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# Multidimensional photon correlation spectroscopy of cavity polaritons

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**The strong coupling of atoms and molecules to radiation field modes in optical cavities creates dressed matter/field states known as polaritons with controllable dynamical and energy transfer properties. We propose a multidimensional optical spectroscopy technique for monitoring polariton dynamics. The response of a two-level atom to the time-dependent coupling to a single-cavity mode is monitored through time-and-frequency-resolved single-photon coincidence measurements of spontaneous emission. Polariton population and coherence dynamics and its variation with cavity photon number and controlled by gating parameters are predicted by solving the Jaynes–Cummings model.**

multidimensional spectroscopy | photon correlation | cavity polaritons

Cavity quantum electrodynamics (QED) provides a powerful tool for studying quantum effects in matter (1–6). Due to strong coupling between electronic and nuclear degrees of freedom, molecular systems can undergo nonadiabatic dynamics, which is hard to detect. The nonadiabatic dynamics can be manipulated (7) when a molecule is coupled to a localized cavity mode. Earlier studies in atomic systems showed that the cavity photons can enhance cooperative signals, such as super-radiance and subradiance (8, 9). The description of these phenomena is based on the joint photon–matter states known as polaritons (10, 11). Cavity polaritons have been applied to trapping and cooling of atoms (12) and prescribe a new recipe for cooling molecules (13, 14). Cavity effects can provide a tool to probe larger molecules (15, 16), where various many-body quantum effects play an important role. For instance, the polariton–polariton interaction strength can be directly probed in a high-quality microcavity (17). Strong coupling in cavity QED has been recently demonstrated for organic molecules (18–21) and photosynthetic light harvesting (22). Polaritons have been further investigated in chromophore aggregates (11) arising from electronic transitions (10) as well as from vibrational transitions (23), which in turn, allow the manipulation of chemical reaction rates and outcomes (24–27).

Cavity polariton dynamics can be investigated by nonlinear spectroscopy. IR and Raman spectroscopies have been recently used to show the enhancement of the spectra of vibrational polaritons in molecular aggregates (11, 28–31). More elaborate two-dimensional spectroscopic measurements have further provided experimental demonstration for multiexciton correlation effects (32). Coherent multidimensional spectroscopy can reveal correlations of matter dynamics during several time intervals controlled by sequences of short pulses to reveal material information (33, 34) by a coherent measurement of a signal optical field. Such correlation plots carry qualitatively higher levels of information than single-interval (1D) techniques. A recent theoretical study of vibrational polaritons using coherent 2D IR spectroscopy (35) has been reported.

In this paper, we propose to study polariton dynamics using a different class of incoherent multidimensional signals. Unlike coherent multidimensional techniques, which is based on carefully timed laser pulse sequences, incoherent techniques detect spontaneously emitted light, and the control knobs of such sig-

nals are based on single-photon gated detection. Time-and-frequency (TF)–gated  $N$ -photon measurement provides a  $2N$ -dimensional parameter  $\omega_j t_j$  space. An adequate microscopic description where joint matter and field information could be retrieved by a proper description of the detection process is required for, e.g., single-photon spectroscopy of single molecules (36–38). These photon counting techniques performed on bulk ensembles or at the single-molecule level offer unique windows into molecular events and relaxation processes that are complementary to coherent multidimensional techniques (34). The proposed incoherent photon coincidence counting measurements (5, 39) can monitor the joint system–cavity mode state as well as the cavity mode statistics. The independent control of the TF photon gating parameters can capture detailed features of polariton dynamics. We consider a two-level system strongly coupled to the quantized cavity modes. The strong coupling is attributed to the enhanced density of radiation states inside the cavity governed by the Purcell effect (1), which results in the strong enhancement of the photon emission into the cavity modes. The joint atom plus photon states (polaritons) can be described by the Jaynes–Cummings (JC) model (2), which is a pillar of quantum optics. In addition, strong coupling requires large absorption oscillator strength, narrow exciton absorption line width, and small cavity losses into leaky modes. It is, therefore, expected that dissipation does not affect the ladder dynamics. Furthermore, for typical molecular polaritons, the dynamics occurs on a picosecond timescale, whereas the cavity linewidth is usually in the nanosecond range. The quantum nature of the field has been shown to result in revival of damped Rabi oscillations,

## Significance

**We propose a spectroscopic technique that can track the time-dependent state of a dressed molecule in an optical cavity (polariton) by measuring coincidence of two emitted photons. The proposed technique offers an independent control of the spectral and temporal resolution; single-photon detection allows for low-intensity measurements, which do not disturb the state of the cavity field, and time-dependent atom/cavity coupling provides a control tool. Tracking the evolution of the polariton states with time-dependent atom/cavity coupling should be of interest in photochemistry and photobiology and could improve fundamental understanding of many physical processes in strongly coupled atom/radiation states. Possible applications include chemical sensors and quantum information processing.**

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(1, 3) is much greater than one, and the cavity leads to a strong enhancement of the atom's ability to emit photons into the cavity mode. Details are in *SI Text*. We use perturbation theory in  $H_{vac}$  and trace over the vacuum field. We shall calculate various photon counting signals by placing the detectors off the cavity axis. These signals are governed by multipoint correlation functions of the dipole operators, and the corresponding Green's functions are determined by an exact solution of the equation of motion governed by  $H_{JC}$  alone.

### Gated Photon Counting Signals

**Atomic Inversion.** We first present the atomic inversion (population difference of the two-level system)  $\langle \sigma_z(t) \rangle' = \langle \psi_0 | U(t) F_0 U^\dagger(t) | \psi_0 \rangle$  given in Eq. S51. Assuming that, initially, the atom is in the excited state ( $w_n = 1$ ,  $v_n = 0$ ) and the cavity mode in the vacuum state  $n = 0$ , the inversion

$$\langle \sigma_z(t) \rangle' = 1 - 2|\mathcal{F}_1(t)|^2 \quad [3]$$

undergoes oscillation between  $\pm 1$  as seen in Fig. 1.  $\mathcal{F}$  depends on the atom-field interaction time  $\tau$ . We note that, although initially, the cavity is empty (no photons), the atom will Rabi flip between the ground and excited states during the interaction time due to the fact that continuum of modes of the free space modes is replaced by a single cavity mode. This results in Rabi oscillations rather than dissipative spontaneous emission.

**Gated Photon Counting Signals.** In the following, we denote a general  $N$ th-order correlation measurement as photon counting. Gated photon number and gated photon coincidence correspond to  $g^{(1)}$  and  $g^{(2)}$  measurements, respectively, where each photon has its own detector. We thus calculated the gated photon number and photon coincidence signals using the formalism of ref. 48. TF-resolved photon number is detected by placing a sequence of temporal and spectral filters in front of the bucket photon detector, whereas the photon coincidence is detected by simultaneous monitoring of a pair of the gated photons, which is a single-photon version of the intensity-intensity correlation measurement. Assuming Lorentzian gating (Eq. S32), we obtain (for the TF-resolved photon number signal)

$$n(t, \omega) = \int_0^\infty dt'_1 \int_0^\infty dt''_1 D(\omega; t'_1, t''_1) \langle V^\dagger(t - t'_1) V(t - t''_1) \rangle'. \quad [4]$$

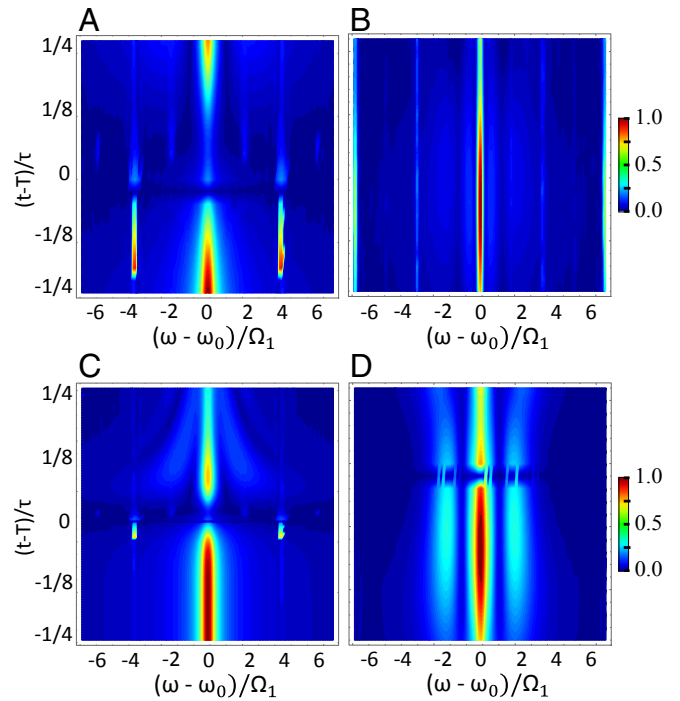
The coincidence counting signal is similarly given by

$$g^{(2)}(t_1, \omega_1; t_2, \omega_2) = \int_0^\infty dt'_1 \int_0^\infty dt''_1 \int_0^\infty dt'_2 \int_0^\infty dt''_2 \times D(\omega_1; t'_1, t''_1) D(\omega_2; t'_2, t''_2) \langle V^\dagger(t - t'_1) \times V^\dagger(t - t'_2) V(t - t'_2) V(t - t'_1) \rangle'. \quad [5]$$

For the TF gated signals  $D_{TF}(\omega, t', t'') = \theta(t'' - t') F_{\Gamma+}^*(t'', \omega) F_{\Gamma-}(t', \omega)$ , where exponential gate  $F_{\Gamma}(t', \omega) = e^{[i(\omega - \omega_0) - \Gamma]t'}$ . The gating bandwidth in  $D_{TF}$  is given by a combination of temporal and spectral gates  $\Gamma_{\pm} = \Gamma_T \pm \Gamma_{\omega}$ . Details of the derivation of the signals via matter correlation functions defined by Eqs. S45 and S48 are given in *SI Text*.

### Results and Discussion

Using Eqs. 4 and 5, we have simulated the photon number  $n$  and the photon coincidence rate  $g^{(2)}$ ; the time-dependent coupling profile given by Eq. 2 is shown in Fig. 1 for the parameters given in *Materials and Methods*. Fig. 2 depicts the time-frequency dependence of the TF gated photon number. Consider first a fast variation  $\tau$ , such that  $\Delta t \Delta \omega \simeq \tau 2\Omega_1 = 1$ , where  $2\Omega_1$  is



**Fig. 2.** (A and B) A 2D depiction of TF gated photon number  $n_{TF}(t, \omega)$  [S60] using the gating parameters  $\Gamma_{\omega} = 2\lambda_0$  and  $\Gamma_T = 2.5\lambda_0$  for the fast modulation with  $\tau^{-1} = 2.2\lambda_0$  (A) and  $\Gamma_{\omega} = 0.8\lambda_0$  and  $\Gamma_T = 0.95\lambda_0$  along with slow modulation  $\tau^{-1} = 0.6\lambda_0$  (B). (C and D) Same coupling duration as in A and B but for PS gated photon number  $n_{ps}(t, \omega)$  [S59] for gated bandwidths  $\Gamma_{ps} = 2\lambda_0$  (C) and  $\Gamma_{ps} = 0.8\lambda_0$  (D).

a spectral interval between neighboring lines of the first-order JC ladder (e.g., at  $\omega = \omega_0$  and  $\omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$ , where  $\Omega_n = \pi\alpha_n/4\tau$ ). The photon number signal shown in Fig. 2A now shows a dominant peak at  $\omega = \omega_0$  and two strong side peaks at  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 4\Omega_1$ , which evolve for the entire range of  $t$ . We also see weak peaks at  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$ . For a slow modulation  $\Delta t \Delta \omega = 3.7$  due to the extra time gate, the TF signal yields no time resolution and very weak side peaks at  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  as shown in Fig. 2B. The side peaks signify the coherence origin of the photon coming from the superposition of the dressed atom-cavity states, which can only be observed during the time modulation of the coupling.

The photon coincidence signals are shown in Fig. 3 A–D. For rapid coupling variation corresponding to Fig. 2A, the coincidence counting depicted in Fig. 3A contains side peaks at  $\omega_{1,2} = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$ ,  $\omega_0 \pm 4\Omega_1$ . These are well-resolved and form a grid similar to that reported by del Valle and coworkers (51–53). For gating times  $t_1 = T$ ,  $t_2 = T - 20\tau$ , the signal shows high spectral resolution with well-pronounced peaks at  $\omega_2 = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  and a single peak for  $\omega_1 = \omega_0$ . In addition, it contains peaks for  $\omega_1 = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  and  $\omega_0 \pm 4\Omega_1$  as depicted in Fig. 3B. At  $t_1 = T + 20\tau$ ,  $t_2 = T - 20\tau$ , Fig. 3C is similar to Fig. 3A. Finally, for  $t_1 = T + 20\tau$ ,  $t_2 = T$ , Fig. 3D shows a full grid of well-pronounced resonances with three prominent peaks for  $\omega_1 = \omega_0$ ,  $\omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  and  $\omega_2 = \omega_0$  and a set of weaker peaks for  $\omega_2 = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  and  $\omega_0 \pm 4\Omega_1$ .

We next compare the commonly used TF gated results of Figs. 2 A and B and 3 A–D with the simpler PS gating (50, 51), which uses the gating function  $D_{PS}(\omega; t', t'') = F_{\Gamma_{ps}}^*(t'', \omega) F_{\Gamma_{ps}}(t', \omega)$ . The PS photon number signal (4) shown in Fig. 2C has a single dominant peak at  $\omega = \omega_0$  and two very weak peaks at  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 4\Omega_1$  visible only at  $t \simeq T$ . This is due to the limited resolution allowed by the model ( $\Delta t \Delta \omega = 2$ ). Higher-order resonances at  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 2\Omega_1$  and  $\omega = \omega_0 \pm 6\Omega_1$  are not resolved by this gate. For the slow process





molecular coherences (due to intermolecular coupling), simultaneous TF gating allows us to distinguish signals originated from polariton coherences and populations as follows from Fig. 3.

In summary, we have demonstrated how multidimensional photon counting can be used to reveal polariton dynamics in a cavity. The TF gated photon number and photon coincidence detection can capture subtle time-evolving features, such as dressed JC ladder polariton states and their correlations via cross-peaks in the 2D photon coincidence spectra. Note that, in the strong dissipation limit, the oscillations shown in Fig. 1 and contributing to the polariton dynamics would be significantly damped. This means that, for systems with the dynamics of the timescale similar to the cavity damping rate, one has to take into account the cavity leakage when evaluating the signals. Recent experiments in light harvesting molecules placed in a microcavity (22) observe large amounts of scattering into the microcavity system; however, the observed damping is not strong enough to destroy the strong coupling. The technique described in this paper can be useful for laser stabilization, where the cavity photon distribution and gain medium dynamics are monitored simultaneously. In this scenario, cavity photon statistics acts as an input into the polariton configuration captured by the photon counting signals, which consequently monitors the stability of the cavity radiation. The time-dependent coupling offers a versatile coherent control tool. Similarly to the pulse shaping technique used in ordinary spectroscopy, one can optimize the coupling temporal profile in a generic algorithm setup to optimize the control. To implement this control scheme, one has to match the coupling duration and profile to the timescale of the nuclear motion. In addition to the suppression of the dephasing and changing of the dynamical rates that are observed in the systems with the stationary cavity coupling, time-dependent coupling provides a unique control mechanism for tracking the polariton–polariton and other many-body correlation effects via optimizing the corresponding coherences visualized as the cross-peaks in 2D spectra in photon coincidence signals.

## Materials and Methods

The Hamiltonian [1] can be recast as  $H = H_0 + H_i$ , where  $H_0 = \omega(\Delta)$  and  $\Delta = n + \frac{1+\sigma_z}{2}$  is the field energy function given by Eq. S2, while  $H_i = \delta(\Delta)\sigma_z + \lambda(t)(A_+\sigma_- + A_-\sigma_+)$ , and the  $\delta(\Delta)$  is given by Eq. S3. For the one-photon JC ladder,  $\omega(\Delta) = (\Delta - 1/2)\omega$  and  $\delta(\Delta) = \delta/2$ , where  $\delta = \omega_0 - \omega$ . A more general  $m$ -photon JC ladder, which can be used for describing multiphoton processes, is presented in *SI Text*. The subspace in which  $n$ , the eigenvalue of  $\Delta$ , satisfies for  $n \neq 0$  the special unitary group of the second degree [SU(2)] symmetry of  $\Delta$ . In many molecular polariton applications that involve, for example, nonadiabatic dynamics, the inclusion of the counterrotating terms is required, which results in band-diagonal structure of the Hamiltonian. While purely analytic, a solution without the rotating wave approximation is possible only in certain cases (56), and the problem can be treated in Fock space to allow for a numerically exact solution (57). The time evolution operator may be recast as  $U(t) = e^{-i\omega(\Delta)t} U_i(t)$ , where  $U_i(t)$  is the evolution operator corresponding to  $H_i$ . Using the SU(2) algebra and the Wei–Norman formalism (42, 58, 59), we can recast the evolution operator in the form  $U_i(t) = e^{h(t)F_0} e^{g(t)F_+} e^{f(t)F_-}$ , where  $F_{\pm} = \pm A_{\mp} \sigma_{\pm} / \sqrt{\Delta}$ ,  $F_0 = \sigma_z$ , and  $f(t)$ ,  $g(t)$ , and  $h(t)$  are generally complex functions, such that  $x^*(t) = -x(t)$ ,  $x = f, g, h$ . Introducing  $\mathcal{G}(t) = g(t)e^{h(t)}$ ,  $\mathcal{F}(t) = f(t)e^{-h(t)}$ , and  $\mathcal{H}(t) = e^{-h(t)}$  using unitary condition, we obtain  $\mathcal{G}(t) = \mathcal{F}^*(t)$ . For simplicity

in the following, we assume that the atom is driven on resonance, such that  $\delta = 0$ . The functions  $X = \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{H}$  satisfy the differential equation:

$$\ddot{X} - \frac{\dot{\lambda}}{\lambda} \dot{X} + 4(n+1)\lambda^2 X = 0. \quad [6]$$

The initial conditions for  $\mathcal{F}, \mathcal{H}$  are  $\mathcal{H}(t_0) = 1$ ,  $\dot{\mathcal{H}}(t_0) = 0$ ,  $\mathcal{F}(t_0) = 0$ , and  $\dot{\mathcal{F}}(t_0) = i\sqrt{n+1}\lambda(t_0) = -i\alpha/(2\tau)$ , where  $\alpha = 2\lambda_0\tau\sqrt{n+1}$ . Normalization implies  $|\mathcal{H}(t)|^2 + |\mathcal{F}(t)|^2 = 1$ . Eq. 6 can be solved analytically for the sech function coupling  $\lambda(t)$ . Changing the variable to  $z(t) = e^{(t-t_0)/\tau} / [1 + e^{(t-t_0)/\tau}]$ , we obtain a hypergeometric equation with  $\beta = -\alpha = 1/2$ . The solution of Eq. 6 subject to initial conditions above is given by a simplified hypergeometric function

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{H}(z) &= \cosh \left[ 2\alpha \log \left( \frac{\sqrt{z} + \sqrt{z-1}}{\sqrt{z_0} + \sqrt{z_0-1}} \right) \right], \\ \mathcal{F}(z) &= \sinh \left[ 2\alpha \log \left( \frac{\sqrt{z} + \sqrt{z-1}}{\sqrt{z_0} + \sqrt{z_0-1}} \right) \right], \end{aligned} \quad [7]$$

where  $z_0 \equiv z(t_0)$ .

The matter correlation functions in Eqs. 4 and 5 are traced over the noncavity modes. Assuming initial wave function  $|\psi_0\rangle = \sum_n [w_n |n, \uparrow\rangle + v_n |n, \downarrow\rangle]$ , where the coefficients  $w_n$  ( $v_n$ ) represent the probability amplitude of the atom to be in the excited (ground) state, the field is in a Fock state with  $n$  quanta. These amplitudes satisfy the normalization  $\sum_n (|w_n|^2 + |v_n|^2) = 1$ . The atomic inversion  $\langle \sigma_z(t) \rangle$  has been calculated previously (41) and is given by Eq. S51.

To get the photon counting signal, we have calculated two-point [4] and four-point [5] correlation functions:

$$\langle V^\dagger(t_1)V(t_2) \rangle' = |\mu|^2 e^{-i\omega_0(t_1-t_2)} \sum_n G_{in}^*(t_1) G_{pn}(t_1, t_2) G_{in}(t_2), \quad [8]$$

$$\begin{aligned} \langle V^\dagger(t_1)V^\dagger(t_2)V(t_3)V(t_4) \rangle' &= |\mu|^4 e^{-i\omega_0(t_1+t_2-t_3-t_4)} \sum_n G_{in}^*(t_1) G_{cn}^*(t_2, t_1) \\ &\times G_{pn}(t_2, t_3) G_{cn}(t_3, t_4) G_{in}(t_4), \end{aligned} \quad [9]$$

where the “initial state” Green’s function  $G_i$ , “coherence”  $G_c$ , and “population”  $G_p$  Green’s functions are defined, respectively, as

$$\begin{aligned} G_{in}(t) &= w_n \mathcal{H}_{n+1}(t) - v_{n+1} \mathcal{F}_{n+1}^*(t), \\ G_{cn}(t_i, t_j) &= \mathcal{H}_{n+1}(t_i) \mathcal{F}_{n+1}^*(t_j) - \mathcal{F}_{n+1}^*(t_i) \mathcal{H}_{n+1}(t_j), \\ G_{pn}(t_i, t_j) &= \mathcal{H}_{n+1}^*(t_i) \mathcal{H}_{n+1}(t_j) + \mathcal{F}_{n+1}(t_i) \mathcal{F}_{n+1}^*(t_j). \end{aligned} \quad [10]$$

Making use of the closed form expressions [7], we have made use of Eqs. 8–10 to calculate the gated emission [4] and the coincidence counting [5]. Note that Eqs. 8–10 reduce to the simple Rabi oscillations  $\cos(\Omega t)$  in the  $\tau \rightarrow 0$  limit given by Eqs. S57 and S58, respectively. Additional details are summarized in *SI Text*.

The simulations shown in Figs. 1–3 use typical parameters related to vibrational spectroscopy: vibrational frequency  $\omega_0 = 12600 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , coupling modulation  $\lambda_0 = 100 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , and centered at  $T = 111.5 \text{ ps}$ . The coupling timescale in Figs. 1 and 3 is  $\tau = 150 \text{ fs}$ .

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