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Selective area growth rates of III-V nanowires

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I. INTRODUCTION

One-dimensional semiconductor nanowires (NWs) have the potential to become the host platform of future quantum information technologies [1–4]. Among the different crystal growth techniques of semiconductor NWs [5–9], selective area growth (SAG) of in-plane III-V NWs using molecular beam epitaxy (MBE) is a method for synthesizing scalable gate-controlled one-dimensional quantum electronics [10,11]. In particular, the design flexibility allows for arbitrary device architectures including networks of quantum dots and NWs.

Recently, in-plane III-V NW arrays have gained attention and have been demonstrated with a variety of materials, shapes, and dimensions [12–21]. Optimizing SAG crystal growth for the functionality and quality of such quantum structures implies optimizations of the morphology [17], composition [22], crystal disorder [23–25], and strain uniformity [26]. This makes it necessary to control the incorporation rates with high precision in order to optimize the performance of quantum devices [27,28].

Here we present a study of adatom incorporation during crystal growth of in-plane GaAs and InGaAs SAG NWs, grown by MBE on GaAs(001) and InP(001) substrates. A silicon dioxide (SiO₂) mask is used to define NWs on the substrates [12]. We discuss two groups of parameters that affect SAG NW growth rates: growth control parameters, namely substrate temperature (Tsub) and beam fluxes (fi), and the NW design such as the width (w), interpitch phase (p), and in-plane crystallographic orientation [hkl]. These dependencies are of importance for the design of reproducible arrays of NWs.

II. ADATOM KINETICS

A crystal growth by MBE is facilitated by incoming beam fluxes of growth species that impinge and get adsorbed on the substrate surface [29–31]. We describe this mechanism by transition-state kinetics of the adatoms, where the transition rates Γαβ (α and β denote the initial and final state, respectively) are limited by effective kinetic barriers [32]. To achieve SAG, the adatoms on the mask must either desorb or diffuse to the exposed crystal areas. The crystal growth rate is highly dependent on Tsub and fi, as well as the surface-state parameters, e.g., activation energies for adatom desorption, surface diffusion, nucleation, and incorporation [21]. Following the continuum kinetics approach in Ref. [32] and ignoring adatom chemical potential variations, the transition rates can be described by the Arrhenius equation Γαβ ∝ ρα exp(−δgαβ/kBTsub), where kB is the Boltzmann constant, ρα is the adatom density in the initial state, and δgαβ is the effective activation energy for the transition.

Figure 1(a) sketches the different types of adatom transitions which take place during SAG: adatom diffusion on either the mask surface (Γacac), the growing crystal surface (Γacam) or across a mask-crystal boundary (Γacac); adatom incorporation into the crystal solid phase (Γacam), or via nucleation to solid phase on the mask (Γacam); or adatom desorption from the mask (Γacam) and crystal (Γacam) to vapor. All transition rates in this study are effective rates describing the mean properties of the transitions, e.g., Γacam describes both the nucleation limited transitions as well as potential single atomic barriers for incorporation. Due to the geometry, the mask-crystal boundary is one dimensional (1D) like (linear) and the boundary of the Γacam, Γacam, Γacam, and Γacam transitions is 2D like (surface).

The total current of adatoms of species i being incorporated in a NW segment of length l and width w (l ≫ w) is given by adatom conservation:

\[ I_{\alpha,v,i} = (f_i - \Gamma_{\alpha,v,i})wl + (\Gamma_{\alpha,v,i} - \Gamma_{\alpha,v,i})2l, \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)
assuming no substrate decomposition \( \Gamma_{aa} = 0 \). From mass conservation, the incorporation rate on the SAG NW can therefore be written as

\[
\Gamma_{a,x} = \sum_i f_i - \Gamma_{a,v,i} + 2 \frac{\Gamma_{a,v,i} - \Gamma_{a,w,i}}{w}, \tag{2}
\]

Then the crystal volume growth rate is \( \dot{V}_{cr} = \Omega \), where \( \Omega \) is the volume of a III-V atomic pair. While \( f_i \) is a controlled parameter, the desorption term \( \Gamma_{a,w,i} \) is highly dependent on \( T_{sub} \). Thus, if the desorption from the crystal can be ignored for a given \( T_{sub} \), i.e., \( \Gamma_{a,v} = 0, \) then the relevant term for controlling the growth rate is the flux across the mask-crystal boundary,

\[
\Delta \Gamma_{a,v,i} = \Gamma_{a,v,i} - \Gamma_{a,w,i}, \tag{3}
\]

where the forward flux \( \Gamma_{a,v,i} \) is the flux of adatoms to the crystal collected from the mask and the backward flux \( \Gamma_{a,w,i} \) is the flux of adatoms to the mask collected from the crystal. We define the growth mode as source if \( \Delta \Gamma_{a,v,i} < 0 \), sink if \( \Delta \Gamma_{a,v,i} > 0 \), and balance if \( \Delta \Gamma_{a,v,i} = 0 \).

To simulate the adatom fluxes in this system, we start by simplifying the adatom diffusion problem to one dimension by considering only the transversal direction \( x \) of an array of parallel NWs of infinite \( l \). The steady-state adatom diffusion equation for each surface \( j \) can be written as

\[
D_j \frac{\partial^2 \rho_j(x)}{\partial x^2} + f - \Gamma_{a,v,j}(x) - \Gamma_{a,s,j}(x) = 0, \tag{4}
\]

where the mask and crystal surfaces \( j \) are coupled via boundary conditions for the particular design in question. We consider four NWs in parallel with symmetry at the mid-point between the two inner NWs \( x = 0 \) and at \( x = \infty \), i.e., \( \partial \rho_{a,v} / \partial x = 0 \) (see Supplemental Material S1 [33]). Figure 1(b) is an atomic force microscopy (AFM) image of a typical array of four NWs used in this work. At the boundaries, we assume continuity, \( \rho_{a,v} = \rho_{a,w} \), and mass conservation, \( D_j \frac{\partial \rho_j}{\partial x} = D_m \frac{\partial \rho_{a,v}}{\partial x} \). Since the effective incorporation rate is proportional to the adatom density, \( \Gamma_{a,v} \propto \rho_{a,v} \exp(-\frac{\Delta_f}{kT}) \), we are interested in solving \( \rho_{a,v} \) as a measure of the SAG growth rate. The model exhibits three general types of solutions, shown in Fig. 1(c): Sink, balance, and source growth modes. If there is no adatom desorption from the crystal \( \Gamma_{a,w} = 0 \), then the sink (source) mode implies that the NW growth rate is higher (lower) than the calibrated corresponding planar growth rate (2D-like growth with no mask), due to an inhomogeneous flux of adatoms \( \Gamma_{a,v} \) at the boundary. The balance mode implies that the NW growth rate is equal to the corresponding planar growth rate, and, importantly, it is independent of NW design. These distinct growth modes have implications for the design of NW patterns. In the following, we will explore SAG growth rates of GaAs and InGaAs based NWs grown on GaAs and InP substrates with a SiO2 mask and illustrate how growth modes and growth rates can be identified and quantified.

### III. Experimental Methods

The structures under study consist of individual NWs and arrays of NWs, with varying pitch and width. The NWs are 14-\( \mu \text{m} \)-long and to avoid influence from the ends, the measure of incorporation is only considered in the central region of the NW (see Supplemental Material S2 [33]). The employed SiO2 mask fabrication flow and crystal growth concept by MBE are described in Refs. [12,34], respectively. Supplemental Material S3 [33] contains information about the typical roughness of mask and substrate prior MBE growth. The MBE beam fluxes are calibrated to the corresponding planar growth rates using reflection high energy electron diffraction (RHEED) oscillations under conditions where desorption of group III can be ignored [21]. We calibrate the V:III 1:1 flux ratio with the surface reconstruction change procedure, using RHEED on GaAs(100) substrates [35,36]. Temperature is measured with pyrometer, which is calibrated with GaAs oxide desorption [37]. After growth, the SAG NW volume in single layer growths is measured by AFM and the cross-sectional area on the multilayer sample is measured by cross-sectional transmission electron microscopy (TEM). We define the NW growth rate, \( \dot{V}_{inc} \), as the measured crystal volume divided by the volume of a NW section with the same \( w \) and \( l \) from the equivalent planar growth used for the flux calibration. \( \dot{V}_{inc} \) is a measure of the amount of material incorporated in a NW compared to the 2D growth and hence the effect on material incorporation caused by the mask-crystal interface term \( \Delta \Gamma_{a,v} \) from Eq. (2). The mask selectivity measurements...
FIG. 2. NW Incorporation rate dependence on design parameters, pitch, width, and \([hkl]\). Incorporation rates in (a)–(c) are measured in units of nominal growth rate of GaAs and GaAs(Sb). All three plots share the same y scale. Filled (open) points indicate incorporation rates measured on the inner (outer) NWs. GaAs(Sb) is shown by red symbols, and GaAs by black symbols. (a) Incorporation rates of inner and outer NWs in a four-NWs array, as a function of NW \(p\). The inset shows an AFM image of an example array. Panels (b) and (c) are the incorporation rates of GaAs(Sb) and GaAs, respectively, as a function of \(w\) and for [110] and [1 ¯10] oriented NWs. The inset in (b) is an AFM image of an example array. (d) Incorporation of isolated NWs as a function of \(T_{\text{sub}}\) indicated by black (red) symbols, for GaAs [GaAs(Sb)]. The dashed line is extracted from the model based on Eq. (2), highlighting a maximum incorporation near 583 °C. The number below each data point corresponds to the percentage of desorbed material from the crystal \(\Gamma_{\text{inc}}\), measured on large mask openings. The blurred gray background represent the transition from \(\Gamma_{\text{inc}}=0\) (white) to \(>0\) (gray). (e) Example of individual isolated 45- and 150-nm-wide NWs, both from the same GaAs(Sb) growth. The source effect overrides the growth inside the 45-nm trench due to its width limitation, whereas the 150 nm grows as expected. Scale bars are 200 nm.

are performed in areas with no mask openings, to avoid any influence from the \(\Delta \Gamma_{\text{inc}}\) term.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We start by examining the growth rates in arrays of four parallel NWs, shown in Figs. 2(a) and 2(b) insets, as a function of design parameters \(p\), \(w\), and \([hkl]\). We determine the growth mode by comparing incorporation rates between the two inner and two outer NWs. Figures 2(a)–2(c) shows the mean incorporation rate of pure GaAs and Sb surfactant-aided GaAs(Sb) NWs grown on a GaAs(001) substrate at \(T_{\text{sub}}\) of 603 °C. The Ga flux corresponds to a planar GaAs growth rate of 0.1 monolayers (ML)/s, under As rich conditions (see Supplemental Material S4 for recipe details [33]). The reason for the selection of these two materials is their use as buffer layers before the growth on InAs transport channels, due to its beneficial effect of crystal defect reduction at the InAs interface [12]. In Fig. 2(a) the mean incorporation rates of inner and outer NWs is plotted as a function of \(p\) for [110] oriented NWs of \(w = 250\) nm. The data reveal a decrease in incorporation rates with increasing \(p\) until it saturates at around 4 \(\mu\)m for both GaAs and GaAs(Sb) to 0.7 and 0.6 of the nominal incorporation rate, respectively. We note that the [110] NWs exhibit different faceting with and without Sb surfactant, with (001) vertical and [113] side predominant facets, respectively [38] (more details about faceting in Supplemental Material S2 [33]). The different faceting can affect the total incorporation of the NW due to Ga adatom diffusion length \(\lambda_{\text{Ga}}\) anisotropy on GaAs(001) [39]. However, in the \(p\) study we consider this effect negligible since \(w \ll \lambda_{\text{Ga,GaAs}}\) and \(\lambda_{\text{Ga,GaAs}}\) [40,41]. The facet time evolution of GaAs NWs from initial (001) to {113} is not considered because the initial stages of the growth are dominated by the diffusion on the original (001) substrate and the NWs reach the {113} fully grown facets at the end of the growth process. The incorporation rate of pure GaAs arrays approaches the nominal value (i.e., \(\Gamma_{\text{inc}} = 1\)) at small \(p\), as expected if the desorption from the crystal is negligible, i.e., \(\Gamma_{\text{inc}}\text{GaAs} \approx 0\). By contrast, GaAs(Sb) NWs have a lower incorporation rates but with the same overall trend. This general downwards shift of ~10% in the incorporation curve for the Sb surfactant compared with the pure case can be explained by two reasons: a result of nonreactive surfactants nature, which decrease the number of incorporation sites for adatoms [42,43] and the higher facet roughness of {113} compared to (001). The decrease in incorporation with pitch implies that the growth is in the source mode (\(\Delta \Gamma_{\text{inc}} < 0\)). As a consequence, an increasing pitch implies a decreasing
number of adatoms being shared between neighboring NWs before they are desorbed from the mask. In the regime of significantly large pitch \( (p \gg \lambda_{Ga,m}) \) \cite{10,44}, the sourcing of adatoms between NWs can be ignored. All NWs in the array grow at the same rate and can be considered decoupled from each other. In this regime, the amount of material incorporated by a NW compared to the nominal growth rate is a direct measure of the source mode strength for the given growth conditions.

While the \( p \) dependence is used to study the desorption limited \( \lambda_{Ga,m} \), the \( w \) dependence can be used to study the incorporation limited \( \lambda_{Ga,c} \). Figures 2(b) and 2(c) show the incorporation rate as a function of \( w \), with and without Sb surfactant respectively, for both [110] and [110] oriented NW arrays with \( p = 1 \) \( \mu \)m. As shown in Fig. 2(b), the GaAs(Sb) growth rate is independent of \([hhkl]\) and even independent of \( w \) for the inner NWs. However, for the outer NWs there is a decrease in the growth rate with decreasing \( w \). The outer NW growth rate dependence on \( w \) is consistent with Eq. (2); as \( w \) increases the sourcing effect from \( \Delta \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \) becomes negligible for the given NW, and the incorporation rate converges toward \( \Gamma_{Ga,c} = \hat{f}_i - \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \). If \( \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \approx 0 \) and the width approaches \( w \gg \lambda_{Ga,c} \), then the mean incorporation rate will converge toward the nominal growth rate for all NWs in the array, ignoring the effect of the surfactant. For increasing widths the growth rate converges toward 0.7–0.8 of the nominal growth rate, which can be explained with a longer \( \tau_{Ga,c} \) due to the role of the surfactant and therefore a higher \( \Gamma_{Ga,c} \). On the other hand, the apparent \( w \) independence on incorporation for the inner GaAs(Sb) NWs is not obvious. We speculate that this apparent independence of \( \Gamma_{inc} \) is due to a compensation on growth rates. The inner NWs get more sourced adatoms from its neighbors, as the outer NWs incorporate less at smaller \( w \). The \( \Gamma_{inc} \) difference between both inner and outer NWs on both directions with \( w = 150–300 \) nm slowly decreases and it is expected to merge at larger \( w \). In Fig. 2(c), there is a clear dependence on \([hhkl]\) and the incorporation rate of GaAs is more efficient on the crystal with \( \Gamma_{inc} \) closer to 1. As the NWs grow, the faceting evolves differently depending on the NW orientation, which means that \( \lambda_{Ga,c} \) also changes during growth. Thus, the crystal surface parameters can be dynamic in nature. The NWs oriented along [110] form dominating [113] facets, while the [110] oriented NWs preserve the (001) top facet. As such, the [110]-oriented NWs exhibit a stronger source effect because the longer lifetime results in a lower incorporation rate, and therefore a more negative \( \Delta \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \) compared to the NWs oriented along [110]. This is consistent with the findings in reference \cite{45} which show the incorporation rate of Ga on [113] GaAs facets is slower than on (001). As we are measuring only mean growth rates, for simplicity we also assume constant surface-state parameters for the modeling, and any change in faceting during the growth is not considered.

The growths discussed in the previous paragraphs exhibit a source behavior. To answer if it is possible to manipulate the strength of the source effect \( \Delta \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \), and potentially achieve balanced and sink growth modes, we grow four identical GaAs(Sb) samples where only \( T_{sub} \) is varied between 570 °C and 603 °C at a nominal growth rate of 0.1 ML/s with a V/III ratio of 9. As shown in Ref. \cite{46}, the reduction of \( T_{sub} \) leads to an exponential reduction of \( \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \), decreasing \( \Delta \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \) since the adatom density will be higher on the mask. Incorporation rates are measured on isolated NWs of \( w = 250 \) nm for each growth, and plotted in Fig. 2(d) as a function of \( T_{sub} \). GaAs(Sb) NWs initially increase the incorporation when temperature is reduced, compared to the growths at 603 °C discussed in Figs. 2(a)–2(c). The number near each point in Fig. 2(d) is the 2D desorption (\( \Gamma_{Ga,v} \)) in percentages of nominal growth rate. The dashed line is the model prediction of incorporation for the GaAs(Sb) samples, based on the adatom conservation model from Eq. (2) (see Supplemental Material S1 \cite{33}) and highlighting a maximum in incorporation around 583 °C for the given growth rate of 0.1 ML/s. None of the samples measured in this series reach nominal incorporation. There are two independent reasons. For the two highest temperature samples, the crystal desorption, \( \Gamma_{Ga,v} \), on large mask openings (i.e., 2D-like) is non-negligible and 10% and 5% at 603 °C and 595 °C, respectively (see Supplemental Material S7 for 2D desorption measurements \cite{33}). Second, the source effect term \( \Delta \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \) reduces the incorporation further at lower temperatures as it gets more negative, as seen in the sample grown at 570 °C. This is understood by the decrease of adatom density on the mask due to nucleation of parasitic crystals \( \Gamma_{Ga,v} \) near the NWs, leading to an increase of the transition \( \Gamma_{Ga,inc} \). The parasitic growth on the mask is marked in Fig. 2(d) with the blurred gray background, with a transition happening between 570 °C and 588 °C. Figure 2(e) shows two AFM images.
FIG. 4. Engineering arrays of NWs with homogeneous height. (a) Sketch and AFM image of an array of In$_{0.53}$Ga$_{0.47}$As NWs grown on InP(001). In the bottom, AFM line scan across the NWs showing simultaneously both source and sink growth modes, generated by the different group III adatoms. The central NWs of the array form a set of NWs with homogeneous height, due to the formation of an adatom density saturation region. (b) ADF-STEM cross-sectional image of multilayer buffer NWs (top) and low magnification of the NW array (bottom). Material contrast is highlighted for visualization purposes. The plot shows the height of the 2 buffers for each of the 4 NWs in the array, summing up to the same height due to the balanced effect of source and sink growth modes. Scale bars are 1 μm in (a), 50 nm in (b) (top), and 500 nm in (b) (bottom).

Fabrication of SAG NWs for quantum electronic devices usually requires the growth of multistack buffer layers to minimize the generation of defects that degrade electronic properties [12]. Specifically, the growth of In$_x$Ga$_{1-x}$As buffer layers between the substrate and the InAs transport channel effectively closing the SAG window as shown in Fig. 2(e). We emphasize that for previously reported SAG f-T conditions where the $w$ limitation in source mode was not taken into account, it is possible to override the growth. Next, as demonstrated in Fig. 2(d), the source effect can be reduced by decreasing the growth temperature, until the point where nucleation on the mask starts. Reducing $f$ while still growing selectively would allow to neutralize the source effect by shifting the incorporation curve in Fig. 2(d) upwards until $\Gamma_{inc} = 1$. In Fig. 3 we speculate the appearance of a sink region at low $f$ and $T$ where $\Delta \Gamma_{ads}/w > 0$ and whose boundary gives balance growth mode independent of NW design. The sink window is expected to extend symmetrically beyond the upper boundary toward lower temperatures until the adatom density is sufficiently reduced by nucleation on the mask, entering the source growth mode once more. This localized region in the $f$-$T$ selectivity map would imply the existence of a critical flux $f^*$ above which it would not be possible to achieve a balanced growth. Further exploration is needed at lower group III fluxes and temperatures of the SAG window in order to demonstrate a balanced growth mode and the existence of the sink effect region for binary materials.

V. ENGINEERING OF III-V TERNARY MATERIALS

Fabrication of SAG NWs for quantum electronic devices usually requires the growth of multistack buffer layers to minimize the generation of defects that degrade electronic properties [12]. Specifically, the growth of In$_x$Ga$_{1-x}$As buffer layers between the substrate and the InAs transport channel...
has been demonstrated to be beneficial for the strain relaxation of InAs [38]. Using this approach, in Fig. 4 we show two independent methods of engineering arrays of NWs with constant height based on the presented source and sink growth regimes.

Figure 4(a) shows an array of lattice matched In0.53Ga0.47As NWs grown on InP(001). The three outermost NWs are under the influence of the nearby mask, whereas the four middle NWs have a constant height. This approach to grow several NWs homogeneously can be extended by increasing the number of NWs in the array, generating a central region in each array where adatom density is constant. In Fig. 4(a), the outermost NWs are the highest in the array. This is caused by the different behavior of group III adatoms of the In0.53Ga0.47As ternary alloy, as opposed to the pure source case from Fig. 2(a). For the growth $T_{\text{sub}} = 508 \degree \text{C}$ and for the given fluxes, we speculate that Ga adatoms are being incorporated in the sink regime of their SAG window, whereas the In adatoms are in source regime simultaneously (see Supplemental Material S2 for growth conditions [33]). This explains a local sink behavior for the outer NWs and a general source effect for the inner NWs compared to the second and third outermost ones.

Another approach of growing reproducible structures is presented in Fig. 4(b). The NWs consist of two buffer layers of GaAs(Sb) and In0.3Ga0.7As with an InAs transport channel, grown on a GaAs(001) substrate. The annular dark field scanning TEM on Figure 4(b) shows the cross-sectional geometry and contrast between the different layers. Material contrast is highlighted for visualization purposes. The In0.3Ga0.7As composition is extracted by electron energy loss spectroscopy and its growth temperature dependence and array position variation has been studied in depth in Ref. [38]. The inset in the plot is the cross-sectional lamella of the array in study via focused ion beam milling. The white (black) triangles show the height of the first (second) buffers. Here a combination of source growth mode from the first buffer and sink growth mode from the second buffer generates an array of NWs with constant height, where the subsequent InAs layer was grown on.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, we have measured and analyzed the SAG growth rates of GaAs, GaAs(Sb), and In0.5Ga1-xAs NWs on GaAs/SiO2 patterned substrates. We show how the growth rates are dominated by the effective flux of adatoms across the mask to crystal areas, $\Delta \Gamma_{\text{ad,}x}$, where the sign of $\Delta \Gamma_{\text{ad,}x}$ determines whether the growth is in source (negative), balanced (neutral) or sink (positive) growth mode. The growth mode is determined by measuring the growth rate dependence on the variables: NW array pitch, position, width, crystallographic orientation, and chemical composition. With the growth conditions used in this study, GaAs and GaAs(Sb) grow consistently in source mode while In0.5Ga1-xAs grows effectively in sink mode. We demonstrate the possibility of growing reproducible NWs by two different approaches: Tuning the growth mode of each group III species on buffer layer stacks and by increasing the number of NWs in the array, creating uniform incorporation conditions for adjacent NWs.

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