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Master‘s Thesis

Title of the Thesis

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Kurzfassung

A short abstract of the thesis in German.

Abstract

A short abstract of the thesis in English.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

One of the most promising directions the field of communication networks has explored in the last years has been the Internet of Things (IoT). An explosion in the capability of everyday objects to connect and communicate with each other via wireless networks promises to mightily expand the boundaries hitherto explored by technology. It also promises to place an almost unmanageable amount of stress into the technologies and infrastructure already in place.

One of the proposed approaches to ameliorate the overload of connections originating from hundreds of devices to a base station is the grouping of the signals via different algorithms into clusters, which then transmit the aggregated information in one single signal to the rest of the network.

Although many such algorithms have been proposed, especially coming from the field of Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) where data aggregation is much more a matter of course, there has been woefully little attention payed to the viability of such mechanisms in comparison to one another in a scenario conforming to the standards and circumstances of LTE-A and Device to Device (D2D) communication. These kind of considerations are specially relevant when considering the prospective arrival of the IoT, the emergence of concepts such as smart grids and smart cities and the prospect of 5G as the next generation of technology that will have to deal with these issues.

This thesis aims to do just that: present a coherent and realistic simulation scenario for the clustering of devices within LTE-A, with special attention payed to the interference caused by the simultaneous transmission of information, both within the clusters and between other clusters. This will allow a fair comparison of existing clustering schemes and the degree to which they effectively alleviate congestion in the network.

The main part of the thesis will first present the background of the topic, explaining the difficulties arising from an increase in network-capable devices to the limits posed by the Random Access Procedure in place at the moment. The trade-offs of clustering will be explored, along with an enumeration of some of the most importants algorithms taken into account in this work. This chapter will also give an overview of the factors that need to be contemplated during the simulation of the network, along with the motivation for the choice of the simulation environment. Additionaly, justification will be given for the metrics used for evaluating the results of the clustering algorithms.

Next, the implementations of said simulations will be explored. This chapter will delve deeper into the details of bringing the theoretical models into the code used, with a more in-depth discussion of the decisions taken when finalizing the constraints under which the tests were run. The results that they yield will then be discussed and evaluated in the subsequent chapter, with especial attention payed to a direct comparison of the performance of different clustering algorithms. Finally, a discussion of the results will identify the ones most promising for future research and further development.

Chapter 2

Background

2.1 Random Access and its Limitations

The necessity of the expansion of the existing standards of wireless networks for the effective handling of large numbers of Machine Type Communications (MTC) had already been identified by the 3GPP early in the implementation of Long Term Evolution (LTE) as a standard in [3rd11]. As explained in [LAAZ14], a large amount of problems arise with increasingly large amounts of devices connecting to the Base Station (BS) or Evolved Node B (eNodeB) mostly due to the Random Access (RA) procedure that has to be initiated with every connection.

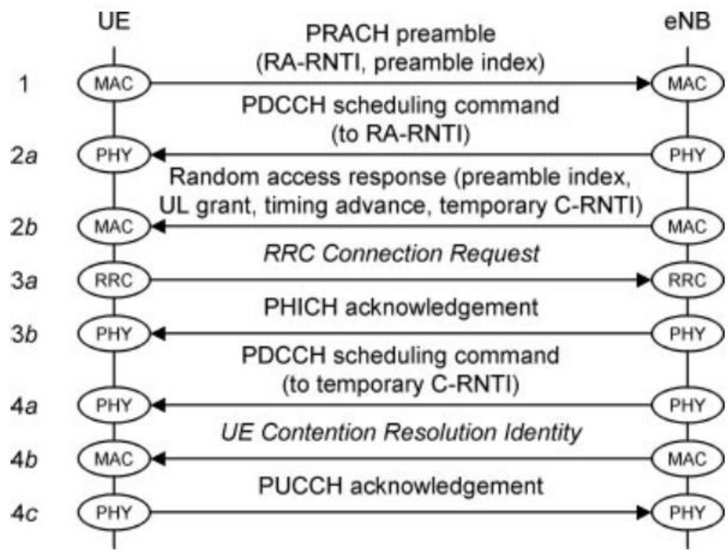

Figure 2.1: Detail of the Random Access Procedure, [Cox12]

RA procedures occurr when a device intends to utilize resources on the Physical Uplink Shared Channel (PUSCH), but has not been given access to the Physical Uplink Control Channel (PUCCH) by the appropriate eNB, which is needed for a scheduling request. As described in [Cox12], the User Equipment (UE) then sends a random access preamble to trigger the procedure, in order to gain the desired access.

This preamble is chosen randomly from an available set generated with a Zadoff-Chu mathematical sequence and transmitted on the Physical Random Access Channel (PRACH). The eNB then solves any possible collisions that may occurr from devices transmitting with the same preamble, granting access to some while ordering others to back off for a certain amount of time. If no access grant is given after several tries, the transmission is considered to have failed.

When a large amount of these connections are initiated in a short time frame, the contention resolution procedures cannot deal with them in a timely manner and many of them are dropped or delayed significantly, waiting for an opportunity to synchronize with the eNodeB, as shown in [PCZZ16]. This scenario occurs most often either because the transmission times are highly correlated or just due to the large number of devices in a given area. Both of these circumstances, both in isolation and in conjunction, will be very ordinary occurences in Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart City applications.

2.2 Clustering

Many approaches have been suggested for the improvement of the circumstances described in the preceding section, as summarized succintly in [LAAZ14], mostly dealing with the improvement of the RA procedures or an expansion of the standards for the Random Access Channel (RACH). Another viable alternative, as presented in a variety of papers ([WHS12],[LWW+14],[WSH+13],[LQL13]) is the clustering of transmitting devices. This approach aims to reutilize the coding and frequency resources within a given set of UEs for different ends, such as decreasing the load on the eNB, increasing the coverage area of the network or minimizing the power consumption of the units involved.

Clustering works by designating devices, called Cluster Heads (CH) that act as relays between the different UEs in a certain area and the eNB or a further Cluster Head by aggregating the data sent to it and relaying it. This aggregation can occur simply by gathering the data over a period of time and transmitting the same information in one long message, as in [SOIJ15], or through actual elimination of data redundancy, as contemplated in [RCCM15].

The Cluster Heads themselves are often dedicated gateways, as utilized in [NXW11] or [SOIJ15] and have been utilized especially in Wireless Sensor Networks with some frequency. Another, very promising approach to creating clusters is the use of direct Device-to-Device (D2D) communication to eliminate the need for dedicated Cluster Heads and enable dynamic cluster forming depending on the circumstances experienced by the network.

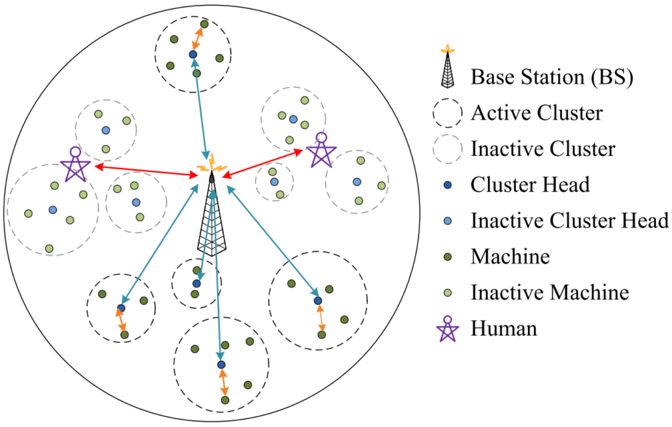

Figure 2.2: Example of D2D Clustering in a network [WSH+13]

This type of clustering scheme promises to bring much needed flexibility to the creation of these structures, since they do not necessitate much investment in additional infrastructure, nor much prior information about the density of devices. D2D communications bring many benefits, both for the user and the network, but also raise several issues that have not been yet properly investigated so far, see [?]. As devices utilize the same shared resources in a constrained space, interference becomes more of an issue as devices elect to transmit their messages in the same bandwith. This topic of inter-cluster interference due to reuse of resources and its effects on possible D2D connections is of great interest to this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, this sort of application is specially intriguing in the case of highly dense Smart Cities and the IoT. Despite the promising vistas offered by this technology, there is a dearth of research concerning this specific scenario, be it a comparison of different clustering schemes or even the detailed simulation of one clustering schemes with varying parameters. Although detailed surveys of algorithms exist, such as [?] or [?], they mostly center around description and classification. This thesis is meant to alleviate this lack of exploration. Not only will different clustering schemes be analyzed and compared fairly, they will also be scrutinized under different criteria, allowing for an assessment of their viability. This will hopefully give a direction to future possible research in this area, by highlighting some of them as viable or others as not viable at all.

The next chapters will explain in detail the steps taken to create the simulation environment as well as a presentation and evaluation of the results it yielded.

Chapter 3

Implementation/Results

3.1 Implementation

Details regarding implementation and/or simulation are given in this chapter. The considered setup and the parameters used are introduced and discussed. Also, the general evaluation methods can be presented. (Note: Code should not be part of this chapter. If it makes sense to introduce it into the thesis, it should be placed in the appendix.)

3.2 Results

Results of the performed investigations are presented here. Interpretations for the observed effects are given and the impact of investigations is discussed.

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Outlook

The thesis is concluded here. The considered problem is repeated. The contribution of this work is highlighted and the results are recapitulated. Remaining questions are stated and ideas for future work are expressed.

Appendix A

The appendix may contain some listings of source code that has been used for simulations, extensive proofs or any other things that are strongly related to the thesis but not of immediate interest to the reader.

Appendix B

Notation und Abkürzungen

This chapter contains tables where all abbreviations and other notations like mathematical placeholders used in the thesis are listed.

AP	Access Point
BS	Base Station
CH	Cluster Head
CQI	Channel Quality Indicator
DCI	Downlink Control Information
D-SR	Dedicated Scheduling Request
D2D	device to device
eNodeB	evolved Node B or E-UTRAN Node B
FDD	Frequency Division Duplexing
H-ARQ	Hybrid-Automatic Repeat Request
IoT	Internet of Things
LTE	Long Term Evolution
MCS	Modulation and Coding Scheme
MTC	Machine Type Communication
OFDM	Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing
PDCCH	Physical Downlink Control Channel
PDSCH	Physical Downlink Shared Channel
PRB	Physical Resource Block
PUCCH	Physical Uplink Control Channel
PUSCH	Physical Uplink Shared Channel
RA	Random Access
RACH	Random Access Channel
SC-FDMA	Single Carrier Frequency Division Multiple Access
SR	Scheduling Request
SRS	Sounding Reference Signal
TDD	Time Division Duplexing
UE	User Equipment
WSN	Wireless Sensor Network

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