Supporting Information

Electrochemical Discrimination of Phthalic Acid among Three Phthalic Acid Isomers

Based on an N-Butylaminomethyl-Ferrocene Derivative

Jisoo Yoon\textsuperscript{a,†}, Jyoti Ramesh Jadhav\textsuperscript{b,†}, Jun Myung Kim\textsuperscript{a,†}, Minserk Cheong\textsuperscript{a}, Hong-Seok Kim\textsuperscript{b,*}

and Joohoon Kim\textsuperscript{a,*}

\textsuperscript{a}Department of Chemistry, Research Institute for Basic Sciences, Kyung Hee University, Seoul 130-701, Korea. E-mail: jkim94@khu.ac.kr

\textsuperscript{b}Department of Applied Chemistry, Kyungpook National University, Daegu 702-701, Korea. E-mail: kimhs@knu.ac.kr

\textsuperscript{†}Equally contributed to this research

\textsuperscript{*}To whom correspondence should be addressed

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Experimental Section

Chemicals and materials. 1,1’-Diformylferrocene, 1-butylamine, NaBH₄, and Boc₂O were purchased from Aldrich Co. (USA) and used as received. Ferrocene, anhydrous dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), acetonitrile, phthalic acid, isophthalic acid, terephthalic acid, 2-hydroxybenzoic acid, 3-hydroxybenzoic acid, 4-hydroxybenzoic acid, 1,8-diazabicyclo[5,4,0]-undec-7-ene (DBU), tetrabutylammonium perchlorate (TBAP), and silver nitrate were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, Inc. (USA).

Synthesis of compound 1. A solution of 1,1’-diformylferrocene (100 mg) and 1-butylamine (138 mg, 2.2 equiv.) in dry CH₃OH (20 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 12 h. NaBH₄ (52 mg, 0.65 equiv.) was added to this solution at 0 °C and then stirred for 1 h. After the solvent was removed under vacuum, the residue was extracted with CH₂Cl₂. The organic layer was washed, dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated. The residue was purified using column chromatography on silica gel (elution with CH₂Cl₂-CH₃OH-NH₄OH 10:0.5:0.2) to give 97 mg of 1 as a gummy solid. Yield: 63%. TLC Rf 0.15 (CH₂Cl₂-CH₃OH-NH₄OH 10:1:0.2). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) □ 0.84 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 6H, -CH₂C₃H₃), 1.26 (m, 4H, -CH₂), 1.42 (m, 4H, -CH₂C₃H₂CH₂), 2.56 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 4H, -CH₂NH), 3.45 (s, 2H, -NH), 3.90 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 4H, NHCH₂Fc), 4.00 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 4H, FcH), 4.08 (d, J = 1.8 Hz, 4H, FcH); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) 14.4 (2C), 20.9 (2C), 32.3 (2C), 49.2 (1C), 49.6 (1C), 68.7 (4C), 69.4 (4C), 86.9 (2C); HR-FAB mass Calcd for (C₂₀H₃₃N₂Fe)⁺: m/z 357.1993, Found: m/z 357.1996 (M+H)⁺.

Synthesis of compound 2. A mixture of 1 (52 mg, 0.22 mmol) and Boc₂O (157 mg 0.72 mmol) in MeOH (10 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 12 h. After the reaction was
completed, the solvent was removed. The residue was extracted with CH$_2$Cl$_2$. The organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na$_2$SO$_4$ and concentrated until dry. The residue was purified using silica gel (elution with 20% EtOAc in hexane) to give 2 in 65% yield. TLC $R_f$ 0.87 (CH$_2$Cl$_2$-CH$_3$OH-NH$_4$OH 10:1:0.2). $^1$H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$) $\delta$ 0.84 (bt, 6H), 1.24 (m, 4H), 1.37 (m, 4H), 1.43 (s, 18H), 3.05 (bt, 4H), 3.99 (bd, 4H, FcH), 4.15 (bd, 4H, FcH), 4.82 (bs, 4H); $^{13}$C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$) $\delta$ 14.4, 20.6, 27.9, 46.3, 46.8, 69.4, 70.6, 71.3, 79.7, 155.5; HR-FAB mass Calcd for (C$_{30}$H$_{48}$O$_4$N$_2$Fe)$^+$: m/z 556.2963, Found: m/z 556.2968 (M)$^+$. 

**Electrochemical experiments.** All electrochemical experiments were carried out with an electrochemical analyzer (Model 440, CH Instruments) using a conventional three-electrode cell. The surface of a glassy carbon working electrode was polished with 0.3 $\mu$m alumina and then rinsed with deionized water. Residual alumina particles were thoroughly removed by ultrasonating the working electrode. A Pt wire and an Ag/Ag$^+$ (0.01 M AgNO$_3$) electrode were used as a counter and reference electrode, respectively. The experiments were carried out at room temperature in a dry N$_2$ atmosphere.

**Computational calculations.** The interactions between the compound 1 and phthalic acid isomers were theoretically investigated using Gaussian 09 program.$^1$ The geometry optimizations and thermodynamic corrections were carried out using the hybrid Becke 3-Lee–Yang–Parr (B3LYP) exchange-correlation functional with the 6-31+G* basis sets for C, H, N, and O and the LanL2DZ (ECP) basis sets for Fe. For simplicity, the bulk solvent effect was not included in the calculation. In order to obtain the most stable geometries, all possible interaction patterns were optimized. Restrictions on symmetries were not imposed on the initial
structures. All stationary points were verified as minima through full calculation of the Hessian and a harmonic frequency analysis.

References
Fig. S1. DPVs of 2 with 0.00 ~ 4.00 equivalents of phthalic acids in DMSO containing 0.1 M TBAP. Pulse amplitude: 0.05 V.
Fig. S2. DPVs of 1 with 0.00 ~ 4.00 equivalents of (a) 2-hydroxybenzoic acids, (b) 3-hydroxybenzoic acids, and (c) 4-hydroxybenzoic acids in DMSO containing 0.1 M TBAP. Pulse amplitude: 0.05 V.
Fig. S3. Optimized structures exhibiting the interactions of 1 with (a) phthalic acid, (b) iso-phthalic acid, and (c) terephthalic acid. The calculated interaction enthalpy ($\Delta H_{\text{interaction}}$) values for 1-phthalic acid, 1-isophthalic acid, and 1-terephthalic acid are -12.1, -3.8, and -2.9 kcal/mol, respectively. Hydrogen bonding distances are given in Å.