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The role of the counter-ion in metal-organic frameworks' chemistry and applications

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ABSTRACT

A review of the synthesis, structure and specifically the effect of counter-ions on the properties of ionic metal organic frameworks (ionic-MOFs) is presented, highlighting the important advances in this regard over the past decade. Most focus is on ionic porous metal–organic frameworks (MOFs) materials consisting of porous anionic or cationic frameworks and cationic or anionic guests. The structure and performance of cationic and anionic MOFs are influenced by several factors, such as organic ligands, metal ions and charge-balancing anions. These types of anionic and cationic materials have distinct advantages in comparison with neutral MOFs in the design of functional materials and their synthesis affords several distinct advantages over that for routine neutral frameworks by virtue of the isolated charged species in confined nano-spaces. The nanosized and charged pores in these ionic structures generate a strong interaction between the host and guest molecules, including enhanced adsorption towards small gases and solvent molecules. Ionic-MOFs can be easily modified via ion exchange and accommodate other charged guest molecules, making them an ideal platform for different applications, such as functional materials. The development of synthesis methods by ion exchange and the potential applications of such cationic or anionic structures have been discussed thoroughly in this review.

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Review



Abbreviations: Tempt, 2,4,6-tris[4-(imidazole-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]-1,3,5-triazine; 1,3,5-tris, 1,3,5-tris(pyrazol-1-yl)benzene; 4-bpdh, 2,5-bis(4-pyridyl)-3,4-diaza-2,4-he xadiene; HL, 1H-1,2,4-triazole-3-carboxylic acid; HDMA, dimethyl ammonium; BDC, benzene dicarboxylic acid; DMA, N,N-dimethyl amide; TMA, tetra methyl ammonium; TEA, tetra ethyl ammonium; TPA, tetra propyl ammonium; H₄mdip, 5,5'-methylenediisophthalic acid; ad, adeninate; BPDC, biphenyl dicarboxylate; L1, 2-amino-4,6dimethylpyrimidine; L2, 2-amino-4-methoxy-6-methylpyrimidine; L3, 2-amino-4,6-dimethoxypyrimidine; NDC, 2,6-naphthalene dicarboxylate; dma, N,N-dimethyl acetamide; bpdc, 4,4'-biphenyldicarboxylate; NH2bdc, 2-amino-1,4 benzene dicarboxylate; HCOO, formate; H2PPZ, tetracarboxylate isophthalate; btr, 4,4'-bis(1,2,4triazole); Tipa, tris(4-(1Himidazol-1-yl)phenyl)amine; 1,4-H2bda, 1,4-H2benzenediacetate; mtrb, 1,3-bis(1,2,4-triazol-4-ylmethyl)benzene; BPDC, 4,4'-dicarboxylate-2,2'dipyridine anion; H4mtb, 4-[tris(4 carboxyphenyl)methyl]benzoic acid; L, 4,4'-dicarboxylate-2,2-dipyridine anion; BTB, 1,3,5-benzene(tris)benzoate; H6dpa, 3,4-di(3,5dicarboxyphenyl)phthalic acid; DMF, dimethyl formamide; dobdc4-, 2,5-dioxido-1,4-benzene dicarboxylate; pbdc, 5-phosphonobenzene-1,3-dicarboxylic acid; bmib, 1,4-bis (2-methylimidazol-1'-yl)butane; H₃btc, 1,3,5-benzenetricarboxylic acid; H₃cpip, 5-(4-carboxyphenoxy)isophthalic acid; NMP, N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone; H₄L, 4,8-disulfo naphthalene-2,6-dicarboxylicacid; bpy, 4,4-bipyridine; H₂L, pyridine-3,5-bis(phenyl-4-carboxylic acid); tata, melamine, 2,4,6-triamino-1,3,5-triazine; bped, meso-1,2-bis(4pyridyl)-1,2-ethandiol; BBPTZ, 4,4'-bis(1,2,4-triazol-1-ylmethyl)biphenyl; H₂thb, 2,5-thiophenedicarboxylate; H₃BTB, 4,4',4''-benzene-1,3,5-triyl-tribenzoic acid; IDC³⁻, imidazole-4,5-dicarboxylate; L1, (N-phenyl-N0-phenyl bicyclo[2,2,2]oct-7-ene-2,3,5,6-tetracarboxylimide tetracarboxylic acid; H4-DHBDC, 2,5- dihydroxy-1,4-benzene dicarboxylic acid; H₆dpa, 3,4-di(3,5-dicarboxyphenyl)phthalic acid; TATB, 4,4',4''-s-triazine-2,4,6-triyltribenzoate; MOF, Metal Organic Framework; H₅hpdia, 5,5'-(hydroxy phosphoryl)diisophthalic acid; NDC, 2,6-naphthalene dicarboxylate; H₆dpa, 3,4-di(3,5-dicarboxyphenyl)phthalic acid; DDS, drug delivery systems; AEMFC, Alkaline polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cells; AEM, Alkaline polymer Electrolyte Membrane; DPT, 3,6-di(pyridin-4-yl)-1,2,4,5-tetrazine; H₃IDC, imidazole-4,5-dicarboxylic acid. Corresponding authors.

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1. Introduction

Advances in new materials for any targeted application require the ability to make progressive changes through an iterative cycle of design, execution and assessment. Metal-Organic Frameworks (MOFs) are a class of compounds consisting of metal clusters or nodes linked by organic moieties. MOFs are highly crystalline. which allows for easy structural determination [1], so they are garnering ever increasing attention in research laboratories worldwide [2-20]. Rational design and the diversity of possible topologies and useful properties allow for the possible application of MOFs in areas such as gas adsorption [2], hydrogen storage [3], molecular sieves [4], catalysis [5], molecular magnets [6], nonlinear optical devices [7], luminescence [8], sensors [9] and drug delivery [10]. Today, there are over several thousand examples of MOF materials in the literature due to the flexibility in metal charge, coordination number and the choice of organic linking agent. Therefore, using different synthesis routes and crystal engineering is an effective method for growing crystals of MOFs and extended materials, in general, allowing a great deal of structural diversity and varying dimensionality [21,22].

Among the various MOFs, those having cations and anions in their structures are very interesting and applicable in comparison with neutral ones in the design of functional materials. They include anionic structures in which the compound is anionic, thereby resulting in the existence of a counter cation to balance their overall charge, and cationic structures where the cationic nature of the backbone results in the necessity of anions to neutralize the charge in order to maintain the electrical neutrality. Cationic structures can serve as promising anion exchange materials through selective exchange of charge balancing anions in the compound with other anions, leading to tunable change in physical properties. Besides, cationic structures can serve as ionic hosts to accommodate different guest molecules by electrostatic interactions, which can cooperatively result in specific functions.

Ion-exchange chromatography and ion-exchange solid phase extraction based on ion-exchange resins are known as the first generation of powerful tools for the separation of charged molecules, so researchers are interested in finding new materials with higher performance in their ability for ion separation. Another separation method, size-exclusion chromatography, is based on the size or molecular weight of the analytes. Although these methods are especially useful, they are used only for separation of very large species, such as proteins and polymers. In another way, by mixing the unique structure of MOFs, especially their porous structures, with the efficiency of ion chromatography, it is possible to develop a novel separation system in which charged MOFs replace conventional ion-exchange resins (Fig. 1). The structural characteristics of porous MOFs, such as precisely defined pores, can result in useful properties, including a size-exclusion effect for guest molecules in a size regime that cannot be achieved by conventional ionexchange resins [23].

Hence, increasing interest has recently shifted to the design and synthesis of ionic MOFs. As we know, the structure and performance of cationic and anionic porous MOFs are influenced by several factors, such as the organic ligands, metal ions, and chargebalancing anions. The ions inside these polarized MOFs are often exchanged with other exogenous ions, making them promising candidates to be used in ion exchange resins. Moreover, the presence of charged species inside the structure may cause specific interactions which can be effectively used for diverse applications; therefore, research on ionic MOFs has considerably advanced over the last decade. Considering just metal-organic frameworks (MOFs) and reviewing the articles in ionic structures and searching in web of science with the keywords "Anionic MOFs", "Cationic MOFs" and "Ionic MOFs" the following chart was drawn up. Scheme 1a and b shows the increase in the number of articles published in this area (Cationic and Anionic MOFs) and also the importance of discussion in this field. Scheme 1c compares articles with keywords "Anionic MOFs", "Cationic MOFs" and "Ionic MOFs".

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