

## Intrinsic Mobility of Low-Density Electrons in Photoexcited Diamond

K. Konishi,<sup>1</sup> I. Akimoto,<sup>2</sup> H. Matsuoka<sup>1b</sup>,<sup>3</sup> J. Isberg<sup>1b</sup>,<sup>4</sup> and N. Naka<sup>1b</sup>,\*

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Physics, Kyoto University, Kitashirakawa-Oiwake-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8502, Japan*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Materials Science and Chemistry, Wakayama University, Sakaedani 930, Wakayama 640-8510, Japan*

<sup>3</sup>*Graduate School of Science, Osaka City University, Sugimoto 3-3-138, Sumiyoshi-ku, Osaka 558-8585, Japan*

<sup>4</sup>*Department of Electrical Engineering, Uppsala University, Box 65, S-751 03 Uppsala, Sweden*

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Extending the limit of charge-carrier mobility in semiconductors has been a long-standing pursuit in material science and its applications. Herein, we investigate the electron mobility via cyclotron resonance in undoped diamond under continuous-wave photoexcitation, whereby the density of charge carriers can be reduced to  $10^8 \text{ cm}^{-3}$  or 1/10 of the previous detection limit [K. Konishi *et al.*, Appl. Phys. Lett. **117**, 212102 (2020)]. For low-density electrons, which obviate the effects of carrier-carrier scattering as a broadening mechanism, we observe an extraordinarily narrow cyclotron resonance spectrum. After correcting for the microwave power broadening, the highest intrinsic mobility value of  $100 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$  is obtained at 3 K, which is a 16-fold increase of the mobility compared with the previous record in diamond. Our result is beneficial for the design and application of diamond radiation detectors implemented for their practical use at cryogenic temperatures.

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The mobility, diffusion, and lifetime of charge carriers govern semiconductor device performance. However, the applicable measurement principles pose several challenges even today [1], as exemplified by the revolutionary demonstration of the carrier-resolved photo-Hall effect [2] as an extension of the standard Hall measurement. The cyclotron resonance (CR) method is another powerful tool for determining the drift mobility of charge carriers [3] using a microwave probe without electrical contact. The mobility is obtained as the inverse of half the width of a CR line. With the progress of ultrafast laser technology, the probe frequency has been extended to a wide band spanning 30–330 GHz [4,5], and a magnetic field strength as high as 560 T has been employed [6]. This method has been applied to explore intriguing physical phenomena, such as screening effects [7] and coherent CR motion [8] in two-dimensional electron gases (2DEGs) in heterostructures, bulk states of Dirac and Weyl semimetals [9], relativistic fermions in the surface states of topological insulators [10], and quantum limit CR in atomically thin conductors [6].

We have explored the transport properties of photoexcited charge carriers in a variety of semiconductors [11–13] by developing a time-resolved CR (TRCR) method. Extremely high mobility has been found in intrinsic diamond [14]; however, the highest value was

limited not by residual impurities [15] but by an unknown effect, possibly related to carrier-carrier interactions [16]. For photoexcitation of diamond with a large energy gap (5.5 eV), pulsed laser light has been used [14,17,18], which generates charge carriers at a density of  $10^9$ – $10^{11} \text{ cm}^{-3}$  in a sea of excitons, i.e., Coulomb-bound electron-hole pairs [see Fig. 1(a)]. For such relatively high-density systems, carrier-carrier scattering can hinder the determination of intrinsic carrier mobility. Here, the term “intrinsic” refers to phonon scattering, while extrinsic mechanisms include scattering by other carriers, impurities, and dislocations.

In this study, we create electrons at a sufficiently low density under continuous-wave (CW) photoexcitation instead of pulsed laser light [Fig. 1(b)]; therefore, carrier-carrier scattering is irrelevant. Such a low density of electrons cannot be probed in our pulsed excitation regime because the pulse-to-pulse intervals (100 ms) of the tunable deep-ultraviolet laser are significantly longer than the carrier lifetimes ( $< 2 \mu\text{s}$ ). We observe an extremely narrow CR spectrum indicating a high mobility value of  $36 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . After correcting for the microwave power broadening, we further derive the intrinsic mobility at  $100 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ , which is governed by inelastic acoustic-phonon scattering. Because conventional Hall effect measurements are not possible for low-temperature diamond without thermal carrier activation and the time-of-flight (TOF) method causes carrier heating by the applied electric field, our technical development

\*naka@scphys.kyoto-u.ac.jp

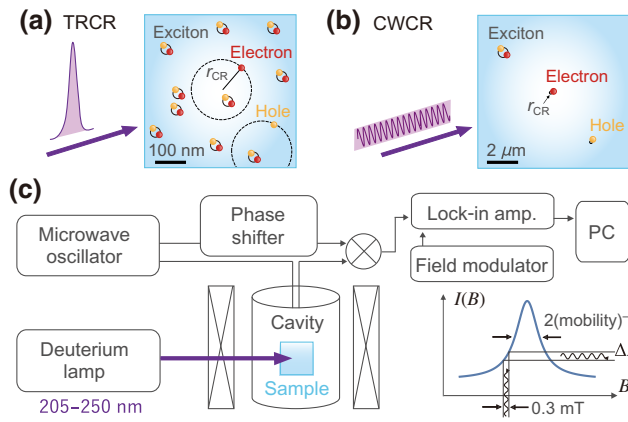


FIG. 1. Schematics of charge carriers with cyclotron radius  $r_{CR}$  in diamond under (a) pulsed and (b) CW photoexcitation. Note the exaggerated particle size and the different length scales in (a) and (b). (c) Experimental setup of CWCR.

and findings provide valuable information on *ideal* carrier transport properties, which impact the design of diamond radiation detectors used at cryogenic temperatures [19].

Three single-crystal chemical-vapor-deposition diamonds (Samples 1, 2, and 3, with dimensions of a few square millimeters and thickness of approximately 0.5 mm) of the highest possible elemental purity are supplied by Element Six. Samples 1 and 3 are custom grown, while Sample 2 is a commercially available electronic-grade sample [18]. The differences in the dislocation densities [20] are detailed in Supplemental Material S1 [21]. We use CW light from a deuterium lamp for photoexcitation [Fig. 1(c)]. The wavelengths in the range of 205–250 nm are selected using harmonic separators (Ekspla Ltd), so that charge carriers are more efficiently excited [22] than those using monochromatic light at 225 nm for the resonant exciton creation [11]. The power of the incident light is typically  $400 \mu\text{W}$  outside the cryostat. The electron density is estimated to be  $n_e < 1 \times 10^9 \text{ cm}^{-3}$  by considering the incident power, absorption coefficient, and diffusion length (Supplemental Material S2 [21]) [23–25]. The sample is placed in a dielectric cavity resonator (Bruker, MD5W1) at a microwave frequency of  $f = 9.6 \text{ GHz}$  and cooled in a continuous-flow cryostat [14]. To improve the detection sensitivity, the magnetic field is modulated by  $\pm 0.15 \text{ mT}$  at 100 kHz [26], and the differential signal of microwave absorption is measured via lock-in detection.

We focus on the electron resonance signal at  $B_0 = 123 \text{ mT}$ , for which the effective mass  $m_1$  is 0.35 times the electron mass at rest. Generally, a Lorentzian is theoretically derived for the functional form of the CR lines for homogeneous systems [3]. We assume that there are two contributions to the width: the homogeneous (intrinsic) width owing to phonon scattering and the inhomogeneous (extrinsic) width. When the

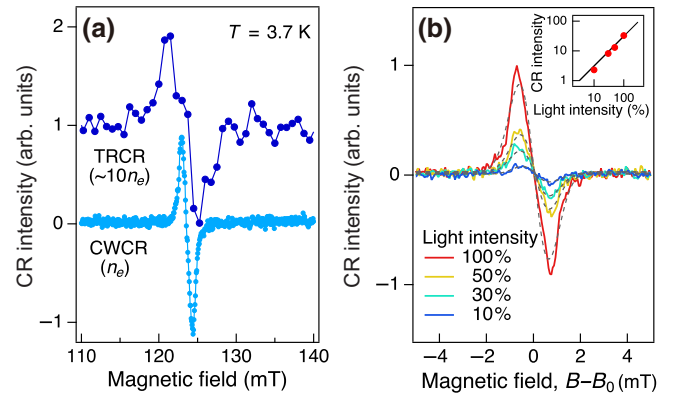


FIG. 2. (a) Differential spectra of TRCR and CWCR in Sample 3 at 3.7 K and a microwave power of  $P = 250 \text{ nW}$  ( $Q = 10^4$ ). (b) CWCR spectra measured in Sample 2 at 3.0 K at different light intensities. Full lines are experimental data and dashed lines represent Gaussian function fits. The horizontal axis indicates difference in magnetic field from the resonance,  $B - B_0$ . The inset shows integrated signal intensity as a function of incident light intensity.

inhomogeneous width dominates over the homogeneous width, the spectral lines follow Gaussian functions.

First, we examine the carrier-density dependence. Figure 2(a) compares the CR spectrum obtained with the maximum CW light intensity at 3.7 K and that obtained under pulsed excitation at an electron density approximately 10 times higher (Supplemental Material S3 [21]). The peak-to-peak width of the CWCR spectrum is approximately 1/3 that of the TRCR spectrum, which is affected by carrier-carrier scattering. Figure 2(b) shows the CWCR spectra measured by reducing the incident light intensity at 3.0 K. The linear dependence of the CR signal intensity, as plotted in the inset, indicates that the electron density varies linearly with the light intensity, down to  $10^8 \text{ cm}^{-3}$ . Meanwhile, the spectral shape is retained as a Gaussian function with a 0.73-mT half-width (dashed lines). This independence against the density indicates ineffective carrier-carrier scattering as a result of weak CW excitation, and the line shape implies the dominance of inhomogeneous broadening other than carrier-carrier scattering.

Second, we investigate the effects of temperature variation and microwave power. Figure 3(a) depicts the CWCR spectra obtained at various temperatures. With decreasing temperature, the spectra become narrower, and the positive- and negative-going peaks increase significantly in strength. Figure 3(b) compares the normalized spectra at 2.9, 5.5, and 8.0 K. The differential form of the Lorentzian function, as depicted by the red lines, matches well with the data at 8.0 K. However, the spectrum gradually deviates from the Lorentzian with decreasing temperature, indicating a transition to a Gaussian functional form, as presented by the black lines.

We further reduce the microwave power at the sample position by reducing the cavity quality factor  $Q$  [27] and

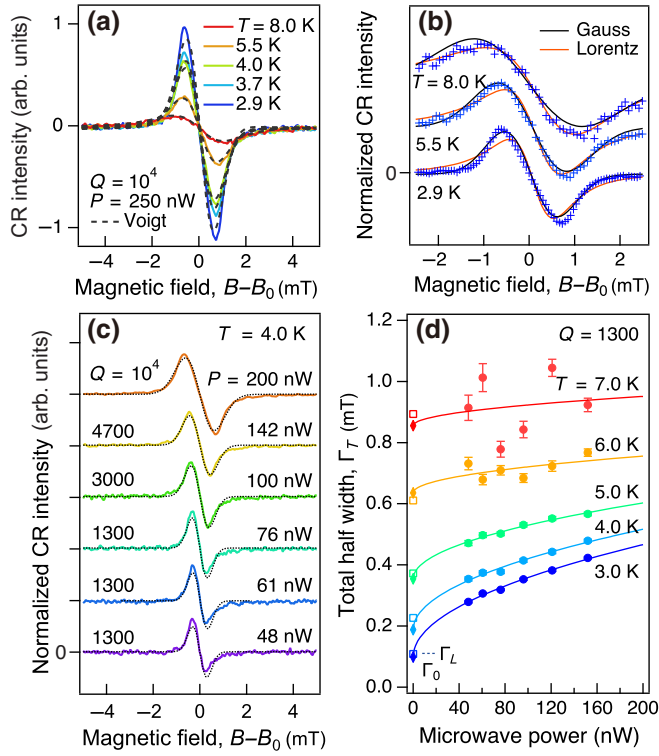


FIG. 3. (a) CWCR spectra measured in Sample 1 at different temperatures. Dashed lines represent fits by Eq. (1). (b) Normalized CWCR spectra with differential Lorentzian and Gaussian functions. (c) CWCR spectra measured in Sample 2 at various microwave powers  $P$  inside the cavity (corrected for the difference in  $Q$ ). Dotted lines represent Gaussian fits. (d)  $\Gamma_T$  as a function of microwave power. Lines represent empirical fits assuming Eq. (2) with  $\lambda = 0.5$ .

adjusting the attenuator setting. A significant narrowing of the lines is observed at reduced microwave power at 4.0 K, as shown in Fig. 3(c). As the Gaussian component becomes dominant at this low temperature, fitting is performed using a Gaussian function. Here, the half width at half maximum ( $\Gamma_T$ ) of the Gaussian is a fitting parameter that approximately includes both homogeneous and inhomogeneous broadening. Figure 3(d) shows  $\Gamma_T$  as a function of the microwave power  $P$ . At temperatures higher than 6.0 K, the width varies only slightly with the variation of  $P$ . Meanwhile, below 5.0 K,  $\Gamma_T$  substantially decreases with decreasing  $P$ . The temperature for the change of the line shape coincides with the temperature at which the width starts to sensitively change with  $P$ . This means that both these changes originate from inhomogeneous broadening owing to microwave power absorption [28].

A method for extracting homogeneous and inhomogeneous widths is yet to be established; therefore, we attempt two ways. Our ultimate goal is to extract an intrinsic scattering rate from fittings of different datasets and to check for internal consistency. For the temperature dependence measured at relatively high  $P$  [Figs. 3(a) and 3(b)], fitting

is performed using a differential form of the Voigt function. The fitting function is expressed as

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x} V(x) = \int G(y, \Gamma_G) \frac{\partial}{\partial x} L(x - y, \Gamma_L) dy, \quad (1)$$

where  $G(x, \Gamma_G) = (\sqrt{\ln 2} / \Gamma_G \sqrt{\pi}) \exp[-x^2 \ln 2 / (\Gamma_G)^2]$  is a Gaussian function and  $L(x, \Gamma_L) = (\Gamma_L \cos \theta + x \sin \theta) / \pi [x^2 + (\Gamma_L)^2]$  is a Lorentzian function.  $\theta$  includes the unintentional phase shift in the cavity, and  $x = B - B_0$  is the difference in the magnetic field from the resonance. We globally fit the data by setting  $\Gamma_G$  and  $\theta$  common for all temperatures. The best-fit functions are indicated by dashed lines in Fig. 3(a). We find that  $\Gamma_L$  decreases with decreasing temperature, down to 0.091 mT at 2.9 K with  $\Gamma_G = 0.65$  mT and  $\theta = -11^\circ$ . The values of  $\Gamma_L$  for 3.0–7.0 K are marked by open squares at  $P = 0$  in Fig. 3(d).

To investigate the  $P$  dependence [Figs. 3(c) and 3(d)], we assume that inhomogeneous broadening occurs proportionally to the power  $\lambda$  of  $P$ , that is,  $CP^\lambda$ , and fit the power dependence to

$$\Gamma_T(P) = \Gamma_0 + CP^\lambda, \quad (2)$$

where  $\Gamma_0$ ,  $C$ , and  $\lambda$  are adjustable parameters. The fitting with Eq. (2) [full lines in Fig. 3(d)] yields  $\lambda \simeq 0.5$  and  $\Gamma_0$  at each temperature, marked by the rhombuses in Fig. 3(d).  $\Gamma_0$  corresponds to a homogeneous (Lorentzian) width, reflecting a scattering rate free from microwave power broadening. If there are no active scattering mechanisms other than acoustic phonon scattering,  $1/\Gamma_0$  provides the intrinsic mobility.

The extracted  $\Gamma_L$  and  $\Gamma_0$  values are in excellent agreement with each other for all measured temperatures, indicating that the assumptions in the two fitting methods are valid. It is noteworthy that although  $\Gamma_L$  (or  $\Gamma_0$ ) is an important quantity, the Gaussian broadening from microwave power is dominant up to approximately 6 K, above which acoustic phonon scattering occurs strongly. Other broadening mechanisms, such as dislocation scattering [29], might appear at ultralow microwave powers (Supplemental Material S1 [21]). However, we obtain the same  $\Gamma_L$  values from samples with different dislocation densities, which implies that such an extrinsic effect is buried in the power broadening and effectively removed by our analyses.

The inset of Fig. 4 shows the spectrum with the smallest width, measured at 3.0 K and  $P = 48$  nW. This spectrum, without any power-broadening correction and thereby free from any extrapolation or model-dependent fitting, already indicates an extraordinarily high mobility of  $\mu_T = (\Gamma_T)^{-1} = 36 \times 10^6 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ V}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$  (the triangle in Fig. 4). The slightly asymmetric line shape, owing to an unintentional phase shift, affects the evaluation of  $\Gamma_T$

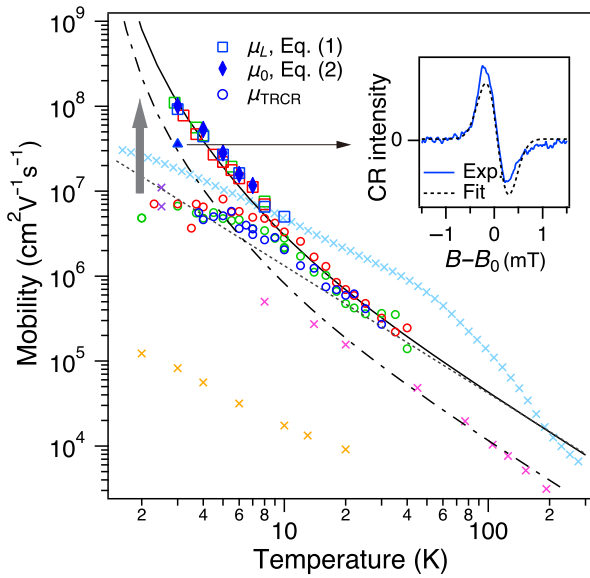


FIG. 4. Electron mobility as a function of temperature. Open squares, rhombuses, and circles represent mobility values from inverse Lorentzian widths, extrapolation to the zero microwave power limit, and TRCR [18], respectively. Green, blue, and red colors correspond to Samples 1, 2, and 3. Full and dotted lines represent calculations assuming inelastic and elastic acoustic-phonon scattering, while the dashed-dotted line shows TOF mobility [18]. Crosses represent mobility values measured in GaAs (cyan) and ZnO (orange) heterostructures by Hall effect [34,35] and those measured in bulk silicon by TOF (magenta) [36] and CWCR (purple) [23]. The inset shows a spectrum measured at 3.0 K,  $P = 48$  nW, and  $Q = 1300$ , together with Gaussian fit (dotted line). The corresponding mobility value is indicated by the triangle.

within only 2%. The mobility values,  $\mu_L = (\Gamma_L)^{-1}$  and  $\mu_0 = (\Gamma_0)^{-1}$ , are marked in Fig. 4 by open squares and rhombuses, respectively. These homogeneous widths indicate that the mobility values increase with decreasing temperature, reaching the value of  $100 \times 10^6$  cm<sup>2</sup> V<sup>-1</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> at 3.0 K. As indicated by the upward arrow in Fig. 4, this goes beyond the limit imposed by the carrier-carrier scattering so far [18], and corresponds to a 16-fold improvement in the mobility, relative to the previous record in diamond (circles).

The theoretical mobility curve, considering the inelastic acoustic-phonon scattering of electrons, is depicted by the full line in Fig. 4 [14,30,31]. Good agreement is observed between the measured and calculated temperature dependences, demonstrating the enhanced mobility as compared with that of classical  $T^{-3/2}$  dependence (dotted line). This enhancement is caused by the quenching of phonon scattering owing to the shift from elastic to inelastic scattering regimes. The threshold temperature for the full quantum CR regime [32,33], where other peculiar mechanisms such as inter-Landau-level scattering enter, is

$\hbar(2\pi f)/k_B = 0.46$  K and is lower than the temperature range used in our experiments.

Finally, we provide a comment on a comparison with other material systems. The mobility determined by CR with small cyclotron radii of the order of 100 nm reflects the properties of the carriers confined in high-quality regions. Therefore, our local mobility by CR is approximately 3.7 times the nonlocal mobility by TOF measurements on the same samples (dashed-dotted line in Fig. 4) [18]. When this difference is considered, the mobility in diamond is similar to that in silicon (magenta crosses, measured by TOF) [23,36] in the elastic scattering regime but increases to significantly higher values in the inelastic scattering regime owing to the high sound velocity in diamond. Such enhancement is also known for excitons of large translational effective masses [37,38] while almost saturating Hall mobility is observed for electrons of small effective masses in III-V compound semiconductors (cyan crosses) [34]. Although a direct comparison is not straightforward because of the different measurement schemes, it is surprising that the local electron mobility in bulk diamond is close to the nonlocal mobility of ultrahigh-quality GaAs 2DEG, which demonstrates the ultrahigh mobility ( $44 \times 10^6$  cm<sup>2</sup> V<sup>-1</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>) at 0.3 K after the recent breakthrough [39] and the high-order fractional quantum Hall states. The Hall mobility of 2DEGs in wider-band-gap semiconductors, such as heteroepitaxial ZnO/MgZnO [35] and GaN/AlGaIn [10], is improving but is still significantly lower, that is, in the range of  $0.1 \times 10^6$  cm<sup>2</sup> V<sup>-1</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> at a few kelvins (orange crosses).

In summary, we observe an extremely narrow CR spectrum of low-density electrons in diamond that unambiguously demonstrates a mobility value of  $36 \times 10^6$  cm<sup>2</sup> V<sup>-1</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>. After separating the microwave power broadening effect, we reveal the intrinsic mobility limit imposed purely by inelastic scattering by acoustic phonons. The extraction of the intrinsic mobility (with a 16-fold improvement) is not possible using our previous TRCR scheme or by conventional transport measurements; thus, we propose an advanced methodology for elucidating carrier transport in a wide-band-gap semiconductor. This study provides valuable information on low-temperature charge carriers, which are difficult to activate in diamond. This study thus has direct relevance to the design and interpretation of diamond radiation detectors used at cryogenic temperatures [19]. Our findings imply that the intrinsic mobility values can generally be reached under minimized perturbations of the carrier system and provide an insight to clarify the highest possible mobility values in semiconductors [40].

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