

The cosmic 21-cm revolution: charting the first billion years of our Universe

Andrei Mesinger

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Preface

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Remember that references need to be at the chapter level and you may find the package **chapterbib** useful for this.

About the Author



Remember to include a brief biography of the Authors or Editors, including a photo.

Contributors

Gianni Bernardi

INAF - Istituto di Radio Astronomia
via Gobetti 101, 40129, Bologna, Italy &
Department of Physics and Electronics
Rhodes University
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa

Lincoln J. Greenhill

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics
60 Garden St, Mail Stop 42
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

Bradley Greig

School of Physics
The University of Melbourne
Parkville, Melboune VIC, Australia

Vibor Jelić

Ruđer Bošković Institute
Zagreb, Croatia

Peter Jones

Department of Physics
University of New England
Acadia, Maine, USA

Jonathan Pritchard

Blackett Laboratory
Imperial College
London, UK

Simon Smith

Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Oxbridge, Camford, USA

Cathryn M. Trott

International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research
Curtin University, Bentley WA, Australia

Emma Chapman

Blackett Laboratory
Imperial College
London, UK

Chapter 1

Astrophysics from the 21-cm background

Jordan Mirocha

The goal of this chapter is to describe the astrophysics encoded by the 21-cm background. We will begin in §1.1 with a general introduction to radiative transfer and ionization chemistry in gas of primordial composition. Then, in §1.2, we will introduce techniques used to model the UV and X-ray backgrounds that drive re-ionization and re-heating of the intergalactic medium (IGM). In §1.3, we will provide a review of the most plausible sources of ionization and heating in the early Universe, and in §1.4, we will summarize the status of current 21-cm predictions, build some intuition for how different model parameters affect the observable signals, and highlight the modeling tools available today.

1.1 Properties of the High- z Intergalactic Medium

In this section we provide a general introduction to the intergalactic medium (IGM) and how its properties are expected to evolve with time. We will start with a brief recap of the 21-cm brightness temperature (1.1.1), then turn our attention to its primary dependencies, the ionization state and temperature of the IGM, and the radiative processes relevant to their evolution on scales large and small (§1.1.2). Readers familiar with the basic physics may skip ahead to §1.2, in which we focus specifically on how this physics is modeled in 21-cm modeling codes.

1.1.1 The brightness temperature

The differential brightness temperature¹ of a patch of the IGM at redshift z and position \mathbf{x} is given by²

$$\delta T_b(z, \mathbf{x}) \simeq 27(1 + \delta)(1 - x_i) \left(\frac{\Omega_{b,0} h^2}{0.023} \right) \left(\frac{0.15}{\Omega_{m,0} h^2} \frac{1+z}{10} \right)^{1/2} \left(1 - \frac{T_R}{T_S} \right), \quad (1.1)$$

¹Can replace this first sub-section with pointers to Chapter 1 to avoid redundancy.

²Refer back to Chapter 1 for a more detailed introduction.

where δ is the baryonic overdensity relative to the cosmic mean, x_i is the ionized fraction, T_R is the radiation background temperature (generally the CMB, $T_R = T_\gamma$), and

$$T_S^{-1} \approx \frac{T_R^{-1} + x_c T_K^{-1} + x_\alpha T_\alpha^{-1}}{1 + x_c + x_\alpha}. \quad (1.2)$$

is the spin temperature, which quantifies the level populations in the ground state of the hydrogen atom, and itself depends on the kinetic temperature, T_K , and “colour temperature” of the Lyman- α radiation background, T_α . Because the IGM is optically thick to Ly- α photons, the approximation $T_K \approx T_\alpha$ is generally very accurate.

The collisional coupling coefficients, x_c , themselves depend on the gas density, ionization state, and temperature, and were computed as a function of temperature in [38]. The radiative coupling coefficient, x_α , depends on the Ly- α intensity, J_α , via

$$x_\alpha = \frac{S_\alpha}{1+z} \frac{\hat{J}_\alpha}{J_{\alpha,0}} \quad (1.3)$$

where

$$J_{\alpha,0} \equiv \frac{16\pi^2 T_\star e^2 f_\alpha}{27A_{10} T_{\gamma,0} m_e c}. \quad (1.4)$$

\hat{J}_α is the angle-averaged intensity of Ly- α photons in units of $\text{s}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-2} \text{Hz}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1}$, S_α is a correction factor that accounts for variations in the background intensity near line-center [5, 12, 17], m_e and e are the electron mass and charge, respectively, f_α is the Ly- α oscillator strength, $T_{\gamma,0}$ is the CMB temperature today, and A_{10} is the Einstein A coefficient for the 21-cm transition.

A more detailed introduction to collisional and radiative coupling can be found in Chapter 1. For the purposes of this chapter, the key takeaway from Equations 1.1-1.3 is simply that the 21-cm background probes the ionization field, kinetic temperature field, and Ly- α background intensity. We quickly review the basics of non-equilibrium ionization chemistry in the next sub-section (§1.1.2) before moving on to techniques used to model these properties of the IGM in §1.2.

1.1.2 Basics of Non-Equilibrium Ionization Chemistry

As described in the previous section, the 21-cm brightness temperature of a patch of the IGM depends on the ionization and thermal state of the gas, as well as the incident Ly- α intensity³. The evolution of the ionization and temperature are coupled and so must be evolved self-consistently. The number density of hydrogen and helium ions in a static medium can be

³Note that Ly- α photons can transfer energy to the gas though we omit this dependence from the current discussion (see §1).

written as the following set of coupled differential equations⁴:

$$\frac{dn_{\text{H II}}}{dt} = (\Gamma_{\text{H I}} + \gamma_{\text{H I}} + \beta_{\text{H I}} n_e) n_{\text{H I}} - \alpha_{\text{H II}} n_e n_{\text{H II}} \quad (1.5)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dn_{\text{He II}}}{dt} &= (\Gamma_{\text{He I}} + \gamma_{\text{He I}} + \beta_{\text{He I}} n_e) n_{\text{He I}} + \alpha_{\text{He III}} n_e n_{\text{He III}} - (\beta_{\text{He II}} + \alpha_{\text{He II}} + \xi_{\text{He II}}) n_e n_{\text{He II}} \\ &\quad - (\Gamma_{\text{He II}} + \gamma_{\text{He II}}) n_{\text{He II}} \end{aligned} \quad (1.6)$$

$$\frac{dn_{\text{He III}}}{dt} = (\Gamma_{\text{He II}} + \gamma_{\text{He II}} + \beta_{\text{He II}} n_e) n_{\text{He II}} - \alpha_{\text{He III}} n_e n_{\text{He III}}. \quad (1.7)$$

Each of these equations represents the balance between ionizations of species H I, He I, and He II, and recombinations of H II, He II, and He III. Associating the index i with absorbing species, $i = \text{H I}, \text{He I}, \text{He II}$, and the index i' with ions, $i' = \text{H II}, \text{He II}, \text{He III}$, we define Γ_i as the photo-ionization rate coefficient, γ_i as the rate coefficient for ionization by photo-electrons [31, 15], $\alpha_{i'}(\xi_{i'})$ as the case-B (dielectric) recombination rate coefficients, β_i as the collisional ionization rate coefficients, and $n_e = n_{\text{H II}} + n_{\text{He II}} + 2n_{\text{He III}}$ as the number density of electrons.

While the coefficients α , β , and ξ only depend on the gas temperature, the photo- and secondary-ionization coefficients, Γ and γ , depend on input from astrophysical sources and thus constitute the bulk of the challenge for theoretical models. We will revisit these coefficients in more detail momentarily.

The final equation necessary in a primordial chemical network is that governing the kinetic temperature evolution, which we can write as a sum of various heating and cooling processes, i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{3}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{k_B T_k n_{\text{tot}}}{\mu} \right) &= f^{\text{heat}} \sum_i n_i \Lambda_i - \sum_i \zeta_i n_e n_i - \sum_{i'} \eta_{i'} n_e n_{i'} \\ &\quad - \sum_i \psi_i n_e n_i - \omega_{\text{He II}} n_e n_{\text{He II}}. \end{aligned} \quad (1.8)$$

Here, Λ_i is the photo-electric heating rate coefficient (due to electrons previously bound to species i), $\omega_{\text{He II}}$ is the dielectric recombination cooling coefficient, and ζ_i , $\eta_{i'}$, and ψ_i are the collisional ionization, recombination, and collisional excitation cooling coefficients, respectively, where primed indices i' indicate ions HII, HeII, and HeIII, while unprimed indices i indicate neutrals HI, HeI, and HeII. The constants in Equation (1.8) are the total number density of baryons, $n_{\text{tot}} = n_{\text{H}} + n_{\text{He}} + n_e$, the mean molecular weight, μ , Boltzmann's constant, k_B , and the fraction of photo-electron energy deposited as heat, f^{heat} [31, 15]. Formulae to compute the values of α_i , β_i , ξ_i , ζ_i , $\eta_{i'}$, ψ_i , and $\omega_{\text{He II}}$, are compiled in numerous sources [11].

These equations do not yet explicitly take into account the cosmic expansion, which dilutes the density and adds an adiabatic cooling term to Eq. 1.8, however these generalizations are straightforward to implement in practice, as we will show in the next section. For the duration of this chapter we will operate within this simple chemical network, ignoring, e.g., molecular species like H₂ and HD whose cooling channels are important in primordial gases. Though an interesting topic in their own right, molecular processes reside in the “subgrid”

⁴Gabriel Altay pointed out a typo in my He equations many years ago...make sure that's fixed.

component of most 21-cm models, given that they influence how, when, and where stars are able to form (see §1.3), but do not directly affect the bulk properties of the IGM on large scales to which 21-cm measurements are sensitive.

1.1.3 Ionization and Heating Around Point Sources

In order to build intuition for the progression of ionization and heating in the IGM it is instructive to consider the impact of a single point source of UV and X-ray photons on its surroundings. Many early works focused on such 1-D radiative transfer problems, and many have subsequently been implemented in full cosmological calculations ([citations](#)). In principle, this is the ideal way to simulate reionization – iterating over all sources in a cosmological volume and for each one applying 1-D radiative transfer techniques over the surrounding 4π steradians. In practice, such approaches are computationally expensive, and while they provide detailed predictions ([citations](#)), more approximate techniques are required to survey the parameter space and perform inference ([citations](#); see Brad’s chapter).

In 1-D, the change in the intensity of a ray of photons, I_ν , is a function of the path length, s , the emissivity of sources along the path, j_ν , and the absorption coefficient, α_ν ,

$$dI_\nu = j_\nu - \alpha_\nu I_\nu. \quad (1.9)$$

If considering a point source, $j_\nu = 0$, we can integrate to obtain

$$I_\nu(s) = I_{\nu,0} \exp \left[- \int_0^s \alpha_\nu(s') ds' \right], \quad (1.10)$$

i.e., the intensity of photons declines exponentially along the ray. It is customary to define the optical depth, τ_ν , as

$$d\tau_\nu = \alpha_\nu ds, \quad (1.11)$$

in which case we can write

$$I_\nu(s) = I_{\nu,0} e^{-\tau_\nu}. \quad (1.12)$$

In the reionization context, the optical depth of interest is that of the IGM, which is composed of (almost) entirely hydrogen and helium⁵, in which case the optical depth is

$$\tau_\nu = \sum_i \sigma_{\nu,i} N_i \quad (1.13)$$

where $i = \text{H}\text{I}, \text{He}\text{I}, \text{He}\text{II}$, and $N_i = \int_0^s ds' n_i(s')$ is the column density of each species along the ray.

With a solution for $I_\nu(s)$ in hand, one can determine the photoionization and heating rates by integrating over all photon frequencies and weighting by the bound-free absorption cross section for each species. For example, the photoionization rate coefficient for hydrogen is given by

$$\Gamma_{\text{H}\text{I}}(s) = \int_{v_{\text{H}\text{I}}}^{\infty} \sigma_{\text{H}\text{I}} I_\nu(s) \frac{dv}{hv} \quad (1.14)$$

⁵Note that metals on small scales will also contribute some opacity, though in most models it is galaxies themselves that are the point sources of radiation from which we solve the RTE, rather than individual sources within galaxies. As a result, one’s choice of source spectrum should encode any intrinsic attenuation from metals (or H and He) in the interstellar medium. See §1.3 for more details.

where v_{HI} is the frequency of the hydrogen ionization threshold, $h\nu = 13.6 \text{ eV}$.

Note that in practice the RTE is solved on a grid, in which case it may be difficult to achieve high enough spatial resolution to ensure photon conservation. For example, a discretized version of Eq. 1.14 uses the intensity of radiation incident upon the face of a resolution element to calculate the photoionization rate within that element, but the radiation incident on the subsequent resolution element is not guaranteed correctly reflect the attenuation within the preceding element. As a result, in order to guarantee photon conservation, it is common to slightly reframe the calculation as follows [2]:

$$\Gamma_i = A_i \int_{v_i}^{\infty} I_v e^{-\tau_v} \left(1 - e^{-\Delta\tau_{i,v}}\right) \frac{dv}{hv} \quad (1.15)$$

$$\gamma_{ij} = A_j \int_{v_j}^{\infty} \left(\frac{v - v_j}{v_i}\right) I_v e^{-\tau_v} \left(1 - e^{-\Delta\tau_{j,v}}\right) \frac{dv}{hv} \quad (1.16)$$

$$\Lambda_i = A_i \int_{v_i}^{\infty} (v - v_i) I_v e^{-\tau_v} \left(1 - e^{-\Delta\tau_{i,v}}\right) \frac{dv}{v}, \quad (1.17)$$

The normalization constant in each expression is defined as $A_i \equiv L_{\text{bol}}/n_i V_{\text{sh}}(r)$, where V_{sh} is the volume of a shell in this 1-D grid of concentric spherical shells, each having thickness Δr and volume $V_{\text{sh}}(r) = 4\pi[(r + \Delta r)^3 - r^3]/3$, where r is the distance between the origin and the inner interface of each shell. We denote the ionization threshold energy for species i as $h\nu_i$. I_v represents the SED of radiation sources, and satisfies $\int_v I_v dv = 1$, such that $L_{\text{bol}}I_v = L_v$. Note that the total secondary ionization rate for a given species is the sum of ionizations due to the secondary electrons from all species, i.e., $\gamma_i = f_{\text{ion}} \sum_j \gamma_{ij} n_j / n_i$.

These expressions preserve photon number by inferring the number of photo-ionizations of species i in a shell from the radiation incident upon it and its optical depth [2],

$$\Delta\tau_{i,v} = n_i \sigma_{i,v} \Delta r. \quad (1.18)$$

This quantity is not to be confused with the total optical depth between source and shell, $\tau_v = \tau_v(r)$, which sets the incident radiation field upon each shell, i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} \tau_v(r) &= \sum_i \int_0^r \sigma_{i,v} n_i(r') dr' \\ &= \sum_i \sigma_{i,v} N_i(r) \end{aligned} \quad (1.19)$$

where N_i is the column density of species i at distance r from the source.

In words, Equations 1.15-1.17 are propagating photons from a source at the origin, with bolometric luminosity L_{bol} , and tracking the attenuation suffered between the source and some volume element of interest at radius r , $e^{-\tau}$, and the attenuation within that volume element, $\Delta\tau$, which results in ionization and heating. In each case, we integrate over the contribution from photons at all frequencies above the ionization threshold, additionally modifying the integrands for γ_{ij} and Λ_i with $(v - v_i)$ -like factors to account for the fact that both the number of photo-electrons (proportional to $(v - v_j)/v_i$) and their energy (proportional to $v - v_i$) that determine the extent of secondary ionization and photo-electric heating. **Forgot to put the factors f_{heat} and f_{ion} in above equations.**

Equations 1.15-1.17 can be solved once a source luminosity, L_{bol} , spectral shape, I_{ν} , and density profile of the surrounding medium, $n(r)$, have been specified. In practice, to avoid performing these integrals on each step of an ODE solver (for Eqs. 1.5-1.8), the results can be tabulated as a function of τ or column density, N_i , where $\tau_{i,\nu} = \sigma_{i,\nu} N_i$ [35, 25].

Show some example results from, e.g., Thomas et al. 2008.

1.1.4 Ionization and Heating on Large Scales

While the procedure outlined in the previous section is relevant to small-scale ionization and heating, i.e., that which is driven by a single (or perhaps a few) source(s) close to a volume element of interest, it is also instructive to consider the ionization and heating caused by a *population* of sources separated by great distances. In this limit, rather than considering the luminosity of a single source at the origin of a 1-D grid, we treat the volume-averaged emissivity of sources in a large “chunk” of the Universe, and solve for the evolution of the mean intensity in this volume.

The transfer equation now takes its cosmological form, i.e.,

$$\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - v H(z) \frac{\partial}{\partial v} \right) J_{\nu}(z) + 3H(z) J_{\nu}(z) = \frac{c}{4\pi} \varepsilon_{\nu}(z) (1+z)^3 - c \alpha_{\nu} J_{\nu}(z) \quad (1.20)$$

where J_{ν} is the mean intensity in units of $\text{erg s}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-2} \text{Hz}^{-1} \text{sr}^{-1}$, v is the observed frequency of a photon at redshift z , related to the emission frequency, v' , of a photon emitted at redshift z' as

$$v' = v \left(\frac{1+z'}{1+z} \right), \quad (1.21)$$

$\alpha_{\nu} = n \sigma_{\nu}$ is the absorption coefficient, not to be confused with recombination rate coefficient, α_{HII} , and ε_{ν} is the co-moving emissivity of sources.

The optical depth, $d\tau = \alpha_{\nu} ds$, experienced by a photon at redshift z and emitted at z' is a sum over absorbing species,

$$\bar{\tau}_{\nu}(z, z') = \sum_j \int_z^{z'} n_j(z'') \sigma_{j,\nu''} \frac{dl}{dz''} dz'' \quad (1.22)$$

To be fully general, one must iteratively solve this and J_{ν} . In practice, you can tabulate τ and it works pretty good.

The solution to Equation 1.20 assuming X, Y, and Z is

$$\hat{J}_{\nu}(z) = \frac{c}{4\pi} (1+z)^2 \int_z^{z_f} \frac{\varepsilon'_{\nu}(z')}{H(z')} e^{-\bar{\tau}_{\nu}} dz'. \quad (1.23)$$

where z_f is the “first light redshift” when astrophysical sources first turn on, H is the Hubble parameter, and the other variables take on their usual meaning. Talk briefly about how this can be solved efficiently.

With the background intensity in hand, one can solve for the rate coefficients for ionization and heating, and evolve the ionization state and temperature of the gas. These coefficients are equivalent to those for the 1-D problem (Eqs. 1.15-1.17), though the intensity

of radiation at some distance R from the source has been replaced by the mean background intensity. They are:

$$\Gamma_{\text{HI}}(z) = 4\pi n_{\text{H}}(z) \int_{v_{\min}}^{v_{\max}} \hat{J}_v \sigma_{v,\text{HI}} dv \quad (1.24)$$

$$\gamma_{\text{HI}}(z) = 4\pi \sum_j n_j \int_{v_{\min}}^{v_{\max}} f_{\text{ion}} \hat{J}_v \sigma_{v,j} (hv - hv_j) \frac{dv}{hv} \quad (1.25)$$

$$\epsilon_X(z) = 4\pi \sum_j n_j \int_{v_{\min}}^{v_{\max}} f^{\text{heat}} \hat{J}_v \sigma_{v,j} (hv - hv_j) dv \quad (1.26)$$

Note similarities between these equations and the 1-D example in previous section.

1.2 Techniques for Modeling the IGM

In the previous section we introduced the basics of ionization chemistry and radiative transfer in a primordial medium, and explored extreme limits on very small and very large scales. These limits bracket the range of possibilities for volume elements, which “see” radiation from a single (or few) source(s) nearby or the combined radiative output of many sources at cosmological distances. **Reality is often somewhere between.** The mean free path of photons in a hydrogen-only medium is [21]

$$\lambda_{\text{HI}} \approx 7x_{\text{HI}}^{-1} \left(\frac{hv}{200 \text{ eV}} \right)^{2.6} \left(\frac{1+z}{10} \right)^{-2} \text{ cMpc}, \quad (1.27)$$

i.e., mean-free paths for UV photons with $hv < 0.1 \text{ keV}$ (or so) are very short. Because the mean free paths of UV photons are short, the IGM is divided roughly into two different phases: (i) a fully-ionized phase composed of “bubbles,” which grow around UV sources, and (ii) a “bulk IGM” phase outside bubbles in which ionization and heating is dominated by X-rays. The boundaries between these two phases can become fuzzy if reionization is driven by sources with hard spectra. However, even in such cases, the two-phase picture is a useful conceptual framework for understanding evolution in the 21-cm background, and provides a basis for approximations to the radiative transfer that have enabled the development of more efficient approaches to modeling the 21-cm background.

In this section, we describe the evolution of the ionization and temperature fields in this two-zone framework, in each case focusing first on the volume-averaged evolution relevant to the global 21-cm signal, and then the spatial structure relevant for 21-cm fluctuations. We will revisit extensions of the two-phase approximation in later sections.

Note that for now, we will not specify the properties of UV and X-ray sources, but instead fold their properties into a single time-, frequency-, and position-dependent emissivity, $\epsilon = \epsilon_v(z, R)$. Models for ϵ will be put forth in §1.3, from which 21-cm predictions will follow in §1.4.

1.2.1 The Density Field

Do we want to delve into this here?

1.2.2 The Ionization Field

Global Evolution

In the two phase approximation of the IGM, the volume-averaged ionized fraction is a weighted average between the fully-ionized phase, with volume filling fraction Q_{HII} , and the (likely) low-level ionization in the bulk IGM phase, characterized by its electron fraction, x_e , i.e.⁶,

$$\bar{x}_i = Q_{\text{HII}} + (1 - Q_{\text{HII}})x_e \quad (1.28)$$

In the limit of negligible ionization in the bulk IGM phase, $\bar{x}_i \approx Q_{\text{HII}}$, we recover the standard ionization balance equation for reionization (e.g., Madau et al., others),

$$\frac{dQ_{\text{HII}}}{dt} = n_{\text{H I}}\Gamma_{\text{HI}} - n_e n_{\text{H II}}\alpha_{\text{HII}} \quad (1.29)$$

where we have written the rate coefficient for photo-ionization generically as **the ionization photon production rate**...We have also neglected collisional ionization and ionization by hot photo-electrons, though such effects could be absorbed into Γ_{HI} ⁷.

The mean ionization history is currently only crudely constrained. High- z quasar spectra suggest that reionization ended at $z \sim 6$ but provide no information on the detailed history. The CMB optical depth provides an integral constraint on reionization, i.e.,

$$\tau_e = \int_0^{R_{\text{ls}}} ds n_e(s) \sigma_T \quad (1.30)$$

where $\sigma_T = 6.65 \times 10^{-25} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ is the Thomson cross section, and R_{ls} is the distance to the last scattering surface, and thus only roughly constrains the timing and duration of reionization.

In principle there is much more information in the spatial fluctuations in the ionization field, simple models for which we discuss in the next section.

Show predictions for Q_{HII} compared to constraints from CMB, quasars, LAEs.

Spatial Structure

While the evolution of the average ionized fraction contains a wealth of information about the properties of UV (and perhaps X-ray) sources in the early Universe, fluctuations in the ionization field contain much more information. Indeed, the patchy “swiss cheese” structure generic to UV-driven reionization scenarios provided the initial impetus to study reionization via 21-cm interferometry [20].

If computational resources were no issue, radiative transfer simulations would be the ideal tool to approach this problem for reasons that will be apparent momentarily. However, once again, the two-phase approximation opens the door to a simple statistical treatment of

⁶Note that we should be more careful about x_e and $x_{\text{H II}}$. the former is important for collisional coupling, the latter for \bar{x}_i

⁷Secondary ionization is generally unimportant in HII regions since stars do not emit much above 1 Rydberg. As a result, photo-electrons are incapable of causing further ionization, and instead deposit most of their energy in heat or collisional excitation.

fluctuations in the ionization field. Given that 21-cm fluctuation efforts are geared largely toward measuring the 21-cm power spectrum, here we restrict our discussion to the ionization power spectrum, which forms a part of the 21-cm power spectrum that we will describe in more detail in §1.4. We will follow closely the early work of [13] in what follows.

The power spectrum of the ionization field is simply the Fourier transform of its two-point correlation function, which we can write as

$$\xi \equiv \langle x_i x'_i \rangle - \langle x_i \rangle^2, \quad (1.31)$$

where x_i is the ionized fraction at a point \mathbf{p} , while x'_i is the ionized fraction at a point $\mathbf{p}' = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{R}$, i.e., a different point a distance \mathbf{R} from the first point. The expectation value is related to the joint probability, i.e.,

$$\langle x_i x'_i \rangle = \int dx_i \int dx'_i x_i x'_i f(x_i, x'_i). \quad (1.32)$$

If we now assume that ionization in the “bulk” IGM is negligible, x_i is a binary field, taking on values of 0 or 1 exclusively. In this limit, the expectation value is simply

$$\langle x_i x'_i \rangle = f(x_i = 1, x'_i = 1) \equiv P_{ii}, \quad (1.33)$$

i.e., $\langle x_i x'_i \rangle$ is equivalent to the probability that both points are ionized.

Now, to model the probability of ionization we first assume that the ionizatoin field is composed of discrete, spherical bubbles, with size distribution dn/dR . Then, taking inspiration from the halo model [6], we can write P_{ii} as the sum of two terms,

$$P_{ii} = P_{ii,1b} + P_{ii,2b} \quad (1.34)$$

where the first term encodes the probability that both points are within a single bubble (hence the “1b” subscript), while the second term is the probability that points are in two different bubbles.

Two points separated by r_{12} can be ionized by the same bubble so long as the diameter of the bubble is the distance between the points or greater. For bubbles bigger than the absolute minimum (r_{12}), there is an “overlap region,” with volume \mathcal{V} , in which a bubble of mass m can ionize both points.

If p_1 is ionized, then the probability that p_2 is ionized by the same source will be equal to the probability that a sufficiently large source, with mass m , resides within the overlap region of p_1 and p_2 , whose volume depends on their separation. The overlap region, V_o , is thus given by the area of intersection between two spheres, assumed here to have the same radius R , placed a distance r_{12} apart,

$$\mathcal{V} = \begin{cases} \frac{4}{3}\pi R(m)^2 - \pi r_{12} \left[R(m)^2 - \frac{r_{12}^2}{12} \right] & r_{12} \leq 2R(m) \\ 0 & r_{12} > 2R(m) \end{cases} \quad (1.35)$$

We will denote the probability that two points are ionized by a source of mass m as $P[m, \mathcal{V}(m, r_{12})]$.

This argument results in an infinite sum over probabilities, with each successive terms corresponding to the probability that a point is ionized by increasingly large bubbles (accounting for the probability that smaller bubbles could *not* ionize both points, i.e., the product of the negation of all previous terms), i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned} P_{ii,1}(r_{12}) &= P[m_1, \mathcal{V}(m_1, r_{12})] \\ &\quad + (1 - P[m_1, \mathcal{V}(m_1, r_{12})])P[m_2, \mathcal{V}(m_2, r_{12})] + \dots \\ &= 1 - \exp \left[\sum_i \log(1 - P_i) \right] \end{aligned} \quad (1.36)$$

To compute the probabilities, we need only the abundance of sources as a function of their mass, which we will leave as a general quantity, $n(m)$, for now, and the overlap volume, i.e.,

$$P[m_1, \mathcal{V}(m_1, r_{12})] = n(m_1) \mathcal{V}(m_1, r_{12}) \quad (1.37)$$

The final step is to realize that $P_i = 1 - \exp[-n_i V_i]$, which follows from a Poissonian argument, i.e., assuming that

$$P_i = \frac{\lambda^N e^{-\lambda}}{N!}. \quad (1.38)$$

However, we are uninterested in exactly how many sources ionize a point – we care only about whether the point is ionized – so we need only compute the probability that there's *not* a source in the volume, and subtract that from unity to obtain the probability that there's *any kind of* source in the volume. We know the mean number of bubbles, so we can make a Poissonian argument with $N = 0$ to determine this probability, i.e.,

$$P(N \geq 1) = 1 - P(N = 0) = 1 - e^{-\lambda} \quad (1.39)$$

So, the probability that two points like in a single ionized bubble is

$$P_{ii,1}(r_{12}) = 1 - \exp \left[- \sum_i n(m_i) \mathcal{V}(m_i, r_{12}) \right] \quad (1.40)$$

The other possibility is that two points are members of two different bubbles, which we denote with the probability $P_{ii,2}$. The probability of this occurring is the probability that a single source *cannot* ionize both points, times the probability that a source of mass m is able to ionize the first point but not the second. If we visualize the overlap of two spheres, we need the second source *not* to reside in the overlap region. So, we can simply replace $\mathcal{V} \rightarrow V(m) - \mathcal{V}$ in Equation 1.39, and square it (to obtain probability of two sources). The total probability is then

$$\begin{aligned} \langle xx' \rangle &= P_{ii,1} + P_{ii,2} \\ &= 1 - \exp \left[- \int n(m) \mathcal{V}(m, r_{12}) dm \right] \\ &\quad + \exp \left[- \int n(m) \mathcal{V}(m, r_{12}) dm \right] \times \left\{ 1 - \exp \left[- \int n(m) (V(m) - \mathcal{V}(m, r_{12})) dm \right] \right\}^2 \end{aligned} \quad (1.41)$$

This is only valid if we neglect clustering of sources. In reality, if we're in the neighborhood of a bubble, there's a good chance there's another bubble nearby. So, we can replace one of the terms in curly braces with $n(m) \rightarrow n(m)(1 + \xi_{bb}(m, r_{12}))$, where ξ_{bb} is the excess probability of finding a bubble of mass m a distance r_{12} away from another bubble.

At this point, it is clear that the “bubble size distribution”, or equivalent bubble mass distribution, $n(m)$, of sources will determine the nature of the ionization field. **Very quickly summarize the results of the excursion set approach and defer to references here.** Point to §1.4.3 for a discussion of how codes do this in practice.

Things to mention here:

- Photon conservation can be a problem.
- Dealing with overlap is a problem.

Show ionization power spectra and maybe cross spectra with density field.

Recombinations

Will need to describe the challenge here in some detail, defer to §1.4 for how one deals with this in semi-numeric and numerical simulations.

1.2.3 The (Kinetic) Temperature Field

Energetic X-ray photons with $E > 100$ eV will be able to travel large distances due to the strong energy dependence of the bound-free cross section (see Eq. 1.27). As a result, the ionization state and temperature of gas in the “bulk IGM” spans a continuum of values and must be evolved in detail.

This section needs quite a bit more work!

Global Evolution

The largely binary nature of the ionization field results in models designed to describe the fractional volume of ionized gas and the size distribution of individual ionized regions. This binarity will be reflected in the temperature field as well given that ionized regions will be $\sim 10^4$ K, while the rest of the bulk IGM will generally be much cooler. However, given that the 21-cm background is insensitive to the temperature within ionized regions, in what follows the mean kinetic temperature will *not* refer to a volume-averaged temperature, but rather the average temperature of gas outside fully-ionized regions.

Modeling the temperature in the bulk of the IGM in a general case is best handled by radiative transfer simulations. However, such simulations can be even more challenging than those targeting the ionization field given that (i) the mean-free paths of relevant photons are longer, (ii) the frequency-dependence of the ionization and heating rates is important, which means multi-frequency calculations are necessary, and (iii) heating generally precedes reionization, meaning smaller halos must be resolved at earlier times.

It is useful to consider first a case in which heating of the IGM is spatially uniform, which could occur if the sources of heating have very hard spectra. In this limit, we can consider the evolution of the average background intensity,

Show simple models a la Pritchard & Loeb.

Spatial Structure

Talk about Jonathan's 2007 approach, Janakee's stuff, 21CMFAST approach, progress in RT sims (hard because X-ray mfp long). Ross et al. simulations.

Show example temperature power spectrum from, e.g., Pritchard & Furlanetto, and/or pictures from Andrei's 2013 paper. Point out dependence on normalization and spectral slope.

1.2.4 The Ly- α Background

This section needs quite a bit more work! Will discuss early Barkana stuff, Holzbauer & Furlanetto approach, semi-numeric treatments, Ahn et al.

Global Evolution

The Ly- α background intensity, which determines the strength of Wouthuysen-Field coupling [37, 10], requires a special solution to the cosmological radiative transfer equation (see Eq. 1.20). Two effects separate this problem from the generic transfer problem outlined in the previous section: (i) the Lyman series forms a series of horizons for photons in the $10.2 < h\nu/\text{eV} < 13.6$ interval, and (ii) the Ly- α background is sourced both by photons redshifting into the line resonance as well as those produced in cascades downward from higher n transitions.

It is customary to solve the RTE in small chunks in frequency space. Within each chunk, the optical depth of the IGM is small⁸, while the edges are semi-permeable. For illustrative purposes, let us isolate the Ly- α background intensity sourced by photons redshifting into resonance from frequencies redward of Ly- β .

is computed analogously via

$$\hat{J}_\alpha(z) = \frac{c}{4\pi} (1+z)^2 \sum_{n=2}^{n_{\max}} f_{\text{rec}}^n \int_z^{z_{\max}^{(n)}} \frac{\mathcal{E}'_V(z')}{H(z')} dz' \quad (1.42)$$

where f_{rec}^n is the “recycling fraction,” that is, the fraction of photons that redshift into a Ly- n resonance that ultimately cascade through the Ly- α resonance [27]. We truncate the sum over Ly- n levels at $n_{\max} = 23$ as in [3], and neglect absorption by intergalactic H_2 . The upper bound of the definite integral,

$$1 + z_{\max}^{(n)} = (1+z) \frac{[1 - (n+1)^{-2}]}{1 - n^{-2}}, \quad (1.43)$$

is set by the horizon of Ly- n photons – a photon redshifting through the Ly- n resonance at z could only have been emitted at $z' < z_{\max}^{(n)}$, since emission at slightly higher redshift would mean the photon redshifted through the Ly($n+1$) resonance.

Talk about excitation of Lyman alpha by photo-electrons.

⁸But for a small H_2 contribution, which here we neglect.

Spatial Fluctuations in the Ly- α background

Show a figure or two from Barkana & Loeb or Holzbauer & Furlanetto.

Ly- α Heating

Talk briefly about initial papers about Ly- α heating, the subsequent revisions, and the revival of this concept in the last year or so.

Excitation of Ly- α via fast photo-electrons

Brief discussion.

1.3 Sources of the UV and X-ray Background

In the previous section we outlined a procedure for evolving the ionization and temperature field without actually specifying the sources of ionization and heating. Instead, we used a generic emissivity, ε_ν , to encode the integrated emissions of sources at frequency ν within some region R , which we will now write as an integral over the differential luminosity function of sources, i.e.,

$$\varepsilon_\nu(z, R) = \int_0^\infty dL_\nu \frac{dn}{dL_\nu}. \quad (1.44)$$

Given the success of models which link the evolution of galaxies to the evolution of their host dark matter halos (citations), it is common to rewrite the emissivity as an integral over the DM halo mass function (HMF), dn/dm , multiplied by a conversion factor between halo mass and galaxy light, dm/dL_ν , i.e.,

$$\varepsilon_\nu(z, R) = \int_{m_{\min}}^\infty dm \frac{dn}{dm} \frac{dm}{dL_\nu}, \quad (1.45)$$

where m_{\min} is the minimum mass of DM halos capable of hosting galaxies. Because dn/dm is reasonably well-determined from large N-body simulations of structure formation (citations), much of the modeling focus is on the mass-to-light ratio, dm/dL_ν , which encodes the efficiency with which galaxies form in halos and the relative luminosities of different kinds of sources within galaxies (e.g., stars, compact objects, diffuse gas) that emit at different frequencies⁹.

The main strength of the 21-cm background as a probe of high- z galaxies is now apparent: though 21-cm measurements cannot constrain the properties of individual galaxies, they can constrain the properties of *all* galaxies, in aggregate, *even those too faint to be detected directly*. As a result, it is common to forego detailed modeling of the mass-to-light ratio and instead relate the emissivity to the fraction of mass in the Universe in collapsed objects,

$$\varepsilon_\nu(z, R) = \rho_b f_{\text{coll}}(z, R) \zeta_\nu, \quad (1.46)$$

⁹Most models consider regions R that are sufficiently large that one can assume a well-populated HMF, though at very early times this approximation may break down, rendering stochasticity due to poor HMF sampling an important effect.

where the collapsed fraction is an integral over the HMF,

$$f_{\text{coll}} = \rho_m^{-1} \int_{m_{\text{min}}}^{\infty} dm m \frac{dn}{dm} \quad (1.47)$$

and ζ_v is an efficiency factor that quantifies the number of photons emitted at frequency v per baryon of collapsed mass in the Universe. It is generally modeled as

$$\zeta_v = f_* N_v f_{\text{esc},v}, \quad (1.48)$$

where f_* is the star formation efficiency (SFE), N_v is the number of photons emitted per stellar baryon at some frequency v , and f_{esc} is the fraction of those photons that escape into the IGM. One could define additional ζ factors to represent, e.g., emission from black holes or exotic particles, in which case f_* and N_v would be replaced by some black hole or exotic particle production efficiencies. In practice, three ζ factors are defined: ζ , ζ_X , and ζ_α , i.e., one efficiency factor for each radiation background of interest. A minimal model for the 21-cm background thus contains four parameters: m_{min} , ζ , ζ_X , and ζ_α .

Because the factors within ζ are degenerate with each other, at least as far as 21-cm measurements are concerned, they generally are not treated separately as free parameters. However, it is still useful to consider each individually in order to determine a fiducial value of ζ and explore deviations from that fiducial model. In addition, inclusion of ancillary measurements may eventually allow ζ to be decomposed into its constituent parts. For the remainder of this section, we focus on plausible values of f_* , N_v and f_{esc} .

1.3.1 Star Formation

Current high- z measurements support a relatively simple picture of star formation in early galaxies. The basic idea is that star formation is fueled by the inflow of gas from the IGM, but the overall rate of star formation in galaxies is self-limiting because winds and supernovae explosions expell gas that would otherwise form stars ([many many references](#)). Qualitatively, the need for some kind of feedback is apparent simply from the mismatch in shapes between the halo mass function and galaxy luminosity function, the latter of which is steeper at both the very bright and very faint ends.

[Introduce MAR-driven models, semi-empirical constraints, etc.](#)

[Show example SFE recovered from UVLF fits. Variations in expectations at very high- \$z\$.](#)

Pop III Star Formation

The very first generations of stars to form in the Universe did so under very different conditions than stars today, and it is not clear that the arguments outlined in the previous section apply. The first stars, by definition, formed from chemically-pristine material, since no previous generations of stars had existed to enrich the medium with heavy elements. This has long been recognized as a reason that the first stars are likely different than stars today ([references](#)). Without the energetically low-lying electronic transitions common in heavy elements, hydrogen-only gas clouds cannot cool efficiently, as collisions energetic enough to excite atoms from $n = 1$ to $n = 2$ (which subsequently cool via spontaneous emission of

$\text{Ly}-\alpha$ photons) imply temperatures of $\sim 10^4$ K. Halos with such virial temperatures are very rare at redshifts greater than $z \sim 10$.

However, other cooling channels may be available even in halos too small to support atomic (hydrogen) line cooling. Hydrogen molecules, H_2 , can form using free electrons as a catalyst¹⁰,



These reactions are limited by the availability of free electrons¹¹ and the survivability of H^- ions. Even in the absence of astrophysical backgrounds, the formation of H_2 is limited by the CMB, which at the high redshifts of interest can dissociate the H^- ion. [34] found that the molecular hydrogen fraction in high- z halos scales with the virial temperature as

$$f_{\text{H}_2} \approx 3.5 \times 10^{-4} \left(\frac{T_{\text{vir}}}{10^3 \text{ K}} \right)^{1.52}. \quad (1.51)$$

Once the first stars form, the situation grows considerably more complicated. As will be detailed in the following section (§1.3.2), massive stars are prodigious sources of UV photons. Some of these photons originate in the Lyman-Werner band ($\sim 11.2\text{-}13.6$ eV), and are thus capable of dissociating molecular hydrogen. This processs is expected to quickly surpass H^- dissociation by the CMB as the most important mechanism capable of regulating star formation in chemically pristine halos.

A substantial literature has emerged in the last ~ 20 years aimed at understanding the critical LW background intensity, J_{LW} , required to prevent star formation in high- z minihaloes.

$$M_{\min} = 2.5 \times 10^5 \left(\frac{1+z}{26} \right)^{-3/2} (1 + 6.96(4\pi J_{\text{LW}})^{0.47}) M_\odot \quad (1.52)$$

Brief discussion of self-shielding complication.

Talk about metal enrichment and how this is (probably) the cause of the demise of PopIII.

Draw attention to how 21-cm background can contribute here: Ly- α and LW backgrounds are closely related. Note that there are very few studies of PopIII in the 21-cm background. Can point to Anastasia's stuff, my stuff, maybe Rick's stuff will be done soon...

Bottom line: m_{\min} sort of understood, f_* unknown.

Show some models for the PopIII SFRD and compare to PopII SFRD extrapolated from observations and/or predictions from models.

1.3.2 UV Emission from Stars

Stellar photons are likely the dominant drivers of reionization¹² and the initial “activation” of the 21-cm background via Wouthuysen-Field coupling at $z \sim 30$. The 21-cm background

¹⁰Dust is the primary catalyst of H_2 formation in the local Universe, but of course is does not exist in the first collapsing clouds.

¹¹Exotic models in which an X-ray background emerges before the formation of the first stars may similarly affect early star formation by boosting the electron fraction.

¹²There is still some room for a contribution from quasars [?, see, e.g.,] Madau2018.

is thus sensitive to the spectral characteristics of stars in the Lyman continuum and Lyman Werner bands¹³. It is also in principle sensitive to the spectrum of even harder He-ionizing photons, since photo-electrons generated from helium ionization can heat and ionize the gas, while HeII recombinations can result in H-ionizing photons. The 21-cm signal could in principle even constrain the rest-frame infrared spectrum of stars in the early Universe, since IR photons can feedback on star-formation at very early times through H^- photo-detachment [36]. In this section, we focus only on the soft UV spectrum ($E < 54.4$ eV) to which the 21-cm background is most sensitive.

The most detailed predictions for stellar spectra come from stellar population synthesis (SPS) models, which take the following approach:

- Assume a model for the stellar initial mass function (IMF), $\xi(m)$, i.e., the number of relative number of stars formed in different mass bins. Commonly-adopted IMFs include Salpeter [29], Chabrier [4], Kroupa [18], and Scalo [30] which are all generally power-laws with indices ~ -2.3 , but differing in shape at the low mass end of the distribution ($M_* < 0.5 M_\odot$).
- Assume a model for stellar evolution, i.e., how stars of different masses traverse the Hertzprung-Russell (HR) diagram over time.
- Assume a model for stellar atmospheres, i.e., as a function of stellar mass, age, and composition, determine the output spectrum.

With all these ingredients, one can synthesize a spectrum from a population of stars with a given age,

$$L_v(t) = \int_0^t dt' \int_{m_{\min}}^{\infty} dm \xi(m) l_v(m, t') \quad (1.53)$$

where $l_v(m, t)$ is the specific luminosity of a star of mass m and age t , and we have assumed that ξ is normalized to the mass of the star cluster, $\int dm \xi(m) = M_*$. Equation 1.53 can be generalized to determine the spectrum of a galaxy with an arbitrary star formation history (SFH) composed of discrete bursts. **mention poor IMF sampling? Widely used stellar synthesis codes include STARBURST99 [19], BPASS [8], FSPS, Bruzual & Charlot...**

Generally, 21-cm models do not operate at level of SPS models because the 21-cm background is insensitive to the detailed spectra and SFHs of individual galaxies. Instead, because 21-cm measurements probe the relatively narrow intervals $10.2 < h\nu/\text{eV} < 13.6$ via Wouthuysen-Field coupling and $h\nu > 13.6$ eV through the ionization field, it is common to distill the predictions of SPS models into just two numbers, N_{ion} and N_α , which integrate over age and the details of the stellar SED, i.e.,

$$N_{\text{ion}} = m_*^{-1} \int_0^\infty dt' \int_{v_{\text{LL}}}^\infty \frac{dv}{h\nu} L_v(t') \quad (1.54)$$

$$N_\alpha = m_*^{-1} \int_0^\infty dt' \int_{v_\alpha}^{v_{\text{LL}}} \frac{dv}{h\nu} L_v(t') \quad (1.55)$$

¹³We use this definition here loosely. Technically, the LW band is $\sim 11.2 - 13.6$ eV, a range which bounds photons capable of photo-dissociating molecular hydrogen, H_2 . The Ly- α background is sourced by photons in a slightly broader interval, $\sim 10.2 - 13.6$ eV, but it is tedious to continually indicate this distinction, and as a result, we use “LW band” to mean all photons capable of eventually generating Ly- α photons.

where ν_{LL} is the frequency of the Lyman limit (13.6 eV) and ν_α is the Ly- α frequency. UV emission is dominated by massive, short-lived stars, hence the integration from $t = 0$ to $t = \infty$.

Assuming a Scalo IMF, stellar metallicity of $Z = Z_\odot/20$, using STARBURST99 SPS model, [3] report $N_\alpha = 9690$, further broken down into sub-intervals between each Ly- n resonance, an oft-used reference value even today. The canonical value of $N_{ion} = 4000$ (I think) makes the same assumptions but I can't find where this first appeared. The general expectation is for N_{ion} and N_α increase for more top-heavy IMF and lower metallicity, meaning these values are likely to increase for Pop III stars (citations). Similarly, binary evolution can effectively increase the lifetimes of massive stars, leading to a net gain in UV photon production [32].

Note that detailed SPS may be needed to if jointly fitting 21-cm measurements and galaxy population.

Show PopII and PopIII spectra?

1.3.3 Escape of UV Photons from Galaxies

Summarize briefly the status of f_{esc} .

1.3.4 X-rays from Black Holes

Though stars themselves emit few photons at energies above the HeII-ionizing edge (~ 54.4 eV), their remnants can be strong X-ray sources. While solitary remnants will be unlikely to accrete much gas from the diffuse ISM, remnants in binary systems may accrete gas from their companions, either via Roche-lobe overflow or stellar winds. Such systems are known as X-ray binaries (XRBs), further categorized by the mass of the donor star: “low-mass X-ray binaries” (LMXBs) are those fueled by Roche-lobe overflow from a low-mass companion, while “high-mass X-ray binaries” (HMXBs) are fed by the winds of massive companions. XRBs exhibit a rich phenomenology of time- and frequency-dependent behavior and are thus interesting in their own right. For a review see, e.g., [28].

In nearby star-forming galaxies, the X-ray luminosity is generally dominated by the HMXBs [16, 9, 1]. Furthermore, the total luminosity in HMXBs scales with the star formation rate, as expected given that the donor stars in these systems are massive, short-lived stars. An oft-used result in the 21-cm literature stems from the work of [1] (update of Gil-fanov), who find

$$L_X = 2.6 \times 10^{39} \left(\frac{\dot{M}_*}{M_\odot \text{ yr}^{-1}} \right) \text{ erg s}^{-1} \quad (1.56)$$

where L_X refers to the 0.5-8 keV band. This relation provides an initial guess for many 21-cm models, which add an extra factor f_X to parameterize our ignorance of how this relation evolves with cosmic time. For example, [14] write

$$L_X = 3 \times 10^{40} f_X \left(\frac{\dot{M}_*}{M_\odot \text{ yr}^{-1}} \right) \text{ erg s}^{-1}, \quad (1.57)$$

which is simply Equation 1.56 re-normalized to a broader energy range, $0.2 < h\nu/\text{keV} < 3 \times 10^4$, assuming a power-law spectrum with spectral index $\alpha_X = -1.5$, where α_X is defined by $L_E \propto E^{\alpha_X}$, with L_E in energy units.

The normalization of these empirical L_X -SFR relations are not entirely unexpected, at least at the order-of-magnitude level. For example, if one considers a galaxy forming stars at a constant rate, a fraction $f_\bullet \simeq 10^{-3}$ of stars will be massive enough ($M_* > 20 M_\odot$) to form a black hole assuming a Chabrier IMF. Of those, a fraction f_{bin} will have binary companions, with a fraction f_{surv} surviving the explosion of the first star for a time τ . If accretion onto these black holes occurs in an optically thin, geometrically-thin disk with radiative efficiency $\epsilon_\bullet = 0.1$ which obeys the Eddington limit, then a multi-color disk spectrum is appropriate and a fraction $f_{0.5-8} = 0.84$ of the bolometric luminosity will originate in the 0.5-8 keV band. Finally, assuming these BHs are “active” for a fraction f_{act} of the time, we can write [23, 24]

$$L_X \sim 2 \times 10^{39} \text{ erg s}^{-1} \left(\frac{\dot{M}_*}{M_\odot \text{ s}^{-1}} \right) \left(\frac{\epsilon_\bullet}{0.1} \right) \left(\frac{f_\bullet}{10^{-3}} \right) \left(\frac{f_{\text{bin}}}{0.5} \right) \left(\frac{f_{\text{surv}}}{0.2} \right) \left(\frac{\tau}{20 \text{ Myr}} \right) \left(\frac{f_{\text{act}}}{0.1} \right) \left(\frac{f_{0.5-8}}{0.84} \right). \quad (1.58)$$

While several of these factors are uncertain, particularly f_{surv} and f_{act} , this expression provides useful guidance in setting expectations for high redshift. For example, it has long been predicted that the first generations of stars were more massive on average than stars today owing to inefficient cooling in their birth clouds. This would boost f_\bullet , and thus L_X/\dot{M}_* , so long as most stars are not in the pair-instability supernova (PISN) mass range, in which no remnants are expected.

There are of course additional arguments not present in Eq. 1.58. For example, the MCD spectrum is only a good representation of HMXB spectra in the “high soft” state. At other times, in the so-called “low hard” state, HMXB spectra are well fit by a power-law. The relative amount of time spent in each of these states is unknown.

In addition, physical models for the L_X -SFR relation may invoke the metallicity as a driver of changes in the relation with time and/or galaxy (stellar) mass. As the metallicity declines, one might expect the stellar IMF to change (as outlined above), however, the winds of massive stars responsible for transferring material to BHs will also grow weaker as the opacity of their atmospheres decline. As a result, increases in L_X/SFR likely saturate below some critical metallicity. Observations of nearby, metal-poor dwarf galaxies support this picture, with L_X/SFR reaching a maximum of ~ 10 times the canonical relation quoted in Eq. 1.56 [1].

Show different spectra often adopted in models and discuss.

Super-Massive Black Holes

Say a few words about plausibility, reference [33].

1.3.5 X-rays from Shocks and Hot Gas

While compact remnants of massive stars are likely the leading producer of X-rays in high- z star-forming galaxies (see previous sub-section), the supernovae events in which these objects are formed may not be far behind. Supernovae inject a tremendous amount of energy

into the surrounding medium, which then cools either via inverse Compton emission (in supernova remnants; [26]) or eventually via bremsstrahlung radiation (in the hot interstellar medium; ISM). Because these sources are related to the deaths of massive stars their luminosity is expected to scale with SFR, as in the case of HMXBs. Indeed, [22] find that diffuse X-ray emission in nearby sources follows the following relation in the 0.5-2 keV band:

$$L_X = 8.3 \times 10^{38} \left(\frac{\dot{M}_*}{M_\odot \text{ yr}^{-1}} \right) \text{ erg s}^{-1} \quad (1.59)$$

This luminosity is that from all unresolved emission, and as a result, is not expected to trace emission from the hot ISM alone. Emission from supernova remnants will also contribute to this luminosity, as will fainter, unresolved HMXBs and LMXBs. [22] estimate that $\sim 30 - 40\%$ of this emission may be due to unresolved point sources.

Though the soft X-ray luminosity from hot gas appears to be subdominant to the HMXB component in nearby galaxies, there are of course uncertainties in how these relations evolve. Furthermore, the bremsstrahlung emission characteristic of hot ISM gas has a much steeper $\sim v^{-2.5}$ spectrum than inverse Compton ($\sim v^{-1}$) or XRBs ($\sim v^{-1}$ or $v^{-1.5}$), and thus may heat more efficiently (owing to $\sigma \propto v^{-3}$ cross section) provided soft X-rays can escape galaxies.

1.3.6 Escape of X-rays from Galaxies

Though the mean free paths of X-rays are longer than those of UV photons, they still may not all escape from galaxies into the IGM.

The column density is used to account for absorption by neutral hydrogen in the ISM, which hardens the intrinsic spectrum. Simulations suggest typical values of $N_{H1} \sim 10^{21} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ [7], which is substantial enough to eliminate emission below $\sim 0.5 \text{ keV}$.

Given the many unknowns regarding X-ray emission in the early Universe, 21-cm models often employ a three-parameter approach, i.e., instead of a single value of ζ_X , the specific X-ray luminosity is modeled as

$$L_{X,v} = L_{X,0} \left(\frac{hv}{1 \text{ keV}} \right)^{\alpha_X} \exp[-\sigma_v N_{H1}] \quad (1.60)$$

and the normalization, $L_{X,0}$, spectral index α_X , and typical column density, N_{H1} , are left as free parameters.

It is common to approximate this intrinsic attenuation with a piecewise model for L_X , i.e.,

$$L_{X,v} = \begin{cases} 0 & hv < E_{\min} \\ L_{X,0} \left(\frac{hv}{1 \text{ keV}} \right)^{\alpha_X} & hv \geq E_{\min} \end{cases} \quad (1.61)$$

Note that N_{H1} (or E_{\min}) can be degenerate with the intrinsic spectrum, e.g., the SED of HMXBs in the high-soft state exhibits a turn-over at energies $hv < 1 \text{ keV}$, which could be mistaken for strong intrinsic absorption.

Translate this to ζ_X .

1.3.7 Cosmic Rays from Supernovae

Other sources of high energy radiation have been explored in recent years though are generally found to be sub-dominant. However, surprises may be in store...

1.4 Predictions for the 21-cm Background

Over the last four sections we have assembled a simple physical picture of the IGM at high redshift from which we can derive predictions for the 21-cm brightness temperature. Here, we finally describe the generic sequence of events predicted in most models, and the sensitivity of the 21-cm background to various model parameters of interest.

1.4.1 Generic Series of Events

Figure XYZ depicts what are now standard predictions for the global 21-cm signal (top) and power spectrum (bottom). Time proceeds from left to right from the Big Bang until the end of reionization. There are four distinct epochs within this time period, labeled A, B, C, and D, which we describe in more detail below.

A. The Dark Ages: As the Universe expands after cosmological recombination, Compton scattering between free electrons and photons keep the radiation and matter temperature in equilibrium. The density is high enough the collisional coupling remains effective, and so $T_S = T_K = T_{CMB}$. Eventually, Compton scattering becomes inefficient as the CMB cools and the density continues to fall, which allows the gas to cool faster than the CMB (see also earlier figures). Collisional coupling remains effective for a short time longer and so T_K follows T_S . This results in the first decoupling of T_S from T_{CMB} at $z \sim 80$, and thus an absorption signature at $\nu \sim 15$ MHz, which comes to an end as collisional coupling becomes inefficient, leaving T_S to reflect T_{CMB} once again.

B. First Light: When the first stars form they flood the IGM with UV photons for the first time. While Lyman continuum photons are trapped near sources, photons with energies $10.2 < h\nu/\text{eV} < 13.6$ either redshift directly through the Ly- α resonance or cascade via higher Ly- n levels, giving rise to a large-scale Ly- α background capable of triggering Wouthuysen-Field coupling as they scatter through the medium. As a result, T_S is driven back toward T_K , which (in most models) still reflects the cold temperatures of an adiabatically-cooling IGM.

C. X-ray Heating: The first generations of stars beget the first generations of X-ray sources, whether they be the explosions of the first stars themselves or remnant neutron stars or black holes that subsequently accrete. Though the details change depending on the identity of the first X-ray sources, generally such sources provide photons energetic enough to travel great distances. Upon absorption, they heat and partially ionize the gas, eventually driving $T_S > T_{CMB}$. Once $T_S \gg T_{CMB}$, the 21-cm signal “saturates,” and subsequently sensitive only to the density and ionization fields. However, it is possible that heating is never “complete” in this sense before the completion of reionization,

name	description	typical values
ζ_i	Ionizing photon production efficiency	40 ish
ζ_α	Ly- α photon production efficiency	40 ish
ζ_X	X-ray photon production efficiency	xxx
T_{\min}	Minimum virial temperature of star-forming halos	10^4 K

Table 1.1: Parameters in simple 21-cm models.

meaning neutral pockets of IGM gas may remain at temperatures at or below T_{CMB} until they are engulfed in the overlap event of large ionized bubbles.

D. Reionization: As the global star formation rate density climbs, the growth of ionized regions around groups and clusters of galaxies will continue, eventually culminating in the completion of cosmic reionization. This rise in ionization corresponds to a decline in the amount of neutral hydrogen in the Universe capable of producing or absorbing 21-cm radiation. As a result, the amplitude of the 21-cm signal, both in its mean and fluctuations, falls as reionization progresses.

Draw connection between features in 21-cm signal and evolution of ionization, heating, and J_α introduced in earlier sections.

The evolution of 21-cm fluctuations is more complicated, though this same series of events imprints on fluctuation patterns as well.

1.4.2 Sensitivity to Model Parameters

Use this section to highlight the sensitivity to parameters in more detail.

Things to discuss:

- Sensitivity to T_{\min} and f_* .
- Sensitivity to α_X , E_{\min} , and f_X .
- Sensitivity to ζ and R_{mfp} (and updates)
- Clumping, feedback
- Shot noise in galaxy counts in voxels.
- PopIII stuff. AGN stuff.
- Exotic physics? Defer to Jonathan's chapter.

1.4.3 Modeling Tools

Predictions from previous section came from a mix of different groups and codes. Discuss some differences here.

- 21CMFAST and DEXM
- Anastasia's code
- simfast21
- ARES
- RT simulations

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Chapter 2

Inference from the 21cm signal

Bradley Greig

Abstract

In the previous chapters we have discussed in-depth the astrophysical and cosmological information that is encoded by the cosmic 21-cm signal. However, once we have a measurement, how do we extract this information from the signal? This chapter focusses on the inference of the interesting astrophysics and cosmology once we obtain a detection of the 21-cm signal.

Essentially, inference of the astrophysics can be broken down into three parts:

1. **Compression of the observed data into a manageable dataset:** The observed 21-cm signal varies spatially as well as along the line-of-sight (frequency or redshift dimension) to provide a full three dimensional movie of the intergalactic medium in the early Universe. However, the signal is faint, requiring either statistical methods to sum the data in order to increase the signal-to-noise or sophisticated approaches to extract the faint signal directly.
2. **An efficient method to model/simulate the 21-cm signal:** In order to interpret the observations and understand the astrophysical processes responsible, we must be able to produce physically motivated models capable of replicating the signal. Further, these must be as computationally efficient as possible in order to be able to realistically investigate the 21-cm signal.
3. **A robust probabilistic framework to extract the physics:** The observed 21-cm signal is dependent on numerous physical processes, which within our models or simulations are described by many unknown parameters. Further, these contain approximations in order to deal with the requisite dynamic range. We must be able to characterise our ignorance in a meaningful way in order to be truly able to infer the astrophysical processes of the epoch of reionisation and cosmic dawn.

In this chapter we will focus on each separately, discussing the current state-of-the-art in inferring the 21cm signal.

2.1 What do we actually measure?

The 21-cm signal from the neutral hydrogen in the intergalactic medium is measured by its brightness temperature, T_b . However, this cannot be measured directly, instead it is expressed as a brightness temperature contrast, δT_b , relative to the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) temperature, T_{CMB} [9]:

$$\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}, v) \equiv T_b(\mathbf{x}, v) - T_{\text{CMB}, 0}. \quad (2.1)$$

As such, this brightness temperature contrast can be seen either in emission or absorption, dependent on the 21-cm brightness temperature which itself is dependent on the excitation state of the neutral hydrogen (i.e. its spin temperature, T_S , see [previous chapter](#)). We can re-express Equation 2.1 in terms of T_S to recover ([should have been introduced in a previous chapter](#)),

$$\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}, v) \equiv \frac{T_S(\mathbf{x}, v) - T_{\text{CMB}}(z)}{1 + z} \left(1 - e^{-\tau_{v_0}(\mathbf{x}, v)} \right), \quad (2.2)$$

where τ_{v_0} is the optical depth of the 21-cm line. $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}, v)$ varies spatially due to its two-dimensional angular position on the sky while it varies along the line-of-sight direction owing to the 21-cm line being redshifted by cosmological expansion (i.e. adding a frequency or time dependence to the signal). Thus, measuring $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}, v)$ can reveal a full three-dimensional movie of the neutral hydrogen in the early Universe.

Unfortunately, $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}, v)$ is faint. Further, in reality it is buried under numerous astrophysical foregrounds all of which are orders of magnitude brighter ([see relevant chapters for more detailed discussions](#)). In order to deal with this faint signal coupled with the astrophysical foregrounds, typically we seek to compress the data to boost the signal-to-noise or specifically tailor methods to extract the faint signal. In this chapter, we will discuss the numerous methods proposed in order to tease out the faint astrophysical signal from the noise.

2.2 Optimal methods for characterising the 21-cm signal

The first step in our efforts to be able to infer information about the astrophysical processes responsible for reionisation and the cosmic dawn is to explore optimal methods to characterise the 21-cm signal. In this section, we summarise the wide variety of approaches considered in the literature, highlighting the leverage that each is able to provide with respect to the underlying astrophysical processes. Note that throughout this chapter, all investigations into detecting the 21-cm signal are generated theoretically, either analytically or numerically. Thus, we urge the reader to refer to the citations in order to understand the limiting assumptions.

2.2.1 Global signal

The simplest way to deal with such a faint signal is to average it over as large a volume as possible. Since the 21-cm signal is visible across the entire sky, one can produce a complete sky-averaged (global) 21-cm brightness temperature as a function of frequency (redshift).

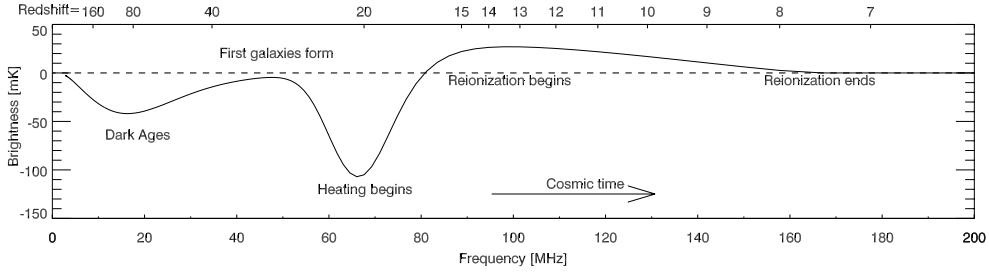


Figure 2.1: A representative example of the all-sky averaged (global) 21-cm brightness temperature signal, demarcating the major cosmological transitions. Taken from [28].

Although the two-dimensional spatial information from the 21-cm signal is lost, the main advantage is that it is relatively cheap to observe, requiring comparatively simple instrumentation (see future chapter on global signal or observations?). A fact that several experiments have used in an attempt to provide a measurement of the 21-cm signal, given that a single radio dipole is capable of seeing essentially the entire sky at any one time. In Figure 2.1, we show a representative model of the global 21-cm signal, highlighting the major cosmological milestones that have been discussed in previous chapters. Thus, in each frequency bin, we measure an all-sky average of the 21-cm brightness temperature.

The global signal has been studied extensively in the literature. Use this hook here to add in citations to works investigating the global signal.

Roughly speaking the global 21-cm signal can be broken up into five major turning points (e.g. [9, 27]) corresponding to: (i) a minimum during the dark ages where collisional coupling becomes ineffective, (ii) a maximum at the transition from the dark ages to the Ly α pumping regime (Ly α pumping from the first sources becomes efficient), (iii) a minimum at the commencement of X-ray heating taking the signal back towards emission, (iv) a maximum once the 21-cm signal becomes saturated during the EoR and finally (v) when reionisation is complete. Importantly, both the amplitude of the 21-cm signal as well as the frequency (redshift) of these transitions is strongly dependent on the underlying astrophysical processes. Thus, measuring both the amplitude and frequency of the turning points can reveal information into the underlying astrophysics.

In [24], these authors connect these transitions more closely to the astrophysics. The second turning point (end of the dark ages) can, under certain simple assumptions, be used to place limits on the spin temperature, T_S . Details on T_S , through equation (should be in an earlier chapter) can provide an estimate on the angle-averaged intensity of Ly α photons, J_α . This provides insight into both the number density of sources and their corresponding emission spectrum (e.g. PopIII stars). The relative depth of the third turning point (heating epoch) can be used to place limits on the co-moving heating rate density, that is, the amount of heating that the IGM has undergone owing to heating sources (e.g. X-rays from HMXBs, the ISM or other more exotic scenarios should be discussed in an earlier chapter). Again, distinguishing the number density and type of sources responsible. Finally, the saturation of the spin temperature, T_S , during the epoch of reionisation collapses the brightness temperature into an approximate proportionality (cite appropriate equation, $T_S \propto x_{\text{HI}}(1 + \delta_{\text{nl}})$) with the underlying ionisation fraction, x_{HI} . Tracking the evolution of the ionised fraction, i.e. the reionisation history, reveals the time-span of reionisation. This reveals insights into the

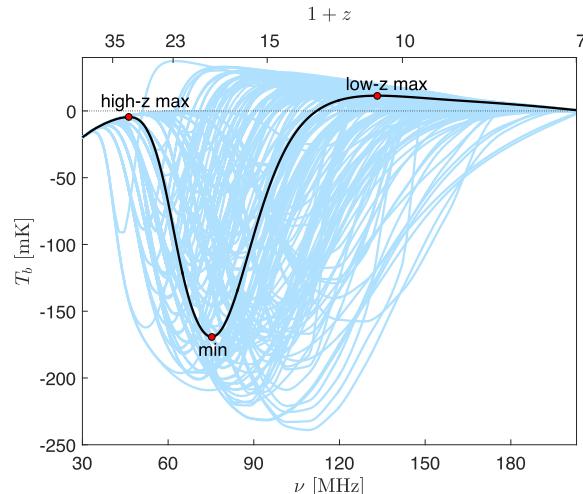


Figure 2.2: The all-sky averaged (global) 21-cm brightness temperature signal obtained when varying the astrophysical parameters in ~ 200 theoretical models from [5].

number density of ionising photons produced, and thus the types of sources responsible for reionising the Universe.

Up until very recently, the first transition was typically ignored, as it was assumed that this transition was well understood theoretically. That is, that the dark matter and baryons decoupled from the CMB temperature at the same time, both cooling adiabatically. It turns out that the dark matter decouples earlier than the baryons, meaning the dark matter is colder than the baryons. As such, the baryons can be cooled by a coupling between the dark matter and baryons (e.g. [33]) altering the amplitude of the 21-cm signal. In addition to this, relative velocity differences between the two fluids (dark matter and baryons) will affect the structure formation on small-scales (e.g. [35]) again impacting on the temperature of the baryons. These will result in observable differences in the location and amplitude of this first turning point in the global signal, enabling dark matter models to be distinguishable (e.g. [25, 7]).

To highlight the expected variation in the global 21-cm signal as a result of the underlying astrophysical processes, in Figure 2.2 we show ~ 200 theoretical models of the global 21-cm signal from [5]. Here, the authors explore the maximal variation in the global 21-cm signal when varying the ionisation and heating properties of the astrophysical sources. Some common features in the signal are, the depth of the absorption trough deepens for lower X-ray luminosities (including some models which never appear in emission as a result of inefficient heating) or the turning points push to later times when the minimum masses of sources increases (i.e. require more massive haloes in which stars can form and produce ionising photons).

2.2.2 Power spectrum

After the global signal, the next simplest and most straightforward approach to characterise the 21-cm signal is through the power spectrum. This is the Fourier transform of the 2-point correlation function. Basically, a measure of the excess signal (above random) on all possible

spatial scales. The workhorse statistic for any signal containing structural information, the power spectrum is simply the number of modes (in Fourier space) as a function of physical scale (or size). It produces a distribution of modes characterising the amount of structural information which is contained within the signal. The power spectrum is the natural method for observing the 21-cm signal from a radio interferometer, since these measure differences in the arrival times of the cosmological signal between radio dipoles or dishes of some fixed separation. Thus, a radio interferometer is sensitive to the spatial fluctuations rather than the total amplitude.

To obtain the 21-cm power spectrum, we normalise the 21-cm brightness temperature, $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x})$ to be a zero-mean quantity, $\delta_{21}(\mathbf{x}) = (\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}) - \bar{\delta T}_b)/\bar{\delta T}_b$, which amplifies the fluctuations (spatial information) in the signal. The power spectrum, $P(\mathbf{k})$ is computed by the angle-averaged sum of the Fourier transform of the 21-cm brightness temperature fluctuations via,

$$\langle \delta_{21}(\mathbf{k}_1) \delta_{21}(\mathbf{k}_2) \rangle = (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\mathbf{k}_1 + \mathbf{k}_2) P(\mathbf{k}_1), \quad (2.3)$$

where δ_D is the Dirac delta function. Typically, the 21-cm power spectrum is converted into a dimensionless quantity through $\Delta^2(\mathbf{k}) = (k^3/2\pi^2)P(\mathbf{k})$. Typically, the Fourier modes are then averaged in spherical shells to obtain the spherically averaged power spectrum, $P(k)$, which considerably improves the overall signal-to-noise, at the cost of averaging over some spatial information. Alternatively, one can also measure the two-dimensional cylindrically averaged power spectrum, $P(k_{\parallel}, k_{\perp})$ decomposing it into modes perpendicular to the line-of-sight (k_{\perp} ; spatially averaging the two dimensional angular modes on the sky in annuli) and along the line-of-sight (k_{\parallel} ; in frequency) direction. The strength of the two dimensional 21-cm power spectrum is that most of the contamination of the signal by the astrophysical foregrounds can be contained in what is referred to as the EoR ‘wedge’ while the remaining Fourier modes can be clean tracers of the cosmological signal ([cite references and/or subsequent chapter](#)).

The advantage of the power spectrum over the global signal, is that it provides a measure of the spatial fluctuations in the 21-cm signal. However, it does not encode all the available spatial information from the 21-cm signal. The power spectrum is a measure of how Gaussian the fluctuations are. If these fluctuations were truly Gaussian, the power spectrum would contain all the information, and any higher order n -point correlation functions would contain no additional information. The structural complexity of the large and small scale processes of reionisation and the cosmic dawn results in the signal being highly non-Gaussian. As such, the power spectrum does not reveal all available information, meaning there is further constraining power from the higher order n -point statistics. In section 2.2.4 we will return to this. Nevertheless, the power spectrum still contains a wealth of information, and observationally is considerably easier to measure.

The sensitivity of the 21-cm power spectrum to the underlying astrophysics can be highlighted when we decompose the 21-cm brightness temperature fluctuations through a perturbative analysis. In doing so, we can recover the following (see e.g. [needs references](#)),

$$\delta_{21} \propto C_b \delta_b + C_x \delta_x + C_{\alpha} \delta_{\alpha} + C_T \delta_T - \delta_{\partial\nu}, \quad (2.4)$$

Simply put, fluctuations in the 21-cm brightness temperature field, δ_{21} , are driven by a sum of contributions from the underlying density field, δ_b , the ionisation fraction δ_x , the Ly α

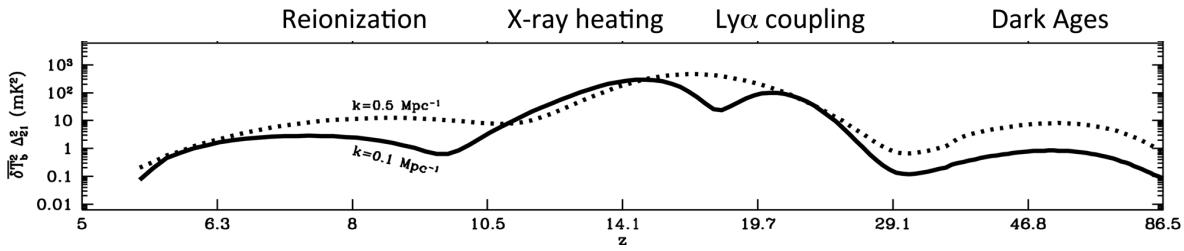


Figure 2.3: The 21-cm power spectrum amplitude for two different Fourier modes, $k = 0.1 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ (solid) and $k = 0.5 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ (dashed). Peaks in the 21-cm power spectrum amplitude correspond to the different cosmic milestones. Taken from [23].

coupling co-efficient, δ_α , the temperature of the neutral hydrogen δ_T and line-of-sight peculiar velocity gradient, $\delta_{\partial v}$. Computing the power spectrum then measures the combined signal from the power spectra of each field as well as the cross-power spectra of each. Thus, if we measure the 21-cm power spectrum across cosmic time, we will be sensitive to both the epochs when each component dominates (similar to the global signal) and also the spatial scales on which the signal is strongest. This, similar to the global signal is depicted in Figure 2.3.

However, rather than using one single Fourier mode, we have a range of spatial scales over which to recover astrophysical information. This provides access to both the small-scale and large-scale physical processes. For example, during the EoR, the 21-cm power spectrum is dominated by the contribution from the ionisation field, which contains particular structural information on the reionisation process due to the characteristic size of the H_{II} regions as well as their clustering ([cite references](#)). Similar is true for both the heating or Ly α coupling epochs, whereby the structural information provides insights into the intensity of the radiation, and the number density of sources producing it.

In Figure 2.4 we show the variation in the three dimensional spherically averaged 21-cm power spectrum at a single redshift ($z = 9$) when varying three different astrophysical parameters under the assumption of $T_S \gg T_{CMB}$ (see e.g. [13]). Inset tables correspond to the parameter being varied and the resultant IGM neutral fraction (stage of reionisation). In the top left panel, we vary the ionising efficiency, ζ , a proxy for the number of ionising photons produced by the sources. The shape of the 21-cm power spectrum differs considerably with ionising efficiency. In the early stages, the 21-cm PS matches the density (matter) power spectrum, while in the latter stages its follows the ionisation field [this surely has been discussed in detail already and I don't have to elaborate on it?](#).

Similar behaviour is observed for varying T_{vir} , a proxy for the minimum mass of halos hosting star-forming galaxies. Increasing this threshold, results in fewer sources to contribute to reionisation. In the top right panel, the maximum photon horizon, R_{mfp} , is varied. Essentially, in this specific work it acts as a maximum allowable bubble size. Note that in this case, the change in R_{mfp} does not alter the neutral fraction strongly, thus the changes in the 21-cm power spectrum are purely as a result in changes to the size of the ionised regions. Finally, in the bottom right we highlight astrophysical models with the same IGM neutral fraction (i.e. the same stage of reionisation). Despite being at the same point in reionisation, the amplitude and shape of the 21-cm power spectrum differs considerably, highlighting the

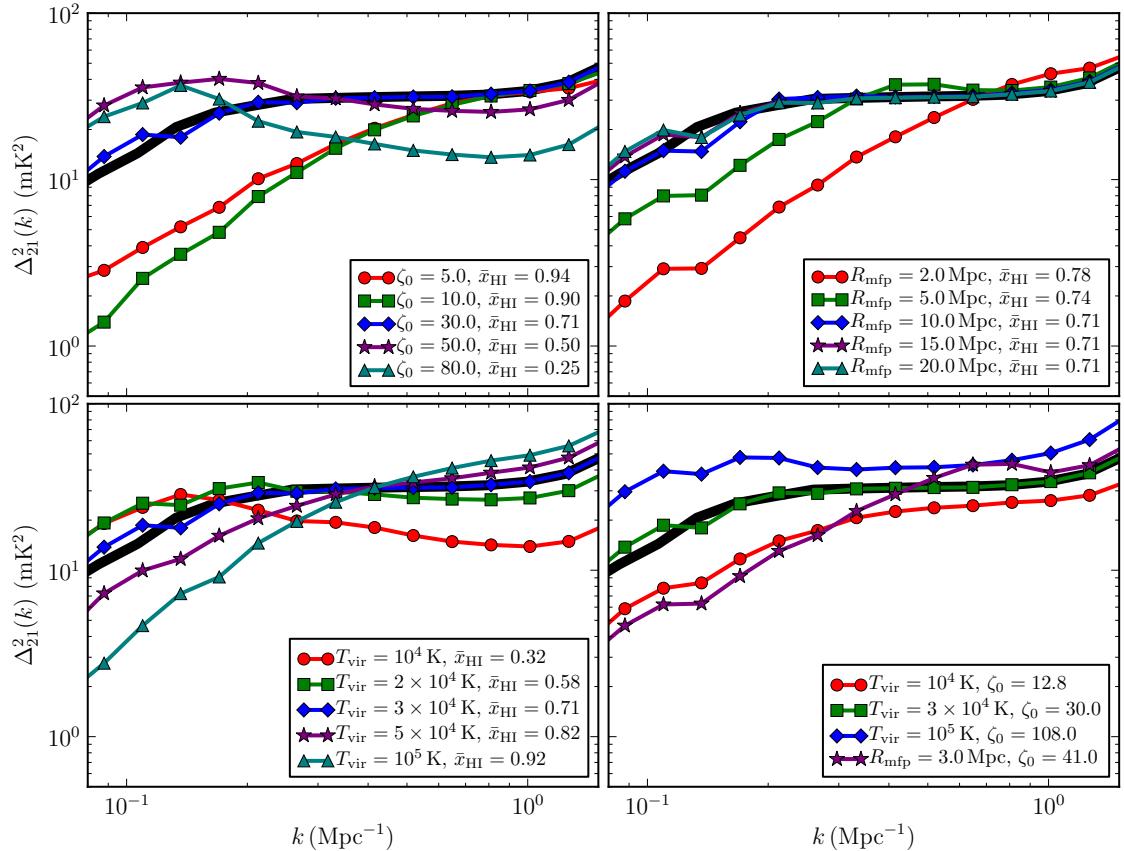


Figure 2.4: The three dimensional spherically averaged 21-cm power spectrum at $z = 9.0$ when varying astrophysical parameters controlling different astrophysical processes, assuming $T_S \gg T_{CMB}$ ([13]). Top left: the number of ionising photons produced per baryon (ionising efficiency, ζ), top right: maximum ionising photon horizon (proxy for maximum allowable bubble size, R_{mfp}) and bottom left: minimum mass of halo hosting star-forming galaxy (represented here as T_{vir}). Bottom right: several models at the same ionisation fraction.

sensitivity of the 21-cm power spectrum to the underlying astrophysical parameters.

While this example is only for the epoch of reionisation, the same strong sensitivity of the 21-cm power spectrum to the underlying astrophysics is true for both the heating or Ly α coupling epochs (see e.g. [citations](#)). This highlights the strength and utility of the 21-cm power spectrum for recovering the astrophysical information. As such numerous authors have explored the impact of various astrophysical processes on the 21-cm power spectrum. [refer to a variety of papers here, and potentially highlight the specific process used.](#)

2.2.3 Bispectrum

The logical extension beyond the power spectrum, the bispectrum, B , is simply the Fourier transform of the 3-point correlation function,

$$\langle \delta_{21}(\mathbf{k}_1) \delta_{21}(\mathbf{k}_2) \delta_{21}(\mathbf{k}_3) \rangle = (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\mathbf{k}_1 + \mathbf{k}_2 + \mathbf{k}_3) B(\mathbf{k}_1, \mathbf{k}_2, \mathbf{k}_3), \quad (2.5)$$

where the δ_D enforces that the Fourier modes must form closed triangles. It measures the excess probability of the underlying quantity as a function of three spatial positions in real space. The bispectrum provides a scale-dependent measure of the non-Gaussianity of the 21-cm signal, and as such contains additional astrophysical information beyond that held in the power spectrum. However, it suffers from lower signal-to-noise as there are less modes to average over to boost the signal.

Whereas the power spectrum is relatively trivial to interpret as it is a measure of the power over a single length scale, k , the bispectrum is the measure of power over all possible triangle configurations that satisfy the closure condition from δ_D . Thus in order to simplify the interpretation of the bispectrum, it is common to consider several simplified triangle configurations. These are typically: (i) the equilateral triangle ($k_1 = k_2 = k_3$), (ii) the isosceles triangle ($k_1 > k_2 = k_3$), (iii) folded triangle ($k_1 = 2k_2 = 2k_3$), (iv) elongated triangle ($k_1 = k_2 + k_3$) and (v) the squeezed triangle ($k_1 \simeq k_2 \gg k_3$). Each, corresponds to different physical properties of the real-space field.

While a detailed discussion of the 21-cm bispectrum is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is fruitful to provide a brief explanation and example of the various configurations (see for example [21] and [39] for more detailed discussions). The equilateral configuration is essentially an extension of the power spectrum, in the sense that it is expressed as a single amplitude scale, k . Generally speaking, it produces the largest amplitude signal and as such is the most commonly studied configuration. It is sensitive to the spherical symmetry of the 21-cm signal such as the scale of the ionised H_{II} regions during reionisation or the hot/cold spots due to IGM heating. Typically its amplitude grows during the EoR as the signal becomes more non-Gaussian due to the topology of the ionisation field. Shifting towards isosceles or folded triangles, these become more sensitive to planar or filamentary structures in the underlying 21-cm signal. Thus as the topology of either the ionised or X-ray heated regions deviate away from spherical symmetry (i.e. either multiple contributing sources or overlap of ionised regions) the signal should increase with increasing angle. The squeezed limit correlates the small-scale signal from two modes with a large-scale mode, for example capturing the impact of the large-scale environment (i.e. from X-ray heating) on the small-scale power spectrum (i.e. source clustering).

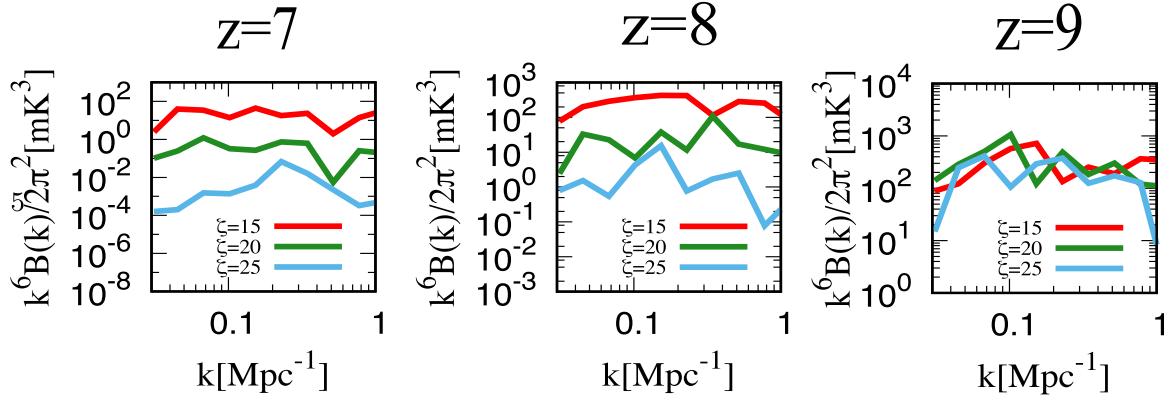


Figure 2.5: Variation in the amplitude of the equilateral bispectrum at $z = 7, 8$ and 9 for different ionising efficiencies, ζ , from [32].

In addition to the structural information in the bispectrum amplitude, the relative sign of the bispectrum equally reveals insight into the underlying processes. As discussed in [22], the sign of the bispectrum during reionisation can distinguish between whether the non-Gaussianity is driven by the topology of the ionised regions (where the bispectrum is negative) compared to being driven by the matter and cross-bispectra (where it is positive).

In Figure 2.5, we compare the equilateral bispectrum at $z = 7, 8$ and 9 from [32] for differing ionising efficiency, ζ . For decreasing ζ , the amplitude of the bispectrum increases due to its amplitude being dependent on the ionisation fraction. Thus, different reionisation models are easily distinguishable by the 21-cm bispectrum.

Note that the bispectrum is not measured independently from the power spectrum, thus both the power spectrum and bispectrum can be combined to considerably improve our understanding of the underlying astrophysics (can refer to the equivalent case for cosmology where the combination of the two improve the constraining power).

In recent times, the 21-cm bispectrum has gained considerable traction in interpreting the astrophysics of reionisation and the cosmic dawn. add in citations here works exploring the bispectrum, and quickly what they are exploring.

Some examples of the exploration of the 21-cm bispectrum. [39, 40, 31]

2.2.4 Trispectrum

I am certain someone looked at the trispectrum...

2.2.5 One-point statistics

Rather than measuring the Fourier transform (e.g. power spectrum) of the 21-cm brightness temperature signal, $\delta_{21}(\mathbf{x})$, we can instead measure the one-point statistics (or moments) of the probability distribution function (PDF). In fact, we have already discussed the lowest order one-point statistic, that is, the mean of $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x})$ given by the global signal (see 2.2.1). These one-point statistics of the PDF essentially measure the deviations away from a fully Gaussian PDF, thus they are by definition sensitive to the non-Gaussian nature of the 21-cm

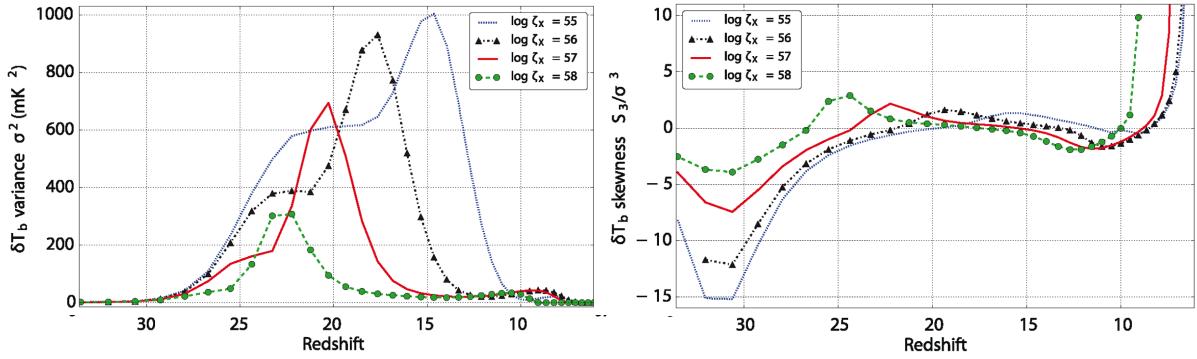


Figure 2.6: The variance (left) and normalised skewness (right) of the 21-cm brightness temperature when varying the efficiency of X-ray heating in the IGM from [38].

signal. Generally speaking, the one-point statistics of $\delta T_b(\mathbf{x})$ are given by,

$$m_n = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=0}^N (\delta T_b(\mathbf{x}_i) - \bar{\delta T}_b)^n, \quad (2.6)$$

where m_n is the n -th order moment and N is the number of pixels over which the signal is measured. For the 21-cm signal, these moments would be generated from the observed two-dimensional tomographic maps of the 21-cm signal.

The next lowest order statistic of the PDF following the mean is the variance, σ^2 . The variance is equivalent to the average of the power spectrum over all Fourier modes, k ,

$$\sigma^2 = (\bar{\delta T}_b)^2 \int \frac{d^3 k}{(2\pi)^3} P(\mathbf{k}). \quad (2.7)$$

As it is the average over all spatial information, the variance itself is less sensitive to the underlying astrophysics than the power spectrum. However, the strength of one-point statistics shines through when using the higher order moments in combination with the variance (or power spectrum). The next two higher order moments are referred to as the skewness and the kurtosis. Equivalent to the variance's relation to the power spectrum, the skewness and kurtosis are the average over all Fourier modes of the bispectrum and trispectrum respectively (the three and four-point correlation functions). As such, whereas the power spectrum only measures the 2-point correlations, the skewness and kurtosis reveals insights from the non-Gaussian properties of the 21-cm signal.

The amplitude of the variance is sensitive to differences in the 21-cm brightness temperature. For example, during the EoR, as the number of ionised regions increases (i.e. the contrast between the 21-cm signal from the neutral regions compared to zero signal from the ionised regions) the variance increases. It subsequently turns over as most of the volume is ionised. The skewness is a measure of the asymmetry of the underlying PDF. A negative skewness corresponds to a longer tail towards a lower amplitude signal and a positive skewness corresponds to a longer tail towards higher amplitude signals. The kurtosis is essentially a measure of the outliers of the distribution, with increasing positive (negative) kurtosis corresponding to larger positive (negative) amplitude outliers.

Figure 2.6 shows an example of both the variance (left) and normalised skewness (right panel) of the 21-cm brightness temperature under different levels of X-ray heating. For increasing X-ray efficiencies (i.e. increase heating) the peak of the variance decreases in amplitude while shifting to earlier times. Increasing the efficiency allows the X-ray heating to occur earlier, reducing the contrast between the T_{CMB}/T_S resulting in a lower amplitude peak in the variance. This same behaviour equally results in larger skewness for decreasing X-ray efficiency, owing to a more asymmetric PDF of 21-cm brightness temperatures due to the increasing contrast in T_{CMB}/T_S . Clearly from Figure 2.6 it can be seen that these one-point statistics are capable of distinguishing between different astrophysical models.

Some (but not all) references for the one-point statistics. [14, 26, 18, 19, 37, 30, 29]

2.2.6 Wavelets

Thus far we have only considered either real-space quantities such as the one-point statistics or the Fourier transform of the n -point correlation functions (i.e. the power spectrum and bispectrum). The Fourier transform measures the amplitude of the fluctuations of a given spatial scale, and in order to increase the signal-to-noise we must average the signal over all line-of-sight modes within some observed bandwidth. As a result, we average over modes containing different redshift evolutions and thus increase the bias of the signal. This can be minimised somewhat, for the case of the power spectrum, by averaging the signal over relatively narrow observing bandwidths. However, it still results in some loss in fidelity of the signal.

Instead, in [34] the authors explore the potential usage of wavelets, which provide multiple alternatives to the Fourier basis set. Specifically, they explored the application of the Morlet Transform. This provides a family of curves which provide the ability to localise the 21-cm signal both spatially and in frequency. In doing so, the equivalent to the power spectrum, the Morlet power spectrum is capable of providing an unbiased estimator which maximises the three dimensional nature of the 21-cm signal. Preliminary analysis shows that the Morlet power spectrum performs more optimally than the Fourier power spectrum. A physical interpretation of the Morlet power spectrum in the context of the evolution of the 21-cm signal has yet to be explored.

2.2.7 Topological measurements of the 21-cm signal

All previous approaches discussed up till this point have characterised the 21-cm signal using some form of statistical analysis, on the basis of maximising the signal-to-noise. However, the most advanced radio interferometers ([do I need to name them or refer to future chapter?](#)) should enable two dimensional images of the 21-cm signal. These images will contain the complicated morphology of the hot/cold patches of the 21-cm brightness temperature throughout the history of reionisation and the cosmic dawn. The relative sizes, shapes and clustering of these hot/cold patches can reveal numerous insights into the underlying astrophysical processes, such as the number density of sources, their contribution to the heating/ionisation of the IGM and the shape of the emitted spectrum of radiation. The study of these geometric shapes in mathematics is referred to as topology.

Topological studies of reionisation and the cosmic dawn are complimentary to the statistical methods described above. For example, reionisation proceeds through three main stages (e.g. [12, 10]): pre-overlap, over-lap and post-overlap. In pre-overlap, the first ionised H II regions (or bubbles) grow completely in isolation roughly until $x_{\text{HI}} \geq 0.1$. Over-lap ($0.9 \geq x_{\text{HI}} \geq 0.1$) describes the merging of these ionised bubbles into essentially a single large connected ionised region. Finally, post-overlap $x_{\text{HI}} \geq 0.9$ corresponds to the breaking down of the last remaining patches of neutral IGM into smaller and smaller islands. Topological studies are capable of breaking down these transitions by describing the ratios of ionised and neutral regions, how the ionised (or neutral) regions are connected together and how they are embedded in the larger structures as they form. This provides unique insights into the reionisation epoch not available from statistical methods.

There are numerous methods to attempt to characterise the topology of the 21-cm signal. Below, we summarise several of the main approaches taken in the literature. Fundamental to topological studies is the definition of how to identify regions of interest. Typically, a threshold value is required, with the quantity above/below this threshold being used to distinguish the two regions.

Genus or the Euler characteristic

The genus, g , is a topological property that defines the number of cuts one can make to an object (i.e. H II region) without dividing it into independent disconnected sub-regions. It can simply be expressed as,

$$g = N_{>\text{th}} - N_{<\text{th}} \quad (2.8)$$

where $N_{>\text{th}}$ and $N_{<\text{th}}$ are the number of connected (or fully enclosed) regions above and below the threshold value for identification. By gradually increasing the threshold value from some initial starting value, a genus curve is constructed, which is a measure of the connectedness of the quantity as a function of different threshold values (e.g. x_{HI} , δT_b). Typically, these threshold values are expressed in units of the standard deviation from the mean.

The genus has been explored, both in two and three dimensions, either in the context of the ionised (or neutral) field ([11, 20, 8]) or the 21-cm brightness temperature field ([15, 36]). However, it has yet to be explored in the context of the heating epoch (i.e. $T_S \gg T_{\text{CMB}}$ is typically assumed). For a purely Gaussian field, the genus curve is symmetric around zero. Thus deviations from symmetry highlight the non-Gaussianity of the 21-cm signal.

Differences in the evolution in the amplitude of the genus as a function of threshold density can distinguish different source biases and ionising efficiencies. For example, reionisation driven by larger, more biased sources exhibits a different topology than one driven by numerous fainter sources. This appears as changes in the amplitude of the genus as a function of threshold. When the ionised regions are isolated, the genus amplitude is higher than when they begin to overlap (as the total number of isolated ionised regions decreases).

Minkowski functionals

A more generalised description of the geometry or topology of the 21-cm signal can be obtained from what are referred to as Minkowski functionals. These are well known concepts

from the branch of mathematics known as integral geometry. Three dimensional space is completely defined by four Minkowski functionals. Used heavily in cosmology, in particular large-scale structure **need to add citations?**, recently they have gained favour for describing the topology of reionisation [11, 8, 41, 4].

For a zero mean scalar function, $u(x)$, (e.g. δT_b) within a volume, V , and standard deviation, u , we can define an excursion set, F_v , which contains all points that satisfy the threshold, $u(x) \geq v\sigma$, where $v = u_{\text{th}}/\sigma$ and u_{th} is the threshold value. Mathematically, this gives rise to the following Minkowski functionals,

$$V_0(v) = \frac{1}{V} \int_V d^3x \Theta[u(x) - v\sigma] \quad (2.9)$$

$$V_1(v) = \frac{1}{6V} \int_{\partial F_v} ds \quad (2.10)$$

$$V_2(v) = \frac{1}{6\pi V} \int_{\partial F_v} ds [\kappa_1(x) + \kappa_2(x)] \quad (2.11)$$

$$V_3(v) = \frac{1}{4\pi V} \int_{\partial F_v} ds \kappa_1(x) \kappa_2(x). \quad (2.12)$$

Here, Θ is the Heaviside step-function, ∂F_v is the surface of the excursion set, ds is the surface element and $\kappa_1(x)$ and $\kappa_2(x)$ are the principle curvatures (inverse of the principle radii) at x . The zeroth Minkowski functional, V_0 , corresponds simply to the total volume of the excursion set (i.e. volume above the threshold value), V_1 and V_2 correspond to the total surface and mean curvature of the excursion set while V_3 is the integrated Gaussian curvature over the surface or the Euler characteristic (also χ). The Euler characteristic is related to the genus, g , via $V_3 = 2(1 - g)$ thus it effectively describes the shape of the excursion set. Thus, the full set of Minkowski functionals contain additional information beyond that of just the genus.

Generally speaking the following behaviour is expected of the Minkowski functionals throughout reionisation and the cosmic dawn. V_0 describes the volume contained above/below the threshold value. For example, if $V_0 \sim 0.5$ at $\delta T_b = 0$ this implies the number of hot/cold patches are roughly equal. The V_0 curve will move from left to right (to increasing δT_b) as heating occurs. V_1 (reflected in V_2) exhibits a similar shift to higher δT_b , however it is initially strongly peaked with a high density tail containing the heated regions. This peak smooths out over a broader range of δT_b as heating continues. During reionisation, V_1 , V_2 and V_3 will shift toward $\delta T_b = 0$ as the higher amplitude δT_b regions ionise first. **Is this description even relevant without a figure? Don't want to include too many figures...**

In Figure 2.7 we show the four Minkowski functionals for the 21-cm brightness temperature when varying the underlying astrophysical processes from [41] at a fixed neutral fraction ($x_{H_I} \approx 0.5$) and redshift ($z = 8.6$). Here, these authors consider variations in either the ionising efficiency, ζ , or the minimum halo mass hosting star-forming galaxies, T_{vir} . Clearly, different reionisation histories are distinguishable by the Minkowski functionals.

Shape-finders

An extension to Minkowski functionals, shape-finders (**need citations to the method**) are a way to characterise the shapes of compact surfaces. Applied to reionisation ([2, 1]), these

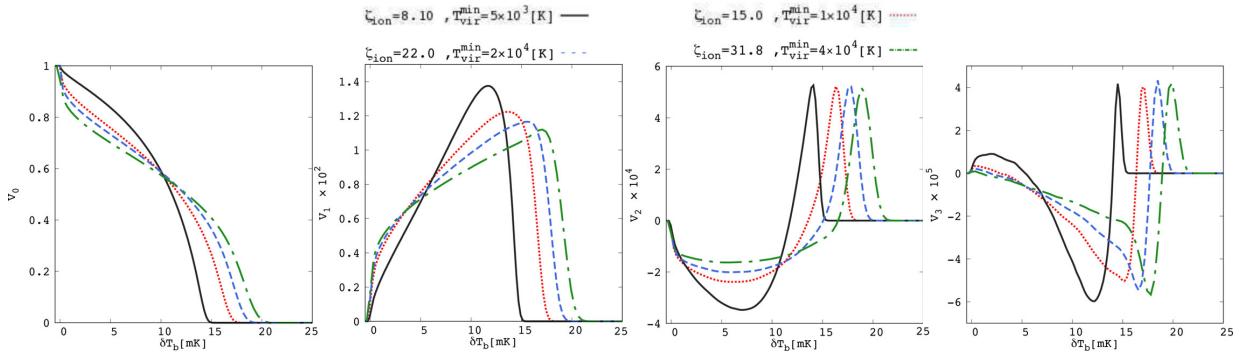


Figure 2.7: The impact of varying the astrophysical parameterisation for a fixed neutral fraction ($x_{H_I} \approx 0.5$) and redshift ($z = 8.6$). Consider the impact of varying either the ionising efficiency ζ or the minimum halo mass for star-forming galaxies, T_{vir} on the four Minkowski functionals. Figure adapted from [41].

shape-finders can provide a means to characterise how the ionised regions grow. For example, they are useful in being able to distinguish between whether the topology is planar or filamentary. Shapefinders are derived directly from the Minkowski functionals via:

$$\text{Thickness : } T = \frac{3V_0}{V_1} \quad (2.13)$$

$$\text{Breadth : } B = \frac{V_1}{V_2} \quad (2.14)$$

$$\text{Length : } L = \frac{V_3}{4\pi}. \quad (2.15)$$

These shape-finders are interpreted as providing the three principle axes of a physical object. The morphology of the ionised region can then be defined by either the planarity or its filamentarity:

$$\text{Planarity : } P = \frac{B - T}{B + T} \quad (2.16)$$

$$\text{Filamentarity : } F = \frac{L - B}{L + B}, \quad (2.17)$$

where $P \gg F$ corresponds to planar objects (i.e. sheets) while the opposite $F \gg P$ corresponds to a filament.

During the reionisation epoch, percolation theory shows that a single infinitely large, multiply connected ionised region will rapidly form (add citations). When describing the largest singly connected ionised region, [2, 1] find that both T and B evolve slowly whereas L increases rapidly. Thus, this large ionised region grows only along its ‘length’ implying a highly filamentary structure.

Persistent homology theory

Homology characterises the topology of the ionisation bubble network into its fundamental components: ionised regions, tunnels (enclosed neutral filaments) and cavities (patches of

neutral hydrogen). The persistence then quantifies the significance of the feature, for example its lifetime, by computing a birth and death date for an object. Thus far, it has only been applied to the ionisation field ([6]). These ionised regions (β_0), tunnels (β_1) and cavities (β_2) can be described by the so-called Betti numbers, which contain the total number of each. These can be related to the earlier Euler characteristic via, $\chi = \beta_0 - \beta_1 + \beta_2$. By breaking the Euler characteristic into the constituent components and tracking their individual growth reveals additional information on the topology, thus it is a more generalised method than either the genus of the Minkowski functionals.

Fractal dimensions

An alternative to classifying the ionised (neutral) regions embedded in the 21-cm signal is through a fractal dimensions analysis. Applied to reionisation ([3]), this provides a direct means to quantify the deviation away from a homogenous distribution, as well as the degree of clustering and lacunarity (a measure of the size of the ionised regions). The fractal dimension, D_q , also known as the Minkowski-Bouligand dimension, is a measure of how complicated the topology of the field in question is. A homogeneous distribution in three dimensions has a $D_q = 3$. [3] show that the topology of reionisation exhibits a significant multi-fractal behaviour. These authors find that the fractal dimension is relatively insensitive to the minimum halo mass of the star-forming galaxies, however it was sensitive to the mass averaged ionisation fraction. Thus, the correlation dimension can be useful for constraining the global neutral fraction. Additionally, it is a strong discriminant of models of outside-in and inside-out reionisation.

Contour Minkowski tensor

In [17, 16], these authors introduced the rank-2 contour Minkowski tensor (add citations) in two-dimensions which can probe both the length and time scales of the ionised regions during reionisation. The Minkowski tensors are a generalisation of the scalar Minkowski functionals. The contour Minkowski tensor provides information on both the alignment of structures in two dimensions and their anisotropy. Since the ionised regions are not perfectly spherical, their shape anisotropy can be explored by the ratio of the two eigenvalues of the contour Minkowski tensor while the amplitude of the eigenvalues describes their size.

In this analysis, the number of connected regions and holes (e.g. the Betti numbers) given a specific threshold value are tracked. In addition, a characteristic radius of the structures and their shape anisotropy can be determined. For a description of the evolution of δT_b , we refer the reader to [16], ignoring it here owing to its complexity due to the definition of the connected regions and holes as a function of the threshold value as the 21-cm signal transitions transition from hot/cold regions in the heating epoch to neutral/ionised regions during reionisation (would require several figures and long descriptions. Don't think that's required here (hopefully not)). However, we emphasise that these authors explored varying the minimum mass hosting star-forming haloes and clearly show that different astrophysical parameters can be distinguishable.

2.2.8 Bubble size distributions

Throughout reionisation and the cosmic dawn, the morphology of the 21-cm signal is driven by processes that embed a morphological signature on the 21-cm signal. For example the ionised H_{II} regions or the hot/cold spots in the 21-cm brightness temperature during the heating epoch. Quite simply, if we could measure the distribution of these ‘bubbles’ and how they evolve over cosmic time we would have a strong discriminant of the populations of sources responsible for the heating and ionisation of the IGM and also the spectrum of their emitted radiation. Effectively, this would behave as a statistical distribution function (number of bubbles given a physical scale) analogous to a halo mass function.

However, the bubbles do not remain isolated, very quickly overlapping into increasingly large and topologically complex structures. Thus, there is no unique way to characterise these bubbles. Nevertheless several methods have been explored in order to be able to construct a probabilistic distribution of the bubble sizes.

The simplest approach is to perform a friends-of-friends approach ([add citations here](#)), which simply connects all cells above (below) a threshold value. However, very rapidly a single large ionised structure exists which fills most of the volume with only a small fraction of isolated regions remaining. The relative volume of this large ionised region and the distribution of the smaller regions can still differentiate reionisation morphologies, however there is less statistical weight.

An alternative approach is to place a sphere on every pixel, averaging out the signal across increasingly larger spheres until a radius is found where the average signal is above the threshold value ([add citations here](#)). While this generates a more statistically meaningful distribution of bubbles, these sizes tend to overestimate the size of the topological feature of interest due to the assumed spherical symmetry.

Recently, more statistically robust methods have been introduced to measure the bubble size distributions. First of these is the mean free path method, which uses a Monte Carlo approach by considering a large number of random positions and determining the distance to the edge of the bubble from different random directions ([add citations here](#)). This results in an unbiased estimator of the bubble size distribution. Next, adapted from the cosmological search for voids, the Watershed ([add citations here](#)) method has been explored. This is a well known two-dimensional image segmentation algorithm creating contours of constant value (i.e. δT_b) which are treated as levels of a tomographic map. These are then ‘flooded’ to obtain unique locations for the minima (e.g. ionised regions).

Remaining in the image processing regime, ([add citations here](#)) introduced the superpixels method. This uses a region based method to identify regions of complex shapes (i.e. ionised regions) segmenting these regions into smaller segments called superpixels. The bubble size distribution is then obtained by averaging the value of the 21-cm brightness temperature within each segment ([search for specific details on how this becomes a bubble distribution](#)).

2.2.9 Individual bubbles

Images will provide a direct tangible link to the process of reionisation. Revealing exactly where ionising bubbles are, and thus where to look for the sources responsible for the bubble creation.

However, bubble identification will become rather problematic, as it is the differential brightness that is observed, not the raw brightness temperature. Need smart/sophisticated approaches to search and characterise the signal.

Look at individual regions of interest, i.e. around a bright QSO or large number of galaxies.

Matched filters etc., are useful for finding/detecting isolated bubbles

2.2.10 Stacked images

May be difficult to detect individual objects, instead, one could stack 21cm spectra centred on known galaxies. See Paul Geil's paper.

Border's on potential discussions of synergies. Requires known locations of ionising sources with precise redshifts and positions of the sky. JWST/WFIRST. Is there

2.2.11 Other statistics

Are there other statistics that I have overlooked/forgotten. Need to do a search of the literature to ensure I have covered everything.

2.3 Efficient methods to model/simulate the 21cm signal

Ideally we want to use the largest, most physically accurate simulations to match the observed 21cm signal. However, this is not practical. Instead, we must come up with methods to compensate accuracy for efficiency.

Originally I envisaged this section to go as follows

- Discuss briefly that numerical simulations are great but too computationally expensive
- Highlight semi-numerical/analytic simulations as fitting the bill by being faster etc.
- Then discuss alternatives (i.e. emulators).

This will need to be re-worked given Jordan's plan to discuss this. I haven't yet thought of a logical plan to motivate this. I guess one way would be to concatenate it into just a simulation section and briefly summarise what was discussed in Jordan's chapter (which is a couple of chapters ago, so might be appropriate to do so). It's less obvious to move into discussing emulators in the absence of motivating the need for them by highlighting the complications of simulations in general.

2.3.1 Numerical simulations

Ideally, use large, numerical simulations to make a realisation which matches observation. Want to include as much physics as possible into these simulations. Doing so, comes at a serious cost. Simulating the 21cm signal is complicated! Brief summary on the required dynamic range. Briefly highlight the expensive nature of these simulations, Hydrodynamics, radiative transfer etc. Quickly becomes computationally prohibitive to run more than a couple of realisations. **Jordan's section (Modelling Tools) will likely cover most if not all of this.**

2.3.2 Semi-numerical/analytic models of the 21cm signal

Enter semi-numerical approaches, which broadly encapsulate the global average quantities of reionisation and the cosmic dawn and reproduce morphologically similar realisations of the 3D structure. The advantage here is that the computational costs are drastically reduced (orders of magnitude less). **Jordan's section (Modelling Tools) will likely cover most if not all of this.**

2.3.3 Intelligent sampling of the parameter space

Running simulations to span all of the allowed parameter space may be too computationally intensive. However, perhaps we can make intelligent assumptions/guesses about how many simulations to run, and on a specific area of physics to focus on. Some of the concepts here may overlap slightly with the Emulator section below. This sampling was discussed in one of Benoit's recent papers.

2.3.4 Emulators

An alternative to directly running a simulation to estimate some astrophysical statistic/model, one can instead construct a function which estimates what the statistical signal should be, given some astrophysical or cosmological parameter set. This is what is referred to as an emulator. Using simulations, a generator function is constructed which can approximate the statistics of the signal. Results in multiple orders of magnitude improvement in computational speed as no new simulations are required. However, it can only approximate statistics, it does not generate 3D simulations.

Developing an emulator benefits from efficient parameter space approaches, as it minimises the size of the database required to construct the emulator. There are a variety of approaches to consider when attempting to minimise the sampling of the astrophysical parameter space. For example Latine-Hypercube, Gaussian processes... Can briefly discuss each method, and a few recent papers that explore methods to do this

There are numerous machine learning approaches to construct an emulator.

Discuss Nick Kern's of 21cmFAST and Cohen's global signal one of Anastasia's code.

Highlight and discuss Chardin et al. (2019). Emulation of reionisation simulations (construction of treion maps given source lists). arxiv:1905.06958

2.3.5 Characterising our ignorance

We are fully aware that semi-numerical approaches are inaccurate at 10s of per cent level. Additionally, they oversimplify/completely ignore the underlying astrophysical properties. However, if the global quantities (observables such as luminosity functions etc.) can still be reproduced within agreement, we can develop an understanding of how one might map from a semi-numerical simulation, to a more realistic simulation. Basically, tell the large, computationally expensive simulation where exactly to look in the region of parameter space.

Using summary statistics and globally average observables, we can develop a means to calibrate one simulation to mimic the outputs of another. In other words, develop a bias or functional form to smooth out uncertainties from one simulation to mimic the results of a more detailed simulation.

Describe ongoing attempts to quantify this. i.e. use luminosity functions to calibrate simulations, apply redshift corrections to deal with photon non-conservation etc.

These correction factors etc., will be crucial for inferring astrophysics and cosmology from the 21cm signal

2.4 Inference methods for 21cm

Having discussed methods to model/simulate the 21cm signal, now need to shift focus to methods to infer information about the astrophysics/cosmology from the 21cm signal.

2.4.1 Fisher Matrices

Simplest method, which takes derivatives with respect to model parameters of a functional form (i.e. a 21cm statistical signal) to infer parameter constraints. Effectively, exploits how sensitive the 21cm signal is to specific parameters. Limiting assumption include Gaussianity etc.

Successfully used for cosmology

2.4.2 Bayesian MCMC

Significantly more robust method to parameter inference. Outline Bayes' theorem. Highlight that this basically boils down to exploring by random walks, using a likelihood function and priors to accept/penalise regions of parameter space. Very useful for recovering constraints. Again, successfully used in Cosmology etc.

Describe its use in the context of 21cm. Introduce 21CMMC, and a couple of other codes that use MCMC (Sultan's simfast21, Jordan's global signal, Geraint's MCMC, Simon's Mphysa). Highlight that 21CMMC is the only direct MCMC. Emphasise that techniques such as emulators can be coupled with MCMC to improve overall computational efficiency at the cost of some further inaccuracies.

Don't forget the Bernardi and Zwart papers.

2.4.3 Nested sampling and model inference

We have a wide variety of simulations, each with their own strength's and weaknesses. In principle, various models/simulations/physical prescriptions can be discriminated against using model selection or inference. Related to MCMC, nested sampling can focus on model selection rather than simply astrophysical recovery. Can refer to Tom Binnie's recent paper.

2.4.4 Neural Networks

Instead of using MCMC to recover parameters from statistics, we can use the full 2/3D images of the 21cm signal with neural networks. One can construct a database of simulations and extract the 21cm signal to construct a neural network. This network can then learn a large number of properties, i.e. how changes in the topology are affected by astrophysical parameters etc. Using this technique one can directly convert from an observed 2D image to the underlying astrophysics. Like emulators, the application of the network is extremely quick. Downsides are parameter errors etc. and in some sense physical intuition. It tells you an answer, but not why.

Simulated images of the 21cm signal have already been used to infer astrophysical and cosmological constraints. For example with convolutional networks (e.g Nicolas or Paul La Plante). Discuss other machine learning approaches.

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Chapter 3

21 cm observations: calibration, strategies, observables

Gianni Bernardi (INAF-IRA & Rhodes University)

Abstract

This chapter aims to provide a review of the basics of 21 cm interferometric observations and its methodologies. I begin by summarizing the main concepts of radio interferometry and their connection with the 21 cm observables - power spectra and images. I then provide a review of interferometric calibration and its interplay with foreground separation, including the current open challenges in calibration of 21 cm observations. I conclude with reviewing 21 cm instrument designs in the light of calibration choices and observing strategies.

3.1 Interferometry overview

The Van Cittert-Zernike theorem expresses the fundamental relationship between the sky spatial brightness (or brightness distribution) I and the quantity measured by an interferometer, i.e. the visibility V (e.g., [79]):

$$V_{ij}(\mathbf{b}, \lambda) = \int_{\Omega} \bar{I}(\hat{\sigma}, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i \mathbf{b} \cdot \hat{\sigma}} d\sigma, \quad (3.1)$$

where \mathbf{b} is the baseline vector that separates antenna i and antenna j , and $\hat{\sigma}$ is the observing direction (see Figure 3.1) and the integral is taken over the source size Ω . The baseline vector is here specified in wavelengths, i.e. $\mathbf{b} = \frac{\mathbf{b}_m}{\lambda}$, where \mathbf{b}_m is the baseline vector expressed in meters and λ is the observing wavelength. It can be seen in Figure 3.1, that the celestial signal travels an extra path between the two antennas, and that length corresponds to a geometrical time delay $\tau = \mathbf{b} \cdot \hat{\sigma}$, where the word “geometrical” refers to the fact that the delay depends upon the source position in the sky and the relative separation between the two antennas.

The sky brightness distribution does not enter directly in equation 3.1, but filtered by the antenna primary beam response A that depends upon the direction in the sky and the

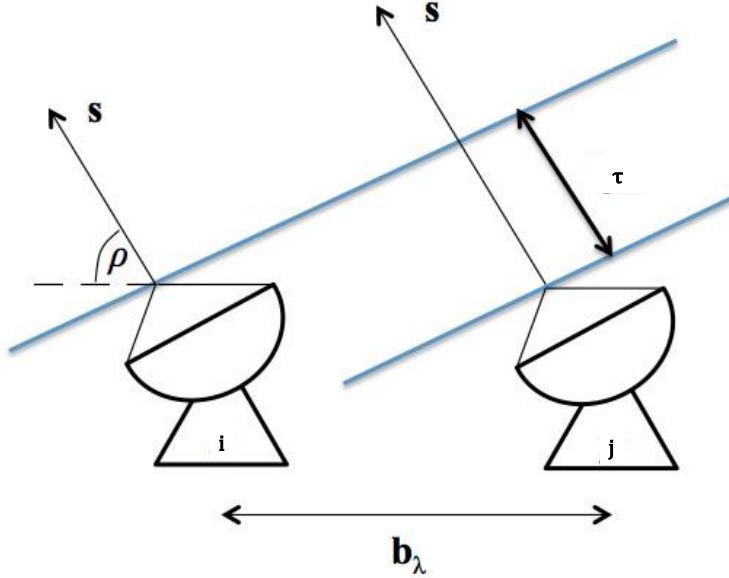


Figure 3.1: A standard schematic of the two element interferometer (from <http://inspirehep.net>).

wavelength, i.e. $\bar{I}(\mathbf{b}, \lambda) = A(\mathbf{b}, \lambda) I(\mathbf{b}, \lambda)$. The response of the primary beam attenuates the sky emission away from the pointing direction, effectively reducing the field of view θ of the instrument. Generally speaking, the size of the field of view is essentially given by the antenna diameter D :

$$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}. \quad (3.2)$$

Equation 3.1 is often re-written in a different coordinate system, i.e. using the components of the baseline vector (u, v, w) and the reciprocal (l, m, n) , where (l, m) are the coordinates in the plane on the sky tangent to the observing direction n (for a detailed discussion of coordinate systems see, for example [79]). Using this coordinate system, equation 3.1 becomes (e.g., [79]):

$$V_{ij}(u, v, w, \lambda) = \int_{\Omega} \bar{I}(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m + w(n-1))} \frac{dl dm dn}{\sqrt{1 - l^2 - m^2}}, \quad (3.3)$$

Although low frequency radio observations are intrinsically wide-field, for the purpose of studying the 21 cm observables, we can reduce equation 3.3 to a two dimensional Fourier transform:

$$V_{ij}(u, v, \lambda) = \int_{\Omega} \bar{I}(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm. \quad (3.4)$$

Equation 3.4 indicates that an *interferometer measures the two dimensional Fourier transform of the spatial sky brightness distribution*. If our goal is to reconstruct the sky brightness distribution, equation 3.4 can be inverted into its corresponding Fourier pair:

$$\bar{I}(l, m, \lambda) = \int V_{ij}(u, v, \lambda) e^{2\pi i(u l + v m)} du dv. \quad (3.5)$$

Equation 3.5 is, however, a poor reconstruction of the sky brightness distribution as only one Fourier mode is sampled at a single time instance. Strictly speaking, indeed, all the quantities in equation 3.4 and 3.5 are time variable. In most cases, the time dependence of the primary beam and the sky brightness distribution can be neglected, however, this is not the case for the visibility V as the projection of the baseline vector with respect to the source direction changes significantly throughout a long (e.g. a few hours) track. In this way, many measurements of the visibility coherence function V can be made as (u, v) change with time, allowing for a better reconstruction of the $\bar{I}(l, m, \lambda)$ function. This methods is commonly referred to as *filling the uv plane via Earth rotation synthesis* and was invented by [68]. The other (complementary) way to fill the uv plane is to deploy more antennas on the ground in order to increase the number of instantaneous measurements of independent Fourier modes. If N antennas are connected in an interferometric array, $\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$ instantaneous measurements are made.

The combination of a large number of antennas and the Earth rotation synthesis, defines the sampling function $S(u, v)$ in the uv plane. In any real case, equation 3.5 can therefore be re-written as:

$$\bar{I}_D(l, m, \lambda) = \int S(u, v, \lambda) V(u, v, \lambda) e^{2\pi i(u l + v m)} du dv, \quad (3.6)$$

where \bar{I}_D indicates the sky brightness distribution sampled at a finite number of (u, v) points (often termed *dirty image*) and where the explicit dependence on the antenna pair was dropped for simplicity. Using the convolution theorem, equation 3.6 can be re-written as:

$$\bar{I}_D(l, m, \lambda) = S \tilde{V} = \tilde{S} * \tilde{V} = \text{PSF}(l, m, \lambda) * \tilde{V}(l, m, \lambda), \quad (3.7)$$

where the tilde indicates the Fourier transform, $*$ the convolution operation and PSF is the Point Spread Function, i.e. the response of the interferometric array to a point sources which, in our case, is also the Fourier transform of the uv coverage.

The sampling function always effectively reduces the integral over a finite (often not contiguous) area of the uv plane. In particular, the sampled uv plane is restricted to a minimum uv distance that cannot be shorter than the antenna¹ size and the largest separation between antennas, i.e. the maximum baseline \mathbf{b}_{\max} . The maximum baseline also sets the maximum angular resolution θ_b :

$$\theta_b \approx \frac{\lambda}{|\mathbf{b}_{\max}|}. \quad (3.8)$$

The incomplete sampling of the uv space leads to a PSF that has “sidelobes”, i.e. nulls and secondary lobes that can often contaminate fainter true sky emission. The best reconstruction of the sky brightness distribution \bar{I} requires deconvolution of the dirty image from the PSF.

3.2 21 cm observables: power spectra and images

The ultimate goal of 21 cm observations is to image the spatial distribution of the 21 cm signal as a function of redshift, also known as *21 cm tomography*. Given the current the-

¹In this chapter I use the words “antenna” and “station” interchangeably to indicate the correlated elements even if, in the literature, they are normally used to indicate a dish and a dipole, or a cluster of dipoles, respectively.

oretical predictions, such observations need to achieve mK sensitivity on a few arcminute angular scales (see Chapter 1 in this book). Most of the current arrays, however, only have the sensitivity to perform a statistical detection of the 21 cm signal, i.e. to measure its power spectrum. Given an intensity field T , function of the three dimensional spatial coordinate \mathbf{x} , its power spectrum $P(k)$ is defined as:

$$\langle \tilde{T}^*(\mathbf{k}) \tilde{T}(\mathbf{k}') \rangle = (2\pi)^3 P(k) \delta^3(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{k}') \quad (3.9)$$

where $\langle \rangle$ indicates the ensamble average, \mathbf{k} is the Fourier conjugate of \mathbf{x} , tilde the Fourier transform, $*$ the conjugate operator and δ the Dirac delta function. In 21 cm observations, power spectra can be computed directly from interferometric image cubes after deconvolution of the dirty image $\bar{I}_D(l, m, \lambda)$ from the point spread function (e.g., [62], [28], [6], [59]). Alternatively, the 21 cm power spectrum can be estimated directly from the interferometric visibilities. Equation 3.4 already shows that the interferometer is a “natural” spatial power spectrum instrument (e.g., [92]). Visibilities can be further Fourier transformed along the frequency axis (the so-called *delay trasform*, [58]):

$$\tilde{V}_{ij}(u, v, \tau) = \int_B \bar{I}(l, m, v) e^{-2\pi i v \tau} dv \quad (3.10)$$

where B is the observing bandwidth and τ is the geometrical delay. The delay transform is therefore proportional to the three dimensional power spectrum ([55]):

$$P(k) \propto \tilde{V}_{ij}(|\mathbf{b}|, \tau), \quad (3.11)$$

where the proportionality constant transforms the visibility units into power units ([55]). The observer units (\mathbf{b}, τ) map directly in k modes parallel and perpendicular to the line of sight (e.g., [50]):

$$k_{\perp} = \frac{2\pi|\mathbf{b}|}{D_c} = \frac{2\pi\sqrt{u^2 + v^2}}{D_c}, \quad k_{\parallel} = \frac{2\pi f_{21} H_0 E(z)}{c(1+z)^2} \tau, \quad (3.12)$$

where D_c is the transverse comoving distance, $f_{21} = 1421$ MHz, H_0 is the Hubble constant and $E(z) = \sqrt{\Omega}m(1+z)^3 + \Omega_k(1+z)^2 + \Omega_{\Lambda}$. Due to the dependence of the geometrical delay upon frequency, equation 3.11 is only valid for short baselines, typically shorter than a few hundred meters, for which the geometrical delay is fairly constant across the bandwidth and lines of constant k_{\parallel} are essentially orthogonal to the k_{\perp} axis ([55]).

Equation 3.10 does not only provide a link between visibilities and three dimensional power spectra, but also introduces the concept of “horizon limit”, i.e. the maximum physical delay allowed $\tau_{\max} = \frac{|\mathbf{b}|}{c}$, where c is the speed of light. The most relevant implication of the existence of an horizon limit is the definition of a region in the two dimensional $(k_{\parallel}, k_{\perp})$ power spectrum space where smooth-spectrum foregrounds are confined, leaving the remaining area uncontaminated in order to measure the 21 cm signal (the so-called “Epoch of Reionization (EoR) window”, Figure 3.2). Foregrounds can therefore be “avoided” with no requirements for subtraction (e.g., [49], [89], [64], [80]; see also Chapter 6 in this book). The choice of a foreground avoidance strategy versus subtraction plays an important role in planning an experiment, its related observing strategy and the array calibration strategy.

The requirements for image tomography are the same as for high brightness sensitivity observations of diffuse emission like the Cosmic Microwave Background (e.g., [26], [19],

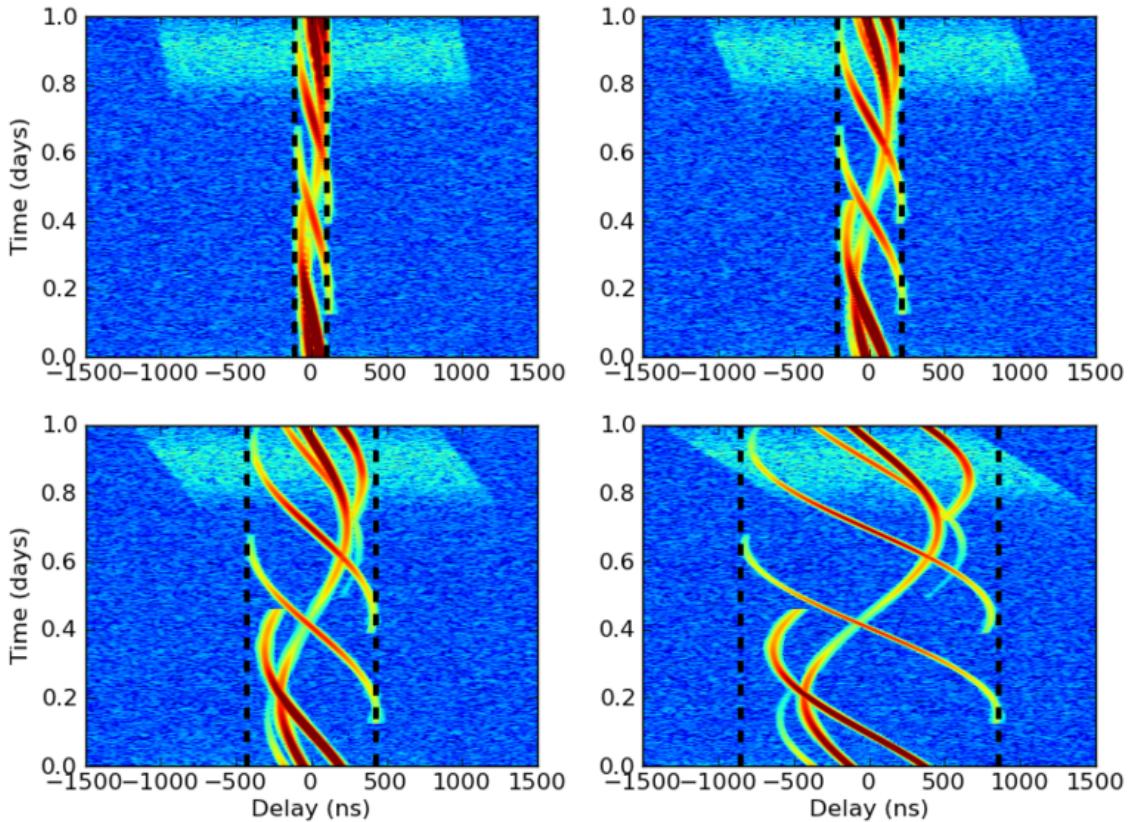


Figure 3.2: Amplitude of delay transformed visibilities as a function of time and delay for a 32 (top left), 64 (top right), 128 (bottom left) and 256 m (bottom right) baselines respectively (from [58]). A number of smooth spectrum point sources are simulated as foregrounds and their tracks are clearly bound within the horizon limit (black dashed line). The cyan emission is a fiducial 21 cm model that has power up to high delays regardless of the baseline length.

[67]). The 21 cm spatial distribution throughout cosmic reionization has structures on 5-10 arcminutes up to degree scales (e.g., [44], [16], [45], [39]). In order to image 21 cm fluctuations, a maximum baseline of the order of a few km gives a resolution of a few arcminutes in the 100 – 200 MHz range, together with filled uv plane in order to accurately reconstruct their complex spatial structure. A filled uv plane also leads to a PSF with very low sidelobes, making the deconvolution process easier. The most stringent requirements for image tomography remain the accurate foreground separation and, as I will review in the next section, the related instrumental calibration.

3.3 Interferometric calibration and 21 cm observations

Celestial radio signals always experience a corruption when observed with an interferometric array, due to the non-ideal instrumental response that is corrected in post processing in a process that is known as interferometric calibration. Calibration relies on the definition of a data model where the corruptions are described by antenna based quantities known as Jones matrices. Such data model is known as the interferometric measurement equation ([27],[71],[72],[73]).

If antenna 1 and antenna 2 measure two orthogonal, linear polarizations x and y , the cross-polarization visibility products can be grouped in a 2×2 complex matrix \mathbf{V} :

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, \lambda) \equiv \begin{bmatrix} V_{12,xx}(u, v, \lambda) & V_{12,xy}(u, v, \lambda) \\ V_{12,yx}(u, v, \lambda) & V_{12,yy}(u, v, \lambda) \end{bmatrix}. \quad (3.13)$$

The sky brightness distribution I can also be written as a 2×2 matrix \mathbf{B} using the Stokes parameters as a polarization basis:

$$\mathbf{B}_I(l, m, \lambda) \equiv \begin{bmatrix} I(l, m, \lambda) + Q(l, m, \lambda) & U(l, m, \lambda) + iV(l, m, \lambda) \\ U(l, m, \lambda) - iV(l, m, \lambda) & I(l, m, \lambda) - Q(l, m, \lambda) \end{bmatrix}. \quad (3.14)$$

At this point, equation 3.3 can be written by including the corruptions represented by the complex Jones matrices J : ([27],[71]):

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, \lambda) = \mathbf{J}_1 \left(\int_{\Omega} \mathbf{B}_I(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm \right) \mathbf{J}_2^H \quad (3.15)$$

Equation 3.15 is known as the *measurement equation* and is the core of interferometric calibration. For an array with N antennas, equation 3.15 can be written for each of the $\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$ visibilities forming an overdetermined system of equations. The development of algorithms to solve the calibration system of equations is a very active research line ([46], [40], [77], [95], [74]) although beyond the scope of this chapter and we mention it here for completeness.

The solution of the measurement equation requires some knowledge of the sky brightness distribution \mathbf{B}_I , in other words, a *sky model*. Traditionally this is achieved by observing a calibration source, i.e. a bright, unresolved point source with known spectral and polarization properties. Calibration solutions are then applied to the observed field that is then used to improve the sky model \mathbf{B}_I which, in turn, leads to more accurate calibration solutions \mathbf{J} .

This loop is traditionally called self calibration ([15], [61]) and can lead to a highly accurate calibration (e.g., [8], [72]).

The advantage of the measurement equation is that it can factorize different physical terms into different matrices. For example, the frequency response of the telescope electronics and its time variations essentially affects only the two polarization response and are modeled with a diagonal Jones matrix \mathbf{B} :

$$\mathbf{B}(t, \lambda) \equiv \begin{bmatrix} b_x(t, \lambda) & 0 \\ 0 & b_y(t, \lambda) \end{bmatrix}, \quad (3.16)$$

where we made it explicit that \mathbf{B} can vary with time and frequency. The undesired instrumental leakage between the two orthogonal polarized can be written as a \mathbf{D} Jones matrix of the form:

$$\mathbf{D}(t, \lambda) \equiv \begin{bmatrix} 1 & d_x(t, \lambda) \\ -d_y(t, \lambda) & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (3.17)$$

and the measurement equation can be written as:

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, \lambda) = \mathbf{B}_1 \mathbf{D}_1 \left(\int_{\Omega} \mathbf{B}_I(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm \right) \mathbf{D}_2^H \mathbf{B}_2^H. \quad (3.18)$$

We note that, in principle, the primary beam response should appear as an additional 2×2 Jones matrix before the \mathbf{D} matrix. For the purpose of this section we will neglect it, although we will illustrate an exception to this assumption when we later discuss about polarization calibration.

Retaining only the first order terms, equation 3.18 can be written as ([69]):

$$V_{12,xx}(u, v, \lambda) = b_{1,x} b_{2,x}^* [V_I(u, v, \lambda) - V_Q(u, v, \lambda)] \quad (3.19)$$

$$V_{12,xy}(u, v, \lambda) = b_{1,x} b_{2,y}^* [(d_{1,x} - d_{2,y}^*) V_I(u, v, \lambda) + V_U(u, v, \lambda) + i V_V(u, v, \lambda)] \quad (3.20)$$

$$V_{12,yx}(u, v, \lambda) = b_{1,y} b_{2,x}^* [(d_{2,x} - d_{1,y}^*) V_I(u, v, \lambda) + V_U(u, v, \lambda) - i V_V(u, v, \lambda)] \quad (3.21)$$

$$V_{12,yy}(u, v, \lambda) = b_{1,y} b_{2,y}^* [V_I(u, v, \lambda) - V_Q(u, v, \lambda)], \quad (3.22)$$

where we dropped the explicit dependence on time and wavelength from the Jones matrices for notation clarity and where $V_{i=I,Q,U,V}$ are the Fourier transforms of the elements of the sky brightness matrix \mathbf{B} .

This form of the measurement equation offers an intuitive understanding as to why calibration is of paramount important in 21 cm observations. The observed visibilities are essentially a measurement of foreground emission and, in the ideal case, their amplitudes would vary smoothly with frequency, allowing to avoid or subtract foregrounds. However, the instrumental response inevitably corrupts this smoothness in several ways: because the telescope primary beam is not sufficiently smooth in frequency, because of the electronic response or because of reflections along the signal path. Although calibration will correct for these effects and restore the intrinsic foreground frequency smoothness, calibration errors (i.e., deviations from the true \mathbf{B} solutions) will still corrupt the foreground spectra. In practice, calibration errors result into foreground power leaking out of the horizon limit and jeopardizing (part of) the EoR window. The corruption of the foreground spectra will limit the accuracy of any subtraction method (see discussion in Chapter 6 in this book). *The*

effectiveness of foreground separation, proven in ideal cases, depends significantly on the accuracy of interferometric calibration.

The form of the measurement equation written in equations 3.18 and 3.22 is often referred to as a *direction independent* calibration as it implicitly assumes that a single Jones matrix is sufficient to describe corruptions across the whole sky area of interest. This assumption is often invalid at low frequencies, mostly because of the changing primary beam response over a wide field of view, frequency, and the course of the observation, and the position and time dependent corruptions introduced by the Earth's ionosphere. In this case the measurement equation becomes *direction dependent*, i.e. a different Jones matrix is written and solved for a certain number of directions in the sky:

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, \lambda) = \sum_s \left[\mathbf{B}_{1,s} \left(\int_{\Omega} \mathbf{B}_{I,s}(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm \right) \mathbf{B}_{2,s}^H \right], \quad (3.23)$$

where the sum is over the number of directions s . We note that we have used here the \mathbf{B} matrix for pedagogical purposes, regardless of the physical origin of the direction dependent effect. Direction dependent effects also impact foreground separation, in a similar way as the direction independent effects.

Accurate direction independent and dependent calibration of 21 cm observations is a key topic of present research and can be grouped in a few main topics:

- *sky models.* Ideally, the sky brightness model matrix \mathbf{B}_I (equation 3.18 and 3.22) would include the whole sky emission. This is practically impossible as part of the sky signal is the unknown of interest (the 21 cm signal) and the detailed properties of the foreground sky are not known sufficiently well. Sky models are normally constituted of a catalogue of compact sources of known (or measured) properties, often covering an area significantly larger than the telescope field of view (e.g., [96], [63]). Nevertheless, sky models remain essentially always incomplete at some level, as source catalogues are limited in depth, source characterization and - often - sky coverage. [24], [94] and [25] show that incomplete catalogues used as sky models bias the calibration and eventually lead to artifacts in the form of ghost-like sources in interferometric images, most of the times fainter than the image noise level. The ghost pattern is stronger for regularly spaced arrays and if the sky model is less complete. In term of power spectrum, [22] and [5] show that the calibration bias introduced by incomplete sky models leads to an overall leakage of foreground power in the EoR window (Figure 3.3). A similar foreground leakage may occur because of the finite angular resolution of interferometric observations: for example, two sources whose size is respectively one third and one tenth of the instrument angular resolution will be both modeled as point like even if the first source is only barely unresolved. This biased catalogue would again lead to a leakage of foreground power in the EoR window ([65]). In this case, the bias can be mitigated by obtaining a sky model with an angular resolution much higher than the scales at which the 21 cm signal is expected ([65]).

Sky models that include only compact sources are not adequate for baselines shorter than a few tens of meters as they are sensitive to Galactic diffuse emission, which contributes to most of the power on angular scales $\theta > 10 - 20$ arcmin (e.g., [7], [14]). Excluding short baselines from the calibration solutions prevents the problem of

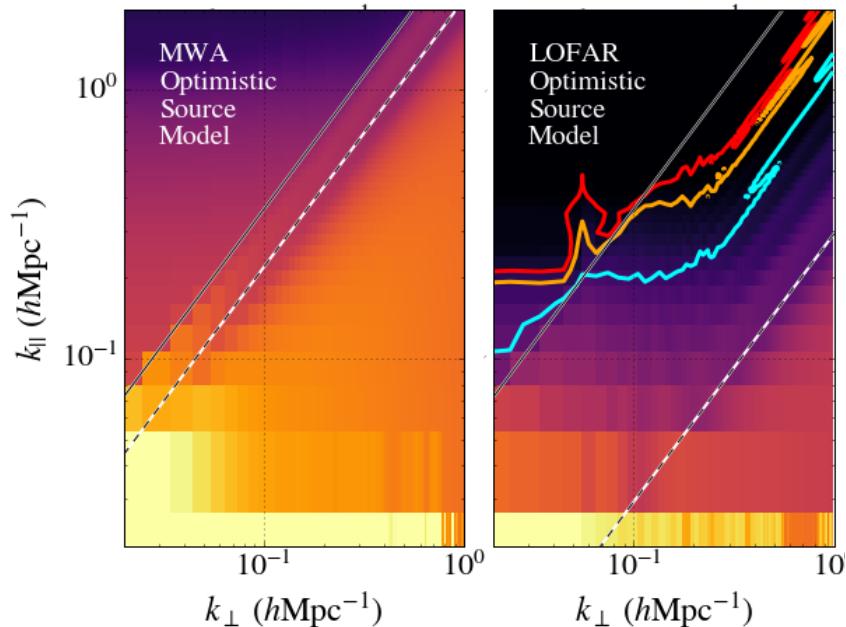


Figure 3.3: Example of power spectrum bias introduced by calibration errors due to an incomplete sky model for the Murchison Widefield Array (MWA, left) and the Low Frequency Array (LOFAR, right) cases respectively (from [22]). Power spectra are shown in their two dimensional (k_{\perp}, k_{\parallel}) form in order to display the foreground dominated region below the horizon limit (grey solid line). Cyan, orange and red lines are the locii where a fiducial 21 cm model power spectrum is one, five and ten times higher than the bias level. In an ideal case with perfectly smooth foregrounds and no calibration errors, the 21 cm power spectrum should be detectable just outside the horizon limit. The errors introduced by an incomplete sky model leak foreground power in the EoR window at a level that may completely prevent a detection in the MWA case.

modeling diffuse emission, but can bias the solutions ([60]) if the system of calibration equation is not properly regularized ([51]).

In summary, different analysis approaches provide evidence that *imperfect sky models (either because of missing catalogue sources, mis-estimating source properties or missing diffuse emission) are a source of calibration bias that has general effect to corrupt the foreground properties, leaking their power well beyond the ideal horizon limit and requiring additional modeling and subtraction.* For this reason, significant efforts are currently ongoing in order to improve sky models via wider and deeper low frequency surveys (e.g., [29], [31], [70]), more accurate low frequency catalogues ([13]) and even better observations of Galactic diffuse emission ([99], [21]);

- *instrument/primary beam models.* A complete knowledge of a sky model may not be, by itself, sufficient for an accurate calibration of 21 cm observations as the brightness matrix \mathbf{B}_I is multiplied by the antenna primary beam (equation 3.4 and 3.15) and the measurement of an intrinsic sky model requires the separation from the primary beam effect.

Unlike steerable dishes, most 21 cm interferometers are constituted of dipoles fixed on the ground, in some cases clustered together to form larger stations whose beams that can be digitally pointed to a sky direction by introducing different delays to the dipoles (e.g., like the MWA and LOFAR arrays). As station beams are formed to track the source on the sky, the station projected area changes with time and the shape of the primary beam changes significantly (Figure 3.4). This is a typical direction dependent effect that can be casted in the measurement equation as

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, \lambda) = \int_{\Omega} \mathbf{E}_1(t, l, m, \lambda) \mathbf{B}_{I,s}(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} \mathbf{E}_2^H(t, l, m, \lambda) dl dm, \quad (3.24)$$

were $\mathbf{E}(t, l, m, \lambda)$ is the Jones matrix describing the primary beam which, in the simplest cases, is a diagonal matrix:

$$\mathbf{E}(t, l, m, \lambda) \equiv \begin{bmatrix} e_x(t, l, m, \lambda) & 0 \\ 0 & e_y(t, l, m, \lambda) \end{bmatrix}. \quad (3.25)$$

We note that we have written the explicit dependence on the time due to change in projected area for dipole stations and that the direction dependence of the \mathbf{E} is encoded in its (l, m) dependence.

Time and frequency variable primary beams leads to apparent time variable sky models where variations that are larger away from the pointing direction due to the larger changes in the sidelobe pattern. For examples, sky sources that are well within the main lobe of the primary beam in Figure 3.4 will experience relatively negligible variations throughout an observation, the opposite will occur to sources located well outside the main lobe as they run through primary beam sidelobes.

Primary beams are also frequency variable and, at first order, their size scales with wavelength (equation 3.2), i.e. rather smoothly. However, in the sidelobe region, variations become rather abrupt as the source can be located on a sidelobe peak at a certain frequency and in the sidelobe null at another frequency. As a final remark, stations that

include several dipoles are not perfectly equal to each other, due to manufacturing reasons or mutual coupling between their elements (e.g., [75]), therefore $\mathbf{E}_1 \neq \mathbf{E}_2$. As primary beams are different, even visibilities for baselines that have the same length and orientation will be different - rather than identical, as expected. The left panel of Figure 3.4 shows an example of how much primary beams vary for different stations due to mutual coupling interactions: variations in the sidelobe region can be as large as $\sim 30\%$.

If not accurately modeled and taken into account, primary beam effects can bias the calibration solution and, again, corrupt the foreground frequency smoothness. [11], [10], [76] and [78] have developed methods to incorporate time and frequency variable primary beams in interferometric images, however, the accuracy of the correction is limited by the accuracy of the primary beam model. Increasing effort is therefore being placed in precise modeling and measurements of the primary beams (e.g., [66], [85], [18], [83], [33], [17]);

- *polarization leakage calibration.* Equation 3.15 and 3.22 show that, even if the 21 cm signal is unpolarized, care needs to be taken against the contamination from polarized foreground emission. Most point sources are unpolarized below 200 MHz ([9], [41], [86]), therefore the assumption of an unpolarized sky model is well justified. However, calibration errors (in the matrix \mathbf{B}) would lead to a relative miscalibration of the xx and yy polarizations and, in turn, to leakage of polarized emission into total intensity. This effect may be particularly strong on short baselines (e.g., shorter than a ~ 1 km), where polarized foregrounds are brighter ([7], [30], [35], [41]). Polarized foregrounds that are Faraday rotated by the interstellar medium and leak to total intensity are a severe contamination to the 21 cm signal: they have a characteristic frequency dependence similar to the 21 cm signal therefore have power across the whole EoR window and cannot be subtracted using standard methods (e.g., [36], [47], [53]).

Even if calibration errors are negligible, low frequency antennas have a non negligible polarized response across their wide field of view, i.e. the primary beam Jones matrix \mathbf{E} is no longer diagonal. The measurement equation with a full polarized primary beam response can be written as ([53]):

$$\begin{bmatrix} V_{12,I}(u, v, \lambda) \\ V_{12,Q}(u, v, \lambda) \\ V_{12,U}(u, v, \lambda) \\ V_{12,V}(u, v, \lambda) \end{bmatrix} = \int_{\Omega} \mathbf{S}^{-1} [\mathbf{E}_1 \otimes \mathbf{E}_2^H] \mathbf{S} \begin{bmatrix} I(l, m, \lambda) \\ Q(l, m, \lambda) \\ U(l, m, \lambda) \\ V(l, m, \lambda) \end{bmatrix} e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm = \\ = \int_{\Omega} \mathbf{A}(l, m, \lambda) \begin{bmatrix} I(l, m, \lambda) \\ Q(l, m, \lambda) \\ U(l, m, \lambda) \\ V(l, m, \lambda) \end{bmatrix} e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm, \quad (3.26)$$

where \mathbf{S} is the matrix that relates the intrinsic Stokes parameters to the observer $x - y$ frame ([27]) and \otimes is the outer product. Visibilities are written as a four-element vector as this form shows that the \mathbf{A} matrix maps the intrinsic Stokes parameters into

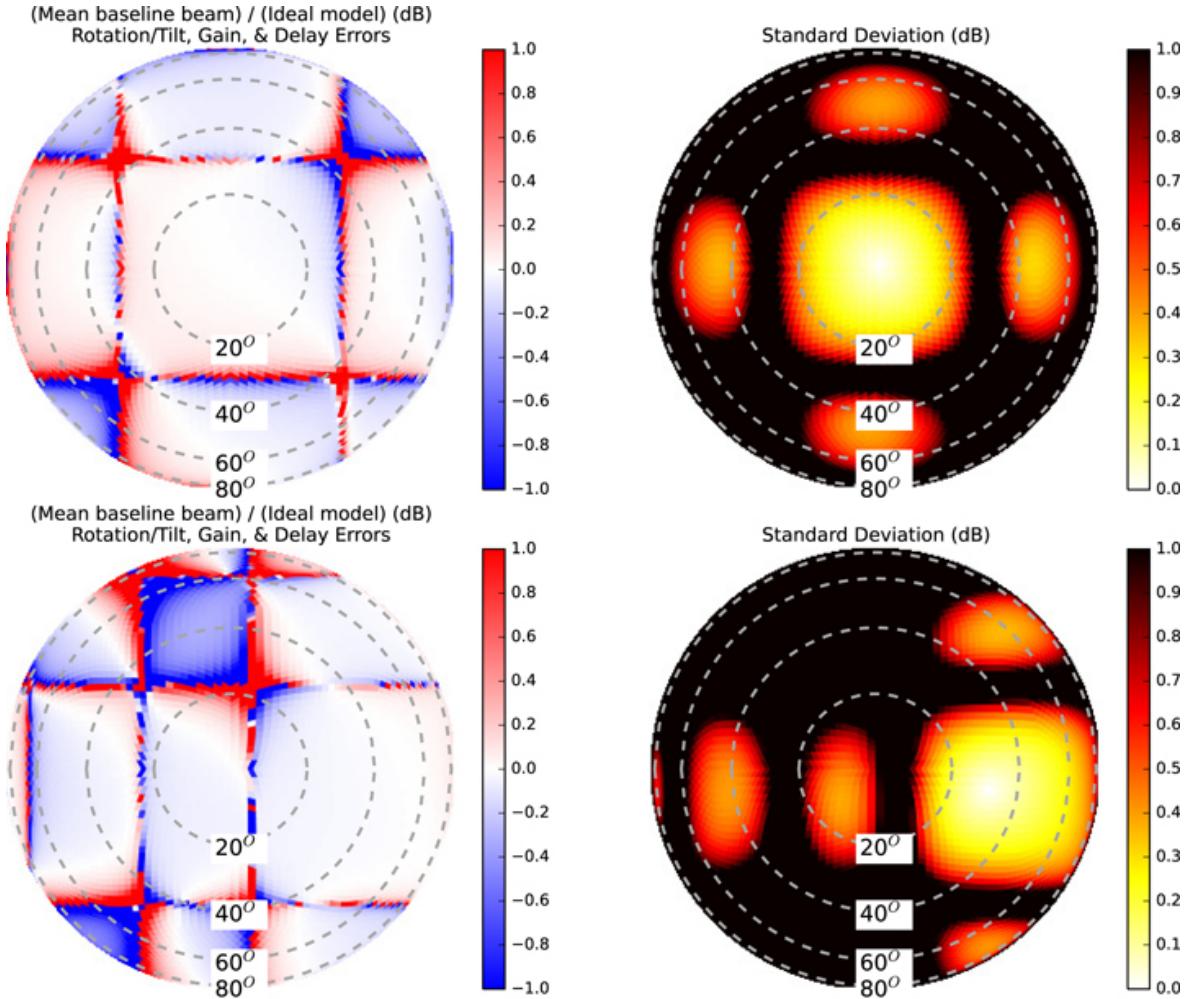


Figure 3.4: Example of primary beam variations as the MWA station points at zenith (top right) and $\sim 30^\circ$ away from zenith (bottom right) at 150 MHz. The left column shows the fractional variation of individual station beam models, with respect to the nominal primary beam (right column, from [52]). It is visible how different the sidelobe pattern is when pointing towards two different directions. It should also be noticed the $\sim 10\%$ magnitude of the first lobe and the large null regions around the sidelobes. The specific pattern is due to the regular shape of the MWA station, where 16 dipoles are arranged in a square 4×4 grid.

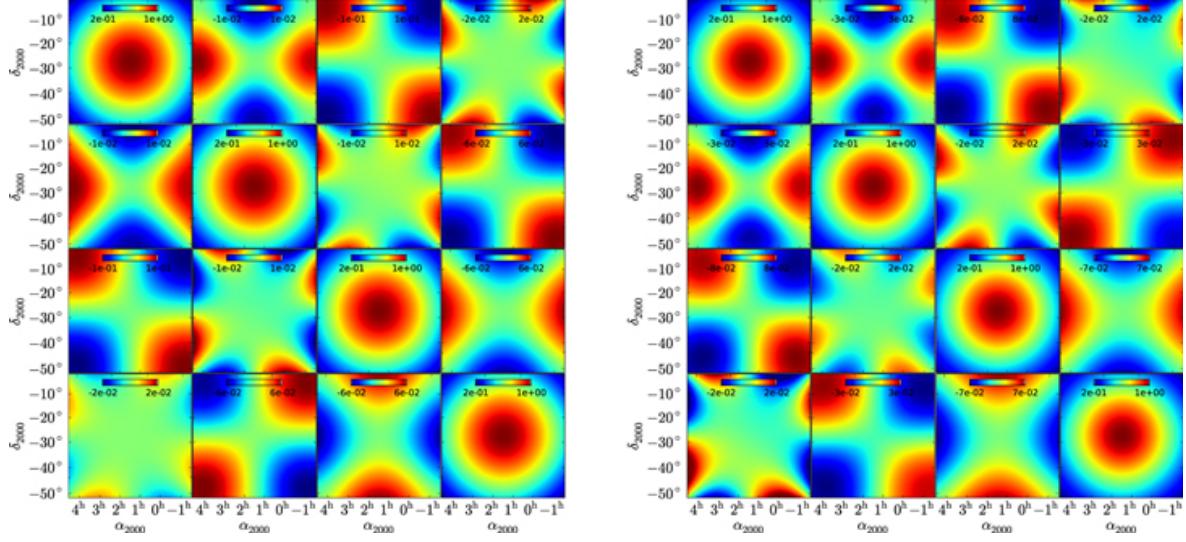


Figure 3.5: Examples of \mathbf{A} matrices at 130 (left) and 150 MHz respectively (from [53]). The matrix maps the intrinsic Stokes parameters into observed ones: the diagonal terms represent the standard primary beam patterns, whereas the off-diagonal terms are the leakage terms. The second, the third and the fourth element of the first row show how Stokes parameters Q , U and V respectively contaminate the total intensity signal.

the observed ones:

$$\begin{pmatrix} I' \leftarrow I & I' \leftarrow Q & I' \leftarrow U & I' \leftarrow V \\ Q' \leftarrow I & Q' \leftarrow Q & Q' \leftarrow U & Q' \leftarrow V \\ U' \leftarrow I & U' \leftarrow Q & U' \leftarrow U & U' \leftarrow V \\ V' \leftarrow I & V' \leftarrow Q & V' \leftarrow U & V' \leftarrow V \end{pmatrix}. \quad (3.27)$$

An example of \mathbf{A} matrix is shown in Figure 3.5. The first raw of the matrix shows how the four intrinsic Stokes parameters contribute to the observed total intensity and, therefore, how polarized foregrounds leak into the 21 cm signal even in absence of any calibration errors: the magnitude of the contaminating Stokes Q and U foregrounds increases away from the pointing direction. Wide-field polarization is another textbook example of direction dependent calibration problem.

Calibration of polarization leakage remains a challenging task. Instruments with narrow fields of view naturally mitigate the leakage ([4], [3], [2]). It can also be mitigated by extending the sky model to include polarization (e.g. [23]), although modeling the diffuse Galactic foreground - the brightest component - is not straightforward and requires accurate imaging. However, [53] show that the magnitude of the Galactic polarization leakage may be below the 21 cm signal at high k_{\parallel} values ($k_{\parallel} > 0.3 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$) and, therefore, still be “avoided”. A more extensive characterization of the polarized foreground properties is needed in order to extend their results to a general case.

- *ionospheric distortions*. The ionosphere is the partially ionized layer situated between ~ 50 and 1000 km above the surface of the Earth, whose electron density changes with

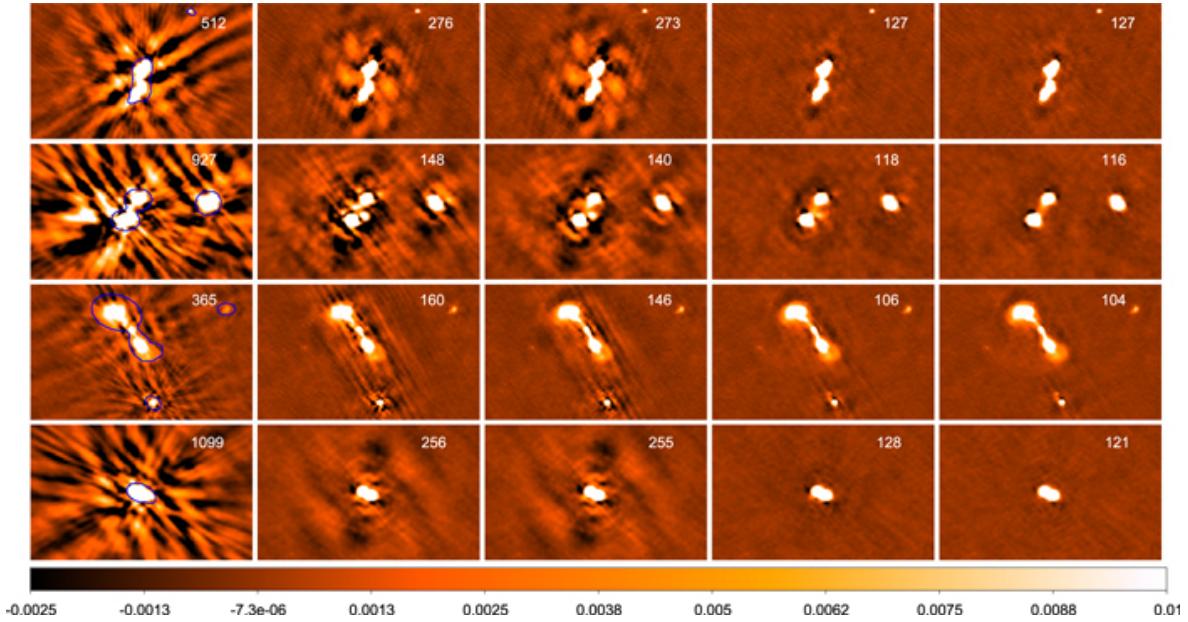


Figure 3.6: Calibration of ionospheric effects in LOFAR observations using a faceting algorithm (from [88]). The image resolution is $8'' \times 6''.5$ and the 120 – 180 MHz bandwidth is used. The left column shows zoom in images around sources without direction dependent calibration which is, in turn, applied incrementally towards the right panels. For each of the sources, a sky model and a direction dependent Jones scalar Z is improved at each iteration until an artefact-free image is obtained (right column). Solutions were computed each 10 s. An additional amplitude calibration to account for primary beam variations was determined on scales of 10 minutes. The colour scale is in units of Jy beam^{-1} .

time and position. At low frequencies the ionosphere is no longer transparent to radio waves and, to first order, it introduces a delay ϕ in the wave propagation proportional to the integral of the electron density along the line of sight (e.g. [79], [32]):

$$\phi(t, v) \propto \frac{1}{v} \int n_e(t) dl; \quad (3.28)$$

where the integral is the total electron content (TEC). When the delay is different for two different antennas, visibilities measure an additional, time variable delay. In the measurement equation formalism, ionospheric delays can be modeled by a scalar term $Z \propto e^{i\phi(t,v)}$, however, ionospheric effects are another textbook example of direction dependent calibration as the Z is often different for different directions. Given the size S of a characteristic ionospheric patch where the TEC is constant, direction dependent effects occur when the field of view is much larger than S or the baseline separation is much larger than S , i.e. different antennas “see through” different TEC values (see [32] for extensive discussion on the different ionospheric regimes). In this case, the measurement equation takes a form similar to equation 3.23:

$$\mathbf{V}_{12}(u, v, t, \lambda) = \sum_s Z_{1,s}(t, \lambda) \left(\int_{\Omega} \mathbf{B}_{I,s}(l, m, \lambda) e^{-2\pi i(u l + v m)} dl dm \right) Z_{2,s}^H(t, \lambda), \quad (3.29)$$

leading to images where sources are convolved with a position and time dependent PSF. An example of this effect is shown in Figure 3.6: the column on the left shows sources after the standard selfcalibration, still surrounded by artifacts due to the ionosphere; moving towards the right, iterative direction dependent corrections lead to virtually artefact-free images on the right column (see [88] for further details).

[84] analyzed the effects of ionospheric perturbations on MWA observations, whose maximum baseline is a factor of ~ 30 shorter than the LOFAR example displayed in Figure 3.6, but with a field of view ~ 4 times larger. They found that direction dependent ionospheric distortions can affect the sky coherence up to degree-scales (i.e. scales relevant for 21 cm observations), however, due to the relatively short baselines, these effects occur only in 8% of the observations and it is relatively straightforward to monitor the ionospheric activity and exclude the most affected observations.

An extensive modeling of the impact of ionospheric errors on the two dimensional $(k_{\perp}, k_{\parallel})$ power spectrum spectrum has been carried out by [90]. They found that most of the residual effects due to the ionosphere on baselines shorter than a few km are confined within the horizon limit, therefore not impacting foreground avoidance. Moreover, the frequency coherence of the ionospheric residuals is such that they will likely be removed by foreground subtraction algorithm.

Current investigations seem therefore to suggest that ionospheric effects are not going to be a show stopper for 21 cm power spectrum observations and, likely, 21 cm tomography.

3.3.1 Redundant calibration

An interferometric array where most of the baselines have the same length and orientation is called *redundant* as they measure the same Fourier mode of the sky brightness distribution.

Redundant array configurations are often not appealing as they have poor imaging performances because they do not measure sufficient Fourier modes to reconstruct accurate sky images. However, a maximally redundant array where the antennas are laid out in a regularly spaced square grid offers the maximum power spectrum sensitivity on the k_{\perp} modes corresponding to the most numerous baselines. This criterium has inspired the highly redundant layouts of the MIT Epoch of Reionization experiment ([98]), the Precision Array to Probe the Epoch of Reionization (PAPER, [55]) and partly driven the updated MWA.

One of the advantages of a redundant array is that it enables a different calibration strategy called *redundant calibration*. In redundant calibration the form of the measurement equation does not change and can be written, for a single polarization, like equation 3.22:

$$V_{12,xx}(u, v, \lambda) = b_{1,x} b_{2,x}^* y_{12,xx}(u, v, \lambda), \quad (3.30)$$

with the difference now that the model visibility y is not tied to a sky model, but it is solved for, simply assuming that it is the same for each group of redundant baselines [93], [43]). In other words, redundant calibration is independent on the sky model and, therefore, bypasses entirely the biases related to sky model incompleteness described in Section 4.5. However, as redundant calibration is not tied to any physical (i.e. sky-based) spatial or spectral model, its solutions have degeneracies that need to be solved for by using a sky model (e.g., [98], [12]). In particular, spectral calibration, which is critical for foreground separation, cannot currently be obtained using redundant calibration and requires a sky-based calibration. [12] suggest that sky model incompleteness can bias this calibration step, in a way similar to what happens with a traditional calibration scheme. Moreover, as redundant calibration is agnostic of the polarization state of the sky brightness distribution, mitigation of polarization leakage remains an open question in the framework of redundant calibration ([20]).

Finally, redundant calibration is prone to effects that break the assumption of redundancy, the most common being errors in the antenna positions and different primary beams for different antennas. Antenna position errors can be reduced to have a negligible impact on redundant calibration [38]. The effect of primary beam variations amongst the different antennas on redundant calibration is likely more severe, although new calibration schemes seem to be able to mitigate it ([54]).

3.4 Array design and observing strategies

I will conclude this chapter by discussing how the various interferometric effects discussed so far impact the choice of array designs and the consequent observing strategies. [48] and [55], for example, investigate how instrumental choices like the array layout, the antenna size and the bandwidth (do not) affect the 21 cm power spectrum spectrum. Here I would rather emphasize on the interdependence between instrumental choices, calibration and foreground separation strategies. If the total collecting area is kept fixed, there are two main elements that impact calibration and foreground separation strategies:

- *station size*. The choice of the station size determines the minimum k_{\perp} value accessible and the footprint of each uv measurement. Each visibility is not a single point in the uv plane but has a footprint corresponding to the two dimensional Fourier transform

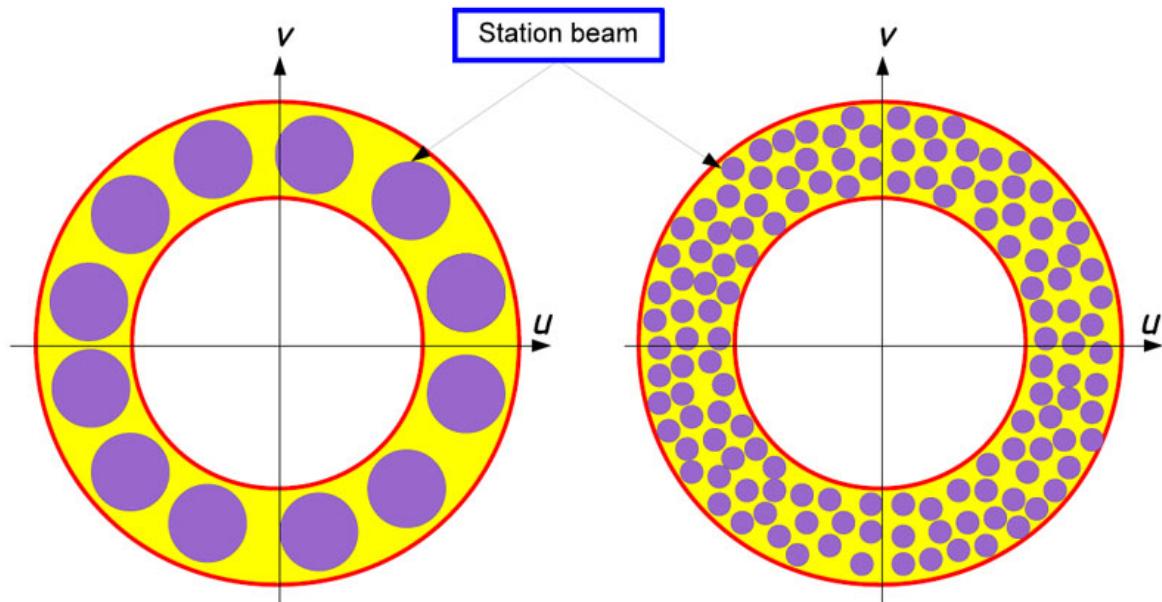


Figure 3.7: Cartoon illustration of the uv footprint due to the primary beam (from <https://ned.ipac.caltech.edu/level5/March14/Zaroubi/Zaroubi5.html#5.1>). The purple circles are the uv footprints for a large (right panel) and small (left panel) station respectively. The minimum and maximum baselines is the same for both cases, in order to sample the same uv annulus (yellow area).

of the primary beam. This can be seen using the convolution theorem to re-write equation 3.1:

$$V_{ij}(\mathbf{b}, \lambda) = \tilde{A}(\mathbf{b}, \lambda) * \tilde{I}(\mathbf{b}, \lambda). \quad (3.31)$$

Smaller stations have smaller footprints in the uv plane (see Figure 3.7) and can, therefore, sample the uv more accurately with respect to larger stations. They also allow to probe smaller k_{\perp} values (as the minimum possible uv length is essentially the station size) for which the avoidance strategy is more effective (see Figure 3.2). If smaller stations would be preferred for power spectrum measurements, they are generally more challenging in terms of calibration: their wider fields of view require a more accurate sky model for calibration, are more susceptible to ionospheric effects and suffer from a more severe polarization leakage contamination. Given the smaller size, their visibilities have a lower signal-to-noise ratio compared to larger station that can lead to limitations to the calibration of high time variable effects. On the other hand, they do not necessarily require to track sources with a high time cadence but can use drift scan strategies (where they are pointed to a fixed direction and the sky drifts overhead) or a mix of drift scan and pointed observations to maximize sensitivity ([82]). The advantage of drift scan over pointed observations is that primary beams remain constant in time, avoiding some of the effects described in the Section 4.5.

- *array layout.* Beyond the obvious sensitivity requirement that prefers compact arrays due to their better brightness sensitivity, layout choices are also intrinsically related to calibration and foreground separation strategies. A pseudo-random station distribution that leads to a filled uv -coverage (between the minimum and the maximum station separation) is highly desirable for imaging, modeling and subtracting foregrounds. It is not a stringent requirement for power spectrum measurement and for the avoidance strategy. It is probably necessary for 21 cm tomography, in order to provide reconstruction of the low-brightness neutral Hydrogen regions.

On the opposite side of the spectrum of choices, redundant arrays are the most sensitive power spectrum machines. They obviously leverage on redundant calibration which is precluded to imaging arrays. Their drawbacks are the poor imaging performances that prevent the accurate foreground modeling and essentially only allow foreground avoidance. For the same reason, if redundant calibration is not sufficient, redundant arrays have limited options to improve calibration by reconstructing the sky brightness sensitivity.

I will use four existing low frequency arrays as examples of the range of cases of interest:

- *Low Frequency Array (LOFAR, [87]).* LOFAR is an array of 40 stations located in The Netherlands and several remote stations across Europe. 24 stations are located in a 2 km core from the array centre and the remaining stations are distributed in a logarithmic spiral layout up to ~ 100 km, providing a very dense uv coverage in a few hours tracked observation (see Chapter 8 in this book for an image of the LOFAR array layout and the other arrays discussed in this Section).

Stations are formed by two types of receptors sensitive to the 30 – 90 and 110 – 200 MHz respectively. The 110 – 200 MHz stations are the most sensitive to 21 cm

observations and we will only consider them in this discussion. They are constituted by 48 clusters of dipoles (each of them being a 4×4 square grid) arranged in a regular ~ 30 m diameter grid, leading a $\sim 4^\circ$ field of view at 150 MHz.

LOFAR is an example of a traditional interferometric array, with excellent point source sensitivity that favours the sky-based calibration and very dense uv coverage for high fidelity imaging. Its large station size has a large uv footprint but also a relatively narrow field of view that essentially requires tracking a sky patch. The narrow field of view allows to select sky patches with low foreground (including polarization) contamination and to reject wide field foreground emission. Unwanted sky emission far from the pointing direction is further suppressed by rotating each station grid with respect to another, while rotating the dipoles back to a common polarization frame: this operation makes the station primary beams all different and the different sidelobe patterns, that would otherwise be reinforced by the regular station grid, cancel out each others.

The calibration of LOFAR 21 cm observations relies on an accurate sky model where compact sources are modeled using the longest baselines available (i.e. ~ 100 km). Direction dependent calibration corrects ionospheric effects that corrupt visibilities on baselines longer than a few km, and the effect of variable primary beams on compact sources ([96]). The sky model is then subtracted from the visibilities and residual foregrounds are subtracted in the image domain (see details in Chapter 6 in this book).

The LOFAR design is suited for 21 cm tomography on large angular scales, providing foregrounds are adequately subtracted ([97]).

- *Murchison Widefield Array (MWA, [81], [91]).* The MWA is an array located in Western Australia, operating between 80 and ~ 200 MHz. It employs the same LOFAR dipoles, although they are assembled in stations of 4×4 elements arranged in a regular grid. The station size is therefore ~ 6 times smaller compared to LOFAR, with an equivalent increase of the field of view. The MWA underwent a recent upgrade to phase II (to distinguish it from the initial deployment, named phase I) and is now constituted of 256 stations (out of which only 128 can be simultaneously correlated) in a hybrid configuration: 128 stations are deployed in a pseudo random configuration out to a ~ 3 km baseline (the phase I telescope), 72 stations in two highly redundant hexagons next to the core of the array and 56 stations to extend the maximum baseline up ~ 5 km.

MWA phase II is a fairly versatile instrument: in its compact, redundant configuration, it is optimized for power spectrum observations and can leverage redundant calibration ([42]); its small stations give a good sampling in the uv plane (right panel case in Figure 3.7). In its extended configuration it has an exceptionally good instantaneous uv coverage (due to the high number of stations instantaneously correlated) with low sidelobe levels, which is good for imaging and foreground modeling, and a large field of view which allows to survey the sky very quickly. The wide field of view does not allow to isolate low foreground patches, but it allows to opt for drift scan observations or a mix of drift scan and pointed observations ([82]), which have the advantage of more time stable primary beams. Wide field ionospheric effects are somewhat mitigated

by the array compactness ([37]). The MWA can therefore leverage on the strength of both redundant and traditional calibration and can adopt a mixture of foreground subtraction and avoidance strategies.

The MWA approach has, however, limitations too: the regular station grid (without any rotation, unlike LOFAR) generates strong sidelobes (see Figure 3.4) which make calibration and foreground separation more challenging; the large field of view requires more comprehensive sky models for calibration and is more susceptible to polarization leakage; the relatively short maximum baseline may be insufficient to derive accurate sky models ([65]).

- *Precision Array to Probe the Epoch of Reionization (PAPER, [56])*. PAPER was an array located in the South Africa, operating in the 100 – 200 MHz range and now decommissioned in favour of its successor (the Hydrogen Epoch of Reionization Array, see Chapter 5 in this book). It employed custom designed ~ 2 m dipoles that were deployed and re-arranged in several configurations up to a 128 element array. Dipoles were always individually correlated with no clustering into larger stations, implying a nearly all-sky field of view instrument. In order to maximize power spectrum sensitivity, dipoles were always deployed in maximally redundant configuration with very short baselines (up to a maximum of 350 m), enabling the advantages of redundant calibration ([57], [1], [34]). In the final 128-element deployment, ~ 20 dipoles were placed as outriggers out of the regular grid in order to partially improve the *uv* coverage for foreground characterization and calibration.

In some sense, PAPER represents the choice opposite to the LOFAR case: an almost fully redundant array that works using essentially only foreground avoidance and without any spatial characterization of foregrounds for either calibration or subtraction. PAPER is a full drift scan array with primary beams that are fairly stable with time, but also with an all-sky field of view where no selection of low foreground regions is possible, for which polarization leakage and ionospheric effects are more severe, although the latter are mitigated by the very compact configuration.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, a redundant array like PAPER is not suited for 21 cm tomography.

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter presented a summary of interferometry and calibration in the light of 21 cm observations. I started from the basics of interferometry to show how they are related to observations of the 21 cm power spectrum and its tomographic images. I reviewed calibration of 21 cm observations, highlighting how foreground separation - the biggest challenge of 21 cm observations - critically depends various calibration effects (sky models, primary beam modeling and calibration, polarization leakage, the ionosphere). I also attempted to show how the various array designs adopted by current experiments enable different calibration and observational strategies - neither of which is clearly winning, at the present point. The field is rapidly developing and both current and upcoming instruments (see Chapter 5 in this book) will address some of the open questions presented in this chapter.

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Chapter 4

Status of 21 cm interferometric experiments

Cathryn M. Trott (ICRAR-Curtin), Jonathan Pober (Brown University)

Abstract

Interferometric experiments of the reionization era offer the advantages of measuring power in spatial modes with increased sensitivity afforded by multiple independent sky measurements. Here we review early work to measure this signal, current experiments, and future opportunities, highlighting the lessons learned along the way that have shaped the research field and experimental design. In particular, this chapter discusses the history, progress, challenges and forecasts for detection and exploration of the spatial structure of the 21 cm brightness temperature signal in the Epoch of Reionisation using interferometric experiments. We discuss GMRT, PAPER, LOFAR, MWA, and the future HERA and SKA.

4.1 Introduction

Because they provide both rapid mapping speed and good angular resolution, interferometers have become the preferred instrument for experiments looking to measure the expected spatial fluctuations in the 21 cm signal. The current instruments hosting such experiments include the Murchison Widefield Array, MWA¹ [17, 115, 52]; the Precision Array for Probing the Epoch of Reionization, PAPER² [94]; the LOw Frequency ARray, LOFAR³ [124, 100]; and the Long Wavelength Array, LWA⁴ [36]. In the future, we expect the Hydrogen Epoch Reionization Array, HERA [31] and the Square Kilometre Array, SKA-Low [65]. Sensitivity predictions for most of the current experiments (e.g. [11, 103]) find that they will not be capable of achieving the necessary signal-to-noise to image the 21 cm signal directly (although

¹<http://www.mwatelescope.org>

²<http://eor.berkeley.edu>

³<http://www.lofar.org>

⁴<http://lwa.unm.edu>

see [134] for a study with LOFAR). As such, most of these experiments are targeting a detection of the 21 cm power spectrum, which can be constrained with higher signal-to-noise compared with an image because the isotropy and homogeneity of the Universe allows the 3D k -space power spectrum to be averaged over spherical shells of constant $|k|$. Even using the power spectrum, typical predictions for the requisite observing time are of order 1,000 hours (see Figure 4.1).

However, beyond the need to achieve the requisite sensitivity, experiments are faced with the daunting task of isolating the 21 cm signal from foregrounds that can be up to five orders of magnitude brighter. While the two can, in principle, be separated by their distinct spectral behavior, the inherently frequency-dependent response of radio interferometers complicates the picture significantly. In this chapter, we review the challenges faced by current interferometric 21 cm experiments as well as the progress to-date in overcoming them. The detailed structure of this chapter is as follows. In §4.2, we present the history of experiments and techniques that led to the design of current 21 cm experiments. In §4.3, we discuss the distinct approaches each experiment has developed to overcome the challenges associated with these observations, and in §4.4 we review the current published upper limits on the 21 cm signal strength from these experiments. In §4.5, we highlight the currently unsolved problems at the forefront of experimental 21 cm cosmology and conclude in §4.6 with a discussion of the potential for both current and future experiments to overcome them.

4.2 Early work

The origins of the approaches that current experiments are taking to detect the Epoch of Reionization power spectrum can be traced to the development of radio interferometry observational techniques and Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) analysis methodology.

Radio interferometers measure the cross-correlation of voltages detected with two antennas, extracting the sky signal in a complex-valued dataset that encodes sky emission location and intensity, and as a function of antenna separation vector and frequency [113]. For small field-of-view instruments (large antenna aperture), the measured signal is well-approximated as the 2D Fourier Transform of the sky brightness, attenuated by the antenna response function (the primary beam).

Motivated by analysis of CMB datasets in the 1990s and 2000s, and the curved nature of full-sky imaging, early discussion of power spectrum estimators used spherical harmonic basis functions to describe the signal and extract optimal estimators [112]. CMB studies suffer from some of the challenges faced also by EoR experiments: wide fields-of-view, low sensitivity, limited angular resolution, and foreground contamination. Unlike EoR, which is an evolving signal in redshift space, CMB studies are single frequency experiments focussed on angular statistics. As such, the foreground mitigation and treatment approaches of CMB studies are of limited use for EoR studies, which attempt to separate foregrounds from the 21 cm signal using the frequency axis. Nonetheless, the fundamental need to extract a weak signal from complex and highly-contaminated data is shared between the two fields, and Tegmark used this experience to apply CMB analysis techniques to early EoR methodology development. Since an interferometer natively measures in Fourier space, there was a transition from the natural basis of curved sky functions (spherical harmonics) to the inter-

ferometer measurement space (Fourier modes) in discussion of optimal estimators for EoR science [73].

This work was supported by groundwork laid out for doing EoR power spectra with radio interferometers, including cosmological and unit conversions [81, 94] and noise considerations for astrophysical parameter estimation with specific future experiments [76]. McQuinn and colleagues discussed a simple foreground model where fitting of a smooth spectral function could remove their effect cleanly, focussing on array sensitivity as the limiting factor for future experiments. However, the lack of any real-world experiments attempting the detection meant they failed to realise the extent of foreground spectral contamination.

More sophisticated approaches to foreground modelling and mitigation appeared in the mid-2000s, with [19] beginning a set of papers that explored the signature of smooth spectrum sources in the EoR power spectrum parameter space. Initially, low-order polynomials were explored to fit and remove these sources. However, lacking a physical motivation for this functional form to robustly separate foregrounds from cosmological signal, polynomials were replaced with more realistic functions. Ultimately, the likelihood of removing not only foregrounds but also cosmological signal when fitting and subtracting models, particularly considering the large difference in magnitude of the two signals, has steered the research field away from this approach to foreground mitigation.

As part of this better appreciation for the impact of foregrounds, particularly with the knowledge that they are used also for data calibration, [29] explored the required accuracy of source models such that foregrounds may be subtracted to a level sufficient to detect the EoR. This work was the first to show the characteristic wedge in power spectrum parameter space, a triangular region in angular and line-of-sight wavenumber space representing the signature of smooth-spectrum sources observed with an interferometer.

4.3 Experimental methodologies and current experiments

In this section we introduce the different instruments that have previously taken, or currently are taking and analysing, data for an interferometric EoR experiment. We start by presenting the relevant parameters of the telescopes that these experiments use, highlighting and motivating the different observational and analysis approaches taken by each. Table 4.3 lists the location (including latitude), frequency (redshift) range, number of stations/antennas, station diameters, and maximum baseline, and field-of-view at 150 MHz for the relevant instruments. Italicised telescopes are discussed in this Chapter. We also plot the full uncertainties (including sample variance) for a 1000 hour observation at $z=8.5$ (10 MHz bandwidth) for each experiment as a function of spatial wavenumber in Figure 4.1. We uniformly assume that the modes within the horizon are inaccessible due to foreground contamination, and note that this is a broad assumption that is not applicable to all experiments. Note also that MWA's and HERA's large fields-of-view gives them access to smaller wavenumbers. This figure also includes a nominal signal strength (black, 21cmFAST, [78]), but this level is highly uncertain. The proximity of the curves to this line highlights the difficulty with predicting the real sensitivity of experiments, particularly in light of the large number of observing hours required to reach an expected detection. The parameters shown in the table, and the curves shown in Figure 4.1 motivate and frame the discussion of different experiments in the follow-

Facility	Location (Latitude)	Freq. [MHz] (z)	N_{ant}	Max. baseline	FOV_{150}
<i>GMRT</i>	India (19.1°N)	150–300 (3.7–8.5)	30	30 km	2.5°
<i>MWA</i>	Australia (26.5°S)	70–90, 135–195 (15–19, 6–10)	128	5 km	25°
<i>LOFAR</i>	Netherlands (52.9°N)	30–80, 120–190 (17–46, 6–11)	50–60	50 km	5°
<i>PAPER</i>	South Africa (30.6°S)	110–180 (7–12)	32–64	210 m	60°
<i>LEDA</i> ¹	USA (34°N)	45–88 (15–30)	256+	<10 km	70°
21CMA	China (42°N)	50–200 (6–27)	81	6 km	10°

Table 4.1: General parameters for the telescopes undertaking interferometric observations of the Cosmic Dawn and EoR. Italicised telescopes are discussed in this Chapter. ¹LEDA is a total power experiment using interferometry for data calibration.

ing sections. Experiments are forced to undertake different approaches to observations and data analysis, because the physical limitations of the systems promote different systematic errors into the forefront for each experiment. There is no silver bullet telescope for undertaking this experiment, however, and after reviewing the main experiments, we discuss the pros and cons of different features.

4.3.1 Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope - GMRT

The GMRT [111] is a Y-shaped array of 30 45 m dishes spread over 25 km in western India. Operating between 50 MHz and 1420 MHz, its 153 MHz receiver has been most used for Reionization studies. Motivated by early work in the post-reionization era (325 MHz and 610 MHz receivers) to statistically detect 21 cm fluctuations and understand the foreground contamination to these data, the low frequency receiver opens the door to exploring the Reionization era. The methodology developed has focused on angular power spectra, measured at a range of frequencies, and pioneered much of the early work to use spectral correlation of foregrounds as a way of treating them. With a lack of short baselines and poor instantaneous *uv*-coverage (Figure 4.2), the array is suited to building high resolution foreground models, and computing the foreground angular correlation function ([107]).

GMRT work has largely utilised the visibility correlation function, which cross-correlates visibilities to study the spectral and spatial structure of the sky. Visibility correlation functions were also explored for 21CMA analysis [136]. Unlike other experiments, which have cross-correlated interleaved time samples to remove noise power bias, GMRT has usually opted for cross-correlating visibilities from adjacent frequency channels. This has different systematics, with finer spectral resolution required to minimise visibility decorrelation.

During the 2000s, there was a series of papers developing a formalism for use of this visibility correlation function to measure angular modes. [14] introduced a cross-visibility angular correlation function to measure HI fluctuations post-reionization. [15] then related the cross-visibility correlation function across baselines and frequencies to the power spectrum of brightness temperature fluctuations, presenting the full formalism and expected results in different epochs. They suggest that the cosmological is uncorrelated for frequency channel differences larger than 1 MHz, allowing signal to be ‘easily distinguished from the continuum sources of contamination’. [4] then extended this formalism to model the expected

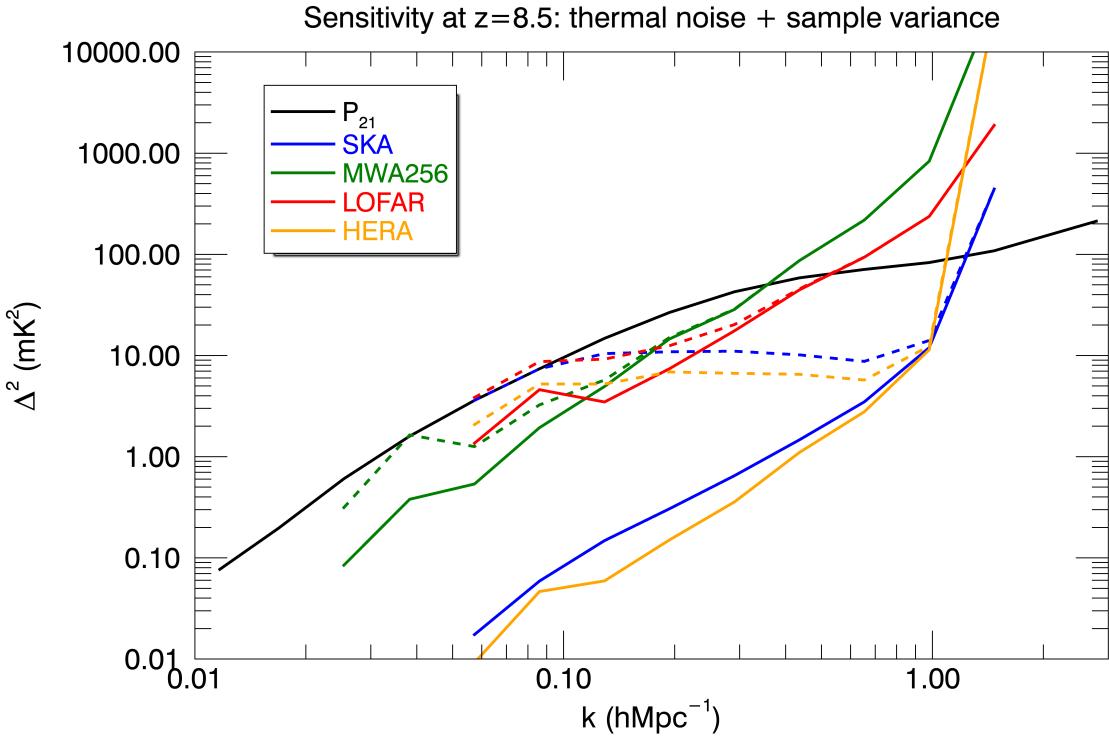


Figure 4.1: Estimated total uncertainty on the dimensionless power spectrum for a 1000 hour observation with several experiments at $z=8.5$ compared with a model input power spectrum (21cmFAST,[78]), and assuming that modes within the horizon are inaccessible. Solid lines are only thermal noise uncertainty, while dashed lines include sample variance. (Black) Model cosmological signal; (blue) SKA; (green) MWA256; (red) LOFAR; (orange) HERA.

foreground continuum signatures in the cross-correlation visibility space, and compared with GMRT observations. Their results were hindered by calibration errors, which caused decorrelation of the signal over frequency, but presented the first application of this technique to data. [30] provided an extension of the visibility cross-correlation approach to estimating power spectra to a multi-frequency angular power spectrum (MAPS), utilising decorrelation of signals over frequency to extract information about bubble sizes and distributions as a function of redshift while suppressing the effects of foreground contamination.

[41] published the first measurement of post-reionization neutral hydrogen fluctuations with GMRT (HI intensity mapping) at $z=1.32$ (610 MHz) and using the MAPS formalism. They used a fourth-order polynomial to remove smooth foregrounds, in line with early attempts with many experiments to fit a parametric function without physical motivation. [42] then demonstrated improved foreground removal for 610 MHz observations by tapering the primary beam function and reducing sidelobes; [44] further extended the work to the reionization epoch using 150 MHz observations to characterize the foregrounds with the MAPS formalism.

Using an alternative analysis to the MAPS formalism, [92] analysed 50h of data at

$z=8.6$ with a simple piecewise linear foreground subtraction method and cross-correlation of foreground-subtracted images. The result was a reported upper limit on the 21 cm signal strength of $(70 \text{ mK})^2$. However, [91] re-analysed the data with a more sophisticated foreground subtraction technique, including a calculation of signal loss due to foreground fitting. The result was an increase in the upper limit to $(248 \text{ mK})^2$, indicative of the degree to which signal loss can affect results.

More recently, [26] published a series of papers introducing and exploring the use of two new optimised power spectrum estimators using visibility correlations: the Tapered Gridded Estimator (TGE) and Bare Estimator (BE). The key concept for the TGE, which has been further discussed in the literature in subsequent papers [27], is to use a Fourier beam gridding kernel that is larger than the physical beam kernel, thereby decorrelating sources at the edge of the field-of-view. Note that this approach is not a silver bullet to removing the effect of horizon sources, because their sidelobes remain in the data even if they have been attenuated. Originally developed as angular power spectra as a function of frequency, the TGE work has recently been expanded to use the line-of-sight spatial information [16]. The BE directly squares adjacent visibilities to provide individual measurements of the power, but this has not been used further, possibly due to the large number of visibilities that are accumulated and stored.

Additionally to power spectra, [108] predicted the amplitude of a bispectrum signal with GMRT using its shortest baselines by modelling non-linear clustering. They predicted the signal strength to be comparable to the power spectrum and detectable in 100 hours but this project has not been explored observationally with this instrument.

4.3.2 Murchison Widefield Array - MWA

The Murchison Widefield Array (MWA) is a 256-element interferometer in the Western Australian desert. In Phase I of the array, operating from 2013–2016, it was composed of 128 tiles of 16 dual-polarization dipoles, spread over 3 km [115]. Phase II (2016–) expanded the array to 256 tiles, with longer baselines for improved survey science and sky model building (5 km), and two hexagonal sub-arrays of 36 tiles with short spacings available for redundant calibration and improved EoR sensitivity [126]. It operates in two distinct modes: Extended Array (128 tiles with long baselines), and Compact Array (128 tiles with short baselines including two 36-tile redundant subarrays in a hexagonal configuration). The Compact Array is principally used for EoR science (see Figure 4.3). The MWA is a general science telescope, with multiple science goals [17]. As such, it balances high surface brightness sensitivity on EoR scales, redundant and non-redundant elements, and longer baselines for good imaging capabilities. The instantaneous *uv*-coverage of the MWA is excellent, allowing for science-quality snapshot imaging (2-minute). The MWA is also a wide-field instrument, with a field-of-view of 25 degrees at 150 MHz. This wide field-of-view, combined with the complex frequency-dependent shape of the aperture array primary beam, and analogue electronics, create challenges for data analysis. The two-stage analogue beamformer produces a frequency bandpass that contains 24 coarse channels over a 30.72 MHz bandwidth (chosen from the full bandwidth listed in Table 4.3), with missing regular channels between the coarse bands. This instrumental spectral structure provides a challenge to producing instrumentally-clean output EoR datasets.

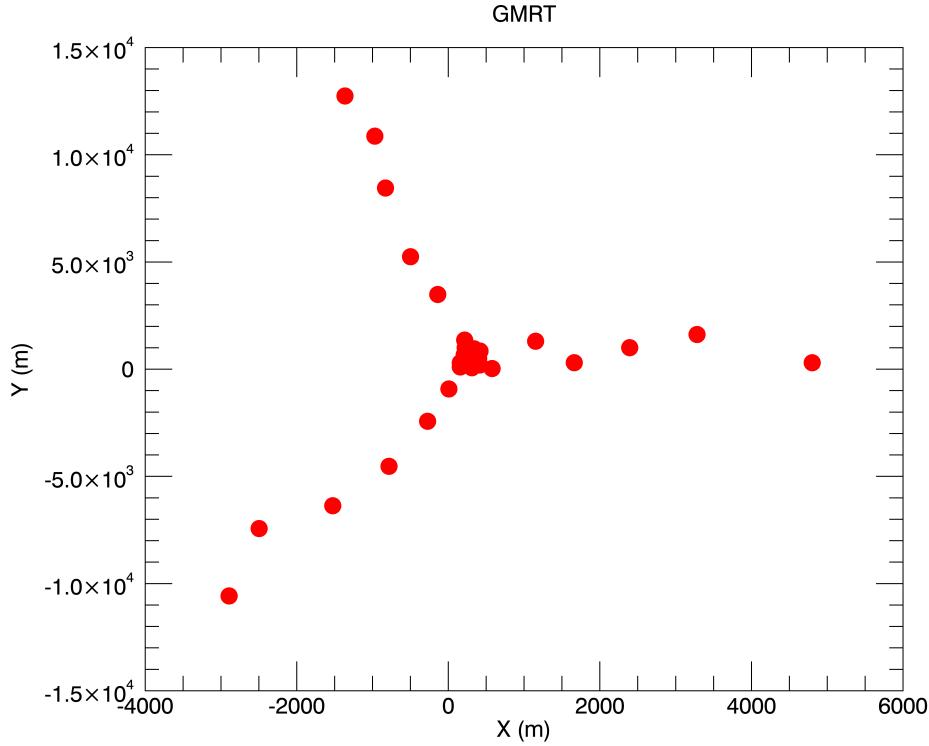


Figure 4.2: Array configuration for the GMRT: thirty 45 m dishes spread over 30 km.

Early deployments of the array, with 32 tiles, were used for preliminary science, and to begin to survey the EoR fields [128]. Upon completion of the 128 tiles, the MWA Commissioning Survey provided the first sky catalogue for use for calibration of EoR data [49]. This work paved the way for the GLEAM survey [125] and catalogue [48], yielding 300,000 sources in the southern sky. GLEAM provides the basis for the current sky model for point sources in EoR observations, augmented by individual models for extended sources.

In line with developments in concurrent experiments, prior to data acquisition the MWA EoR collaboration focused on relatively simplistic foreground fitting and removal methods, but with an increasing understanding of the signature of smooth-spectrum foregrounds in the wavenumber parameter space of an interferometer [19, 29, 118]. There are now two primary EoR data calibration and source subtraction pipelines used by the collaboration: the Real-Time System (RTS, [79]) and Fast Holographic Deconvolution (FHD, [110]). Both use underlying catalogues of sources that have been generated by cross-matching multiple low-frequency sky catalogues. PUMA [72] generates an observation-specific sky model of point sources and double sources [106], and includes shapelet-based and point source-based models for extended sources. The RTS calibrates the data in two steps, both of which rely on a weighted least-squares minimisation: (1) overall direction-independent (flux density and phase) calibration on a full model of 5,000 sources; (2) direction-dependent corrections along the line-of-sight to bright sources. The direction dependent corrections are then ap-

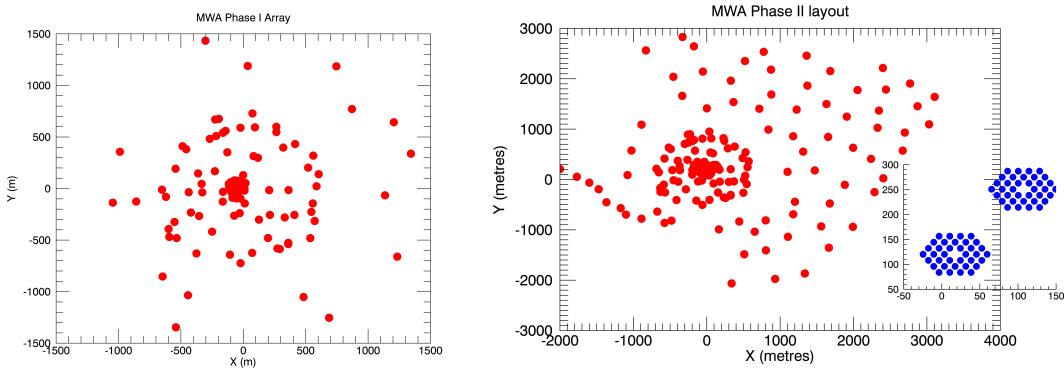


Figure 4.3: Array configurations for the MWA (Phase I, left; Phase II, right, including cutout of hexagonal subarrays (blue)): 128 (256) 4.4 m aperture array tiles spread over 3 (5) km.

plied to sources in the region of the fit, and the 5,000 source sky model is subtracted. FHD calibration [110] computationally optimizes the direction-dependent and wide-field imaging steps by pre-computing the mapping from Fourier to real space. FHD relies on an underlying point source sky model [21], which generates an observation-specific calibration model for $>10,000$ sources based on the GLEAM catalogue and other cross-matched surveys.

Early developments of power spectrum pipelines stemmed from the inverse covariance quadratic estimator framework pioneered in CMB studies [112], and applied to theoretical EoR datasets by Liu & Tegmark in 2011 [73]. This work was further developed by Dillon in a series of papers that explored how to bridge some of the differences between the ideal estimator and a physical dataset [34, 33]. In particular, Dillon discussed missing data, and large data volumes. An adapted approach was then applied to three hours of MWA data, showing promising results [33].

One key feature of the optimal quadratic estimator formalism is the whitening of data according to the correlated covariance introduced by the uncertainty on residual foregrounds. This is effectively a down-weighting of data that are heavily affected by foregrounds, thereby improving signal-to-error. Subsequent analysis of a higher redshift dataset was used to estimate the principal eigenmodes of the data in spectral space, identifying these with bright foregrounds [34]. The covariances of these modes were then used in the estimator to down-weight and decorrelate data, yielding improved limits at $z = 6.8$. However, as with commensurate and subsequent work with PAPER that used this technique, it had the large potential to cause bias in the estimates. Re-use of the same dataset to empirically estimate the data covariance, and then fit for it, causes re-substitution bias, a well-known statistical effect where the performance of an estimator can appear much better than it actually is. In this work, Dillon was careful to estimate covariances empirically while omitting the uv cells in question, to avoid bias, however there was still limited information available in the remaining cells. Thus, although this work was careful to not try to subtract the foreground bias directly, use of the empirical covariance in the data weighting, and lack of a full end-to-end simulation to demonstrate no signal loss, makes this approach prone to large bias. It has not been used to analyze MWA data since the original analysis in [34].

In a later paper, describing the CHIPS estimator, Trott also developed an inverse co-

variance quadratic estimator formalism using a model foreground covariance [116]. Unlike the empirical approach of earlier work, this does not use the data itself to form the foreground covariance, but a model for the expected spatial and spectral structure of point source foregrounds. However this approach can suffer from similar effects, whereby error in the covariance can propagate into the analysis. Therefore, this inverse foreground covariance has never been applied to data used in publication due to the output’s sensitivity to the choice of foreground model.

A second principal power spectrum estimator for MWA EoR analysis, ϵ psilon, was independently developed from CHIPS [9]. ϵ psilon prioritizes the propagation of thermal noise error from the visibilities (with estimates provided by FHD) through to the power spectrum while also providing a suite of diagnostics for assessing the performance of the estimator in a number of domains.

Both ϵ psilon and CHIPS (without the foreground covariance weighting) were used in the EoR limit paper led by Beardsley [12], which processed 32 hours of MWA Phase I high-band data to power spectrum limits. At the time, these results were highly-competitive in the field, but the data were clearly still systematic-dominated. At a similar time, Ewall-Wice published the first measurement of upper limit from the Cosmic Dawn (Epoch of X-ray heating, EoX) from 3-hours of MWA data above $z = 15$ [37].

One of the clear outcomes of the early upper limit publications from MWA (and other instruments, particularly LOFAR) was that the data were highly systematic-dominated in modes relevant for EoR, and accumulating more data into the power spectrum estimator would offer no advantage. With this realisation, the MWA collaboration embarked on a two year program to prioritize understanding and treating systematics over processing large datasets, despite more than a thousand hours having been collected by the instrument. This work encompassed (1) improving the sky model (point, extended and multiple sources, [106, 123]); (2) understanding the impact of calibration choices on residuals and uncertainties [10, 117, 119, 38, 84]; (3) improving the primary beam modelling [71]; (4) developing data quality metrics for data triaging (RFI, ionospheric activity, [59, 121, 127]), (5) developing and refining redundant and hybrid calibration pipelines for Phase II [70, 60, 20]. A final important step was the development of a full end-to-end simulation to demonstrate that there was no signal loss in the chain from telescope to data product. The results of this work include upcoming EoR limits from re-analysis of Phase I data and new Phase II data, as well as exploration of new techniques for exploring the EoR [122].

A final, key insight from recent work helps to address the current questions in the EoR research field about robustness of any future claimed detection of cosmological signal. Along with confirmation by other telescopes, ability to detect the same signal in independent observing fields, where the foregrounds are different, is crucial. In [120], MWA data from two observing fields was studied with a Kernel Density Estimator to understand the similarities and differences between the statistical structure of data from independent sky areas. This work can lead to a better understanding of robustly discriminating contamination from cosmological signal.

4.3.3 Low Frequency Array - LOFAR

LOFAR is a composite aperture array low-frequency radio interferometer. It has two primary station types; the High-Band Antennas (HBA, 120–190 MHz) and Low-Band Antennas (LBA, 30–90 MHz). Both station types have been used for EoR and Cosmic Dawn science. Although LOFAR formally contains baselines of thousands of kilometres to the international stations, it is only the Dutch-based stations that are used for actual EoR measurements. Figure 4.4 shows the central stations (blue cut out) and the nearest remote stations (red).

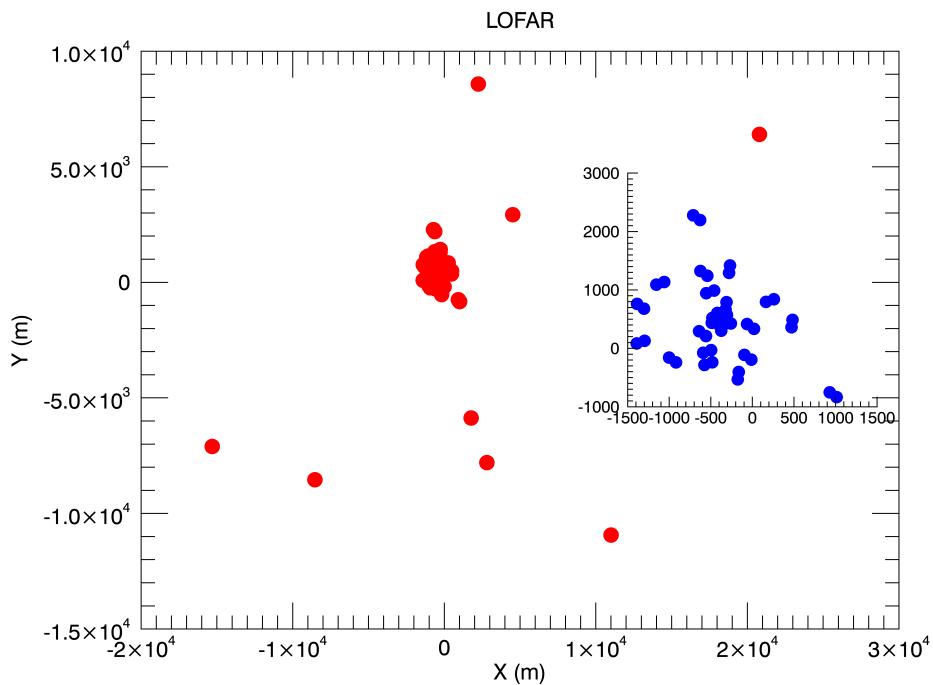


Figure 4.4: Array configuration for the central and inner remote stations of LOFAR (red), and subplot showing the central stations only (blue): 30–40 m aperture array dipole stations spread over tens of kilometres.

The LOFAR latitude allows for circumpolar observations with long winter nights. As such, one of the primary observing fields is the North Celestial Pole, which can be observed for more than 12 hours in the winter months. Early work with the LOFAR EoR Key Science Project focussed on foreground mitigation, choice of observing fields, and data analysis methodology. As with many of the published papers in this early epoch, foregrounds in [57] were modelled to be subtracted with a simple smooth fitting function. This work is notable because it provided realistic models for a range of different foreground components, and included discussion of the treatment of polarized foregrounds.

[58] extended the work from 2008 to focus on simulations of Faraday Rotation from polarized Galactic foregrounds. FR rotates the phase of the intrinsically-smooth foreground component yielding spectral structure that may mimic the EoR signal. In this work, Jelić

shows the effect of inaccurate data calibration on polarized emission, which can imprint total intensity structure if the polarized instrumental response is incorrect.

The SAGE algorithm (Space Alternating Generalized Expectation Maximization) was first introduced in 2011 by [61], and provides the basis for all calibration of LOFAR EoR datasets to the present day. Based on the well-known Expectation Maximization (EM) algorithm, which iteratively fits for calibration parameters (maximizes the likelihood with respect to a set of parameters and then alters the parameters to find a new likelihood) when the underlying system model contains unobserved variables, SAGE extends the traditional least-squares fitting to allow for more model flexibility, and improved convergence and efficiency. Part of the SAGE algorithm performs direction-dependent calibration towards clusters of sources on the sky, thereby allowing for ionospheric distortion of the sky model.

Detailed total intensity and polarized imaging of the LOFAR EoR fields were presented in [130] and [56]. The North Celestial Pole field allows for deep, long winter nighttime observations, and was shown to be able to be calibrated over long integrations. Observations of low Faraday depth structures in the ELAIS-N1 field yielded structures that would be problematic for EoR science if the degree of polarization leakage into total intensity exceeded 1%. This quantification of the accuracy required of instrumental polarization models was the first of a set of papers that explored polarized signal and leakage for EoR science. Thus far, the LOFAR EoR collaboration has undertaken the most extensive work to quantify the impact of polarization leakage, while the MWA collaboration has made some observations of polarized emission in their data ([69], [68], [13]). In [8] and [7], Asad and colleagues first studied the polarized emission in the 3C196 EoR field, finding them to be localized around a small Faraday depth, and quantified the leakage, and then studied the accuracy of the LOFAR polarized beam model to be able to limit leakage into total intensity. Given the level of polarized to total intensity, and a beam model accurate to 10% at the field centre, the leakage and subsequent spectral structure would be acceptable for EoR science. Finally, [6] considered the more problematic impact of wide-field polarization leakage on the EoR power spectrum. Far from the field centre, the primary beam models are less accurate, and sources imprint additional spectral structure due to the chromaticity of an interferometer. In these cases, bias was found to persist in the EoR power spectrum.

In early work on fitting foregrounds, Harker and colleagues [46] discussed the use of Wp smoothing as a non-parametric method for fitting a smooth function, based on limiting the number of inflection points in the fit. Further, they discuss the systematic errors introduced by the fitting routine, methods for estimating these, and for accounting for them in the final uncertainties. This approach is used again in the work of [77] for the Gaussian Process Regression fitting, and also is used generically in the PAPER analysis to try to understand signal loss. There, and elsewhere, use of the same dataset to empirically estimate the bias, and then to correct it, leads to resubstitution bias, underestimate of bias and signal loss.

In a series of papers, Chapman and collaborators explored novel approaches to fitting and removing foreground signal from image-based datacubes. In [24], they introduced the FastICA technique, as a non-parametric method that estimates independent foreground components and their mixing for each image pixel and frequency. The advantage of such methods is that they do not rely on any a priori knowledge of the signal, but instead only assume that the full signal can be represented by a small number of components (sparsity), thereby allowing for good estimation with a given dataset. The disadvantage lies in the sensitivity of

results to the number of components the user chooses that the data should contain, and the potential for signal loss if the projection of the estimated components onto the EoR signal is non-negligible. ICA generically minimizes Gaussianity, thereby enforcing smoothness in the fitted components. Beyond ICA, a generalized method (GMCA; Generalized Morphological Component Analysis) was applied ([23, 22]) to use an underlying blind wavelet decomposition of the components, combined with the sparsity and mixing model methodology of the ICA method. As with other methods when the underlying structure, spatial distribution and amplitude of the cosmological signal and foreground components is unknown, the potential for signal loss is present. The ICA and GMCA methods both assume that the cosmological signal has negligible amplitude and is absorbed in the noise. Structural deviations from this assumption can lead to signal loss.

In a new approach to foreground treatment, Mertens and colleagues discuss use of the well-known Gaussian Process Regression (GPR) technique to fit for foregrounds using only an understanding for the spectral data covariance of different components [77]. Unlike parametric methods that assume an underlying model, GPR (an extended version of kriging, which interpolates data based on their known covariance properties) relies only a statistical separation of foreground and cosmological signal via their spectral correlation lengths. This method also suffers from the potential for cosmological signal loss, but the authors attempt capture the potential bias statistically through increased noise. The ultimate utility of this approach has yet to be demonstrated on a large dataset at the time of the writing.

Along with the power spectrum as a measure of the signal variance as a function of spatial scale, the variance statistic was explored with simulations in [102]. The variance of the brightness temperature, as the wavenumber integral over the power spectrum, quantifies the variability in the cosmological signal on the imaging scale (autocorrelation function). Although it provides limited cosmological information, detection of this variance can be theoretically obtained with fewer observing hours. Bayesian power spectrum extraction techniques were also explored in [43], with a view to allowing for a spatially-smooth component to capture the unmodelled diffuse emission in the NCP field. Like other instruments, the data calibration and foreground models were limited to point and extended sources, with the complex diffuse emission difficult to measure and model. Increasingly, the impact of this incomplete sky model has become apparent.

In a landmark paper published by Patil and colleagues in 2016 [100] the source of ‘excess noise’ and diffuse emission suppression in LOFAR data were studied. Excess noise is the identification of increased noise levels in the data post-calibration compared with expectations of thermal noise and Stokes V measurements. Ultimately, the lack of a diffuse model in the calibration sky model allowed for this signal to be absorbed into the gain calibration solutions, thereby yielding a direction-dependent bias and noise in the residual data. To address this problem, the short baselines containing the majority of the diffuse emission could be excluded, however this leads to increased noise on these scales (due to statistical leverage; effectively this amounts to additional flexibility in the gain solutions on these scales because they are not used in the modelling). This work was undertaken contemporaneously with that of [10] and [117], which both studied the effect of incomplete sky models and spectrally varying bandpass parameters on calibration and residual signal. The combined outcome of these studies is an understanding of the impact of sky model incompleteness, the need to enforce spectral correlation (e.g., regularization as in SAGECal or smooth model fitting) for

calibration parameter fitting, and the approaches to calibration that can mitigate these.

Further exploration of the impact of calibration frameworks and data treatment were then explored in [83] and [88], with a view to having a complete understanding of the end-to-end data processing of LOFAR EoR data on the path to a detection. Unlike in the previous ten years before real observations were undertaken and thermal noise sensitivity was seen to be the major impediment for EoR detection, the field has come to appreciate the crucial roles of unbiased calibration, sky model completeness, and foreground treatment without cosmological signal loss.

The culmination of the lessons learned from statistical leverage and incomplete sky models was applied to two fluctuation upper limit papers published since 2017. In [99], Patil and colleagues presented competitive results from a small set of data (~ 10 hours) at $z = [9.6 - 10.6]$, with the best limit of $(59.6 \text{ mK})^2$. This work reported an excess variance, in line with previous discussions, and the use of Stokes V power to remove noise power. At higher redshifts (lower frequencies), Gehlot and colleagues [40] reported upper limits above $z = 20$, with use of the Gaussian Process Regression foreground fitting technique introduced by [77] for EoR science.

Beyond the power spectrum, LOFAR has explored other tracers of the neutral hydrogen temperature field, namely the ability to produce low angular resolution images [134] and the 21 cm Forest [28]. LOFAR like other current instruments, does not have the sensitivity to directly image neutral hydrogen bubbles at the instrumental resolution. However, by lowering the resolution of images (thereby improving the radiometric noise), Zaroubi and colleagues argue that the largest of bubbles may be detectable at low signal-to-noise ratio on the largest of scales late in reionization. The ability to detect the 21 cm Forest (absorption of continuum radio emission along the line-of-sight to high redshift AGN due to intervening neutral gas) remains a challenge and aim of many current interferometers. Ciardi and colleagues showed that LOFAR would have the ability to detect an absorption feature under ideal conditions. Unlike the statistical detection of the power spectrum of temperature fluctuations, the absorption signal amplitude is determined by the astrophysical conditions close to the gas, namely gas kinetic temperature. Cold gas is able to absorb light more readily than heated gas. The failure of this method to date is primarily due to the lack of any known high-redshift radio-loud AGN ($z > 6$). Given the sensitivity of current instruments, a source with flux density exceeding 10 mJy and cold neutral gas would be required. It is likely that the arrival of SKA will provide both the sensitivity and the detection (and confirmation) of high-redshift radio-loud AGN to be able to undertake this experiment. Of the current interferometric experiments, only LOFAR has sufficient sensitivity to be able to attempt this experiment at all.

The utility of extracting higher-order statistics of the 21 cm brightness temperature field were explored in a simulation study of foreground-subtracted image cubes by [47]. Again, the ability to smoothly treat and remove foregrounds placed the burden of detection on pure noise considerations.

4.3.4 Precision Array for Probing the Epoch of Reionization - PAPER

The PAPER experiment was designed as a testbed for developing novel 21 cm cosmology analysis techniques. PAPER antennas were chosen to be small, single dipoles on elevated

ground-screens to enable reconfiguration of the array, and the system used a flexible digital correlator architecture that could scale as the number of antennas grew [96]. The small antenna sizes was also chosen to limit the frequency evolution of the antenna response over the instrument’s 110 – 180 MHz of usable instantaneous bandwidth. The design and results from an initial 8-station deployment of PAPER in Green Bank, WV, USA were described in [94].

In its earlier stages, PAPER deployed its antennas in configurations designed for imaging, including a single-polarization 16-element 300 m diameter ring in Green Bank used for primary beam measurements in [105]. While the Green Bank array was upgraded to a single-polarization, 32-element array, all subsequent publications came using arrays deployed at the SKA-SA site in the Karoo, South Africa. Highlights of early PAPER studies include the creation of a 145 MHz Southern hemisphere sky-catalog using a single-polarization, 32-element array [53] and a study of the radio galaxy Centaurus A using a single-polarization, 64-element array [109]. In both of these cases, the elements were deployed in a randomized configuration over a circle of 300 m diameter to maximize *uv* coverage.

In 2012, however, members of the PAPER team developed what is now referred to as the “delay spectrum” approach for measuring the 21 cm power spectrum. In the delay spectrum approach, visibility spectra from individual baselines are Fourier transformed and cross-multiplied. [93] demonstrated how these delay spectra can be used as estimates of the 21 cm power spectrum, without ever combining visibilities and making an image. [93] also provided sensitivity estimates for the delay spectrum approach using a 128-element PAPER array. [98] then demonstrated how 21 cm foregrounds isolate into what is now commonly referred to as “the wedge” and included the effects of foreground contamination in the sensitivity study. One consequence of the delay spectrum approach is a higher noise level than alternative approaches: power spectra estimated from individual baselines are averaged together, as opposed to coherently combining all the visibilities and forming a single power spectrum, so noise fluctuations average down more slowly. To make-up for this sensitivity sacrifice, [93] proposed using a “maximum redundancy” configuration, in which antennas are arranged to create multiple copies of the same baseline spacing. These redundant baselines can then be averaged together before squaring, helping the noise level to integrate down faster. Although redundant layouts drastically reduce imaging fidelity, the delay spectrum approach does not requiring imaging and so is, in principle, not affected by this consequence.

The decision was made to reconfigure the PAPER array and test the delay spectrum technique in a maximum redundancy layout. However, a short data set in a single-polarization, 64-element “minimum redundancy” (i.e. random layout) with a 300 m diameter was collected and used to make delay spectra from a range of baseline lengths and orientations in [1]. This analysis demonstrated good isolation of foreground emission to the wedge in 2D cosmological *k*-space, suggesting the promise of the delay spectrum technique.

[95] presented the first deep power spectrum limits from a dual-polarization, 32-element, maximum redundancy array (a grid of 8 columns and 4 rows, with a column spacing of 30 meters and a row spacing of 4 meters). Just over 1000 hours of data were used in the analysis. In addition to the basic delay spectrum formalism, [95] introduced two additional analysis techniques: redundant calibration [2, 74], which was enabled by the redundant layout of the array, and a new technique for removing off-diagonal covariances between redundant baselines. These same techniques were applied to the same data over a range of redshifts in

[55].

The techniques of [95] were then applied to a new, 1000+ hour, dual-polarization, 64-element PAPER data set in [5] (the layout of which is shown in Figure 4.5). This analysis improved upon the redundant calibration technique by using the OMNICAL package [135], replaced the off-diagonal covariance removal technique with an inverse covariance weighting approach using empirically estimated covariance matrices (similar to [34]) and applied a new technique known as “fringe rate filtering” (described in [97]). At the time, the [5] limits on the 21 cm power spectrum were believed to be the most stringent to be published and were followed by two separate publications using their measurement to constrain the temperature of the IGM at $z = 8.4$ [104, 45].

However, re-analysis of the [5] data by [25] revealed a critical error in the analysis: empirically estimated covariance matrices are correlated with the data, and weighting by them can bias the recovered signal low. (As described in §4.3.1, this bias has frequently been referred to as “signal loss” — the idea that an analysis technique can remove 21 cm signal along with foregrounds.) In practice, the signal loss in the PAPER analysis was very large (nearly four orders of magnitude of potential EoR signal was suppressed) due to the fringe-rate filtering technique that reduced the number of independent samples used to estimate the covariance matrix. Although the analysis in [5] attempted to estimate signal loss using injection of mock EoR signals into the data, their method missed potential loss caused by data-signal cross terms in the covariance matrix and thus concluded that the original analysis was effectively lossless. Incorrect estimates of both the theoretical and observed noise levels in the data also contributed to the belief that the analysis of [5] was sound.

In light of the analysis in [25], all of the PAPER results in [95, 55, 5] are considered to be invalid and do not place meaningful limits on the 21 cm signal.¹ A re-analysis of the full [5] data set using a lossless analysis is forthcoming, but the limits are not expected to be near the same level as [5]. The PAPER experiment also collected two years of data with a dual-polarization, 128-element array, but due to an increased amount of instrument systematics and failures in the aging system, these data are not expected to be published.

The delay spectrum approach does not allow for high accuracy polarization calibration, which needs to be performed in the image domain. Theoretical studies of the effect of Faraday rotated (i.e. frequency-dependent) polarized emission on the delay spectrum technique were presented in [80] and [87] and studies using PAPER data were performed in [3] and [64]. Overall, the effect of polarized emission on the delay spectrum approach can be quite significant, but the overall amplitude is uncertain as there are few constraints on the polarization properties of the 150 MHz sky at the angular scales probed by PAPER. Ionospheric Faraday rotation can also attenuate the polarized signal in data sets averaged over many nights [75].

¹Although [95] did not use the inverse covariance weighting that was the main source of the problem in [5], its covariance removal technique has not been robustly vetted for signal loss and thus the results are considered suspect at best.

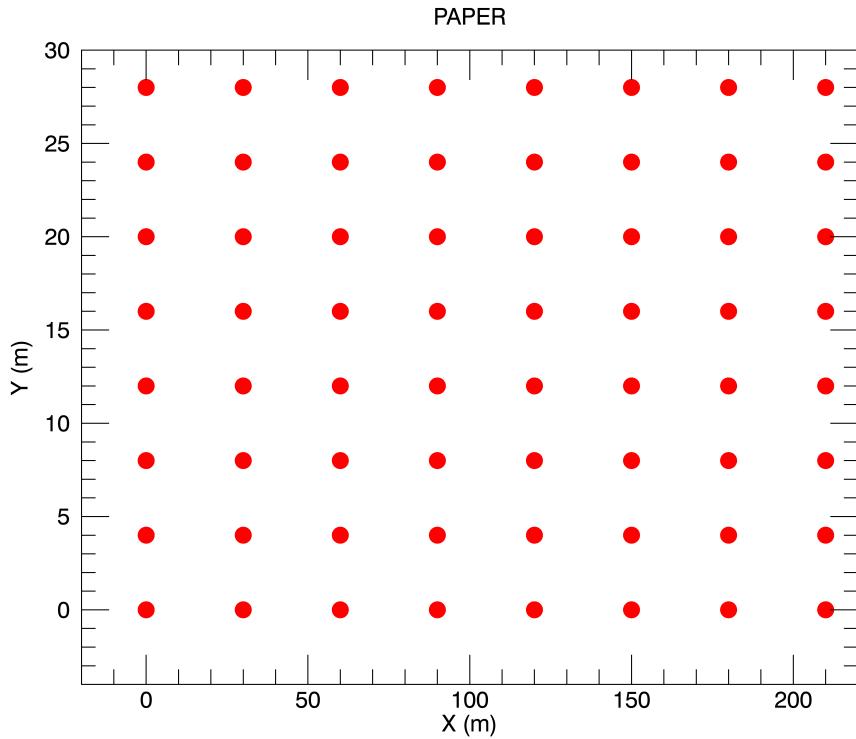


Figure 4.5: Array configuration for the PAPER-64 maximally-redundant array: 64 single dipoles spread over 210 m. Note the distinctly different scales on the x and y axes.

4.4 Published results

Here we collate the published best limits at each redshift from the current experiments (Table 4.4). PAPER measurements have been omitted. Despite the current published values, there are publications in peer-review now for LOFAR, PAPER, and MWA improving on these results.

4.5 Current challenges

21 cm experiments consist of many components, from the analog telescope design through to power spectrum estimation algorithms. One clear lesson from first generation experiments is that no one aspect of the system can provide the necessary 1-part-in- 10^5 dynamic range required to detect the 21 cm signal; rather, the burden needs to be spread across the components of the experiment, alleviating the demands on each of the other components. In this section, we briefly review what we consider five key areas where 21 cm experiments continue to innovate: (1) analog instrument design; (2) data quality control; (3) calibration; (4) foreground mitigation and the associated potential for signal loss; and (5) end-to-end validation of analysis pipelines.

Facility	z	$k (h\text{Mpc}^{-1})$	Upper limit (mK) ²	Ref.
MWA	12.2	0.18	2.5×10^7	[37]
MWA	15.35	0.21	8.3×10^8	[37]
MWA	17.05	0.22	2.7×10^8	[37]
MWA	7.1	0.23	2.7×10^4	[12]
MWA	6.8	0.24	3.0×10^4	[12]
MWA	6.5	0.24	3.2×10^4	[12]
MWA	9.5	0.05	6.8×10^4	[34]
LOFAR	10	0.053	6.3×10^3	[100]
LOFAR	9	0.053	7.5×10^3	[100]
LOFAR	8	0.053	1.7×10^4	[100]
LOFAR	23	0.038	6.8×10^4	[40]
GMRT	8.6	0.5	6.2×10^4	[91]

Table 4.2: Best two sigma upper limits on the EoR and Cosmic Dawn power spectrum for each experiment. Only the lowest limits have been reproduced.

1. Analog instrument design. One of the major challenges for 21 cm cosmology experiments is to remove any spectral structure introduced by the instrument that might otherwise mix smooth spectrum foregrounds into the spectral modes occupied by the cosmological signal. One seemingly straightforward approach is to limit the amount of spectral structure in the instrument response through careful analog design. Initial specifications on the HERA system design were to limit spectral structure to a level that would enable the delay spectrum technique without any additional calibration or analysis requirements; however, further study has shown that the HERA design does not meet this stringent specification and will need data analysis algorithms to also model and remove spectral structure from the instrument [31]. The push to larger bandwidths (e.g. 50 – 250 MHz for HERA and 50 – 350 MHz for the SKA) adds to the challenge of constructing a single instrument with a smooth spectral response over a large range of wavelengths. Analysis with the MWA has also demonstrated how reflections in the analog system can contaminate modes of the EoR power spectrum, suggesting that more stringent specifications on impedance matches and cable lengths are necessary for future instruments [10, 38].

2. Data Quality Control. Given the extreme brightness of human-generated radio signals compared to the 21 cm signal, only a very small number of contaminated measurements are enough to significantly affect the analysis of a large data set. The “gold standard” for identifying radio frequency interference, AOFlagger [90], is used by both LOFAR and the MWA. However, additional quality metrics can still catch corrupted data that slips by this first round of flagging, including ultra-faint, broad-band digital TV transmission [127] and effects due to ionospheric weather [121, 59]. As interferometers grow in size, the large data rates may also require computationally faster algorithms for data quality checks [62]. [89] also demonstrate how even flagged RFI can affect power spectrum analysis if care is not taken.

3. Calibration. Instrument calibration is often regarded as the greatest challenge for existing and future 21 cm experiments. While both the analog design and the methodology

used for power spectrum estimation can ease calibration requirements [82], experiments still need to control the spectral response of their telescopes over wide bandwidths at a level unprecedented in radio astronomy. Typically, antenna-based gain calibration is performed by forward-modeling visibilities and minimizing the difference with the observed data; however, [10], [100], and [117] demonstrate that without additional constraints, calibration performed with an incomplete sky-model can lead to spurious spectral structure in the calibration solutions that can both overwhelm or remove the EoR signal. Redundancy based calibration has been viewed as a promising alternative because it does not reference a sky-model; however, recent work has shown that a sky model is still required to constrain the degeneracies inherent in redundant calibration, and that the same kind of contamination can affect the power spectrum as in sky-based calibration [20, 70, 60]. Calibration of the primary beam response of the instruments is also a major challenge, and several options have been explored, including sky-based calibration [105], using satellite broadcasts [85, 86, 71], and with drones flying transmitters [54].

4. Foreground mitigation. Fundamentally, the real challenges at the heart of 21 cm cosmology come from the intrinsic brightness of the foreground emission. While much of the work to date focuses on removing the instrument response from the foreground spectra, most current experiments use some form of foreground mitigation to help isolate or remove foregrounds. Many distinct approaches have been developed, which can be broadly classified as either “foreground avoidance” and “foreground subtraction.” Foreground avoidance methods attempt to isolate foregrounds into the wedge and minimize bleed into the EoR window; power spectra are then only estimated from within the EoR window. Examples of avoidance techniques includes the wide-band iterative deconvolution filter used in PAPER analyses [63] and the inverse covariance weighting techniques also used by PAPER [25]. Foreground subtraction, on the other hand, attempts to remove specific models of the foregrounds — using either real sky catalogs or parametric models for their spectra — while leaving the 21 cm unaffected. Examples of foreground subtraction including the point-source forward modeling and subtraction performed by FHD [9] and the spectral based fitting methods used by LOFAR [22, 77]. It is worth stressing that while these techniques have historically been developed in the context of specific experiments, they are more generally applicable; see [63] for an example of PAPER-developed techniques applied to MWA data and MWA-developed techniques applied to PAPER data.

One of the greatest risks of foreground removal is the inadvertent removal of 21 cm signal, i.e., signal loss. Although many techniques have been developed using frameworks where signal loss is not expected, due to a presumed orthogonality of the foreground description and 21 cm signal basis, there are subtle challenges that arise when faced with a need to achieve five orders of magnitude of dynamic range. While cross-terms between the foreground and signal might have an expectation value of 0, there are still only a finite number of samples going into the analysis, and these cross terms will not have converged to their expectation value — as was the case in the PAPER analysis of [5].

5. Validation. One of the last major challenges for current and future experiments is to rigorously test foreground removal and other analysis algorithms — ideally as part of complete pipeline and not as an independent step — to confirm that 21 cm signal is not being biased or removed. And although foreground removal seems like the step most likely to cause signal loss, it is certainly not the only place that needs further scrutiny. In light of the PAPER

retractions, 21 cm experiments are realizing the importance of simulation-based analysis vetting — ideally with independent, third-party simulations. Many interferometric simulators exist, including CASA, PRISim [114], OSKAR, and pyuvsim [67]. In turn, it has become important to test the simulators against each other, to verify that they achieve the requisite precision for 21 cm cosmology. These validation efforts can be slow and painstaking, but as experiments push closer to a first detection of the 21 cm signal, they have become more vital than ever. The other avenue for verification is with other instruments and other pipelines providing independent analysis. Use of multiple observing fields can also show robustness to foreground treatment [120].

4.6 Prospects for the future

4.6.1 Current instruments

MWA and LOFAR are both currently pursuing deeper limits. Armed with new calibration and analysis, and critically, a deeper understanding of the effects of different processing approaches, the level of systematics in data are reduced, and more data can be processed to reduce noise. At this stage, it is difficult to predict whether systematics will remain at deeper levels, and if the fundamental limitations of the instrument will preclude a detection. While the reported detection of the Cosmic Dawn global signal from the EDGES experiment [18] suggests that the spatial power spectrum amplitude may be larger than expected, this is highly uncertain, and the flexibility in possible strengths of the signal in the EoR emission part of the spectrum could help or hinder a detection by LOFAR and MWA. Pursuit of the Cosmic Dawn signal from 75–100 MHz observations with the MWA and LOFAR is also underway, but that introduces even greater challenges of large fields-of-view and poor extended source models at those frequencies.

4.6.2 Future instruments

The SKA and HERA offer the future vision for EoR and Cosmic Dawn science. Like LOFAR and MWA, SKA is a general science instrument, being able to produce its own sky model and calibration framework, while needing to balance design with the other science aims of the observatory. HERA, like PAPER, is a custom EoR instrument, being able to design with a complete focus on EoR science, likely requiring external information to provide a full end-to-end calibration and source subtraction element.

The low-frequency telescope of the SKA Observatory, SKA-Low, will be centred at the Murchison Radioastronomy Observatory in Western Australia, on the same radio quiet site as MWA, ASKAP, EDGES and BiGHorNS [65, 32]. Despite being designed for 512 38 m stations (256 dual-polarization dipoles in each station) spread over >40 km, the core region will contain >200 stations within the central 1 km, with exceptional surface brightness sensitivity for EoR and CD science. With a frequency range available down to 50 MHz, the CD will be accessible to $z = 27$, with sub-stations able to be formed to produce the wider fields-of-view and shorter baselines required for early times. With its exceptional imaging capabilities, SKA-Low aims to pursue power spectrum, direct imaging (tomography) and

21 cm Forest studies. The prices to be paid for this highly-capable instrument are the complexity of the data and instrument, and the large data volumes that will be produced from the telescope, and is therefore faces a more severe version of the challenges currently experienced by multi-purpose dipole arrays such as MWA and LOFAR.

HERA [31] is a smaller instrument (although still significantly larger than any of the existing instruments) being constructed in South Africa. It comprises 350 14 m dipole elements spread over <1 km (331 in a 320 m core) for high EoR sensitivity and moderate imaging and calibration needs (19 outriggers). It will primarily pursue the statistical exploration of the EoR and CD using the delay spectrum technique, with some hope for imaging capability and alternate power spectrum analyses.

4.6.3 Future analyses

Although the spatial power spectrum is the primary data product of most current EoR 21 cm experiments, there are other avenues of pursuit to explore this first billion years of the Universe, including an integrated product (the variance statistic, [101]). Direct imaging is beyond the capability of current instruments, demanding a high surface brightness sensitivity and thousands of hours. This will be pursued by the future SKA [65]. However, there are other statistics that can be pursued through the 21 cm line, and also the opportunity for cross-correlating the signal with other tracers of early Universe evolution. The benefit of the latter approach is that the systematic errors may be different between the two tracers, offering an advantage over 21 cm alone.

At early times, the brightness temperature of the 21 cm line, relative to the CMB traces the matter power spectrum, and is highly Gaussian, but at later times the evolution of ionised bubbles dominates the spatial fluctuations and the signal is expected to have non-zero higher order terms [39, 76, 35]. The shape of the temperature distribution function evolves with time and spatial scale, and differs for different underlying models of the evolution of the Universe. As such, probing these non-Gaussian components can provide complementary information to the power spectrum, which, by design, only captures information in the second moment of the distribution [129].

The bispectrum measures the three-point correlation function, and has been shown to encode non-Gaussianity. In early work to study the expected sensitivity of 21 cm experiments to the bispectrum, [133] computed theoretical expectations for a range of instruments, under the assumption of thermal noise only. More sophisticated recent work included the effects of calibration and foregrounds on the ability to detect the signal. In [122], two bispectrum estimators were developed to take a practical approach to estimation with real data, and were applied to 20 hours of data from Phase II of the MWA. This work discussed some of the advantages and challenges of doing such an experiment with real data.

Cross-correlation studies from the early Universe offer the potential for new astrophysical insight and reduced observational biases and errors. In the context of the MWA, [131] used data to explore the cross-correlation of the 21 cm image from the EoR-0 observing field, and the CMB field measured by Planck. An additional tracer that can be used is the population of high-redshift LAEs, which are observable in ionised regions [132, 66, 51]. The SKA's Synergy group is exploring the potential for multi-facility observations, including the exciting prospects available with WFIRST [50].

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Chapter 5

Future prospects

Leon V. E. Koopmans (Kapteyn Astronomical Institute), Gianni Bernardi (INAF-IRA & Rhodes University)

Abstract

This chapter discusses some important things

5.1 Forthcoming interferometric ground based instruments and upgrades

In this section we review the status of the 21 cm ground based interferometers that are under construction, have been upgraded or will be constructed in the near future.

5.1.1 The Hydrogen Epoch of Reionization Array

The Hydrogen Epoch of Reionization Array (HERA, [6]) is an array currently under construction in the Karoo reserve area in South Africa - following the decommissioning of the PAPER experiment (see Chapters 3 and 8 in this book for an overview of PAPER). HERA is built following the approach used for PAPER: a highly redundant array to maximize the sensitivity on a number of power spectrum modes measured using the avoidance approach. In order to increase the sensitivity with respect to PAPER, it employs 14 m diameter non steerable dishes that, in the final configuration, will be densely packed in a highly redundant hexagonal array configuration of ~ 350 m diameter (see Figure 5.1). HERA main goal is to measure the 21 cm power spectrum in the $6 < z < 12$ range with high significance in the $0.2 < k < 0.4 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$ range ([19], providing a full characterization of the evolution of the neutral Hydrogen fraction of the intergalactic medium (Figure 5.2).

Given the high redundant configuration, imaging tomography will remain challenging for HERA and likely the goal of a future generation experiment. As foreground modeling and characterization will also be limited because of redundancy and the coarse angular resolution, a significant effort was dedicated to keep the instrumental response from corrupting the intrinsically smooth foreground spectra and to accurately model it ([17], [11], [21], [18]). An

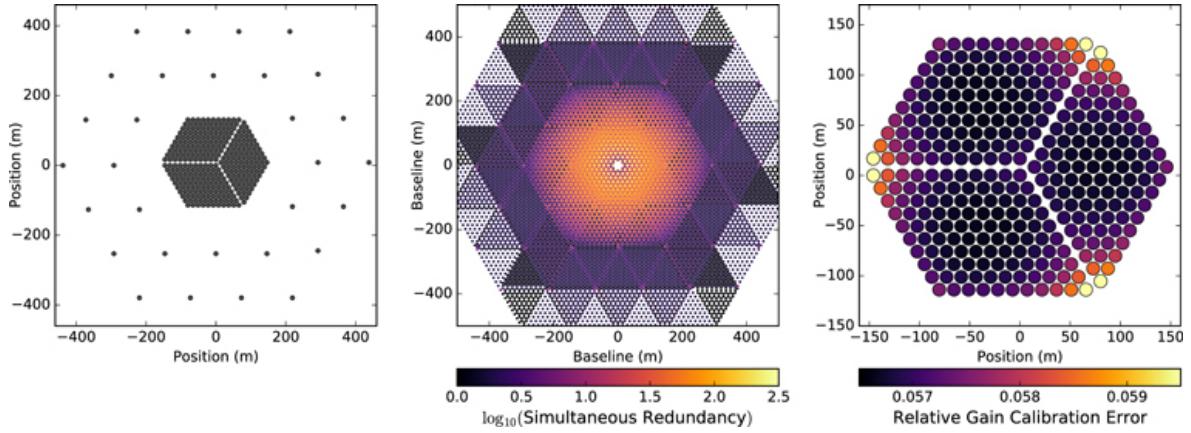


Figure 5.1: The HERA layout (left panel): 320 dishes are located in the hexagonal core and 30 more outrigger dishes are planned to be deployed out to a maximum baselines of ~ 800 m to improve angular resolution and imaging capabilities. The core is split in three sectors that are displaced from each other by a fraction of the dish diameter (see [8] for a detailed discussion). The split core provides a significantly improved instantaneous uv coverage (central panel) whilst retaining high redundancy. The right panel shows the expected relative antenna gain errors after using redundant calibration (from [8]).

alternative approach to redundant calibration is to apply foreground avoidance using closure phase quantities from antenna triads ([20]): closure phase are insensitive to errors in direction independent interferometric calibration and, therefore, directly bypass the requirement of an accurate spectral calibration (see Chapter 3 in this book for an overview of calibration of 21 cm observations). A preliminary analysis of HERA closure phases seem to confirm these premises ([5]).

HERA is currently under construction, with more than 200 dishes deployed, and 21 cm observations are currently being analyzed. New feeds that extend the sensitivity to the 50–250 MHz range are currently deployed for testing in order to enable observations in the $12 < z < 35$ range (the Cosmic Dawn) and probe the nature of the first luminous sources and their impact on the thermal history of the intergalactic medium.

5.1.2 The Low Frequency Array

5.1.3 The Large aperture Experiment to detect the Dark Ages

The Large aperture Experiment to detect the Dark Ages (LEDA, [2], [13]) is located at the Owens Valley Radio Observatory, California. It operates in the 30–88 MHz frequency range, corresponding to $15 < z < 46$, seeking to detect the 21 cm signal from the Cosmic Dawn. The array layout consists of 251 dipoles pseudo randomly deployed within a 200 m diameter core, 23 dipoles are added out to a maximum 1.5 km baseline (see Figure 5.3). Five additional outrigger dipoles are custom-equipped to measure the global 21 cm signal via individual custom-built dipoles (see Section 5.2.2).

The very dense core provides exceptional brightness sensitivity and a point spread func-

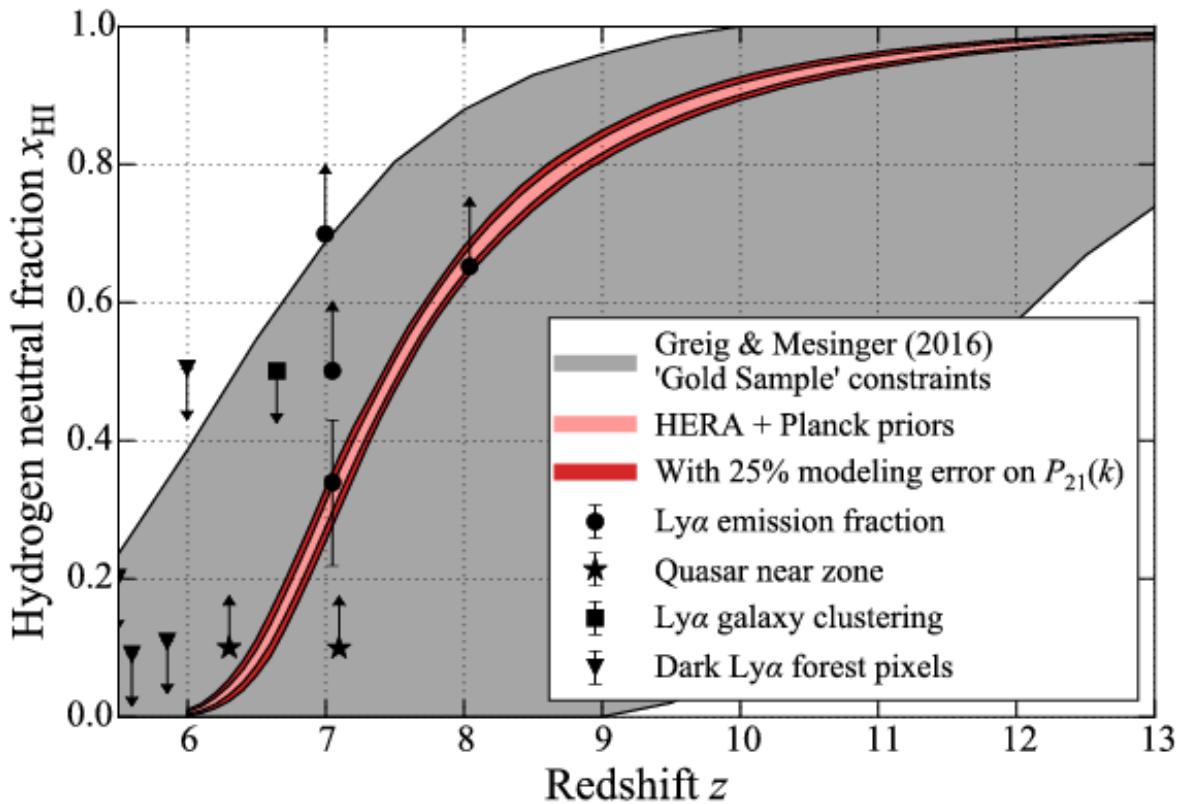


Figure 5.2: 95% confidence region on the Hydrogen neutral fraction X_{HI} (grey, from [12]). The inclusion of HERA measurement leads to a dramatic improvement in the constraints (red and pink areas, [14]). Constraints from other reionization probes are shown as well (see [6] for a detailed description).

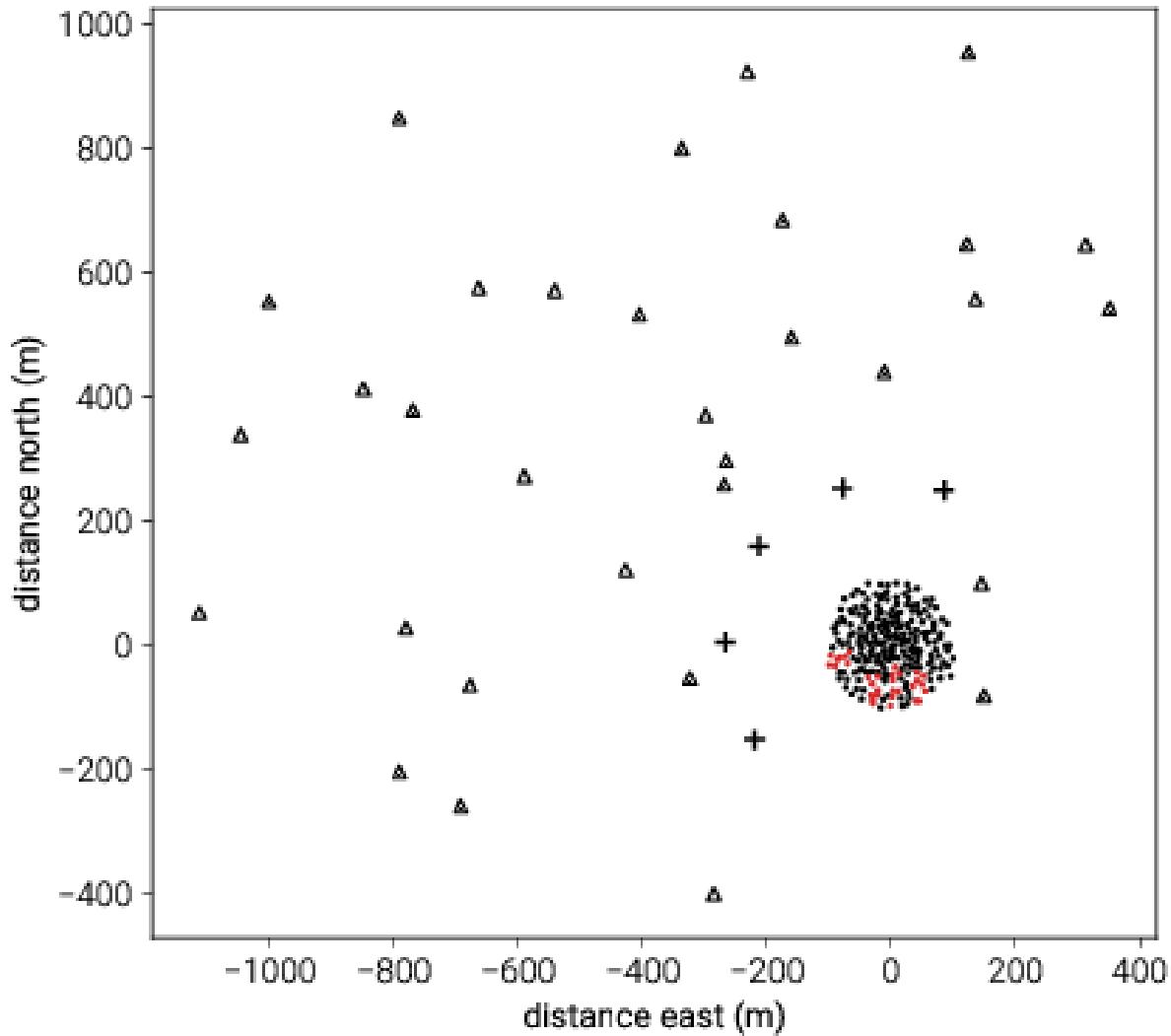


Figure 5.3: LEDA antenna layout: the dense core is surrounded by 32 dipoles in order to provide an exceptionally good instantaneous uv coverage (from [9]).

tion with very low sidelobes. The outrigger dipoles improve the angular resolution that helps to identify calibration sources and lower the confusion level. As the dipoles are individually correlated, visibilities have contributions from all-sky emission, particularly from Galactic diffuse emission - given the number of short baselines - and with significant ionospheric-induced refraction and scintillation. Despite these challenges, [9] generated the first high quality all-sky foreground maps.

The LEDA approach to measure the 21 cm signal can be versatile, allowing to image and subtract foregrounds ([9]) but also to avoid them (similar to [1]). [10] analyzed 20 hours of LEDA data calibrated using a compact source sky model and filtering foregrounds using their statistical properties in way similar to [7] and [22]. They reported an initial 10^8 mK^2 upper limit on the 21 cm power spectrum at $z = 18.4$.

5.1.4 Murchison Widefield Array phase II

Chapters 3 and 8 have already described the relevant aspects of the MWA phase II upgrade. Here we emphasize the improved sensitivity to the 21 cm power spectrum due to the addition of the two redundant hexagon near to the core. Figure ?? shows a sensitivity improvement of a factor of four with respect to the phase I and $\sim 10\sigma$ detection of the fiducial 21 cm power spectrum at $k \sim 0.1 \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$. (**GB: Leon, are you ok with this summary?**)

5.2 Ongoing Global Signal Experiments

In this Section we review the status of the ongoing global signal experiments (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion about global signal observations).

5.2.1 The Experiment to Detect the Global EoR Signature

The Experiment to Detect the Global EoR Signature (EDGES, [3] currently operates in two frequency bands: the 90 – 200 MHz band (high band) in order to constrain the evolution of the neutral fraction throughout reionization, and the 50 – 100 MHz band (low band), in order to measure the expected heating of the intergalactic medium from the primordial sources. The EDGES experiment has been pioneering techniques to accurately model all the various instrumental components in order to carefully control systematics effects. Observations in the high band have constrained the duration of reionization Δz to be longer than $\Delta z > 1$ and started to constrain some properties of the first galaxies ([16], [15]). In the low band, [4] reported the surprising detection of an absorption trough twice as deeper than the most extreme models, posing a serious challenge to its interpretation - assuming it is of cosmological issue. (**GB: we should look at this paragraph in the light of the chapter on global signal observations**)

5.2.2 LEDA - Bernardi - 0.5 page

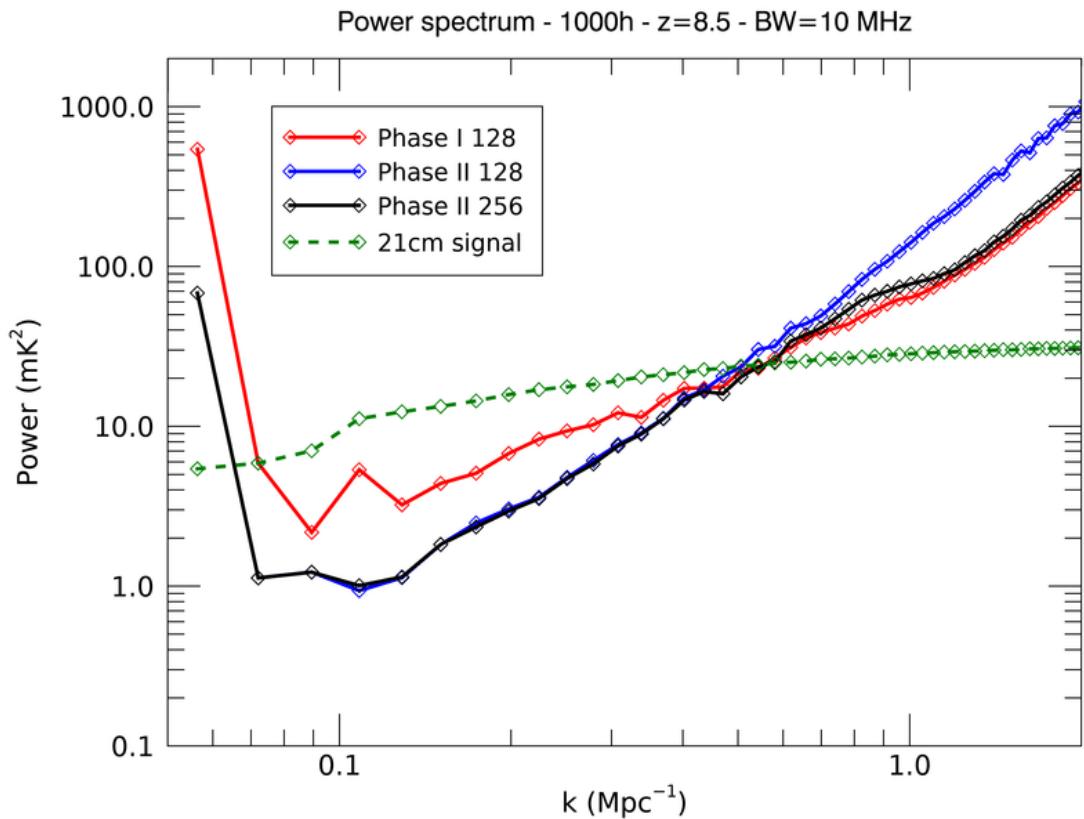


Figure 5.4: Fiducial 21 cm power spectrum model at $z = 8.5$ with associated noise levels from Phase I and Phase II arrays with a 1000 hour observation. “Phase II 256” shows the result from a future MWA upgrade where all 256 tiles are correlated simultaneously (from [23]).

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