

Structural Evolution of SiO₂ Glass with Si Coordination Number Greater than 6

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Pair distribution function measurement of SiO₂ glass up to 120 GPa reveals changes in the first-, second-, and third-neighbor distances associated with an increase in Si coordination number C_{Si} to >6 above 95 GPa. Packing fractions of Si and O determined from the first- and second-neighbor distances show marked changes accompanied with the structural evolution from $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ to >6 . Structural constraints in terms of ionic radius ratio of Si and O, and ratio of nonbonded radius to bonded Si–O distance support the structural evolution of SiO₂ glass with $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ at high pressures.

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Knowledge of pressure-induced structural changes in network-forming glasses is of great interest in various scientific fields such as condensed matter physics, geophysics, materials science, and engineering. As a prototype network-forming glass, SiO₂ glass undergoes pressure-induced coordination number changes and has been the most extensively studied. It has been well known that the coordination number of Si [C_{Si}] in SiO₂ glass gradually increases from 4 to 6 at ~ 15 –50 GPa [1–3]. However, further structural changes to $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ at ultrahigh pressure conditions are controversial. Some simulation studies predicted $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ above ~ 100 GPa in SiO₂ melt [4] and glass [5]. An earlier experimental work based on pair distribution function [$g(r)$] measurement reported that C_{Si} remains constant at 6 up to at least 102 GPa [2]. A kink in the pressure dependence of shear wave velocity was observed above ~ 140 GPa [6], which was interpreted as the formation of $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ structural motifs. Recently, Ref. [3] succeeded in measuring $g(r)$ up to 172 GPa, and reported that C_{Si} continuously increases from 6 to 6.8 between 50 and 172 GPa. However, their C_{Si} versus pressure results [3] are inconsistent with previous reports [2,6], neither showing a stable plateau at $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ with increasing pressure nor displaying an observable slope change in C_{Si} around 140 GPa. A more recent study [7] investigated structure of SiO₂ glass by a combination of x-ray diffraction and molecular dynamics (MD) simulations, and showed that C_{Si} remains at ~ 6 between 46 and 83 GPa and begins increasing to >6 above 109 GPa. Two x-ray Raman studies also give inconsistent results. One study, based on oxygen K -edge and silicon $L_{2,3}$ -edge x-ray Raman spectroscopy up to 108 GPa and MD simulations up to 150 GPa, showed that average C_{Si} in SiO₂ glass remains lower than 6 at

pressures up to 150 GPa [8]. Another oxygen K -edge spectroscopy study up to 160 GPa showed that coordination number of oxygen increases with pressure from 2 at ambient pressure to nearly 3.5 at 160 GPa [9]; in other words, the C_{Si} increases toward 7.

A clear determination of C_{Si} at ultrahigh pressure conditions is crucial not only for understanding the pressure-induced structural evolution of network-forming glasses but also for discussing the nature of magmas in the Earth's deep mantle (up to ~ 136 GPa) in geophysics. The discussions on changes in C_{Si} in Refs. [7,8] rely on MD simulations, while the results in Refs. [2,3] are solely based on *in situ* $g(r)$ measurements at ultrahigh pressure conditions. One possible cause of the inconsistency in the latter two experimental studies may be due to the accuracy in the $g(r)$ measurements, because of experimental challenges in the measurement of $g(r)$ at ultrahigh pressure conditions of >100 GPa. It has been reported that C_{Si} determined from x-ray structure factor [$S(Q)$] measurements with a limited range of momentum transfer (Q) of less than 12 \AA^{-1} can contain large uncertainties [10]. The maximum Q and pressure range in previous $g(r)$ measurements are 14 \AA^{-1} and 102 GPa [2], and 10 \AA^{-1} and 172 GPa [3], respectively.

In order to overcome the technical difficulties in accurate determination of $g(r)$, we utilized our recently developed opposed-anvil-type double-stage large-volume cell combined with multiangle energy dispersive x-ray diffraction [11–13] (cf. Supplemental Material [14]). The opposed-anvil-type double-stage large-volume cell is a recently developed high-pressure technique, enabling for significantly larger sample volume than those of diamond anvil cell experiments used in previous studies [2,3]. Use of

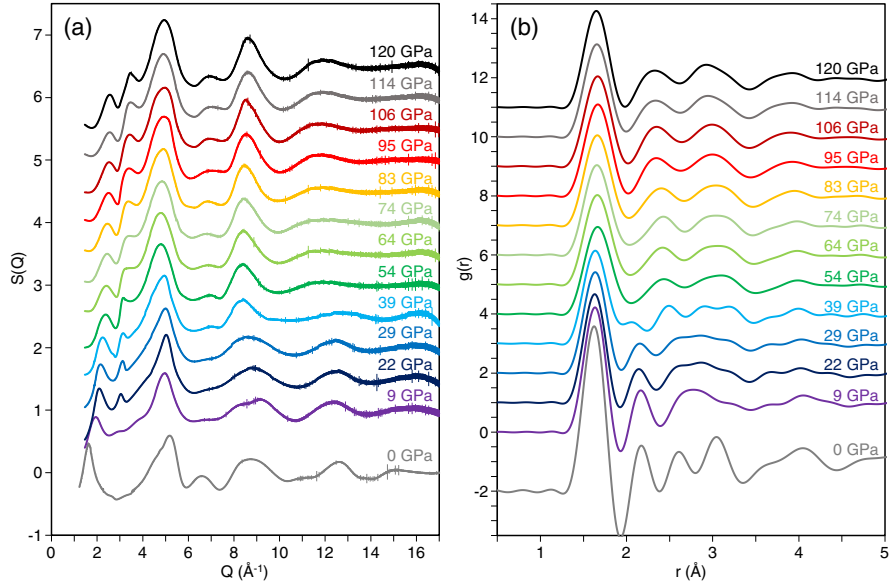


FIG. 1. Structure factor [$S(Q)$] (a) and pair distribution function [$g(r)$] (b) of SiO_2 glass up to 120 GPa. $S(Q)$ is displayed by a vertical offset of $+0.5$ for high-pressure data and of -1.0 for ambient pressure data. $g(r)$ is displayed by a vertical offset of $+1.0$ for high-pressure data and -2.0 for ambient pressure.

large-volume sample is beneficial to gain signal from weak x-ray scattering SiO_2 glass, and it allows for measuring $S(Q)$ with a large range of momentum transfer Q ($Q = 4\pi E \sin \theta / 12.398$, where E is x-ray energy and θ is diffraction angle), which is essential to improve the resolution in real space in the $g(r)$.

Figure 1(a) shows $S(Q)$ of SiO_2 glass over a Q range up to 17 \AA^{-1} under the pressure conditions up to 120 GPa, with data quality remaining essentially unchanged up to the maximum pressure. With increasing pressure the $S(Q)$ spectra reveal the emergence of a new peak around 3 \AA^{-1} above 9 GPa, considered to represent formation of sixfold coordination species [2,7,18]. This peak becomes more predominant with increasing pressure. Figure 1(b) shows $g(r)$ of SiO_2 glass determined by Fourier transformation of the $S(Q)$ data. The $g(r)$ at ambient pressure shows somewhat negative values around the minimum near 1.9 \AA , possibly due to the truncation effect in Fourier transformation. It is reported that Si—O, O—O, and Si—Si distances of SiO_2 glass at ambient pressure are $1.60 \pm 0.01 \text{ \AA}$, $2.62 \pm 0.01 \text{ \AA}$, and $3.08 \pm 0.01 \text{ \AA}$, respectively [19]. Our obtained first (r_1), second (r_2), and third (r_3) peaks in $g(r)$ (Supplemental Material, Table I [14]) agree with the literature. At pressures between 9 and 22 GPa, r_1 is similar to that at ambient pressure. It then increases rapidly from 1.622 \AA at 22 GPa to 1.670 \AA at 54 GPa (Fig. 2). At 54 GPa, r_1 is close to the Si—O distance of crystalline SiO_2 in the CaCl_2 -type structure [20], indicating that SiO_2 glass now consists of octahedrally coordinated structural motif. As pressure continues to increase, r_1 remains similar to the Si—O distances of the

corresponding crystalline SiO_2 phases (stishovite [21], CaCl_2 -type [20], and $\alpha\text{-PbO}_2$ type [20]). At ambient pressure, r_2 and r_3 observed in SiO_2 glass correspond to the average O—O distance in the SiO_4 tetrahedra and the Si—Si distance of corner-linked SiO_4 in quartz [22], respectively (Fig. 2). At 9–29 GPa, the r_2 and r_3 peaks exhibit partial overlap [Fig. 1(b)], probably because r_2 maintains the O—O distance of regular SiO_4 tetrahedra while the Si—Si distance (r_3) changes due to bending of the tetrahedral chain upon compression. Above 39 GPa, r_2 and r_3 separate again, primarily due to shortening of r_2 . Above 54 GPa, r_2 and r_3 are similar to the O—O and longer Si—Si [labeled as $(\text{Si—Si})_2$] distances of the crystalline SiO_2 phases (stishovite [21] and CaCl_2 type [20]), respectively (Fig. 2), suggesting that formation of octahedrally coordinated SiO_6 structure shortens O—O distance (r_2) in SiO_2 glass. Above 54 GPa, there is no observable peak in $g(r)$ around 2.6 \AA , which is around the minimum between r_2 and r_3 [Fig. 1(b)] and corresponds to the shorter Si—Si distance [$(\text{Si—Si})_1$] in the crystalline SiO_2 phases (stishovite [21] and CaCl_2 type [20]). In crystalline CaCl_2 -type SiO_2 , there are eight $(\text{Si—Si})_2$ distances and only two $(\text{Si—Si})_1$ distances. We therefore attribute the absence of the $(\text{Si—Si})_1$ peak in SiO_2 glass at high pressures to the absence or low population of $(\text{Si—Si})_1$ distances similar to the crystalline phases at similar pressures. The r_2 peak of SiO_2 glass remains essentially constant between 54 and 83 GPa, while it decreases again with pressure above 83 GPa (Fig. 2).

We determine C_{Si} in SiO_2 glass based on the area under the r_1 peak in $g(r)$. We first derive pseudopartial correlation function of Si—O [$T(r)_{\text{Si—O}}$] according to Ref. [3]

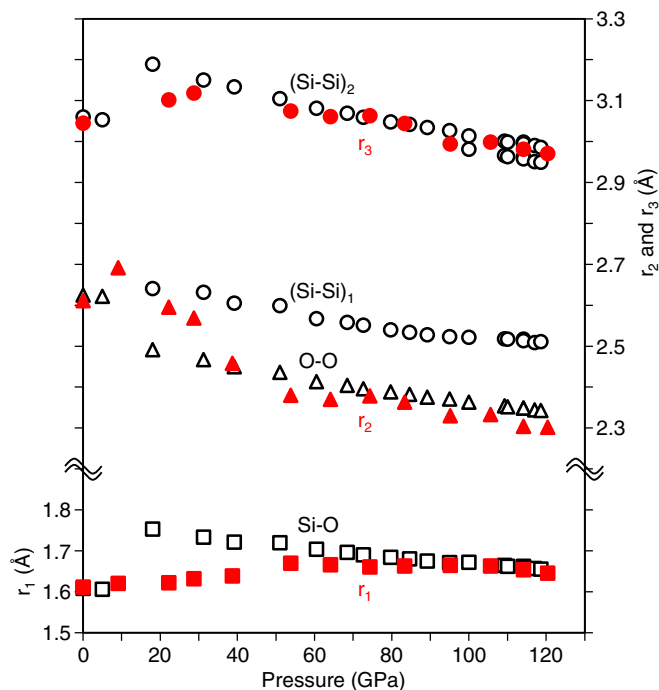


FIG. 2. The first (r_1), second (r_2), and third (r_3) peak positions in $g(r)$ of SiO_2 glass. Solid red symbols represent the r_1 , r_2 , and r_3 of SiO_2 glass, and open black symbols are average Si—O (squares), O—O (triangles), and Si—Si (circles) distances of crystalline SiO_2 (quartz at 0–5 GPa [22], stishovite at 18–39 GPa [21], CaCl_2 type at 51–95 GPa [20], α - PbO_2 type at 100–119 GPa [20]) calculated by using lattice parameters at high pressures [23].

(cf. Supplemental Material [14]). Since our measurements of $S(Q)$ were collected with a large Q range up to 17 \AA^{-1} , $T(r)_{\text{Si-O}}$ shows well-separated Si—O peaks (Supplemental Material, Fig. S1 [14]), which effectively removes the uncertainty due to the overlap with the O—O peak as discussed in previous study [3]. Figure 3 compares C_{Si} determined in this study with those reported in previous studies [2,3,7,8]. The corresponding values are summarized in Supplemental Material, Table I [14]. Our results show that C_{Si} remains around 4 below 10 GPa, increases gradually to 6 between 10 and 54 GPa, stays near constant at 6 between 54 and 83 GPa, and finally becomes greater than 6 above 95 GPa.

Our observed C_{Si} evolution is in reasonable agreement with the results of four previous studies [2,3,7,9] (Fig. 3). Reference [2] reported that C_{Si} increases to ~ 6 at 35 GPa, and C_{Si} stays at ~ 6 above 35 GPa until 102 GPa. Similarly, Ref. [7] also shows C_{Si} of ~ 6 at 46 and 83 GPa, and >6 above 109 GPa (Fig. 3). The C_{Si} values of Ref. [3] are also similar to this study. Within the reported uncertainties, their results can be interpreted as having a plateau of $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ up to ~ 100 GPa (Fig. 3). Above ~ 106 GPa, the C_{Si} values of Ref. [3] clearly exceed 6, consistent with this study. In addition, we note that a recent x-ray Raman study shows evolution of heavily contracted oxygen environments characterized by a decrease in average O—O distance and emergence of fourfold

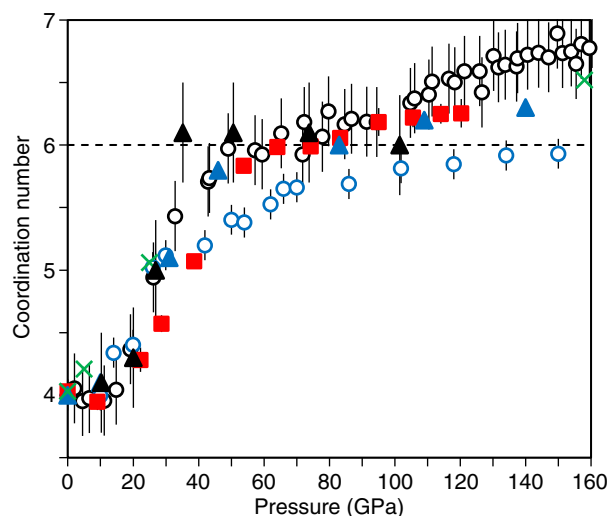


FIG. 3. Si coordination number in SiO_2 glass. Solid red squares: this study, solid black triangles [2], open black circles [3], solid blue triangles [7], and open blue circles [8]. Green crosses are Si coordination number of SiO_2 melt calculated by first-principles simulation [4].

coordinated oxygen above 100 GPa [9]. The average oxygen coordination number exceeding 3 above 100 GPa [9] means C_{Si} greater than 6, which is consistent with our observations. Combining data from this study and the four previous reports [2,3,7,9], we conclude that C_{Si} increases to ~ 6 between 35 and 54 GPa and stays more or less constant at ~ 6 up to ~ 100 GPa. Then, C_{Si} increases to more than 6 above ~ 100 GPa (Fig. 3). Only one study [8] reported C_{Si} lower than 6 at pressures up to 150 GPa. However, we note that, although the average C_{Si} values are somewhat lower than those of the above studies, the MD simulations reported by these authors show that population of $C_{\text{Si}} = 7$ species begins increasing above 110 GPa [8].

Several recent studies have discussed oxygen packing fraction (OPF) as a geometric parameter to understand evolution of coordination number in oxide glasses [3,7,11,24]. However, geometric factor for the structural evolution from $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ to >6 has not been well understood. Figure 4(a) shows the packing fractions of oxygen (OPF) and silicon (SiPF) of SiO_2 glass above 54 GPa, where C_{Si} is ~ 6 or higher. The OPF and SiPF values are derived from r_1 (Si—O distance) and r_2 (O—O distance) obtained in this study with the density data of SiO_2 glass from Ref. [25] (cf. Supplemental Material [14]). It is important to note that, in previous studies, radius of oxygen (r_{O}) is estimated from r_1 (Si—O distance) by assuming octahedral geometry for $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ (Ref. [24]) and Fe_2P -type structure with effective $C_{\text{Si}} = 8.5$ (Ref. [3]) as the end member for $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$. In this study, we derive r_{O} directly from measured r_2 , which provides direct information for the behavior of OPF with increasing pressure. The results show that OPF increases with pressure when C_{Si} is ~ 6 , which is consistent with previous studies [11,24]. However, OPF turns around and

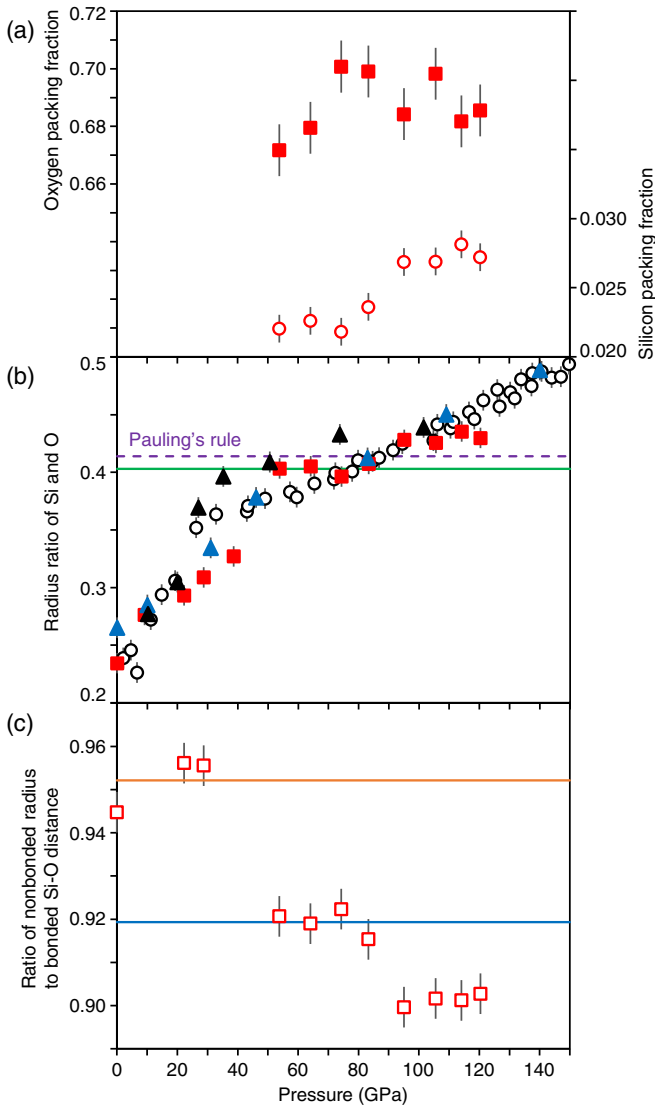


FIG. 4. (a) Oxygen (solid squares) and silicon (open circles) packing fraction of SiO_2 glass. (b) Radius ratio of Si and O, calculated from all the existing Si—O distance data (solid red squares: this study, solid black triangles [2], open black circles [3], solid blue triangles [7]). (c) Ratio of nonbonded radius to bonded Si—O distance.

starts to decrease above 95 GPa [Fig. 4(a)], where the C_{Si} clearly exceeds 6. In contrast, SiPF remains almost constant between 54 and 83 GPa, where C_{Si} is ~ 6 , and then increases above 95 GPa [Fig. 4(a)]. The change of SiPF above 83 GPa ($9.7 \times 10^{-5}/\text{GPa}$) is ~ 2.5 times higher than that at 54–83 GPa ($3.9 \times 10^{-5}/\text{GPa}$). The decrease in OPF and the steep increase in SiPF clearly indicate a relative increase in ionic radius of silicon due to the increase of C_{Si} to >6 above 95 GPa. These packing fractions, which are based on directly measured r_1 and r_2 distances, may be viewed as more robust indicators for the structural change from $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ to >6 in SiO_2 glass without having to rely on the determination of C_{Si} , which may be complicated by possible overlaps in the Si—O and O—O peaks in $g(r)$ [3].

The principle of determining coordinated polyhedron structures in view of atomic radii is known as Pauling's rule in crystalline systems [26], where coordination number of a cation in contact with a given number of anions with the shape of a coordinated polyhedron is rationalized by the ratio of the radius of the cation (Si) to that of the anion (O), $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$. Figure 4(b) shows $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ of SiO_2 glass as a function of pressure. Over a wide pressure range of ~ 50 to ~ 90 GPa, C_{Si} remains essentially constant at ~ 6 , and our obtained $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ is also almost constant at 0.403 ± 0.004 [green line in Fig. 4(b)], which is close to the minimum radius ratio of octahedral polyhedron according to Pauling's rule (0.414) [purple line in Fig. 4(b)]. Above 95 GPa, $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ begins to increase to greater than 0.403, which coincides with a modification of the Si—O polyhedron along with the increase of C_{Si} to >6 .

We have calculated the $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ values from the literature data based on x-ray diffraction [2,3,7] by using the reported Si—O distances and our observed r_{O} values at 1 bar and 54–120 GPa, based on a linear regression ($r_{\text{O}} = -1.182 \times 10^{-3} \times P + 1.281$, where P is pressure in GPa). The calculated $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ from Ref. [2,3,7] are consistent with our data. In particular, it is important to note that all the calculated $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ values of this study and previous studies [2,3,7] show a consistent behavior above ~ 90 GPa [Fig. 4(b)], which implies consistency in the local structural change among this study and previous studies in view of $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$, despite the reported discrepancies in C_{Si} . The discrepancy in C_{Si} may be attributed to the details of calculations in the determination of C_{Si} (area of the Si—O peak) because of possible overlaps in the Si—O and O—O peaks as discussed in Ref. [3]. The consistent behavior in the evolution of $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ among this study and previous studies [2,3,7], all of which are determined from the Si—O distance (peak position) in the $g(r)$, strongly suggests that a structural change from $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ to >6 takes place above ~ 95 GPa.

Reference [27] proposes an alternative approach to describe structural units by the ratio of nonbonded Si radius (R) to bonded Si—O distance (r_1), by considering the number of cations (Si) surrounding an anion (O). Simple geometric arguments show that for corner-shared one-angle configuration at ambient pressure, R/r_1 is ≤ 1.000 for OSi_2 , ≤ 0.866 for OSi_3 , and ≤ 0.816 for OSi_4 [27]. Following Ref. [27], we calculated nonbonded radius in SiO_2 glass from r_3 (the Si—Si distance) by $R = r_3/2$. R/r_1 shows high values of 0.945–0.956 at 0–29 GPa [orange line in Fig. 4(c)], where $C_{\text{Si}} = \sim 4$ (i.e., OSi_2), and decreases rapidly to 0.921 at 54 GPa, indicative of a coordination change from OSi_2 to OSi_3 (i.e., SiO_6) similar to crystalline stishovite [27]. Our R/r_1 value at 54 GPa is somewhat higher than that predicted for OSi_3 at ambient pressure [27]. The discrepancy may be due to possible existence of edge-shared two-angle configuration and/or minor amount of shorter $(\text{Si—Si})_1$ distance in SiO_2 glass as predicted in MD

and *ab initio* simulations [7,28]. R/r_1 stays nearly constant (0.922–0.915) between 54 and 83 GPa [blue line in Fig. 4(c)], indicating a stable structural configuration. Above 95 GPa, R/r_1 decreases sharply again, implying further structural change. A recent MD simulation predicted formation of OSi_4 in SiO_2 glass between 83 and 140 GPa [7], consistent with our observed decrease of R/r_1 above 95 GPa. It is important to note the consistency between the ionic radius ratio model [Fig. 4(b)] and the nonbonded radius model [Fig. 4(c)]. Both $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ and R/r_1 change rapidly between 29 and 54 GPa followed by a stable plateau at 54–83 GPa, considered as structural change in space filling structure from OSi_2 to OSi_3 and polyhedron structure from SiO_4 to SiO_6 . Then, above 95 GPa, both $\gamma(\text{Si}/\text{O})$ and R/r_1 change again simultaneously (Fig. 4), indicating further structural change in SiO_2 glass to $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$.

Our results of the structural evolution of SiO_2 glass to $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ above 95 GPa provide important implications not only for understanding the mechanism of the pressure-induced structural evolution of network-forming glasses in physics and materials sciences but also for discussing nature of silicate magmas in geophysics. It has been known that structural change from $C_{\text{Si}} = 4$ to 6 in silicate melt occurs at pressure conditions similar to that of SiO_2 glass [29,30]. Our data on SiO_2 glass imply that structural change to $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ may also occur in silicate melts at pressures above ~ 95 GPa. In fact, first-principles simulations gave C_{Si} of 6.52 in SiO_2 melt at ~ 158 GPa and 6000 K [4]. Such a C_{Si} value is similar to that of SiO_2 glass reported here (Fig. 3) and in Ref. [3]. Although evolution of average C_{Si} may vary between SiO_2 and more complex silicate compositions, several first-principles molecular dynamics simulations (e.g., basalt liquid [31]; MgSiO_3 liquid [32]; and glass [33]) report the occurrence of sevenfold coordination species above ~ 100 GPa. At room temperature and at 110 GPa, a density of SiO_2 glass of 5.27 ± 0.13 g/cm³ [25] is identical, within measurement errors, to that of CaCl_2 -type crystalline SiO_2 with $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ structure (5.31 g/cm³) [34]. First-principles simulations show that density of SiO_2 melt exceeds that of α - PbO_2 -type SiO_2 crystal with $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ structure (seifertite) at ~ 120 GPa and 3000 K [4]. Since silicate minerals all have $C_{\text{Si}} = 6$ structures throughout the Earth's lower mantle (up to ~ 136 GPa), silicate melts with $C_{\text{Si}} > 6$ structure may become denser than the surrounding mantle minerals at deep mantle conditions, making it possible for deep magma ocean to be gravitationally stable.

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