

ADDRESSING THE HIDDEN TERMINAL PROBLEM IN MU-MIMO  
WLANS WITH RELAXED ZERO-FORCING APPROACH

by

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## CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than University of Technology Sydney, Australia.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Last but not the least, this research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

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Sanjeeb Shrestha



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*To my parents, my wife Sulochana, my son Yash, and my daughter Yashasvi*



## ABSTRACT

An ever-increasing data rate demand, mainly due to the proliferation of numerous smart devices, enterprises' mission critical networks, and industry automation, has mounted tremendous pressure on today's Wireless Local Area Networks (WLANs). Several avenues such as bandwidth, constellation density, the Multiple Input Multiple Output (MIMO) technique, etc., have been explored, e.g., IEEE802.11n/ac standards, to keep up with the demand. Future WLAN standard, e.g., IEEE802.11ax, with potential technologies such as uplink Multi-User (MU)-MIMO, full duplex transmission, etc., is anticipated by 2019.

Having said that, there has been a strong emphasis on solving the technical issues with WLANs along with the addition of new frontiers in order to cope with the data rate demanded. One such impending decade-long issue is the inevitable Hidden Terminal (HT) problem in a distributive, decentralised and densely deployed WLANs, which fundamentally arises because of the transmission time overlaps between different transmitters operating at a particular frequency. The consequence is that it causes collisions of signals, which sharply reduces the system throughput.

In the context of MU-MIMO based WLANs, several designs for a general network scenario, without the consideration of the HT problem, have been proposed, bringing efficiency by avoiding the collision of signals. However, a dedicated design, which could effectively address the HT problem in MU-MIMO WLANs



and also become interoperable (with legacy standards) and feasible with existing hardware, is lacking to the best of our knowledge.

In this thesis, we propose a solution for the HT problem which has three fundamental attributes.

First, a) at the Physical (PHY) layer, the Zero-forcing (ZF) transmission strategy with fairness and throughput aware precoding is proposed, b) a hybrid scheduling scheme, combining the packet position-based First In First Out (FIFO) and channel quality-based scheme, namely the Best of the Two Choices, is designed, c) at the Medium Access Control (MAC) layer, Degrees-of-Freedom (DoF) based Transmission Opportunity (TXOP) for Access Points (APs) is developed which is backed by an extended Point Coordination Function (PCF), d) an explicit channel acquisition framework is proposed for ZF which has a reduced signaling time overhead of  $98.6740 \mu s$  compared to IEEE802.11ac. e) performance evaluation methodologies are: i) hardware testbed results of the PHY strategy, which shows a received SNR gain of about 6 dB on average, and about 10 dB in comparison to the HT scenario, ii) simulation results of the MAC design, which shows a constant throughput gain of 4 – 5 times w.r.t. the popular Request to Send/Clear to Send (RTS/CTS) solution.

Second, to address the interoperability issue, we purposefully use the standard frame format except for some required logical changes. Notably, the transition mechanism of our design, and for any MAC that uses standard frame formats, is investigated meticulously. The transition condition, transition steps and transition frame formats are detailed.

Third, to address a practical constraint of an imperfect Channel State Information (CSI) at APs, a) we incorporate the Finite Rate Feedback (FRF) model in our solution. The effects on system parameters such as quantisation error bounds,



throughput loss w.r.t. perfect CSI, etc., are discussed with closed-form analytical expressions, b) instead of an ideal ZF technique, a Relaxed ZF (RZF) framework is considered, in which the interference and power constraints of the optimisation problem are relaxed to the interference upper bound and to the maximum transmit power respectively. Our results lead to a distributive algorithm for calculating the optimal ZF precoding vector which suits the distributive, decentralised and uncoordinated nature of MU-MIMO WLANs.





# Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xxiii</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>xxvii</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background . . . . .	1
1.2 The Context . . . . .	3
1.3 Motivation of the Research . . . . .	4
1.4 Research Objectives . . . . .	6
1.5 Scope of the Thesis . . . . .	6
1.6 Organisation of the Thesis . . . . .	8
1.7 Thesis Contributions . . . . .	10
<b>2 Background and Related Work</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Background . . . . .	13
2.2 Related Work . . . . .	16
2.3 Summary . . . . .	26
<b>3 Hidden-Terminal Based System Model in WLANs and Design Oppor-</b>	

<b>tunities</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 System Model . . . . .	30
3.2 Design Opportunities . . . . .	32
3.2.1 ZF Precoding for MU-MIMO WLANs in Our Design . . . . .	33
3.2.2 Primer-Zero-forcing Beamforming in Multiuser Interference Channel	33
3.2.3 Application-specific Requirements of MU-MIMO WLANs . . . . .	34
3.2.4 Implications of the Design . . . . .	37
3.3 Summary . . . . .	39
<b>4 Fairness and Network Throughput-Aware Precoding</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Introduction . . . . .	41
4.2 Steps to Obtain the Precoding Vector . . . . .	42
4.2.1 Channel Acquisition via Channel Sounding . . . . .	42
4.2.2 TXOP Decision . . . . .	42
4.2.3 Concurrent Transmission Algorithm to Find Clients Among Desired Clients . . . . .	43
4.2.4 Calculation of Precoding Vector . . . . .	44
4.3 Concurrent Transmission Algorithm . . . . .	45
4.3.1 Concurrent Transmission Algorithm Design . . . . .	45
4.3.2 Performance of the Concurrent Transmission Algorithm . . . . .	51
4.4 Summary . . . . .	52
<b>5 Experimental Study</b>	<b>55</b>
5.1 Introduction . . . . .	55
5.2 Experimental Prototype Setup . . . . .	55
5.2.1 The USRP2 Platform . . . . .	57
5.2.2 Implementations . . . . .	58

---

5.2.3	Channel Feedback . . . . .	59
5.3	Practical Issues . . . . .	61
5.3.1	Frequency Offset and Phase Tracking . . . . .	61
5.3.2	Time Synchronisation and Packet Detection . . . . .	62
5.3.3	Multipath . . . . .	62
5.4	Performance Evaluation from the Testbed . . . . .	62
5.4.1	Analysis from the Raw Received Signal . . . . .	63
5.4.2	The Impact on the Received SNR . . . . .	64
5.4.3	Analysis of ESNR . . . . .	66
5.5	Summary . . . . .	68
<b>6</b>	<b>Degrees-of-Freedom-Based Medium Access</b>	<b>69</b>
6.1	Introduction . . . . .	69
6.2	Wireless Medium Access Procedure . . . . .	70
6.2.1	Acquiring CSI Associated with Transmitter and Clients . . . . .	71
6.2.2	Performance Evaluation . . . . .	74
6.2.3	Transmission Opportunity for APs with Heterogeneous Antennas . . . . .	78
6.2.4	Fairness among APs with Heterogeneous Antennas . . . . .	79
6.2.5	Fairness Index of the Algorithm for TXOPs . . . . .	79
6.3	Wireless Medium-access Function . . . . .	81
6.3.1	Contention Free Period and Contention Period . . . . .	83
6.3.2	Medium Access to Downlink . . . . .	84
6.3.3	Medium Access to Uplink . . . . .	85
6.3.4	When to Initiate the Extended PCF? . . . . .	86
6.4	Some Worthwhile Points . . . . .	86
6.4.1	Are Active and Silent Modes Fixed? . . . . .	86

6.4.2	How does the Concurrent Transmission Algorithm go out of Active and Silent Modes? . . . . .	87
6.4.3	If There is No Contention Among the APs, How will They Synchronise? . . . . .	88
6.5	Summary . . . . .	89
<b>7</b>	<b>The ZF Technique with Finite Rate Feedback in MU-MIMO WLANs</b>	<b>91</b>
7.1	Introduction . . . . .	91
7.2	System Model . . . . .	93
7.3	Expected Quantisation Error for MU-MIMO WLANs . . . . .	95
7.4	Rate Reduction for Zero-forcing Beamforming with FRF in MU-MIMO WLANs . . . . .	97
7.5	Numerical Analysis . . . . .	100
7.5.1	Error Bound Analysis . . . . .	100
7.5.2	Rate with Finite Rate Feedback . . . . .	101
7.5.3	Average Rate Reduction for Zero-forcing Beamforming due to FRF	105
7.6	Conclusion . . . . .	105
<b>8</b>	<b>Relaxed Zero-forcing Precoding Based on Channel Quantisation for Finite Rate Feedback based MU-MIMO WLANs</b>	<b>107</b>
8.1	Introduction . . . . .	107
8.2	The Feedback Bits $B$ . . . . .	109
8.2.1	Determining Feedback Bits $B$ . . . . .	110
8.2.2	Feedback Bits $B$ for Heterogeneous Antenna Clients in MU-MIMO WLANs . . . . .	114
8.3	Zero-forcing Relaxed with Quantisation Bits $B$ and Distributive Algorithm	115
8.3.1	Formulation . . . . .	115

8.3.2	The Optimal ZF Precoding Vector . . . . .	117
8.3.3	Sub-gradient Based Solution for Dual Problem . . . . .	120
8.3.4	Distributive Algorithm for Optimal ZF Precoding Vector Tuned with Quantised Bits $B$ . . . . .	121
8.4	Simulation Results . . . . .	123
8.5	Summary . . . . .	130
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusions and Future Work</b>	<b>133</b>
9.1	Conclusions . . . . .	133
9.2	Future Work . . . . .	137
9.2.1	Live Performance Measurements . . . . .	137
9.2.2	Frequency of CSI Measurements . . . . .	138
9.2.3	Sufficiency Condition/s for the Pareto-boundary . . . . .	138
<b>A</b>	<b>List of Publications</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Lemma Proofs</b>	<b>145</b>
C.1	Proof of Lemma 1 . . . . .	145
C.2	Proof of Lemma 2 . . . . .	146
C.3	Proof of Lemma 3 . . . . .	147
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>148</b>



# List of Figures

2.1	The Hidden-Terminal problem with a specific three-network scenario, i.e., $K=3$ . . . . .	15
3.1	The HT problem with a specific two-network scenario, i.e., $K=2$ . . . . .	30
4.1	Diagrammatic illustration of the design in the PHY layer. The figure basically illustrates our way to calculate a fairness and throughput-aware ZF precoding vector at AP. . . . .	50
4.2	Throughput comparison among FIFO, Brute-Force and FIFO combined with Best of the Two Choices. We discuss three concurrency algorithms for APs to transmit with their desired clients within the network after winning TXOP. The throughput comparison is made among FIFO, Brute-Force and the FIFO combined with the Best of the Two Choices. . . . .	51
5.1	Basic block diagram of our hardware prototype implementation. . . . .	56
5.2	The frequency response of the channel with 64 subcarriers out of which 48 are occupied subcarriers and the remainder are unoccupied subcarriers. The response is obtained by estimating the channel with the preambles sent by APs. . . . .	60
5.3	The decoded raw samples in a collided form at client ‘I4’ from AP1 and AP2 in the HT Scenario. . . . .	63

5.4 The raw received signals after applying our scheme in the HT scenario where AP2 cancels interference at I4, and as a result the AP1 signal is only seen at I4. However, some part of the AP2 signal is also present. This is deliberately done to show what the AP2 signal would look like when interference cancellation is not applied. . . . . 65

5.5 Comparison of the received SNR per subcarrier with the collision-free  $j$ th network AP1 and the  $j$ th network client I4 transmission, the proposed solution and the HT scenario. The received SNRs in collision-free transmissions, the proposed solution and the HT scenario are plotted separately, and present them in one combined figure. The gain in SNRs is associated with 48 occupied subcarriers. . . . . 66

5.6 ESNR comparison of different modulation schemes in the HT Scenario. The figure shows an Effective SNR comparison: a) when the HT scenario is present (ESNR-ori), and b) ESNR after applying our scheme (ESNR-null). Different modulation schemes Binary Phase Shift Keying (BPSK), Quadrature Phase Shift Keying (QPSK), 16QAM and 64QAM are used for comparison. . . . . 67

6.1 Frame formats and basic Channel Sounding process. The Channel Sounding process and the frame formats used for channel sounding. We present the Channel Sounding process considering the  $i$ th network AP2 and clients from both the  $i$ th and the  $j$ th networks. . . . . 72

6.2 Capacity comparison between RTS/CTS, our WMA and IEEE802.11ac MAC: air-time 20 ms. . . . . 76

6.3 Capacity comparison between RTS/CTS and our WMA and IEEE802.11ac MAC, air-time 2 ms. . . . . 77



6.4	Throughput of three APs with the Fairness Index. Basically we present a Jain Fairness Index considering 3 APs and clients, i.e., $4 \times 4$ , $3 \times 3$ and $2 \times 2$ systems. . . . .	82
6.5	We extend the traditional PCF for concurrent transmissions. Since concurrent transmissions are contention free, the CFP of PCF can be used for this purpose. The figure shows 4 concurrent transmissions as an example. . . . .	83
6.6	Metadata structure. . . . .	84
7.1	A diagrammatic representation of System Model with FRF, where a dotted violet line between the $j$ th AP and $j$ th client 'I6' represents a wireless FRF. However, the system model assumes the similar wireless FRFs that exist between all APs and clients in order to feedback CSI in quantised form. . . . .	93
7.2	Error Bounds with: a. number of antennas at clients $M$ and b. Feedback bits per antenna $\alpha$ . . . . .	101
7.3	$4 \times 1$ MISO capacity with $B = 6$ bits. . . . .	102
7.4	$4 \times 2$ MIMO capacity with $B = 6$ bits. . . . .	103
7.5	$4 \times 2$ MIMO capacity with error bound. . . . .	104
7.6	Average rate reduction due to Finite Rate Feedback when $B = 6$ bits. . . . .	106
8.1	Average rate reduction due to Finite Rate Feedback vs feedback bits $B$ . . . . .	111
8.2	a) Feedback bits $B$ as a function of $\theta$ , b) Predicted bits $B$ . . . . .	113
8.3	a) Optimal values vs Number of iterations with varying feedback bits $B$ , when $\lambda_{jj} = \frac{P_j}{\ \mathbf{v}_j\ ^2} = 5$ ; b) 3D view showing Optimal values, Number of iterations and Number of feedback bits $B$ , when $\lambda_{jj} = \frac{P_j}{\ \mathbf{v}_j\ ^2} = 5$ . . . . .	125
8.4	Values of $\lambda_{j1}$ , $\lambda_{j2}$ and $\lambda_{j3}$ for feedback bits $B = 5, 10, 15$ bits respectively, when $\lambda_{jj} = \frac{P_j}{\ \mathbf{v}_j\ ^2} = 5$ . . . . .	127

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- 8.5 a) Optimal values vs Number of iterations with varying feedback bits  $B$ , when  $\lambda_{jj}$  uses power gradient i.e.,  $\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_j\|^2 - P_j$ , b) 3D view showing Optimal values, Number of iterations and Number of feedback bits  $B$ , when  $\lambda_{jj}$  uses power gradient i.e.,  $\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_j\|^2 - P_j$ . . . . . 128
- 8.6 a) Values of  $\lambda_{j1}$ ,  $\lambda_{j2}$  and  $\lambda_{j3}$  for feedback bits  $B = 5, 10, 15$  bits respectively, when  $\lambda_{jj}$  uses the power gradient, i.e.,  $\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_j\|^2 - P_j$ , b) Values of  $\lambda_{jj}$  when  $\lambda_{jj}$  uses the power gradient, i.e.,  $\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_j\|^2 - P_j$ . . . . . 129

# List of Tables

5.1	PHYSICAL LAYER PARAMETERS . . . . .	57
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