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Effects of A-site order on the Mn local structure and polar phases of magnetoelectric REBaMn₂O₆ (RE: La, Nd, Sm and Y)

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The relationship between Mn local structure and the polar and magnetic phases of A-site ordered REBaMn₂O₆ [1-3] and disordered RE_{0.5}Ba_{0.5}MnO₃ (RE: La, Nd, Sm and Y) manganites has been investigated combining high energy resolution fluorescence and total fluorescence detected X-ray absorption at the Mn K-edge, to overcome the interference of the RE L-edges [4]. The extended k-range EXAFS spectra were measured at the CLAES beam line of the ALBA synchrotron using the CLEAR spectrometer. An abrupt loss of local distortions of the MnO₆ only occurs when the A-site ordered samples develops long-range ferromagnetic non-polar phases (RE=La). With decreasing the A-site ionic size (RE=Nd, Sm), a competition between ferromagnetism and charge localization appears, resulting in the development of a local distortion of the MnO₆ octahedron in the low temperature polar phases. For the smallest A-site atom, YBaMn₂O₆, the local distortion of the MnO₆ octahedron already exists at temperatures above the polar charge-ordered phase and vary little with temperature below the transition. This polar local distortion in REBaMn₂O₆ (RE: Sm, Y) is a bit less than half of the expected for a 1:1 Mn³⁺-Mn⁴⁺ order, i.e. ~0.3-0.5 e⁻. On the other hand, the A-site disorder weakens the ferromagnetism, favouring the presence of local distortions of the MnO₆ octahedron. For the smaller A-site atoms (Sm, Y), a large local distortion of the MnO₆ octahedron that is temperature-independent prevents the development of any magnetic order in the A-site disordered RE_{0.5}Ba_{0.5}MnO₃ perovskites.

In conclusion, both a large difference in the ionic size of A-site cations and A-site disorder are proven to be detrimental for the development of long-range ferromagnetism in REBaMn₂O₆ (RE: La, Nd, Sm and Y) by favouring the electronic localization. Moreover, entropy contents in connection with the EXAFS results indicate that the mechanism of the polar structural transitions in ordered REBaMn₂O₆ (RE: Sm, Y) can be mainly associated with an order-disorder phase transition.

- [1] J. Blasco, G. Subías, et al., Phys. Rev. B 103, 064105 (2021)
- [2] J. Blasco, G. Subías, et al., Phys. Rev. B 103, 214110 (2021)
- [3] J. Blasco, G. Subías, et al., J. Phys. Chem. C 125, 19467 (2021)
- [4] G. Subías et al., Phys. Rev. B (2022) submitted

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