Reductive Cleavage of Sulfones and Sulfonamides by a Neutral Organic Super Electron-Donor (S.E.D.) Reagent

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Section 1. Experimental Procedures

General information

¹H NMR spectra were recorded at 400.13 MHz on a Bruker DPX400 spectrometer. ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded at 100.6 MHz using a broadband decoupled mode on the same spectrometer. JMOD and ¹³C-decoupled spectra were used to determine the multiplicities of the carbon resonances. Experiments were carried out using deuterochloroform (CDCl₃) unless otherwise stated and chemical shifts are reported in parts per million (ppm). Coupling constants *J* are reported in Hertz (Hz). The following abbreviations are used for the multiplicities: s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet; dd, double doublet; b, broad.

Infrared spectra were recorded on a Perkin Elmer "spectrum One FT-IR" spectrometer. Melting points were recorded using either a Griffin or a Gallenkamp melting point apparatus.

Mass spectrum analysis was carried out by the EPSRC national mass spectrometry service centre using a JLZX 102, VG ZAB-E or VG micromass instrument.

Column chromatography was performed using Prolabo 35-75 μ m particle sized silica gel 60 (200-400 mesh). Reactions were followed using thin layer chromatography (TLC) carried out on Merck silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ precoated aluminium plates. Visualisation was achieved under UVP mineralight UVG-11 lamp or by developing plates with methanolic vanillin or phosphomolybdic acid.

All reagents were obtained from commercial suppliers. Tetrahydrofuran, dichloromethane, hexane, diethyl ether and toluene were dried with a Pure-Solv 400 solvent purification system (by Innovative Technology Inc., USA). Dimethylformamide was obtained from commercial suppliers as anhydrous (99.98%) and used directly. Sodium hydride was supplied as a 60% suspension in mineral oil and was washed with hexane to remove the oil prior to use.

1,1-3,3-Bistrimethylene diimidazolium diiodide 2



A dry five litre three-necked flask, equipped with a mechanical stirrer and a condenser was charged with acetonitrile (4.0 litres), 1-[3-(1*H*-imidazol-1-yl)propyl]-1*H*-imidazole (2.002 g, 11.36 mmol, 1.0 eq) and 1,3-diiodopropane (3.361 g, 11.36 mmol, 1.0 eq). The mixture was heated at reflux for 24 h, and then another batch of starting materials (of same quantity) was added. One batch of starting material was added every 24 h. White precipitate appeared gradually. After 20 days, a total of 1-(3-(1*H*-imidazol-1-yl)propyl)-1*H*-imidazole (40.040 g, 227.2 mmol) and 1,3-diiodopropane (67.226 g, 227.2 mmol) had been added. The mixture was further heated at reflux for additional four days. The hot solution was decanted and acetonitrile was removed. The resulting solid was recrystallised from methanol to afford 1,1-3,3-bistrimethylene diimidazolium diiodide **2** (55 g, 51%) as white needles, mp 284 °C (dec.); (Found: $[M-I]^+$: 345.0569. C₁₂H₁₈I₂N₄ requires $[M-I]^+$, 345.0571); ν_{max} (disc, KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3051, 3032, 1560, 1454, 1166; δ_{H} (d₆-DMSO) 2.29-2.41 (2H, m, CH₂), 2.42-2.56 (2H, m, together with DMSO peak, CH₂), 4.43-4.48 (4H, m, 2 × CH₂), 4.58-4.65 (4H, m, 2 × CH₂), 7.65 (4H, s, ArH), 9.07 (2H, s, 2 × N=CH); δ_{C} (d₆-DMSO) 28.6 (CH₂), 49.2 (CH₂), 124.0 (CH), 138.9 (CH); m/z (ESI) 345 [(M-I)⁺, 9%), 217 (65), 109.0 (100).

1-(3-(1H-imidazol-1-yl)propyl)-1H-imidazole 3



A 250 ml Schlenk flask with a magnetic stirbar was flame-dried in vacuum, backfilled with argon and charged with 1,1-3,3-bistrimethylene diimidazolium diiodide 2 (10 g, 21.184 mmol, 1.0 eq). The salt was dried in vacuo at 100 °C for 2 h, then cooled to r.t., purged with argon gas and sodium hydride (6.779 g of 60% dispersion of NaH in mineral oil, 169.47 mmol, 8.0 eq) was added. The mixture was washed with dry hexane $(3 \times 80 \text{ ml})$ under an argon atmosphere and a dry ice condenser was attached to the flask. The residual hexane in the reaction mixture was removed under vacuum and the system was back-filled with argon gas. Ammonia (150 ml) was condensed into the flask while a steady flow of argon gas was maintained at all times during the course of the reaction. The suspension turned yellow, stirred and refluxed at r.t. for 2 h and left overnight at r.t. while the ammonia evaporated slowly. The system was continued to be purged with argon gas and the dry ice condenser was removed quickly. The flask was swiftly sealed and transported into a glove box containing a nitrogen atmosphere (oxygen and moisture levels were maintained at 0-2 ppm at all times). The flask was opened inside the glove box and the yellow solid mixture was extracted with dry ether (3 \times 80 ml, deoxygenated). The yellow suspension was filtered and the filtrate was evaporated under reduced pressure by distillation to afford a yellow solid. This was dried in vacuo to afford 1-(3-(1H-imidazol-1-yl)propyl)-1H-imidazole 3 (4.47 g, 98%) as a yellow solid which was stored under nitrogen; $\delta_{\rm H}$ (C₆D₆) 1.38-1.43 (4H, m, 2 × CH₂), 2.43-2.45 (8H, m, $4 \times CH_2$), 5.48 (4H, s, $4 \times = CH$); δ_C (C₆D₆) 31.5 (CH₂), 54.4 (CH₂), 120.4 (C), 127.6 (CH); AAS analysis: 0.005 mg of Na in 100.0 mg of 1-(3-(1H-imidazol-1-yl)propyl)-1Himidazole 3 (0.047 mol%), analysed by AAnalyst 200 Atomic Absorption Spectrometer, PerkinElmer instruments. The spectroscopic data of 3 were consistent with those reported in the literature.¹

General Procedure for the reductions of sulfones

Salt 2 (425 mg, 0.9 mmol, 3.0 equiv.) was heated at 110°C for 1h under vacuum in a centrifuge tube, then cooled to room temperature and sodium hydride (60% suspension with mineral oil, 288 mg, 7.2 mmol, 24.0 equiv.) was added under argon atmosphere. This mixture was then washed with hexane (2 x 20 ml) and subsequently dried under argon. Dry DMF (15 ml) was deoxygenated with argon for 20 min and then added dropwise to the salt/ sodium hydride residue. This mixture was stirred for 4h at room temperature under argon and then exposed to centrifugation. The resulting supernatant liquid was transferred *via* cannula to the particular sulfone substrate (0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv) [dried beforehand under vacuum at room temperature for 3 h]. The reaction mixture was heated at 110°C for 18 h under argon atmosphere. After allowing to cool to room temperature the reaction mixture was poured into water (20 ml). The aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 ml) and the combined organic layer was then washed with water (4 x 20 ml) and brine (20 ml), dried over sodium sulfate and removed *in vacuo*. The residue was purified by column chromatography.

General procedure for the reductions of sulfonamides

Salt 2 (850 mg, 1.8 mmol, 6.0 equiv.) was heated at 110°C for 1h under vacuum in a centrifuge tube, then cooled to room temperature and sodium hydride (60 % suspension with

mineral oil, 576 mg, 14.4 mmol, 48.0 equiv.) was added under argon atmosphere. This mixture was then washed with hexane (2 x 20 ml) and subsequently dried under argon. Dry DMF (15 ml) was deoxygenated with argon for 20 min and then added dropwise to the salt/ sodium hydride residue. This mixture was stirred for 4 h at room temperature under argon and then exposed to centrifugation. The resulting supernatant liquid was transferred *via* cannula to the particular sulfonamide substrate (0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) [dried beforehand under vacuum at room temperature for 3 h]. The reaction mixture was heated to 110°C for 18 h under argon atmosphere [4 h for sulfonamide **24**]. The DMF was evaporated and the resulting residue dissolved in water (20 ml) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 ml). The combined organic layer was dried over Na₂SO₄ and removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography.

3-Methyl-1-phenyl-3-(phenylsulfonyl)-1-butene 5²



3-Methyl-1-phenyl-3-(phenylsulfonyl)-1-butene **5** was synthesised according to the procedure reported by Jonczyk and Radwan-Pytlewski;² the data were consistent with those reported.

1,1-Diphenyl-1-(phenylsulfonyl)ethane 6

Stage (1) Phenyl-(1,1-diphenylethyl)sulfane³

Thiophenol (1.71 ml, 16.6 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) and perchloric acid (70%, 0.1 ml) were added to a dry flask under argon and the mixture was cooled to 0°C. To this, diphenylethylene (2.45 ml, 13.8 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was added dropwise at 0°C and the reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at room temperature. Benzene (100 ml) was then added to the reaction mixture, followed by sodium hydroxide solution (5%). The organic layer was separated and dried over sodium sulfate. The solvent was subsequently removed and the residue was recrystallised from hexane. Phenyl-(1,1-diphenylethyl)sulfane³ was obtained as a white solid (3.44 g, 86%); mp 145-148°C (lit.³ 148-149°C); (Found: $[M-H]^+$ 289.1043. C₂₀H₁₇S (M – H) requires $[M-H]^+$, 289.1045); (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3057 (Ar-H), 3019 (Ar-H), 2965 (C-H), 2923 (C-H), 1590 (Ar), 1535 (Ar); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 2.14 (3H, s, CH₃), 7.26-7.28 (4H, m, ArH), 7.37-7.47 (7H, m, ArH), 7.60-7.62 (4H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 30.5 (CH₃), 59.8 (C), 126.8 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 132.7 (C), 136.7 (CH), 146.5 (C); *m/z* [CI (CH₄)] 289 ([M-H]⁺, 2%), 209 (9), 181 (100), 103 (3).

Stage (2)

Phenyl-(1,1-diphenylethyl)sulfane (1.04 g, 3.58 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in dichloromethane (10 ml) under argon. A solution of 3-chloroperbenzoic acid (77 %, 3.7 g, 21.49 mmol, 6.0 equiv.) in dichloromethane (30 ml) was then added dropwise under argon while cooling to 0°C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and was stirred overnight. The reaction mixture was filtered and the solution was washed with

PhS Ph

aqueous sodium hydroxide solution (3 x 30 ml) and brine (30 ml). The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, filtered and evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography (50:50 petroleum ether/ dichloromethane, then 100:0 dichloromethane) to give 1,1-diphenyl-1-(phenylsulfonyl)ethane⁴ **6** as a white solid (1.13 g, 98 %); mp 171-172°C (lit.⁴ 174-175°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 340.1366. C₂₀H₂₂NO₂S requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 340.1366); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3058 (Ar-H), 2999 (C-H), 1497 (Ar), 1445 (C-H), 1293 (SO₂), 1128 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 2.12 (3H, s, CH₃), 7.23-7.34 (10H, m, ArH), 7.45-7.48 (1H, m, ArH), 7.53-7.55 (4H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 26.5 (CH₃), 75.6 (C), 128.5 (CH), 130.0 (CH), 130.7 (CH), 133.6 (CH), 137.1 (C), 139.7 (C); *m/z* (CI) 340 ($[M+NH_4]^+$, 7%), 200 (4), 181 (100), 160 (6), 94 (5), 52 (7).

1,1-Dimethyl-3-phenylpropyl phenyl sulfone 7



A solution of 3-phenylpropyl phenyl sulfone (1.00 g, 3.80 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in THF (40 ml) was cooled to -78 °C and *n*-butyl lithium (1.6 ml, 4.18 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) was added dropwise and the resulting mixture was stirred at -78 °C for 1h. Methyl iodide (0.36 ml, 5.70 mmol, 1.5 equiv.) was then added dropwise at -78 °C and the mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 16 h. Ethyl acetate and a saturated aqueous NH₄Cl solution were added and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phases were combined and washed with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and evaporated. The residue was filtered on silica gel (50:45:5 petroleum ether/ dichloromethane/ ethyl acetate) to give 1-methyl-3-phenylpropyl phenyl sulfone as a white solid which was used in the next step without any further purification.

A solution of 1-methyl-3-phenylpropyl phenyl sulfone (874 mg, 3.20 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in THF (30 ml) was cooled to -78 °C and *n*-butyl lithium (1.5 ml, 3.50 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) was added dropwise and the resulting mixture was stirred at -78 °C for 1h. Methyl iodide (0.3 ml, 4.80 mmol, 1.5 equiv.) was added dropwise and the mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 16 h. Ethyl acetate and a saturated aqueous NH₄Cl solution were added, and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phases were combined, washed with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and evaporated. The residue was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel (80:20 petroleum ether/ ethyl acetate) to give 1,1-dimethyl-3-phenylpropyl phenyl sulfone⁵ 7 as a white solid (614 mg, 56 % over 2 steps); mp 96-98°C (lit.⁵ 98.5-99°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 306.1523. $C_{17}H_{24}NO_2S$ requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 306.1522); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3064 (Ar-H), 3022 (Ar-H), 2988 (Ar-H), 1289 (SO₂), 1134 (SO₂); δ_H (CDCl₃) 1.49 (6H, s, CH₃), 2.05-2.15 (2H, m, CH₂), 2.75-2.85 (2H, m, CH₂), 7.27 (2H, d, J 7.0, ArH), 7.29 (1H, t, J 7.4, ArH), 7.38 (2H, dd, J 7.4, 7.0, ArH), 7.65 (2H, dd, J 7.8, 7.4, ArH), 7.74 (1H, t, J 7.4, ArH), 7.99 (2H, d, J 7.8, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 21.4 (CH₃), 30.9 (CH₂), 37.6 (CH₂), 63.5 (C), 126.7 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 131.0 (CH), 134.1 (CH), 136.0 (C), 141.7 (C); *m/z* (CI) 306 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 100 %), 202 (3), 164 (3), 108 (2), 52 (4); Microanalysis (%) : calculated C = 70.80, H = 6.99, S = 11.12 ; found C = 70.99, H = 7.11, S = 11.15.

1-(3-Methylbut-2-enyl)benzene 8

Starting material: 1-[2-Methyl-4-phenylbut-3-en-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene **5** (84 mg, 0.293 mmol). The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (hexane) to give 1-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)benzene⁶ **8** as a colourless liquid (33.8 mg, 79 %); (Found: M⁺ 146.1088. C₁₁H₁₄ requires M^+ , 146.1090); v_{max} (NaCl)/cm⁻¹ 3063 (Ar-H), 3028 (Ar-H), 2925 (C-H), 1603 (Ar), 1494 (C-H), 1452 (C-H); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.81 (3H, s, CH₃), 1.83 (3H, s, CH₃), 3.43 (2H, d, *J* 7.3, PhCH₂), 5.40-5.44 (1H, m, CH), 7.23-7.27 (3H, m, ArH), 7.32-7.42 (2H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 25.9 (CH₃), 34.5 (CH₂), 123.4 (CH), 125.9 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 132.7 (C), 142.1 (C); *m/z* (EI) 146 (M⁺, 8 %), 131 (12), 91 (48), 57 (63), 41 (100).

Reaction of 1-[2-methyl-4-phenylbut-3-en-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene 5 in DMF (a blank experiment conducted to test if substrate 5 could undergo spontaneous dissociation or elimination in the absence of donor 3)



1-[2-Methyl-4-phenylbut-3-en-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene **5** (85.8 mg, 0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in anhydrous DMF (15 ml) and the mixture was heated at 110°C for 18 h. After cooling to room temperature the mixture was poured into water (20 ml). The aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 ml) and the combined organic layer was washed with water (3 x 20 ml) and brine (20 ml). The organic layer was then dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated. ¹H-NMR of this crude mixture showed only starting material **5**.

1,1-Diphenylethane 9



Starting material: 1,1-Diphenyl-1-(phenylsulfonyl)ethane **6** (96.7 mg, 0.3 mmol). The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (5:95 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give 1,1-diphenylethane⁷ **9** as a colourless liquid (53 mg, 97 %); (Found: M⁺ 182.1091. C₁₄H₁₄ requires M^+ , 182.1090); ν_{max} (NaCl)/cm⁻¹ 3061 (Ar-H), 3026 (Ar-H), 2967 (C-H), 2930 (C-H), 1493 (C-C), 1450 (C-H); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.74 (3H, d, J 7.2, CH₃), 4.25 (1H, q, J 7.2, CH), 7.24-7.39 (10H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 22.1 (CH₃), 45.0 (CH), 126.2 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 146.6 (C); *m/z* (EI) 182 (M⁺, 89 %), 167 (100), 152 (52), 77 (48), 51 (34).

Reaction of 1,1-diphenyl-1-(phenylsulfonyl)ethane 6 with NaI in DMF (a blank experiment conducted to test if substrate 6 could undergo spontaneous dissociation or elimination in the absence of donor 3)

$$\frac{Me}{PhO_2S} \xrightarrow{Ph}_{Ph}$$
 NaI, DMF no reaction

Sodium iodide (269.6 mg, 1.8 mmol, 6.0 equiv.) was dried under vacuum and 130° C for 6 h and then cooled to room temperature. A solution of 1,1-diphenyl-1-(phenylsulfonyl)ethane **6** (96.7 mg, 0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in dry DMF (15 ml) was added under argon and the reaction mixture was heated at 110°C for 18 h. After cooling to room temperature the mixture was poured into water (20 ml). The aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 ml) and the combined organic layer was washed with water (3 x 20 ml) and brine (20 ml). The organic

layer was then dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated. ¹H-NMR of this crude mixture showed only starting material **6**.

Reaction of 1,1-dimethyl-3-phenylpropyl phenylsulfone 7 with donor 3



The reaction was carried out as stated in the general procedure. ¹H-NMR of the crude mixture showed only starting material **7**; the reaction did not proceed.

1-[2-(Phenylsulfonyl)propan-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene 10

$$\begin{array}{c}
 Me \\
 PhO_2S \\
 SO_2Ph \\
 10
\end{array}$$

1-[2-(Phenylsulfonyl)propan-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene **10** was synthesised according to the analogous procedure reported by Brown *et al.*;⁸ mp 189-190°C (lit.⁹ 187-188°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 342.0829. C₁₅H₂₀NO₄S₂ (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 342.0829); (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3095 (Ar-H), 3073 (Ar-H), 2986 (C-H), 1582 (Ar), 1448 (C-H), 1327 (SO₂), 1144 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.74 (6H, s, CH₃), 7.59-7.63 (4H, m, ArH), 7.71-7.75 (2H, m, ArH), 8.02-8.04 (4H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 19.6 (CH₃), 84.0 (C), 129.1 (CH), 131.5 (CH), 134.8 (CH), 136.2 (C); *m*/*z* (CI) 342 ($[M+NH_4]^+$, 23 %), 219 (4), 202 (100), 151 (3), 94 (3), 78 (4), 52 (6).

1,1-Diphenylsulfonylcyclopentane 11



1,4-Diiodobutane (1.00 ml, 7.50 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was added dropwise to a stirred suspension of *bis*(phenylsulfonyl)methane (2.31 g, 7.50 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), potassium carbonate (5.0 g, 37.5 mmol, 5.0 equiv.) in DMSO (15.0 ml). The suspension was stirred at room temperature under argon atmosphere for 16 h. Water and diethyl ether were added, the aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether. The combined organic layer was washed with water/brine 1/1 (2 x), with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and the solvent evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel (50:45:5 petroleum ether/ dichloromethane/ diethyl ether) to obtain *1,1-diphenylsulfonylcyclopentane* **11** as a white solid (2.45 g, 93.0 %); mp 136-140°C; (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 368.0989. C₁₇H₂₂NO₄S₂ ((MNH₄)) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 368.0985); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3063 (Ar-H), 2954 (C-H), 2872 (C-H), 1446 (C-H), 1308 (SO₂), 1142 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.70-1.80 (4 H, m, CH₂), 2.45- 2.55 (4 H, m, CH₂), 7.58-7.62 (4H, m, ArH), 7.71 (2H, t, *J* 7.5, ArH), 8.07-8.09 (4H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 27.2 (CH₂), 33.4 (CH₂), 94.2 (C), 129.2 (CH), 131.8 (CH), 135.0 (CH), 137.2 (C); *m/z* (CI) 368 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 19 %), 228 (100), 52 (3); Microanalysis (%) : calculated C = 58.26, H = 5.18, S = 18.30; found C = 58.17, H = 4.91, S = 18.17.

1-Phenyl-3,3-bis(phenylsulfonyl)butane 12



Stage (1) 1-Phenyl-3-(phenylsulfonyl)propane

A solution of 1-bromophenylpropane (2.00 ml, 12.4 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and sodium benzenesulfinate (2.50 g, 14.9 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) in absolute ethanol (100 ml) was refluxed under an argon atmosphere for 16 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and concentrated *in vacuo*. Water was added and the aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether. The organic phases were combined and washed with water, brine, dried over Na₂SO₄ and filtered. After evaporation of the solvent the residue was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel (100:0 dichloromethane) to give 1-phenyl-3-(phenylsulfonyl)-propane¹⁰ as a white solid (1.16 g, 36 %); the spectroscopic data were consistent with those reported in the literature.¹⁰

Stage (2)



Sodium hydride (220 mg, 5.5 mmol, 11.0 equiv.) was added to a mixture of bis(phenylsulfonyl)methane (1.54 g, 5.00 mmol, 10.0 equiv.) and ammonium iodide (185 mg, 0.50 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in dry THF (50 ml) under argon atmosphere. The resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 10 min and then heated at reflux for 2 h. After cooling the reaction mixture to room temperature, (2-bromoethyl)benzene (0.76 ml, 5.5 mmol, 11.0 equiv.) was added dropwise and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 16 h. Ethyl acetate and saturated aqueous NH₄Cl solution were added and the aqueous laver was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phases were combined and washed with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and the solvent evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using dichloromethane to obtain 1,1bis(phenylsulfonyl)-3-propane⁸ as a white solid (1.79 g, 89.0 %); mp 137-140°C (lit.⁸ 139-140°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 418.1138. $C_{21}H_{24}NO_4S_2$ requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 418.1141); ν_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3064 (Ar-H), 3027 (Ar-H), 2918 (C-H), 1343 (SO₂), 1163 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 2.45-2.55 (2H, m, CH₂), 2.99 (2H, t, J 7.4, CH₂), 4.40 (1H, t, J 5.7, CH), 7.09 (2H, d, J 7.8, ArH), 7.2-7.35 (3H, m, ArH), 7.60 (4H, dd, J 8.1, 7.4, ArH), 7.74 (2H, t, J 7.4, ArH), 7.92 (4H, d, J 8.1, ArH); δ_H (CDCl₃) 27.5 (CH₂), 33.7 (CH₂), 82.1 (CH), 127.2 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 130 (CH), 135.0 (CH), 138.4 (C), 139.2 (C); *m/z* (CI) 418 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 12 %), 278 (100), 186 (6).

Stage (3)

Sodium hydride (165 mg, 4.12 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) was added to a solution of 1,1bis(phenylsulfonyl)-3-phenylpropane (1.50 g, 3.74 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in THF (50 ml) under argon atmosphere. The resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 min. Methyl iodide (0.30 ml, 4.86 mmol, 1.3 equiv.) was added dropwise, and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature for 16 h. Ethyl acetate and saturated aqueous NH₄Cl solution were added and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phases were combined and washed with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and evaporated. The residue was purified by flash chromatography on silica gel (100:0 dichloromethane) to give 1-phenyl-3,3-bis(phenylsulfonyl)butane¹⁰ 12 as a white solid (1.46 g, 94 %); mp 121-124°C (lit.¹⁰ 127-129°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 432.1299. C₂₂H₂₆NO₄S₂ requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 432.1298); ν_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3063 (Ar-H), 3031 (Ar-H), 3000 (Ar-H), 2978 (C-H), 2937 (C-H), 2875 (C-H), 1307 (SO₂), 1141 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.85 (3H, s, CH₃), 1.35-1.45 (2H, m, CH₂), 2.90-3.00 (2H, m, CH₂), 7.13 (2H, d, J 6.9, ArH), 7.21 (1H, t, J 7.3, ArH), 7.25-7.35 (2H, m, ArH), 7.61 (4H, dd, J 8.1, 7.4, ArH), 7.73 (2H, t, J 7.4, ArH), 8.06 (4H, dd, J 8.4, 1.2, ArH); δ_C (CDCl₃) 17.6 (CH₃), 30.8 (CH₂), 33.9 (CH₂), 88.0 (C), 126.9 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 131.8 (CH), 135.1 (CH), 137.0 (C), 140.9 (C); *m/z* (CI) 432 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 8 %), 292 (100), 202 (9), 166 (10).

1,11-Diphenyl-6,6-bis(phenylsulfonyl)undecane 13



1-Iodo-5-phenylpentane (495 mg, 1.81 mmol, 2.0 equiv.), bis(phenylsulfonyl)methane (268 mg, 0.903 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and potassium carbonate (624 mg, 4.515 mmol, 5.0 equiv.) were dissolved in dimethyl sulfoxide (15 ml) under argon and stirred at room temperature for 5 d. The mixture was then poured into water (50 ml) and the aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 50 ml). The combined organic layer was washed with water (3 x 50 ml), brine (50 ml), dried over sodium sulfate, filtered and evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography (10:10:80 ethyl acetate/ toluene/ petroleum ether) to give 1,11diphenyl-6,6-bis(phenylsulfonyl)undecane 13 as a colourless oil (324 mg, 61 %); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 606.2706. $C_{35}H_{44}NO_4S_2$ requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 606.2702); v_{max} (NaCl)/cm⁻¹ 3060 (Ar-H), 3025 (Ar-H), 2928 (C-H), 1447 (C-H), 1327 (SO₂), 1144 (SO₂); δ_H (CDCl₃) 1.34-1.43 (4H, m, CH₂), 1.69-1.77 (8H, m, CH₂), 2.22-2.28 (4H, m, CH₂), 2.68 (4H, t, J 7.5, CH₂), 7.25-7.30 (6H, m, ArH), 7.36-7.40 (4H, m, ArH), 7.57-7.61 (4H, m, ArH), 7.72-7.75 (2H, m, ArH), 8.08-8.11 (4H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 23.5 (CH₂), 28.6 (CH₂), 29.7 (CH₂), 30.9 (CH₂), 35.7 (CH₂), 92.8 (C), 125.9 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 131.1 (CH), 134.5 (CH), 137.3 (C), 142.3 (C); m/z (CI) 606 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 8%), 465 (44), 325 (25), 160 (23), 126 (48), 108 (78), 94 (100), 78 (81).

Isopropylsulfonylbenzene 14



Starting material: 1-[2-(Phenylsulfonyl)propan-2-ylsulfonyl]benzene **10** (95 mg, 0.292 mmol).

The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (10:90 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give isopropylsulfonylbenzene¹¹ **14** as a colourless oil (52 mg, 97 %); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 202.0896. C₉H₁₆NO₂S (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$,

202.0896); ν_{max} (NaCl)/cm⁻¹ 3066 (Ar-H), 2938 (C-H), 1447 (C-H), 1305 (SO₂), 1144 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.27 (6H, d, *J* 6.9, CH₃), 3.18 (1H, septet, *J* 6.9, CH), 7.53-7.57 (2H, m, ArH), 7.62-7.67 (1H, m, ArH), 7.86-7.88 (2H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 15.9 (CH₃), 55.7 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 133.8 (CH), 137.2 (C); *m*/*z* (EI) 184 (*M*⁺, 4 %), 142 (49), 78 (100), 51 (97).

1-[3-(Phenylsulfonyl)butyl]benzene 16

$$Me$$
 Pr
 $O=S=O$
Ph
16

Starting material: 1-Phenyl-3,3-bis(phenylsulfonyl)butane **12** (124 mg, 0.3 mmol). The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (10:90 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give *1-(3-(phenylsulfonyl)butyl)benzene* **16** as a colourless oil (80.6 mg, 98 %); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 292.1365 C₁₆H₂₂NO₂S (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 292.1366); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3063 (Ar-H), 3028 (Ar-H), 2981 (C-H), 2936 (C-H), 2867 (C-H), 1603 (Ar C=C), 1585 (Ar C=C), 1304 (SO₂), 1146 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.32 (3H, d, *J* 6.9, CH₃), 1.65-1.78 (1H, m, CH₂), 2.27-2.36 (1H, m, CH₂), 2.56-2.64 (1H, m, ArCH₂), 2.78-2.86 (1H, m, ArCH₂), 2.99-3.08 (1H, m, CHSO₂), 7.09-7.12 (2H, m, ArH), 7.18-7.29 (3H, m, ArH), 7.52-7.57 (2H, m, ArH), 7.63-7.67 (1H, m, ArH), 7.83-7.86 (2H, m, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 13.4 (CH₃), 30.9 (CH₂), 32.7 (CH₂), 59.3 (CH), 126.5 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 133.7(CH), 137.5 (C), 140.3 (C); *m/z* (EI) 274 ([M]⁺, 4%), 132 (95), 117 (85), 91 (100), 77 (80).

1,11-Diphenyl-6-(phenylsulfonyl)undecane 17



Starting material: 1,11-Diphenyl-6,6-*bis*(phenylsulfonyl)undecane **13** (122 mg, 0.207 mmol). The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on gel (20:80 ethyl give 1,11-diphenyl-6acetate/ petroleum ether) to silica (phenylsulfonyl)undecane 17 as a colourless oil (87 mg, 94 %); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 466.2774. $C_{29}H_{40}NO_2S$ (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 466.2774); v_{max} (NaCl)/cm⁻¹ 3061 (Ar-H), 3026 (Ar-H), 2931 (C-H), 2857 (C-H), 1603 (Ar), 1447 (C-H), 1303 (SO₂), 1144 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 1.36-1.51 (6H, m, CH₂), 1.51-1.60 (2H, m, CH₂), 1.62-1.73 (6H, m, CH₂), 1.90-1.98 (2H, m, CH₂), 2.69 (4H, t, J 7.6, CH₂Ph), 2.97-3.00 (1H, m, SO₂CH), 7.25-7.31 (6H, m, ArH), 7.36-7.41 (4H, m, ArH), 7.63-7.67 (2H, m, ArH), 7.27-7.76 (1H, m, ArH), 7.97-7.99 (2H, m, ArH); δ_{C} (CDCl₃) 26.8 (CH₂), 28.0 (CH₂), 29.2 (CH₂), 31.1 (CH₂), 35.9 (CH₂), 64.7 (CH), 125.9 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 129.0 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 133.6 (CH), 138.5 (C), 142.6 (C); m/z (CI) 466 ([M+NH₄]⁺, 60 %), 326 (100), 160 (31), 126 (39), 108 (52), 94 (85), 78 (66).

Phenylmethylsulfone 23



A mixture of sodium hydride (216 mg, 5.4 mmol, 18.0 equiv.) and salt 2 (425 mg, 0.9 mmol, 3.0 equiv.) were poured into a centrifuge tube under argon atmosphere, then washed with hexane (3 x) and dried under vacuum. Deoxygenated DMF (15 ml) was added to the mixture and the resulting suspension was stirred at room temperature for 3 h. The suspension was centrifuged and the supernatant liquid was transferred via cannula into a round-bottomed flask containing 1,1-diphenylsulfonylcyclopentane 11 (105 mg, 0.3 mmol) under argon. The reaction mixture was then heated at 110 °C for 18 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and iodomethane (0.9 ml, 14.4 mmol, 48 equiv.) was added. The mixture was stirred for 48 h at room temperature and then water and ethyl acetate were added. The aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic phases were combined and washed with water (2 x), brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (50:45:5 diethyl ether/ dichloromethane/ ethyl acetate) to give phenyl methyl sulfone¹² **23** as a white solid (40.1 mg, 86 %); mp 80-82°C (lit.¹² 88°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$: 174.0582. C₇H₁₂NO₂S (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 174.0583; v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3023 (Ar-H), 3009 (C-H), 2927 (C-H), 1285 (SO₂), 1146 (SO₂); δ_{H} (CDCl₃) 3.05 (3H, s, CH₃), 7.56-7.60 (2H, m, ArH), 7.65-7.67 (1H, m, ArH), 7.95 (2H, d, J 7.3, ArH); δ_C (CDCl₃) 45.0 (CH₃), 127.8 (CH), 129.8 (CH), 134.2 (CH), 141.1 (C).

1-Tosyl-1H-indole 24¹³



Crushed potassium hydroxide pellets (2.5 g, 0.045 mol, 3.5 equiv.) were added to anhydrous DMSO (20 ml) under argon. To this a solution of indole (1.5 g, 0.013 mol, 1.0 equiv.) in diethyl ether (10 ml) was added dropwise via cannula at room temperature. The mixture was stirred for 1 h and a solution of p-toluenesulfonyl chloride (2.44 g, 0.013 mol, 1.0 equiv.) in diethyl ether (10 ml) was then added *via* cannula at room temperature. After stirring for 30 min at room temperature under argon, water (50 ml) was added. The layers were separated and the aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (2 x 50 ml). The organic phases were combined and washed with water (3 x 50 ml) and brine (1 x 50 ml), then dried over sodium sulfate, filtered and evaporated. The resulting solid was recrystallised from hexane/ dichloromethane to afford 1-tosyl-1H-indole¹⁴ 24 as a white solid (1.6 g, 45 %); 82-84°C (lit.¹⁴ 83-84°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 289.1007. $C_{15}H_{17}N_2O_2S$ O (MNH₄) requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 289.1005); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3068 (Ar-H), 2918 (C-H), 1596 (Ar), 1370 (SO₂), 1260 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 2.38 (3H, s, CH₃), 6.73 (1H, d, J 3.7, ArH), 7.25-7.33 (3H, m, ArH), 7.38-7.42 (1H, m, ArH), 7.59-7.61 (1H, m, ArH), 7.65-7.66 (1H, m, ArH), 7.84-7.86 (2H, m, ArH), 8.09-8.10 (1H, d, J 8.3, ArH); δ_C (CDCl₃) 21.6 (CH₃), 109.2 (CH), 113.7 (CH), 121.5 (CH), 123.4 (CH), 124.7 (CH), 126.5 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 130.0 (CH), 130.9 (C), 135.0 (C), 135.5 (C), 145.1(C); m/z (EI) 271 (M^+ , 50 %), 155 (66), 116 (89), 91 (100), 65 (67), 51 (19).

N-Benzyl-4-methyl-N-phenylbenzenesulfonamide 25



N-Phenylbenzylamine¹⁵ (1.50 g, 8.18 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and *p*-toluenesulfonyl chloride (1.87 g, 9.82 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) were dissolved in pyridine (40 ml) under argon. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux overnight. After cooling to room temperature, the mixture was poured into diethyl ether (300 ml) and subsequently washed with 2N hydrochloric acid (3 x 150 ml), 2N aqueous sodium hydroxide solution (150 ml) and brine (100 ml). The organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate and removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (20:80 ethyl acetate/ petroleum ether) to give *N*-benzyl-4-methyl-*N*-phenylbenzenesulfonamide¹⁶ **25** as a white solid (2.67 g, 97 %); 138-140°C (lit.¹⁶ 139-140°C); found: $[M+H]^+$ 338.1208. C₂₀H₂₀NO₂S (MH) requires $[M+H]^+$, 338.1209); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3064 (Ar-H), 3028 (Ar-H), 2920 (C-H), 1596 (Ar), 1456 (C-H), 1345 (SO₂), 1166 (SO₂); δ_{H} (CDCl₃) 2.51 (3H, s, CH₃), 4.86 (2H, s, CH₂), 7.10-7.12 (2H, m, ArH), 7.24-7.32 (6H, m, ArH), 7.35-7.37 (4H, m, ArH), 7.66 (2H, d, *J* 8.3, ArH); δ_{C} (CDCl₃) 21.9 (CH₃), 55.1 (CH₂), 127.9 (CH), 128.1 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 129.2 (CH), 129.3 (CH), 129.9 (CH), 136.0 (C), 133.4 (C), 139.4 (C), 143.9 (C); *m/z* (EI) 337 (M⁺, 7 %), 181 (29), 104 (16), 91 (100), 77 (43), 65 (29), 51 (16).

4-Phenyl-1-*p*-tolylpiperidine 26



4-Phenylpiperidine (800 mg, 4.96 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and triethylamine (1.67 ml, 12.0 mmol, 2.4 equiv.) were dissolved in dichloromethane (10 ml) under argon and cooled to 0°C. A solution of *p*-toluenesulfonyl chloride (1.134 g, 5.95 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) in dichloromethane (10 ml) was then added dropwise at 0°C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and was stirred over night. The reaction mixture was then poured into 2 N hydrochloric acid (30 ml) and the organic layer was washed further with 2 N hydrochloric acid (2 x 30 ml) and aqueous sodium hydroxide solution (2 x 30 ml) and brine (30 ml). The organic layer was then dried over sodium sulfate, filtered and removed under reduced pressure. The residue was recrystallised (hexane/ dichloromethane) to give 4-phenyl-1-ptolylpiperidine¹⁷ **26** as a white solid (954 mg, 61 %); 151-152°C; (Found: [M+H]⁺ 316.1365. $C_{18}H_{22}NO_2S$ (MH) requires $[M+H]^+$, 316.1366); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3026 (Ar-H), 2944 (C-H), 2840 (C-H), 1594 (Ar), 1493 (C-H), 1334 (SO₂), 1162 (SO₂); δ_H (CDCl₃) 1.79-1.89 (4H, m, CH₂CHPh), 2.33-2.44 (3H, m, NCH₂, CH), 2.50 (3H, s, CH₃), 3.91-3.96 (2H, m, NCH₂), 7.14-7.16 (2H, m, ArH), 7.20-7.23 (1H, m, ArH), 7.28-7.32 (2H, m, ArH), 7.35-7.37 (2H, m, ArH), 7.69 (2H, d, J 8.3, ArH); $\delta_{\rm C}$ (CDCl₃) 32.8 (CH₂), 42.1 (CH), 47.1 (CH₂), 126.8 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 129.8 (CH), 143.7 (C), 145.1 (C); m/z (CI) 333 $([M+NH_4]^+, 4\%), 316(10), 162(100), 108(8), 52(14).$

1H-indole 27



Starting material: 1-Tosyl-1H-indole 24 (81.39 mg, 0.3 mmol).

Purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (5:95 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give 1H-indole¹⁸ **27** as a white solid (32 mg, 91 %); mp 52-53°C (lit.¹⁸ mp 51-54°C); (Found: $[M+H]^+$ 118.0651. C₈H₈N (MH) requires $[M+H]^+$, 118.0651); v_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3397 (N-H), 3048 (Ar-H), 1455 (C=C); δ_{H} (CDCl₃) 6.64-6.65 (1H, m, Ar*H*), 7.19-7.32 (3H, m, Ar*H*), 7.46-7.48 (1H, m, Ar*H*), 7.74-7.76 (1H, m, Ar*H*), 8.17

(1H, s, N*H*); δ_C (CDCl₃) 102.8 (CH), 111.2 (CH), 120.0 (CH), 120.9 (CH), 122.2 (CH), 124.4 (CH), 128.1 (C), 136.0 (C); *m/z* (EI) 117 (M⁺, 100 %), 89 (37), 63 (34), 49 (33).

N-benzyl-*N*-phenylamine 28



Starting material: *N*-benzyl-4-methyl-*N*-phenylbenzenesulfonamide **25** (100 mg, 0.296 mmol).

The purification of the residue after work-up was carried out by column chromatography on silica gel (5:95 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give *N*-benzyl-*N*-phenylamine¹⁵ **28** as a white solid (40.6 mg, 74 %); mp 34-36°C (lit.¹⁸ mp 35-38°C); (Found: $[M+H]^+$ 184.1119. C₁₃H₁₄N (MH) requires $[M+H]^+$, 184.1121); ν_{max} (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3417 (N-H), 3022 (Ar-H), 2926 (C-H), 1603 (Ar), 1514 (Ar); δ_{H} (CDCl₃) 4.14 (1H, s, N*H*), 4.42 (2H, s, C*H*₂), 6.72-6.75 (2H, m, Ar*H*), 6.79-6.83 (1H, m, Ar*H*), 7.21-7.29 (2H, m, Ar*H*), 7.33-7.42 (1H, m, Ar*H*), 7.44-7.48 (4H, m, Ar*H*); δ_{C} (CDCl₃) 48.6 (CH₂), 113.1 (CH), 117.8 (CH), 127.5 (CH), 127.7 (CH), 128.9 (CH), 129.5 (CH), 139.6 (C), 148.4 (C); *m/z* (EI) 183 (*M*⁺, 19 %), 106 (16), 91 (100), 77 (31), 65 (43), 51 (38).

1-Methyl-4-(methylsulfonyl)benzene 29



Salt 2 (850mg, 1.8mmol, 6.0 equiv.) was heated to 110°C for 1h under vacuum in a centrifuge tube, then cooled to room temperature and sodium hydride (60% suspension with mineral oil, 576 mg, 14.4 mmol, 48 equiv.) was added under argon atmosphere. This mixture was then washed with hexane (2 x 20 ml) and subsequently dried under argon. Dry DMF (15 ml) was deoxygenated with argon for 20 min and then added dropwise to the salt/ sodium hydride residue. This mixture was stirred for 4h at room temperature under argon and then exposed to centrifugation. The resulting supernatant liquid was transferred via cannula to (i) N-benzyl-4methyl-N-phenylbenzenesulfonamide 25 (101 mg, 03 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) [(ii) 1-tosyl-1Hindole 24 (81 mg, 0.3 mmol, 1.0 equiv.)] that was dried beforehand under vacuum at room temperature for 3 h. The reaction mixture was heated to 110°C for 18 h under argon atmosphere, then allowed to cool to room temperature and then iodomethane (0.75 ml, 12 mmol, 40 equiv.) was added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2 d and was then poured into water (20 ml). The aqueous layer was extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 ml) and the combined organic layer was then washed with water (4 x 20 ml) and brine (20 ml), dried over sodium sulfate and removed in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (10:90, then 50:50 ethyl acetate/ hexane) to give 1-methyl-4-(methylsulfonyl)benzene¹⁹ **29** as a white solid [(i) 37 mg, 73 %] [(ii) 41 mg, 81 %]; mp 84-85°C (lit.²⁰ mp 88°C); (Found: $[M+NH_4]^+$ 188.0740. C₈H₁₄NO₂S requires $[M+NH_4]^+$, 188.0740); (KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3018 (Ar-H), 2926 (C-H), 1300 (SO₂), 1148 (SO₂); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (CDCl₃) 2.45 (3H, s, CH₃), 3.03 (3H, s, CH₃), 7.36 (2H, d, J 7.9, ArH), 7.82 (2H, m, ArH); δ_C (CDCl₃) 22.1 (CH₃), 45.1 (CH₃), 128.4 (CH), 130.5 (CH), 128.3 (C), 145.2 (C); *m/z* (EI) 170 (M⁺, 27%), 155 (40), 107 (40), 91 (100), 77 (40), 65 (78), 51 (32).

Section 2 Computational Study

Computational Methods

The structures of the neutral compounds 5-7, 10 and 24-26 (see main text for numbering) and their respective radical anions were optimized at the density functional level of theory,²¹⁻²³ where the B3LYP functional²⁴⁻²⁹ was used in conjunction with the 6-311++G(d,p) basis set. $^{30-32}$ The Gaussian03 program³³ was used for all calculations. The charge distribution for each system was calculated using the natural bond order analysis^{34,35} as implemented in Gaussian03.

Reorganization Energies

In order to obtain a balanced description of the relative energies of the cationic, anionic and neutral species of the molecules, single point calculations of the gas phase optimized structures were performed using a dielectric continuum model of the solvent. These calculations were performed with the same functional and basis set combination described above while the polarizable continuum model³⁶ with a dielectric constant of 38.3 was used to model the DMF solvent. The single point energy calculations in the solvent phase were used to obtain the energies used in the calculation of the internal reorganization energy (λ_i).

The internal reorganization energy associated with the electron transfer was calculated as described in our previous work on the donor compound³⁷ and also in the work of others. ³⁸⁻⁴⁰ As a first approximation⁴¹ the activation energy can be calculated from Marcus theory (*eq.* 1) using the internal reorganization energies and the reaction free energies.

$$\Delta G^* = \frac{\lambda_i}{4} (1 + \frac{\Delta G_R}{\lambda_i})^2 \tag{1}$$

Acceptor	ΔG^*	ΔG_R
5	6.1	-8.7
6	5.1	-13.3
7	25.4	24.9
10	13.9	-1.7
24	11.8	-1.5
25	10.7	-5.2
26	27.0	26.7

Table S1. Activation and reaction free energies for the electron transfer from **3**. All energies are in kcal/mol.

The electron transfer reactions involving **7** and **26** are clearly less favored both kinetically and thermodynamically in comparison to the other acceptors studied in this work. The initial electron transfer requires the surmounting of a large barrier and the high endothermicity of these reactions, due to the relative instability of the radical anions of **7** and **26**, imply that the donor-acceptor complex is not sufficiently stable to support this electron transfer.

Structures

The acceptor molecules, in their neutral states, were optimized at the DFT level described above. The resulting structures were subsequently re-optimized in the desired ionized states, i.e., as radical anions. The optimized structures of the neutral and radical anion species are shown in Figures S1 and S2. The charge distributions for the radical anions are also indicated.



Figure S1. Optimized structures of **5-7**, **10**. The partial fragment charges (*e*) of the radical anions derived from the neutral compounds are shown.



Figure S2. Optimized structures of **24-26**. The partial fragment charges (*e*) of the radical anions derived from the neutral compounds are shown.

For the disulfone (10) and the arylsulfones (5-7) the addition of an electron clearly results in the formation of the sulfinate anion (see charge distributions in Figure S1). Furthermore, the addition of an electron to 5, 6, and 10, results in spontaneous dissociation of the compounds to form the sulfinate anion. The inspection of the LUMOs of these compounds suggest that the electron will be delivered into an orbital which has a strong overlap with the σ^* -orbital of the scissile C—S bond (See Figure S3 for the LUMOs of 5 and 7). However for 7 there is much less overlap of the LUMO with the σ^* -orbital of the scissile C—S bond and thus the addition of an electron does not lead to the spontaneous dissociation of the compound. However, the radical anion of 7 does have an elongated C—S bond (1.889 Å \rightarrow 1.945 Å) and the calculated activation barrier for the dissociation of this species into a sulfinate anion and alkyl radical is only 2 kcal/mol (B3LYP/6-31G(d,p) TS optimization with a frequency calculation confirm the imaginary mode for this species to be consistent with the breaking of the C—S bond).



Figure S3. Comparison of the LUMOs in 5 and 7.

The relatively low activation energy required for the dissociation of the radical anion derived from 7 clarifies that the stability of the donor-acceptor complex is not sufficient to support the formation of the radical anion, as this reaction was not observed experimentally.

The sulfonamides (24-26) exhibit somewhat different characteristics. For 24 and 25, the additional electron clearly results in the N—S bond scission, however, the fragments remain proximal and the additional negative charge is shared between both species. In 24 the formation of an amide anion appears to be most likely with the NBO analysis indicating a total charge on this fragment of -0.66 *e*, while the arenesulfonyl unit bears the smaller charge of -0.34 *e*. This is reflected in the orbital diagrams (Figure S4), where the highest energy β -electron is shared between the two fragments, although is predominantly located on the indole anion. This situation is reversed in 25, where the shared electron is primarily on the sulfinate, as is reflected in the charge distribution (see Figure S2).



Figure S4. Comparison of the SOMOs in the radical anions derived from 24 and 25.

The nature of the fragments resulting from the cleavage of the sulfonamides upon electron addition is dependent primarily on the functional groups. The aromatic indole in **24** is able to delocalize the additional negative charge and as such an indole anion is preferentially formed over the sulfinate. This aromatic stabilization is present to a lesser extent in **25**, with a smaller amount of delocalization to the aniline substituent. As such, the negative charge resides primarily on the sulfinate.

The radical anion of the piperidine derivative (26) does not spontaneously dissociate to form the sulfinate anion. However, the calculated activation barrier for the dissociation of this species is 0.3 kcal/mol (B3LYP/6-31G(d,p) TS optimization and frequency calculation).



Figure S5. LUMO of 24, 25 and 26.

The barriers to fragmentation of the radical anions of **7** and **26** are small and as such it is clear that the lack of reactivity for **7** and **26** is due to the much higher activation energy associated with the initial electron transfer (see Table S1). Nonetheless, the orbital analysis presented above indicates that the cause of the dissociation barriers is the lesser degree of orbital overlap between the LUMO of the acceptor and its scissile X—S bond.

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41. The Marcus equation allows the activation energy for the electron transfer to be calculated from the total reorganization energy (i.e., the total of the internal and solvent contributions) and the reaction free energy. However, we use in this case only the internal reorganization energies as studies on similar systems have shown the solvent reorganization energy contribution to be minimal (see refs 38-40). Nonetheless, the calculated activation energies should be considered as lower limits of the real value.

Section 3: Spectra





ppm 180 160 140 120 100 80 60 40 20

Person 1-1 dimer 0proton16_np C6D6 u jam 53



dimer €13Cjmod_np C606 u jam 53			
8	100 BS1 100 BS	64.19 	
$\widetilde{\bigcup_{N \to N}}_{3}$			Current Data Parameters NAME D6675 EXPN0 2 PROCN0 1 F2 - Acquisition Parameters 1 Date 2005007 Time 16.32 INSTRUM 0 cm.400 PAGEND 5 mm OVF IH PALHOD 5 mm OVF IH PACHOD 5 mm OVF IH AG 1 3505402 sec DM 20.700 usec DI1 4.00000000 sec DI2 0.0000000 sec DI2 0.0000000 sec DI2 1 300 0.0000000 sec DI2 1 300 130 P1 7.10 usec P2 1 5
			CPORAGE NALL1 NLC2 II PCPD2 90.00 Usec PL2 -3.00 dB PL12 18.90 dB SFD2 400.1318005 MHz
			F2 - Processing parameters ST 68036 SF 100.612775 Hetz HOB 6 558 6 LB 1.00 Hz 599 6 HC 4.00
			10 NMR plot parameters CX 24.50 cm CY 8.00 cm F1P 230.000 ppm F1 2314.0.91 kz F2P 0.000 ppm F2 0.000 ppm F2 0.000 kz PPMCM 9.38776 ppm/cm H2CN 944.52710 Hz/cm

Person 1-1

ppm 220 200 180 160 140 120 100 80 60 40 20





Person 1-5 fs233 @13Cjmod_np CDC13 u jam 114





Person 1-4 MY192B @proton16_np CDCl3 u jam 20





S29





Person 1-4















Person 1-5 fs239









1

Person 1-4 @proton16_np CDC13 u jam 35

MY194B

Edd

ppm

8

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Person 1-4 MY1948



Person 1-5 fs204





















ppm 120 100 80 60 40 20







Person 1-4 PhSO2Me



արաստությունը հայտարանությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտարությունը հայտությունը հայտությունը հայտությունը հայտությունը հայտությունը հերեն հայտությունը հերեն հերեն հերենի հերենենի հերենենի հերենեն հերենեն հերենենինը հերենեն հերենենինը հերենեն հերենեն հերենեն հերենեն հերենեն հ





Person 1-5 fs258 @13Cjmod_np CDC13 u jam 103 Person 1-5 fs219 @proton16_np CDC13 u jam 100





Person 1-5 fs219 @13Cjmod_np COC13 u jam 100





Person 1-5 fs260 @13Cjmod CDC13 u jam 2





5

















