Magnetic Flux Cancelation as the Buildup and Trigger Mechanism for CME-Producing Eruptions in two Small Active Regions

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We follow two small, magnetically isolated CME-producing solar active regions (ARs) from the time of their emergence until several days later, when their core regions erupt to produce the CMEs. In both cases, magnetograms show: (a) following an initial period where the poles of the emerging regions separate from each other, the poles then reverse direction and start to retract inward; (b) during the retraction period, flux cancelation occurs along the main neutral line of the regions, (c) this cancelation builds the sheared core field/flux rope that eventually erupts to make the CME. In the two cases, respectively 30% and 50% of the maximum flux of the region cancels prior to the eruption. Recent studies indicate that solar coronal jets frequently result from small-scale filaments eruptions (Sterling et al. 2015), with those “minifilament” eruptions also being built up and triggered by cancelation of magnetic flux (Panesar et al. 2016). Together, the small-AR eruptions here and the coronal jet results suggest that isolated bipolar regions tend to erupt when some threshold fraction, perhaps in the range of 50%, of the region’s maximum flux has canceled. Our observed erupting filaments/flux ropes form at sites of flux cancelation, in agreement with previous observations. Thus, the recent finding that minifilaments that erupt to form jets also form via flux cancelation is further evidence that minifilaments are small-scale versions of the long-studied full-sized filaments. (Details are in Sterling et al. 2018, ApJ, 864, 68.) This work was supported by the NASA HGI Program, and the NASA/MSFC NPP program.

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