## **Supporting Information**

## Spontaneous Si-C Bond Cleavage in (Triphos<sup>si</sup>)-Nickel Complexes

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Figure S1 Structural motif of compound 3b(ClO₄) with thermal ellipsoids at the 50% probability level (hydrogen atoms and thermal ellipsoids of phenyl groups were omitted for clarity).



Figure S2 UV-vis spectra of compounds 3a(ClO<sub>4</sub>), 3a(BF<sub>4</sub>) and 3b(ClO<sub>4</sub>) in THF.



Figure S3 UV-vis spectra of compounds 4 and 5 in Acetonitrile.



Figure S4 UV-vis spectra of compound 5 in acetonitrile. Measured over 60 min at 70°C.



**Figure S5** <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra of compound **1b** (red line), complex **5** (blue line) and reaction mixture of compound **1b** with [Ni(CH<sub>3</sub>CN)<sub>6</sub>](BF<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub> in MeCN-d<sub>3</sub>.



Figure S6 <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra of complex 5 (red line),  $PMe_3$  (green line) and reaction mixture of complex 5 + 1eq  $PMe_3$  in MeCN-d<sub>3</sub> (blue line).



Figure S7 Structural motif of compound 8 (left) and 9 (right) with thermal ellipsoids at the 50% probability level (hydrogen atoms of compound 9 were omitted for clarity).



Figure S8 UV-vis spectra of compounds 3a(ClO<sub>4</sub>), 5, 7a and 7b in THF.



**Figure S9.** EPR spectrum of **7a**. The inset shows a zoom of the hyperfine structure with a pattern of 4 equidistant signals in 1:1:1:1 ratio, assigned to the chloride atom. Experimental conditions: T = 30K, frequency 9.65 GHz, microwave power 2mW, modulation amplitude 0.5 mT.



**Figure S10** Self-absorption correction of fluorescence-detected XAS spectra. (A) Example of a raw transmission-detected K-edge spectrum of a concentrated powder sample of a nickel complex (**2**a) showing ~75 % absorption of incident X-rays above the edge jump (8345 eV). Transmission was set arbitrarily to 100 % before the edge jump (8330 eV). (B) Reabsorption of X-ray fluorescence photons (self-absorption) in the concentrated sample leads to increasing spectral flattening for increasing absorption and thereby causes relative enhancement of amplitudes of pre-edge features at low energies and damping of oscillations above the K-edge (EXAFS) in normalized Ka (or Kß) fluorescence-detected absorption spectra compared to the ("true") normalized transmission-detected spectrum. (C) Least-squares fitting of data points in a plot of fluorescence vs. transmission spectra by a saturation curve (top equation) yields parameters for correction of fluorescence-detected spectra (bottom equation). (D) The corrected K $\alpha$  detected spectrum ( $F_{corr}$ ) is identical to the transmission-detected using the same parameters as for the Ka-detected spectrum) in particular shows increased resolution of resonant transitions in the pre-edge region (inset).



**Figure S11** EXAFS analysis of Ni compounds. For the indicated nickel complexes, Fourier-transforms (FTs) of EXAFS oscillations in the inset were vertically shifted for comparison. Thin lines, experimental data; thick lines, simulations with parameters in Table S1. FTs were calculated for a *k*-range of 1.7-12.3 Å<sup>-1</sup> using cos windows extending over 10% at both *k*-range ends. Spectra were collected in absorption mode (transmission).



**Figure S12** XANES spectra of Ni compounds. Main panel: absorption spectra of indicated compounds detected in transmission mode. Inset: pre-edge absorption spectra at increased resolution from narrow-band (~1 eV) spectra from X-ray fluorescence emission detection at the  $K_B^{1,3}$  line maximum (8265.7 eV) corrected for self-absorption. K-edge energies mentioned in the text were determined at half-height (50 % level) of the normalized spectra in the main panel. Main-edge rise background subtraction from pre-edge spectra in the inset yielded the ctv spectra shown in Figure S10A.



**Figure S13** Kß X-ray emission spectra of Ni compounds. Main panel: Kß main line spectra. Left inset: Kß' features in magnification. Right inset: Kß satellite line spectra. Main line spectra were normalized to unity area in a 8245-8345 eV energy range after setting the spectra to zero level at 8345 eV for comparison. Kß<sup>2,5</sup> spectra were smoothed by adjacent averaging over 5 data points (1.75 eV) for display and normalized according to the main line spectra. Kß<sup>1,3</sup>-tail background subtraction from Kß<sup>2,5</sup> spectra yielded the vtc spectra shown in Figure S10B. The apparently smallest Kß' feature for **7a** likely resulted from the spin-1/2 Ni(I) configuration (M = 2) of the tetrahedral site and shifts to lower energies of the decay transitions underlying the Kß' multiplet features.



**Figure S14** Nickel and ligand characters of ctv and vtc electronic transitions. (Left) ctv excitation. (Right) vtc decay. Data correspond to BP86/ TZVP single-point calculations on XRD structures. Metal and ligand characters of target (ctv) or source (vtc) MOs for calculated transitions in the spectra (sum) are color-coded as indicated (phosphine = whole ligand except other given species; Cl<sup>-</sup> not present in **5** and replaced by a C-P group).



**Figure S15** Ni(d) orbital degeneracy. Shown energy levels correspond to MOs with highest Ni(d) characters from single-point DFT calculations on crystal structures; numbers represent Ni(d) character of MOs in %); black/grey bars and arrows denote occupied  $\alpha/\beta$ -spin MOs; unoccupied MOs are shown as dotted bars; selected dominant specific Ni(d) characters are indicated (mixed characters in parenthesis).



**Figure S16** Charge and spin density distribution. Data represent Hirshfeld charges (CM5) and spin densities on indicated species (C-P ligand only present in **5**; ligand = remaining ligand atoms excluding P, Cl, or C-P atoms) from single-point BP86/TZVP calculations on XRD structures (complex charges for the compounds are indicated). The Si atom in **5** carries significant charge (0.17), which is summed in the ligand charge here.



**Figure S17** <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra of complex **5** (red line), the reaction mixture of compound **1b** with Ni(ClO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub> with NaF after 5 min (green line) and the reaction mixture of compound **1b** with Ni(ClO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub> with NaF after 1 day (blue line) in MeCN-d<sub>3</sub>.



**Figure S18** <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra of complex **5** (red line), compound **1b** (green line) and the reaction mixture of compound **1b** with NiCl<sub>2</sub> with NaF after 1 day (blue line) in MeCN-d<sub>3</sub>.







**Figure S20** Relaxed surface scan for Si-C bond cleavage in the coordination complex of Triphos<sup>Si</sup> to two Ni<sup>2+</sup> cations after nucleophilic attack at Si by F<sup>-</sup>. The figure demonstrates that the Si-C bond breaks at 2.3 Å leading to a slightly larger change of the internal coordinates than at other steps of the scan. The figure additionally indicates that an activation energy of only 5 kcal/mol is required for final Si-C bond cleavage after nucleophilic attack at Si has taken place.

	N [per Ni ion] / R [Å] / 2🛛 x10³ [Ų]		
compound	Ni-P (-C)	Ni-Cl	R <sub>F</sub> [%]
2a	2 / 2.16 [2.14] / 5 <sup>#</sup>	2 / 2.20 [2.18] / 5 <sup>#</sup>	8.5
3a(BF <sub>4</sub> )	3 / 2.24 [2.25] / 7	1 / 2.16 [2.16] / 2*	6.7
5	1 / 2.15 [2.13 / 2.18, 2.51] / 2*		9.8
	2 / 2.23 [2.22 / 2.26, 2.40] / 7		
	1 / 2.32 [2.31 / 2.35, 2.36] / 2*		
	(1 / 2.07 [2.06 / 2.01, 2.05] / 2*)		
7a	3 / 2.19 [2.23] / 7	1 / 2.25 [2.26] / 2*	7.2

Table S1 EXAFS fit parameters and nickel-ligand bond lengths.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Fit parameters are for EXAFS spectra in Fig. S8. *N*, coordination number; *R*, interatomic distance;  $2\mathbb{Z}^2$ , Debye-Waller factor; R<sub>F</sub>, fit error sum calculated for reduced distances of 1-3 Å. \*Parameters that were fixed in the simulations, <sup>#</sup>Debye-Waller factors were restraint to the same value for Ni-P and Ni-Cl shells, coordination numbers were fixed to the crystallographic values. Bond lengths from crystal structures / and for **5** from DFT for BP86 functional and M = 1, M = 3 spin states (for geometry-optimized structures) are given in brackets. The fits contained additional longer Ni-C/Si shells: **2a**, (C) 2 / 3.38 [3.46] / 5\*; **3a**(BF<sub>4</sub>), (C) 2 / 3.38 [3.39] / 5\*; **5**, (C) 2 / 3.38 [3.33] / 5\* and (Si) 1 / 3.54 [3.48] / 5\*; **7a**, 2 / 3.27 [3.30] / 5\*. The splitting of the first-sphere distances into several shells is tentative according to the distance resolution limit of ~0.1 Å for the given *k*-range, but results in bond lengths in good agreement with the crystallographic data.

compound	functional	multiplicity <sup>b</sup>	method <sup>c</sup>	cycles <sup>d</sup>	energy / eV	ΔE / eV	preferred <sup>f</sup>
5	BP86	1	sp	23	-141895.72	1.99	ls-Ni(II)
		3		123	-141893.73		(1.97 eV)
		1	go	27	-141895.91	-	
		3		_ <sup>e</sup>	-		
7a	BP86	2	sp	298	-124612.75	(-0.32)	Ni(I)
		2	go	82	-124613.07		(1.58 eV)
<b>3a</b> (BF <sub>4</sub> )	BP86	1	sp	316	-124606.85	-0.87	hs-Ni(II)
		3		35	-124607.72		(3.08 eV)
2a	BP86	1	sp	24	-137137.34	1.87	ls-Ni(II)
		3		501	-137135.47		(2.04 eV)
		1	go	23	-137138.13	0.36	
		3		67	-137137.77		

Table S2 Molecular energies for different spin states.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Data for the annotated nickel complexes for DFT calculations (BP86/TZVP). <sup>b</sup>Spin multiplicity (M = 2S + 1); <sup>c</sup>method: sp = single-point calculation using XRD coordinates, og = gas-phase geometry optimization for indicated spin states prior to energy calculation; <sup>d</sup>cycles needed to reach electronic structure convergence; <sup>e</sup>geometry did not converge to an energetic minimum; <sup>f</sup>preferred spin state (hs = high-spin, ls = low spin) and nickel redox state according to energy differences ( $\Delta E$ ) and convergence cycle numbers (in parenthesis:  $\Delta E$  for **7a** is for XRD vs. relaxed structures of the M = 2 spin state), as well as (for  $\alpha$ -spin MOs) HOMO – LUMO energy differences for the relevant spin state (in parenthesis).

	3b(ClO <sub>4</sub> )	3a(BF <sub>4</sub> )
Empirical formula	$C_{40}H_{39}CI_2O_4NiP_3Si$	$C_{41}H_{39}\text{CIBF}_4\text{NiP}_3$
Formula weight	840.01	804.13
Temperature/K	170	293.15
Crystal system	cubic	cubic
Space group	F-43c	Fd-3
a/Å	33.108(3)	33.558(2)
b/Å	33.108(3)	33.558(2)
c/Å	33.108(3)	33.558(2)
a/°	90	90
β/°	90	90
γ/°	90	90
Volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	36291(6)	37790(4)
Ζ	32	32
ρ <sub>calc</sub> g/cm <sup>3</sup>	1.230	1.133
µ/mm <sup>- 1</sup>	0.713	0.609
F(000)	14016.0	13319.0
Crystal size/mm <sup>3</sup>	0.07 x 0.05 x 0.030	0.23 x 0.19 x 0.16
Radiation	MoK <sub>α</sub> (λ = 0.71073)	MoK <sub>α</sub> (λ = 0.71073)
2O range for data collection/°	4.26 to 50.38	3.44 to 48.22
Index ranges	-39 ≤ h ≤ 39,39 ≤ k ≤ 39, -39 ≤ l ≤ 39	-37 ≤ h ≤ 38, -38 ≤ k ≤ 38, -38 ≤ l ≤ 38
Reflections collected	61209	52558
Independent reflections	2683 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.2515, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0779]	7465 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.1108, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0821]
Data/restraints/	2683/0/144	7465/0/461
<sup>a</sup> Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	0.923	0.0675
<sup>▶,c</sup> Final R indexes [l≥2σ (l)] Final R indexes [all data]	$R_1 = 0.0830,$ wR_2 = 0.22565 R_1 = 0.1110, wR_2 = 0.2451	$R_1 = 0.0401, \\ wR_2 = 0.0890 \\ R_1 = 0.0946, \\ wR_2 = 0.0984$
Largest diff. peak/hole/ e Å <sup>-3</sup>	0.76/-0.91	0.307/-0.194
Flack parameter	1.01(6)	-
CCDC reference	1486087	1486084

 Table S3 Crystal Data and Refinement Details for the Crystal Structure Analyses of Compounds

 3a(BF<sub>4</sub>) and 3b(CIO<sub>4</sub>).

<sup>a</sup>S ={ $\Sigma[w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/(n - p)$ }<sup>0.5</sup>; n = no. of reflections; p = no. of parameters. <sup>b</sup> R<sub>1</sub> =  $\Sigma ||Fo| - |Fc||/$  $\Sigma |Fo|$ . <sup>c</sup> wR<sub>2</sub> = { $\Sigma [w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/(\Sigma[w(F_o^2)^2])$ <sup>0.5</sup>.

	4	5	7a
Empirical formula	$C_{47}H_{49}B_2F_8N_3NiP_3$	$C_{50}H_{54}BF_4NNiP_4Si$	$C_{41}H_{39}CINiP_3$
Formula weight	980.18	1026.54	718.79
Temperature/K	105.10(14)	104.7(10)	293(2)
Crystal system	monoclinic	monoclinic	orthorhombic
Space group	P2 <sub>1</sub> /c	P2 <sub>1</sub> /c	Pna2 <sub>1</sub>
<i>a</i> /Å	20.7166(5)	10.33005(10)	20.70(2)
ЫÅ	12.4767(3)	20.6239(2)	10.259(11)
c/Å	20.5881(3)	23.6859(2)	16.853(16)
a/°	90	90	90
β/°	109.315(2)	90.01(2)	90
γ/°	90	90	90
Volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	5021.99(19)	5046.20(9)	3579(6)
Z	4	4	4
ρ <sub>calc</sub> g/cm³	1.2963	1.3511	1.351
µ/mm <sup>-1</sup>	2.011	2.413	0.789
F(000)	2021.9	2135.3	1500.0
Crystal size/mm <sup>3</sup>	0.33 x 0.26 x 0.15	0.14 x 0.11 x 0.10	0.15 x 0.11 x 0.08
Radiation	Cu Kα (λ=1.54184)	CuK <sub>α</sub> (λ = 1.54184)	MoK <sub>α</sub> ( $\lambda$ = 0.71073)
20 range for data collection/°	8.4 to 148.2	8.56 to 148.5	4.4 to 50.0
Index ranges	-17 ≤ h ≤ 24, -9 ≤ k ≤ 15, -25 ≤ l ≤ 16	-12 ≤ h ≤ 11, -23 ≤ k ≤ 25, -28 ≤ l ≤ 29	-30 ≤ h ≤ 33, -13 ≤ k ≤ 14, -24 ≤ l ≤ 28
<b>Reflections collected</b>	13488	26336	29335
Independent reflections	7884 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0178, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0247]	9610 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0144, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0141]	6292 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.1148, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.1006]
Data/restraints/	7884/0/575	9610/10/645	6292/1/416
<sup>a</sup> Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.049	1.062	1.097
<sup>b,c</sup> Final R indexes [l≥2σ (l)] Final R indexes [all data]	$R_1 = 0.0463, \\ wR_2 = 0.1227 \\ R_1 = 0.0499, \\ wR_2 = 0.1272$	$R_1 = 0.0321, \\ wR_2 = 0.0838 \\ R_1 = 0.0342, \\ wR_2 = 0.0846$	$\begin{array}{l} R_1 = 0.0550, \\ wR_2 = 0.1183 \\ R_1 = 0.075, \\ wR_2 = 0.1412 \end{array}$
Largest diff. peak/hole/ e Å <sup>-3</sup>	1.27/-0.87	1.105/-0.685	0.370/-0.572
Flack parameter	-	-	-0.01(2)
CCDC reference	1486081	1486082	1486083

 Table S4 Crystal Data and Refinement Details for the Crystal Structure Analyses of Compounds 4, 5

 and 7a.

<sup>a</sup>S ={Σ[w( $F_o^2 - F_c^2$ )<sup>2</sup>]/(n - p)}<sup>0.5</sup>; n = no. of reflections; p = no. of parameters. <sup>b</sup> R<sub>1</sub> = Σ ||Fo| - |Fc||/ Σ |Fo|. <sup>c</sup> wR<sub>2</sub> = { Σ [w( $F_o^2 - F_c^2$ )<sup>2</sup>]/( Σ[w( $F_o^2$ ) <sup>2</sup>]}<sup>0.5</sup>.

and J.				
	7b	8	9	
Empirical formula	$C_{40}H_{39}BrNiP_3Si$	$C_{14}H_{39}B_2Fe_8NNiP_{34}$	$C_{15}H_{51}B_2F_8NiO_6P_5$	
Formula weight	779.33	577.7	714.74	
Temperature/K	170(2)	108.2(6)	193(2)	
Crystal system	monoclinic	Monoclinic	orthorhombic	
Space group	P2 <sub>1</sub>	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> /c	Pna2₁	
a/Å	10.2603(18)	10.1498(3)	21.1905(6)	
ЫÅ	17.719(2)	16.0585(6)	13.5221(4)	
c/Å	10.385(2)	19.1814(7)	11.3801(3)	
a/°	90	90	90	
β/°	105.514(15)	121.948(2)	90	
γ/°	90	90	90	
Volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	1819.1(6)	2652.83(16)	3260.85(15)	
Z	2	4	4	
ρ <sub>calc</sub> g/cm³	1.423	1.446	1.456	
µ/mm <sup>- 1</sup>	1.824	3.891	0.913	
F(000)	802	1200	1496.0	
Crystal size/mm <sup>3</sup>	0.15 x 0.11 x 0.08	0.14 x 0.11 x 0.10	0.16 x 0.14 x 0.11	
Radiation	MoK <sub>α</sub> ( $\lambda$ = 0.71073)	CuK <sub>α</sub> (λ = 1.54184)	MoK <sub>α</sub> ( $\lambda$ = 0.71073)	
20 range for data collection/°	5.46 to 50	7.8 to 148.6	6.02 to 73.52	
Index ranges	-12 ≤ h ≤ 12, -21 ≤ k ≤ 21, -12 ≤ l ≤ 12	-12 ≤ h ≤ 12, -18 ≤ k ≤ 19, -23 ≤ l ≤ 23	-25 ≤ h ≤ 25, -16 ≤ k ≤ 18, -13 ≤ l ≤ 13	
<b>Reflections collected</b>	9961	14226	44950	
Independent reflections	5979 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.048, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0739]	4798 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0244, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0244]	5730 [R <sub>int</sub> = 0.0430, R <sub>sigma</sub> = 0.0233]	
Data/restraints/	5979/0/416	4798/0/282	5730/1/313	
<sup>a</sup> Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	0.882	1.042	1.069	
<sup>b,c</sup> Final R indexes [l≥2σ (l)] Final R indexes [all data]	$\begin{array}{l} R_1 = 0.0335, \\ wR_2 = 0.0668 \\ R_1 = 0.0450, \\ wR_2 = 0.0692 \end{array}$	$R_1 = 0.0460, \\ wR_2 = 0.1200 \\ R_1 = 0.0510, \\ wR_2 = 0.1244$	$R_1 = 0.0497, \\ wR_2 = 0.1347 \\ R_1 = 0.0538 \\ wR_2 = 0.1398$	
Largest diff. peak/hole/ e Å <sup>-3</sup>	0.533/-0.460	1.104/-0.970	0.717/-1.078	
Flack parameter	-0.013(8)	-	0.118(18)	
CCDC reference	1486085	1486088	1486086	

Table S5 Crystal Data and Refinement Details for the Crystal Structure Analyses of Compounds 7b, 8and 9.

<sup>a</sup>S ={ $\Sigma[w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/(n - p)$ }<sup>0.5</sup>; n = no. of reflections; p = no. of parameters. <sup>b</sup> R<sub>1</sub> =  $\Sigma ||Fo| - |Fc||/$  $\Sigma |Fo|$ . <sup>c</sup> wR<sub>2</sub> = { $\Sigma [w(F_o^2 - F_c^2)^2]/(\Sigma[w(F_o^2)^2]$ }<sup>0.5</sup>.



**Table S6** Cartesian coordinates [Å] of the coordination complex of Triphos<sup>Si</sup> to two Ni<sup>2+</sup> cations after nucleophilic attack of F<sup>-</sup> at Si.

NT -		0 40441770007700	0 10001000704000
Nl	12.10496459551666	8.43441//090//00	8.10201090724329
Р	13.05485707612065	6.59980451736385	9.04455907795632
Ρ	12.90902184842887	7.82083563095079	6.02858654517415
Ρ	15.39320995354598	4.45787532395194	3.74028570059961
С	14.22724606826807	3.40084318787027	2.71933860144993
Ν	11.22697017879591	8.79489307405295	9.79251447136016
С	12.10837671188276	5.02262976096251	8.92824867901519
С	12.61510499689466	5.98818532936477	11.83444460993362
Н	12.00660128628397	5.14048667945847	11.49853404379014
С	16.69826316591470	1.92660258018142	4.25246159919159
Н	15.69882559232437	1.47530427112347	4.29651005735661
С	12.73015643586162	9.35551801116633	4.98175068618078
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