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Carbon Dioxide Insertion into Rhenium Hydrides as a Probe for the Impact of Solvent on Linear Free Energy Relationships Between Thermodynamic and Kinetic Hydricity

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Abstract

The kinetics of CO₂ insertion into electronically different Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H (^Rbpy = 4,4'-R-2,2'-bipyridine; R = OMe, ^tBu, Me, H, Br, COOMe, CF₃) complexes to form Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃{OC(H)O} compounds were determined in acetone, dimethylacetamide (DMAc), dimethylformamide (DMF), dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO), and 3-methoxypropionitrile (3-MPN) and compared with previous data in acetonitrile (MeCN). The rates of CO₂ insertion for any one complex of the type Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H in different solvents correlates with the Dimroth-Reichardt (*E*_T(30)) solvent parameter. Hammett plots in each solvent indicate that insertion reactions are faster for bpy ligands with electron-donating groups. There is, however, no correlation between the slope of the Hammett plot in different solvents and any common solvent parameter. Similarly, the enthalpies and entropies of activation and kinetic isotope effects associated with CO₂ insertion into Re(bpy)(CO)₃H in different solvents do not correlate with any common solvent parameters. Theoretical calculations were used to determine the relative thermodynamic hydricities of Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H type complexes in MeCN, acetone, DMF, and DMSO and in each solvent complexes with more electron-donating substituents on the bpy ligand are stronger hydride donors. Linear Free Energy Relationships (LFERs) between calculated thermodynamic and experimental kinetic hydricity, as measured through CO₂ insertion reactions, were observed in MeCN, acetone, DMF, and DMSO. The slopes of the LFERs correlate with the dielectric constant of the solvent. Overall, this work provides fundamental information about the thermodynamics and kinetics of hydride transfer reactions in different solvents, which is valuable for catalyst design.

Introduction

Hydride transfer reactions from transition metal hydrides to organic compounds represent a crucial elementary step in many transition metal catalyzed processes.¹ For example, hydride transfer is important in transition metal catalyzed hydrogenation,² hydroformylation,³ and hydrosilylation⁴ reactions. Additionally, hydride transfer from a transition metal hydride to CO₂ is often a key step in the reduction of CO₂ to chemicals, such as formic acid or methanol.⁵ Two quantitative parameters are often used to understand the ability of a transition metal hydride to donate a hydride to a substrate (Figure 1): i) *Thermodynamic hydricity* ($\Delta G^\circ_{H^-}$) is the free energy needed to release a hydride ion, H⁻, from a transition metal hydride in solution,⁶ and ii) *Kinetic hydricity* is the elementary rate constant for the transfer of a hydride to a particular substrate, which is related to $\Delta G^\ddagger_{H^-}$.^{6b,6c} Whereas thermodynamic hydricity is an intrinsic property of a transition metal hydride, kinetic hydricity varies as the substrate that is accepting the hydride is changed. Understanding thermodynamic hydricity is important because it enables predictions about whether a hydride transfer reaction is energetically favorable, while understanding kinetic hydricity is important because it enables predictions about the rate of a specific reaction.

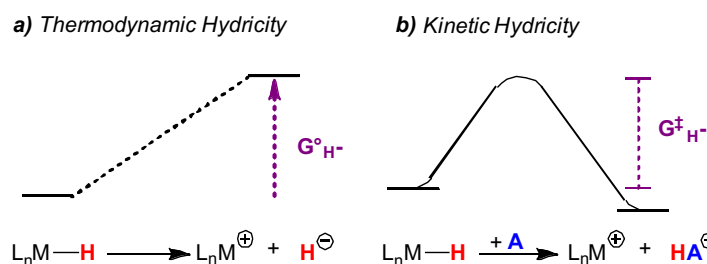
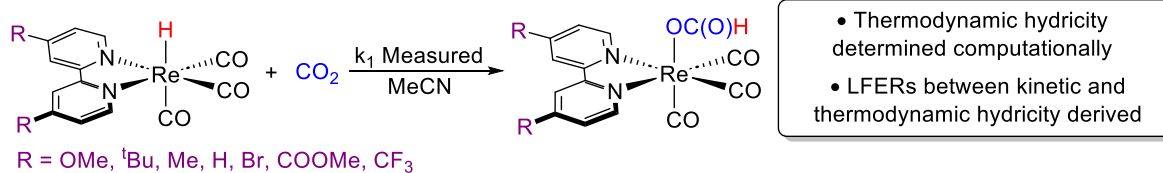


Figure 1: Representations of: **a)** Thermodynamic hydricity, which is the Gibbs free energy difference between the ground state of the metal hydride (L_nM-H) and the product of heterolytic bond scission (L_nM^+ and H^-). **b)** Kinetic hydricity, which is the elementary rate constant for hydride transfer from a metal hydride (L_nM-H) to a hydride acceptor (A). It varies as the acceptor is changed and is related to the free energy of activation energy ($\Delta G^\ddagger_{H^-}$) for hydride transfer.

A challenge in using thermodynamic and/or kinetic hydricity to make predictions about transition metal catalyzed reactions is that they both vary as the solvent changes.^{6c} For instance, all transition metal hydride complexes that have been measured to date have a lower thermodynamic hydricity (are more hydridic) in water than in acetonitrile (MeCN), although there is a paucity of studies in other solvents.^{6c} Investigations using a structurally similar but electronically different series of complexes of the type $[Cp^*Ir(Rbpy)H]^+$ ($Rbpy$ = 4,4'-R-2,2'-bipyridine; R = OMe, ^tBu, Me, H, COOMe, CF₃; Cp* = C₅Me₅), demonstrate that the complexes have the same electronic sensitivity in their thermodynamic hydricity in water and MeCN, suggesting that for this series of complexes

a) Previous work only in MeCN



b) This work in different solvents

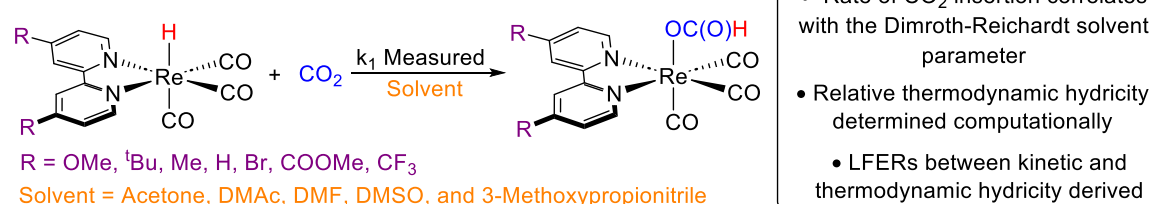


Figure 2: **a)** Previously correlations between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity were determined in MeCN. **b)** In this work, kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity are correlated in different solvents.

it may be possible to translate relative thermodynamic hydricity from one solvent to the next.⁷ In contrast, the relative change in thermodynamic hydricity as the solvent is varied is much larger for a gas like CO_2 compared to a typically solvated metal complex, so trends in the thermodynamic hydricity of the formate ion between solvents are quite different to those of metal complexes.^{6c}

Kinetic hydricity is more easily compared across solvents than thermodynamic hydricity, which can be challenging to compare because of the need for basic thermodynamic data (*e.g.* H^+ reduction to H^-) in the solvent of interest and the fact that corrections are needed in some cases because of different thermochemical conventions in different solvents.^{6c} Preliminary investigations of the influence of solvent on kinetic hydricity indicate that it is more predictable than thermodynamic hydricity. For example, recent studies on the rates of CO_2 insertion into transition metal hydrides (often a proxy for the rate of hydride transfer) indicate that the rate of insertion correlates with the Gütmann acceptor number (AN) or Dimroth-Reichardt ($E_{\text{T}}(30)$) parameter of the solvent.^{8,9} Nevertheless, more research is required on the impact of solvent on kinetic hydricity to generalize these preliminary conclusions.

Linear free energy relationships (LFERs) that correlate a kinetic and thermodynamic parameter are often used to predict the performance of catalysts and design new systems.¹⁰ However, it has been difficult to develop LFERs between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity because thermodynamic and kinetic hydricity are often challenging to measure experimentally. We recently determined the kinetics of hydride transfer from $\text{Re}(\text{R}^t\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$ ($R = \text{OMe}, ^t\text{Bu}, \text{Me}, \text{H}$,

Br, COOMe, CF₃) to CO₂ in MeCN and computed the thermodynamic hydricities of the Re complexes using theoretical calculations (Figure 2a).¹¹ In MeCN, we demonstrated that there is a LFER between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity. In this work, we experimentally determine the rates of CO₂ insertion into Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H to form Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃{OC(H)O} in five different solvents to determine kinetic hydricity (Figure 2b). This CO₂ insertion reaction is a model for the types of hydride transfer reactions from a metal hydride to CO₂ that are a crucial elementary step in thermal, electro- and photochemical systems for the catalytic reduction of CO₂ to formate.¹² We show that the rate of CO₂ insertion for any given Re complex in a solvent can be predicted by the *E*_T(30) parameter of the solvent and that bpy ligands with electron rich substituents promote the reaction. However, there is no correlation between the slope of the Hammett plot in a solvent and any common solvent parameter. Using theoretical calculations, we determined the relative thermodynamic hydricity of complexes of the type Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H in acetone, DMF, and DMSO in addition to MeCN. In each solvent, complexes with more electron-donating substituents on the bpy ligand are stronger hydride donors. Finally, we show that LFERs exist between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity in different solvents and the slopes of the LFERs correlate with the dielectric constant of the solvent, which is likely to be useful for the design of improved catalysts.

Results and Discussion

Experimental Measurements of Kinetic Hydricity

The rate of CO₂ insertion into Re hydrides of the form Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H to generate Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃{OC(H)O} is an indicator of the kinetic hydricity of the Re complexes¹¹ because the first step in these reactions is the rate-determining outer-sphere hydride transfer¹³ to CO₂ (Figure 3). To understand the impact of solvent on the rates of CO₂ insertion into our family of Re complexes, we measured the kinetics of insertion in acetone, dimethylacetamide (DMAc), dimethylformamide (DMF), dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO), and 3-methoxypropionitrile (3-MPN) to complement our previous data in MeCN (Figure 2b).^{11,14} As observed previously, these reactions

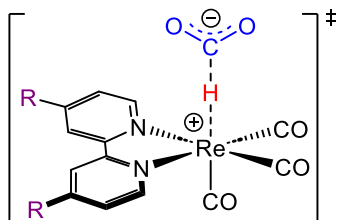


Figure 3: Rate determining transition state for CO₂ insertion for complexes of the type Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H.¹¹ This type of transition state is consistent with rate limiting hydride transfer and thus the rate of the reaction is a measure of the kinetic hydricity of the complex.

are first-order in [Re] and [CO₂], with an overall rate law of rate = $k_1[\text{Re}(\text{Rbpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}][\text{CO}_2]$ (see SI).^{11,15} Values of k_1 for each reaction were obtained by dividing the k_{obs} value (from a plot of $\ln([\text{Re}(\text{Rbpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}]$ versus time) by the concentration of CO₂. The concentration of CO₂ in different solvents was determined using quantitative ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectroscopy (see SI).

We observe a very strong correlation between the rate constant for CO₂ insertion into any single Re complex (for example Re(bpy)(CO)₃H or Re(CF₃bpy)(CO)₃H) and the $E_{\text{T}}(30)$ parameter of the solvent (Figure 4). This indicates that for a given Re complex, the rate of CO₂ insertion in different solvents can be predicted based on the solvent $E_{\text{T}}(30)$ parameter. In contrast, to the clear correlation with $E_{\text{T}}(30)$, the correlation with solvent dielectric constant and the rate of CO₂ insertion is poor (see Figures S15-S21), while the correlation with AN is good but not as strong as $E_{\text{T}}(30)$ (see Figures S8-S14). Our results are consistent with previous observations about the relationship between the rates of CO₂ insertion and solvent properties for metal hydride, hydroxide, and alkyl species and demonstrate that the correlation with $E_{\text{T}}(30)$ is likely more general than initially proposed.^{8,16}

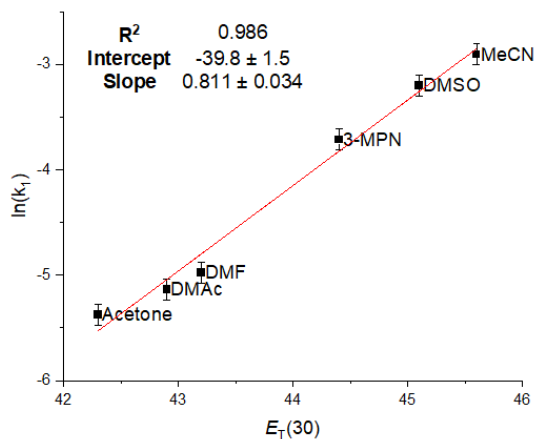


Figure 4: Plot of the rate of CO₂ insertion into Re(bpy)(CO)₃H against $E_{\text{T}}(30)$. The same trends are observed for other substituted bpy complexes (see Figures S2-S7).

We constructed Hammett plots for CO₂ insertion into Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H in acetone, DMAc, DMF, DMSO, and 3-MPN. A representative Hammett plot in acetone is shown in Figure 5, with other data in the SI. We use a summed Hammett parameter ($\Sigma\sigma_{\text{p}}$) because there are two substituents on the bpy ligand and $\Sigma\sigma_{\text{p}}$ gives a better fit than either $\Sigma\sigma_{\text{p}}^+$ or $\Sigma\sigma_{\text{p}}^-$ (see SI).¹⁷ In all cases the slopes of the Hammett plot are negative, indicating that electron-donating substituents on the bpy ligand promote CO₂ insertion. Given the transition state proposed in Figure 3, this is not surprising, as

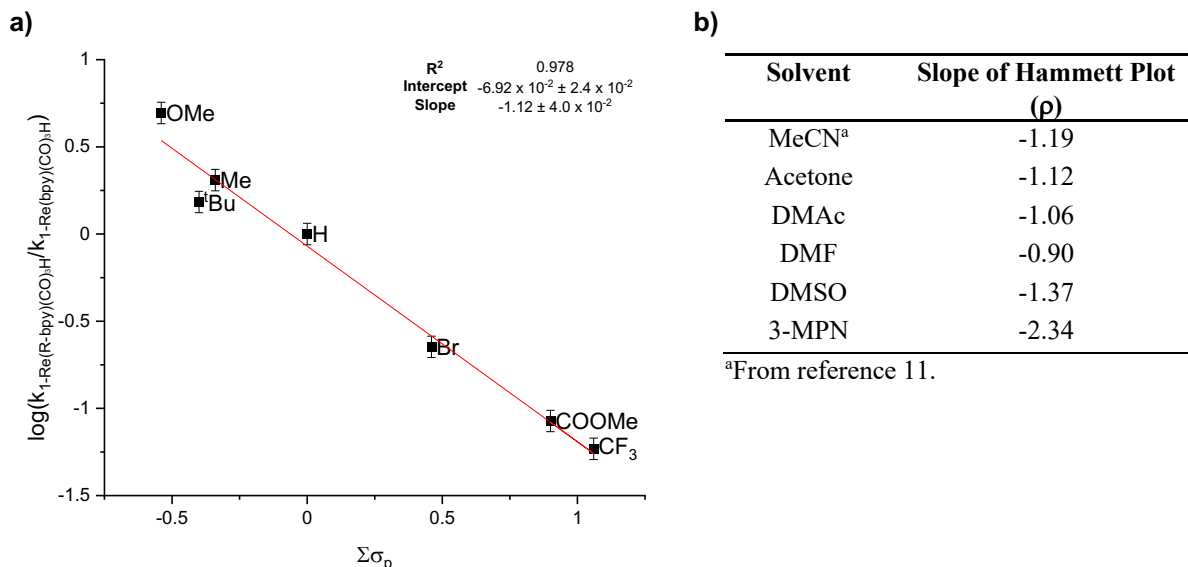


Figure 5: **a)** Representative Hammett plot for CO₂ insertion into Re(Rbpy)(CO)₃H in acetone. **b)** Slopes of Hammett plots in different solvents.

the electron-donating substituents should stabilize the increasing positive charge on the Re center in the transition state. Our results are consistent with prior studies exploring the effect of the ancillary ligand on CO₂ insertion reactions.^{8a,11} The slopes of the Hammett plot vary significantly across the solvent series, with the largest ρ value being 2.6-fold greater than the smallest value. However, analysis of the slopes of the Hammett plots in different solvent reveals no trends based on any common solvent parameter, for example dielectric constant or $E_T(30)$. It is also surprising that the slope of the Hammett plot in 3-MPN is considerably more negative than any other solvent, especially given the presumed similarities between 3-MPN and MeCN. The lack of identifiable dependence of the slope of the Hammett plot on the properties of the solvent suggests that the magnitude of electronic effects on the kinetics of CO₂ insertion are not impacted by solvent in a predictable fashion.

To gain further information about the effect of solvent on CO₂ insertion, we performed Eyring analysis of CO₂ insertion reactions into the unsubstituted complex Re(bpy)(CO)₃H in different solvents (Table 1). Although negative entropies were found for insertion in all solvents, indicating a highly organized rate-limiting transition state, there were large differences between the solvents. For example, the transition state is entropically unfavorable by -19.40 cal mol⁻¹ K⁻¹ in 3-MPN, compared to -40.10 cal mol⁻¹ K⁻¹ in MeCN. This large difference between 3-MPN and MeCN is consistent with the differences in the ρ values between 3-MPN and MeCN and may suggest that for these solvents there is a correlation between solvent ordering and steepness of the Hammett

Table 1: Activation parameters and kinetic isotope effect values for CO₂ insertion into Re(bpy)(CO)₃H in different solvents.

Solvent	ΔH^\ddagger (kcal mol ⁻¹)	ΔS^\ddagger (cal mol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)	ΔG^\ddagger_{303} (kcal mol ⁻¹)	KIE (k _H /k _D)
Acetonitrile ^a	7.4 ± 0.7	-40.1 ± 4.0	19.6 ± 1.9	0.60 ± 0.08
Acetone	11.0 ± 1.1	-32.4 ± 3.2	20.8 ± 2.1	0.61 ± 0.09
DMAC	13.7 ± 1.3	-23.7 ± 2.3	20.8 ± 2.1	0.31 ± 0.04
DMF	11.5 ± 1.1	-30.9 ± 3.0	20.8 ± 2.1	0.37 ± 0.05
DMSO	12.7 ± 1.2	-22.4 ± 2.2	19.5 ± 1.9	0.41 ± 0.06
3-MPN	13.9 ± 1.3	-19.4 ± 1.9	19.8 ± 1.9	0.36 ± 0.05

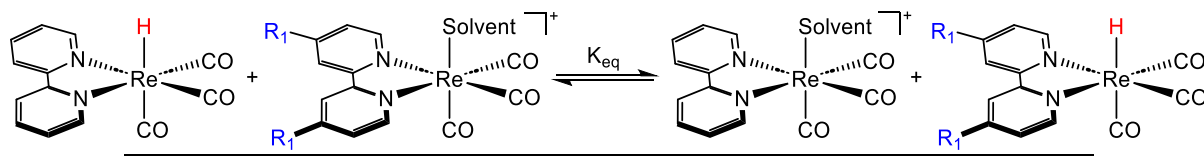
^aFrom reference 11.

slope. In general, there appears to be an offsetting effect between ΔH^\ddagger and ΔS^\ddagger and solvents that have a low ΔH^\ddagger have a more negative ΔS^\ddagger . For instance, ΔH^\ddagger is 7.40 kcal mol⁻¹ in MeCN, but 13.90 kcal mol⁻¹ in 3-MPN. Within the error of our measurements ΔG^\ddagger_{303} is similar across all the solvents, consistent with the relatively similar rate constants in different solvents (a factor of 20 difference). Nevertheless, the origins for the significant differences in enthalpy and entropy between different solvents are unclear, although similar differences have been observed in the literature, without an explanation.⁸ We also determined the kinetic isotope effects (KIEs), k_H/k_D , for CO₂ insertion into Re(bpy)(CO)₃H and Re(bpy)(CO)₃D. An inverse KIE is observed in all solvents, which is expected because the strength of the C–H bond formed is greater than the strength of the M–H bond broken.^{8b,11,15} However, the KIEs range from 0.36-0.60, and at this stage we do not have an explanation for this difference. The magnitude of the KIE does not correlate with any solvent parameter and there is also no correlation between ΔH^\ddagger or ΔS^\ddagger and the measured KIE.

Computational Estimation of Relative Thermodynamic Hydricity and Linear Free Energy Relationships

In previous work we found that it is challenging to experimentally measure the thermodynamic hydricity of complexes of the form Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H because of problems with their solution stability.¹¹ Therefore, to determine the thermodynamic hydricity of our family of Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H complexes in different solvents, we turned to computational approaches and performed theoretical calculations (see computational methods in SI). A common method for calculating the thermodynamic hydricity of a complex is to take the average of computed thermodynamic hydricities from isodesmic equilibrium exchange reactions between the compound of interest and other transition metal hydride acceptors with known experimental thermodynamic affinities.^{6e} In

Table 2: Computed relative thermodynamic hydricities of $\text{Re}(\text{Rbpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$ in different solvents, determined through isodesmic exchange reactions with $\text{Re}(\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3(\text{solvent})^+$.^a



Complex	Relative Thermodynamic Hydricity (kcal mol ⁻¹)			
	MeCN	Acetone	DMF	DMSO
$\text{Re}(\text{OMebpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	-0.9	-1.2	-0.9	-0.8
$\text{Re}(\text{tBu}^-\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	-0.4	-0.5	-0.3	-0.3
$\text{Re}(\text{Me}^-\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	-0.5	-0.6	-0.5	-0.5
$\text{Re}(\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
$\text{Re}(\text{Br}^-\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1
$\text{Re}(\text{COOMe}^-\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.0
$\text{Re}(\text{CF}_3^-\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.7

^aAll computations were performed at the M06/def2-TZVP level with SMD continuum solvation model for the appropriate solvent using optimized structures at the B3LYP-D3 level of theory.

our case, there are almost no experimental determinations of thermodynamic hydricity in solvents such as acetone or DMF, which means that this type of approach cannot be used.^{6c} Consequently, we estimated relative thermodynamic hydricity, which is sufficient for the purpose of developing LFERs, through isodesmic exchange reactions between $\text{Re}(\text{Rbpy})(\text{CO})_3\text{H}$ and $\text{Re}(\text{bpy})(\text{CO})_3(\text{solvent})^+$ in MeCN, acetone, DMF, and DMSO (Table 2).¹⁸ We tested different density functionals and observed strong correlations between calculated thermodynamic and experimental kinetic hydricities despite differences in slopes (Tables S11-S15 and Figures S32-S36). Here, we limit our discussion to computed relative hydricities obtained at the M06 level of theory¹⁹ in conjunction with SMD continuum solvation model²⁰ on optimized structures at the B3LYP-D3 level of theory²¹ in vacuum (see SI for further details). A limitation of this approach is that continuum solvation models are not available for all solvents (*e.g.*, 3-MPN) so we focused on MeCN, acetone, DMF, and DMSO.

The data in Table 2 indicates that complexes with electron-donating substituents on the bpy ligand are stronger hydride donors in all solvents, while complexes with electron-withdrawing substituents on the bpy ligand are weaker donors. Additionally, the span between the weakest and strongest hydride donor is similar across all solvents (the range is 2.6-3.1 kcal mol⁻¹), which indicates that as observed for $[\text{Cp}^*\text{Ir}(\text{Rbpy})\text{H}]^+$ in MeCN and water,⁷ the complexes have the same electronic sensitivity in their thermodynamic hydricity across a range of solvents. This suggests that for transition metal complexes it may be possible to determine the sensitivity to electronic 6

changes in thermodynamic hydricity in one solvent, and then extrapolate it to other solvents without performing more experiments.

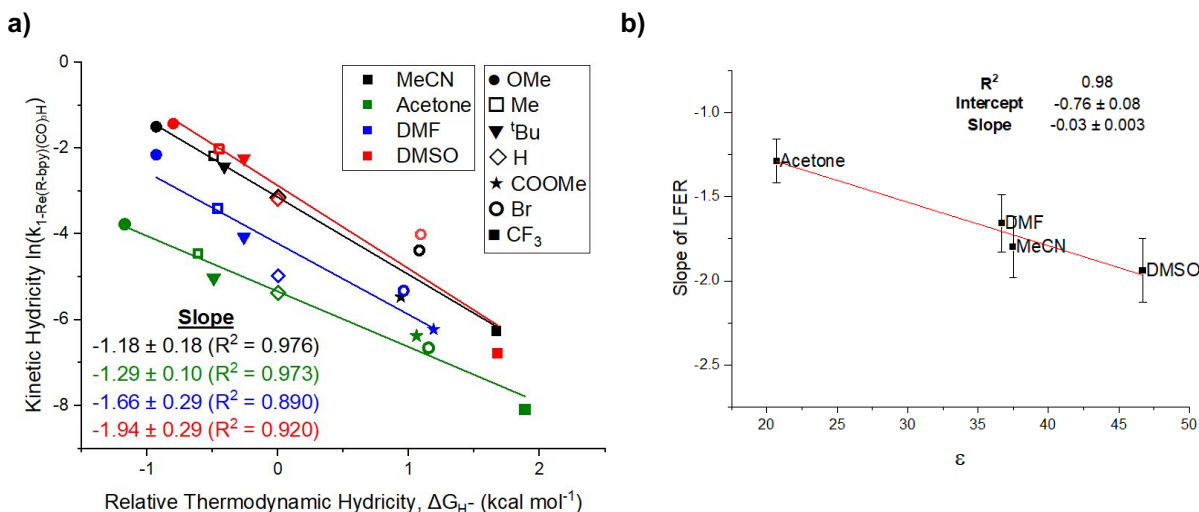


Figure 6: **a)** LFERs between relative thermodynamic hydricity and kinetic hydricity (determined using the rate constants for CO₂ insertion) for Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H in MeCN (black), acetone (pink), DMF (blue), and DMSO (red); **b)** Relationship between the slopes of LFERs correlating relative thermodynamic hydricity and kinetic hydricity in different solvents and the dielectric constant of the solvent.

Using the computed relative thermodynamic hydricities for Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H we examined the relationship between relative thermodynamic hydricity and the experimental rates of CO₂ insertion in acetone, DMF, DMSO, and MeCN (Figure 6a). In all cases, LFERs are observed between relative thermodynamic hydricity and kinetic hydricity, with more thermodynamically hydridic donors giving faster rates of insertion. The quality of the correlation varies slightly across the different solvents, but the trends are clear and strongly suggest that LFERs between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity exist across different solvents. This is the first time that it has been demonstrated that LFERs between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity extend across different solvents.

A feature of the LFERs in different solvents is that the slopes correlate well with the dielectric constant of the solvent (and reasonably well with the $E_{\text{T}}(30)$ value, Figure S37), albeit we only have four data points at this stage (Figure 6b). Solvents with higher dielectric constants, such as MeCN, give shallower slopes in the LFER, and the difference between kinetic and thermodynamic effects is most pronounced in solvents with lower dielectric constants. In the case of the CO₂ insertion reactions studied here, this may be related to the zwitterionic nature of the transition state (Figure 3), which leads to a large solvent influence in less polar solvents, where the solvent is less

able to assist in stabilizing the transition state. In contrast, it is possible that in hydride transfer reactions that involve less build-up of charge in the transition state, the impact of solvent on the LFERs will be smaller. Our results also suggest that in catalytic reactions involving CO₂ insertion, it is likely possible to achieve higher rates of CO₂ insertion by changing solvent, while maintaining similar thermodynamic driving forces. This is important because in many CO₂ reduction reactions, CO₂ insertion into a metal hydride competes with protonation of a metal hydride to generate H₂,²² and making CO₂ insertion more thermodynamically favorable will also result in an increase in the thermodynamics of protonation. Hence, if changing the solvent results in a greater impact in the kinetics of CO₂ insertion relative to protonation, this will be a strategy for improving selectivity. To assess if this is possible, future work that explores the effect of solvents on LFERs for hydride transfer, which include a wider range of hydride acceptors than just CO₂ are required.

Conclusions

In this work, we have explored the effect of solvent on the rates of CO₂ insertion into complexes of the type Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H, which is a direct measure of kinetic hydricity in different solvents. Our results provide strong support to several proposals in the literature relating to CO₂ insertion reactions such as: (i) more electron-donating ancillary ligands promote CO₂ insertion,^{8a,15} (ii) the rates of insertion into a given complex in different solvents correlate with the solvent *E*_T(30) value,^{8,16} and (iii) inverse KIEs are observed for insertion into a metal hydride compared to a metal deuteride.^{8,11,15} However, based on our current level of understanding we are unable to explain how Hammett parameters, activation enthalpies and entropies, and KIEs for CO₂ insertion into metal hydrides vary as the solvent is changed. For the development and optimization of catalysts, the most important feature of our work is likely that electronic trends on CO₂ insertion in one solvent are broadly the same in a different solvent, with more electron-donating ligands promoting insertion reactions, although the magnitude of electronic effects varies between solvents.

We used theoretical calculations to determine the relative thermodynamic hydricity of complexes of the type Re(^Rbpy)(CO)₃H and in all solvents complexes with electron-donating substituents on the bpy are more powerful hydride donors. Our results suggest that electronic effects on thermodynamic hydricity do not differ markedly between solvents, which broadens previous work^{6c} to a wider range of solvents. Using our experimental values of kinetic hydricity and calculated relative thermodynamic hydricities, we extended our recent work in MeCN,¹¹ and

showed for the first time that LFERs between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity exist in different solvents and the slopes of the trendlines of the LFERs in different solvents correlate strongly with the dielectric constant of the solvents. Overall, this work provides fundamental information about the impact of solvent on hydride transfer reactions, which is likely to be relevant to designing improved catalysts given the plethora of transformations that involve hydride transfer.

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Supporting Information

Details about selected experiments, kinetics data, computational information, Cartesian coordinates and energies of the optimized geometries.

Competing Financial Interests

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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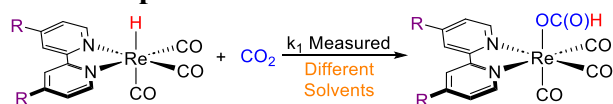
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14. In the case of DMF and DMSO, which are the slowest solvents for CO₂ insertion, it was not possible to measure the rates of insertion into our full series of complexes because for some species with electron-withdrawing bpy substituents decomposition occurred on the same timescale as insertion.
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TOC Graphic



R = Electron donating or withdrawing

- Measured effect of solvent on kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity
- Derived LFERs between kinetic and thermodynamic hydricity in different solvents