Study of Detailed Degradation Behavior of Solid Oxide Electrolyzer Cells (SOEC)

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Outline

- Introduction: Need for energy storage
  Principle of solid oxide electrolysis
- Cell manufacturing
- Cell characterization
- Degradation measurements
- Conclusion and Outlook

Storage of Electricity from Renewable Energy Sources

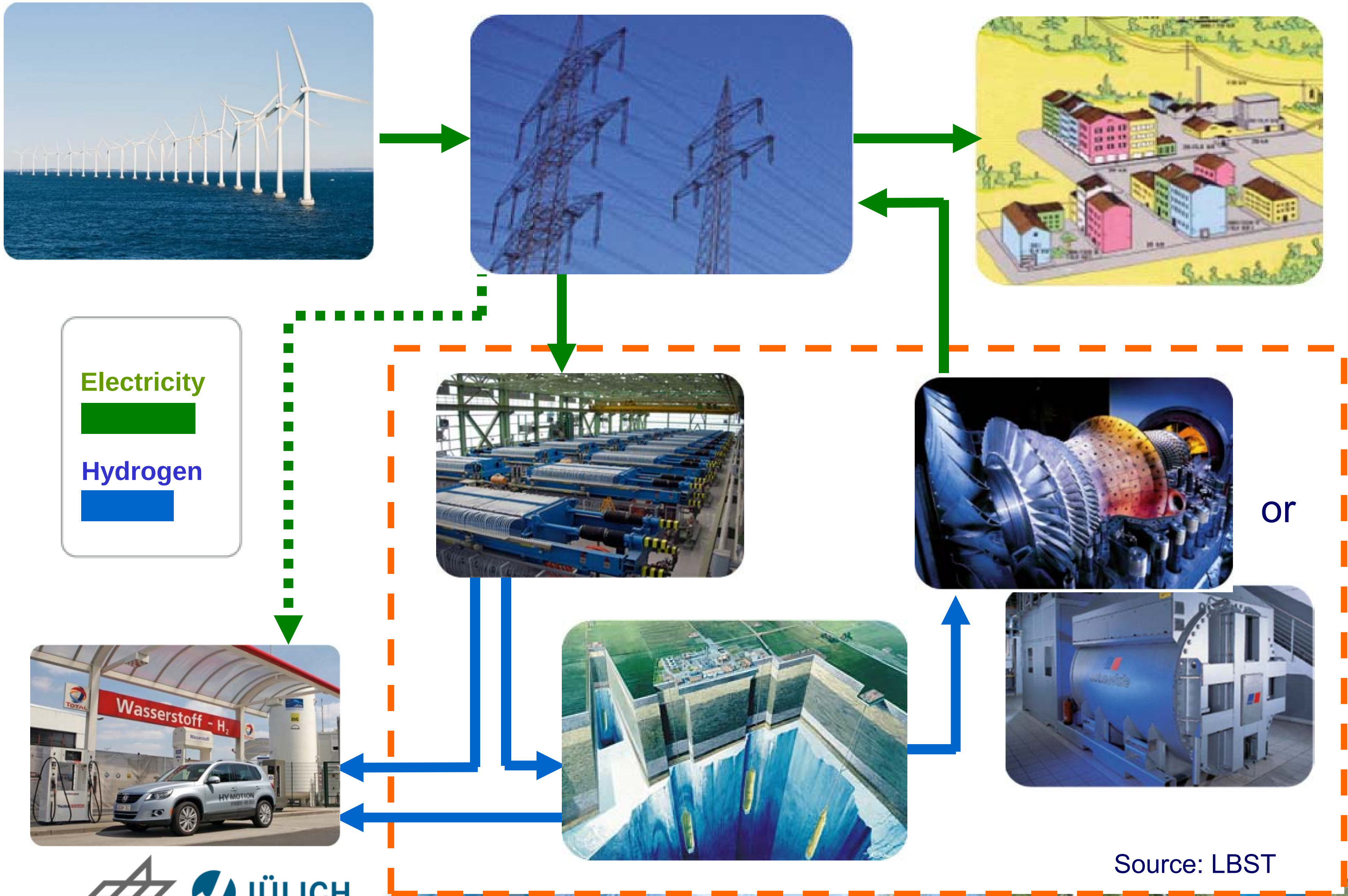
- Need for energy storage
  → Increasingly fluctuating power generation
  → Mobile applications

- Electrical energy difficult to store
  → Conversion to chemical energy

- Water electrolysis: $H_2O + W_{el} \rightarrow H_2 + ½ O_2$

- Solid oxide electrolysis is one possible conversion technology

Hydrogen as Storage Option



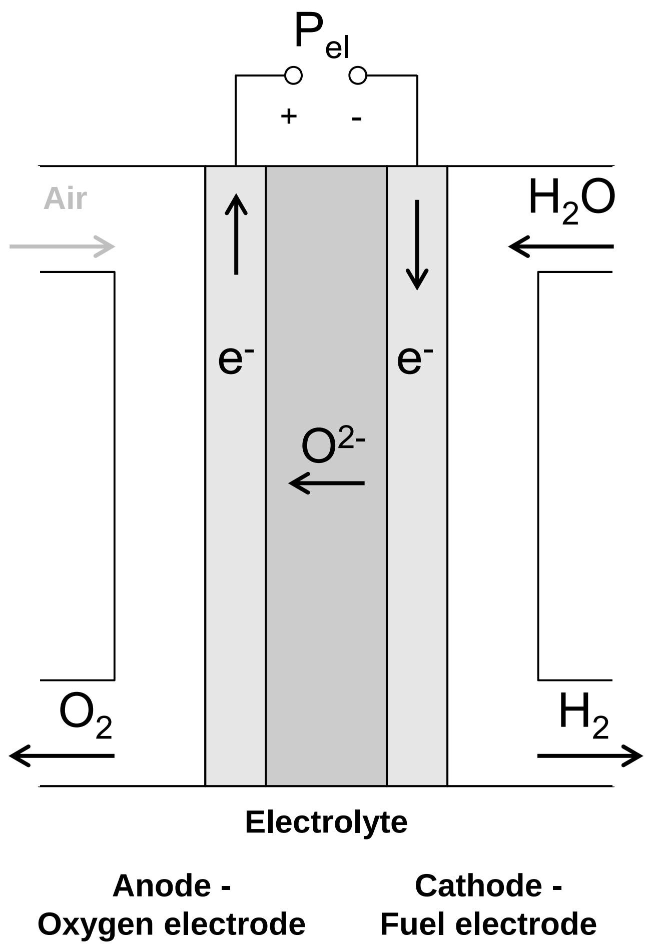
Principle of Solid Oxide Electrolysis

Advantages:

- High temperature (600 - 900° C)
  - Fast reaction kinetics
  - Low overvoltage
  - High efficiency & high current densities
- No noble metals as catalysts
- Fuel versatility: CO_2 electrolysis
  - → Co-electrolysis of H_2O/CO_2 possible
  - → Syn-gas production
  - → External (or internal) hydrocarbon formation

Problem:

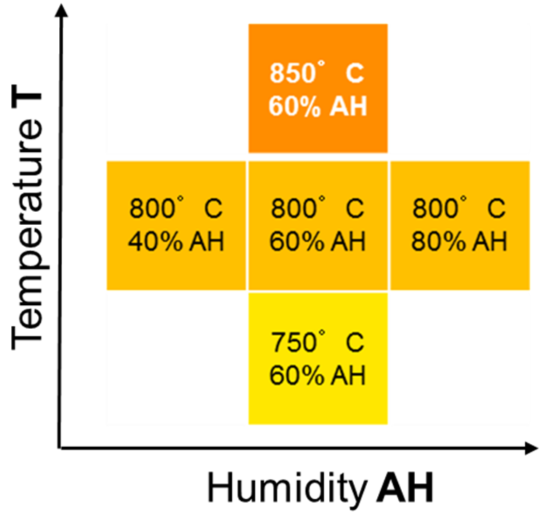
Low longevity - Degradation



Present Work – Motivation and Concept

Systematic study: operating parameter → degradation

- Temperature (T)
- Fuel gas humidity (AH)
- Current density (i)



Experimental concept:

- Degradation experiments for 1000 h
- Test rig – quadruple cell measurement
  → Identical temperature, gas supply (and also incidents)
  → Four different current densities simultaneously
- Fuel electrode supported cells from FZ Jülich and CeramTec
  → Ni-8YSZ support | Ni-8YSZ | 8YSZ | CGO | LSCF

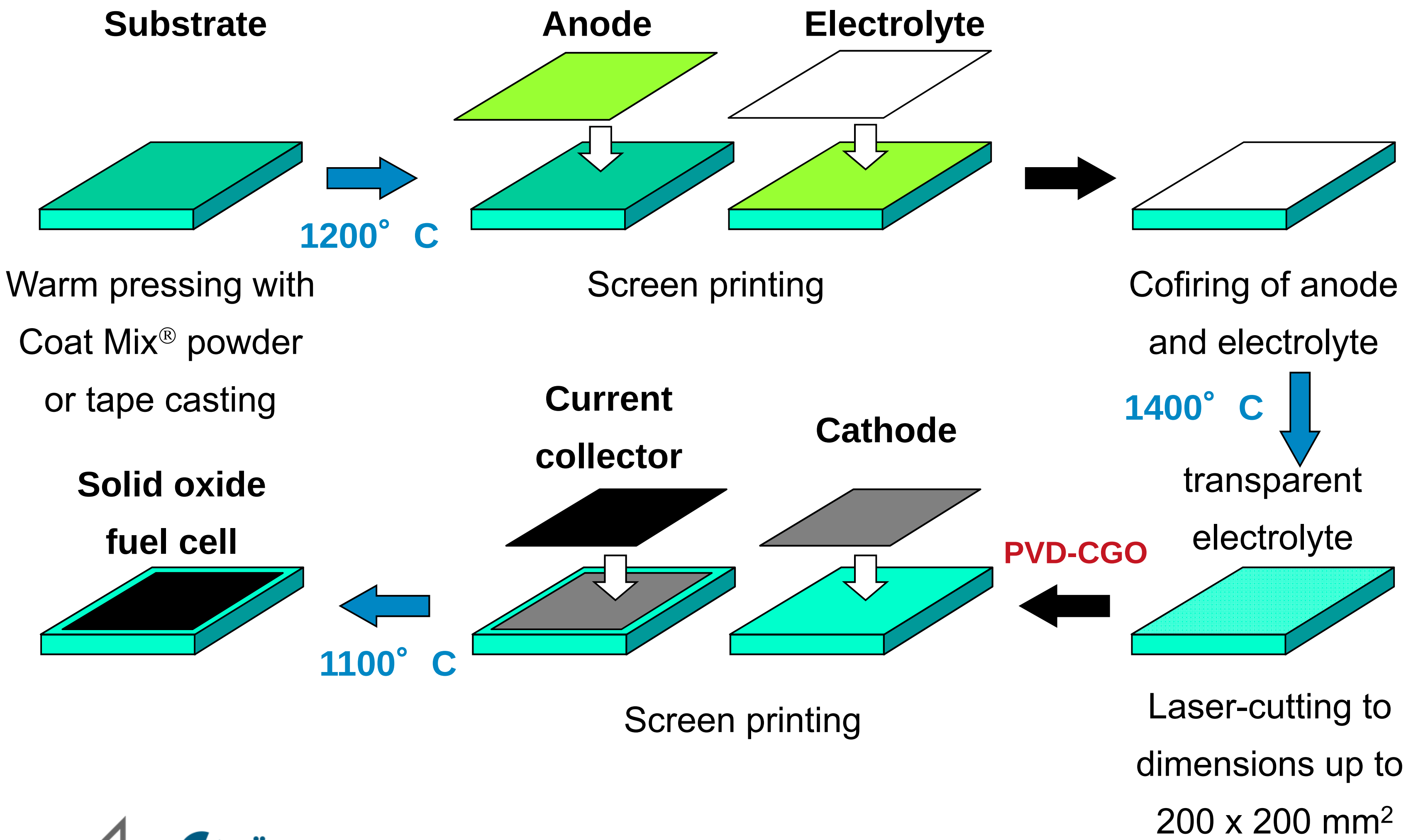
Objectives

- To gain fundamental understanding of degradation processes
  → Distinguish between degradation processes
  → Identify degradation mechanisms
  → Correlate them with operating parameters

- To optimise cells for electrolysis operation

- To adapt operating parameters for low degradation

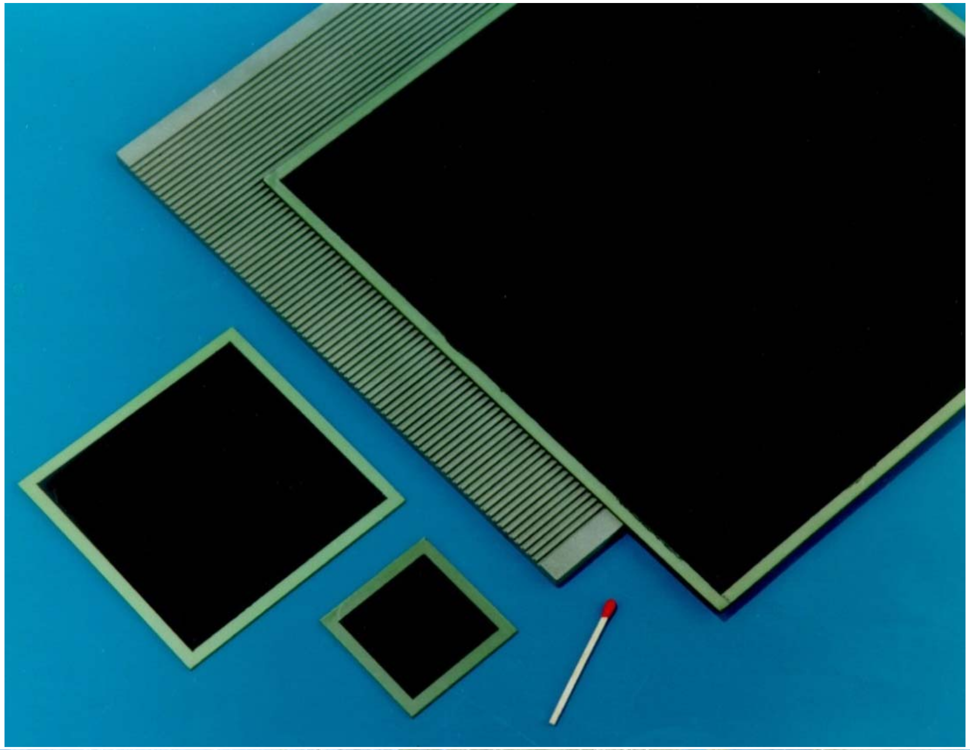
Manufacturing Steps of SOFC Anode-Supported Cells



Solid Oxide Electrolyser Cells: Planar Design

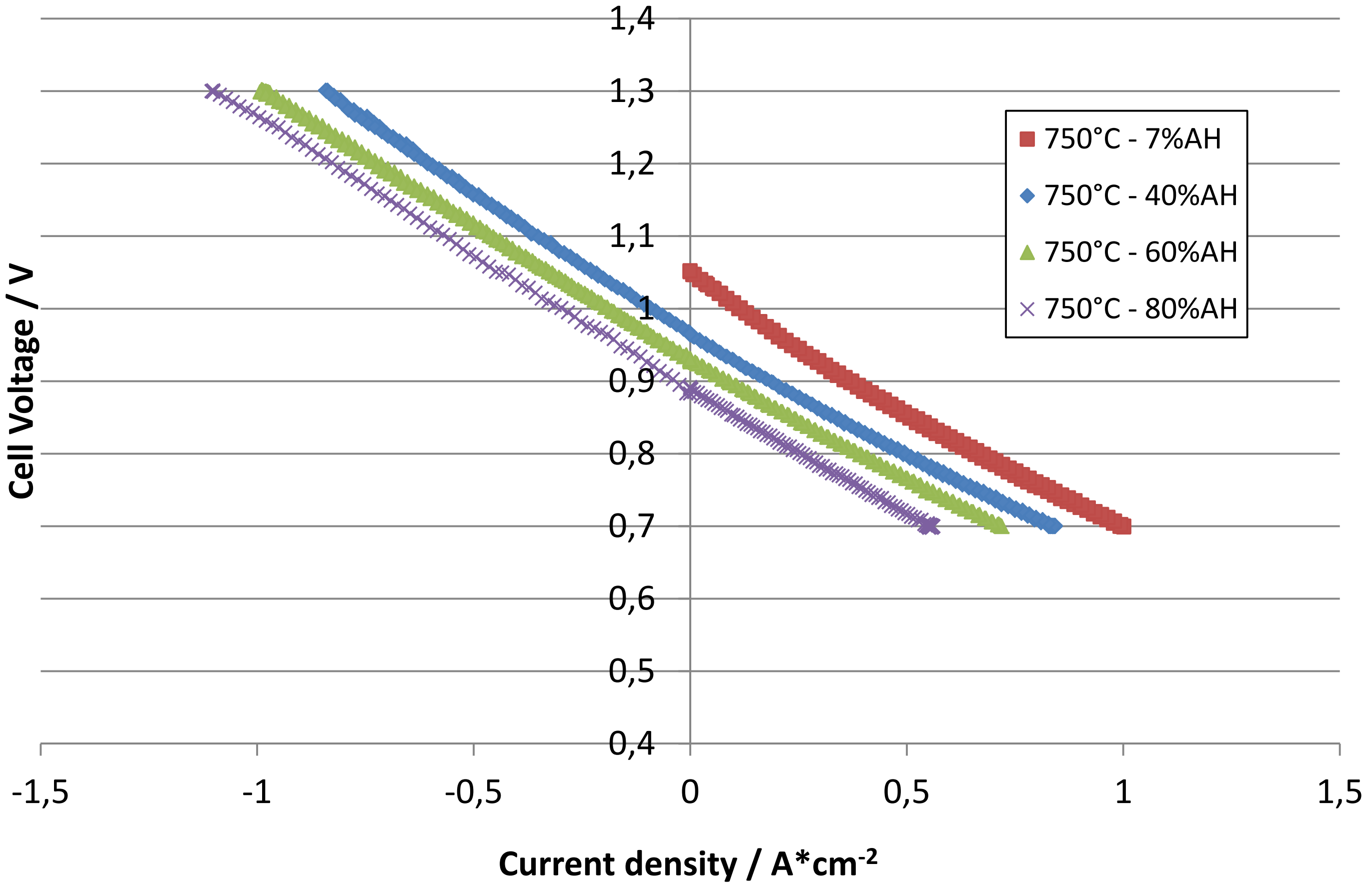
Materials

Anode:	$(La,Sr)(Fe,Co)O_3$
Diffusion barrier:	CGO – 1-5 µm
Electrolyte:	8YSZ – 5-10 µm
Cathode:	Ni/YSZ
Cathode Substrate:	Ni/YSZ

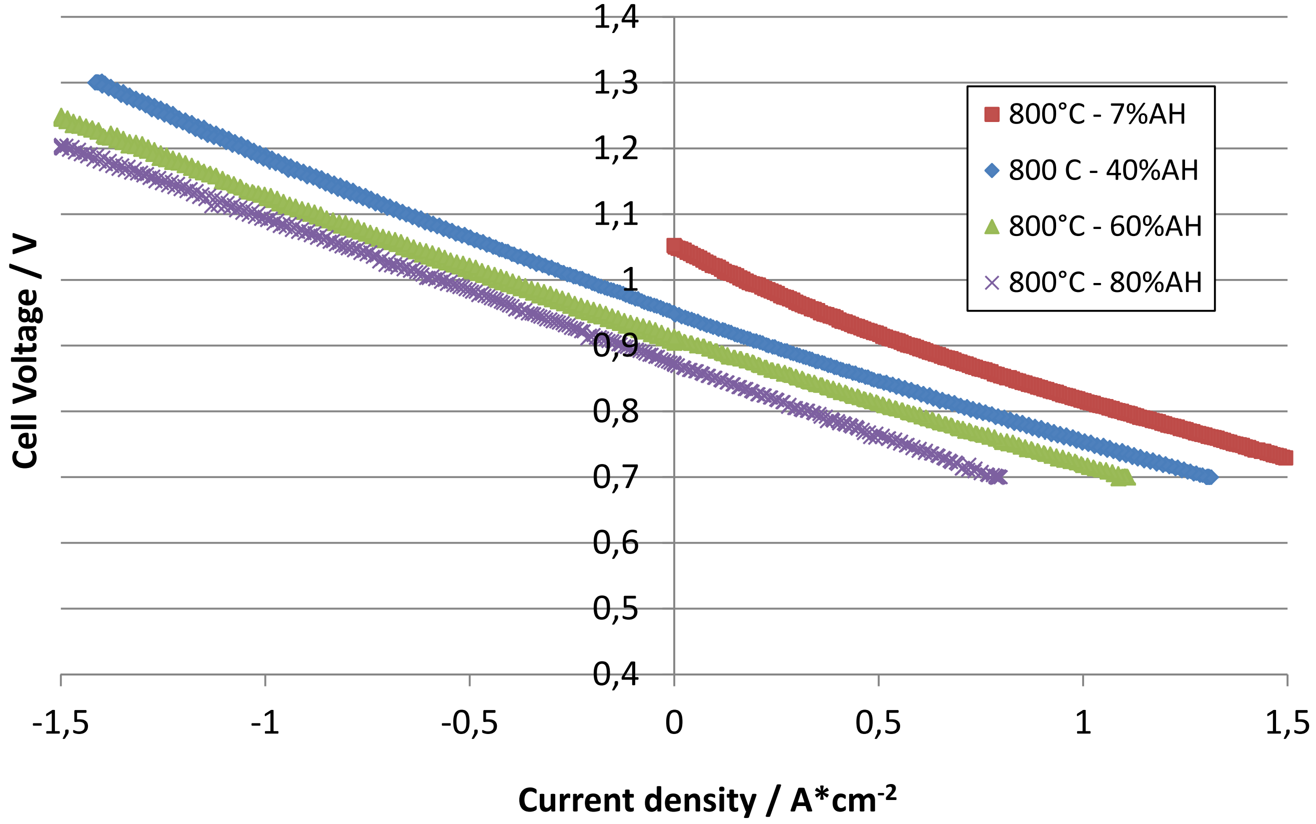


I-V Curves at 750 ° C as a Function of Steam Content

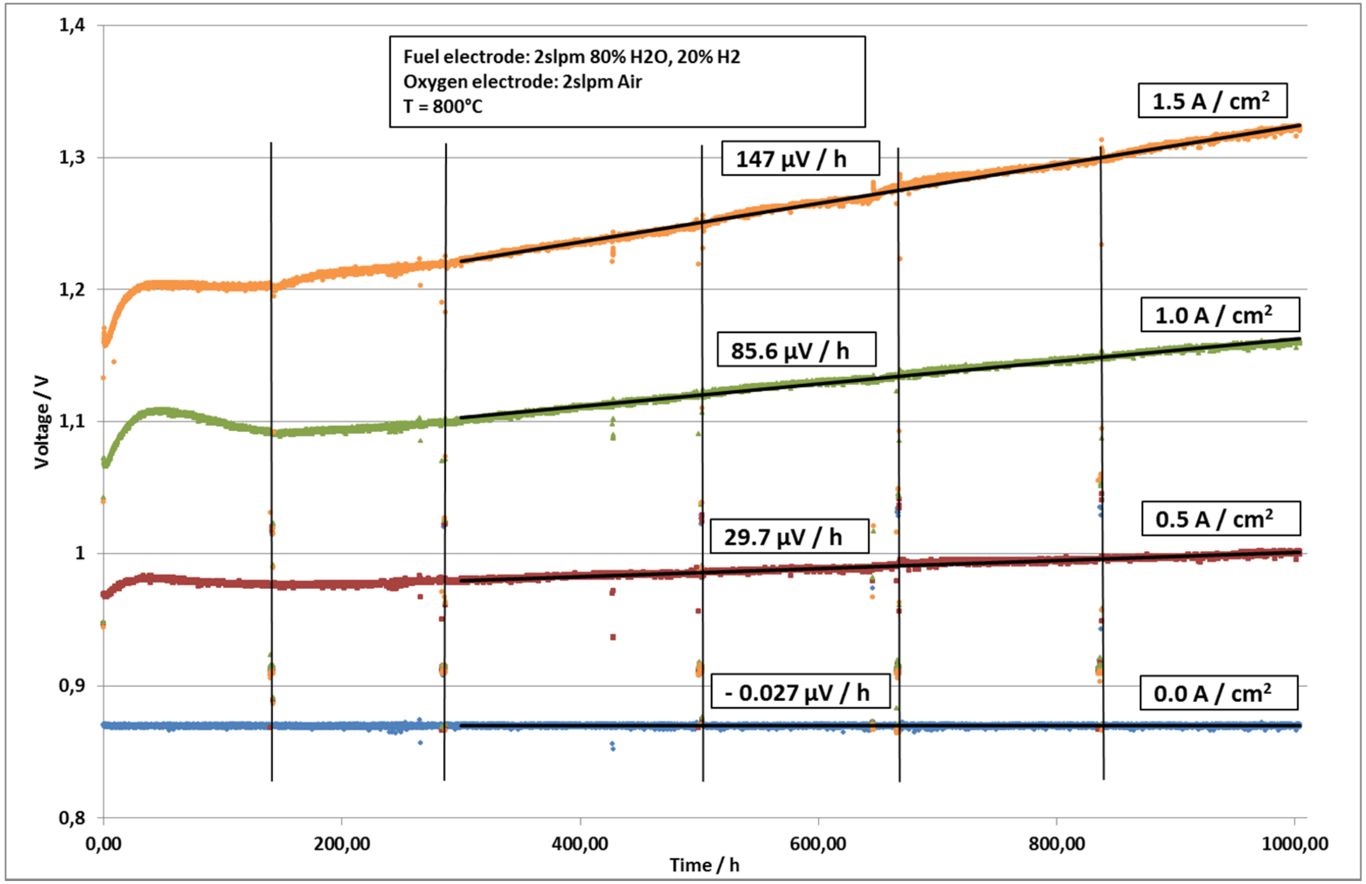
(Flow rates: 2 l/min H_2/H_2O, 3 l/min air)



I-V Curves at 800 ° C as a Function of Steam Content
(Flow rates: 2 l/min H_2/H_2O, 3 l/min air)



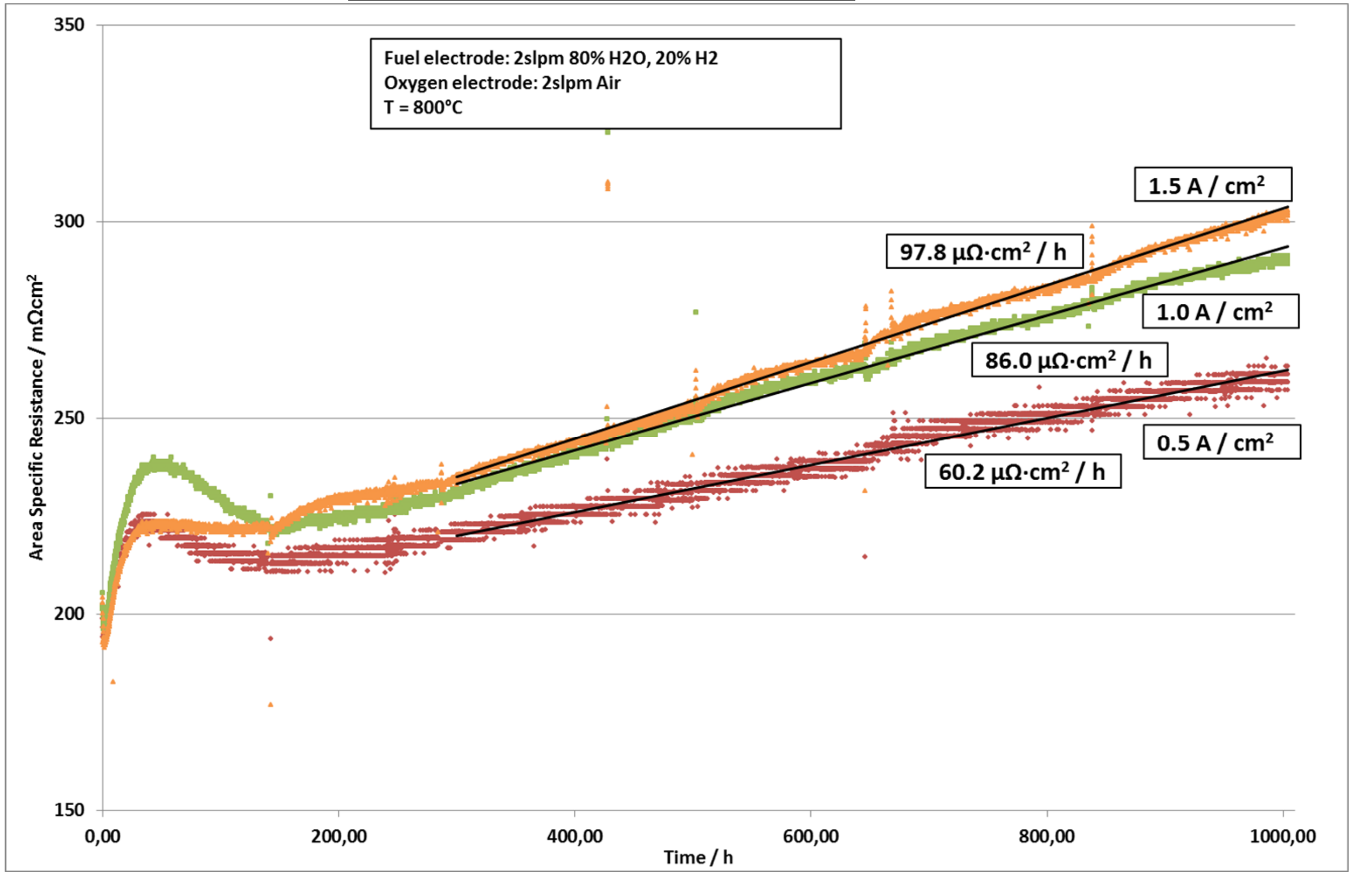
Degradation Experiment and Impedance Data Interpretation



- 4 cells measured simultaneously at different current densities
- Linear degradation after initial phase
- Be careful with interpretation of voltage degradation rate

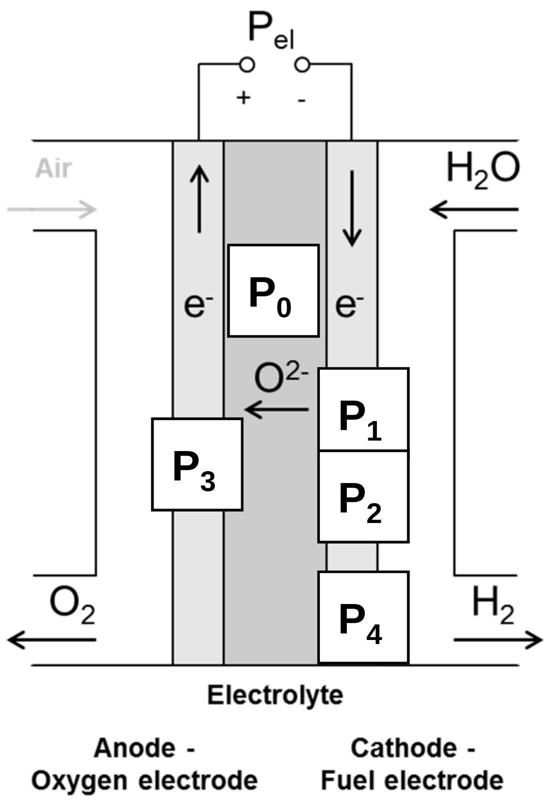
Degradation Experiment and Impedance Data Interpretation

$$ASR(t) = \frac{U(t) - OCV}{i(t)}$$



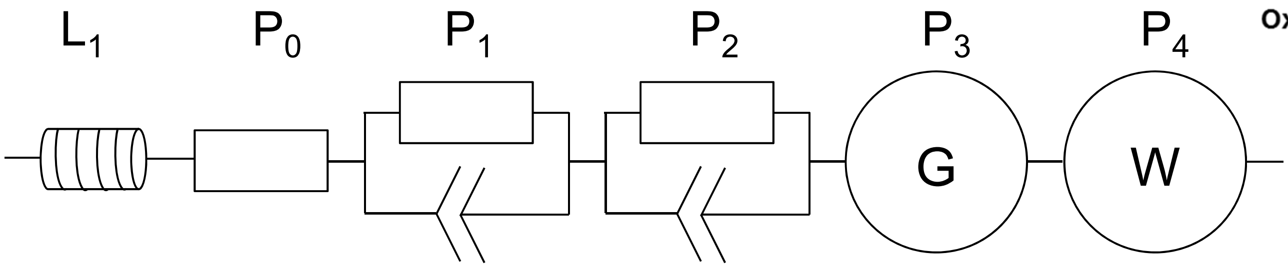
- Degradation rate at 1.5 A/cm^2 only 13 % higher than at 1.0 A/cm^2
- Degradation rate at 0.5 A/cm^2 significantly lower
- ASR degradation rate about 30% compared to 3% voltage degradation (per 1000 h @ 0.5 A/cm^2)

Degradation Experiment and In-situ Data Interpretation

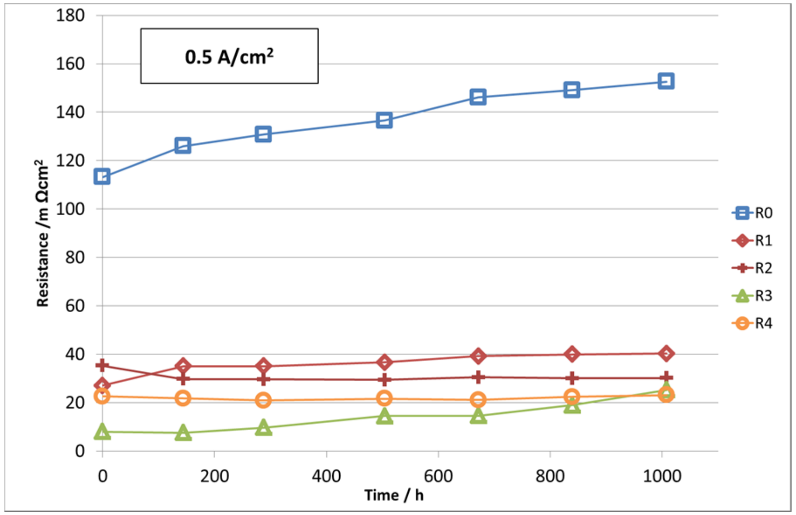


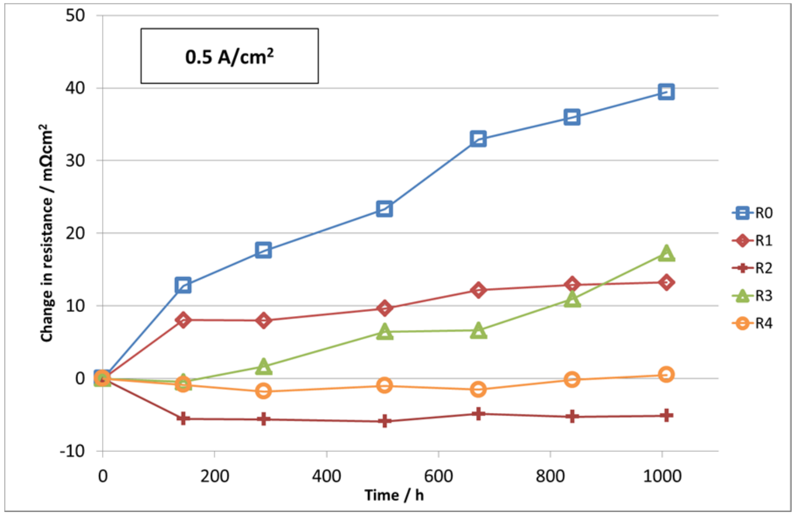
Equivalent circuit model

- L_1: High frequency induction
- P_0: Ohmic resistance (> 10^5 Hz)
- P_1: Fuel electrode process A (~ 10^4 Hz)
- P_2: Fuel electrode process B (~ 10^3 Hz)
- P_3: Oxygen electrode process (~ 10^2 Hz)
- P_4: Fuel electrode mass transport (~ 10^1 Hz)

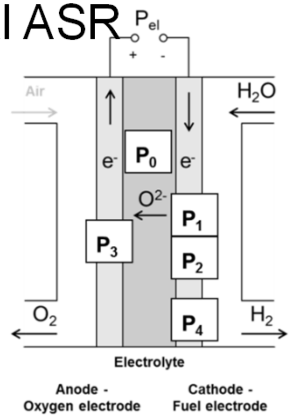


Influence of Current Density on Degradation



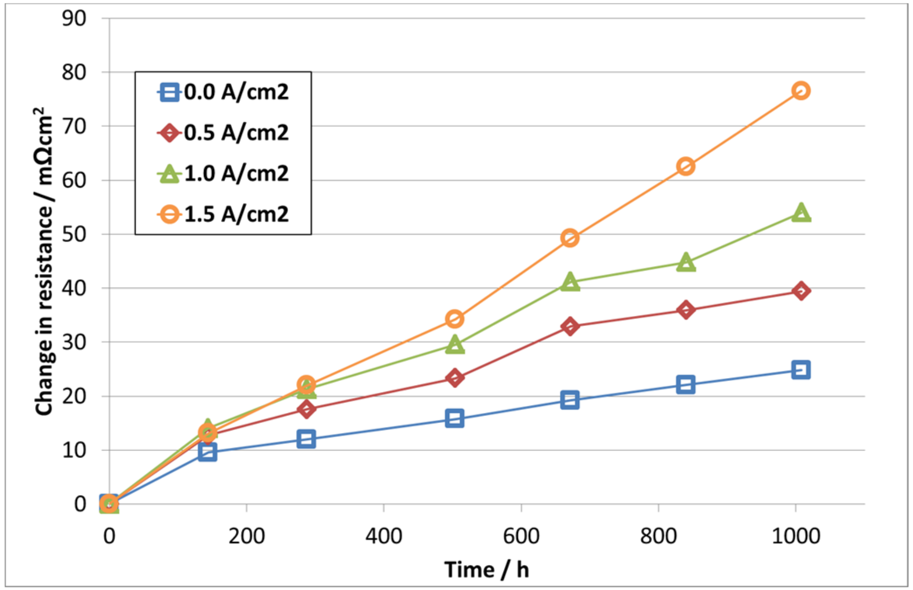


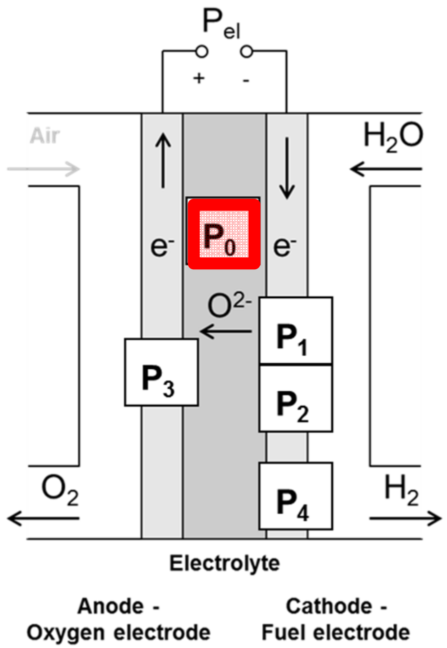
- Ohmic resistance contributes more than 50% of total ASR



- Degradation of ohmic resistance is most severe
- Oxygen electrode has small ASR but high contribution to degradation
- Fuel electrode process 1 degrades while process 2 improves performance

Influence of Current Density on Degradation

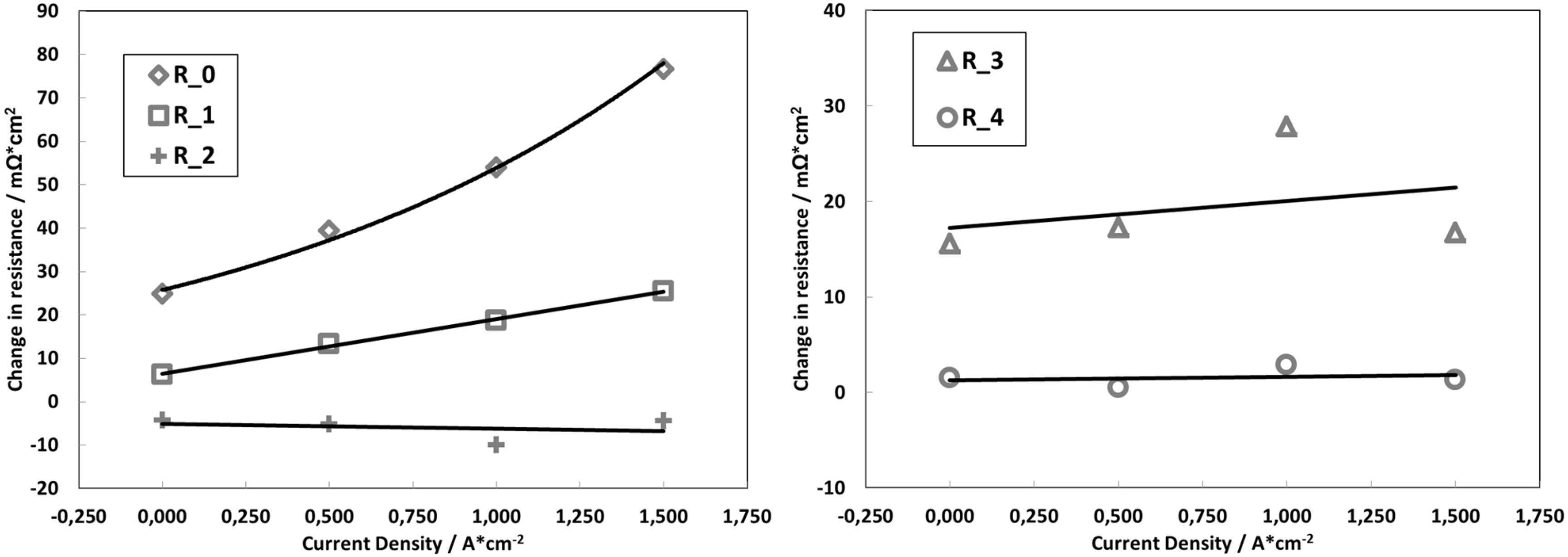




P_0: Ohmic resistance

- Obvious correlation with current density
- Linear degradation with time

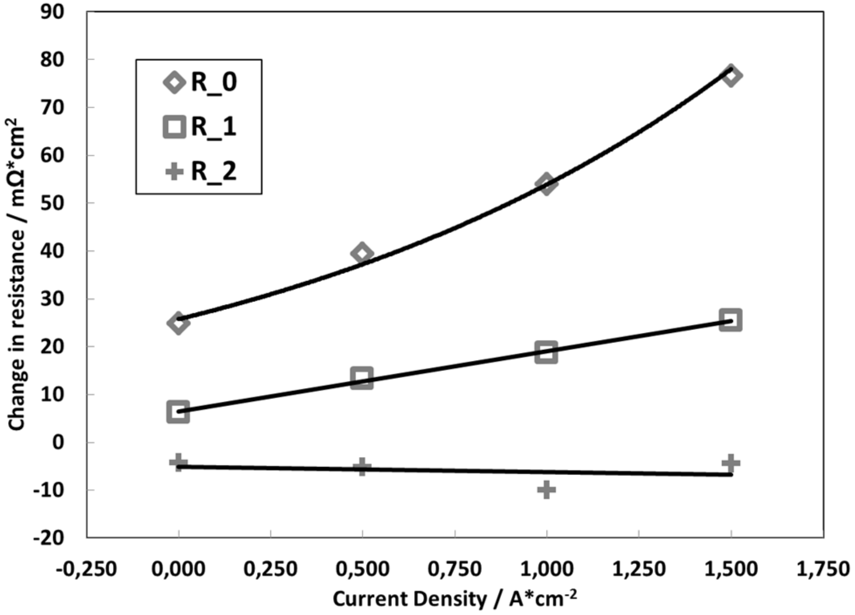
Influence of Current Density on Degradation

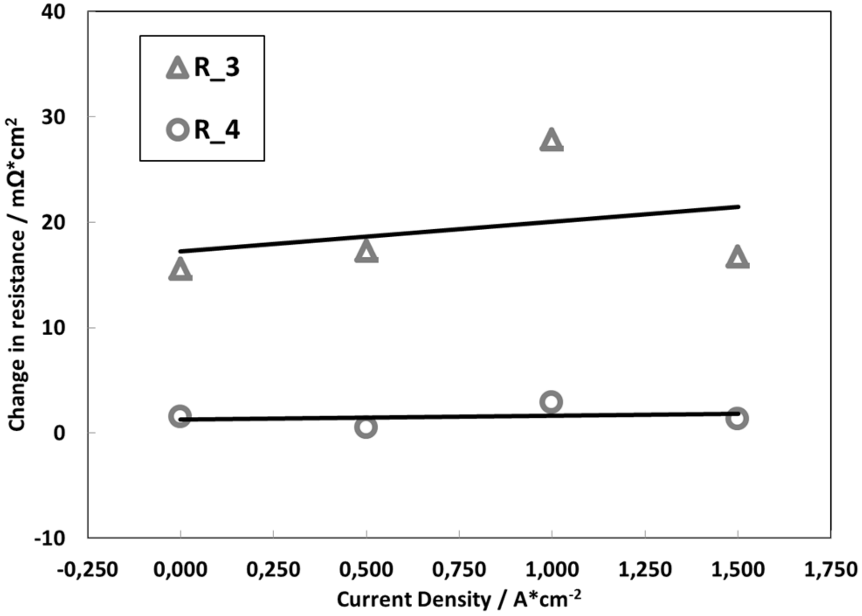


<u>Degradation after 1000 h</u>

- Ohmic resistance: strong dependence on current density
  Dependence possibly exponential

Influence of Current Density on Degradation

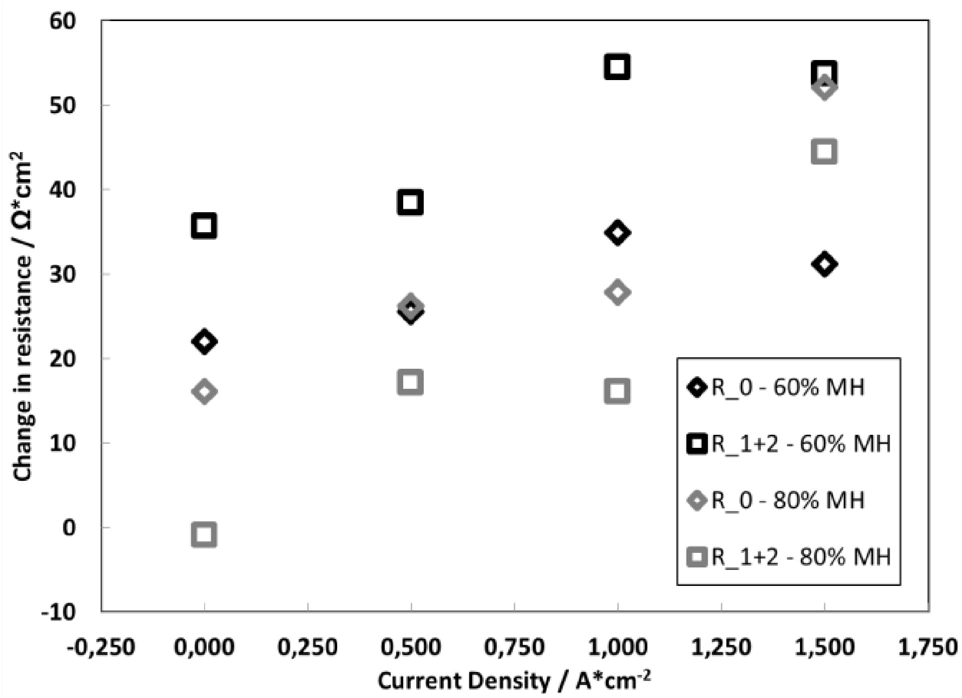




Degradation after 1000 h

- Fuel electrode process 1: clear linear dependence on current density
- Other three processes: no current dependency

Humidification



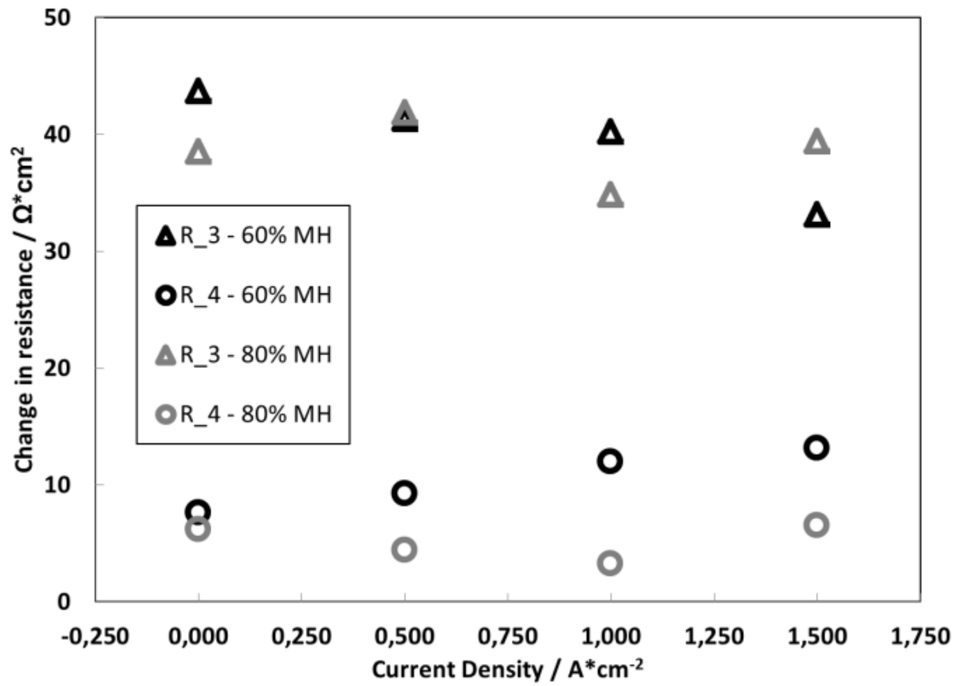
Ohmic resistance (R_0):

- Dependent on current density

Fuel electrode polarization (R_1+2):

- Lower degradation rate at higher humidities…
- … but higher degradation dependence on current density

Humidification



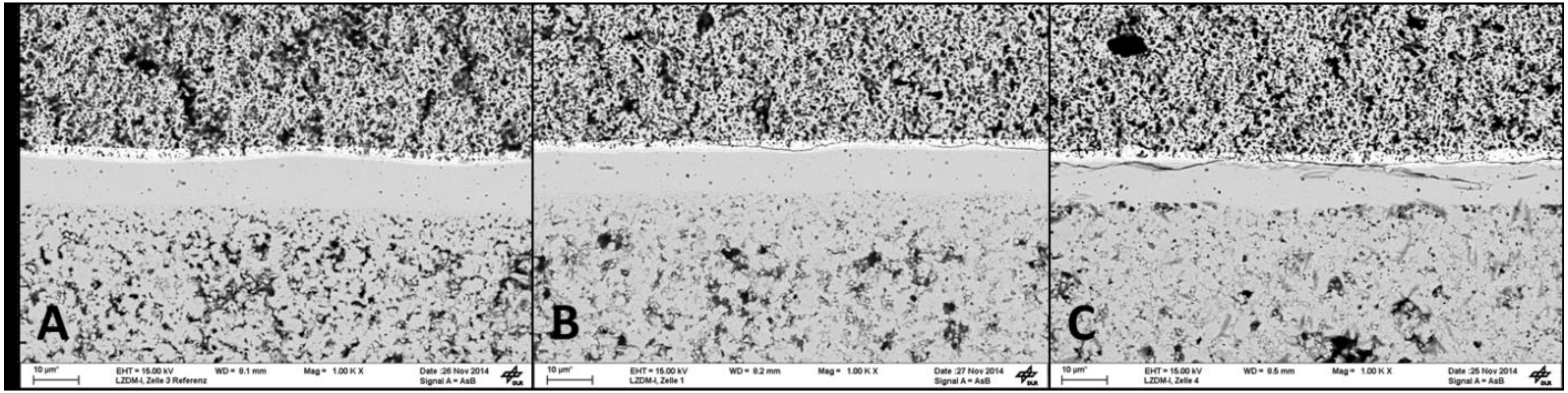
Oxygen electrode polarization (R_3):

- Humidity has very little influence

Fuel electrode polarization (R_4):

- Generally small degradation
- Lower at higher humidities
- No obvious trend

Post-mortem Analysis – Electrolyte



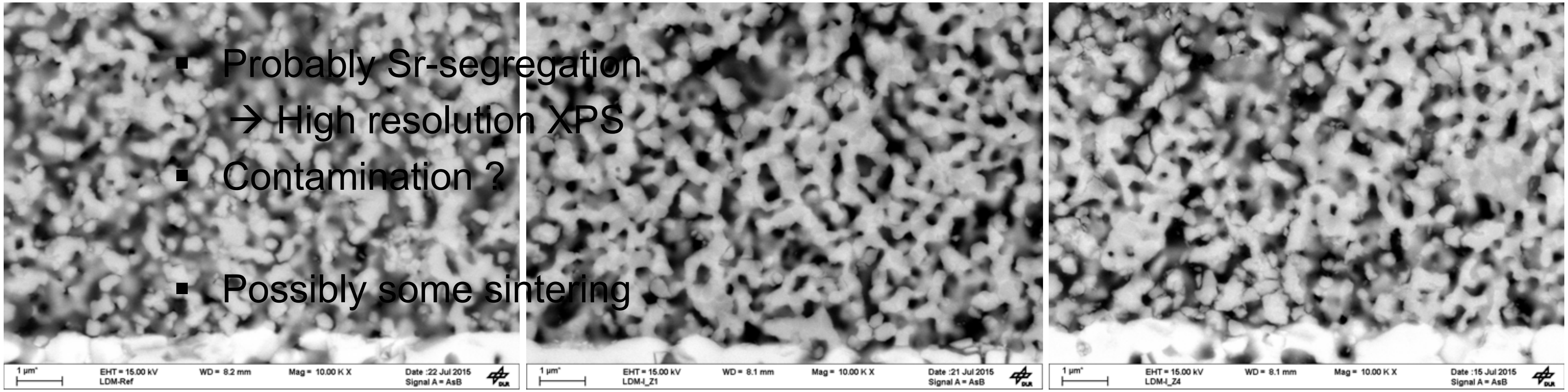
Reference | 1000 h @ OCV | 1000 h @ 1.5 A/cm^2

Ohmic resistance:

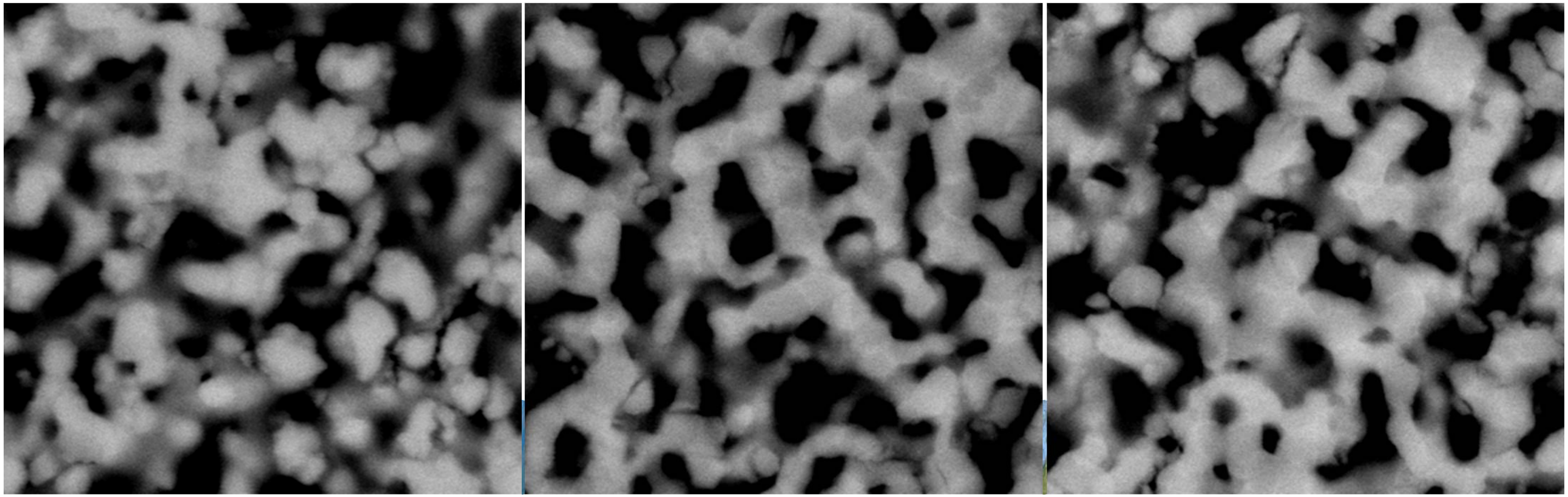
- Weakening of YSZ|CGO|LSCF interface → probably formation of cracks
- Visible cracks probably formed during sample preparation along weakened microstructure

Post-mortem Analysis – Oxygen Electrode

- Probably Sr-segregation
  → High resolution XPS
- Contamination ?
- Possibly some sintering



Reference | 1000 h @ OCV | 1000 h @ 1.5 A/cm^2



Summary

- Correlation between degradation and current density has been investigated
- Ohmic resistance dominates degradation and increases with current density
- Oxygen electrode contributes significantly to degradation and is independent of current density
- Higher frequency fuel electrode process significant for degradation and dependent on current density
- Lower frequency fuel electrode process is stable after initial activation independent of current density
- No degradation in mass transport limitation

Acknowledgment

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Thank you for your attention

DLR JÜLICH FORSCHUNGSZENTRUM