PROGRESS IN INORGANIC CHEMISTRY

Edited by

KENNETH D. KARLIN

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

VOLUME 54



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Progress in Inorganic Chemistry

Volume 54

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Progress in Inorganic Chemistry

Volume 54

Atomlike Building Units of Adjustable Character: Solid-State and Solution Routes to Manipulating Hexanuclear Transition Metal Chalcohalide Clusters

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, considerable progress has been made in the synthesis and characterization of compounds containing discrete hexanuclear clusters (1–12). Most recently, soluble, molecular forms of these clusters have begun to see use as building units in the construction of extended solid frameworks and supramolecular assemblies. In our view, certain hexanuclear cluster cores are very much akin to a new transition metal ion, but one with a large radius, a fixed coordination geometry, and electronic properties that can be adjusted through synthesis. In particular, clusters of this type are encountered with second- and third-row transition elements of groups 4–7 in reduced oxidation states, accompanied by core halide and/or chalcogenide ligands. Herein, we review the methods available for manipulating the composition of such species, and give a brief overview of their use in solution assembly reactions.

A. Cluster Geometries

The clusters of interest here bear one of three distinct geometries, all of which are based upon a central M_6 unit exhibiting some degree of metal-metal bonding. In two of the geometries, the metal atoms are arranged in an octahedron, while in the third they from a regular trigonal prism. Importantly,



Figure 1. Idealized structures of an octahedral ML₆ complex (*a*), a face-capped octahedral M₆X₈L₆ cluster (*b*), and an edge-bridged octahedral M₆X₁₂L₆ cluster (*c*). Black, shaded, and white spheres represent metal atoms M, inner-ligands X, and terminal-ligands L, respectively. Each structure conforms to O_h symmetry.

each metal center bears one radially extending terminal ligand L, such that, overall, the outer coordination sphere is analogous to that of an octahedral or trigonal-prismatic metal complex.

For the metals of Groups 6 and 7, the M₆X₈L₆ geometry displayed in the middle of Fig. 1 is predominant. Here, the cluster core consists of a perfect octahedron of metal atoms with each face capped by a halide or chalcogenide anion X. The eight core anions form a cube, with the metal atoms positioned approximately within the plane and near the center of each cube face. Thus, each metal center has local $C_{4\nu}$ symmetry, with a ligand set comprised of an axial ligand L, a square of four equatorial X anions, and a lower, staggered square of four metal atoms. Typical mean M-M bond distances range from 2.601(4) Å in $[\text{Re}_6\text{S}_8\text{Cl}_6]^{4-}$ (13) to 2.681(3) Å in $[\text{Re}_6\text{Te}_8(\text{CN})_6]^{4-}$ (14), while mean M-X distances range from 2.403(9) Å in $[\text{Re}_6\text{S}_8\text{Cl}_6]^{4-}$ to 2.792(7) Å in $[\text{W}_6\text{I}_{14}]^{2-}$ (15). Based upon comparisons with analogous ML₆ complexes, the clusters exhibit a core radius of ~ 2.8 Å, which of course is much larger than the radius of any single transition metal ion. The M₆X₈ core geometry is perhaps most notably observed in the Chevrel phases of the type $A_xMo_6X_8$ (X = S, Se), which have long been of interest for their superconducting and magnetic properties (16-19). This geometry generally does not appear to support the presence of an interstitial atom at the center of the octahedron, with an exception arising in the electron-deficient clusters of Nb₆HI₁₁ (20, 21).

Clusters containing metals from groups 4 and 5 show a strong preference for structures based upon the $M_6X_{12}L_6$ geometry shown in Figure 1(*c*). In this case, the core consists of an octahedron of metal atoms with each edge bridged by a halide or chalcogenide anion X. The 12 core anions form a regular cuboctahedron, with the metal atoms positioned near the center but slightly below the plane

of each square face. Accordingly, each metal center has local C_{4v} symmetry, with a ligand set comprised of an axial ligand L, a square of four equatorial X anions, and a lower, eclipsed square of four metal atoms. Typical mean M-M bond distances range from 2.803 Å in Nb₆F₁₅ (22) to 3.018(2) Å in $[Nb_6Cl_{18}]^{2-}$ (23), while mean M–X distances range from 2.049 Å in Nb₆F₁₅ to 2.797(5) Å in Ta₆I₁₄ (24). Note that these clusters tend to be slightly larger than face-capped octahedral clusters, with a core radius of \sim 3.2 Å, based upon comparisons with analogous ML₆ complexes. The edge-bridged octahedral geometry has also been observed for a single binary group 6 halide: W₆Cl₁₈ (25, 26). Importantly, for group 4 metals, this geometry typically occurs with an interstitial main group or transition metal atom situated at the center of the octahedron, giving rise to clusters of generic formula M₆ZX₁₂L₆. Clusters of this type are also apparent in numerous reduced rare earth halide phases, although generally only within the confines of a highly condensed framework (1, 5, 6, 10, 27). These interesting rare earth clusters will not be further discussed here, since methods for bringing them into solution have not yet been developed.

An alternative $M_6ZX_{12}L_6$ cluster geometry of relevance here has been encountered in a few compounds. As shown at the right in Fig. 2, the metal atoms in this geometry surround the interstitial atom Z to form a trigonal prism instead of an octahedron. Twelve edge-bridging anions X complete the cluster core, with two bridging each of the longer edges of the trigonal prism, and one bridging each of the shorter edges. Here again, a single terminal ligand L extends from



Figure 2. Idealized structures of a trigonal prismatic ML_6 complex (*a*) and a centered edge-bridged trigonal-prismatic $M_6ZX_{12}L_6$ cluster (*b*). Black, small shaded, large shaded, and white spheres represent metal atoms M, interstitial atom Z, inner ligands X, and terminal ligands L, respectively. Each structure conforms to D_{3h} symmetry.

each metal vertex, now resulting in an outer ligand set akin to that of a trigonal prismatic ML₆ complex. Note that the nonmetal atoms of the cluster are arranged in a hexagonal closest packing, whereas those of the centered, edge-bridged octahedral geometry are arranged in a cubic closest packing. Trigonal-prismatic clusters of this type were first observed within the one-dimensional (1D) compounds $A_3Nb_6SBr_{17}$ (A = K, Rb, Cs, Tl) (28, 29). Very recently, they have also been observed in the two-dimensional (2D) solid W₆CCl₁₆ and as the molecular species $[W_6CCl_{18}]^{n-}$ (n = 0–3) and $[W_6NCl_{18}]^{n-}$ (n = 1–3) (30–32). Taking $[W_6CCl_{18}]^{2-}$ as a prototype, it is worth noting that mean $Cl^a \cdots Cl^a$ angles of 71.7° and 89.2° deviate somewhat from the analogous S–Mo–S angles of 78.7° and 84.0° in MoS₂ (33, 34). While trigonal-prismatic technetium and rhenium halide clusters are known without interstitial atoms, these have multiple-bond character along three parallel edges, leading to an outer ligand arrangement that is unlike that of any simple metal complex (34).

B. Electronic Structures

The electronic structures for many hexanuclear clusters adopting the basic geometries displayed in Figs. 1 and 2 have been investigated using a variety of computational methods (30, 35–47). We will therefore only briefly summarize the results obtained from DFT calculations performed—by methods described in detail elsewhere (30, 44, 45)—on a few representative examples.

The frontier orbitals calculated for the face-capped octahedral cluster $[\text{Re}_6\text{Se}_8\text{Cl}_6]^{4-}$ consist of a pair of e_g highest occupied molecular orbitals (HOMOs) and an a_{2g} lowest unoccupied molecular orbitals (LUMO), as shown in the middle of Fig. 3. The former are primarily rhenium-rhenium bonding in character, with some rhenium-selenium antibonding contributions, while the latter is almost exclusively rhenium-rhenium antibonding in character. The 10 orbitals (three triply degenerate orbital sets and an a_{1g} orbital) directly lower in energy than the HOMO are principally rhenium-rhenium bonding in character. This result is quite analogous to that obtained previously for the face-capped octahedral Mo₆S₈ units of the Chevrel phases (38). Filling 12 rhenium-rhenium bonding orbitals with 24 electrons gives the equivalent of a single two-center, two-electron bond per Re-Re edge of the Re₆ octahedron; thus, the cluster is electron precise. Consistent with the expectation that all of these bonding orbitals should be filled, the cluster formally contains Re(III), affording a count of $6 \times 4 = 24$ metal-based valence electrons. While the majority of the facecapped octahedral clusters have this preferred electron count of 24, counts as low as 19 and as high as 25 have been established within Nb₆I₁₁ and [Re₄Os₂- $Se_8(CN)_6]^{3-}$, respectively (20, 45). Since the HOMO for $[Re_6Se_8Cl_6]^{4-}$ is doubly degenerate, one would expect the one-electron oxidized (23-electron) cluster to undergo a first-order Jahn-Teller distortion. Indeed, careful examination of