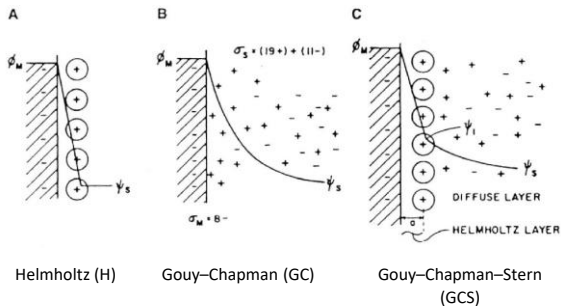
$$\frac{1}{C_d} = \frac{1}{C_H} + \frac{1}{C_D}$$

If it barks like a dog, and it smells like a dog, then maybe we should model it as being a dog...
... What are the units?

This means that the electric potential drop across the Helmholtz Layer (inside of the OHP) will be linear, and a quasi-exponential potential drop will extend from this point and into the bulk solution...

795

... our three models for the potential distribution near a charged electrode 796 immersed in an electrolyte solution...



<http://electrochem.cwrui.edu/>

796

... History...

Physician & Physicist

797



Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821–1894)

Physicist



Otto Stern (1888–1926) Nobel Prize (Physics, 1943)

Physicist



Louis Georges Gouy (1854–1926)

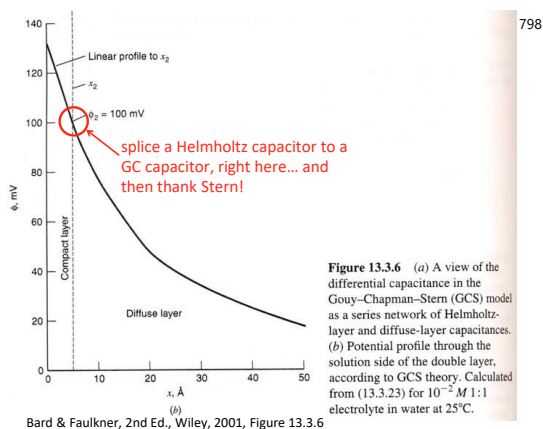
P-Chemist



David Leonard Chapman (1869–1958)

from Wiki

797



Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.3.6

798

... the mathematical details are in B&F, pp. 551 – 552, but qualitatively, what GCS does is it uses the smaller capacitance of either C_H or $C_{D(GC)}$...

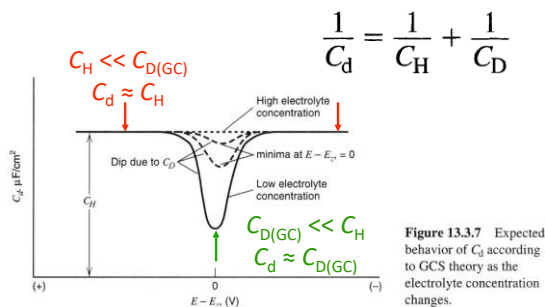


Figure 13.3.7 Expected behavior of C_d according to GCS theory as the electrolyte concentration changes.

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And lastly, what effect does *specific adsorption* have on the pzc?
 The answer is hinted at in the data that we saw earlier...

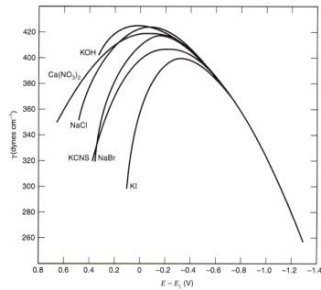


Figure 13.2.2 Electrocapillary curves of surface tension vs. potential for mercury in contact with solutions of the indicated electrolytes at 18°C. The potential is plotted with respect to the PZC for NaF. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.2.2

800

... but to really reveal specific adsorption, one must look carefully at the concentration (activity) dependence of the pzc. *If there is one, then specific adsorption is occurring...*

The *sign* of the shift in pzc is the sign of the ion that is adsorbing...

... for this we define the *Esin-Markov coefficient* for a given σ^M ($= 0$), as the following slope:

$$\frac{1}{RT} \left(\frac{\partial E_{\pm}}{\partial \ln a_{\text{salt}}} \right)_{\sigma^M} = \left(\frac{\partial E_{\pm}}{\partial \mu_{\text{salt}}} \right)_{\sigma^M}$$

Bockris and Reddy, Plenum Press, 1973, Figure 7.57

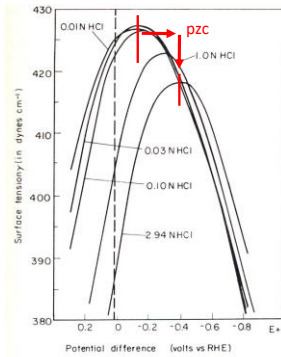
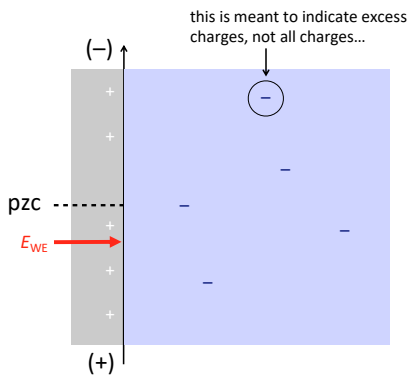


Fig. 7.57. Electrocapillary curves from solutions of different electrolyte (HCl) concentration. The symbol RHE stands for a reversible hydrogen electrode immersed, not in a standard solution, but in the same electrolyte as the electrode under study.

801

... why a negative shift with anion adsorption?

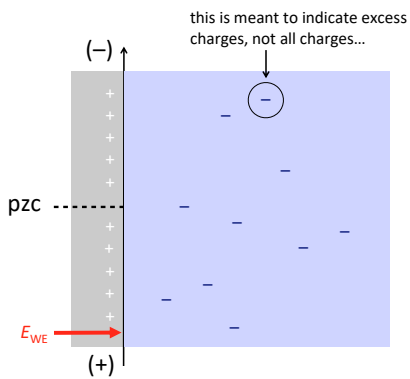
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... why a negative shift with anion adsorption?

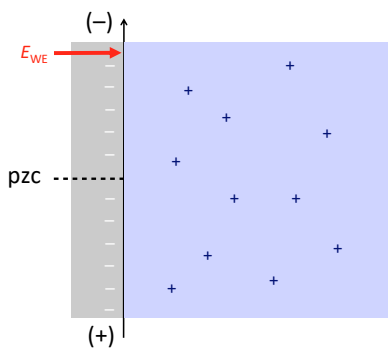
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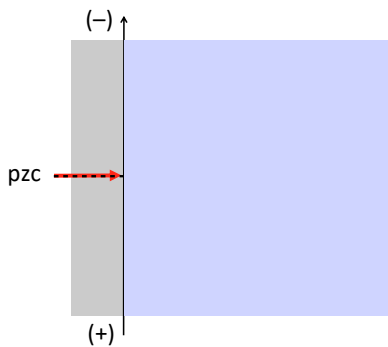
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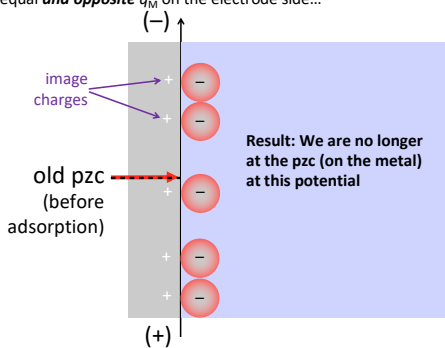
... at the pzc, $q_M = 0$ and there is no excess positive or negative charge in the solution...

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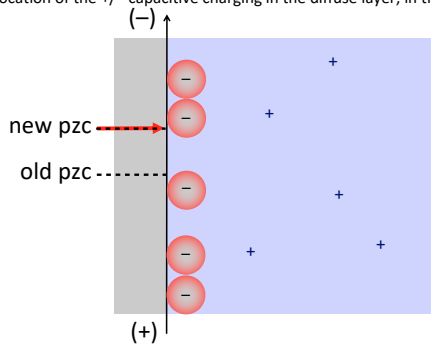
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... now, an adsorbing anion is added and thus fixed negative charge is added to the solution side of the interface... this new q_s is matched by an equal **and opposite** q_M on the electrode side... 806



806

... a new pzc exists, which is the potential required to neutralize charges in the metal, but due to charges on both sides of the interface... notice the location of the +/- capacitive charging in the diffuse layer, in this case 807



807

... but to really reveal specific adsorption, one must look carefully at the concentration (activity) dependence of the pzc. If there is one, then specific adsorption is occurring...

The sign of the shift in pzc is the sign of the ion that is adsorbing...

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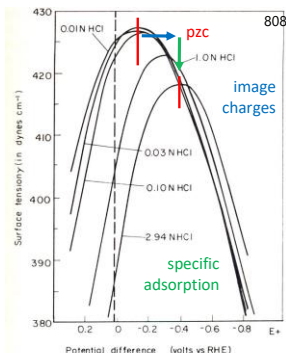


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Bockris and Reddy, Plenum Press, 1973, Figure 7.57



808

... a new pzc exists, which is the potential required to neutralize charge, due to charges on both sides of the interface... specific adsorption! (SKIPPED)

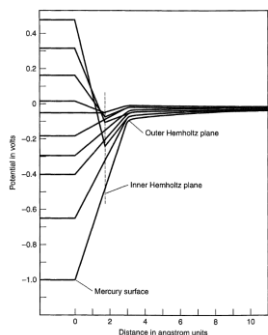


Figure 13.3.8 Calculated potential profiles in the double layer for mercury in contact with aqueous 0.3 M NaCl at 25°C. Potentials given with respect to the PZC in NaF. At positive electrode potentials the profile has a sharp minimum because chloride is specifically adsorbed. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.3.8



809

... what about uncharged adsorbates, like organic molecules? (SKIPPED) 810

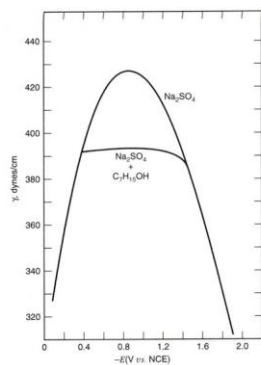


Figure 13.9.1 Electrocapillary curves for mercury in contact with 0.5 M Na₂SO₄ in the presence and absence of n-heptanol. Data from G. Gouy, *Ann. Chim. Phys.*, **8**, 291 (1906). [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

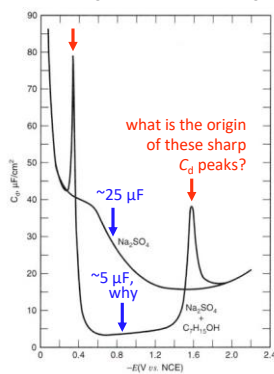
Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.9.1



810

... what about uncharged adsorbates, like organic molecules?

811



... Gunk that is redox-active... and whose capacitance is called chemical, or quantum, capacitance

... Gunk is blocking ~80% of surface!

Figure 13.9.2 Differential capacitance curves corresponding to the systems of Figure 13.9.1. [Reprinted with permission from D. C. Grahame, *Chem. Rev.*, **41**, 441 (1947). Copyright 1947, American Chemical Society.]

Bard & Faulkner, 2nd Ed., Wiley, 2001, Figure 13.9.2



811

In conclusion, with the Guoy–Chapman–Stern Model we have a semi-quantitative understanding of this interface with some predictive power... 812

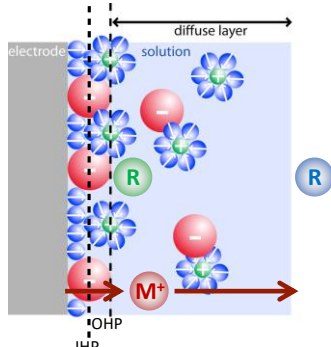
... but don't forget my questions from the start of this series of lectures on the double layer...

... What is the potential difference between the two sides? E_{app}

What is the potential difference between one side and near the middle? $\sim E_{app}/2$

NEW QUESTION: Can anyone explain how a corrosion reaction can be potential dependent when the electron never transfers across the metal|solution interface?

An ion transfers across the double layer... mind = blown, again!



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Q: What was in this set of lectures?

A: B&F Chapter 13 main concepts:

- Section 1.2.3: Double layer structure
- Sections 13.1 & 13.2: Gibbs adsorption isotherm, Electrocapillar(it)y, Surface excess, Lippmann's equation, Point of Zero Charge
- Section 13.3: Models: Helmholtz, Gouy–Chapman (Poisson–Boltzmann), Gouy–Chapman–Stern
- Section 13.5: Specific adsorption

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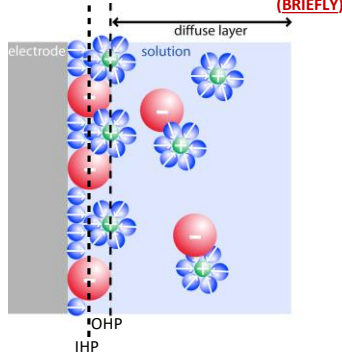
In conclusion, with the Guoy–Chapman–Stern Model we have a semi-quantitative understanding of this interface with some predictive power... 814

Now what about starting with this approximate behavior (an active area of research)...

... plus adding in Faradaic charge-transfer reaction kinetics?!?!?

... Oh yeah!!! ... Now we're talking!

... still don't forget about the location of the reactants and products within/outside of the double layer during Faradaic charge transfer



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