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Physics Colloquium

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What can we learn from photoluminescence about the efficiency of solar cells?

The importance of solar cells for electricity generation is increasing. In 2019 45% of the newly installed power capacity worldwide was from solar cells. Most of these installations are based on Si wafers. However, thin film solar cells have the addittional advantage of a lower carbon footprint. Many semiconducting materials are under investigation for thin film solar cells. The best

efficiencies have been obtained with halide perovskites, chalcopyrites and CdTe. To further develop these and other materials it is essential to understand the interaction between the semiconductor properties of the absorber and the final performance of the solar cell. Important properties, like bulk and interface recombination or electronic defects can be determined by measuring the photoluminescence spectra of the absorber. I will show how the recent advances in chalcopyrite solar cells can be understood using photoluminescence.



