## Equilibrium partitioning of organic compounds

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The equilibrium concentration of *i* in phase 1 of a multi-phase system is zero. What can you say about the equilibrium concentration in all other phases?

**Answer:** According to theory, the concentration of any compound *i* must always be larger than zero in all phases of a system if *i* is present in the system at all. This is tricky though, because there are cases in which the partition equilibrium is shifted so much towards other phases that it is experimentally close to impossible to detect the compound in phase 1. An example is the partitioning of very large organic molecules (e.g. proteins) or ionic organic compounds. Both do not occur at detectable concentrations in the gas phase.



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