

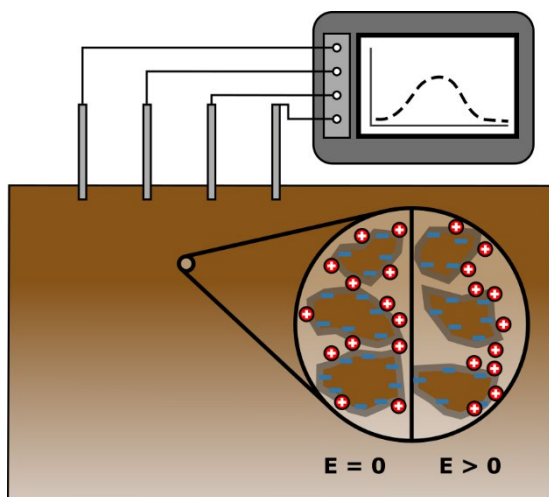
1 **Field-based estimation of cation exchange capacity using induced**  
2 **polarization methods**

3 Running Title: *Field-based estimation of CEC using IP methods*

4 **Abstract**

5 This study investigates the potential of field-based induced polarization (IP)  
6 methods to provide *in-situ* estimates of soil cation exchange capacity  
7 (CEC). CEC influences the fate of nutrients and pollutants in the subsurface.  
8 However, estimates of CEC require sampling and laboratory analysis, which  
9 can be costly, especially at large scales. Induced polarization (IP) methods  
10 offer an alternative approach for CEC estimation. The sensitivity of IP  
11 measurements to the surface properties of geological materials makes  
12 them more appropriate than geophysical methods that are sensitive to bulk  
13 electrical properties (e.g., DC resistivity and electromagnetic induction  
14 methods). Such abilities of IP are well demonstrated in the laboratory;  
15 however, applications are lacking in field studies. In this work the ability of  
16 IP to characterize CEC of floodplain soils is assessed by implementing a  
17 methodology that allows for direct comparison between IP and soil  
18 parameters. In one field, soil polarization and CEC exhibited the expected  
19 positive correlation; and multi-frequency measurements showed no clear  
20 advantage over single-frequency measurements. In another field, coarser  
21 soils (with low CEC) exhibited a high polarization. These coarser soils in the  
22 second field were characterized by anomalous magnetic susceptibility  
23 values, and hence the polarization was attributed to the presence of

24 magnetic minerals. Although better than order-of-magnitude estimates of  
25 CEC were possible in soils without substantial magnetic minerals,  
26 characterization of porosity, saturation, cementation and saturation  
27 exponents, and pore fluid conductivity would improve predictions.  
28 However, characterization of these parameters would require similar efforts  
29 as direct CEC measurements. This study contributes to bridging the gap  
30 between laboratory-derived relationships and their applicability in field  
31 applications. Overall, this work provides valuable insight for future studies  
32 seeking to understand polarization mechanisms in soils at the field scale.



33

34 Graphical Abstract – Experimental design showing electrode layout and  
35 recorded spectral induced polarization (SIP) data. The left half of the  
36 zoomed in region shows the equilibrium state with no applied electrical  
37 field. The right half shows the situation whereby an electrical field causes  
38 the cations to migrate on the surface of mineral grains; which can then be  
39 measured with the SIP method.

40 Keywords: Induced Polarization, Hydrogeophysics, Petrophysics, Cation  
41 Exchange Capacity, Floodplains, Contamination

## 42 **1. Introduction**

43 The ability of the subsurface to retain and exchange cations has important  
44 implications for groundwater-surface water interactions (e.g., Smith and  
45 Lerner, 2008), agriculture (e.g., Ramos et al., 2018), and contaminant  
46 transport (e.g., Laing et al., 2009). For example, floodplain sediments can  
47 attenuate river-borne nutrients and contaminants to reduce ecological  
48 degradation (e.g., Overton et al., 2023). In agriculture, nutrient retention  
49 influences the leaching of fertilizers into groundwater (e.g., Gaines and  
50 Gaines, 1994; Abdelwaheb et al., 2019).

51 Attenuation characteristics of porous media are commonly quantified using  
52 cation exchange capacity (CEC), a parameter related, in part, to the  
53 electrically charged surfaces of porous media. Materials containing a high  
54 proportion of clay minerals and organic matter (OM) are characterized by  
55 high CEC values. However, measuring CEC is labor intensive and relies on  
56 laboratory analysis; this makes it difficult to characterize variability at the  
57 field scale. Consequently, there is substantial motivation to investigate  
58 methods that can make *in situ* assessments of CEC.

59 Geophysical methods offer a promising approach for estimating CEC in the  
60 field. They are relatively low-cost, quick to deploy, and have a larger  
61 measurement support volume than conventional soil sampling. Triantafilis

62 et al. (2009) showed positive correlations between CEC and electrical  
63 conductivity measurements from frequency domain electromagnetic  
64 induction (EMI) measurements. Similarly, McLachlan et al. (2022) found  
65 that CEC covaried with the in-phase component of EMI measurements in  
66 vineyard soils. The in-phase component of EMI measurements is related to  
67 magnetic susceptibility, and consequently, the link between CEC and in-  
68 phase was attributed to the iron content in the soil, which was concentrated  
69 in areas with high OM and CEC. Importantly, although Triantafilis et al.  
70 (2009) attributed the high bulk electrical conductivity values to CEC, bulk  
71 electrical conductivity is also strongly dependent on water content (e.g.,  
72 Archie, 1942). High CEC is typically associated with greater soil water  
73 retention (e.g., due to the finer texture), so CEC will often be positively  
74 correlated with water content. Therefore, relationships linking CEC and bulk  
75 electrical conductivity are likely to be ambiguous and site-specific.

76 Induced polarization (IP) methods offer an alternative approach for  
77 estimating CEC as they are sensitive to electrical polarization phenomena  
78 occurring at grain surfaces. Whereas bulk electrical conductivity is  
79 dominated by fluid content and fluid composition of the pore space,  
80 polarization is more closely related to the electrochemistry of grain surfaces  
81 (e.g., Kemna et al., 2012). Numerous laboratory studies have  
82 demonstrated strong links of IP with surface area, hydraulic conductivity,  
83 and CEC (e.g., Börner and Schön, 1991; Binley et al., 2005; Slater et al.,  
84 2007; Weller et al., 2010; Revil et al., 2012; 2014; Niu et al., 2016; Weller  
85 and Slater, 2019). Moreover, many of these works have demonstrated

86 generalizable relationships that can be applied to large datasets comprising  
87 different, predominantly saturated, geological materials (e.g., Revil et al.,  
88 2017). However, despite the progress made in laboratory studies,  
89 successful field-scale demonstrations are comparatively rare.

90 The relative scarcity of field-based studies can be attributed to the  
91 complexities of field-based IP acquisition. For instance, it is easier to control  
92 important parameters, e.g., fluid saturation and pore-fluid electrical  
93 conductivity, in laboratory studies. Another key difference is that whereas  
94 laboratory studies typically focus on broad-spectrum multi-frequency  
95 measurements, this is generally not possible in the field. Consequently, the  
96 polarization behavior of materials tends to be better characterized in  
97 laboratory studies.

98 It is also simpler to directly compare IP measurements with parameters of  
99 interest. Given the small sample volumes typically analyzed in laboratory  
100 experiments, SIP measurements can be made at equivalent scales. As  
101 noted by Singha et al. (2015), discrepancies in scales have been a key  
102 obstacle in the petrophysical interpretation of field-based electrical  
103 resistivity data. Consequently, the principal aim of this work is to assess  
104 the ability of field-based IP methods to make quantitative estimates of CEC.  
105 However, before discussing specific objectives, it is important to consider  
106 aspects of the IP method in some detail.

## 107 **2. Induced Polarization**

### 108 *2.1. Complex conductivity measurements*

109 The following focuses on frequency domain IP measurements; for further  
110 background on IP, including time-domain IP, see Binley and Slater (2020).  
111 Frequency domain IP measurements are determined from the amplitude  
112 and phase shift of a measured voltage between two electrodes, relative to  
113 a current injected between another two electrodes. Measurements are  
114 typically expressed as complex conductivity,  $\sigma^*$ .

$\sigma^*(\omega) = \sigma'(\omega) + i\sigma''(\omega),$	(1)
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115

116 where  $\omega$  represents the frequency,  $\sigma'$  represents the real component of  
117 electrical conductivity and  $\sigma''$  represents the imaginary component. At low  
118 frequencies (e.g., < 1 kHz), and the absence of matrix conductivity, the  
119 real component is typically described by current flow in pore fluids and at  
120 the grain-fluid interface (see Waxman and Smits, 1968):

$\sigma' = \sigma_{el} + \sigma'_{surf},$	(2)
---	-----

121

122 where  $\sigma_{el}$  and  $\sigma'_{surf}$  represent the electrolytic and real surface conductivity,  
123 respectively. In comparison, the imaginary component is typically

124 described by phenomena occurring at the grain-fluid interface (see Vinegar  
125 and Waxman, 1984):

$\sigma'' = \sigma''_{surf}$	(3)
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126

127 The equivalence of  $\sigma''$  and imaginary surface conductivity ( $\sigma''_{surf}$ ) infers that  
128 the IP method provides a more direct route to CEC quantification than  
129 methods sensitive to bulk electrical conductivity (which is typically  
130 dominated by  $\sigma'$ ), e.g., EMI or DC resistivity. However, it is important to  
131 note that  $\sigma''$  is not independent from saturation and pore water  
132 conductivity. For instance, a decrease in saturation results in a decrease in  
133 the connectivity of the fluid-grain interface, and a change in pore water  
134 conductivity results in a change in the concentration of counterions at the  
135 grain-fluid interface (see Vinegar and Waxman, 1984; Weller and Slater,  
136 2012).

137 Complex conductivity values are frequency-dependent; consequently,  
138 multi-frequency measurements are often used to characterize the spectral  
139 behavior of porous media. This approach is referred to as spectral IP (SIP)  
140 and in laboratory studies frequencies typically range from 1 mHz to 1 kHz.  
141 In comparison, field measurements typically have narrower bandwidths.  
142 For instance, Revil et al. (2021) collected usable data between 125 mHz  
143 and 37.5 Hz due to errors associated with electromagnetic inductive and  
144 capacitive effects. Similarly, Moser et al. (2023) collected data between 1

145 and 240 Hz but noted that data above 15 Hz were characterized by high  
146 measurement errors, again related to electromagnetic effects.

147 Electromagnetic effects are commonly encountered in field-based IP  
148 studies; consequently, there is a substantial body of work assessing  
149 approaches to improve the quality of IP data. In summary, electromagnetic  
150 capacitive effects occur due to high electrical resistance between electrodes  
151 and the ground, or due to the conductive shielding of the cables relative to  
152 the ground surface (e.g., Zimmermann et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2013;  
153 Revil et al., 2021). In comparison, electromagnetic inductive effects are  
154 predominantly related to the current flow along the cables between  
155 electrodes and IP instruments. The magnitude of inductive effects is  
156 proportional to the cable length, the subsurface electrical properties, and  
157 the frequency of the injected current (e.g., Ingeman-Nielsen and  
158 Baumgartner, 2008; Schmutz et al., 2014; Flores Orozco et al., 2018). It  
159 should be noted that electromagnetic effects have also been observed in  
160 laboratory studies, however, approaches to account for these effects have  
161 been implemented, e.g., Wang et al. (2021a).

## 162 *2.2. Relaxation Models*

163 The frequency dependence of complex conductivity in laboratory studies is  
164 typically analyzed using phenomenological relaxation models (e.g., Cole  
165 and Cole, 1941; Pelton et al., 1978). Usage of these models is less common  
166 for field IP data because reliable model parameter fitting requires  
167 measurements across a broad frequency range. In this work the Pelton et



168 al. (1978) model was used, see Tarasov and Titov (2013) and Slater and  
169 Weller (2022) for more background Cole-Cole and Pelton relaxation models.  
170 The Pelton model can be defined as follows:

$\rho^*(\omega) \approx \rho_0 \left( 1 - M \left( 1 - \frac{1}{1 + (i\omega\tau)^c} \right) \right),$	(4)
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171  
172 where  $\rho^*$  is the complex resistivity (the inverse of complex conductivity),  
173  $\rho_0$  is the low frequency, or DC, resistivity,  $M$  is the chargeability,  $c$  is the  
174 Cole-Cole exponent, and  $\tau$  denotes the relaxation time.  $M$  is a measure of  
175 the integrated polarization strength,  $c$  can be considered to represent a  
176 range of polarization time scales, and  $\tau$  represents an effective time  
177 constant of polarization (see Tarasov and Titov, 2013). These model  
178 parameters can be considered linked to the physical and electrochemical  
179 characteristics of the porous media. For example, finer-grain sediments are  
180 characterized by smaller  $\tau$  values but a greater surface area and, thus,  
181 higher  $M$  values.

182 In petrophysical models,  $M$  is typically expressed as a normalized  
183 chargeability (i.e.,  $M_n = M/\rho_0$ );  $M_n$  is recognized as a more direct measure  
184 of surface polarization (see Slater and Lesmes, 2002; Revil et al., 2017). It  
185 should also be noted that  $M_n$  can be obtained from the difference between  
186 high and low-frequency real conductivities (i.e.,  $M_n = \sigma'_\infty - \sigma'_0$ ).  
187 Additionally, given that field measurements typically have a limited  
188 bandwidth,  $M_n$  has been approximated from complex conductivity

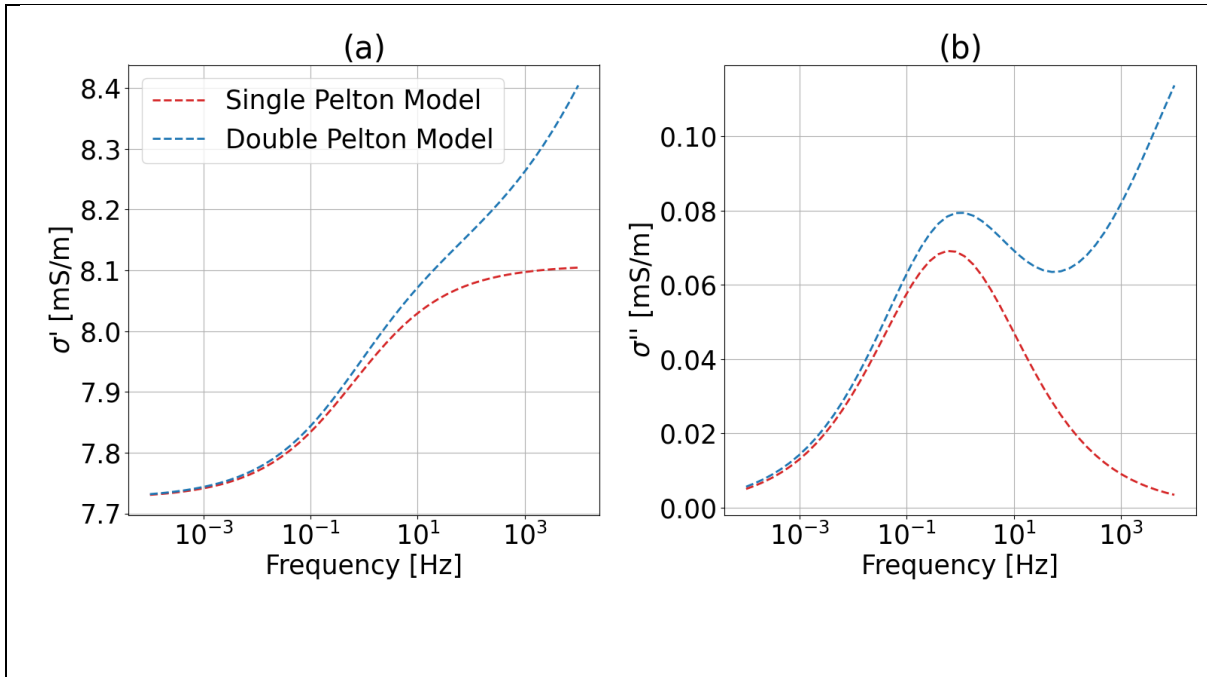
189 measurements made at two frequencies. For instance, Revil et al. (2017)  
 190 proposed a relationship to obtain  $M_n$  estimates from two imaginary  
 191 conductivity measurements for soils with broad of relaxation time  
 192 distributions, i.e., no clearly defined peak in the  $\sigma''$  spectra. These  $M_n$   
 193 approximations were subsequently used in the field study of Revil et al.  
 194 (2021) who used IP tomography to estimate CEC in vineyard soils.

195 Often, the Pelton model (eq. 4) is expanded to include higher orders and  
 196 account for high-frequency polarization effects (e.g., Maxwell-Wagner  
 197 polarization and capacitive coupling). In this way, the low-frequency  
 198 polarization effects, which are dictated by geological materials, can be  
 199 resolved more accurately, see review by Kemna et al. (2012). The general  
 200 equation for the multi-order Pelton model can be written as follows:

$\rho^*(\omega) \approx \rho_0 \left( 1 - \sum_{k=1}^N M_k \left( 1 - \frac{1}{1+(i\omega\tau_k)^{c_k}} \right) \right).$	(5)
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201

202 The difference between single and double Pelton models is highlighted in  
 203 Figure 1. For the double Pelton model,  $\sigma''$  continues to increase with  
 204 frequency, whereas, for the single Pelton model,  $\sigma''$  decreases at high  
 205 frequencies. Importantly, in both spectra, the low-frequency parameters  
 206 are identical. Consequently, if data are influenced by high-frequency  
 207 effects, the low-frequency parameters will not be accurately determined by  
 208 fitting a single-order relaxation model.



**Figure 1:** Single and double Pelton models for (a) real and (b) imaginary conductivity. The parameters used are as follows:  $\rho_0 = 130$  ohm.m,  $M_1 = 0.05$ ,  $\tau_1 = 0.28$  s,  $c_1 = 0.44$ ,  $M_2 = 0.2$ ,  $\tau_2 = 1 \times 10^{-6}$ s,  $c_2 = 0.3$

209

### 210 2.3. Petrophysical Models

211 Electrical polarization is caused by the accumulation of ions and electrons  
 212 on grain surfaces due to an external electrical field, see Kemna et al. (2012)  
 213 and Revil et al., (2022). A substantial body of work has sought to explain  
 214 polarization mechanisms via either mechanistic or empirical petrophysical  
 215 models (e.g., Revil and Florsch, 2010; Jougnot et al., 2010; Weller and  
 216 Slater, 2015; Revil et al., 2017). However, detailed consideration of this  
 217 body of work is beyond the scope of this discussion. Instead, the focus is  
 218 on the early empirical work of Vinegar and Waxman (1984) which is a

219 precursor to much of the subsequent petrophysical literature. Vinegar and  
 220 Waxman (1984) demonstrated that the Waxman and Smits (1968) model  
 221 can be used to explain  $\sigma'$ :

$\sigma' = \frac{1}{F} S^n \left( \sigma_w + \frac{BQ_v}{S} \right),$	(6)
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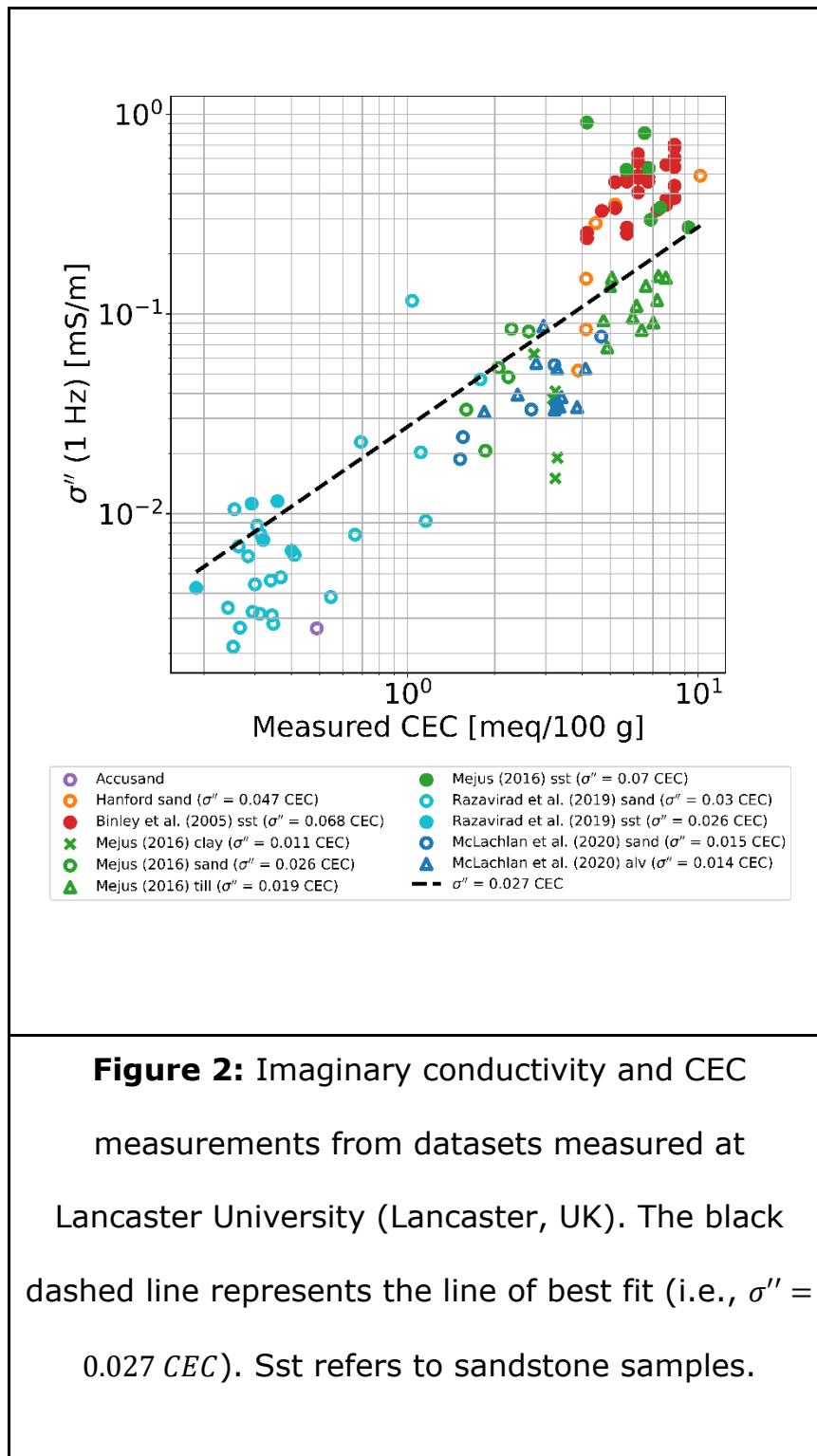
222  
 223 where  $F$  is the Archie (1942) electrical formation factor,  $F = \phi^{-m}$  (with  $\phi$   
 224 and  $m$  representing the porosity and the cementation exponent,  
 225 respectively),  $S$  is the water saturation,  $\sigma_w$  is the pore water electrical  
 226 conductivity,  $B$  is the equivalent ionic conductance of clay exchange cations  
 227 as a function of  $\sigma_w$ , and  $Q_v$  is the CEC normalized by pore volume.  
 228 Importantly, whereas CEC values are typically expressed in meq/100 g,  $Q_v$   
 229 is expressed in meq/cm<sup>3</sup>, consequently, transformations between both  
 230 quantities would require knowledge of soil bulk density. Vinegar and  
 231 Waxman (1984) also defined a relationship for  $\sigma''$ :

$\sigma'' = \frac{1}{F_{im}} S^n \lambda Q_v,$	(7)
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232  
 233 where  $F_{im}$  is the formation factor for imaginary conductivity, ( $F_{im} = \phi F =$   
 234  $\phi^{1-m}$ , for saturated conditions) and  $\lambda$  represents the apparent mobility of  
 235 the counterions. Vinegar and Waxman (1984) noted that although  $F$  offers  
 236 a good empirical fit for their data, using  $F_{im}$  provided an improved fit.  
 237 Vinegar and Waxman (1984) reason that this is because  $\sigma''$  has additional

238 dependence on pore size; they propose that pore constrictions cause a  
239 membrane blockage effect and a displacement of clay counterions that is  
240 particularly dependent on water saturation.

241 To highlight the relationship between  $\sigma''$  and CEC, several saturated  
242 datasets measured at Lancaster University (Lancaster, UK) are shown in  
243 Figure 2. The Accusand sample consisted of well-rounded, spherical 0.8 to  
244 1.7 mm diameter sand grains and were obtained from Unimin Corporation  
245 (Minnesota, US). The Hanford sand samples were obtained at Pacific  
246 Northwest National Laboratory (Ward, pers. comm., 2010) and originated  
247 from the Hanford 300 site (Washington, US). The Binley et al. (2005)  
248 samples comprised medium and fine-grained fluvial sandstones from  
249 northern England, UK. The Mejus (2016) samples were a range of  
250 sandstones, sands, clays, and tills, also collected from northern England,  
251 UK. The Razavirad et al. (2019) samples comprised clean (clay-poor) sands  
252 and sandstones from the Persian Gulf, Iran. Lastly, the samples from  
253 McLachlan et al. (2020) comprised riverbed sands and gravels from  
254 northern England, UK.



255

256 In all cases, CEC measurements were made using the ammonium acetate  
 257 approach (see Chapman, 1965), as discussed below in section 3.2.2. Most  
 258 of the SIP measurements were made with 100 mS/m NaCl saturating

259 solutions, however, the McLachlan et al. (2020) samples were saturated  
 260 with a 58 mS/m NaCl solution to match water conductivity at the field site.  
 261 To account for this, the McLachlan et al. (2020)  $\sigma''$  values were adjusted  
 262 following the procedure described in Weller and Slater (2012).

263 Given that the IP measurements were made on saturated samples, eq. 7  
 264 can be simplified as  $\sigma'' = aCEC$ , where  $a$  contains information related to pore  
 265 fluid chemistry, mineralogy, and  $F_{im}$ . This simple linear relationship has the  
 266 same form as an empirical model proposed by Weller et al. (2010) to link  
 267  $\sigma''$  and pore-normalized surface area,  $S_{por}$  for a range of sand and sandstone  
 268 samples. The  $\sigma'' = 0.027 CEC$  relationship fits the data in Figure 2 relatively  
 269 well; the scatter can be attributed to differences in formation factors and  
 270 mineralogy. For instance, the Binley et al. (2005) and Mejus (2015)  
 271 sandstones are likely to be characterized by lower  $F_{im}$  than the other  
 272 samples; furthermore, formation factor variability could also explain within-  
 273 dataset variability in  $\sigma''$ .

274 In addition to relationships linking  $\sigma''$  and CEC (e.g., Vinegar and Waxman,  
 275 1984; Revil et al., 2021; 2022), there have been relationships proposed  
 276 using chargeability. For instance, Revil et al. (2021) proposed a relationship  
 277 linking  $M_n$  and CEC, where  $M_n$  is approximated from high and low frequency  
 278 imaginary conductivity measurements (see Revil 2017). They define the  
 279 relationship as follows:

$M_n = \theta^{m-1} \rho_g \lambda CEC$	(8)
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280

281 where  $\theta$  is the volumetric water content,  $\rho_g$  is the grain density,  $\lambda$   
282 represents the apparent mobility of the counterions (as also used in eq. 7).  
283 Equation 8 is derived from relationships linking  $\sigma_\infty$  and  $\sigma_0$  with CEC for  
284 partially saturated sediments, and it assumes that exponents  $m$  and  $n$  are  
285 both approximately equal to 2. More details are presented in Revil et al.  
286 (2021) and preceding work (i.e., Revil, 2012; Revil et al. 2013a; 2013b).  
287 Importantly, it should also be noted that Revil et al. (2021) estimate  $\theta$  from  
288  $M_n$ ; thus, the accuracy of their CEC predictions is highly dependent on their  
289 approximated  $M_n$  values.

#### 290 2.4. This Study

291 The primary objective of this work is to assess the ability of field-based IP  
292 methods to obtain *in situ* estimates of CEC in the unsaturated zone. This  
293 objective requires that high-quality SIP data are collected. To this end, a  
294 field setup that mitigates many of the issues encountered in the field was  
295 designed. The approach involved collecting SIP measurements with a single  
296 quadrupole and short coaxial cables to mitigate electromagnetic errors  
297 often seen in larger-scale IP studies (e.g., Schmutz et al., 2014; Moser et  
298 al., 2023).

299 Additionally, by using a small electrode spacing, the depth of investigation  
300 was relatively shallow. This approach made it easier to collect  
301 representative soil measurements and make direct comparisons between



302 measured and predicted CEC values. It should be highlighted that, although  
303 technically feasible to conduct, imaging-type measurements using multiple  
304 electrode arrays were avoided. Instead, the work focuses on assessing the  
305 links between CEC and SIP parameters and thus avoiding the influence of  
306 imaging artefacts, for example, is critical. If reliable links between CEC and  
307 SIP can be established, then they could be used in future IP imaging.

308 This work focuses on three primary goals:

- 309 1. Assessing the advantages of multi-frequency over single-frequency  
310 polarization measurements.
- 311 2. Determining the importance of other soil parameters in polarization.
- 312 3. Evaluating the ability of field-based IP measurements to provide  
313 quantitative estimates of CEC.

314 In this work, two petrophysical relationships are used to link polarizability  
315 to CEC: one uses  $\sigma''$ , and the other uses  $M_n$  from a double Pelton model  
316 fitting. The first is derived from Vinegar and Waxman (1984) and uses a  
317 fitting coefficient,  $b_{im}$ :

$\sigma'' = b_{im}\phi^{m-1}S^nCEC.$	(9)
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318

319 The second equation has a similar form but links  $M_n$  and  $CEC$  with the fitting  
320 coefficient,  $b_{Mn}$ :

$M_n = b_{Mn}\phi^{m-1}S^nCEC.$	(10)
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321

322 In both cases, the fitting coefficients contain information about the pore  
323 water conductivity, counterion mobility, and bulk density. For instance, eq.  
324 9 is comparable to eq. 7, as defined by Vinegar and Waxman (1984), and  
325 eq. 10 is comparable to eq. 8, as defined by Revil et al. (2021).

326 The first goal assesses the benefit of multi-frequency IP over single-  
327 frequency IP. As noted, polarization can be assessed from  $\sigma''$   
328 measurements (i.e., single frequency measurements) or  $M_n$   
329 measurements, which require broadband SIP measurements. Given the  
330 difficulties in collecting high-frequency IP data in the field and their  
331 importance in accurately determining  $M_n$ , there is a clear rationale for  
332 assessing the value of collecting multi-frequency measurements. Moreover,  
333 given the time required for low-frequency measurements, collecting single-  
334 frequency, or time-domain, data has the added benefit of reducing  
335 acquisition times in the field significantly.

336 The second goal investigates the importance of other soil parameters in  
337 influencing polarization behavior. For instance, in addition to CEC,  
338 polarization is also dependent on water content, porosity, mineralogy, and  
339 cementation and saturation exponents. To this end, measurements of  
340 texture, water content, and magnetic susceptibility (as a proxy for  
341 mineralogy) were collected. In comparison, cementation and saturation

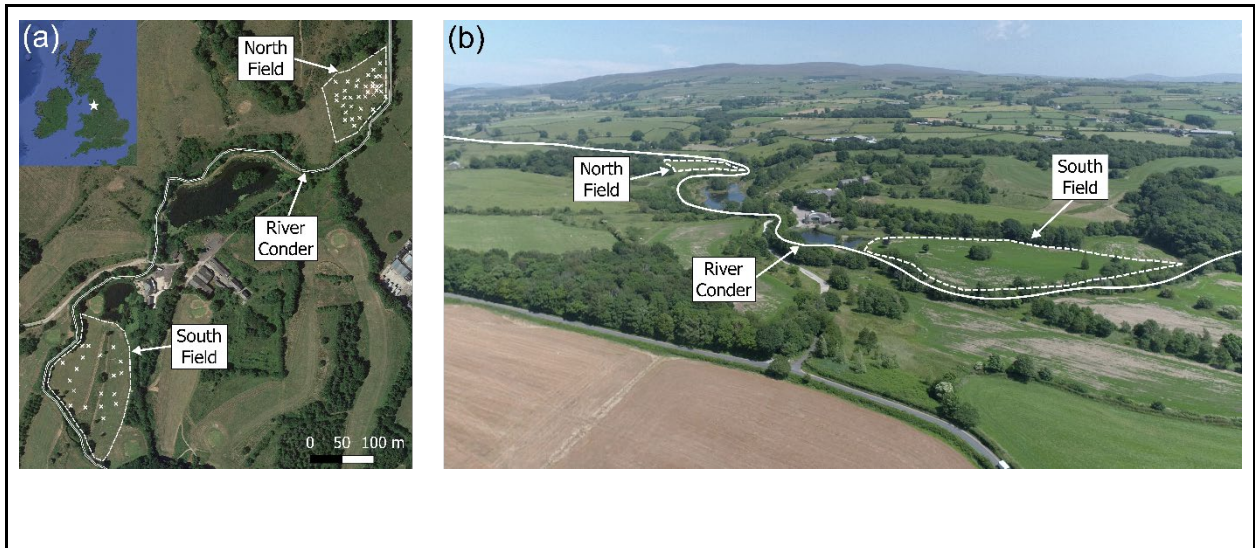
342 exponents were assumed homogenous, as discussed in section 3.3.  
343 Importantly these assumptions will also influence the fitting coefficients in  
344 eq. 9 and 10.

345 The last goal is to evaluate the ability of field-based IP to provide  
346 quantitative estimates of CEC using eq. 9 and 10. This goal seeks to  
347 determine if the large-scale relationships observed for multiple data sets  
348 (e.g., Figure 2) are meaningful for quantitatively assessing CEC variability  
349 at the field scale.

### 350 **3. Materials and Methods**

#### 351 *3.1. Study Site*

352 The study site is in the catchment of the River Conder, Lancaster, UK  
353 (Figure 3). The land is owned by Lancaster University and is managed as  
354 farmland, grassland, and woodland. Two study fields adjacent to the river  
355 were selected, hereafter referred to as the North Field and the South Field,  
356 both of which are periodically flooded. The North Field is used for cattle  
357 grazing, and the South Field is used for silage production and has no  
358 permanent livestock. The bedrock in the area comprises Carboniferous  
359 mudstones, siltstones, and sandstones; the superficial cover comprises  
360 glacial tills and fluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel.



**Figure 3:** (a) map of the field site with locations of field measurements, and (b) aerial image of the field site.

361

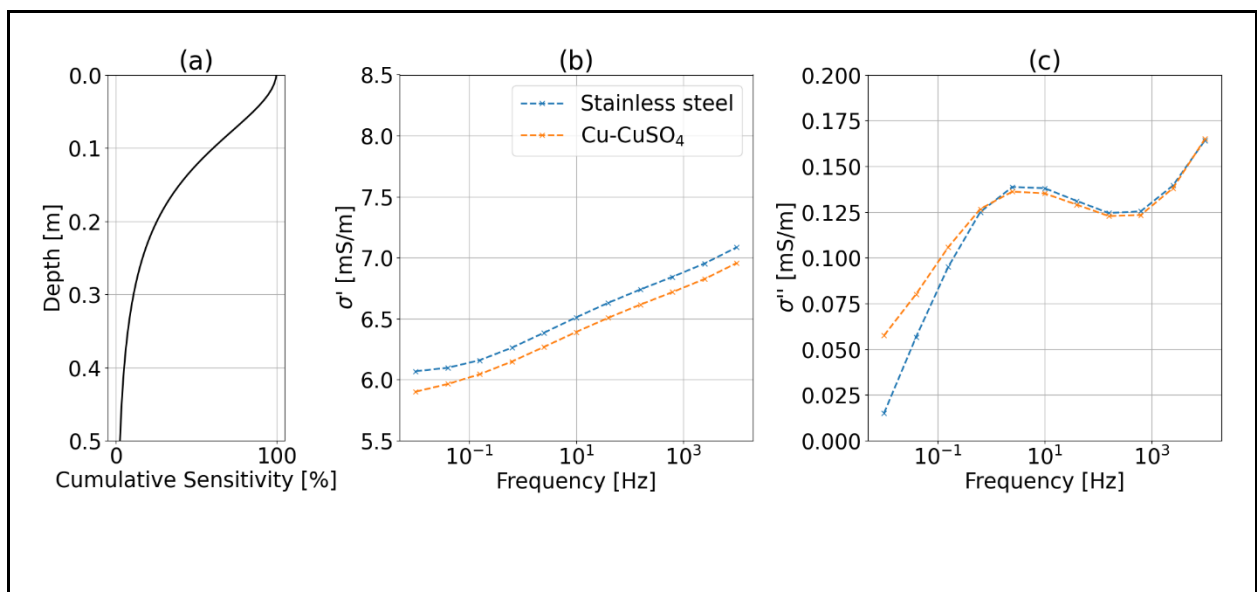
### 362 *3.2. Field Measurements*

363 The field measurements were conducted on several campaigns. The bulk of  
 364 the work was completed in five days (20 & 21-Nov-2021; 25-Apr-2022; 12  
 365 & 17-May-2022); on each day, co-located SIP measurements and soil  
 366 samples were obtained alongside soil temperature and volumetric moisture  
 367 content (VMC) measurements. As discussed below, the soil samples were  
 368 subsequently analyzed for gravimetric water content (GMC), texture, and  
 369 magnetic susceptibility (MS). CEC measurements were made on the  
 370 samples collected on 25-Apr-2022, and 12 & 17 May 2022. Additional field  
 371 campaigns were also conducted to collect soil samples to deeper depths,  
 372 i.e., up to 2 m, (01-Apr-2022; 24-May-2022) and to obtain additional  
 373 shallow samples to obtain porosity measurements and OM (11-Oct-2022).

374 3.2.1. Co-located SIP measurements and soil sampling

375 Soil samples were collected immediately after the SIP measurements to  
376 ensure that the SIP data were representative of the soil conditions. The SIP  
377 measurements were made using a PSIP instrument (Ontash and Ermac,  
378 New Jersey, US) and coaxial cables were used to mitigate electromagnetic  
379 errors. Although primarily designed for laboratory measurements, the  
380 instrument has been successfully used in field experiments previously. For  
381 example, Wang et al. (2021b) used the instrument to characterize the  $\sigma^*$   
382 of riverbed sediments.

383 In the present work, data were collected using a Wenner configuration with  
384 25 cm electrode spacing, whereby current is injected between the two  
385 outermost electrodes and the result voltage was measurement on the  
386 central electrode pair. The sensitivity profile (Figure 4a) shows that most  
387 of the sensitivity (i.e., ~90%) is focused in the upper 30 cm of the  
388 subsurface.



**Figure 4:** (a) cumulative sensitivity profile, (b) influence of electrode material on real conductivity, (c) influence of electrode material on imaginary conductivity.

389

390 Additionally, although several authors have advocated for using non-  
391 polarizable electrodes (e.g., porous pot electrodes) over stainless-steel  
392 electrodes, they require settling time and are therefore less practical. The  
393 importance of electrode type was assessed with some initial tests using  
394 both stainless-steel and Cu-CuSO<sub>4</sub> voltage electrodes (see Figures 4b and  
395 c). It can be observed that the  $\sigma'$  measurements are slightly higher for the  
396 measurements made with the stainless-steel current electrodes. This  
397 increase in  $\sigma'$  can be attributed to the electrodes influencing the subsurface  
398 conductivity given that they were inserted 2.5 cm into the ground, i.e.,  
399 10% of the electrode spacing. For  $\sigma''$  beyond 0.3 Hz, there is good  
400 agreement between both electrode types. However, below 0.3 Hz, the  
401 stainless-steel electrodes measure lower  $\sigma''$  values. Nonetheless, given the  
402 substantial increase in productivity, stainless-steel electrodes were used in  
403 this work.

404 SIP measurements were made at 13 logarithmically spaced intervals  
405 between 10 mHz and 10 kHz. After each SIP measurement, soil samples  
406 were collected using a hand auger to depths of 30 cm and bagged in 10 cm  
407 intervals. Three replicates were obtained at each location: at the midpoint

408 of each electrode pair. Additionally, after each SIP measurement,  
409 temperature, and VMC measurements were made at 0 cm and 15 cm  
410 depths using a HI-98509 meter (Hanna Instruments, Leighton Buzzard, UK)  
411 and a ThetaProbe (Delta T Devices, Cambridge, UK), respectively, again at  
412 three locations. Although the sampling intervals for the soil samples, and  
413 the VMC and temperature measurements were different, the interest in this  
414 work is regarding the correlation of SIP with the bulk properties of the upper  
415 ~30 cm of the soil profile. Consequently, as discussed in 3.2.4., properties  
416 were averaged to obtain single values for the parameters of interest.

### 417 *3.2.2. Laboratory soil measurements*

418 GMC measurements were made on each sample within the week following  
419 sampling (in each case samples were stored in sealed bags and refrigerated  
420 before analysis). In each case, samples were dried for at least 48 hours at  
421 105°C. Samples from the same depth interval for each measurement site  
422 were then homogenized before CEC, textural, and MS analyses.

423 CEC measurements were made using the ammonium acetate method (see  
424 Chapman, 1965). In each case, approximately 4 g of dry soil samples were  
425 centrifuged with sodium acetate solution to replace all cation sites with  
426 sodium ions. Methylated spirits were then used to remove non-bound  
427 sodium ions before ammonium acetate was used to displace the sorbed  
428 sodium. The amount of displaced sodium was then determined using a  
429 flame photometer (Model 410, Corning, AZ, US).

430 Textural analyses were done using a laser diffractometer (Beckman and  
431 Coulter, Brea, CA, US). First, samples were sieved to < 2 mm, and organic  
432 matter was removed using hydrogen peroxide. Samples were then  
433 homogenized before 1 g of sample was added to the laser diffractometer  
434 and run until the grain size distribution readings were stable (approximately  
435 2 minutes).

436 The MS2 meter (Bartington Instruments, Witney, UK) was used to measure  
437 the bulk MS of 10 to 15 g of oven-dried soil in 10 cm<sup>3</sup> plastic pots. The  
438 device's dual frequency MS2B sensor (0.465 kHz and 4.65 kHz) was used  
439 to determine both the low and high-frequency mass-specific MS ( $\chi_{LF}$  and  
440  $\chi_{HF}$ , respectively) in m<sup>3</sup>/kg. Given that many of the samples were weakly  
441 magnetic, instrumental drift needed to be accounted for, especially for the  
442 higher frequency measurements. This correction was done using the 4-  
443 measurement-cycles procedure that corrects the sample reading with an  
444 air reading (see p. 44-45 in Dearing, 1999). The sample readings were also  
445 corrected for the diamagnetic signal of the plastic pot. The  $\chi_{LF}$  and  $\chi_{HF}$   
446 values then allowed the calculation of the percentage of frequency-  
447 dependent susceptibility,  $\chi_{FD}\%$ :

448

$\chi_{FD}\% = \frac{\chi_{LF} - \chi_{HF}}{\chi_{LF}} \times 100$	(11)
--	------

449



450 *3.2.3. Additional soil sampling*

451 The deeper-depth soil cores were collected to depths of 2 m using a Cobra  
452 TT percussion auger (Royal Eijkelkamp, Giesbeek, Netherlands). A total of  
453 12 cores, 6 in each field, were collected and subsampled into 15 cm  
454 intervals. During the drilling, the samples were compacted; consequently,  
455 a compression factor was calculated for the entire core and used to rescale  
456 the core length. The gravel (i.e., grains exceeding 2 mm) content by dry  
457 mass of these cores was then determined for each interval.

458 Additional samples were also collected to make measurements of porosity  
459 and OM. A 5.25 cm diameter, 4 cm long PVC tube was pushed into the  
460 subsurface at depths of 0 and 15 cm. Samples were saturated in a water  
461 bath for 48 hours and weighed. The samples were dried in a 105°C oven  
462 and weighed again to determine porosity. The samples were then placed  
463 in a 505°C furnace for 24 hours to quantify the OM content.

464 *3.2.4. Averaging of soil parameters*

465 Given the small volume of the samples typically measured in laboratory-  
466 based SIP studies, the samples are typically assumed homogenous, and  
467 representative parameter values can be determined easily. In contrast,  
468 when field IP data are collected, they are typically modeled to get spatial  
469 distributions of  $\sigma'$  and  $\sigma''$ . Transformations of SIP data to depth-specific  
470  $\sigma^*$  models are not possible for single quadrupole measurements.

471 Consequently, this work used an approach to weight the soil measurements  
 472 by the sensitivity profile shown in Fig. 4a.

473 The relative sensitivities for each sampling interval were used to weight the  
 474 soil parameters. For instance, the soil samples collected at the 0 – 10, 10  
 475 – 20, and 20 – 30 cm intervals were weighted with factors of 0.403, 0.335,  
 476 and 0.262, respectively. In comparison, measurements made in the 0 – 15  
 477 and 15 – 30 cm intervals were weighted with factors 0.6 and 0.4,  
 478 respectively. This approach is comparable to the ‘apparent water content’  
 479 approach used by Martini et al. (2018), whereby EMI sensitivity patterns  
 480 are used to scale volumetric soil water contents.

### 481 3.3. Modeling SIP data

482 A double Pelton model (eq. 5) was fitted to the measured SIP spectra to  
 483 obtain  $M$  and  $\rho_0$  values, these were then used to compute  $M_n$ . The  
 484 following objective function was used to determine the optimal Pelton  
 485 model parameters:

$\varphi = \frac{1}{2N} \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \left  \frac{\sigma'_{o,i} - \sigma'_{m,i}}{\sigma'_{o,i}} \right  + \left  \frac{\sigma''_{o,i} - \sigma''_{m,i}}{\sigma''_{o,i}} \right  \right)$	(12)
---	------

486

487 where  $N$  is the number of frequencies, and  $\sigma'_o$ ,  $\sigma'_m$ ,  $\sigma''_o$ , and  $\sigma''_m$  represent the  
 488 modeled and observed real and imaginary conductivities, respectively.

489 For the petrophysical modeling, the measured 1 Hz  $\sigma''$  was used for eq. 9  
490 and Pelton-defined  $M_n$  was used for eq. 10. For each measurement site,  
491 independent sensitivity weighted VMC and CEC values were used. However,  
492 given that porosity measurements were obtained at different sampling  
493 locations, an average sensitivity-weighted porosity value for each field was  
494 defined.

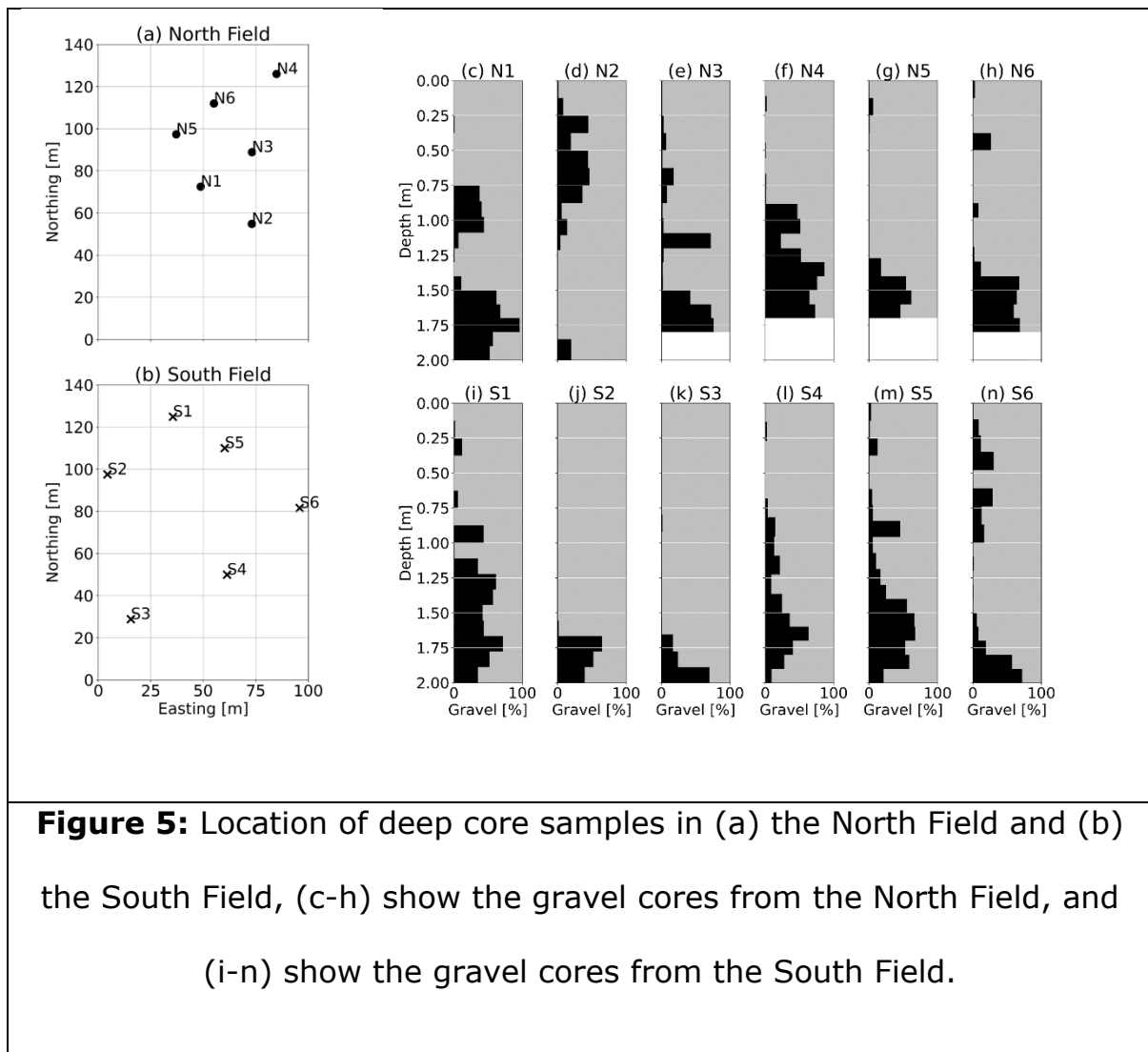
495 Additionally, the saturation and cementation exponents were both assumed  
496 to be 2 (e.g., Glover, 2015). The respective fitting coefficients,  $b_{im}$  and  $b_{Mn}$ ,  
497 were determined by minimizing the root mean square error (RMSE)  
498 between predicted and observed CEC values. Although the saturation and  
499 cementation exponents could be determined alongside the fitting  
500 coefficients, they would be make highly correlated with  $b_{im}$  (eq. 9) and  $b_{Mn}$   
501 (eq. 10).

## 502 **4. Results**

### 503 *4.1. Deep Soil Auger Core*

504 The North Field has a gravel-dominated horizon at depths of around 1.5 m  
505 to 2 m (Figure 4c-h). It appears that this horizon deepens towards the  
506 south of the North Field. Additionally, shallower gravel horizons can be seen  
507 at depths between 0.2 and 1.2 m, particularly in cores N1 and N2. In the  
508 South Field, there are gravel-dominated horizons at depths between around  
509 1 m and 2 m (Figure 4i-n); however shallower gravel horizons are also  
510 present (e.g., S5 and S6). The gravel-dominated horizons are remnants of

511 the meandering River Conder and indicate a dynamic depositional system.  
 512 Given that the gravel content is typically low in the upper 30 cm, it is not  
 513 anticipated to influence the SIP data substantially and is consequently not  
 514 considered further.



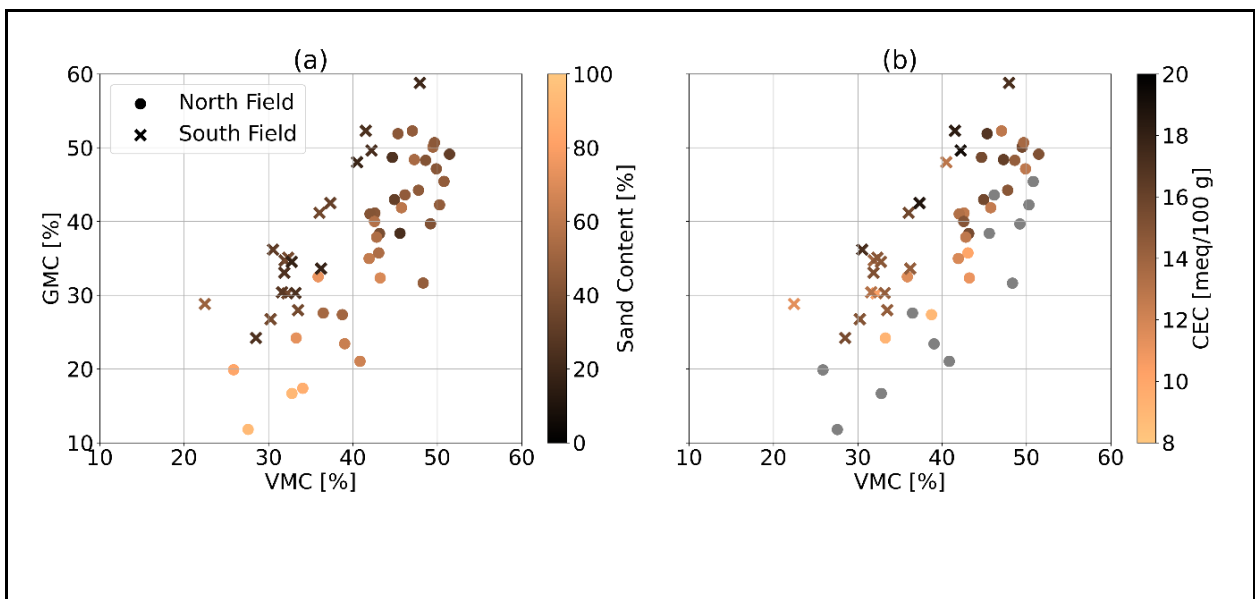
**Figure 5:** Location of deep core samples in (a) the North Field and (b) the South Field, (c-h) show the gravel cores from the North Field, and (i-n) show the gravel cores from the South Field.

515

516 *4.2 CEC, water content, porosity, and OM*

517 As expected, there is a strong correlation between the sensitivity averaged  
 518 GMC and VMC in both fields (Figure 6). Moreover, although the data were  
 519 collected on different days, both fields have a similar VMC range. However,

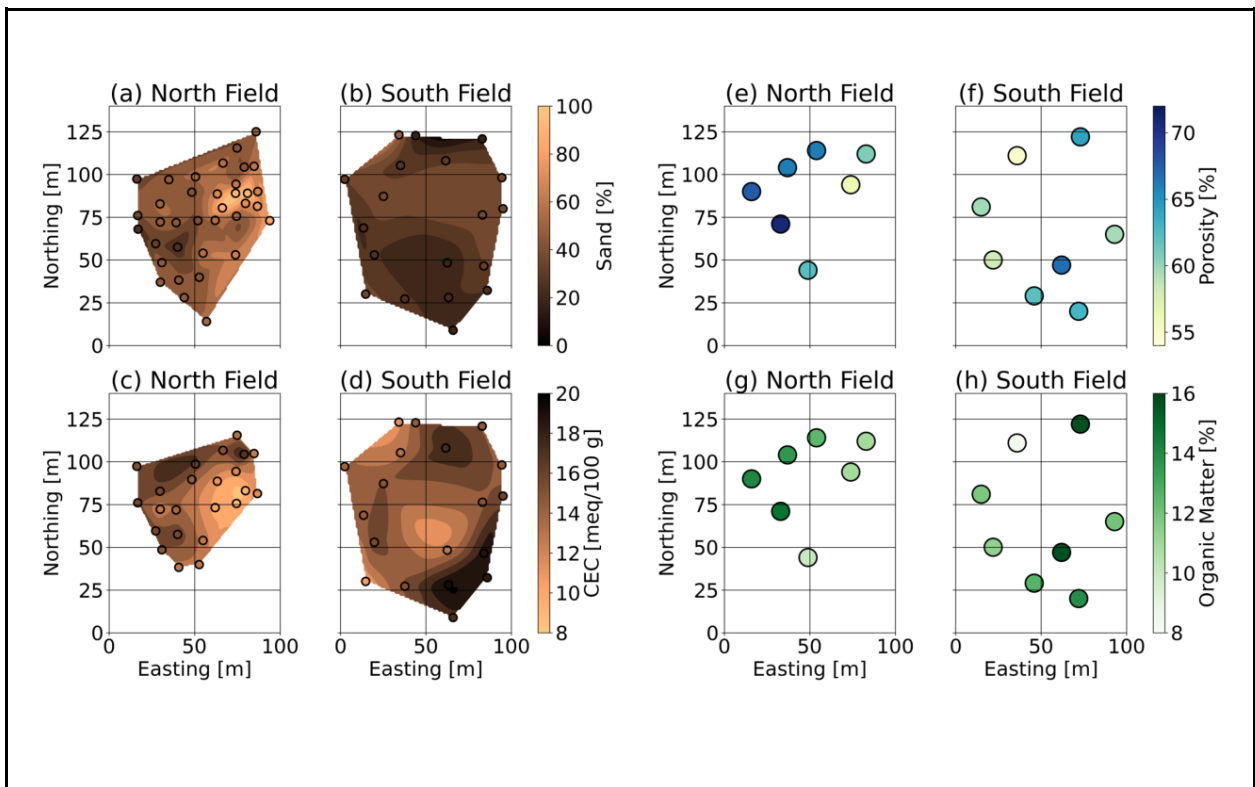
520 it can be observed that GMC in the South Field is higher, for comparable  
521 VMC, i.e., the soil bulk density is higher. This can be attributed to different  
522 soil types in both fields, as evidenced by the predominantly lower sand  
523 content and higher CEC values in the South Field. Additionally, it can be  
524 observed in both fields that GMC content has a moderate positive  
525 correlation with CEC (Spearman's  $r = 0.71$  for the North Field and  $0.60$  for  
526 the South Field); reasserting the earlier statement that relationships linking  
527 CEC and bulk electrical conductivity can be ambiguous given that saturation  
528 has a strong influence on real electrical conductivity.



**Figure 6:** Gravimetric water content (GMC) and volumetric water content (VMC). (a) displays the points colored relative to their sand content, and (b) the points colored relative to their CEC. Grey colors indicate the sites where no CEC data were collected.

529

530 The spatial distributions of sensitivity-averaged sand, CEC, porosity, and  
 531 OM are presented in Figure 7. In the North Field, there is a distinctive  
 532 anomalous zone centered at an easting of 75 m and a northing of 85 m.  
 533 This zone is characterized by high sand content and low CEC values.  
 534 Although the sand content is relatively homogenous over the South Field,  
 535 elevated CEC values can be observed in the north and the south of the field,  
 536 Figure 7d. Given that there is a negligible correlation between CEC and clay  
 537 content (*Spearman's*  $r = -0.06$ ) and a moderate correlation between CEC  
 538 and silt content (*Spearman's*  $r = 0.54$ ), the elevated CEC in the north and  
 539 south areas of the South Field can most likely be attributed to elevated OM  
 540 content, see Figure 7d and h.



**Figure 7:** Maps of sand content in (a) the North Field and (b) the South Field, CEC in (c) the North Field and (d) the South Field, porosity in (e) the

North Field and (f) the South Field, and organic matter in (g) the North Field and (h) the South Field.

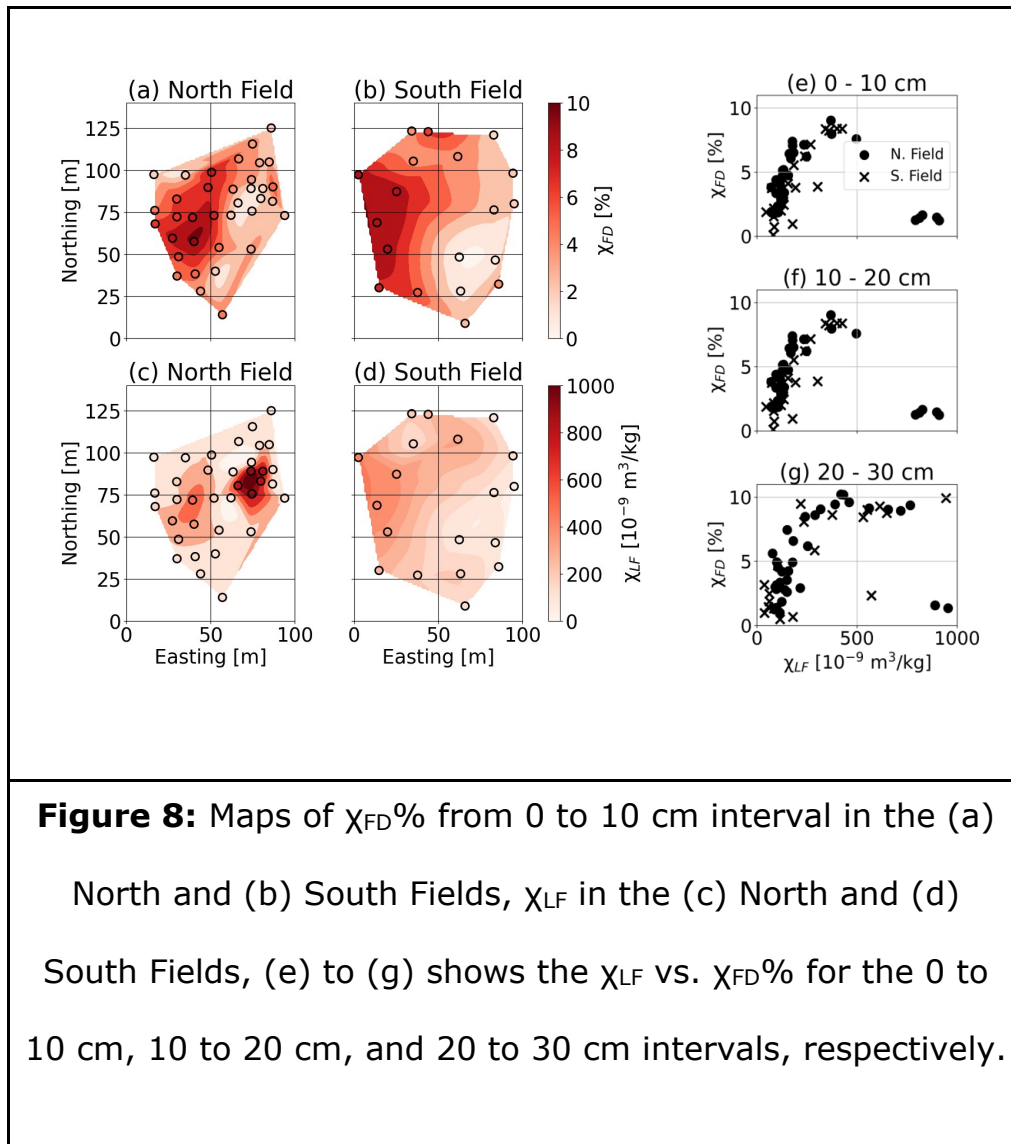
541

542 It can also be seen that the western portion of the North Field has the  
543 highest OM contents and the highest CEC values. However, it should be  
544 noted that in the North Field CEC has Spearman correlations of 0.57 and  
545 0.66 with clay and silt, respectively, indicating that the CEC is more closely  
546 related to the fine content in the North Field (compared to the South Field).  
547 The porosity of the soils is higher in the North Field, i.e., 64.23 +/- 4.94%  
548 in comparison to 61.02 +/- 3.72% in the South Field, this is agreement  
549 with the South Field soils having higher bulk densities. Interestingly, the  
550 anomalous zone in the North Field is seemingly characterized by low  
551 porosity.

#### 552 *4.3 Magnetic Susceptibility*

553 The spatial patterns in MS data from the 0 – 10 cm soil interval are  
554 presented in Figures 8a to d. The  $\chi_{LF}$  values mostly range between 50 and  
555  $950 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m}^3/\text{kg}$ , which is typical for soils with weak to medium magnetic  
556 signatures. The relationship between frequency-dependent MS,  $\chi_{FD}\%$ , and  
557  $\chi_{LF}$  is shown for each interval in Figures 8e to g. Most of the samples show  
558 an increase in  $\chi_{FD}\%$  with increasing  $\chi_{LF}$  before  $\chi_{FD}\%$  reaches a plateau at 9  
559 – 10%. This pattern is indicative of natural soil formation on top of weakly  
560 magnetic parent material (see Dearing et al., 1996). For instance, *in situ*

561 formation of ultrafine magnetite and maghemite grains can be expected in  
 562 regularly flooded and well-drained soils (Grimley & Vepraskas, 2000;  
 563 Grimley et al., 2008). This process increases both  $\chi_{LF}$  and  $\chi_{FD}\%$ , see Maher  
 564 (1988) and Dearing (1994) for further information.



565

566 It can be observed that the anomalous zone in the North Field, as identified  
 567 from the soil parameter maps (Figure 7), also exhibits anomalous MS  
 568 values. The high  $\chi_{LF}$  (500 to 1000  $\times 10^{-9}$   $m^3/kg$ ) and very low  $\chi_{FD}\%$  (typically



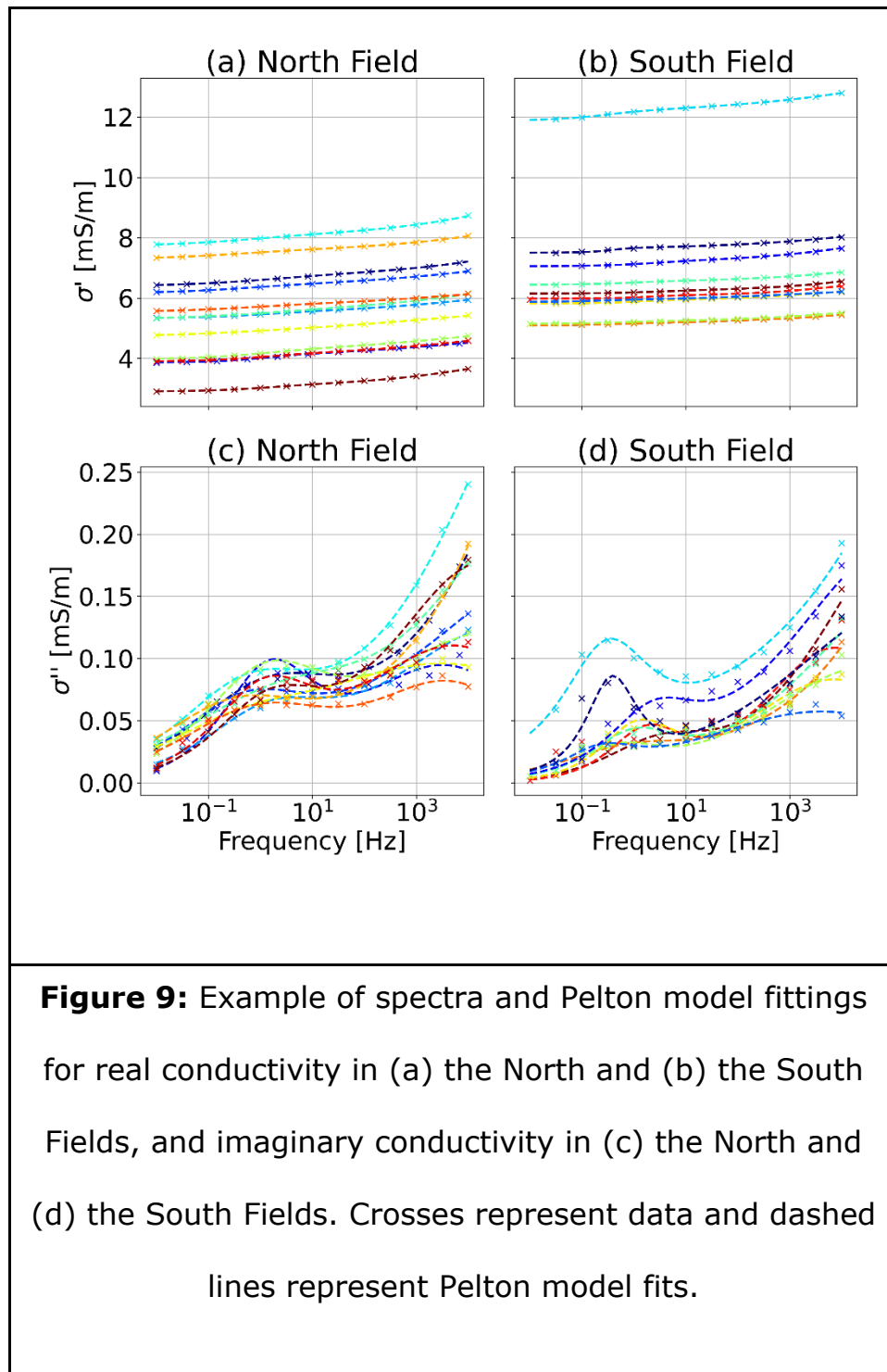
569 between 1.5 and 2.0%) values of this zone indicate a more magnetic parent  
570 material than the other sites. In the first interval (0 to 10 cm), five samples  
571 from the North Field (sites NP2, NP7, NV7, NV8, and NH11) show this  
572 anomalous behavior, Figure 8e. In the second interval (10 to 20 cm),  
573 samples from the same five locations are also anomalous, Figure 8f. In the  
574 third interval (20 to 30 cm), one sample from the South Field (site SH5)  
575 and three samples from the North Field (sites NP2, NP7, and NV7) are  
576 anomalous, Figure 8g.

577 Soils from this zone in the North Field are characterized by elevated sand  
578 content (see Fig 7a), moreover many of the grains in the 1 – 2 mm range  
579 from these sites were black in color. Although potentially magnetic parent  
580 rocks (e.g., basaltic dykes and mudstones) are known in the area, the  
581 localized nature of this anomaly suggests human activity, i.e., imported  
582 sediments. For instance, it appears that sediments have been used in the  
583 eastern portion of the North Field to build an embankment and mitigate  
584 flooding from the river. More detailed investigations could focus on grain  
585 provenance or detailed magnetic studies (e.g., magnetite granulometry) to  
586 clarify the origin, however, these analyses are beyond the scope of this  
587 work.

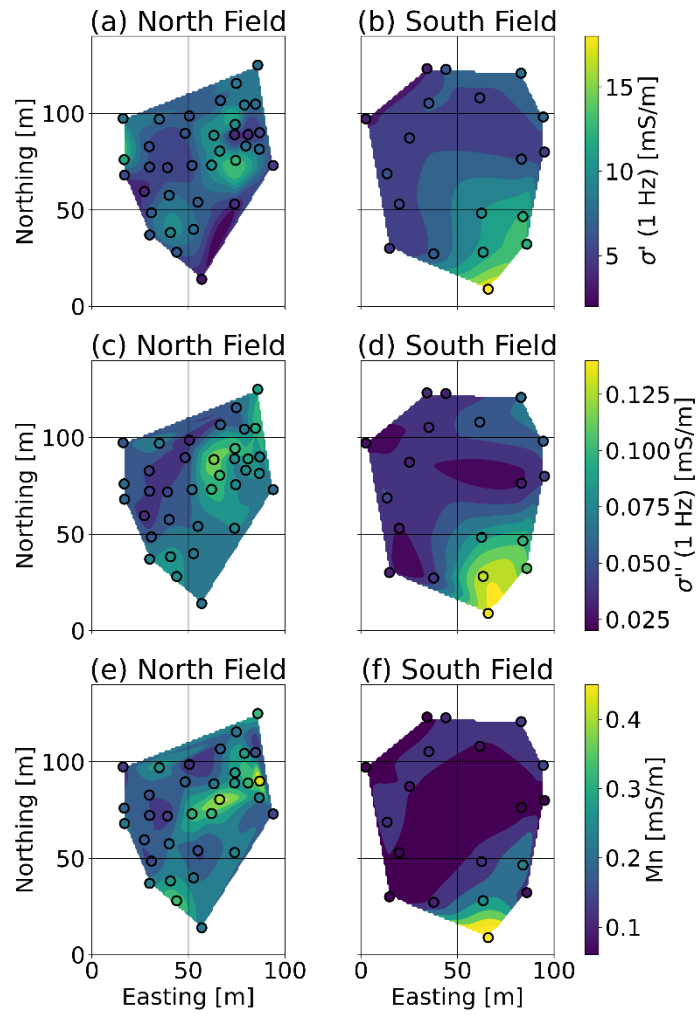
#### 588 *4.4. SIP Results*

589 To highlight the variability of the SIP measurements, two field days of data  
590 are presented, one in the North Field and one in the South Field (Figure 9).  
591 In general, the double Pelton model fitted the data well, root mean square

592 percentage error (RMSPE) values for the  $\sigma'$  were typically below 1%, and  
 593 RMSPE values for the  $\sigma''$  typically ranged from 1 to 20%. However, it should  
 594 be noted that RMSPE values of up to 72.8% were also observed for  $\sigma''$ , see  
 595 Table 1 in the Appendix.



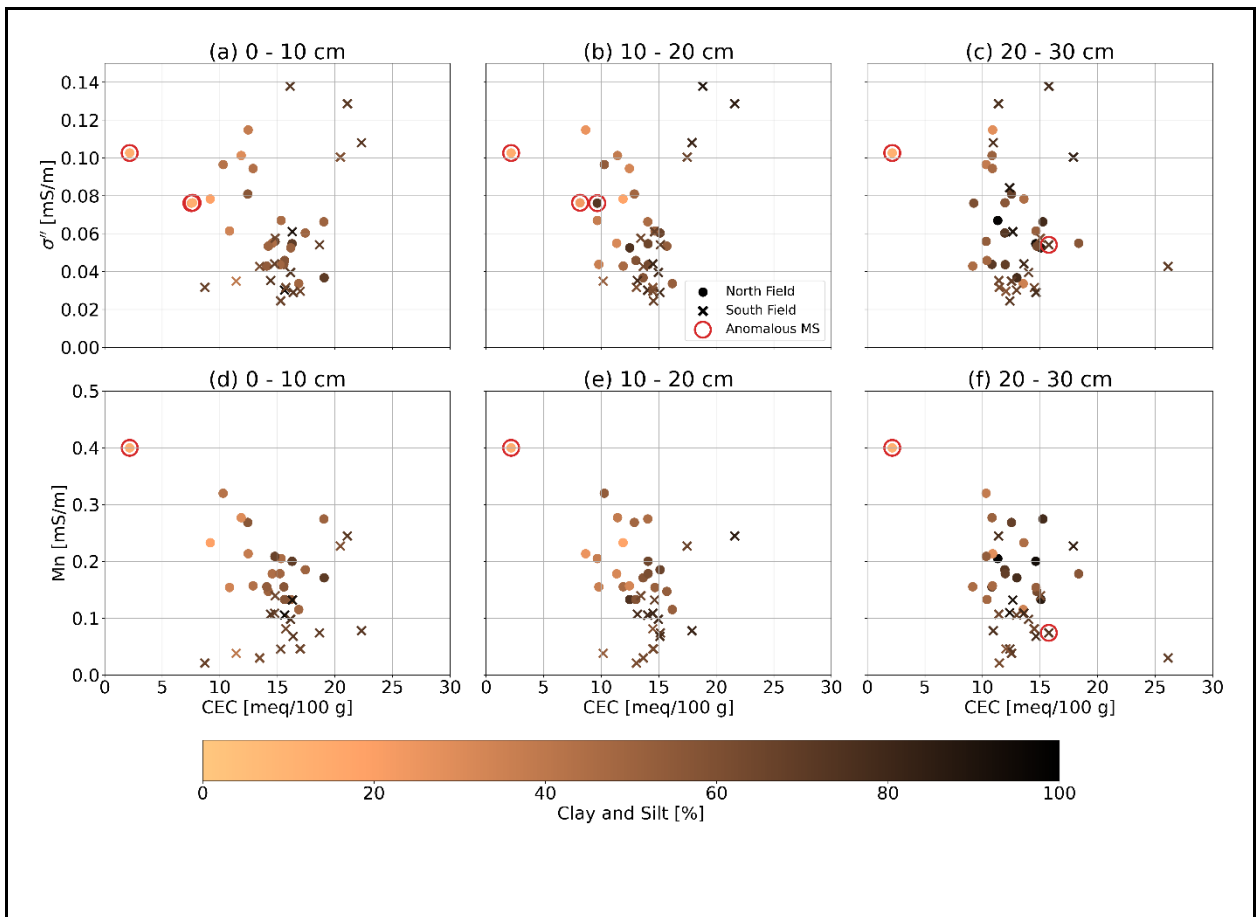
597 The SIP data from the South Field displays an increasing  $\sigma'$  and  $\sigma''$  towards  
598 the southeast (Figures 10b and d). In comparison, data from the North  
599 Field displays anomalous patterns in the same location as the anomalous  
600 zone identified in Figures 7 and 8 (Figures 10a and c). However, it should  
601 be noted that samples with anomalously low  $\sigma'$  are not characterized by  
602 anomalous  $\sigma''$  values. Furthermore, although the  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$  values have  
603 similar patterns, there are some notable differences in the North Field  
604 (Figures 10c and e). For instance, the high  $\sigma''$  anomaly is north of the high  
605  $M_n$  anomaly. In comparison, the  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$  values in the South Field have  
606 similar spatial patterns (Figures 10d and f).



**Figure 10:** Maps of real conductivity in (a) the North Field and (b) the South Field, imaginary conductivity in (c) the North Field and (d) the South Field, and normalized chargeability in (e) the North Field and (f) the South Field.

608 4.5. Polarization and CEC

609 The relationships of  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$  with CEC are shown in Figure 11.  
610 Additionally, the plots are colored by the percentage of fine materials (i.e.,  
611 clay and silt). The CEC values (and the percentage of clay and silt) from  
612 each sample interval are presented; doing so allows for the soil intervals  
613 with anomalous MS values (see Figure 8) to be highlighted (with red  
614 circles). It was anticipated that a positive correlation between polarization  
615 and CEC would be observed. However, in the North Field higher  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$   
616 values are typically associated with lower CEC values, particularly in the  
617 top two soil intervals (Figures 10a, b, d, and e). For the North Field,  $\sigma''$  and  
618 CEC values have Spearman correlations of -0.65, -0.60, and -0.42 for each  
619 soil interval, respectively.



**Figure 11:** Relationships of CEC and vs polarization for each soil interval in both fields. (a) to (c) show the relationships between CEC and  $\sigma''$ , at 1 Hz, for the 0 – 10, 10 – 20, and 20 – 30 cm intervals. (d) to (f) show the relationships between CEC and  $M_n$  for the 0 – 10, 10 – 20, and 20 – 30 cm intervals. Red circles are used to denote soils with anomalous MS values (as identified in Figure 8).

620

621 In the South Field, higher  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$  values are associated with higher CEC  
 622 values in the top two soil intervals (Figures 10a, b, d, and e). For instance,  
 623  $\sigma''$  and CEC have Spearman correlations of 0.62, and 0.84, for the soil

624 intervals 0 – 10 cm, and 10 – 20 cm, whereas the values for the 20 – 30  
625 cm interval have a correlation of 0.00.

626 It can be observed that the North Field samples with anomalous magnetic  
627 susceptibility values (red circles in Figure 11) are associated with low CEC  
628 values. Importantly, even if these samples are removed, the negative  
629 correlation between CEC and polarizability still remains, albeit at a weaker  
630 level. However, it should be noted that samples from the North Field, where  
631 clay and percentages exceed 50%, show broad agreement with the  
632 polarization vs. CEC patterns of the South Field data. This implies that  
633 mineralogy does influence the polarizability, and it is strongly linked to  
634 grain size. Further MS analysis could focus on the sand-rich and sand-poor  
635 fractions independently, to assess if the finer-grained soils in the North  
636 Field have a comparable MS signature to the South Field soils.

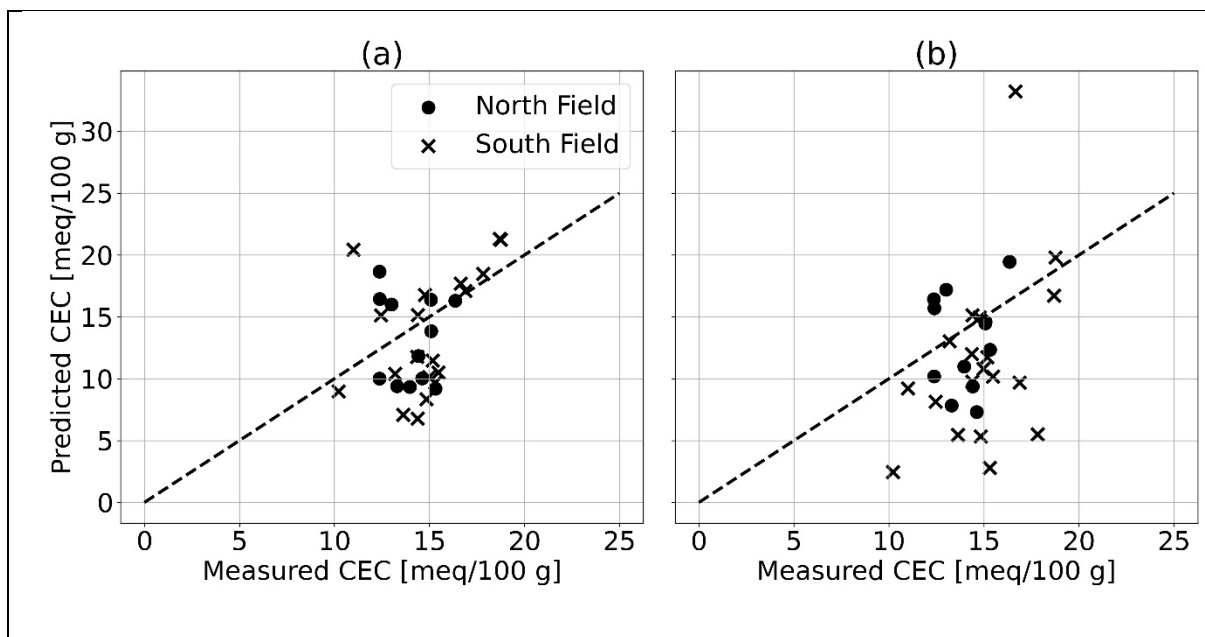
#### 637 *4.6. Prediction of CEC from SIP measurements*

638 Given the anomalous behavior of the coarser North Field samples, this  
639 section focuses on North Field samples with a sand content < 50% and the  
640 South Field samples. As noted in section 3.3, the fitting parameters for eq.  
641 9 and 10 were determined using the measured CEC and VMC for each site  
642 and average porosity values for both fields.

643 In the South Field the average porosity (61.0%) was used, for the  
644 remaining North Field samples the porosity values from the excluded areas  
645 were not considered and the average porosity was determined to be 65.7%.

646 The saturation and cementation exponents were both assumed to be 2  
647 (e.g., Glover et al., 2015).

648 The fitting coefficients  $b_{im}$  and  $M_n$  were determined by minimizing the RMSE  
649 between the measured and predicted CEC. This approach resulted in  
650  $\sigma''(1\text{ Hz}) = 0.013 \phi S^2 CEC$  and  $M_n = 4.41 \times 10^{-5} \phi S^2 CEC$  for the North Field  
651 samples, and  $\sigma''(1\text{ Hz}) = 0.021 \phi S^2 CEC$  and  $M_n = 5.01 \times 10^{-5} \phi S^2 CEC$  for the  
652 South Field, see Figure 12. The resultant RMSE values for both approaches  
653 in the North Field were 3.34 meq/100 g (24.6%) and 3.47 meq/100 g  
654 (25.2%), respectively. In comparison, in the South Field the RMSE values  
655 were 3.59 meq/100 g (25.6%) and 5.47 meq/100 g (36.9%).



**Figure 12:** Plot showing the prediction of CEC from (a)  $\sigma''(1\text{ Hz})$  and (b)  $M_n$ , dashed line shows 1:1. As discussed in section 4.6, North Field data with  $> 50\%$  sand content are omitted.

656



657 Importantly, the included North Field data do not form a trend between  
658 predicted and measured CEC. This suggests that variability in other soil  
659 parameters (e.g., mineralogy, porosity, porewater electrical conductivity)  
660 is obscuring the relation between CEC and polarization. In comparison,  
661 many of the South Field data lie parallel to the 1:1 line indicating that  
662 assumption of homogenous porosities, cementation and saturation  
663 exponents, and pore water conductivities is somewhat valid for these  
664 samples.

## 665 **5. Discussion**

666 This work aimed to tackle three principal goals: (1) assessing the  
667 advantages of multi-frequency over single-frequency polarization  
668 measurements, (2) determining the importance of other parameters in  
669 polarization of soils, and (3) evaluating the ability of field-based IP  
670 measurements to provide quantitative estimates of CEC.

### 671 *5.1 Multi-frequency and single-frequency measurements*

672 Although approximations to estimate  $M_n$  in limited bandwidth data exist,  
673 e.g., Revil et al. (2021), the most accurate characterization of  $M_n$  requires  
674 collection of broadband SIP data. However, it was evident in this work that  
675  $M_n$  values from the Pelton model provided no clear advantage over 1 Hz  $\sigma''$ .  
676 Consequently, in many cases, high quality single-frequency IP  
677 measurements, may be sufficient for defining the polarization  
678 characteristics in soils.

679 Such conclusions align with the laboratory work of Weller et al. (2010), who  
680 observed that predictions of  $S_{por}$  from  $\sigma''$  and  $M_n$  were broadly comparable  
681 for a range of sands and sandstones. Consequently, it is of more interest  
682 to dedicate time to characterizing heterogeneity in space rather than  
683 frequency in field cases. For instance, Moser et al. (2023) noted the benefits  
684 of 3D IP surveys in landfill characterization in specific comparison to multi-  
685 frequency characterization.

686 However, it should be noted that the correlation between  $\sigma''$  and sensitivity  
687 averaged CEC was the strongest for measurements made at 0.316 Hz in  
688 the South Field. Nonetheless, the 1 Hz  $\sigma''$  exhibited only a slightly weaker  
689 correlation with sensitivity averaged CEC.

## 690 *5.2 The importance of other soil parameters in the polarization signature*

691 Although  $\sigma''$  is less dependent on VMC than  $\sigma'$  (e.g., Vinegar and Waxman,  
692 1984), inclusion of VMC data in the petrophysical modeling substantially  
693 improved the accuracy of CEC predictions. Consequently, it is important to  
694 obtain accurate estimates of VMC for such predictions of CEC with IP data.  
695 Given the experimental set up of this work, accounting for VMC was  
696 relatively straightforward; however in IP tomography it may be unfeasible  
697 to measure VMC directly. One could envisage this being problematic in  
698 areas with thick unsaturated zones.

699 Revil et al. (2021) proposed that VMC could be estimated from their  
700 approximated  $M_n$  and an assumed pore water conductivity. However, given

701 that they use  $M_n$  to obtain CEC, as shown in eq. 10, their predictions of  
702 CEC are highly susceptible to errors in their  $M_n$  values.

703 In the current work, porosity, cementation and saturation exponents, and  
704 pore fluid chemistry were assumed homogenous in each field. It is  
705 anticipated that variation in these parameters could contribute to the  
706 scatter in the CEC predictions shown in Figure 12a. The importance of these  
707 parameters is well documented, e.g., Vinegar and Waxman (1984);  
708 however, it should be noted that accurate determination of such properties  
709 is comparable in effort to direct measurement of CEC.

710 One possible route to separate surface conductivity and electrolytic  
711 conductivity, and therefore estimate both saturation and porewater  
712 electrical conductivity, could be via the proportionality factor ( $l = \sigma''/\sigma'_{surf}$ ),  
713 Börner, (1992) and Weller et al. (2013). For instance, Weller et al. (2013)  
714 demonstrated that  $l = 0.042$  for a database of sandstones and  
715 unconsolidated sediments. In the North Field, there was a negligible  
716 correlation (*Spearman's correlation* = 0.07) between 1 Hz  $\sigma'$  and VMC;  
717 which indicates that  $\sigma'_{surf}$  dominates  $\sigma'$ . However, there was only a  
718 moderate correlation (*Spearman's correlation* = 0.39) between the 1 Hz  $\sigma'$   
719 and  $\sigma''$  in the North Field; which indicates that the proportionally factor is  
720 variable. In the South Field, given the stronger correlation between 1 Hz  $\sigma'$   
721 and VMC (*Spearman's correlation* = 0.75),  $\sigma'$  cannot be assumed to be  
722 independent from electrolytic conductivity. However, in the absence of  
723 detailed information on electrolytic conductivity in the South Field, the

724 nature of the proportionality factor cannot be validated. Future work ought  
725 to explore the usefulness of the proportionality factor in IP based  
726 predictions of CEC.

727 From the magnetic susceptibility data, it was interpreted that the  
728 mineralogy of the North Field soil is more diverse than the South Field.  
729 Peshtani et al. (2022) demonstrated positive linear and power-law  
730 relationships between magnetic susceptibility and polarization for a diverse  
731 range of sediments. However, in the present work there was a non-  
732 monotonic relationship between  $\chi_{LF}$  and  $\sigma''$  (Figure 13b). For instance,  
733 when  $\chi_{LF}$  is  $< 200 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m}^3/\text{kg}$ ,  $\sigma''$  varies substantially without a clear  
734 relation to  $\chi_{LF}$  in both fields. When  $\chi_{LF}$  is  $> 200 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m}^3/\text{kg}$ , there appears  
735 to be a weakly positive correlation between  $\chi_{LF}$  and  $\sigma''$  for the North Field  
736 data, and no correlation for the South Field data. It should be noted that  
737 the samples in Peshtani et al. (2022) had much stronger magnetic  
738 signatures; and that it was observed by Chen et al. (2021) that MS and  $\sigma''$   
739 were poorly correlated for weakly magnetic serpentinized basalts.  
740 Nonetheless, the relationship between imaginary conductivity and magnetic  
741 susceptibility has clear importance for CEC prediction in magnetically  
742 influenced soils and is worthy of further study.

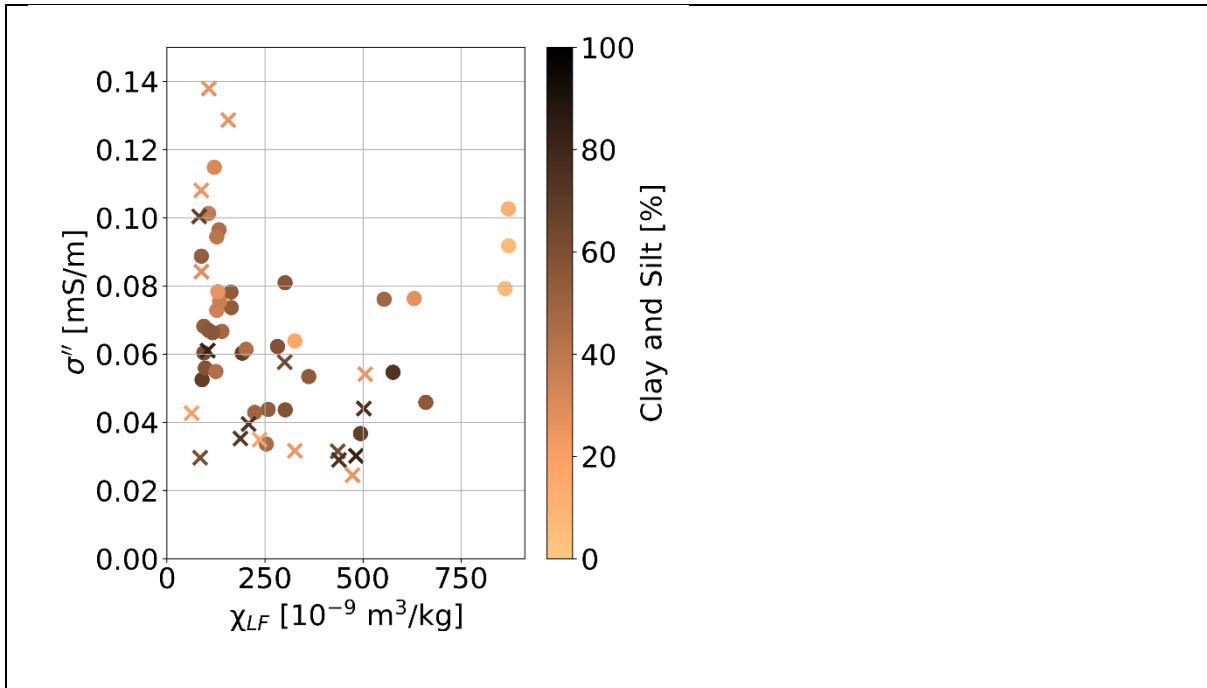
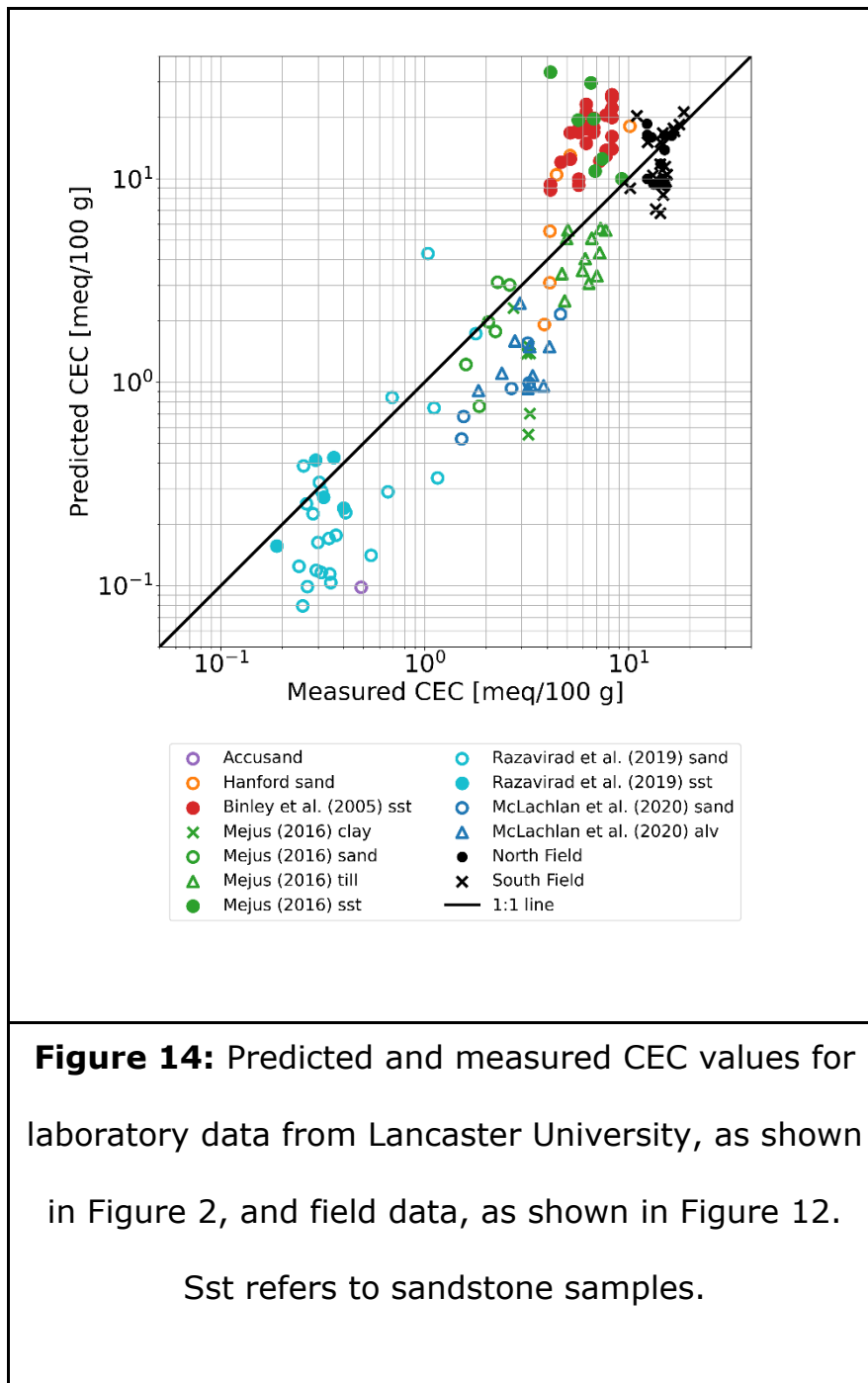


Figure 13: Plot showing the non-monotonic relationship between  $\chi_{LF}$  and 1 Hz  $\sigma''$ .

743

### 744 5.3 The ability of field-based IP to quantify CEC

745 The last objective of the work was to assess the ability of field-based IP to  
 746 quantify CEC. To better visualize the field-based CEC predictions it is useful  
 747 to plot them alongside the laboratory data from Figure 2. Figure 14 shows  
 748 predicted vs measured CEC for the South Field data, the North Field data  
 749 with < 50 % sand content, and the laboratory data. The predicted CEC for  
 750 the laboratory data assumes a global relationship of  $\sigma'' = 0.027 CEC$ .  
 751 Although one could argue that a better fit of the laboratory samples could  
 752 be achieved using a separate coefficient for each data set, this allows for a  
 753 more objective comparison with the field data given that porosities and  
 754 cementation coefficients were not well-defined.



755

756 The predictions from the field data lie comparatively close to the 1:1 line,  
 757 indicating that relatively accurate estimates of CEC could be obtained from  
 758 IP measurements. For instance, one could envisage building a larger  
 759 database of field-based IP and CEC data for order-of-magnitude CEC  
 760 estimates. Although order-of-magnitude estimates ought to be useful in

761 informing nutrient retention in agricultural and hydrogeological systems, it  
762 is anticipated that in most cases, CEC will not vary orders of magnitude  
763 across the field site. Future work ought to extend the methodology to other  
764 field sites, particularly those with non-magnetic soils, to build a larger  
765 measurement database.

## 766 **6. Conclusions**

767 This study addressed three key objectives related to the application of  
768 induced polarization (IP) measurements in CEC characterization. First, the  
769 investigation into multi-frequency versus single-frequency polarization  
770 measurements revealed that single-frequency IP measurements, or time-  
771 domain IP measurements, may be sufficient for characterizing polarization  
772 characteristics of geological materials.

773 Second, the study indicated the importance of soil parameters such as  
774 moisture content, porosity, pore fluid chemistry, and mineralogy on  
775 polarization signatures. Mineralogy was identified to have a significant role,  
776 indicating that consideration of soil parent materials and soil management  
777 ought to be considered before CEC is estimated with electrical approaches.  
778 To assess magnetic influence, one could envisage conducting an EMI survey  
779 to identify anomalous regions (e.g., McLachlan et al., 2022).

780 Given the importance of VMC on polarization signature future work in  
781 unsaturated zones ought to consider uncertainty related to VMC. However,  
782 it should be noted that IP-based CEC prediction could be more viable in

783 saturated settings. For instance, in cases where the subsurface is saturated  
784 (e.g., wetlands, and river and lake beds) one could envisage obtaining more  
785 accurate CEC predictions without the need for VMC measurements. The  
786 CEC values of sediments here are important as they govern the transfer of  
787 nutrients and pollutants between groundwater and surface water.  
788 Moreover, saturated conditions would also allow for an easier constraint on  
789 porewater conductivity, which would likely yield improved CEC predictions.

790 Nonetheless, despite the uncertainties of working in the unsaturated zone,  
791 field-based IP measurements demonstrated promising results for  
792 quantifying CEC, particularly in the South Field. The derived petrophysical  
793 relationship showed broad agreement with the large-scale patterns present  
794 in the laboratory measurements for data in both the North and South Field.

795 Overall, this work contributes valuable insights into the complexities of  
796 utilizing IP measurements for CEC characterization. The findings provide a  
797 foundation for future research to refine and expand the applicability of field-  
798 based IP measurements in diverse settings.

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## 991 **9. Appendix**

992

993 Table 1: A summary of the samples and key data for the samples in this  
994 work. Sites with names starting 'N' denote North Field, and sites with names  
995 starting 'S' denote South Field. The  $\sigma'$  RMSE and  $\sigma''$  RMSE denote the root-  
996 mean-square-error of the double Pelton model fitting.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>1 Hz <math>\sigma'</math> (mS/m)</b>	<b>1 Hz <math>\sigma''</math> (mS/m)</b>	<b><math>\rho_0</math> (ohm.m)</b>	<b><math>M_n</math> (mS/m)</b>	<b><math>\sigma'</math> RMSE (%)</b>	<b><math>\sigma''</math> RMSE (%)</b>
NP1	6.577	0.078	156.528	0.331	0.040	2.760
NP2	3.984	0.079	258.617	0.270	0.210	14.350
NP3	6.371	0.074	162.593	0.225	0.050	1.770
NP4	5.463	0.060	187.778	0.217	0.060	5.420
NP5	7.979	0.089	129.454	0.325	0.070	1.620
NP6	5.498	0.073	189.585	0.426	0.100	3.970
NP7	4.174	0.092	252.532	0.319	0.140	3.540
NP8	4.921	0.064	212.089	0.139	0.070	1.910
NP9	7.518	0.068	137.509	0.256	0.040	1.960
NP10	5.719	0.062	180.568	0.310	0.090	2.440
NP11	4.049	0.075	256.517	0.241	0.150	9.760
NP12	3.028	0.067	344.809	0.211	0.140	7.590
NV1	7.836	0.067	129.516	0.205	0.140	10.450
NV2	7.399	0.055	137.010	0.200	0.410	6.370
NV3	5.546	0.044	183.506	0.155	0.460	2.620
NV4	8.272	0.052	122.268	0.133	0.310	8.760
NV5	6.267	0.034	161.107	0.115	0.380	22.530
NV6	10.103	0.115	102.103	0.213	0.500	6.870
NV7	10.224	0.103	66.070	0.400	0.500	6.660
NV8	12.464	0.076	-	-	-	-
NV9	7.388	0.078	11.818	0.233	0.460	16.820
NV10	8.267	0.066	41.262	0.275	0.460	3.050
NV11	8.364	0.056	41.265	0.209	0.400	7.120

NV12	6.800	0.055	27.754	0.178	0.470	10.410
NH1	9.212	0.081	18.558	0.268	0.450	14.690
NH2	6.965	0.053	30.344	0.147	0.440	5.180
NH3	3.905	0.037	65.565	0.171	0.530	4.930
NH4	11.613	0.060	19.501	0.185	0.300	26.020
NH5	5.780	0.043	34.747	0.155	0.420	6.210
NH6	5.019	0.046	15.289	0.133	0.470	26.810
NH7	6.808	0.061	25.990	0.154	0.440	8.220
NH8	9.967	0.096	17.666	0.320	0.450	7.270
NH9	6.158	0.044	57.415	0.178	0.420	1.420
NH10	9.738	0.101	10.930	0.277	0.490	18.020
NH11	7.761	0.076	-	-	-	-
NH12	7.730	0.094	18.101	0.157	0.570	8.030
SH1	3.498	0.035	2.277	0.038	4.500	62.460
SH2	3.470	0.024	7.152	0.046	2.360	67.790
SH3	4.470	0.032	0.661	0.021	3.380	71.090
SH4	9.934	0.084	0.890	0.110	1.010	57.620
SH5	5.293	0.054	1.317	0.074	3.330	59.880
SH6	4.679	0.043	0.675	0.030	1.840	36.980
SH7	12.126	0.108	2.219	0.078	1.990	72.800
SH8	10.933	0.129	2.123	0.245	2.060	67.840
SH9	18.232	0.138	23.078	0.627	1.160	47.690
SV1	6.196	0.030	32.122	0.105	0.100	11.710
SV2	6.035	0.035	14.124	0.107	0.260	32.650
SV3	5.161	0.031	8.784	0.081	0.060	4.690

SV4	5.892	0.044	9.574	0.109	0.180	16.420
SV5	5.212	0.029	4.371	0.068	0.100	13.480
SV6	6.521	0.039	8.500	0.098	0.110	12.400
SV7	12.176	0.100	2.529	0.227	0.040	4.430
SV8	5.947	0.030	1.768	0.046	0.100	4.570
SV9	7.134	0.058	21.151	0.139	0.090	9.610
SV10	7.651	0.061	2.314	0.132	0.140	13.580

997