# Radio Propagation Measurements and Path Loss Formulas for Microcellular Systems

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요 약

본 논문에서는 현재까지 셀룰라 서비스와 PCS서비스를 위해 얻어진 전파전파 측정에 대한 전체적인 요약을 하였다. 이렇게 얻어진 협대역신호 기반의 측정치와 광대역 신호에 의한 이동통신 채널 측정에 대해 고찰을 한 후 미국 캘리포니아의 오클랜드시에서 얻어진 측정치를 이용하여 불규칙한 높이의 건물로이뤄진 도시 환경에서 쓰일 수 있는 마이크로셀용 신호 감쇄 예측 공식을 만들고, 이를 균일한 높이의 건물로 이뤄진 환경에서 얻은 신호 감쇄 예측 공식과 비교하였다.

Keyword: Path loss formula, Microcell measurements, Macrocell measurements, Non-uniform height environment

## **ABSTRACT**

In this paper, we will provide a comprehensive review of radio propagation measurements conducted to date for mobile radio systems at frequency bands used for cellular and personal communications services in microcellular systems. Path-loss results were measured by using narrowband signal and multipath propagations were characterized by wideband measurements. This paper includes unpublished empirical path loss formulas for Oakland city of non-uniform building heights, and presents a comparison with path loss formulas obtained from typical low-rise building environments in order to discuss street grid dependence on route-specific building profile. We will also compare some empirical models developed based on the measurements with a few well-established theoretical prediction models.

#### I. Overview

As the demand for cellular mobile services dra matically increases in the recent years, microcells have been deployed in dense areas and inside buil dings to increase capacity and to provide indoor c overage. To cope with microcells deployments, me asurements have been carried out for small cells with low base station antennas. When the base st ation antenna is about the same height or even be low the surrounding buildings, the dependence of radio signals on street orientation and building heights becomes even more significant. Therefore mi crocellular measurements usually involve street co

nfiguration andbuilding structure in addition to terr ain profile and morphology. The microcellular m easurements were commonly conducted along line-of-sight (LOS) path and/or non-LOS routes. The measurement results for non-LOS routes can be u sed to study the complex diffraction mechanism a ssociated with propagation over rooftops or around building corners.

Measurements reviewed in this paper are classified into two categories: path-loss measurements using typical narrowband CW signal and multipath characteristics measurements employing wideband pulse signal. Following the review of radio propagation measurements made to date, we will comp

are path loss formulas from Oakland city of nonuniform building heights with those from areas of uniform building heights and discuss how the stre et grid dependence is changed due to specific buil ding profile. Furthermore, a comparison of some e mpirical models developed based on the measurem ents with a few well-established theoretical models is presented.

#### II. Microcellular Measurements

As compared to the macrocellular measurements, the microcellular measurements exhibit more diversified propagation characteristics due to relativelylow base station antenna placed on rooftop or lamppost.

#### A. Path-loss measurements

It was found by Harley in short-range path-loss measurements made in Melbourne, Australia[1] that there is a turning (break) point associated with si gnal variation in LOS path. However, he did not specify how to calculate the break point distance. Due to the presence ofdirect path between base st ation and mobile station, path-loss for LOS path i s typically less than that for non-LOS paths. Me asurement results obtained by Whitteker[2] and Chi a et al.[3] showed that there is a difference of abo ut 20 dB between the path-loss measured along L OS path and that measured in the route just turni ng around the corner, which is significantly more severe than that observed by Black and Reudink[4] in the macrocellular environments. In some dense urban environments having buildings aligned along streets, the break point is found to be pushed for ward beyond the theoretical location due to waveg uide effects, as observed by Rustako et al. [5].

More comprehensive propagation measurements involving LOS path and a variety of non-LOS paths were conducted by Xia et al. in San Francisco Bay Area<sub>[6-7]</sub>. The measurements were made to characterize microcellular radio signal variation in the cellular and PCS frequency bands (900 and 190 0 MHz). In the measurements, the base station a ntenna was placed at heights hb of 3.2 m, 8.7 m

and 13.4 m while the mobile antenna height hr w as fixed at 1.6 m. The propagation mechanism a ssociated with LOS paths were discussed in detail s in [6] using the LOS measurement results obtained in various urban, suburban, and rural areas. The Sunset District and the Mission District of San Francisco, which have attached buildings of quasi-uniform height built on a rectangular street grid on flat terrain, were selected as typical low-rise environments for the measurements. Figure 1 shows the test routes used in the measurements with a transmitter located in the middle of a block in a street, which is part of a rectangular street grid.

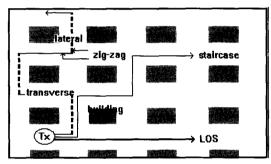


Figure 1: Measurement test routes (adopted from [7])

Measurements were performed for radial distances up to 3 km. The zig-zag measurement results in [7] show that signal strength decreases 10-20 dB a s the mobile turned a corner from a perpendicular street into a parallel street. Therefore, the measur ement results for the two different segments of th e zig-zag path were treated as separate groups. On the parallel streets the propagation path is tran sverse to the rows of buildings. On the perpendi cular streets the propagation path has a long later al segment down the street. Signal strength on the staircase route showed continuous variation with d istance traveled by the mobile, so that measureme nt results were treated as one group. Path-loss c urves were then generated for the zig-zag and stai rcase groupings. These path-loss curves were late r used by Har, Xia and Bertoni to establish empir ical microcell models<sub>[8]</sub>. Difference in signal streng th between parallel streets and perpendicular street

s was also observed by Wagen in [9]. Measurem ents made along LOS streets and neighboring para llel streets in Dallas (US) are reported in [10]. F igure 2 shows a comparison of signal strengths o btained for the LOS path and the first parallel street. A constant gap of about 35 dB between LOS and parallel street measurements is shown in Figure 2 before the LOS break point.

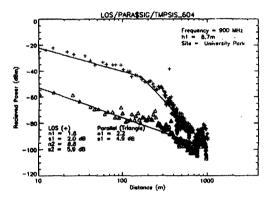


Figure 2: Received signal strength for LOS and parallel street measurements in University Park, Dallas (adopted from [10]).

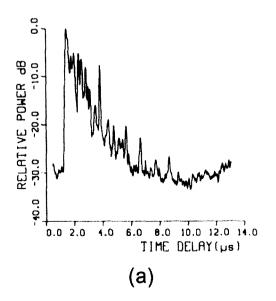
The gap becomes narrower after the break point distance at about 200 m and eventually vanishes at a distance of 1 km. Due to the anisotropic pr opagation characteristics as observed in the measu rements, cell shape formed by radio signal contours in a dense building environments, as demonstrated in [8] and [11], is more closely approximate d by a diamond rather than a regular hexagon.

Extensive radio propagation measurements in Eu ropean cities were performed by many universities and institutions under the COST 231 program. C ombined the COST 231 measurements with previously published theoretical model<sub>[12]</sub>, COST 231-Walfisch-Ikegami model was developed for predicting radio signal propagation in different environments. The COST 231 measurement results were also used to validate the performance of other prediction models [13-15].

Effects of terrain variation on propagation in sm all urban cells are studied by Lampard and Vu-Di nh in [16]. Also, signal strength attenuation due to trees is estimated in [17-19]. Measurements m ade in a few specific environments such as tunnel s or railways are reported in [20-24].

## B. Multipath characteristics measurements

Microcellular propagation measurements reveal multipath characteristics significantly different from that observed in macrocellular measurements. Micr ocellular propagation measurements reveal multipat h characteristics significantly different from that o bserved in macrocellular measurements. It was fo und by Bultitude and Bedal<sub>[25]</sub> in their multipath measurements at 910 MHz that the rms delay spr ead value of a microcell channel is only one quar ter of that measured in a macrocell channel result s<sub>[26]</sub>. In Figure 3, power delay profiles of macroce ll channel and microcell channel are plotted. The rms delay spread is computed by using significant multipath components with power over a threshold of -25 dB with respect to the peak. Unlike the macrocellular measurement results, microcellular m easurement results often demonstrates clear relatio nship between path-loss and rms delay spread. In their measurements made at 1.9 GHz in a suburb an area of St. Louis (US), Devasirvatham et al. [27] observed that rms delay spread doubled, statisticall y, for every 19 dB increment of path loss over a distance range less than 600 m.



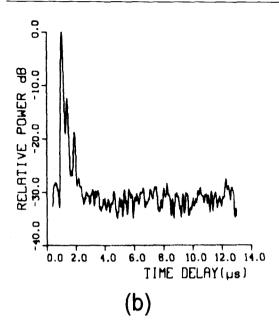


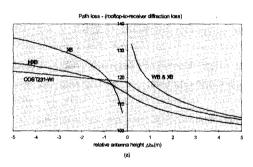
Figure 3: Power delay profiles of (a) macrocell channel (adopted from [26]) and (b) microcell channel (adopted from [25]).

The measurements were conducted by employin g a base station antenna at heights about the roof top level of two story houses and a mobile statio n at heights of 2~3 m. Similar relation between rms delay spread and path loss is shown in the microcell measurement results[28] for low base stati on antennas ranging from 3 to 13 m. An upper bound of rms delay spread as a function of path-l oss is obtained in [28] by using the measurement results. It is expressed as sd = exp[0.065\*PL], w here sd is the rms delay spread in nanoseconds a nd PL is the path loss in dB. With secured lineof-sight between transmitter and receiver located o n tops of buildings, multipath measurements were made by Bartolom<sub>[29]</sub> at 1.9 GHz in an urban area of Madrid (Spain), which shows a rms delay spre adof 59.1, 54.9, 65.5 ns for antenna separation of 50, 150, 300 m, respectively. Mostly for smart a ntenna applications, angles of arrival for different multipaths were extensively measured in recent ye ars. Some of the measurement results are publish ed in [30-32].

# III. Path loss formulas

# A. Comparison of path loss formulas

Empirical microcell models have been establishe d based on some of the aforementioned microcell ular measurements. Here we compare two of the se empirical microcell models, i.e., the COST 231 -Walfisch-Ikegami model[15] and the Har-Xia-Berto ni model<sub>[8]</sub> with two theoretical path-loss predictio n models, the Walfisch-Bertoni model[33] and the Xia-Bertoni model<sub>[34]</sub>. The comparison is made for low-rise environments with relative base station an tenna height  $\Delta h$  in a range of -5 m <  $\Delta h$ < 5 m. The relative base station antenna height is measur ed over the average rooftop level of surrounding buildings. In Figure 4, we plot the path-loss, exc luding the loss due to diffraction at the last rooft op adjacent to the receiver at street level, predicte d by these models at a distance of 1 km for freq uencies of 900 MHz and 1.9 GHz.



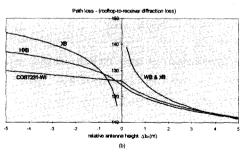


Figure 4: Comparison of path loss values excluding rooftop-to-receiver diffraction loss according to four path loss models for (a) 0.9 GHz and (b) 1.9 GHz. Relevant parameters are antenna separation R = 1 km, average building height  $h_{BD} = 8$  m, average spacing of building row

d=50 m, distance between base station antenna and first building row  $r_0=50$  m (only for XB model).

It seems that the theoretical models, Walfisch-Bert oni model and Xia-Beroni model, are slightly mor e pessimistic as compared to the empiricalmodels, COST231-Walfisch-Ikegami model and Har-Xia-Be rtoni model. The singularity of Walfisch-Bertoni model and Xia-Bertoni model at  $\Delta h$ =0 m, i.e. bas e station antenna height is at the rooftop level, re sults from the unbounded value of multiple diffraction loss at rooftops.

In the foregoing discussion, prediction models were obtained for suburban/urban areas where the building height is relatively uniform. These form ulas can be used for the environments where the dominant contribution of the received signal is giv en by the propagation over the surrounding roofto However, some urban environments consists of the buildings of non-uniform heights, in which different propagation characteristics are observed. As an example, downtown Oakland is composed of low to high buildings and shows somewhat dif ferent range dependence for each route. For this particular environment, we will attempt to derive site-specific formula and compare with the other f ormulas obtained from low-rise environments of re latively uniform building heights.

# B. Path loss formulas for non-uniform building height area

In [8], the empirical path loss formulas for low rise environments of quasi-unifrom building heigh ts, such as Sunset and Mission districts where the formulas were obtained, are given by

Staircase route:

$$PL(R_k)$$
=[137.61+35.16 log $f_G$ ]+[12.48+4.16 log  $f_G$ ] sgn( $\Delta h$ ) log(1+| $\Delta h$ |)+[39.46-4.13 sgn( $\Delta h$ ) log(1+| $\Delta h$ |)]log $R_k$ 

(1)

Transverse route:

 $PL(R_k) = [139.01 + 42.59 \log f_G] + [14.97 + 4.99 \log f_G]$ 

$$sgn(\Delta h) log(1+|\Delta h|)+[40.67-4.57 sgn(\Delta h) log(1+|\Delta h|)]logR_k$$
 (2)

Lateral route:

$$PL(R_k) = [127.39 + 31.63 \log f_G] + [13.05 + 4.35 \log f_G]$$
  
 $sgn(\Delta h) \log(1 + |\Delta h|) + [29.18 - 6.70 sgn(\Delta h)$   
 $\log(1 + |\Delta h|) \log R\kappa$  (3)

where

$$sgn(x) = \begin{cases} +1 & x > 0 \\ -1 & otherwise \end{cases}$$

and  $\Delta h = h_b - h_{BD}$  ( $h_b$  = antenna height measured from ground level,  $h_{BD}$ = average building height measured from ground level),  $f_G$ =frequency in GHz,  $R_b$ =antenna separation in km.

As is shown by eq.(1)-(3) first constant of each formula corresponds to path loss at 1 km for 1 G Hz with  $\Delta h=0$  m. Based on the first constants, 1 ateral route show very different values of path los s. This disparity between lateral route and stairca se or transverse route is also observed in other ar eas of relatively uniform building heights. It was pointed in [8] that large segment length on ray p ath between the nearest rooftop from a receiver a nd the receiver can be regarded as the principal c ause for the small path loss related with lateral ro

The average building height of Oakland city w as computed using a report which contained the n umber of stories of each building in this area. A ntenna height used for measurements at 876 MHz, 1937 MHz were 3.2 m, 8.7 m and 13.4 m. Most buildings are lower than 5-story height while a fe w higher buildings are mixed in. Average buildi ng height was calculated as 12 m, the height bet ween those of 3 and 4 stories. The average heig ht of intervening buildings varied with each drive route. For transverse and lateral routes, most pro pagation paths are thought to be over the rooftop s. In the staircase route, high-rise buildings locat ed in the middle of the route cause the signal pr opagating over the rooftops to go around the buil ding corners and subsequently produce large diffra ction loss. However, for the whole area, we belie

ve that propagation over the rooftop is the domin ant process for most paths.

Since  $h_{BD}$  is 12 m,  $\Delta h$ = -8.8 m, -3.3 m and 1.4 m for the three base station antenna heights used. The non-LOS path loss formulas fit to the routes shown in Figure 1, by using the intercepts at 1 km and slope indexes, are found to be:

# Staircase Route:

$$PL(R_{\ell})=[140.14+32.13\log f_{G}]+[7.38+2.46\log f_{G}]$$

$$sgn(\Delta h)\log(1+|\Delta h|)+$$

$$[45.01-5.20sgn(\Delta h)\log(1+|\Delta h|)]\log R_{\ell}$$
(4)

Transverse Route

$$PL(R_{i})=[128.23+39.97\log f_{G}]+[6.33+2.21\log f_{G}]$$

$$sgn(\Delta h) \log(1+|\Delta h|)+$$

$$[30.38-2.31sgn(\Delta h)\log(1+|\Delta h|)]\log R_{i}$$
(5)

Lateral Route

$$PL(R_k) = [126.68+42.13\log f_G] + [5.01+1.67\log f_G]$$

$$sgn(\Delta h) \log(1+|\Delta h|) +$$

$$[33.67-2.81sgn(\Delta h)\log(1+|\Delta h|)]\log R_k$$
(6)

Since the path loss values for the transverse and lateral routes are close to each other, the path loss on these two routes can be predicted by a combined zig-zag route formula given by

# Zig-zag route

$$PL(R_{k})=[127.46+41.05\log f_{G}]+[5.67+1.94\log f_{G}]$$

$$sgn(\Delta h) \log(1+|\Delta h|)+$$

$$[32.02-2.56sgn(\Delta h)\log(1+|\Delta h|)]\log R_{k}$$
(7)

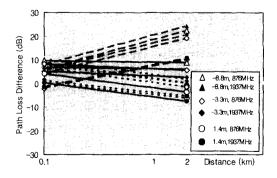
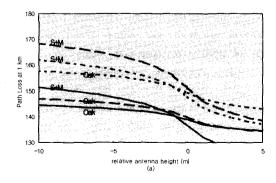


Figure 5: Path loss difference between the path

loss formulas of eq.(1)-(3) and staircase (dotted lines), transverse (dashed lines) and lateral (solid lines) routes measurements obtained in downtown Oakland. Path loss of the transverse route is overestimated by the formula in eq. (2).

Figure 5 shows the prediction errors with three different antenna heights and two different frequen cies when the individual formulas in eq.(1)-(3) are used for each route. Due to the scattering by tal 1 buildings on staircase routes, the path loss on transverse route is overestimated by eq.(2). Except for the case of the transverse route, the formulas estimate the values of the path loss for the various routes with reasonable accuracy. The formulas fit to this environment are shown as the continuous curves in Figure 6. For a pictorial comparison, variation of intercepts and slope indexes based on eq.(1)-(3) is also illustrated in Figure 6.

It is seen in Figure 6(a) that street grid depend ence observed in Sunset and Mission districts no longer holds in downtown Oakland, as observed f rom close path loss intercept values of transverse route and lateral route. Also it is noted that ante nna height dependence in downtown Oakland is r educed, since the range of path loss variation with  $10 \ m < \Delta h < 5 \ m$  is smaller than that of Suns et and Mission districts. This also suggests that variation of path loss due to diffraction process around building edges to a receiver on staircase rou te and variation of power contribution due to scat tering to receivers on transverse and lateral routes are less sensitive to antenna height as compared to that based on over-the rooftop propagation.



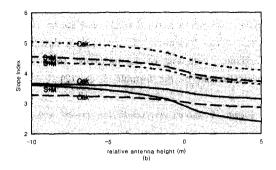


Figure 6: (a) Intercepts, (b) slope indexes and their fit lines of 1937MHz for staircase (dotted lines), transverse (dashed lines) and lateral (solid lines) routes. Fit lines associated with symbol "S+M" correspond to those of Sunset and Mission districts while symbol "Oak" indicates fit lines for downtown Oakland measurements.

For a receiver on non-LOS routes, each path to a receiver crosses rooftops that are typically repre sented by the edges of absorbing half screens orien ted perpendicular to the direction of ray path and located at the middle of the buildings(8). Due to the insensitivity to irregularities in the building sp acing along the ray path, path loss for base statio n antenna heights near to the rooftops can be obt ained with average building spacing[34]. It was sh own in [8] that path loss varies as 20 log(M), w here M is the number of intervening buildings, so that path loss is not strongly dependent on numbe r of buildings when M is large. Moreover, distan ce between a receiver and the last rooftop on ray path of transverse route is close to that associated with staircase route. Therefore, for a given distan ce, individual path loss components, free space lo ss, multiple screen forward diffraction loss and dif fraction loss at the last rooftop should show ident ical or close values with both routes.

Suppose the tall buildings are located at the same distances from the base station and are mixed in on transverse route instead of staircase route. Diffraction at building edges and scattering by building surfaces will affect the path loss of receivers on staircase route, as observed with transverse routes when they are on staircase route. In

fluence of these buildings on received signal level in dB scale associated with lateral route might be less significant due to higher received signal level. The boosted signal level on staircase route may r esult in diminished path loss difference denoted in dB scale, depending on the level of contribution f rom scattered and/or diffracted signals, between st aircase route and lateral route while diffraction los s because of the buildings causes large path loss of receivers on transverse route. This argument c an be extended further with arbitrarily located an d more uniformly distributed tall buildings on non -LOS routes. Tall buildings on staircase route wi ll affect path loss associated with transverse route whereas those on transverse route will have an in fluence on that corresponding to staircase route, s uchthat it is expected street grid dependence of p ath loss in non-uniform building heights is getting more deviated with a few and more uniformly dis tributed tall buildings from that observed in areas of quasi-uniform building heights.

## IV. Conclusions

In this paper, a comprehensive review of outdo or microcell measurements, path loss formulas der ived for low-rise areas of non-uniform building he ights and a discussion on street grid dependnece with a few tall buildings existing in non-LOS rou tes were presented. We have attempted to establi sh empirical path loss formulas for downtown Oa kland. The areas pertinent to the scope of this p aper are where over-the-rooftop propagation is the dominant process, which naturally precludes the a pplication for high-rise urban core with low base station antenna. It is expected that transverse rou te formula obtained from downtown Oakland can be used in other areas of non-uniform building he ights when a few tall buildings are located on sta ircase route. Similar path loss decrease associated with staircase route might be observed when a fe w tall buildings are located on transverse route in stead of staircase route. In general, street grid de pendence, which was clearly observed with low-ri

se areas of relatively uniform building heights, is expected to be significantly reduced with a few ta Il buildings located on a particular or various type of non-LOS routes.

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