Introduction to Physics of Neutron Stars

Pulsars — Magnetars

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- \bullet 2010–2015 Bachelor in physics $+$ Master in astrophysics at MU
- 2015–2019 PhD in astrophysics at MU
- \approx 2014–2019 Work in industry
- 2020–2022 Research assistant at Technical University of Berlin: GAČR–DFG project on solar/pulsar coherent (at kinetic scales) radio emission processes
- 2023–2025 Research assistant at University of Potsdam: PI of a DFG grant pulsar coherent radio emission processes

Scientific interests:

Solar flares, magnetospheres of stars/compact objects, pulsars, fast radio bursts

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Books

- Beskin et al., "*Physics of the pulsar magnetosphere*," 1993
- Lorimer & Kramer, "*Handbook of pulsar astronomy*," 2005
- Rezolla et al., "*The Physics and Astrophysics of Neutron Stars*," 2018

Papers

- Petri, "*Theory of pulsar magnetosphere and wind*", JPP, 2016
- Kaspi & Beloborodov, "*Magnetars*", ARAA, 2017
- Zhang, "*Physical Mechanism of fast radio bursts*", Nature, 2020
- Philippov and Kramer, "Pulsar Magnetospheres and their radiation", ARAA, 2022

1. Introduction to neutron stars

- Jocelyn Bell in 1967
- 2000 wires as dipole antennas
- Analyzing roles of paper
- Advisor: Anthony Hewish & Martin Ryle
- Nobel price 1974

Neutron star

Neutron star properties

- Remnants of supernovae
- Composed of compressed matter, neutrons
- Very dense *[∼]* ⁵ *[×]* ¹⁰¹⁷ kg m*−*³ , *>* 10*n*atomcore
- Short rotation periods ≤ 1 s
- Radius *∼*10 km
- Hot surface (*∼*10⁵ K)
- *M ∼* 1.1–2.1 *M[∗]*
- Strong magnetic fields *[∼]*10⁸ ^T (10^{12} G)
- Radio to *γ*-rays
- Plasma heating, particle acceleration
- Reliability of shown figures

Neutron stars provide insights into a broad range of various astrophysical phenomena

Pulsars Magnetars Extreme physical environments

Gravitational waves

X-ray binaries Microqusars **Fast radio bursts**

1. Introduction to neutron stars

Neutron star

Formation

- Initial star mass ≳ 8 *M ∗*
- Inner core exceeds Chandrasekhar limit (1.4 M *∗*)
- Core-collapse supernovae (Type II, or Type Ib,c)
- Central core collapse into a compact object (NS or BH)
- Implosion *→* shock wave
- Outer layers outflow
- Electrons and protons combine $p^+ + e^- \rightarrow n + \nu_e$ (reversed *β*-decay)
- Initial temperature $10^{11} 10^{12}$ K drops in few years to 10^6 K (BB in X-rays)
- Compact object kicked (*∼*100 km s*−*1)
- $NS =$ neutron star; $BH =$ black hole

(Latimer & Prakash, 2005) (Ozel & Freire 2016)

- Main problem: Equation of state
- Superconductivity and superfluidity of matter
- Strong frozen magnetic fields
- Two main models (AP4 and MS2), Many more existing
- Neutrons hold from decay by strong pressures (otherwise decay in *∼*15 minutes)

INSIDE A NEUTRON STAR

A NASA mission will use X-ray spectroscopy to gather clues about the interior of neutron stars - the Universe's densest forms of matter.

Magnetosphere

Toy/book model:

Properties:

- Magnetic dipole
- Higher pole moments under debate
- Inclination between rotation and magnetic axes
- Light cylinder $R_{\text{LC}} = P c / 2\pi$, $R_{\rm LC}$ $\sim 500 R_{\star}$
- Open and closed magnetic fields
- Atmosphere only a fraction of millimeter thickness
- Bending of radiation from surface
- Effect of spaghettification
- Red shift of light from star surface

Spin down

- Rotational kinetic energy of star decreases
- Rotation periods increase
- Measuring slow down *→* amount of energy release
- Spin-down luminosity

$$
\dot{E} = \frac{d(\Omega^2/2)}{dt} = I\Omega\dot{\Omega} = 4\pi^2 \dot{P} P^{-3}
$$
\n(1)

$$
I = 10^{45} \text{ g cm}^{-2}
$$

$$
\dot{E} \sim 10^{25} \text{ W } (10^{32} \text{ erg s}^{-1})
$$

(Other energy releases neglected)

- Dependence of spin down on period
- Dependence of energy release on period
- Spin down caused by dipole radiation power

$$
\dot{E}_{\rm rad} = \frac{2}{3c^3} (B_{\rm surface} R_\star^3 \sin \alpha) \left(\frac{2\pi}{P}\right)^4 \tag{2}
$$

 \bullet *α* is the dipole inclination angle

Small dots: Radio pulsars *HE*: High energy pulsars *AXP*: Anomalous X-ray pulsars *RRAT*: Radio transients *XINS*: Thermally emitting isolated neutron stars

- Sudden changes of rotational period
- 1. Changes in structure of star core
- 2. Changes in structure of mg. fields The mg. field disturbance propagate along field lines
- More often for young NS

 $(Lyne et al. 1999)$ 15

- Quantifies the spin down
- Dipole emission

$$
\dot{E}_{\text{dipole}} = \frac{2}{3c^3} |m|^2 \Omega^4 \sin^2 \alpha \qquad (3)
$$

• Change of NS rotational frequency

$$
\dot{\nu} = -K\nu^n \tag{4}
$$

- \blacksquare *n* is braking index
- Measured as $n = \nu \ddot{\nu} / \dot{\nu}^2$
- \blacksquare Values: $1.4 2.9$

Estimation of pulsar age

$$
T = \frac{P}{(n-1)\dot{P}} \left[1 - \left(\frac{P_0}{P}\right)^{n-1} \right] \tag{5}
$$

Characteristic age

$$
\tau = \frac{P}{2\dot{P}}\tag{6}
$$

- Crab: *τ* = 1240 yr, known: 970
- Born periods $P_0 = 14 140$ ms

Magnetic fields at surface

$$
B_0 = \sqrt{\frac{3c^3}{8\pi^2} \frac{I}{R_\star^6 \sin^2 \alpha} P \dot{P}}
$$
 (7)

•
$$
B_0 \sim 10^{12}
$$
 G (10⁸ T)

Braking index

- As NS period increases, efficiency of energy conversion decreases
- For large periods, their emission vanishes
- Can be recycled if in binary

2. Pulsar Observations

Radio telescopes

GBT

Arecibo

Effelsberg

MeerCAT

ALMA

Integral

NICER

Average pulses

(Lorimer & Kramer 2005) – Effelsberg

- PSR B1913+16 separate epochs
- PSR B1237+25 only part of rotation phase
- PSR B1934+21 1.4 GHz
- Others 430 MHz
- Interpulses, 2 explanations
- Duty cycle

PSR B0301+19, Arecibo, Lorimer & Kramer 2005

Vela pulsar spectrum

(Mignani et al. 2017)

Crab pulsar

(Hankins & Eilek 2015)

• Signal delay

$$
\Delta t = \frac{1}{c} \left(\int_0^d \frac{dl}{v_{\rm g}} \right) - \frac{d}{c} \qquad (8)
$$

• Group velocity

$$
v_g = cN = c\sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{f_p}{f}\right)^2} \qquad (9)
$$

- (*N* refractive index, *f^p* plasma frequency)
- \blacksquare Signal delay (after expansion of N)

$$
\Delta t = \frac{e^2}{2m_e c} \frac{\int_0^d n_e dl}{f^2} = C \frac{DM}{f^2}
$$
 (10)

$$
DM = \int_0^d n_e dl
$$
 (11)

Faraday rotation

• Difference in phase between left and right polarization

$$
\Delta\Psi_{\text{Far}}(f) = \int_0^d (k_R(f) - k_L(f))dl,
$$
\n(12)

where

$$
k(f) = \frac{2\pi}{c} f \sqrt{1 - \frac{f_p^2}{f^2} + \frac{f_p^2 f_B}{f^3}} \tag{13}
$$

Then

$$
\Delta\Psi_{\text{Far}}(f) = \frac{2e^3}{m_e^2cf^2} \int_0^d n_e B_{\parallel} dl
$$
\n
$$
\Delta\Psi_{\text{PPA}} = \Delta\Psi_{\text{Far}}(f)/2 \equiv RM/f^2
$$
\n(15)\n
$$
RM = \frac{e^3}{m_e^2cf^2} \int_0^d n_e B_{\parallel} dl
$$
\n(16)

$$
\langle B_{\parallel}\rangle = \frac{\int_0^d n_e B_{\parallel} dl}{\int_0^d n_e dl} = 1.2 \mu\text{G} \left(\frac{RM}{\text{rad m}^{-2}}\right) \left(\frac{DM}{\text{cm}^{-3}\text{pc}}\right)^{-1}
$$

Submicrosecond pulses

(Hankins & Eilek 2016) – Crab

(Hankins et al. 2003) (Hankins & Eilek 2007)

• Black body radiation

$$
\frac{dI(\nu)}{d\nu} = \frac{2h\nu^3}{c^2} \frac{1}{e^{\frac{h\nu}{kT}} - 1}
$$
\n(17)

• Temperature

$$
T_b = \frac{h\nu}{k_B} \ln^{-1} \left(1 + \frac{2h\nu^3}{I(\nu)c^2} \right)
$$
 (18)

- For $h\nu < kT$
- Brighness temperature

$$
T_b = \frac{I(\nu)c^2}{2k_B\nu^2} \tag{19}
$$

 $NICER (X-ray) + Nançay (1.4 GHz)$

(Guillot et al. 2019)

Gamma rays

Crab

Vela

(Kuiper & Hermsen 2015) – Vela

Vela

(Rudak 2018) – Crab
3. Physical applications

- Precide measurements of times of pulse arrivals
- Depends on time resolution and S/N ratio
- Low variance between individual pulses
- Millisecond pulsars are ideal
- Precision *∼* 100 ns for over *>* 1 year
- Stability of pulsar internal clock limited (due to "unknown" slow down mechanism)
- Cross-check with terrestrial clocks

(Hotan 2005)

Testing general theory of relativity

Shift of periastron

(Weisberg & Taylor 2005)

Window of opportunity

- Continuous gravitational waves
- Compact binary gravitational waves
- (Stochastic gravitational wave)
- (Burst gravitational waves)

(Lorimer & Kramer 2005)

- Continuous gravitational waves
- Compact binary gravitational waves
- (Stochastic gravitational wave)
- (Burst gravitational waves)

(Haskell & Schwenzer 2021)

- Source of gravitational waves
- Might produce short gamma ray bursts or kilonovae
- Produce a neutron star or a black hole (Tolman–Oppenheimer–Volkoff limit)
- First detection on 17th August 2017 by gravitational waves, later short gamma ray burst
- Total mass 2.82 *M[∗]*
- It collapsed into a black hole or a magnetar in milliseconds
- Direct evidence of production of heavier elements and that neutron star is composed of neutrons

Extrasolar planets

(Marcy & Buttler 2000)

• Relativistic temperatures

$$
\rho=\frac{mc^2}{k_BT}\lesssim 1
$$

- Relativistic particle velocity distributions e.g. Maxwell–Jüttner
- Magnetic fields ¹⁰¹⁴ G (*ωce [∼]* ¹⁰²⁰ Hz)
- Particle Lorentz factors γ up to 10^7 , typical 10^3 ($v/c = 0.9999995$)
- Large kinetic energy densities
- Huge field energy densities
- Plasma beta parameter *β ≪* 1

4. Magnetospheres of Pulsars

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Physics of the magnetosphere

Pulsar model

•

Force free magnetosphere

• Force ratio

$$
\frac{f_{EM}}{f_G} = \frac{eE_{\parallel}R_*^2}{GM_*m_p} \approx 10^9 \qquad (20)
$$

• Goldreich–Julian density

$$
\rho_e = \epsilon_0 \nabla \cdot \boldsymbol{E} = -2\epsilon_0 \boldsymbol{\Omega} \cdot \boldsymbol{B} \qquad (21)
$$

• Particle (EB) drift

$$
v_{E,d} = \frac{E \times B}{B^2} \qquad (22)
$$

[→] No currents between e*[−]* and p+. And drift along mg. fields $(+)$ stationarity) For deviation from charge-neutrality *→* currents

• Ideal MHD

$$
\boldsymbol{v}_{E,d} = \boldsymbol{\Omega} \times \boldsymbol{r} - \frac{\boldsymbol{B} \cdot (\boldsymbol{\Omega} \times \boldsymbol{r})}{B^2} \boldsymbol{B}.
$$
 (23)

From ideal Ohm's law

$$
E + v \times B = 0 \tag{24}
$$

Problem between open and closed fields.

2D magnetospheric simulations

(Chen & Beloborodov 2014) ⁴²

3D magnetospheric simulations

(Philippov et al. 2015)

- Breaking of force–free magnetospheric models in regions called gaps
- Electric currents do not compensate plasma co-rotation

$$
\nabla \times \boldsymbol{B} = \boldsymbol{j} + \epsilon_0 \mu_0 \frac{\partial \boldsymbol{E}}{\partial t} \qquad (25)
$$

- Electric fields can reach *[∼]* ¹⁰¹³ V/m
- "Primary particles accelerated" (10^7 MeV)
- Curvature emission of *γ*-photons
- Inverse Compton scattering may occur

$$
\gamma + B \to e^+ + e^- + B \qquad (26)
$$

- Production of "secondary particles" $(10^2 - 10^4 \text{ MeV})$
- Multiplicity factor $\kappa \sim 10^2 10^5$.

Other electron-positron sources

- *γ* photons from hot star surface
- photon-photon interactions

Formation of relativistic beams

(Usov 2002, ArXiv)

(Gurevich et al. 1993)

Types of wind:

- Quasi-neutral (MHD) wind of relativistic particles, currents between species, large particle density required
- Relativistic charged wind, species separated, questions about effectiveness, current only one species
- Large-amplitude low-frequency elmg. wave in a low density plasma

Focus mainly on propagation effects.

(Petri, 2016)

(Cerutti et al. 2020)

5. Magnetars

Discovery

Soft gamma repeaters (SGRs)

- (Vegnera 11 and 12) detection of hard X-ray / soft gamma-ray repeater (SGR 1900+14)
- Softer spectra than gamma ray bursts (GRBs)
- New class of high energy sources
- 8 s period (SGR 0526-66) suggests a neutron star, but much larger than other newly born pulsars (*<*100 ms)
- Ultrastrong magnetic fields needed for such decay in 10^4 years
- Fields provide energy source for large activity
- Magnetic fields confirmed from spin-down measurements in 1998

(Mazets 1979a,b; Thompson & Duncan 1992,1996)

Anomalous X-ray pulsars (AXPs)

- Indipendent theory evolution
- 1980 "an extraordinary new celestial X-ray source"
- Pulsations with period *∼*3.5 s (Later 7 s)
- Later suggested as a new type of accretion powered X-ray (neutron star) binary
- Periods 2–12 s
- Born with periods *∼*100 ms *→* rapid magnetic breaking
- Large spin-down rates *[∼]* ¹⁰*−*³ yr*−*¹
- Mg. fields from spind down rates $> 10^{14}$ G
- Spin down energy *<* X-ray luminosity
- X-ray luminosity ¹⁰³⁰ *[−]* ¹⁰³⁵ erg s*−*¹ (2–10 keV)
- Soft X-ray black body radiation
- Hard X-ray hardening
- Sometimes observed at other wavelength (radio to UV)
- Located in galactic plane *→* young sources
- Spatial velocities *[∼]* ²⁰⁰ km s*−*¹
- Some associated with supernova remnants

(Olausen & Kaspi 2014)

Generally vary strongly between magnetars. Bursts:

- Durations ms $-$ s, typically 100 ms
- Energies ¹⁰³⁶ *[−]* ¹⁰⁴⁴ erg s*−*¹
- More common during outbursts

Outbursts:

- 10 10³ time increase of X-ray flux
- Energy flux *<* 10³⁶ erg s*−*¹
- Accompanied by glitches
- Rapid initial decay in minutes hours
- \blacksquare Slow decay of days $-$ years

(Woods et al. 2004)

Giant flares

- Three sources detected
- Power ¹⁰⁴⁴ *[−]* ¹⁰⁴⁷ erg s*−*¹

Pulsations

• Star pulsations (magnetosphere)

(Beloborodov 2013)

6. Fast radio bursts

Discovery

- First burst detected 24th July 2001 Parkes 64-m telescope
- Published by Lorimer et al. 2007
- Debate about "Lorimer burst" or "peryton"
- Originating from "microwave-ovens"
- Other reported by Petroff in 2013
- Telescope: Parkes, Arecibo, GBT, ASKAP, CHIME, FAST, STARE2
- Every 6 months "quamtum leap"

- Duration of 1 ms \rightarrow *L* = $ct \sim 10^5 10^6$ *m* \rightarrow compact sources
- Repetition, *>* 20 repeating sources *→* can be majority repeating?
- Repetition ms s *→* pulsars? no such source
- Typical repetition after days *→* binary/precession models?
- Pulse structure complex
- Subpulse down frequency drifts
- DM *∼* 100 *−* 2600, typical 300 *−* 400
- Luminosities ¹⁰³⁸ *[−]* ¹⁰⁴⁶ erg s*−*¹
- Reduction by a beaming factor
- Luminosity large for pulsars, but low for GRB
- Not clear association to SGR
- Brighness temperatures *[∼]* ¹⁰³⁶ ^K *[→]* coherent source
- Detection range 300 MHz 8 GHz, No LOFAR detection *→* hard spectral pulses
- Linear polarization *>* 50 %
- No polarization swing across pulse
- Some FRBs constant polarization angle in all pulses
- Large rotation measures ¹ *[−]* ¹⁰⁵ rad m*−*²
- Isotropic over sky
- Rate *[∼]* ¹⁰³ events per day (*>* ¹ mJy)
- Massive galaxies

Repeating FRB 121102 (z = 0.19)

- DM *[∼]* ⁵⁶⁰ pc cm*−*³
- Establishing extragalactic/cosmological origin

(Spitler et al. 2016)

- CHIME & STARE2
- Soft-gamma-repeater SGR 1935+2154
- During its active phase
- Magnetars are origin of, at least some, FRBs

(Tavani et al. 2020)

(Nimmo et al. 2022)

- Are there multiple species?
- Where are they from?
- What creates/produces them?

(Zhang et al. 2018)

FRB models

- Pulsar-like models
- GRB-like models
- Main energy source is magnetic energy (not spin-down energy)

List of FRB models (not all)

(continued on next page)

List of FRB models (not all)

List of FRB models (not all)

AGN active galactic nuclei. Apertif Apertif Radio Transient System. AON axion quark nugget. ASKAP Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder. BH black hole BLAST black hole laser powered by axion superradiant instabilities. CHIME Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment. CMB cosmic microwave background. DM dispersion measure. DSR Dicke's superradiance. EM electromagnetic. EVN European VLBI Network. FAST Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope. Fermi GBM Fermi Gamma-ray Burst Monitor. Fermi LAT Fermi Large Area Telescope. FRB Fast Radio Burst. GRB gamma ray burst. GW gravitational wave. HIRAX Hydrogen Intensity and Real Time Analysis Experiment. IGM intergalactic medium. ISM interstellar medium KBH Kerr black hole KNBH Kerr-Newman black hole. LGRB long gamma ray burst. LOFAR Low-Frequency Array. LSD large superconducting dipole. MWD magnetic white dwarf. MWN magnetar wind nebula. NS neutron star. PBH primordial black hole. PWN pulsar wind nebula. RM rotation measure SGR soft gamma repeater. sGRB short gamma ray burst. SKA Square Kilometre Array. SLSN I superluminous supernova. SMBH supermassive black hole. SN supernova. SOM strange quark matter. SS strange quark star. Swift/BAT Swift Burst Alert Telescope.
Probability of source of FRBs

Observational facts – blue Speculations – grey Speculated multi-messenger – green (Zhang et al. 2020)

- Neutron stars, pulsars, millisecond pulsars, magnetars, soft gamma repeaters, active X-ray pulsars, *γ*-ray sources, fast radio bursts
- Observational and theoretical approaches
- Large variety and uncertainty in emission processes of electromagnetic waves
- Dynamics of the magnetosphere
- Supergiant pulses and FRBs have same mechanism
- Now is the time of first global magnetopsheric simulations