

# Chemical Engineering and Catalysis: from molecular to process scale

G.B. Marin

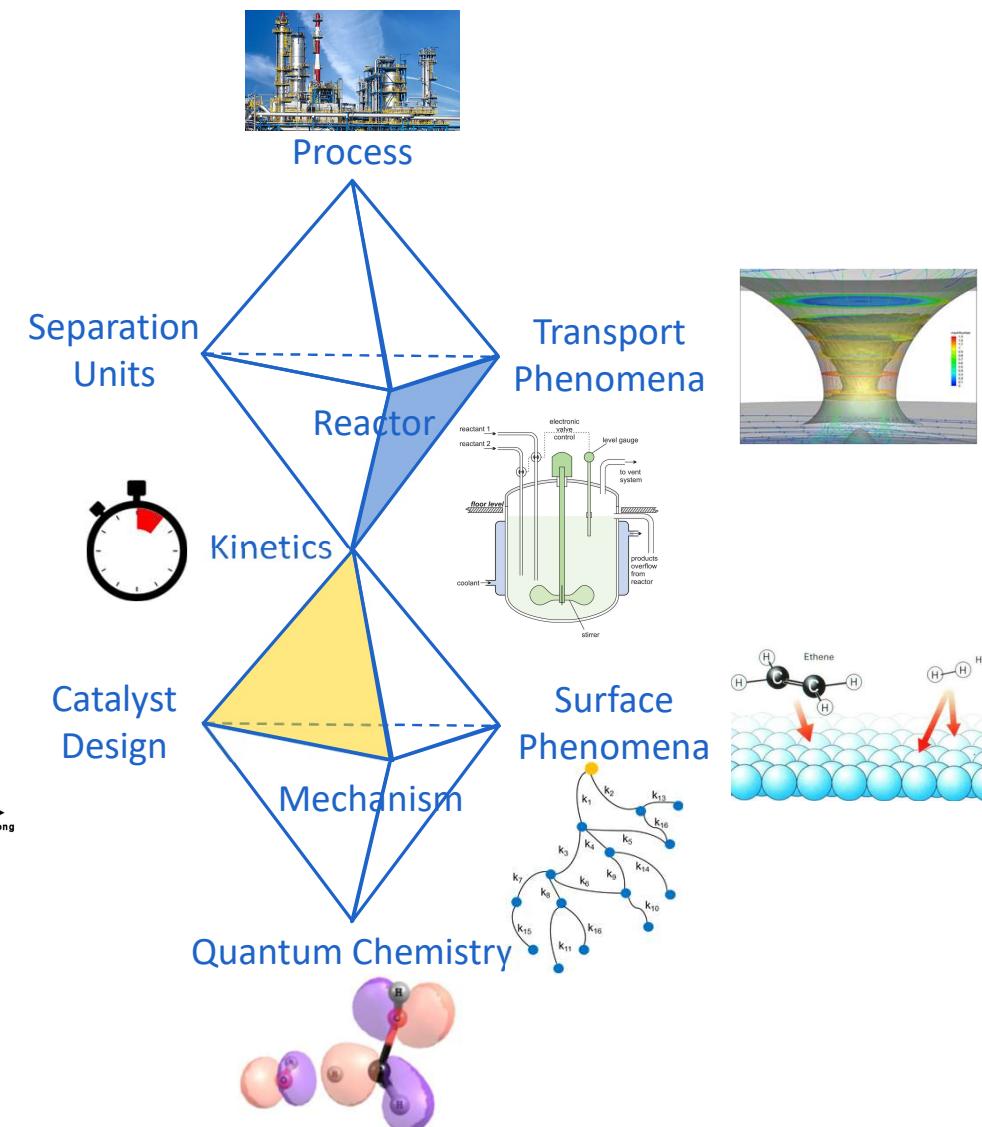
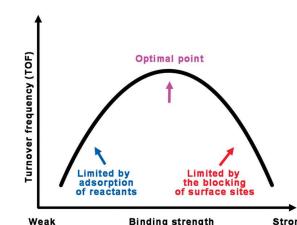
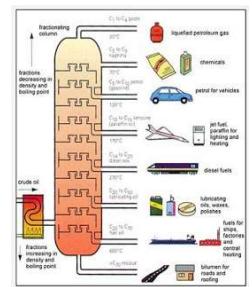
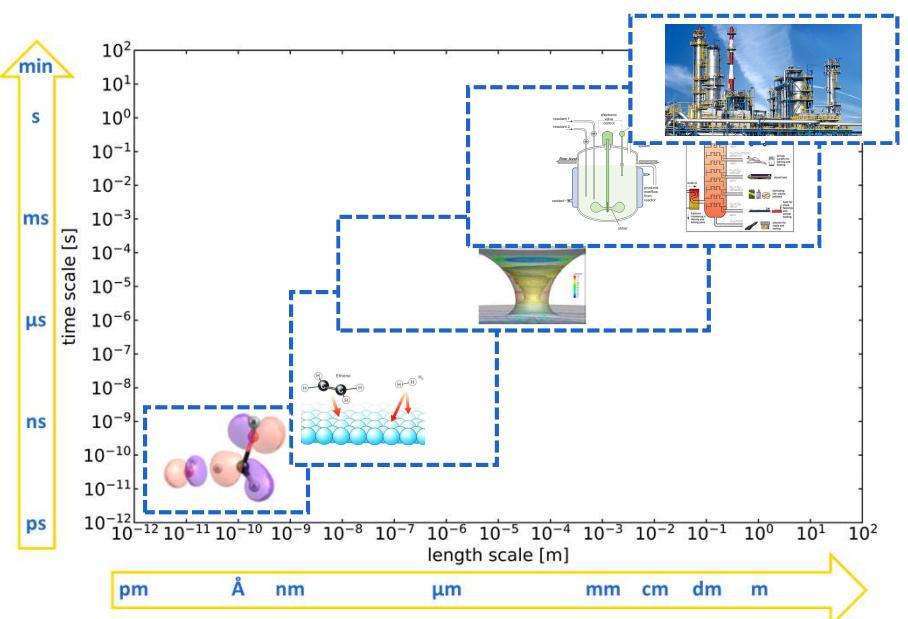
Laboratory for Chemical Technology



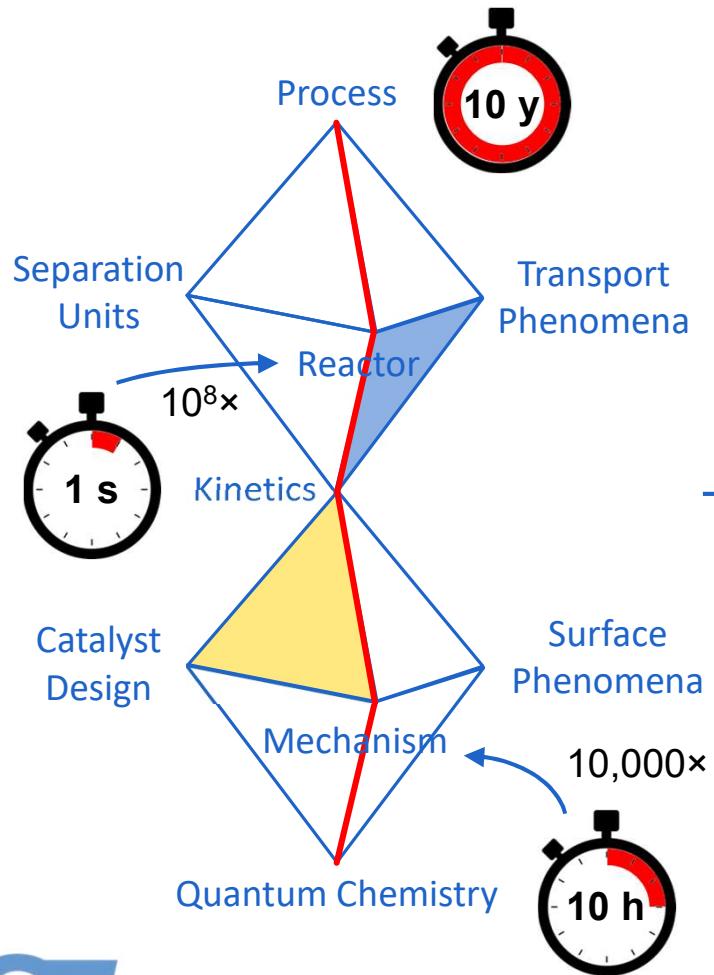
# Outline

- Introduction
- Super Dry Reforming
- Oxidative coupling of methane
- Conclusions and Perspectives

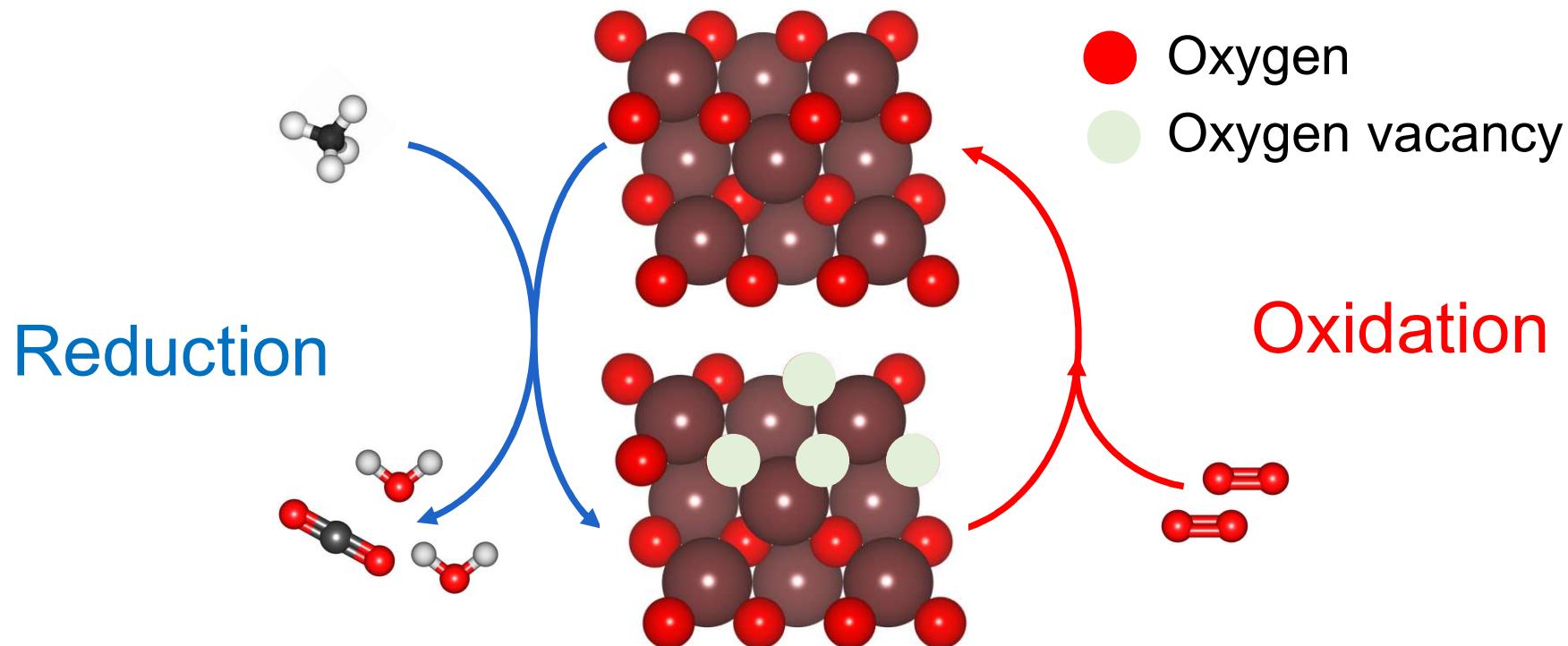
# Setting the scene



# Multi-Scale Modeling

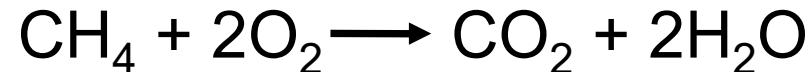


# Catalysis: e.g. Mars van Krevelen Redox cycle



+ Diffusion of **lattice** oxygen from bulk to surface

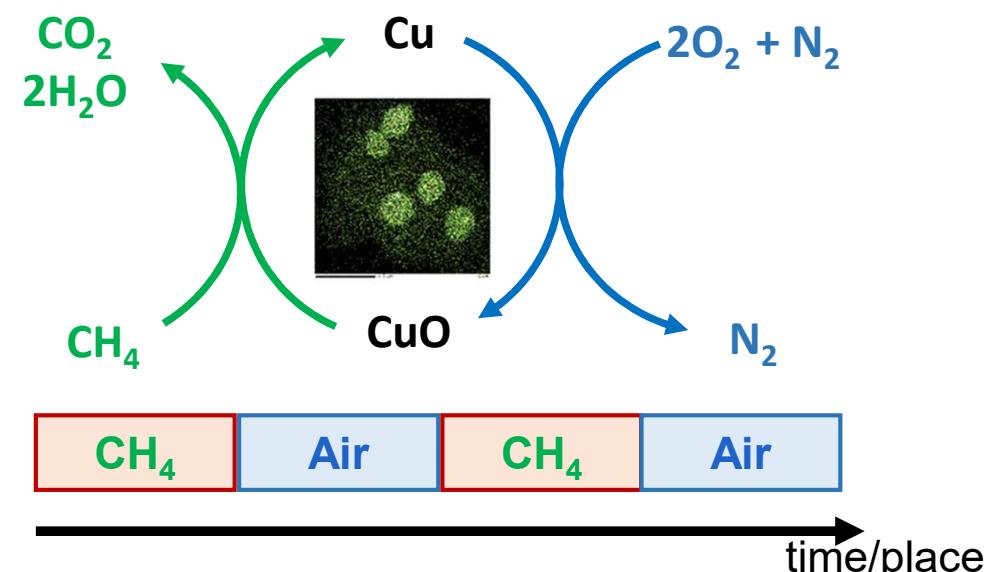
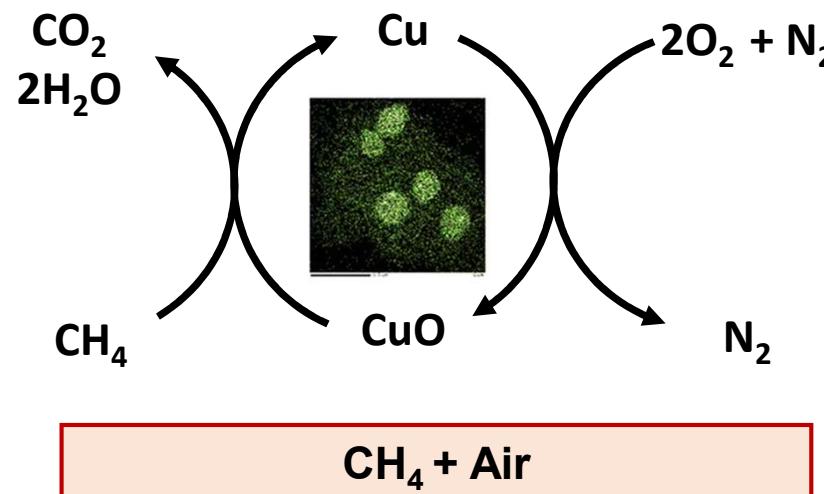
# Catalytic vs Cyclic/Chemical Looping process



Catalytic process

Single set of conditions

e.g. Mars - van Krevelen mechanism



Ishida M. et al., "Evaluation of a CHEMICAL-LOOPING-COMBUSTION power generation system by graphic exergy analysis" Energy, 12 (1987), 147

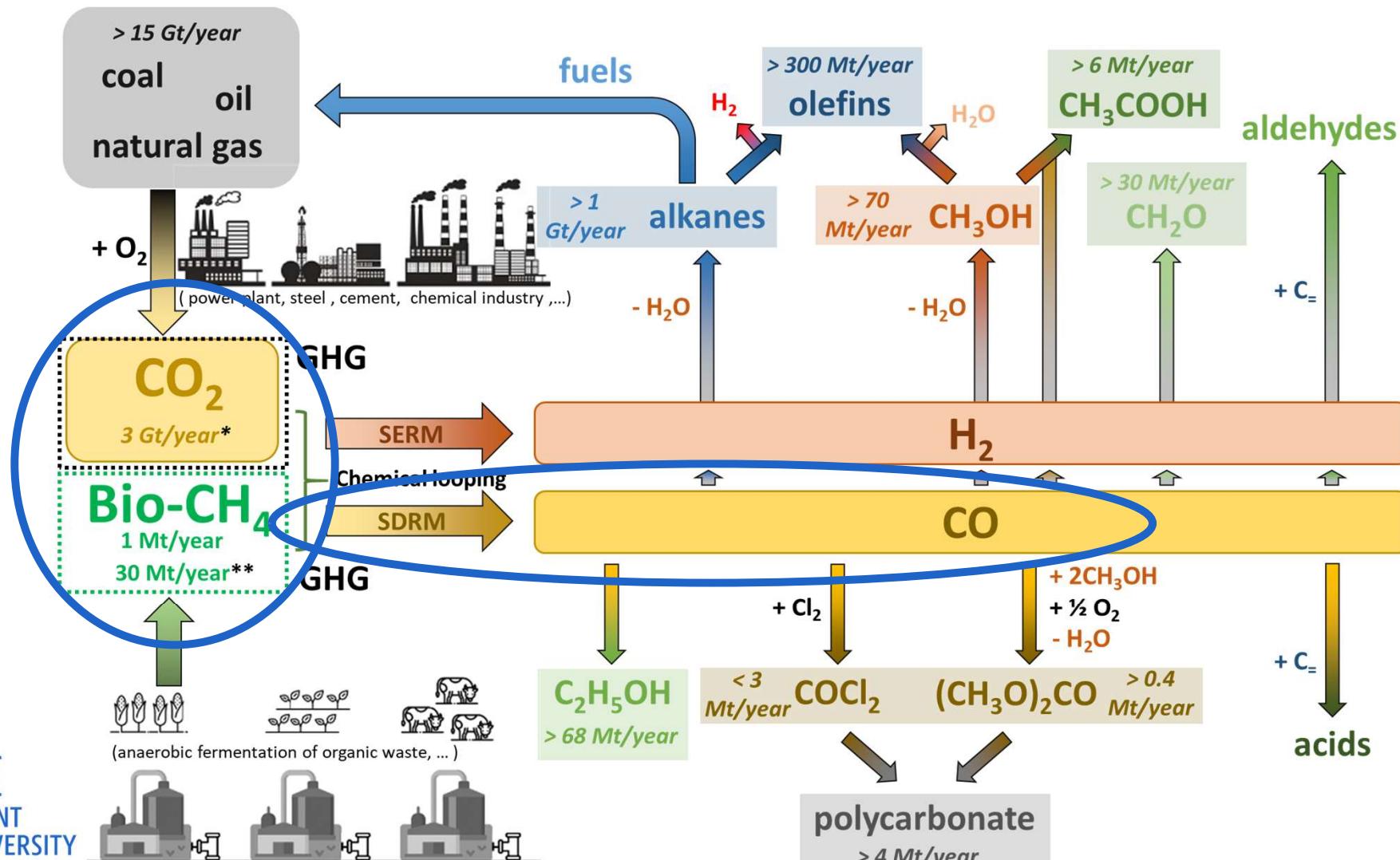
# Chemical Looping allows to:

- combine reaction and separation
- improve selectivity e.g. Rashmi M. Contractor CES vol. 54 (1999) 5627-5632 : Dupont's CFB technology for maleic anhydride
- operate safely “within” explosion limits
- use cheap materials (CaO, FeO<sub>x</sub>, ...)
- circumvent equilibrium limitations
- mitigate carbon formation
- optimize heat management
- minimize exergy loss

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# CO<sub>2</sub> capture and utilization (CCU)



# Chemical Looping: super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>



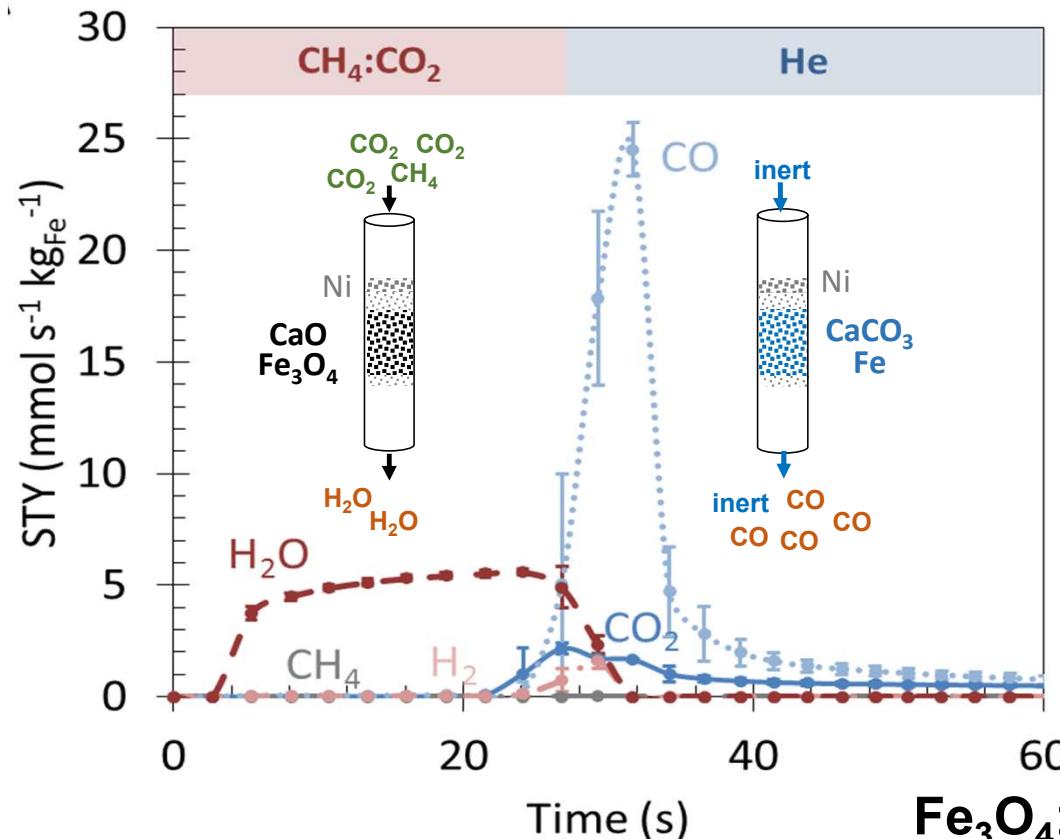
$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32



$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
+212	+24

# Fixed bed: Permanent periodic regime

T=1023 K; CH<sub>4</sub>:CO<sub>2</sub> = 1:3; after 25 cycles



**Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>:** Oxygen carrier/Storage Material (OSM)

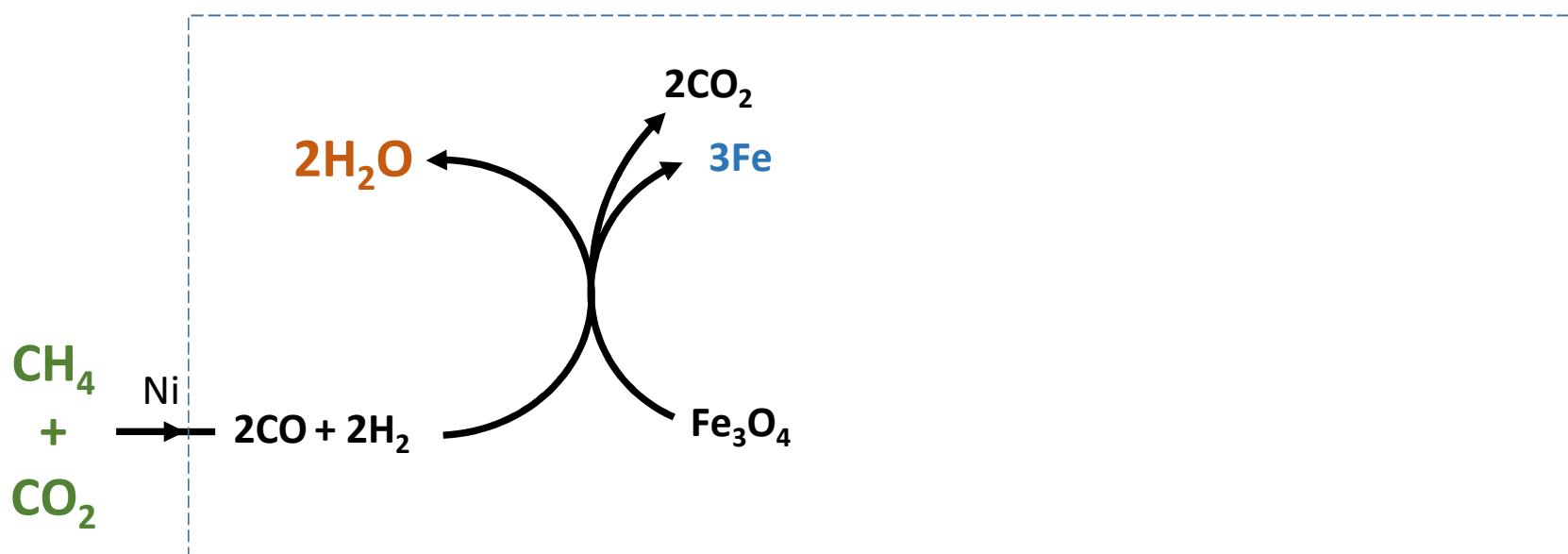
**CaO :** CO<sub>2</sub> sorbent

**Ni** : reforming catalyst

# Super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>

→ Step 1: CH<sub>4</sub> + 3CO<sub>2</sub> + Fe<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> + 4CaO ⇌ 2H<sub>2</sub>O + 3Fe + 4CaCO<sub>3</sub>

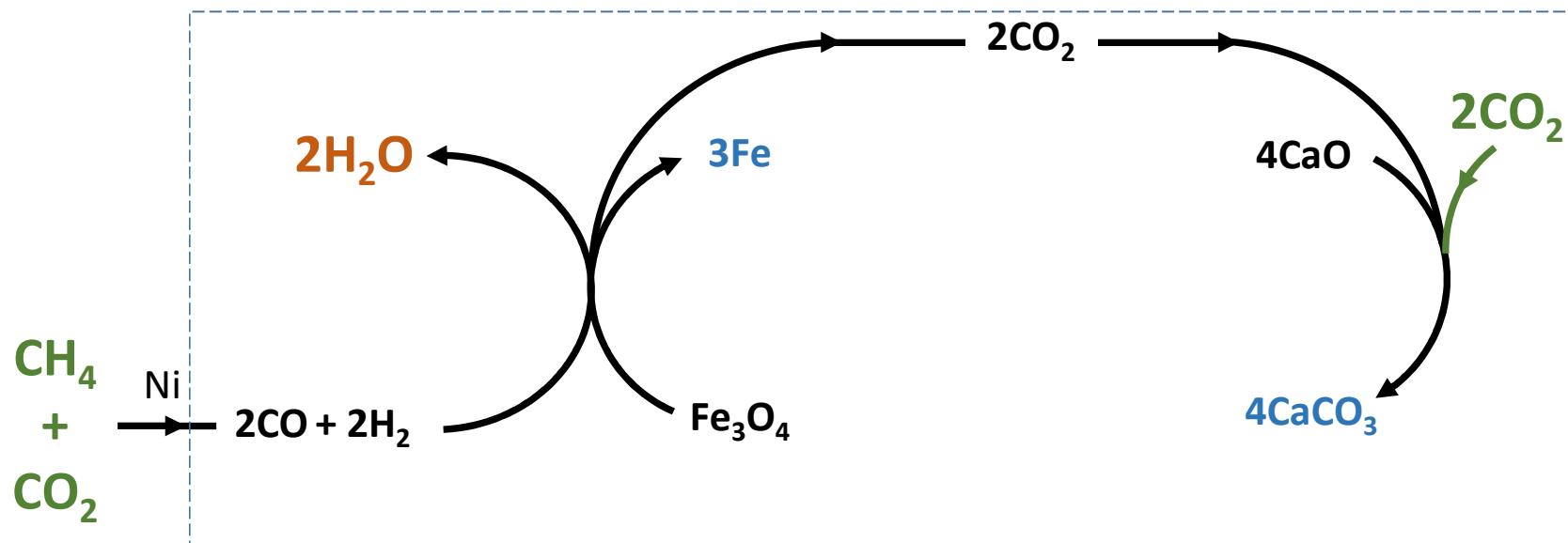
$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32



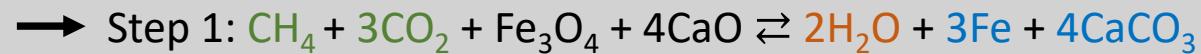
# Super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>

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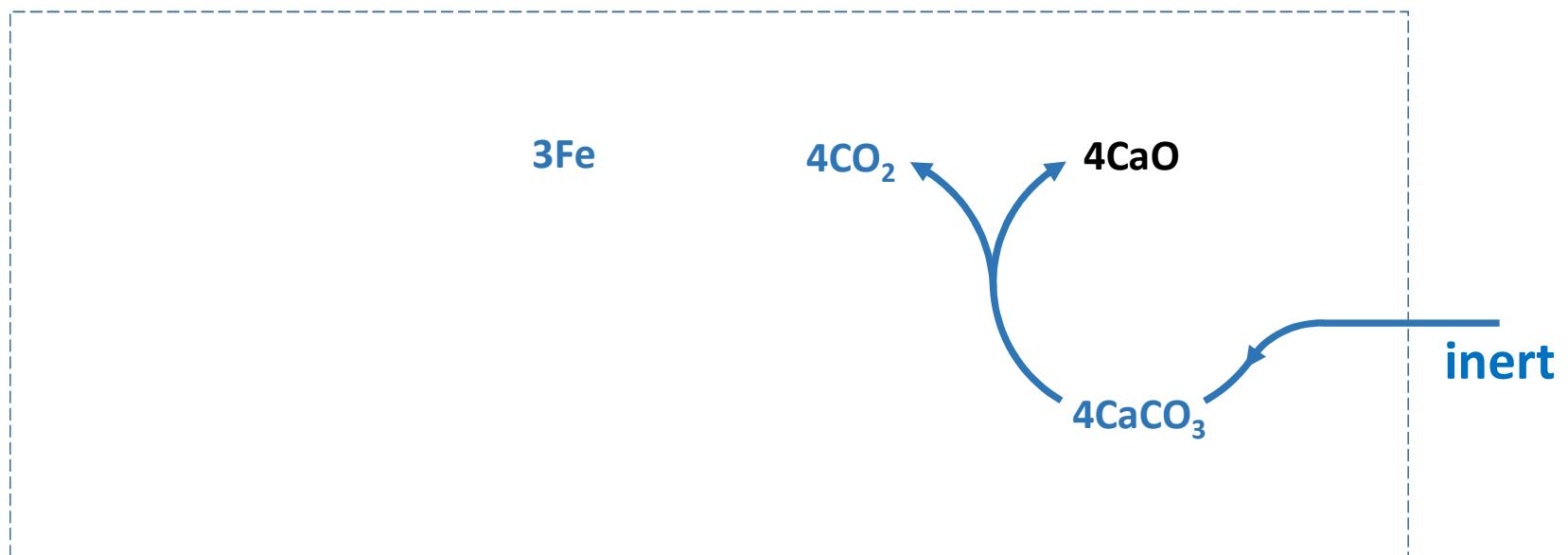
$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32



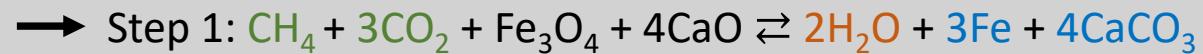
# Super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>



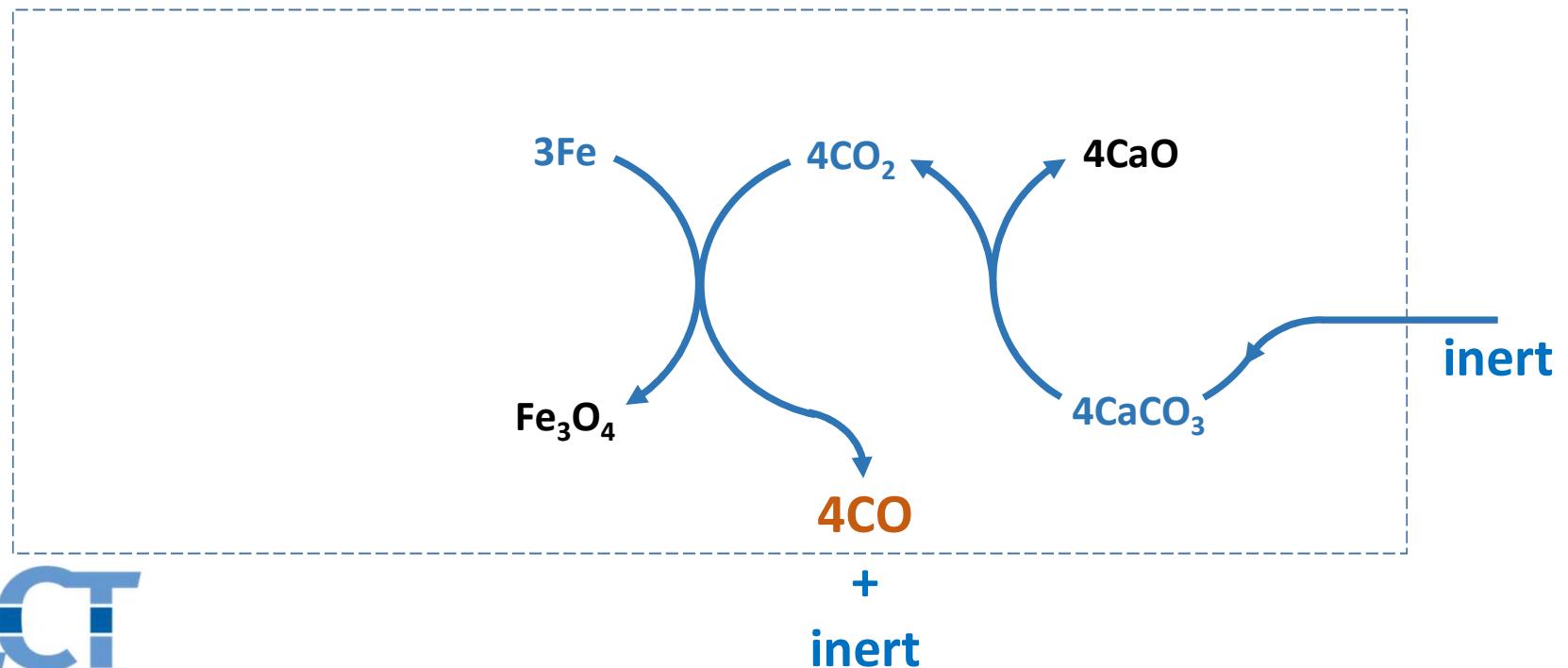
$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32
+212	+24



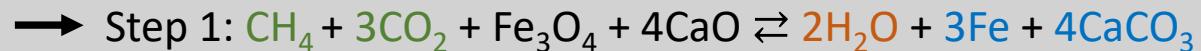
# Super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>



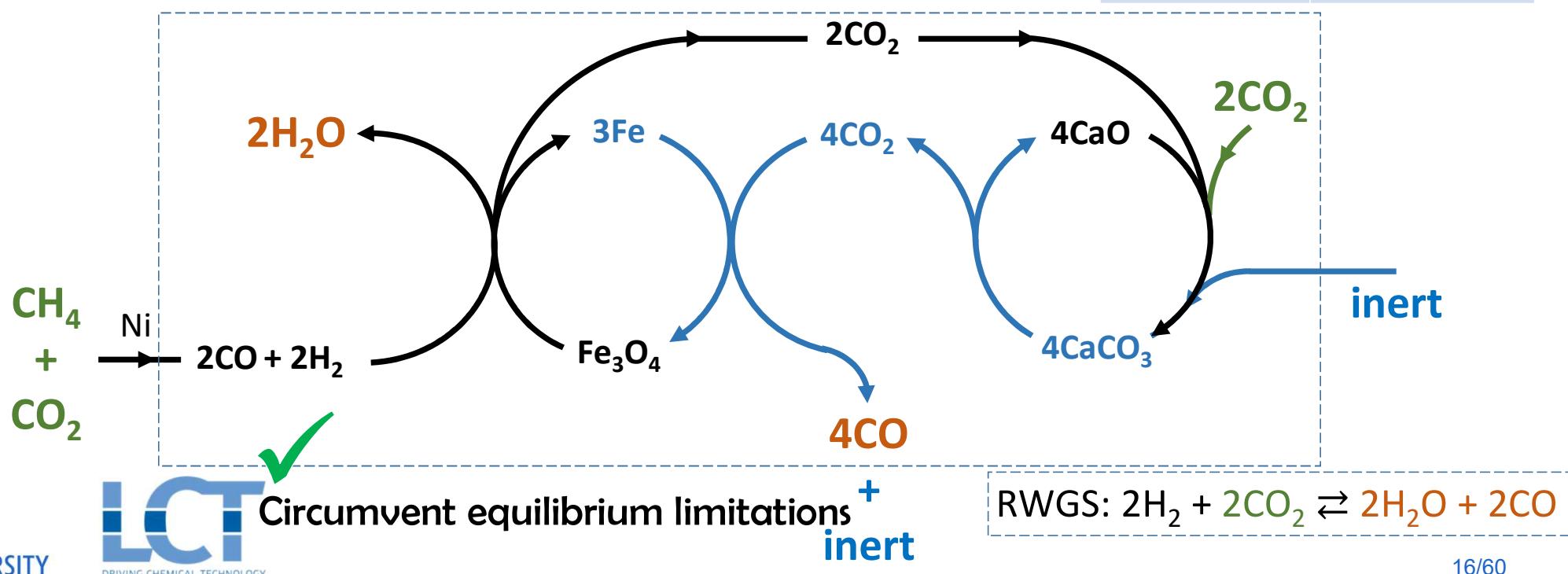
$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32
+212	+24



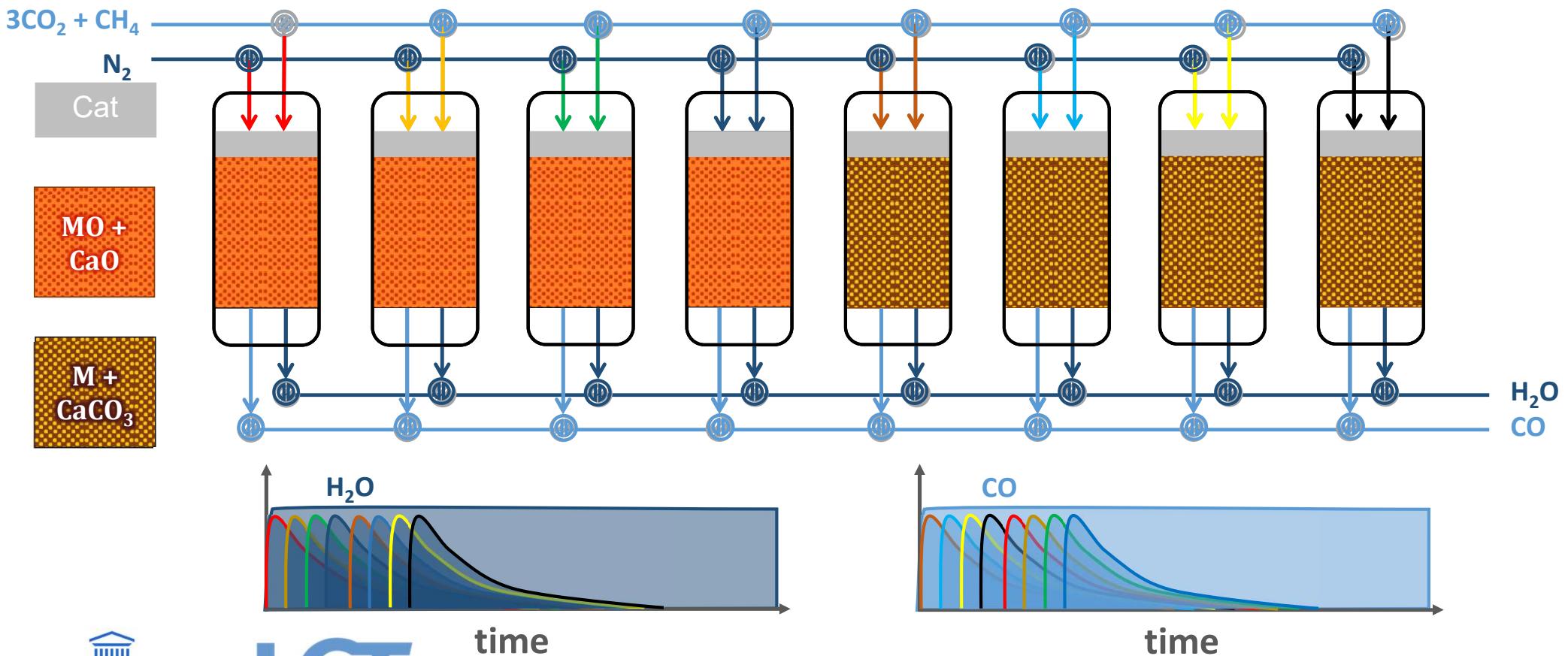
# Super dry reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>



$\Delta_r H_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )	$\Delta_r G_{1023K}^\circ$ (kJ mol <sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
-103	-32.4
+212	+23.8
+109	-8.6

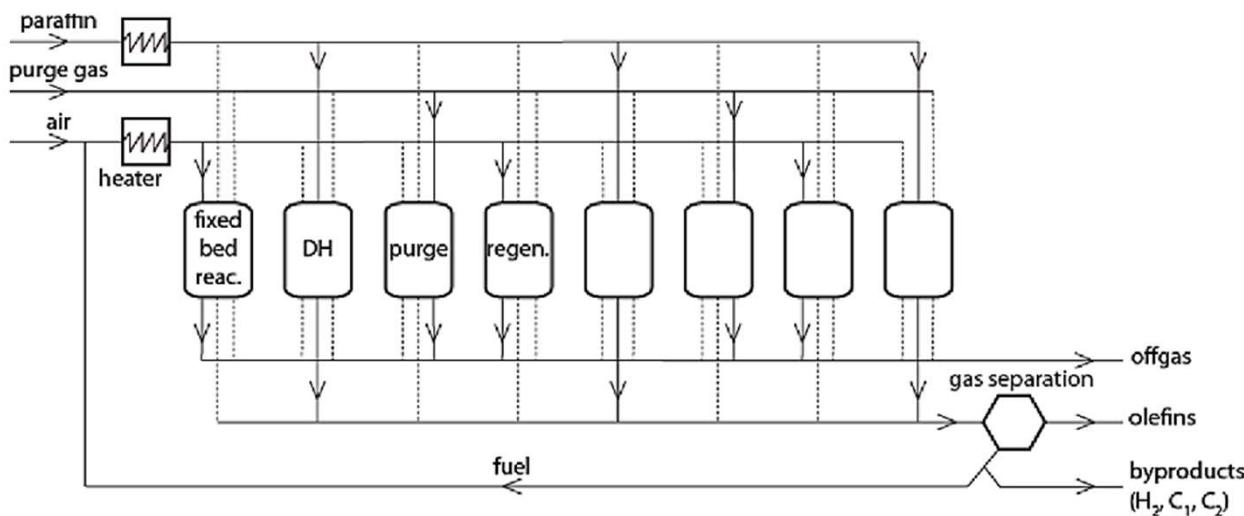


# Permanent periodic regime: simulated moving bed

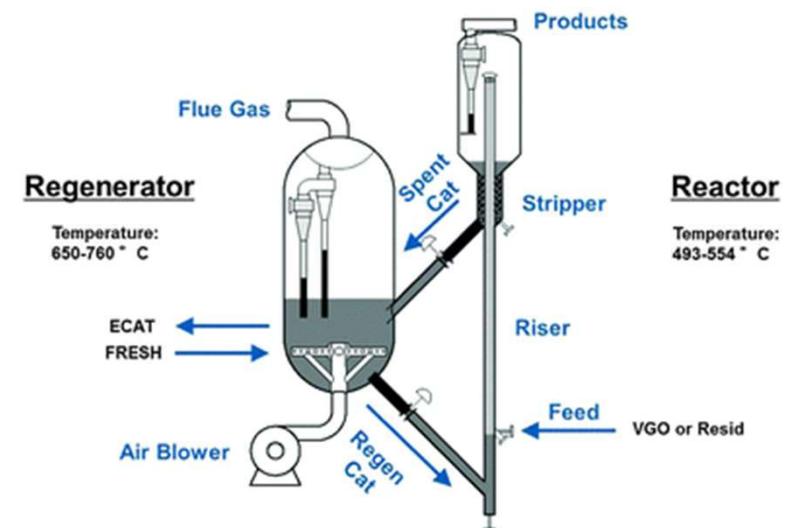


# Industrial processes with similar technology

## CATOFIN dehydrogenation unit



## Fluid catalytic cracking (FCC)



$\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3/\text{Alumina}$

T: 575 °C

P: 0.2 - 0.5 bar

Period: hour



Sattler J.J.H.B. et al., Chem. Rev. 2014, 114, 10613

$\text{Zeolite}$

T: 500 - 800 °C

Period: minute



# Super Dry Reforming of CH<sub>4</sub>

3 CO<sub>2</sub> per CH<sub>4</sub> at a CO space-time yield of 1-10 mol/m<sup>3</sup>/s

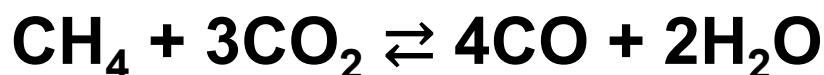
Paul B. Weisz “The Science of the Possible: windows on reality”  
CHEMTECH, July 1982, 425

Jean-Paul Lange et al. I&EC Research 2019, 58, 8674-8680 and  
Catal. Sci. Technology 2016, 6, 4759-4767

Overall endothermic: how to reach and maintain 1023K?

Autothermal Dry Reforming

# Chemical Looping with “combustion” of some methane

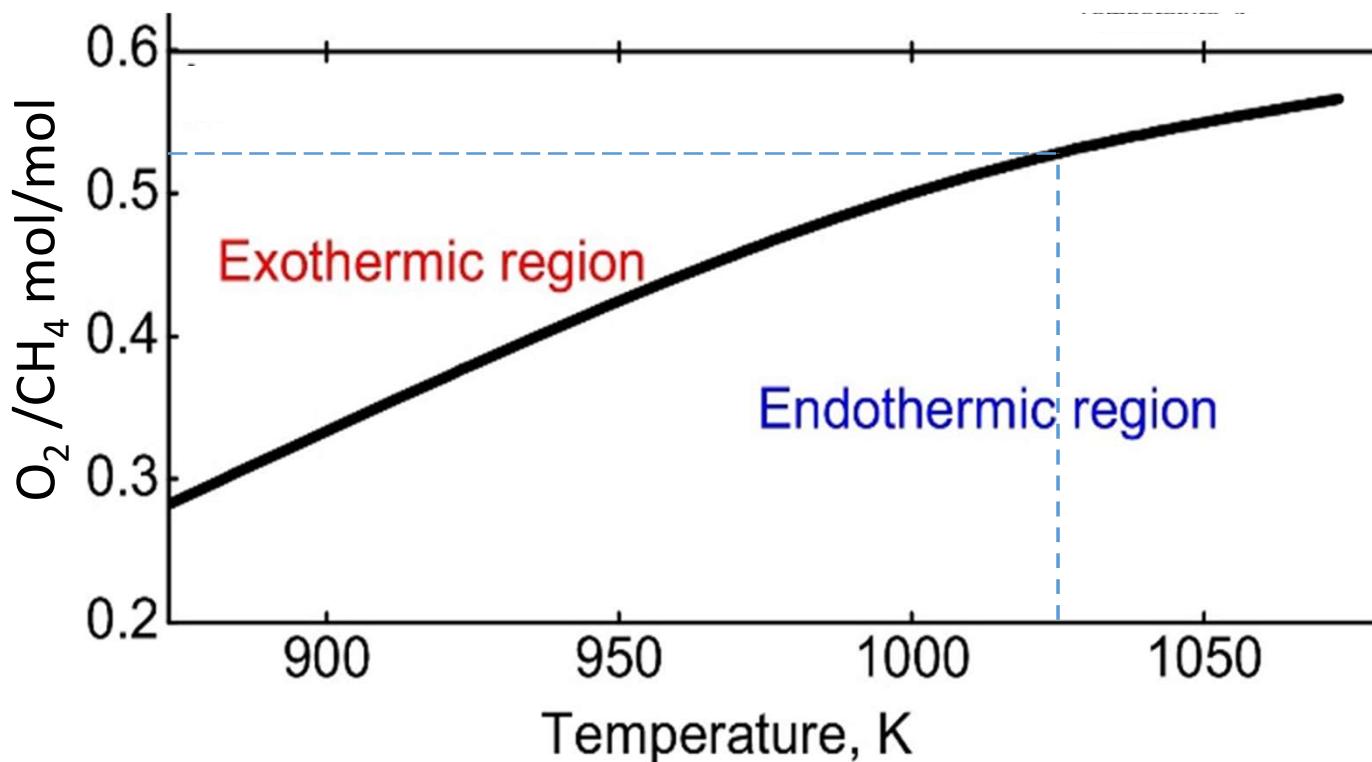


$$\Delta H^0_{1023} = 327 \text{ kJ/mol}_{\text{CH}_4}$$

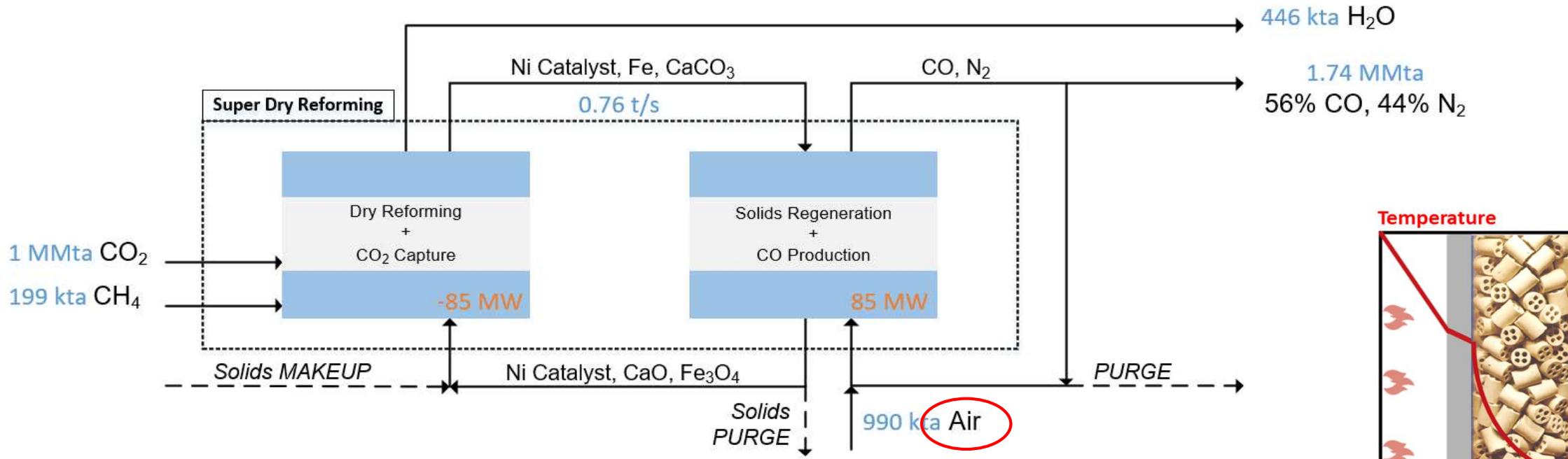


$$\Delta H^0_{1023} = 0 \text{ kJ/mol}_{\text{CH}_4}$$

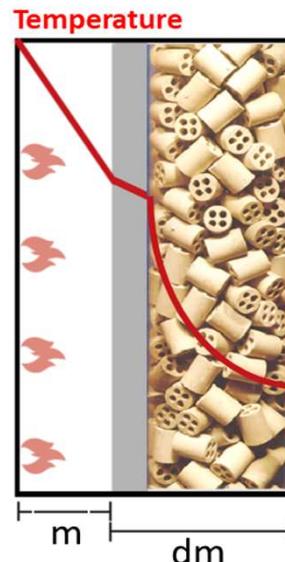
@ T=1023K  
 $x \approx 2$



# Autothermal dry reforming: flowsheet (circulating solids)



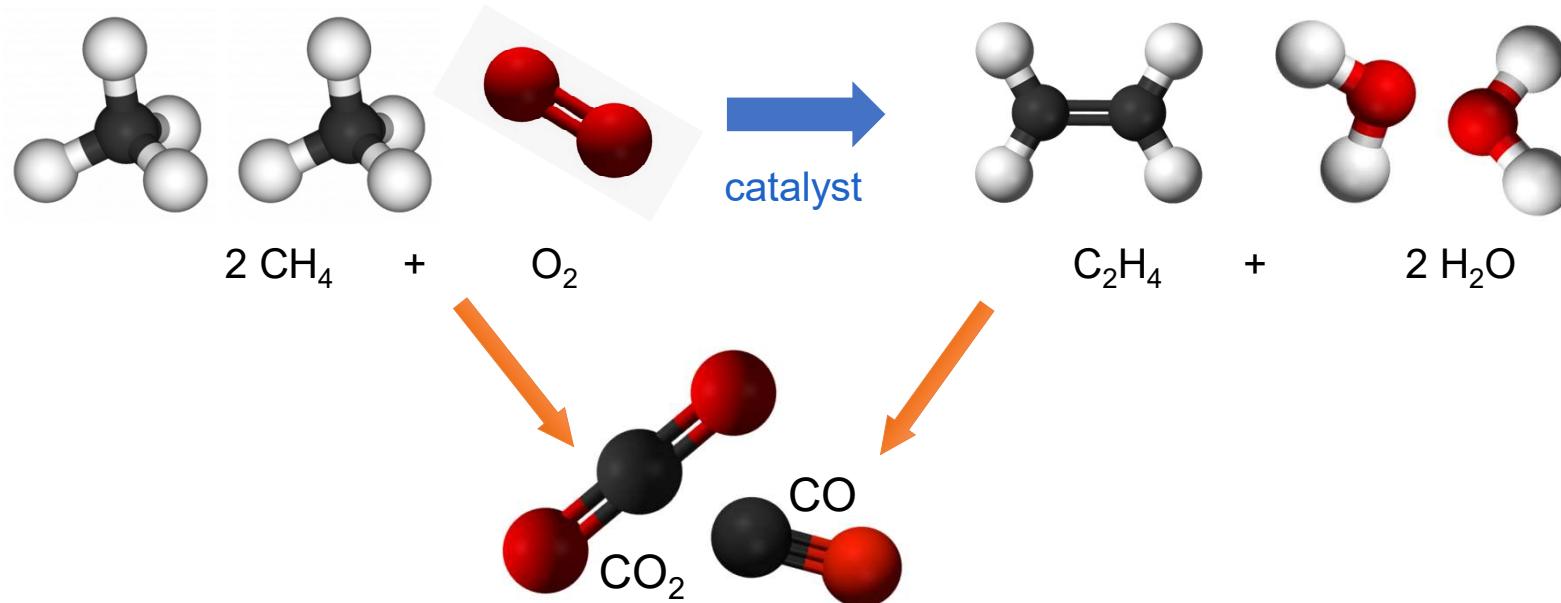
10 molCO/m<sup>3</sup>/s → 100 Ton solids



# Outline

- Introduction
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- Conclusions and Perspectives

# Oxidative coupling of methane (OCM)



## Challenges

- × Inertness of  $\text{CH}_4$ : **high T**
- × Trade-off between conversion and selectivity: **low ethene yield**
- × High exothermicity: **heat management**

GAS PHASE CHEMISTRY

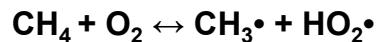
CATALYST &  
REACTOR DESIGN

# Outline

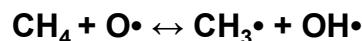
- Introduction
- Super Dry Reforming
- Oxidative coupling: kinetics
- Conclusions and Perspectives

# Gas-Phase Reaction Network

## *Primary initiation*



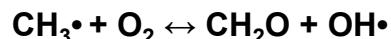
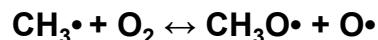
## *CH<sub>3</sub>· generation*



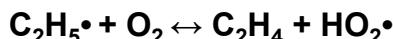
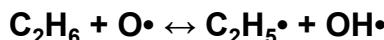
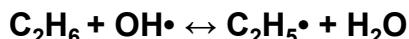
## *CH<sub>3</sub>· coupling*



## *CH<sub>3</sub>· oxidation*



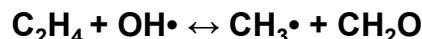
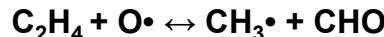
## *Dehydrogenation of ethane*



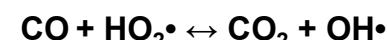
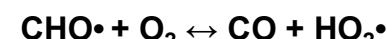
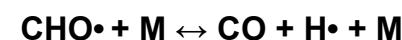
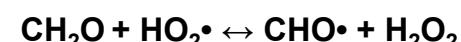
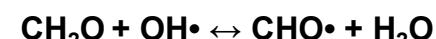
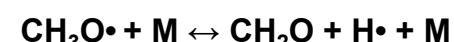
## *Hydrogen–oxygen reactions*



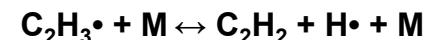
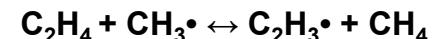
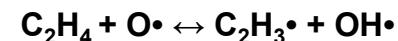
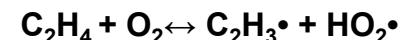
## *Decomposition of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>*



## *Oxidation of CH<sub>3</sub>O· and CH<sub>2</sub>O*



## *Dehydrogenation of ethene*



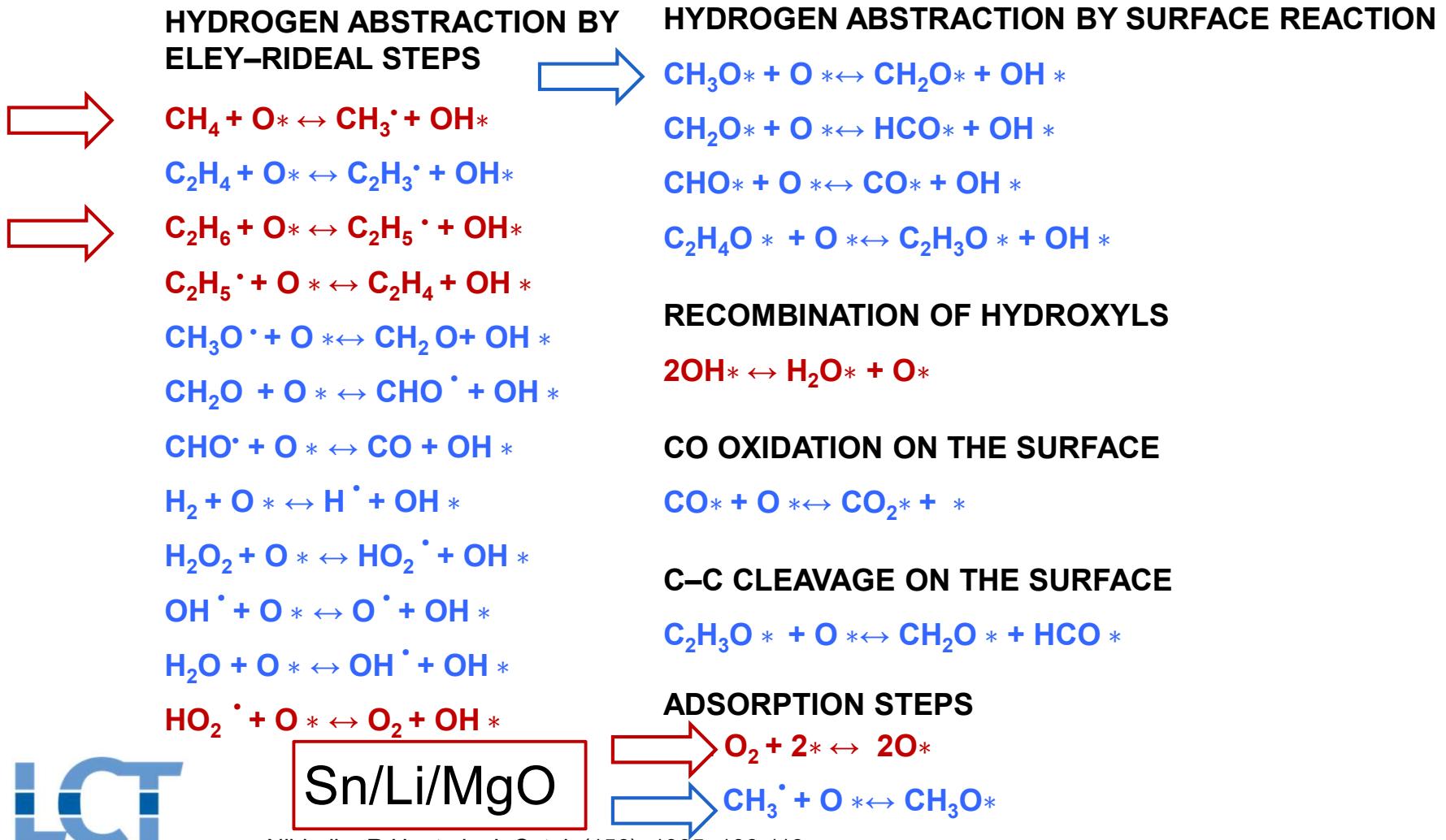
**Experimental conditions:**  
 $p_t = 1\text{--}10 \text{ bar}$ ;  $T = 873\text{--}1123 \text{ K}$ ;  $\text{CH}_4/\text{O}_2 I_0 = 4\text{--}10$ ;  $\text{He}/\text{CH}_4 I_0 = 0\text{--}1.25$ ;  $V/F_{\text{CH}_4,0} = 0.1\text{--}1.9 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s mol}^{-1}$ ;

**CH<sub>4</sub> conversion** = 2–15%, **O<sub>2</sub> conversion** = 10–100%

Chen, Qi, et al. Industrial & Engineering Chemistry Research 30.9 (1991): 2088–2097

Chen, Qi, et al. AIChE journal 40.3 (1994): 521–535

# Surface Reaction Network



# Catalyst and Kinetic Descriptors

- Reaction families:

H abstraction by Eley–Rideal reaction

H abstraction by surface reaction

Recombination of OH

CO oxidation on the surface

C–C cleavage on the surface

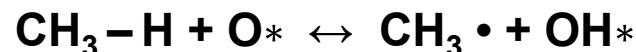
- Polanyi relation within a reaction family:

activation energy:  $E_{a,i} = E_0 + \alpha \Delta_{r,i} H$

- kinetic descriptors:  $\alpha$ ,  $E_0$
- a reaction family shares the same  $(E_0, \alpha)$



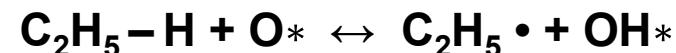
- Reference: abstraction from Methane



$$D_1 = \Delta_{r,1} H \text{ catalyst descriptor}$$

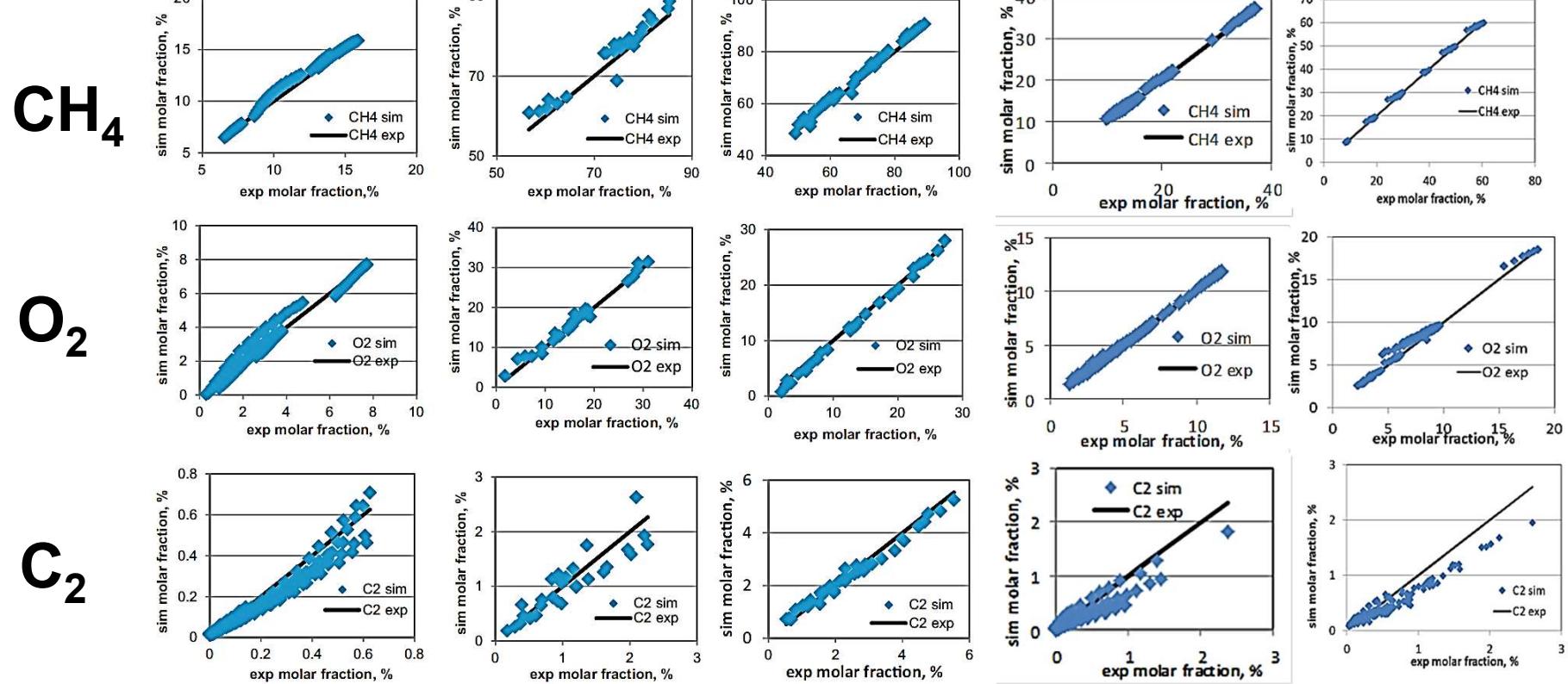


- Any reaction  $i$  in the family: e.g. from Ethane



$$\Delta_{r,i} H = D_1 + Q_{\text{C}_2\text{H}_5-\text{H}} - Q_{\text{CH}_3-\text{H}}$$

# Gas phase/surface reactions microkinetics



# Catalyst descriptors

D1  
**Reaction enthalpy of H abstraction (kJ/mol<sub>CH4</sub>)**

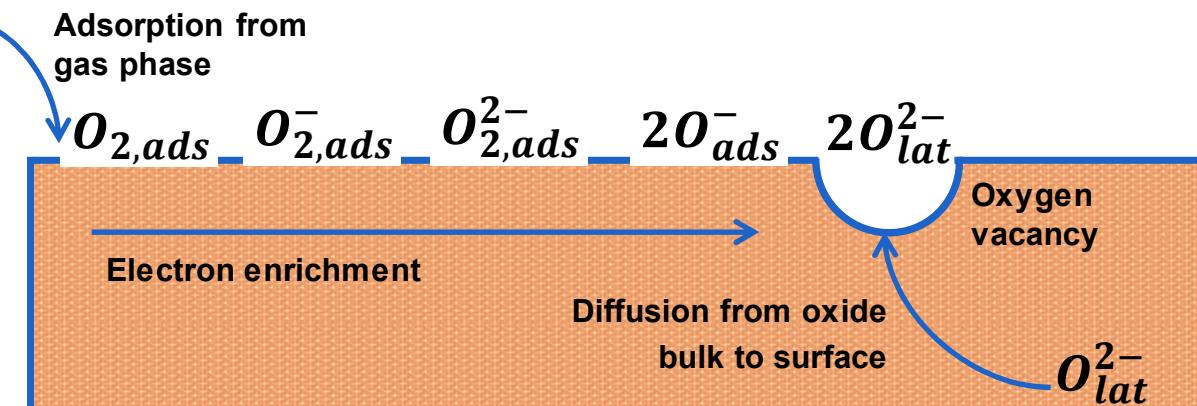
D2  
**Chemisorption heat O<sub>2</sub> (kJ/mol<sub>O2</sub>)**

D3  
**Sticking probability of CH<sub>3</sub> on O\* (-)**

D4  
**Active sites Density (mol/m<sup>2</sup>)**



*Oxygen Pool Capacity*



Nibbelke R.H. et al., J. Catal. 156), 1995, 106-119

Pirro, L. et al., Catal. Sci. Technol. (9), 2019, 3109-3125

# Catalyst descriptors and catalyst performance

	<b>D<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>D<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>D<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>D<sub>4</sub></b>
<b>Unit</b>	kJ mol <sup>-1</sup>	kJ mol <sup>-1</sup>	10 <sup>-4</sup>	10 <sup>-6</sup> mol m <sup>-2</sup>
<b>Sr/La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub></b>	44.4±0.2	119.5±3.5	6.5 ±0.5	10 ± 1
<b>Li/MgO</b>	91.2±0.2	73.6±2.2	1.1900±0.0002	0.4330 ±0.0009
<b>Sn–Li/MgO</b>	56.6±0.8	60.5±2.6	0.62±0.01	1.33 ±0.03
<b>LaSr/CaO</b>	65.1±1.6	139.6±5.3	1.14±0.03	6.4±1.5
<b>NaMnW/SiO<sub>2</sub></b>	81.400±0.002	44.0±1.6	0.10±0.02	0.457±0.005

Value ±95% confidence interval

**D<sub>1</sub>** – Reaction enthalpy of hydrogen abstraction from CH<sub>4</sub>  
**D<sub>3</sub>** – Initial sticking probability of CH<sub>3</sub>

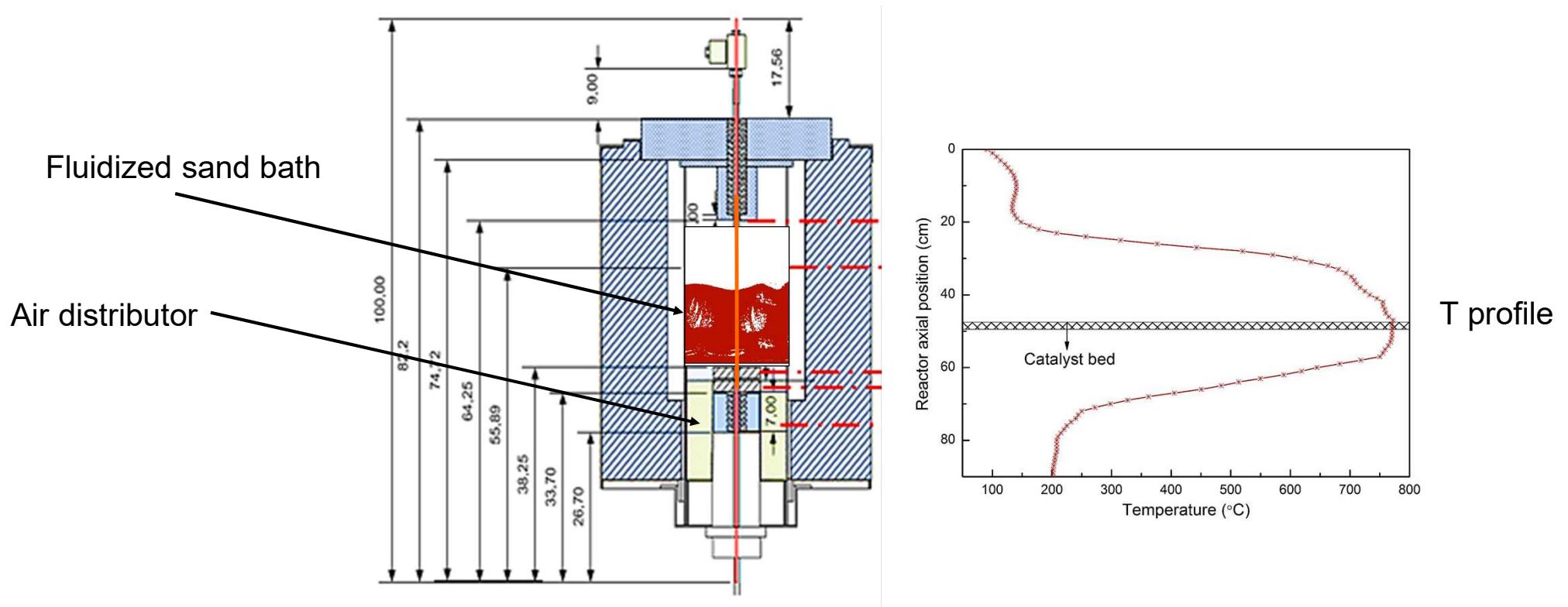
**D<sub>2</sub>** – Chemisorption heat of O<sub>2</sub>  
**D<sub>4</sub>** – Density of active sites

**HIGH ACTIVITY:**  
low D<sub>1</sub>, high D<sub>3</sub>,D<sub>4</sub>

**LOW ACTIVITY:**  
high D<sub>1</sub>, low D<sub>4</sub>

**HIGH SELECTIVITY:**  
low D<sub>2</sub>,low D<sub>3</sub>

# Experimental Set-Up: isothermal conditions



# Chemical Engineering and Catalysis

- Introduction
- Super Dry Reforming
- Oxidative coupling: heat transfer
- Conclusions and Perspectives

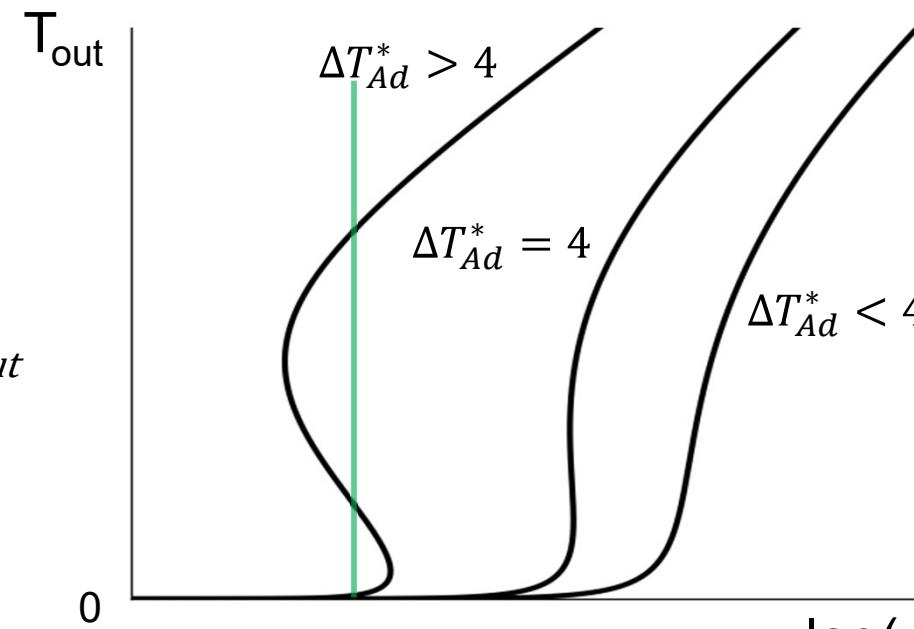
# Exothermic reactions: steady-state multiplicity

Unfolding parameter: e.g. dimensionless adiabatic temperature rise  $\Delta T_{Ad}^*$

$$\Delta T_{Ad}^* = \frac{E}{RT_0^2} \Delta T_{Ad}$$

State variable:

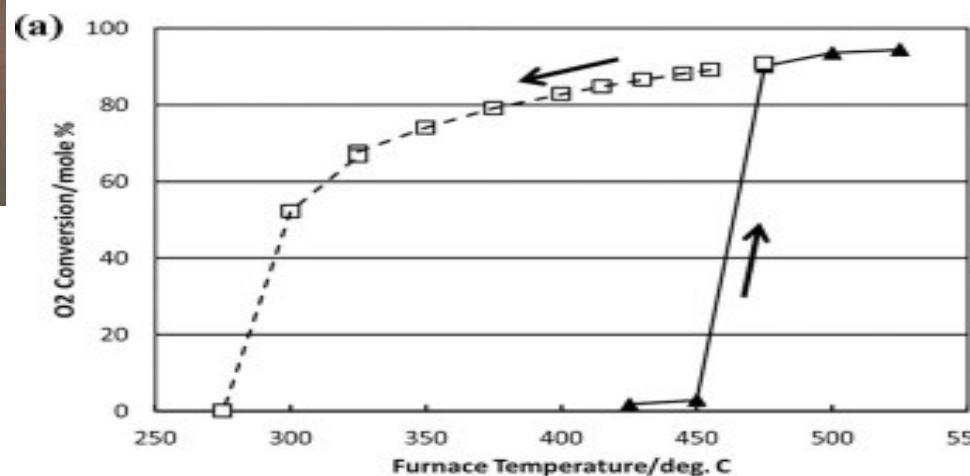
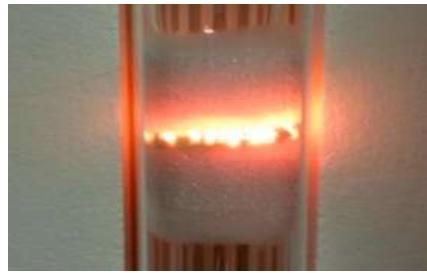
e.g. outlet temperature  $T_{out}$   
or conversion  $X_A$



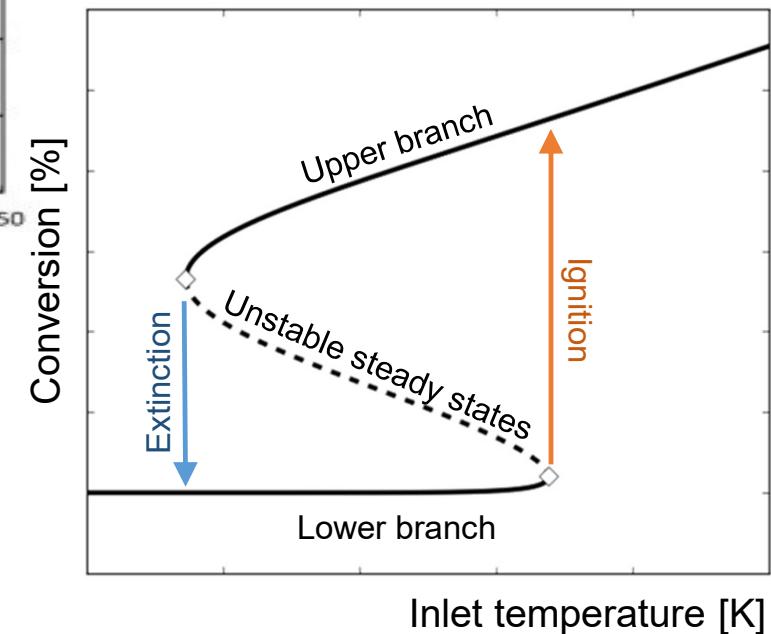
Positive feedback required: e.g. sufficient thermal backmixing

Bifurcation parameter: e.g. inlet temperature  $T_{in}$  or  $\tau_0 = \frac{V}{F_{V(STP),CH_4}^0}$

# Steady-state multiplicity: Ignition/Extinction



S. Sarsani et al., Chem. Eng. J., (328), 2017, 484-496.

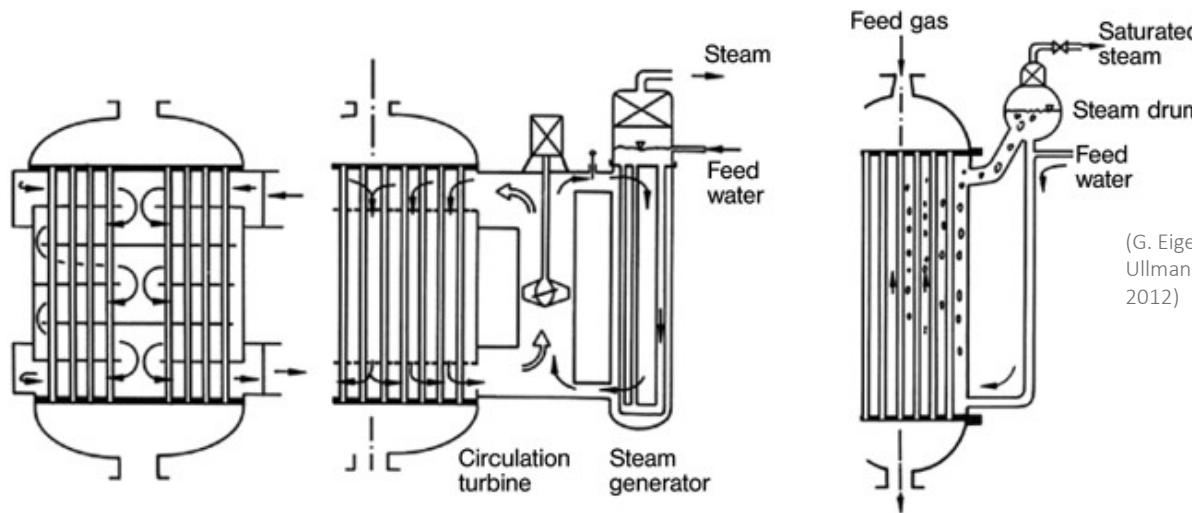


# Outline

- Introduction
- Super Dry Reforming
- Oxidative coupling: reactor design
- Conclusions and Perspectives

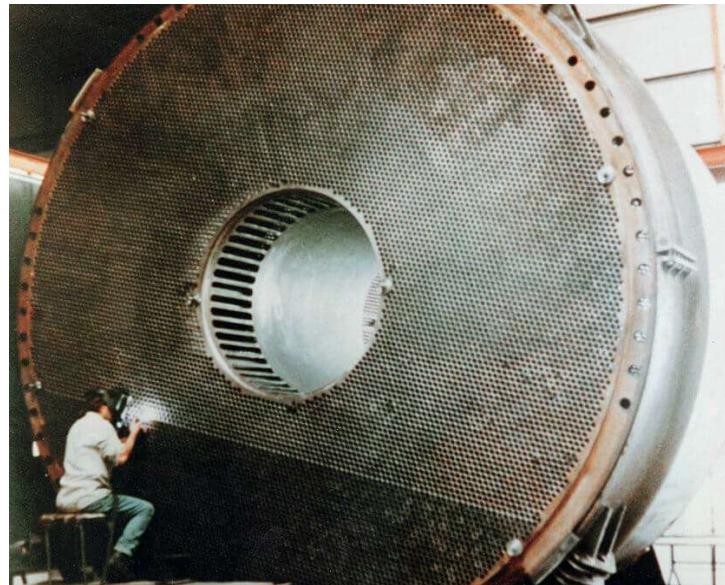
# Industrial reactor : heat management by cooling?

cooled,  
multi-tubular  
reactor



(G. Eigenberger & W. Ruppel,  
Ullmann's Encycl. Ind. Chem.,  
2012)

(<http://www.technobel.be/chemical-process-technologies/phthalic-anhydride/>)

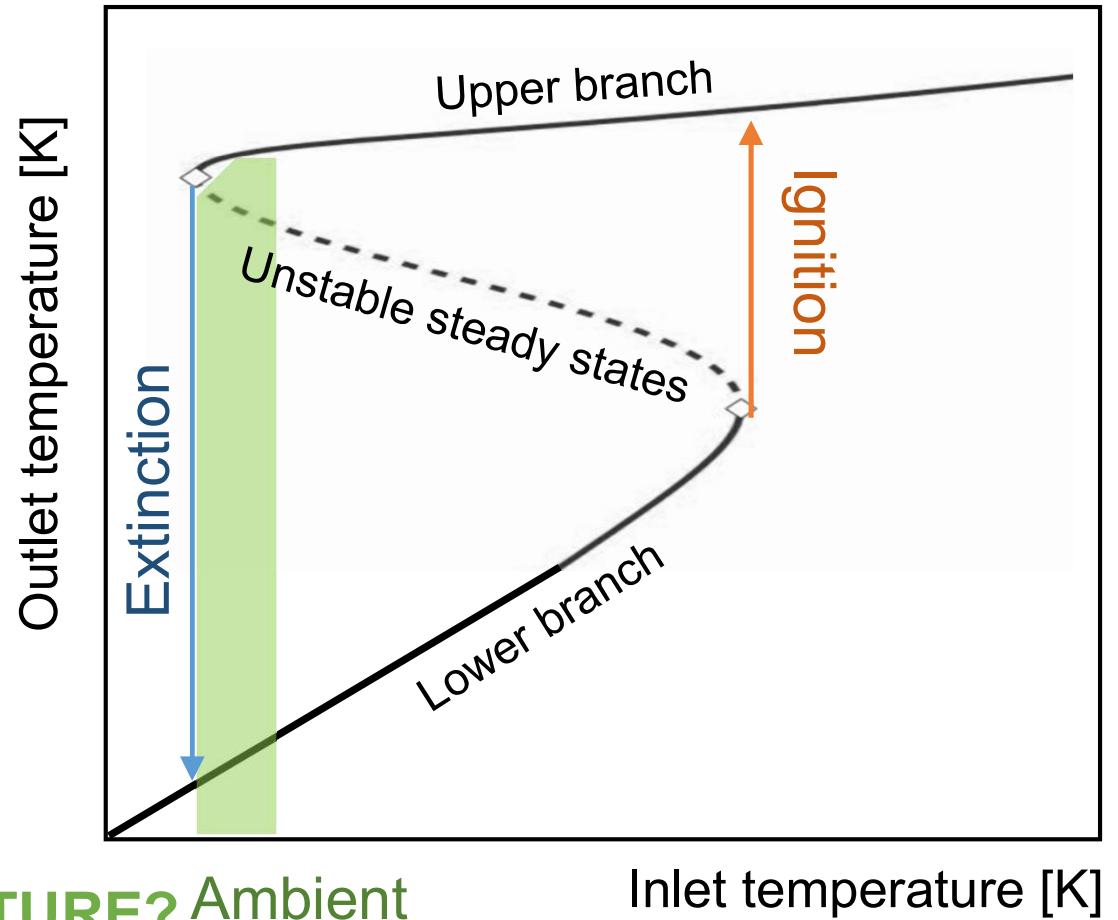


> 200 multi-tube reactors  
(of the largest size possible  
 $\cong$  50000 tubes/reactor) for  
a single OCM plant

(J.H.B.J. Hoebink et al., Chem. Eng. Sci., 1994)  
(L. Chen et al., Chem. Eng. J., 2020)

# Industrial reactor : heat management

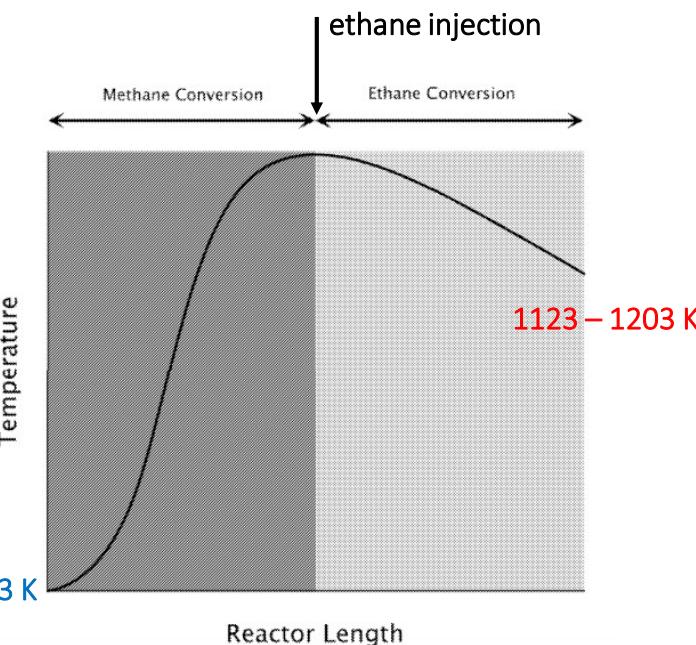
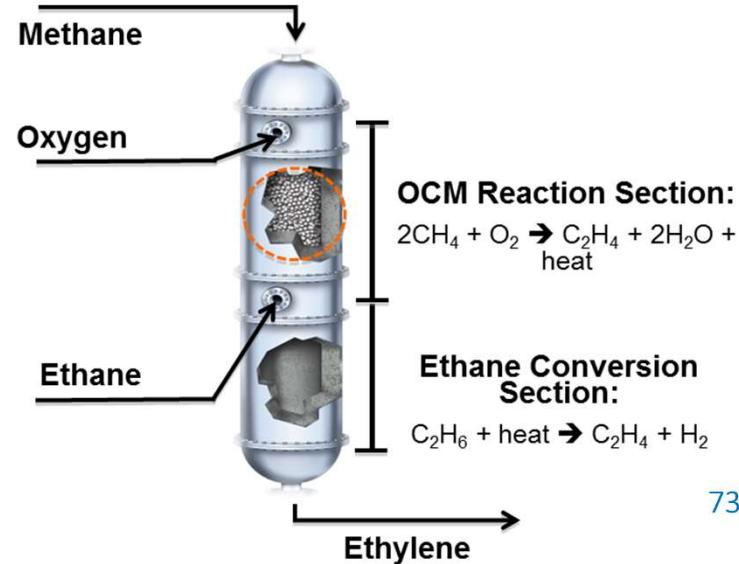
AUTOTHERMAL  
ADIABATIC OPERATION  
WITH AMBIENT INLET TEMPERATURE?



# Adiabatic packed-bed reactors



[http://siluria.com/Technology/Demonstration\\_Plant](http://siluria.com/Technology/Demonstration_Plant)



**c&en** CHEMICAL & ENGINEERING NEWS TOPICS MAGAZINE COLLECTIONS VIDEOS JOBS

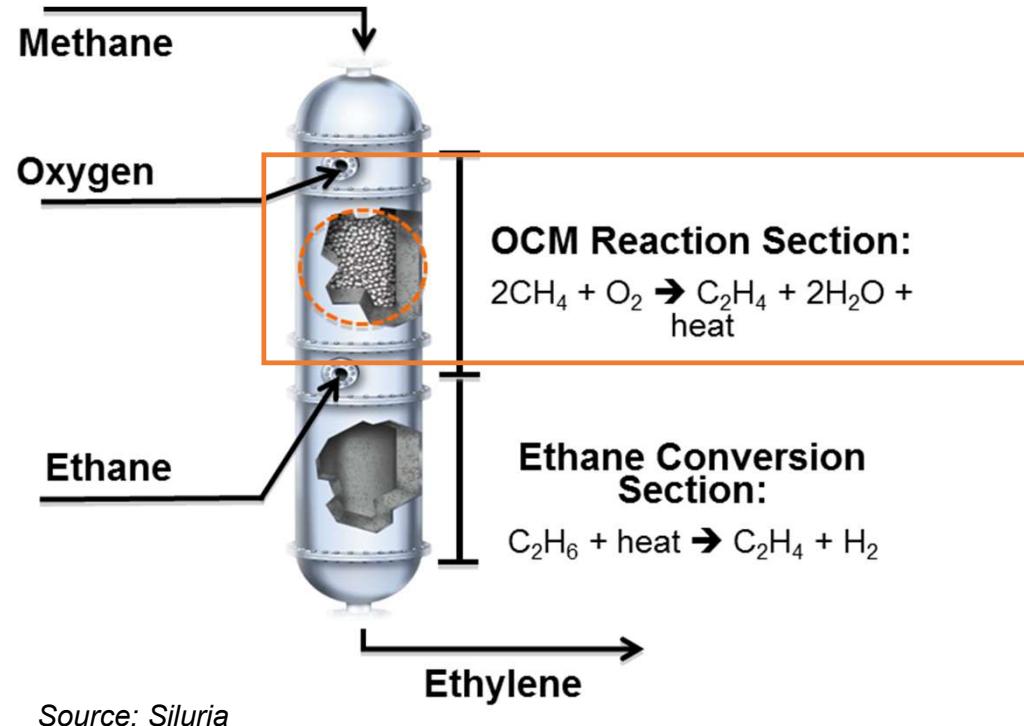
PETROCHEMICALS

McDermott buys Siluria for oxidative methane-coupling technology

By Alexander H. Tullo  
AUGUST 9, 2019 | APPEARED IN VOLUME 97, ISSUE 32



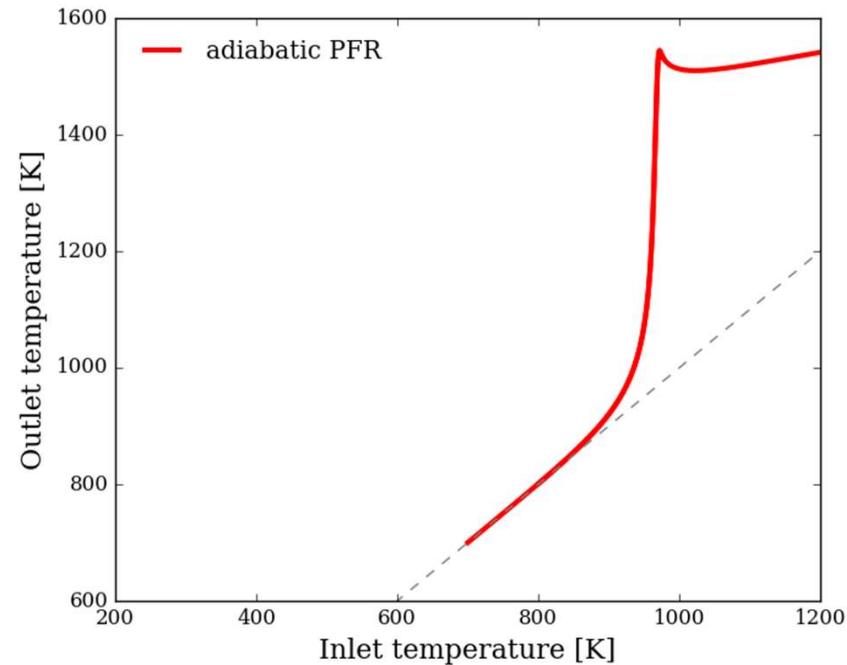
# Adiabatic packed bed reactor



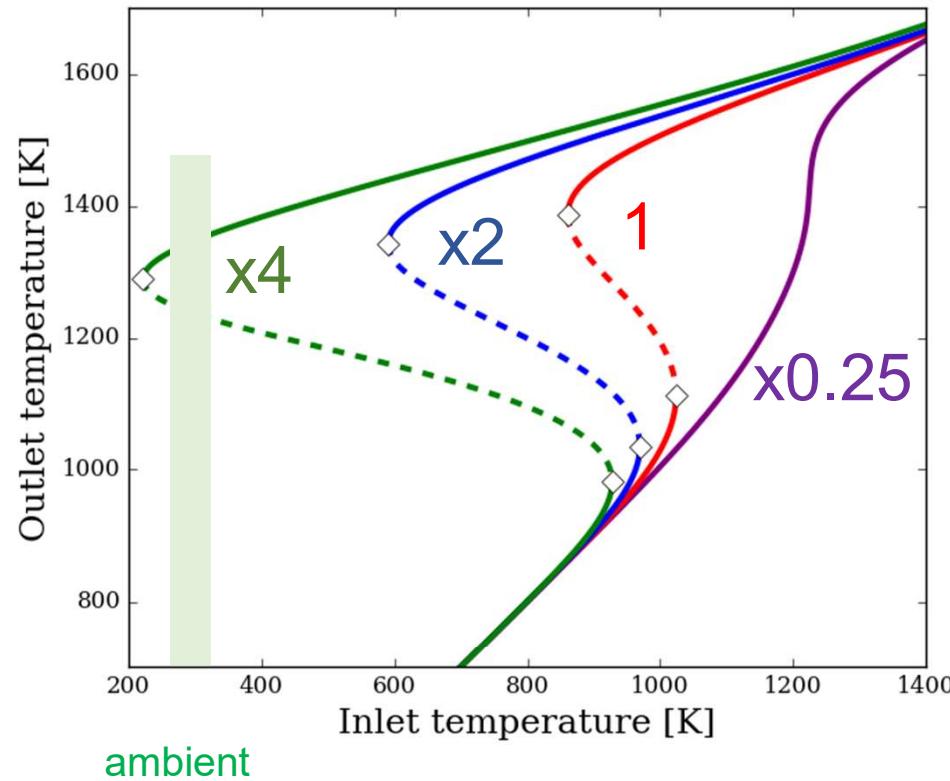
Plug flow reactor (PFR)

Sr/La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>

$\text{CH}_4:\text{O}_2 = 6$ ,  $V/F^0_{V(\text{STP}),\text{CH}_4} = 0.01 \text{ s}$ ,  $m_{\text{cat}}/V = 1000 \text{ kg}_{\text{cat}}/\text{m}^3$



# Adiabatic Continuous Stirred Tank Reactor (CSTR)



$\text{Sr/La}_2\text{O}_3$

$P = 1 \text{ bar}$ ,  $\text{CH}_4:\text{O}_2 = 4$  (no dilution),  
 $V/F_0V(\text{STP}), \text{CH}_4 = 0.003 \text{ s}$

# Ideal reactor types

- Plug flow reactor (**PFR**)  
No species backmixing, no thermal backmixing
- Continuously stirred tank reactor (**CSTR**)  
Perfect species backmixing, perfect thermal backmixing
- Lumped thermal reactor (**LTR**)  
No species backmixing, perfect thermal backmixing

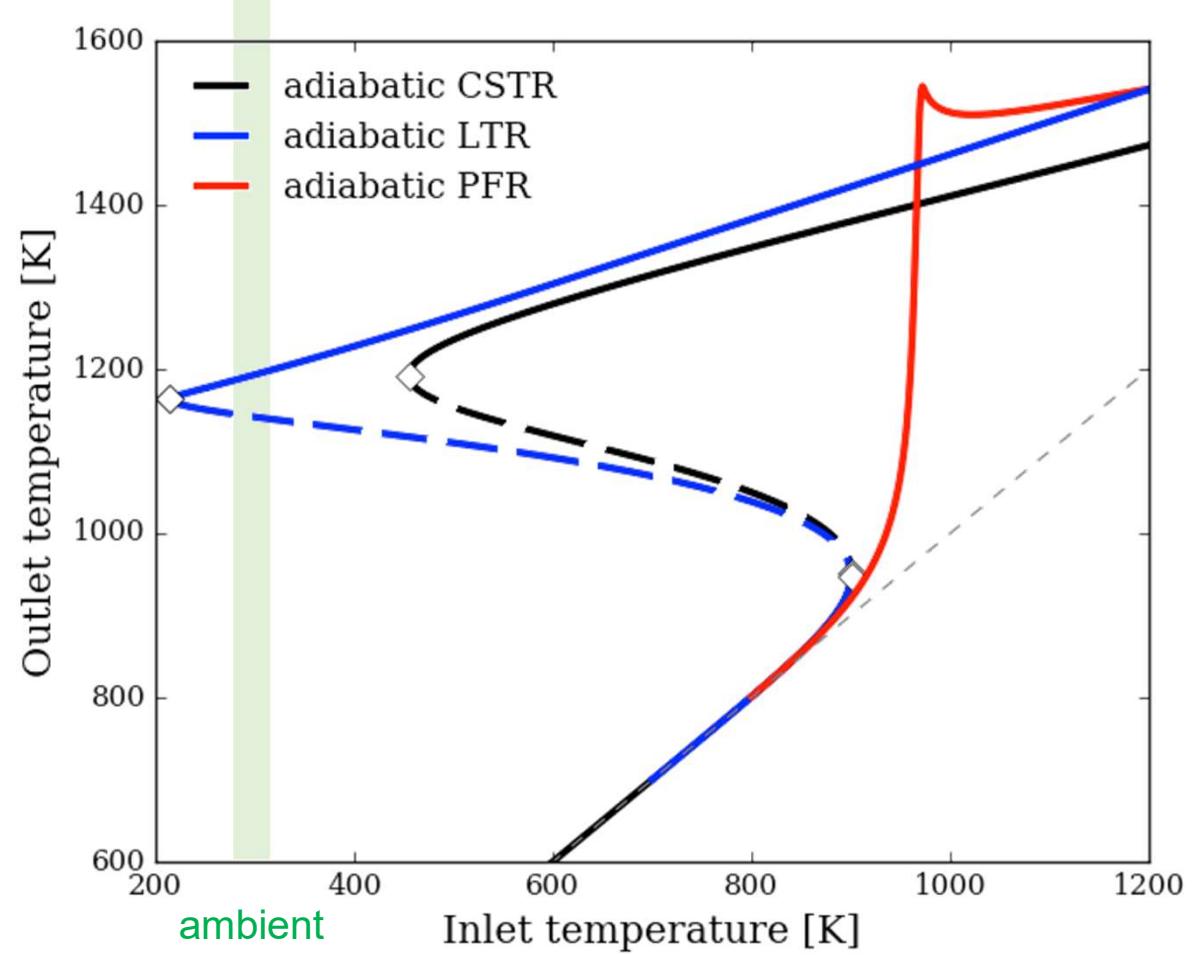
(Zhe Sun et al. CEJ , 343, 770-788, 2018)

# OCM with Sr/La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> : comparison of reactor types

## LTR most promising

- Lowest extinction point (ambient inlet temperature possible)

Operating conditions:  
 $P = 1 \text{ bar}$ ,  $\text{CH}_4:\text{O}_2 = 6$ ,  
 $V/F_{V(\text{STP}),\text{CH}_4}^0 = 0.01 \text{ s}$ ,  
 $m_{\text{cat}}/V = 1000 \text{ kg}_{\text{cat}}/\text{m}^3$

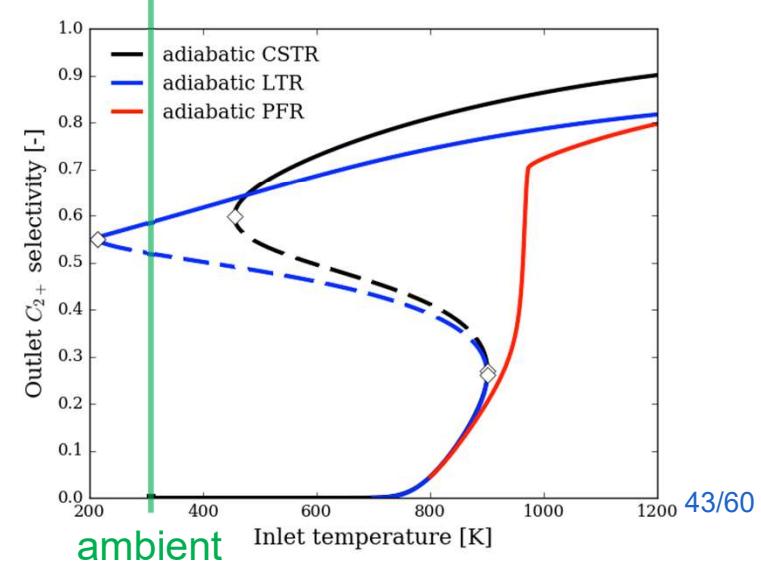
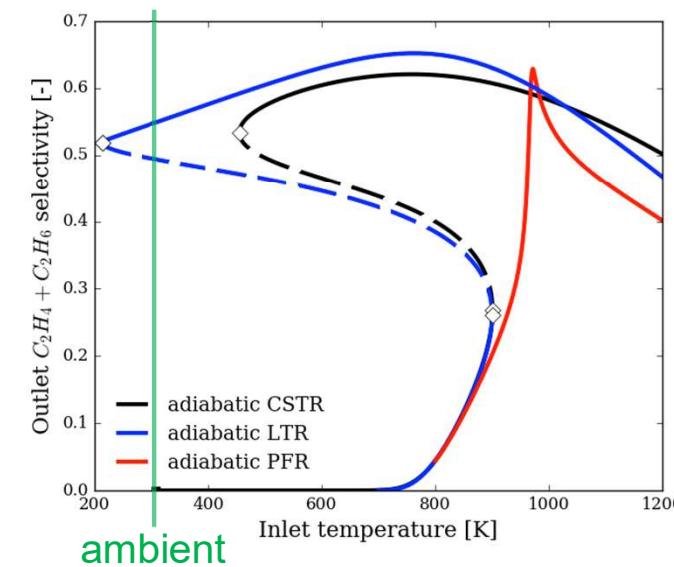
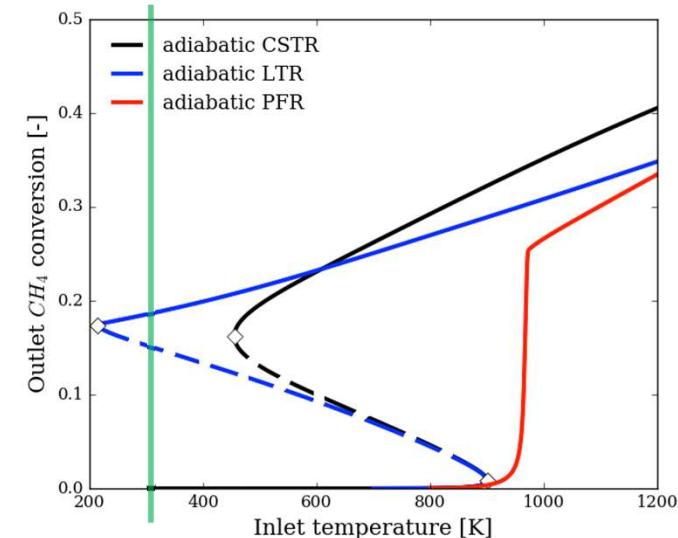
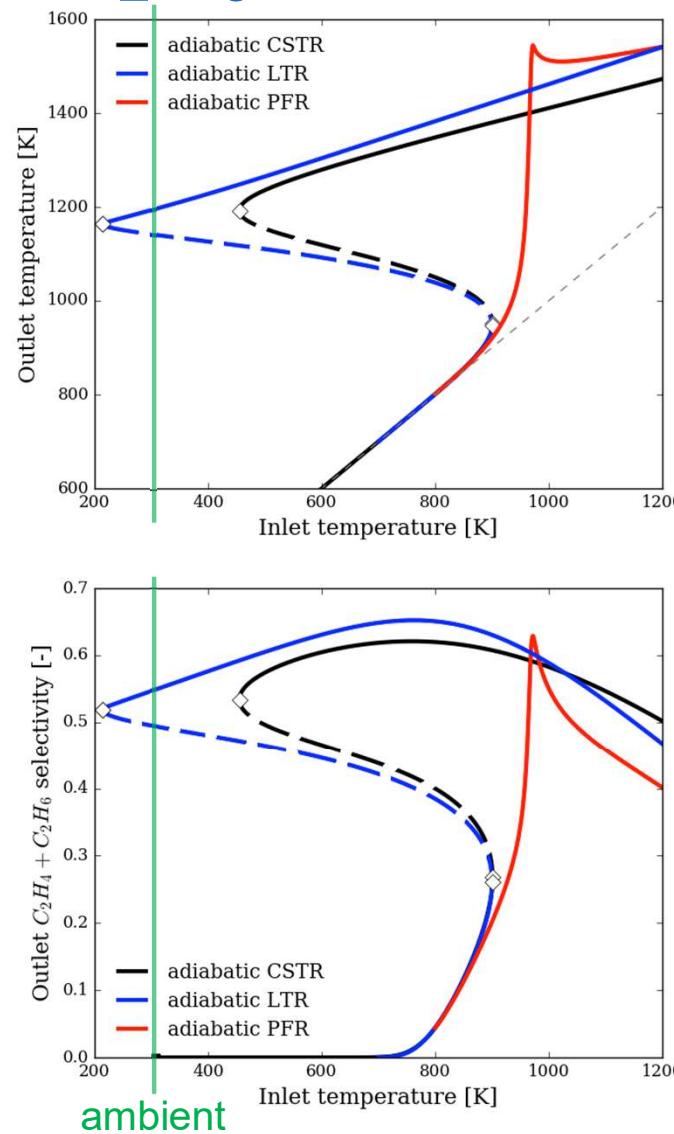


# OCM with Sr/La<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> : comparison of reactor types

## LTR most promising

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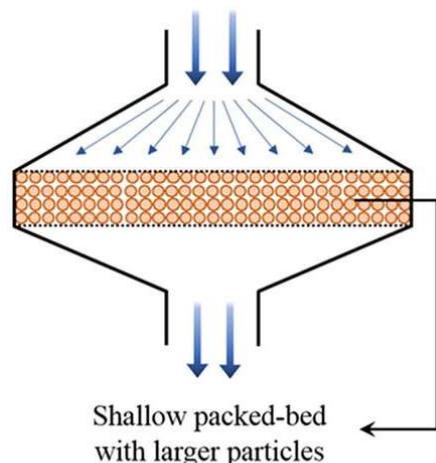
Operating conditions:  
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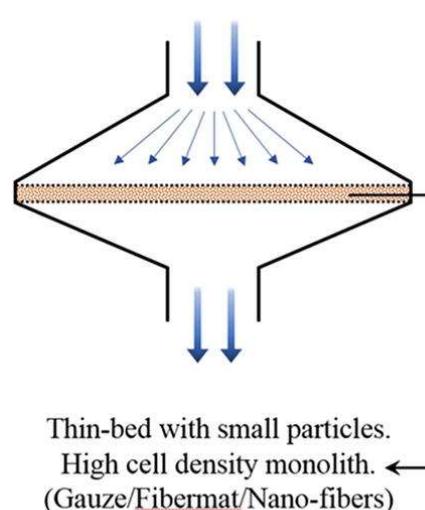
# Lumped Thermal Reactors in real life

Key feature: **little species but good thermal backmixing**

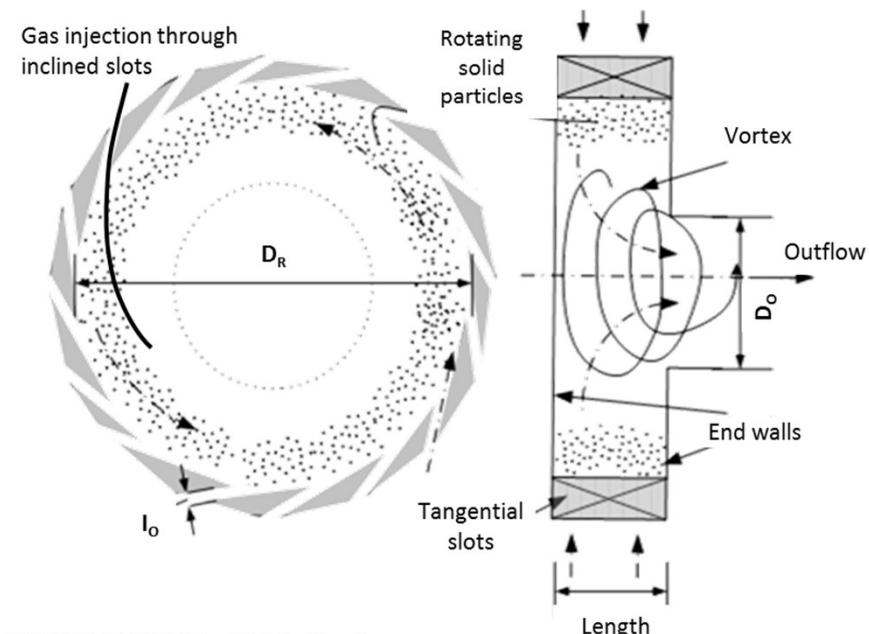
Shallow packed bed



High cell density monoliths



Gas-solid vortex reactor

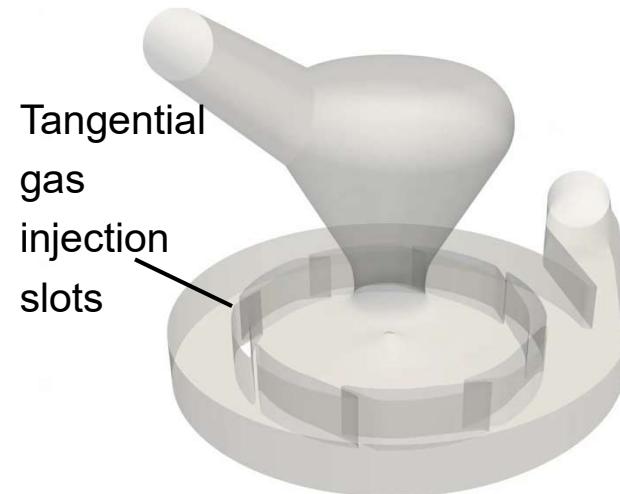
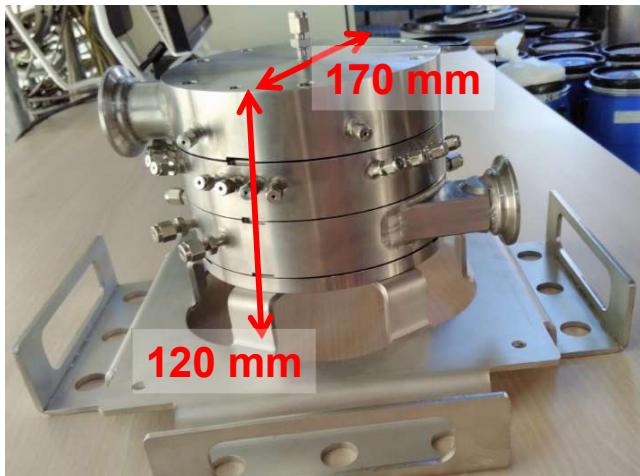


Balakotaiah, V. et al. Chem. Eng. J. 2019, 374, 1403–1419

Thin bed cofeed reactors for methane conversion, US4876409A, 1989 ARCO

Process for oxidatively converting methane to higher hydrocarbon products, WO2019048408A1, WO201948412A1, 2019 Shell

# Gas-Solid Vortex Reactor (GSVR)



- High gas feed flow rates → small gas residence time
- High gas-solid slip velocity → good gas-solid heat and mass transfer
- Good thermal backmixing

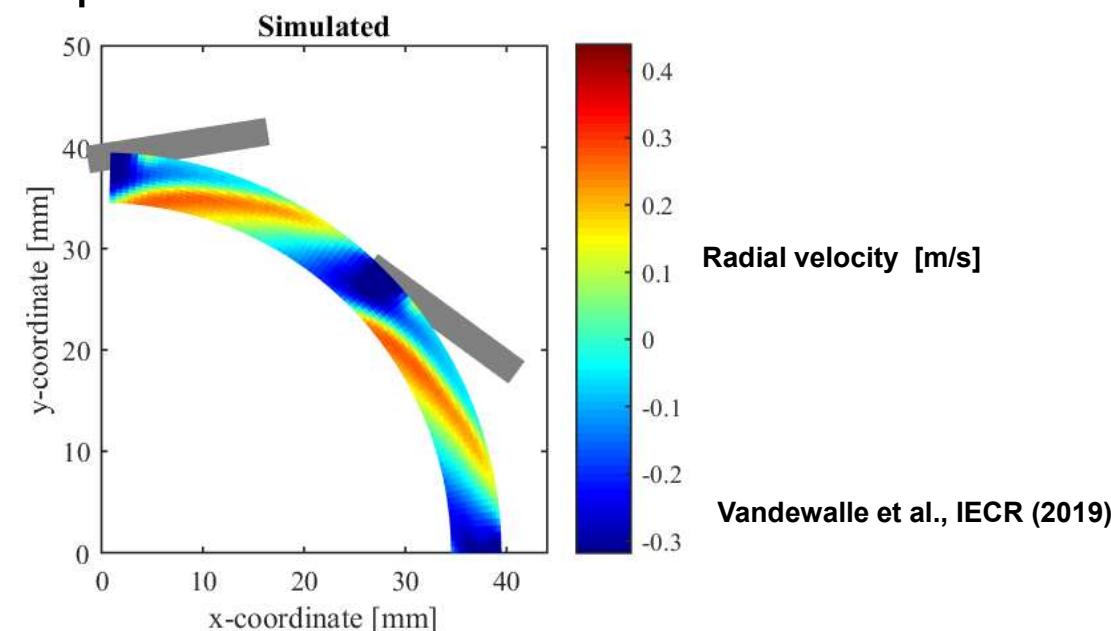
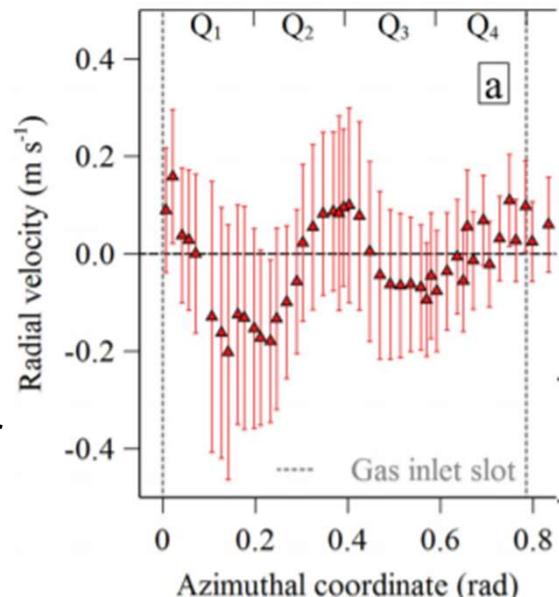
# Thermal backmixing

Solid-phase energy equation:

$$\frac{\partial(\varepsilon_s \rho_s h_s)}{\partial t} + \vec{\nabla} \cdot (\varepsilon_s \rho_s \vec{u}_s \vec{h}_s) = \vec{\nabla} \cdot (\varepsilon_s \rho_s \alpha_{\text{eff},s} \vec{\nabla} h_s) + \varepsilon_s \rho_s (\vec{u}_s \cdot \vec{g}) - Q_{sg} + \varepsilon_s Q_{r,s}$$

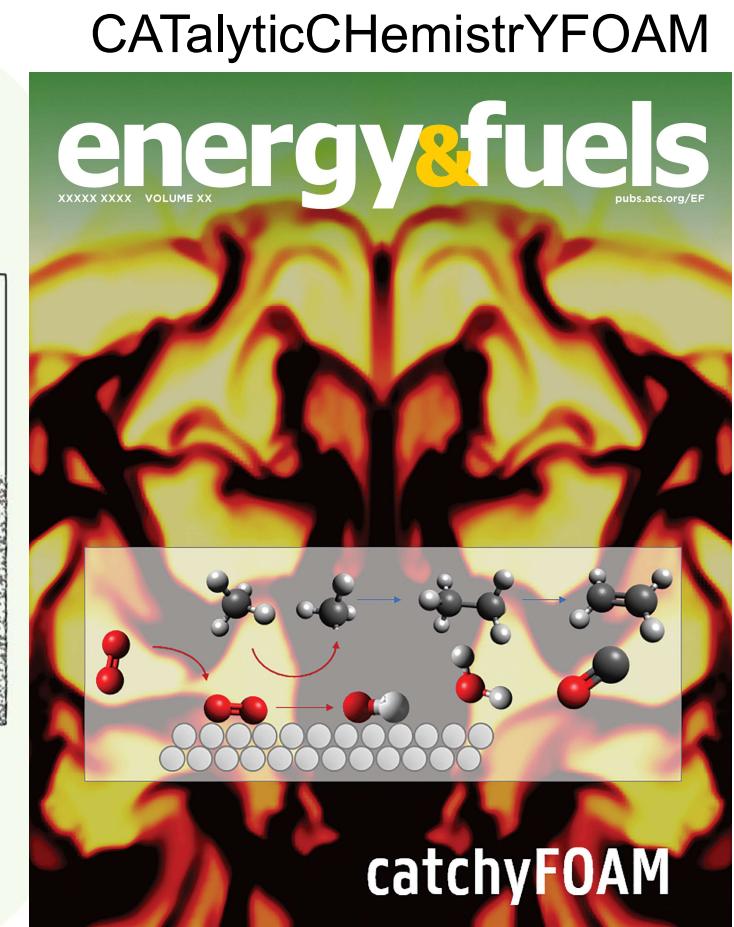
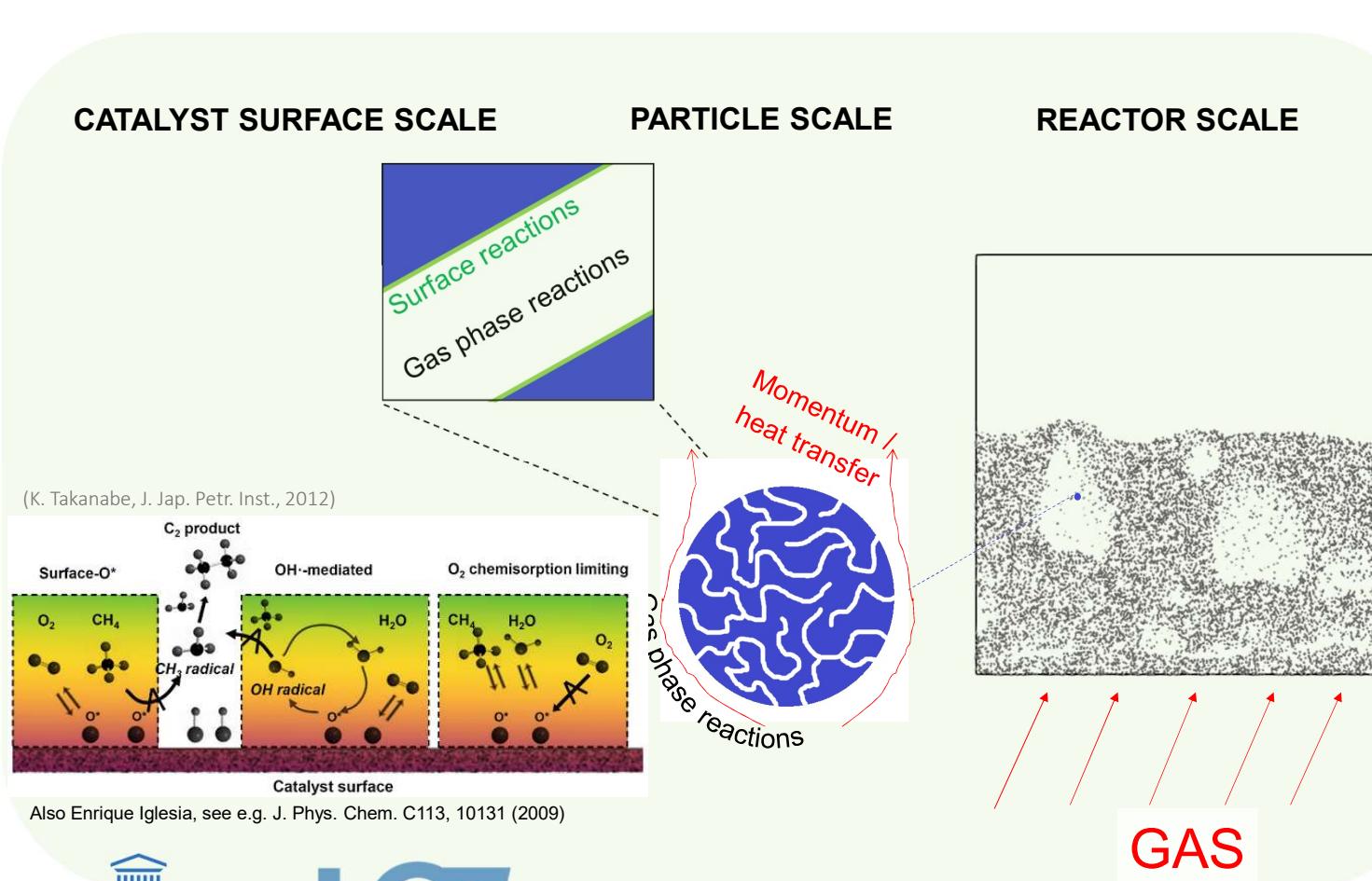
*energy transport by moving particles*

For GSVR: importance of radial motion of particles!!

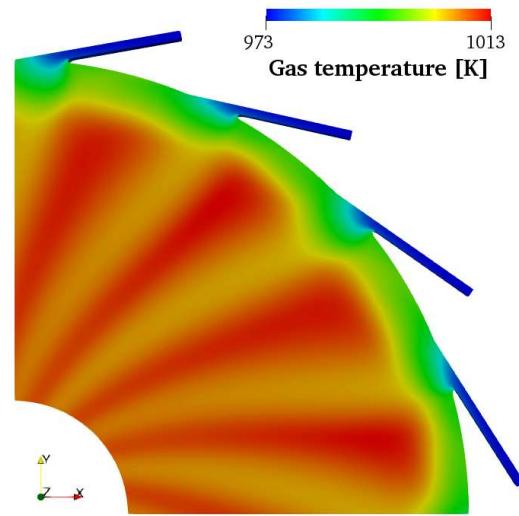
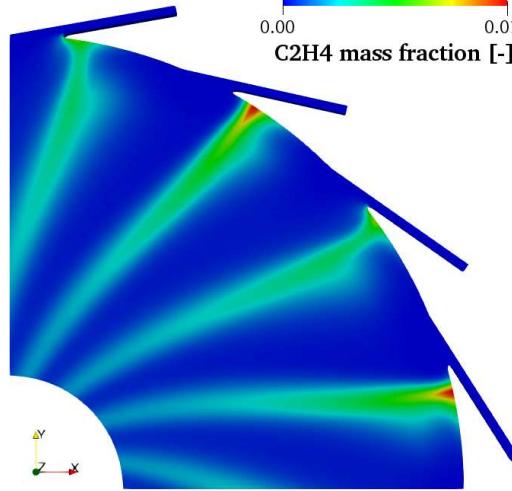
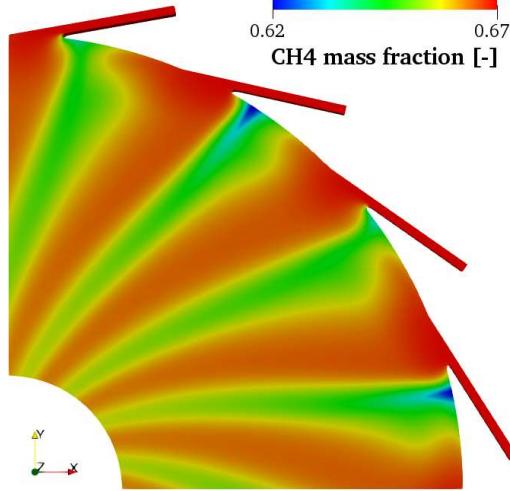
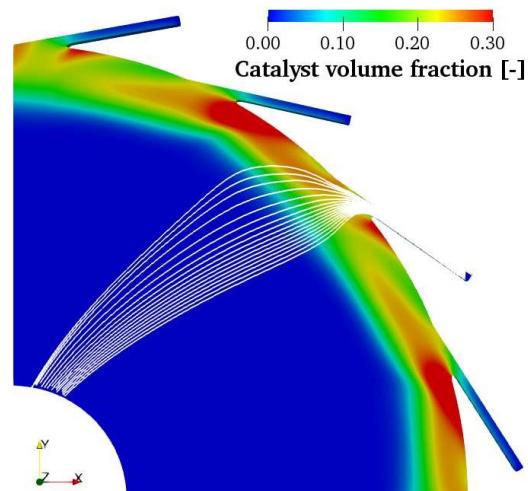


Gonzalez-Quiroga et al., Powder  
Technology (2019)

# Computational Fluid Dynamics Euler-Euler code



# Adiabatic GSVR for OCM: $T_{in} = 973$ K

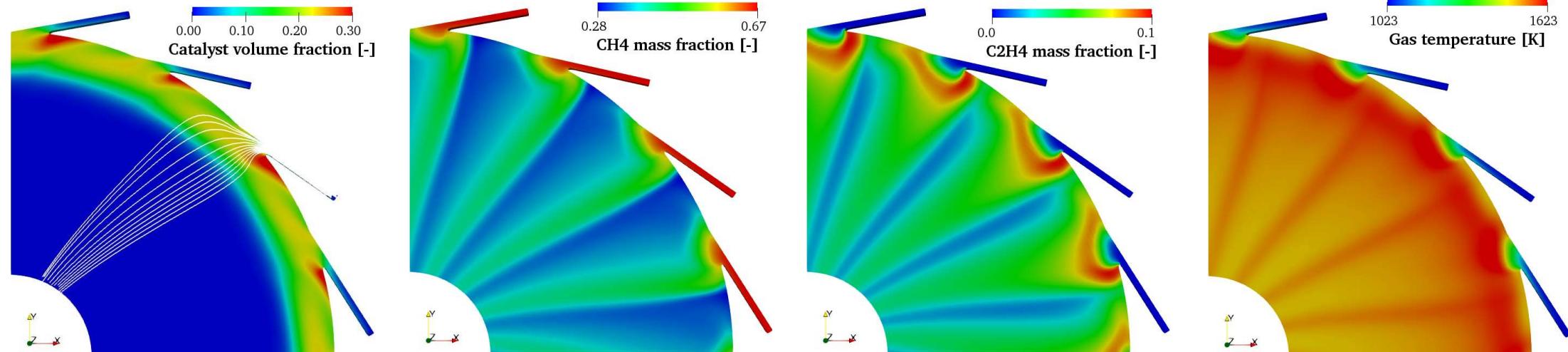


CH<sub>4</sub> conversion ~ 1.56 %  
Local higher conversion  
in 'dead' zone between  
the slots

C<sub>2</sub> selectivity ~ 67 %  
9.4 % C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> + 57.6 % C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>

Temperature rise  
from inlet to outlet  
~ 35 K

# Adiabatic GSVR for OCM : $T_{in} = 1023$ K



**IGNITION**

CH<sub>4</sub> conversion ~ 44 %

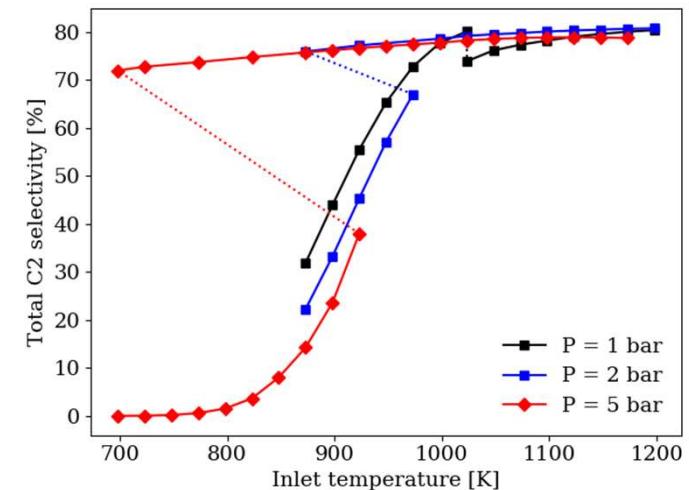
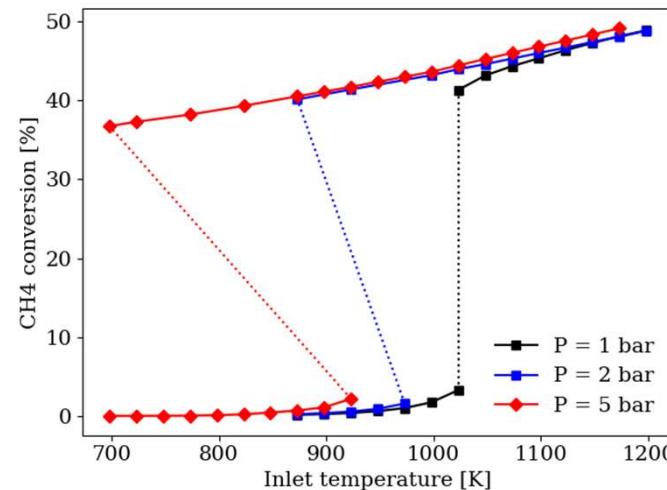
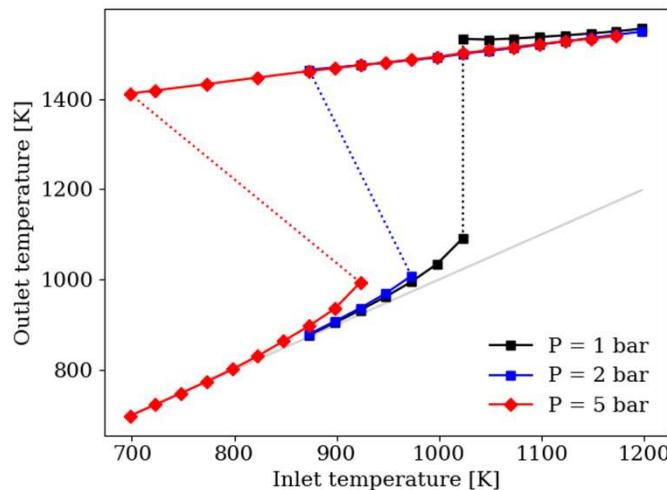
C<sub>2</sub> selectivity ~ 79 %

14.5 % C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> + 0.3 % C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>  
+ 64.3 % C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>

Temperature rise  
from inlet to outlet  
~ 475 K

# Effect of pressure on ignition/extinction

**Wider range of steady-state multiplicity at higher pressure**



# Outline

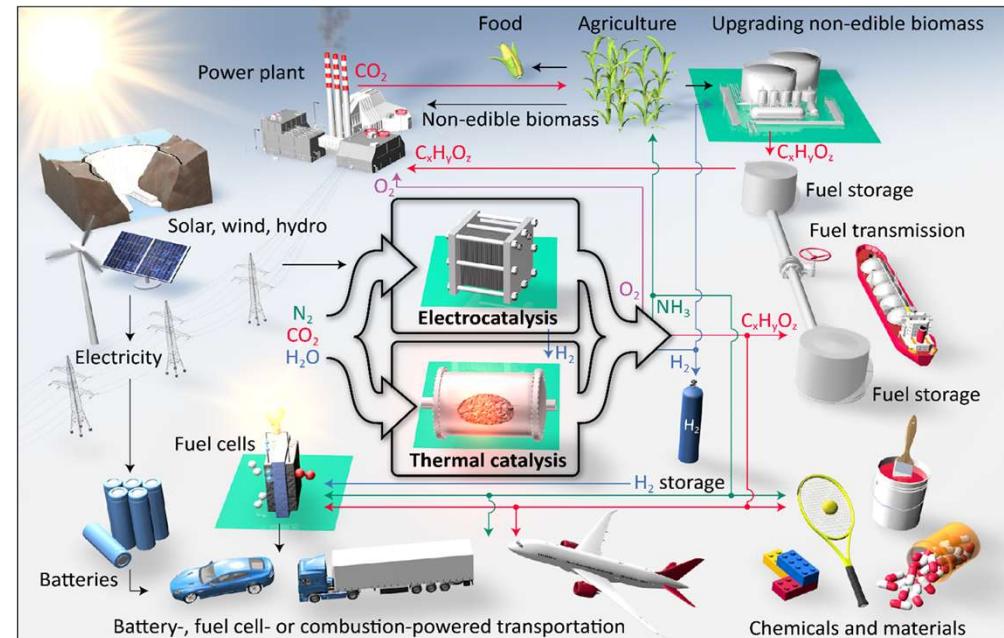
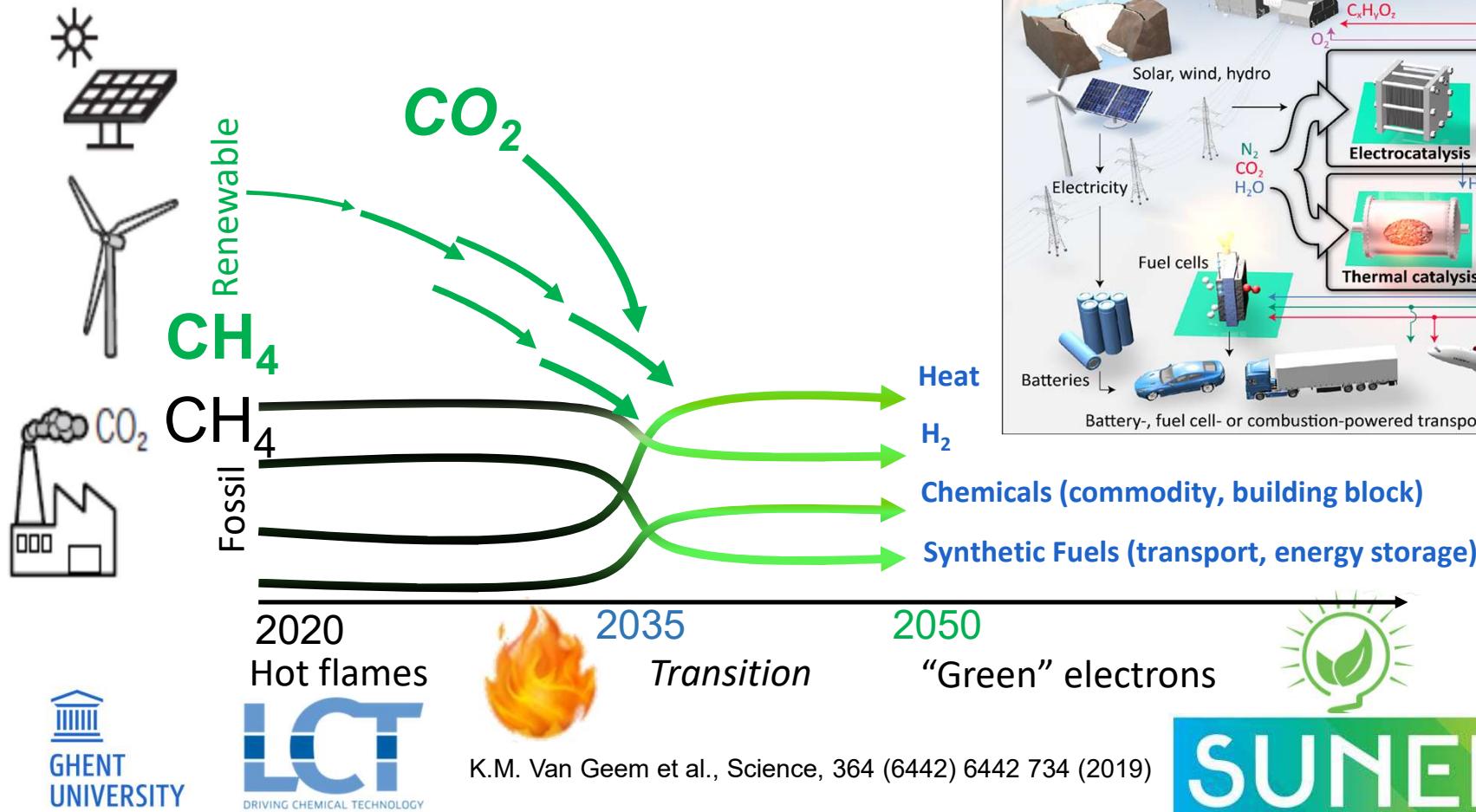
- Introduction
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# Conclusions

## ■ Combine !

- computational and experimental techniques
- material and process development
- chemical engineering and catalysis
  - Transport phenomena on lab and industrial scale
  - Autothermal adiabatic operation of exothermic reactions

# Perspectives: Chemical engineering and catalysis



**SUNERGY**

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Dr. Laurien A. Vandewalle

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