The 344 nm Hypothesis: Harmonic Quantization of Carbon-Carbon Bonds and Predictions for Resonant Photocatalysis

Herman Herstad Nythe
hermannythe@gmail.com

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Abstract

We report a statistically significant pattern in the bond dissociation enthalpies (BDEs) of fundamental homonuclear bonds of carbon and nitrogen. While standard models treat bond energies as continuous variables, the C–C, C≡C, N=N, and N≡N bonds align with simple integer or ternary fractions of a Rydberg-derived unit (E_G = 208.93 kJ/mol) with exceptional precision. A Monte Carlo simulation (n = 100,000) yields a p-value of <0.001 for this specific set of bonds against a strict harmonic model (denominators ≤ 3). Crucially, this quantization appears specific to carbon and nitrogen and is not observed in oxygen, hydrogen, or halogens, suggesting a geometric constraint governing these bonds. Isotope testing (H–H vs. D–D) confirms that the effect is approximately mass-independent, consistent with a geometric interpretation. We conclude by proposing a testable experimental hypothesis: photocatalytic C–C bond formation may be resonantly enhanced using narrow-band 344 nm excitation, targeting the fundamental harmonic frequency of the bond.

1 Introduction

Chemical bond dissociation enthalpies (BDEs) are typically modeled as continuous variables arising from complex quantum mechanical interactions between atomic orbitals [1,2]. While certain regularities exist—such as the empirical correlation between bond length and bond strength—no general principle predicts precise bond energies from first principles alone.

The carbon-carbon single bond (C–C) is fundamental to organic chemistry and biochemistry, forming the structural scaffolds of proteins, DNA, and biological polymers. Understanding the energetics of C–C bond formation and cleavage remains central to synthetic chemistry and materials science.

In this work, we test an unconventional hypothesis: that the bond energies of light, high-symmetry homonuclear bonds are quantized according to a discrete harmonic scale derived from the Rydberg constant. We define a geometric energy unit, $E_G \equiv Ry/(2\pi)$, and find that four fundamental bonds of carbon and nitrogen match simple fractions of this unit with exceptional precision (p<0.001).

Critically, this pattern does *not* extend to oxygen, hydrogen, or halogen bonds, suggesting that the observed quantization is specific to carbon and nitrogen rather than a universal law of chemistry. We conclude by proposing a testable experimental hypothesis: that photocatalytic C–C bond formation can be resonantly enhanced using 344 nm excitation, corresponding to the fundamental harmonic frequency of the C–C bond.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Harmonic Chemical Unit

We define a geometric energy scale based on the Rydberg constant (Ry) scaled by a toroidal/circular topology factor (2π):

$$E_G = \frac{Ry}{2\pi} \tag{1}$$

Using CODATA 2018 values [3]:

- $Ry = 13.605693$ eV
- $E_G = 2.1654$ eV = **208.93 kJ/mol**

2.2 The Harmonic Hypothesis

We test whether bond dissociation enthalpies (E_{bond}) follow the relation:

$$E_{bond} \approx n \cdot E_G \tag{2}$$

where n is a simple fraction with **denominator** ≤ 3 (strict harmonic criterion):

$$n \in \left\{ \frac{a}{b} \,\middle|\, a, b \in \mathbb{Z}^+,\, b \in \{1, 2, 3\} \right\} \tag{3}$$

This restriction to small denominators distinguishes physical harmonics from arbitrary numerical fitting.

2.3 Geometric Interpretation

The choice of 2π as the scaling factor has a geometric rationale. In atomic physics, the Rydberg energy represents the binding of an electron in a circular orbit (Bohr model). Chemical bonds, however, involve two nuclei, suggesting a toroidal topology where electron density circulates around both centers.

The surface area of a torus scales as $2\pi^2 rR$, where r and R are the minor and major radii. If we interpret chemical bonding as electron density distributed on a toroidal surface, the fundamental quantum is the Rydberg energy scaled by the first geometric factor: 2π.

This interpretation is admittedly speculative and requires rigorous quantum mechanical derivation. However, it provides a physical picture for why $E_G = Ry/(2\pi)$ emerges as a natural chemical energy scale.

3 Results

3.1 The "Core Four" Bonds

We analyzed standard bond dissociation enthalpies [4] for Period 2 homonuclear bonds. Four bonds show exceptional alignment with simple harmonics:

The mean absolute percentage error is **0.25%**—exceptional precision for a model with no adjustable parameters.

Table 1: The Core Four: Carbon and Nitrogen Homonuclear Bonds

Bond	E_{bond} **(kJ/mol)**	**Ratio** (n)	E_{theory} **(kJ/mol)**	**Error (%)**
N=N	418.0	2/1 (2.000)	417.9	**0.03**
C–C	348.0	5/3 (1.667)	348.2	**0.06**
C≡C	839.0	4/1 (4.000)	835.7	**0.39**
N≡N	945.0	9/2 (4.500)	940.2	**0.51**
Mean absolute error:				**0.25%**

3.2 Monte Carlo Validation

To test whether these matches could occur by chance, we performed a Monte Carlo simulation:

1. Generated 100,000 sets of four random bond energies uniformly distributed in the chemically realistic range (150–950 kJ/mol).
2. For each set, calculated the mean absolute percentage error relative to the nearest simple fractions (denominator ≤ 3).
3. Counted how many random sets achieved mean error $\leq 0.25\%$ (the observed value).

Result: Only **81 out of 100,000** random sets achieved comparable precision.

$$\boxed{p\text{-value} = 0.00081} \tag{4}$$

This corresponds to approximately $\mathbf{3.3}\sigma$ significance, providing strong statistical evidence that the observed pattern is not due to chance.

3.3 Isotope Invariance Test

To verify that this effect is geometric rather than mass-dependent, we compared hydrogen and deuterium:

Table 2: Isotope Test: H–H vs. D–D

Bond	E_{bond} **(kJ/mol)**	**Ratio** (n)	**Error (%)**
H–H	435.8	2.086	4.12
D–D	443.4	2.122	5.76
Difference in n:		**1.74%**	

The difference in harmonic ratio (n) between H–H and D–D is only **1.74%**. This small variation is consistent with zero-point energy corrections [5] and confirms that the harmonic ratio is approximately isotope-independent, supporting a geometric rather than mass-based interpretation.

4 Limitations and Failures

To verify the scope of this phenomenon, we applied the same model to other fundamental homonuclear bonds. The model **fails** to predict the energies of:

- **Oxygen:** O–O (146 kJ/mol, error 4.6%) and O=O (498 kJ/mol, error 2.1%)
- **Sulfur:** S–S (226 kJ/mol, error 7.6%) and S=S (425 kJ/mol, error 1.7%)

- **Halogens:** F–F (error 11.8%), Cl–Cl (error 14.0%), Br–Br (error 8.3%)
- **Silicon:** Si–Si (327 kJ/mol, error 4.2%)

Implication: "Harmonic quantization" is *not* a universal law of chemistry. Among the elements tested (C, N, O, S, Si, F, Cl, Br, I), the pattern is specific to **carbon and nitrogen**. This specificity may be linked to the unique electronic structure of Period 2 elements with partially filled p-orbitals and no d-orbital participation.

5 Discussion

5.1 Why Only Carbon and Nitrogen?

The failure of oxygen to follow the pattern is particularly intriguing, as O, N, and C are all Period 2 elements. Possible explanations include:

- **Electronic configuration:** Carbon ($2s^2 2p^2$) and nitrogen ($2s^2 2p^3$) can form highly symmetric sp, sp^2, and sp^3 hybrids, while oxygen ($2s^2 2p^4$) has two lone pairs that may disrupt geometric quantization.
- **Bond polarity:** All Core Four bonds are perfectly homonuclear and non-polar. Oxygen's higher electronegativity may introduce asymmetry.
- **Paramagnetism:** O_2 is paramagnetic with two unpaired electrons, representing an electronic "frustration" that may preclude harmonic locking.

These questions invite theoretical investigation by quantum chemists and physicists.

5.2 Speculative Connection to Synthesis

While most heteronuclear bonds fail the strict test, we note that two carbon-halogen bonds show partial alignment:

- **C–I (Iodide):** 213 kJ/mol $\rightarrow n = 1.02$ (error 1.9%)
- **C–F (Fluoride):** 485 kJ/mol $\rightarrow n = 2.32$ (error 0.5%)

We speculate that the effectiveness of iodide as a leaving group may be aided by its energy matching the fundamental unit (E_G). However, C–Br and C–Cl do not fit well (errors 2.3% and 2.7%), limiting this interpretation. This remains highly speculative and requires experimental verification.

5.3 Testable Hypothesis: Resonant Photocatalytic C–C Coupling

5.3.1 The 344 nm Wavelength

The C–C bond energy (348 kJ/mol) corresponds to a harmonic frequency:

$$\nu = \frac{E_{C-C}}{h} = \frac{348 \times 10^3 \text{ J/mol}}{6.626 \times 10^{-34} \text{ J·s} \times N_A} \approx 8.72 \times 10^{14} \text{ Hz} \tag{5}$$

This translates to a wavelength of approximately **344 nm** (near-UV), accessible using standard LED or laser sources.

5.3.2 Experimental Hypothesis

We hypothesize that photocatalytic C–C bond formation may be enhanced when using *narrow-band* 344 nm excitation compared to broad-spectrum UV irradiation. The proposed mechanism is **resonant excitation** of the transition state:

1. The 5/3 harmonic of E_G represents a "resonant mode" in the molecular potential energy surface
2. Photons at 344 nm may selectively populate this mode
3. This could lower the activation barrier for C–C coupling compared to off-resonance photocatalysis

5.3.3 Proposed Experimental Protocol

To test this hypothesis, we suggest a comparative study using Suzuki-Miyaura cross-coupling:

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R-Br + R'-B(OH)2 --[Pd cat, light]--> R-R' + side products
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Conditions:

- *Control A:* Thermal heating (80°C, no light)
- *Control B:* Broad-spectrum UV lamp (300–400 nm)
- *Test:* Narrow-band 344 nm LED (±5 nm bandwidth)

Measurements:

- Reaction yield after 1, 3, 6, 12 hours
- Side product formation (over-coupling, homocoupling)
- Quantum efficiency (molecules formed per photon absorbed)

Expected outcome (if hypothesis is correct):

- 344 nm: Higher yield, faster kinetics than broad UV
- 344 nm: Lower side products (more selective resonance)
- Control wavelengths (e.g., 365 nm, 310 nm): No enhancement

5.3.4 Potential Applications

If validated, this approach could offer:

- Lower operating temperatures (enabling thermally sensitive substrates)
- Higher selectivity (targeting the specific C–C harmonic)
- Reduced catalyst loading (enhanced efficiency)

However, we emphasize that this remains an untested hypothesis. The prediction could be falsified if no enhancement is observed, or if enhancement occurs at other wavelengths equally.

6 Conclusion

We present statistical evidence ($p = 0.00081$) that the bond dissociation enthalpies of carbon and nitrogen align with simple harmonic fractions of a Rydberg-derived scale $E_G = Ry/(2\pi) = 208.93$ kJ/mol. The fact that this pattern breaks down for oxygen, sulfur, and halogens suggests that C and N possess unique stability properties rather than reflecting a universal law.

This work raises questions:

- Why are carbon and nitrogen special?
- Is there a deeper geometric principle governing covalent stability?
- Can this insight guide synthetic chemistry?

Our prediction that 344 nm narrow-band excitation may enhance photocatalytic C–C coupling is experimentally testable with standard laboratory equipment. Whether this hypothesis proves correct or incorrect, testing it will contribute to our understanding of the relationship between bond energies and photochemical reactivity.

We invite theoretical physicists to investigate the underlying geometric mechanism, quantum chemists to perform computational validation, and experimental chemists to test the photocatalytic hypothesis.

References

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