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- (71) **Applicant: DRAGONFLY INSULATION LIMITED**
[GB/GB]; 9d Marquis Court, Low Prudhoe, Prudhoe
Northumberland NE42 6PJ (GB).
- (72) **Inventor: HAN, Xiao**; 9d Marquis Court, Low Prudhoe,
Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 6PJ (GB).
- (74) **Agent: DEFINITION IP LIMITED**; The Core, Newcas-
tle Helix, Bath Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear
NE4 5TF (GB).

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(54) **Title:** METHODS OF PREPARING SILICA AEROGELS AND AEROGELS PREPARED THEREBY

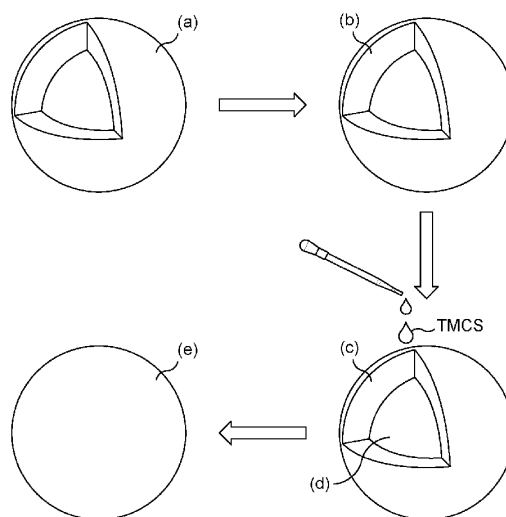


FIG. 1

(57) **Abstract:** The present invention relates to aerogels, and more particularly to ambient pressure methods for the synthesis of silica aerogels. In embodiments, the invention relates to methods for preparing controlled-shape fibre reinforced silica aerogel composites.

[Continued on next page]

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