SCATTERING OF HF RADIO WAVES BY A SPHERICAL ELECTRON CLOUD

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Scattering of HF radio waves by a spherical electron cloud

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, studies of the upper atmosphere have been conducted with artificial ionized clouds obtained by the release of barium vapor at high altitudes. To help in the understanding and interpretation of experimental data, a theoretical study is being made of the scattering of radio waves by an artificial electron cloud.

Because the electron cloud, which is several kilometers in extent, is considerably larger than a typical wavelength in the HF band, the method of geometrical optics has been utilized. For those frequencies at which the effect of the magnetic field is not negligible, a detailed ray-tracing technique such as that furnished by the Haselgrove method [Haselgrove, 1955] must be employed. If, however, the magnetic field can be neglected, the scattering may be computed directly, at least for the case of spherical symmetry, with increased accuracy and considerable reduction in computational labor.

Our present investigation is concerned with the frequencies at which the magnetic field is negligible. We shall assume that the distribution of electron density is spherically symmetric and, as indicated by diffusion theory, has a Gaussian form in the radial direction. The collision frequency within the cloud is generally small compared to the incident frequency; thus absorption may be neglected in our calculations.

2. ANALYSIS

A ray initially a distance \( b \) from the \( z \) axis is deflected through an angle \( \theta \) at a given position \( r, \phi \) within the cloud, and is scattered through an angle \( \delta \) as it emerges from the cloud (Figure 1). For a spherically symmetric plasma, the scattering is independent of meridian angle and can be described in terms of the scattering angle \( \theta \) in the plane of incidence and the impact parameter \( b \). The relation between \( b \) and \( \theta \) may be obtained from the scattering integral for the two-body central force problem [Goldstein, 1950a] and the analogy between particle dynamics and ray optics [Goldstein, 1950b], or by direct consideration of the scattering of a ray by a spherically symmetric plasma [Kelso, 1964]. We may express this relation in the form

\[
\frac{r - \theta}{2} = b \int_{r_1}^{r} \left( \frac{dr}{(b^2 r^2 - b^2 r^2)^{1/3}} \right)
\]

(1)
where \( n \) is the index of refraction, \( r \) the radial position of the ray, and \( r_1 \) the turning point or reflection point, that is, the location at which the ray starts to move away from the center of the sphere. For a Gaussian distribution, the electron density \( N' \) and the index of refraction have the form

\[
N' = \exp \left( -r' / a' \right)
\]

and

\[
\mu' = 1 - N' / N_{max} = 1 - \exp \left( (r_{max}' - r') / a' \right)
\]

where \( a \) is the Gaussian radius and the subscripts max and cr refer to maximum and critical values, respectively. It is convenient to change the variable of integration to \( z = a/r \) and to take \( a \) as the unit of length to yield

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = b \int_0^{r_{max}} \frac{dx}{(r' - b x)^{1/2}}
\]

and

\[
\mu'^2 = 1 - \exp (x_{cr} - x^{-1})
\]

The differential cross section in the direction \( \theta, \sigma (\theta) \), is then calculated by

\[
\sigma (\theta) = (4 \pi b / \sin \theta) (d \sigma / d \theta)
\]

Equations 4 and 6 can always be solved numerically for a given variation of \( \mu' \) with \( x \). An approximate analytic solution may be obtained, however, if the function \( \mu'^2 \) may be fitted with reasonable accuracy by a linear or quadratic function of \( x \), since the integral in (4) can then be expressed in terms of elementary functions. The properties of the cross section and its dependence upon the governing parameters in a given region of interest can then be clearly exhibited. For a highly overdense plasma (large \( r_{cr} \)), the turning point occurs at a small value of \( r \) so that \( \mu'^2 \) varies very rapidly over a small range of \( x \) well inside the inflection point which occurs at \( x = (2/3)^{1/2} \). We do not expect, therefore, the details of the variation to be very important and should obtain a reasonably accurate solution. However, for a slightly underdense plasma (small \( r_{cr} \)) at small impact parameters, the turning point occurs at a small value of \( r \) with a consequent slow variation of \( \mu'^2 \) over a wide range of \( x \) which includes the inflection point. The manner of variation is important here, and we anticipate more difficulty and less accuracy in obtaining approximate solutions. Since a ray penetrates very little into a highly overdense plasma and deeply into a slightly underdense plasma, it is convenient to refer to these cases as "hard" and "soft" spheres, respectively. When the plasma becomes underdense, the turning point is, as in the slightly overdense case, small at small impact parameters; and, in addition, the scattering is now confined to the forward region (\( \theta \leq 90^\circ \)). We may therefore consider the underdense case as a "very soft" sphere and expect difficulties in obtaining an approximate solution.

3. ANALYTIC PROCEDURE

In view of the somewhat different treatments required, the overdense (hard, intermediate, and soft) and the underdense spheres are treated separately.

3.1. Hard sphere. We consider first a typical hard sphere with \( r_{cr} = 2 \), for which a plot of \( \mu'^2 \) against \( x \) is given in Figure 2. Because of the rapid drop in \( \mu'^2 \), it is more accurate to use a single quadratic term than a combination of linear and quadratic terms and write

\[
\mu'^2 = 1 - a_2 (x - x_2)^2
\]

where \( x_2 \) is the point at which the parabola starts and is determined by noting where \( \mu'^2 \) for the Gaussian has not yet decreased significantly from unity. The constant \( a_2 \) may be evaluated by noting that \( \mu'^2 = 1 \) at \( x_{cr} = 0.5 \) to give \( a_2 = 44.5 \). A plot of \( \mu'^2 \) for the parabola shows that it is in good agreement with the exact curve over the entire range.

The scattering integral can then be written as

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = b \int_0^{r_{max}} \frac{dx}{(1 - b x^2)^{1/2}}
\]

where

\[
\mu'^2 = 1 - a_2 (x - x_2)^2
\]

and

\[
\mu'^2 = 1 - u_2 (x - x_2)^2
\]

\( x \geq x_2 \)

where \( x_2 \) is the point at which the parabola starts and is determined by noting where \( \mu'^2 \) for the Gaussian has not yet decreased significantly from unity. The constant \( a_2 \) may be evaluated by noting that \( \mu'^2 = 0 \) at \( x_{cr} = 0.5 \) to give \( a_2 = 44.5 \). A plot of \( \mu'^2 \) for the parabola shows that it is in good agreement with the exact curve over the entire range.
where \( A := 1 - b^2 x_0^3 \), \( B = 2 b^2 x_0 \), \( C = a_2 + b^2 \), and 
\( u = x - x_2 \) is the variable of integration.

Performing the integration and noting that the quadratic vanishes at the turning point, we obtain

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_0 + \frac{b}{a_2 + b^2} \sqrt{\left( \frac{2 - \sin^{-1} bx_0}{b^2 + a_2(1 - bx_0^2)} \right)^{1/2}}
\]

For a hard sphere, \( a_2 \) is large compared to \( b^2 \) over most of the scattering range, except near forward scattering where \( b \) achieves its maximum value of \( 1/x_2 \). We may then neglect the second arc sine term in (9) and write

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_0 + \frac{\pi b}{2 a_2}\sqrt{2}
\]

Solving for \( b \) and taking \( b/\sqrt{2} \) as small compared to unity, we obtain

\[
b = \frac{\cos(\theta/2)}{x_0[1 + (\pi/2)(a_2 x_0^3)^{1/2} \sin(\theta/2)]}
\]

which yields the cross section

\[
\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_0^2} \left( 1 + \frac{1}{a_2 x_0^3} \right) - \frac{\theta^2}{8} \left( 1 + \frac{2}{a_2 x_0^3} \right)
\]

An analysis of (9) and (11) shows that the cross-section formula given by (12) is valid for hard spheres from the backscatter region to about 30° in the forward-scatter region. Therefore, to complete our calculation, we require the cross section for small scattering angles in the forward direction.

Because we are interested in small values of \( \theta \) and hence values of \( x \) where the electron density is small, we approximate \( \mu^2 \) by the linear function

\[
\mu^2 = 1 - a_0(x - x_0)
\]

where \( x_0 \) is a cutoff position at which the electron density is negligibly small. The coefficient \( a_0 \) is determined from the slope of the \( \mu^2 \) versus \( x \) curve at \( x_0 \); that is,

\[
a_0 = -(2, x_0^3) \exp (x_0^3 - x_0^{-2})
\]

The scattering integral is then

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_0 + \frac{b}{a_2 + b^2} \sqrt{\left( \frac{2 - \sin^{-1} bx_0}{b^2 + a_2(1 - bx_0^2)} \right)^{1/2}}
\]

For large impact parameter, \( x_i \) is close to \( x_0 \); we may therefore approximate \( 1 - bx_0^2 \) by \( 2(1 - bx) \) to give

\[
\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_0 + \frac{b}{a_2 + b^2} \sqrt{\left( \frac{2 - \sin^{-1} bx_0}{b^2 + a_2(1 - bx_0^2)} \right)^{1/2}}
\]

\[
\theta = \left( 1 + \frac{2}{a_2 x_0^3} \right) \left( 2(1 - bx_0) \right)^{1/2}
\]

which yields the cross section

\[
\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_0^2} \left( 1 + \frac{1}{a_2 x_0^3} \right) - \frac{\theta^2}{8} \left( 1 + \frac{2}{a_2 x_0^3} \right)
\]

It is interesting to note that no change is produced in (16) if we use in addition to the linear term in (13) a quadratic term \( bu(x - x_0)^3 \). This result is not unexpected; the integrand is linear in the small quantity \( 1 - bx \) and, therefore, terms of higher order than the first in the small quantity \( (x - x_0) \) are negligible.

Because the cross section becomes infinite for zero-scattering angle, it is convenient to adopt a cutoff value for the impact parameter so that a large but
finite cross section is obtained. A reasonable requirement is to take the electron density $N_0/N_e$ at $x_0$ between $10^{-4}$ and $10^{-3}$. Using (5) and (14) we express the cross section at $\theta = 0$ by

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_0^2} \left( 1 + \frac{x_0^2}{N_0/N_e} \right)$$

where $x_0$ is determined by

$$x_0^{-2} = x_{cr}^{-2} + \log \left( \frac{N_0}{N_e} \right)$$

3.2. Intermediate case. If the sphere is moderately hard, the critical value $x_{cr}$ will be somewhat greater than the point of inflection which will affect the right side of the curve. We take as typical examples $r_{cr} = 1$ and $r_{cr} = 1/2$ for which plots of $\mu^2$ against $x$ are shown in Figures 3 and 4. For the case $r_{cr} = 1$ (Figure 3) we see that, aside from the bending in the region $\mu = 1$, the curve is almost a straight line over the remaining region. Although it is possible to use a parabola over the initial portion of the curve and a straight line over the remainder, the resulting formulas become sufficiently complicated to make analysis and numerical calculation difficult. We shall, therefore, use a straight line starting at $x = 0.54$, $\mu = 1$ to $x_{cr} = 1.0$, $\mu_{cr} = 0$. The initial portion of the curve from $x = 0.54$ to $x = 0.6$, while not accurate should not affect the remainder very much since it is a small part of the integral in (4) over most of the range. Furthermore, because it is above the exact curve in the initial region, this should compensate somewhat for the straight line being, on the average, slightly below the exact curve in the remaining region. Our straight line can be written as

$$\mu^2 = \begin{cases} 1 & x \leq x_1 \\ 1 - a_1(x - x_1) & x \geq x_1 \end{cases}$$

for which the scattering integral yields

$$\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_1 + \frac{\pi}{2}$$

$$- \sin^{-1} \left[ \frac{a_1 + 2b^2x_1}{a_1^2 + 4b^2(1 + a_1x_1)^{1/2}} \right]$$

The arc sine terms may be combined in a simple manner and the parameter $b$ solved for explicitly as a function of scattering angle. We obtain

$$b = x_1^{-2} \cos \left( \frac{\theta}{2} \right)$$

$$\left[ 1 + \frac{4}{a_1x_1} \left( 1 + \frac{1}{a_1x_1} \right) \sin^2 \frac{\theta}{2} \right]^{-1/2}$$

which yields the cross section

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_1^2} \left[ 1 + \frac{2/a_1x_1}{1 + 4/a_1x_1\left( 1 + 1/a_1x_1 \right) \sin^2 \left( \frac{\theta}{2} \right)} \right]$$

An analysis of (19) shows that when the turning point $= 0.6$, the corresponding angle is less than $30^\circ$; thus the cross-section formula can be used to at least $30^\circ$. The cross section near zero scattering can then be obtained from (17).

As the critical radius decreases to 0.5, Figure 4 shows that the right-hand portion of the $\mu^2 - x$ curve becomes concave upward so that the curve may no longer be fitted accurately by a single straight line. It is possible, however, to obtain good accuracy by the
use of two straight lines of different slopes meeting at $x = 1.4$. The cross section corresponding to turning points within the region of the first straight line may be obtained from (23). When the turning point lies beyond the region of the first straight line, the contribution to the scattering integral from the second line must be considered. Because of the discontinuity in the slope, the integral loses its simple structure and can no longer be solved in simple analytic form for arbitrary $b$. However, for small $b$ (large scattering angles), the integral assumes a simple form and can be conveniently solved. For turning points beyond $x_2$, the scattering integral is

$$\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_1 + \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{a_1 + \frac{2b^2}{a_1}}{[a_1^2 + 4b^2(1 + a_1)^2]^{1/2}} \right)$$

$$- \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{a_1 + \frac{2b^2}{a_1}}{[a_1^2 + 4b^2(1 + a_1)^2]^{1/2}} \right)$$

$$+ \frac{\pi}{2} - \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{a_1 + \frac{2b^2}{a_1}}{[a_1^2 + 4b^2(\mu_2^2 + a_1^2)]^{1/2}} \right).$$

(24)

For small $b$, the arguments of the arc sine terms may be expanded to first order in $b^2$ to yield

$$\frac{\pi - \theta}{2} = \sin^{-1} bx_1 + \sin^{-1} \left( 1 - \frac{2b^2}{a_1^2} \mu_2^2 \right)$$

$$- \sin^{-1} \left( 1 - \frac{2b^2}{a_1^2} \mu_2^2 \right) + \frac{\pi}{2} - \sin^{-1} \left( 1 - \frac{2b^2}{a_1^2} \mu_2^2 \right).$$

(25)

where we have used

$$\mu_2^2 = 1 - a_1(x_2 - x_1)$$

Expanding the arc sine terms for small $b$, we obtain

$$\frac{\pi - \theta}{\eta^2} = \left( x_1 + \frac{2}{a_1x_1} (1 - \mu_2) + \frac{2b^2}{a_1^2} \right)$$

(26)

which yields the cross section

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_1} \frac{(\pi - \theta)}{\sin \theta} \left[ 1 + \frac{2}{a_1x_1} (1 - \mu_2) + \frac{2b^2}{a_1x_1} \right]^2$$

(27)

valid for large scattering angles.

3.3. Soft sphere. When the critical radius is small, the initial moderate decrease in $\mu_2$ is followed by a very slow decrease, as shown in Figure 5 for $r_{cr} = 1/8$. It becomes difficult and inaccurate, therefore, to use a combination of two simple curves. However, we have found it feasible to use a straight line for the initial portion of the curve, and an approximate method of integration for the latter portion.

A reasonable fit up to $x = 1.4$ may be obtained with a straight line from $x_1 = 0.5$, $\mu_2 = 1.0$, to $x_2 = 1.4$. The cross section may then be obtained from (22) and (23) as long as the parameter $b$ does not go below the value corresponding to $x_2$ as the turning point, that is, $b = \mu_2/x_2$. The calculation then yields a maximum scattering angle of about $69^\circ$.

For values of $x$ beyond $x_2$ we split the integral at a suitable point $x_3$ where $x_3$ is not far from $x_2$, but

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Fig. 5. Plot of $\mu_2$ for very soft sphere ($r_{cr} = \frac{1}{8}$) and approximation by straight line for initial position of curve.
such that $x_s^2$ is somewhat larger than unity and write

$$I = I_1 + I_2$$

which yields the cross section

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{\sin \theta} \frac{1}{x_s x_r^2 (A - x_s^2)^2} \cdot \left\{ \left[ \left( \frac{\pi}{2} - \theta \right) + \left[ \left( \frac{\pi}{2} - \theta \right) + 2 \frac{A - x_r^2}{x_s x_r^2} \right]^{1/2} - 2 \left[ \left( \frac{\pi}{2} - \theta \right) + 2 \frac{A - x_r^2}{x_s x_r^2} \right]^{1/2} \right] \right\}$$

In terms of $b$, the cross section has the simpler form

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{8\pi}{\sin \theta} \frac{x_r^2 b^3}{1 + 2\left( A - x_r^2 \right)x_r b^2}$$

For large scattering angles, the argument of the \( \sin \) term in the \( I_2 \) integral is no longer small compared to unity; thus the preceding simplification cannot be used. We therefore write the scattering integral in the form

$$\pi - \theta = Ab + \cos \left\{ \frac{1 + 2b x_r^2 x_s^2}{1 + 4x_r b^2} \right\}$$

and take the cosine of both sides to yield

$$\cos(\pi - \theta) = \cos(\theta) \cdot \frac{1 + 2b x_r^2 x_s^2}{1 + 4x_r b^2}$$

For backscatter, we obtain the interesting limiting form (neglecting the small quantity \( B \))

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_s} \frac{(1 + B) \cos(\pi - \theta)}{x_r} \left[ B + \cos^2(\theta - \theta) \right]^{1/2}$$

where

$$B = x_r^2 \left( 1 - \frac{2x_r^2}{x_s^2} \right) - \frac{x_s^2}{x_r} + \frac{A^2}{4x_r}$$

The cross section is, accordingly,

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_s} \frac{(1 + B) \cos(\pi - \theta)}{x_r} \left[ B + \cos^2(\theta - \theta) \right]^{1/2} \left[ 1 + \frac{2b x_r^2 x_s^2}{1 + 4x_r b^2} \right]$$

For backscatter, we obtain the interesting limiting form (neglecting the small quantity \( B \))

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_s^4} \frac{(1 + B) \cos(\pi - \theta)}{x_r^4} \left[ B + \cos^2(\theta - \theta) \right]^{1/2}$$

For backscatter, we obtain the interesting limiting form (neglecting the small quantity \( B \))

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{\pi}{x_s^4} \frac{(1 + B) \cos(\pi - \theta)}{x_r^4} \left[ B + \cos^2(\theta - \theta) \right]^{1/2}$$

where \( r_{ct} \) is the radius of a conducting sphere having the same cross section as the Gaussian sphere.

3.4. Underdense sphere. When the maximum electron density of the plasma is below the critical frequency, the index of refraction has a minimum
value greater than zero. The general shape of the curve is similar to a soft sphere, with the minimum value approached asymptotically for large $x$. In view of the tediousness of our method for very soft spheres, we use a perturbation technique in which we assume in first approximation that the deflection of the ray path may be neglected. For a spherical plasma, the relation between index of refraction and the angle $\alpha$ between the radius and the ray direction is given by Bouger's rule [Kelso, 1964]

$$\mu \sin \alpha = b$$  \hspace{1cm} (41)

The variation in $\alpha$ due to change in $\mu$ is

$$da = -\frac{\tan \theta}{2\mu^2} \frac{d\mu^2}{dr}$$  \hspace{1cm} (42)

where we omit the change in $\alpha$ due to the explicit $r$ term since this gives its variation due to the angular change in $r$ (note that for fixed $\mu$ and hence no deflection, the variation in $r$ gives precisely the change in $\alpha$). Since $da$ is referred to a fixed position of $r$, it gives the deflection of the ray at this point. The total deflection of the ray is then obtained by integration over the ray path. If we assume the path is unperturbed then $\tan \alpha = b/z$, $r^2 = b^2 + z^2$, and the integral can be cast in the form

$$\theta = b \int_0^1 \frac{1}{\mu^2} \frac{d\mu^2}{dr} \frac{dz}{r}$$  \hspace{1cm} (43)

a relation similar to that obtained in classical mechanics [Bohm, 1951] if we take $\mu^2$ as close to unity. For our Gaussian sphere $\mu^2 = 1 - pe^{-r^2}$ where $p = N_{\text{en}}/N_{\text{e}}$, yielding

$$\theta = pb^e^{-r^2} \int_1^\infty \frac{e^{-u^2}}{1 - pe^{-r^2} e^{-u^2}} du$$  \hspace{1cm} (44)

where $u = z/b$. Since $p$ is less than unity, we may expand the denominator to effect the integration and obtain

$$\theta = 2b^e\left(1 + \frac{c}{2} + \frac{c^2}{2^2} + \cdots\right)$$  \hspace{1cm} (45)

where $c = pe^{-r^2}$, which yields the cross section

$$\sigma(\theta) = \frac{4\pi}{\sin \theta} \left\{c \left[(1 - 2b^2) + (1 - 4b^2) \frac{c}{2^2} + \cdots\right]\right\} \left\{1 - \frac{6b^2}{c^2} + \cdots\right\}^{-1}$$  \hspace{1cm} (46)

For underdense spheres, the scattering angle vanishes at $b = 0$ as well as at large $b$ so that $b$ is a double valued function of $\theta$; accordingly, the contributions from the two values of $b$ must be added numerically to obtain the total cross section. The scattering in the forward direction may be calculated by the procedure for overdense spheres. However, since $p$ is less than unity, we express $(19)$ directly in terms of

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**Fig. 6.** Variation of impact parameter with scattering angle for overdense spheres for several values of critical radius.
Fig. 7. Variation of effective radius with scattering angle for several values of critical radius.

\[ x_0^{-2} = \ln\left(\frac{N_{ei}}{N_0}\right) - \ln \rho^{-1} \]  \hspace{1cm} (47)

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained by the numerical procedure for overdense spheres are presented in Figures 6 and 7, where we have plotted the variation of impact parameter and cross section with scattering angle, with the cross section expressed in terms of \( r_{\text{eff}} \). The results obtained by the analytic procedure were generally very close to those obtained numerically. To indicate the agreement obtained, we have also plotted in Figure 7 the analytic solutions for \( r_{\text{eff}} \) for a hard

Fig. 8. Plot of ratio of effective radius to critical radius against scattering angle for overdense spheres with critical radius as the parameter.

Fig. 9. Variation of impact parameter with scattering angle for underdense spheres for several values of density ratio.
sphere \((r_s = 2)\) and for a very soft sphere \((r_s = 1/8)\).

Figure 6 indicates that for hard spheres, except for the forward-scattering region, the impact parameter is almost a linear function of scattering angle. As the critical radius becomes small, the impact parameter decreases rapidly in the forward-scattering region, resulting in very small values for all scattering angles greater than 90°.

Figure 7 shows that hard spheres have an almost constant cross section over a fairly wide range of backscattering angles, and \(r_{\text{eff}}\) is only slightly less than \(r_s\). For \(r_s = 0\), the cross section becomes vanishingly small from 0° to 180°. We have indicated this result by a vertical line at 90°. The small values of \(r_{\text{eff}}\) for a soft sphere in the backscatter region are due to the great depth of penetration, and consequently small value of the impact parameter \(b\) required for a given scattering angle. The rate of change of impact parameter with scattering angle is accordingly very small in the backscatter region, resulting in low cross sections. We thus have a transition region in which \(r_{\text{eff}}\) decreases very rapidly until the scattering angle becomes quite large. This result may also be seen from the form of the \(\mu^2\) versus \(x\) curve for a very soft sphere (Figure 5) and the scattering integral. As the turning point gets closer to the center of the sphere, \(x_t\) becomes larger and the integral starts to increase rapidly because of the large contribution from the region of small \(\mu\) values; the value of \(b\) then begins to decrease rapidly with a sharp drop in cross section. For large values of the turning point, however, the integral is quite large and further increases in the scattering angle have very little effect upon \(db/d\theta\), resulting in a slowly decreasing cross section.

In the region of forward scatter, we note that the curves for different \(r_s\) coalesce, the process occurring at smaller angles for larger \(r_s\). This result occurs because the forward-scattered rays penetrate the outer edge of the cloud where the electron density and its gradient are small, and do not differ significantly for different critical radii. The scattering therefore depends principally upon the impact parameter and very little upon the critical radius. For large values of \(r_s\), however, the electron density is affected to some extent by the critical radius unless the impact parameter is taken sufficiently large. (See equation 19, where we note that large \(r_s\) may have some effect unless the cutoff density \(N_0/N_s\) is taken sufficiently small.) The curves for large \(r_s\), therefore, coalesce more slowly than do the smaller \(r_s\) curves.

Since, in backscatter, the effective radius \(r_{\text{eff}}\) is very close to \(r_s\) for large \(r_s\) and decreases as \(r_s^2\) for small \(r_s\) (see equation 40), it is of interest to see whether a simple exponential law can be used to represent the backscatter results. A plot of \(\log (1 - r_{\text{eff}}/r_s)\) against \(r_s\) shows that the backscatter results may be fitted with good accuracy by a straight line whose equation is

\[
1 - r_{\text{eff}}/r_s = e^{-1.0 r_s} \quad (48)
\]

This relation gives the proper dependence of \(r_{\text{eff}}\) upon \(r_s\) for small \(r_s\), and satisfies the requirement that \(r_{\text{eff}}/r_s\) is close to unity for large \(r_s\). To show the relations between \(r_{\text{eff}}\) and \(r_s\) for all scattering angles, we have plotted in Figure 8 the ratio \(r_{\text{eff}}/r_s\) as a function of scattering angle for several values of \(r_s\).

\[
\text{Fig. 10. Variation of effective radius with scattering angle for underdense spheres for several values of density ratio.}
\]
The curves cross near $\theta = 105^\circ$ and $r_{crit}$, indicating that, in this scattering region, all Gaussian spheres may be replaced by a conducting sphere of radius equal to the critical radius.

The variation of impact parameter with scattering angle for underdense spheres is shown in Figure 9 where, in contradistinction to the overdense case, small deflections are obtained at small as well as at large values of the impact parameter. The results obtained by the perturbation procedure are in fair agreement with the more exact calculations at small values of the density ratio $\rho$, the agreement lessening as $\rho$ increases. The more exact calculations show a steady decrease of $b$ at maximum deflection with increasing $\rho$, whereas the corresponding value of $\theta$ by the analytic method is relatively insensitive to an increase in $\rho$. The two sets of curves are therefore considerably displaced at higher values of $\rho$, with consequently inaccurate cross sections. Attempts to improve the perturbation results by an iterative procedure in which the orbit is not neglected have not proved very successful. We have therefore not presented the analytic results for the cross sections.

The cross-section results are presented in Figure 10, where we have added the contributions from the two values of $b$. The contribution from the large value of $b$ is generally much higher, except near $\theta_{max}$, where both $b$ values give very large contributions. The vertical lines in Figure 10 indicate the points of maximum deflection at which the cross section is infinite. As anticipated, the curves for different $\rho$ coalesce in the forward-scattering region, with merging occurring at lower values of $\theta$ for smaller $\rho$. This may be easily seen by noting that the value of $r_{c}$ depends more strongly on $\rho$ when it is small (see equation 47).

For the purpose of comparison and discussion with respect to the critical density region, some of the impact parameter results for overdense and underdense spheres are presented together in Figure 11. We note that, as the density approaches unity, the upper branch for the underdense region merges with the forward-scatter portion of the overdense curve. In addition, the lower branch of the underdense curve goes to $b = 0$ with a maximum deflection of $90^\circ$, while the backscatter portion of the overdense curve also goes to $b = 0$ for the region $90^\circ$ to $180^\circ$.

We thus have a discontinuity in maximum scattering angle at the critical density, with $90^\circ$ obtained when the approach is from underdense values and $180^\circ$ when it is from the overdense side.

The cross section approaches zero in the backscatter region as the density becomes critical from the overdense side (see Figure 7) whereas because of the infinite slope in the impact parameter curve, it becomes infinite at $90^\circ$ from the underdense side (Figure 9).

These peculiarities in the scattering near critical density have been analyzed in detail, and the results are presented in Figures 9 and 10.
density are due to the use of a geometric optics model for the calculations. The nature of the scattering in this region may be exhibited in terms of a simple model for the electron density which has the proper asymptotic form near the center of the cloud (large $x$). We write

$$
\mu^2 = 1 - \rho a^2 x^2 \quad 0 \leq x \leq x,
$$

$$
\mu^2 = 1 - \rho + \frac{\rho c^2}{x^2} \quad x \geq x,
$$

(49)

where a simple parabolic fit has been chosen for small $x$ and an inverse square behavior for large $x$. The coefficients $a$ and $c$ may be evaluated in terms of a specific density distribution.

The scattering integral now reads

$$
\pi - \theta = \frac{2b}{(a^2 \rho + b^2)^{1/2}} \sin^{-1} \left( a^2 \rho + b^2 \right)^{1/2} x,
$$

$$
+ \frac{\pi}{2} \sin^{-1} \frac{2b x}{(1 - \rho)^{1/2}} \left[ (1 - \rho)^2 + 4\rho^2 b^2 \right]^{1/2}
$$

(50)

For $b$ close to zero the first term is negligible indicating, as expected, that the scattering parameters is determined by the interior center of the sphere. For $b = 0$ we obtain

$$
\pi - \theta = (\pi/2) - \sin^{-1} \left[ (1 - \rho)/|b| \right]
$$

which yields $\theta = 0^\circ$ for underdense and $180^\circ$ for the overdense case. At the limiting value as $b$ approaches $|b|$, the model gives the required value of $b$ versus $\theta$ near $\theta = 0$ (underdense) and $180^\circ$ (overdense).

REFERENCES


