Adsorption dynamics of H2 on Pd(100) from first principles

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We study H2 dissociative adsorption on Pd(100) through classical molecular dynamics (MD) calculations, using density functional theory (DFT) to describe the molecule–surface interaction potential. We employ two methods to evaluate the forces acting on the atoms along the trajectories: (i) by doing a DFT calculation (and using the Hellman–Feynman theorem) every time step, and (ii) by computing the gradient of a six-dimensional potential energy surface (PES) obtained first, by interpolation of DFT total energy results using the corrugation reducing procedure (CRP). The corresponding MD calculations, hereafter referred to as ab initio MD (AIMD) and CRP-PES-MD, respectively, provide very similar dissociative adsorption probabilities ($P_{\text{diss}}$) as a function of the initial kinetic energy ($E_i$) for initial rotational states characterized by $0 \leq J \leq 4$ indicating that the interpolated CRP-PES gives a faithful representation of the underlying ab initio PES. Thus, we make use of the computationally cheaper CRP-PES-MD for a detailed analysis of rotational effects on dissociative adsorption for $0 \leq J \leq 12$. In agreement with available experimental data for H2 interacting with Pd surfaces, we have found that $P_{\text{diss}}$ barely depends on $J$ for $E_i \geq 200$ meV, and that it follows a non-monotonic $J$-dependence at low energies. Our simulations show that two competing dynamical effects which were previously suggested based on lower-dimensional model calculations are indeed also operative at low energies in a realistic high-dimensional treatment. For low values of $J$, a shadowing effect prevails that entails a decrease of $P_{\text{diss}}$ when $J$ increases, whereas for $J > 6$, rotational effects are dominated by the adiabatic energy transfer from rotation to perpendicular motion that provokes the increase of $P_{\text{diss}}$ with increasing $J$.

I. Introduction

The adsorption of H2 on Pd surfaces has historically attracted a lot of attention due to the well known catalytic properties of Pd (e.g. for hydrogenation reactions) and its potentiality as a hydrogen storage medium (see ref. 1 and references therein). Experimentally, the adsorption dynamics of H2 on Pd surfaces has been studied by using both supersonic molecular beam2–6 and rotational state resolved desorption7,8 experiments. These experiments have been mainly focused on the effect of the initial kinetic energy and rotational motion of the H2 molecules on the adsorption probability and today, it is widely accepted that: (i) dissociative adsorption of H2 on bare Pd surfaces is a nonactivated process;2 (ii) the sticking probability as a function of the initial kinetic energy presents a non-monotonic dependence;3 (iii) at low kinetic energies, initial rotation slightly suppress adsorption;4 (iv) H2 molecules initially rotating in helicopter fashion adsorb with a higher probability than in cartwheel states.5

Theoretically, high dimensional quantum10–18 and classical11,18–23 dynamics studies have been carried out for H2 interacting with the three lowest Miller index Pd surfaces, i.e. (100), (110) and (111). The later studies made use of the Born–Oppenheimer and the so-called rigid surface (RS) approximations, i.e. the effect of electron-hole pair excitations is neglected and surface atoms are considered frozen in their equilibrium positions during the adsorption process. Thus, the H2-surface interaction is given by a six dimensional potential (the potential energy surface, PES) usually obtained from density functional theory (DFT) results (see ref. 24, 25 and references therein).

Due to the huge number of evaluations of the PES (and/or its derivatives) required by a dynamical calculation and the high computational cost of DFT calculations, the usual approach is to obtain first a continuous representation of the PES by interpolation or fitting of a selected set of DFT data. This allows to evaluate the potential and its derivatives for any molecular configuration much (various orders of magnitude) faster than through a direct DFT calculation which reduces tremendously the time consumed by the dynamics calculations. The price to pay is the possible inaccuracy of the dynamics description due to the unavoidable errors of any PES parametrization procedure. Various methods have been proposed to represent six-dimensional (6D) PESs,26–30 being the corrugation reducing procedure (CRP)27 one of the most widely employed so far.

The accuracy of various CRP-PESs has been gauged by comparison with DFT results for molecular configurations not included in the interpolation input data set.20,31,32 Typical
errors found for H$_2$ are between 20–50 meV depending on the region of configuration space \( (i.e. \) entrance or exit channel) considered. Such small errors are expected to have a very small effect on the dynamics. However, it has been shown that for non-activated processes in particular the dynamics are very sensitive to small changes in the PES, especially at low energies.  

Therefore, possible artifacts introduced by the continuous representation of the PES employed, cannot be completely ruled out \textit{a priori}.  

Very recently, the so-called \textit{ab initio} molecular dynamics (AIMD) calculations \( (i.e. \) with the forces needed in the dynamics being directly computed using DFT through the Hellman–Feynman theorem) have also been carried out for H$_2$/Pd(100) and H$_2$/Pd(111). The most important advantage of AIMD is that it allows to go beyond the RS approximation, accounting for energy exchange with surface atoms as well as surface coverage effects in a straightforward manner. Since AIMD bypass any PES parametrization, it also can be used to check the reliability of a 6D PES representation method to provide artifact-free dynamical results. This is still important because the applicability of AIMD remains limited to favorable cases in which, for instance, the probabilities of interest are large enough to obtain good statistics with a moderated number of trajectories and when the total integration time required is not too long. Moreover, a detailed analysis of high dimensional dynamical results sometimes requires a large number of additional test calculations which might become too expensive using AIMD.

For H$_2$/Pd(100), the adsorption probability as a function of the initial translational energy and the rotational state of impinging molecules had been previously investigated using various parametrized PESs based on DFT results. Though the qualitative energy dependence of the adsorption probability obtained in the latter studies was later confirmed by AIMD results (for initially non-rotating molecules), significant quantitative differences do exist. Thus, for instance, the conclusions of ref. 13 (based on a model PES) cannot be considered as definitive, and it is important to revisit rotational effects for H$_2$/Pd(100) using AIMD calculations.

In this work we study the role of initial rotation on the adsorption of H$_2$ molecules on Pd(100) using both, AIMD and MD based on a CRP-PES, hereafter referred to as CRP-PES-MD. In section II we briefly describe the method employed to build the CRP-PES from DFT results for H$_2$/Pd(100) and summarize the two methods used in the dynamics calculations. Then, in section III we compare the dissociative adsorption probabilities obtained from AIMD and CRP-PES-MD calculations for various initial kinetic energies and rotational states of the impinging molecules. In view of the very good agreement between the CRP-PES-MD and AIMD results, we employ the computationally cheaper CRP-PES-MD to analyze in detail the origin of the main rotational effects observed. Finally, section IV summarizes the main conclusions of our study.

### II. Computational methods

Both, AIMD and CRP-PES-MD are based on DFT calculations which were carried out with the Vienna \textit{Ab initio} Simulation Program (VASP) that uses a plane wave basis set for the electronic orbitals. Electronic exchange and correlation has been described within the generalized gradient approximation proposed by Perdew and Wang (PW91). All DFT calculations were spin restricted. This is well justified for H$_2$ interacting with a non-magnetic metal surface at low energies \( (e.g. \) lower than \( \sim 1.5 \) eV), because throughout the energetically accessible region of configuration space \( (i.e. \) for \( 0.5 \) Å \( \leq r \leq 1.2 \) Å and \( Z_{\text{res}} \geq 2 \) Å or for any value of \( r \) and both H atoms closer than \( \sim 2 \) Å from the surface\cite{note1}), the electronic ground state of the H$_2$-surface system is a singlet state.

Since, the DFT calculations for the CRP interpolation were done independently of the AIMD ones, the settings employed in both DFT calculations are similar but not exactly the same. The particular settings employed in each calculation are provided separately in the following subsections.

#### A AIMD calculations

The AIMD simulations have been performed using ultrasoft pseudopotentials\cite{note5,note6} to represent the ionic cores in order to make the calculations compatible to previous ones carried out within the same setup. The one-electron valence states were expanded in plane waves with an energy cutoff of 200 eV. The (100) surface was modeled by a slab of five layers with a \( (2 \times 2) \) unit cell using a Monkhorst–Pack grid of \( 5 \times 5 \times 1 \) \( \mathbf{k} \)-points.

Sticking probabilities were determined by averaging over at least 200 trajectories which were started with random initial lateral positions and orientations of the H$_2$ molecule 4 Å above the surface. The H$_2$ molecules were initially non-vibrating, \textit{i.e.}, the simulations correspond to \textit{classical} (C) calculations. The molecules were impinging on the Pd(100) surface at normal incidence with kinetic energies between 20 meV and 400 meV. The initial rotational energies used in the AIMD simulations correspond to rotational states with the quantum number \( 0 \leq J \leq 4 \).

The AIMD simulations were performed using the Verlet algorithm\cite{note7,note8} with a time step of 1 fs within the microcanonical ensemble, \textit{i.e.}, the total energy was conserved during the simulations. This energy conservation was typically fulfilled to within \( \pm 5 \) meV. The substrate atoms were initially at rest corresponding to a surface temperature of \( T_s = 0 \) K, but the uppermost two layers of the Pd slab were allowed to move during the simulations. The calculated dissociative adsorption probabilities, \( P_{\text{diss}} \), have a statistical error\cite{note9} of \( \sqrt{P_{\text{diss}}(1 - P_{\text{diss}})}/\sqrt{200} \leq 0.035 \). A trajectory was considered to correspond to a dissociation event when the internuclear distance of the molecule exceeded 2.5 Å and to a scattering event when the molecule returned to the initial distance of 4 Å from the surface.

#### B CRP-PES-MD calculations

In order to obtain a continuous representation of the 6D PES for a diatomic molecule interacting with a surface, the CRP makes use of both molecule- and atom-surface calculations. DFT calculations were carried out for a single atom or molecule within a \( (2 \times 2) \) unit cell and using a \( 5 \times 5 \times 1 \) \( \mathbf{k} \)-points grid. The Pd(100) surface has been represented by a
calculations to evaluate carried out as explained in the appendix of ref. 20. The energy cut-off was 300 eV and electronic smearing was introduced within the Mettessl and Paxton scheme with $N = 1$ and $\sigma = 0.2$ eV.

For H/Pd(100), DFT calculations have been performed on the six surface sites displayed in right panel of Fig. 1. A 3D-cubic spline has been used to interpolate the atomic interpolation function from DFT results for N values of Z per site, between $Z_{\text{min}} = -1.25$ Å and $Z_{\text{max}} = 5.25$ Å.

In the left panel of Fig. 1 we present the coordinate system employed throughout the text to identify different molecular configurations above the surface. We have evaluated the H$_2$/Pd(100) potential energy for 27 2D$(Z,r)$ cuts with the molecular center of charge on the six high and low symmetry sites shown in Fig. 1 and various molecular orientations:

- 3 2D cuts on top (site 1: $X = 0$; $Y = 0$): ($\theta = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 0^\circ$) and ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 45^\circ$)
- 3 2D cuts on bridge (site 2: $X = \Delta/2$; $Y = 0$): ($\theta = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 0^\circ$) and ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 90^\circ$)
- 3 2D cuts on hollow (site 3: $X = \Delta/2$; $Y = \Delta/2$): ($\theta = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 0^\circ$) and ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 45^\circ$)
- 6 2D cuts on 1h (site 4: $X = \Delta/4$; $Y = \Delta/4$): ($\theta = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 45^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 135^\circ$), ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 45^\circ$), ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 135^\circ$) and ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 225^\circ$).
- 6 2D cuts on b2h (site 5: $X = \Delta/2$; $Y = \Delta/4$): ($\theta = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 90^\circ$), ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\varphi = 45^\circ$), ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 0^\circ$), ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 90^\circ$) and ($\theta = 45^\circ$, $\varphi = 180^\circ$).

where $\Delta$ is the Pd–Pd nearest neighbor distance (calculated value: 2.80 Å).

For each 2D$(Z,r)$ cut we have computed ~2100 DFT total energies (for 0.4 Å < r < 2.3 Å and 0.25 Å < Z < 4 Å). Thus, the total number of DFT (molecular and atomic) data employed is ~5850. Extrapolation of the PES toward the vacuum was carried out as explained in the appendix of ref. 20.

Using the CRP-PES, we have carried out classical MD calculations to evaluate $P_{\text{diss}}$ for H$_2$ molecules impinging on Pd(100) at normal incidence for various initial kinetic energies, $E_i$, and rotational states ($J,m_J$) with $0 \leq J \leq 12$. Hamilton equations have been integrated by the predictor-corrector method of Burlisch and Stoer. In the case of rotating molecules ($J \neq 0$) we have carried out calculations for a random initial orientation of the angular momentum $L_{\text{z}} = \sqrt{J(J+1)}$ a.u., and also for particular quantized values of $L_{\text{z}} (L_{\text{z}} = m_J \text{ a.u.})$. The method employed to choose the initial conditions in each case can be found elsewhere. For each initial condition, ($E_i,J$) or ($E_i,J,m_J$), we have computed 5000 trajectories which makes statistical errors negligible for our purposes. We consider that dissociation has taken place whenever the H–H distance, $r$, reaches the value $r_{\text{diss}} = 2.25$ Å with $dr/dt > 0$. Whenever a trajectory reaches the initial value of the molecule–surface distance, $Z = 5$ Å, with velocity pointing toward the vacuum, we consider that it has been reflected. We have done both quasi-classical (QC) calculations, taking into account the initial vibrational zero point energy (ZPE) of H$_2$, and classical (C) calculations, without ZPE. However, we will only present C results for a consistent comparison with AIMD results and because the main conclusions that arise from the analysis of both C and QC results are essentially the same.

III. Results

A. AIMD and CRP-PES-MD

In Fig. 2 we compare C dissociative adsorption probabilities obtained using AIMD, $P_{\text{diss}}$(AIMD), (red triangles) and CRP-PES-MD, $P_{\text{diss}}$(CRP), (full line) for initially non-rotating molecules ($J = 0$). The agreement between $P_{\text{diss}}$(C) and $P_{\text{diss}}$(AIMD) is satisfactory. Both calculations predict the same non-monotonic energy-dependence for the sticking probability as observed experimentally. Still, a quantitative comparison with experiments is difficult because of the discrepancies between the two sets of experimental data obtained by Rettner et al. and Rendulic et al. Due to this fact, we will mainly focus the discussion on our own theoretical results.

For initially rotating molecules with $1 \leq J \leq 4$ (Fig. 3) the agreement between $P_{\text{diss}}$(AIMD) and $P_{\text{diss}}$(CRP) is also very good. Both
calculations predict the same rotational hindering effects at low translational energies and a monotonic energy-dependence of $P_{\text{diss}}(E_i)$.

It must be noted that whereas in AIMD calculations molecule–surface energy transfer has been allowed during the dynamics, the CRP-PES-MD results represented by full lines in Fig. 2 and 3 were obtained within the RS approximation. Nevertheless, in the present case, this difference should not alter dramatically the comparison. Our calculations show that $\text{H}_2$ dissociation on Pd(100) is essentially a direct process (see section IIIB) which in general, makes that energy transfer to the surface barely affects the dissociative adsorption probability. Additional support to this comparison, is provided by an AIMD result computed within the RS approximation for $E_i = 200$ meV (the diamond in Fig. 2) which is very close to the AIMD value obtained accounting for energy transfer to surface atoms for the same initial energy. Finally, we have also computed $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{CRP}}$ for $T_s=1$ K using the surface oscillator (SO) model48–50 (dashed line in Fig. 2) to account for energy exchange to the surface and obtained a sticking curve very close to the one obtained within the RS approximation, discrepancies being smaller than 2–3%.

We have checked that the two different setups for the underlying DFT calculations lead to equivalent results as far as the energetics are concerned. As an example, we have determined the adsorption energy of a hydrogen atom at the hollow site in a $\{2 \times 2\}$ geometry, i.e. for a hydrogen coverage of $\theta_{\text{H}} = 1/4$, with respect to the free $\text{H}_2$ molecule. Using the setup of the AIMD calculations, we obtain an adsorption energy $E_{\text{ads}} = -0.45$ eV, whereas for the DFT setup underlying the CRP interpolation we obtain $E_{\text{ads}} = -0.44$ eV, both in good agreement with previously published values.51 However, note that the interpolation of potential energy surfaces with a coexistence of non-activated and activated paths towards dissociative adsorption, as it is the case for the $\text{H}_2$/Pd(100) system, requires special attention because the dynamics in such systems is very sensitive to small changes in the PES. As was shown in a detailed study,30 for such systems a small root mean square error between input and interpolated data does not necessarily lead imply, that reaction probabilities are faithfully reproduced on the interpolated PES. The ultimate test of the accuracy of an interpolated PES is not the root mean square error of the fitted points, but the determination of its consequences on derived properties such as calculated reaction properties. The fact that the $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{AIMD}}$ and $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{CRP}}$ agree not only as far as the dependence on the translational energy is concerned but also with respect to the initial rotational state (see Fig. 2 and 3) therefore strongly suggests that both MD simulations capture essentially the same details of the adsorption dynamics although different setups for the underlying DFT calculations were used. Therefore, in section IIIB we will employ the computationally cheaper CRP-PES-MD calculations to investigate in detail the origin of the rotational effects shown in Fig. 3.

B CRP-PES-MD: rotational effects

In Fig. 4 we plot the contributions of direct and indirect (dynamic trapping mediated) dissociative adsorption ($P_{\text{dir}}$ and $P_{\text{trapp}}$, respectively) for $J = 0$, 1 and 4. We associate reactive trajectories with dynamic trapping if dissociation takes place after more than five rebounds and the others with a direct mechanism. In all cases $P_{\text{dir}}$ is much larger than $P_{\text{trapp}}$. Dynamic trapping plays some role for $E_i \leq 100$ meV and $P_{\text{trapp}}$ decreases when $E_i$ increases. It is interesting to note that dynamic trapping for $J = 0$ is more important than for $J \neq 0$. For instance, at the lowest energies considered ($\sim 10$ meV) $P_{\text{trapp}} = 0.3$ for $J = 0$ and goes down to 0.1 for $J = 1$ and $J = 4$ (as well as for other values of $J$ not shown in the Figure). For $J \neq 0$, the small contribution of dynamic trapping and the sharper increase of $P_{\text{diss}}(E_i)$ at low energies, provoke the monotonic increase of $P_{\text{diss}}(E_i)$. The particularly higher contribution of dynamic trapping for $J = 0$ and the relatively flat $E_i$-dependence of $P_{\text{dir}}$ at low energies, give rise to the non-monotonic dependence of $P_{\text{diss}}$ observed for $J = 0$ (in contrast with the case of $J \neq 0$). To summarize, Fig. 4 clearly shows that: (i) the origin of the rotational hindering effects observed for $J \neq 0$ (Fig. 3) is connected with the influence that initial rotation has on direct dissociation only, and (ii) $J = 0$ is a particular case in which, at low energies, dynamic trapping plays a more important role than for any value of $J \neq 0$. Accordingly, in subsections IIIB1 and IIIB2 we will consider separately the cases of $J \neq 0$ and $J = 0$ focussing the analysis on the direct and dynamic trapping mechanisms, respectively.

1. $J \neq 0$. In the upper panels of Fig. 5 we plot $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ for three values of $E_i$: 50, 100 and 200 meV. Here we focus on $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{CRP}}$ (circles) but we have also included the AIMD values (triangles) for comparison. For all the three energies considered, $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{CRP}}(J)$ presents a non-monotonic behavior, first decreasing until $J \sim 6$ and then increasing when $J$ increases. This $J$-dependence is stronger at low energies (e.g. $E_i = 50$ meV) and $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ becomes more flat when $E_i$ increases. A similar (translational energy dependent) rotational hindering effect has been obtained in previous experimental4 and theoretical studies15 of dissociative adsorption of $\text{H}_2$ on Pd surfaces.

It is well known that in molecule–surface collisions, stereodynamical effects connected with the orientation of the angular momentum vector of impinging molecules do play an
important role. The dissociation probability for molecules initially rotating with the angular momentum vector approximately perpendicular and parallel to the surface (respectively referred to as helicopter and cartwheel states) are often quite different (see e.g. ref. 52). Thus, the behavior of \( P_{\text{diss}}(J) \) can be more easily interpreted by analyzing \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J) \) for \( m_J = 0, 1, \ldots, J \). These results are presented in the lower panels of Fig. 5. To guide the eye, we have drawn lines connecting results for the same value of \( m_J \). Thus, for example, the lowest curve corresponds to all cartwheel states \( (m_J = 0 \text{ for } J = 1, 2, \ldots, 12) \). For each value of \( J \) the highest dissociation probability is always for helicopter states \( (m_J = J) \). On one hand, \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = J) \) slightly increases when \( J \) increases and reaches a saturation value close to 1. These large values are easily understood because molecules initially in helicopter states rotates in a plane parallel to the surface \( (\theta = 90^\circ) \) which is particularly favorable for dissociative adsorption. On the other hand, \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0) \) presents a strong non-monotonic (first decreasing and then increasing) \( J \)-dependence that still presents \( P_{\text{diss}}(J) \) after averaging over \( m_J \). This is valid in particular for \( E_i = 50 \text{ meV} \) but for higher energies (e.g. \( E_i = 200 \text{ meV} \)), \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = J) \) barely depends on \( J \).

From the previous discussion it is clear that, in order to understand the behavior of \( P_{\text{diss}}(J) \), it is important to elucidate the origin of the \( J \)-dependence of \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0) \) (cartwheel states). This analysis is simplified by the fact that reflection is a direct process that takes place relatively far from the surface (between \( Z \sim 1.5 \text{ Å} \) and \( 2.3 \text{ Å} \)) and without involving significant variations of the \( r \) coordinate with respect to its initial value \( (\text{i.e. } r \approx 0.75 \text{ Å}) \). Thus, on a given surface site the dynamics of cartwheel molecules can be approximately considered as taking place in a 2D(\( Z,\theta \))-potential. Using this model the initial decrease of \( P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0) \) when \( J \) increases can be interpreted in terms of a shadowing effect schematically depicted in Fig. 6a. Within such a 2D(\( Z,\theta \)) cut of the full dimensional PES, it is observed that when a molecule approaches the surface with a perpendicular orientation \( (\theta = 0^\circ \text{ or } \theta = 180^\circ) \) the PES quickly becomes repulsive, whereas for parallel configurations \( (\theta \sim 90^\circ) \) a closer approach is possible (Fig. 6a).

For molecules rotating in a cartwheel state \( (m_J = 0) \), an increase of \( J \) entails an increase of \( p_y \). Thus, for a given (low) value of \( E_i \), when \( J \) increases the trajectories approach a condition of grazing incidence which favors reflection into the most repulsive part of the PES for perpendicular
configurations (lower panel of Fig. 6a). In contrast, for lower values of $J$ the incidence condition allows a larger fraction of trajectories to approach the surface with a more convenient orientation for dissociation (upper panel of Fig. 6a). It must be kept in mind that this simplified model based on straight line trajectories is justified here because we are interested in direct adsorption and reflection mechanisms but would not be suitable to explain rotational effects for reflection of dynamically trapped molecules. Furthermore, it should be noted that the described mechanism is equivalent to the one invoked in order to explain the dependence of the sticking probability on the angle of incidence at energetically corrugated surfaces, i.e., surfaces where the barrier height varies laterally across the surface unit cell.\textsuperscript{54,55}

Concerning the increase of $P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0)$ for larger values of $J$ (e.g. $J \geq 7$), our results show that it is due to an adiabatic energy transfer from rotation to perpendicular motion ($T_{\text{rot}} \rightarrow T_Z$) which provokes an additional acceleration of impinging molecules towards the surface favoring dissociative adsorption. Since $T_{\text{rot}} = L^2/2I = J(J + 1)/2I$, with $I$ being the moment of inertia of the molecule, when a molecule approaches the surface the interatomic bond length $r$ and $I$ slightly increase. In addition, our results show that in the entrance channel rotation is adiabatic (i.e. $L^2$ remains constant). Therefore, the small increase of $I$ entails a decrease of $T_{\text{rot}}$ (approximately proportional to $J(J + 1)$) and this rotational energy lost goes to perpendicular motion. This is clearly shown by Fig. 6b where we have plotted the mean kinetic energy perpendicular to the surface as a function of $J$, $T_Z(J)$, when molecules reach $Z = 3$ Å (upper panel) and $Z = 2.3$ Å (lower panel). Clearly, the increase of $T_Z(J)$ when $J$ increases is proportional to $J(J + 1)$.

Therefore, for low values of $J$, a shadowing effect prevails producing the decrease of $P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0)$ but for larger values of $J$, the $T_{\text{rot}} \rightarrow T_Z$ energy transfer that favors dissociation overcompensate the effect of shadowing described in Fig. 6a and $P_{\text{diss}}(J,m_J = 0)$ increases when $J$ increases.

It is interesting to note that the $T_{\text{rot}} \rightarrow T_Z$ energy transfer in the entrance channel is more significant for cartwheel than for helicopter states (see Fig. 6b). To understand the origin of this, we have computed the mean value of the variation of $r$ coordinate, ($\Delta r$) separately for molecules rotating in cartwheel and helicopter fashion. We have found that in the former case $\Delta r$ is larger than in the latter one. This explains the more efficient $T_{\text{rot}} \rightarrow T_Z$ energy transfer observed for cartwheel states. Still, why $\Delta r$ is larger for molecules in a cartwheel state is, at first sight, not obvious. In fact it is so because in the entrance channel (above $Z = 2.5$ Å), the energetically optimum value of $r$ for perpendicular configurations is slightly larger than for parallel configurations (see Fig. 7). Thus, molecules rotating in a cartwheel fashion in the entrance channel, visit more frequently perpendicular configurations and undergo (in average) an increase of the $r$ coordinate slightly larger than molecules in helicopter states.

It is worth to mention that the same rotational effects are also obtained in QC calculations. Still, the difference between $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{QC}}(J,m_J = 0)$ and $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{QC}}(J,m_J = J)$ (cartwheel and helicopter states, respectively) is smaller than for the C results of Fig. 5 which entails a slightly weaker $J$-dependence of $P_{\text{diss}}^{\text{QC}}$.

To summarize, our analysis shows that the non-monotonic behavior of $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ (averaged over $m_J$) is essentially determined by the dynamics of molecules initially rotating in cartwheel-like states, with the initial decrease due to shadowing effects and the increase above $J \sim 7$ due to the $T_{\text{rot}} \rightarrow T_Z$ energy transfer.
adiabatic energy transfer. This conclusion agrees very well with those obtained in previous studies for dissociation of H$_2$ on Pd$^{13,15,56}$ and other metal surfaces.$^{27}$

Before concluding the analysis of rotational effects it is interesting to evaluate the quadrupole alignment parameter $A_0^{(2)} (J)$ which provides a quantitative measure of the relative sticking probability for different $m_J$ states for a given value of $J$. Moreover, $A_0^{(2)}(J)$ has been measured for H$_2$ molecules recombiningly desorbing from Pd(100)$^{7–9}$ and other surfaces.$^{52}$ Given that recombiningly desorbing corresponds to configurations in the entrance channel is relatively small ($\theta = 0^\circ$), dashed lines: configurations parallel to the surface ($\theta = 90^\circ$).

results$^7$ and previous high-dimensional quantum calculations.$^{10}$

2. $J = 0$. We have found that the adsorption dynamics of initially non-rotating molecules ($J = 0$) presents some particularities not found for $J \neq 0$. For instance, in contrast with the case of $J \neq 0$, for $J = 0$ $P_{\text{diss}}(E_i)$ presents a non-monotonic behavior. This is partially because, for $J = 0$, dynamic trapping plays a more important role (twice larger at low energies) than for any other value of $J$. In addition, Fig. 5 shows that $P_{\text{diss}}(J = 0) < P_{\text{diss}}(J = 1)$, in contrast with the decreasing behavior of $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ with increasing $J$ (for small values of $J$) at low energies.

To investigate the origin of this particular behavior of $P_{\text{diss}}(J = 0)$, we have computed the distribution of the polar angle $\theta$ for molecules with $J = 0, 1$ and 4 when they approach the surface in the entrance channel. These results are compared with the initial random distribution of $\theta$ at $Z = 5$ Å in Fig. 9. Our results show that for initially non-rotating molecules, there is a strong change of the $\theta$-distribution (with respect to the initial one) in favor of perpendicular configurations ($\theta \sim 0^\circ$ or $180^\circ$). This effect is still present but more moderated already for $J = 1$ and is completely absent for $J = 4$. This strong reorientation of initially non-rotating molecules is certainly due to the fact that, in the entrance channel, the perpendicular orientation is the energetically most favorable one throughout the surface unit cell (see e.g. Fig. 7). Still, since the energy difference between perpendicular and parallel configurations in the entrance channel is relatively small ($\sim 20$ meV at $Z = 2.75$ Å) this only affects significantly those molecules with very low initial values of $p_0$ and in particular,

$\theta = 0^\circ$. Full lines: configurations perpendicular to the surface ($\theta = 0^\circ$), dashed lines: configurations parallel to the surface ($\theta = 90^\circ$).
initially non rotating molecules. It is interesting to note that
this strong reorientation of molecules in the entrance channel
is also connected with relative contributions of the direct and
dynamic trapping dissociation mechanisms for $J = 0$. On one
hand, the reorientation of a large molecular fraction in the
entrance channel towards perpendicular configurations re-
duces direct dissociation, because molecules cannot dissociate
in such a configuration.

On the other hand, this stronger molecular reorientation for
$J = 0$ in the entrance channel also entails an increase of
rotational energy corresponding to a $T_{	ext{rot}} \rightarrow T_{\text{rot}}$ transfer which
provides the increase of dynamic trapping mediated dissociation
at very low energies.

This is because it is unlikely that, after acquiring some
rotational energy, the molecules could later transfer all this
rotational energy back to perpendicular motion as required to
escape to the vacuum. Thus, in the presence of non-activated
pathways to dissociation, most of these dynamically trapped
molecules finally dissociate.

IV. Conclusions

We have studied H$_2$ dissociative adsorption on Pd(100) from
classical molecular dynamics (MD) calculations using density
functional theory to describe the molecule–surface interaction
potential. We have first compared dissociative adsorption prob-
abilities, $P_{\text{diss}}$, obtained using two different methods: (i)
the so-called ab initio molecular dynamics (AIMD), in which
the forces acting on the molecular and surface atoms are
evaluated directly using DFT every time step; and (ii) MD
calculations that make use of a potential energy surface (PES)
obtained first by interpolation of a set of ~6000 DFT total
energy results using the corrugation reducing procedure,
referred to as CRP-PES-MD. For molecules impinging at
normal incidence for initial rotational states from $J = 0$ up
to $J = 4$ and for various impinging energies $0 \leq E_i \leq 200$
meV, both MD calculations predict the same $E_i$- and $J$-
dependence of $P_{\text{diss}}$, indicating that the interpolated CRP-
PES-MD reproduces the underlying ab initio PES rather well.
Thus, the computationally cheaper MD method, i.e. the CRP-
PES-MD was used for a detailed investigation of the adsorp-
tion dynamics. For $J = 0$, we obtain a non-monotonic $E_i$-
dependence of $P_{\text{diss}}$ due to an initial decreasing contribution of
dynamic trapping and an increasing contribution of direct
dissociation. For $J \neq 0$, dynamic trapping plays a minor role
(independently of the value of $J$) and $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ presents a non-
monotonic dependence at low energies whereas it barely
depends on $J$ for $E_i \gtrsim 200$ meV.

We conclude that the decrease of $P_{\text{diss}}(J)$ for low values of $J$
(below $J \sim 6$), is mainly due to a shadowing effect that entails
a higher probability of encountering repulsive parts of the PES
(for perpendicular configurations relatively close to the sur-
face) for molecules rotating in a cartwheel fashion. For larger
values of $J$, an efficient adiabatic energy transfer from rotation
to perpendicular motion accelerates the molecules towards the
surface enhancing $P_{\text{diss}}$ as suggested based on low-dimen-
sional simulations using a model PES. Our analysis shows that
the combination of these two effects would also provoke (if
detailed balancing holds) a non-monotonic $J$-dependence of
the quadrupole alignment parameter, $A_{\text{F2}}(J)$, for molecules
desorbing from Pd(100) with low translational kinetic energy.

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