Independent evaluation of the integrated $Z/ZDR$ method for obtaining more accurate rainfall rates from polarization radar.

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Polarimetric radars promise to provide more accurate rainfall rates than provided by conventional radars measuring only reflectivity and are being introduced into operational C-band networks in Europe. For light and moderate rainfalls, the differential phase shifts are too small and so one must rely on the differential reflectivity, $ZDR$, which essentially provides a measure of the mean raindrop shape and hence its size. In principal when $ZDR$ is combined with $Z$ then the normalized raindrop concentration, $N_w$, can be derived if the drop spectrum is assumed to be an exponential or gamma function. In practice the observed values of $ZDR$ are very noisy, so rather than use the data at each gate, we analyse the variation of $Z$ and $ZDR$ over a region of about 5km square, and hence derive the value of $N_w$ over this region. The value of $N_w$ over the region fixes the ‘a’ in the $Z=aR^b$. In this talk we will evaluate this technique, and compare the values of $N_w$ obtained simultaneously by three independent methods: 1) the $Z/ZDR$ technique described above, 2) From the Doppler spectrum obtained by a vertically pointing radar 3) From a disdrometer. Remarkable consistency is obtained, indicating that $N_w$ can be derived from $Z$ and $ZDR$ to better than 3dB, so that the rainfall rate, $R$, should be accurate to within 1dB (25%). We will also present some results of the variability of $N_w$ in different types of rainfall.