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# *Ab-Initio* Surface Hopping and Multiphoton Ionisation Study of the Photodissociation Dynamics of CS<sub>2</sub>

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## Abstract

New *ab-initio* surface hopping simulations of the excited state dynamics of CS<sub>2</sub> including spin-orbit coupling are compared to new experimental measurements using a multiphoton ionisation probe in a photoelectron spectroscopy experiment. The calculations highlight the importance of the triplet states even in the very early time dynamics of the dissociation process and allow us to unravel the signatures in the experimental spectrum, linking the observed changes to both electronic and nuclear degrees of freedom within the molecule.

*Keywords:* Photodissociation, Photoelectron spectroscopy, Theoretical Chemistry, Non-adiabatic dynamics

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## 1. Introduction

2 The dissociation dynamics of CS<sub>2</sub> following UV excitation have been  
3 a benchmark in chemical dynamics for many years, with numerous exper-  
4 imental studies in both the time and frequency domain, see for example  
5 [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]. This lasting fascination with CS<sub>2</sub> can be traced  
6 to the efficient dissociation, dictated by complex dynamics on multiple cou-  
7 pled electronic states. Despite intense experimental study, the fast dynamics

8 and the high ionisation limits of intermediates and final products have lim-  
9 ited the experimental view to specific points along the full dissociation path,  
10 such that open questions remain even for this structurally simple molecule.  
11 The origin of the complexity derives from the near degeneracy of the opti-  
12 cally bright  ${}^1\text{B}_2({}^1\Sigma_u^+)$  state with multiple other electronic states at linear  
13 geometry, which leads to highly efficient population transfer and strongly  
14 coupled multistate dynamics. The mixing of the electronic states leads to  
15 dissociation and the formation of a ground state CS ( $\text{X } {}^1\Sigma^+$ ) molecule in  
16 conjunction with atomic sulphur in either the spin forbidden ground state,  
17  ${}^3\text{P}$ , or a spin allowed excited state,  ${}^1\text{D}$ . While the exact branching ratio has  
18 proven difficult to define accurately, the spin forbidden product is seen to  
19 dominate in most experimental studies [11, 2, 12], highlighting the impor-  
20 tance of spin-orbit coupling for an accurate description. Considering how well  
21 studied this molecule has been experimentally, calculations of the dynamics  
22 have been limited with, as far as we are aware, no simulations accounting for  
23 the spin-orbit coupling that drives the dominant dissociation process. In this  
24 work we combine *ab-initio* surface hopping simulations of the dissociation  
25 dynamics of  $\text{CS}_2$  with new photoelectron spectroscopy measurements using  
26 a multiphoton probe to study the effect of spin-orbit coupling on the early  
27 time dynamics of the molecule.

28 Previous dynamics calculations have focused on the singlet state dynamics  
29 and the effect of non-adiabatic coupling on measured photoelectron angular  
30 distributions obtained following excitation at 201 nm and ionisation with 268  
31 nm[13]. These calculations provide a very good measure of the photoangular  
32 distribution, which they claim suggests that the lack of spin-orbit coupling  
33 in the model does not affect the calculated early time dynamics. It should be  
34 noted that the rather low energy probe used in the experiment means that  
35 only the singlet states could be ionised and that any effect of the triplet in  
36 the angular distributions would not be observable. The measurements and  
37 theory therefore do not take into account the population transfer between  
38 the initially excited singlet manifold and the accessible triplet states. This  
39 point is highlighted by recent time-resolved VUV photoelectron spectroscopy  
40 experiments by Spesyvtsev *et al.* [4] using a 20 fs 159 nm (7.8 eV) probe  
41 pulse. These experiments provide the most detailed maps of the excited  
42 state dynamics to date, and show large changes in electron kinetic energy as  
43 the molecule undergoes bending vibrations with an almost 3 eV shift in the  
44 measured electron kinetic energy in 40 fs. The probed dynamics occur on the  
45 singlet surfaces and, as the molecule continues to vibrate, the population is

46 transferred into lower lying electronic states which are outside the observation  
 47 window provided even by their VUV probe.

## 48 2. Theory

### 49 2.1. Computational methods

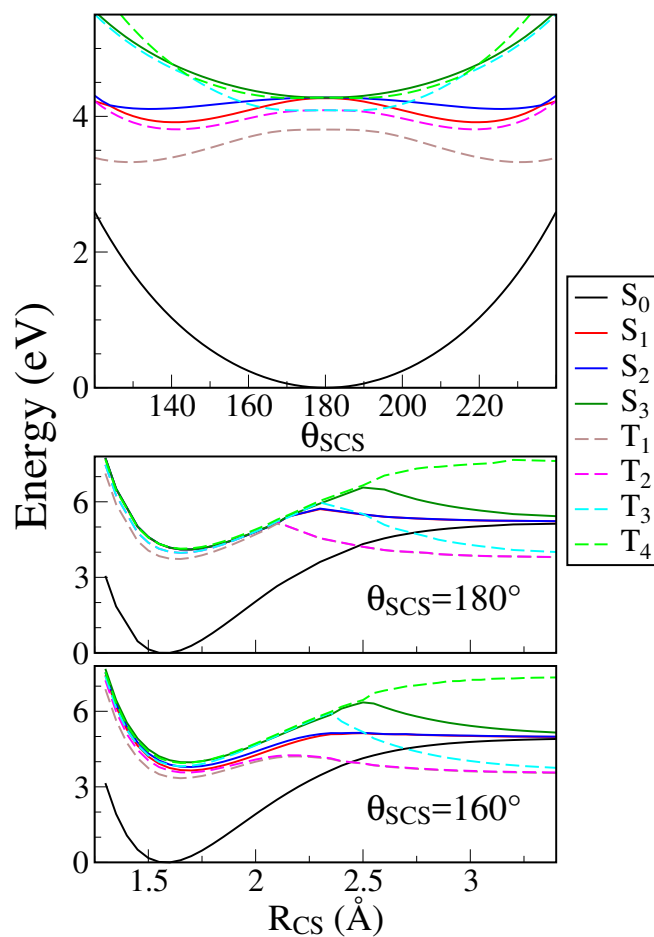


Figure 1: Bending  $\theta_{\text{SCS}}$  (top), and radial asymmetric stretch  $R_{\text{CS}}$  for linear  $\theta_{\text{SCS}}=180^\circ$  (middle) and bent  $\theta_{\text{SCS}}=160^\circ$  (bottom), potential energy curves calculated at the SA8-CAS(16,12)/aug-cc-pvTZ level for the first four singlet and triplet states of CS<sub>2</sub>. Remaining degrees of freedom are frozen at their equilibrium values.

50 *Ab-initio* electronic structure calculations were performed using the Mol-  
 51 pro 2015.1 [14] suite of programs at the CAS(16,12)/aug-cc-pvTZ and aug-

52 cc-pvQZ level of theory using the full valence (16,12) active space with bond-  
 53 ing and antibonding  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  molecular orbitals and sulfur atom lone pairs.  
 54 Ground state geometry optimisation using CAS(16,12)/aug-cc-pvQZ resulted  
 55 in  $R_{\text{CS}}=1.569 \text{ \AA}$  and  $\theta_{\text{SCS}}=0^\circ$ . Angular and radial cuts through the singlet  
 56 and triplet potential energy surfaces are shown in Fig. 1, and vertical excita-  
 57 tion energies and oscillator strengths for the first four excited singlet states  
 58 are given in Table 1. The potential energy curves in Fig. 1 are broadly in  
 59 keeping with previous *ab-initio* calculations [15, 16, 17, 18, 19].

Table 1: Vertical excitation energies ( $\Delta E = E(S_i) - E(S_0)$ ) and oscillator strengths from the ground state to the first four excited singlet states of  $\text{CS}_2$ , calculated using SA5-CAS(16,12)-SCF/aug-cc-pvQZ with CASPT2 corrections to the energies. The excitation energies are calculated at the equilibrium geometry ( $\theta_{\text{SCS}}=180^\circ$  and  $R_{\text{CS}}=1.569 \text{ \AA}$ ), while oscillator strengths are calculated at  $\theta_{\text{SCS}}=160^\circ$  since transition are very weak in the linear geometry.

State	Energy (eV)	Oscillator strength
S <sub>1</sub>	3.821	0
S <sub>2</sub>	3.836	0.004282
S <sub>3</sub>	3.836	0
S <sub>4</sub>	6.430	0.000834

60 We simulate the dynamics of photoexcited  $\text{CS}_2$  using the code SHARC  
 61 [20, 21] interfaced with MOLPRO [14]. SHARC treats nuclear motion clas-  
 62 sically, but nonadiabatic effects and spin-orbit coupling [22] are included  
 63 using the fewest-switches surface-hopping approach [23]. In contrast to pre-  
 64 vious singlet-only simulations [13], we propagate the dynamics on the four  
 65 lowest singlet *and* triplet electronic states. To keep the simulations compu-  
 66 tationally feasible, we perform the electronic structure calculations at the  
 67 SA8-CAS(8,6)-SCF/6-31+G\* level, which reproduces the potential energy  
 68 curves shown in Fig. 1 qualitatively. Initial positions are generated from a  
 69 Wigner distribution based on the CAS(8,6)/6-31G\* ground state vibrational  
 70 frequencies and the oscillator strength of each geometry, and kinetic energy is  
 71 assigned based on the required excitation energy and the experimental pump  
 72 pulse energy. Following this protocol, 85% of trajectories begin in the  $B \ ^1\text{B}_2$   
 73 state. A total of 369 trajectories are launched, of which 197 reach 500 fs and  
 74 114 reach 1000 fs, using a time step of 0.5 fs.

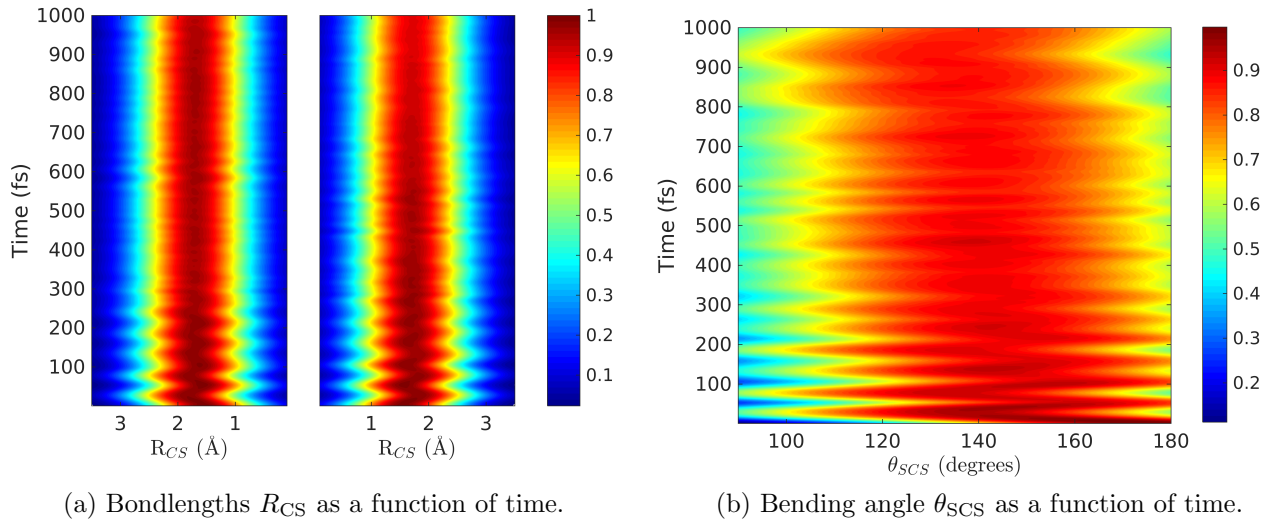


Figure 2: Probability density evolution of the  $CS_2$  geometry in terms of the two bondlengths  $R_{CS}$  (Fig. 2a) and bending angle  $\theta_{SCS}$  (Fig. 2b) from the simulations.

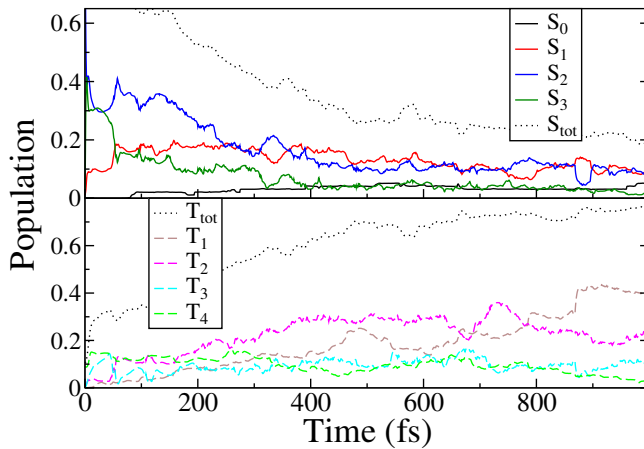


Figure 3: Time-dependent adiabatic state populations from simulation of  $CS_2$  dynamics. The upper panel shows the populations of the singlet states and the lower panel shows the corresponding triplet state populations. The total singlet population excluding the  $S_0$  ground state is shown in the upper panel ( $S_{tot}=0.9$  at  $t=0$ ), and the total triplet population is shown in the lower panel ( $T_{tot}=0.1$  at  $t=0$ ).

75 *2.2. Computational results*

76 Excitation of  $CS_2$  triggers bending and vibrational motion in the molecule,  
 77 as can be seen in Fig. 2, which shows the probability density evolution of the

78 molecular geometry as a function of the C-S bond-lengths,  $R_{CS}$ , and the  
79 bending angle,  $\theta_{SCS}$ . During the first 100 fs the vibrations are dominated  
80 by the symmetric stretch, but at later times energy flows into the asym-  
81 metric stretch. The frequencies of vibrations are somewhat over-estimated  
82 compared to the experimental values, presumably due to slight differences  
83 in the *ab-initio* potential energy surfaces at the CAS(8,6) level. The total  
84 fraction of dissociated molecules in the full set of 369 trajectories is 22%,  
85 which constitutes a lower bound since only about a quarter of the trajecto-  
86 ries reach 1000 fs. Dissociation occurs predominantly in the triplet states,  
87 with 89% of the trajectories that dissociate occurring on the triplet surfaces.  
88 The lower degree of dissociation compared to the experiments can be traced  
89 to the topology of the potential energy surfaces at the level of *ab-initio* theory  
90 employed in the simulations, as discussed below.

91 The electronic state populations as a function of time are shown in Fig.  
92 3. Initial excitation onto the  $S_2$   $^1B_2(^1\Sigma_u^+)$  state is followed by rapid decay  
93 onto the singlet  $S_3$  and  $S_1$  potentials, as well as a redistribution of population  
94 onto the manifold of triplet states via spin-orbit coupling. The nonadiabatic  
95 transfer of population between the singlet states correlates strongly with  
96 the bending motion of the molecule, with efficient transfer predominantly  
97 occurring close to the linear geometry where states are (near)-degenerate.  
98 This gives rise to a rather periodic beating in both the individual singlet  
99 state populations, and in the total singlet population. Over time there is a  
100 build-up of population in  $T_2$  at  $t > 400$  fs, and a subsequent rise of population  
101 in  $T_1$  at around  $t > 800$  fs, due to population transfer from  $T_2$  to  $T_1$ . The  
102 build-up in  $T_1$  appears to be an artifact due to the SA8-CAS(8,6)-SCF/6-  
103 31+G\* *ab-initio* calculations, which increases the relative barrier height for  
104 dissociation on the  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  potentials by  $\approx 1.5$  eV, hindering dissociation  
105 and leading to the observed accumulation of population in  $T_2$ . Consequently,  
106 it is reasonable to assume that the population trapped in  $T_2$  in actual fact  
107 dissociates as observed in the experiment. Nevertheless, despite that the  
108 simulations underestimate the amount of  $t < 1$  ps dissociation via the triplet  
109 states, the short-time  $t < 400$  fs dynamics appears quite reliable.

### 110 3. Experiment

#### 111 3.1. Experimental methods

112 The experiment has been described in detail previously [24]. Briefly, an  
113 amplified femtosecond laser system (Red Dragon, KM Labs) generates 30 fs

114 pulses of 800 nm light, with a pulse energy of up to 10 mJ at a repetition  
115 rate of 1 kHz. The pump pulse is produced via fourth harmonic generation of  
116 the fundamental (800 nm) beam, generating photons at around 200 nm. The  
117 200 nm beam is produced using standard non-linear optics with sequential  
118 second, third and fourth harmonic generation in BBO giving a pulse energy  
119 of  $\sim 1 \mu\text{J}$ . The 400 nm probe is generated by second harmonic generation of  
120 the fundamental laser output, producing approximately  $5 \mu\text{J}$  per pulse. The  
121 pump and probe beams are reflection focused in a near collinear geometry  
122 and cross at the centre of the interaction region of a velocity-map imaging  
123 (VMI) spectrometer [25], where they intersect the  $\text{CS}_2$  molecular beam. The  
124 pump and probe beams are both linearly polarised in the plane of the VMI  
125 detector, perpendicular to the time-of-flight axis. The molecular beam is  
126 generated through the expansion of 5%  $\text{CS}_2$  in He at 1 bar through a 1 kHz  
127 pulsed nozzle (Amsterdam cantilever [26]) with a  $100 \mu\text{m}$  aperture. The re-  
128 sulting expansion passes through a 1 mm skimmer and enters the interaction  
129 region of the spectrometer through a hole in the centre of the repeller plate  
130 of the VMI spectrometer. The photoelectron spectra are obtained through  
131 polar onion-peeling of the background subtracted images [27]. Although the  
132 photoelectron angular distributions are obtained, they show no time depen-  
133 dence and as such are not discussed in the results section.

### 134 3.2. *Experimental results*

135 The 200 nm pump excites a vibrational wavepacket, predominantly in the  
136  $\text{S}_2$   $^1\text{B}_2$  excited electronic state. The motion is then probed by non-resonant  
137 two-photon absorption at 400 nm. This provides a total energy of 12.5 eV,  
138 with the ionisation potential of  $\text{CS}_2$  at 10.07 eV. The photoelectron signal  
139 obtained when the pump and probe pulse are overlapped in time is plotted  
140 in Fig. 4(a) with three main features around 2.1 eV, 1.4 eV and 0.9 eV  
141 electron kinetic energy. The spacing between the features is similar to that  
142 seen in previous single-photon ionisation measurements [1, 5]. The use of  
143 a multiphoton probe maintains a clean experimental measurement, without  
144 any probe-pump contributions at early times, while maximising the available  
145 energy for ionisation, such that we can observe much of the initial excited  
146 state dynamics.

147 The time-dependence of the photoelectron spectrum is shown in Fig. 4(b).  
148 The three peaks in the spectrum have different appearance times, with those  
149 at lower electron kinetic energy appearing after those at higher electron ki-  
150 netic energy. The low-energy feature rises approximately 35 fs after the high-



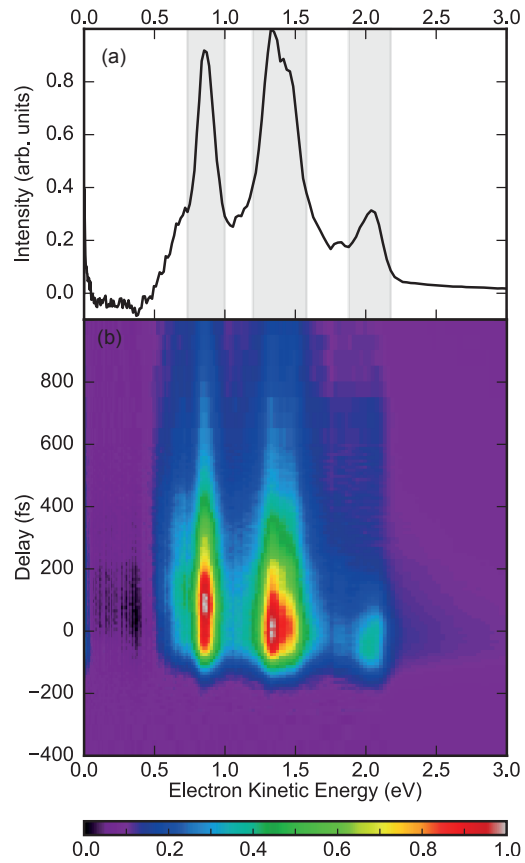


Figure 4: (a) Photoelectron spectrum obtained when the pump and probe pulses are temporally overlapped. The highlighted regions mark those used in the integrated plots shown in figure 5. (b) Photoelectron spectra as a function of pump-probe delay.

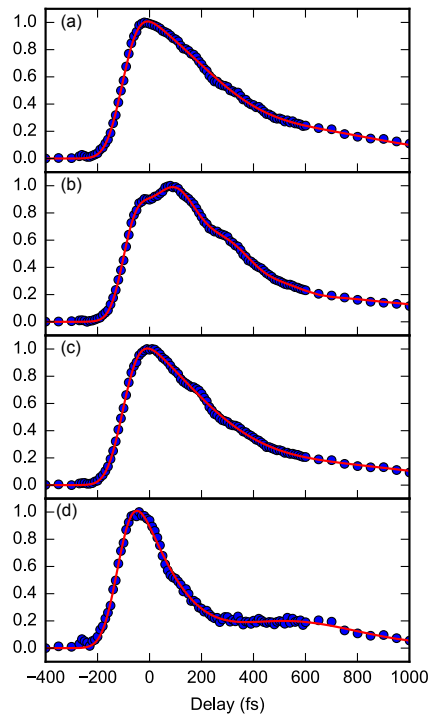


Figure 5: Total integrated photoelectron intensity (a) and intensity within the shaded areas shown in Fig. 4; 0.75 - 1.00 eV (b), 1.20 - 1.60 eV (C) and 1.90 - 2.20 eV (d). Solid lines represent fits to the data. (a,c,d) were fit with a single exponential decay, modulated by a single damped oscillator and convoluted with the instrument response function. However, a second oscillation with a period  $\sim 200$  fs is clearly visible in the data. The data in (b) was fit with two damped oscillating components, which reproduce both observed oscillatory features well.

151 est energy feature at 2.1 eV. This maps the initial bending motion as seen  
 152 in the calculated dynamics, Fig. 2b, and in previous measurements [4]. At  
 153 longer delay times it is also clear that the centre of mass of the photoelectron  
 154 spectrum shifts to lower electron kinetic energies, such that the lifetime of  
 155 the measured photoelectron features is longer at lower electron kinetic ener-  
 156 gies. To obtain a clearer view of the changes observed at the various electron  
 157 kinetic energies measured, we plot the integrated intensity over the features  
 158 highlighted in Fig. 4(a) in Fig. 5. The difference in lifetime is apparent in the  
 159 plots, as well as the appearance of clear oscillations in intensity that peak at  
 160 times after time zero. The effect of the oscillations is most prominent in the  
 161 feature centered around 0.9 eV, Fig. 5(b), which has a maximum intensity  
 162  $\sim 200$  fs after excitation. None of the transients can therefore be fit to a  
 163 simple exponential decay, but are modulated by at least one oscillating com-  
 164 ponent. We therefore fit the transients to an exponential decay modulated  
 165 by either one or two damped oscillations, convoluted with the instrument  
 166 response function, corresponding to the laser pulse cross-correlation [28],

$$g \otimes \left( A_0 \exp\left(-\frac{t-t_0}{\tau}\right) \times \prod^n A_n \cos(\omega_n(t-t_0) + \delta_n) \right). \quad (1)$$

167 Here  $A_n$  represent intensity scaling parameters,  $t_0$  the arrival time of the  
 168 laser pulse,  $\tau$  the exponential lifetime and  $\omega$  and  $\delta$  the angular frequency and  
 169 phase of the oscillatory component. Fits are plotted as solid lines in Fig.  
 170 5. The highest energy feature, Fig. 5(d), provides the clearest data set and  
 171 contains a single oscillation of period  $\sim 0.9$  ps,  $38 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , as has previously been  
 172 experimentally observed [9, 10]. This corresponds to the beat between the  
 173  $\nu_1$  and  $\nu_2$  vibrational modes [8]. This is present in each of the other features  
 174 in the spectrum, along with a second beat with a period around 200 fs.  
 175 The effect of this oscillation is clearest in the trace presented in Fig. 5(b),  
 176 however the mixing with the other oscillation and relatively low contrast  
 177 makes assigning the absolute value of this oscillation difficult, leading to  
 178 significant error margins. Nonetheless we extract an oscillation period of  
 179 220 fs, corresponding to  $149 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , from this data. While this oscillation  
 180 period does not fit with any of the known vibrational periods of the molecule,  
 181 similar frequencies were also observed in a previous study [4] but were not  
 182 discussed or assigned. The fits to the experimental data furthermore yield  
 183 an increase in lifetime towards the lower electron kinetic energy regions. The  
 184  $1/e$  lifetimes extracted are 401 fs, 457 fs and 451 fs for the peaks at 2.1 eV,

185 1.4 eV and 0.9 eV respectively.

## 186 4. Discussion

187 We now provide a comparison of the experimental measurements and the  
188 theoretical calculations. For both the calculations and experiment it is clear  
189 that the triplet states play a large role in the dynamics from very early times.  
190 Significant population is transferred into the triplet states very rapidly with  
191 over 50% of the total population in the triplet states within 250 fs. The overall  
192 transfer of population approximately matches the decay rate measured in the  
193 experiment such that we are only sensitive to the singlet state population.  
194 As mentioned above the initial shift in the measured electron kinetic energy  
195 maps the initial bending motion of the molecule. As the pump-probe delay  
196 increases, the electron kinetic energy shifts towards lower values, such that  
197 we observe a longer lifetime for the lower electron kinetic energy regions in  
198 the spectrum in Fig. 5. To compare the measured signal to theory, in Fig.  
199 6 we plot the singlet state component of Fig. 2. Initial excitation leads to a  
200 wavepacket that oscillates between linear geometries and an angle of  $\sim 110^\circ$ .  
201 With increasing pump-probe delay, the range of angles explored narrows and  
202 moves away from the linear geometries associated with the spectral feature  
203 at the highest electron kinetic energy. Within the current experiment we do  
204 not have the time resolution to fully resolve the bending motion, but we do  
205 observe the effect of the narrowing and shifting of the angles explored by the  
206 molecule as a corresponding narrowing and shifting to lower electron kinetic  
207 energies in the photoelectron spectrum.

208 As mentioned above, the short time period oscillation seen both in the  
209 total photoelectron count rate and, in individual regions of the photoelectron  
210 spectrum (Fig. 5), do not match any vibrational periods within the molecule.  
211 The simulations also show no obvious changes in the molecular structure that  
212 appear to provide an explanation for the oscillations. The calculations do  
213 show periodic changes in total singlet excited state population that correlate  
214 with the observed changes the photoelectron yield. We therefore tentatively  
215 assign the oscillations in the experimental spectrum to changes in the total  
216 singlet state population.

## 217 5. Summary

218 We have performed a combined theory and experiment study of the ex-  
219 cited state dynamics of  $\text{CS}_2$ . The ab-initio surface-hopping simulations high-

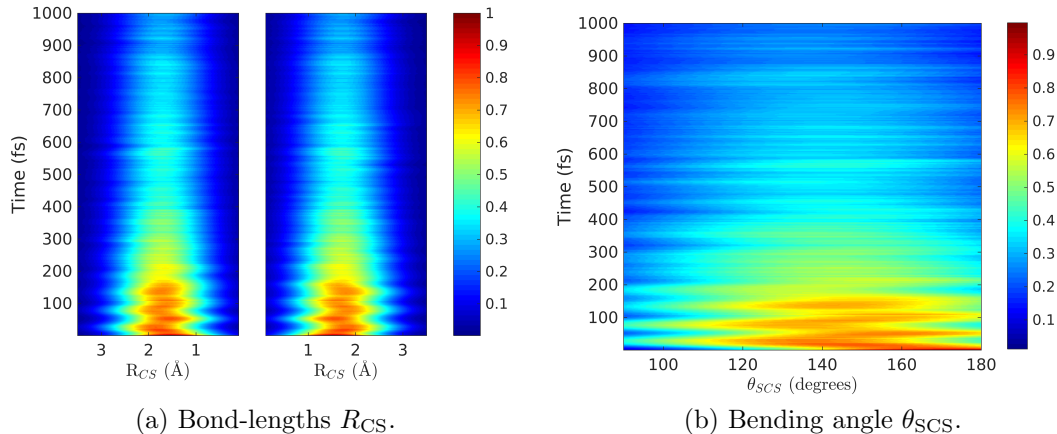


Figure 6: Probability density evolution of the CS<sub>2</sub> geometry in terms of the two bond-lengths  $R_{CS}$  and bending angle  $\theta_{SCS}$  in the singlet states only. The intensity bar shows the total population with the decreasing intensity showing the transfer of population into the triplet states.

220 light the importance of the triplet states in the early time dynamics with  
 221 significant population transfer predicted, and observed in the complemen-  
 222 tary time-resolved photoelectron spectroscopy measurements. The combined  
 223 work demonstrates that one can now do on-the-fly dynamics including spin-  
 224 orbit coupling. The accuracy of the calculation is such that we are able  
 225 to directly compare the results of the calculation with experiment and ex-  
 226 plain the shifting and narrowing of the photoelectron spectrum in terms  
 227 of the bending motion and angles explored by the vibrational wavepacket,  
 228 while oscillation in the measured photoelectron count rate are explained by  
 229 the complex coupling of the electronic states that leads to rapid population  
 230 transfer between manifolds of multiple singlet and triplet excited states.

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