Axial stereogenicity for designing inherently chiral organic semiconductors

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1. Foreword

2. Introduction: electroactive polymers and the “inherent chirality” concept

2.1. Organic semiconductors

2.2. Chiral electroactive materials
  2.2.1. Chiral electrodes and chiral sensors

2.3. “Inherently chiral” electroactive materials

3. Research subject

4. Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

4.1. A family of solution-processable macrocyclic and open-chain oligothiophenes with atropoisomeric scaffolds: structural and electronic features for potential energy applications

4.2. 3,3’-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant elongation strategy
  4.2.1. 2,2’-Bis(2,2’:5’,2”-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂T₆)
  4.2.2. 2,2’-Bis[3’4’-di-n-butyl-(2,2’:5’,2”-terthiophen)-5-yl]-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂T₆Bu)

4.3. 3,3’-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant planarization strategy
  4.3.1. 2,2’-Bis(N-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2’,3’-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂DTP₂)
  4.3.2. 2,2’-Bis(4,4’-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b’]dithiophen-2-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂CPDT₂)

4.4. 3,3’-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant modification strategy
  4.4.1. 2,2’-Bis(2,2’:3’,2”-terthiophen-5’-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂(T₃)₂)
  4.4.2. 2,2’-Bis{bi[2,2’-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]}-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂E₄)
4.4.3. 2,2′-Bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-3,3′-bithianaphthene (BT₂BTD₂) 77

4.5. Summary of 3,3′-bithianaphthene compounds 80
4.5.1. Photophysical 3,3′-bithianaphthene monomers comparisons 80
4.5.2. Electrochemical 3,3′-bithianaphthene monomer comparisons 84

5. Electroactive materials based on 2,2′-biindole scaffold ......................... 86
5.1. The family of the N-alkylderivatives of the 3,3′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1′H-2,2′-biindole 89
5.2. Synthesis of 2,2′-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-N,N′-dihexyl-1H,1′H-2,2′-biindole, IND₂BTD₂Hex 96
5.3. Photophysical 2,2′-biindole monomers comparisons 99

6. Approaches to large scale resolution of racemates............................. 102
6.1. Introduction of new stereogenic elements 102
6.2. Synthesis from enantiopure precursors: 2,2′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-binaphthalene, BN₂T₄ 106

7. Inherently chiral spider-like oligothiophenes..................................... 112

8. Conclusions and Outlook............................................................... 120

9. Experimental Section........................................................................ 123
9.1. General Conditions 123
9.1.1. Materials 125
9.1.2. Codes and abbreviations used 125
9.2. Synthesis 2,2′-dibromo-3,3′-bithianaphthene, BT₂Br₂ (4) 126
9.2.1. Synthesis of 3-bromothianaphthene (2) 126
9.2.2. Synthesis of 3,3′-bithianaphthene (3) 126
9.2.3. Synthesis of 2,2′-dibromo-3,3′-bithianaphthene (4) 127
9.3. Synthesis of 2,2′-bis(2,2′-bithiophene-5-yl)-3,3′-bithianaphthene, BT₂T₄ (1) 128
9.3.1. Synthesis of 5-(tributylstannyl)-2,2′-bithiophene (5) 128
9.3.2. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophene-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1) 128

9.4. Synthesis of stereoisomeric mixture BT$_2$T$_4$ open-chain dimer (6) 129

9.5. Synthesis of BT$_2$T$_4$ cyclic tetramer (7) 130

9.6. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$T$_6$ (10) 130

9.6.1. Synthesis of 2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (8) 131

9.6.2. Synthesis of 5-(trimethylstannyl)-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (9) 131

9.6.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (10) 132

9.7. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen)-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$T$_6$Bu (15) 132

9.7.1. Synthesis of 3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (11) 133

9.7.2. Synthesis of 2,5-dibromo-3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (12) 133

9.7.3. Synthesis of 3',4'-di-n-butyl-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (13) 134

9.7.4. Synthesis of 5-trimethylstannyl-[3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophene)] (14) 134

9.7.5. Synthesis of 2,2'-Bis[3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen)-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (15) 135

9.8. Synthesis of 2,2'-Bis(N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$DTP$_2$ (18) 135


9.8.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (18) 137

9.9. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ (26) 138


9.9.2. Synthesis of 3,3'-thienyl (20) 139

9.9.3. Synthesis of (3,3'-dithiienyl)glycolic acid (21) 139

9.9.4. Synthesis of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene-4-carboxylic acid (22) 140

7
9.9.5. Synthesis of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (23) 140

9.9.6. Synthesis of 4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (24) 141

9.9.7. Synthesis of 2-tributylstanny-4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (25) 141

9.9.8. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (26) 142

9.10. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$ (31) 143

9.10.1. Synthesis of 2-bromo-5-trimethylsilylthiophene (27) 143

9.10.2. Synthesis of 2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (28) 144

9.10.3. Synthesis of 5'-tributylstanny-2,2':3',2''-terthiophene-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (29) 144

9.10.4. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane))-3,3'-bithianaphthene (30) 145

9.10.5. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (31) 146

9.11. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{bi[2,2'-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]}}-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$E$_4$ (38) 146

9.11.1. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (32) 147

9.11.2. Synthesis of 5-tributyltin-2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (33) 147

9.11.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{bi[2,2'-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]}-3,3'-bithianaphthene (34) 148

9.12. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$BTD$_2$ (38) 149


9.12.2. Synthesis of 4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (36) 149

9.12.3. Synthesis of 5-tributylstanny-4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (37) 150

9.12.4. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (38) 151
9.13. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (43) 151


9.13.2. Synthesis of 2,2,2-trifluoro-N-[2-(4-[2,2,2-trifluoro-4-(2-bromoethyl)benzene (47)]biindole, IND2T4Ph (49) 159

9.13.3. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (43) 153

9.13.4. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (43) 153


9.14.1. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bismethyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2T4Me (39a) 154

9.14.2. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bisethyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2T4Et (39b) 155

9.14.3. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(4-propyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2T4Pr (39c) 156

9.14.4. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(4-hexyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2T4Hex (39d) 157

9.14.5. Synthesis of (S)-(1-bromoethyl)benzene (47) 158


9.14.7. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(1-phenylethyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, (R)-IND2T4Ph (49) 159

9.14.8. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(1-phenylethyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, (S)-IND2T4Ph (50) 160

9.15. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2BTD2Hex (48) 161

9.15.1. Synthesis of 4-(5-bromo-thiophen-2-yl)-7-(thiophen-2-yl)benzothiadiazole (44a) 161

9.15.2. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2BTD2 (45) 162

9.15.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND2BTD2Hex (46) 163

9.16. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-binaphthalene, BN2T4 (55) 164
9.16.1. Synthesis of CuCl₂(benzylamine)₂ (57) 164
9.16.2. Synthesis of 2-naphthylamine (51) 164
9.16.3. Synthesis of 1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine (52) 165
9.16.4. Resolution of 1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine with (S)-CSA ((R)-53) 165
9.16.5. Resolution of (S)-(−)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine with (R)-CSA ((S)-53) 166
9.16.6. Synthesis of (R)-(+)′-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-dibromide ((R)-54) 167
9.16.7. Synthesis of (S)-(−)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-dibromide ((S)-54) 168
9.16.8. Synthesis of (R)-2,2′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-binaphthalene, (R)-BN₃T₄ ((R)-55) 169
9.16.9. Synthesis of (S)-2,2′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-binaphthalene, (S)-BN₃T₄ ((S)-55) 169

9.17. Synthesis of 2,2′,4,4′,5,5′-tetra(2-thienyl)-3,3′-bithiophene, T₈₃ (60) 170
9.17.1. Synthesis of 3,3′-bithiophene (58) 170
9.17.2. Synthesis of hexabromo-3,3′-bithiophene (59) 171
9.17.3. Synthesis of 2,2′,4,4′,5,5′-tetra(2-thienyl)-3,3′-bithiophene (60) 172

9.18. General procedure of monomers oxidation 172

10. References ........................................................................................................... 173

11. Appendix – Towards a new low band donor-acceptor copolymer... 177

11.1. Introduction 177

11.2. Results and discussion 178

11.3. Experimental section 189

11.3.1. Materials and methods 189

11.3.2. Synthesis 190

11.3.3. Chemical copolymerization of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1] 191

11.3.4. Electrochemical Experiments 191

11.3.5. In-Situ Spectroelectrochemical Measurements 192

11.3.6. In-Situ Conductance Measurements 193
11.4. References 193

12. Unofficial acknowledgement ................................................................. 195
1. Foreword

Chirality is an intriguing molecular property occurring in different chemical fields: organic chemistry, bioorganic chemistry, biochemistry, medicinal chemistry are just few examples of areas where chirality has a dominant role.

However, chirality is not just a concept confined to chemistry but it is hidden in everyday life on Earth.

The word “chirality” derives from ancient Greek χείρ, “hand”, and it is a property of an object not to be superimposable to its mirror image. From this definition it appears immediately clear the origin of the word “chirality”: chiral molecules are not superimposable to their mirror image, just like hands or feet. In such a case, there are two possible forms of the same object, which are called enantiomers, again from Greek: ἐναντίος meaning “opposite” and μέρος meaning “part”.

Condition for chirality is the absence of second order symmetry elements. A chiral object of whatsoever nature does not possess any symmetry plane (σ), nor inversion centre (i), nor roto-reflexion axes (Sn).

Chirality, however, extends to less intuitive situations: chirality properties characterize the mathematical and geometric world. For example, helices are chiral objects: indeed, helices (like screws and propellers) exist in a clockwise and an anti-clockwise shape which are not superimposable mirror-images. From the helix concept comes also the “right-hand rule”, a widespread easy way to understand vectors, a cornerstone in mathematics and physics.

Furthermore, chirality is not only a theoretical trick to explain mathematical concepts: chirality is fundamental in Nature, from inorganic materials to animals and humans. Crystals, for example,
can be chiral, as Louis Pasteur first noticed and explained: in 1848 he could manually separate crystals of (2\textit{R}, 3\textit{R})- and (2\textit{S}, 3\textit{S})-tartaric acid, demonstrating also that solutions of the two acids had opposite optical rotation. After this historical example, chirality was found a frequently occurring phenomenon in crystals: in Figure 2 it is possible to observe two couples of enantiomeric quartz crystals; in this case, chirality in quartz is related to the nature of bonding between tetrahedral silicate groups, which results in either right- or left-handed helixes running through these network-covalent solids.\footnote{1}

![Figure 2: Two couples of enantiomeric quartz crystals.\footnote{1}](image)

In living organisms, chirality is more frequent and much more important than in minerals: gastropod shells, produced by mollusks, show an elliptical chiral structure. In Figure 3 pictures of two shells are reported, both from \textit{Neptunea} genus, with opposite helix configuration. Anyhow it is funny to notice that Nature clearly selected a preferential structure: the 90% of gastropod shells, indeed, are dextral (or right-handed) ones.

![Figure 3: \textit{Neptunea angulate} shell (left) and \textit{Neptunea despecta} shell (right).\footnote{2}](image)

The biological examples of chirality are countless: tree logs, vines, roots or leaves in some plants are some of the macroscopic right- or left-handed biological structures.

The examples of chirality reported so far underline how this concept is widespread but, back to the issue, chirality involves fundamental consequences especially in chemistry.
The presence of chirality in molecules is strictly related to the presence of at least one stereogenic element: stereogenic elements associated to chirality are generally rigid tridimensional elemental structures, constituted either by a single atom or by a group of atoms, characterized by directional ligands. The permutation of two ligands produces a stereoisomer of the original molecule.\[^3\]

Chemists have individuated the most commonly occurring elemental structures, which are responsible, when present, for the existence of stereoisomers, enantiomers and diastereoisomers, in order to facilitate the description of how the atoms of each stereoisomer are distributed in the space. Sufficient, but not necessary, condition to produce stereoisomers is the presence in the molecule of at least one stereogenic element.

In fact, some organic molecules exist as different stereoisomeric species even though devoid of classical rigid stereogenic elements, like topological stereoisomers\[^4\], and the so called “residual” stereoisomers.\[^5\] Topological stereoisomers, like three-foil knots, oriented catenanes and Moebius strips are characterized by “mechanical” bonds.

The most popular tridimensional stereogenic elements, then capable of generating chirality in a molecule, are the stereogenic center, or stereocenter, the stereogenic axis, the stereogenic plane and the helix.

The enantiomers display identical scalar physical properties (properties devoid of sign), like melting point, boiling point, solubility, \( n_D \) and UV, IR and NMR spectra. They are characterized by identical energies, at least at a macroscopic level.

Two enantiomers display opposite pseudo-scalar physical properties (properties endowed with opposite sign), like optical rotatory power \( (\alpha_D) \), and circular dichroism (electronic CD and vibrational CD). Most importantly, they exhibit different reactivity towards chiral reagents.\[^6\]

Although characterized by the same chemical-physical properties, two enantiomers are not interchangeable when they interact with a chiral environment.

For example, (R)-carvone smells of spearmint oil while (S)-carvone smells of caraway oil; 2-(4-isobutylphenyl)propanoic acid (Figure 4 A), better known as the painkiller ibuprofen, has the desired pharmacological effect in its (S)-configuration, while the (R)-form is nearly inactive.

(R)-Thalidomide is an effective sedative, which has a soothing effect that relieves anxiety and makes the patient drowsy, while the (S)-enantiomer is known to cause teratogenic birth defects called phocomelia, a congenital disorder involving malformation of the limbs (Figure 4 B). In 1960s in Germany, thalidomide could be bought without a prescription and shortly after the drug was sold, 5,000-7,000 infants were born with phocomelia. It was further proposed that the
thalidomide tragedy could have been avoided if the single (R)-enantiomer had been used, but humans interconvert (S)- and (R)-thalidomide enantiomers rapidly by both oral and intravenous assumption.[7]

![Figure 4: A) S- and R-ibuprofen. B) S- and R-thalidomide.](image)

It appears clearly why the choice of the right enantiomer and the evaluation of a possible interconversion between enantiomers are so crucial, especially for drugs: enantiomers are involved in a stereoselective recognition by biological receptors inside and outside cells. The two enantiomers of the same molecules differ in their interactions with targets (generally enzymes, proteins or other chiral molecules) and these differences in interactions lead to differences in the biological activities of the two enantiomers, such as their pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, metabolism, toxicity or immune response.

The aim of this PhD work was to exploit the properties of a class of molecules endowed with axial stereogenicity, and to use them to obtain innovative structures suitable for the realization of enantioselective sensors.

We are aware that the potential inherent to chiral molecules is almost unlimited and that this work represents just a little, but carefully investigated and hopefully innovative step toward a better knowledge of stereoselective phenomena.

“You, Enantiomer
Dual but the same

Wrap the taste of the essence
Meaning of twin existence
Two forms, one path, one soul”

Chirality, Chaos Plague
2. Introduction: electroactive polymers and the “inherent chirality” concept

2.1. Organic semiconductors

Since the discovery of the photoelectric effect by the Italian Pochettino,[8] consisting in the emission of electrons from a material when light is shone over the material, many organic compounds have been studied as multi-functional materials due to their capability of showing different and remarkable properties such as charge transport, light absorption/emission, photoconductivity or electroluminescence.

All the above-mentioned peculiar properties of these materials are certainly related to their chemical structure and can be strictly correlated to the presence of sequences of π-conjugated double bonds along the backbone of the molecule. The π-conjugated orbitals, highly delocalized over the carbons of the backbone, can create the electronic mobility suitable for giving origin to semiconducting properties. Organic semiconductors (OSCs), single-molecule or polymeric semiconductors, show peculiar optical and electronic properties which make them suitable candidates, as the traditional inorganic counterpart, for the preparation of optoelectronic devices. However, the critical and the most widely explored features in OSCs are the HOMO/LUMO energy gap and the possibility of performing chemical or electrochemical doping. The oxidative (p doping) or reductive doping (n doping), which converts OSCs from insulators into reliable conductors, is a key point in the preparation of materials suitable for the above-mentioned applications.

Furthermore, the main advantage of the OSCs is a better processability compared to their inorganic counterparts. In addition, it is possible to customize the chemical structure in order to modify the chemical-physical properties, tuning some characteristics of the material for a specific purpose. A further interesting feature of the OSCs relies on the possibility of casting films at room temperature and on flexible, transparent and cheap substrates.

The potential applications of OSCs were realized and described for the first time in 1976 by Shirakawa, Heeger and MacDiarmid, when a redox potential was applied to an intrinsically insulating organic polymer, the polyacetylene, for the first time.[9] The polyacetylene, considerable as the prototype of polymeric OSCs and the simplest member of the family, is an insulator at the fundamental state (with a conductivity lower than $10^{-5} \, \Omega^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$) but was turned
into a strong charge conductor when it was oxidized by exposure to iodine vapors, acquiring a $10^8$ times greater conductivity, thus attaining values close to those exhibited by silver. This behavior is due to the small ionization potential of the conjugated chain, since the $\pi$ electrons can be relatively easily removed to form a polymeric cation without substantial disruption of the $\sigma$ bonds which are responsible for maintaining the connectivity of the polymeric backbone, as shown in Figure 5.

The origin of the finite energy gap in conjugated systems lies in the alternation of single and double bonds. In the hypothetical case of complete electron delocalization, all the C–C bonds should have an equal length and the extension of the conjugated chain would produce a progressive closure of the energy gap.

Theoretical and experimental work, however, has shown that one-dimensional conjugated systems are unstable;\cite{10} the combined effects of electron-phonon coupling and electron-
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

electron correlation lead to the localization of $\pi$-electrons with the aperture of a gap of at least $\approx 1.50 \text{ eV}$ in the case of a simple polyenic system. Thus, bond length alternation (BLA) represents the major contribution to the magnitude of the energy gap (Scheme 1). Consequently, synthetic approaches leading to structural modifications resulting in a reduced BLA can be expected to produce a decrease in the HOMO-LUMO gap.\textsuperscript{[11]}

The second generation of OSCs was characterized by peculiar structural and chemical modification of the backbone, consisting in the substitution of the all-trans double bond conjugated chain with carbocyclic or heterocyclic aromatic rings. This approach maintained an efficient conjugation in the system and produced a greatly improved stability of the material, making also much more feasible its functionalization.\textsuperscript{[12]} Moreover, the introduction of heteroaromatic systems into the conjugated chain hugely enlarged the panorama of synthetically accessible compounds, allowing an even finer tuning of the optical and of the electronic properties.

The second generation OSCs, which attracted greatest attention by the scientific community, are based on poly-\textit{para}-phenylene (PPP), polyphenylenevinylene (PPV), poly-aniline (PANI) and poly-2,5- thiophene (PT) (Figure 6).

![Figure 6: PPP, PPV, PANI, PT and P3HT general structures.](image)

Unlike polyenes, poly-aromatic systems have a non-degenerate ground state. Thus, contrary to polyenic systems, the two limiting mesomeric forms obtained by the flip of the double bonds are not energetically equivalent (Scheme 2). While the aromatic form is energetically more stable, the quinoid form has a higher energy and a lower energy gap.\textsuperscript{[13]} Obviously, the energy needed to switch from the aromatic to the quinoid form directly depends on the aromatic stabilization resonance energy of the aromatic unit.
This resonance effect tends to confine the \(\pi\)-electrons within the aromatic ring and hence to prevent their delocalization along the whole conjugated chain. Despite the extremely interesting optoelectronic and charge-conduction properties, these polymers generally show a dramatic insolubility in organic solvents, even in the case of low molecular weight oligomers, such as the sexiphenylene and sexithiophene systems.

The aromatic backbone has been functionalized with alkyl chains, ether functions, aromatic rings or polar groups to enhance the solubility and to improve the performances of the final material. Unlike the polyacetylene, the introduction of substituents does not compromise the electric properties of the polymer. In Figure 6 the regioregular poly(3-hexylthiophene) (P3HT) is reported, one of the most popular polymeric OSCs employed as donor materials in bulk-heterojunction solar cells. P3HT represent an example of functionalized polymer, based on the simpler PT, properly modified to improve solubility without modification of the conductive backbone.\[14\]

Also those materials, like polyacetylene, are insulator in their fundamental state but become conductors as a result of a doping process: like anticipated, it can be oxidative, the most commonly used process for polythiophene materials, or reductive. The \(p\)- and the \(n\)-doping process consists respectively in removal or injection of one or two electrons occurring on every three heterocyclic units. In the case of \(p\)-doping, oxidation develops through the subsequent formation of species defined respectively polaron and bipolaron, as schematized in Scheme 3 for the case of PT \(p\)-doping.
The most common polymerization method, used for the preparation of polythiophenes, consists on an oxidative treatment that can be performed by chemical or electrochemical processes. The application of an oxidative process with a chemical oxidant, such as FeCl₃ or (NH₄)₂S₂O₈, leads to the formation of powders with polymeric structure, which behave as current conductors but are, unfortunately, insoluble in most organic solvents. The counteranions A⁻ (Scheme 3) coming from the oxidizing agent (e.g. Cl⁻ and HSO₄⁻/SO₄²⁻ respectively from FeCl₃ and (NH₄)₂S₂O₈) is incorporated in the material to compensate for the "holes" (electronic deficiencies) due to the electronic removal.

As for the preparation of electroactive polymers by electrochemical oxo-reduction processes, the imposition of an oxidative potential sufficient to induce the oxidation of a monomer leads to the deposition of the polymer on the surface of the working electrode. Electrochemically oxidized monomers can be deposited on different electrodes surfaces: Gold, Indium-Tin oxide (ITO), Platinum, glassy carbon (GC) electrodes are suitable for the deposition of electroactive polymeric materials and the choice of different substrates corresponds, often, to very different investigation techniques. However, in any case, the initial polymerization steps, corresponding to the oxidation of the monomer and to the formation of oligomers, may occur in solution rather than on the electrode surface. Moreover, in the electrochemical synthesis, the ions A⁻, which compensate the charge of the holes induced by oxidative doping, are extracted by the supporting electrolyte during the deposition process.
2.2. **Chiral electroactive materials**

Chiral electroactive materials were investigated with the aim of combining in the same material the conduction properties typical for OSCs polymers with the ability to discriminate between the two enantiomers of an analyte.

Chirality is generally introduced in the polyconjugated semiconductors by attaching chiral pendants to the electroactive backbone and the presence of carbon stereocenters invariably characterizes the chiral substituents.

A wide variety of examples that exploit this general approach are known in literature; many natural chiral substituents were selected for the side-chains functionalization and, in particular, sugars, amino acids or artificially synthesized structures designed for this specific application.

The most studied chiral polymers were the thiophene-based ones, derived from the chemical or electrochemical oxidation of thiophene monomers functionalized in position 3\(^{[15][16]}\) or 3,4.\(^{[17]}\)

This approach, however, is not limited to the design of chiral oligo- and poly-thiophenes only (some examples are reported in Figure 7), but other examples concern the possibility of using poly-pyrrole\(^{[18]}\) derivatives (some examples are reported in Figure 8).

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![Figure 7: Literature examples \(^{[15][16][17]}\) of chiral side-chain functionalization for thiophene-based polymers.](image1)

![Figure 8: Literature examples \(^{[18]}\) of chiral side-chain functionalization for pyrrole-based polymers.](image2)

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A general drawback of this kind of chiral electroactive materials is that they give relevant chirality manifestations only under particular experimental conditions. For example, in the case reported in Figure 9, no CD signal is detectable in CHCl\(_3\) solution, while a progressive signal...
increase is observed by subsequent additions of aggregating protic solvents, like methanol, which induce a helical arrangement in a chain aggregation process.\textsuperscript{[17]}

\textbf{Figure 9:} Helical arrangement (top) and CD profile with increasing amounts of MeOH, aggregating protic solvent (bottom)\textsuperscript{[17]}

In addition, a further aspect to be considered is the fact that the alpha positions of the 3-functionalized monomers are constitutionally heterotopic due to the C\textsubscript{1}-symmetry. By consequence the polymers resulting from oxidation of this kind of monomers are not constitutionally regular being constituted by a mixture of different regioisomers, as reported in Figure 10.
In order to obtain ordered materials, it is necessary to perform a regioselective chemical polymerization, generally quite laborious, as reported by Kane-Maguire and co-workers.\(^{[15]}\)

One of the most attractive applications for this kind of materials is in the field of enantioselective sensors,\(^{[19]}\) being well documented that the electrically conductive polymers are able to modify their electrical properties in the presence of organic substances. By consequence, if the conductive material, a film over the sensors surface in this case, is chiral, it may behave differently in the presence of one or of the other enantiomer of a chiral analyte and, possibly giving well-defined different responses.

However, few examples are reported in literature. Outstanding results were obtained when a chiral electroactive compound was employed in the realization of an Organic Field-Effect Transistor (OFET)\(^{[20]}\) shown in Scheme 4. The device is characterized by a double layer able of combine field effects and chiral enantiorecognition. The two layers are constituted by two alkoxyphenylthiophene-based oligomers which differ only in the structure of the side-chains.

The amino acid \(L\)-phenylalanine \(N\)-BOC and \(\beta\)-\(D\)-glucose tetraacetate, responsible for chiral recognition, respectively in PTA and PTG, were chosen as examples of chiral substituents, easily available from natural sources and inexpensive.
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

It was found to be essential to combine the two layers because, when only one was used, it was not possible to observe the so-called amplified current field effects, probably due to the steric hindrance of the substituents on the side-chains.

The response of a transistor based on PTA / PTO structure exposed to vapors of (R)-, (S)-citronellol and their corresponding racemates is reported in Figure 11. It is immediately clear that the response of the two enantiomers is different and, in particular, the S enantiomer shows a higher current intensity than the R one.

Moreover, the response of the transistor (expressed in current intensity ΔI/nA) appears to be linearly correlated with the concentration of the vapors and the racemate shows an intermediate behaviour, as expected, between the two enantiopure profiles. Last but not least, the sensitivity of this technique is remarkable, allowing to measure vapors concentration of 5 ppm and even below. The sensitivity is, of course, crucial for the reliability and the feasibility of the devices and their possible applications.

Another use of these materials, particularly interesting in our research perspectives, is the possibility of preparing modified electrodes. Few examples are known and the results obtained are partially satisfying because, the modified electrodes reported in literature exhibit weak responses towards the enantiomers of the same analyte.
Dong and co-workers,\textsuperscript{[21]} for example, reported the preparation of a chiral electrode obtained coating a GCEs with a film of the modified poly-EDOT reported in Figure 7. The chiral EDOT, nicknamed as (R)- or (S)-PEDTM-PP was electropolymerized in CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2}. In Figure 12 it is possible to observe the response of the electrodes during cyclic voltammetry analysis. As previously mentioned, a small difference, expressed in mV, between the CV profile of the two enantiomers of DOPA could be measured and the CV patterns resulted to be almost superimposable.

![Figure 12: Enantioselective properties of modified electrodes (coated with pEDOT functionalized with chiral pendants). A) (R)-PEDTM-PP B) (S)-PEDTM-PP. CV condition: 0.25 M H\textsubscript{2}SO\textsubscript{4} containing 0.5 mM L-DOPA (dashed line) or D-DOPA (solid line), 50 mV s\textsuperscript{-1} scan rate.\textsuperscript{[21]}](image)

Another drawback of those kind of modified electrodes is that the response towards the enantiomers is generally expressed through the current intensity and not through the absolute potential required for the oxidation of the analyte. This is the case reported by Pleus and Schwientek\textsuperscript{[18]} who electrodeposited on platinum electrodes the chiral pyrrole monomers reported in Figure 8. Different pyrrole 1- or 3-substituted with chiral pendants were employed as starting material for the preparation of chiral sensors that were tested in the presence of the two enantiomers of camphosulfonic acid (CSA) as supporting electrolyte and doping agent. The results obtained are reported in Figure 13 showing that the observed differences in current densities are rather small (below 70 μA).
2.2.1. Chiral electrodes and chiral sensors

Many different approaches were reported in literature to realize chiral electrodes not involving the electrodeposition of chiral monomers. The first approach, suggested first by Muskal and co-workers\textsuperscript{[22]} in 1995, then by Nakanishi\textsuperscript{[23]} and Fu\textsuperscript{[24]} involves the preparation of sensors modified with chiral Self-Assembled Monolayers (SAMs): different selected monolayers (ω-mercaptocarboxylic acid, homocysteine or N-isobutyryl-L-(D)-cysteine) were employed to functionalize electrodes (Hg or Au), leading to remarkable results in terms of enantioselectivity. Furthermore, it was highlighted that nanosized chiral spaces are fundamental as enantioselection sites, suggesting that a strong correlation between structure and organization in the monolayer should be involved.

Specifically, Muskal reported the preparation of a SAM obtained with a carbomethoxy phenylalanine derivative of 6-mercaptohexanoic acid and the properties of a hanging mercury drop electrode (HMDE) modified with D-, L-, and the DL-monolayer were evaluated.

In Figure 14 it is possible to observe the cyclic voltammograms of Ru(NH\textsubscript{3})\textsubscript{6}\textsuperscript{3+} on a modified electrode with the enantiopure SAMs and racemic SAM versus the unmodified electrode: it is evident that the rate of electron transfer of the redox couple is substantially decreased by the presence of a monolayer and, specifically, the electron transfer resulted to be less intense on HMDE modified with heterochiral monolayer with respect to homochiral monolayer.
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

This behaviour was considered attributable to the organization of the layers on the electrode surfaces.

Figure 14: Cyclic voltammetry of 1 mM Ru(NH$_3$)$_6^{3+}$ in 0.1 M acetate buffer (pH 6.0) on a bare HMDE (1) and on mercury drops modified with pure enantiomers: D (2), L (3), and racemic mixture (4), 100 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate.$^{[22]}$

On the other hand, Nakanishi’s group tested the enantioselectivity of SAMs obtained from homocysteine (Hcy) deposited on the (111)-oriented gold surface, and they tested, after the chiral SAMs deposition, the redox behavior of 3,4-dihydroxyphenylalanine (DOPA) in acidic solution. The shape of the voltammograms, reported in Figure 15 was found to depend upon the combination of the chirality of L- and D-Hcy and that of L- and D-DOPA: it is possible to observe that the difference between the oxidation and reduction potential for the DOPA enantiomers on the different SAMs reach values between 50 and 100 mV.

Figure 15: A) Cyclic voltammograms for redox reactions of DOPA at gold electrodes modified with L-Hcy; B) Cyclic voltammograms for redox reactions of DOPA at gold electrodes modified with D-Hcy; both in aqueous 0.25 M H$_2$SO$_4$. Red and blue curves represent the voltammograms for D- and L-DOPA, respectively. C) CV profile obtained with bare gold electrode for L-DOPA. 5 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate.$^{[23]}$
A third example considering the use of SAM for the enantiorecognition of chiral analytes comes from the research of Fu: a sensor, obtained from \(N\)-isobutyryl-L-(D)-cysteine (NIBC) enantiomers self-assembled monolayer was tested for recognizing the enantiomers of DOPA. In Figure 16 it is reported that L- and D-DOPA display identical CV profiles on a bare gold electrode, while there is a variation in the current intensity when a chiral SAM electrode is employed. The effect of some interferences was also investigated and the enantiorecognition ability was tested also in the presence of ascorbic acid or tyrosine, since electrochemically closely related to DOPA. The tests performed with interferences give satisfying results.

Figure 16: Cyclic voltammetries for redox reactions of 5 mM L-DOPA (a) and D-DOPA (b) in 0.25 M \(H_2SO_4\), 100 mV s\(^{-1}\) scan rate. A) Bare gold electrode, B) L-NIBC-Au functionalized, C) D-NIBC-Au functionalized.\(^{[24]}\)

Chiral electrodes can be also prepared by functionalization with chiral molecular layers: Nie\(^{[25]}\) and co-workers prepared a chiral electrochemical sensor via cysteic acid modified glassy carbon electrode that resulted to be suitable for discriminating tyrosine enantiomers. While previous research was focused on the evaluation of different peak current density between two enantiomers, the Authors suggested a new method the main goal of which consisted in the fact that enantioselection evaluation is based on the difference between the oxidation potential peaks. In Figure 17 different voltammograms are reported: on CyA-GC modified electrodes, the oxidative potential of the enantiomers of tyrosine shifted negatively, and the peak current increased; in particular, the difference of the peak potential \(\Delta E_p(E_D - E_L)\) was found to be 40 mV.
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

Another approach, elaborated by Kuhn\cite{26}\cite{27} and co-workers, consists in the preparation of molecularly imprinted chiral mesoporous metal surfaces; these materials were obtained by electrochemical reduction of platinum salts in the presence of a liquid crystal phase and chiral molecules (L- and D-DOPA or R- and S-mandelic acid): the matrix obtained through this procedure showed outstanding enantiodiscrimination ability between the enantiomers of the imprinted molecules and it was used as chiral electrode. The general structure of the chiral-imprinted mesoporous platinum film is depicted in Figure 18 A: Pt is deposited on an Au electrode surface in the presence of a liquid crystal and the chiral template; surfactant and DOPA are then removed by accurate washing with large amounts of water, leading to an alignment of the mesopores in a hexagonal lattice. The electrodes were studied by differential pulse voltammetry (DPV) and the profile obtained with chiral electrode imprinted with L-DOPA is shown in Figure 18 B.

Figure 18: A) Mesoporous chiral matrix structure. B) DPV of chiral mesoporous platinum electrode imprinted with L-DOPA using a L-DOPA/PtCl$_6$$^2$ ratio of 1/25. CV conditions: 50 mM HCl containing 4 mM using L- or D- DOPA as probes.\cite{26}
A high difference between the electro-oxidation current densities was observed due to the different interaction between the enantiomers of DOPA with the chiral mesoporous surface.

The apparent drawback of this approach is that this kind of electrodes are able to discriminate, at least in theory, only the enantiomers employed to imprint them.

2.3. “Inherently chiral” electroactive materials

In the research group where the present PhD thesis was developed, a new and original design of chiral electroactive materials was developed a few years ago. A new class of chiral oligo- and poly-heterocycles, completely different from those reported in the literature, was designed: they are prepared by oxidation of monomers displaying the general structure shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: General structure of the class of inherently chiral OSCs monomers.

The guidelines followed for designing this kind of monomers are based on the following rationale:

- Chirality results from a tailored torsion internally generated along the conducting oligothiophene backbone. From here comes the appellative of inherently chiral monomers, since the stereogenic element, namely the stereogenic axis, is not external to the conjugated chain, like in the previously mentioned literature examples, but it is part of it. Thus, the same conjugated system responsible for the optical and electrochemical properties of the materials is also responsible for molecular chirality and, by consequence, the chiroptical and enantiorecognition properties of the material are strictly correlated to the electrochemical ones.
The stereogenic core responsible for chirality (a stereogenic axis) is an atropisomeric bithiophene or bipyrole system. Both sub-classes have been deeply investigated and many new members of both of them have been prepared in our laboratories.

The stereogenic unit is tailored to conjugatively interconnect the two bithienyl termini, as indicated by the red conjugated sequence in the formula reported above.

A node is located on the interanular bond: conjugative transmission between the two halves is not precluded, while polymeric network tridimensionality is important for amplifying the electro-optical performances.

The symmetry of the monomers is $C_2$. Thus, the thiophene $\alpha$-positions involved in the oxidative polymerization are homotopic and full regioregularity of the polymers is guaranteed.

The first intrinsically non-planar, dissymmetrical multithiophene-based monomer, the 2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophene-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, nicknamed BT$_2$T$_4$, was synthesized few years ago.$^{[28]}$ Its general structure is reported in Figure 20: the red circle represents the central node associated to a calculated torsional angle of 70°, proving the non-planarity of the structure. The green small squares represent the two terminal $\alpha$-position, the only suitable positions for chemical or electrochemical oxidation. Their homotopism guarantees full regioregularity of the oxidation products.

![Figure 20: Structural formula of BT$_2$T$_4$ and dihedral angle between the two halves.$^{[28]}$](image)

The stereogenic axis coincides with the 3,3’ interanular bond; the hindered rotation along this axis produces a couple of atropisomeric enantiomers (Figure 21). Discrete Fourier Transform (DFT) calculations suggested a racemization barrier value of 43 kcal mol$^{-1}$, confirming that the interconversion of the antipodes can develop at very high temperature, higher than 100 °C.
BT$_2$T$_4$ was prepared starting from the commercially available thianaphthene, according to the strategy reported in Scheme 5. The thianaphthene was brominated in 3-position with liquid bromine in a chloroform solution and in the presence of sodium acetate; the 3-bromothianaphthene (2) was then converted into the 3,3'-bithianaphthene (3) through a copper dichloride mediated anion coupling performed at -90°C. The 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (4), which is the key intermediate, was obtained through a bromination reaction in the presence of potassium acetate in a 55% yield.

The final step is the palladium (0) catalyzed Stille-reaction between the 2,2'-dibromo derivative 4 and the 5-tributylstannyl-2,2'-bithiophene (5), obtained, in turn, by reaction of the anion of the 2,2'-bithiophene with tributylstannyl chloride (Scheme 6).
Thanks to this rather simple reaction scheme, BT$_2$T$_4$ could be obtained in satisfactory overall yields and its properties deeply investigated.

The monomer was electrochemical and spectroelectrochemical characterized: the material resulting from the electro-polymerization of 1 as racemate revealed very interesting properties. For example, it worked excellently as an efficient cross-linker and three-dimensional promoter when used as a co-monomer in an electropolymerization processes, essential step for the preparation of a Molecularily Imprinted Polymer (MIP), or even exceptionally performing as an element of recognition in a piezomicrogravimetric chemosensor, highly selective for the melamine and its derivatives.

After complete characterization of the racemate, compound 1, was resolved into antipodes by semi-preparative HPLC on a chiral stationary phase and the enantiopure monomers were characterized from a chiroptical point of view. In Figure 22 it is possible to observe the chiral HPLC chromatogram simultaneously monitored by UV and CD detectors: the two peaks, corresponding to the two enantiomers are perfectly separated (about 4 minutes difference in the retention times).

After the separation of the two enantiomers, their CD spectra were recorded and correlated to the one calculated for the S-enantiomer in order to assign the absolute configuration of the stereogenic axis (Figure 22 B). The first eluted monomer resulted to be the (S)-(+-)1.

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Figure 22: A) Analytical resolution of racemate of BT$_2$T$_4$ through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CPS: Chiralpak IB-3 (250 x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ : EtOH= 100 : 5 : 0.2, T= 25 °C, detector UV (black) and CD at 360 nm. B) CD spectra or (S)-BT$_2$T$_4$ (green), (R)-BT$_2$T$_4$ (red) and calculated CD for (S)-BT$_2$T$_4$ (dotted black).
Last but not least, the very high values of the specific rotatory power of the antipodes, about 1000, demonstrate the importance of the presence of the inherently disymmetric chromophore.\[29\]

The \( R \) enantiomer of the \( \text{BT}_2\text{T}_4 \) was, chemically oxidized with \( \text{FeCl}_3 \) in order to have larger quantities of material available for the complete characterization and applicative experimentation of the enantiopure oligomers.\[30\] The standard procedure involved the addition of a diluted solution of enantiopure 1 in chloroform to a slurry of the oxidant and the subsequent reduction of the oxidized material with hydrazine hydrate. The obtained material was then extracted with a Soxhlet apparatus and analyzed through MALDI spectrometry (Figure 23). In the spectrum, the presence of the dimer, as the main product, of the trimer in relevant amounts and of superior oligomers is evident. However, a surprising result was found when the oligomeric mixture was submitted to a high-resolution LDI analysis: all the oligomers were found to be cyclic and not open structures.

![Figure 23: MALDI analysis of chemically oxidized \( \text{BT}_2\text{T}_4 \).][30]

In Figure 24 is also possible to observe the structures, obtained by DFT calculation in the general gradient approximation, of two and three-member rings formed by oxidation of the \( R \) enantiomer. In both cases the symmetry is \( D_3 \): the dimer appears as an ellipse with a 6 Å minor axis length, while the trimer is an equilateral triangle with an 18 Å geometrical height.
The symmetry of these structures was confirmed by $^1$H-NMR analysis (Figure 25) of pure (R,R)-1 and (R,R,R)-1, isolated in a pure state after an accurate column chromatography. In fact, the spectra of both oligomers show only four coupled signals for the benzothiophene ring and four doublet related to the protons in β position of the two thiophene units connected to the thianaphtene ring.
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

The enantiopure oligomers obtained from the chemical oxidation were isolated and characterized by a chiroptical point of view. Remarkable, in the chiral photoluminescence spectra, are the high values of g comparable to those of helicenes.

Prompted from the outstanding features of compound 1, the enantiopure monomers were electropolymerized on electrode surfaces in order to produce chiral electrodes and the enantiorecognition ability of electrodes coated with the enantiopure films were tested. In Figure 26 it is possible to observe the results obtained with gold electrodes coated with thin films of oligo-(S)-1 or oligo-(R)-1: the tests were performed using commercially available (R)-(+)- and (S)-(-)-N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylethylamine as chiral probes.
Introduction: electroactive polymers and “inherent chirality” concept

Figure 26: A) Enantiorecognition tests on enantiopure oligo-(S)-1 (deposited form thirty-six cycles, 0.5 mM monomer solution in CH₂Cl₂ + TBA PF₆, 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate) with the enantiopure probes (8 Mm N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylylethylamine in BMIMPF₆). B) Enantiorecognition tests on enantiopure oligo-(R)-1 (deposited form thirty-six cycles, 0.5 mM monomer solution in CH₂Cl₂ + TBA PF₆, 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate) with the enantiopure probes (8 Mm N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylylethylamine in BMIMPF₆). C) Enantiorecognition tests with enantiopure oligo-(S)-1 and the racemic probe. [31]

It is easy to observe that the electrodes coated with the enantiomeric oligo-(R)-1 and oligo-(S)-1 films display an outstanding, perfectly specular, enantiodiscrimination ability towards the probes, with a formal oxidative potential difference of about 100 mV. Furthermore, the probe showing the lower oxidative potential on the (S)-film was oxidized at a higher potential on the (R)-film and vice versa. The same tests were performed on dopamine, MeDOPA and ofloxacin and the enantiopure films equally gave impressive enantiorecognition responses for all the compounds used as chiral probes. [31]

The wide-range enantioselectivity of the inherently chiral electrode surfaces was fully confirmed also in aqueous media since large peak potential differences were obtained for a series of chiral DOPA-related molecules (Figure 27). Moreover, interesting modulating effects on enantiodiscrimination can be observed as a function of both molecular structure and pH. [32]
Figure 27: Cyclic voltammetry characteristics of DOPA enantiomers (4 mM in H2O + 50 mM HCl). (a) Bare GC electrode. (b) and (c) GC electrode coated with (S)-BT2T4 and (R)-BT2T4 film, respectively. \[^{[31]}\]
3. **Research subject**

The present PhD research was focused on the following topics:

- Application of the racemic oligomers derived from the oxidation of BT₂T₄ as donor materials in bulk-heterojunction solar cells.
- Design of new inherently chiral compounds based on the modification of the structure of BT₂T₄. Three different modification strategies were carried out starting from the general structure of compound 1:
  1. side chains elongation, in order to achieve, after a chemical or electrochemical oxidation, cyclic oligomers with bigger cavity;
  2. side chains planarization by blocking the two thiophene moieties in a rigid fused heterocyclic system, in order to achieve compounds where the rigidity and higher conjugation extent should improve optoelectronic properties;
  3. side chain modification by introducing different substituents on the bithiophene units, in order to tune electronic and steric properties.
- Design of new inherently chiral compounds based on the modification of the structure of 2,2′-biindole atropisomeric scaffold.
- Design of enantiopure inherently chiral monomers accessible through a stereoselective strategy.
- Design of inherently chiral monomers based on the spider-like oligothiophene structures.
4. Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

4.1. A family of solution-processable macrocyclic and open-chain oligothiophenes with atropoisomeric scaffolds: structural and electronic features for potential energy applications

Conjugated oligothiophene macrocycles are interesting objects especially because they idealize conducting polymers without ends; in addition, they are more soluble in organic solvents compared to their linear counterparts offering electroactive cavities of different sizes for selective inclusion of guest molecules.[33]

A preliminary investigation on the possible application as donors of the cyclic oligomers derived from chemical oxidation of racemic BT₂T₄ in bulk-heterojunction solar cells was carried out in order to verify if they were suitable to interact with fullerene derivatives as electron-acceptor counterparts.

The whole racemic materials and the stereoisomers distribution for the different macrocycles resulting from the FeCl₃ chemical oxidation of racemic 1 were preliminarily investigated.[34]

Careful column chromatography of the crude orange-red solid obtained after Soxhlet extraction allowed to isolate cyclic dimers and trimers in a pure state. The fractions were analyzed by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase and the corresponding chromatograms are reported in Figure 28.

![Figure 28: A) Analytical resolution of the racemate of cyclodimers of 1 through HPLC on a CSP in comparison with enantiopure samples of (S,S)-1 (green) and (R,R)-1 (red). B) Analytical HPLC separation on an achiral SP of the two racemic diastereoisomers of cyclotrimer and confirmation that the first eluted product is the homochiral racemate by comparison with authentic enantiopure samples. C) Analytical resolution of the racemate of the cyclotrimer of 1 by HPLC on a CSP in comparison with enantiopure samples of (S,S,S)-1 (green) and (R,R,R)-1 (red).[34]](image)
The cyclodimeric compound 1 is exclusively constituted by the racemate and unexpectedly, no evidence of the formation of the *meso* diastereoisomer was observed. At the same time, analysis of the cyclotrimer on an achiral stationary phase demonstrated that it is constituted by a 4:1 mixture of the two expected diastereoisomeric racemates.

In order to rationalize the observed behaviour during the formation of cyclic dimers and trimers, the preferred conformation of the radical cations of the open chains dimer and trimer was calculated. The dimeric \((R,R)-1\) and \((S,S)-1\) stereoisomers display the two bithiophene terminals oriented on the same side, thus prone to undergo the intramolecular oxidative coupling while, for the \((R,S)-meso\) the two bithiophene units extend along opposite directions penalizing the intramolecular coupling affording the *meso* cyclodimer. The \((R,S)-meso\), for this reason, is more prone to give a further coupling with monomer of 1 than to close to give the *meso* macrocycle. An open-chain trimer is formed in which the bithiophene extremities are again oriented in a favorable conformation for undergoing ring closure.

![Preferred calculated conformation for the radical cation of \((R,R)\)-dimer (a), of \((R,S)\)-dimer (b) and \((R,R,S)\)-trimer (c).](image)

Furthermore, the synthesis of an open-chain dimer was planned, in order to compare the properties of closed and open structures as donors towards fullerene derivatives in bulk heterojunction solar cells.

Compound 6 was obtained through a CuCl\(_2\) promoted oxidative coupling of the anion of compound 1 generated, in turn, by treatment of the latter with \(n\)-BuLi.
The HPLC analysis of 6 on a chiral stationary phase, reported in Figure 31, shows that the open-chain dimeric product is constituted by a mixture of the two enantiomers and the meso stereoisomer in a statistical 1:2:1 ratio (undetected by the circular dichroism detector).

The availability of open dimers allowed us to accede to the macrocyclic tetramer 7, that was synthesized through a FeCl₃-promoted cyclodimerization process of compound 6. The process implies coupling between the α position of the terminal thiophenes and, as expected, it produced oligomers with an even number of BT₂T₄ subunits: the undesired oligomers were removed by several cycles of selective precipitation in n-hexane. A mixture of stereoisomeric macrocyclic tetramers was obtained, in this way, in a good purity state.
Compounds 6 and 7 were analytically and chemically characterized and the observed properties were compared with those of cyclic dimers and trimers: photophysical and electrochemical characterization were also performed. The stereoisomeric mixtures of open chain 6 and cyclic dimers and trimers have been tested separately as donors in bulk-heterojunction solar cells in combination with commonly used acceptors, namely C_{60} and PCBM. The results of the preliminary experiments gave very interesting indications on the more promising strategies to adopt in the design of these kind of materials. Firstly, a preliminary theoretical investigation was performed in order to acquire elements useful to rationalize the experimental results: The C_{60} and PCBM fullerenes and the stereoisomers of 6, cyclodimer and cyclotrimer oligothiophenes have been separately modeled. Calculations showed that both C_{60} and PCBM fit in cyclodimer and cyclotrimer and 6 cavities giving stable dyads.

Figure 32: Molecular orbitals (red-blue: HOMO; orange-cyan: LUMO) of oligothiophene : fullerene adducts.\cite{34}
The interaction mainly involves the HOMO and the LUMO of each couple (Figure 32) and the coordination enthalpy of the dyad increases with the number of thiophenes facing the fullerene surface. Due to their lower rigidity, the open homologues 6 seem to embrace more effectively the C$_{60}$/PCBM molecule resulting in a stronger stabilization of the dyad with respect to the cyclic dimer.

Photovoltaic properties of cyclic oligothiophene: PCBM and cyclic oligothiophene: C$_{60}$, in solution-deposited by spin coating inverted solar cells, were investigated. The best PCEs (Power Conversion Efficiency) were obtained from inverted solar cells fabricated by first spin-coating at a spinning speed of 1000 rpm. The active layer (~ 40 nm) was spin-coated at 1000 rpm for 90 s on top of ZnO from solution in o-dichlorobenzene heated at 60 °C. The total concentration of the active components was 20 mg mL$^{-1}$. 10 nm of MoO$_3$ buffer layer anode was deposited in a thermal evaporator in a vacuum of 106 mbar and the devices were completed by the deposition of 100 nm of silver. Each substrate contained three cells, with a nominal active area of 25 mm$^2$ each. Thermal annealing (150°C, 30 min) was found to be ineffective on the PCBM-based device performances and it has not been tested on C$_{60}$-based devices. The thicknesses of the active layer were generally around 40 nm, although its high roughness makes them difficult to measure. The J–V curves of the polymer solar cells under AM 1.5 illumination at 100 mW cm$^2$ are shown in Figure 33.

![Figure 33: J–V curves of oligothiophene:fullerene blends. Top: PCBM; bottom: C$_{60}$. Profiles for: cyclodimers (blue line), cyclotrimers (red line), open-chain dimers (green line) and mixture (purple line).][34]
Among the oligomers, the mixture of stereoisomeric trimers exhibits the highest PCE (about 1.1%), while that of cyclic dimers leads to a PCE of about 0.3%. The PCE value of the oligomer mixture is in between. EQE (External Quantum Efficiency) curves substantially confirm the trend. Interestingly, the devices based on the open-chain dimer 6 demonstrated both PCE and EQE greater than those shown by cyclic dimer. However, cyclic trimers, that can allocate fullerenes without fully incorporating them, gave interesting results in terms of PCE, while promising results in terms of efficiencies have been achieved in the case of the tweeze-shape dimeric system, although composed 50% by the meso form displaying the zig-zag geometry mentioned above. Even though the conclusive performances could not be compared with those reported in the specialized literature, this work gave useful indications for the design of promising architectures of thiophene-based cyclic and open-chain macromolecules employable as active layers in solar cell devices.\[34\]

### 4.2. 3,3′-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant elongation strategy

#### 4.2.1. 2,2′-Bis(2,2′:5′,2″-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3′-bithianaphthene (BT$_2$T$_4$)

As anticipated, the first strategy planned to modify the general structure of compound 1 was to extend the bithiophene side chains in order to obtain cyclic oligomers of different size. The simplest structural change was to add a thiophene unit to the bithiophene pendant and the synthesis of compound 10, nicknamed BT$_2$T$_4$, was planned according to the strategy followed for the preparation of BT$_2$T$_4$. The terthiophene 8, the key intermediate to accede to the corresponding stannyl derivative 9, was obtained in good yields through a Pd(0) catalyzed Stille reaction between two equivalents of 5-tributylstannyl-thiophene and one equivalent of 2,5-dibromo-thiophene, both commercially available. Compound 8 was then treated with n-BuLi and the generated anion was reacted with trimethylstannyl chloride to give the (2,2′:5′,2″-terthiophen-5-yl)trimethylstannane 9, which was coupled with the 2,2′-dibromo-3,3′-bithianaphthene 4 through a palladium(0) mediated Stille coupling, in refluxing toluene solution.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

The racemate was oxidized in dry CHCl₃ by adding the monomer to a FeCl₃ slurry, according to the procedure described in Chapter 2 for BT₄T₄. The residue, obtained after Soxhlet extraction with THF, was analyzed by HR-MALDI and the corresponding spectrum is reported in Figure 34. It is evident that the residue was constituted exclusively by dimers and trimers.

![MALDI analysis of chemically oxidized BT₄T₄. Oligomers extracted by THF.](image)

However, to better investigate the expected formation of superior oligomers, the residue obtained after THF extraction was further extracted with chlorobenzene in the Soxhlet apparatus and the soluble portion was submitted again to HR-LDI analysis. The spectrum demonstrated the presence of higher molecular weight oligomers insoluble in THF, such as cyclic tetramers and pentamers.

In Figure 35, the experimental (A) and the theoretical (B) patterns of the peaks corresponding to cyclic dimers and trimers are reported. It is evident that fitting is very good. In addition, the absence of linear oligomers was demonstrated.
The electrochemical characterization of BT₃T₆ shows a narrower HOMO-LUMO gap than BT₂T₄, with both first oxidation and first reduction processes taking place at more advantageous potentials compared with BT₂T₄ behaviour, so that the reduction process becomes visible even in CH₂Cl₂ on account of the improved conjugation. In addition to the first oxidation peak, which, according to its broad shape, could correspond to the merging oxidation peaks of the two slightly interacting homotopic moieties, a second oxidation process can be observed, which could be consistent with the longer conjugated chains in the two moieties.
Several experiments have been carried out in order to electrochemically oligomerize monomer 10 and to investigate the properties of the resulting conductive film (ec-p(BT₂T₆)). The electrodeposition of monomer 10 was performed under potentiodynamic (Figure 37 A and B) conditions, using a 1 mM solution of the monomer in CH₂Cl₂ + 0.1 M TBAPF₆, scan rate = 50 mVs⁻¹, on gold electrode (for CV analysis), ITO electrode (for CV and spectroelectrochemical analysis) and 10 μm interdigitated platinum electrodes (for in-situ conductance analysis). The growth of the oligomeric films on the electrodes was very regular, especially on the gold electrode, due to the high affinity of the sulfur atoms for the electrode surface.

Taking advantage of the equipment available in the laboratories of prof. Ludwigs at the Universität zu Stuttgart, the oligomeric films were characterized not only by voltammetry, but
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithiophene scaffold

also through spectroelectrochemical and *in-situ* Conductance (ISC) analysis. In Figure 38 A and B the anodic cyclovoltammery and the related UV spectrometric analysis are reported.

**Figure 38:** *In-situ* spectroelectrochemistry of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_6$): A) Cyclic voltammogram of the reversible p-doping of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_6$) (deposited on ITO electrode from five cycles, 1 mM monomer solution in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + TBA PF$_6$, 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate), ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ solution, 20 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate. B) Vis/NIR spectra of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_6$) recorded during the forward scan (oxidation) in the p-doping process: profiles for neutral (red), radical cation (green) and dication species (blue) are highlighted.

Spectroelectrochemical analysis is extremely useful to investigate the UV behaviour of an oligothiophene oligomeric film while a cyclic potential is applied to it. According to this technique, the different UV profiles corresponding to the different species formed during the oxidation process can be highlighted. The neutral film absorption band is characterized by a $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ of 468 nm, whereas the radical cation, transient and ephemeral species, exhibited a $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ at 761 nm, that shifts to 1021 nm in the transition between radical cation and dication. From both the CV profile and the spectroelectrochemical data it was possible to deduce that the radical cation is prompt to be further oxidized to dication: on one hand, the distance between the two peaks (of about 150 mV) and, on the other hand, the height of the band at 761 nm and the contemporary presence of the band at 1021 nm are clear evidence of the formation of the dicationic species.

*In-situ* conductance measurements confirmed the conductivity of the charged species, both dication and anion, but also the instability of the radical cation.

As for the anion generated on the same film, it was found to be more conductive than the dication but the most interesting behaviour can be observed in the anodic window. A very low conductivity was observed for the radical cation, as highlighted by the small shoulder observable in the backward scan (proved by a sudden change in the slope of the conductivity profile).
After the characterization of the racemate, compound 10 was resolved through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. The chromatogram corresponding to the analytical separation of the enantiomers of 10 is reported in Figure 40.

Even though the analytical separation was very good, some scale-up difficulties were found moving from analytic to semi-preparative scale. Scaling up the conditions employed for the analytical resolution, the formation of an unknown peak with lower elution time was observed; reinjection of the material corresponding to the unknown peak, the unexpected correspondence with the racemate of BT₂T₆ was found (Figure 41 A). This behaviour was ascribed to the formation of aggregates due to the high amount of material injected in the semi-preparative resolution process. The problem was solved by modifying the ratio of the solvents constituting the eluent without changing the immobilized phase: the amount of CH₂Cl₂ was reduced and the
ethanol percentage was increased. Under these experimental conditions, the separation was satisfactory and the resolution could be scaled up to semi-preparative level (Figure 41 B).

The absolute configuration of the stereogenic axis was assigned by comparison of the Electronic Circular Dichroism (ECD) spectra, reported in Figure 42, with those recorded for BT$_2$T$_6$, attributing to the first eluted enantiomer, exhibiting positive Cotton effect, the S configuration. The $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ of the latter, measured in chloroform, was found to be +1368°, and -1582° for the second eluted (R) antipode.

The chiroptical characterization of the enantiomers of BT$_2$T$_6$ was completed by recording the Chiral PhotoLuminescence (CPL) spectra: CPL is a luminescence phenomenon that provides the dissymmetric emission of right and left circularly polarized light, thereby providing information on the excited state chiroptical properties of the systems. This technique recently became a widely applied tool for the investigation of organic molecules and not only for lanthanide complexes, as formerly.$^{[35][36]}$ It is common to report the degree of CPL in terms of luminescence dissymmetry factor $g_{lum}$, which represents the ratio of the difference in intensity of left-circularly polarized light ($I_L$) versus right-polarized light ($I_R$) divided by the average total luminescence.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

intensity. For organic luminescent molecules (generally polyconjugated molecules endowed with axial or helical stereogenicity) this value range between $10^{-2}$ to $10^{-4}$. For BT$_2$T$_6$ the CPL band is positive for the first eluted enantiomer (as already observed for BT$_2$T$_4$)\cite{37} and the $g_{lum}$ was found to be $3.3 \times 10^{-3}$, surprisingly lower than that exhibited by BT$_2$T$_4$ that was $9.0 \times 10^{-3}$.

Analogously to the experiments carried out on BT$_2$T$_4$, enantiopure (S)-BT$_2$T$_6$ was electroligomerized on a glassy carbon electrode and the chiral surface was used for enantiorecognition tests with chiral probes. The enantiorecognition test where the two enantiomers of DOPA are used as chiral probes is reported in Figure 43. The results were outstanding since a difference of $\pm 200$ mV was found between the oxidative potentials of the two enantiomers of DOPA. The values found for the enantiorecognition of DOPA on (S)-ec-p(BT$_2$T$_6$) enantiopure film are two times higher than those shown by ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$). The wider cavities characterizing the cyclic compounds resulting from BT$_2$T$_6$ oligomerization look more suitable for accommodating the analyte, as indicated by the electronic transfer occurring at lower oxidative potentials, in comparison with the case of BT$_2$T$_4$\cite{31}.

BT$_2$T$_6$ showed, however, some processability issues due to its low solubility, that is remarkably lower than that shown by BT$_2$T$_4$. For that reason, it was planned to synthesize compound 15 in which the same backbone was functionalized with lipophilic chains that should have improved monomer solubility.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

Figure 43: Enantiorecognition tests on enantiopure oligomeric (S)-ec-p(BT₂T₆) (deposited form thirty-six cycles, 0.5 mM monomer solution in CH₂Cl₂ + TBA PF₆, 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate) in the presence of enantiopure probes L- and D-DOPA (4 mM in 50 mM HCl).

4.2.2. 2,2'-Bis[3',4'-di-n-butyl-{2,2':5',2''-terthiophen}-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT₂T₆Bu)

The synthesis of compound 15, reported in Scheme 2, required the achievement of the functionalized terthiophene derivative 13 that was obtained in two steps starting from commercially available 3,4-dibromothiophene. The latter was converted in high yields into the corresponding 3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (11), through a nickel catalyzed Kumada reaction with butylmagnesium bromide in diethyl ether. Compound 11 was then dibrominated with bromine in a chloroform and acetic acid solution to give the corresponding 2,5-dibromo-3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (12); the dibromo derivate is a suitable substrate for a double Stille reaction with 2-tributyl-stannylthiophene to give the 3',4'-di-n-butyl-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (13) in moderate yields.

Compound 13 was then reacted with n-BuLi to give the corresponding anion, that was treated with trimethyltin chloride to afford the stannyl derivative 14 that was coupled, in turn, following a Stille procedure, with BT₂Br₂ affording the final target 15, even if in low yields.
Scheme 8: Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT₂₆Bu) 15.

The cathodic and anodic cyclic voltammetric pattern for BT₂₆Bu monomer in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF₆ at 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate is reported in Figure 44 A.

Figure 44: A) Complete CV patterns of BT₂₆Bu, 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate, solvent: ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF₆. B) Potentiodynamic electrooxidation of BT₂₆Bu on glassy carbon electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles at 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate, 0.5 mM of BT₂₆Bu in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF₆.
The electrochemical CV pattern shows a HOMO-LUMO gap narrower than BT$_2$T$_4$, with both first oxidation and first reduction processes taking place at more advantageous potentials, on account of the improved conjugation due to the addition of the two thiophene moieties. Besides the first oxidation peak a second oxidation process can be observed, which would be consistent with the longer conjugated chains in the two moieties. The deposition of the oligomeric films (reported in Figure 44 B) was performed using a 0.5 mM solution of the monomer, in acetonitrile + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$, on glassy carbon electrode. The resulted oligomeric film of BT$_2$T$_6$Bu gave a fast, regular and virtually unlimited electroligomerization process; additionally, the films are very stable upon repeated potential scans in a monomer-free solution.

Also in this case, the resolution of the racemate at analytical level through chiral HPLC was not trivial, since several chiral columns were tested and good separation was observed only when chiral stationary phase based on an uncommon cellulose derivative, the cellulose tris(3-chloro-4-methyl-phenyl)carbamate, was employed. The chromatogram, reported in Figure 45 shows well separated signals of the antipodes. Unfortunately, the resolution at a semi-preparative level could not be performed due to the long elution times required for the two antipodes, namely 20 and 30 minutes.

![Analytical resolution of the racemate of BT$_2$T$_6$Bu through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Luxcellulose 2 (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : IPA 100 : 0.25, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 35°C, detector: UV (black) and CD (red) at 350 nm.](image-url)
4.3. 3,3’-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant planarization strategy

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the modification strategy of the BT$_2$T$_4$ structure implies a planarization of 2,2’-bithiophene pendants that were substituted by fused ring heterocycles. In particular, the scaffold of 3,3’-bithianaphthene was functionalized with 4,4-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b’]dithiophene (CPDT) and N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2’,3’-d]pyrrole (DTP) pendants where the 2,2’-bithiophene units are forced to be coplanar by a methylene unit or a nitrogen atom, respectively.

An important advantage of these scaffolds was their easy functionalization by introduction of suitable substituents on the methylene groups or on the nitrogen atoms, leading to more soluble and more easily processable materials.

On the other hand, a breakdown was related to the fact that these bithiophene pendants required a specific, not trivial syntheses. These heteroaromatic compounds, however, are today very popular building blocks, since they are known to lead to materials with very favorable properties, like a decrease in the HOMO-LUMO separation and an increase in charge mobility due to the extended conjugation in the ground state, to the planar molecular geometry and to their quite rigid structure.

We considered that these systems should confer some peculiar properties to our inherently chiral materials.

4.3.1. 2,2’-Bis(N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2’,3’-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT$_2$DTP$_2$)

The synthesis of the 2,2’-bis(N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2’,3’-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3’- bithianaphthene (18), nicknamed BT$_2$DTP$_2$, (Scheme 9) requires the preparation of N-n-octyl-DTP (16) as the key intermediate, that was easily obtained in high yields following the well-known Buchwald protocol, starting from commercially available 3,3’-dibromo-2,2’-bithiophene and n-octylamine. Compound 16 was then treated with n-BuLi and the resulting anion reacted with tributyli- stannylichloride to give the stanny derivative 17 which was used, in turn, in a Pd(0) catalyzed Stille coupling reaction with the dibromo derivative BT$_2$Br$_2$ 4, in DMF solution, to give the final product 18 in good yields.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

**Scheme 9:** Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(N-n-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrol-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT₂DTP₂) 18.

BT₂DTP₂ 18 was oxidized with FeCl₃ in dry chloroform solution to lead to a much more complex oligomeric mixture than those obtained with the previously synthesized inherently chiral monomers. Indeed, in addition to large amounts of dimers and trimers (Figure 46), a remarkable series of superior oligomers was found in the material extracted with a soxhlet apparatus using THF as solvent. The presence of the n-octyl chains strongly increases the solubility of the reaction products, making possible their extraction and identification at least at a qualitative analytical level. Also in this case HR MALDI spectrum demonstrated that the oligomers are cyclic and not linear structures by comparison of the experimental with the calculated patterns of the single peaks.

![Figure 46: Maldi analysis of chemically oxidized BT₂DTP₂. Oligomers extracted by THF.](image)

Monomer 18 was also electrochemically characterized and electro-oligomerized to give ec-p(BT₂DTP₂).

The complete cyclic voltammetric pattern of monomeric BT₂DTP₂ is reported in Figure 47 A: two nearly equivalent peaks are present, corresponding to the two active terminal units involved in
the electrooxidation process, separated by the central node but still communicating through the conjugated system.

The electrodeposition of the monomer (0.5 mM) on a glassy carbon electrode was performed at 200 mV s\(^{-1}\) scan rate, in acetonitrile + 0.1 M TBAPF\(_6\) solution (Figure 47 B): electrode coating took place fast and regularly and the resulting films were stable when tested in a monomer free solution. In addition, a large radical cation stabilization was observed from the deposition profile of the oligomeric film, as demonstrated by neat separation and large distance between the peaks.

![Figure 47: A) Complete CV patterns of BT\(_2\)DTP\(_2\) monomer (0.5 mM); 200 mV s\(^{-1}\) scan rate; solvent: ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF\(_6\). B) Potentiodynamic electrooxidation of BT\(_2\)DTP\(_2\) on GC electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles at 200 mV s\(^{-1}\) scan rate, 0.5 mM of BT\(_2\)DTP\(_2\) in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF\(_6\).](image)

The racemate was resolved into antipodes by HPLC at a semi-preparative level and the CD detected chromatograms (Figure 48) demonstrated a perfect separation of the enantiomers.
Furthermore, the specific rotatory powers are impressive, in accordance with the presence of an inherently dissymmetrical chromophore in the molecule. The first eluted BT₂DTP₂ enantiomer exhibited $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = +928^\circ$ while the second one displayed $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = -1042^\circ$, in chloroform solution.

![Analytical resolution of the racemate of BT₂DTP₂ through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IA (250 mm 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ : ethanol 100 : 2 : 1, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 40°C, detector: UV and CD at 254 nm.](image)

The ECD and CPL spectra of monomer 18 are reported in Figure 49. The green-trace spectra correspond to the first eluted enantiomer, while the red ones correspond to the second eluted one.

All the ECD spectra are dominated by exciton-type features[42] centred at 400 nm.

![CD profiles of (R)-(+)-18 (red) and (S)-(−)-18 (green).](image)  
![CPL of (R)-(+)-18 (green) and (S)-(−)-18 (red).](image)
The second eluted enantiomer, under these experimental conditions, showed a positive Cotton effect and, in analogy with other inherently chiral monomers based on the same atropisomeric scaffold, the $S$ configuration can be attributed to the levorotatory antipode.

The monomer exhibited lower luminescent properties with respect to the $\text{BT}_2\text{T}_4$: CPL spectra, indeed, showed $g_{\text{lum}}$ values equal to $5.0 \times 10^{-3}$, while $\text{BT}_2\text{T}_4$ enantiomers exhibited a $9 \times 10^{-3}$ value, as reported above.

The enantioselection capability of $\text{BT}_2\text{DTP}_2$ films was tested electrodepositing the enantiopure monomers from ACN solutions, due to the scarce aptitude of these materials to electroligomerize in ionic liquid media, like BMIMPF$_6$.

The results obtained with films of $(R)$-ec-p($\text{BT}_2\text{DTP}_2$) or $(S)$-ec-p($\text{BT}_2\text{DTP}_2$) are depicted in Figure 50, using commercially available $(R)$-$(\pm)$- and $(S)$-$(\mp)$-$N,N$-dimethyl-$1$-ferrocenylethylamine as chiral probes.

![Figure 50: Top: CV patterns of $(R)$-$(\pm)$- and $(S)$-$(\mp)$-$N,N$-dimethyl-$1$-ferrocenylethylamine recorded on GC bare electrode in BMIMPF$_6$ (on the left) and in ACN + TBAPF$_6$ 0.1 M (on the right). Bottom: Enantiorecognition tests on ec-p($R$)-($\text{BT}_2\text{DTP}_2$) in presence of the ferrocene based chiral probes on GC electrode. On the left: tests in BMIMPF$_6$, on the right: tests in ACN + TBAPF$_6$ 0.1 M. CV pattern of the stabilized oligomer film is reported for comparison (grey line).]
The BT$_2$DTP$_2$ chiral surfaces displayed very good enantiorecognition capability, especially when enantiopure films were tested in ACN + TBAPF$_6$ 0.1 M solution, with a peak separation between the chiral probes of about 160 mV. Interestingly, the voltammetric signal is not characterized by a fully canonic shape in the case of probe with $R$ configuration, probably due to a partial superimposition of the probe signal with the signal of the film (grey line in Figure 50). In the case of ionic liquid, however, the peak separation is about 0.049 V.

4.3.2. 2,2'-Bis(4,4'-di-$n$-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT$_2$CPDT$_2$)

The preparation of CPDT, which is the key intermediate necessary for coupling with BT$_2$Br$_2$ in the synthesis of BT$_2$CPDT$_2$, requires several steps which had been studied in the laboratories where the present thesis project was developed many years ago (Scheme 10).

The first step is a benzoin-type condensation of 3-thiophenecarboxyaldehyde, mediated by thiamine hydrochloride, in ethanol, at pH 9, to give the 3,3'-thienoin (19). The latter was easily and quantitatively oxidized with copper sulfate to give the 3,3'-dithienoyl (20), which, in the presence of KOH, undergoes a very fast rearrangement affording the 3,3'-thienylic acid (21). This reaction step is crucial and reaction times and temperature must be strictly controlled.

The aluminum trichloride promoted pentadienyl cation-type electrocyclization of 21 in benzene solution (we did not find alternative solvents) gave the CPDT-4-carboxylic acid (22), that gave the CPDT (23) by a copper-mediated decarboxylation in quinoline solution at 100 °C.

The dialkylated derivative 24 was obtained in high yields by exhaustive CPDT alkylation, performed with $n$-hexyliodide generated in situ by reaction of the corresponding bromide with KI, in the presence of KOH as a base, in DMSO solution.

The stannylderivative 25 was obtained, as usual, by reaction of the lithium derivative of dihexyl-CPDT with tributyl-stannylchloride. The final step is the reaction between the 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene BT$_2$Br$_4$ 4 and the 2-tributylstannylderivative 25, in the presence of palladium tetrakis(triphenylphosphine), according to Stille’s procedure.
The racemate was resolved into antipodes by HPLC at a semi-preparative level and the CD detected chromatograms (Figure 51) demonstrated a perfect separation of the enantiomers: in the BT₂CPDT₂ case, the elution times were highly satisfying. The measured specific rotatory powers resulted to be very high: \([\alpha]^{25}_D = +883^\circ\) and \([\alpha]^{25}_D = -878^\circ\), respectively.

The ECD spectra are reported in Figure 52. The green-trace spectrum corresponds to the first eluted enantiomer, while the red one corresponds to the second eluted one.

All the ECD spectra are dominated by exciton-type features\(^{[42]}\) centred at 400 nm like it was observed for the BT₂DTP₂. The first eluted enantiomer, in these experimental conditions, showed a positive Cotton effect similarly to BT₂T₄, for which the S configuration was attributed to the first eluted enantiomer on the basis of a comparison with the S calculated CD curve.
Figure 51: Analytical resolution of the racemate of BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB-3 (250 mm 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ 100 : 2, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 25°C, detector: UV and CD at 254 nm.

Figure 52: A) CD profiles of (S)-(+)26 (green) and (R)-(−)26 (red).

The complete cyclic voltammetric pattern of BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ monomer, recorded at 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ solution is reported in Figure 53. In this case, it is possible to observe, as previously reported for the BT$_2$DTP$_2$ monomer, two nearly equivalent oxidation peaks, corresponding to the oxidation of the two homotopic terminal thiophene units, which are not independent but slightly communicating through the central node of the stereogenic axis.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

Figure 53: Complete CV patterns of BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ monomer (0.5 mM), 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, solvent: ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$.

Oligomerization attempts were unsuccessful both in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ and acetonitrile solution, due to the high solubility of the oligomerized products in these solvents. Electrodeposition experiments were carried out in pure ionic liquid (BMIM TFSI, Figure 54) but the solubility of the monomer in this medium was unsatisfactory. Oligomerization of BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ was successfully performed in a 1:1 mixture of CH$_2$Cl$_2$ and the BMIM TFSI ionic liquid, on a screen-printed gold electrode (Figure 55, grey line).

![Figure 54: BMIM TFSI, 1-butyl-3-methylimidazolium bis(trifluoromethylsulfonyl)imide.](image)

After electrodeposition of enantiopure (S)-ec-p(BT$_2$CPDT$_2$), the enantiorecognition ability of the chiral film was tested, employing, as usual, the (R)-(+) and (S)-(−)-N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylethylamine ferrocene, dissolved in pure ionic liquid. The enantiodiscrimination results for the two probes are quite satisfactory, the difference between the oxidative potential of the two enantiomers being about 100 mV, as reported in Figure 55.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

4.4. 3,3’-Bithianaphthene derivatives based on the bithiophene pendant modification strategy

4.4.1. 2,2’-Bis(2,2’:3’,2”-terthiophen-5’-yl)-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT₂(T₃)₂)

The synthesis of a monomer endowed with intermediate characteristics between BT₂T₄ and BT₂T₆ appeared an interesting target for studying the effects of an additional thiophene unit not involved in the conjugative delocalization along the main backbone, but crucial for determining its conformational characteristics. In collaboration with the University of Stuttgart, we planned the synthesis of a new inherently chiral monomer, endowed with six thiophene units but characterized by a branched terthiophene structure, supported in this project by the expertise in this field of prof. Ludwigs’ group.[43][44][45]

The synthesis started from commercially available 2-bromothiophene that was treated with n-BuLi, diisopropylamine and trimethylsilyl chloride in order to protect the position 5 with the trimethylsilyl group. Compound 27 was obtained in quantitative yields. Two equivalents of compound 27 were then treated with magnesium turnings to give the corresponding Grignard reagent, that was employed in a Kumada coupling reaction, catalyzed by 1,2-(dppe)NiCl₂, with
2,3-dibromothiophene, to give the protected 2,2':3',2''-terthiophene 28. The anion of the latter, generated with n-BuLi, was converted into the stannyl derivative 29, that was used in the palladium catalyzed Stille-reaction with the 2,2'-dibromo derivative BT2Br2 4 to give the new compound 30. The final deprotection reaction of 30, effected with tetrabutylammonium fluoride (TBAF) in THF solution, allowed to accede to the 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene BT2(T3)2 (31) in quantitative yields.

Scheme 11: Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT2(T3)2) 31.

The chemical oxidation of compound 31 was performed by reaction with iron trichloride, in dry chloroform solution, in order to investigate if also branched monomers were able to produce cyclic oligomers. The thiophene in β position, indeed, could complicate the reaction trend due to the possible formation of branched oligothiophenes, sterically hindering the formation of cyclic structures.

Figure 56: MALDI analysis of chemically oxidized BT2(T3)2. Oligomers extracted by THF.
The MALDI spectrum, reported in Figure 56, demonstrated that the oxidation trend was analogous to that exhibited by the previously investigated monomers: indeed, a regular decreasing distribution between cyclic dimers, trimers and small amounts of tetramers was observed.

The formation of cyclic compounds was proved by comparing the isotopic distribution of the peaks present in the HR MALDI spectrum with the calculated one.

\[ \text{BT}_2(T_3)_2 \] was also electrochemically oxidized in the laboratories of prof. Ludwigs and the properties of the resulting films investigated with different techniques, such as cyclic voltammetry, spectroelectrochemistry and \textit{in-situ} conductance.

The deposition of the oligomeric films was performed under potentiodynamic conditions (reported in Figure 57 A and B), using a 1 mM solution of the monomer in acetonitrile + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ (scan rate = 50 mV s$^{-1}$), on 10 μm interdigitated platinum and ITO electrodes.

![Figure 57: Potentiodynamic electro-oxidation of BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$ on platinum (A) and ITO (B). Five consecutive cycles at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate; 1 mM of compound BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$ in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$.](image)

Cyclovoltammetric analysis and spectroelectrochemical investigation (Figure 58 E and F) revealed an interesting behavior, highlighted by comparison of these results with those collected for BT$_2$T$_4$ (Figure 58 A and B) and BT$_2$T$_6$ (Figure 58 C and D) under analogous experimental conditions.

A progressive lower stabilization of the radical cation was observed moving from BT$_2$T$_4$ (1) to BT$_2$T$_6$ (10) to BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$ (31).

BT$_2$T$_4$, indeed, showed the more pronounced stabilization, since two peaks are well detectable in the CV, the first one corresponding to the radical cation and the second one to the dication. The same mentioned stabilization can be also observed from the UV spectrum where the bands...
corresponding to these species can be clearly individuated and the transient species, namely the radical cation, can be separated from the neutral and the double charged ones.

Figure 58: In-situ spectroelectrochemistry of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_3$)$_2$: A) Cyclic voltammogram of the reversible p-doping of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$) (deposited on ITO electrode from five cycles, 1 mM monomer solution in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate). B) Vis/NIR spectra of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$) recorded during the forward scan (oxidation) in the p-doping process: profiles for neutral (red), radical cation (green) and dication species (blue) are highlighted. C) Cyclic voltammogram of the reversible p-doping of ec-p(BT$_3$T$_4$) (deposited on ITO electrode from five cycles, 1 mM monomer solution in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate). D) Vis/NIR spectra of ec-p(BT$_3$T$_4$) recorded during the forward scan (oxidation) in the p-doping process: profiles for neutral (red), radical cation (green) and dication species (blue) are highlighted. E) Cyclic voltammogram of the reversible p-doping of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_3$)$_2$ (deposited on ITO electrode from five cycles, 1 mM monomer solution in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate). F) Vis/NIR spectra of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_3$)$_2$ recorded during the forward scan (oxidation) in the p-doping process.
BT₂T₆ showed a similar behaviour, even if the peaks are less pronounced: the radical cation resulted to be a transient and less defined species. This trend is even more evident for BT₂(T₃)₂: in the CV, only one oxidation peak can be observed and, from the spectroelectrochemical analysis, the radical cation (λ_max at 798 nm) resulted to be an extremely evanescent species. This trend can be summarized considering the delocalization of the charged species that appears to be more extended in a more conjugated system (BT₂T₆) and even more in a branched structure (BT₂(T₃)₂) with respect to the parent monomer BT₂T₄.

In-situ conductance analysis confirmed the behaviour observed in spectroelectrochemical experiments. Comparisons of the results obtained for BT₂T₆ (Figure 39), with those achieved for BT₂(T₃)₂ (Figure 59), allowed to deduce that the branched structure of the terthiophene in BT₂(T₃)₂ greatly destabilizes the radical cation species. Radical cation stabilization, therefore, resulted to be dependent not only on the size of the side chain in the monomer and in the oligomeric structures, but also on the spatial 3D arrangement.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 59:** In-situ conductance analysis of ec-p(BT₂(T₃)₂) (deposited on 10 μm interdigitated Pt electrode, 1 mM monomer solution in ACN + TBA PF₆, 50 mV s⁻¹ scan rate) recorded in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF₆ solution, 20 mV s⁻¹ scan rate. A) Anodic scan. B) cathodic scan.

4.4.2. **2,2'-Bis{bi[2,2'-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT₂E₄)}**

Monomer 34, in which the atropisomeric core of the 3,3'-bithianaphthene is decorated with four 3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene (EDOT) units, was designed in order to obtain a compound interesting not only for its stereochemical properties but also for its intrinsic conductive behaviour.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

Poly-(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene), better known as pEDOT (commercially, as Baytron®), represents a smart material in the field of conductive polymers due to its peculiar properties. It plays a relevant role in electronic, antistatic and electric applications. It is generally used as homopolymeric layer or in association with polystyrene sulfonic acid (PSS) that allows the formation of the pEDOT-PSS complex, widely used as conductive layer in electroluminescent devices and OFETs. Furthermore, pEDOT is an electrically-conducting conjugated polymer that shows remarkable conductivity, relatively stable in its oxidized form, endowed with a quite low redox potential, a moderate band gap and, last but not least, can form nearly transparent thin films.

By consequence, the possibility to prepare a material that combines the concept of inherent chirality with remarkable characteristics of EDOT appeared very attractive.

The synthesis of BT₂E₄ was planned according to the general strategy applied for the preparation of all the other monomers based on the 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold, which required, in this case, the availability of the stannyl derivative 33. The bis-EDOT 32 was obtained in good yields starting from commercially available EDOT, which was treated with n-BuLi and the resulting anion submitted to oxidative coupling effected by CuCl₂.

The bis-EDOT was then stannylated to give compound 33, suitable precursor for the Pd-catalyzed Stille reaction with BT₂Br₂ 4; monomer 34 was obtained in high yields, after overnight refluxing in toluene, and it was fully characterized from an analytical and spectroscopic point of view.

TD-DFT calculation were performed by dr. Carmen Ruiz Delgado at the Universidad de Málaga and the lateral views of the optimized geometries for BT₂E₄ and BT₂T₄ are reported in Figure 60. As we can observe, similar distortions between the two thianaphthene units are found upon EDOT substitution, whereas the external thiophene units become almost coplanar when going from BT₂T₄ to BT₂E₄ due to the benefits of electron rigidification through inter-ring S-O interactions.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

In Figure 61 the voltammetric patterns of BT₂E₄ (light grey) and BT₂T₄ (grey), for sake of comparison, are reported. The anodic CV patterns for both monomers consist of two equal nearly merging peaks pointing to two equal, slightly interacting conjugated systems. Actually, in CH₂Cl₂ these two peaks exhibit a 1:1 current ratio especially at higher scan rates, while in more polar acetonitrile they merge (in fact unlike the former case the following shoulder decreases with increasing scan rate and should therefore correspond to an electron transfer product).

The residual interaction between the two half moieties (constituted by three thiophene rings) through the interanular bond causes a negative shift of the oxidation potentials with respect to α-terthiophene (E_{ox,1} BT₂E₄ = 0.19 V and E_{ox,1} = 0.64 V BT₂T₄ vs E_{ox,1} α-terthiophene = 1.53 V).[50]

In addition, electron-richness of EDOT rings and the increase of planarity of each bis-EDOT wings (suggested by theoretical data) make the BT₂E₄ monomer a better reductant.
Cathodic peaks in Figure 61 are not visible as a consequence of the narrower potential window of CH₂Cl₂ respect to acetonitrile.

Consistently with their intrinsic 3D structures, BT₂E₄ and BT₂T₄ electrooligomerize very rapidly and regularly, a behavior steadily maintained even after several consecutive CV cycles (Figure 62 A). The inductive effect of four EDOT moieties is transferred from monomer to oligomer films ec-p(BT₂E₄) with a strong decrease of the oxidation onset potential, $E_{\text{onset}}^{\text{ox}}$, of about 0.85 V. The anodic cycle clearly shows two well-separated oxidation waves with maxima at 0.05 and 0.33 V vs Fe⁺⁺|Fc. Concerning first reduction a value of -1.89 V for $E_{\text{onset}}$ can only be provided, whereas the $E_{\text{onset}}$ for first oxidation is -0.39 V, resulting in a $\Delta E_{\text{onset}} = 1.5$ V.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 62**: A) Electrooligomerization of BT₂E₄ (1 mM) in a 0.1 M TBAPF₆ CH₂Cl₂ solution on ITO electrode, scan rate 50 mV s⁻¹. B) CV profile of ec-oligo(BT₂E₄) in a 0.1 M TBAPF₆ acetonitrile monomer free solution on ITO electrode, scan rate 20 mV s⁻¹.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>oligomer</th>
<th>neutral state</th>
<th>radical cation</th>
<th>dication</th>
<th>$E_{\text{onset,ox}}^{1/2}$ (V)</th>
<th>$E_{\text{onset,red}}^{1/2}$ (V)</th>
<th>$E_{\text{onset,ox}}^{\text{HOMO}}$ / $E_{\text{onset,red}}^{\text{LUMO}}$</th>
<th>$E_{\text{band gap}}$ (eV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ec-oligo(BT₂E₄)</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>-0.39 (-4.71)</td>
<td>1.31 / 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ec-oligo(BT₂T₄)</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-1.76 (-5.54)</td>
<td>2.04 / 2.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Optical and electrochemical characteristics of BT₂E₄ and BT₂T₄ in comparison with ec-p(EDOT) recorded in CH₂Cl₂ + TBAPF₆.

**In-situ** spectroelectrochemical measurements were performed in order to study absorption profiles as a function of the electrode potential with the aim of correlating redox waves in the cyclic voltammograms with relative abundance of the neutral and charged species involved in the process. In Figure 63 A and C the cyclic voltammograms of ec-oligo(BT₂E₄) and ec-oligo(BT₂T₄) deposited on ITO electrodes are shown. The corresponding absorption spectra during the
forward anodic scans are shown in Figure 63 B and D. Backward scans, not reported here, point to reversible charge/discharge processes for both oligomeric films with a small hysteresis.

From the absorption spectra, the p-doping of both oligomeric films reveals three different species. In the neutral state ec-oligo(BT$_2$E$_4$) has an absorption maximum at 516 nm with a slightly visible vibronic structure. The first band at shorter wavelengths corresponds to the neutral state, attributed to the π–π* transition; Upon the anodic voltammetric scan the absorption band of the neutral species (red curve in Figure 63 B at $E = -0.75$ V) decreases while a new absorption band with a peak maximum of 798 nm (green curve in Figure 63 B at $E = 0.05$ V) arises. The gradual conversion of the neutral species into the radical cation one also results in an isosbestic point at about 600 nm. At more positive potentials, the absorption band of the radical cation in turn decreases with concurrent increase of a third characteristic absorption band at around 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold
1000 nm (blue curve in Figure 63 B at $E = 0.35$ V), indicating the formation of the dication species.\textsuperscript{51}

In Figure 64, the absorptogram of the ec-p(BT$_2$E$_4$) is reported: particularly remarkable is the perfectly reversible profiles for the wavelengths associated to the neutral, radical cation and dication species; furthermore, no hysteresis was observed for the $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ of neutral and dication species.

![Absorptogram of BT$_2$E$_4$. Absorption as function of polarization potential at constant wavelengths, corresponding to maximum absorbance for the neutral film (516 nm), radical cation (798 nm) and dication (1005 nm). ITO in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$; scan rate: 20 mV s$^{-1}$.

The conductance of the oligomeric films was finally investigated by electrodepositing the two monomers on 10 μm Pt interdigitated electrodes (Figure 65). At lower oxidation levels conductivity is supported by polarons (relative maximum at 0.1 V vs Fc$^+/\text{Fc}$ and about 0.5 V vs Fc$^+/\text{Fc}$ for ec-p(BT$_2$E$_4$) and ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$) respectively).

At more positive potentials, where bipolarons become the dominant charge carriers (Figure 63), a second peak signal is observed, with the films reaching their maximum conductivity around 0.4 V vs Fc$^+/\text{Fc}$ and 0.8 V vs Fc$^+/\text{Fc}$ for ec-oligo(BT$_2$E$_4$) and ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$) respectively. At the conductivity maximum both polarons and bipolarons are present, allowing an electron hopping mechanism of bipolarons from polaron or neutral states according to a “mixed valence” conductivity that disappears when there are no unoxidized or polaron sites, explaining our observed conductivity decrease with further positive polarization.\textsuperscript{52-54} Hysteresis is observed from the direct to the reverse potential sweep, with the maximum of conductance being shifted at higher values for the charge process respect to the discharge one according to previous data on polythiophene films.\textsuperscript{55} In Figure 65 B and D films are polarized in the cathodic direction, and
the conductance signal possibly correspond to radical anion and dianion states. The overall pattern is rather similar to the one observed for p-doping, with maxima at slightly higher $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ values respect to the p-doping case.

Figure 65: In-situ conductance analysis of ec-p(BT$_2$E$_4$) (deposited on 10 μm interdigitated Pt electrode, 1 mM monomer solution in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + TBA$\text{PF}_6$, 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate) ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ solution, 20 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate. A) Anodic scan. B) cathodic scan. In-situ conductance analysis of ec-p(BT$_2$T$_4$) (deposited on 10 μm interdigitated Pt electrode, 1 mM monomer solution in ACN + TBAPF$_6$, 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate) ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ solution, 20 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate. C) Anodic scan. D) cathodic scan.

Monomer 34 was also chemically oxidized in order to evaluate the formation of macrocyclic oligomers; unfortunately, the presence of the EDOT units leads to oligomers which are much less soluble than those obtained from the oxidation of BT$_2$T$_4$. For this reason, we found impossible to extract significant amounts of material with the Soxhlet apparatus. However, a MALDI spectrum was recorded on the oligomeric mixture recovered from the electrodes surface after electrodeposition. The analysis of the spectrum (Figure 66) showed that the film was constituted by a mixture of oligomers, even if, due to the low resolution, it was not possible to understand whether they were cyclic or open-chain structures.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

After the characterization described above, the racemate of BT$_2$E$_4$ was submitted to HPLC analysis on a chiral stationary phase in order to resolve it into antipodes. Unfortunately, we did not succeed in resolving it into antipodes even at analytical level. The best results we obtained are reported in Figure 67. The peaks characterized by an elution time of 29 and 33 minutes, respectively, correspond to the two antipodes, as confirmed by the CD detector, but the separation was partial and required long elution times. Furthermore, a broad peak with elution time in the range of 15-25 minutes was present in the chromatogram, probably due to the formation of aggregates, since the presence of by-products could be excluded on the basis of the $^1$H-NMR spectrum.

Figure 66: MALDI analysis of electrochemically oxidized BT$_2$E$_4$. Oligomeric material analyzed through solid-phase method.

Figure 67: Analytical resolution attempts of racemate of BT$_2$E$_4$ through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : IPA-70 : 30, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 25°C, detector: UV (black) and CD (red) at 360 nm.
4.4.3. 2,2’-Bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-3,3’-bithianaphthene (BT$_2$BTD$_2$)

The last monomer synthesized, with the aim to confer special properties to the material by functionalizing the bithiophene chains connected to the bithianaphthene atropisomeric scaffold, was characterized by the introduction of a 2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (BTD) ring between the thiophene units of BT$_2$T$_4$. BTD is one of the most important heterocyclic ring used in the chemistry of photoluminescent compounds and widely employed in light technology.$^{[57][58]}$ The derivatives of BTD (beside fungicides, herbicides and antibacterial applications) normally possess several favorable characteristics for electronics: indeed, they exhibit strong electron-withdrawing nature, they are efficient fluorophores, afford well-ordered crystal structures as a result of their highly polarized properties and are suitable to be used as electron acceptors units for devices based on donor-acceptor (D-A) interactions. Consequently, the introduction of the BTD system in inherently chiral structure appeared to be particularly appealing in the light of obtaining compounds with bigger cavities and, at the same time, endowed with different, and hopefully better, optical and optoelectronic properties.

The synthesis of the new monomer 38, showed in Scheme 13, started from commercially available benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole, which afforded the corresponding dibromo derivative 35 in good yields by reaction with bromine in refluxing hydrobromic acid solution. The presence of the two bromine atoms was the key for the subsequent introduction of the two thiophene moieties through a Stille coupling. The 4,7-di(thiophen-2-yl)benzothiadiazole (36) was obtained in satisfactory yields and converted into the corresponding mono-anion by regioselective lithiation with n-BuLi in the presence of 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine in THF solution. The anion was quenched with trimethylstannyl chloride to give the corresponding stannyl derivative 37, which was used without further purification in a new Pd-catalyzed Stille coupling with BT$_2$Br$_2$ 4 using DMF as solvent.

The expected 2,2’-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-3,3’-bithianaphthene (38), nicknamed with acronym BT$_2$BTD$_2$, was obtained in moderate yields and fully characterized from an analytical and spectroscopic point of view.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3'-bithianaphthene scaffold

Scheme 13: Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (BT₂BTD₂) 38.

BT₂BTD₂ appeared, at first sight, to be optically different from the other inherently chiral monomers synthesized so far that display a yellowish color, the introduction of the benzothiadiazole confers a deep red color to BT₂BTD₂.

A detailed discussion of the optoelectronic properties of this compound is reported in paragraph 4.5.1.

BT₂BTD₂ was chemically oxidized with iron trichloride following the standard procedure and the MALDI spectrum of the material collected by Soxhlet extraction is reported in Figure 68. The spectrum shows the presence of some unreacted material and of the dimeric compound only. This unexpected result could be ascribed to the low solubility of the starting monomer, and by consequence of the oligomers, rather than to the inability of BT₂BTD₂ to form higher molecular weight oligomers.

Figure 68: MALDI analysis of chemically oxidized BT₂BTD₂. Oligomers extracted by THF.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

BT₂BTD₂ was electrochemically characterized on a GC electrode both as monomer and as oligomeric film. The oligomeric film was deposited from a 0.5 mM solution of BT₂BTD₂ in CH₂Cl₂ + 0.1 M TBAPF₆ at 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate and the voltammogram is reported in Figure 69 B. The reduction potential resulted to be expectedly high due to the presence of the benzothiadiazole system: the energy gap of monomer 38 was 0.6 V less than that found for BT₂T₄.

Despite the interesting properties of this new inherently chiral compound, the low solubility of BT₂BTD₂ was found an unsurmountable problem in the attempts of racemate resolution by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase.
4.5. Summary of 3,3’-bithianaphthene compounds

4.5.1. Photophysical 3,3’-bithianaphthene monomers comparisons

The absorption and the emission spectra of all the new chiral monomers based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold, recorded in diluted, air-equilibrated dichloromethane solution, at room temperature are summarized in a sequence of Figures, from Figure 70 to Figure 73, while the photophysical data are given in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monomer</th>
<th>λ_{abs} (solution) (nm)</th>
<th>λ_{em} (solution) (nm)</th>
<th>Lifetime τ (ns)</th>
<th>Quantum yield Φ (solution) (%)</th>
<th>λ_{em} (solid) (nm)</th>
<th>Quantum yield Φ solid (%)</th>
<th>ε [M⁻¹ cm⁻¹]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BT₂T₄</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂T₆</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>56700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂T₆Bu</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>56000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂DTP₂</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>59000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂CPDT₂</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>58000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂(T₃)₂</td>
<td>305; 369</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂E₄</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>57500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT₂BDT₂</td>
<td>358; 485</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>38500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Optical characterization of 3,3’-bithianaphthene monomers. Values were recorded in CH₂Cl₂ deaerated solution.

Compared to the parent monomer BT₂T₄, the absorption maxima of BT₂T₆, BT₂T₆Bu, BT₂DTP₂, BT₂CPDT₂ and BT₂E₄ are red-shifted of more than 19 nm. This red-shift is presumably due to the wider π-conjugation afforded by the elongation of the α-oligothiophene chain in the case of BT₂T₆ and BT₂T₆Bu. On the other hand, in the case of BT₂DTP₂ and BT₂CPDT₂, the bathochromic effect is attributable to the central fused-ring units, which increases the planarity of the system, allowing a more extended π-conjugated ground state than in the more flexible α-oligothiophene chain of BT₂T₄.

Quite different is the case of BT₂E₄, in which the red-shifted absorption band is probably due to the increased planarization of the bithiophene lateral edge imposed by the steric hindrance of the EDOT substituents. This hypothesis is further supported by the observed increased extinction coefficients (ranging from \(5.6 \times 10^4\) and \(5.9 \times 10^4\) M⁻¹ cm⁻¹ for the different oligothiophenes, in comparison with \(4.8 \times 10^4\) M⁻¹ cm⁻¹ for BT₂T₄) and by the slight vibronic structure observed in the spectra of BT₂DTP₂ and BT₂CPDT₂, as expected for a more planar and more rigid conformation.
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

All the observed absorption maxima correspond to the $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition, also in the case of the BT$_2$DTP$_2$, since the nitrogen lone-pair is involved in the aromatic $\pi$-system of the pyrrole fused ring and, therefore, the $n \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition would not be expected. The presence of nitrogen atom has a slight influence on the frontier orbitals, acting as electron withdrawing with $\pi$-orbitals and destabilizing mainly the HOMO level.

Figure 70: UV profile (solid lines) and fluorescence profile (dashed line) of BT$_2$T$_4$, BT$_2$T$_6$ and BT$_2$T$_6$Bu. Profiles were recorded in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ deaerated solution.

However, the electrochemical data (Table 3) indicate that both the HOMO and the LUMO levels are equally affected (being the LUMO level stabilized), and consequently the transition energy is
not affected by the presence of the pyrrole unit as it might be expected.\textsuperscript{59,60} Indeed, a red shift of the absorption is observed even if it is the smallest one in the series.

A completely different behavior was observed for BT\textsubscript{2}(T\textsubscript{3})\textsubscript{2} and for BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2}. In both cases two different absorption bands were observed, with a strong reduction of the molar extinction coefficients. In the case of the BT\textsubscript{2}(T\textsubscript{3})\textsubscript{2} the higher energy absorption band, at 305 nm, is attributable to the $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition localized on the lateral, non-conjugated thiophene ring, while the lower energy band at 369 nm is due to the $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition involving the atropoisomeric scaffold. Both of them result blue-shifted with respect to the BT\textsubscript{2}T\textsubscript{4}, in agreement with the reduced coplanarity afforded by the thiophene substituent in $\beta$ position on the thiophene ring of the lateral chain.

In the case of BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2}, the high energy absorption band at 358 nm, is assigned as a $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ transition, while the low energy band, at 485 nm and strongly red-shifted with respect to the band of BT\textsubscript{2}T\textsubscript{4}, is most probably due to the intramolecular charge transfer (ICT) transition between the donor benzo thiophene moiety and the benzothiadiazole acceptor unit where the LUMO is localized.\textsuperscript{61,62} The nature of the LUMO is confirmed also by the electrochemical data; indeed, BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2} displays the lowest reduction potential of the whole series and, consequently, the lowest band-gap.

Figure 72: UV profile (solid lines) and fluorescence profile (dashed line) of BT\textsubscript{2}T\textsubscript{4}, BT\textsubscript{2}(T\textsubscript{3})\textsubscript{2} and BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2}. Profiles were recorded in CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2} deaerated solution.
Structural factors have significant effects also on the emission properties of these oligothiophenes. In particular, the increased conjugation among the thiophene rings affords a red shifted emission maximum. Only the BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$ monomer displays the same emission energy of the parent compound BT$_2$T$_4$, thus confirming again the lack of conjugation between the three lateral thiophene rings. While the introduction of the fused-ring units, as in BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ and BT$_2$E$_4$, allowing an extension of the $\pi$-conjugation, affords an important red shift of the emission band. As already observed in the absorption spectrum, the emission of BT$_2$BTD$_2$ results strongly red-shifted. This monomer displays also the longest emission lifetime and the highest photoluminescence quantum yield within the series, in agreement with the ICT character of the emission transition.

Backbone structure and rigidity, can have a significant effect on the photoluminescence quantum yield $\Phi$ of this kind of oligothiophenes. Indeed, the presence of the chemical bridge reduces the occurring of the interanular torsional vibrations, thus resulting in increased fluorescence. This effect is particularly evident for BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ and BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$, showing the highest and the lowest $\Phi$ values respectively ($\Phi = 21\%$ for BT$_2$CPDT$_2$ and $\Phi = 8\%$ for BT$_2$(T$_3$)$_2$). All the other monomers display $\Phi$ values which are intermediate with respect these two values. In particular it is interesting to note that the emission intensities of BT$_2$T$_6$ and of the analogous butyl derivative BT$_2$T$_6$Bu, are lower than the emission of the parent compound BT$_2$T$_4$. Indeed,
the third thiophene ring provides an increase of the torsional and vibrational modes thus resulting in decreased emission intensities. Moreover, the presence of the node, even if it should not preclude conjugative interaction, affords a distortion from the coplanarity of the two halves thus hampering the formation of an extended conjugated planar structure. The lack of vibrational structure in the emission spectra is in agreement with this hypothesis. Actually, the ground state of these oligothiophenes barely match the planar quinoid-like structure proposed for the excited states, thus requiring a greater conformational reorganization energy.

Ongoing from emission in solution to the solid state, the panorama is completely different. The more planar oligothiophenes display the lowest emission quantum yields. This is most probably due to the formation of \( \pi-\pi \) staking interactions between the molecules which leads to the formation of weakly emissive aggregated species predominantly in the solid state. In agreement with this hypothesis the emissions intensities of BT\(_2\)T\(_6\)Bu and of BT\(_2\)E\(_4\) both containing substituents on the \( \beta \) positions on the lateral thiophenes having an important steric demand, result the highest ones within the series and, for BT\(_2\)E\(_4\), even higher than the solution emission intensity.

On the other hand, the strong quenching of the emission observed for BT\(_2\)BTD\(_2\) on passing from solution to solid state is correlated to the ICT nature of the transition which, in the solid state, could occur in intermolecular way, instead of in intramolecular one, affording a separation of charge and a quenching of the emission.

4.5.2. Electrochemical 3,3’-bithianaphthene monomer comparisons

Table 3 summarizes the electrochemical characteristics of the 3,3’-bithianaphthene monomers. Generally, all the monomers resulted to have similar electrochemical properties, with oxidation \( E_{\text{onset}} \) between 0.32 and 0.49 V vs Fc|Fc\(^+\) redox couple and reduction \( E_{\text{onset}} \) between -2.21 and -2.43 V vs Fc|Fc\(^+\).

BT\(_2\)DTP\(_2\) showed slightly different electrochemical properties: the introduction of the dithienopirrole unit leads to an energy band gap of 2.65 V, similar to those found for the other analyzed monomers. However, both the oxidation and reduction onset potentials resulted to be at higher potential.

The properties of BT\(_2\)BTD\(_2\) were found to be particularly remarkable: the introduction of the benzothiadiazole, indeed, led to strong increase of the reduction potential and, consequently, to
Electroactive materials based on 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold

a decrease of the energy band gap. Additionally, HOMO and LUMO energies resulted to be particularly low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$E_{\text{onset}}^\text{ox}/V$ vs Fc$^+/Fc$</th>
<th>$E_{\text{onset}}^\text{red}/V$ vs Fc$^+/Fc$</th>
<th>Electrochemical band gap/eV</th>
<th>HOMO (eV)</th>
<th>LUMO (eV)</th>
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<tr>
<td>BTzT4</td>
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<td>2.92</td>
<td>-5.29</td>
<td>-2.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTzT6</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>-5.12</td>
<td>-2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTzT6Bu</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>-5.15</td>
<td>-2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTzDTP2</td>
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<td>-1.94</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>-5.12</td>
<td>-2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTzCPDT2</td>
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<td>-2.21</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>-5.21</td>
<td>-2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-4.75</td>
<td>-2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTzBTD2</td>
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<td>-1.72</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>-5.85</td>
<td>-3.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Electrochemical characterization of 3,3’-bithianaphthene monomers. Analysis were carried out in ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$, 200 mV s$^{-1}$.
5. **Electroactive materials based on 2,2'-biindole scaffold**

In order to expand the investigation on inherently chiral materials, in parallel to the monomers characterized by a 3,3'-bithianaphthene atropisomeric scaffold, a different class of inherently chiral compounds, based on the 2,2-biindolic core, was investigated. The first member of this family, namely the N-methyl derivative (3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bismethyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole) 39a (reported in Figure 74), had been synthesized some years ago and the choice of this atropisomeric core was based both on electronic and steric considerations.

![Structural formula of IND₄₄Me 39a.](image)

As for the electronic properties, the oxidative potential of the biindole core, much electron richer than the bithianaphthene scaffold, results to be very low, allowing to perform the enantiorecognition tests in a hitherto unexplored potential region.

By means of DFT calculations the structure of the more stable conformers of BT₂₄ and IND₂₄Me was determined: the dihedral angles of the biheteroaromatic scaffolds resulted to be very different, moving from 82° for BT₂₄ to 115° for IND₂₄Me (Figure 75).

![Geometry of the most stable conformers of BT₂₄ (left) and IND₂₄Me (right). DFT calculations at B3LYP/TZVP level of theory.](image)
Furthermore, the biindole core can be easily functionalized at the nitrogen atoms allowing a simple tuning of some properties of the final material important for applicative purposes, such as solubility and processability.

Racemic IND$_2$T$_4$Me was electrochemically characterized. The complete CV pattern of monomer 39a, recorded at 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ solution, is reported in Figure 76 A. It is characterized by numerous oxidation peaks: the first couple of reversible oxidation peaks corresponds to the oxidation of the biindolic core, while the second pair of peaks corresponds to the oxidation of the bithiophene moieties.

The electrodeposition of IND$_2$T$_4$Me on GC electrode over thirty-six consecutive potentiodynamic cycles is reported in Figure 76 B: the growth of the oligomeric film is smooth and regular and the electrodeposited film was found highly stable under repeated oxidative cycles.

Figure 76: A) Complete CV pattern of IND$_2$T$_4$Me monomer (0.5 mM), 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, solvent: CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$. B) Potentiodynamic electro-oxidation of IND$_2$T$_4$Me on GC electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles at 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, 0.5 mM of IND$_2$T$_4$Me in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$. 
The racemate was resolved into antipodes through semi-preparative HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. The HPLC chromatograms, CD detected, of the racemate and of pure enantiomers are reported in Figure 77.

The \([\alpha]_{D}^{20}\) values are +808° and -818° (0.1 M in CHCl₃) for the first and the second eluted enantiomer respectively.

![HPLC Chromatograms](image)

Figure 77: Analytical resolution of the racemate of IND₄T₄Me through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB-3 (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ : ethanol 100 : 5 : 1, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 25°C, detector: UV and CD at 380 nm.

The enantiopure antipodes of IND₄T₄Me were fully characterized from a chiroptical point of view. The ECD and the CPL spectra are reported in Figure 78.

The antipodes exhibited remarkable \(\beta_{\text{cum}}\) values \((3.0 \times 10^{-3})\) similar to that showed by BT₄T₄ enantiomers. The absolute axial configuration was assigned by comparison of the ECD profile of the first eluted monomer with the calculated ECD profile for the (S) enantiomer (Figure 78 B).
Prompted by the preliminary interesting results obtained for the IND$_2$T$_4$Me, a deeper investigation on this monomer was carried out under different perspectives during the present PhD research project: in particular, the chemical oxidation was studied for the first time and some interesting enantiorecognition experiments were performed.

5.1. The family of the \textit{N}-alkylderivatives of the 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1\textit{H},1'\textit{H}-2,2'-biindole

The general synthetic pathway, reported in Scheme 15, of the 2,2'-biindole based monomers is a variant of the Larock reaction, that is particularly advantageous since it allows the formation of the interanular bond between the two indole units and their functionalization with the heteroarylic substituents in a single step.$^{[63]}$

The classical Larock reaction was reported for the first time in 1991 and found wide application for the preparation of a wide variety of indoles with different substituents.$^{[64]}$ Larock heteroannulation is a palladium-catalyzed chemoselective and “ligandless” heteroannulation
between ortho-iodoanilines and disubstituted alkynes to form substituted indole derivatives: the catalytic cycle is reported in Scheme 14.

![Scheme 14: Catalytic cycle of the classic Larock Pd-catalyzed heteroannulation.](image)

As anticipated, we used an interesting variant of the Larock reaction presented by Abbiati[63] for the preparation of 2,2'-biindole derivatives functionalized in position 3 with different aryl substituents.

The reaction requires a double alkyne derivative, namely the 2,2,2-trifluoro-N-(2-[4-[2,2,2-trifluoro-acetylamino-phenyl]-buta-1,3-diynyl]-phenyl)-acetamide 41 and a suitable aromatic haloderivative. We exploited this strategy using heteroaromatic iododerivatives and, for the synthesis of this family, we employed the 5-iodobithiophene 42, obtained by direct iodination with N-iodosuccinimide in 1:1 CHCl₃: acetic acid solution.

Compound 40 was synthesized, according to the literature procedure, from commercially available 2-iodoaniline that underwent a Sonogashira palladium-catalyzed reaction in the presence of ethynyltrimethylsilane (TSA) and copper(I) iodide in triethylamine as a solvent. The 2-alkynyl aniline was not isolated and, after deprotection of the trimethylsilyl group by means of KF, underwent a Glaser coupling in the presence of oxygen as oxidant with copper (I) as a catalyst.[65] Product 41 was then obtained in good yields by acylation of 40 with trifluoracetic anhydride in a pyridine and CH₂Cl₂ solution. The trifluorocarbonyl group is crucial for the subsequent Larock coupling reaction, since it reduces the nucleophilicity of the nitrogen atoms and directs the catalyst to selectively bind to the alkyne to promote the closure of the indole.
Electroactive materials based on 2,2'-biindole scaffold

The last step was the above mentioned palladium mediated Larock coupling that gave the 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (43) in acceptable yields.  

![Scheme 15: Synthesis of the 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (IND$_2$T$_4$H) 43.](image)

The 2,2'-biindole derivatives 43 was used as the key intermediate for access all the alkylated derivatives 39a-d. The final step consists in the reaction of the appropriate alkyl iodine with the dianion generated by using KOH in N,N-dimethylformamide at 0 °C.

![Figure 79: Structural formula of IND$_2$T$_4$ derivatives with differen N-n-alklyc chains.](image)

The racemates of all the mentioned N-alkylated compounds were resolved into antipodes at analytical level by HPLC on CSP (chiral stationary phase). The HPLC chromatograms are reported in Figure 80. It is interesting to observe that, as the length of the alkylic chains increases, the separation of the two antipodes is easier. In particular, a very good resolution was obtained when the biindole scaffold was functionalized with propyl and hexyl groups. Additionally, it was observed an inversion of the absolute configuration of the first eluted enantiomer by moving from the N-methyl to the N-ethyl derivatives.$^{[66]}$
Figure 80: Analytical resolution of the racemate of A) IND₂T₄Hex B) IND₂T₄Pr C) IND₂T₄Et D) IND₂T₄Me through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB-3 (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : ethanol 100 : 10, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 25°C.

Unfortunately, the monomer functionalized with hexyl groups was found to be too soluble for electrochemical purposes and, consequently, its use for the preparation of chiral surfaces was limited, despite the easy racemate resolution process.

The monomer functionalized with methyl groups gives very stable oligomeric films, but the resolution process is long and tedious due to the small difference between the retention times of the antipodes. A good compromise between electrochemical feasibility and racemate resolution was found in IND₂T₄Pr.

The electrochemical characterization of IND₂T₄Pr and subsequent potentiodynamic film deposition are reported in Figure 81.
A preliminary enantiorecognition test was carried out on the enantiopure oligomeric films of (S)-IND$_2$T$_4$Me and (R)-IND$_2$T$_4$Pr, which are the first eluted monomers in the resolution process. The enantiomers of the N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenyylethylamine were used as probes, which provided an electrochemical and chemically reversible peak in a region where the conjugated film is still neutral (Figure 83 A). The results were really outstanding: the separation between the oxidative peaks of the two enantiomers was found 270 mV.

Furthermore, the oxidation potential value of the S probe resulted to be the lower on the film derived from the electrooxidation of the first eluted enantiomer of IND$_2$T$_4$Me (Figure 82 A), while it showed the higher oxidative potential value on the film derived from the electrooxidation of the first eluted enantiomer of IND$_2$T$_4$Pr. This was a proof of the inversion of the configuration of the eluted enantiomers during the racemate resolution processes.
Electroactive materials based on 2,2'-biindole scaffold

Additional enantiorecognition experiments were carried out on the films derived from the electrooxidation of both the enantiomers of IND_{2}T_{4}Me.

Madopar®, a drug used for the treatment of Parkinson disease, which consists in a 4:1 mixture of L-DOPA and benzerazide, was used as probe: it is. A single oxidation peak was observed. Also in this case the enantiodiscrimination was very high: the difference between the oxidation potential values is 140 mV.

The third test (Figure 83 B) was carried out with Ketoprofen, a very popular non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), in CH_{2}Cl_{2} solution + TBAPF_{6} as a support electrolyte. The electrochemical reduction of the ketonic function is involved in this test. Great enantiodiscrimination (about 330 mV) was observed also in this case, which deserves special
attention since it is one of the rare examples of enantioselection observed in the cathodic region.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 83:** Enantiorecognition tests on enantipure ec-p(IND$_2$T$_4$Me). A) (S)-ec-p(IND$_2$T$_4$Me) (red) and (R)-ec-p(IND$_2$T$_4$Me) (green) (deposited from thirty-six cycles 0.5 mM monomer solution in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + TBAF$_6$, 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate on GC electrode) in the presence of Madopar drug (2 mM), in HCl + water at pH 2, 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate. B) (S)-ec-p(IND$_2$T$_4$Me) (red) and (R)-ec-p(IND$_2$T$_4$Me) (green) (deposited from thirty-six cycles 0.5 mM monomer solution in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + TBAF$_6$, 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate on GC electrode) in the presence of Ketoprofen drug (2 mM), in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ solution + 1 M TBACIO$_4$, 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate.

Racemate IND$_2$T$_4$Me was chemically oxidized by adding the monomer to a FeCl$_3$ slurry in dry CHCl$_3$. The residue, obtained after Soxhlet extraction with THF, was submitted to a purification process by gravimetric column chromatography, in order to isolate each single oligomer. Each fraction was analyzed by HR-MALDI and in Figure 84 the spectra of the two main fractions collected during the chromatographic process are reported.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 84:** MALDI analysis of the FeCl$_3$ oxidation products of IND$_2$T$_4$Me separated by column chromatography, after extraction with THF. Mass spectrum corresponding to linear dimers (a), left. Mass spectrum corresponding to a mixture of cyclic dimers (b), cyclic trimers (c) and cyclic tetramers (d), right.
The first fraction was constituted by the linear dimer while, the second fraction, was constituted exclusively by cyclic oligomers, namely dimers, trimers and tetramers according to what previously observed for the FeCl₃ oxidation of the analogous monomer based on the 3,3’-bithianaphthene scaffold.

5.2. Synthesis of 2,2’-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2’-biindole, IND₂BTD₂Hex

As shown in the previous chapter, monomer BT₂BTD₂, characterized by the presence of the benzothiadiazole system, is endowed by some peculiar opto-electronic features. The λ_{max} in the emission and absorption spectra are red-shifted by 100 nm compared to the values measured for other monomers. In addition, the half-life time of the charged species is from 5 to 10 times higher, while the quantum yield in solution, which is around the 12% for the other monomers, reaches the 50%.

Unfortunately, the scarce solubility of the compound, and the even lower solubility of the oligomers resulting from its oxidation, makes BT₂BTD₂ difficult to employ for applicative purposes. For this reason, the synthesis of a new monomer, based on the structure of 2,2’-biindole was planned, in the perspective of obtaining a derivative with similar optoelectronic properties, but more soluble and, therefore, more easily processable.

Furthermore, the new monomer would be the first example of the 2,2’-biindol e series in which the atropisomeric system is functionalized with a sequence of three heteroaromatic units which could produce, after oxidation, cyclic oligomers quite larger than those obtained from all the other members of this family investigated so far.

The synthesis of this new monomer, nicknamed IND₂BTD₂Hex, was planned according to the strategy developed for the other monomers of this class, that requires the availability of a suitable haloderivative as intermediate.

The synthesis of the iododerivative 44a was carried out with NIS in a 2:1 mixture of CHCl₃ and acetic acid, as described in literature[67].

Unfortunately, the monoiododerivative was obtained together with considerable amounts of the diiododerivative which was found difficult to remove. Obviously, the presence of the latter would have strongly complicated the subsequent reaction due to the formation of oligomers derived from its coupling with butadiine 40.
Electroactive materials based on 2,2'-biindole scaffold

In order to plan a clean reaction, we resorted to the preparation of the bromoderivative 44b, which was affected by reaction of compound 36 with NBS in a 1:1 mixture of CH₂Cl₂ and acetic acid. The formation of the dibromoderivative was surprisingly not observed under these experimental conditions and the bromoderivative 44b was isolated in a pure state in 95% yields. The palladium mediated Larock coupling was carried out in DMF solution, instead that in acetonitrile, in order to grant both the solubilization of compound 44b and a higher reaction temperature, given the expected lower reactivity of the bromoderivative in comparison with the corresponding iodocompound. Unfortunately, the Larock coupling took place in very low yields and a further optimization of the reaction conditions is certainly required.

The last step of the sequence was the introduction of two n-hexyl groups, which was carried out with sodium hydride as deprotonating agent in DMF at room temperature. Compound 46 was isolated in moderate yields, together with some amount of the monosubstituted product.

Scheme 16: Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND₂BTDMHex 46.

Compound IND₂BTDMHex was electrochemically characterized both as monomer and as oligomeric film (Figure 85 A and B). The oxidative pattern was found to be very similar to the above-mentioned IND₂T₄Me and IND₂T₄Pr while the reductive pattern resulted to be characterized by the presence of two consecutive electrochemically and chemically reversible peaks related to the presence of the benzothiadiazole units. The deposition proceeded regularly in CH₂Cl₂ and the pattern resembles that of IND₂T₄Me.
Figure 85: A) Complete CV pattern of IND₂BTD₂Hex monomer, 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate, solvent: CH₂Cl₂ + 0.1 M TBAPF₆. B) Potentiodynamic electro-oxidation of IND₂BTD₂Hex on GC electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles at 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate, 0.5 mM of IND₂BTD₂Hex in CH₂Cl₂ + 0.1 M TBAPF₆.

After the analysis performed on the racemate, compound 46 was resolved into antipodes at analytical level by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase.

Figure 86 reports the chromatogram corresponding to the separation of the two enantiomers that resulted to be well defined.
Figure 86: Analytical resolution of the racemate of IND$_2$BTD$_2$ through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : IPA : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ 100 : 5 : 2, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 40°C, detector: UV (black) and CD (red) at 380 nm.

5.3. Photophysical 2,2’-biindole monomers comparisons

The photophysical data of the absorption and of the emission spectra of the 2,2’-biindole based monomers, recorded in diluted, air-equilibrated dichloromethane solution at room temperature, are reported in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>$\lambda_{\text{abs}}$ (solution) (nm)</th>
<th>$\lambda_{\text{em}}$ (solution) (nm)</th>
<th>Lifetime $\tau$ (ns)</th>
<th>Quantum yield $\Phi$ (solution)</th>
<th>$\varepsilon$ (M$^{-1}$ cm$^{-1}$)</th>
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<td>BT$_2$T$_4$</td>
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<tr>
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<td>633</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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</table>

Table 4: Optical characterization of 2,2’-biindole monomers. Values were recorded in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ deaerated solution.

As the analogous benzothiophene derivatives, all these new chiral monomers upon optical excitation display an intense emission in the yellow region of the visible spectrum. However, the absorption maxima of the chiral monomers based on 2,2’-biindole scaffold resulted blue-shifted with respect to the parent monomer BT$_2$T$_4$. This blue shift is presumably due to the different electron density of the indole ring which is higher than that of the benzo-thiophene system.
The electrochemical data, reported in paragraph 4.5.2, confirmed this hypothesis; indeed, in comparison with the HOMO and LUMO levels of BT\textsubscript{2}T\textsubscript{4}, the LUMO and, with less extent also the HOMO levels of the IND\textsubscript{2}Me result destabilized. However, as expected, the substitution at the nitrogen atoms does not affect the photophysical properties of the molecules (Figure 87). Indeed, as reported in Table 4, no differences of the maxima of the absorption and emission bands were observed moving from the methyl to the propyl derivative, together with the same molar extinction coefficients and photoluminescence quantum yields.

As already reported for the benzothiophene derivative BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2}, also in this case a special behavior were shown by the biindolic derivative functionalized with the benzothiadiazole moiety as lateral substituents of the atropoisomeric scaffold (Figure 88). Two different absorption bands were observed, the higher energy band attributable to the $\pi-\pi^*$ transition, while the lower energy band is due to the ITC transition between the electron donor biindolic moiety and the benzothiadiazole acceptor unit. If compared with the absorption spectrum of the analogous BT\textsubscript{2}BTD\textsubscript{2}, the higher energy band is strongly blue-shifted, while the lower energy band resulted moderately red-shifted (only 10 nm vs a blue shift of about 50 nm for the higher energy band).
This behavior is in agreement with the electrochemical data underlying again that the electronic structure of the biindolic system mainly affect the LUMO level, destabilizing it and therefore increasing the $\pi-\pi^*$ energy gap. On the contrary to the HOMO level, involved in the ICT transition, is only slightly destabilized with respect the HOMO level of BT$_2$BTD$_2$ and, therefore, the position of the ICT band is only 10 nm red shifted. Finally, the emission maximum resulted red-shifted (695 nm vs 633 nm) and partially quenched in agreement with the low energy gap value.

Figure 88: UV profile (solid lines) and fluorescence profile (dashed line) of IND$_2$T$_4$Me, IND$_2$BTD$_2$Hex and BT$_2$BTD$_2$. Profiles were recorded in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ deaerated solution.
6. Approaches to large scale resolution of racemates

All the monomers investigated so far present a drawback for their application on a large-scale level in the enantiopure form, namely the resolution into antipodes, which is achieved by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase at a semi-preparative level. This is a very powerful method even if expensive for the large consumption of solvents, tedious and time-consuming. We considered the resolution of the racemates into antipodes by HPLC on CSP a so critical bottleneck that we felt mandatory to find an alternative resolution method. We envisaged two different strategies as the most promising ones to reach this goal: the introduction into the molecule of two new identical homotopic stereogenic elements and the synthesis starting from enantiopure scaffolds. The results we obtained in experimentally testing the feasibility of these approaches are reported in the following paragraphs.

6.1. Introduction of new stereogenic elements

The first monomer synthesized according to the above-mentioned strategy was designed by exploiting a cornerstone concept: the introduction of an additional stereogenic element on a couple of enantiomers leads to the formation of diastereoisomers that, by definition, have different chemical-physical properties and, in principle, are separable through classic methodologies, such as fractional crystallization or chromatography on an achiral stationary phase.

The presence of two functionalizable nitrogen atoms in the 2,2′-bindole scaffold was considered very useful for the introduction of two homomorphic chiral pendants characterized by a carbon stereocenter.

The selected pendant was the 1-phenylethyl, group which was introduced using both the enantiomers of the 1-bromo-ethylbenzene as alkylating agent.

The enantiopure antipodes of 1-bromoethylbenzene, unfortunately, are not commercially available and they were synthesized starting from enantiopure (R)- and (S)-phenylethanol. They were converted into the corresponding bromoderivative with phosphorus oxybromide in dry pentane solution, in the presence of pyridine. The substitution reaction does not proceed through a pure \( \text{S}_{\text{N}}2 \) mechanism, as reported in the Scheme 17, since partial racemization was
observed, as demonstrated by the enantiomeric excesses of the resulting bromoderivatives which were found to range from 76 to 86%.

Scheme 17: Synthesis of (S)-1-bromoethylbenzene 47 and (R)-1-bromoethylbenzene 48.

Biindole alkylation was carried out in DMF using KOH as a base; the theoretical stereochemical outcome of the alkylation reaction is reported in Scheme 18. Obviously, the incomplete enantiomeric purity of the alkylating reagents complicates the stereochemical outcome of the N-alkylation; indeed, eight possible stereoisomers could be formed in the reaction, even if in different ratios. As expected, the most abundant stereoisomers should be those characterized by identical configuration of the stereogenic carbons.

Scheme 18: Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis((R)-1-phenylethyl)-1'H,1'H-2,2'-biindole IND$_2$T$_4$(R)Ph $49$ and 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen)-5-yl)-1,1'-bis((S)-1-phenylethyl)-1'H,1'H-2,2'-biindole IND$_2$T$_4$(S)Ph $50$. 

103
Several stereoisomers were clearly distinguishable in the $^1$H-NMR spectra. Their isolation by column chromatography was, however, difficult since they exhibited quite similar $R_f$ values, exception made for the most retained one, which was obtained in an about 15% yield.

According to the previous observation, these stereoisomers should be characterized by the presence of pendants with the identical configuration at the stereogenic center but with undetermined configuration of the stereogenic axis. Furthermore, the inversion of the configuration of the stereogenic center of the alkylating reagent was assumed, with consequent formation of the ($R,R$) diastereoisomers from the ($S$)-bromoderivative and of the ($S,S$)-ones from the ($R$)-bromoderivative.

Furthermore, a sample of the stereoisomer obtained from ($R$)-1-bromoethylbenzene was analyzed by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. The chromatogram, reported in Figure 89, showed the presence of a main peak with an area of $\sim$ 92.5%. Furthermore, two other stereoisomers with shorter retention times are distinguishable, the first eluted one in a 7.5% percentage, and the second one in traces.

Considering that the stereogenic axis is expected to give a much greater contribution to the chiroptical properties of these compounds than the stereocenters, the minor components of the mixture should be related to stereoisomers with opposite configuration of the stereogenic axis. One with opposite CD profile should be the related enantiomer.

![Figure 89: Stereoisomeric purity control of IND$_2$T$_4$(S)Ph through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. CSP: Chiralpak IB-3 (250 mm x 4.6 mm I.D.), eluent: n-hexane : IPA : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ : DEA 100 : 1 : 1 : 0.1, flow rate: 1 mL/min, temperature: 25°C, detector: UV (black) and CD (red) at 360 nm.](image)
Interestingly, the HPLC analysis showed that the stereoisomeric purity of the isolated diastereoisomer was about 85%, reflecting the enantiomeric purity of the starting alkylating reagent.

However, in order to complete the stereochemical characterization of the main stereoisomer, it will be necessary to establish the absolute configuration of the stereogenic axis which, in the case of other inherently chiral monomers, was assigned on the basis of the comparison of the experimental circular dichroism curves of the two antipodes with that calculated for one enantiomer, generally the one having (S$_{ax}$) configuration. Calculations are currently under way.

The IND$_2$T$_4$(S)Ph stereoisomer isolated in an acceptable stereoisomeric purity level was then electrochemically characterized and the cyclic voltammograms are depicted in Figure 90. The CV profiles, recorded in two solvents, CH$_2$Cl$_2$ and acetonitrile, on the same electrode surface (glassy graphite) and at the same scan rate (0.2 V / s$^{-1}$) are reported in Figure 90. The comparison between the data obtained in the two solvents was possible because the electrode potential values were referred to the same Fe / Fe$^+$ redox couple.

The tendency of the monomer for oxidative electro-oligomerization was verified in both solvents, but, in both cases, no film deposition was observed on the electrode surface, probably due to the steric hindrance of the bulky substituents at the indole nitrogen. Overcrowding probably prevents deposition.

In order to overtake this problem, we tried to perform the chemical oligomerization with different reagents, but all the attempts were found unsuccessful.

Oxidation attempts with FeCl$_3$ in dry chloroform led to a degradation product, probably involving indole ring overoxidation.

A second method was based on the CuCl$_2$ promoted coupling of the bisanion of IND$_2$T$_4$(S)Ph, generated with n-butyllithium on the terminal alpha positions of the 2,2'-bithiophenes units.

In this case, no reaction took place and the starting material was completely recovered. It is not clear whether deprotonation does not occur or if the bulky phenylethyl groups sterically interfere with the correct approach of the anions.
6.2. Synthesis from enantiopure precursors: 2,2′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-binaphthalene, BN₂T₄

The second strategy we adopted to accede to enantiopure monomers at a preparative level was a synthesis involving an easily accessible enantiopure scaffold.

We considered as a good candidate the 1,1′-binaphthalene system, since a careful analysis of the literature demonstrated the good accessibility of enantiopure 2,2′-dibromo-1,1-binaphthalene, [68][69], which could be used as the intermediate of choice in the final Pd-mediated Stille coupling reaction with the 5-tributhylstannyl-2,2′-bithiophene.
The synthesis, depicted in Scheme 21, started from commercially available β-naphthol which was converted into β-naphthylamine 53 through a Bucherer reaction. This reaction was carried out at a multi-gram scale in a stainless steel autoclave in the presence of ammonium sulfite, in aqueous ammonia at 145°C.

β-Naphthylamine was then converted into 1,1'-binaphthalene-2,2'-diamine 52 through an unusual copper mediated oxidative coupling reaction. The copper reagent was an adduct of copper dichloride with two molecules of benzylamine and was easily prepared by reaction of CuCl₂ with benzylamine in methanol solution.

Racemic binaphthyldiamine 52 was then resolved into antipodes by selective precipitation of the diastereoisomeric salts with the two enantiomers of the camphosulfonic acid from a mixture of CH₂Cl₂, water and methanol. The enantiomeric excess was evaluated by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase and by specific optical rotation power: the ee found were 98% for the (R)-binaphthylamine and 99% for the (S)-binaphthylamine 53.

The two binaphthyldiamine enantiomers were then converted into the double diazonium salts that was reacted, according to a Sandmeyer-type reaction effected with KBr and HgBr, into the
(R)- and (S)-2,2'-dibromo-1,1'-binaphthalene 54. The diazonium salts were prepared by reaction of the bisamine with sodium nitrite in sulfuric acid and pyridine, keeping the temperature under -5°C; a solution of urea was added to the reaction mixture in order to remove nitrous acid excess before the addition of the metal bromide salts. The yields varied between 45 and 60%, and the enantiomeric excesses, checked by chiral HPLC on CSP, were found to be 96% for the (R)-2,2'-dibromo-1,1'-binaphthalene (R)-55 and 98% for the (S)-2,2'-dibromo-1,1'-binaphthalene (S)-55.

The functionalization of the binaphthalenic scaffold was first carried out by applying the classical Stille procedure, successfully employed for the synthesis of the 3,3'-bithianaphtene-based derivatives, but, in this case, the synthesis unexpectedly failed.

The Suzuki reaction was then selected as an alternative approach and the (R)-dibromoderivative was reacted with 5-(4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)-2,2'-bithiophene in a 3:1:1 mixture of toluene, water and ethanol, in the presence of sodium carbonate as base and Pd-tetrakis as catalyst.

Under these experimental conditions the (R)-2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-binaphthalene ((R)-BNT$_4$) (R)-55 and (S)-2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-binaphthalene ((S)-BNT$_4$) (S)-55.

Figure 91: 2-(1,1'-binaphthalen-2-yl)-2,2'-bithiophene, Suzuki's reaction by-product.
Some attempts of modify the base involved were performed in order to improve the yields of the Suzuki coupling reaction by extensively changing the experimental conditions, but no significant results were achieved.\cite{68,69}

Despite the low yields, however, a very encouraging enantiomeric excess of 96% was obtained, evaluated by HPLC on CSP (Figure 92 A).

The same procedure was then applied to the preparation of the S enantiomer which was obtained with identical results (Scheme 21) in terms both of yields and enantiomeric excess. Specific optical rotation power values were found to be +207° for the R enantiomer and -206° for the S antipode.

![Figure 92](image)

Figure 92: A) Enantiomeric purity control of (\(\text{\((R)\)-\(\text{BN}_2\text{Ta}_4\)\)}) 61 through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase. B) Enantiomeric purity control of (\(\text{\((S)\)-\(\text{BN}_2\text{Ta}_4\)\)}) 62 through HPLC on a chiral stationary phase.

Despite the numbers of steps involved, we considered this synthetic strategy as extremely interesting under multiple points of view: first of all, all the reactions can be carried out on large
scale and do not require expensive chiral reagents. The second important point is that the conversion of the diamine into the dibromo-binaphthalene and the Suzuki coupling do not influence the configurational stability of the stereogenic axis, keeping the enantiomeric purity substantially unchanged.

In Figure 93 A, the complete cyclic voltammetric pattern of monomeric BN$_2$T$_4$, recorded at 200 mV s$^{-1}$ potential scan rate in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$ is reported: the peaks in the cathodic region were not observable because of the use of CH$_2$Cl$_2$ that narrow the potential window.

![Figure 93: A) Complete CV pattern BN$_2$T$_4$ monomer, 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, solvent: CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$. B) Potentiodynamic electro-oxidation of (S)-BN$_2$T$_4$ on GC electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate, 0.5 mM of BN$_2$T$_4$ in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ + 0.1 M TBAPF$_6$.](image)

From electrochemical analysis, BN$_2$T$_4$ appeared relatively similar to its bithianaphthene counterpart: oxidation potentials, however, were shifted to more positive values in respect to
BT$_2$T$_4$ because of the worse conjugation in the naphthalene compared to thianaphthene. Additionally, the oxidation peak was a merge of two oxidation electron transfer located on the two α homotopic positions: this means that the two halves of the monomer are barely interacting (less then for BT$_2$T$_4$).

BN$_2$T$_4$ was able to oligomerize on electrode surface (Figure 93 B) giving a stable oligomeric film, suitable for enantiorecognition tests.

Our research group is performing some profilometry experiments in order to correlate the morphology and homogeneity of the films with enantiorecognition capability: it was observed, indeed, that some variables (like deposition scan rate, number of deposition cycles and concentration of the starting monomer) deeply influence the quality of the final film. Electroooligomerization was performed in this case at 50 mV s$^{-1}$ for the above-mentioned reasons because no enantiodiscrimination was observed on the films obtained applying a 200 mV s$^{-1}$ scan rate.

Enantiorecognition tests were carried out on enantiopure oligomeric (S)-ec-p(BN$_2$T$_4$) in the presence of (R)- and (S)-enantiopure N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylethylamine as chiral probes. The cyclic voltammogram depicted in Figure 94 displayed the presence of two oxidative peaks for each enantiomer. The first peak did not display any enantiodiscrimination and was related to the oxidation of the chiral probes on the bare glassy carbon electrode; on the other hand, the second oxidation peak was related to the oxidation of the probes on the chiral oligomeric network surface and displayed a difference of 80 mV between the two enantiopure probes. This behaviour can be ascribed to the irregularity of the film surface: the presence of a nanoporous structure allowed the interaction of the probes both with the film surface and the unfunctionalized electrode. An additional proof of this trend was observed for the achiral ferrocene probe (grey line in Figure 94): also in this case, two oxidation peaks can be observed due to the two surfaces where the oxidation processes can take place.
7. Inherently chiral spider-like oligothiophenes

Recently the synthesis and large-scale production of materials based on multithiophene structure has attracted considerable attention, especially in the field of diodes, photovoltaic or photoluminescent devices. Furthermore, the possibility to tune the nature of the substituent, the inter-ring connectivity, the molecular symmetry or shape is considered a strong advantage in the different application of these materials. Multi- branched oligothiophene in particular are peculiar structures due to their 3D conjugated architectures endowed with isotropic charge transport and optical properties; at the same time the present high chemical stability and remarkable solubility in organic non-polar solvents. Among this class of materials, different structure, as swivel-cruciform, star and X-shaped, and dendrimeric oligothiophenes have been reported together with their application as sensitive materials for OFETs and photovoltaic devices.

In 2010 the synthesis and the computational investigation of several examples of a class of oligothiophenes (spider-like) was reported. These compounds resulted to be promising materials for applications as active layers in multifunctional organic devices, where fine tuning between charge transport ability, intermolecular interactions and light emission efficiency is crucial.
Particularly interesting for the aim of the present research project resulted to be the octathiophene T'8₄ (Figure 95) characterized by a 2,2'-bithiophene core fully functionalized with six thiophene units. The subscript 4 in the nick-name indicates the length of the longest α-conjugated thiophene chain.

A new inherently chiral monomer which is a constitutional isomer of T'8₄, characterized by the same thiophene numbers but with a different 3,3' core, was designed.

The synthesis started from the commercially available 3-bromothiophene which was treated with n-BuLi and the resulting anion was submitted to an oxidative coupling in the presence of CuCl₂ to give the 3,3'-bithiophene 58 in high yields. The bithiophene was hexabrominated with liquid bromine in CS₂ at reflux. The use of a dangerous solvent like carbon disulfide is mandatory since in other experimental condition it was not possible to perbrominate the atropisomeric scaffold. T₈₃ 60 was obtained in moderate yields by a Stille reaction coupling between the hexabromo-3,3'-bithiophene and 2-tributylstannyliothiophene in the presence of Pd(0)tetrakis.

![Scheme 22: Synthesis of 2,2',4,4',5,5'-tetra(2-thienyl)-3,3'-bithiophene (T₈₃).]
DFT calculations, performed by Prof. Rocco Martinazzo of Università degli Studi di Milano, suggested a racemization energy barrier very high (178.74 kJ mol⁻¹), thereby granting the configurational stability of the enantiomers. Furthermore, DFT calculation gave information about the π-electron distribution on the different thiophene rings: the equilibrium geometry of the most stable conformer (depicted in Figure 96 for the R enantiomer) exhibits two homotopic α-terthiophene units orthogonal to each other with the three rings coplanar and the 2-thienyl groups in β-position nearly perpendicular to them.

Lastly, calculations revealed that both the HOMO and the HOMO-1 orbitals have sizable amplitude on the α-terthiophene moieties and modest weight on the β-connected units; for this reason, the preferred electrooxidation-electrooligomerization sites resulted to be the four α-positions of the two homotopic α-conjugated fragments and the compound resulted to be suitable for an oxidative electrooligomerization.

The redox properties of T8₃ were investigated by cyclic voltammetry in different solvents (CH₂Cl₂, ACN and butylmethylimidazolium hexafluophosphate ionic liquid). In ACN and (BMIM)PF₆ both oxidation and reduction peaks can be observed, affording to estimate HOMO–LUMO gaps for the molecule, 2.93 and 2.89 eV respectively. Furthermore, in the anodic window, a two-peak oxidation system is clearly observed in all the solvents: this behaviour can be attributed to the presence of two equivalent redox centers reciprocally interacting in space. Additionally, the absence of symmetrical return peaks is a clear evidence of the formation of electron transfer products arising from a coupling of the radical cations in α-terminal positions.
Inherently chiral spider-like oligothiophenes

Figure 97: Complete CV patterns of T8₃ monomer (0.5 mM). 200 mV s⁻¹ scan rate on the GC electrode in different solvents. Blue curve: dichloromethane + 0.1 M TBA PF₆; red curve: ACN + 0.1 M TBA PF₆; yellow curve: (BMIM)PF₆ ionic liquid (x 5).

Due to its intrinsic properties, T8₃ underwent to electrochemical oxidation and very regular electroactive films grew (Figure 98) on all supports and in all solvents, and the stability of the oligomeric films was evaluated. Furthermore the electrodeposited films were stable upon subsequent oxidative potential cycling in a monomer-free solution.

Figure 98: Potentiodynamic electro-oxidation of T8₃ on GC electrode. Thirty-six consecutive cycles, 50 mVs⁻¹ scan rate, 10 mM solution of T8₃ in CH₂Cl₂ + 0.1 M TBAF₆.

The resolution of racemic T8₃ by HPLC on a chiral stationary phase presented some difficulties related to the low-resolution factor (a = 1.11), so that only very low amounts of the enantiopure...
dextrorotatory (+)-T8₃ first eluted antipode (15 mg) could be obtained, while an 84% enantiomeric purity was the highest value achieved for the more retained levorotatory enantiomer. The configuration assignment to the enantiomers was performed by comparison of the experimental CD curves (Figure 99 B) with that calculated for the (S)-antipode, which corresponds to the first eluted dextrorotatory antipode.

The enantiorecognition ability of enantiopure oligo-T8₃ films was tested with two structurally different probes and two different protocols, previously developed for the oligo-BT₂T₄ films. The enantiopure monomer was electrodeposited on Au screen-printed electrodes (SPE) from a drop of the monomer solution in (BMIM)PF₆ ionic liquid (36 oligomerization potential cycles, T8₃ conc. = 12 mM, scan rate = 50 mV s⁻¹).

The first test was performed with (R)- and (S)-N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylethylamine probes, (enantiopure and as racemate), chosen for their electrochemical reversibility and commercial availability (Figure 100 A and B). An impressive and specular discrimination was obtained for the enantiopure probes of the ferrocenylamine on the enantiopure oligo-T8₃ electrode surfaces, with a peak separation of ~ 250 mV and, as observed for BT₂T₄, the probe’s enantiomer that showed the lower oxidative potential on the (R)-film was oxidized at a higher potential on the (S)-film and vice versa.

Moreover, enantioselectivity tests were carried out with racemic probe (Figure 100 C): in this case, peak separation was significantly lower (about 150 mV). Finally, for the racemate of the probe, the peak potentials are shifted to more positive potentials with respect to those observed for the pure enantiomers of the probe. This suggests the occurrence of some reciprocal interaction of the two antipodes in the sensing process within the chiral film.
Inherently chiral spider-like oligothiophenes

The second test was performed on enantiopure L- and D-DOPA (0.016 M) in 0.05 M HCl, using (R)-oligo-T83 film deposited by electrooxidation on the Au SPE. Similarly, to what observed in the first test, a neat enantiodiscrimination was achieved, although with a less pronounced peak separation (60–70 mV) (Figure 101).
Based on the peculiar structural characteristics of T8₃, the possibility of using the racemate as co-monomer able to produce a 3D architecture in the construction of the rigid tridimensional framework MIPs[81] capable of selective hosting a tridimensional molecule in tailored cavities was considered.

In the MIP synthesis, a cross-linking and functional monomer is co-polymerized in the presence of a selected template, which is subsequently removed from the resulting MIP, leaving empty molecularly imprinted cavities capable of recognizing the original imprinter (Figure 100).[82]

In collaboration with the group of professor Kutner of Institute of Physical Chemistry Polish Academy of Sciences of Warsaw, a MIP imprinted with the 5′-TATAAA-3′-oligonucleotide was prepared in which T8₃ acts as a cross-linking monomer.

For the TATAAA imprinting the bis[2-(5,2′-bithienyl-)methane functional monomers, reported in Figure 102, bearing thymine and adenine pendant were used.

The possibility of employing the T8₃ monomer also as racemate, represents an added value considering that its resolution is a very difficult process.
Inherently chiral spider-like oligothiophenes

Figure 102: Structural formulas of the templating molecule, 5'-TATAA-3' and bis[2-(5,2'-bithienyl-)]methane functional co-monomers.
The present PhD thesis research was focused mainly on the design of new inherently chiral monomers and on their applications as chiral sensors in the fields of OSCs. Specifically, we focused on new possible application of BT$_2$T$_4$, the parent inherently chiral monomer; in particular we investigated its application as donor in bulk-heterojunction solar cells in combination with commonly used acceptors, namely C$_{60}$ and PCBM. Preliminary results gave interesting indications on the more promising strategies to adopt in the design of these kind of donor materials, even if the measured performances could not be compared with those reported in the specialized literature.

Furthermore, the library of inherent chiral monomers was expanded. New monomers based both on different atropisomeric backbone with respect to 3,3'-bithianaphthene or 2,2'-biindole and different side chain pendants were synthesized and characterized. In particular, from this investigation the following aspects can be underline:

- The concept of inherent chirality and the application of inherent chiral oligomeric films in the field of chiral sensors can be extended over different atropisomeric cores. 3,3'-Bithianaphthene, 2,2'-biindole, spider-like oligothiophene and 1,1'-binaphthalene showed their potentialities for this application with interesting results.
- Film morphology is essential for obtaining reproducible and remarkable enantiorecognition tests. The presence of nanoporous structure in the oligomeric film leads to the interaction of the chiral probes also with the bare electrode and not only with the chiral film deposited on it. Two peaks (one for the oxidation of the probes on the bare surface and one for the oxidation of the probes on the oligomer surface) were observed, due to the irregularity of the film surface.
- A fine tuning of the monomer is necessary in order to obtain a final material endowed with exhibits appropriate properties. A compromise between monomer solubility, racemate resolution feasibility, processability and film stability must be achieved in order to obtain a racemic material easily resolvable but at the same time able to form stable films under repeated oxidative cycles.
- Considering the same atropisomeric core, i.e. 3,3'-bithianaphthene, the modification of the side chain pendants deeply modify the optical properties. Under this point of view, particularly interesting could be the preparation of chiral optical devices, able to
combine peculiar optical properties with the presence of a stereogenic element like stereogenic axes.

- A possible correlation between dihedral angle and enantiorecognition capability could be observed. Considering the enantiorecognition tests carried out on the parent compounds BT$_2$T$_4$ (82°), T$_8$ (109°) and IND$_2$T$_4$Me (115°) in the presence of (R)-(+) and (S)-(−)-N,N-dimethyl-1-ferrocenylethylamine ferrocene as chiral probes, a distance of 200 mV between the oxidation peaks was found for the 3,3′-bithianaphthene derivative, 250 mV for the spider-like derivative and 300 mV for the 2,2′-biindole derivative.

Finally, considering the future evolution of the present research project, the development of additionally methods suitable for the racemate resolution seems to be a foundamental target.

An interesting approach could be the introduction of two carboxylic groups on the 3,3′-bithianaphthene or the 2,2′-biindole core in order to resolve their racemate through a selective precipitation of diastereoisomeric salts formed with an appropriate chiral base. The structure of three possible new monomers are depicted in Figure 103. In the case of the 2,2′-biindole derivatives the introduction of the carboxylic groups could be performed by N-alkylation, or by synthesizing a suitable 2,2′-biindole scaffold starting from the commercially available 4-amino-3-iodobenzoic acid.

On the contrary, the synthesis of the 3,3′-bithianaphthene derivative would result more complicate and it would require the synthesis of an appropriate thianaphthene derivative synthesized ad hoc.

![Figure 103](image1.png)

Figure 103: Structural formulas of BT$_2$T$_4$ and IND$_2$T$_4$ derivatives functionalized with carboxylic groups, suitable for the resolution of the racemates through classical methods.

The last considered frontier in the synthesis of new inherently chiral monomer is the synthesis of new 2,2′-biindole monomers by exploiting the expertise achieved in the synthesis of side chain pendants.
In particular, the introduction of other substituents, like bis-EDOT pendants appeared to be an interesting target due to the possibility of obtaining soluble derivatives through the introduction of lipophilic chains on the nitrogen atoms.

Figure 104: Structural formulas of IND2E4.
9. Experimental Section

9.1. General Conditions

All the reactions were carried out in anhydrous conditions in flame-dried glassware with magnetic stirring under nitrogen or argon atmosphere, unless otherwise stated. The solvents for reactions were distilled over the following drying agents and transferred under nitrogen: CHCl₃ (P₂O₅), ACN (CaCl₂). Dry Et₂O, THF, toluene, DMF and MeOH (over molecular sieves in bottles with crown cap) were purchased from Sigma Aldrich, Alfa Aesar or Acros Organics and stored under nitrogen.

The reactions were monitored by analytical thin-layer chromatography (TLC) using pre-coated TLC sheets ALUGRAM-Xtra SIL G/UV254 (0.2 mm layer thickness; Macherey-Nagel). Visualization was accomplished by irradiation with a UV lamp (365 nm and/or 254 nm respectively). Gravimetric chromatography was performed using silica gel (particle size 0.63-2.00 mm) as stationary phase, flash column chromatography was performed using silica gel (60 Å, particle size 0.4-0.064 mm) as stationary phase, following the procedure by Still and co-workers.[83]

¹H-NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AVANCE spectrometer operating at 400.13 MHz or Bruker FT 300 operating at 300.16 MHz or Bruker AMX 300 operating at 300.16 MHz. Proton chemical shifts are reported in ppm (δ) with the solvent reference relative to tetramethylsilane (TMS) employed as the internal standard (CDCl₃ δ = 7.26 ppm; CD₂Cl₂, δ = 5.32 ppm; [D]₆DMSO, δ = 2.50 ppm; [D]₆acetone, δ = 2.05 ppm). The following abbreviations are used to describe spin multiplicity: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, m = multiplet, br = broad signal, dd = doublet-doublet, td = triplet-doublet. ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AVANCE spectrometer 400 MHz operating at 100.56 MHz, with complete proton decoupling. Carbon chemical shifts are reported in ppm (δ) relative to TMS with the respective solvent resonance as the internal standard (CDCl₃, δ = 77.16 ppm; CD₂Cl₂, δ = 54.00 ppm; [D]₆DMSO, δ = 39.51 ppm; [D]₆acetone, δ = 29.84 ppm, 206.26 ppm). The coupling constant values are given in Hz.

Melting point were determined on a Stuart Melting Point SMP30 instrument.

Optical rotation values were measured on an automatic polarimeter Jasco P1010 with a 1 dm cell at the sodium D line (λ = 589 nm), interfaced with a Spectra Manager software, 1.53.00 version from Jasco Company.
High resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were performed on a Fourier Transform Ion Cyclotron Resonance (FT-ICR) Mass Spectrometer APEX II & Xmass software (Bruker Daltonics) – 4.7 T Magnet (Magnex) equipped with ESI source, available at CIGA (Centro Interdipartimentale Grandi Apparecchiature) c/o Università degli Studi di Milano.

Low resolution mass spectra (MS) were acquired either on a Thermo-Finnigan LCQ Advantage mass spectrometer (ESI ion source), or on a VG AUTOSPEC M246 spectrometer (EI).

UV-vis spectroscopy measurements were performed with the UV2501 PC UV-vis recording spectrometer of Shimadzu (Kyoto, Japan) operating either in a transmission or reflection mode.

MALDI-TOF mass spectrometric measurements were performed on a Bruker autoflex speed spectrometer. The polymer samples concentration was set to 3 mg mL⁻¹. A poly(ethylene glycol) standard was used for internal calibration (3 mg mL⁻¹). Matrix trans-2-[(4-tert-butylphenyl)-2-methyl-2-propenylidene]malononitrile (DCTB, 10 mg mL⁻¹) containing the ionizer sodium trifluoromethanesulfonate was used. The mixed samples were prepared by the dried-droplet method or with a solid-phase method used for non-soluble polymers.[84]

**In-situ** Spectroelectrochemical Measurements on thin films were conducted using an Autolab PGSTAT101 potentiostat (Metrohm) and a Zeiss UV–vis spectrometer equipped with a MCS621 Vis II spectrometer cassette and a CLH600F lamp in a custom-built three electrode-one compartment quartz cell at room temperature under argon atmosphere. The counter and reference electrode consisted of a Pt wire and an AgCl-coated Ag wire (pseudoreference electrode). Transparent ITO coated float glass slides (≤20 Ω/sq, PGO, Germany) (~2 × 1 cm²) were used as the working electrode and for background measurements a non-modified ITO-coated float glass slide was used. Electrolyte solutions (0.1 M NBu₄PF₆/MeCN) were deaerated by argon bubbling before use.

**In-situ** conductance measurements were performed using an electrolyte gated transistor setup with interdigitated Pt electrodes (distance = 10 μm) as the working electrodes.[85] The CV experiments were performed at room temperature under argon atmosphere using an Autolab PGSTAT101 potentiostat (Metrohm) with a Pt wire as counter electrode and an AgCl coated Ag wire directly immersed into the electrolyte solution as pseudoreference electrode. Additionally, a constant bias of 10 mV was applied between the combs of the interdigitated electrode using a
second potentiostat (DropSens, Spain). Electrolyte solutions (0.1 M NBu₄PF₆/MeCN) were deaerated by argon bubbling before use.

9.1.1. Materials
Commercially available reagents were purchased from commercial suppliers (TCI Chemicals, ACROS, Sigma Aldrich) and used as received: thianaphthene, sodium acetate, potassium acetate, bromine, n-BuLi (1.6 M and 2.5 M in n-hexane), copper dichloride, 2,2′-bithiophene, tributyltin chloride, Pd(PPh₃)₄, 5-tributhyltin-thiophene, 2,5-dibromo-thiophene, magnesium(0), trimethyltin chloride, 1-bromo butane, 1,3-(dppp)NiCl₂, 2-bromothiophene, diisopropylamine, trimethylsilyl chloride, 2,3-dibromo-thiophene, 1,2-(dppe)NiCl₂, TBAF, EDOT, 3,3′-dibromo-2,2′-bithiophene, (±)-BINAP, potassium tert-butoxide, n-octyl amine, 3-thiophen-carboxaldehyde, Vitamin B₃, pyridine, copper sulfate pentahydrate, potassium hydroxide, aluminum trichloride, copper(0), quinoline, n-hexyl bromide, potassium iodide, benzothiadiazole, TMP, TMSA, triethyl amine, potassium fluoride, copper iodide, trifluoracetic anhydride, potassium carbonate, methyl iodide, ethyl iodide, propyl iodide, (R)-phenyl ethanol, (S)-phenyl ethanol, sodium hydride, ethyl bromoacetate, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, n-hexyl bromide, benzylamine, 2-naphtol, ammonium sulfite monohydrate, ammonia (30%), (R)-CSA, (S)-CSA, sodium nitrite, urea, mercury(I) bromide, potassium bromide, 3-bromo-thiophene, Pd₂(DBA)₄, 2,2′-bithiophene-boronic acid, zinc(0).

9.1.2. Codes and abbreviations used
BINAP: (±)-2,2′-bis(diphenylphosphino)-1,1′-binaphthalene;
1,2-(dppe)NiCl₂: [1,2-bis(diphenylphosphino)ethane]-nickel(II)chloride;
1,3-(dppp)NiCl₂: [1,3-bis(diphenylphosphino)propane]-nickel(II)chloride;
(R)-CSA: (1R)-(+)camphorsulfonic acid;
(S)-CSA: (1S)-(−)camphorsulfonic acid;
Pd₂(DBA)₄: tris(dibenzylideneacetone)-dipalladium(0);
TBAF: tetra n-butylammonium fluoride;
TMSA: ethynyltrimethylsilane;
Pd(PPh₃)₄: tetrakis(triphenylphosphine)palladium(0) 97%;
PdCl₂(PPh₃)₂: bis(triphenylphosphine)palladium(II) dichloride 98%;
TMP: 2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine;
Vitamin B₁: thiamine hydrochloride;
2,2′-bithiophene-boronic acid: 5-(4,4,5,5-Tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)-2,2′-bithiophene;
9.2. Synthesis 2,2’-dibromo-3,3’-bithianaphthene, BT₂Br₂ (4)

9.2.1. Synthesis of 3-bromothianaphthene (2)

A solution of Br₂ (1.07 eq., 32 g, 200 mmol) in CHCl₃ (30 mL) was slowly added dropwise to a suspension of thianaphthene (1 eq., 25 g, 186 mmol) and sodium acetate (1.64 eq., 25 g, 305 mmol) in CHCl₃ (250 mL) under stirring over a period of 2 hours and keeping the temperature below 20°C. At the end of the addition the obtained orange solution was stirred at 20°C for 30 minutes. Afterwards water (150 mL) was added under stirring keeping the temperature below 20°C. The two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were washed with water, NaOH solution (1 M), dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give an orange oil. The product was purified by distillation in vacuum (17 mm Hg) to afford the desired product 2 as a colorless oil. Yield: 28.76 g (73%); B.p.: 140°C (17 mm Hg); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.91-7.79 (m, 2H), 7.56-7.35 (m, 3H).

9.2.2. Synthesis of 3,3’-bithianaphthene (3)

A solution of 3-bromothianaphthene (1 eq., 28.76 g, 135 mmol) in dry THF (52 mL) was added dropwise at -90°C to a 2.5 M n-BuLi solution (in n-hexane) (1.04 eq., 56 mL, 140 mmol) in dry
THF (98 mL). At the end of the addition the solution was stirred for 5 minutes and then anhydrous CuCl\(_2\) (1.6 eq., 29 g, 215 mmol) was added. The solution was stirred for one additional hour keeping the temperature at -90°C. Afterwards the temperature was raised to 0°C and 2 M aqueous NH\(_3\) solution (200 mL) was added; the phases were filtered over celite, separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\). The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO\(_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by crystallization from isopropanol to afford the desired product 3 as a white solid.\(^{[87]}\)

**Yield:** 4.84 g (49%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl\(_3\), 400 MHz): \(\delta = 7.97\) (d, \(J = 7.5\) Hz, 2H), 7.77 (d, \(J = 7.8\) Hz, 2H), 7.58 (s, 2H), 7.41 (q, \(J = 7.8\) Hz, 4H).

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**9.2.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (4)**

![Diagram of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (4)]

A solution of Br\(_2\) (2 eq., 0.77mL, 15 mmol) in CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\) (5 mL) was added to a mixture of 3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 2.0 g, 7.5 mmol) and potassium acetate (2 eq., 1.5 g, 15 mmol) in CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\) (15 mL) at room temperature and the reaction mixture was then stirred for 24 hours. After that, water was added and the phases were separated, the organic layer was dried over MgSO\(_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give a residue which was purified by crystallization from diisopropyl ether to afford the desired product 4 as a white solid.\(^{[28]}\)

**Yield:** 1.7 g (55%);

M.p.: 171°C;

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl\(_3\), 400 MHz): \(\delta = 7.81\) (d, \(J = 8.0\) Hz, 2H), 7.40–7.30 (m, 2H), 7.30–7.20 (m, 4H);

\(^{13}\)C NMR (CDCl\(_3\), 100 MHz) \(\delta = 140.3, 138.6, 130.5, 125.4, 125.3, 123.4, 122.3, 117.3\);

M.S. (EI): 422, 424 (77%), 426 (t, M\(^+\)), 344, 342 (d, M\(^+\)-Br, 18%), 264 (M\(^+\)-2Br, 100%).
9.3. **Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophene-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$T$_4$ (1)**

9.3.1. **Synthesis of 5-(tributylstannyl)-2,2'-bithiophene (5)**

\[
\text{5-Thiophene} + \text{BuLi} \rightarrow \text{5-tributylstannyl-bithiophene (5)}
\]

A 1.6 M n-BuLi solution (in n-hexane) (1.1 eq., 1.25 mL, 1.92 mmol) was added to a solution of 2,2'-bithiophene (1 eq., 291 mg, 1.75 mmol) in dry THF (25 mL) over a period of 5 minutes at −78 °C; then the mixture was stirred for 30 min. Tributyltin chloride (1.2 eq., 690 mg, 2.1 mmol) was added, and the mixture was stirred for 40 min at −78 °C and then for 12 hours at room temperature. The mixture was quenched with saturated NH$_4$Cl solution, the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with Et$_2$O. The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO$_4$ and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product 5 as a brown oil that is used without any further purification.$^{[88]}$

Yield from $^1$H NMR: (83%);

$^1$H-NMR (CDCl$_3$, 300 MHz) δ = 7.28 (d, J = 3.4 Hz, 1H), 7.14–7.17 (m, 1H), 7.05 (d, J = 3.4 Hz, 1H), 7.05 (d, J = 3.4 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (dd, J = 5.5 Hz, J = 3.4 Hz, 1H), 1.56–1.61 (m, 6H), 1.35 (m, 6H), 1.09–1.14 (m, 6H), 0.90 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 9H).

9.3.2. **Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophene-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1)**

\[
\text{5-tributylstannyl-bithiophene (3 eq., 3.27 g, 7.2 mmol) and Pd(PPh$_3$)$_4$ (0.15 eq., 420 mg, 0.36 mmol) were added under nitrogen atmosphere to a warm stirred solution of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (4) (1 eq., 1 g, 2.4 mmol) in dry toluene (40 mL). The mixture was refluxed}
\]

128
for 24 hours, then additional amounts of 5-tributylstannyl-2,2'-bithiophene (5) (1.4 eq., 1.1 g, 3.4 mmol) and Pd(PPh3)4 (0.1 eq., 280 mg, 0.24 mmol) were added. The mixture was refluxed for 4 hours, then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give a residue, which was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH2Cl2 = 6 : 4) to afford the desired product 1 as a yellow solid.\[28]

Yield: 1.4 g (98%);
M.p.: 86 °C;

\[^1\text{H} \text{NMR} (\text{CDCl}_3, 400 \text{ MHz})\]: \(\delta = 7.87 \text{ (d, } J = 8.0 \text{ Hz, } 2\text{H), 7.38–7.30 (m, } 2\text{H), 7.23–7.17 (m, } 4\text{H), 7.12 (dd, } J = 4.9 \text{ Hz, } J = 1.0 \text{ Hz, } 2\text{H), 7.09 (d, } J = 4.0 \text{ Hz, } 2\text{H), 6.98–6.87 (m, } 6\text{H});\n
\[^{13}\text{C} \text{NMR} (\text{CDCl}_3, 100 \text{ MHz})\]: \(\delta = 140.4, 138.9, 138.1, 136.8, 136.7, 134.4, 127.7, 127.1, 125.2, 125.0, 124.6, 123.9, 123.7, 122.9, 122.0;\n
MS (EI): 594 (M\(^+\), 18%), 430 (100%), 330 (95%).

9.4. Synthesis of stereoisomeric mixture BT2T4 open-chain dimer (6)

A 1.6 M \(n\)-BuLi solution (in \(n\)-hexane) (1.14 eq., 600 \(\mu\)L, 0.96 mmol) was added dropwise under argon atmosphere to a solution of 1 (1 eq., 500 mg, 0.84 mmol) in dry THF (25 mL) and freshly distilled TMEDA (2 eq., 250 \(\mu\)L, 1.68 mmol) under stirring at \(-78\) °C in 30 minutes. Within this time the mixture became dark orange. Then, solid CuCl2 (3 eq., 340 mg, 2.53 mmol) was added and the mixture was allowed to warm up to room temperature and stirred for 20 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the residue was dissolved in CH2Cl2 and washed with 1 M HCl and water. The organic layer was dried over MgSO4, filtered and then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The orange brown solid was purified by column chromatography (THF : \(n\)-hexane = 4 : 6) to afford the desired product 6 in a stereoisomeric mixture (racemate/mesoform).\[34]\n
Yield: 141.2 mg (28%).

\[^1\text{H} \text{NMR} (\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2, 500 \text{ MHz})\]: \(\delta = 7.96 \text{ (d, } J = 8.8 \text{ Hz, } 4\text{H), 7.41 (t, } J = 7.4 \text{ Hz, } 4\text{H), 7.28 (t, } J = 7.4 \text{ Hz, } 4\text{H), 7.15-7.24 (m, } 10\text{H), 7.03-6.92 (m, } 10\text{H), 7.29 (d, } J = 3.8 \text{ Hz, } 2\text{H).}
13C NMR (CD$_2$Cl$_2$, 100 MHz): δ = 140.8, 140.7, 139.3, 138.7, 138.7, 137.3, 137.1, 136.9, 136.4, 136.0, 135.0, 134.7, 128.2, 127.7, 127.6, 125.8, 125.7, 125.4, 125.2, 125.1, 124.8, 124.4, 124.1, 124.0, 123.1, 123.0, 122.5.

9.5. Synthesis of BT$_2$T$_4$ cyclic tetramer (7)

A solution of 6 (1 eq., 140 mg, 0.118 mmol) in dry chloroform (20 mL) was added dropwise under argon atmosphere into a slurry of FeCl$_3$ (2.5 eq., 90 mg, 0.55 mmol) in dry chloroform (180 mL), under stirring at room temperature over a period of 2 hours. The dark purple mixture was stirred overnight, then the volume of the solvent was reduced to 70 mL by evaporation under reduced pressure and the remaining solution poured into MeOH (150 mL). The mixture became bright orange, the precipitate was recovered by filtration and suspended in MeOH (30 mL), then hydrazine (4 drops) was added. The orange-red solid (130 mg) was recovered by filtration and extracted with THF using a Soxhlet apparatus, affording a soluble residue. The solid was dissolved in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ (20 mL), the suspension was filtered and the resulting solution concentrated to 3 mL. n-Hexane (7 mL) was added to the solution and the orange solid was collected after centrifugation. This procedure was repeated 6 times to give 7 in a pure state.\[34] Yield: 12.0 mg (17%)

1H NMR (CD$_2$Cl$_2$, 400 MHz): δ(ppm) = 8.13 (m, 8H), 7.44 (m, 8H), 7.27 (m, 16H), 7.18 (m, 24H), 7.08 (m, 8H), 6.98 (m, 8H).

9.6. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT$_2$T$_6$ (10)
9.6.1. Synthesis of \(2,2':5',2''\)-terthiophene (8)

\[
\text{8}
\]

5-Tributylstannyl-thiophene (2.1 eq., 5.5 mL, 17.4 mmol) was added dropwise under nitrogen atmosphere to a stirred solution of 2,5-dibromo-thiophene (1 eq., 1 mL, 8.3 mmol), and \(\text{Pd(PPh}_3\text{)}_4\) (0.1 eq., 93 mg, 0.08 mmol) in dry toluene (50 mL). The solution was refluxed under stirring to reflux for 24 hours, then diluted with \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\); the collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over \(\text{MgSO}_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by flash chromatography (\(n\)-hexane : \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\) = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.\(^{[89]}\)

Yield: 1.19 g (58%);

\(^1\text{H-NMR (CDCl}_3\text{, 400 MHz) }\delta = 7.16 (d, J = 9.2 \text{ Hz, 2H}), 7.13 (d, J = 3.6 \text{ Hz, 2H}), 7.03 (s, 2H), 6.97 (t, J = 4.4 \text{ Hz, 2H}).\)

9.6.2. Synthesis of \(5\)-(trimethylstannyl)-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (9)

\[
\text{9}
\]

A 2.5 M \(n\)-BuLi solution (in \(n\)-hexane) (1 eq., 2.4 mL, 6 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of \(2,2':5',2''\)-terthiophene (1 eq., 1.5 g, 6 mmol) in dry THF (35 mL) over a period of 5 minutes at \(-78 \text{ °C},\) and the mixture was stirred for 20 minutes. A trimethyltin chloride (1.1 eq., 1.3 g, 6.6 mmol) solution in dry THF (15 mL) was added, and the mixture was stirred for 1 hour at \(-78 \text{ °C}\) and then for 24 hours at room temperature. The mixture was quenched with water; the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\). The collected organic phases were dried over \(\text{MgSO}_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product as a brown oil used without any further purification.\(^{[90]}\)

Yield from \(^1\text{H NMR: (84%)};\)

\(^1\text{H-NMR (CDCl}_3\text{, 300 MHz) }\delta = 7.30 (m, 1H), 7.24 (m, 1H), 7.19 (m, 1H), 7.05 (d, J = 3.4 \text{ Hz, 1H}), 7.12-7.09 (m, 2H), 7.06-7.03 (m, 1H), 0.27 (t, J = 7.0 \text{ Hz, 9H}).\)
9.6.3. Synthesis of 2,2′-bis(2,2′:5′,2″-terthiophen-5-yl)-3,3′-bithianaphthene (10)

5-Trimethylstannyl-2,2′:5′,2″-terthiophene (2 eq., 4.8 mmol) and Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.05 eq., 260 mg, 0.25 mmol) were added under nitrogen atmosphere to a warm stirred solution of 2,2′-dibromo-3,3-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 980 mg, 2.3 mmol) in dry toluene (45 mL). The mixture was refluxed for 24 hours, then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give a residue, which was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as an orange solid.

Yield: 800 mg (46%);
M.p.: 194°C;

¹H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz): δ = 7.87 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.45–7.38 (m, 4H), 7.28–7.24 (m, 6H), 7.22 (d, J = 4.9 Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 7.06–7.03 (m, 4H), 6.92 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 2H);

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 140.4, 138.6, 138.2, 137.0, 136.7, 136.6, 135.6, 134.5, 127.9, 127.2, 125.3, 125.1, 124.8, 124.6, 124.3, 123.8, 123.7, 122.9, 122.1;

M.S. (ESI): 758.0.

9.7. Synthesis of 2,2′-bis[3′,4′-di-n-butyl-(2,2′:5′,2″-terthiophen)-5-yl]-3,3′-bithianaphthene, BT₂TeBu (15)
9.7.1. Synthesis of 3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (11)

![Chemical Structure of 3,4-di-n-butylthiophene](image)

1-Bromobutane (4.1 eq., 1.8 mL, 17 mmol) was added dropwise to magnesium turnings (2.87 eq., 281 mg, 12.5 mmol) in dry Et₂O (8 mL) at room temperature, heating gently to improve the magnesium dissolution. The mixture was stirred at room temperature until the disappearance of magnesium and the obtained solution was added dropwise into a solution of 3,4-dibromothiophene (1 eq., 1 g, 4.15 mmol) and 1,3-(dppp)NiCl₂ (0.02 eq., 45 mg, 0.08 mmol) in dry Et₂O (15 mL) at 0°C. The mixture was refluxed for 24 hours and then poured into a 10% HCl aqueous solution. The phases were separated and the aqueous layer was extracted with Et₂O. The collected organic phases were washed with water and brine, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by flash chromatography (n-hexane) to afford the desired product as a colorless liquid.\([91]\)

Yield: 733 mg (90%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 6.89 (s, 2H), 2.53 (t, J = 6.1 Hz, 4H), 1.61 (m, 4H), 1.41 (m, 4H), 0.89 (t, J = 11.3, 6H).

9.7.2. Synthesis of 2,5-dibromo-3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (12)

![Chemical Structure of 2,5-dibromo-3,4-di-n-butylthiophene](image)

A solution of Br₂ (2.3 eq., 0.7 mL, 13.5 mmol) in acetic acid (2 mL) was added dropwise over a period of 30 minutes into a 2:1 ratio solution of 3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (1 eq, 1.15 g, 5.25 mmol) in acetic acid (4 mL) and CH₂Cl₂ (2 mL). The red suspension obtained was quenched with saturated Na₂S₂O₃ aqueous solution. The phases were separated and the organic solution was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by chromatography (n-hexane) to afford the desired product as a colorless liquid.\([92]\)

Yield: 1.67 g (93%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 2.53 (m, 4H), 1.59 (m, 4H), 1.40 (m, 4H), 0.92 (t, J = 11.1, 6H)
9.7.3. **Synthesis of 3',4'-di-n-butyl-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (13)**

![Chemical structure](image)

Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.1 eq., 427 mg, 0.37 mmol) was added to a solution of 2,5-dibromo-3,4-di-n-butylthiophene (1 eq., 1.3 g, 3.67 mmol) and 5-tributylstannyl-thiophene (2.2 eq., 2.5 mL, 8.08 mmol) in dry toluene (40 mL). The reaction mixture was refluxed under stirring for 24 hours, then diluted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by flash chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 8 : 2) to afford the product as an orange solid.

Yield: 662 mg (50%);

^1^H-NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz) δ = 7.38 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.18 (br, 2H), 7.12 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 2.75 (t, J = 9.6 Hz, 4H), 1.64-1.44 (m, 8H), 0.98 (t, J = 9.8 Hz, 6H).

9.7.4. **Synthesis of 5-trimethylstannyl-(3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophene)) (14)**

![Chemical structure](image)

A 2.5 M n-BuLi solution (in n-hexane) (1 eq., 1.1 mL, 2.72 mmol) was added dropwise into a solution of 3',4'-dibutyl-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene (1 eq., 970 mg, 2.72 mmol) in dry THF (20 mL) over a period of 5 minutes at −78 °C; then the mixture was stirred for 20 min. A trimethyltin chloride (1 eq., 550 mg, 2.72 mmol) solution in dry THF (8 mL) was added, and the mixture was stirred for one hour at −78 °C and then for 24 hours at room temperature. The mixture was quenched with water, the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product as a brown oil used without further purification.

Yield from ^1^H NMR: (45%);

^1^H-NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ = 7.38 (m, 1H), 7.28 (m, 1H), 7.19 (m, 2H), 7.11 (m, 1H), 2.75 (m, 4H), 1.64-1.41 (m, 8H), 0.95 (m, 6H), 0.27 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 9H).
9.7.5. Synthesis of 2,2'-Bis[3',4'-di-n-butyl-(2,2':5',2''-terthiophen)-5-yl]-3,3'-bithianaphthene (15)

Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.1 eq., 45 mg, 0.06 mmol) was added to a solution of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 254 mg, 0.6 mmol) and 5-trimethylstanny1-(3',4'-di-n-butyl-2,2':5',2''-terthiophene) (2 eq., 1.2 mmol) in dry toluene (10 mL). The reaction mixture was refluxed under stirring for 24 hours, then diluted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by flash chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as an orange solid.

Yield: 135 mg (23%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.95 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.41 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.34 (d, J = 5.5 Hz, 2H), 7.30-7.23 (m, 6H), 7.13 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 7.08 (t, J = 5.6 Hz, 2H), 7.00 (d, J = 5.8 Hz, 2H), 2.66 (t, J = 9.1 Hz, 4H), 2.52 (t, J = 9.1 Hz, 4H), 1.51-1.41 (m, 12H), 1.24-1.20 (m, 6H), 0.95 (t, J = 9.4 Hz, 6H), 0.86 (t, J = 9.4 Hz, 6H);

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 140.3, 140.1, 138.2, 138.0, 137.1, 135.9, 135.0, 130.0, 129.3, 127.4, 126.7, 125.9, 125.6, 125.4, 125.3, 125.0, 124.6, 122.6, 122.1, 32.7, 27.8, 27.6, 22.9, 22.9, 13.8, 13.6;

M.S. (Ei): 594 (M⁺, 18%), 430 (100%), 330 (95%).

9.8. Synthesis of 2,2'-Bis(3,2-b:2',3'-dipyrrl-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT₂DTP₂ (18)

\[
\text{C}_\text{H}_{17}
\]

3,3’-Dibromo-2,2’-bithiophene (1 eq., 2 g, 6.17 mmol), potassium tert-butoxide (3.5 eq., 2.42 g, 21.6 mmol), \(\text{Pd(DBA)}_3\) (0.1 eq., 568 mg, 0.62 mmol) and \(\text{BINAP}\) (0.3 eq., 1.15 g, 1.85 mmol) were dissolved in dry \(p\)-xylene (100 mL) and the solution was stirred under argon atmosphere for 20 minutes at room temperature; then \(n\)-octylamine (1 eq., 1 mL, 6.17 mmol) was added to the mixture and the reaction mixture was refluxed for 24 hours. Then, the reaction was cooled to room temperature and water was added; the phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\). The collected organic phases were dried with \(\text{MgSO}_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography (\(n\)-hexane : \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\) 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow oil.\(^{93}\)

\[\text{Yield: 1.48 g (83%)};\]

\(^1\text{H NMR (CDCl}_3, 300 MHz): \delta = 7.15 \text{ (d, } J = 5.4 \text{ Hz, 2H), 7.03 \text{ (d, } J = 5.4 \text{ Hz, 2H), 4.22 \text{ (t, } J = 3.9 \text{, 2H), 1.89 \text{ (m, 2H, 1.34-1.26 \text{ (m, 10 H), 0.90 \text{ (t, } J = 7.2 \text{ Hz, 3H).}}}}\]

9.8.2. Synthesis of 2-trimethylstannyl-\(N\)-\(n\)-octyl-dithieno[3,2-\(b\):2',3'-\(d\)]pyrrole (17)

\[
\text{Bu}_3\text{Sn}
\]

\(n\)-BuLi (1.6 M in \(n\)-hexane) (1 eq., 2 mL, 3.33 mmol) was added to a solution of \(N\)-\(n\)-octyl-dithieno[3,2-\(b\):2',3'-\(d\)]pyrrole (1 eq., 970 mg, 3.33 mmol) in dry THF (30 mL) over a period of 5 minutes at \(-78\) °C, and the mixture was stirred for 20 min. Tributyltin chloride (1.1 eq., 0.9 mL, 3.66 mmol) was added, and the mixture was stirred for 1 hour at \(-78\) °C and then for 24 hours at room temperature. The mixture was quenched with water, the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with \(\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2\). The collected organic phases were dried over \(\text{MgSO}_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product as a brown oil used without further purification.\(^{94}\)

\[\text{Yield from } ^1\text{H NMR: (90%)};\]
1H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.08 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 1H), 6.97 (m, 3H), 4.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.85 (m, 2H), 1.59 (m, 6H) 1.34 (m, 16H), 1.13 (m, 6H), 0.86 (m, 12H).

9.8.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(N-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrole-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (18)

A mixture of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 346 mg, 0.82 mmol), 2-(trimethylstannyl)-N-octyl-dithieno[3,2-b:2',3'-d]pyrrole (3.5 eq., 1.3 g, 2.86 mmol) and Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.13 eq., 133 mg, 0.11 mmol) in dry DMF (20 mL) was heated until 100°C under argon atmosphere for 5 hours. Then, the reaction was cooled to room temperature and CH₂Cl₂ was added; the organic phase was washed 5 times with water and two times with a 1 M NaOH solution; the organic phases were dried with MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as an orange solid.

Yield: 470 mg (68%);

M.p.: 58°C;

1H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.91 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.38-7.32 (m, 2H), 7.23 (m, 4H), 7.18 (s, 2H), 7.07 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 2H); 6.88 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 4.08 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 4H), 1.77 (m, 4H), 1.26 (m, 20 H), 0.89 (t, J = 6.9 Hz, 6H);

13C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 145.4, 144.0, 140.9, 138.5, 137.8, 132.8, 124.9, 124.9, 123.9, 122.7, 121.9, 117.0, 114.7, 110.6, 109.9, 47.3, 31.8, 30.2, 29.7, 29.1, 29.1, 26.9, 22.6, 14.1;

M.S. (El): 844 (100%).
9.9. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(4,4'-di-\textit{n}-hexyl-4\textit{H}-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT\textsubscript{2}CPDT\textsubscript{2} (26)

9.9.1. Synthesis of 3-thiophenone (19)

A solution of 3-thiophene-carboxaldehyde (1 eq., 38.6 g, 345 mmol) in isopropanol (50 mL) was prepared setting the pH at 7 with ethanoic NaOH solution (1 M), then vitamin B\textsubscript{1} (0.07 eq., 8.6 g, 25 mmol) was added at room temperature under stirring. The pH was monitored during the reaction and adjusted with ethanoic NaOH at 9.1. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 12 hours, then a second amount of vitamin B\textsubscript{1} (0.03 eq., 4 g, 11.6 mmol) was added keeping the pH at 9.1. The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours and the obtained cloudy solution was filtered and a grey precipitate was collected. The solid was dissolved in CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2}, the organic phase was washed with water, dried over MgSO\textsubscript{4}, filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The product was crystallized from isopropanol to afford the desired product as a pale yellow solid.

Yield: 29.6 g (72%);

\textsuperscript{1}H NMR (CDCl\textsubscript{3}, 400 MHz): \(\delta = 8.07 \text{ (d, } J = 3.8, \text{ 1H)}, 7.54 \text{ (dd, } J = 5.2, J = 0.8 \text{ Hz, } 1 \text{H)}, 7.35 \text{ (dd, } J = 5.9, J = 1.0 \text{ Hz, } 1 \text{H)}, 7.12 \text{ (m, 2H)}, 7.03 \text{ (dd, } J = 4.8, J = 0.4 \text{ Hz, } 1 \text{H}), 5.86 \text{ (1H, s), 4.36 (br, 1H)}.\)
9.9.2. Synthesis of 3,3'-thienyl (20)

3-Thienoin (1 eq., 21.4 g, 95.6 mmol) was added to a solution of CuSO₄ · 5 H₂O (2.3 eq., 54.4 g, 218 mmol) in water (30 mL) and pyridine (50 mL) preheated at 60°C. The reaction mixture was stirred for 4 hours at 80°C, afterwards it was cooled to room temperature and a 10% with aqueous HCl solution was added until the solution color changed from blue to green. The phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with AcOEt. The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The product was recrystallized from isopropanol to afford the desired product as a pale yellow solid.¹⁹⁵

Yield: 19.1 g (90%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 8.36 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d, J = 5.4 Hz, 2H), 7.41 −7.39 (m, 2H).

9.9.3. Synthesis of (3,3'-dithienyl)glycolic acid (21)

3,3'-Thienyl (1eq., 17.2 g, 77 mmol) was diluted in a 90 mL 1:1 solution of KOH (4.4 eq., 13.5 g, 337 mmol) in ethanol/water and stirred under reflux for 10 minutes. The reaction mixture was cooled to 0°C and pH was adjusted to 1 by adding concentrated HCl. Afterwards the ethanol was evaporated and the reaction mixture was diluted with AcOEt. The organic phase was extracted with saturated NaHCO₃ solution. The aqueous phase was decolorized with charcoal and HCl (10%) was added to precipitate the product. The white precipitate was filtered and dissolved in diethyl ether. The organic phase was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The raw product was directly used in the next step without any further purification since it was unstable.¹⁹⁵

Yield: 16.7 g (93%).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.39 (dd, J = 3.1 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz 2H), 7.31 (dd J = 5.4 Hz, J = 3.1 Hz, 2H), 7.17 (dd, J = 5.4 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H).
9.9.4. Synthesis of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene-4-carboxylic acid (22)

![Chemical Structure](image)

Dry AlCl₃ (3.1 eq., 15.9 g, 119 mmol) was added to a solution of (3,3'-dithienyl)glycolic acid (1 eq., 9.12 g, 38 mmol) in benzene (200 mL) at 5°C under vigorous stirring. Afterwards the temperature of the reaction mixture was raised to room temperature and the it was stirred under reflux for 1 hour. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and a 5% HCl solution was added. The phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were washed with water and brine; the organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The product was obtained as a brown solid and was isolated without any further purification.⁹⁵

Yield: 7.3 g (87%);
M.p.: 166°C;
¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.21 (dd, J = 5.1 Hz, 4H), 4.63 (s, 1H).

9.9.5. Synthesis of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (23)

A suspension of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene-4-carboxylic acid (1 eq., 2.5 g, 6.85 mmol) and Cu(0) powder (0.36 eq, 160 mg, 2.45 mmol) in dry quinoline (16 mL) was heated at 100°C for 2 hours. The reaction mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature and then poured into a 5% HCl solution. The aqueous phase was extracted with diethyl ether. The collected organic phases were washed with water and brine; the organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as a white solid.⁹⁵

Yield: 1.06 g (87%);
¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.17 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 2H), 7.08 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 2H), 3.53 (s, 2H).
9.9.6. Synthesis of 4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (24)

A mixture of 4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (1 eq., 500 mg, 2.81 mmol), hexyl bromide (2.5 eq., 1.16 g, 7.02 mmol) and KI (0.026 eq., 12 mg, 0.075 mmol) in dry DMSO (50 mL) was cooled at 0°C. Then, KOH (3.2 eq., 500 mg, 8.93 mmol) was added in small portions. The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at room temperature, shielded from light. The reaction mixture was then cooled at 0°C, and water (50 mL) was added. The phases were separated and the aqueous layer was extracted with n-hexane; the collected organic phases were washed with water and with saturated solution of NH₄Cl. The organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography (n-hexane) to afford the desired product as a yellow oil.\textsuperscript{[96]}

Yield: 972 mg (87%);

\textsuperscript{1}H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): \( \delta = 7.14 \ (d, \ J = 4.9 \ Hz, \ 2H), \ 6.92 \ (d, \ J = 4.9 \ Hz, \ 2H), \ 1.84 \ (m, \ 4H), \ 1.19 \ (m, \ 12H), \ 0.95 \ (m, \ 4H), \ 0.82 \ (m, \ 6H). \)

9.9.7. Synthesis of 2-tributylstanny-4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (25)

A 2.5 M \( n \)-BuLi solution (in \( n \)-hexane) (1.1 eq., 0.63 mL, 1.58 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of 4,4-dihexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (1 eq., 500 mg, 1.44 mmol) in dry THF (20 mL) over a period of 5 minutes at \(-78^\circ C\), then the solution was stirred for 20 min. The reaction temperature was raised up to \(-30^\circ C\) and then cooled again at \(-78^\circ C\). Tributyltin chloride (1 eq., 0.39 mL, 1.44 mmol) was added dropwise, and the mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and was kept under stirring for 24 hours at room temperature. The mixture was quenched with water; the phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was...
removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product as a yellow oil which was used without further purification.

Yield from $^1$H NMR: (50%);

$^1$H NMR (CDCl$_3$, 300 MHz): $\delta = 7.13$ (dd, $J = 10.0$ Hz, $J = 4.6$ Hz, 1H), 6.92 (dd, $J = 8.0$ Hz, $J = 4.6$ Hz, 1H), 6.90 (s, 1H), 1.81 (m, 4H), 1.58 (m, 4H), 1.35 (m, 6H), 1.14 (m, 18H), 0.90 (m, 15H), 0.80 (m, 6H).

9.9.8. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(4,4'-di-n-hexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophen-2-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (26)

A solution of 2-tributylstanny-4,4-dihexyl-4H-cyclopenta[1,2-b:5,4-b']dithiophene (2 eq., 850 mg, 1.34 mmol) in dry toluene (10 mL) was added dropwise to a mixture of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 264 mg, 0.67 mmol) and Pd(PPh$_3$)$_4$ (0.05 eq., 39 mg, 0.033 mmol) in dry toluene (5 mL) and the reaction mixture was heated until 100°C under argon atmosphere for 24 hours. After that, the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and CH$_2$Cl$_2$ was added; the organic phase was washed with water, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 240 mg (38%);

M.p.: 55°C;

$^1$H NMR ([D]$_6$acetone, 300 MHz): $\delta = 7.98$ (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.37 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.28 (d, $J = 4.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.25 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.12 (s, 2H), 7.28 (d, $J = 4.8$ Hz, 2H), 1.78 (m, 8H), 1.06 (m, 24H), 0.77 (m, 20H);

$^{13}$C NMR (CDCl$_3$, 100 MHz): $\delta = 160.0, 159.2, 142.1, 140.5, 139.4, 137.7, 136.7, 134.1, 128.7, 126.9, 126.3, 125.8, 125.2, 124.2, 123.4, 123.0, 122.5, 54.8, 39.0, 33.1, 31.2, 25.9, 24.1, 15.5;

M.S. (EI): 954.3 (100%).
9.10. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene, \( \text{BT}_2(\text{T}_3)_2 \) (31)

9.10.1. Synthesis of 2-bromo-5-trimethylsilylthiophene (27)

A 1.6 M solution of \( n-\text{BuLi} \) (in \( n \)-hexane) (1.2 eq., 15 mL, 24 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of diisopropylamine (1.4 eq., 3.92 mL, 28 mmol) in dry THF (40 mL) at -78°C. The reaction mixture was warmed to 0°C for 5 minutes and then cooled again to -78°C. 2-Bromothiophene (1 eq., 1.94 mL, 20 mmol) was added dropwise, then the solution was warmed to 0°C for 5 minutes; then the reaction mixture was cooled at -78°C and trimethylsilyl chloride (1.2 eq., 3.95 mL, 24 mmol) was added in one portion. The solution was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 30 minutes at that temperature then poured into water with HCl (3M) (0.3 mL). The two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with \( \text{Et}_2\text{O} \). The collected organic phases were washed with water and \( \text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3 \) saturated solution, dried over \( \text{MgSO}_4 \), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by column flash chromatography (petroleum ether : TEA = 99 : 1) to afford the desired product as a colorless liquid.\(^{[97]}\)

Yield: 4.6 g (quantitative);

\(^1\text{H NMR} (\text{CDCl}_3, 300 \text{ MHz}): \delta = 7.11 (d, J = 4.2 \text{ Hz}, 1\text{H}), 7.01 (d, J = 4.2 \text{ Hz}, 1\text{H}), 0.34 (s, 9\text{H}).\)
9.10.2. Synthesis of 2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (28)

A solution of 2-bromo-5-trimethylsilylthiophene (2.75 eq., 1 g, 4.25 mmol) in Et₂O (2 mL) was added dropwise to magnesium turnings (4.11 eq., 155 mg, 6.37 mmol) in dry Et₂O (4.5 mL). After the addition the reaction mixture was refluxed for 2 hours and the solution was then transferred in a flask containing a 2,3-dibromo thiophene (1 eq., 374 mg, 1.55 mmol) and 1,2-(dppe)NiCl₂ (0.015 eq., 15 mg, 0.023 mmol) solution in dry Et₂O (4.5 mL) at 0°C. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux for 4 hours and then stirred at room temperature for 24 hours. The reaction mixture is poured into ice-water, the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with Et₂O. The collected organic phases were washed with water and a Na₂CO₃ saturated solution, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by column flash chromatography (PE = 100) to afford the desired product as a yellow liquid.[98]

Yield: 385 mg (63%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.29 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.16 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 0.34 (s, 9H), 0.33 (s, 9H).

9.10.3. Synthesis of 5'-tributylstannyl-2,2':3',2''-terthiophene-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (29)

A 1.6 M solution of n-BuLi (in n-hexane) (1.1 eq, 2.88 mL, 4.6 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of 2,2':3',2''-terthiophene-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (1 eq., 1.65 g, 4.19 mmol) in dry THF (10 mL) keeping the temperature of the solution below -72°C. After 30 minutes the reaction mixture was allowed to heat to room temperature and stirred for 15 minutes; then, tributyltin
chloride (1.1 eq., 1.25 mL, 4.6 mmol) was added. The reaction was stirred at room temperature for 24 hours and then was quenched with water. The phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with Et₂O; the collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the product as an orange oil that was used without any further purification.  

Yield from ¹H NMR: (85%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.19 (s, 1H), 7.15 (m, 4H), 1.67-1.55 (m, 6H), 1.43-1.34 (m, 6H), 1.27-1.17 (m, 6H), 0.93 (t, J = 6.0 Hz, 9H), 0.34 (s, 9H), 0.33 (s, 9H).

9.10.4. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane))-3,3'-bithianaphthene (30)

Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.1 eq., 116 mg, 0.1 mmol) was added to a mixture of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 424 mg, 1 mmol) and 5'-tributylstannyl-2,2':3',2''-terthiophene-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane) (4 eq., 4 mmol) in dry toluene (20 mL). The solution was heated under stirring to reflux for 24 hours, then diluted with AcOEt; the collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column flash chromatography (petroleum ether : AcOEt = 97.5 : 2.5) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 1047 mg (quantitative);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.93 (d, J = 9.6 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (s, 1H), 7.26 (m, 3H), 7.10 (d, J = 3.9 Hz 1H), 7.03 (m, 2H), 6.99 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 1H), 0.31 (s, 9H), 0.28 (s, 9H).
9.10.5. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophen-5'-yl)-3,3'-bithianaphthene (31)

A solution of TBAF (1M in THF) (10 eq., 10 mL, 10 mmol) was added to a solution of 2,2'-bis(2,2':3',2''-terthiophene-5,5''-di(trimethylsilane))-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 1047 mg, 1 mmol) in THF (25 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 2.5 hours and then poured into water (40 mL); the organic layer was separated and the aqueous layers was extracted with AcOEt. The collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced to afford the product as an orange solid. No further purification steps were required.²⁰⁰

Yield: 740 mg (quantitative);
M.p.: 230°C;

¹H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz): δ = 7.92 (d, J = 9.9 Hz, 2H), 7.42–7.37 (m, 2H), 7.33 (s, 2H), 7.30 (m, 8H), 6.99 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 4H), 6.95–6.91 (m, 4H);

¹³C NMR-APT (CDCl₃, 100 MHz) δ = 140.3, 138.2, 136.7, 136.5, 134.4, 134.0, 133.6, 131.6, 129.0, 127.8, 127.1, 127.1, 126.9, 126.8, 125.7, 125.4, 125.13 125.1, 123.0, 122.1;

M.S. (ESI): 758.95 (q, M⁺), 780.93 (q, M + Na⁺).

9.11. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{bi[2,2'-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]}-3,3'-bithianaphthene, BT₂E₄ (38)
9.11.1. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (32)

![Image of 2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (32)]

A 1.6 M solution of n-BuLi (in n-hexane) (1.1 eq., 9.67 mL, 15.5 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of EDOT (1 eq., 2 g, 14.07 mmol) in dry THF (70 mL) cooled at -78°C over a period of 30 minutes: after the addition the reaction mixture was stirred for 45 minutes at -78°C and then CuCl₂ (1.1 eq., 2.08 g, 15.5 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction temperature was raised up to -45°C and the solution was stirred at this temperature for 2 hours. The reaction mixture was then poured into water (150 mL) and stirred for 10 minutes. The formation of a green precipitate was observed, which precipitate was filtered and washed with n-hexane. The collected solid was dissolved into CH₂Cl₂ and the organic phase was washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by column flash chromatography (PE : CH₂Cl₂ = 6 : 4) to afford the desired product as a white/greenish solid.[49]

Yield: 1.45 g (74%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 6.30 (s, 2H), 4.36 (m, 4H), 4.25 (m, 4H).

9.11.2. Synthesis of 5-tributyltin-2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (33)

![Image of 5-tributyltin-2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (33)]

A 1.6 M solution of n-BuLi (n-hexane) (1.1 eq., 3.16 mL, 5.1 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of 2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (1 eq., 1.3 g, 4.6 mmol) in dry THF (54 mL) cooled at -80°C, over a period of 25 minutes. The solution was stirred at -78°C for 1 hour and at -60°C for an additional hour. After cooling at -78°C, tributyltin chloride (1.1 eq., 1.37 mL, 5.1 mmol) was added dropwise within 15 minutes. After stirring at -78°C for 30 minutes the reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and was stirred for further 2 hours, the
quenched with aqueous NH₄Cl solution. The phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with AcOEt; the collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as a brown oil that was used without any further purification.\[^{49}\]

Yield from $^1$H NMR: (80%);

$^1$H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): $\delta = 6.26$ (s, 1H), 4.38-4.19 (m, 8H), 1.67-1.52 (m, 6H), 1.44-1.26 (m, 6H), 1.17-1.09 (m, 6H), 0.92 (t, J=7 Hz, 9H).

**9.11.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{bi[2,2'-(3,4-ethylenedioxy)thiophen-5-yl]}-3,3'-bithianaphthene (34)**

![Diagram](image)

Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.09 eq., 108 mg, 0.09 mmol) was added to a mixture of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 424 mg, 1 mmol) and 5-tributyltin-2,2'-bis(3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene) (3.68 eq., 3.68 mmol) in dry toluene (20 mL). The solution was refluxed under stirring for 24 hours, then diluted with AcOEt; the collected organic phases were washed with water, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column flash chromatography (petroleum ether : AcOEt = 6 : 4) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 700 mg (84%);

M.p.: 265°C;

$^1$H NMR (CD₂Cl₂, 400 MHz): $\delta = 7.96$ (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.40–7.2 (m, 6H), 6.23 (s, 2H), 4.36 (br, 5H), 4.19 (m, 5H);

$^{13}$C NMR-APT (CDCl₃, 100 MHz) $\delta = 141.1, 140.1, 139.1, 138.8, 137.4, 136.0, 134.9, 124.5, 123.9, 123.7, 122.5, 121.3, 121.2, 109.5, 109.2, 98.0, 64.9, 64.7, 64.5, 64.2;

MS (ESI): 827.00 (q, M⁺), 848.99 (q, M + Na⁺), 864.96 (q, M + K⁺).
9.12. Synthesis of 2,2′-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-3,3′-bithianaphthene, BT₂BTD₂ (38)


Benzothiadiazole (1 eq., 20 g, 147 mmol) was dissolved in aqueous HBr (47%) (150 mL). A solution containing Br₂ (3 eq., 70 g, 0.44 mol) in HBr (100 mL) was added dropwise over a period of 2 hours; after the addition, the solution was refluxed for 6 hours. The mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature and a saturated solution of NaHSO₃ was added. The mixture was filtered under vacuum and the collected solid was washed with water. The solid was then trituted with cold Et₂O and dried under vacuum, affording the desired product as a yellow solid.[101]

Yield: 41 g (95%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.75 (s, 2H).

9.12.2. Synthesis of 4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (36)
Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.1 eq., 1.6 g, 1.4 mmol) was added to a solution of 4,7-dibromobenzo[1,2,5]thiadiazole (1 eq., 4.18 g, 14.22 mmol) and 5-tributylstannyl-thiophene (2.1 eq., 11.1 g, 29.9 mmol) dissolved in dry DMF (96 mL). The solution was refluxed for 5 hours under nitrogen atmosphere. After removing the solvent under reduced pressure, the crude product was washed several times with methanol and used without further purification.¹⁰²

Yield: 3.1 g (73%);

¹ H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 8.15 (dd, J = 3.6 Hz, J = 0.9 Hz, 2H), 7.90 (s, 2H), 7.48 (dd, J = 5.1 Hz, J = 0.9 Hz, 2H), 7.24 (dd, J = 5.1 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H).

9.12.3. Synthesis of 5-trimethylstannyl-4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (37)

A 2M n-BuLi solution (in n-hexane) (1.2 eq., 0.6 mL, 1.2 mmol) was added to a solution of TMP (1.2 eq., 200 μL, 1.2 mmol) in dry THF (7 mL), at -78°C. After 1 hour stirring at -78°C, a solution of 4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (1 eq., 300 mg, 1 mmol) in dry THF (6 mL) was added one pot. After stirring for 2 hours at -78°C, a solution of trimethyltin chloride (1.3 eq., 259 mg, 1.3 mmol) in dry THF (2 mL) was added and the reaction mixture was allowed to heat to room temperature and stirred for 24 hours. Then the reaction was quenched with water, the two phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The collected organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure, to afford the desired product as an orange oil used without further purification.¹⁰³

Yield from ¹H NMR: (60%);

¹ H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 8.26 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 1H), 8.17 (m, 1H), 7.94 (s, 2H), 7.52 (m, 1H), 7.34 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 1H), 7.26 (m, 1H), 0.42 (s, 9H).
9.12.4. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-3,3'-bithianaphthene (38)

A mixture of 2,2'-dibromo-3,3'-bithianaphthene (1 eq., 165 mg, 0.39 mmol), 5-trimethylstannyl-4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazole (3.5 eq., 632 mg, 1.36 mmol) and Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.14 eq., 63 mg, 0.05 mmol) in dry DMF (10 mL) was heated until 100°C under argon atmosphere for 5 hours. Then, the reaction was cooled to room temperature and CH₂Cl₂ was added; the organic phase was washed 5 times with water and two times with a 1 M NaOH solution. The organic phases were dried with MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 7 : 3) to afford the product as a deep red solid.

Yield: 150 mg (45%);
M.p.: 284°C;

¹H NMR (DMSO, 300 MHz): δ = 8.17 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 8.05 (d, J = 3.0 2H), 7.92 (m, 4H), 7.73 (m, 4H), 7.46 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H); 7.35-7.30 (m, 2H), 7.23-7.17 (m, 2H).
M.S. (EI): 861 (100%), 862 (65%), 863 (55%).


2-iodoaniline (1 eq., 15.3 g, 71.23 mmol), PdCl$_2$(PPh$_3$)$_2$ (0.01 eq., 500 mg, 0.71 mmol) and Cul (0.02 eq., 270 mg, 1.42 mmol) were dissolved in dry and degassed TEA (240 mL). TMSA (1.3 eq., 13.1 mL, 92.6 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 2 hours at room temperature under inert atmosphere. KF (2 eq., 8.3 g, 142 mmol) in methanol (160 mL) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at room temperature in air. The mixture was filtered on celite and the solvents were removed under reduced pressure. The residue obtained was purified by column flash chromatography (n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ = 4 : 6) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.$^{[104]}$

Yield: 5.73 g (69%);  
$^1$H NMR (CD$_2$Cl$_2$, 400 MHz): δ = 7.36 (dd, J = 7.5 Hz, J = 1.2 Hz, 2H), 7.18 (dt, J = 8.7 Hz, J = 1.5, 2H), 6.74 (m, 4H).

9.13.2. Synthesis of 2,2,2-trifluoro-N-(2-[4,2,2-trifluoroacetamino-phenyl]-buta-1,3-diynyl)-phenyl-acetamide (41)

Trifluoroacetrazine anhydride (2.1 eq., 5 mL, 36.16 mmol) was slowly added to a solution of 2[-4-(2-aminophenyl)-1,3-butenediyl]phenylamine (1 eq., 4 g, 17.22 mmol) and pyridine (4.16 mL) in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ at room temperature. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 3 hours and then was filtered and the precipitate obtained was dried under vacuum to afford the desired product as a white solid.$^{[104]}$

Yield: 5.63 g (77%);  
$^1$H NMR (DMSO, 400 MHz): δ = 11.39 (s, 2H), 7.74 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.57 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.45 (m, 4H).
9.13.3. Synthesis of 5-iodo-2,2′-bithiophene (42)

2,2′-bithiophene (1 eq., 4.53 g, 27.2 mmol) was dissolved in a 1:1 mixture of CHCl₃ and acetic acid (108 mL) and NIS (1.1 eq., 6.74 g, 29.9 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was shielded from light and was stirred at room temperature for 24 hours. The solution was then filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was diluted with CH₂Cl₂ and the solution obtained was washed with saturate NaHCO₃ solution and water. The obtained solid was dissolved in a 1:1 mixture of CHCl₃ and acetic acid, cooled and the precipitate, corresponding to the 5,5′-diiodo-2,2′-bithiophene, was removed by filtration. The solvents were removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as a grey solid. [67]

Yield: 4.43 g (56%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.24 (dd, J = 4.8 Hz, J = 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (d, J = 4 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (dd, J = 3.6 Hz, J = 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.03 (dd, J = 4.8 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 1H).

9.13.4. Synthesis of 3,3′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1H,1′H-2,2′-biindole (43)

5-Iodo-2,2′-bithiophene (4.3 eq., 5.9 g, 20.3 mmol), Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.1 eq., 544 mg, 0.47 mmol) and K₂CO₃ (5 eq., 3.2 g, 23.5 mmol) were added to a stirred solution of 2,2,2-trifluoro-N-(2-(4-[2,2,2-trifluoro-acetylamino-phenyl]-buta-1,3-diylnl)-phenyl)-acetamide (1 eq., 1.99 g, 4.7 mmol) in dry and degassed ACN (94 mL) under N₂. The reaction mixture was stirred under reflux for 24 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was diluted with AcOEt; the organic phase was washed with water. The organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was
purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 4 : 6) to afford the desired product as a yellow/brown solid.
Yield: 1.28 g (45%);
M.p.: 215°C;

¹H NMR (DMSO, 400 MHz): δ = 11.95 (s, 2H), 7.99 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.48 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.40 (d, J = 4.4 Hz, 2H), 7.29 (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 2H), 7.23 (t, J = 5.2 Hz, 2H), 7.12 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 7.09 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 7.00 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 2H);
¹³C NMR (DMSO, 100 MHz): δ = 137.1, 136.8, 136.4, 134.3, 128.7, 126.8, 125.9, 125.3, 124.7, 124.6, 123.7, 123.4, 120.9, 120.0, 112.4, 110.9;
M.S. (EI): 560 (100%).


9.14.1. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bismethyl-1'H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND₂T₄Me (39a)

3,3'-Di([2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (1 eq., 310 mg, 0.55 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (3 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (6.5 eq., 200 mg, 3.56 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred at that temperature for 10 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then methyl iodide (10 eq., 300 μL, 5.53 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the residue was dissolved into CH₂Cl₂; the organic phase was washed with water and brine, then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.
Yield: 228 mg (70%);
Experimental Section

1H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 8.19 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.45-7.32 (m, 6H), 7.14 (d, J = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.03-7.01 (m, 4H), 6.97-6.95 (m, 2H), 6.81 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 3.48 (s, 6H);

13C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 137.7, 136.6, 135.9, 135.2, 127.7, 126.9, 125.7, 124.3, 124.2, 123.8, 123.4, 123.2, 120.8, 120.6, 112.9, 110.1, 30.3.
M.S. (EI): 588.1 (100%).

9.14.2. Synthesis of 3,3′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-bisethyl-1H,1′H-2,2′-biindole, IND₂T₄Et (39b)

3,3′-Di([2,2′-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1′H-2,2′-biindole (1 eq., 110 mg, 0.20 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (2.5 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (5 eq., 55 mg, 0.98 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred at that temperature for 10 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then ethyl iodide (10 eq., 200 μL, 1.98 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was dissolved into CH₂Cl₂; the organic phase was washed with water and brine then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.
Yield: 85 mg (70%);

1H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 8.24 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.49-7.34 (m, 6H), 7.14 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 2H), 7.05 (m, 4H), 6.99 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (m, 2H), 6.85 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 4.02-3.88 (m, 4H), 1.12 (m, 6H);

13C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 137.7, 136.6, 135.9, 135.2, 127.7, 126.3, 126.0, 124.4, 124.2, 123.8, 123.3, 123.2, 120.7, 120.1, 113.2, 110.4, 39.0, 14.9.
M.S. (EI): 616.1 (100%).
9.14.3. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(n-propyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND₂T₂Pr (39c)

3,3'-Di([2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (1 eq., 135 mg, 0.24 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (3 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (5 eq., 67 mg, 1.2 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred at that temperature for 10 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then 1-iodopropane (6 eq., 71 μL, 0.72 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was dissolved into CH₂Cl₂; the organic phase was washed with water and brine, then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 120 mg (79%);

₁H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 8.21 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.46-7.31 (m, 6H), 7.14 (d, J = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.02-6.94 (m, 4H), 6.82 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 4H), 3.86-3.73 (m, 4H), 1.37-1.29 (m, 4H), 0.75 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 6H);

₁³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 137.7, 137.1, 135.9, 135.3, 127.7, 126.5, 125.9, 124.4, 124.2, 123.8, 123.4, 123.2, 120.7, 120.6, 113.3, 110.6, 46.14, 23.0, 11.5.

M.S. (EI): 644.1 (100%).
9.14.4. Synthesis of 3,3′-bis(2,2′-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1′-bis(n-hexyl)-1H,1'H-2,2′-biindole, IND₂T₄Hex (39d)

3,3′-Di([2,2′-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2′-biindole (1 eq., 135 mg, 0.24 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (3 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (5 eq., 67 mg, 1.2 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred at that temperature for 10 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then 1-iodohexane (6 eq., 91 μL, 0.72 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was dissolved into CH₂Cl₂; the organic phase was washed with water and brine, then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 130 mg (81%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 8.21 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.45-7.33 (m, 6H), 7.14 (d, J = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.01-6.94 (m, 4H), 6.82 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 4H), 3.86-3.73 (m, 8H), 1.37-1.25 (m, 12H), 0.75 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 6H);

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ = 137.7, 137.1, 135.9, 135.3, 127.7, 126.5, 125.9, 124.4, 124.2, 123.8, 123.4, 123.2, 120.7, 120.6, 113.3, 110.6, 46.4, 30.3, 28.7, 25.7, 21.35, 11.8.

M.S. (EI): 728.2 (100%).
9.14.5. Synthesis of (S)-(1-bromoethyl)benzene (47)

Pyridine (5 mL) was added to a stirred solution of (R)-1-phenyl ethanol (1 eq., 2 g, 16.4 mmol) in anhydrous pentane (50 mL), and the reaction mixture was stirred at -20 °C. A solution of POBr₃ (1.1 eq., 5.1 g, 18 mmol) in dry pentane (30 mL) was added dropwise to the mixture over a period of 45 minutes. After reaction for 15 minutes, the reaction mixture was slowly poured into cold water (150 mL). The phases were separated and the organic layer was washed with a 5% Na₂CO₃ solution, 2 M HCl and brine, then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as a colorless oil.¹⁰⁵

Yield: 1062 mg (35%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.47-7.28 (m, 5H), 5.25 (q, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 2.05 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 3H);

[α][D]₂₀ = -96° (1g/100 mL in CH₂Cl₂);

ee = 86% (S).


Pyridine (5 mL) was added to a stirred solution of (S)-1-phenyl ethanol (1 eq., 2 g, 16.4 mmol) in anhydrous pentane (50 mL), and the reaction mixture was stirred at -20 °C. A solution of POBr₃ (1.1 eq., 5.1 g, 18 mmol) in dry pentane (30 mL) was added dropwise to the mixture over a period of 45 minutes. After reaction for 15 minutes, the reaction mixture was slowly poured into cold water (150 mL). The phases were separated and the organic layer was washed with a 5% Na₂CO₃ solution, 2 M HCl and brine, then dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as a colorless oil.¹⁰⁵

Yield: 910 mg (30%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ = 7.45-7.27 (m, 5H), 5.23 (q, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.07 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 3H);

[α][D]₂₀ = -91° (1g/100 mL in CH₂Cl₂);

ee = 80% (R).
9.14.7. Synthesis of 3,3’-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1’-bis((R)-1-phenylethyl)-1H,1’H-2,2’-biindole, (R)-IND$_2$TPh (49)

3,3’-Di([2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1’H-2,2’-biindole (1 eq., 300 mg, 0.53 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (13 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (5 eq., 150 mg, 2.67 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred for 15 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then (S)-(1-bromoethyl)benzene (10 eq., 900 mg, 4.89 mmol) was added one pot. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was dissolved into CH$_2$Cl$_2$; the organic phase was washed with water and brine, then dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : AcOEt = 97 : 3) to afford the desired product as a brown solid. The last fraction eluted was collected, the solvent removed under reduced pressure to give a single diastereoisomer (50 mg, 12%).

Yield: 375 mg (90%);

$^1$H NMR (CD$_2$Cl$_2$, 300 MHz): δ = 8.05 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.25-6.87 (m, 26H), 5.53 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 1.96 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 6H);

$^{13}$C NMR (CDCl$_3$, 100 MHz): δ = 139.0, 136.5, 135.4, 134.4, 134.2, 127.1, 126.7, 126.3, 126.2, 125.5, 125.6, 124.9, 123.4, 122.9, 122.4, 121.9, 119.6, 119.5, 113.8, 112.5, 53.2, 19.03

MS (EI): 768 (100%);

[$\alpha$]$^\text{D}_{20}$ = +694° (0.1 g/100 mL in CH$_2$Cl$_2$);

d$e$ = 85 %.
9.14.8. Synthesis of 3,3'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-bis(\((S)-1\)-phenylethyl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, \((S)-\text{IND}_{2}\text{T}_{4}\text{Ph} (50)

3,3'-Di([2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (1 eq., 250 mg, 0.45 mmol) was dissolved in dry DMF (13 mL) and the solution was cooled at 0°C. KOH (6 eq., 150 mg, 2.67 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred at that temperature for 15 minutes. The reaction mixture was allowed to reach room temperature and then \((R)-(1\text{-bromoethyl})\text{benzene (10 eq., 760 mg, 4.13 mmol) was added in one fraction. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the obtained residue was diluted with CH\text{2}Cl\text{2}; the organic phase was washed with water and brine. The organic phase was dried over MgSO\text{4}, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained residue was purified by gravimetric chromatography (n-hexane : AcOEt = 97 : 3) to afford the desired product as a brown solid. The last fraction eluted was collected, the solvent removed under reduced pressure to give a single diastereoisomer (60 mg, 17%).

Yield: 383 mg (92%);

\(^1\text{H NMR (CD}_2\text{Cl}_2, 400 MHz): } \delta = 7.95 (d, J = 8.0 \text{ Hz}, 2H), 7.17-6.73 (m, 26H), 5.42 (q, J = 6.9 \text{ Hz}, 2H), 1.82 (d, J = 7.1 \text{ Hz}, 6H);

\(^{13}\text{C NMR (CDCl}_3, 100 MHz): } \delta = 140.1, 137.6, 136.4, 135.5, 135.2, 128.2, 127.7, 127.4, 127.3, 126.5, 126.3, 126.0, 124.4, 124.0, 123.5, 123.0, 120.6, 120.6, 114.8, 113.6, 54.21, 20.1;

MS (EI): 768 (100%);

[\alpha]_D^{20} = -627^\circ (0.1 \text{ g/100 mL in CH}_2\text{Cl}_2);

de = 74 \%.
9.15. Synthesis of $2,2^\prime$-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND$_2$BTD$_2$Hex (48)

9.15.1. Synthesis of 4-(5-bromothiophen-2-yl)-7-(thiophen-2-yl)benzothiadiazole (44b)

NBS (1.1 eq., 280 mg, 1.6 mmol) was added in small portion over a period of 30 minutes to a stirred solution of 4,7-bis(thiophen-2-yl)benzothiadiazole (1 eq., 440 mg, 1.46 mmol) in CH$_2$Cl$_2$/AcOH (1:1, 126 mL), shielding the solution from the light. The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at room temperature and then poured into water. The phases were separated and the organic layer was washed with saturated NaHCO$_3$ solution and brine. The organic phase was dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as dark red solid.$^{[106]}$

Yield: 530 mg (95%);

$^1$H NMR (CDCl$_3$, 400 MHz): $\delta = 8.13$ (d, $J = 3.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.88-7.79 (m, 3H), 7.47 (d, $J = 4.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.21 (dd, $J = 4.6$ Hz, J = 4 Hz, 1H), 7.15 (d, $J = 4$ Hz, 1H).
9.15.2. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis[2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl]-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND$_2$BTD$_2$ (45)

4-(5-Bromothiophen-2-yl)-7-(thiophen-2-yl)benzothiadiazole (4 eq., 1.97 g, 5.19 mmol), Pd(PPh$_3$)$_4$ (0.1 eq., 149 mg, 0.13 mmol) and K$_2$CO$_3$ (5 eq., 897 mg, 6.5 mmol) were added to a stirred solution of N,N'-[buta-1,3-diyne-1,4-diylbis(2,1-phenylene)]bis(2,2,2-trifluoroacetamide) (1 eq., 551 mg, 1.3 mmol) in dry DMF (33 mL) under N$_2$ atmosphere. The reaction mixture was refluxed under stirring for 24 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the residue was diluted with AcOEt; the organic phase was washed with water, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ = 3 : 7) to afford the desired product as a purple solid.

Yield: 170 mg (23%);
M.p.: 268°C;
$^1$H NMR (DMSO, 400 MHz): $\delta = 12.14$ (s, 2H), 8.11 (m, 2H), 8.02 (d, $J = 4.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.97 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.85 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.77 (d, $J = 4.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.60 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.39 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.33 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.28 (t, $J = 4.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.03 (d, $J = 4.0$ Hz, 2H);
$^{13}$C NMR-APT (DMSO, 100 MHz) $\delta = 151.5$, 151.4, 139.1, 138.4, 128.0, 127.9, 127.8, 127.1, 126.9, 125.8, 125.7, 125.1, 124.5, 124.1, 123.0, 120.5, 119.6, 112.0, 110.4;
M.S. (EI): 828 (100%).
9.15.3. Synthesis of 2,2'-bis{2-[7-(thiophen-2-yl)-2,1,3-benzothiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-5-yl}-N,N'-dihexyl-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole, IND$_2$BTD$_2$Hex (46)

NaH (60% in mineral oil) (5 eq., 25 mg, 0.6 mmol) was added under stirring to a solution of 3,3'-bis{5-(7-(thiophen-2-yl)benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazol-4-yl]thiophen-2-yl)-1H,1'H-2,2'-biindole (1 eq., 100 mg, 0.12 mmol) in dry DMF (15 mL). After 15 minutes, n-hexyl bromide (10 eq., 159 μL, 1.2 mmol) was added one pot and the reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the residue was diluted with CH$_2$Cl$_2$; the organic phase was washed with water, was dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as a red solid.

Yield: 50 mg (42%);

$^1$H NMR (CD$_2$Cl$_2$, 400 MHz): δ = 8.21 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.98 (d, J = 3.2 Hz, 2H), 7.91 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 7.71 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.62 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.42 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.36-7.26 (m, 6H), 7.10 (dd, J = 5.2 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 3.89 (m, 2H), 3.74 (m, 2H), 1.50 (m, 4H), 1.21 (m, 4H), 0.98 (m, 8H), 0.54 (t, J = 6.4 Hz, 6H);

$^{13}$C NMR-APT (CDCl$_3$, 100 MHz) δ = 151.5, 151.4, 138.5, 137.5, 136.2, 136.1, 126.9, 126.1, 124.8, 123.9, 123.9, 122.3, 119.8, 112.5, 109.7, 43.6, 30.3, 28.7, 25.7, 21.3, 12.8;

M.S. (EI): 996.2 (100%).
9.16. Synthesis of \(2,2'^\text{-}\text{bis}(2,2'^\text{-}\text{bithiophen-5-yl})\text{-}1,1'^\text{-}\text{binaphthalene}, \text{BN}_2\text{T}_4\) (55)

9.16.1. Synthesis of \(\text{CuCl}_2\text{(benzylamine)}_2\) (57)

Benzylamine (2 eq., 42.86 g, 0.4 mol) was added to a methanol solution (270 mL) of \(\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2 \text{H}_2\text{O}\) (1 eq, 34.09 g, 0.2 mol) under stirring at room temperature. Immediately a green precipitate was formed and the mixture was stirred for 30 minutes at room temperature. The precipitate was filtered, washed with methanol and dried under vacuum.

Yield: 63 g (89.6%); IR (KBr): 3323 cm\(^{-1}\) = (NH\(_2\)), 3024 cm\(^{-1}\) = (Ar-H), 1562 cm\(^{-1}\) = (NH\(_2\)), 1494 cm\(^{-1}\) = (C=C)\(_\text{ar}\), 1454 cm\(^{-1}\) = (CH\(_2\)), 752 cm\(^{-1}\) = (Ar-H), 697 cm\(^{-1}\) = (C=C)\(_\text{ar}\)

9.16.2. Synthesis of 2-naphthylamine (51)

2-Naphtol (1 eq., 11.53 g, 80 mmol) and ammonium sulfite monohydrate (2 eq., 24.46 g, 160 mmol) were added to a steel autoclave and suspended in ammonium hydroxide solution (30%)
(112 mL); the solution was heated for 12 hours at 145°C. The reaction was then diluted with 1 M NaOH solution and extracted with CH$_2$Cl$_2$; the organic phases were dried with MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The obtained product was purified by column chromatography (CH$_2$Cl$_2$: n-hexane = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as a brown solid.$^{[108]}$

Yield: 9 g (78%);

$^1$H NMR (CDCl$_3$, 300 MHz): δ 7.71 (d, J = 10 Hz, 2H), 7.68 (d, J = 10.3 Hz, 2H), 7.62 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.37 (dt, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.25 (dt, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d, J = 2.7 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (dd, J = 9.3 Hz, J = 2.3 Hz, 2H), 3.87 (bs, 4H).

### 9.16.3. Synthesis of 1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-diamine (52)

![Structure of 52](image)

A methanol solution of 2-naphthylamine (1 eq., 716 mg, 5.0 mmol) was added to a methanol suspension of CuCl$_2$(benzylamine)$_2$ (2 eq., 3.487 g, 10 mmol) under stirring at room temperature. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2 hours, then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give a brown residue, which was acidified with concentrated HCl (25 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes, then concentrated NH$_4$OH (75 ml) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 5 minutes and then diluted with water (125 mL). The resulting suspension was filtered to give the crude product.

The residue was purified by column chromatography (CH$_2$Cl$_2$: n-hexane = 7 : 3) to afford the desired product as a brown solid.$^{[107]}$

Yield: 359 mg (51%);

$^1$H NMR (CDCl$_3$, 300 MHz): δ 7.71 (d, J = 10 Hz, 2H), 7.68 (d, J = 10.3 Hz, 2H), 7.62 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.37 (dt, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.25 (dt, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d, J = 2.7 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (dd, J = 9.3 Hz, J = 2.3 Hz, 2H), 3.87 (bs, 4H).

### 9.16.4. Resolution of 1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-diamine with (S)-CSA ((R)-53)
A solution of (S)-CSA (1 eq., 4.8 g, 20.63 mmol) in EtOH (5.78 mL) and water (3 mL) was added to a solution of 1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine (1 eq., 5.87 g 20.63 mmol) in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ (76 mL), under slow stirring under inert atmosphere over a period of 10 minutes. After 3 minutes under very slow stirring the solution was kept still and shielded by light for 24 hours. The obtained precipitate was filtered, washed with CH$_2$Cl$_2$, collected and suspended in AcOEt. A 20% NaOH solution was added and the two phases were stirred for 1 hour. The phases were separated, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the desired product as a brown solid.

Yield: 2 g (34%);

$[\alpha]_{D}^{20} = +151^\circ$ (0.5 g / 100 mL in pyridine);

$ee = 98 \%$ (R).

The organic phase collected from the filtration were treated with a 20% NaOH solution was added and the two phases were stirred for 1 hour. The phases were separated, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the unprecipitated material.

9.16.5. Resolution of (S)-(-)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine with (R)-CSA ((S)-53)

A solution of (R)-CSA (1 eq., 3.2 g, 13.78 mmol) in EtOH (3.86 mL) and water (2 mL) was added to a solution of 1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine (1 eq., 3.92 g 13.78 mmol) in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ (51 mL), under slow stirring under inert atmosphere over a period of 10 minutes. After 3 minutes under very slow stirring the solution is kept still and shielded by light for 24 hours. The obtained precipitate was filtered, washed with CH$_2$Cl$_2$, collected and suspended in AcOEt. A 20% NaOH solution was added and the two phases were stirred for 1 hour. The phases were separated, the organic phases were dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure.
Yield: 1.6 g (42%);  
$\left[\alpha\right]_{D}^{20} = -153^\circ$ (0.5 g / 100 mL in pyridine);  
$ee = 99\%$ (S).

The organic phase collected from the filtration were treated with a 20% NaOH solution was added and the two phases were stirred for 1 hour. The phases were separated, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the unprecipitated material.

9.16.6. Synthesis of (R)-(+-)1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-dibromide ((R)-54)

![Chemical Structure](image)

Concentrated H$_2$SO$_4$ (68 mL) was cooled to -10°C and NaNO$_2$ (5 eq., 2.1 g, 30 mmol) was slowly added under stirring. After the addition, the solution was allowed to come at room temperature until the NaNO$_2$ was dissolved then it was cooled between -5 and -10 °C.

A solution of (R)-1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-diamine (1 eq., 1.7 g, 5.98 mmol) in pyridine (14.6 mL) previously prepared was added dropwise to the solution, paying attention to keeping the temperature below -5 °C. The resulting dark solution was stirred for an additional hour. Small chunks of ice were slowly added to the stirring mixture, keeping the temperature below -5 °C. Addition of ice was continued until no rise in temperature was observed. An ice-cooled mixture of urea (5 eq., 1.8 g, 30 mmol) in water (44 mL) was then added dropwise, maintaining the temperature below -5 °C; the addition evolved persistent foam. When the addition was complete, the solution is stirred for 30 minutes.

A cold solution of mercuric bromine (2.8 eq., 6.03 g, 16.74 mmol) and KBr (8.5 eq., 6.05 g, 51 mmol) in water (40 mL) was then added to the reaction mixture, causing the immediate formation of a light brown precipitate that was collected by filtration.

The brown residue was grinded with KBr (10 eq, 7.14 g, 60 mmol) until a fine, intimate mixture was obtained. This mixture was dried in a round bottom flask under vacuum and heated at 95 °C (0.1 torr) for 2 h. The resulting residue was dissolved and extracted with CH$_2$Cl$_2$, the organic phase was washed with aqueous sodium bisulfite, dried over MgSO$_4$, filtered and the solvent
was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.¹⁰⁹

Yield: 1.12 g (45%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.95 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.89 (d, J = 9.6 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (d, J = 10.0 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.6 Hz, 2H), 7.11 (d, J = 9 Hz, 2H);

[α]D²⁰ = +67.5° (1 g / 100 mL in CH₂Cl₂);

ee = 96% (R).

9.16.7. Synthesis of (S)-(−)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-dibromide ((S)-54)

Concentrated H₂SO₄ (64 mL) was cooled to -10°C and NaNO₂ (5 eq., 1.94 mg, 28.13 mmol) was slowly added under stirring. After the addition, the solution was allowed to come at room temperature until the NaNO₂ was dissolved, then it was cooled between -5 and -10 °C.

A solution of (S)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-diamine (1 eq., 1.6 g, 5.63 mmol) in pyridine (14 mL) previously prepared was added dropwise to the solution, paying attention to keeping the temperature below -5 °C. The resulting dark solution was stirred for an additional hour. Small chunks of ice were slowly added to the stirring mixture, keeping the temperature below -5 °C. Addition of ice was continued until no rise in temperature was observed. An ice-cooled mixture of urea (5 eq., 16.9 g, 28.13 mmol) in water (42 mL) was then added dropwise, maintaining the temperature below -5 °C; the addition evolved persistent foam. When the addition was complete, the solution was stirred for 30 minutes.

A cold solution of mercuric bromine (2.8 eq., 5.68 g, 15.76 mmol) and KBr (8.5 eq., 5.7 g, 47.8 mmol) in water (5 mL) was then added to the reaction mixture, causing the immediate formation of a light brown precipitate that was collected by filtration.

The obtained brown residue was grinded with KBr (10 eq, 6.7 g, 56.3 mmol) until a fine, intimate mixture was obtained. This mixture was dried in a round bottom flask under vacuum and heated at 95 °C (0.1 torr) for 2 h. The resulting residue was dissolved and extracted with CH₂Cl₂, the organic phase was washed with aqueous sodium bisulfite, dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH₂Cl₂ = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.¹⁰⁹
Yield: 1.4 g (60%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl\textsubscript{3}, 400 MHz): δ = 7.94 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.89 (d, J = 9.6 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (d, J = 10.0 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (dd, J = 7.7 Hz, J = 1.6 Hz, 2H), 7.11 (d, J = 9 Hz, 2H);

\([\alpha]_D^{20} = -34^\circ\) (1 g / 100 mL in pyridine);

\(ee = 98.5\%\) (S).

9.16.8. Synthesis of (R)-2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-binaphthalene, (R)-BN\textsubscript{T}4 ((R)-55)

A mixture of (R)-(-)-1,1'-binaphthyl-2,2'-dibromide (1 eq., 182 mg, 0.44 mmol), 22-{[2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl}-4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolane (2.5 eq., 323 mg, 1.1 mmol), Pd(PPh\textsubscript{3})\textsubscript{4} (0.1 eq., 51 mg, 0.044 mmol) and Na\textsubscript{2}CO\textsubscript{3} (3.5 eq., 164 mg, 1.55 mmol) in a degassed mixture of dry toluene (18 mL), ethanol (6 mL) and water (6 mL) was refluxed under argon atmosphere for 24 hours. Then, the reaction was cooled at room temperature and AcOEt was added; the organic phase was washed with water, dried with MgSO\textsubscript{4}, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2} = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 67 mg (26%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl\textsubscript{3}, 400 MHz): δ = 8.05 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.93 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.89 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (ddd, J = 8.1 Hz, J = 6.3 Hz, J = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 7.27-7.11 (m, 4H), 7.12 (dd, J = 4.2 Hz, J = 2.4, 2H) 6.92 (dd, J = 5.4 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz, 2 H) 6.91 (s, 2H), 6.79 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H);

\(^{13}\)C NMR (CDCl\textsubscript{3}, 100 MHz) δ = 141.6, 137.8, 137.4, 134.0, 133.0, 132.8, 132.3, 128.9, 128.0, 127.6, 127.1, 127.0, 126.9, 126.6, 126.2, 124.1, 123.4, 123.3;

\([\alpha]_D^{20} = +207^\circ\) (0.1 g/100 mL in CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2})

\(ee = 96\%\)

M.S. (ESI): 582 (100%), 584 (42%).

9.16.9. Synthesis of (S)-2,2'-bis(2,2'-bithiophen-5-yl)-1,1'-binaphthalene, (S)-BN\textsubscript{T}4 ((S)-55)
A mixture of (S)-(-)-1,1′-binaphthyl-2,2′-dibromide (1 eq., 226 mg, 0.55 mmol), 2-[(2,2′-bithiophen)-5-yl]-4,4,5,5-tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolane (2.5 eq., 400 mg, 1.36 mmol), Pd(PPh\(_3\))\(_4\) (0.1 eq., 63 mg, 0.05 mmol) and Na\(_2\)CO\(_3\) (3.5 eq., 204 mg, 1.93 mmol) in a degassed mixture of dry toluene (22 mL), ethanol (7.5 mL) and water (7.5 mL) was refluxed under argon atmosphere for 24 hours. Then, the reaction was cooled at room temperature and AcOEt was added; the organic phase was washed with water, dried with MgSO\(_4\), filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\) = 9 : 1) to afford the desired product as a yellow solid.

Yield: 87 mg (27%);

\(^1\)H NMR (CDCl\(_3\), 400 MHz): \(\delta = 8.05\) (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.93 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.89 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (dd, J = 8.1 Hz, J = 6.3 Hz, J = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 7.27-7.11 (m, 4H), 7.12 (dd, J = 4.2 Hz, J = 2.4, 2H) 6.92 (dd, J = 5.4 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz, 2 H) 6.91 (s, 2H), 6.79 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, J = 3.9 Hz, 2H);

\(^{13}\)C NMR (CDCl\(_3\), 100 MHz) \(\delta = 141.6, 137.8, 137.4, 134.0, 133.0, 132.8, 132.3, 128.9, 128.0, 127.6, 127.1, 127.0, 126.9, 126.6, 126.2, 124.1, 123.4, 123.3;

\([\alpha]_D^{20} = -206^\circ\) (0.1 g/100 mL in CH\(_2\)Cl\(_2\))

\(ee = 98\%\)

M.S. (ESI): 582 (100%), 584 (42%).

9.17. Synthesis of 2,2′,4,4′,5,5′-tetra(2-thienyl)-3,3′-bithiophene, T8\(_3\) (60)

9.17.1. Synthesis of 3,3′-bithiophene (58)
3-Bromothiophene (1 eq., 10 g, 61 mmol) was dissolved in anhydrous diethyl ether (50 mL). The solution was cooled at -78 °C. A 2.5 M solution of n-BuLi (in n-hexane) (1.1 eq., 26.8 mL, 67 mol) was added dropwise to the mixture over a period of 20 minutes. The reaction was stirred for 10 minutes at -78 °C and 20 minutes at -60 °C. Then CuCl₂ (1.1 eq., 8.7 g, 67 mol) was added in one portion at -60 °C. The reaction was kept at -60 °C for 1 hour and warmed to room temperature and stirred for 24 hours at room temperature. The reaction mixture was quenched with water (30 mL). The phases were separated and the organic layer was dried over MgSO₄, filtered and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane) to afford the desired product as a white solid.¹¹⁰

Yield: 4 g (79%);

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ = 7.40-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.36-7.34 (m, 4H).

9.17.2. Synthesis of hexabromo-3,3'-bithiophene (59)

Liquid Br₂ (32 eq., 5.0 mL, 96 mmol) was added dropwise to a solution of 3,3'-bithiophene (1 eq., 500 mg, 3.0 mmol) in dry CS₂ (15 mL) and the solution was heated to reflux for 36 h. A saturated solution of Na₂S₂O₅ in water was added portion-wise to the mixture until the brown color completely disappeared. The crude product, separated as a brown-colored solid, was repeatedly treated with hot ethanol to remove all soluble impurities.¹¹¹

Yield: 1.56 g (80%);

M.p. 180–183 °C;

M.S. (EI) = 640 [M⁺].
9.17.3. Synthesis of 2,2',4,4',5,5'-tetra(2-thienyl)-3,3'-bithiophene (60)

A mixture of hexabromo-3,3'-bithiophene (1 eq., 0.50 g, 0.8 mmol), 2-(tributylstanny) thiophene (8 eq., 2.4 g, 6.4 mmol) and Pd(PPh$_3$)$_4$ (0.2 eq., 0.185 g, 0.16 mmol) in p-xylene (25 mL), was refluxed under nitrogen atmosphere for 20 h. The reaction mixture was filtered on a silica gel cake to remove the catalyst, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the crude residue was purified by column chromatography (n-hexane : CH$_2$Cl$_2$ = 8 : 2) to afford the desired product as a pale yellow solid.$^{[111]}$

Yield: 150 mg (26%);
M.p.: 120–125 °C;

$^1$H NMR (CDCl$_3$, 400 MHz): $\delta =$ 7.24 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 1.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.17 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 1.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.16 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 1.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.13 (dd, $J = 3.7$ Hz, $J = 1.1$ Hz, 2H), 7.06 (dd, $J = 3.7$ Hz, $J = 1.1$ Hz, 2H), 6.95 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 3.7$ Hz, 2H), 6.92 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 3.7$ Hz, 2H), 6.87 (dd, $J = 5.1$ Hz, $J = 3.5$ Hz, 2H), 6.56 (dd, $J = 3.5$ Hz, $J = 1.1$ Hz, 2H);

$^{13}$C NMR (CDCl$_3$, 100 MHz) $\delta =$ 135.7, 135.6, 135.0, 134.9, 133.3, 132.6, 131.9, 128.9, 127.0, 126.9, 126.8, 126.6, 126.2, 126.1, 126.0, 125.1;

M.S. (EI): 658 [M$^+$].

9.18. General procedure of monomers oxidation

A solution of the monomer (1 eq., 0.2 mmol) in dry CHCl$_3$ (50 mL) was added dropwise under N$_2$ atmosphere into a slurry of FeCl$_3$ (5 eq., 1 mmol) in dry chloroform (200 mL), under stirring at room temperature over a period of 2-5 hours. The dark mixture obtained was stirred for 24 hours at room temperature, then the volume of the solvent was reduced to 50 mL by evaporation under reduced pressure and the remaining solution was poured into MeOH (150 mL); then few drops of hydrazine hydrate were added and the solution turns orange-red. The obtained precipitate was recovered by filtration and then extracted with THF using soxhlet apparatus affording a soluble residue composed of oligomers.
10. References

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11. Appendix – Towards a new low band donor-acceptor copolymer

11.1. Introduction

During the period spent in the prof. Ludwigs’ group we moved our attention from inherent chirality to the synthesis of a new donor-acceptor copolymer, exploiting the expertise of the Institut für PolymerChemie (IPOC), was planned.

Donor/acceptor polymer (D-A) structure, based on a blend of two types of conjugated polymers acting as an electron donor and electron acceptor, have recently attracted considerable attention for the preparation of solar cells because they have numerous potential advantages over conventional polymer/fullerene blend solar cells.\[^1\]

The most widely studied bulk-heterojunction organic solar cells (BHJ) structure in which a conjugated polymer is intimately mixed with a low-molecular-weight fullerene derivative\[^2\]: D-A polymers, compared to fullerene-based structure, allow a flexible molecular design of both the components (and not only for the donor, as in BHJ solar cells), tuning the optical, morphological and electronic properties of materials. Furthermore, polymer/polymer blends can harvest a larger fraction of solar light and all-polymer blends yield superior thin-film formation properties, including flexibility and mechanical robustness.\[^3\]

Unfortunately, the majority of these D-A polymer/polymer have exhibited significantly lower electron mobility ($\mu_e$) than the fullerene derivatives, resulting in lower charge generation efficiency. For this reason, significant efforts have been made towards enhancing the power conversion efficiencies (PCEs) of polymer/polymer blend solar cells, trying to achieve and develop low-bandgap polymer acceptors with both high $\mu_e$ and high electron affinity.

The D:A blend ratio is an important parameter with regard to the fabrication of polymer/polymer blend solar cells. Ito and co-workers\[^4\] have investigated the effect of the D:A ratio on the photovoltaic performance of polymer/polymer blend solar cells based on an amorphous donor PTQ1 and a semi crystalline acceptor P(NDI2OD-T2) (Figure A 1) proving that photovoltaic parameters depend strongly on the D:A ratio.
Chemical structures of PTQ1 and P(NDI2OD-T2).

Figure A 1: Chemical structures of PTQ1 and P(NDI2OD-T2).

Regioregular poly(3-hexylthiophene) (P3HT) and 2,2′;3,2″-terthiophene (3T) are two of the most widely used donor polymers in the polymer/polymer BHJ solar cells because of their excellent hole mobility owing to the π−π interchain stacking in crystals. On the other hand, benzothiadiazole derivate are well-known to be suitable electron acceptors structure. Finally, EDOT is a well-known building block for the preparation of oligomers and polymers and, as previously reported in this thesis it possesses a remarkable conductivity, it is relatively stable in its oxidized form, and above all, it is endowed with a quite low redox potential and a moderate band gap, properties strongly required for the preparation of a D-A polymer.

It was reported by Ludwigs and co-worker[5] that the use of a branched monomer unit like 3T leads to the formation of 3D oligothiophene networks, in particular in the presence of EDOT as co-monomer. EDOT was found to be able to tune the properties of the material: it was introduced not only on the 3T structure (leading to a 3TE₃ monomer) but also it was used as co-monomer during electropolymerization processes in different 3T:EDOT ratio. The architectures resulting from the analysis were found to be interesting for electrochemical devices where ions flow in and out of the structure is required. The project to investigate further copolymerization of 3T with other interesting co-monomers (e.g., for the preparation of low-bandgap polymers) arises from the results obtained in this field.

11.2. Results and discussion

2,2′:3′,2″-Terthiophene (3T) and 4,7-bis(3,4-diethylenedioxythiophene)benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole (BTDE) (Figure A 2) were selected for the preparation of a D-A copolymer.
BTDE was synthesized according to a Stille protocol by reaction between 4,7-dibromobenzothiadiazole and the 2-tributylstanny1-3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene. The latter was obtained, in turn, by treatment with n-BuLi and the generated anion was reacted with tributyltin chloride to give the desired product.

Both the monomers have characteristics suitable to undergo chemical or electrochemical oxidation. Scheme A 2 represents the conditions applied in order to promote the formation of the two homopolymers and the copolymer.

Figure A 2: 2,2′:3′,2″-Terthiophene (3T) and 4,7-bis(3,4-diethylenedioxythiophene)benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole (BTDE).

Scheme A 1: Synthesis of BTDE.

Scheme A 2: Formation of homopolymers and copolymer by anodic oxidation processes from monomer 3T, BTDE or a mixture of 3T and BTDE.
Appendix

It must be considered that, for the direct electrochemical copolymerization of two different monomers, the oxidation potentials of the two co-monomer species must be very similar.\textsuperscript{[6]}

Preliminary cyclic voltammetric measurements on ITO electrodes in 0.1 M tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate (NBu\textsubscript{4}PF\textsubscript{6})/CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2} or acetonitrile, however, showed that the oxidation potentials are very different, being specifically E\textsubscript{ox} (vs Fc/ Fc\textsuperscript{+}) of BTDE (-0.55 V on ITO) and 3T (+0.4 V on ITO) (Δ E\textsubscript{ox} ≈ 1 V). The possibility of a major tendency to homopolymerization compared to copolymerization must be considered.

For this reason, preliminary tests aimed to prove the possible copolymerization were carried out. Chemical oxidation mediated by FeCl\textsubscript{3} was carried out on a 1:1 mixture of 3T and BTDE in a chloroform diluted solution under Ar atmosphere. The oxidized black material was treated with hydrazine hydrate in order to reduce the material, filtered and extracted with THF through a soxhlet apparatus. The resulted oligomeric mixture was analyzed by MALDI mass analysis: the spectrum is depicted in Figure A 3 A while the complete peaks analysis is reported in Table A 1.

The trend observed was, mainly, a strong tendency of 3T to homopolymerize to give a mixture of oligomers of different length (up to seven units). The formation of copolymers was observed and a different number of 3T units were found but containing just one BTDE unit. On the other hand, BTDE showed a lower tendency to polymerize both with itself and with 3T. However, the small amounts of BTDE polymers isolated after the soxhlet extraction could be attribute to the low solubility of the monomer itself.

However, the possibility to chemically copolymerize the two monomers seems to be attainable but, in order to complete the mass characterization, a second MALDI analysis was carried out from the material electrodeposited on electrode surfaces. The copolymeric films of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1], deposited on ITO electrodes in CH\textsubscript{2}Cl\textsubscript{2} containing 0.1 M NBu\textsubscript{4}PF\textsubscript{6} as supporting electrolyte were physically removed from the electrodes and treated according to the procedure reported by Skelton and co-workers\textsuperscript{[7]}; that is a solid-phase method used for analyzing non-soluble polymers and it requires to grind in a mortar appropriate quantity of matrix, ionizer and sample and mashing the obtained mixture directly on the polished steel target through a spatula.

This technique, compared to the usually used dried-droplet method, leads to spectra less resolved and with higher background noise (as is possible to observe from Figure A 3 B) but it is necessary for compounds not enough soluble to be dissolved and deposited as drop on the target.
A different behaviour (summarized in Figure A 3 B and in Table A 1) was found from the analysis of the ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]: a less strong tendency of 3T homopolymerization and a much wider range of BTDE-3T copolymers were observed. This behaviour confirmed the results of chemical oxidation: 3T and BTDE can indeed copolymerize (chemically and electrochemically) despite the huge difference between their oxidative potential. The low amount of the BTDE-3T copolymer found in the ch-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1] analysis must be related to the low solubility of the oligomers with higher molecular weight and, especially, higher number of BTDE units in their structure.

After demonstrating the reliability of the copolymerization between 3T and BTDE, an electrochemical characterization of the homopolymers and of the copolymer was carried out.

![Figure A 3: A) MALDI spectrum of ch-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1], sample prepared by the dried-droplet method. B) MALDI spectrum of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1], sample prepared with solid-phase method.](image-url)
Appendix

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**Table A1:** MALDI spectrum peak analysis of ch-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]. Sample prepared by the dried-droplet method.

MALDI spectrum peak analysis of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]. Sample prepared with solid-phase method.

Thin homopolymeric films of ec-p(3T) and ec-p(BTDE) were electrodeposited on Au and on ITO in acetonitrile or CH$_2$Cl$_2$, respectively, containing 0.1 M NBu$_4$PF$_6$ as supporting electrolyte. A copolymeric film of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1] (obtained from 1 mM solution of 3T and 1 mM of BTDE in CH$_2$Cl$_2$) and a double-layer of the two homopolymeric film deposited on the same electrode (ec-p(BTDE-dl-3T)) were prepared. The cyclic voltammograms recorded from homopolymeric or copolymeric films deposited on ITO electrodes, together with the related Vis/NIR spectra recorded during the forward scan in the p-doping process, are reported in Figure A 4. The analysis carried out on a double layer of BTDE and 3T must be considered in order to confirm with a different method the actual copolymerization and rules out the possibility of the formation of different layers of homopolymers on the electrode surface instead of a real copolymer.
The two homopolymers were compared to the copolymer and to the double layer. ec-p(3T) (Figure A 4 A and B) showed an oxidative potential \( E_{\text{onset}}^{\text{ox}} \) of +0.40 V and a neutral absorbance profile characterized by the presence of a strong band at 452 nm. This band, during the stepwise increase of the anodic potential, decreased in intensity meanwhile the increasing presence of a transient radical cation absorption band (\( \lambda_{\text{max}} = 781 \) nm), overwhelmed by the band characteristic for the dication (\( \lambda_{\text{max}} = 1041 \) nm) when a further anodic potential was applied. Due to its oxidative potential, P(3T) results to be in its neutral state at 0.0 V.

Ec-p(BTDE) (Figure A 4 C and D) showed an oxidative potential \( E_{\text{onset}}^{\text{ox}} \) of -0.55 V and a neutral absorbance profile characterized by the presence of two strong bands at 432 nm and 775 nm, respectively. These bands, during the stepwise increase of the anodic potential decreased simultaneously in intensity and meanwhile the radical cation absorption band (\( \lambda_{\text{max}} = 982 \) nm) appeared. Due to its oxidative potential, P(BTDE) results to be present as a radical cation at 0.0 V.

Ec-p(BTDE-dl-3T) (Figure A 4 E and F) was constituted by a double layer of BTDE and 3T (because of solubility issues only two layers, BTDE first and 3T last) were deposited on ITO electrode surface. The behavior of the double layer both in cyclic voltammograms and in spectroelectrochemical analysis, resulted to be the perfect superimposition of the 3T and BTDE profiles. In particular, the CV profile resulted to be very similar to that observed for the single components and both the oxidative potentials were present in the voltammogram. Secondly, the Vis/NIR spectra of the neutral species showed two strong bands at 432 nm and 775 nm like BTDE but, during a stepwise increase of the anodic potential, the two bands decrease in a different ratio: at an oxidative potential of 0.0 V the band corresponding to \( \lambda_{\text{max}} = 775 \) nm resulted to be absent while the band at \( \lambda_{\text{max}} = 432 \) nm was still present. This result can be attributable to the simultaneous presence of two species, namely the radical cation BTDE and the neutral 3T.

A totally different behaviour was observed for ec-p(BTDE-co-3T) (Figure A 4 G and H). Cyclic voltammetry showed a first oxidation peak at -0.40 V, remarkably higher that that observed for c-p(BTDE) but strongly lower than that relative of ec-p(3T). An even more interesting behaviour could be observed from spectroelectrochemical data: the neutral copolymer ec-p(BTDE-co-3T) showed two intense bands at 432 nm and 678 nm while, if the first matches perfectly with that
of the homopolymers and of the double layer, the second one resulted to be blue-shifted of 100 nm. Furthermore, differently from what was found for the double layer ec-p(BTDE-dl-3T): for the copolymer it was possible to observe a simultaneously decrease of the two bands above-mentioned that were still present at an anodic potential of 0.0 V, proving that the radical cation, although inchoate, was not the predominant species.

These electrochemical analyses allowed to state that, despite the difference in oxidative potential, not only electro copolymerization between 3T and BTDE can be performed but also the resulting material possess new and interesting properties.

Furthermore, in-situ conductance measurements (Figure A 5) demonstrated some different features between the copolymer and the two homopolymers. Unfortunately, in order to estimate the absolute conductance, the value of conductance must be related with the exact amount of material deposited on the interdigitated electrode surface and, in this case, this operation was not possible. For that reason, the only information that was possible to extrapolate was the range of conductance of the different polymers. Under this point of view, ec-p(BTDE-co-3T) resulted to have a conductive window from -0.25 V while ec-p(BTDE) from -0.5 and ec-p(3T) from +0.5 V. It was so possible to state that a tuning in the 3T:BTDE ratio leads to a tuning of the conductive characteristics of the material.
Figure A 5: In-situ Conductance analysis of A) ec-p(3T) B) ec-p(BTDE) and C) ec-p(BTDE-co-3T){1:1} (deposited on 10 μm interdigitated Pt electrode, 1 mM monomer solution in CH₂Cl₂ + TBAFPF₆, 50 mV s⁻¹ scan rate) ACN + 0.1 M TBAPF₆ solution, 20 mV s⁻¹ scan rate.

To prove the influence of stoichiometry, different co-monomer 3T:BTDE ratios, from [5:1] to [1:5], were investigated. As for the experiments described above, the copolymeric films were electrodeposited on Au and on ITO electrodes in CH₂Cl₂ containing NBu₄PF₆ (c = 0.1 M) as supporting electrolyte. The final overall concentration of each solution used for the electrodepositions was setted at 2 mM.

The films were analyzed by Vis/NIR spectroelectrochemical analysis (for ITO electrodes, data reported in Table A 2) and by cyclic voltammetry (for Au electrodes, data reported in Table A 3).
measured band gap values could arise. Anyhow, this theoretical
structure of the materials that results to be optimized at certain BTDE:3T
ratio; from the optimized structure, the band gap lowering could arise. Anyhow, this theoretical explanation

Table A 2: Absorption and electrochemical characteristics of electrochemically deposited copolymers ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[5:1], [3:1], [2:1], [1:1], [1:2], [1:3] and [1:5], and homopolymers ec-p(BTDE) and ec-p(3T) derived from in-situ spectroelectrochemical experiments on ITO electrodes.

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<th>polymer</th>
<th>λ/nm (eV)</th>
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<td>ec-p(BTDE)</td>
<td>432 767</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>-0.55 (-4.25)</td>
<td>-1.60 (-3.20)</td>
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<td>ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[5:1]</td>
<td>436 728</td>
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<td>-1.58 (-3.22)</td>
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<td>-0.63 (-4.17)</td>
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<td>ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:2]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1041</td>
<td>0.40 (-5.20)</td>
<td>-1.91 (-2.89)</td>
<td>2.31</td>
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Table A 3: Electrochemical characteristics of electrochemically deposited copolymers ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[5:1], [3:1], [2:1], [1:1], [1:2], [1:3] and [1:5], and homopolymers ec-p(BTDE) and ec-p(3T) derived from cyclic voltammetric experiments on Au electrodes.

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<th>polymer</th>
<th>$E_{ox}^{\text{meas}}$ (HOMO/eV)</th>
<th>$E_{red}^{\text{meas}}$ (LUMO/eV)</th>
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<td>ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]</td>
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<td>ec-p(3T)</td>
<td>0.46 (-5.26)</td>
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The electrochemical band gap (EBG) measured for the homopolymeric films resulted to be 1.05 eV and 1.07 eV respectively on ITO and Au for ec-p(BTDE) and 2.31 eV and 2.45 eV for ec-p(3T).

As expected, in most cases the EBG for the copolymers resulted to be intermediate between those values: the copolymers obtained by electrooxidizing BTDE and 3T in [1:1], [1:2], [1:3], and [1:5] ratio showed this behaviour.

However, copolymers prepared with a ratio of BTDE higher than 3T (ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[5:1], -[3:1] and -[2:1]) showed a EBG lower that the expected values: the measured band gap values resulted to be lower even compare to the BTDE homopolymer. Those values of electrochemical energy band gap, for films deposited and ITO and Au, are also plotted and showed in Figure A 6.

A plausible explanation of this phenomenon is to assume a peculiar geometry or stacking or structure of the materials that results to be optimize at certain BTDE:3T ratio; from the optimized structure, the band gap lowering could arise. Anyhow, this theoretical explanation
must be proved by theoretical DFT calculation, in order to give an unambiguous explanation of the collected data.

Figure A 6: Electrochemical band gap vs. [BTDE:3T] ratio derived from experiments on Au (blue) and ITO (red) electrodes.

In Figure A 7 the normalized absorbances of the neutral copolymer are depicted. The UV/vis profiles show two remarkable trends, one expected, the other unforeseen.

As previously mentioned, on one hand, 3T has an absorption band in its neutral form at 452 nm while, on the other hand, BTDE and its copolymers show two strong absorption bands, the first around 430 nm, while the second one around 775 nm (for ec-p(BDTE)), band that shifts to 678 nm (for ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]).

An expected phenomenon is a difference in intensity for the two bands as the BTDE:3T ratio is modified: the more blue-shifted band, indeed, resulted to be the superimposition of the bands of both the monomers while, the other one is related only to the presence of BTDE units in the copolymer. For that reason, as the BTDE:3T ratio decreases a parallel decrease of intensity of the red-shifted band is observed.

At the same time, an unexpected phenomenon was observed analyzing the maximum absorption wavelength of the red-shifted band: a continuous hypsochromic shift was observed as the amount of BTDE in the polymeric film decreases.
In conclusions, the BTDE:3T copolymer seems to be a highly appealing donor-acceptor copolymer: the material was obtained despite the remarkable difference between the oxidation potential of the two monomers. Furthermore, the properties of the copolymers resulted to be extremely tunable: the band gap, for example, can be set in a range between 0.9 to 1.7 V as is possible to set the conductive window of the material. Additionally, it is interesting to underline how easy was to modify the absorbance profile of the copolymeric material only by adjusting wisely the ratio between the two copolymer units.

11.3. Experimental section

11.3.1. Materials and methods

All chemicals and solvents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, TCI Chemicals, Alfa-Aesar or Acros Organics. Solvents were at least HPLC grade and were used as received except otherwise noted. NBu₄PF₆ (TCI) was stored in a desiccator over blue gel. Acetonitrile (Alfa Aesar, supergradient HPLC grade (far-UV), 99.9+%) and dichloromethane (Acros Organics, 99.9% analytical grade) were stored under argon atmosphere and over activated neutral Al₂O₃ or were dried over activated Al₂O₃ before use. All reactions were carried out under argon atmosphere unless otherwise noted.
The NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AC 300 spectrometer. Chemical shifts are given in ppm and the coupling constants are given in Hz; s=singlet, ddd=double double doublet, m=multiplet.

MALDI-TOF mass spectrometric measurements were performed on a Bruker autoflex speed spectrometer. The polymer samples concentration was set to 3 mg mL\(^{-1}\). A poly(ethylene glycol) standard was used for internal calibration (3 mg mL\(^{-1}\)). Matrix trans-2-[3-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-2-methyl-2-propenyldiene]malononitrile (DCTB, 10 mg mL\(^{-1}\)) containing the ionizer sodium trifluoromethanesulfonate was used. The polymer samples were mixed in a 1:2 ratio with the DCTB matrix. The mixed samples were prepared by the dried-droplet method (1 μL of the mixed solution was allowed to dry on a polished steel target) or with a solid-phase method used for non-soluble polymers (grinding in a mortar appropriate quantity of matrix, ionizer and sample and mashing the mixture on a polished steel target through a spatula)\(^7\).

11.3.2. Synthesis

2, 2’: 3’, 2”-terthiophene (3T)\(^8\), benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole\(^9\) and 4,7-dibromobenzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole\(^9\) were synthesize based on literature and are not reported.

2-tributylstannyl-3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene: A 2.5 M solution of n-BuLi (1.1 eq., 1.55 mL, 3.86 mmol,) in n-hexane was slowly added to a solution of 3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene (1 eq., 500 mg, 3.52 mmol) and \(N,N,N',N'\)-tetramethylethylenediamine (TMEDA) (1.1 eq., 0.58 mL, 3.86 mmol) in anhydrous diethyl ether (14 mL) under argon atmosphere at room temperature. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 10 minutes and then refluxed for 30 minutes. The reaction mixture was then cooled at -78°C and tributyltin chloride (1 eq., 1.37 mL, 3.52 mmol) was slowly added over 1 hour. The reaction was stirred at -78°C for 30 minutes, then warmed up to room temperature and stirred for 3 h. The reaction mixture was then quenched with saturated NaCl solution; the aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether, dried over MgSO\(_4\) and filtered. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the TMEDA was removed by vacuum distillation to produce a pale-yellow oil that was used without any further purification (72% yield). \(^1\)H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl\(_3\)) \(\delta = 6.60\) (1 H, s), \(\delta = 4.18\) (4 H, m), \(\delta = 1.59\) (6 H, m), \(\delta = 1.35\) (6 H, m), \(\delta = 1.12\) (6 H, m), \(\delta = 0.92\) (9 H, m).

4,7-Bis(3,4-diyelenedioxythiophene)benzo[c][1,2,5]thiadiazole (BTDE): A mixture of 4,7-dibromobenzothiadiazole (1 eq., 310 mg, 1.06 mmol), 2-tributylstannyl-3,4-ethylenedioxythiophene (2.5 eq., 1.14 g, 2,64 mmol), 99% Pd(PPh\(_3\))\(_4\) (0.05 eq., 61 mg, 0.05 mmol)
and toluene (10 mL) was refluxed under nitrogen atmosphere for 6 hours. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the crude residue was purified by column chromatography using a 7:3 mixture of CH$_2$Cl$_2$ and n-hexane. Combined final fractions gave BTDE as a deep red solid by removal of the solvent (343 mg, 78% yield). $^1$H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl$_3$) $\delta$ = 8.41 (2 H, s), $\delta$ = 6.59 (2 H, s), $\delta$ = 4.42 (4 H, ddd, $J$ = 2.4 Hz, $J$ = 1.8 Hz, $J$ = 1.5 Hz), $\delta$ = 4.34 (4 H, ddd, $J$ = 2.4 Hz, $J$ = 1.8 Hz, $J$ = 1.5 Hz).

**11.3.3. Chemical copolymerization of ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[1:1]**

FeCl$_3$ (5 eq., 213 mg, 1.31 mmol) was added one pot to a stirred solution of 3T (1 eq., 65 mg, 0.26 mmol) and BTDE (1 eq., 109 mg, 0.26 mmol) in dry chloroform (120 mL) under argon atmosphere. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 16 h; the solvent was removed under reduced pressure and then methanol (60 mL) and hydrate hydrazine (1 mL) were added to the obtained black residue to give a red solution. The mixture was stirred for 10 minutes and filtered. The solid residue was washed with methanol (3x10 mL) and diethyl ether (3x10 mL). The solid residue was collected and transferred into a cellulose extraction thimble; the thimble was insert into a soxhlet assembly and the extraction was performed using 120 mL of THF heating for 36 h the whole assembly to obtain an orange solution. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give the final polymer (98 mg, 56% yield).

**11.3.4. Electrochemical Experiments**

All electrochemical experiments were performed with an Autolab PGSTAT101 potentiostat (Metrohm, Germany) in a three-electrode glass cell at room temperature under argon atmosphere using the NOVA software (version 1.10). The counter electrode was a Pt plate. The reference electrode consisted of an AgCl-coated silver wire (pseudoreference electrode) directly immersed into the electrolyte. As working electrodes, gold-coated Si wafers (50 nm Au layer with a 5 nm Cr layer between the Si wafer and the Au layer) or ITO (Indium-Tin Oxide)-coated glass ($\leq$20 $\Omega$/sq, PGO, Germany) slides were used ($\sim$2 $\times$ 1 cm$^2$). The gold working electrodes were fabricated by physical vapor deposition of Cr and Au on rotating Si wafers. The gold-coated Si wafers and the ITO substrates were thoroughly washed with water, isopropanol and acetone prior to use. Additionally, the ITO electrodes were treated with oxygen plasma for 10 min before measurements. NBu$_4$PF$_6$ was used every time as electrolyte at a concentration of 0.1 M in HPLC.
grade dichloromethane or acetonitrile. Electrolyte solutions were deaerated by argon bubbling before use. All potentials are rescaled to the formal potential of the redox couple \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \) (internal standard).\[^{10}\] To avoid charge-trapping effects during cyclic voltammetric experiments, the oxidation and reduction cycles were performed separately.

**Electropolymerization of homopolymer ec-p(BTDE) on gold or ITO** was performed under potentiostatic control for 200 s using a 1 mM solution of BTDE in 0.1 M NBu\(_4\)PF\(_6\)/DCM at 0.5-0.6 V vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \). After deposition, the oxidized films were directly reduced to the neutral form by applying a potential between −1.3 and −1.4 V (vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \)) for 200 s. Finally, the deposited films were washed with MeCN.

**Electropolymerization of homopolymer ec-p(3T) on gold or ITO** was performed under potentiostatic control for 200 s using a 1 mM solution of 3T in 0.1 M NBu\(_4\)PF\(_6\)/MeCN at 1.1-1.2 V vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \). After deposition, the oxidized films were directly reduced to the neutral form by applying a potential between −1.3 and −1.4 V (vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \)) for 200 s. Finally, the deposited films were washed with MeCN.

**Electropolymerization of copolymer ec-p(BTDE-co-3T)-[5:1]-[3:1]-[2:1]-[1:1]-[1:2]-[1:3]-[1:5] on gold or ITO** was performed under potentiostatic control for 200 s using an overall concentration of 2 mM solution of 3T and BTDE in 0.1M NBu\(_4\)PF\(_6\)/DCM at 1.1-1.2 V vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \). After deposition, the oxidized films were directly reduced to the neutral form by applying a potential between −1.3 and −1.4 V (vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \)) for 200 s. Finally, the deposited films were washed with MeCN.

**Electropolymerization of blend polymer ec-(double layer) on gold or ITO** was performed under potentiostatic control for 200 s depositing two homopolymer layers; two consecutive potentiostatic polymerization (first 1 mM solution of BTDE in 0.1M NBu\(_4\)PF\(_6\)/DCM at 0.5-0.6 V vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \) then 1 mM solution of 3T in 0.1M NBu\(_4\)PF\(_6\)/MeCN at 1.1-1.2 V vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \)). After each deposition, the oxidized films were directly reduced to the neutral form by applying a potential between −1.3 and −1.4 V (vs \( \text{Fc/Fc}^+ \)) for 200 s. After each reduction, the deposited films were washed with MeCN.

11.3.5. **In-Situ Spectroelectrochemical Measurements**

Spectroelectrochemical experiments on thin films were conducted using an Autolab PGSTAT101 potentiostat (Metrohm) and a Zeiss UV–vis spectrometer equipped with a MCS621 Vis II spectrometer cassette (mean spectral pixel pitch: 3.2 nm) and a CLH600F lamp in a custom-built
three electrode-one compartment quartz cell at room temperature under argon atmosphere. The counter and reference electrode consisted of a Pt wire and an AgCl-coated Ag wire (pseudoreference electrode) directly immersed into the electrolyte solution, respectively. Transparent ITO coated float glass slides (≤20 Ω/sq, PGO, Germany) (∼2 × 1 cm²) were used as the working electrode and for background measurements a non-modified ITO-coated float glass slide was used. The absorption spectra of the polymer films were recorded in transmission mode. All voltammograms were recorded with a scan rate of 20 mV s⁻¹ with step potentials of 50 mV. At every potential step a UV–vis absorption spectrum was recorded. Electrolyte solutions (0.1 M NBu₄PF₆/MeCN) were deaerated by argon bubbling before use.

11.3.6. In-Situ Conductance Measurements

ISC measurements were performed using an electrolyte gated transistor setup with interdigitated Pt electrodes (distance = 10 μm) as working electrodes. The CV experiments were performed at room temperature under argon atmosphere using an Autolab PGSTAT101 potentiostat (Metrohm) with a Pt wire as counter electrode and an AgCl coated Ag wire directly immersed into the electrolyte solution as pseudoreference electrode. Additionally, a constant bias of 10 mV was applied between the combs of the interdigitated electrode using a second potentiostat (DropSens, Spain). The conductance of the polymers on the microarray electrode was calculated from the measured current between the two interdigitated Pt electrodes according to Ohm’s law (U = R·I; G = 1/R). Electrolyte solutions (0.1 M NBu₄PF₆/acetonitrile) were deaerated by argon bubbling before use.

11.4. References


12. Unofficial acknowledgement

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