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► **To cite this version:**

Moulika Bhattacharyya, Rini Prakash, Chandan Nandi, Monojit Ghosal Chowdhury, Beesam Raghavendra, et al.. Syntheses and structures of chalcogen-bridged binuclear group 5 and 6 metal complexes. *Journal of Chemical Sciences*, 2019, 131 (12), pp.123. 10.1007/s12039-019-1703-9. hal-02438549

**HAL Id: hal-02438549**

**<https://univ-rennes.hal.science/hal-02438549>**

Submitted on 27 Mar 2020

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## Syntheses and structures of chalcogen-bridged binuclear group 5 and 6 metal complexes

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**Abstract.** Syntheses and structural elucidations of a series of chalcogen stabilized binuclear complexes of group 5 and 6 transition metals have been described. Room temperature reaction of  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{CrCl}]_2$  ( $\text{Cp}^* = \eta^5\text{-C}_5\text{Me}_5$ ) with  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{SePh})]$  afforded a Se inserted binuclear chromium complex,  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Cr})_2(\mu\text{-Se}_2\text{SePh})_2]$ , **1**. In an attempt to make the analogous complexes with heavier group 6 metals, reactions of  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{MCl}_4]$  ( $\text{M} = \text{Mo}$  and  $\text{W}$ ) with  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{SePh})]$  were carried out that yielded Se inserted binuclear complexes  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{M})_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2(\mu\text{-SePh})_2]$ , **2** and **3** (**2**:  $\text{M} = \text{Mo}$  and **3**:  $\text{M} = \text{W}$ ) along with known  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{M})_2\text{B}_5\text{H}_9]$ , **4a-b** (**4a**:  $\text{M} = \text{Mo}$  and **4b**:  $\text{M} = \text{W}$ ). Similarly, the reactions of  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{NbCl}_4]$  with  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{EPh})]$  ( $\text{E} = \text{S}$  or  $\text{Se}$ ) followed by thermolysis led to the formation of binuclear chalcogen complexes  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Nb})_2(\mu\text{-E}_2)_2]$ , **5** and **6** (**5**:  $\text{E} = \text{S}$  and **6**:  $\text{E} = \text{Se}$ ) and known  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Nb})_2(\text{B}_2\text{H}_6)_2]$ , **7**. All these complexes have been characterized by  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy and mass spectrometry. The structural integrity of complexes **1**, **3**, **5** and **6** were established by X-ray diffraction studies. The DFT studies further exemplify the bonding interactions present in these complexes, especially the multiple bond character between the metals in **1-3**.

**Keywords.** Chalcogen - binuclear complex - chalcogen-bridged.

### 1. Introduction

Transition metal complexes possessing chalcogen ligands have gained considerable attention due to their potential applications in chemical and biological systems.<sup>1-2</sup> In parallel to the other transition metal-main group complexes,<sup>3-4</sup> chalcogenide bridged molecular complexes also attracted importance due to their unusual stability, structural variety and catalytic applications.<sup>5-7</sup> Extensive studies unveiled the superior reactivity associated with transition metal sulfido complexes towards alkene, alkyne and dihydrogen.<sup>8-10</sup> Particularly for early transition metals, the “electron sink” properties of the chalcogenide cores associated with their structural and electronic

diversity established the interesting aspects of such complexes. In this regard, thio complexes of vanadium and molybdenum containing cyclopentadienyl ligands exhibited rich chemistry and interesting electronic properties.<sup>11-12</sup> Dinuclear cyclopentadienyl-molybdenum and rhenium complexes containing bridging sulfido and disulfido ligands such as  $[(\text{MeCp})_2\text{Mo}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)(\mu\text{-S})_2]$  ( $\text{Cp} = \eta^5\text{-C}_5\text{H}_5$ ) and  $[(\text{Cp}')_2\text{Re}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2]^{2+}$  ( $\text{Cp}' = \eta^5\text{-C}_5\text{Me}_4\text{Et}$ ) showed interesting structures and reactivity.<sup>13</sup> The facile reactivity of  $[\text{Cp}_2\text{Mo}_2\text{S}_4]$  towards  $\text{H}_2$  under ambient conditions yielded bis(hydrosulfide) complex  $[\text{Cp}_2\text{Mo}_2(\mu\text{-S})_2(\mu\text{-SH})_2]$ .<sup>14</sup> The reactions of alkenes or alkynes with  $[\text{Cp}_2\text{Mo}_2(\mu\text{-S})_2(\mu\text{-}\eta^2\text{-SH})_2]$  generated bis-dithiolate complexes with exciting structural aspects.<sup>15</sup> Also, the study of the structure and magnetic properties of the mixed-metal chalcogenide-containing clusters has been a topic of intense research interest for modelling the action of natural metallo-enzymes.<sup>16</sup> A significant effect of the chalcogen bridge atom on the magnetic properties of the cluster have been observed for antiferromagnetic homo- and heterochalcogenide complexes.<sup>17</sup>

Among the presently known metal-chalcogen complexes, group 6 metals are well explored, especially Mo and W.<sup>18a-e</sup> Apart from their importance in biology and catalysis,<sup>18f-h</sup> these complexes also demonstrated the presence of unique conformational isomers. Similar to group 6, binuclear complexes of group 5 are also known, albeit lesser number.<sup>19-20</sup> Not only structural point of view, unsupported  $\text{NbS}_3$  complexes containing  $\{\text{Nb}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)(\mu\text{-S})\}$  unit found its application as catalyst in thiophene hydrodesulfurization.<sup>21</sup> Binuclear sulfide complex  $(\text{Et}_4\text{N})_2[\text{Nb}_2\text{S}_4((\text{NCS})_6(\text{bipy}))]$  coordinated by diimine ligand revealed photocatalytic and optical limiting properties.<sup>22</sup> However, it is important to note that, although dinuclear complexes of early transition metals containing bridging sulfur ligands are well known, structurally characterized heavier chalcogen inserted cyclopentadienyl binuclear complexes are relatively less.

Apart from chalcogen powders or organo-chalcogenides,<sup>23-24</sup> we have established that the chalcogenated borohydrides can also be used as a potential reagent for the synthesis of binuclear chalcogen complexes along with dimetallaheteroboranes.<sup>25-27</sup> Hence, to extend this strategy for group 5 and 6 metals we have performed the reactivity of  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{CrCl}]_2$  and  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{MCl}_4]$  ( $\text{M} = \text{Mo}, \text{W}$  and  $\text{Nb}$ ) with  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{EPh})]$  ( $\text{E} = \text{S}$  and  $\text{Se}$ ). In this report, we describe the synthesis of various chalcogen-bridged binuclear complexes furnishing interesting structural aspects. In addition, theoretical studies have been performed on these molecules to elucidate their bonding nature.

## 2. Experimental

### 2.1 General considerations

All of the operations were conducted under an Ar/N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere by using standard Schlenk techniques or in a glove box. Solvents were distilled prior to use under Ar atmosphere. [LiBH<sub>4</sub>·THF], [Ph<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>] and [Ph<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>2</sub>] were used as received (Aldrich). [Cp\*CrCl]<sub>2</sub>,<sup>28</sup> [Cp\*MoCl<sub>4</sub>],<sup>29a</sup> [Cp\*WCl<sub>4</sub>],<sup>29b</sup> [Cp\*NbCl<sub>4</sub>],<sup>30</sup> Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(EPh)]<sup>26b</sup> (E = S or Se) and the external reference for <sup>11</sup>B NMR is [Bu<sub>4</sub>N(B<sub>3</sub>H<sub>8</sub>)]<sup>31</sup> were synthesized according to the literature methods available. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was carried out on 250- $\mu$ m diameter aluminum supported silica gel TLC plates (MERCK TLC Plates) to separate the reaction mixtures. The NMR spectra were recorded on 500 or 400 MHz Bruker FT-NMR spectrometer. Residual solvent protons were used as reference (CDCl<sub>3</sub>,  $\delta$  = 7.26 ppm, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>,  $\delta$  = 7.16 ppm), while a sealed tube that contained, [Bu<sub>4</sub>N(B<sub>3</sub>H<sub>8</sub>)] in [D<sub>6</sub>]-benzene ( $\delta_B$  = -30.07 ppm) was used as an external reference for the <sup>11</sup>B{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR analysis. Mass spectra were recorded with a BrukerMicroTOF-II mass spectrometer and Qtof Micro YA263 HRMS instrument in ESI ionization mode. Infrared spectra were recorded with a JASCO FT/IR-4100 spectrometer. Absorption spectra were recorded with Jasco V-650 UV/Vis spectrophotometers at 298 K.

### 2.2 Synthesis of 1-4

A suspension of [Cp\*CrCl]<sub>2</sub> (0.5 g, 1.12 mmol) in 10 mL toluene at -78 °C was charged dropwise with a freshly prepared solution of Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)] (2.24 mmol) over 15 min. The Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)] solution was prepared from the reaction of [Ph<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>2</sub>] with LiBH<sub>4</sub>·THF at ice cooled temperature. The reaction mixture was then stirred at room temperature for 20 hrs. The solvent was dried and the residue was extracted into *n*-hexane/CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> and passed through Celite. After removal of the solvent, the residue was subjected to chromatographic work-up by using TLC plates (*n*-hexane/CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 50:50 v/v) to yield complex [(Cp\*Cr)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -Se<sub>2</sub>SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **1** (0.078 g, 7%), as violet solid. Along with **1** few air and moisture sensitive complexes are also formed which we were unable to isolate.

Under the similar experimental conditions, treatment of Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)] (2.16 mmol) with [Cp\*MoCl<sub>4</sub>] (0.2 g, 0.54 mmol) and reaction of Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)] (1.72 mmol) with [Cp\*WCl<sub>4</sub>] (0.2 g, 0.43 mmol) for 4 hrs yielded [(Cp\*Mo)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -Se)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **2** (0.02 g, 8%) and [(Cp\*W)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -Se)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **3** (0.024 g, 10%) as blue and purple solids respectively.

Note that complexes **2** and **3** have been isolated along with the metallaborane [(Cp\*Mo)<sub>2</sub>B<sub>5</sub>H<sub>9</sub>], **4a**<sup>32a,b,d</sup> (0.008 g, 6%) and [(Cp\*W)<sub>2</sub>B<sub>5</sub>H<sub>9</sub>], **4b**<sup>32c,d</sup> (0.012 g, 8%).

**1:** MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>):  $m/z$  calculated for C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>41</sub>Cr<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>4</sub>: 844.4 [M-2Se+H]<sup>+</sup>, found: 844.7; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 7.52-6.87 (m, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 2.12 (s, 30H, Cp\*).

**2:** HR-MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>40</sub>Mo<sub>2</sub>KSe<sub>4</sub>: 978.7536 [M+K]<sup>+</sup>, found: 978.7532; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 7.01-6.89 (m, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 2.20 (s, 30H, Cp\*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 135.8-126.5 (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 110.8 (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>), 14.9 ppm (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>).

**3:** MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>40</sub>W<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>4</sub>: 1111.8 [M]<sup>+</sup>, found: 1111.8; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 6.99-6.89 (m, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 2.53 (s, 30H, Cp\*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 135.1-125.4 (s, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 107.1 (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>), 14.9 ppm (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>).

### 2.3. Synthesis of **5-7**

A suspension of [Cp\*<sup>+</sup>NbCl<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>] (0.5 g, 1.3 mmol) in 10 mL toluene at -78 °C was charged dropwise with a freshly prepared solution of Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SPh)], (5.4 mmol) over 15 min. The Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SPh)] solution was prepared from the reaction of [Ph<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>] with LiBH<sub>4</sub>·THF at ice cooled temperature. The reaction mixture was warmed to room temperature over 1 hour and then heated to 90 °C for 48 hrs. The solvent was dried and the residue was extracted in *n*-hexane and passed through Celite. After removal of the solvent, the residue was subjected to chromatographic work-up by using TLC plates (*n*-hexane/CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 70:30 v/v) to yield complex [(Cp\*<sup>+</sup>Nb)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -S<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], **5** (0.024 g, 6%) as orange solid. Under similar reaction conditions the treatment with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)], (5.4 mmol) yielded [(Cp\*<sup>+</sup>Nb)<sub>2</sub>( $\mu$ -Se<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], **6** (0.047 g, 9%) as purple solid.

Note that the complexes **5** and **6** have been isolated along with [(Cp\*<sup>+</sup>Nb)<sub>2</sub>(B<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], **7**<sup>33</sup> (0.027 g, 8%) and several air and moisture sensitive complexes which we were unable to isolate.

**5:** HR-MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>):  $m/z$  calcd. for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>31</sub>Nb<sub>2</sub>S<sub>4</sub>: 584.9436 [M+H]<sup>+</sup>, found 584.9451; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 2.07 (s, 30H, Cp\*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 111.0, (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>), 11.8 ppm (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>).

**6:** HR-MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>30</sub>KNb<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>4</sub>: 814.6773 [M+H]<sup>+</sup>, found 814.6790; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 2.26 (s, 30H, Cp\*), <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 22 °C):  $\delta$  = 111.3 (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>), 13.3 ppm (s, C<sub>5</sub>Me<sub>5</sub>).

### 2.4 X-ray structure determination

The crystal data for **1**, **3**, **5** and **6** were collected and integrated using a Bruker kappa apex II CCD diffractometer with graphite-monochromated MoK $\alpha$  ( $\lambda$  = 0.71073 Å) radiation at 296 K. The structures were solved by heavy atom methods using SHELXS-2016 and refined by using SHELXL-2016/SHELXL-2017 (Sheldrick, G.M., University of Göttingen).<sup>34</sup>

**Table1.** Crystal data and structural refinement for complexes **1**, **3**, **5** and **6**

	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
CCDC no.	1915156	1868351	1868348	1868349
Empirical formula	C <sub>32</sub> H <sub>40</sub> Cr <sub>2</sub> Se <sub>6</sub>	C <sub>32</sub> H <sub>40</sub> Se <sub>4</sub> W <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>30</sub> S <sub>4</sub> Nb <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>30</sub> Se <sub>4</sub> Nb <sub>2</sub>
Formula weight	1002.40	1108.18	584.50	772.10
Crystal system	Triclinic	Monoclinic	Triclinic	Triclinic
Space group	<i>P</i> -1	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> / <i>n</i>	<i>P</i> -1	<i>P</i> -1
<i>a</i> /Å	8.3131(11)	8.3913(9)	8.056(2)	8.100(2)
<i>b</i> /Å	9.5788(11)	13.7365(14)	8.565(2)	8.597(2)
<i>c</i> /Å	11.3227(15)	14.3308(14)	10.302(2)	10.254(2)
$\alpha$ /°	73.104(5)	90	105.954(5)	105.117(5)
$\beta$ /°	85.784(5)	105.642(2)	99.915(6)	100.801(6)
$\gamma$ /°	75.344(4)	90	110.982(6)	110.227(6)
Volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	834.63(19)	1590.7(3)	608.5(3)	615.7(3)
Z	1	2	1	1
$\rho_{\text{calc}}/\text{cm}^3$	1.994	2.314	1.595	2.082
$\mu/\text{mm}^{-1}$	7.214	11.823	1.288	6.846
F(000)	484	1032	296	368
2 $\theta$ range for data collection/°	2.533 to 54.984	4.184 to 56.666	5.474 to 52	5.398 to 56.612
Reflections collected	14944	29404	12243	12995
Independent reflections	3831	3976	12243	12995
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.026	1.046	1.066	1.056
Final R indexes [I $\geq$ 2 $\sigma$ (I)]	R <sub>1</sub> = 0.0776, wR <sub>2</sub> = 0.1689	R <sub>1</sub> = 0.0339, wR <sub>2</sub> = 0.0769	R <sub>1</sub> = 0.0792, wR <sub>2</sub> = 0.1756	R <sub>1</sub> = 0.0977; wR <sub>2</sub> = 0.2779

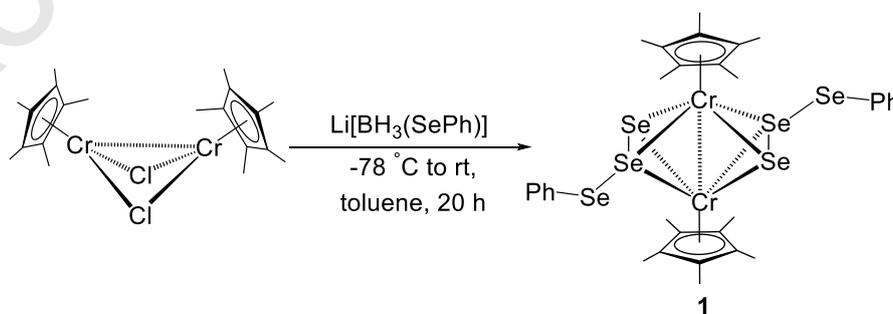
## 2.5 Computational details

The Quantum chemical calculations were performed on the simplified model complexes **1'**, **2'**, **3'**, **5'** and **6'** (Cp analogues of **1**, **2**, **3**, **5** and **6**) and **I-IV** using the Gaussian 09 program package.<sup>35</sup> Geometry optimization were conducted in the gaseous state (no solvent effect) without any symmetry constraints using the BP86<sup>36</sup> functional paired with a mixed basis set: Stuttgart/Dresden double- $\zeta$ (SDD) effective core potentials (ECPs)<sup>37</sup> for Nb, Ta, Mo and W; 6-31g\* basis set for the other atoms. The optimized geometries were characterized as true minima by using analytical frequency calculations. Wiberg bond indices (WBIs)<sup>38</sup> were obtained from a natural bond orbital (NBO)<sup>39</sup> analysis. All the optimized structures and orbital graphics were generated by using the Chemcraft.<sup>40</sup>

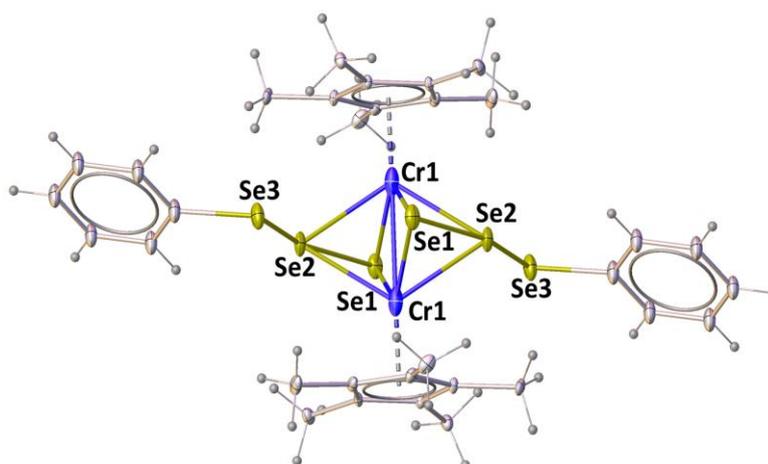
## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Reactivity of $[\text{Cp}^*\text{CrCl}]_2$ with $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{SePh})]$

From our recent studies, it was proved that  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{EPh})]$  (E = S, Se) is a potential reagent for the synthesis of metallachalcogenoboranes.<sup>25-27</sup> Among group 6 metals, the examples of chromium heteroborane complexes are very few.<sup>41</sup> In this context, we have performed the room temperature reaction of  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{CrCl}]_2$  with two equivalents of  $\text{Li}[\text{BH}_3(\text{SePh})]$  with an aim to synthesize dichromaselenaboranes. Surprisingly, the reaction led to the formation of a unique complex,  $[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Cr})_2(\mu\text{-Se}_2\text{SePh})_2]$ , **1** (Scheme 1). Complex **1** was isolated as violet crystals, which were characterized by  $^1\text{H}$ , mass spectrometry and by single crystal X-ray crystallography. The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum showed the presence of Cp\* and phenyl protons. The  $^{11}\text{B}$  NMR showed no  $^{11}\text{B}$  chemical shift confirming the absence of boron in **1**. Although the  $^{11}\text{B}$  NMR of the reaction mixture indicates formation of several metallaborane species, due to low yield and sensitive nature, their isolation could not be carried out. The mass spectrometric analysis of **1** shows molecular ion peaks at  $m/z$  844.7 which is equivalent to the mass of **1** minus two Se atoms. The complete structure of **1** is identified by single crystal X-ray crystallography as shown in Figure 1.



Scheme 1: Synthesis of **1**



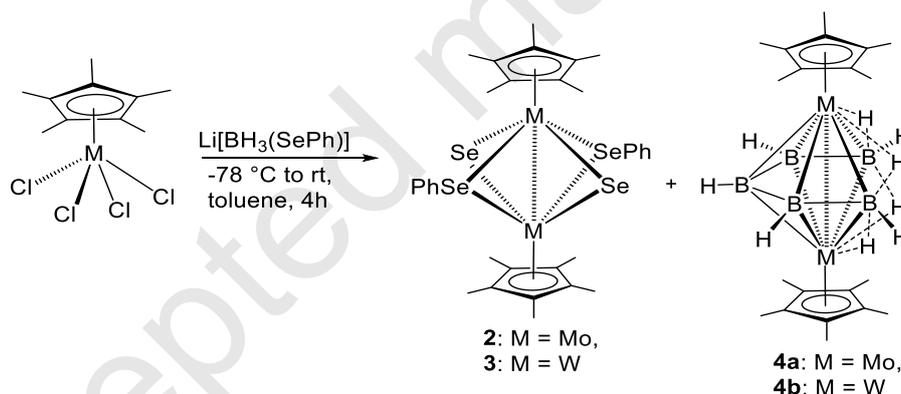
**Figure 1.** Molecular structure and labelling diagram for **1**. Selected bond distances (Å) and angle (°): Cr1-Cr1 2.588(2), Se1-Se2 2.6794(10), Se2-Se3 2.5065(11), Cr1-Se1 2.4211(13); Se1-Cr1-Se2 80.63(4), Cr1-Se2-Se3 111.30(4), Se1-Cr1-Cr1 57.76(5), Se2-Cr1-Cr1 58.40(4).

Single crystals of **1** was obtained by slow diffusion of hexanes into a dichloromethane solution. The X-ray diffraction analysis confirmed that **1** is a chalcogen-bridged bimetallic Cr complex with two  $[\text{Se}_2\text{SePh}]^{3-}$  units having close similarity with lanthanide-chalcogen cluster,  $[(\text{pyridine})_8\text{Yb}_4(\text{SeSe})_2(\text{Se})_2(\mu_2\text{-SPh})_2(\text{SPh})_2]$ .<sup>42</sup> Although triple bridged chalcogen stabilized binuclear complexes of chromium are known in literature,<sup>43</sup> quadruple bridged heavier chalcogen rich binuclear complexes of chromium like **1** are sporadic. The molecular structure of **1** is symmetrical and has a direct Cr-Cr bond (2.588 (2) Å), which is significantly shorter as compared to normal Cr-Cr single bond found in related binuclear complexes [2.950(2) Å for  $[\text{CpCr}(\mu\text{-SPh})(\text{NO})]_2$ ,<sup>44</sup> and 2.906(3) Å for  $[\text{Cp}_2\text{Cr}_2(\text{NO})_2(\mu\text{-SCMe}_3)(\mu\text{-S-SCMe}_3)]$ .<sup>45</sup> Based on the Cr-Cr bond distance, we assume that there lies a double bond character. The presence of Cr-Cr double bond has been earlier identified in  $[\{\text{CpCr}(\mu\text{-SPh})\}_2\text{S}]$ , a well-known binuclear chromium chalcogen complex that exhibited antiferromagnetic properties.<sup>45b</sup> The core geometry of  $\text{Cr}_2\text{Se}_4$  can also be considered as fusion of two tetrahedral ( $\text{Cr}_2\text{Se}_2$ ) through Cr-Cr edge. One of the interesting features of **1** is that two  $\text{SeSe}_2\text{Ph}$  units adopt perfectly symmetric disposition perpendicular to the metal-metal axis and parallel to  $\text{Cp}^*$  planes. The average bond angle for Cr1-Se2-Se3 is  $110.45^\circ$  and for Cr1-Se1/2-Cr1 is  $64.05^\circ$ . There are two different Se-Se bonds present in  $[\mu_2\text{-}\eta_2\text{-}\eta_2\text{-SeSeSePh}]^{3-}$ , Se(1)-Se(2) (2.6794(10) Å) and Se(3)-Se(2) (2.5065(11) Å). Although they are considerably longer than the usual Se-Se single bond,<sup>47</sup> they are comparable to those of  $[(\text{pyridine})_8\text{Yb}_4(\text{SeSe})_2(\text{Se})_2(\mu_2\text{-SPh})_2(\text{SPh})_2]$ .<sup>42</sup> The Cr metal centre follows 18e rule in **1** (6e from the metal, 5e from  $\text{Cp}^*$ , 1 each from the Se atom connected to

SePh and 3 from the other Se atoms). Moreover, the oxidation state of Cr is +4 due to the presence of anionic Cp\*<sup>-</sup> and [Se<sub>2</sub>SePh]<sup>3-</sup> ligands, making it as a d<sup>2</sup>-d<sup>2</sup> homo-bimetallic complex.

### 3.2. Reactivity of [Cp\**M*Cl<sub>4</sub>] (*M* = Mo, W) with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)]

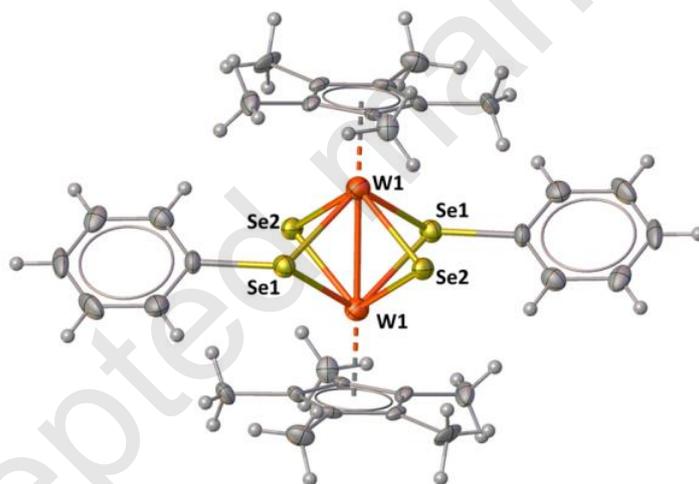
In an attempt to isolate analogous complex of **1** composed of heavier group 6 metals we have carried out the reaction of [Cp\**M*Cl<sub>4</sub>] (*M* = Mo and W) with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(SePh)]. Unexpectedly, the reaction did not form analogue of **1**, instead it led to the formation of similar kind of binuclear chalcogen clusters [(Cp\*Mo)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **2** and [(Cp\*W)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **3** (Scheme 2). Although chalcogen stabilized binuclear complexes of molybdenum are well known,<sup>18a</sup> structurally characterized diselenolato complexes of tungsten are scarce. In parallel to the formation of **2** and **3**, the reaction also yielded known [(Cp\**M*)<sub>2</sub>B<sub>5</sub>H<sub>9</sub>], **4a-b** (**4a**: *M* = Mo; **4b**: *M* = W).<sup>32</sup> The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of **2** and **3** show single peak at δ = 2.20 and 2.53 ppm respectively for the Cp\* ligand. The <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra also furnishes the presence of one kind of Cp\* ligand for these complexes. Based on the spectroscopic data along with mass spectrometric analysis, complex **2** was characterized as [(Cp\*Mo)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>], in comparison with earlier reported [(CpMo)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>].<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, complex **3** shows molecular ion peak at *m/z* = 1111.8 that indicates the formation of C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>40</sub>W<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>4</sub>.



**Scheme 2.** Synthesis of binuclear complexes **2-4**

The molecular structure of **3** has been unequivocally determined by X-ray diffraction analysis (Figure 2). The crystal structure of **3** envisions the molecule as a chalcogen-bridged binuclear complex stabilized in the coordination sphere of two μ-selenido and μ-selenolato ligands. The molecule possesses a crystallographic inversion symmetry consists of a linear Cp\*<sup>-</sup>-W-W-Cp\*<sup>-</sup> unit in which the π-bonded Cp\* ligands lies perpendicular to the W-W bond. The W-W bond length of 2.6595(5) Å is significantly shorter than in [W<sub>2</sub>(CO)<sub>4</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>6</sub>],<sup>47</sup> [W<sub>2</sub>(μ-S<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>6</sub>(SeCl<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>]<sup>48</sup> and [W<sub>2</sub>(μ-S<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(S<sub>2</sub>CNR<sub>2</sub>)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>2+</sup><sup>49</sup> However, it is found to be longer than those observed in [Cp\*WCl<sub>2</sub>(μ-H)]<sub>2</sub><sup>50</sup> and dithiolato-bridged complex of tungsten, [(Cp\*W)<sub>2</sub>(μ-S)(μ-η<sup>2</sup>-S<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>)].<sup>51</sup> The short W-W bond distance indicates a double bond interaction similar to Mo-

Mo double bond (2.653(2) Å) identified in [(CpMo)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>].<sup>46</sup> The short W–W distance is compatible with sharp acute W–S–W bite angles in the range of 61.79–64.53°. The W–W double bond is bridged across by two alternate pairs of monoselenido and phenylselenolato ligands. The W atoms lie in plane with both the Se1 (phenylselenolato bridge) atoms on one side and both Se2 (selenido bridge) on the other side with an interplanar angle of 84.36°. Short contacts between the Se atoms, Se1–Se2 (2.917 (1) and 3.218 (1) Å) are observed which are in between the sum of the van der Waal’s radius of two Se atoms (3.8 Å) indicating the existence of nonbonding interactions between the bridging Se atoms in **3**. The W–Se bond lengths differ to a significant extent that may be due to the coordination of bridging (μ-Se) and (μ-SePh) ligands to the metal centers. In case of bridging μ-selenido ligands, the W–Se bond distances lie in between 2.489–2.492 Å, comparable to W–Se distances observed in [(CpW)<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>].<sup>52</sup> However, the bond length increases when the metal centers are coordinated to μ-selenolato ligands that can be compared with [W<sub>2</sub>(CO)<sub>4</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>4</sub>(SePh)<sub>2</sub>].<sup>47</sup> All the W–Se bonds are much shorter than the sum of the covalent radii of W and Se (2.82 Å) indicating a stronger bonding interaction.



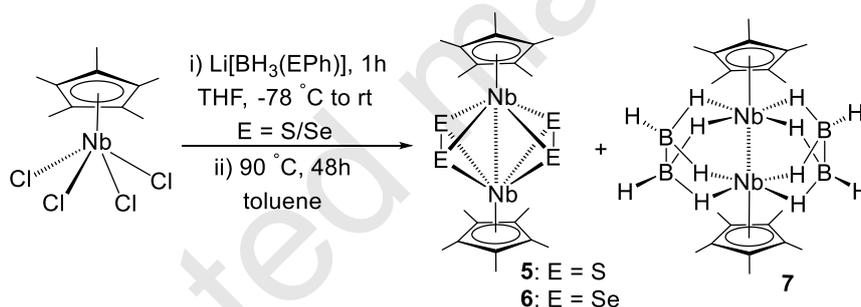
**Figure 2.** Molecular structure and labelling diagram of [(Cp\*W)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>], **3**. Selected bond distances (Å) and angle (°): W1–W1 2.6595(5), W1–Se2 2.4893(7), W1–Se1 2.5850(7); W1–Se1–W1 61.513(17), W1–Se2–W1 64.531(18) Se2–W1–Se1 78.08(2), Se1–W1–Se1 118.488(17).

The crystal structure further revealed that the complex **3** is a trans/anti isomer (Figure 2) with the similar ligands are trans to each other and the Ph group is in the anti-orientation with respect to the W<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>2</sub> (selenato) ring. The four-bridged atoms in the complex constitute a plane, which is parallel to the two substituted cyclopentadienyl ring planes and bisects the W–W vector perpendicularly. The molecule can also be visualized as a [W<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>4</sub>] paddle wheel like complex. Considering the two connected (μ-Se) and (μ-SePh) ligands as two and three electron donors, **3** displays a chalcogen-bridged 36-electron bimetallic-selenium complex (18e to each metal)

probably with the existence of the W-W double bond. On the other hand, taking the Cp\* ligands as monoanions and two diverse selenium ligands as dianions [Se<sup>2-</sup> and (SePh)<sup>2-</sup>], each of the W atoms possess a +IV oxidation state with d<sup>2</sup> configuration similar to complex **1**.

### 3.3. Reactivity of Cp\*NbCl<sub>4</sub> with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(EPh)] (E = S and Se)

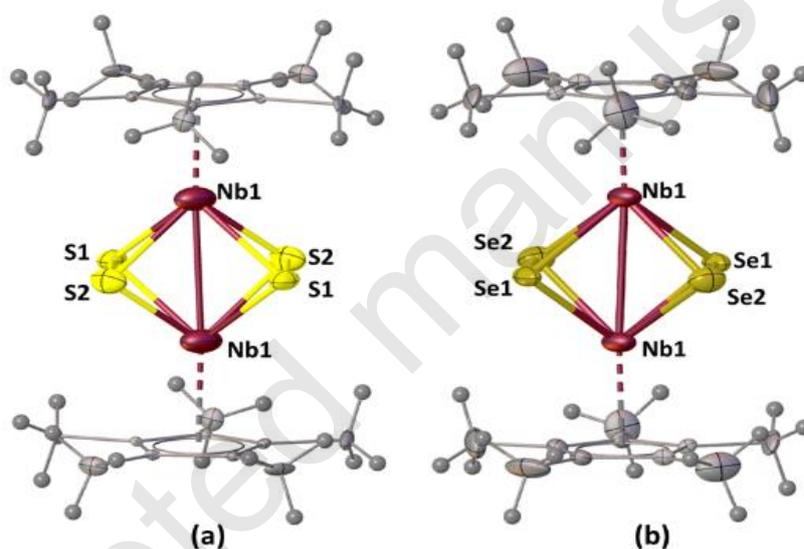
To extend the same approach to synthesize group 5 chalcogen complexes similar to **1-3**, we have carried out the reactivity of [Cp\*NbCl<sub>4</sub>] with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(EPh)] (E = S and Se). Thermolysis of [Cp\*NbCl<sub>4</sub>] with Li[BH<sub>3</sub>(EPh)] at 90°C afforded [(Cp\*Nb)<sub>2</sub>(μ-E<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], **5** and **6** (**5**: E = S and **6**: E = Se) (Scheme 3) in 6-9% yields along with the formation of known [(Cp\*Nb)<sub>2</sub>(B<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>)<sub>2</sub>],<sup>33</sup> **7**. It is important to mention that these reactions also yielded several air and moisture sensitive complexes which could not be isolated from the reaction mixture. Complexes **5** and **6** were characterized by spectroscopic as well as crystallographic analysis. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of both **5** and **6** show single peak at δ = 2.07 and 2.26 ppm for Cp\* ligand respectively, which in turn predicts the static symmetric structures. The <sup>13</sup>C NMR also supports the presence of one kind of Cp\* ligand for each of these complexes. In addition, the peak in the mass spectra at m/z = 584.9451 and 814.6790 for **5** and **6** respectively is consistent with their composition.



**Scheme 3** Synthesis of binuclear complexes **5-7**

To authorize the spectroscopic assignments and to elucidate the solid-state X-ray structures of **5** and **6**, X-ray diffraction structure analyses were performed. Single crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction studies of **5** and **6** were obtained from a hexane/CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution at -10°C that allowed structural interpretation. The molecular structures of these complexes shown in Figure 3a-b, can be depicted as chalcogen-bridged binuclear complexes where each metal is coordinated to a η<sup>5</sup>-Cp\* ligand and four μ-bridging chalcogen atoms (S/Se). Interestingly complexes **5** and **6** possess the central [Nb<sub>2</sub>(μ-E<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>] (E = S, Se) core, where the coordination between disulfur and diselenide ligands with the metal centers provides η<sup>2</sup>-η<sup>2</sup>-μ<sub>2</sub> coordination of acetylene type. Similar kind of coordination modes have been well explicated in [Nb<sub>2</sub>(μ-S<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(NCS)<sub>8</sub>]<sup>4-</sup> <sup>19a</sup> and [Nb<sub>2</sub>(μ-S<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>(H<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>8</sub>]<sup>4+</sup> <sup>19a</sup> complexes.

The calculated Nb-Nb bond distance of 2.780 Å in **5** is found to be considerably shorter than  $[\text{Nb}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2(\text{NCS})_8]^{4-}$  <sup>19a</sup> (2.913(2) Å),  $[\text{Nb}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_8]^{4+}$  <sup>19a</sup> (2.898(11) Å) and  $[\text{Nb}_2\text{S}_4(\text{Et}_2\text{NCS}_2)_4]$  (2.892(9) Å).<sup>53</sup> The Nb-Nb bond length gets elongated when S is substituted by Se in **5**. Nevertheless, the calculated Nb-Nb distance of 2.805 Å in **6** is considerably shorter as compared to the Nb-Nb distances having  $\text{Nb}_2\text{Se}_4$  core in  $[\text{Nb}_2\text{Se}_4(\text{Et}_2\text{NCS}_2)_4]^{54}$  and  $[\text{Nb}_2\text{Se}_4][\text{Te}_2\text{I}_6]_2$ .<sup>54</sup> In that context, some of the typical structural parameters of **5** and **6** have been compared with reported binuclear complexes owning similar structural core (Table 1), that shows significant difference in bond distances of **5** and **6** in presence of cyclopentadienyl ligands. The solid-state X-ray structures of **5** and **6** can also be represented as a paddle-wheel like complex comprising of  $[\text{Nb}_2\text{S}_4]$  and  $[\text{Nb}_2\text{Se}_4]$  in which all the four sulphur and the selenium atoms of the paddle are linked to the Nb metals.<sup>55</sup>



**Figure 3.** Molecular structure and labelling diagrams for **5** and **6**. Selected bond distances (Å) and angle (°): (a) **5**: S1-Nb1 2.481(14), S2-Nb1 2.304(17), S1-S2 2.39(3); S2-S1-Nb1 56.5(6), Nb1-S2-S1 63.8(5). (b) **6**: Nb1-Se2 2.439(5), Se1-Se2 2.364(10); Se2-Se1-Nb1 59.97(19), Se1-Se2-Nb1 63.0(2).

**Table 1.** Selected structural parameters of **5** and **6** with related binuclear complexes

Binuclear complexes	$d_{\text{Nb-Nb}}$ [Å]	$d_{\text{Nb-E}}$ [Å] <sup>a</sup>	$d_{\text{E-E}}$ [Å], (E = S, Se)	Ref.
$[\text{Nb}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2(\text{NCS})_8]^{4-}$	2.913	2.51	2.012	19a
$[\text{Nb}_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_8]^{4+}$	2.898	2.497	2.004	19a
$[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Nb})_2(\mu\text{-S}_2)_2]$ , <b>5</b>	2.780	2.398	2.386	b
$[(\text{Cp}^*\text{Nb})_2(\mu\text{-Se}_2)_2]$ , <b>6</b>	2.805	2.476	2.363	b

[Nb <sub>2</sub> S <sub>4</sub> (Et <sub>2</sub> NCS <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>4</sub> ]	2.892	2.564	2.033	53
[Nb <sub>2</sub> Se <sub>4</sub> (Et <sub>2</sub> NCS <sub>2</sub> ) <sub>4</sub> ]	2.974	2.639	2.303	54
[Nb <sub>2</sub> Se <sub>4</sub> ][Te <sub>2</sub> I <sub>6</sub> ] <sub>2</sub>	2.926	2.613	2.310	54

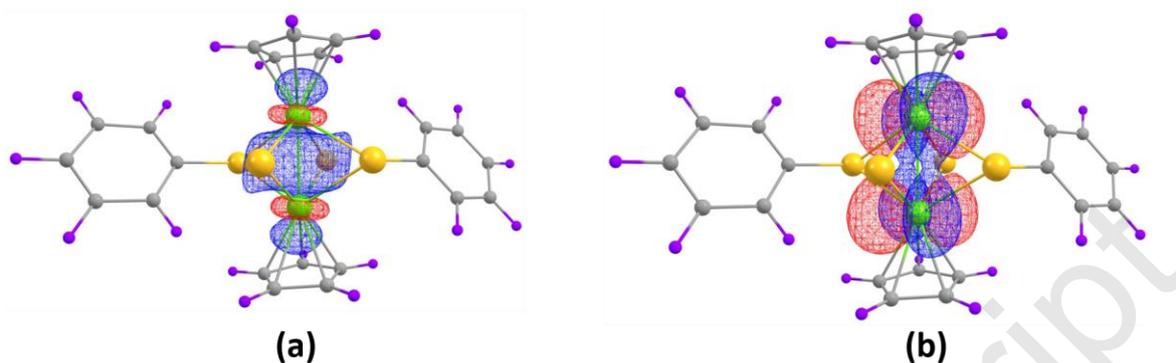
<sup>a</sup> average Nb-E distances; <sup>b</sup> this work.

### 3.4. Electronic structure analysis of complexes **1-3**, **5** and **6**:

Even though many structurally characterized metal-chalcogen complexes, similar to **1-3**, **5** and **6** are known, theoretical aspects of these complexes have not been explored to a significant extent to understand their bonding and electronic structure. Hence, in order to illustrate the electronic structure and bonding of **1-3** and **5-6**, the DFT studies were performed. The Cp analogues, **1'-3'**, **5'** and **6'** are optimized with BP86/SDD, 6-31g\* level of theory. The structure of **1** is slightly different from **2** and **3** even though the metals belong to same group. The bond parameters of **2** and **3** are in good agreement with the theoretical values (Table S1) whereas **1** is in moderate agreement. The M-M bond distance is slightly shortened and Se1-Se2 bond distance increased in the calculated structure, **1'**. In general, the energy gap between the frontier molecular orbitals (FMO) signifies the hardness / stability of the complexes. Here, the FMO analysis shows slightly higher HOMO (higher highest occupied molecular orbitals)-LUMO (lowest unoccupied molecular orbitals) energy gap for **2'** (2.30 eV) than **3'** (2.26 eV), where **1'** shows the least energy gap (2.04 eV), indicates their relative hardness or thermodynamic stability. Among the chalcogen analogues the hardness decreases in the order of S>Se>Te (Table S2). Furthermore, molecular orbitals show the accumulation of electron density of HOMO on metals and Se3 atoms in **1** and only on metals in **2** and **3** where in case of LUMO it is localized on both metals and Se1 in **1-3** (Figure S20).

The observed M-M bond distances of 2.51, 2.67 and 2.70 Å, in **1'**, **2'** and **3'** respectively signify a double bond. In addition, high WBI value of 0.77, 0.91 and 0.94 further elucidates the presence of a strong M-M bonding in **1'-3'** respectively. Further, the NBO analysis displays the existence of two M-M bond formed by d<sub>z</sub><sup>2</sup> σ bond and d<sub>(x<sup>2</sup>-y<sup>2</sup>)</sub> π bond with the occupancy of 1.47 and 1.09, 1.46 and 1.04 (Figure 4) and 1.51 and 0.82 respectively in **1'-3'** (Figures S21 and S22), consistent with the double bond. Surprisingly, the NBO and Wiberg bond index analysis shows a weak bonding between Se1-Se2 in **1** due to the elongation of bond, whereas two μ-Se ligands in **2** and **3** shows a bonding interaction even though they are far in distance, through a π-bond (Figure S23). Among the two different type of Se ligands, μ-Se and μ-SePh, the earlier one has stronger

bonding towards the metals than later in (Table S4). In case of **1** there is an additional strong covalent bond exist between Se2-Se3.



**Figure 4.** Molecular orbitals showing (a) Mo-Mo  $\sigma$  bond and (b)  $\pi$  bond in **2'**.

The optimized geometries of **5'** and **6'** appeared to be very different from that observed in the crystal structure. The E-E interaction (E = S, Se) in one of the  $E_2^{2-}$  unit became weaker to form two ( $\mu$ -E) units which results the entire bond parameters to be different from the crystallographic structures. These changes can be described as valence isomerization where Nb(III) is oxidised to Nb(IV) by oxidation of ( $\mu$ - $E_2$ ) $^{2-}$  to two ( $\mu$ -E) $^{2-}$  so that the final structure corresponded to  $[\text{Cp}^*_2\text{Nb}^{\text{IV}}_2\{(\mu\text{-}E_2)^{2-}\}\{(\mu\text{-}E)^{2-}\}_2]$  similar to the case of  $[\text{Cp}^*_2\text{Mo}^{\text{V}}_2(\mu\text{-}Se_3^{4-})_2]$  which optimized to  $[\text{Cp}^*_2\text{Mo}^{\text{III}}_2(\mu\text{-}Se_3^{2-})_2]$ .<sup>56</sup> That means that the structure of **5** and **6** are metastable with respect to **5'** and **6'**, but there must be a significant kinetic barrier for its conversion which can attribute to their isolation from a reaction under drastic reaction conditions. In literature, similar geometry as that of **5'** and **6'** is identified in the case of molybdenum chalcogen complex.<sup>14b</sup> In the optimized geometry of **5'** and **6'** the M-M bond gets even shorter that signify a partial double bond nature<sup>57</sup> which makes the complex a stable 18 electron species. The molecular orbital displaying M-M bonding interactions also suggest the existence of double bond (Figure S25). In addition, the Wiberg bond indices *ca.* 1 shows a very strong interaction between the metals in **5'** and **6'** (Table S4).

The molecular orbital study of **5'** and **6'** shows that the HOMO-LUMO energy gap increases in the order of **6'**<**5'**. Inspection of the electron density of the FMOs of **5'** and **6'** reveals that the HOMOs are mainly localized on the chalcogen atom and LUMOs are on metal atoms (Figure S24). Even though, the bond between one of the ( $\mu$ - $E_2$ ) $^{2-}$  is getting elongated, there is a special bonding interaction between them which is clearly visible in HOMO-11 (Figure S25). Natural charge analysis further displays the accumulation of more positive charge on Se atom in **6'** in

comparison with the S atom in **5'** that provides more donation of electron towards the metal. (Table S3).

### 3.5. UV-Vis absorption spectroscopic study of complexes **2**, **3**, **5** and **6**

In order to elucidate the colour associated with these complexes, the UV-Vis absorption spectra of complexes **2**, **3**, **5** and **6** were recorded in dichloromethane (Figure S18 and S19). (Unfortunately, we could not perform the UV-Vis absorption spectroscopy of **1** due to its highly sensitive behaviour in solution state, especially in chlorinated solvents. Complexes **2** and **3** show their absorption bands at 450, 586 and 769 and 415, 519 and 764 nm respectively. Complexes **5** and **6** show weak absorption band at about 314 and 358 nm respectively which corresponds to  $\pi$ - $\pi^*$  transition of the cyclopentadienyl ligands. In addition to that, low energy absorption bands at 483 and 500 nm have been identified which may be attributed to the significant intramolecular charge transfer interactions.

To understand the nature of the electronic transitions, we performed time-dependent DFT calculations of excitation energies (see Tables S5-S9 and Figure S26-S30). Even though we were unable to get the UV-Vis spectra of **1**, the theoretical calculated result shows peaks shifted to higher wavelength region of the UV-Vis spectral region (700-800 nm). The peaks mainly arise due to the excitation from HOMO-2 and HOMO-3 to LUMO indicates the LMCT (ligand to metal charge transfer) and intramolecular charge transfer from Se3 to Se1. The profile of the TD-DFT simulated absorption spectra of **2** and **3** agree well with experiment and thus allow assignment of the absorption bands. The strongest peak in the visible region (~586 and 519 nm) can be primarily assigned to the excitations from LMCT transition from nonbonding lone pairs on the bridging selenium atoms (HOMO-1) to predominantly metal-centered MOs (LUMO), in contrast the less intense excitations at 760 nm which is due to MLCT (metal to ligand charge transfer) from MO of metal (HOMO) to non-bonding Se orbital in LUMO. The weak absorption in the 410-450 nm is primarily related to transitions from the Se ligand non-bonding MOs (HOMO-7, HOMO-5) to metal orbitals of LUMO. As there is a difference between the experimental and theoretical calculated geometry of **5** and **6**, the exact comparison of electronic spectra was not possible. However, from the analysis it is well understood that the major contributing factor for the strong band around 400-500 nm is due to the LMCT.

## 4. Conclusions

This work describes a new synthetic strategy that enables us to isolate and characterize a series of chalcogen-bridged binuclear complexes of early transition metals. The crystal structures of the synthesized complexes represent three different types of chalcogen-bridged bimetallic complexes

of groups 5 and 6 metals, such as, [(Cp\*Nb)<sub>2</sub>(μ-E<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>] (E = S and Se), [(Cp\*Cr)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se<sub>2</sub>SePh)<sub>2</sub>] and [(Cp\*M)<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub>(μ-SePh)<sub>2</sub>] (M = Mo and W). In addition, combined theoretical and experimental studies ensure the presence of multiple bonds in these complexes.

### Supplementary Information (SI)

Supplementary data contains the X-ray crystallographic files in CIF format for **1**, **3**, **5** and **6** CCDC 1915156 (**1**), 1868351 (**3**) 1868348 (**5**) and 1868349 (**6**) for this work. These data can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via [www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\\_request/cif](http://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif). All additional information pertaining to characterization of the complexes **1-3**, **5** and **6** using ESI-MS technique and multinuclear NMR spectra, computational details are given in the Supplementary Information available at [www.ias.ac.in/chemsci](http://www.ias.ac.in/chemsci).

### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) (Project No. 01(2939)/18/emr-ii), New Delhi, India. DST-FIST, India, is gratefully acknowledged for the HRMS facility. M. B., R. P., M. G. C. and B. R are grateful to IIT Madras and C.N is grateful to DST-INSPIRE, India for fellowship. The computational facility of IIT Madras is gratefully acknowledged. We thank Dr. C. Ghosh for X-ray data collection and Dr. B. Varghese and Mr. V. Ramkumar for X-ray structure analysis.

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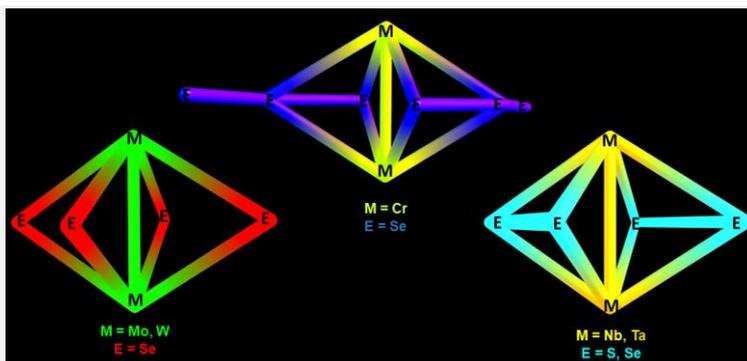
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**Syntheses and structures of  
chalcogen-bridged binuclear group  
5 and 6 metal complexes**

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The syntheses and structural characterizations of three chalcogen-bridged bimetallic complexes of group 5 and 6 metals, such as  $[(Cp^*Nb)_2(\mu-E)_2]$  (E = S and Se) (right),  $[(Cp^*Cr)_2(\mu-Se_2SePh)_2]$  (centre) and  $[(Cp^*M)_2(\mu-Se)_2(\mu-SePh)_2]$ , (M = Mo and W) (left) are reported.

Accepted manuscript