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### Mapping the properties of bidentate ligands with calculated descriptors (LKB-bid)

Natalie Fey,\*<sup>‡</sup> Alexander Koumi,<sup>‡</sup> Andrei V. Malkov,<sup>§</sup> Jonathan D. Moseley,<sup>\$</sup> Bao N. Nguyen,<sup>√</sup> Simon N. G. Tyler,<sup>\$</sup> Charlotte E. Willans<sup>√</sup>

### **Electronic Supporting Information**

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# Computational Details

Density functional theory calculations were performed in Jaguar<sup>1</sup> and used the standard Becke-Perdew (BP86) density functional.<sup>2</sup> The triple-zeta form of the standard Los Alamos ECP basis set (LACV3P) as implemented in Jaguar was used on the transition metal atoms, employing the 6-31G\* basis for all other atoms. "Loose" convergence (five times larger than default criteria) was used for optimizations. Test calculations using default criteria did not lead to significant changes in geometries, but were more time-consuming. Calculations were performed on isolated molecules and NBO atomic charges were calculated.<sup>3</sup> Vibrational frequencies were not computed; ligand effects on zero-point energy corrections are likely to be small and have been neglected. Stationary points have not been verified as minima but accidental optimization to transition states seems unlikely for complexes of low symmetry.

Molecular mechanics (MM) conformational searches used the default MMX force field in PCModel.<sup>4</sup> GMMX was used for stochastic conformational searches with default settings unless stated otherwise. 500 Iteration conformational searches were performed on free ligands and ligands bound to the zinc fragment (stop criteria defined as Emin found 10 times and duplicates found 50 times).

Principal component analyses were performed in SIMCA-P+.<sup>5</sup>

### References

Schrödinger-LLC, Jaguar 6.0, New York, NY, 2005; Schrödinger-LLC, Jaguar 7.6, New York, NY, 2009.
 Becke, A. D. Phys. Rev. A **1988**, 38, 3098-3100; Perdew, J. P. Phys. Rev. B **1986**, 33, 8822-8824; Perdew, J. P. Phys. Rev. B **1986**, 34, 7406; Perdew, J. P.; Zunger, A. Phys. Rev. B **1981**, 23, 5048-5079; Slater, J. C. Quantum Theory of Molecules and Solids, Vol. 4: The Self-Consistent Field for Molecules and Solids; McGraw-Hill: New York, 1974.

(3) Glendening, E. D.; Badenhoop, J. K.; Reed, A. E.; Carpenter, J. E.; Bohmann, J. A.; Morales, C. M.; Weinhold, F., *NBO 5.0* Madison, 2001.

(4) Gilbert, K., PCModel Bloomington, IN, 2004.

(5) Umetrics, SIMCA P+ 12.0.1.0, 2009.

All new ligand data, as well as principal component scores and loadings (PCs 1-4), can be found in a separate Excel table.

### Description of Computational Workflow

Conformational searches were carried out for free ligands and ligands coordinated to the [ZnCl<sub>2</sub>] fragments to ensure that substituents adopted sensible conformers. The lowest energy conformer from the molecular mechanics searches was then used as input for DFT calculations. We readily acknowledge that the potential energy surfaces will be different between different levels of theory and that this may introduce some conformational noise. This has been discussed further in prior work (*Organometallics* 2008, *27*, 1372-1383; *Dalton Trans.* 2013, *42*, 172-181), and represents a reasonable compromise for such databases. The DFT-optimised free ligand geometry was then adapted as input for coordination of the [AuCl] fragment to each donor atom, at times with minor structural adjustment to accommodate the metal complex, while the DFT-optimised [ZnCl<sub>2</sub>(D<sub>1</sub>~D<sub>2</sub>)] complexes were used to generate a ligand template file. All other starting geometries were based on these templates. To generate these templates, the metal centre was changed to a trigonal planar fragment and "M"-donor distances were set to standard values for different donors (2.28 Å (P), 2.00 Å (C, N), 2.05 Å (O)). These fragments were aligned to a standard orientation and then combined with template files for the [PdCl<sub>2</sub>] complex and both He<sub>8</sub> adducts. This alignment can be performed in Jaguar through conversion into z-matrix and back to Cartesian coordinates; many other codes for viewing multiple formats of molecular structures will perform a similar alignment as part of this conversion.

Fully optimised ligand and Zn complex geometries for all ligands have been included as xyz coordinates as part of this electronic supporting information.

Note that data for the following ligands has been published previously (*Organometallics* **2008**, *27*, 1372-1383; *ibid*. **2012**, *31*, 5302-5306):

pn02, pn03, pn06, pn08, pn10, pn11, pn13, pn23, pn23, pp01-pp16, pp18-pp28.

In addition, sample input files including all calculation settings are listed here for ligand nn05:

### Ligand:

```
&gen
dftname=bp86
basis=6-31g*
numd=5
igeopt=1
iaccg=3
ip11=2
&
&zmat
N -1.193525 -0.091804 -0.134134
N 1.207160 -0.001005 0.134962
 -0.024193 0.768197 0.002201
С
 -2.424363 0.683820 -0.100786
С
 -1.127179 -0.901788 -1.341820
С
C 1.202786 -0.818972 1.339077
C 2.375463 0.866088 0.105217
H 0.044272 1.432519 -0.891615
Н -0.142816 1.421469 0.898907
н -2.501957 1.241917 0.860116
н -2.475766 1.408561 -0.946306
н -3.307255 0.006466 -0.150999
Н -0.217822 -1.544090 -1.334408
Н -1.113896 -0.269687 -2.259883
н -2.002458 -1.588961 -1.390358
```

```
H 0.344891 -1.528511 1.328699
H 2.127783 -1.437819 1.384749
H 1.141640 -0.193739 2.259897
H 2.410243 1.432673 -0.853217
H 3.307305 0.257602 0.152610
H 2.371760 1.588928 0.953913
δ
```

#### Zn complex:

```
&gen
isymm=0
iaccg=3
igeopt=1
numd=5
basis=6-31g*
dftname=bp86
ip11=2
&
&zmat
Zn1 0.229719 -1.079768 0.161516
Cl 0.558730 -2.649796 -1.288874
Cl 0.144862 -2.064287 2.085156
N -0.947052 0.408354 -0.241069
N 1.099609 0.642934 -0.030728
C -0.019361 1.526307 -0.321279
C -1.911817 0.545995 0.841351
C -1.624361 0.139326 -1.502111
C 1.771547 0.968168 1.219901
C 2.059002 0.561498 -1.123561
н -0.188866 2.320509 0.442308
Н 0.027598 2.014273 -1.322398
н -2.576230 1.425644 0.677374
н -1.388998 0.670152 1.816583
н -2.539927 -0.370580 0.917173
н -2.272304 0.995672 -1.800365
н -2.253924 -0.775195 -1.414446
н -0.882626 -0.046223 -2.311576
H 1.049319 0.949622 2.067176
Н 2.241146 1.977793 1.172470
H 2.560595 0.214022 1.441369
H 2.545073 1.547821 -1.305269
Н 1.555690 0.233247 -2.060983
Н 2.846598 -0.190593 -0.890250
&
&atomic
atom
       basis
Zn1
       lacv3p
&
&nbo
&
```

#### **Aligned ligand**

&zmat			
X22	0.0000000000000	0.0000000000000	0.00000000000000
Н2З	0.0000000000000	0.0000000000000	1.8000002365880
N1	1.2186682530345	0.0000000000000	-1.5859954316576
N2	-1.2175919847126	-0.0000000000000	-1.5866536354112
C3	0.0004613130294	-0.3114826026797	-2.3874355859076
C4	2.2436849011447	-1.0674931155787	-1.6985690154401
С5	1.8091775830353	1.3214962824709	-1.9118968755389

С6	-2.2411781795875	-1.0691018899829	-1.6959755491544
С7	-1.8105253167141	1.3193839691186	-1.9159426237250
Н8	0.0015908875490	-1.3926244325052	-2.5958219091444
Н9	0.0010008771100	0.2333253690327	-3.3545254774338
H10	2.6167224915107	-1.1753444290240	-2.7383239291961
H11	1.8169060281297	-2.0197178318019	-1.3448746124746
H12	3.0930556958116	-0.8103647529240	-1.0451033370450
H13	2.1838959541816	1.3512820077724	-2.9564043397152
H14	2.6459249549741	1.5165226587667	-1.2227034879721
H15	1.0683121448681	2.1197367770073	-1.7579156919741
H16	-1.8125572969802	-2.0205522533281	-1.3423019485369
H17	-2.6156817507455	-1.1795469583322	-2.7349872226275
H18	-3.0899682656800	-0.8122018985245	-1.0416884490906
H19	-2.1886506552332	1.3443802670221	-2.9593596532925
H20	-1.0700260559313	2.1190962426515	-1.7681355217922
H21	-2.6451236912067	1.5166085429484	-1.2247429411686

```
&
```

#### Pd complex

&gen dftname=bp86 basis=6-31g\* numd=5 igeopt=1 iaccg=3 isymm=0 ip11=2 & &zmat Pd1 -0.000000000000 0.000000000000 -0.0350590000000 C12 -1.6192750000000 0.0000000000000 1.584215000000 C13 1.619275000000 0.000000000000 1.584215000000 Ν1 0.0000000000000 -1.5859954316576 1.2186682530345 N2 -1.2175919847126 -0.0000000000000 -1.5866536354112 C3 0.0004613130294 -0.3114826026797 -2.38743558590762.2436849011447 -1.0674931155787 -1.6985690154401 C4 C5 1.8091775830353 1.3214962824709 -1.9118968755389 С6 -2.2411781795875 -1.0691018899829 -1.6959755491544 -1.8105253167141 1.3193839691186 -1.9159426237250 С7 Н8 0.0015908875490 -1.3926244325052 -2.5958219091444 Н9 0.0010008771100 0.2333253690327 -3.3545254774338 H10 2.6167224915107 -1.1753444290240 -2.7383239291961 -2.0197178318019 H11 1.8169060281297 -1.3448746124746 Н12 3.0930556958116 -0.8103647529240 -1.0451033370450 -2.9564043397152 H13 2.1838959541816 1.3512820077724 H14 2.6459249549741 1.5165226587667 -1.2227034879721 H15 1.0683121448681 2.1197367770073 -1.7579156919741 H16 -1.8125572969802 -2.0205522533281 -1.3423019485369 -1.1795469583322 -2.7349872226275 H17 -2.6156817507455 H18 -3.0899682656800 -0.8122018985245 -1.0416884490906 H19 -2.1886506552332 1.3443802670221 -2.9593596532925 H20 -1.07002605593132.1190962426515 -1.7681355217922H21 -2.6451236912067 1.5166085429484 -1.2247429411686 æ &atomic atom basis Pd1 lacv3p & &nbo

&

#### He8-wedge

&gen igeopt=1 dftname=bp86 basis=6-31q\* numd=5 iaccg=3 ip11=2 isymm=0 & &zmat 1.2186682530345# 0.00000000000000 -1.5859954316576# Ν1 -0.0000000000000 -1.5866536354112# N2 -1.2175919847126# CЗ 0.0004613130294 -0.3114826026797 -2.3874355859076 C4 2.2436849011447 -1.0674931155787 -1.6985690154401 C5 1.8091775830353 1.3214962824709 -1.9118968755389-2.2411781795875-1.0691018899829 -1.6959755491544C6 1.3193839691186 -1.8105253167141-1.9159426237250С7 -2.5958219091444 Н8 0.0015908875490 -1.3926244325052 0.2333253690327 -3.3545254774338 Н9 0.0010008771100 H10 2.6167224915107 -1.1753444290240-2.7383239291961 H11 1.8169060281297 -2.0197178318019 -1.3448746124746 -1.0451033370450 Н12 3.0930556958116 -0.8103647529240 Н13 2.1838959541816 1.3512820077724 -2.9564043397152 H14 2.6459249549741 1.5165226587667 -1.2227034879721 H15 1.0683121448681 2.1197367770073 -1.7579156919741 H16 -1.8125572969802-2.0205522533281 -1.3423019485369 H17 -2.6156817507455 -1.1795469583322 -2.7349872226275 H18 -3.0899682656800-0.8122018985245 -1.0416884490906 -2.1886506552332 1.3443802670221 -2.9593596532925 н19 H20 -1.0700260559313 2.1190962426515 -1.7681355217922 H21 -2.6451236912067 1.5166085429484 -1.2247429411686 He 0.000# 2.28# 0.000# 0.000# -2.28# 0.000# Ηe 0.00# 1.612# 1.612# He -1.612# 0.00# 1.612# He 0.806# 1.14# 0.806# He -0.806# 1.14# 0.806# He He -0.806# -1.14#0.806# He 0.806# -1.14#0.806#

#### nHe8

&

&gen igeopt=1 dftname=bp86 basis=6-31g\* numd=5 iaccg=3 ip11=2 isymm=0 & &zmat X1 0.0# 0.0# 0.0# N2 1.2186682530345 0.000000000000 -1.5859954316576-1.5866536354112 NЗ -1.2175919847126 -0.0000000000000

С3	0.0004613130294	-0.3114826026797	-2.3874355859076
C4	2.2436849011447	-1.0674931155787	-1.6985690154401
C5	1.8091775830353	1.3214962824709	-1.9118968755389
C6	-2.2411781795875	-1.0691018899829	-1.6959755491544
С7	-1.8105253167141	1.3193839691186	-1.9159426237250
Н8	0.0015908875490	-1.3926244325052	-2.5958219091444
Н9	0.0010008771100	0.2333253690327	-3.3545254774338
H10	2.6167224915107	-1.1753444290240	-2.7383239291961
H11	1.8169060281297	-2.0197178318019	-1.3448746124746
H12	3.0930556958116	-0.8103647529240	-1.0451033370450
H13	2.1838959541816	1.3512820077724	-2.9564043397152
H14	2.6459249549741	1.5165226587667	-1.2227034879721
H15	1.0683121448681	2.1197367770073	-1.7579156919741
H16	-1.8125572969802	-2.0205522533281	-1.3423019485369
H17	-2.6156817507455	-1.1795469583322	-2.7349872226275
H18	-3.0899682656800	-0.8122018985245	-1.0416884490906
H19	-2.1886506552332	1.3443802670221	-2.9593596532925
H20	-1.0700260559313	2.1190962426515	-1.7681355217922
H21	-2.6451236912067	1.5166085429484	-1.2247429411686
Не	0.000# 2.28#	0.000#	
He	0.000# -2.28#	0.000#	
Не	1.612# 0.00#	1.612#	
Не	-1.612# 0.00#	1.612#	
He	0.806# 1.14#	0.806#	
He	-0.806# 1.14#	0.806#	
Не	-0.806# -1.14#	0.806#	
Не	0.806# -1.14#	0.806#	
æ			
&coord			
X1 N2	# 2.		
X1 N3	# 2.		
æ			

Table S1: Ligand structures and labelling. (Green highlights for ligands used as reference)

a) CC (reference: cn01)



b) NN (reference: nn05)

nn01	MeHN	^NHMe
nn02	Me <sub>2</sub> N	NMe <sub>2</sub>
nn03	H <sub>2</sub> N	NH <sub>2</sub>
nn04	MeHN	NHMe
nn05	Me <sub>2</sub> N	NMe <sub>2</sub>
nn06	/= Me <sub>2</sub> N	NMe <sub>2</sub>
nn07		
nn08		
nn09		NMe <sub>2</sub>
nn10		N-Me
nn11		 N−Ph
nn12		
	Me <sub>2</sub> N	NMe <sub>2</sub>
nn13	Me <sub>2</sub> N	NMe
nn14	MeN	NMe





c) NN, charged (reference: nn\_ch02)

nn_ch02	R'\
	NR
	)NR
	R' R, R' = Me
nn_ch03	as ldnn051, R' = Me, R = Ph
nn_ch01	∕ <del>,</del> -NMe
	$\langle : \Theta \rangle$
	\` <u></u> NMe

d) OO (reference: oo02)

0001	$D_1 D_2 D_1 D_2 - 0M_2$
0002	MeO OMe
0003	MeO OMe
0004	Me O Me
0005	O Ph Ph H
0006	OMe OMe
0007	OMe OMe
0008	
0009	$ \begin{array}{c}  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\  \\ $
0010	
0011	

e) OO charged (reference: oo\_ch02)





f) PP (reference: pp04)

pp01	Me <sub>2</sub> P	PMe <sub>2</sub>
pp02	Ph <sub>2</sub> P	PPh <sub>2</sub>
рр03	H Ph <sub>2</sub> P´	`PPh <sub>2</sub>
pp04	Me <sub>2</sub> P	PMe <sub>2</sub>
pp05	Ph <sub>2</sub> P	PPh <sub>2</sub>
pp06		Ph Ph





g) CN (reference: cn01)













h) CO (reference: co02)





i) CO charged (reference co\_ch01)

co_ch01	
co_ch02	$R^{-N}$
co_ch03	as co004, R = iPr
co_ch04	as co004, R = tBu
co_ch05	as co004, R = Mes
co_ch06	as co004, R = Me, R' =
	Me
co_ch07	as co004, R = Me, R' =
	CF <sub>3</sub>

j) CP (reference: cp01)



k) NO (reference: no02)

no01	D <sub>1</sub> D <sub>2</sub> , D1 NMe <sub>2</sub> , D2 OMe
no02	D <sub>1</sub> D <sub>2</sub> , D1 NMe <sub>2</sub> , D2 OMe





# I) NO charged (reference: no\_ch01)

no_ch01	$D_1 D_2$ , D1 NMe <sub>2</sub> , D2 O <sup>-</sup>
no_ch02	∬ ⊖ O NMe
no_ch03	R''-N R''-O R''-O R''-O Ch, R', R''-Me, R'''=H, R = Me
no_ch04	as ldno023, R = Ph
no_ch05	NMe O- Me
no_ch06	Me
no_ch07	NPh O-

m) PN (reference: pn05)

pn01	$D_1 D_2$ , $D1 = PMe_2$ , $D2 = NMe_2$
pn02	$D_1 D_2$ , $D_1 = PPh_2$ , $D_2 = NMe_2$
pn03	Ph <sub>2</sub> P <sup>NMe</sup>
pn04	PMe <sub>2</sub> NMe
pn05	$D_1 D_2$ , D1 PMe <sub>2</sub> , D2 = NMe <sub>2</sub>
pn06	$D_1 D_2$ , D1 PPh <sub>2</sub> , D2 = NMe <sub>2</sub>
pn07	Me <sub>2</sub> P NMe <sub>2</sub>
pn08	Ph <sub>2</sub> P NMe <sub>2</sub>
pn09	$D_1 D_2$ , D1 = PMe <sub>2</sub> , D2 = NMe
pn10	$D_1$ $D_2$ , $D1 = PPh_2$ , $D2 = NMe$
pn11	$D_1$ $D_2$ , $D1 = PPh_2$ , $D2 = NPh$





n) PO (reference: po03)

		D1	D2
po01	$D_1 D_2$	PMe <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po02	$D_1 D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po03	$D_1$ $D_2$	PMe <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po04	$D_1 D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po05	$D_1 D_2$	PMe <sub>2</sub>	0
po06	$D_1 D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	0
po07	$D_1$ $D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po08	$D_1$ $D_2$	PMe <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po09	$D_1$ $D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po10	$P \rightarrow D_2$		PMe <sub>2</sub>
po11	$D_1$ $D_2$	PMe <sub>2</sub>	OMe
po12	$D_1$ $D_2$	PPh <sub>2</sub>	OMe





o) PO charged

			D1	D2
po_ch_01	D <sub>1</sub> [	) <sub>2</sub>	PMe <sub>2</sub>	0-

p) Monodentates (same or mixed)



# PCA Diagnostics and Details

a) All ligands included

Component	R <sup>2</sup> X	R <sup>2</sup> X(cum)	Eigenvalue	<b>Q</b> <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup> (cum)
0	Cent.				
1	0.359	0.359	6.45	0.239	0.239
2	0.156	0.514	2.81	0.0825	0.302
3	0.126	0.640	2.26	0.148	0.406

Table S2: Model overview (224 ligands, 18 descriptors)



Figure S1: Descriptor loadings plot (see spreadsheet for data)

Detailed PCA plots



Figure S2: Larger version of Figure 1.



Figure S3: North West quadrant of Figure 1, all labels.



Figure S4: South West quadrant of Figure 1, all labels.



Figure S5: North East quadrant of Figure 1, all labels.



Figure S6: South East quadrant of Figure 1, all labels.



Figure S7: Zoomed in on equatorial region of Figure 1, all labels.







Figure S8: a) Inset of Figure 1, map coloured by bridge length. b) Additional coding according to flexibility of bridge with 3f and 4f bridges likely to be more flexible.

## Further discussion of PCA results

While PCA is useful for dimension reduction, 18 descriptors will give rise to 18 PCs, albeit of less and less importance to capturing the variation in the dataset. In the present case, PCs 1 and 2 capture 52% of the variation, with PC3 adding a further 13%. While we have focussed on the first two PCs to aid visualisation, it can be instructive to inspect PC3 and a 3D plot of PCs (Figure S9) can be seen below. In the orientation shown, this further emphasises the separation of different ligands by this analysis approach.



Figure S9: Principal component score plot showing PCs 1-3 for LKB-bid, all ligands.

For the full ligand set, PC3 loads steric and bite angle descriptors quite highly (see Figure S10 and spreadsheet for loadings), along with structural changes around the donor atoms for both metal complexes and the binding energy to the palladium fragment. This suggests a steric component for this PC, albeit one that is not separated well from electronic effects.



Figure S10: Descriptor loadings for PCs 1 and 3.



Figure S11: Principal component score plot for PCs 1 and 3.

Figure S11 shows a score plot of PCs 1 and 3. This analysis of PC3 suggests that an improved resolution of ligand donor atoms, particularly for NN, NO and OO donor ligands can be achieved by consideration of the third PC, but that these continue to overlap/lie close in chemical space, suggesting that their properties are quite similar. Ligand classes are less well-defined at higher values of PC1, where charged ligands lie alongside other ligand classes. Overall, while we have focussed our discussion in the manuscript predominantly on PCs1 and 2, it appears prudent to consider PC3 as well in experimental design and data analysis.

# PCA excluding charged donors

Component	R <sup>2</sup> X	R <sup>2</sup> X(cum)	Eigenvalue	<b>Q</b> <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup> (cum)		
0	Cent.						
1	0.4	0.4	7.2	0.323	0.323		
2	0.143	0.543	2.58	0.127	0.409		
3	0.102	0.645	1.83	0.0377	0.431		

Table S3: Model overview (198 ligands, 18 descriptors)



Figure S12: Principal component score plot (PCs 1 and 2) for all uncharged ligands (198), coloured by donor atoms.



ure S13: Principal component score plot (PCs 1 and 2) for all uncharged ligands (198), coloured by bridge length

# PCA Diagnostics and Details

C, N and O donors, excluding all P-donors

Component	R <sup>2</sup> X	R <sup>2</sup> X(cum)	Eigenvalue	<b>Q</b> <sup>2</sup>	Limit	Q <sup>2</sup> (cum)
0	Cent.					
1	0.433	0.433	7.8	0.342	0.0591	0.342
2	0.135	0.568	2.42	0.0722	0.0621	0.389
3	0.111	0.679	1.99	0.0678	0.0654	0.431
4	0.0787	0.757	1.42	-0.027	0.0691	0.415

Table S4: Model overview (146 ligands, 18 descriptors)



Figure S14: Loadings plot PCs 1 and 2.



Figure S15: Figure 2 enlarged.



Figure S16: Overview with ligand numbers.



Figure S17: North West Quadrant of Fig. 2, all labels.



Figure S18: South West Quadrant of Fig. 2, all labels.



Figure S19: North East Quadrant of Fig. 2, all labels.



Figure S20: South East Quadrant of Fig. 2, all labels.



re S21: Figure 2 coloured by bridge length.



Figure S22: Loadings plot, PC1 and 3, C, N and O donor ligands.



Figure S23: Principal component score plot for PCs 1 and 3, C, N and O donor ligands.



Figure S24: Enlarged version of Figure 3.



Figure S25: Figure 4 with all labels.

### Transferability to other metal complexes

Our work to date, albeit dominated by P,P donor ligands, suggests that the full set of parameters is likely to have some transferability to other coordination environments, such as square-based pyramidal, trigonal bipyramidal, piano stool, and octahedral, while the expansion to sample these environments directly with additional parameters will introduce computational challenges (evaluating equatorial-equatorial vs. equatorial-axial coordination in trigonal bipyramidal geometries (and, perhaps more difficult, in square-based pyramidal ones, as well as their distortion towards trigonal bipyramidal), steric clashes in octahedral complexes affecting conformer preferences/convergence and the interactions/meshing between the ligands of interest and the remaining coordination sphere for all) that are not necessarily justified by achieving improved models. As such, the square planar complex seems to capture the strongest electronic interactions in octahedral complexes (*trans* influence) while the two steric parameters ( $He_8$ \_wedge and  $nHe_8$ ) capture steric clashes that would arise from *cis* ligands in this geometry, rigidly in the former and allowing for ligand flexibility in response to such clashes in the latter. Between them, some of the features of a more hindered coordination environment are thus captured. The ZnCl<sub>2</sub> complex does not exert a strong coordination preference from the metal centre and sees only limited interactions with the chloride ligands. It should thus be a better model for unhindered coordination environments. Between them, some transferability can be achieved.