

## Supporting Information

### **Rational Design of Solid-Acid Catalysts for Cellulose Hydrolysis Using Colloidal Theory**

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## **Table of content**

1. Supplemental figure
2. DLVO Theory Section
3. Hamaker constant ( $A_{132}$ ) determination section
4. Estimating Surface Potential of Bifunctional Catalysts
5. Shear force effect on cellulose-catalyst aggregation
6. Temperature Effect on Cellulose-Solid-Acid Interactions
7. Solvent Effect on Cellulose-Solid-Acid Interaction

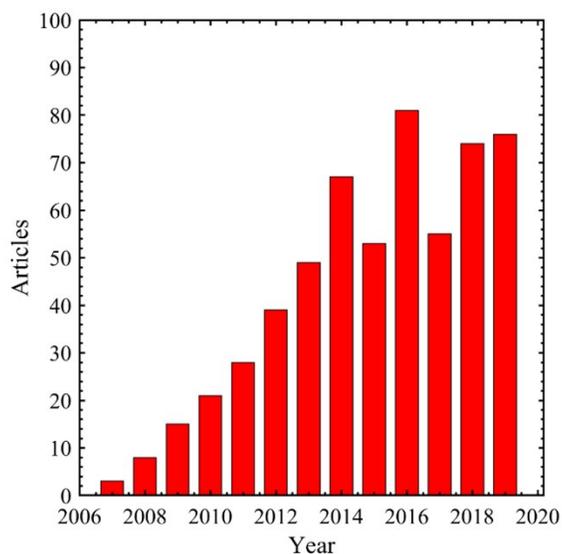
## List of Symbols

$U$	DLVO total interaction energy (J)
$U_{VDW}$	van der waals attraction energy (J)
$U_{EDL}$	Electrical double layer interaction energy (J)
$A_{132}$	Hamaker constant of cellulose (1) interacting with catalyst (2) across water (3) (J)
$A_{11}$	Hamaker constant of cellulose-cellulose interaction in vacuum (J)
$A_{22}$	Hamaker constant of catalyst-catalyst interaction in vacuum (J)
$A_{33}$	Hamaker constant of water-water interaction in vacuum (J)
$R_1$	Radius of cellulose particle
$R_2$	Radius of catalyst particle
$x$	Cellulose-catalyst separation
$k_b$	Boltzmann constant, $1.38 \times 10^{-23} \text{ (J K}^{-1}\text{)}$
$T$	Temperature (K)
$\varepsilon_i$	Relative permittivity of cellulose ( $\varepsilon_1$ ), catalyst ( $\varepsilon_2$ ), water ( $\varepsilon_3$ ) and free space ( $\varepsilon_0$ )
$n_i$	Refractive index of cellulose ( $n_1$ ), catalyst ( $n_2$ ), water ( $n_3$ )
$h$	Planck constant (J.s)
$v_e$	Rotational frequency ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )
$\psi$	Electrical potential (V)
$\psi_0$	Surface electrical potential (V)
$c$	Ions number concentration ( $\text{L}^{-1}$ )

$z$	Valence number
$e$	Electron charge, $1.60 \times 10^{-19}$ (C)
$\kappa$	Reciprocal of Debye length ( $\text{m}^{-1}$ )
$\lambda_D$	Debye length (m)
$Z$	Zeta potential (V)
$k_a$	Acid dissociation constant
$k_b$	Base dissociation constant
$\Gamma_{AH}$	Surface coverage of undissociated acid ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\Gamma_{BOH}$	Surface coverage of undissociated base ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\Gamma_{A^-}$	Surface coverage of dissociated acid $A^-$ ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\Gamma_{B^+}$	Surface coverage of dissociated acid $B^+$ ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\Gamma_{At}$	Total acid surface coverage ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\Gamma_{Bt}$	Total base surface coverage ( $\text{mol m}^{-2}$ )
$\sigma_0$	Surface charge density ( $\text{C m}^{-2}$ ).

## 1. Supplemental Figure

**Figure SI-1** indicates that the field grew rapidly between 2007-2014, reaching a steady value between 50 and 80 publications per year from 2014-2019. The result is that the field has expanded from a handful of publications in 2007 to a cumulative total of more than 500 over a 13-year time period.



**Figure SI-1** shows the number of annually published articles since 2006. The data was obtained from Web of Science with the search keywords “solid acid catalyst cellulose hydrolysis”.

## 2. DLVO Theory Section

DLVO theory, named after Boris Derjaguin and Lev Landau, Evert Verwey and Theodoor Overbeek, forms the basis of understanding whether colloidal particles will agglomerate or remain dispersed when in solution. DLVO theory divides colloidal interactions into a van der Waals component and an electrical double layer component:<sup>[1]</sup>

$$U = U_{VDW} + U_{EDL} \quad [1]$$

where  $U$  is the total DLVO interaction energy,  $U_{VDW}$  is the interaction energy arising from van der Waals force and  $U_{EDL}$  represents the interaction energy of electrostatic double-layer force.

The van der Waals interaction energy ( $U_{VDW}$ ) between two spherical particles follows a power law with respect to particle-particle separation ( $x$ ), as derived by Hamaker:<sup>[1]</sup>

$$U_{VDW}(x) = -\frac{A_{132}}{6} \left[ \frac{2R_1R_2}{x(2R_1 + 2R_2 + x)} + \frac{2R_1R_2}{(2R_1 + x)(2R_2 + x)} + \ln \frac{(2R_1 + 2R_2 + x)x}{(2R_1 + x)(2R_2 + x)} \right] \quad [2]$$

$A_{132}$  is the combined nonretarded Hamaker constant for cellulose-solid-acid catalyst interacting across water. For the purposes of this study, cellulose is denoted as “1”, the solid-acid catalyst is denoted as “2”, and the solvent (water) is denoted as “3”. The value of  $A_{132}$  can be determined by empirical data fitting or (more typically) can be estimated using a combinatorial rule:<sup>[2]</sup>

$$A_{132} = -(\sqrt{A_{11}} - \sqrt{A_{33}})(\sqrt{A_{22}} - \sqrt{A_{33}}) \quad (3)$$

where  $A_{11}$  is the Hamaker constant of cellulose-cellulose interacting across vacuum,  $A_{22}$  denotes the Hamaker constant for catalyst-catalyst interaction, and  $A_{33}$  is the Hamaker constant of water interacting with itself.

Values of individual Hamaker constants ( $A_{ii}$ ) can be obtained by fitting force-distance data, which is time-consuming and instrument-dependent. Instead, the approach recommended by Lifshitz [2] can be adopted to estimate  $A_{ii}$  based on values of dielectric constant and refractive index, both of which are commonly available. The expression is given as:

$$A_{ii} = \frac{3}{4}k_bT \left( \frac{\varepsilon_i + 1}{\varepsilon_i - 1} \right)^2 + \frac{3h\nu_e (n_i^2 - 1)^2}{16\sqrt{2}(n_i^2 + 1)^{3/2}} \quad (4)$$

where  $\nu_e$  is the main electronic absorption frequency in the ultraviolet region, typically around  $3 \times 10^{15} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . Equation (4) indicates that the interaction is always attractive for particles with identical permittivity and refractive index. [1] Appropriate values for the index of refraction and dielectric constant are available in the literature for cellulose and model materials representative of major catalyst types (e.g., oxides, carbon, and polymers).

The second term in the overall DLVO interaction energy arise from electrostatic interaction, which can either result in repulsion or attraction, depending on the charges sign of the two examined surfaces relative to one another. Cellulose and most catalyst materials, especially those bearing acid groups, are negatively charged when placed in aqueous solutions, either due to dissociation of ionizable functional groups or adsorption of ions.[3] To quantify the electrostatic repulsion, the electrical potential distribution between the particles must be computed using the Poisson-Boltzmann (P.B.) distribution:[4]

$$\nabla^2\psi = \frac{8\pi cez}{\varepsilon_0\varepsilon_3} \sinh\left(\frac{ze\psi}{k_bT}\right) \quad (5)$$

For spherical particles, the PB equation reduces to:<sup>[4]</sup>

$$\frac{d^2\psi}{dx^2} = \kappa^2\psi \quad (6)$$

where  $\kappa$  is reciprocal of the Debye length, which characterizes the thickness of the diffusion layer and which varies from a few hundred nanometers in pure water to several nanometers in highly concentrated ion solutions. The Debye length is defined as:

$$\kappa = \lambda_D^{-1} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (z_i e)^2 c}{\varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_3 k_b T}} \quad (7)$$

where all terms have been defined previously.

Solution of the P.B. equation gives the electrical potential as a function of radial distance ( $x$ ) from the surface. Many mathematical methods, both numerical and analytical, have been developed to solve the P.B. equation.<sup>[5]</sup> Among these mathematical methods, Hogg et al. provided an analytical solution appropriate for spherical particles.<sup>[4]</sup> The expression for  $U_{edl}$  given by the Hogg solution of the PB equation is shown as equation (8):

$$U_{EDL}(x) = \frac{\varepsilon_0 \varepsilon_3 R_1 R_2 (\psi_{01}^2 + \psi_{02}^2)}{4(R_1 + R_2)} \left[ \frac{2\psi_{01}\psi_{02}}{(\psi_{01}^2 + \psi_{02}^2)} \ln \left( \frac{1 + \exp(-\kappa x)}{1 - \exp(-\kappa x)} \right) + \ln(1 - \exp(-2\kappa x)) \right] \quad (8)$$

Inserting Equations (2) and (8) into Equation (1) allows calculation of  $U$  as a function of particle-particle separation.

### 3. Hamaker constant ( $A_{132}$ ) Determination Section

The vdw interaction always exists between particles, and its magnitude is determined primarily by the value of the nonretarded Hamaker constant, a quantity that is typically determined by fitting force-distance curve for interacting particles. Accurate estimation of Hamaker constant would facilitate us evaluate the reported catalysts and also identify potential catalysts candidate for cellulose hydrolysis.

Lifshitz theory (Eqn. 4) that use optical properties such as dielectric constant and refractive index has provided accurate estimation for a wide range of particles interaction in polar solvents such as water. Accordingly, dielectric constant and refractive index for cellulose and some common catalysts substrate materials, including carbon, iron oxide, zirconia, polystyrene and Nafion are extracted from literatures (table SI-1). Then Hamaker constant ( $A_{ii}$ ) for individual materials interacting with itself across the vacuum is obtained using equation (4). Then equation (3) is being utilized to compute nonretarded Hamaker constant for cellulose-catalyst interaction in aqueous solution. The computed Hamaker constant ( $A_{132}$ ) for cellulose and solid-acid catalysts are not generally available in literature.  $A_{ii}$  is compared with literature value where available. For example, the calculated Hamaker constant of cellulose interacting with itself in vacuum is approximately  $6.4 \times 10^{-20}$  J, which is close to  $5.8 \times 10^{-20}$  J reported by Bergström et al. using spectroscopic ellipsometry.<sup>[6]</sup> Hough and White use the exact solution of the Lifshitz theory to compute  $A_{132}$  for zirconia and obtain  $20 \times 10^{-20}$  J, which close to the value in **Table SI-1**. Reported  $A_{ii}$  using “Quasi-Dynamic” method for polystyrene is about  $7.9 \times 10^{-20}$  J and close to  $8.30 \times 10^{-20}$  J.<sup>88</sup> Literature reported Hamaker constant for magnetite is about  $40 \times 10^{-20}$  J and is higher that calculated value ( $34.8 \times 10^{-20}$ ). Although the accuracy of Hamaker constant obtained from different physical instruments is still in debate, the Lifshitz theory still remains the

most widely used theoretical approach to estimate Hamaker constant. The congruence of calculated Hamaker constant with literature values suggests the promise of Lifshitz theory for determining  $A_{132}$  without involving experimental efforts.

**Table SI-1.** Calculated Hamaker constant ( $\times 10^{-21}$  J) for different solid-acid catalysts interacting with cellulose in water using Lifshitz theory

Materials	$n_i$	$\epsilon_r$	$A_{ii}$	$A_{132}$	Ref.
Cellulose	1.53	7.6	64.0	-	[7, 8]
Carbon	2.42	12	439	36.0	[9, 10]
$Fe_3O_4$	2.42	8.5	348	35.0	[11]
ZrO <sub>2</sub>	2.15	18	262	28.8	[12, 13]
Polystyrene	1.55	2.6	83	10.7	[14]
Nafion	1.38	3.5	103	1.70	[15]

The data provided in **Table SI-1** suggest that Hamaker constant ( $A_{132}$ ) for cellulose-catalysts interaction across water ( $A_{132}$ ) increases in the sequence of: activated carbon  $> Fe_3O_4 > ZrO_2 > polystyrene > Nafion$ , ranging from  $0.17 \times 10^{-20}$  J to  $3.60 \times 10^{-20}$  J. Interestingly, carbon and metal oxides e.g.  $Fe_3O_4$  and  $ZrO_2$  are excellent candidates for adsorbing cellulose. This is in accord with the fact that carbon materials and metal oxides are protons donors because of its rich electron cloud density, resulting in strong vdw attraction. <sup>[16]</sup> Not surprisingly, increasing the catalyst surface electron density has been a widely used approach to tailor catalyst catalytic performance. <sup>[17]</sup> In contrast, polymer materials such as Nafion are chemically inert and have low tendency to adsorb cellulose. Polystyrene has an intermediate Hamaker constant ( $A_{132}$ ) of

$1.07 \times 10^{-20}$  J, allowing it having greater attraction than Nafion with cellulose. The catalysts showing in **Table SI-1** cover three main categories, including carbon, polymer, metal oxides solid materials. However, this does not necessarily represent all the catalysts within each category. In fact, even for the case of metal oxides, the Hamaker constant ( $A_{ij}$ ) can vary drastically. [18] In evaluating individual catalyst vdw attraction, accurate optical properties such as dielectric constant refractive index should be obtained for the accurate prediction of Hamaker constant.

#### 4. Estimating Surface Potential of Bifunctional Catalysts

The surface of a solid catalyst particle will become charged upon aqueous immersion due to acid dissociation and subsequent ion adsorption. The charge density of the surface depends on several factors, including catalyst acidity ( $pKa$ ), catalyst surface acid density, and solution  $pH$  or ionic strength.[19]

The charge density/surface potential can be rendered in terms of measurable parameters, e.g.  $pKa$ ,  $pH$  and acid surface coverage, either using experimental measurements of the zeta potential ( $\zeta$ ) or a mathematical model that can predict surface acid dissociation. In the first of these, the zeta potential is an indirect measure of the surface potential, and the two quantities can be related to one another using the following expression:[2]

$$\psi_0 = \frac{4k_bT}{ze} \tanh^{-1} \left( \tanh\left(\frac{ze\zeta}{4k_bT}\right) \times e^{\kappa d} \right) \quad (9)$$

where  $d$  is the distance between particle surface and slipping plane, often taking the value of 5-6 Å. [2] In principle,  $\zeta$  is a function of  $pH$  and possibly ionic strength. Here, we will use equation (9) and  $pH$  resolved measurements of  $\zeta$  to approximate  $\psi_0$  for particles that have published data, namely cellulose, zirconia, Nafion, and activated carbon.

When experimental  $\zeta$  measurements are not available, a second method can be used to relate surface acid density and  $pK_a$  (or  $pK_b$ ) to surface potential. [19] For a bifunctional catalyst bearing acid groups ( $AH$ ) and base groups ( $BOH$ ), the surface can be charged either by deprotonation of  $HA$  or protonation of  $BOH$ :



Two assumptions can be applied to simplify the model: i). ionization of individual sites are independent of one another and do not interact with each other; ii). protonation of  $HA$  occurs only under extremely acidic condition (typically  $pH < 1$ .) that are not of interest here.

With these two assumptions, dissociation can be quantified by the equilibrium dissociation constant ( $K_a$  and  $K_b$ ):

$$K_a = \frac{[H^+]_0 \Gamma_{A^-}}{\Gamma_{AH}} \quad (12)$$

$$K_b = \frac{[OH^-]_0 \Gamma_{B^+}}{\Gamma_{BOH}} \quad (13)$$

where  $[H^+]_0$  is the protons activity around solid-acid catalyst surface and  $[OH^-]_0$  is the hydroxide ions activity around surface.  $\Gamma_{AH}$  is surface acid density for undissociated acid and  $\Gamma_{A^-}$  is the surface density for dissociated acid or substrate catalyst, and the same definition applies to  $BOH$ .

Applying the P.B. distribution equation, the proton activity around the solid surface and that in bulk phase can be correlated as:[19]

$$[H^+]_0 = [H^+]_b \exp\left(-\frac{e\psi_0}{k_b T}\right) \quad (14)$$

where  $[H^+]_b$  is the proton activity in bulk phase, and it is normally determined by measuring solution  $pH$ .

When placed in a solution with  $pH > pKa$ , the surface will become negatively charged, resulting in a non-zero value of the surface charge density ( $\sigma_0$ ):

$$\sigma_0 = eN_A \{ \Gamma_{B^+} - \Gamma_{A^-} \} \quad (15)$$

The surface acid coverage can then be related to the dissociated acid surface concentration. The total acid concentration consists of dissociated and undissociated site density for both acid head group and substrate catalysts and is given by:<sup>[19]</sup>

$$\Gamma_{A_t} = \Gamma_{AH} + \Gamma_{A^-} \quad (16)$$

$$\Gamma_{B_t} = \Gamma_{BOH} + \Gamma_{B^+} \quad (17)$$

Equations (10-17) can be solved for surface charge density as a function of measurable quantities, including  $pH$ ,  $pKa$ , surface coverage ( $\Gamma_{tot}$ ). However, upon solving the above equations, surface charge density and surface potential are inter-correlated. Obtaining separate equations for surface potential and density individually requires a separate equation. Here, the Grahame equation will be used to relate surface charge density to surface potential, since it is appropriate for curved surfaces: <sup>[20]</sup>

$$\sigma_0 = \frac{\epsilon_0 \epsilon_3 \kappa k_b T}{2\pi e} \left[ \sinh\left(\frac{e\psi_0}{2k_b T}\right) + \frac{2}{\kappa a} \tanh\left(\frac{e\psi_0}{4k_b T}\right) \right] \quad (18)$$

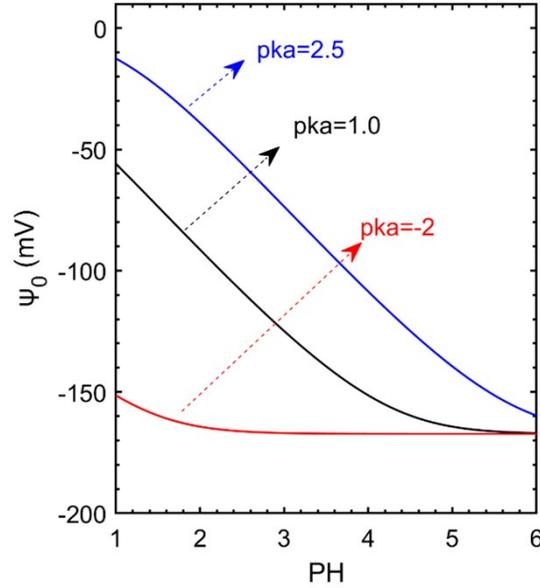
where  $\epsilon_0$  is the vacuum permittivity and  $\epsilon_3$  represents the dielectric constant of water,  $\kappa$  is the reciprocal of Debye length,  $k_b$  is the Boltzmann constant and  $\psi_0$  is the surface potential.

Solving Equations (10-18) simultaneously allows explicit determine of either the surface potential ( $\psi_0$ ) or surface charge density ( $\sigma_0$ ),.

In practice, the approach based on Equations (10-18) works best for materials bearing well-defined acid groups. Here, we apply the second approach to functionalized ZSM catalysts bearing carboxylic/sulfonic acid functionalized catalysts, and Nafion materials where surface acid coverage and acid the dissociation equilibrium constant are accurately known. (**Figure 2b** and **Figure 2d**). The few cases where the surface acid coverage and dissociation constant are both known and where pH-resolved measurements of  $\zeta$  are available permit direct comparison.

To demonstrate this method, we have selected ZSM-5 as an example as substrate materials and assume it bears three acid groups with  $pK_a$  of 2.5, 1.0 and -2. The predicted surface potential results as a function of  $pH$  are show in **Figure SI-2**. Overall, predicted surface potential of ZSM-5 bearing acid group increases as  $pH$  increases, in accord with the fact that the anions can attract counter-ions at high ionic strength aqueous solution and reduce the surface charge density or surface potential. In particular, this localized protonation becomes significant for weak acid. For strong acid such as sulfonic aid with  $pK_a$  smaller than -2, the surface potential is somehow insensitive to  $pH$  change and stays relatively constant around -230 mV, as shown in **Figure SI-2**. Predicted surface potential for weak acid (e.g. carboxylic acid with  $pK_a$  around 2.5) varies from close to zero at low  $pH$  (around 1) to around -170V at  $pH$  close to 6. The change of surface potential with respect to  $pH$  is steeper at pH between 2-3 and reaches to flat at pH about 5. For acid with intermediate strength ( $pK_a = 1$ ), the variation of the surface potential over pH between 1 and 6

follows the same trend as the cases for weaker acid (e.g. pKa = 2.5). Overall, the predicted surface potential captures.



**Figure SI-2** The surface potential of ZSM-5 bearing different acid head group as a function of media  $pH$ . The  $pKa$  of acid head group is taken as 2.5, 1.0 and -2 from weak acid to strong acid. The  $pK_b$  for the base group is assumed as 8.0. The substrate (ZSM-5) surface density is assumed as  $5.0 \text{ nm}^{-2}$ . Particle size is assumed as  $1 \mu\text{m}$ .

## 5. Shear Force Effect on Cellulose-Catalyst Aggregation

Shear-induced aggregation is discussed and derived by Zaccone et al.[21] as a shear rate-dependent Arrhenius equation for aggregation rate constant of two-body particle interaction:

$$k_{ij} = \sqrt{\frac{3\pi\alpha\omega\gamma(R_i + R_j)R_iR_j - U_m''|_{xm}}{k_B T}} e^{[-U_m + 6\pi\omega\gamma(R_i + R_j)R_iR_j]/k_B T} \quad (19)$$

where  $k_{ij}$  is coagulation rate constant,  $u$  is viscosity,  $\gamma$  is shear rate,  $U_m$  is DLVO energy barrier and  $U_m''|_{x_m}$  is the second derivate of  $U_m$  with respect to separation ( $x$ ) evaluated at DLVO energy barrier.

The activation energy for shear-induced aggregation takes the form of:

$$E_a = \frac{[-U_m + 6\pi u \gamma (R_i + R_j) R_i R_j]}{k_B T} \quad (20)$$

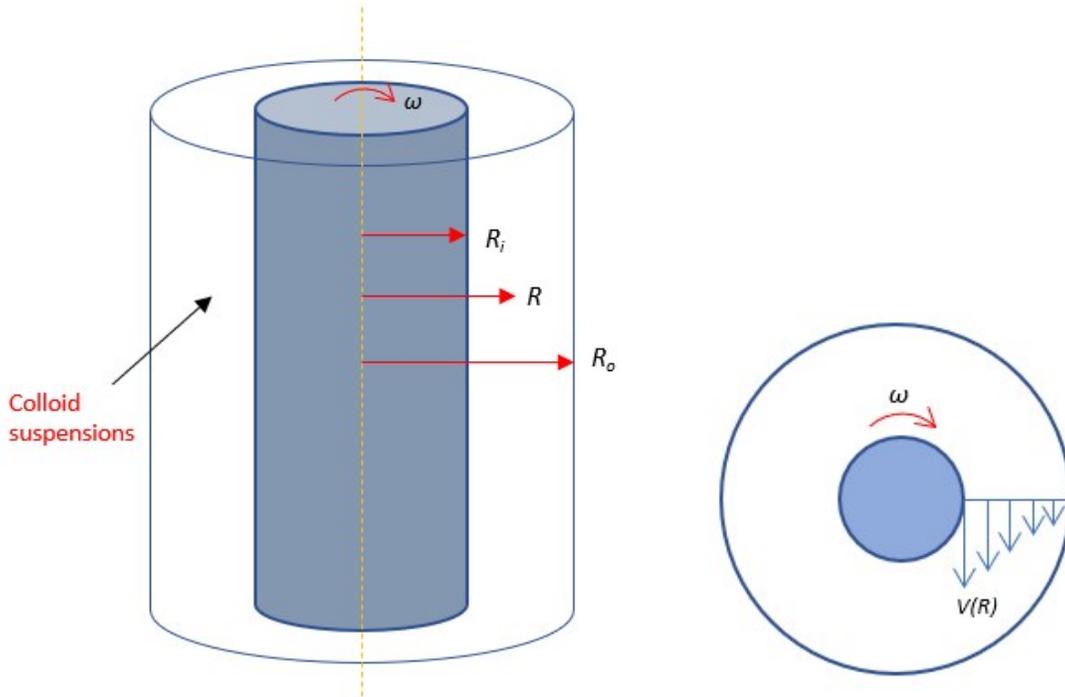
In the case where shear force counterbalances DLVO energy barrier and diminish the barrier, this critical shear rate is an important condition defining the transition from slow aggregation to fast aggregation[21]. Thus, the critical shear rate becomes:

$$\dot{\gamma}^* = \frac{U_m}{6\pi u (R_i + R_j) R_i R_j} \quad (21)$$

For a specific solid catalyst with fixed Hamaker constant, the energy barrier ( $U_m$ ) is strongly dependent on surface potential and particle size. To capture this effect, the surface potential of the solid catalyst is systematically varied from 0 mV to -120 mV for catalyst radius of 0.5, 1, 1.5 and 2  $\mu\text{m}$ . Then equation (1) is used to determining the maximum energy barrier for specific surface potential and catalyst radius. Finally, equation (21) is employed for calculating critical shear rate.

In a typical hydrolysis setup, a magnetic stirring bar is inserted into a 15-mL heavy wall glass tube (ChemGlass LLC.). The stirring speed, which affects the shear flow of the reaction medium, is often set in the rage of 200-800 rpm. For simplification, we assume that the stirring bar can be modeled as a cylinder that is concentric with the reaction vessel, with fluid confined to the annulus.[22] Figure SI-3 shows the schematic. The annular geometry will tend to overestimate the average shear rate in the reactor; accordingly, we focus our analysis on the maximum shear

rate, which should be captured with reasonable accuracy using the geometry shown in Figure SI-3.



**Figure SI-3** Schematic of reaction system of lab-scale batch reactor for cellulose hydrolysis. Left is the side view of the glass tube reactor and right is top view for velocity profile.

The velocity profile is given by:

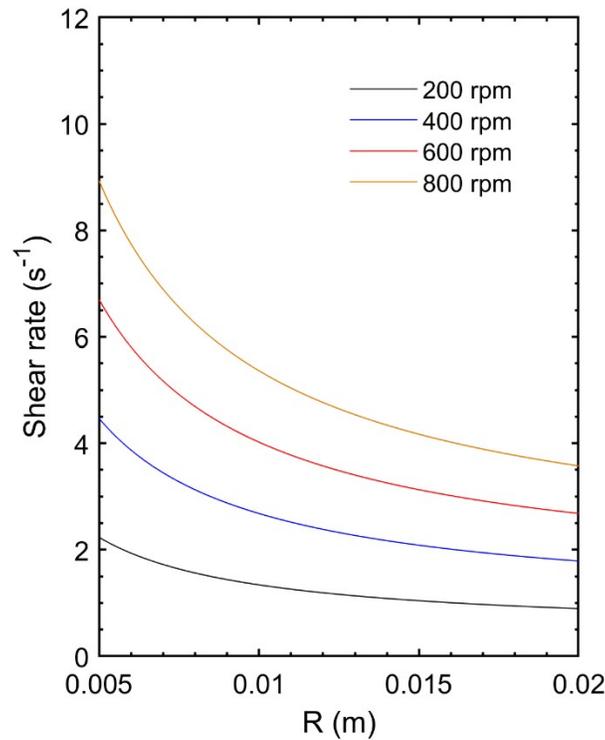
$$v(R) = \frac{\omega R_i^2}{R_o^2 - R_i^2} \left( \frac{R_o^2}{R} - R \right) \quad (22)$$

where  $\omega$  is angular velocity of the inner cylinder (or the rotating speed of stirring bar),  $R_i$  and  $R_o$  are radius of inner and outer cylinders respectively,  $R$  is an arbitrary radius.

Therefore, the corresponding shear rate between the moving fluid and stationary cylinder is:

$$\gamma(R) = \frac{\omega R_i^2}{(R_o^2 - R_i^2)(R_o - R)} \left( \frac{R_o^2}{R} - R \right) \quad R_i < R < R_o \quad (23)$$

Equation (23) will be used to extract shear rate profile along the radial direction. Notice that equation (23) can apply to the shear rate at glass tube (e.g.  $R = R_o$ ) because of the denominator term  $(R_o - R)$ . Figure SI-4 shows some representative shear rate when the inner cylinder (or the stirring bar) rotates at the speed of 200, 400, 600 and 800 rpm. In general, the shear rate is maximized in the center of the reactor and then it decreases nonlinearly along outward radial direction. The maximum shear rate is reported in the text at representative stirring rates (200 and 800 rpm).



**Figure SI-4** Shear rate distribution within glass tube reactor.  $R_o$  is assumed as 2 cm and inner cylinder radius  $R_i$  is 0.5 cm.

## 6. Temperature Effect on Cellulose-Solid-Acid Interactions

Most reported hydrolysis reactions are performed within the temperature range of 350-450K. Under mildly high temperature, the first order effect of changing temperature is from thermal fluctuations, which is easily accounted for using  $k_bT$  in the DLVO analysis. And the particle-particle collisions changes caused by raising temperature is negligible considering the hydrodynamics friction is large enough to reduce thermal fluctuation.

A secondary direct effect is the dependence of the Hamaker constant and surface potential on changing temperature. The van der Waals attraction is caused by electronic fluctuation, and it is weakly dependent or independent on external temperature fluctuations. Therefore, van der Waals attraction between cellulose and solid acid is relatively constant under given reaction condition. The effect of temperature on catalyst surface potential/charge density is much more complicated to consider. First, temperature affects water dielectric and ionization constants ( $\epsilon$  and  $K_w$ ). In fact, the dielectric constant varies from 78 at 25 °C to approximately 35 at 200 °C, the upper range of temperatures used for catalytic cellulose hydrolysis.<sup>[23]</sup> As a result, Debye length will increase and water will be much less effective at screening charges than room temperature water, enhancing electrostatic repulsion and resulting in net colloidal stabilization for similarly charged particles. Second, water ionization constant ( $K_w$ ) increases from  $1 \times 10^{-14}$  to  $1 \times 10^{-11}$  when water is heated from 25 to around 200 °C, with the net effect being to adjust protonation/deprotonation equilibria, especially for weak acids and bases. Comparatively, the dissociation constants<sup>[24]</sup> of carboxylic acids – and probably sulfonic acids – are much weaker functions of temperature than water over the same temperature range. Accordingly, the main effect of temperature on acid-base interactions should be due to the temperature dependence of water dissociation. Lastly, despite that increasing temperature may enhance the acid dissociation, resulting in higher ionic strength than at room temperature. This increased ionic strength may

contribute to the aggregation; however, this would largely depend on how sensitive the acid dissociation to temperature and whether it is endothermic or exothermic reaction. Therefore, the effect of temperature on electrostatic interaction is complicated to consider.

To simplify the temperature effect, we have taken dielectric constant of water, cellulose and solid-acid catalyst (e.g. carbon, zirconia and polystyrene) under different temperature and substitute those into equations(1-8). The results and analysis are provided in the manuscript.

## **7. Solvent Effect on Cellulose-Solid-Acid Interaction**

Heating water to temperatures greater than 100 °C has been compared with the effect of changing solvents,<sup>[25]</sup> Accordingly, an alternative strategy for manipulating catalyst-cellulose binding is to change the solvent entirely. Various alcohol water mixtures,<sup>[26]</sup> tetrahydrofuran-water mixtures,<sup>[27]</sup> and mixtures of  $\gamma$ -Valerolactone and water <sup>[28]</sup> have been suggested for biomass deconstruction solvents, and combining non-aqueous solvents with solid acid catalysts may provide substantial technological benefits. Unfortunately, colloidal stability in non-aqueous solvents has been the subject of limited studies, meaning that more work is required to arrive at definitive conclusions.

From the considerations presented here, a first order effect of changing solvent will (generally) be to decrease the dielectric constant, accentuating both attractive and repulsive electrical double layer interactions and with only a handful of exceptions for unusual solvents, such as formamide ( $\epsilon = 109.5$ ) or methylformamide ( $\epsilon = 182.4$ ).<sup>[29]</sup> Accordingly, negatively charged solid acids will more strongly repel negatively charged cellulose in non-aqueous solvents than in water, assuming that the values of the surface potentials themselves are not changed when the solvent is switched. That stated, non-aqueous solvents will shift acid-base dissociation equilibrium to favor the neutral forms of acids and bases compared with water, meaning that the

assumption of constant surface potential is likely erroneous and instead absolute values of the surface potential will be less in non-aqueous solvents than in water. Similarly, the activity of the proton itself is greater in non-aqueous solvents than in water,<sup>[30]</sup> meaning that combining the other strategies presented here – manipulating particle size, maximizing Hamaker constant, and using bifunctional catalysts to control surface potential – with use of non-aqueous solvents has potential to open entirely new avenues.

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