SOME THOUGHTS ON THE BAKER-NATHAN ORDER*+

ERNST BERLINER

Department of Chemistry. Rryn Mawr Collcgc. Bryn Mawr. Pa.

Abstract --The present status of the Baker-Nathan order is discussed in terms of current interpretations. On the basis of the large amount of available experimental data, it is suggested that hyper**conjugation of carbon-hydrogen bonds provides the most consistent and satisfactory explanation of** this effect.

THE least controversial statement that can be made about the Baker-Nathan order¹ **is that it is an experimentally observed order of reactivity, which places a series of alkylated benzene derivatives in a sequence which suggests electron release from the** alkyl groups to be $Me > Et > Pr^t > Bu^t$, and therefore in a sequence opposite to that of the general inductive effect ($Bu' > Pr' > Et > Me$). This means that in a reaction **which is favored by electron accession, a p-methyl compound will react faster than a prerr.-butyl compound, while in a reaction involving a nucleophilic attack in the rate**determining step, a p-tert.-butyl compound will react faster than a para-methyl **compound. The concept of the greater electron release of a methyl group than that of higher alkyl groups was originally postulated as an hypothesis in order to explain certain experimental facts.' and later became part of the hyperconjugation concept. The situation is similar today, except that, irrespective of explanation, a much larger and more consistent body of experimental data has accumulated, showing the Baker-Nathan phenomenon, than was the case over 20 years ago.**

When the concept was postulated in 1935, there were actually very few cases known **where clear-cut reactivity orders had been observed, orders that placed the four alkylatcd benzene derivatives in a monotonously changing sequence. Since then. many reactions have been examined where this is the case. However, one must recognize at the outset, and be resigned to it, that, in experiments with alkylated benzene dcrivativcs. rate differences are usually cxtremcly small and therefore the need for exact work is great. Ncverthelcss. many cases of clear-cut orders have been reported, in which the rate diffcrenccs are beyond stated experimental errors and a;c experimentally rcliablc. Whether or not these small rate differences mean anything in terms of the problem of the relation of structure to reactivity is perhaps another question. For the present discussion this question is answered in the affirmative. because the consistency of the large body of data now available is sufficiently great and striking to justify an explanation. It is also true that. in spite of some very careful experimental work, activation energies and entropies rarely show sufficiently dislincttivc difierenccs among the various compounds to be of help in interpreting the data. however much desirable a knowledge of these quantities would be. and by necessity.**

[•] Electronic Effects of Alkyl Groups- X.

t Some of the ideas expressed here have been discussed in a previous publication. See E. Berliner and M. M. Chen, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 80, 343 (1958).

¹ J. W. Baker and W. S. Nathan, *J. Chem. Soc.* 1844 (1935); J. W. Baker, *Hyperconjugation.* **Oxford Umvcrsity Press, Oxford (1952).**

one has to rely on rate differences. A justification of this has been given in other cases.^{2, 3}

Even though acccptcd by most chemists, the concept of hyperconjugation as an explanation for the Baker-.Nathan order has never been accepted by all. There arc probably several reasons for this scepticism. One has perhaps arisen because in the valence bond description—in which the concept was first conceived—hyperconjuga**tion or "no-bond" resonance structures constitute too much of a departure from views based on classical structural organic chemistry. Another reason is undoubtedly the very small experimental rate differences on which the concept is based (although rate differences showing the generally accepted inductive effect arc usually not larger). Moreover, some reactions show either order of apparent electron release. depending on conditions. or no clear-cut order at all. And finally, the sccpticism is not lessened** by the case with which practically every case of a Baker–Nathan order can be ac**counted for by other means.**

It is therefore not surprising that instead of hypcrconjugation other explanations have from time to time been suggested to account for the Baker-Nathan order.^{4, 5, 4, 7} These alternate explanations usually endeavor to maintain the inductive effect (or the inductive order⁵) as the only,^{$6, 7$} or the most important, mechanism (or order) by which **alkyl groups release electrons. and ascribe the experimentally observed Baker-Nathan order to stcric cffccts of one kind or other, which are assumed to reverse the normal inductive order and lead to the reactivity sequence** $Me > Bu^t$ **. The present discussion will exclude those auxiliary concepts which have been added to modify the hypcrconjugation explanation. but not to replace it, such as. for instance, stcric inhibition of hypcrconjugation due to lack of proper orbital overlap.8 or solvent cnhance**ment of hyperconjugation,⁹ because these concepts implicitly acknowledge the operation **of hypcrconjugation effects. Also, various suggestions which have been made for** single special cases, such as relief of steric strain in *meta*-alkyl groups,¹⁰ or buttressing **cffccts by mera-alkyl groups," will not be considered. Unanswered will also remain the** question if, on theoretical grounds, a methyl group, with three x-hydrogen atoms. **should be more favorable to hypcrconjugation than an ethyl group with only two but** with one x-methyl group, and the latter more than a *tert*.-butyl group with no x**hydrogen atoms but with three a-carbon.carbon bonds. This notion, on which the original hypothesis was based, does not appear to have been worked out by the molecular orbital method, in which no distinction was made between hypcrconjuga** tion involving carbon-hydrogen or carbon-carbon bonds.¹² There are, however, ² C. K. Ingold, *Structure and Mechanism in Organic Chemistry*, Chapter 6. Cornell University

- Press, Ithaca, New York (1953).
- ³ M. J. S. Dewar and R. J. Sampson, *J. Chem. Soc.* 2789 (1956).
- **'** C. C. Price and D. C. Lincoln, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 73, 5836 (1951); C. C. Price and W. J. Belanger
Ibid. 76, 2682 (1954).
- W. A. Sweeney and W. M. Schubert, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 76, 4625 (1954); W. M. Schubert and W. Amer. Chem. Soc. 79, 910 (1957); W. M. Schubert and J. Robins, *Ibid. 80*, 559 (1958).
* A. Burawoy and E. Spinner, J. Chem. Soc. 3752 (1954).
² A. Burawoy and E. Spinner, J. Chem. Soc. 2085 (1955); E. Spinner, *Ibid.* 1590 (1
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- M. Gordon, J. Chem. Soc. 2190 (1952); R. T. Arnold and W. L. Truett, J. Amer. Chem. Soc. 73,
5508 (1951); V. J. Shiner, Jr., *Ibid.* 78, 2653 (1956).
⁹ V. J. Shiner, Jr., *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 76, 1603 (1954); V. J. Shin
- 79, 373 (1957).
- ¹⁰ M. S. Newman and E. K. Fasterbrook, *J. Amer. Chem. Suc. 7*7, 3763 (1955).
- *I*¹ R. A. Benkeser, R. A. Hickner and D. I. Hoke, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 80, 2279 (1958).
- ¹⁸ R. S. Mulliken, C. A. Rieke and W. G. Brown, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 63, 41 (1941).

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various indications, taken from rate and equilibrium data.13 that a rerr.-butyl group is capable of a resonance effect, in addition to its inductive effect, and that both carbonhydrogen and carbon-carbon hyperconjugation play a role, but that the former is **more important than the latter, and that their contributions might be in a constant ratio. Quantitative correlations between the structure of alkyl groups and their reactivitics have been uncovered on this assumption."**

In earlier years certain cases of reactivity were ascribed to the Baker-Nathan effect, where it could easily be shown that the rate differences must actually be due to steric **influences. For instance. substitution or/ho to the methyl group by various electrophilic reagents in p-rerr.-butyltolucnc was ascribed to the greater electron releasing** effect of the methyl group alone,¹ but an inspection of the partial rate factors for ortho substitution easily reveals that the orientation in these cases is predominantly **influenced by the stcric hindrance** *orrho* **to the large rerf.-butyl group.* The more recent alternate explanations for the Baker-Nathan order which deserve the most serious consideration. because they are in themselves reasonable and have analogies in many reactions not pertaining to hyperconjugation. are those that ascribe the ob**served decrease in rate on going from a methyl to a *tert*.-butyl group to some sort of **inhibition of solvation by the larger alkyl groups. One ascribes the decrease in rate on going from methyl to ferr.-butyl to a "bulk effect" on solvent stabilization of a polar transition state. even by remote alkyd substituents which prevent solvent dipoles** from proper orientation.⁴ This explanation was used to account for the relative reacti**vities in the alkaline hydrolysis of ethyl p-alkylbenzoatcs in aqueous acctonc, which** follows an inductive order (i.e., a methyl compound reacts faster than a *tert*.-butyl **compound bccausc of a rate-determining nuclcophilic attack) and, as expected for this effect, it was considered significant that the effect was greater for alkyl groups in the** *meta* **position, which is closer to the reaction site. A similar decrease in rate on increasing the size of suhstitucnts was also found in other ester hydrolyses, and the suggested explanation may well be of importance in these cases. (It is indicative of the perplexities one encounters on working with alkylatcd compounds-although not pertinent to the particular point under discussion that the alkaline hydrolysis of the** same ethyl *p*-alkylbenzoates in aqueous ethanol follows a hyperconjugation order.¹⁵) The other alternate explanation⁵ postulates that the decrease in rate of a more highly **branched alkylatcd benzene derivative is due to inhibition of solvation by alkyl groups of electron deficient centers. which develop in the transition state on the aromatic ring. at or near the alkyl groups, for instance in the solvolysis of p-alkyl**benzhydryl halides.¹⁶ This view was developed on the basis of the spectral behavior **of alkylated compounds and various physical measurements on static molcculcs.** where usually the inductive order is observed. Since a *tert*.-butyl group would have a **greater "bulk effect" and also inhibit the solvation of the aromatic ring at, or near, the carbon atom to which it is attached more** than the smaller methyl group, the observed reactivity order Me '.. **But** can be accounted for.

¹³ (a) E. Berliner and F. J. Bondhus, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 70, 854 (1948); P. D. Bartlett, *J. Chem. Educ.* **30.22 (1953); (h) C. A. Vernon,J. C'hrm. Sot. 423** *(IY54); (c)* **H. C. Brown, J. D. Brady, M. Grayson**

and W. H. Bonner, J. Amer. Chem. Soc. 79, 1897 (1957).
¹⁴ R. W. Taft, Jr. and I. C. Lewis, in press. I am indebted to Professor Taft for the personal communication prior to publication. See *Tetrahedron* 5, 210 (1959).

ib E. Berliner, M. C. Beckett, E. A. Blommers and B. Newman, J. Amer. Chem. Soc. 74, 4940 (1952); C. W. L. Bevan, E. D. Hughes and C. K. Ingold, *Nature, Lond.* 171, 301 (1953). However, see R. L. Herbst and M. E. Jacox, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 74, 3004 (1952).
¹⁶ E. D. Hughes, C. K. Ingold and N. A. Taher, *J. Chem. S*

Either explanation is reasonable in itself, and these factors may be important. There is also no single clear-cut experiment by which these explanations can be shown to be either superior or inferior to that based on hypcrconjugation. But while such steric factors may be important, it is the present contention that they do not satisfactorily account for all of the facts and are not decisive, and it is only when the large body of accumulated material is considered that a more consistent picture obtains on the hyperconjugation hypothesis. Such data are collected in Table I. This table is not complete. nor is it meant to be. Some of the older literature data have been omitted, and only illustrative material has been collected which will fit into the three listed categories.

On first sight one is impressed by the consistency of the data, which was not the case when the concept was first formulated. First of all. in all cases of electrophilic substitution in the para **position for which exact data arc available, a Baker-Nathan** order is obtained. (Nos. 1-4). The only exception is nitration (No. 21), while rate **constants for hydrogen dcuterium exchange in the para positions are the same within experimental errors." A Baker-Nathan order is obtained for bromination by molccular bromine or by positive bromine, for bcnzoylation in nitrobenzcne or in benzoyl chloride, as well as in the brominolysis and protonolysis of the trimethylsilyl group** (Nos. 6 and 7). It is very likely also true for molecular chlorination,¹⁸ for iodinecatalyzed bromination¹⁹ and for mercuration,²⁰ although not all the necessary data arc **available for an exact comparison. It is also the case for various solvolytic reactions of the Ssl or limiting case (Nos. g-l I). such as the solvolysis of benzyl halides. benzhydryl halides and cuminyl halides in various solvent mixtures. and for some Ss2 reactions on bcnzyl halides (Nos. I2 14). in which the spread in reactivity is less. as anticipated. Included arc also solvolyscs of acetylenic and allylic halides (Nos. I5 and 16) which. although not aromatic, constitute systems where an analogous behavior might be cxpectcd. Finally, some equilibrium constants which show the Baker Nathan pattern are also listed (Nos. I9 and 20). It is therefore no longer true that the Baker-Nathan order is sometimes exhibited in electron demanding processes in aromatic systems, but it would be much more justified to say that the Baker-Nathan order is rarely not exhibited in such processes.**

Because of the rate sequence $p-Me > p-Bu^t$, these are the reactions to which the **alternate explanations apply. Two further observations are worth noting in this connection. One is that these reactions were conducted in a variety of solvents. but no systematic change in reactivity pattern is discernible. The other is that, while the ratio of methyl to Ierr.-butyl reactivitics is not the same in the direct substitution reactions, these ratios are not due to a different behavior of the alkyl groups in the different reactions, but to the different susceptibility of each reaction to the electron demand of the substituting agents, i.e.. to different rho values. This conclusion is based on the remarkably constant behavior of the methyl group in a great variety of** substitution reactions, as shown by the excellent quantitative correlation of *para* and

seems to be also true for *para* propylation. See F. E. Condon, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 70, 2265 (1948).
¹⁸ P. B. D. de la Mare and P. W. Robertson, *J. Chem. Soc.* 279 (1943). According to a private communication from Dr Nathan order for *para* and the inductive order for *meta* chlorination. I am indebted to Dr. de la

¹⁷ E. L. Mackor, P. J. Smit and J. H. Van Der Waals, *Trans. Faraday Soc.* 53, 1309 (1957). This

Mare for this information. See also *Tetrahedron* 5, 107 (1959).
¹⁹ E. Berliner and F. J. Bondhus, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 68, 2355 (1946); also in ref. 13.
²⁰ H. C. Brown and C. W. McGary, Jr., *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 77,

• R in this reaction means H, Me or Bu'.

TABLE 1A. SOME REACTIONS SHOWING THE BAKER-NATHAN ORDER OF ELECTRON RELEASE (Me > Bu')

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R. of N-benzylpyridinium ions with EtO⁻ (ethanol)
R. of 2-nitrobromobenzenes with piperidine (piperidine)
R. of 2, 6-dinitrochlorobenzenes with EtO⁻ (ethanol)

meta partial rate factors,²¹ and on the good fit of the methyl and *tert*.-butyl groups in the $p\sigma$ relationship.²² To put it differently, in reactions in which a large resonance **effect** *of* **substituents is called for, the two alkyl groups behave just like many other substitucnts for which the linear free energy relationship holds.**

There are some reactions. notably two solvolytic reactions (Nos. 9 and IO). where alkyl groups in the *meta* **position also show the Baker .Nathan order. It has been reasoned elsewhere²³ that if this decrease. m-Me** \therefore **m-Bu', were owing to solvation hindrance, a greater spacing bctwccn the two groups should bc obtained, because they are closer to the reaction center. Actually, the spacing of the two groups is considerably closer than for the same two groups in the pare position. A Baker-Nathan order from the** *meta* **position, however, is an exception, and it is of consider**able importance that, in practically all cases of electrophilic substitution, *meta-alkyl* groups follow the inductive pattern, i.e., a *m-tert*.-butyl compound reacts faster than **a m-methyl compound (Table In). This is eminently reasonable when the restriction is recalled that resonance cffccts are transmitted preferentially through the** *orrho/paru* **positions, but as a rule not through the** *metu* **position, some exceptions not withstanding. The mera-alkyl groups thercforc affect rates and equilibria mainly through** their inductive effects.²⁴ It is difficult to see how the usually greater reactivity of the *m-tert.*-butyl than the *meta*-methyl compound can be accommodated with the solvation **views, bccausc the mern-alkyl groups arc closer to the reaction sites, and also any** solvation of the ring must be more inhibited by the larger alkyl group. This is what the alternate theories demand, yet in almost all cases the *m-tert*.-butyl compound reacts faster. On the solvation view, one could, of course, say that the *meta-alkyl* groups behave quite normally and their effects need no explanation; but that would not do, **because specific solvent cffccts would be expected to have at least the same influence** with *meta-* as with *para-alkyl groups.* Practically the only way to get around this **difficulty (which does not arise if electronic effects are used as the explanation) is to** postulate that, when alkyl groups are attached to the *meta* position, the demand for **solvation of the transition state is less.**

There is a third category of reactions which is well accounted for on the hyperconjugation hypothesis. but less so by steric factors. These arc reactions which follow a Baker-Nathan order of electron release. but which, because of a nucleophilic rafcdetermining attack, result in the reactivity order H :- Bu¹ :- Me (Table Ic). Here **belong various basic hydrolyses of alkylbenroates. aromatic nucleophilic displacc**ments and some others. In these reactions, too, a *tert*.-butyl compound reacts faster **than a methyl compound. Furthermore. the concept of steric resistance to bond contraction, advanced to account specifically for the Baker--Nathan order in reactions** going through an electron-deficient transition state.^{6, 7} does not seem to offer an ex**planation for these reactions.**

The consistency of the data is persuasive and lends support to hyperconjugation **as the explanation of the observed rcactivitics. With the various steric effccrs one cannot easily explain why a rerr.-butyl compound should ever react faster than a methyl compound. These altcrnatc suggestions can be maintained only if additional hypotheses arc made about varying solvation demands. which essentially amounts to**

²¹ H. C. Brown and F. R. Jensen, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* **80**, 2296 (1958).

²² H. C. Brown and Y. Okamoto, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 79, 1913 (1957). See also ref. 21.
²³ E. Berliner and M. M. Chen, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 80, 343 (1958).
²⁴ See, for instance, N. N. Lichtin and P. D. Bartlett, *J.*

the new hypothesis that, in those reactions in which a *tert*.-butyl compound reacts faster than a methyl compound, rate decreasing solvation factors arc not decisive. or that they arc only decisive where a Baker-Nathan order is observed. It seems at the moment more satisfactory to account for the behavior of alkyl groups in terms of the two electronic effects, although it is very likely that solvation factors arc also of some importance.

There are many things that are not yet fully explained by hyperconjugation as it pertains to the Baker-Nathan order and that need further investigation. Among these are the role of the solvent and solvation, ϵ ϵ solvation assistance,⁹ the stercochemical requirements of hyperconjugation,^{θ} the significance of the secondary isotope effects, $9.$ ²⁶ the relation between hyperconjugation and hydrogen participation,²⁶ the importance of carbon-carbon hyperconjugation,^{13, 14} and probably others. The situation is admittedly complex, because alkyl groups affect rates by three different clectromc mechanisms, carbon-hydrogen hypcrconjugation. carbon-carbon hyperconjugation and the inductive effect. the last two of which reinforce each other. In addition, various solvation and specific solvent effects, as well as stcric factors, must play some role. The difficulty is that one does not know quantitatively how important each of these factors is in determining the total behavior of an alkyl group, although encouraging attempts in this direction are being made. $27 \text{ In view of this complexity, it}$ is surprising how consistent, on the whole, the over-all picture is, and there is therefore justification in the statement that the predominant effects of alkyl groups on the benzene ring arc usually the hypcrconjugation and the inductive cffccts.

- ²⁴ V. J. Shiner, Jr., *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 75, 2925 (1953); E. S. Lewis and C. E. Boozer, *Ibid.* 76, 791 (1954); E. S. Lewis and G. M. Coppinger, *Ibid.* 76, 4495 (1954); C. G. Swain, T. E. C. Knee and **A. J. Kresge,** */hid. 79, 505 (1957);* **A. Strcitwxser, Jr., R. I(. Jagow. R. C. Fahcy and S. Suzuki** */hid. 80. 2326 (1958).*
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³⁹ C. Eaborn, *J. Chem. Soc.* 4858 (1956).
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⁴² E. Berliner, F. Berliner and I. Nelidow, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.* 76, 507 (1954)
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