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Local Softness and Hardness Based Reactivity Descriptors for Predicting Intra- and Intermolecular Reactivity Sequences: Carbonyl Compounds

R. K. Roy,^{‡,§} S. Krishnamurti,[†] P. Geerlings,[§] and S. Pal^{*,†}

Physical Chemistry Division, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune-411008, India, and
Eenheid Algemene Chemie (ALGC), Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Received: October 24, 1997; In Final Form: February 27, 1998

The DFT-based reactivity descriptors “local softness” and “local hardness” are used as reactivity indices to predict the reactivity sequences (both intramolecular and intermolecular) of carbonyl compounds toward nucleophilic attack on them. The finite difference approximation is used to calculate local softness, whereas local hardness is approximated by $-V_{el}/2N$, where V_{el} is the electronic part of the molecular electrostatic potential. Both aldehydes and ketones, aliphatic and aromatic, have been selected as systems. Critical cases, e.g., $C_6H_5CH=CHCHO$, $CH_3CH=CHCHO$, and $CH_2=CHCHO$, where a $C=C$ double bond is in conjugation with the $C=O$ group, are also considered. Two new reactivity descriptors are proposed, “relative electrophilicity” (s_k^+/s_k^-) and “relative nucleophilicity” (s_k^-/s_k^+), which will help to locate the preferable reactive sites. Our results show that local hardness can be used as a guiding parameter when constructing intermolecular reactivity sequences.

1. Introduction

Ever since the concept of hard and soft acids and bases (HSAB) was introduced by Pearson,¹ it was exploited by the chemist community to explain the wide-ranging phenomena in organic,^{2a–c} inorganic,^{2a–c} and biological chemistry.^{2c,d} The concept got renewed impetus after Parr and Pearson gave precision to chemical hardness, affording its calculation via approximate working equations.³ The proposition of the principle of maximum hardness (PMH)⁴ added a new dimension in understanding the driving forces of chemical processes.

Whereas hardness and softness are global properties of acids and bases, there are parallel developments on the local front. The motivation behind these studies is to predict the site selectivity or site specificity in a chemical reaction. The most important local reactivity parameter, defined as the Fukui function, was introduced by Parr and Yang.⁵ Later on, other local reactivity parameters based on the hard and soft acids and bases, e.g., local hardness^{6a,b} and local softness,^{6b} were introduced. Recently Krishnamurti et al.⁷ have shown that in case of gases interacting with zeolite surfaces the reaction follows the local HSAB principle, which was originally proposed by Parr and Yang⁸ and analytically proved by Gazquez and Mendez.⁹ One of the present authors and co-workers also exploited the Fukui functions and local softness parameters to explain a variety of features of chemical species, e.g., intrinsic group properties,^{10a} influence of isomorphous substitution on the catalytic activity of zeolites,^{10b} acidity of substituted acetic acids,^{10c} acidity of first- and second-row hydrides,^{10d} acidity of alkyl-substituted alcohols,^{10e} basicity of primary amines,^{10f} etc.

Whereas Fukui functions and local softness are well-defined, the definition of local hardness is ambiguous.^{11a,b} Recently

Langenaeker et al.¹² have proposed several approximate working equations of local hardness and also defined a new local reactivity parameter as “hardness density”. They have shown that in the case of electrophilic aromatic substitution, where the intramolecular reactivity sequences (i.e., site selectivity) can be predicted correctly by condensed local softness values of the atoms, the intermolecular reactivity sequences are explained better by local hardness values.

In this article we want to address the reactivity aspects of some carbonyl compounds through local softness and hardness based reactivity descriptors. We will consider both aldehydes and ketones, aliphatic and aromatic. The nucleophilicity and electrophilicity of the atoms are compared to find out the preferable site selectivities of different sites. The critical cases (e.g., $CH_2=CHCHO$, $CH_3CH=CHCHO$, and $C_6H_5CH=CHCHO$), where an α,β unsaturated double bond is present in conjugation with C_{carb} (carbonyl carbon), are also discussed. We propose a new scheme, based on the local softness parameters, which successfully explains the preferred sites of attack in almost all cases we have studied. Our study also reveals that for prediction of intermolecular reactivity sequences of the C_{carb} , the local hardness parameter $\eta_D^{TFD}(\bar{r})$ provides the best result.

The article is organized as follows: In section 2 a brief description of the background theory is given. Section 3 contains the computational part. The detailed methodology for calculating local hardness on C_{carb} is given. The results are critically analyzed and compared with other available theoretical and experimental results in section 4. This section is subdivided into three subsections. In subsection 4.A we have tested the validity of the local softness parameters s_k^+ and s_k^- to locate the preferable electrophilic and nucleophilic sites respectively in the compounds studied. The superiority of the newly proposed local reactivity descriptors s_k^+/s_k^- and s_k^-/s_k^+ in predicting preferable reactive sites is discussed in subsection 4.B. The importance of local hardness parameters to evaluate intermolecular reactivity sequences is shown in subsection 4.C.

* Author for correspondence.

[†] National Chemical Laboratory.

[‡] Presently Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow (FWO) at ALGC, VUB, Belgium.

[§] Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

2. Theoretical Background

(i) Global Hardness and Softness. Parr and Pearson³ first provided the analytical definition of global hardness of any chemical species as

$$\eta = \left(\frac{\partial^2 E}{\partial N^2} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} = \left(\frac{\partial \mu}{\partial N} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} \quad (1)$$

where E is the total energy, N is the number of electrons of the chemical species, and μ is the chemical potential, which is identified as the negative of the electronegativity¹³ (χ) as defined by Iczkowski and Margrave.¹⁴

The corresponding global softness is expressed as

$$S = \frac{1}{2\eta} = \left(\frac{\partial^2 N}{\partial E^2} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} = \left(\frac{\partial N}{\partial \mu} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} \quad (2)$$

By applying the finite difference approximation to eq 1, we get the operational definition of η and S as³

$$\eta = \frac{\text{IP} - \text{EA}}{2} \quad (3)$$

$$S = \frac{1}{\text{IP} - \text{EA}} \quad (4)$$

where IP and EA are the ionization potential and electron affinity of the chemical species.

(ii) Local Softness and Fukui Functions. The local softness $s(\bar{r})$ can be defined as

$$s(\bar{r}) = \left(\frac{\partial \rho(\bar{r})}{\partial \mu} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} \quad (5)$$

so that

$$\int s(\bar{r}) d\bar{r} = S$$

Combining eqs 5 and 2, we can write

$$s(\bar{r}) = \left(\frac{\partial \rho(\bar{r})}{\partial N} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} \left(\frac{\partial N}{\partial \mu} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} = f(\bar{r})S = \left(\frac{\partial \mu}{\partial \nu(\bar{r})} \right)_N S \quad (6)$$

where $f(\bar{r})$ is defined as the Fukui function by Parr and Yang.⁵ From eq 6 it is obvious that local softness contains the same information as Fukui functions (i.e., sensitivity of the chemical potential of a system to a local external perturbation¹⁵) plus additional information about the total molecular softness. Therefore either the Fukui function or local softness can be used in studies of intramolecular reactivity sequences (i.e., relative site reactivity in a molecule). But only $s(\bar{r})$ (and not $f(\bar{r})$) should be a better descriptor of the global reactivity with respect to a reaction partner with a given hardness (or softness), as stated in the HSAB principle.

As $\rho(\bar{r})$ is a discontinuous function of N , three types of $f(\bar{r})$ can be defined which, when multiplied by S , result in three different local softness. Within a finite difference approximation the condensed form of these three local softness for any

particular atom (k) can be written as¹⁶

$$s_k^+ = [\rho_k(N_0 + 1) - \rho_k(N_0)]S \quad (7a)$$

(suited for studies of nucleophilic attack)

$$s_k^- = [\rho_k(N_0) - \rho_k(N_0 - 1)]S \quad (7b)$$

(suited for studies of electrophilic attack)

$$s_k^0 = \frac{1}{2}[\rho_k(N_0 + 1) - \rho_k(N_0 - 1)]S \quad (7c)$$

(suited for studies of radical attack)

Here $\rho_k(N_0)$ represents the electronic population (Mulliken) on atom k for the N_0 electron system.

(iii) Local Hardness. The analytical definition of local hardness was first proposed by Ghosh and Berkowitz^{6a} as

$$\tilde{\eta}(\bar{r}) = \left(\frac{\delta \mu}{\delta \rho(\bar{r})} \right)_{\nu(\bar{r})} \quad (8)$$

An explicit form of the local hardness $\tilde{\eta}(\bar{r})$ can be obtained starting from the Euler equation resulting from the application of the variation principle to the energy functional⁸:

$$\nu(\bar{r}) + \frac{\delta F_E[\rho(\bar{r})]}{\delta \rho(\bar{r})} = \mu \quad (9)$$

with $F_E[\rho(\bar{r})]$ containing the kinetic energy and electron-electron interaction energy. Now multiplying eq 9 by a composite function $\lambda(\rho(\bar{r}))$,¹¹ which integrates to N ,

$$\int \lambda(\rho(\bar{r})) d\bar{r} = N \quad (10)$$

we get after integrating both sides

$$N\mu = \int \nu(\bar{r}) \lambda(\rho(\bar{r})) d\bar{r} + \int \frac{\delta F_E}{\delta \rho(\bar{r})} \lambda(\rho(\bar{r})) d\bar{r} \quad (11)$$

Taking the functional derivative with respect to ρ , at constant external potential ν , we obtain the following expression:

$$\left(\frac{\delta \mu}{\delta \rho} \right)_N + \mu = \nu(\bar{r}) \left(\frac{\delta \lambda(\rho)}{\delta \rho} \right)_\nu + \frac{\delta F_E}{\delta \rho} \left(\frac{\delta \lambda(\rho)}{\delta \rho} \right)_\nu + \left(\int \frac{\delta^2 F_E}{\delta \rho(\bar{r}) \delta \rho(\bar{r}')} \lambda(\rho(\bar{r}')) d\bar{r}' \right)_\nu \quad (12)$$

which can be written as

$$\left(\frac{\delta \mu}{\delta \rho} \right)_\nu N = \left(\nu(\bar{r}) + \frac{\delta F_E}{\delta \rho} \right) \left(\frac{\delta \lambda(\rho)}{\delta \rho} \right)_\nu - \mu + \left(\int \frac{\delta^2 F_E}{\delta \rho(\bar{r}) \delta \rho(\bar{r}')} \lambda(\rho(\bar{r}')) d\bar{r}' \right)_\nu \quad (13)$$

Using eq 9, we get

$$\left(\frac{\delta \mu}{\delta \rho} \right)_\nu N = \left(\left(\frac{\delta \lambda(\rho(\bar{r}))}{\delta \rho(\bar{r})} \right)_\nu - 1 \right) \mu + \left(\int \frac{\delta^2 F_E}{\delta \rho(\bar{r}) \delta \rho(\bar{r}')} \lambda(\rho(\bar{r}')) d\bar{r}' \right)_\nu \quad (14)$$

Now if local hardness is forced to have an expression of the type (eq 3.25 in ref 11b)

$$\left(\frac{\delta\mu}{\delta\rho(\vec{r})}\right)_v = \frac{1}{N} \int \frac{\delta^2 F_E}{\delta\rho(\vec{r}') \delta\rho(\vec{r})} \lambda(\rho(\vec{r}')) d\vec{r}' \quad (15)$$

the composite function $\lambda(\rho)$ should have an additional constraint (in addition to that of eq 10),

$$\left(\frac{\delta\lambda(\rho)}{\delta\rho}\right)_v = 1 \quad (16)$$

Defining the hardness kernel, $\eta(\vec{r}, \vec{r}')$,^{6a} as

$$\eta(\vec{r}, \vec{r}') = \frac{\delta^2 F_E}{\delta\rho(\vec{r}') \delta\rho(\vec{r})} \quad (17)$$

the final expression for the local hardness is as follows:

$$\eta_\lambda(\vec{r}) = \left(\frac{1}{N}\right) \int \eta(\vec{r}, \vec{r}') \lambda(\rho(\vec{r}')) d\vec{r}' \quad (18)$$

As pointed out by Ghosh^{11a} as well as Harbola et al.,^{11b} the definition of local hardness is ambiguous if we imply only the condition of eq 10 on the composite function. This is because, in principle, any function which fulfills the condition of eq 10 can be accepted as a composite function. However if the conditions of both eqs 10 and 16 are imposed, then the series of composite functions is restricted. A first function that was originally used by Ghosh and Berkowitz^{6a} is the electron density ρ . The other obvious choice is $Nf(\vec{r})$. However, in our present study we will use the expression of local hardness derived from ρ (denoted by η_D), which can be expressed as

$$\eta_D(\vec{r}) = \left(\frac{1}{N}\right) \int \eta(\vec{r}, \vec{r}') \rho(\vec{r}') d\vec{r}' \quad (19)$$

As it is difficult to provide any routine calculational scheme for $\eta_D(\vec{r})$, Langenaeker et al.¹² have proposed approximate working equations for it. These approximations are based on the Thomas–Fermi–Dirac (TFD) approach to DFT. If we keep in mind that the nucleus–electron attraction is not contained in $F_E[\rho(\vec{r})]$, the following equation is obtained from the general form of the energy functional $E^{\text{TFD}}[\rho(\vec{r})]$,⁸ without further approximations:

$$F_E^{\text{TFD}}[\rho(\vec{r})] = C_F \int \rho(\vec{r})^{5/3} d\vec{r} + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right) \iint \frac{\rho(\vec{r}) \rho(\vec{r}')}{|\vec{r} - \vec{r}'|} d\vec{r} d\vec{r}' + C_X \int \rho(\vec{r})^{4/3} d\vec{r} \quad (20)$$

Inserting eq 20 in eq 15 and taking $\lambda = \rho$, the local hardness can be written as

$$\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\vec{r}) = \left(\frac{10}{9N}\right) C_F \rho(\vec{r})^{2/3} - \left(\frac{1}{2N}\right) V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r}) + \left(\frac{4}{9N}\right) C_X \rho(\vec{r})^{1/3} d\vec{r} \quad (21)$$

with $V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r})$ being the electronic contribution to the molecular electrostatic potential,¹⁷ corresponding to the proposal made before by Berkowitz and Parr.^{6b}

Considering the exponential falloff of the electron density in the outer regions of the system considered, eq 21 can be approximated as

$$\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\vec{r}) = -\frac{V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r})}{2N} \quad (22)$$

It was shown that this approximated form of local hardness, (i.e., $-V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r})/2N$) can be used as a reliable parameter for comparison of intermolecular reactivity sequences of any particular site in a series of molecules.¹²

3. Methodology and Computational Details

For our present study we have considered 12 carbonyl compounds: CH_3CHO , CH_3COCH_3 , $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$, CH_2ClCHO , CH_2FCHO , $\text{CH}_3\text{CF}_2\text{CHO}$, $\text{CH}_2=\text{CHCHO}$, $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}=\text{CHCHO}$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}=\text{CHCHO}$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COCH}_3$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_6\text{H}_5$. The geometries have been generated by using the Unichem program system.¹⁸ Subsequently these geometries are optimized with three different basis sets, STO-3G, DZ, and DZP,¹⁹ using the Gaussian-94 program²⁰ on the CRAY computer of the Universities of Brussels. The last two basis sets are named as D95 and D95* in the Gaussian-94 program system. For neutral systems (closed-shell) RHF and for the corresponding cations and anions (open-shell) ROHF²¹ methods are used.

Local softness values (both s_k^+ and s_k^-) are in a straightforward way calculated for all the atoms by using eqs 8a and 8b. However for calculation of local hardness $\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\vec{r})$, we require $V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r})$. This quantity has been evaluated only for the C_{carb} center (as the intramolecular reactivity study will reveal that C_{carb} normally is the most reactive center, i.e., the center to be attacked by a nucleophile Nu^- , and so is to be considered when comparing intermolecular electrophilicity order of different carbonyl compounds).

We have used the Felkin–Anh model^{22a–d} for addition of the nucleophile to the $\text{C}=\text{O}$ group. It is to be noted that the Felkin–Anh model was proposed to predict or rationalize the stereochemical outcome from kinetically controlled additions to the carbonyl group of chiral aldehydes and ketones in which a stereogenic center is adjacent to the carbonyl group. According to this model, the bulkiest of the α groups (i.e., the groups attached to the stereogenic carbon) take up a perpendicular relationship to the plane of the carbonyl group anti to the incoming nucleophile, and the sterically next most demanding α substituent (medium size groups) is placed gauche to the carbonyl function. It was argued that for such a mode of attack the torsional strain involving the partially formed bonds in the transition state will be minimized.^{22a–c} Later on Bürgi et al.^{23a–c} argued that it is not necessary that the medium sized group should be gauche to the oxygen atom in the preferred transition state. Instead they suggested that the angle of approach of the attacking nucleophile should be about 109° with respect to the plane of the carbonyl group (known as the Bürgi–Dunitz trajectory).

However, none of the carbonyl compounds we have studied contain any stereogenic center adjacent to the carbonyl carbon. Stricto sensu the Felkin–Anh model (or its modified form by Bürgi et al.) cannot be applied. So, we have considered the optimized geometry at different basis sets and then invoked the Bürgi–Dunitz trajectory to choose the angle $\angle \text{Nu}^- - \text{C}_1 - \text{O} = 109^\circ$ (see Figure 1). The dihedral angle $\angle \text{Nu}^- - \text{C}_1 - \text{O} - \text{C}_2$ is taken as 90° . The distance $\text{Nu}^- - \text{C}_1$ is 4 au, as Langenaeker et al.¹² have shown that at a distance of 4 au the approximation $\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\vec{r}) = -V_{\text{el}}(\vec{r})/2N$ is justified.

4.A. Local Softness: A Measure for Intramolecular Reactivity (Site Selectivity)

The numbering of the atoms in the molecules considered is given in Figure 2. The local softness values (both s_k^+ and s_k^-) of individual atoms (only the atoms that are of interest, i.e.,

TABLE 1: s_k^+ and s_k^- Values of the Relevant Atomic Positions of All 12 Compounds Studied

carbonyl compound	atomic center	basis sets					
		STO-3G		DZ		DZP	
		s_k^+	s_k^-	s_k^+	s_k^-	s_k^+	s_k^-
CH ₃ CHO	1	0.6088	0.3029	0.9793	0.1911	0.9832	0.1468
	2	0.5372	0.7191	0.5711	1.0823	0.5284	1.0739
CH ₃ COCH ₃	1	0.6112	0.2832	0.7263	0.1086	0.7505	0.0882
	2	0.5077	0.7169	0.5610	1.0614	0.5167	1.0573
C ₂ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	1	0.6149	0.2707	0.6480	0.1154	0.6792	0.0925
	2	0.5034	0.7168	0.5697	1.0772	0.5209	1.0719
CH ₂ FCHO	1	0.6092	0.2989	0.9559	0.2761	0.9557	0.2254
	2	0.5365	0.7150	0.6012	1.0810	0.5546	1.0765
CH ₂ ClCHO	1	0.5852	0.3017	0.9042	0.2240	0.9473	0.1857
	2	0.5156	0.7203	0.5580	1.0895	0.5355	1.0760
CH ₂ =CHCHO	4	0.3748	0.3583	0.4790	0.4945	0.3369	0.3851
	1	0.3388	0.2632	0.8027	0.5030	0.7699	0.4427
	3	0.5220	0.3047	0.5757	0.1936	0.4194	0.1647
CH ₃ CH=CHCHO	4	0.4880	0.7541	0.5596	1.1663	0.4793	1.1759
	2	0.3469	0.2653	0.6240	0.4267	0.5871	0.3806
	4	0.5216	0.2899	0.5694	0.1466	0.4405	0.1260
C ₆ H ₅ CH=CHCHO	5	0.4806	0.7552	0.5535	1.1673	0.4718	1.1758
	1	0.2756	0.2796	0.4992	0.5243	0.4207	0.4823
	2	0.2061	-0.0053	0.3057	-0.1166	0.3782	-0.1390
C ₆ H ₅ COCH ₃	3	0.1512	0.2773	0.2524	0.0696	0.2132	0.0605
	4	0.3998	0.7915	0.4748	1.2610	0.3810	1.2871
	6	0.1231	0.0818	0.2465	0.1708	0.2167	0.1510
	8	0.1801	0.1046	0.3331	0.1859	0.3421	0.1680
	10	0.1264	0.0736	0.3159	0.1397	0.3004	0.1150
	2	0.1562	0.1143	0.3602	0.1624	0.3188	0.1554
	4	0.2032	0.1362	0.4266	0.1847	0.4594	0.1695
	6	0.1393	0.0913	0.3764	0.1944	0.3353	0.1666
	7	0.5017	0.2802	0.4235	0.1023	0.3315	0.1009
	8	0.4118	0.7655	0.4632	1.1790	0.3835	1.2010
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	2	0.1568	0.1120	0.3720	0.1642	0.3318	0.1566
	4	0.2044	0.1347	0.4202	0.1799	0.4544	0.1651
	6	0.1396	0.0902	0.3750	0.1928	0.3343	0.1638
	7	0.4963	0.2767	0.4174	0.0993	0.3324	0.0976
	8	0.4103	0.7681	0.4659	1.1882	0.3867	1.2119
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₆ H ₅	2	0.1095	0.1005	0.2291	0.1245	0.1956	0.1226
	4	0.1519	0.1224	0.2706	0.1628	0.2657	0.1523
	6	0.1120	0.0748	0.2764	0.1524	0.2351	0.1248
	7	0.5788	0.2833	0.5946	0.1647	0.5508	0.1544
	8	0.3780	0.7840	0.4740	1.1981	0.4383	1.2200
	10	0.1095	0.1005	0.2291	0.1245	0.1956	0.1226
	12	0.1519	0.1224	0.2706	0.1628	0.2657	0.1523
	14	0.1120	0.0748	0.2764	0.1524	0.2351	0.1248
CH ₃ CF ₂ CHO	1	0.6118	0.3009	0.8909	0.2673	0.9168	0.2307
	2	0.5329	0.7113	0.5994	1.0676	0.5575	1.0608

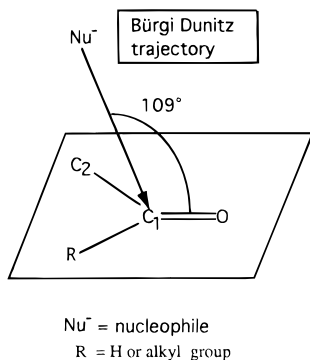


Figure 1. Felkin-Anh model for addition of nucleophiles to the carbonyl group.

having higher s_k^+ and s_k^- values) are tabulated in Table 1. These will help us to estimate the relative tendency of an atomic center to behave as an electrophile or a nucleophile.

It is obvious from Table 1 that for simple systems, e.g. CH₃-CHO, CH₃COCH₃, C₂H₅COC₂H₅, CH₂ClCHO, CH₂FCHO, and CH₃CF₂CHO, the highest s_k^+ value is found for C_{carb}, which is the most reactive (electrophilic) site. Similarly the highest s_k^-

is found for the carbonyl-oxygen atom. This clearly shows that C_{carb} is the most reactive center toward a nucleophile (Nu⁻), whereas the carbonyl-oxygen atom displays the highest reactivity toward an electrophile (E⁺).

However, observation of other complex systems, e.g., having a C=C bond in conjugation with a C=O group (case 1) or having a Ph group that can participate in extended delocalization with the C=O group (case 2) reveals some interesting features. Let us consider these two cases one by one.

Case 1. We have studied three systems of this type. These are C¹H₂ = C²HC³HO⁴, CH₃C¹H = C²HC³HO⁴, and C₆H₅C¹H = C²HC³HO⁴. These types of systems have received special attention by both theoretical^{24a} and experimental chemists^{24b} because they have two reactive centers to be attacked by a nucleophile. The first one is center 1, the reaction usually described as a “nucleophilic attack on an activated C=C bond”. Here the C=C bond is activated because of the electron pulling effect of the adjacent C=O group. The second type of attack, which demonstrates the common type of reaction of aldehydes and ketones, is on center 3. Which center will be preferred by a nucleophile is both system and condition dependent. If we look into the hybridization aspect, then both C₁ and C₃ are sp²

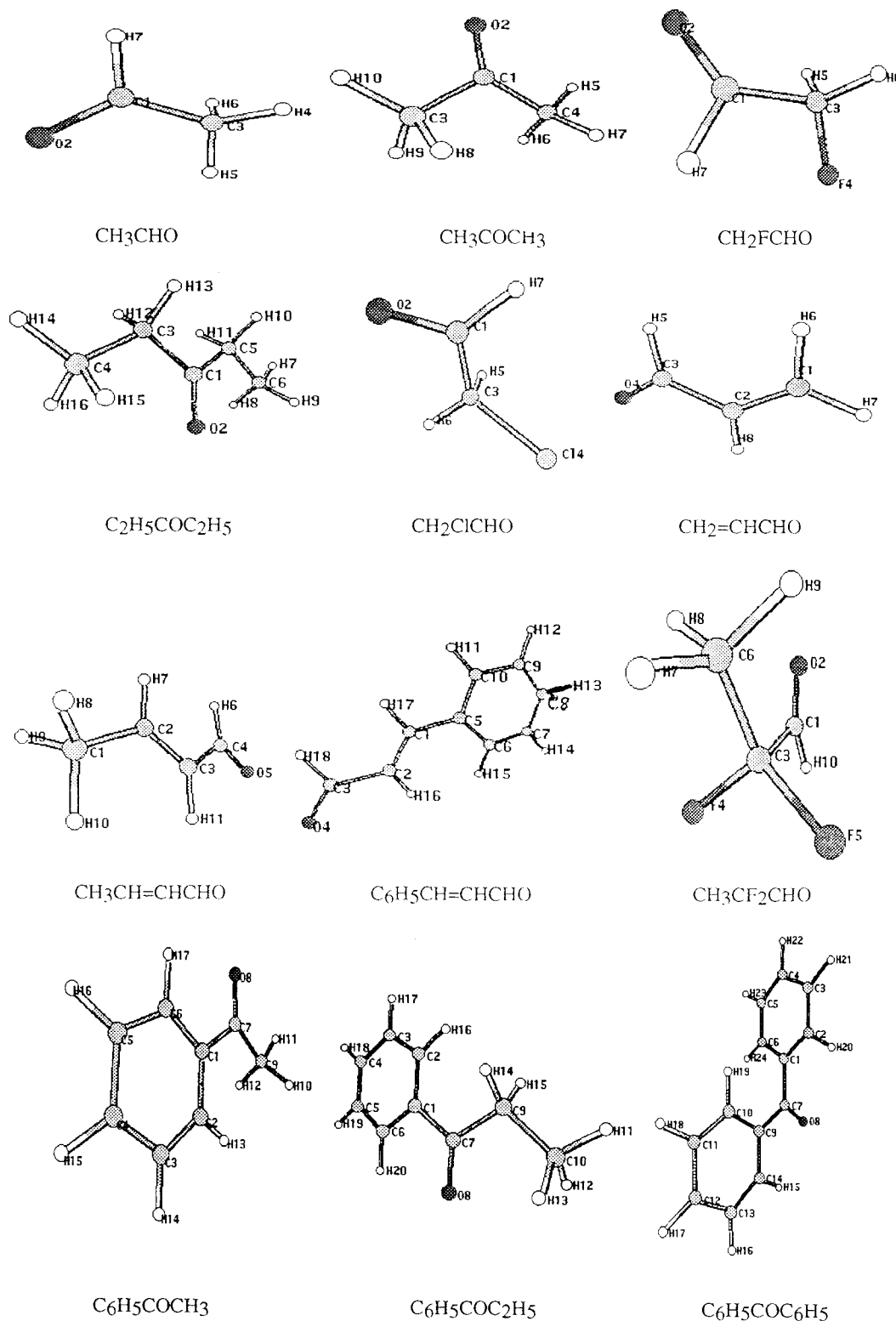


Figure 2. Numbering of atoms of the carbonyl compounds.

hybridized. But C₃ is attached to the more electronegative O atom (i.e., C=O bond is more polarized than C=C bond). So, neglecting resonance effects, C₃ should behave as the strongest electrophilic center. However, center 1 becomes important toward nucleophilic attack as the resultant negative charge is distributed by delocalization.

Anyway, experimental observations suggest the presence of both types of addition products^{24b} (known as 1,2 and 1,4 addition). For α,β unsaturated aldehydes (which we are studying here) exclusively 1,2 addition products are obtained

when treated with Grignard reagents.^{24b} But with other reactants the product ratio may vary.

We analyze the results of these three systems one by one:

(i) $C^1H_2 = C^2HC^3HO^4$. In this molecule the preferable sites for electrophilic attack by a nucleophile (Nu⁻) should be the centers 1 and 3. The results from the STO-3G basis set show that the s_k^+ value of center 3 is higher than that of center 1. However, these values at the DZ and DZP basis set levels are higher for center 1 than for center 3. Even the O atom also shows high s_k^+ values (may be because of its high electrone-

gativity), although its s_k^- value is higher than the s_k^+ value and also the highest of all the centers.

Thus according to the results at the STO-3G basis set, center 3 seems to be a stronger electrophilic (El^+) one than center 1. However, at the DZ and DZP basis set levels this trend changes, and center 1 seems to be more electrophilic than center 3. The highest s_k^- value of the O atom shows it to be the strongest nucleophilic center in all three basis sets.

(ii) $\text{CH}_3\text{C}^1\text{H} = \text{C}^2\text{HC}^3\text{HO}^4$. From experiment it is known that center 1 and center 3 are the two reactive sites susceptible to be attacked by a nucleophile.^{24b} In this case also our observed results show that the s_k^+ value of center 3 is higher than that of center 1 at the STO-3G level, although it is reversed at the DZ and DZP level. Thus at the STO-3G level although center 3 is shown to be a stronger electrophile (El^+) than center 1, it is reversed at the DZ and DZP levels. The high s_k^+ values of the O atom show it to be also an electrophilic center. But as its s_k^- values are higher than its s_k^+ values, we can argue that its nucleophilicity is stronger than its electrophilicity.

(iii) $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{C}^1\text{H} = \text{C}^2\text{HC}^3\text{HO}^4$. This case is somewhat more complicated. Normally in this case centers 1 and 3 should behave as the most reactive electrophilic centers. However, some of the positions on the Ph ring (particularly ortho and para) could also behave as electrophilic centers because the $-\text{C}^1\text{H} = \text{C}^2\text{HC}^3\text{HO}^4$ side group should act, in principle, as ortho, para directing toward nucleophilic attack on the Ph ring. Interestingly our calculation also shows high s_k^+ values for the ortho and para positions, thus exhibiting a highly electrophilic nature of these sites. However, having the highest s_k^+ values, center 1 emerges as the most electrophilic center at the DZ and DZP level. The calculated values reflect that STO-3G is really a bad choice for this case, as the O atom has the highest s_k^+ value, showing it to be the most electrophilic center in this basis set. Also for center 3 $s_k^- > s_k^+$, which indicates that its nucleophilicity is higher than its electrophilicity for this basis set. These irregularities disappeared with improvement of basis set.

Case 2. The systems that are studied in this category are $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COCH}_3$, $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$, and $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_6\text{H}_5$. We focus on these individual systems one by one.

(i) $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COCH}_3$. The s_k^+ value at the STO-3G basis is highest for position 7 (i.e., C_{carb}) (see Figure 2), claiming it to be the most electrophilic one. Similarly, the highest s_k^- value for position 8 (i.e., O atom) points to its most nucleophilic nature. Interestingly, at higher basis sets the importance of the ortho and para position of the Ph ring becomes obvious, and at the DZP level the s_k^+ value of position 4 (i.e., the para carbon atom) is the highest, suggesting its strongest electrophilic nature. However, the O atom remains the strongest nucleophilic one in all three basis sets.

(ii) $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$. In this case also at the STO-3G level the s_k^+ and s_k^- values are the highest for C_{carb} (i.e., position 7) and the O atom (i.e., position 8), indicating the most electrophilic and most nucleophilic nature of these two centers, respectively. However, with improvement of the basis set the electrophilicity of the ortho and para positions is enhanced, and at the DZP level the highest s_k^+ value of position 4 (i.e., the para carbon atom) reveals it to be the strongest electrophilic center. Comparison of s_k^+ and s_k^- values indicates that the O atom is the strongest nucleophilic center (i.e., having the highest s_k^- values) in all three basis sets.

(iii) $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_6\text{H}_5$. For this system the observation is similar in all three basis sets. The s_k^+ and s_k^- values are the highest for C_{carb} and the O atom, indicating their strongest electrophilic

and strongest nucleophilic nature, respectively. However, the ortho and para positions of the two Ph rings also exhibit some electrophilic character. This is quite expected as the $\text{C}=\text{O}$ group is, in principle, ortho, para directing toward a nucleophilic attack on the Ph ring.

4.B. Summary of the Previous Observations and Propositions of New Reactivity Descriptors

From our previous analysis we saw that for simple systems the s_k^+ and s_k^- values are the highest for the C_{carb} and the O atom, respectively, indicating their strongest electrophilic and strongest nucleophilic nature, respectively. However, when complexity arises either because of the presence of α,β unsaturation (i.e., presence of $\text{C}=\text{C}$ bond at the α position of the C_{carb}) or because a Ph ring can participate in the extended delocalization with the $\text{C}=\text{O}$ group, some irregularities are observed. In the case of α,β unsaturation the β position (i.e., position 1) becomes competitive with C_{carb} . If we look only at s_k^+ values, this feature is observed at the DZ and DZP level in the case of $\text{CH}_2=\text{CHCHO}$, $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}=\text{CHCHO}$, and $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}=\text{CHCHO}$. While it is still accepted with some reservation (as the nature of the attacking nucleophile also influences the 1,2 or 1,4 character of the reaction), serious discrepancies become evident in other cases. The s_k^+ values of the O atom are highest at the STO-3G level of $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}=\text{CHCHO}$ and the DZ level of $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COCH}_3$ and $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$, revealing it to be the most reactive electrophilic center. Following the same argument para positions of $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COCH}_3$ and $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{COC}_2\text{H}_5$ at the DZP level become the strongest electrophilic center, which might call for some bias when selecting most reactive sites.

However, a careful analysis reveals that the centers that show anomalous high electrophilicity (i.e., have high s_k^+ values) in some cases also show high nucleophilicity (having high s_k^- values). This indirectly suggests that for a reliable trend of site reactivity we have to consider both of these two features and have to take some sort of "relative electrophilicity" or "relative nucleophilicity". By "relative electrophilicity" we want to describe the "electrophilicity of any site as compared to its own nucleophilicity". Similarly "relative nucleophilicity" is understood as "the nucleophilicity of any site as compared to its own electrophilicity". This argument seems to be physically realistic, as in most of the addition reactions to carbonyl compounds the attack by a nucleophile (Nu^-) is always accompanied by an electrophilic (El^+) attack (for a discussion in depth on this subject see ref 24b). So with the simultaneous presence of both Nu^- and El^+ , the Nu^- fragment of the reactant will prefer to attack that position of the substrate that has the highest "relative electrophilicity". Similarly El^+ will attack that position of the substrate having the highest "relative nucleophilicity".

The next question that automatically arises is how to measure this "relative nucleophilicity" or "relative electrophilicity" of a particular site. The first rational choice, which automatically comes to mind, is to take the ratios s_k^+/s_k^- and s_k^-/s_k^+ for "relative electrophilicity" and "relative nucleophilicity", respectively. Indeed individual s_k^+ (or s_k^-) values are strongly influenced by basis set or correlation effects. So far the influence of these two effects on the redistribution of electron densities with the change in number of electrons (i.e., passing from N_0 to $N_0 + 1$ and from N_0 to $N_0 - 1$, where N_0 is the number of electrons of the neutral system) is not clearly known. As an alternative, it may be expected that the ratio of s_k^+ and s_k^- , involving two differences of electron densities of systems differing by one in their number of electrons at constant nuclear framework, is less sensitive to the basis set and correlation

TABLE 2: s_k^+/s_k^- and s_k^-/s_k^+ Values of the Relevant Atomic Positions of All 12 Compounds Studied

carbonyl compound	atomic center	basis sets					
		STO-3G		DZ		DZP	
		s_k^+/s_k^-	s_k^-/s_k^+	s_k^+/s_k^-	s_k^-/s_k^+	s_k^+/s_k^-	s_k^-/s_k^+
CH ₃ CHO	1	2.0099	0.4976	5.1234	0.1952	6.6968	0.1493
	2	0.7470	1.3387	0.5276	1.8953	0.4920	2.0324
CH ₃ COCH ₃	1	2.1579	0.4634	6.6907	0.1495	8.5097	0.1175
	2	0.7083	1.4118	0.5286	1.8919	0.4887	2.0462
C ₂ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	1	2.2711	0.4403	5.6139	0.1781	7.3431	0.1362
	2	0.7023	1.4238	0.5289	1.8908	0.4860	2.0578
CH ₂ FCHO	1	2.0382	0.4906	3.4625	0.2888	4.2393	0.2359
	2	0.7503	1.3328	0.5562	1.7980	0.5152	1.9410
CH ₂ ClCHO	1	1.9400	0.5155	4.0361	0.2478	5.1003	0.1961
	2	0.7157	1.3972	0.5122	1.9526	0.4977	2.0093
CH ₂ =CHCHO	4	1.0459	0.9561	0.9686	1.0325	0.8749	1.1430
	1	1.2872	0.7769	1.5959	0.6266	1.7389	0.5751
	3	1.7131	0.5837	2.9738	0.3363	2.5460	0.3928
CH ₃ CH=CHCHO	4	0.6472	1.5453	0.4798	2.0840	0.4076	2.4535
	2	1.3076	0.7648	1.4624	0.6838	1.5426	0.6483
	4	1.7995	0.5557	3.8839	0.2575	3.4962	0.2860
C ₆ H ₅ CH=CHCHO	5	0.6363	1.5715	0.4742	2.1090	0.4013	2.4921
	1	0.9857	1.0146	0.9521	1.0503	0.8723	1.1464
	2	-38.7361	-0.0258	-2.6209	-0.3815	-2.7217	-0.3674
	3	0.5454	1.8335	3.6277	0.2757	3.5234	0.2838
	4	0.5052	1.9796	0.3765	2.6561	0.2960	3.3783
	6	1.5046	0.6646	1.4429	0.6930	1.4346	0.6971
	8	1.7214	0.5809	1.7918	0.5581	2.0365	0.4910
	10	1.7175	0.5823	2.2616	0.4422	2.6127	0.3827
	2	1.3666	0.7318	2.2184	0.4508	2.0515	0.4875
	4	1.4925	0.6700	2.3105	0.4328	2.7100	0.3690
C ₆ H ₅ COCH ₃	6	1.5266	0.6550	1.9363	0.5165	2.0123	0.4970
	7	1.7903	0.5586	4.1403	0.2415	3.2845	0.3045
	8	0.5380	1.8588	0.3929	2.5450	0.3193	3.1316
	2	1.4003	0.7141	2.2658	0.4414	2.1184	0.4721
	4	1.5173	0.6591	2.3354	0.4282	2.7524	0.3633
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	6	1.5473	0.6463	1.9450	0.5142	2.0448	0.4891
	7	1.7935	0.5576	4.2051	0.2378	3.4074	0.2935
	8	0.5341	1.8722	0.3921	2.5504	0.3191	3.1339
	2	1.0902	0.9173	1.8410	0.5432	1.5954	0.6268
	4	1.2417	0.8054	1.6622	0.6016	1.7442	0.5733
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₆ H ₅	6	1.4965	0.6682	1.8133	0.5515	1.8839	0.5308
	7	2.0428	0.4895	3.6104	0.2770	3.5678	0.2803
	8	0.4821	2.0742	0.3957	2.5275	0.3593	2.7835
	10	1.0902	0.9173	1.8410	0.5432	1.5954	0.6268
	12	1.2417	0.8054	1.6622	0.6016	1.7442	0.5733
	14	1.4965	0.6682	1.8133	0.5515	1.8839	0.5308
CH ₃ CF ₂ CHO	1	2.0335	0.4918	3.3336	0.3000	3.9745	0.2516
	2	0.7492	1.3348	0.5615	1.7811	0.5256	1.9027

effects. The site having the highest s_k^+/s_k^- is the most probable site to be attacked by a nucleophile (Nu⁻), and the site having the highest s_k^-/s_k^+ ratio is the most probable site to be attacked by an electrophile (El⁺). So the general scheme to predict the site selectivity should be stated as follows:

(i) Choose only those sites having comparable and higher s_k^+ and s_k^- values.

(ii) Then compare the s_k^+/s_k^- and s_k^-/s_k^+ values to find out the most probable site as prescribed above.

(iii) If for any site $s_k^+/s_k^- > s_k^-/s_k^+$, then it is the preferred electrophilic site and vice versa.

Following the above scheme, we have evaluated the s_k^+/s_k^- and s_k^-/s_k^+ values of the important sites of all 12 compounds studied. The results are presented in Table 2. The values show that with this new scheme the trend has become as expected in almost all cases (i.e., s_k^+/s_k^- value is highest for C_{carb}). In the case of α,β unsaturated aldehydes also the s_k^+/s_k^- values show that C_{carb} is the strongest electrophilic site. But the relative importance of the β positions is also evident from the comparable s_k^+/s_k^- values of those sites. Maybe the local HSAB principle⁹ would be helpful to locate the most reactive site for any particular case. Only for C₆H₅CH=CHCHO at STO-3G

is the result not as expected. But we have already mentioned that STO-3G is really a bad choice for C₆H₅CH=CHCHO. The s_k^-/s_k^+ value of the O atom is the highest in all cases, and all basis sets show it to be the nucleophilic center for the systems studied here.

4.C. Local Hardness: A Measure For Intermolecular Reactivity Sequences

From the previous discussions we conclude that C_{carb} is the strongest electrophilic center in the compounds we are studying. Now to compare the intermolecular reactivity sequence (electrophilicity orders) of these compounds, we will focus only on the C_{carb} . To do this, we have first arranged them in four homologous series. These series are based on the electronic effects (inductive and resonance) exerted on the C=O group by the groups attached to it. The rationality for this procedure is that for nucleophilic substitution of carbonyl compounds the rate-determining step is usually the one involving nucleophilic attack on C_{carb} . The inductive (I) and resonance (R) effects exerted by the groups attached to the C_{carb} should obviously influence the speed of nucleophilic attack on it, which also explains the *experimental* observations.^{24b,25}

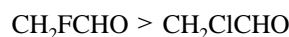
TABLE 3: s_k^+ Values of C_{carb} of All the Compounds Belonging to the Four Homologous Series (See Text)

carbonyl compound	basis set		
	STO-3G	DZ	DZP
CH ₃ CHO	0.6088	0.9794	0.9833
CH ₃ COCH ₃	0.6112	0.7263	0.7505
C ₂ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	0.6149	0.6480	0.6792
CH ₂ FCHO	0.6092	0.9559	0.9557
CH ₂ ClCHO	0.5852	0.9042	0.9473
CH ₂ =CHCHO	0.5220	0.5757	0.4194
CH ₃ CH=CHCHO	0.5216	0.5694	0.4405
C ₆ H ₅ CH=CHCHO	0.1512	0.2524	0.2132
C ₆ H ₅ COCH ₃	0.5017	0.4235	0.3315
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	0.4963	0.4174	0.3324
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₆ H ₅	0.5788	0.5946	0.5508

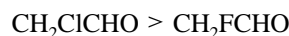
(i) CH₃CHO, CH₃COCH₃, and C₂H₅COC₂H₅. Here the reactivity order differs because of the difference of the +I effect of the H, -CH₃, and -C₂H₅ groups. The larger the +I effect the smaller the electrophilicity of the C_{carb} . On that basis the electrophilicity order of the C_{carb} should be



(ii) CH₂ClCHO and CH₂FCHO. Here normally the electronegativity of Cl and F should play the deciding role. On that basis the order should be



But one of the present authors²⁶ has shown that in the case of gas-phase acidities of halogenated alcohols and silanols both the electronegativity and polarizability of halogen atoms are to be considered. In the case of Cl-substituted alcohols and silanols, these two effects act in parallel as Cl has high polarizability due to its large size. But in the case of F substitution these two effects compete, as F is small and so is less polarizable and also has small charge capacity. The result is that F-substituted alcohols and silanols are less acidic than the Cl-substituted analogues. Following this argument, we can say that the electrophilicity of C_{carb} should be of the following order:



(iii) CH₂=CHCHO, CH₃CH=CHCHO, and C₆H₅CH=CHCHO. The common moiety in this series is -CH=CHCHO. The reactivity difference arises due to the difference in electron-donating tendency of the H, -CH₃, and -C₆H₅ groups. As this trend is H < -CH₃ < -C₆H₅, the reactivity order should be



(iv) C₆H₅COCH₃, C₆H₅COC₂H₅, and C₆H₅COC₆H₅. This series has the C₆H₅CO- moiety in common. So the electrophilicity difference of the C_{carb} arises because of the difference of electron-donating ability between the -CH₃, -C₂H₅, and Ph groups. As the +I effect of -C₂H₅ is higher than that of the -CH₃ group and the +R effect is stronger than the +I effect, the electrophilicity order of C_{carb} should be as follows:

**TABLE 4:** s_k^+/s_k^- Values of C_{carb} of All the Compounds Belonging to the Four Homologous Series (See Text)

carbonyl compound	basis sets		
	STO-3G	DZ	DZP
CH ₃ CHO	2.0099	5.1234	6.6968
CH ₃ COCH ₃	2.1579	6.6907	8.5097
C ₂ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	2.2711	5.6139	7.3431
CH ₂ FCHO	2.0382	3.4625	4.2393
CH ₂ ClCHO	1.9490	4.0361	5.1003
CH ₂ =CHCHO	1.7131	2.9738	2.5460
CH ₃ CH=CHCHO	1.7995	3.8839	3.4962
C ₆ H ₅ CH=CHCHO	0.5454	3.6277	3.5234
C ₆ H ₅ COCH ₃	1.7903	4.1403	3.2845
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	1.7935	4.2051	3.4074
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₆ H ₅	2.0428	3.6104	3.5678

TABLE 5: $\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r}) (\approx -V_{\text{el}}/2N)$ Values of C_{carb} of All the Compounds Belonging to the Four Homologous Series (See Text)

carbonyl compound	basis sets		
	STO-3G	DZ	DZP
CH ₃ CHO	0.1086	0.1086	0.1089
CH ₃ COCH ₃	0.1078	0.1078	0.1080
C ₂ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	0.0971	0.0971	0.0973
CH ₂ FCHO	0.1017	0.1055	0.1058
CH ₂ ClCHO	0.1200	0.1163	0.1122
CH ₂ =CHCHO	0.1044	0.1045	0.1048
CH ₃ CH=CHCHO	0.0960	0.0963	0.0965
C ₆ H ₅ CH=CHCHO	0.0736	0.0739	0.0741
C ₆ H ₅ COCH ₃	0.0882	0.0884	0.0885
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₂ H ₅	0.0867	0.0869	0.0870
C ₆ H ₅ COC ₆ H ₅	0.0828	0.0828	0.0830

As CH₃CF₂CHO does not fall in any of the four homologous series, we will exclude it from our discussion of intermolecular reactivity sequences.

Now we will analyze our results by comparing the s_k^+ , s_k^-/s_k^+ , and local hardness ($\approx -V_{\text{el}}/2N$) values of the C_{carb} one by one. The comparison of reactivity descriptors will help us to understand the nature of interaction (charge-controlled or orbital-controlled) between the C_{carb} and the nucleophile (Nu⁻). In Tables 3 (constructed from Table 1), 4 (constructed from Table 2), and 5 we depict these values. The final outcome by comparing the s_k^+ values from Table 3 is as follows.

Series 1: C₂H₅COC₂H₅ > CH₃COCH₃ > CH₃CHO (unexpected) STO-3G

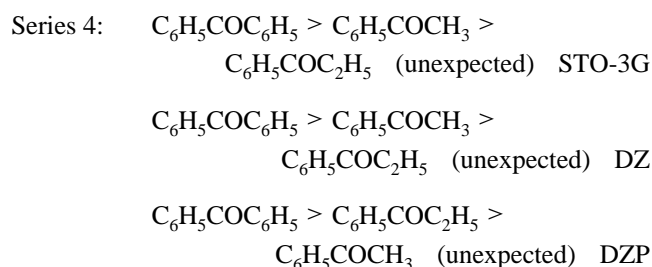
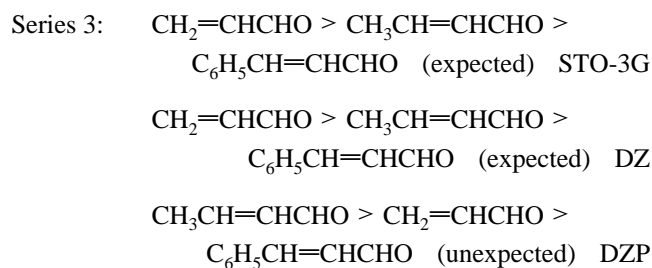
CH₃CHO > CH₃COCH₃ > C₂H₅COC₂H₅ (expected) DZ

CH₃CHO > CH₃COCH₃ > C₂H₅COC₂H₅ (expected) DZP

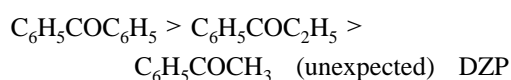
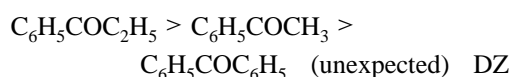
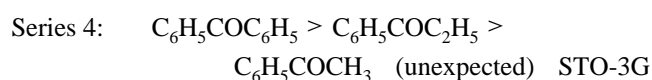
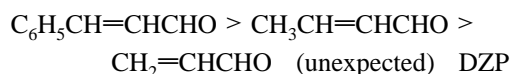
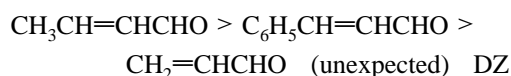
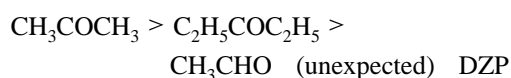
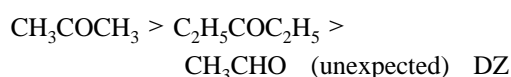
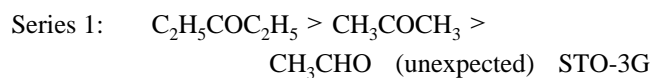
Series 2: CH₂FCHO > CH₂ClCHO (unexpected) STO-3G

CH₂FCHO > CH₂ClCHO (unexpected) DZ

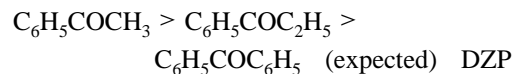
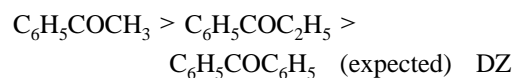
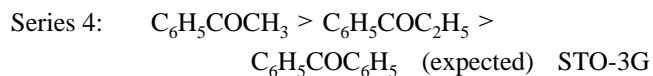
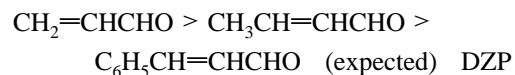
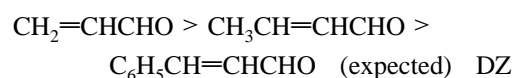
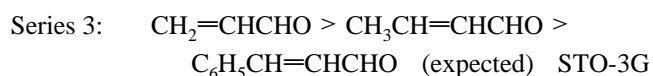
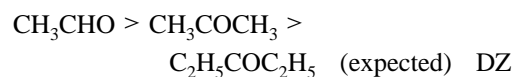
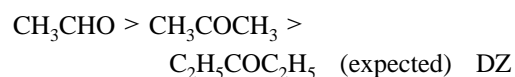
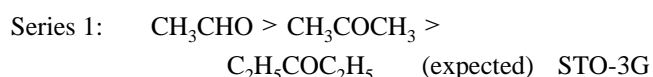
CH₂FCHO > CH₂ClCHO (unexpected) DZP



Similarly summarizing the s_k^+/s_k^- values (from Table 4) we get the following trends:



Our general observation is that there is no clear trend of the electrophilicity of C_{carb} . In four cases s_k^+ provides the correct trend, but s_k^+/s_k^- provides a correct trend only in two cases. So neither s_k^+ nor s_k^+/s_k^- can be considered as a reliable indicator of the intermolecular electrophilicity trend of C_{carb} . This indirectly suggests that the interaction between the C_{carb} and the nucleophile (Nu^-) may not necessarily be an orbital-controlled (i.e., soft-soft) one. Langenaeker et al.¹² have shown that in the case of electrophilic aromatic substitution local hardness values provide a much better trend than local softness values. So it will be interesting to check the reliability of the local hardness ($\eta_{\text{D}}^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r})$) quantity in predicting intermolecular reactivity order of carbonyl compounds. In Table 5 we have tabulated the $\eta_{\text{D}}^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r})$ ($\approx -V_{\text{el}}/2N$) values at three different basis sets. Comparing the $\eta_{\text{D}}^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r})$ values, we get the following trend.



Here we get correct trends in all four series in three different basis sets. Thus the present study gives us confidence to conclude that nucleophilic additions to carbonyl compounds are predominantly charge-controlled, and so the local hardness parameter $\eta_{\text{D}}^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r})$ can be used to investigate such types of intermolecular reactivity sequences.

5. Conclusion

In this study we have basically tested the usefulness of “local softness” and “local hardness” parameters in predicting intra-

and intermolecular reactivity sequences of carbonyl compounds. We have found that "relative electrophilicity" (defined as s_k^+/s_k^-) and "relative nucleophilicity" (defined as s_k^-/s_k^+) provide the correct intramolecular reactivity trends which are not always attainable by comparing only s_k^+ or s_k^- values. This is really interesting, as other known reactivity descriptors, e.g. MEP, show poor predictive power in the case of nucleophilic attack.²⁷

It is also evident from our observation that in complicated cases, e.g. systems having α,β unsaturation (i.e., C=C bond) or a Ph group, which can participate in extended delocalization of the $+\delta$ charge on C_{carb} , more than one site may have comparable s_k^+/s_k^- values. This suggests that although only one site is dominant in electrophilicity, other sites also become important in favored conditions. This is not surprising, as experimental findings suggest the existence of side products obtained by addition on position 1 and 3 in $C^1H_2=C^2HC^3HO$ and $CH_3C^1H=C^2HC^3HO$.⁴ The relevance of a local HSAB principle to find out the most preferable attacking sites, in cases where more than one site of comparable s_k^+/s_k^- values exist, has also been pointed out.

For comparison of intermolecular electrophilicity of C_{carb} , local hardness ($\eta_D^{\text{TFD}}(\bar{r})$) is found to be more reliable, at least in the case of a homologous series.

Acknowledgment. We are grateful to Dr. K. Choho for computational help and to Dr. F. De Proft and Dr. W. Langenaeker for helpful discussions on the subject. R.K.R. thanks CSIR (India) and FWO-Flanders (Belgium) for granting a research fellowship. S.K. and S.P. acknowledge the financial aid provided by IFCPAR (Indo French Centre for Promotion of Advanced Research). P.G. wants to thank the Fund for Scientific Research (FWO) and the Free University of Brussels for continuous support of his group.

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