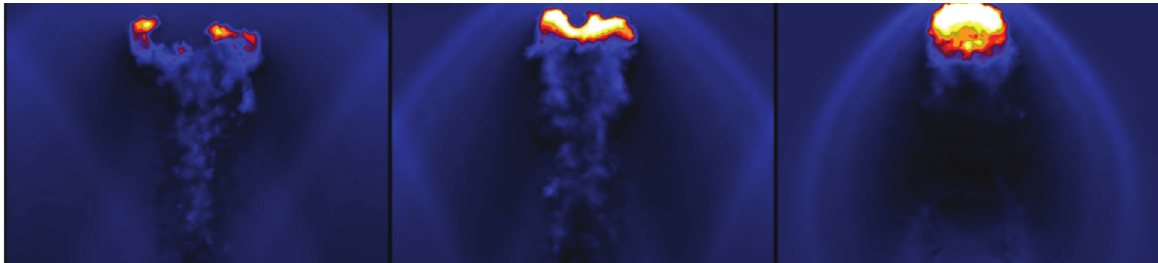


Research Proposal for a Master Thesis in Physics

Verifying the VPH scheme in Galaxy Formation

Sebastian Bustamante Jaramillo



Time evolution of a gas cloud in a supersonic wind using a VPH scheme. Taken from (Heß & Springel, 2010)

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1 General Information

Information of the Student

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Information of the Project

Title	Verifying the VPH scheme in Galaxy Formation
Field	Cosmology, Astrophysics, Physical Sciences
Advisor 1	Professor Juan Carlos Munoz-Cuartas. Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia.
University	Universidad de Antioquia, Master of Physics program
Time Frame	2 years

2 Abstract

3 Introduction

As we understand more deeply the physical processes involved in astrophysical phenomena, it becomes necessary to compute complex interactions of a ever increasing number of single components. Some prominent examples include the large-scale Universe, galaxy evolution, stellar interior, star formation and protoplanetary disk dynamics. A common aspect of these examples is that all of them can be regarded basically as a fluid mechanic problem.

Although the development of analytical approaches has demonstrated to be a valuable resource for studying these processes, their increasing complexity makes necessary to invoke numerical solutions as a more viable alternative. For this purpose, two different families of hydrodynamics solvers has been explored and widely used by the astrophysical community. First, a family of moving-mesh-based techniques (e.g. *Smoothed Particle Hydrodynamics* SPH (Monaghan, 1992), *Voronoi Particle Hydrodynamics* VPH (Heß & Springel, 2010)), and a second family of fixed-mesh-based techniques (e.g. *Adaptive Mesh Refinement* AMR (Berger & Colella, 1989)).

Due to the Lagrangian character of moving-mesh methods, techniques like SPH are easily implemented on a computer. Furthermore, as the physical system evolves, the mass particles naturally move into higher density regions, providing a self-adjusting spatial resolution. Nevertheless, SPH has been shown to produce spurious suppression of fluid instabilities due to its kernel-based density estimator, making it unsuitable to model some of the dynamics accurately. On the other hand, fixed-mesh methods like AMR are more efficient for capturing shock dynamics. However, due to the conservative nature of the hydrodynamical equations, a fixed mesh causes a lack of Galilean invariance. Furthermore, the sampling of physical properties over the grid introduces spurious vorticity to the fluid, making this technique poor suitable for studying turbulent flows.

A completely new approach to solve hydrodynamical problems was introduced by Springel (2010) and implemented into the AREPO code. It combines the strengths of AMR and SPH but overcomes many of their weaknesses, hence it can be thought as a mixed technique. AREPO uses a moving mesh based on a Voronoi tessellation defined over a set of particles that represents the fluid. The geometry of the mesh resembles very closely that of the point distribution, retaining the self-adaptivity inherent of SPH and also keeping a grid to capture shocks like AMR does. These features make AREPO highly accurate for simulating a wide range of hydrodynamical problems. Nevertheless, there is a price to pay for this accuracy, AREPO demands a huge computing time as compared with SPH and even AMR.

A very interesting alternative was introduced by Heß & Springel (2010), i.e. the *Voronoi Particle Hydrodynamics* VPH technique. This approach consists of an implementation of SPH with a modified density estimator based on the *Voronoi Tessellation Field Estimator* VTFE. The new estimator has demonstrated to improve substantially the spurious suppression of fluid instabilities as well as retaining the computational efficiency of the original formulation.

Finally, galaxy evolution and large-scale structure formation are very rich astrophysical phenomena where a plethora of hydrodynamical processes can be found and studied. In this fashion, cosmological simulations are a quite suitable scenario for performing detailed physical and computational comparisons of all above-mentioned techniques. It is especially interesting to quantify the computational efficiency of the VPH technique in terms of its physical accuracy as compared with the classical approaches and AREPO.

4 Objectives

General Objective

- Evaluating the performance of the VPH method

5 Theoretical Framework

6 Methodology

7 Expected Results

8 Scientific Impact

9 Schedule

Semester	Goals
First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying a set of existing AREPO simulations suitable for our succeeding studies. • Applying web finding schemes (T-web and V-web) to the simulations for quantifying structures in the gaseous cosmic web, i.e. voids, walls, filaments and clusters. • Evaluating properties of found structures at different redshifts.
Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying by mean of high resolution simulations the impact of the gaseous cosmic web on specific galaxy evolution processes.

8 Bibliography

Berger M. J., Colella P., 1989, *Journal of Computational Physics*, 82, 64

Heß S., Springel V., 2010, *MNRAS*, 406, 2289

Monaghan J. J., 1992, *ARA&A*, 30, 543

Springel V., 2010, *MNRAS*, 401, 791