Halo and Sub-Halo Finding in Cosmological N-body Simulations

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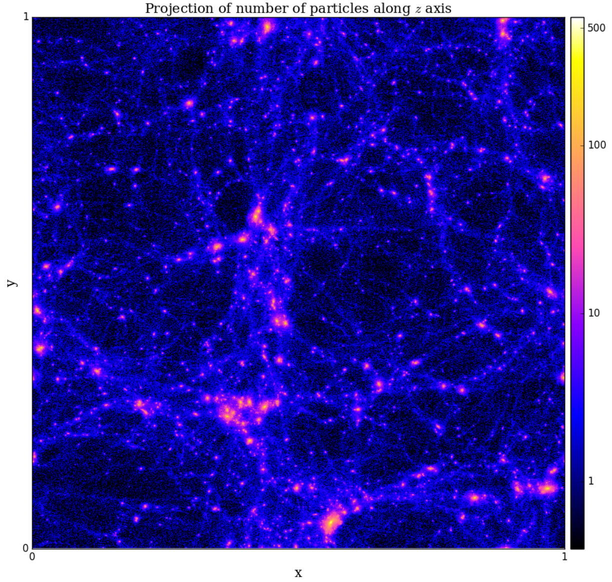
Cosmological N-body Simulations

- N-body simulations are simulations of the motion of particles under the influence of physical forces. In this work, I focus on collisionless dark matter particles: only significant interaction between the particles is via gravity.
- After some time, the particles will clump together. Such gravitationally bound objects are called *halos*.
- Halos themselves may contain self-bound objects, called *subhalos*.
- The identification of halos and subhalos is an important tool for problems concerning cosmic structure and its formation.
- Codes that perform this task are called *halo-finders*.

Cosmological N-body Simulations

The results of a cosmological simulation of 128^3 dark matter particles at redshift $z = 0$ with $H_0 = 70.4$ and density parameters $\Omega_m = 0.272$ and $\Omega_\Lambda = 0.728$. The box length corresponds to 88.8 Mpc.



Unbinding Particles

- By convention, it is customary to treat all particles assigned to a halo as bound to it, even though from a strict energetic perspective they may not be.
- For subhalos, on the other hand, it is vital to identify and remove unbound particles:
  - Subhalos are located within a host halo and therefore expected to be contaminated by the host's particles
  - Usually subhalos contain far less particles than their hosts, so assigning particles to it without an unbinding procedure can influence its physical properties significantly.
- "Removing a particle" means here to assign it to the parent structure. This applies recursively to any level of substructure within substructure.

Goals of this thesis

- `RAMSES` (Teyssier, R. 2002) is a N-body and hydrodynamical code that contains a clump finding algorithm, `PHEW` (Bleuler et al. 2015).
- Both `PHEW` and `RAMSES` are fully parallel and make use of the MPI library. `PHEW` works on-the-fly.
- The goal of this thesis is to implement a particle unbinding algorithm to work with `PHEW` that is also fully parallel and works on-the-fly.

PHEW

- `PHEW` groups cells together by separating the mass density field along minima, thus dividing the density field into patches.
- The algorithm can be divided in four main steps:
    - segmentation
    - connectivity establishment
    - noise removal and
    - substructure merging

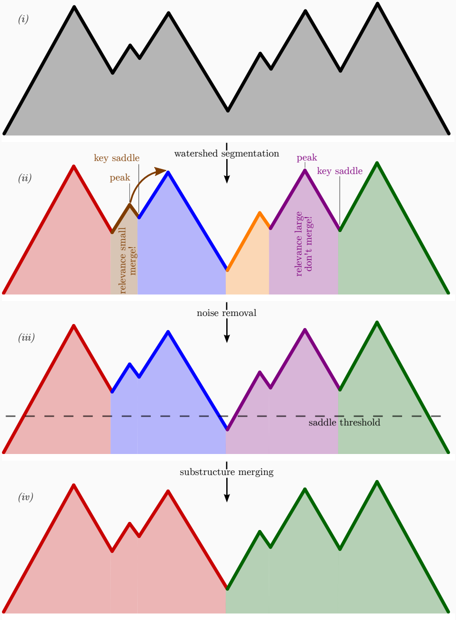
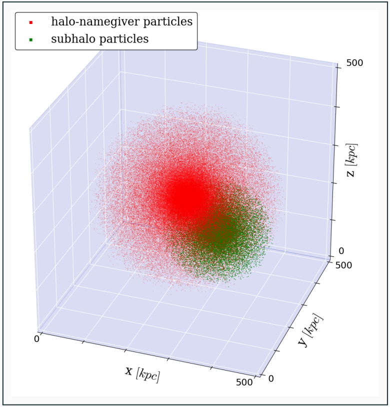


Image adapted from Bleuler et al. 2015.

Test Case

To demonstrate the effects of the particle unbinding, highly idealistic structures where the effects can be seen and evaluated more easily, created using `DICE` (Perret 2016) will be used.



The initial particle distribution of the `dice-twobody` dataset. A smaller halo (subhalo 1) made of 40'000 particles is nested within a bigger halo (halo-namegiver), which contains 200'000 particles.

Particle Unbinding

In an isolated system in the centre of mass frame, each particle i can be assigned an energy E_i:

$$E_i = T_i + V_i = \frac{1}{2} m_i \cdot v_i^2 + m_i \phi(\vec{r}_i)$$

A particle is considered bound if:

$$E_i < 0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad v_i < \sqrt{-2 \cdot \phi(\vec{r}_i)}$$

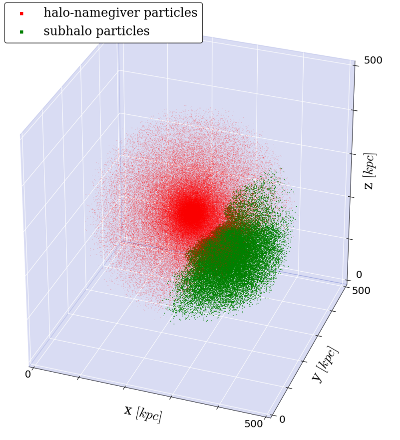
Assuming spherical symmetry, the potential is given by

$$\phi(r_i) = -G \int\limits_{r_i}^{r_{max}} \frac{M(< \tilde{r})}{\tilde{r}^2} \mathrm{d}\tilde{r} - G \frac{M_{tot}}{r_{max}}$$

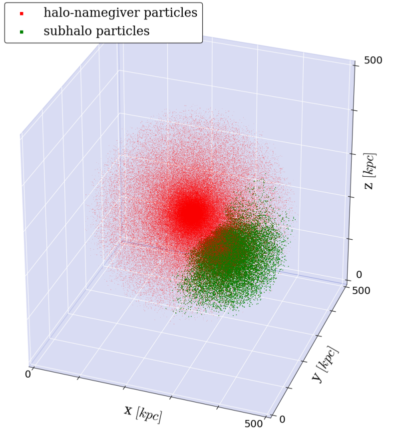
Where $M(< r) \equiv \int\limits_0^r 4\pi\rho(\tilde{r})\tilde{r}^2 \mathrm{d}\tilde{r}$ is the mass enclosed by a sphere of radius r.

Results: `dice-twobody`-dataset

PHEW only

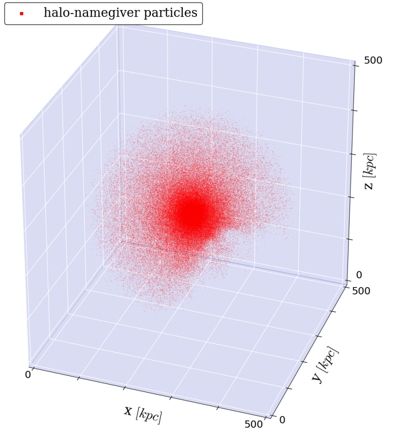


simple unbinding

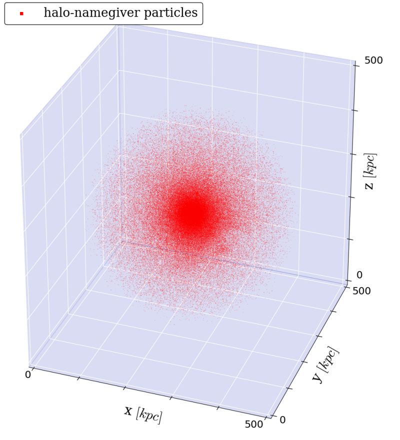


Results: halo-namegiver particles only

PHEW only



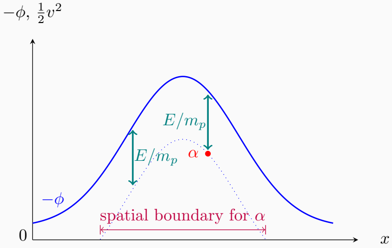
simple unbinding



Accounting for Neighbouring Structures

By construction, the identified subhalos are not isolated. This fact changes the situation significantly for the interpretation of what particles should be considered bound.

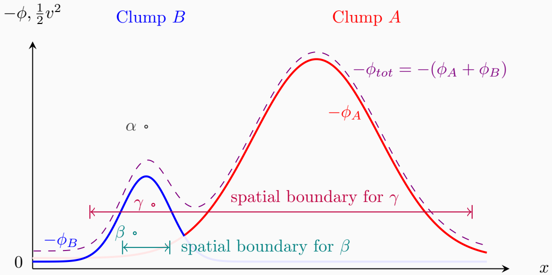
Consider first a particle α in the potential of an isolated clump:



The spatial boundaries of its trajectory can be found by demanding energy conservation $E/m_p = \frac{1}{2}v^2 + \phi = const.$ by following the curve of constant total energy to the points where $v^2 = 0$.

Accounting for Neighbouring Structures

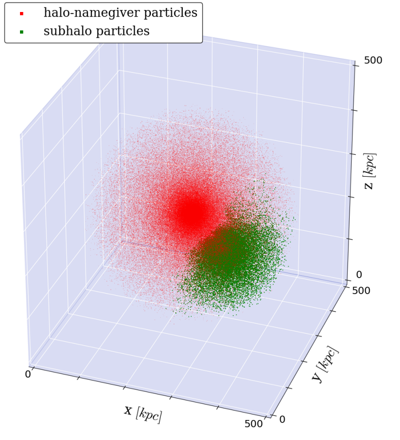
Now apply the same thoughts to an isolated halo that is made up from two clumps:



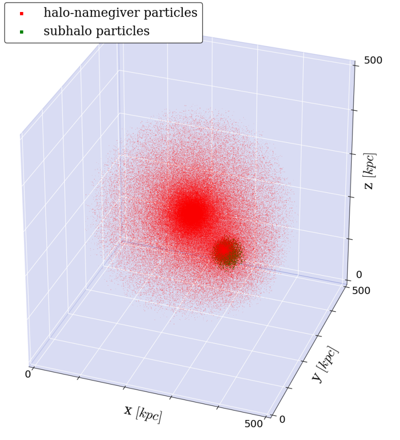
- α is clearly not bound to the clump B.
- β will remain bound on an elliptic trajectory around the centre of mass.
- γ is energetically bound to the clump just like β, but because of clump A's neighbouring potential, the particle can leave the boundaries of clump B and wander off deep into clump A.

Results

simple unbinding

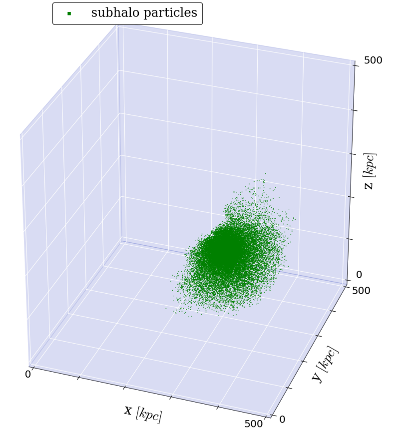


accounting for neighbours

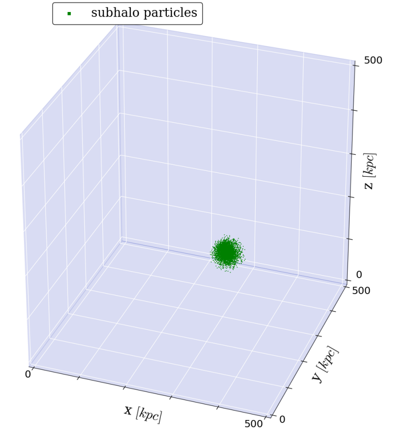


Results: subhalo particles only

simple unbinding

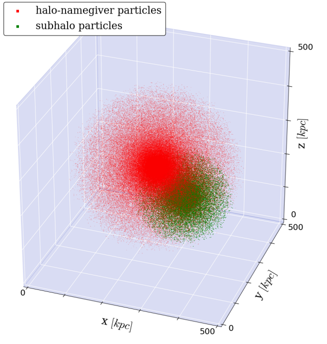


accounting for neighbours

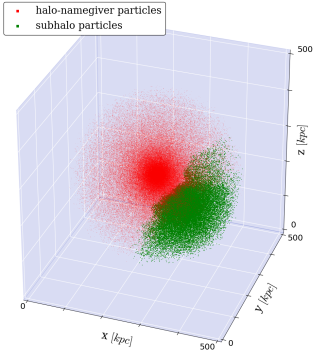


Biased Clump Properties

initial set-up



clumps found by `PHEW`



The identified clump properties will be biased:

- Missing particles: Subhalo is cut off
- Alien particles: Subhalo in contaminated by host's particles

Biased Clump Properties

It seems likely that the clump properties after particle unbinding should be closer to the known ones, particularly so if only exclusively bound particles are considered.

$\Rightarrow$ recompute the clump properties after unbinding and use this updated information to go through the entire procedure again.

Reiterate until the bulk velocity of each clump converges:

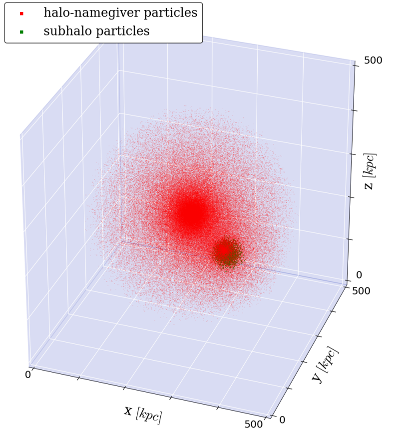
$$\text{bulk velocity converged} \Leftrightarrow \left| \frac{v_{bulk,old} - v_{bulk,new}}{v_{bulk,old}} \right| < \varepsilon$$

where ε is a user-defined convergence limit.

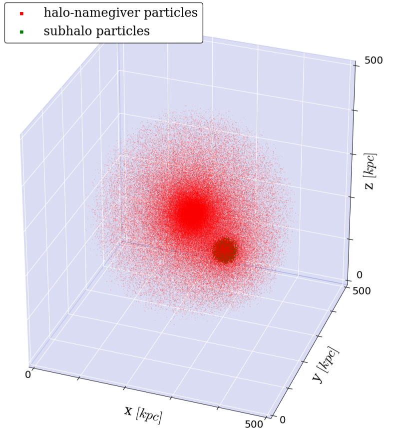
For $\varepsilon = 0.01$, the deviation from the originally set bulk velocity to the found bulk velocity was $< 1\%$ and needed 7 iterations.

Results

accounting for neighbours

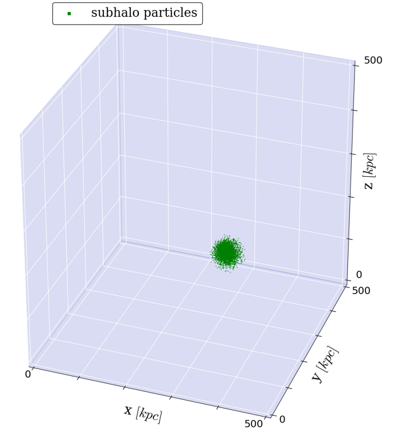


iterative properties determination

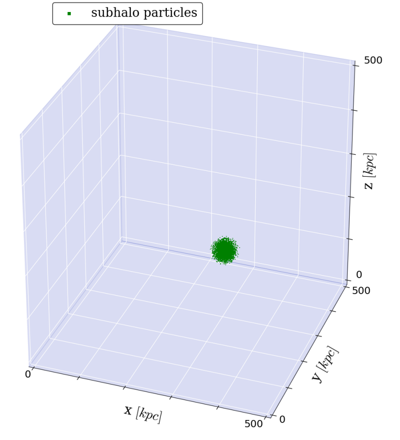


Results: halo-namegiver particles only

accounting for neighbours



iterative properties determination



References

Andreas Bleuler et al. "PHEW: a parallel segmentation algorithm for three-dimensional AMR datasets". In: *Computational Astrophysics and Cosmology* 2.1 (2015), pp. 1–16. ISSN: 2197-7909. DOI: 10.1186/s40668-015-0009-7. URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s40668-015-0009-7.

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Teyssier, R. "Cosmological hydrodynamics with adaptive mesh refinement. A new high resolution code called RAMSES". In: *Astronomy and Astrophysics* 385 (Apr. 2002), pp. 337–364. DOI: 10.1051/0004-6361:20011817. eprint: astro-ph/0111367.