A comparison of silicon–oxygen bonding in quartz and magnesian olivine from X-ray spectra and molecular orbital calculations

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Abstract

X-ray photoelectron (XPS) and X-ray emission spectra (XES) show the valence region of magnesian olivine to be narrower than that of SiO₂. The observed narrowing of the upper valence region results from a destabilization of the 5a₄ and 4t₅ bonding orbitals of the SiO₄⁴⁻ unit in olivine indicative of weaker Si–O bonding. Molecular orbital calculations suggest that this destabilization is not a result of the change in the Si–O distance, but must be attributed to differences in the identity of the second-nearest-neighbor cations in quartz and olivine. The separation of the photoelectron peaks arising from the 3t₅ (O2s nonbonding) orbital and the 5a₄ (Si3s–O2p bonding) orbitals of the SiO₄⁴⁻ unit is used in a XPS-based theory of ionicity to calculate ionic characters of 58 and 63 percent for the Si–O bond in quartz and olivine, respectively.

Introduction

The idea that the silicon to oxygen bond is different in neso- and tektosilicates is not new. Ramberg (1952) developed a model to explain element partitioning between silicate minerals based on the idea that Si–O bond covalency increased with degree of polymerization. White and Gibbs (1967) have since related the decrease in energy of the main SiKβ X-ray emission in tektosilicates to stronger silicon–oxygen covalent bonding. However, in the past, such concepts were necessarily somewhat qualitative, since no reliable theoretical or experimental techniques existed for the quantitative assessment of covalency.

Recently quantum-mechanical calculations have been performed on the tetrahedral oxyanion SiO₄⁴⁻, using the SCF-Xα scattered wave MO method, and these calculations have been used to assign and interpret the X-ray emission, X-ray photoelectron, and UV spectra of quartz. (Tossell et al., 1973; Tossell, 1975a). However, one might expect the SiO₄⁴⁻ calculation to be a more accurate representation of the isolated SiO₄⁴⁻ tetrahedra found in nesosilicates. Quartz was chosen as the basis for comparison of calculation and experiment primarily because of the large amount of experimental data available for it. Relatively little experimental spectral data could be found for the nesosilicates. Fairly good agreement was obtained between the SiO₂ (quartz) data and the SCF-Xα calculation. There did, however, seem to be a somewhat greater discrepancy between calculation and experiment in the SiO₄⁴⁻ case than had been found in the case of SCF-XαMO calculations on similar oxyanions (Johnson and Smith, 1970; Tossell, 1975a).

Spectral studies from diverse sources which have since been examined have indicated measurable, and in some cases substantial, spectral differences between quartz and the nesosilicates (White and Gibbs, 1967; Kuroda and Iguchi, 1971; Nefedov et al., 1972). These spectral differences are in such a direction as to give improved agreement with the silicate SCF-Xα calculation. Systematic analysis of the X-ray spectra of the third-row oxyanions also suggests that the spectral energies of the SiO₄⁴⁻ group in SiO₂ are anomalous; i.e., they are inconsistent with the trends observed in the ionic salts of ClO₄⁻, SO₄²⁻ and PO₄³⁻. These three observations, i.e., (1) agreement between the SiO₄⁴⁻ calculation and the quartz experimental data that was poorer than that obtained for the oxyanions ClO₄⁻ and SO₄²⁻, (2) observed X-ray spectral differences between quartz and the nesosilicates, and (3) the anomalous position of the quartz experimental energies within the third row oxyanion series, encouraged a new effort to correlate the SiO₄⁴⁻ calculations with nesosilicate experimental data.

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The basic orbital structure of SiO$_4^4$

The highest occupied molecular orbital in the SiO$_4^4$ cluster is of symmetry type and number 1t$_1$. It is an oxygen 2p non-bonding orbital with an experimental ionization potential around 7 eV. At about 2 eV higher ionization potential are the 5t$_2$ and 1e orbitals which are essentially nonbonding, but do possess some silicon $p$ and $d$ character. Next lower in energy are the main bonding orbitals of the system, the 4t$_2$ and the 5a$_1$. In quartz these orbitals lie, respectively, 5 and 8 eV below the 1t$_1$. Finally, the lowest energy orbitals are the oxygen 2s orbitals, 3t$_2$ and 4a$_1$ which are essentially nonbonding. The orbital sets 1e, 5t$_2$, and 3t$_2$, 4a$_1$ do possess both oxygen and some Si character and make some contribution to the bond strength, but the major part of the Si–O bond strength derives from the 5a$_1$ and 4t$_2$ bonding orbitals. Therefore we might expect changes in Si–O bond strengths to be manifested by changes in the energies of the 5a$_1$ and 4t$_2$ orbitals.

Agreement between SCF-X$alpha$ calculation and experimental spectra for third-row tetrahedral oxyanions.

Absolute ionization potentials cannot be accurately determined from SCF-X$alpha$ cluster calculations, since the assumed stabilization of the cluster by a uniformly positively charged sphere is a crude approximation to the effect of the other atoms of the lattice. This problem is not particularly critical, since absolute experimental IP's are also difficult to obtain because of charging and relaxation effects. Therefore we shall simply set the experimental and calculated IP's to be equal for the highest occupied orbital, the 1t$_1$, and concentrate our attention upon calculated and experimental relative IP's. In Table 1 we compare calculated and experimental relative IP's for ClO$_4^-$, SO$_4^{2-}$, and SiO$_4^4$. All the calculations listed employed very similar schemes for choosing the parameters required as input to the SCF-X$alpha$ calculation, and all the experimental energies are obtained from X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, (XPS). Note that for each ion the calculated energies of the 5t$_2$, 1e and 4a$_1$, 3t$_2$ orbital sets are too high and that the errors are of similar magnitude for all three oxyanions. For ClO$_4^-$ these errors have since been reduced substantially by a slight modification of the calculational method (Norman, 1974). For the 5a$_1$ and 4t$_2$ orbitals, on the other hand, agreement of calculation and experiment is quite good for all the oxyanions except SiO$_4^4$, for which the experimental data used for comparison is the XPS of amorphous SiO$_2$. This discrepancy is particularly apparent in the case of the 4t$_2$ orbital. There seems to be no significant difference between the technique used in the SiO$_4^4$ calculation and that used for the other oxyanions; thus within the model of an isolated TO$_4^{2-}$ cluster no theoretical reason is apparent for the poorer 5a$_1$ and 4t$_2$ energies in SiO$_4^4$. Consideration of transition state rather than ground state orbital energies does not remove the discrepancy. (Tossell, 1976).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ClO$_4^-$</th>
<th>SO$_4^{2-}$</th>
<th>SiO$_4^4$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1t$_1$</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5t$_2$, 1e</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4t$_2$</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a$_1$</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
<td>-11.3</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3t$_2$</td>
<td>-20.7</td>
<td>-17.1</td>
<td>-19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a$_1$</td>
<td>-28.1</td>
<td>-23.4</td>
<td>-23.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Prins and Novakov (1971)
(b) Johnson and Smith (1970)
(c) XPS of amorphous SiO$_2$, Distefano and Eastman (1971)
(d) Tossell (1975a)
Spectra differences between quartz and nesosilicates

Kuroda and Iguchi (1971) have studied the $\text{SiL} X$-ray emission spectrum (XES) of quartz and several olivines. Their quartz spectrum is very similar to that of Ershov et al. (1966) which has been previously interpreted (Tossell et al., 1973; Tossell, 1975c). The lowest energy peak ($D$) arises from the $4a_1, O2s$ nonbonding orbital, and the two intense peaks ($C,A$) at higher energy from the $5a_1, bonding$ orbital and the $5t_2, 1e O2p$ nonbonding orbital set. A weak feature ($B$) intermediate between the two intense peaks is assigned to the $4t_2$ orbital. The spectra of Kuroda and Iguchi, reproduced in Figure 1, show measurable differences between quartz and magnesium-rich olivine (unfortunately the exact composition of the olivine is not given). The peaks $D$ derived from the $4a_1$, orbital and the peaks $A$ from $5t_2, 1e$ are at relative constant energy in the two spectra, but the $5a_1$ peak ($C$) occurs at $\sim 0.7$ eV higher energy in olivine. To obtain relative energies with respect to the $1t_1$ orbitals, assumed at constant energy because of their nonbonding nature, these energies should be corrected for the difference between the energy of the $\text{Si2p}$ orbital (the core orbital involved in $\text{SiL} X$ES) in quartz and its energy in olivine. Nefedov et al. (1972) have found the $\text{Si2p}$ binding energy to be higher in quartz than in olivine by about 0.7 eV. Combining the XPS and XES data we thus find the $4a_1, 5a_1,$ and $(5t_2, 1e)$ energies to be higher in olivine than in quartz by about 0.6, 1.4, and 0.8 eV, respectively. The width of the upper valence region in silicon oxides is determined by the $5a_1$ orbital energy. Thus, olivine with a less stable $5a_1$ orbital will have a narrower upper valence region than $\text{SiO}_2$.

The weak $4t_2$ feature is not resolvable in the olivine spectrum, so to determine its position we must study the $\text{SiK}\beta$ XES. The main peak in this spectrum arises from the $4t_2$ orbital, and its energy has been accurately determined for a number of silicates. White and Gibbs (1967) find the main $\text{SiK}\beta$ peak to be 1.1 eV higher in energy in olivine than in quartz. To determine the relative $4t_2$ orbital energies, we must also assess the relative $\text{Si1s}$ energies in these two minerals. $\text{Si1s}$ binding energies are very high and thus not readily measurable with most spectrometers, but since both the $\text{Si1s}$ and the $\text{Si2p}$ are deep core levels we expect their binding energies to shift in much the same way. We therefore set the difference of $\text{Si1s}$ binding energies equal to the value of 0.7 eV measured for the $\text{Si2p}$ shift. Using this value, the $4t_2$ orbital in olivines lies 1.8 eV higher in energy than that in quartz. In Table 2 the estimated olivine orbital energies relative to the $1t_1$ orbital are compared with those obtained from the $\text{SiO}_2$ XPS and from the SCF-X$\alpha$ calculations. It is apparent that the SCF-X$\alpha$ energies agree more closely with the olivine experimental energies than with those from $\text{SiO}_2$.

This result holds in spite of the fact that the Si-O distance [$R(\text{Si-O}) = 1.634\AA$ in $\text{Mg}_2\text{SiO}_4$; Birle et al., 1968] is larger in olivine than the value of 1.609Å found for quartz and used in the original SCF-X$\alpha$ calculation. The orbital energies resulting from an $\text{SiO}_4^+$ SCF-X$\alpha$ calculation with $R(\text{Si-O}) = 1.634\AA$ are also given in Table 2. Differences in orbital energies as a result of the Si-O distance variation are obviously very small. Therefore the SCF-X$\alpha$ calculations suggest that the difference in electronic structure of the $\text{SiO}_4^+$ oxyanion in quartz and olivine should not be attributed to the direct effect of variation in average Si-O distance.

Approximate LCAO MO calculations using previously described methods (Tossell, 1973) also indicate that average $4t_2$ and $5a_1$ orbital energies for an $\text{SiO}_4^+$ oxyanion with bond distance and angles as observed in olivine differ by less than 0.2 eV from those for a perfect tetrahedral cluster with the same average Si-O distance. Thus, distortion does not appear to have a strong effect on the orbital energies in the context of the isolated tetrahedron calculations. The large differences observed must then arise from

![Fig. 1. SiL XES quartz and (cleavable) olivine (from Kuroda and Iguchi (1971))](image-url)
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Table 2. Comparison of experimental quartz and olivine relative orbital energies with SCF-Xα results for R(Si-O) = 1.609 and 1.634Å

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orbital</th>
<th>4a1</th>
<th>3t2</th>
<th>5a1</th>
<th>4t2</th>
<th>1e,5t2</th>
<th>1t1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SiO2 XPS</td>
<td>-20.8</td>
<td>-18.4</td>
<td>-7.8</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivine XPS &amp; XES</td>
<td>-20.2</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference (SiO2 vs. olivine)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCF-Xα calc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R(Si-O) = 1.609Å</td>
<td>-17.4</td>
<td>-14.5</td>
<td>-7.4</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCF-Xα calc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R(Si-O) = 1.634Å</td>
<td>-17.2</td>
<td>-14.4</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference (1.609 vs. 1.634Å)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) DiStefano and Eastman (1971)
(b) Kuroda and Iguchi (1971), White and Gibbs (1977), Nefedov et al. (1972), orbital energies from XES with correction for shift of core levels measured by XPS
(c) Tossell (1975a)
(d) present work

the identity of the cations next-nearest-neighbor to Si, or similarly, from the extent of silicate polymerization. This conclusion is identical to that previously reached on the basis of approximate SCF-MO calculations (Tossell, 1973). Observed changes in SiKβ spectral intensities have been interpreted on a similar basis (Wiech et al., 1976). The rate of change of the 4t2 orbital energy as a function of distance calculated using the SCF-Xα method is also in good agreement with the previous estimate obtained from approximate LCAO MO calculations (Tossell, 1973).

Anomalous spectral energies in quartz compared to those for ionic salts of ClO4-, SO42-, PO43- and SiO44-

The above analysis of the spectral differences between olivine and quartz is supported by comparison of the quartz XPS data with XPS studies (Prins, 1974) of the lithium salts of third-row oxyanions in which the TO₄⁻ are isolated from one another. Figure 2 shows relative quartz XPS energies, along with Prins’ XPS energies for the ionic salts. It is clear that energy trends within the series of ionic salts are internally consistent and that the quartz XPS energies are anomalously low (i.e. the orbitals of SiO₂ are more stable than those of Li₃SiO₄). The estimated lowering of the quartz orbitals from the data in Figure 2 are 0.8, 0.9, and 1.3 eV for the (1e, 5t2), 4t2, and 5a₁ orbitals respectively, in acceptable agreement with the previous estimates from XES and core XPS spectra. The Li₃SiO₄ vs. SiO₂ comparison further supports the contention that degree of polymerization strongly affects valence orbital energies.

Spectral ionicities of the Si-O bond in quartz and olivine

Recently Kowalczyk et al. (1974) have developed a method for estimating ionicity from XPS valence band spectra for AB compounds. They measure the energies of two orbitals, one of B₂s nonbonding type and the other of A₂s-B bonding type. The appropriate orbitals in the Si-O system are the 3t₂ (O2s nonbonding) and the 5a₁ (Si3s-O2p bonding). The experimental energy difference is expressed as the sum of a covalent term, dependent only upon nearest-neighbor distance, and an ionic term. The covalent term is given by the simple expression $\Delta E_c = 8.0 - 2.2d$, where the energy is in eV and d, the nearest neighbor distance, is in Å. The ionic term is then the difference; $\Delta E_i = \Delta E_{XPS} - \Delta E_c$, and the fractional ionicity is defined as $\delta_{PS(AB)} = \Delta E_i/\Delta E_{XPS}$. This ionicity calculation is similar to that performed earlier by Phillips (1970) (who used dielectric constant data) and by Grobman et al. (1973). Although a strict correspondence with the Phillips model can be made only for AB compounds, we expect that relative Si-O bond ionicities in SiO₂ and Mg₂SiO₄ should be meaningful and semiquantitatively comparable to those for AB compounds. Assuming the 3t₂ orbital energies to be
equal in SiO₂ and Mg₂SiO₄ (consistent with the near equality of 4a₁ energies) and using 5a₁ energies from Table 2, we calculate ionicities of 58 and 63 percent for the Si-O bond in SiO₂ and Mg₂SiO₄, respectively. Both values are well below the value of 67 percent determined as the transition value between four- and six-coordination for many compounds (Kowalezyk et al., 1974).

**Differences in electron distribution between olivine and quartz**

The effect of polymerization upon the energies of the Si-O bonding orbitals is evident from the X-ray data. A determination of the effects of polymerization upon the electron density distribution is more difficult. Approximate LCAO MO calculations indicate that the Si atom becomes more positive as polymerization increases (Tossell, 1973). The calculated trend is in agreement with trends in Si2p binding energies (Nefedov et al., 1972) and with atomic charges estimated from SiK XES (Urusov, 1970). Approximate LCAO calculations indicate that much of the reduction in electron density on Si takes place within the set of O2s nonbonding orbitals, changes in electron distribution with the bonding orbital set being rather small. On the other hand, a lowering in energy of a bonding orbital certainly implies more covalency corresponding to more charge in the bonding region. To clarify this situation we require more accurate calculations on polymeric systems and direct analysis of electron density distributions, e.g. from X-ray minus neutron diffraction maps, as opposed to Mulliken charge analyses which are highly basis set dependent.

**The influence of Si–O bond strength upon the stability of olivine**

Das Gupta (1952) suggested a method for estimating heats of formation from K XES energies. This method has been discussed by Tossell (1975b) and a generalized alternative suggested. The new method gave acceptable results for the heats of atomization of SiO₂, Al₂O₃, and MgO. Briefly, the method sums the measured ionization potentials for the electrons of the free atoms and the solid compound, and corrects the molecular sum for charging and polarization effects by reducing each IP by a constant energy, chosen to give best fit with experiment. The difference in IP sum between the 12 valence electrons in SiO₂ and the 12 valence electrons in the hypothetical SiO₂ molecule within Mg₂SiO₄ is about 180 kcal/mole, with the olivine “SiO₂” being less stable. However, Mg₂SiO₄ has a heat of formation of −15.2 kcal/mole with respect to SiO₂ + 2MgO. Therefore the weakening of the Si–O bond in Mg₂SiO₄ must be compensated by a strengthening of the Mg–O bonds or by a change in the absolute ionization potentials of the entire orbital set. Iguchi (1974) has also found somewhat different SiL spectral widths, and consequently different orbital energy separations in Mg, Fe, and Ni olivines. The Ni olivines have the most stable 5a₁ orbital. The effect of different cations on the energies of Si–O bonding orbitals may influence the stability of cations within the olivine lattice.

**Conclusion**

Experimental X-ray photoelectron and emission spectra show differences in Si–O bonding orbital energies between quartz and olivine which are consistent with the results of molecular orbital calculations for the third-row tetrahedral oxyanions. These differences appear to be a result not of differences in Si–O distances, but rather of differences in second-nearest-neighbor identity. The orbital energy differences are substantial, indicating that Si–O
bonds in olivine are considerably weaker than those in quartz. Conversely, the stability of Mg$_2$SiO$_4$, relative to 2MgO + SiO$_2$ requires the Mg–O bonds to be stronger in olivine than in MgO.

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