

Impact of carbon dioxide and nitrogen addition on the global structure of hydrogen flames

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Abstract

Investigations into the combustion characteristics and flame structure of hydrogen/carbon dioxide/air flames have been carried out experimentally and numerically. The aim was to determine the variations of the combustion properties and flame shape for different carbon dioxide dilutions in the H₂-air mixtures. For this purpose, premixed flames at various compositions of hydrogen-carbon dioxide mixtures are investigated experimentally in a heat flux burner configuration at varying equivalence ratios from 0.5 to 1.1, fresh gas temperatures and under atmospheric conditions. Optical investigations are performed to detect the number of cellular structures on the flame front. Furthermore, the laminar burning velocity and the influence of carbon dioxide addition were examined numerically. A detailed kinetic mechanism was implemented for the identification of the most representative intermediates via a reaction path analysis, and the most influential species and reactions are identified through sensitivity analyses at conditions relevant to the studied application. Considering the nature of the adopted mechanism, the presence of CO₂ has the potential to shift the production/consumption rate of some hydrogen-containing radicals. Hence, numerical investigations employing an inert species having the same thermodynamic and transport properties as CO₂ (referred to as fictitious CO₂, FCO₂) were compared and discussed in

30 this work. To investigate the effect of CO₂ on the dynamics of the hydrogen flames, one-dimensional
31 and two-dimensional detailed simulations of the flame structure have been carried out. The addition of
32 CO₂ makes the flame more prone to thermo-diffusive instabilities through a decrease in the mixture's
33 thermal diffusivity. This results in a decrease of the Markstein number and an enhanced formation of
34 characteristic cellular structures on spherically expanding flames. Overall, the comparison between the
35 experimental and numerical investigations reveals similar conclusions.

36

37 Keywords: hydrogen admixtures, flame structure, CO₂, cellular structures

38

39 **Introduction**

40 To reduce CO₂ emissions, fossil fuels, such as natural gas, have to be replaced in the gas supply
41 system by non-fossil energy carriers, such as hydrogen produced preferably from renewable sources.
42 In this context, carbon oxides as by-products from hydrogen manufacturing are an increasingly important
43 issue in the utilization of lower grade hydrogen. Technologies needed for the industrial utilization of
44 hydrogen, e.g. safe transport and optimised combustion, are under rapid development or in the
45 prototype stadium. Numerous industrial thermo-processes could run on gaseous mixtures rich in H₂ and
46 CO₂, including hydrogen from biomass conversion, plastic waste treatment, thermal processes, steam
47 reforming, and gasification processes [1]. Undoubtedly, new technologies based on H₂ for providing of
48 energy (e.g., integrated gasification combined cycle or gas turbines) have been considerably improved
49 in the last decades for reduction of air pollution. Commonly, a large variety of processed materials or
50 operating conditions can be applied for these processes. For example, steam reforming and gasification
51 can implement different charges (e.g., methane, naphtha, or coal) and have several target products
52 (e.g., hydrogen, methanol, or ammonia), resulting in considerably different compositions of the product
53 stream from the reactor (see Table 1, adapted from [2,3]).

54 These product streams usually are treated via several conversion and separation processes aiming
55 at the reduction of impurities (e.g., sulphur-based species) and undesired by-products. Considering that
56 95 % of H₂ is produced via steam reforming worldwide [1], particular attention is paid to the conversion
57 of CO when H₂ is manufactured for providing of energy. In this case, shift reactors are commonly
58 integrated into the process to convert CO (Equation 1), with obvious implications on the H₂ to CO₂

59 volume ratio. Based on data reported in refs [1-4] for the ratio of H₂/CO for gasification processes, a
 60 proper amount of steam must be provided.

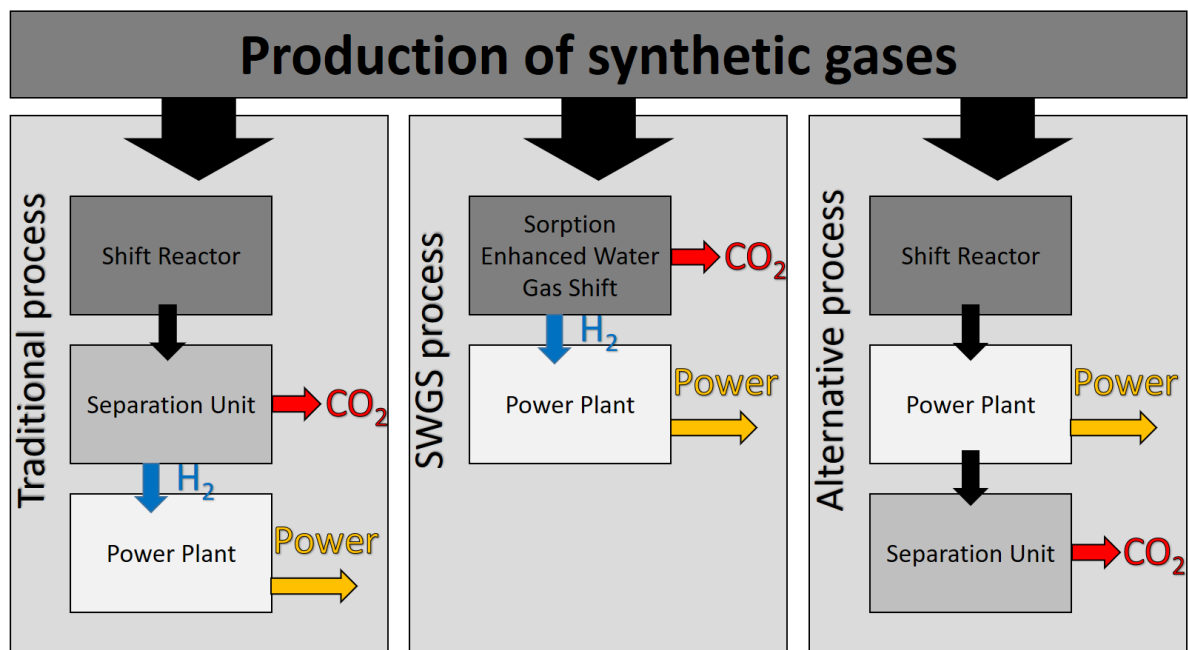


62
 63 **Table 1** Typical composition of products gases from industrial processes delivering gaseous
 64 mixtures rich in H₂ and CO₂. Adapted from [2,3]

Process	H ₂	CO	CO ₂	CH ₄	H ₂ O	H ₂ /CO ₂	C/H
SR (Methane)	48.6	9.2	5.2	5.2	31.8	9,35	0.12
SR (Nafta)	34.6	5.3	8.0	8.0	44.1	4.33	0.14
MBG (Coal)	52.2	29.5	5.6	4.4	5.1	9.32	0.34
FBG (Coal)	27.7	54.6	4.7	5.8	4.4	5.89	1.01
EFG (Goal)	26.7	63.1	1.5	0.03	2.0	17.80	1.13

65 SR = Stream reforming, MBG = Moving Bed Gasifier, FBG = Fluidized Bed Gasifier, EFG = Entrained Flow Gasifier

66
 67 Traditionally, a separation unit is employed to produce the H₂-rich stream for power generation and CO₂
 68 for carbon sequestration. More recently, investigations have suggested the re-use of sequestered CO₂
 69 as fracking agent [4]. Alternatively, the integration of water gas shift reactors and separation in a single
 70 unit has been intensively studied and referred to as sorption enhanced water gas shift (SEWGS) [5,6].
 71 Dealing with highly pure H₂ streams raises concerns of safety during storage and transportation [7], and
 72 poses new challenges for environmental and technological aspects during combustion [8], e.g.
 73 production of pollutants such as NO_x [9]. On the other hand, the presence of CO₂ in the streams resulting
 74 from shift reactors offers alternative technological solutions utilizing its effects as a thermal diluent.
 75 Indeed, the use of CO₂ has been recently considered within the energy supply chain either as a service
 76 fluid for indirect heat transfer or as a component in the combustion chamber for direct heat transfer [10].
 77 The latter approach includes the Allam's Cycle [11] and it can be seen as an integrated strategy to
 78 recycle CO₂ from the carbon capture units, reducing the technical requirements. However, if traditional
 79 carbon-based fuels are considered, the presence of CO₂ alters the chemical equilibrium. With these
 80 premises, direct combustion of H₂-CO₂ followed by carbon sequestration may be considered as a
 81 possible alternative, see Figure 1.



82 **Figure 1** Schematic representation of synthetic gas-based processes

83

84 Quantitative investigations on the chemistry of combustion and flammability limits of H₂/CO₂-
 85 mixtures are missing at present. Indeed, most of the published studies dealing with the combustion
 86 chemistry of binary mixtures of C₀-C₁ species were devoted to the characterization of the interactions
 87 between CO and H₂ [12,13] in the view of synthetic gas utilization, or CH₄ and H₂ [14,15] for the
 88 application of hydrogen enriched methane flames [16]. The chemistry of H₂-CO₂ in complex mixtures
 89 was investigated as per the employment of oxygen-enriched air or pure oxygen [17] or in the case of
 90 biomass-derived fuels [18–21]. For safety relevant aspects, the effects of CO₂ addition on the hydrogen
 91 ignition limits were characterized by Djebaili et al. [22] at high temperatures, revealing the existence of
 92 non-thermal inhibition of the hydrogen oxidation.

93 The laminar burning velocities (LBV) of H₂/CO₂- mixtures were investigated at different temperatures
 94 and mixture compositions. For diluted H₂-air mixtures, planar flames formed in diverging channels could
 95 be used for the measurement. The effect of CO₂ is stronger than that of N₂ in reducing the burning
 96 velocity indicating a thermal and chemical effect of CO₂ dilution [23,24]. However, no apparent influence
 97 on the morphology of the planar flame due to the CO₂ admixture is reported. In other studies with flat
 98 flames, cellular structures were observed in CH₄, C₃H₈ and C₂H₆ flames [25] with high CO₂ dilution. Also,
 99 in flat flames stabilised on a McKenna burner, instabilities were observed in extremely lean CH₄-H₂-CO₂
 100 flames with equivalence ratios of $\phi = 0.55-0.69$. Beyond that, no further studies on instabilities of the

101 flame front due to the admixture of CO₂ are known [26]. The occurrence of cellular instabilities in
102 adiabatic H₂/O₂/N₂ premixed flames anchored to a heat flux burner has been investigated numerically.
103 Both hydrodynamic instabilities and diffusional instabilities leading to the formation of cellular flames
104 were studied [27]. An adiabatic unstretched planar flame anchored to the heat-flux burner could only be
105 realized within a critical lift-off distance. This lift-off distance seems to differ for each mixture. To explain
106 the occurrence of these phenomena in more detail, insights from experimental and numerical
107 investigations are necessary.

108 In this paper, H₂-CO₂-O₂-N₂ flames were investigated numerically to elucidate the effect of CO₂
109 dilution on combustion properties, flame structure and instabilities. The effects of CO₂ dilution on laminar
110 burning velocity and Markstein length are investigated and quantified with 1-D simulation results using
111 different reaction mechanisms. Further, the effects of CO₂-dilution on flame structure were investigated.
112 Significant changes in flame morphology were found in experiments with H₂-CO₂-O₂-N₂ flames stabilized
113 on a heat flux burner. The results were quantified as a function of plate temperature, unburned gas
114 velocity and equivalence ratio. 2-D numerical simulations served to explain the appearance of the
115 formation of cellular structures in the investigated flames.

116

117 **1-D and 2-D Simulations, Numerical Setup and Procedure**

118 Laminar burning velocity is generally considered a stand-alone parameter summarizing the
119 interaction of convection, diffusion and chemical reactions during combustion [28]. In this work, the
120 laminar burning velocity was estimated through the numerical simulation of one-dimensional, freely
121 propagating, and adiabatic flames with the open-source software Cantera [29]. Absolute and relative
122 tolerances for the steady-state problem were set to 1.0·10⁻⁹ and 1.0·10⁻⁴, respectively. Additional
123 information about the numerical setup and adopted procedure can be found elsewhere [30].

124 A detailed kinetic mechanism composed of ~80 species and ~600 reactions, referred to as KiBO
125 (Kinetics in Bologna) was employed because of the verified accuracy in reproducing the combustion
126 chemistry of light species [28]. The initial temperature of T_{gas} = 298 K and atmospheric pressure were
127 considered. Several combustible mixture compositions were tested, varying the equivalence ratio
128 between $\phi = 0.5 - 6.0$ and the H₂/diluent ratio by moles from 1.0 - 6.0. Either CO₂ or N₂ was used as
129 diluent. The same conditions were used for fictitious CO₂ (i.e., FCO₂), as well. FCO₂ is an artificial
130 species with the same thermodynamic and transport properties as CO₂, but not involved in any reaction.

131 A sensitivity analysis is performed by imposing a perturbation equal to 0.1 % of each input parameter
 132 (i.e., the rate constant of the i -th reaction, k_i) and evaluating the effects on the LBV (s_L). Results are
 133 expressed as normalized sensitivity coefficients (NSC), defined in Equation 2,

$$134 \quad NSC = \left(\frac{k_{i,0}}{s_{L,0}} \right) \cdot \frac{\partial s_L}{\partial k_i} \quad (2)$$

135 where the subscript 0 denotes the unperturbed values

136 Reaction path analysis identifies the key intermediates in the reaction path and quantifies the relative
 137 weight of each branch by estimating branching ratios. The relative width of the connection pathway is
 138 related to the relative contribution of the pathway to the species net yield [31]. In this work, a global
 139 pathway selection algorithm is implemented in a zero-dimensional constant volume system to identify
 140 the shortest paths connecting the most relevant species involved in the element flux. A threshold value
 141 of 0.01 is adopted for the selection of species to be included in the analysis. This approach allows for
 142 the generation of overall reaction paths. Hence, results are independent of the time instance, in contrast
 143 to the traditional path flux algorithm. Considering the analysed mixtures, the migration of H is
 144 investigated. Additional details of this methodology can be found in the references [32,33].

145 The effect of carbon dioxide dilution of hydrogen on possible thermo-diffusive instabilities is
 146 numerically investigated using one-dimensional and two-dimensional flames. In this context, the
 147 Markstein number Ma expresses how sensitive the burning velocity s_L , normalized by the flame speed
 148 of an unstretched flame $s_{L,0}$, is to the dimensionless flame stretch or Karlovitz number Ka :

$$149 \quad Ma := - \frac{\partial s_L / s_{L,0}}{\partial Ka} \quad Ka := \frac{1}{A} \frac{dA}{dt} \frac{d_{fL,0}}{s_{L,0}} \quad (3)$$

150 where $d_{fL,0}$ is the thermal thickness of the unstretched flame front. A negative Markstein number is
 151 generally indicative of thermo-diffusively unstable flames. To quantify the Markstein number of hydrogen
 152 flames with different fuel dilutions, numerical simulations of counterflow-twin flames are performed with
 153 the open-source library Cantera [29]. In this axisymmetric setup, two opposed nozzles in 5 cm distance
 154 serve as inlets of the premixed hydrogen-diluent-air mixture at atmospheric conditions with a prescribed
 155 velocity. The oxidizer is air and the fuel is a mixture of hydrogen and the diluent. In all cases, the
 156 equivalence ratio is $\phi = 0.9$. The diffusion model is the mixture-averaged model applying the
 157 Hirschfelder-Curtiss approximation, thereby taking preferential diffusion into account.

158 Lastly, a detailed 2-D simulation of spherically expanding flames is conducted to study the
 159 evolution of cellular structures on the thermo-diffusively unstable flame during flame propagation.

160

161 **Numerical results**

162 **Laminar Burning Velocity, Non-Stretched Flames**

163 The effects of the CO₂ share in the unburnt mixture on the laminar burning velocity estimated at
164 T_{gas} = 298 K and p_{gas} = 1 bar are reported in Figure 2 in dependence on the equivalence ratio. The case
165 where N₂ was added to H₂ is included for comparison.

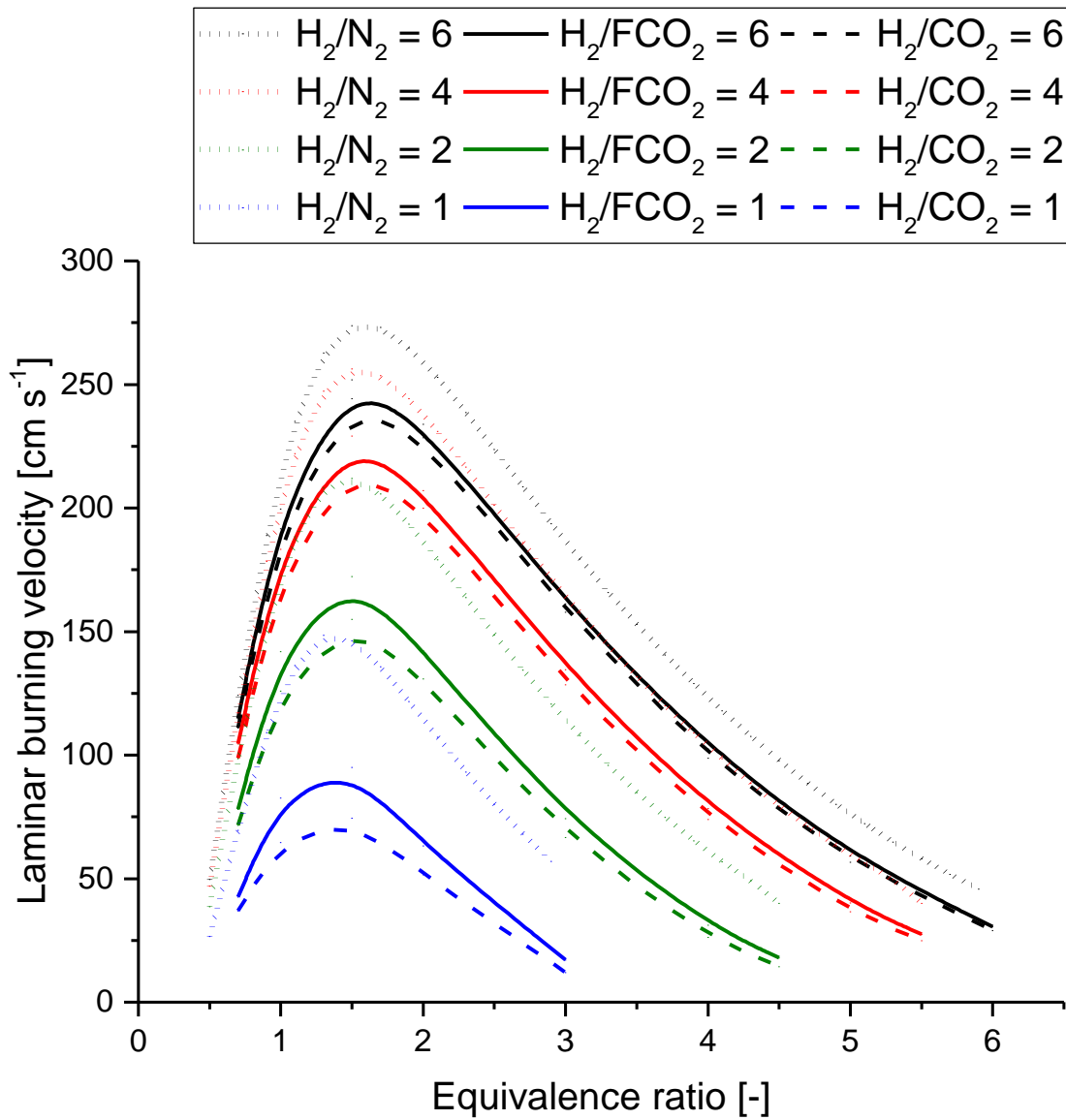


Figure 2 Comparison of estimated LBV at 298 K and 1 bar, in dependence on the equivalence ratio (the notation X/Y stands for the volume ratio).

166

167 The introduction of FCO₂ has a significant effect increasing the laminar burning velocity compared
168 with CO₂ regardless of the H₂/CO₂ ratio, especially at near-stoichiometric compositions. The reduced

169 overall burning velocity testifies to the chemical effects of CO₂. FCO₂ can be viewed as accounting for
170 the thermal dilution only. The estimated laminar burning velocities of H₂/FCO₂ and H₂/N₂ mixtures show
171 significantly larger values for the second case, regardless of the equivalence ratio and fuel composition
172 considered. For example, the increase in the fundamental laminar burning velocity achieves values up
173 to 50% for elevated dilution (i.e., low H₂/FCO₂ H₂/N₂ ratios). This trend can be explained considering the
174 thermal inertia of the adopted diluents. It is worth noting that the observed increase in the laminar burning
175 velocity can be linearly associated with the variation of the average heat capacity (\bar{c}_p), namely
176 $LBV_{H_2/N_2}/LBV_{H_2/FCO_2} \approx \bar{c}_{p_{H_2/N_2}}/\bar{c}_{p_{H_2/FCO_2}}$. On the other hand, the magnitude of the effects of the
177 chemistry of CO₂ on the LBV is largely influenced by the applied compositions. Indeed, the variation in
178 the laminar burning velocity is limited to -10% for lean compositions, whereas it can reach ~-25% at
179 stoichiometric and ~-40% in rich conditions. This trend is in line with the increased contribution of
180 radicals in the conversion of the fuel typically attributed to the increase in equivalence ratios [34].
181 Considering the structure of the adopted mechanism, CO₂ plays either a direct role as a reactant/product
182 dependent on the concentration or an indirect role as a diluent. The reaction associated with the
183 formation of CO₂ via CO oxidation (i.e., CO + OH \rightleftharpoons CO₂ + H) is a clear example of the above-mentioned
184 direct role. The presence of CO₂ alters the equilibrium, suppressing the formation of H radicals, thus
185 potentially affecting the reactivity of the whole system. Conversely, reactions where CO₂ acts simply as
186 inert diluent reducing the reaction rate by decreasing the reactant concentrations can be included into
187 the group of indirect contributions.

188 For further clarification, the relevance of each reaction of the adopted mechanism was assessed
189 through a sensitivity analysis. Although larger relative deviations between the dilution with FCO₂ and
190 CO₂ are observed in rich compositions, the stoichiometric composition shows the largest absolute
191 differences. Hence, the sensitivity analysis performed in this work was executed at 298 K, 1 bar, and
192 stoichiometric composition (Figure 3) to assess the effect of CO₂ on the most influential reactions. For
193 the sake of clarity, reactions are sorted by the absolute values of the NSCs and only the largest ten are
194 listed.

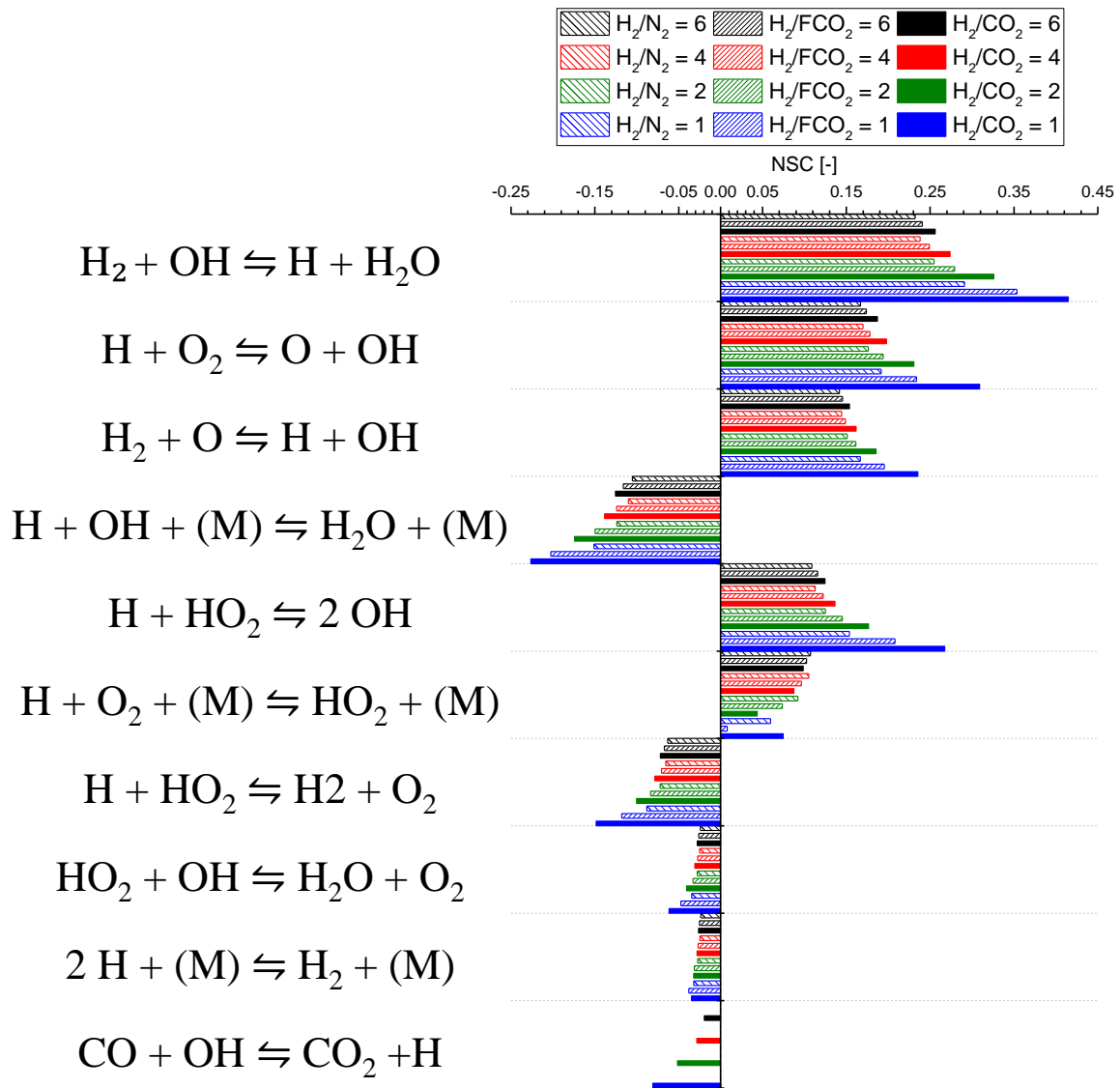
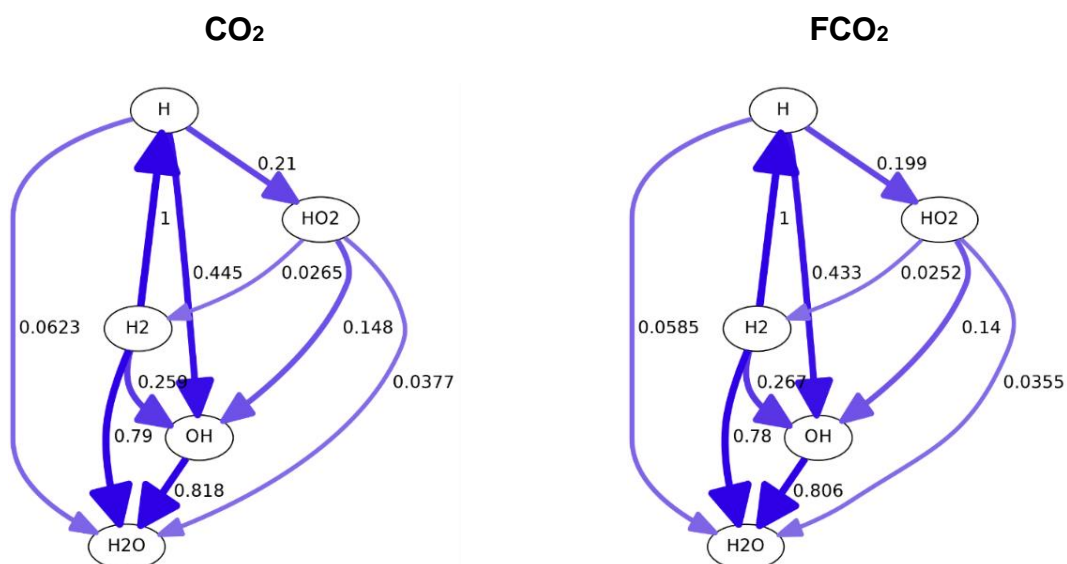


Figure 3 Comparison of normalized sensitivity coefficients of the laminar burning velocity with respect to the rate constants at 298 K and 1 bar, as a function of the initial fuel composition at stoichiometric conditions (the notation X/Y stands for the volume ratio).

195

196 Regardless of the chemical and thermal properties of the diluent, increasing the H₂ content leads to a
 197 general decrease in the absolute value of the NSCs. Besides, the comparison between the values for
 198 the FCO₂ and N₂ dilution shows slightly lower values for the latter case, except for the H + O₂ + (M) ⇌
 199 HO₂ + (M) reaction. This reaction represents the only case of a falloff reaction having CO₂ efficiencies
 200 lower than that of H₂ among the ones reported in Figure 3. This observation suggests that the
 201 competition between CO₂ (or FCO₂) and H₂ has a detrimental effect on H + O₂ + (M) ⇌ HO₂ + (M).

202 Conversely, the direct role of CO₂ can be evaluated through the comparison between the CO₂ and FCO₂
 203 data. In most cases, larger NSCs are calculated for CO₂ dilution for a given fuel composition. These
 204 trends imply that the presence of CO₂ makes the systems more sensitive to the chemistry of OH and H
 205 radicals either from a kinetic or thermal point of view. It should be noted that the most influential reaction
 206 directly involving CO₂ is CO + OH \rightleftharpoons CO₂ + H. NSCs corresponding to the FCO₂ and N₂ cases are
 207 negligible for this reaction due to the inert character of these reactants. Hence, the presence of CO₂ can
 208 promote the formation of CO and OH through the reverse reaction consuming H. Besides, this reaction
 209 offers the possibility to explain the differences in laminar burning velocities, as the NSC is negative and
 210 the reaction is typical of near stoichiometric mixtures. These observations can be confirmed by the
 211 reaction path analysis shown in Figure 4 for equimolar fuels (i.e., H₂/CO₂ and H₂/FCO₂ equal to 1) under
 212 flame conditions, namely 1200 K, 1 bar, and stoichiometric mixture composition.



213 **Figure 4.** Reaction path analysis for CO₂ and FCO₂ in equimolar composition with H₂ and
 214 stoichiometric conditions at initial temperature 1200 K and 1 bar.

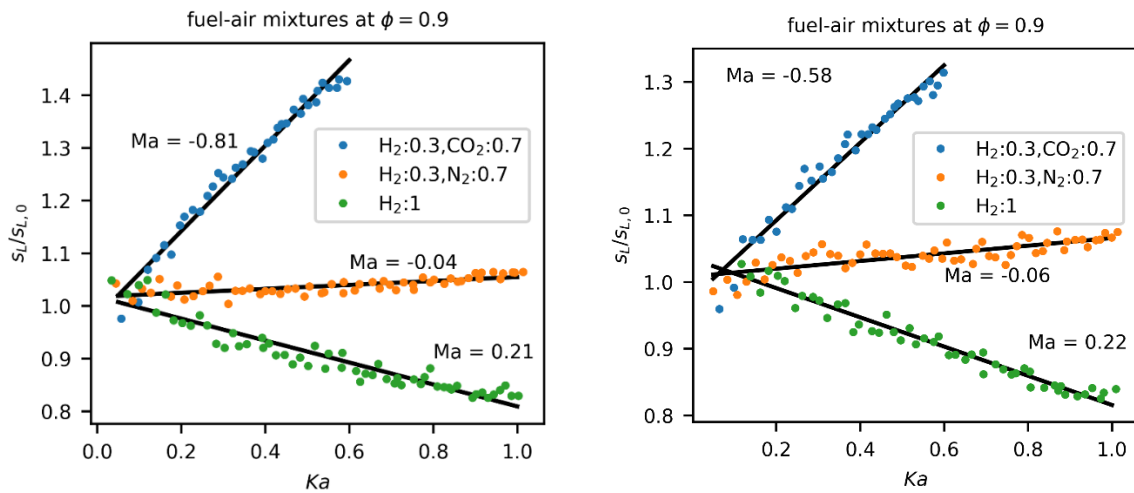
215
 216 Although the general structure of the presented reaction paths is not affected by the fuel composition,
 217 significant variations in branching ratios can be observed. The flux diagrams indicate that the presence
 218 of CO₂ slightly affects the relative contribution of branches producing small radicals, except for the direct
 219 production of H. Looking at the intermediates resulting from primary reactions involving H₂, OH is favored
 220 by FCO₂ to the detriment of direct H₂O formation. Combining these observations with the results of the
 221 sensitivity analysis, it is obvious that CO₂ affects the competition between H₂ + O \rightleftharpoons H + OH and H₂ + O

222 + (M) \rightleftharpoons H₂O + (M). It should be noted that CO₂ and FCO₂ have the same collision efficiencies for any
223 third body reaction included in the mechanism, leaving the reaction rate of H₂ + O + (M) \rightleftharpoons H₂O + (M)
224 unaffected. Therefore, the abovementioned differences can be mainly attributed to the difference in
225 temperature due to the modified global heat release of the systems. The resulting excess in OH
226 suppresses its production from H and HO₂, mostly attributable to H + HO₂ \rightleftharpoons 2 OH. Following the
227 observations derived from the sensitivity analysis, the branch connecting H to OH is diminished by about
228 3% at the investigated conditions through FCO₂ with the chemical contribution from CO + OH \rightleftharpoons CO₂ +
229 H.

230

231 **Laminar Burning Velocity, Stretched Flames**

232 To investigate the effect of CO₂ dilution on the burning velocity of stretched flames and possibly
233 flame instabilities a one-dimensional counterflow-twin flame is considered. The setup consists of two
234 opposed nozzles with identical premixed hydrogen-diluent-air mixtures at atmospheric conditions. Three
235 cases at $\phi = 0.9$ are considered, where the fuel consists of a) pure hydrogen, b) 30 mol-% hydrogen
236 and 70 mol-% CO₂, and c) 30 mol-% hydrogen and 70 mol-% nitrogen. All cases are computed using
237 the DRM19 reaction mechanism [35], which has been used in the literature for similar conditions, and
238 the KiBO mechanism. Figure 5 shows the burning velocity over Karlovitz number, which represents the
239 non-dimensional flame stretch (see equation 3) for the different fuel mixtures. The flame with pure
240 hydrogen as a fuel has a positive Markstein number, which is indicative of a thermo-diffusively stable
241 flame. The flame with nitrogen dilution has a Markstein number close to zero and is therefore insensitive
242 to flame stretch. The flame with CO₂ dilution on the other hand has a negative Markstein number.



243 **Figure 5** Burning velocity over Karlovitz number from the counterflow-twin flames for
 244 different fuel mixtures and resulting Markstein numbers. Left: DRM19 reaction mechanism.
 245 Right: KiBO reaction mechanism.

246
 247 The negative Markstein number resulting from the CO₂ dilution is mainly attributed to the reduction
 248 of the thermal diffusivity of the gas mixture and therewith the reduction of the Lewis number. The thermal
 249 diffusivity of the fuel-oxidizer mixture with pure hydrogen at $\phi = 0.9$ is $a = 4.5 \times 10^{-5}$ m²/s, while the
 250 mixture thermal diffusivity with CO₂ dilution is $a = 2.9 \times 10^{-5}$ m²/s. The simulation with CO₂ dilution has
 251 been repeated by replacing CO₂ with the chemically inert FCO₂. Disabling the conversion of CO₂ leads
 252 to slightly higher burning velocities and a slightly larger Markstein number ($Ma = -1.0$), but otherwise
 253 the same trend is found. Likewise, changing the diffusion model from the mixture-averaged model to the
 254 multi-component model including the Soret effect yields a similar Markstein number of -0.99 for the H₂-
 255 CO₂ mixture and +0.21 for the pure hydrogen flame (compare with Tab. 2). Several strategies for the
 256 development of detailed kinetic mechanisms can be used, including manual enlargement or automatic
 257 generation [36]. The selected strategy as well as the approach to compute thermodynamic and kinetic
 258 data to be used as input, strongly affect the laminar burning velocity predicted by the produced
 259 mechanisms, as recently demonstrated [37]. Nevertheless, the identification of the most accurate model
 260 for the hydrogen case is still a challenging task. Indeed, a comparison of the experimental
 261 measurements for the laminar burning velocity of hydrogen-containing mixtures from different setups
 262 shows a significant variability of this parameter [38]. On the other hand, the comparison of estimated

263 laminar burning velocity obtained by different mechanisms can provide useful information on the
 264 robustness and validity of physical models.

265 To validate these results, simulations of cases a) and b) have been repeated with the detailed GRI
 266 3.0 reaction mechanism [39] and the reduced reaction mechanism by Kee [40]. For the pure hydrogen
 267 flame, the reaction mechanisms by Li et al. [41], Konnov [42], and Connaire et al. [43] were included in
 268 the comparison as well. While there are slight differences in the predicted burning velocity and Markstein
 269 number, they all show the same tendency, i.e. a change from a flame with $Ma > 0$ for pure hydrogen as
 270 fuel to a flame with $Ma < 0$ when considering dilution with CO₂. The results are summarized in Table 2.
 271 Flames with $Ma < 0$ are potentially thermo-diffusively unstable. All predictions can be included within
 272 the uncertainty range typically associated with laminar burning velocity measurements [44]. It should be
 273 noted that the GRI3.0 reaction mechanism has not been originally validated for methane-CO₂ blends
 274 and thus shows considerable differences in flame speed compared with other reaction mechanisms,
 275 especially for case b. The tendency of GRI3.0 to underestimate the overall reactivity has been already
 276 reported for low-carbon fuels [45]. Nonetheless, GRI3.0 is still widely used today. Even though the
 277 prediction of the laminar flame speed differs, the observed trend of CO₂ addition stays the same: the
 278 Markstein number of the reactive mixture changes from positive to negative, showing that the addition
 279 of CO₂ leads to a potentially thermos-diffusively unstable flame.

280

281 **Table 2** Burning velocity and Markstein number from the counterflow-twin flames obtained
 282 with different reaction mechanisms at $\phi = 0.9$

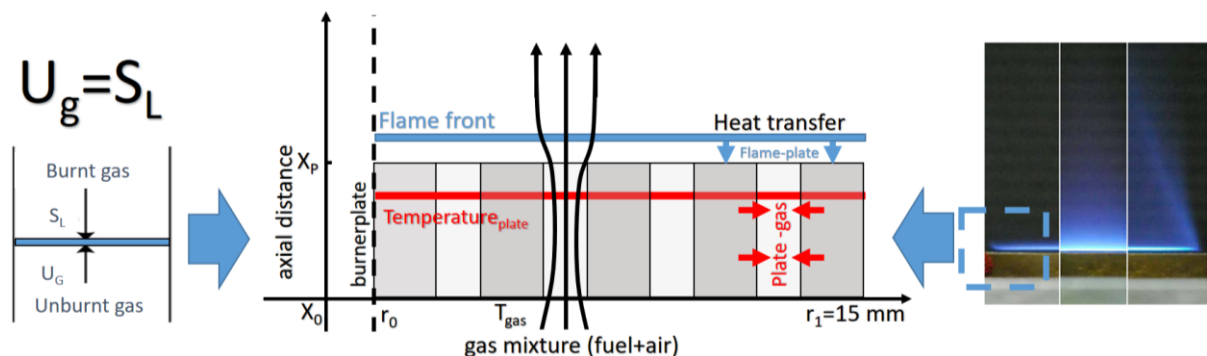
Case a (100 mol-% H ₂)			Case b (30 mol-% H ₂ , 70 mol-% CO ₂)		
Mechanism	$s_{L,0}$ (m/s)	Ma	Mechanism	$s_{L,0}$ (m/s)	Ma
DRM19	2.24	+0.21	DRM19	0.111	-0.81
KiBO	2.12	+0.22	KiBO	0.107	-0.58
GRI3.0	2.02	+0.33	GRI3.0	0.066	-1.07
Kee	2.21	+0.32	Kee	0.138	-0.74
Li	2.02	+0.30			
Konnov	2.03	+0.33			
Connaire	1.97	+0.28			

283

284

285 Experiments for determining of the flame front instabilities

286 As stated above, flames with $Ma < 0$ are potentially thermo-diffusively unstable. To investigate
287 thermo-diffusive instabilities and non-stable flame fronts, a flat flame burner with a stabilized flame was
288 selected also allowing optical examination of changes in the flame front over long examination intervals.
289 These burners are usually used to determine the laminar burning velocity of quasi-adiabatic flat flames.
290 The heat flux burner design used in the present work was proposed by de Goey et al. [46], based on
291 the fundamental experimental work done by [47]. The method has the advantage of directly measuring
292 the LBV of a planar stationary unstretched flame. The stabilization of a planar flame has been further
293 proved by [48] and can be achieved with a temperature-controlled burner plate compensating heat
294 losses from the flame. In the experimental setup used here the gas flow is controlled by three calibrated
295 mass flow controllers (MFCs). The ambient conditions as well as the signals from newly integrated type
296 T thermocouples are recorded and used to calculate the LBV [49]. By definition, the determination of
297 the laminar burning velocity is only possible for planar flames. Therefore, the radial temperature profiles
298 of the plate are fitted by parabolic functions and analysed for up to 350 measurements to find conditions
299 for adiabatic stabilisation of the flame, i.e. the parabolic coefficient C of the radial temperature profile
300 equals 0, see middle of figure 6. For further details of the setup [50,51] and experimental uncertainties
301 [52] related to gas flows and other possible sources of errors, refer to Eckart et al. [53–56] and Rau et
302 al. [57]. If instabilities and cellular structures occur, a determination of the LBV is not permissible.



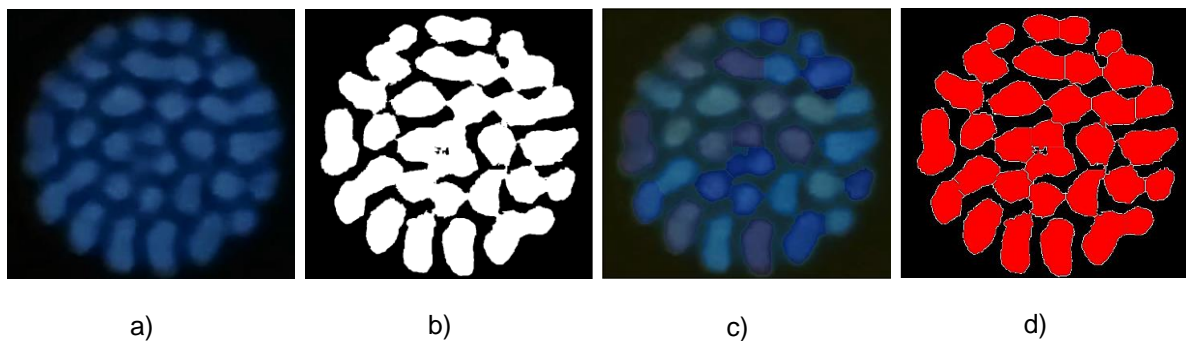
303 **Figure 6** Schematic drawing of the heat flux burner setup and the position of the stabilized
304 flame.

305

306 Experiments are conducted at equivalence ratios ($\phi = 0.5$ – 1.1) and CO_2 contents up to 70% in
307 hydrogen. The initial gas temperatures are 300 K. Under these conditions, cellular structures could be

308 observed. To evaluate the behaviour of the flames and their instabilities, a VIS-camera was mounted
309 above the heat flux burner. With this optical setup, 10 pictures of the stabilized flame were taken at a
310 time interval of 120 s. These pictures were then evaluated carrying out a step binarization and reduction
311 of small interference effects due to reflections. Subsequently, edge detection and a watershed
312 transformation were performed in a parameterized manner. This procedure made it possible to separate
313 flame structures from each other. The number of separated flames was evaluated and displayed
314 graphically as an overlay. The procedure can be seen systematically in Figure 7.

315



316 **Figure 7** Steps of image processing, a) raw data of the heat flux flame, b) binarization and
317 reduction of reflections, and c) overlay of cells detected by watersheded transformation and
318 d) counting.

319

320 **Experimental results for flame structures**

321 Experimental results obtained at atmospheric pressure for hydrogen-carbon dioxide-air mixtures at
322 various equivalence ratios of $\phi = 0.5 - 1.1$ were analyzed. Figure 8 shows the comparison of measured
323 unburnt gas velocity and the parabolic coefficient C for equivalence ratio $\phi = 0.9$ and a flame with 30 mol-
324 % hydrogen diluted by 70 mol-% of CO_2 . In the experiments, different plate temperatures (368-428 K)
325 were applied. It was observed that the plate temperatures affect the parabolic coefficient, which is
326 normally used to interpolate to the adiabatic state. The plate temperature did not influence the overall
327 trend of the results. Since all the flames were not planar and therefore did not correspond to the
328 theoretical prerequisites for the determination of the laminar burning velocity, the inflow velocity cannot
329 be considered the same as the burning velocity even if the parabolic coefficient is $C = 0$. The
330 determination of the laminar adiabatic curvature and stretch free burning velocity was not possible for
331 the investigated regions, as impairments were detected in the flame in all cases. In the experiments, it

332 could be shown that with an increase in the velocity at the outlet and a corresponding increase in the
 333 volumetric flow rate, the temperature in the middle of the plate decreased in the order of $\Delta T_{\max} \approx 15\text{K}$.
 334 These changes also had no influence on the flame shape of the $\text{H}_2\text{-CO}_2\text{-O}_2\text{-N}_2$ flames.

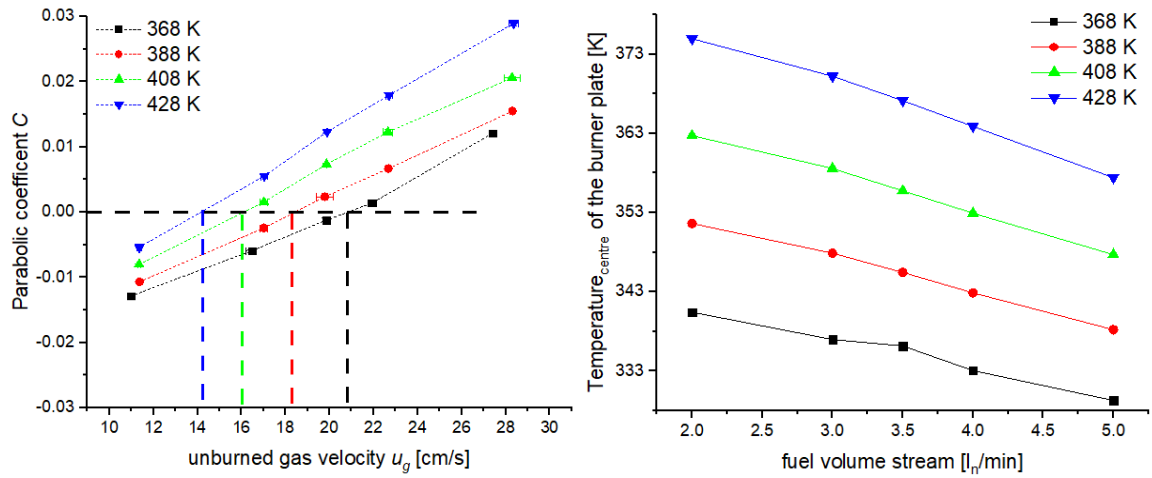
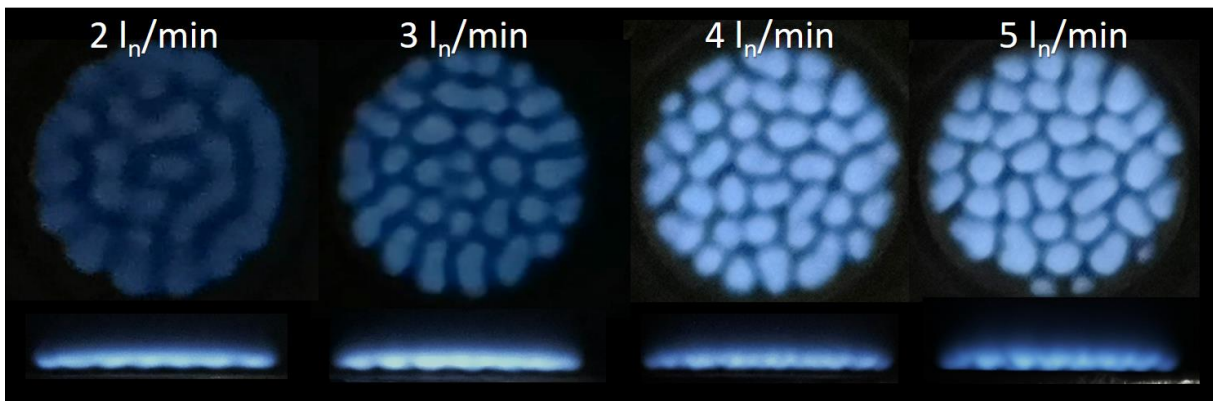


Figure 8 Measured parabolic coefficient and fuel volume stream as a function of plate temperature for a flame with 30 mol-% H_2 diluted by 70 mol-% of CO_2 , for equivalence ratio $\phi = 0.9$ and $T_{\text{gas}} = 300\text{ K}$

335
 336 In Figure 9 the flame morphology with view from above and from the side at the plate temperature of
 337 $T_{\text{plate}} = 368\text{ K}$ and varying flow rates are illustrated. The flames have been operated with 30 mol-%
 338 hydrogen diluted by 70 mol-% of CO_2 at an equivalence ratio $\phi = 0.9$ and $T_{\text{gas}} = 300\text{ K}$. It can be seen
 339 that the intensity of the individual flame structures increases significantly with inflow velocity. With
 340 increasing inflow velocity, the flames are also stabilized further away from the burner plate and a
 341 "sealed" flame front is no longer appearing. The change of this state can be seen in the range from 3 to
 342 4 l_n/min , whereby the transition from negative to positive parabolic coefficients can also be detected (see
 343 Figure 8).

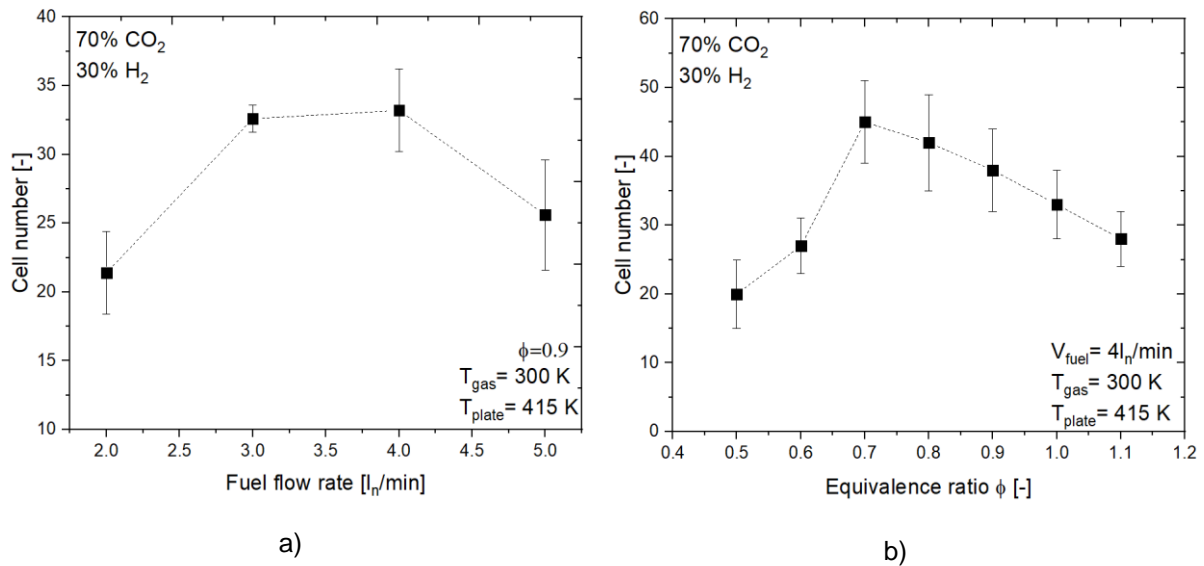


344 **Figure 9** Flame morphology for different volume streams with 30 mol-% hydrogen and
 345 70 mol-% carbon dioxide for an equivalence ratio of $\phi = 0.9$, $T_{\text{gas}} = 300 \text{ K}$ and $T_{\text{plate}} = 368 \text{ K}$,
 346 top: top view, bottom: side view

347

348 For two different image series, one depending on the fuel flow rate and one on the equivalence ratio,
 349 the number of cells in the broken flame front was analysed. The series were recorded independently of
 350 each other. However, it can be seen that both overlap in-within the uncertainty ies regions. The maximum
 351 number of cells is again located in the range of parabolic coefficients around $C = 0$. The number of cells
 352 is in the same order of magnitude as found by Konnov et al. for methane flames, but below the ones of
 353 ethane and propane flames. In this study, however, "closed" flame fronts were frequently found [25]. For
 354 the highest volume flow rate tested, an evaluation of the number of individual cellular flames as a
 355 function of the equivalence ratio was carried out according to the procedure described above. It turns
 356 out that a maximum of around 45 cells could be found, as seen in Figure 10 b). Konnov et al. [25] could
 357 find the maximum cell count for methane flames in the range of $\phi = 0.8$, whereas for ethane and propane
 358 higher values were observed at $\phi = 1.2$ -1.4 and 1.3, respectively.

359

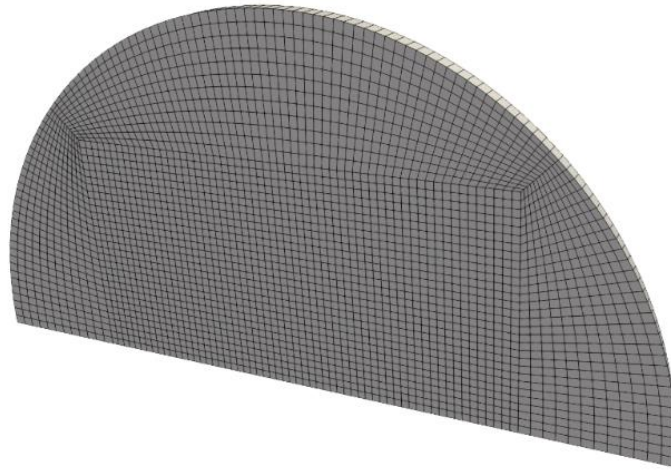


360 **Figure 10** Cell number a) depending on the fuel flow rate and b) the equivalence ratio

361 **2-D Numerical Simulation of Spherically Expanding Flames**

362

363 To investigate the thermo-diffusive instabilities caused by the CO₂ dilution further and to assess the
 364 structure of the flames, detailed simulations of spherically expanding, constant pressure flames in
 365 initially quiescent premixed fuel-air mixtures at atmospheric conditions ($p = 1 \text{ atm}, T = 300 \text{ K}$) are
 366 conducted. A H₂-air (case a, $\phi = 0.9$, 100 % H₂) and a H₂/CO₂-air flame from case b ($\phi = 0.9$, 30 mol-
 367 % H₂ and 70 mol-% CO₂) are simulated. The computational setup consists of a quasi-3D domain, which
 368 is a wedge-shaped half-sphere, as shown in Figure 11. For the flame of case a, the diameter of the
 369 computational domain is 16 cm and the mesh consists of 8.1 million finite volumes, yielding a resolution
 370 in the equidistant region of the mesh of 33 μm . For the CO₂ diluted flame of case b, the diameter of the
 371 domain is 48 cm and consists of 65 million finite volumes with a resolution of 56 μm . The finer mesh for
 372 the flame in case a is required due to the pure hydrogen flame having a lower flame thickness. Similarly,
 373 the flame speed of the CO₂ diluted flame is lower, and therefore a larger propagation distance is required
 374 for the flame to develop the thermo-diffusive instabilities. In both cases, the flame zone is fully resolved
 375 with more than 15 cells.



376 **Figure 11** Computational domain for the spherically expanding flames

377

378 The simulation is performed with an in-house solver for the detailed simulation of flames [58–60]
 379 based on OpenFOAM [61] and Cantera, which has been validated in previous works [62–65]. It solves
 380 the fully compressible Navier-Stokes equations together with a balance equation for energy and each
 381 chemical species. The conservation of total mass reads

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \vec{u}) = 0 \quad (4)$$

382 ρ is the density, t time and \vec{u} is the gas velocity. The conservation of momentum is expressed as

$$\frac{\partial(\rho \vec{u})}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \vec{u} \vec{u}) = -\nabla p + \nabla \cdot \tau \quad (5)$$

383 with p the pressure and τ the stress tensor

$$\tau = \mu \left(\nabla \vec{u} + \nabla \vec{u}^T - \frac{2}{3} \nabla \cdot \vec{u} \mathbf{I} \right) \quad (6)$$

384 and μ being the dynamic viscosity of the reacting mixture. \mathbf{I} is the unit tensor. The balance of species
 385 masses is expressed in terms of the mass fractions Y_k of species k

$$\frac{\partial(\rho Y_k)}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \vec{u} Y_k) = \dot{\omega}_k - \nabla \cdot \vec{j}_k \quad (7)$$

386 where $\dot{\omega}_k$ is the reaction rate of species k and \vec{j}_k its diffusive flux. Species diffusion is computed from a
 387 mixture-averaged approach

$$\vec{j}_k = -\rho D_k \nabla Y_k \quad (8)$$

388 where D_k is the diffusion coefficient of species k computed from kinetic gas theory. The energy balance
 389 is formulated in terms of the total sensible enthalpy:

$$\frac{\partial(\rho(h_s + \frac{1}{2}\vec{u} \cdot \vec{u}))}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho\vec{u}(h_s + \frac{1}{2}\vec{u} \cdot \vec{u})) = -\nabla \cdot \vec{q} + \frac{\partial p}{\partial t} - \sum_k h_k^\circ \dot{\omega}_k \quad (9)$$

390 h_k° is the enthalpy of formation of species k and h_s the sensible enthalpy of the mixture. \vec{q} is the diffusive
 391 heat flux

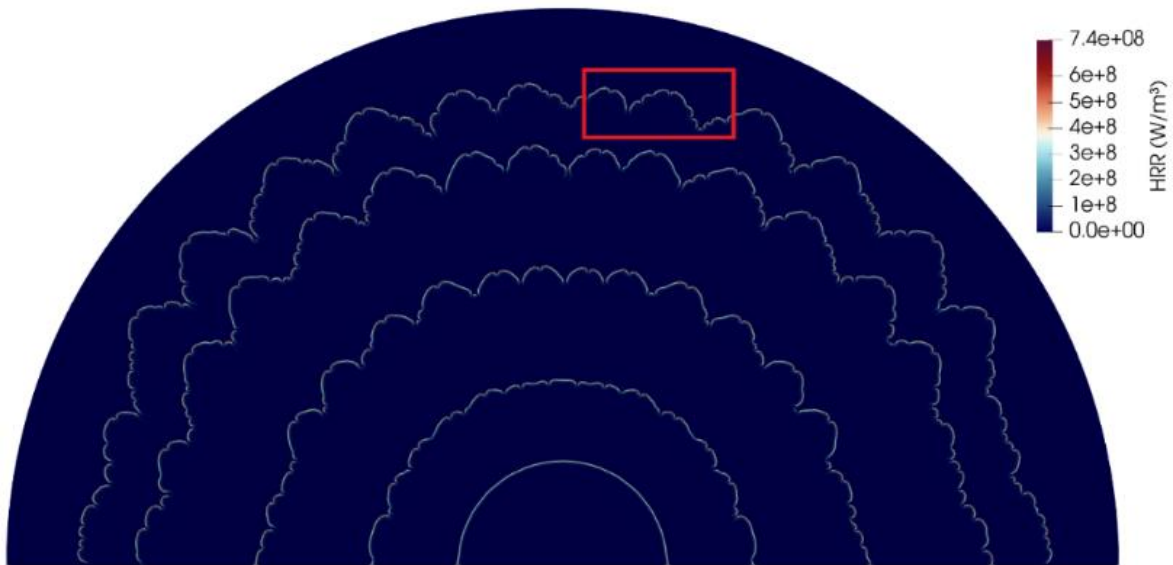
$$-\nabla \cdot \vec{q} = \nabla \cdot \lambda \nabla T - \sum_k \nabla \cdot h_{s,k} \vec{j}_k \quad (10)$$

392 where λ is the heat conductivity of the gas mixture, T is the temperature and $h_{s,k}$ the sensible enthalpy
 393 of species k.

394 The DRM19 reaction mechanism is used and chemical reaction rates are computed from finite rate
 395 chemistry. The diffusion model is the mixture-averaged model. For time discretization, a second order
 396 implicit method is used, while spatial discretization is based on fourth-order interpolation schemes. The
 397 initial condition is given by a spherical flame kernel with a radius of 2 cm, obtained from a one-
 398 dimensional pre-cursor simulation of a spherically expanding flame. The subsequent flame propagation
 399 and development of instabilities is then captured during the simulation in detail.

400 Figure 12 shows the temporal evolution of the flame front for the hydrogen-CO₂ fuel mixture of case b
 401 during flame propagation in terms of the heat release rate (HRR) at different time instances. The flame
 402 starts from a perfectly spherical configuration. While the flame expands, cellular structures form on the
 403 flame front. The red box indicated in the top figure is later discussed in Figure 14.

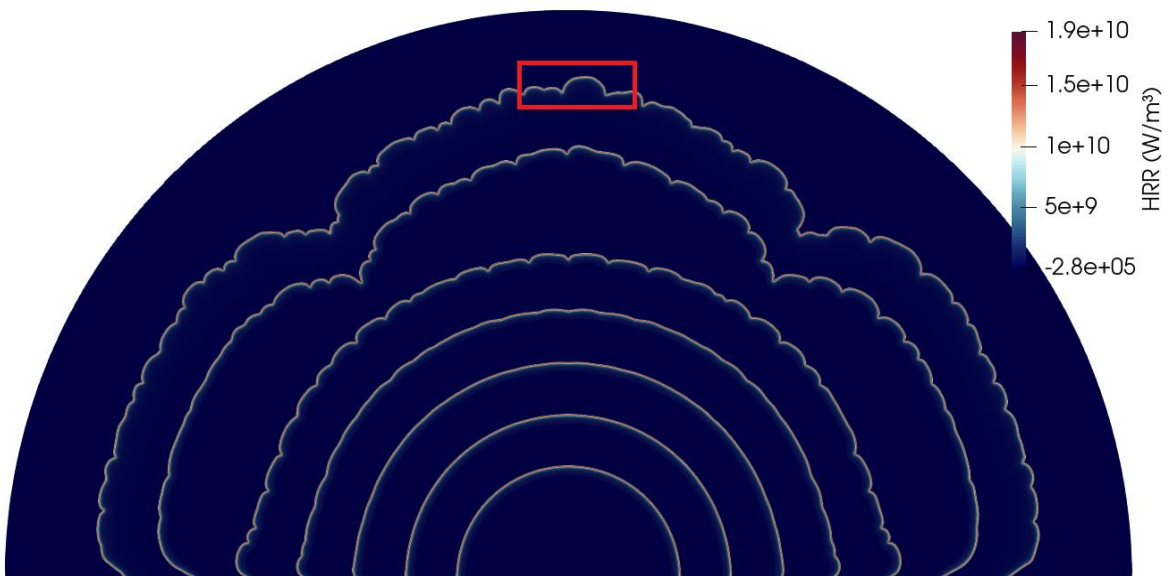
404 At negatively curved parts of the flame front, the flame locally extinguishes, which is consistent with
 405 the negative Markstein number. The structure of the cell formation follows the typical flame finger
 406 configuration [66]. In this way, the H₂-CO₂ flame at $\phi = 0.9$ behaves the same as thermo-diffusively
 407 unstable, lean ($\phi \ll 1$) pure hydrogen flames [67].



408 **Figure 12** Flame front indicated by the heat release rate (HRR) at different time instances for
 409 the flame from case b during spherical propagation.

410

411 Figure 13 shows the propagating pure hydrogen flame at $\phi = 0.9$, again in terms of heat release rate
 412 at different time instances. As the flame reaches a sufficient radius, it becomes corrugated. However,
 413 this corrugation is not an effect of thermo-diffusively unstable cellular structures, but a hydrodynamic
 414 instability due to thermal expansion across the flame front (Darrieus-Landau instability), lacking the
 415 typical structure of the flame fingers or thermo-diffusive cells. This distinction is shown in Fig.14.

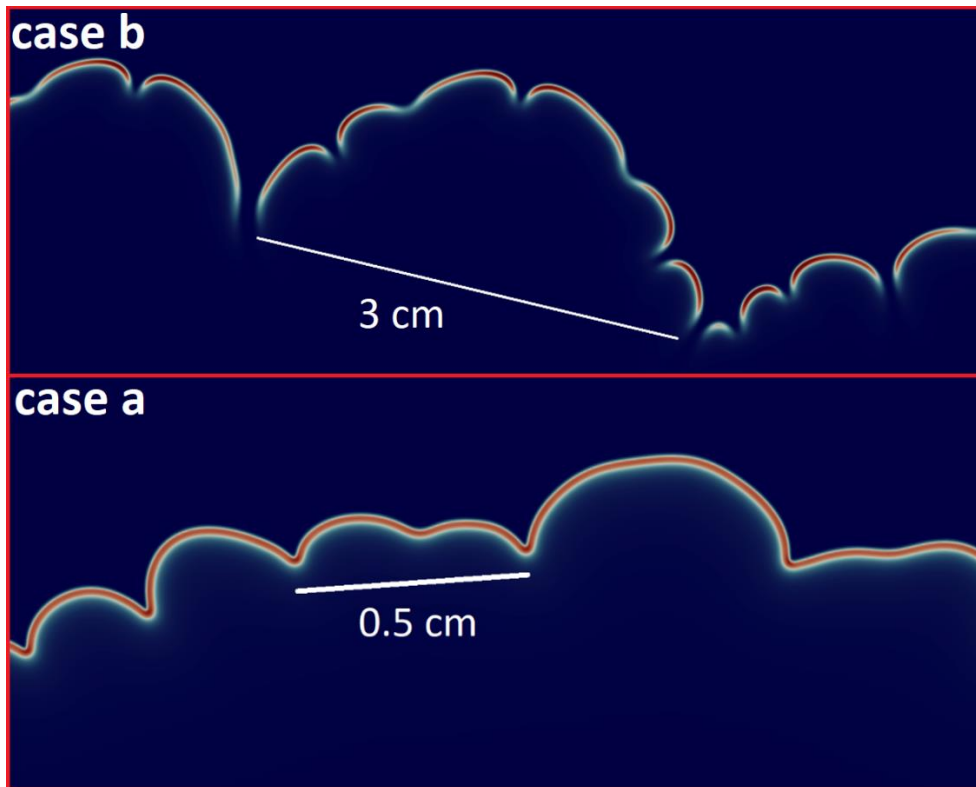


416 **Figure 13** Flame front indicated by the heat release rate (HRR) at different time instances for
 417 the flame from case a during spherical propagation.

418

419 The reaction zones indicated by the red boxes from Fig. 12 and 13 are zoomed-in in Fig. 14. The top
420 figure shows the CO₂ diluted flame. Due to the cellular structures caused by the thermo-diffusive
421 instability, characteristic flame fingers develop [66]. These also have a characteristic length scale, in this
422 case with a diameter of about 3 cm. The depicted heat release rate field also shows that the flame locally
423 extinguishes at the negative curved parts of the flame front, and locally enhances at the positively curved
424 parts of the flame front. This is in accordance with the negative Markstein number, as computed from
425 the one-dimensional counterflow flame simulations. In this way, the H₂-CO₂ flame at $\phi = 0.9$ behaves
426 the same as thermo-diffusively unstable, lean ($\phi \ll 1$) pure hydrogen flames [67].

427 On the other hand, the zoom into the flame front of the pure hydrogen flame at $\phi = 0.9$ does not
428 show the typical cellular structure of thermo-diffusively unstable flames. Instead, the corrugations on the
429 flame front are irregular, eventually forming cusps consistent with hydrodynamic instabilities. Again, in
430 accordance with the low positive Markstein number from Table 2, the correlation of local heat release
431 rate and flame curvature is reversed: in this case, the local heat release rate becomes maximal at the
432 negatively curved parts of the flame front. Since the Markstein number is close to zero, the sensitivity of
433 local flame speed or heat release rate with respect to flame curvature is low. Therefore, the variation of
434 HRR along the flame front is low and no local extinction occurs.



435 **Figure 14** Zoomed-in regions from Fig. 12 and 13. Top: heat release rate field from the CO₂
 436 diluted flame from case *b*, showing the regular structure of the thermo-diffusively unstable
 437 cells. Bottom: heat release rate field from the pure H₂ flame from case *a*, where the corrugation
 438 results from a hydrodynamic instability with little variation of heat release rate along the flame
 439 front.

440

441 **Conclusions**

442 In this paper premixed H₂-CO₂-O₂-N₂ flames with air were investigated first numerically and the findings
 443 have been afterwards confirmed in an experimental investigation. The utilization of a validated detailed
 444 kinetic mechanism allowed for the evaluation of the effects of initial composition on the laminar burning
 445 velocity, the most influential reactions, and the main oxidation paths of the investigated mixtures. The
 446 relative contribution of thermal and chemical effects was quantified through the definition of a fictitious
 447 CO₂ (FCO₂), acting as an inert species having the same thermal and transport properties as CO₂. The
 448 obtained results showed that the presence of CO₂ strongly affects the chemistry of non-carbon
 449 containing species because of the modifications in the reaction rate of $\text{CO} + \text{OH} \rightleftharpoons \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}$, potentially
 450 causing significant differences in the ignition behavior. Further, the effect of CO₂ addition in terms of the

451 flame structure has been investigated with two different numerical setups: the addition of CO₂ leads to
452 a decrease in the mixture's thermal diffusivity and therewith a decrease in the Lewis number. This in
453 turn changes the Markstein number for near-stoichiometric flames from slightly positive values for pure
454 hydrogen flames to negative ones for H₂-CO₂ flames. These results are independent of the employed
455 reaction mechanisms and also if CO₂ is considered an inert species or not. Detailed simulation of a
456 spherically expanding H₂-CO₂ flame shows the expected cellular structures of thermo-diffusively
457 unstable flames, which is not present for the pure hydrogen flame.

458 These results were verified by experiments using a heat flux burner. Adiabatic cellular flames of H₂-CO₂-
459 O₂-N₂ were identified visually and by photographic observations and the cellular structures have been
460 quantified. Under specific experimental conditions, the flames become cellular; this led to significant
461 modification of the flame propagation speed. Increasing the temperature of the burner plate up to
462 $T_{\text{plate}} = 428 \text{ K}$ does not eliminate this instability for H₂-CO₂-O₂-N₂ flames. Lowering the temperature of
463 the burner plate extended the range of equivalence ratios over which cellularity was observed. No direct
464 proportionality between the number of cells and inlet velocity in H₂-CO₂-O₂-N₂ flames was observed.
465 Dependence of the number of cells as a function of equivalence ratio clearly showed a local maximum
466 in the lean mixtures. In future studies, the influence of CO₂/H₂ ratios as well as the influence of pressure
467 and temperature on these instability phenomena will be investigated in more depth.

468

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473

474

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