Nuclear Experiment

The role of Spectator Fragments at an electron lon collider

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Efficient detection of spectator fragments is key to the main topics at an electron-ion collider (eIC). Any process which leads to emission of fragments or \$\gamma\$'s breaks coherence in diffractive processes. Therefore this is equivalent to non-detection of rapidity gaps in pp collisions. For example, in coherent photoproduction of vector mesons their 4-momentum transfer distribution would image the "gluon charge" in the nucleus in the same way that Hofstadter measured its charge structure using elastic scattering of \$\sim\$100 MeV electrons. Whereas he could measure the \$\sim\$4 MeV energy loss by the electron due to excitation of nuclear energy levels (Figure 1), even the energy spread of the incident beam would prevent such an inclusive selection of quasielastic events at an eIC. The only available tool is fragment detection. Since, in our example, one finds that \$\sim100\$ of deexcitations go through \$\gamma\$'s or 1 neutron, rarely to 2 neutron and never to protons(due to Coulomb barrier suppression), the elC design should emphasize their detection.

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