Polarized neutron scattering

Gøran Nilsen
ISIS Facility

OSNS17

Overview

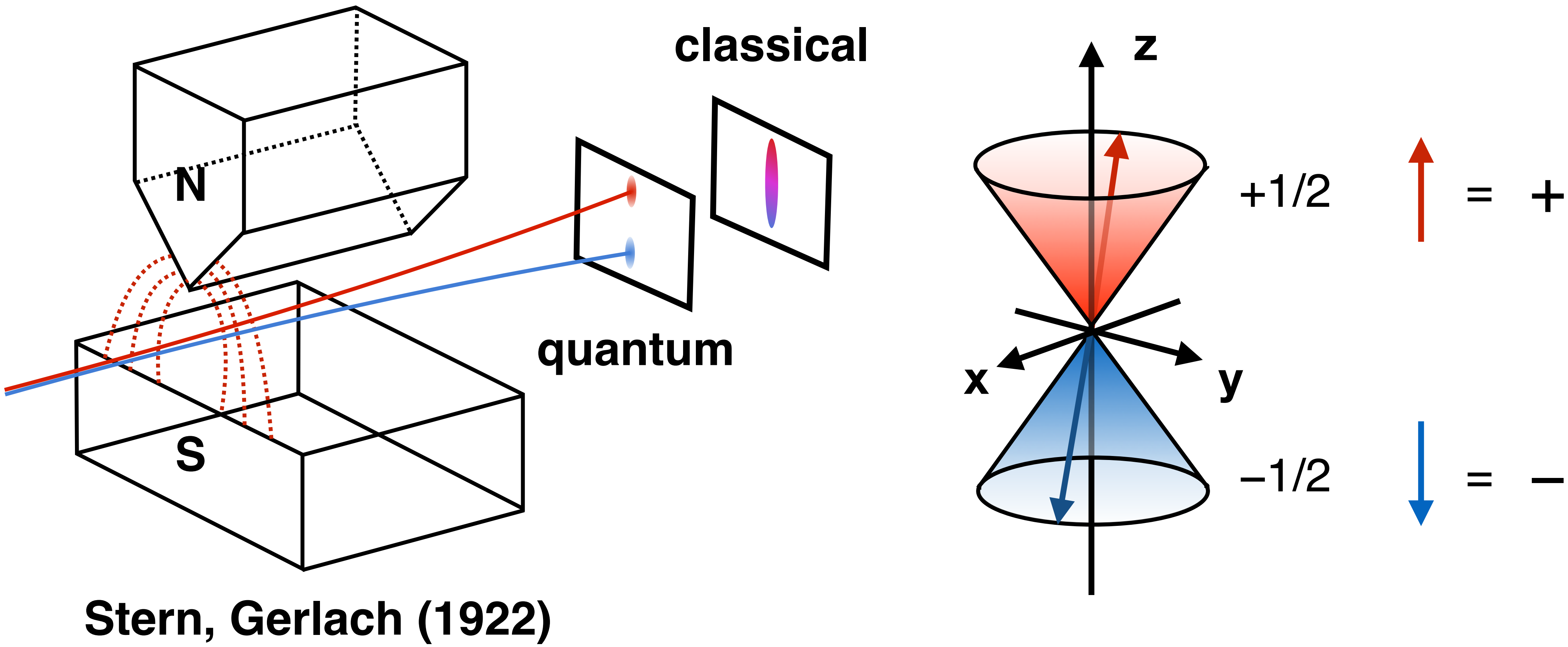
Science & Technology Facilities Council

1. What is a polarized neutron beam?
2. How does a polarized neutron beam interact with matter and what extra information can be gained?
3. What devices are required to perform a polarized neutron experiment?
4. Advanced applications of polarization analysis — magnetic diffraction
5. Other uses of polarization analysis

Principles of polarised neutron scattering

Spin angular momentum

Neutrons possess an inherent **magnetic moment** related to their **spin-angular momentum** S = 1/2



The **spin** has three components — *x*, *y*, and *z*. In a magnetic field, only the component along the field, conventionally *z*, is well defined.

Vector and Scalar Polarization

Science & Technology Facilities Council

In a magnetic field, the polarization of a beam is a vector pointing in the direction of the field, with the length of the vector defined as the **scalar polarization**:

$$P = \frac{N_+ - N_-}{N_+ + N_-}$$

or

$$P = \frac{F-1}{F+1}; \quad F = \frac{N_+}{N_-}$$

Where F is the **flipping ratio**, a frequently measured experimental quantity.

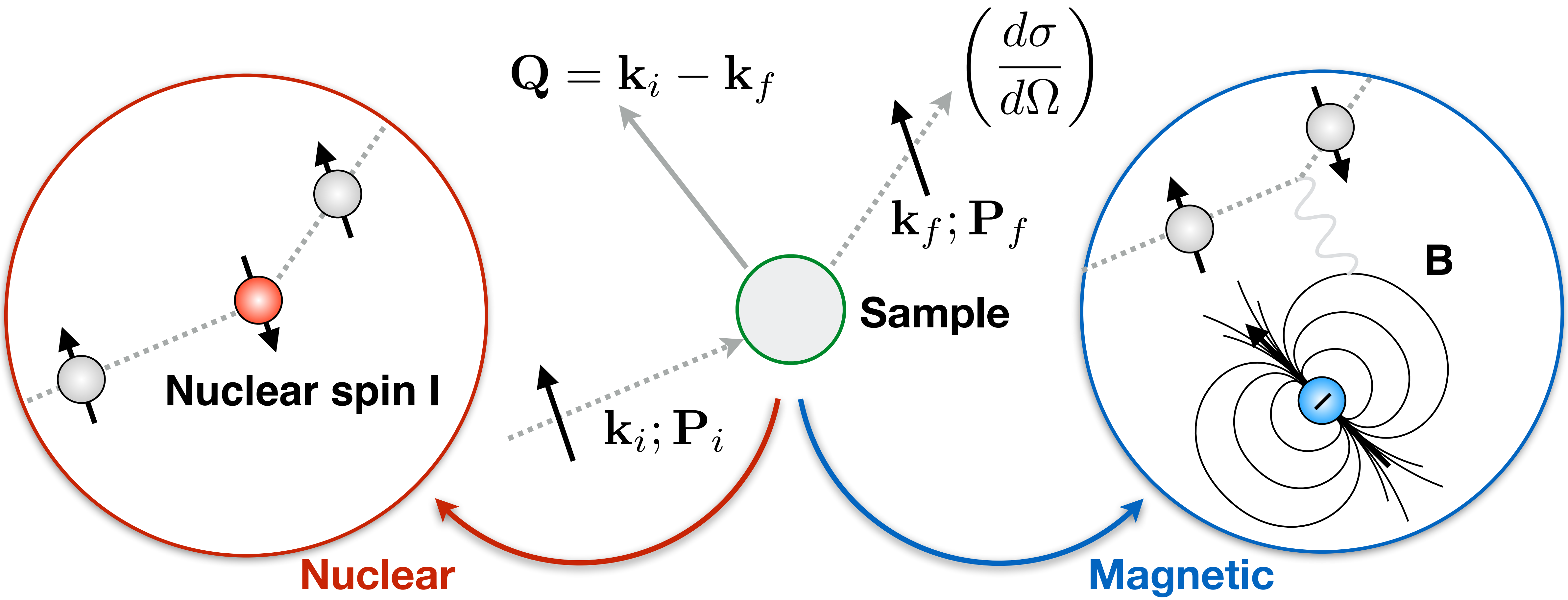
To determine the polarisation of a beam, we insert a device that selects either ↑ or ↓ from the beam (*e.g.* another SG apparatus). This is called **polarization analysis**.

$$P = \frac{1200}{3000} = 40\%; \quad F = \frac{7}{3}$$

Polarized neutron scattering

Science & Technology Facilities Council

Most samples also contain magnetic moments, originating either from nuclei or the electrons — **magnetism**.



The **scattered polarization** and **cross section** (intensity) depends on the relative orientation of the beam polarization and the magnetic moments in the sample.

➔ Analyzing the scattered beam can provide us with this information!

Spin-flip and non-spin-flip scattering

Science & Technology Facilities Council

In most cases, it is sufficient to analyse the scattered polarization along the same direction as the incident. This is called **longitudinal polarization analysis**.

We then only need to consider two types of process:

Non-spin-flip (NSF)

↓ → ↓ "$--$"

↑ → ↑ "$++$"

Cross sections

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} \qquad \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{--}$$

If equal: $\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{NSF}}$

Spin-flip (SF)

↑ → ↓ "$+-$"

↓ → ↑ "$-+$"

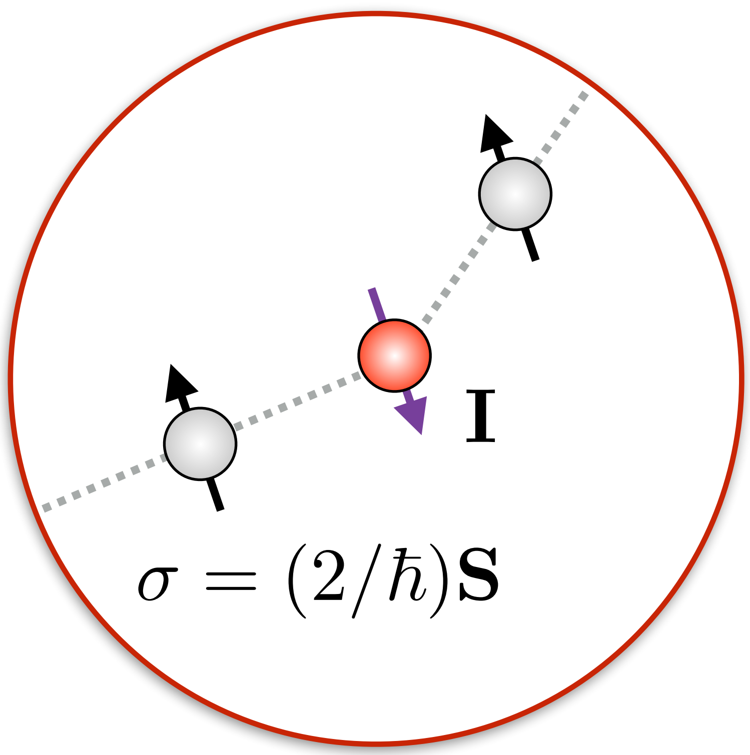
Cross sections

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-} \qquad \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{-+}$$

If equal: $\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{SF}}$

Nuclear scattering

The neutron interacts with the nucleus via the **strong nuclear force** (Squires Ch. 9 and A. Boothroyd):



$$\mathbf{b} = \boxed{A} + \boxed{B\sigma \cdot \mathbf{I}}$$

$$b_{coh} = \overline{\mathbf{b}}; \quad b_{inc} = \sqrt{\overline{\mathbf{b}^2} - \overline{\mathbf{b}}^2}$$

Nuclear coh.
Isotope inc.

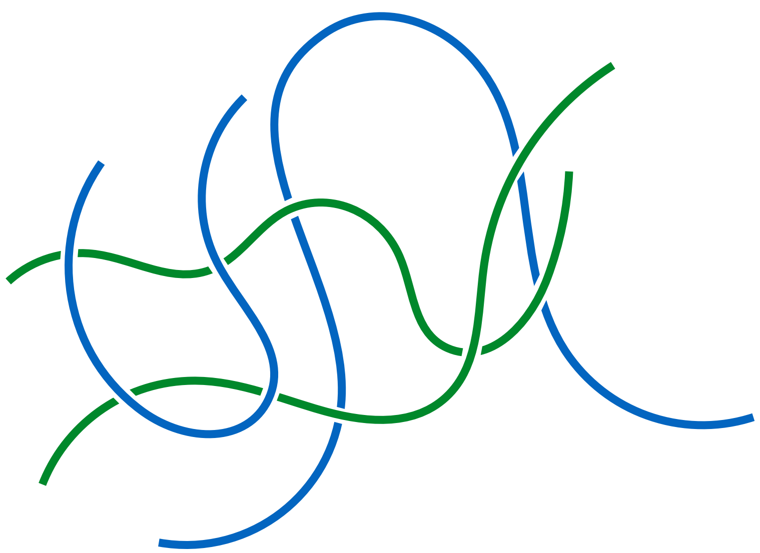
Spin inc.
$\sqrt{B^2 I(I+1)}$

NSF: $\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{--} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{coh+II}} + \frac{1}{3}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{inc}}$

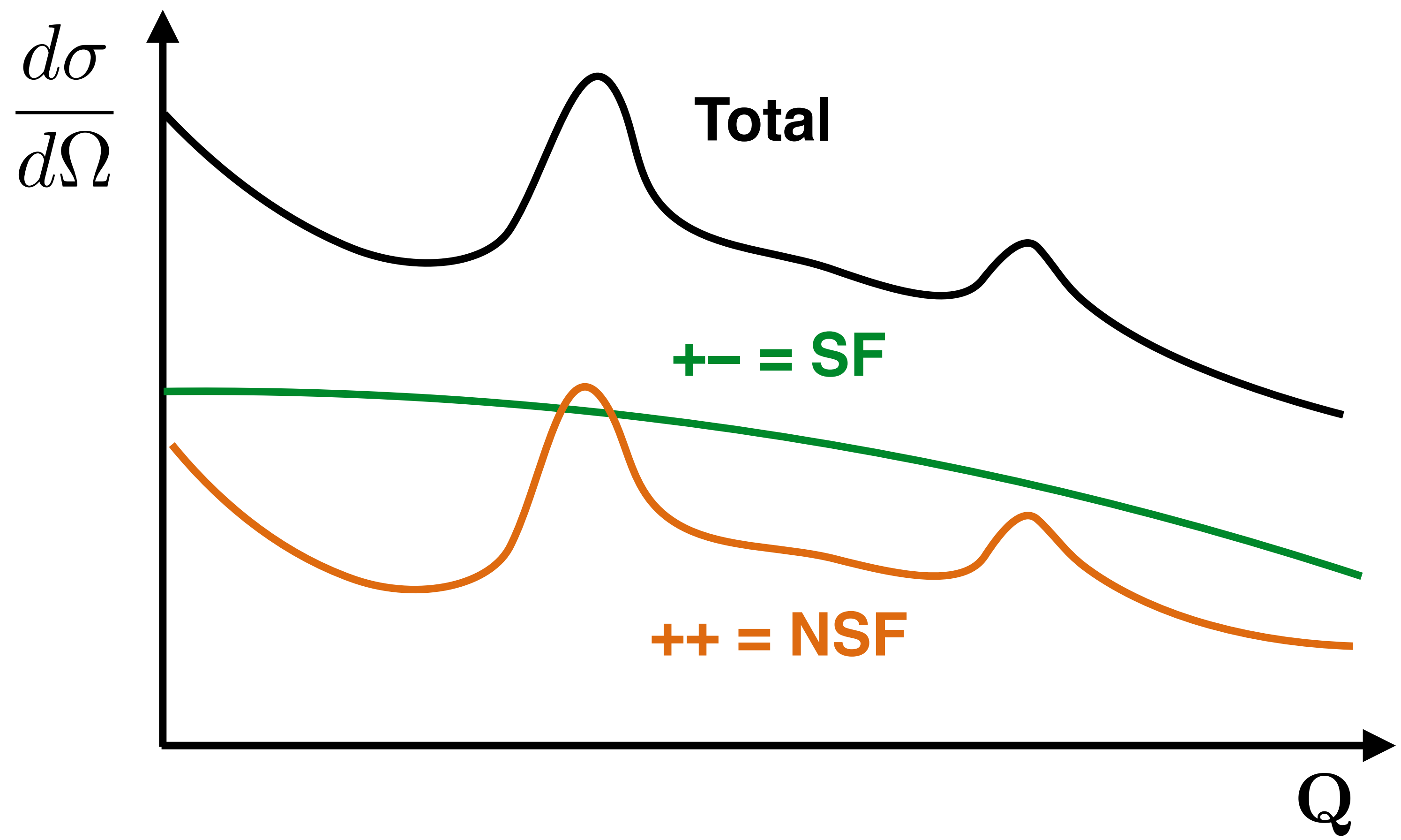
SF: $\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{-+} = \frac{2}{3}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{inc}}$

Example 1: Polymer

Consider a hydrocarbon polymer:



	σ_{coh}	σ_{SI}
C	**5.551**	0.001
H	**1.757**	**80.26**

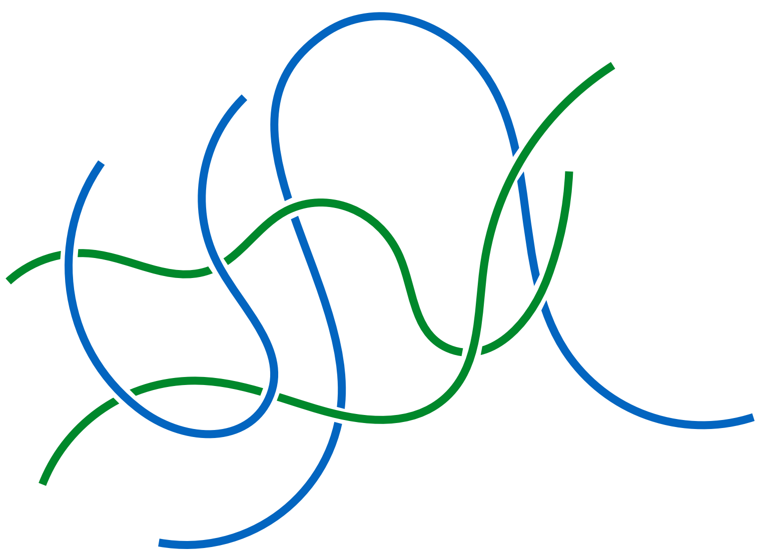


If we perform longitudinal polarization analysis, we can separate the contributions:

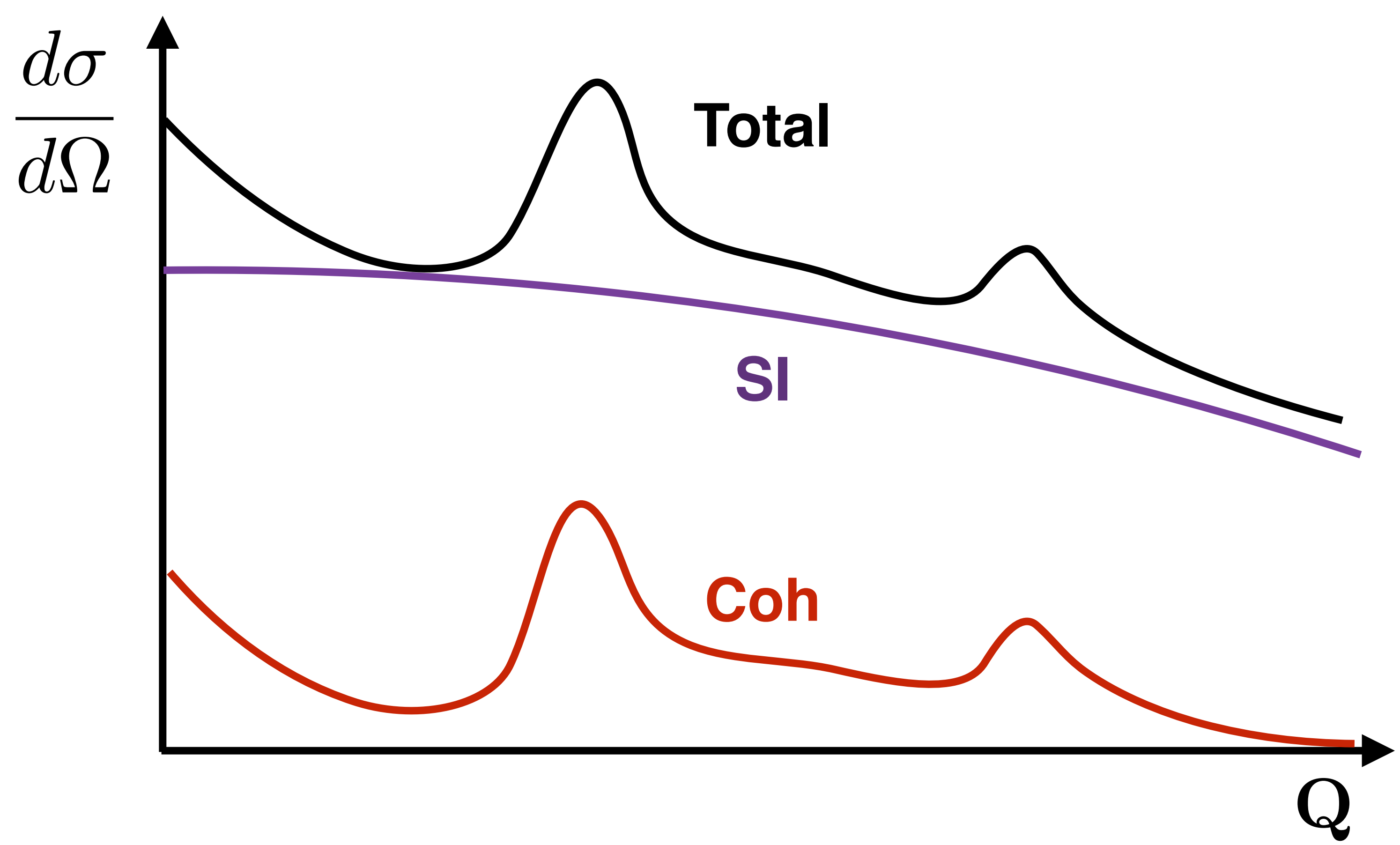
$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{coh+II}} + \frac{1}{3}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{inc}} \qquad \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-} = \frac{2}{3}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{inc}}$$

Example 1: Polymer

Consider a hydrocarbon polymer:



	σ_{coh}	σ_{SI}
C	**5.551**	0.001
H	**1.757**	**80.26**

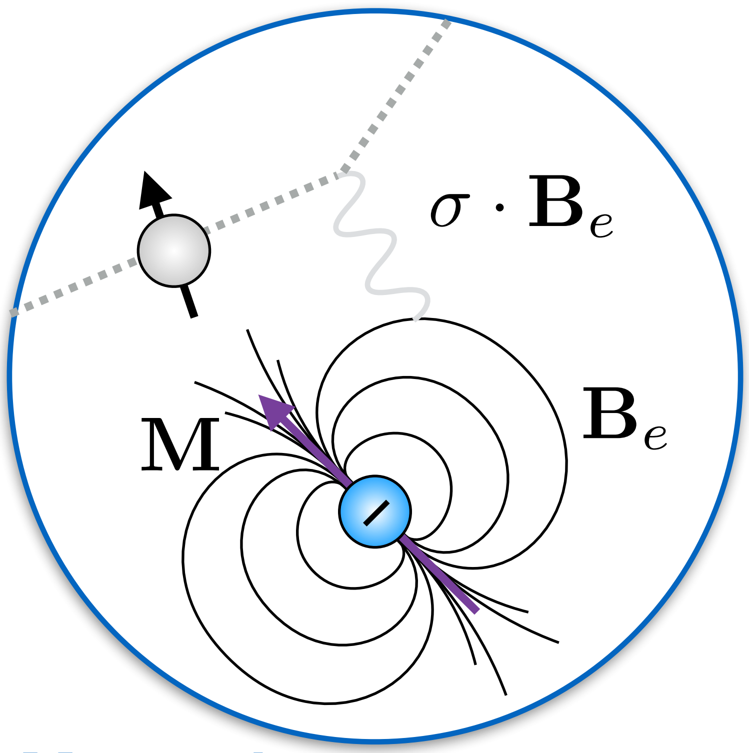


If we perform longitudinal polarization analysis, we can separate the contributions:

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{coh} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} - \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-} \qquad \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{inc} = \frac{3}{2}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-}$$

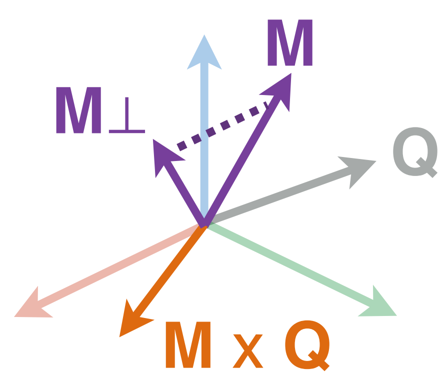
Magnetic scattering

Magnetic scattering is dominated by the **neutron-dipole interaction** (see A. Wildes)



Magnetic

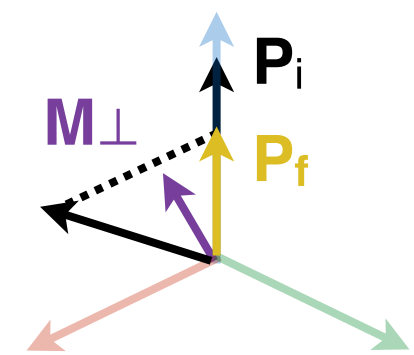
(A) Only measure components **M⊥Q**



$$\mathbf{M}_\perp = \mathbf{Q} \times \mathbf{M}(\mathbf{Q}) \times \mathbf{Q}$$

Squires Ch. 7

(B) **M⊥** ll **P**$_i$ - NSF
M⊥ ⊥ **P**$_i$ - SF



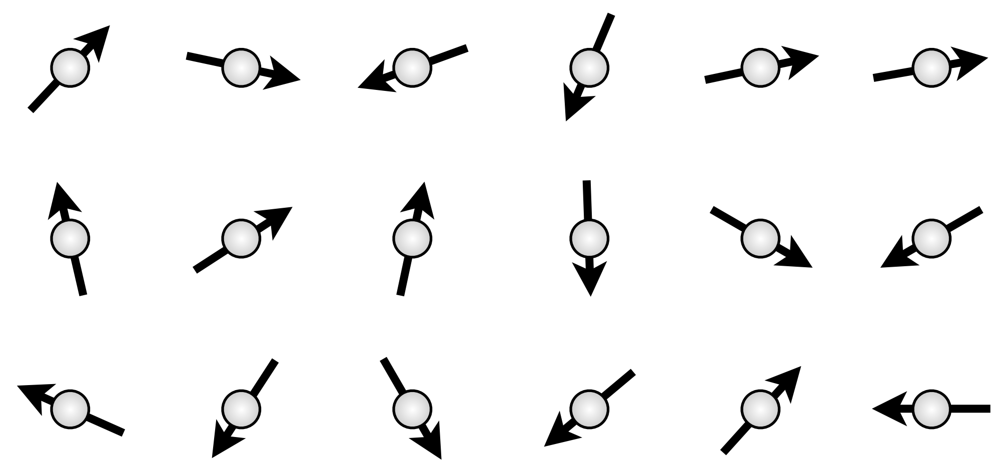
1. Rot. **P**$_i$ 180° about **M**
2. Project onto **P**$_i$
3. Find ratio **NSF**:**SF**

Brown, Forsyth, Tasset

This means we now have to worry about the relative directions of the sample magnetisation **M**, not necessarily disordered, **Q**, and **P**$_i$. Complicated in general!

Example 2: paramagnetic scattering

Let us consider the case where the electronic moments are disordered.

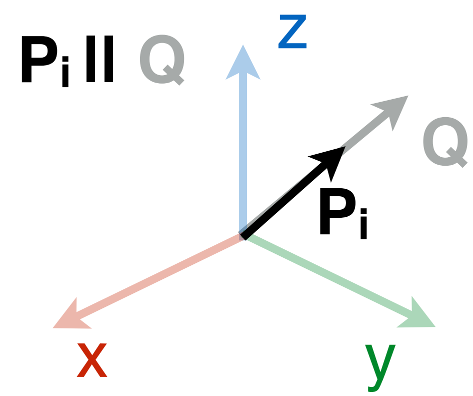


<M> = 0

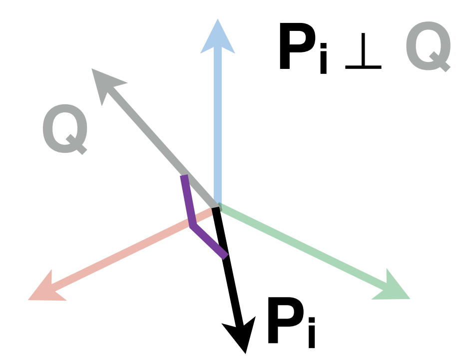
After averaging over the random direction of **M**, the magnetic elastic scattering cross section only depends on angle between the incident polarization $\mathbf{P_i}$ and **Q**:

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{--} \propto 1 - (\hat{\mathbf{Q}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{P}}_i)^2$$

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-} = \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{-+} \propto 1 + (\hat{\mathbf{Q}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{P}}_i)^2$$



0 : 1

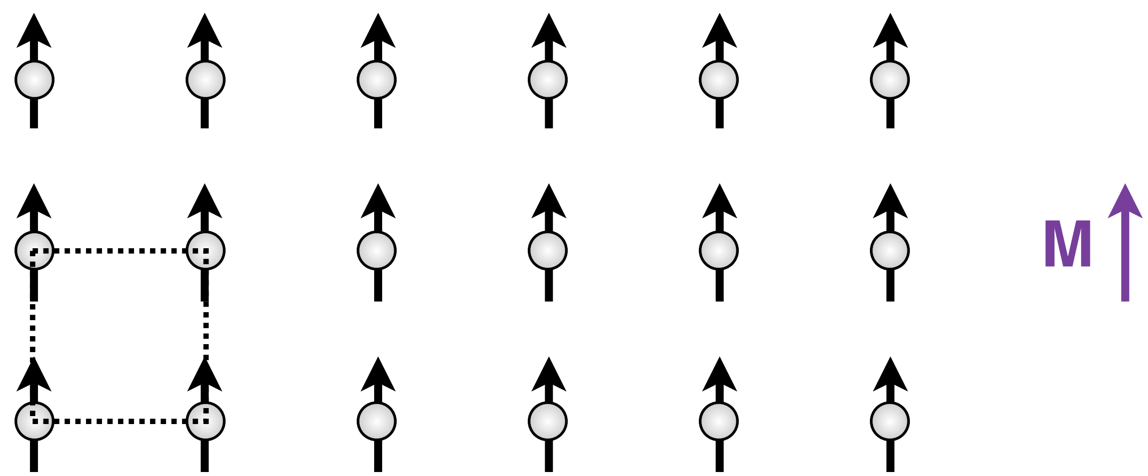


1/2 : 1/2

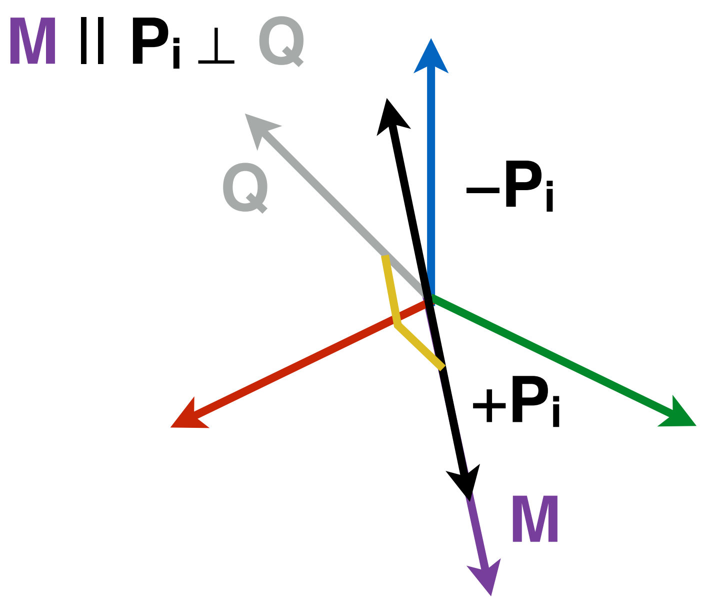
Squires Ch. 9, p. 179

Example 3: collinear ferromagnet

Another case involves the electronic moments in the sample all being aligned



Elastic cross section now depends on the orientations of the magnetisation **M**, **P_i**, and **Q**. It also includes **both** nuclear and magnetic contributions. For **M** ∥ **P_i** ⊥ **Q**:



1. **M** ⊥ **Q** : measure all of **M**
2. **P_i** ∥ **M⊥** : all scattering **NSF**

$$+P_i \parallel M : \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{++} \propto |b_N + b_M|^2$$

$$-P_i \parallel M : \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{--} \propto |b_N - b_M|^2$$

different!

Squires Ch. 9, p. 181

Summary

Rules

1. The **nuclear** coherent and isotope incoherent scattering is entirely NSF
2. The **spin incoherent** scattering is 1/3 NSF and 2/3 SF
3. The components of the sample magnetisation perpendicular to **Q** and…
   - … parallel to $\mathbf{P}_i$: NSF
   - … perpendicular to $\mathbf{P}_i$: SF

Consequences

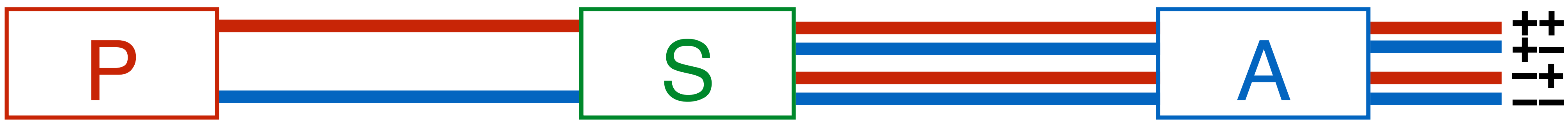
1. We can separate the components of the cross section (Examples 1,2)
2. We are also sensitive to the direction of magnetic moments

Practical polarised neuton scattering

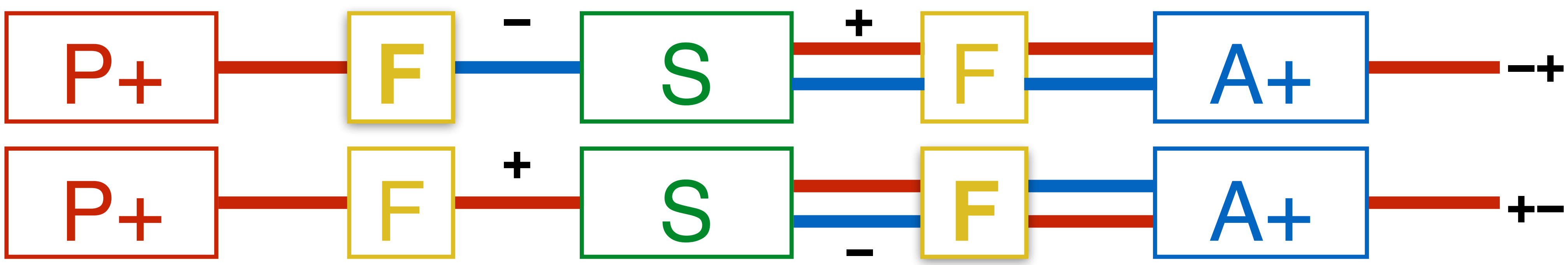
What do we need?

Science & Technology Facilities Council

So far we have assumed an instrument consisting of an ideal polariser and analyser



However, polariser and analyser usually accept only one state — need **flippers**

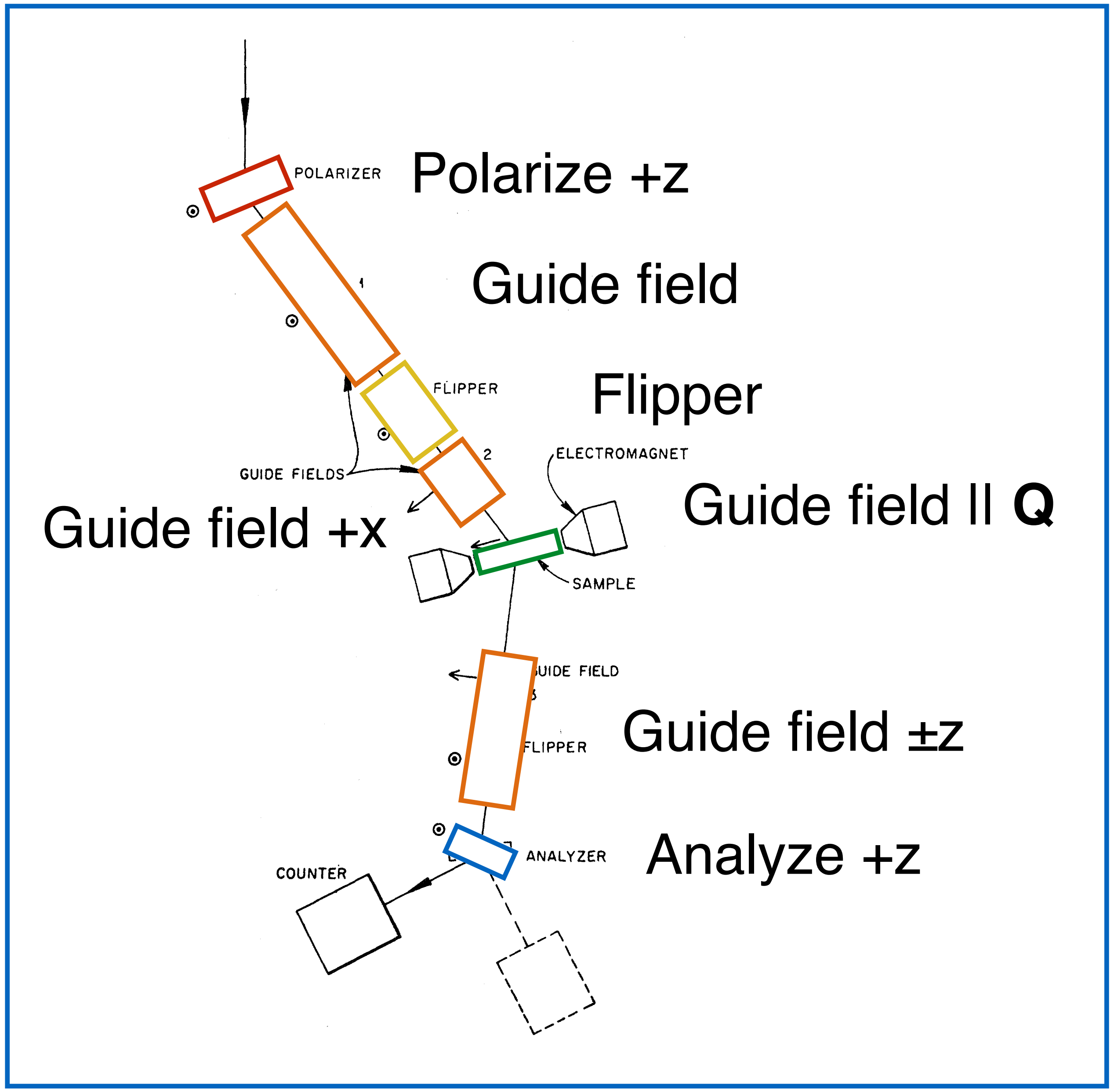


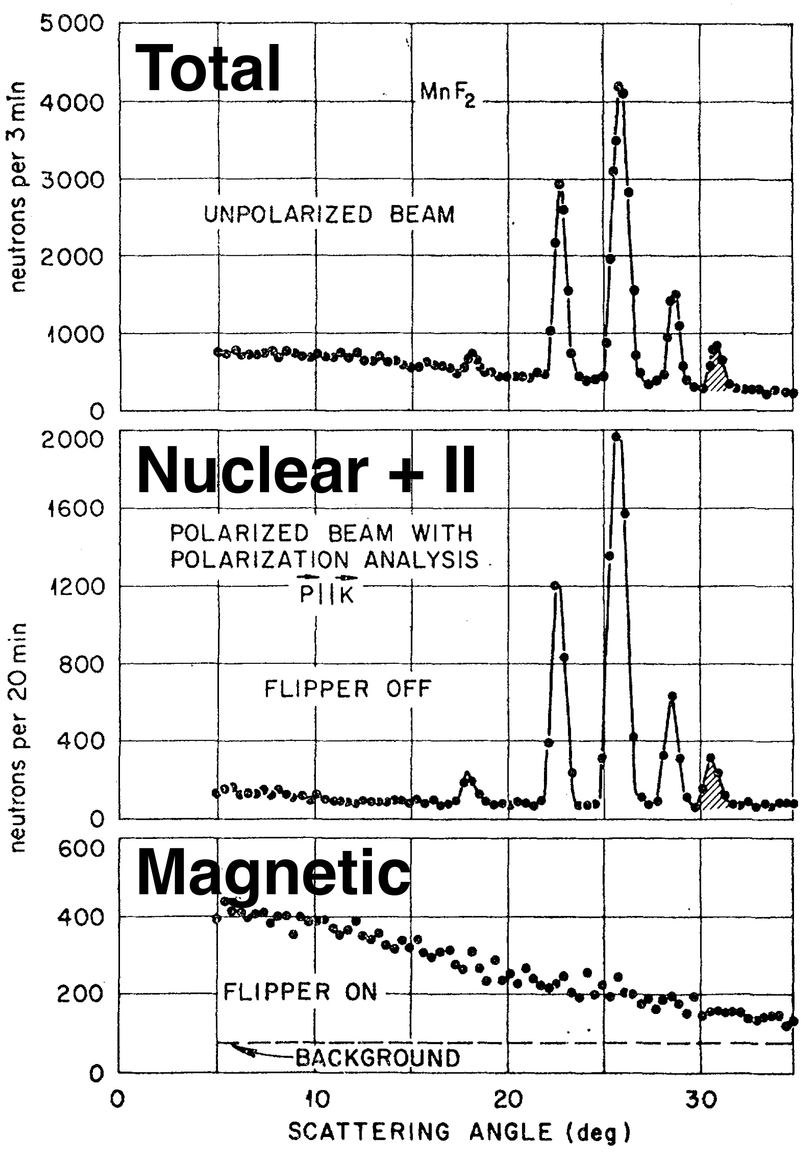
We have also seen that it can be useful to rotate the polarisation versus Q and M — **guide field**. The guide field also preserves the polarisation between the elements.

Polarized neutrons in practice

Science & Technology Facilities Council

The first instrument of this kind was built by Moon, Riste, and Koehler in 1968

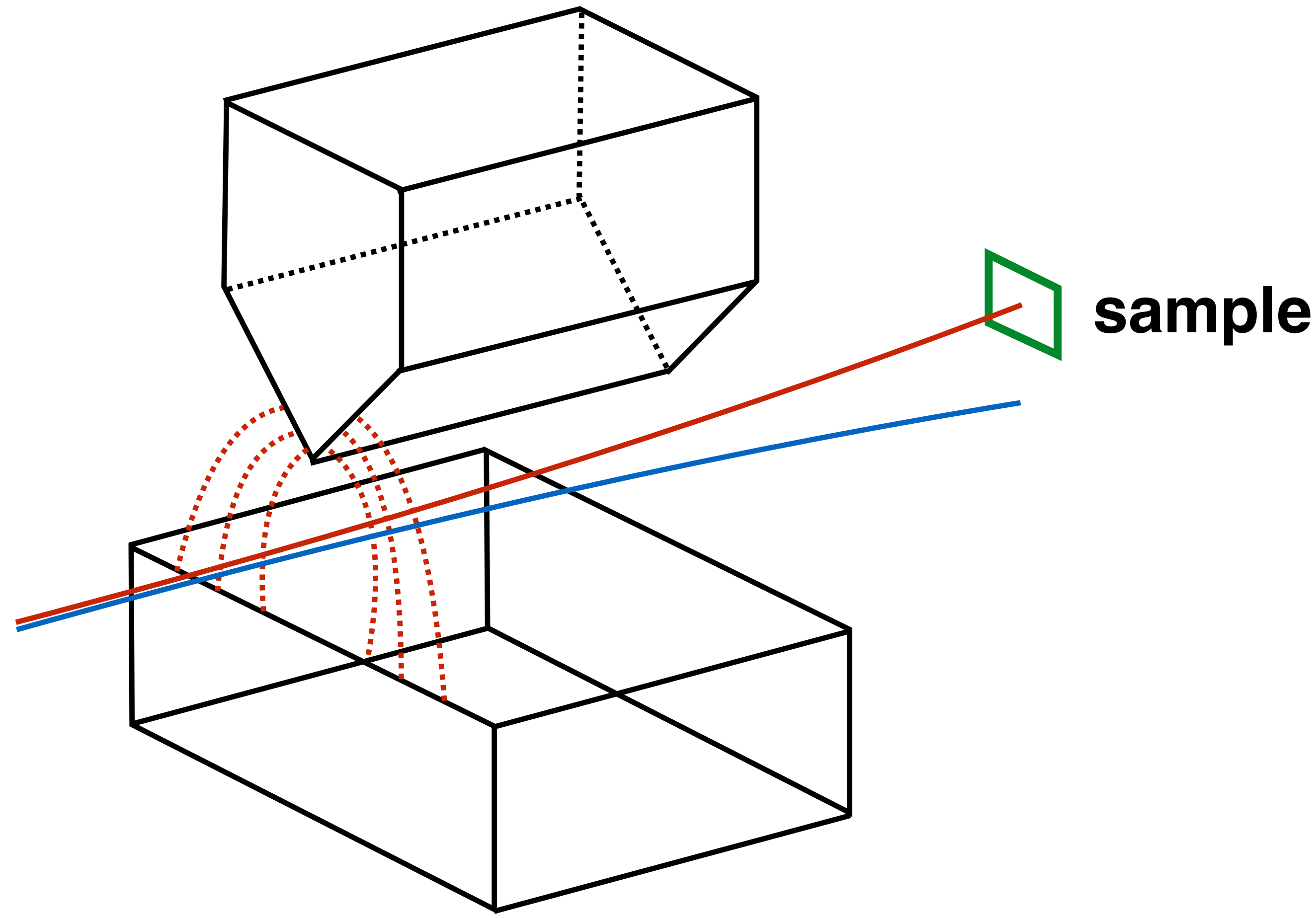




Moon, Riste, Koehler

Neutron polarizers and analyzers

Why don't we just use Stern-Gerlach to polarize our neutron beam?

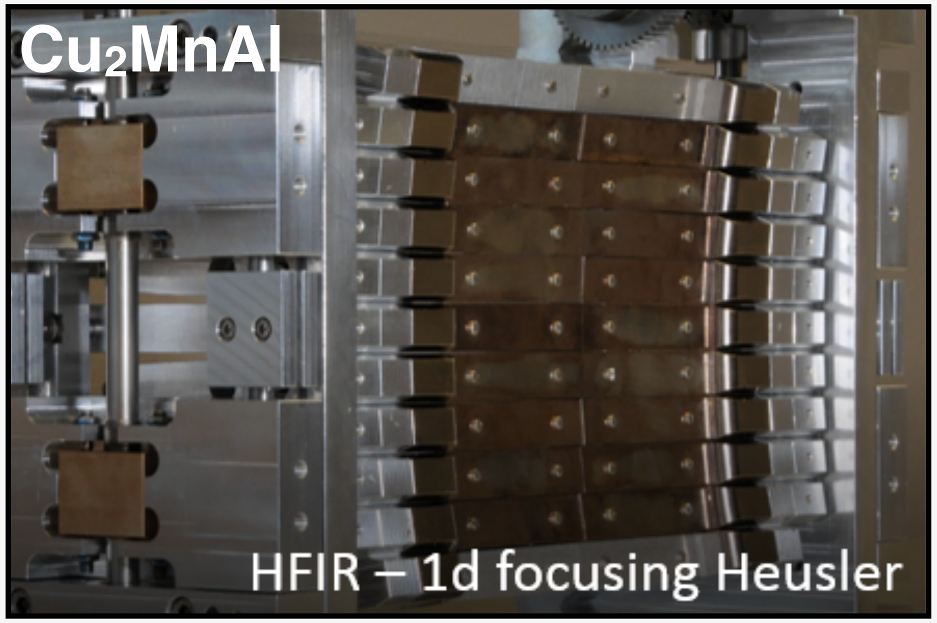


Neutron beams are large, and the neutrons magnetic moment is very small.
We need big fields and long flight paths to separate the beams!

Neutron polarizers and analyzers

Science & Technology Facilities Council

1. Magnetic crystal



$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\pm\pm} \propto |b_{\text{coh}} \mp b_{\text{mag}}|^2$$

$$P = \frac{N_+ - N_-}{N_+ + N_-}$$

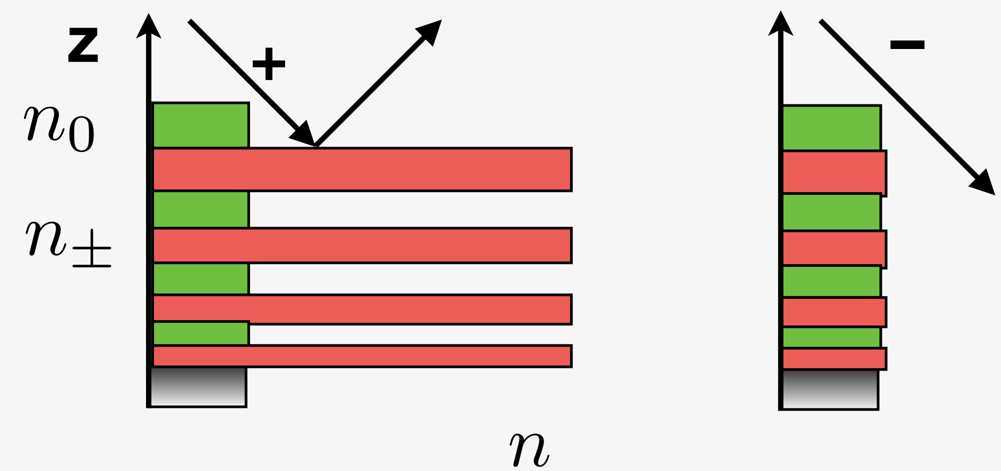
If $b_{coh} = b_{mag}$, polarized beam!

(see Example 3)

2. Polarizing mirrors

Sandwich of nonmagnetic and magnetic metallic layers

$$n_\pm \propto \sqrt{\rho_{\text{coh}} \mp \rho_{\text{mag}}}$$



Reflectivity at the interface:

$$R = \left(\frac{n_0 - n_\pm}{n_0 + n_\pm}\right)^2$$

If $n_0 = |n_\pm|$, polarized beam!

(see S. Langridge lecture)

Science & Technology Facilities Council

3. ^{3}He spin filter

Match absorptions instead of cross sections or refractive indices

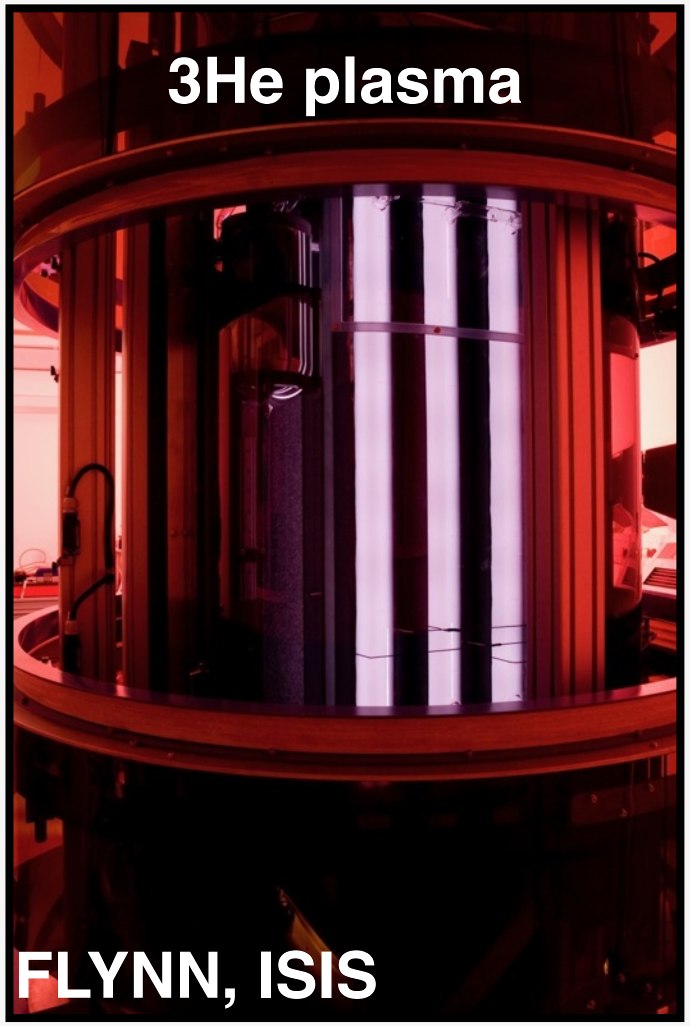
total absorption — spin-dependent

$$\sigma_{\pm} = \sigma_0 \pm \sigma_p$$

spin-independent

^{3}He has exactly matched σ_0 and σ_p, and therefore transmits only + or –

However, the spin-dependent part is only non-zero if the ^{3}He is polarised → lasers!



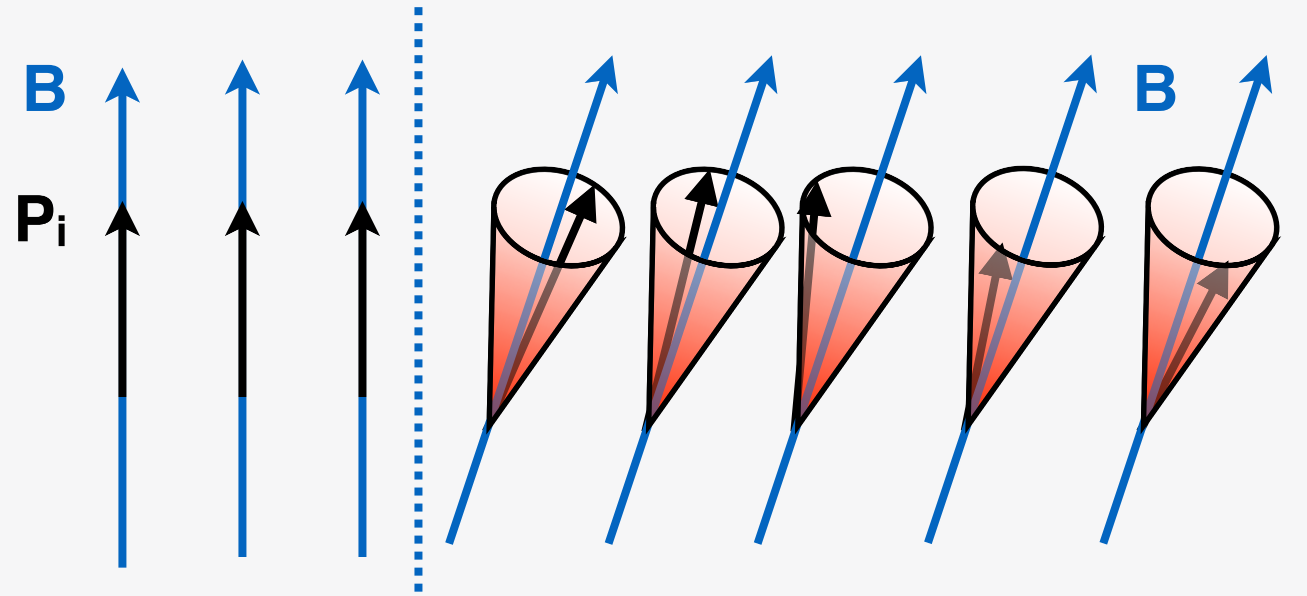
All three methods rely on matching spin-dependent/independent!

Manipulating the polarization

After creating a polarised beam, we need to **guide/rotate** it and **flip** its direction versus the magnetic field. This is done using magnetic fields.

If the direction of the magnetic field changes, the polarization **Larmor precesses** around the new field direction.

Larmor frequency $\omega_L = \gamma_n B$



The angle of the cone depends on the angle between the original field direction and the new field direction.

Manipulating the polarization

Science & Technology Facilities Council

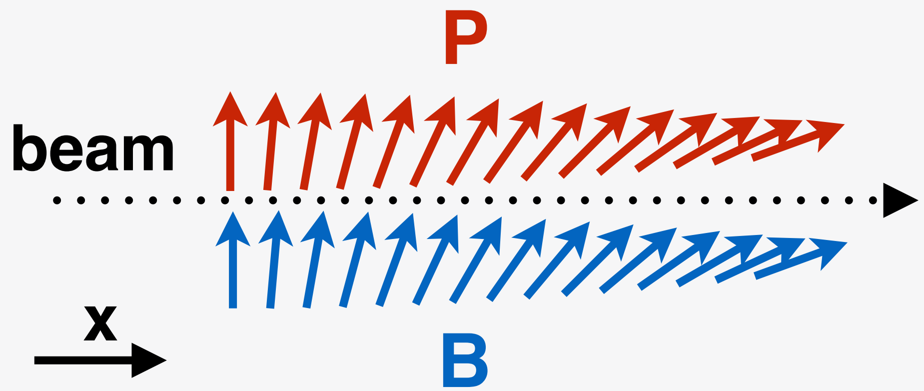
Let us now imagine we have a field changing at a constant rate $\omega_B = d\theta_B/dt$. We may then identify two cases by comparing this rate with the Larmor frequency:

$$A = \frac{\omega_L}{\omega_B} = \frac{|\gamma| B}{v_n (d\theta_B / dx)}$$

neutron velocity

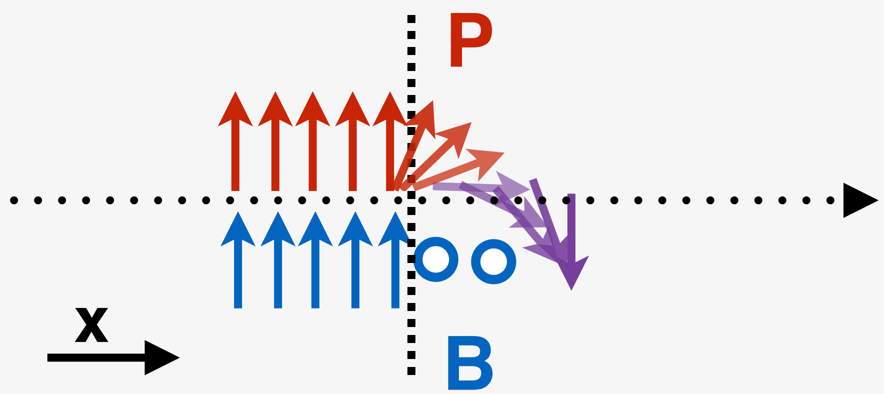
Adiabatic (A > 10)

The spin follows the rotating field direction



Non-adiabatic (A < 0.1)

The spin immediately begins precessing about the new direction



Slow changes → field rotation. Fast changes → precession/flipping

Guide fields/field rotators

Guide/rotating field is typically constructed using either permanent magnets or electromagnets:

XYZ field rotator

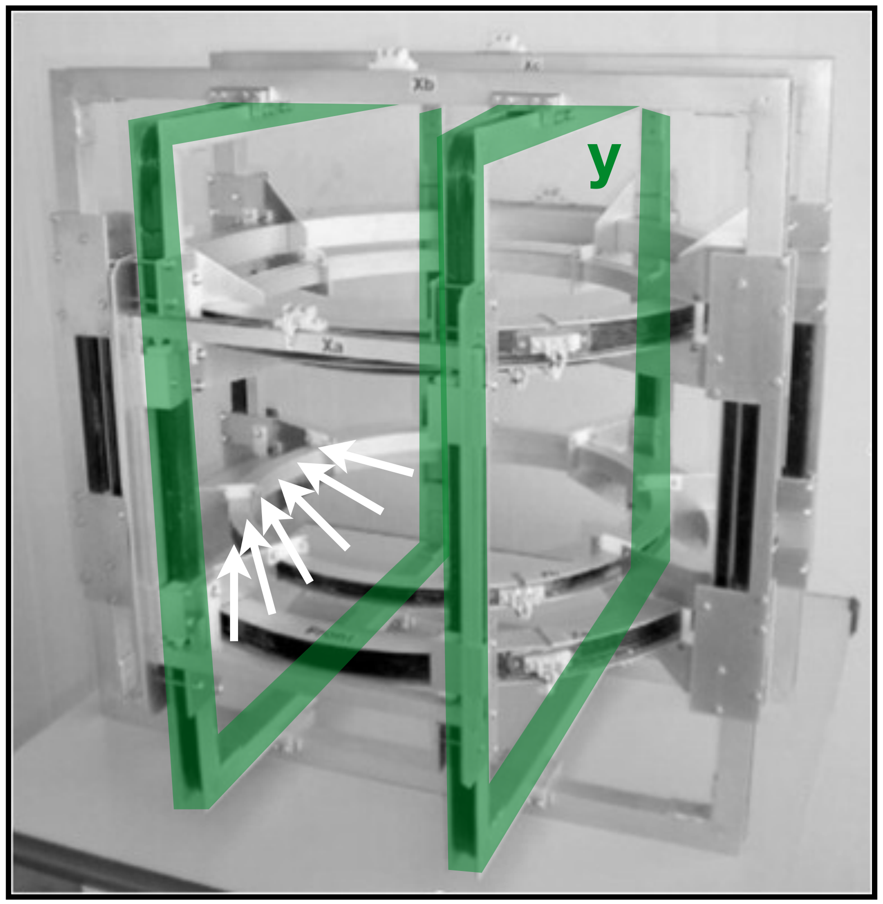


Photo: R. Stewart

Guide field

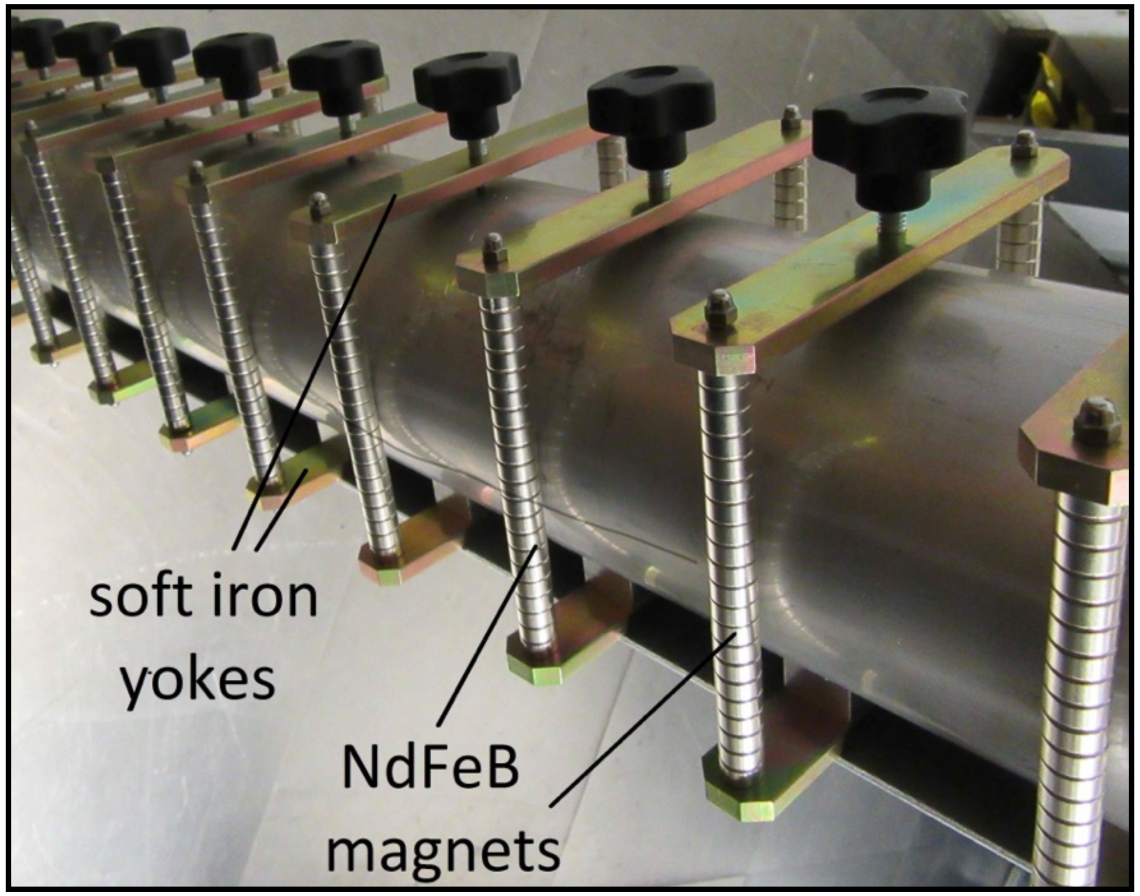
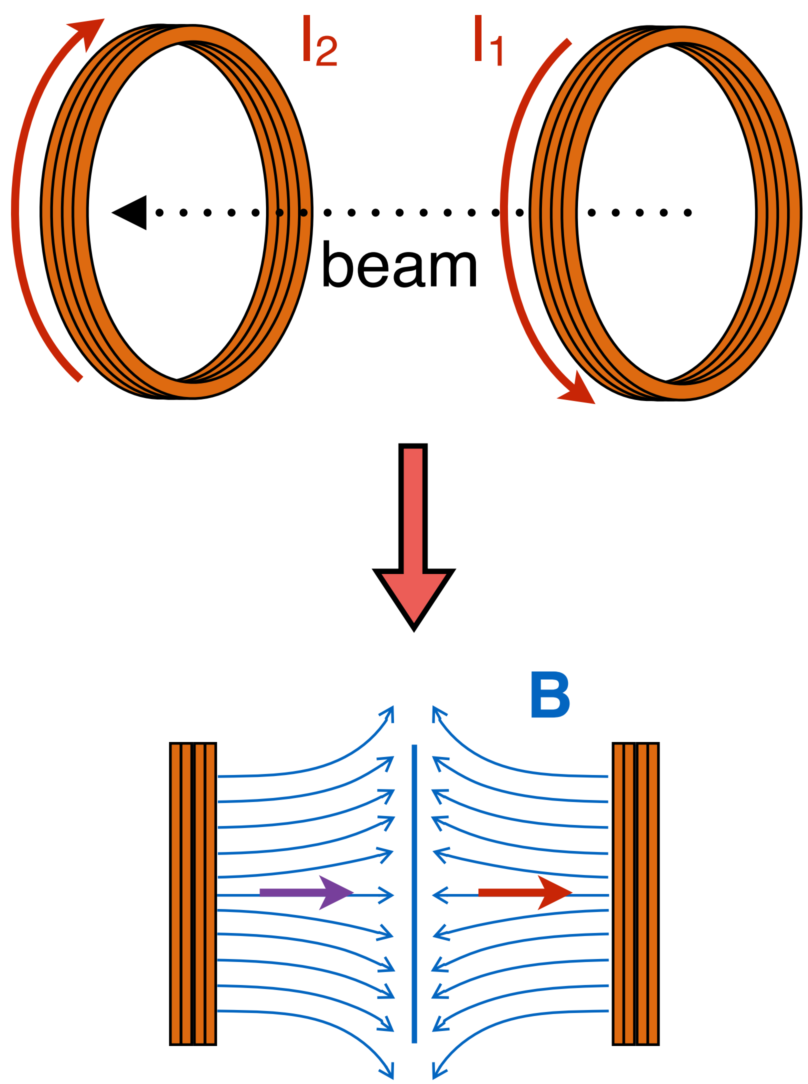


Photo: J. Kosata

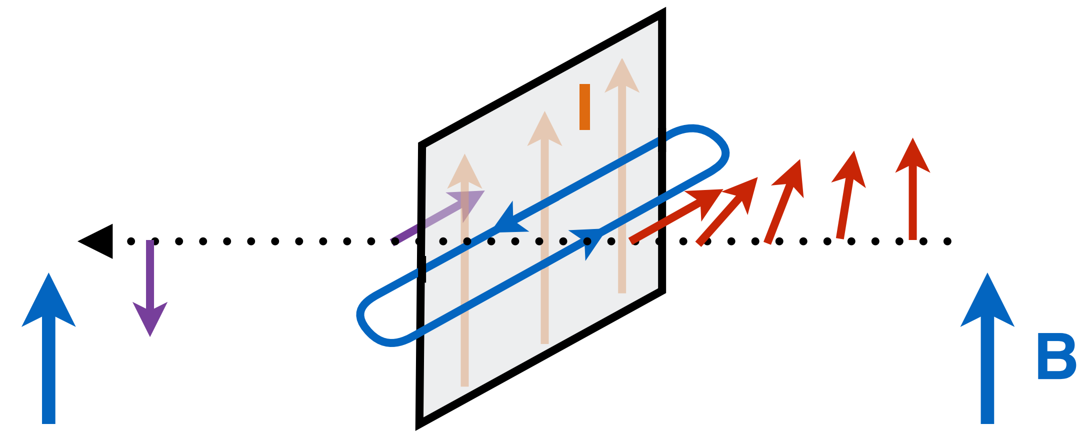
Non-adiabatic spin flippers

Drabkin

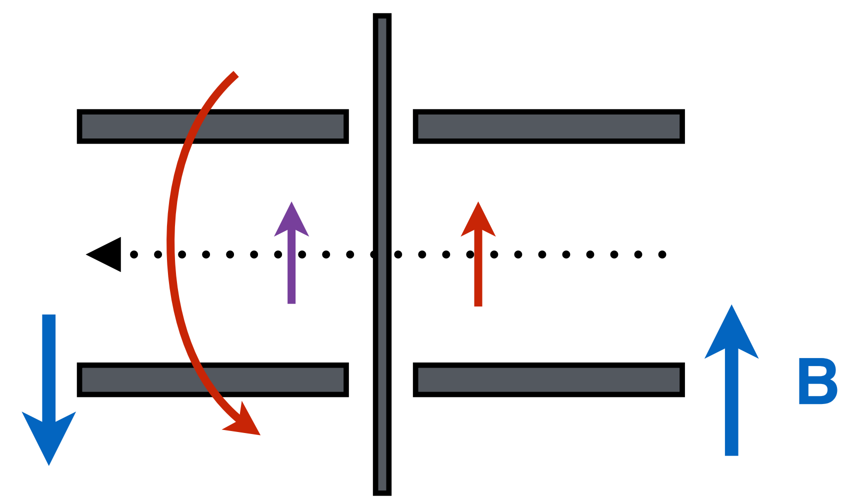


Field changes direction in the middle.

Dabbs foil



Cryoflipper



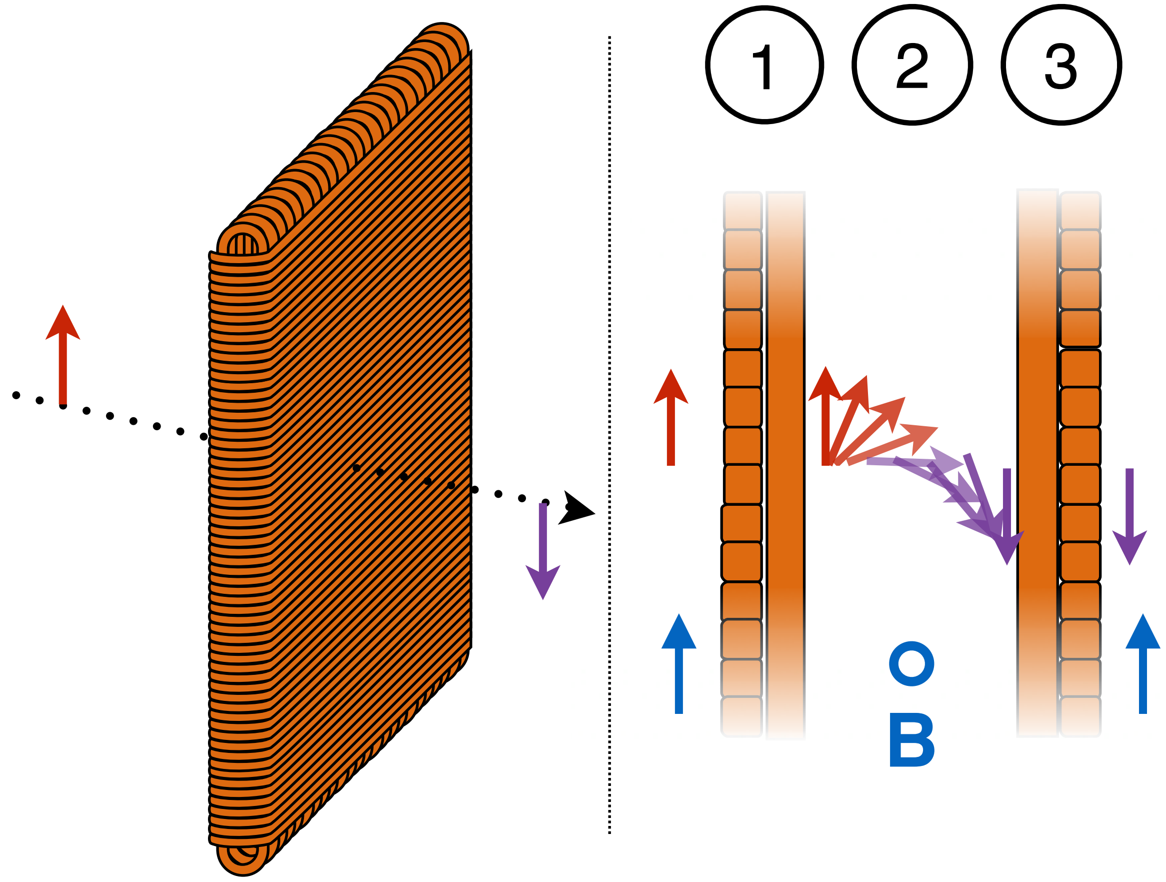
Meissner screen (Nb or YBCO)

Other types of spin flipper

Science & Technology Facilities Council

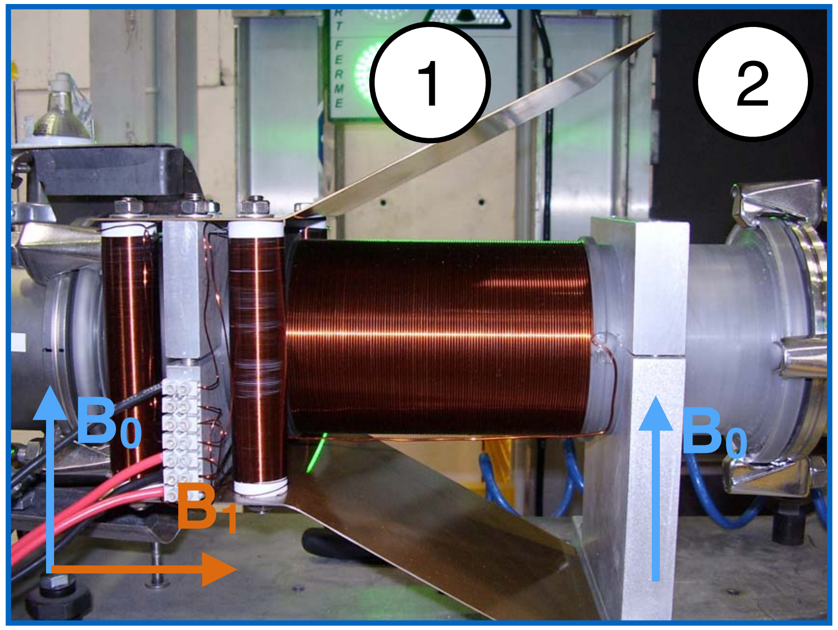
Alternatively, we can use Larmor precession combined with non-adiabatic trans.

Mezei



1. Non-adiabatic transition
2. Half a precession (π)
3. Non-adiabatic transition

Adiabatic Fast Passage



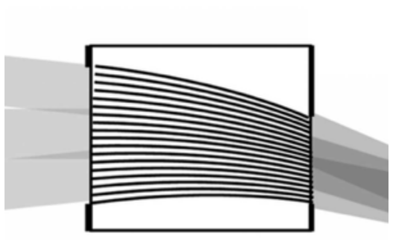
$$\mathbf{B}_{tot} = \left(B_0 + \frac{\omega}{\gamma}\right)\hat{z} + B_1\hat{x}$$

1. Reversal of B_{tot} with RF field
2. Non-adiabatic transition

Example instrument: D7, ILL

Science & Technology
Facilities Council

Polarizer
Supermirror
bender



Flipper
Mezei

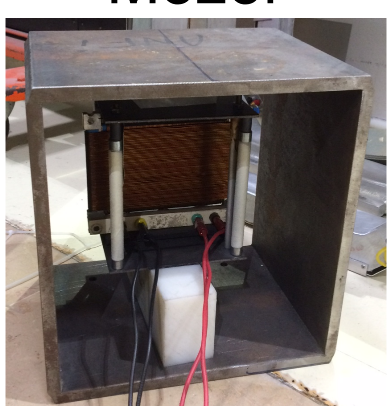
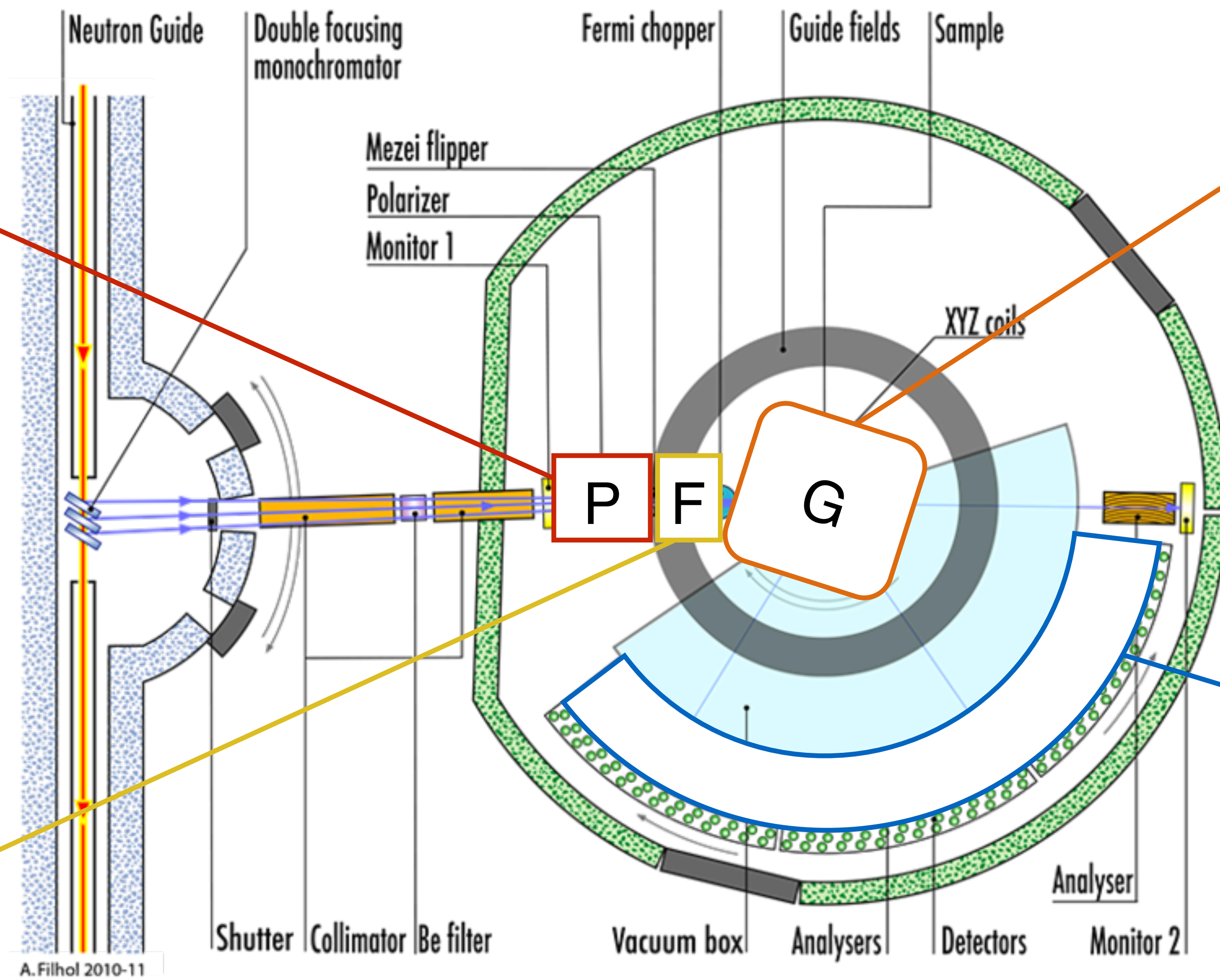
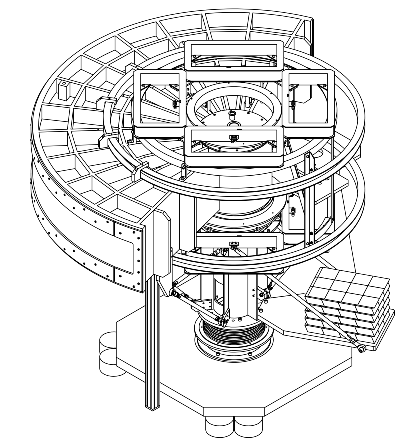


photo: A. Wildes



Stewart et. al.; Schärpf

Guide field
XYZ



Analyzer
Supermirror

(wide angle rare)

Generalising polarisation analysis

Science & Technology Facilities Council

Nuclear

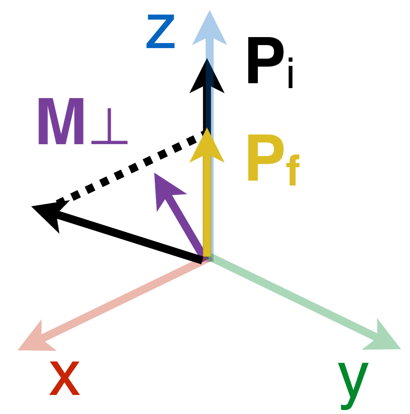
1. The nuclear coherent and isotope incoherent scattering is entirely NSF

2. The spin incoherent scattering is 1/3 **NSF** and 2/3 **SF**

Magnetic

3. The components of the sample magnetisation perpendicular to **Q** and…

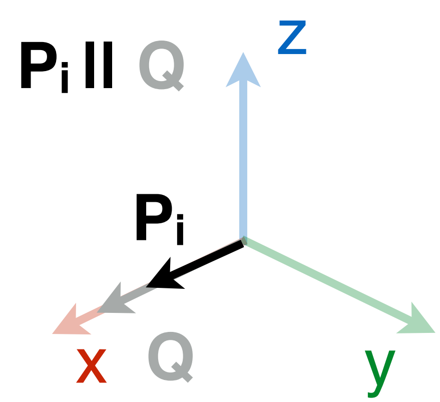
- … parallel to $\mathbf{P}_i$: **NSF**
- … perpendicular to $\mathbf{P}_i$: **SF**

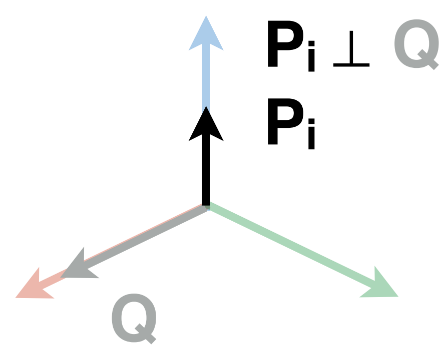


The || - ⊥ method

We saw earlier the case of cross section separation for nuclear/spin incoherent and nuclear/magnetic scattering (Examples 1 and 2). What if all three types are present?

$(d\sigma/d\Omega)_{NSF}$: $(d\sigma/d\Omega)_{SF}$





	$P_i \parallel Q$	$P_i \perp Q$
Magnetic	0 : 1	1/2 : 1/2
Spin incoherent	1/3 : 2/3	1/3 : 2/3
Nuclear	1 : 0	1 : 0

e.g.

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{mag}} = 2\left[\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{\mathbf{P}||\mathbf{Q}}_{\mathrm{SF}} - \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{\mathbf{P}\perp\mathbf{Q}}_{\mathrm{SF}}\right]$$

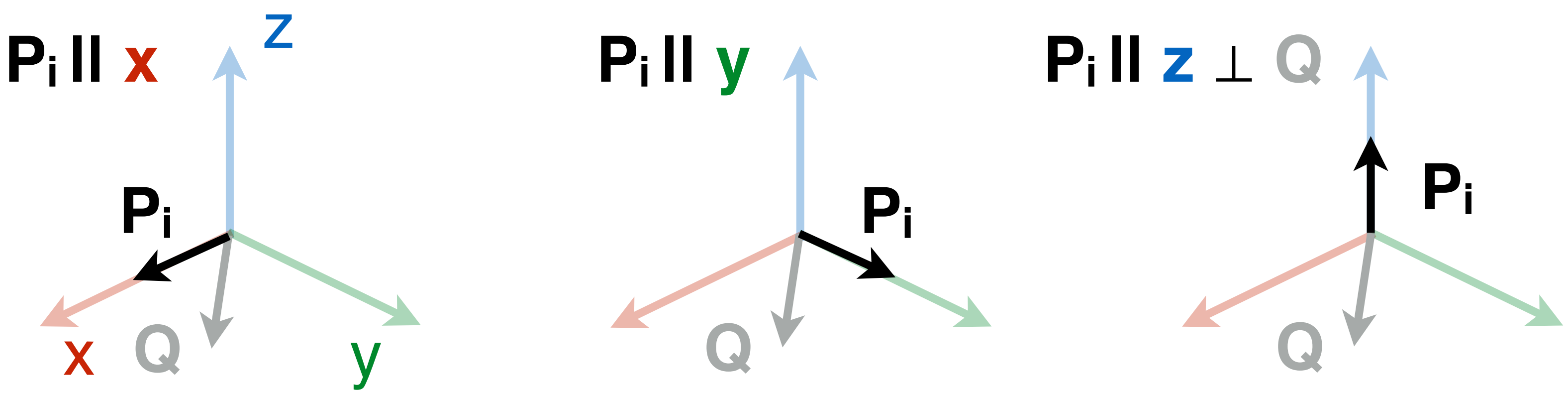
Stewart; Schärpf

2D XYZ polarization analysis

Science & Technology Facilities Council

In the case where we have a 2D detector, like in a diffractometer, it is no longer possible to align **Q** and $\mathbf{P}_i$ for every detector. However:

$(d\sigma/d\Omega)_{NSF}$: $(d\sigma/d\Omega)_{SF}$



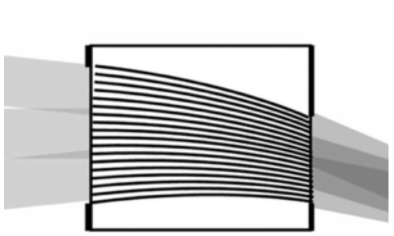
	$\mathbf{P}_i \parallel x$	$\mathbf{P}_i \parallel y$	$\mathbf{P}_i \parallel z \perp Q$
Magnetic	$1/2(\cos^2\alpha)$: $1/2(\cos^2\alpha+1)$	: $1/2(\sin^2\alpha+1)$	1/2 : 1/2
Spin incoherent	1/3 : 2/3	1/3 : 2/3	1/3 : 2/3
Nuclear	1 : 0	1 : 0	1 : 0

e.g.

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{\mathrm{mag}} = 2\left[\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{\mathrm{x}}_{\mathrm{SF}} + \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{\mathrm{y}}_{\mathrm{SF}} - 2\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{\mathrm{z}}_{\mathrm{SF}}\right]$$

D7, ILL

Polarizer
Supermirror bender



Flipper
Mezei

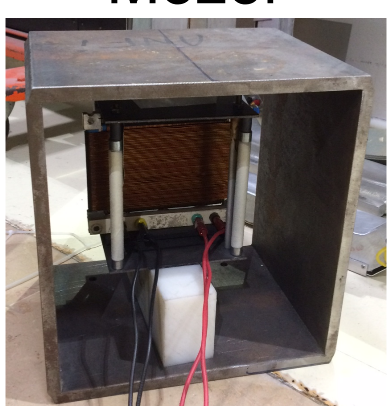
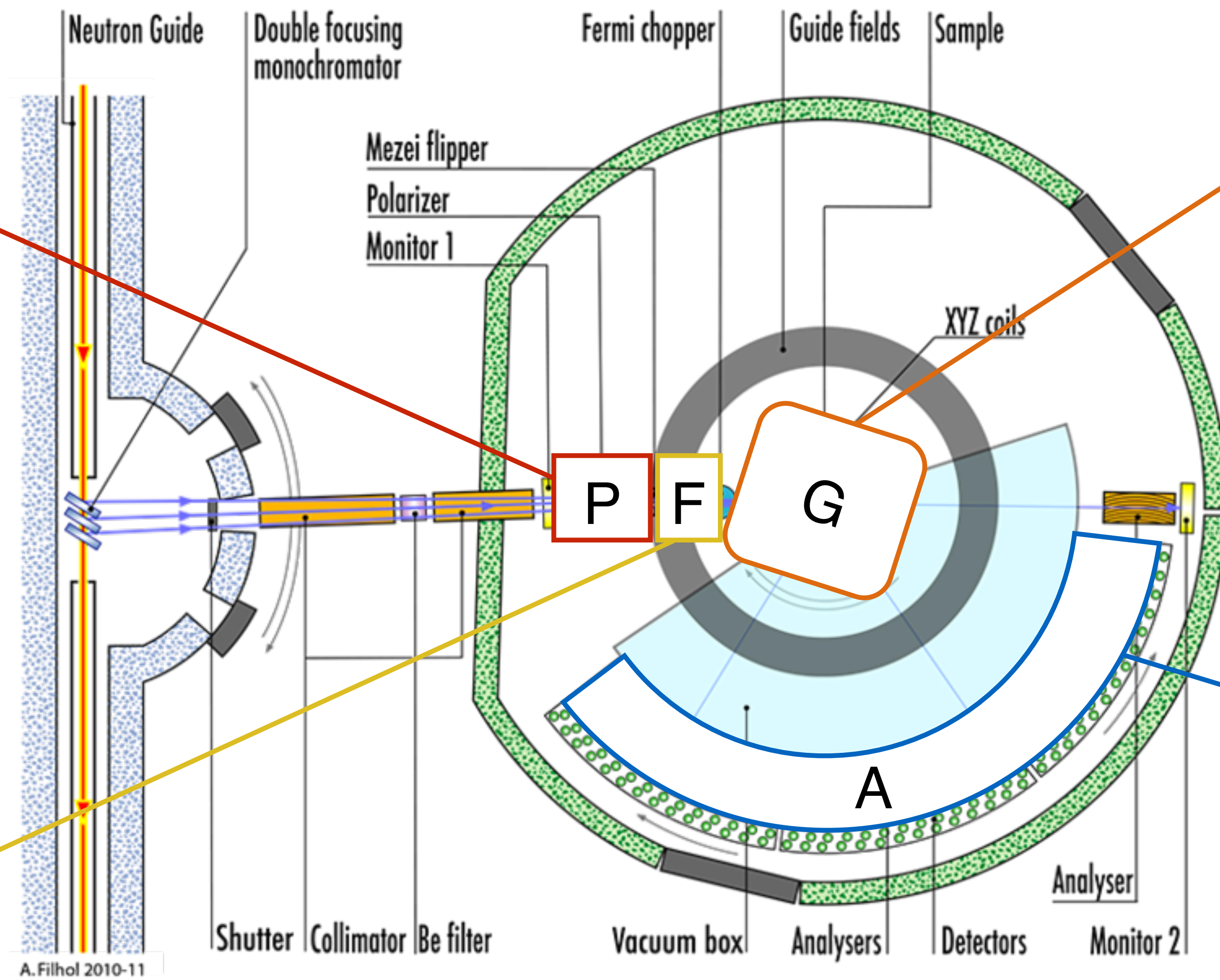
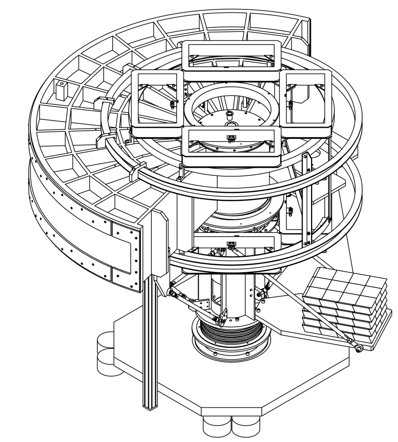


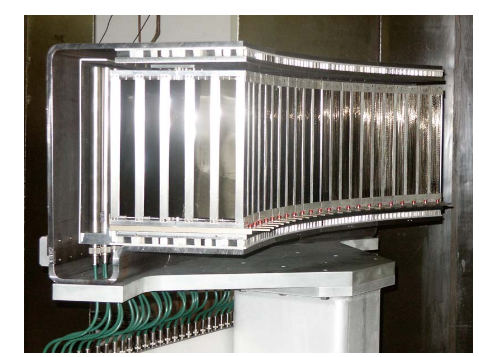
photo: A. Wildes



Guide field
XYZ



Analyzer
Supermirror

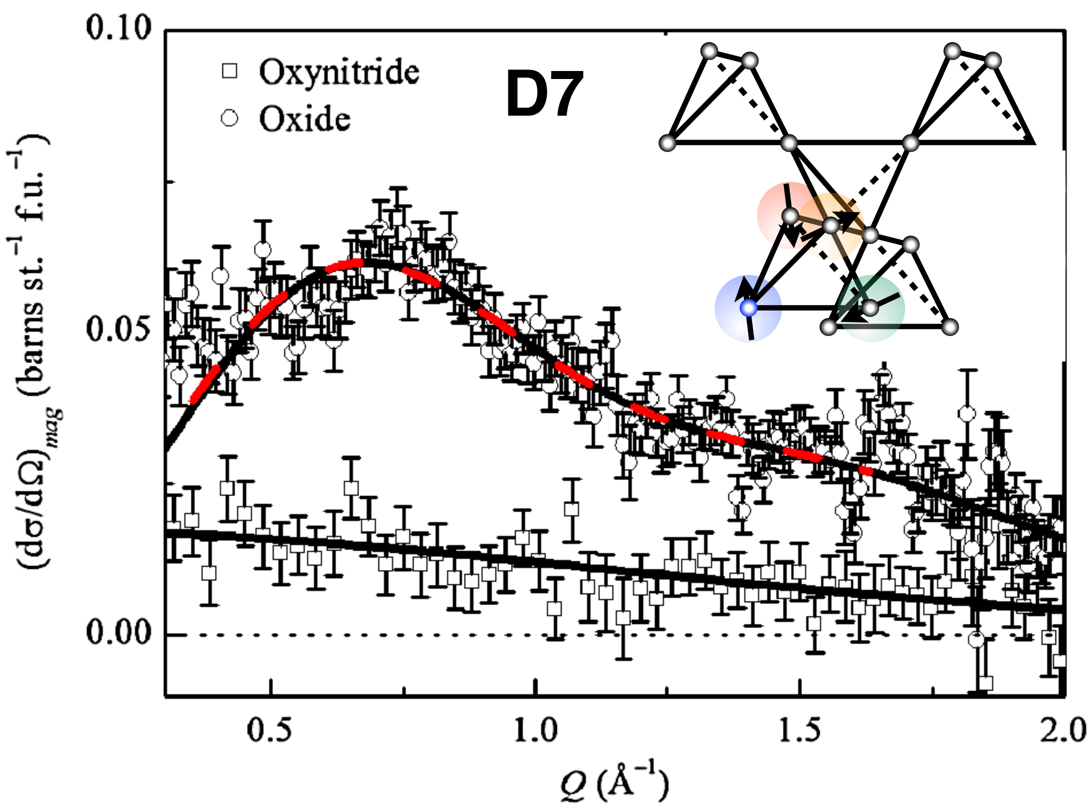


(wide angle rare)

Examples: 2D XYZ PA

This technique can be used to separate very small signals in magnetically disordered powders (scatter like paramagnets):

Frustrated magnets

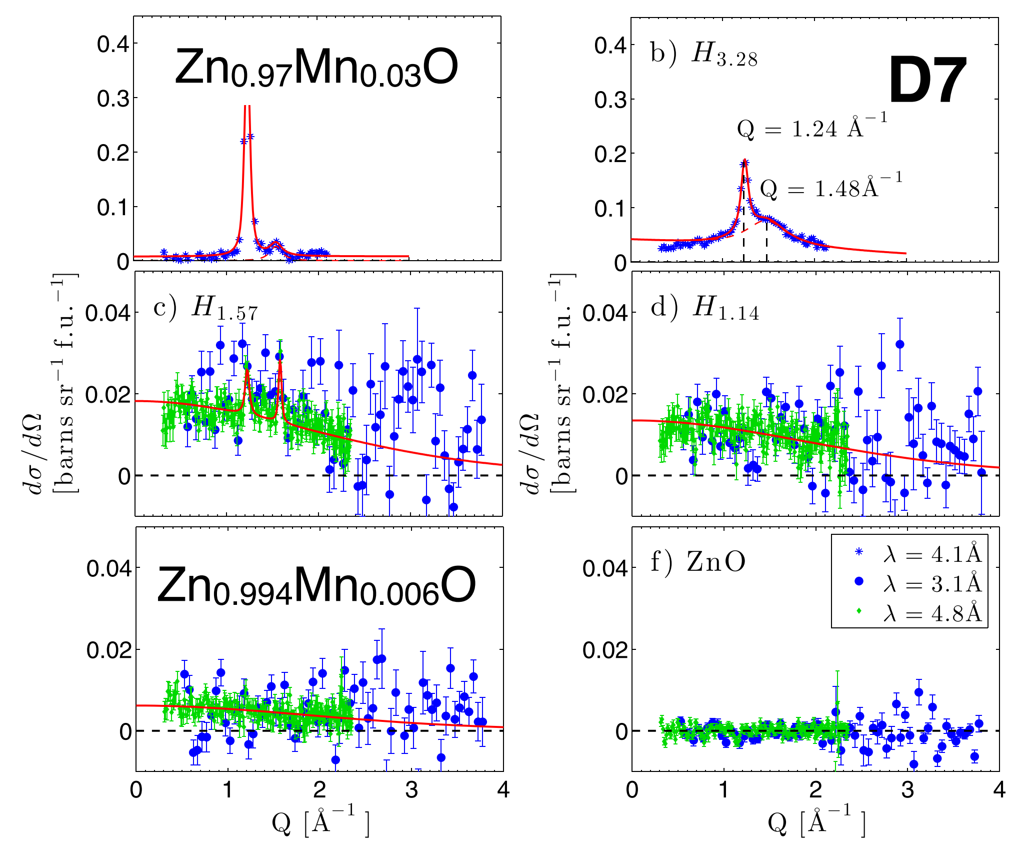


Magnetic frustration destroys magnetic order, only short range order

$Lu_2Mo_2O_5N_2$: **6% of S = 1/2!**

Clark et. al.

Magnetic semiconductors



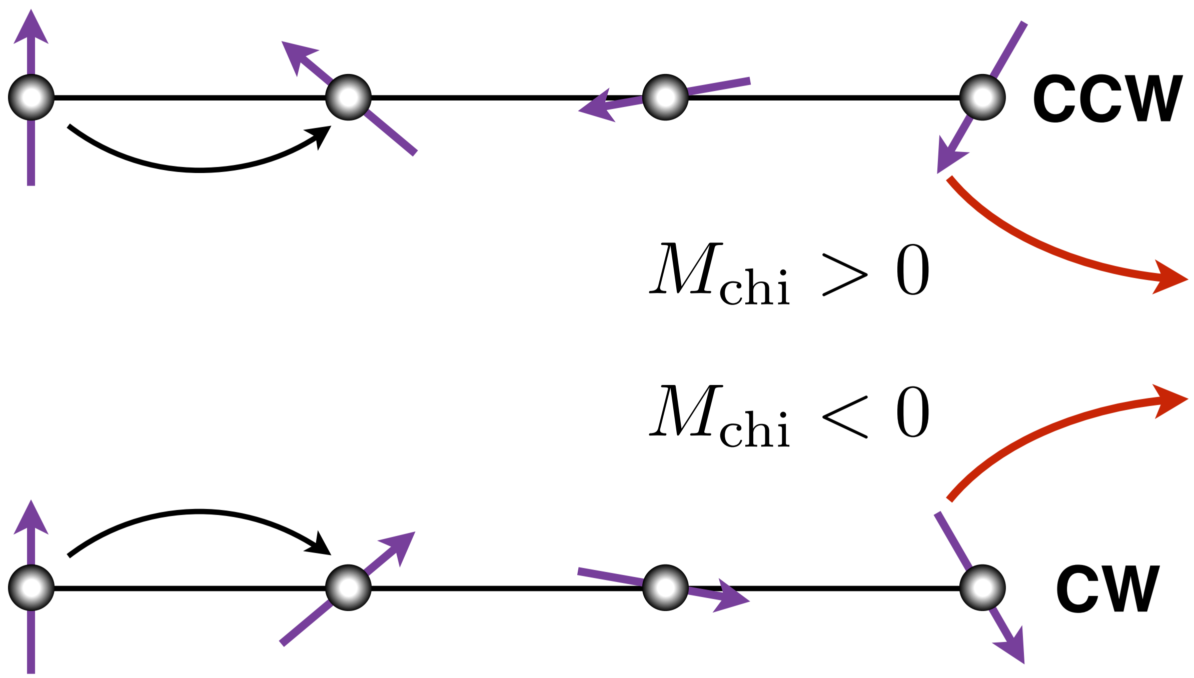
Is the RT ferromagnetism intrinsic?
No! Clusters at high concentrations.

Lancon et. al.

XYZ LPA: Magnetic single crystals

If the scattering is not paramagnetic-like, we're back to having to consider the directions of **Q**, **M**, and $\mathbf{P}_i$. This is usually the case for single crystals.

Other complications we may encounter are the presence of **nuclear-magnetic interference** (Example 3), and **chiral scattering** for non-collinear structures:



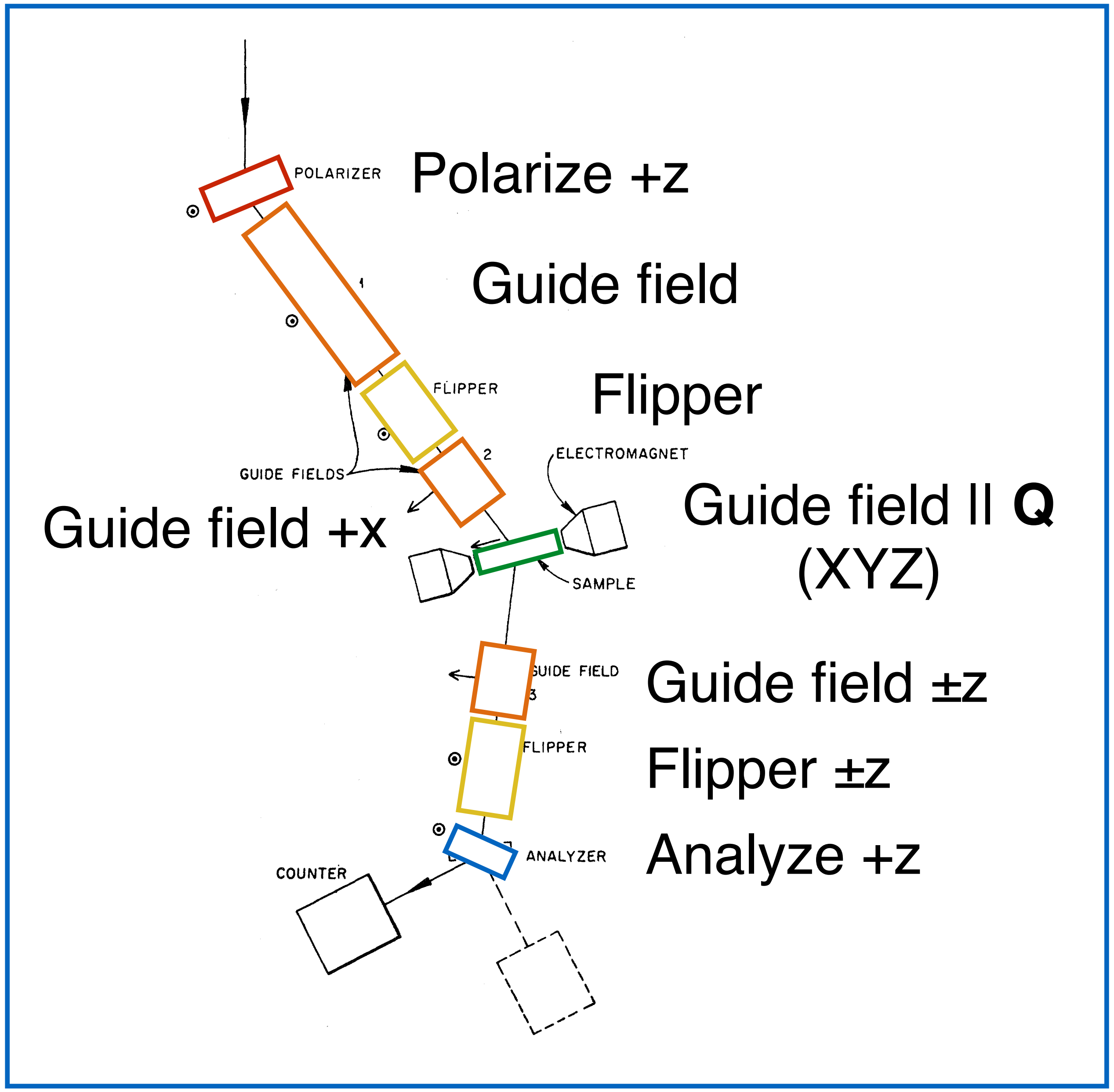
SF cross section || **Q** contains handedness

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-}^{\mathbf{P}_i||\mathbf{Q}} \propto |M_{\perp}^{\perp\mathbf{P}_i}|^2 - PM_{chi}$$

Not visible in unpolarized!

If we can set **x** || **Q**, and if we use two flippers, it is still possible (in most cases) to separate all of the components (see Blume, Ressouche for the maths).

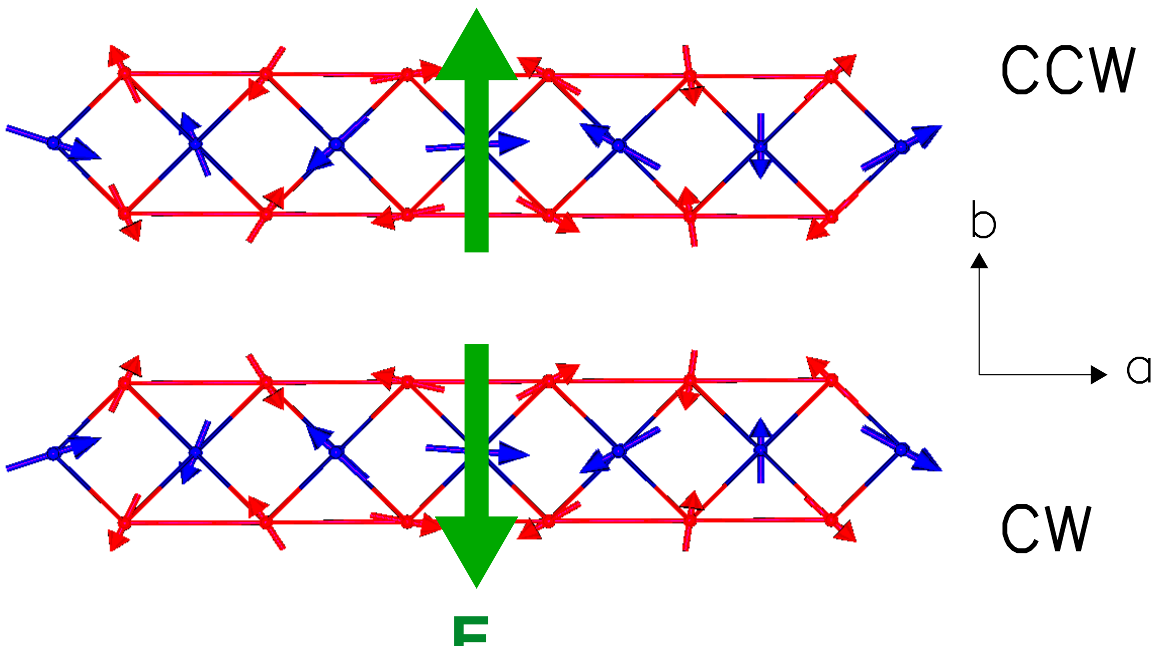
XYZ LPA: Instrument



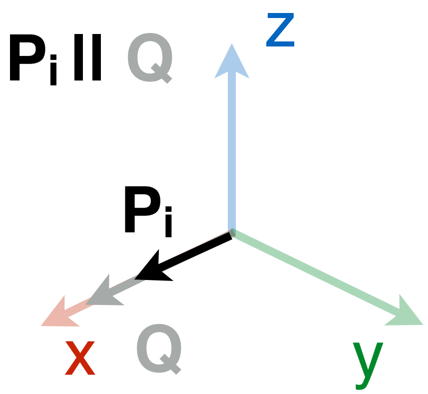
Triple axis spectrometers, *e.g.*

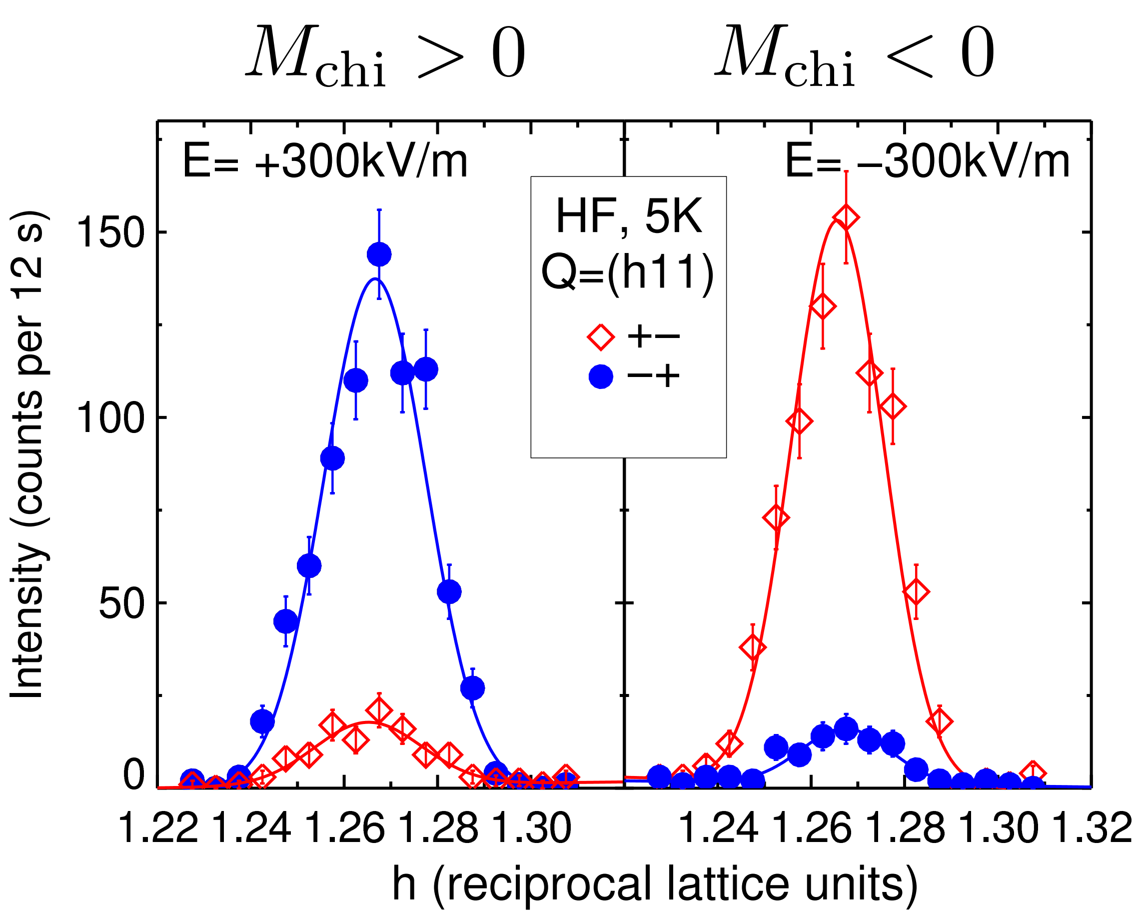
Example: non-collinear structure

In the multiferroic $Ni_3V_2O_8$, we can select handedness by applying an electric field:



$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{+-}^{\mathbf{P}_i||\mathbf{Q}} \propto |M_{\perp}^{\perp\mathbf{P}_i}|^2 - PM_{chi}$$

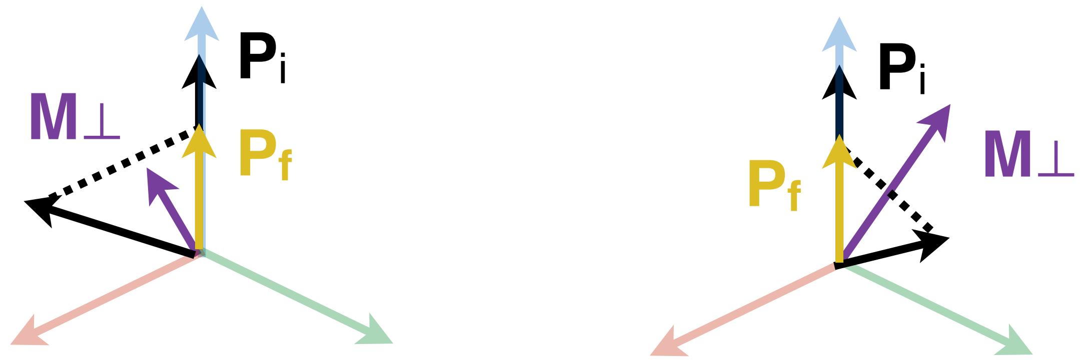




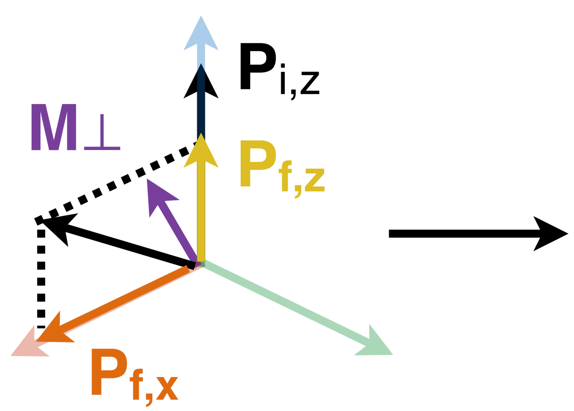
Cabrera et. al.

Spherical polarimetry

In some cases, crystal symmetry means that different magnetic structures look identical in LPA. This is a result of the projection onto the $\mathbf{P}_i$ (field) direction:



In this case, LPA is insufficient, and we need to measure all components of the scattered polarization. This is achieved by performing **spherical polarimetry**



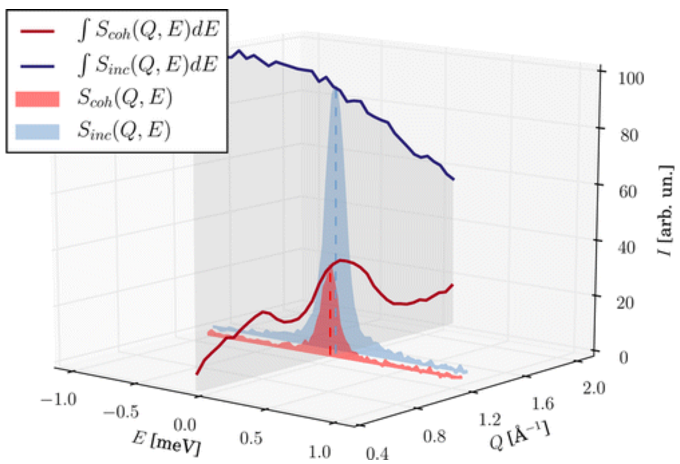
$$\begin{pmatrix} P_{f,x} \\ P_{f,y} \\ P_{f,z} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} P_{xx} & P_{xy} & \boxed{P_{xz}} \\ P_{yx} & P_{yy} & P_{yz} \\ P_{zx} & P_{zy} & \boxed{P_{zz}} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} P_{i,x} \\ P_{i,y} \\ P_{i,z} \end{pmatrix}$$

In spherical polarimetry, projection avoided by placing sample in zero field, and carefully controlling $\mathbf{P}_i$ and $\mathbf{P}_f$ with fields and flippers (see Brown, Forsyth, Tasset).

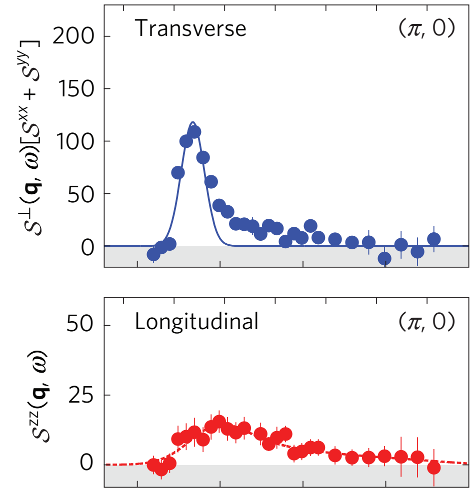
Polarized neutron scattering beyond magnetic diffraction

PA beyond magnetic diffraction

Inelastic scattering

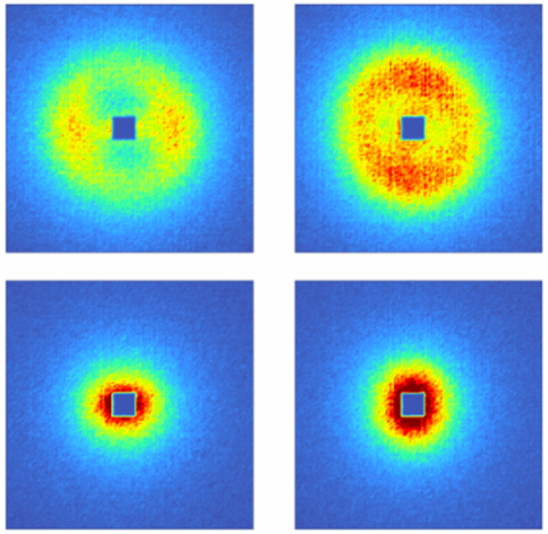


Burankova *J. Phys Chem. B*



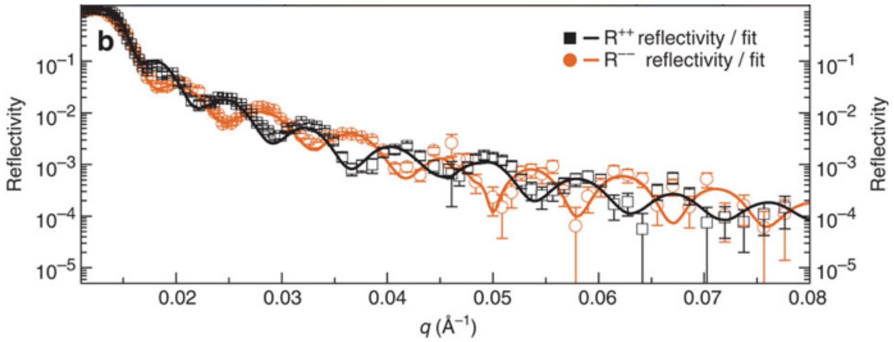
Dalla Piazza *Nat. Phys.*

Polarized SANS

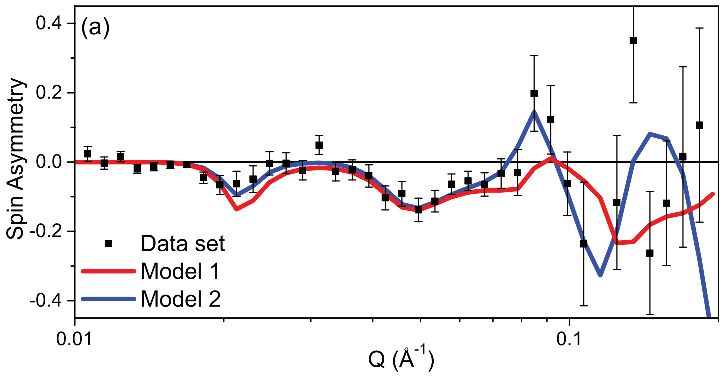


Klepp, *Materials*

Polarized Reflectometry (S. Langridge)

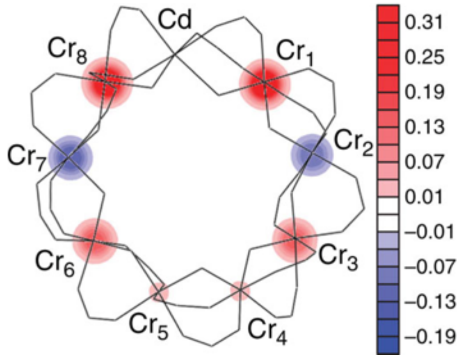


Spurgeon *Nature Comms.*



Satchell *J. Phys.: Condens. Matter*

Spin Density



Guidi *Nature Comms.*

Example: Inelastic scattering

One of the most promising future applications is inelastic polarised neutron scattering on wide-angle inelastic spectrometers.

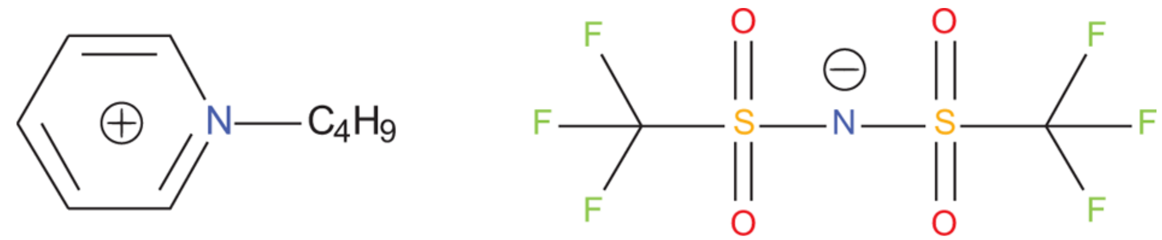
Ionic liquids

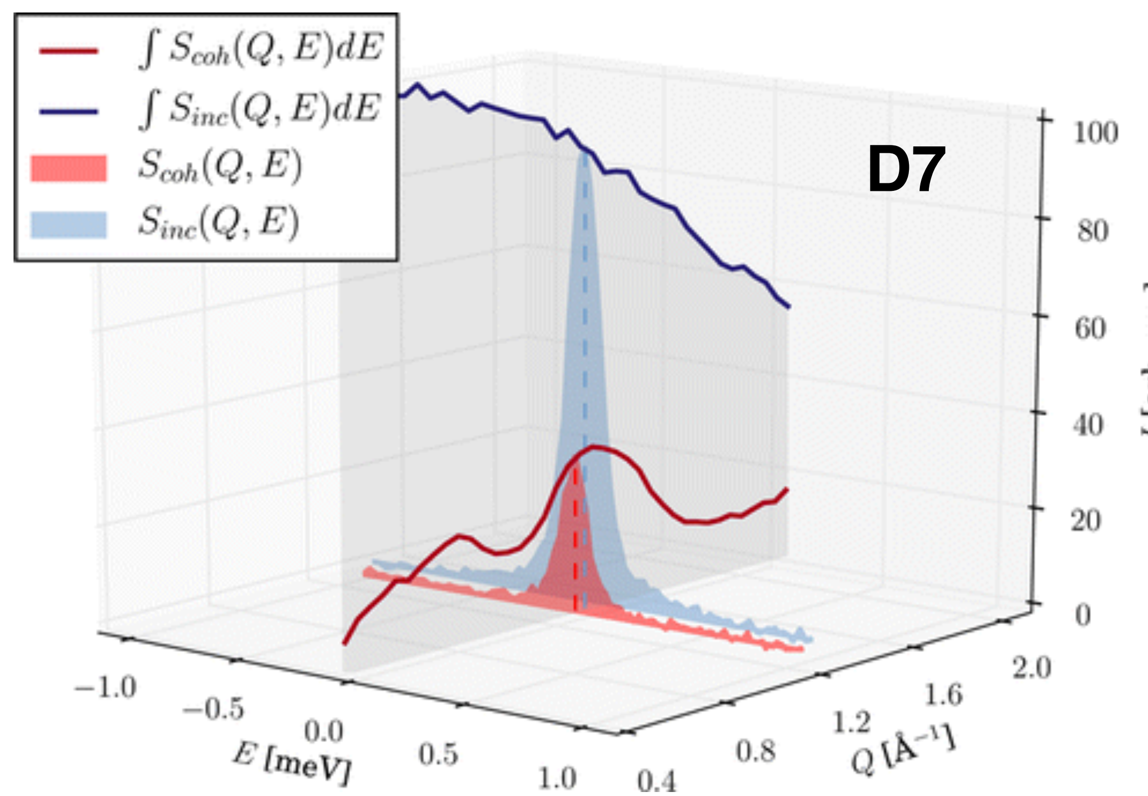
Ionic liquids are molten salts with useful solvent properties.

Quasielastic scattering contains information on slow dynamics — diffusion, rotation, etc. (see V. Garcia-Sakai lecture).

Polarized neutrons allow for separation of collective $S_{coh}(Q,E)$ and single-particle dynamics $S_{inc}(Q,E)$.

Burankova et. al.



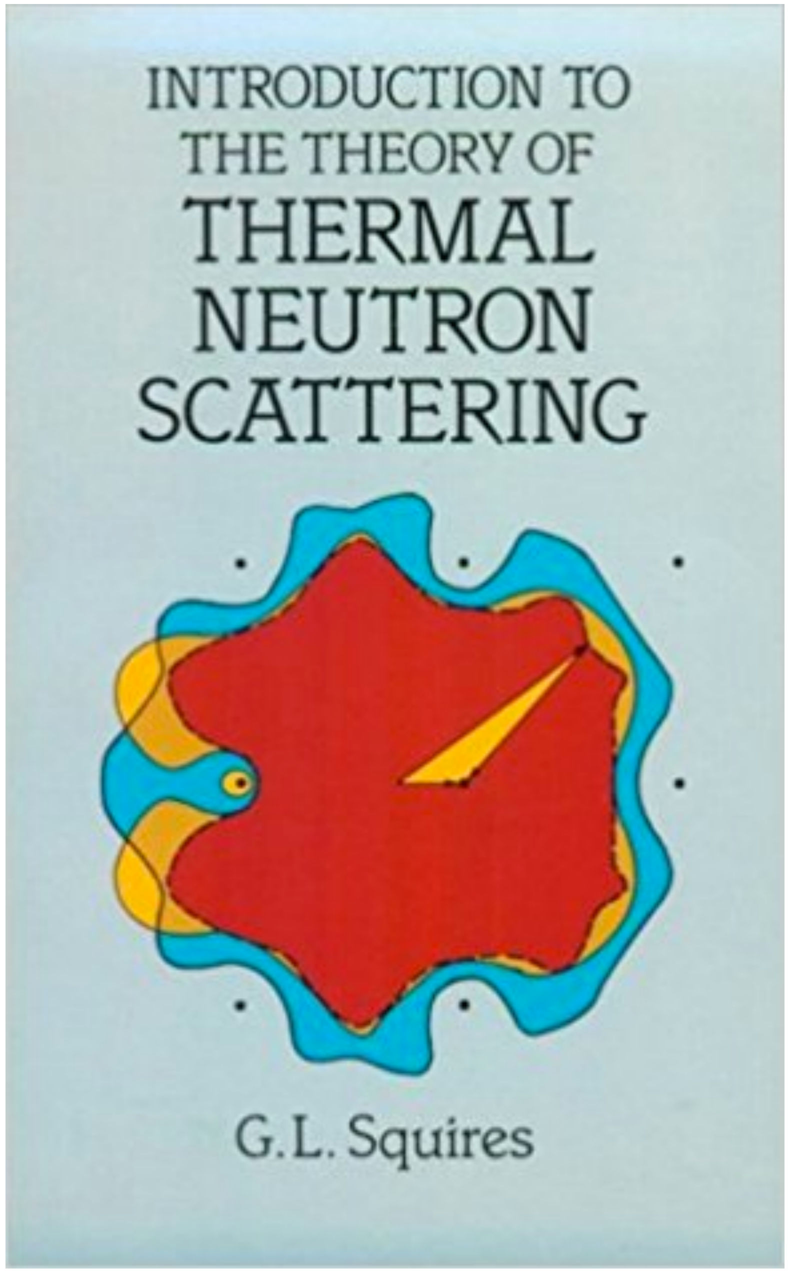


Conclusion

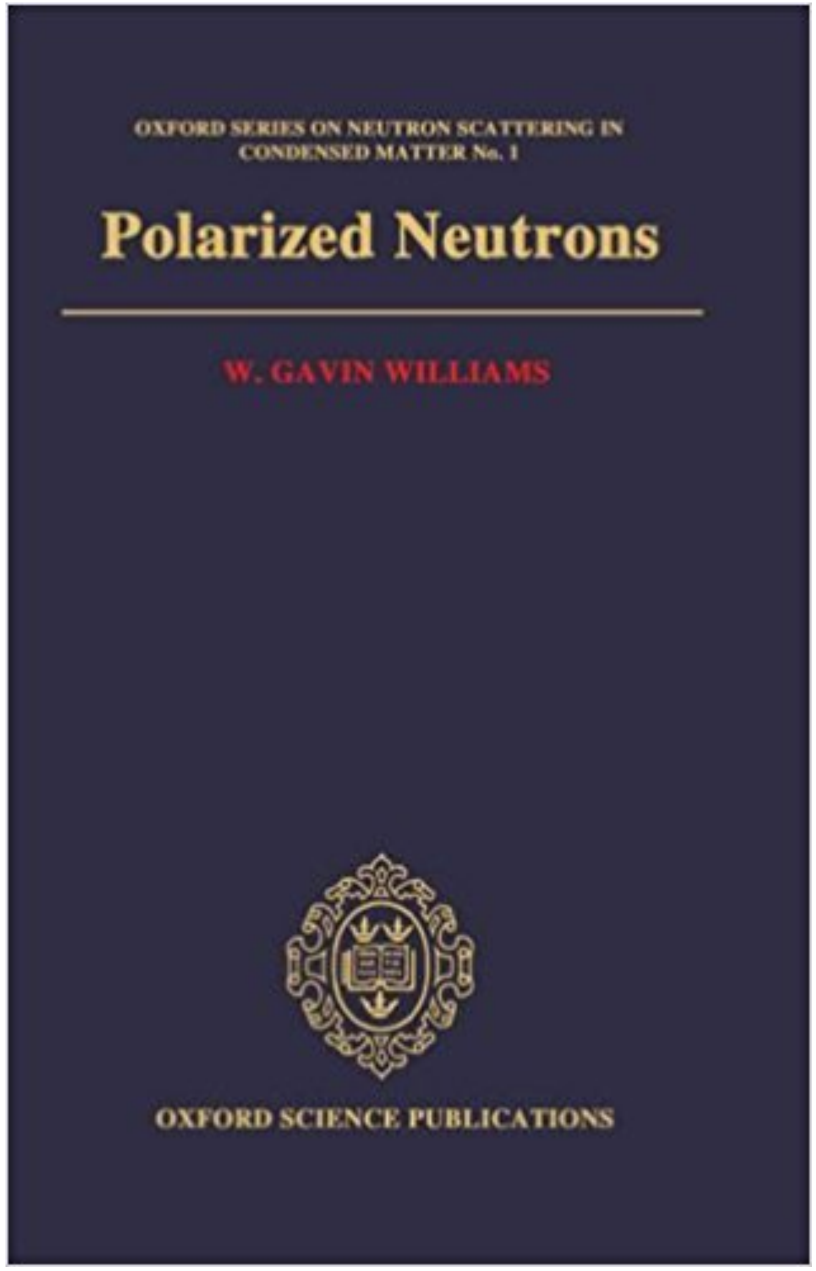
1. Polarized neutron beams interact with magnetic moments (both nuclear and electronic) in samples. The scattered polarization and cross section depends on the type of scattering process.

2. Polarized neutron beams can therefore be used to:
   - Separate cross section components
   - Determine magnetic moment orientations
   - Access parts of the cross section inaccessible to unpolarised neutrons

Books



Basic theory



Devices

Further reading

Science & Technology Facilities Council

Theory

LPA: Moon, Riste, Koehler Phys Rev. **181** (1969) 920

LPA: Blume, Phys. Rev. **130** (1963) 1670

Polarimetry: Brown, Forsyth, Tasset, Proc. Roy. Soc **442** (1969) 147

2D XYZ: Schärpf and Capellmann, phys. stat. sol. a **135** (1993) 359

LPA+Polarimetry: Ressouche Collection SFN **13** (2014) 02002

Examples

Multiferroic $Ni_3V_2O_8$: Cabrera et. al. Phys. Rev. Lett. **103** (2009) 087201

Ionic liquids: Burankova J. Phys. Chem. B **118** (2014) 14452

Frustrated magnet $Lu_2Mo_2O_5N_2$: Clark et. al. Phys. Rev. Lett. **113** (2014) 117201

Magnetic semiconductor Mn:ZnO: Lancon et. al. Appl. Phys. Lett. **109** (2016) 252405

Instrumentation

LPA: Moon, Riste, Koehler Phys Rev. **181** (1969) 920

D7 and 2D XYZ: Stewart et. al. J. Appl. Cryst. **42** (2009) 69

Polarimetry: Tasset, Physica B **267** (1999) 69