

MULTI-HOP, HIGH-FREQUENCY RADIO PROPAGATION NEAR SOUTH AMERICA

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Abstract

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MCM Requirements

Hi team, here is what we *need* to have in our report (according to the MCM overlords):

- Restatement and clarification of the problem
- Explain assumptions and rationale/justification
- Include your model design and justification
- Describe model testing and sensitivity analysis
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses

They also claim to judge the quality of our writing. So remember our good friend Williams.

1 Motivation

2 Introduction

3 Model

3.1 Radiowaves

3.2 The Ionosphere

The ionosphere consists of roughly three layers that lie between 75–1000 km above the Earth's surface: (1) the F-region, (2) the E-region, and (3) the D-region; each of these regions has charge-density dependent on the time of year, the sunspots number of sunspots present, the time of day, and the movement of the charged particles¹(Figure 1a). X-rays, ultraviolet light, ejected plasma, and other high energy particles that are released by the sun interact with the atoms in the atmosphere and strip them of electrons.^[1] The ionosphere interacts heavily with radio waves, mainly through the interaction of these free electrons.^[3]

Early experiments demonstrated that the electrons in the ionosphere are arranged in approximately horizontal layers, meaning that the number density is a function of height above the Earth's surface. Presumably, these cations are stripped atoms or molecules. Because the ratio between the mass of a proton (the smallest positive charge we could have in the atmosphere) and an electron is on the order of 2×10^3 , we would expect there must be approximately 5×10^{-4} more cations than electrons.² If this were the case, the ionosphere would be unstable, due to the large repulsive forces of this unbalanced positive charge. However, due to the ionosphere's empirically determined and stable layers, the ionosphere must be nearly electrically neutral, i.e. there must be an equal number of positive and negative charges per unit volume.^[3] Consequently, we assume that the radio-waves only interact with the free electrons in the ionosphere.

¹The study of which has the impressive sounding name of magnetohydrodynamics.

²This is because the electric field of the propagating radio-waves will have 5×10^{-4} of the effect on a proton than an electron because $F \propto m$.

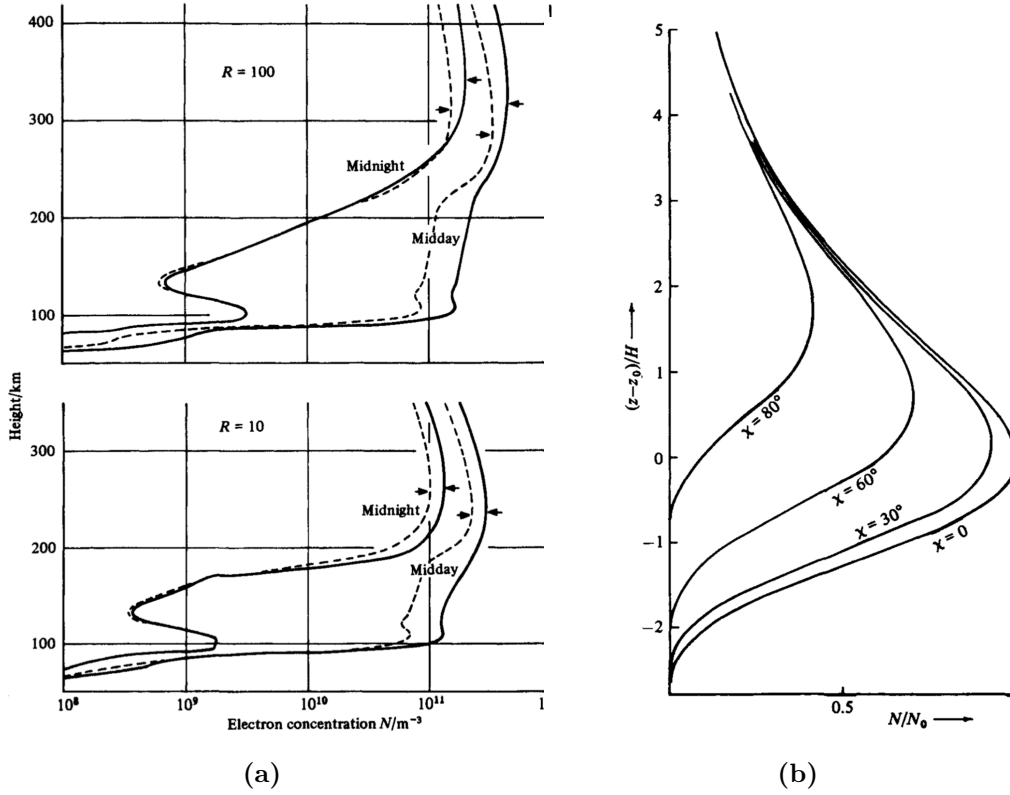


Figure 1: (a) The charge density as a function of height in the ionosphere. It also shows how the ionosphere changes at midnight and noon. Dashed lines are for January while solid lines are for June. Also given is the number of sunspots, R , at the time of data collection. Figure is taken from K.G. Budden (1961).^[2] (b) Contour plot of the Chapman Law for various azimuthal angles. Figure taken from K.G. Budden (1988).^[2]

As stated above, at a first approximation, we expect that the electron density, N , is only a function of the height above the earth's surface, z . More compactly, $N = N(z)$.

3.2.1 Electron Density, $N(z)$

Before we can calculate how radio-waves are reflected off of the ionosphere, we must model the ionosphere's electron density. In the early 1930's, a simple model for the electron density as a function was produced called the Chapman Law.^[4,5]

If we assume the Earth is constant in composition and temperature (as well as neglect the curvature of the earth³), then the density of the atmosphere, $\rho = \rho(z)$, is given by

$$\rho(z) = \rho_0 e^{-Mgz/RT} = \rho_0 e^{-z/\kappa} \quad (3.1)$$

where $\kappa \equiv RT/Mg$, $\rho_0 \equiv \rho(0)$, M is the average molecular weight, g is the gravitational

³See <https://www.tfes.org/> for more information.

acceleration (assumed constant), R is the universal gas constant,⁴ and T is the temperature. The result of (3.1) comes by balancing the forces acting on infinitesimal layers of atmosphere that, on a whole, is taken to be static and solving the barometric equation.^[7]

Next, we must find the intensity of the sun that passes through the earth's atmosphere. The intensity of the sun—not surprisingly—decreases as it goes through the atmosphere.^[3] Since, the sun enters at an angle from the zenith, α . By drawing a simple diagram,⁵ we can see that the area normal to the incident radiation of the sun will be a factor of secant too large than the area that the ground actually receives, i.e. $dA = dA_{\perp} \cos \alpha$. Since intensity is inversely proportional to dA , we will have the relationship of

$$dI = I \sigma \rho \sec(\alpha) dz. \quad (3.2)$$

where σ is a mass coefficient of absorption of the atmosphere. If we plug (3.1) into (3.2) and integrate, we get

$$I(z) = I_0 \exp \left[-\sigma \kappa \rho_0 \sec(\alpha) e^{-z/\kappa} \right] = I_0 \exp \left[-\sec(\alpha) e^{-(z-z_0)/\kappa} \right] \quad (3.3)$$

if we (cleverly) define $z_0 \equiv \kappa \ln(\sigma \kappa \rho_0)$. The rate of absorption of energy at height z is $\cos(\alpha)(dI/dz)$. If we assume that the rate of production of electrons, q , is proportional to this, then we get

$$q(z) = q_0 \exp \left[1 - \frac{z - z_0}{\kappa} - \sec(\alpha) e^{-(z-z_0)/\kappa} \right]. \quad (3.4)$$

Empirically—at least in the D and E-layers of the ionosphere⁶—the variation of charge density is given by^[3]

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = q - aN^2 \quad (3.5)$$

where a is a “recombination constant.” In the steady-state solution, where $dN/dt \approx 0$, we have $N = \sqrt{q/a}$ or

$$N(z) = N_0 \exp \left[\frac{1}{2} \left(1 - \frac{z - z_0}{\kappa} - \sec(\alpha) e^{-(z-z_0)/\kappa} \right) \right] \quad (3.6)$$

where N_0 is a constant we can gather from experimental data. This is the Chapman Law.

⁴Since all of us are “physicists,” we feel the need to note the definition of R : $R \equiv k_B N_A$ where k_B is Boltzmann's constant and N_A is Avogadro's number.

⁵Remember, we have a flat Earth; this is a subtle but important point in this derivation.

⁶In the F-layer, this rate law may be equal to $dN/dt = q - bN$

3.3 The Ocean

4 Results

5 Conclusion

Acknowledgments

References

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- [4] S Chapman. The absorption and dissociative or ionizing effect of monochromatic radiation in an atmosphere on a rotating earth part ii. grazing incidence. *Proceedings of the physical society*, 43(5):483, 1931.
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