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Axial Chirality around N–P Bonds Induced by Complexation between $E(C_6F_5)_3$ ($E = B, Al$) and an *N*-Phosphine Oxide-Substituted Imidazolinyldene: A Key Intermediate in the Catalytic Phosphinoylation of CO_2

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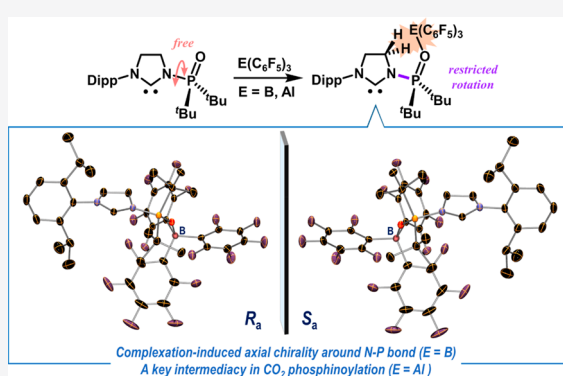
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ABSTRACT: Complexation-induced axial chirality around an N–P bond occurs upon the predominant coordination of the *N*-phosphinoyl group in the *N*-phosphine oxide-substituted imidazolinyldene (SPoxIm) to $B(C_6F_5)_3$. (R_a) and (S_a) atropisomers of $(\kappa\text{-O-SPoxIm})B(C_6F_5)_3$ were observed independently in the single-crystal lattice and the optimized gas-phase structure. Experimental and theoretical studies confirmed that this axial chirality arises from the restricted rotation around the N–P bond, caused by the steric repulsion between the C5–H atoms of the imidazolinyldene ring and the C_6F_5 rings on the $B(C_6F_5)_3$ unit. Conversely, this axial chirality was not certainly observed via the complexation between SPoxIm and $Al(C_6F_5)_3$. The carbene carbon atoms in $(\kappa\text{-O-SPoxIm})E(C_6F_5)_3$ ($E = B, Al$) remain sufficiently nucleophilic to react with CO_2 , and the phosphinoylation of CO_2 with SPoxIm proceeds far more rapidly in the presence of a catalytic amount of $Al(C_6F_5)_3$ than in the absence of $Al(C_6F_5)_3$.



INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, numerous applications have been developed for *N*-heterocyclic carbenes (NHCs) in diverse areas of chemistry.¹ Multifunctional NHCs equipped with additional coordination sites have further diversified the structures and functions of NHCs; however, their utility has been majorly limited to serve as multidentate ligands for the complexation of metals.² Thus, exploring the unprecedented utility of multifunctional NHCs would significantly advance the development of NHC chemistry.

Recently, we have proposed a concept of multifunctional multipurpose carbenes,³ i.e., carbenes that include functional groups applicable to a variety of purposes beyond additional coordination sites. In this context, *N*-phosphine oxide-substituted imidazolinyldene (PoxIm) and the corresponding imidazolinyldene (SPoxIm) represent pioneering examples (Figure 1A). Under ambient conditions, (S)PoxIm predominantly exist in the *anti*-conformation ($\theta \approx 0^\circ$; θ is defined as shown in Figure 1A), in which the carbene carbon and the phosphinoyl oxygen atoms adopt an *anti*-orientation with respect to the N–P bond. Rotation of the *N*-phosphinoyl moiety to generate the *syn*-conformer ($\theta \approx 160^\circ$) can occur via a relatively low energy barrier to overcome TS ($\theta \approx 90^\circ$; $\Delta E^\ddagger \approx 12 \text{ kcal}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$ for previously reported PoxIm).^{3a} The *N*-phosphinoyl groups in PoxIm were used for scaling the

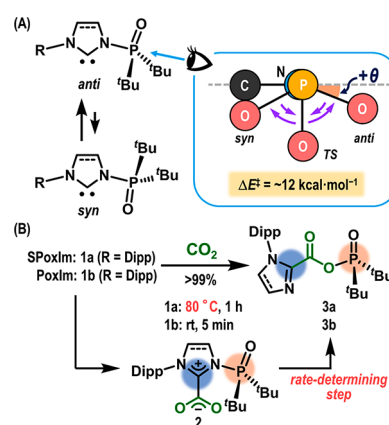


Figure 1. (A) Interconversion between *anti*- and *syn*-conformers of *N*-phosphine oxide-substituted imidazolinyldene (PoxIm) and imidazolinyldene (SPoxIm). (B) Previously reported phosphinoylation of CO_2 with SPoxIm (**1a**) and PoxIm (**1b**). Dipp, *N*-2,6- $Pr_2C_6H_3$.

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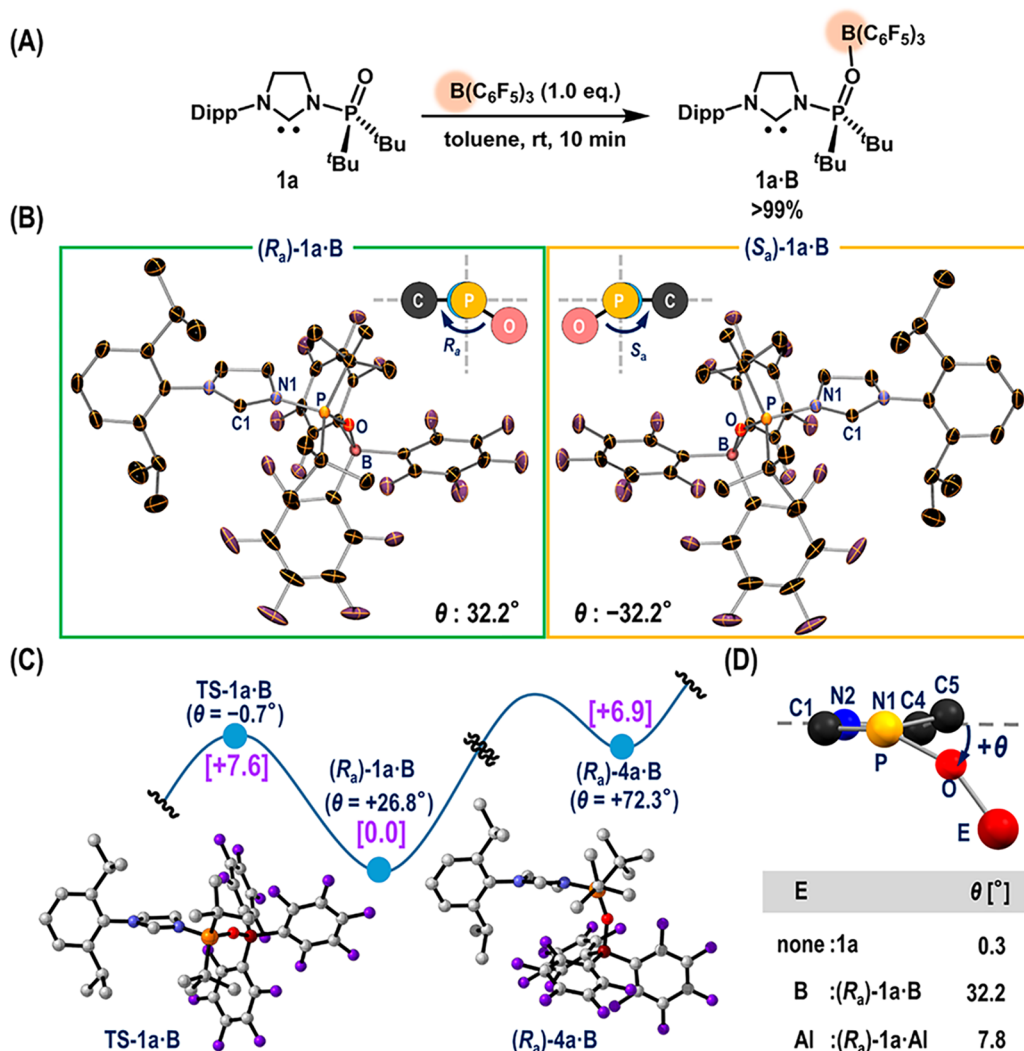


Figure 2. (A) Synthesis of **1a·B** from **1a** and $B(C_6F_5)_3$. The yield of the isolated product is shown. (B) Molecular structures of (R_s) -**1a·B** (left) and (S_a) -**1a·B** (right) with thermal ellipsoids at 30% probability; H atoms are omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg) in (R_s) -**1a·B**: N1–P 1.666(1), P–O 1.525(1), O–B 1.551(2), P–O–B 154.43(8), C1–N1–P–O + 147.8(1) (C) The relative Gibbs free energies (kcal·mol⁻¹) for **TS-1a·B** and (R_s) -**4a·B** with respect to (R_s) -**1a·B** (+0.0 kcal·mol⁻¹), and their angles of θ . The optimized gas phase structures of **TS-1a·B** (left) and (R_s) -**4a·B** (right) are also shown. Gray, C; blue, N; orange, P; red, O; brown, B; purple, F. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): **TS-1a·B**; N1–P 1.69, P–O 1.54, O–B 1.58, P–O–B 160.8, C1–N1–P–O –179.3. (R_s) -**4a·B**; N1–P 1.69, P–O 1.54, O–B 1.57, P–O–B 154.2, C1–N1–P–O + 107.7. (D) Comparison on the angles of θ between molecular structures of **1a**, (R_s) -**1a·B**, and (R_s) -**1a·Al**, determined by the single-crystal XRD analyses.

coordination sphere around the carbene carbon via rotation around the N–P bond,^{3a} as well as for the phosphinoylation of CO₂, which is enabled by cooperation between the nucleophilic carbene carbon and the electrophilic phosphorus atoms.^{5b} The latter was applied to the straightforward, one-pot synthesis of carbonyl compounds, including challenging unsymmetrical ketones, from gaseous CO₂. However, the reaction between CO₂ and SPoxIm (**1a**) or PoxIm (**1b**), both of which bear a *N*-2,6-*i*-Pr₂C₆H₃ (Dipp) group, was far faster for the latter than the former, and heating was required to expedite the reaction with **1a** (Figure 1B). Detailed mechanistic studies uncovered that the N to O migration of the phosphinoyl moiety in imidazolium-2-carboxylate intermediates **2** is involved in the rate-determining event. We thus envisioned a promotion of this migration step via an enhancement of the electrophilicity on the phosphorus atom in **2** by the predominant complexation between the *N*-phosphinoyl group in SPoxIm and Lewis acids. Herein, we report a

significant acceleration of the phosphinoylation of CO₂ with SPoxIm in the presence of a catalytic amount of $Al(C_6F_5)_3$. A potential intermediacy of $(\kappa$ -O-SPoxIm) $E(C_6F_5)_3$ (E = B, Al) is discussed based on experimental and theoretical results. Through this work, we directly observed the complexation-induced axial chirality around an N–P bond.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previously, we have reported the formation of $(\kappa$ -O-PoxIm)LA or $(\kappa$ -O-**1a**) $Al(C_6F_5)_3$ (**1a·Al**) complexes that include unreacted carbene carbons (LA is either $E(C_6F_5)_3$ (E = B^{3a} and Al⁴) or MOTf (M = Li and Na)^{3e}). Although the complexes were successfully isolated at room temperature when LA was $Al(C_6F_5)_3$ or MOTf, $(\kappa$ -O-**1b**) $B(C_6F_5)_3$ (**1b·B**) was required to be characterized by NMR analysis at –90 °C, as it smoothly transformed into the thermodynamically more stable carbene–borane adduct $(\kappa$ -C-**1b**) $B(C_6F_5)_3$ at room temperature.^{3a} During our study on the complexation between (S)PoxIm

and main group Lewis acids, and their intermediacy in the synthesis of organic/organometallic compounds, we initially examined the reaction between **1a** and $B(C_6F_5)_3$. At room temperature, we observed the quantitative formation of $(\kappa\text{-O-1a})B(C_6F_5)_3$ (**1a·B**) via the coordination of the *N*-phosphinoyl group in **1a** to $B(C_6F_5)_3$ (Figure 2A). Subsequently, **1a·B** was isolated in >99% yield, and its molecular structure was unambiguously determined by NMR and single-crystal X-ray diffraction (XRD) analyses.⁵ A set of (*R_a*) and (*S_a*) atropisomers of **1a·B** was identified in the asymmetric unit of the single crystal (Figure 2B).⁶ The carbene carbon and *N*-phosphinoyl oxygen atoms in these atropisomers adopt an *anti*-orientation with respect to the N–P bond; however, they exhibit different C1–N1–P–O torsion angles ((*R_a*)-**1a·B**: +147.8(1)°, $\theta = +32.2^\circ$; (*S_a*)-**1a·B**: –147.8(1)°, $\theta = -32.2^\circ$). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first example of a direct observation of axial chirality generated around an N–P bond.^{6b–e} Although a substantial H···F–C interaction can be expected when the H and F atoms are within a range of 2.2–2.3 Å,⁷ the conformational fixation via weak H···F interactions cannot be completely ruled out in **1a·B**, as interatomic distances between a F atom in the individual C_6F_5 group and the C5–H atom of the imidazolinyldene moiety or the ¹Pr–H atom of the Dipp moiety are 2.577(2) or 2.670(1) Å.⁸ To clarify the participation of these H···F–C interactions, the noncovalent interactions (NCIs) analysis was carried out based on the structural parameters confirmed by XRD analysis.⁹ In Figure 3, NCIs observed in (*R_a*)-**1a·B** are represented as

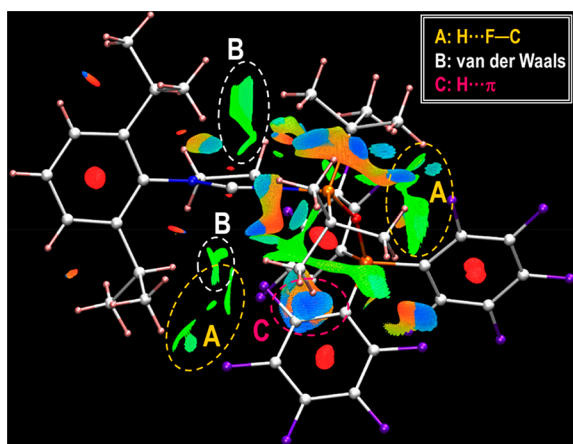


Figure 3. Visualization of the noncovalent interactions in (*R_a*)-**1a·B**. The cutoff value of 0.25 au is adopted for the reduced density gradient within the range of $-0.03 < \rho < 0.03$ au. Key interactions between (A) H and F atoms, (B) ¹Pr and ^tBu groups, and (C) the H atom and the C_6F_5 ring are circled in yellow, white, and pink color, respectively.

isosurfaces colored in the blue-green-red scale, wherein regions filled in deeper blue colors suggest more attractive interactions between specific atoms and/or bonds, and deeper red colors indicate more repulsive interactions. The regions colored in green indicate weak interactions such as van der Waals and H···lone pair interactions. The H···F–C interactions between the ¹Pr–H and the F atoms (highlighted in the yellow cycle, Figure 3A) as well as van der Waals interactions between ¹Pr and the ^tBu groups (highlighted in the white cycle, Figure 3B) are clearly confirmed to be involved, which would contribute to the fixation of the conformation of (*R_a*)-**1a·B**. In addition, NCIs such as H···F and strongly attractive CH··· π (highlighted

in the pink cycle, Figure 3C) interactions are also found between ^tBu and C_6F_5 groups.

To gain further insight into the aforementioned axial chirality, DFT calculations were carried out at the ω B97X-D/6-311G(d,p)// ω B97X-D/6-31G(d) level of theory (gas phase; Figure 2C). In the following discussion, the relative free Gibbs energies for TS-**1a·B**, and (*R_a*)-**4a·B** are shown with respect to (*R_a*)-**1a·B** (0.0 kcal·mol⁻¹). A relaxed potential energy scan for the conversion from (*R_a*)-**1a·B** to (*S_a*)-**1a·B** via a rotation of the *N*-phosphinoyl moiety predicted the participation of the activation complex TS-**1a·B** ($\Delta G^\ddagger = \Delta E^\ddagger = +7.6$ kcal·mol⁻¹; Figure S3). In the optimized structure of TS-**1a·B**, the C1–N1–P–O torsion angle of -179.3° ($\theta = -0.7^\circ$) shows that these four atoms are arranged in a nearly coplanar fashion and that the steric repulsion should thus be generated between the C_6F_5 groups and the C5–H atoms of the imidazolinyldene ring (Figure 2C). On the other hand, the rotation of the *N*-phosphinoyl group in the *R_a* direction afforded the metastable conformer (*R_a*)-**4a·B** ($\Delta G^\circ = +6.9$ kcal·mol⁻¹; $\Delta E^\circ = +6.4$ kcal·mol⁻¹), which exhibits the C1–N1–P–O angle of $+107.7^\circ$ ($\theta = +72.3^\circ$; Figure 2C). Although a certain energy barrier could be predicted for the formation of (*R_a*)-**4a·B** based on the scanning of a potential energy surface between (*R_a*)-**1a·B** and (*R_a*)-**4a·B** (Figure S4), a structure for this transition state was not determined. Nevertheless, these results manifest that axial chirality around the N–P bond can be certainly induced to generate both (*R_a*)-**1a·B** as well as (*S_a*)-**1a·B** as the energetically most favorable species in the present system, while they should readily isomerize each other via TS-**1a·B** in solution.

In the case of free carbene **1a**, the molecular structure exhibits the C1–N1–P–O angle of $179.7(2)^\circ$ ($\theta = 0.3^\circ$) in the crystalline state, implying that atropisomers are not generated without the complexation via the *N*-phosphinoyl group, as the rotation of *N*-phosphinoyl group in **1a** occurs without a substantial amount of energy barrier within the range of ca. $-90^\circ \leq \theta \leq +90^\circ$ (Figure 1A). Moreover, the corresponding axial chirality is not effectively induced even in the crystalline state of **1a·Al**; i.e., the C1–N1–P–O angles in **1a·Al** ($\pm 172.2(2)^\circ$, $\theta = \pm 7.8^\circ$) are not deviated largely from $\theta = 0^\circ$ (Figure 2D). On the basis of these results, the aforementioned axial chirality in **1a·B** should be attributed to the restricted rotation of the *N*-phosphinoyl moieties around the N–P bonds, caused by steric repulsion between the C_6F_5 groups and the imidazolinyldene ring. In the case of **1a·Al**, the longer O–Al bond (1.786(1) Å) compared to the O–B bond (1.551(2) Å) in **1a·B** would decrease the aforementioned steric repulsion, which would enable a facile interconversion between (*R_a*) and (*S_a*) atropisomers.

The electronic structure of **1a·B** was further explored by NMR spectroscopy and an NBO analysis. The ³¹P NMR spectrum of **1a·B** at -30°C showed a resonance at δ_p 76.7, which is downfield shifted relative to that of **1a** (δ_p 59.6) and almost identical to that of **1a·Al** (δ_p 79.8).⁴ Thus, an electron density on the phosphorus atom in **1a·B** should decrease through coordination of the *N*-phosphinoyl group to $B(C_6F_5)_3$. Furthermore, in the ¹³C NMR spectrum, the resonance of the carbene carbon atom is observed at 245.4 ppm ($^2J_{C,P} = 35.5$ Hz), which is almost identical to that of **1a** (δ_C 244.9; $^2J_{C,P} = 28.0$ Hz). These results suggest (i) the enhanced electrophilicity on the phosphorus atom and (ii) the vital nucleophilicity on the carbene carbon atom in **1a·B**. The results of DFT calculations support these notions, and the

LUMO+6 and HOMO−4 orbitals are shown together with their energy levels in Figure 4A. The energy levels of the

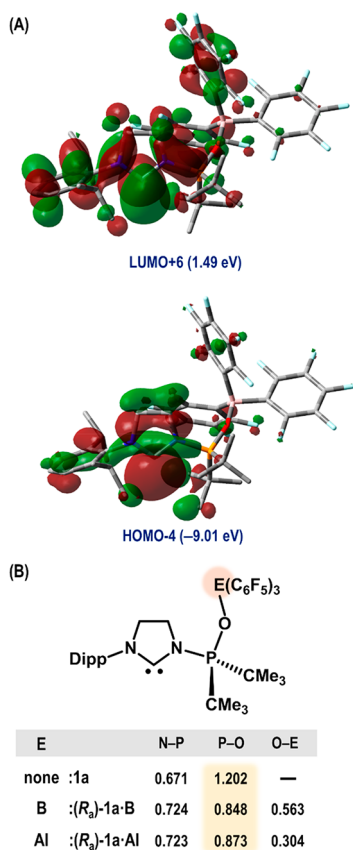


Figure 4. (A) Selected molecular orbitals of **1a•B** and their associated energy levels, calculated at the ω B97X-D/6-311G(d,p)// ω B97X-D/6-31G(d) level of theory. (B) Selected Wiberg bond indices in **1a**, *(R_a)*-**1a•B**, and *(R_a)*-**1a•Al**. Structural optimization for **1a** was conducted at the ω B97X-D/6-311G(d,p)//B3LYP/6-31G(d) level of theory.

orbitals between HOMO−1 and HOMO−4 are almost degenerate (−8.82 to −9.01 eV), and these molecular orbitals include a partial contribution of the lone pair on the carbene carbon atom (Figure S5). The contribution of the p orbital on the carbene carbon atom is observed for several energy levels, e.g., the LUMO+2 (1.16 eV) and the LUMO+6 (1.49 eV). These results are consistent with the results of the ¹³C NMR measurements. An NBO analysis based on the Wiberg bond indices (WBIs) was carried out in order to examine the bonding situation in **1a**, *(R_a)*-**1a•B**, and *(R_a)*-**1a•Al** (Figure 4B). The bond order for the phosphinoyl P−O bond decreases from 1.202 (**1a**) to 0.848 (**1a•B**) and 0.873 (**1a•Al**), while the WBIs for the other bonds are almost identical in the **1a** moieties of these compounds (Figure S6). Nevertheless, the P−O bonds in **1a•B** and **1a•Al** are expected to possess multiple-bond character, as the P−O bond lengths observed by X-ray crystallography (**1a•B**: 1.525(1) Å; **1a•Al**: 1.521(1) Å) are still shorter than the sum of the single-bond radii of P (1.07 Å) and O (0.66 Å),¹⁰ even though they are substantially elongated compared to the corresponding bond in **1a** (1.478(2) Å).

Complex **1a•B** gradually decomposes at room temperature (conversion of **1a•B** after 24 h: 40%), which results in the appearance of at least two resonances at δ_p 64.3 and 55.0 in the

³¹P NMR spectrum. During this decomposition, a resonance that implies the formation of carbene−borane adduct (κ -C-**1a**)B(C₆F₅)₃ (**5a**) was not observed, based on a comparison with δ_p 76.0 of (κ -C-**1b**)B(C₆F₅)₃ (**5b**). In contrast, in the case of PoxIm **1b**, the transformation of (κ -O-**1b**)B(C₆F₅)₃ (**1b•B**) to **5b** occurred easily at room temperature.^{3a} These results are rationalized in terms of the differences in the relative Gibbs free energies between the **1•B** and **5** derivatives (Figure 5). In

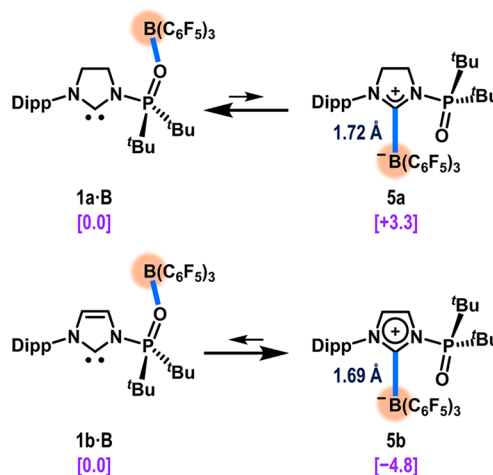


Figure 5. (A) Relative Gibbs free energies (kcal·mol^{−1}) for **5a** and **5b** are shown relative to **1a•B** and **1b•B**, respectively.

the case of **1b**, **5b** ($\Delta G^\circ = -4.8$ kcal·mol^{−1}) exhibits a higher stability with respect to **1b•B**, due to an effective delocalization of π -electrons over the imidazolium ring (Figure S2). In stark contrast, in the case of **1a**, **1a•B** can be expected to be energetically more favorable than **5a** ($\Delta G^\circ = +3.3$ kcal·mol^{−1}), probably due to a lack of the stabilization effects observed in **5b**. Moreover, the steric repulsion between the (S)PoxIm and B(C₆F₅)₃ moieties is expected to be higher in **5a** than that in **5b**, given the longer C−B bond (1.72 Å) in the DFT-optimized structure of **5a** compared to that in **5b** (DFT: 1.69 Å; XRD: 1.696(3) Å). A comparison of the percent buried volumes^{1b,11} of **1a** (% $V_{bur} = 30.8$) and **1b** (% $V_{bur} = 29.2$) moieties in **5a** and **5b** supports that **1a** is sterically more demanding than **1b**.

Given the expected nucleophilic reactivity of the carbene carbon in **1a•B**, the reaction between **1a•B** and CO₂ (5 atm) was explored in toluene at room temperature, which resulted in the formation of **6a** in 95% isolated yield (Figure 6A-1). The molecular structure of **6a** was unambiguously determined by NMR spectroscopy and single-crystal XRD analysis (Figure 6B). Thus, CO₂ was scavenged by **1a** and B(C₆F₅)₃.¹² Compound **6a** might be expected to be formed via the generation of imidazolium-2-carboxylate intermediate **2a•B**, in which the phosphinoyl moiety coordinates to B(C₆F₅)₃, followed by a transfer of B(C₆F₅)₃ to the carboxylate oxygen. The thermolysis of *in situ* generated **6a** in the presence of CO₂ (5 atm) at 100 °C for 36 h afforded (κ -N-**3a**)B(C₆F₅)₃ in 71% yield, in which the imidazole nitrogen atom of carboxylic phosphinic mixed anhydride **3a** coordinates to B(C₆F₅)₃. The expected accelerating effect of B(C₆F₅)₃ on the transformation of **1a** to **3a** was not observed under these conditions. We also carried out a reaction between **1a•Al** and CO₂ at room temperature (Figure 6A-2). The complete consumption of **1a•Al** was confirmed after 1 h, and the target (κ -O-**3a**)Al(C₆F₅)₃

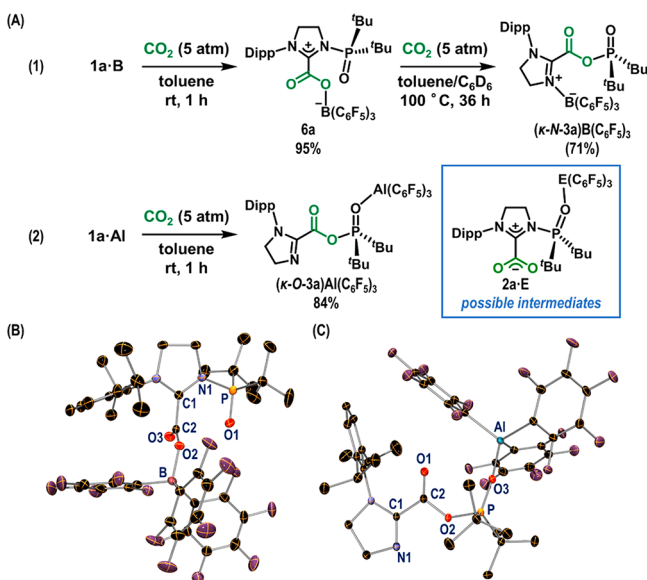


Figure 6. (A) Reaction between $1a \cdot B/1a \cdot Al$ and CO_2 . The isolated product yield is shown. The yield determined by NMR analysis is also shown in parentheses. (B) Molecular structure of $6a$ with thermal ellipsoids at 30% probability; H atoms and a molecule of CH_2Cl_2 are omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): N1–P 1.745(2), P–O1 1.473(1), C1–C2 1.535(2), C2–O2 1.294(2), C2–O3 1.200(2), O2–B 1.540(2), C1–C2–O3 118.1(1), C1–C2–O2 110.4(1). (C) Molecular structure of $(\kappa\text{-}O\text{-}3a)Al(C_6F_5)_3$ with thermal ellipsoids at 30% probability; H atoms and a molecule of C_7H_8 are omitted for clarity. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (deg): C1–C2 1.500(5), C2–O1 1.188(4), C2–O2 1.372(3), O2–P 1.615(2), P–O3 1.507(2), O3–Al 1.795(2), C1–C2–O1 126.1(3), O1–C2–O2 123.6(3), P–O3–Al 169.4(1).

was isolated in 84% yield. The molecular structures of $(\kappa\text{-}N\text{-}3a)B(C_6F_5)_3$ (Figure S1) and $(\kappa\text{-}O\text{-}3a)Al(C_6F_5)_3$ (Figure 6C) were determined by single-crystal XRD analyses. The formation of $(\kappa\text{-}O\text{-}3a)Al(C_6F_5)_3$ would also proceed via an imidazolium-2-carboxylate intermediate such as $2a \cdot Al$, followed by a migration of the activated phosphinoyl moiety.

Encouraged by the aforementioned results, we explored the room-temperature phosphinoylation of CO_2 with $1a$ in the presence of a catalytic amount of Lewis acids (Figure 7). In the absence of a catalyst, $3a$ was formed in 39% after 2.5 h (run 1). In the presence of $Al(C_6F_5)_3$, $3a$ was formed in >99% yield (run 2), while $B(C_6F_5)_3$ did not promote the formation of $3a$ (run 3). Subsequently, we examined $B(p\text{-}HC_6F_4)_3$, BPh_3 , and $B(2\text{-}CF_3C_6H_4)(p\text{-}HC_6F_4)_2$ (runs 4–6), as the suppressed Lewis acidity may promote the dissociation of CO_2 from a possible resting-state compound such as $6a$. However, the yield of $3a$ did not improve under these conditions. To explore the reactivity of triaryl boranes equipped with a five-membered aromatic substituent,^{13,14} $B(1,3\text{-}dichloroazulenyl)(p\text{-}HC_6F_4)_2$ was employed, albeit that the improvement of the yield of $3a$ was negligible (run 7, Figure 7). Al-, Ti-, and Li-based inorganic Lewis acids were also tested, which failed to accelerate the reaction (runs 8–11), probably due to the difficulty on the selective and quantitative complexation with the phosphinoyl group. It should thus be crucial to choose a suitable Lewis acid that is both sufficiently oxophilic as well as sterically demanding in order to maintain the predominant complexation via the N-phosphinoyl group in $1a$ throughout the reaction.

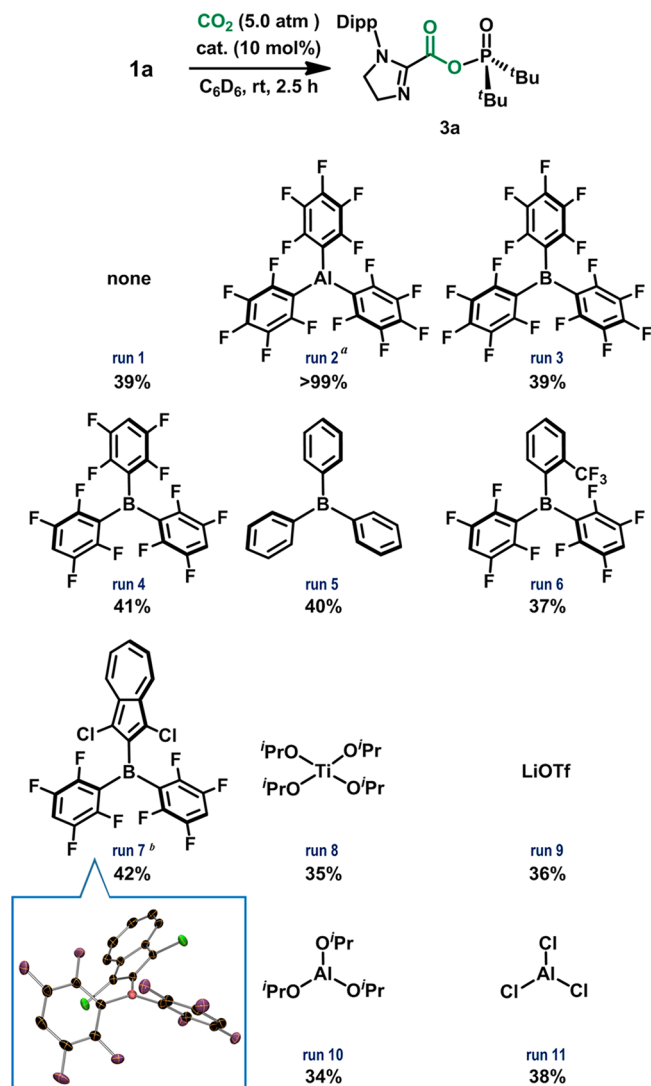


Figure 7. Reaction between $1a$ and CO_2 in the presence/absence of a catalytic amount of Lewis acids. Product yields were determined by NMR spectroscopy using hexamethylbenzene as the internal standard. (a) $Al(C_6F_5)_3 \cdot (tol)_{0.5}$ was used. (b) Molecular structure of $B(1,3\text{-}dichloroazulenyl)(p\text{-}HC_6F_4)_2$ with thermal ellipsoids at 30% probability.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we have observed the first example of complexation-induced axial chirality around an N–P bond. The complexation between $B(C_6F_5)_3$ and the N-phosphine oxide-substituted imidazolynilidene (SPoxIm) occurred via the predominant coordination of the N-phosphinoyl oxygen atom to the B center to afford the corresponding (R_a) and (S_a) atropisomers. The steric repulsion between the C5–H atoms in the imidazolynilidene ring and the C_6F_5 groups seems to be crucial for this axial chirality, as it effectively restricts the rotation of the N-phosphinoyl moiety. The conformational fixation via the multiple intramolecular H···F interactions as well as van der Waals interactions between alkyl groups would also contribute to the stabilization of these atropisomers. On the other hand, axial chirality was not certainly observed in the corresponding $Al(C_6F_5)_3$ complex. The vital nucleophilicity on the carbene carbon atom in $(\kappa\text{-}O\text{-}SPoxIm)B(C_6F_5)_3$ was used for the fixation of CO_2 in the corresponding carbene– CO_2 –

B(C₆F₅)₃ adduct that was subsequently transformed into an adduct comprising a carboxylic phosphinic mixed anhydride and B(C₆F₅)₃. Furthermore, in the presence of a catalytic amount of Al(C₆F₅)₃, the phosphinylation of CO₂ with SPoxIm was significantly accelerated at room temperature to quantitatively afford the carboxylic phosphinic mixed anhydride, while this reaction proceeded only in moderate yields in the absence of Al(C₆F₅)₃. The present work showcases the multipurpose utility of strategically designed multifunctional carbenes, thus contributing to the expansion of their chemistry. Further applications of multifunctional multipurpose carbenes are currently in progress in our laboratory.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

General Considerations. Unless otherwise noted, all manipulations were conducted under a nitrogen atmosphere using standard Schlenk line or drybox techniques. ¹H, ¹¹B, ¹³C, ¹⁹F, ²⁷Al, and ³¹P NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AVANCE III 400 or JEOL JNM-400 spectrometers at 25 °C. The chemical shifts in the ¹H NMR spectra were recorded relative to Me₄Si or residual protonated solvent (C₆D₅H (δ 7.16), toluene-*d*₈ (δ 7.09, 7.01, 6.97, 2.08), CDHCl₂ (δ 5.32), DMSO-*d*₆ (δ 2.50)). The chemical shifts in the ¹¹B NMR spectra were recorded relative to BF₃. The chemical shifts in the ¹³C spectra were recorded relative to Me₄Si or deuterated solvent (C₆D₆ (δ 128.06), toluene-*d*₈ (δ 137.48, 128.87, 127.96, 125.13, 20.43), CD₂Cl₂ (δ 53.84), DMSO-*d*₆ (δ 39.52)). The chemical shifts in the ¹⁹F NMR spectra were recorded relative to α,α,α-trifluorotoluene (δ -65.64). The chemical shifts in the ²⁷Al NMR spectra were recorded relative to AlCl₃. The chemical shifts in the ³¹P NMR spectra were recorded relative to 85% H₃PO₄ as an external standard. Assignment of the resonances in ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra was based on ¹H-¹H COSY, HMQC, and HMBC experiments. High resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS) and elementary analyses were performed at the Instrumental Analysis Center, Faculty of Engineering, Osaka University. Exact mass spectra were recorded on a double-focusing mass spectrometer (JMS-700; JEOL). For some complexes, accurate elemental analyses were precluded by extreme air or thermal sensitivity and/or systematic problems with elemental analysis of organometallic compounds. X-ray crystal data were collected with Rigaku XtaLAB Synergy equipping with the HyPix-6000HE detector. Melting points were confirmed on a Stanford Research Systems MPA100 OptiMelt Automated Melting Point System. DFT calculations were performed using the program Gaussian 09, Revision A.02.¹⁵ Geometry optimizations of minima and transition states were carried out without any symmetry constraint at the B3LYP or ωB97X-D level of theory¹⁶ for 6-31G(d) basis sets. The vibrational frequencies were calculated at the ωB97X-D/6-311G(d,p) level of theory to check whether each optimized structure represents an energy minimum or a transition state, and to evaluate its zero-point vibrational energy and thermal corrections at 298.15 K (gas phase, 1 atm). All stationary-point structures were found to have the appropriate number of imaginary frequencies. The appropriateness of the connections between each reactant and product was confirmed using quasi-intrinsic reaction coordinate (qIRC) calculations. In the qIRC calculations, the geometry of a transition state was first shifted by perturbing the geometries very slightly along the reaction coordinate, and then released for equilibrium optimization. Relative Gibbs energies were obtained by adding the Gibbs energy corrections derived from the analytical frequency calculations to the single-point energies. These calculations involve a certain margin of error.

Materials. All commercially available reagents, including super-dehydrated solvents (toluene, hexane, and Et₂O), were used as received. Benzene-*d*₆ and toluene-*d*₈ were distilled from sodium benzophenone ketyl prior to use. CD₂Cl₂ was distilled from CaH₂ and stored over molecular sieves (4 Å). Compounds **1a**,^{3b} B(*p*-HC₆F₄)₃,^{17a} B(2-CF₃C₆F₄)(*p*-HC₆F₄)₂,^{17b} and (1,3-dichloroazulenyl)boronic acid^{17c} were prepared using previously reported procedures. *Caution: Al(C₆F₅)₃ is a potentially explosive*

*material, and ligand-supported derivatives such as Al(C₆F₅)₃(*tol*)_{0.5} should thus be handled with the utmost care.*

Synthesis of Potassium Trifluoro(1,3-dichloroazulenyl)borate. (1,3-Dichloroazulenyl)boronic acid (2.77 g, 11.5 mmol) was dissolved in methanol (20 mL) in a PE-wash bottle. The solution was treated with KHF₂ (3.60 g, 46.1 mmol, 4 equiv) dissolved in 5 mL of distilled water. The resulting suspension was stirred at room temperature for 12 h. Then extraction with acetone through a glass filter and the following removal of all volatiles at 60 °C furnished a green solid. Again extraction with acetone, filtration, and evaporation yielded a solid that was washed with hexane followed by dried *in vacuo*, which afforded the target product as a green solid (3.06 g, 10.1 mmol, 88%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ 8.15 (d, *J* = 9.6 Hz, 2H), 7.58 (t, *J* = 9.8 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (t, *J* = 9.8 Hz, 2H). ¹¹B NMR (128 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ 2.0 (br). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ 138.1, 132.8, 132.0, 124.0, 122.3, 119.0. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ -137.0 (br, 3F). HRMS(FAB⁻): *m/z* calcd for C₁₀H₅Cl₂F₃B: ([M⁻]) 262.9813, found 262.9816. Melting points: 230–231 °C.

Synthesis of B(1,3-dichloroazulenyl)(*p*-HC₆F₄)₂. (*p*-C₆F₄H)-MgBr was prepared by slow addition of ¹PrMgCl (1.0 M in Et₂O, 7.3 mL, 7.3 mmol) to a solution of *p*-C₆F₄HBr (1.66 g, 7.25 mmol) in Et₂O (20 mL). The resulting mixture was stirred for 1 h at room temperature. Then (*p*-C₆F₄H)MgBr was added to the suspension of potassium trifluoro(1,3-dichloroazulenyl)borate (1.00 g, 3.3 mmol) in Et₂O (5 mL) at 0 °C, and the mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature with further stirring for 12 h. Then, after all volatiles were removed, the resultant mixture was extracted with 200 mL of hot hexane under N₂, followed by removal of volatiles to afford the product as a green solid (679.5 mg, 1.35 mmol, 41%). A single crystal was prepared by recrystallization from toluene/hexane at -35 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 7.89 (d, *J* = 10.0 Hz, 2H), 6.75 (t, *J* = 9.8 Hz, 1H), 6.33–6.25 (m, 4H). ¹¹B NMR (128 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 62.6 (br). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 147.6 (dm, ¹*J*_{C,F} = 246 Hz), 146.2 (dm, ¹*J*_{C,F} = 245 Hz), 143.3, 138.8, 134.6, 124.4, 121.1, 110.7 (t, *J* = 22.7 Hz). Two resonances are obscured by a C₆D₆ signal. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, C₆D₆): δ -133.1–133.2 (m, 2F), -141.4–141.6 (m, 2F). HRMS(EI⁺): *m/z* calcd for C₂₂H₇Cl₂F₈B: ([M⁺]) 503.9890, found 503.9888. Melting points: 154–155 °C. X-ray data for B(1,3-dichloroazulenyl)(*p*-HC₆F₄)₂: *M* = 505.02, green, monoclinic, *P*2₁/*c* (#14), *a* = 19.1406(4) Å, *b* = 9.6406(2) Å, *c* = 11.2647(3) Å, α = 90°, β = 105.952(3)°, γ = 90°, *V* = 1998.60(9) Å³, *Z* = 4, *D*_{calcd} = 1.678 g/cm³, *T* = -150 °C, *R*₁ (*wR*₂) = 0.0391 (0.1084).

Synthesis of 1a·B. B(C₆F₅)₃ (128.1 mg, 0.25 mmol) was added to a toluene solution of **1a** (97.7 mg, 0.25 mmol, 0.05 M) at room temperature. The reaction mixture was stirred for 10 min. After the removal of all volatiles *in vacuo*, the residue was washed with cold hexane to afford **1a·B** as a white solid (228.2 mg, 0.25 mmol, > 99%). A single crystal was prepared by recrystallization from CH₂Cl₂/hexane at -35 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, *tol-d*₈, -30 °C): δ 7.15 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H, *Ar-H*), 6.98 (d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H, *Ar-H*), 3.20 (t, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, CH₂), 2.99 (t, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H, CH₂), 2.71–2.68 (m, 2H, CHCH₃), 1.27 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 1.07 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 0.89 (d, ³*J*_{H,P} = 16.4 Hz, 18H, ^tBu-H). ¹¹B NMR (128 MHz, *tol-d*₈, -30 °C): δ -2.7 (br). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, *tol-d*₈, -30 °C): δ 245.4 (d, ²*J*_{C,P} = 35.5 Hz, NCN), 148.6 (dm, ¹*J*_{C,F} = 240 Hz), 145.7, 140.3 (dm, ¹*J*_{C,F} = 245 Hz), 137.5 (dm, ¹*J*_{C,F} = 246 Hz), 137.1, 136.6, 124.2, 120.2 (br), 53.2, 49.3, 39.3 (d, ¹*J*_{C,P} = 68.6 Hz), 28.7, 26.7, 25.2, 23.0. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, *tol-d*₈, -30 °C): δ -131.3 (s, 6F), -156.8 (m, 3F), -163.7 (m, 6F). ³¹P{¹H} NMR (162 MHz, *tol-d*₈, -30 °C): δ 76.7 (s). Anal. Calcd for C₄₁H₃₉BF₁₅N₂OP: C, 54.56; H, 4.36; N, 3.10. Found: C, 54.40; H, 4.32; N, 3.20. Melting points: 145–146 °C. X-ray data for **1a·B**: *M* = 902.55, colorless, triclinic, *P*-1 (#2), *a* = 10.6793(2) Å, *b* = 11.2817(2) Å, *c* = 16.7507(4) Å, α = 86.433(2)°, β = 84.296(2)°, γ = 88.897(2)°, *V* = 2004.08(7) Å³, *Z* = 2, *D*_{calcd} = 1.495 g/cm³, *T* = -150 °C, *R*₁ (*wR*₂) = 0.0336 (0.0879).

Reaction between 1a·B and CO₂. A 10 mL autoclave was charged with **1a·B** (190.5 mg, 0.21 mmol) and toluene (6.0 mL). Once sealed, the vessel was pressurized with CO₂ (5 atm), and the

reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h. After the removal all volatiles in vacuo, the residue was washed with cold hexane to afford **6a** as a white solid (190.2 mg, 0.20 mmol, 95%). A single crystal was prepared by recrystallization from CH₂Cl₂/hexane at -35 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 7.47 (t, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.22 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.34 (t, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H, CH₂), 4.27–4.25 (m, 2H, CH₂), 2.86 (br, 2H, CHCH₃), 1.39 (d, ³J_{H,P} = 15.6 Hz, 18H, ^tBu-H), 1.20 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 12H, CHCH₃). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (128 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ -2.5 (br). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 151.9 (s, OCO), 148.6 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 227 Hz), 146.4, 137.0 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 250 Hz), 132.2, 129.4, 128.7 (d, ²J_{C,P} = 19.0 Hz, NCN), 125.4, 55.9, 49.1, 38.9 (d, ¹J_{C,P} = 63.0 Hz), 29.6, 27.0, 26.7, 22.6. Several resonances for the C₆F₅ ring were not identified. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ -134.3 (d, $J = 18.8$ Hz, 6F), -165.3 (t, $J = 20.7$ Hz, 6F), -170.6 (t, $J = 18.8$ Hz, 6F). ³¹P{¹H} NMR (162 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 68.9 (s). Anal. Calcd for C₄₂H₃₉BF₁₅N₂O₃P·CH₂Cl₂: C, 50.07; H, 4.01; N, 2.72. Found: C, 48.74; H, 3.79; N, 2.80. X-ray data for **6a**·CH₂Cl₂: $M = 1031.50$, colorless, monoclinic, $P2_1/n$ (#14), $a = 10.5340(3)$ Å, $b = 21.0599(6)$ Å, $c = 20.8720(6)$ Å, $\alpha = 90^\circ$, $\beta = 95.002(2)^\circ$, $\gamma = 90^\circ$, $V = 4612.7(2)$ Å³, $Z = 4$, $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.485$ g/cm³, $T = -150$ °C, R_1 (wR_2) = 0.0397 (0.0951).

Thermolysis of 6a in the Presence of CO₂. A pressure-tight NMR tube (Wilmad-LabGlass, 524-PV-7) was charged with **1a**·**B** (15.7 mg, 0.017 mmol) and toluene/C₆D₆ (0.5 mL, $v/v = 4/1$). Once sealed, the mixture was pressurized with CO₂ (5 atm), confirming the quantitative generation of **6a**. This reaction mixture was heated at 100 °C for 36 h. After the removal all volatiles in vacuo, the residue was washed with hexane to afford a crude mixture (13.3 mg) which includes (κ -**N-3a**)B(C₆F₅)₃ in 71% (0.012 mmol; determined by ³¹P NMR analysis). The formation of (κ -**N-3a**)B(C₆F₅)₃ was unambiguously confirmed by the comparison with the authentic compound that was prepared by the reaction between **3a** and B(C₆F₅)₃ in toluene. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 7.40 (t, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 7.23 (d, $J = 7.7$ Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 4.38 (br, 2H, CH₂), 4.06 (t, $J = 10.6$ Hz, 2H, CH₂), 3.02 (br, 2H, CHCH₃), 1.29 (d, $J = 20.4$ Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 1.21 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 0.86 (d, ³J_{H,P} = 16.8 Hz, 18H, ^tBu-H). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (128 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ -8.1 (br). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 158.9, 152.9 (d, ²J_{C,P} = 10 Hz), 149.2 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 242 Hz), 148.2, 140.5 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 262 Hz), 137.6 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 241 Hz), 131.8, 130.5, 125.7, 53.7, 52.3, 38.0 (d, ¹J_{C,P} = 69 Hz), 32.0, 29.2, 26.9, 26.5. Resonances for the *ipso*-carbons of C₆F₅ ring were not identified. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ -132.2 (d, $J = 15.0$ Hz, 2F), -135.1 – 135.4 (m, 2F), -136.4 (d, $J = 15.0$ Hz, 2F), -160.9 (t, $J = 21.7$ Hz, 1F), -161.9 – 162.3 (m, 2F), -162.9 (t, $J = 22.6$ Hz, 1F), -167.1 (br, 2F), -167.7 (br, 2F), -168.9 (t, $J = 16.9$ Hz, 1F). ³¹P{¹H} NMR (162 MHz, CD₂Cl₂): δ 84.7 (s). Anal. Calcd for C₄₂H₃₉BF₁₅N₂O₃P: C, 53.30; H, 4.15; N, 2.96. Found: C, 53.81; H, 4.51; N, 2.95. Melting points: 151 – 152 °C. X-ray data for (κ -**N-3a**)B(C₆F₅)₃: $M = 946.56$, colorless, monoclinic, $P2_1/c$ (#14), $a = 12.5964(5)$ Å, $b = 21.5652(12)$ Å, $c = 18.5448(9)$ Å, $\alpha = 90^\circ$, $\beta = 95.214(4)^\circ$, $\gamma = 90^\circ$, $V = 5016.7(4)$ Å³, $Z = 4$, $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.253$ g/cm³, $T = 25$ °C, R_1 (wR_2) = 0.0676 (0.2225).

Reaction between 1b·Al and CO₂. A 50 mL autoclave was charged with **1b**·Al (79.0 mg, 0.086 mmol) and toluene (2.0 mL). Once sealed, the vessel was pressurized with CO₂ (5 atm), and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h. After the removal all volatiles in vacuo, the residue was washed with cold hexane to afford (κ -**O-3a**)Al(C₆F₅)₃ as a white solid (69.7 mg, 0.072 mmol, 84%). A single crystal was prepared by recrystallization from toluene/hexane at -35 °C. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 7.19 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 6.98 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 3.69 (t, $J = 11.3$ Hz, 2H, CH₂), 3.24 (t, $J = 11.3$ Hz, 2H, CH₂), 2.98–2.91 (m, 2H, CHCH₃), 1.15 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 1.07 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 6H, CHCH₃), 0.97 (d, ³J_{H,P} = 17.2 Hz, 18H, ^tBu-H). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 150.5 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 233 Hz), 147.2, 141.8 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 247 Hz), 137.3 (dm, ¹J_{C,F} = 230 Hz), 134.1, 132.3, 129.5, 124.5, 54.8, 54.1, 37.6 (d, ¹J_{C,P} = 73 Hz), 28.6, 25.3, 24.9, 23.8. Resonances for the *ipso*-carbons of C₆F₅ ring and NCN were not identified. ¹⁹F NMR (376 MHz, C₆D₆): δ -124.5 – 124.6 (m, 6F), -157.0 (t, $J = 18.8$ Hz, 3F), -165.3 – 165.4 (m, 6F). ²⁷Al NMR (103 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 113.1

(br, $\nu_{1/2} = ca. 4000$ Hz). ³¹P{¹H} NMR (162 MHz, C₆D₆): δ 79.5 (br). In the case of (κ -**O-3a**)Al(C₆F₅)₃, an accurate elemental analysis was precluded by extreme air sensitivity and/or systematic problems with elemental analysis of organometallic compounds: Anal. Calcd for C₄₂H₃₉AlF₁₅N₂O₃P: C, 52.40; H, 4.08; N, 2.91. Found: C, 50.91; H, 3.90; N, 3.09. Melting points: 118 – 119 °C. X-ray data for (κ -**O-3a**)Al(C₆F₅)₃·C₇H₈: $M = 1054.86$, colorless, triclinic, $P-1$ (#2), $a = 11.0128(3)$ Å, $b = 12.0642(3)$ Å, $c = 20.6781(6)$ Å, $\alpha = 83.247(2)^\circ$, $\beta = 75.607(2)^\circ$, $\gamma = 66.202(3)^\circ$, $V = 2434.35(13)$ Å³, $Z = 2$, $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.439$ g/cm³, $T = -150$ °C, R_1 (wR_2) = 0.0557 (0.1544).

General Procedures for the Reaction between 1a and CO₂ in the Presence/Absence of a Catalyst. A pressure-tight NMR tube (Wilmad-LabGlass, 524-PV-7) was charged with **1a** (0.04 mmol), additive (0.004 mmol, 10 mol %), hexamethylbenzene (0.04 mmol; an internal standard for NMR analysis), and C₆D₆ (0.4 mL). Once sealed, the tube was pressurized with CO₂ (5 atm), and the reaction was monitored by ¹H NMR at room temperature.

Noncovalent Interactions (NCIs) Analysis for (R_a)-1a·B. NCI analysis was carried out based on the structural parameters (xyz coordinates) obtained by the single-crystal XRD analysis of (R_a)-**1a**·**B**. A profile for the reduced density gradient (RDG < 1.0 au) was prepared as a function of electron density (ρ) multiplied by the sign of the Hessian second eigenvalue, $\text{sign}(\lambda_2)\rho$, with the NCIPLOT program (Figure S7).⁹ On the basis of this result, the isosurfaces shown in Figure 3 are visualized with the VMD program¹⁸ by adopting the cutoff values of RDG = 0.25 au and $-0.03 < \rho < 0.03$ au. These surfaces are colored according to the indicated $\text{sign}(\lambda_2)\rho$ values: blue colors suggest more attractive interactions; deeper red colors indicate more repulsive interactions; green colors indicate weak interactions.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

SI Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.joc.9b03210>.

NMR spectra, molecular structure of (κ -**N-3a**)B(C₆F₅)₃, details on experimental procedures for Figure 6, the DFT calculations (NCI analysis), and calculated Cartesian coordinates(PDF)

X-ray data for obtained compounds (CIF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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