

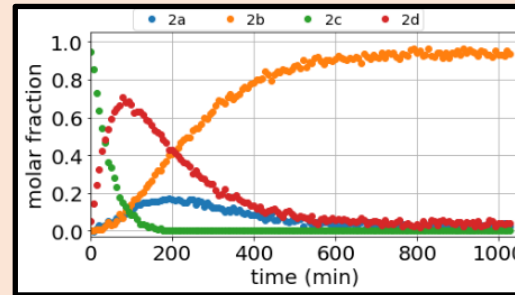
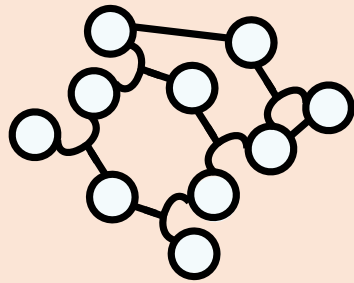
Some structural aspects of CRNS in theory and experiment

Alex Blokhuis

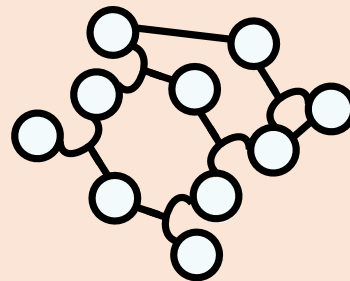
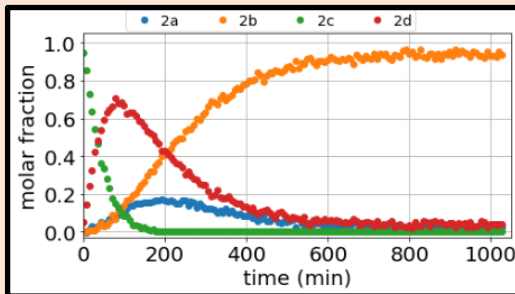
IMDEA Nanociencia, Madrid

Chemical reaction networks, two problems

I) How does the structure of a CRN relate to what it can and cannot do?

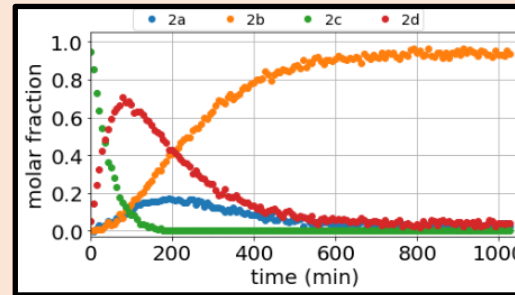
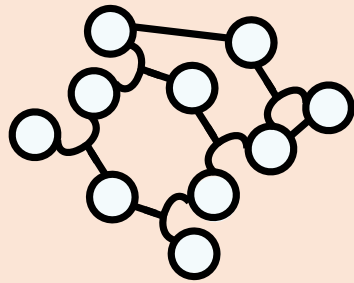


II) How do I know what CRN I'm looking at*?



Chemical reaction networks in chemistry, two problems

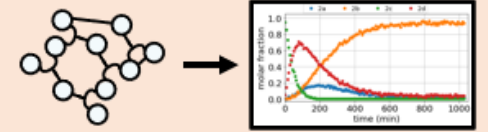
I) How does the structure of a CRN relate to what it can and cannot do?



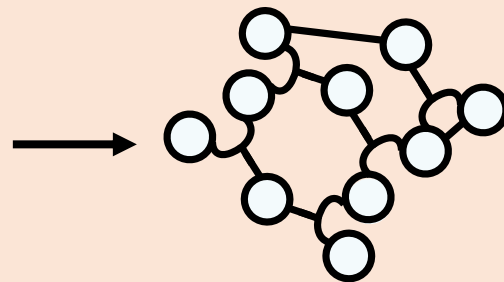
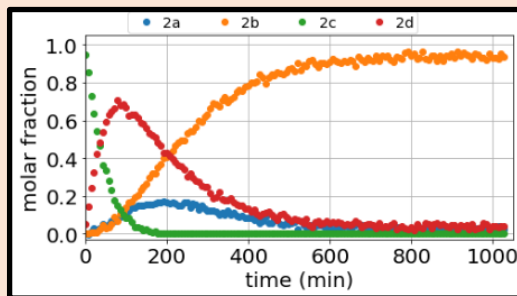
II) How do I know what CRN I'm looking at*?

**(in a way where I can quantitatively account for all my experiments with a chemically sound description)*

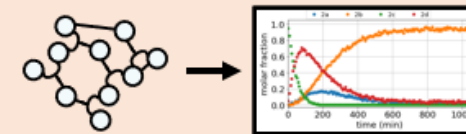
CRNs in Chemistry






- CRNs allow us to better understand chemistry.
- Chemistry provides clues towards understanding CRNs, and in turn better understanding dynamical systems.
- To pursue these goals, we need CRNs with ‘chemical’ properties



CRNs in Chemistry



What makes a reaction network “chemical”?

Stefan Müller¹, Christoph Flamm² and Peter F. Stadler^{2,3,4,5,6,7*}

Müller *et al. Journal of Cheminformatics* (2022) 14:63
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13321-022-00621-8>

- To pursue these goals, we need CRNs with ‘chemical’ properties

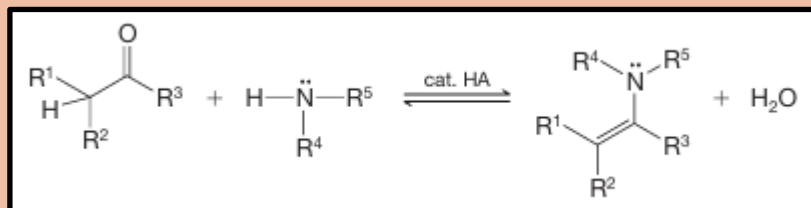
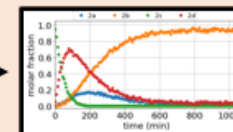
- What makes a reaction network chemical? [1]

Conservation laws with chemical interpretations, local energy conservation (detailed balance),

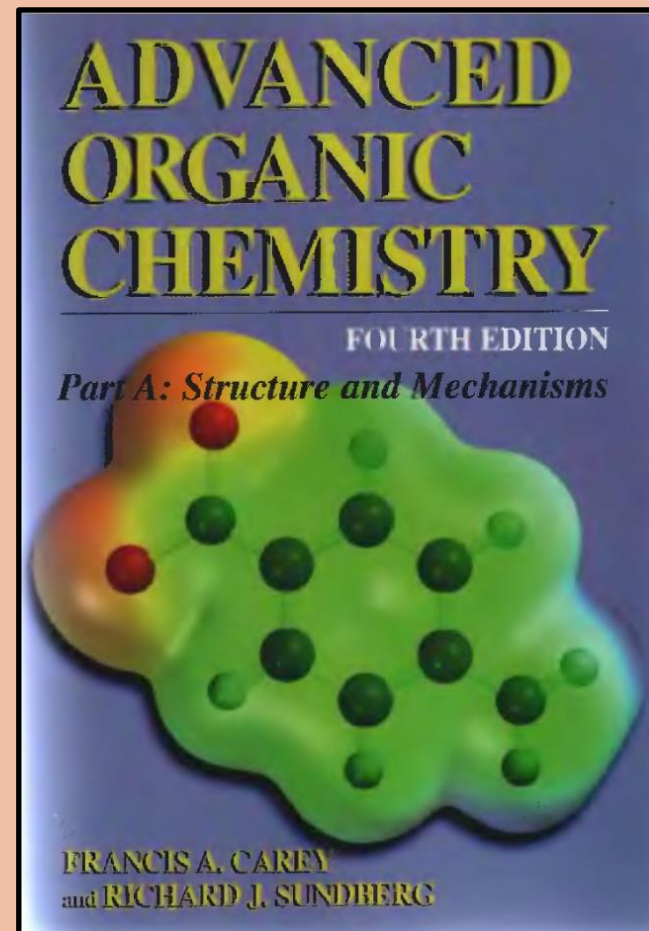
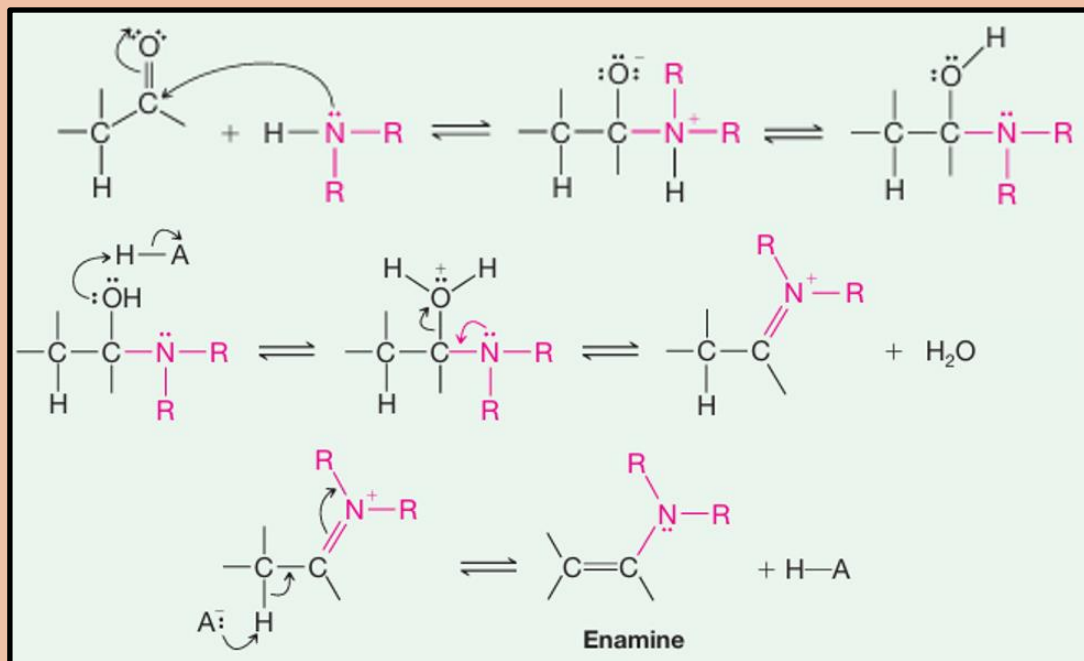
...

- What else makes a reaction network ‘chemical’?

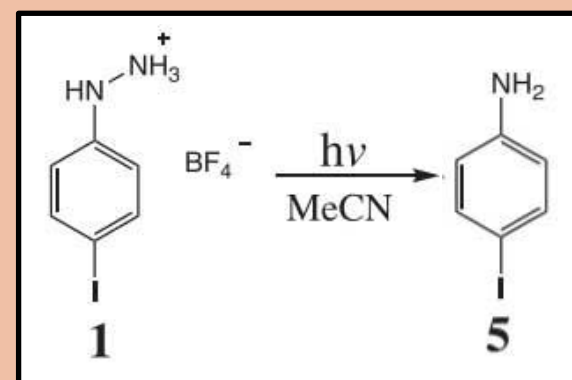
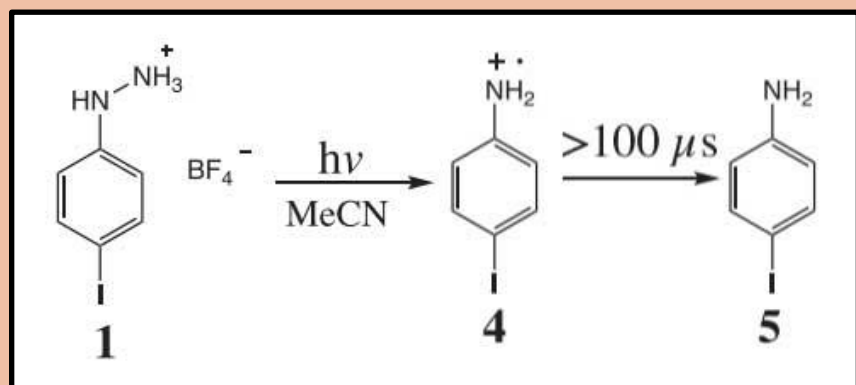
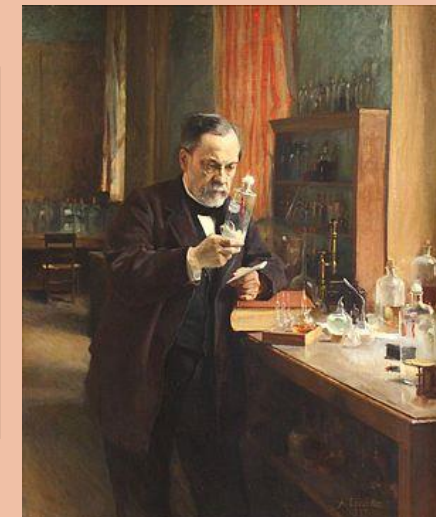
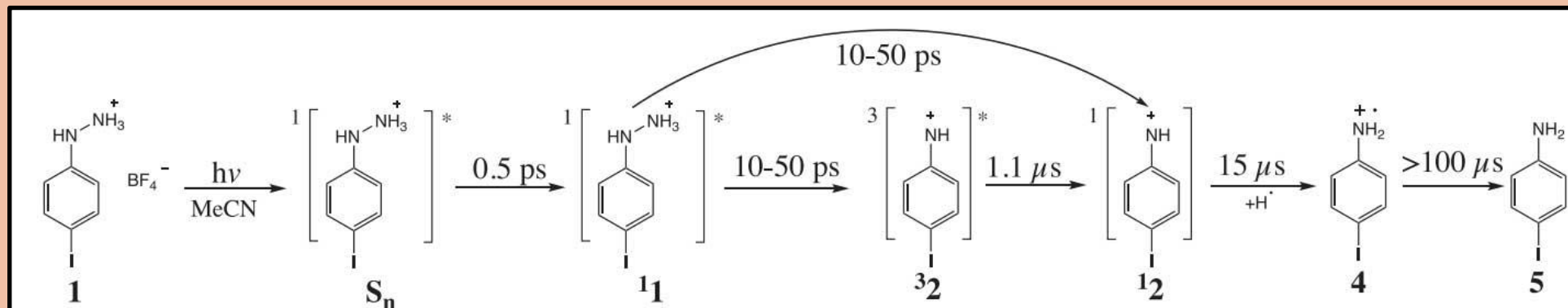
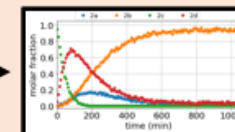
Chemists assume implicit detail



“=”

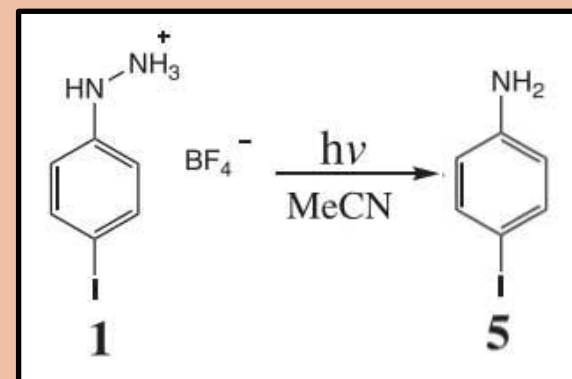
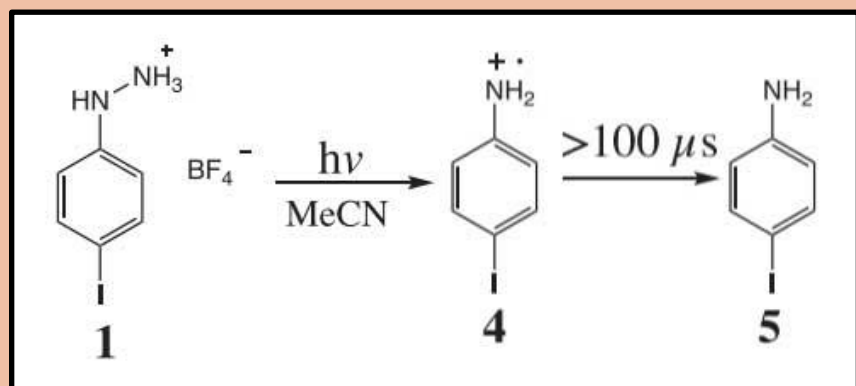
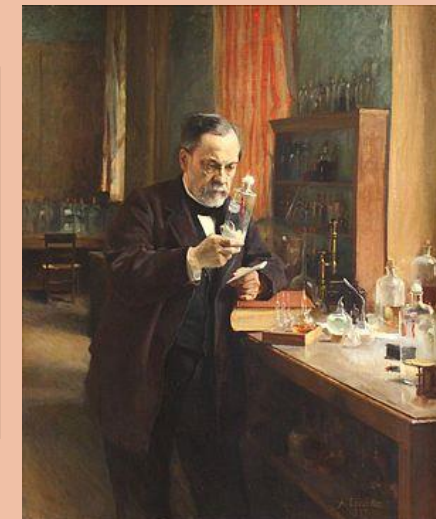
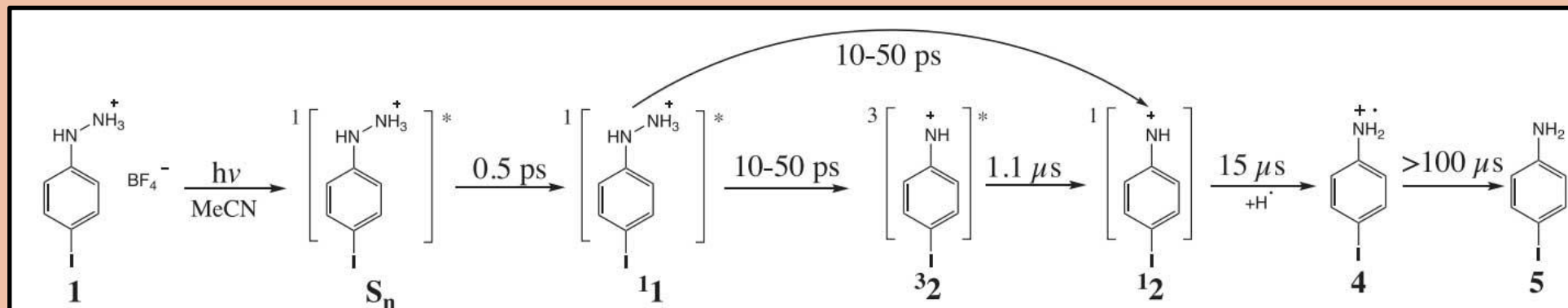
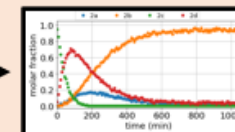


“My colleagues can see more”



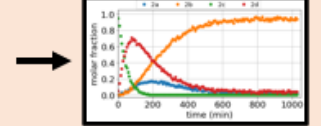
Different representations, but not contradictory: we're talking about the same thing

Resolution of CRNs: no 'absolute' representation



Different representations, but not contradictory: we're talking about the same thing

Resolution of CRNs: no 'absolute' representation



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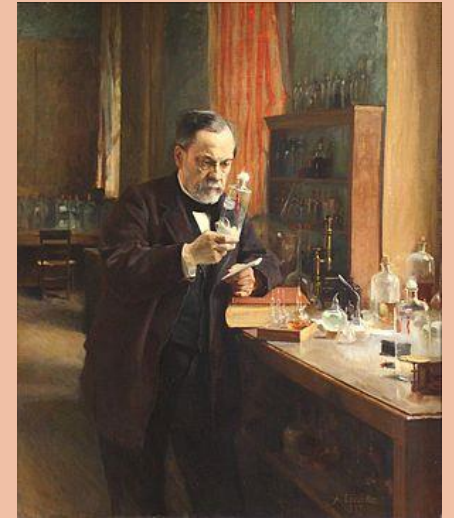
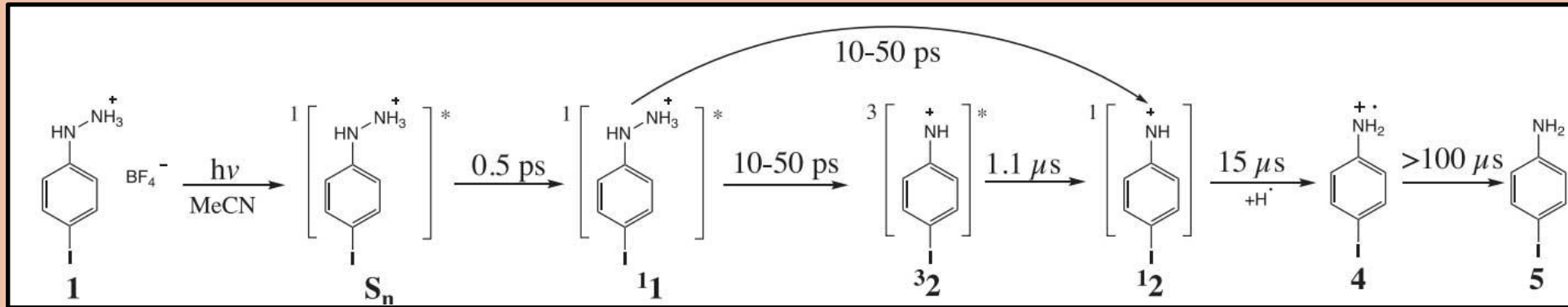
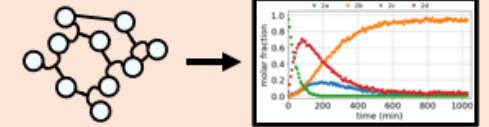
L. Pasteur,
A. Edelfelt (1885)

=

L. Pasteur,
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Different representations, but not contradictory: we're talking about the same thing

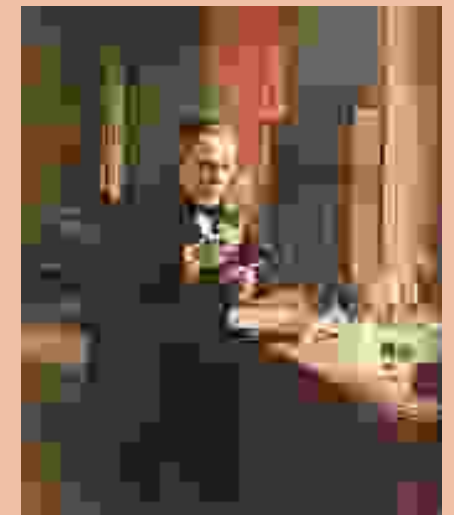
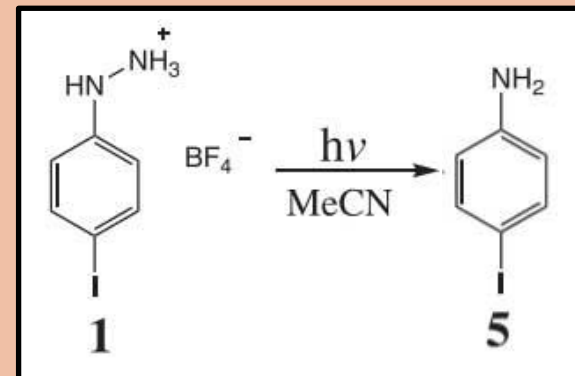
“reactions are not absolute”



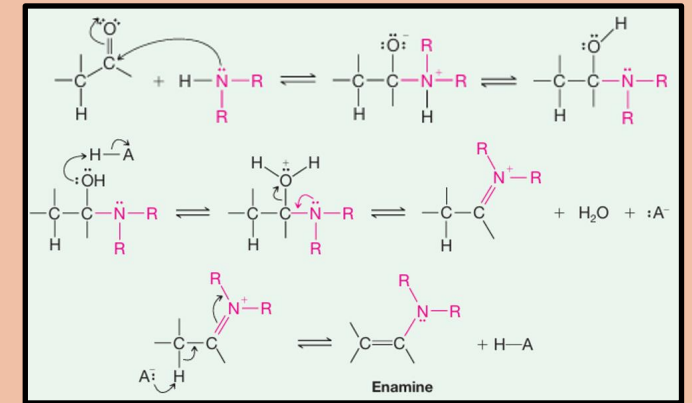
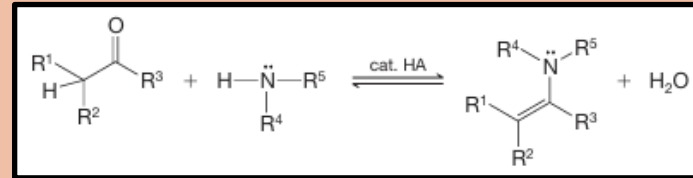
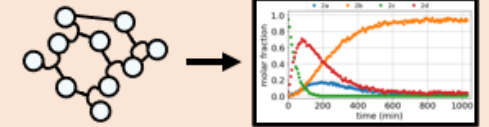
What else makes a reaction network ‘chemical’?

A system doesn't have ‘one reaction network’, but a family of agreeing reaction networks of varying detail

Experimental resolution dictates the CRN we can see.



“reactions are not absolute”

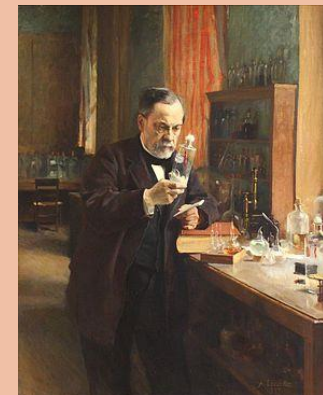


* Robustness to detail: predicted phenomenology is not expected to be altered by adding in more intermediates.

What else makes a reaction network ‘chemical’?

A system doesn’t have ‘one reaction network’, but a family of agreeing* reaction networks of varying detail

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L. Pasteur, A. Edelfelt (1885)

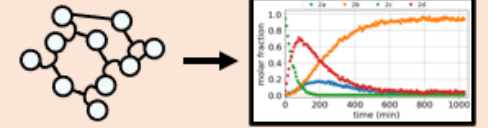
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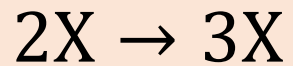
L. Pasteur, A. Edelfelt (1885)

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Nonrobustness, a very small example



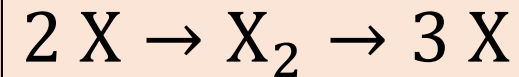
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Blows up in finite time

$$N_X = 2$$

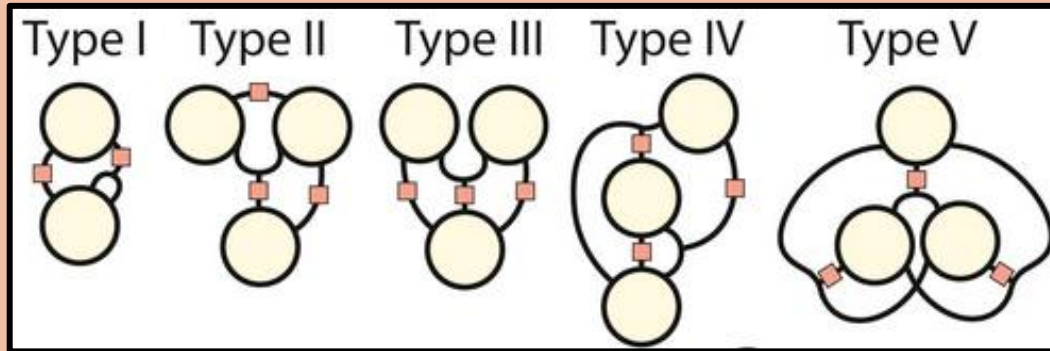
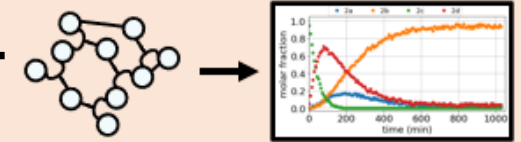
$$\langle t_{2 \rightarrow 3} \rangle = \langle t_{3 \rightarrow \emptyset} \rangle$$



No blow up in finite time

$2X \rightarrow 3X$ intrinsically fails to be a good approximation on all but the shortest times.

No “absolute” CRN as a theoretical requirement



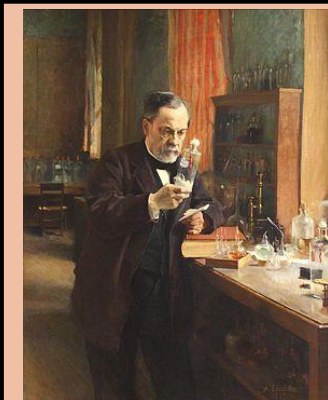
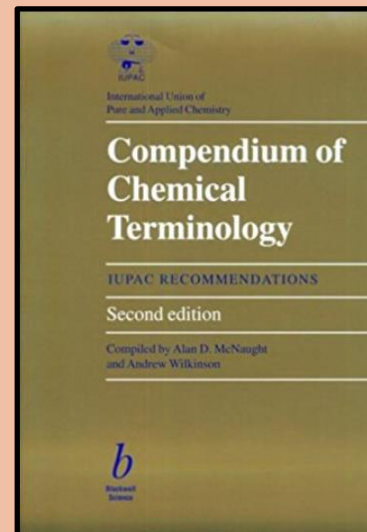
Universal motifs and the diversity of autocatalytic systems

Alex Blokhuis , David Lacoste, and Philippe Nghe  [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

Edited by Peter Schuster, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, and approved September 1, 2020 (received for review June 30, 2020)

September 28, 2020 | 117 (41) 25230-25236 | <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2013527117>

Several concepts in chemistry (e.g. catalysis) are explicitly defined in terms of hierarchy of descriptions.



L. Pasteur, A.
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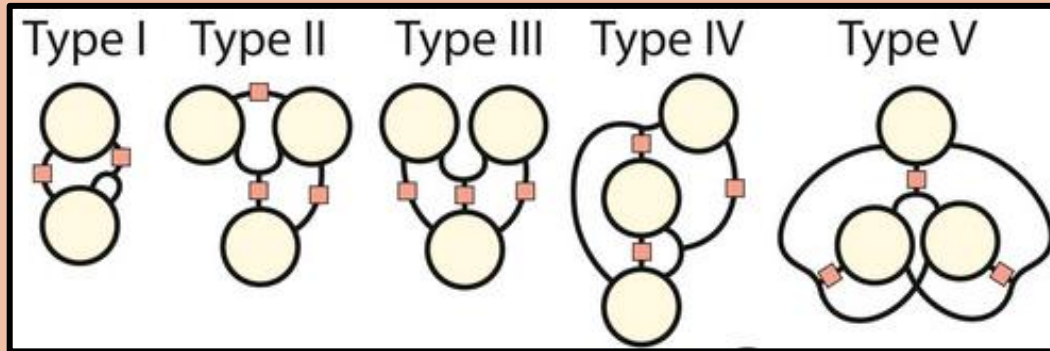
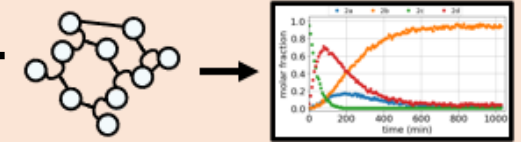
≠



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No “absolute” CRN as a theoretical requirement



E.g. to formalize autocatalysis in chemistry we use that reaction networks have family of representations.

See also:

Defining Autocatalysis in Chemical Reaction Networks

[Jakob L. Andersen](#), [Christoph Flamm](#), [Daniel Merkle](#), [Peter F. Stadler](#)

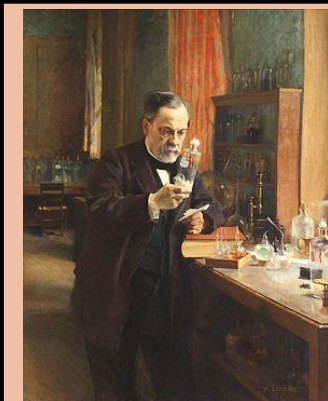
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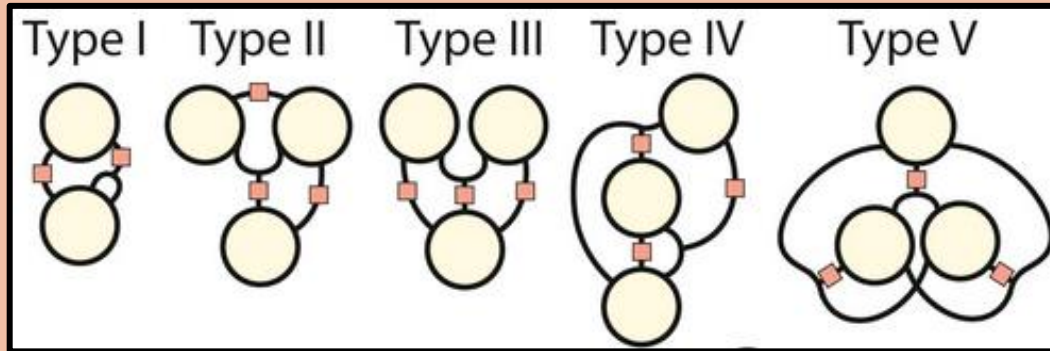
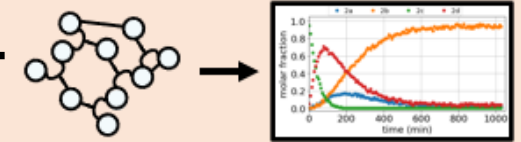
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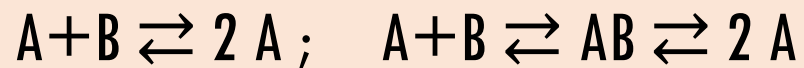
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No “absolute” CRN as a theoretical requirement



Nonambiguity:

reactants \neq products in the same reaction



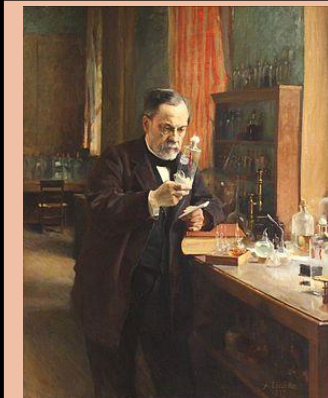
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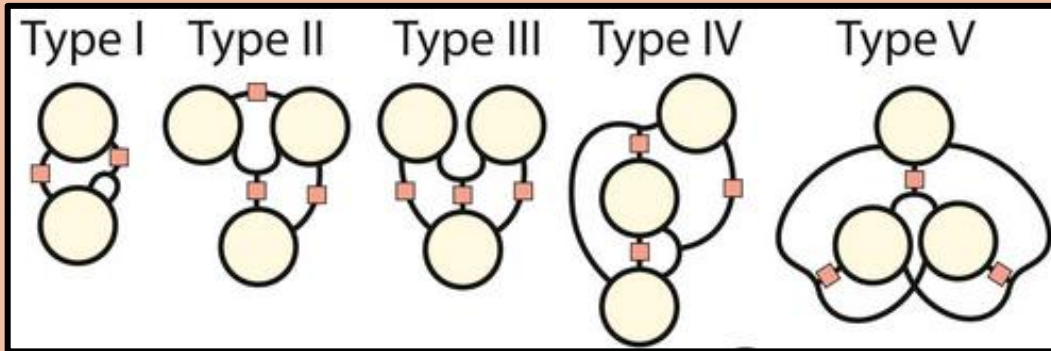
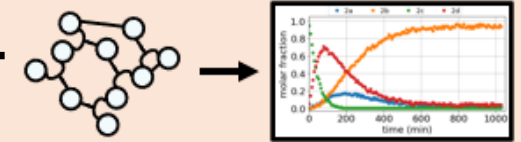
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No “absolute” CRN as a theoretical requirement



Universal motifs and the diversity of autocatalytic systems

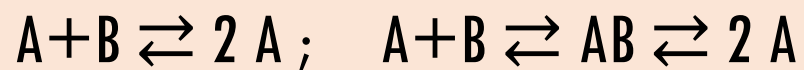
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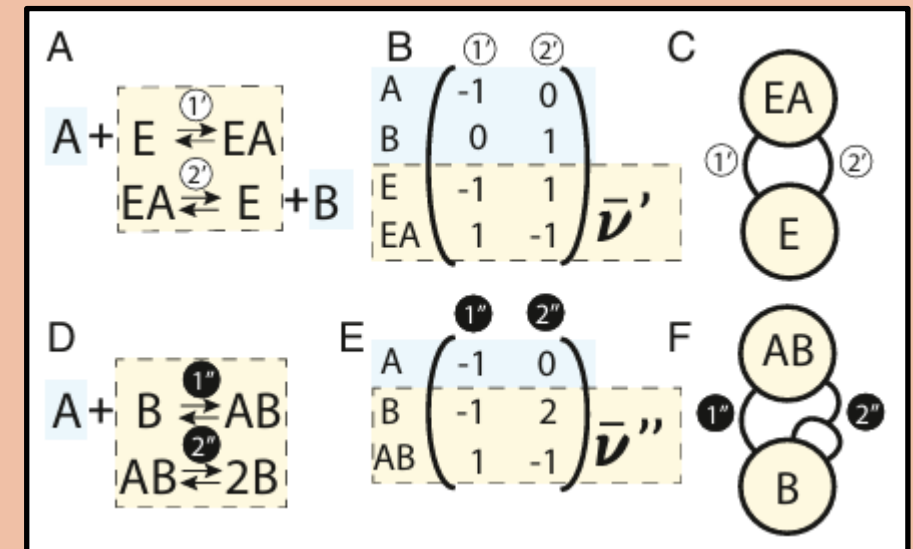
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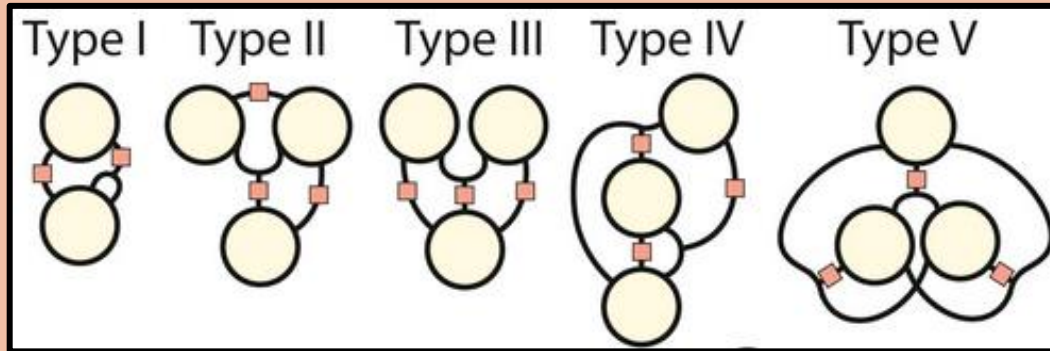
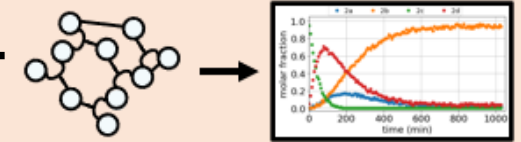


A methodological advantage:

→ Under **nonambiguity**, list of reactions maps 1-to-1 to stoichiometric matrix.



No “absolute” CRN as a theoretical requirement



Universal motifs and the diversity of autocatalytic systems

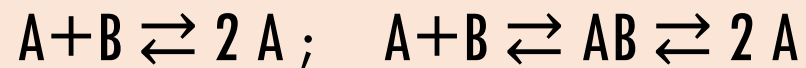
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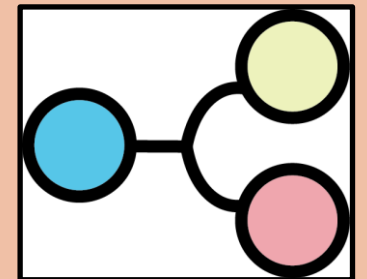
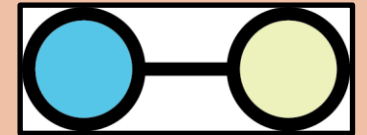
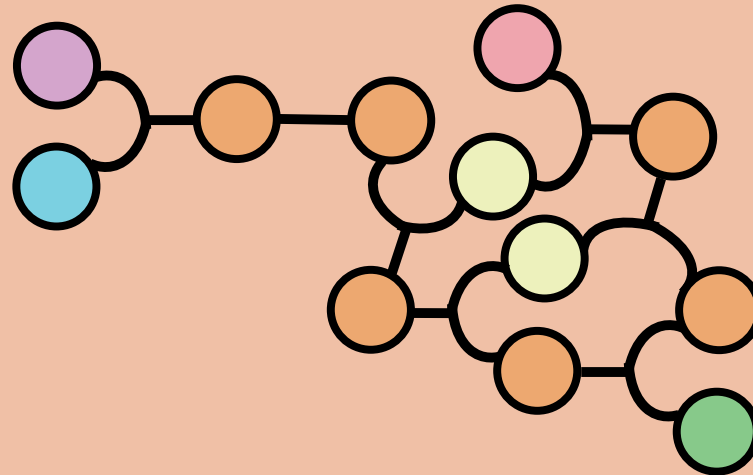
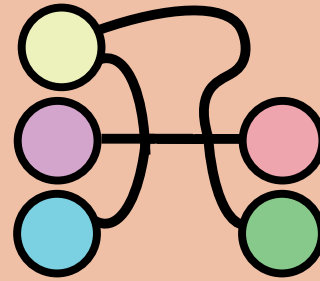
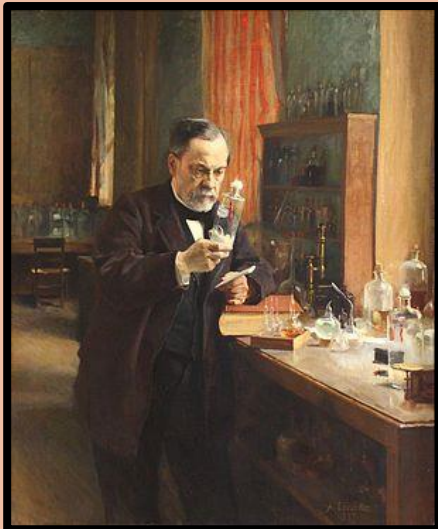
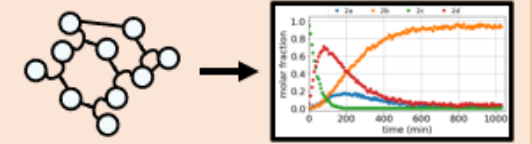
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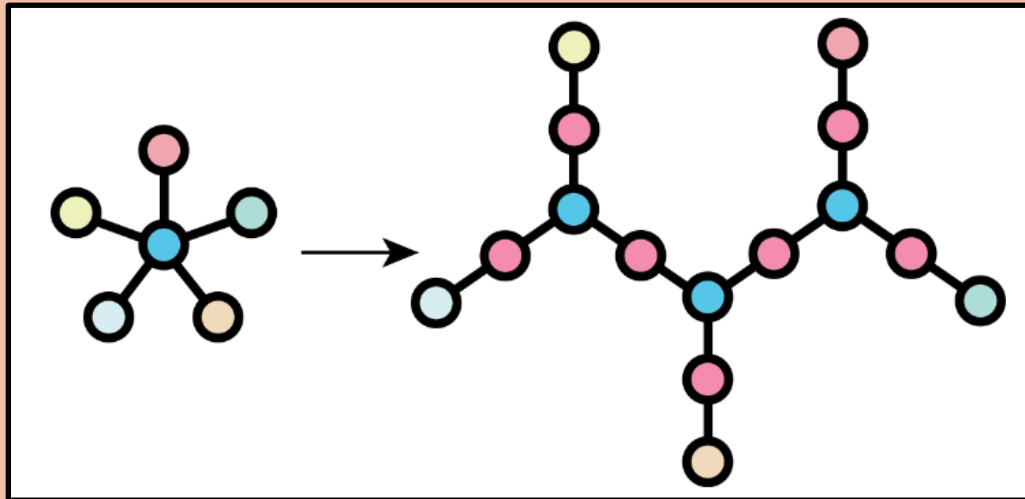
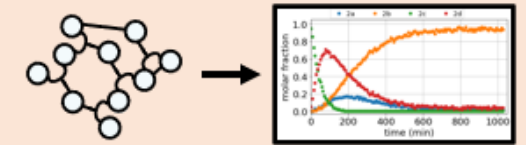
→ Under **nonambiguity**, list of reactions maps 1-to-1 to stoichiometric matrix.

More steps, simpler steps



We only need two types of reactions

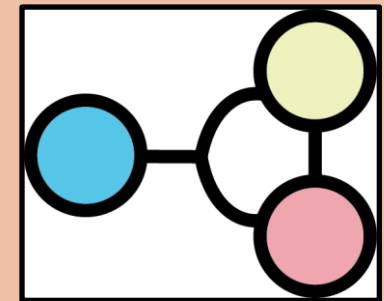
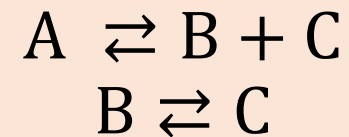
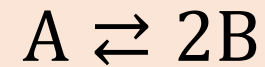
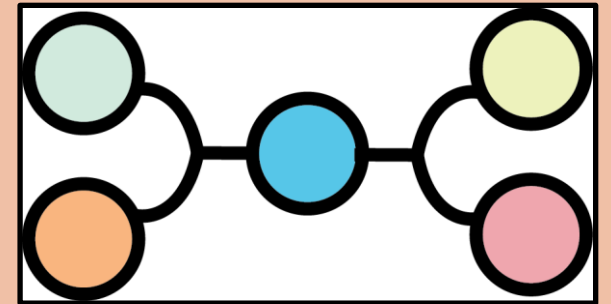
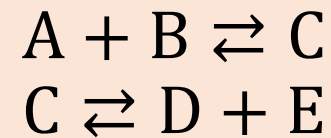
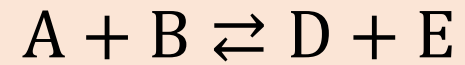
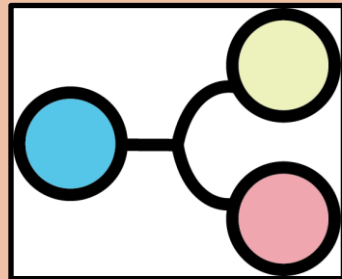
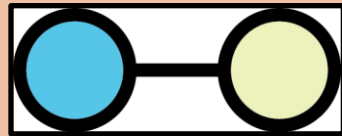
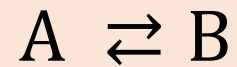
More steps, simpler steps



$$s^{(3)} = 3$$

A species involved in >3 reactions can be reduced to several triconnected species

2 Fundamental building blocks

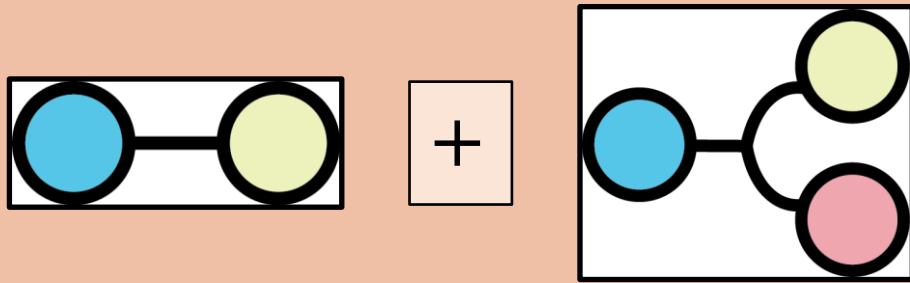


A methodological advantage

More variables, reactions \Leftrightarrow less structural elements, more regularity

- Dramatically reduces # cases to check in proofs
- Facilitates constructions
- Endows mathematical constructions with 'nice' properties

Simple building blocks \Leftrightarrow Many equivalent representations



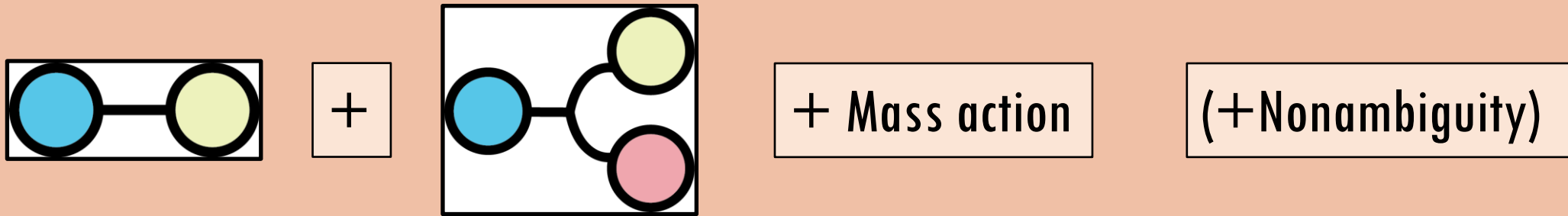
+ Mass action

(+ Nonambiguity)

Normally in CRN Theory,
Stoichiometric matrix \neq hypergraph \neq dynamic equations
 \neq reaction list \neq characteristic polynomial(s) \neq

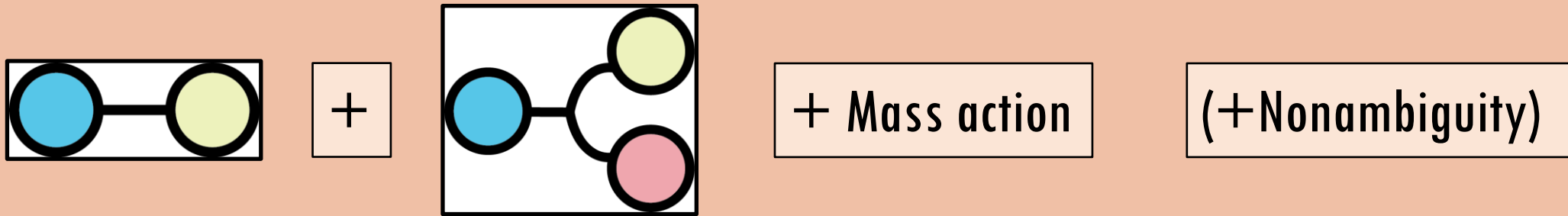
Upon regularizing structure, **representations become equivalent, and new representations become available**
Stoichiometric matrix = hypergraph = dynamic equations =
Reaction list = characteristic polynomial(s) = Big polynomial =
generalized Jacobian = Jacobian for currents = Hamiltonian = ...

Simple building blocks \Leftrightarrow Many equivalent representations



Directed* Hypergraph	Dynamic Equations	Reaction List	Stoichiometric Matrix	Big Polynomial	Hamiltonian
	$J_1 = \kappa_1^+ [X] - \kappa_1^- [Y]$ $J_2 = \kappa_2^+ [Y] - \kappa_2^- [Z]$ $J_3 = \kappa_3^+ [Z] - \kappa_3^- [X]$ $d_t[X] = -J_1 + J_3$ $d_t[Y] = -J_2 + J_1$ $d_t[Z] = -J_3 + J_2$	$\begin{array}{l} \boxed{1} \quad X \rightleftharpoons Y \\ \boxed{2} \quad Y \rightleftharpoons Z \\ \boxed{3} \quad Z \rightleftharpoons X \end{array}$	$S = \begin{pmatrix} \boxed{1} & \boxed{2} & \boxed{3} \\ -1 & 0 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{array}{l} X \\ Y \\ Z \end{array}$	$B = Q_1^+ J_1^+ + Q_2^+ J_2^+ + Q_3^+ J_3^+ + Q_1^- J_1^- + Q_2^- J_2^- + Q_3^- J_3^-$ $Q_1^+ = [X]^2/6 - [Y]^2/2 \quad Q_1^- = [X]^2/6 - [Y]^2/2$ $Q_2^+ = [Y]^2/6 - [Z]^2/2 \quad Q_2^- = [Y]^2/6 - [Z]^2/2$ $Q_3^+ = [Z]^2/6 - [X]^2/2 \quad Q_3^- = [Z]^2/6 - [X]^2/2$	$\mathcal{H} = J_1 (z_2 - z_1) + J_2 (z_3 - z_2) + J_3 (z_1 - z_3)$
...					

Simple building blocks \Leftrightarrow Many equivalent representations



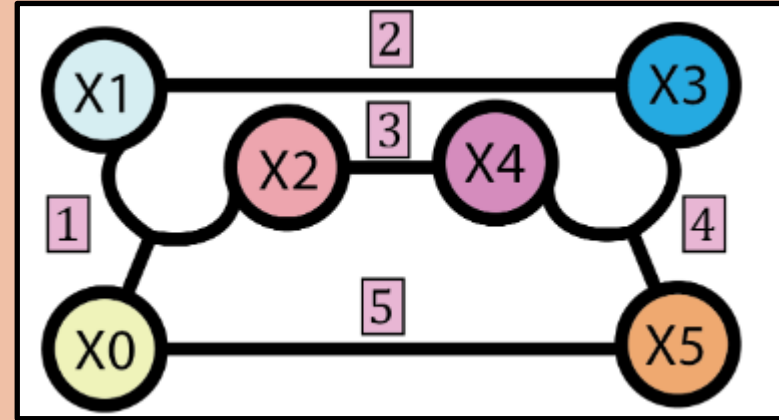
Upon regularizing structure, **representations become equivalent, and new representations become available**
Stoichiometric matrix = hypergraph = dynamic equations =
Reaction list = characteristic polynomial(s) = Big polynomial =
generalized Jacobian = Jacobian for currents = Hamiltonian = ...

Ipso facto,

- questions can be reformulated as questions about the object of our choice.
- representations acquire deeper, more regular structure
- we can go back and forth between representations to look for easy insights, simple(r) proofs

Big polynomial

$$d_t x_k = \frac{\partial^2 \mathcal{B}}{\partial x_k^2}$$



$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{B} = & \kappa_1^+ x_0 \left(\frac{x_1^2}{2} + \frac{x_2^2}{2} - \frac{x_0^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_1^- x_1 x_2 \left(\frac{x_0^2}{2} - \frac{x_1^2}{6} - \frac{x_2^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_2^+ x_1 \left(\frac{x_3^2}{2} - \frac{x_1^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_2^- x_3 \left(\frac{x_1^2}{2} - \frac{x_3^2}{6} \right) \\ & + \kappa_3^+ x_2 \left(\frac{x_4^2}{2} - \frac{x_2^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_3^- x_4 \left(\frac{x_2^2}{2} - \frac{x_4^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_4^+ x_3 x_4 \left(\frac{x_5^2}{2} - \frac{x_3^2}{6} - \frac{x_4^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_4^- x_5 \left(\frac{x_3^2}{2} + \frac{x_4^2}{2} - \frac{x_5^2}{2} \right) \\ & + \kappa_5^+ x_5 \left(\frac{x_0^2}{2} - \frac{x_5^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_5^- x_0 \left(\frac{x_0^2}{2} - \frac{x_5^2}{6} \right) \end{aligned}$$

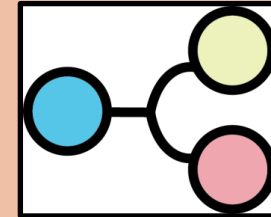
Regularized CRNs are never divergence-free

$$d_t x_k = \frac{\partial^2 B}{\partial X_k^2}$$

$$\text{div}(d_t \mathbf{x}) = \sum_k \frac{\partial^3 B}{\partial X_k^3} < 0$$

CRN properties that critically rely on divergence-free dynamics are not robust and should not be expected in chemistry (nor ecology)

$$\mathcal{B} = \sum_{k=1}^r \mathcal{B}_k = \sum_{k=1}^r (Q_k^+ J_k^+ + Q_k^- J_k^-)$$

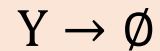
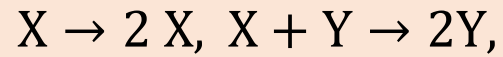


$$\mathcal{B} = \kappa_1^+ x_0 \left(\frac{x_1^2}{2} + \frac{x_2^2}{2} - \frac{x_0^2}{6} \right) + \kappa_1^- x_1 x_2 \left(\frac{x_0^2}{2} - \frac{x_1^2}{6} - \frac{x_2^2}{6} \right)$$

Regularized CRNs are never divergence-free

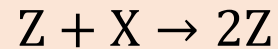
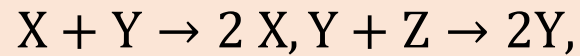
Lotka-Volterra

oscillates



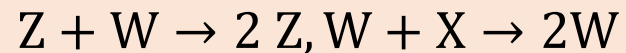
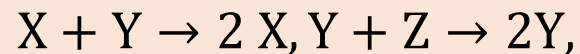
Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS-3)

oscillates



(RPS-4)

quasi-periodic



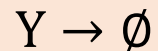
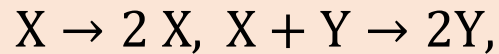
Stable, but not
asymptotically stable

CRN properties that critically rely on divergence-free dynamics
are not robust and should not be expected in chemistry

Regularized CRNs are never divergence-free

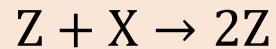
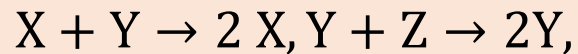
Lotka-Volterra

oscillates



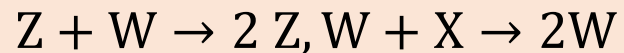
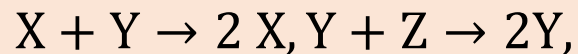
Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS-3)

oscillates



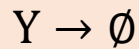
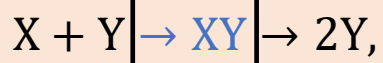
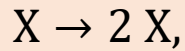
(RPS-4)

quasi-periodic



Lotka-Volterra

Fixed point, extinction



Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS-3)

Fixed point, extinction

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(RPS-4)

Fixed point, extinction

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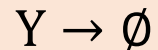
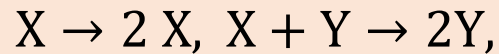
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CRN properties that critically rely on divergence-free dynamics
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Regularized CRNs are never divergence-free

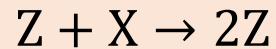
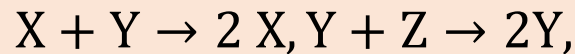
Lotka-Volterra

oscillates



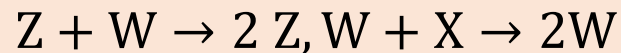
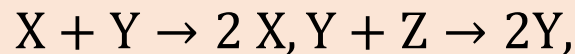
Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS-3)

oscillates



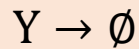
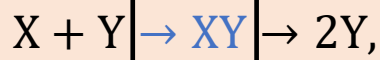
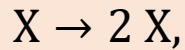
(RPS-4)

quasi-periodic



Lotka-Volterra

Fixed point, extinction



Rock-Paper-Scissors (RPS-3)

Fixed point, extinction

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(RPS-4)

Fixed point, extinction

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Regularization



Lotka-Volterra

Fixed point, extinction

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(RPS-3)

Fixed point, extinction

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(RPS-4)

Fixed point, extinction

.

.

CRN properties that critically rely on divergence-free dynamics
are not robust and should not be expected in chemistry (nor ecology)

Jacobian

$$\mathfrak{J}_{k,j}(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{\partial d_t x_k}{\partial x_j}$$

$$d_t \Delta \mathbf{x} = \mathfrak{J}(\mathbf{x}) \Delta \mathbf{x}$$

Linearized dynamics

$$d_t \mathbf{x} = \mathfrak{J}(\mathbf{x}/2) \mathbf{x}$$

Full dynamics

For regularized network, the Jacobian also expresses non-linearized dynamics

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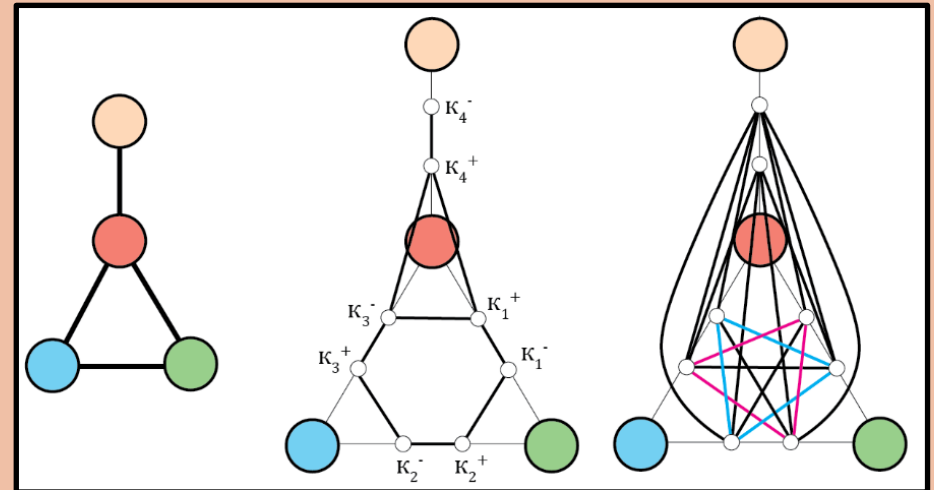
For regularized network, the Jacobian also expresses non-linearized dynamics

One can deduce simple rules to construct a characteristic polynomial $P_\lambda(J)$ from (hyper)graph, and vice versa.

A factor graph.

A factor of coefficients occurs in the characteristic polynomial if it is not **forbidden**

Forbidden: i) nearest neighbors, ii) cycles in factor graph



$$\mathcal{K}_4^+ \mathcal{K}_3^- \quad \times, \quad \mathcal{K}_3^- \mathcal{K}_2^- \mathcal{K}_1^+ \quad \times, \quad \mathcal{K}_4^- \mathcal{K}_3^-$$

Jacobian

$$\mathfrak{J}_{k,j}(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{\partial d_t x_k}{\partial x_j}$$

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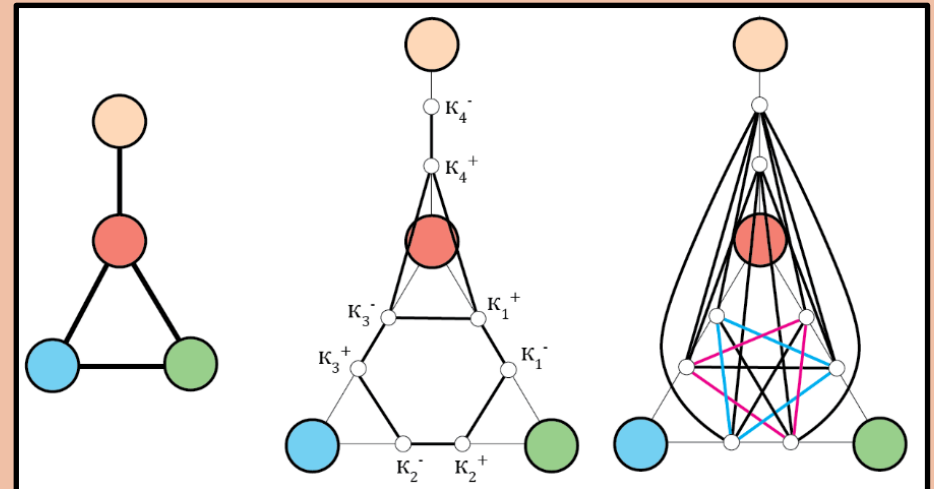
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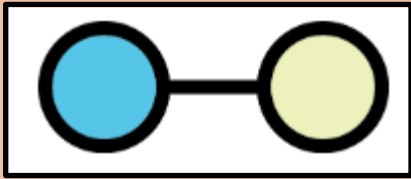


$$K_4^+ K_3^- \times, K_3^- K_2^- K_1^+ \times, K_4^- K_3^-$$

More elaborate rules with bimolecular reactions

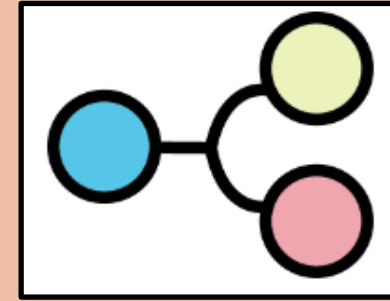
Jacobian for currents

$$\mathcal{N}_{k,j}(\mathbf{J}) = \frac{\partial d_t J_k}{\partial J_j}$$



$$d_t x_1 = -d_t x_2 = -J_1$$
$$d_t J_1 = \kappa_1^+ d_t x_1 - \kappa_1^- d_t x_2 = -(\kappa_1^+ + \kappa_1^-) J_1$$

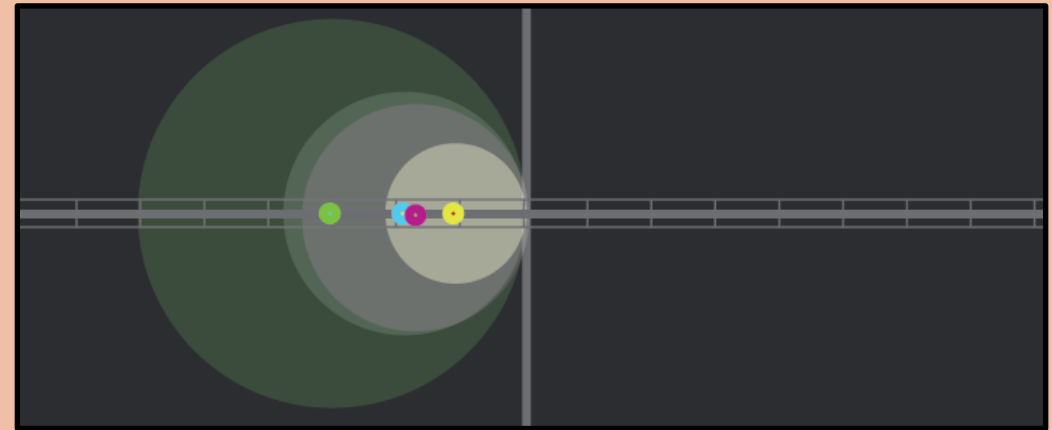
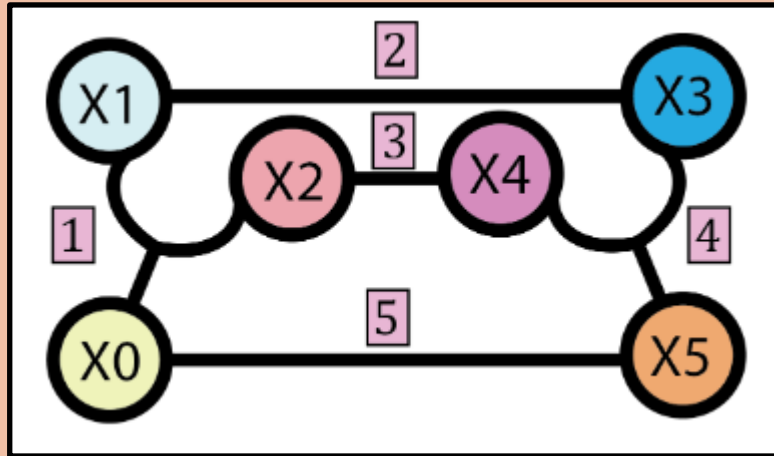
$$\mathcal{N}_o = \left(\frac{\partial d_t J_1}{\partial J_1} \right) = \left(-\kappa_1^+ - \kappa_1^- \right)$$



$$d_t x_1 = -d_t x_2 = -d_t x_3 = -J_1$$
$$d_t J_1 = \kappa_1^+ d_t x_1 - \kappa_1^- x_3 d_t x_2 - \kappa_1^- x_2 d_t x_3 = -(\kappa_1^+ + \kappa_1^- (x_2 + x_3)) J_1$$

$$\mathcal{N}_{oo} = \left(\frac{\partial d_t J_1}{\partial J_1} \right) = \left(-\kappa_1^+ - \kappa_1^- (x_2 + x_3) \right)$$

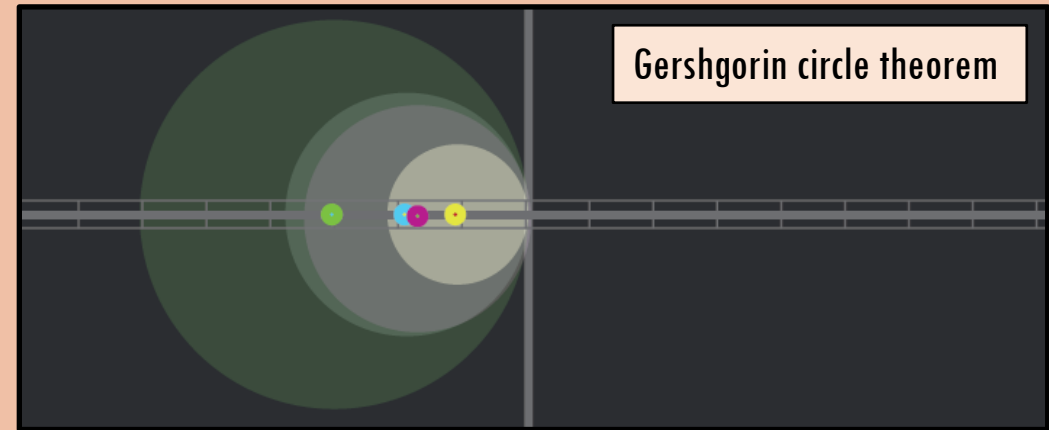
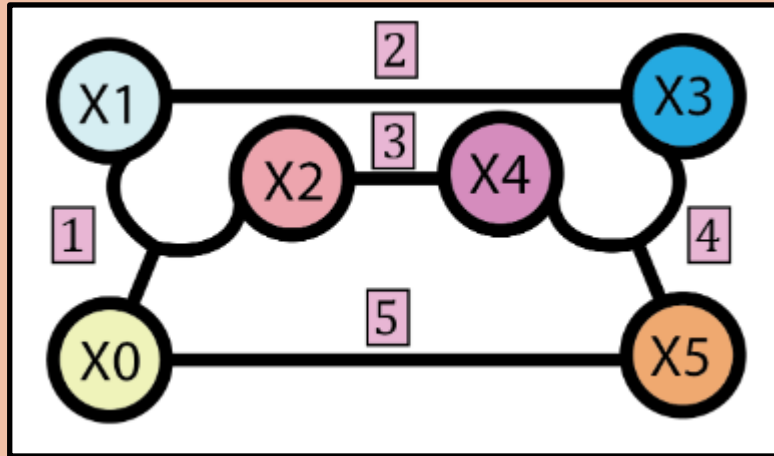
Jacobian for currents – Handshake stability



$$s^{(3)} = 0$$

$$\mathcal{N} = \begin{pmatrix} -k_1^+ - k_1^-(x_1 + x_2) & k_1^- x_2 & k_1^- x_1 & 0 & k_1^+ \\ k_2^+ & -k_2^+ - k_2^- & 0 & k_2^- & 0 \\ k_3^+ & 0 & -k_3^+ - k_3^- & k_3^- & 0 \\ 0 & k_4^+ x_4 & k_4^+ x_3 & -k_4^+(x_3 + x_4) - k_4^- & k_4^- \\ k_5^- & 0 & 0 & k_5^+ & -k_5^+ - k_5^- \end{pmatrix}$$

Jacobian for currents – Handshake stability

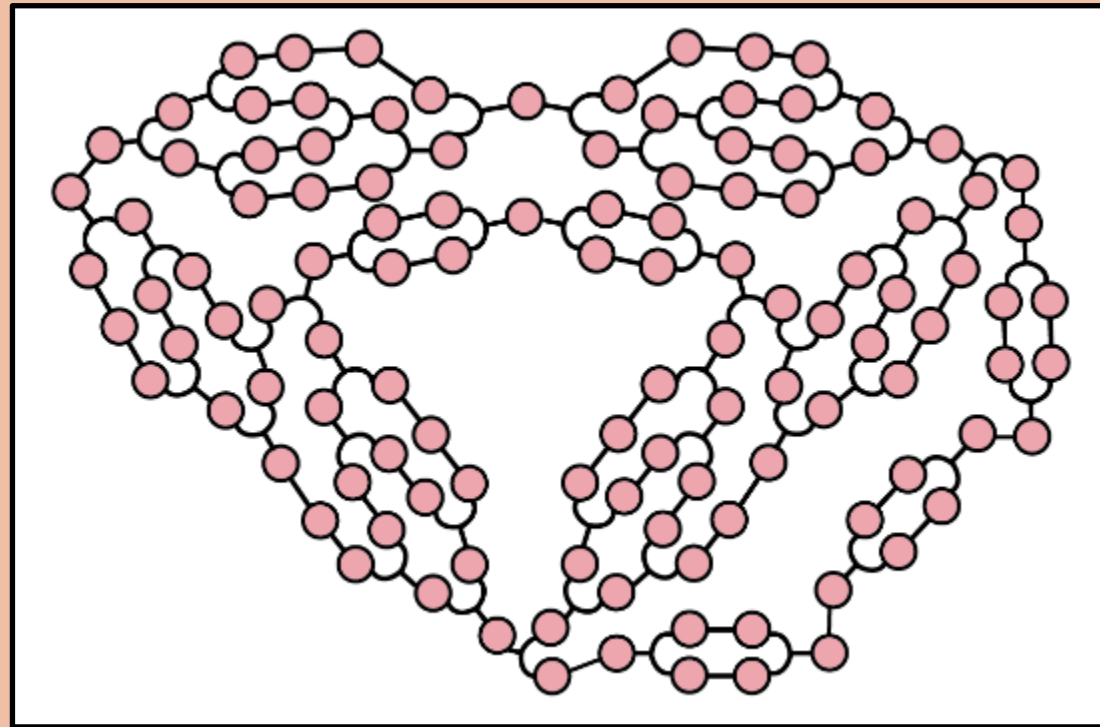


$$s^{(3)} = 0$$

$$\mathcal{N} = \begin{pmatrix} -k_1^+ - k_1^- (x_1 + x_2) & k_1^- x_2 & k_1^- x_1 & 0 & k_1^+ \\ k_2^+ & -k_2^+ - k_2^- & 0 & k_2^- & 0 \\ k_3^+ & 0 & -k_3^+ - k_3^- & k_3^- & 0 \\ 0 & k_4^+ x_4 & k_4^+ x_3 & -k_4^+ (x_3 + x_4) - k_4^- & k_4^- \\ k_5^- & 0 & 0 & k_5^+ & -k_5^+ - k_5^- \end{pmatrix}$$

Jacobian for currents – Handshake stability

If each species in a CRN engages in at most 2 reactions, then the CRN is **handshake stable** i.e. all eigenvalues of jacobian for currents are nonpositive.



$$s^{(3)} = 0$$

Handshake stable

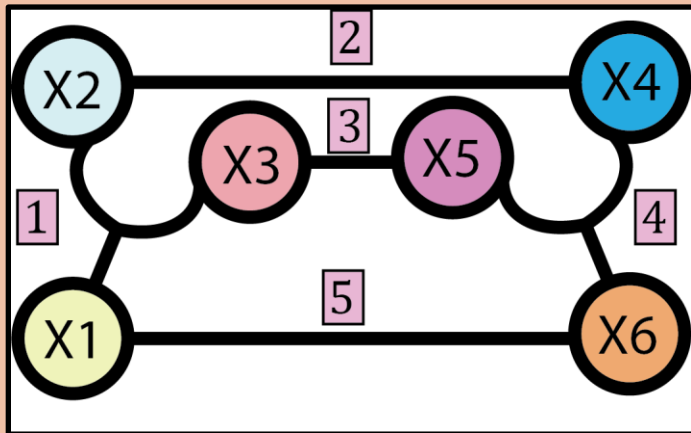
Deficiency δ , invariant deficiency δ

“properties of a system” vs “properties of a specific description”

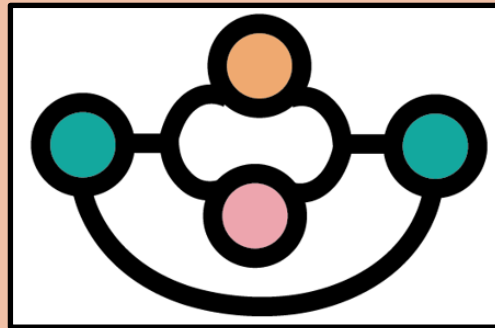
$$\delta_{\odot, S^{(3)}}$$

$$\delta$$

$$\delta_{\odot} = c - c_0 = c_{00}$$



$$\delta_{\odot} = 1, \delta = 1, s^{(3)} = 0$$



$$\delta_{\odot} = 1, \delta = 0, s^{(3)} = 0$$

Invariant deficiency:
nontrivial cycles
(cycles that are not purely unimolecular)

$\delta = 0$ is a well-known guarantee of stability

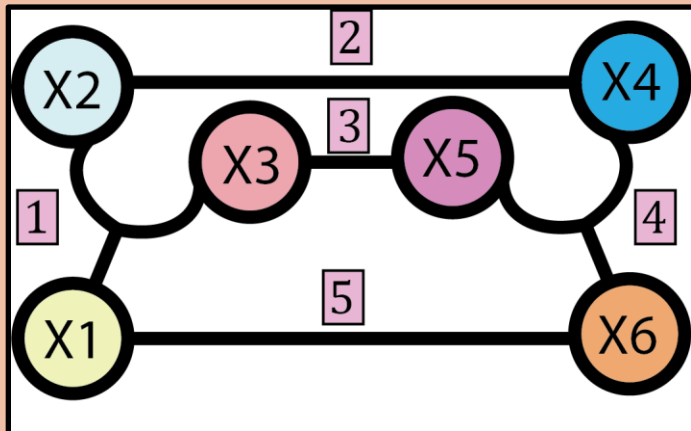
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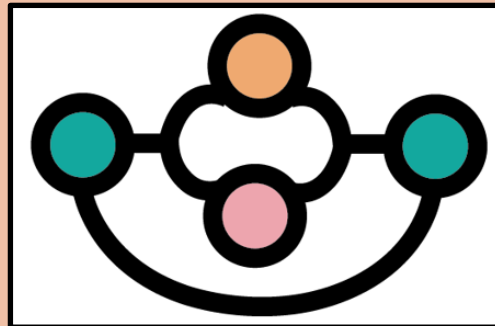
$$\delta_{\odot, S^{(3)}}$$

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$$\delta_{\odot} = 1, \delta = 1, s^{(3)} = 0$$



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Invariant deficiency:
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Open question:

To what extent are conclusions based on deficiency robust to regularization?

Generating robust invariants & CRN index laws

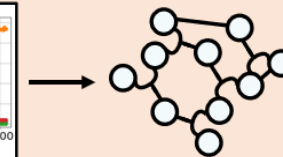
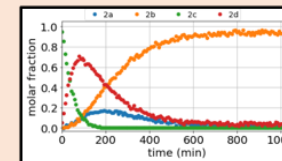
Graph transform	Structural Law	Introduced quantities
	SL1 $s - r = \ell_s - c$	s : # species r : # reactions ℓ_s : # conserved quantities c : # cycles
	SL2 $s - r = j + r_{oo} - \gamma$	j : # disjoint networks r_{oo} : # bimolecular reactions
	SL3 $s - r = \beta - \gamma_{\triangleright} - c_0$	β : # bilinkage classes γ_{\triangleright} : # pointy loops
	SL4 $s - r = \psi - r_{oo} - c_0$	ψ : # local isomer groups c_0 : # trivial cycles

(hyper)Graph Transform +
Fundamental theorem of Linear Algebra



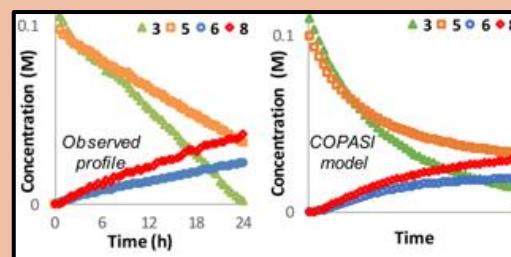
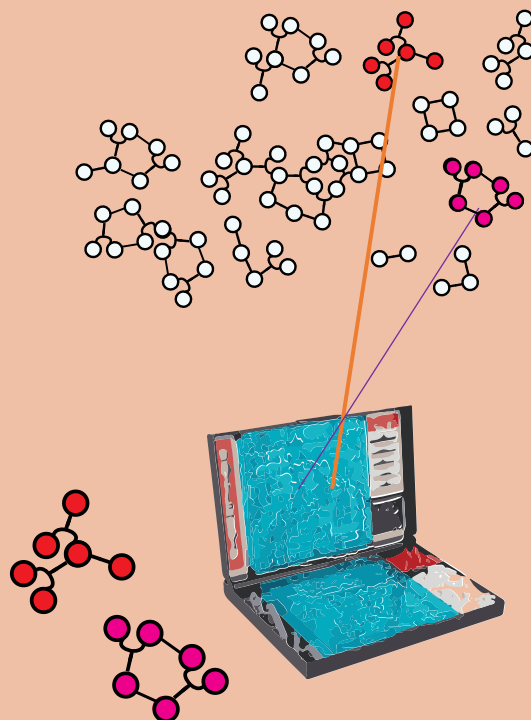
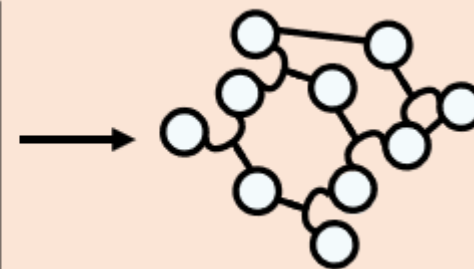
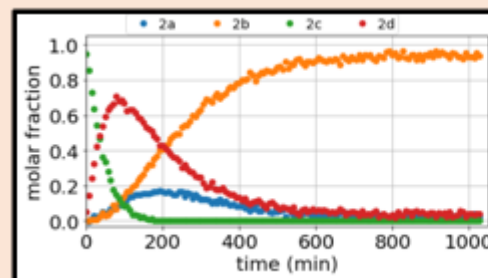
Robust topological properties of systems +
Structural laws for chemical networks

How do I know what CRN I'm looking at?



Battleship

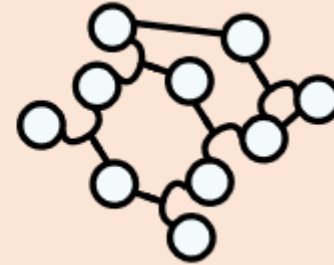
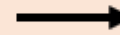
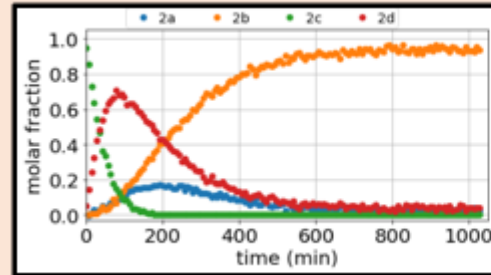
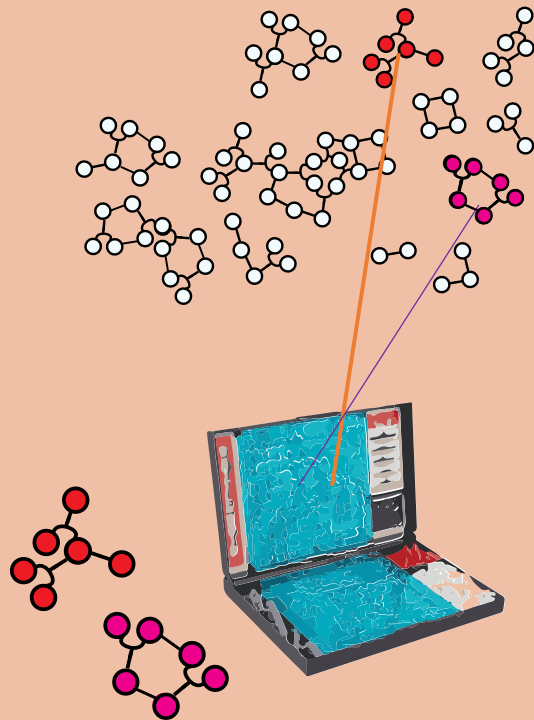
Try to fit one specific hypothesis after another.



How do I know what CRN I'm looking at?

Battleship

Try to fit one specific hypothesis after another.

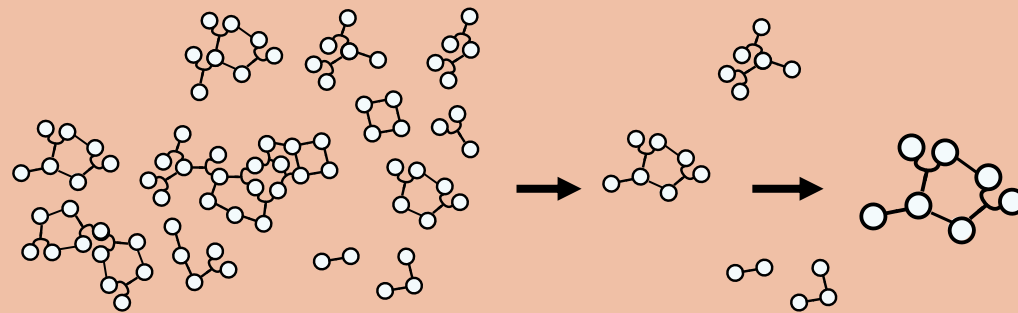
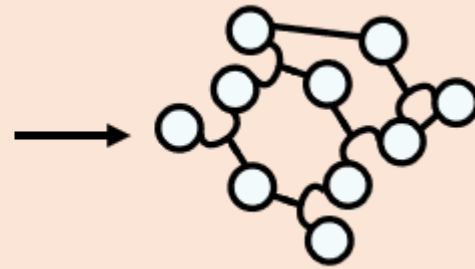
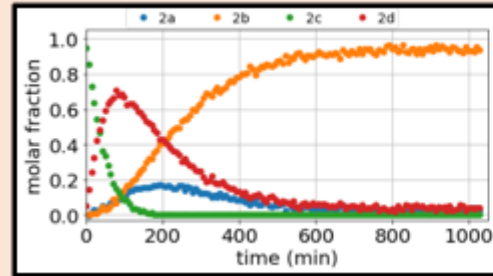


Guess who?

Exponentially narrow down the options



Measurable indices











Exponentially narrow down the options by measuring various families of indices characterizing CRN

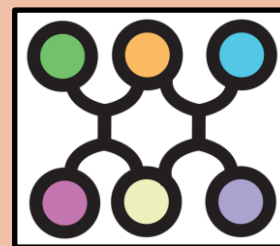
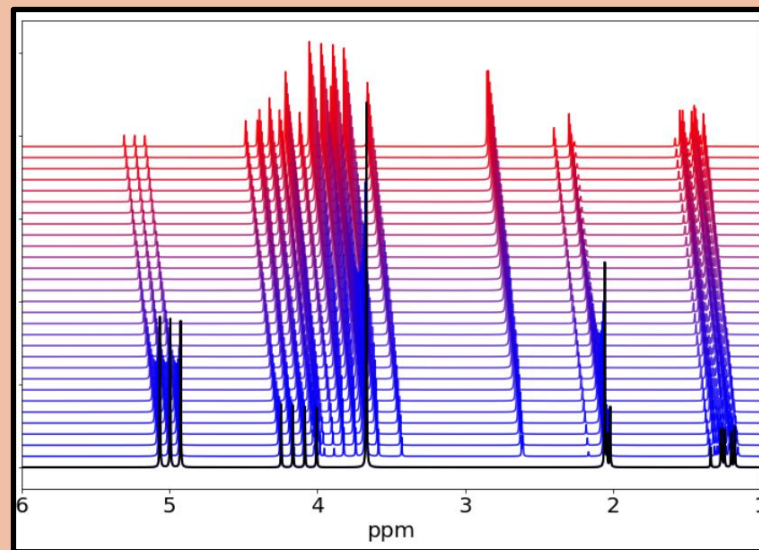
Guess who?

Exponentially narrow down the options



Measurable indices

CRN	d	d ⁺	d [^]	I ^x
	2	3	3	0
	2	3	4	1
	2	4	4	0
	2	4	4	1
	2	4	4	2
	2	4	5	1
	2	4	5	2
	2	4	6	3



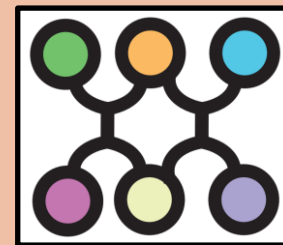
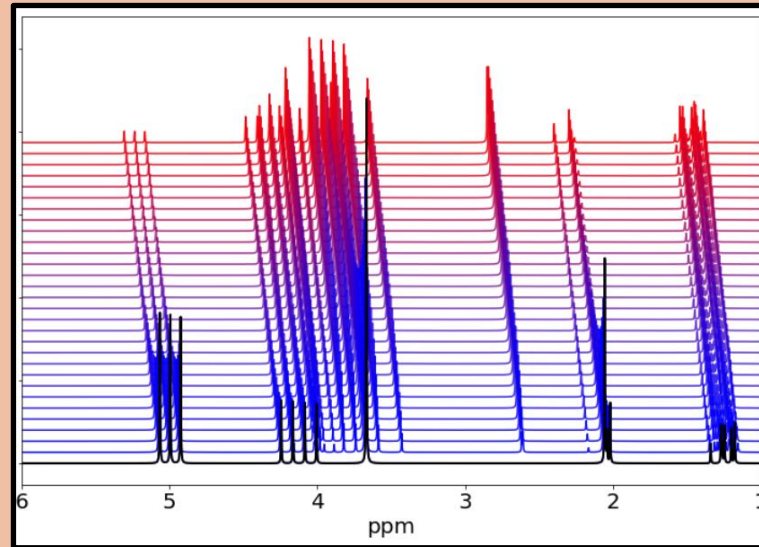
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Exponentially narrow down the options



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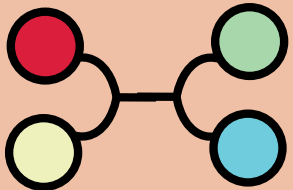
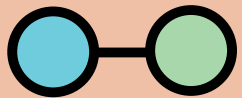
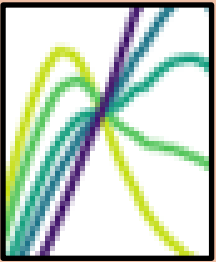


Guess who?
Exponentially narrow down the options

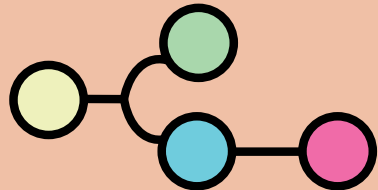
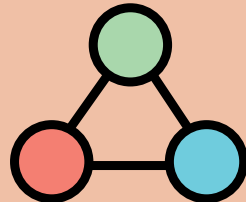


An example of an index, data dimension d

$d=1$
(isosbestic point*)



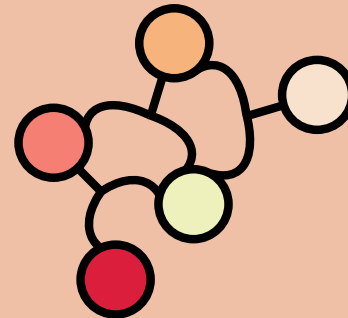
$d=2$
(Isosbestic line*)



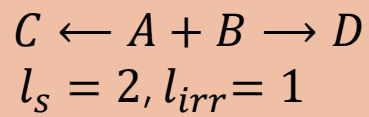
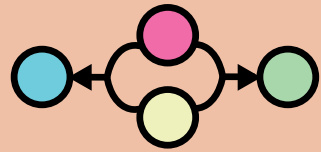
$$d = v - \ell \quad \text{"\# variables - \# constraints"}$$

Rank estimation of mean-subtracted data

$d=3$

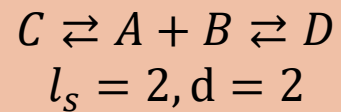
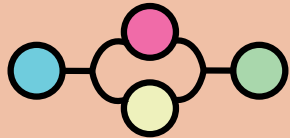


Many chemical phenomena lower data dimension

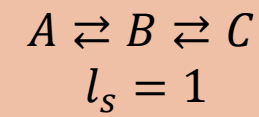
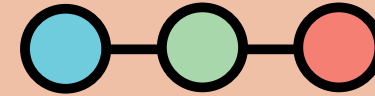


d

1



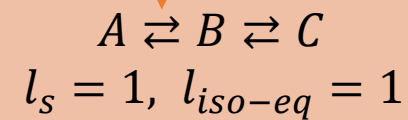
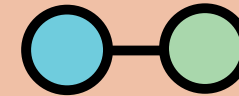
2



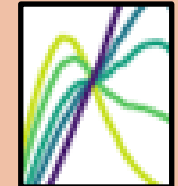
2



fast



1

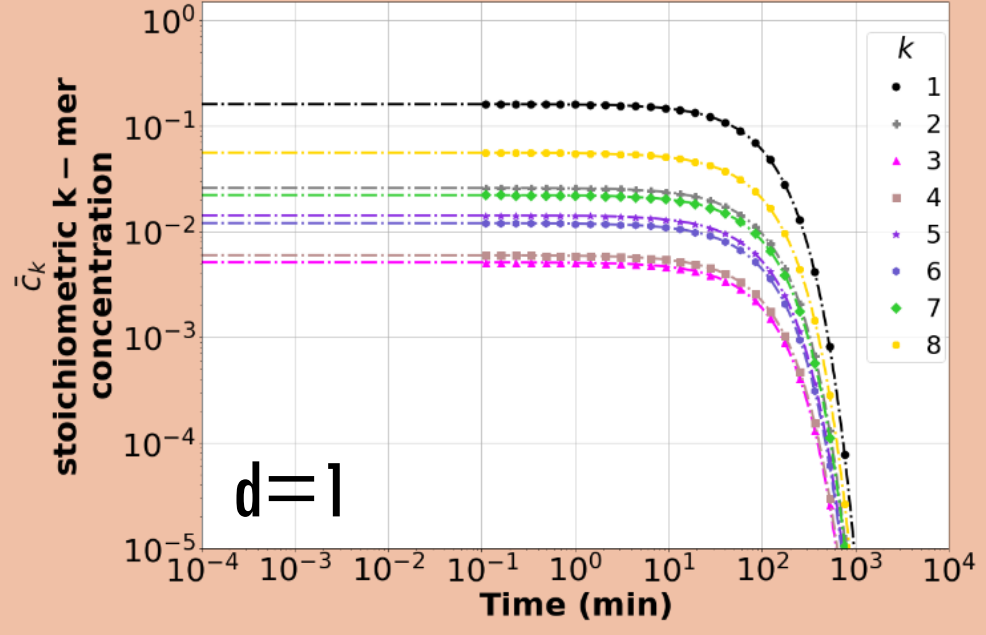
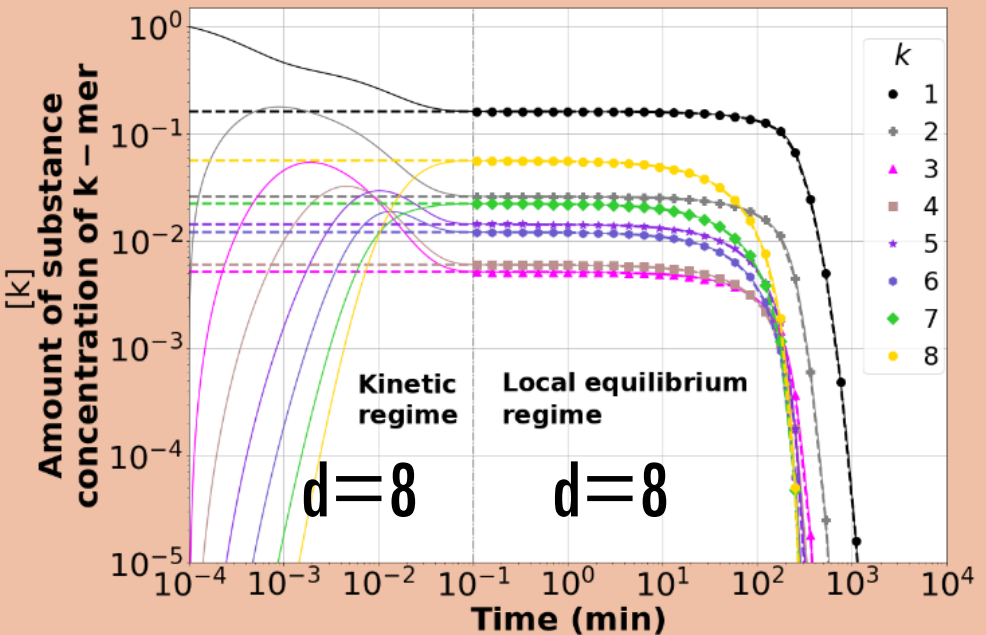
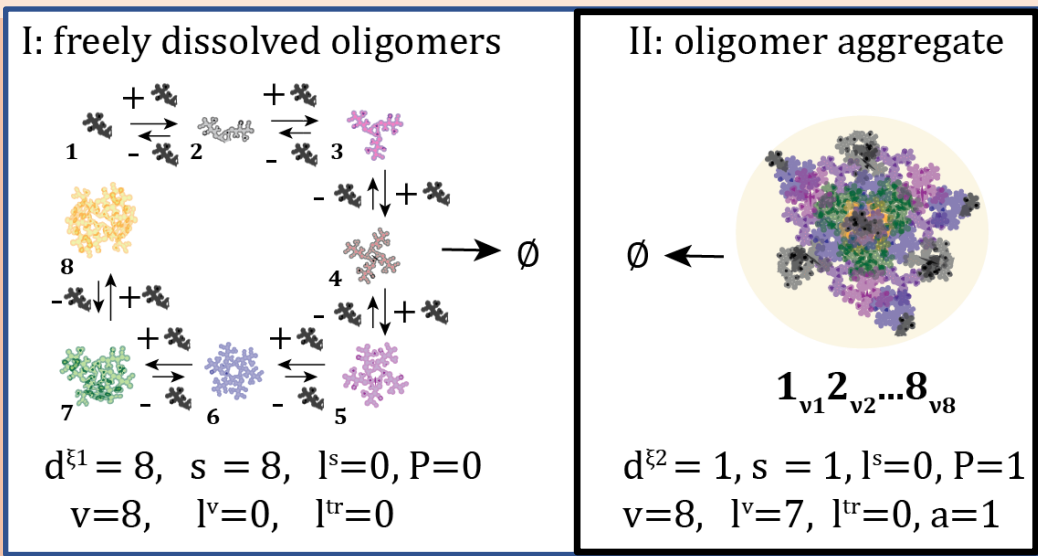


(effectively) irreversible collinear reactions

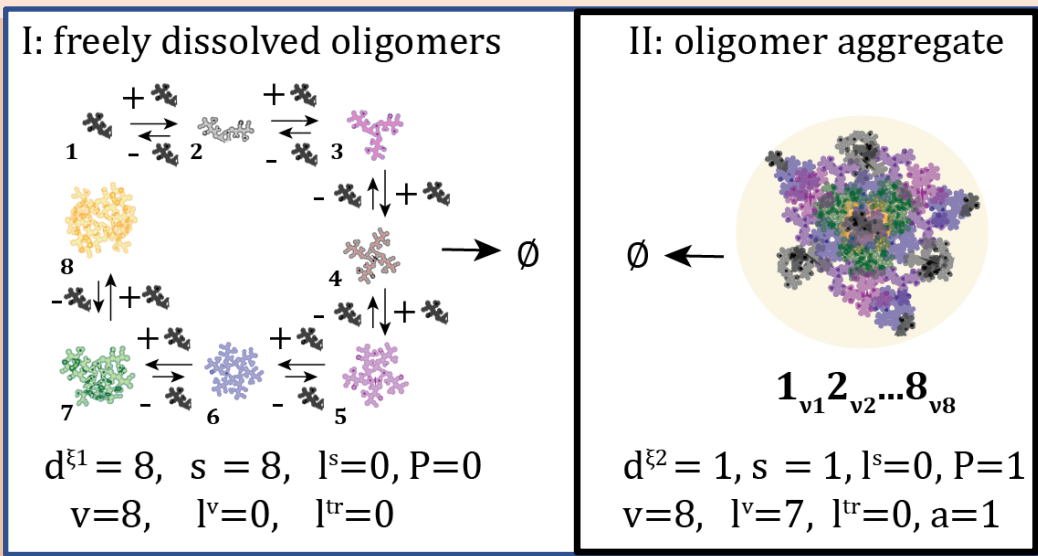
Local isomer equilibria

Fast equilibria + chemostats
(e.g. due to phase separation)

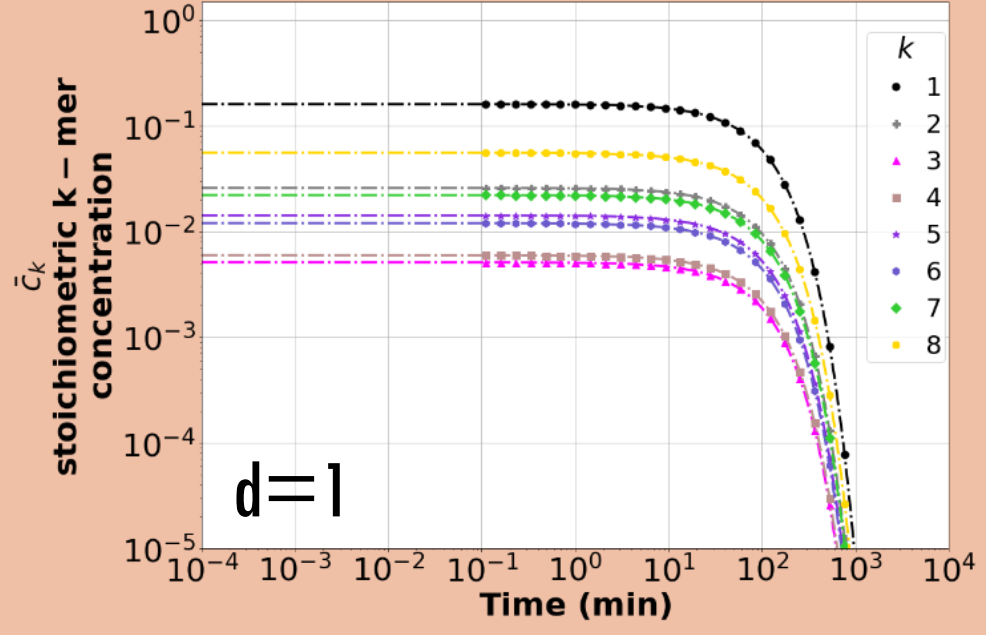
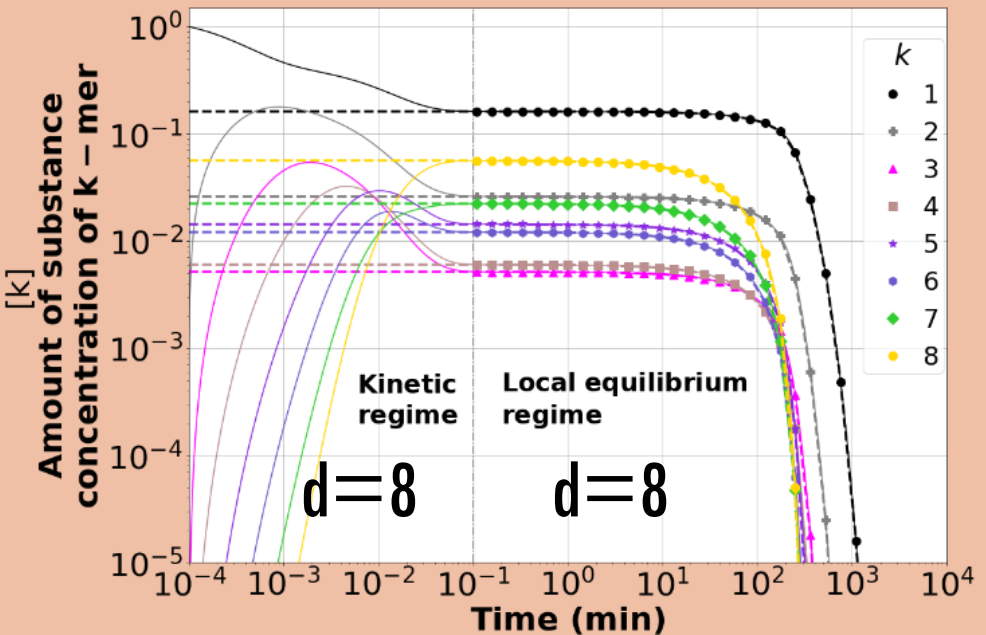
Dramatic dimension reduction with nanoscopic phase separation



Dramatic dimension reduction with nanoscopic phase separation

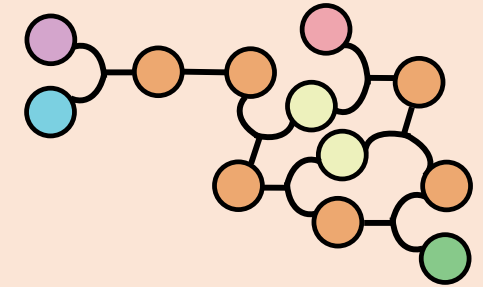
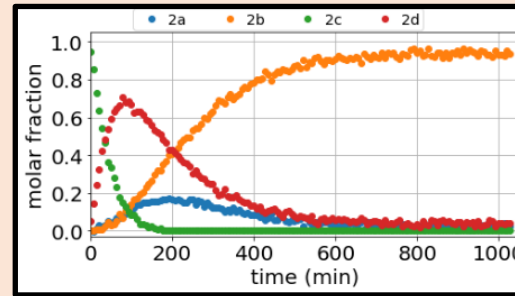
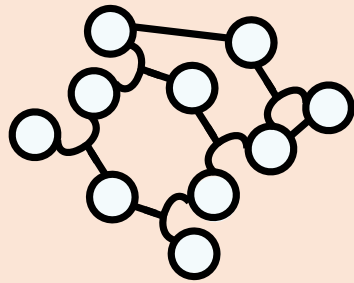


In dynamic combinatorial chemistry, one oftentimes observes very low-dimensional data ($d=1,2$) in spite of there being many species that can be isolated (e.g. by HPLC-MS)

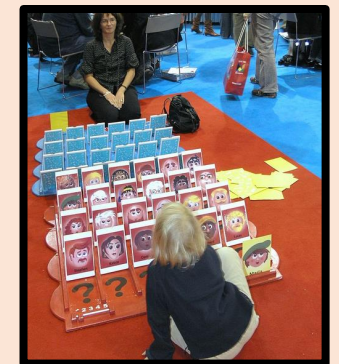
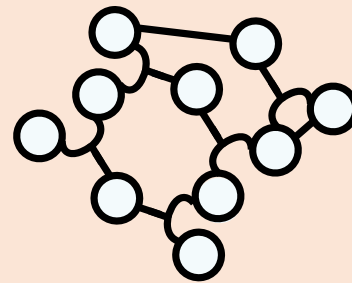
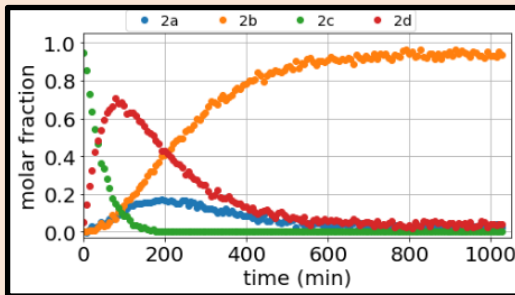


Chemical reaction networks, two problems

I) How does the structure of a CRN relate to what it can and cannot do?



II) How do I know what CRN I'm looking at*?



Thank you



Ottolab



Martijn van Kuppeveld



Hermanslab



Robert Pollice



Daan van de Weem