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Jahn-Teller effects and surface interactions in multiply-charged fullerene anions and the effect on scanning tunneling microscopy images

By: **Dunn, JL** (Dunn, Janette L.)^[1]; **Alqannas, HS** (Alqannas, Haifa S.)^[1,2]; **Lakin, AJ** (Lakin, Andrew J.)^[1]

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Abstract

We investigate the combined effects of Jahn-Teller (JT) coupling and interactions with a surface substrate on fullerene anions C-60(2-) to C-60(4-). JT coupling alone causes the C-60 ions to instantaneously distort from the icosahedral symmetry of the neutral molecule to a lower symmetry, with the molecule moving dynamically between a set of equivalent distortions. When adsorbed on a surface, the number of equivalent minimum-energy distortions is reduced. The implications of this on observed scanning tunneling microscopy (STM) images will be discussed, and comparisons made with existing experimental data. We show that a consistent interpretation of the images from all of the charge states of C-60 can only be obtained using a JT model in which the symmetry is further reduced by surface interactions. The comparison with experimental data also allows us to determine relationships between the quadratic Jahn-Teller coupling and surface interaction parameters. (C) 2015 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

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Author Information

Reprint Address: Dunn, JL (reprint author)

+ Univ Nottingham, Sch Phys & Astron, Univ Pk, Nottingham NG7 2RD, England.

Addresses:

+ [1] Univ Nottingham, Sch Phys & Astron, Nottingham NG7 2RD, England

+ [2] King Abdulaziz Univ, Dept Phys, Fac Sci Girls, Jeddah 21413, Saudi Arabia

E-mail Addresses: janette.dunn@nottingham.ac.uk

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