Optical characterization and bandgap engineering of flat and wrinkle-textured FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_{0.17}$Pb(I$_{1-x}$Br$_x$)$_3$ perovskite thin films

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The complex refractive indices of formamidinium cesium lead mixed-halide (FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_{0.17}$Pb(I$_{1-x}$Br$_x$)$_3$) perovskite thin films of compositions ranging from $x = 0$ to 0.4, with both flat and wrinkle-textured surface topographies, are reported. Films are characterized using a combination of variable angle spectroscopic ellipsometry and spectral transmittance in the wavelength range of 190 nm to 850 nm. Optical constants, film thicknesses and roughness layers are obtained point-by-point by minimizing a global error function, without using optical dispersion models, and including topographical information supplied by a laser confocal microscope. To evaluate the bandgap engineering potential of the material, the optical bandgaps and Urbach energies are then accurately determined by applying a band fluctuations model for direct semiconductors, which considers both the Urbach tail and the fundamental band-to-band absorption region in a single equation. With this information, the composition yielding the optimum bandgap of 1.75 eV for a Si-perovskite tandem solar cell is determined.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organic-inorganic hybrid perovskite materials are currently one of the most promising materials for next generation solar cells$^{1-10}$ and other optoelectronic devices$^{3,4}$ owing to their high cell efficiencies, high absorption, direct bandgap, long carrier diffusion length, bandgap tunability and low manufacturing costs.$^{1,3,10}$ The use of cesium mixed-cation lead mixed-halide perovskites (FA$_{1-y}$Cs$_y$Pb(I$_{1-x}$Br$_x$)$_3$) has also significantly improved upon the stability issues of classical PV perovskites like MAPbI$_3$. As such they hold great potential for single junction cells and especially for dual junction Si-perovskite tandem cells. Si solar cells are already approaching the 29% Shockley-Queisser efficiency limit (with the current record at 26.6%$^{11}$), and adding an extra perovskite top cell can potentially increase efficiencies beyond 30% if tuned to the optimal 1.75 eV bandgap.$^{1-3,12}$

Therefore, accurate knowledge of the relation of the complex refractive index $n$, optical bandgap and Urbach energy to perovskite composition is of great importance. To date, most relevant studies on cesium mixed-cation lead mixed-halide perovskites estimate the bandgap from photoluminescence (PL) measurements,$^{10}$ or from direct bandgap fits on an estimation of the absorption coefficient. Also, studies of the complex refractive index obtain $n$ by fitting dispersion models to optical data,$^7$ which can lead to unwanted artifacts and biases in the results.$^5$

In this work, the bandgap engineering potential of two types of FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_{0.17}$Pb(I$_{1-x}$Br$_x$)$_3$ perovskite films is studied. One presents a flat though somewhat uneven surface topography, which appears to be typical for films of this type of perovskite manufactured by spin coating. The other presents an unusual, strongly wrinkled self-texturing effect, that produces very optically diffuse films. These may have significant potential for light trapping schemes that can use the perovskite films as grown and on flat substrates suitable for low-cost spin coating processes, without requiring further processing of the layers to achieve sufficient light scattering inside the cell.

For both surface topographies, the complex refractive indices are determined in the wavelength range of 190 nm to 850 nm. This is achieved using a combination of spectral transmittance ($T$) and variable angle spectroscopic ellipsometry (VASE), which allows the calculation of the absorption coefficient in a wider dynamic range than would be possible with ellipsometry only.$^{13}$ The solution algorithm minimizes an error function on a point-by-point basis, i.e. for each measured wavelength, to achieve a self consistent calculation of the complex refractive index, film thickness and root mean square (rms) roughness layer thickness, without using dispersion models. The proposed optical models account for film thickness variation, film surface roughness and internal reflections in the substrate. The optical bandgaps and Urbach energies are subsequently determined using a band fluctuations model for the absorption coefficient of direct semiconductors, which describes both the fundamental band-to-band absorption region and the Urbach tail in a single equation.$^5$ From these results, the composition for the ideal bandgap of 1.75 eV for Si-perovskite tandem cells is determined.
II. EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS

A. Perovskite fabrication

Chemicals were purchased from TCI (lead(II) iodide 99.99% Pb, lead(II) bromide 99.99% Pb), Sigma-Aldrich (anhydrous chlorobenzene, anhydrous dimethyl sulfoxide, anhydrous dimethylformamide), ABCR (cesium iodide 99.999% Cs) and Dyenamo (formamidinium iodide 98%), and were used as received.

The FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_0.17$Pb(I$_{0.90}$Br$_{0.10}$)$_3$ perovskite films were grown on two side polished 500 µm thick fused quartz substrates (for optical measurements) as well as ordinary glass slides (for topography measurements). In both cases, the substrates were consecutively cleaned in acetone, detergent (Mucasol 2 vol% in water), water and isopropanol in an ultrasonic bath for 15 min, respectively. Before layer deposition the substrates were dried in a N$_2$ stream and treated in an UV ozone cleaner (FHR Anlagenbau GmbH, UV/Oh 150 LAB) for 15 min.

The perovskite layers were fabricated in a glove box with an N$_2$ atmosphere in close analogy to previously reported procedures for these compositions. The precursor solutions for the various perovskite compositions were obtained by mixing 1.0M perovskite stock solutions (see Table I) in appropriate ratios (see Table II). The perovskite stock solutions were prepared by weighing the respective solid starting materials into a 5.0 mL volumetric flask and brought up to volume with dimethylformamide and dimethyl sulfoxide (4:1 volume ratio). The perovskite layers were shaken at 60°C for 15 min, respectively. Before layer deposition the substrates were dried in a N$_2$ stream and treated in an UV ozone cleaner (FHR Anlagenbau GmbH, UV/Oh 150 LAB) for 15 min.

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Table I. Quantity of starting materials to obtain perovskite stock solutions 1 and 2 with 1.0M concentration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perovskite composition</th>
<th>Stock solutions (ratio)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_0.17$PbI$_3$</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA$<em>{0.83}$Cs$<em>0.17$Pb(I$</em>{0.90}$Br$</em>{0.10}$)$_3$</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 (3:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA$<em>{0.83}$Cs$<em>0.17$Pb(I$</em>{0.80}$Br$</em>{0.20}$)$_3$</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 (1:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA$<em>{0.83}$Cs$<em>0.17$Pb(I$</em>{0.70}$Br$</em>{0.30}$)$_3$</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 (1:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA$<em>{0.83}$Cs$<em>0.17$Pb(I$</em>{0.60}$Br$</em>{0.40}$)$_3$</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Mixing ratios of stock solutions 1 and 2 to generate the final perovskite precursor solutions used for layer fabrication.

Two deposition procedures were used to yield perovskite layers with flat topographies (Procedure 1, P1) and wrinkled topographies (Procedure 2, P2). P1: Perovskite precursor solution (100 µL) was spread on the substrate and spun in a single step process with open spin coater lid, 4000 rpm for 30 s with an acceleration time of 1 s; during this process chlorobenzene (150 µL) was dripped from 1 cm distance on the center of the spinning substrate after 25 s. The perovskite layer was directly transferred onto a hot plate for annealing at 100°C for 20 min. P2: Perovskite precursor solution (100 µL) was spread on the substrate and spun in a two step process with closed spin coater lid, 1000 rpm for 10 s with an acceleration time of 1 s followed by 6000 rpm for 30 s with an acceleration time of 3 s; during this process chlorobenzene (150 µL) was dripped from 1 cm distance on the center of the spinning substrate after 42 s. The perovskite layer was directly transferred onto a hot plate for annealing at 50°C for 1 min, then on a second hot plate at 100°C for 20 min.

B. Optical measurements

Total spectral transmittance was measured with a Perkin Elmer Lambda 1050 UV/VIS/NIR spectrophotometer with an integrating sphere from 250 nm to 1500 nm (5 nm step). The VASE curves were measured with a Sentech SE 850 ellipsometer from 190 nm to 850 nm (~1 nm step), with incidence angles from 20° to 70°, in 10° increments. The flat film samples were measured with the probing beam incident on the film side, while the wrinkle-textured samples were measured through the backside of the quartz substrate. This was due to the optically diffuse nature of the wrinkle-textured films, which often impeded the ellipsometer from collecting enough light for proper measurements. Because the latter are significantly depolarizing measurements, the degree of polarization was also measured.

Film topography was measured using a Keyence VK-X260 confocal 3D laser scanning microscope with a 408 nm laser at 50x magnification. Care was taken to measure the glass-deposited films in locations similar to those used in the quartz-deposited ones for the transmittance and ellipsometry measurements.

To prevent film degradation, all samples were sealed in plastic bags inside the N$_2$ atmosphere of the glove box and only removed just before measuring. Degradation during the measurements themselves was considered negligible, as no significant change in the ellipsometry curves was observed during the span of a measurement session.

III. OPTICAL ANALYSIS

A. Extraction of the complex refractive index

The complex refractive index $\tilde{n} = n - ik$, where $n$ is the refractive index and $k$ is the extinction coefficient, is obtained using a combination of spectral transmittance and ellipsometry. This approach is chosen due to the complementary nature of the two techniques: $T$ obtains plenty of information from the bulk of the probed film and is thus very sensitive to the low absorption coefficients found in the fundamental absorption and trans-
have also been achieved using multi-sample analyses. The use of two different techniques also adds more equations to the system, further constraining the final solutions for \( n \) and \( k \). The most common strategy for extracting optical constants is to fit curves generated with a dispersion model for \( \tilde{n} \) to the experimental data. This has the advantages of being quick and yielding convenient equations for \( n \) and \( k \). However, some insight into the fundamental properties of the sample is necessary to select the appropriate dispersion model, and there are many to choose from. If the model is inadequate, it can be unclear whether certain features in \( \tilde{n} \) are genuine or if they are artifacts caused by using an incorrect model. For lead halide perovskites in particular, the Forouhi-Bloome, Tauc-Lorentz and Drude-Lorentz dispersions have been used.

The approach used in this work instead is to self consistently determine \( \tilde{n} \) for each individual wavelength, i.e. 'point-by-point'. This is done by numerically solving a system of equations of the type shown in Eq. (1).

\[
M_{t,j}^{\exp} - M_{j}^{\text{th}} (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i) = 0 \tag{1}
\]

Here, \( M_{t,j}^{\exp} \) is a vector containing entries representing experimental optical data (in this case, \( T \) and/or VASE) at the wavelength \( \lambda_i \), and \( M_{j}^{\text{th}} (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i) \) is the theoretical value for \( M_{t,j}^{\exp} \) as a function of \( \lambda_i \), as well as of discrete values for \( n \) and \( k \) chosen by the solution algorithm. The index \( j \) runs through the independent measurement sets, e.g. \( T, \psi, \Delta \). Assuming the film thickness and other such parameters are known, in principle only two measurement sets should suffice to obtain \( n(\lambda) \) and \( k(\lambda) \). In practice, this typically yields noisy solution curves with several artifacts, such as diverging solution branches, discontinuities and non-physical values. The reasons for this are two-fold: first, the solution process is highly sensitive to measurement noise, as \( M_{j}^{\text{th}} \) is usually very strongly dependent on \( n_i \) and \( k_i \), such that small variations in \( M_{t,j}^{\exp} \) yield comparatively large variations in \( n_i \) and \( k_i \). Second, when solved numerically, a system of only two equations such as this one often allows several possible values for the algorithm to converge to.

To mitigate the aforementioned issues, redundancy is increased by adding more measurement sets for the same sample. In this work, this is done by adding ellipsometry data obtained for several angles. Doing so averages out the effect of measurement noise and constrains the number of possible solution curves for \( n \) and \( k \). Similar results have also been achieved using multi-sample analyses.

B. Solution algorithm

The self consistent analysis is carried out by minimizing a global error function of the type shown in Eq. (2).

\[
\sigma_i^2 (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i, d_f, d_r) = \left[ T_i^{\exp} - T_i^{\text{th}} (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i, d_f) \right]^2 + \sum_j \left[ S_{2,i}^{\exp} - S_{2,i}^{\text{th}} (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i, \theta_j, d_f, d_r) \right]^2 + \left[ S_{3,i}^{\exp} - S_{3,i}^{\text{th}} (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i, \theta_j, d_f, d_r) \right]^2 \tag{2}
\]

Here, \( T \) is transmittance, \( \theta_j \) is the incidence angle for the various ellipsometry measurements, and \( S_2 \) and \( S_3 \) are the second and third Stokes parameters, which are related to the usual ellipsometry measurements by Eq. (3), where \( p \) is the degree of polarization. The constants \( d_f \) and \( d_r \) are the film and rms roughness layer thicknesses, respectively.

\[
\begin{align*}
S_1 &= -p \cos (2\psi) \\
S_2 &= p \sin (2\psi) \cos (2\Delta) \\
S_3 &= -p \sin (2\psi) \sin (2\Delta)
\end{align*} \tag{3}
\]

\( S_2 \) and \( S_3 \) are chosen over \( \psi \) and \( \Delta \) as they tend to be better fitting variables. This is attributed to their typical value ranges being closer to each other and to those for \( T \). Consequently, the minimization algorithm does not skew excessively towards one type of measurement. \( S_1 \) provides no additional information to the system, so it isn’t necessary to include it in the error function. An example of a fit between the theoretical and experimental curves obtained using this procedure is shown in Fig. 1.

The effects of surface micro roughness are not considered for \( T \). This is because, for low rms values, the resulting light scattering can be mostly compensated for by measuring total transmittance instead of only specular transmittance. Note that this is entirely equivalent to using the classical scalar scattering theory models for surface roughness, which assume the total transmittance of a rough sample to be equal to the specular transmittance of an equivalent flat sample. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider surface roughness in ellipsometry (at least when probing on the film side, see section III C). This is done by the typical Bruggeman effective medium approximation (EMA), with a void fraction of 50%. As film and roughness layer thicknesses are not known beforehand, they are determined by minimizing the total error obtained from Eq. (2) for all wavelengths, as a function of \( d_f \) and \( d_r \) (see Eq. (4)).

\[
\sigma_{f,r}^2 (d_f, d_r) = \sum_{i=1}^{N} \sigma_i^2 (n_i, k_i, \lambda_i, d_f, d_r) \tag{4}
\]

Here, \( N \) indicates the total number of measured wavelengths. In practice, the wavelengths used for this step should be limited to the region where \( T \) is noticeably greater than zero, to maximize accuracy. Further details on this procedure are outlined in a previous work.
Figure 1. Transmittance $T$ (a), and VASE variables $\psi$ (b) and $\Delta$ (c) fit. Experimental curves (circles) and corresponding fits (solid curves) obtained with the self consistent approach. The example corresponds to a composition of $x = 0$. Solid curves correspond to the region where transmittance and ellipsometry spectra overlap (250 to 850 nm) whilst dashed lines correspond to theoretical curves calculated with ellipsometry data only (190 to 250 nm).

C. Film topography considerations

Two types of films were studied: one with a generally flat, though still somewhat inhomogeneous topography (Procedure 1, P1), and one with a strongly wrinkled self-texturing effect caused by the deposition parameters (Procedure 2, P2). Examples of both are shown in Fig. 2. In order to obtain accurate estimates for $n$ and $k$, the effects of these topographies on the optical measurements had to be considered. To this end, surface topography images for each sample were recorded with a laser confocal microscope. The images were leveled by mean plane subtraction and smoothed with a Gaussian filter to remove high frequency noise and anomalous peaks.

To include the topography effects in the optical models, the height data in the images was then used to build a histogram (see Fig. 2 insets), from which a normalized probability distribution function $f$ for the film height was calculated. This could then be used to average the transmittance and ellipsometry variables, as seen in Eqs. (5) and (6), respectively.\textsuperscript{13,18,19}

$$\langle T \rangle = \int T(d + t) f(t) \, dt \quad (5)$$

$$\langle S_n \rangle = \int S_n(d + t) f(t) \, dt \quad (n = 1, 2, 3) \quad (6)$$

Here, $t$ is the height of a thickness variation layer on top of a layer with constant thickness $d$ (recalling section III B, the roughness layer would be on top of the $t$ layer). Note that this is completely equivalent to averaging over the imaging area, as seen in Eq. (7), where $A$ is the imaged area.\textsuperscript{16} The main advantage of averaging over height frequency is increased calculation speed, as the
Integrals in Eqs. (5) and (6) are one-dimensional and require far fewer computations of $T (d + t)$ and $S_n (d + t)$ to yield the same level of precision.

\[ (T) = \int \int_A T (d + t (x, y)) \, dx \, dy \]  

(7)

The models for $T$ and $S_n$ to be averaged are standard ones obtained through Fresnel coefficient addition for the corresponding sample and probing beam configurations.\textsuperscript{13,16} The refractive index for the fused quartz substrate is modeled with a Sellmeier series, previously fitted to measurements of the substrate only. The effect of internal reflections in the substrate is also considered.

With these considerations and those of section III B in mind, the complex refractive index for the various flat topography films are shown in Fig. 3. These samples are analyzed with the ellipsometry probing beam incident on the film side.

The wrinkle-textured films require some additional considerations. Due to their optically diffuse nature, the ellipsometer was often unable to collect enough light for proper measurements. To get around this problem, these samples were measured with the probing beam incident on the substrate side of the sample, which required the use of a depolarizing model that considers the incoherent light passing through the quartz glass.\textsuperscript{13} Because of this, the degree of polarization $p$ was also measured to be used in Eq. (3) ($p \approx 1$ for the flat samples).

It was observed in practice that using a simplified ellipsometry model, assuming the film to be an infinite homogeneous medium beneath the quartz substrate, was just as effective as the fully detailed model. This is attributed to the large thickness of these films ($\sim 1 \mu$m), the scattering effect of the wrinkled texturing and the intermediate reflections in the substrate, which results in practically no light reflected from the bottom layer of the sample reaching the detector. This assumption breaks down slightly as absorption approaches zero, but is compensated for by the transmittance measurements, for which the complete optical model is considered. While this may seem inconsequential, it allowed the film thickness to be calculated much quicker, as Eq. (4) would then only depend on $d_f$. With these considerations in mind, the complex refractive index for the various wrinkle-textured films are shown in Fig. 4.

There are some slight differences between the $n (\lambda)$ and $k (\lambda)$ curves shown in Figs. 3 and 4, particularly in higher energy regions. Even though the compositions for both the flat and wrinkle-textured films are the same, they were formed under different deposition conditions. This could have yielded somewhat differing levels of atomic disorder and therefore internal stresses within the bulk material, which can distort the band structure and therefore $\bar{n} (\lambda)$ as well. Differences in the deep UV may be partly due to the quartz substrate becoming slightly absorbing near 190 nm, as well as information loss due to the depolarizing nature of the measurements for the wrinkle-textured films.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig3.png}
\caption{Refractive indices (a) and extinction coefficients (b) of the flat topography perovskite films for various stoichiometries. Here, $x$ corresponds to FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_{0.17}$Pb(I$_{1-x}$Br$_x$)$_2$Cl$_3$. Solid lines correspond to calculations obtained from both $T$ and ellipsometry (250 to 850 nm), and dashed lines correspond to the calculation performed with ellipsometry only (190 to 250 nm).}
\end{figure}

\section*{IV. BANDGAP CALCULATION}

The optical bandgap $E_g$ is calculated from the absorption coefficient $\alpha$, which is obtained from the previously calculated $k$ values by $\alpha = \pi k / \lambda$. The classical procedure for achieving this, which uses a fundamental absorption model for optical band-to-band transitions in direct bandgap materials, involves fitting a linear region located near the absorption edge in a $(\alpha \cdot \hbar \omega)^2$-plot.\textsuperscript{20} This can also be done using quantum efficiency measurements in a similar fashion.\textsuperscript{21} While this is a very simple and straightforward approach, the linear region in question is arbitrarily delimited, and partial overlap with the Urbach tail may result in few available measurement points as well as a systematic bias in the yielded bandgap values.\textsuperscript{5,22} These issues, which can limit the accuracy and reliability of the procedure, can be compensated for by instead using a model that considers a larger spectral region. For this purpose, a band fluctuations model for direct semicon-
The material's optical bandgap increases quite linearly from 1.564 eV to 1.792 eV, with a slope parameter $dE_g/dx$ of 0.575 eV (values averaged between flat and wrinkled textured films), which is consistent with Vegard's law. Thus, the material's optical bandgap is not only highly tunable, but is so in a predictable way within the range of $x = 0$ to 0.4. Finally, it is possible to interpolate the composition that would yield the ideal 1.75 eV bandgap necessary for a Si-perovskite tandem solar cell. This is determined to be $x = 0.33$, or FA$_{0.83}$Cs$_{0.17}$Pb(I$_{0.67}$Br$_{0.33}$)$_3$. 

Figure 5. Fitted absorption coefficients shown in $(\alpha \cdot \hbar \omega)^2$-plots for the flat topography films (a) and the wrinkle-textured films (b). Circles correspond to the absorption coefficients obtained from the $k$ values in Figs. 3 and 4. Solid lines correspond to fits with the band fluctuations model whilst dashed lines to linear fits with the direct bandgap model.
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REFERENCES


The graph shows the relationship between $(\alpha\cdot\hbar\omega)^2 \times 10^9$ cm$^{-2}$(eV)$^2$ and $\hbar\omega$ (eV) for different values of $x$: $x = 0$, $x = 0.1$, $x = 0.2$, $x = 0.3$, and $x = 0.4$. The graph is labeled 'Textured' and is represented by various color lines for each value of $x$. The y-axis represents the square of the product of the absorption coefficient $(\alpha)$, Planck's constant times frequency $(\hbar\omega)$, and an offset of $10^9$ cm$^{-2}$(eV)$^2$. The x-axis represents the energy in electron volts (eV). The graph is divided into sections labeled as 'b)'.
The graph shows the relationship between $E_g$ (eV) and $x$ for Flat and Textured samples. The energy gap $E_g$ increases linearly with $x$ for both samples, with a slight difference between Flat and Textured conditions.
$E_U$ (meV)

Flat

Textured