

1 INTRODUCTION

2 Above Earth's atmosphere are the a pair of Van Allen radiation belts, a complex  
3 and dynamic plasma environment that affects our technology-driven society. These  
4 effects include: a higher radiation dose for astronauts and cosmonauts, higher chance  
5 of spacecraft failure due to single event upsets that can lead to catastrophic latchups,  
6 degradation of silicon (changing the silicon doping) from an extended radiation dose  
7 that can degrade a transistor to the point where it no longer function as a switch,  
8 and the degradation of the ozone layer due to the chemical production of  $\text{NO}_X$  and  
9  $\text{HO}_X$  molecules. With these effects in mind, it is no surprise that the radiation belts  
10 have been extensively studied since their discovery in the 1960s.

11 One natural phenomenon in the radiation belts that has been a topic of interest  
12 in the space physics community is wave-particle interactions that, as we will explore  
13 throughout this dissertation, can accelerate particles to very high energies (e.g.  $\approx$   
14 MeV for electrons) and scatter them into the atmosphere.

15 The goal of this dissertation is to study the wave-particle scattering mechanism  
16 that scatters electron microbursts. Electron microbursts, henceforth referred to  
17 as microbursts, are typically observed by low Earth orbiting spacecraft, sounding  
18 rockets, and high altitude balloons as a sub-second impulse of electrons. Some of  
19 the most intense microbursts are observed as a 10 to 100 fold increase of electrons  
20 (for example see Fig. 7 in Blake et al. (1996)). Since they were first reported by  
21 Anderson and Milton (1964), the short microburst duration and their impulsive nature  
22 have compelled countless researchers to understand their properties and the physical  
23 mechanism(s) that create microbursts. Microbursts are widely believed to be created  
24 by wave-particle scattering between a plasma wave called whistler mode chorus  
25 and outer radiation belt electrons, although many details regarding the scattering

<sup>26</sup> mechanism are unconstrained or unknown.

<sup>27</sup> This chapter serves as an introduction to the physics of charged particles, plasma  
<sup>28</sup> waves, and the wave-particle interactions in Earth's magnetosphere. We will first  
<sup>29</sup> derive the motion of individual charged particles in Earth's electric and magnetic  
<sup>30</sup> fields. Then we will cover how various groups of charged particles coalesce to form  
<sup>31</sup> the major particle populations in the magnetosphere. Then, we will cover the various  
<sup>32</sup> mechanisms that accelerate particles in the magnetosphere. Lastly, we will review  
<sup>33</sup> the basics of microbursts as a jumping-off point for the rest of the dissertation.

<sup>34</sup> Charged Particle Motion in Electric and Magnetic Fields

A charged particle trapped in the magnetosphere will experience three types of periodic motion in Earth's nearly dipolar magnetic field. The three motions are ultimately due to the Lorentz force that a particle of momentum  $\vec{p}$ , charge  $q$ , and velocity  $\vec{v}$  experiences in an electric field  $\vec{E}$  and magnetic field  $\vec{B}$  and is given by

$$\frac{d\vec{p}}{dt} = q(\vec{E} + \vec{v} \times \vec{B}). \quad (1.1)$$

<sup>35</sup> In the magnetosphere, the three periodic motions, in decreasing frequency, are  
<sup>36</sup> gyration, bounce, and drift and are schematically shown in Fig. 1.1. Each of periodic  
<sup>37</sup> these motions have a corresponding conserved quantity i.e. an adiabatic invariant.

The highest frequency periodic motion is gyration about a magnetic field of magnitude  $B$ . This motion is circular with a Larmor radius of

$$r = \frac{mv_{\perp}}{|q|B} \quad (1.2)$$

where  $m$  is the mass and  $v_{\perp}$  the particle's velocity perpendicular to  $\vec{B}$ . This motion

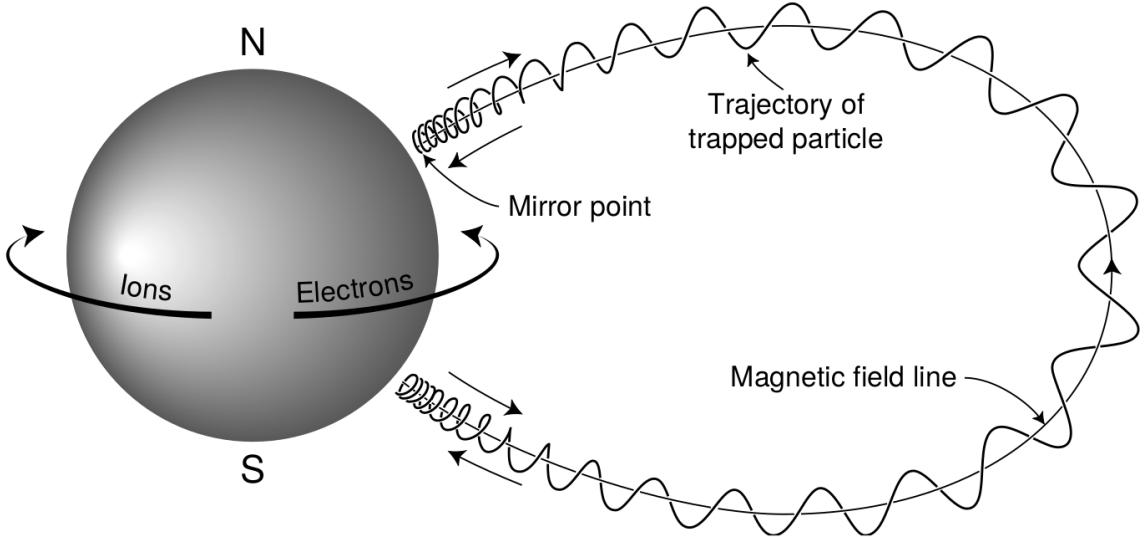


Figure 1.1: The three periodic motions of charged particles in Earth's dipole magnetic field. These motions are: gyration about the magnetic field line, bounce motion between the magnetic poles, and azimuthal drift around the Earth. Figure from (Baumjohann and Treumann, 1997).

has a corresponding gyrofrequency

$$\Omega = \frac{|q|B}{m} \quad (1.3)$$

in units of radians/second. Inside the radiation belts the electron gyrofrequency,  $\Omega_e$  is on the order of a kHz. The corresponding adiabatic invariant is found by integrating the particle's canonical momentum around the particle's path of gyration

$$J_i = \oint (\vec{p} + q\vec{A}) \cdot d\vec{l} \quad (1.4)$$

<sup>38</sup> where  $J_i$  is the  $i^{th}$  adiabatic invariant and  $\vec{A}$  is the magnetic vector potential. This  
<sup>39</sup> integral is carried out by integrating the first term over the circumference of the gyro  
<sup>40</sup> orbit and integrating the second term using Stokes theorem to calculate the magnetic  
<sup>41</sup> flux enclosed by the gyro orbit. The gyration invariant is then  $J_1 \sim v_{\perp}^2/B$ , which is

<sup>42</sup> conserved when the frequency,  $\omega$  of a force acting on the gyrating electron satisfies  
<sup>43</sup>  $\omega \ll \Omega_e$ .

<sup>44</sup> The second highest frequency periodic motion is bouncing due to a parallel  
<sup>45</sup> gradient in  $\vec{B}$ . This periodic motion naturally arises in the magnetosphere because  
<sup>46</sup> Earth's magnetic field is stronger near the poles, and artificially in the laboratory  
<sup>47</sup> in magnetic bottle machines. To understand this motion we first we need to define  
<sup>48</sup> the concept of pitch angle  $\alpha$  as the angle between  $\vec{B}$  and  $\vec{v}$  which is schematically  
<sup>49</sup> shown in Fig. 1.2a. The pitch angle relates  $v$  with  $v_{\perp}$ , and  $v_{\parallel}$  (the component of the  
<sup>50</sup> particles velocity parallel to  $\vec{B}$ ). As shown in 1.2b and c, a smaller (larger)  $\alpha$  will  
<sup>51</sup> increase (decrease) the distance that the charged particle travels parallel to  $\vec{B}$ , during  
<sup>52</sup> one gyration.

Assuming the particle's kinetic energy is conserved, the conservation of  $J_1$  implies that given a particle's  $v_{\perp}(0)$  and  $B(0)$  at the magnetic equator (where Earth's magnetic field is usually at a minimum), we can calculate its  $v_{\perp}(s)$  along the particle's path  $s$  by calculating  $B(s)$  from magnetic field models. The particle's perpendicular velocity is then related via

$$\frac{v_{\perp}^2(0)}{B(0)} = \frac{v_{\perp}^2(s)}{B(s)} \quad (1.5)$$

<sup>53</sup> which can be rewritten as

$$\frac{v^2 \sin^2 \alpha(0)}{B(0)} = \frac{v^2 - v_{\parallel}^2(s)}{B(s)} \quad (1.6)$$

<sup>54</sup> and re-arranged to solve for  $v_{\parallel}(s)$

$$v_{\parallel}(s) = v \sqrt{1 - \frac{B(s)}{B(0)} \sin^2 \alpha(0)} \quad (1.7)$$

<sup>55</sup> which will tend towards 0 when the second term in the radical approaches 1.

56        The location where  $v_{||}(s) = 0$  is called the mirror point and is where a particle  
 57   reverses direction. Since Earth's magnetic field is stronger towards the poles, the  
 58   mirroring particle will execute periodic bounce motion between its two mirror points  
 59   in the northern and southern hemispheres. The corresponding adiabatic invariant,  $J_2$   
 60   is

$$J_2 = \oint p_{||} ds \quad (1.8)$$

where  $ds$  describes the particle path between the mirror points in the northern and southern hemispheres (see Fig. 1.1).  $J_2$  is found by substituting Eq. 1.7 into Eq. 1.8 and defining the magnetic field strength at the mirror points as  $B_m$  where  $\alpha(m) = 90^\circ$ .

The  $J_2$  integral can be written as

$$J_2 = 2p \int_{m_n}^{m_s} \sqrt{1 - \frac{B(s)}{B(m)}} ds \quad (1.9)$$

61   where  $m_n$  and  $m_s$  are the northern and southern mirror points, respectively. The  
 62   bounce period can be estimated (e.g. Baumjohann and Treumann, 1997) to be

$$t_b \approx \frac{LR_e}{\sqrt{W/m}} (3.7 - 1.6 \sin \alpha(0)) \quad (1.10)$$

63   where  $L$  is the  $L$ -shell which describes the distance from the Earth's center to the  
 64   location where a particular magnetic field line crosses the magnetic equator, in units  
 65   of Earth radii,  $R_e$ .  $W$  is the particle's kinetic energy. As with gyration, the particle  
 66   will bounce between the mirror points as long as  $\omega \ll \Omega_b$ , where  $\Omega_b$  is the bounce  
 67   frequency.

68        At this stage it is instructional to introduce the notion of the loss cone pitch  
 69   angle,  $\alpha_L$ . A particle with  $\alpha \leq \alpha_L$  will mirror at or below  $\approx 100$  km altitude in

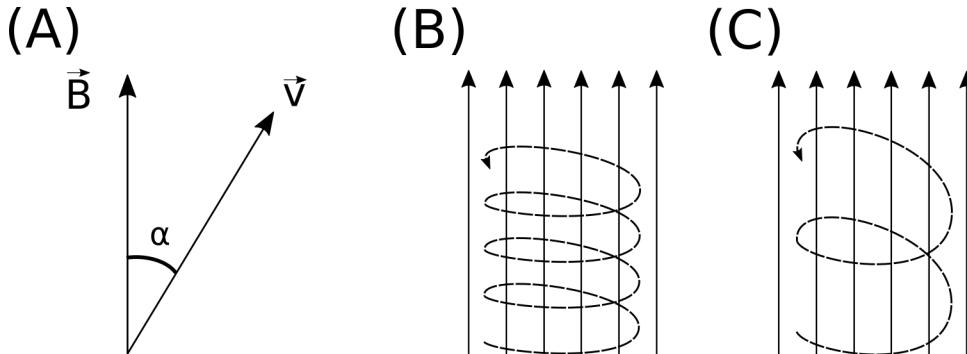


Figure 1.2: Charged particle motion in a uniform magnetic field  $\vec{B}$ . Panel (A) shows the geometry defining the pitch angle,  $\alpha$ . Panel (B) and (C) show two helical electron trajectories with dashed lines assuming a large and small  $\alpha$  (corresponding to a small and large parallel velocity  $v_{||}$ ), respectively.

70 the atmosphere. A charged particle gyrating at those altitudes will encounter and  
71 Coulomb scatter with the dense atmosphere and be lost from the magnetosphere.

72 The slowest periodic motion experienced by charged particles in Earth's mag-  
73 netic field is azimuthal drift around the Earth. This drift results from a combination of  
74 a radial gradient in  $\vec{B}$  and the curvature of the magnetic field. The radial gradient drift  
75 arises because Earth's magnetic field is stronger near the Earth where the particle's  
76 gyroradius radius of curvature is smaller as it gyrates towards stronger magnetic field,  
77 and larger when it gyrates outward. The overall effect is the particle gyro orbit does  
78 not close on itself and negatively charged particles drift east and positively charged  
79 particles drift west. The radial gradient drift is enhanced by the centrifugal force that  
80 a particle experiences as it bounces along the curved field lines. The drift adiabatic  
81 invariant,  $J_3$  is found by integrating Eq. 1.4 over the complete particle orbit around  
82 the Earth. The shape of this drift orbit is otherwise known as a drift shell. For  $J_3$ ,  
83 the first term is negligible and the second term is the magnetic flux enclosed by the  
84 drift shell,  $\Phi_m$  i.e.  $J_3 \sim \Phi_m$ .

85 Figure 1.3 from Schulz and Lanzerotti (1974) shows contours of the gyration,

<sub>86</sub> bounce, and drift frequencies for electrons and protons in Earth's dipole magnetic  
<sub>87</sub> field.

Up until now we have considered the three periodic motions due Earth's magnetic field and the absence of electric fields. If  $\vec{E}$  is present, a particle's center of gyration i.e., averaged position of the particle over a gyration, will drift with a velocity perpendicular to both  $\vec{E}$  and  $\vec{B}$ . The drift velocity can be solved directly from Eq. 1.1 and is

$$\vec{v}_E = \frac{\vec{E} \times \vec{B}}{B^2}. \quad (1.11)$$

<sub>88</sub> Lastly, for more detailed derivations of these motions, see the following texts:  
<sub>89</sub> Baumjohann and Treumann (1997); Schulz and Lanzerotti (1974); Tsurutani and  
<sub>90</sub> Lakhina (1997).

## <sub>91</sub> Particle Populations and Their Interractions in the Magnetosphere

<sub>92</sub> Now that we have looked at the dynamics of single-particle motion in electric  
<sub>93</sub> and magnetic fields, we will briefly tour the various macroscopic populations in the  
<sub>94</sub> magnetosphere. Various magnetosphere populations are illustrated in Fig. 1.4. In  
<sub>95</sub> this section we will introduce the various particle populations in the magnetosphere  
<sub>96</sub> and how they couple.

<sub>97</sub> The sun and its solar wind are ultimately the source of energy input into the  
<sub>98</sub> magnetosphere. The solar wind at Earth's orbit is a plasma traveling at supersonic  
<sub>99</sub> speeds with an embedded interplanetary magnetic field (IMF). When the solar wind  
<sub>100</sub> encounters Earth's magnetic field the plasma can not easily penetrate into the  
<sub>101</sub> magnetosphere, rather it drapes around the magnetosphere forming a cavity in the  
<sub>102</sub> solar wind that is roughly shaped as shown in Fig. 1.4. Because the solar wind is  
<sub>103</sub> supersonic at 1 AU, a bow shock exists upstream of the magnetosphere. The solar

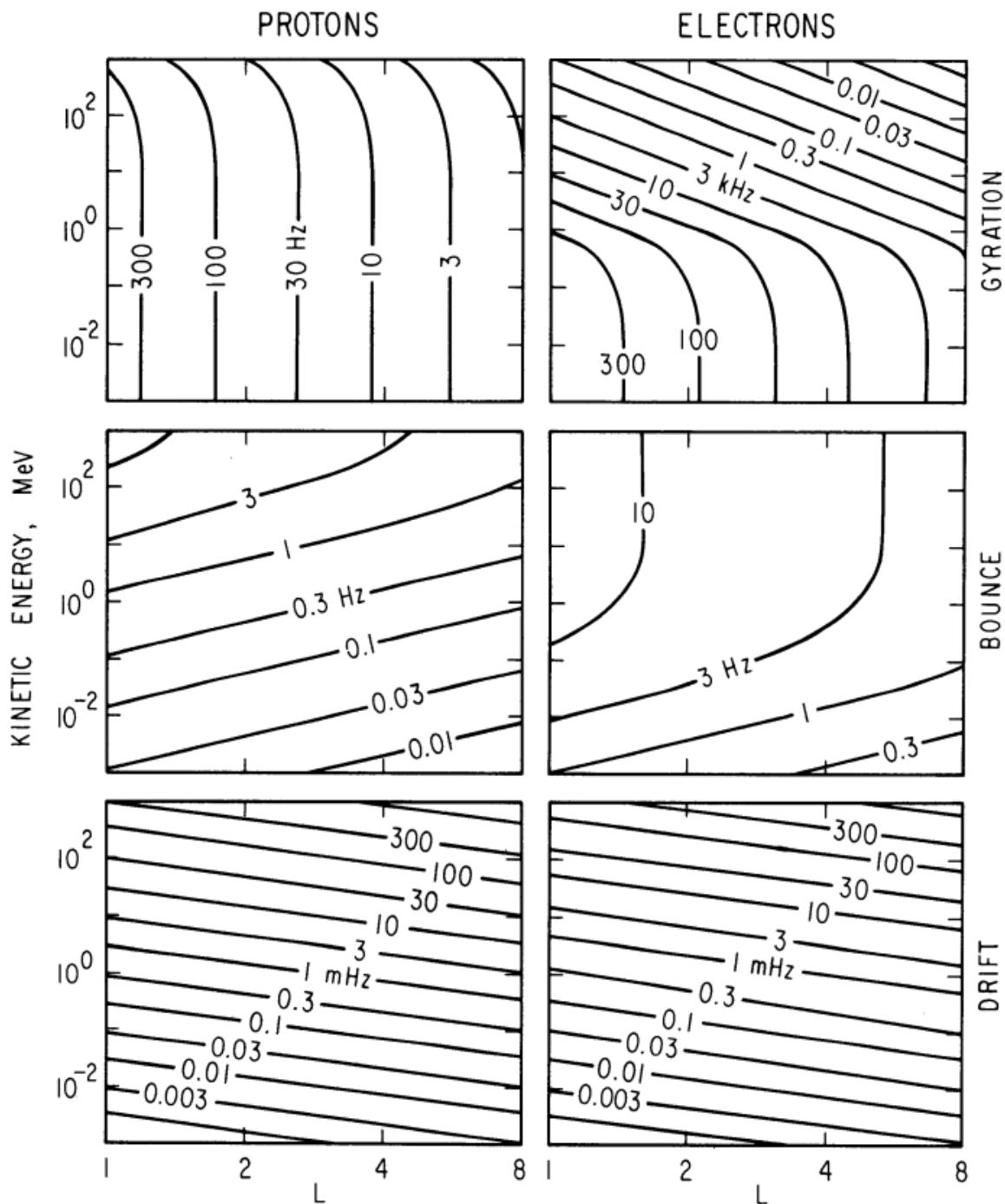


Figure 1.3: Contours of constant gyration, bounce, and drift frequencies for electrons and protons in a dipole field. Figure from Schulz and Lanzerotti (1974).

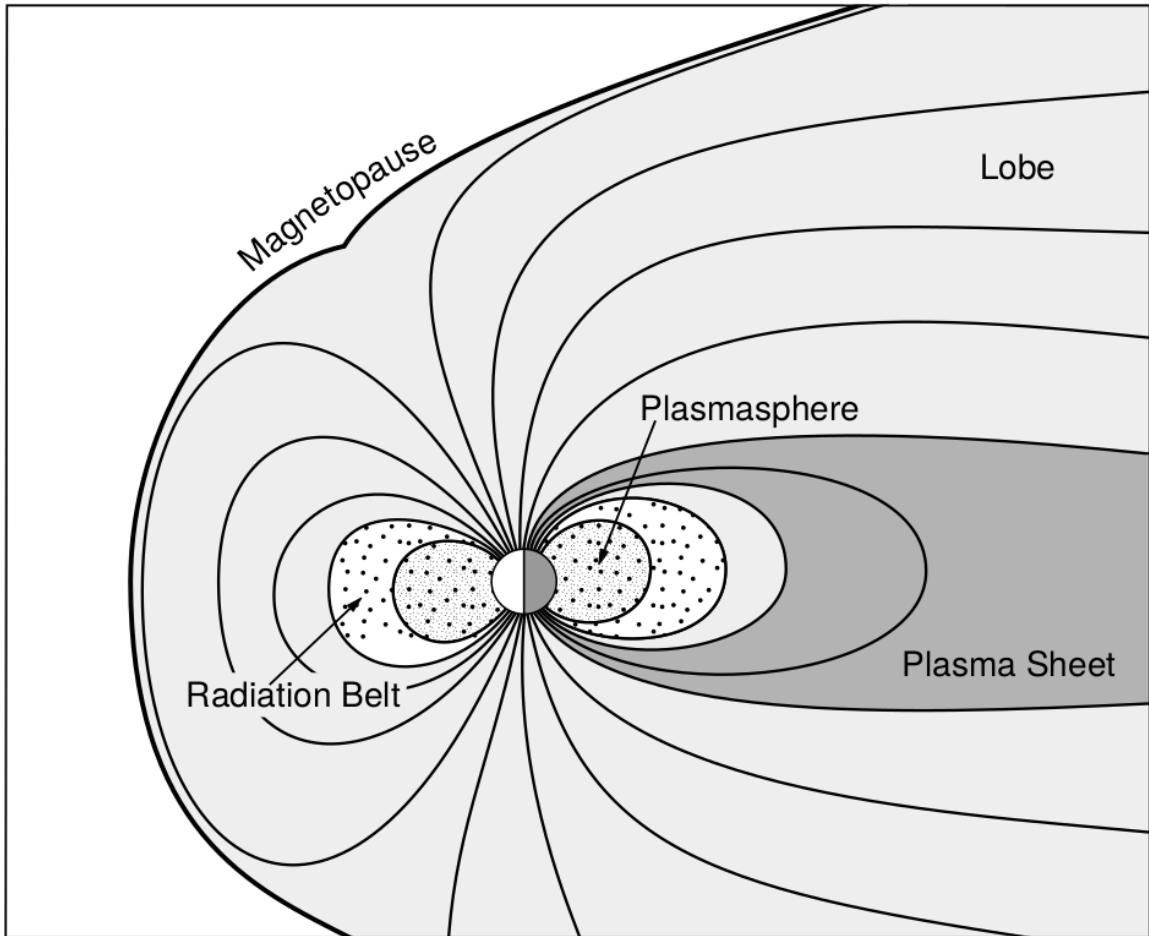


Figure 1.4: Macroscopic structures in the inner magnetosphere most relevant to this dissertation. The plasmasphere, and the radiation belts are shown and ring current is co-located there as well. Figure from Baumjohann and Treumann (1997).

104 wind plasma, after it is shocked by the bow shock, flows around the magnetosphere  
 105 inside the magnetosheath. The surface where the solar wind ram pressure and Earth's  
 106 magnetic pressure balance is termed the magnetopause, which can be thought of as  
 107 a boundary between the solar wind's and Earth's plasma environments. This is  
 108 a slightly naive description of the magnetopause, but is nonetheless an instructive  
 109 conceptual picture. The shocked plasma then flows past the Earth where it shapes  
 110 the magnetotail. In the magnetotail the solar wind magnetic pressure balances Earth's  
 111 magnetic field pressure in the lobes. The magnetotail extends on the order of 100  
 112  $R_E$  downstream of Earth, and the tailward stretching of magnetic field lines creates  
 113 the plasma sheet which exists in the region of low magnetic field strength near the  
 114 magnetic equator (e.g. Eastwood et al., 2015).

115 Inner Magnetosphere Populations

116 Closer to Earth, where the magnetic field is largely dipolar, are three particle  
 117 populations: the plasmasphere, the ring current, and the radiation belts. Before we  
 118 describe these three particle populations in detail, we will first introduce the coor-  
 119 dinate system that most naturally describes the inner magnetosphere environment,  
 120 and the electric fields that affect mostly low energy particles.

121 In this coordinate system the “radial” coordinate was defined in section 1 and  
 122 is the L shell. The azimuthal coordinate is the magnetic local time (MLT). For an  
 123 observer above Earth's north pole looking down, MLT is defined to be 0 (midnight)  
 124 in the anti-sunward direction, and increases in the counter-clockwise direction with 6  
 125 at dawn, 12 at noon (sunward direction), and 18 in dusk. The final coordinate is the  
 126 magnetic latitude,  $\lambda$  which is analogous to the latitude coordinate in the spherical  
 127 coordinate system, and is defined to be 0 at the magnetic equator. This coordinate  
 128 system naturally describes the following inner magnetosphere populations.

129        The low energy particle dynamics in the inner magnetosphere are organized by  
 130   two electric fields: the co-rotation and the dawn-dusk electric fields. The co-rotation  
 131   electric field arises from the rotation of Earth's magnetic field. Since particles are  
 132   frozen on magnetic field lines and the plasma conductivity is effectively infinite, to  
 133   a non-rotating observer, Earth's rotation appears as a radial electric field that drops  
 134   of as  $\sim L^2$ . This electric field makes particles orbit around the Earth due to the  
 135    $\vec{E} \times \vec{B}$  drift. The other electric field, pointing from dawn to dusk is called the  
 136   convection electric field and is formed by the Earthward transport of particles from  
 137   the magnetotail that appears as an electric field to a stationary observer (with respect  
 138   to Earth). The superposition of the co-rotation and convection electric fields  
 139   results in a potential field shown in Fig. 1.5. The shaded area in Fig. 1.5 shows  
 140   the orbits on which low energy electrons are trapped, and outside are the untrapped  
 141   particles. The dynamic topology of the shaded region in Fig. 1.5 is controlled by only  
 142   the convection electric field which is dependent on the solar wind speed and the IMF.  
 143   The lowest energy particles, that are most effected by these electric fields, make up  
 144   the plasmasphere.

145        Plasmasphere The plasmasphere is a dense ( $n_e \sim 10^3/\text{cm}^3$ ), cool plasma  
 146   ( $\sim \text{eV}$ ) that extends to  $L \sim 4$  (extent is highly dependent on the solar wind and  
 147   magnetospheric conditions) and is sourced from the ionosphere. The two main  
 148   mechanisms that source the cold plasma from the ionosphere are ultraviolet ionization  
 149   by sunlight and particle precipitation. The ultraviolet ionization by sunlight is  
 150   strongly dependent on the time of day (day vs night), latitude (more ionization near  
 151   the equator). The ionization due to particle precipitation, on the other hand, is highly  
 152   dependent on magnetospheric conditions, and mostly occurs at high latitudes.

153        The outer boundary of the plasmasphere is the plasmapause which is typically

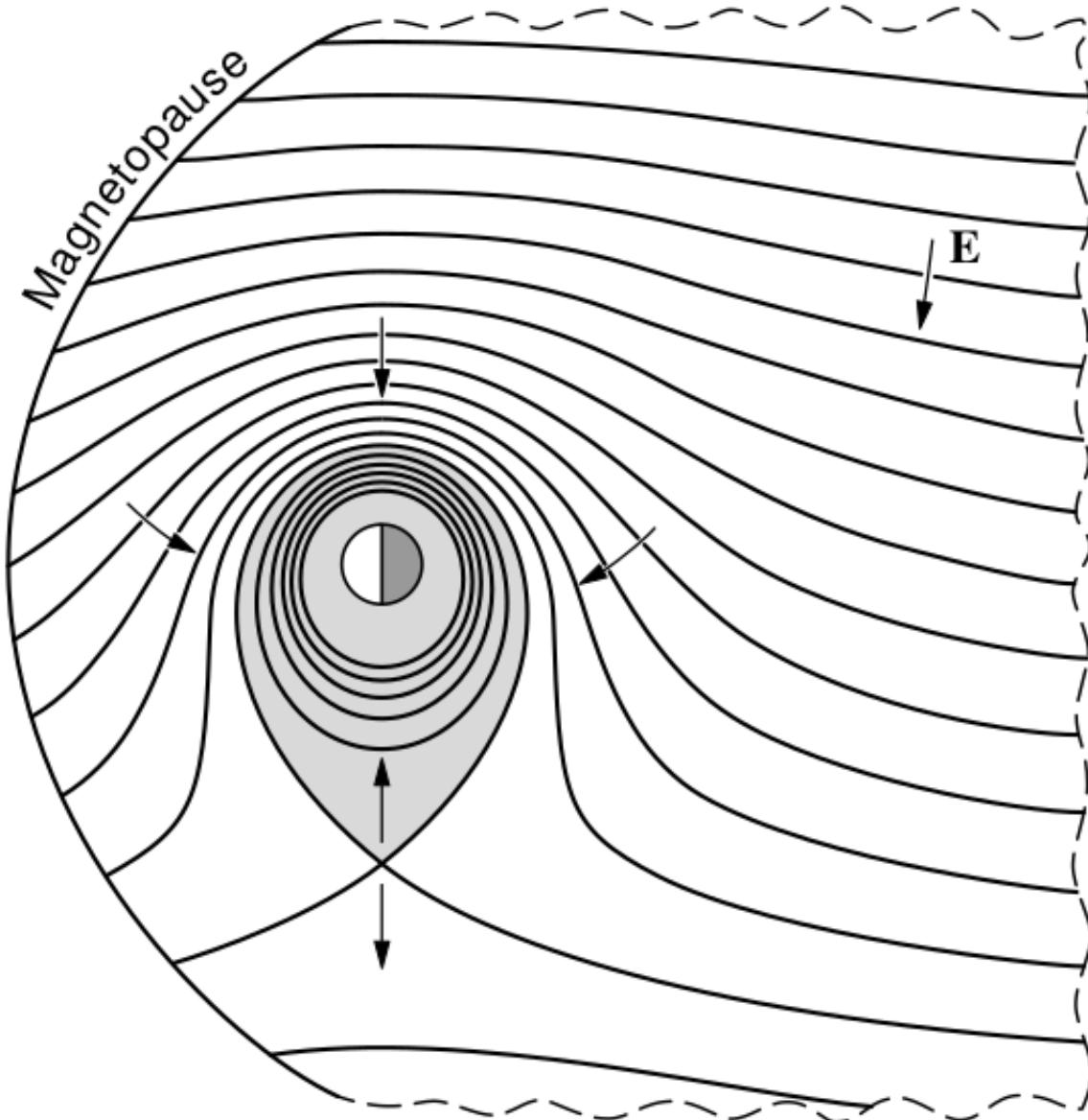


Figure 1.5: Equipotential lines and electric field arrows due to the superposition of the co-rotation and convection electric fields. Electrons in the shaded region execute closed orbits. Outside of the shaded regions the electrons are not trapped and will escape. The region separating the two regimes is called the Alfvén layer. Figure from Baumjohann and Treumann (1997).

<sub>154</sub> identified as a steep radial gradient in plasma density from  $\sim 10^3/\text{cm}^3$  to  $\sim 1/\text{cm}^3$ . As  
<sub>155</sub> we will see throughout this dissertation, the location of the plasmapause is important  
<sub>156</sub> to model (e.g. O'Brien and Moldwin, 2003) and understand since the plasma density  
<sub>157</sub> strongly controls the efficiency of particle scattering (Horne et al., 2005).

<sub>158</sub>        Ring Current The next higher energy population is the ring current. This  
<sub>159</sub> population consists of protons and electrons between tens and a few hundred keV  
<sub>160</sub> that drift around the Earth. The orbits of higher energy particles are not as effected  
<sub>161</sub> by the convection and co-rotation electric field, rather they drift around the Earth  
<sub>162</sub> due to gradient and curvature drifts. Since the direction of the drift is dependent on  
<sub>163</sub> charge, protons drift west around the Earth and electrons drift East. This has the  
<sub>164</sub> effect of creating a current around the Earth.

<sub>165</sub>        The ring current generates a magnetic field which decreases the magnetic field  
<sub>166</sub> strength on Earth's surface and increases it outside of the ring current. The decrease  
<sub>167</sub> of Earth's magnetic field strength is readily observed by a system of ground-based  
<sub>168</sub> magnetometers and is merged into a Disturbance Storm Time (DST) index. An  
<sub>169</sub> example of a DST index time series from a coronal mass ejection (CME) driven 2015  
<sub>170</sub> St. Patrick's Day storm is shown in Fig. 1.6. The ring current is sometimes first  
<sub>171</sub> depleted and DST increases slightly (initial phase or sudden storm commencement).  
<sub>172</sub> Then the ring current is rapidly built up during which DST rapidly decreases (main  
<sub>173</sub> phase). Lastly the ring current gradually decays toward its equilibrium state over a  
<sub>174</sub> period of a few days and DST increases towards 0 (recovery phase). The DST index  
<sub>175</sub> along with other indicies are readily used by the space physics community to quantify  
<sub>176</sub> the global state of the magnetosphere.

<sub>177</sub>        Radiation Belts The highest energy particle populations are in the Van Allen  
<sub>178</sub> radiation belts. These belts were discovered by Van Allen (1959) and Vernov and

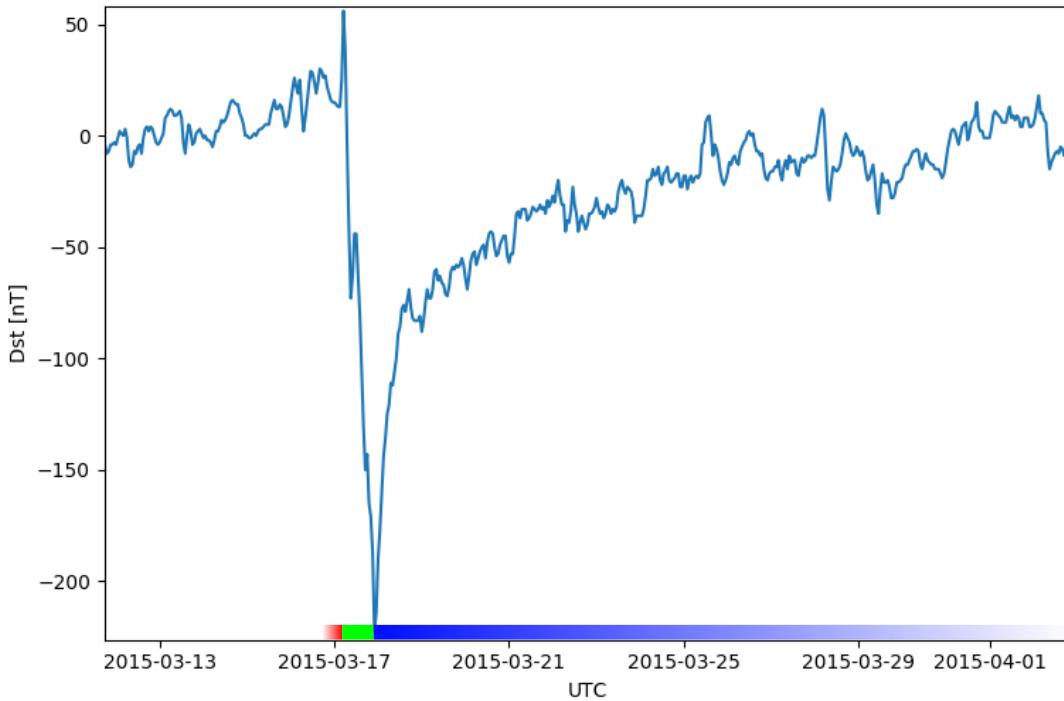


Figure 1.6: The DST index during the St. Patrick's Day 2015 storm. This storm was caused by a coronal mass ejection on March 15th, 2015. The storm phases are: initial phase, main phase, and recovery phase. The initial phase occurred when the Dst peaked at +50 nT on March 17th during which the ring current was eroded by the coronal mass ejection during the interval shown by the red bar. Then the rapid decrease to  $\approx -200$  nT was during the main phase where many injections from the magnetotail pumped up the ring current which reduced Earth's magnetic field strength at the ground and is shown with the green bar. Lastly, the recovery phase lasted from March 18th to approximately March 29th during which the ring current particles were lost and the ring current returned to its equilibrium state. The recovery phase is shown with the blue bar.

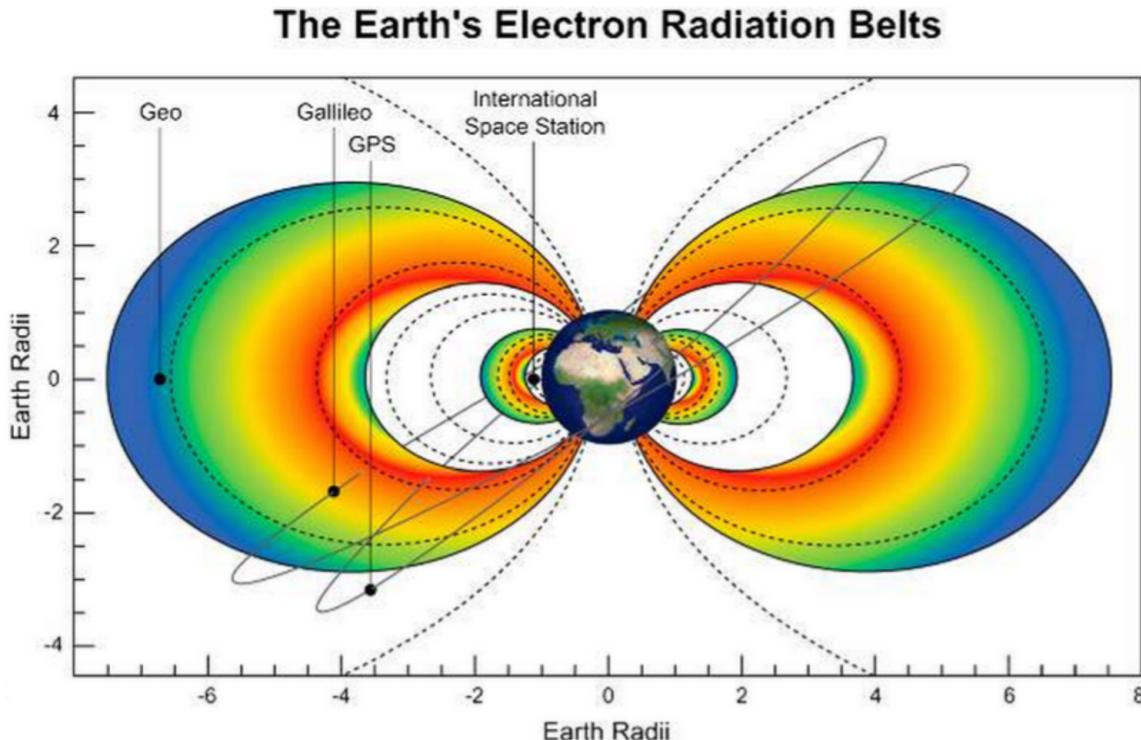


Figure 1.7: The two radiation belts with the locations of various satellites and orbits. Figure from (Horne et al., 2013).

<sup>179</sup> Chudakov (1960) during the Cold War and are a pair of toroidally shaped populations  
<sup>180</sup> of trapped electrons and protons usually within to  $L < 8$  and are shown in Fig. 1.7.  
<sup>181</sup> Their quiescent toroidal shape is similar to the shape of the plasmasphere and ring  
<sup>182</sup> current and is a result of Earth's dipole magnetic field and the conservation of the  
<sup>183</sup> three adiabatic invariants discussed in section 1.

<sup>184</sup> The inner radiation belt is extremely stable on time periods of years, extends  
<sup>185</sup> to  $L \approx 2$ , and mainly consists of protons with energies between MeV and GeV and  
<sup>186</sup> electrons with energies up to  $\approx 1$  MeV (Claudepierre et al., 2019). The source of  
<sup>187</sup> inner radiation belt protons is believed to be due to cosmic-ray albedo neutron decay  
<sup>188</sup> (e.g. Li et al., 2017) and inward radial diffusion for electrons (e.g. O'Brien et al.,  
<sup>189</sup> 2016). The gap between the inner and outer radiation belt is called the slot, which is

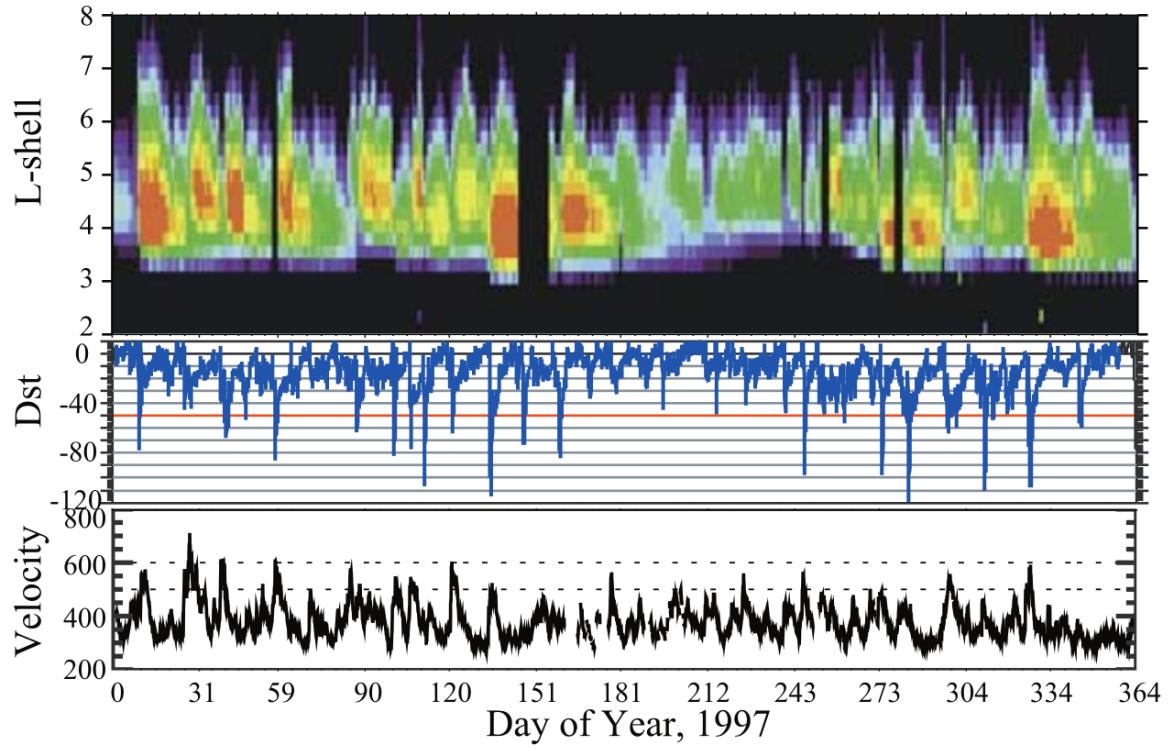


Figure 1.8: The dynamics of the outer radiation belt in 1997 from the POLAR satellite. Top panel shows the 1.2-2.4 MeV electron flux as a function of L and 1997 day of year. The middle panel shows the DST index, and bottom panel shows the solar wind velocity. Figure from (Reeves et al., 2003).

<sup>190</sup> believed to be due to hiss waves inside the plasmasphere (described below) scattering  
<sup>191</sup> particles into the atmosphere (e.g. Breneman et al., 2015; Lyons and Thorne, 1973).

<sup>192</sup> The outer radiation belt, on the other hand is much more dynamic and consists  
<sup>193</sup> of mainly electrons of energies up to a few MeV. The outer belt's spatial extent is  
<sup>194</sup> highly variable e.g. see Fig. 1.8, and is typically observed at  $4 < L < 8$ . Since  
<sup>195</sup> the outer radiation belt contains a dynamic population of energetic particles that  
<sup>196</sup> pose a threat to human and technological presence in Earth's atmosphere and space,  
<sup>197</sup> decades of research has been undertaken to understand and predict the outer radiation  
<sup>198</sup> belt particles, waves, and wave-particle interactions. The dynamics of the outer  
<sup>199</sup> radiation belt can be understood by considering various competing acceleration and  
<sup>200</sup> loss mechanisms which will be described in the following sections.

<sup>201</sup> Radiation Belt Particle Sources and Sinks

<sup>202</sup> Adiabatic Heating

<sup>203</sup> One of the particle heating and transport mechanisms arises from the Earthward  
<sup>204</sup> convection of particles. The conservation of  $J_1$  implies that the initial and final  $v_\perp$   
<sup>205</sup> depends on the change in the magnetic field amplitude

$$\frac{v_{\perp i}^2}{B_i} = \frac{v_{\perp f}^2}{B_f}. \quad (1.12)$$

<sup>206</sup> As a particle convects Earthward,  $B_f > B_i$  thus  $v_\perp$  must increase. The dipole  
<sup>207</sup> magnetic field amplitude can be written as

$$B(L, \theta) = \frac{31.2 \mu\text{T}}{L^3} \sqrt{1 + 3 \cos^2 \theta} \quad (1.13)$$

208 which implies that

$$\frac{v_{\perp f}^2}{v_{\perp i}^2} = \left(\frac{L_i}{L_f}\right)^3. \quad (1.14)$$

209 .

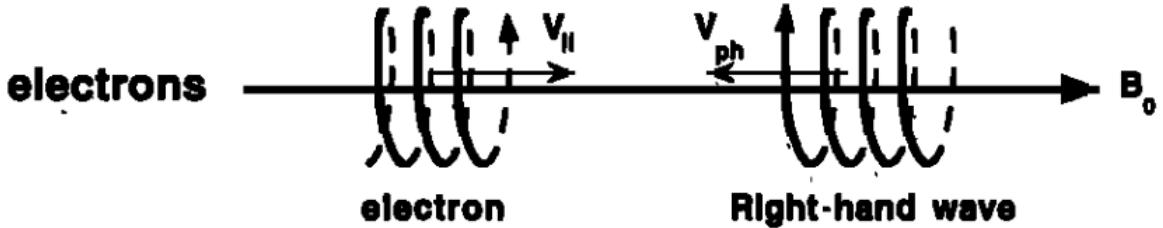
210 In addition, as the particle convects Earthward the distance between the  
211 particle's mirror points decrease. If  $J_2$  is conserved, the shrinking bounce path implies  
212 that  $v_{||}$  must increase by

$$\frac{v_{|| f}^2}{v_{|| i}^2} = \left(\frac{L_i}{L_f}\right)^k \quad (1.15)$$

213 where  $k$  ranges from 2 for equatorial pitch angles,  $\alpha_{eq} = 0^\circ$ , to 2.5 for  $\alpha_{eq} = 90^\circ$   
214 (Baumjohann and Treumann, 1997). Since the rate of adiabatic heating is greater in  
215 the perpendicular direction than heating in the parallel direction, an initially isotropic  
216 particle distribution will become anisotropic during its convection. These isotropic  
217 particles can then become unstable to wave growth and generate waves in order to  
218 reach equilibrium.

219 Wave Resonance Heating

220 Another mechanism that heats particles is due to particles resonating with  
221 plasma waves. A few of the electromagnetic wave modes responsible for particle  
222 acceleration (and deceleration) relevant to radiation belt dynamics are hiss, whistler  
223 mode chorus (chorus), and electromagnetic ion cyclotron (EMIC) waves. These waves  
224 are created by the loss cone instability that driven by an anisotropy of electrons  
225 for chorus waves, and protons for EMIC waves. The level of anisotropy can be  
226 quantified by the ratio of the perpendicular to parallel particle temperatures ( $T_{\perp}/T_{||}$ ).  
227 A particle distribution is unstable when  $T_{\perp}/T_{||} > 1$  which facilitates wave growth.



$$\omega + k_{\parallel} v_{\parallel} = \Omega^-$$

Figure 1.9: The trajectories of an electron and a right-hand circularly polarized wave during a cyclotron resonance. The electron's  $v_{\parallel}$  and the wave's  $k_{\parallel}$  are in opposite directions such that the wave's frequency is Doppler shifted to an integer multiple of the electron cyclotron frequency. Figure from (Tsurutani and Lakhina, 1997).

228 Since electrons gyrate in a right-handed sense, the chorus waves also tend to be right  
 229 hand circularly polarized (Tsurutani and Lakhina, 1997). The same argument applies  
 230 to protons and left hand circularly polarized EMIC waves as well.

231 These circularly polarized waves can resonate with electrons and/or protons  
 232 when their combined motion results in a static  $\vec{E}$ . One example of a resonance  
 233 between a right hand circularly polarized wave and an electron is shown in Fig. 1.21  
 234 and is termed the cyclotron resonance. An electron's  $v_{\parallel}$  and the wave's parallel wave  
 235 vector,  $k_{\parallel}$  are in opposite directions such that the wave frequency  $\omega$  is Doppler shifted  
 236 to an integer multiple of the  $\Omega_e$  at which point the electron feels a static electric  
 237 field and is accelerated or decelerated. This acceleration happens when a resonance  
 238 condition is satisfied between a wave and a particle for which we will now derive an  
 239 illustrative toy model.

240 Assume a uniform magnetic field  $\vec{B} = B_0 \hat{z}$  with a parallel propagating ( $k = k\hat{z}$ ),  
 241 right-hand circularly polarized wave. The wave's electric field as a function of position  
 242 and time can be written as

$$\vec{E} = E_0 (\cos(\omega t - kz) \hat{x} + \sin(\omega t - kz) \hat{y}) \quad (1.16)$$

which is more clearly expressed by taking the dot product to find  $\vec{E}$  in the  $\hat{\theta}$  direction

$$E_\theta = \vec{E} \times \hat{\theta} = E_0 \cos(\omega t - kz + \theta). \quad (1.17)$$

<sup>243</sup> Now assume that the electron is traveling in the  $-\hat{z}$  direction with a velocity  $\vec{v} = -v_0 \hat{z}$

<sup>244</sup> so its time dependent position along  $\hat{z}$  is

$$z(t) = -v_0 t \quad (1.18)$$

<sup>245</sup> and gyrophase is

$$\theta(t) = -\Omega t + \theta(0) \quad (1.19)$$

<sup>246</sup> where the first negative sign comes from the electron's negative charge. Now we put

<sup>247</sup> this all together and express the electric field and the force that the electron will

<sup>248</sup> experience

$$m \frac{dv_\theta}{dt} = qE_\theta = qE_0 \sin((\omega + kv_0 - \Omega)t + \theta(0)). \quad (1.20)$$

<sup>249</sup> This is a relatively complex expression, but when the time dependent component,

$$\omega + kv_0 - \Omega = 0, \quad (1.21)$$

<sup>250</sup> the electron will be in a static electric field which will accelerate or decelerate the

<sup>251</sup> electron depending on  $\theta_0$ , the phase between the wave and the electron. [Show Bortnik](#)

<sup>252</sup> [2008 plot?](#) The expression in Eq. 1.21 is commonly referred to as the resonance

253 condition and is more generally written as

$$\omega - k_{||}v_{||} = \frac{n\Omega_e}{\gamma} \quad (1.22)$$

254 where  $n$  is the resonance order, and  $\gamma$  is the relativistic correction (e.g. Millan and  
255 Thorne, 2007). In the case of the cyclotron resonance,  $\omega \approx \Omega_e$  thus  $J_1$  is violated.  
256 Since  $J_1$  is violated,  $J_2$  and  $J_3$  are also violated since the conditions required to  
257 violate  $J_2$  and  $J_3$  are less stringent than  $J_1$ . It is important to remember that along  
258 the particle's orbit it will encounter and experience the effects of many waves along  
259 its orbit. The typical MLT extent of a handful of waves that are capable of resonating  
260 with radiation belt electrons are shown in Fig. 1.10.

261 Particle Losses

262 Now that we have seen two general mechanisms with which particles are  
263 accelerated and transported in the magnetosphere, we will now consider a few  
264 specific mechanisms with which particles are lost to the atmosphere or the solar  
265 wind. One particle loss mechanism into the solar wind is magnetopause shadowing  
266 (e.g. Ukhorskiy et al., 2006). Particles are sometimes lost when the ring current is  
267 strengthened and Earth's magnetic field strength is increased outside of the ring  
268 current (and reduced on Earth's surface). If the time scale of the ring current  
269 strengthening is slower than a particle drift,  $J_3$  is conserved. Then in order to  
270 conserve  $J_3$  while the magnetic field strength is increased, the particle's drift shell  
271 must move outward to conserve the magnetic flux contained by the drift shell. Then  
272 if the particle's drift shell expands to the point that it crosses the magnetopause, the  
273 particle will be lost to the solar wind.

274 **Move to acceleration?** Another particle loss and acceleration mechanism is driven  
275 by ultra low frequency (ULF) waves and is called radial diffusion. Radial diffusion is

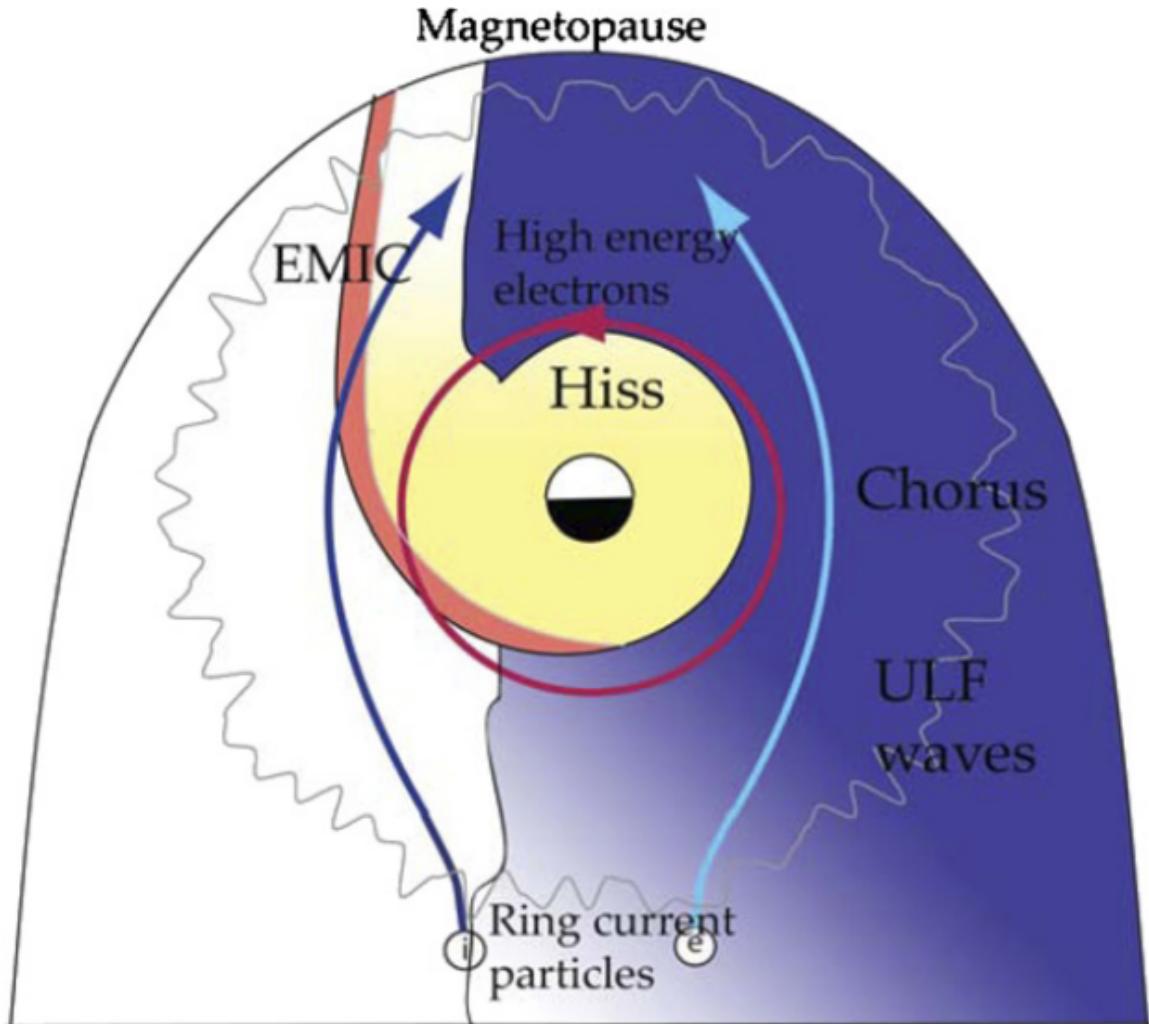


Figure 1.10: Various wave modes in the magnetosphere. Ultra low frequency waves occur through the magnetosphere. Chorus waves are typically observed in the 0-12 midnight-dawn region. EMIC waves are typically observed in the dusk MLT sector. Hiss waves are observed inside the plasmasphere. Figure from Millan and Thorne (2007).

276 the transport of particles from high to low phase space density,  $f$ . If the transport is  
 277 radially inward, particles will appear to be accelerated. On the other hand, radially  
 278 outward radial diffusion can transport particles through the magnetopause where  
 279 they will be lost to the solar wind. Reeves et al. (2013) investigated the driver of  
 280 particle acceleration during the October 2012 storm and observationally found that  
 281 inward radial diffusion was not dominant, rather local acceleration via wave-resonance  
 282 heating (i.e. particle diffusion in pitch angle and energy which will be described below)  
 283 appeared to be the dominant acceleration mechanism.

284 The loss mechanism central to this dissertation is pitch angle and energy  
 285 scattering of electrons by waves. Some of the waves that scatter electrons in energy  
 286 and pitch angle in the inner magnetosphere are: plasmaspheric hiss (e.g. Breneman  
 287 et al., 2015; O'Brien et al., 2014), EMIC waves (e.g. Capannolo et al., 2019; Hendry  
 288 et al., 2017), and chorus waves (e.g. Breneman et al., 2017; Kasahara et al., 2018;  
 289 Ozaki et al., 2019). These wave-particle interactions occur when the resonance  
 290 condition in Eq. 1.22 is satisfied at which point the particle's energy and  $\alpha$  is modified  
 291 by the wave. More details regarding the theory of pitch angle and energy diffusion is  
 292 given in Chapter X. If the wave changes  $\alpha$  towards 0 such that  $\alpha < \alpha_{LC}$ , the particle's  
 293 mirror point lowers to less than 100 km altitude where the particle can be lost due  
 294 collisions with air. One manifestation of pitch angle scattering of particles into the  
 295 loss cone are microbursts: a sub-second durtation impulse of electrons.

296

### Microbursts

297 Microbursts were first identified in high altitude balloon observations of bremsstrahlung  
 298 X-rays emitted by microburst electrons impacting the atmosphere by Anderson and  
 299 Milton (1964). Since then, other balloons have observed microburst X-ray signatures  
 300 in the upper atmosphere (e.g. Anderson et al., 2017; Barcus et al., 1966; Parks, 1967;

301 Trefall et al., 1966; Woodger et al., 2015; ?). In addition to their X-ray signature,  
 302 microbursts electrons have been directly observed in LEO with spacecraft including  
 303 the Solar Anomalous and Magnetospheric Particle Explorer (SAMPEX), Focused  
 304 Investigation of Relativistic Electron Bursts: Intensity, Range, and Dynamics II  
 305 (FIREBIRD-II), Science Technologies Satellite (STSAT-I) (e.g. Blake et al., 1996;  
 306 Blum et al., 2015; Breneman et al., 2017; Crew et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2012, 2005;  
 307 Lorentzen et al., 2001a,b; Nakamura et al., 1995, 2000; O'Brien et al., 2004, 2003).  
 308 An example microburst time series is shown in Fig. 1.11 and was observed by  
 309 Montana State University's (MSU) FIREBIRD-II CubeSats. The prominent features  
 310 of microbursts in Fig. 1.11 are their  $\approx 1$  second duration, half order of magnitude  
 311 increase in count rate above the falling background, and their approximately 200-800  
 312 keV energy extent.

313 Microbursts are observed on magnetic field footprints that are connected to the  
 314 outer radiation belt (approximately  $4 < L < 8$ ), and are predominately observed in  
 315 the 0-12 MLT sector with an elevated occurrence frequency during magnetospherically  
 316 disturbed times as shown in Fig. 1.12. Microbursts have been previously observed  
 317 over a wide energy range from a few tens of keV (Datta et al., 1997; Parks, 1967) to  
 318 greater than 1 MeV (e.g. Blake et al., 1996; Greeley et al., 2019). The microburst  
 319 electron flux ( $J$ ) falls off in energy, and the microburst energy spectra is typically  
 320 well fit to a decaying exponential

$$J(E) = J_0 e^{-E/E_0} \quad (1.23)$$

321 where  $J_0$  is the flux at 0 keV (unphysical free parameter) and  $E_0$  quantifies the  
 322 efficiency of the scattering mechanism in energy (.e.g Datta et al., 1997; Lee et al.,  
 323 2005; Parks, 1967). A small  $E_0$  suggests that mostly low energy particles are scattered

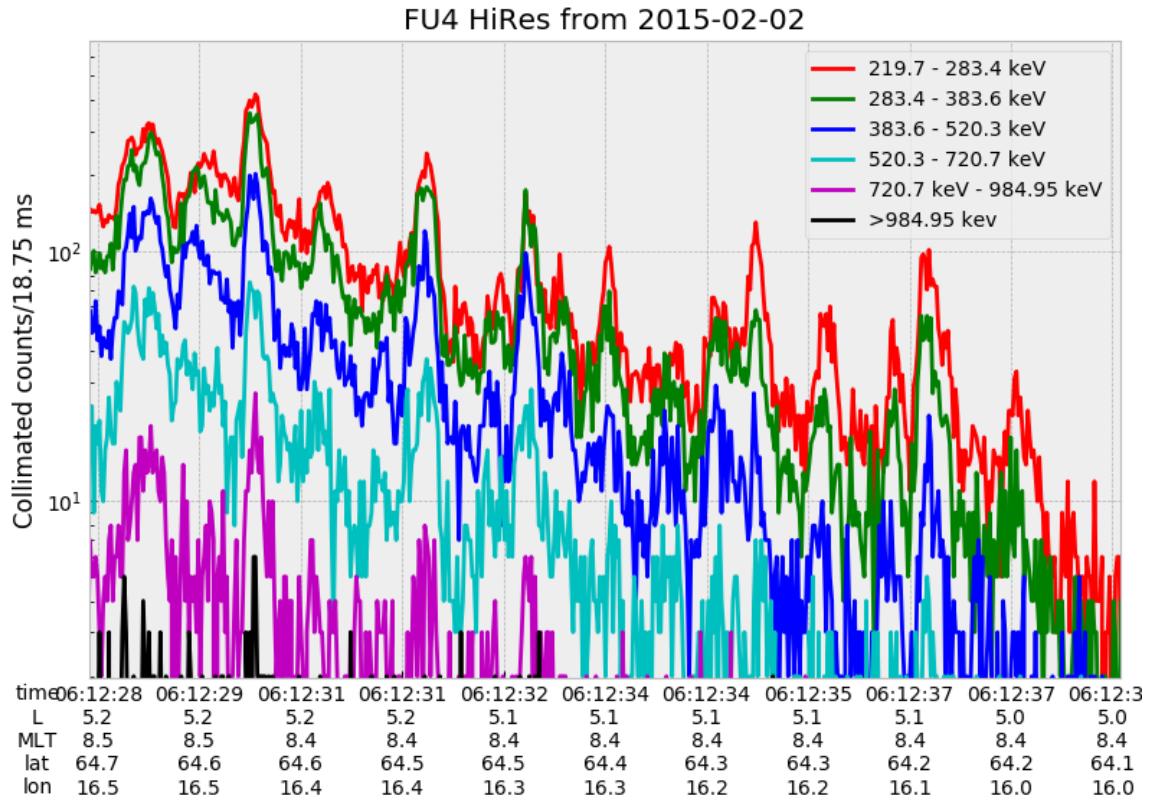


Figure 1.11: An example train of microbursts observed by FIREBIRD-II unit 4 on February 2nd, 2015. The colored curves show the differential energy channel count rates in six channels from  $\approx 200$  keV to greater than 1 MeV. The x-axis labels show auxiliary information such as time of observation and the spacecraft position in L, MLT, latitude and longitude coordinates.

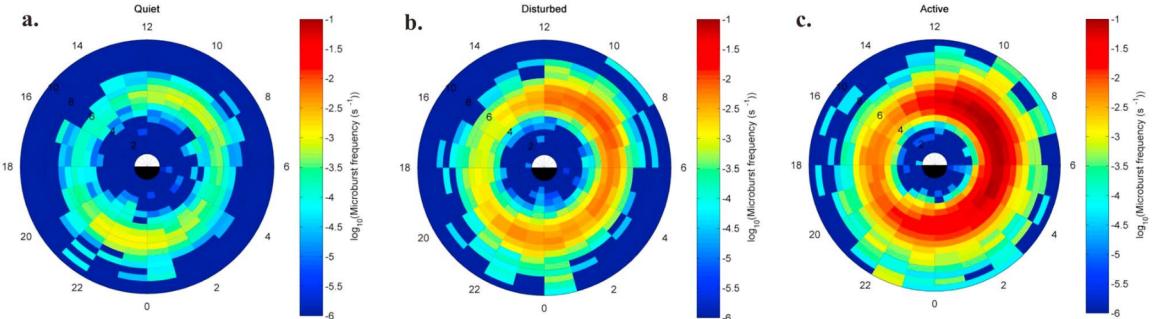


Figure 1.12: Relativistic ( $> 1\text{MeV}$ ) distribution of microburst occurrence rates as a function of L and MLT. The three panels show the microburst occurrence rate dependence on geomagnetic activity, parameterized by the auroral electrojet (AE) index for (a)  $\text{AE} < 100 \text{nT}$ , (b)  $100 < \text{AE} < 300 \text{nT}$  and (c)  $\text{AE} > 300 \text{nT}$ . Figure from Douma et al. (2017).

and a high  $E_0$  suggests that the scattering mechanism scatters low and high energy electrons. Reality is a bit more messy and a high  $E_0$  may be a signature of a scattering mechanism preferential to high energy electrons, but is hidden by the convolution of the source particles available to be scattered (typically with a falling energy spectrum) and the energy-dependent scattering efficiency.

The short duration of microbursts observed by a single LEO satellite has an ambiguity when interpreting what is exactly a microburst. The two possible realities are: a microburst is very small and spatially stationary so that the LEO spacecraft passes through it in less than a second. Alternatively, microbursts are spatially large with a short duration such that the microburst passes by the spacecraft in a fraction of a second. There are a few ways to distinguish between the two possible realities, and each one has a unique set of advantages.

A high altitude balloon provides essentially a stationary view of the precipitating particles under the radiation belt footprints so a short-lived, temporal microburst can be unambiguously identified. Spatial structures on the other hand are difficult to identify because a balloon is essentially still on drift timescales thus a variation in

340 the X-rays can be due to the spatial structure or an increase of precipitating particles  
 341 over the whole area. Furthermore, if the stationary structure is drifting its particles  
 342 are not precipitating into the atmosphere so there is no X-ray signature.

343 Another solution is multi-spacecraft missions that can determine if a microburst  
 344 is spatial or temporal. As will be shown in this dissertation, if a microburst is  
 345 observed simultaneously by two spacecraft then it is temporally transient and has  
 346 a size greater than the spacecraft separation. On the other hand, if two spacecraft  
 347 observe a microburst-like feature in the same location and at different times, then it is  
 348 spatial may be a curtain (Blake and O'Brien, 2016). Both observational methods have  
 349 a unique set of strengths, and this dissertation takes the multi-spacecraft approach  
 350 to identify and study microbursts.

351

### Scope of Research

352 This dissertation furthers our understanding of the microburst scattering  
 353 mechanism by observing the scattering directly, and measuring the microburst sizes  
 354 and comparing them to the size of waves near the magnetic equator where those  
 355 electrons could have been scattered. Chapter **X** describes a microburst scattering  
 356 event observed by NASA's Van Allen Probes which was studied in the theoretic  
 357 framework of pitch angle and energy diffusion. The following two chapters will then  
 358 study the size of microbursts. Chapter **Y** describes a bouncing packet microburst  
 359 observation made by MSU's FIREBIRD-II mission where the microburst's lower  
 360 bound longitudinal and latitudinal sizes were estimated. Then Chapter **Z** expands  
 361 the case study from Ch. **Y** to a statistical study of microburst sizes using The  
 362 Aerospace Corporation's AeroCube-6 (AC6) CubeSats. In this study, a Monte Carlo  
 363 and analytic microburst size models were developed to account for the compounding  
 364 effects of random microburst sizes and locations. Lastly, Ch. **A** will summarize the

<sup>365</sup> dissertation work and make concluding remarks regarding outstanding questions in  
<sup>366</sup> microburst physics.

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