Mechanistic Insights into Oxidative Decomposition of *exo*-Tetrahydrodicyclopentadiene

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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: We investigated the decomposition of *exo*-tetrahydrodicyclopentadiene (*exo*-THDCP, $C_{10}H_{16}$) in the absence and presence of O_2 at various temperatures. It was found that conversion of *exo*-THDCP was faster in the presence of O_2 as compared to in its absence. The O_2 -induced increase in the conversion of *exo*-THDCP was hardly affected by variations in temperature. In addition, the O_2 -induced increase in the rate of C_{10} product formation was higher than those of $< C_{10}$ and $> C_{10}$. We proposed the mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP, which occurs independently of its thermal decomposition and induces distinct product formation near and below its thermal decomposition starting temperature.



1. INTRODUCTION

Fuel is a primary coolant for the hydraulics, control systems, and engines in aircraft.¹⁻⁴ When fuel is subjected to high temperatures, it undergoes thermal and oxidative decomposition to form gum and coke, which cause many problems such as fouling and plugging. Thermal and oxidative decomposition of fuel need to be lowered for the proper functioning of the engine and subsystem.

exo-Tetrahydrodicyclopentadiene (*exo*-THDCP, $C_{10}H_{16}$) is a synthetic liquid fuel with a multicyclic structure.^{5–28} *exo*-THDCP has attracted significant attention due to its high energy density, which is greater than those of conventional kerosene-based fuels and renders it suitable for use in volume-limited aircraft.

Several studies on the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP using experimental and computational methods have been reported.^{15,20,21,23,24} Formation of hydroperoxide upon oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP was observed by ultraviolet–visible spectroscopy.¹⁵ The energies of radicals formed upon H abstraction of *exo*-THDCP were calculated using computational methods, and its oxidative decomposition products were predicted..^{20,21,23,24} However, a mechanistic study on the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP in the liquid phase below its thermal decomposition starting temperature has not been conducted yet.

Here, we report the study on the decomposition of *exo*-THDCP in the absence and presence of O_2 at various temperatures. It was found that the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP occurred independently of its thermal decomposition. We proposed the mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP, which explains distinct product

formation thereupon near and below its thermal decomposition starting temperature.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

2.1. Experimental Methods. Decomposition of *exo*-THDCP (100 mL) in the absence and presence of O_2 at various temperatures was carried out in a batch reactor (160 mL) as reported previously.²⁶ A quartz flask was inserted inside a stainless steel reactor, and a quartz plate was placed on the inside of the stainless steel reactor cover. Quartz was used to block any possible catalytic role of stainless steel or other metals. The pressure inside the reactor was set at 40 bar of N_2 or air, which is higher than the critical pressure (38 bar) of *exo*-THDCP.¹¹

Hydrocarbon compounds and the hydrogen molecule were analyzed on gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS, Agilent 7890A, 5975C), GC-flame ionization detection (GC-FID, Agilent 7890A), and GC-thermal conductivity detection (GC-TCD, Agilent 7890A) systems as reported previously.²⁶

Conversion of *exo*-THDCP and the composition of the product were measured as reported previously.²⁶ Conversion of *exo*-THDCP is defined as

conversion of *exo*-THDCP (%) =
$$\frac{C_0 - C_t}{C_0} \times 100$$

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where C_0 and C_t are the concentrations (wt %) of *exo*-THDCP at the initial and indicated times, respectively. C_t was determined by GC analysis as described above. The composition of the product is defined as the ratio (wt %/wt %) of C_n to all compounds, where C_n indicates all compounds with *n* number of carbons, unless otherwise noted. Standard deviations of product compositions were smaller than 0.01%.²⁶

2.2. Molecular and Quantum Mechanics Calculations. The geometry optimized structures and energies of *exo*-THDCP and its oxidatively decomposed intermediates and products were calculated using the molecular mechanics (MM3), parameterized model (PM3), and Austin model (AM1) methods in the MOPAC program (Fujitsu CAChe 7.7).^{29–33} The geometry optimized structures thus obtained were then employed to calculate the energy changes for bond breaking and forming processes. Such energy changes were used to determine the possible reaction pathways as reported previously.²⁸

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Oxidative Decomposition of exo-THDCP. Decomposition of hydrocarbon fuels in the absence and presence of O₂ is affected by temperature and pressure.²⁶ We found that conversion of exo-THDCP and the product composition were hardly affected by variations in the pressure of N_2 (28–40 bar), whereas they were strongly affected by those of O_2 (12–0 bar) at the total pressure of 40 bar and 200-370 °C (data not shown). The ratio of gaseous products such as hydrogen gas, methane, ethane, ethene, propane, propene, and butane to all compounds was ~0.1% regardless of whether O_2 was present or not. Therefore, we analyzed the compositions of liquid products to measure the decomposition of exo-THDCP in the absence and presence of O2 at various temperatures. The reaction pressure was set at 40 bar of N2 or air, which mimics a real system, where fuels are subjected to pressures higher than 35 bar.³

Conversions of *exo*-THDCP in the absence and presence of O_2 at 200–370 °C for 7.5 h are shown in Figure 1. At 200–350



Figure 1. Conversions of exo-THDCP at 200–370 $^\circ C$ and 40 bar of air or N_2 for 7.5 h.

°C, conversions of *exo*-THDCP were 0.0% in the absence of O_2 , whereas they reached 3.8% within 1 h, which lasted until the end of the reaction in the presence of O_2 . At 370 °C, conversion of *exo*-THDCP steadily increased to 2.2% over 7.5 h in the absence of O_2 , whereas it reached 3.8% within 1 h and steadily increased to 6.3% over 7.5 h in the presence of O_2 . Thus, at 200–370 °C, conversion of *exo*-THDCP was faster in

the presence of O_2 compared to in its absence. Conversion of *exo*-THDCP in the presence of O_2 at 370 °C appeared to be the simple sum of its conversions in the presence of O_2 at 200–350 °C and in the absence of O_2 at 370 °C. Note that the O_2 -induced increases in the conversion of *exo*-THDCP were nearly identical at 200–350 °C. Thus, the O_2 -induced increase in the conversion of *exo*-THDCP was hardly affected by variations in temperature (200–370 °C). Unlike the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP, however, its thermal decomposition was faster at the higher temperature (see Figure 1, magenta and yellow).

Compositions of products formed from exo-THDCP in the absence and presence of O_2 at 200–370 °C for 7.5 h are shown in Figure 2 and Table 1. At 200-350 °C, where products were not formed from *exo*-THDCP in the absence of O_2 most of the products formed in the presence of O_2 were C_{10} compounds (Figure 2a-d). At 200 and 250 °C, the order of the product formation rate in the presence of O_2 was 4 > 10 > 2 > 9 > 6 > 3> 5 > 7. Their ratios to all compounds reached 1.44%, 0.69%, 0.49%, 0.45%, 0.24%, 0.17%, 0.10%, and 0.00% at 200 °C, and 1.35%, 0.69%, 0.51%, 0.45%, 0.24%, 0.18%, 0.10%, and 0.00% at 250 °C, respectively, within 1 h, which lasted until the end of the reaction, during which conversion of exo-THDCP was not changed. At 300 and 350 °C, the order of the product formation rate in the presence of O_2 was 4 > 10 > 2 > 9 > 6 > 8> 3 > 5 > 7. Their ratios to all compounds reached 1.23%, 0.82%, 0.43%, 0.39%, 0.23%, 0.16%, 0.15%, 0.11%, and 0.10% at 300 °C, and 1.17%, 0.83%, 0.44%, 0.38%, 0.22%, 0.25%, 0.14%, 0.12%, and 0.10% at 350 °C, respectively, within 1 h, which lasted until the end of the reaction except for 4, 2, and 8. After 1 h, the ratios of 4 and 2 to all compounds gradually decreased, whereas that of 8 concomitantly increased while conversion of exo-THDCP was not changed. It seems that products 4 and 2 are further converted into 8. At 370 °C, most of the products formed in both the absence and presence of O_2 were C_{10} compounds, although the products were somewhat different depending on whether O_2 was present or not (Figure 2e and f). At 370 °C, the order of the product formation rate in the presence of O_2 was $4 > 10 > 2 > 9 > 8 > 6 > 3 > 5 > 7 \gg 12 >$ 11 > 13 > 14 > 15 > 17 > 16. At 370 °C, the order of the product formation rate in the absence of O_2 was 12 > 11 > 13 >15 > 17 > 14 > 16. Thus, the products from *exo*-THDCP in the presence of O₂ at 370 °C appeared to be the simple sum of those in the presence of O_2 at 200–350 °C and in the absence of O₂ at 370 °C. It seems that the products from exo-THDCP in the presence of O_2 at 370 °C are composed of the oxidative (2-10) and thermal (11-17) decomposition products, which are formed from exo-THDCP independently of each other. The ratios of oxidative decomposition products 4, 10, 2, 9, 8, 6, 3, 5, and 7 to all compounds reached 1.31%, 1.03%, 0.48%, 0.40%, 0.34%, 0.23%, 0.14%, 0.13%, and 0.10%, respectively, within 1 h at 370 °C, which lasted until the end of the reaction except for 4, 2, and 8. After 1 h, the ratios of 4 and 2 to all compounds gradually decreased, whereas that of 8 concomitantly increased while conversion of exo-THDCP was not changed. It seems that products 4 and 2 are further converted into 8. The ratios of thermal decomposition products 12, 11, 13-15, 17, and 16 to all compounds almost linearly increased until 7.5 h regardless of whether O2 was present or not at 370 °C. Their ratios to all compounds in the presence (absence) of O_2 were 0.02%, 0.02%, 0.02%, 0.02%, 0.02%, 0.01%, and 0.00% (0.06%, 0.05%, 0.03%, 0.01%, 0.03%, 0.02%, and 0.00%) for 1 h, and 0.21%, 0.20%, 0.06%, 0.05%, 0.06%, 0.10%, and 0.01% (0.20%, 0.18%,



Figure 2. Compositions of products formed upon decomposition of *exo*-THDCP at 200–370 °C and 40 bar of air or N₂ for 7.5 h. See Table 1 for the names, structures, and formulas of products 2-17. See also Figure S1 and Tables S1–S3 of the Supporting Information. Oxidative (2-10) and thermal (11-17) decomposition products (see the detailed discussion in 3.1) are indicated by solid and open circles, respectively.

0.10%, 0.03%, 0.07%, 0.10%, and 0.03%) for 7.5 h, respectively, at 370 °C. Note that at 200–370 °C, most of the oxidative decomposition products from *exo*-THDCP were C_{10} compounds. Thus, the O₂-induced increase in the rate of C_{10} product formation was higher than those of $<C_{10}$ and $>C_{10}$.

3.2. Mechanistic Insights into Oxidative Decomposition of *exo*-THDCP. We can summarize the key experimental results on compositions of products formed from *exo*-THDCP in the presence of O_2 as follows:

- (i) Most of the oxidative decomposition products 2–10 from *exo*-THDCP were C₁₀ compounds, which were formed independently of its thermal decomposition products 11–17.
- (ii) The ratios of products 4 and 2 to all compounds gradually decreased, whereas that of 8 concomitantly increased while conversion of *exo*-THDCP was not changed.

The proposed mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP is illustrated in Figure 3, which explains the experimental results (i) and (ii). *exo*-THDCP 1 is converted to products 2-7 via H abstraction, and products 2 and 4 are then converted to product 8 via dehydration. *exo*-THDCP 1 is also converted to product 9 via H abstraction and C-C cleavage, and product 9 is then converted to product 10 via radical rearrangement and C-C cleavage.¹⁸

Our proposed mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of exo-THDCP (RH₂) can be summarized as follows: $^{\rm 18,34-39}$

$$RH_2 + O_2 \rightarrow RH^{\bullet} + HOO^{\bullet} \tag{1}$$

$$RH \cdot + O_2 \to RHOO \cdot$$
 (2)

 $RHOO + RH_2 \rightarrow RHOOH + RH +$ (3)(4) $RHOOH \rightarrow RHO \cdot + \cdot OH$ $RHO + RH_2 \rightarrow RHOH + RH +$ (5)(6) $RHO + RHOOH \rightarrow RHOH + RHOO +$ (7) $RHO + RHOO \rightarrow RO + RHOOH$ $RHO \cdot + \cdot OH \rightarrow RO + H_2O$ (8) $RHOH \rightarrow RH \cdot + \cdot OH$ (9) $RH \cdot + \cdot OH \rightarrow R + H_2O$ (10) $RH \cdot \rightarrow R'H \cdot$ (11) $R'H \cdot + O_2 \rightarrow R'HOO \cdot$ (12) $R'HOO + RH_2 \rightarrow R'HOOH + RH$ (13) $R'HOOH \rightarrow R'HO \cdot + \cdot OH$ (14) $R'HO + R'HOO \rightarrow R'O + R'HOOH$ (15) $R'HO \cdot + \cdot OH \rightarrow R'O + H_2O$ (16)

$$R'O \to R'' \tag{17}$$

Radical (RH•, RHOO•, RHO•, R'H•, R'HOO•, and R'HO•) and hydroperoxide (RHOOH and R'HOOH) formation steps 1–7 and 11–15 involve H abstraction and radical rearrangement, whereas radical termination (product (RHOH, RO, R, R'O, and R") formation) steps 5–8, 10, and 15–17 involve H addition and H abstraction. RH₂ (*exo*-THDCP 1) is oxidized in step 1, and then converted to RHOH (2, 4, and 6) in steps 5

Table 1. Products Formed upon Decomposition	f exo-THDCP in the A	Absence and Presence of	O ₂ at 370 °C"
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entry	name and abbreviation	structure	formula
1	exo-THDCP		$C_{10}H_{16}$
2	THDCP-1-ol		C ₁₀ H ₁₆ O
3	THDCP-1-one		$C_{10}H_{14}O$
4	THDCP-2-ol	строн 4	$C_{10}H_{16}O$
5	THDCP-2-one	5 5	$C_{10}H_{14}O$
6	THDCP-5-ol	HO	$C_{10}H_{16}O$
7	THDCP-5-one	7	$C_{10}H_{14}O$
8	THDCP-1-ene	8	$C_{10}H_{14}$
9	2-cyclopentylcyclopentanone (2-CPCPone)		$C_{10}H_{16}O$
10	<i>trans</i> -1-butenylcyclopentane (1-BCP)	10	$C_{9}H_{16}$
11	4-methyl-2,3,4,5,6,7-hexahydro-1H-indene (4-MHI)	11	$C_{10}H_{16}$
12	1-cyclopentylcyclopentene (1-CPCP)		$C_{10}H_{16}$
13	cyclopentylcyclopentane (CPCP)		$C_{10}H_{18}$
14	bicyclopentylidene (BCPI)	14	$C_{10}H_{16}$
15	2,3-dihydro-1-methyl-1H-indene (DMI)	15	$C_{10}H_{12}$
16	cyclopentane	16	$C_{5}H_{10}$
17	cyclopentene	۲ <u>ــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــــ</u>	C_5H_8

^{*a*}Products from *exo*-THDCP 1 can be classified into oxidative (2–10) and thermal (11–17) decomposition products as discussed in Section 3.1. Gaseous products H_2 and C_{1-4} and unidentified products were omitted.

and 6, RO (3, 5, and 7) in steps 7 and 8, R (8) in step 10, R'O (9) in steps 15 and 16, and R" (10) in step 17. Note that H abstraction is the major reaction step in the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP. H abstraction is also known to be important in the oxidative decomposition of hydrocarbons.²⁰ To investigate the differences in the product formation kinetics, we carried out molecular and quantum mechanics calculations for intermediates and products formed from *exo*-THDCP.

The relative energies of radicals formed upon H abstraction of *exo*-THDCP are shown in Figure 4. The energies of radicals R1, R2, R5, and R8 (Rn is denoted for THDCP-Rn in Figure 4) calculated using MM3, PM3, and AM1 in this work were in

good agreement with those calculated using density functional theory (DFT) and ReaxFF in refs 20 and 21. The average energies of *exo*-THDCP, R1, R2, R3a, R4, R5, and R8 for six calculations were 0.0, 19.1, 19.3, 23.1, 31.3, 21.2, and 25.7 kcal/ mol, respectively. Thus, the order of the radical energies were R1 \approx R2 < R5 < R8 < R4. Note that the order of the product formation rate was 2-ol 4 > 1-ol 2 > 5-ol 6 > 1-one 3 > 2-one 5 > 5-one 7 (see Figure 2; *n*-ol and *n*-one are denoted for THDCP-*n*-ol and THDCP-*n*-one in Table 1, respectively). In addition, 8-ol, 4-ol, 8-one, and 4-one were not detected at all. Both *n*-ol and *n*-one products are formed from the same corresponding R*n* radical upon oxidative decomposition (see



Figure 3. Proposed mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP at 200–370 °C. *exo*-THDCP 1 (RH₂) is converted to intermediates and then products 2-10. See the detailed discussion in Section 3.2. RH•, RHOO•, RHOOH, and RHO• are assumed intermediates.^{18,34–39} Oxygen molecule (O₂), water (H₂O), hydroperoxy radical (HOO•), and hydroxyl radical (HO•) described in Section 3.2 are omitted to simplify the mechanism and thereby to clearly show radicals and products formed from *exo*-THDCP. For conversions of radical R1 into R3a (R*n* is denoted for THDCP-R*n* in Figure 4), and product 9 into 10 (probably in several steps), see refs 26 and 18, respectively. Such conversions explain the faster formation of 10 compared to 2 (see Figure 2) despite the higher energy of R3a compared to R2 (see Figure 4). For the formation of the diradical from R3a (or 1), see ref 26.



Figure 4. Relative energies of radicals formed upon H abstraction of *exo*-THDCP. Here, Rn is denoted for THDCP-Rn, which is the radical formed from *exo*-THDCP upon H abstraction at its Cn site (see right top). The energies of radicals Rn were calculated using MM3, PM3, and AM1 methods as described in Section 2.2. For DFT and ReaxFF data, see refs 20 (blue and cyan) and 21 (magenta).

Figure 3). Thus, the formation of product from a radical with lower energy appears to be faster than that with higher energy.

The relative energies of *exo*-THDCP and its possible oxidative decomposition products are shown in Figure 5. The energies of *exo*-THDCP and its products *n*-ol, *n*-one, and *n*-ene calculated using PM3 were similar to those calculated using AM1. The average energies of *exo*-THDCP, 1-ol, 1-one, 2-ol, 2-one, 3a-ol, 4-ol, 5-ol, 5-one, 8-ol, 8-one, and 1-ene for two calculations were 0.0, -40.0, -28.1, -42.0, -29.0, -41.0, -41.5, -41.9, -26.8, -43.7, 9.4, and 29.8 kcal/mol, respectively. Thus, the average energies of *n*-ol were lower



Figure 5. Relative energies of *exo*-THDCP and its possible oxidative decomposition products. Here, *n*-ol, *n*-one, and *n*-ene are denoted for THDCP-*n*-ol, *-n*-one, and *-n*-ene in Table 1, respectively. Note that 1-ol **2**, 1-one **3**, 2-ol **4**, 2-one **5**, 5-ol **6**, 5-one **7**, and 1-ene **8** were detected products (see Figure 2 and Table 1), whereas 3a-ol, 4-ol, 8-ol, and 8-one were undetected products. The energies of *exo*-THDCP **1** and its products *n*-ol, *n*-one, and *n*-ene were calculated using PM3 and AM1 methods as described in Section 2.2.

than those of *n*-one. In addition, the average energies of 1-ene and 8-one were quite higher than those of the other products. Note that the formation rate of *n*-ol was faster than that of *n*-one (see Figure 2). In addition, 1-ene was formed only at 300 °C or above and 8-one was not detected at $200-370^{\circ}$. Thus, the formation of a product with lower energy appears to be faster than that with higher energy.

4. CONCLUSION

We investigated the decomposition of *exo*-THDCP in the absence and presence of O_2 at various temperatures. It was found that the oxidative decomposition of *exo*-THDCP occurred independently of its thermal decomposition. We proposed the mechanism for the oxidative decomposition of

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exo-THDCP, which explains distinct product formation thereupon near and below its thermal decomposition starting temperature. Our proposed mechanism provides a mechanistic framework for further studying the decomposition of *exo*-THDCP in the presence of O_2 at higher temperatures and the role of H donors in lowering its thermal and oxidative decomposition.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

Figure and tables showing compositions of products and their comparison obtained upon decomposition of *exo*-THDCP in the absence and presence of O_2 at 350 and 370 °C. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http:// pubs.acs.org.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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