Photonic Crystal Analog to Digital Converter A Literature Review, Challenges, and Some Novel Trends

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Abstract— This paper reviews all-optical analog to digital converters (OADCs) based on the photonic crystal. They are nonlinear applications and are used in all-optical data processing systems. They are consisting of one input (i.e., continuous analog optical signal) and two or five outputs (i.e., binary code). Most of these structures have two operation steps. The first one is a nonlinear demultiplexer followed by second stage that has an optical coder. The demultiplexer creates the discrete levels for the continuous optical input signal; then the optical coder generates output bits. There are two techniques to design OADC, ring and cavity resonators. All OADCs structures use the finite difference time domain (FDTD) and plane wave expansion (PWE) analysis methods. The paper presents a comparison between the different designs in the literature for both the ring and cavity resonators using the RSOFT simulator followed by the challenges and some novel trends.

Keywords— Photonic crystal, Optical ADC, ring resonator, Demultiplexer, Optical encoder.

Introduction

Photonic crystals (Ph. Cs.) are good choices to realize all optical components. Photonic crystals are appropriate for implementing optical communications systems, signal processing systems and optical integrated circuits [1]. Processing signals is an important stage in communication networks, it is recommended to have separate digital signals as inputs of the signal processing stage [2], so a conversion process is required to get discrete optical waves from analog ones. Therefore, OADCs are so important to realize the complete optical networks.

In all (OADC), nonlinear materials are essentials, so high input power is needed. The main disadvantages of using nonlinear materials are the narrow range of frequency and the difficulty of integration with optical devices that made of silicon. The nonlinear material is efficient use of data. Nonlinear regression can help us to make an estimate of unknown parameters of the model using small sets of data. Most of these structures have two operation steps. The first one is a nonlinear demultiplexer and followed by the second stage that has an optical coder. The demultiplexer creates the discrete levels for the continuous optical input signal; then the optical coder is generating output bits. The OADC is a device that can convert analog signal to standard binary codes (zero, one) from the optical intensity of the input signal. It has been shown that the optical behavior of (Ph. Cs.) depends considerably on the refractive index of the material structure [3,4].The techniques are ring and cavity resonators to design OADC. The advantages of applying these techniques are decreasing footprint (i.e. total area of the ADC structure) to minimize the leakage loss and improve the maximum sampling rate.

The trend now is converting electronic devices to an optical integrated circuit to improve the bandwidth and the speed of operation. The drawbacks of electronic solutions are: big size, chip-scale integration, high-power consumption, low signal-to-noise ratio, low-speed and narrow operating wavelength bandwidth. We can solve these problems by using the (Ph. Cs.) technology [5]. Photonic crystal (ADC) improves the performance of sampling bit rate [6], transmission efficiency [7], speed and band width compared with electronic component. Moreover, its footprint is decreasing to micro and nano scales. It has low power consumption by using ring resonator [8, 9], cavity that are constructed by nonlinear materials. Many applications are made by using optical circuits, for examples optical filters [10- 23], demultiplexers [24-31], switches [32-36], logic gates [37-47], sensors [48, 50], lasers [51], power splitter [52], encoder [53, 54], routers [55, 56], amplifiers [57- 61], memories [62, 63], couplers [64]. All nonlinear optical structures have low absorption coefficients and fast response times (i.e. picoseconds).

This paper provides in-depth survey for (OADC) based on (Ph. Cs.). An intensive review has been done on the (1x2), (1x4) and (1x5) dimensions. The classification of this study depends on ring and cavity resonators techniques. All the calculations and simulations of the proposed designs have been done using plane wave expansion (PWE) which is used as a numerical method to calculate the photonic band gap and finite-difference time domain (FDTD) [65]. These methods are applied to analyze propagation of electromagnetic wave. A concise elaboration was provided followed by comparison tables.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The operating design techniques, analysis and simulation methods are provided in section 2. In section 3, a

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discussion about the conventional analog to digital converters is given. A survey on the photonic crystal analog to digital converter based on ring resonator with two, four and five outputs followed by cavity resonator are provided in section 4 and 5, respectively. The challenges and some novel trends for the design of such devices were presented in section 6. The conclusion is introduced in section 7 followed by the more relevant reference.

I. OPERATING DESIGN TECHNIQUES, ANALYSIS AND SIMULATION METHODS

The two-dimensional (Ph. Cs.) platform is common in all the proposed structures. Different lattice types (i.e., square and Hexagonal) are used in the pillar scheme (i.e. rod on a background of air) to implement them. ADCs are built with line defect technique which is used in wave guide structure. Cavity and ring resonators techniques are used to improve the results. The resonant wavelength is determined based on the used resonance elements [66]. The change in refractive rod index and the input power can affect also on the resonant wavelength. According to the final design, the operating range of the wavelength will be determined.

A. The Photonic Band Gap

Photonic band gap (PBG) is the range of wavelengths where the light beam cannot propagate [67]. There are two methods of analyzing the (Ph. Cs.). These methods are Plane wave expansion (PWE) and finite difference time domain (FDTD). They are periodic structures, so (PWE) expresses the Eigen modes as a superposition of plane waves. Therefore, an accurate solution has been provided for the calculation of (PBG). The reason of the accurate calculation is the treat of just propagation modes [68]. Figure.1 shows the photonic band diagram representation of the fundamental transverse electric (TE) and transverse magnetic (TM) modes in (Ph. Cs.).



Fig.1 The photonic band diagram in photonic crystal [67].

(Ph. Cs.) is used for calculating the field distribution and transmission spectra and solving Maxwell's equations [69, 70]. The time-dependent representation for these equations can be shown as:

$$\frac{\partial H}{\partial t} = -\frac{1}{\mu} \nabla \times \boldsymbol{E} \tag{1}$$

$$\frac{\partial E}{\partial t} = -\frac{1}{\varepsilon_r} \nabla \times \boldsymbol{H} - \frac{\sigma_r}{\varepsilon_r} \boldsymbol{E}$$
(2)

where ε_r , μ_r , and σ_r are the spatial dependent permittivity, permeability, and conductivity of the material, respectively [71]. The E is the electric field and H is the magnetic field. For all proposed designs, the Gaussian modulated continuous wave (GMCW) signal is used as an input.

The sampling rate is a relation between the number of samples and sampling time. Moreover, the delay time and the switching speed can be calculated from the time response curves. The delay time is the time taken to climb the output power from 0 to 10% of the steady-state output power [72, 73]. The switching speed is the reciprocal of the delay [74].

II. A CONVENTIONAL ANALOG TO DIGITAL CONVERTER

Conventional ADCs can be implemented as shown below. Figure (2) consists of two blocks; the first one is a sampling and quantizing block, while the other is binary encoder block.

In the first block, a nonlinear demultiplexer is used to perform the sampling-quantization process. The second block is used to verify the code via a binary encoder. The optical input signal will be quantized into separate levels; afterwards, two-bit binary numbers are generated for every level as outputs after passes throw the binary encoder block [75].



Fig.2 The block diagram of the conventional two-bit ADC [75].

The input optical analog signal is capable of generating standard binary codes in all (OADCs).

A. Numerical Method and Basic Structure

Analog to digital converters have a quantization block consists of only one input and multi levels output ports. In equation (3), the refractive index of nonlinear materials consists of linear refractive index (n_0) referred to



the usual, weak-field refractive index. The nonlinear refractive Index is (n_2) and (I) is the optical intensity of field. We can use equation (4) to obtain (n_2) and (I) [76]. (n_2) represents the rate at which the refractive index increases with increasing optical intensity [77].

$$n = n_0 + n_2 I \tag{3}$$

$$I = 2n_o \varepsilon_o c |E(\omega)|^2 \tag{4}$$

The total polarization P due to second- and third-order nonlinearities is:

$$P = \varepsilon_o \left(x^{(1)} \cdot E + x^{(2)} \colon E^2 + x^{(3)} \colon E^3 \right)$$

= $P^{(1)} + P^{(2)} + P^{(3)}$ (5)

Where $\chi^{(2)}$ (i.e. that can be neglected as considering the nonlinear material has crystal symmetries), $\chi^{(3)}$, and *E* are the second-order, third-order nonlinear susceptibilities, and the electric field [78], respectively. We considered that the nonlinear material has crystal symmetries, so The Kerr effect is:

$$n_2 = \frac{3\chi^3}{4n_o^2\varepsilon_o c} \tag{6}$$

1

Where c is the speed of light in space. The discrete levels in the presence of light with different power intensities can be generated by the nonlinear ring resonators located inside the waveguides [79].

III. PHOTONIC CRYSTAL ANALOG TO DIGITAL CONVERTER BASED ON RING RESONATOR

OADC is nonlinear application. That based on Kerr effect nonlinear coefficient in photonic crystal. In this section, the ring resonator technique is used to enhance the sampling rate. There are three types of ADC outputs, two, four and five bits.

A. Two Bit Optical Analog to Digital Converter (OADC)

A three ring resonators are used to implement 2-bits OADC [78] as shown in Fig.3. The design has a lattice constant (a) equal to 460 nm, PBG will be at 1390 nm $<\lambda <$ 2010 nm, the refractive index n=2.78, radius of air holes r=0.3a, linear refractive index of n₀=1.5 and Kerr coefficient of n₂=10⁻¹⁶ m²/W. Around 5% of normalized power back is reflected toward the input port. The total footprint is about 806 µm². The maximum sampling rate equals 200 GS/s.

As Mehdizadeh et al. reported in [79], the OADC block is consisting of a nonlinear triplexer and an optical coder. The triplexer has three hexagon ring resonator and it is used to generate discrete levels in the continuous input signal, and the optical coder converts the discrete levels coming from the triplexer to a 2-bit output. The structure has a=548 nm, n=3.46, $n_0=1.4$, $n_2=10^{-14}$ m²/W and r=0.185a as

shown in Fig.4. It used a nonlinear material that made of doped glass.



Fig.3 Two-bit with three ring resonator ADC [78].

The maximum delay time is achieved and equal to 5 ps. It has a large total footprint of 1520 μ m² and the maximum sampling rate is around to 76.9 GS/s. These results are acceptable but not the best results according to all published works.



Fig.4 Triplexer and an optical coder of OADC [79].

This structure has a quantizer (i.e. demultiplexer) that has three nonlinear ring resonators to provide three discrete [80]. The nonlinear material is AlGaAs with $n_2 = 1.5 \times 10^{-14} \text{ m}^2/\text{W}$ and $n_0 = 1.4$. A design has a = 570 nm and $n_{si}=3.4$ have been implemented in the air background. The main gain from this structure that it could able to reduce the loss and improve the transmission efficiency by use four ring resonators made of GaN. The PBG will be at 1360 nm $<\lambda < 2040 \text{ nm}$ with r=0.25a.

The structure of ring resonator ADC is illustrated in Fig.5, which has one input and two output ports. The maximum sampling rate will be about 220 GS/s with

footprint around 777.52 μm^2 and resolution sampling rate is 880 KS.



Fig.5 Optical ADC with three ring resonators [80].

As in [81], The structure of OADC has seven ring resonators. The lattice constant, radius of the Si rods and the refractive index are 595 nm,119 nm and 3.46 respectively as shown in Fig.6. The PBG is round at 1416 nm $<\lambda < 2125$ nm. Doped glass is the nonlinear rods in core section of the resonators. The nonlinear Kerr coefficient and the linear refractive index are 10^{-14} m²/W and 1.4 for these rods. It has large footprint equal to 2016 μ m² with maximum sampling rate equal to 250 GS/s. The fall times and the maximum rise are 0.5 ps and 1.5 ps, respectively.



The (OADC) has two ring resonators and three nonlinear rods which are located inside the waveguide [82]. Two dimensions (Ph.Cs.) is made of linear material

Si_{0.75}Ge_{0.25} with $n_{SiGe}=3.6$ implemented in the air background and $n_0 = 1.4$. The structure has a= 570 nm and r=114 nm. the PBG will be at 1350 nm< λ < 1970 nm. Nonlinear part of structure has three rods whose nonlinear refractive is $n_2=10^{-17}$ m²/W.

At the output of the waveguide, there are green and blue nonlinearrods as shown in Fig.7. The behavior of optical field intensity can be controlled by the three nonlinear rods.

In this structure the sampling rate, footprint and resolution Sampling Rate are 300 GS/s, 240 μ m² and 1200 KS, respectively. This structure has the best results as ADC compared with all other previous structures uses ring resonator technique.



Fig.7 Two ring resonators and nonlinear rods ADC [82].

The ADC as in [83] based on nonlinear material made of doped glass. That has eight ring resonators as shown in Fig.8. The linear refractive index and Kerr coefficient are 1.4 and 10^{-14} m²/W respectively. The maximum delay time is 4 ps.



Fig.8 Two-bit ADC structure [83].



OADC using five nonlinear X-PCRRs with twooutput bits. This structure contents of a three-channel demultiplexer [84]. As shown in Fig.9, a = 600 nm, R = 0.2a, n = 3.46 and the PBG in the wavelength range is 1333 nm $<\lambda<$ 2142 nm. The nonlinear rods were made of doped glass whose n₀ = 1.4 and n₂= 10⁻¹⁴ m²/W. The structure has five ring resonators and six waveguides. The maximum sampling rate is around 125GS/s, maximum time response of 4 ps, and the total footprint of 1785 μ m². These results are suitable but not the best result.



Fig.9 The schematic two-bit OADC [84].

We can do a brief comparison between all OADC in table1. It includes the most remarkable properties for each ring resonator design with one input and two output.

In [82], the results have been improved, the sampling rate of (OADC) is 300GS/s and footprint is 240 μ m² when using two ring resonator and three nonlinear rode. The proposed structure gives good results compared to the previous results.

B. Four Bit Optical Analog to Digital Converter

ADC has one input and four outputs based on successive-like approximation. We use the Concept of successive-like approximation to quantize the signal into m bits of discrete levels; a regular coding system requires 2^{m} -1 discrete quantization levels [85]. So, this method discretes the input signal into only one quantized level [86, 87]. The threshold values are represented by x_i , i=1, 2, 3, 4 as shown in Fig.10.

The structure has octagon-like ring based on a square lattice (Ph. Cs.) in [88]. The structure has r=0.2a, a = 558 nm with relative permittivity of $\varepsilon_r = n_0^2 = (1.6)^2$, and relative permittivity of $\varepsilon_b = n_b^2 = (3.6)^2$ as shown in Fig.11. The nonlinear refractive index of Si-ncs's made by plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition (PECVD) is reported as $n_2 = 10^{-16} \ m^2/W$ and $n_0 = 1.5$ and.

In [89], the octagonal-shape photonic crystal ring resonators (OSPCRRs) is representing bit of OADC. The structure has double rings of OSPCRRs (DR-OSPCRR). The lattice material Si_{0.75}Ge_{0.25}, a= 560 nm, r = 112 nm, and wavelength of band gap 1300 $\leq \lambda \leq 1880$ nm as shown in Fig.12.

Sampling Rate (GS/s)	200	76.9	220	250	300	NA	125
Transfers (%)	60	75	65	90	89	NA	95
Input power range W/µm²	0 - 0.016	0 - 0.1	0-4	0-0.031	0 - 10	0- 4	0 - 2
Radius of the Si rod (nm)	0.3a	0.185a	0.2a	0.2a	0.2a	0.2a	0.2a
Nonlinear refractive index (m ² /w)	10 ⁻¹⁶	10^{-14}	1.5x10 ⁻¹⁷	10^{-14}	10 ⁻¹⁷	10 ⁻¹⁴	10^{-14}
Linear refractive index	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Refractive index	2.78	3.46	3.4	3.46	3.6	NA	3.46
Lattice constant(a) nm	460	548	570	595	570	595	600
Lattice type	hexagon	square	hexagonal	square	square	square	hexagonal
Footprint (μm²)	806	1520	777.52	2016	240	NA	1785
No. of ring resonator	З	5	3	L	2	~	5
No. of wave guide	9	9	8	8	3	NA	9
Wavelength 1550 nm	1390< 🗻 <2010	1245< 👞 <1827	1360< 👞 <2040	1416< 🛰 <2125	1350<<1970	NA	1333 < 👞 <2142
Years	[78, 2017]	[79, 2017]	[80, 2019]	[81, 2020]	[82, 2020]	[83, 2020]	[84, 2021]

 TABLE I.
 COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE PUBLISHED NONLINEAR

 ADC IN THE LITERATURE USING RING RESONATOR



Fig.10 The coding system to represent ADC [85].



Fig.11 The single ring structure [88].



Fig.12 Two-vertical octagon-like rings [89].

C. Five-Bit Optical Analog to Digital Converter

In [90], A five-bit (AOADC) was created by cascading four optical limiters with different switching thresholds. The structure has two nonlinear (Ph. Cs.) ring resonators, the total foot print is about 1796 μ m² and the bit

rate is 500 GS/s. The design has a=587 nm, PBG will be at 1390, n=3.46, r=0.2a, and n_0 =1.4. The nonlinear defects are made of doped glass, the nonlinear Kerr coefficient is 10^{-14} m²/W shown in Fig. 13.



IV. PHOTOIC CRYSTAL ANALOG TO DIGITAL CONVERTER BASED ON RESONATE CAVITIES

The structure has a nonlinear 3-channel demultiplexer, followed by an optical coder [91]. The nonlinear demultiplexer consists of three nonlinear resonant cavities shown in Fig. 14. The structure has a = 725 nm, r =0.26a, n = 3.46 and The PBG region is equal to 1342 nm $\leq \lambda \leq 1611$ nm. One of the cavities can drop the optical beam to output port at suitable values of input signal optical intensity. The maximum sampling around to 52 GS/s and total footprint of the structure is about 924 μm^2 .



Fig.14 ADC with three nonlinear resonant cavities [91].



As Dariush et al. reported in [92], the OADC block consists of two cavity resonators. The structure is based on a = 434 nm, r = 0.3a and n= 3.49 with in GaAs substrate as shown in Fig.15. Using (Ph. Cs.), and nonlinear properties to improve the speed of the structure around 1 TS/s that is much faster than the ADC in previous studies. The total footprint is equal to 42 μ m². 2-D FDTD method was applied. The cavity and nonlinear properties led to gain low-power consumption and high-speed performance.



Fig.15 The structure ADC with two outputs [92].

The ADC has a maximum response time of around 4 ps and a sampling rate of 125 GS/s [93]. ADC is the most suitable device in photonic integrated circuits has minimum leakage loss and small footprint =1440 μ m². As shown in Fig.16, the structure has r = 0.2a, n₀ = 1.4, n₂ = 10⁻¹⁴ m²/W and n= 3.46 surrounded by air. The PBG is 1214 < λ < 1821 nm in the wavelength range.

A Y-branch and three cavities resonators are used to implement 2-bits ADC [94]. The intensities of the optical input play a major role of the optical behavior so, it is important to shift the resonant mode of cavities to lower frequencies. A designed has n=3.46, r = 0.2a and a hexagonal lattice of silicon rods equal to 600 nm as shown in Fig.17. A large frequency band gap is equal to 1348 nm < λ < 2181 nm. The structure has the sampling rate and the total footprint equal to 253 μ m² and 600 GS/s, respectively.

The results are getting better; the structure has a good sampling rate according to the previous structure. The best sampling rate is equal to 1000 GS/s which is the best result of all structures [92]. A brief comparison of all OADC will be collected in table 2. It includes the most remarkable properties for each cavity resonator design.

In the first structure in [91], the results are not good because the sampling rate is very small and has a large footprint. The structure of optical analog to digital converter in [92], has the best result because the structure has 1000 GS/s sampling rate and small area. In [94], the structure has good results too; the sampling rate is equal to 600 GS/s. The recent published paper in the same field can be found in [95].

It has a brief review about some structures exists in literature; but not states some novel trends that will be discussed in the next section.



Fig.17 A Y-branch with three cavities resonators ADC [94].

VII. CHALLENGES AND SOME NOVEL TRENDS

A. Challenges for the Design of Photonic Crystal Analog to Digital Converters

Challenges for the design of photonic crystal A/D converters may include the following points: -

- a) The topological problem that means what the optimum topology that fits the required specifications.
- b) The huge computer costs for simulating such devices.
- c) What sort of optimizer that compromise between the computing cost and the required specifications?

Years	Wavelength 1550 nm	Footprint (µm²)	Lattice type	Lattice constant (a) nm	Refractive index	Linear refractive index	Nonlinear refractive index (m ² /W)	Radius of the Si rod (nm)	Nonlinear rod material	Input power range (W/µm ²⁾	Transfers (%)	Sampling Rate (GS/s)
[91, 2017]	1342 < 🛰 <1611	924	square	725	3.46	1.4	10^{-14}	0.26a		0 -0.1	80	52
[92, 2018]	1542< 👞 <1551	42	hexagonal	434	3.49	2.6	2.7x10 ⁻⁹	0.3a		0 -0.21	NA	1000
[93, 2021]	1214<<1821	1440	square	510	3.46	1.4	10 ⁻¹⁴	0.2a	nonlinear glass	0.06 - 0.24	95	125
[94, 2021]	1348< _<2181	253	hexagonal	600	3.46	1.4	0.01	0.2a	doped glass	0.1-0.35	75	600

 TABLE 2
 COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE PUBLISHED NONLINEAR CAVITY
 RESONATOR ADC IN THE LITERATURE

B. Deep-learning for the Design of Photonic Crystal Analog to DigitalConverters

The ability of using the deep learning technique to design OADC will be studied. This technique will help us to choose the best parameters to be applied on the proposed structures of OADCs. We will get best results and save a lot of time compared with the traditional try and error techniques.

Deep learning method makes a computational mode that contains a lot of layers of processing units have the ability to learn multiple levels of abstraction information given in [96, 97]. The unique advantages of deep learning lie in its ability to analyze huge amount of data, and determine the useful needed information automatically based on historical background and key applications. At the near future deep learning will be essential in photonic design.

Using numerical simulation to optimize nanostructures with large number of possible combinations is computationally costly. For example, we may require long simulation time to compute electromagnetic field profile via (FDTD) methods to analyze the optical transmission response. It could take hours in the computing process, depending on the volume of photonic device [98].

In order to resolve this issue, we could use neural networks (NN) to implement an artificial intelligence integrated optimization process. NN can accelerate the optimization process by reducing the total number of the required simulations [99, 100].

VIII. CONCLUSION

In this paper, all OADCs are nonlinear applications based on Kerr effect in (Ph. Cs.). All types of OADC (1x2), (1x4) and (1x5) dimensions have been studied. The classification has been done based on the two techniques ring and cavity resonators of the proposed designs. A brief elaboration was established, and different remarkable characteristics were investigated. A cavity technique has the best results compared with ring resonators. It has small footprint and max sampling rate. By using the cavity technique, the structure of OADC in [92] has the best results because it has 1000 GS/s sampling rate and has a smallest area. In the ring resonator technique, the best results were at [82] because the sampling rate of OADC is 300 GS/s and its footprint are 240 μ m².

All the structures were built on (2DPh.Cs.), the platform is arranged in an array of rods. The square and hexagonal lattice types have been used for the implementation process. The simulation and analysis are executed by using (PWE) and (FDTD) methods. This review combines the design and evaluating factors, thus bringing a good understanding of the proposed (OADC). In the future, ADC can be proposed with high performance by using deep learning technique.

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