

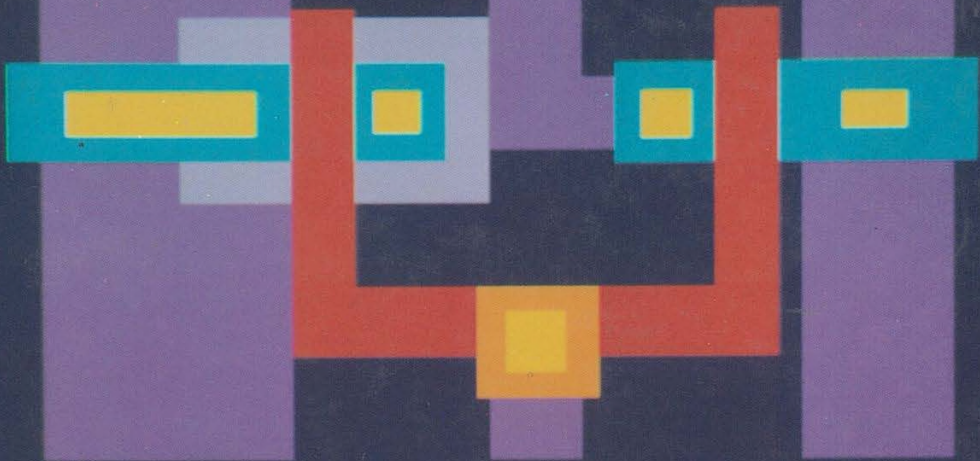
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# Silicon Processing

for the VLSI Era  
Volume 2 - Process Integration



S. Wolf

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# Silicon Processing

for the VLSI Era

Volume 1 – Process Technology

By STANLEY WOLF and RICHARD N. TAUBER

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## PREFACE

SILICON PROCESSING FOR THE VLSI ERA is a text designed to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date treatment of this important and rapidly changing field. The text will consist of three volumes, of which this book is the second, subtitled, *Process Integration*. Volume 1, subtitled *Process Technology*, was published in 1986. Volume 3, to be subtitled *Assembly, Packaging and Manufacturing Technology* is scheduled for publication in 1993. In Volume 1, the individual processes utilized in the fabrication of silicon VLSI circuits are covered in depth (e.g., epitaxial growth, chemical vapor and physical vapor deposition of amorphous and polycrystalline films, thermal oxidation of silicon, diffusion, ion implantation, microlithography, and etching processes).

In this volume, we undertake to explain how the individual processes described in Volume 1 are combined in various ways to produce silicon integrated circuits. This task is referred to as *process integration*. The first part of the book deals with *sub-process integration*; that is, the effort involved in forming circuit structures that can be implemented into a variety of circuit types. These structures include *isolation structures* (Chap. 2), *metal-silicon contacts* (Chap. 3), and *device-interconnect structures* (Chap. 4).

The second part of the book covers the process integration tasks of full-device-type technologies, including *NMOS* (Chap. 5), *CMOS* (Chap. 6), *bipolar* and *BiCMOS* (Chap. 7), and *semiconductor memories* (Chap. 8). Chapter 9 describes the process simulation tools that are available for aiding in the process integration and development efforts.

Volume 3 will cover process control, VLSI manufacturing issues and facilities, contamination and yield, automation, assembly, packaging, and parametric testing.

The purpose of writing this text was to provide professionals involved in the microelectronics industry with a single source that offers a complete overview of the technology associated with the manufacture of silicon integrated circuits. Other texts on the subject are available only in the form of specialized books (i.e., that treat just a small subset of all of the processes), or in the form of edited volumes (i.e., books in which a group of authors each contributes a small portion of the contents).

Such edited volumes typically suffer from a lack of unity in the presented material from chapter-to-chapter, as well as an unevenness in writing style and level of presentation. In addition, in multi-disciplinary fields, such as microelectronic fabrication, it is difficult for most readers to follow technical arguments in such books,

xxx

especially if the information is presented without defining each technical "buzzword" as it is first introduced.

In our books such drawbacks are avoided by treating the subject of VLSI fabrication from a unified and more pedagogical viewpoint, and by carefully defining technical terms when they are first introduced. The result is intended to be a user friendly book for workers who have come to the semiconductor industry after having been trained in but one of the many traditional technical disciplines.

An important technical breakthrough has occurred in publishing that the author also felt could be exploited in creating a unique book on silicon processing. That is, revolutionary electronic publishing techniques have recently become available, which can cut the time required to produce a published book from a finished manuscript. This task traditionally took 15-18 months, but can be now reduced to less than 3 months. If traditional techniques are used to produce books in such fast-breaking fields as VLSI fabrication, these books automatically possess a built-in obsolescence, even upon being first published.

We have taken advantage of these rapid production techniques, and have been able to successfully meet the reduced production-time schedule. As a result, information contained in technical journals and conferences which was available within three months of the book's publication date has been included.

Written for the professional, the book belongs on the bookshelf of workers in several microelectronic disciplines. Microelectronic fabrication engineers who seek to develop a more complete perspective of the subject, or who are new to the field, will find it invaluable. Integrated circuit designers, test engineers, and integrated circuit equipment designers, who must understand VLSI processing issues to effectively interface with the fabrication environment, will also find it a uniquely useful reference. The book should also be very suitable as a text for graduate-level courses on silicon processing techniques, offered to students of electrical engineering, applied physics, and materials science. It is assumed that such students already possess a basic familiarity with semiconductor device physics. Problems are included at the end of each chapter to assist readers in gauging how well they have assimilated the material in the text.

The book is an outgrowth of several intensive seminars conducted by the author through the Engineering Extension of the University of California, Irvine. Over one thousand engineers and managers from more than 75 companies and government agencies have enrolled in these short courses since they were first presented in 1984.

A book of this length and diversity would not have been possible without the indirect and direct assistance of many other workers. To begin, virtually all of the information presented in this text is based on the research efforts of a countless number of scientists and engineers. Their contributions are recognized to a small degree by citing some of their articles in the references given at the end of each chapter. The direct help came in a variety of forms, and was generously provided by many people. The text is a much better work as a result of this aid, and the authors express heartfelt thanks to those who gave of their time, energy, and intellect.

Each of the chapters was reviewed after the writing was completed. The engineers and scientists who participated in this review were numerous. The main reviewers are

listed on the page before the preface, and we would like to thank them once again at this point for their contributions. That is, the following professionals (each one an expert in the topic covered by the chapter they reviewed), read an entire chapter for technical correctness, and provided appropriate comments and corrections: Robert S. Blewer, John Y. Chen, Andrew R. Coulson, Haiping Dun, Terry Herndon, Michael Kump, Farhad K. Moghadam, Joseph R. Monkowski, Stan Swirhun, Al F. Tasch, Jr., and Samuel T. Wang. In addition, J. B. Price, of Spectrum CVD, Chris A. Mack, of the National Security Agency, and Sidney Marshall, Editor of Solid State Technology, provided other valuable technical and editorial input. Robert Shier, of VTC Corp., and Jim Cable of TRW also kindly provided the author with timely and valuable technical literature.

The copy editing of the book was undertaken by Mary Nadler, and the clarity and grammatical correctness of the prose owes a great deal to her professional efforts. The aesthetically pleasing graphics of the cover were designed by Roy Montibon of Visionary Art Resources, Inc., Santa Ana, CA.

Stanley Wolf

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# CHAPTER 1

## PROCESS INTEGRATION

### FOR VLSI and ULSI

Since the creation of the first integrated circuit in 1960, the density of devices that can be fabricated on semiconductor substrates has steadily increased. In the late 1970s the number of devices manufactured on a chip exceeded the generally accepted definition of *very large scale integration*, or *VLSI* (i.e., more than 100,000 devices per chip) (Fig. 1-1a). By 1990 this number had grown to more than 32 million devices per chip (16-Mbit DRAMs), and it is generally acknowledged that the era of *ultra-large-scale integration* (*ULSI*) has begun. The increasing device count has been accompanied by a shrinking minimum feature size (Fig. 1-1b), which as of 1990 had decreased to  $\sim 0.5 \mu\text{m}$  in the most advanced commercially available chips.

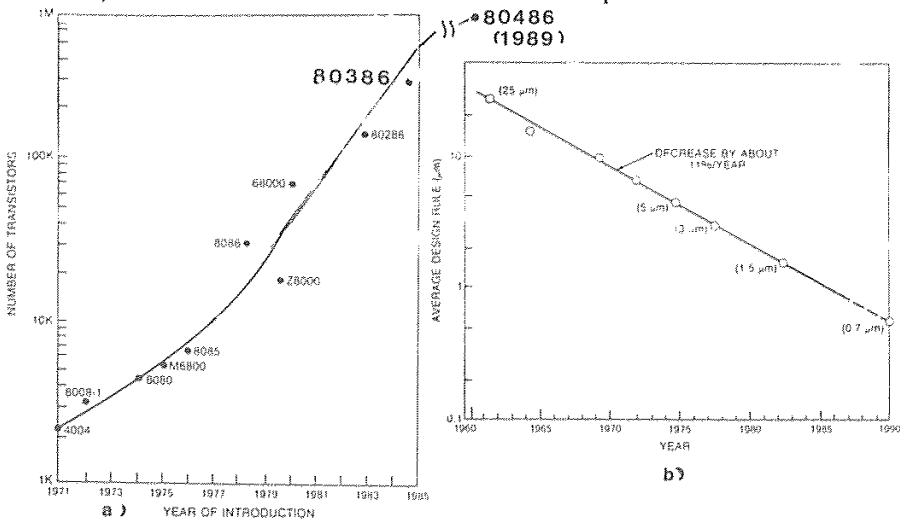


Fig. 1-1 (a) Increase in the number of transistors per microprocessor chip versus year of introduction, for a variety of 8-bit and 16-bit microprocessors, and (b) The decrease in minimum device feature size versus time on integrated circuits.

## 2 SILICON PROCESSING FOR THE VLSI ERA – VOLUME II

Progress seems likely to continue at a rapid pace, with even further reductions in the unit cost per function and in the power-delay product of integrated circuits projected. Silicon processing has been the dominant technology of IC fabrication and is likely to retain this position for the foreseeable future. The entire adventure of silicon device manufacturing represents a remarkable application of scientific knowledge to the requirements of technology. Our books\* are intended to serve as a comprehensive and cohesive report on the state of the art of this technology, as practiced at the time of publication.

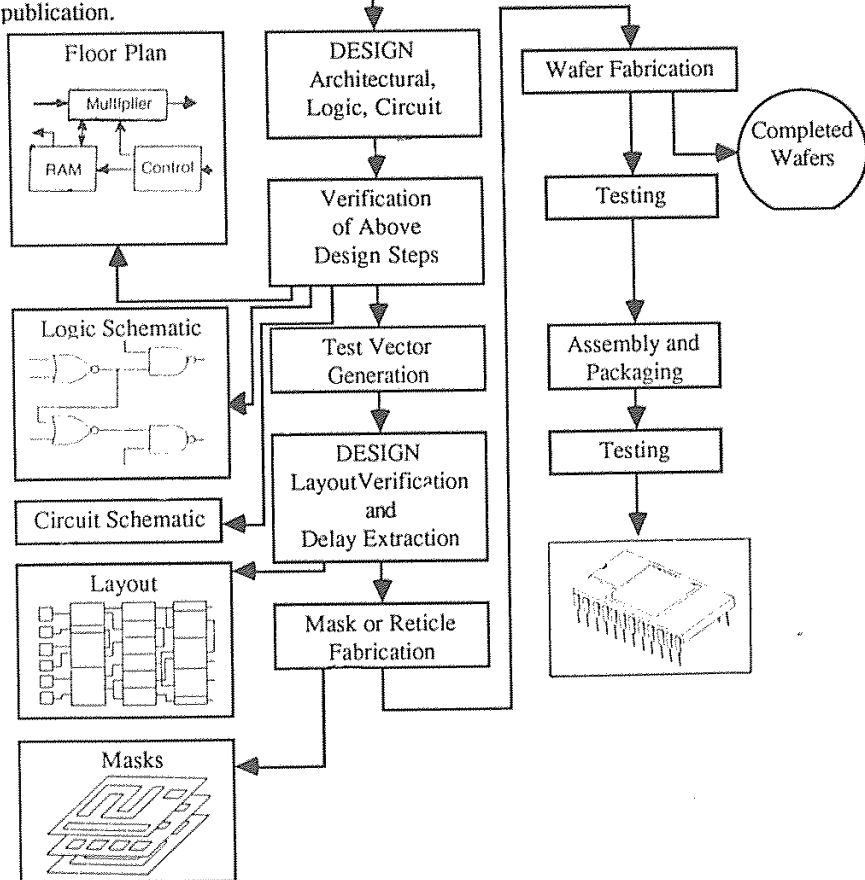


Fig. 1-2 Steps required for the manufacture of very large scale integrated circuits (VLSI).

\* SILICON PROCESSING FOR THE VLSI ERA - Volume 1: Process Technology; Volume 2 - Process Integration; and Volume 3 - Assembly, Packaging, and Manufacturing Technology (the latter is scheduled to be published *approximately* in 1992)

Figure 1-2 illustrates the sequence of tasks followed in the manufacture of an integrated circuit. These tasks can be grouped into three phases: *design*, *fabrication*, and *testing*. Our books are concerned primarily with the fabrication phase. We describe the IC manufacturing steps that occur from the point at which the circuit design has been completed and the necessary design information has been rendered into the form of a circuit layout. In this form, the layout information is ready to be used to generate a set of masks (or reticles) that will serve as the tools for specifying the circuit patterns on silicon wafers. For VLSI and ULSI circuits, the layout information is stored in a computer.

The details concerning the individual fabrication processes (e.g., those associated with creating patterns, introducing dopants, and depositing films on silicon substrates to form integrated circuits) are the subjects of Volume 1. In this second volume, we

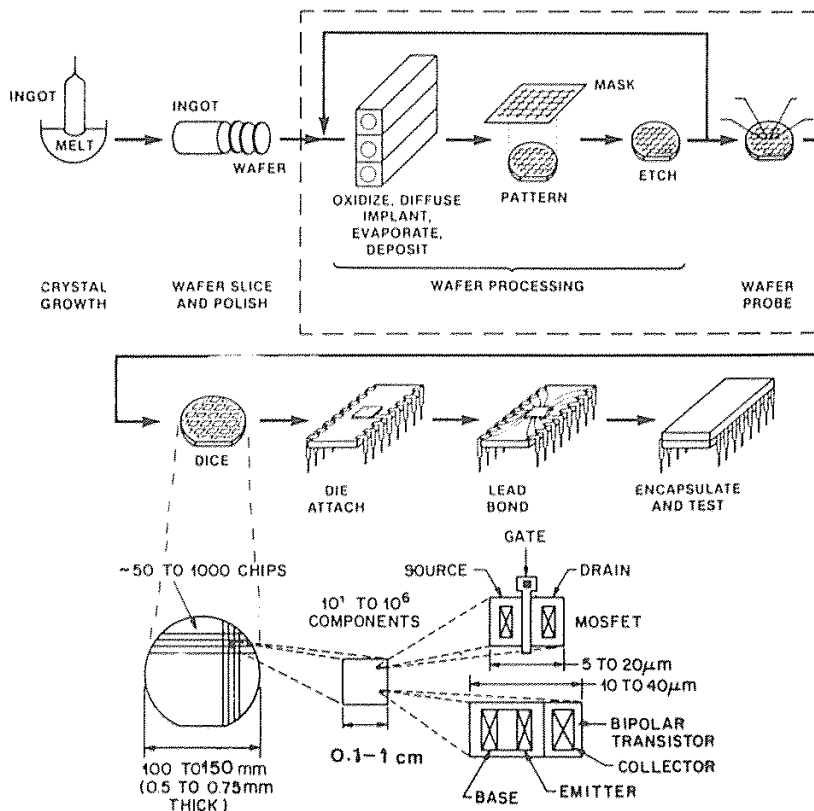


Fig. 1-3 The fabrication process sequence of integrated circuits.

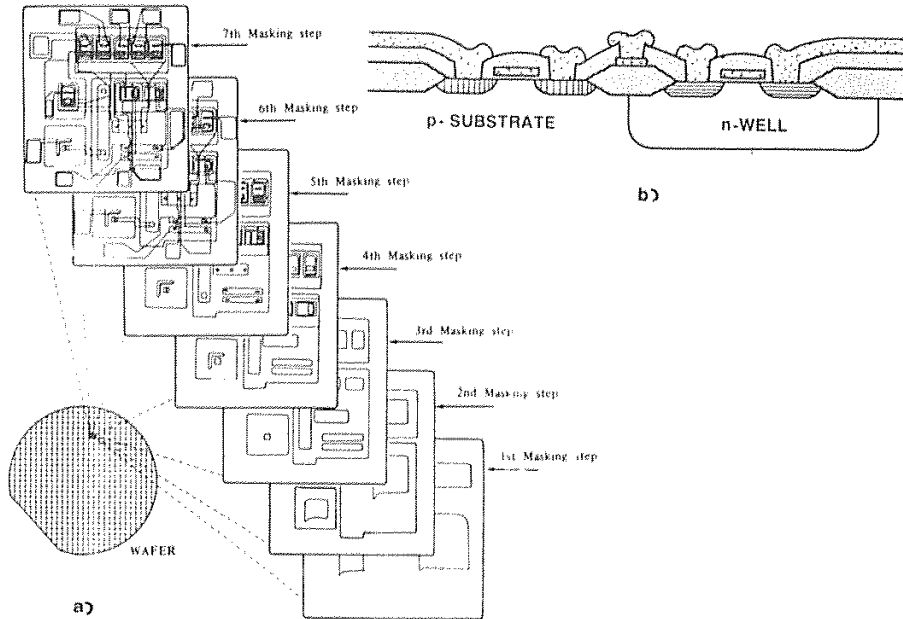


Fig. 1-4 (a) Example of the patterns transferred to a wafer during a seven-mask process sequence, and (b) Cross section of completed devices in a basic CMOS process.

undertake a discussion of the *sequences* of the steps performed to produce the device structures of the circuits. The text describes how the various individual processes are integrated together so that the end result is a completely realized integrated circuit.

One perspective of such a *process-integration* effort is illustrated in Fig. 1-4. It can be seen that a series of masking steps must be sequentially performed for the desired patterns to be created on the wafer surface. The other processing procedures performed between the masking steps serve to create the desired device structures. An example of the end result of a complete process sequence is shown in Fig. 1-4b as an IC cross-section.

This book is roughly divided into two parts. The first part deals with what we refer to as *subprocess integration* (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), while the second covers *complete process integration* (Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8). Chapter 9 covers the subject of *process simulation*, an approach applicable to both the subprocess and complete process-integration development efforts.

The function of subprocess integration is to produce device structures that can be used in a variety of integrated-circuit technologies (i.e., isolation, contact, and interconnect structures). The purpose of the process-integration task is to design the process sequences used to manufacture complete IC technologies (i.e., NMOS, CMOS, bipolar, BICMOS, and IC memory devices).

# CHAPTER 5

## MOS DEVICES AND

### NMOS PROCESS INTEGRATION

This chapter deals with NMOS process integration. To provide background information for this topic, a review of the physics of long-channel MOS devices (i.e., whose channel lengths are greater than  $2\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ ) and the basics of MOS circuit design is presented. Also included is a discussion of the relationship between desired device performance and process technology. (More rigorous treatments of MOS device physics are found in references 1 - 5.)

The history of NMOS processing is also presented, emphasizing how the obstacles to fabricating reliable NMOS ICs were overcome. A detailed example of the fabrication sequence of a typical NMOS inverter circuit culminates this discussion. The chapter concludes with a description of short-channel and hot-carrier effects in MOS devices, together with processing techniques developed to combat the problems they cause.

#### 5.1 MOS DEVICE PHYSICS

##### 5.1.1 The Structure and Device Fundamentals of MOS Transistors

A perspective view of an *n-channel MOSFET* is shown in Fig. 5-1a, while additional details of its structure and its circuit symbol are given in Figs. 5-1b and 5-1c, respectively. The device has a *gate terminal* (to which the input signal is normally applied), as well as *source* and *drain* terminals (across which the output voltage is developed, and through which the output current flows, i.e., the drain-source current,  $I_D$ ). The gate terminal is connected to the gate electrode (a conductor), while the remaining terminals are connected to the heavily doped source and drain regions in the semiconductor substrate.

A *channel* region in the semiconductor under the gate electrode separates the source and drain. The channel (of length  $L$  and width  $W$ ) is lightly doped with a dopant type opposite to that of the source and drain. The semiconductor is also physically separated

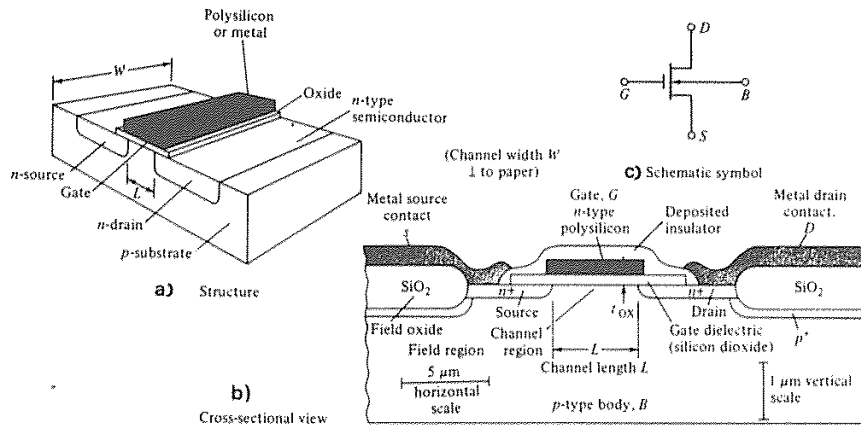


Fig. 5-1 (a) Structure of an MOS device. (b) Cross sectional view. (c) Schematic symbol.<sup>7</sup>  
 From D. A. Hodges and H. G. Jackson, *Analysis and Design of Digital Integrated Circuits*, Copyright, 1983 McGraw-Hill Book Co. Reprinted with permission.

from the gate electrode by an insulating layer (typically,  $\text{SiO}_2$ ), so that no current flows between the gate electrode and the semiconductor.

As shown in Fig. 5-1b, MOS transistors are symmetrical devices, which means that the source and drain are interchangeable. In NMOS circuits, however, the more positive of these two electrodes is normally defined to be the drain, and thus the input signal is defined as the voltage between the gate and source terminals ( $V_{in} = V_G$ ).

In simplest terms, the operation of an MOS transistor involves the application of an input voltage to the gate electrode, which sets up a transverse electric field in the channel region of the device (5-2a). By varying this transverse electric field, it is possible to modulate the longitudinal conductance of the channel region. Since an electric field controls current flow, such devices are termed *field-effect transistors (FETs)*. They are further described as *metal-oxide-semiconductor (MOS) FETs* because of the thin  $\text{SiO}_2$  layer that separates the gate and substrate.

The substrate (or body) of the MOS transistor is a silicon wafer; this wafer also provides mechanical support for the finished circuit. In addition, an external electrical connection (or *terminal*) can be made to the body, making the MOS transistor a four-terminal device. (In later sections we will see how the transistor behavior is impacted if a bias is applied between the source and body terminals of the device.)

The top surface of the body consists of *active* or *transistor* regions as well as *passive* or (*field*) regions. The active regions are those in which transistor action occurs; i.e., the channel and the heavily doped source and drain regions. Conduction between separate active regions must be prevented (see chap. 2). A thick oxide layer (0.5-1.0 μm) is normally grown over the field regions as one of the measures to achieve this goal.

If no gate bias is applied, the electrical path between source and drain consists of two back-to-back two *pn* junctions in series. If a drain bias is applied such that the source-

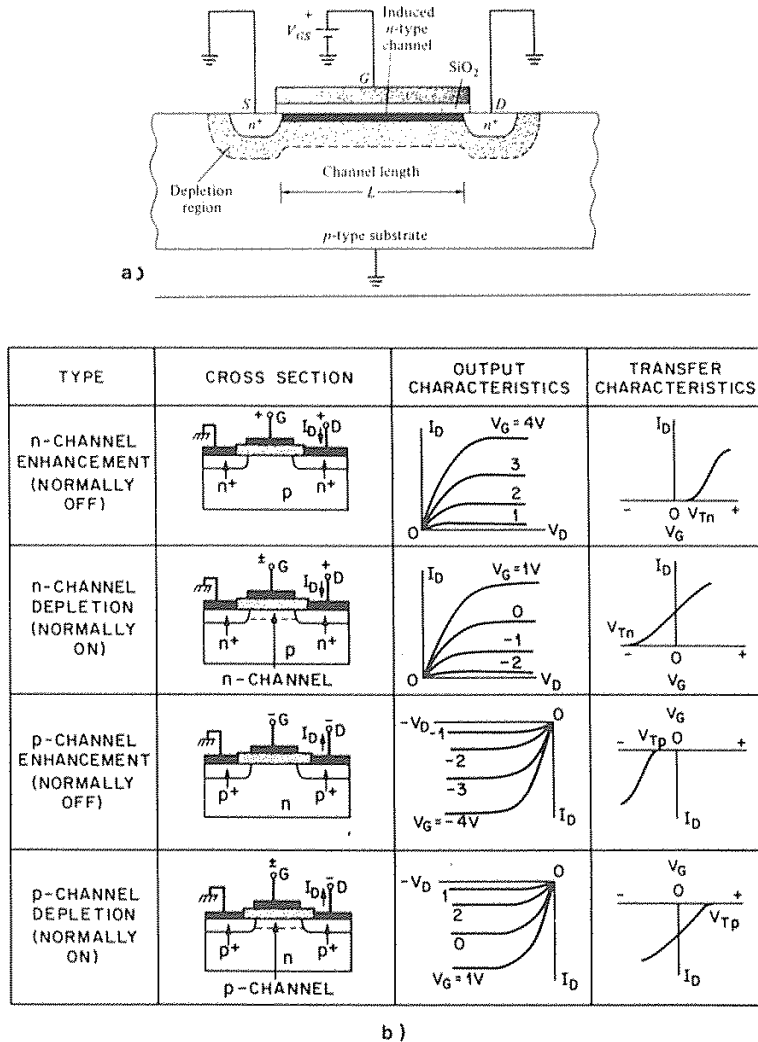


Fig. 5-2 (a) Idealized NMOS cross section with positive  $V_{GS}$  applied showing depletion regions and the induced channel.<sup>7</sup> From D. A. Hodges and H. G. Jackson, *Analysis and Design of Digital Integrated Circuits*, Copyright, 1983 McGraw-Hill Book Co. Reprinted with permission. (b) Cross sections and output and transfer characteristics of four types of MOSFETs. <sup>7</sup> From S. M. Sze, *Semiconductor Devices - Physics and Technology*, Copyright, 1985, John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission.

body and drain-body junctions remain reverse-biased,  $I_D$  will consist of only the reverse-bias diode leakage current and hence will be considered negligibly small.

When positive bias is applied to an NMOS transistor gate, electrons will be attracted to the channel region and holes will be repelled. (Holes are the majority carriers in the channel of the  $p$ -type body when no gate bias exists.) Once enough electrons have been drawn into the channel by the positive gate voltage to exceed the hole concentration, the region behaves like a  $n$ -type semiconductor. Under these circumstances, an  $n$ -type channel connects the source and drain regions (Fig. 5-2a). Current will flow if a voltage,  $V_{DS}$ , is applied between the source and the drain terminals. The voltage-induced  $n$ -type channel does not form unless the voltage applied to the gate exceeds the *threshold voltage*,  $V_T$ .

MOS devices such as those just described, in which no conducting channel exists when  $V_G = 0$ , are referred to as *enhancement-mode* (or *normally OFF*) transistors (see Fig. 5-2b). With NMOS enhancement-mode transistors, a positive gate voltage,  $V_G$ , greater than  $V_T$  must be applied to create the channel (or to turn them *ON*), while to turn *ON* PMOS enhancement-mode devices, a negative gate voltage (whose magnitude is  $>V_T$ ) must be applied. Note that in NMOS transistors a positive voltage must also be applied to the drain to keep the drain-substrate reverse-biased, while in PMOS devices this voltage must be negative.

On the other hand, it is also possible to build MOS devices in which a conducting channel region exists when  $V_G = 0$  V (see Fig. 5-2b), and such MOS devices are described as being *normally ON*. Since a bias voltage to the gate electrode is needed to deplete the channel region of majority carriers (that is, the channel is eradicated as long as the bias is applied), such devices are also commonly called *depletion-mode* devices. NMOS depletion-mode devices require a negative gate voltage to be turned *OFF*, while corresponding PMOS devices require positive gate voltages.

### 5.1.2 The Threshold Voltage of the MOS Transistor

If the source and body of an MOS transistor are both tied to ground ( $V_{SB} = 0$ ), the threshold voltage,  $V_T$ , of the transistor can be found from the following equation (note that  $V_T = V_{T0}$  when  $V_{SB} = 0$ ):

$$V_{T0} = \phi_{ms} - 2\phi_f - Q_{tot}/C_{ox} - Q_{BO}/C_{ox} \quad (5-1)$$

where  $\phi_{ms}$  is the workfunction difference (in V) between the gate material and the bulk silicon in the channel,  $\phi_f$  is the equilibrium electrostatic potential in a semiconductor (in V),  $Q_{BO}$  is the charge stored per unit area ( $C/cm^2$ ) in the depletion region (when the voltage between source and body is zero),  $C_{ox}$  is the gate-oxide capacitance per unit area ( $F/cm^2$ ), and  $Q_{tot}$  is the total positive oxide charge per unit area present at the interface between the oxide and the bulk silicon (see section 5.3.3).

Expressions have been established for these various quantities in terms of doping concentrations in the material, physical constants, device structure dimensions, and temperature. They are:

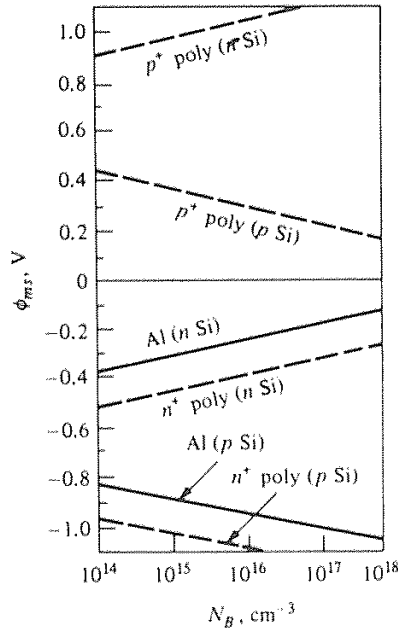


Fig. 5-3 Work-function difference  $\phi_{ms}$  versus doping for degenerate polysilicon and Al electrodes.<sup>80</sup> Reprinted with permission of Solid-State Electronics.

$$\phi_f = kT/q \ln(n_i/N_A) \quad (p\text{-type semiconductor}) \quad (5-2a)$$

$$\phi_f = kT/q \ln(N_D/n_i) \quad (n\text{-type semiconductor}) \quad (5-2b)$$

where  $N_A$  is the acceptor concentration in a  $p$ -type semiconductor ( $\text{cm}^{-3}$ ),  $N_D$  is the donor concentration in an  $n$ -type semiconductor, and  $n_i$  is the intrinsic carrier concentration in the semiconductor. Note that  $n_i$  is a strong function of temperature. For silicon at 300 K, however,  $n_i = 1.45 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ . Therefore, at 300 K:

$$\phi_{ms} (\text{metal gate, with Al as gate electrode}) = \phi_f(\text{sub}) - \phi_f(\text{Al}) = \phi_f(\text{sub}) - (+0.6 \text{ V}) \quad (5-3a)$$

$$\phi_{ms} (\text{Si gate}) = \phi_f(\text{sub}) - \phi_f(\text{gate}) \quad (5-3b)$$

Figure 5-3 shows the value of  $\phi_{ms}$  for various substrate-doping values if an aluminum gate electrode is used. Note also that in silicon-gate NMOS, the doping of the polysilicon gate material is usually  $n$ -type, with  $N_D \approx 10^{20} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , so that  $\phi_f(\text{gate})$  in this case is +0.59 V. Figure 5-4 shows the value of the threshold voltage of  $n^+$  silicon

gate MOS transistors (both PMOS and NMOS) versus substrate doping concentration, assuming either a 65-nm, a 25-nm, or a 15-nm thick gate oxide, and  $Q_{\text{tot}} = 0$ .

$Q_{\text{BO}}$  is found from:

$$Q_{\text{BO}} = -\sqrt{2qN_A\epsilon_{\text{Si}}|-2\phi_f|} \quad \text{NMOS} \quad (5-4a)$$

$$Q_{\text{BO}} = +\sqrt{2qN_D\epsilon_{\text{Si}}|-2\phi_f|} \quad \text{PMOS} \quad (5-4b)$$

and  $C_{\text{ox}}$  is calculated from:

$$C_{\text{ox}} = \epsilon_{\text{ox}} / t_{\text{ox}} = 3.9 \epsilon_0 / t_{\text{ox}} \quad (5-5)$$

where  $\epsilon_{\text{Si}} = 11.8 \epsilon_0$ ,  $\epsilon_0$  is the permittivity of vacuum, and  $\epsilon_{\text{ox}}$  and  $t_{\text{ox}}$  are the permittivity and thickness of the gate oxide.

It is easy to become confused about the signs of the various terms in the threshold voltage equation. Equation 5-1 gives correct results for NMOS and PMOS if the signs shown in Table 5.1 are used for each of the parameters. When calculating the various terms, the table can be used to insure that the value of each parameter is entered into the equation with the correct sign (e.g.,  $\phi_{\text{ms}}$  will have a negative value for  $n^+$  Si gate NMOS devices).

**Table 5.1 Signs in the Threshold-Voltage Equation<sup>7</sup>**

| Parameter                            | NMOS           | PMOS           |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Substrate                            | <i>p</i> -type | <i>n</i> -type |
| $\phi_{\text{ms}}$                   |                |                |
| Metal gate                           | -              | -              |
| $n^+$ Si gate                        | -              | -              |
| $p^+$ Si gate                        | +              | +              |
| $\phi_f$                             | -              | +              |
| $Q_{\text{BO}}$                      | -              | -              |
| $Q_{\text{tot}}$                     | +              | +              |
| $\gamma$                             | +              | +              |
| $C_{\text{ox}}$                      | +              | +              |
| Source-body voltage, $V_{\text{SB}}$ | +              | +              |

**EXAMPLE 5-1:** Find the threshold voltage of an NMOS silicon-gate transistor that has substrate doping  $N_A = 10^{15}/\text{cm}^2$ , gate doping  $N_D = 10^{20}/\text{cm}^3$ , gate-oxide thickness  $t_{\text{ox}} = 100 \text{ nm}$ , and  $Q_{\text{tot}} = q (1 \times 10^{11}/\text{cm}^2)$ . Note that the values for  $t_{\text{ox}}$  and  $Q_{\text{tot}}$  are typical of the values that existed in early NMOS transistors.

**SOLUTION:**

$$\phi_{f(\text{sub})} = kT/q \ln [n_i/N_A] = -0.026 \ln [10^{15}/1.4 \times 10^{10}] = -0.29 \text{ V}$$

$$\phi_{\text{ms}} = \phi_{f(\text{sub})} - \phi_{f(\text{gate})} = -0.29 - kT/q \ln [10^{20}/1.4 \times 10^{10}] = -0.88 \text{ V}$$

$$\epsilon_{\text{ox}} = 3.9\epsilon_0 = 3.5 \times 10^{-13} \text{ F/cm}; \quad C_{\text{ox}} = \epsilon_{\text{ox}}/1 \times 10^{-5} = 35 \times 10^{-9} \text{ F/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{\text{BO}} = -[2 \times 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 10^{15} \times 1.04 \times 10^{-12} \times |-0.58|]^{1/2} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} \text{ C/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{\text{BO}}/C_{\text{ox}} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} / 35 \times 10^{-9} = -0.4 \text{ V}$$

$$Q_{\text{tov}}/C_{\text{ox}} = 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 1 \times 10^{11} / 35 \times 10^{-9} = 0.46 \text{ V}$$

$$V_{\text{T0}} = -0.88 - (-0.58) - (-0.4) - (0.46) = -0.36 \text{ V}$$

Note that a negative value of  $V_{\text{T0}}$  is yielded, implying that this transistor would be *ON* at  $V_{\text{G}} = 0 \text{ V}$  (would therefore behave as a *depletion-mode* device). The parameters used in this calculation of  $V_{\text{T}}$  are typical of the NMOS device parameters encountered in the early days of MOS ICs. Hence, at that time it was not possible to easily or reliably fabricate enhancement-mode NMOS transistors. We shall later show how this problem was overcome so that enhancement-mode NMOS devices could be manufactured.

### 5.1.3 Impact of Source-Body Bias on $V_{\text{T}}$ (Body Effect)

As mentioned earlier, the MOS transistor is a four-terminal device, insofar as a contact can also be made to the body region. A bias,  $V_{\text{SB}}$ , can also be applied between the source and body (e.g., with the source being tied to ground, as shown in Fig. 5-5) and such a bias will have an impact on  $V_{\text{T}}$ . If  $V_{\text{SB}} = 0$ , inversion will, of course, occur when the voltage drop across the semiconductor equals  $2\phi_{\text{f}}$ . If  $V_{\text{BS}} < 0 \text{ V}$ , the semiconductor still attempts to invert when the voltage drop across it reaches  $2\phi_{\text{f}}$ . However, any inversion-layer carriers that do appear at the semiconductor surface migrate laterally into the source because this region is at a lower potential. Thus, the surface potential must be lowered to  $2\phi_{\text{f}} - V_{\text{SB}}$  in order for inversion to occur, implying that the threshold voltage required to achieve inversion must be increased.

Hence, for either enhancement-mode or depletion-mode MOSFETs,  $V_{\text{T}}$  becomes *more positive* for *n*-channel transistors and *more negative* for *p*-channel transistors as  $V_{\text{SB}}$  is increased. A simple, quantitative way to view this effect is to assume that biasing changes the inversion point in the semiconductor from  $2\phi_{\text{f}}$  to  $2\phi_{\text{f}} - V_{\text{SB}}$ . The threshold-voltage equation (Eq. 5-1), which was applicable when  $V_{\text{SB}} = 0$ , is in turn modified to

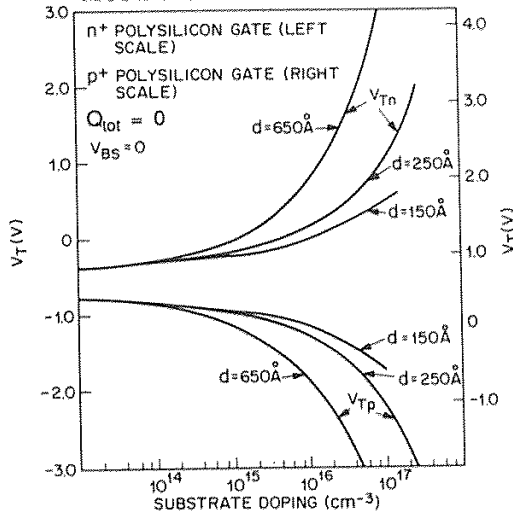


Fig. 5-4 Calculated threshold voltages of  $n$ -channel ( $V_{Tn}$ ) and  $p$ -channel ( $V_{Tp}$ ) transistors as a function of their substrate's doping, assuming  $n^+$  polysilicon gate (left scale) and  $p^+$  polysilicon gate (right scale). Curves for gate oxide thicknesses  $d$  of 150 Å, 250 Å, and 650 Å are shown. From S. M. Sze, Ed., *VLSI Technology*, 2nd. Ed., Chap. 11, "VLSI Process Integration." Copyright, 1988 Bell Telephone Laboratories. Reprinted with permission of McGraw-Hill.

$$V_T = V_{T0} + \gamma \left( \sqrt{|-2\phi_f + V_{SB}|} - \sqrt{2|\phi_f|} \right) \quad (5-6)$$

where the parameter  $\gamma$  (referred to as the *body-effect coefficient* or *body factor*, with units of  $V^{1/2}$ ) is given by

$$\gamma = \frac{\sqrt{2q\epsilon_{si}N_A}}{C_{ox}} \quad \text{NMOS} \quad (5-7a)$$

and

$$\gamma = \frac{\sqrt{2q\epsilon_{si}N_D}}{C_{ox}} \quad \text{PMOS} \quad (5-7b)$$

#### 5.1.4 Current-Voltage Characteristics of MOS Transistors

We will now present the equations that describe the large-signal current-voltage (I-V) characteristics of *long-channel* MOS transistors, assuming an NMOS device with its source grounded and with bias voltages  $V_{GS}$ ,  $V_{DS}$ , and  $V_{BS}$  applied as shown in Fig.

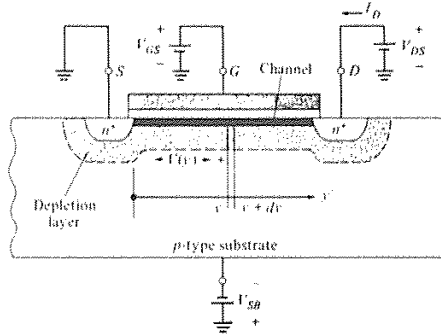


Fig. 5-5 NMOS device with bias voltages  $V_{GS}$ ,  $V_{DS}$ , and  $V_{BS}$  applied.<sup>7</sup> From D. A. Hodges and H. G. Jackson, *Analysis and Design of Digital Integrated Circuits*, Copyright, 1983 McGraw-Hill Book Co. Reprinted with permission.

5-5. (Any modifications that occur in the I-V characteristics due to short-channel effects will be described section 5.5.)

In the simplest MOS model, if  $V_G$  is smaller than  $V_T$ , no channel exists, and no current is assumed to flow between the source and drain. If  $V_G$  is greater than  $V_T$ , a conducting channel is present, and  $V_{DS}$  causes a drift current ( $I_D$ ) to flow from drain to source. For small values of  $V_{DS}$ , the drain current  $I_D$  is linearly related to  $V_{DS}$ . In this so-called *linear region* of operation, the equation that describes  $I_D$  is

$$I_D = \frac{k}{2} [2(V_G - V_T) V_{DS} - V_{DS}^2] \quad \begin{matrix} V_G \geq V_T \\ V_{DS} \leq (V_G - V_T) \end{matrix} \quad (5-8)$$

where  $k$  (the so-called *device transconductance parameter*) is defined as

$$k = \mu_n C_{ox} (W/L) \quad (5-9)$$

and  $\mu_n$  is the surface mobility of electrons in the channel.

As the value of  $V_{DS}$  is increased, the induced conducting-channel charge decreases near the drain. When  $V_{DS}$  equals or exceeds  $V_G - V_T$ , the channel is said to be pinched off. Increases above this critical voltage produce little change in  $I_D$ , and Eq. 5-8 no longer applies. The value of  $I_D$  in this region is then given by the following

$$I_D = \frac{k}{2} (V_G - V_T)^2 \quad \begin{matrix} V_G \geq V_T; \\ V_{DS} > (V_G - V_T) \end{matrix} \quad (5-10)$$

This is the so-called *saturation region* of operation.

A plot of  $I_D$  versus  $V_{DS}$  (with  $V_G$  as a parameter) for a long-channel NMOS transistor as described by Eqs. 5-8 and 5-10, is shown in Figure 5-6. If the value of  $V_G$  is smaller than  $V_T$ , the device is said to be in *cutoff*. In the model given here,  $I_D$  is

assumed to be zero in cutoff (i.e., no *subthreshold current*,  $I_{Dst}$ , flows). We shall see in a later section that this assumption is not completely correct (even in long-channel devices), and that in short-channel devices such currents can cause severe problems.

### 5.1.5 The Capacitances of MOS Transistors

It can be shown that the switching speed of MOS digital circuits is not limited by the channel transit time (i.e., the time required for a charge to be transported charge across the channel), but by the time required to charge and discharge the capacitances that exist between device electrodes and between the interconnecting lines and the substrate. Figure 5-7 shows the significant capacitances between the electrodes of an MOS transistor. The capacitance from gate to other electrodes [ $C_G$ ] is, to a first approximation, the sum of  $C_{GB}$ ,  $C_{GS}$ , and  $C_{GD}$ . Furthermore, since  $C_{GS}$  and  $C_{GD}$  are small in silicon-gate technology (as the gate and source/drain regions are self-aligned), we can treat  $C_G$  as a constant, essentially determined by

$$C_G = W L C_{ox} = W L \epsilon_{ox} / t_{ox} \quad (5-11)$$

The capacitance per unit area of the source/body and drain/body junctions ( $C_{SB}$  and  $C_{DB}$ , respectively) are calculated using the parallel-plate capacitance formula with a plate spacing of  $W$ .<sup>1</sup> The larger the doping of the substrate, the larger the value of these capacitances. As an example, in the case of zero bias and a doping concentration of  $10^{16}/\text{cm}^3$ , the junction capacitance is approximately  $10 \text{ nF}/\text{cm}^2$ .

## 5.2 MAXIMIZING DEVICE PERFORMANCE THROUGH DEVICE DESIGN AND PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY

Having identified the parameters that determine  $V_T$  and the I-V characteristics of MOSFETs, we next discuss how to link device design and fabrication procedures in

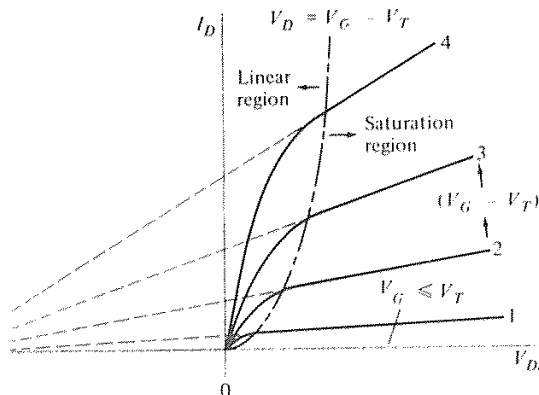


Fig. 5-6 NMOS device with  $I_D - V_{DS}$  characteristics.

order to achieve optimum device and circuit performance.

The desired device properties of MOSFETs include the following: high-output current drive (large value of  $I_D$ ), high and stable transconductance ( $g_m$ ), predictable and stable threshold voltage ( $V_T$ ), fast switching speed, very small subthreshold current ( $I_{D_{sl}}$ ), high gate-oxide breakdown voltage, high drain/body breakdown voltage, low source/drain-to-body capacitances, high field-region threshold voltage and punchthrough voltage values, and high reliability of device operation. Note that the models used to select the process conditions that provide such optimum device behaviors are Eqs. 5-1, 5-8, and 5-10. In practice, these equations accurately describe the dc circuit behavior of *long-channel MOS devices*. (In section 5.5 we'll see how this behavior is modified in short-channel devices, as well as what device design and processing constraints result.)

### 5.2.1 Output Current ( $I_D$ ) and Transconductance ( $g_m$ )

Equations 5-8 and 5-10 predict how  $I_D$  in MOSFETs can be impacted by various device parameters. Since increasing the *gate width* linearly increases  $I_D$ , one option when large drive-currents are needed, is to increase the dimension of the gate width. However, when minimum-sized devices must be used (e.g., for maximum packing density), this option cannot be implemented, and the other parameters that can influence  $I_D$  in Eqs. 5-8 and 5-10 must be considered.

From the dependence of  $I_D$  on  $k' = \mu C_{ox}$ , both the mobility of the carriers in the channel and the gate oxide capacitance should be as high as possible. Since electron mobility is greater than hole mobility, circuits using NMOS devices will exhibit higher performance than those built with PMOS devices. In fact, *NMOS transistors of the same width as PMOS transistors will indeed provide roughly 2.5x the current drive*. In addition, the mobility of carriers decreases as the doping concentration of the channel increases. Hence, lightly doped channel regions are also favored.

Because the value of  $C_{ox}$  is inversely proportional to  $t_{ox}$ , as thin a gate oxide as possible (commensurate with oxide breakdown and reliability considerations) is normally used.  $I_D$  is also inversely proportional to channel length, and minimum channel lengths are therefore desirable. On the other hand, if the channel lengths become too short, they adversely impact device operation in other ways, as described in section 5.5.

Although the equations indicate that  $(V_G - V_T)$  should be as large as possible,  $V_G$  is usually fixed by system specifications and material limitations, and cannot be changed by the device or circuit designer. Similarly,  $V_T$  is selected primarily by other circuit considerations (such as adequate noise margin in digital circuits).

The transconductance in saturation,  $g_{msat} = dI_D/dV_G$ , can be expressed simply by way of the following equation

$$g_{msat} = 2 \mu_n C_{ox} (W/L) [V_G - V_T] \quad (5 - 12)$$

Hence, we can maximize  $g_{msat}$  by varying the process and device parameters in the same manner as discussed for  $I_D$ .

### 5.2.2 Controlling the Threshold Voltage through Process and Circuit Design Techniques

In many MOS IC applications, it is critical to be able to establish and maintain a uniform and stable value of  $V_T$  (i.e., the value of  $V_T$  should not vary with time or with device-operating conditions). An example of the importance of being able to control this parameter involves semiconductor memory devices. In these circuits, charge flows from the memory cells to the sense amplifier. The sense amplifier is a delicately balanced flip-flop whose voltage-sensing capability is directly related to the threshold-voltage variation between the transistors (see chap. 8). Hence, such circuits would not function reliably without the presence of a highly uniform and stable threshold voltage in the circuit devices.

The factors that impact threshold voltage (when  $V_{SB} = 0$ ) are given in Eq. 5-1. Examining each term of this equation will enable us to determine which device parameters can be adjusted to provide practical control of  $V_T$ .

The  $\phi_{ms}$  term depends on the work-function difference between the gate,  $\phi_f(\text{gate})$ , and the semiconductor,  $\phi_f(\text{sub})$ . For metal and heavily doped silicon gates,  $\phi_f(\text{gate})$  is constant while the parameter  $\phi_f(\text{sub})$  depends on the substrate doping, but only in a logarithmic manner. Hence, each factor-of-10 increase in substrate doping will change the  $\phi_{ms}$  term by only 2.3 kT, or  $\sim 0.06$  V ( $kT/q = 0.026$  V at 300 K). Thus, changes in the substrate-doping concentration produce changes in  $V_T$  through the  $\phi_{ms}$  term which are too small to provide the required degree of threshold-voltage control. The next term ( $2\phi_f$ ) also changes only slightly as a result of changes in the substrate doping concentration (for the same reason given for the  $\phi_{ms}$  term); thus, the  $2\phi_f$  term is also not of much use in controlling  $V_T$ .

Since every attempt is made to keep  $Q_{tot}$  as low as possible through various processing procedures, the  $Q_{tot}/C_{ox}$  term is very small in modern MOS devices. Hence, it must also be ruled out as a candidate for controlling  $V_T$ .

While it is true that  $C_{ox}$  can be varied (primarily by changing the gate oxide thickness), this parameter is not a practical vehicle for controlling  $V_T$  in active devices, since the gate oxide is normally made as thin as possible to achieve maximum  $I_D$ . In the field regions, however, large  $V_T$  values are needed to prevent inversion under the field oxide. A thick field oxide makes  $C_{ox}$  small, allowing  $V_T$  to be increased. Thus, the  $C_{ox}$  is one of the parameters normally used to control  $V_T$  in the field regions of the circuits.

This leaves the  $Q_{BO}$  term as the remaining candidate for controlling  $V_T$  in active devices. Equation 5-4 indicates that the doping concentration can indeed provide a large change in  $V_T$ . The signs of Eq. 5-1 indicate that increasing the substrate doping (i.e.,  $N_A$  in  $n$ -channel devices, and  $N_D$  in  $p$ -channel devices) will increase  $V_T$ . Thus, to increase  $V_T$  in Example 5-1 in this manner, it would be necessary to increase the substrate doping concentration above  $N_A = 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ . Figure 5-7 shows how  $V_T$  can be controlled by changing the substrate doping concentration for various gate-oxide thicknesses (assuming that  $Q_{tot}$  is kept small enough that it is not a significant contribution to  $V_T$ ).

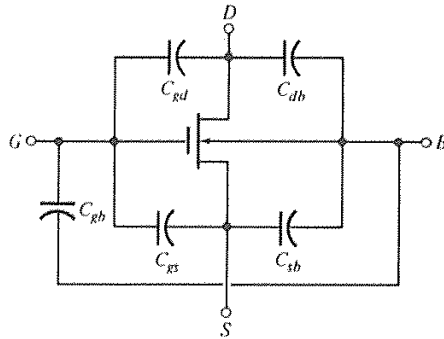


Fig. 5-7 MOS transistor capacitances.  $C_G = C_{GS} + C_{GB} + C_{GD}$ .<sup>7</sup> From D. A. Hodges and H. G. Jackson, *Analysis and Design of Digital Integrated Circuits*, Copyright, 1983 McGraw-Hill Book Co. Reprinted with permission.

Significant increases in substrate-doping concentration give rise to lower junction-breakdown voltages, larger junction capacitances, and lower carrier mobilities, making such substrate doping concentration increases undesirable. Yet, prior to the development of ion implantation in the early 1970s, adjustment of substrate doping was the only practical *processing approach* for significantly controlling  $V_T$  in active devices.

A *circuit approach* known based on applying a bias between the source and body (and hence known as *body biasing*) can also control  $V_T$ . When body biasing is used  $V_T$  is given by Eq. 5-6. Figure 5-8 gives an example of how the application of  $V_{SB}$  can change the  $V_{T0}$  value in an NMOS device.<sup>14</sup> The intercept of the channel conductance and the  $V_G$  axis when  $V_{SB} = 0$  corresponds to  $V_{T0}$ , which in this example is +0.99 V.

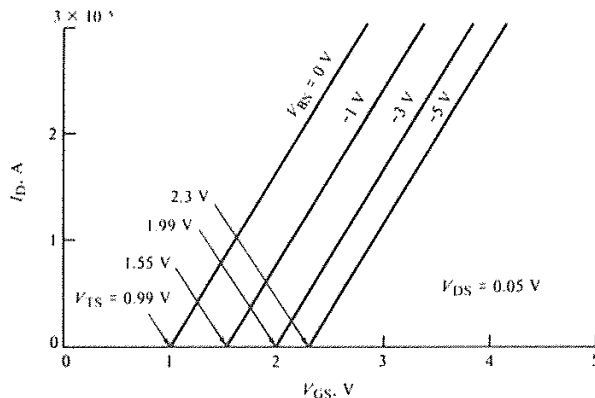


Fig. 5-8 Threshold voltage adjustment using substrate bias.

As  $V_{SB}$  is increased from 0 V to -5 V,  $V_T$  increases up to +2.3 V. However, body biasing is an added complication, and it is now avoided as a technique for adjusting  $V_T$  whenever possible in favor of the newer *ion implantation  $V_T$ -adjust method*.

We nevertheless include a discussion of body biasing because it pre-dated ion implantation as a method of controlling  $V_T$ . C. T. Sah points out that the availability of the technique allowed IBM to implement MOS memory devices instead of core memory for the first time in the IBM-370/158 mainframe computer in 1973.<sup>60</sup> The access time of NMOS RAMs at that time was competitive with magnetic core memory ( $\sim 1 \mu s$ ), whereas PMOS RAMs were slower. Body biasing allowed the higher-performance NMOS devices to function as enhancement-mode devices, even though their threshold voltages without body biasing would have caused them to behave like depletion-mode devices.

Another important reason for describing body biasing is that the body effect impacts devices in MOS IC logic circuits even when no deliberate attempt is made to apply an external bias. For example, when a logic gate containing a transistor as the load device has a logic 1 output (see for example Fig. 5-13), the voltage at the source of this device is different from that of the body. Hence, the device is subject to a non-zero  $V_{SB}$ , and  $V_T$  no longer equals  $V_{T0}$  value. The degree to which the change occurs depends on the *body factor*,  $\gamma$ . Since the smallest change in  $V_T$  is generally desired, small values of  $\gamma$  are preferred. Equation 5-7 indicates that  $\gamma$  depends on substrate doping, and that lower doping concentrations provide smaller values of  $\gamma$ , providing further impetus for lightly doped substrates in MOS ICs.

The value of  $\gamma$  also decreases with channel length below  $1 \mu m$ . For example,  $\gamma$  in NMOS devices decreases by about 50% as  $L_{eff}$  is decreased from  $1 \mu m$  to  $0.6 \mu m$ , while for PMOS the decrease is about 30%.<sup>8</sup>

### 5.2.3 Subthreshold Currents ( $I_{Dst}$ when $V_G < |V_T|$ )

The basic MOS device model neglects all free charges in the channel until the magnitude of the gate voltage exceeds  $V_T$ . This is a valid approximation for most subthreshold bias conditions because the free-charge densities in the channel change exponentially with the channel voltage. When this approximation is used, it implies that *no current flows between the drain and source* if  $V_G < |V_T|$ . As  $V_G$  approaches the value of  $V_T$ , (corresponding to a condition of *weak inversion*), however, the magnitude of  $I_D$  is not well defined by this simple approach. In fact, it is observed that  $I_D \neq 0$  if  $V_G$  is close to (but still less than) the value of  $V_T$ . The current which is observed in such cases is therefore referred to as *subthreshold current*,  $I_{Dst}$ .

The values of  $I_{Dst}$  can be well predicted in long-channel MOSFETs by modifying the basic MOS model to take into account the fact that the minority carrier concentration at the Si surface is greater than the value at equilibrium, but still less than the bulk doping concentration.<sup>19</sup> The results of this modified model indicate that the magnitude of  $I_{Dst}$  is essentially independent of  $V_{DS}$  but is exponentially proportional to  $V_G$ .

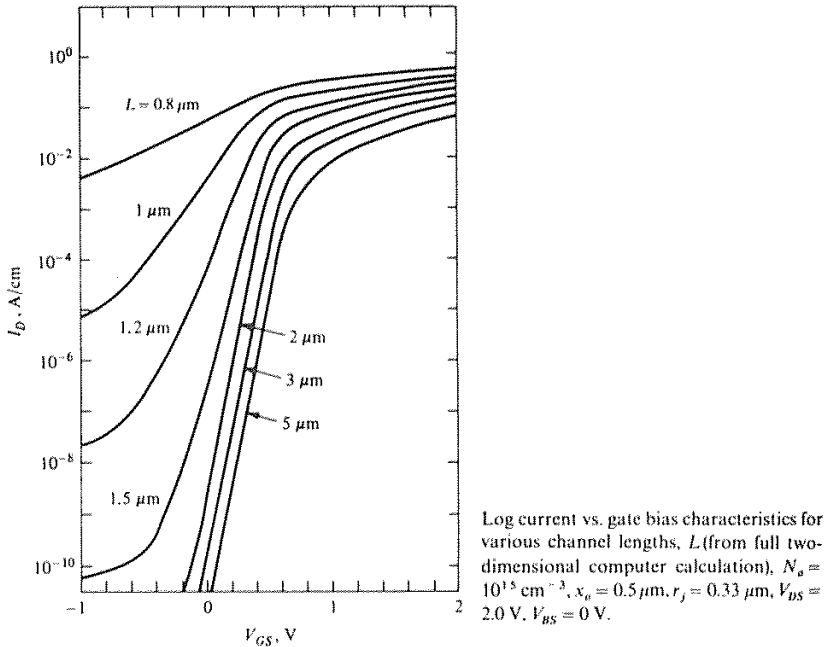


Fig. 5-9 Example of subthreshold MOSFET  $I_D$  -  $V_{GS}$  curves for various channel lengths.<sup>19</sup> (Reprinted with permission of Solid State Electronics).

Since  $I_{Dst}$  can be accurately modeled in long-channel MOSFETs (Fig. 5-9), circuit designers can readily calculate the gate bias required to ensure a given allowable subthreshold leakage current. Typically, to ensure that  $I_{Dst}$  will be negligibly small, the bias applied to the gate should be 0.5 V below  $V_T$ .

Since  $I_{Dst}$  is exponentially proportional to  $V_G$ , if  $\log I_{Dst}$  is plotted versus  $V_G$  the result on a semilogarithmic plot will be a straight line for values of  $V_G$  below  $V_T$ . The slope of the  $I_{Dst}$  versus  $V_G$  line, when plotted in this manner, is characterized by the *subthreshold swing*, S.S., where

$$\text{S.S.} = \Delta V_G / \Delta \log I_{Dst} \quad (5-13)$$

Hence, S.S. is the change in  $V_G$  that produces a decade increase in  $I_{Dst}$ . A small value of S.S. is desirable, since it indicates maximum control of the gate over the channel current. Typical values of subthreshold swing in long-channel MOSFETs are around 90 mV/decade. Such values can be achieved by building devices that have a low value of substrate doping concentration (which gives a larger depletion width) and a thin gate oxide. (A more detailed treatment of the derivation of the  $I_{Dst}$  dependence on  $V_G$  can be found in references 1 and 3.)

Note that when the channel length gets small, the values of  $I_{Dst}$  are larger than those predicted by the modified long-channel MOSFET model. This is due to so-called *short-channel effects* (discussed in section 5.5). However, measurements of the subthreshold swing can be used to detect the onset of these short-channel effects (*punchthrough* and *drain-induced barrier lowering*). Since the measurable  $I_{Dst}$  is the sum of both the normal subthreshold and the short-channel subthreshold current components, an increase in the value of S.S. will signal the onset of these effects.

### 5.2.4 Switching Speed

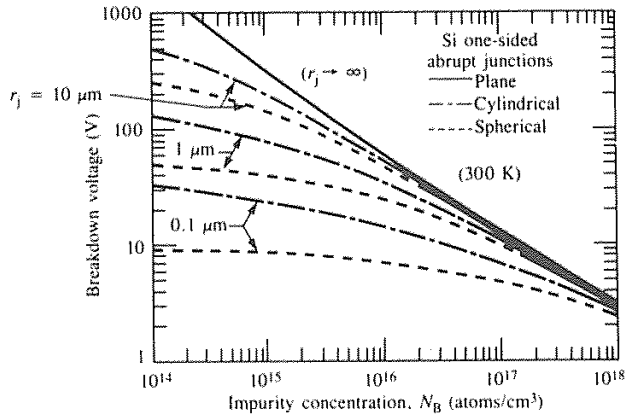
The switching speed of the logic gates in an MOS IC is limited only by the time required to charge and discharge the capacitances between device electrodes and between the interconnecting lines and ground (or other lines). At the circuit level the propagation delay is frequently limited by the interconnection-line capacitances. At the device level, however, the gate delay is determined primarily by the channel transconductance, the MOS gate capacitance ( $C_G$ ) and the other two MOS parasitic capacitances,  $C_{DB}$  and  $C_{SB}$  (as defined in the previous section). If these capacitance values can be reduced, the device switching speed will be increased.

The gate capacitance is decreased by decreasing the gate area (although decreasing the gate oxide thickness increases its value). The dominant parasitic capacitance on the device level, however, is that due to  $C_{SB}$  and  $C_{DB}$  (i.e., junction capacitances). An analytical study has shown that these junction capacitances account for up to 50% of the total capacitance in logic gates.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, reductions in these capacitances should produce corresponding decreases in the gate delay. In general, *the lower the doping concentration in the body, the lower the junction capacitances*.

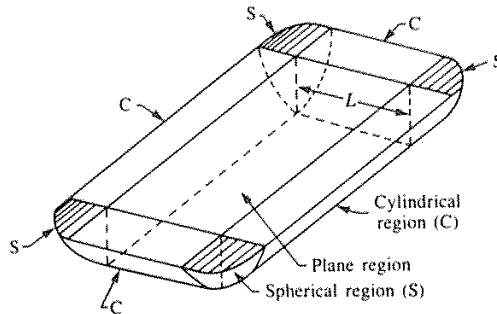
### 5.2.5 Junction Breakdown Voltage (Drain-to-Substrate)

The source and drain regions are very heavily doped to minimize their resistivities. Thus, the breakdown voltage of the drain-to-substrate junction will be determined by the lighter doping concentration of the body. As seen in Fig. 5-10a (which shows breakdown voltage of a one-sided *pn* junction as a function of the lighter doping concentration), the breakdown voltage decreases as the doping increases. Thus, *lightly doped substrates also yield high junction breakdown voltages*.

Junction curvature enhances the electric field in the curved part of the depletion region (Fig. 5-10b), and this effect reduces the breakdown voltage below that predicted by one-dimensional junction theory. A rectangular source or drain region (formed either by diffusion or ion implantation) has regions with both cylindrical and spherical curvature.<sup>10,11</sup> Figure 5-10a also shows the effect of junction curvature on the breakdown voltage of a one-sided step junction in silicon. It can be seen that as the junction depths get shallower (making the radius of curvature,  $r_j$ , of the spherical and cylindrical structures smaller), the breakdown voltage is significantly reduced, especially for low substrate impurity concentrations.



(a)



(b)

**Fig. 5-10** (a) Abrupt  $pn$  junction breakdown voltage versus impurity concentration on the lightly doped side of the junction for both cylindrical and spherical structures.  $r_j$  is the radius of curvature.<sup>10</sup> (© 1957 IEEE). (b) Formation of cylindrical and spherical regions by diffusion through a rectangular window. From S. M. Sze, *Semiconductor Devices - Physics and Technology*, Copyright, 1985, John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission.

### 5.2.6 Gate-Oxide Breakdown Voltage

High-quality  $\text{SiO}_2$  films will typically break down at electric fields of 5-10 MV/cm (the exact value is a function of oxidation and anneal conditions, oxide charges, surface crystallographic orientation, surface preparation and a number of other factors). This corresponds to 50-100 V across a 100-nm-thick oxide. Present day 5 V processes use gate-oxide thicknesses of 15-100 nm. Below around 5 nm (at less than 3 V), there is a

finite probability that electrons will pass through the gate by means of a quantum-mechanical tunneling effect. For proper device operation, the tunneling current must be small. This effect therefore sets a fundamental lower limit of about 5 nm for the thickness of the gate oxide. A search for alternative gate dielectric materials to mitigate this limitation is being conducted; this issue will be discussed in the CMOS chapter.

Oxide breakdown may also occur at electric-field values smaller than those given above, as a result of process-induced flaws in the gate oxide. Such defects include: metal precipitates on the silicon surface prior to oxide growth (see Vol. 1, chap. 2); high defect density in the silicon lattice at the substrate surface (e.g., stacking faults and dislocations, see Vol. 1, chap. 2); pinholes and weak spots created in the gate oxide by particulates; thinning of the oxide during growth caused by the Kooi effect (see chap. 2); and oxide wearout due to failure mechanisms related to hot-electron injection (this topic will be covered in Vol. 3).

### 5.2.7 High Field-Region Threshold-Voltage Value

A high value of threshold voltage in the field region is needed to keep the parasitic field channels between adjacent active devices from being turned on. This topic is described in great detail in chapter 2.

## 5.3 THE EVOLUTION OF MOS TECHNOLOGY (PMOS AND NMOS)

Following the introduction of MOS integrated circuits in the 1960s, MOS technology evolved through several stages. At first, PMOS was the dominant technology, but it was supplanted by NMOS in the early 1970s. NMOS in turn was largely replaced by CMOS in the mid-1980s. (The evolution of CMOS will be described in chap. 6.) In addition, the drive to shrink feature dimensions led to smaller device sizes in all IC technologies. In MOS technology, the main dimension that summarized the shrinkage in each new generation was the *minimum gate length* of the transistors. NMOS overtook PMOS roughly when gate lengths reached  $\sim 6 \mu\text{m}$ , while CMOS became the dominant technology at gate lengths of  $\sim 1.5\text{-}2 \mu\text{m}$ .

Although the *physical gate length*,  $L$ , of the MOS device is commonly used to identify each generation of technology, this practice can be misleading in that it may convey the impression that this dimension is also the minimum dimension of all other device features fabricated in the technology. In fact, the physical gate length does not necessarily reflect the dimensions of the other design rules (many, if not most, of which are larger than the physical gate length dimension).

In addition, the physical gate length does not accurately represent the electrical or *effective* channel length ( $L_{\text{eff}}$ ), which in fact is given by

$$L_{\text{eff}} = L - 2x_j \quad (5 - 14)$$

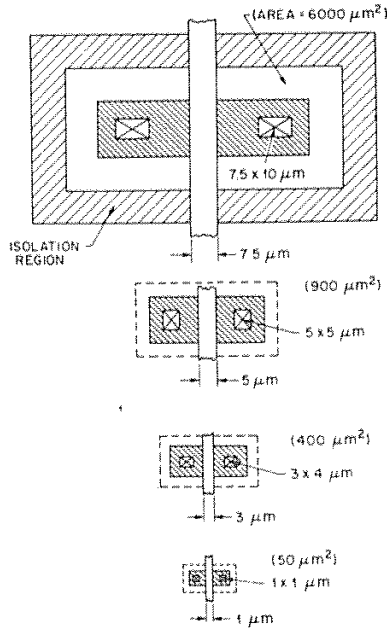


Fig. 5-11 Reduction in the area of the MOSFET as the gate length (minimum feature length) is reduced.<sup>12</sup> Reprinted with permission of Solid State Technology.

where  $x_{jl}$  is the lateral distance that the source or drain junction extends under the gate. For example, in a  $1.2\ \mu\text{m}$  MOS technology, the source and drain junctions both extend  $\sim 0.125\ \mu\text{m}$  under the gate region, so  $L_{\text{eff}}$  in this technology is actually  $0.95\ \mu\text{m}$ . Furthermore, in CMOS technologies, the minimum physical length of PMOS devices is generally longer than that of NMOS devices, for reasons that will be discussed later. Figure 5-11 shows the reduction in MOS area as the gate length is reduced.<sup>12</sup> A longer and more detailed history of the evolution of the field-effect devices themselves and the technology that has been developed to fabricate these devices.<sup>60</sup>

### 5.3.1 Aluminum-Gate PMOS

The first MOS ICs built in the mid-1960s were implemented with *p*-channel enhancement-mode devices whose threshold voltages were approximately  $-4\ \text{V}$ . (An example of an early PMOS IC was the Intel 256-bit SRAM, introduced in the late-60s with devices having gate lengths of  $12\ \mu\text{m}$ .) Such early MOS integrated circuits were built on silicon wafers of  $\langle 111 \rangle$  orientation and used Al as the gate electrode material. These choices grew out of the experience gained in manufacturing bipolar ICs prior to the development of MOS ICs. When MOS IC technology was first being implemented,

semiconductor manufacturers transferred their bipolar fabrication know-how to the newer technology.

Since precise control of dopant diffusion in  $\langle 111 \rangle$  Si was a mature bipolar process,  $\langle 111 \rangle$  wafers were also the logical choice for building MOS ICs. Similarly, since aluminum metallization was already being implemented, it was natural to adapt Al as the MOS gate electrode material. Unknowingly, these choices worsened the problems which prevented NMOS devices from being used to produce early MOS ICs, and instead, forced the use of PMOS devices in these circuits.

The earliest MOS circuits exhibited two serious limitations, partly as a result of being implemented with  $p$ -channel devices. First, the PMOS devices had a  $V_T$  of  $-4$  V, which required a power-supply voltage of  $-12$  V for the drain supply (a value that was incompatible with the  $+5$  V power-supply voltage used in bipolar digital [TTL] ICs). Second, the circuits were very slow (e.g., a PMOS flip-flop could operate at 500 kHz to 1 MHz, while a bipolar flip-flop could operate at 5-10 MHz). It was known that the latter problem was due to the low surface mobility of holes in the channel and that electron mobility in silicon is nearly three times as large. Therefore, NMOS circuits would have been able to provide significantly improved performance. Nevertheless, the decision to manufacture ICs with PMOS devices was dictated primarily by the existence of large (and quite variable) oxide-charge densities in the early MOS technologies.

These oxide charges were generally positive, and positive voltages on the gate tend to accumulate  $n$ -type surfaces (but will deplete or invert  $p$ -type surfaces). The oxide charges present in early MOS devices were often large enough to cause inversion in NMOS devices fabricated with reasonably thin gate oxides, even when  $V_G = 0$ . A thicker gate oxide could have been used to increase  $V_T$ , but this would also have degraded  $g_m$  to such a degree that circuits built with such devices would have been even slower than those built with PMOS devices. Thus, only *depletion*-mode high performance NMOS devices could be reliably manufactured. Since *enhancement*-mode devices are needed for most applications, this presented a major difficulty.

In addition, because the oxide charges were also capable of inverting  $p$ -doped substrate regions under field oxides, it was difficult to reliably isolate  $n$ -channel devices. This problem was made worse by the depletion of boron during thermal oxidation, because it reduced the boron concentration at the  $p$ -type surface. In summary, at the outset of the MOS era, it was not possible to reliably manufacture integrated circuits with  $n$ -channel enhancement-mode MOSFETs.

On the other hand, since positive oxide charges tend to accumulate an  $n$ -type surface, they merely increase the negative voltage that is required to turn on a  $p$ -channel device. Hence, the manufacture of enhancement-mode PMOS devices was possible despite the presence of the oxide charges. Nevertheless, it was clear that processing innovations were needed if the potential benefits of MOS (i.e., increased packing density, lower power consumption, TTL power-supply voltage compatibility, and process simplicity) were to be fully realized.

### 5.3.2 Silicon-Gate MOS Technology

One of the key process innovations for MOS ICs was the use of heavily doped polysilicon as the gate electrode in place of Al (see Vol. 1, chap. 6 for more information on polysilicon thin films). The development of this *silicon gate technology* improved the fabrication of MOS ICs in the following ways:

- Since aluminum must be deposited following completion of all high-temperature process steps (including drive-in of the source and drain regions), the gate electrode must be separately aligned to the source and drain. This alignment procedure adversely affects both packing density and parasitic overlap capacitances between the gate and source/drain regions. Since polysilicon has the same high melting point as the silicon substrate, it can be deposited prior to source and drain formation. Furthermore, the gate itself can serve as a mask during formation of the source and drain regions (by either diffusion or ion implantation). The gate thereby becomes nearly perfectly aligned over the channel, with the only overlap of the source and drain being that due to lateral diffusion of the dopant atoms. This *self-alignment* feature simplifies the fabrication sequence, increases packing density, and reduces the gate-source and gate-drain parasitic overlap capacitances.
- The threshold voltage of PMOS devices is reduced by the use of a polysilicon gate, since the  $\phi_{ms}$  is less negative (see Eqs. 5-2). For PMOS devices on  $\langle 111 \rangle$ -Si, the threshold voltage is reduced from roughly -4 V to -2 V. This smaller threshold voltage value enabled PMOS ICs to become compatible with TTL (bipolar) ICs, allowing MOS to be designed into many digital systems that operated at TTL-defined power supply voltage levels (i.e., 0 V to 5 V).
- The ability of polysilicon to withstand high temperatures also permits it to be completely encapsulated by an  $\text{SiO}_2$  layer. This allows the polysilicon film to function as an interconnect path, in addition to serving as the gate electrode. By taking advantage of this new interconnection structure (without having to use a second layer of metal, as was necessary with bipolar ICs), it was possible to give MOS ICs an additional level of interconnection that could be crossed by the usual metal layer, or even by another polysilicon layer. This eased the problem of routing the electrical paths among the devices of an IC, thereby facilitating the layout of compact digital integrated circuits. (Techniques for establishing contact between the polysilicon layer and substrate are described in chap. 3, section 3.11.1). The ability of polysilicon to withstand high temperatures was also exploited to allow the dielectric (e.g. phosphorus-doped  $\text{SiO}_2$ ) that covers it to be flowed, thereby making a significantly smoother surface topography for metallization layers.

The greatest disadvantage of polysilicon as a gate material compared to Al is its significantly higher resistivity. Even when doped at the highest practical

concentrations, a 0.5- $\mu\text{m}$ -thick polysilicon film has a sheet resistance of about 20  $\Omega/\text{sq}$  (compared to  $\sim 0.05$   $\Omega/\text{sq}$  for a 0.5- $\mu\text{m}$ -thick Al film). The resulting high values of interconnect line resistance can lead to relatively long RC time constants (i.e., long propagation delays) and severe dc voltage variations within a VLSI circuit. Consequently, the formation of refractory metal silicide layers on top of polysilicon layers (which results in so-called *polycide* films) was developed to reduce the severity of this drawback. Such polycide films can provide sheet resistances of 1  $\Omega/\text{sq}$ , at the expense of more complex processing (see Vol. 1, chap. 11 for more information on polycides). Despite of the above limitation, the development of silicon-gate technology proved to be the most important contribution to MOS technology during the reign of PMOS.

### 5.3.3 Reduction of Oxide-Charge Densities

Another set of important advances allowed the magnitude of the positive oxide-charge densities to be reduced. These oxide charge reduction techniques can be summarized as those involving *cleanliness, gettering, annealing, and replacing <111> wafers with <100> wafers*.

Cleanliness and gettering techniques reduced the densities of *mobile ionic charge*, which are due to the incorporation of ionized alkali metal atoms ( $\text{Na}^+$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ ) in the gate oxide. Na contamination can be controlled through clean gate oxidation processing. Gettering is used to prevent any  $\text{Na}^+$  that enters the gate oxide from significantly degrading the  $V_T$  (see Vol. 1, chap. 7). Although tests for Na contamination of MOS devices must be routinely performed to ensure that accidental contamination does not occur, it is possible to establish fabrication procedures in which the instability of  $V_T$  due to mobile ionic charge is less than 0.1 V.

Another source of positive oxide charge is the *interface trap charge*. Again, as described in Volume 1, chapter 7, two annealing techniques were discovered that reduced this charge to acceptably low levels (i.e., to the low  $10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ eV}^{-1}$  range). At these levels the contribution to the threshold voltage of the device is acceptably small for modern MOS devices.

The final source of positive oxide charge is the so-called *fixed oxide charge* which is located in the transition region between the silicon and the  $\text{SiO}_2$  (see Vol. 1, chap. 7). It was learned that this charge can be reduced by the use of proper annealing techniques and that the lowest fixed oxide charge densities ( $\sim 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ) are obtained on <100> wafers. As a result, the production of MOS ICs was shifted from <111> to <100> starting material.

In summary, the threshold voltage is negatively shifted by an amount proportional to the sum of these three oxide charge densities,  $Q_{\text{tot}}$ . When  $Q_{\text{tot}}$  was quite high this had an extremely important influence on MOS production. Through an enormous effort by the semiconductor community (industry and universities), each of the positive oxide charge density values was reduced. As a result,  $Q_{\text{tot}}$  can now be kept to less than  $5 \times 10^{10}$  charges  $/\text{cm}^2$ , and in currently used MOS devices, the oxide charge contribution to

threshold voltage is minimal. As an example, the change in threshold voltage ( $\Delta V_T$ ) due to a  $Q_{\text{tot}}$  of  $q$  ( $5 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ ) in an MOS device with a 20-nm-thick oxide is:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta V_T &= Q_{\text{tot}}/C_{\text{ox}} = Q_{\text{tot}} x_o / 3.9 \epsilon_o \\ &= (1.6 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C}) (5 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2}) (2 \times 10^{-6} \text{ cm}) / (3.5 \times 10^{-13} \text{ F/cm}) = 0.05 \text{ V}.\end{aligned}$$

The primary reason that thermal  $\text{SiO}_2$  is used as the gate insulator in almost all MOSFETs is that it exhibits the best interface with silicon (where "best" means that the interface has a very low concentration of interface fixed charges and traps). In fact, if a phenomenon such as the tying up of the dangling silicon bonds at the silicon surface by  $\text{SiO}_2$  did not exist, and if an annealing process was not discovered for reducing the remaining bonds and traps to an acceptable level, MOS devices would have remained merely a laboratory curiosity.<sup>61</sup> Experimentation, however, is still being conducted to determine the suitability of other materials as gate insulators; this is discussed in chapter 6 which deals with CMOS.

**EXAMPLE 5-2:** Recalculate the threshold voltage of the NMOS transistor considered in Example 5-1 of section 5.1.2 when the oxide thickness,  $t_{\text{ox}}$ , is reduced to 15 nm, and the total oxide-charge density is reduced to  $5 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ .

**SOLUTION:**  $\phi_{f(\text{sub})} = -0.29 \text{ V}; \quad \phi_{\text{ms}} = -0.88 \text{ V};$

$$\epsilon_{\text{ox}} = 3.9\epsilon_o = 3.5 \times 10^{-13} \text{ F/cm}; \quad C_{\text{ox}} = \epsilon_{\text{ox}} / 15 \times 10^{-6} = 2.3 \times 10^{-7} \text{ F/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{\text{BO}} = - [2 \times 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 10^{15} \times 1.04 \times 10^{-12} \times |-0.58|]^{1/2} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} \text{ C/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{\text{BO}} / C_{\text{ox}} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} / 2.3 \times 10^{-7} = -0.06 \text{ V}$$

$$Q_{\text{tot}} / C_{\text{ox}} = 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 5 \times 10^{10} / 2.3 \times 10^{-7} = 0.46 \text{ V}$$

$$V_{\text{TO}} = -0.88 - (-0.58) - (-0.06) - (0.03) = -0.27 \text{ V}$$

Note that the threshold voltage is still negative, and that this device would still be *ON* if the applied gate bias was  $V_G = 0 \text{ V}$ .

**EXAMPLE 5-3:** Repeat the threshold-voltage calculation in Example 5-2 for an NMOS transistor whose oxide thickness ( $t_{\text{ox}}$ ) is increased to 500 nm. This oxide thickness is typical of the field-oxide thickness between MOS devices on an IC. Hence, it allows us to calculate  $V_T$  for the parasitic NMOS field-region device.

**SOLUTION:**  $\phi_{f(\text{sub})} = -0.29 \text{ V}; \quad \phi_{\text{ms}} = -0.88 \text{ V};$

$$\epsilon_{\text{ox}} = 3.9\epsilon_o = 3.5 \times 10^{-13} \text{ F/cm}; \quad C_{\text{ox}} = \epsilon_{\text{ox}} / 5 \times 10^{-5} = 7 \times 10^{-9} \text{ F/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{BO} = - [2 \times 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 10^{15} \times 1.04 \times 10^{-12} \times |-0.58|]^{1/2} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} \text{ C/cm}^2$$

$$Q_{BO}/C_{ox} = -1.4 \times 10^{-8} / 7 \times 10^{-9} = -2 \text{ V}$$

$$Q_{tot}/C_{ox} = 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \times 5 \times 10^{10} / 7 \times 10^{-9} = 1.14 \text{ V}$$

$$V_{TO} = -0.88 - (-0.58) - (-2) - (1.14) = 0.66 \text{ V}$$

This shows that an increase in the oxide thickness in the field will increase the  $V_T$  of the NMOS device in Example 5-2 so that it is now an enhancement-mode device. Unfortunately, if  $V_G = 5 \text{ V}$ , this device would still turn on, and thus the parasitic field device would conduct.

### 5.3.4 Ion Implantation for Adjusting Threshold Voltage

The development of ion implantation for  $V_T$  adjustment removed the last obstacle to reliable production of  $n$ -channel devices for MOS ICs, because this procedure made it possible to select the substrate-doping value without having to consider its impact on  $V_T$ . Substrate doping could now be selected strictly on the basis of optimum device performance, since  $V_T$  became separately adjustable by means of ion implantation. In addition, since dopants could be selectively implanted into the field regions, high-performance NMOS circuits could also be reliably fabricated on lightly doped substrates (i.e., without the possibility of inadvertent inversion of the surrounding field regions).

This technique of adjusting  $V_T$  involves implantation of boron, phosphorus, or arsenic ions into the regions under the oxide of a MOSFET. The implantation of boron causes a positive shift in the threshold voltage, while phosphorus or arsenic implantation causes a negative shift. For shallow implants, the procedure has essentially the same effect as placing an additional "fixed" charge at the oxide-semiconductor interface. To first order, the threshold-voltage change ( $\Delta V_T$ ) is thereby estimated from<sup>1</sup>

$$\Delta V_T = q N_I / C_{ox} \quad (5-15)$$

where  $N_I$  is the dose of the implanted ions (atoms/cm<sup>2</sup>) introduced into the silicon near its surface. For example, Eq. 5-15 predicts that when  $N_I = 5 \times 10^{11}$  ions/cm<sup>2</sup> and  $t_{ox} = 25 \text{ nm}$ , a shift in  $V_T$  of 0.58 V will be produced. Exact modeling can be performed to calculate the actual threshold voltage shift more accurately. Figure 5-12 graphically shows the results of such modeling calculations.<sup>16,75</sup>

The  $V_T$ -adjust implant is usually done through the gate oxide layer. When the correct implant energy for the gate-oxide thickness being used is selected, the peak of the implant will occur at the oxide-silicon interface. After the implant-activating anneal, the implanted distribution is broader than the as-implanted profile. Calculating the effect of the implant on  $V_T$  is greatly simplified by approximating the actual distribu-

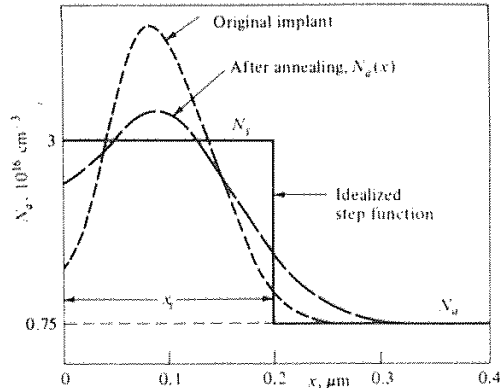


Fig. 5-12 Doping profile of implanted region beneath the gate oxide. The original implant is broadened by thermal annealing. The step doping is used to estimate the threshold voltage shift achieved using ion implantation.<sup>75</sup> Reprinted with permission of IBM J. of Research and Development.

tion via a "box" distribution (in which the implanted dopant is assumed to have a constant density from the surface to a depth of  $x_i$ .) Figure 5-12 shows that  $V_T$  does not change greatly as  $x_i$  is varied. Thus, the first-order approximation of the threshold-voltage change,  $\Delta V_T$  (which ignored the depth of the implant as a parameter), will therefore give reasonably good estimates of  $\Delta V_T$ . This calculation is often accepted in practice.

Ion implantation can also be used to fabricate depletion-mode MOSFETs. Depletion-mode NMOS devices (*i.e.* in which  $V_T < 0$  V) are commonly used in NMOS logic circuits (see the following section). In order for the required negative threshold voltage for a depletion-mode NMOS device to be produced,  $n$ -type impurities are implanted to form a built-in channel between the source and drain. The dose required to shift the threshold voltage by the desired value may also be estimated using Eqs. 5-1 and 5-15.

**EXAMPLE 5-4:** If the NMOS transistor of Example 5-2 is to be used in an application that requires a  $V_T = 1.0$  V, calculate the boron dose needed to adjust  $V_T$  to this value.

**SOLUTION:** The threshold voltage of the device in Example 5-2 is -0.27 V. We wish to have a  $V_T$  of 1.0 V. Thus  $V_T$  must be shifted ( $\Delta V_T$ ) by 1.27 V. Using Eq. 5-15, we see that the boron dose needed to cause this  $\Delta V_T$  is

$$\begin{aligned} N_I &= \Delta V_T C_{ox}/q = [1.27 \text{ V} \times 2.3 \times 10^{-7} \text{ F/cm}^2] / 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C} \\ &= 1.8 \times 10^{12} \text{ boron atoms/cm}^2. \end{aligned}$$

### 5.3.5 Isolation Technology for MOS

Although MOS transistors are inherently self-isolating devices it is still necessary to prevent the formation of spurious channels between MOS devices (see chap. 2). This can be accomplished with the combination of a thick field oxide between the devices and a high surface concentration under the field oxide.

Prior to about 1970 the process for obtaining thick oxide regions in the field involved growing an oxide to the desired thickness on the wafer surface and then etching windows into it. This approach caused severe steps in the wafer topography, which were difficult to cover with subsequent metal layers. The introduction of LOCOS isolation in 1970 substantially overcame this problem (see chap. 2). The smoothly tapered step from the edge of the active region to the top of the field oxide in LOCOS permits overlying conductors to be easily deposited on such steps without the occurrence of significant thinning. In addition, with the development of the threshold-voltage adjustment process via ion implantation, high surface concentrations of boron could also be selectively placed under the field oxide regions. These two advances made it feasible to reliably isolate devices in NMOS circuits.

**EXAMPLE 5-5:** If the parasitic field NMOS transistor of Example 5-3 is implanted with the boron implant dose calculated in Example 5-4 before the field oxide is grown, determine  $V_T$  of this device (assume that no boron is lost because of segregation effects during the oxide growth).

**SOLUTION:** The threshold voltage of the device in Example 5-3 is 0.66V. Using Eq. 5-15, we see that a boron dose of  $1.8 \times 10^{12}$  atoms/cm<sup>2</sup> would cause a  $\Delta V_T$  of

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta V_T &= q N_I / C_{ox} = 1.6 \times 10^{-19} \text{ C} \times 1.8 \times 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-2} / 7 \times 10^{-9} \text{ F/cm}^2 \\ &= 41 \text{ V}\end{aligned}$$

Thus, the  $V_T$  of the parasitic field device would be (0.66 V + 41 V), or almost 42 V. This example shows that a combination of a thicker field oxide and a channel-stop implant dose can increase the threshold voltage of the parasitic field device to sufficiently large values.

### 5.3.6 Short-Channel Devices

As MOS channel lengths got smaller than about 3  $\mu\text{m}$ , so-called short-channel effects began to become increasingly significant. As a result, device design and, consequently, process technology had to be modified to take these effects into account so that optimum device performance could continue to be obtained. Short-channel effects and their impact on processing in will be discussed in section 5.5.

## 5.4 PROCESS SEQUENCE FOR FABRICATING NMOS INVERTERS WITH NMOS DEPLETION-MODE LOADS

This section will describe the process sequence used to fabricate silicon-gate NMOS digital integrated circuits. A simple inverter circuit with enhancement-mode pull-down and depletion-mode pull-up NMOS transistors is used in the example. Many other logic circuits can also be implemented with this *enhancement-depletion* (E-D) NMOS process sequence.

A brief outline of how the inverter functions from a circuit point of view is given at the outset to help define some of the characteristics of MOS IC circuits. The process flow described in this section represents a relatively simple NMOS technology. In fact, many techniques have been developed to improve the performance and packing density of MOS circuits beyond those that can be produced by this process sequence. These include alternatives to LOCOS isolation structures; thin gate oxides (and alternative gate oxide materials); shallow source/drain junctions; spacers (for forming lightly-doped drain structures and salicides); punchthrough prevention implants; double polysilicon; 2-level (or more) metallization; and self-aligned contact structures. While most of these techniques are discussed in this chapter; others are discussed elsewhere in the book (e.g., isolation technology in chap. 2, salicides and self-aligned contact structures in chap. 3, and multilevel metallization technology in chap. 4).

### 5.4.1 Operation of an NMOS Inverter with a Depletion-Mode Load

The most common applications of MOS transistors are in integrated circuit digital logic gates and memory arrays. Several types of circuits have been developed to implement logic gates in MOS ICs, with each circuit type characterized by the type of *load device* it utilizes. The class of logic-gate circuits that has become standard in most NMOS digital ICs is based on enhancement-depletion (E-D) NMOS technology, and such E-D logic gates are the basis for most NMOS microprocessors, microprocessor peripheral devices, and static NMOS memories.

The inverter is the fundamental logic gate. E-D NMOS inverters are composed of two transistors; an enhancement mode MOSFET called the *driver*, which is switched *ON* and *OFF* by the input signal; and a depletion-mode MOSFET, called the *load*. The circuit diagram of this inverter is shown in Fig. 5-13a, and an example of a layout (as it would appear on the completed wafer) is shown in Fig. 5-13b. The cross-sectional view of this structure is shown in Fig. 5-13c.

The load connects the power supply voltage  $V_{DD}$  and the output of the inverter. The gate of the load transistor is electrically connected to its source region, so that  $V_G$  in the load transistor always equals zero. Since depletion-mode devices are always *ON* when  $V_G = 0$ , tying together the gate and drain ensures that the device is always *ON*. The driver transistor has its source connected to ground, while its drain region is electrically connected to the source region of the load transistor and the output. The threshold voltage of the driver transistor,  $V_{TE}$ , is selected to be between 0 and  $V_{DD}$ ,

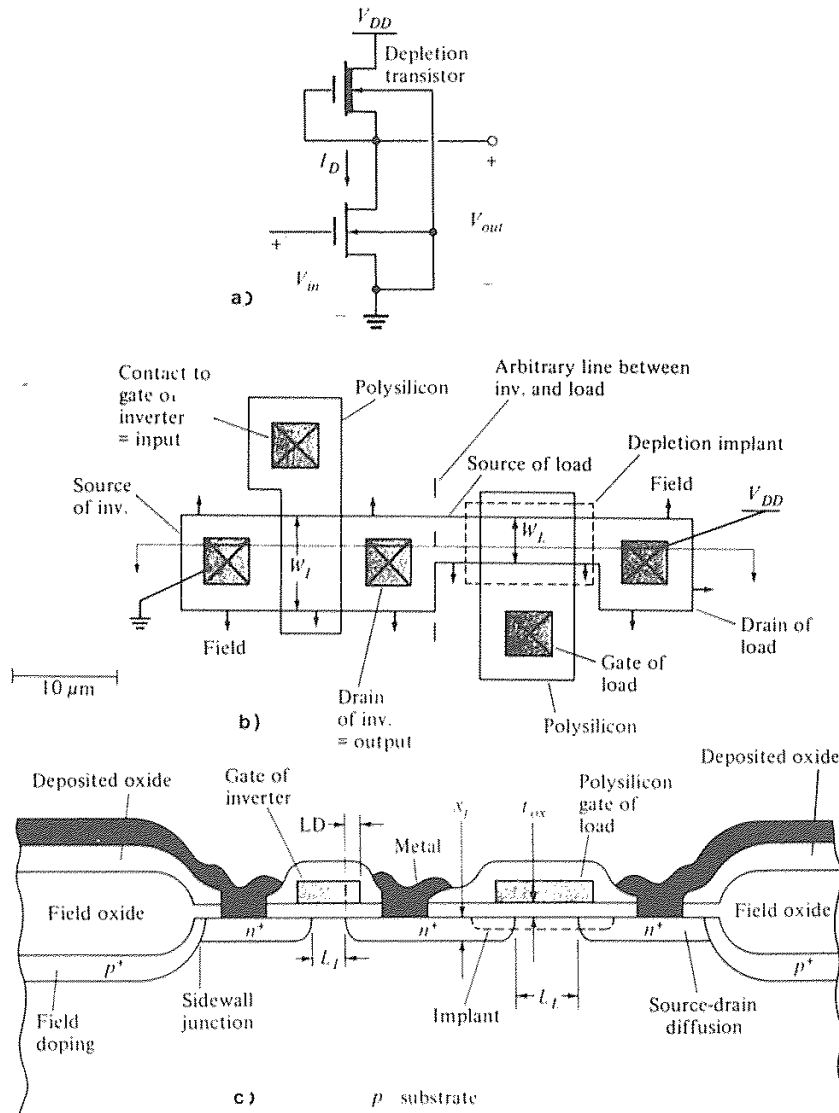


Fig. 5-13 NMOS inverter, depletion MOSFET load. (a) Schematic representation. (b) Layout. (c) Cross sectional view.<sup>7</sup> From D. A. Hodges and H. G. Jackson, *Analysis and Design of Digital Integrated Circuits*, Copyright, 1983 McGraw-Hill Book Co. Reprinted with permission.

while the threshold voltage of the load transistor (since this is a depletion-mode device),  $V_{TD}$ , is selected to have a negative voltage value.

The input signal to the inverter (a voltage,  $V_{in}$ ) is fed to the gate of the driver transistor, and the output signal is the voltage level at the output node,  $V_o$ . When there is a logic 0 input signal (low voltage at  $V_{in}$ ),  $V_G$  at the driver transistor is  $< V_{TE}$ . In this case, there is no conducting channel between source and drain, so the impedance between the output and ground is very high. Since the depletion transistor is *ON*, however, the output is electrically connected to  $V_{DD}$ , and  $V_o$  rises (or is *pulled up*) to logic 1 (close to  $V_{DD}$ ).

When the input voltage to the inverter is logic 1 (close to  $V_{DD}$ ), the gate voltage applied to the driver is greater than  $V_{TE}$ , thus turning the driver transistor *ON*. A low-impedance path then exists between the output node and ground. Hence, the driver transistor can conduct a large current with a small voltage drop across it, allowing the output to go to logic 0. This demonstrates how the logic level at the input is inverted at the output of the circuit.

The desired characteristics of digital logic gates as IC elements are the following: fast switching speed (i.e., small propagation-delay time); low power dissipation; small size (i.e., minimum silicon area); and high noise margin. We'll now see how the NMOS inverter just described is designed to meet these requirements. (Note: the circuit design considerations used to arrive at the configuration presented here can be found in texts dealing with IC design.<sup>7,17,18</sup> Since our interest here is in how these design choices impact the processing of the device, readers interested in their justification are advised to consult the references mentioned.)

In order to obtain maximum packing density (i.e., most logic gates per area of substrate) with minimum power consumption\* an E-D NMOS inverter would be designed in the following manner:<sup>17</sup> The driver transistor would have a gate area whose dimensions would be the minimum that could be fabricated in that generation of technology. The depletion load transistor would have an effective *channel length* ( $L_{effD}$ ) that would be four times the effective channel length of the driver device ( $L_{effE}$ ) and a minimum gate width.

As a simple example, let us assume an inverter is to be fabricated with E-D NMOS technology, and that the minimum manufacturable feature dimension is  $5\ \mu\text{m}$ . Let us also assume that a  $1\text{-}\mu\text{m}$  lateral diffusion occurs under each side of the gate. In this case,  $L_{effE}$  is  $3\ \mu\text{m}$  and thus  $L_{effD}$  should be  $12\ \mu\text{m}$ . This means that the drawn gate lengths of the driver and load devices would be  $5\ \mu\text{m}$  and  $14\ \mu\text{m}$  respectively. The drawn gate widths of both devices would be  $5\ \mu\text{m}$  (since these are the dimensions between the walls of the field oxide).

If a 5 V power supply is assumed, the threshold voltages of the driver and depletion load transistor ( $V_{TE}$ , and  $V_{TD}$ ) would be selected to be approximately 1.0 V and -3.0 V, respectively. (These two  $V_T$  values are chosen in order to give a high noise margin without severely impacting switching speed.) To conserve space, *buried contacts* between the polysilicon gate and the silicon substrate would be employed. (The procedure used for fabricating such contacts is presented in chap. 3.)

\* But as a result, with less than maximum switching speed,

While the E-D NMOS technology has some important advantages over other IC technologies (particularly high packing density), it does have some drawbacks that become extremely serious as the number of devices on the chip gets very large. The most important of these is the high total power that is consumed. The origin of this power consumption arises from the operation of the NMOS inverter. When the inverter (and similarly other logic gates) has a low output state, both driver and load are *ON*, allowing current to flow from  $V_{DD}$  to ground. The power consumed by each inverter in a low-output state is the product of this current and  $V_{DD}$ . Thus, if a series of inverters are connected together, 50% of them will be drawing power at all times. When the devices get small enough, the power density on the chip becomes so large that it becomes necessary to replace NMOS with CMOS, since this technology consumes much less power per logic gate.

#### 5.4.2 Process Sequence of a Basic E-D NMOS IC Technology

Figure 5-14 is a flow-chart representation of the sequence of steps that were used to fabricate typical E-D NMOS digital integrated circuits for gate lengths down to about  $3\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ .<sup>76</sup> Figures 5-15a through 5-15j show what occurs on the wafer as this sequence of process steps is followed. The process being illustrated is a seven mask process (including the passivation pad mask, even though this final pad mask is not shown). The E-D NMOS inverter described in the previous section is used here as a vehicle for showing how device features on the wafer surface are created during the course of the process flow.

**5.4.1.1 Starting Material.** The starting material is a lightly doped ( $\sim 5 \times 10^{14}$ – $10^{15}$  atoms/cm<sup>2</sup>) *p*-type <100> silicon wafer (substrate). As described earlier, the lightly doped substrate is chosen to provide low source/drain-to-substrate capacitance, high source/drain-to-substrate breakdown voltage, high carrier mobility, and low sensitivity to source-substrate bias effects. A backside gettering process, such as implanting with Ar, to create crystalline-damaged regions that will trap mobile impurities during subsequent heat steps during the process may be used prior to the next step (see Vol. 1, chap 2).

**5.4.1.2 Active Region and Field Region Definitions.** The first task in this processing sequence is to define the active device and field regions on the wafer surface. This is done by selectively oxidizing the field regions so that they are covered with a thick field oxide, using the LOCOS process. The steps involved in this task are those of boxes 3-9 in Fig. 5-14, and are illustrated in Figs. 5-15a and 5-15b.

A thin pad oxide (20-60 nm thick) is first thermally grown or CVD-deposited on the wafer surface as a stress-relief layer. This is followed by the deposition of a CVD nitride layer (100-200 nm thick). *Mask #1* is then used to expose a resist film that was spun on after the nitride deposition (Fig. 5-15a2). After exposure and development, the resist layer remains behind only in the regions that will be the active device regions

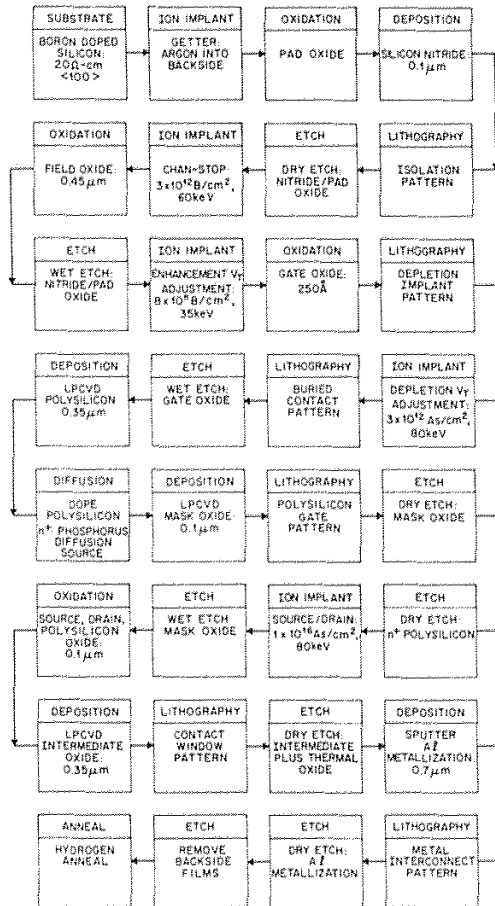


Fig. 5-14 Main steps in an *n*-channel, polysilicon-gate MOS IC process flow.<sup>76</sup> (© 1980 IEEE).

(Fig. 5-15b1). Next the nitride and pad oxide are anisotropically dry-etched away in the regions not covered by the resist (field regions). Thus, after the removal of the resist, the active areas are covered with the nitride/pad-oxide layer (Fig. 5-15b3).

In the next step, a boron implant ( $10^{12}$ - $10^{13}$  atoms/cm<sup>2</sup>, 40-80 keV) is performed to create *channel stops* in the field regions. The nitride/pad oxide layer now acts as a mask (Fig. 5-15c1) to prevent the boron from penetrating the silicon in the active areas. (Note that in some processes the resist is not removed until after the channel-stop

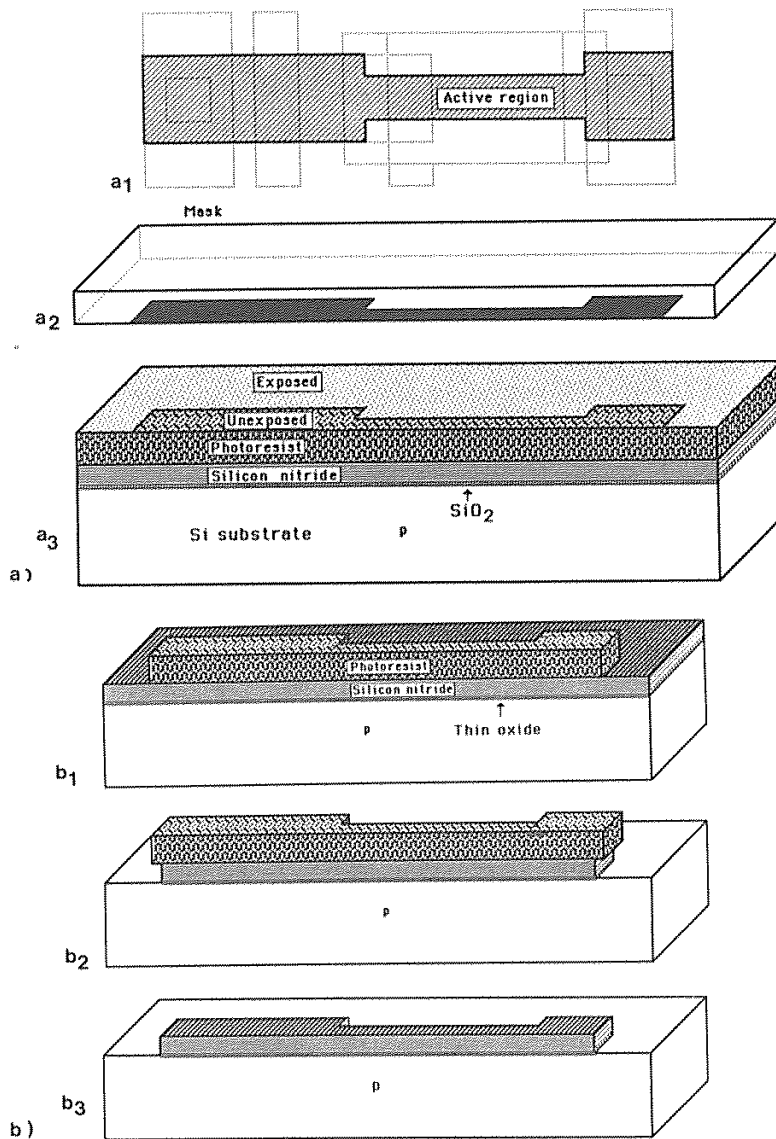


Fig. 5-15 NMOS E-D inverter fabrication sequence. (a) Patterning of the active region. (b) Patterning the silicon nitride-pad oxide layers. From W. Maly, *Atlas of IC Technologies*, Copyright 1987 by the Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission.

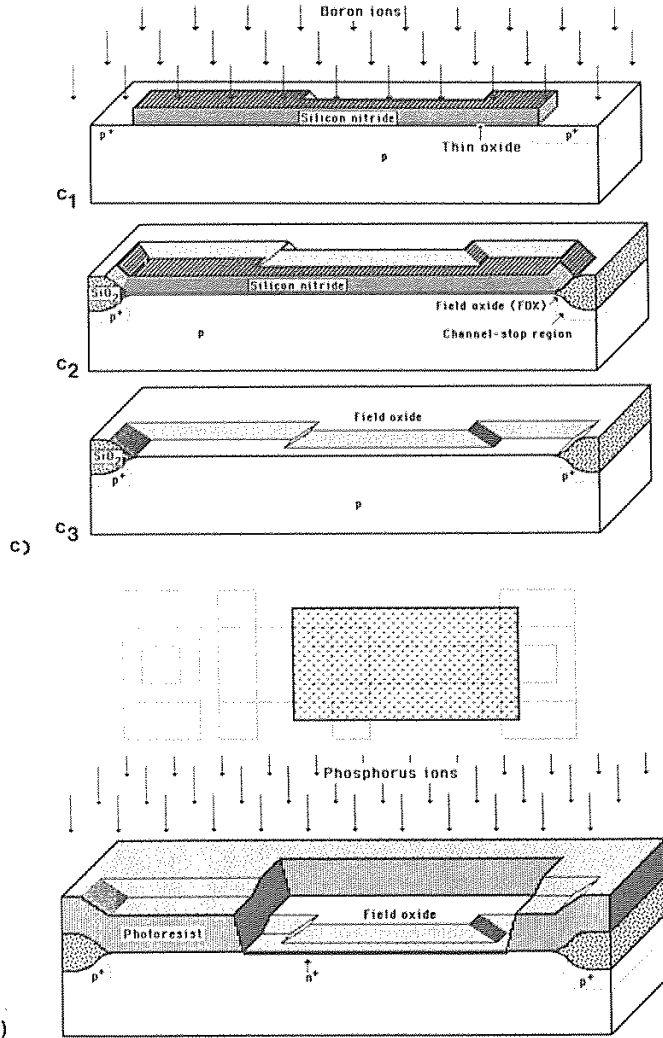


Fig. 5-15 (c) Active region formation and channel-stop implant. (d) Implantation of the channel of the depletion-mode transistor. From Maly, *Atlas of IC Technologies*.

implant, as the nitride/pad oxide layer may be too thin to act as an effective implant mask. In fact, with the patterned resist still in place, the channel stop may be implanted through the nitride/pad oxide layer, which in this case would not be etched until the implant is performed.)

A thermal-oxidation step is then performed to grow a thick (0.5-1.0  $\mu\text{m}$ ) field oxide over the regions where the nitride has been etched away. In this process, the field oxide is self-aligned to the channel stops. During the oxide growth, some lateral oxidation also occurs under the nitride edges, forming the *bird's beak* structure (see chap. 2 for more details concerning this effect, as well as other problems that arise in connection with the field-oxide growth step). After the field oxide has been grown, the remaining nitride and pad oxide are stripped, leaving the active areas with exposed silicon surfaces for further processing (Fig. 5-15c3).

#### 5.4.1.3 Gate-Oxide Growth and Threshold-Voltage Adjust Implant

In the next major step the gate oxide is grown, and the threshold voltages of the enhancement-mode and depletion-mode transistors of the inverter are adjusted through ion implantation. The growth of the gate oxide is a critical step, as a defect-free, very thin (15-100-nm), high-quality oxide without contamination is essential for proper device operation. The gate oxide is grown only in the exposed active region (the field-oxide thickness is actually increased slightly as a result of this oxide-growth step). As noted earlier, the drain current in an MOS transistor is inversely proportional to the gate-oxide thickness (for a given set of terminal voltages). As a result, the gate oxide is normally made as thin as possible, commensurate with oxide breakdown and reliability considerations.

In order for a high-quality gate oxide to be obtained, the surface of the active area is wet-etched to remove any residual oxide. A sacrificial oxide is often deliberately grown on the exposed active areas after field oxidation to remove any dry-etch induced damage or unwanted nitride (due to the Kooi effect, see chap. 2).<sup>65</sup> After such oxides have been stripped, the gate oxide is grown slowly and carefully, usually through dry oxidation in a chlorine ambient (see Vol. 1, chap. 7).

The threshold-voltage adjust implant of the enhancement-mode devices is performed next. In this step, boron is implanted through the gate oxide ( $10^{12}$ - $10^{13}$  atoms/cm<sup>2</sup>, 50-100 keV), but the ions are not given enough energy to penetrate the field oxide. No mask is used in this step. (Note that in many processes, another pre-gate oxide is grown, through which this implant is performed. It is again stripped off following the implant, and the gate oxide is then grown.)

Next, the depletion-mode devices of the circuit are given their threshold-voltage implant dose (Fig. 5-15d). The areas of the depletion-mode transistor channels are implanted with phosphorus or arsenic ions ( $\sim 10^{12}$  atoms/cm<sup>2</sup>, 100 keV) to give a threshold voltage of about -3.0 V. The implant dose is adjusted so that it overcompensates for the previous boron threshold-voltage-adjust implant, thus making the surfaces *n*-type. A negative threshold voltage is thus yielded, as required to establish a depletion-mode device. Photoresist (patterned by the use of *Mask #2*) is used to selectively allow the depletion-mode transistor channels to be implanted. The ions cannot penetrate the resist to reach active areas below. Likewise, the ions cannot penetrate any field oxide that is exposed by the resist opening. Hence, the location of the depletion transistor channel is defined by the intersection of the *Mask #2* window and the active region.

Buried contacts are then opened in the gate oxide using *Mask #3* (Fig. 5-15e). This opening in the gate oxide must be provided wherever it is desired to have polysilicon electrically contact the active silicon area (details of buried-contact formation are described in chap. 3). Since the polysilicon is deposited on the gate oxide, it will remain isolated from the substrate below unless a special opening is cut in the gate oxide. With *Mask #3*, resist covers the entire wafer except in those areas where the buried contact is desired. The gate oxide can then be etched from these regions, uncovering the silicon below.

**5.4.1.4 Polysilicon Deposition and Patterning.** A layer of polysilicon (typically 0.4-0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  thick) is next deposited by CVD over the whole wafer (see Vol. 1, chap. 6 for more information on the properties of polysilicon and its deposition process). Either ion implantation or diffusion with phosphorus is then used

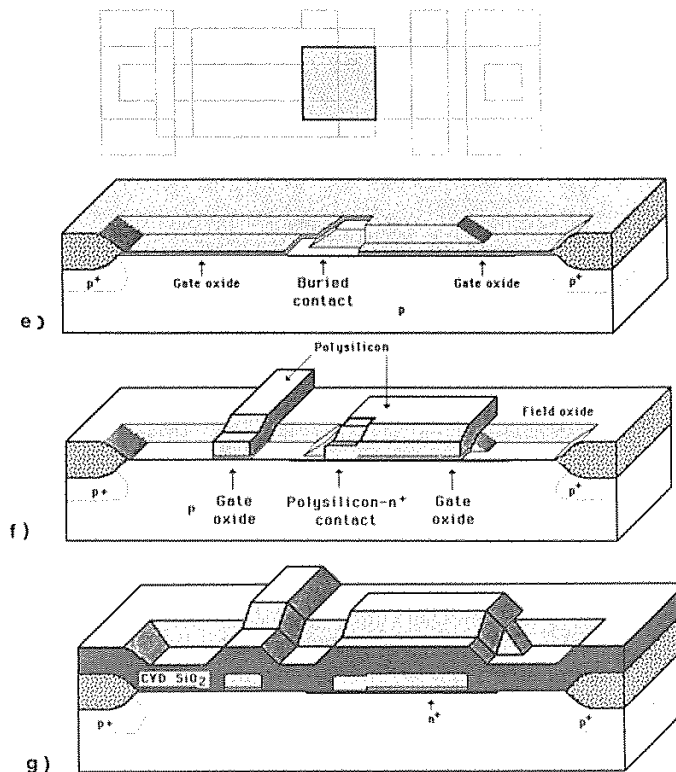


Fig. 5-15 (e) Buried contact etching. (f) Patterning of the polysilicon layer followed by gate oxide etching. (g) Deposition of the CVD  $\text{SiO}_2$  layer followed by the diffusion of the drain and source regions. From Maly, *Atlas of IC Technologies*.

to dope the polysilicon to a sheet resistance of 20-30  $\Omega/\text{sq}$ . This resistance is adequate for MOS circuits with gate lengths  $\geq 3 \mu\text{m}$ . For smaller devices, polycide layers (i.e., composite layers of refractory metal silicides and polysilicon) can be used to reduce the sheet resistance to  $\sim 1 \Omega/\text{sq}$  (see Vol. 1, chap. 11). Using a polycide gives us the benefits of both silicon-gate and metal-gate technologies.

The gate structure and polysilicon interconnect structures are then patterned using *Mask #4* (Fig. 5-15f). Following exposure and development of the resist, the polysilicon film is etched (in current technology this is done by means of a dry-etch process). This is a critical etch step for several reasons. First, the channel length of the device depends on the gate length, because of the self-aligned nature of the silicon gate technology. Hence, the gate-length dimension must be precisely maintained across the entire wafer, and from wafer to wafer. Second, the profile of the etched poly gate structure should be vertical; this will prevent variation of channel lengths by the penetration of the ions of the thinner regions of the gate sidewalls during formation of the source/drain regions by ion implantation. Third, to achieve the above goals, an anisotropic polysilicon etch process must be employed. This type of process, however, requires overetching to remove the locally thicker regions of polysilicon that exist wherever it crosses steps on the wafer surface. During the overetch time, areas of the thin gate oxide are exposed to the etchants. Thus, it is necessary to use a polysilicon etch process that is highly selective with respect to  $\text{SiO}_2$ .

**5.4.1.5 Formation of the Source and Drain Regions.** Once the gate has been fabricated, the source and drain regions can be formed. This is normally done by ion implantation without the use of a lithography step (Fig. 5-15g). The gate and the field oxide act as masks to prevent the ion implantation from penetrating to the silicon substrate below. Therefore, only the active regions covered by the gate oxide (and no gate polysilicon), are implanted. An  $n^+$  implant is used, with an energy that is insufficient to penetrate the gate-poly or field-oxide layers (arsenic is typically used, with a dose of  $\sim 10^{16}$  atoms/ $\text{cm}^2$  and an energy of 30-50 keV). As noted earlier, the source and drain are thereby *self-aligned* to the gate, and the dimension of the polysilicon gate thus plays a major role in the defining of the MOS gate length.

Following the source/drain implant, an anneal (or drive-in) step is performed to activate the implanted atoms and to position the source/drain junctions as desired. During this step, some of the phosphorus doping of the polysilicon outdiffuses into the silicon substrate wherever a buried contact opening the gate oxide has been cut. This diffusion (which occurs both vertically and laterally into the silicon below) forms a heavily doped  $n^+$  region under the polysilicon in the buried-contact exposed region. The lateral diffusion of the implanted source/drain dopant thereby becomes electrically connected to the  $n^+$  region under the polysilicon buried-layer region. In this manner, an electrical connection between the polysilicon and the silicon is established at the buried contact locations. In some processes, the junction formed by the buried-contact dopant outdiffusion from the polysilicon is deeper than the source/drain junctions, while in others it is not as deep.

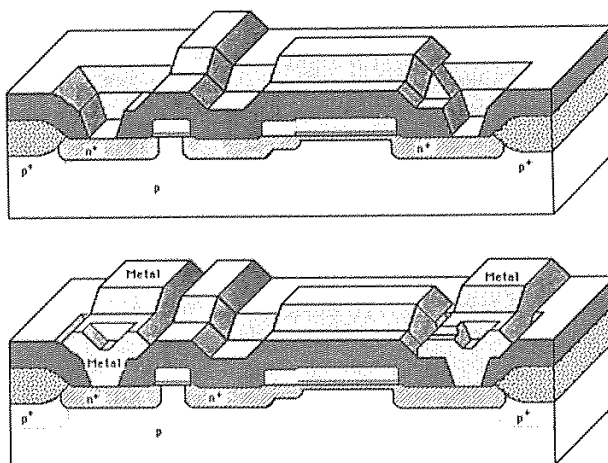


Fig. 5-15 (h) Contact cuts of the E-D inverter. Metallization of the E-D inverter. (i) Completed NMOS E-D inverter structure. Figures 15a through 15i from W. Maly, *Atlas of IC Technologies*, Copyright 1987 by the Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission.

The source/drain drive-in step also plays a part in determining the effective channel length ( $L_{eff}$ ). That is, if the lateral junction depth is  $x_{jl}$  (which is primarily determined by the lateral diffusion during the drive-in step, because the lateral straggle of arsenic at 30 keV is only  $\sim 5$  nm, see Vol. 1, chap. 9),  $L_{eff}$  will be decreased by  $2x_{jl}$  from the gate length at the mask level. Note that the channel *width* is also reduced by the bird's beak encroachment into the active area (see chap. 2). Thus, the actual width,  $W_w$ , of an MOS device is  $W_w = W - \Delta W$ , where  $W$  is the width at the mask level and  $\Delta W$  is the channel-width shrinkage during processing.

The depth of the source and drain is thus a critical dimension, but the doping concentration is not as important. (A discussion of shallow source/drain junction formation techniques is presented in chap. 3, section 3.10.) To a first approximation, the device characteristics will not depend on the doping concentration value, provided it is sufficiently heavy.

A diffusion step may be used to dope the source/drain regions. In some of these cases the dopant source of the diffusion is the CVD oxide layer that is deposited after the gate has been defined (see next section).

**5.4.1.6 Contact Formation.** After the source/drain regions have been formed, a CVD process is used to deposit a layer of doped  $\text{SiO}_2$  (glass), about  $1 \mu\text{m}$  thick, onto the wafers (see Vol. 1, chap. 6). The dopant in the  $\text{SiO}_2$  is either phosphorus (in which

case the material is referred to as *phosphosilicate glass*), or both phosphorus and boron (making it a layer of *borophosphosilicate glass*). In some processes a thin thermal oxide is grown on the polysilicon prior to deposition of the glass layer. Nevertheless, a thick layer of  $\text{SiO}_2$  cannot be thermally grown because of the excessive redistribution of the impurities that would take place during such growth. Hence, a lower-temperature CVD process must be used to get a sufficiently thick oxide.

The doped CVD glass layer plays several roles in the fabrication and operating aspects of the circuit. First, it acts as an insulating layer between the polysilicon and the metal to be deposited. Second, it reduces the parasitic capacitance of the interconnect metallization layer. Third, the addition of the phosphorus to the glass makes the layer an excellent getter of Na ions (recall that contamination by Na can cause instabilities in the  $V_T$  of the MOS devices). The phosphorus-doped glass immobilizes the otherwise mobile Na atoms within the CVD layer, preventing them from reaching the gate oxide and altering the threshold voltage. Finally, the dopants in the glass make it viscous at elevated temperatures (1000-1100°C for PSG, and 800-950°C for BPSG, see Vol. 1, chap. 6), allowing the layer of doped glass to be flowed after it is deposited. Through this procedure, a rounding of the contours of the glass and a smoothing out of any sharp steps is achieved. This produces better step coverage of the metal (which is deposited next) over the otherwise severe wafer topography. The high-temperature glass-flowing step also serves to activate the source/drain implanted junctions and drive them to their desired positions.

Contact openings are next created by a lithography-and-etch step (Fig. 5-15h). *Mask #5* is used to define contact opening patterns in a photoresist film, and a dry-etch process is then used to open the contact windows through the CVD  $\text{SiO}_2$  to the underlying polysilicon and the  $n^+$  regions in the silicon.

The contact-opening step can be critical, as the contact size and alignment limit the minimum size of the device. The source and drain regions must be large enough for the contact to fit, with allowance for alignment tolerance. If the contact opening exposes a part of the substrate, the drain or source will be shorted to the substrate. Likewise, any overlap of the source/drain contact opening and the gate will cause the gate to be shorted to the source or drain.

To keep the transistor as small as possible, the contact window is usually made at the minimum size achievable with the given process. In some processes, the exposed silicon in the contact is redoped to prevent shorting between the source/drain areas and the substrate (see chap. 2). Also note that the gate contact (i.e., Al to polysilicon) is often made outside the active device area to avoid possible damage to the thin gate oxide.

After the contact etch is completed and the resist is stripped, the doped CVD glass is again subjected to another flowing step. This procedure rounds the corners of the top of the oxide windows so that metal step coverage into the contact windows is improved. The process is called *reflow* of the contact windows (see chap. 3 and Vol. 1, chap. 6).

**5.4.1.7 Metallization Deposition and Patterning.** After the contacts have been opened, the metallization layer is deposited ( $\sim 1 \mu\text{m}$  thick). Because the metal

layer is highly conductive, it is used whenever possible to interconnect circuit elements and to carry large amounts of supply current. The metal interconnect lines that are fabricated must have sufficient thickness, width, and step coverage to keep the current density in each line below the value that could produce electromigration failure (see chap. 4). In addition, the spacing between adjacent metal lines must be kept large enough that the lines will never touch, even under worst-case process variations.

Although evaporation was the method employed to deposit Al in the early days of MOS, it has generally been replaced by sputtering. To a great extent, the change was made because Al alloys with tightly controlled compositions became the materials of choice for the metal layer. Sputtering allows alloys to be deposited with much better compositional fidelity (see Vol. 1, chap. 10).

The metal alloy that was eventually chosen for NMOS is Al:1wt% Si. The silicon is added to the aluminum film to prevent spiking of the contacts during subsequent annealing steps (see chap. 3). In CMOS, such Al:Si alloys are being phased out as the metallization material for reasons that are discussed in the CMOS chapter and in chapters 3 and 4. Either wet-chemical etching or dry etching is used to pattern the Al film, using *Mask #6* (Fig. 5-15i and 5-15j).

Following the patterning of the metal, the Al-silicon contacts are alloyed. This step brings the Al and the  $n^+$  silicon into intimate contact, since it allows the thin native  $\text{SiO}_2$  layer that is likely to exist at the Al-Si interface to be reduced by the Al (see chap. 3). Such intimate contact between Al and  $n^+$ Si establishes a low-resistance ohmic contact. The anneal process exposes the wafer to a 375-500°C temperature in an  $\text{H}_2$  or

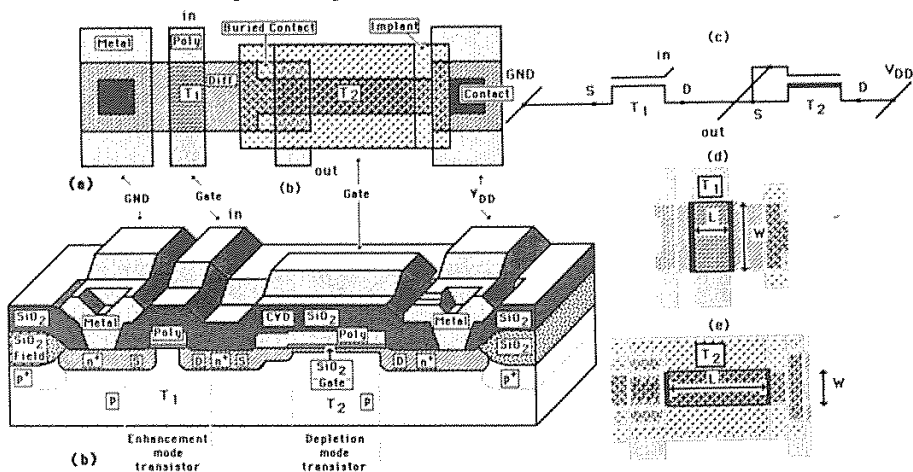


Fig. 5-15 (j) E-D inverter. 1) Composite drawing of the layout. 2) Cross section of complete structure. 3) Electrical diagram. 4) The enhancement transistor. 5) The depletion transistor. From Maly, *Atlas of IC Technologies*.

$N_2 + H_2$  (5%) ambient for about 30 minutes. As a result, this step may also be used as the annealing process for reducing the interface trap density in the gate oxide that was introduced by earlier processing steps (see Vol. 1, chap. 7).

**5.4.1.8 Passivation Layer and Pad Mask.** Finally, a *passivation* (or *overcoat*) layer, such as CVD PSG or plasma-enhanced CVD silicon nitride, is put down onto the wafer surface. This layer seals the device structures on the wafer from contaminants and moisture, and also serves as a scratch protection layer.

Openings are etched into this layer so that a set of special metallization patterns under the passivation layer is exposed. These metal patterns are normally located in the periphery of the circuit and are called *bonding pads* (Fig. 5-16). Bonding pads are typically about  $100 \times 100 \mu m$  in size and are separated by a space of 50 to  $100 \mu m$ . Wires are connected (bonded) to the metal of the bonding pads and are then bonded to the chip package. In this way connections are established from the chip to the package leads.

The bonding-pad openings are created by patterning the passivation layer with *Mask #7*. If a PSG layer is used, the phosphorus (2-6 wt%) in the glass not only causes the PSG to act as a getter for Na but also prevents the glass film from cracking. Care must be taken to ensure that not more than 6% phosphorus is incorporated into the PSG, as this can cause corrosion of the underlying metal if moisture enters the circuit package (see Vol. 1, chap. 10). When silicon nitride is used, care must be taken to ensure that the deposited nitride film exhibits low stress (either tensile or compressive), so that it will not crack, since cracking would compromise the sealing capability of the film.

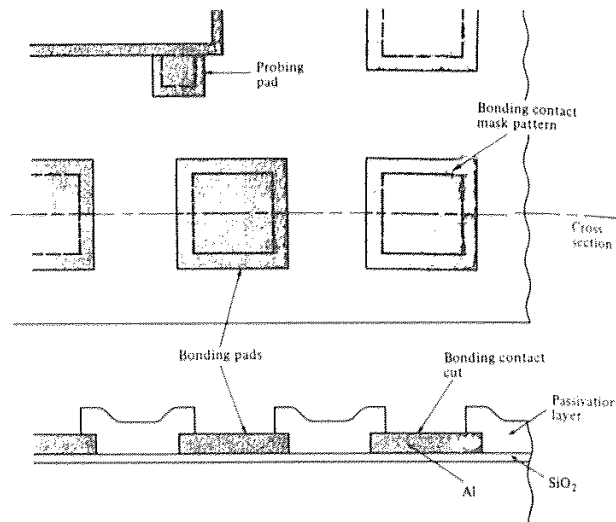


Fig. 5-16 Passivation layer and bonding pad openings. (Note, cross-section not to scale.)

## 5.5 SHORT-CHANNEL EFFECTS AND HOW THEY IMPACT MOS PROCESSING

The device characteristics of MOSFETs (such as threshold voltage, subthreshold currents, and I-V characteristics beyond threshold) are well predicted by Eqs. 5-1 through 5-10, if the channel lengths of the transistors are "long" (i.e., if they exceed  $2\ \mu\text{m}$  in length). A guide to the design of such long-channel MOSFETs is given in reference 70.

For shorter channel devices, however, a series of effects arise that result in significant deviations from the values predicted by the long-channel models. Such *short-channel effects* become a dominant part of MOS device behavior when channel lengths decrease below  $2\ \mu\text{m}$ . The effects are briefly described here to provide readers with a basis for understanding the processing steps that have been developed to mitigate their adverse impact on device performance. So-called *hot-carrier effects* will be described separately in the following section, even though these have only been observed in short-channel devices. More details on short-channel effects in *p*-channel CMOS devices are also given in chapter 6. A guide to the design of submicron channel MOSFETs (those with channel lengths  $\leq 1\ \mu\text{m}$ ), is presented in reference 62.

Short-channel effects can be divided into the following categories: (a) those that impact  $V_T$ ; (b) those that impact subthreshold currents; and (c) those that impact I-V behavior beyond threshold.

### 5.5.1 Effect of Gate Dimensions on Threshold Voltage

**5.5.1.1 Short Channel Threshold Voltage Effect.**  $V_T$  becomes less well predicted by Eq. 5-6 as the dimensions of the gate are reduced, and the error becomes significant when the dimensions are reduced to less than  $2\ \mu\text{m}$ . To get good agreement with measured data, a term  $|\Delta V_T|$  must be subtracted from the  $V_T$  value obtained from Eq. 5-6. Thus, as the device length is reduced, the measured value of  $V_T$  of *n*-channel enhancement-mode devices becomes *less positive* than that given by Eq. 5-6, while for *n*-channel depletion-mode devices,  $V_T$  becomes *more negative*. For *p*-channel (enhancement-mode) devices,  $V_T$  becomes *less negative*.

The discrepancy arises because the equations for  $V_T$  given earlier in the chapter are based on one-dimensional theory.<sup>20</sup> It is assumed that the space charge *under* the gate is a function of only the vertical electric field,  $E_x$  (and is thereby influenced only by the charge *on the gate*). If the channel length is long, this is a reasonable assumption, as the influence of the drain and source junctions on the quantity of charge in the channel can be neglected. However, as the channel length approaches the dimensions of the widths of the depletion regions of the source and drain junctions, these depletion regions become a greater part of the *channel-depletion region* (Fig. 5-17a). Thus, some of the channel-depletion region charge is actually linked to the charge in the depletion region within the source and drain structures, rather than being linked to the gate charge. Hence, some of the channel region is partially depleted without any influence of the gate voltage. (In the extreme, if the two built-in depletion regions spanned the entire channel length when no voltage existed between source and drain, they could deplete all

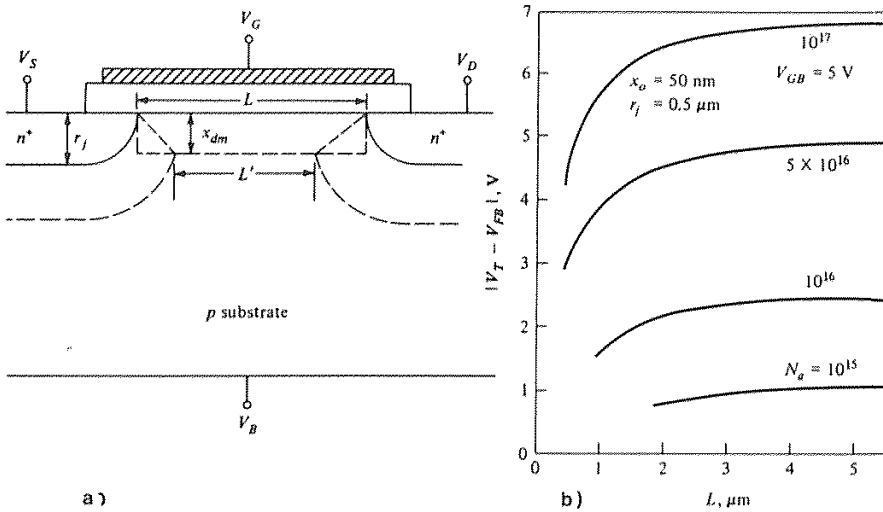


Fig. 5-17 (a) Yau's model of charge sharing.<sup>73</sup> (b) Theoretical threshold voltage as a function of channel length for various substrate doping concentrations.<sup>73</sup> Reprinted with permission of Solid-State Electronics.

of the channel region at the Si-SiO<sub>2</sub> interface.) Since some of the channel is depleted without the need to apply a gate bias, *less gate charge is required to invert the channel in short-channel devices than in a long-channel device with comparable substrate doping.*

A relatively simple equation that predicts the threshold lowering ( $\Delta V_T$ ) in terms of the device parameters is

$$\Delta V_T = \frac{q N_A W_{\max} x_j \left( \sqrt{1 + \frac{2 W_{\max}}{x_j}} - 1 \right)}{C_{\text{ox}} L} \quad (5-16)$$

where  $W_{\max}$  is the maximum depth of the depletion region in the channel, and  $x_j$  is the junction depth of the source drain regions.<sup>74</sup>

This effect is important because in order to be able to establish slightly positive  $V_T$  values (e.g.,  $< +1$  V) in long-channel NMOS transistors with lightly doped channels, it is necessary to increase the doping concentration at the surface of the channel. Consequently, in order to allow short-channel enhancement-mode NMOS devices to be fabricated with the same  $V_T$  value, the substrate doping concentration must be further increased. Since the magnitude of this effect increases as the device length is reduced (as is predicted by Eq. 5-16 and illustrated in Fig. 5-17b), it will be necessary to

progressively increase the substrate doping concentrations as devices are made smaller, in order to maintain suitably positive values of  $V_T$ .

Application of a drain voltage causes the drain depletion region to extend into the channel region, where it acts as an additional substrate bias, and reduces  $V_T$ .<sup>21</sup>

**5.5.1.2 Narrow Gate-Width Effect on Threshold Voltage.** In contrast to the short-channel-length effect, devices with narrow channel-widths require that such a positive-value correction term be *added* to Eq. 5-6 to give good agreement with the calculated values.<sup>22</sup> This effect is primarily due to the encroachment of the channel-stop dopants under the edges of the sides of the gate (see chap. 2). This has the effect of doping the channel at these edges more heavily than at the center (Fig. 5-18a). Thus, it requires more charge on the gate to invert the channel than if such encroachment did not occur, and this causes a shift in  $V_T$  from its predicted value (Fig. 5-18b).<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, if the voltage on the gate is held constant, the edges of the channel will have a higher  $V_T$  than the center of the channel. Because  $(V_G - V_T)$  is smaller, narrow-channel devices will thus conduct less drain current. Several schemes are also described in chapter 2 for reducing the channel-stop encroachment and thus reducing the narrow-width effect.

Narrow-width effects are still observed even if there are no channel-stop implants. These arise because the relatively thinner depletion region under the field-oxide device distorts the depletion region under the gate oxide and prevents the formation of an

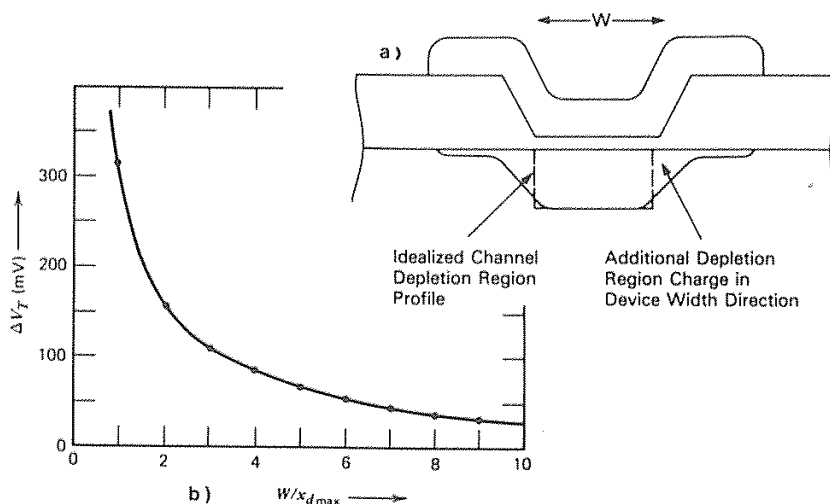


Fig. 5-18 (a) Schematic depiction of the narrow-channel effect. (b) Threshold voltage shift  $\Delta V_T$  caused by the narrow-channel effect for a MOSFET with  $N_A = 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ , and  $t_{ox} = 50 \text{ nm}$ .<sup>22</sup>

inversion layer at the two edges. Although this leads to a slightly higher  $V_T$ , the effect is much less severe than that observed in devices with heavy channel-stop implants.

### 5.5.2 Short-Channel Effects on Subthreshold Currents (Punchthrough and Drain-Induced Barrier Lowering)

In section 5.2.3 we described the nature of subthreshold current flow ( $I_{Dst}$ ) in MOSFETs, noting that a specific value of the *subthreshold-swing* parameter (S.S.) can be attributed to such "normal"  $I_{Dst}$  currents in long-channel devices. In short-channel MOSFETs, however, larger  $I_{Dst}$  values are observed at lower voltages than predicted by long-channel device models: one manifestation is an increase in the value of S.S. Note that even relatively small values of  $I_{Dst}$  can limit the transistor's ability to isolate nodes in a dynamic circuit or can allow excess current in static inverters. Hence, care must be taken to minimize  $I_{Dst}$ . Two of the primary causes of increased  $I_{Dst}$  are *punchthrough* and *drain-induced barrier lowering* (DIBL).

Punchthrough is normally observed when the gate voltage is well below  $V_T$ . It occurs as a result of the widening of the drain depletion region when the reverse-bias voltage on the drain is increased. The electric field of the drain may eventually penetrate into the source region and thereby reduce the potential energy barrier of the source-to-body junction (Fig. 5-19).<sup>23</sup> When this occurs, more majority carriers in the source region have enough energy to overcome the barrier, and an increased current then flows from source to body. Some of this current is collected by the drain, thereby increasing  $I_{Dst}$ . In general, punchthrough current begins to dominate  $I_{Dst}$  when the drain and

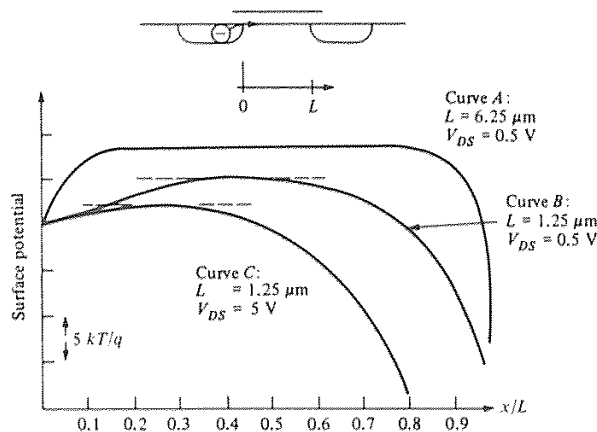


Fig. 5-19 Surface potential in the channel for devices with different channel lengths.<sup>23</sup> (© 1979 IEEE).

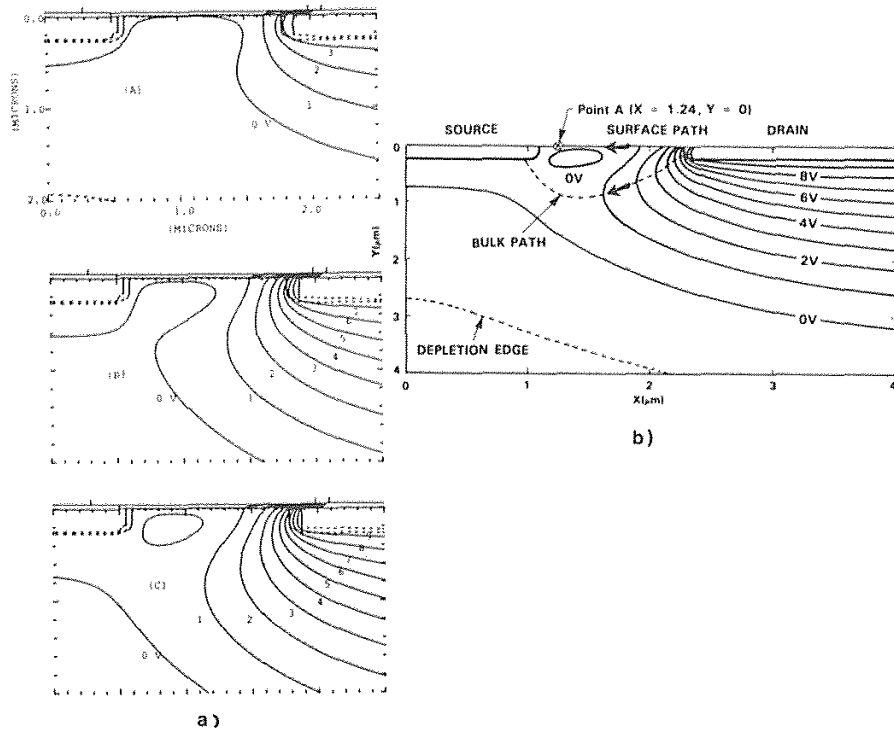


**Fig. 5-20** (a) 2-D potential profile of an  $n$ -channel MOSFET with a drain bias of: 1) 3 V; 2) 7 V; 3) 9 V. Channel length =  $1\ \mu\text{m}$ . (b) Simulation of the potential profile of an  $n$ -channel MOSFET with a gate and drain bias of 0 and 9 V respectively. The surface DIBL and bulk punchthrough paths are indicated. From K. M. Cham, *et al.*, *Computer Aided Design and VLSI Device Development*. Copyright 1986 Kluwer Academic Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

source depletion regions meet, and it can be suppressed by keeping the total width of the two depletion regions smaller than the channel length.<sup>24</sup>

Calculations of the potential in the bulk channel region in devices that use ion implantation to adjust  $V_T$  indicate that the barrier is lowest away from the Si-SiO<sub>2</sub> interface (usually at almost the same depth as the source/drain junction depths). That is, the  $V_T$ -adjust implant increases the doping concentration near the surface of the channel, causing the drain depletion region to be wider in the bulk than it is near the Si-SiO<sub>2</sub> interface. As a result, punchthrough current flows *below* the surface (Fig. 5-20). Consequently, the gate voltage has less control over the subthreshold current (i.e., even with sufficient gate voltage to turn off the channel,  $I_{DST}$  can still flow in such devices).