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Mohamadi

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(54) **BEAM-FORMING ANTENNA SYSTEM**

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2002, provisional application No. 60/428,409, filed on Nov.
22, 2002, provisional application No. 60/431,587, filed on
Dec. 5, 2002, and provisional application No. 60/436,749,
filed on Dec. 27, 2002.

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **H01Q 3/26**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **342/372**

(58) **Field of Search** **342/372**

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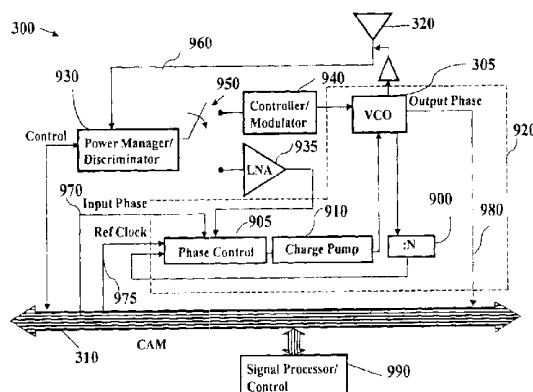
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A beam-forming antenna system includes an array of inte-
grated antenna units. Each integrated antenna unit includes
an oscillator coupled to an antenna. A network couples to the
integrated antenna units to provide phasing information to
the oscillators. A controller controls the phasing information
provided by the network to the oscillators.

15 Claims, 24 Drawing Sheets



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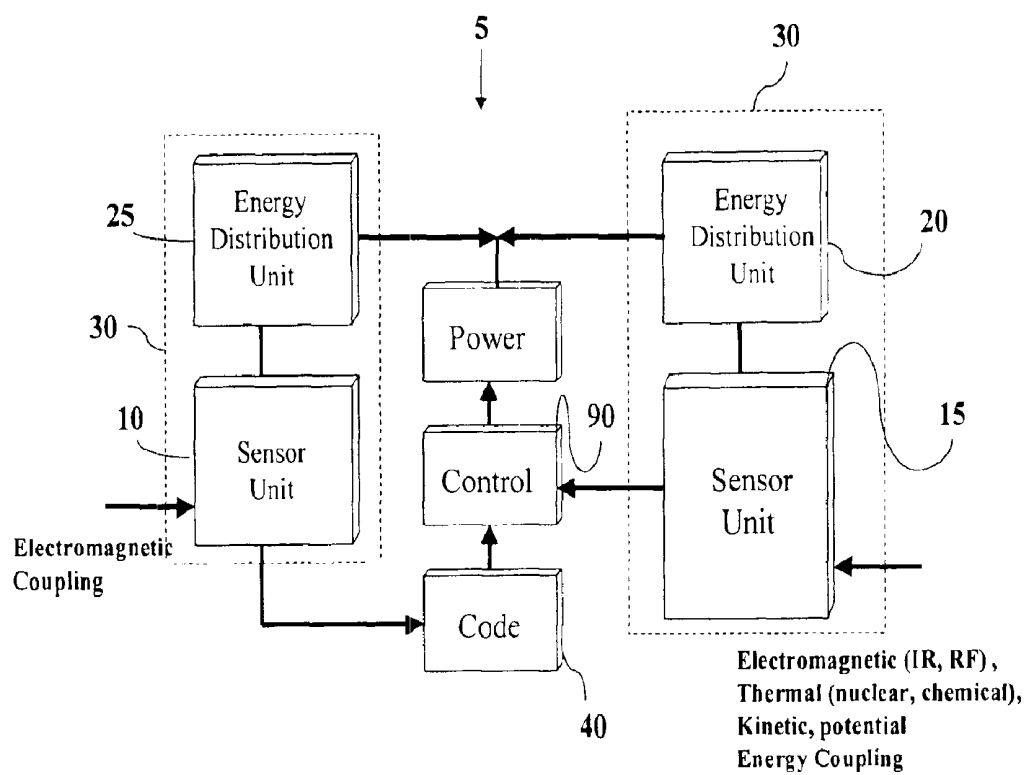


Figure 1

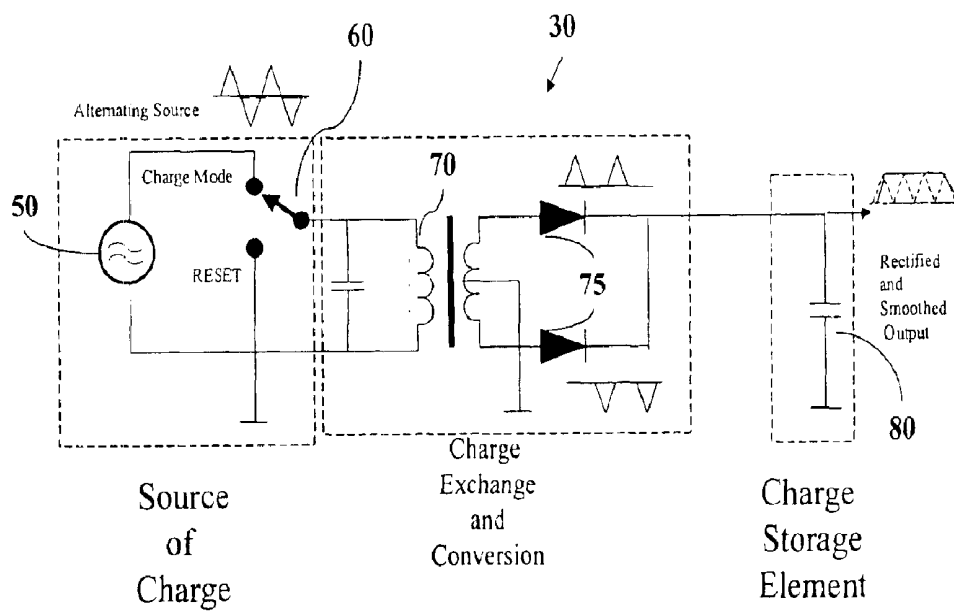


Figure 2

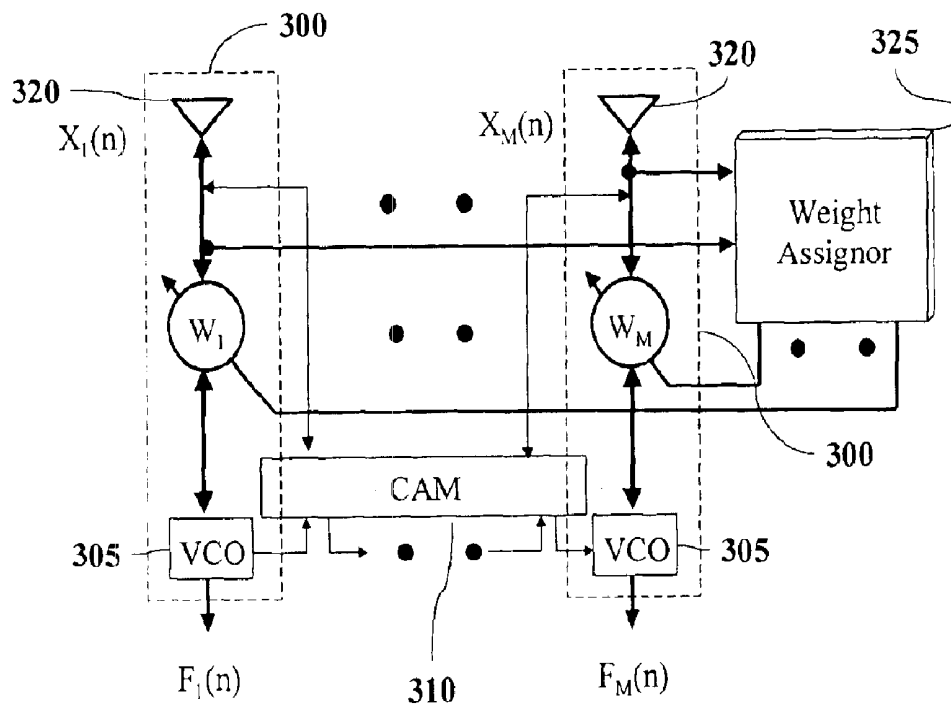


Figure 3a

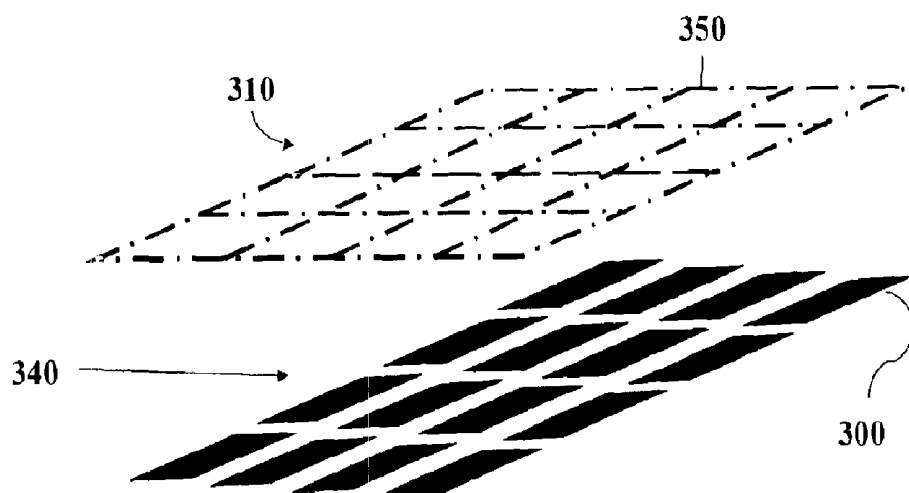


Figure 3b

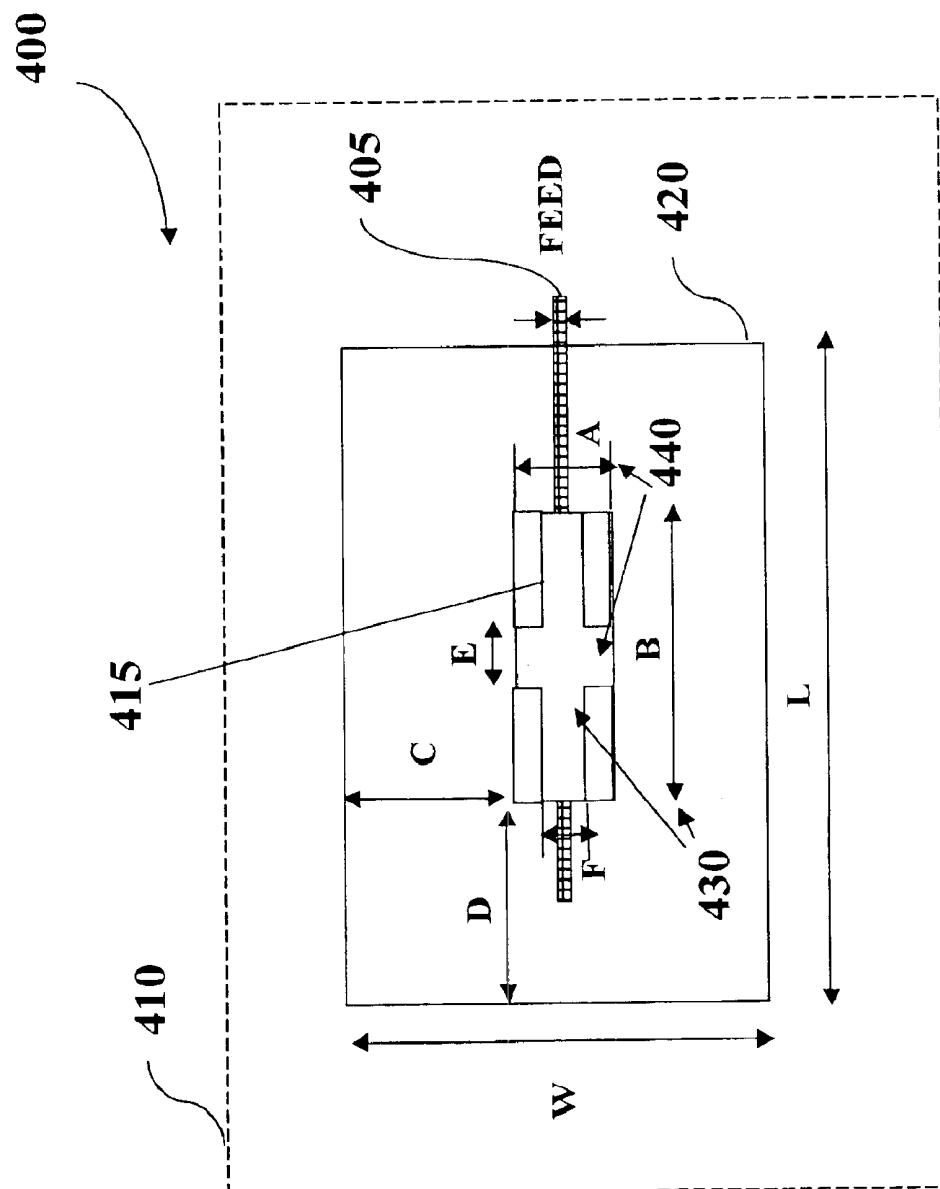


Figure 4a

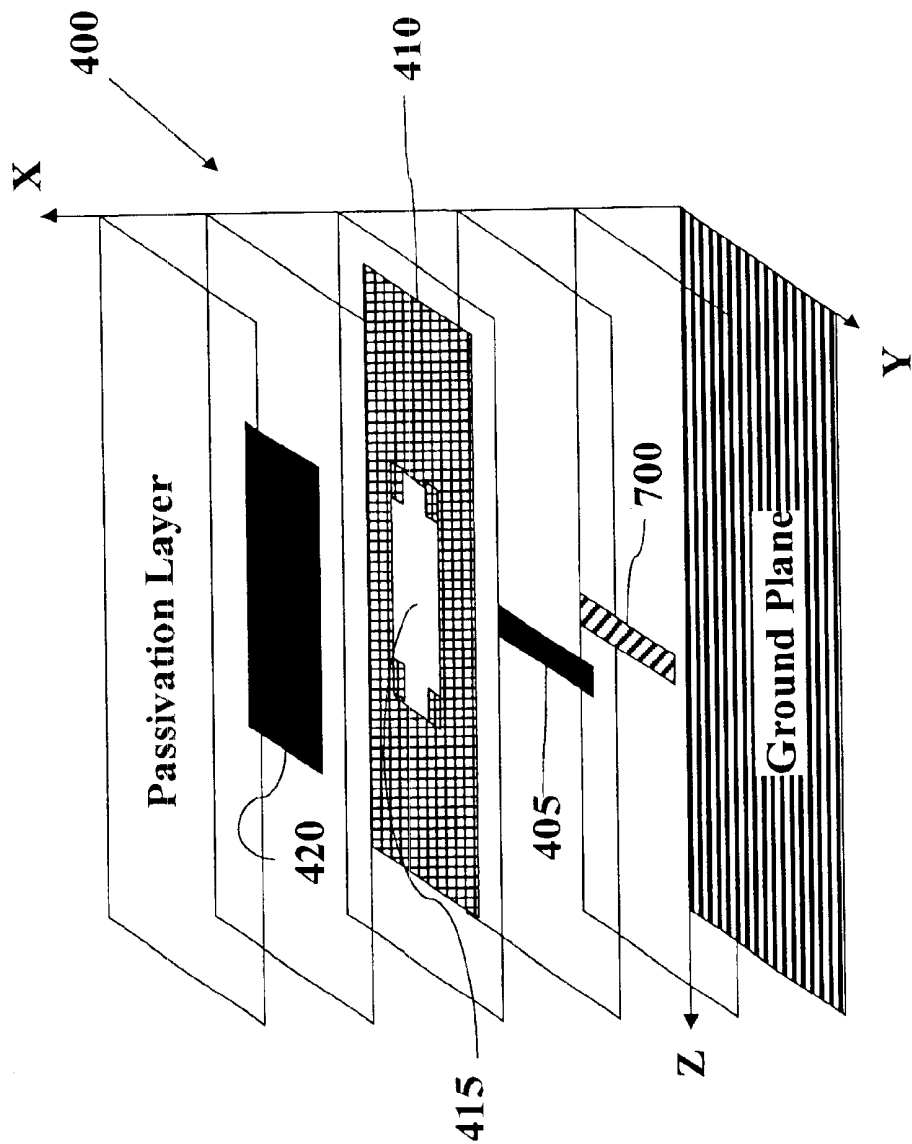


Figure 4b

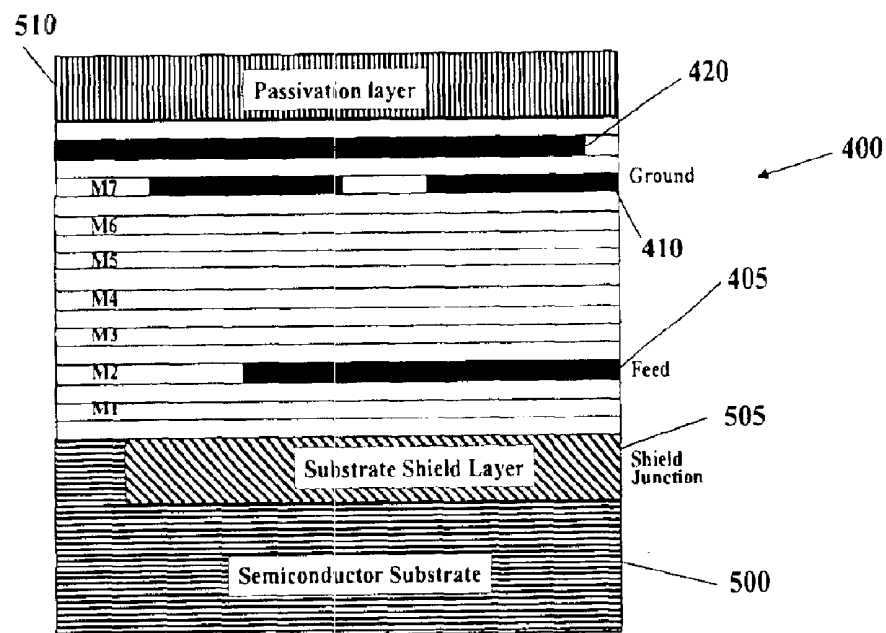


Figure 5

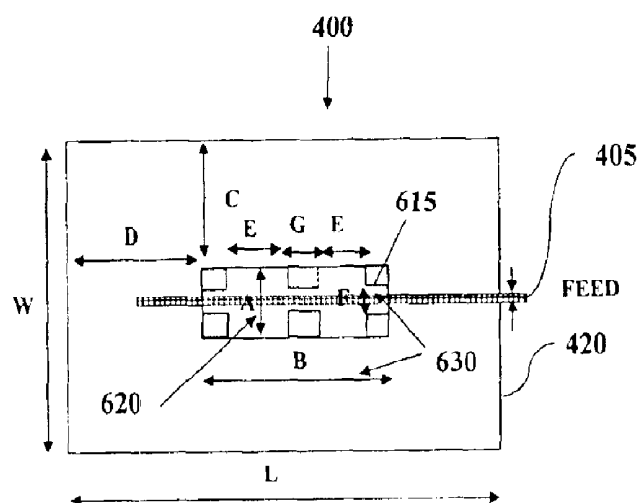


Figure 6a

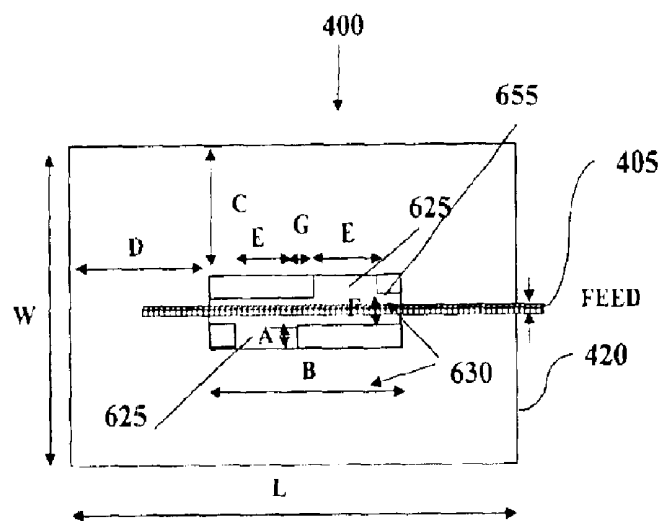


Figure 6b

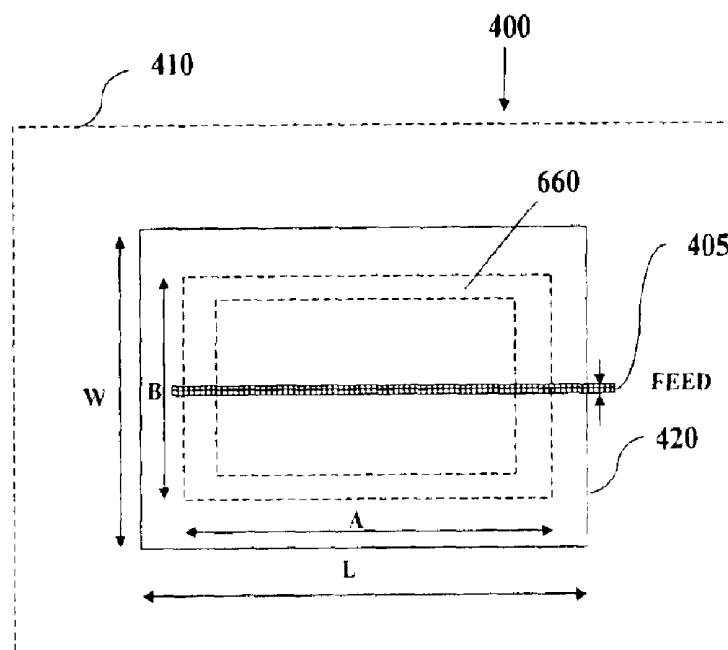


Figure 6c

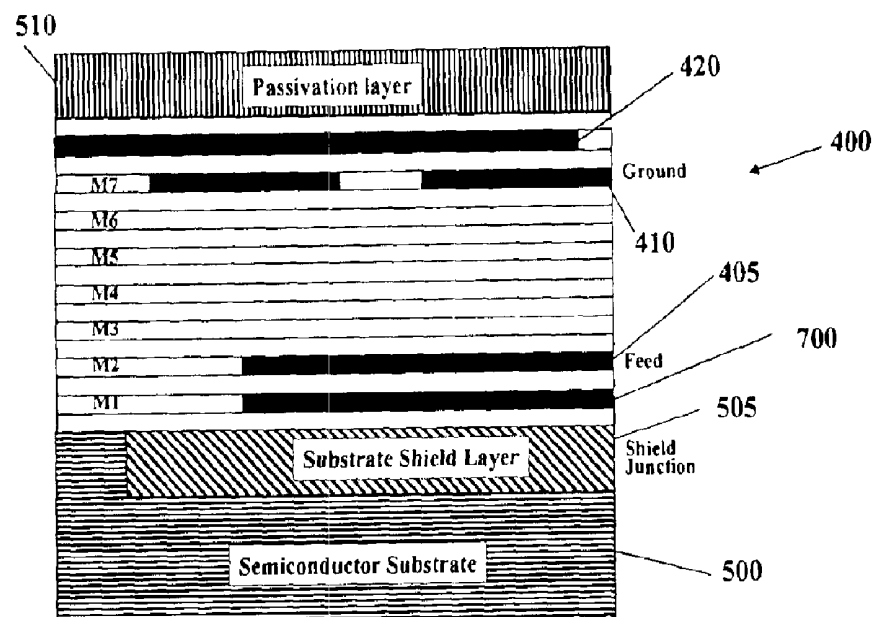


Figure 7

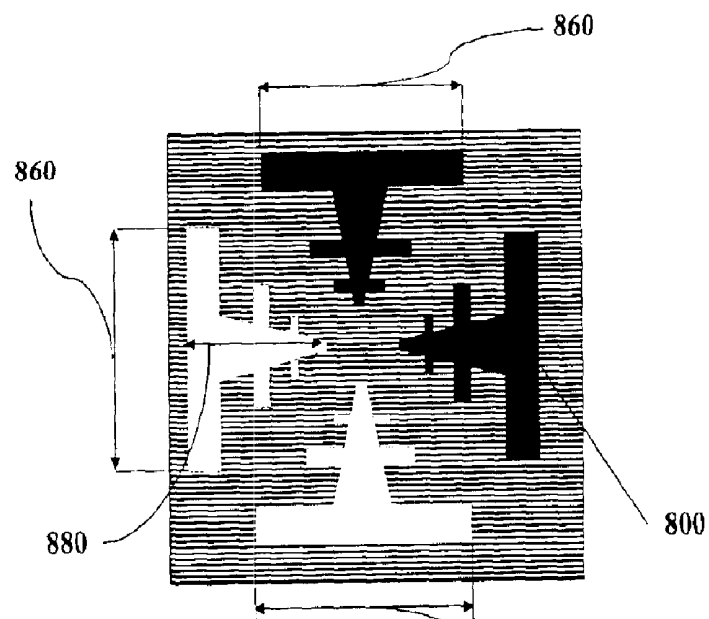


Figure 8a

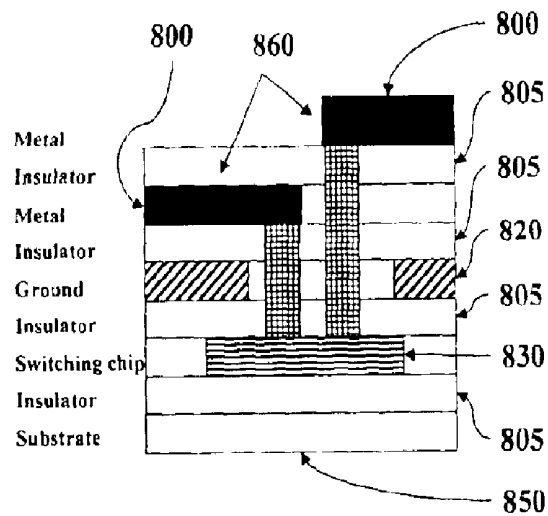


Figure 8b

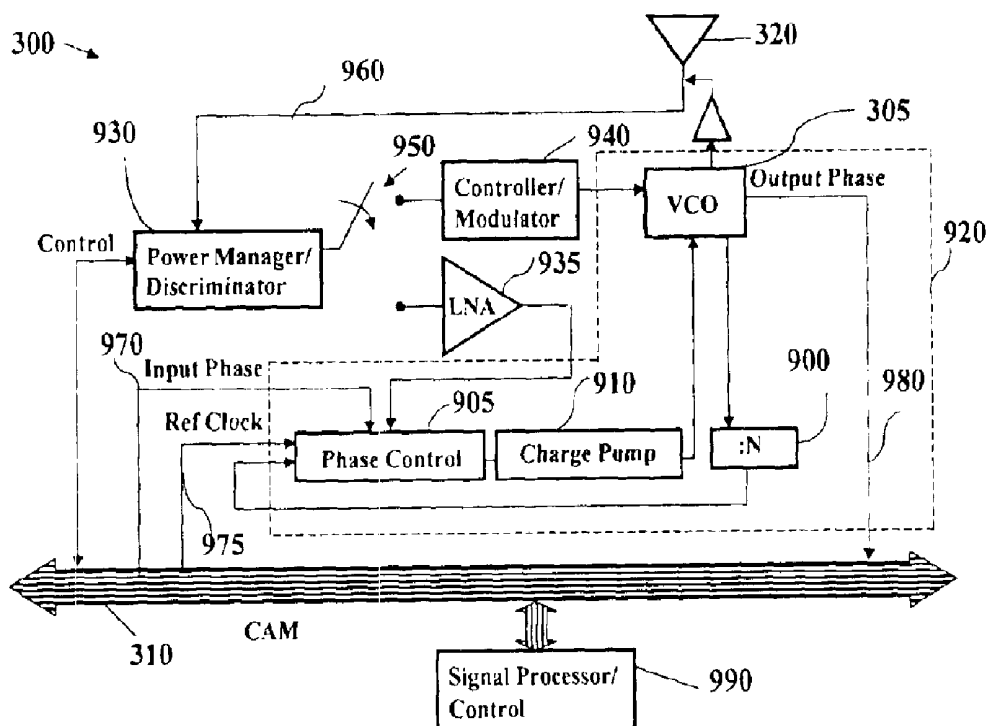


Figure 9

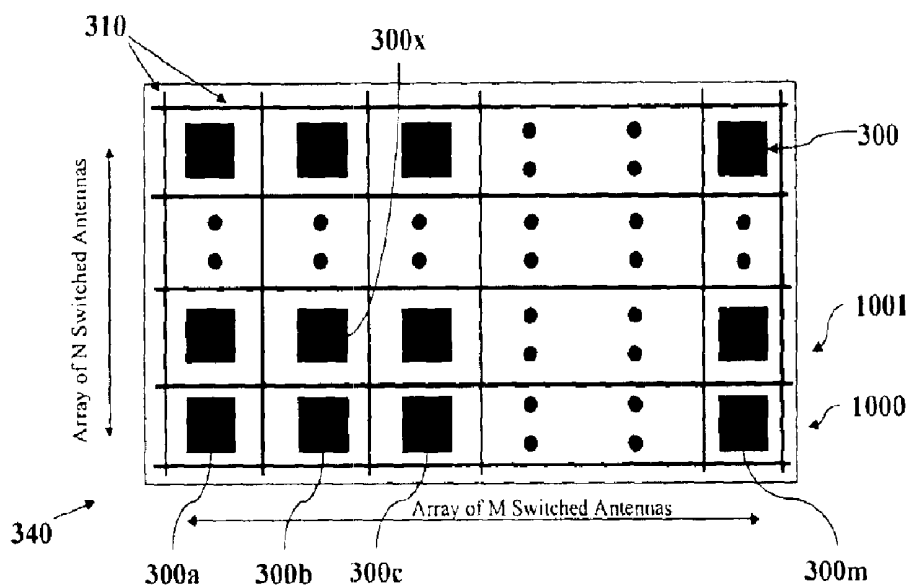


Figure 10

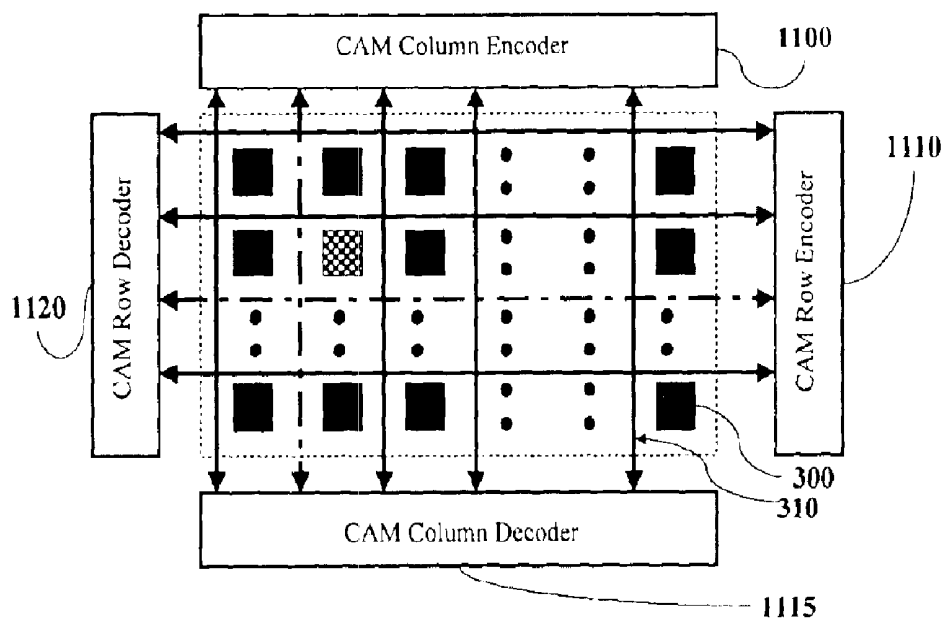


Figure 11

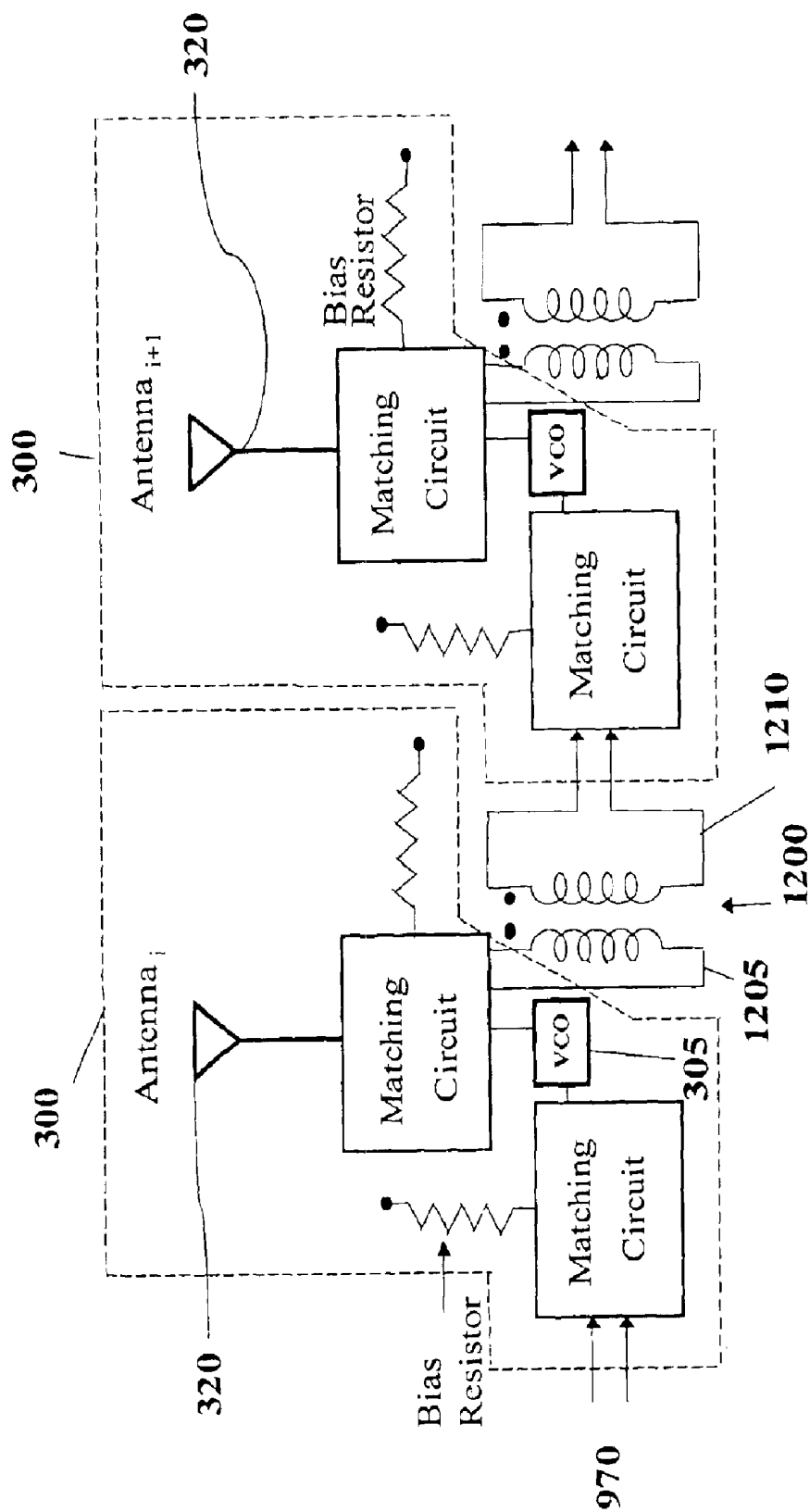


Figure 12

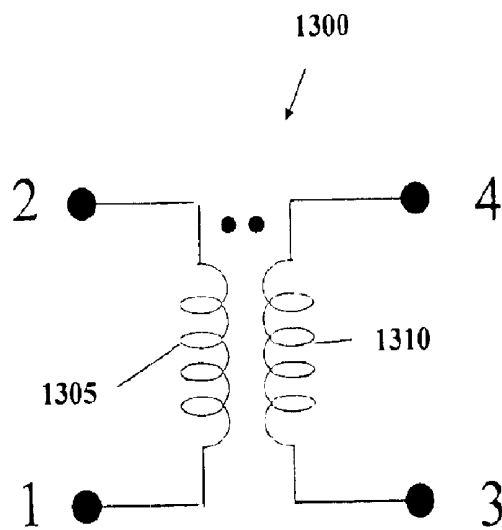


Figure 13a

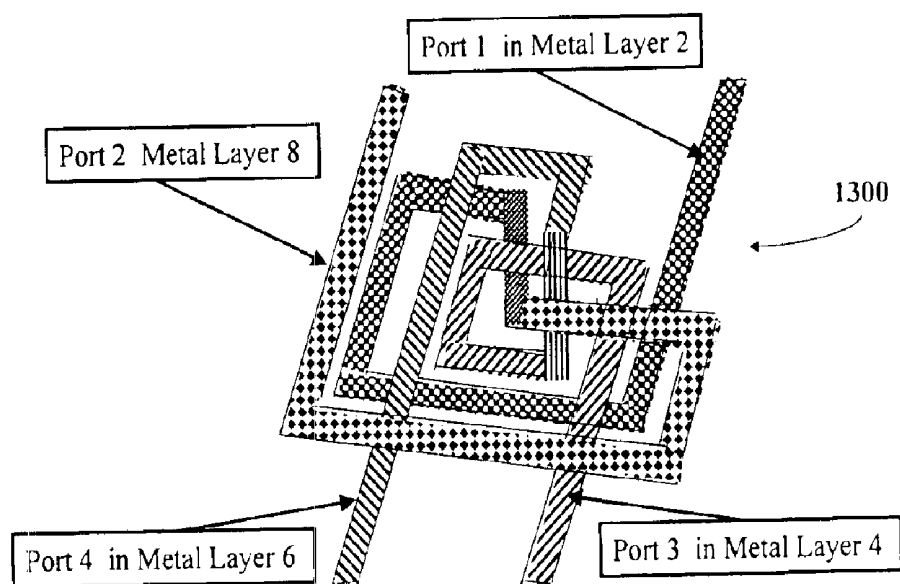


Figure 13b

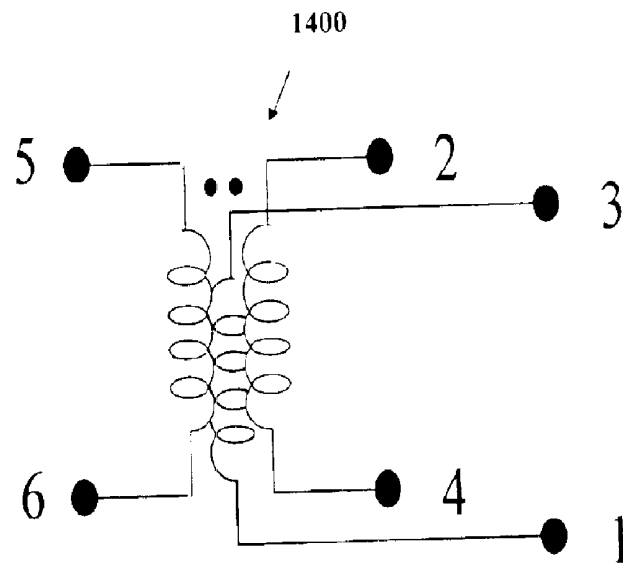


Figure 14a

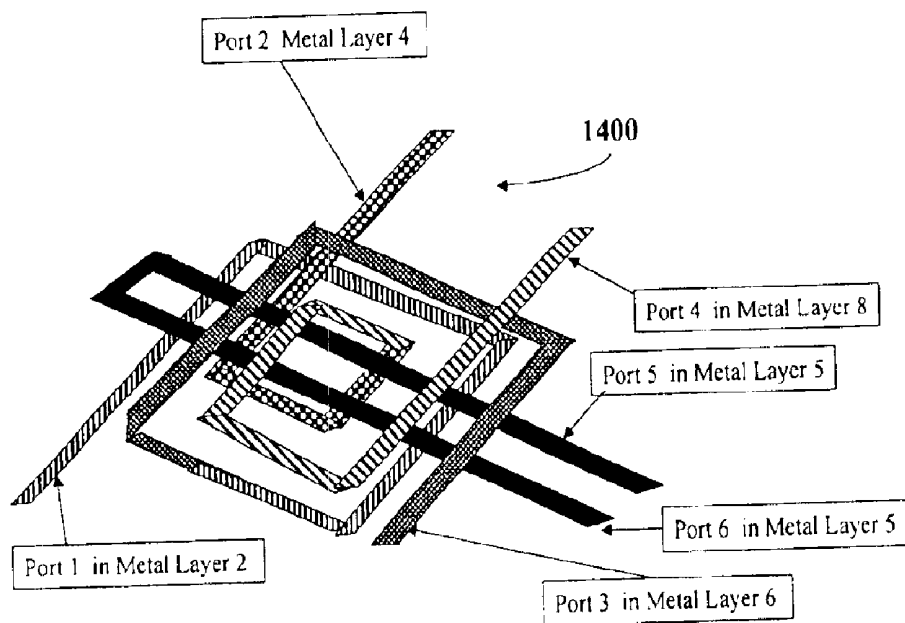


Figure 14b

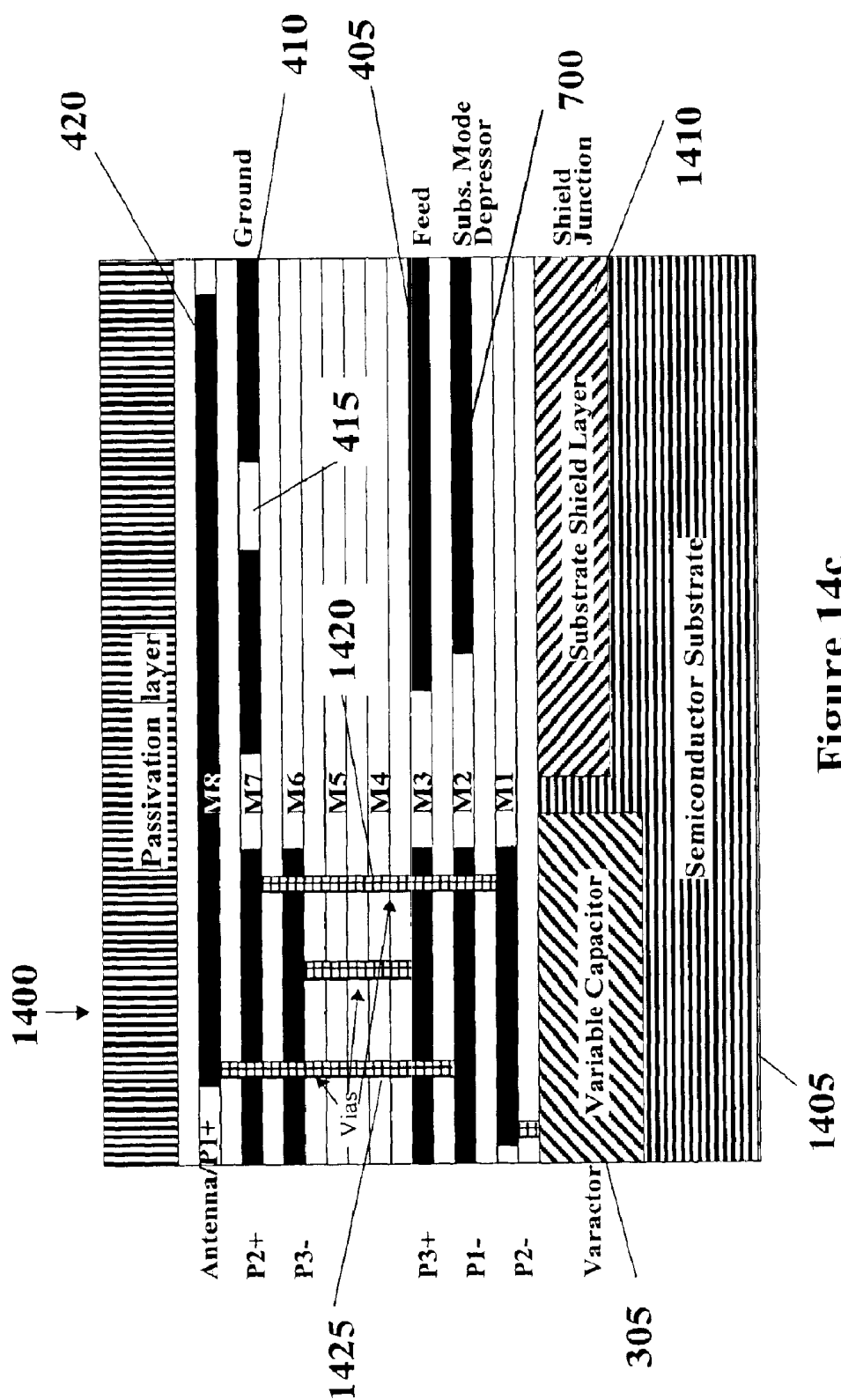
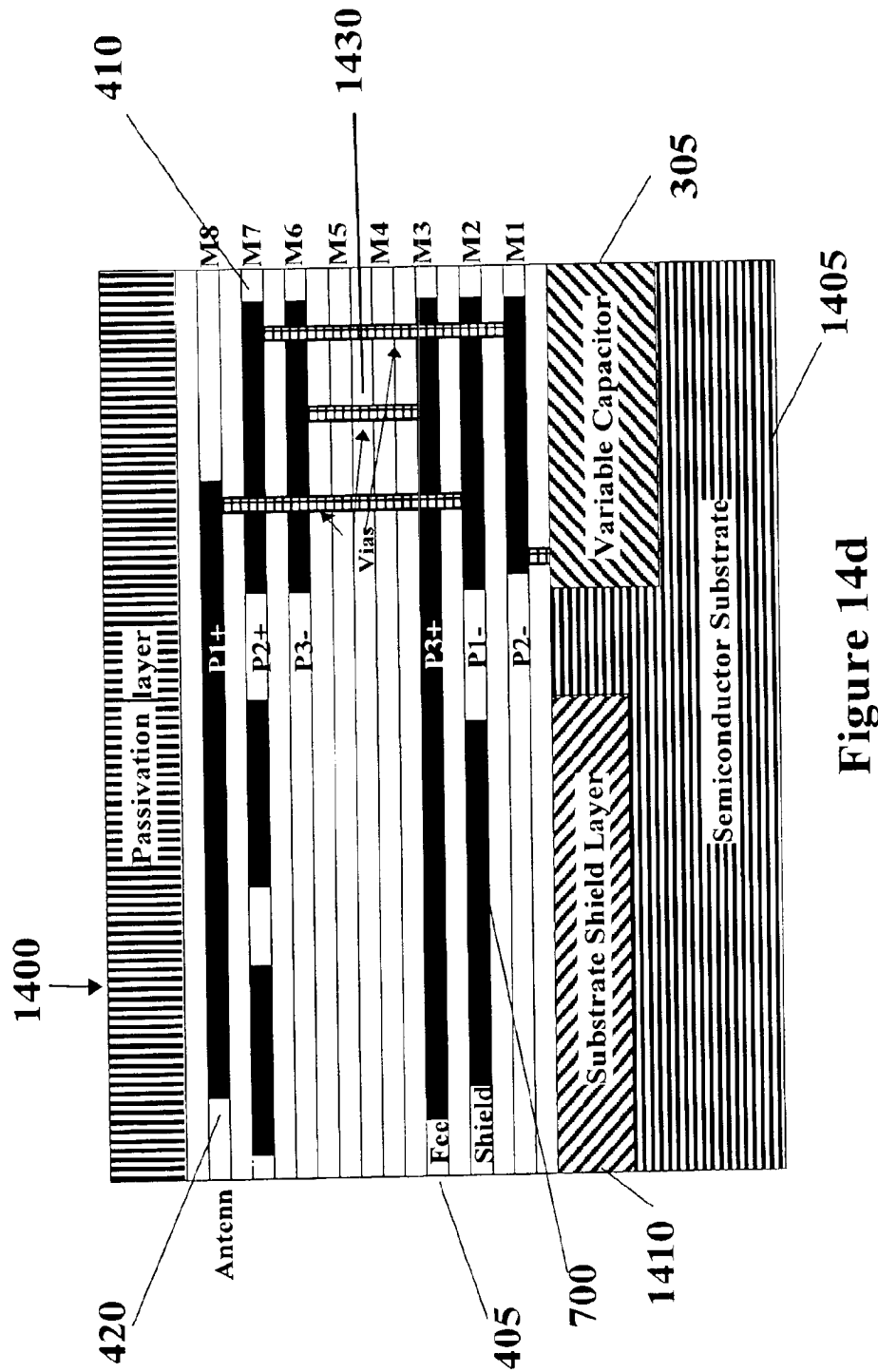


Figure 14c



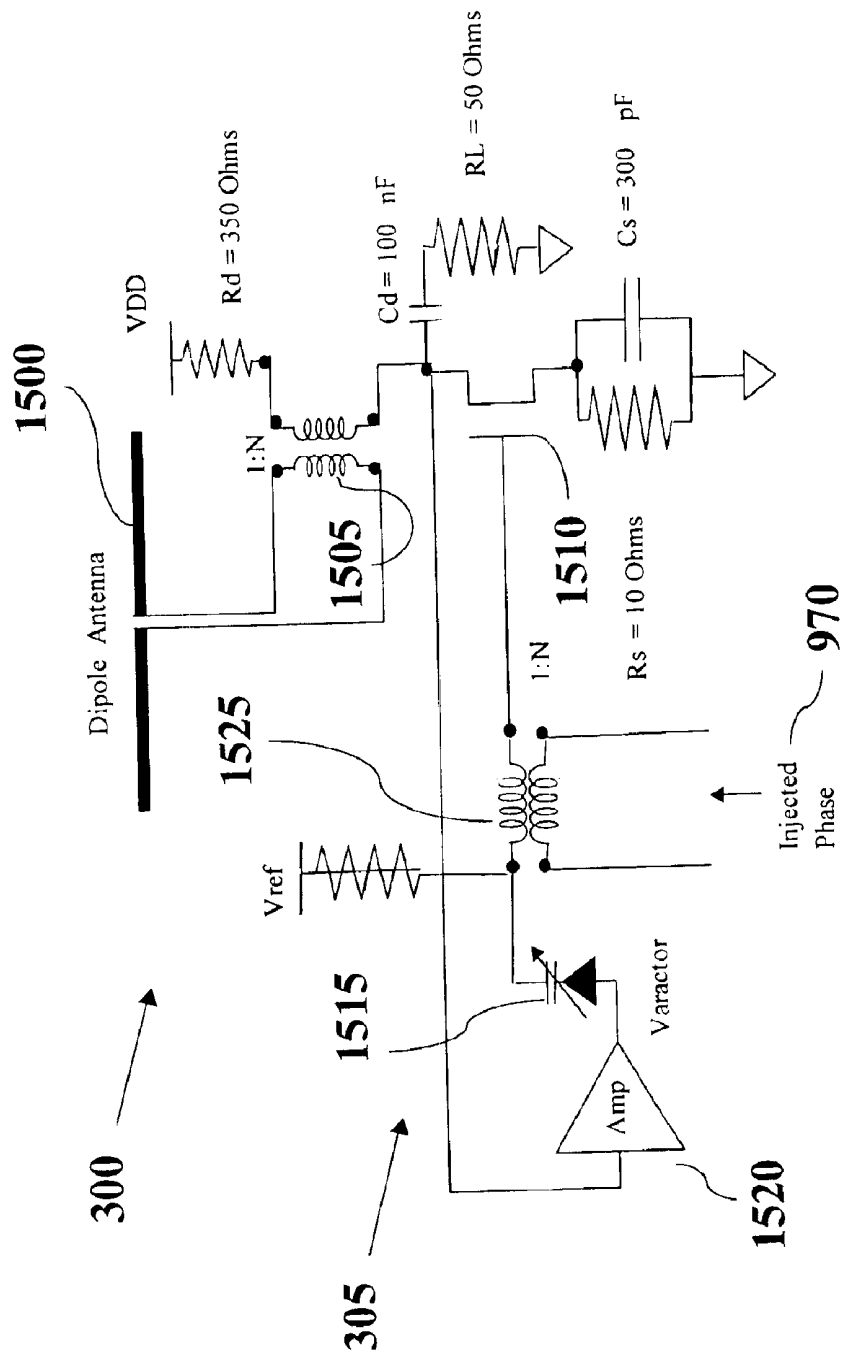


Figure 15a

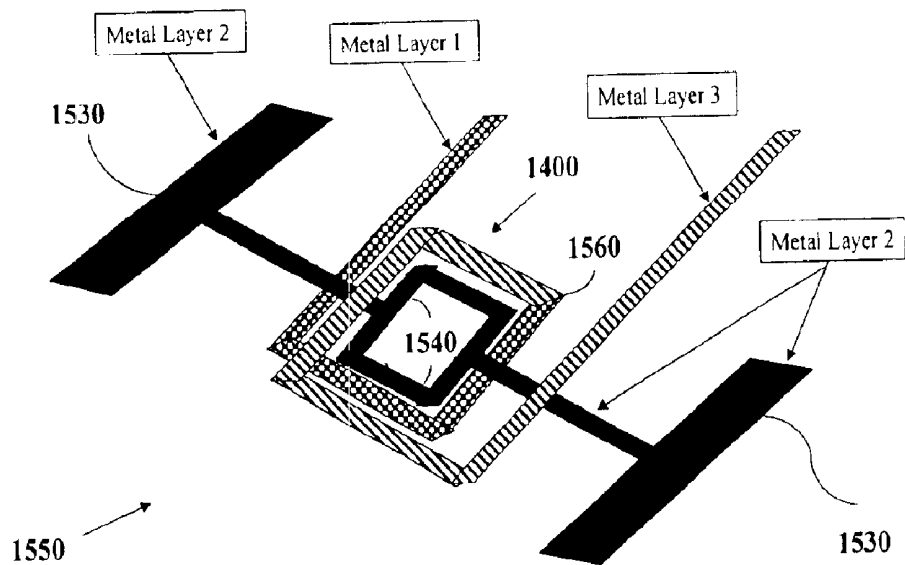


Figure 15b

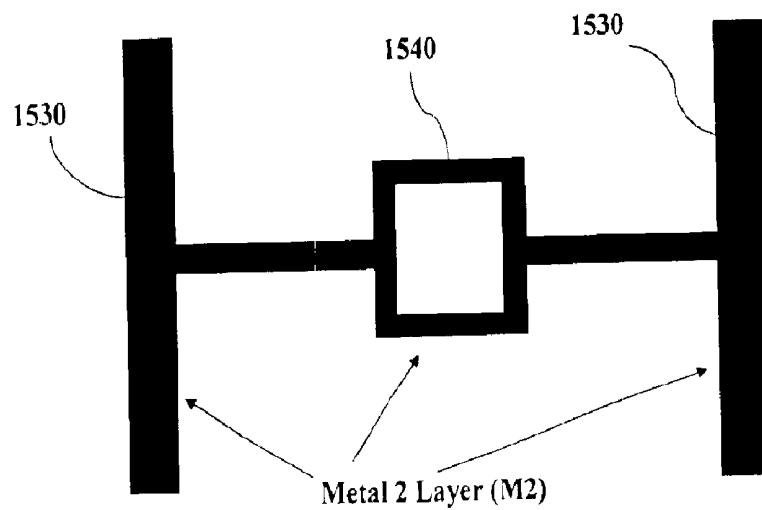


Figure 15c

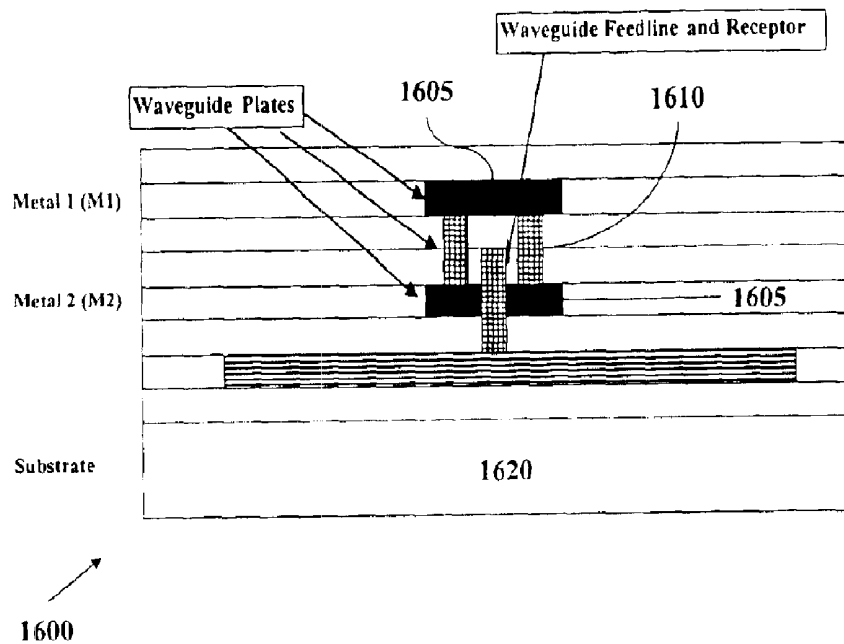


Figure 16

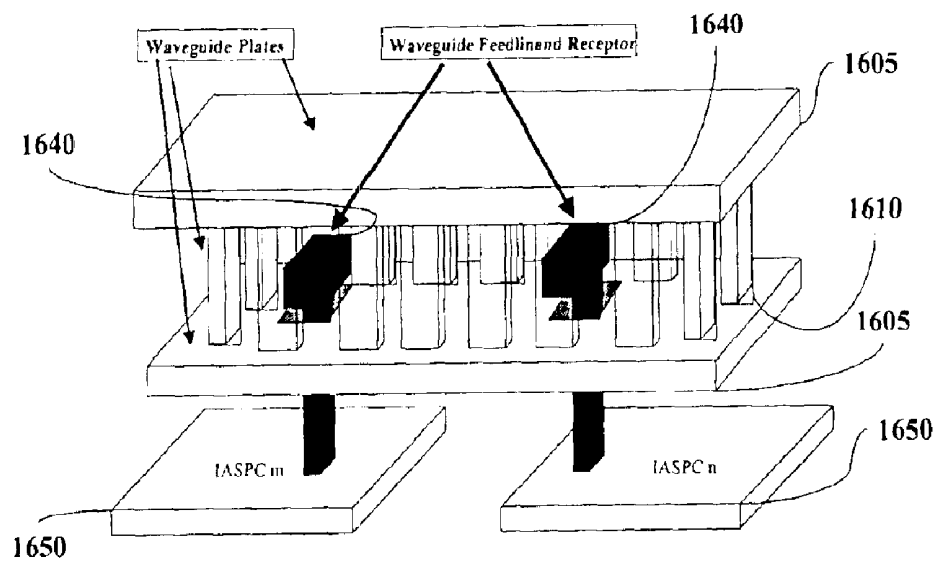


Figure 17

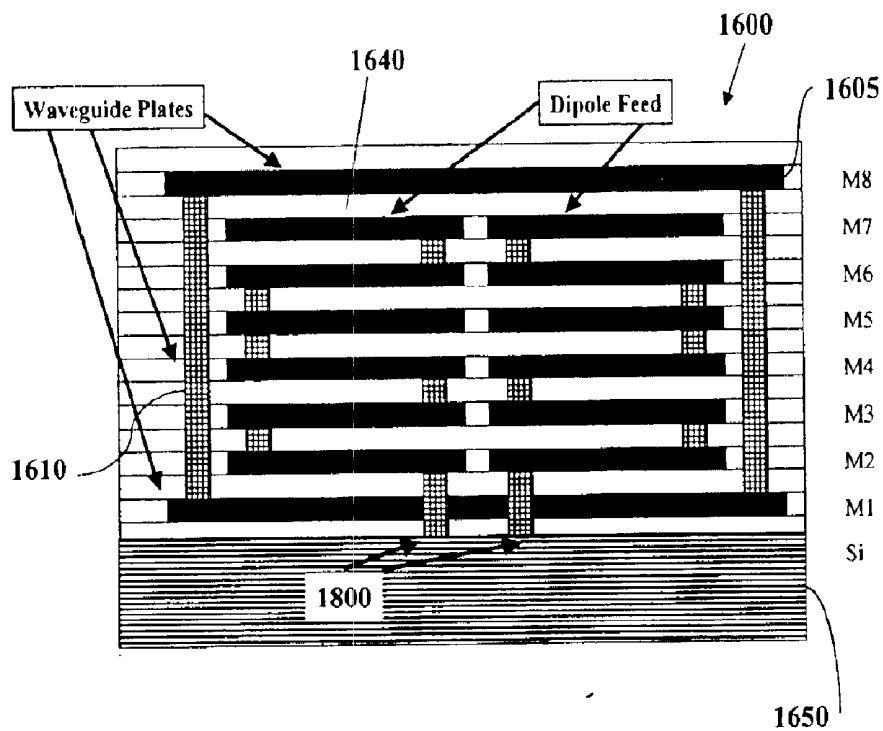


Figure 18a

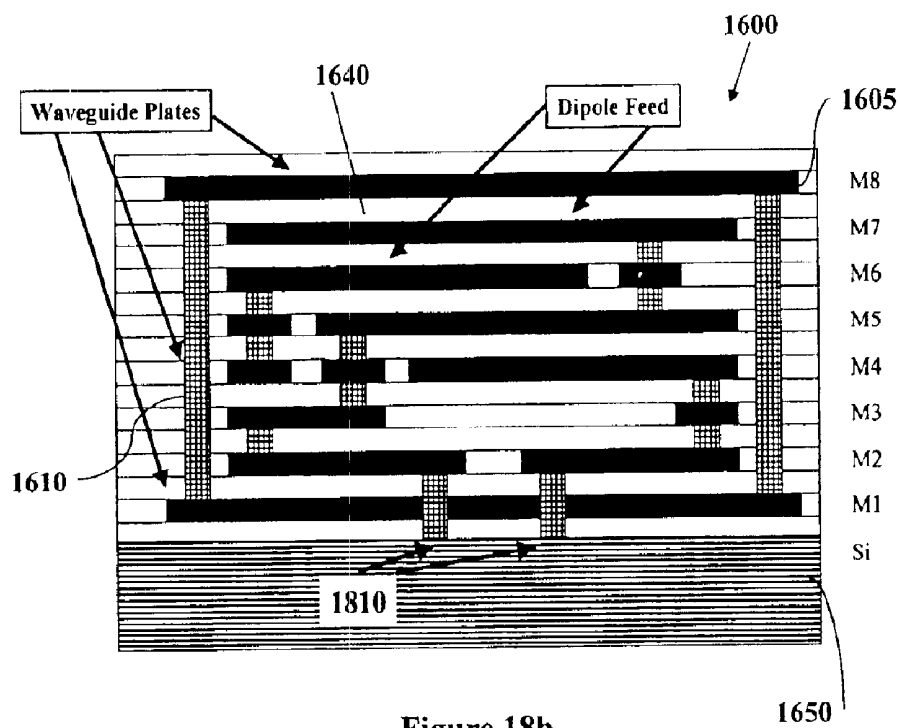


Figure 18b

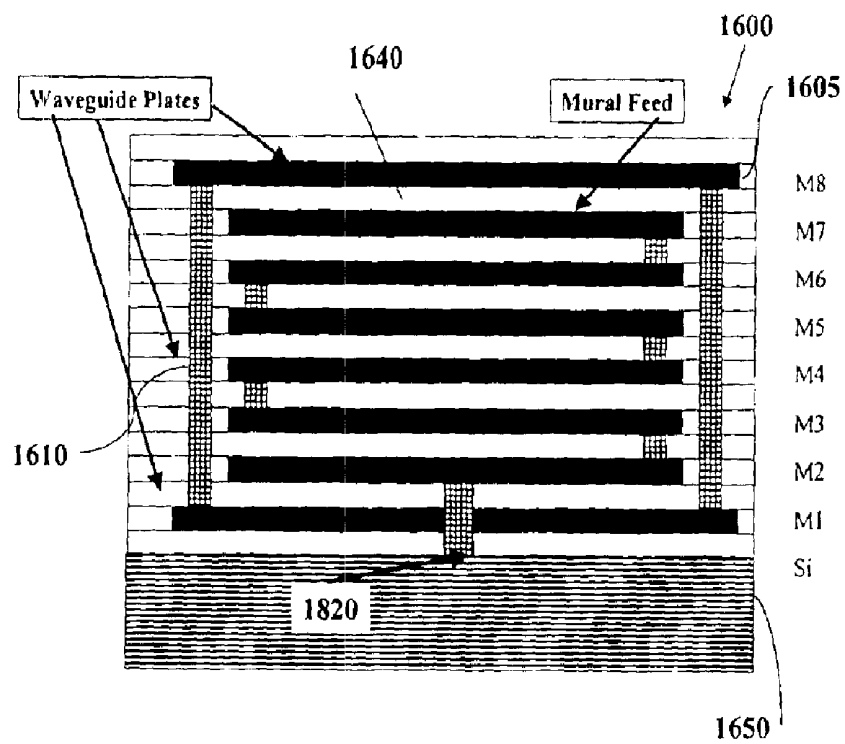


Figure 18c

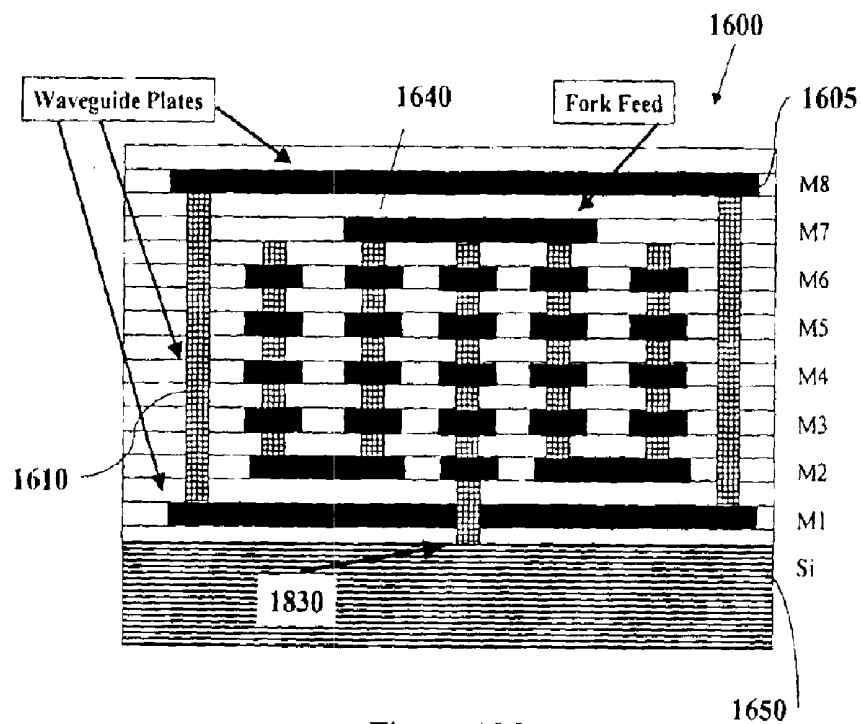


Figure 18d

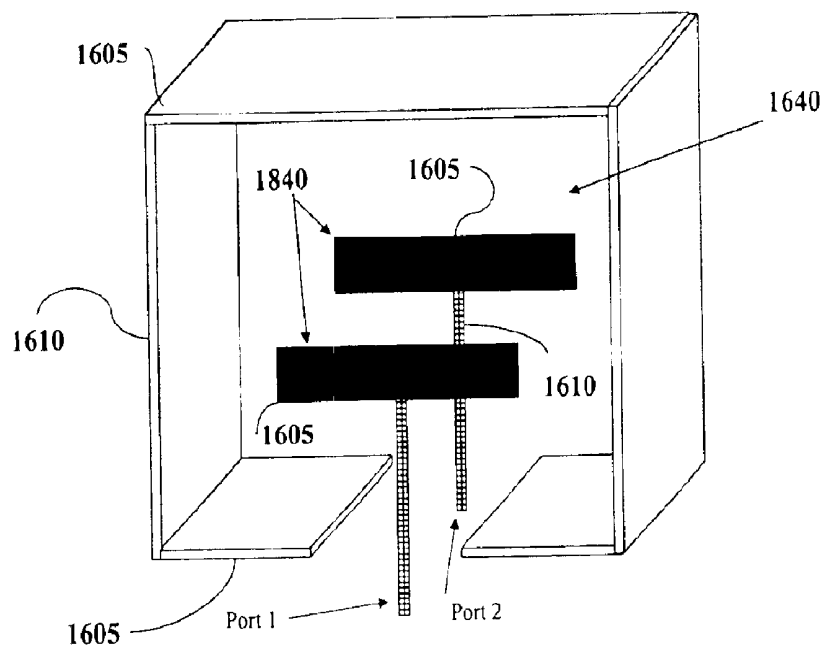


Figure 18e

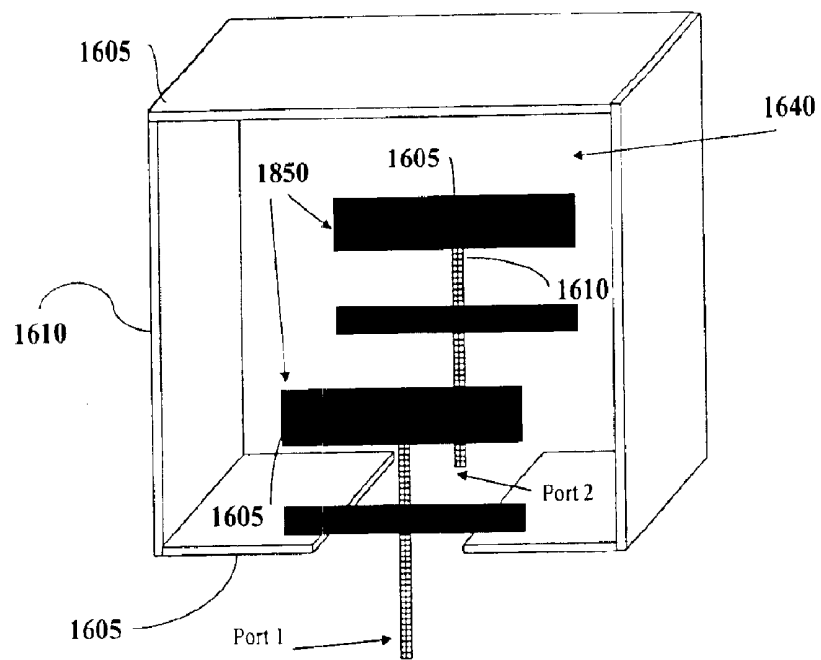


Figure 18f

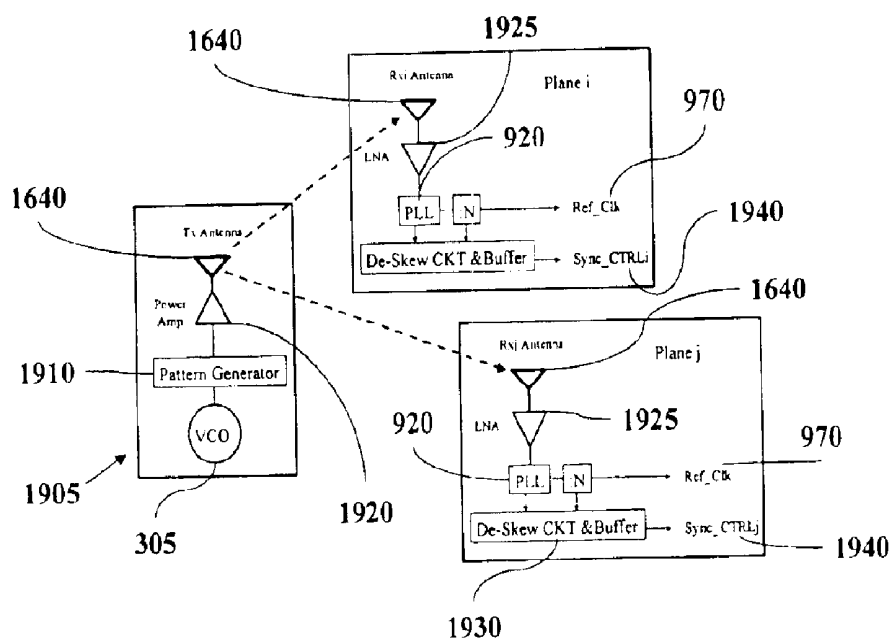


Figure 19



Figure 20a

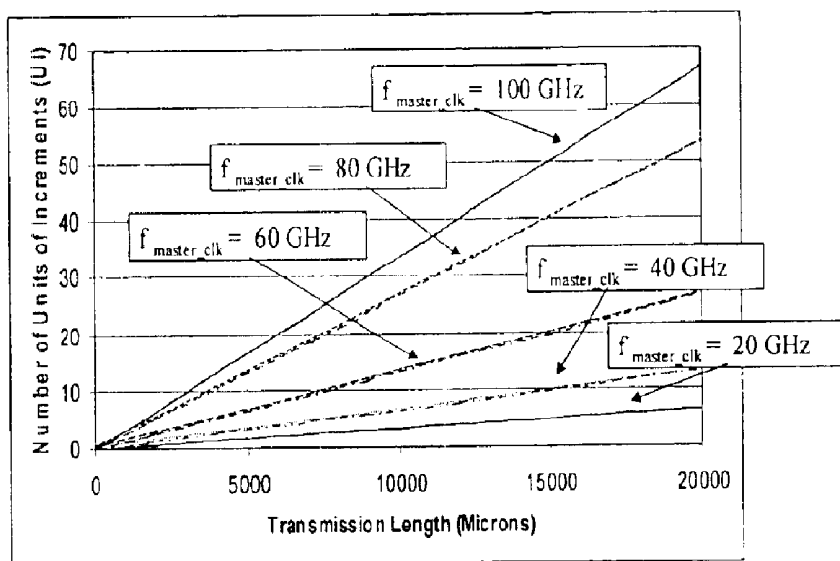


Figure 20b

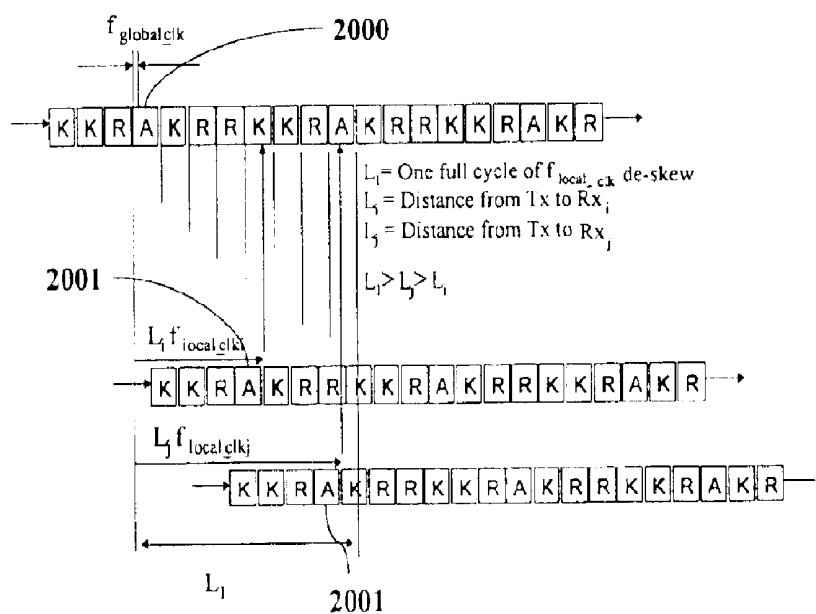


Figure 20c

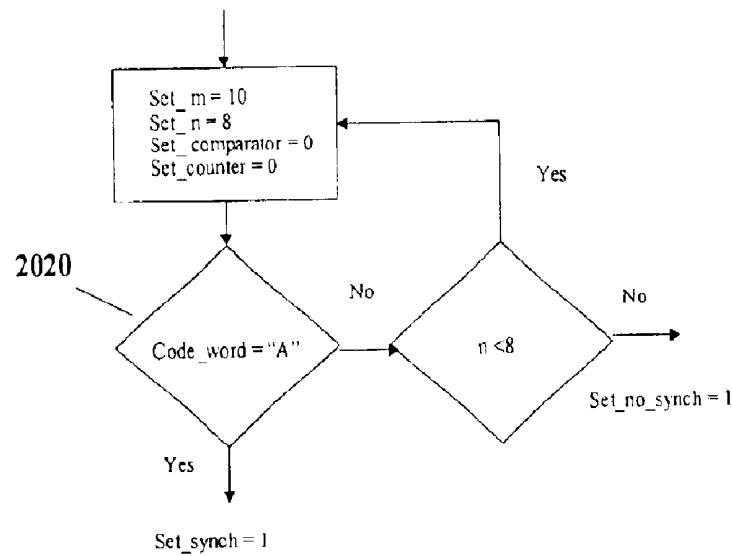


Figure 20d

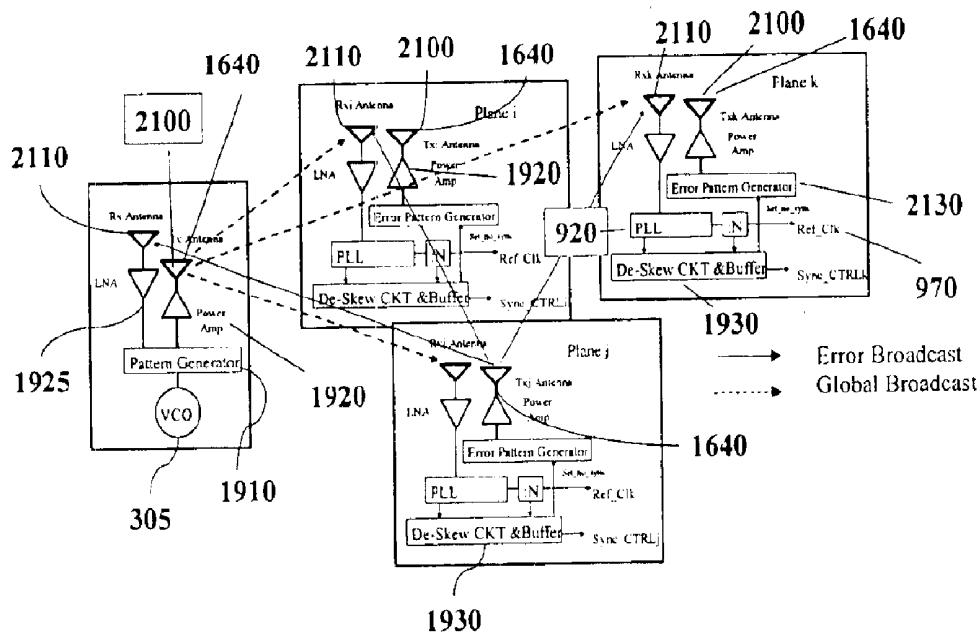


Figure 21

BEAM-FORMING ANTENNA SYSTEM**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/427,665, filed Nov. 19, 2002, U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/428,409, filed Nov. 22, 2002, U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/431,587, filed Dec. 5, 2002, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/436,749, filed Dec. 27, 2002. The contents of all four of these applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to antennas, and more particularly to an antenna array compatible with standard semiconductor manufacturing techniques.

BACKGROUND

Conventional high-frequency antennas are often cumbersome to manufacture. For example, antennas designed for 100 GHz bandwidths typically use machined waveguides as feed structures, requiring expensive micro-machining and hand-tuning. Not only are these structures difficult and expensive to manufacture, they are also incompatible with integration to standard semiconductor processes.

As is the case with individual conventional high-frequency antennas, beam-forming arrays of such antennas are also generally difficult and expensive to manufacture. Conventional beam-forming arrays require complicated feed structures and phase-shifters that are incompatible with a semiconductor-based design. In addition, conventional beam-forming arrays become incompatible with digital signal processing techniques as the operating frequency is increased. For example, at the higher data rates enabled by high frequency operation, multipath fading and cross-interference becomes a serious issue. Adaptive beam forming techniques are known to combat these problems. But adaptive beam forming for transmission at 10 GHz or higher frequencies requires massively parallel utilization of A/D and D/A converters.

Accordingly, there is a need in the art for improved antenna arrays that enable high-frequency beam-forming techniques yet are compatible with standard semiconductor processes.

SUMMARY

In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a beam forming system includes a plurality of integrated antenna units, wherein each integrated antenna unit includes an oscillator coupled to an antenna. A network is configured to provide phasing information to each oscillator so as to phase lock at least a subset of the oscillators. A controller provides the phasing information to the network, wherein the integrated antenna units, the network, and the controller are all integrated on a substrate.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a clock distribution system includes a semiconductor substrate. A first longitudinal conducting plate and a second longitudinal conducting plate are formed on the semiconductor substrate such that at least one dielectric layer separates the first longitudinal metal plate from the semiconductor substrate and at least one dielectric layer separates the first and second longitudinal metal plates. A first plurality of conducting vias extends from a first side of the first longitudinal conducting plate to a first side of the second longitudinal

conducting plate. Similarly, a second plurality of conducting vias extends from a second side of the first longitudinal conducting plate to a second side of the second longitudinal conducting plate, wherein the combination of the first and second longitudinal conducting plates and the first and second conducting vias forms a rectangular waveguide. A master clock source is configured to transmit a global clock through the rectangular waveguide. A local clock source is configured to receive the global clock from the rectangular waveguide and to synchronize a local clock to the received global clock.

The invention will be more fully understood upon consideration of the following detailed description, taken together with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a wireless remote sensor according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic illustration of a passive power collection technique according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3a is a conceptual illustration of the relationship between a coupling array mesh and integrated antenna units forming an array according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3b is a conceptual illustration of the relationship between the coupling array mesh of FIG. 3a and multiple antenna arrays according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4a is a plan view, partially cut away, of a patch antenna excited through a cross-shaped aperture according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4b is an exploded side elevational view of the patch antenna of FIG. 4b modified to include a narrow shield layer.

FIG. 5 is a cross sectional view of the patch antenna of FIG. 4a implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 6a is a plan view, partially cut away, of a patch antenna excited through a cross-shaped aperture having multiple transverse arms according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6b is a plan view, partially cut away, of a patch antenna excited through an aperture having a longitudinal arm and two transverse half-arms according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6c is a plan view, partially cut away, of a patch antenna excited through an annular aperture according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a cross sectional view of the patch antenna of FIG. 4b implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 8a is a plan view of T-shaped antenna elements according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 8b is a cross sectional view of a pair of T-shaped antenna elements from FIG. 8a implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram showing the relationship between an integrated antenna element, a coupling array mesh, and a central signal processing and control module according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 10 is a plan view of an antenna array and its functional relationship to a coupling array mesh according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 11 is a plan view of an antenna array and a coupling array mesh comprising a row and column decoders and encoders according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 12 is a schematic representation of integrated antenna elements with a coupling array mesh providing mutual inductance coupling between the integrated antenna elements according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 13a is a schematic representation of a four-port transformer.

FIG. 13b is a perspective view, partially cutaway, of the four-port transformer of FIG. 13b implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 14a is a schematic representation of a six-port transformer.

FIG. 14b is a perspective view, partially cutaway, of the six-port transformer of FIG. 14b implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 14c is a cross-sectional view of a six-port transformer coupled to a patch antenna implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 14d is a cross-sectional view of a six-port transformer coupled to a patch antenna implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 15a is a schematic diagram for an inductively-coupled integrated antenna unit according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 15b is a perspective view, partially cut-away, of an inductively-coupled T-shaped dipole antenna implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 15c is a perspective view of the T-shaped dipole antenna of FIG. 15b.

FIG. 16 is a cross-sectional view of a waveguide implementation of a coupled array mesh according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 17 is a perspective view, partially cutaway, of the waveguide of FIG. 16, implemented using a semiconductor process such as CMOS.

FIG. 18a is a cross-sectional view of a waveguide having a mural-type dipole feed according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 18b is a cross-sectional view of a waveguide having an interleaved mural-type dipole feed according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 18c is a cross-sectional view of a waveguide having a mural-type monopole feed according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 18d is a cross-sectional view of a waveguide having a mural-type fork feed according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 18e is a perspective view, partially cutaway of a T-shaped dipole feed for a waveguide according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 18f is a perspective view, partially cutaway of a dual-arm-T-shaped dipole feed for a waveguide according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 19 is a block diagram of a global clock synchronization system using a waveguide according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 20a is a graphical representation of a code sequence for de-skewing of global clock transmission through a waveguide according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 20b is a graphical representation of the number of cycles generated as a function of propagation distance (in microns) and transmission frequency.

FIG. 20c is a graphical representation of the propagation delay for the code sequence of FIG. 20a with respect to two different propagation paths.

FIG. 20d is a flowchart illustrating the management of timestamp generation from received codewords.

FIG. 21 is a block diagram of a global clock synchronization system using a waveguide according to one embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

As seen in FIG. 1, a wireless remote sensor 5 includes an antenna or antenna array 10 that converts received RF energy into electrical current that is then coupled to energy distribution unit 20. Alternatively, other sources of energy besides RF energy may be converted to electrical charge by sensor unit 15 coupled to an energy distribution unit 20. For example, sensor unit 15 may sense and convert thermal energy (such as from a nuclear or chemical reaction), kinetic energy, pressure changes, light/photonics, or other suitable energy sources. Together, each sensor unit 10 or 15 and energy distribution unit 20 forms an energy conversion unit 30. To enable active rather than passive operation, wireless remote sensor 5 may also include a battery (not illustrated).

Code unit 40 responds to the stimulation of sensor unit 10 or 15 and provides the proper code to indicate the source of the stimulation. For example, should sensor 15 be a piezoelectric transducer, impact of an object on sensor 15 may generate electrical charge about the size of the impact and its recorded environment. This information may then be transmitted wirelessly by sensor unit 10 to provide a remote sensing capability.

Referring now to FIG. 2, an energy conversion unit 30 responds to a radio frequency (RF) stimulation represented by AC source 50. Sensor unit 10 (FIG. 1) within energy conversion unit 30 is represented by a transformer 70. During RF stimulation, symbolic switch 60 couples AC current through the primary winding of transformer 70. On the secondary side of transformer 70, diodes 75 rectify the secondary current. The rectified current is then received by a storage capacitor 80. As a result, storage capacitor 80 may then provide a rectified and smoothed current to power the remaining components in wireless remote sensor 5 (FIG. 1).

Antenna array 10 and sensor unit 15 detect environmental changes and respond with analog signals as is known in the art. Control unit 90 provides an analog-to-digital (A/D) conversion to convert these analog signals into digitized signals. Control unit 90 responds to these digitized signals by encoding RF transmissions by antenna array 10 according to codes provided by code unit 40. Code unit 40 may be programmed before operation with the desired codes or they may be downloaded through RF reception at antenna array 10 during operation. Depending upon the RF signal received at antenna array 10, the appropriate code from code unit 40 will be selected. For example, an external source may interrogate antenna array 10 with a continuous signal operating in an X, K, or W band. Antenna array 10 converts the received signal into electrical charge that is rectified and distributed by energy distribution unit 25. In response, control unit 90 modulates the transmission by antenna array 10 according to a code selected from code unit 40 (using, for example, a code of 1024 bits or higher), thereby achieving diversity antenna gain. In embodiments having a plurality of codes to select from, the frequency of the received signal may be used to select the appropriate code by which control unit 90 modulates the transmitted signal. Although wireless remote sensor 5 may be configured for passive operation, it will be appreciated that significant increased range capability is provided by using an internal battery (not illustrated).

Antenna Array and Coupling Array Mesh

An embodiment of antenna array **10** comprises an array of integrated antenna units **300** is illustrated in FIG. **3a**. Each integrated antenna unit **300** acts as a self contained transmitter/receiver by having its own voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) **305** coupled to an antenna element **320** functioning as a resonator and load to its VCO **305**. Each VCO **305** couples to its antenna element **320** through a coupling array mesh (CAM) **310** which also acts as a local coupler between integrated antenna units **300** and distributes a master clock and the desired phasing (phase offset) with respect to the master clock to integrated antenna units **300** to enable adaptive beam-forming techniques. As is known in the adaptive beam-forming art, the received or transmitted signal from each antenna element **320** is assigned a weight and phase-shift, depending upon the particular beam-forming algorithm being employed. These phase-shifts and/or amplitude changes are effected through coupling array mesh **310**. Depending upon the beam-forming algorithm implemented through coupling array mesh **310**, each integrated antenna unit **300** is assigned a complex weight (amplitude and phase) as shown symbolically be weight assignor module **325**. These complex weights couple through coupling array mesh **310** to integrated antenna units **300**.

The antenna array **10** resulting from an arrangement of integrated antenna units **300** may provide a number of basic diversity schemes as is known in the art. For example, spatial diversity may be achieved by ensuring that the separation between integrated antenna units **300** is large enough to provide independent fading. A spatial separation of one-half of the operating frequency wavelength is usually sufficient to ensure non-correlated signals. By configuring individual integrated antenna units **300** to transmit either horizontally or vertically polarized signals, received signals in the resulting orthogonal polarizations will exhibit non-correlated fading statistics. A received signal at an array of integrated antenna units **300** will arrive via several paths, each having a different angle of arrival. By making integrated antenna units **300** directional, each directional antenna may isolate a non-correlated different angular component of the received signal, thereby providing angle diversity. Moreover, a received signal may be spread across several carrier frequencies. Should the carrier frequencies be separated sufficiently to ensure non-correlated fading, integrated antenna units **310** may be configured for operation across these carrier frequencies to provide frequency diversity.

It will be appreciated that integrated antenna units **300** and coupling array mesh **310** may be implemented within any suitable device in addition to being implemented within wireless remote sensor **5** (FIG. **1**). Should the device incorporating antenna units **300** be a passive device such as a passive embodiment of wireless remote sensor **5**, coupling array mesh **310** may also distribute charge to energy distribution unit **20**. To enable synthetic phase shifting in one embodiment of the invention, coupling array mesh **310** distributes to each integrated antenna unit **300** a master or reference clock and a phase offset. Each VCO **305** may be used as component of a phase-locked-loop (discussed with respect to FIG. **9**) such that VCO **305** provides an oscillation frequency that is offset in phase from the master clock by the phase offset as is known in the art.

Coupling array mesh **310** may resistively couple to integrated antenna units **300** to provide the master clock. Alternatively, coupling array mesh **310** may radiatively couple to integrated antenna units **300** as seen in FIG. **3b**. In

a radiatively-coupled embodiment, antenna elements **300** may form sub-arrays **340** such that each sub-array **340** contains an arbitrary number of antenna elements **300**. As will be described further herein, sub-arrays **340** may be formed on the same substrate (not illustrated) or on separate substrates. Also formed on the substrate (or, depending upon the embodiment, substrates), are coupling array mesh antennas (shown conceptually by mesh **350**) configured for wide-bandwidth operation. Thus, in a radiatively-coupled embodiment, coupling array mesh **310** comprises array mesh antennas **350**. Mesh antennas **350** control the phase offset between integrated antenna units **300** within any given sub-array **340** relative to the remaining sub-arrays **340**. In this fashion, the phase offset between sub-arrays **340** may be controlled by mesh antennas **350** such that sub-arrays **340** form a "sea" of phased arrays that collectively perform a beam forming and steering function. Although mesh antennas **350** would generally be designed for operation (transmit and receive) at lower frequency bandwidths as compared to the typically higher frequency bandwidth used for sub-array **340** operation, it may be also designed for the same or higher frequency operation as compared to sub-arrays **340**.

Regardless of whether coupling array mesh **310** couples resistively, inductively, or through electromagnetic wave propagation to integrated antenna elements **300**, each sub-array **340** will have a different propagation path, enabling the collection of elements to distinguish individual propagation paths within a certain resolution. As a consequence, sub-arrays **340** may encode independent streams of data onto different propagation paths or linear combinations of these paths to increase the data transmission rate. Alternatively, the same data may be transmitted over different propagation paths to increase redundancy and protect against catastrophic signals fades, thereby providing diversity gain. Each sub-array **340** may electronically adapt to its environment by looking for pilot tones or beacons and recovering certain characteristics such as an alphabet or a constant envelope that a received signal is known to have. In addition, sub-arrays **340** may be used to separate the signals from multiple users separated in space but transmitting at the same frequency using a space-division multiple access technique.

Patch Antenna Element

Any suitable antenna topology may be used for antenna element **320**. For example, as illustrated in FIGS. **4a** and **4b**, a patch antenna **400** includes a linear feedline **405** beneath a shield **410**. Feedline **405** excites a rectangular patch element **420** through a cross-shaped aperture **415** in shield **410**. Shield **410** may be grounded or allowed to float in potential. A longitudinal arm **430** of cross-shaped aperture **415** runs parallel to feedline **405** and is preferably centered over feedline **405**. A transverse arm **440** of cross-shaped aperture **415** runs transverse to feedline **405** and centrally across longitudinal arm **430**.

Patch antenna **400** may be advantageously implemented using any conventional semiconductor process such as a CMOS process without the need for micromachining. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **5**, patch antenna **400** is implemented using an 8-metal layer CMOS process. Metal layers **M1** through **M8** are formed using a 0.13 micrometer minimum geometry on a 100 to 120 micrometer substrate **500** which includes a doped substrate shield layer **505**. Silicon dioxide layers of 0.7 to 1.0 micrometer thickness separate the metal layer **M1** through **M8** as is known in the art. Feedline **405** is formed in lower metal layer **M2**, shield **410** in metal layer **M7**, and patch element **420** in upper metal layer **M8**. A silicon nitride or silicon oxide layer **510** or

combination of the two isolating materials in a layer thickness of 1 to 10 micrometers may be used to form passivation on upper metal layer M8 to prevent environmental corrosion. Although shown implemented using an 8 metal layer CMOS process, it will be appreciated that patch antenna 400 requires only a three metal layer semiconductor process. As seen in FIG. 4a, the dimensions of patch 420, cross-shape aperture 415 in shield 410, and feedline 405 depend upon the desired operating frequency. For example, to achieve a 95 GHz resonant frequency in the 8 metal layer 0.13 micrometer minimum geometry CMOS embodiment of FIG. 5, feedline 405 may have a width of 30 microns, longitudinal arm 430 in aperture 415 may have a length (dimension B) of 380 microns and a width (dimension F) of 160 microns, transverse arm 440 in aperture 415 may have a length (dimension A) of 280 microns and a width (dimension E) of 180 microns, and patch element 420 may be formed as a 500 micron by 500 micron square (dimensions L and W). Patch element 420 (cutaway) may be centered with respect to aperture 615. Simulation results indicate that such dimensions provide a signal return loss of -19 dB at 95 GHz. This impressive performance may be further enhanced using a narrow shield 700 as seen in FIGS. 4b and 7. For example, in an 8 metal layer CMOS embodiment, feedline 405 may be formed in metal layer M2 above narrow shield 700 which is formed in lower metal layer M1. Shield 410 and patch antenna element 420 may be formed in metal layers M7 and M8 as discussed with respect to FIG. 5. Feedline 405 runs parallel to narrow shield 700 and is preferably centered over narrow shield 700. Narrow shield 700 may be grounded or allowed to float in potential. In one embodiment, should narrow shield 700 have the same 30 micron width as feedline 405 as discussed with respect to FIG. 6 and all the remaining dimensions of patch antenna 400 remain the same, simulation results indicate an approximately -30 dB signal return loss and an efficiency of nearly 20%. Thus, patch antenna 400 is robustly designed to be immune to de-tuning as a result of environmental changes such as rain, fog, dirt, and undesired antenna coupling. Narrow shield 700 functions to suppress various elements of transverse electric (TE) and transverse magnetic (TM) that are generated due to substrate surface currents within shield region 505.

Numerous modifications may be made to patch antenna 400. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 6a, patch antenna 400 may be modified to provide a skewed wider beam for rapid convergence in beam tracking applications by implementing a cross-shaped aperture 615 that includes two transverse arms 620 rather than the single transverse arm 440 discussed with respect to FIG. 4a. A longitudinal arm 630 of cross-shaped aperture 615 runs parallel to feedline 405 and is preferably centered over feedline 405. The dimensions of longitudinal arm 630 and transverse arms 620 depend upon the desired operating frequency. For example, to achieve a 95 GHz resonant frequency in an 8-metal-layer 0.13 micrometer CMOS embodiment, feedline 405 may be 30 microns in width, longitudinal arm 630 in aperture 615 may have a length (dimension B) of 380 microns and a width (dimension F) of 160 microns, each transverse arm 620 in aperture 615 may have a length (dimension A) of 280 microns and a width (dimension E) of 130 microns, and patch element 420 may be formed as a 500 micron by 500 micron square (dimensions L and W). Transverse arms 620 may be separated by 60 microns and centrally located with respect to longitudinal arm 630. It will be appreciated that many other modifications may be implemented with respect to the cross-shaped aperture 415 discussed with respect to FIG. 4a. For example, a plurality of greater than 2 transverse

arms may be used. In addition, the location and relative width of any given transverse arm with respect to the longitudinal arm may be varied.

As an alternative to a cross-shaped aperture, longitudinal arm 630 in an aperture 655 may have at least two transverse half-arms 625 that are longitudinally staggered and branch from opposing sides of longitudinal arm 630 as seen in FIG. 6b. Should aperture 655 be dimensioned for 95 GHz resonant operation, longitudinal arm 630 may have a length (dimension B) of 380 microns and a width (dimension F) of 160 microns as discussed with respect to FIG. 6a. Each transverse half-arm 625 has a width (dimension E) of 130 microns and a length (dimension A) of 60 microns and are separated from each other by a gap (dimension G) of 60 microns. Patch element 420 may be formed as a 500 micron by 500 micron square (dimensions L and W), centered with respect to aperture 655.

As another alternative to a cross-shaped aperture, a patch antenna 400 may be formed using a rectangular annular aperture 660 in shield layer 410 as illustrated in FIG. 6c. The dimensions of rectangular annular aperture 660 depend upon the desired resonant frequency. For a resonant frequency of 95 GHz in an 8-metal-layer 0.13 micrometer CMOS embodiment, rectangular annular aperture 660 may have a longitudinal length of 380 microns (dimension A) and a transverse length of 280 microns (dimension B). Thus, the overall length and width of aperture 660 adapted for 95 GHz resonant frequency operation is the same as the cross-shaped aperture embodiments. Similarly, the length and width of patch antenna element 420 is also the same. The width of aperture 660 may be approximately 30 microns. Feedline 405 is centered with respect to the longitudinal orientation of aperture 660.

T-Shaped Antenna Element

Other embodiments for antenna element 320 may be used within each integrated antenna element 300. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 8a, a T-shaped antenna element 800 may be used to form antenna element 320. As seen in cross section in FIG. 8b, each T-shaped antenna element 800 may be formed using a metal layer of a standard semiconductor process such as CMOS. T-shaped antenna elements 800 are excited using vias that extend through insulating layers 805 and through a ground plane 820 to driving transistors formed on a switching layer 830 separated from a substrate 850 by an insulating layer 805. Two T-shaped antenna elements 800 may be excited by switching layer 830 to form a dipole pair 860. To provide polarization diversity, two dipole pairs 860 may be arranged such that the transverse arms 870 in a given dipole pair 860 are orthogonally arranged with respect to the transverse arms 870 in the remaining dipole pair 860.

Depending upon the desired operating frequencies, each T-shaped antenna element 800 may have multiple transverse arms 870. The length of each transverse arm 870 is approximately one-fourth of the wavelength for the desired operating frequency. For example, a 2.5 GHz signal has a quarter wavelength of approximately 30 mm, a 10 GHz signal has a quarter wavelength of approximately 6.75 mm, and a 40 GHz signal has a free-space quarter wavelength of 1.675 mm. Thus, a T-shaped antenna element 800 configured for operation at these frequencies would have three transverse arms 870 having fractions of lengths of approximately 30 mm, 6.75 mm and 1.675 mm, respectively. The longitudinal arm 880 of each T-shaped element may be varied in length from 0.01 to 0.99 of the operating frequency wavelength depending upon the desired performance of the resulting antenna. For example, for an operating frequency of 105 GHz, longitudinal arm 880 may be 500 micrometer in length

and transverse arm **870** may be 900 micrometer in length using a standard semiconductor process. In addition, the length of each longitudinal arm **880** within a dipole pair **860** may be varied with respect to each other. The width of longitudinal arm may be tapered across its length to lower the input impedance. For example, it may range from 10 micrometers in width at the via end to hundreds of micrometers at the opposite end. The resulting input impedance reduction may range from 800 ohms to less than 50 ohms.

Each metal layer forming T-shaped antenna element **800** may be copper, aluminum, gold, or other suitable metal. To suppress surface waves and block the radiation vertically, insulating layer **805** between the T-shaped antenna elements **800** within a dipole pair **860** may have a relatively low dielectric constant such as $\epsilon=3.9$ for silicon dioxide. The dielectric constant of the insulating material forming the remainder of the layer holding the lower T-shaped antenna element **800** may be relatively high such as $\epsilon=7.1$ for silicon nitride, $\epsilon=11.5$ for Ta_2O_3 , or $\epsilon=11.7$ for silicon. Similarly, the dielectric constant for the insulating layer **805** above ground plane **820** may also be relatively high (such as $\epsilon=3.9$ for silicon dioxide, $\epsilon=11.7$ for silicon, $\epsilon=11.5$ for Ta_2O_3).

In an array of T-shaped antenna elements **800**, the coupling between elements of radiated waves should be managed for efficient reception. Proper grounding and selection of a very highly conductive substrate beneath silicon substrate **500** (FIG. 7) can depress this coupling. However, T-shaped antenna element **800** may still strongly couple to coupling array mesh **310**, enabling the use of phase injection as described below.

Phase Injection

Regardless of the topology for antenna element **320**, coupling array mesh **310** (FIG. 3a) distributes signals to integrated antenna units **300** to enable synthetic phase shifting. For example, coupling array mesh **310** may distribute a reference clock and a phase offset to provide phase injection for an integrated antenna unit **300**. As illustrated in FIG. 9, VCO **305** may couple with a frequency divider **900**, a phase control module **905**, and a charge pump **910** to form a phase-locked loop (PLL) **920** as is known in the art. In this embodiment, each integrated antenna element **300** includes a power management module **930**. Alternatively, power management could be centralized and controlled through coupling array mesh **310**.

Antenna element **320** couples a received signal **960** to power management module **930**. Power management module **930** may be configured to compare the power of the received signal **960** to a threshold using, for example, a bandgap reference. Should the received signal power be less than the threshold, power management module **930** prevents a switch **950** from coupling the received signal into a low noise amplifier **935**. In this fashion, integrated antenna unit **300** does not waste power processing weak signals and noise. During transmission by antenna element **320**, power management unit **930** activates, through switch **950**, controller/modulator **940** which modulates the oscillation frequency of VCO **305** according to whatever code a user desires to implement.

Regardless of whether integrated antenna element **300** is transmitting or receiving, coupling array mesh **310** may provide an input phase offset **970** to phase control module **905** and receive an output phase offset **980** from VCO **305**. During transmission, coupling array mesh **310** may also provide a reference clock **975** to phase control module **905**.

Consider the advantages provided by linking integrated antenna unit **300** with coupling array mesh **310** in this fashion. During high frequency transmission and reception,

a digital control of PLL **920** could become burdensome. For example, at the higher data rates enabled by high frequency operation, multipath fading and cross-interference becomes a serious issue. Adaptive beam forming techniques are known to combat these problems. But adaptive beam forming for transmission specifically at 10 GHz or higher frequencies requires massively parallel utilization of A/D and D/A converters. However, coupling array mesh may couple input phase offset **970**, reference clock **975**, and output phase offset **980** as analog signals, thereby obviating the need for such massively parallel DSP operations. Moreover, simple and powerful analog beam steering algorithms are enabled using either mode locking or managed phase injection.

Adaptive beam forming gives the ability to adjust the radiation pattern of an antenna array **10** (FIG. 1) according to changes in the signal environment by adjusting the gain and phase of the received or transmitted signal from each integrated antenna unit **300** (FIG. 3a). During reception, adaptive beam forming maximizes the antenna array sensitivity in the direction of external source and minimizes the interfering sources. Correlated multi-path components of the desired signal may be either constructively added or suppressed as necessary. It will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that the present invention is compatible with any adaptive beam forming technique. For example, least mean square, direct matrix inversion, recursive least square, or constant modulus algorithms may be used as the adaptive beam-forming techniques in the present invention. In addition, a retro-directive beam-forming technique may be used. In a retro-directive array, the received signals are conjugated in phase with respect to some reference and re-transmitted.

Although high-frequency operation (such as at 10 GHz or higher) enables greater data transmission rates, effects such as multipath fading and cross-interference becomes more and more problematic. The present invention provides mode locking and managed phase injection techniques to enable any conventional adaptive beam-forming technique, even at higher frequencies.

Digital Phase Injection

Although a digital phase injection approach is hampered by the aforementioned massively parallel utilization of A/D and D/A converters at higher frequencies, coupling array mesh **310** may be used to perform a digital phase injection at lower frequencies. In such an embodiment, the input phase offset **970** represents a binary value as an up-down counter value (digital binary) to address the phase lag or phase advance of VCO **305** with respect to a reference point (such as reference clock **975**). Coupling array mesh may thus use this digital phase injection process to address each VCO **305** individually. Alternatively, a sub-array **340** (FIG. 3b) may be addressed as a unit with the same digital phase offset from coupling array mesh **310**. For example, integrated antenna units **310** may be arranged in rows and columns such that each sub-array **340** represents an individual row or column. Coupling array mesh **310** may then be configured to address digital phase injection values by row or by column. These values may be predetermined or may be adaptively changed by digital signal processing and control module **990** (FIG. 9). Digital phase injection requires some settling time within each injected phase-locked loop **920** to adjust for the desired phase depending on the phase-locked loop settling time.

Mode-Locked Phase Injection

As seen in FIG. 10, integrated antenna units **300** may be arranged in rows and columns to form an antenna array **340**. With respect to such an arrangement, coupling array mesh

310 may be configured to mutually couple integrated antenna units 300 in a daisy chain unilateral or two-dimensional fashion. This unilateral or two-dimensional daisy chaining may be arranged with respect to either rows or columns. For example, the output phase offset (not illustrated) from a first integrated antenna unit 300a in row 1000 may couple through coupling array mesh 310 as the input phase offset (not illustrated) to a second integrated antenna unit 300b in row 1000. In turn, the output phase offset from the second integrated antenna unit 300b in row 1000 may couple through coupling array mesh 310 as the input phase offset to a third integrated antenna unit 300c in row 1000, and so on. Finally, the output phase offset from the mth integrated antenna unit 300m may couple as the input phase offset to the mth integrated antenna unit in adjacent row 1001 at which point the phases daisy chain through row 1001 in the opposite direction.

This daisy chaining of phase offset enables a mode locked phase injection mode as follows. Power management modules 930 may be configured such that during reception, only one integrated antenna unit will be declared as a “master” unit. For example, as discussed before with respect to FIG. 9, a given power management module 930 may compare the received power from its antenna element 320 to a threshold power. Should the threshold be exceeded, power management 930 signals a central digital signal processing and control module 990 (FIG. 9) through coupling array mesh 310 that it is the “master.” In response, central digital signal processing and control module digitizes the associated output phase offset from the master unit and determines an appropriate input phase offset which should be injected into the master unit according to adaptive beam forming algorithms as is known in the art. The appropriate phase offset may be converted to analog form within central digital signal processing and control module 990 and coupled through coupling array mesh 310 to the integrated antenna unit 300 that has been designated as the master. In turn, the output phase offset from the injected master integrated antenna unit 300 couples through coupling array mesh 310 to adjoining integrated antenna units in the two-dimensional fashion just described. As is known in the art, the resulting mode-locked integrated antenna units 300 will oscillate in a number of equally-spaced spectral modes, with comparable amplitude and locked phases. If positive integer number N of integrated antenna units 300 are mode locked in this fashion, the peak power obtainable from these units is N² the average power output from each of these units. Should these N integrated antenna units 300 be spatially separated by distances of approximately the operating frequency wavelength, the pulsing transmission from these N units will scan according to the relationship:

$$E(r, \theta, t) = E_0 \cdot G(\theta) \cdot \frac{\sin[N(\Delta\omega t + \Delta\varphi + k_0\Delta d\sin\theta)/2]}{\sin[(\Delta\omega t + \Delta\varphi + k_0\Delta d\sin\theta)/2]} \cdot \exp(j\omega_0 t)$$

where k_0 is the free space propagation constant, Δ_d is the antenna spacing, θ is the receiver angle from the center antenna element 310 in the array, $G(\theta)$ is the antenna gain pattern for each of the antenna elements 310, ω_0 is the center frequency, and $\Delta\omega$ is the fixed pulse repetition modulation frequency. Thus, should each integrated antenna unit 300 be configured for 10 GHz operation and be mode-locked with a 50 MHz separation between each unit, the resulting array will produce a scanning beacon having a beat rate of 50 MHz. If the frequency is kept constant then the phase change will provide a scanner at that frequency.

If the mode spacing (frequency separation) between each integrated antenna unit 300 is less than the locking band-

width of the associated phase-locked loops 920, each VCO 305 will tend to lock to a single frequency. However, if the mode spacing exceeds this locking bandwidth, the resulting frequency pulling between the coupled VCOs 305 generates a comb spectrum, which also enables mode-locking of the array. By selecting an appropriate set of frequencies, coupled VCOs 305 will settle into a mode-lock state. Such a system of coupled VCOs 305 uses coherent power combining to exhibit stable periodicity. The frequency management condition then exists between all of the VCOs 305. If any VCO 305 in the array is slightly detuned, the equal frequency spacing is maintained; however, the relative phase shifts between VCOs 305 varies. In an array, if the first and last oscillator tunings are fixed, the spectral location and beat frequency are also fixed, and tuning the central element changes only the phases.

The output waveform from an array of mode-locked integrated antenna units 300 depends on the value of the coupling phase angle. For no phase injection, the output envelope bears little resemblance to the desired pulse train, due to the destructive behavior of the phases from the coupled VCOs 305. By varying the injected input phase offset, a nearly ideal multi-mode behavior (depending on the number of array elements) can be generated. It will be appreciated that the mutual pulling effects between VCOs 305 should be kept as low as possible. These mutual pulling effects may be minimized by either increasing the frequency separation between VCOs 305, increasing the VCO 305 Q-factor, or decreasing the coupling strength. The number of mode-locked VCOs 305 should not be too large because the stable mode locking region becomes highly eccentric as the number of elements increases, thus making array tuning difficult and causing high sensitivity to particular VCO 305 tuning errors. Such instability limits the achievable output power, which may otherwise be increased by a factor of N² as the integer number N or mode-locked VCOs 305 is increased.

Should the beam forming algorithm implemented by central digital signal processing and control module 990 be retro-directive, a simple and elegant retro-directive beam forming system is implemented. In such a case, the master integrated antenna unit 300 is controlled by central digital signal processing and control module 990 to direct its antenna beam at the interrogating transmitter. Because of the mode-locking provided by coupling array mesh 310, the adjacent mode-locked integrated antenna elements will also direct their antenna beams at the interrogating transmitter to provide the N² enhancement in signal power. By separating an integer number N of antenna elements 320 by approximately one-half the operating frequency, the directivity is around the broadside about N and is higher at sharper angles further from broadside. Thus, the reinforcement of a communication link is a factor of more than N² at any incoming angle compared to a transponder using just one of the N antenna elements 320. Since an external source always “sees” the peak of the radiation pattern, the array of N antenna elements 320 should not give any null in the mono-static radar cross-sectional pattern. This is one of the fundamental advantages of retro-directive arrays. Since the mono-static radar cross section strongly depends on the element pattern, the antenna topology is important. For maximum coverage, the antenna elements 320 in the array should have as low directivity as possible to reduce the angular dependency of the mono-static radar cross section and the beam-pointing error. An array radiation pattern is given by the product of the element and array factor directivities. The product of the two directivities has a peak off

the peak of the array factor when a non-isotropic antenna element **320** is used. Should antenna elements **320** be omni-directional, increasing the number of antenna element **320** or enlarging the array aperture size can reduce this error. Patch antenna element **400** will typically have a broad beam and is good for beam-steering arrays.

Although mode-locking is simple and powerful, even more powerful adaptive beam forming techniques may be implemented using managed phase injection as follows.
Managed Phase Injection

In a managed phase injection embodiment, each integrated antenna unit **300** will have its input phase offset specified by central digital signal processing and control module **990**. This managed phase injection may be implemented in a similar fashion to as addressing is performed in digital memories. For example, as seen in FIG. **11**, integrated antenna elements **300** may be arranged in rows and columns. Coupling array mesh **310** may include a column encoder **1100** and a row encoder **1110** which receive the output phase offsets from integrated antenna units **300**. Because of power management modules **930** (FIG. **9**) within each integrated antenna unit **300**, column encoder **1100** and row encoder **1110** will receive only the output phase offsets from those integrated antenna units receiving an adequate signal. Column encoder **1100** and row encoder **1110** encode the various output phase offsets to identify which row and column correspond to a given output phase offset. Based on these output phase offsets, central digital signal processing and control module **990** (FIG. **9**) provides the proper input phase offsets to implement adaptive beam forming, which are encoded with the address (row and column) for the proper integrated antenna units **300**. Column decoder **1115** and row decoder **1120** receive the input phase offsets and decode them so that the intended integrated antenna units **300** may receive their injected input phase offset.

Regardless of whether mode-locked phase injection or managed phase injection is implemented through coupling array mesh **310**, analog signals may be used to enable adaptive beam forming techniques at high frequencies that would be problematic to implement using digital signal processing techniques. It will be appreciated, however, that coupling array mesh **310** may be used to provide phase injection using digital signals as A/D and D/A processing speed increases are achieved. Not only does analog phase injection avoid burdensome digital signal processing bottlenecks, it enables the use of inductive coupling as described below.

Inductive Coupling

The present invention provides a semiconductor-based beam-forming antenna array. To provide more accurate phase control and improved signal return loss, each antenna element **320** (FIG. **3a**) may be inductively coupled to its VCO **305** through coupling array mesh **310**. In addition, inductive coupling may be used to implement a unilateral or two-dimensional mode-locked phase injection such that CAM **310** comprises transformers **1200** as seen in FIG. **12**. Each integrated antenna unit **300** includes a VCO **305** and an antenna element **320** as discussed with respect to FIG. **9**. Matching circuits **1205** match each VCO **305** to its antenna element **320**. In addition matching circuits **1205** match each VCO **305** to its input phase offset signal **970**. Should an integrated antenna unit be designated the master, coupling array mesh **310** provides input phase offset **970**. A separate transformer (not illustrated) may be used to provide this phase injection or transformers **1200** may have additional windings to accommodate this injection. In turn, the master integrated antenna unit **300** provides an output phase offset

980 (FIG. **9**) to a primary winding **1205** of its associated transformer **1200**. Depending upon the turn ratio in transformer **1200**, the voltage in primary winding **1205** may induce an increased voltage across secondary winding **1210**. The voltage across secondary winding **1210** provides the input phase offset **970** for the unilaterally-coupled adjacent integrated antenna unit **300**, and so on. Note that bi-lateral or even more complex mode-locking phase injection schemes may be implemented. For example, as seen in FIG. **10**, coupling array mesh **310** may be configured such that the output phase offset from a given integrated antenna unit **300** may be coupled to not only the adjacent integrated antenna unit in its row but also an adjacent integrated antenna unit in its column. Thus, in such an embodiment, integrated antenna unit **300** may couple its output phase offset through coupling array mesh **310** to neighboring integrated antenna units in either the row or column direction. In such a case, each transformer **1200** would require multiple secondary windings (discussed with respect to FIG. **14**). Depending upon the desired coupling direction, the appropriate secondary winding would be selected.

Note the advantages of implementing coupling array mesh **310** using transformers **1200**. Unlike resistive coupling, transformers **1200** provide passive amplification for the coupled signals. Moreover, transformers **1200** may be implemented using conventional semiconductor processes such as CMOS. For example, as seen in FIGS. **13a** and **13b**, a 4-port transformer **1300** may be implemented using a conventional semiconductor process such as an 8 metal layer CMOS process discussed with respect to FIGS. **5** and **7**. Primary winding **1305** is formed between ports **1** and **2**. Port **1** is in metal layer **2** and port **2** is formed within metal layer **8**. Secondary winding **1310** is formed between ports **4** and **3**. Port **4** is in metal layer **6** and port **5** is in metal layer **4**. Vias connect the metal layers as is known in the art.

A six-port transformer **1400**, illustrated in FIGS. **14a** and **14b** may also be implemented in an 8 metal layer CMOS process such as that used with respect to FIGS. **5** and **7**. A primary winding **1405** of transformer **1400** is formed between ports **5** and **6**. Ports **5** and **6** both lie in metal layer **5**. Secondary windings **1410** and **1415** are formed between ports **3** and **1** and ports **2** and **4**, respectively. Port **3** is in metal layer **6** and port **1** is in metal layer **2**. Port **2** is in metal layer **4** and port **4** is in metal layer **8**. It will be appreciated that other semiconductor processes having differing numbers of metal layers may be used to form either transformer **1300** or **1400**.

Not only may inductive coupling be used for synthetic phasing of the integrated antenna units **300**, it may also be used to inductively couple each antenna element **320** to its VCO **305** for both received and transmitted signals. Although the same winding may be used to couple the received and transmitted signals, using separate windings for the received and transmitted signals enables multiple frequency operation. For example, as seen in cross section in FIG. **14c**, a transformer **1400** having separate windings for the transmitted and received signals may be coupled to a patch antenna element **400** configured as discussed with respect to FIG. **7**. Although shown implemented using an 8-metal layer CMOS process, it will be appreciated that transformer **1400** may be implemented using any conventional semiconductor process having a sufficient number of metal layers. A VCO **305** is formed within a doped region on substrate **1405**. VCO **305** couples to a secondary winding of transformer **1400** formed within metal layers **M1** and **M7** coupled by via **1420**. In this fashion, VCO **305** may inductively couple to a primary winding formed within metal

15

layers M8 and M2 coupled by via 1425. The primary winding couples to patch antenna element 420. Thus, VCO 305 may inductively receive RF signals from patch antenna element 420 through the secondary winding in metal layers M1 and M7. The winding ratio of the primary winding to that used in the secondary winding coupled to VCO 305 provides passive gain. Patch antenna element 420 formed in metal layer M8 couples to a linear feedline 405 (metal layer M3) through an aperture 415 in ground layer 410 (metal layer M7). A shield layer 700 may be formed within metal layer M2. In addition, a highly-doped shield region 1410 may be formed within substrate 1405. For a 95 GHz resonant frequency, the dimensions of patch antenna element 420, aperture 415, linear feedline 405, and shield layer 700 may be the same as discussed with respect to FIG. 7. As illustrated in FIG. 14d, another secondary winding for transformer 1400 is formed in metal layers M3 and M6 as coupled through via 1430. This secondary winding couples to feedline 405 so that feedline 405 may be energized to excite transmissions by patch antenna element 420. In this fashion, transmitted signals and received signals for patch antenna element 420 couple through different secondary windings of transformer 1400. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that by adjusting the dimensions of the coils for these secondary windings, the transmit and receive signal frequencies may be different, thereby providing frequency diversity using a single antenna.

Transformers may also be used in the present invention to couple each VCO 305 to its corresponding antenna element 305 in either a single-ended or double-ended fashion. Should antenna element 305 comprise a monopole antenna, thereby requiring only a single-ended feed, a 4-port transformer having a single secondary winding may be used. Of course, as discussed with respect to FIGS. 14c and 14d, a monopole patch antenna may also couple through a 6-port transformer to isolate the transmitted and received signals. Should antenna element 305 comprise a dipole antenna, thereby requiring a differential feed, a 6-port transformer having two secondary windings may be used. Alternatively, a dipole antenna may receive a differential feed using only a 4-port transformer as will be discussed with respect to FIGS. 15a and 15b.

FIG. 15a illustrates an embodiment of integrated antenna unit 300 including a dipole antenna element 1500 inductively coupled through a transformer 1505 to a voltage-controlled oscillator 305 comprising a field effect transistor 1510 using a varactor 1515 for tuning. Dipole antenna element 1500 couples across the primary winding of transformer 1505 whereas the secondary winding of transformer 1505 couples to the drain terminal of field effect transistor 1510. Varactor 1515 is coupled within a low-pass feedback loop including amplifier 1520 and a coupling array mesh transformer 1525. By injecting an input phase offset 970 into transformer 1525, integrated antenna unit 300 may be mode-locked as described above. To provide a wide locking range, the Q-factor of VCO 305 should be kept relatively low. However as the Q-factor is lowered, phase noise is increased. Thus, a design trade-off between phase noise and locking range should be reached, depending upon design specifications. By adjusting the bandwidth and loop gain of the low-pass filter incorporating varactor 1515, the locking range may be readily controlled. Simulation results indicate that the integrated antenna unit 300 of FIG. 15 may achieve a tuning sensitivity of 0.1 GHz/V at an operating frequency of 10 GHz while providing a -100 dBc/Hz phase noise at 100 KHz.

As seen in FIG. 15b, a T-shaped dipole antenna 1550 may be implemented using a semiconductor process in a single

16

metal layer M2. Each T-shaped antenna element 1530 couples to a secondary coil 1540 of transformer 1400 formed on the same layer of metal. The relationship of secondary coil 1540 to T-shaped antenna elements 1530 may also be seen in FIG. 15c, wherein only metal layer M2 is illustrated. Primary coil 1550 of transformer 1400 is formed in metal layers M3 and M1 as coupled through via 1560. Consider the advantages of inductively coupling to a dipole antenna as discussed with respect to FIGS. 15a through 15c as compared to the via feed structure discussed with respect to FIG. 8b. Exciting each T-shaped antenna element through vias induces undesired radiation from the vias. Because secondary coil 1540 and T-shaped antenna elements 1530 may all be formed on the same metal layer, no such undesirable radiation is induced.

Coupling Array Mesh Waveguide Implementation

As discussed above, one function for the coupling array mesh is to distribute a reference clock to the integrated antenna units. For transmission of a high speed clock, a waveguide 1600 as seen in cross section in FIG. 16 may be used. Advantageously, waveguide 1600 may be constructed using conventional semiconductor processes such as CMOS. Waveguide 1600 comprises two metal plates 1605 within metal layers M1 and M2 formed on a substrate 1620. Metal plates 1605 may be formed using conventional photolithographic techniques. To construct the sidewalls of waveguide 1600, a plurality of vias 1610 couple between metal plates 1605. FIG. 17 is a perspective view of waveguide 1600 with the semiconductor insulating layers cutaway. Vias 1610 may be separated by distances of up to one-half to a full wavelength of the operating frequency. A feedline may be used to excite transmissions within waveguide 1600 that are received by receptors. Because the construction of such feedlines and receptors is symmetric, they will be generically referred to herein as "feedline/receptors" 1640. Thus, feedline/receptors 1640, which may be formed as T-shaped monopoles, excite transmissions within waveguide 1600 or may act to receive transmissions. Each feedline/receptor couples to control circuitry 1650 formed within substrate 1620. Signals may travel unidirectionally from one feedline/receptor 1640 to another feedline/receptor 1640 or bidirectionally between feedline/receptors 1640 in a half or full duplex fashion.

Consider the advantages of using waveguide 1600 as a clock tree to provide a synchronized source for signal shaping, signal processing, delivery, and other purposes. A transmitter (not illustrated) within control circuitry 1650 may generate a global clock at ten to one hundred times the required system clock and broadcast it through waveguide 1600 using one of the feedline/receptors 1640. A clock receiver within the control circuitry coupled to a receiving feedline/receptor 1640 may detect the global clock and divides it down to generate the local system clock. After proper buffering, the local system clock is synchronized to the source of the global clock. Advantageously, this synchronization addresses the jitter and de-skew problems without the complexity and cost faced by conventional high-speed (10 GHz or greater) clock distribution schemes. Because waveguide 1600 may be implemented using conventional semiconductor processing, waveguide 1600 may be implemented using low-cost mass production techniques.

Numerous topologies are suitable for feedline/receptors 1640 depending upon application requirements. For example, FIG. 18a illustrates a cross-section of waveguide 1600 formed using an 8-metal layer semiconductor process such as CMOS. Waveguide plates 1605 are formed in metal layers M1 and M8. Feedline/receptor 1640 comprises a

mural-type dipole **1800** of plates formed in metal layers **M2** through **M7** to generate a traveling wave such as a **TM21** mode with minimal additional mode generation that incorporates a quarter wavelength length in a relatively compact area. Although shown directly coupled to control circuitry **1620**, dipole **1800** has a relatively low coupling capacitance and is thus suitable for inductive coupling and matching applications. In an alternate embodiment, an interleaved mural-type dipole **1810** as seen in cross section in FIG. **18b** may be used to transmit through waveguide **1600**. Dipole **1810** may also generate a **TM21** propagation mode with minimal additional mode generation. In another embodiment, a mural-type monopole **1820** as seen in cross-section in FIG. **18c** may be used to transmit through waveguide **1600**. Monopole **1820** may generate a **TM11** propagation mode. Alternatively, a fork-type monopole feed **1830** as seen in cross section in FIG. **18d** may be used to generate a **TM11** propagation mode. Advantageously, the use of fork-type monopole feed **1830** avoids patterning and manufacturing of long lines of metal raise issues with metal patterning definition (photolithographic process) or etching (removing undesired portions of the metal).

A T-shaped dipole design for feedline/receptor **1640** has the advantage of simplicity and mode minimization. As seen in perspective view in FIG. **18e**, a T-shaped dipole **1840** may be formed in adjacent metal layers of a semiconductor process. Simulation results indicate that at an operating frequency of 80 GHz, T-shaped dipole **1840** may achieve a return loss (**S11**) of -32 dB. By adding an additional "T" arm to form double-arm T-shaped dipole **1850** as seen in FIG. **18f**, the return loss may be reduced to -43 dB.

Regardless of the topology implemented for feedline/receptor **1640** in waveguide **1600**, its dimensions are limited by the furthest separation achievable between the metal layers used to form waveguide plates **1605**. For example, if the first and eighth metal layers are used to form waveguide plates **1605** in a conventional 8-metal-layer semiconductor process such as CMOS, this separation is approximately seven micrometers. Because the higher frequency clock rates correspond to smaller wavelengths, such a separation is adequate for 40 GHz and higher clock rates which would correspond to a feedline/receptor **1640** length of a few hundred microns to a few millimeters.

Various methods of coding may be used to ensure synchronization to a global clock transmission through waveguide **1600**. A conceptual diagram of a such a global clock transmission is illustrated in FIG. **19** in which a master VCO **1905** couples its output to a pattern generator **1910**. For example, if each VCO **305** forms part of phase-locked loop (PLL) **920** (FIG. **9**), the coding must ensure sufficient signal transitions to sustain the edges necessary for PLL **920** to achieve lock. As is known in the art, data and clock may be encoded together such that a "global clock" transmission may represent both a global clock and data. Accordingly, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in that art that "global clock" may represent both a clock source and a data source. After coding by pattern generator **1910** and amplification by a power amplifier **1920**, the resulting global clock signal is transmitted through waveguide **1600** (not illustrated for clarity) by slave feedline/receptors **1640**. Each slave feedline/receptor **1640** couples to a low-noise amplifier **1925**. In turn, each low-noise amplifier **1925** couples to a PLL **920**. After de-skewing from a de-skew module **1930** in response to the coding provided by pattern generator **1910**, divided-down reference clocks **970** and synchronization signals **1940** are available for local use.

The skew associated with propagation is determined by the actual voltage wave $v(x)$ that propagates through

waveguide **1600** as a function of the propagation distance x . The voltage wave $v(x)$ may be expressed as:

$$V(x) = v \cdot e^{-\alpha \cdot x + j \cdot \beta \cdot x}$$

where v is the propagation velocity, α is the resistive loss (which is typically negligible in waveguide **1600**), and β is $2\pi/\lambda$. The propagation velocity v is given by:

$$v = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L_u \cdot C_u}}$$

where L_u is the inductance per unit length and C_u is the capacitance per unit length.

To address this skew, pattern generator **1910** may generate a sequence of "K," "R," and "A" codes as illustrated in FIG. **20a**. In this code sequence, the "A" code is transmitted after a "KRRKKR" code sequence has been transmitted.

In this fashion, depending upon the transmission frequency and the propagation distance between a transmitting feedline/receptor **1640** and a receiving feedline/receptor **1640** (FIG. **16**), a receiving unit may, after receiving an initial "A" code, make an assumption about the number of transmission cycles that may have expired. An example of suitable A, R, and K codes is:

$A=28.3=001111 \ 0011$, $K=28.5=001111 \ 1010$, and $R=28.0=00111 \ 0100$.

Given such a set of "K28.5" codes, a suitable error code "E" is: $E=30.7=011110 \ 1000$

FIG. **20b** is a graphical representation of the number of cycles generated as a function of propagation distance (in microns) and transmission frequency. Analysis of FIG. **20b** indicates that an 80 GHz transmission will complete less than 60 cycles while propagating a distance of 20,000 microns (20 mm). Accordingly, if the "AKRRKKRA" sequence is transmitted (using 80 cycles over a propagation distance of 20 mm or less) at a frequency of 80 GHz, the local clocking system may initiate a synchronization acknowledgement upon receipt of the second "A" code. Dividing down the received signal by 32, a PLL **920** may then generate a reference clock **970** having a frequency of 2.5 GHz. Should the propagation distance be greater than 20 mm, the length of the repeating code sequence may be increased—for example, to 72 cycles, 96 cycles, or greater depending upon individual requirements. The transition of the "K," "R," and "A" codes guarantees the locking of the receiving PLLs **920**. The seven bit comma string preceding each symbol in the previously-mentioned K28.5 code may be defined as b'0011111' (comma+) or b'1100000' (comma-). An associated protocol assures that "comma+" is transmitted with either equivalent or greater frequency than "comma-" for the duration of the transmission to ensure compatibility with common components. The comma contained within the /K28.5/ special code group is a singular bit pattern which cannot appear in other locations of a code group and cannot be generated across the boundaries of two adjacent code groups in the absence of transmission errors.

A graphical representation of the propagation delay between a pattern generator **1910** generating the K28.5 code and two receiving PLLs **920** (FIG. **20a**) is illustrated in FIG. **20c**. After transmission of an initial "A" code **2000**, different amounts of propagation delay is encountered at the receiving PLLs **920**, each receiving a delayed "A" code **2001**, respectively. With the proper amount of buffering achieved, for example, through the use of stack or barrel shifters, the de-skew between local clocks occurs.

19

A simple state machine for each de-skew module **1930** (FIG. **19**) performing the steps illustrated in FIG. **20d** may manage the timestamp generation from the received codewords propagated through waveguide **1600** according to a global clock (blind transmit). At step **2020**, if the codeword “A” is detected, a synchronization acknowledgment “Set_synch” word may be asserted true to indicate the identification of the code at this location.

It will be appreciated that many different techniques may be used to synchronize local clocks to a transmitted global clock using a waveguide **1600**. For example, FIG. **21** represents an enhancement to the global blind clock synchronization technique discussed with respect to FIGS. **19** through **20c**. In the embodiment of FIG. **21**, each feedline/receptor **1640** may be used to both transmit and receive signals. For illustration clarity, each feedline/receptor **1640** is shown as comprising a feedline/transmitting antenna **2100** and a receptor/receiving antenna **2110**. In practice, however, these antennas may be combined or kept separate.

Master VCO **305** may initiate an “AKRRKKRA” sequence as described previously. Each receiving PLL **920** not only associates with a de-skew module **1930** as described previously but also associates with an error pattern generator **2130**. Should a PLL **920** encounter a missing “A” code or simply cannot detect any “A” codes as determined by error pattern generator **2130**, a sequence of “E” codes (described previously) may be broadcast from the associated feedline/transmitting antenna **2100**. In response, receiving PLLs **920** will reset their clocks **970** to local without locking to the global clock signal. These receiving PLLs remain in reset as long as they receive the E code from any source. The master VCO **305**, in response to receipt of the E code, stops sending any signal for a complete cycle (in this example, the AKRRKKRA sequence). Upon resumption of the global clock transmission and lack of any “E” code reception, the normal synchronization process continues.

Integrated Device

As discussed above, conventional semiconductor processes may be used to form antenna elements **320** and coupling array mesh **310**. The same substrate may be used for both devices. Similarly all remaining components such as those discussed with respect to FIG. **9** may be integrated onto the same substrate to form an integrated antenna and signal processing circuit. In addition, an integrated antenna and signal processing circuit may be implemented on a flexible substrate using thin-film processing techniques. The organic materials used for flexible substrates may be processed at relatively low temperatures using spin coating, stamping or other thin-film processing techniques.

The above-described embodiments of the present invention are merely meant to be illustrative and not limiting. It will thus be obvious to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention in its broader aspects. The appended claims encompass all such changes and modifications as fall within the true spirit and scope of this invention.

I claim:

1. A beam forming system, comprising:

- a plurality of integrated antenna units, wherein each integrated antenna unit includes an oscillator coupled to an antenna;
- a network configured to provide phasing information to each oscillator so as to phase lock at least a subset of the oscillators; and

20

a controller to control the phasing information, wherein the integrated antenna units, the network, and the controller are all integrated on a substrate.

2. The beam forming system of claim 1, wherein the substrate is a semiconductor substrate.

3. The beam forming system of claim 1, wherein the substrate is a flexible substrate.

4. The beam forming system of claim 1, wherein the phasing information comprises an analog signal.

5. The beam forming system of claim 1, wherein the phasing information comprises a digital signal.

6. The beam forming system of claim 1, wherein the phasing comprises an input phase offset, and wherein the controller is configured to provide the input phase offset to a selected one of the oscillators in the subset, the remaining oscillators in the subset being coupled by the network to mode lock to the selected oscillator.

7. The beam forming system of claim 6, wherein the remaining oscillators in the subset are arranged from a first to a last oscillator, and wherein the network is configured to unilaterally couple the remaining oscillators in the subset such that an output phase offset from the selected oscillator couples to the first oscillator, an output phase offset from the first oscillator couples to the second oscillator, and so on.

8. The beam forming system of claim 6, wherein the network is arranged to bi-laterally couple the remaining oscillators in the subset.

9. The beam forming system of claim 6, wherein the selected oscillator is chosen based upon a maximum received power level.

10. The beam forming system of claim 9, wherein each integrated antenna unit is configured to compare received a received RF signal power from its antenna to a threshold and to announce to the network that its oscillator is the selected oscillator if the received RF signal power exceeds the threshold.

11. The beam forming system of claim 9, wherein the network is configured to couple a received RF signal from each integrated antenna unit to the controller, and wherein the controller is configured to identify the integrated antenna unit that had the greatest received RF signal power and to select the oscillator within the identified integrated antenna unit as the selected oscillator.

12. The beam forming system of claim 11, wherein each oscillator comprises a voltage-controlled oscillator (VCO).

13. The beam forming system of claim 12, wherein each integrated antenna unit includes a phase-locked loop controlling the oscillation frequency of its VCO.

14. The beam forming system of claim 13, wherein the phasing information comprises an input phase offset, and wherein the controller is configured to provide an input phase offset to each one of the oscillators in the subset.

15. The beam forming system of claim 14, wherein the integrated antenna units are arranged in rows and columns, and wherein the controller is configured to row and column address the input phase offset to each oscillator in the subset, the network including row and column decoders to decode the address received from the controller to identify a particular oscillator in the subset.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 6,870,503 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 10/423160
DATED : March 22, 2005
INVENTOR(S) : Farrokh Mohamadi

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Col. 20, Line 14

Claim 6, line 2 is corrected to include the word --information-- after the word
“phasing.”

Signed and Sealed this

Sixth Day of November, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray dotted background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Jon W. Dudas".

JON W. DUDAS

Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office