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Matthew B. Pinson, Tingtao Zhou, Hamlin M. Jennings, Martin Z. Bazant

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# Inferring Pore Connectivity from Sorption Hysteresis in Multiscale Porous Media

Matthew B. Pinson<sup>a</sup>, Tingtao Zhou<sup>a</sup>, Hamlin M. Jennings<sup>b,1</sup>, Martin Z. Bazant<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

<sup>b</sup>*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

<sup>c</sup>*Department of Chemical Engineering and Mathematics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

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## Abstract

### *Hypothesis*

Vapor adsorption experiments are widely used to assess pore size distributions, but the large hysteresis sometimes observed between sorption and desorption isotherms remains difficult to interpret. Such hysteresis is influenced pore network connectivity, which has previously been modeled by percolation on infinite lattices. Our hypothesis is that percolation occurs instead through finite networks of micropores connecting accessible macropores, always exposed to the outside environment.

### *Theory*

We derive a general formula for sorption/desorption isotherms that introduces a simple measure of hierarchical pore connectivity – the fraction of always exposed pores. The model thus accounts for “small world” connections in finite-size percolation, while also incorporating other hysteresis mechanisms, in single-pore filling, liquid insertion into the solid matrix, and cavitation.

### *Findings*

Our formula is able to fit and interpret both primary and scanning sorption/desorption isotherms for a variety of adsorbates (noble gases, water,

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<sup>1</sup>Deceased in July 2015. R.I.P.

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