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Perovskite-Type InCoO₃ with Low-Spin Co³⁺: Effect of In–O Covalency on Structural Stabilization in Comparison with Rare-Earth Series

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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Perovskite rare-earth cobaltites $ACoO_3$ (A = Sc, Y, and La–Lu) have been of enduring interest for decades due to their unusual structural and physical properties associated with the spin-state transitions of low-spin Co^{3+} ions. Herein, we have synthesized a non-rare-earth perovskite cobaltite, InCoO₃, at 15 GPa and 1400 °C and investigated its crystal structure and magnetic ground state. Under the same high-pressure and high-temperature condition, we also prepared a perovskite-type $ScCoO_3$ with an improved cation stoichiometry compared to a previous study where the synthesis at 6 GPa and 1297 °C yielded a perovskite cobaltite with cation mixing on the A-site, $(Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO_3$. The two perovskite phases have nearly stoichiometric cation compositions, crystallizing in the orthorhombic Pnma space group. In the present investigation, comprehensive studies on newly developed and well-known Pnma ACoO₃ perovskites (A = In, Sc, Y, and Pr-Lu) show that InCoO₃ does not fulfil the general evolution of crystal metrics with A-site cation size, indicating that InCoO3 and rare earth counterparts have different chemistry for stabilizing the Pnma structures. Detailed structural analyses combined with first-principles calculations reveal that the origin of the anomaly for $InCoO_3$ is ascribed to the A-site cation displacements that accompany octahedral tilts; despite the highly tilted CoO_6 network, the In-O covalency makes In³⁺ ions reluctant to move from their ideal cubic-symmetry position, leading to the smaller orthorhombic distortion than expected from electrostatic/ionic size mismatch effects. Magnetic studies demonstrate that InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ are diamagnetic with a low-spin state of Co³⁺ below 300 K, in contrast to the case of (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ where the high-spin Co^{3+} ions on the A-site generate a large paramagnetic moment. The present work extends the accessible composition range of the low-spin orthocobaltite series and thus should help to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the structureproperty relation.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been increased interest in recent years in transition-metal perovskite oxides AMO_3 (M = transition metal) with unusually small A-site cations because they extends the range of existence of perovskite phases and the variety of their properties.^{1,2} The A site of AMO_3 perovskites is usually occupied by large cations like alkali, alkali-earth, and rare-earth ions. The smallest typical cation occupying the A site is Lu³⁺. When cations smaller than Lu³⁺ (e.g. Mn²⁺, Sc³⁺, and In³⁺ ions) are introduced into the A-sites, the perovskite structure becomes so unstable in ambient conditions that it is converted into other structures such as

ilmenite-, bixbyite-, and hexagonal LuMnO₃-type structures.³ The stability and structural distortions of simple perovskites are often discussed in terms of Goldschmidt tolerance factor, $t = (r_A + r_O) / (\sqrt{2} (r_M + r_O))$, where r_A , r_M , and r_O stand for the ionic radii of *A*-site, *B*-site and O²⁻ ions, respectively.⁴ The ideal cubic perovskite has $t \sim 1$ and the incorporation of small *A*-site cations for which t < 1 leads to symmetry lowering into the orthorhombic or rhombohedral perovskite structures as a result of different tilt distortions of MO_6 octahedra. Further reduction in *A*-site cation size, which results in *t* below a limit (t < 0.8),⁵ often gives rise to non-perovskite structures due to destabilization of otherwise

highly tilted perovskite structures. Nevertheless, it is now possible to stabilize novel perovskite compounds with extremely small t values as metastable ambient phases by utilizing high-pressure synthesis.

Among such small-tolerance factor perovskite oxides, Scand In-based compounds, ScMO3 and InMO3, and related materials have been extensively studied to find intriguing structural and magnetic properties associated with large structural distortions.^{1,6–21} For example, Castillo-Martínez et al.⁶ synthesized an orthorhombic ScVO₃ perovskite (space group Pnma) at 8 GPa and 800 °C and demonstrated stabilization of a rarely found tetragonal Jahn-Teller distortion at room temperature. This compound also exhibits a nontrivial spin structure at low temperatures, in contrast to C or G-type antiferromagnetic ordering for the other AVO₃ perovskites (A = Y and La–Lu). Belik et al.⁷ prepared Pnma ScCrO₃ and InCrO₃ perovskites at 6 GPa and 1227 °C, and found that these compounds exhibit C-type antiferromagnetic ordering, contrasting with the G-type structure for the other ACrO₃ perovskites with large rareearth ions on the A sites.⁸ Although ScMnO₃ and InMnO₃ perovskites are difficult to prepare at 5-6 GPa and 800-1100 °C,^{1,22-24} the high-pressure treatment over 10 GPa turns out to stabilize the perovskite phases. For ScMnO₃, it has been reported that the increase in pressure up to 12.5 GPa (at 1100 °C) creates a perovskite modification.¹¹ In the case of InMnO₃, the application of 10 GPa (at 1200 °C) produces a perovskite phase, but with a large amount of rhombohedral In₂O₃ impurity (~30 wt%); namely, the perovskite phase is enriched in Mn with respect to the stoichiometric composition of InMnO₃ and has been identified as having a cation mixing at the A-site, $(In_{1-v}Mn_v)MnO_3$ ¹ ScMnO₃ and (In1-yMny)MnO3 perovskites crystallize in a monoclinic $(P2_1/n)$ symmetry,^{1,12} which is lower than the crystal symmetry of the other AMnO₃ perovskites (orthorhombic *Pnma* perovskites are obtained as the stable phase for A =La–Dy or the metastable phase for A = Y and Ho–Lu). Using a high pressure above 10 GPa, we synthesized two polar rhombohedral (R3c) perovskite ferrites, ScFeO₃ and InFeO₃,^{15,16} although the other AFeO₃ perovskites with large rare-earth ions on the A sites adopt a nonpolar orthorhombic Pnma perovskite structure. More generally, these R3c phases are regarded as LiNbO3-type polar magnets, exhibiting room-temperature coexistence of polar structural distortion and magnetic order. R3c ScFeO₃ and InFeO₃ are thus potential candidates as magnetoelectric multiferroics.

Despite the enhanced capabilities in materials exploration through high-pressure synthesis techniques, the range of existence of perovskite cobaltites ACoO3 is, on the other hand, scarcely extended toward the small-tolerance factor side. Recently, Belik et al.¹⁷ reported the synthesis of ScCoO₃ under 6 GPa and 1297 °C, but with a nonstoichiometric, Co-rich composition, Sc_{0.9}CoO_{2.85}. The structural analysis indicated the formation of a Pnma perovskite with cation mixing at the A-site, $(Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO_3.$ To our knowledge, the synthesis of stoichiometric ScCoO3 perovskite still remains elusive. Also, previous attempts to prepare perovskite-type InCoO₃ were unsuccessful under 6-7.5 GPa at elevated temperatures up to 1627 °C.1 The scarcity of small-tolerance factor perovskite cobaltites is probably related to the inherent difficulty in stabilizing Co^{3+} ions. Indeed, even for existing perovskite cobaltites, the synthesis requires increasingly oxidizing conditions as the size of the A^{3+} ions decreases from La to Lu, and so high-pressure synthesis in the presence of an oxidizing agent (e.g., KClO₄) serves to obtain the compounds in single phases, especially for the smaller A^{3+} ions (A = Tm, Yb, and Lu).²⁵

Here, we report the successful preparation of a smalltolerance factor perovskite $InCoO_3$ (t = 0.80) by increasing the synthesis pressure up to ~15 GPa at elevated temperature. We also show the possibility of obtaining nearly stoichiometric $ScCoO_3$ (t = 0.78) under the same high-pressure and high-temperature condition. Emphasis is placed on identifying the crystal structure and magnetic ground state of these small-tolerance factor perovskites. Early works reported that ScMO₃ and InMO₃ perovskites with early 3d-transition metals (M = V, Cr, and Mn)crystallize in orthorhombic (*Pnma*) or monoclinic ($P2_1/n$) symmetries, $^{6-12}$ while the rhombohedral symmetry (R3c) appears for the middle 3d-transition metal (M = Fe).^{15,16} Hence, it is interesting to examine which crystal structure type is stabilized for the later 3d-transition metals such as Co. The spin state of Co^{3+} ions is another important aspect. A series of perovskite cobaltites, $ACoO_3$ (A = Y and La–Lu), has received continued attention for decades because they exhibit a degree of freedom in the electronic configuration of Co³⁺ ions, in addition to the spin, charge, and orbital degrees of freedom. All the members of the series have a low-spin ground state of Co^{3+} ions $(t_{2g}^{6}e_{g}^{0}, S = 0)$. With increasing temperature, they undergo two magnetic transitions associated with thermal excitations to either the intermediate-spin $(t_{2g}^{5}e_{g}^{1}, S = 1)$ or high-spin $(t_{2g}^{4}e_{g}^{2}, S = 2)$; although the nature of paramagnetic Co3+ species is still under debate, the first magnetic transition is ascribed to the diamagnetic-paramagnetic transition,²⁶⁻²⁹ and the second one to the transition to another paramagnetic state accompanied by an insulator-metal transition.³⁰⁻³⁴ Given the fact that (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ exhibits a large paramagnetic response from the high-spin Co^{3+} ions on the A-site,¹⁷ the magnetic ground states of almost stoichiometric ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃ deserve to be investigated to confirm a link with the wellknown members of the perovskite cobaltite series.

Our characterizations show that $ScCoO_3$ and $InCoO_3$ obtained here expand the accessible composition range of the low-spin orthocobaltite series, unlike the case of $(Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO_3$.¹⁷ In this work, a comprehensive comparison of crystal structure is also made for newly developed and well-known orthocobaltites $ACoO_3$ (A = In, Sc, Y, and Pr–Lu). We find that $InCoO_3$ does not follow the general evolution of crystal metrics with A-site cation size, implying that $InCoO_3$ and rare earth counterparts (A = Sc, Y, and Pr–Lu) have a distinct chemistry to stabilize the orthorhombic structures. The origin of such a peculiarity for $InCoO_3$ is argued with help of first-principles calculations.

2. EXPERIMENTAL AND COMPUTATIONAL DETAILS

Polycrystalline InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ were synthesized by the solid-state reaction under high-pressure and high-

temperature conditions in the presence of KClO₄ as an oxidizing agent. Reagent-grade In_2O_3 (99.999 %, Kojundo Chemical), Sc₂O₃ (99.9%, Kojundo Chemical), Co₃O₄ (99.9 %, Kojundo Chemical) and KClO₄ (99.99 %, Sigma-Aldrich) were used as starting materials. A_2O_3 (A = Sc or In), Co₃O₄, and KClO₄ were mixed in a molar ratio of 1.5 : 1 : 0.225 in an agate mortar. The resultant mixture was placed into a Pt capsule and put into a high-pressure cell. The solid-state reaction was performed at 15 GPa and 1400 °C for 30 min using a Kawai-type high-pressure apparatus, followed by a rapid temperature quench and then a gradual pressure release. The obtained sample was washed with water, ethanol, and acetone several times to remove KCl.

Synchrotron X-ray diffraction (SXRD) data were recorded at 300 K on the BL02B2 beamline at SPring-8 equipped with a large Debye-Scherrer camera using monochromated X-rays ($\lambda = 0.65084$ or 0.77475 Å). The minimum d value reached was as low as 0.524 Å. The powder sample was loaded into a Lindemann glass capillary with an inner diameter of 0.1 mm (InCoO₃) or 0.2 mm (ScCoO₃), which was continuously rotated during the measurement to reduce the effect of preferential orientation. The time-of-flight (TOF) neutron powder diffraction (NPD) was carried out for ScCoO₃ at room temperature using the WISH diffractometer at ISIS neutron facility.³⁵ Approximately 40 mg of sample powders was housed in a vanadium can. Bank 4 at 2θ = 121.7° was used for the refinement, allowing us to cleanly catch the observable Bragg reflections in the d range of 0.63 to 4.05 Å with a high resolution and a satisfactory counting statistics despite the small sample volume. All the structural refinements were carried out through the Rietveld method³⁶ using the FullProf program.³⁷ An absorption correction was made during the Rietveld refinements against the SXRD data,³⁸ μr values of 0.36 and 0.70 were used for InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃, respectively. For the TOF NPD data, a cylindrical sample absorption correction was also applied. The crystal structure was drawn by the program VESTA.39 The cation ratio was evaluated with electron probe microanalysis (EPMA) using a JEOL JXA-8500F instrument. Sc₂O₃, In₂O₃, and Co₃O₄ were utilized as standard samples. The magnetic susceptibility data were recorded using a SQUID magnetometer (MPMS-XL; Quantum Design) between 5 and 300 K under an applied field of 100 Oe.

To explore comparatively the crystal and electronic structures of InCoO3 and ScCoO3 against their isostructural analogues $ACoO_3$ (A = Y and Pr-Lu), we used DFT calculations. As a reference, calculations were also made for as-yet unsynthesized TlCoO3. Our first-principles calculations were carried out using the projector augmentedwave (PAW) method⁴⁰ as implemented in the VASP code.⁴¹⁻ ⁴⁵ The exchange-correlation interactions among electrons were treated by using the HSE06 hybrid functional,⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸ which is shown to predict appropriately the magnetic, electronic, and structural properties in insulating transition metal compounds.⁴⁹⁻⁵⁴ The PAW data sets with radial cutoffs of 1.6 Å for Pr, Nd, Sm, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, and Lu, and Sc; 1.7 Å for Eu, Yb, In, and Tl; 1.8 Å for Y and Ce; 1.3 Å for Co; and 0.8 Å for O were used with a plane-wave cutoff energy of 550 eV. The following states were described as valence electrons: 3s, 3p, 3d, and 4s for Sc; 4s, 4p, 4d, and 5s for Y; 5s, 5p, 5d, and 6s for Ce, Pr, Nd, and Sm; 5p, 5d, and 6s for Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, and Lu; 4d, 5s, and 5p for In; 5d, 6s, and 6p for Tl; 3s, 3p, 3d, 4s for Co; and 2s and 2p for O. A $3 \times 2 \times 3$ *k*-point mesh was used for the *Pnma* unit cell with 20 atoms, in accordance with the Monkhorst-Pack scheme.⁵⁵ A diamagnetic ground state was assumed according to the present and previous works.^{27–29,32–34} The lattice constants and internal coordinates were fully optimized in each case until the residual stresses and forces converged to less than 0.5 GPa and 0.05 eV/Å, respectively.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Crystal Structure: Figure 1a and **b** show the SXRD data at 300 K for InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃, respectively, together with the results of their Rietveld refinements. For each of the data sets, the main reflections can be indexed in orthorhombic symmetry with a $\sqrt{2}a_p \times 2a_p \times \sqrt{2}a_p$ unit cell (where a_p is the lattice parameter of basic cubic perovskite).

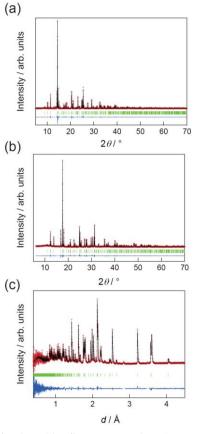


Figure 1. Rietveld refinements against SXRD data at 300 K for (a) InCoO₃ ($\lambda = 0.65084$ Å) and (b) ScCoO₃ ($\lambda = 0.77475$ Å) and (c) Rietveld refinement against TOF NPD data at 300 K for ScCoO₃ (bank 4 at $2\theta = 121.7^{\circ}$). These refinements are performed on the basis of the orthorhombic (*Pnma*) perovskite-type structure, showing the observed (crosses) and calculated (solid line) profiles. The bottom solid line represents the difference between the observed and calculated profiles. The ticks correspond to the positions of the calculated Bragg reflections for *Pnma* perovskite cobaltites. The unindexed peaks from unknown impurities were excluded from the refinement.

In contrast to the case of $(Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO_3$ prepared at 6 GPa and 1297 °C,¹⁷ no reflections from bixbyite-type Sc_2O_3 are found in the SXRD pattern for ScCoO₃. Instead, a few weak reflections from unknown phases are observed; the intensities of impurity reflections were less than 0.8 % of the intensities of the most intense perovskite reflections (**Figure S1** in the Supporting Information,). The SXRD pattern for InCoO₃ also contained impurity reflections at a similar level (see **Figure S1**).

Rietveld refinements were performed against the SXRD patterns for the main perovskite phase by assuming as an initial model the *Pnma* structure of LuCoO₃;²⁵ A (= In or Sc), Co, O1, and O2 atoms are placed at 4c (x, 1/4, z), 4b (0, 1/4, z), 4b (0,0, 1/2), 4c(x, 1/4, z), and 8d(x, y, z), respectively. For both compounds, the cation sites were refined anisotropically, while the anion sites were handled isotropically. For InCoO₃, the U_{iso} values of O1 and O2 sites were fixed to the same least-squares parameter. Since no apparent vacancy was observed at any cation sites within the limits of standard uncertainties, the occupancy factor g was constrained to unity. The stoichiometric composition models immediately provide good overall fits to the observed patterns for both InCoO₃ (weighted profile *R*-factor, $R_{wp} = 11.7\%$, and Bragg *R*-factor, $R_{\rm B} = 4.52\%$) and ScCoO₃ ($R_{\rm wp} = 12.2\%$ and $R_{\rm B} =$ 3.14%). For ScCoO₃, SXRD alone may not be sufficient to reliably estimate the site occupancies because of the relatively close X-ray scattering factors between Sc and Co atoms. Hence, we measured TOF NPD at 300 K to take advantage of distinct scattering lengths of Sc (1.2290×10^{-15}) m) and Co (0.2490 $\times 10^{-15}$ m) but also to obtain more relevant values of the oxygen occupancies. Figure 1c shows the TOF NPD Rietveld plot for ScCoO₃ at 300 K. Again, the fully stoichiometric Pnma model leads to a satisfactory refinement ($R_{wp} = 8.45\%$ and $R_B = 6.25\%$). The cation and anion site occupancies were refined to check deviations in the stoichiometry, but the refined occupancies were consistently within 1 or 2% of the expected values.

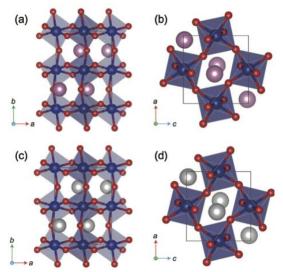


Figure 2 Crystal structures of $InCoO_3$ in (a) *ab* plane and (b) *ac* plane and those of $ScCoO_3$ in (c) *ab* plane and (d) *ac* plane. Pink, grey, blue, and red spheres represent In, Sc, Co, and O atoms, respectively.

We also checked the possibility of cation mixing on the *A*-site, according to the previous report of high-pressure synthesized (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃.¹⁷ In refinements against SXRD data for InCoO₃, the introduction of a small content of Co (a few %) at the In 4*c* site did not improve the fitting quality. Similar results were obtained for ScCoO₃ when considering Co mixing on the Sc 4*c* site in the combined refinement performed simultaneously against SXRD data and TOF NPD data. Complementary EPMA on ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃ showed In/Co = 1.010(7) and Sc/Co = 0.986(8), respectively. Thus, we conclude that *Pnma* InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ synthesized at 15 GPa and 1400 °C are almost stoichiometric within experimental standard uncertainties.

Figure 2 displays the refined crystal structures for InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃. The refinement results including the crystallographic data are listed in **Table 1**, and the selected

Table 1. Refined Structural Parameters (AtomicCoordinates and Atomic Displacement Parameters) at 300K for Perovskite-Type InCoO3 (SXRD data) and ScCoO3(SXRD and TOF NPD data)^a

| Atom | Site | x/a | y/b | z/c | $U_{ m eq} \text{ or } U_{ m iso}$ (Å ²) | | |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|--|--|
| InCoO ₃ (SXRD) | | | | | | | |
| In^{\dagger} | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.06232(8) | 1/4 | 0.98129(9) | 0.0035 | | |
| Co^\dagger | 4b | 0 | 0 | 1/2 | 0.0026 | | |
| 01 | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.4478(8) | 1/4 | 0.1182(7) | 0.0012(5) | | |
| 02 | 8 <i>d</i> | 0.3021(6) | 0.0613(4) | 0.6937(6) | 0.0012(5) | | |
| ScCoO ₃ (SXRD) | | | | | | | |
| \mathbf{Sc}^{\dagger} | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.08075(15) | 1/4 | 0.9738(2) | 0.0033 | | |
| Co^\dagger | 4b | 0 | 0 | 1/2 | 0.0018 | | |
| 01 | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.4484(5) | 1/4 | 0.1292(6) | 0.0023(7) | | |
| 02 | 8 <i>d</i> | 0.3057(4) | 0.0648(3) | 0.6837(4) | 0.0024(5) | | |
| ScCoO ₃ (TOF NPD) | | | | | | | |
| Sc | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.08124(16) | 1/4 | 0.97393(19) | 0.0262(3) | | |
| Co | 4b | 0 | 0 | 1/2 | 0.0081(10) | | |
| 01 | 4 <i>c</i> | 0.4500(3) | 1/4 | 0.1309(3) | 0.0160(5) | | |
| 02 | 8 <i>d</i> | 0.3078(2) | 0.06381(16) | 0.6842(2) | 0.0178(4) | | |

^aSpace group: Orthorhombic *Pnma* (No. 62), Z = 4. The occupancy parameter g is fixed to unity for all atoms. [†]Refined anisotropically. InCoO₃ (f.w. = $221.75 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$): SXRD ($\lambda = 0.65084$ Å, 0.494 Å < d < 7.372 Å); a =5.264382(17) Å, b = 7.33374(2) Å, c = 5.076713(17) Å, and $V = 195.9998(11) \text{ Å}^3$; $R_{wp} = 11.70 \%$, $R_p = 9.44\%$, and $\chi^2 =$ 5.31. ScCoO₃ (f.w. = 151.89 g mol⁻¹): SXRD (λ = 0.77475 Å, 0.599 Å < d < 7.280 Å); a = 5.284874(16) Å, b =7.14173(2) Å, c = 4.915136(17) Å, and V = 185.5126(10)Å³; $R_{wp} = 12.20\%$, $R_P = 12.1\%$, and $\chi^2 = 0.91$. ScCoO₃ (f.w. = 151.89 g mol⁻¹): TOF NPD (0.350 Å < d < 5.848 Å); a = 5.29250(10)Å, b = 7.15286(14)Å, c = 4.92243(9)Å, and V = 186.346(6) Å³; R_{wp} = 8.45 %, R_{P} = 28.8%, and χ^{2} = 2.04. $R_{\rm wp} = [\Sigma w_i (y_{io} - y_{ic})^2 / \Sigma w_i y_{io}^2]^{1/2}$ and $R_{\rm p} = \Sigma |y_{io} - y_{ic}| / \Sigma y_{io}$, where y_{i0} and y_{ic} are the observed and calculated intensities, respectively, and w_i is the weighting factor.

Table 2. Selected Bond Lengths and Bond AngleObtained from Refinements against SXRD Data at 300 K

| InCoC |)3 | ScCoO ₃ | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| In–O1 / Å | 3.309(4) | Sc–O1 / Å | 3.428(3) | |
| In–O1 / Å | 3.103(4 | Sc–O1 / Å | 3.045(3) | |
| In–O1 / Å | 2.145(4) | Sc–O1 / Å | 2.088(3) | |
| In–O1 / Å | 2.121(4) | Sc–O1 / Å | 2.073(3) | |
| In–O2 (×2) / Å | 3.408(3) | Sc–O2 (×2) / Å | 3.473(2) | |
| In–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.624(3) | Sc–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.545(2) | |
| In–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.375(3) | Sc–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.279(2) | |
| In–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.140(3) | Sc–O2 (×2) / Å | 2.112(2) | |
| Co–O1 (×2) / Å | 1.9486(12) | Co–O1 (×2) / Å | 1.9145(10) | |
| Co–O2 (×2) / Å | 1.925(3) | Co–O2 (×2) / Å | 1.920(2) | |
| Co–O2 (×2) / Å | 1.923(3) | Co-O2 (×2) / Å | 1.908(2) | |
| Co–O1–Co / ° | 140.40(5) | CoO1Co / ° | 138.48(5) | |
| Co–O2–Co / ° | 143.71(13) | Co–O2–Co / ° | 141.06(9) | |

bond lengths and bond angles are given in **Table 2**. The structural views along [101] and [010] directions show a GdFeO₃-type orthorhombic distortion, being characterized by $a^-b^+a^-$ tilt system in Glazer's notation.⁵⁶ As expected from the small tolerance factors, both compounds possess a notable magnitude of CoO₆ octahedral tilts, with the Co–O1–Co and Co–O2–Co angles deviating significantly from the ideal value of 180° by up to ~ 42° (see **Table 2**).

Bond valence sum (BVS) calculations57 using the structural parameters refined from SXRD data give values of +2.964(11) and +2.703(8) for In and Co, respectively, confirming an ionic model of $In^{3+}Co^{3+}O_3$. The BVS of Sc and Co for $ScCoO_3$ [Sc = +2.982(8) and Co = +2.838(6)] are also close to the formal oxidation states expected from $Sc^{3+}Co^{3+}O_3$. The CoO₆ octahedral distortion is estimated by using the following equation: $\Delta = 1/6 \sum_{i} [(d_i - \langle d \rangle)/\langle d \rangle]^2$, where d_i is the individual Co–O bond length, and $\langle d \rangle$ is the average Co–O bond length. We obtained $\Delta = 2.1 \times 10^{-5}$ and 4.7×10^{-5} for CoO₆ octahedra in InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃, respectively. These distortions are comparable to those observed for other perovskite cobaltites with small A-site cations (e.g., $\Delta = 5.53 \times 10^{-5}$ for LuCoO₃),²⁵ but are approximately two orders of magnitude lower than what has been observed for perovskite manganites $AMnO_3$ (A = Sc, Y, and Pr–Er) with Jahn–Teller active Mn^{3+} ions ($\Delta = 4.3-4.9$ 10⁻³).^{11,58} The very small dispersions in Co-O bonds for InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ are ascribed to the Jahn–Teller inactive, low-spin Co³⁺ ions as mentioned below.

Here, it should be noted that the calculated density for ScCoO₃ (5.44 g/cm³) in this study (15 GPa and 1400 °C) is slightly lower than that for the isostructural (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ (5.47 g/cm³) synthesized at 6 GPa and 1297 °C,¹⁷ implying differences in the cation arrangement and stoichiometry between the two compounds. We also find that the unit-cell volume of ScCoO₃ (V = 185.512(2) Å³) obtained by the combined refinement against SXRD and TOF NPD data (**Table S1** in the Supporting Information) is slightly larger than that of (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ (V = 185.141 Å³) and more comparable to that of ScAlO₃ (V = 185.915

Å³).⁵⁹ This result is consistent with the fact that the 6-fold coordinated ionic radii of Co³⁺ (0.545 Å for low-spin configuration) and Al³⁺ (0.535 Å) are very close to each other,⁶⁰ validating the stoichiometric composition model for ScCoO₃.

3.2. Relation between Lattice Parameters and Asite Cation Size: InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ adopt the same orthorhombic (*Pnma*) structure as well-studied perovskite cobaltites ACoO₃ (A = Y and Pr–Lu);^{25,27,28,32–34,61} LaCoO₃ is excluded from the series of orthocobaltites because of the R $\overline{3}c$ symmetry.²⁶ Here, we examine comprehensively the evolution of structural distortions across the isostructural series of ACoO₃ (A = In, Sc, Y, and Pr–Lu). The orthorhombic lattice parameters are plotted in **Figure 3a** as a function of A^{3+} ionic radius, r_A , in 8-fold coordination.⁶⁰ ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃ both possess the orthorhombic distortion with the following relationship between lattice

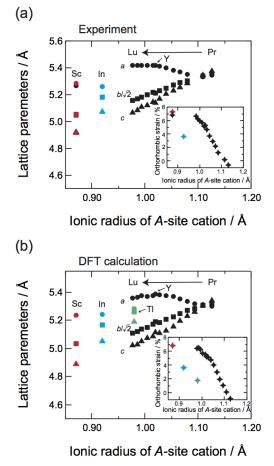


Figure 3. Variations in (a) experimental and (b) calculated lattice parameters with A^{3+} ionic radius, r_A (in 8-fold coordination⁶⁰) for ScCoO₃ (red), InCoO₃ (blue), and ACoO₃ where A = Y and Pr–Lu (black).^{25,32–34} In (a), the experimental lattice parameters for (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ (black) are displayed for comparison.¹⁷ In (b), the calculated lattice parameters for TlCoO₃ (green) are shown as a reference. Insets depict the r_A -dependent variations in (a) experimental and (b) calculated orthorhombic strain, s = 2(a - c)/(a + c).

parameters, $c < b / \sqrt{2} < a$, which is the same as that for the other $ACoO_3$ perovskites with small A-site cations (A = Y and Sm-Lu). This kind of orthorhombic distortion is characteristic of the so-called O-type structure where the CoO₆ octahedral tilts are the dominant source of the orthorhombic distortion; the strong contractions in caccompanying the octahedral tilts eventually results in the structures with c < a.⁶² Figure 3a also indicates that the relation between lattice parameters changes into $a < b / \sqrt{2} <$ c when A = Nd and Pr. The relation a < c has been seen for some Pnma perovskites with large A-site cations, such as PrNiO₃ and LaCrO₃,^{63,64} and this is ascribable to local distortions in the MO₆ octahedra (specifically, slight deviation of the O-M-O bond angles in the ac plane from 90 °), which lead to an expansion in c and a contraction in a. For NdCoO₃ and PrCoO₃, the O–Co–O bond angles are 90 \pm β° , where β is about 1°, and the β value is large enough to override the impact of the modest octahedral tilts on the relative a/c dimension.⁶⁵

The evolution of lattice parameters (a, b, and c) across the well-studied series of $ACoO_3$ (A = Y and Pr–Lu), as shown in Figure 3a, is a commonly observed feature of the octahedral framework in $a^-b^+a^-$ tilt pattern, where a reduction in r_A gives rise to monotonic decreases in b and c, while leaving a almost unchanged. When the variation in lattice parameters is extrapolated toward the smaller r_A , one can see different behavior between ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃. $ScCoO_3$ approximately follows the relationship between r_A and lattice parameters found for A = Y and Pr–Lu, while this does not hold for InCoO₃, i.e., InCoO₃ displays significant deviations of all the lattice parameters from the extrapolated values at r_{In} . The r_{A} -dependent variation in orthorhombic strain, s = 2(a - c)/(a + c), also shows a clear anomaly for InCoO₃ (see the inset of Figure 3a). The orthorhombicity for InCoO₃ is much smaller than the expected value from the trend for the other members of this series.

Across the isostructural series of $ACoO_3$ (A = In, Sc, Y, and Pr–Lu), the unit-cell volume decreases nearly monotonically with decreasing r_A (**Figure 4a**), suggesting a smooth increase in octahedral tilts. We estimated the tilt angles from the oxygen atomic positions by the method of Kennedy *et al.*,⁶⁶ as implemented in a previous study. The in-phase ($a^0b^+a^0$) and out-of-phase ($a^-b^0a^-$) tilt angles as well as the average tilt angle are plotted in **Figure 4b** against r_A . As expected, the average tilt angle increases roughly proportionally to the decrease in r_A , but the individual tilt angles for InCoO₃ deviate from the trend for the other members of this series, reflecting the anomalies in the crystal metrics as shown in **Figure 3**.

To obtain an insight into the aforementioned anomalous behavior of the crystal metrics of InCoO₃, we performed DFT calculations. Figure 3b and the inset plot the calculated orthorhombic lattice parameters and orthorhombic strain as a function of r_A , respectively. As a reference, the calculated data for an as-yet unsynthesized Pnma orthocobaltite, TlCoO₃, are also shown in these figures. The HSE06 optimized lattice parameters for each compound are almost consistent with the experimental data, and the evolution of the calculated lattice parameters and orthorhombic strain with r_A also reproduces well the experimental trend, highlighting the anomalies for InCoO₃. Interestingly, such anomalies are found for TlCoO₃ as well. These results suggest the different chemistry of group 13 (In and Tl) vs group 3 (rare earth) ions with respect to the stabilization of *Pnma* perovskites. Similar phenomena have been experimentally observed for InCrO₃ and TlCrO₃ in the orthochromite *A*CrO₃ series (A = TI, In, Y, and La–Lu)^{7,67} and for TlFeO₃ in the orthoferrite *A*FeO₃ series (A = TI, Y, and Pr–Lu).⁶⁸ These previous studies considered the relatively high electronegativity of In and Tl compared to rare earth elements and suggested that the covalency of In–O and Tl–O bonds is responsible for the observed anomalies. Further discussion about the electronic effects of *A*-site cations on orthorhombic distortions is given in Section 4.

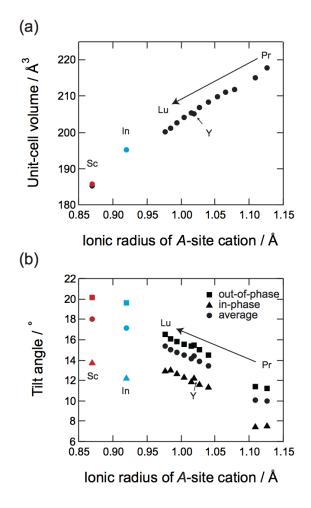


Figure 4 (a) Variations in unit-cell volume with A^{3+} ionic radius, r_A (in 8-fold coordination⁶⁰) for ScCoO₃ (red), InCoO₃ (blue), and ACoO₃ where A = Y and Pr–Lu (black).^{25,32–34} The unit-cell volume for (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ (black)¹⁷ is also displayed for comparison.¹⁷ (b) Variation in octahedral tilt angles with A^{3+} ionic radius, r_A (in 8-fold coordination⁶⁰) for ScCoO₃ (red), InCoO₃ (blue), and ACoO₃ where A = Y, Pr, Nd, and Tb–Lu (black).^{25,32–34} The inphase ($a^0b^+a^0$) and out-of-phase ($a^-b^0a^-$) tilt angles as well as the average tilt angle were calculated from the oxygen fractional coordinates by the equations given in ref. 66.

3.3. Magnetic Properties: Figure 5 shows the temperature dependence of magnetic susceptibility, $\chi(T)$, of *Pnma* ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃ measured at 100 Oe after zero-field cooling. As the temperature is decreased, χ gradually increases. We analyzed the χ -*T* curve in the temperature range of 5 to 300 K by using the Curie-Weiss law with the equation:

$$\chi(T) = \chi_0 + \frac{N\mu_{\rm eff}^2}{3k_B(T-\theta_{\rm w})},$$

where χ_0 is a temperature-independent term, N is the Avogadro constant, μ_{eff} is an effective magnetic moment, k_{B} is the Boltzmann constant, θ_w is the Weiss temperature. The fitting yields $\chi_0 = 4.98(2) \times 10^{-3}$ emu Oe⁻¹ mol⁻¹, $\theta_w = -$ 0.2(1) K, and $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 0.72(3) \mu_{\text{B}}$ for InCoO₃ and $\chi_0 = 1.95(2) \times$ 10^{-4} emu Oe⁻¹ mol⁻¹, $\theta_w = -0.72(7)$ K, and $\mu_{eff} = 0.10(1) \mu_B$ for ScCoO₃. The effective magnetic moments are much smaller than those for intermediate-spin state Co^{3+} (2.828) $\mu_{\rm B}$) and high-spin state Co³⁺(4.899 $\mu_{\rm B}$). This, together with the very weak magnetic interactions ($\theta_{\rm w} \sim 0$ K), suggests that the paramagnetic contributions stem from magnetic impurities and/or from a very small amount of defects in the structure. It should be mentioned that the present situation is quite different from that for (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ prepared at 6 GPa and 1297 °C, where the cation mixing on the A-site leads to the larger magnetic moment and stronger magnetic interaction ($\mu_{eff} = 1.749 \ \mu_B$ and $\theta_w. = -130 \ K$).¹⁷ The large effective moment for (Sc_{0.95}Co_{0.05})CoO₃ is ascribed to the presence of high-spin Co^{3+} ions on the A-site, while the Bsite Co³⁺ ions have a low-spin configuration. Given the nearly stoichiometric compositions of the present ScCoO₃ and InCoO₃, it is reasonable to conclude that their magnetic ground state is diamagnetic with a low-spin state of Co^{3+} .

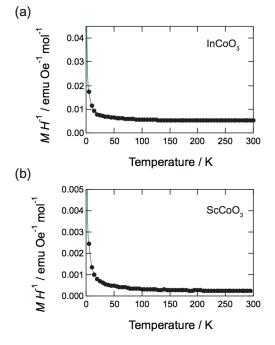


Figure 5. Temperature dependent magnetic susceptibility, $\chi = M/H$, of (a) InCoO₃ and (b) ScCoO₃ measured at H = 100 Oe after zero-field cooling. The solid green curves represent the Curie-Weiss law.

4. DISCUSSION

In ABO₃ perovskites, oxygen octahedral tilts are driven by the need to compensate for underbonding caused by a reduction of A-site cation size. GdFeO₃-type orthorhombic (*Pnma*) structure $(a^{-}b^{+}a^{-}$ tilt system) is related to the cubic Pm 3 m perovskite structure by two octahedral tilt modes: one is the in-phase tilt $(a^0b^+a^0)$ of the adjacent BO₆ octahedra about the cubic [010] axis (transforming like the irreducible representation M_3^+), and the other is the out-of-phase tilt $(a^{-}b^{0}a^{-})$ of the adjacent BO₆ octahedra about the cubic [101] axis (transforming like the irreducible representation R_4^+). Other kinds of structural distortions are also allowed by Pnma symmetry. In particular, antiparallel displacements of the A-site cations (transforming like the irreducible representations X_5^+ and R_5^+), which are equal in magnitude but in opposite directions in adjacent AO planes (see Figure 2b and 2d), play a key role in stabilizing Pnma perovskites.^{2,69} The A position (4c site) in Pnma has two free

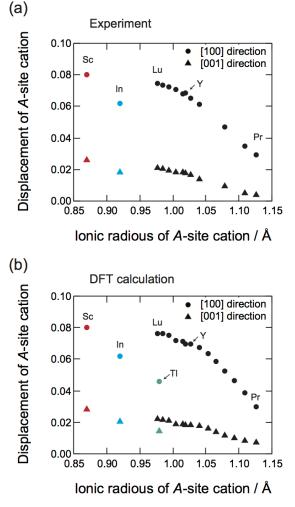


Figure 6 Variations in (a) experimental and (b) calculated *A*-site cation displacements along [100] and [001] directions (*a* and *c* directions) with A^{3+} ionic radius, r_A (in 8-fold coordination⁶⁰) for ScCoO₃ (red), InCoO₃ (blue), and ACoO₃ where A = Y and Pr–Lu (black).^{25,32–34} In (b), the calculated *A*-site cation displacements for TlCoO₃ (green) are shown as a reference.

parameters (x and z), thereby allowing A-site cations to shift away from their ideal $Pm\bar{3}m$ position to a more favorable coordination within the *ac* plane as the tilt angles are larger. Hence, the A-site coordination environment in *Pnma* perovskites is optimized by both octahedral tilts and A-site cation displacements. Given this, and the Jahn–Teller inactivity of low-spin Co³⁺ on the *B*-sites, the octahedral tilts and A-site cation displacements mainly affect the crystal metrics of orthocobaltites.

In light of the bonding requirements of A-site cations in Pnma, we discuss the origin of anomalies in the evolution of crystal metrics across the entire $ACoO_3$ series (Figure 3a). We here focus on the A-site cation displacements that occur within the ac plane. The experimental and calculated A-site cation displacements are plotted in Figure 6a and 6b as a function of r_A , respectively. For the group 3 perovskite series $ACoO_3$ (A = Sc, Y, and Pr–Lu), both experiments and calculations present the expected increases in A-site cation displacements as r_A decreases. Nevertheless, InCoO₃ does not follow this trend; the antiparallel displacements along a and c directions, which are associated with the X_5^+ and R_5^+ modes, respectively, are smaller than the expected values from the trend for the group 3 series. We also see such anomalies for TlCoO₃ in the evolution of calculated A-site cation displacements with r_A (Figure 6b). As a result, group 13 (In and Tl) and group 3 (rare earth) ions optimize the Pnma A-site coordination environment in a different manner. Given the A-site bonding preference in Pnma, the smallerthan-expected A-site cation displacements should be linked to the unusual behavior of the in-phase $(M_3^+ \text{ mode})$ and outof-phase $(R_4^+ \text{ mode})$ tilts (Figure 4b) and hence of the crystal metrics (Figure 3).

Next, we compare the electronic structures between group 3 and group 13 orthocobaltites. As a representative example, Figure 7a and 7b depict the calculated total and partial density of states (DOS) for Pnma InCoO3 and YCoO₃, respectively, where the A-site elements (i.e., In and Y) belong to the same period of the periodic table. In both cases, the valence band consists mainly of Co 3d and O 2p states (upper panels). The large differences in DOS are found on the A-site cations (lower panels). For InCoO₃, the formally unoccupied 5s state of In is located at much lower energies as compared to those of Y, consistently with the well-known fact that the effective nuclear charge increases with no accompanying increase in shielding effect. As a result, the In 5s state, which is completely empty in the ionic limit, is significantly occupied through orbital overlap with the O 2p state, forming the bottom of the valence band. This is evident in the orbital-projected DOS for the In site, which shows a large contribution from the In 5s state around -7 eV. Here, it should be noted that since the In "semicore" 4d states form a narrow band around -13 eV below the top of the valence band (Figure S2 in the Supporting Information), they do not directly create covalent bonds with the O 2p state. To our knowledge, this is the first identification of the nature of covalent bonding for A-site In³⁺ ions in perovskite oxides, although the influence of such covalent bonding on crystal structure has been shown by the electronic structure

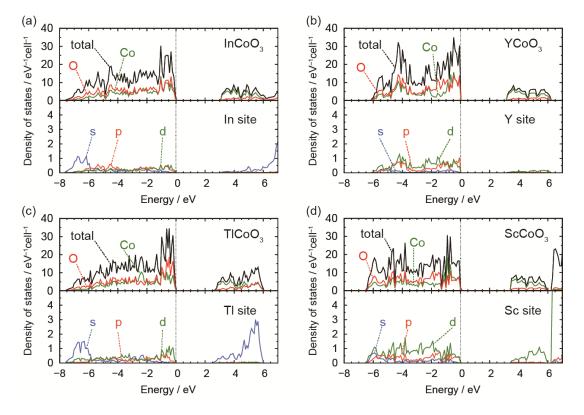


Figure 7 Calculated density of states (DOS) for diamagnetic perovskite cobaltites, (a) $InCoO_3$, (b) $YCoO_3$, (c) $TICoO_3$, and (d) $ScCoO_3$. In each of figures, the upper panels show the total DOS and the partial DOS projected onto Co and O sites, and the lower panels correspond to the orbital-projected DOS for *A*-site cations. The zero of energy is set to the top of the valence band.

calculations for some nonperovskite oxides such as hexagonal InMnO₃,^{23,70,71} For YCoO₃, on the other hand, the higher-lying Y 5s state has negligibly small orbital overlap with the O 2p state and so they do not contribute to the valence band. Instead, there is a small contribution from the formally empty Y 4d states through orbital overlap with the O 2p state. The difference in covalency between InCoO₃ and YCoO₃ can be also seen by comparing their valenceelectron charge densities. We calculated the charge densities of the valence band electrons for InCoO₃ and $YC_{0}O_{3}$ relative to that for $L_{0}C_{0}O_{3}$ (Figure S3 in the Supporting Information). InCoO₃ shows an increase in the charge density at the outer region of the In site, accompanied by a decrease in the charge density near the O site. The high charge-density regions around the In sites extend more spatially than those around the Y sites in YCoO₃, reflecting the significant contribution from spherical In 5s orbitals to the covalent bond formation.

To further explore the nature of chemical bonding between A-site cations and oxide ions, we also carried out DFT calculations for an additional set of group 3 and 13 orthocobaltites, TlCoO₃ and ScCoO₃. The electronic structure of TlCoO₃ can be interpreted similarly to that of InCoO₃. As shown in **Figure 7c**, the Tl 6s state, although it is also formally empty in the ionic description, develop significant occupation through the overlap with the O 2p state and form the bottom of the valence band; in the orbitalprojected DOS for the Tl site, a large contribution from the Tl 6s state is observed around -7 eV. Similar behavior has been identified in the electronic structure for perovskite-type TlMnO₃.⁵⁴ In contrast, ScCoO₃ behaves analogously to YCoO₃. As shown in Figure 7d, no sign of occupancy of the formally empty Sc 4s state is observed in the valence band because of its large energy gaps with the O 2p state. Our electronic structure calculations clearly indicate that group 13 (In and Tl) ions, unlike group 3 (rare earth) ions, form strong covalent bonding with oxide ions.

The orthorhombic *Pnma* distortion is the most frequently encountered structure for perovskites⁷² because it allows an A-site cation shift and results in a better distribution of A-O distances.^{2,69} For the group 3 series, the A-site coordination environment is optimized by electrostatic/ionic size mismatch effects, and hence, the smaller A-site cations involve the larger shifts from the ideal cubic $Pm\overline{3}m$ position (see Figure 6). Apart from this trend, a significant contribution from A–O covalent bonding exists for the group 13 series. This makes A-site cations reluctant to shift from their ideal position (Figure 6), and thus yields a specific Asite coordination environment. Although the A-site cations are formally eight-coordinate with four nearest-neighbor and four next-nearest neighbor oxide ions, the In-O and Tl-O bonds are likely confined to the four shorter oxide ions through strong covalent bonding. The unique bonding preferences of In³⁺ and Tl³⁺ ions are responsible for the anomalies in the evolution of crystal metrics across the entire ACoO₃ series.

5. CONCLUSION

Two perovskite cobaltites with nearly stoichiometric composition, InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃, have been successfully synthesized via the high-pressure and high-temperature treatment at 15 GPa and 1450 °C, although they have proved difficult to prepare. They crystallize in Pnma space group and exhibit large CoO₆ octahedral tilts due to the smallness of A-site cations (Sc^{3+} and In^{3+}). A comprehensive comparison of crystal structure for newly developed and well-known orthocobaltites $ACoO_3$ (A = In, Sc, Y, and Pr-Lu) highlights a distinct chemistry of InCoO₃ and rare earth counterparts with respect to the stabilization of Pnma perovskites. The peculiarity for InCoO₃ is caused by the Asite cation displacements that accompany octahedral tilts. We find, using first-principle calculations, that while the Asite cation displacements of rare earth series are driven by local electrostatic/ionic size mismatch effects to satisfy the A-site coordination requirements, there is a significant contribution from A-O covalency to the A-site optimization of InCoO₃, which leads to the A-site cation displacements smaller than expected from size mismatch effects. Both Pnma InCoO₃ and ScCoO₃ have a diamagnetic ground state, and will stimulate further experimental and theoretical investigations of the thermally induced spin-state transitions and possibly coupled structural and electrical properties.

6. ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: XXXX.

Crystallographic data (CIF format), and the detailed results of SXRD data and electronic structure calculations.

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All authors have given approval to the final version of the manuscript.

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