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Semiclassical and weak-magnetic-field eigenvalue asymptotics for the Schrödinger operator with electromagnetic potential

by

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ABSTRACT. – We consider the discrete spectrum of the Schrödinger operator $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu} := (ih\nabla + \mu A)^2 - V$ where A is the magnetic potential, $-V$ is the electric potential, h is the Planck constant, and μ is the magnetic-field coupling constant. We study the asymptotic behaviour of the number of the eigenvalues of $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ smaller than $\lambda \leq 0$ as $h \downarrow 0$, $\mu > 0$ being fixed, or $\mu \downarrow 0$, $h > 0$ being fixed.

RÉSUMÉ. – On considère le spectre discret de l'opérateur de Schrödinger $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu} := (ih\nabla + \mu A)^2 - V$ où A est le potentiel magnétique, $-V$ est le potentiel électrique, h est la constante de Planck, et μ est la constante du couplage du champ magnétique. On étudie le comportement asymptotique du nombre des valeurs propres de $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ plus petites que $\lambda \leq 0$ pour $h \downarrow 0$, $\mu > 0$ étant fixée, ou pour $\mu \downarrow 0$, $h > 0$ étant fixée.

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0. INTRODUCTION

For $u \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$, $m \geq 2$, introduce the real-valued quadratic form

$$\mathfrak{h}_{h,\mu}[u] := \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (|ih \nabla u + \mu A u|^2 - V|u|^2) dx$$

where $A : \mathbb{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ is the magnetic potential, $-V : \mathbb{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is the electric potential, $h > 0$ is the Planck constant, and $\mu \geq 0$ is the magnetic-field coupling constant. We assume $A \in L_{\text{loc}}^2(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$. Moreover, we suppose that the multiplier by $V_+ := \max\{V, 0\}$ is $-\Delta$ -form-bounded with zero relative form bound, and $V_- := V_+ - V \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(\mathbb{R}^m)$. In the formulation of our main results we shall impose more restrictive assumptions on A and V which will guarantee, in particular, the validity of these general conditions.

It is well-known that under these hypotheses the quadratic form $\mathfrak{h}_{h,\mu}$ is lower-bounded and closable in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^m)$ (see e.g. [Av.Her.Sim 1], Theorem 2.5). Define the Schrödinger operator $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ as the unique selfadjoint operator generated by the closed quadratic form $\mathfrak{h}_{h,\mu}$.

In the present paper we study the asymptotic behaviour of the discrete spectrum of $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ as $h \downarrow 0$, μ being fixed or as $\mu \downarrow 0$, h being fixed.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 1 we introduce the basic notations used throughout the paper. Section 2 contains semiclassical eigenvalue asymptotics for the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$, i.e. the asymptotics of the discrete spectrum of $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ as $h \downarrow 0$, the number $\mu > 0$ being fixed. First, we consider the case of quite arbitrary magnetic potentials A and electric potentials V which decay rapidly at infinity in a certain sense. Next, we study the case of magnetic potentials A associated with magnetic fields

$$\left. \begin{aligned} B &\equiv \text{curl } A := \{B_{jk}\}_{j,k=1}^m, \\ B_{jk} &:= \partial A_k / \partial x_j - \partial A_j / \partial x_k, \\ j, k &= 1, \dots, m, \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (0.1)$$

which are constant with respect to $x \in \mathbb{R}^m$, and electric potentials which decay slowly at infinity [i.e. $V(x)$ behaves like $|x|^{-\alpha}$, $\alpha \in (0, 2]$, as $|x| \rightarrow \infty$]. For approximately the same two classes of potentials (A, V) , in section 3 we investigate the weak-magnetic-field eigenvalue asymptotics, i.e. the asymptotics of the eigenvalues of $\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu}$ as $\mu \downarrow 0$, the number $h > 0$ being fixed.

Related problems (which however differ essentially from the ones considered here) have been treated in [Ale], [Av.Her.Sim. 1], Section 6, [Com.Sch.Sei], [Av.Her.Sim 2], Section 7, [Hel.Sjö 1, 2] and [Ivr 1-4].

The results of the paper are obtained by means of a variational technique of Weyl-Courant type (see [Bir.Sol 2] or [Ree.Sim], Ch. XIII). In particular,

we use essentially some spectral estimates due to E. Lieb and Y. Colin de Verdière. In section 3 we also apply the approach of M. Kac, W. L. Murdock and G. Szegő to the study of the semiclassical eigenvalue asymptotics of compact pseudodifferential operators (*see* [Gre.Sze], Section 7.1). Here the Feynman-Kac-Itô formula for the resolvent of the magnetic Schrödinger operator also plays an important rôle.

A weaker version of the present results has been announced in the author's short communication [Rai 4]. Here the minor errors made there have been corrected, and the unnecessary assumptions have been cancelled.

1. NOTATIONS AND PRELIMINARIES

1.1. Let T be a selfadjoint operator in a Hilbert space. Then $\sigma(T)$ is the spectrum of T , and $\sigma_{\text{ess}}(T)$ is its essential spectrum. Moreover, if $(\lambda, \mu) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$, then $P_{(\lambda, \mu)}(T)$ denotes the spectral projection of T corresponding to the open interval (λ, μ) . Put

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{N}(\lambda, \mu|T) &= \text{rank } \mathcal{P}_{(\lambda, \mu)}(T), \\ \mathcal{N}(\lambda; T) &= \mathcal{N}(-\infty, \lambda|T), \quad \lambda \in \mathbb{R}, \\ n(\lambda; T) &= \mathcal{N}(\lambda, \infty|T), \quad \lambda > 0.\end{aligned}$$

1.2. Let $\Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m$, $m \geq 2$, be an open set. By $W_p^q(\Omega)$, $q \in [1, \infty]$, $p \in \mathbb{N}_+ := \{1, 2, \dots\}$, we denote the standard Sobolev spaces, and by $\bar{W}_p^q(\Omega)$ —the closure of $C_0^\infty(\Omega)$ in the $W_p^q(\Omega)$ -norm. Denote by $-\Delta_\Omega^D$ the operator generated in $L^2(\Omega)$ by the closure of the quadratic form $\int_\Omega |\nabla u|^2 dx$, $u \in C_0^\infty(\Omega)$. Suppose that the multiplier by the function $\mathcal{V}_+ := \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ is $-\Delta_\Omega^D$ -norm-bounded with zero relative form bound, and the function $\mathcal{V}_- := \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ is in $L_{\text{loc}}^1(\Omega)$. Set $\mathcal{V} := \mathcal{V}_+ - \mathcal{V}_-$. Let $\mathcal{A} \in L_{\text{loc}}^2(\Omega)^m$. Introduce the quadratic form

$$\int_\Omega (|i \nabla u + \mathcal{A} u|^2 - \mathcal{V} |u|^2) dx, \quad u \in C_0^\infty(\Omega). \quad (1.1)$$

Denote by $H_\Omega^D(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})$ the operator generated in $L^2(\Omega)$ by its closure. If $\Omega = \mathbb{R}^m$, we write $H(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})$ instead of $H_{\mathbb{R}^m}^D(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})$. In particular, we have $\mathfrak{H}_{h, \mu} = h^2 H(h^{-1} \mu A, h^{-2} V)$.

Now, assume that $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^m$, $m \geq 2$, is a bounded domain with Lipschitz boundary. Let $\mathcal{A} \in L^p(\Omega; \mathbb{R}^m)^m$, where $p = m$ if $m \geq 3$, $p > 2$ if $m = 2$,

and $\mathcal{V} \in L^q(\Omega; \mathbb{R})$, where $q = m/2$ if $m \geq 3$, $q > 1$ if $m = 2$. On $C^\infty(\Omega)$ introduce a quadratic form analogous to (1.1), and denote by $H_\Omega^N(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})$ the operator generated in $L^2(\Omega)$ by its closure.

1.3. Let $\mathcal{L}$ be a finite or a countable set. We shall say that the family $\{\varphi_l\}_{l \in \mathcal{L}}$ is a partition of unity over $\mathbb{R}^m$ if and only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- (i) $\varphi_l \in C^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$, $\forall l \in \mathcal{L}$;
- (ii) $0 \leq \varphi_l(x) \leq 1$, $\forall l \in \mathcal{L}$, $\forall x \in \mathbb{R}^m$;
- (iii) $\sum_{l \in \mathcal{L}} \varphi_l^2(x) = 1$, $\forall x \in \mathbb{R}^m$;
- (iv) for any given compact subset $K \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m$ the intersection $K \cap \text{supp } \varphi_l$ may be nonempty just for a finite set of indices $l \in \mathcal{L}$;
- (v) we have $\sup_{x \in \mathbb{R}^m} \sum_{l \in \mathcal{L}} |\nabla \varphi_l(x)|^2 < \infty$.

LEMMA 1.1. – *Let the family $\{\varphi_l\}_{l \in \mathcal{L}}$ be a partition of unity over $\mathbb{R}^m$ such that $\text{supp } \varphi_l$ is contained in the open set Ω_l . Suppose that $\mathcal{A} \in L_{\text{loc}}^2(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$, $\mathcal{V}_- \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(\mathbb{R}^m)$ and $\mathcal{V}_+$ is $-\Delta$ -form-bounded with zero relative form bound. Then we have*

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})) \leq \sum_{l \in \mathcal{L}} \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_l}^D(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V} + \sum_{s \in \mathcal{L}} |\nabla \varphi_s|^2)). \quad (1.2)$$

Proof. – Write the “magnetic” version of the so-called IMS localization formula

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{l \in \mathcal{L}} \{ (H(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V}) \varphi_l u, \varphi_l u) - \sum_{s \in \mathcal{L}} (|\nabla \varphi_s|^2 \varphi_l u, \varphi_l u) \} \\ & = (H(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V}) u, u), \quad \forall u \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m), \end{aligned}$$

(see [Cy.Fr.Ki.Sim], Section 3.1), which combined with the minimax principle entails (1.2). $\square$

2. SEMICLASSICAL EIGENVALUE ASYMPTOTICS

In this section we discuss the behaviour of the quantity $\mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1})$ as $h \downarrow 0$, the number $\lambda \leq 0$ being fixed.

2.1. In the present subsection we deal with quite arbitrary magnetic potentials A and electric potentials V which decay rapidly at infinity.

THEOREM 2.1. — *Let $m \geq 3$. Suppose that $A \in L^m_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$, $V_- \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^m)$. Fix $\lambda \leq 0$ and assume that $(V + \lambda)_+ \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m)$. Moreover, suppose that there exists an open set $\Omega_\lambda \subseteq \mathbb{R}^m$ such that $V(X) + \lambda > 0$ if $x \in \Omega_\lambda$, and $V(x) + \lambda \leq 0$ if $x \notin \Omega_\lambda$. Then we have*

$$\lim_{h \downarrow 0} h^m \mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (V + \lambda)_+^{m/2} dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + m/2). \quad (2.1)$$

The hypotheses of Theorem 2.1 imply, in particular, that the multiplier by V_+ is $-\Delta$ -form-bounded with zero relative form bound. As a matter of fact, we have

$$V(x)_+ = (V(x) + \lambda)_+ - V(x) \chi_1(x; \lambda) - \lambda \chi_2(x; \lambda)$$

where $\chi_1(x; \lambda)$ is the characteristic function of the set $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : -\lambda \leq V(x) < 0\}$, and $\chi_2(x; \lambda)$ is the characteristic function of the set $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : V(x) > -\lambda\}$. The functions $V(x) \chi_1(x; \lambda)$ and $\chi_2(x; \lambda)$ are bounded, and the multiplier by $(V + \lambda)_+ \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m)$ is $-\Delta$ -form-compact, so all the three terms in the representation of $V(x)_+$ are $-\Delta$ -form-bounded with zero relative form bound.

If $m = 2$, Theorem 2.1 is valid again but under more complicated assumptions. For example, (2.1) holds if $A \in L^p_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^2)^2$, $p > 2$, $V_- \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^2)$, $(V + \lambda)_+ \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^2)$, $q > 1$, and there exists a *bounded* open set $\Omega_\lambda \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ such that $V(x) + \lambda > 0$ if $x \in \Omega_\lambda$ and $V(x) + \lambda \leq 0$ if $x \notin \Omega_\lambda$.

We should mention the formal similarity of Theorem 2.1 with the results of [Ale], Theorem 1.1, [Com.Sch.Seil], Corollary 3.2, [Ivr 1], Theorem 3, [Ivr 2], Theorem 6 (i), and some of the results in [Ivr 4], Chapters 6, 10 and 11. However, in [Ale] only potentials $A \in L^m(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$ are considered, while we assume just the validity of the *local* condition $A \in L^m_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$, and do not impose *any* restrictions on the behaviour of A at infinity. Further, the authors of [Com.Sch.Seil] investigate the semiclassical eigenvalue asymptotics for magnetic Schrödinger operators with compact resolvent, while the assumptions of Theorem 2.1 entail the discreteness of the spectrum of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{h,1}$ only below the point $-\lambda \leq 0$. Finally, more precise versions of the asymptotic formula (2.1) can be found in [Ivr 1, 2, 4]; namely, these works contain a sharp estimate of the remainder, and, in some cases, even the second asymptotic term of $\mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1})$. However, the potentials (A, V) in [Ivr 1, 2, 4] are supposed to satisfy quite numerous conditions, by far more restrictive than our assumptions which are close to the minimal ones guaranteeing the finiteness of the right-hand-side of (2.1) and the self-adjointness of $\mathfrak{H}_{h,1}$ for all $h > 0$.

The proof of Theorem 2.1 essentially depends on the following auxiliary result.

LEMMA 2.2. — Let $m \geq 3$, $\mathcal{A} \in L^2_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$, $\mathcal{V}_- \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^m)$ and $\mathcal{V}_+ \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m)$. Then we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(\mathcal{A}, \mathcal{V})) \leq c \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \mathcal{V}(x)_+^{m/2} dx \quad (2.2)$$

where the constant c depends only on the dimension m .

The proof of the relation (2.2) which extends the famous Cwikel-Lieb-Rozenbljum estimate to the case $\mathcal{A} \neq 0$, can be found in [Av.Her.Sim 1], Theorem 2.15, and [Sim], Chapter V.

Proof of Theorem 2.1. — Our argument is similar to the one utilized in the proof of Theorem 1.1 in [Rai 3]. The asymptotics (2.1) will follow from the estimates

$$\begin{aligned} & \limsup_{h \downarrow 0} \pm h^m \mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) \\ & \leq \pm \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (V + \lambda)_+^{m/2} dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + m/2). \end{aligned} \quad (2.3)_{\pm}$$

First, we verify (2.3)₊. Obviously, we have

$$\mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) \leq \mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, h^{-2}(V + \lambda)_+)). \quad (2.4)$$

Fix an arbitrary $\varepsilon > 0$ and write $(V + \lambda)_+ = V_1 + V_2$ where $V_1 \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$ and V_2 satisfies the estimate

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^m} |V_2|^{m/2} dx < \varepsilon. \quad (2.5)$$

The minimax principle yields

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, h^{-2}(V + \lambda)_+)) \\ & \leq \mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, (1 - \tau)^{-1}h^{-2}V_1)) \\ & \quad + \mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, \tau^{-1}h^{-2}V_2)), \quad \forall \tau \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \quad (2.6)$$

The estimate (2.2) combined with (2.5) implies

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, \tau^{-1}h^{-2}V_2)) \leq c \tau^{-m/2} h^{-m} \varepsilon. \quad (2.7)$$

Let $\mathfrak{B}$ be an open ball in $\mathbb{R}^m$ such that $\text{supp } V_1 \subset \mathfrak{B}$. By the minimax principle we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(0; H(h^{-1}A, (1-\tau)^{-1}h^{-2}V_1)) \\ \leq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\mathfrak{B}}^N(h^{-1}A, (1-\tau)^{-1}h^{-2}V_1)), \quad \forall \tau \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \quad (2.8)$$

Employing the general variational methods developed in [Bir.Sol 2] and [Ale], we get the Weyl-type asymptotics

$$\left. \begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\mathfrak{B}}^N(h^{-1}A, (1-\tau)^{-1}h^{-2}V_1)) \\ = (2\pi)^{-m} \text{vol} \{(x, \xi) \in T^*\mathfrak{B} : |h\xi - A(x)|^2 \\ - (1-\tau)^{-1}V_1(x) < 0\} (1 + o(1)), \\ h \downarrow 0, \quad \forall \tau \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (2.9)$$

Obviously, we have

$$\begin{aligned} (2\pi)^{-m} \text{vol} \{(x, \xi) \in T^*\mathfrak{B} : |h\xi - A(x)|^2 - (1-\tau)^{-1}V_1(x) < 0\} \\ = h^{-m} (1-\tau)^{-m/2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (V_1)_+^{m/2} dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1+m/2). \end{aligned} \quad (2.10)$$

Combining (2.4) with (2.6)-(2.10), we obtain the estimate

$$\begin{aligned} \limsup_{h \downarrow 0} h^m \mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) &\leq (1-\tau)^{-m/2} \\ &\times \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (V_1)_+^{m/2} dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1+m/2) + c\tau^{-m/2}\varepsilon, \\ &\forall \tau \in (0, 1), \quad \forall \varepsilon > 0. \end{aligned} \quad (2.11)$$

Letting consecutively $\varepsilon \downarrow 0$ and $\tau \downarrow 0$, we come to (2.3)₊.

Finally, we just outline the demonstration of (2.3)₋. Fix $\varepsilon > 0$ and write again $(V + \lambda)_+ = V_1 + V_2$, where V_1 and V_2 have the same meaning as above. In this case, however, we assume without any loss of generality $\text{supp } V_1 \subset \Omega_\lambda$, where Ω_λ is the set described in the hypotheses of Theorem 2.1. The minimax principle entails the inequalities

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) &\geq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_\lambda}^D(h^{-1}A, h^{-2}(V + \lambda)_+)) \\ &\geq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_\lambda}^D(h^{-1}A, (1+\tau)^{-1}h^{-2}V_1)) \\ &\quad - \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_\lambda}^D(h^{-1}A, -\tau^{-1}h^{-2}V_2)), \quad \forall \tau > 0. \end{aligned} \quad (2.12)$$

Further the derivation of (2.3)₋ from (2.12) is quite similar to the derivation of (2.3)₊ from (2.4) and (2.6). $\square$

2.2. In the subsection we deal with constant magnetic fields B and electric potentials V which decay slowly at infinity.

Suppose that we have

$$B_{jk} = \text{const.}, \quad \forall j, k = 1, \dots, m, \quad B \neq 0, \quad (2.13)$$

where the magnetic-field B is defined in (0.1). Whenever (2.13) holds, we assume without any loss of generality that the potential A has components $A_j = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{l=1}^m B_{lj} x_l$, $j = 1, \dots, m$; in particular, $\text{div } A = 0$. Moreover, the spectrum of the skew-symmetric matrix B is a subset of the imaginary axis which is symmetric with respect to the origin. Let $b_1 \geq \dots \geq b_d > 0$ be such numbers that the nonzero eigenvalues of B coincide together with the multiplicities with the imaginary numbers $-ib_j$ and ib_j , $j = 1, \dots, d$. Thus we have $2d = \text{rank } B$ and $0 < 2d \leq m$. Set $k := m - 2d \equiv \dim \text{Ker } B$.

Further, we shall say that V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$, $\alpha > 0$, if and only if $V \in C^1(\mathbb{R}^m)$ and the estimates

$$\begin{aligned} C^{-1} \langle x \rangle^{-\alpha} &\leq V(x) \leq C \langle x \rangle^{-\alpha}, \\ |\nabla V(x)| &\leq C \langle x \rangle^{-\alpha-1}, \quad \langle x \rangle := (1 + |x|^2)^{1/2}, \end{aligned}$$

hold for each $x \in \mathbb{R}^m$ and some constant $C \geq 1$.

Assume that (2.13) is valid and V satisfies $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$ with any $\alpha > 0$. Then the lower bound of $\sigma_{\text{ess}}(\mathfrak{H}_{h,\mu})$ coincides with $h\mu\Lambda$ where

$$\Lambda := \sum_{j=1}^d b_j$$

(see [Rai 2]). For $t \in \mathbb{R}$ and $k \in \mathbb{Z}$, $k > 0$, set $\theta_k(t) = t_+^{k/2}$; respectively, $\theta_0(t) = 1$, if $t > 1$, and $\theta_0(t) = 0$, if $t \leq 0$. Further, for $t \in \mathbb{R}$ introduce the quantity

$$\Theta(t) \equiv \Theta(t; B) := C_m(\mathbf{b}) \sum_{\mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d} \theta_k(t - 2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b} - \Lambda)$$

where

$$\mathbb{N} := \{0, 1, 2, \dots\}, \quad \mathbf{b} := (b_1, \dots, b_d)$$

and

$$C_m(\mathbf{b}) = b_1 \dots b_d / 2^{d+k} \pi^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + k/2).$$

Assume that V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$, $\alpha > 0$. For $s > 0$ set

$$\psi(s) := \text{vol} \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : V(x) > s\}.$$

We shall say that the potential V satisfies condition $\mathcal{T}$ if and only if we have

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{s \downarrow 0} \psi((1-\delta)s)/\psi(s) = 1. \quad (2.14)$$

The condition $\mathcal{T}$ is valid if the estimate

$$-(x \cdot \nabla V(x)) \geq c \langle x \rangle^{-\alpha}, \quad c > 0,$$

holds for sufficiently large $|x|$. As a matter in this case the function $\psi(s)$ is differentiable for $s \in (0, s_0]$ and $s_0 > 0$ small enough, and we have

$$-s \psi'(s) \leq c \psi(s)$$

which immediately entails (2.14) (see [Dau.Rob]). Another sufficient condition which guarantees the validity of (2.14) is the asymptotic relation

$$V(x) = v(\hat{x}) |x|^{-\alpha} (1 + o(1)), \quad \hat{x} := x/|x|, \quad |x| \rightarrow \infty, \quad (2.15)$$

where $v \in C(\mathbb{S}^{m-1})$ is a strictly positive function. In this case we have

$$\psi(s) = \frac{s^{-m/\alpha}}{m} \int_{\mathbb{S}^{m-1}} v(\omega)^{m/\alpha} dS(\omega) (1 + o(1)), \quad s \downarrow 0.$$

Let V satisfy $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$, $\alpha \in (0, 2]$. Assume that (2.13) holds, and for $g > 0$ put

$$\nu_0(g) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \Theta(gV(x); B) dx.$$

Obviously, the estimates

$$\nu_0(g) \underset{\cap}{\cup} g^{m/\alpha}, \quad \alpha \in (0, 2), \quad (2.16)$$

$$\nu_0(g) \underset{\cap}{\cup} g^{m/2} \log g, \quad \alpha = 2, \quad (2.17)$$

hold as $g \rightarrow \infty$. Moreover, if V obeys the asymptotics (2.15) we have

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{g \rightarrow \infty} g^{-m/\alpha} \nu_0(g) &= C_m(\mathbf{b}) \frac{\Gamma(m/\alpha - k/2)}{\alpha \Gamma(1 + m/\alpha)} \Gamma(1 + k/2) \\ \sum_{\mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d} (\Lambda + 2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b})^{k/2 - m/\alpha} \int_{\mathbb{S}^{m-1}} v(\omega)^{m/\alpha} dS(\omega), \quad \alpha \in (0, 2), \\ \lim_{g \rightarrow \infty} g^{-m/2} (\log g)^{-1} \nu_0(g) \\ &= \int_{\mathbb{S}^{m-1}} v(\omega)^{m/2} dS(\omega) / 2(4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + m/2), \quad \alpha = 2. \end{aligned}$$

LEMMA 2.3. – Assume that (2.13) holds and V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$ with $\alpha \in (0, 2]$. If $k = 0$ and $\alpha \in (0, 2)$, assume in addition that V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{T}$. Then we have

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{g \rightarrow \infty} \nu_0((1 + \delta)g) / \nu_0(g) = 1. \quad (2.18)$$

The proof of the lemma can be found in the Appendix.

THEOREM 2.4. – Assume that the hypotheses of Lemma 2.3 hold. Set $\nu_1(h) := h^{-m/2} \nu_0(h^{-1})$. Then we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) = \nu_1(h) (1 + o(1)), \quad h \downarrow 0. \quad (2.19)$$

Note that if V satisfies $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$ with $\alpha > 2$, then $V \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m)$ so that in this case Theorem 2.1 is valid (provided $m \geq 3$).

Remark 2.5. – Assume that the potential U satisfies the condition $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$ with $\alpha \in (0, 2]$; if $k = 0$ and $\alpha \neq 2$, assume in addition that U satisfies $\mathcal{T}$. If $m \geq 3$, suppose $W \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m; \mathbb{R})$; if $m = 2$ suppose that the support of W is compact and, moreover, $W \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^2; \mathbb{R})$ for some $q > 1$. Then the asymptotics (2.19) is valid for $V = U + W$. Note that in this case the main asymptotic term of $\nu_1(h)$ as $h \downarrow 0$ depends only on U but not on W .

Similarly to the case of Theorem 2.1, the results of [Ivr 2], Theorem 6 (ii)-(iii), and some of the results of [Ivr 4], Chapters 10 and 11, contain more precise versions of (2.19) but the assumptions about V are more restrictive than ours.

In the demonstration of the asymptotics (2.19) we shall use systematically the following important technical result due to Y. Colin de Verdière (see [CdV], Theorem 3.1).

LEMMA 2.6. – Let $Q_R \subset \mathbb{R}^m$, $m \geq 2$, be any cube whose side length equals R . Assume that $B = \text{curl } A$ satisfies (2.13). Then for each $\mu \in \mathbb{R}$, $R > 0$ and any $R_0 \in (0, R/2)$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(\mu; H_{Q_R}^D(A, 0)) &\leq R^m \Theta(\mu; B), \\ \mathcal{N}(\mu; H_{Q_R}^D(A, 0)) &\geq (R - R_0)^m \Theta(\mu - C_0 R_0^{-2}; B), \end{aligned}$$

where the constant C_0 depends only on the dimension m .

Proof of Theorem 2.4. – Set $V_h(x) := h^{-1} V(h^{1/2}x)$ and change the variables $x \rightarrow h^{1/2}x$ in order to verify the identity

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) = \mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_h)). \quad (2.20)$$

Further, for a fixed sufficiently small $\delta > 0$ introduce a disjoint covering of $\mathbb{R}^m$ by open cubes $Q_l \equiv Q_l(r_l; x_l)$, $l \geq 1$, with centres at the points x_l and side lengths r_l satisfying

$$C^{-1} \delta (1 + |x_l|) \leq r_l \leq C \delta (1 + |x_l|)$$

where the constant $C > 1$ is independent of l and δ . The existence of such a covering can be verified if we modify in a straightforward manner the argument in the proof of Lemma 4 in [Roz]. Introduce a partition of unity $\{\chi_l\}_{l=1}^\infty$ such that the function χ_l is supported on $\tilde{Q}_{l,\delta} := Q_l((1+\delta)r_l; x_l)$ and the estimates

$$|D^\gamma \chi_l| \leq c_\gamma (\delta r_l)^{-|\gamma|} \quad (2.21)$$

hold for each multiindex γ and some constants c_γ which are independent of r_l and δ . The quantity $\#\{j : \text{supp } \chi_j \cap \text{supp } \chi_l \neq \emptyset\}$ is uniformly bounded with respect to l and δ . Moreover, the ratios $(1 + |x_l|)/(1 + |x_j|)$ are uniformly positive and bounded with respect to the pairs (l, j) for which $\text{supp } \chi_l \cap \text{supp } \chi_j \neq \emptyset$. Applying Lemma 1.1 and the estimates (2.21) with $|\gamma| = 1$, we get

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_h)) \leq \sum_{l=1}^\infty \mathcal{N}(C_1 \delta^{-2} r_l^{-2}; H_{\tilde{Q}_{l,\delta}}^D(A, V_h)) \quad (2.22)$$

where the constant C_1 is independent of l and δ . Put

$$V_{h,l}^+ = \sup_{x \in \tilde{Q}_{l,\delta}} V_h(x).$$

Using Lemma 2.6, we obtain the estimate

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{l=1}^\infty \mathcal{N}(C_1 \delta^{-2} r_l^{-2}; H_{\tilde{Q}_{l,\delta}}^D(A, V_h)) \\ & \leq (1 + \delta)^m \text{vol } Q_l \Theta(V_{h,l}^+ + C_1 \delta^{-2} r_l^{-2}; B). \end{aligned} \quad (2.23)$$

The condition $\mathcal{D}_\alpha$ with $\alpha \in (0, 2]$ implies that for a given $\delta > 0$ and sufficiently small $h > 0$, we have $V_{h,l}^+ + C_1 \delta^{-2} r_l^{-2} \leq (1 + \delta) V_h(x)$ for each $x \in Q_l$ and every $l \geq 1$. Therefore, combining (2.22) and (2.23), we get

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_h)) \leq (1 + \delta)^m \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \Theta((1 + \delta) V_h(x); B) dx. \quad (2.24)$$

In view of Lemma 2.3, we have

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{h \downarrow 0} (1 + \delta)^m \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \Theta((1 + \delta) V_h(x); B) dx / \nu_1(h) \leq 1. \quad (2.25)$$

Hence, the estimates (2.20), (2.24) and (2.25) imply

$$\limsup_{h \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) / \nu_1(h) \leq 1. \quad (2.26)$$

Further, by the minimax principle, we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_h)) \geq \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \mathcal{N}(0; H_{Q_l}^D(A, V_h)).$$

Applying Lemma 2.6, and mimicking the derivation of (2.24), we get

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_h)) \geq (1 - \delta)^m \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \Theta((1 - \delta) V_h(x); B) dx$$

which entails

$$\liminf_{h \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{h,1}) / \nu_1(h) \geq 1. \quad (2.27)$$

Putting together (2.26) and (2.27), we come to (2.19). $\square$

The proof of Theorem 2.4 is inspired by the proof of Theorem 1 (i) in [Tam] and is quite similar to the proof of Theorem 2.1 in [Rai 3]. Note that the explicit assumption that V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{T}$, if $k = 0$ and $\alpha \in (0, 2)$, has been omitted in the hypotheses of Theorem 2.1 in [Rai 3] although this assumption is necessary (*see* the Appendix).

3. WEAK-MAGNETIC-FIELD EIGENVALUE ASYMPTOTICS

The results of this section concern the behaviour of the quantity $\mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu})$ as $\mu \downarrow 0$, the number $-\lambda \leq 0$ being fixed.

3.1. In this subsection we deal with electric potentials V which decay rapidly at infinity in a certain sense.

We shall write that $V \in \mathcal{K}_j$, $j = 0, 1$, if and only if for each $\varepsilon > 0$ we can represent V in the form

$$V = V_1 + V_2 \quad (3.1)$$

where $V_1 \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$, and V_2 satisfies the inequality

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^m} |V_2| |u|^2 dx \leq \varepsilon \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} (|\nabla u|^2 + j |u|^2) dx, \quad \forall u \in C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m). \quad (3.2)$$

The class $\mathcal{K}_0$ will be considered only in the case $m \geq 3$.

If $V \in \mathcal{K}_1$, then the negative spectrum of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0} \equiv -\Delta + V$ is purely discrete and, hence, the quantity $\mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1,0})$ is finite for each $-\lambda < 0$. Moreover, if V satisfies $\mathcal{K}_0$, then the negative eigenvalues of $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$ do not accumulate to the origin, i. e. we have $\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,0}) < \infty$ (see [Bir]).

The following proposition which can be proved using the methods of [Bir] and [Bir.Sol 2] contains some *sufficient* conditions which guarantee $V \in \mathcal{K}_j$, $j = 0, 1$.

PROPOSITION 3.1. – (i) Let $q = m/2$ if $m \geq 3$, and $q > 1$ if $m = 2$. Assume $\mathcal{V} \in L_{\text{loc}}^q(\mathbb{R}^m)$ and $\int_{|y-x|<1} |\mathcal{V}(x)|^q dx \rightarrow 0$ as $|y| \rightarrow \infty$. Then we have $\mathcal{V} \in \mathcal{K}_1$.

(ii) Let $m \geq 3$ and $\mathcal{V} \in L^{m/2}(\mathbb{R}^m)$. Then we have $\mathcal{V} \in \mathcal{K}_0$.

THEOREM 3.2. – Let $A \in L_{\text{loc}}^2(\mathbb{R}^m)^m$, $m \geq 2$.

a) Assume $V \in \mathcal{K}_1$. Suppose that the number $-\lambda < 0$ is not an eigenvalue of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$. Then we have

$$\mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1,0}). \quad (3.3)$$

b) Let $m \geq 3$. Assume $V \in \mathcal{K}_0$. Suppose that the zero is not an eigenvalue of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$. Then we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,0}).$$

COROLLARY 3.3. – Assume $V \in \mathcal{K}_1$. Suppose that the negative number $-\lambda$ is an eigenvalue of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$ of multiplicity κ . Then under the hypotheses of Theorem 3.2 a) we have

$$\mathcal{N}(-\lambda - \varepsilon, -\lambda + \varepsilon; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) = \kappa$$

for both $\varepsilon > 0$ and $\mu > 0$ small enough.

Theorem 3.2 and Corollary 3.3 treat the stability of the isolated eigenvalues of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$ with respect to a perturbation by a weak magnetic field. Related results can be found in [Av.Her.Sim 1], Section 6, and [Av.Her.Sim 2], Section 7. The authors of [Av.Her.Sim 1-2], however, consider just the case of constant magnetic fields B , and a class of electric potentials V which is narrower than the one we study in Theorem 3.2.

On the other hand, in [Av.Her.Sim 1-2] the analyticity with respect to small μ is proved, while we just obtain limiting relations of the type of (3.3). Moreover, in [Av.Her.Sim 2], Sect. 7, the many-particle Schrödinger operator is considered.

In the sequel we denote by $\mathfrak{S}_q$, $q \in [1, \infty)$, the spaces of linear compact operators with norm $\|T\|_q := (\text{Tr } |T|^q)^{1/q}$ (see e.g. [Bir.Sol 3], Ch. 11). The proof of Theorem 3.2 relies substantially on the following lemma due to Kac-Murdock-Szegö.

LEMMA 3.4. – *Let T_μ , $\mu \geq 0$, be a family of linear compact operators such that $\|T_\mu\| \leq t_0$, $\forall \mu \geq 0$, and $T_\mu \in \mathfrak{S}_q$, $q \geq 1$. Let the positive numbers t_j , $j = 1, 2$, be not eigenvalues of the operator T_0 . Then the limiting relations*

$$\text{Tr } T_\mu^n \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \text{Tr } T_0^n, \quad \forall n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad n \geq q,$$

imply

$$\mathcal{N}(t_1, t_2 | T_\mu) \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(t_1, t_2 | T_0).$$

The simple proof of the lemma employs the ideas used in [Gre.Sze], Section 7.1.

Proof of Theorem 3.2. – For definiteness we prove the first assertion of the theorem. We assume $\text{div } A = 0$ in the distribution sense since we can always achieve this property by means of a gauge transform (see [Lei], Lemma 1.1 and Theorem 1.2).

Let the multiplier by the real function $W : \mathbb{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be $-\Delta$ -form-compact. Define the “magnetic” Birman-Schwinger operator

$$T_{\mu, \lambda}(W) := (H(\mu A, 0) + \lambda)^{-1/2} W (H(\mu A, 0) + \lambda)^{-1/2}, \\ \mu \geq 0, \quad \lambda > 0.$$

Note that $-\lambda \notin \sigma(\mathfrak{H}_{1,0})$ implies $1 \notin \sigma(T_{0, \lambda}(V))$. Fix $\delta \in (0, 1/2)$ in such a way that the inequality

$$2\delta < \text{dist}\{1, \sigma(T_{0, \lambda}(V))\} \quad (3.4)$$

holds, set $\varepsilon = \delta \min\{1, \lambda\}$, and write V in the form (3.1). Then, in view of the diamagnetic inequality (see [Av.Her.Sim 1], Theorem 2.3), we get

$$\|T_{\mu, \lambda}(V_1)\| \leq t_0 := \| |V_1|^{1/2} (-\Delta + \lambda)^{-1/2} \|^2, \quad \forall \mu \geq 0. \quad (3.5)$$

Further, the estimate (3.2), the diamagnetic inequality, and the relation between ε and δ entail

$$\|T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_2)\| \leq \delta, \quad \forall \mu \geq 0. \quad (3.6)$$

Hence, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \pm \mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) &= \pm n(1; T_{\mu,\lambda}(V)) \\ &\leq \pm n(1 \mp \delta; T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)) = \pm \mathcal{N}(1 \mp \delta, \tau |T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)) \end{aligned} \quad (3.7)_{\pm}$$

where the number τ is strictly greater than t_0 (and $1 + \delta$).

Since the support of V_1 is compact, we have $T_{0,\lambda}(|V_1|) \in \mathfrak{S}_{2p}$ provided that $p \in \mathbb{N}$, $p > m/4$. Hence, we have $T_{\mu,\lambda}(|V_1|) \in \mathfrak{S}_{2p}$ for each $\mu \geq 0$ and each $p \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $p > m/4$ (see [Av.Her.Sim 1], p. 850). By virtue of the minimax principle, the same is valid for the operator $T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)$, $\mu \geq 0$. The inequality (3.4) [resp. (3.5)] entails $1 \mp \delta \notin \sigma(T_{0,\lambda}(V_1))$ (resp. $\tau \notin \sigma(T_{0,\lambda}(V_1))$). Therefore, Lemma 3.4 implies that it suffices to verify the limiting relations

$$\mathrm{Tr} T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)^n \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathrm{Tr} T_{0,\lambda}(V_1)^n, \quad \forall n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad n \geq 2p, \quad (3.8)$$

in order to conclude that

$$\mathcal{N}(1 \mp \delta, \tau |T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)) \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathcal{N}(1 \mp \delta, \tau |T_{0,\lambda}(V_1)). \quad (3.9)_{\pm}$$

If $S, T \in \mathfrak{S}_2$ are integral operators acting in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^m)$ with kernels $s(x, y)$ and $t(x, y)$, then $ST \in \mathfrak{S}_1$ and we have

$$\mathrm{Tr} ST = \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} s(x, y) t(y, x) dx dy,$$

the integral at the right-hand side being absolutely convergent (see e.g. [Bir.Sol 1], § 8). Since we have $T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)^p \in \mathfrak{S}_2$, $p > m/4$, $T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)^{n-p} \in \mathfrak{S}_2$, $n \geq 2p$, it is not difficult to verify the validity of the formula

$$\begin{aligned} &\mathrm{Tr} T_{\mu,\lambda}(V_1)^n \\ &= \int_{\mathbb{R}^{nm}} V_1(x_1) \mathcal{R}(x_1, x_2; \lambda, \mu A) V_1(x_2) \\ &\quad \dots V_1(x_n) \mathcal{R}(x_n, x_1; \lambda, \mu A) dx_1 dx_2 \dots dx_n, \quad n \geq 2p, \end{aligned} \quad (3.10)$$

where $\mathcal{R}(x, y; \lambda, \mu A)$ is the distribution kernel of the operator $(H(\mu A, 0) + \lambda)^{-1}$, $\lambda > 0$. Since $\operatorname{div} A = 0$, we can write the Feynman-Kac-Itô formula in the form

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{R}(x, y; \lambda, \mu A) &= \int_0^\infty dt e^{-\lambda t} \int dE_{0, x; t, y}(\omega(s)) \\ &\quad \times \exp \left\{ i \mu \int_0^t A(\omega(s)) \cdot d\omega \right\}, \quad \lambda > 0, \end{aligned}$$

where $\omega(s)$ are the Wiener paths, and $dE_{0, x; t, y}(\omega(s))$ is the conditional Wiener measure (see [Sim], Section 15). Hence, in particular we have

$$|\mathcal{R}(x, y; \lambda, \mu A)| \leq \mathcal{R}(x, y; \lambda, 0), \quad \forall \mu \geq 0,$$

for almost every $(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^{2m}$. Thus we obtain

$$|\operatorname{Tr} T_{\mu, \lambda}(V_1)^n| \leq \operatorname{Tr} T_{0, \lambda}(|V_1|)^n \equiv \|T_{0, \lambda}(|V_1|)\|_n^n < \infty,$$

$$n \in \mathbb{N}, \quad n \geq 2p.$$

Moreover we have

$$\mathcal{R}_1(x, y; \lambda, \mu A) \xrightarrow{\mu \downarrow 0} \mathcal{R}_1(x, y; \lambda, 0)$$

for almost every $(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^{2m}$. Consequently, we find that the integrand in (3.10) tends as $\mu \downarrow 0$ to its value at $\mu = 0$ for almost every $(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \mathbb{R}^{nm}$. Bearing in mind the formula (3.10), and applying the dominated convergence theorem we come to (3.8), and whence to (3.9) $_{\pm}$. The estimates (3.4)-(3.6) and the Birman-Schwinger principle entail

$$\begin{aligned} \pm \mathcal{N}(1 \mp \delta, \tau | T_{0, \lambda}(V_1)) &= \pm n(1 \mp \delta; T_{0, \lambda}(V_1)) \\ &\leq \pm n(1 \mp 2\delta; T_{0, \lambda}(V)) \\ &= \pm n(1; T_{0, \lambda}(V)) \\ &= \pm \mathcal{N}(-\lambda; \mathfrak{H}_{1, 0}). \end{aligned} \tag{3.11}_{\pm}$$

Putting together (3.7) $_{\pm}$, (3.8) and (3.11) $_{\pm}$, we come to (3.3). $\square$

3.2. In this subsection we consider constant magnetic fields and electric potentials which decay slowly at infinity.

THEOREM 3.5. – Suppose that (2.13) holds and V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{D}_{\alpha}$ with $\alpha \in (0, 2)$. If $k = 0$, assume in addition that V satisfies the condition $\mathcal{T}$. For $\mu > 0$ put $\nu_2(\mu) = \mu^{m/2} \nu_0(\mu^{-1})$. Then we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1, \mu}) = \nu_2(\mu)(1 + o(1)), \quad \mu \downarrow 0.$$

Suppose that the assumptions of Remark 2.5 are fulfilled for $\alpha \in (0, 2)$. Then Theorem 3.5 remains valid for $V = U + W$, and the main asymptotic term of $\nu_2(\mu)$ as $\mu \downarrow 0$ again depends only on U but not on W .

We omit the proof of Theorem 3.5 since it is quite the same as the proof of Theorem 2.4.

3.3. In this subsection we consider the case where $V(x)$ behaves like $|x|^{-2}$ as $|x| \rightarrow \infty$, i. e. the border-line case between Theorem 3.5 and Theorem 3.2 b). More precisely, we assume the relation (2.15) holds with $\alpha = 2$. Denote by $\{-\lambda_l(v)\}_{l \geq 1}$ the nondecreasing sequence of the negative eigenvalues of the operator

$$\mathcal{S}(v) = -\Delta_s - v$$

where Δ_s is the Laplace-Beltrami operator defined in $L^2(\mathbb{S}^{m-1})$. Evidently, the set $\{\lambda_l(v)\}_{l \geq 1}$ is finite and not empty.

THEOREM 3.6. – Assume that (2.13) holds, and $V \in L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$ satisfies (2.15) with $\alpha = 2$. Then we have

$$\lim_{\mu \downarrow 0} |\log \mu|^{-1} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sum_{l \geq 1} \left(\lambda_l(v) - \frac{(m-2)^2}{4} \right)_+^{1/2}. \quad (3.12)$$

Moreover, if $\lambda_1(v) < (m-2)^2/4$, we have

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) = 0(1), \quad \mu \downarrow 0. \quad (3.13)$$

Under the hypotheses of Theorem 3.6 the negative spectrum of the operator $\mathfrak{H}_{1,0}$ is discrete. Moreover, the quantity $\mathcal{N}(0, H(0, V))$ is finite if $\lambda_1(v) < (m-2)^2/4$, and infinite if $\lambda_1(v) > (m-2)^2/4$.

Proof of Theorem 3.6. – For $\varepsilon \in (-1, 1)$ and $\mu \geq 0$ set

$$V_0(x; \varepsilon, \mu) = (1 + \varepsilon) v(\hat{x}) (\mu + |x|^2)^{-1}.$$

Applying a standard variational technique (cf. [Rai 1], Lemma 4.1), we obtain the estimates

$$\begin{aligned} \pm \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{H}_{1,\mu}) &\leq \pm \mathcal{N}(0; H(\mu A, V_0(\pm \varepsilon, 1))) + 0(1), \\ \mu &\downarrow 0, \quad \forall \varepsilon \in (0, 1) \end{aligned} \quad (3.14)_\pm$$

Changing the variables $x \rightarrow \mu^{1/2} x$, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(0; H(\mu A, V_0(\varepsilon, 1))) \\ = \mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))), \quad \varepsilon \in (-1, 1), \quad \mu > 0. \end{aligned} \quad (3.15)$$

Let $\Omega := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : |x| < 1\}$. Then for each $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ and $\varepsilon' \in (\varepsilon, 1)$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \pm \mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_0(\pm\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ & \leq \pm \mathcal{N}(0; H_\Omega^D(0, V_0(\pm\varepsilon', \mu))) + 0(1), \quad \mu \downarrow 0. \end{aligned} \quad (3.16)_\pm$$

In order to verify (3.16)₊, put $\mathcal{O} = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : |x| > 1/2\}$ and introduce a partition of unity $\{\varphi_l\}_{l=1}^2$ over $\mathbb{R}^m$ such that $\text{supp } \varphi_1 \subset \Omega$, $\text{supp } \varphi_2 \subset \mathcal{O}$. By Lemma 1.1 we get

$$\left. \begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}(0; H(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ & \leq \mathcal{N}\left(0; H_\Omega^D\left(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right)\right) \\ & + \mathcal{N}\left(0; H_{\mathcal{O}}^D\left(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right)\right), \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (3.17)$$

$\varepsilon \in (0, 1), \quad \mu > 0.$

Obviously we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}\left(0; H_{\mathcal{O}}^D\left(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right)\right) \\ & \leq \mathcal{N}\left(0; H_{\mathcal{O}}^D\left(A, V_0(\varepsilon, 0) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right)\right), \quad \forall \mu \geq 0. \end{aligned}$$

Since $\inf \sigma_{\text{ess}}(H_{\mathcal{O}}^D(A, 0))$ is strictly positive and the multiplier by $V_0(\varepsilon, 0) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2$ is a relatively compact perturbation of the operator $H_{\mathcal{O}}^D(A, 0)$, the second term at the right-hand side of (3.17) remains uniformly bounded as $\mu \downarrow 0$. Further, the minimax principle entails

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}\left(0; H_\Omega^D\left(A, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu) + \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right)\right) \\ & \leq \mathcal{N}(0; H_\Omega^D(0, (1 - \tau)^{-1} V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ & + \mathcal{N}\left(0; -\tau \Delta_\Omega^D + 2i A \cdot \nabla + |A|^2 - \sum_{l=1}^2 |\nabla \varphi_l|^2\right), \\ & \forall \tau \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \quad (3.18)$$

Note that the second term at the right-hand side of (3.18) is independent of μ and finite for each $\tau > 0$. Choosing τ so that $1 + \varepsilon = (1 - \tau)(1 + \varepsilon')$ and combining (3.17) with (3.18), we come to (3.16)₊. The estimate (3.16)₋ can be verified in a similar (and simpler) manner.

Now, assume $\mu < 1$ and put $\Omega_1 \equiv \Omega_1(\mu) := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : |x| < \sqrt{\mu}\}$, $\Omega_2 \equiv \Omega_2(\mu) := \Omega \setminus \overline{\Omega_1(\mu)} \equiv \{x \in \mathbb{R}^m : \sqrt{\mu} < |x| < 1\}$. The minimax principle entails the inequality

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega}^D(0, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))) &\leq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_1(\mu)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ &+ \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_2(\mu)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, 0))), \quad \forall \varepsilon > 0, \quad \forall \mu > 0. \end{aligned} \quad (3.19)$$

Changing the variables $x \rightarrow \sqrt{\mu}x$, we establish the estimate

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_1(\mu)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, \mu))) = \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_1(1)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, 1))) < \infty. \quad (3.20)$$

Further, set $\mathfrak{R} \equiv \mathfrak{R}(\varepsilon) := \mathcal{N}(0; \mathcal{S}((1 + \varepsilon)v))$ and denote by $\mathfrak{X}_l^N(\varepsilon, \mu)$ [resp. by $\mathfrak{X}_l^D(\varepsilon, \mu)$], $l = 1, \dots, \mathfrak{R}$, the operator generated in $L^2[(\sqrt{\mu}, 1); r^{m-1}dr]$ by the closed quadratic form

$$\int_{\sqrt{\mu}}^1 \{|du/dr|^2 - \lambda_l((1 + \varepsilon)v)r^{-2}|u|^2\} r^{m-1} dr, \quad \varepsilon \in (-1, 1), \quad (3.21)$$

with domain $W_1^2(\sqrt{\mu}, 1)$ [or, respectively, $\overset{\circ}{W}_1^2(\sqrt{\mu}, 1)$].

Pass to spherical coordinates in $\Omega_2(\mu)$, and decompose the trial function u in the domain of the quadratic form of the operator $H_{\Omega_2(\mu)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, 0))$ in a series with respect to the eigenfunctions of the operator $\mathcal{S}((1 + \varepsilon)v)$. Thus we obtain

$$\mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_2(\mu)}^N(0, V_0(\varepsilon, 0))) = \sum_{l=1}^{\mathfrak{R}} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^N(\varepsilon, \mu)). \quad (3.22)$$

Recalling that $\dim W_1^2(\sqrt{\mu}, 1) \ominus \overset{\circ}{W}_1^2(\sqrt{\mu}, 1) = 2$, we come to the estimate

$$\sum_{l=1}^{\mathfrak{R}} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^N(\varepsilon, \mu)) \leq \sum_{l=1}^{\mathfrak{R}} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^D(\varepsilon, \mu)) + 2\mathfrak{R}(\varepsilon). \quad (3.23)$$

Fix $\delta > 0$ and assume $\mu < \delta$. Then the minimax principle implies

$$\left. \begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega}^D(0, V_0(-\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ & \geq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_2(\mu/\delta)}^D(0, V_0(-\varepsilon, \mu))) \\ & \geq \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_2(\mu/\delta)}^D(A, V_0(-\varepsilon', 0))), \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (3.24)$$

with $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$, $\varepsilon' \in (\varepsilon, 1)$ and $\delta > 0$ connected by $1 - \varepsilon = (1 - \varepsilon')(1 + \delta)$. By analogy with (3.22) we get

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathcal{N}(0; H_{\Omega_2(\mu/\delta)}^D(A, V_0(-\varepsilon, 0))) \\ & = \sum_{l=1}^{\mathfrak{R}} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^D(-\varepsilon, \mu/\delta)), \quad \forall \varepsilon \in (0, 1). \end{aligned} \quad (3.25)$$

Now, substitute the trial function $u \in \mathring{W}_1^2(\sqrt{\mu}, 1)$ according to the formula $u \rightarrow r^{(2-m)/2} u$, and then change the variable $r \rightarrow t = -\log r / \log \sqrt{\mu}$. Bearing in mind (3.21), we find that the operator $\mathfrak{X}_l^D(\varepsilon, \mu)$, $\varepsilon \in (-1, 1)$ is unitarily equivalent to the operator generated by the quadratic form

$$\int_0^1 \{4|\log \mu|^{-2} |du/dt|^2 - (\lambda_l((1 + \varepsilon)v) - (m - 2)^2/4)|u|^2\} dt,$$

with domain $\mathring{W}_1^2(0, 1)$. Applying an elementary semiclassical asymptotic formula for the eigenvalues of this operator, we get

$$\left. \begin{aligned} & \lim_{\mu \downarrow 0} |\log \mu|^{-1} \mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^D(\varepsilon, \mu)) \\ & = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left(\lambda_l((1 + \varepsilon)v) - \frac{(m - 2)^2}{4} \right)_+^{1/2}, \\ & \forall \varepsilon \in (-1, 1), \quad l = 1, \dots, \mathfrak{R}. \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (3.26)$$

Putting together (3.14) $_{\pm}$, (3.15), (3.16) $_{\pm}$, (3.19), (3.20), (3.22)-(3.26), taking into account the continuity for small $|\varepsilon|$ of the quantities $\lambda_l((1 + \varepsilon)v)$, $l = 1, \dots, \mathfrak{R}$, and utilizing the relation $\lim_{\mu \downarrow 0} |\log \mu|^{-1} |\log(\mu/\delta)| = 1$, we come to (3.12).

Finally assume that $\lambda_1(v) < (m-2)^2/4$. Then for $\varepsilon > 0$ small enough the quantity $\lambda_1((1+\varepsilon)v)$ does not exceed $(m-2)^2/4$ as well. Hence, we get

$$\mathcal{N}(0; \mathfrak{X}_l^D(\varepsilon, \mu)) = 0, \quad l = 1, \dots, \mathfrak{A}, \quad \forall \mu > 0. \quad (3.27)$$

The combination of (3.14)₊, (3.15), (3.16)₊, (3.19), (3.20), (3.22), (3.23) and (3.27) yields (3.13). $\square$

APPENDIX: PROOF OF LEMMA 2.3

In view of (2.16)-(2.17), it suffices to verify the relations

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{g \rightarrow \infty} g^{-m/\alpha} \{\nu_0((1+\delta)g) - \nu_0(g)\} = 0, \quad \alpha \in (0, 2), \quad (\text{A.1})$$

or

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{g \rightarrow \infty} g^{-m/2} (\log g)^{-1} \{\nu_0((1+\delta)g) - \nu_0(g)\} = 0, \quad \alpha = 2, \quad (\text{A.2})$$

in order to prove (2.18).

First, we assume that $\alpha \in (0, 2)$ and verify (A.1). For $k \geq 0$, $\lambda > 0$, $g > 0$, put

$$\Psi_k(\lambda; g) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_k(gV(x) - \lambda) dx \equiv -g^{k/2} \int_{\lambda/g}^{\infty} (s - \lambda/g)^{k/2} d\psi(s).$$

Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} & g^{-m/\alpha} \{\nu_0((1+\delta)g) - \nu_0(g)\} \\ &= g^{-m/\alpha} \mathcal{C}_m(\mathbf{b}) \sum_{\mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d} \Psi_k(2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b} + \Lambda; g) \\ & \quad \times \left\{ \frac{\Psi_k(2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b} + \Lambda; (1+\delta)g)}{\Psi_k(2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b} + \Lambda; g)} - 1 \right\} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.3})$$

It is easy to check the estimate

$$g^{-m/\alpha} \Psi_k(2\mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{b} + \Lambda; g) \leq c(1 + |\mathbf{n}|)^{k/2 - m/\alpha}, \quad \mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d,$$

where the constant c is independent of $\mathbf{n}$ and g . Note that the series $\sum_{\mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d} (1 + |\mathbf{n}|)^{k/2-m/\alpha}$ is convergent if $\alpha \in (0, 2)$. Hence, applying the identity (A.3), we find that the relation (A.1) would follow from the estimate

$$\lim_{\delta \downarrow 0} \limsup_{g \rightarrow \infty} [\Psi_k(\lambda; (1 + \delta)g) - \Psi_k(\lambda; g)] / \Psi_k(\lambda; g) = 0, \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} \forall \lambda > 0, \quad \forall k \geq 0. \end{array} \right\} \quad (\text{A.4})$$

Since we have $\Psi_k(\lambda; g) \underset{\cap}{\cup} g^{m/\alpha-k/2}$, $g \rightarrow \infty$, the estimate (A.4) would follow from the estimate

$$\lim_{\tau \downarrow 0} \limsup_{\varepsilon \downarrow 0} \varepsilon^{m/\alpha-k/2} \times \left\{ \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \{ \theta_k(V(x) - (1 - \tau)\varepsilon) - \theta_k(V(x) - \varepsilon) \} dx \right\} = 0. \quad (\text{A.5})$$

Let $k \geq 2$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \{ \theta_k(V(x) - (1 - \tau)\varepsilon) - \theta_k(V(x) - \varepsilon) \} dx \\ &= \frac{k}{2} \int_{(1-\tau)\varepsilon}^{\varepsilon} dt \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_{k-2}(V(x) - t) dx. \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.6})$$

Since the estimate $V(x) \leq c'|x|^{-\alpha}$ holds, the right-hand-side of (A.6) is upper bounded by

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{k}{2} \int_{(1-\tau)\varepsilon}^{\varepsilon} dt \int_0^{(c'/t)^{-1/\alpha}} (c' r^{-\alpha} - t)^{k/2-1} r^{m-1} dr \\ & \leq c'' \varepsilon^{k/2-m/\alpha} [1 - (1 - \tau)^{k/2-m/\alpha}]. \end{aligned}$$

Thus (A.6) entails (A.5) if $k \geq 2$.

Let $k = 1$. It is easy to check that we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \{ \theta_1(V(x) - (1 - \tau)\varepsilon) - \theta_1(V(x) - \varepsilon) \} dx \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \int_{(1-\tau)\varepsilon}^{\infty} (s - (1 - \tau)\varepsilon)^{-1/2} \psi(s) ds \\ & \quad - \frac{1}{2} \int_{\varepsilon}^{\infty} (s - \varepsilon)^{-1/2} \psi(s) ds \\ & \leq \frac{1}{2} \int_{(1-\tau)\varepsilon}^{\varepsilon} (s - \varepsilon)^{-1/2} \psi(s) ds. \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.7})$$

Since the estimate $\psi(s) \leq c' s^{-m/\alpha}$, $s > 0$, holds, the rightmost quantity in (A.7) is upper bounded by $c'' \varepsilon^{1/2-m/\alpha} [1 - (1 - \tau)^{1/2-m/\alpha}]$. Hence in the case $k = 1$, the relation (A.1) holds again.

Assume $k = 0$. Then the quantity $\Psi_0(\lambda; g)$ coincides with $\psi(\lambda/g)$, $\lambda > 0$, $g > 0$. Hence, in the case $k = 0$ the relation (A.1) is implied directly by the condition $\mathcal{T}$ satisfied by V according to the hypotheses of Lemma 2.3. Thus, we have completed the proof of (A.1) for all values of $k \geq 0$.

Now we assume $\alpha = 2$, and prove (A.2). First of all note that the set $\{2\mathbf{n}, \mathbf{b}\}_{\mathbf{n} \in \mathbb{N}^d}$ coincides with the nondecreasing sequence $\{\Lambda_j\}_{j=1}^\infty$ of the eigenvalues of the selfadjoint operator

$$\sum_{j=1}^d b_j (-\partial^2 / \partial x_j^2 + x_j^2) - \Lambda$$

which is essentially selfadjoint on $C_0^\infty(\mathbb{R}^m)$. Then the function $\nu_0(g)$ can be written in the form

$$\nu_0(g) = C_m(\mathbf{b}) \sum_{j=1}^\infty \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_k(gV(x) - \Lambda_j - \Lambda) dx, \quad g > 0. \quad (\text{A.8})$$

It is well-known that the eigenvalues Λ_j obey the asymptotics

$$\Lambda_j = C_d j^{1/d} (1 + o(1)), \quad j \rightarrow \infty,$$

with $C_d := (2^d d! b_1 \dots b_d)^{1/d}$. On the other hand, it is easy to check that each individual term in (A.8) has order $O(g^{m/2})$ as $g \rightarrow \infty$. Thus we obtain the asymptotic estimates

$$\begin{aligned} & \nu_0((1 + \delta)g) \\ & \leq C_m(\mathbf{b}) \sum_{j=1}^\infty \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_k((1 + \delta)gV(x) - (1 - \eta)C_d j^{1/d} - \Lambda) dx \\ & \quad + O(g^{m/2}), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.9})$$

$$\begin{aligned} \nu_0(g) & \geq C_m(\mathbf{b}) \sum_{j=1}^\infty \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_k(gV(x) - (1 + \eta)C_d j^{1/d} - \Lambda) dx \\ & \quad + O(g^{m/2}), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.10})$$

which hold for $g \rightarrow \infty$ and each $\eta \in (0, 1)$.

Note the elementary inequalities

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} f(j) \leq \int_0^{\infty} f(t) dt \leq \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} f(j) \quad (\text{A.11})$$

where $f(t) := \theta_k(\gamma_1 - \gamma_2 t)$, and γ_j , $j = 1, 2$, are positive parameters. Hence, (A.9)-(A.10) entail

$$\begin{aligned} & \nu_0((1 + \delta)g) \\ & \leq (1 - \eta)^{-d} \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_m((1 + \delta)g V(x) - \Lambda) dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + m/2) \\ & \quad + O(g^{m/2}), \\ & \nu_0(g) \\ & \geq (1 - \eta)^{-d} \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_m(g V(x) - \Lambda) dx / (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(1 + m/2) \\ & \quad + O(g^{m/2}), \end{aligned}$$

which hold for $g \rightarrow \infty$ and each $\eta \in (0, 1)$. Thus we get

$$\begin{aligned} & g^{-m/2} (4\pi)^{m/2} \Gamma(m/2) \{ \nu_0((1 + \delta)g) - \nu_0(g) \} \\ & \leq (1 - \eta)^{-d} [(1 + \delta)^{m/2} - 1] \int_0^{\infty} \theta_{m-2}(s - \Lambda/(1 + \delta)g) \psi(s) ds \\ & \quad + (1 - \eta)^{-d} \int_{\Lambda/(1 + \delta)g}^{\Lambda/g} dt \int_{\mathbb{R}^m} \theta_{m-2}(V(x) - t) dx \\ & \quad + [(1 - \eta)^{-d} - (1 + \eta)^{-d}] \\ & \quad \times \int_0^{\infty} \theta_{m-2}(s - \Lambda/g) \psi(s) ds + O(1), \quad g \rightarrow \infty, \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.12})$$

Since the function $\psi(s)$ vanishes identically for s large enough, and admits the estimate $\psi(s) \leq cs^{-m/2}$ for sufficiently small $s > 0$, the integrals of the type $\int_0^{\infty} \theta_{m-2}(s - \varepsilon) \psi(s) ds$, $\varepsilon > 0$, occurring in the first and the third term at the right-hand side of (A.12) has order $O(|\log \varepsilon|)$ as $\varepsilon \downarrow 0$. Further, since we have $V(x) \leq c|x|^{-2}$, $x \in \mathbb{R}^m$, we easily find that the second term of the right-hand side of (A.12) has order $O(1)$ as $g \rightarrow \infty$. Finally, since $\eta > 0$ (and, hence, $(1 - \eta)^{-d} - (1 + \eta)^{-d}$) can be chosen as small as needed, we can conclude that (A.2) is valid.

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