

# Rapid Microwave Preparation and Composition Tuning of the High-Performance Magnetocalorics $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$

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## Abstract

Rapid preparation utilizing assisted microwave heating permits significantly shorter preparation times for magnetocaloric compounds in the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  family, specifically samples of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  with starting compositions of  $\delta = 0, 0.06,$  and  $0.12$ . To fully understand the effects of processing and composition changes on structure and properties, these materials are characterized using synchrotron powder diffraction, neutron powder diffraction, electron microprobe analysis (EMPA), X-ray fluorescence (XRF), and magnetic measurements. The diffraction analysis reveal that increasing  $\delta$  results in decreasing amounts of the common Heusler  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  secondary phase. EMPA shows  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  in all three samples to be Mn and P rich, while XRF demonstrates that the bulk material is Mn rich yet P deficient. Increasing  $\delta$  brings the Mn:Fe and P:Si ratios closer to their starting values. Measurements of magnetic properties show an increase in saturation magnetization and ordering temperature with increasing  $\delta$ , consistent with the increase in Fe and Si content. Increasing  $\delta$  also results in a decrease in thermal hysteresis and an increase in magnetic entropy change, the latter reaching values close to what have been previously reported on samples that take much longer to prepare.

## Keywords

Magnetocaloric materials, Microwave synthesis, Synchrotron diffraction, Neutron diffraction

## Introduction

While gas compression refrigeration is a mature technology, new cooling methods such as magnetic refrigeration have the potential to exceed current efficiencies obtained from vapor-compression refrigeration without the use of environmentally harmful coolants.<sup>1</sup> Magnetic refrigeration is based on the magnetocaloric effect, where the

entropy change that occurs when a material transitions between magnetic states manifests as a change in temperature. To be useful for refrigeration and cooling, a magnetocaloric material should magnetically order near the working temperature, have minimal thermal hysteresis ( $\Delta T_{hys}$ ), and have a large adiabatic temperature change ( $\Delta T_{ad}$ ) and magnetic entropy change ( $\Delta S_M$ ) under a moderate applied field (1 - 2 T).<sup>2,3</sup>

Some of the most promising magnetocaloric materials come from the  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  structure type.<sup>4</sup>  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  has a first-order magnetoelastic transition in which the moments ferromagnetically order with an accompanying abrupt change in the dimensions of the unit cell, but no change in structural symmetry.<sup>5-7</sup> By substitution of Mn for Fe, and As, Ge, or Si for P, a large  $\Delta S_M$  can be achieved at this transition and the materials can be tuned for optimal magnetocaloric performance.<sup>8-15</sup> Due to the toxicity of As and the limited supply of Ge, the most likely material to see adoption for widespread cooling applications is  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ , which forms the hexagonal  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  structure with Si concentrations between 0.24 and 0.5 when Fe and Mn are present in equal amounts.<sup>16,17</sup> This material can be optimized by adjusting the Mn:Fe and P:Si ratios.<sup>18,19</sup> Increasing Fe content leads to an increase in  $T_C$ ,  $\Delta T_{hys}$ , and  $\Delta S_M$ , while increasing Si content results in a decrease in  $\Delta S_M$  and  $\Delta T_{hys}$  and an increase in  $T_C$ .<sup>20-23</sup> Properties can also be tuned by adjusting the metal to non-metal ratio, and there are many examples in the literature of materials with compositions of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_{1.95}(\text{P,Si})$ .<sup>21,24-26</sup> Recent work by Fries *et al.* suggests the metal to non-metal ratio has a significant impact on magnetic properties, and is closely related to the formation of the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  secondary phase.<sup>27</sup> It has also been shown that changes in processing parameters such as annealing temperature and time can have a significant impact on the magnetic properties.<sup>28,29</sup> Due to the large amount of potential configurations available for this material, parametric studies of single degrees of freedom are necessary for tuning the material for magnetocaloric applications.

Current methods for preparing  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  are time consuming, often involving long periods of ball milling and high temperature heat treatment.<sup>19,22</sup> We have developed a rapid preparation for  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  utilizing high-energy ball milling, assisted

microwave heating, and brief furnace annealing, allowing materials to be prepared in less than a day. Assisted microwave heating has been successfully used to rapidly prepare high quality materials for various applications including thermoelectrics, phosphors, and catalysis.<sup>30-32</sup> Microwave preparations not only have the benefit of reduced reaction times (minutes instead of days), but also decreased energy costs compared to high temperature furnaces. Microwave heating also has the advantage of volumetric heating, where the entire material is uniformly and rapidly heated, in contrast to conventional heating where there is a heat gradient between the exterior of the material and the center.<sup>33</sup>

This study investigates the impact of reducing the total metal content on composition, structure and magnetism in  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  with  $\delta = 0, 0.06,$  and  $0.12$  using this new method. Starting Mn/Fe and P/Si ratios were maintained at 1 to separate their influence on properties. Since the nominal composition is unlikely to match the actual composition post reaction, elemental analysis has been performed using electron microprobe analysis (EMPA) and X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry. Combined with detailed phase and structural analysis from neutron and synchrotron powder diffraction, this gives a detailed picture of the compositional and structural changes caused by reducing the metal content in this preparation.

## Methods

Starting materials representative of precursors used in industrial production were provided by BASF: MnP (97.3%), Mn pieces (99.2%, cleaned by heating at 1000°C for 12 hr in an evacuated fused silica tube), Fe powder (99.5%, -70 mesh), and Si powder (99.7%, -70 mesh). 5 gram samples of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0, 0.06, 0.12$ ) were prepared by ball milling stoichiometric amounts of the starting materials, corrected for their purities, in a 55 mL tungsten carbide vial with two 11.2 mm tungsten carbide balls using a SPEX 8000M Mixer/Mill for 30 min. The ball milled powder was then hand ground using an agate mortar and pestle until it was homogeneous, pressed

into a 13 mm pellet, and sealed under 1/4 atm Ar in a fused silica tube. The base of the ampoule was inserted into a 20 mL alumina crucible filled with 6 g of activated charcoal (DARCO 12-20 mesh), and placed in a cylindrical cavity carved into an alumina fiberboard block and covered with another piece of fiberboard. This enclosure was placed off-center on the rotating plate of a domestic microwave oven (Panasonic NN-SN651B, 1200 W), and heated at 360 W for 20 min. The pellet was removed from the ampoule after cooling, and sealed in a new fused silica tube under vacuum. The evacuated ampoule was then placed in a furnace at 1100°C for 2 hr, followed by a water quench. This heat treatment is necessary for achieving a sharp magnetic transition (see Supporting Information, Figure S2).

High resolution synchrotron powder diffraction data were collected using beamline 11-BM at the Advanced Photon Source (APS), Argonne National Laboratory using an average wavelength of 0.414536 Å. Discrete detectors covering an angular range from  $-6$  to  $16^\circ$   $2\theta$  are scanned over a  $34^\circ$   $2\theta$  range, with data points collected every  $0.001^\circ$   $2\theta$  and scan speed of  $0.01^\circ \text{ s}^{-1}$ .

Neutron powder diffraction data were collected using the BT-1 32 detector neutron powder diffractometer at the NIST Center for Neutron Research (NCNR). The samples were loaded in a vanadium sample can of length 50 mm and diameter 6.0 mm. Data were collected under ambient conditions. A Cu(311) monochromator with a  $\lambda = 1.5403(2)$  Å and in-pile collimation of 60 minutes of arc were used. Data were collected over the range of  $3$ - $168^\circ$   $2\theta$  with a step size of  $0.05^\circ$ .

Joint Rietveld refinements of the neutron and synchrotron diffraction data were performed using TOPAS 6. Unit cell parameters were allowed to freely refine for each data set, while atomic positions, occupancies, and thermal parameters were co-refined. Total compositions were constrained to values determined from EMPA. P/Si occupancies were fixed assuming a uniform distribution of both elements across the two distinct crystallographic sites. Peaks from the  $\delta = 0.12$  neutron powder diffraction data that had significant magnetic contributions were excluded from the refinement to reduce their impact on Mn and Fe occupancies.

Elemental compositions were obtained using electron microprobe for the majority  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  phases and X-ray fluorescence for the bulk material. Electron microprobe analyses were performed on pieces of each annealed pellet using a Cameca SX100 equipped with 5 wavelength dispersive spectrometers (WDS). The same pieces were analyzed by X-ray fluorescence on a Rigaku Primus IV using semi-quantitative analysis, where three points were analyzed across each sample with a spot size of 1 mm.

Magnetic measurements were performed using a Quantum Design Dynacool Physical Properties Measurement System (PPMS) equipped with a Vibrating Sample Magnetometer (VSM). Magnetization versus temperature data were collected using a sweep rate of  $1 \text{ K min}^{-1}$  with an applied field of 2 T, and magnetization versus field loops were collected at 100 K from  $-5$  to 5 T. Values of magnetic entropy change ( $\Delta S_M$ ) were determined from magnetic measurements using the Maxwell relation:

$$\left(\frac{\partial S}{\partial H}\right)_T = \left(\frac{\partial M}{\partial T}\right)_H \quad (1)$$

where  $H$  is the applied field and  $M$  is magnetization. This relation gives the following equation for determining  $\Delta S_M$ :

$$\Delta S_M(H, T) = \int_0^H \left(\frac{\partial M}{\partial T}\right)_{H'} dH' \quad (2)$$

Temperature derivatives were calculated from smoothed magnetization vs. temperature traces collected at magnetic fields ranging from 0.1 to 5 T and integrated with respect to field.

## Results and Discussion

Preparations of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  were confirmed using synchrotron powder diffraction, shown in Figure 1. While the majority phase of all three compositions is hexagonal  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ , these samples also contain Heusler  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  and cristobalite  $(\text{SiO}_2)$

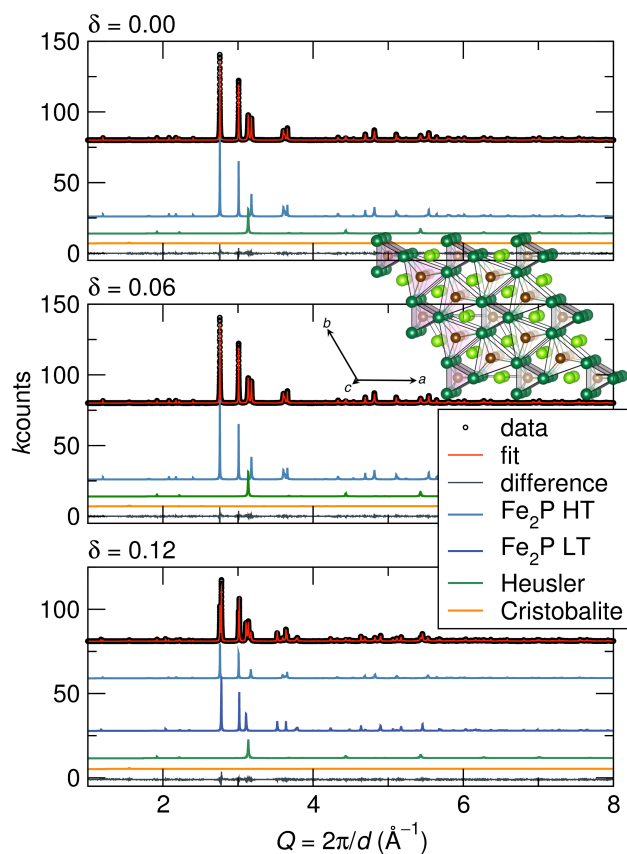


Figure 1: Synchrotron X-ray powder diffraction patterns of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  taken at 300 K and Rietveld fits to that data, showing individual contributions for the impurity phases: Heusler  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  and cristobalite  $\text{SiO}_2$ . The inset displays a view of the  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  structure of the materials discussed here, depicted as P-centered prisms formed by the transition metals.

impurities. Two distinct  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  phases with the same space group but different lattice parameters are observed in the  $\delta = 0.12$  diffraction pattern due to phase coexistence near the magnetoelastic transition. These phases are referred to as low temperature (LT) for the magnetically ordered phase and high temperature (HT) for the paramagnetic phase. This is only seen in the  $\delta = 0.12$  sample since the others order below room temperature. Neutron powder diffraction patterns are shown in Figure 2.

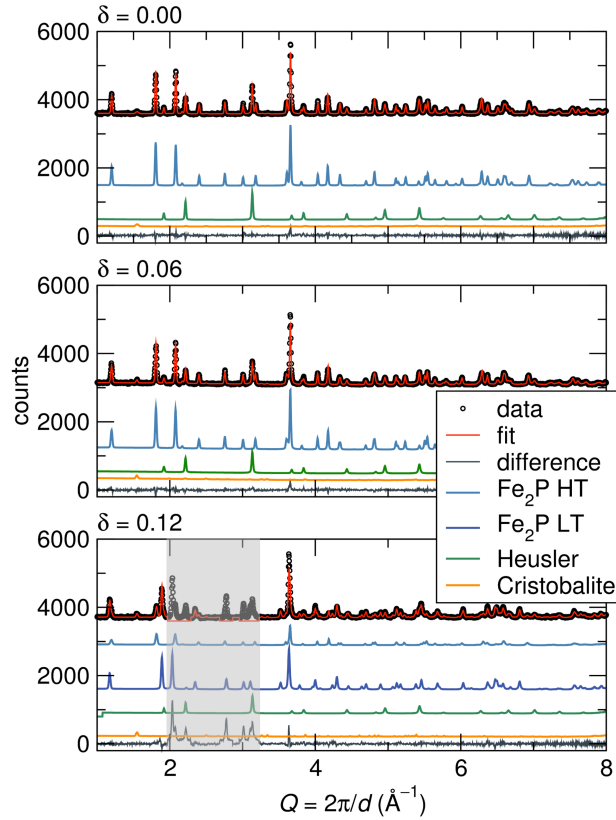


Figure 2: Neutron powder diffraction patterns of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  taken at 300 K and Rietveld fits to that data, showing individual contributions for the Heusler and cristobalite impurity phases. Peaks with significant magnetic contributions have been masked in  $\delta = 0.12$ .

Joint Rietveld refinements were performed using the synchrotron and neutron powder diffraction data. The patterns are well-fit as a combination of HT, LT, Heusler, and cristobalite. Unit cell parameters taken from the refined synchrotron HT  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  phase are shown in Figure 3 and Table 1. As  $\delta$  increases,  $a$  increases while  $c$  decreases. As a result of these changes, the  $c/a$  ratio decreases as  $\delta$  increases, and the overall vol-



ume increases. This agrees with previous studies where increasing Si content results in  $c$  decreasing while  $a$  and the volume increase, however the opposite trend has been observed for increasing Fe content.<sup>17,22</sup> The overall trend following the change in Si content is however not unexpected considering the change in Si content is significantly larger than the change in Fe content. Lattice parameter  $a$  for the Heusler  $\text{Fe}_{3-x}\text{Mn}_x\text{Si}$  varies from 5.66900(5) to 5.66530(4) Å for  $\delta = 0$  and 0.12 respectively, suggesting a composition range of  $x \approx 1.25$  to 1.05.<sup>34</sup>

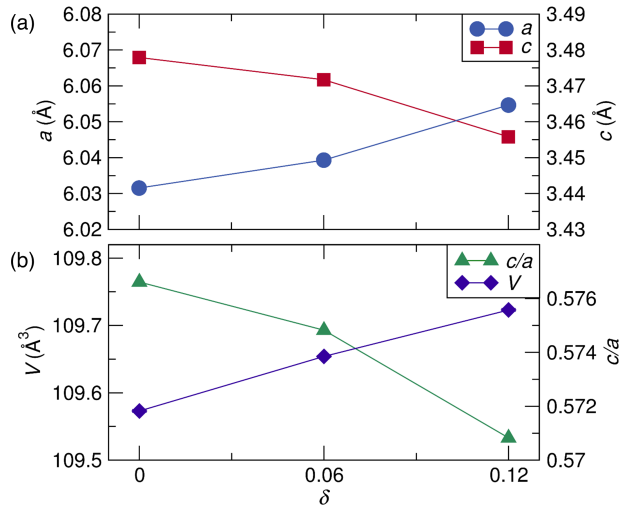


Figure 3: Unit cell parameters (a)  $a$  and  $c$  and (b) unit cell volume and  $c/a$  ratio for  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  determined from Rietveld refinements of synchrotron powder diffraction data.

Table 1: Unit cell parameters taken from synchrotron Rietveld refinements and occupancies and impurity weight fractions of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  taken from joint neutron and synchrotron Rietveld refinements

$\delta$	$R_{wp}$ (%)	$a$ (Å)	$c$ (Å)	vol (Å <sup>3</sup> )	3f Fe occ	3f Mn occ	3g Mn occ	3g Fe occ	(Mn,Fe) <sub>3</sub> Si (wt %)	SiO <sub>2</sub> (wt %)
0	15.90	6.03153(3)	3.47789(3)	109.572(2)	0.884(6)	0.111(6)	0.969(6)	0.036(6)	23.3(2)	2.07(6)
0.06	12.11	6.03929(3)	3.47151(2)	109.653(1)	0.890(6)	0.098(7)	0.962(7)	0.040(6)	20.4(2)	2.16(4)
0.12	10.82	6.05463(4)	3.45616(4)	109.723(2)	0.898(7)	0.096(7)	0.944(7)	0.052(7)	14.8(2)	2.22(3)

The refined weight fractions of each phase are shown in Figure 4(a). The amount of cristobalite remains constant at roughly 2% in each material, and could be due to devitrification of the silica tube. As  $\delta$  increases, the amount of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  decreases, with a corresponding increase in  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ . Occupancies determined from the

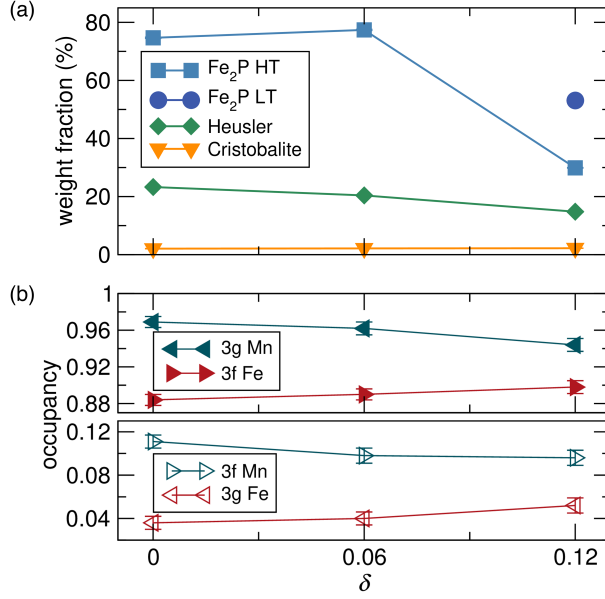


Figure 4: (a) Weight fractions of LT and HT  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ , and the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  and cristobalite impurities, and (b) Mn/Fe site occupancies of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  as determined by joint synchrotron and neutron Rietveld refinements.

joint refinements are presented in Figure 4(b). Mn occupancies for both sites decrease with increasing  $\delta$  while Fe occupancies increase.

Electron microprobe X-ray maps (Figure 5) reveal porous materials consisting of uniform  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  majority phases and inclusions of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  on the order of  $20 \mu\text{m}$ . Elemental compositions were determined for the majority phases using EMPA and for the bulk using XRF, both shown in Figure 6. Despite starting with equal ratios of Fe:Mn, all samples are Mn-rich in both the bulk and  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ . While both the bulk and  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  are Fe-deficient, the bulk material contains more Fe than the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  phase due to the additional Fe content in the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  impurity phase. In the case of P and Si, which also started with equal ratios,  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  is P-rich while the bulk material is Si-rich. This can again be attributed to  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  which does not contain any P. As  $\delta$  is increased, the Fe:Mn and P:Si ratios move closer to their starting values. Elemental formulas for the majority phases of  $\delta = 0, 0.06$ , and  $0.12$  were determined from EMPA to be  $\text{Mn}_{1.10(3)}\text{Fe}_{0.933(6)}\text{P}_{0.61(1)}\text{Si}_{0.39(1)}$ ,  $\text{Mn}_{1.06(5)}\text{Fe}_{0.934(4)}\text{P}_{0.57(3)}\text{Si}_{0.43(3)}$ ,

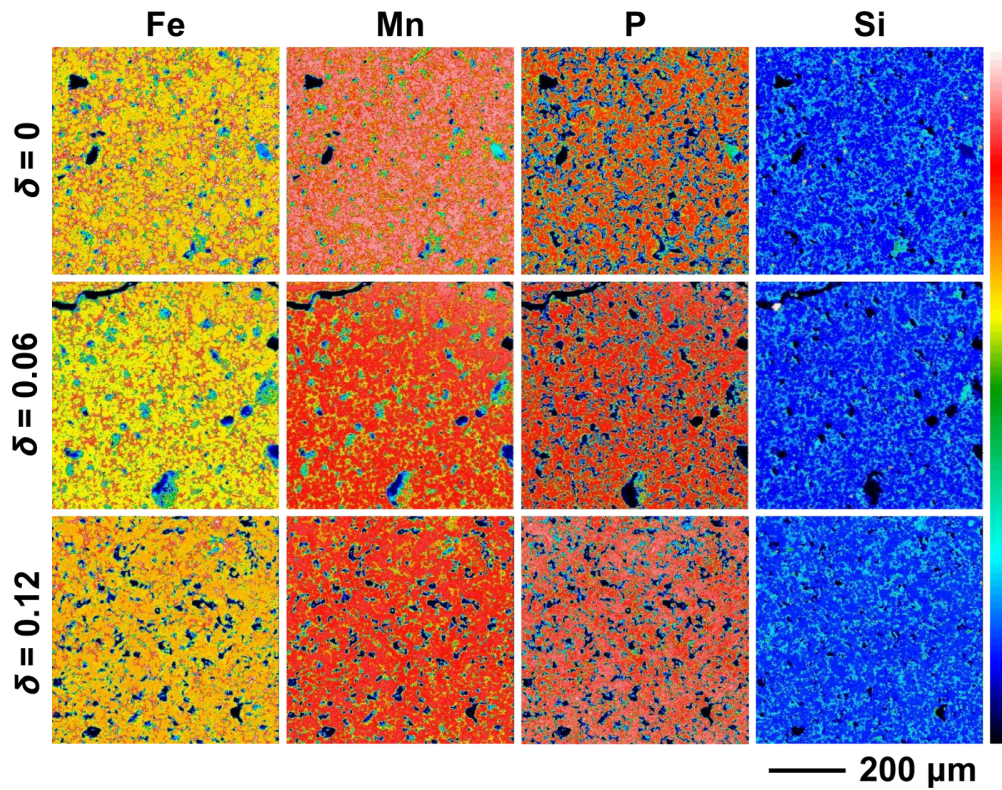


Figure 5: Electron microprobe X-ray backscatter maps of annealed pellets of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$ . The color scale shows the relative weight-percents of each element.

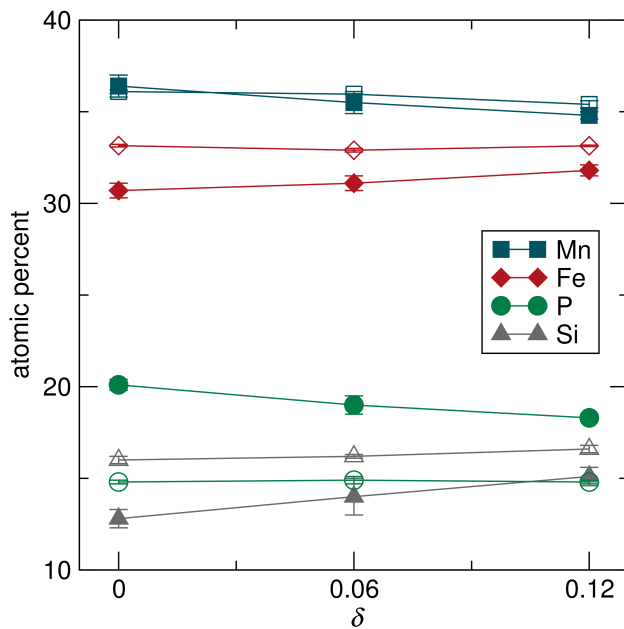


Figure 6: Elemental compositions of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  as determined from EMPA (filled markers) and XRF (empty markers).

and  $\text{Mn}_{1.04(2)}\text{Fe}_{0.95(2)}\text{P}_{0.55(1)}\text{Si}_{0.45(1)}$ . Despite starting with compositions that were metal deficient, these materials do not appear to have (Mn,Fe):(P,Si) ratios significantly below 2:1, with the  $\delta = 0.12$  sample displaying a ratio of 1.99:1, within error of 2:1.

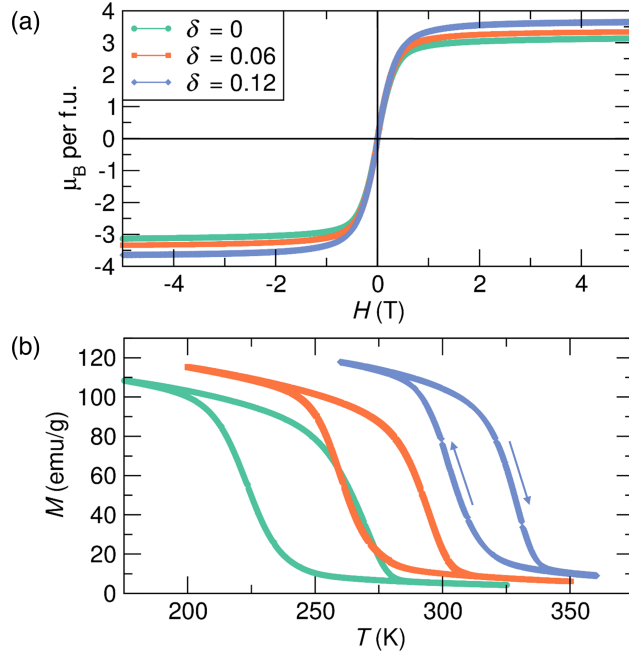


Figure 7: (a) Field dependent magnetization taken at 100 K and (b) temperature dependent magnetization data taken at  $H = 2$  T of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$ . The arrows indicate heating and cooling for the two branches of temperature dependent data.

Table 2: Magnetic properties of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$

$\delta$	$T_C$ (K)	$\mu_{sat}$ ( $\mu_B$ )	$\mu_{sat}$ ( $\mu_B$ ) <sup>‡</sup>	$\Delta S_M$ ( $\text{J kg}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ )		$\Delta S_M$ ( $\text{J kg}^{-1}\text{K}^{-1}$ ) <sup>‡</sup>		$\Delta T_{hys}$ (K) <sup>*</sup>
				$H = 2$ T	$H = 5$ T	$H = 2$ T	$H = 5$ T	
0	224	3.1	4.2	-6.0	-15.2	-8.0	-20.4	48
0.06	260	3.3	4.3	-6.8	-17.1	-8.8	-22.1	35
0.12	302	3.7	4.5	-8.2	-20.0	-9.9	-24.1	27

<sup>‡</sup>corrected using  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  weight percent from Rietveld refinement

<sup>\*</sup>measured using a ramp rate of  $1 \text{ K min}^{-1}$

Key values from magnetization data are listed in Table 2. Field dependent magnetization measurements, shown in Figure 7a, reveal an increase in saturation magnetization with increasing  $\delta$ . This is consistent with the increasing Fe and Si content.<sup>18,35</sup> No hysteresis with respect to field is observed for any of the studied materials. Figure

7(b) shows temperature dependent magnetization taken at 2 T. Increasing  $\delta$  leads to an increase in magnetic ordering temperature and a decrease in thermal hysteresis. This increase in  $T_C$  can be attributed to the increase in Fe and Si content, as increasing amounts of either element will result in higher ordering temperatures.<sup>20,22</sup> In the case of thermal hysteresis, increasing Si content has been reported to decrease  $\Delta T_{hys}$  while increasing Fe content should increase it.<sup>20</sup> The Heusler impurity  $\text{Fe}_{3-x}\text{Mn}_x\text{Si}$  ferromagnetically orders around 202(2) K to 181(1) K for compositions from 1.05 to 1.25, and has been found to exhibit a very small magnetocaloric effect.<sup>34,36</sup> As this ordering temperature range is below the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  transitions in this study, this impurity is expected to have a minimal impact on the observed magnetism.

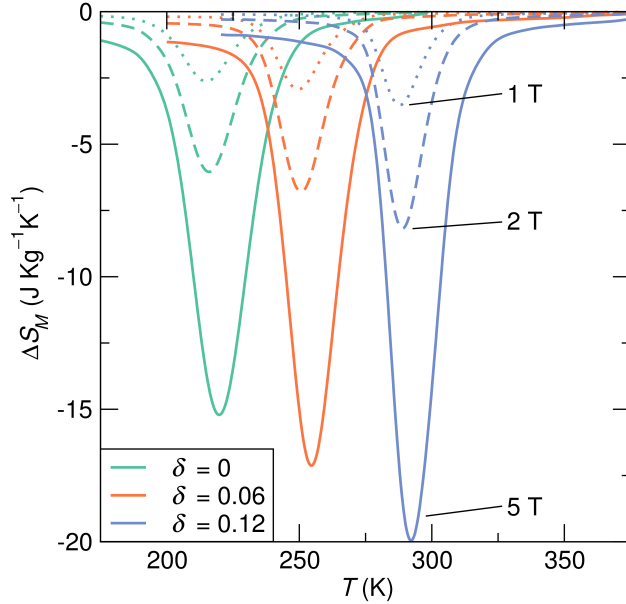


Figure 8:  $\Delta S_M$  for select fields of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  as obtained using Equation 1 with temperature dependent magnetization data collected at several fields.

Figure 8 shows  $\Delta S_M$  calculated from magnetization measurements. Increasing  $\delta$  leads to an increase in  $\Delta S_M$ , reaching the highest value for the  $\delta = 0.12$  sample with  $-20 \text{ J kg}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$  at 290 K and a 5 T field. Increasing Si content is expected to result in a decrease in  $\Delta S_M$  while increasing Fe content results in an increase.<sup>21,23</sup> Despite the contradictory effects of increasing Fe and Si content,  $\Delta S_M$  increases by a significant amount with increasing  $\delta$ , which cannot be solely attributed to the increase in the

weight fraction of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ .

## Conclusions

Samples of  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0, 0.06, 0.12$ ) were successfully prepared by assisted microwave heating of ball milled powders. Characterization by powder diffraction revealed the impurities  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  and cristobalite. Despite starting 1:1 ratios for Mn:Fe and P:Si,  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  was Fe and Si deficient in all samples due to the occurrence of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  impurities. Increasing  $\delta$  does not actually result in a change in the metal to non-metal ratio, but instead causes a decrease in the amount of the  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  impurity and an increase in Fe and Si content in  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$ . This leads to a contraction of  $c$  and an expansion of  $a$  and unit cell volume, consistent with the increasing Si content but contradictory to the increasing Fe content. Magnetization measurements were also consistent with the increase in Fe and Si content, with saturation magnetization and  $T_C$  increasing with increasing  $\delta$ . While increasing Fe and Si content have contradictory effects on thermal hysteresis, increasing  $\delta$  leads to a decrease in  $\Delta T_{hys}$ , consistent with increasing Si content. The opposite is observed in  $\Delta S_M$ , where increasing  $\delta$  results in a larger  $\Delta S_M$ , consistent with increasing Fe content.

Based on the effects of reducing the total metal content in these microwave preparations, it is expected that further increasing  $\delta$  could be used to decrease the amount of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_3\text{Si}$  and bring the final composition of  $(\text{Mn,Fe})_2(\text{P,Si})$  to be more in line with the initial Mn:Fe and P:Si ratios. While this would likely further boost  $\Delta S_M$ , it would also increase the  $T_C$  even further, potentially bringing it far above the desired region near 300 K that is ideal for common cooling applications. By tuning metal deficiency along with Mn:Fe and P:Si ratios, an optimized material could be produced using this rapid preparation.

## Supporting Information

X-ray diffraction and magnetization data for a sample after the microwave step; temperature dependent magnetization data used to calculate  $\Delta S_M$  for  $(\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5})_{2-\delta}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0, 0.06, 0.12$ )

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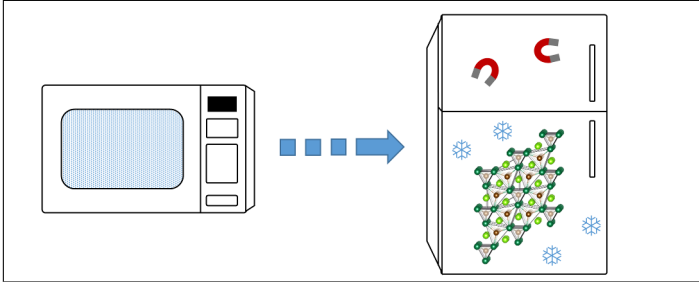
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# Graphical TOC Entry



# Supporting Information: Rapid Microwave Preparation and Composition Tuning of the High-Performance Magnetocalorics (Mn,Fe)<sub>2</sub>(P,Si)

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An additional sample of  $\text{MnFeP}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  was prepared by ball milling 2 grams of the precursors (MnP, Mn, Fe, and Si) for 30 minutes. 1 gram of the powder was pressed into a 6 mm pellet and sealed under 1/4 atm Ar in a fused silica tube. The ampoule was placed in a 20 mL alumina crucible filled with 7 g of activated charcoal (DARCO 12-20 mesh) and placed and covered in a cylindrical cavity in a block of alumina fiberboard. This enclosure was placed off-center on the rotating plate of a domestic microwave oven (Panasonic NN-SN651B, 1200 W), and heated at 360 W for 8 min. Powder X-ray diffraction was collected using a Panalytical Empyrean diffractometer with  $\text{Cu K}\alpha$  radiation. Separate portions of this material were sealed in fused silica tubes under vacuum and annealed for 5 hr and 20 hr, each followed by water quench.

Rietveld refinement of the powder X-ray diffraction data taken after the microwave step (Figure S1) revealed this sample to contain 20.9(5)% by weight of the Heusler impurity, with the majority phase consisting of the  $\text{Fe}_2\text{P}$  structure type. Temperature dependent magnetization data (Figure S2) shows a broad ferromagnetic ordering below 200 K. After heat treatment, this transition sharpens noticeably, although increasing the heat treatment time does not appear to affect the temperature or breadth of this transition.

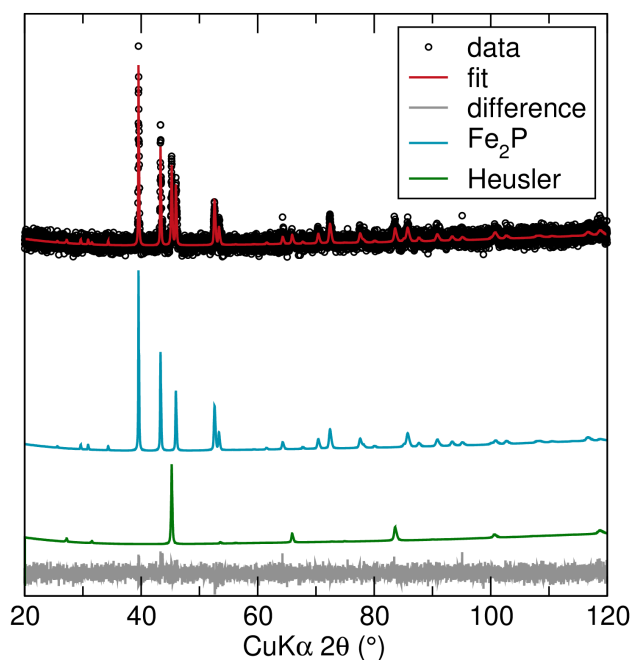


Figure S1: Laboratory powder X-ray diffraction data of microwave prepared MnFeP<sub>0.5</sub>Si<sub>0.5</sub> before heat treatment.

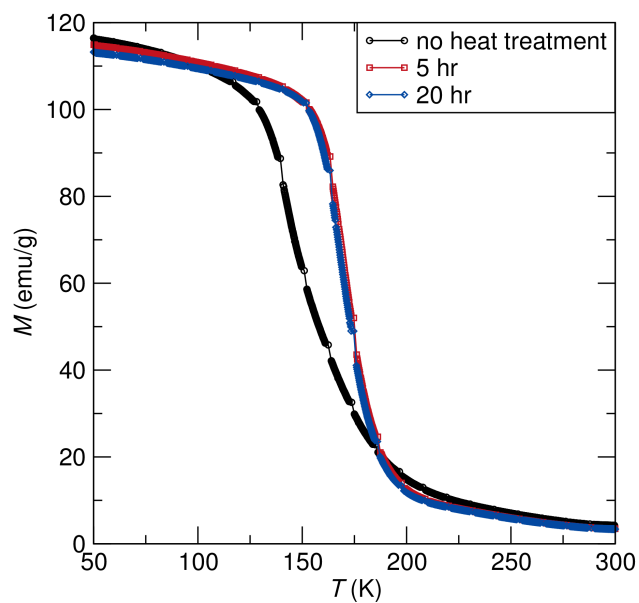


Figure S2: Temperature dependent magnetization at 2T of microwave prepared MnFeP<sub>0.5</sub>Si<sub>0.5</sub> before heat treatment, and after heat treatment for 5 and 20 hours.



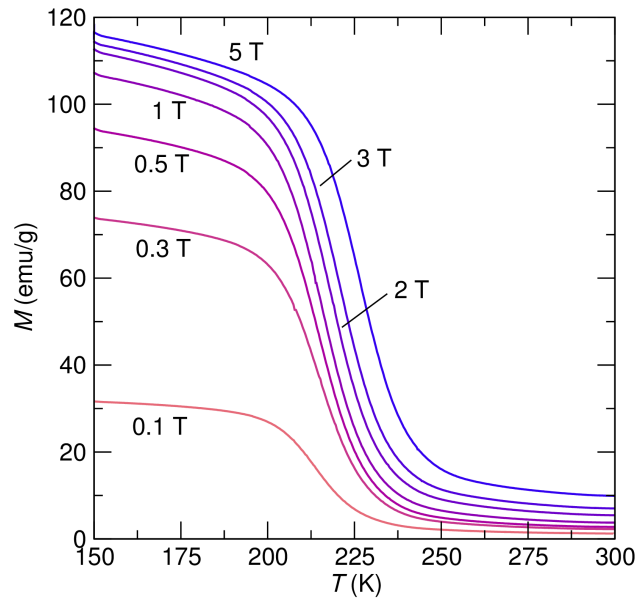


Figure S3: Temperature dependent magnetization data  $\text{MnFeP}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0$ ) collected at various fields. These data were used to calculate  $\Delta S_M$ .

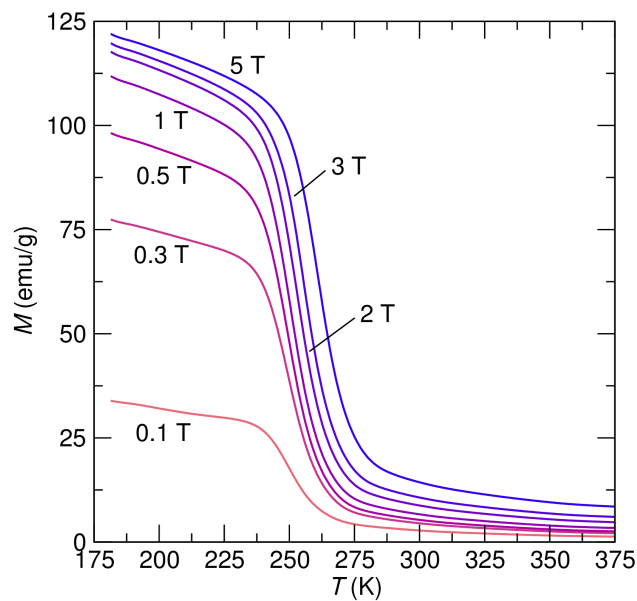


Figure S4: Temperature dependent magnetization data  $\text{Mn}_{0.97}\text{Fe}_{0.97}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0.06$ ) collected at various fields. These data were used to calculate  $\Delta S_M$ .

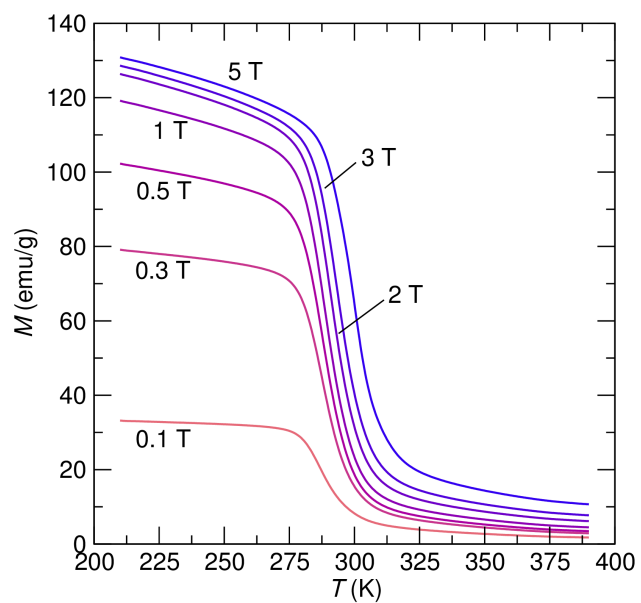


Figure S5: Temperature dependent magnetization data  $\text{Mn}_{0.94}\text{Fe}_{0.94}\text{P}_{0.5}\text{Si}_{0.5}$  ( $\delta = 0.12$ ) collected at various fields. These data were used to calculate  $\Delta S_M$ .