

Recent Advances on Diaryliodonium-Based Monocomponent Photoinitiating Systems

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Abstract

Iodonium salts are historical cationic photoinitiators extensively used for the polymerization of epoxides or vinyl ethers. As drawback, the absorption of iodonium salts is strongly UV-centered so that this UV photoinitiator can only operate in the visible range by mean of a photosensitization process. With aim at simplifying the composition of the photopolymerizable resins, numerous chromophores have been covalently linked to the iodonium salts, enabling to design monocomponent photoinitiating systems. In this review, an overview of the different dyes that have been connected to iodonium salts is provided.

Keywords

Photoinitiator; visible light; photopolymerization; LED; iodonium salt; natural compound; monocomponent system

1. Introduction

During the past decades, photopolymerization has witnessed intense research efforts, supported by the ever-growing demand for photopolymers.[1] Nowadays, photopolymerization is used in research fields such as 3D and 4D printing, adhesives, coatings and varnishes, solvent-free paints, microelectronics or dentistry.[2–15] Historically, photopolymerization was developed with photoinitiating systems activable in the UV range. Nowadays, this approach is discarded in favour of visible light photopolymerization that exhibits numerous advantages compared to UV photopolymerization. Notably, UV light is well-known to be responsible of skin cancers and eye damages.[16,17] UV irradiation setups are also costly and energy-consuming devices. Considering the current energy sobriety drive numerous European countries are currently facing, alternatives to UV irradiation setups must be found. Interest for alternative technologies is also supported by the different rules imposed by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) Minamata Convention on Mercury from 2013 that has totally banned Hg lamps as light sources. Since 2020, Hg lamps are even no longer allowed to be manufactured, imported or exported. To overcome these drawbacks, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) have emerged as new light sources exhibiting different advantages such as compactness, long operating lifetime, low cost, and precise emission

wavelength. Nowadays, LEDs emitting from the UV range up to the near-infrared region are commercially available. Benefiting from these new light sources, visible light photopolymerization has emerged as a promising strategy to elaborate photopolymers. Another key parameter to efficiently promote a polymerization process is the light penetration inside the resins. As shown in the Figure 1, the light penetration that can be achieved in the visible range varies between a few millimeters up to a few centimeters in the near-infrared range. [18] With aim at elaborating composites, the significant light penetration that can be achieved at 800 nm thus enables to polymerize resins containing fillers but also thick samples.[19] Polymerization of such photocomposites is almost impossible with UV light.

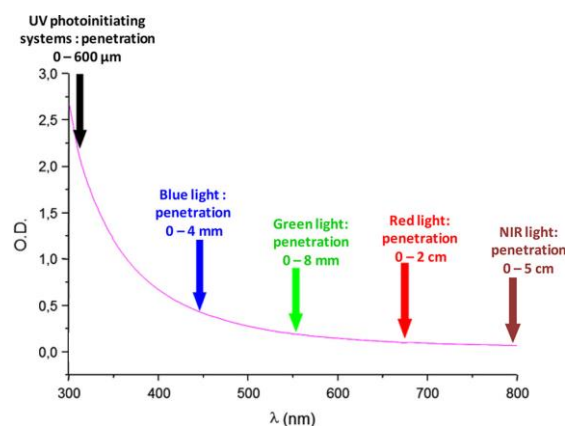


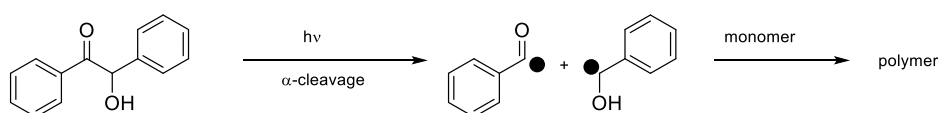
Figure 1. Light penetration in a polystyrene latex with an average diameter of 112 nm.

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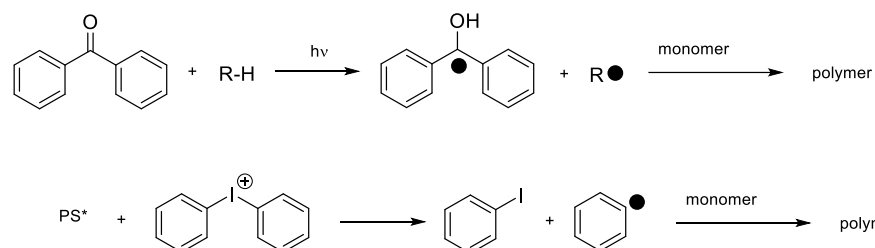
However, contrarily to UV photons that are highly energetic, the situation differs for visible light photons that are clearly less energetic. To address this issue, more reactive photoinitiating systems have thus to be designed. Over the years, various structures have been examined in order to design visible light photoinitiating systems and cyclohexanones,[20–23] cyanines,[24–30] iodonium salts,[31–41] naphthoquinones,[42–44] naphthalimides,[32,45–63] benzylidene ketones,[64–71] acridine-1,8-diones,[72–74] bodipy,[31,75–79] chalcones,[10,80–96] iridium complexes, [97–105] chromones and flavones,[106–108] carbazoles,[109–124] benzophenones,[125–132] furan derivatives,[133] copper complexes,[134–151] glyoxylates,[152–156] diketopyrrolopyrroles,[157] phenothiazines,[158–166] thioxanthenes,[31,167–181] coumarins,[182–195] iron complexes,[196–203] zinc complexes,[204] perylenes,[205–208] curcumin,[209–212] quinoxalines,[213–227] camphorquinones,[228,229] chalcones,[10,80–95] anthracenes,[230] pyrenes,[231–239] and push-pull dyes [197,240–255] can be cited as relevant examples of these intense research efforts. Still related to the design of visible light photoinitiating systems, a growing demand exists for photobleachable photoinitiating systems,[123,158,187,256,257] for photoinitiators that can be activated with sunlight or daylight,[258] or that are water-soluble.[259,260] In this last case, polymerization in water becomes possible. However, even if the photosensitizer is important, the way how the radicals are produced can strongly differ with the photoinitiating system, considering that two mechanisms exist. In the case of Type I photoinitiators, a homolytic cleavage of the bond can occur, producing radicals (See Scheme 1). Acyloximino

esters, benzylketals, oxime esters, α -haloacetophenones, α -aminoalkyl-acetophenones, hexaaryl biimidazoles (HABIs), *o*-acyl- α -oximino ketones, phosphine oxides, trichloromethyl-*S*-triazine glyoxylates or hydroxyacetophenones can be cited as the most extensively studied Type I photoinitiators.[261–263] As specificity, photocleavage of Type I photoinitiators is irreversible so that a decrease of the photoinitiator content and thus of the initiating species within the photocurable resin is observed. The situation differs with Type II photoinitiators. In this case, Type II photoinitiators are not capable to initiate the polymerization alone so that additives have to be used. As a result of this, the production of initiating species is directly related to the use of multicomponent systems. Type II photoinitiators can be combined with hydrogen donors or used as photosensitizers for the sensitization of onium salts (sulfonium or iodonium salts).[20,168,173,264–269] In this last case, a photoinduced electron transfer between the excited dye and the onium salt occurs.

Type I



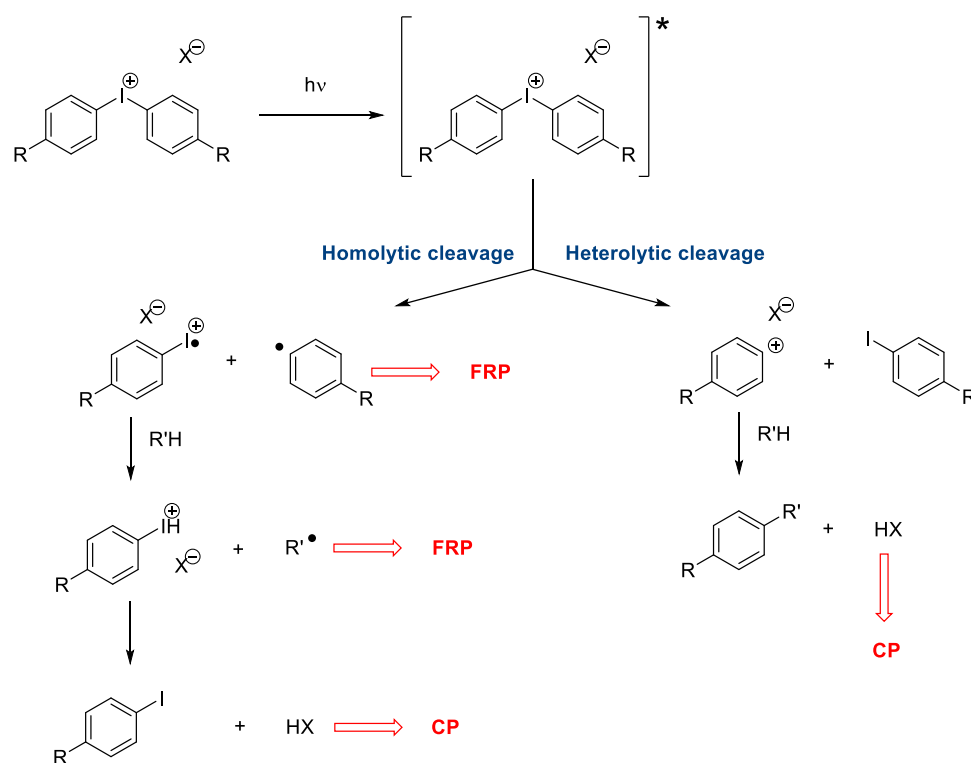
Type II



Scheme 1. Radical generation with Type I and Type II photoinitiators

If the multicomponent approach is appealing for the design of high-performance photoinitiating systems, the main drawback of this strategy remains besides the complexity of the elaboration of the photocurable resins. This is particularly true in the case of four-component photoinitiating systems.[270] Beyond the complexity of the formulations, efficiency of the multicomponent systems can be drastically reduced in viscous resins in which the mobility of the different partners is considerably reduced. Probability of intermolecular interactions is thus adversely affected. With aim at simplifying the composition of the photocurable resins while favoring interactions between the photosensitizers and the different additives, the combination of an iodonium salt and a photosensitizer within a unique molecule constitutes an appealing approach.[271,272] Additionally, by the proximity of the two partners (electron donor and acceptor), efficiency of the photoinduced electron transfer can be optimized. At present, examples of iodonium salts linked to chromophores are still scarce in the literature, even if the cationic polymerization of epoxides with diaryliodonium salts was reported as soon as 1977 by Crivello and coworkers.[36] In 1978, the same authors examined the photosensitization of iodonium salts with dyes such as Acridine Orange, Acridine Yellow,

Phosphine R, Benzoflavin and Setoflavin T (See Figure 2), enabling to promote the cationic polymerization of epoxides in the near UV/visible range.[273] Indeed, if diaryliodonium salts are efficient cationic photoinitiators, these structures mainly absorb in the UV-C range (i.e. 220–280 nm), thus requiring a photosensitizer in order to be activable in the visible range. Since these pioneering works done by Crivello and coworkers, photochemistry of diaryliodonium salts has been extensively studied.[274–281] Numerous and sometimes unexpected photosensitizers have been used, as exemplified by acylphosphine oxides,[282] 9,10-phenanthrenequinone, [283] dimethyl-*p*-toluidine,[284,285] indole,[286] anthraquinone[287,288] and polymethine dyes.[18,289–291] Photosensitization from the UV range up to the near-infrared region has thus been explored. From the mechanistic viewpoint, iodonium salts can decompose via a homolytic or a heterolytic cleavage upon light irradiation, according to the two mechanisms depicted in the Scheme 2.[292–294] In the case of the homolytic cleavage, radicals and superacids can be simultaneously formed in the presence of a hydrogen donor, enabling to initiate the free radical polymerization (FRP) of acrylates and the cationic polymerization (CP) of epoxides. In the case of a heterolytic cleavage, only superacids are produced.



Scheme 2. Photodissociation of iodonium salts by the two possible mechanisms: heterolytic and homolytic.

However, photosensitization is based on an intermolecular process that can be adversely affected if viscous resins are used. Still based on photosensitization, interaction between the two partners can be greatly improved by the design of monocomponent photoinitiating systems in which the intramolecular electron transfer is totally independent of

the concentration, the viscosity of the resin, or the rate constant of interaction. Modification of diaryliodonium salts in order to improve their reactivities was notably examined by Liska and coworkers and a series of phenylethynyl onium salts was notably proposed as cationic photoinitiators.[295] Investigation of the side-products of the reaction revealed the dissociation of the onium salts to occur on the phenylethynyl side, producing phenylethynyl cations capable to initiate the cationic polymerization of epoxides. However, aside from this example of modification of the carbon-iodine bond reported by Liska and coworkers, chemical engineering on diaryliodonium salts was mostly carried out on the phenyl side with the introduction of chromophores as peripheral groups. Indeed, if the modification of the carbon-iodine bond can be extremely complex, introduction of peripheral groups on one to the two phenyl rings of diaryliodonium is much easier. Besides, at present, none of these monocomponent iodonium salt-chromophore systems have been commercialized yet, thus evidencing that the synthesis of such conjugates is not an easy task. In fact, the main drawback of this approach can be summarized in a few words: the use of low-yielding reactions. In this review, an overview of the different iodonium salt-chromophore conjugates reported to date is provided. Numerous comparisons will be established with photoinitiating systems where the two partners (i.e. the chromophore and the iodonium salt) are not covalently linked to each other. It has to be noticed that iodonium salts have been the most extensively studied onium salts for photopolymerization. In the family of onium salts, sulfonium salts are also excellent photoinitiators and their reactivities are comparable to that of iodonium salts. Besides, only few monocomponent systems have been reported to date with these structures and to the best of our knowledge, only two examples of monocomponent systems have been designed with 1,3,5-triphenyl-2-pyrazoline[296] and phenyldialkyl groups[297] as the chromophores. This lack of structures can be confidently assigned to synthetic issues limiting the availability of structures.

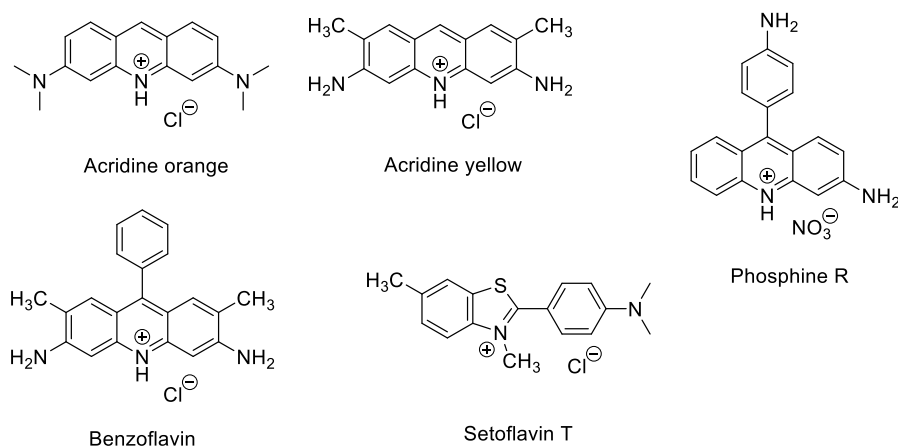


Figure 2. The first dyes used as photosensitizers by Crivello and coworkers for the sensitization of diaryliodonium salts.

2. Monocomponent photoinitiating systems based on iodonium salt-chromophore conjugates.

2.1. Iodonium salts with electron-donating groups.

Diaryliodonium salts exhibit an absorption strongly centered in the UV range, with an absorption not extending beyond 300 nm. In order to redshift the absorption towards the visible range, Crivello and coworkers introduced in 1993 different substituents on diaryliodonium salts in order to redshift their absorptions (See Figure 3).[298] The direct sensitization of the iodonium salts by light and by the intermediate of thioxanthenes (2-chlorothioxanthone (CTX),[299] 2-isopropylthioxanthone (ITX), 3-carboethoxy-7-methylthioxanthone (ETX), 1-carboethoxy-3-nitrothioxanthone (T1), 1 carboxy-3-chlorothioxanthone (T2), 1-carboethoxy-3-phenylsulfonylthioxanthone (T3), *N*-allyl-3,4-imidothioxanthone (T4)) was investigated (See Figure 3).

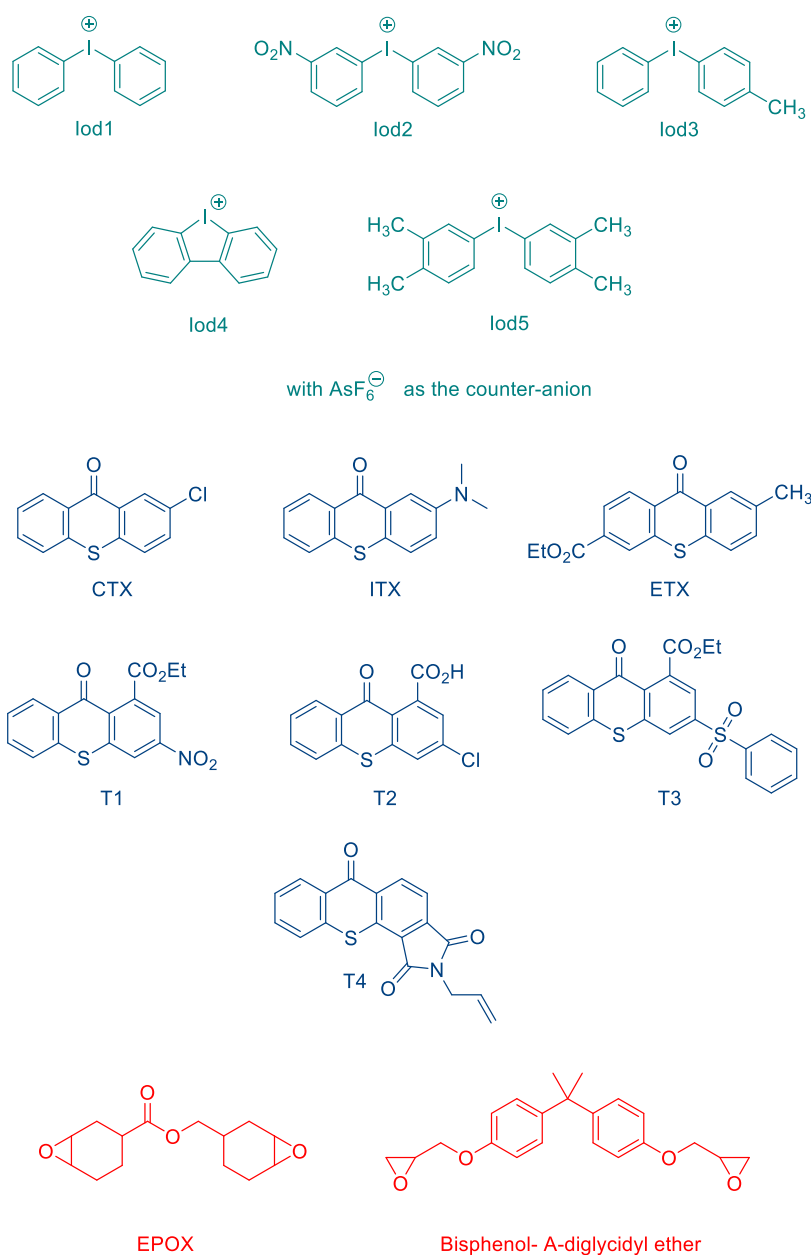


Figure 3. A series of iodonium salts substituted with various groups and the different thioxanthenes used for the sensitization.

As shown in the Figure 4, introduction of electron-donating groups in Iod4 and Iod5 redshifted the absorption of the diaryliodonium salts ($\lambda = 264$ and 240 nm in methanol for Iod4 and Iod5 respectively), compared to the parent structure i.e. Iod1 ($\lambda = 227$ nm in methanol). The opposite situation was found upon introduction of electron-withdrawing groups, as exemplified with Iod2 ($\lambda = 215$ nm in methanol) for which a blueshift of the absorption maximum was determined in solution.

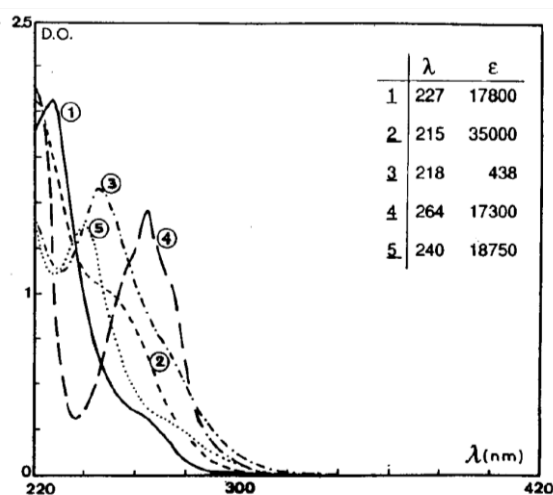


Figure 4. UV-visible absorption spectra of Iod1-Iod5 in methanol. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[298]

When tested as photoinitiators for the cationic polymerization (CP) of bisphenol-A-diglycidyl ether (DGEBA) and 3,4-epoxycyclohexylmethyl-3',4'-epoxycyclohexanecarboxylate (CADE) upon irradiation with an 80-W mercury lamp, the following order of polymerization rates was determined Iod5 > Iod1 > Iod3 > Iod2 > Iod4, perfectly fitting with the amount of superacid released by the different iodonium salts (See Figure 5). Besides, a slightly different order of reactivity was found concerning the final monomer conversions and this order of reactivity was dependent of the monomer used. Thus, in the case of CADE, the following order of reactivity could be determined (Iod5 > Iod3 > Iod1 > Iod2 > Iod4), whereas the following one was established for DEGBA (Iod1 > Iod3 > Iod5 > Iod2 > Iod4). The most reactive iodonium salts were thus identified as being the unsubstituted Iod1 and the two methyl substituted Iod3 and Iod5.

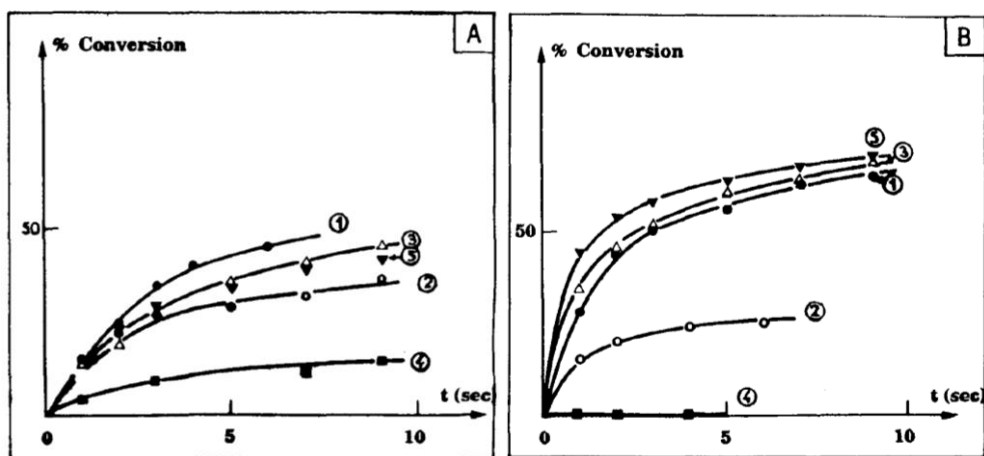
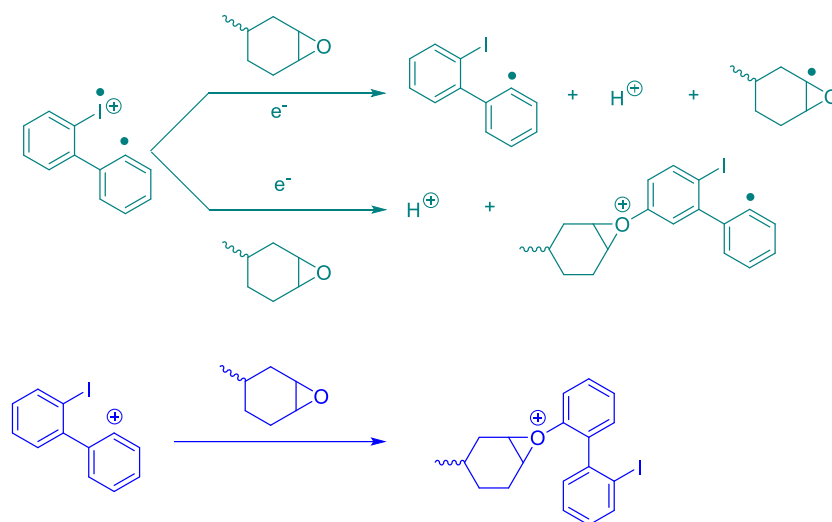


Figure 5. Polymerization profiles obtained during the CP of DGEBA (A) and CADE (B) upon irradiation with an 80-W mercury lamp. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[298]

Noticeably, the cyclic diaryliodonium salt Iod4 only furnished low monomer conversions with DEGBA and CADE, assigned to its low ability to produce superacids. In fact, a competition between two reaction pathways was suggested by the authors. Due to the steric hindrance generated by the biaryl group, concomitant occurrence of an addition on the monomer in competition with a reduction process of the iodonium salt was proposed (See Scheme 3).



Scheme 3. The two possible reaction pathways reducing the reactivity of Iod4.

Sensitization of the iodonium salts by different thioxanthenes was also examined. As specificities, absorptions of thioxanthenes are located in the 250-270 nm range with a long tail extending up to 350-450 nm (See Figure 6).

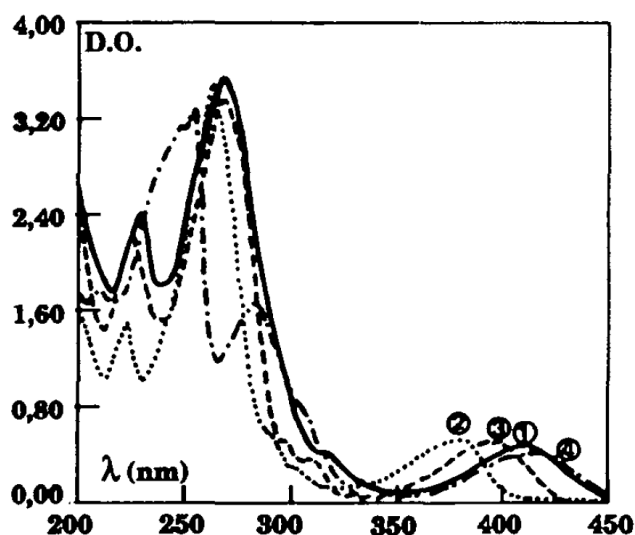


Figure 6. UV-visible absorption spectra of 1) T1, 2) T2, 3) T3, 4) T4. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[298]

Here again, compared to DEGBA, higher monomer conversions were obtained with CADE, resulting from the simultaneous presence of two cycloaliphatic epoxy groups that are more reactive than the vinyl ether group. Noticeably, a low monomer conversion was obtained with Iod2 when sensitized by thioxanthenes, and this unexpected result was assigned to a competition occurring for light absorption between the iodonium salt and the thioxanthenes, adversely affecting the photosensitization process (See Figure 7). By photosensitization with thioxanthenes, Iod1 outperformed the other iodonium salts in two-component thioxanthone/Iod systems. High monomer conversion obtained with Iod1 was assigned to the high reactivity of the phenyl radicals produced by photoinduced electron transfer and decomposition of the iodonium salt. In the case of Iod2-Iod5, electronic effects generated by the different substituents (electron donating or electron accepting groups) negatively impacted the reactivity of the radicals formed after photolysis of the iodonium salts. From these different experiments, it was thus concluded that the unsubstituted iodonium salt was the best cationic photoinitiator of the series.

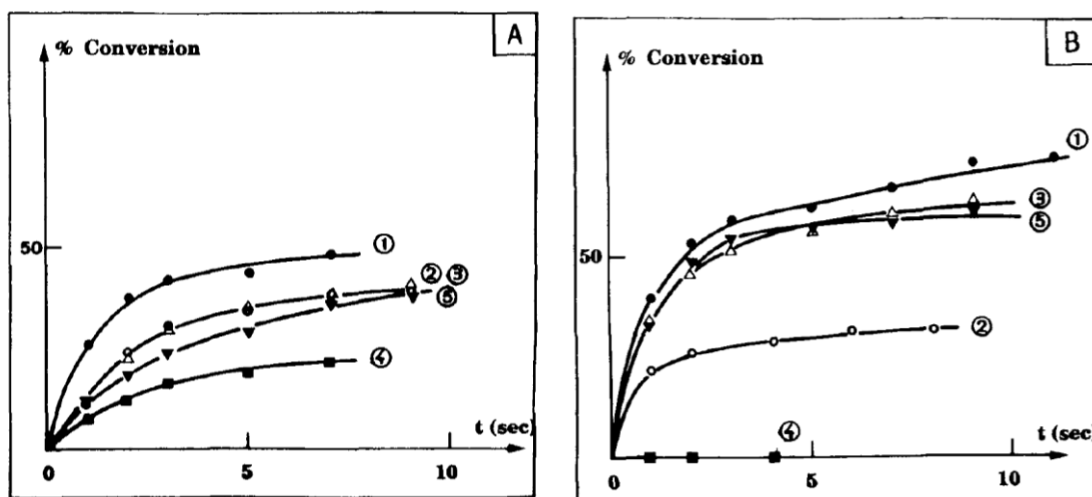


Figure 7. Polymerization profiles determined during the CP of DEGBA and CADE using 1) 1, 2) 2, 3) 3, 4) 4, 5) 5. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[298]

2.2. Fluorenone derivatives

In 2001, Schröder and coworkers developed a monocomponent system in which the diaryliodonium moiety was covalently linked to the fluorenone group.[300] Fluorenone was selected as the photosensitizer for this assembly due to the perfect adequation of its absorption with that of the emission of the high-pressure mercury lamp. Choice to combine the iodonium salt with fluorenone in (9-oxo-9*H*-fluoren-2-yl)phenyl iodonium hexafluoroantimonate(V) (FL-I-Ph SbF₆) was also motivated by the respective positions of the triplet excited states of fluorenone (222 kJ/mol) and the iodonium salt (267 kJ/mol) impeding the triplet sensitization of the iodonium salt by fluorenone (See Figure 8).[275] Only a photoinduced electron transfer can occur. Goal of this study was also to investigate which decomposition products could form during photolysis. Surprisingly, this iodonium salt i.e. FL-I-Ph SbF₆ exhibited a strong sensitivity to moisture. Indeed, by adding 1 wt% water in acetone and by introducing 1 wt% photoinitiator, 44% of the iodonium salt was decomposed by this small water content after 20 min. A higher stability was determined in the solid state. When stored as a solid and under air, only 10% of the iodonium salt was decomposed after eleven months of storage. Under a water saturated atmosphere, 44% of the iodonium salt was hydrolyzed after only two days, evidencing its strong sensitivity to moisture.

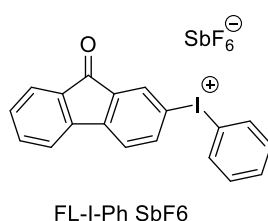


Figure 8. Chemical structure of FL-I-Ph SbF₆.

Interestingly, by replacing the hexafluoroantimonate anion by a chloride anion, the resulting iodonium salt proved to be totally insensitive against moisture. Photolysis

experiments done in acetonitrile revealed the photolysis to occur on the fluorenone side. Indeed, after irradiation, fluorenone and iodobenzene were identified as the main photolysis products. No presence of benzene could be detected after photolysis by nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). From the photolysis experiments, it was concluded that no intramolecular energy transfer from the excited fluorenone towards the iodonium salt was occurring and that presence of the fluorenone moiety was destabilizing the C-I bond so that a specific fragmentation on the fluorenone side could happen. CP of CADE done upon irradiation with a mercury lamp revealed FL-I-Ph SbF₆ to outperform Iod1 alone or by photosensitization with anthracene (See Figure 9). Comparisons of the monomer conversions obtained upon sensitization of Iod1 by fluorenone or 2,2-dimethoxyethanone revealed the monomer conversion to be lower than that obtained with the hybrid structure FL-I-Ph SbF₆. Improvement of the monomer conversion with FL-I-Ph SbF₆ compared to that of the bimolecular dye/Iod1 system was assigned to an efficient photoinduced electron transfer from the fluorenone moiety to the iodonium moiety due to its close proximity. The high sensitivity of FL-I-Ph SbF₆ to moisture was confirmed during the polymerization experiments, with a severe reduction of the CADE conversion with the exposure time of the resin to water.

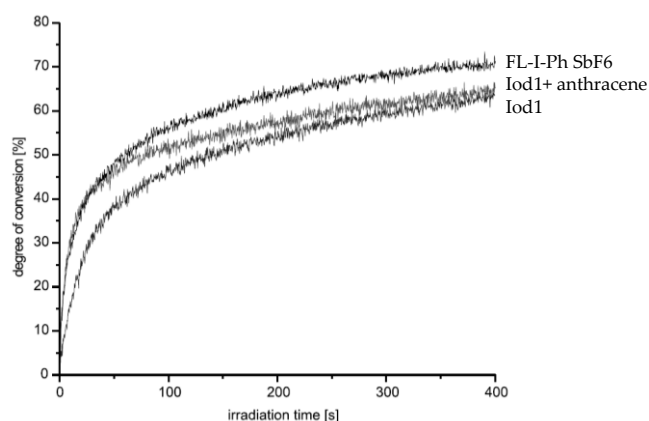


Figure 9. Polymerization profiles of CADE using FL-I-Ph SbF₆ (1 wt%), Iod1 (1 wt%) and Iod1/anthracene (1%/1% w/w). Reproduced with permission of Ref.[300]

2.3. Benzophenone derivatives

In 1996, Salazar Mendoza and coworkers proposed an iodonium salt bearing a benzophenone moiety as the side group (See Figure 10).[301] Benzophenone is a popular photosensitizer for onium salts.[132,302–304] *p*-Benzoyldiphenyliodonium hexafluorophosphate PhCOPhI⁺Ph PF₆ notably exhibited an absorption maximum at 342 nm in methanol, close to that of benzophenone (330 nm). Based on its absorption, photopolymerization tests were done under UV light with this hybrid structure. Interestingly, comparison of the photoinitiating ability of the monocomponent PhCOPhI⁺Ph PF₆ and the two-component photoinitiating PhCOPh/Ph₂I⁺ PF₆ system revealed the bimolecular sensitization system to give lower monomer conversions during the FRP of methyl methacrylate (MMA). Notably, after 3 min. of irradiation, a MMA conversion of 7% was

obtained with the bimolecular system contrarily to 30% for the monocomponent system at similar concentrations. Investigation of the photodecomposition of the monocomponent system revealed 4-iodobenzophenone to be identified as the unique side-product of the photocleavage, therefore evidencing a selective dissociation of the iodonium salt on the phenyl side.

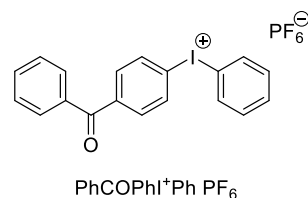


Figure 10. Chemical structure of PhCOPhI⁺Ph PF₆.

2.3. Benzylidene derivatives

With aim at redshifting the absorption of iodonium salts towards the visible range, an interesting strategy was proposed by Ortyl and coworkers in 2021.[41] They notably investigated the introduction of different groups on the iodonium scaffold and varied the number of electron-donating and electron-accepting groups so that a structure/performance relationship could be established. In this first work, the asymmetric substitution of the iodonium salts was examined (See Figure 11). A push-pull system was notably introduced on one of the two aromatic rings of the diaryliodonium salt. By the concomitant presence of an electron donor and an electron accepting on the same aromatic ring, an electronic delocalization could be produced in close vicinity of the iodonium moiety and shift the absorption towards the visible range.

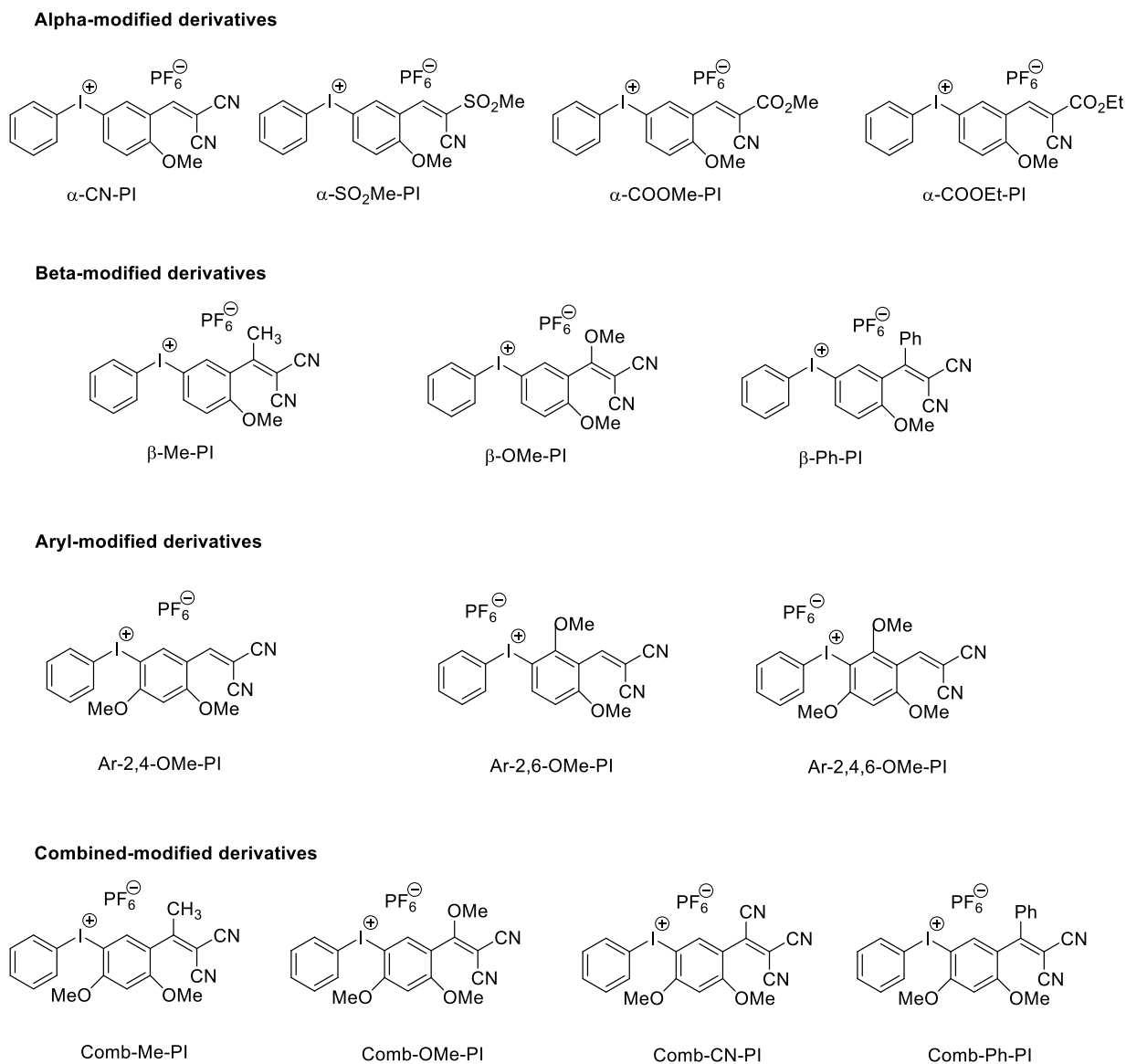


Figure 11. Chemical structures of iodonium salt based on benzylidene derivatives. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [41]

More precisely, modification of the benzylidene core in alpha, beta positions as well as on the benzylidene core was studied (See Figure 12).

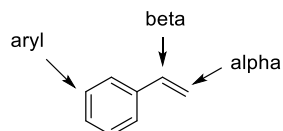


Figure 12. The different chemical modifications done on the benzylidene-based iodonium salts in alpha, beta-positions or on the phenyl ring.

Interestingly, by the concomitant presence of an electron donating and accepting group on [3-(2,2-dicyanovinyl)-4-methoxyphenyl]phenyliodonium hexafluorophosphate (α -CN-PI), a significant red-shift of the absorption could be observed with regards to the parent structure

diphenyliodonium hexafluorophosphate (Iod1) (See Figure 13). Thus, a shift of the absorption maxima from 230 nm for Iod1 up to 350 nm for α -CN-PI could be determined, resulting from the intramolecular push-pull effect. Noticeably, if a redshift of the absorption was found, no improvement of the molar extinction coefficient could be evidenced between Iod1 and α -CN-PI.

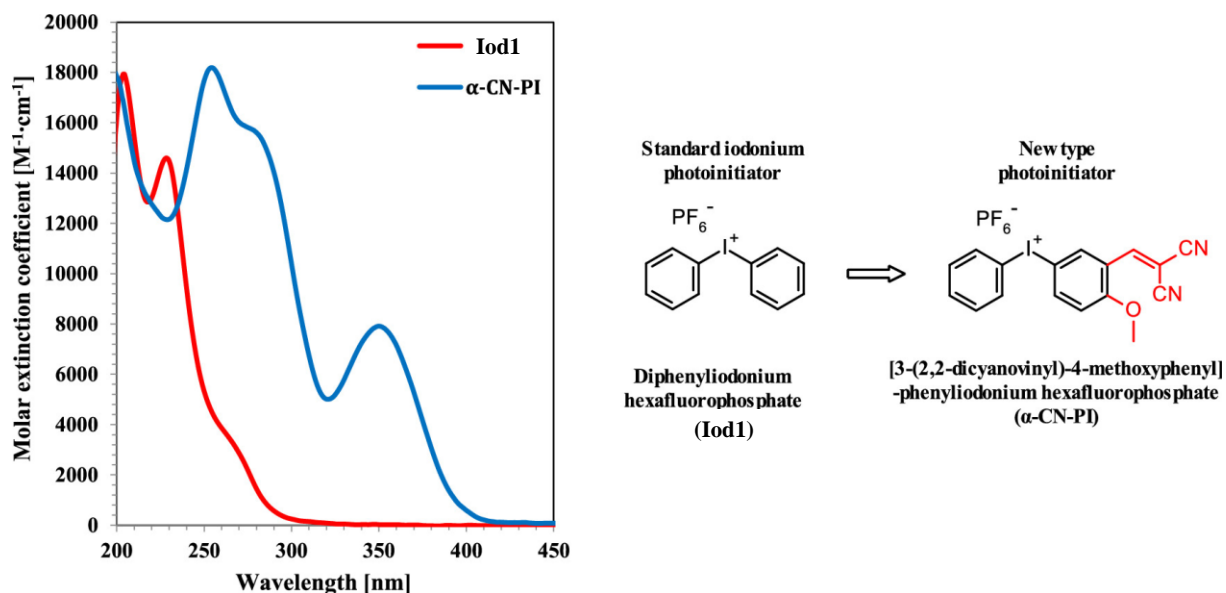


Figure 13. Comparison of the absorption spectra of Iod1 and α -CN-PI in acetonitrile. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [41]

The different chemical modifications done on this series of photoinitiators revealed the cyano groups in alpha-position to cause the highest redshift of the absorption compared to the ester or the methylsulfonyl groups (α -SO₂Me-PI, α -COOMe-PI and α -2-COOEt-PI). An opposite situation was found for all beta-substituted derivatives for which a significant blue shift of the absorptions compared to that observed for the alpha-substituted ones could be determined. This is directly related to the fact that the electron-withdrawing groups were introduced in none-conjugated positions with regards to the electron donors. The most blue-shifted absorption was found for β -OMe-PI at 252 nm in acetonitrile. By introducing methoxy groups on the aryl group, a redshift of the absorption could be detected resulting from the excellent electron donating ability of the methoxy groups, improving the electronic delocalization and reducing the HOMO-LUMO gaps (See Table 1).

Table 1. Absorption properties of the different benzylidene-based iodonium salts, at the absorption maximum, at 365 and 405 nm in acetonitrile.

photoinitiators	λ_{\max} [nm]	ϵ_{\max} [M ⁻¹ ·cm ⁻¹]	$\epsilon_{365 \text{ nm}}$ [M ⁻¹ ·cm ⁻¹]	$\epsilon_{405 \text{ nm}}$ [M ⁻¹ ·cm ⁻¹]
α -CN-PI	350	7900	6250	350
α -SO ₂ Me-PI	343	6080	3370	210
α -COOMe-PI	342	8800	5000	260
α -2-COOEt-PI	308	6100	200	0
β -Me-PI	312	3600	0	0
β -OMe-PI	252	20000	0	0
β -Ph-PI	309	11450	1240	0
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI	360	17000	16650	1300
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI	295	12100	1580	150
Ar-2,4,6-OMe-PI	347	14100	9500	480
Comb-Me-PI	305	8400	1450	0
Comb-OMe-PI	253	19700	110	0
Comb-CN-PI	392	8300	5600	7700
Comb-Ph-PI	297	14100	6400	550

Photolysis experiments done in acetonitrile revealed α -2-COOEt-PI to furnish the slowest photolysis rate of the series of iodonium salts. In the case of β -OMe-PI, no photolysis was detected at all. These two iodonium salts were also identified as being the worse photoinitiators during the polymerization experiments, consistent with their poor photolysis behaviors. The fastest photolysis was detected for Ar-2,4-OMe-PI which is also the iodonium salt furnishing the best monomer conversions. Overall, a good adequation between photolysis experiments and photoinitiating abilities could be evidenced with these different iodonium salts. Determination of the quantum efficiency of acid generation revealed the aryl ring-modified derivatives Ar-2,4-OMe-PI and Ar-2,4,6-OMe-PI, and the combined modification derivative Comb-CN-PI to give quantum efficiency values higher than 1.5%. For all the others, lower values were obtained. Low ability to produce superacids was assigned to the presence of a double bond and strong electron-accepting groups in the benzylidene chromophores lowering the quantum efficiency as previously reported in the literature.[305] Besides, presence of these groups is required to get an absorption centered in the near UV/visible range and the best compromise was thus obtained for the aryl ring-modified derivatives for which the highest quantum efficiency values of superacid generation could be determined. Investigation of the cationic polymerization of triethylene glycol divinyl ether (TEGDVE) in thin films and in laminate upon irradiation at 365 nm revealed the β -position-modified derivatives to give the longest induction time and the lowest monomer conversions (See Table 2).

Table 2. Induction times and monomer conversions obtained during the CP of TEGDVE and CADE upon irradiation at 365 and 405 nm.

Compounds	TEGDVE				CADE			
	LED@365 nm		LED@405 nm		LED@365 nm		LED@405 nm	
	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]
α -Position-Modified Derivatives of New Cationic Photoinitiators								
α -CN-PI	6	91	16	88	17	41	64	28
α -SO ₂ Me-PI	3	89	-	n.p. ^c	7	44	-	n.p.
α -COOMe-PI	5	88	-	n.p.	8	41	-	n.p.
α -2-COOEt-PI	35	91	-	n.p.	31	42	-	n.p.
β -Position-Modified Derivatives of New Cationic Photoinitiators								
β -Me-PI	110	41	-	n.p.	94	27	-	n.p.
β -OMe-PI	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.
β -Ph-PI	51	86	-	n.p.	65	43	-	n.p.
Aryl Ring-Modified Derivatives of New Cationic Photoinitiators								
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI	5	92	6	88	15	44	40	41
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI	16	92	108	23	29	38	-	n.p.
Ar-2,4,6-OMe-PI	17	92	-	n.p.	56	45	-	n.p.
Combined Modification Derivatives of New Cationic Photoinitiators								
Comb-Me-PI	36	84	-	n.p.	49	51	-	n.p.
Comb-OMe-PI	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.
Comb-CN-PI	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.	-	n.p.
Comb-Ph-PI	10	94	-	n.p.	18	42	-	n.p.

^a: induction time ^b: monomer conversion determined after 300 s of irradiation ^c: no polymerization.

In terms of monomer conversion, the best TEGDVE conversions were determined for the aryl ring-modified derivatives, peaking at 92% for the three salts after 300 s of irradiation. At 405 nm, only few salts could initiate the CP of TEGDVE, consistent with their light absorption properties. By replacing TEGDVE by 3,4-epoxycyclohexylmethyl 3,4-epoxycyclohexanecarboxylate (CADE) as the monomer, a severe reduction of the monomer conversion could be determined. As interesting feature, a significant increase of the fluorescence was detected during the cationic polymerizations of vinyl and epoxy monomers with α -CN-PI at 365 nm, enabling in turn to monitor the monomer conversion by fluorescence measurements. This photoinitiator can thus act as an initiator but also as a fluorescent probe enabling to visualize acid generation during the photolysis of the initiator (See Figure 14). To explain this enhancement of the fluorescence properties during photopolymerization, a phenomenon comparable to that observed with aggregation-induced emission (AIE) fluorophores for which the restriction of intramolecular motions enhances the photoluminescence properties.[306–309]

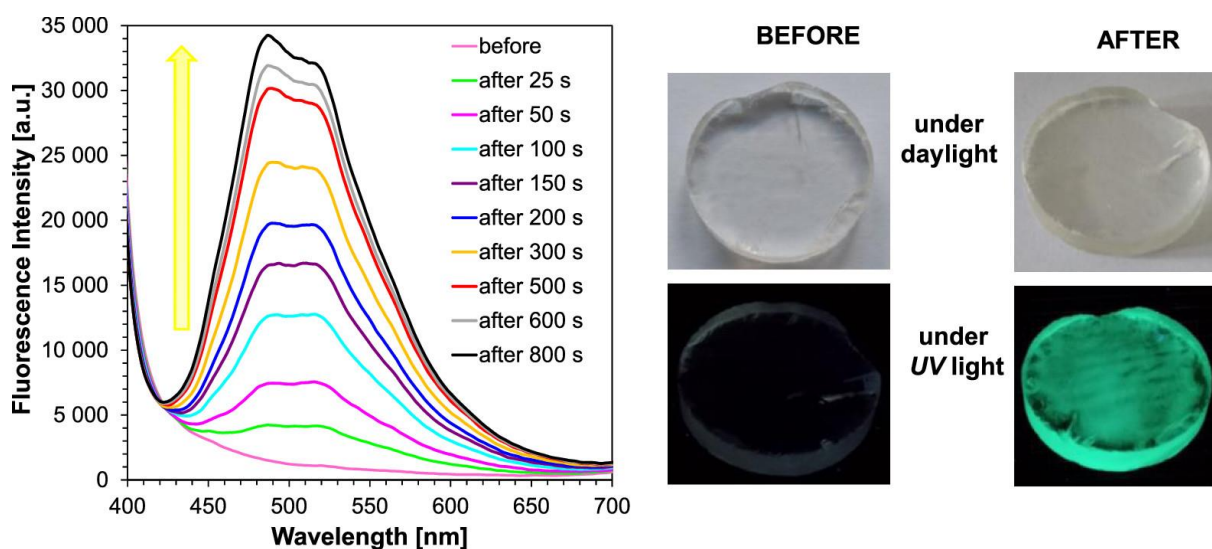


Figure 14. Fluorescence spectra determined during the CP of TEGDVE with α -CN-PI upon exposure to LED@365 nm. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [41]

In 2022, the same group investigated the design of symmetrically substituted iodonium salts.[40] The strategy previously used for the design of asymmetrically structures was newly applied, with the modification of the benzylidene core in alpha and beta-positions, but also on the aromatic rings (See Figure 15).

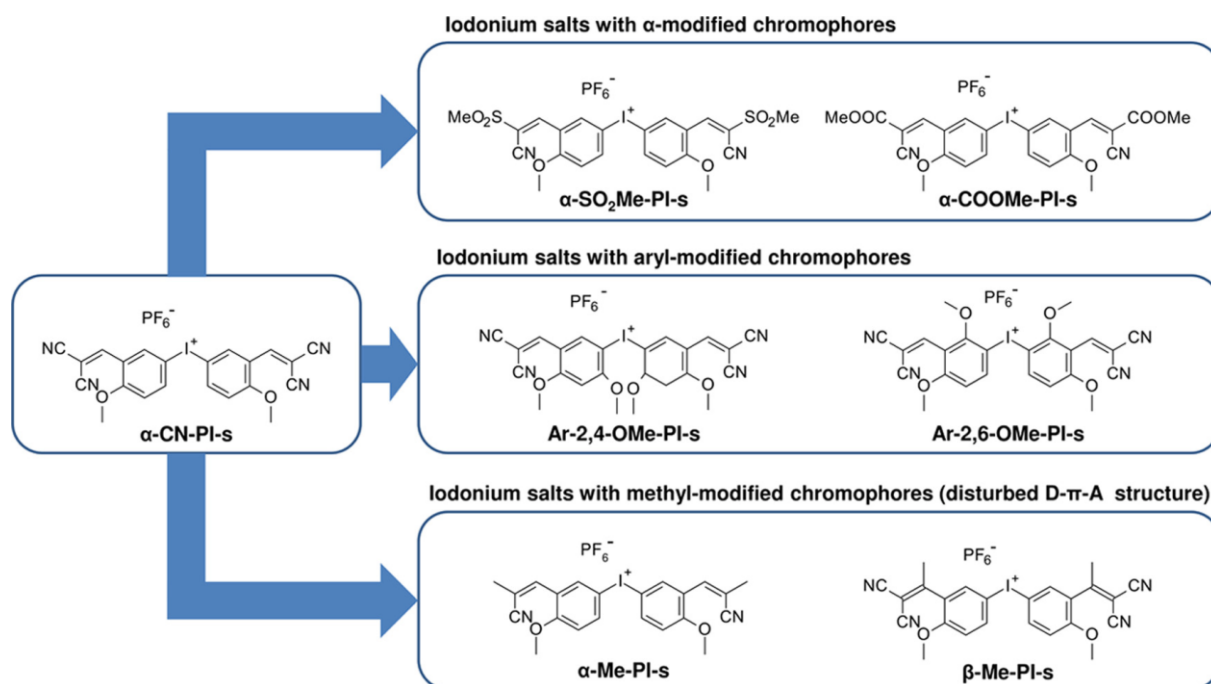


Figure 15. The different symmetrically substituted iodonium salts based on the benzylidene core. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[40].

Compared to the previous asymmetrical benzylidene derivatives (See Figure 11) that sometimes exhibited a weak absorption at 405 nm, absorption properties of the symmetrical structures were boosted in terms of molar extinction coefficients. The highest molar extinction coefficient was determined for β -Me-PI-s, peaking at $36\,700\text{ M}^{-1}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ at 250 nm (See Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of absorption properties of asymmetrical and symmetrical benzylidene-based and diaryliodonium iodonium salts in acetonitrile.

Iodonium salt	λ_{\max} [nm]	ϵ_{\max} [M ⁻¹ .cm ⁻¹]	$\epsilon_{365\text{ nm}}$ [M ⁻¹ .cm ⁻¹]	I _a 365 nm	$\epsilon_{405\text{ nm}}$ [M ⁻¹ .cm ⁻¹]	I _a 405 nm
Iod1	228	14600	0	0	0	0
Asymmetrical Benzylidene-Based Iodonium Salts						
α -CN-PI-a	350	7900	6250	43%	350	8%
α -SO ₂ Me-PI-a	343	6080	3370	24%	210	5%
α -COOMe-PI-a	342	8800	5000	30%	260	0%
β -Me-PI-a	312	3600	0	0.4%	0	27%
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI-a	360	17000	16650	78%	1300	3%
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI-a	295	12100	1580	13%	150	3%
Symmetrical Benzylidene-Based Iodonium Salts						
α -CN-PI-s	353	13400	11860	66%	997	20%
α -SO ₂ Me-PI-s	340	12100	6670	50%	270	7%
α -COOMe-PI-s	340	14000	8485	50%	300	8%
α -Me-PI-s	260	27300	350	4%	0	0%
β -Me-PI-s	250	36700	610	6%	0	0%
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI-s	364	30900	30800	94%	4300	58%
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI-s	297	19600	3750	28%	405	8%

I_a 365 nm : amount of emitted light absorbed by the 25 μm thick layer. I_a 405 nm : amount of emitted light absorbed by the 25 μm thick layer.

As the main finding, iodonium salts modified with methyl substituents (i.e. α -Me-PI-s and β -Me-PI-s) exhibited the most blueshifted absorptions of the series, evidencing the detrimental effect of this substitution. This negative impact was also confirmed during the photolysis experiments, with no noticeable changes of the absorption intensities. In the case of α -CN-PI-s and Ar-2,4-OMe-PI-s, noticeable changes of the absorption spectra could be evidenced in acetonitrile with the formation of a photoproduct whose structure could be identified on the basis of previous works done by Neckers and coworkers concerning the photolysis of iodonium salts.[310] This photoproduct is notably issued from radical recombination subsequent to the photodissociation of the C–I bond (See Figure 16).

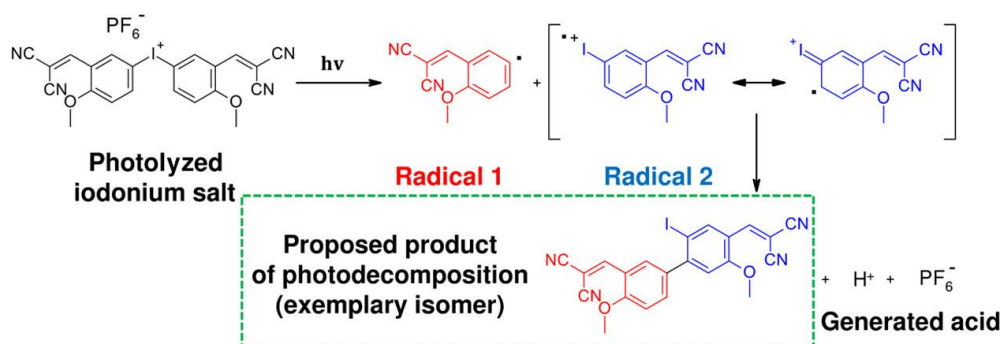


Figure 16. Photoproduct formed during the photolysis of iodonium salt. Reproduced with permission of Ref.[40].

By theoretical calculations, the bond dissociation energy from the C-I bond could be calculated and determined as ranging between 38 and 51 kcal/mol (See Table 4). These values are greatly lower than that of benchmark iodonium salts such as HPI for which a BDE of 73 kcal/mol was calculated.[311] It was thus concluded that the presence of the push-pull structure was greatly contributing to lower the BDE. Quantum efficiencies of acid generation comparable to that determined for the previous asymmetrical iodonium salts were determined. Theoretical calculations also revealed the dissociation of the iodonium salts to be favorable from the singlet excited state.

Table 4. Bond dissociation energies determined by theoretical calculations for symmetrically substituted iodonium salts.

Iodonium salt	C-I BDE (kcal/mol)
α -CN-PI-s	45.51
α -SO ₂ Me-PI-s	45.78
α -COOMe-PI-s	50.60
α -Me-PI-s	38.45
β -Me-PI-s	49.66
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI-s	50.99
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI-s	45.83

Determination of their photoinitiating abilities during the CP of TEGDVE and CADE revealed the symmetrical structures to give slightly lower monomer conversions than the asymmetrical ones. Here again, in this series of iodonium salts, the methyl-modified symmetrical iodonium salts were unable to initiate any polymerization processes at 405 nm, evidencing the negative impact of this substitution. Parallel to the decrease of the monomer conversions during the CP of TEGDVE and CADE, an elongation of the induction time was also determined, evidencing that the push-pull effect was more important in the asymmetrical structures than in the symmetrical ones.

Table 5. Monomer conversions determined after 300 s of irradiation at 365 and 405 nm during the CP of TEGDVE and CADE.

Compounds	TEGDVE				CADE			
	LED@365 nm		LED@405 nm		LED@365 nm		LED@405 nm	
	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]	τ_{ind}^a [s]	FC ^b [%]
α-Modified Symmetrical Iodonium Salts								
α -CN-PI-s	2	81	4	85	3	54	82	38
α -SO ₂ Me-PI-s	40	8	35	12	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
α -COOMe-PI-s	2	89	20	81	7	47	136	25
Methyl-Modified Symmetrical Iodonium salts								
α -Me-PI-s	48	85	n.p.	n.p.	18	41	n.p.	n.p.
β -Me-PI-s	26	81	n.p.	n.p.	15	51	n.p.	n.p.
Aryl Modified Derivatives of New Cationic Photoinitiators								
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI	5	92	6	88	15	44	40	41
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI	16	92	108	23	29	38	-	n.p.
Ar-2,4,6-OMe-PI	17	92	-	n.p.	56	45	-	n.p.
Combined Modified Symmetrical Iodonium salts								
Ar-2,4-OMe-PI-s	4	87	<1	88	5	41	43	34
Ar-2,6-OMe-PI-s	27	79	4	46	18	31	n.p.	n.p.

^a τ_{ind} : induction time, ^bFC : final conversion ^cn.p. : no polymerization.

2.4. Coumarin derivatives

In 2015, Ortyl and coworkers investigated for the first time coumarin-derived iodonium salts i.e. P3C-P and P3C-Sb (See Figure 17).[33] Especially, influence of the counteranion on the photoinitiating ability of these monocomponent systems was studied. Choice of coumarin as the chromophore was notably justified by its strong absorption centered in the near-UV/visible range but also for its almost colorless structure, enabling to produce colorless coatings.[182,186,187,193,195]

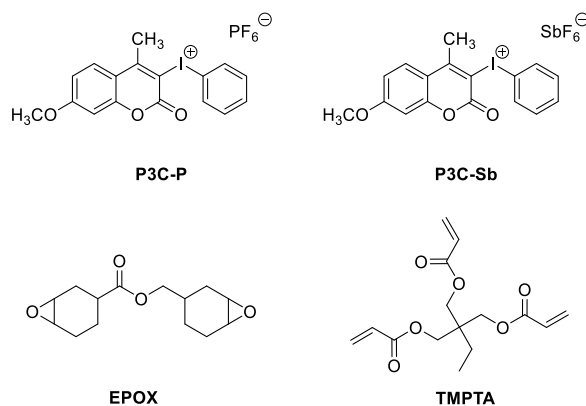


Figure 17. Chemical structures of coumarin-based iodonium salts.

The two salts exhibited an absorption maximum located at 347 nm ($\epsilon = 17\,000\text{ M}^{-1}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$) in acetonitrile with an absorption extending up to 410 nm. In this context, polymerization

tests could be performed at 385 nm but also at 405 nm, using CADE as the monomer. As anticipated, P3C-Sb furnished the highest monomer conversion during the CP of TEGDVE at 405 nm ($I = 100 \text{ mW/cm}^2$), together with a high rate of polymerization. A conversion of 69% was reached after 800 s of irradiation, higher than that obtained with P3C-P (50%). This difference of reactivity is directly related to the nucleophilicity of the anions. Indeed, the hexafluoroantimonate anion is less nucleophilic than the hexafluorophosphate one so that lower interactions exist between the cation and the anion, favoring the reactivity of the iodonium salt. This difference of reactivity between P3C-P and P3C-Sb was considerably reduced at 385 nm ($I = 500 \text{ mW/cm}^2$) (47% for P3C-P and 55% for P3C-Sb) (See Figure 18 and Table 6) and assigned to a better adequation between the emission of the light source and the absorptions of the iodonium salts. The use of more energetic photons was also favorable to reduce the influence of the counter-anion on the photoinitiating ability. Besides, P3C-Sb remained more reactive than P3C-P. Tack-free coatings exhibiting an excellent photobleaching could be obtained with the two coumarin derivatives. It has to be noticed that photobleaching during the polymerization process is actively researched, considering that visible light photoinitiating systems are colored systems that are often responsible from an undesired color for the final coatings.[256]

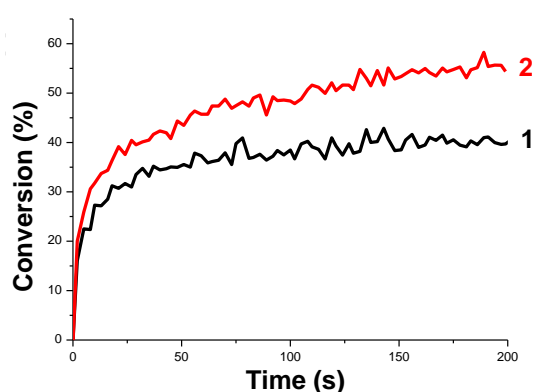


Figure 18. Photopolymerization profiles of CADE under air, LED@385 nm ($I = 500 \text{ mW/cm}^2$) using (1) P3C-P (1 wt %), (2) P3C-Sb (1 wt %). Reproduced with permission of Ref. [33]

Table 6. CADE final conversion (FC) obtained under air upon exposure to different LEDs for 800 s in the presence of the four different PIs. For the LED@385nm operating at 500 mW/cm^2 , the conversions are given for 200 s of irradiation.

PIs	LED (385nm)		LEDs
	$I = 25\text{mW/cm}^2$	$I = 500\text{mW/cm}^2$	405 nm
P3C-P (1 wt%)	47%	39%	50%
P3C-Sb (1 wt%)	55%	55%	69%
Iod1 (1 wt%)	np ^a	np ^a	np ^a

^a no polymerization (<5%).

Noticeably, if the CADE conversion was insensitive to the concentration of P3C-Sb (less than 2% variations), a different situation was found for P3C-P. In this case, by increasing the photoinitiator content from 0.5 wt% to 1 wt% and 2 wt%, the conversion increased from 37 to 50 and finally 65% at 2 wt%. Presence of a dark polymerization was also evidenced. After 200 s of irradiation, the light was switched off and due to a living polymerization process, the polymerization of CADE could continue. If the monomer conversion was lower than 5% after 1800 s with P3C-P, this value increased up to 18% for P3C-Sb in the same conditions. This behavior was assigned to the lower nucleophilicity of the SbF_6^- counter anion, once again favoring the polymerization process. The preparation of interpenetrated polymer networks (IPNs) using a CADE/TMPTA blend (50%/50% w/w) in laminate upon irradiation at 405 nm proved to be feasible. In these conditions, the final monomer conversions determined for CADE and TMPTA were not significantly affected by the iodonium salt used for photopolymerization. Tack free coatings could be obtained. By theoretical calculations, the photodissociation of the iodonium salts was investigated. Based on the BDE, a more favorable cleavage of the iodonium salts on the phenyl side was evidenced (See Figure 19). Considering the different of BDEs (46.66 and 61.37 kcal/mol), a rather selective I-Ph cleavage reaction can occur. This result was confirmed by electron spin resonance (ESR) experiments which confirmed the formation of phenyl radicals.

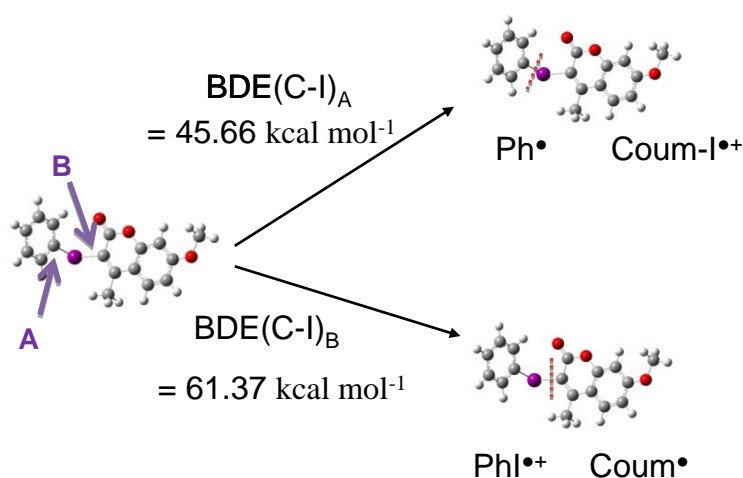


Figure 19. The two possible dissociation pathways with P3C salts. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [33]

The possibility to initiate free radical processes with P3C-Sb was confirmed with the polymerization of a model methacrylic dental resin based on the mixture of three monomers, namely bisphenol A glycidyl dimethacrylate (BisGMA) (50 wt%), triethylene glycol dimethacrylate (TEGDMA) (25 wt%) and 2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate (HEMA) (25 wt%).^[312] For these experiments, a light-emitting diode polywave (Bluephase, Ivoclar Vivadent, 1100 mW/cm²) was used so that conditions typically used by dentists could be reproduced. By using a three-component photoinitiating system based on camphorquinone (CQ) (0.4 wt%), P3C-Sb (2 wt%) and a tertiary amine i.e. ethyl 4-dimethylaminobenzoate

(EDAB) (0.8 wt%), no improvement of the monomer conversion was detected during the FRP of the methacrylic resin, compared to the reference CQ/EDAB system. However, a lower sensitivity to the solvent residue was clearly evidenced. Notably, in the case of ethanol, a severe inhibitory effect was detected with the reference CQ/EDAB system which was not observed with the ternary photoinitiating system. Jointly, an improvement of the monomer conversion was determined, highlighting the interest of this iodonium salt for dental applications. More recently, P3C-Sb was revisited for the development of new routes for the synthesis of polyalkenamers and polyolefin elastomers.[313] Easily processible elastomers could be prepared using this photoinitiator. In light of these different applications devoted to P3C-Sb, Ortyl and coworkers investigated a new series of coumarin-based iodonium salts in which electron donating and accepting groups were introduced in *para*-position of the phenyl ring (See Figure 20).

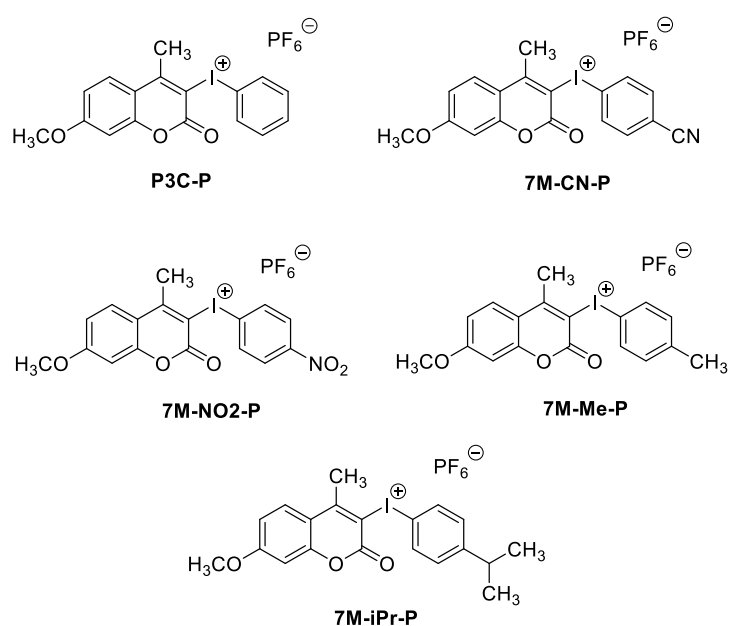


Figure 20. Chemical structures of coumarin-based iodonium salts with phenyl ring substituted in *para*-position.

This chemical modification was not investigated in the previous works.[314] From the absorption viewpoint, presence of these groups did not modify the absorption spectra of the different salts, the absorption being dominated by the coumarin moiety (See Figure 21). For the different iodonium salts, an absorption maximum located at ca. 350 nm was determined in acetonitrile.

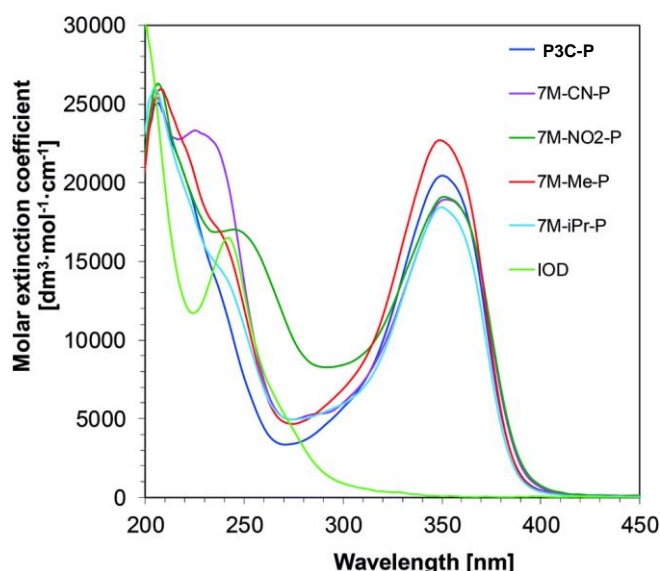


Figure 21. UV-visible absorption spectra of the coumarin-based iodonium salts in acetonitrile. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [314]

Examination of the contour plots of the frontier orbitals revealed the HOMO energy level to be centered on the coumarin moiety whereas the LUMO energy level was centered on the carbon-iodine bond. As previously determined by theoretical calculations, lower BDE were determined for the dissociation of the phenyl-I bond compared to the coumarin-I bond (See Figure 22). Selectivity of this dissociation was confirmed by ESR experiments, enabling to evidence the formation of *para*-substituted aryl radicals.

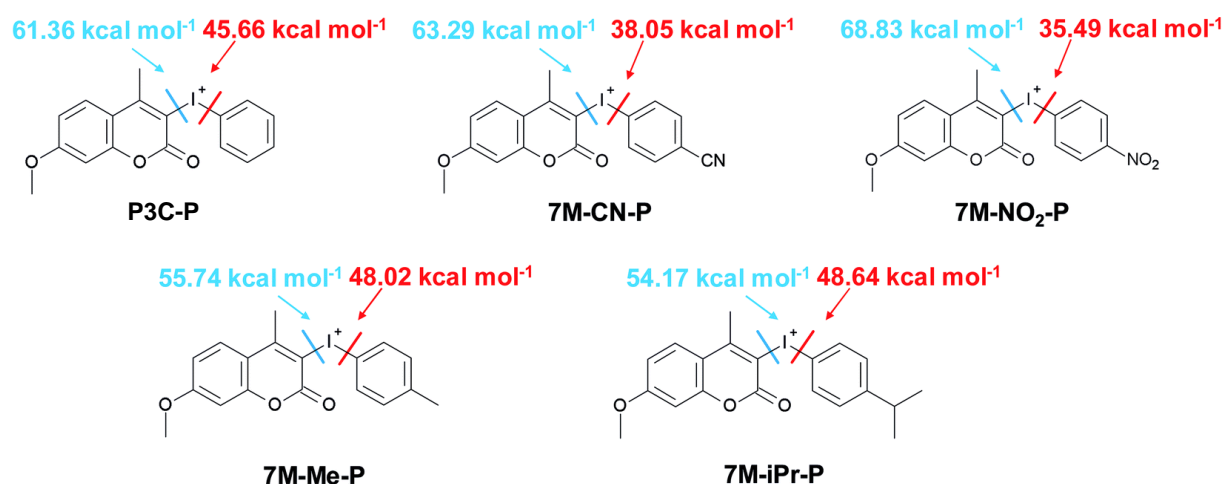


Figure 22. BDE determined for the two carbon-I bonds. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [314]

Examination of their photoinitiating abilities during the CP of CADE at 365 nm revealed P3C-P to furnish the highest final monomer conversion (59% conversion after 800 s). Here again, Ortyl and coworkers demonstrated the detrimental impact of the substitution of iodonium salts with electron donating or accepting groups. In this series of coumarin-based iodonium salts, the best candidate was again the iodonium salt capable to produce phenyl

radicals. Concerning the iodonium salts bearing electron donating groups, (7-methoxy-4-methyl-2-oxo-chromen-3-yl)-(p-tolyl)iodonium hexafluorophosphate (7M-Me-P) and (4-isopropylphenyl)-(7-methoxy-4-methyl-2-oxo-chromen-3-yl)iodonium hexafluorophosphate (7M-iPr-P) could furnish monomer conversions slightly lowered compared to that of P3C-P (40 and 53% respectively). In the case of the two salts bearing electron accepting groups ((4-cyanophenyl)-(7-methoxy-4-methyl-2-oxo-chromen-3-yl)iodonium hexafluorophosphate (7M-CN-P) and (7-methoxy-4-methyl-2-oxo-chromen-3-yl)-(4-nitrophenyl)iodonium hexafluorophosphate (7M-NO₂-P), only low monomer conversions were obtained (21 and 29% respectively). These results were assigned to the ability of these salts to facily protonate during photolysis so that this protonation was competing with the generation of photoacids and thus negatively impact the addition of superacids on monomers for photoinitiation.

2.5. BODIPY derivatives

Up to now, all monocomponent systems based on iodonium salts were designed to exhibit an absorption centered in the near UV/visible range. In 2021, Ortyl and coworkers developed a series of panchromatic structures comprising a BODIPY as the chromophore and differing by the counter-anions (See Figure 23).[31]

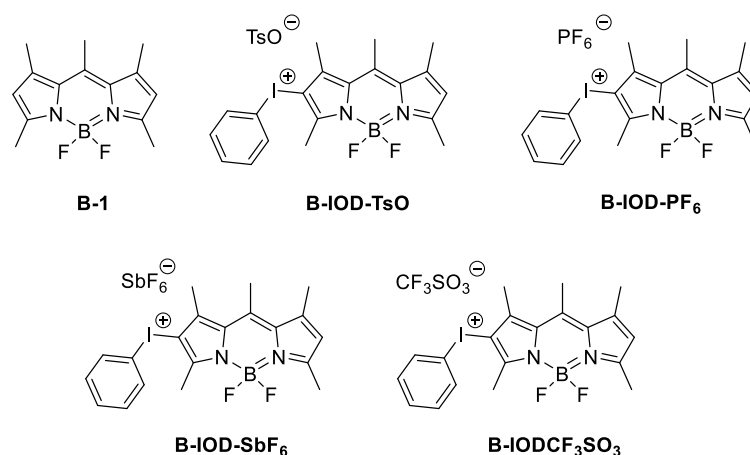


Figure 23. Chemical structures of BODIPY-based iodonium salts.

All BODIPY-based iodonium salts exhibited a broad absorption extending between 250 and 600 nm, making these compounds promising candidates for photoinitiation processes done at 365, 405, 420, 450, 455, 470, 490, 505 and 530 nm (See Figure 24 and Table 7). High molar extinction coefficients at the absorption maxima could be determined, ranging between 28 076 M⁻¹.cm⁻¹ for B-IOD-TsO up to 31 620 M⁻¹.cm⁻¹ for B-IOD-PF₆.

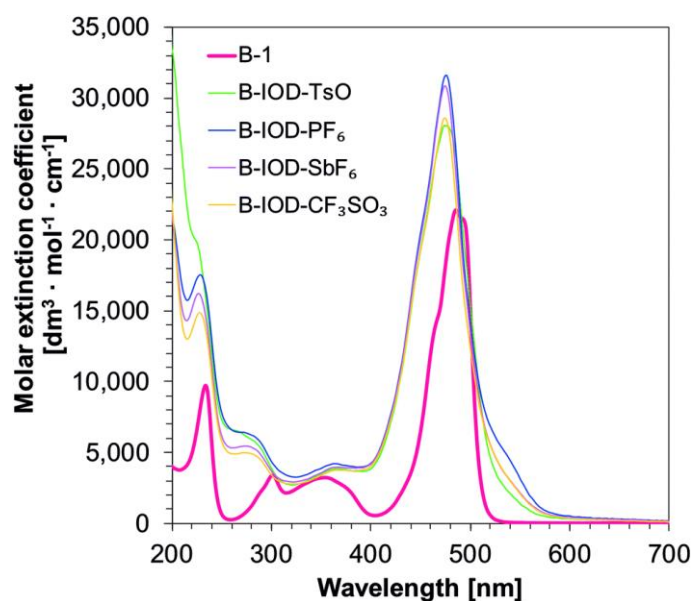


Figure 24. UV-visible absorption spectra of BODIPY-based iodonium salts recorded in acetonitrile. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [31]

Table 7. Optical characteristics of the different iodonium salts at the absorption maximum and at different irradiation wavelengths.

	λ_{\max} (nm)	ϵ_{\max} ($M^{-1} \cdot cm^{-1}$)	ϵ_{365}	ϵ_{405}	ϵ_{420}	ϵ_{450}	ϵ_{455}	ϵ_{470}	ϵ_{490}	ϵ_{505}	ϵ_{530}
chromophore used to conjugate iodonium salts											
B-1	486	22115	2955	547	1070	6399	9025	15332	21585	7703	149
Cationic photoinitiators											
B-IOD-TSO	474	28076	3861	4257	7145	19209	21218	27227	22515	11979	2997
B-IOD-PF ₆	476	31620	4204	4657	7699	20412	22442	30047	21650	11454	5536
B-IOD-SbF ₆	475	30869	3950	4629	7570	20040	22122	29748	20393	10770	4057
B-IOD-CF ₃ SO ₃	474	28599	3757	4461	7308	19165	21012	27663	18677	10021	4089

Photolysis experiments done in acetonitrile revealed the photolysis rates to be directly related to the molar extinction coefficients of the different salts at the different irradiation wavelengths. Besides, no photolysis could be detected at 530 nm, resulting from the low absorption of the different iodonium salts at this specific wavelength (See Figure 25). Influence of the anions on the photolysis rates could also be detected, evidencing the different nucleophilicities of the anions. By increasing the size of the anions, a reduction of the nucleophilicity was obtained, speeding up the photolysis process. This trend was confirmed during the polymerization experiments.

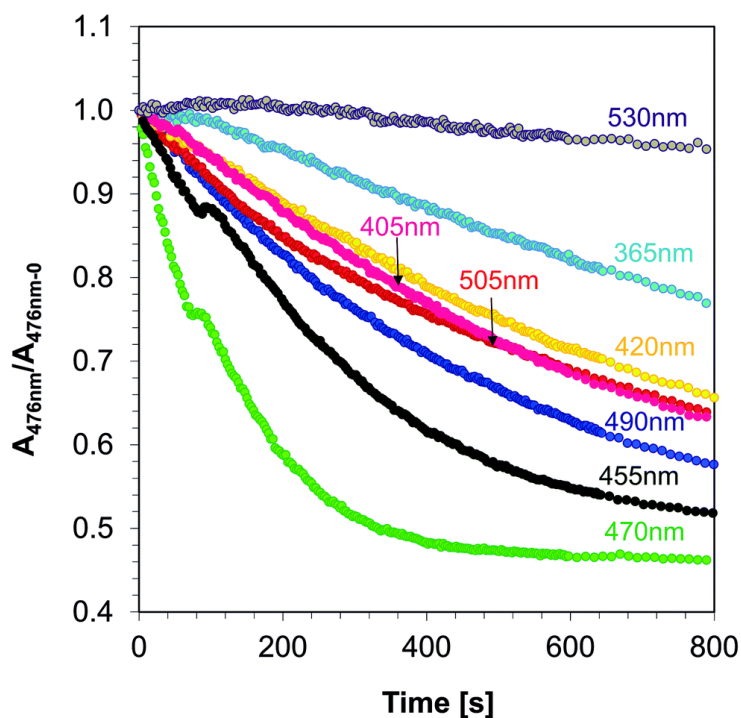


Figure 25. Dependence A/A_0 at 476 nm during the photolysis of B-IOD-PF6 upon irradiation with different diodes emitting at 365 nm, 405 nm, 420 nm, 455 nm, 470 nm, 490 nm, 505 nm, and 530 nm. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [31]

Investigation of the fragmentation mechanism by theoretical calculations revealed the photodissociation to occur preferentially on the phenyl side due to a lower BDE (32.44 kcal/mol vs. 69.25 kcal/mol on the BODIPY side) (See Figure 26). These results are consistent with the previous trends determined for asymmetrically substituted iodonium salts.

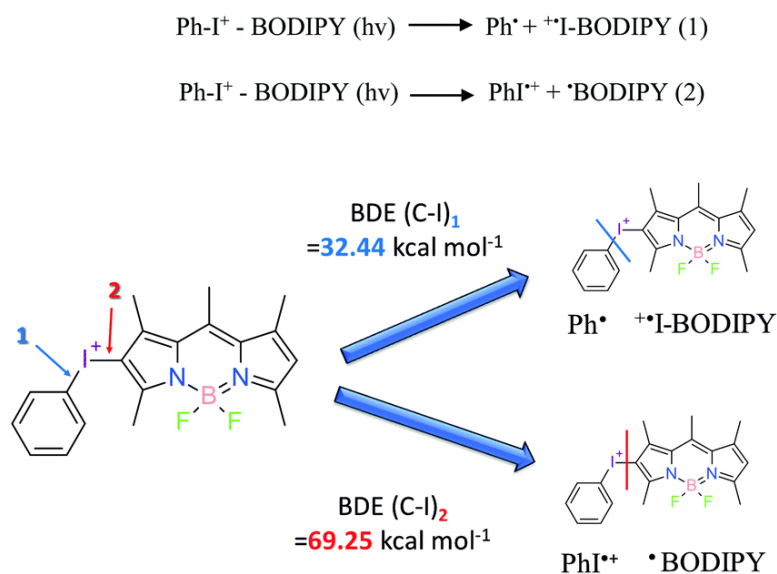


Figure 26. Dissociation mechanism of the BODIPY-based iodonium salts. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [31]

As the main findings of these investigations, the CP of CADE and TEGDVE revealed the monomer conversions to correlate well with the molar extinction coefficients at the irradiation wavelengths. A perfect correlation between the intensity of the light source and the monomer conversions could also be determined. In this context and considering that the difference of light intensities used, the highest monomer conversions were obtained at 405 nm and 450 nm ($I = 22.8 \text{ mW/cm}^2$), with CADE conversions of 79 and 70% respectively after 900 s of irradiation. In the case of TEGDVE, higher monomer conversions were obtained and conversions higher than 90% could be obtained upon irradiation between 365 and 455 nm (See Table 8). Here, a dark polymerization process could be detected. Using B-IOD-PF₆ as the photoinitiator (3 wt%) and upon irradiation at 505 nm for 200 s, an additional CADE conversion of 7.5% could be detected after the light was switched off for 700 s. In previous works, the following scale of reactivity depending on the counter-anions used was established for iodonium salts comprising fluorinated anions: $\text{BF}_4^- < \text{PF}_6^- < \text{AsF}_6^- < \text{SbF}_6^- < \text{B}(\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)_4^- < \text{Ga}(\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)_4^-$. [315] In the present case, SbF_6^- being the less nucleophilic anion, the highest monomer conversion was logically obtained with the iodonium salt comprising this anion (See Figure 27 for TEGDVE and CADE). Conversely, due to the high nucleophilic character of the tosylate group, the lowest monomer conversion was obtained for the iodonium salt comprising this anion.

Table 8. Monomer conversions obtained during the CP of CADE and TEGDVE using B-Iod-PF₆ (3 wt%) with different light sources.

monomer	ϵ ($\text{M}^{-1} \cdot \text{cm}^{-1}$)	Light sources	Intensity of LEDs (mW/cm^2)	Conversion (%)
CADE	4204	365 nm HP	22.8	64.6
CADE	4657	405 nm HP	22.8	79.0
CADE	20412	450 nm HP	22.8	70.0
CADE	30047	470 nm	12.9	57.2
CADE	11454	505 nm	7.9	63.0
TEGDVE	30047	470 nm	12.9	83.4
TEGDVE	22442	455 nm	12.9	90.8
TEGDVE	7699	420 nm	12.9	92.8
TEGDVE	4657	405 nm	12.9	88.7
TEGDVE	4204	365 nm HP	12.9	90.8
TEGDVE	21650	490 nm	5.1	90.5
TEGDVE	5536	530 nm	6.9	81.6
TEGDVE	22454	505 nm	7.9	69.3

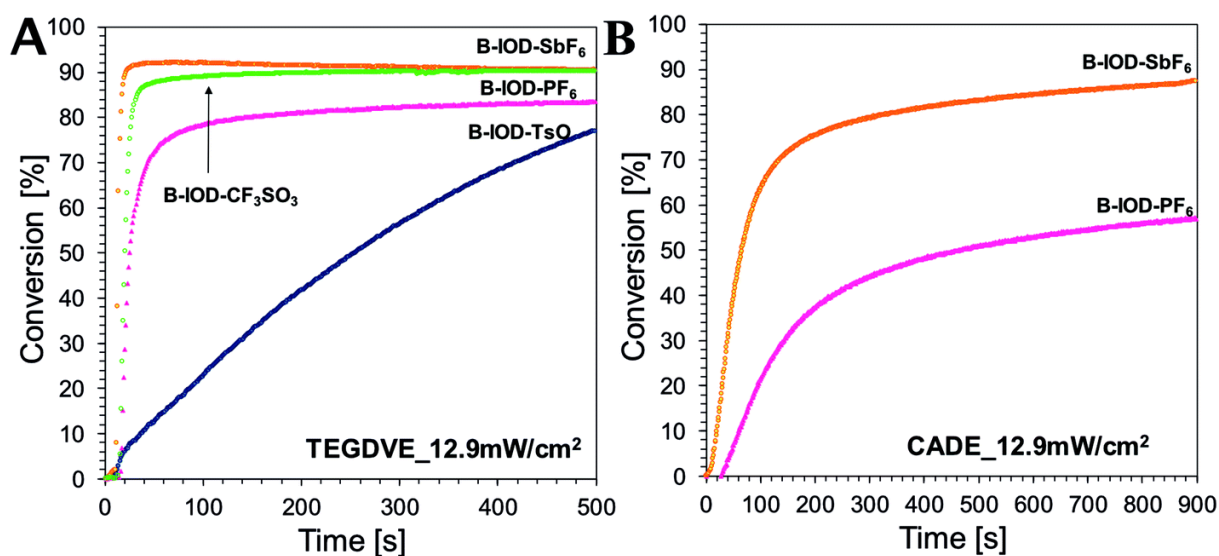


Figure 27. Polymerization profiles of: (A) TEGDVE and (B) CADE upon irradiation at 470 nm using BODIPY-based iodonium salts differing by the counter-anions. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [31]

Finally, interest of these mono-component structures was confirmed by comparing the monomer conversions obtained with B-1 and Iod1 and the corresponding monocomponent system B-IOD-PF₆ at different wavelengths. By adjusting the concentration so that the polymerization experiments were carried out at the same absorbance, an improvement of the monomer conversion by ca 5% could be obtained with the mono-component system, demonstrating that the photoinduced electron transfer was facilitated in the case of intramolecular interactions between the iodonium salt and the photosensitizer.

2.6. Iodonium salts derived from natural dyes.

The design of photoinitiators derived from natural dyes is an active research field considering that these chromophores are issued from renewable sources and can be more biocompatible and less toxic than artificial dyes produced by the chemical industries.[316] In 2021, Xiao and coworkers investigated the design of iodonium salt using an anthraquinone and a flavone derivative as the chromophore (See Figure 28).[317] Choice of these chromophores was notably motivated by the excellent performances obtained in multicomponent photoinitiating systems.[108,287,288,318–321] From the absorption viewpoint, these two dyes are ideal candidates for the design of colorless coatings. Indeed, as shown in Figure 29, absorptions of Iod2' and Iod3' are centered in the near UV range, with a tail extending up to 450 nm. Absorption maxima located at 336 and 344 nm were determined in acetonitrile. Light sources emitting in the 250–650 and 320–480 nm range were selected as the irradiation sources for photopolymerization. Compared to Iod1, a significant enhancement of the molar extinction coefficient in the 300–450 nm range was detected for Iod2' and Iod3', what is beneficial for radical generation. During the FRP of TMPTA, logically, higher monomer conversions were obtained with Iod2' and Iod3' (33 and 46%) compared to Iod1 (31%) upon irradiation in the 250–650 nm range. By irradiating in the 320–480 nm, a reduction

of the TMPTA conversion was logically observed, resulting from a reduction of the absorption properties. Thus, conversions of 18, 18 and 41% were determined for Iod1, Iod2' and Iod3' respectively. In order to improve the monomer conversion, addition of a tertiary amine such as ethyl dimethylaminobenzoate (EDAB) enabled to significantly improve the monomer conversion, increasing to 25, 30 and 40% in the same irradiation conditions (320-480 nm range). Improvement of the monomer conversion with EDAB was assigned to the formation of a charge transfer complex (CTC) with the iodonium salts, improving the light absorption properties. In order to extend the sensitization up to 500 nm, camphorquinone was used as the photosensitizer. Noticeably, upon irradiation at 465 nm with a LED, the two-component CQ/Iod3' furnish similar conversion than the reference CQ/Iod1 system (31% TMPTA conversion after 300 s). Conversely, a lower monomer conversion was obtained with Iod2 (28%). Finally, by using three component CQ/Iod/EDAB system and still by irradiating at 465 nm, an improvement of the monomer conversion was obtained resulting from the concomitant light absorption by camphorquinone but also by the CTC Iod/EDAB (See Figure 29). Thus, conversions of 36, 32 and 36% were obtained with the three-component photoinitiating systems prepared with Iod1, Iod2' and Iod3' respectively.

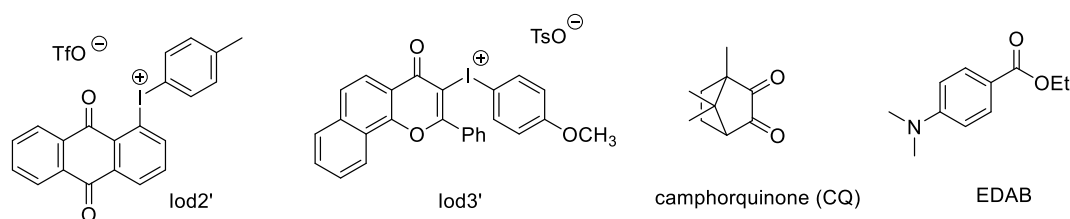


Figure 28. Chemical structures of the anthraquinone and flavone-based iodonium salts investigated by Xiao and coworkers.

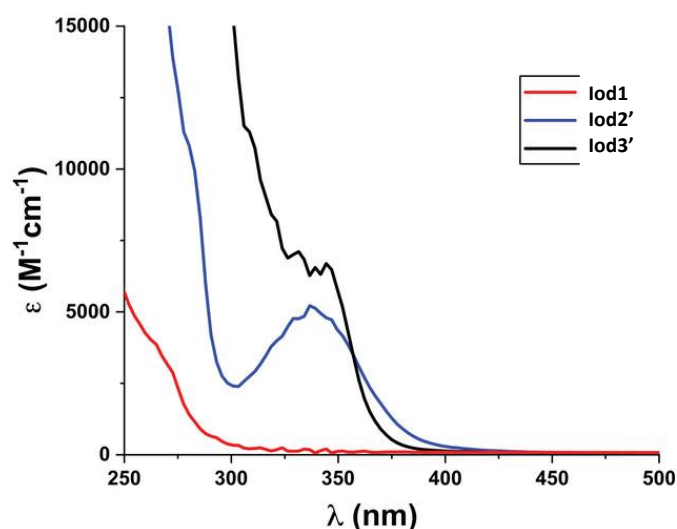


Figure 29. UV-visible absorption spectra of Iod1, Iod2' and Iod3' in acetonitrile. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [317]

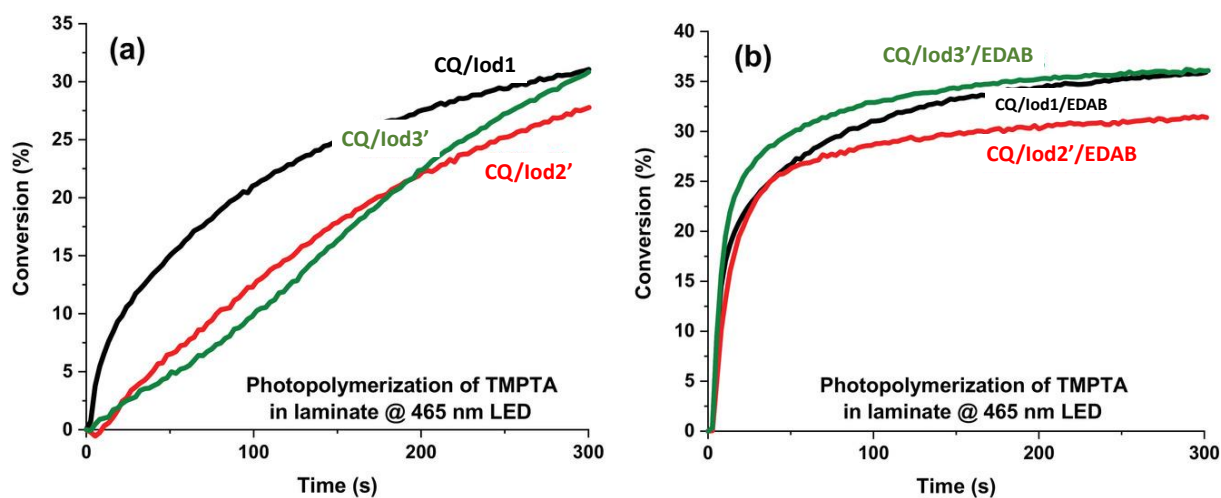


Figure 30. TMPTA conversions determined upon irradiation at 465 nm using (A) Two-component CQ/Iod systems and (B) Three-component CQ/Iod/EDAB photoinitiating systems. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [317]

2.7. Iodonium salts based on naphthalimides.

Naphthalimides have been extensively studied for the design of photoinitiating systems and a wide range of structures have been proposed by Lalevée and coworkers. [45–62] Capitalizing on these works, in 2016, the elaboration of a monocomponent system was examined and an iodonium-naphthalimide conjugate was proposed (See Figure 31).[32] Here again, the chromophore was precisely selected in order the iodonium salt to exhibit an absorption centered in the near UV/visible range and thus to be only slightly colored. As shown in the Figure 32, an absorption maximum at 340 nm was determined in acetonitrile.

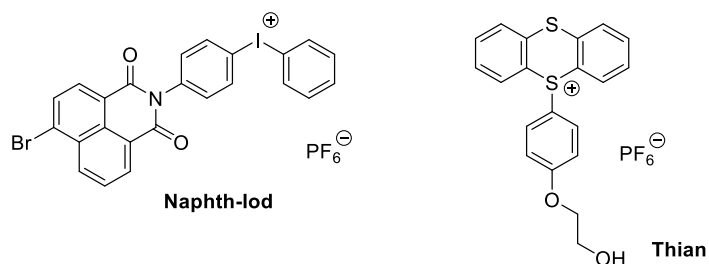


Figure 31. Chemical structures of Napht-Iod and thianthrenium (Thian).

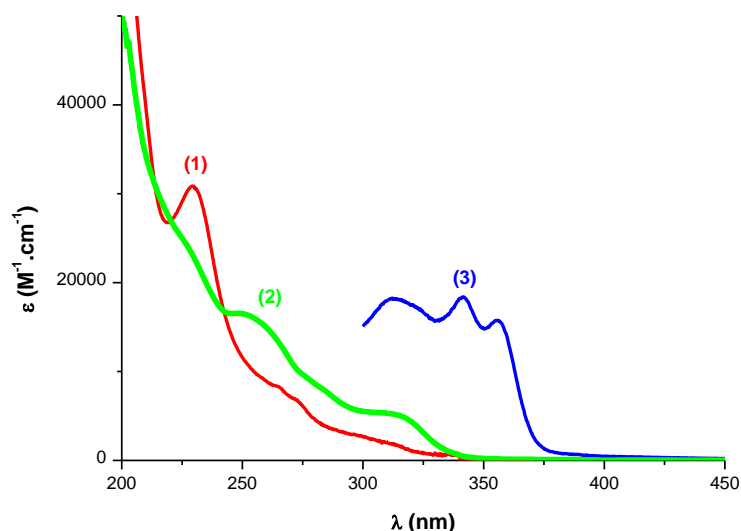


Figure 32. UV-visible absorption spectra of Naphth-Iod (3), Iod (1) and Thian (2) in acetonitrile. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [32]

The cationic polymerization of a representative diepoxide monomer i.e. CADE revealed Napht-Iod to be capable to act as a monocomponent system. A CADE conversion of 40% after 800 s of irradiation at 365 nm was obtained using Napht-Iod (1 wt%). Upon addition of water acting as a hydrogen donor (1 wt%), this value increased up to 50%. These values are greatly higher than that obtained with the reference photoinitiator, namely thianthrenium (Thian) (20% conversion) or Iod1 for which no conversion was detected due to the lack of absorption at 365 nm. By theoretical calculations, determination of the two BDEs (47.6 and 61.7 kcal/mol) revealed the photocleavage to occur on the phenyl side, as observed for the other asymmetrically substituted iodonium salts (See Figure 34).

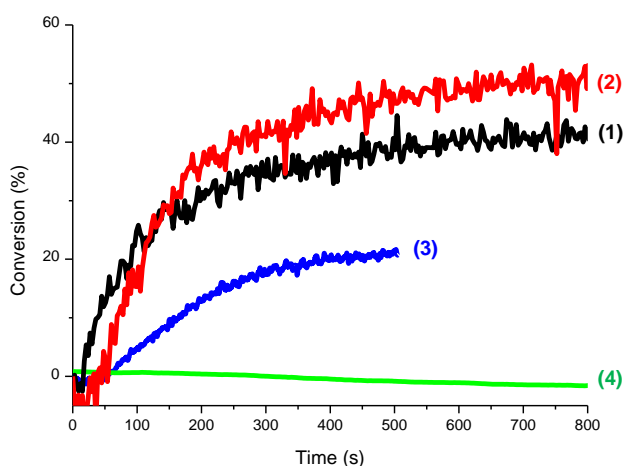


Figure 33. Photopolymerization profiles of CADE under air upon irradiation at 365 nm; (1) Naphth-Iod (1% w); (2) Naphth-Iod/water (1/1% w/w); (3) Thian (1% w/w); (4) Iod1 (1% w/w). Reproduced with permission of Ref. [32]

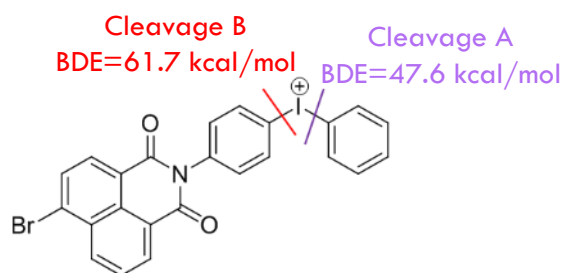


Figure 34. The two possible cleavage processes in Naphth-Iod with the associated C-I Bond Dissociation Energy (BDE). Reproduced with permission of Ref. [32]

In 2020, the same authors investigated the influence of the counter-anions on the photoinitiating ability of the iodonium salts (See Figure 35).[34] As observed by Ortyl and coworkers, the highest monomer conversions were obtained with the salts 3 and 6 bearing an hexafluorophosphate or a hexafluoroantimonate anion.

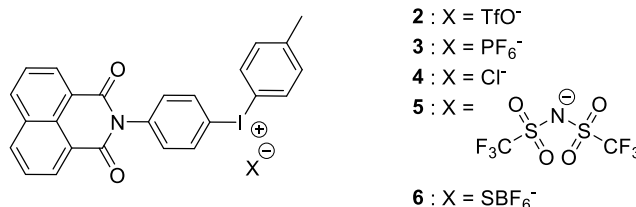


Figure 35. Chemical structures of iodonium salts 2-6.

2.8. New approaches towards monocomponent iodonium salts.

In the aforementioned examples, the design of monocomponent photoinitiating systems has been achieved by chemical engineering on the diaryliodonium salt. However, photoinitiators obtained using this approach have never been used in industries, their syntheses being difficult, requiring numerous synthetic steps and in turn furnishing costly compounds. With aim at developing more simple synthetic approaches, metathesis which consists in exchanging an anion for another one was proposed as soon as 2015 by Lalevée and coworkers. Using this approach, anions capable to act as photosensitizers could be used as counteranions. This strategy was notably applied to two polyoxometalates that were used as anions for Iod1. Two salts were prepared, namely [(SiMo₁₂O₄₀)⁴⁻](Ph₂I⁺)₄ and [(W₁₀O₃₂)⁴⁻](Ph₂I⁺)₄ (See Figure 36).[322] For comparison, two onium salts were investigated, namely [(SiMo₁₂O₄₀)⁴⁻](TH)₄ and [(W₁₀O₃₂)⁴⁻](TH)₄ comprising arylthianthrenium as the cation. Indeed, arylthianthrenium salts are extensively used in industry and thus constitute excellent candidates for elaborating monocomponent photoinitiating systems.[323–325] In these structures, the two polyoxometalates exhibited the dual role of anions ensuring the neutrality of the salts but also as the photosensitizers for the iodonium or the arylthianthrenium salts.

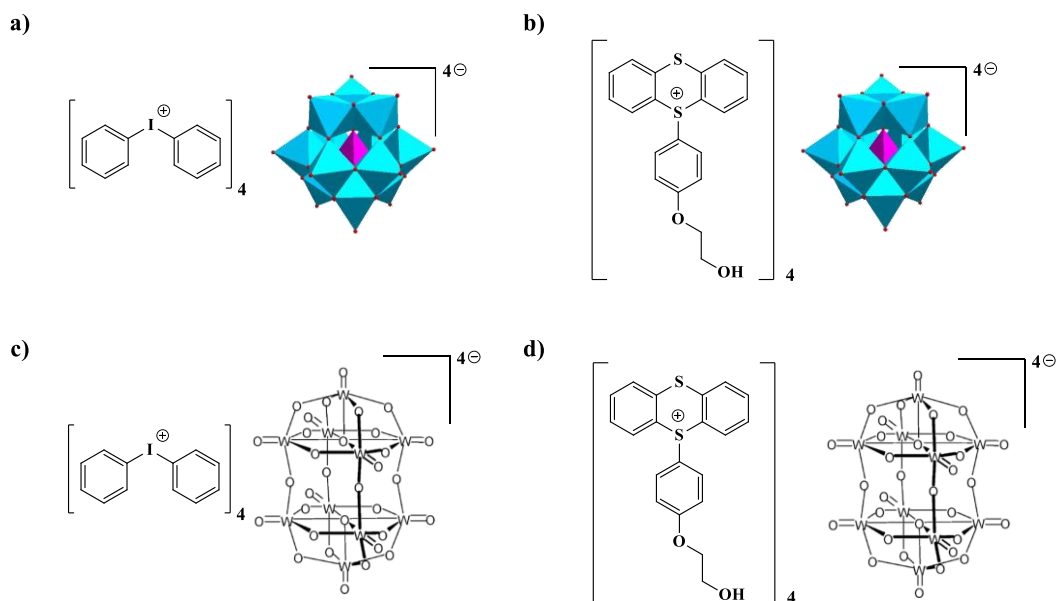


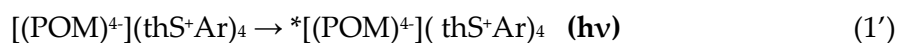
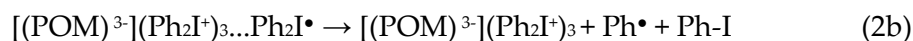
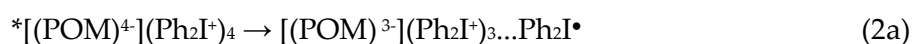
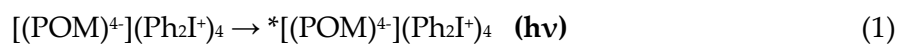
Figure 36. Chemical structures of onium salts in which polyoxometalates have been used as counteranions and as photosensitizers. Reproduced with permission of Ref. [322]

From the absorption viewpoint, use of polyoxometalates did not modify the positions of the absorption maxima compared to that of the commercially available iodonium and thianthrenium salts (See Table 9). However, a 6-fold increase of the molar extinction coefficients were obtained for the modified onium salts, what is beneficial for the photochemical reactivity. In this series of salts, SiMo12-Iod only exhibited a low solubility in acetonitrile so that the molar extinction coefficient could not be determined for this salt. For the different polymerization experiments, a Xe-Hg lamp was used due to its UV centered emission.

Table 9. Molar extinction coefficients of the different POM/onium salts determined at λ_{\max} in acetonitrile.

	λ_{abs} (nm)	ϵ ($\text{M}^{-1}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$)
SiMo12-Iod	225	n.d.
SiMo12-TH	253	83440
W₁₀O₃₂-Iod	227	68461
W₁₀O₃₂-TH	255	85920
Iod	229	15052
TH	255	17656

Investigation of the photolysis of the onium salts in solution revealed the photolysis of the polyoxomolybdates to be faster than that of the polyoxotungstates. The formation of the classical photoproducts resulting from the photolysis process was detected by UV-visible absorption spectroscopy (See equations 2a-2c, 2a'-2b').



Interest of these modified onium salts was notably demonstrated during the FRP of TMPTA. As shown in the Figure 37B, SiMo12-TH could furnish a TMPTA conversion of 53% after 1000 s of irradiation with a Xe-Hg lamp contrarily to only 17% for the benchmark thianthrenium salt. Among the salts investigated, SiMo12-Iod proved to be the most reactive one, giving a final monomer conversion of 74% after 1000 s. Improved reactivity of the modified onium salts was confirmed during the CP of CADE. Thus, conversions of 43 and 35% were respectively determined for SiMo12-Iod and Iod at similar iodonium concentrations. The same holds for the thianthrenium salts. Thus, conversions of 44 and 38% were measured after 1000 s of irradiation with SiMo12-TH and TH. Conversely, $\text{W}_{10}\text{O}_{32}$ -TH only exhibited a low reactivity during the CP of CADE (25% conversion) and these results are consistent with the photolysis experiments demonstrating slower photolysis kinetics for polyoxotungstates compared to polyoxomolybdates.

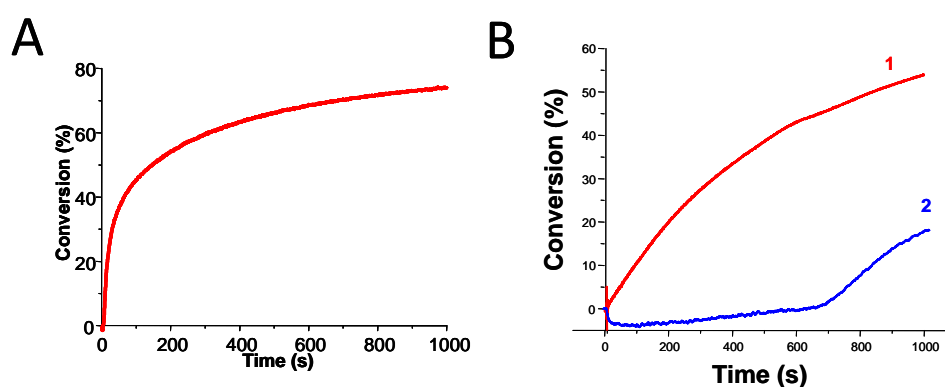


Figure 37. Photopolymerization profile of TMPTA in laminate upon the Xe-Hg lamp exposure (110 mW/cm²) in the presence of (A) SiMo12-Iod (2%, w/w) and (B) (1) SiMo12-TH (1%, w/w); (2) TH salt (0.3% w/w). Reproduced with permission of Ref. [322]

Conclusion

The design of monocomponent photoinitiating systems based on iodonium salts has greatly evolved over the years. If the covalent linkage of chromophores has been extensively studied, new emerging strategies have emerged such as the use of “intelligent” counteranions capable to absorb this. Using this approach, the desired monocomponent iodonium salt can be obtained. As drawback, the chromophore used for metathesis must be negatively charged. At present, several new and innovative research directions exist. Notably no iodonium salts activable with sunlight has been reported to date. Besides, it could constitute an interesting approach for developing low cost photopolymerization processes. Similarly, the design of water-soluble iodonium salts is still lacking for performing the FRP of (meth)acrylates in safer conditions. However, by developing such structures, the access of hydrogels could be possible. Even if the design of monocomponent photoinitiating systems is actively researched, easiness of synthesis should also be considered. Indeed, even if highly efficient, iodonium-based monocomponent systems will never be used in industry if their synthesis is too complex and the synthetic cost too high.

Acknowledgments

Aix Marseille University and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) are acknowledged for financial supports.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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