Miniature Low-Loss CPW Periodic Structures for Filter Applications

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***Abstract*—Several novel periodic structures for coplanar waveguides are presented. The proposed structures exhibit low insertion loss in the passband, simple fabrication, and slow-wave characteristics. These structures are applied to realize miniature low-pass filters one-tenth the size of conventional filters, with spurious-free response and deep attenuation levels using only three cells.**

***Index Terms*—Coplanar waveguide, filters, periodic structures.**

I. Introduction

PERIODIC structures of various types have always been a favorite topic of researchers and are currently enjoying renewed interest in the microwave field for their applications in the microwave and millimeter-wave regime [1]. For example, planar periodic structures have been used to achieve high-performance filters, to perform harmonic tuning in power amplifiers, and to suppress leakage in CB-coplanar waveguide (CPW) and stripline circuits [2]–[5]. These applications are possible because periodic structures exhibit distinctive bandstop characteristics when patterned on the microstrip ground plane. Additionally, the slow-wave characteristics exhibited by periodic structures can be exploited to reduce microstrip circuit component size. With chips sizes currently being limited by the size of passive components rather than of the active devices, it becomes increasingly attractive to develop a complementary CPW slow-wave structure for the miniaturization of microwave integrated circuits (MICs) and monolithic microwave integrated circuits (MMICs). Many exotic schemes have been proposed to this end. Metal–insulator–semiconductor (MIS) CPW lines can achieve very high slow-wave factors, but suffer from low impedance values and high insertion loss, making MIS CPW lines impractical at higher frequencies. MIS loss may be improved by introducing cross-tie periodic structures or by inhomogeneously doping the semiconductor, but these methods necessitate additional fabrication processes [6], [7]. An ideal slow-wave structure with low loss properties, moderate impedance, and easy fabrication still remains the objective of many researchers. This paper entails our efforts to develop such a structure for CPW transmission lines.

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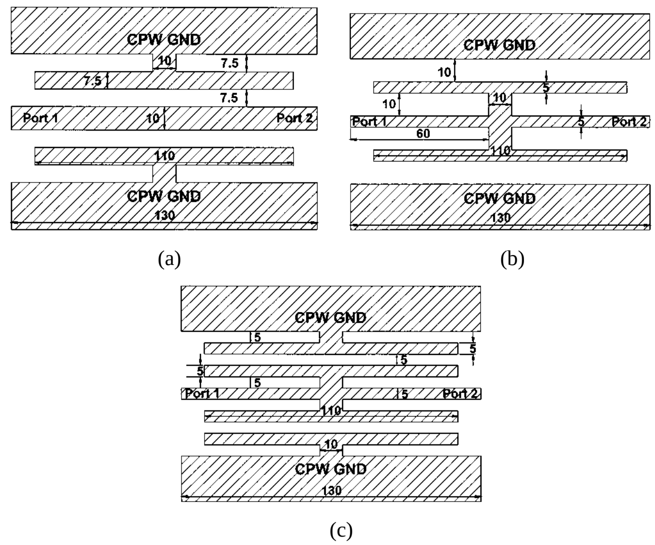

Fig. 1. Unit cells of proposed periodic structures (units in millimeters). Structures are symmetric about both axes and drawn to scale. (a) Structure A. (b) Structure B. (c) Structure C.

II. Design Considerations

From transmission-line theory, the propagation constant and phase velocity of a lossless transmission line are given, respectively, as $\beta = \omega\sqrt{LC}$ and $v_p = 1/\sqrt{LC}$, where L and C are the inductance and capacitance per unit length along the transmission line. Thus, slow-wave propagation can be accomplished by effectively increasing the L and C values. One way to do this is by introducing periodic variations along the direction of propagation, such as by drilling holes in the substrate or by etching patterns in the microstrip ground plane [8]. Because the fields in a microstrip line are concentrated in the dielectric substrate region, these periodic variations strongly perturb the nature of the microstrip field distributions. In contrast, the fields in CPW are localized in the two slots, so that perforation of the two ground planes will have little effect on CPW guided-wave propagation. Therefore, in order to increase the effective capacitance and inductance along the CPW line, we propose several periodic structures of the form depicted in Fig. 1. In each of these schemes, the width of the CPW center conductor is narrowed, enhancing the inductance per unit length. To increase the capacitance to ground, the two ground planes of the CPW line are brought closer in proximity to the center conductor. This can be accomplished by branching out the two ground planes, as in Fig. 1(a), by branching out the center conductor, as in Fig. 1(b), or by combining the two effects, as in Fig. 1(c). The proposed unit cells offer several advantages over existing structures. First, the overall footprints of the periodic

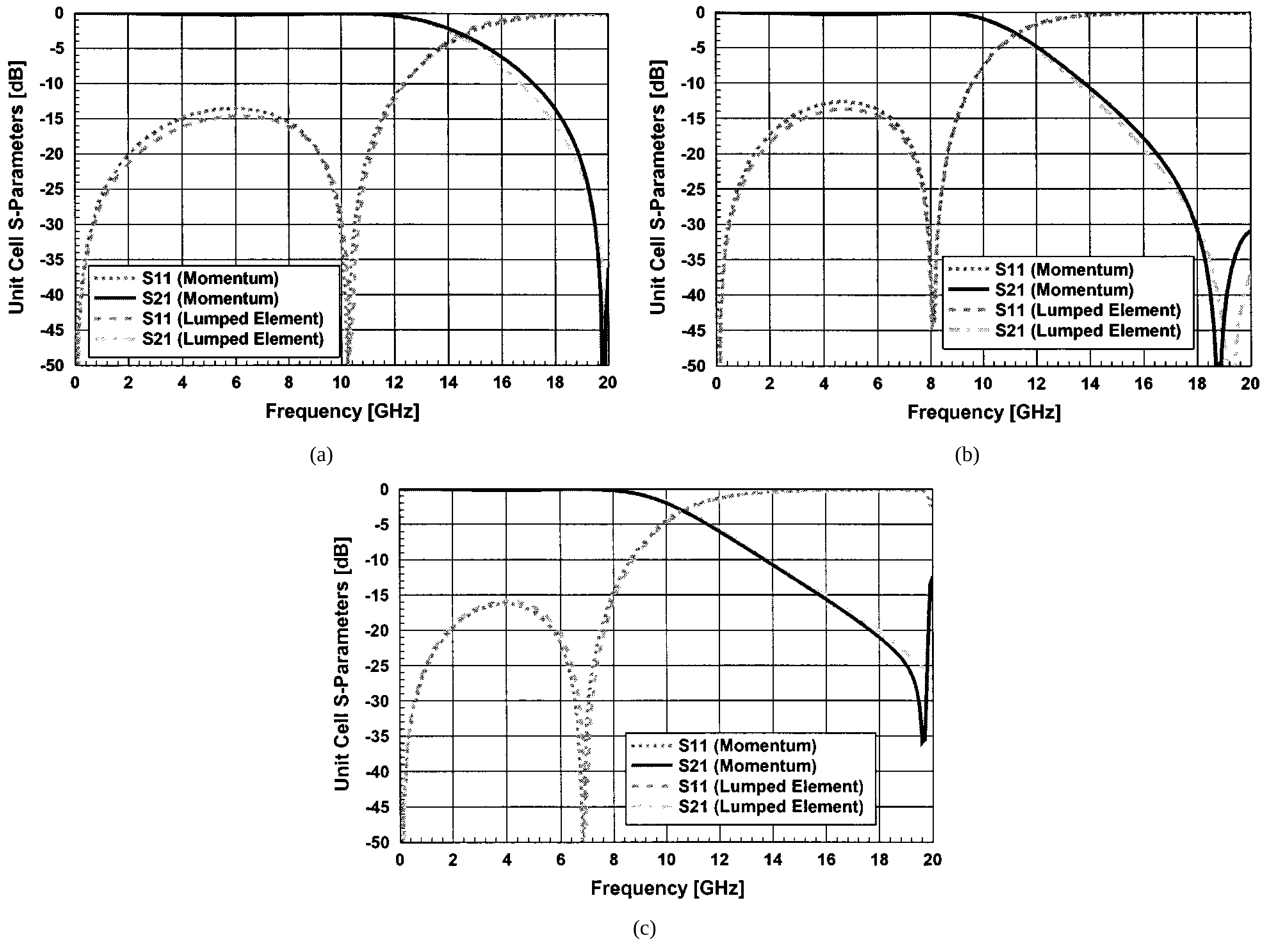

Fig. 2. Simulated method-of-moments response of unit cells and extrapolated lumped element response.

structures remain the same when compared to a standard 50-Ω CPW transmission line. Although perforating the edges of the two ground planes can potentially enhance the capacitive and inductive effects, doing so reduces the transmission line's compatibility with active devices and increases the overall footprint of the periodic structure [9]–[11]. Second, the completely uniplanar geometries of the structures eliminate any uncertainty in positioning the signal line in reference to the ground plane. This differs from some microstrip periodic structures, where the insertion loss and return loss vary depending upon where the top conductor is placed in reference to the periodically etched ground plane [12]. Finally, the proposed periodic structure offers very simple fabrication that can be implemented on one side of a dielectric substrate using standard etching techniques. No additional procedures in the form of ion-implanting or cross-tie overlays are required, and the smallest dimensions of the unit cells are still large enough such that no photoreduction or photolithographic processes are required.

A complete full-wave analysis is required for accurate analysis of each unit cell, since the inductive and capacitive values of any periodic structure are not entirely independent owing to coupling effects [13]. The scattering parameters for each of the unit cells are simulated using Agilent's Momentum software and shown in Fig. 2. These are shown together with the scattering parameters of the corresponding lumped-element models, which have been extrapolated by experimentally curve fitting the results from the full-wave analysis. These equivalent lumped-element circuits are shown in Fig. 3, and the corresponding lumped-element component values can be found in Table I. In the equivalent circuits, each narrow conducting line in the unit cells can be modeled as an inductance while any pair of parallel conducting edges is represented by some capacitance value. For modeling purposes, it is assumed that the branched arms of the CPW ground plane in Structures A and C are not at ground potential. In Structure C, the capacitances connecting the input/output ports to the C1 capacitors were found to be negligible and, thus, have been left out. Also, it should be noted that while these lumped-element models give accurate results for a single unit cell, cascading the cells in series may not give entirely accurate results due to the coupling interaction between cells. Each individual cell will couple with not only the immediately adjacent cell, but to all other cells in the periodic chain as well. This distributed nature of the periodic structures prevents the extraction of a cascadable model, even after a coupling capacitor is inserted between single-cell models and extensive optimizations are performed. However, the equivalent-circuit models provided here can give insight as to how the individual components of the proposed structures interact with each other and can be used to facilitate optimization and design of these periodic structures. For reference, each unit cell is connected to a 50-Ω CPW line with center conductor width of 25 mm and gap spacing of 15 mm built on a 25-mil $\varepsilon_r = 10.2$

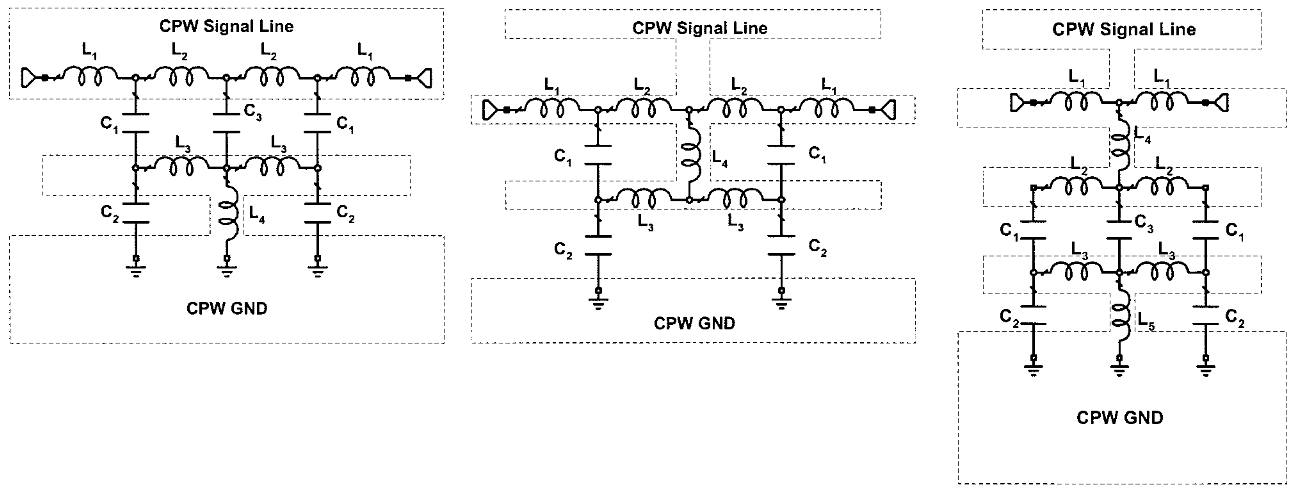

Fig. 3. Lumped-element equivalent-circuit models for unit cells of proposed periodic structures (not to scale).

TABLE I
LUMPED-ELEMENT CIRCUIT PARAMETERS

Parameter	Structure A	Structure B	Structure C
C_1 [pF]	0.11	0.02	0.09
C_2 [pF]	0.11	0.17	0.57
C_3 [pF]	0.05	NA	0.26
L_1 [nH]	0.55	0.67	1.03
L_2 [nH]	0.15	0.27	0.08
L_3 [nH]	0.02	0.03	0.06
L_4 [nH]	0.14	0.14	0.02
L_5 [nH]	NA	NA	0.01

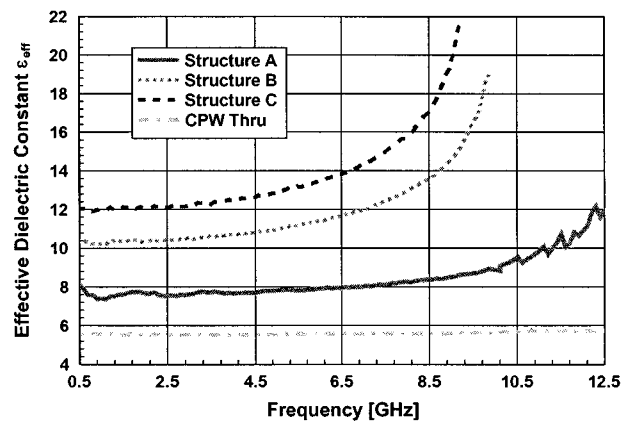

Fig. 4. Measured effective dielectric constant of proposed periodic structures (11 cells) compared to a reference 50-Ω CPW line on the same substrate.

Duroid substrate. The unit cells exhibit minimal insertion loss (better than -1.0 dB) from dc to 10 GHz (± 1 GHz). Potentially wide stopbands exist above this region, which can be enhanced by cascading several periods in series.

III. MEASURED RESULTS

To analyze the slow-wave characteristics of the periodic structures, an 11-cell series cascade of unit cells is built for each topology. Phase information is extracted from a network analyzer and unwrapped to obtain the slow-wave factor. To ensure accurate measurements, the phase is measured using two different methods. A thru-reflect-line (TRL) calibration is used to verify the results of a standard two-port calibration where the phase of all 50-Ω feed lines and connectors have been subtracted out. Good agreement is obtained between the two methodologies. From the phase information, the effective dielectric constant ε_{eff} is calculated and presented in Fig. 4. The slow-wave enhancement can be defined as the ratio of $\sqrt{\varepsilon_{\text{eff}}}$ of the proposed structure divided by $\sqrt{\varepsilon_{\text{eff}}}$ for a standard 50-Ω CPW line. A minimum (dc) slow-wave enhancement of 20% is obtained by branching out the two ground planes of the CPW, as done in Structure A. A stronger slow-wave effect of at least 42% is achieved when the branching is done through the center conductor of the CPW line (Structure B). When the two effects are combined as in Structure C, the minimum slow-wave enhancement is measured to be better than 54%. In the passband of these structures, the increased inductance and capacitance per unit cell result in a slow-wave enhancement factor that is up to 1.8 times higher than that of a reference 50-Ω

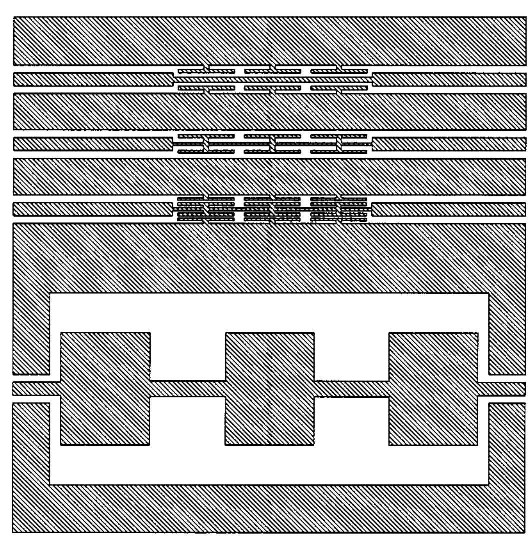

Fig. 5. Mask illustrating the reduced size of proposed periodic filters versus three-stage conventional stepped-impedance filter. Actual mask size is 1 in × 1 in.

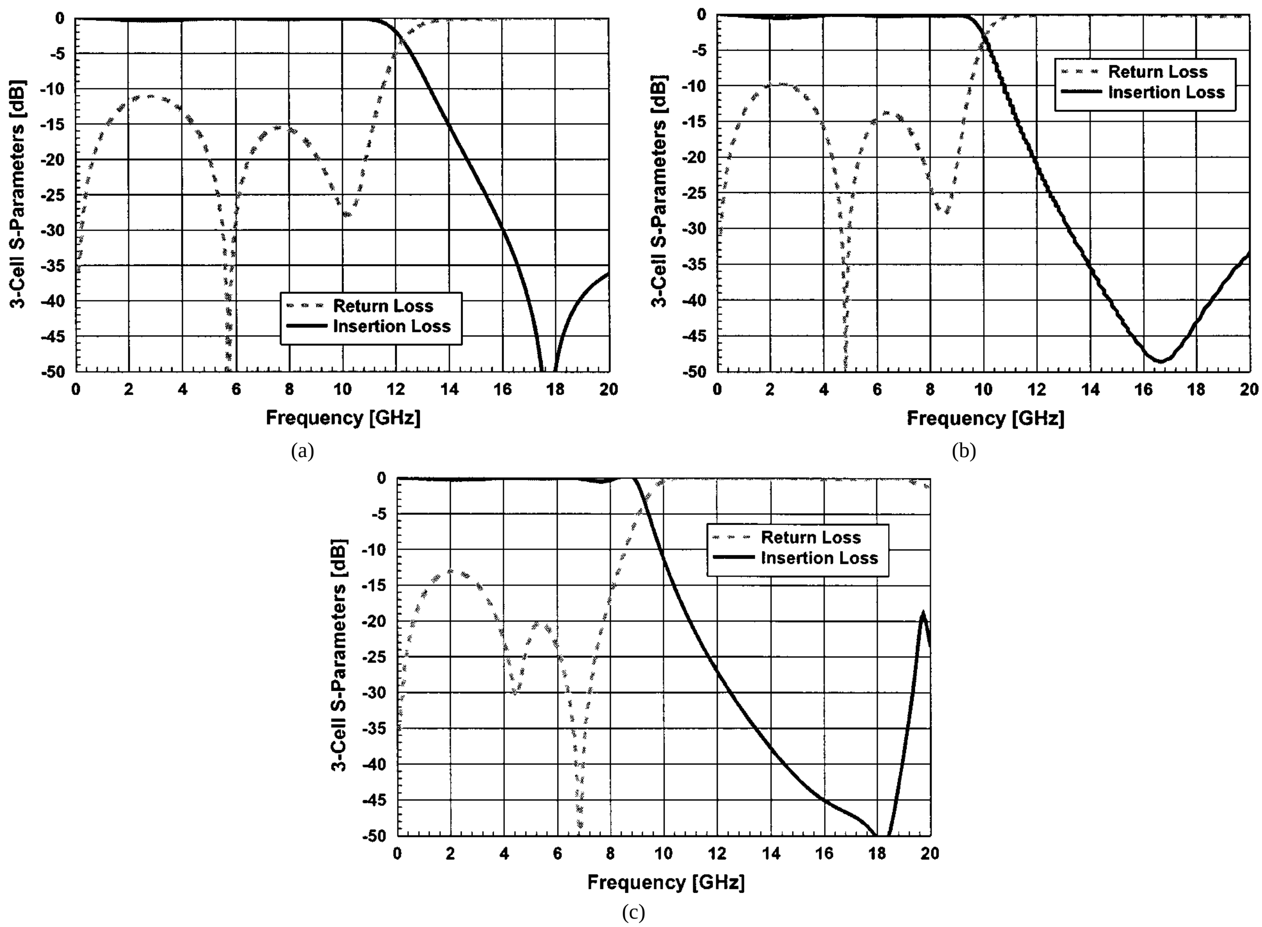

Fig. 6. Simulated method-of-moments response of three-cell periodic filters.

CPW line on the same substrate. Above these frequencies, the phase velocity increases exponentially, establishing a broad stopband effect that begins when the unit cell length equals one-half the guided wavelength in the periodic transmission line. The required unit cell length for this cutoff frequency f_c can be estimated as

$$l = \frac{c_0}{2f_c\sqrt{\varepsilon_{\text{eff}}}} \tag{1}$$

where the effective dielectric constant ε_{eff} was previously given in Fig. 4 for our proposed structures. In reality, ε_{eff} will depend on the number of unit cells in the periodic structures. That is, an ideal periodic structure infinite in extent will experience a higher effective dielectric constant than for periodic structures with a finite number of cells owing to the coupling interaction between cells. We believe that the slow-wave factor of the periodic structure can be further enlarged by narrowing the width of the inductive branch or by bringing the two branched arms closer to the ground planes, but this comes at the cost of tighter fabrication precision.

An immediate and straightforward application of these slow-wave periodic structures is a miniature low-pass filter. Traditionally, slow-wave structures have not been used extensively as passive filters because of the large number of periods needed to establish deep attenuation levels and the associated increase in insertion loss of these structures. Moreover, reducing the size of filters generally tends to reduce the filter performance [14]. To demonstrate the filtering capabilities of the proposed structures, a series cascade of three unit cells is fabricated and measured for each topology. Since the proposed periodic structures are each entirely integrated into the CPW transmission line itself, filter size is dramatically reduced. For illustrative purposes, a mask of the three-cell proposed periodic filters is shown in Fig. 5 alongside a conventional three-stage CPW stepped-impedance low-pass filter with about the same cutoff frequency as Structure B. A twofold reduction in filter length and a tenfold reduction in filter area is achieved when comparing Structure B to the stepped-impedance filter. A filter with the same cutoff frequency, but based on the unit cell construction of Structure C, would be even smaller in size since the guided wavelength for Structure C is the shortest among all the proposed periodic structures. Figs. 6 and 7 depict the simulated and measured responses of the newly proposed periodic filters, respectively. Despite the extremely small size of the periodic filters, spurious-free response and deep attenuation levels can be observed in the stopband of Structures B and C. In fact, the attenuation levels achieved from just three cells of the proposed CPW structures are comparable to those of equivalent microstrip configurations that utilize the combined effects of a low-pass filter and a periodically etched ground plane [15]. An important consideration in any periodic structure is its associated loss. CPW MIS transmission lines are not used in practice due to their high loss, particularly at frequencies above 5 GHz. The insertion loss of the proposed periodic filters in the passband region, where the periodic structures serve as slow-wave transmission lines, compare very

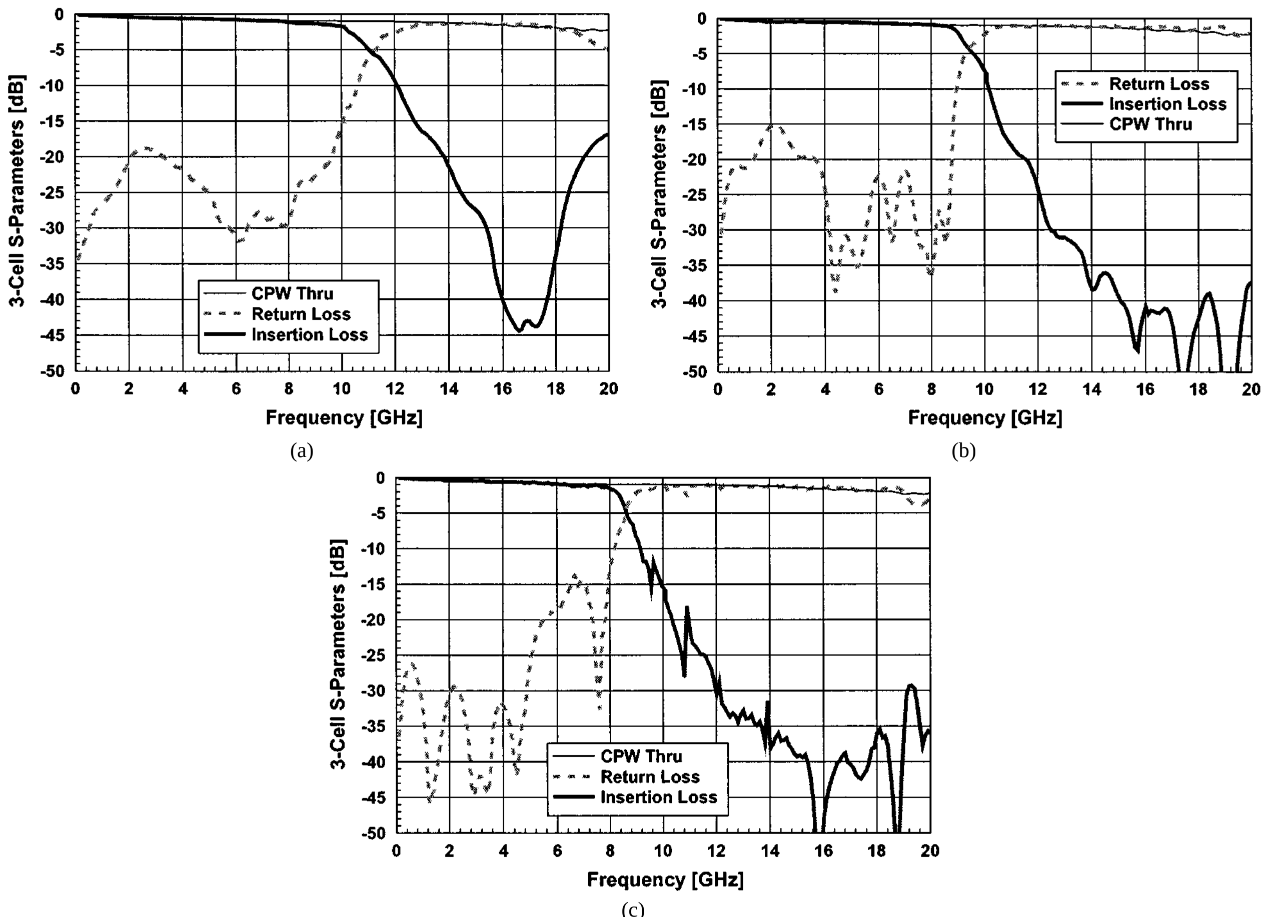

Fig. 7. Measured response of three-cell periodic filters.

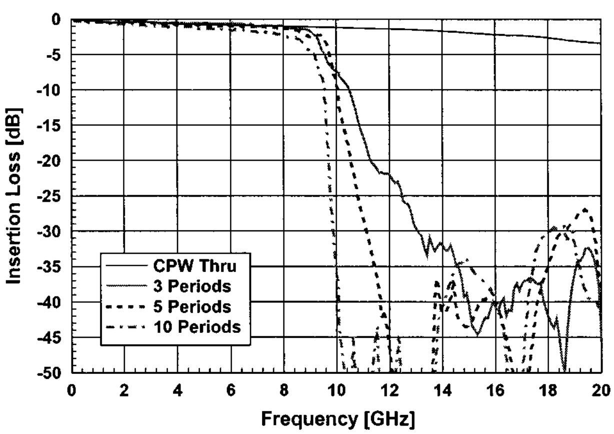

Fig. 8. Effect of additional cells on filter rolloff of Filter B.

well to that exhibited by a standard 50-Ω CPW line up to the respective cutoff frequencies, where we begin to see the effects of the filter rolloff take effect. Finally, since the filters are based upon the construction of periodic structures, filter synthesis is greatly simplified. A sharper rolloff can be accomplished simply by inserting more cells, as demonstrated in Fig. 8, while the length of the unit cell determines the cutoff frequency.

IV. Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented several novel periodic structures for a CPW waveguide. In the passband, a minimum slow-wave enhancement factor of up to 54% is recorded when compared to a reference 50-Ω CPW line on the same substrate. Taking up no more space than a standard CPW transmission line, the periodic structures offer very easy fabrication, very low insertion loss, and simple filter synthesis. A three-cell series cascade results in miniature low-pass filters that offer high attenuation levels in the stopband while reducing filter area size by over 90%. These novel periodic structures should find a wide variety of applications in microwave integrated circuits and help to significantly reduce MMIC chip sizes.

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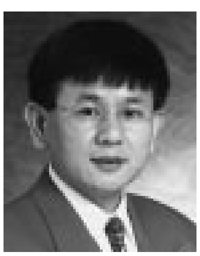

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