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# Pd-catalyzed Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR][OTf] with arylboronic acids

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#### ABSTRACT

The Pd-catalyzed Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling of alkyl- and fluoroalkyl(diphenyl)sulfonium triflates with arylboronic acids was compared. The fluorine substitution on the alkyl groups of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR][OTf] had a big influence on the reaction. Perfluoroalkyl(diphenyl)sulfonium triflates (**2b**–**d**) were unsuccessful participants in the Pd-catalyzed phenylation of arylboronic acid under the standard conditions because of the strong electronegativity of the long-chain perfluoroalkyl groups, which underwent S–R<sub>fn</sub> bond cleavage instead. Polyfluoroalkyl(diphenyl)sulfonium triflates (**2f**–**h**) reacted with arylboronic acid to afford the phenylation product in very low yields due to the tendency of deprotonation and β-F elimination of the sulfonium salts. Eventually, (2,2,2-trifluoroethyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (**2e**), methyl- or ethyl(diphenyl)sulfonium triflate (**2i** or **2j**), and triphenylsulfonium triflate (**2m**) were found to be more effective reagents than other tested phenylsulfounium salts for Pd-catalyzed phenylation, which provided much higher yields of the desired products under mild conditions.

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#### 1. Introduction

Arylsulfonium salts have gained great interest in areas of chemistry and materials science in the past several decades.<sup>1</sup> They can be readily reduced by pulse radiolytic, chemical, photochemical, and electrochemical methods via single electron transfer processes.<sup>2</sup> This intriguing property has led to triarylsulfonium salts as important photoinitiators in cationic polymerization reactions and as excellent photoacid generators capable of releasing protons under irradiation, which have been widely used in the fields of coatings, adhesives, photoresists, microfabrication, and patterning.<sup>3</sup> The aryl radicals derived from triarylsulfonium salts under photocatalytic conditions have accomplished the carbon–carbon bond formation with allyl sulfones and activated olefins.<sup>4</sup> The conjugate addition of nucleophiles to vinyl(diphenyl)sulfonium salts in situ forms sulfur ylides, which have been successfully utilized in a variety of cyclization reactions.<sup>5,6</sup>

It has been well known that the introduction of fluorine atoms into organic compounds can dramatically change their physical, chemical, and biological properties.<sup>7</sup> The incorporation of perfluoroalkyl groups into diphenylsulfoniums at the sulfur center has

-Umemoto reagents) to perfluoroalkylate various nucleophiles under mild reaction conditions, showing much different reactivities from the non-fluorinated (alkyl)diphenylsulfonium analogs.<sup>8</sup> (Trifluoromethyl)diphenylsulfoniums, the fluorinated version of (methyl)diphenylsulfoniums, are also effective CF3 transfer sources in the reductive trifluoromethylation reactions towards a wide range of substrates, initiated by copper, photoredox catalysts, and other reductants.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, (2,2,2-trifluoroethyl) diphenylsulfonium triflate, a partially fluorinated version of (ethyl) diphenylsulfonium triflate, is an efficient ylide reagent and trifluoromethylcarbene source to successfully afford a large number of trifluoromethyl cyclopropanes and their derivatives.<sup>1</sup> Recently, we found that (trifluoromethyl)diarylsulfonium triflates could be used as cross-coupling partners in Pd-catalyzed Suzuki–Miyaura reaction with arylboronic acids.<sup>11</sup> The use of 1-

yielded (perfluoroalkyl)diphenylsulfonium salts, which are effective electrophilic perfluoroalkylation reagents (e.g., Yagupolskii-

Suzuki—Miyaura reaction with arylboronic acids.<sup>11</sup> The use of 1aryl(tetrahydro)thiophenium salts as cross-coupling agents in the similar reaction was also reported.<sup>12</sup> Since the fluorine substitution often significantly alters the properties of molecules, we speculated that phenylsulfonium salts bearing fluoroalkyl groups might have distinctive reaction profiles compared to the non-fluorinated analogs in the Pd-catalyzed Suzuki—Miyaura cross-couplings. To understand the 'fluorine effects' and to determine the efficient crosscoupling partners in this type of transformation, we further studied







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the reactions of arylboronic acids with a family of phenylsulfonium salts bearing either fluoroalkyl or alkyl moieties on the sulfur atoms.

#### 2. Results and discussion

Initially, the reaction of (trifluoromethyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2a, 1.5 equiv) with [1,1'-biphenyl]-4-ylboronic acid (1a) in DMF in the presence of  $Pd[P(t-Bu)_3]_2$  (5 mol %) and NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (2 equiv) at  $60 \,^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 6 h provided 1,1':4',1''-terphenyl (**3a**) in 53% yield (Table 1) (For reaction condition optimization see Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI)). When (perfluoroethyl)diphenylsulfonium (2b), (perfluorobutyl)diphenylsulfonium (2c), or (perfluorooctyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2d) was used instead of 2a in the same reaction, 3a was obtained in trace amount (Table 1). This phenomenon may be attributed to the stronger electronegativity of the long-chain perfluoroalkyl groups of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR<sub>fn</sub>][OTf] than the CF<sub>3</sub> moiety, which preferentially underwent the S-Rfn bond cleavage of [Ph2SRfn] cations in the reaction (see ESI). Interestingly, if (2,2,2-trifluoroethyl) diphenylsulfonium triflate (2e) was treated with 1a under the standard conditions, **3a** was formed in 94% yield (Table 1). Nevertheless, treatment of (2,2,3,3,3-pentafluoropropyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2f) with 1a, 3a was prepared in 10% yield. Similarly, the reaction of (2,2-difluoroethyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2g) or (2fluoroethyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2h) with 1a gave 3a in 19% or 23% yield, respectively. The <sup>19</sup>F NMR analysis of the reaction mixtures indicated that 2f-h decomposed in the reaction, which might cause the poor yields of 3a.

triflate (**2I**) with **1a** provided **3a** in 56% yield, which was approximate to those using other aryl(tetrahydro)thiopheniums as the cross-coupling partners in Suzuki–Miyaura reactions with organoboron reagents.<sup>12</sup> These results implied that the non-fluorinated alkyl diphenylsulfonium triflates were more effective participants than the non-fluorinated dialkyl phenylsulfonium compounds in the Pd-catalyzed Suzuki–Miyaura cross-couplings. In addition, the reaction of **1a** with triphenylsulfonium triflate (**2m**), a well-known photoacid generator, could give **3a** in 92% yield under the standard reaction conditions, the yield of which was nearly equal to those using **2e**, **2i**, and **2j** (Table 1).

To shed more light on this transformation, we monitored the reactions of several representative phenylsulfonium triflates by HPLC (Fig. 1). It was found that the Pd-catalyzed reactions of 1a with 2e, 2i, and 2j exhibited similar reactivity profiles, which were almost completed in 3 h and gave comparable yields of **3a** after 6 h. Furthermore, the cross-coupling of 2a with 1a proceeded fast at the beginning of the reaction and 1 h later it slowed down, which finally provided 3a in moderate yield. Likewise, a fast formation of 3a was observed in the cases of 2g and 2h during the first 40-60 min of the reactions and later the transformation shut down. We suggested that the cleavage of the S-R<sub>fn</sub> bonds of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR<sub>fn</sub>][OTf] and the  $\beta$ -F elimination of the CH<sub>2</sub>R<sub>fn</sub> groups of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SCH<sub>2</sub>R<sub>fn</sub>][OTf] might happen in these reactions (according to <sup>19</sup>F NMR analysis of the reaction mixtures, see ESI),<sup>13</sup> which ceased the Suzuki-Miyaura crosscoupling once the sulfonium salts were completely consumed. This trend could be strengthened with the elongation of perfluoroalkyl chains of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR<sub>fn</sub>][OTf] (e.g., **2b**–**d**), which led to the

#### Table 1

Pd-catalyzed Suzuki–Miyaura cross-coupling of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SR][OTf] with [1,1'-biphenyl]-4-ylboronic acid (1a)<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol)/**2** (0.15 mmol)/Pd[P(t-Bu)<sub>3</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (0.005 mmol, 5 mol %)/NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (0.2 mmol)/DMF (2 mL)/N<sub>2</sub>/60 °C/6 h. Yields of **3a** were determined by HLPC using 1,1':4',1"-terphenyl as the external standard ( $t_R$ =6.145 min,  $\lambda_{max}$ =278.3 nm, CH<sub>3</sub>OH/H<sub>2</sub>O=90:10 (v/v)). Isolated yield is depicted in the parentheses.

The non-fluorinated phenylsulfonium salts were also investigated in the reaction (Table 1). (Ethyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2i) and (methyl)diphenylsulfonium triflate (2j) reacted with 1a under the standard reaction conditions to supply 3a in 95% and 92% yield, respectively. These yields were comparable to that of 2e and higher than that of 2a. Moreover, reaction of (dimethyl)phenylsulfonium triflate (2k) with 1a under the standard conditions gave 3a in 73% yield. Treatment of phenyl(tetrahydro)thiophenium

failure of the conversions. Since **2e** has more steric hindrance than **2g** and **2h** (because of the shielding of  $\beta$ -fluorine atoms), the deprotonation of **2e** followed by  $\beta$ -F elimination is to some extent prohibited (see ESI). Increasing the length of perfluoroalkyl groups of [Ph<sub>2</sub>SCH<sub>2</sub>R<sub>fn</sub>][OTf], however, the deprotonation and  $\beta$ -F elimination became predominant due to the strong electron-withdrawing power of R<sub>fn</sub> moiety, which counteracted the steric effects, thus leading to serious inhibition of the phenylation (e.g., **2f**).

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