



# Plasma sputtering synthesis of nanocatalyst for fuel cells: Experiments and molecular dynamics simulations

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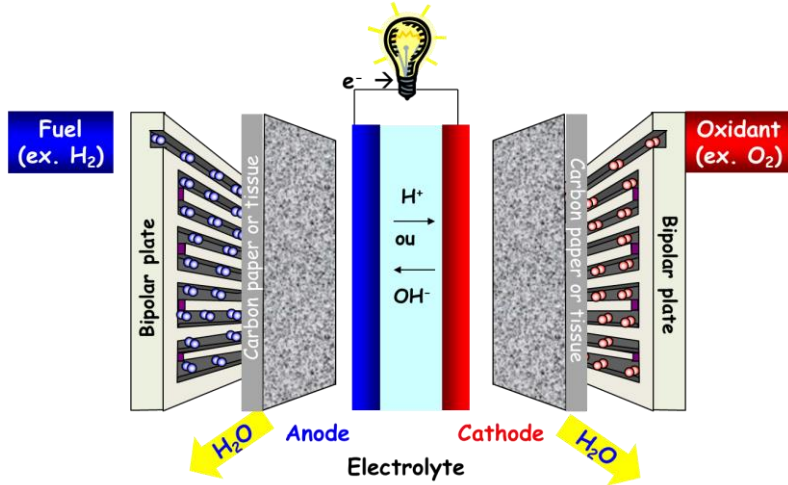


# Outline

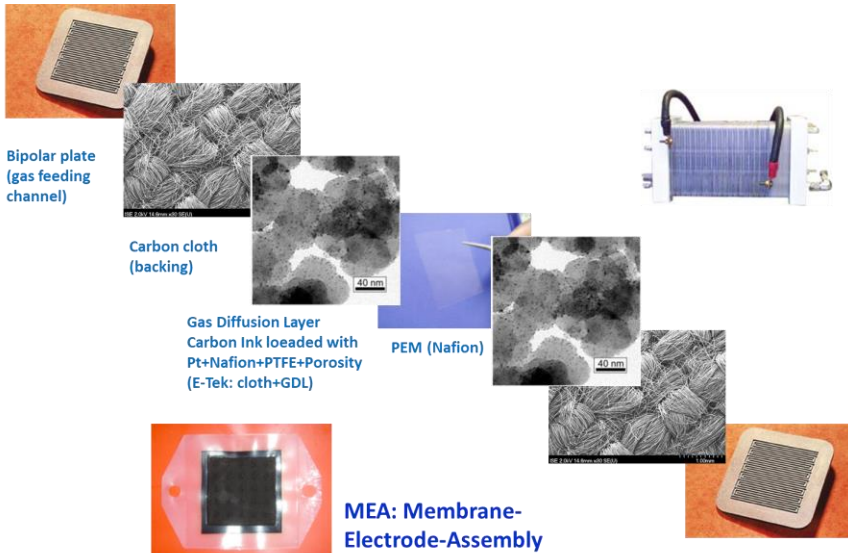
- About fuel cell catalysts and electrodes
- Plasma sputtering insights
- DC magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells
- HiPIMS deposition
- Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source
- Molecular dynamics simulation of plasma sputtering catalysts growth
- Perspectives



# About fuel cell catalysts and electrodes



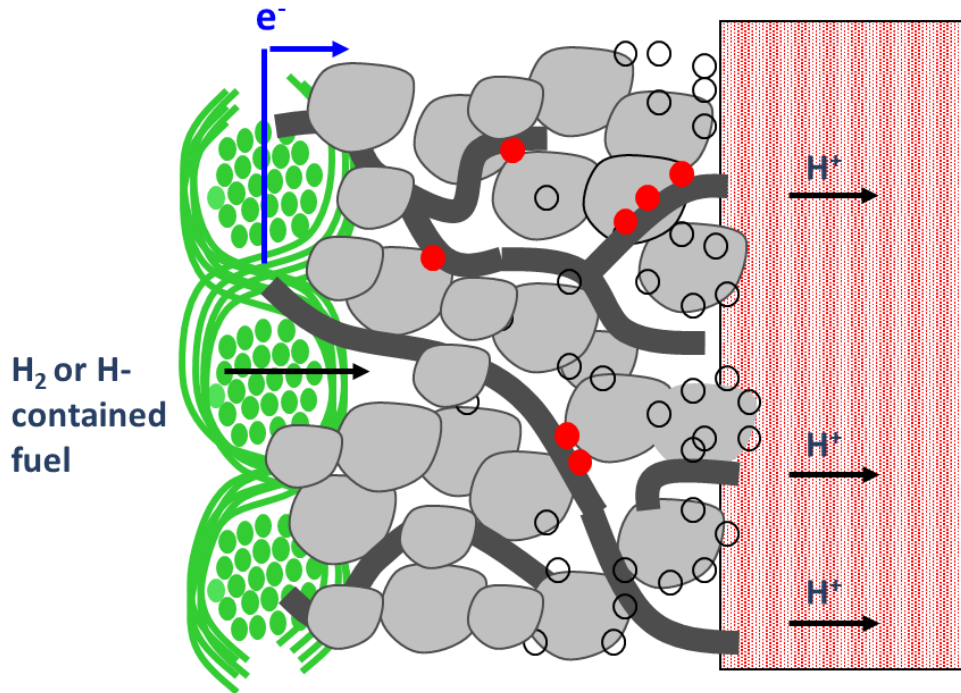
- Proton exchange Membrane Fuel Cell
- Electrochemical DC current generator
- GES free  $\text{H}_2 + 1/2 \text{O}_2 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{electrical current} + \text{heat}$  (90% efficiency!!)
- Issues:
  - Reducing noble metal catalysts content
  - Increasing performances





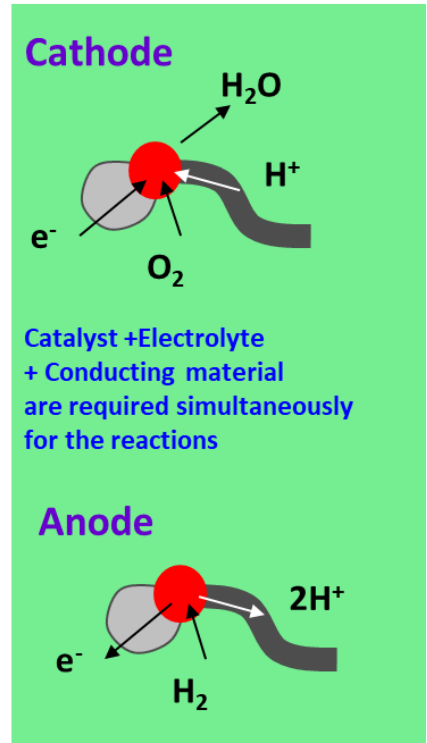
# About fuel cell catalysts and electrodes

## PEMFC: Active phase



Catalyst is Pt or Pt alloy or ...

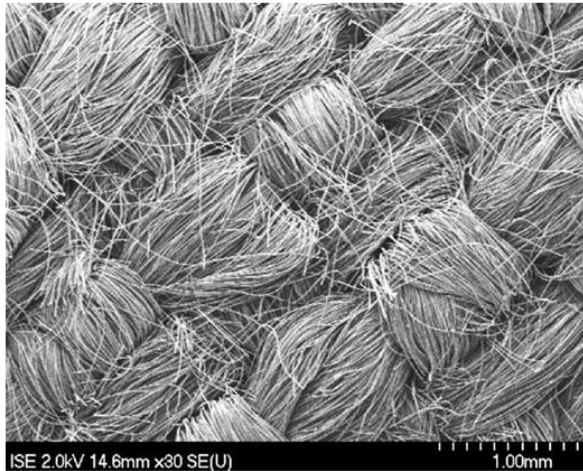
- Nafion solution Nafion electrolyte
- Active catalyst Carbon nano-particle
- Inactive catalyst Carbon cloth (backing)





# About fuel cell catalysts and electrodes

## PEMFC: Electrode before adding catalyst



Carbon cloth : 250 m<sup>2</sup>/g

Porous carbon : Commercial E-TEK

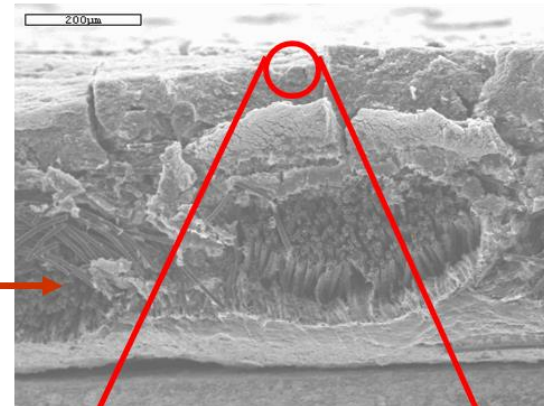
50 μm diffusion layer

→ Ink : 80% carbon particles with 20% PTFE (-CF<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub> painted on carbon cloth.

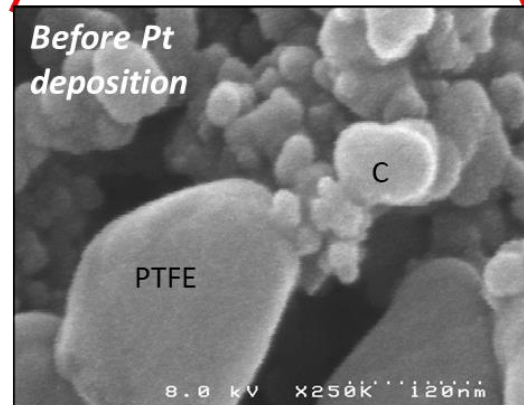
Porosity = 50%

$\phi_p = 30 - 100 \text{ nm}$

$\phi_{\text{PTFE}} = 100-300 \text{ nm}$



Before Pt deposition





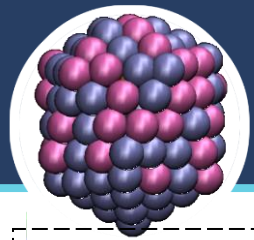
# About fuel cell catalysts and electrodes

- Low loading issue:
  - Working on appropriate catalysts concentration profile in the porous GDL
  - Alloying with non-noble or low cost metal
- Catalyst stability issue in acidic PEMFC medium
  - Pt alloying
  - New corrosion resistant catalyst
- New synthesis ways for solving this issue : **plasma sputtering deposition**

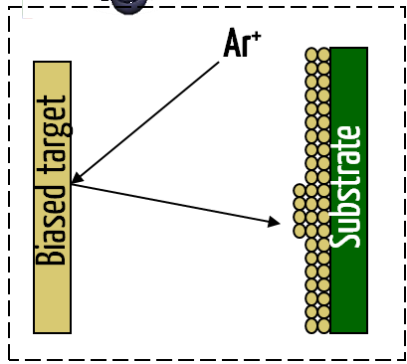
P. Brault, *Plasma deposition of catalytic thin films: Experiments, Applications, Molecular modeling*, Surf. Coat. Technol. **205** (2011) S15-S23

P. Brault, A. Caillard, A. L. Thomann, *Polymer electrolyte fuel cell electrodes grown by vapor deposition techniques*, Chemical Vapor Deposition **17** (2011) 296-304

P. Brault, *Review of low pressure plasma processing of proton exchange membrane fuel cell electrocatalysts*, Plasma Process. Polym. **13** (2016) 10-18



# Plasma sputtering insights



- Sputtering control (at the target)

Ion kinetic energy, mass, flux

- Deposition Control (at the substrate)

Kinetic energy, mass, flux of ions

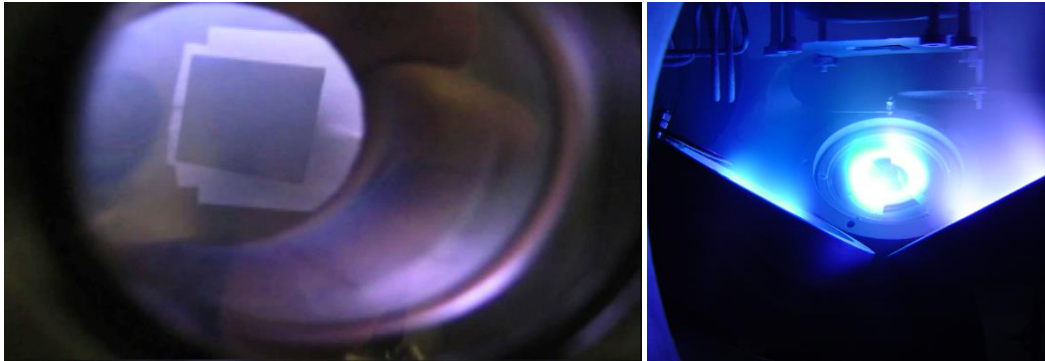
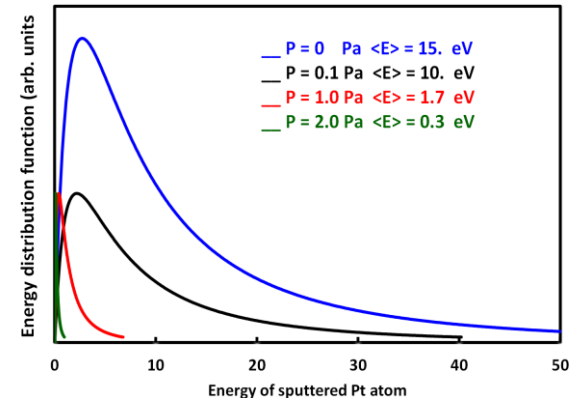
Kinetic energy, mass, flux and state of active species impinging the substrate



Control of: “cluster” morphology,  
organization, density, adhesion,

....

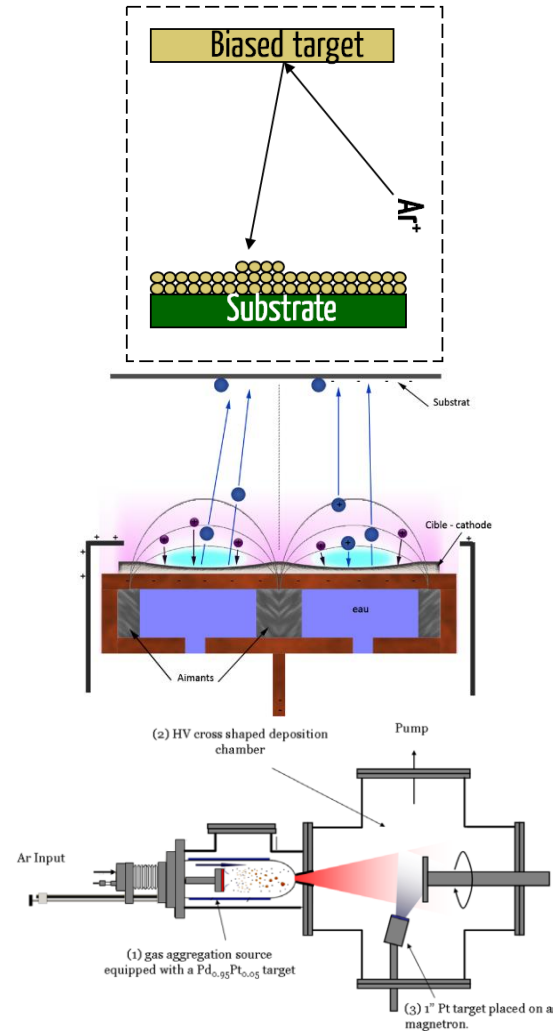
## Sputtered Pt atom Energy Distribution Function





# Plasma sputtering insights

- Which plasma sources ?
  - Conventional magnetron or ICP
  - HiPIMS
  - Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source





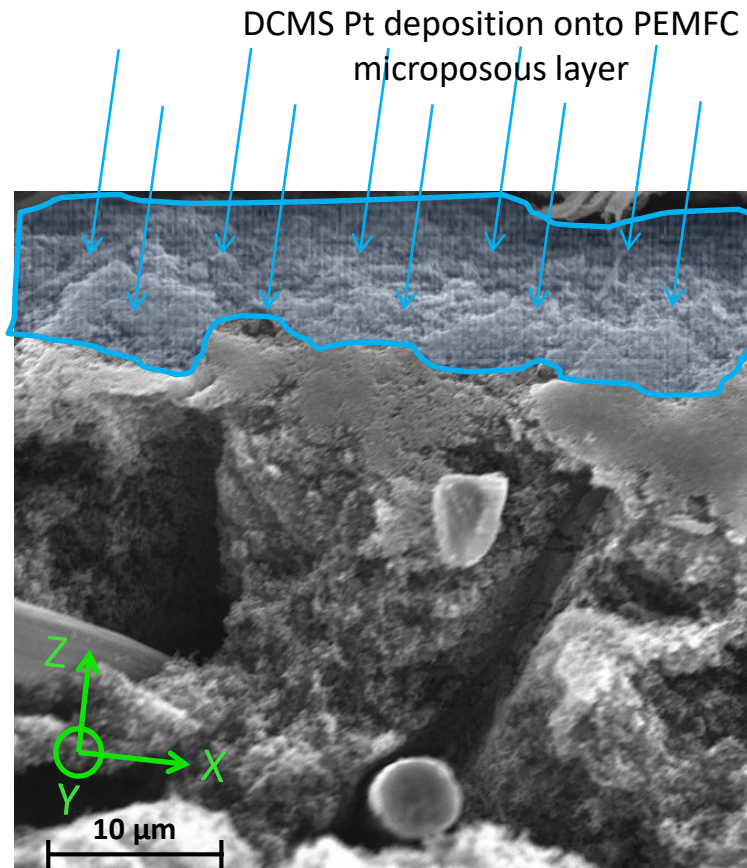


# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

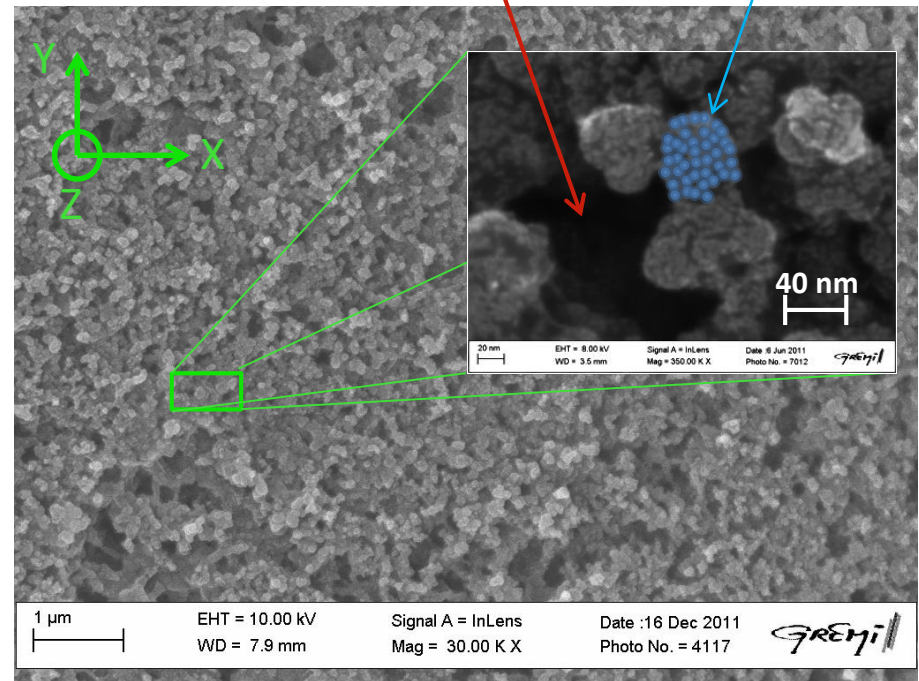
- DCMS acts as an atom source
- Deposition in porous carbon electrode
  - Concentration profil management
  - Cluster size control
- Improved performances (V and W(j) plots)
- Limitations



# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells



Concentration profile control : Ar pressure and substrate bias  
Depth up to 400 nm



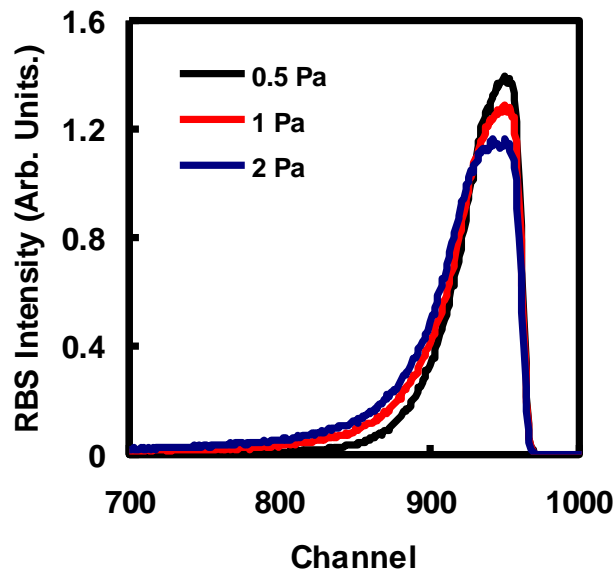


# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

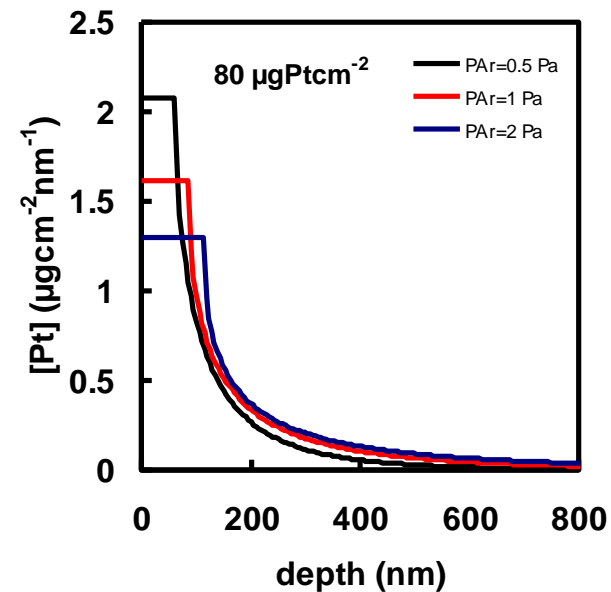
## PEMFC: Pt profile analyzed by RBS

### Ar pressure effect

RBS Spectrum



Deduced profile



At low pressure, high superficial Pt amount and large diffusion depth

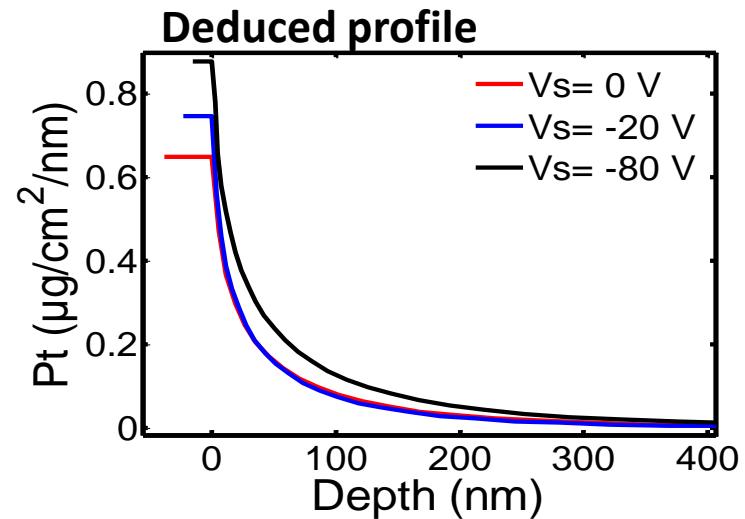
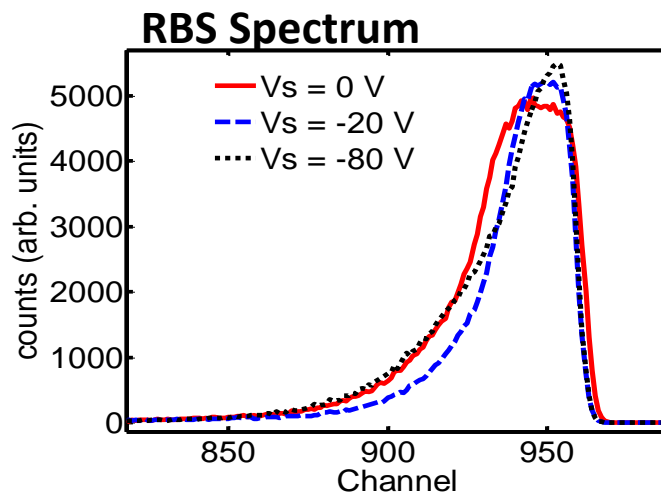
At High pressure, low constant superficial Pt amount over a large depth, more efficient diffusion process



# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

## PEMFC: Pt profile analyzed by RBS

### C cloth (substrate) bias effect



**C cloth negative bias leads to profile with high Pt amount at the surface and below, over a large depth**

**Diffusion is assisted by attracted  $\text{Ar}^+$  ions**

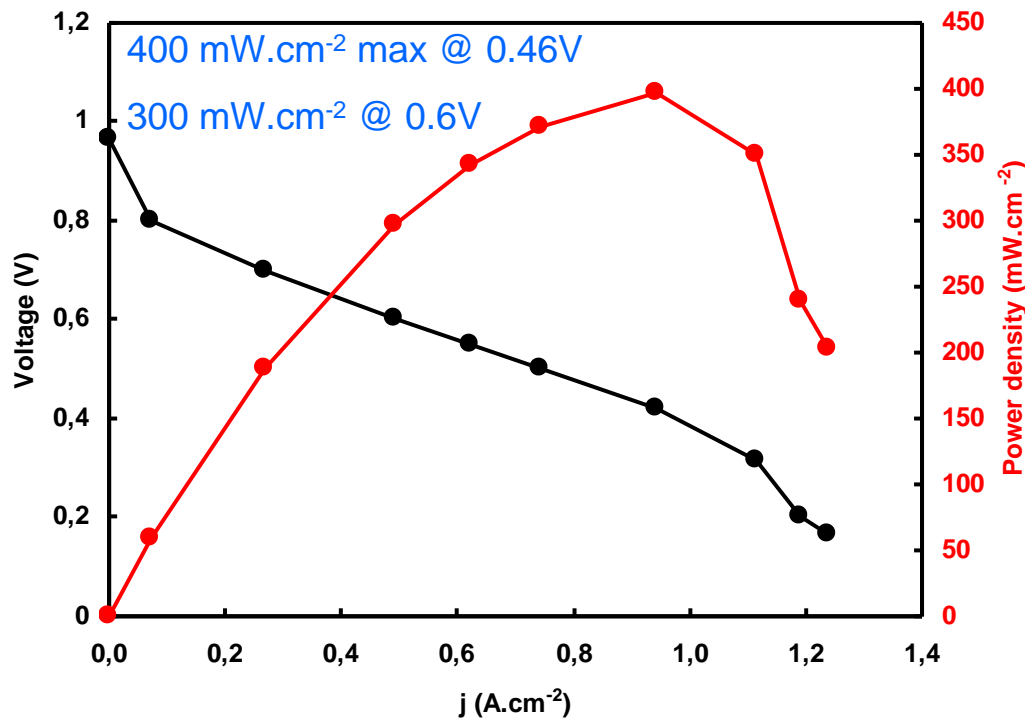
- A. Caillard et al, *Deposition and diffusion of platinum nanoparticles in porous carbon assisted by plasma sputtering*, Surf. Coatings Technol. 200 (2005) 391
- A. Caillard et al, *Plasma based platinum nano-aggregates deposited on carbon nano-fibres improve fuel cell efficiency*, Appl. Phys. Lett. 90 (2007) 223119
- A. Caillard et al, *Integrated plasma synthesis of efficient catalytic nanostructures for fuel cell electrodes*, Nanotechnology 18 (2007) 305603
- P. Brault et al, *Anomalous diffusion mediated by atom deposition into a porous substrate*, Phys. Rev. Lett. 102 (2009) 045901



# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

Pt loading is significantly decreased

PVD (here magnetron) deposition allows better catalyst use.



Total Pt load: 0.02  
mg(Pt)/cm<sup>2</sup>

Membrane : Nafion 212

Electrode: MPL E-Tech (clot)

Temperature : 80°C

Energy density 20 kW/g(Pt)

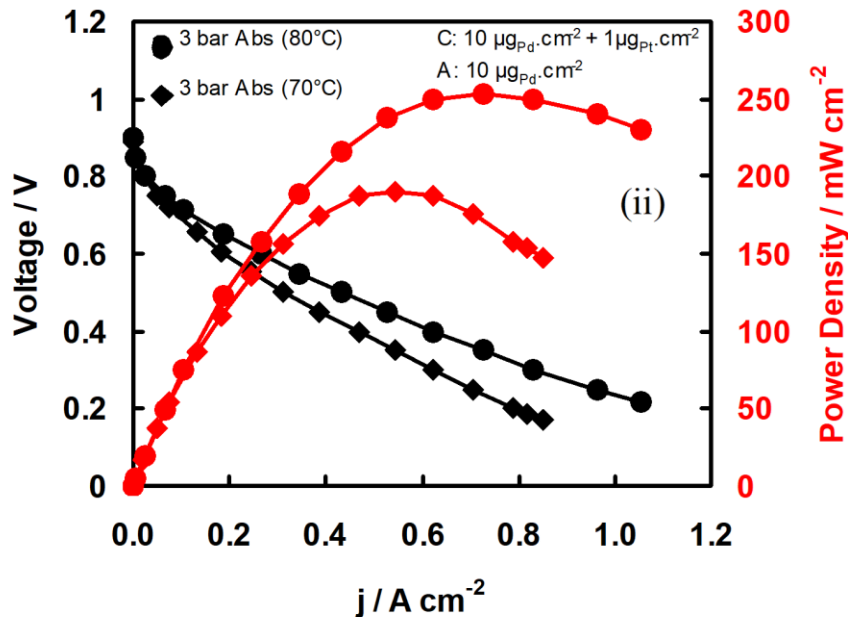
80kW powertrain → 4g Pt

■ M. Cavarroc et al, Performance of plasma sputtered Fuel Cell electrodes with ultra-low Pt loadings, Electrochemistry Communications 11 (2009) 859 – 861



# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

$\text{Pd}_9\text{Pt}_1$  catalyst deposition :  $10 \mu\text{g}_{\text{Pd}_9\text{Pt}_1}\text{cm}^{-2}$  at both electrodes



Total Pt load:  $0.002 \text{ mg(Pt)/cm}^2$

Membrane : Nafion 212

Electrode: MPL E-Tech (clot)

Temperature :  $80^\circ\text{C}$

Energie density  $125 \text{ kW/g(Pt)}$

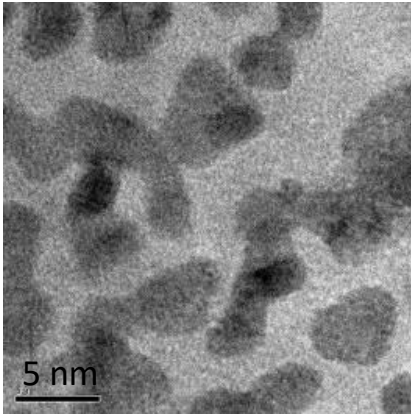
$80\text{kW powertrain} \rightarrow 0.6 \text{ g Pt}$

■ M. Mougnot et al, *High Performance Plasma Sputtered PdPt Fuel Cell Electrodes with Ultra Low Loading*, International Journal of Hydrogen Energy 36 (2011) 8429-8434



# DC Magnetron sputtering of catalyst for fuel cells

But ....



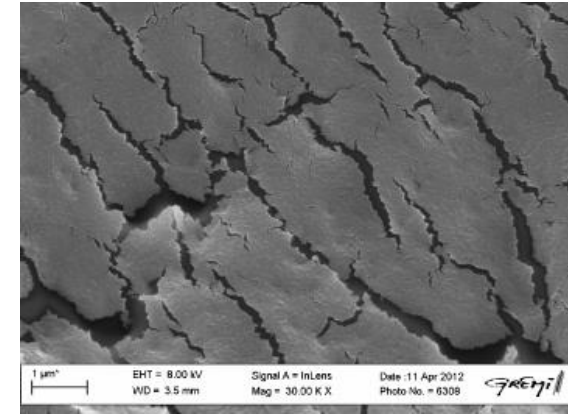
For low Pt amount:

- 3 nm in diameter Pt nanoclusters
- The aggregation of the nanoclusters starts!

Increase of the amount of Pt catalyst deposited on the membrane

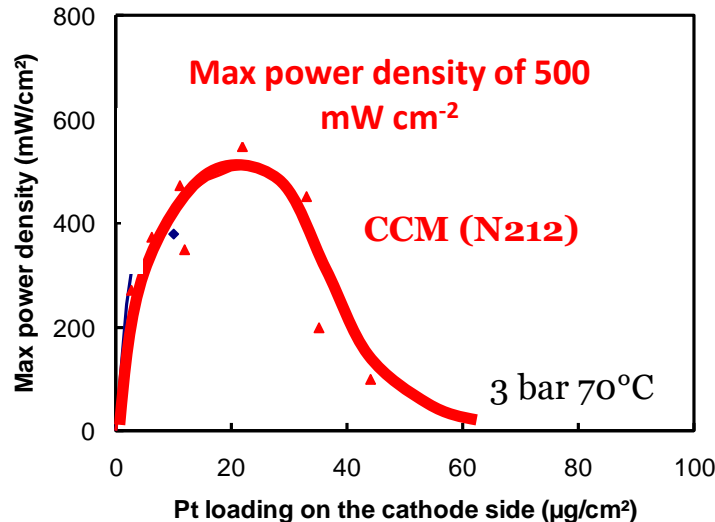


The size of the nanoclusters increase with the Pt amount



For high Pt amount:

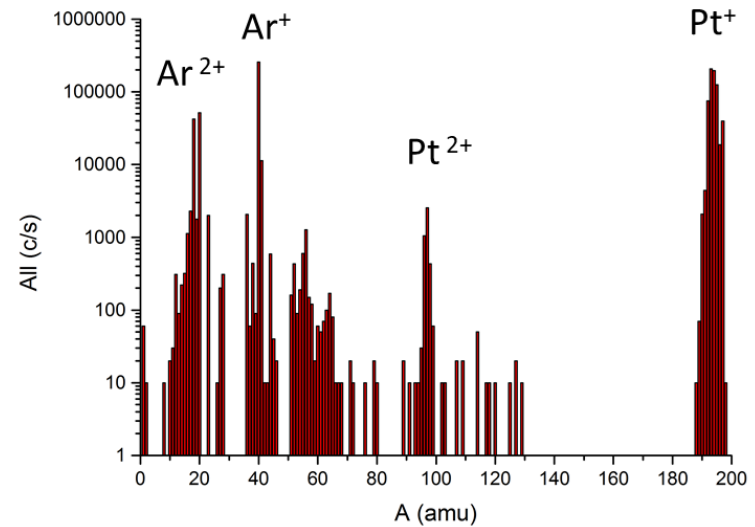
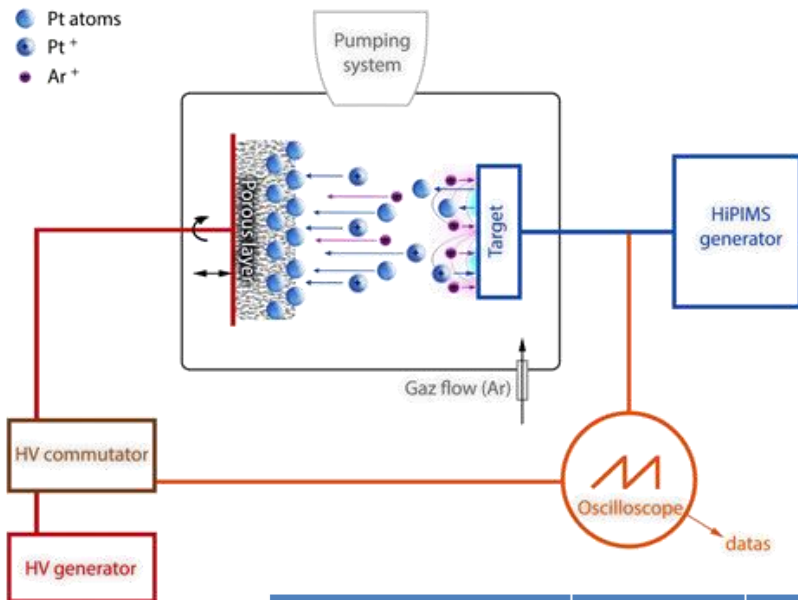
- The agglomeration of the nanocluster induce the formation of a Pt thin film.
- This dense thin film separates the GDL and the membrane.





# HiPIMS

- HiPIMS : High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtering
- Interest : High sputtered metal ion fraction



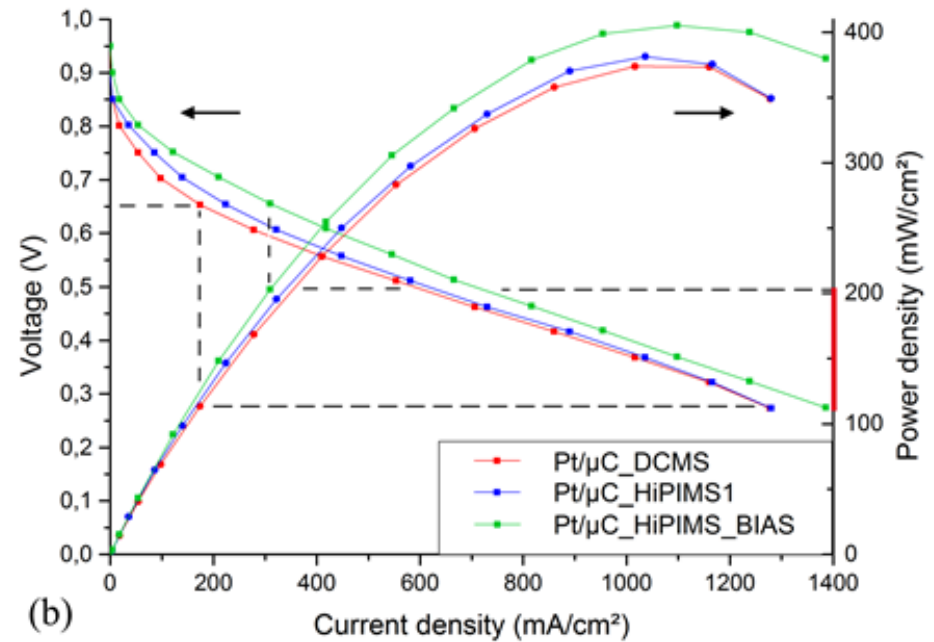
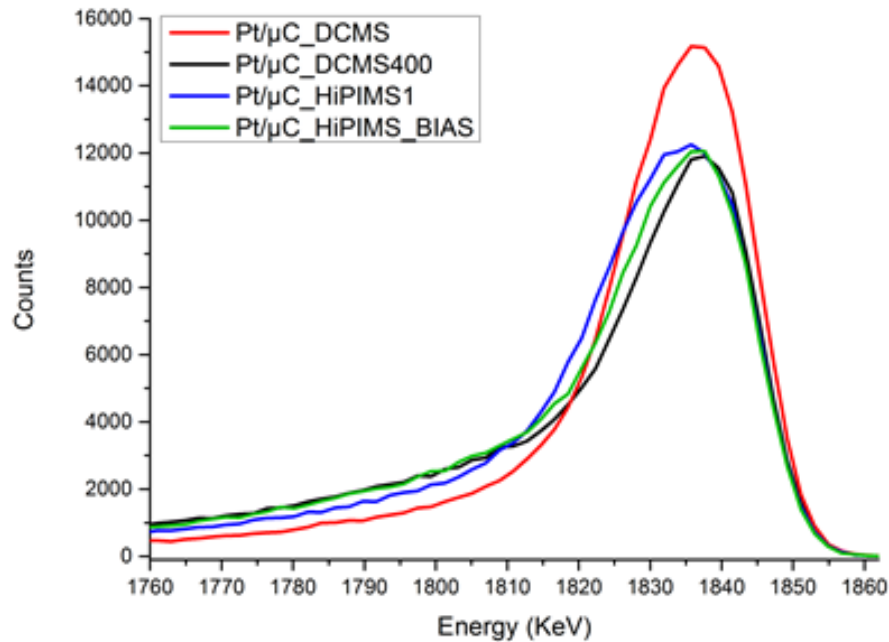
	Magnetron	Voltage (V)	Mean Power (W)	Bias	Substrate temperature	Loading (μg/cm <sup>2</sup> )
Pt/μC_DCMS	DC	500	100	Floating	RT	20
Pt/μC_DCMS400	DC	500	100	Floating	400°C	20
Pt/μC_HiPIMS1	HiPIMS	1500	100	Floating	RT	20
Pt/μC_HiPIMS_BIAS	HiPIMS	1500	100	-600 V	RT	20





# HiPIMS

- Larger Pt incorporation.: comparable to DCMS 400°C
- Improved FC performances, when adding bias (-600 V) on carbon electrode



- S. Cuyenet et al, *Influence of the HiPIMS voltage on the time resolved platinum ions energy distributions*, IEEE transaction on Plasma Science 42 (2014) 2818-2819.
- S. Cuyenet et al, *High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtering deposition of Pt inside fuel cell electrodes*, J. Phys. D 47 (2014) 272001
- S. Cuyenet et al, *An efficient way to evidence and to measure the metal ion fraction in high power impulse magnetron sputtering (HiPIMS) post-discharge with Pt, Au, Pd and mixed targets*, Journal of Plasma Physics 82 (2016) 695820601



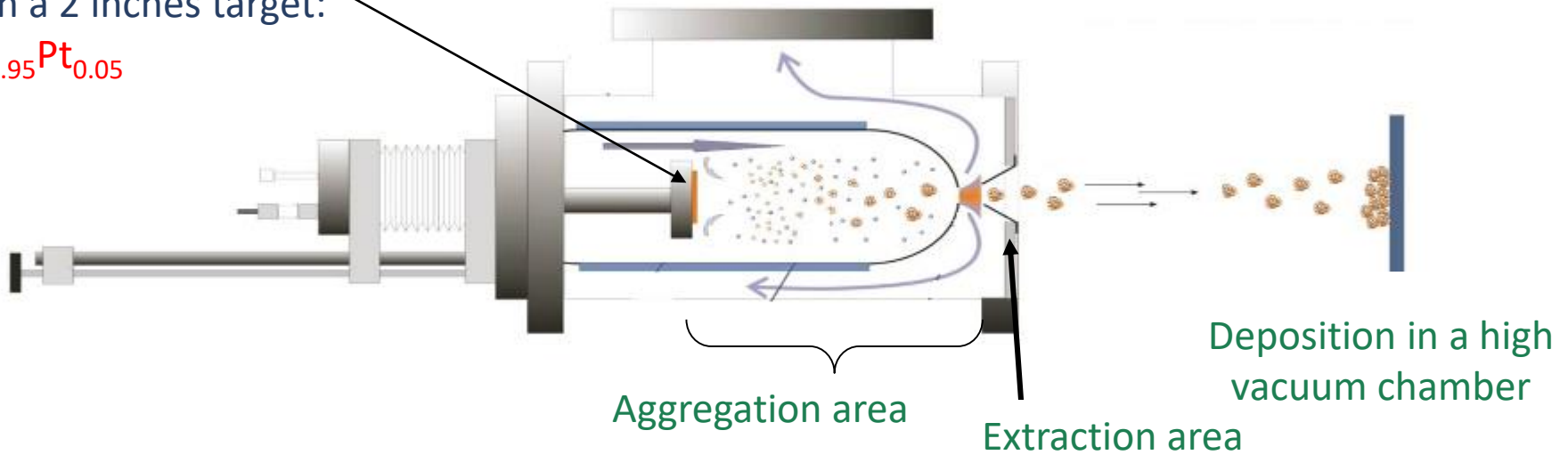
# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source

- Goal: Deposition of on-flight formed nanocatalyst
- Issues to be solved: Size distribution, deposition rate
- Principle: Sputtering in a « high » pressure (10 to 100 Pa) condensation chamber followed by transport in a differentially pumped chamber through a hole/nozzle



# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source

Magnetron equipped with a 2 inches target:



**The size of the nanoclusters mainly depends on:**

- The gas pressure in the aggregation area
  - The length of the aggregation area
- } Residence time

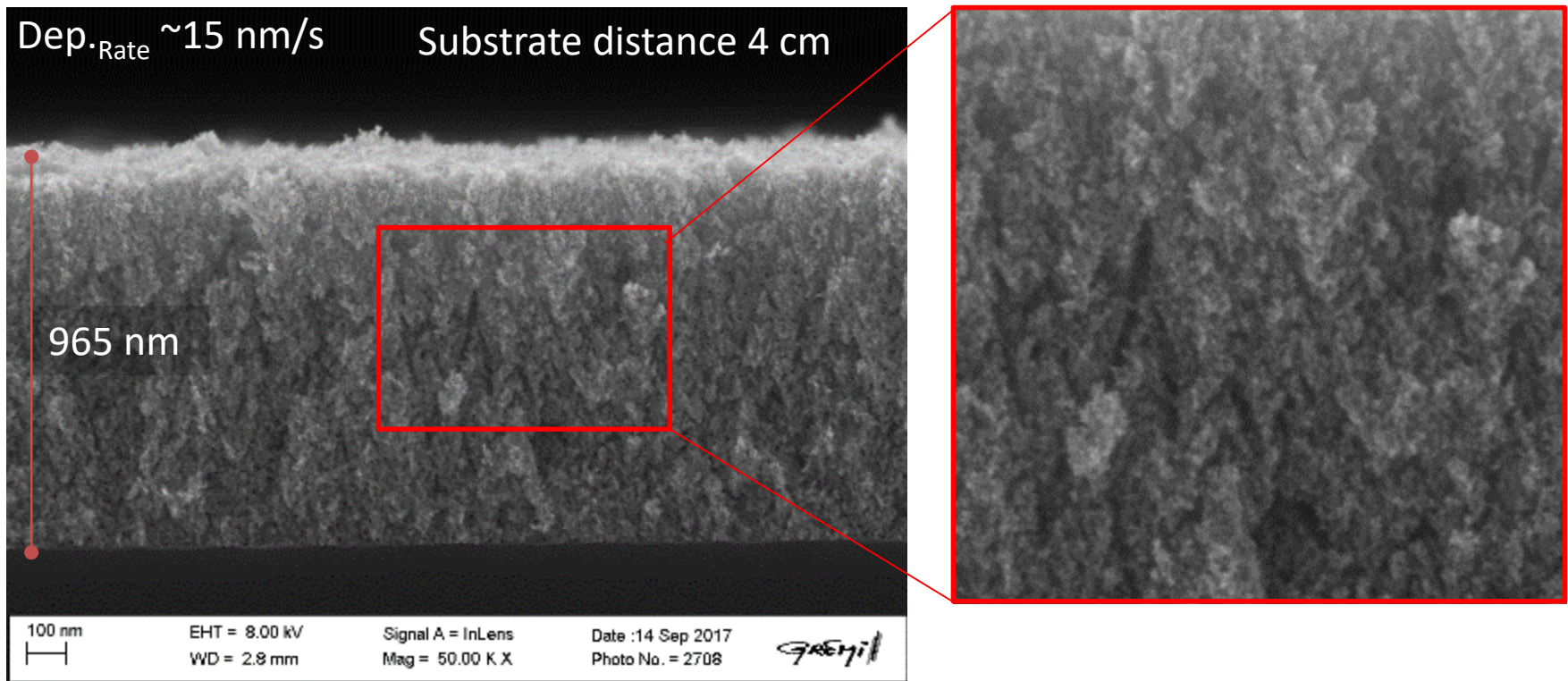
**The amount of the nanoclusters mainly depends on:**

- The gas flow carrying the nanoclusters to the extraction area
- The power applied on the target
- The pressure drop between the two chambers (in the extraction area)
- The hole/skimmer/nozzle size



# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source

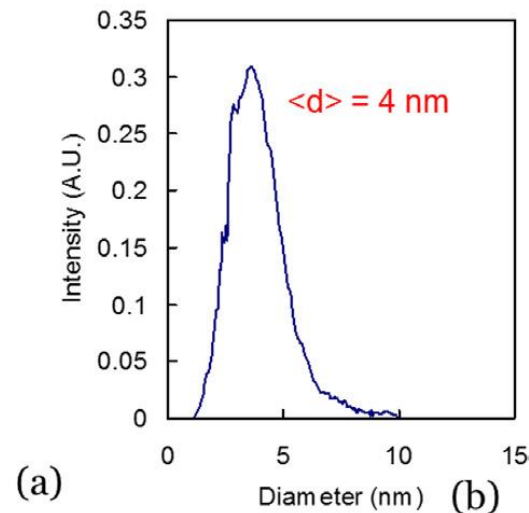
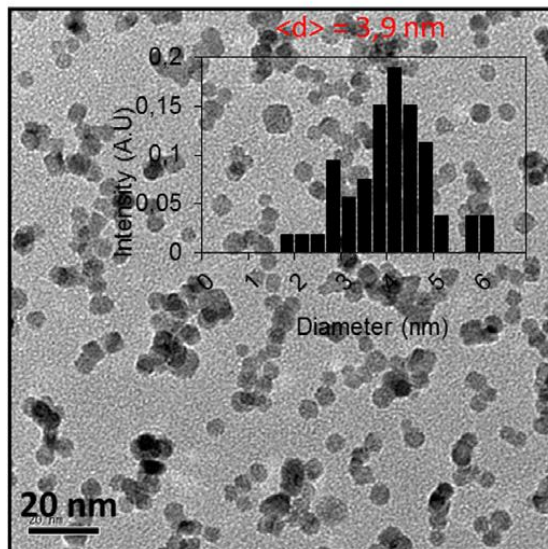
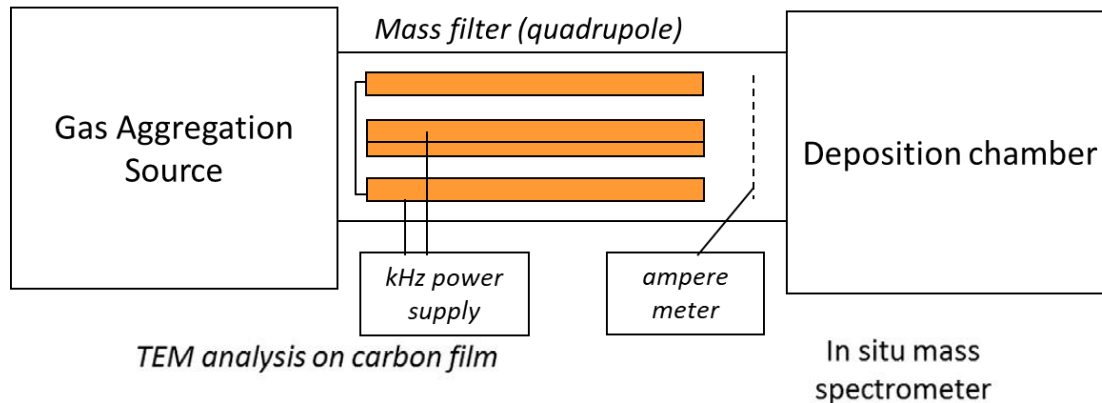
- Growth of porous Pd thin films: nm sized Pd NPs stacking  
→ Hydrogen storage ?





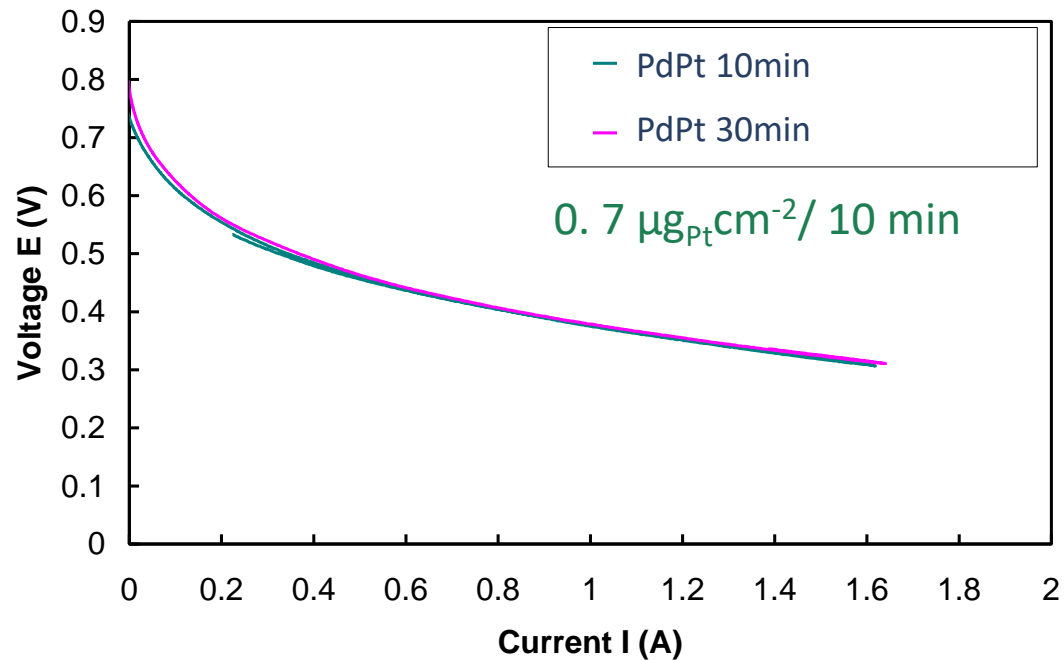
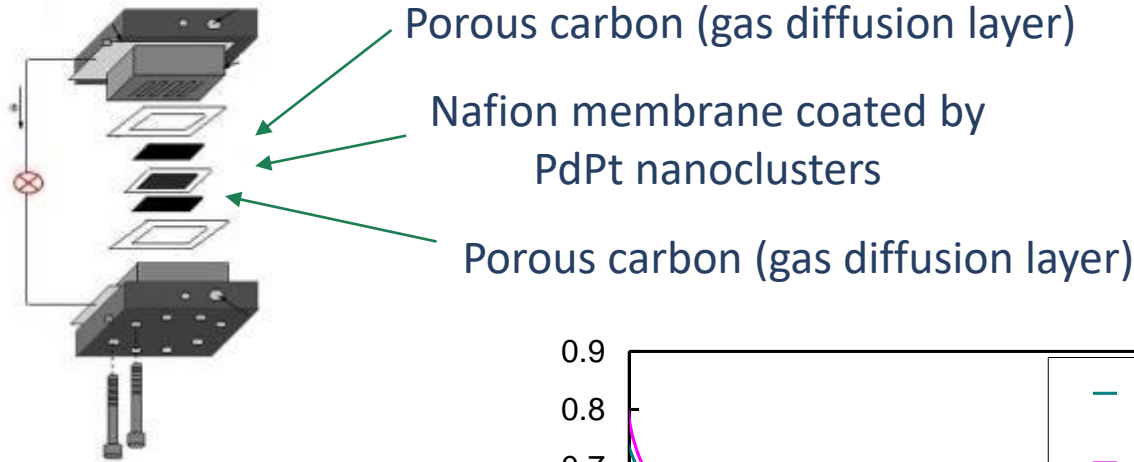
# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source

## ■ Pd<sub>0.95</sub>Pt<sub>0.05</sub> nanocatalyst deposition





# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdPt Catalysts





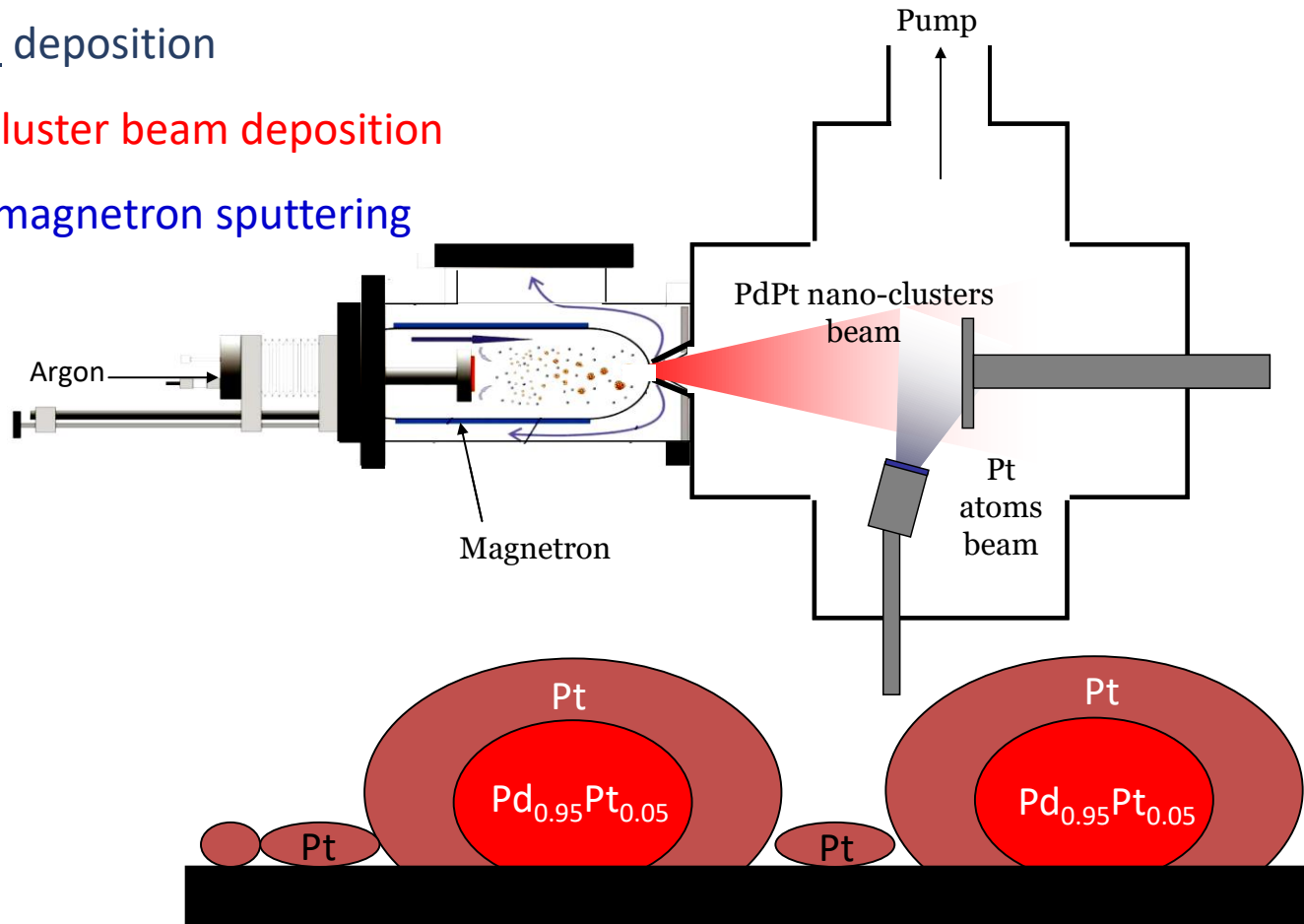
# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdPt Catalysts

$\text{Pd}_{0.95}\text{Pt}_{0.05}$  @ Pt Core-Shell nanoclusters prepared by co-deposition (CBD & DCMS)

Alternate deposition

1/ PdPt Cluster beam deposition

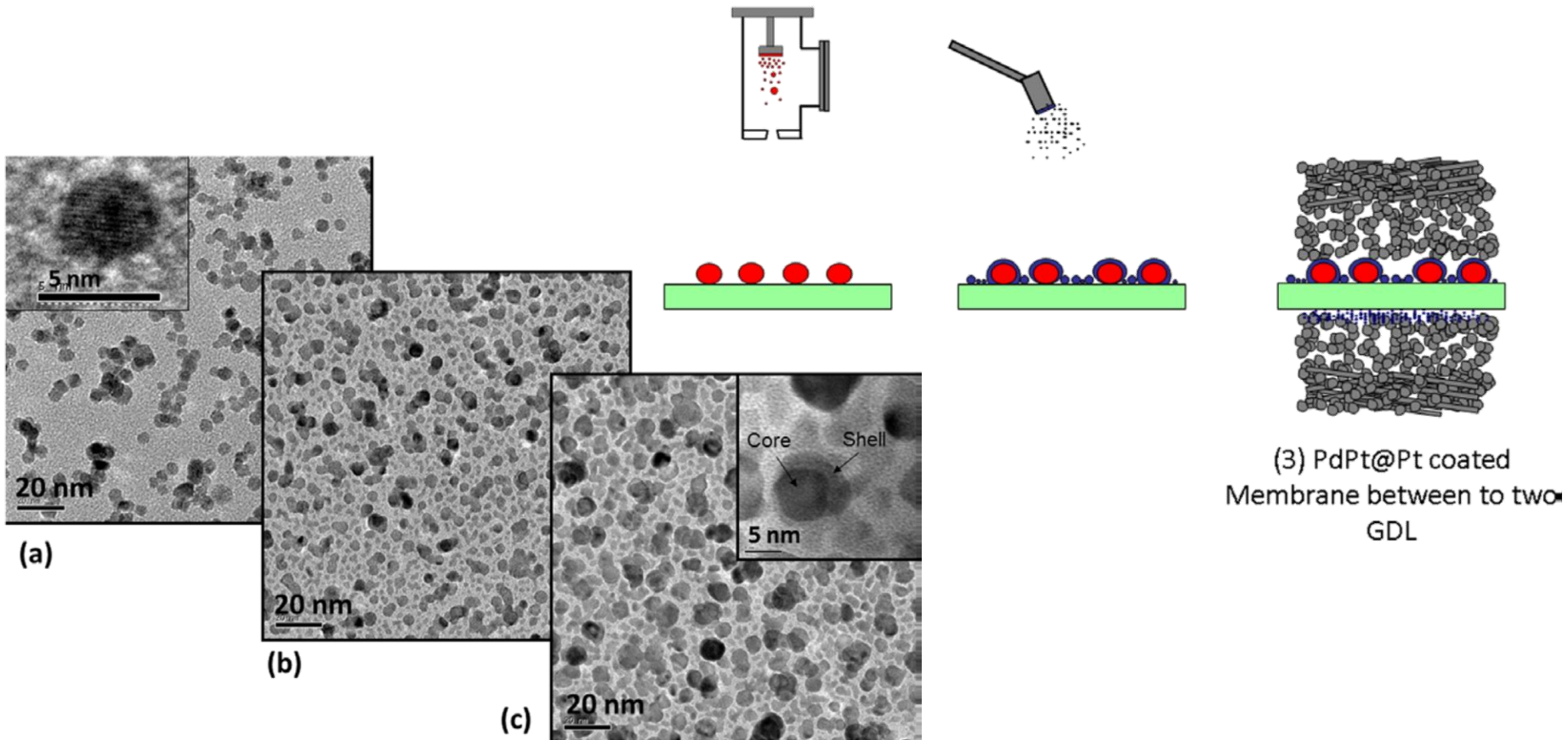
2/ Pt DC magnetron sputtering





# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdPt Catalysts

- Suitable for direct deposition on the polymer electrolyte membrane (CCM)

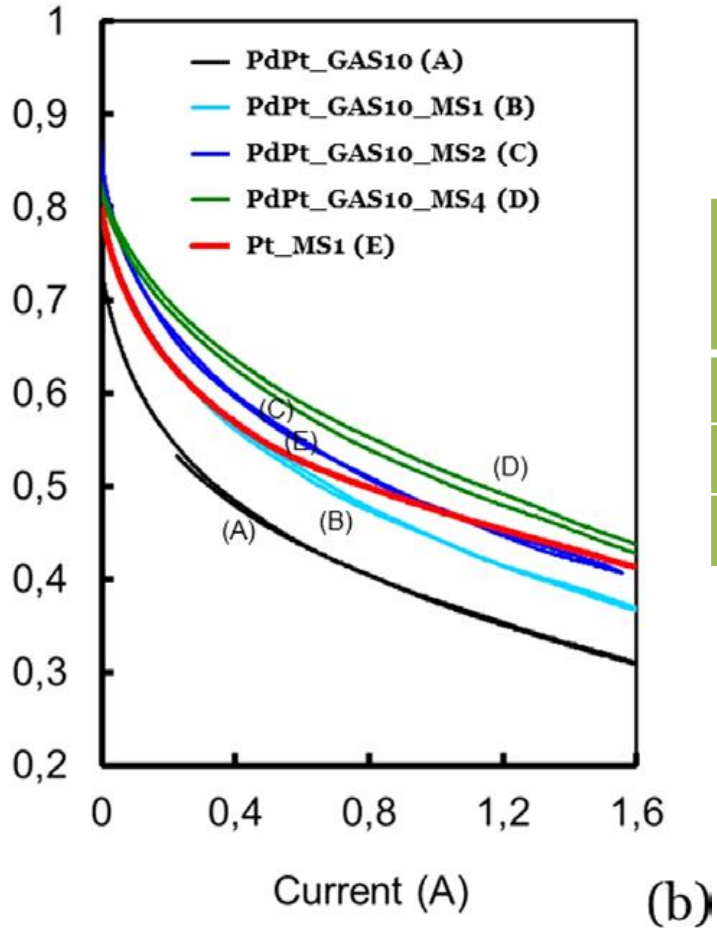






# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdPt Catalysts

## Fuel cell tests

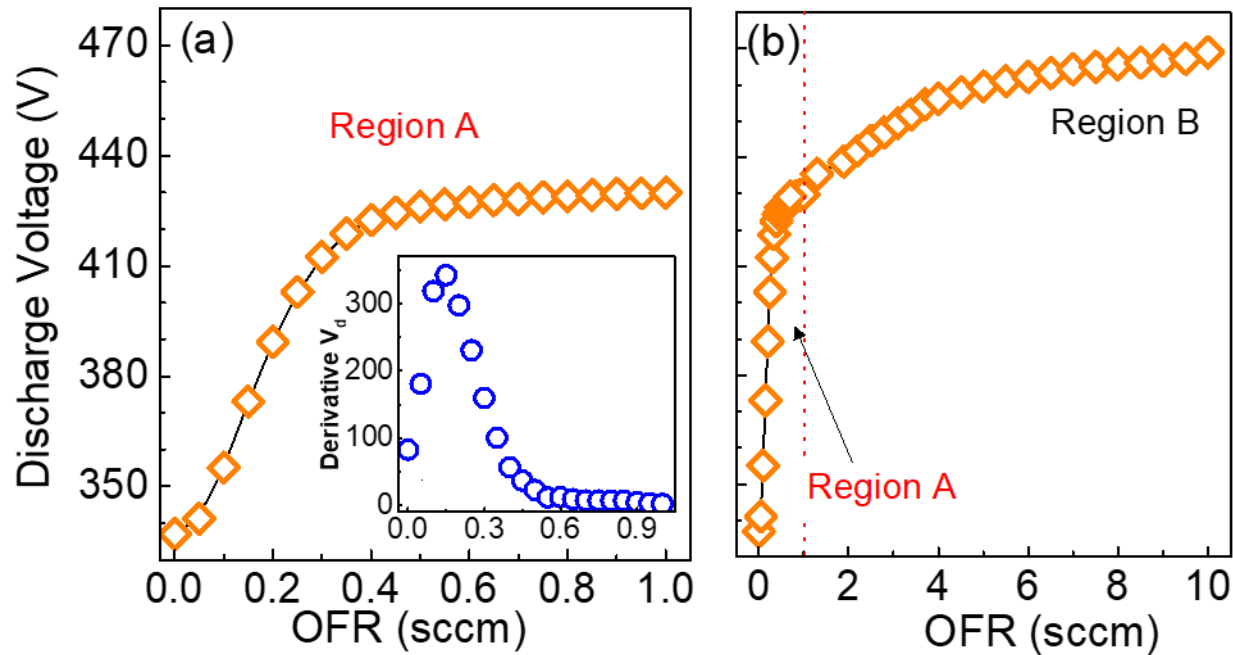


Name	PdPt Dep. time (min)	Pt dep. Time (min)
PdPt@Pt_GAS10_MS1	10	1
PdPt@Pt_GAS10_MS2	10	2
PdPt@Pt_GAS10_MS4	10	4



# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdO<sub>x</sub> Catalysts

- Growth of NPs in a reactive atmosphere: O<sub>2</sub> here.
- Effects of reactive atmosphere on:
  - NP size distribution
  - NP structure



OFR: Oxygen Flow Rate

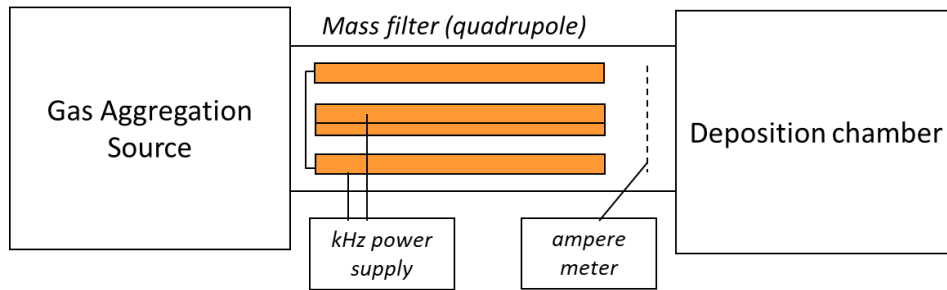
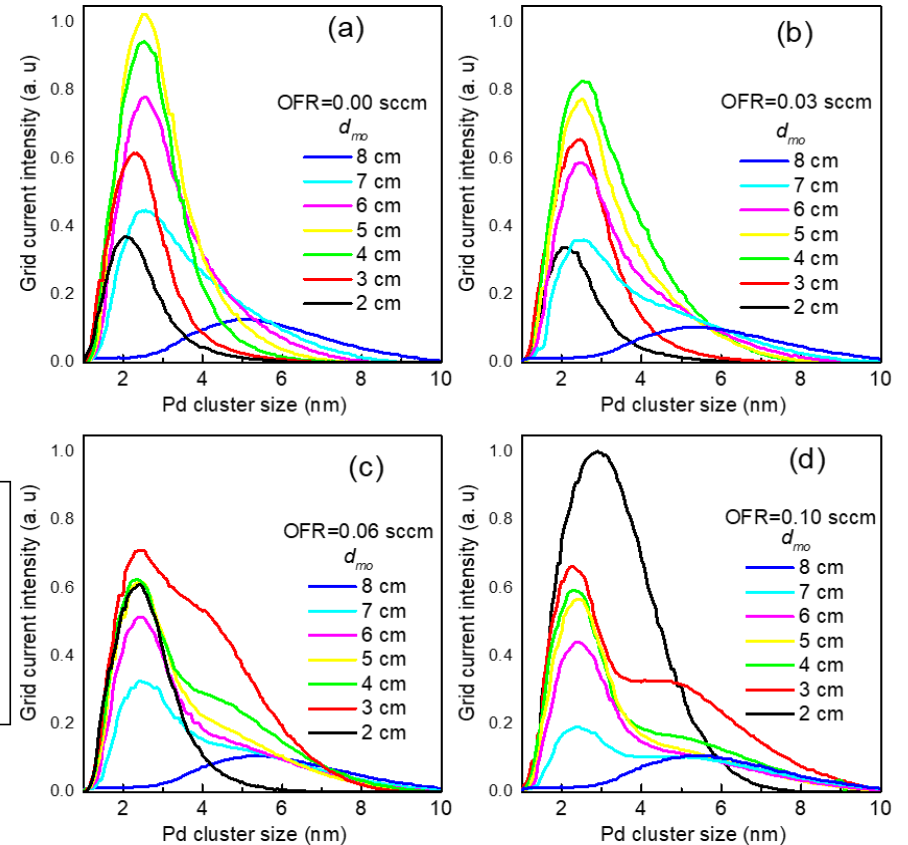
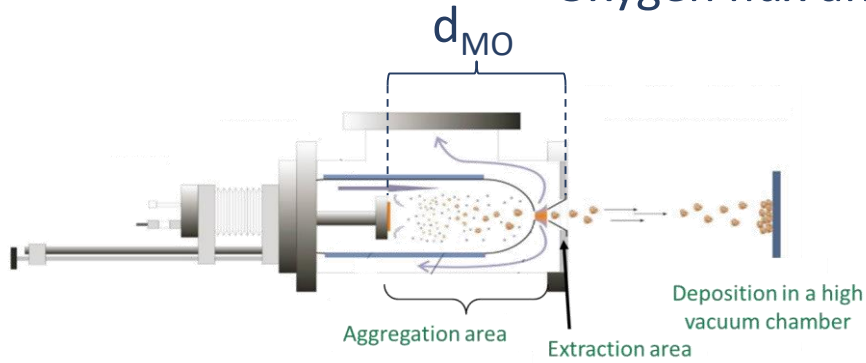


# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdO<sub>x</sub> Catalysts

Mass spectrometric measurement of the NP size distribution

VS

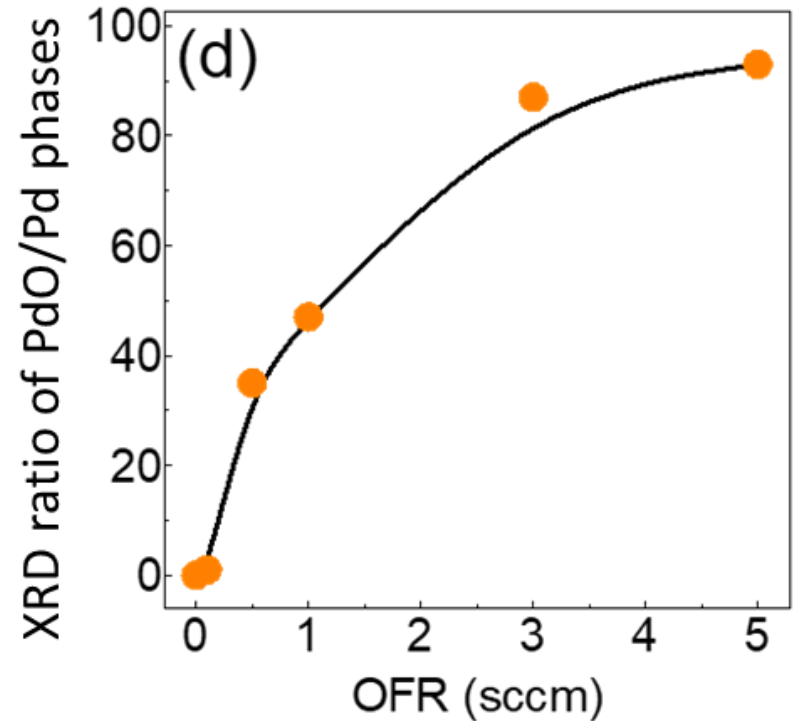
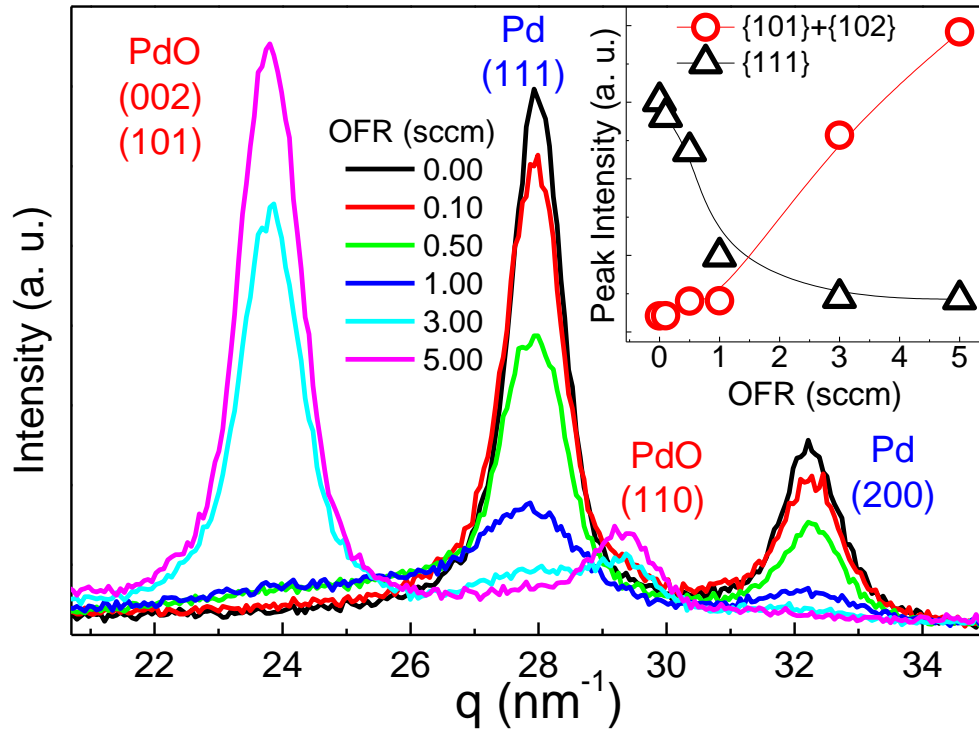
Oxygen flux and condensation distance





# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdO<sub>x</sub> Catalysts

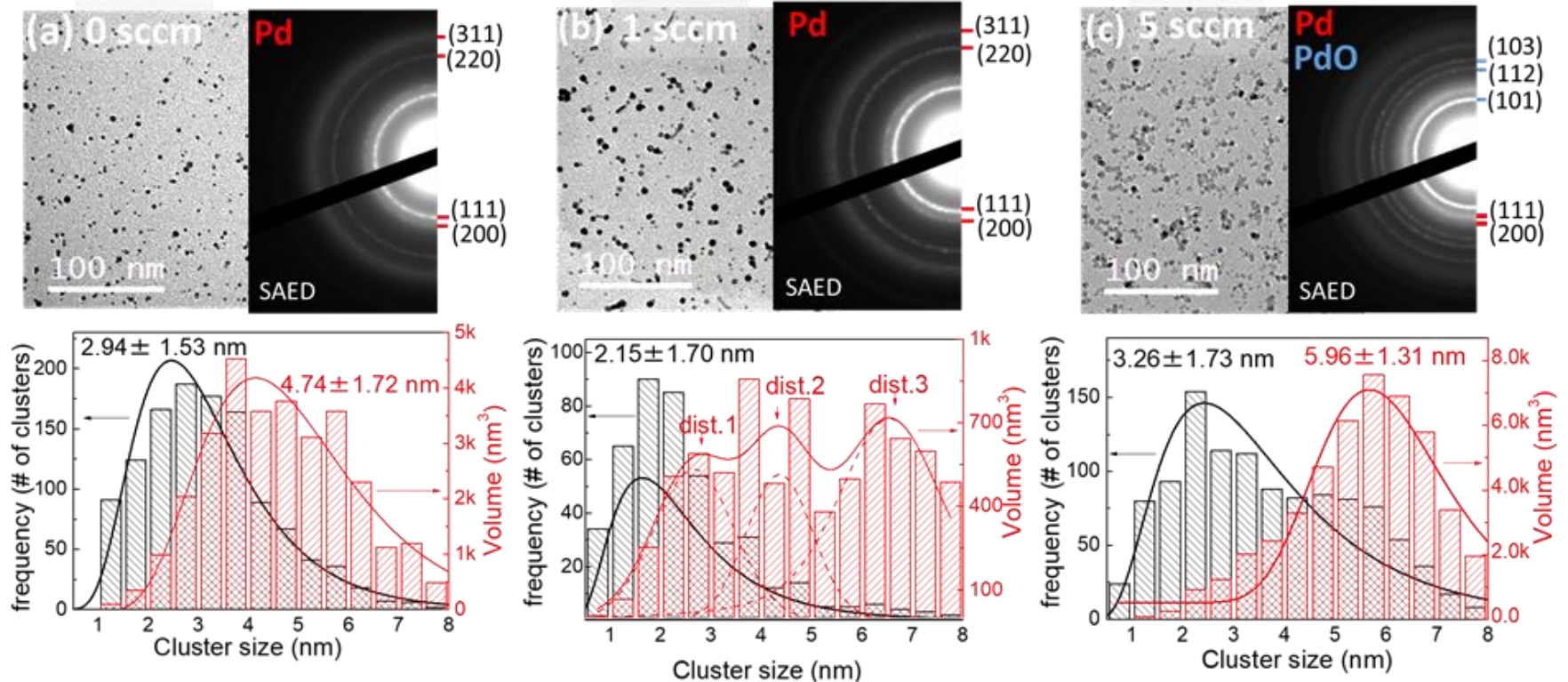
Grazing Incidence XRD results of deposited NPs on Si(100)





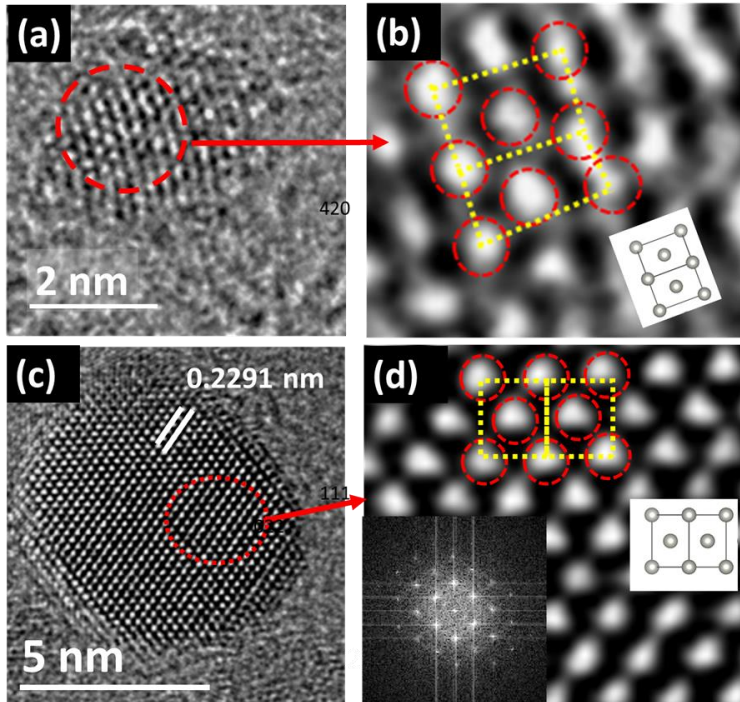
# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdO<sub>x</sub> Catalysts

HRTEM pictures and size distributions vs OFR

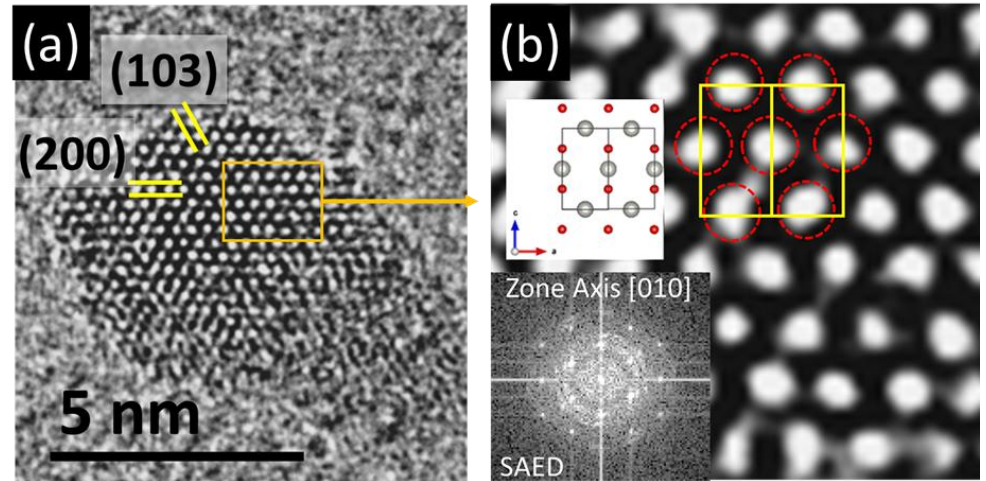




# Magnetron gas aggregation nanocluster source: PdO<sub>x</sub> Catalysts



OFR = 0 sccm



OFR = 5 sccm



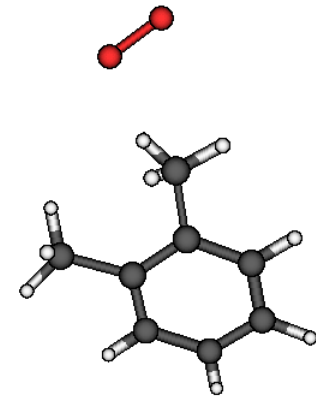
# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth

- ✓ Calculate all trajectories of a set of atoms, molecules, ...  
via the Newton equation of motion  
→ Suitable for processes at nanoscale (up to  $10^9$  atoms)
- ✓ A rigorous approach requires the use of robust interaction potentials and initial conditions (positions, velocities) preferably matching experimental conditions  
→ appropriate velocity distribution functions can be derived from experimental conditions.
- ✓ Proper energy dissipation:
  - Energy release during bond formation : deposition, bond formation/breaking
  - Annealing→ via friction term(s), thermostat(s)

$$\vec{F}_i = m_i \vec{a}_i = m_i \frac{d\vec{v}_i}{dt} = m_i \frac{d^2 \vec{r}_i}{dt^2}$$

and

$$\vec{F}_i = -\vec{\nabla}_{\vec{r}_i} U(\vec{r}_1, \vec{r}_2, \vec{r}_3, \dots, \vec{r}_N)$$





# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth

## Relevance/significance of MD Simulations

### Flux :

Exp.  $1 \cdot 10^{15} \text{cm}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1} = 10 \text{ species / nm}^2 / \text{s}$  - MD 1 specie /  $10 \times 10 \text{ nm}^2 / 2 \text{ ps}$

Prohibit long time diffusion, except if including specific strategies

### Pressure/simulation box size

Solid density : Pt  $65 \text{ nm}^{-3}$

Liquid density: water  $33 \text{ nm}^{-3}$

→ Can be treated. Diffusion coefficients can be calculated without additional approximation(s)

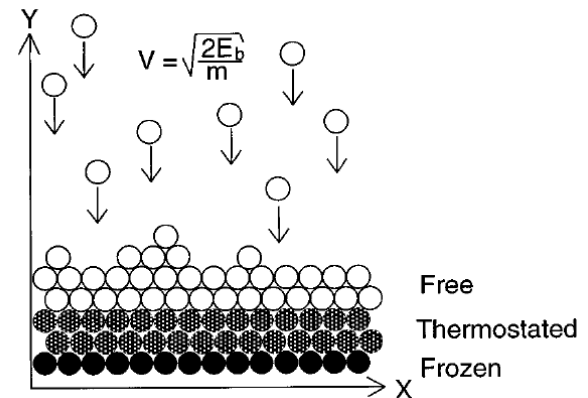
Gas density : 1 atm =  $2.4 \cdot 10^{-2} \text{ nm}^{-3}$  → Not enough species in box of size d at pressure P

Solution: relevant parameter = Collision number  $\propto P \cdot d$

→ ↑P ↓d should work.

### Thermal relaxation

- Choose a relevant specie release time: i.e. greater than thermalisation time
- Choose a relevant thermostat (region i.e. what should be thermostated) within this relevant time
- For interactions with surface, one can guess that only the substrate should be thermostated







# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Interactions potentials

## Metals : Embedded Atom Method (EAM)

- ⇒ energy of a solid is a unique functional of the electron density.
- ⇒ uses the concept of electron (charge) density to describe metallic bonding:
- ⇒ each atom contributes through a spherical, exponentially-decaying field of electron charge, centered at its nucleus, to the overall charge density of the system.
- ⇒ Binding of atoms is modelled as embedding these atoms in this “pool” of charge, where the energy gained by embedding an atom at location  $r$  is some function of the local density.

⇒ The total energy thus writes:

$$E_{pot} = \sum_{i=1}^N E_i = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j, j \neq i}^N \phi_{ij}(r_{ij}) + \sum_{i=1}^N F_i(\rho_i) \quad \rho = \sum_{j, j \neq i}^N f_j(r_{ij}) \quad f(r) = \frac{f_e \exp\left[-\beta\left(\frac{r}{r_e} - 1\right)\right]}{1 + \left(\frac{r}{r_e} - \lambda\right)^{20}}$$

With pairwise function:

$$\phi(r) = \frac{A \exp\left[-\alpha\left(\frac{r}{r_e} - 1\right)\right]}{1 + \left(\frac{r}{r_e} - \kappa\right)^{20}} - \frac{B \exp\left[-\beta\left(\frac{r}{r_e} - 1\right)\right]}{1 + \left(\frac{r}{r_e} - \lambda\right)^{20}}$$

and mixing rule:

$$\phi^{ab}(r) = \frac{1}{2} \left[ \frac{f^b(r)}{f^a(r)} \phi^{aa}(r) + \frac{f^a(r)}{f^b(r)} \phi^{bb}(r) \right]$$

S.M. Foiles, M.I. Baskes Contributions of the embedded-atom method to materials science and engineering, MRS Bulletin, 37 (2012) 485-491.

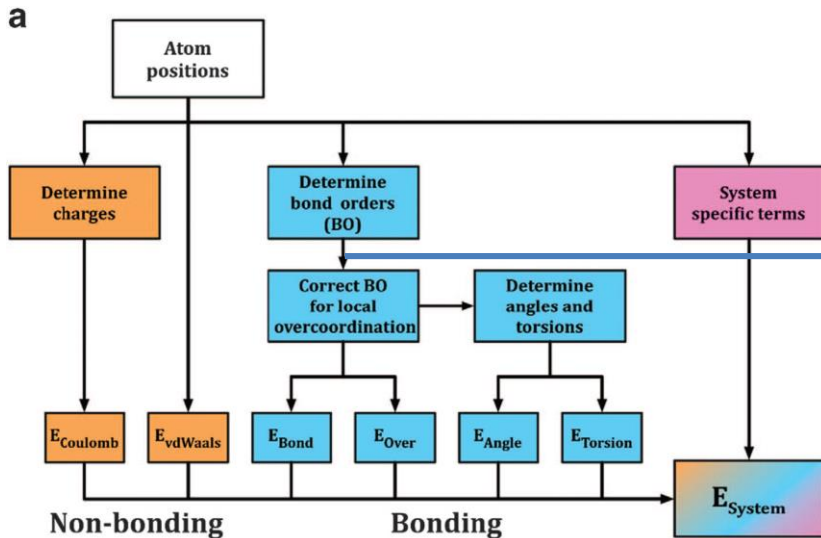
X. W. Zhou et al, Misfit-energy-increasing dislocations in vapor-deposited CoFe/NiFe multilayers, Phys. Rev. B 69 (2004) 144113



# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Interactions potentials

ReaxFF allows for computationally efficient simulation of materials under realistic conditions, *i.e.* bond breaking and formation with accurate chemical energies. It also includes variable partial charges.

Due to the chemistry, ReaxFF has a complicated potential energy function:  $E_{\text{system}} = E_{\text{bond}} + E_{\text{over}} + E_{\text{angle}} + E_{\text{tors}} + E_{\text{vdWaal}} + E_{\text{Coulomb}} + E_{\text{Specific}}$



$$\begin{aligned}
 BO_{ij} &= BO_{ij}^{\sigma} + BO_{ij}^{\pi} + BO_{ij}^{\pi\pi} \\
 &= \exp \left[ p_{bo1} \left( \frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^{\sigma}} \right)^{p_{bo2}} \right] + \exp \left[ p_{bo3} \left( \frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^{\pi}} \right)^{p_{bo4}} \right] \\
 &\quad + \exp \left[ p_{bo5} \left( \frac{r_{ij}}{r_o^{\pi\pi}} \right)^{p_{bo6}} \right]
 \end{aligned}$$

Correct Bond Order  $\Rightarrow$  Correct description of reaction energy barriers

Overview of the ReaxFF total energy components

TP Senftle et al, *The ReaxFF reactive force-field: development, applications and future directions*, npj Computational Materials 2, (2016) 15011



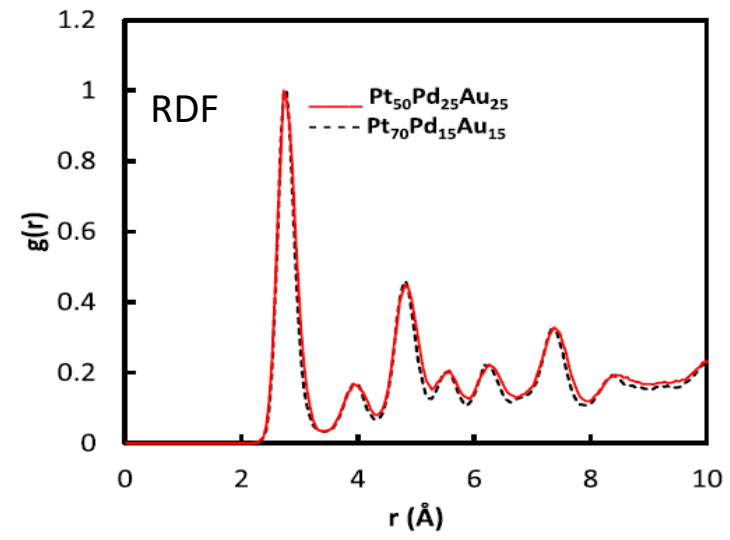
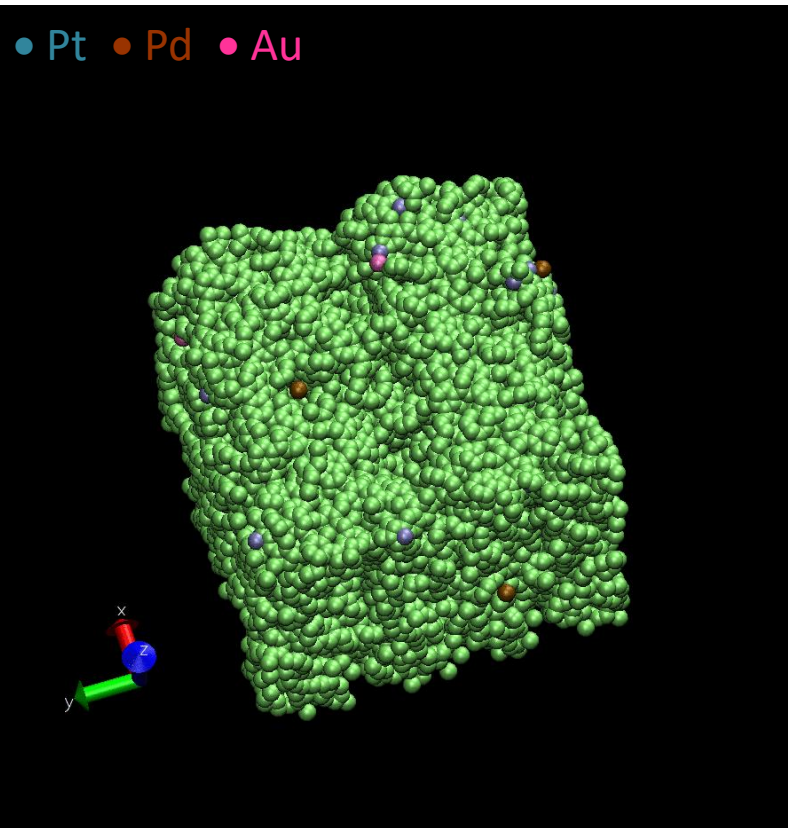
# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Supported Pt<sub>2</sub>PdAu nanocatalyst growth on porous carbon

Potentials used in the system:

Pt-Pd-Au: EAM potentials

C – C: Tersoff potential -> thermostat

Metal – C: LJ potential (Steele)



**Table 1 – EAM and average experimental surface energies of the low index faces of Pt, Pd, Au in  $Jm^{-2}$  [40].**

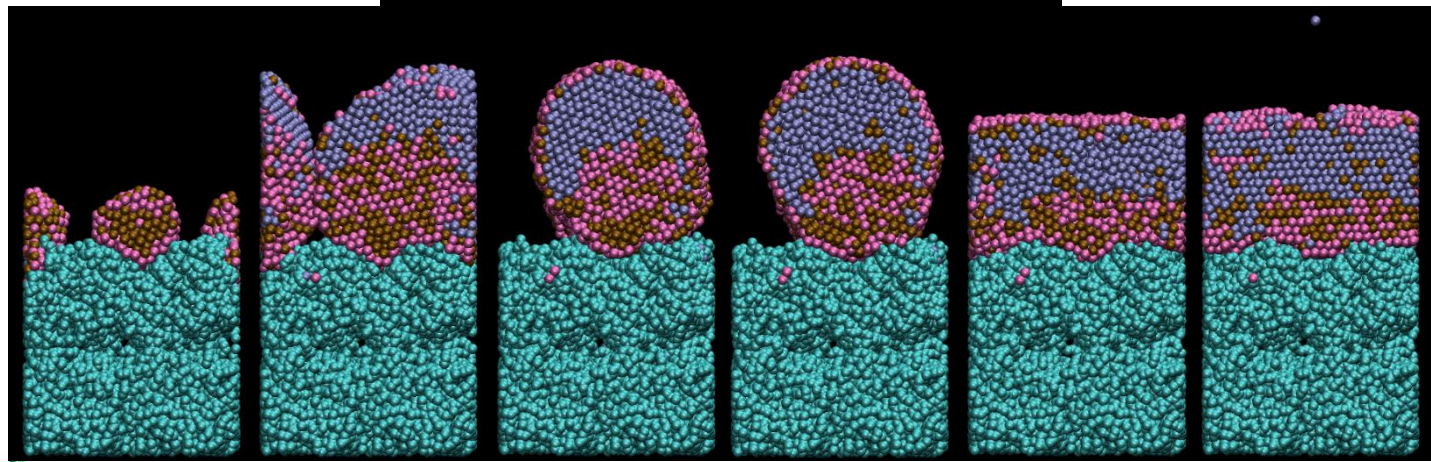
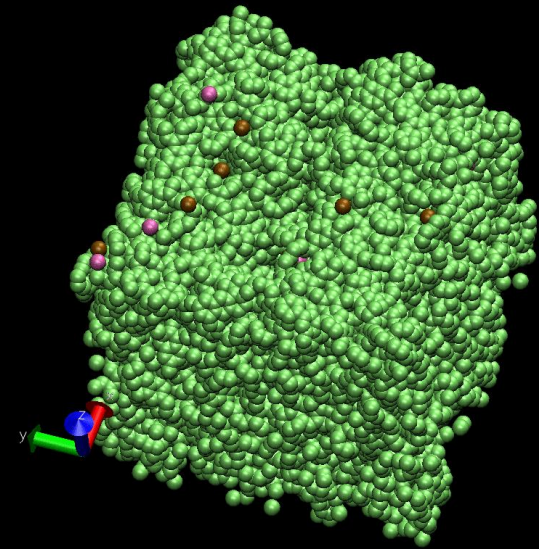
	Pt	Pd	Au
(111)	1.44	1.22	0.79
(100)	1.65	1.37	0.92
(110)	1.75	1.49	0.98
Experimental, face averaged	2.49	2.00	1.5

■ Gold surface segregation



# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Supported Pt<sub>2</sub>PdAu nanocatalyst growth on porous carbon

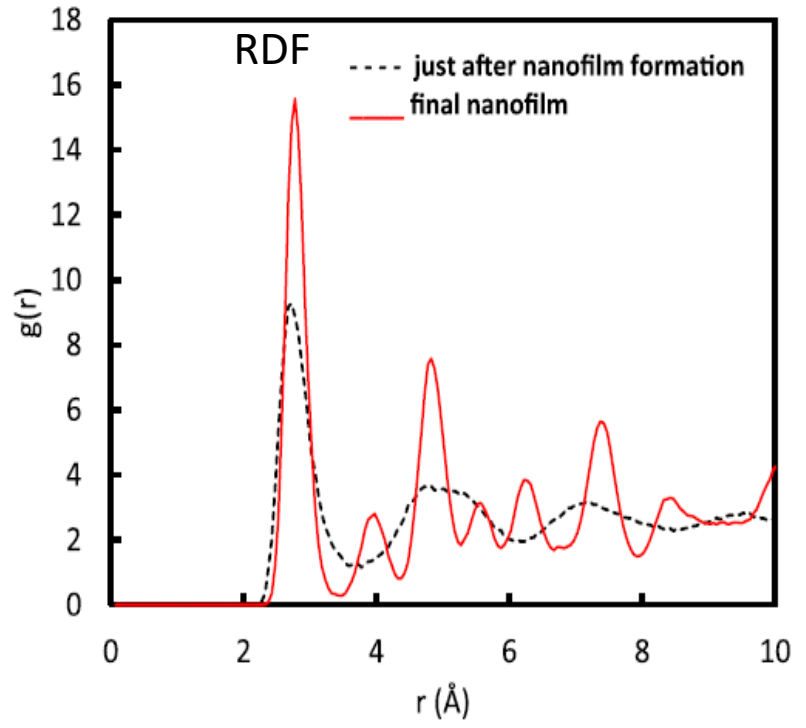
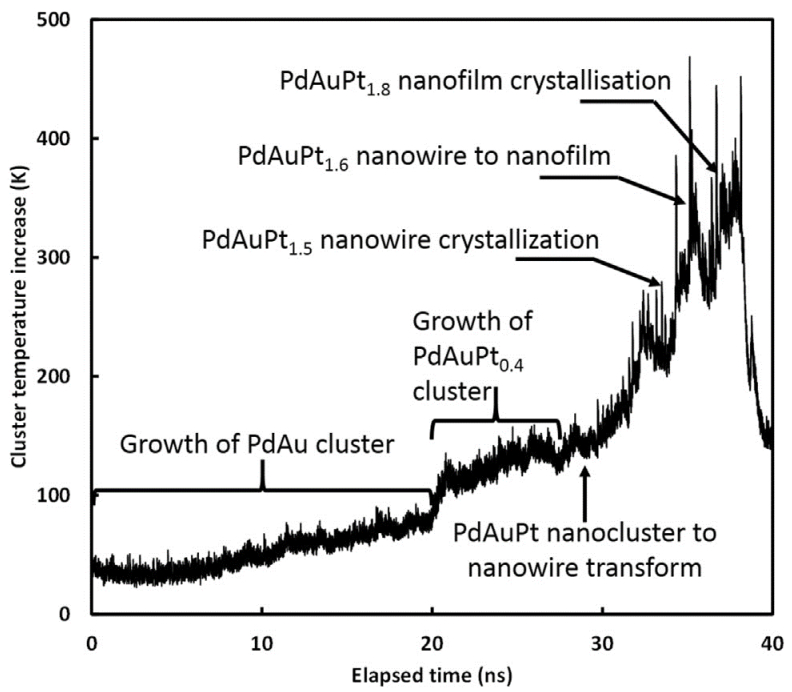
● Pt ● Pd ● Au





# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Supported Pt<sub>2</sub>PdAu nanocatalyst growth on porous carbon

Correlations between cluster temperature evolution and morphology transform in the course of deposition of core-shell PdAu@Pt<sub>2</sub> nanocatalyst

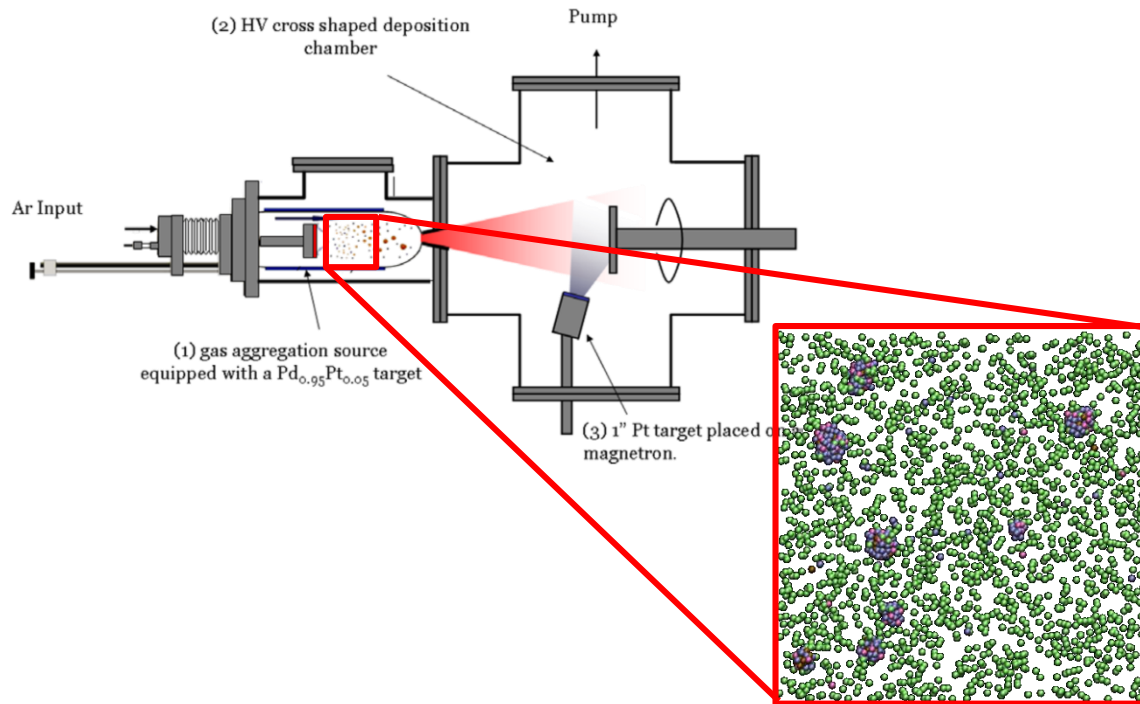


- L. Xie, P. Brault, C. Coutanceau, A. Caillard, J. Berndt, E. Neyts Appl. Cat. B, 62 (2015) 21 – 26
- P. Brault, C. Coutanceau, P. C. Jennings, T. Vegge, J. Berndt, A. Caillard, S. Baranton, S. Lankiang, International Journal of Hydrogen Energy 41 (2016) 22589-22597
- E. Neyts, P. Brault, Plasma Processes and Polymers 14 (2017) 1600145 (Review article)
- FP7 FCH-JU SMARTCat project #325327



# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Free Pt<sub>3</sub>NiAu nanocatalyst growth

## Gas aggregation source: simulation principles



## Matching experimental and simulation conditions

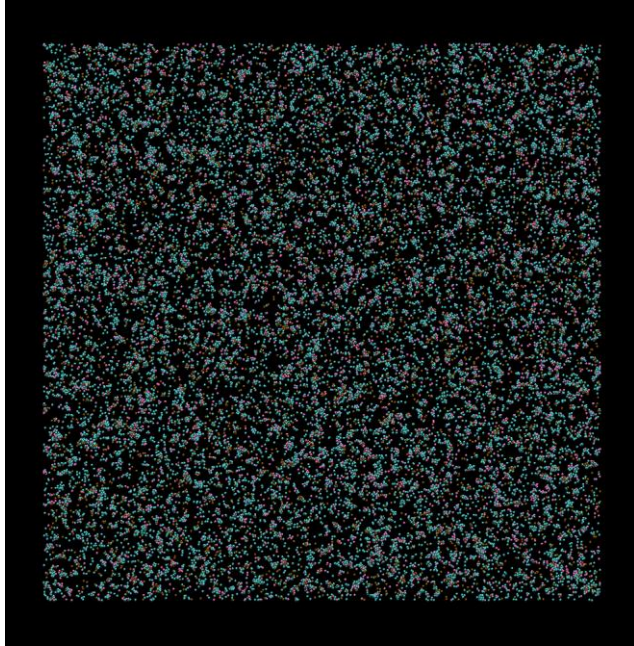
- Metal vapor density in the aggregation chamber  
$$N_M = (Y_{Ar} I / q) / (\Phi(Ar) \cdot P_{at} / P_{Ar})$$
  
→ will give the proper ratio of  $N_M / N_{Ar}$  in the simulation box

- Collision number identical in experiments and in simulation  
i.e.  $P_{exp} \cdot d_{exp} = P_{sim} \cdot d_{sim}$

A. Caillard et al, *PdPt catalyst synthesized using a gas aggregation source and magnetron sputtering for fuel cell electrodes*, J. Phys. D: Appl. Phys. 48 (2015) 475302  
E Quesnel et al *Modeling metallic nanoparticle synthesis in a magnetron-based nanocluster source by gas condensation of a sputtered vapor*, J. Appl. Phys. 107 (2010) 054309



# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Free Pt<sub>3</sub>NiAu nanocatalyst growth



Temperature evolution of the vapor and of the metal vapor and then clusters display the cluster growth and coalescence : breaks in the plot (green vertical sticks)

Tricks :

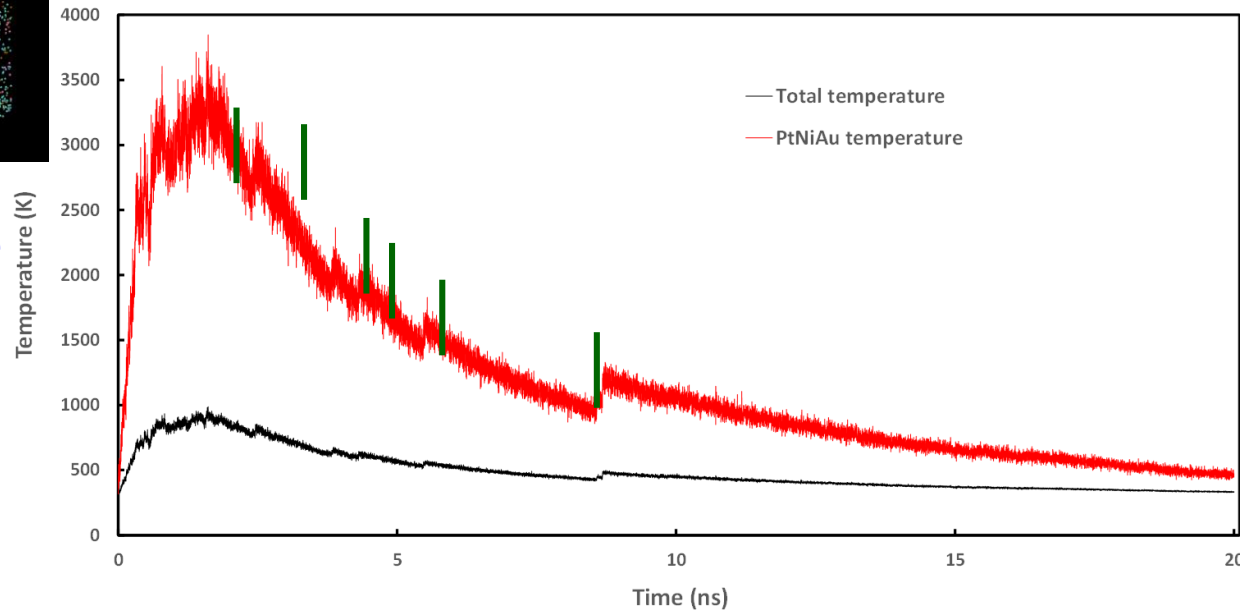
NVE ensemble for Pt, Ni and Au

NVT ensemble for Ar : surrounding gas is the thermostat

Ratio of  $N_{Ar}$  to  $N_{metal}$  estimated from experiments: depends on discharge current, Ar pressure, ...

here:  $N_{Ar}=128000$ ;  $N_{Pt}=19200$ ;  $N_{Ni}=6400$ ;  $N_{Au}=6400$

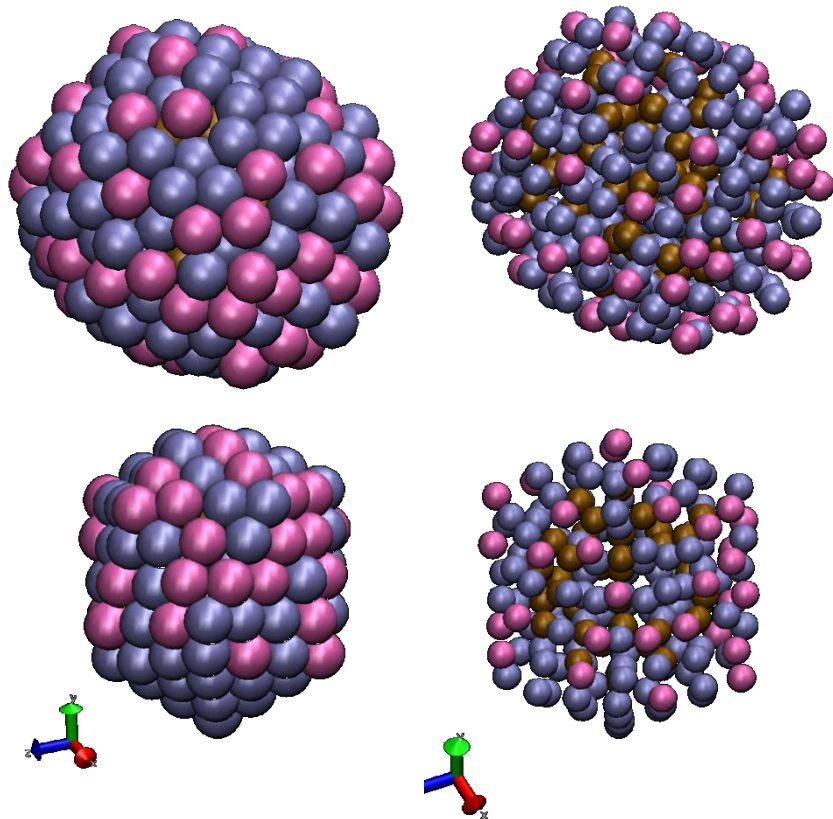
Box size 64x64x64 nm<sup>3</sup>



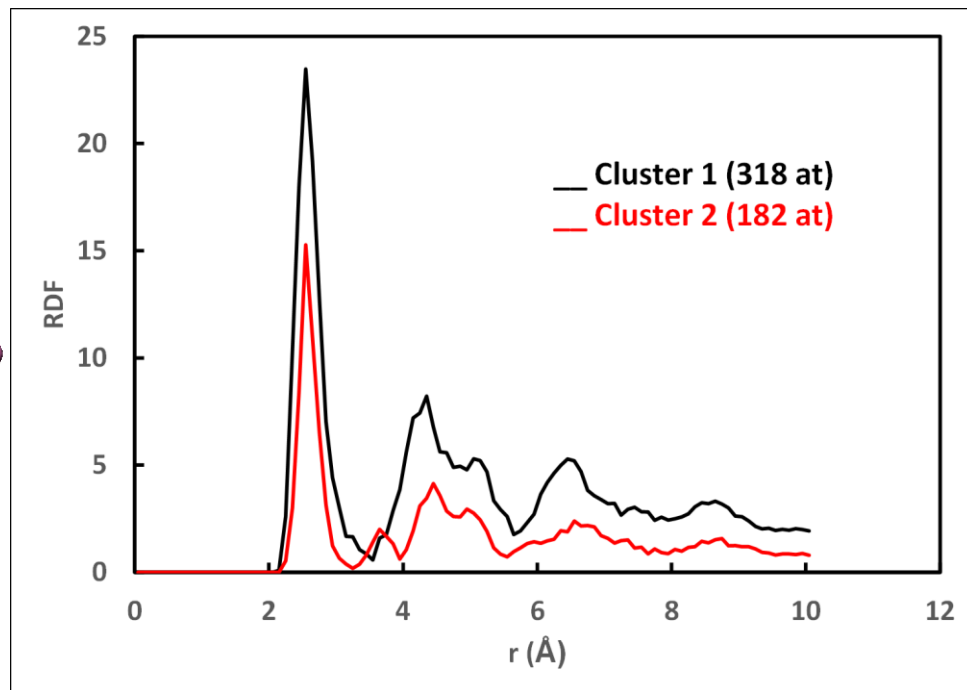


# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Free Pt<sub>3</sub>NiAu nanocatalyst growth

Cluster 1 (318 at.) : cuboctahedron ?  
 $Pt_{189}Ni_{62}Au_{67} \approx Pt_3NiAu$     ● Pt; ● Ni; ● Au



Cluster 2 (182 at.) : icosahedron ?  
 $Pt_{111}Ni_{38}Au_{33}$

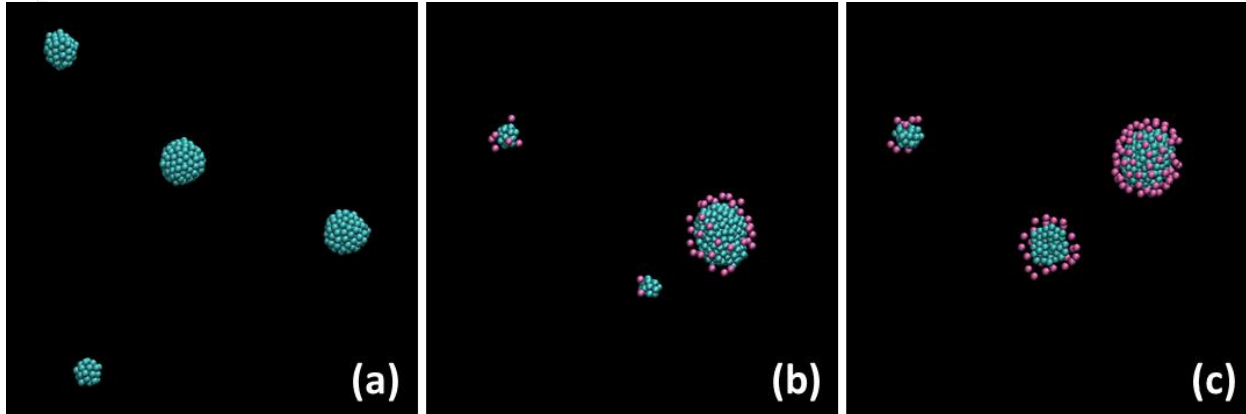


	1 <sup>st</sup> NN	2 <sup>nd</sup> NN	3 <sup>rd</sup> NN
Theoretical (fcc) 0.6Pt+0.2Ni+0.2Au	2.738 Å	3.872 Å	4.74 Å
Cluster 1	2.55 Å	(3.75 Å)	4.35 Å
Cluster 2	2.55 Å	3.65 Å	4.45 Å

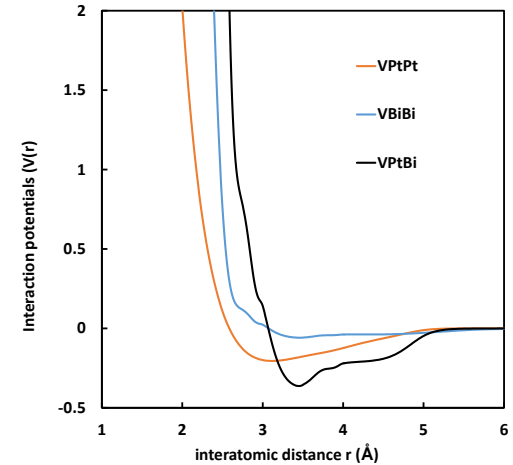




# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: $Pt_xBi_y$ nanocatalyst growth



Snapshot of the final clusters at 20 ns. Argon atoms (4000) are not represented for clarity.  $n_{Pt} + n_{Bi} = 500$ . (a) Pt alone (b)  $Pt_9Bi_1$  (c)  $Pt_8Bi_2$ . Box size  $16 \times 16 \times 16 \text{ nm}^3$



Plots of the pair part of the EAM interaction potentials:

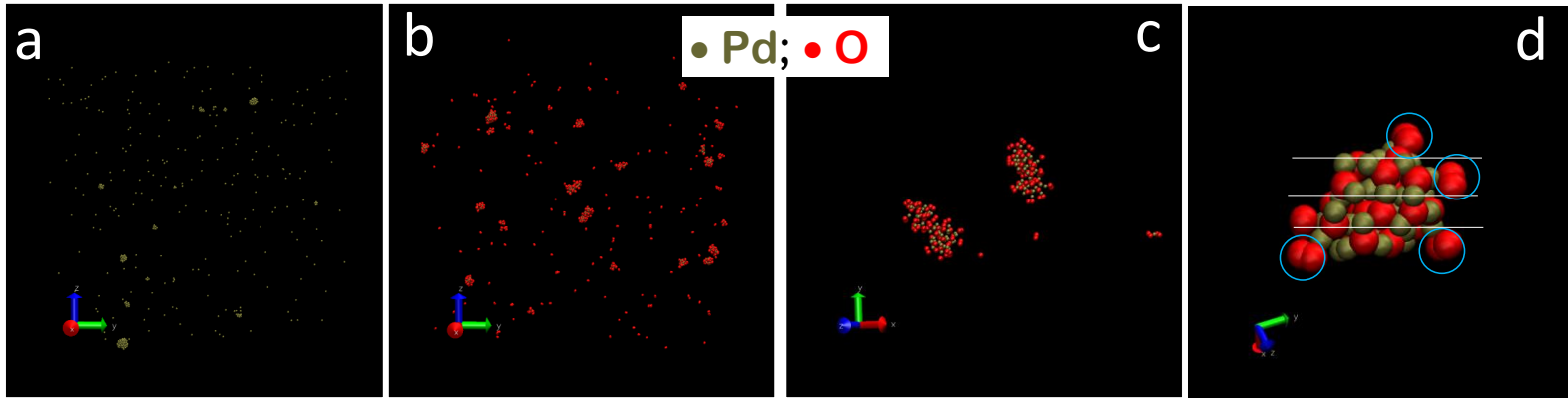
$$V_{PtPt}(r), V_{BiBi}(r), V_{PtBi}(r).$$

- Cluster atomic arrangements are typical of a crystalline structure of the Pt cores, with numbers of 1<sup>st</sup> nearest neighbors between 10 and 12 (i.e. consistent with fcc arrangement)
- Bi composition < 20% leads to cluster surfaces with both Pt and Bi, allowing catalytic activity enhancement.
- Pt/Bi atomic composition is not only globally preserved, but is also verified for each cluster



# Molecular dynamics simulation of sputtering plasma catalysts growth: Reactive PdO nanocatalyst growth

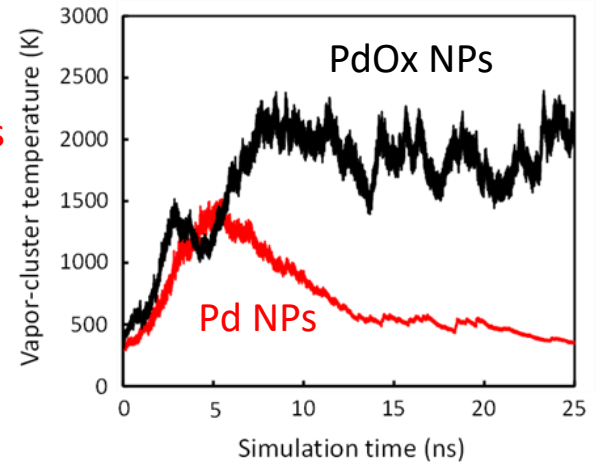
ReaxFF reactive variable charge potentials for Pd sputtering in Ar-O<sub>2</sub> gas mixture



Snapshot of (a-b) the overall Pd and PdO clusters at 25 ns simulation time (b-c) of the detailed PdO clusters.

First results: O addition -> no more free Pd, more PdO than Pd clusters

Ratio of  $N_{Ar}$  to  $N_{metal}$  estimated from experiments = 40 here;  
 $N_{Ar} = 20000$ ;  $N_{Pd} = 500$ ;  $N_{O} = 1000$ ; Box size : 40 x 40 x 40 nm<sup>3</sup>  
 Integration time 0.25 fs → 1. 10<sup>8</sup> iterations



Potential ReaxFF : T. Senftle et al, J. Chem Phys 139 (2013) 044109

P. Brault et al, Molecular Dynamics simulations of initial Pd and PdO nanocluster growths in a magnetron gas aggregation source, Frontiers in Chemical Science and Engineering (2018) accepted.



# Conclusions

- Magnetron sputtering deposition techniques are very powerful for designing nanocatalysts.
- GAS is a very promising variant for depositing preformed well defined nanocatalysts. Deposition rate can be high.
- (Reactive) molecular dynamics simulations are very attractive for describing/predicting sputter deposited/ grown NPs.



# Perspectives

## Towards full MD description of plasma processing: Principles

New reactive and including electron interaction potential allow targeting multiscale MD simulations of operating plasma reactor

1/ recovering/scaling experimental conditions

Hypothesis : Collision number are the same in experiments and simulations so,  $P_{exp}d_{exp} = P_{sim}d_{sim}$  thus  $N_{sim} = \frac{P_{exp}}{k_B T_g} \cdot S_{sim} \cdot d_{exp}$  and if  $r_{cut}$  is the largest cutoff radius :  $d_{sim} > \frac{N_{sim}}{S_{sim}} \cdot r_{cut}^3$

( $S_{sim}$  is the chosen smallest area of the simulation box)

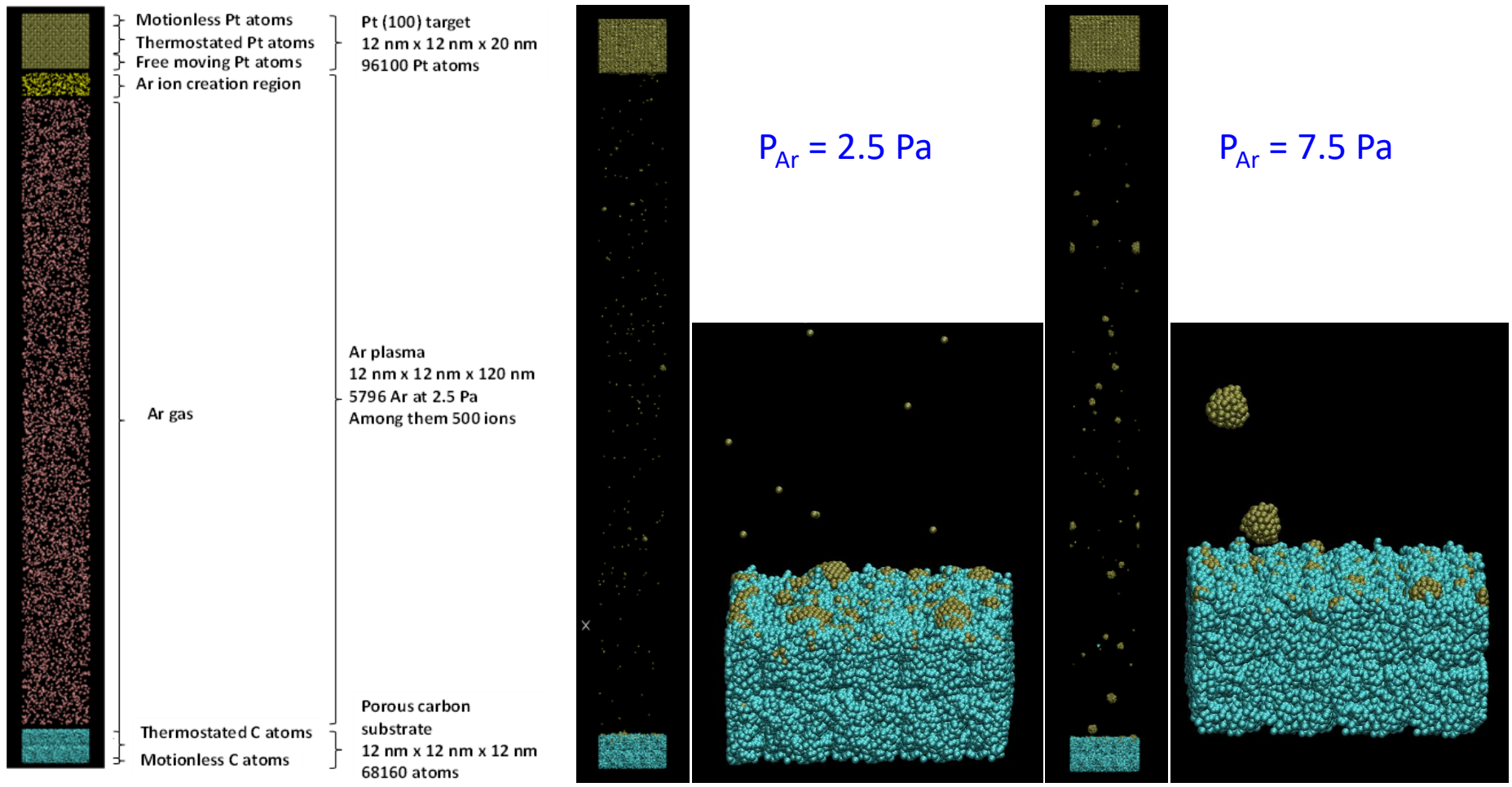
2/ combine improved force fields

Plasma factor	Possible?	Example
electric field	yes	CNT growth
atoms and hyperthermal species	yes	Si-NW oxidation
radicals	yes	a-C:H growth
ions	yes	sputtering
electronically excited states	yes	etching
vibrationally excited states	yes / no (reaxFF)	/
photons	implicit	(polymer degradation)
electrons	Yes (eFF, e-reaxFF)	/

E. Neyts, P. Brault (Review article), *Molecular dynamics simulations for plasma surface interactions*, Plasma Processes and Polymers 14 (2017) 1600145



# Perspectives: Towards full MD description of plasma processing. Application to nanocluster growth in plasma sputtering



P. Brault, *Multiscale Molecular Dynamics Simulation of Plasma Processing: Application to Plasma Sputtering*, Front. Phys. 6 (2018) 59



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Johannes Berndt	Stéphane Cuyenet		E. Neyts
	Sotheara Chuon		P. & C. Andreazza