Modeling the floating-body effects of fully depleted, partially depleted, and body-grounded SOI MOSFETs

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The review of this paper was arranged by Prof. S. Cristoloveanu

Abstract

This paper describes a unified framework to model the floating-body effects of various SOI MOSFET operation modes, including body-contacted mode, partially depleted mode and fully depleted mode. As the operation mode is dimension and bias dependent, different modes can co-exist in a single SOI technology. A smooth transit from one type of operation mode to another is thus essential and has been included in the model. In addition, the floating-body effects can couple to a number of other SOI specific phenomena such as heating assisted impact ionization, gate tunneling induced dynamic behavior, and operation mode dependent small signal output resistance. A methodology to model the overall SOI MOSFET behavior due to the combination of multiple floating-body related effects will also be described. © 2004 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Keywords: SOI; SOI devices; Circuit simulation; Device model; SPICE; BSIMSOI

1. Introduction

As mainstream bulk CMOS technology scales to sub-100 nm, it becomes more challenging to keep up with the continuous reduction of device dimensions as predicted by the Moore’s Law. Silicon-on-insulator (SOI) technology has emerged as an alternative to bulk CMOS technology to address the performance requirements for sub-100 nm devices. It has been demonstrated that SOI CMOS and its derivatives such as double-gate MOSFETs can provide better performance with lower power consumption, making it very attractive for DRAM and microprocessor applications [1]. A major barrier to fully exploit the performance provided by SOI technology is the immature design tool for designing circuit applications. An important link between SOI technology and application design is a SPICE friendly compact SOI MOSFET model. A lot of efforts have been devoted to SOI modeling and a number of compact models have been made available in the public domain [2–4]. Among them, BSIMSOI developed by Pin Su [4] at UC Berkeley has been chosen by the Compact Modeling Council [5] to be the industrial standard model adopted by major technology providers such as IBM. The selection is not totally based on model accuracy, but the flexible architecture that makes it easy to be adopted during process development even before device data is available [6].

While SOI MOSFETs have a lot of common features in terms of structure and behavior with mainstream bulk CMOS devices, they also have many subtle differences that require particular attention. In particular, the floating-body effect is the key to understand the unique behavior in SOI MOSFETs. In this paper, the
methodology used in BSIMSOI to model the floating-body effect is described. To be concise, only the features unique to SOI devices will be presented, and we assume the readers to be familiar with the formulation of MOSFET model, which can be found in other publications such as [7]. The paper first describes the different device structures available in SOI technology including body-contacted (BC) SOI MOSFET, partially depleted (PD) SOI MOSFET and fully depleted (FD) SOI MOSFETs and how the floating effects in these structures are modeled. While the “structural” classification is conceptually simple, the different device types are actually categorized by operation modes rather than physical device structures. And different operation modes can co-exist in a single technology when dimensions and bias are varied. As a result, a unified floating-body model with smooth transition between different modes of operation is desired. As SOI technology is supposed to be meaningful only in small dimensions and low supply voltages, a number of device phenomena that are ignored in conventional MOSFETs can become significant and couple to the floating-body effects. This includes self-heating assisted impact ionization, gate current induced dynamic effects and frequency dependent performance parameters. A methodology to model these behaviors together with the floating-body effects will also be described.

2. Modeling floating-body effect in different SOI MOSFETs

2.1. Body-contacted MOSFET

BC MOSFETs is widely used in critical analog circuits like phase-lock loop. There are a number of ways to provide body contact, but the most common one resemble the structure shown in Fig. 1. Unlike the substrate contact in bulk device, the body contact in SOI MOSFETs has a high resistance distributed along the width of the device due to the short channel length and thin body [8,9] as shown in the figure. The body resistance ($R_B$) can be calculated by $R_B = R_{body} \times W/L$, where $R_{body}$ is the resistivity per unit silicon film thickness of the body. While there have been proposals to use an effective resistance to approximate the body resistance, the approach cannot produce the gradual turn-on of the kink effect [10]. To fully account for the distributed effect of the body resistance, a wide SOI MOSFET has to be broken down into a number of smaller transistors in parallel as shown in Fig. 1(b) [11]. From a modeling perspective, a mechanism is required to contact the body terminal and turn-off related narrow width effect when decomposing the transistor into narrower ones. This option has been made available in BSIMSOI.

In addition to distributed-body resistance, the extra device area used to provide body contact creates an extra capacitive current path from drain to the body. This results in an enhanced frequency dependent output resistance ($R_{out}$) as shown in Fig. 2. For MOSFETs without floating-body effects, the drain-to-body and body-to-source capacitances behave like a short circuit at high frequency and provide a second conductive path connect the drain-to-source through the body resistance. Hence, a decrease in $R_{out}$ is expected at high frequency. However, the frequency drop appears at around 1 kHz, which is much lower than that required to turn-on the second conduction path through the substrate. A different mechanism is responsible for this observation.

The decrease of $R_{out}$ is attributed to the influence of floating-body effect, which can be explained by the small
The body potential is supposed to be connected to ground by the body contact, but it cannot be completely grounded due to the distributed-body resistance R_B. When a small signal drain voltage v_d is applied, the body potential v_b is modulated, which in turn causes V_T to fluctuate. It provides a mechanism for the drain voltage to modulate V_T which shows up in the R_out characteristics. The small signal model given in Fig. 3 can be used to track the fluctuation of v_b as a result of v_d variation which is then fed back to the calculation of V_T. At low frequency, this drain coupling effect is insignificant when the body resistor R_B can still provide an effective discharging path for the capacitive current from the drain. So, the value of R_B will affect the frequency at which R_out degradation appears. The model has been extensively verified by measurement data from many devices with different dimensions and under various bias conditions.

2.2. Partially depleted SOI MOSFET

While a BC SOI MOSFET can produce bulk MOSFET like I–V characteristics that we are familiar with, the use of substrate contact consumes extra area, and is generally not desirable in circuit applications. PD MOSFETs with floating body are still the most popular technology used in manufacturing ICs in company like IBM. The accurate modeling of PD MOSFETs again has to do with the modeling the impact of floating body on the device behaviors. In BSIMSOI, an equivalent circuit as shown in Fig. 4 is used to calculate the floating-body voltage under the influence of various body currents.

In DC operation, the impact ionization current (I_{ii}) [13] at the drain flows to the body and forward biases the source-to-body diode so that the diode current is equal to the I_{gb}. Thus the floating-body potential is dictated by the I–V characteristic of the source to body diode. The diode voltage between the body and source increases the body voltage (V_B), which in turn causes a reduction in threshold voltage V_T. The change in V_T causes a sudden increase in drain current when the impact ionization becomes significant. It results in the famous kink effect in the drain current versus V_D curve as shown in Fig. 5. This effect can be modeled effectively by monitoring the degree of forward bias of the body-to-source junction as a function of I_{ii}, which is a strong function of V_D. The diode model has to include a number of non-uniform lateral doping effects due to the use of halo (pocket implant) in most of the industrial process. The calculated V_{BS} is used to modify V_T using the body effect model.
equation \( V_T = V_{T0} + \gamma (\sqrt{2\phi_B} - V_{BS} - \sqrt{2\phi_B}) \), which will then be used to calculate the drain current.

During time domain simulation, transient charge and capacitive coupling between all the terminals have to be accounted for in the calculation of the body potential. \( V_{BS} \) is determined by the initial body charge as well as the displacement current resulting from capacitive coupling of the body node to other terminals. For example, when the gate is switched from low to high, it causes an initial increase in the body voltage beyond the equilibrium value. The body voltage will then settle to the equilibrium value governed by a time constant determined by the combined effects of carrier generation/recombination rate, gate-induced-drain-leakage, impact ionization current, gate tunneling current, and body-to-source diode current. Various body leakage and displacement currents that determine the floating-body potential are included in the body voltage model shown in Fig. 4.

From the equivalent circuit, a nodal equation at the body node can be written as:

\[
\frac{dQ_g}{dt} + \frac{dQ_{bg}}{dt} + \frac{dQ_s}{dt} + \frac{dQ_b}{dt} + I_{ii} + I_{idl} + I_{bs} + I_{bd} + I_{gb} = 0
\]

(1)

The SPICE solution to the differential equation at the body node depends not only on the present terminal voltages, but also the initial conditions of the body charge (past history). The behaviors of the body potential with respect to \( V_D \) and \( V_G \) switching from the model and 2-D device simulation are compared and the results are shown in Fig. 6 with an input ramp much fast that the RC time constant of the subcircuit given in Fig. 4. The model can predict the correct behavior of the body potential as a function of both \( V_D \) and \( V_G \) switching.

2.3. Fully depleted SOI MOSFET

In order to suppress short channel effects, the silicon film thickness has to be scaled together with the channel length in advanced device structure. As the silicon thickness becomes thinner than the depletion depth of the body, it operates in the FD mode and the observed floating-body effect decreases. FD mode is not too much different from PD mode except (1) the threshold voltage becomes silicon film thickness and back-gate bias dependent [14]; (2) backgate can be more effectively coupled to the frontgate [15]; (3) close to ideal sub-threshold swing of 60 mV/dec at room temperature [16];
and (4) reduction of kink effect [17]. All these effects can be handled in a unified way using the body-to-source barrier-lowering concept.

The main operational difference between PD mode and FD mode operation is the body-to-source potential barrier at the backgate. In the PD mode at equilibrium, it is the same as the built-in potential of the body-to-source diode as shown in Fig. 7. When the film thickness is reduced and the device starts to operate in the FD mode, the potential barrier between the source and body at the backside is lowered by $\Delta V_{bi}$ as shown in Fig. 7, which is equivalent to the source-to-body diode in the PD mode is forward biased. This lowering also depends on the backgate bias. Using this $\Delta V_{bi}$, the threshold voltage lowering with reference to the PD MOSFET case can be modeled. In practice, the $V_T$ used in compact model is usually extracted rather than calculated and thus is absolute value is not very important in a practical modeling framework. The more important effect is the modulation of $\Delta V_{bi}$ under different terminal biases that affect the device output characteristics. The diode characteristic between the body and source is determined by $\Delta V_{bi}$ as shown in Fig. 8, where $\Delta V_{bi} = 0$ correspond to the PD case. $\Delta V_{bi}$ as a function of silicon film thickness and back gate bias, which can be expressed as

$$
\Delta V_{bi}(\phi_S) = \frac{C_{Si}}{C_{Si} + C_{box}} \left( \phi_S - \frac{qN_{ch}}{2\epsilon_{Si}} r_{Si}^2 + \Delta V_{DIBL} \right) + \eta_s(L_{eff}) \frac{C_{box}}{C_{Si} + C_{box}} (V_{bgs} - V_{fbs})
$$

(2)

where $\phi_S$ is the surface band bending that can be approximated by

$$
\phi_S = \begin{cases} 
\phi_{ON} - \frac{C_{ox}}{C_{ox} + (C_{Si} + C_{int})} (V_T - V_{GS}) & \text{for } V_{GS} < V_T \\
\phi_{ON} & \text{for } V_{GS} \geq V_T 
\end{cases}
$$

(3)

$\phi_{ON}$ in generally can be represented by $2\phi_B$. $\Delta V_{DIBL}$ and $\eta_s$ are correction terms due to drain-induced-barrier-lowering and short channel effects. In BSIMSOI, they are given by

$$
\Delta V_{DIBL} = D_{vdib} \left( \exp \left( -D_{vdib} \frac{L_{eff}}{2l} \right) + 2 \exp \left( -D_{vdib} \frac{L_{eff}}{2l} \right) (V_{bi} - 2\phi_B) \right)
$$

(4)

$$
\eta_{eff}(L_{eff}) = K_{1b} - K_{2b} \left( \exp \left( -D_{vdb} \frac{L_{eff}}{2l} \right) + 2 \exp \left( -D_{vdb} \frac{L_{eff}}{2l} \right) \right)
$$

(5)

The values of the parameters can be referred from the BSIMSOI manual [18]. The first term in the equation represents the frontgate coupling. $N_{ch}$ is the effective channel doping, which may vary with channel length due to non-uniform lateral doping. The second term of

Fig. 7. Body-to-source band diagram at the back side indicating the lowering of built-in potential relative to the value calculated from the body/source PN junction. FD devices has a lower barrier (larger $\Delta V_{bi}$) to begin with and more stable under the influence of external currents.

Fig. 8. The source-to-body diode characteristics as a function of $\Delta V_{bi}$ from a generic SOI NMOSFET with different channel doping of $1 \times 10^{17}$ cm$^{-3}$ with different film thickness to give the corresponding $\Delta V_{bi}$. FD device can accommodate larger current ($I_{BS}$) before a change in $V_{BS}$ is necessary due to its higher initial $\Delta V_{bi}$. As $V_{GS}$ in FD devices varies at a smaller range than in the PD case, the floating-body effect is less significant.
the equation represents the backgate coupling. The minimum value of $\Delta V_{bi}$ is fixed at zero, as it is physically impossible to go negative.

From the expression, FD devices with thin silicon film thickness give higher $\Delta V_{bi}$. As a result, higher impact ionization current from the drain ($I_{bs}$) can be accommodated before it causes a change in $V_{BS}$ as shown in Fig. 8. The reduced sensitivity of $V_{BS}$ to impact ionization current gives a reduced floating-body effect. According to Fig. 8, $\Delta V_{bi}$ can be used to indicate the degree of full depletion of a SOI MOSFET. For FD devices with small $\Delta V_{bi}$, floating body induced phenomena like the kink effects can still be observed.

2.4. Transition for PD and FD including dynamic depletion

State-of-the-art SOI technology requires FD devices with extremely thin silicon film thickness to suppress SCE. At the same time, devices with multiple $V_T$'s are often used to optimize the tradeoff between speed and standby power. It is then possible or even preferred to have devices with different $T_{Si}$ in a process. When combined with the use of pocket implants, it is generally observed that FD and PD devices co-exist in the same technology. Furthermore, the same devices can behave as either PD or FD depends on bias conditions. As observed from the transistor characteristics shown in Fig. 9, the device can operate at PD mode (with subthreshold swing of 102 mV/dec) or FD mode (with subthreshold swing of 67 mV/dec) depends on the backgate bias. A dynamic transition with the gate voltage can also be observed, which is referred as dynamic depletion (DD) [19]. It occurs because at a low gate voltage, the depletion width from front oxide interface to the silicon film is small and the device operates at the PD mode. When the gate voltage increases, the depletion region extends to the back gate and eventually becomes FD [20].

The three modes of operation (FD, PD and DD) can be captured in a unified way by modeling the body-to-source built-in potential lowering using the concept of $\Delta V_{bi}$. First, $\Delta V_{bi}$ is calculated and using Eq. (2) with known $T_{Si}$, $t_{ox}$ and gate voltages. Then, assumes the film thickness is infinite in PD model and calculates the corresponding $V_{BS}$ when the device is operating in PD mode using the equivalent circuit given in Fig. 4. $\Delta V_{bi}$ is then compared with the $V_{BS}$ in PD. If this $V_{BS}$ becomes smaller than $\Delta V_{bi}$, then the body-to-source barrier lowering is mainly caused by $\Delta V_{bi}$ and the FD characteristics of the device dominates. If some mechanism, such as impact ionization at high $V_{DS}$, gives a higher $V_{BS}$, the FD mode with the calculated $\Delta V_{bi}$ can no longer accommodate the currents from the body-to-source as shown in Fig. 8. In this case, the body potential is modulated by the $V_{BS}$ in the PD mode rather than maintaining a constant value at $\Delta V_{bi}$. Therefore, an effective body potential can be formulated by selecting the smaller $V_{BS}$ and $\Delta V_{bi}$ as shown in Fig. 10 to monitor the body potential. The effective $V_{BS}$ concept provides a unified approach to model the characteristics of floating-body effects due to fluctuation of body potential in PD, FD and DD devices.
3. Advanced models for floating-body effects in deep-submicron SOI MOSFETs

In the state-of-the-art SOI process, a number of newly observed behaviors cannot be explained using some commonly known theories. New physics have to be included before these observations can be explained. All these observations, however, are still directly or indirectly linked to the floating-body effect and they are explained below.

3.1. Thermal related effects

The kink effect has been regarded as the signature of PD SOI MOSFET, and it has been attributed to impact ionization induced substrate current. With the reduction of power supply voltage to below 1 V according to the technology scaling roadmap, the impact ionization theory predicts that the kink effect will be eliminated because the carrier acceleration energy becomes less than the bandgap energy of silicon, which is around 1.1 V. However, the kink effect can still be observed in SOI MOSFETs operating at a drain voltage below 1 V. It requires a correction to the existing substrate current model.

The observed kink effect can be explained by the lattice temperature assisted subbandgap impact ionization [21]. In SOI MOSFET, this effect is enhanced due to self-heating. The Arrhenius plot given in Fig. 11 shows the relationship between impaction ionization current (normalized by $I_D$) and the reciprocal of temperature. The required activation energy to cause impact ionization under a given drain voltage is given by $E_a = E_g - qV_D$, and this $E_a$ has to be supplied by the lattice temperature. The smaller the $E_a$, the larger the impact ionization current at a given temperature. Thus, the thermally assisted impact ionization model at $qV_D < E_g$ is given by:

$$\frac{I_{sub}}{I_D} \propto \exp \left[ \frac{-(E_g - qV_D)}{kT} \right]$$

where $I_{sub}$ is the substrate current. The model has been verified by a lot of experimental data and the results are also plotted in Fig. 11, indicating the correct dependents of impact ionization current with respect to temperature. The thermal driven sub-$E_g$ impact ionization model predicts a linear dependent between $\ln(I_{sub})$ and $V_D$. On the other hand, the traditional theory predicts that $\ln(I_{sub})$ depends on $1/V_D$ when the impact ionization is electric-field driven. In some immediate $V_D$, a smooth transition from thermal driven impaction to electric-field driven impact ionization is required. In BSIMSOI, this is modeled by

$$\frac{I_{sub}}{I_D} \propto \exp \left( \frac{V_D}{\beta_0 + \beta_1 V_D + \beta_2 V_D^2} \right)$$

where $\beta_0$, $\beta_1$, $\beta_2$ are fitting parameters. At low temperature region, we observed the experimentally determined activation energy is smaller than the theoretical prediction, which indicates other energy gain mechanisms are involved in the process. One of these mechanisms is

![Fig. 11. Measured $I_{sub}/I_D$ versus reciprocal temperature at (a) $V_{GS} = 0.4$ V and (b) $V_{GS} = 0.8$ V of a SOI NMOSFET. The uncorrected curves are the total measured substrate current while the corrected curves have the temperature dependent junction leakage currents subtracted to display the intrinsic characteristics of the impact ionization current.](image-url)
electron–electron scattering that provide an additional source for carrier heating as proposed in [22–24]. This phenomenon is more prominent when the channel electron concentration is high at large $V_{GS}$. It agrees with the observation that the deviation between experimental data and model prediction at low temperature becomes larger when the gate voltage is increased from 0.4 to 0.8 V as shown in Fig. 11.

3.2. Impact of gate tunneling current on floating-body effect

In bulk MOSFET, the gate tunneling current adds an additional component to the DC currents that in most cases, can be handled by simple superposition of all currents. In a SOI MOSFET, the gate tunneling current contributes a conduction path to the floating body and modulates the body-to-source voltage [25]. As a result, it affects the intrinsic value of the drain-to-source current. The effect have to be modeled by adding the impacts of various gate leakage currents to the floating-body potential, which have been included in the equivalent circuit given in Fig. 4. This body voltage is used to calculate $V_{BS}$ in PD operation, or the equivalent body voltage in the unified PD/FD model.

To investigate the impact of the gate tunneling current on the behavior of a SOI MOSFET, the turn-on responses by a step gate voltage input are simulated with and without the gate tunneling model activated. The results are shown in Fig. 12. Without gate tunneling, body charge decreases due to carrier recombination once inversion layer is formed and shield the gate-to-body coupling. With oxide tunneling, the gate current continues charging the body even after the formation of the inversion layer. The body potential continues to increase until the forward diode current from the body-to-source becomes equal to the gate current. The time to reach this equilibrium depends on the forward bias characteristics of the body-to-source diode. In this particular simulation, the time constant ($t_p$) for PMOSFET to reach steady state is longer than that of NMOSFET ($t_n$) due to smaller recombination current at the junction and net

![Fig. 12. Impact of gate tunneling (IgMod = 1) on the transient behavior of (a) NMOSFET; (b) PMOSFET; and (c) body current. Simulation results without body current (IgMod = 0) are also included for comparison. Simulation parameters are $V_{DD} = 1.5$ V, $t_{ox} = 1.5$ nm, $W = 5 \mu$m.](image-url)
charge injection to the source. Thus, the induced forward body potential for PMOSFET ($\delta V_{bp}$) is larger than that of the NMOSFET ($\delta V_{bn}$).

### 3.3. Modeling output resistance SOI MOSFET at high frequency

At high frequency, it is observed that FD devices have a higher output resistance than PD devices and the drain voltage has a strong influence at the output resistance [26]. The observation can be explained by the schematic shown in Fig. 13. At high frequency, the drain-to-body and source-to-body capacitor behavior like a short circuit and create another current path from the drain-to-source. However, the resistance from the drain-to-source is under the influence of the terminal bias and mode of operations. In particular, the body resistance become very large and can be regarded as infinite in FD mode.

Besides the additional current path, a more important effect is the modulation of body-to-source potential though this new current path. A good representation of the physical structure is the addition of a series RC branch in parallel to $C_D$ in Fig. 13.

### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, a framework to model the floating-body effect of SOI MOSFETs has been described in detail. The approach has been used to formulate the BSIMSOI model, which is the current industrial standard SOI MOSFET model. The behavior of SOI MOSFETs, in a large part, is governed by the floating-body effect. The accurate modeling of the floating-body effect is essential to capture a number of unique characteristics of SOI MOSFETs.

### References


### Acknowledgements

This work was supported by SRC under contract #2000-NJ-795, the DARPA under Air Force contract #F19628-00-C-0002 and Research Grant Council of Hong Kong under NSFC_HKUST27.