Signature of the Superatom to Superhalogen Behavior of Auₙ(BO₂)ₘ clusters

ANIL KANDALAM, McNeese State University, MATTHIAS GOTZ, University of Konstanz, MARY WILLIS, Virginia Commonwealth University, GERD GANTEFOR, University of Konstanz, PURU JENA, Virginia Commonwealth University — We report the discovery of a new class of clusters consisting of Auₙ(BO₂)ₘ which formed during the oxygenation of gold clusters when boron nitride was used as insulation in the pulsed arc cluster ion source (PACIS). Using DFT based calculations, we trace the origin of these species to be due to the unusual stability of the BO₂ moiety as well as shed light on their formation process. PES measurements and the corresponding DFT calculations further reveal some rather remarkable properties of Auₙ(BO₂)ₘ clusters such as large HOMOLUMO gaps in the range of 3.00 eV – 3.95 eV and electron affinities substantially larger than that of F, the most electronegative element in the periodic table. In addition, some of the most predominant features of the electronic structure of the bare Au clusters, namely odd-even alternation in the electron affinity, are preserved in the Auₙ(BO₂) species. The synergy between theory and experiment illustrates that Auₙ(BO₂)ₘ clusters, behave as superatoms and superhalogens, opening the door for the synthesis of a new class of cluster-assembled materials.

¹This work is supported in part by grants from the DTRA and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

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Date submitted: 20 Nov 2009