

Highly Selective Route to Unsymmetrically Substituted 1-{2-[(Butylsulfanyl)methyl]-5-(chloromethyl)-4-methoxyphenoxy}-3,7-dimethyloctane and Isomers toward Synthesis of Conjugated Polymer OC1C10 Used in LEDs: Synthesis and Optimization

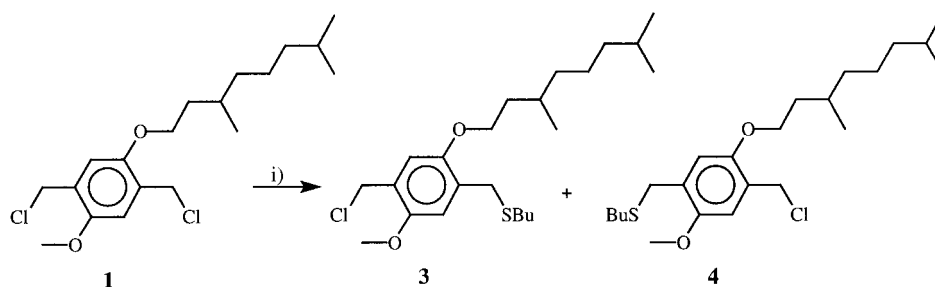
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A new and convenient route to an unsymmetrically substituted sulfinyl monomer of precursor polymer toward poly[2-methyl-5-(3,7-dimethyloctyloxy)-*p*-phenylenevinylene] (OC1C10) is described. OC1C10 is a commercial polymer used as the active layer in LEDs. Therefore, the optimization of the reaction conditions of the monomer synthesis was of some importance for a possible commercialization of this new process. It was possible to increase the overall yield by a factor of 1.5, as compared to the route previously used to obtain these compounds.

1. Introduction. – The interest in light-emitting diodes (LEDs) based on thin π -conjugated polymer films as the active layer has increased since the first report by *Friend* and co-workers about poly(*p*-phenylene vinylene) (PPV) thin emission layer LEDs [1]. Organic polymer LEDs have many advantages in the manufacture of large-area visible-light-emitting displays because of the good processability, low operating voltage, fast response time, and the possibility to display the three primary colors [2]. Many conjugated polymers are insoluble in common solvents and are infusible at temperatures below the decomposition temperature of the polymer. Generally, polymeric precursors for conjugated polymers introduce solubility and processability, which is necessary for making a LED device. *Wessling* and *Zimmerman* introduced in the late 1960's a versatile precursor route in which poly(*p*-phenylene vinylene) and derivatives are obtained after thermal conversion from a polyelectrolyte precursor with good mechanical properties, high thermal stability and electrical conductivities [3]. However, *Wessling*'s method still shows some drawbacks, *e.g.*, instability of the precursor polymer and gelation. Furthermore, it is difficult to polymerize monomers with extended aromatic systems, *e.g.*, as poly(4,4'-biphenylenevinylene). Other precursor routes were developed by different groups [4]. An alternative precursor route was also developed by our group [5]. This method is particularly attractive because it avoids the use of ionic, polymeric intermediates, and a clear distinction is made between the three processing steps: formation of the active monomer, a *p*-quinodimethane system, the polymerization to the soluble precursor polymer, and the thermal conversion to conjugated polymer. To have control over the polymerization process, it is necessary to chemically differentiate in the structure of the monomer between the polarizer and the leaving group [6]. Different strategies have been developed to deal with the synthesis of this asymmetric monosubstituted monomer.

Scheme 2. Synthesis with BCDM (**1**) as Starting Material Used Formerly

i) 1 equiv. BuSH, 1 equiv. *t*-BuONa, MeOH, 20°, 1 h.

consists of **1** (23%), (butylthio)methyl-chloromethyl derivatives **3** and **4** (52%), and bis[(alkylthio)methyl] derivative (25%). This product distribution is very close to the statistical distribution (25 : 50 : 25) and is similar to that found in experiments starting from the unsubstituted 1,4-bis(chloromethyl)benzene [9].

Addition of a phase-transfer catalyst increased the yield of the desired products **3** and **4**, comparable to the behavior of 1,4-bis(chloromethyl)benzene [9] (Table 1).

Table 1. Product Yields [%] from Methods Formerly Applied to BCDM (**1**)

Entry	Phase transfer?	Equiv. of thiol	Product yields [%]		
			1	3 and 4 (ratio 3/4)	Bis(butylthio) derivative
1	No	1.00	23	52	25
2	Yes	0.45	73	25 (41 : 59)	2
3	Yes	1.00	21	56 (43 : 57)	23

The use of excess of BCDM (**1**) as starting material decreases the amount of disubstitution, but excess **1** requires further purification by column chromatography.

2.2. *Optimum Reaction Conditions for the New Method.* BCDM (**1**) is applied industrially as a monomer. The polymers obtained serve as the active layer in LEDs [8]. With this industrial background in mind, we sought the optimal reaction conditions, including reaction time, ratio of thiol/monomer/base and reaction temperature.

2.2.1. *Reaction Time.* Fig. 1 shows a graph of the change in pH as a function of time during the second step in the new process. The pH was measured in MeOH (instead of H₂O), and the reaction conditions are described in the *Exper. Part*. The pH rises sharply upon addition of the base, followed by a slower decrease, and approaches the initial value within *ca.* 40 min. This indicates a time scale of 40 min to run the reaction to completion.

2.2.2. *Ratio of Reactants (Alkanethiol/BCDM/Base).* Table 2 shows the influence of different ratios of starting compounds on the product distribution with a reaction time of 40 min.

The ratio of these four compounds (**1**, **3**, **4**, and disubstituted product) can be determined by ¹H-NMR spectroscopy. The MeO resonance (3.84–3.77 ppm) of these products are sufficiently separated to allow a reliable determination of the product distribution by deconvolution of peaks as seen in Fig. 2. The highest yield of both

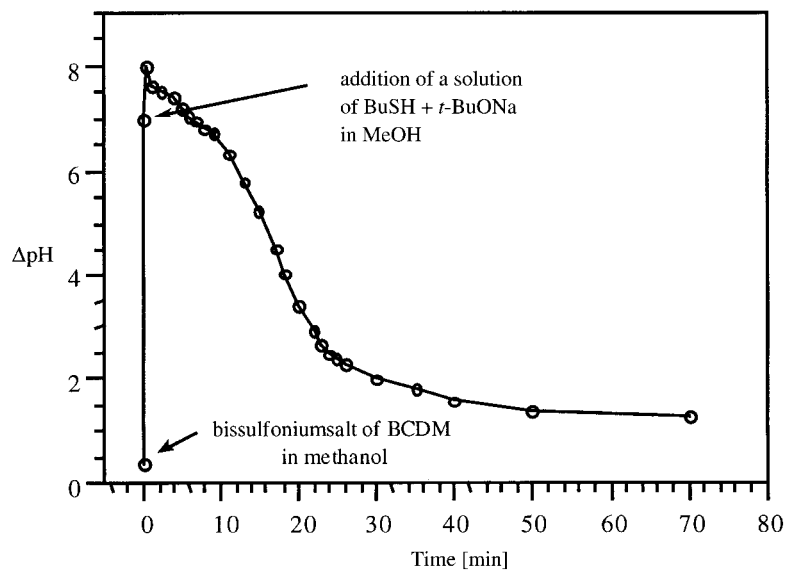


Fig. 1. Change in pH as a function of time during the second step of the synthesis depicted in Scheme 1

Table 2. Effect of Ratio of Reagents on Product Distribution

Entry	Ratio of BuSH/ 1 / <i>t</i> -BuONa	Product yields [%]		
		1	3 and 4 (ratio 3/4)	Bis(butylthio) derivative
1	0.99 : 1.00 : 1.10	16	77 (49 : 51)	7
2	0.98 : 1.00 : 1.00	18	74 (50 : 50)	7
3	0.95 : 1.00 : 0.95	33	54 (49 : 51)	13

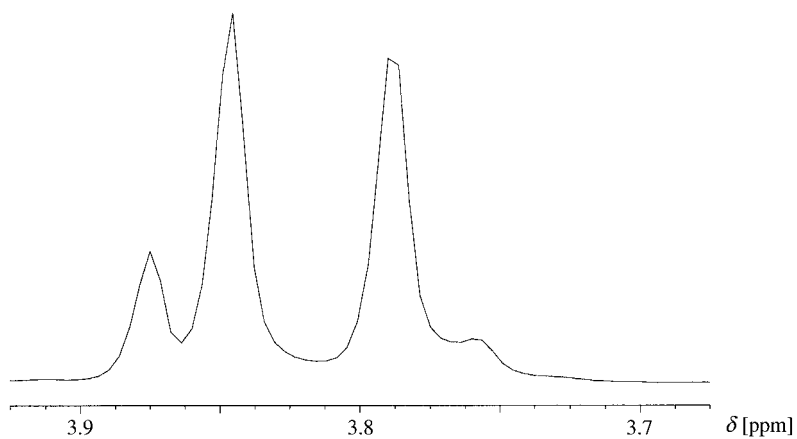


Fig. 2. MeO Region in the ^1H -NMR spectrum analyzed during monomer synthesis

monosubstituted isomers was obtained for BuSH/**1**/*t*-BuONa of 0.99:1.00:1.10. Under these conditions, however, a yellow color developed, presumably due to premature precursor polymer conversion caused by the excess base. This side reaction was suppressed at a ratio of 0.98:1.00:1.00, which gave a high enough selectivity (74%) for the monosubstituted thioether.

2.2.3. *Reaction Temperature.* Table 3 shows the product distribution found in experiments conducted at three different temperatures at a constant ratio of bis(tetrahydrothiophenium) derivative/thiol/*t*-BuONa of 1.00:0.98:1.00. Low reaction temperatures favor monosubstitution. At the lowest temperature ($T=0^\circ$) 79% of monosubstituted compound and only 4% of disubstituted byproduct were found. However, the reaction carried out at room temperature still led to an acceptable yield of 74% of monosubstituted thioether.

Table 3. *Effect of Temperature on Product Distribution*

Temp. [$^\circ$]	Product yields [%]		
	1	3 and 4 (ratio 3/4)	Bis(butylthio) derivative
20	18	74 (50:50)	7
10	19	77 (51:49)	4
0	17	79 (51:49)	4

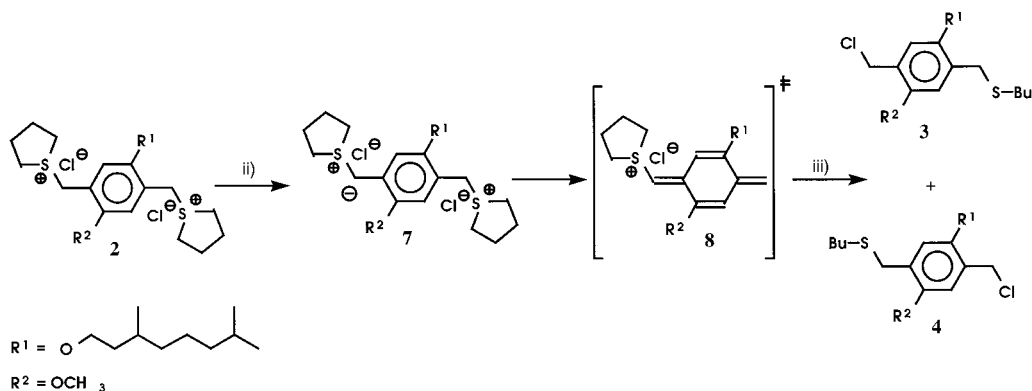
3. Discussion. – Sulfonium groups are good leaving groups. Thus, **2** can undergo a special kind of a nucleophilic substitution to predominantly yield the monosubstituted compounds **3** and **4**. As side-products, some disubstituted compound is formed, as well as some BCDM (**1**), originating either from a *retro*-reaction or from unreacted starting material. By selecting optimal reaction conditions (see above), the product distribution can be shifted in favor of the monosubstituted products **3** and **4** (74%), even if just 1 equiv. of bis-sulfonium salt of **1** is applied (see *Entry 2* in Table 2).

We suggest as the primary step a deprotonation of salt **2** by a thiolate anion, which is a strong enough base. The conjugated base **7** (Scheme 3) eliminates 1 equiv. of tetrahydrothiophene. This 1,6-elimination leads to a quinodimethane derivative, which is a notoriously reactive species and would usually polymerize immediately. Polymerization is obviously suppressed in presence of the thiol compound, which acts as an efficient trap or inhibitor¹⁾, leading to the monosubstituted thioether **3** and **4** with far higher yield than expected from simple statistics. Key to these findings is a balanced double function of the thiol derivative; it is a moderate base to generate smoothly with time the quinodimethane. In parallel, the thiol compound traps the quinodimethane efficiently and inhibits polymerization. The reaction sequence is completed by substitution of the remaining tetrahydrothiophenium group by a Cl⁻ ion, which is easily forced to full conversion by stripping off the tetrahydrothiophene by distillation.

This mechanism is in full agreement with the almost statistical product distribution found in the direct substitution of BCDM (**1**) with a thiolate, which was state-of-the-art formerly (*Entries 1* and *3* in Table 1). The weaker acid **1** would not be deprotonated

¹⁾ This resembles the S_N1cB -type substitution, where the active species is the conjugated base, as described in [10].

Scheme 3. Proposed Mechanism of Step ii.



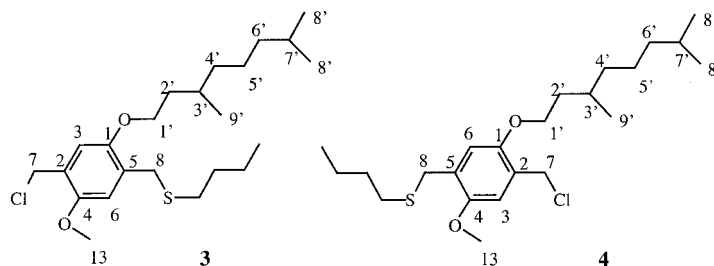
ii) 0.98 equiv. *t*-BuONa, 1 equiv. BuSH, MeOH, r.t. 9iii) Octane, Δ .

under these conditions. A simple nucleophilic substitution occurs, with both reaction centers being independent and decoupled. Thus, the only way to disfavor the disubstituted product had been to use a huge excess of **1**, which, afterwards, required a tedious workup procedure including chromatographic processes.

4. Conclusion. – A new simple process for preparing asymmetrical thioether derivative of 2,5-bis(chloromethyl)-1-[(3,7-dimethyloctyloxy)-4-methoxybenzene (BCDM; **1**) with an unexpectedly high selectivity is reported. In comparison to the formerly applied nucleophilic substitutions, this method requires the synthesis of a bis(tetrahydrothiophenium) salt **2** of **1** as an intermediate, which then forms a quinodimethane system in presence of thiolate anion. As thiol derivatives can act as inhibitors of polymerization for quinodimethane and in parallel, as nucleophiles, these latter are trapped in a monosubstitution by the thiol derivate.

Optimal conditions lead to a reaction mixture of 18% of **1**, 74% of monosubstituted thioether, 7% of disubstituted compounds. As the fraction of side products is kept below 25% and as **1** and the disubstituted derivative do not interfere with the polymerization conditions chosen, this mixture can be used directly without any further purification in a polymerization process leading to a structurally pure, fully conjugated OC1C10 polymer with a very high yield [11]. This novel process could be used as a new tool in the synthesis of pure OC1C10 polymer in large scale as no time-consuming purification would be necessary.

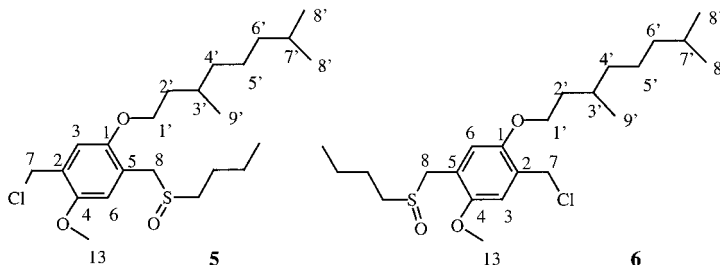
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(CDCl₃, 200 MHz): 6.92–6.78 (br., 2 arom. H); 4.61 (s, CH₂Cl); 4.20–3.75 (br., CH₂O); 3.84–3.77 (4s, MeO, 4 compounds); 4.61 (*m*, BuSCH₂); 2.45 (*t*, CH₂S); 0.8–2.0 (br., 19 H, alkyl side chain). ¹³C-NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): 13.56 (C(12)); 19.55 (C(9')); 21.91 (C(11)); 22.45, 22.55 (C(8')); 24.53 (C(5')); 27.81 (C(7)); 29.64, 29.69 (C(3'), C(8)); 30.01 (C(9)); 31.39 (C(10)); 36.10, 36.17, 36.25 (C(2')); 37.09, 37.14 (C(6')); 41.12, 41.44 (C(7)); 55.94, 56.04 (C(13)); 67.09, 67.19 (C(1')); 112.89, 113.12, 113.98, 114.24 (C(3), C(6)); 124.53, 124.86, 126.16, 126.58, 126.88, 128.46, 128.89 (C(2), C(5)); 150.47, 150.87 (C(1), C(4)).

Compounds 3 and 4 (cf. Entry 1 in Table 1). To a stirred mixture of **1** (36.1 g, 0.1 mol) in toluene (200 ml), NaOH (10.5 g, 0.26 mol) in H₂O, and Aliquat 336 (0.44 g), a soln. of BuSH (4.01 g, 44.4 mmol) in toluene (50 ml) was added dropwise over a period of 24 h at r.t. The org. layer was washed with H₂O (3 × 100 ml), dried (MgSO₄) and concentrated *in vacuo* to give 39.3 g of a light yellow solid, which is a mixture of **1** (23%), **3** and **4** (52%), and disubstituted product (25%), as calculated from ¹H-NMR integral curve. IR (NaCl): 2954, 2927, 2869, 1507, 1465, 1409, 1212, 1036, 865, 739, 696. ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃, 200 MHz): 6.92–6.78 (br., 2 arom. H); 4.61 (s, CH₂Cl); 4.20–3.75 (br., CH₂O); 3.84–3.77 (4s, MeO, 4 compounds); 4.61 (*m*, BuSCH₂); 2.45 (*t*, CH₂S); 0.8–2.0 (br., 19 H, alkyl side chain). ¹³C-NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): 13.56 (C(12)); 19.55 (C(9')); 21.91 (C(11)); 22.45, 22.55 (C(8')); 24.53 (C(5')); 27.81 (C(7)); 29.64, 29.69 (C(3'), C(8)); 30.01 (C(9)); 31.39 (C(10)); 36.10, 36.17, 36.25 (C(2')); 37.09, 37.14 (C(6')); 41.12, 41.44 (C(7)); 55.94, 56.04 (C(13)); 67.09, 67.19 (C(1')); 112.89, 113.12, 113.98, 114.24 (C(3), C(6)); 124.53, 124.86, 126.16, 126.58, 126.88, 128.46, 128.89 (C(2), C(5)); 150.47, 150.87 (C(1), C(4)).

1-[2-[(Butylsulfinyl)methyl]-5-(chloromethyl)-4-methoxyphenoxy]-3,7-dimethyloctane (5) and 1-[5-[(Butylsulfinyl)methyl]-2-(chloromethyl)-4-methoxyphenoxy]-3,7-dimethyloctane (6). TeO₂ (0.038 g, 12 mol-%) was added to a soln. of the pale yellow oil (0.82 g), consisting of **1**, **3**, **4**, and disubstituted derivative (Entry 3 in Table 1), in 40 ml of dioxane. Under vigorous stirring 0.39 g (4 mmol) of a H₂O₂ soln. (35 wt.-% soln. in H₂O) was added dropwise. The mixture was stirred vigorously at r.t. until a slight overoxidation was visible by TLC (ca. 3½ h). The reaction was quenched by pouring in ice-cold H₂O. The H₂O layer was extracted once with 50 ml of CHCl₃ and twice with 20 ml CHCl₃. The combined org. layers were dried (MgSO₄), filtered and evaporated on a rotary evaporator to give 0.6 g of product, consisting of 74% of **5** and **6**, 18% of **1**, and 7% of disubstituted product, as calculated from ¹H-NMR integral curve. This mixture was used without further purification in the following polymerization step [12]. Monosubstituted and disubstituted products do not polymerize under the reaction conditions as described in [11]. IR (KBr): 2960, 2930, 2868, 1506, 1462, 1409, 1221, 1037. ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃, 200 MHz): 6.90–6.80 (br., 2 arom. H); 4.61 (s, CH₂Cl); 4.20–3.75 (br. CH₂O); 3.84–3.77 (4s, MeO, 4 compounds); 4.61 (s, BuS(O)CH₂); 2.67 (*t*, CH₂S(O)); 0.8–2.0 (br., 19 H, alkyl side chain). ¹³C-NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): 13.51 (C(12)); 19.48 (C(9')); 21.88 (C(11)); 22.39, 22.50 (C(8')); 24.33 (C(10)); 24.47 (C(5')); 27.75 (C(7)); 29.57, 29.65 (C(3')); 36.13 (C(2')); 37.01 (C(4')); 38.98 (C(6')); 41.05, 41.12 (C(7)); 50.87, 50.98 (C(9));



52.45, 52.68 (C(8)); 55.78, 55.96 (C(13)); 66.83, 67.11 (C(1')); 112.66–115.47 (C(3), C(6)); 119.26–119.64 (C(5)); 126.21–126.83 (C(2)); 150.40–150.97 (C(4), C(1)).

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