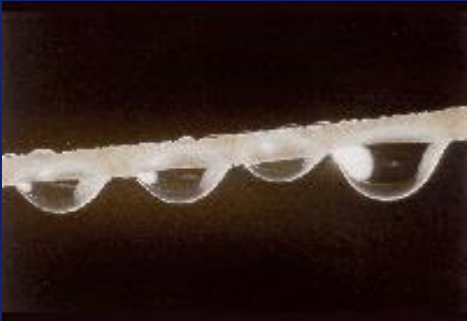


Short courses

Membrane : basics



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Course WFC 2025

www.patricebacchin.fr

www.lgc.cnrs.fr



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BORDEAUX FRANCE
30 JUNE - 4 JULY 2025

Course outline

1: Introduction to Membrane Separation Processes

- Definition and fundamental principles
- Classification of membrane processes
- Comparison with other separation technologies
- Industrial applications and case studies

2: Membrane Structures, Operating Parameters, and Characterization

- Relationship between structure and function: pore size, selectivity, permeability
- Definition and measurements of operating parameters characterizing selectivity and performance
- Membrane characterization techniques

3: Limitations of Membrane Processes: Fouling and Solutions

- Types of fouling
- Mechanisms and impact on performance
- Initiation to modeling
- Prevention and cleaning strategies

Round of table

What do you know about membrane processes ?

Specific expectations ?

(not listed in the course outline)

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Types of fouling

Mechanisms and impact on performance

Initiation to modeling

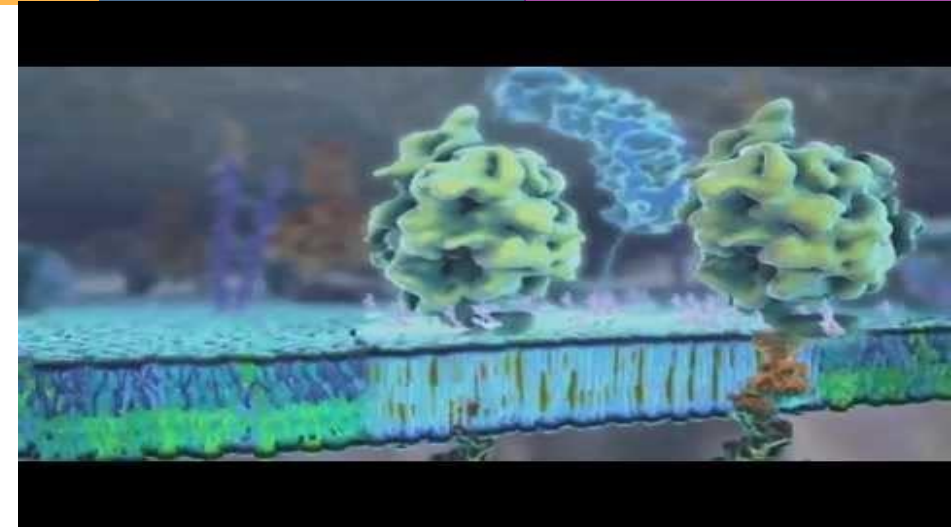
Prevention and cleaning strategies

Biological and artificial membranes

In biology :

Dynamic lipid bilayer structure with proteins embedded in rigid floating structures (RAFT) over 10-30% of the surface to ensure selectivity between the inside and outside of the cell

Stability thanks to interactions between the various components

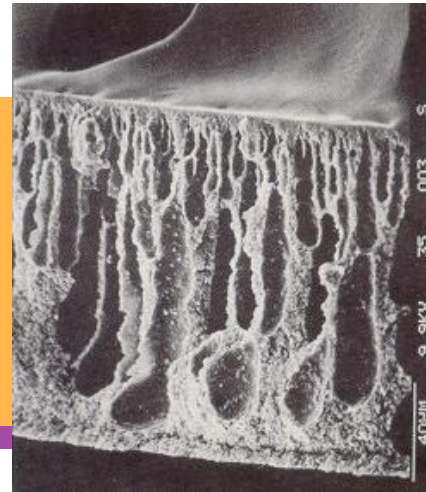


<https://youtu.be/-Tgmrl1y6qc>

Asymmetrical materials (organic or mineral)

macroporous support
(for mechanical strength)

skin or surface layer
(for selectivity)



In process :

Stable artificial structure with charged pores
Stability thanks to organic or inorganic chemical bonds

But often bioinspired by natural membranes
The Graal !

Membranes : definition and classification from driving forces

Membrane: permselective barrier between two phases
(reducing the movement of a solute or fluid)



$$\nabla \mu = \underbrace{RT \nabla \ln a}_{\text{activity}} + \underbrace{v \nabla P}_{\text{pressure}} - \underbrace{z F \nabla E}_{\text{Electric field}}$$

Microfiltration
Ultrafiltration
Nanofiltration
Reverse Osmose

Antagonist force

Driving force

Electrodialysis

Antagonist force

Driving force

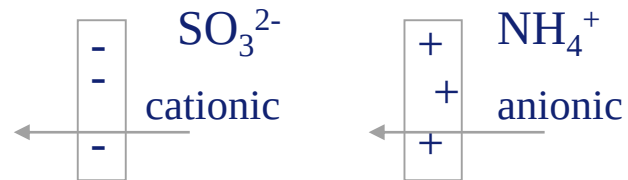
Pervaporation
Dialysis

Driving force

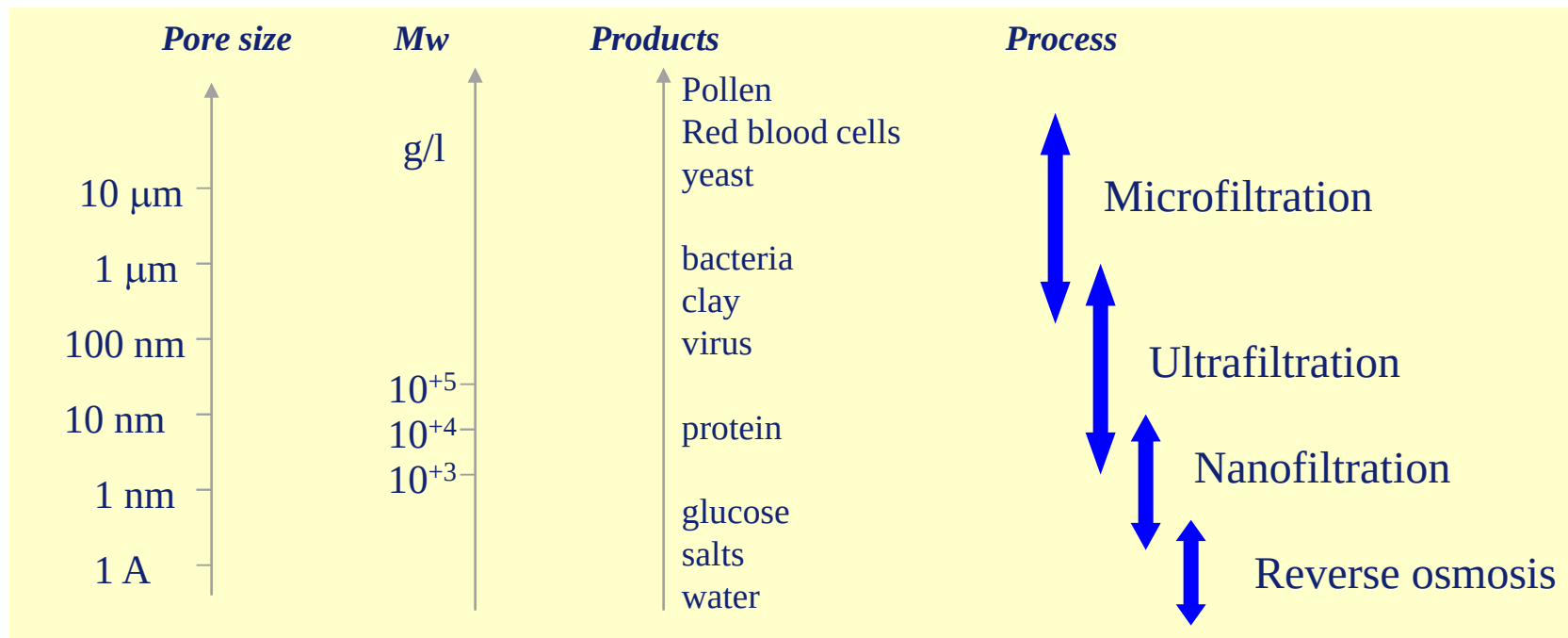
Antagonist force

7 Membranes ... Classification from structure

Structure ➡ Charged



➡ Porous



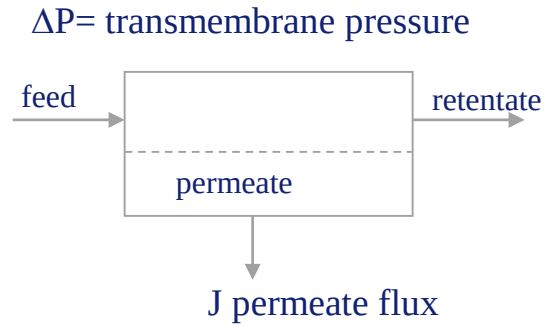
➡ Dense

Hydrophilic or hydrophobic material

Membrane processes : applications and competing processes

$$\nabla\mu = v\nabla P$$

Microfiltration
Ultrafiltration
Nanofiltration
Reverse osmosis



Applications

Clarification

Water and waste
water treatment

Desalination

Competing processes

Settling

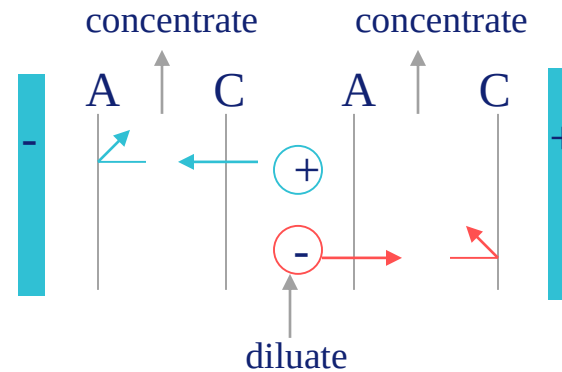
Flocculation/
settling

Distillation

$$\nabla\mu = zF\nabla E$$

Electrodialysis

Reverse ED



Desalination

Valorization
of food product

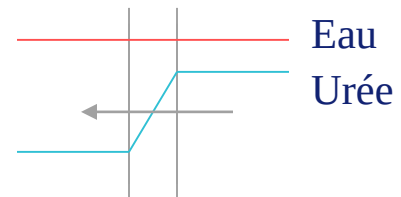
Energy harvesting

Ionic exchange

$$\nabla\mu = RT\nabla \ln a$$

Dialysis

Pervaporation



Artificial kidney

COV Extraction

Precipitation

Liquid/liquid
Extraction

Membrane materials

Synthetic materials

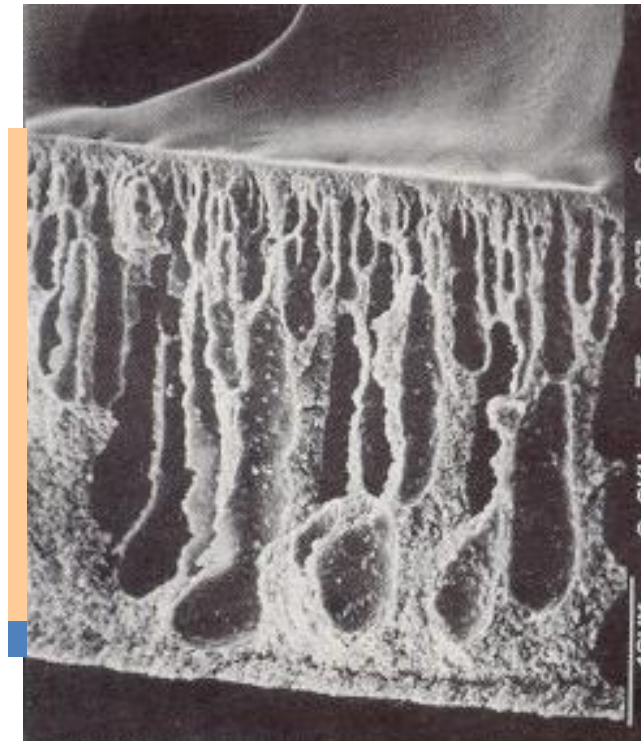
organic
inorganic

(cellulose acetate, polysulfone ...)
(ZrO_2 , TiO_2 , alumine)

Asymmetric materials

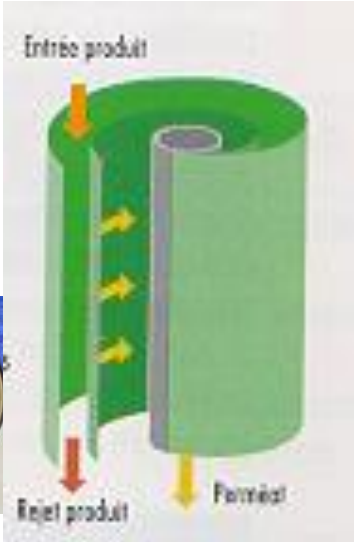
macroporous support
(for mechanical strength)

skin or surface layer
(for selectivity)



Membrane technologies : some examples

Spiral



www.dow.com/liquidseps
<https://www.lenntech.com/>

Planar



www.sterlitech.com/

Tubular

Φ_{int} 1 cm

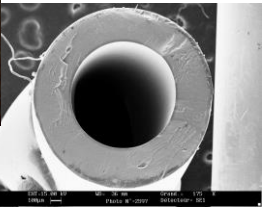
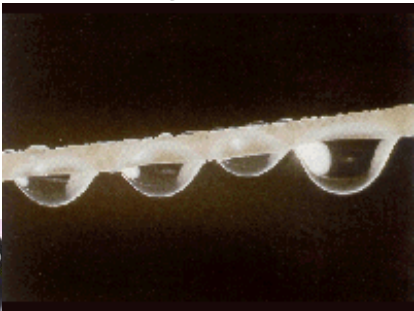
www.alsys-group.com
www.pall.com/



www.tami-industries.com

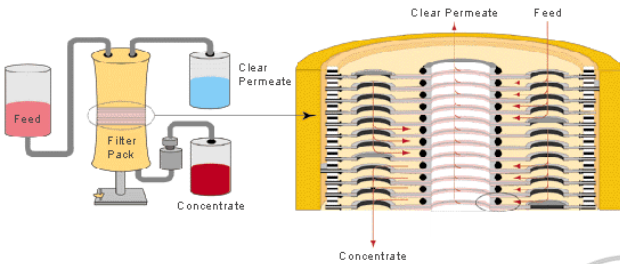
Hollow fiber

Φ_{int} 0,1-1 mm



www.polymem.fr
nxfiltration.com/

Vibrating disk



www.vsep.com
www.sanimembranes.com/



hemotech.fr

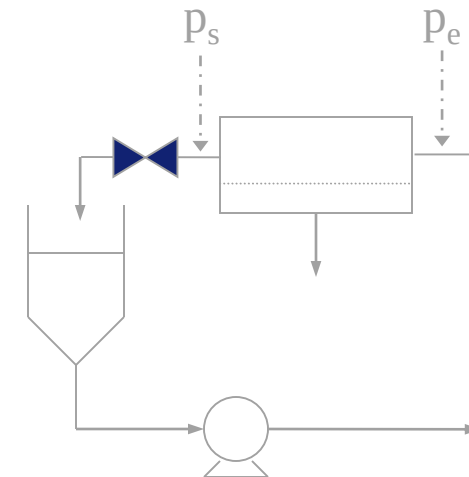
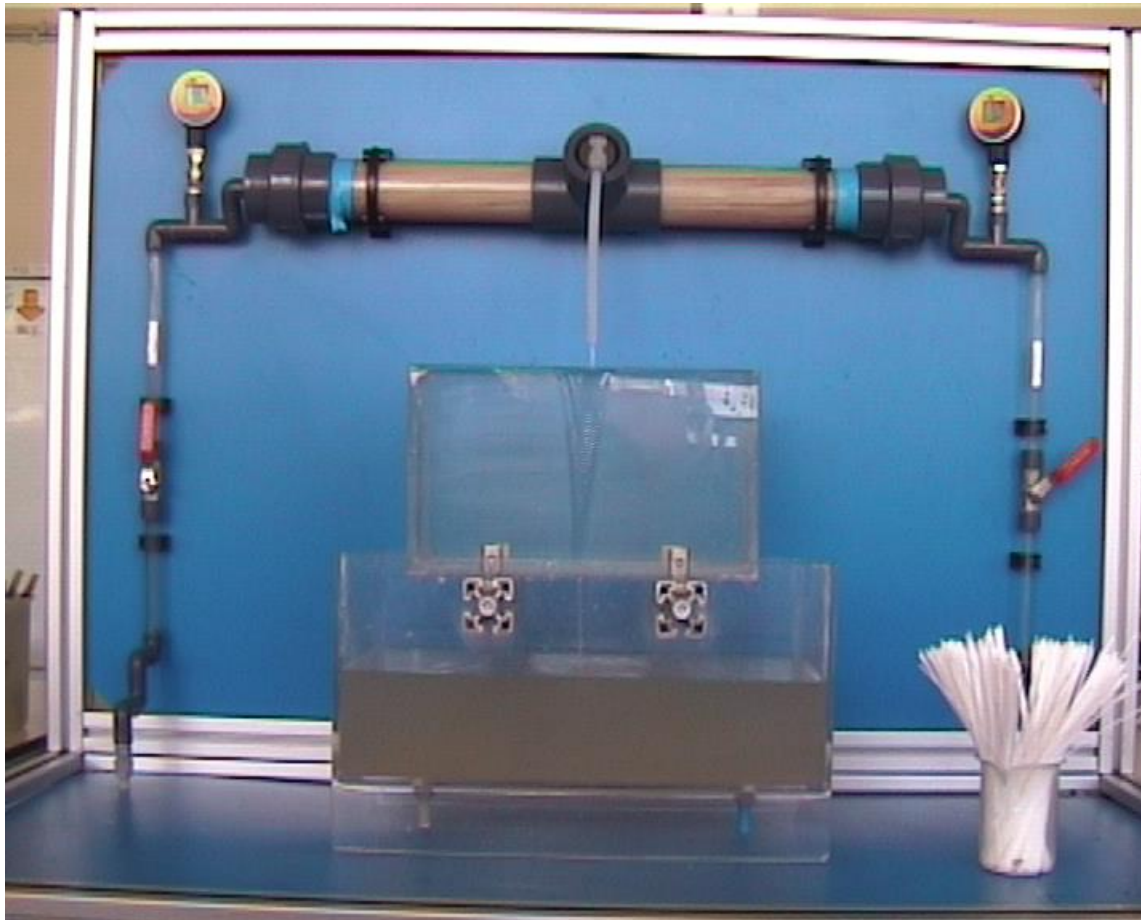
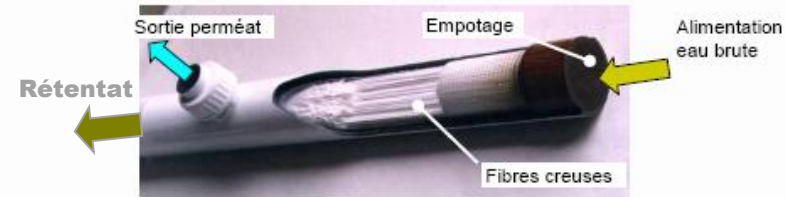
polymem

A **REPLIGEN** COMPANY



Membrane technology : In practice

Illustration: Crossflow ultrafiltration on a hollow-fiber module



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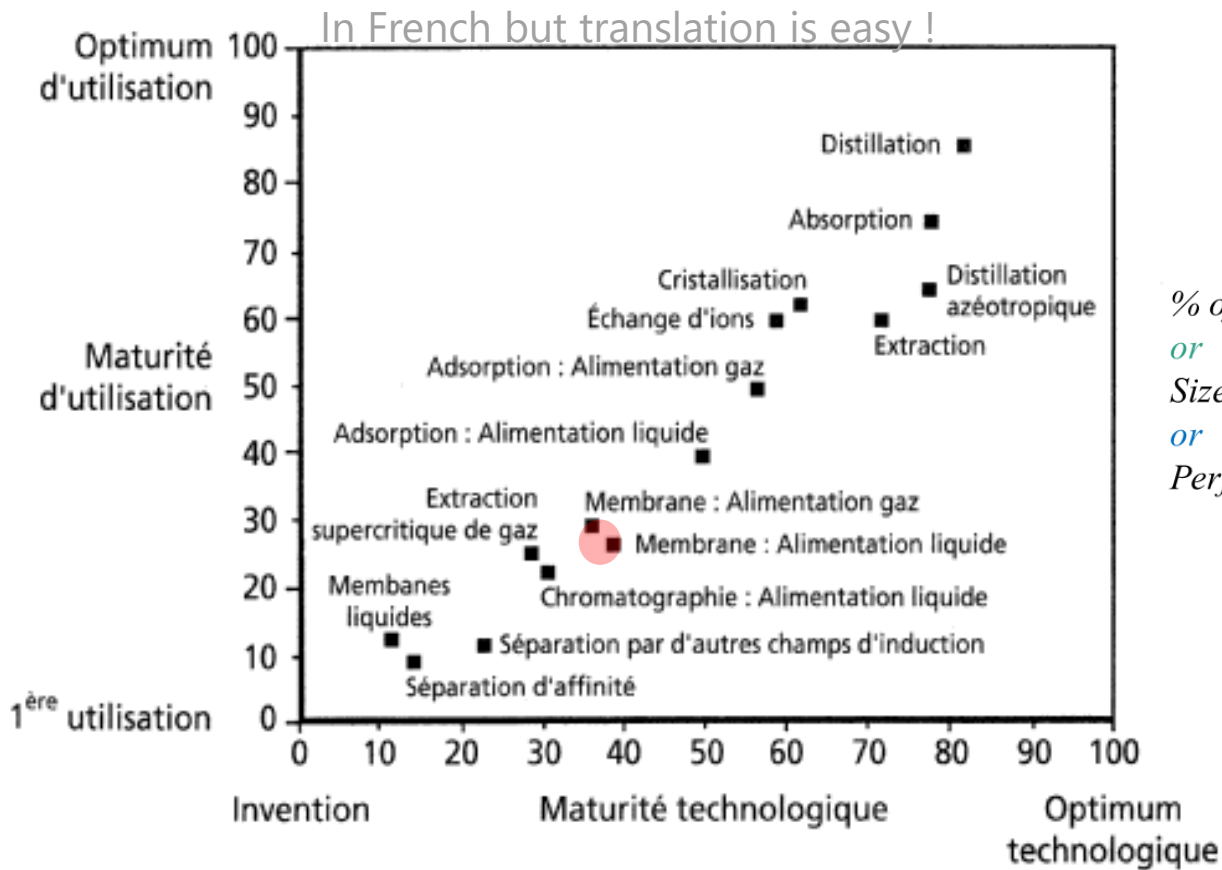
Types of fouling

Mechanisms and impact on performance

Initiation to modeling

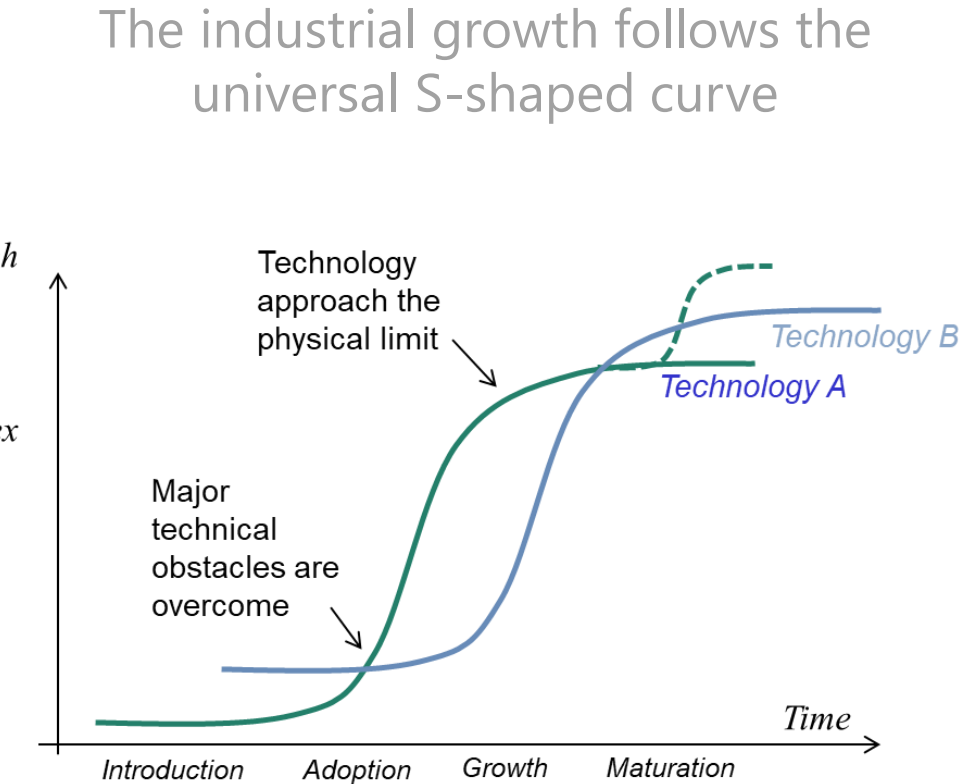
Prevention and cleaning strategies

Membrane filtration: a mature process in full industrial development



J.L. HUMPHREY et G.E. KELLER, 2001

Stages of industrial developement
of ultrafiltration for drinking water



Amoncourt	1989	240 m³/d (world first)
Fillière	1994	2 000 m³/d
Rouen	2000	24 000 m³/d
Moscou	2005	275 000 m³/d

INDUSTRIAL EXAMPLE : DRINKING WATER PRODUCTION



Drinking water station
(24,000 m³/day) in
ROUEN with 4*24
modules of 125 m²
surface area.
Commissioned in 2000



CLARIFICATION (PARTICLES REMOVAL)

Coagulation + (settling or sand filtration)

And/or

Ultrafiltration

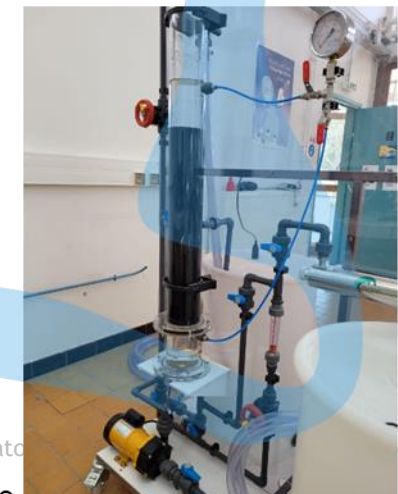
SMALL MOLECULES REMOVAL (pesticides ...)

Adsorption on active carbon

DISINFECTION (PATHOGENES REMOVAL)

Ozonation and/or UV

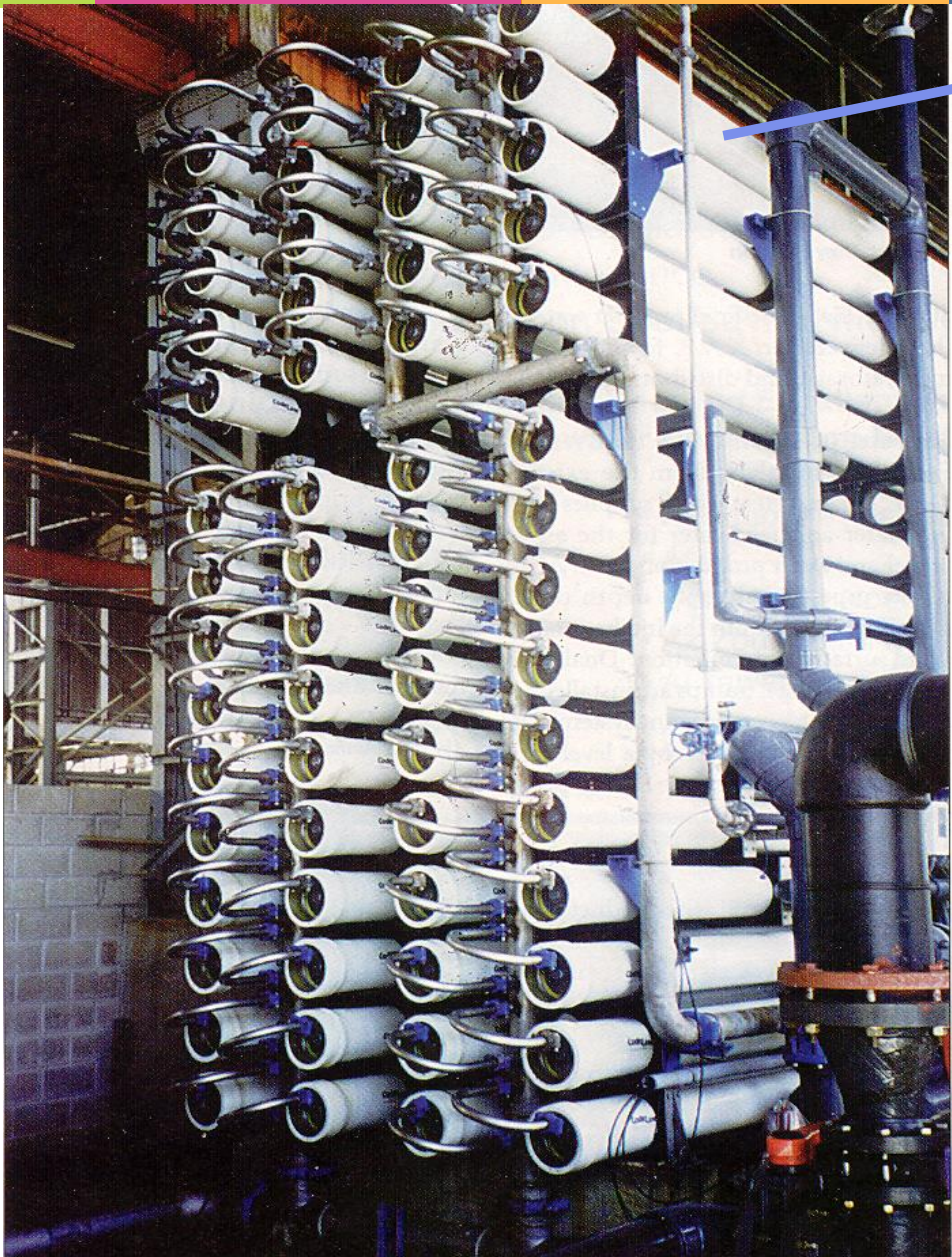
CHLORINATION (remanent disinfection)



INDUSTRIAL EXEMPLE : DESALINATION

Desalting plant of CURAÇAO (Antilles Néerlandaises)

- Capacity : 3.000 m³/day
- Started in 1997
- DOW FILMTEC
Membranes
- Salinity of the producted
water : 20 mg/l



111 m²

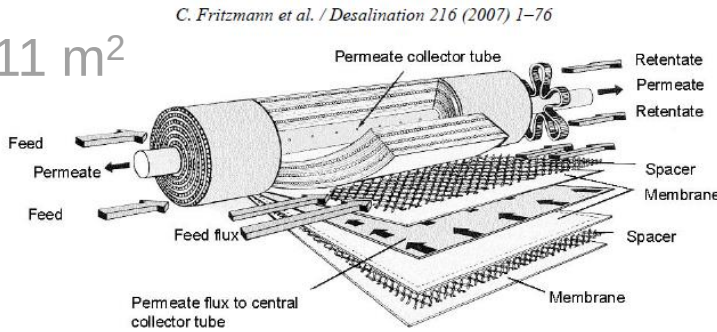


Table 4
Comparison of key operational data of thermal and
membrane based desalination technologies [2,16]

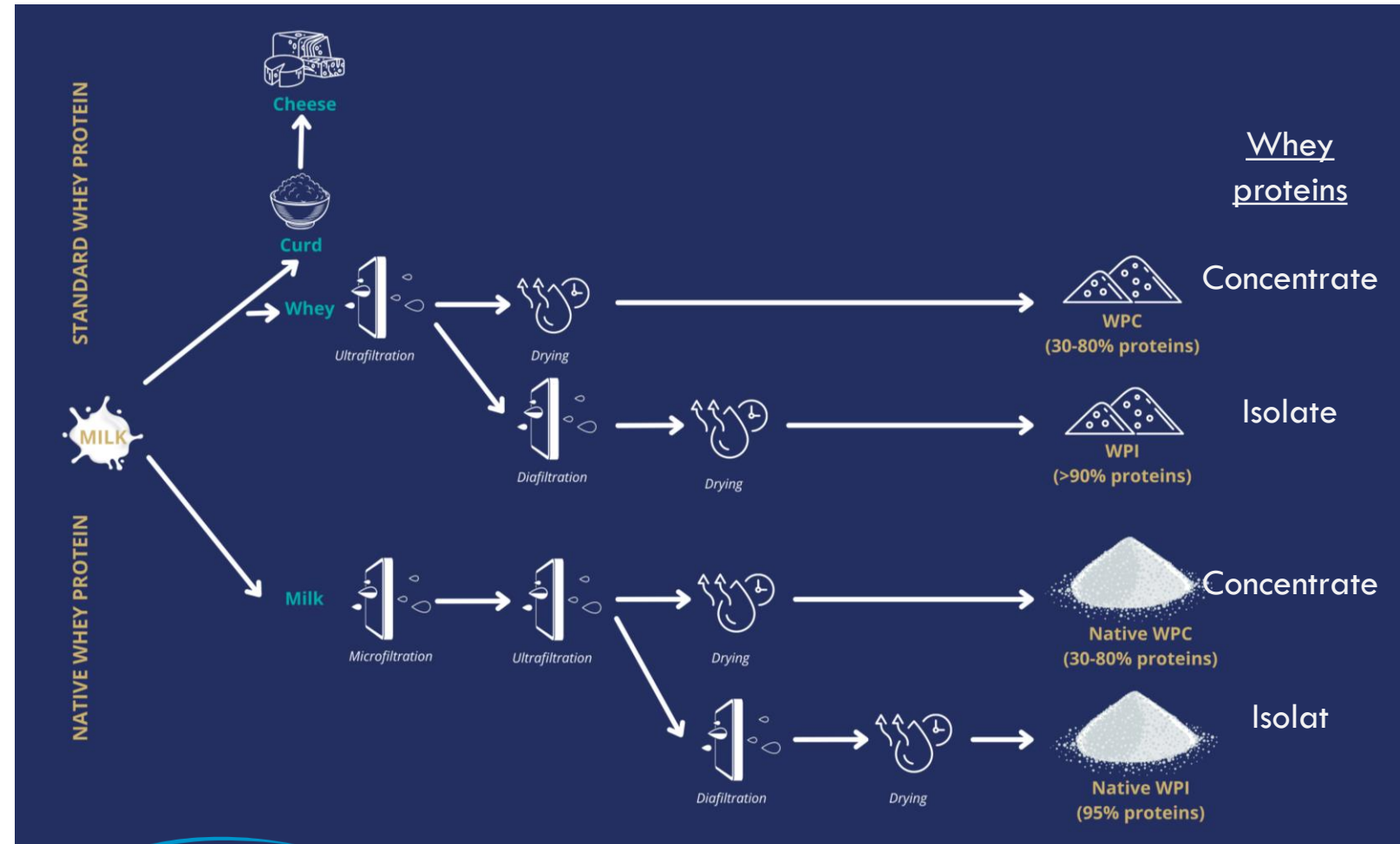
	MSF	RO	Electro- dialysis
Thermal energy consumption [kWh/m ³]	12	—	—
Electrical energy [kWh/m ³]	35	0.4–7	1
Typical salt content of raw water	30,000– 100,000	1,000– 45,000	100– 3,000
Product water quality (ppm TDS)	<10	<500	<500

C. Fritzmann et al. / Desalination 216 (2007) 1–76

INDUSTRIAL EXAMPLE : PRODUCTION OF MILK PROTEINS



Microfiltration unit
for whey treatment



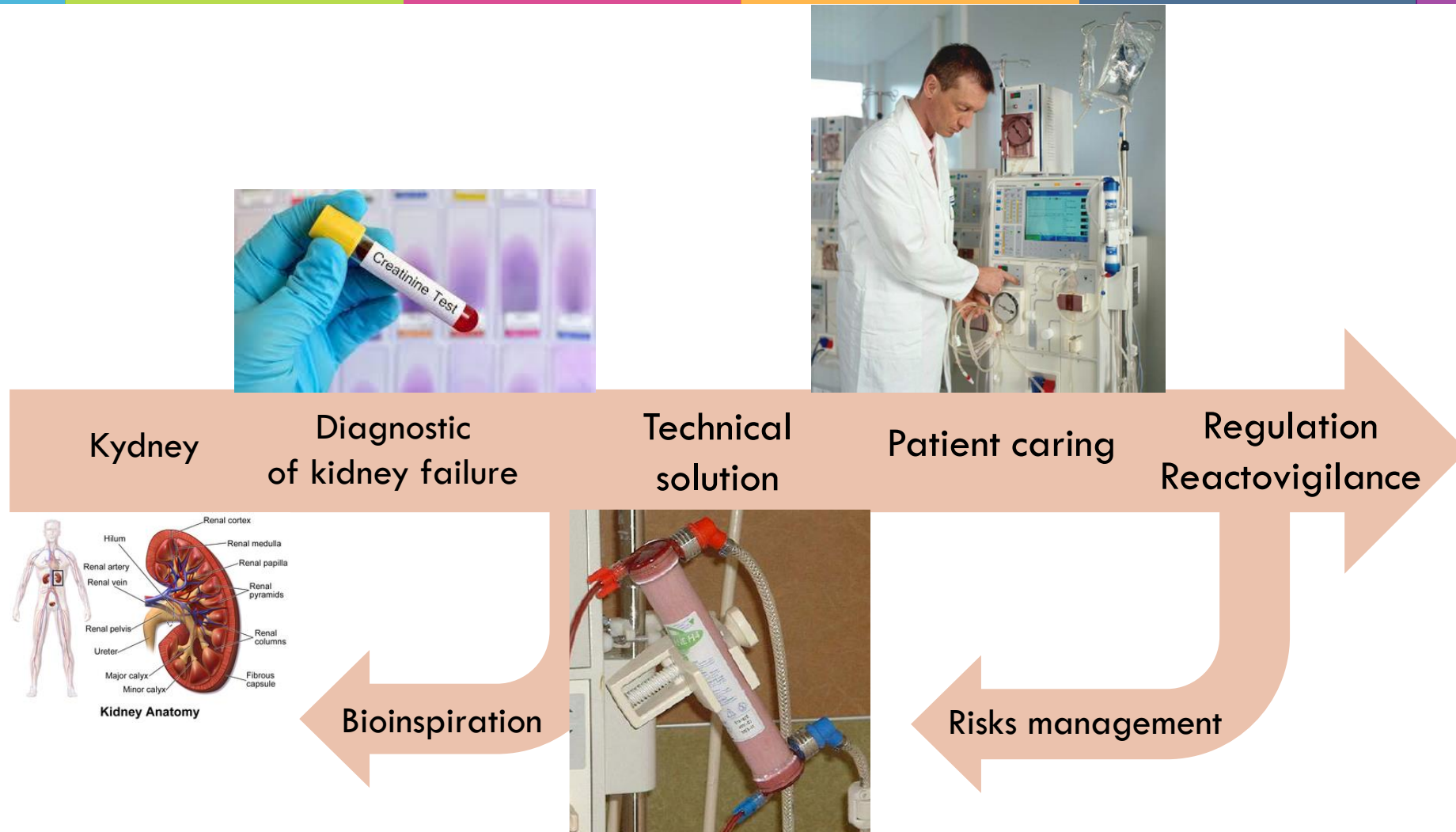
Nutrition

Infantile

Sportive

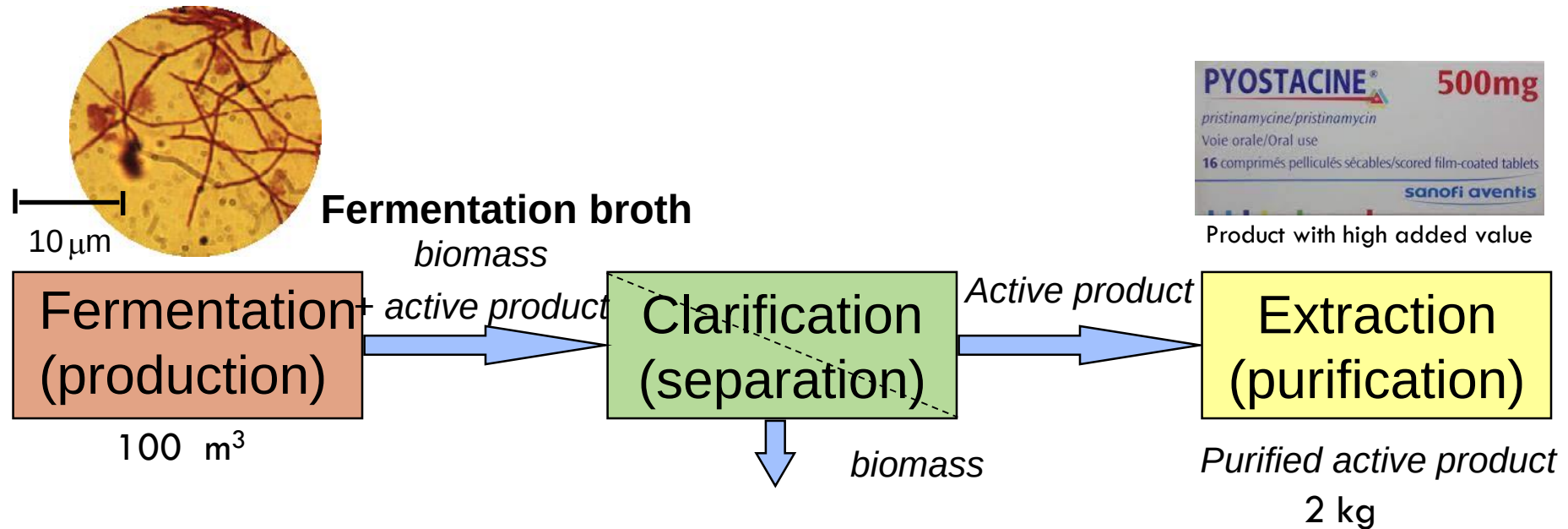


BIOMEDICAL EXAMPLE: KIDNEY DIALYSIS



Urea and toxins removal
by diffusion from the blood to the dialysate
(dialysis session 4h / osmosed water consumption 150 L)

INDUSTRIAL EXAMPLE: DOWNSTREAM PROCESS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY



ULTRAFILTRATION
or
CONVENTIONAL FILTRATION OR
ROTARY DRUM
or
CENTRIFUGATION

LIQUID/LIQUID EXTRACTION
and
PREPARATIVE CHROMATOGRAPHY
and
CRISTALLISATION / FILTRATION / DRYING

A LAST INDUSTRIAL EXAMPLE

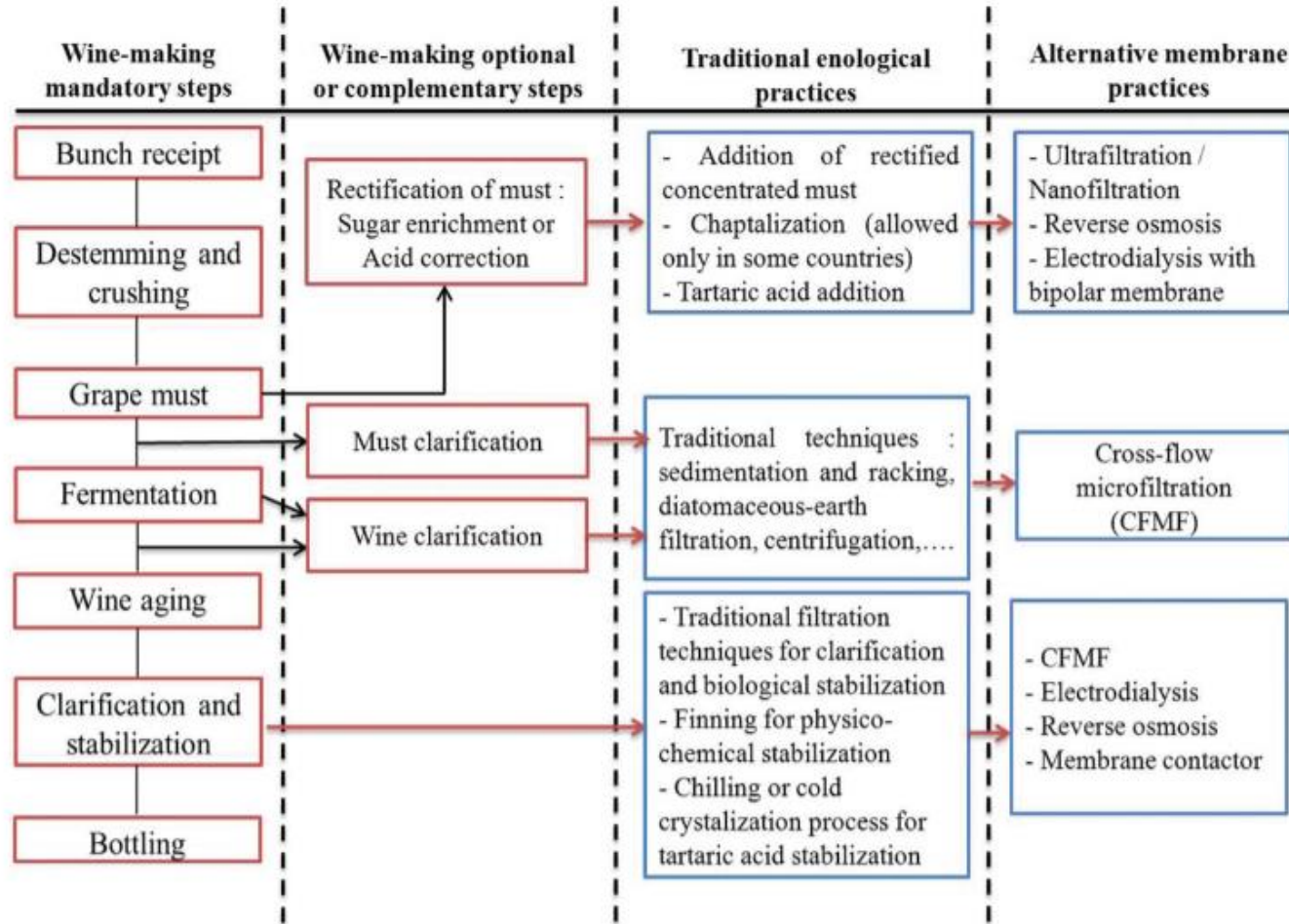
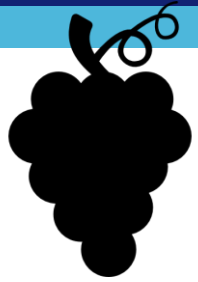
Inevitable in Bordeaux ?!



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INDUSTRIAL EXAMPLE: MEMBRANE IN WINE INDUSTRY



El Rayess, Youssef and Mietton-Peuchot, Martine Membrane Technologies in Wine Industry: An Overview. (2016) Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition, 56(12). 2005-2020. ISSN 1040-8398

Membrane : definitions, classifications, applications



Questions ?

Interactions 

Membrane characterisation

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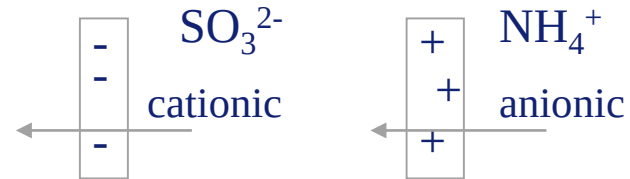
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Membranes ... from structure to function

Structure ➡ Charged



➡ Porous

Pore size	Mw	Products	Process
10 μm		Pollen Red blood cells yeast	
1 μm		bacteria clay virus	Microfiltration
100 nm			
10 nm	10^{+5}	protein	Ultrafiltration
1 nm	10^{+4}		
1 A	10^{+3}	glucose salts water	Nanofiltration Reverse osmosis

➡ Dense

Hydrophilic or hydrophobic material

Functions

Selective transport of charged molecules (ions, ...)

Electrostatic interaction

Selective transport according to the size

Steric effect

Selective transport of the solvent

Hydration interaction

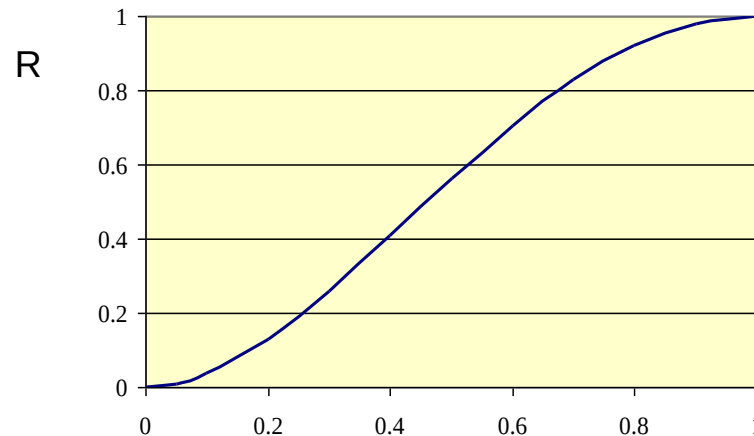
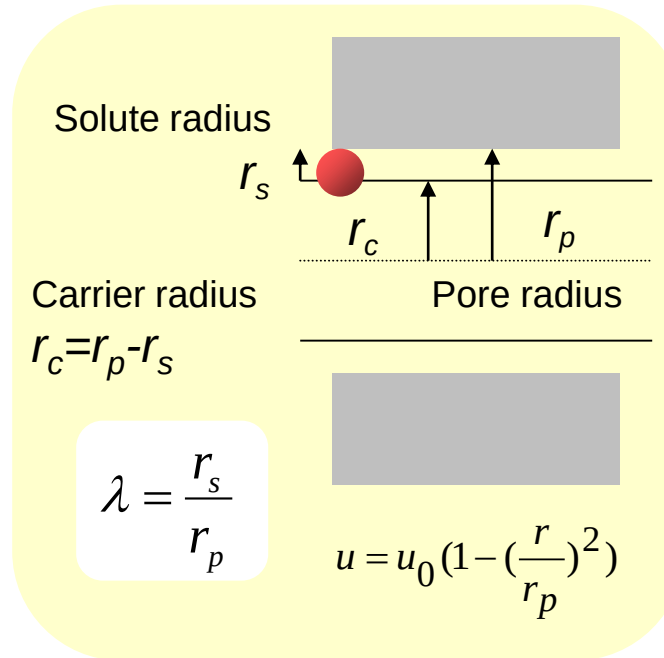
Possibility to combine transport phenomena

How the membrane selectivity occurs in porous media ?

Effect of the size (steric effect)

$$R = 1 - \frac{C_p}{C_m} = (1 - (1 - \lambda)^2)^2$$

(Ferry law)



Effect of the charge (electrostatic effect)

The **Debye length** can allow to estimate the range of electrostatic interaction : an additional exclusion layer that reduces the carrier radius of the pore and increases the solute size

$$\lambda = \frac{r_s + \lambda_D}{r_p - \lambda_D}$$

With : $\lambda_D = \sqrt{\frac{\epsilon RT}{2F^2 \sum z_i^2 c_i}} = \frac{3.07 \cdot 10^{-10}}{\sqrt{I}}$

$\downarrow$ m $\downarrow$ mol/l

$$I = \frac{1}{2} \sum z_i^2 c_i$$

What are the parameters when operating membranes ?

Trans-Membrane
Pressure

$$\Delta P = \frac{P_E + P_S}{2} - P_P \Rightarrow \text{Driving force}$$

Or TMP

Tangential flow

$$Q_R \Rightarrow \text{Hydrodynamic}$$

Pressure drop

$$P_S - P_E \Rightarrow \text{Sweeping energy}$$

energy

Separation efficiency

Permeate flux

$$J = \frac{Q_P}{S} \Rightarrow \text{« Productivity »}$$

Retention

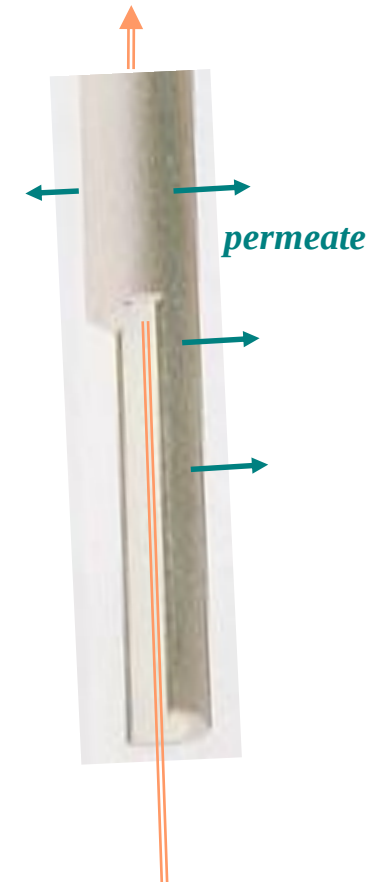
$$R = 1 - \frac{C_P}{C_0} \Rightarrow \text{« Efficacy »}$$

Conversion rate

$$Y = \frac{Q_P}{Q_0} \Rightarrow \text{« Yield »}$$

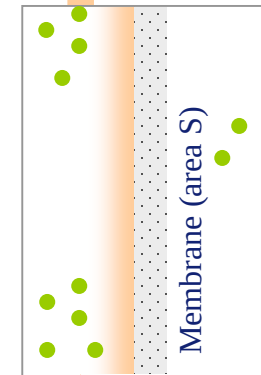
Cross flow

Tangential flow



Retentate

C_R
 Q_R



C_P
 P_P Q_P
Permeate

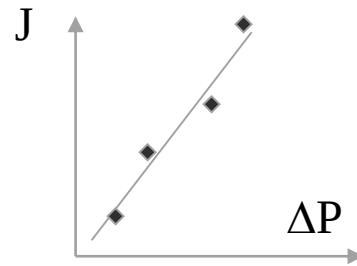
C_0
 Q_0
 P_E

Feed

Dead end Mode : $Q_R=0$ or cross flow : $Q_R>0$

(more energy required but less fouling)

Solvent permeation



Porosity
Pore size

$$J = \frac{\Delta P}{\mu R_m} = \frac{A}{\mu} \Delta P = A^* \Delta P$$

A : permeability (m) –intrinsic property-

A^* : permeability (L.h⁻¹.m⁻².bar⁻¹)

but the solvent and temperature (which determines viscosity) must be indicated

In French but translation is easy !

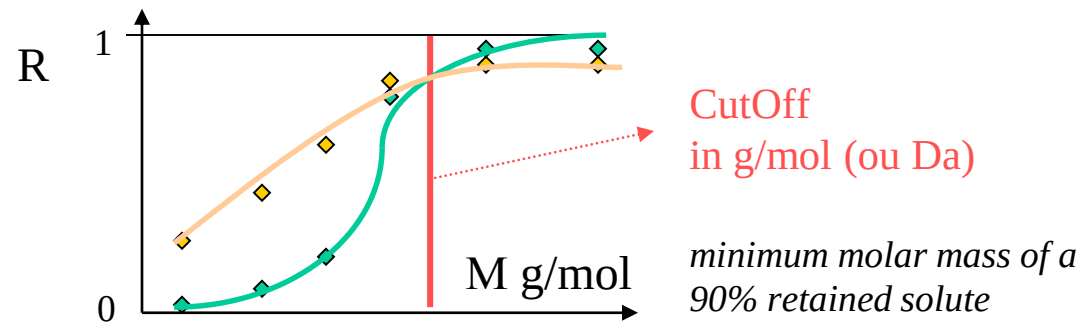
Tableau 2 – Ordre de grandeur des perméabilités

Catégorie	Perméabilité à l'eau à 20 °C, A^*		Perméabilité A (m)
	(m · s ⁻¹ · Pa ⁻¹)	(L · h ⁻¹ · m ⁻² · bar ⁻¹)	
Micro-filtration	1,4 × 10 ⁻⁹ à 2,8 × 10 ⁻⁸	500 à 10 000 (voire plus)	1,4 × 10 ⁻¹² à 2,8 × 10 ⁻¹¹
Ultra-filtration	1,4 × 10 ⁻¹⁰ à 1,4 × 10 ⁻⁹	50 à 500	1,4 × 10 ⁻¹³ à 1,4 × 10 ⁻¹²
Nano-filtration	2,8 × 10 ⁻¹¹ à 2,8 × 10 ⁻¹⁰	10 à 100	2,8 × 10 ⁻¹⁴ à 2,8 × 10 ⁻¹³
Osmose inverse	8,3 × 10 ⁻¹² à 5,5 × 10 ⁻¹¹	3 à 20	8,3 × 10 ⁻¹⁵ à 5,5 × 10 ⁻¹⁴

[Filtration membranaire, Aimar P., Bacchin P., Maurel A. Techniques de l'ingénieur, J2790](#)

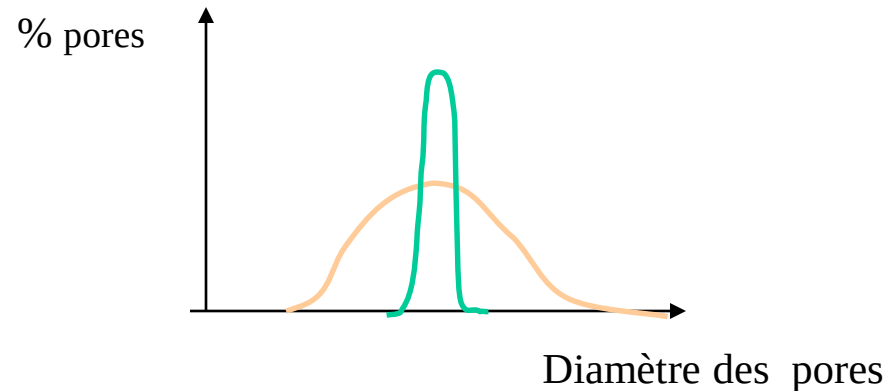
“Solute” (molecule, macromolecule or colloids) permeation

R Retention rate $R = 1 - \frac{c_p}{c_r}$

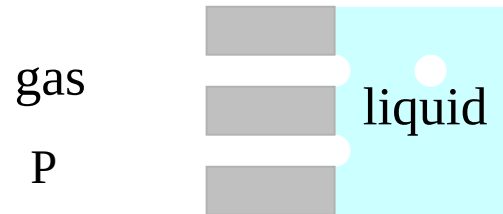


Membrane cutoff

Pore size distribution



Dewetting (drainage)



$$r_p = \frac{2\gamma \cos \theta}{P}$$

Maximum
pore size

Distribution
of pores

Integrity test

also called Bubble point method

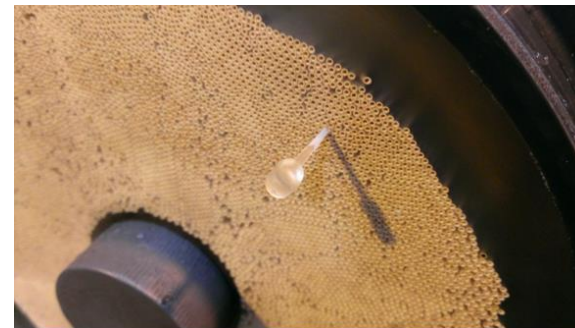
Detection of broken or damaged fibers



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYb4onYIBwo>

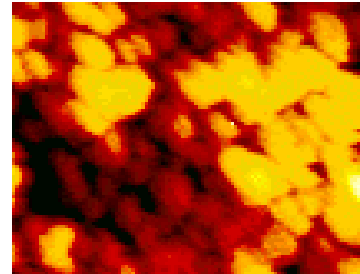
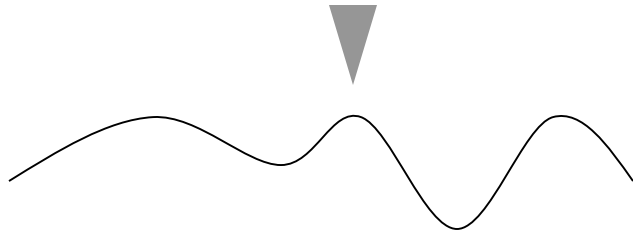
At 2:20

Repair



Membrane characterization : surface properties

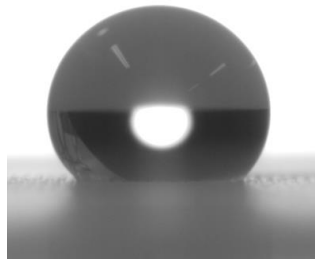
AFM (atomic force microscopy)



© LGC -CEMES

Rugosity
Pore size
membrane/soluté
interactions

Wettability

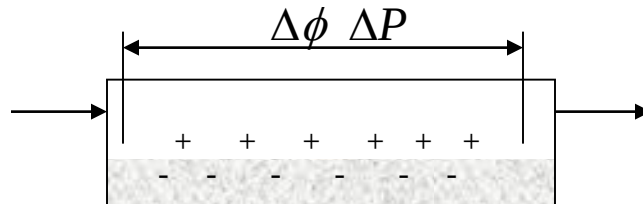


Adhesion force

Surface
energy

Hydrophilic/phobic effects

Surface charge (by streaming potential)



$$\frac{\Delta \phi}{\Delta P} = \frac{\epsilon \zeta}{\eta k}$$

Surface
charge

Electrostatic effects

Membrane characterisation



Membrane fouling

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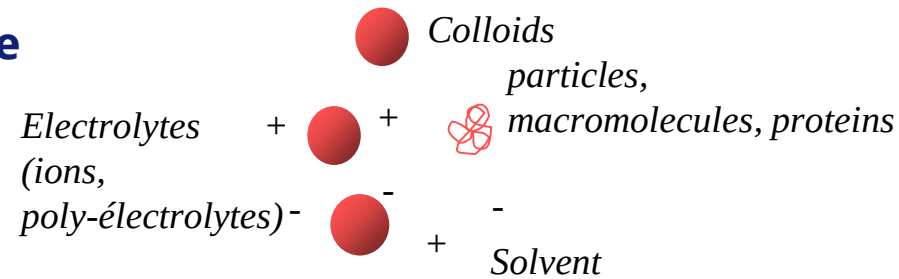
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Problem number 1: Various fouling mechanisms

A fluid with different scales of size and interaction ...



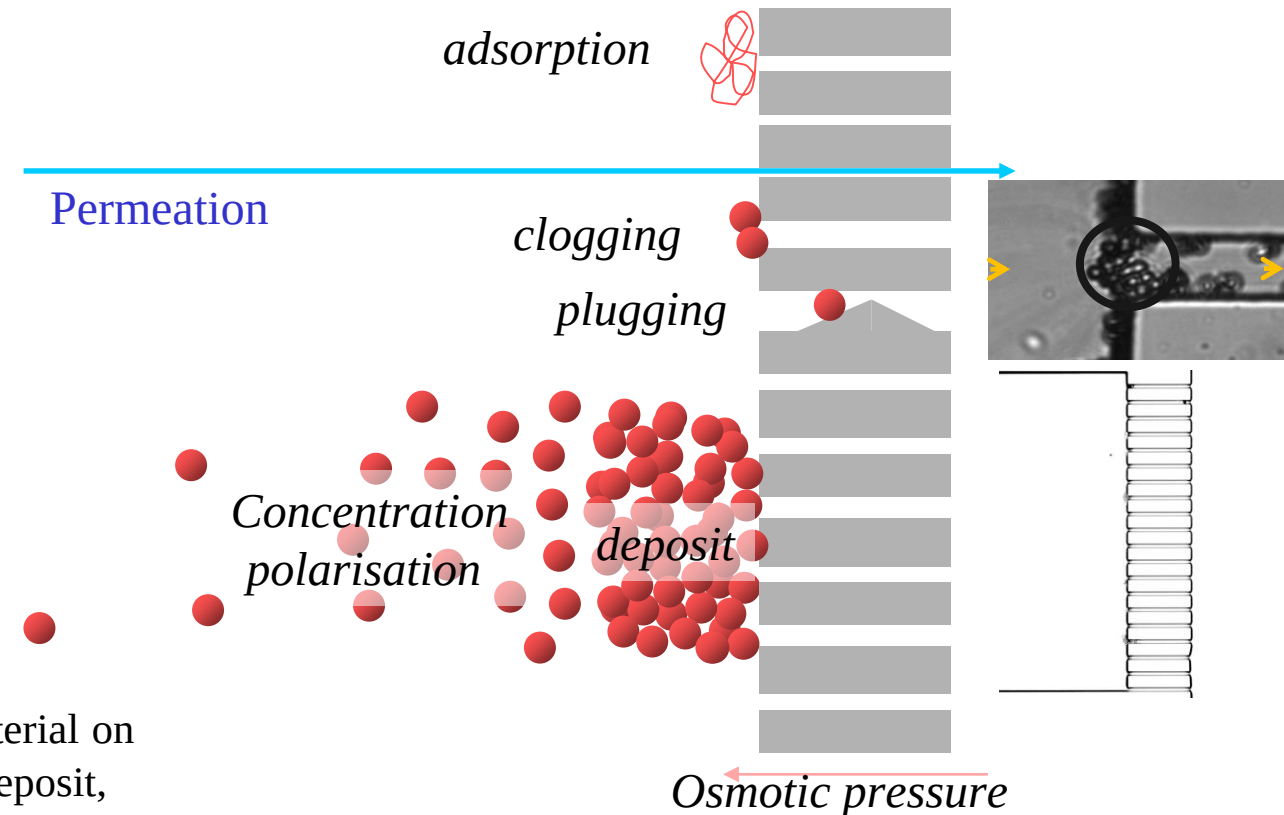
... causes multiple fouling phenomena ...

Adsorption of molecules or macromolecules with a chemical affinity for the membrane material

Clogging or mechanical plugging by particles in the membrane

Concentration polarisation : reversible accumulation of at the surface, resulting in osmotic counter-pressure

Deposition (irreversible) deposition of material on the membrane surface (particulate matter: deposit, molecular matter: gel)

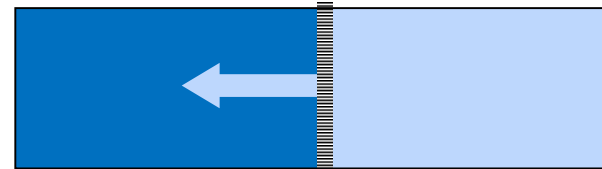


Osmotic pressure and reverse osmosis



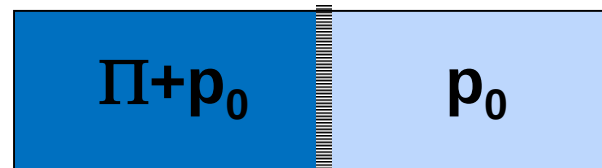
Semi-permeable membrane
solvent permeable
But non permeable to solute

Transfert of the solvent
from **dilute** zone
Toward **concentrated** zone



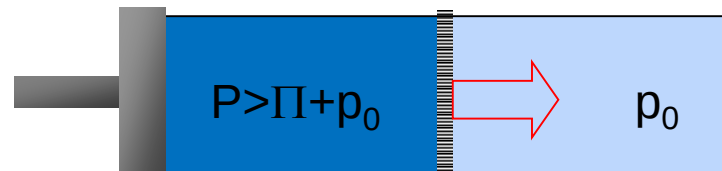
Osmosis

At **equilibrium** : an osmotic pressure
compensante the concentration difference



Equilibrium

If a pressure $> \Pi + p_0$
is applied



**Reverse
osmosis**

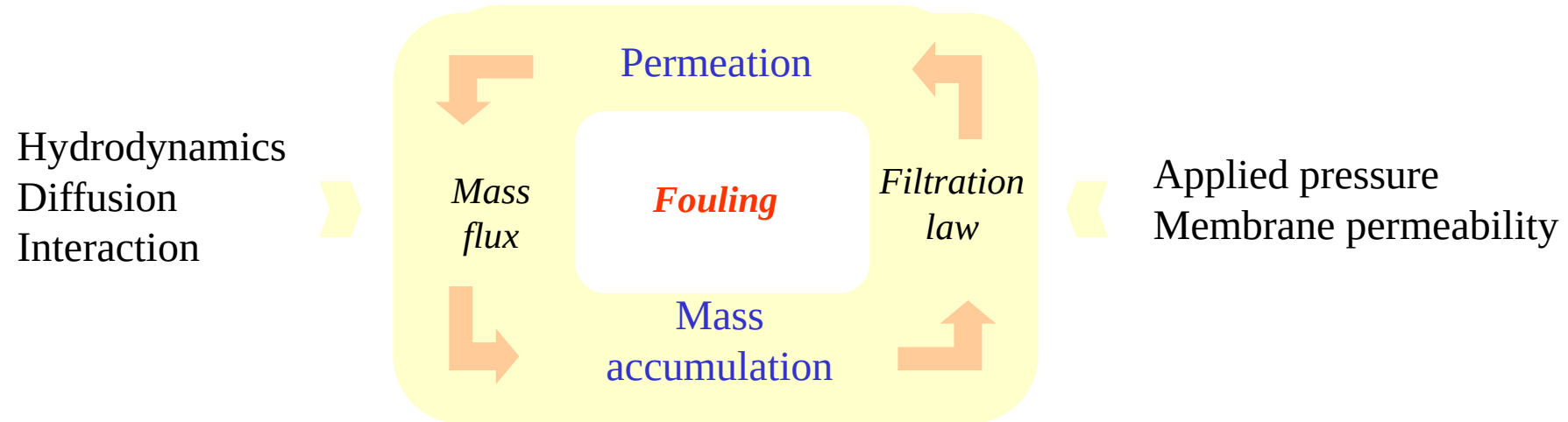
**The solvent (water) is
extracted from the
concentrated feed**



1748

Fouling : description and consequences

Fouling depends on a number of operating parameters



... and control the process efficiency

Reduction of the permeation
(process productivity)

Modification of solute transfer
(Separation efficiency)

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- Industrial applications and case studies

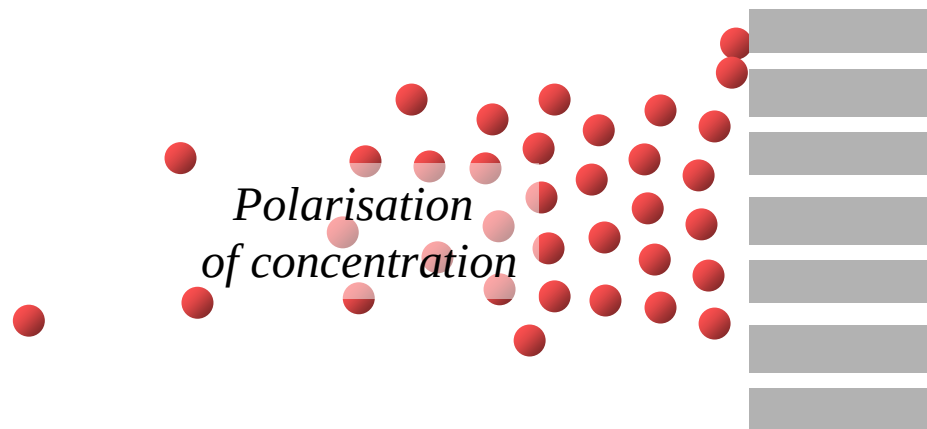
2: Membrane Structures, Operating Parameters, and Characterization

- Relationship between structure and function: pore size, selectivity, permeability
- Definition and measurements of operating parameters characterizing selectivity and performance
- Membrane characterization techniques

3: Limitations of Membrane Processes: Fouling and Solutions

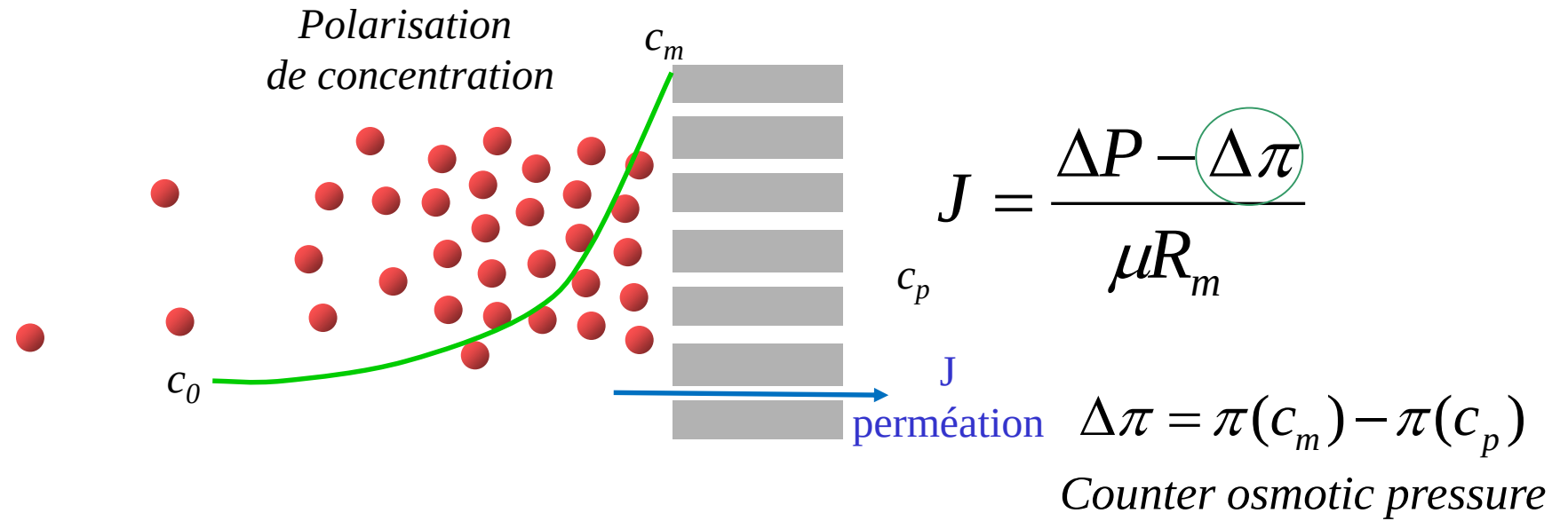
- Types of fouling
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Level 1 : How do you model concentration polarisation ?



How do you model fouling?

Filtration law



Osmotic pressure : estimation with Van't Hoff law



Osmotic pressure, Π , in Pa

$$\Pi = cRT$$

c number of dissociated moles in the solution

R Perfect gas law constant

T temperature in Kelvins

Van 't Hoff law 1886 (Nobel prize in 1901)

Exemple : solution of NaCl at 35 g/l $\approx$ sea water

$$c_{NaCl} = \frac{35}{58,5} = 0,60 \text{ mol/L} = c_{Na^+} = c_{Cl^-}$$

$$\pi = 2 \times 0,6 \times 10^3 \times 8,134 \times 298 = 29,1 \cdot 10^5 \text{ Pa}$$

29,1 bar

Reverse osmosis and production rate

Calculation of the flow rate passing through the RO membrane

$$Q = S * A * (P - p_0 - \Pi)$$

S : membrane surface m²

A : perméabilité constant

$$A = 3.10^{-12} \text{ m/(s.Pa)}$$

Surface for 3 000 m³ of water per day with an applied pressure of 50 atm

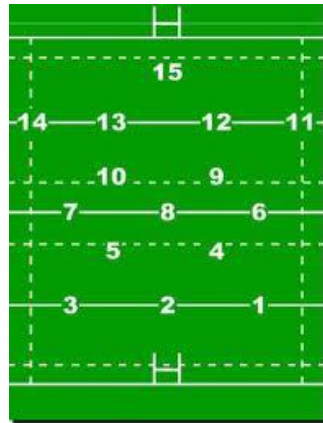
Data: NaCl 30 g/l
p₀=1 atm

(no concentration polarisation)

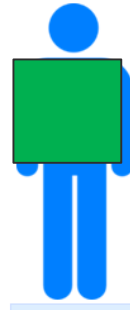
$$S = 4\,780 \text{ m}^2$$

[Excel](#)

Is it possible ?



m² for 10 000

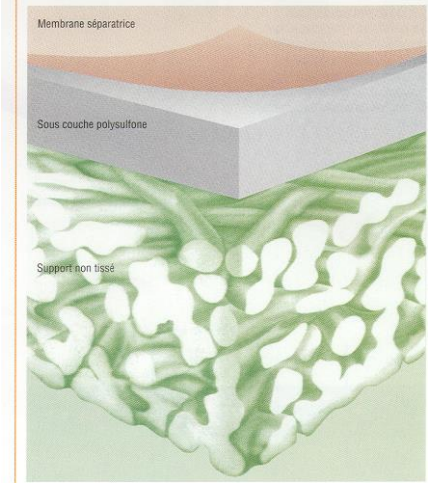


m² for 1



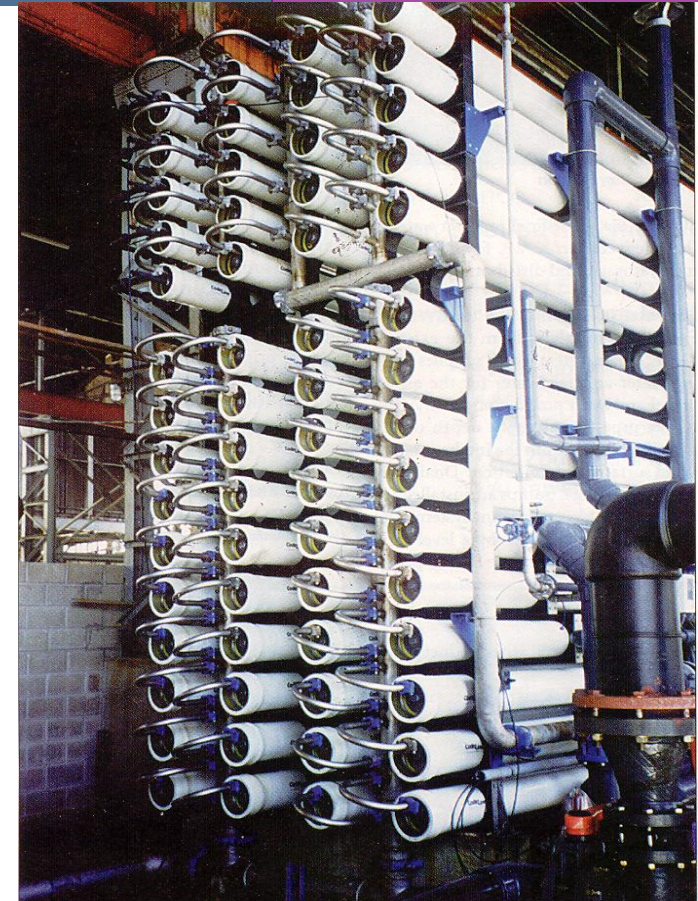
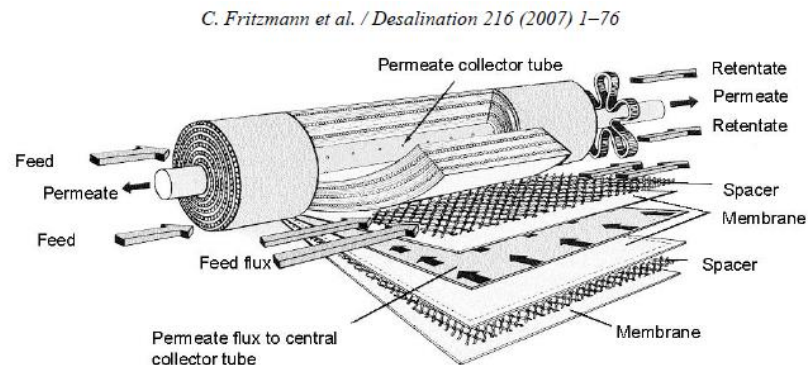
Yes, we can

Thanks to ultrathin membranes -> high permeability



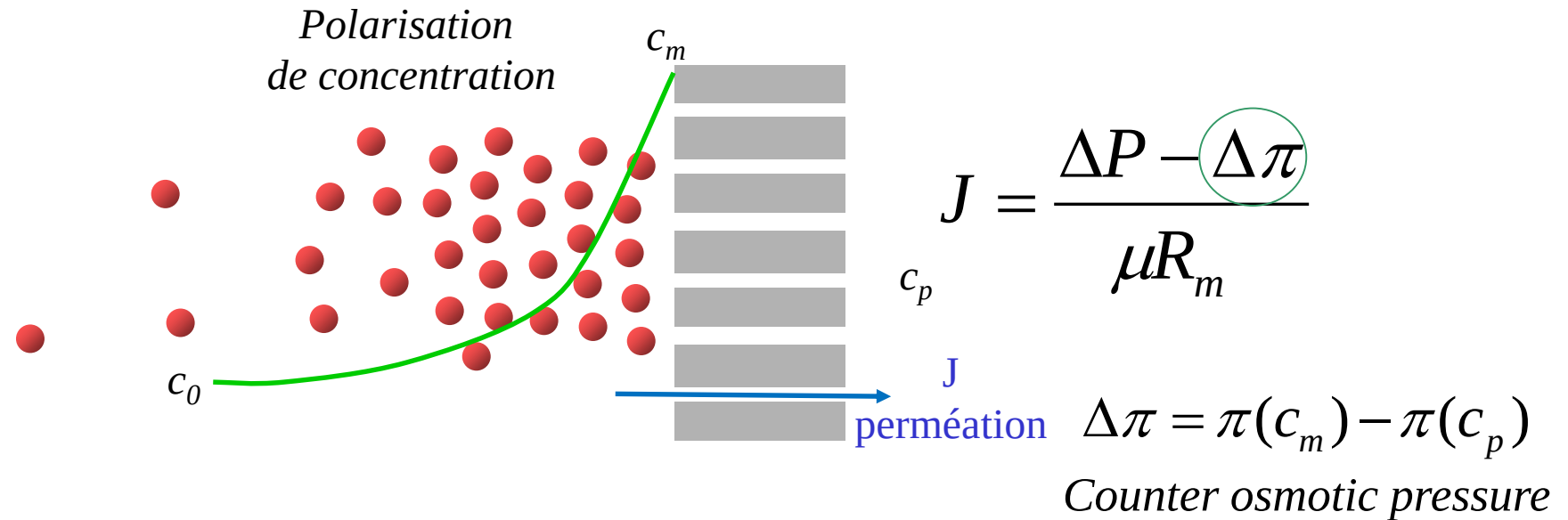
- ← polyamide membrane 0,2 μm
- ← polysulfone sub-layer 40,0 μm
- ← polyester layer 120,0 μm

Thanks to technologies allowing to have important surface in a small volume



- Capacity : 3.000 m³/day
- Membrane surface 6660 m²

Filtration law



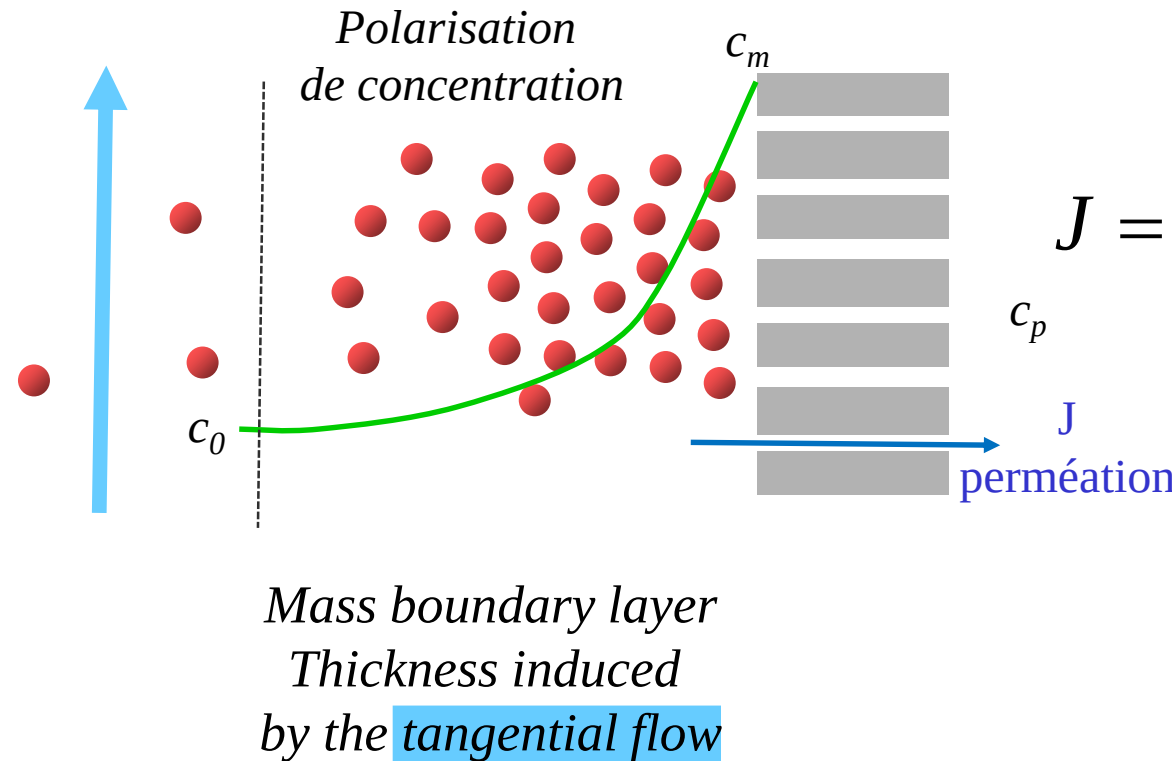
How to model the effect of concentration polarisation ?

How do you model fouling?

Solute transfer

$$\frac{c_m - c_p}{c_0 - c_p} = e^{Pe}$$

$$Pe = \frac{J}{D/\delta} = \frac{\text{perméation}}{\text{diffusion}}$$



Filtration law

$$J = \frac{\Delta P - \Delta \pi}{\mu R_m}$$

$$\Delta \pi = \pi(c_m) - \pi(c_p)$$

Counter osmotic pressure

Level 1 achieved ! You have two equations, two unknowns c_m and J

An example of modeling

Mass transfer

$$\frac{c_m - c_p}{c_0 - c_p} = e^{-\frac{J\delta}{D}}$$

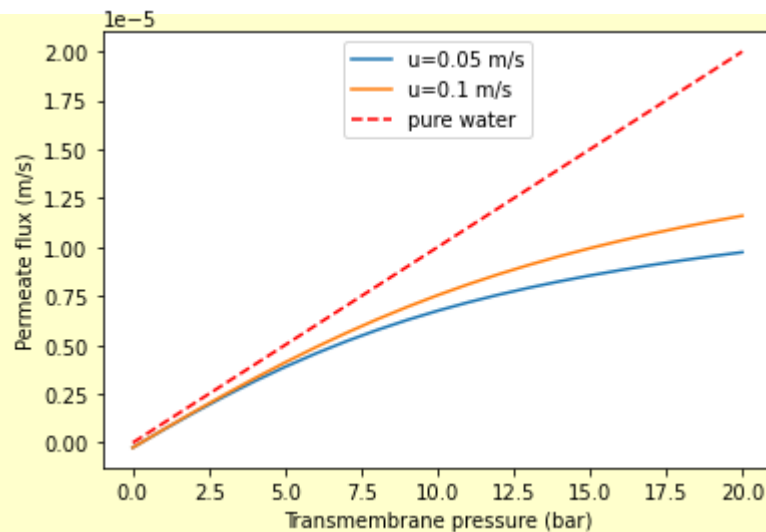
Filtration law

$$J = \frac{\Delta P - \Delta \pi}{\mu R_m}$$

$$\Delta \pi = \pi(c_m) - \pi(c_p)$$

If the membrane is fully retentive ($c_p=0$)

$$\frac{c_m - c_p}{c_0 - c_p} - e^{-\frac{\Delta P - \pi(c_m)\delta}{\mu R_m}} = 0 \rightarrow \begin{matrix} c_m \\ J \end{matrix}$$



Fruit juice filtration

Membrane :



diameter 6 mm Length 1,2 m
velocity 0,05-0,1 m/s

Fruit juice:

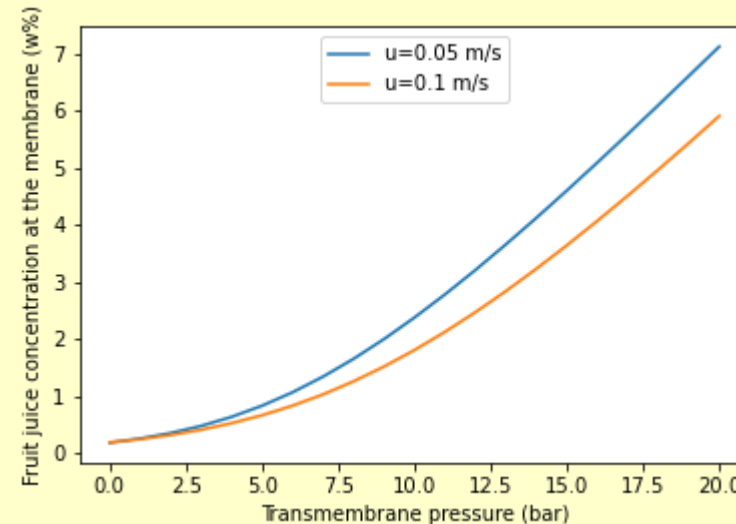
c (% mass) = 1

$$\pi(\text{bar}) = \frac{133,75c}{100 - c} *$$

$\rho = 1200 \text{ kg/m}^3$

$\mu = 0,002 \text{ Po}$

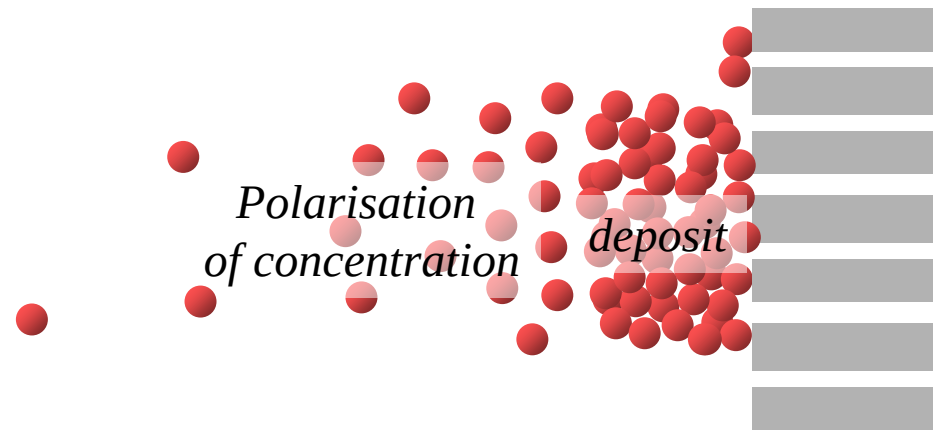
$D = 7 \cdot 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2 \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$



Python code



Level 2 : How do you model deposit formation ?

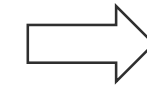


$$J = \frac{\Delta P - \Delta \pi}{\mu(R_m + R_d)}$$

Resistance in series

+

model to describe the transition from concentration
polarisation to deposit



Level 2 !

1: Introduction to Membrane Separation Processes

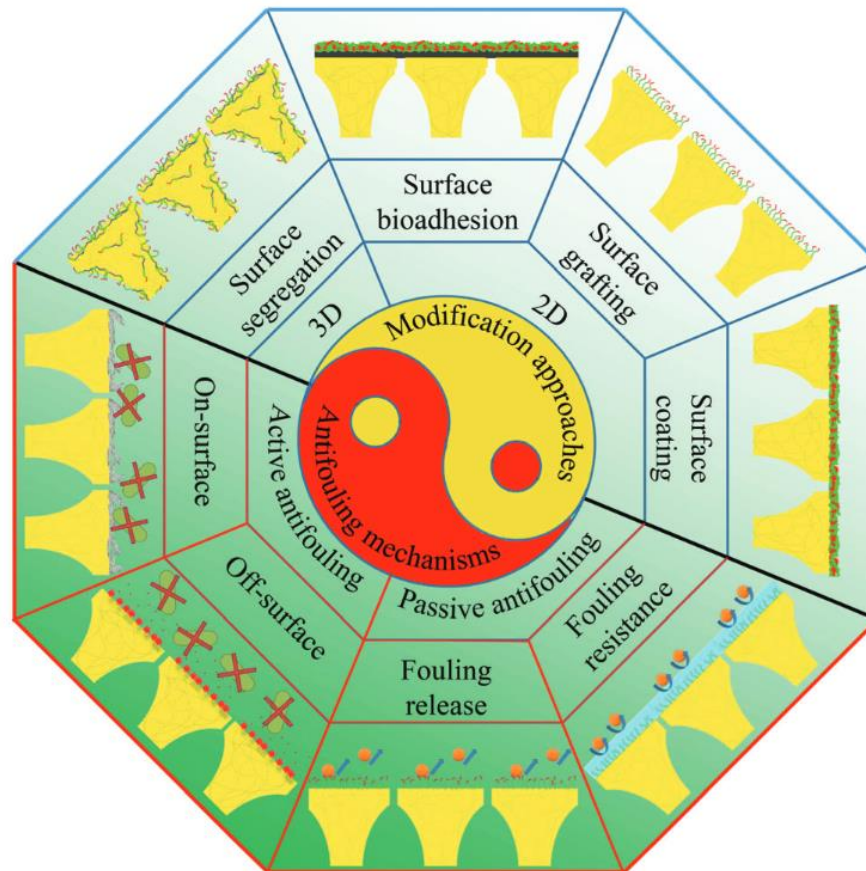
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Surface modification

Grafting

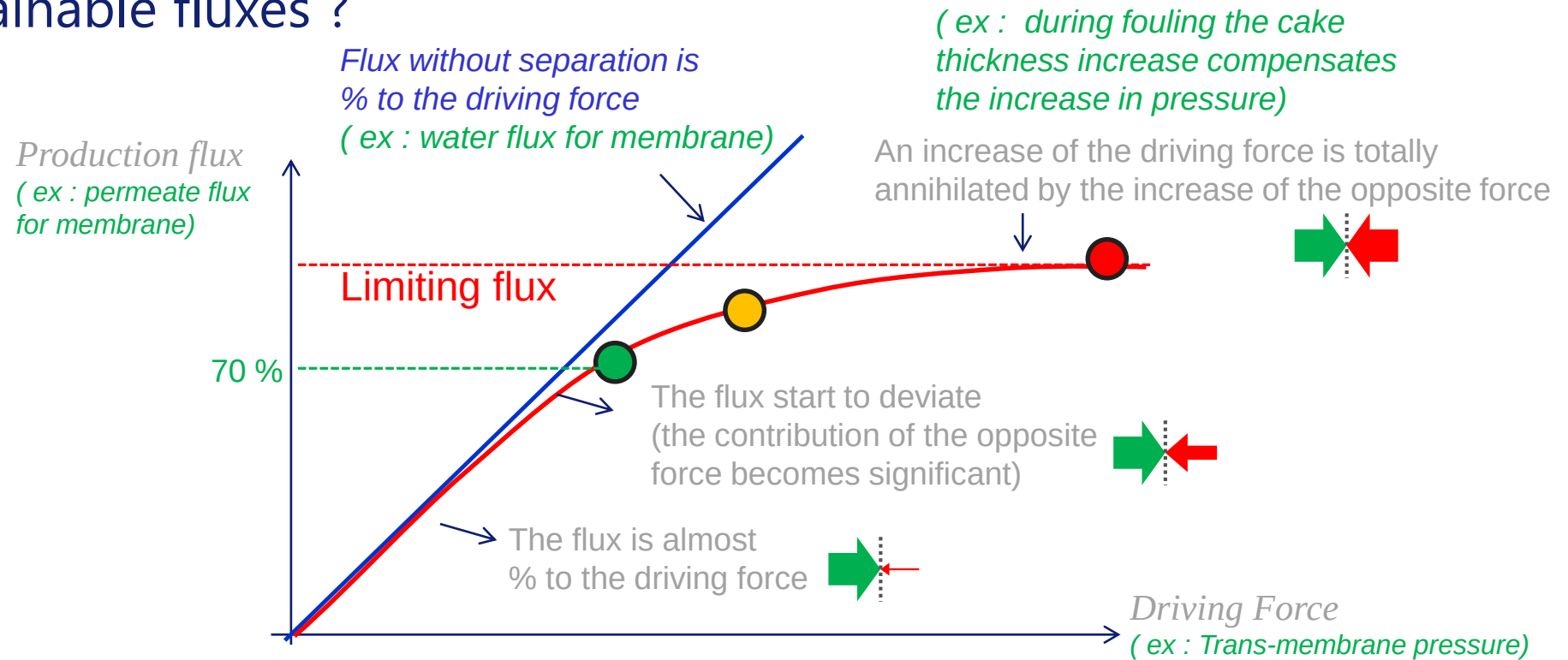
Coating

Segregation (during phase inversion)

**Bioinspired from cell membranes
(Quorum quenching, zwitterionic
properties, hydrophobic patches ...)**

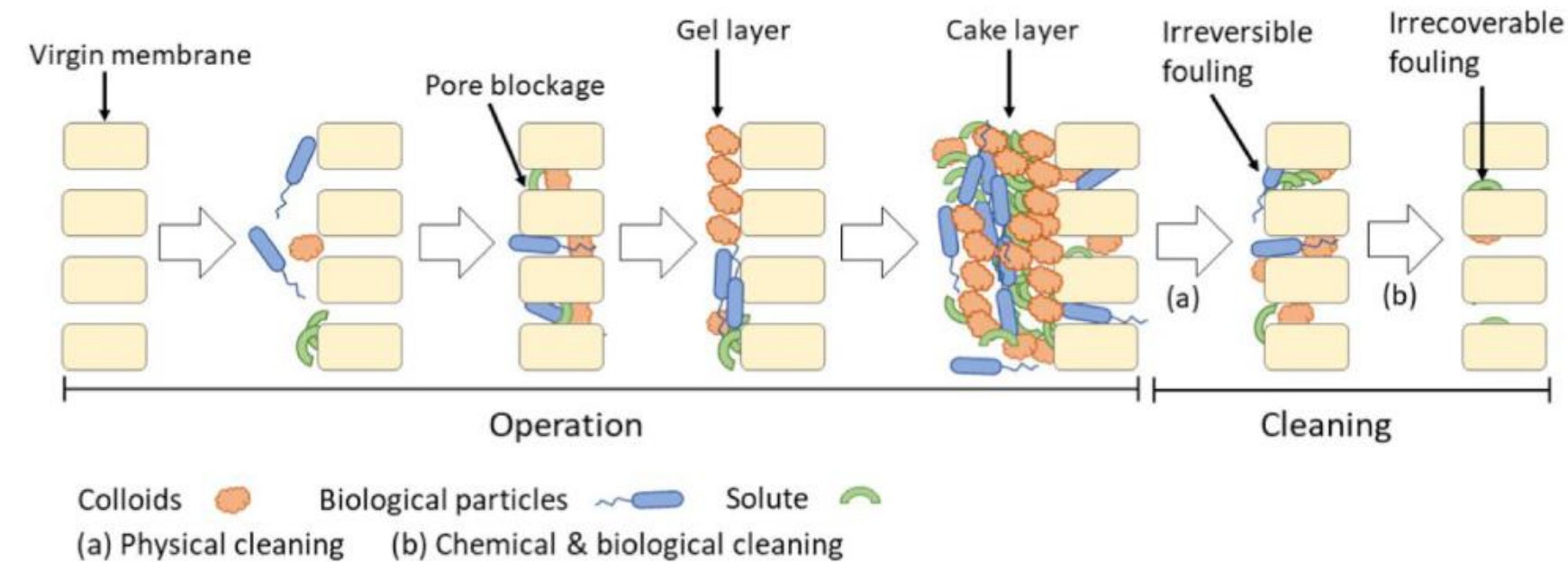
Prevention of fouling : Adapting operating conditions

How to find sustainable fluxes ?



A **sustainable way to operate** is to work at 70 % of the limiting flux
(above a significant part of the energy is used to fight against the opposite force)

Cleaning strategies



Physical cleaning

- Hydraulic cleaning cycle
- Air scouring
- Ultrasonic cleaning
- CO₂ bubble formation

Chemical cleaning

- Acid or alkaline cleaning
- Fenton cleaning (strong oxidant)

Biological cleaning

- Quorum quenching

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Let's practice

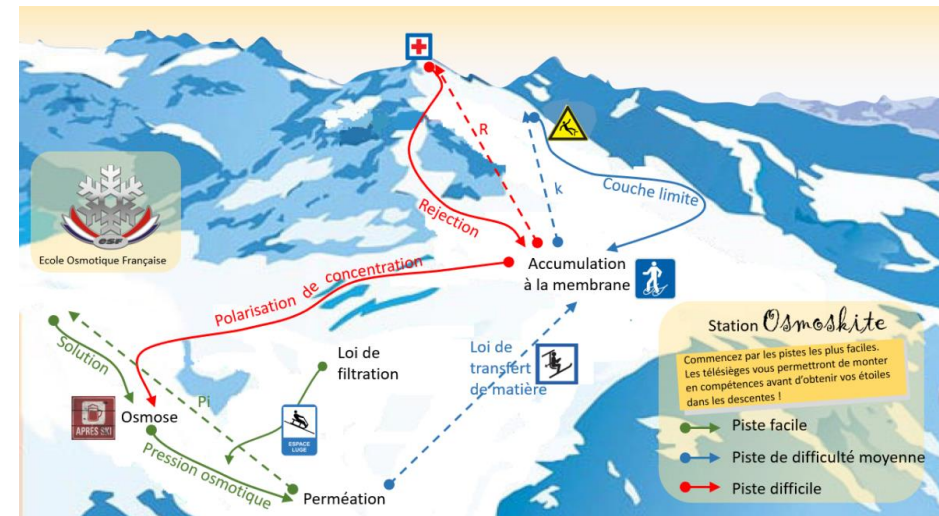
Membrane Serious Game

A serious game to progress in membrane science

www.patricebacchin.fr/cours/membrane_eng/



*Acquire “high altitude” knowledge with chair lifts
and
Test your “slipping” knowledge on the ski slopes*

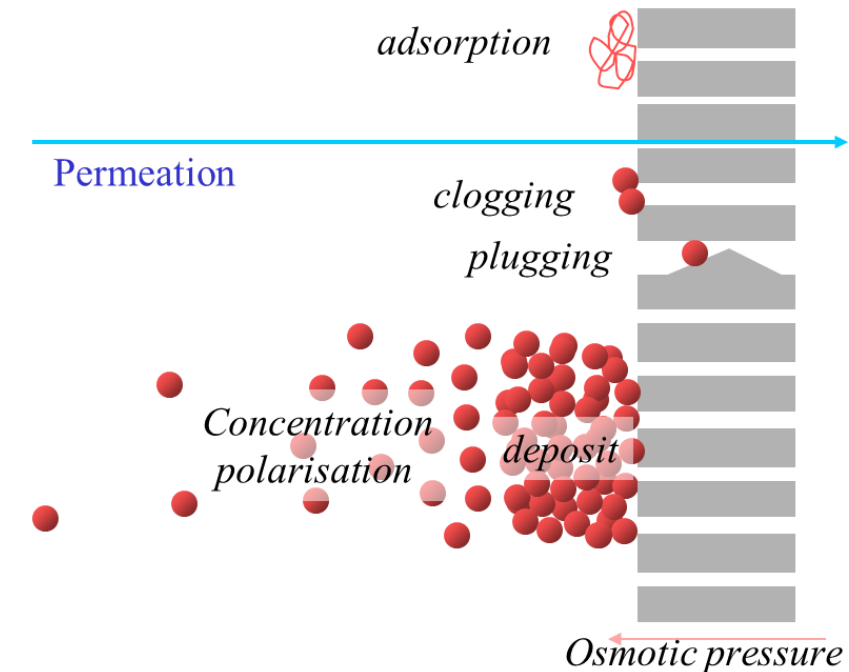


Membrane : A mature process applied in various applications

As with all processes, opposing forces limit separation : membrane fouling.

But fouling is now well understood and prevention and cleaning strategies exist.

Fouling is unpredictable for complex fluids and experimental testing of performance (productivity and selectivity) remains necessary.



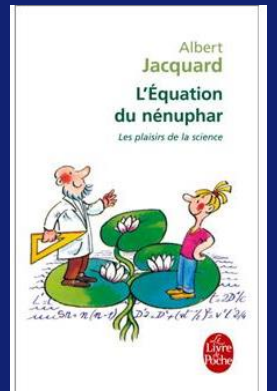
Thanks for your attention

Questions ? Interactions

*Interactions lead to an increase of complexity
that is the source of the emergence of unexpected performances*

*Les interactions (...) entraînent un accroissement de complexité
source de l'émergence de performances inattendues*

Albert Jacquard (geneticist), L'équation du nénuphar



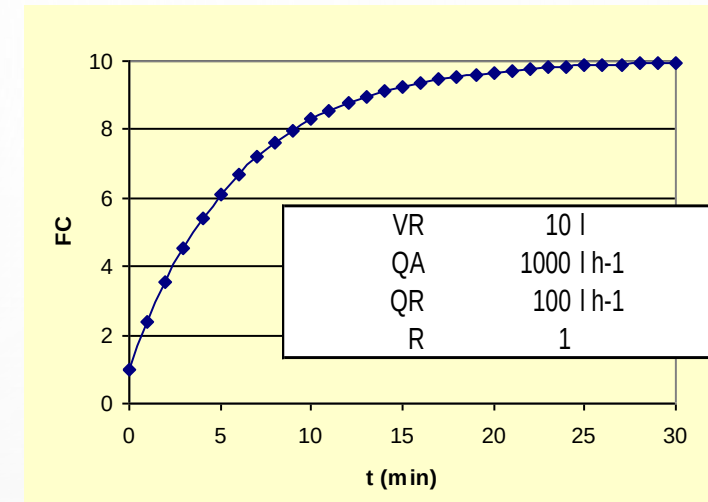
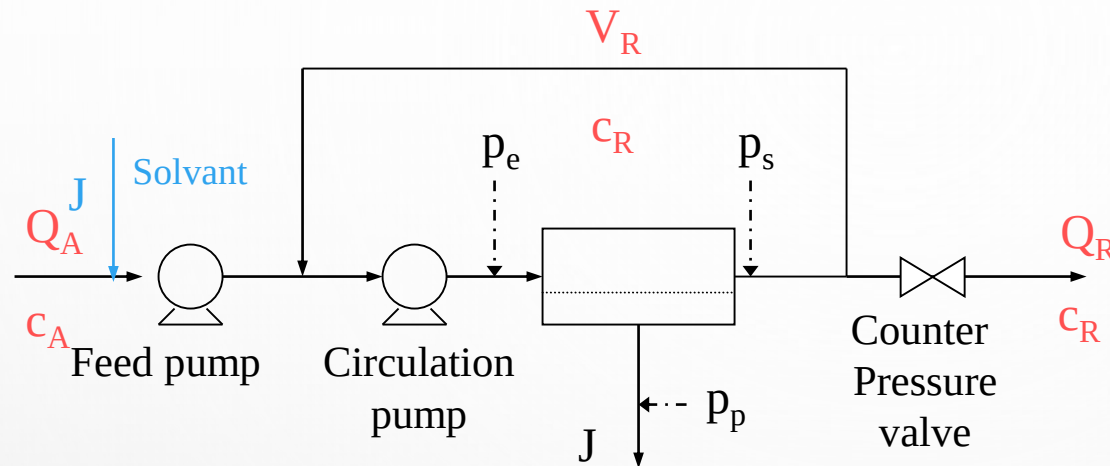
BACKUP SLIDES

Example of scaling-up principles

Problematic of Brackish water
during desalination

Example of scaling-up principles

Continuous concentration mode



Mass balance

$$Q_A c_A - Q_R c_R - Q_p c_p = V_R \frac{dc_R}{dt}$$

$$Q_A = Q_R + Q_p$$

$$\frac{dFC}{dt} = \frac{Q_A - (Q_A - Q_p R) FC}{V_R}$$

$$\frac{dFC}{dt} = \frac{1 - \alpha \cdot FC}{t_s}$$

$$\text{With } t_s = \frac{V_R}{Q_A}$$

Limit $Q_A \geq Q_p$

$$FC < \frac{1}{1-R}$$

$$FC = \frac{1}{\alpha} + \left(1 - \frac{1}{\alpha}\right) e^{-\alpha \frac{t}{t_s}}$$

with

$$\alpha = 1 - \frac{FRV - 1}{FRV} R$$

$$FRV = \frac{Q_A}{Q_R}$$

➡ If $t \rightarrow \infty$ then $FC = \frac{1}{\alpha}$

➡ If $R=0$ then $FC=1$

➡ If $R=1$ then $FC=FRV$

Operating conditions : — Concentration

— Diafiltration

Continuous concentration mode

Scaling up (in steady state)

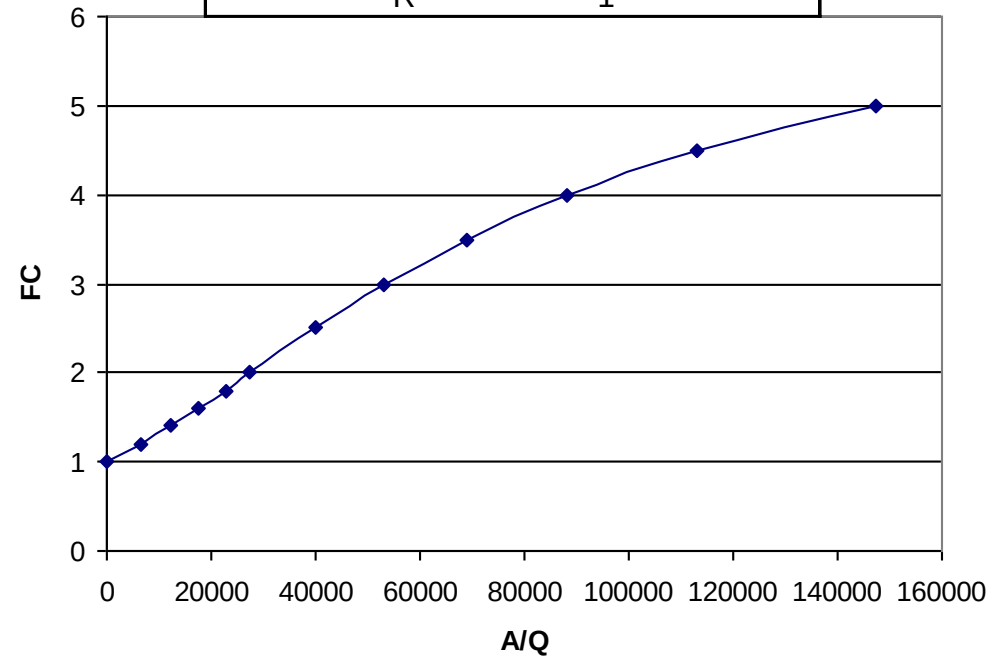
$$\frac{A}{Q_A} = \frac{FC - 1}{J \cdot R \cdot FC}$$

Surface to concentrate 5 time
a flow rate of 1000 l/h ?

Relationship for the dependence of
permetate flux to concentration

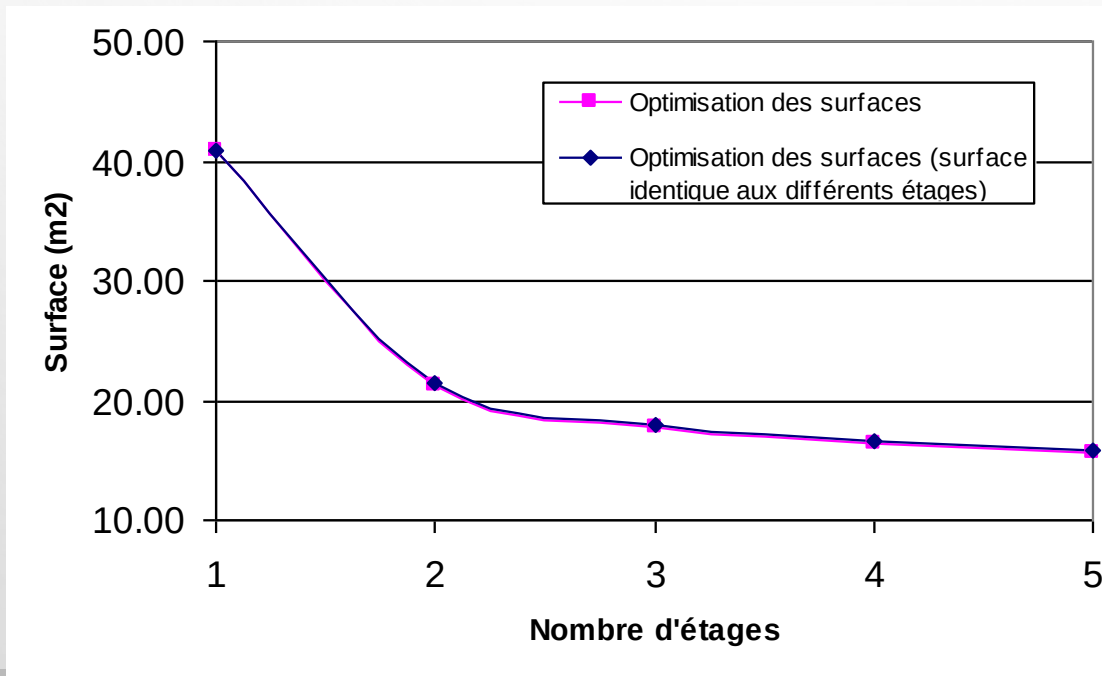
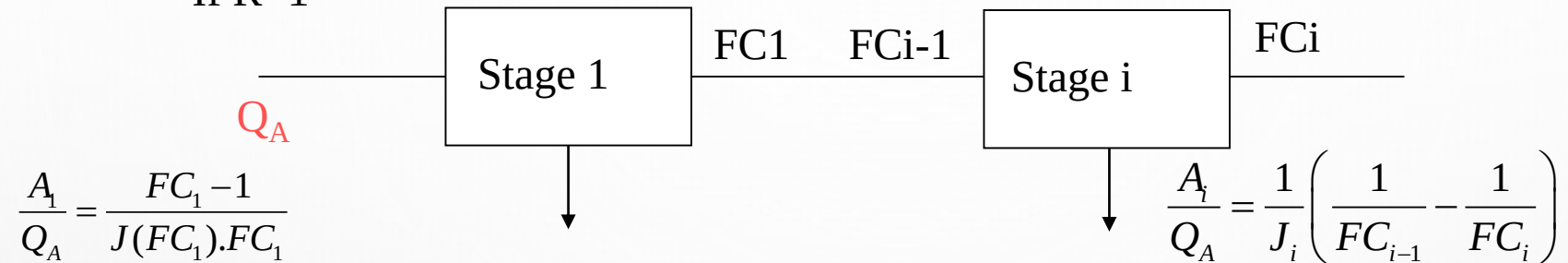
$$J = a - b \ln(FC)$$

a	100 l.h-1.m-2
b	50 l.h-1.m-2
R	1



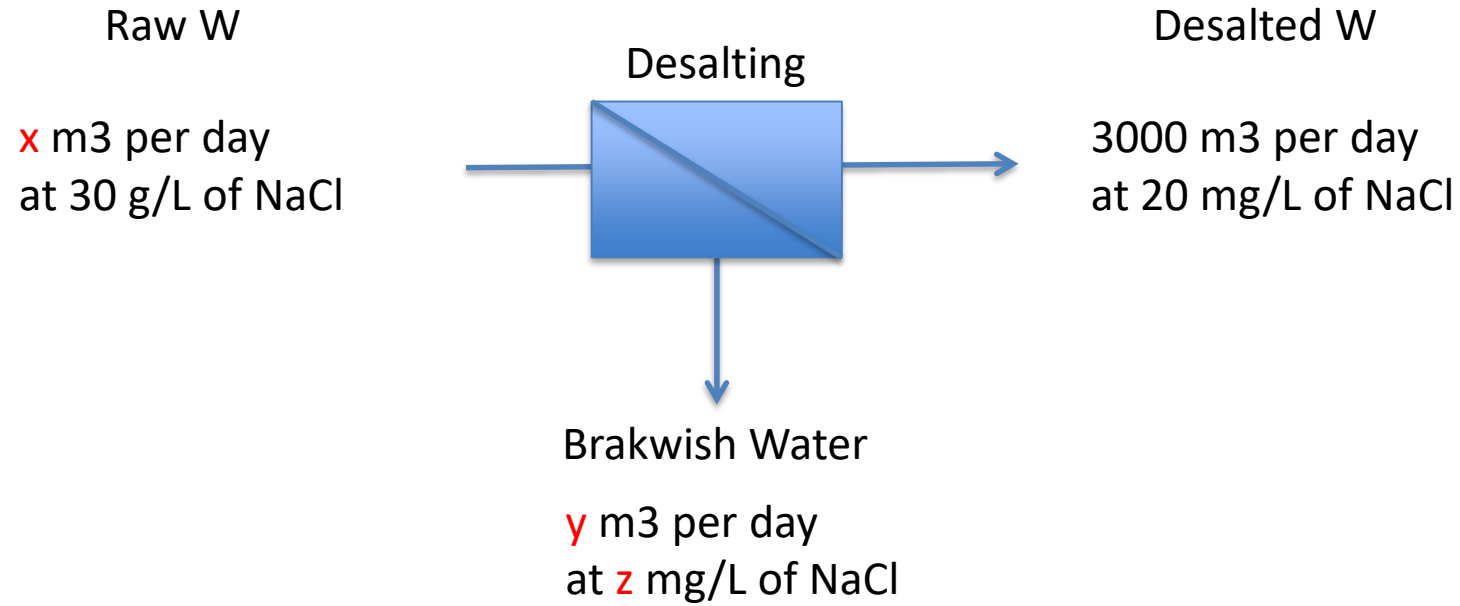
Multistage continuous mode

If $R=1$

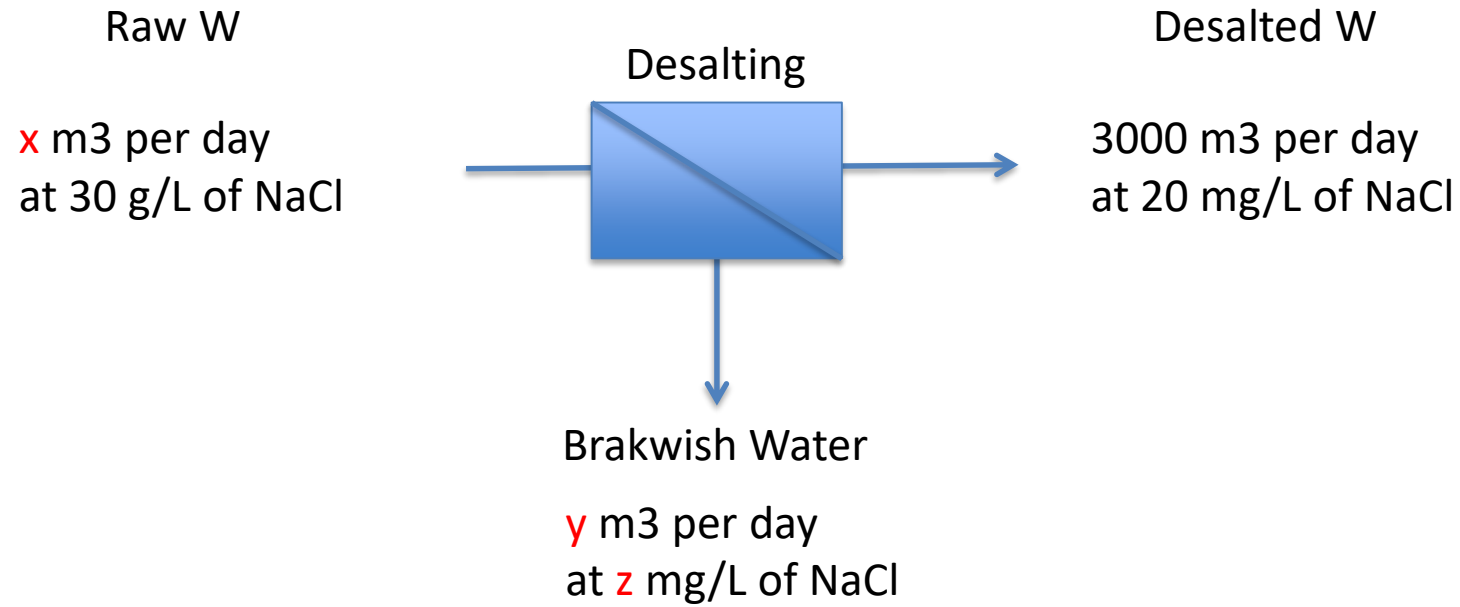


Surface reduction with multistage process

Problematic of Brackish water during desalination



$x ? y ? z ?$

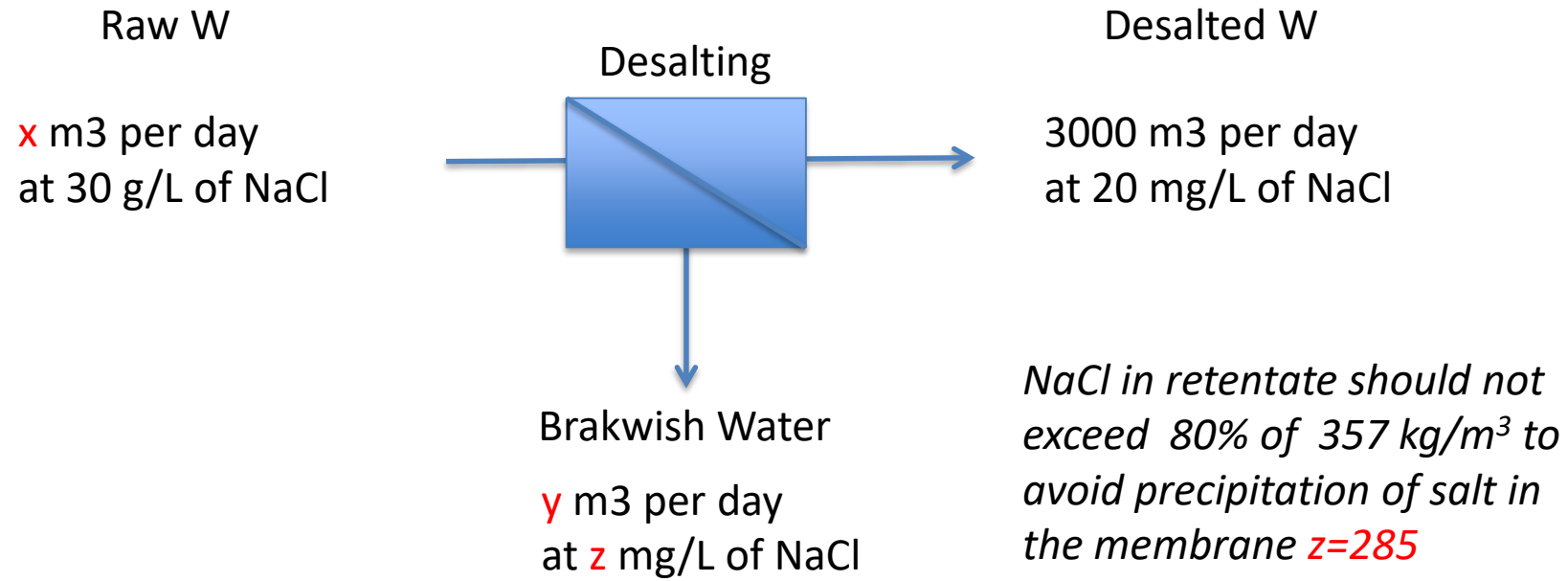


$$x = y + 3000$$

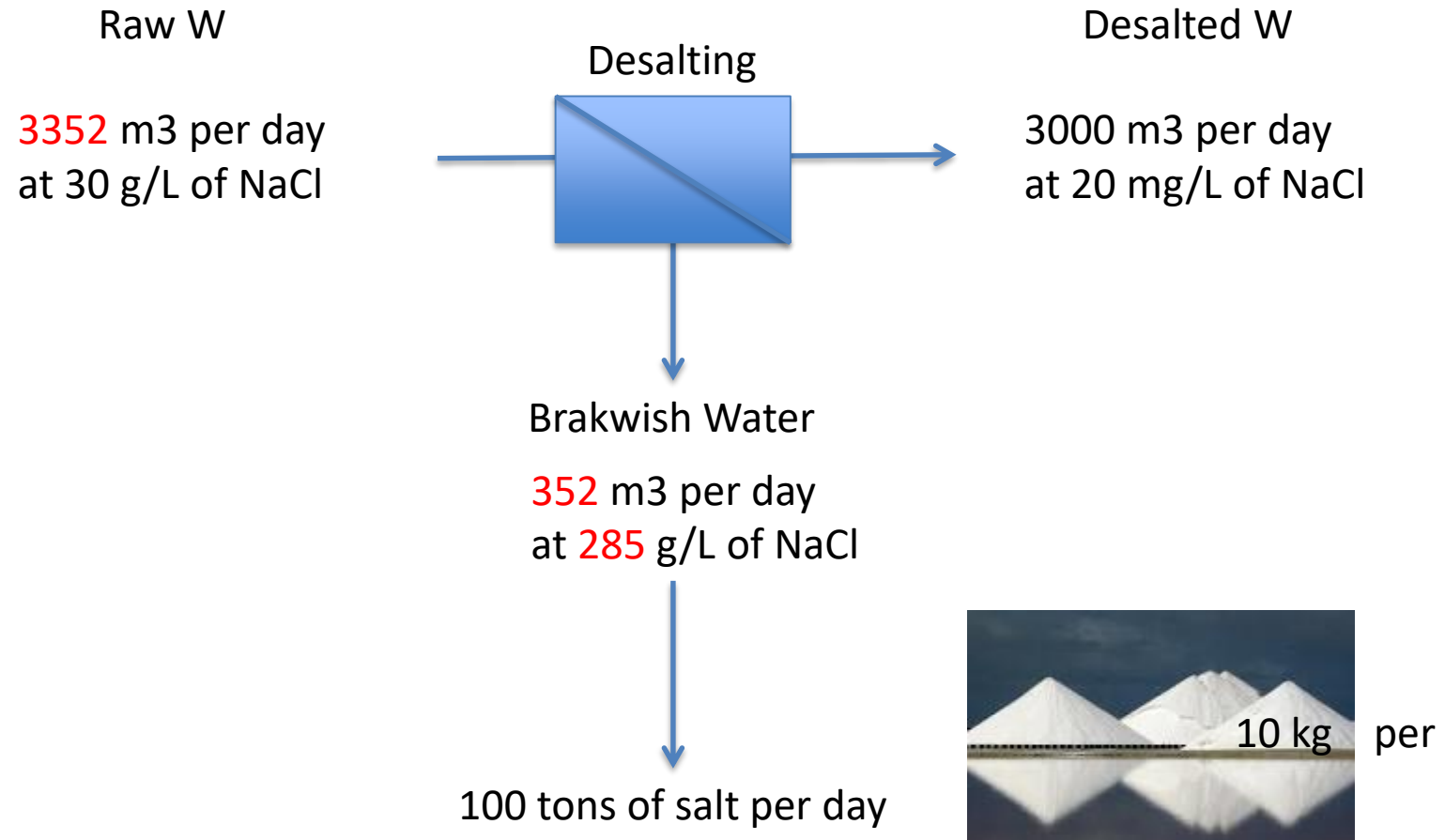
x and y in m^3

$$x \cdot 30 = y \cdot z + 3000 \cdot 0.02$$

z in kg/m^3



The solubility of NaCl in water is 357 kg/m³ at 20°C



More often the yield is $Y=Q_p/Q=0.4$

