# Rational design and characterization of electron-deficient heterocycles for organic photovoltaic materials

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Organic Chemistry

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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2015

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of Donna E. David.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

## INTRODUCTION TO CONDUCTING POLYMERS

#### 1.1. Dissertation overview

This dissertation is comprised of work performed primarily by the author while in the Jeffries-EL research group from 2009-2015. The main goal of the research is to design, synthesize, and characterize new electron accepting constituents for organic photovoltaic (OPV) materials by analyzing the structure-property relationships arising from such structural modifications. Design of the materials is guided by the results of previous research and fundamental physical organic principles. The following overviews the composition of this dissertation and the role of each contributor toward the project.

Chapter 1 introduces organic semiconductors, with an emphasis on organic photovoltaic materials by exploring the operation principles of a bulk heterjunction (BHJ) solar cell, from the nanoscale to macroscale level. Chapter 1 concludes by discussing the various elements to consider when designing an organic photovoltaic material; concepts which are implemented in the following chapters.

New transformations of trithioorthoesters are studied in Chapter 2. The initial motivation was to develop a new route for synthesis of orthoesters, an important intermediate of benzobisoxazole (BBO) based compounds used in our group. We optimized this transformation and studied the scope of reactivity by synthesizing various orthoesters. The reaction was then expanded by synthesizing other heterocycles, demonstrating the utility of this versatile reaction which can have applications toward synthesis of other organic electronic building blocks. The concept for this research was proposed by Dr. Jeffries-EL and implemented by the author of this dissertation along with James Klimavicz.

Chapter 3 introduces the properties and synthesis of benzobisoxazoles as used for OPV materials to preface the experimental attempts to synthesize 2,6-asymmetric *trans*-benzobisoxazoles.

The goal of Chapter 4 is to improve the electron accepting ability of benzobisoxazoles in conjugated polymers by altering the conjugation pathway and varying the substitution at the 2,6-position. Donor-acceptor-donor small molecules are used as a platform to study the stucture-property effects of the 2,6-substitutions and then a polymer is synthesized with the benzobisoxazole which resulted in the lowest bandgap of the small molecules.

Having demonstrated in Chapter 4 that strategic addition of electron-withdrawing groups can lower the bandgap of the material, Chapter 5 continues that pursuit by focusing on substitution of another heterocycle, isodindigo. A new synthesis of an *N*-acyloyl isoindigo is presented and the stucture-property effects of *N*-alkyl vs. *N*-acyloyl isoindigos are compared when incorporated into a donor-acceptor conjugated polymer.

Chapter 6 studies an electron-deficient heterocycle, isatin, used for the first time herein for the synthesis of a solution processable small molecule for organic photovoltaics. The structure is modified by a Knoevenagel condensation with the goal of decreasing the bandgap. Both molecules are characterized and their performance in the active layer of a bulk heterjunction solar cell is evaluated.

This dissertation concludes with general remarks and ideas of future research for benzobisoxazoles and donor-acceptor small molecules, followed by acknowledgements.

#### **1.2. Introduction to organic photovoltaics**

Energy demand is expected to increase by 56% by 2040<sup>1</sup>, yet the supply of traditional fossil fuels is expected to be depleted within the next 120 years<sup>2</sup>. This inversely proportional relationship of fossil fuel availability to global energy demand highlights the urgent need for practical, renewable sources of energy. The largest source of energy in our solar system by far is the sun itself and it has the potential to be harnessed in some capacity in most environments. While the greatest solar resource in the United States is located in the southwest, even the northern states can, on average, receive about 4 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> /day<sup>3</sup>. Future energy models predict that solar will become one of the prominent renewable energy sources, accounting for up to 14% of the global supply by 2040<sup>4</sup>. The development of cost-efficient photovoltaic devices would help open more markets for renewable energy and, in recent years, the cost of silicon based solar panels has reached a level of practical affordability for most consumers<sup>5</sup>, but continuing development of organic electronics holds the promise of obtaining the most economical devices<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike inorganic semiconductors, semiconducting organic molecular or polymeric materials offer the advantages<sup>7</sup> of not only cheaper overall cost, but easier fabrication via conventional printing techniques<sup>8</sup>, flexibility<sup>9</sup>, and a variety of synthetic techniques can be utilized to tune the material for any desired application or property. With these unique properties, organic electronics could find niche applications such as integration into apparel, customer electronics, and off-grid power generation<sup>10</sup>, as well as hybrid organic/inorganic tandem solar cells<sup>11</sup>. While the latest certified organic photovoltaic device achieved a 12% efficiency in 2013<sup>12</sup>, more research progress is needed to further advance the efficiencies of organophotovoltaics to compete with the dropping prices of traditional solar.

The photoconductivity properties of organic compounds have long been known, beginning with the small molecules and then conjugated polymers. Heeger, MacDiarmid, and Shirakawa discovered in 1977 that doping of polyacetylene enhanced its photoconductivity<sup>13</sup>, for which they received the Nobel Prize in 2000. Tang reported the first bilayer organic heterojunction<sup>14</sup> solar cell by 1986 and the field of organic photovoltaics has expanded ever since<sup>15</sup>. The combinations of organic structures that can be utilitized for devices, ranging from the semiconducting backbone units to solubilizing or functional side groups, is seemingly infinite and in an effort to increase device performance, research strategically focuses on such structure-property relationships and the underlying physics of the processes involved as well as improved device engineering methods. With the increase in efficiency gained in the last few years, ongoing research can contribute to even better device performances.

#### 1.2.1. Origin of organic semiconductors

Before exploring the variety of structures used for organic electronics, we will discuss the origin of their semiconducting properties in the context of conjugated polymers. Solution processable conjugated small molecules are emerging as popular materials and certainly many of the properties discussed below apply to them as well.

The property of conductivity determines whether a material is a metal  $(10^6 \text{ to } 10^4 (\Omega \text{ cm})^{-1})$ , semiconductor  $(10^4 \text{ to } 10^{-10} (\Omega \text{ cm})^{-1})$ , or insulator( $< 10^{-10} (\Omega \text{ cm})^{-1}$ )<sup>16</sup>. The semiconducting nature of a material depends on its bandgap, defined as the difference in the conduction and valence bands, with the bands being the summation of the energy levels occupied (valence) and unoccupied (conduction) by electrons. When there is no gap the material is a conductor and electrons can flow freely, such as in metals (Figure 1.1). A small gap gives the material semiconducting properties such that electrons can be excited to the conduction band by electrical, chemical, or thermal stimulation. Larger bandgaps result in insulating materials which cannot conduct charges under normal operating conditions.





The nature of organic semiconductors is based on an increasing degree of conjugation<sup>17</sup> within the molecule. When conjugation, the alternation of double and single bonds, in an organic molecule increases, the filled bonding and antibonding pi molecular orbitals of the structure builds up to a state that they resemble the valence and conduction bands of traditional inorganic semiconductors. The bandgap is the energy gap between the highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) and lowest unoccupied molecular orbital (LUMO).

One might imagine that as the degree of conjugation increases, the bandgap continuously decreases to a point where it vanishes and the material obtains metallic properties; however this does not occur. It is true that the bandgap decreases up to a certain point at which the material has reached its so-called effective conjugation<sup>18</sup> and no further decrease can be obtained by extending conjugation. Due to Peierl's distortion<sup>19</sup>, organic metals do not exist. For example, consider the material polyacetylene which is comprised of alternating double and single bonds. At first glance,

it appears that a resonance form can be drawn by exchanging the position of these bonds, and therefore can be denoted with equal bond lengths similarly to that of a benzene ring (Figure 1.2). In actuality, it has been observed by NMR and X-ray crystallography<sup>20</sup> that the alternating bonds differ by approximately 0.08 Å<sup>21</sup>, resulting in a bandgap of 1.5-2.0 eV<sup>22</sup>.



Figure 1.2. Resonance forms of benzene and polyacetylene.

#### **1.3. Bulk Heterojunction Solar Cells**

#### **1.3.1.** Solar cell architecture

Conventional OPV architecture layers the components of the device as shown in **Figure 1.3**, starting with an indium tin oxide (ITO) glass substrate as the anode, followed by a hole conducting layer of poly(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) polystyrene sulfonate (PEDOT:PSS). The active layer is a mixture of electron-donating polymer and electron accepting [6,6]-phenyl-C<sub>61</sub>-butyric acid methyl ester (PCBM), a soluble fullerene derivative with good electron transport properties<sup>23</sup>. Lastly, an electron transport layer followed by a metal anode are applied. The polymer and PCBM are analogous to the p-type and n-type materials of inorganic semiconductors, but they operate in



a different way. Their mode of conduction will be explained in the following section.

Figure 1.3. Architecture of an OPV device.

The composition of the active layer is a key component of device performance and it has evolved from original bilayer devices<sup>14</sup> into the concept of a bulk heterojunction<sup>24</sup> with polymer and fullerene blended into one layer of intermixed materials to form networks for conduction (**Figure 1.4**). It is important to optimize the morphology of the polymer/PCBM mixture within 10 to 20nm to provide the pathways for conduction<sup>25</sup>. This can be controlled through the design of the polymer structure, by solvent vapor<sup>26</sup> or thermal annealing<sup>27</sup>, or the addition of solvent additives<sup>28</sup>.



Figure 1.4. Close-up of the active layer in a bulk heteojunction solar cell.<sup>29</sup>

#### **1.3.2.** Charge transport

In short, charge transport in an OPV occurs by stepwise charge generation, exciton diffusion, charge separation and transport to the electrodes, as illustrated in Figure 1.5. The conjugated polymer is the active material<sup>30</sup> which absorbs the solar photons (Step 1, **Figure 1.5**) to excite an electron from the HOMO to the LUMO, leaving behind a hole in the HOMO (Step 2, **Figure 1.5**). Because of the low dielectric constant of organic materials<sup>31</sup>, the resulting hole and electron are weakly bound by Coulombic forces to form a neutral species called an exciton. The neutral exciton is not influenced by external fields<sup>32</sup>, and thus can randomly travel down the chain via Förster resonant energy transfer<sup>33</sup>. The exciton can travel a short distance (Step 3, **Figure 1.5**), before recombining or meeting with a material of a higher



Figure 1.5. Charge formation and transport in a donor-acceptor material configuration.<sup>34</sup>

electron affinity (usually PCBM)<sup>35</sup> onto which to donate the electron<sup>36</sup> (Step 4, **Figure 1.5**) to form a charge transfer species. Upon dissociation of the exciton onto the donor and acceptor materials, the hole and electron then each travel to their respective electrodes (Step 5 and 6, **Figure 1.5**).

### **1.3.3.** Device performance characteristics

An OPV device is analyzed by measuring the current density (J) as the voltage (V) is varied, resulting in what is called a J-V curve. The working equation for calculating the power conversion efficiency (PCE or I]) of an OPV (equation 1) is represented by the fraction of power generated ( $P_{out}$ ) versus power input ( $P_{in}$ ), or the ratio of the variables of fill factor (FF), short circuit current density ( $J_{sc}$ ) and open circuit voltage ( $V_{oc}$ ) over  $P_{in}$ .

$$\eta = \frac{P_{out}}{P_{in}} = \frac{FF \cdot J_{sc} \cdot V_{oc}}{P_{in}}$$
(1)



Figure 1.6. A J-V curve<sup>37</sup> and a circuit diagram of a solar cell.<sup>38</sup>

The  $V_{oc}$  is the maximum voltage obtained under open circuit conditions. This is an intrinsic property of the active layer which is controlled by the offset of the LUMO of the PCBM acceptor and the HOMO of the polymer donor<sup>39</sup>. The J<sub>sc</sub> is the current per area under no applied bias. It depends on many factors such as charge generation, recombination, and mobility<sup>40</sup>. Recombination can occur by decay of the charge transfer species (geminate recombination)<sup>41</sup> or the charge separated species (bimolecular recombination)<sup>42</sup>.

Another variable is the fill factor which is the fraction of the graph extending from the axes to the point of  $V_{oc}$  at maximum power (FF =  $(J_mV_m)/(J_{sc}V_{oc}))^{43}$ . This represents the "squareness" of the J-V curve, and is influenced by a multitude of factors<sup>44</sup> that contribute to the overall shape of the curve. A summary of these features has been published by Qi & Wang<sup>43</sup>. The slope of the curve near the Y-axis represents the inverse of the shunt resistance,  $R_{sh}$ , of the device. This resistance occurs from leakage currents either at the edge of the cell or material defects and impurities.  $R_{sh}$ can sometimes be improved after annealing, which is a strategy for generating higher ordered films and improving interlayer contacts<sup>45</sup>. The effect of annealing and addition of buffer layers<sup>46</sup> upon  $R_{sh}$  highlights the need for optimization of morphology not only between the donor and acceptor of the active layer, but also at layer interfaces. The slope of the line crossing near the X-axis represents the inverse of the series resistance ( $R_s$ ), due to the bulk resistance of the active layer of the device, as well as that of the electrodes and every material interface of the device<sup>47</sup>. Increasing the mobility of charge carriers, to a point<sup>48</sup>, can improve the  $R_s$  and therefore the FF. Charge carrier balance is an important factor in performance. An imbalance of holes and electrons in the active layer will cause the formation of external fields and increased recombination, leading to a low FF, or even a characteristic S-shaped J-V curve<sup>49</sup>.

#### 1.4. Material design considerations

Some basic design principles have been developed to guide the selection of compounds for organic electronics to determine what type of device the material is best suited for, such as solar cells<sup>50</sup>, light emitting diodes<sup>51</sup>, or transistors<sup>52</sup>. Additional structural modifications can tune the materials electronic properties to improve perfromance. The following looks at what techniques can lead to effective organic semiconducting materials for OPV applications. **Figure 1.7** graphically summarizes the main aspects which influence the bandgap of the material, including



Figure 1.7. Illustration of structural factors that contribute to determination of the bandgap.<sup>53,54</sup>

bond length alternation or quinoid form, addition of side groups, degree of planarity, and aromaticity. These topics will be discussed further in the following sections.

#### **1.4.1.** Conjugation and aromaticity

The first requirement of synthesizing organic electronics is establishing extended conjugation. This can be achieved by linking aromatic units together directly or between vinylene or alkynyl spacers. These aromatic structures have ground state nondegenerate resonance forms, known as quinoid forms<sup>37</sup>, in which the double and single bonds are alternated. The units should be bonded together in such a way that there is a greater contribution of the quinoid resonance structure because the decrease of aromaticity in the quinoid form results in a higher energy state which can be an effective a strategy to lower the bandgap<sup>55</sup>.



Figure 1.8. Greater contributions from the quinoid form lead to a lower bandgap.<sup>37</sup>

#### **1.4.2.** Planarity

To obtain orbital overlap and extend the effective conjugation of the molecule, it is necessary to design planar materials for photovoltaic purposes. By considering the dihedral bond angles formed between units, torsional strain within the molecule can be avoided by placing complementary units next to each other. For example, a biphenyl system will have more torsional strain than bithiophene (see Figure 1.7). Placement of side groups must also be properly arranged, such that steric hindrance of neighboring alkyl chains does not lead to a disruption in planarity and decreased performance<sup>56</sup>. Another strategy for obtaining planar materials is to fuse the rings into one rigid unit, whether it is a polycyclic aromatic unit such as fluorene or so-called ladder structures with fully fused units<sup>57</sup>.

#### **1.4.3.** Solubility and morphology

While utilizing many aromatic units can extend the conjugation to improve conductivity, an undesired side effect of this is that a large degree of pi-stacking<sup>58</sup> can occur which will render the material insoluble in common organic solvents and limit processability. The solution to this is to place solublizing groups along the molecule. Different groups such as amphiphilic<sup>59</sup>, conjugated<sup>60</sup>, or hydrogen bonding<sup>61</sup> can solubilize and produce specialized properties<sup>62</sup>, but typically alkyl chains are affixed to the material to control solubility. Interdigitation of the alkyl chains changes the d-spacing of the polymer and can direct self-assembly<sup>63</sup> to produce higher order structures, such as lamellar formations as shown in **Figure 1.9** for poly-3-hexylthiophene (P3HT). The length and degree of branching of the alkyl chains can be varied to obtain a balance between solubility, morphology, and semiconducting performance. Often a step in the optimization of the material is the synthesis and evaluation of many chain variations.



## Figure 1.9. Lamellar formation of P3HT.<sup>64</sup>

#### 1.4.4. Optoelectronic properties

In addition to a conjugated and soluble material, it must also possess the proper optoelectronic properties to function in a photovoltaic device. For many years, poly-3-hexylthiophene (P3HT) was the most popular conjugated polymer because of its facile synthesis, excellent solubility and processability, as well as good crystallinity and charge transport properties. However, its relatively high-lying HOMO rendered it somewhat oxidatively unstable and its bandgap of about 2 eV was too large to capture the long wavelength portion of the visible spectrum. Despite extensive studies and engineering, devices thereof could only achieve efficiencies of about 4 to 5%<sup>65</sup>.



Figure 1.10. The solar spectrum<sup>66</sup>.

An ideal polymer should efficiently absorb visible radiation of the solar spectrum, which mainly occurs within the visible range of 500-700 nm. Obtaining complementary absorption across this region is controlled by tuning the bandgap of the material due to the relationship  $E=hc/\lambda$ . A bandgap of 1.5 to 1.7 eV is desired<sup>39</sup>, which is measured from the onset of absorption of the material in the solid state.

The polymer must also be oxidatively stable, and to ensure this a HOMO lower than -5.2 eV is necessary<sup>67</sup>. While decreasing the HOMO will stabilize the material and increase the V<sub>oc</sub>, going too low will also widen the bandgap. Positioning the LUMO at least 0.3 eV<sup>68</sup> above that of PCBM is desirable for efficient electron transfer<sup>39, 69</sup> to overcom the Coulombic binding energy of the

exciton<sup>70</sup>. When considering the "ideal" bandgap in an OPV device with PCBM as the acceptor component, a range of HOMO/LUMO values are therefore set as shown in **Figure 1.11**.



Figure 1.11. Illustration of energy levels of P3HT, an "ideal" polymer and PCBM.<sup>71</sup>

The next generation of conjugated materials after P3HT focused on reducing the bandgap to further increase device efficiences. To tune the bandgap, electron-rich and electron-deficient monomers are copolymerized to form what is known as a donor-acceptor copolymer<sup>72</sup>. The donor and acceptor comonomers must be chosen according the factors already overviewed such as planarity, solubility, and quinoid form, and also by the electron-donating/withdrawing strength of each aromatic unit. As shown in **Figure 1.12**, the donor material has a higher HOMO/LUMO relative to the acceptor unit. When polymerized, the combination of atomic orbitals produces new energy levels with an overall narrower bandgap<sup>54</sup>, wherein the LUMO is dictated by the acceptor and the HOMO by the donor monomer. This enables fine-tuning of the bandgap by selective combinations of various comonomers. Stronger acceptors will lower the LUMO, and likewise, strong donors can raise the HOMO, while combining strong to medium acceptors with weak to medium donors can achieve the proper bandgap<sup>71, 72b, 73</sup>. Research has focused on developing new

donor and acceptor units and exploring the properties resulting from the many combinations of monomers.

![](_page_20_Figure_1.jpeg)

**Figure 1.12.** The bandgap of the polymer is tuned by the combination of the donor and acceptor components.<sup>54</sup>

#### 1.4.5. Donor and acceptor monomers used in organic electronics

Much of the discussion has emphasized the importance of proper monomer selection to tune the optoelectronic properties. Donor monomers, some of which are shown in **Figure 1.13**, often contain electron-rich heteroatoms, such as sulfur, oxygen, and sp<sup>3</sup>-hybridized nitrogen. Thiophenebased structures are popular donors because thiophene is a stronger electron donor than benzene, while being less aromatic which can lower the bandgap<sup>37</sup>. In addition, thiophene has a smaller bond angle to reduce torsional strain with neighboring units. As noted, the relative strength of each component is important, and using a very strong donor can raise the HOMO too much at the expense of oxidative stability<sup>67</sup> or lowering the device's open circuit voltage<sup>71</sup>.

![](_page_21_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_21_Figure_1.jpeg)

The strength of an acceptor, shown in **Figure 1.14**, can be evaluated by comparing its ability to lower the LUMO of the polymer when each is polymerized with a common donor. Weak donors such as thiazolothiazole and benzobisthiazole contain electron-rich sulfur atoms, as does thienopyrroledione, yet the latter functions as a medium strength donor because the imide atop the molecule promotes the quinoid form. It is common to use sp<sup>2</sup>-hybridized nitrogens throughout the array of acceptors, and lactams increase the strength of isoindigo and diketopyrrolopyrrole as well as provide a site for alkylation. Other aryl or N- substituents such as acyl, trifluoromethyl, and fluorine can further contribute to the strength of the acceptors.

![](_page_22_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure 1.14. Representative acceptors used in OPVs.<sup>54</sup>

#### 1.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, knowledge of the operating principles of a bulk heterojunction organic solar cell along with basic strategies of how to tune the bandgap of conjugated polymers allows for the development of new materials for photovoltaic purposes. Some of the known monomers illustrated in Section 1.4.5 are combined with newly developed units in the following chapters with the goal of creating narrow bandgap materials.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

## SYNTHESIS OF ORTHOESTERS AND HETEROCYCLES FROM

## TRITHIOORTHOESTERS

![](_page_30_Figure_3.jpeg)

Figure 2.15. Transformations of 1,3-dithianes.

#### 2.1. Introduction

Orthoesters are an obscure yet versatile functional group in organic chemistry. They serve many roles, as either a protecting group for esters and carboxylic acids<sup>1</sup> and sugars<sup>2</sup>, a reactive intermediate for synthesis of heterocycles<sup>3</sup>, and are present in natural products<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2.2). However, few methods are available to synthesize orthoesters, as shown in Scheme 2.1. The Pinner synthesis<sup>5</sup> (A) is a common method which under acidic conditions transforms a nitrile into an

iminoester hydrochloride salt and then the orthoester. A long reaction time is typical and the yields can be low. The Tschitschibabin orthoester synthesis<sup>6</sup> (B) involves formation of a

![](_page_31_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 2.16. Orthoesters in organic chemistry.

Grignard reagent which is reacted with tetraethyl orthocarbonate, as demonstrated below with the formation of a thienyl orthoester<sup>3a</sup>. The limitation of this reaction is that functional groups tolerant of Grignard reagents must be used. Chlorination of diethyl oxalate with PCl<sub>5</sub> followed by attack of ethanol yields an ester orthoester<sup>7</sup> (C). Bicyclic orthoesters<sup>8</sup> (D) are novel structures formed by acid-catalyzed rearrangements and this group offers the advantage of being a more robust protecting group than acyclic orthoesters. The last two reactions presented in Scheme 2.1 illustrate the transformation of trithioorthoesters into orthoesters. They differ in both the synthesis of the trithioorthoester and conditions to synthesize the orthoester. The formation of the trithioorthoester in (E) with KDA and MeSSMe is unique to the acidic nature of the methy group of piccoline, while the AlCl<sub>3</sub> catalyzed substitution (F) with an acid chloride could provide a more general method. The piccoline orthoester is then synthesized using more traditional mercuric reagents<sup>9</sup>, commonly used to deprotect 1,3-dithianes. A variation is to use AgNO<sub>3</sub> under basic conditions so as to protect the orthoester from acid-catalyzed decomposition to an ester, as shown in Scheme 2.2.

![](_page_32_Figure_0.jpeg)

Scheme 2.1. Methods of synthesizing orthoesters.

![](_page_32_Figure_2.jpeg)

Scheme 2.2. Mechanism of acid-catalyzed decomposition of orthoesters to esters.

Our research required the synthesis of novel orthoesters and we found the methods of trithioorthoesters to be appealing due to the mild conditions and functional group tolerance, but difficult to implement the trithioorthoesters due to the limited scope of the method based on picoline or the foul reaction conditions with ethanethiol. In searching for an alternative synthesis of the trithioorthoesters, we noted that the common carbonyl protecting group, 1,3-dithiane, already possessed two of the needed sulfur substituents and the third sulfur group could be installed by metallation of the reactive 2-position followed by the electrophile dimethyl disulfide (Scheme 2.3). Indeed, Ellison *et al*<sup>10</sup> had previously studied this moiety and used the mercuric conditions with 95% ethanol to synthesize esters, which mostly likely formed through an orthoester intermediate that was not isolated.

![](_page_33_Figure_1.jpeg)

Scheme 2.3. Synthesis of trithioorthoester.

Drawing upon these advances we sought to develop a general methodology for the dithiane to orthoester conversion by making modifications to improve the efficiency of the reaction and purity of the product. Furthermore, we studied the versatility of the novel trithioorthoester intermediate to see what other nucleophiles were suitable for this reaction to develop mild route toward the synthesis of heterocycles.

#### 2.1. Results & Discussion

#### 2.1.1. Synthesis of orthoesters

1,3-Dithianes were synthesized following literature conditions with 1,3-propanedithiol and either  $BF_3 \cdot OEt_2$  or catalytic iodine, which gave equivalent yields, usually 80% yield or better.

Synthesis of the orthoester was optimized using the substrate 2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1,3-dithiane (Scheme 2.4).

![](_page_34_Figure_1.jpeg)

Scheme 2.4. Test reaction for synthesizing orthoester by oxidative solvolysis.

The dithiane was deprotonated with *n*-BuLi, followed by addition of the electrophile dimethyl disulfide, resulting in complete conversion to the trithioorthoester. For the next step of solvolysis, we employed the method of Ellison *et al*, wherein excess anhydrous ethanol was added, followed by collidine and a solution of AgNO<sub>3</sub> in acetonitrile. The product was successfully recovered after filtration of the silver salts and extraction of the organic layer, with the main impurities being a small amount of ester, the hydrolysis side-product, and excess collidine. The collidine could be removed by either distillation, reduced pressure, or washing the organic layer with aq. Cu(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>. We found that the addition of a second base, triisopropylamine, suppressed the formation of the ester to increase the purity of the orthoester. Usually no additional purification was needed, but the orthoester could be vacuum distilled or passed through a neutral alumina column to avoid decomposition on silica gel, a more acidic medium. The conversion from dithiane to orthoester was completed in one pot with no isolation of the intermediate trithioorthoester. This helped to reduce transfer losses and exclude water from the reaction.

![](_page_35_Figure_0.jpeg)

![](_page_35_Figure_1.jpeg)

Table 2.1. Yields of orthoesters.
Having fine-tuned the conditions of the reaction, we then studied the scope of reactivity by varying the substrates and a clear pattern of electronic effects emerged, as shown in Table 2.1.

The reactions were performed in one pot and *n*-BuLi was used to deprotonate the dithiane with the exception of the brominated or esterified starting materials, in which case LDA was used. Electron-rich aromatic substrates performed the best, as in compounds 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and the thiophene orthoester 12, all with yields near 80% or better. More strongly electron-donating alkoxy groups are preferred, compared to unsubstituted benzene and toluene which did not yield product (4 and 5) but instead a complex mixture was recovered. Meanwhile the naphthyl derivative, 11, gave a low yield of 30%. A longer alkyl chain on the benzene ring did promote the reaction, resulting in 84% of compound 9. A TBDMS-protected alcohol was tolerated in the reaction, yielding 55% of 6. The 4-iodo-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl substrate contained a mixture of donating/withdrawing functionality and suffered a lower yield of 29%. In a related fashion, 15 and 16 with electron-withdrawing bromo- and ester substituents in the *para*-position returned cleanly the dithiane starting material. The dithianes in this case were most likely successfully deprotonated by LDA, a conventional reaction, yet the resulting anion was not nucleophilic enough to attack the disulfide even with heat or extended reaction time, because of the electronic effects imparted by these substituents. Placing the bromine at the *meta*-position illustrates the impact of this effect, as in this case product 14 was formed in 48%. Lastly, an alkyl substrate was tested and no product (17) was obtained, resemblant of the problems encountered with the phenyl and tolyl substrates. The preference for electron-rich substrates can be rationalized by considering the reaction mechanism wherein the silver abstracts the sulfur group, creating a cation that is stabilized by these aromatic substituents.

#### 2.1.2. Synthesis of heterocycles

Having established the reactivity of various aromatic substrates for the formation of orthoesters, we then studied what nucleophiles besides ethanol could be used with our general method. Since orthoesters are often a synthetic intermediate of more complex products, we wondered if the trithioorthoester could perform in a similar way, thereby eliminating a synthetic step or providing new synthetic pathways to formation of heterocycles (Table 2.2). The two cyclic orthoesters were formed in a one-pot reaction as before. The following aniline-based nucleophiles were used in a two-step variation: synthesis and isolation of the trithioorthoester followed by the AgNO<sub>3</sub> reaction conditions. In this case 2 equivalents of the various nucleophiles were used instead of the larger excess used previously. The reason for these changes was to remove any possible interferences from the reaction by isolating the intermediate and then use a smaller amount of nucleophile, which in some scenarios could be a more valuable component.

Besides ethanol, other alchoholic nucleophiles could be implemented to form bicyclic orthoesters, either **18** or an *N*-Boc variation **19**. A compound such as **18** is appealing compared to the simple ethyl orthoester since it forms a solid that can be purified by recrystallization. The formation of benzazoles using these intermediates was studied. This class of heteroaromatic compounds differ only in the substitution of *N*,*O*, or *S* heteroatoms. Interestingly, only the benzoxazole, **20**, was formed in 69% yield. Under the reaction conditions with either *o*-phenylenediamine or 2-aminobenzenethiol the solution turned black and appeared to decompose, perhaps due to oxidation of the aromatic amine by the AgNO<sub>3</sub>. The benzoxazine (**23**) was not recovered whereas a benzoxazinone, (**24**), was successfully produced from anthranilic acid.



 Table 2.2. Synthesis of heterocycles from trithioorthoesters.

#### 2.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have explored the conversion of trithioorthoesters into orthoesters and other heterocycles. A study of the reactivity of various substrates for orthoesters indicates that electron-rich aromatic units perform best in this role.

#### 2.3. Acknowledgements

Synthesis of the dithiane starting materials and orthoesters was distributed between Dana Drochner and James Klimavicz. Additionally, J. Klimavicz synthesized the cyclic orthoesters while D. Drochner synthesized the heterocycles.

#### 2.4. Experimental

#### Materials

Tetrahydrofuran was dried using an Innovative Technology, Inc. solvent purification system. Other reagents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification.

#### Characterization

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Varian MR (400 MHz) or a Bruker Avance III (600 MHz). Spectra were internally referenced to the residual protonated solvent peak. Chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) relative to the solvent.

Synthesis and characterization of compounds **3**<sup>11</sup>, **8**<sup>11</sup>, **9**<sup>12</sup>, **10**<sup>11</sup>, **12**<sup>11</sup>, **18**<sup>11</sup>, and **19**<sup>11</sup> have been reported elsewhere.

**General one-pot synthesis of orthoesters.** The 2-substituted-1,3-dithiane (2 mmol) was dissolved in an oven-dried flask kept under an argon atmosphere and cooled to -78 °C in a dry ice/acetone bath. 2.2 M n-Butyllithium in hexanes (1.1 mL, 2.4 mmol) was added dropwise and the solution

was stirred for 0.5-1 h, followed by the dropwise addition of MeSSMe (0.18 mL, 2.1 mmol). The solution was removed from the cold bath and allowed to warm to room temperature. Anhydrous ethanol (3 mL) was added to the solution, followed by collidine (1 mL, 8 mmol) and diisopropylamine (1.1 mL, 8 mmol). Silver nitrate (1.36 g, 8 mmol) was dissolved in dry acetonitrile and added dropwise to the reaction solution and a precipitate formed. The solution was stirred at room temperature for 1 h, then filtered and the filter cake was washed well with diethyl ether. The filtrate was washed with water, aq Cu(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, and brine. The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, filtered, and concentrated by rotary evaporation to yield the product.

tert-Butyldimethyl(4-(triethoxymethyl)phenoxy)silane (6). 55% yield.

**1,4-Dimethoxy-2-(triethoxymethyl)benzene** (**7**). 90% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 7.35 (t, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.35 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 6H), 1.16 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 9H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, cdcl<sub>3</sub>) δ 15.14, 32.52, 55.77, 56.56, 57.53, 112.85, 113.99, 117.22, 126.84, 151.93.

**General synthesis of heterocycles.** 2-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-1,3-dithiane (0.45 g, 2 mmol) was dissolved in an oven-dried flask kept under an argon atmosphere and cooled to -78 °C in a dry ice/acetone bath. 2.2 M n-Butyllithium in hexanes (1.1 mL, 2.4 mmol) was added dropwise and the solution was stirred for 0.5-1 h, followed by the dropwise addition of MeSSMe (0.18 mL, 2.1 mmol). The solution was removed from the cold bath and allowed to warm to room temperature. Water was added and the product was extracted with diethyl ether. The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over sodium sulfate, filtered, and concentrated by rotary evaporation. The trithioorthoester was dissolved in 20 mL THF, followed by the addition of collidine (1 mL, 8 mmol) and diisopropylamine (1.1 mL, 8 mmol). Silver nitrate (1.36 g, 8 mmol) was dissolved in

dry acetonitrile and added dropwise to the reaction solution and a precipitate formed. The solution was stirred at room temperature for 1 h, then filtered and the filter cake was washed well with diethyl ether. The filtrate was washed with water, aq Cu(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, and brine. The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, filtered, and concentrated by rotary evaporation to yield the crude product.

**2-(4-Methoxyphenyl)benzo[d]oxazole** (**20).** 69% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.23 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.78 – 7.73 (m, 1H), 7.59 – 7.53 (m, 1H), 7.36 – 7.31 (m, 2H), 7.08 – 7.01 (m, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H).

**2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4H-benzo[d][1,3]oxazin-4-one** (**24**). 65% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.27 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 8.22 (dd, *J* = 7.9, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.81 (td, *J* = 7.7, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.01 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, cdcl<sub>3</sub>) δ 55.66, 114.29, 116.85, 122.67, 127.05, 127.85, 128.70, 130.42, 136.64, 147.47, 157.27, 159.93, 163.42.



Figure 2.17. <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 1,4-Dimethoxy-2-(triethoxymethyl)benzene (7).



Figure 2.18. <sup>13</sup>C NMR of 1,4-Dimethoxy-2-(triethoxymethyl)benzene (7).

### 2.5. References

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### **CHAPTER 3**

# TOWARD THE SYNTHESIS OF 2,6-ASYMMETRIC BENZOBISOXAZOLES

#### 3.1. Introduction to benzobisoxazoles

The donor-acceptor approach to synthesizing conjugated polymers, wherein electron-rich and deficient monomers are copolymerized<sup>1</sup>, has proven to be an effective technique toward producing low bandgap polymers for optoelectronic applications such as organic photovoltaics<sup>2</sup>. In our group we have widely studied benzobisazoles, a class of heterocycles which includes *trans*-benzobisoxazole (*trans*-BBO), *cis*-benzobisoxazole (*cis*-BBO), and *trans*-benzobisthiazole (*trans*-BBTZ) (Fig. 1).



benzo[1,2-*d*:4,5-*d*']bis(oxazole) *trans*-BBO



benzo[1,2-*d*:5,4-*d'*]bis(oxazole) *cis*-BBO

benzo[1,2-*d*:4,5-*d*']bis(thiazole) *trans*-BBTZ

Figure 3.1. Structures of benzobisazoles.

Benzobisazoles are an appealing family for the development of materials for organoelectronic purposes due to the extended, planar pi system, high charge carrier mobilities<sup>3</sup> and thermal stability<sup>4</sup>. While traditionally synthesized in harsh conditions like condensations with polyphosphoric acid (PPA)<sup>5</sup>, our group's advances in benzobisazole synthesis via orthoester condensation<sup>6</sup> expanded the scope of reactivity by increasing solubility and functional group tolerance under the mild reaction conditions. Our research, among others, has demonstrated that benzobisazoles are relatively weak acceptors<sup>7</sup>, in comparison to other well-known acceptors, producing wide bandgap materials. This is beneficial for the synthesis of materials for use in organic light emitting diodes<sup>8</sup>, but for photovoltaic applications that require narrow bandgap materials, new BBO-containing materials are needed. Other groups have studied the use of benzobisthiazole as a donor molecule<sup>9</sup> and have observed good efficiencies<sup>9-10</sup>. In this new approach, we sought to explore the use of benzobisoxazoles as a "pi spacer<sup>11</sup>," a relatively weaker electron-donating/withdrawing unit used to extend conjugation and improve the molar absorptivity of the molecule. Typically, vinylene, ethynyl, benzene, thiophene, or furan are used as pi spacers in the synthesis of conjugated polymers and small molecules. Similarly, the large pi system and weak electron-donating and withdrawing properties of BBO suggest that it could be used for this purpose as an alternative role to either a donor or acceptor. The use of BBOs as a pi spacer requires the synthesis of new 2,6-asymmetric BBOs (ABBOs), a greater synthetic challenge compared to the usual symmetric structures.

#### 3.1.1. Synthesis of benzobisoxazoles and benzoxazoles

We began by reviewing current methods of synthesizing BBOs and benzoxazoles to gain insight on how to approach the new synthesis. An overview of the synthetic methods herein focuses on the *trans*-BBO isomer, as the research discussed later focuses on synthesis of the



Scheme 3.1. Synthesis of *trans*-BBO.

A-trans-BBO. Traditional methods for the synthesis of the BBO involve condensation of diaminohydroquinone (DAHQ) hydrochloride salt (1) and reaction conditions can range from harsh to mild. The use of polyphosphoric acid (PPA) to couple DAHQ and a carboxylic acid is a high temperature and strongly acidic method and, as a result, the BBOs produced can have limited solubility and functionality tolerated in these reaction conditions. Using polyphosphoric silyl ether (PPSE)<sup>12</sup> and an acid chloride with DAHQ can tolerate some functionality such as alkyl chains, though yields of this reaction average 50%. A milder and higher yielding method was developed by our group<sup>6</sup>, inspired by known methods of benzoxazole synthesis from orthoesters. After optimization, it was found that BBOs with many functional groups could be synthesized at low temperature with catalytic amounts of Y(OTf)<sub>3</sub> or Yb(OTf)<sub>3</sub>, which functions as a Lewis acid. While benzoxazoles can be synthesized similarly to BBOs some additional methods are shown in Scheme 3.2. The C-O bond can be formed by copper catalyzed cyclization of an orthobromoacetanilide<sup>13</sup> (2). A benzoxazole can be formed from an ortho-hydroxy aryl oxime (3) via a Beckmann rearrangement<sup>14</sup> which is catalyzed by the Vilsmeier reagent, formed *in situ* from POCl<sub>3</sub> and DMF.



Scheme 3.2. Synthesis of 2-methylbenzoxazole.

#### **3.1.2.** Asymmetric BBOs

#### 3.1.2.1. Via cross-coupling reactions

There have been very few syntheses of asymmetric benzobisazoles. In one case, a BBTZ was synthesized with alkylthiophenes at the 2,6-positions (Scheme 3.3). Bromination of the flanking thiophenes (**4**) allowed for stepwise coupling of different aromatic units to either side by a Suzuki reaction in low yields due to the mixture of substituted products and starting material that can be recovered from this non-regioselective approach<sup>15</sup>.



Scheme 3.3. Synthesis of asymmetric BBTZ via Suzuki cross-coupling.

#### 3.1.2.2. Via Beckmann rearrangement



Scheme 3.4. Synthesis of vinylene A-*cis*-BBO via Beckmann rearrangement and Knoevenagel condensation.

Previous research in our group made progress toward the synthesis of A-*trans*-BBOs and resulted in a new synthesis of an A-*cis*-BBO. The key was synthesizing the benzene core with different precursor functional groups which could be individually transformed to produce the A-*cis*-BBO as shown in Scheme 3.4. J. Klimavicz produced the A-*cis*-BBO starting from resorcinol, which was acylated and nitrated to make 2,4-dihydroxy-5-nitroacetophenone, **8**. The carbonyl group was transformed into an oxime under basic conditions, and finally the Beckmann rearrangement with POCl<sub>3</sub>/DMF was used to create the benzoxazole, **10**. To demonstrate proof of concept, **10** and p-anisaldehyde were condensed in a Knoevenagel-like reaction to join the two aromatic groups by a vinlylene linkage. Reduction of the nitro group and orthoester condensation on the other side completed the A-*cis*-BBO (**12**). Finally, another Knoevenagel-type condensation with 2-pyridine carboxaldehyde resulted in the other vinylene linkage.

#### 3.2. Synthesis of asymmetric trans-BBOs

With a known method of synthesizing A-*cis*-BBOs, we turned our attention to the synthesis of A-*trans*-BBOs, an isomer which is more commonly used and has a better quinoid structure, a resonance form which is important to consider when designing conjugated polymers, as shown in Figure 3.2.



Figure 3.2. Aromatic and quinoid resonance forms of trans-BBO and cis-BBO

**3.2.1.** Via nucleophilic aromatic substitution



Scheme 1.5. Attempted nucleophilic aromatic substitution.

2-Amino-4-chloro-5-nitrophenol was commercially available and appeared to be an ideal starting material, since 3 of the 4 needed aromatic substituents were in place. It was envisioned that the remaining chloro group could be replaced with an oxygen substituent via nucleophilic aromatic substitution, which should be a favorable reaction since the chloro group was ortho to a nitro group to facilitate the reaction. The simplest first reaction was direct substitution of the chloro group of 2-amino-4-chloro-5-nitrophenol with the nucleophiles sodium hydroxide, methoxide or

acetate (Scheme 3.5). In all cases, starting material was returned, perhaps because the base only deprotonated the alcohol group and deactivated the aromatic ring from reacting.

Next, it was thought that if the benzoxazole was formed first, then the substitution might proceed, so 6-chloro-2-methyl-5-nitrobenzoxazole (14) was synthesized. This was used as the substrate with sodium acetate as the nucleophile. Unfortunately, the product's NMR indicated that the benzoxazole was ring opened, which is known to occur in basic conditions<sup>16</sup>. This proved that a benzoxazole was unstable to this type of reaction and other nucleophiles were not tested.



**Scheme 3.6.** Attempted nucleophilic aromatic substitution of a benzoxazole resulted in ring opening.

To overcome this complication, it was determined that a base-stable protecting group should be employed. *N*-acylation of 2-amino-4-chloro-5-nitrophenol followed by benzylation of the alcohol afforded **16** containing the base-tolerant benzyl group. Nucleophilic aromatic substitutions can be attempted on this compound, providing a path toward an A-*trans*-BBO as illustrated in Scheme 3.7.



Scheme 3.7. Nucleophilic aromatic substitution in the presence of a benzyl group.

**3.2.2.** Via copper catalyzed cyclization



Scheme 3.8. Attempted copper-catalyzed benzoxazole formation

It was known that ortho-haloacetanilides with copper could be transformed to benzoxazoles so compound **19** was synthesized. The copper-catalyzed reaction was attempted with copper (I) iodide, 1,10-phenanthroline and potassium carbonate according to similar literature procedures (Scheme 3.8), yet no product was formed. While it might be possible that a bromo- instead of a chloro- substituent could facilitate the reaction, experience with test reactions with similar compounds showed that this reaction performed best when there was no other electron-withdrawing group on the benzene ring. Therefore it was clear that the reaction would not occur with the benzoxazole already on the ring.

#### **3.2.3.** Via Beckmann rearrangement



Scheme 3.9. Routes toward substituted acetophenones for A-*trans*-BBO via Beckmann rearrangement.

It was investigated if the Klimavicz method of A-*cis*-BBOs would work for A-*trans*-BBOs. First the ketone and nitro groups needed to be installed *para*- to each other as shown in Scheme 3.9. Based on the directing effect of the ketone, it was known that nitration of 2,5dimethoxyacetophenone would not produce the correct isomer, **22**. However, Friedel-Crafts acylation of 2,5-dimethoxyacetanilide would create a structure (**24**) that could be used similarly to the Klimavicz synthesis. Unfortunately, an optimized synthesis of the ketone could not be obtained, either with AlCl<sub>3</sub> or SnCl<sub>4</sub>, and the reactant appeared to decompose instead.

**3.2.4.** Via nitration of methoxybenzoxazole



**Scheme 3.10.** Nitration of 6-hydroxy- or 6-methoxybenzoxazole results in different substitution patterns.

Previous research by the Jeffries-EL group demonstrated an interesting reaction pattern of benzoxazoles (Scheme 3.10). A 2-phenyl-5-hydroxybenzoxazole could be nitrated at the 4-position (**26**), whereas nitration of the 5-methoxy derivative resulted in substitution at the 6-position (**28**). Therefore, a 6-methoxybenzoxazole (**28**) was synthesized to further investigate the possiblity of using this as a core for ABBOs.



Scheme 3.11. Synthesis of A-trans-BBO via a 5-amino-6-hydroxybenzoxazole.

The 5-methoxy-2-methylbenzoxazole was synthesized from an aminophenol by an orthoester condensation as in Scheme 3.11. Compound **30** was nitrated, resulting in a 3:2 mixture of substitution products **31** and **32** from which the desired isomer (**31**) could be isolated by recrystallization from ethyl acetate. Demethylation with boron tribromide and then catalytic hydrogenation yielded **33**. Lastly, the ring on the opposite side needed to be closed, and it was decided to attempt this with our usual orthoester/Y(OTf)<sub>3</sub> conditions. Unfortunately, the starting material decomposed under these conditions. This approach remains a promising path toward the A-*trans*-BBO and other methods of ring closing the final hydroxyamine could be tested, such as acylation and dehydration.





It was investigated if the order of reactions could be altered to yield the vinylene benzoxazole, wherein a Knoevenagel-like condensation occurred before ring closing the second oxazole ring

(Scheme 3.11). The nitro- (**29**) and aminobenzoxazoles (**31**) were each tested with the condensation of p-anisaldehyde under modified Knoevenagel condensation conditions of KOtBu in THF, as well as the usual method of KOH/DMF<sup>17</sup>. While the cis-BBO derivative (**11**) had previously survived the condensation reaction, both (**35**) and (**36**) were not recovered and instead the starting materials appeared to decompose. It was also attempted to deoxygenate the solvents by bubbling argon and conducting the reaction under an argon atmosphere, yet to no avail.





Scheme 3.13. Pathways toward an A-*trans*-BBO via protected hydroquinones.

Another strategy toward the synthesis of ABBOs is by substitution of protected hydroquinones (Scheme 3.13). Nitration of 2,5-dimethoxyacetanilide occurs at the 4-position in high yield, thus installing all oxygen and nitrogen subustituents needed for the ABBO core. In his research, J. Klimavicz sought to demethylate this compound and then ring-close to form the first oxazole ring (**39**). Many deprotection conditions were tried, such as boron tribromide, ceric ammonium nitrate, aluminum chloride, and chromium trioxide, yet unfortunately all methods resulted in decomposition or returned starting material. Other alcohol protecting groups were also evaluated in this fashion, but did not lead to success.

This strategy seemed promising and I hypothesized that the presence of the nitro group was deactivating the reaction. The order of reactions was rearranged to continue with the synthesis so the deprotection was needed later. First, the nitro group was transormed into a phenyl amide (**41**) and then the demethylation successfully occurred with ceric ammonium nitrate to form the quinone (**42**) followed by reduction to the hydroquinone (**43**) by sodium dithionite. Lastly, the BBO **40** was formed by acid-catalyzed dehydration by heating in Eaton's reagent, a milder alternative to PPA. Precipitation into water yielded the ABBO in 73% yield.



Scheme 3.14. Synthesis of the core starting material for A-*trans*-BBO.



Scheme 3.15. Dehydration with Eaton's reagent resulted in decomposition.

To create a general method, 2,5-dimethoxy-4-nitroaniline (44) was synthesized as the core starting material by hydrolysis of N-(2,5-dimethoxy-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide (Scheme 3.14). A more complex diamidohydroquinone featuring carbazole and methyl substituents (45) was synthesized to expand the scope of the ABBO synthesis. As shown in Scheme 3.15, the substituted



**Scheme 3.16.** A compound with asymmetric alkyl chains was used to test dehydration/cyclization conditions.

hydroquinone was heated with Eaton's reagent and precipitation into water resulted in black, decomposed material. It was evident that Eaton's reagent was too harsh to complete the reaction in the presence of additional functional groups and another reagent needed to be used.

To test conditions for the final ring closure, a molecule with asymmetric alkyl substituents on the amides (**47**, Scheme 3.16) was synthesized with the intent that the longer alkyl chain would aid with solubility. This molecule also decomposed with Eaton's reagent. In my experience, acetic anhydride was an efficient dehydrating reagent for the similar formation of benzoxazoles but in this case resulted, surprisingly, in a very low yield of 2,6-dimethyl-*trans*-BBO. Triphenyl phosphine with carbon tetrachloride was reported to be a mild dehydrating agent but the reaction never achieved completion by TLC so this method was abandoned. Refluxing toluene with catalytic *p*TSA also did not make product after extended reaction times. The problem with these conditions was the insolubility of the starting material in hot toluene, thus a more polar solvent was needed. The starting material was soluble in hot POCl<sub>3</sub>/CHCl<sub>3</sub> or POCl<sub>3</sub>/DMF but the reaction again was not complete after heating for multiple days, perhaps due to equilibration of the starting material and product mixture.

#### **3.3.** Conclusion

Several methods were attempted to synthesize an A-*trans*-BBO. It was found that the Beckmann rearrangement used to synthesize an A-*cis*-BBO could not be used for an A-*trans*-BBO due to the inability to synthesize the ketone starting material and copper-catalyzed benzoxazole formation did not complete the ring formation. Selection of the benzyl protecting group could provide a pathway for nucleophilic aromatic substitution to succeed. Other methods have made progress toward the synthesis of A-*trans*-BBOs. Another approach involved the synthesis of a 5-amino-6-hydroxybenzoxazole and new conditions to achieve the final ring closure to complete the BBO can be explored. An alternative synthesis included dehydration of asymmetrically substituted 2,5-diacetanilidehydroquinones with Eaton's reagent, although this method does not tolerate functionality. New methods of dehydration that accommodate additional functionality and solubility issues need to be developed in order to achieve a general synthetic method for producing a library of 2,6-asymmetric *trans*-BBOs.

#### **3.4.** Acknowledgements

All experiments were performed by the author unless stated otherwise. All text was written by the author.

#### 3.5. Experimental

4-methoxy-2-nitrophenol<sup>18</sup>, 2,5-dimethoxyacetanilide<sup>19</sup>, and *N*-hexylcarbazole-3-carboxylic acid<sup>20</sup> were synthesized according to literature procedures. All other materials were purchased from commercial sources and used without further purification. Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Varian MR (400 MHz) or a Bruker Avance III (600 MHz).

Spectra were internally referenced to the residual protonated solvent peak. Chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) relative to the solvent.

**6-chloro-2-methyl-5-nitrobenzo[d]oxazole** (14). 2-amino-4-chloro-5-nitrophenol (1.50 g, 8 mmol), triethyl orthoacetate (2.2 mL, 12 mmol) and yttrium triflate (24 mg, 0.05 mmol) were mixed in 5 mL DMSO and heated to 70 °C for 2 h. The mixture was cooled and poured into water. The pale yellow solid was filtered, washed well with water and dried to yield the product (1.58 g, 93%) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.06 (s, 1H), 7.80 (s, 1H), 2.71 (s, 2H).



*N*-(5-chloro-2-hydroxy-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide (S1). 2-amino-4-chloro-5-nitrophenol (0.83 g, 4.4 mmol) and triethylamine (0.9 mL, 6.6 mmol) were mixed in 15mL DCM. Acetyl chloride (0.3mL, 4.8mmol) was added dropwise. A yellow precipitate soon formed and dilute HCl was added. The solid was filtered and recrystallized with EtOH (0.61 g, 60%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  7.94 (s, 0H), 6.84 (s, 0H), 4.33 (s, 3H), 2.37 (s, 1H).

*N*-(2-(benzyloxy)-5-chloro-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide (16). *N*-(5-chloro-2-hydroxy-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide (S1) (1.13 g, 4.9 mmol), potassium carbonate (1 g, 7.4 mmol), and benzyl chloride (0.7 mL, 5.9 mmol) were mixed in 5 mL DMF and heated to 50 °C overnight and then cooled to room temperature. The organic layer was extracted with chloroform and then washed with 1 M NaOH, water and brine. The organic layer was dried with sodium sulfate, filtered, and concentrated by rotary evaporation. The crude product was recrystallized from EtOH, filtered, and

dried to yield the product (1.16 g, 74%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.71 (s, 1H), 7.86 (s, 1H), 7.62 (s, 1H), 7.47 – 7.39 (m, 5H), 5.18 (s, 2H), 2.21 (s, 3H).



*N*-(5-chloro-2-hydroxy-4-nitrophenyl)thiophene-2-carboxamide (S2). 2-amino-4-chloro-5nitrophenol (1.89 g, 10 mmol) and triethylamine (2 mL, 15 mmol) were mixed in 30 mL DCM and thiophene-2-carbonyl chloride (1.61 g, 11 mmol) was added dropwise. A yellow solid formed which was filtered and rinsed with water and chloroform, then dried (2.72 g, 91%).

**5-chloro-6-nitro-2-(thiophen-2-yl)benzo[d]oxazole** (18). *N*-(5-chloro-2-hydroxy-4-nitrophenyl)thiophene-2-carboxamide (S2) (2.38 g, 8 mmol) was refluxed in 20 mL acetic anhydride with one drop of concentrated sulfuric acid. The solution was cooled and poured into ice water and allowed to sit while a solid formed. The solid was filtered and recrystallized from MeOH/H<sub>2</sub>O (1.70 g, 84%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.13 (s, 1H), 8.05 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 0H), 7.95 (dd, J = 3.9, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (dd, J = 5.1, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (s, 1H), 7.21 (dd, J = 5.0, 3.9 Hz, 1H).

**2-amino-4-methoxyphenol (29).** 4-Methoxy-2-nitrophenol (6.49 g, 38.3 mmol) was suspended in methanol and the solution was degassed by bubbling argon. 0.80 g of 10% Pd/C was added and then hydrogen was bubbled through the solution overnight and it turned form yelow to colorless. The solution was flushed with argon and filtered through a Büchner funnel to remove the Pd/C. The solvent of the filtrate was removed by rotary evaporation to afford the product

(5.12 g, 36.7 mmol) as a brown solid in 96% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 8.44 (s, 1H), 6.50 (s, 0H), 6.19 (s, 1H), 5.95 (dd, J = 8.5, 2.9 Hz, 1H), 4.53 (s, 2H), 3.58 (s, 3H).

**5-methoxy-2-methylbenzo[d]oxazole (30).** 2-amino-4-methoxyphenol (2.05 g, 14.7 mmol), 1,3-Dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin (20 mg, 0.07 mmol) and 10 mL triethyl orthoacetate were mixed together and heated to 60 °C for 0.5 h. The mixture was concentrated by vacuum distillation. The residue was passed through a silica gel column with 1:1 hexanes:ethyl acetate and isolated by rotary evaporation. The solid was recrystallized with cold hexanes and filtered to yield the product (2.12 g, 82%) as pinkish crystals. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, cdcl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.46 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 2.5 Hz, 1H). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, cdcl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  7.46 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (dd, *J* = 8.9, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 2.73 (s, 3H).

**5-methoxy-2-methyl-6-nitrobenzo[d]oxazole (31).** 5-methoxy-2-methylbenzo[d]oxazole (1.30 g, 8 mmol) was dissolved in a flask with 5 mL concentrated sulfuric acid, which was chilled in an ice bath. 15.8 M nitric acid (0.57 mL, 9 mmol) was added to the solution dropwise. The solution was stirred for 0.5 h and then poured into ice water. The solid was filtered and rinsed well with water. The solid was recrystallized with ethyl acetate and the solid product was isolated by filtration (0.76 g, 3.6 mmol) in 46%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.03 (s, 1H), 7.30 (s, 1H), 4.00 (s, 3H), 2.68 (s, 3H).

**2-Methyl-6-nitrobenzo[d]oxazol-5-ol (33).** 5-Methoxy-2-methyl-6-nitrobenzo[d]oxazole (0.2 g, 1 mmol) was mixed with 5 mL dichloromethane in a round bottom flask. The flask was flushed with argon and cooled to -78 °C. Boron tribromide was added dropwise and the solution turned from cloudy white to clear bright orange. The flask was allowed to warm to room temperature and then the solution was added dropwise to cold water. The solution was extracted with

dichloromethane, and then the organic layer was washed with brine. The organic layer was dried with magnesium sulfate and then filtered and rotovapped to yield 0.15 g (0.8 mmol, 80%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  10.69 (s, 1H), 8.24 (s, 1H), 7.35 (s, 1H), 2.69 (s, 3H).

*N*-(2,5-dimethoxy-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide (37). *N*-(2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (0.82 g, 4.2 mmol) was dissolved in 10 mL AcOH. 70% nitric acid (0.3 mL, 5 mmol) was added dropwise and the solution was stirred for 15 min and then poured into ice water. The resulting bright yellow solid was filtered and washed well with water and dried to yield the product (0.83 g, 82%).

*N*-(**4**-acetamido-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)benzamide (**41**). Benzoyl chloride was added dropwise at 0 °C to a solution of N-(4-amino-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (1.03 g, 4.9 mmol) and triethylamine (1.4 mL, 10 mmol) in 10 mL dichloromethane. The reaction was strirred at room temperature for one hour. Water was added and the organic layer was extracted with a separatory funnel. The organic layer was washed with 1 M HCl, aq. NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, and brine and then dried with Mg<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and rotovapped. The crude product was purified by recrystallization with MeOH/H<sub>2</sub>O. 0.78 g, 51%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.55 (s, 1H), 8.34 (s, 1H), 8.21 (s, 1H), 7.89 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 7.78 (s, 1H), 7.55 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 3.92 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 7H), 2.21 (s, 3H).

#### N-(4-acetamido-2,5-dihydroxyphenyl)benzamide (43). N-(4-acetamido-2,5-

dimethoxyphenyl)benzamide (0.71 g, 2.3 mmol) was dissolved in 30 mL MeCN. Ceric ammonium nitrate (3.78 g, 6.9 mmol) was dissolved in water and this was added to the MeCN solution. The solution was refluxed for 20 min and then water was added and the mixture was cooled in an ice bath. An orange solid was filtered and rinsed with water and used for the next

step without further purification. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 9.14 (s, 1H), 8.33 (s, 1H), 7.90 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (s, 1H), 7.62 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d, *J* = 1.9 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (t, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 2.27 (s, 3H).

The orange solid was refluxed in a 1:1 v/v solution of  $H_2O$  and EtOH. Sodium dithionite (1.06 g, 6.9 mmol) was added in portions and the solution turned colorless. The solution was cooled and poured onto ice and then filtered to yield 0.64 g of *N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-

dihydroxyphenyl)benzamide (96% overall yield). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-d6) δ 9.34 (s, 1H), 9.24 (s, 1H), 9.17 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.94 (d, 2H), 7.59 (t, 1H), 7.53 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (s, 1H), 7.36 (s, 1H), 2.09 (s, 3H).

**2-methyl-6-phenylbenzo**[**1**,**2-d**:**4**,**5-d**']**bis**(**oxazole**) (**40**). *N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dihydroxyphenyl)benzamide (0.64 g, 2.2 mmol) was mixed with 3 mL of Eaton's reagent (10% P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> w/w in methanesulfonic acid) and heated to 90 °C for 3 h. The solution was cooled and poured into ice water and a white solid formed, which was filtered and rinsed with water to yield 0.4 g (1.6 mmol, 73%) of product. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.29 – 8.23 (m, 2H), 7.82 (d, J = 2.1 Hz, 2H), 7.56 – 7.51 (m, 3H), 2.69 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.94, 100.65, 100.83, 127.09, 127.76, 129.14, 131.87, 139.66, 139.92, 148.33, 148.77, 164.25, 165.46.

**2,5-dimethoxy-4-nitroaniline** (**44**). *N*-(4-amino-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (4.63 g, 19.3 mmol) was refluxed in a 1:1 v/v solution of EtOH/1M HCl for 3 h. The solution was cooled and a brown solid formed. The crystals were filtered to yield 3.62 g (18.2 mmol, 1.95%) without need for further purification. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  7.56 (d, *J* = 4.3 Hz, 1H), 6.59 – 6.15 (m, 2H), 4.58 (s, 4H), 3.89 (s, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H).



*N*-(4-amino-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (S3). A suspension of 0.97 g (4.0 mmol) *N*-(2,5-dimethoxy-4-nitrophenyl)acetamide in methanol was degassed by bubbling argon. 0.2 g of 10% Pd/C was added and then hydrogen was bubbled through the solution overnight, which eventually turned from a yellow suspension to a colorless solution. The solution was purged with argon, and then the mixture was filtered with a Büchner funnel to remove the Pd/C. The filtrate was concentrated by rotary evaporation to yield 0.78 g of solid product, 93% yield.

#### *N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-9-hexyl-9H-carbazole-3-carboxamide (S4). *N*-

hexylcarbazole-3-carboxylic acid (0.69 g, 2.3 mmol) was mixed in dichloromethane and thionyl chloride (0.2 mL, 2.8 mmol) was added dropwise at room temperature. The solution was refluxed for 1 h then cooled to room temperature. The excess thionyl chloride was removed by distillation. In another round bottom flask was mixed N-(4-amino-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (0.48 g, 2.3 mmol) and pyridine (0.28 mL, 3.5 mmol) in dichloromethane. The acid chloride was dissolved in some dichloromethane and added dropwise to the pyridine solution at room temperature. The solution was refluxed 1 h and then cooled. The product was extracted, washed with dil HCl, water, brine, and dried over magnesium sulfate. The organic layer was filtered and concentrated by rotary evaporation. The crude product was recrystallized from EtOH to yield the product (0.83 g, 72%) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.69 (s, 1H), 8.42 (s, 1H), 8.23 (s, 1H), 8.18 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 8.00 (dd, *J* = 8.6, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.79 (s, 1H), 7.53 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (t, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H),

7.30 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 4.34 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 3.96 (s, 2H), 3.95 (s, 2H), 2.22 (s, 2H), 1.93 – 1.81 (m, 1H), 1.40 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 1.31 – 1.23 (m, 1H), 0.87 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H).

*N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dihydroxyphenyl)-9-hexyl-9H-carbazole-3-carboxamide (45). *N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-9-hexyl-9H-carbazole-3-carboxamide (S4) (0.60 g, 1.2 mmol) was dissolved in 10 mL dichloromethane, flushed with argon and cooled to -78 °C. Boron tribromide (0.46 mL, 4.8 mmol) was added dropwise to the solution which was then allowed to warm to room temperature. The solution was added to water and the precipitate was filtered and purified by recrystallization with ethanol (0.47 g, 85%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  9.47 (s, 1H), 9.28 (s, 1H), 9.22 (s, 2H), 8.84 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 8.26 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 8.07 (dd, J = 8.7, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.54 – 7.49 (m, 1H), 7.48 (s, 1H), 7.39 (s, 1H), 7.27 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 4.45 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 2H), 2.10 (s, 3H), 1.79 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.31 – 1.13 (m, 8H), 0.80 (t, J = 6.9 Hz, 3H).



*N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-2-ethylhexanamide (S5). *N*-(4-amino-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetamide (S1) (0.78 g, 3.7 mmol) and triethylamine (1 mL, 7 mmol) were mixed in dichloromethane to which 2-ethylhexanoyl chloride was added dropwise at room temperature and stirred for 0.5 h. 1M HCl was added and the organic layer was extracted with DCM and washed with water, 1 M NaOH and brine. The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, filtered, and concentrated by rotary evaporation to yield the product with no need for

further purification (1.27 g, quant. yield). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.52 (s, 1H), 7.97 (s, 1H), 7.57 (s, 1H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 3.94 (s, 3H), 2.16-2.24 (m, 2H), 1.77 – 1.58 (m, 4H), 1.42-1.26 (m, 6H), 1.01 – 0.92 (m, 3H), 0.94 – 0.85 (m, 3H).

**N-(4-acetamido-2,5-dihydroxyphenyl)-2-ethylhexanamide** (47). *N*-(4-acetamido-2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)-2-ethylhexanamide (S5) (1.24 g, 3.7 mmol) was dissolved in 10 mL dichloromethane, placed under an argon atmosphere, and cooled to -78 °C. Boron tribromide (1.45 mL, 15 mmol) was added dropwise and the solution was allowed to warm to room temperature and then was added to water. The solid was filtered and recrystallized from methanol and filtered to yield the product (0.70 g, 61%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  9.13 (s, 2H), 9.07 (s, 1H), 7.36 (s, 1H), 7.26 (s, 1H), 2.45 – 2.37 (m, 1H), 2.06 (s, 3H), 1.58 – 1.46 (m, 2H), 1.45 – 1.33 (m, 2H), 1.32 – 1.17 (m, 4H), 0.93 – 0.76 (m, 6H).

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## **CHAPTER 4**

# TUNING THE BANDGAP OF BENZOBISOXAZOLE SEMICONDUCTING MATERIALS BY 2,6-SUBSTITUTION

#### **4.1. Introduction**

Research in the field of organic electronics continuously seeks to develop new structures to obtain improved performance from devices such as solar cells<sup>1</sup>, transistors<sup>1c, 2</sup>, and light emitting diodes<sup>3</sup>. The class of benzobisazoles, including benzobisoxazole (BBO) and benzobisthiazole have been studied for such purposes<sup>4</sup> since these rigid, polycyclic heteroaromatic systems have good charge transport and thermal stability<sup>5</sup> and can be synthesized under mild conditions<sup>6</sup>. To synthesize a narrow bandgap material for an organic photovoltaic function, a popular strategy is to copolymerize electron-donating monomers with electron accepting comonomers. In this regard, benzobisazoles have proven to be weak acceptors<sup>7</sup>, resulting in high lowest unoccupied molecular orbitals (LUMOs) and therefore bandgaps wider than the 1.5-1.7 eV generally desired for optimal OPV performance<sup>8</sup>. Herein we investigate a new strategy toward the goal of developing BBO as a stronger acceptor.

#### 2,6-polymerization axis



Figure 4.19. Aromatic and quinoid resonance forms of BBO through alternate conjugation axes.

To improve the electroluminescent properties of BBO-containing polymers for OLEDs, J. Intemann, et al.<sup>9</sup>, polymerized BBO through the 4,8-axis instead of the more commonly studied 2,6-axis and this greatly increased the brightness and luminous efficiencies of the host-guest OLEDs. Noting that the new configuration can stabilize its quinoid structure (Figure 4.1) in conjugated polymers which results in a narrower bandgap<sup>10</sup>, we saw the potential to use the BBO in this way for photovoltaic applications. Figure 4.202 shows the energy levels resulting from substitution of BBOs and other acceptor units among a common dithienosilole donor, along with those of P3HT and PCBM included for reference. Switching the polymerization axis from the 2,6-to the 4,8- slightly lowered the bandgap, though not as much as that achieved when stronger acceptor units of diketopyrrolopyrrole or benzothiadiazole were used.


**Figure 4.20.** Comparison of acceptor monomers and their effect on energy levels of the polymer. By studying BBO-based cruciform materials, the research of B. Tlach<sup>11</sup>, et al, demonstrated that the highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) of the BBO molecule can be controlled by substitution of the 4,8-axis and, likewise, the LUMO can be tuned independently by substitution of the 2,6-axis. With this in mind, we envisioned that polymerization through the 4,8-axis with additional substitution at the 2,6-axis will further tune the material's properties. We predicted that incorporation of a stronger electron-withdrawing substituent would (1) alter the electron density distribution (2) promote the quinoid form and (3) lower the LUMO, factors which should all contribute to lowering the bandgap. Herein, the properties of small molecules with 2,6-variations were studied and then a polymer was synthesized to demonstrate the utility of the new monomer, 2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)BBO.

#### 4.2. Results & Discussion

#### 4.2.1. Small molecules

#### 4.2.1.1. Synthesis

4,8-DibromoBBOs with varying 2,6-substitutions were synthesized in two ways starting with 2,6-diamino-3,5-dribromohydroquinone, as shown in Scheme 4.1. Lewis acid-catalyzed orthoester condensations<sup>6b</sup> were used to produce the 2,6-unsubstituted-4,8-dibromo BBO as well as 2,6-di(ethoxy), ethyl carboxylate, and ethyl BBOs. Following a modified literature procedure<sup>12</sup>, 2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)BBO was synthesized with trifluoroacetic anhydride in PPSE in 46% yield and the product was soluble in chloroform and toluene. Synthesis of other 2,6-disubstituted BBOs was attempted but did not yield product, such as a 2,6-bis(*N*,*N*-dimethylamino)BBO from the condensation of *N*,*N*-dimethylcarbamoyl chloride with the PPSE reaction conditions. Different methods of synthesizing a 2,6-dicarbaldehydeBBO were examined, such as oxidation of an alcohol, methyl oxidation with SeO<sub>2</sub>, and periodate-mediated alkene cleavage, yet either no reaction occurred or the materials decomposed.



Scheme 4.5. Synthesis of 2,6-substituted-4,8-dibromoBBOs





To study the structure-property effects of these variations, donor-acceptor-donor type small molecules were synthesized with the BBOs as the acceptor and 5-hexylthiophene donors by a Stille cross-coupling of (5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)trimethylstannane and the dibromo BBOs **1-5** (Scheme

4.2). **9** and **8** small molecules produced yields of 59% and 54%, respectively. **6** and **7** gave considerably lower yields of 27% and 29%, respectively, and the ester derivative **10** gave a low mass recovery plus a mixture of products to result in no recoverable product. The reactions to produce **6**,**7**,and **10** may have suffered from decomposition, as the reaction mixture turned black whereas the reactions to form **8** and **9** did not under the same conditions. Nevertheless, purification of the small molecules was accomplished by column chromatography followed by recrystallization. During the synthesis of **10**, it may be possible that the palladium complexed with the ester carbonyl and imine nitrogen of the benzobisoxazole unit which could lead to incomplete reaction, undesired side reactions, or decomposition. Compounds **6-9** were carried forward for characterization.

#### 4.2.1.2. DFT calculations

DFT calculations are underway to understand the effects of these 2,6-substitutions on the electronic properties of the small molecule.

# 4.2.1.3. Optical properties

The normalized chloroform solution and film UV-vis spectra for compounds **6-9** are shown in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, respectively, and summarized in Table 4.1. Overall, the spectra display a large amount of fine structure due to the rigidity of this planar conjugated system. In chloroform solution, **6** shows the most vibronic detail and **9** shows lesser detail with a broader  $\lambda_{max}$  peak. The absorption maximum ranges from 341 nm for **6** to 409 nm for **9**. In the solid state, **6** and **9** have small red-shifting of the  $\lambda_{max}$  by 3 and 4 nm, respectively. **7** and **8** are both blue-shifted, going from 392 nm to 379 nm for **8** and 381 to 359 nm for **7**. All peaks are broadened overall but largely retain the same peak formations, except the formerly broad peak at the  $\lambda_{max}$  of **9** now has distinct peaks in that region. The bandgaps were calculated from the onset of absorption in the solid state.

Compound	λ <sub>max</sub> solution (nm)	λ <sub>max</sub> film (nm)	Abs <sub>onset</sub> (nm)	εx10 <sup>4</sup> (M <sup>-1</sup> cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Eg <sup>opt</sup> (eV) <sup>a</sup>	Eonset <sup>ox</sup> (V) <sup>b</sup>	HOMO <sup>c</sup> (eV)	LUMO <sup>d</sup> (eV)
6	341	344	468	1.49	2.65	0.80	-5.41	-2.76
7	381	359	456	3.78	2.72	0.80	-5.41	-2.69
8	392	379	453	4.73	2.74	0.94	-5.55	-2.81
9	409	417	496	4.41	2.5	0.93	-5.54	-3.04

Table 4.1. Optical and electronic properties for 6-9.

<sup>a</sup> Estimated from the optical absorption edge. <sup>b</sup> Onset of potentials (vs Fc). <sup>c</sup> HOMO= -( $E_{onset}^{ox}$  + 4.8) (eV). <sup>d</sup> LUMO = HOMO -  $E_g^{opt}$ 

#### 4.1.1.1. Electrochemical properties

The electochemical properties of the small molecules were studied by cyclic voltammetry performed in dichloromethane solution  $nBu_4PF_6$  electrolyte with an Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> reference electrode, as shown in Figure 4.3 and summarized in Table 4.1. All small molecules displayed quasi-reversible oxidation peaks, the onset of which was used to calculate the ionization potential which represents the highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) of the molecule. Despite their apparent electronic differences based on the substitution of trifluoromethyl and ethyl groups, both compounds **8** and **9** had similar HOMOs of -5.55 and -5.54 eV, respectively, and **6** and **7** 



Figure 4.21. Small molecule solution UV-vis.



Figure 4.22. Small molecule film UV-vis.



Figure 4.3. Cyclic voltammetry of small molecules 6-9.

had the same HOMO of -5.41 eV. This indicates that the electronic effects of 2,6-substitution of the BBO does not create a trend in the position of the HOMO level, which is consistent with the results of Tlach, et al. All compounds did not display reversible reduction behavior when measured up to -2 V. Therefore the LUMO was calculated as LUMO = HOMO –  $E_g^{opt}$ . Due to the lower bandgap, **9** had the lowest LUMO of -3.04 eV.

#### 4.1.2. Polymer

#### 4.1.2.1. Synthesis

Having demonstrated that the trifluoromethyl BBO, **9**, was the most effective at lowering the bandgap of the small molecules, a donor-acceptor copolymer was synthesized with this new monomer. The polymer was designed to incorporate solubilizing alkyl chains while maintaining crystallinity, planarity, and increasing conjugation length. First, flanking octylthiophene units were coupled to **9** with the alkyl chains oriented away from the BBO unit to reduce steric interactions (Scheme 4.3). The product **10** was then brominated to form the pi-acceptor-pi monomer (**11**) which was copolymerized with (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane) via a Stille reaction to yield **PCF3BBOTT**, as shown in Scheme 4.4.



Scheme 4.7. Synthesis of monomer 11.



Scheme 4.8. Synthesis of PCF3BBOTT.

### 4.1.2.2. Physical properties

**PCF3BBOTT** was purified by Soxhlet extraction and collected after precipitation into methanol, with a final recovery of 79% from the chloroform fraction. The polymer had a MW of 10.6 kDa and PDI of 1.7 and was soluble in common organic solvents, as summarized in Table 4.2. The polymer had a high decomposition temperature of 387 °C, as shown in the TGA in Figure 4.4.

**Table 4.3.** Physical properties of polymer.

Polymer	Yield	(kDa) <sup>a</sup>	PDI	DP <sup>b</sup>	$T_d  (^\circ C)^c$
PCF3BBOTT	79%	10.6	1.70	10	387

<sup>a</sup>Determined by GPC in THF using polystyrene standards. <sup>b</sup>Degree polymerization calculated from the molecular weight. <sup>c</sup>5% weight loss temperature by TGA in air.



Figure 4.4. TGA of polymer

#### 4.1.2.3. Optical

The physical properties of the polymer are summarized in Table 4.3. According to the UV-vis spectra, Figure 4.5, the polymer displays  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transitions up to 400nm and an intramolecular charge transfer band with a  $\lambda_{max}$  of 452 nm. This peak is greatly red-shifted by 127 nm in the solid state, to a  $\lambda_{max}$  of 579 nm, due to the planarity of the aromatic backbone and strategic placement of side chains to promote crystallinity. The broad solid state absorption nearly matches the solar spectrum output, in which the most photons are emitted between 500 to 700 nm. Films of **PCF3BBOTT** spin coated from the chloroform solution exhibit a low energy shoulder. The bandgap, calculated from the onset of absorption, was determined to be 1.82 eV and is one of the lowest bandgaps of BBO polymers to date.

<b>Table 4.4</b> . Op	otoelectronic	properties of	polymer.
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Compound	λ <sub>max</sub> soln (nm)	λ <sub>max</sub> film (nm)	λ <sub>onset</sub> (nm)	$E_g{}^{opt}(eV)^a$	Eonset <sup>ox</sup> (V)	LUMO (ev)	HOMO (ev)
PCF3BBOTT	452	579	682	1.82	0.82	-3.68	-5.53

<sup>a</sup>Estimated from the optical absorption edge. <sup>b</sup>LUMO = HOMO -  $E_g^{opt}$  <sup>c</sup>HOMO = -4.8-( $E_{onset}^{ox}$ ) (eV).



Figure 4.5. UV-vis spectroscopy of PCF3BBOTT

#### 4.1.2.4. Electrochemical

Cyclic voltammetry was used to study the redox behavior of the polymer. Chlorobenzene solutions of polymer were drop-cast onto electrodes and data was obtained with a  $Bu_4NPF_6$ /acetonitrile electrolyte solution, an Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> reference electrode and Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> was used as a reference value. The output voltammogram, as shown in Fig. 4.6, displays quasireversible

oxidation. The onset of oxidation was 0.82V from which the HOMO was calculated to be -5.53 eV according to the equation  $HOMO = -(4.8 + (E_{onset}^{ox}))$  (eV). There was no reversible reduction character to the voltammogram so the LUMO was estimated by subtracting the optical bandgap from the HOMO, resulting in a value of -3.68 eV, which is the lowest reported



Figure 4.6. Cyclic voltammetry of PCF3BBOTT.

value of a BBO-based polymer to date. The BBO monomer could have influenced the low HOMO, an effect which has been observed in polymers with fluorinated acceptors<sup>13</sup>. Incorporation of fluorine atoms into conjugated polymers has become popular lately and resulted in high efficiencies, while the trifluoromethyl group has not been studied in detail. A comparison of

fluoro- vs. trifluoromethyl groups should be conducted in the future to ascertain the impact of these groups upon device performance.

#### 4.1.3. Device data

Fabrication of OPV devices is currently in progress.

#### 4.3. Conclusion

In conclusion we used small molecules to study the optoelectronic effects of varied substitution at the 2,6-positions of BBOs and determined that the electron-withdrawing trifluoromethyl group did indeed reduce the LUMO and bandgap. The 2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)BBO monomer (**11**) was then polymerized with thienothiophene to synthesize a donor-acceptor copolymer (**PCF3BBOTT**) which exhibited good optical properties and a relatively low bandgap. Future studies will synthesize a series of conjugated polymers with variations of trifluoromethyl and fluoro substituents on the acceptor to investigate how these substituents affect the optoelectronic properties and device performance.

#### 4.4. Acknowledgements

Synthetic contributions include that of Dawn Knoble for 4,8-dibromo-2,6-diethylbenzo[1,2d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole), Jeremy Intemann for trimethyl(4-octylthiophen-2-yl)stannane, and Brandon Kobilka for (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane); whereas all other synthesis and characterization was performed by the author of this dissertation. Benjamin Hale conducted the TGA and DSC analysis. All text was written by the author.

#### 4.5. Experimental

#### Materials

4,8-Dibromobenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (**2**)<sup>14</sup>, 4,8-dibromo-2,6-diethylbenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (**3**)<sup>14</sup>, diethyl 4,8-dibromobenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole)-2,6-dicarboxylate (**4**)<sup>14</sup>, (5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)trimethylstannane<sup>15</sup>, trimethyl(4-octylthiophen-2-yl)stannane<sup>16</sup>, and (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane)<sup>17</sup> were synthesized according to literature procedures. Toluene was dried using an Innovative Technology, Inc. solvent purification system. Other reagents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification.

#### Characterization

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Varian MR (400 MHz) or a Bruker Avance III (600 MHz). Spectra were internally referenced to the residual protonated solvent peak. Chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) relative to the solvent. Absorption spectra were obtained on a photodiode-array Agilent 8453 UV-visible spectrophotometer using sample solutions in CHCl<sub>3</sub> or thin films made by spin-coating 25 x 25 x 1 mm glass slides using solutions of polymer (1-3 mg/mL) in CHCl<sub>3</sub>/chlorobenzene at a spin rate of 1200 rpm on a Headway Research, Inc. PWM32 spin-coater. Cyclic voltammetry was performed using an e-DAQ e-corder 410 potentiostat with a scanning rate of 50 mV/s. Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> was used as the reference electrode and a platinum wire as the auxiliary electrode. The reported values are referenced to Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> (-4.8 eV vs. vacuum). Polymer solutions in chlorobenzene (1-2 mg/mL) were drop-cast onto a platinum electrode. Polymer analysis was performed in deoxygenated solutions of 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate electrolyte in CH<sub>3</sub>CN under an argon atmosphere. Small molecule analysis were performed by dissolving 1mg/mL of small molecule sample in 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate in DCM and deoxygenated with argon. Gel permeation chromatography (GPC) measurements were performed on a Shimadzu Prominence

UFLC instrument calibrated relative to polystyrene standards and equipped with RI and UV-Vis detectors. Measurements were conducted at 50 °C using CHCl<sub>3</sub> as the eluent with a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min. Thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) measurements were performed with a Netzsch STA449 F1 instrument. TGA were conducted at a heating rate of 20 °C/min under ambient atmosphere. DSC was performed using a heat/cool/heat method at 15 °C/min under nitrogen.

#### **Synthesis**

**4,8-dibromo-2,6-diethoxybenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole)** (**1**). Tetraethylorthocarbonate (3.3 mL, 15.6 mmol), yttrium triflate (140 mg, 0.26 mmol) and 2,5-diamino-3,6-dibromohydroquinone (1.57 g, 5.2 mmol) were added to 20 mL of degassed DMSO and heated to 60 °C for 2 h. The solution was cooled and poured into ice water. The resulting solids were filtered and recrstallized from methanol to yield the product as a beige solid (0.77 g, 36%). mp: 208-213 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  4.70 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 1.53 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.47, 69.43, 89.91, 136.59, 143.57, 163.02. HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>12</sub>H<sub>10</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>, 549.2604; found, 549.2603.

**4,8-dibromo-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole)** (**5).** To a solution of degassed PPSE in chlorobenzene was added trifluoroacetic anhydride (2.8 mL, 20 mmol) and 2,5-diamino-3,6-dibromohydroquinone (1.50 g, 5 mmol). The solution was heated overnight at 90 °C overnight. The solution was cooled and methanol was added and the resulting precipitate was filtered. The solid was recrystallized from methanol/water, filtered, and dried to yield the product (1.05 g, 46%) mp: >260 °C. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  154.02 (q, *J* = 45.2 Hz), 147.58 , 139.28 , 117.10 (t, *J* = 273.1 Hz), 95.74. HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>10</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>, 452.8303; found, 452.8318.

#### General procedure for small molecule synthesis

5mL degassed toluene was added to a 3-neck round bottom flask with a reflux condenser. The 2,6substituted-4,8-dibromobenzobisoxazole (1 eq) and (5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)trimethylstannane (2.2 eq) were added to the flask followed by  $Pd_2(dba)_3$  (0.02 eq), and  $P(o-tol)_3$  (0.08 eq). The solution was further degassed by bubbling argon for another 10 min and then kept under an argon atmosphere and heated to 110 °C for 24 h. The solution was cooled and concentrated by rotary evaporation. The crude prodct was purified by column chromatography.

**2,6-diethoxy-4,8-bis**(**5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo**[**1,2-d:4,5-d']bis**(**oxazole**) (**6**). mp: 85-92 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.03 (d, *J* = 3.7 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 4.75 (d, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.01 – 2.84 (m, 3H), 1.77 (s, 1H), 1.58 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3H), 1.41 (s, 3H), 1.36 – 1.29 (m, 5H), 0.93 – 0.85 (m, 3H). HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>32</sub>H<sub>40</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>S<sub>2</sub>,581.2502; found, 581.2501.

**4,8-bis**(**5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo**[**1,2-d:4,5-d'**]**bis**(**oxazole**) (**7**). mp: 175-180 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d) δ 8.33 (s, 1H), 8.13 (d, J = 3.7 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d, J = 3.8 Hz, 1H), 2.92 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.78 (p, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.49 – 1.39 (m, 2H), 1.38 – 1.31 (m, 4H), 0.95 – 0.84 (m, 3H). HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>28</sub>H<sub>32</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>,493.1978; found, 493.1983.

**2,6-diethyl-4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole)** (**8**). mp: 98-100 °C. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl3) δ 11.35, 14.25, 22.76, 22.81, 29.02, 30.36, 31.77, 31.86, 107.75, 124.75, 128.76, 131.86, 135.36, 144.45, 148.13, 168.31. HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>32</sub>H<sub>40</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>, 549.2604; found, 549.2603.

**4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole)** (9). mp: 167-168 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.15 (d, J = 3.7 Hz, 1H), 6.96 (d, J = 3.8 Hz, 1H), 2.93 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 1.78 (p, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.49 – 1.38 (m, 2H), 1.41 – 1.27 (m, 4H), 0.91 (t, J = 6.6 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.18, 22.74, 29.00, 30.42, 31.73, 31.75, 77.37, 110.85, 115.85, 117.65, 125.40, 129.38, 130.69, 135.56, 144.79, 150.84. HRMS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>30</sub>H<sub>29</sub>F<sub>6</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>, 628.1647; found, 628.1646.

#### 4,8-bis(4-octylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (10).

4,8-dibromo-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (272 mg, 0.6 mmol) and trimethyl(4-octylthiophen-2-yl)stannane (482 mg, 1.3 mmol) were added to a flask, equipped with a reflux condenser, containing 4 mL of degassed toluene, followed by the addition of Pd<sub>2</sub>(dba)<sub>3</sub> (11 mg, 0.012 mmol) and P(*o*-tol)<sub>3</sub> (15 mg, 0.048 mmol). The solution was degassed for another 10 min by bubbling argon and then kept under an argon atmosphere and heated to 110 °C for 24 h. The solution was cooled and then passed through a silica gel plug with chloroform. The solution was concentrated by rotary evaporation. The bright yellow solid was suspended in cold hexanes and then filtered to isolated the product (285 mg, 69%). mp: 175-177 °C. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.16 (d, J = 1.4 Hz, 1H), 7.23 (d, J = 1.2 Hz, 1H), 2.74 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.72 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 1.47 – 1.38 (m, 2H), 1.38 – 1.33 (m, 2H), 1.33 – 1.24 (m, 6H), 0.88 (t, J = 6.9 Hz, 3H). HRMS (APCI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd forC<sub>34</sub>H<sub>38</sub>F<sub>6</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>, 685.2352; found, 685.2359.

#### 4,8-bis(5-bromo-4-octylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-

**d']bis(oxazole)** (**11).** 4,8-dibromo-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (210 mg, 0.3 mmol) was added to 10 mL chloroform followed by NBS (125 mg, 0.7 mmol) all in one portion. The solution was heated to reflux for 3 h and then cooled. The bright yellow solid was filtered to obtain the product (222 mg, 88%). mp: 187-189 °C. HRMS (APCI):  $[M+H]^+$  Calcd forC<sub>34</sub>H<sub>36</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>, 841.0562; found, 841.0584.

# Poly(4-(5-(5-methyl-3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophen-2-yl)-4-octylthiophen-2-yl)-8-(5-methyl-4-octylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole))

(PCF3BBOTT). A 3-neck round bottom flask was equipped with a reflux condenser and placed under an argon atmosphere. To this was added 4mL degassed dry toluene, 4,8-bis(5-bromo-4octylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (11) (126 mg, 0.15 mmol), (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane) (103 mg, 0.15 mmol), Pd<sub>2</sub>dba<sub>3</sub> (2.7 mg, 0.003 mmol), and P(o-tol)<sub>3</sub> (3.6 mg, 0.012 mmol). The solution was heated to 110 °C for 4 d. One drop of trimethylphenyltin was added and this was heated for 2 h, followed by 0.1 mL of iodobenzene which was heated overnight. The solution was cooled and precipitated into methanol. The solid was filtered through a Soxhlet thimble and purified by Soxhlet extraction with methanol, hexanes, and chloroform. The chloroform fraction was concentrated by rotary evaporation to approximately 10 mL and then this was passed through a silica gel plug with chloroform eluent. The eluent was concentrated by rotary evaporation to approximately 10mL and then precipitated into methanol and isolated by filtration with a Büchner funnel. The dark purple solid was dried overnight in a vacuum oven (124 mg, 79% yield). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d) & 8.26 (s, 1H), 2.83 (s, 2H), 2.76 (s, 2H), 1.81 (s, 2H), 1.72 (s, 2H), 1.38 (s, 2H), 1.28 (d, J = 19.3 Hz, 24H), 0.85 (d, J = 23.2 Hz, 6H). GPC (CHCl<sub>3</sub>): M<sub>n</sub> =6244, M<sub>w</sub> = 10643, PDI = 1.70.



Figure 4.7. <sup>1</sup>H NMR of of 4,8-dibromo-2,6-diethoxybenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (1)



Figure 4.8. <sup>13</sup>C NMR of of 4,8-dibromo-2,6-diethoxybenzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (1)



Figure 4.9. <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 4,8-dibromo-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (5).



Figure 4.10. <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (7)



Figure 4.11. <sup>13</sup>C NMR of 4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (7)



**Figure 4.13.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of 2,6-diethyl-4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (8)



**Figure 4.14.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (9)



**Figure 4.15.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of 4,8-bis(5-hexylthiophen-2-yl)-2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzo[1,2-d:4,5-d']bis(oxazole) (9)

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# **CHAPTER 5**

# TUNING THE BANDGAP OF CONJUGATED POLYMERS BY *N*-ACYLATION OF ISOINDIGO CONJUGATED POLYMERS

#### 5.1. Introduction

Conjugated polymers for OPV<sup>1</sup> applications offer the possibility of low-cost, easily fabricated<sup>2</sup> solar cells and much research has focused on how structure-property relationships<sup>3</sup> can modulate the optoelectronic properties to achieve good performance. A low bandgap is necessary for absorption of the abundant visible portion of the solar spectrum and a deep HOMO can provide environmental stability<sup>4</sup> and a high device open circuit voltage<sup>5</sup>. The position of the lowest occupied molecular orbital is also of consequence, as it should be at least 0.3 eV above that of the PCBM acceptor material to drive electron transfer of the exciton formed on the polymer<sup>6</sup> upon absorbance of solar radiation. Synthesis of donor-acceptor copolymers<sup>7</sup> is an effective strategy to establish the bandgap, wherein the LUMO is mainly determined by the acceptor and the HOMO by the donor. Further side group modifications can fine-tune the energy levels, and in an effort to reduce the bandgap by lowering the LUMO, we sought to study the effect of *N*-acylation of isoindigo.

Isoindigo has become a widely studied material for the synthesis of organic transistors<sup>8</sup> and OPVs, due to its facile synthesis and two lactam rings which make it a strong acceptor. It is known to produce low bandgap materials with good charge transport properties<sup>9</sup>. Fluorination of the 7-7' positions of the aromatic core<sup>10</sup> has shown to reduce the LUMO and impart ambipolar transport<sup>11</sup> behavior in transistors. Another way to reduce the LUMO can be through N-substitution.

Isoindigo, as well as other lactam- and imide-containing units, are typically *N*-alkylated to increase solubility, but other groups such as acyl and Boc<sup>12</sup> can be appended to influence the electronics or self-assembly of the unit. *N*-acylation has been demonstrated with dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrole<sup>13</sup>, to lower the HOMO of this relatively strong donor, as well as with acceptors such as benzodipyrrolidone<sup>14</sup> and thieno[3,4-c]pyrrole-4,6-dione<sup>15</sup> which decreased both the HOMO and the LUMO of the resulting polymers when compared to the alkylated versions. Isoindigo itself has even been *N*-acylated<sup>16</sup> for use in conjugated polymer transistors, but has not been studied for OPVs. Herein we report a new synthesis of an *N*-acyloylisoindigo and evaluate it in donor-acceptor copolymers for OPV applications. The energy levels are further tuned by varying the donors with common alkyl vs. acyl isoindigo acceptors.

#### 5.2. Results & Discussion

#### 5.2.1. Synthesis

Synthesis of the isoindigo monomers is outlined in Scheme 5.1. Isoindigo was alkylated by a standard  $S_N2$  reaction of 6,6'-dibromoisoindigo with 2-ethylhexyl bromide to yield monomer **1**. Monomer **2** was synthesized by acylating 6,6'-dibromoisoindigo with 2-ethylhexanoic acid with DCC and catalytic DMAP. Purification was accomplished by simply filtering to remove the DCU by-product, rotary evaporation of the filtrate and isolation of the resulting bright red solid in 82% yield.



Scheme 5.9. Synthesis of isoindigo monomers.

The electron-donating monomers 4,8-bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene (BDT) and 3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene (TT) were chosen due to their strong and moderate electron-donating abilities, respectively. These monomers will further fine-tune the bandgap and establish a wider scope of the effect of *N*-acylation of isoindigo, as their structural differences could also affect polymer solubility, crystallinity, and photovoltaic performance. (4,8-Bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene-2,6-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane) and (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane) were coupled with **1** or **2** via Stille



Scheme 5.10. Synthesis of polymers.

cross-coupling reactions (Scheme 5.2), resulting in BDT-based polymers **P1** and **P2** and thienothiophene-based polymers **P3** and **P4**. Polymer **P1** was reacted for a total of 2 days and purified by Soxhlet extraction with methanol, hexane, and chloroform. Material from the

Polymer	Yield (%) <sup>b</sup>	Mw <sup>a</sup> (kDa)	PDI	$T_d^c$ (°C)
P1	72%	5.3	1.4	376
P2	54%	4.9	1.2	331
P3	42%	5.7	2.1	
P4	34%	1.9	5.9	

**Table 5.5.** Physical properties of isoindigo polymers.

<sup>a</sup>Determined by GPC in THF using polystyrene standards. <sup>b</sup>Degree polymerization calculated from the molecular weight. <sup>c</sup>5% weight loss temperature by TGA in air.

chloroform fraction was isolated in 72% yield. A similar reaction was conducted for **P2**, however, after 1 day the reaction solution had formed a solid film and the polymerization reaction was terminated at that point. Purification was completed in the same manner as the previous polymer, resulting in a 54% yield from the chloroform Soxhlet fraction. Both polymers were soluble in chloroform and 1,2-dichlorobenzene. Reactions to synthesize **P3** and **P4** were both conducted for 3 days, yet resulted in poor yields of 42% and 34%, respectively. Despite the low yield and low molecular weight, they were carried forward for characterization for a comparison to **P1** and **P2** as well as to determine if future optimization of these conditions would be necessary.

#### 5.2.2. Physical properties

The molecular weight of the polymers was analyzed by GPC with chloroform as the solvent. The results, as seen in Table 5.1, show relatively low molecular weights. However, the chromatogram of each polymer also displayed another peak with a low retention time which could indicate aggregation of the polymers. Thus, the reported values might not reflect the true MWs of the polymers due to limitations of the GPC system. Despite the low MW, the polymers likely reached their effective conjugation length, based on the similar optoelectronic properties, *vide infra*, to similar isoindigo polymers<sup>17</sup>.

*N*-acylation of the acceptor unit causes a lower onset of thermal decomposition,  $T_d$ , with that of **P2** being about 40 °C lower than **P1**. However, both temperatures are acceptable for normal operating conditions.

#### 5.2.3. Optical & Electrochemical Properties

The UV-vis spectra of **P1** and **P2** are shown in Figure 5.1 and 5.2, respectively as well as summarized in Table 5.2. In solution, both polymers have a broad absorption within the visible range. The  $\lambda_{max}$  of **P1** is 681 nm while that of **P2** is at 747 nm, demonstrating that the side chain modification resulted in a 66 nm bathochromic shift in absorption. Interestingly, in the film state, the maximum absorption of both polymers is blue-shifted by 61 and 47 nm, respectively. While the GPC result suggested aggregation in solution, the blue-shifted absorption from solution to film might suggest less crystallinity in the solid state. **P1** also shows an increase in absorption in the higher wavelengths. With absorption values blue shifted relative to **P1** and **P4** in solution, there is a 76 nm difference between **P3** and **P4**. **P4** possesses a slight long-wavelength shoulder,

Polymer	λ <sub>max</sub> solution (nm)	λ <sub>max</sub> film (nm)	Abs <sub>onset</sub> (nm)	Eg <sup>opt</sup> (eV) <sup>a</sup>	Eonset <sup>ox</sup> (V) <sup>b</sup>	HOMO <sup>c</sup> (eV)	LUMO <sup>d</sup> (eV)
P1	681	379, 620	754	1.64	0.61	-5.32	-3.68
P2	747	700	872	1.42	0.62	-5.37	-3.95
P3	613	616	732	1.69	0.78	-5.44	-3.71
P4	689	705	885	1.40	0.69	-5.33	-3.93

 Table 5.2
 Optical and electronic properties for P1-P4

<sup>a</sup> Estimated from the optical absorption edge. <sup>a</sup> Onset of potentials (vs Fc). <sup>c</sup> HOMO= -( $E_{onset}^{ox}$  + 4.8) (eV). <sup>d</sup> LUMO = HOMO - Eg<sup>opt</sup>

indicating some aggregation in solution. Despite the differences in solution, the properties in solid state between the two donor monomers become very similar in  $\lambda_{max}$ , with the absorption of the BDT-based polymers being broader overall. Both **P2** and **P4** have nearly identical bandgaps of about 1.4 eV. Therefore, the difference in donor monomers ended up having little effect on the bandgap.



а..

b.



Figure 5.1. UV-Vis spectra (a) in chloroform solution and (b) in film.


Figure 5.23. Cyclic voltammetry

The redox properties of the polymers were determined by cyclic voltammetry, as shown in Figure 5.3. Polymer solutions were drop cast onto platinum electrodes and data was obtained with an Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> reference electrode and nBu<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub>/MeCN electrolyte solution. The thienothiophene-based polymers **P3** and **P4** exhibited quasi-reversible oxidation with onsets of 0.69 V and 0.78 V, from which the HOMO was calculated to be -5.33eV and -5.44 eV,

respectively. They did not show activity in the negative direction up to -1.5 V. Conversely, the BDT-based polymers were reversible upon reduction while being essentially irreversible in the positive direction.

Having determined the HOMO from the CV data, the LUMO was then calculated by subtracting the optical bandgap from the HOMO. The results among all the polymers illustrate how the *N*-acylation selectively tunes the energy levels by reducing the LUMO by more than 0.2 eV while the HOMO remained similar among common donors.

#### **5.2.4.** Photovoltaic properties

Fabrication and analysis of OPV devices containing these polymers is currently underway.

#### **5.3.** Conclusion

In conclusion, isoindigo monomers have been modified into stronger acceptors which are promising for OPV purposes. *N*-acylation selectively lowered the LUMO into the ideal range for efficient electron transfer to PCBM. Meanwhile, a small change in the HOMO level resulted in quite narrow bandgaps. As such, a large red shift of the absorption spectra of the *N*-acyl polymers when compared to their alkyl analogs, places its absorption outside the desired range for OPV applications. Because the LUMO has been selectively tuned, further studies should focus on additional donors to copolymerize with these *N*-acyl isoindigos in an effort to stabilize the HOMO and increase the bandgap such that a complementary absorption profile can be achieved. Optimization of this ideal polymer should then focus on determining the best *N*-acyl chains for solubility and self-assembly with PCBM to maximize OPV performance.

#### 5.4. Acknowledgements

Synthetic contributions include that of Brian Tlach for the (4,8-bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene-2,6-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane) and Brandon Kobilka for the (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane). Benjamin

Hale performed thermal analysis studies. The author performed all other synthesis and wrote the text.

#### 5.5. Experimental

#### Materials

(E)-6,6'-Dibromo-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione<sup>18</sup>, (4,8-bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene-2,6-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane)<sup>19</sup>, (3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane)<sup>18b</sup>, and (9,9-dioctyl-9H-fluorene-2,7-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane)<sup>20</sup> were synthesized according to literature procedures. Toluene was dried using an Innovative Technology, Inc. solvent purification system. Other reagents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification.

#### Characterization

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Varian MR (400 MHz) or a Bruker Avance III (600 MHz). Spectra were internally referenced to the residual protonated solvent peak. Chemical shifts are given in ppm (δ) relative to the solvent. Absorption spectra were obtained on a photodiode-array Agilent 8453 UV-visible spectrophotometer using sample solutions in CHCl<sub>3</sub> or thin films made by spin-coating 25 x 25 x 1 mm glass slides using solutions of polymer (1-3 mg/mL) in CHCl<sub>3</sub>/chlorobenzene at a spin rate of 1200 rpm on a Headway Research, Inc. PWM32 spin-coater. Cyclic voltammetry was performed using an e-DAQ e-corder 410 potentiostat with a scanning rate of 50 mV/s. Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> was used as the reference electrode and a platinum wire as the auxiliary electrode. The reported values are referenced to Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> (-4.8 eV vs. vacuum). Polymer solutions in chlorobenzene (1-2 mg/mL) were drop-cast onto a platinum electrode. Polymer analysis was performed in deoxygenated solutions of 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate electrolyte in CH<sub>3</sub>CN under an argon atmosphere. Small molecule analysis were performed by dissolving 1mg/mL of small molecule sample in 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate in DCM and deoxygenated with argon. Gel permeation chromatography (GPC) measurements were performed on a Shimadzu Prominence UFLC instrument calibrated relative to polystyrene standards and equipped with RI and UV-Vis detectors. Measurements were conducted at 50 °C using CHCl<sub>3</sub> as the eluent with a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min. Thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) measurements were performed with a Netzsch STA449 F1 instrument. TGA were conducted at a heating rate of 20 °C/min under ambient atmosphere. DSC was performed using a heat/cool/heat method at 15 °C/min under nitrogen.

#### Synthesis

(E)-6,6'-dibromo-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexanoyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione (2). 6,6'dibromoisoindigo (0.92 g, 2.2 mmol), 2-ethylhexanoic acid (0.69 g, 4.8 mmol), and a few crystals of DMAP were mixed in 10 mL THF. DCC (0.99 g, 4.8 mmol) was added to the solution and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24 h. The bright red solution was filtered with a Büchner funnel, washed with hexanes and the filtrate was concentrated by rotary evaporation. The red solid was suspended in hexanes and filtered to yield the product (1.20 g, 82%) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.72 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 8.52 (d, *J* = 1.9 Hz, 1H), 7.39 (dd, *J* = 8.8, 1.9 Hz, 1H), 3.85 (p, *J* = 6.7, 6.0 Hz, 1H), 1.82 (ddt, *J* = 10.8, 7.6, 3.6 Hz, 2H), 1.69 – 1.60 (m, 2H), 1.32 (dd, *J* = 7.8, 4.3 Hz, 4H), 0.96 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 3H), 0.89 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  11.73, 14.11, 23.03, 25.34, 29.57, 31.44, 47.38, 119.65, 121.12, 128.08, 128.37, 129.81, 132.38, 142.90, 167.33, 177.47. General polymerization procedure: To an oven dried 3-neck round bottom flask equipped with a condenser was added 5 mL of degassed toluene and placed kept under an argon atmosphere. The isoindigo (0.25)mmol, 1 eq), aryl bisstannane (0.25)monomer mmol. 1 ea). tris(dibenzylideneacetone)dipalladium(0) (4.5 mg, 0.005 mmol), and tris-o-tolyphosphine (6 mg, 0.02 mmol) were added to the flask and the solution was degassed for 10 more minutes by bubbling argon through the solution. The flask was heated to 110 °C for the specified amount of time and then cooled and the solution was precipitated into methanol. The solid was purified by Soxhlet extraction with methanol, hexanes, and chloroform. The chloroform fraction was concentrated to approximately 10mL by rotary evaporation and then the solution was passed through a silica gel plug with chloroform as the eluent. The solvent was reduced to approximately 10mL by rotary evaporation, and then poured into methanol to precipitate the polymer which was collected by filtration with a Büchner funnel. The solid was dried overnight at 40 °C in a vacuum oven.

Poly((E)-6-(4,8-bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-1,1'-bis(2ethylhexyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione) (P1): Heated for 45 h. Yield 173 mg, 72% as a dark blue solid.

Poly((E)-6-(4,8-bis((2-ethylhexyl)oxy)benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-1,1'-bis(2ethylhexanoyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione) (P2): Heated for 21 h. Yield 129 mg, 54% as a dark blue solid.

Poly((E)-6-(3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophen-2-yl)-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione) (P3): Heated for 36 h. Yield 88 mg, 42% as a dark blue solid.
Poly((E)-6-(3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophen-2-yl)-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexanoyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione) (P4): Heated for 36 h. Yield 60 mg, 34% as a dark blue solid.



**Figure 24.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of (E)-6,6'-dibromo-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexanoyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione (**2**)



**Figure 25.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR of (E)-6,6'-dibromo-1,1'-bis(2-ethylhexanoyl)-[3,3'-biindolinylidene]-2,2'-dione (2)

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# **CHAPTER 6**

# ISATIN-BASED SMALL MOLECULES FOR ORGANIC PHOTOVOLTAIC MATERIALS



#### **6.1. Introduction**

The use of small molecules<sup>1</sup> in the active layer of OPV devices<sup>2</sup> is gaining interest to expand the field of study which has typically focused on conjugated polymers. The development of donoracceptor conjugated polymers<sup>3</sup> has proven to be an effective strategy to achieve the low bandgaps needed for OPV applications. Through the development of new polymer structures and device engineering of bulk heterojunction solar cells<sup>4</sup>, high efficiencies have been reported. However, the high standard of reproducibility needed for industrial applications is not always possible with the polymers. Variations in molecular weight<sup>5</sup> and polydispersity among batches can be detrimental to large scale production and device performance. A possible solution to these problems is the use of solution processable donor-acceptor based small molecules<sup>6</sup>, the design of which draws upon previous knowledge gained from their antecedent polymers, as well as push-pull dyes often used for dve-sensitized solar cells<sup>7</sup>. Relatively strong electron accepting units such as benzothiadiazole<sup>8</sup>. diketopyrrollopyrole<sup>9</sup>, isoindigo<sup>10</sup>, and thieno[3,4-c]pyrrole-4,6-dione<sup>11</sup>, are used to increase the electon affinity of the organoelectronic material. Given the demonstrated success of lactam-based acceptors, we sought to develop new A-D-A small molecules which incorporate this motif, utilizing isatin as a new acceptor.

While it is commonly used in conjugated polymers as the precursor to isoindigo, isatin itself has not been studied for organic electronic applications. Its asymmetric structure appears to lend itself well for small molecule engineering which otherwise would not be suitable for polymers. The electron deficient pyrroledione ring can lower the bandgap and its arrangement at the periphery of the molecule will help direct charge transport. Isatin also contains a site for Nalkylation which facilitates solubility and self-assembly. We noted that the electrophilic carbonyl of the isatin moiety provided the opportunity for further functionalization, as it is common throughout the literature to create Schiff bases or Knoevenagel condensation products thereof<sup>12</sup>. The Knoevenagel condensation with malononitrile is often used in the synthesis of high performing conjugated materials for organoelectronic applications. It can increase the electron affinity of the compound, extend conjugation, and promote the quinoid resonance form<sup>13</sup>. Dicyanovinyl thiophene is a common acceptor end unit, and other variations exist such as 2-(1,1dicyanomethylene)rhodanine<sup>14</sup> in small molecules, as well as 3-dicyanovinyl-2-quinolone<sup>15</sup> and similar derivatives for dye sensitized solar cells. With these structures in mind, we designed an A- $\pi$ -D- $\pi$ -A small molecule with N-hexyl isatin as the end group, 3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene as a moderate donor, and thiophene pi-spacers to increase conjugation and planarity. We studied the optoelectronic properties of this molecule as well as those after the Knoevenagel condensation of malononitrile on the isatin moiety.

#### 6.2. Results & Discussion

6.2.1. Synthesis





#### Scheme 6.26. Synthesis of small molecules

Synthesis of the small molecules is illustrated in Scheme 6.1. Compound **3** was synthesized via a Stille cross-coupling reaction with 6-bromo-*N*-hexylisatin **1** and ((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(trimethylstannane), compound **2**. After purifcation by column chromatography, compound **3** was precipitated into methanol and collected by filtration. A portion of compound **3** was used to then synthesize compound **4** under mild conditions. Compound **3** was stirred at room temperature in chloroform with excess malononitrile and a drop of piperidine as a catalyst. Upon the addition of piperidine the reaction solution immediately turned from deep red to dark blue. After completion of the reaction, the product was collected by precipitation into hexanes followed by filtration to yield compound **4** in 87% yield. Both **3** and **4** were soluble in common solvents such as chloroform, chlorobenzene, toluene, and tetrahydrofuran.

#### 6.2.2. Thermal properties

The small molecules had nearly identical  $T_d$  for **3** and **4** at 384 °C and 385 °C, respectively, as shown in Figure 6.1.



Figure 6.1. TGA of small molecules

#### 6.2.3. Optical properties

The optoelectronic properties are summarized in Table 6.1. The UV-vis spectra, shown in Figure 6.1, show the comparison of the solution and film data for both **3** and **4**. Compound 3 forms a bright red solution and compound **4** dissolves as a deep blue solution, as shown in Figure 6.2, due to their absorption properties. Both compounds have similar molar absorptivites with that of **3** being slightly larger at 43,900 M<sup>-1</sup>cm<sup>-1</sup> compared to 42,600 M<sup>-1</sup>cm<sup>-1</sup> for **4**. Compound **3** absorbs mainly from 400 to 600 nm and emits the red portion of the spectrum. Its spectrum features a  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transition peak at 351 nm and a stronger ICT peak at 502 nm. The solution spectrum of **4** exhibits peaks of nearly equal intensity for the  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transition (401 nm) and ICT (616 nm) with a deep valley around 470 nm, which corresponds with the blue emission. Therefore, addition of the dicyanovinylene groups from **3** to **4** overall shifts the absorption by 114 nm, and the large difference is also mostly retained in the film state. The pattern of intensity is largely the same upon shifting from solution to film and both exhibit a bathochromic shift of 49 nm for **3** and 25 nm for

**4**, due to the increase of crystallinity and planarity in the solid state. This results in an onset of 670 nm for **3** that corresponds to an optical bandgap of 1.85 eV. While the  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  peak in the film of **4**, at 417 nm, is slightly larger in intensity, the ICT peak broadens out to an onset value of 827 nm and an bandgap of 1.50 eV, which is 0.35 eV lower upon addition of the dicyanovinyl units. To compare, addition of a dicyanovinyl group to a rhodanine-flanked small molecule resulted in a 0.07 eV bandgap reduction. The large difference here is mostly likely because the dicyanovinyl group is in conjugation with the rest of the molecule so it has an electronic and inductive effect in lowering the bandgap.



Figure 6.2. UV-vis of 3 and 4 in CHCl<sub>3</sub> solution and film.



Figure 6.3. Compounds 3 (left) and 4 (right) in chloroform solution.

Compound	λ <sub>max</sub> solution (nm)	λ <sub>max</sub> film (nm)	Absonset (nm)	εx10 <sup>4</sup> (M <sup>-</sup> <sup>1</sup> cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Eg <sup>opt</sup> (eV) <sup>a</sup>	Eonset <sup>ox</sup> (V) <sup>b</sup>	HOMO <sup>c</sup> (eV)	LUMO <sup>d</sup> (eV)	Eg <sup>EC</sup> (eV) <sup>d</sup>
3	351, 502	382, 551	670	4.39	1.85	0.81	-5.30	-3.45	1.75
4	401, 616	417, 641	827	4.26	1.50	0.83	-5.32	-3.82	1.28

<sup>a</sup> Estimated from the optical absorption edge. <sup>b</sup> Onset of potentials (vs Fc). <sup>c</sup> HOMO= -( $E_{onset}^{ox}$  + 4.8) (eV). <sup>d</sup> LUMO = HOMO -  $E_g^{opt}$ 

#### **6.2.4.** Electrochemical properties

The electronic properties of the molecules were investigated by cyclic voltammetry which measures ionization potential and elctron affinity and can be correlated to the HOMO and LUMO, respectively. The small molecule was dissolved in a  $Bu_4NPF_6$  electrolyte/dichloromethane solution, and measurements were obtained with an  $Ag/Ag^+$  reference cell and platinum wire counter electrode with Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> for adjustment. The normalized data obtained is shown in Figure 6.3, which shows two nearly identical, reversible oxidation processes that occur up to 1.5V. Upon reduction, **3** exhibits one reversible peak up to -1.5 V and the addition of the dicyanovinyl groups

result in 2 reversible reduction peaks. From the onset of reduction and oxidation, the HOMO and LUMO were calculated and shown in Table 1. **3** and **4** have similar HOMOs of -5.30 and -5.32 eV, respectively, which is within an acceptable range for organic photovoltaic devices to ensure oxidative stability as well as a high  $V_{oc}$ . A greater difference among the molecules was observed in the reduction process, with 3 displaying one reversible reduction whereas **4** had two up to the range of -1.5 V. From the onset of reduction the LUMO was calculated to be -3.55 eV for **3** and -4.04 eV for 4.



Figure 6.3. Cyclic voltammetry

#### **6.3.** Conclusion

In conclusion, novel small molecules based on isatin have been developed. A Knoevenagel condensation, resulting in the dicyanovinyl derivative **4** has been shown to possess excellent

optoelectronic properties and is a promising candidate for high performance OPVs. Fabrication of OPV devices is in progress.

#### **6.4.** Acknowledgements

Brandon Kobilka synthesized ((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2diyl))bis(trimethylstannane), whereas the author performed all other synthesis and characterization of the small molecules. Benjamin Hale performed thermal analysis studies. The author wrote the text of this chapter.

#### **6.5. Experimental**

#### Characterization

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on a Varian MR (400 MHz) or a Bruker Avance III (600 MHz). Spectra were internally referenced to the residual protonated solvent peak. Chemical shifts are given in ppm ( $\delta$ ) relative to the solvent. Absorption spectra were obtained on a photodiode-array Agilent 8453 UV-visible spectrophotometer using sample solutions in CHCl<sub>3</sub> or thin films made by spin-coating 25 x 25 x 1 mm glass slides using solutions of polymer (1-3 mg/mL) in CHCl<sub>3</sub>/chlorobenzene at a spin rate of 1200 rpm on a Headway Research, Inc. PWM32 spin-coater. Cyclic voltammetry was performed using an e-DAQ e-corder 410 potentiostat with a scanning rate of 50 mV/s. Ag/Ag<sup>+</sup> was used as the reference electrode and a platinum wire as the auxiliary electrode. The reported values are referenced to Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> (-4.8 eV vs. vacuum). Polymer solutions in chlorobenzene (1-2 mg/mL) were drop-cast onto a platinum electrode. Polymer analysis was performed in deoxygenated solutions of 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate electrolyte in CH<sub>3</sub>CN under an argon atmosphere. Small molecule analysis were performed by dissolving 1mg/mL of small molecule sample in 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate in DCM and deoxygenated with argon. Thermal gravimetric analysis (TGA) and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) measurements were performed with a Netzsch STA449 F1 instrument. TGA were conducted at a heating rate of 20 °C/min under ambient atmosphere.

#### **Materials**

Toluene was dried using an Innovative Technology, Inc. solvent purification system. Other reagents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification. 6-bromo-1-hexylindoline-2,3-dione<sup>16</sup> and ((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl)bis(trimethylstannane)<sup>11a</sup> were synthesized according to literature prodedures.

6,6'-((3,6-Dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(1-hexylindoline-

1H), 3.79 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 2.96 (t, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 1.85 – 1.77 (m, 2H), 1.77 – 1.68 (m, 2H), 1.49 – 1.40 (m, 4H), 1.40 – 1.33 (m, 6H), 1.33-1.23 (m, 6H), 0.91 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H), 0.87 (t, J = 6Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  14.16, 14.27, 22.68, 22.82, 26.74, 27.51, 29.17, 29.38, 29.49, 29.87, 31.54, 32.03, 40.42, 106.41, 116.50, 120.45, 126.40, 126.83, 127.52, 131.59, 133.05, 139.49, 139.50, 142.43, 143.65, 151.98, 158.93, 182.35. HRMS (APCI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd for C<sub>58</sub>H<sub>70</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>S<sub>4</sub>: 987.4291; found 987.4298.

2,2'-(((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(1-hexyl-2-

oxoindoline-6-yl-3-ylidene))dimalononitrile (**4**): 6,6'-(((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl))bis((1-hexylindoline-2,3-dione) (**3**) (100 mg, 0.1 mmol) and malononitrile (33 mg, 0.5 mmol) were dissolved in 10 mL chloroform at room temperature. One drop of piperidine was added and the solution immediately turned from dark red to dark blue. The solution was stirred overnight and concentrated by rotary evaporation. The residue was passed through a silica gel column with chloroform eluent. The product was concentrated by rotary evaporation and then precipitated into hexane and filtered (94 mg, 87%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, Chloroform-d)  $\delta$  8.12 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (dd, J = 8.3, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.25 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 1H), 7.01 (d, J = 1.6 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 2.95 (t, J = 8.4Hz, 2H), 1.81 (p, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.73 (p, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 1.46 (q, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 1.42 – 1.23 (m, 18H), 0.91 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H).



**Figure 27.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 6,6'-((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(1-hexylindoline-2,3-dione) (**3**)



**Figure 28.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 6,6'-((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(1-hexylindoline-2,3-dione) (**3**)



**Figure 29.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR of 2,2'-(((3,6-dioctylthieno[3,2-b]thiophene-2,5-diyl)bis(thiophene-5,2-diyl))bis(1-hexyl-2-oxoindoline-6-yl-3-ylidene))dimalononitrile (**4**)

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# **CHAPTER 7**

## CONCLUSION

#### 7.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research in this dissertation has made progress toward development of efficient OPV materials, in both the synthesis of new building blocks and assembly and characterization of macromolecular structures. An emphasis on structure-property relationships rationally developed novel electron accepting units to expand the array of compounds in this field. Facile yet effective synthetic steps were employed to achieve this, such as acylation, Knoevenagel condensations, and incorporation of trifluoromethyl groups. New reactions were studied with transformations of trithioorthoesters, while other synthetic challenges remain to be conquered in the case of asymmetric BBOs. The development of a 2,6-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzobisoxazole represents the pinnacle of BBO materials to date. Other studies, including acyl isoindigo and isatin-based small molecules, established the framework for future materials that have the potential to achieve excellent device performances.

#### 7.2. Future work

New concepts pioneered in this dissertation lead the way for future research in the field of BBOs and acceptor-donor-acceptor small molecules. Studies of structure-property relationships are again the focus of these ideas toward the development of high-performance organic electronics and the following proposals are original ideas of the author of this dissertation.

#### 7.2.1. Two dimensional BBO as a donor monomer for OPV materials

Thoughtful selection of complementary donors and acceptors is important to tune the optoelectronic properties of OPV materials, and a proven strategy is to copolymerize strong acceptors with weak/medium donors<sup>1</sup>. This ensures a low bandgap and deep HOMO to maximize light absorption and high  $V_{oc}^2$ . BBOs have proven to be weak acceptor<sup>3</sup> components and Chapter 4 presented a new strategy for improving the electron accepting strength of BBOs by 2,6-substitution of trifluoromethyl groups and polymerization through the 4,8-axis with a moderate donor comonomer. The research of BBO cruciforms by Tlach et al<sup>4</sup> demonstrated that a unique feature of BBOs is that the HOMO and LUMO are spatially separated in the molecule with the HOMO controlled by substitution of the 4,8-axis and, likewise, the LUMO controlled by the 2,6-axis. This observation provides insights into how to tune the BBO as an acceptor and, similarly, can also be utilized to make BBOs into electron-rich donor monomers.



Scheme 7.11. Structures of BDT and BBO.

When envisioning how to incorporate BBOs into the family of known donors, a similar synthon emerges: benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene (BDT)<sup>5</sup> (Scheme 7.1). This popular heteroaromatic species is considered to be a donor of medium strength<sup>6</sup> and substitution of the 4,8-positions of BDT is accomplished in the course of its synthesis, typically with either 2-ethylhexyloxy or alkylthienyl<sup>7</sup> groups, though other variations have been studied. The extra thiophene rings increase

the conjugation, hole mobility, and external quantum efficiency of the compound while having little impact on the HOMO level when compared to the alkoxy derivative. A deep HOMO is required for improved device performance, and to that end variations of BDT have been evaluated such as changing the aromatic side groups from thienyl to phenyl<sup>8</sup>, while another approach can involve altering the heteroatoms of the aromatic core.

The BDT-T unit is structurally similar to the BBO cruciforms and small molecules that have been studied in our group, and a direct comparison of the BBO and BDT monomers can be conducted for the purpose of developing BBO for a new donor role. The use of benzobisazoles as donors has been studied by Jenekhe<sup>9</sup> with the sulfur analog, benzobisthiazole (BBTZ), wherein polymerization with diketopyrrolopyrrole resulted in a "weak donor/strong acceptor" copolymer. Variations of the polymer with different acceptors by Seki, et al, further increased the OPV performance<sup>10</sup>.

Our group has studied the optoelectronic effects when varying BBO or BBTZ as acceptors in a conjugated polymer<sup>3c</sup> and shown that it has little impact on the energy levels or OPV performance. However, the smaller radii of the heteroatoms in BBO compared to BBTZ or BDT will significantly increase the planarity of two-dimensional conjugated structures. The dihedral angle between the thiophene side group and BDT core has been calculated to be  $53^{\circ 11}$  and the BBO derivative will reduce steric strain for improved orbital overlap and charge transfer. The lower aromaticity and electron density of the oxazole ring<sup>12</sup> compared to thiophene should make BBO a weaker donor than BDT, with the potential to produce narrow bandgap donor-acceptor copolymers with a lower HOMO and therefore higher  $V_{oc}$ . Controlled experiments should be conducted by synthesizing polymers with variation of the BDT or BBO core and evaluating their physical and optoelectronic properties as well as their performance in solar cells. Fabrication of the BBO core, as shown in Scheme 7.2, requires synthesis of compound **1**, a 4,8-dibromoBBO with 2,6-thienyl substituents which in this case will act as pi spacers in the polymer. The thienyl groups are necessary at this point in the synthesis because, to date, there is no known method of synthesizing a BBO with either stannyl or halide substituents at the 2,6-positions to enable Stille couplings. The insolubility of **1** seemingly limits its synthetic value, yet our group has demonstrated that nevertheless a Stille cross coupling can be performed, resulting in intermediate **2**. Lastly, the flanking thiophenes can be stannylated to afford the final monomer **3** for polymerization through the 2,6-axis. Synthesis of the BDT analog **4** is plentiful throughout the literature.



Scheme 7.12. Synthesis of BBO monomer.

A strong acceptor must be chosen as the comonomer. Among the choices are benzothiadiazole<sup>13</sup>, diketoprrolopyrrole (DPP)<sup>14</sup>, and isoindigo<sup>15</sup>. Benzothiadiazole is eliminated as a contender because it lacks the possibility of adding solubilizing chains. Although DPP can be alkylated, it was not chosen to avoid redundancy of the pi spacers. Flanking thiophene pi spacers

are built-in components of this monomer, and this unit was already present in the donor portion. Therefore, 5,5'-dibromoisoindigo is a practical choice, and it should be alkylated with long branched aliphatic chains (2-hexyldecyl or longer) to ensure solubility of the polymer (Scheme 7.3).



Scheme 7.13. Synthesis of BBO and BDT polymers.

The rational design of this copolymer with a two-dimensional BBO as a weak donor should lead to good efficiences, conclusions which can be drawn by comparison to its BDT counterpart.

# 7.2.2. Introducing benzobisoxazinone as an electron accepting monomer for OPV materials

The Jeffries-EL group has extensively studied BBOs as an electron accepting monomer for organic semiconducting materials. The trithioorthoester condensation method discussed Chapter 2 of this dissertation developed a mild method for synthesizing novel orthoesters and successfully yielded other heterocycles such as benzoxazoles, benzoxazines, and benzoxazinones. The orthoester condensation method developed by J. Mike<sup>16</sup>, et al, has enabled the sythesis of a large family of benzobisoxazole polymers and small molecules, yet BBOs remain to be weak electron acceptors when incorporated into a polymer through their 2,6-axis. In an effort to improve their electron accepting strength, Chapter 4 of this dissertation demonstrates that introduction of

trifluoromethyl groups at the 2,6-positions and polymerization through the alternate 4,8-axis can lower the LUMO of the polymer, leading the way to narrow bandgap materials. Analysis of the similarities between the benzoxazole and benzoxazinone synthesized in Chapter 2 provides inspiration for another approach presented herein. A structural variation related to the BBO core is proposed, introducing a new heterocycle for organoelectronic studies: benzobisoxazinone (BBX).





The BBX is related to benzoxazine in the same way that BBO is related to a benzoxazole, with the heterocyclic ring attached to both sides of the core benzene ring (Figure 7.30), resulting in a symmetric species. While BBO is an aromatic compound, the introduction of the ester into the heterocycle breaks aromaticity but contributes a stronger electron accepting character to the unit. A survey of strong acceptors reveals that carbonyl groups are a common feature, such as in the popular units diketopyrrolopyrrole<sup>14</sup> and isoindigo<sup>15b</sup>. Rather than being a fused tricyclic aromatic like BBO, the BBX can be thought of as a para-phenylene vinylene derivative with linking carbonyl substituents to impart planarity and electronic effects (see Figure 7.31). As such, BBX should attain status as a strong electron acceptor.



**Figure 7.31.** BBX bears structural similarities to other electron acceptors and para-phenylene vinylene.

Synthesis of a BBX has been reported once by Skibo & Gilchrist<sup>17</sup> and a route toward its formation is outlined below in Scheme 7.14, beginning from the commercially available 2-aminoterephthalic acid (**5**). Acylation of **5** followed by nitration and reduction according to literature procedures affords 2,5-diaminoterephthalic acid (**8**) as the core starting material. After that, a one-step condensation is expected to yield the BBX, as demonstrated by compound **10**. Since benzoxazinones are known to be synthesized from acid chlorides<sup>18</sup>, it was chosen for this example to use an acid chloride in a PPSE solution to accomplish the ring closure. This method is often used for the synthesis of BBOs, but an orthoester condensation with catalytic Y(OTf)<sub>3</sub> is also popular and certainly these conditions could also be applied toward the synthesis of a BBX.



Scheme 7.14. Synthesis of BBX monomer.

The condensation **9** with **10** yields a polymerizable pi-acceptor-pi monomer in one step, and the alkyl chains on the thiophene ensure solubility of this large pi system. At this point a donor comonomer can be selected and polymerization can be conducted via an appropriate crosscoupling reaction, such as Stille or Suzuki.



Scheme 7.15. Synthesis of donor acceptor copolymers with DPP, BBO, and BBX acceptors.

To gauge the accepting strength of the new BBX unit, side by side comparisons should also be made with BBO, and perhaps a known strong acceptor bearing some resemblance to the unit, such as the aforementioned DPP or isoindigo (Scheme 7.15). Polymers shall be synthesized with the same donor, such as 4,8-bis(2-ethylhexyloxy)BDT for example, with the only alteration being among the acceptor. Comparison of the bandgap and position of the LUMO will determine the strength of the BBX. Differences in OPV performance can be expected as well, as the morphology of the polymers could be drastically different due to their structural differences, and as a result OPV performance characteristics like J<sub>sc</sub> can vary. With this format it will be possible to identify what molecular properties influence these results to gain understanding of the promising new BBX unit.

7.2.3. Oxazolophthalimide and oxazoloisatin as acceptors for solution-processable small molecule OPV materials



Chapter 6 of this dissertation introduced isatin as an acceptor moiety to the field of organic electronics by studying its properties when incorporated into an acceptor-donor-acceptor small molecule for OPV purposes. Despite the presence of two electron-withdrawing carbonyl groups, the isatin-containing small molecule had a somewhat high, yet respectable, bandgap of 1.85 eV.

Incorporation of a dicyanovinyl group by condensation of malononitrile yielded a new small molecule a greatly reduced bandgap of 1.50 eV. The following details further studies to explore isatin and related molecules as acceptor end groups to understand the role of isomerism upon the properties of the material, and offers novel compounds based on structural variations intended to enhance their semiconducting properties.

#### 7.2.3.1. Isatin vs. phthalimde

Isatin is a constitutional isomer of another electron accepting unit, phthalimide. This imide has been studied for OPV purposes in both polymers<sup>19</sup> and small molecules<sup>19c, 20</sup> and demonstrated to result in polymers with good morpology and charge transport while retaining p-type character which can be lost when the monomer is a related imide compound such as napthalene diimide or perylene diimide<sup>21</sup>. To ascertain the properties of isatin as an end group, it is proposed herein to synthesize acceptor-donor-acceptor small molecules each with either isatin or phthalimide as the acceptor. Though they appear similar, the isomerism is expected to impart different effects on the optoelectronic properties and a structure-property study with these molecules has not been conducted. Given that phthalimide has two carbonyl groups directly bonded to the benzene ring, whereas isatin does not, it could be estimated that phthalimide is a stronger electron acceptor and therefore its small molecule would possess a greater electron affinity.

Another factor to consider is the morphology of the small molecules, as optimization of this parameter has a large impact on the performance of a device. Both isatin and phthalimide can be N-alkylated for solubility, but the orientation of these chains would be different. For isatin the chains would point along the backbone of the small molecule in the same direction as chains on other units of the molecule, while for phthalimide they would be oriented outward from each end of the backbone, resulting in different self assembled formations and different hole mobilities<sup>22</sup>.

#### 7.2.3.2. Oxazolo derivatives

After the initial study on the effects of isomerism to provide baseline information, new molecules based on isatin and phthalimide can be synthesized and evaluated. The proposed structures expand the unit by fusing oxazole rings to the aromatic core of each unit. This electron-deficient aromatic unit is expected to increase the electron affinity of the molecule, while imparting other beneficial effects known to occur from fused ring systems: pi stacking to facilitate charge transport, planarity, and increased molar absorptivity. Connection to the rest of the small molecule through the 2-position of the oxazole ring will also alter the orientation of the acceptor unit in the small molecule in relation to their parent compounds, resulting in altered morphology. Synthesis of each oxazolo derivative is detailed below.

Synthesis of the oxazolophthalimide begins with nitration of 4-hydroxyphthalic acid, as shown in Scheme 7.6. The diacid is ring closed to the imide (**14**) by SOCl<sub>2</sub> and an alkylamine, a standard route to phthalimides. The nitro group is reduced, in this example with sodium dithionite, to yield the main oxazolo precursor **15**. At this point the oxazole ring can be formed with a desired aryl group, shown here as an orthoester condensation, though many other methods of oxazole formation are available in the literature as well. Most likely the Ar- group would be a thiophene pi-spacer which can be brominated and then cross coupled to the donor component of the small molecule.



#### Scheme 7.6. Synthesis of oxazolophthalimide.

The isatin version is synthesized (Scheme 7.7) by first forming a substituted isatin. The Sandmeyer isatin synthesis<sup>23</sup> is performed with 3-aminophenol, chloral hydrate, and hydroxylamine under acidic conditions to yield 6-hydroxylsatin (17). This is then nitrated, *N*-alkylated for solubility and demethylation followed by reduction of the nitro group results in the final aromatic core (20) which can be ring closed in a similar fashion as above to yield the oxazoloisatin 22.



Scheme 7.7. Synthesis of oxazoloisatin.
Characterization of the small molecules containing these new acceptors and their device performance will be conducted in the usual way to determine the effect of this extended conjugation. It is expected that they will display greater efficiencies when compared to their parent compounds from the previous section.

## 7.3. Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge those who have helped to support this achievement. I am thankful for the support of my family through the years by gently encouraging my academic interests. My fiancé, Nick, has done an excellent job helping me deal with the challenges of grad school, and without whom I could not have accomplished this.

I am thankful for the excellent teachers I through the years that fostered a strong interest in science, like my high school chemistry teacher Mr. Hansen whose enthusiasm for science made me aspire to attain this knowledge too. My college professors, Dr. Charles Cornett and Dr. Tim Zauche in particular, helped me understand what it meant to think like a chemist and helped me believe I could succeed in graduate school. A special thank you to my graduate advisor, Dr. Malika Jeffries-EL, for helping me to develop the creativity, independence, and skills of a research chemist. Thank you to the past members of the Jeffries-EL group who were excellent mentors and helped me better understand the scientific content and lab techniques to achieve such research. To James Klimavicz and Kirsten Johnson, my colleagues and friends, I am grateful for your support and for our "group meetings" where many innovative new research ideas were developed.

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## APPENDIX

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Acronym	Description
A-cis-BBO	Asymmetric cis-benzobisoxazole
A-D-A	Acceptor-donor-acceptor
A-trans-BBO	Asymmetric trans-benzobisoxazole
AcOH	Acetic acid
APCI	Atmospheric pressure chemical ionization
BBO	Benzobisoxazole
BBTZ	Benzobithiazole
BBX	Benzobisoxazinone
BDT	Benzo[1,2-b:4,5-b']dithiophene
BHJ	Bulk hetrojunction
CHCl <sub>3</sub>	Chloroform
cis-BBO	cis-benzobisoxazole
CV	Cyclic voltammetry
DAHQ	2,5-diamino-1,4-hydroquinone
DCC	N,N'-Dicyclohexylcarbodiimide
DCU	Dicyclohexylurea
DIO	1,8-diiodooctane
DMAP	4-(Dimethylamino)pyridine
DMF	Dimethyl formamide
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DP	Degree of polymerization
DPP	Diketopyrrolopyrrole

Acronym	Description
DSC	Differential scanning calorimetry
Eg	Bandgap
ESI	Electron-spray ionization
eV	Electron volts
FF	Fill factor
GPC	Gel permeation chromatography
НОМО	Highest occupied molecular orbital
HRMS	High resolution mass spectrometry
ITO	Indium tin oxide
J <sub>sc</sub>	Short circuit current density
LUMO	Lowest unoccupied molecular orbital
m/z	Mass to charge ratio
MeCN	Acetonitrile
$M_n$	Number-averaged molecular weight
MP	Melting point
$M_{\rm w}$	Weight-averaged molecular weight
MW	Molecular weight
NMR	Nuclear magnetic resonance
OFET	Organic field-effect transistor
OLED	Organic light-emitting diode
OPV	Organic photovoltaic
РЗНТ	Poly(3-hexylthiophene)
PCBM	[6,6]-Phenyl-C61-butyric acid methyl ester
PCE	Power conversion efficiency

Acronym	Description
PDI	Polydispersity index
PEDOT:PSS	Poly(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) poly(styrenesulfonate)
PPA	Polyphosphoric acid
PPSE	Polyphosphoric acid trimethylsilyl ester
PPV	Poly(phenylenevinylene)
SCE	Standard calomel electrode
T <sub>d</sub>	Thermal decomposition temperature
TFA	Trifluoroacetic acid
THF	Tetrahydrofuran
TGA	Thermal gravimetric analysis
trans-BBO	trans-benzobisoxazole
V <sub>oc</sub>	Open circuit voltage