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The interaction between light and electrons in semiconductors forms the basis for many interesting and practically significant properties. This book examines the fundamental physics underlying this rich complexity of photoelectronic properties of semiconductors, and will familiarise the reader with the relatively simple models that are useful in describing these fundamentals. The basic physics is also illustrated with typical recent examples of experimental data and observations.

Following introductory material on the basic concepts, the book moves on to consider a wide range of phenomena, including photoconductivity, recombination effects, photoelectronic methods of defect analysis, photoeffects at grain boundaries, amorphous semiconductors, photovoltaic effects and photoeffects in quantum wells and superlattices. The author is Professor of Materials Science and Electrical Engineering at Stanford University, and has taught this material for many years. He is an experienced author, his earlier books having found wide acceptance and use. This book represents, as much as any one book can, his 44 years of research to date.

Readers will therefore find this volume to be an up-to-date and concise summary of the major concepts, models and results. It is intended as a text for graduate students, but will be an important resource for anyone researching in this interesting field.

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# Photoelectronic properties of semiconductors

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*Ever since the creation of the world  
His invisible nature, namely, His eternal  
power and deity,  
has been clearly perceived  
in the things that have been made.*

*Romans 1:20–(RSV)*

# Contents

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<i>Preface</i>	xvii
<b>1 Introductory concepts</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Intrinsic optical absorption	7
1.3 Extrinsic optical absorption	9
1.4 Electrical contacts	10
Blocking contacts	11
Ohmic contacts	14
Single injection	15
Double injection	17
<b>2 Photoconductivity parameters</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Overview	18
2.2 Measures of photosensitivity	20
Specific sensitivity	20
Detectivity	20
Photoconductivity gain	21
2.3 Spectral response of photoconductivity	21
2.4 Speed of response: effect of traps	26
Decrease in speed of response	27
Decrease in drift mobility	27
Decrease in photosensitivity	28
2.5 Simple kinetics: intrinsic semiconductor	28
Insulator case	29
Semiconductor case	30
2.6 Maximum gain	30
2.7 Types of photoconducting systems	31
Homogeneous material	31

	p–n junctions	33
	n–p–n junctions	35
	Polycrystalline intergrain barriers	36
2.8	Mathematical models for photoconductivity	39
	Complete mathematical model	39
	Steady-state Fermi levels	41
	Demarcation levels	42
<b>3</b>	<b>One-center recombination models</b>	<b>45</b>
3.1	The simplest one-center model	45
	n-equation in steady state	46
	p-equation in steady state	47
	Qualitative evaluation	47
	Specific solutions: n-equation	47
	Specific solutions: p-equation	48
	A simple computer approach	49
3.2	Insulator model including thermal processes	50
3.3	General large-signal model	50
3.4	Model for sublinear behavior without traps	52
3.5	One-center model with traps	56
<b>4</b>	<b>The Shockley–Read one-center model</b>	<b>60</b>
4.1	General properties of the model	60
4.2	Case A: small signals, equal lifetimes	62
4.3	Case B: large signals, equal lifetimes	64
4.4	Case C: small signals, unequal lifetimes	65
4.5	Case D: large signals, unequal lifetimes	65
4.6	Comparison with computer model calculations	67
4.7	Two Shockley–Read recombination centers	67
<b>5</b>	<b>Two-center recombination effects</b>	<b>71</b>
5.1	Two-center phenomena	71
	Imperfection sensitization	72
	Supralinear photoconductivity	73
	Thermal quenching	76
	Optical quenching	76
	Negative photoconductivity	79
	Photoconductivity saturation with illumination intensity	80
5.2	A qualitative two-center model	81
5.3	Examples of sensitizing imperfections	82
5.4	Fermi level and demarcation level analysis	83

<i>Contents</i>	xi
5.5 Negative photoconductivity	87
5.6 Photoconductivity saturation with increasing photoexcitation rate	89
5.7 A simple analytical two-center model	91
Low photoexcitation rate: beginning of supralinear photoconductivity	93
High photoexcitation rate: end of supralinear photoconductivity	94
5.8 Calculations with the general model	94
5.9 Specific examples	96
Identifying the sensitizing center	96
Sensitizing centers in solid solutions	98
High impurity concentration effects	99
Silicon single crystals with Zn impurity	101
<b>6 Recombination processes</b>	<b>105</b>
6.1 Radiative recombination	105
Intuitive approach	105
Detailed balance for intrinsic recombination	106
Dipole approximation	106
6.2 Phonon emission: Coulomb attractive imperfection	108
Simplest model	108
Drift equal to diffusion	108
Cascade capture with multiphonon emission	109
6.3 Coulomb repulsive imperfection	110
6.4 Non-radiative recombination: Auger	111
6.5 Summary of recombination cross sections	113
<b>7 Steady state photoelectronic analysis</b>	<b>114</b>
7.1 Temperature dependence of dark conductivity	114
7.2 Dark Hall effect	116
7.3 Dark thermoelectric effect	117
7.4 Dark Schottky barrier capacitance	118
7.5 Optical absorption	119
7.6 Photoconductivity	119
7.7 Minority carrier lifetime	120
Photoconductivity saturation with electric field	120
Photomagnetolectric effect	121
Surface photovoltage	122
Electron- and photon-beam-induced current	123
Spectral response of junctions	123



xii *Contents*

	Steady-state photocarrier grating technique	124
	Transient methods	124
7.8	Photo-Hall effects	124
	Change in scattering cross section by photoexcitation	125
	Effects associated with optical quenching	127
	Effects associated with temperature dependence of lifetime	129
	Persistent effects in high-resistivity GaAs	132
7.9	Photothermoelectric effects	134
7.10	Photocapacitance	136
7.11	Luminescence	141
	Luminescence analysis of ZnSe:Cu crystals	143
<b>8</b>	<b>Transient photoelectronic analysis</b>	<b>149</b>
8.1	Representative decay measurements	149
	Exponential decay rate	150
	Strong retrapping	150
	Rate window	151
	Thermally stimulated behavior	151
8.2	Decay of a single level	151
	$\tau$ constant; no retrapping; neglect $dn/dt$	152
	$\tau$ not constant; no retrapping; neglect $dn/dt$	153
	$\tau$ constant; no retrapping; include $dn/dt$	153
8.3	Strong retrapping	153
	Trap above Fermi level; $E_t > E_{Fn}$	154
	Trap below Fermi level; $E_t \ll E_{Fn}$	154
	$\tau$ not constant; $E_t > E_{Fn}$	155
	Trap analysis using a strong retrapping perspective	155
	Intermediate retrapping	155
	Rise curves	156
8.4	Specific trap distributions	156
	Discrete set of traps	156
	Continuous uniform trap distribution	157
	Continuous exponential trap distribution	160
8.5	Thermally stimulated luminescence	163
8.6	Thermally stimulated conductivity	167
	Discrete trap level; no retrapping	169
	Discrete trap level; strong retrapping	170
	'Decayed TSC' measurement	171

<i>Contents</i>	xiii
Hall effect during thermal stimulation	172
8.7 A mystery story: 'photochemical changes'	175
8.8 Photoinduced transient spectroscopy	180
8.9 Deep level transient spectroscopy	182
<b>9 Photoeffects at grain boundaries</b>	<b>189</b>
9.1 Small grain vs large grain effects: CdTe films	190
9.2 Direct measurements of grain boundary properties: CdTe films	193
9.3 CdS films	196
Heat treatment in hydrogen	197
O <sub>2</sub> adsorption effects	199
Effect of dc electric field during heat treatment	201
9.4 PbS films	204
Effects of O <sub>2</sub> adsorption and desorption in the dark	205
Photoconductivity	207
Effects of O <sub>2</sub> adsorption: time dependence	211
<b>10 Amorphous semiconductors</b>	<b>216</b>
10.1 Background information on amorphous semiconductors	217
Preparation	217
Types of amorphous materials	217
General description	217
10.2 Amorphous chalcogenides	219
General photoconductivity characteristics	219
Photoconductivity model: type I photoconductivity	222
Scaling of parameters	230
Other transport properties	232
How many data are required to establish a model?	232
10.3 Hydrogenated amorphous Si (a-Si:H)	233
Optical determination of defect densities	233
Effects of illumination on a-Si:H	235
Photoconductivity model	235
Doping of a-Si:H	239
Optical degradation	241
<b>11 Photovoltaic effects</b>	<b>244</b>
11.1 Types of semiconductor junctions	244
Homojunctions	245

xiv *Contents*

	Heterojunctions	246
	Buried or heteroface junctions	247
	Schottky barriers	247
	p–i–n junctions	248
11.2	Simple photovoltaic model	250
11.3	A more realistic photovoltaic model	252
	Junction current	252
	Collection functions	253
	Other photovoltaic parameters	255
11.4	Junction transport processes in heterojunctions	256
	Diffusion	257
	Recombination in the depletion region	257
	Interface recombination without tunneling	257
	Tunneling limited recombination through interface states without thermal assistance	258
	Thermally assisted tunneling through interface barrier	258
11.5	Photovoltaic materials	260
11.6	Cu <sub>x</sub> S/CdS heterojunctions: theater for photoelectronic effects	262
	Overview of effects	262
	Junction capacitance	263
	Spectral response	263
	Optical quenching	264
	Persistence of enhancement	265
	Enhancement/quenching model	265
	Photocapacitance effects	267
	Thermally restorable optical degradation (TROD)	270
<b>12</b>	<b>Quantum wells and superlattices</b>	<b>280</b>
12.1	Electron in a one-dimensional well	281
12.2	Effective mass filtering photoconductor	282
12.3	Avalanche photodiodes (APDs)	283
	Multiquantum wells	284
	Staircase structures	284
	Channeling structures	287
	Impact ionization across the band discontinuity	287
12.4	Quantum well infrared photodetectors	289
12.5	Quantum confined Stark effect devices	290
	High-speed modulation of a light beam	292

<i>Contents</i>	xv
Wavelength-selective voltage-tunable photo-detector	293
Self electro-optic effect devices	294
12.6 Internal electric polarization of quantum wells	294
12.7 Tunable band-edge discontinuities	297
Doping interface dipoles	297
Ultrathin intralayers	300
12.8 Tunneling-related phenomena	301
Sequential resonant tunneling	301
Far infrared laser	303
Wavelength-selective infrared photodetector	305
<b>Notes</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>313</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>315</b>

# Preface

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My earlier book, *Photoconductivity of solids*, published in 1960 and subsequently in print for 26 years, attempted to describe all of the previous work related to photoconductivity or any of its associated phenomena. From the response that it evoked it appears that this attempt was reasonably successful.

But the field continued to expand rapidly. If a thousand references were adequate to describe almost a century from Willoughby Smith's discovery of photoconductivity in selenium in 1873, tens of thousands of references have been added in recent years. A representative bibliography of books and reviews is included at the end of the text. In 1976 when *Photoconductivity and related phenomena*, edited by J. Mort and D. Pai was published, fifteen authors contributed to cover a wide variety of solids in addition to crystalline semiconductors, like molecular crystals, amorphous materials, polymeric photoconductors, and non-polar liquids, which had been mentioned either not at all or very little in *Photoconductivity of solids*. It is no longer possible for a single, reasonably long monograph to provide a complete discussion of the whole field.

So it is not the purpose of this book even to attempt to give an exhaustive treatment of all photoelectronic phenomena in semiconductors. Rather it is the purpose to provide a look at the fundamentals that underlie the rich complexity of phenomena, to provide the reader with some familiarity for relatively simple models that are useful in describing these fundamentals, and to give typical recent examples of experimental data and observations that illustrate them. The present book deliberately chooses to limit itself to photoelectronic properties of semiconductors, still a very large and rapidly growing field indeed,

xviii *Preface*

especially when one realizes the potential of low-dimensional structures such as quantum wells and superlattice structures.

It has been a special thrill for me to be able to write this book, in a kind of way reliving and at the same time updating my professional research career. My purpose in writing the book is facilitated by the fact that for the past 30 years I have been teaching courses related to this subject area at Stanford University. I would like to express my gratitude toward all those friends and colleagues through the years who have contributed to my progress, and to all of my students (Ph.D. No. 50 graduated in 1990) involved in research with me, as well as to those many more who interacted in the courses taught at Stanford and thereby directly or indirectly contributed to the material of this book.

I was in the midst of the task of writing the book, when I learned of the death of Dr Albert Rose, who was my professional mentor and friend particularly during the 14 years I spent at the RCA Laboratories. I wish to acknowledge my special indebtedness to him.

My beloved wife Betty was by my side through the writing of the original *Photoconductivity of solids*, and I thank God that I have had her unfailing love and support through all the intervening years.

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