Tokamak Plasma Self-driven Current Generation in the Presence of Turbulence

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in collaboration with

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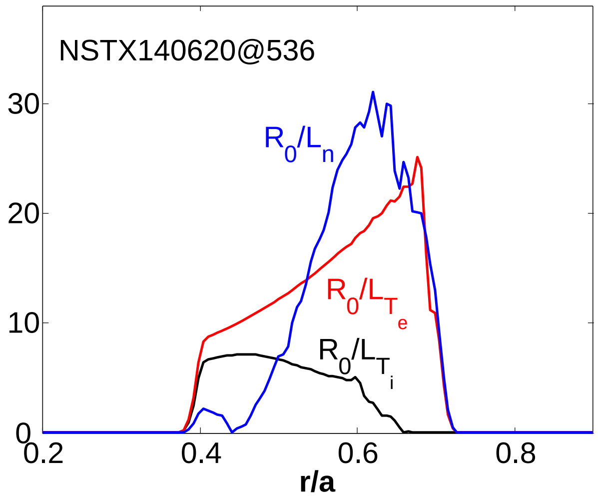
Can turbulence drive plasma current or change bootstrap current? and how?

- Plasma self-generated non-inductive current is of great importance
  - NTM physics, ELM dynamics, overall plasma confinement
- Bootstrap current J_{bs} – a well known non-inductive current
  - driven by pressure and temperature gradients in toroidal geometry
  - associated with existence of trapped particles
  - predicted by neoclassical theory (see, e.g., Hinton & Hazeltine, '76);
  - discovered in experiments (Zarnstorff & Prager, '84)
- Total current rather than local current density measured in exptls.
  - $\sim J_{\mathrm{bs}} \pm 50$ % in core
  - significant deviations seem to appear in edge pedestal

    (Coda et.al., IAEA-FEC'08; Kikuchi-Azumi, PPCF'95)
- However, fusion plasmas are usually not turbulence-free
  - how fluctuations affect self-driven current generation
  - a largely unexplored, but important issue

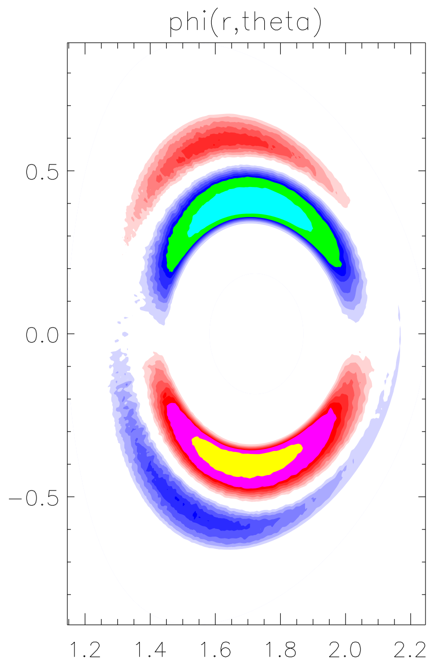
This study employs a global gyrokinetic model coupling self-consistent turbulence + neoclassical dynamics



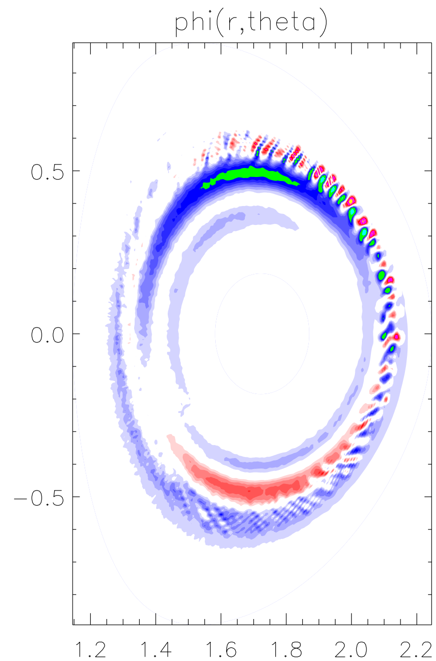
Plasma conditions relevant to NSTX/DIII-D/C-MOD

- an NSTX H-mode core plasma profiles
- DIII-D or NSTX geometry/equilibrium
- ∇n-driven CTEM (DTEM) turbulence for DIII-D (NSTX)

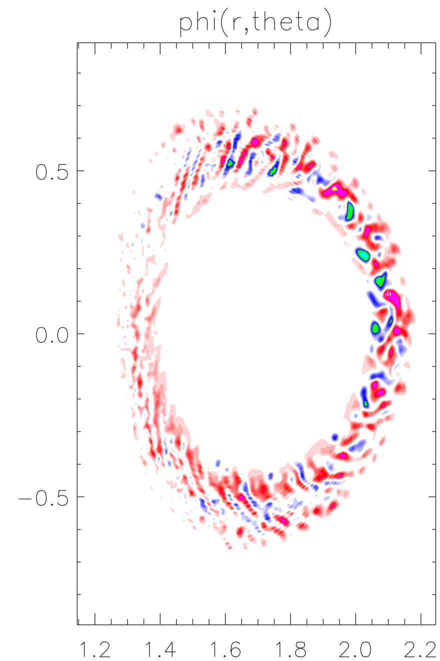
$t = 2.03\tau_{ei}$



$t = 11.1\tau_{ei}$



$t = 30\tau_{ei}$

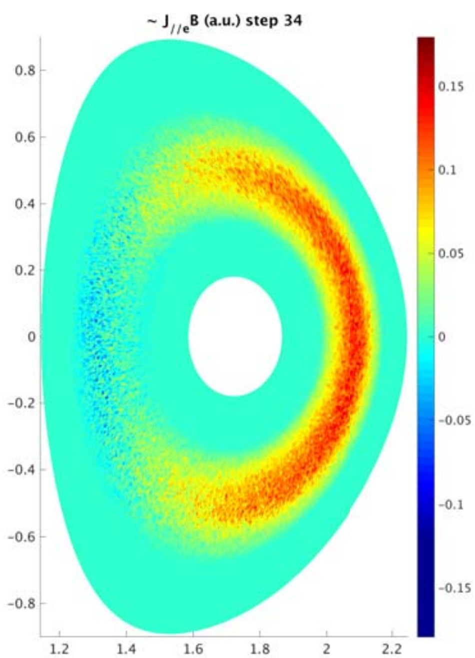


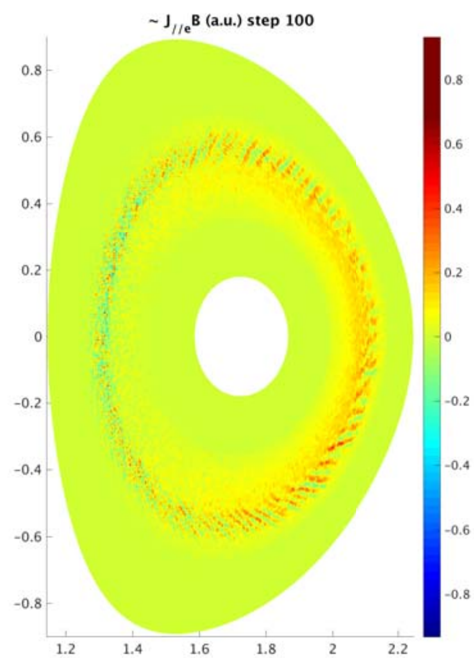
Parallel current structure is largely changed from neoclassical phase to turbulence phase

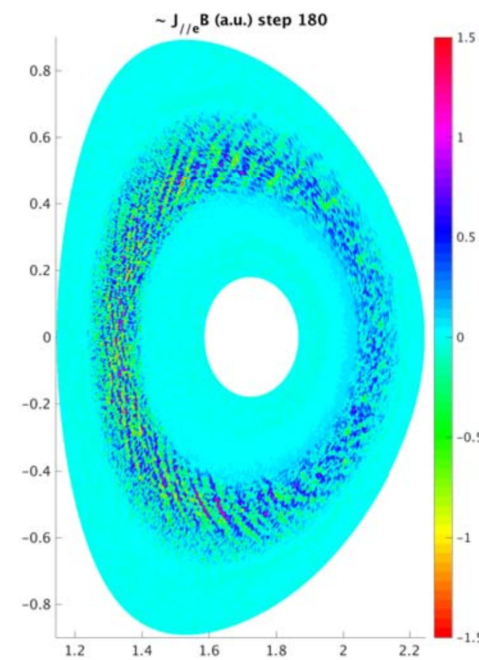
Electron parallel current (only contributed by non-adiabatic electrons):

$$j_{e,\parallel}B \equiv e \int v_\parallel B \delta f_e d^3v$$

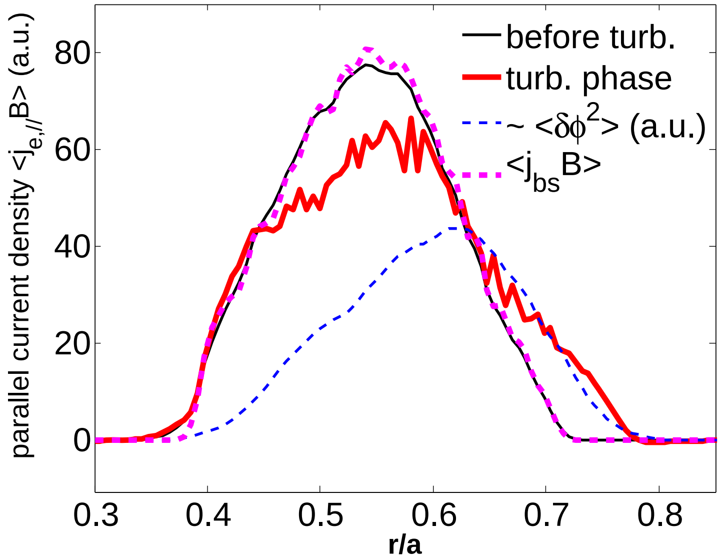
$t = 3.4\tau_{ei}$	$t = 10.1\tau_{ei}$	$t = 30\tau_{ei}$
(neoclassical phase)	(turb. growing phase)	(well-developed turb. phase)



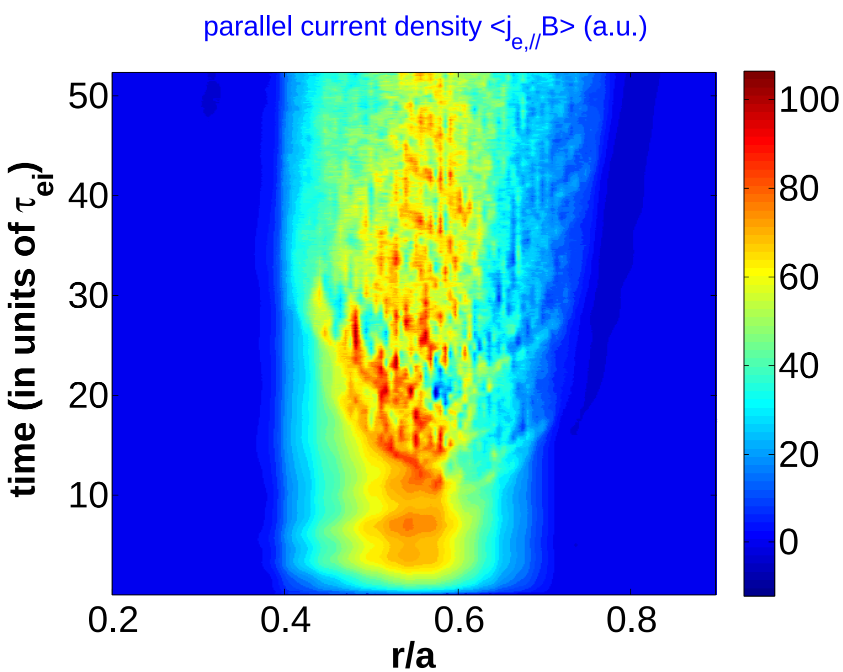


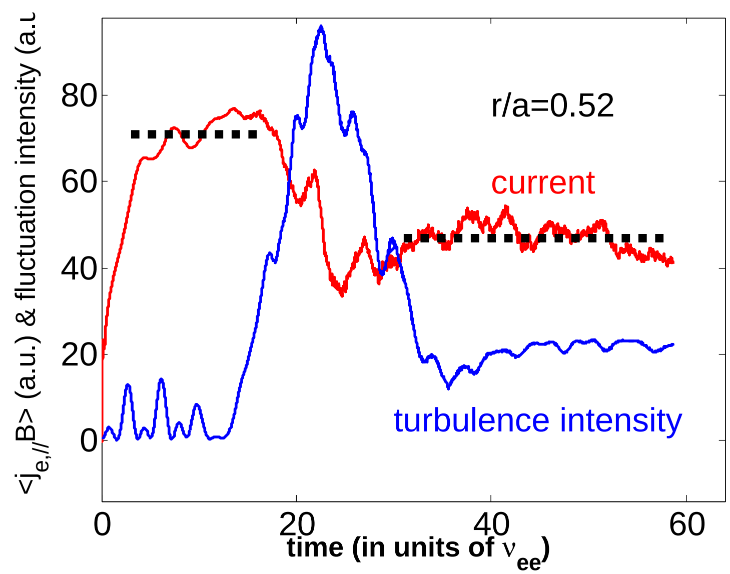


Plasma self-generated macroscopic current can be significantly modified in the presence of turbulence

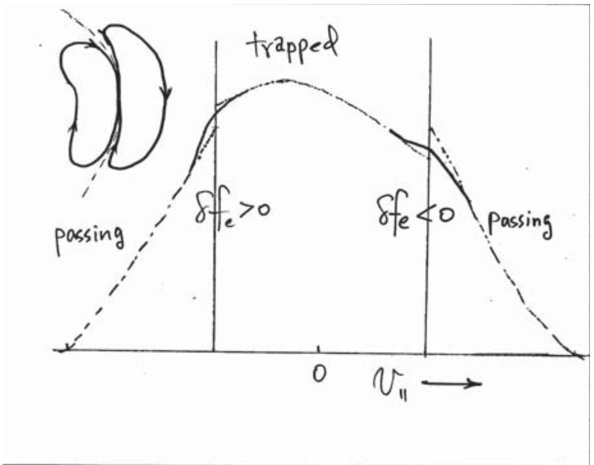


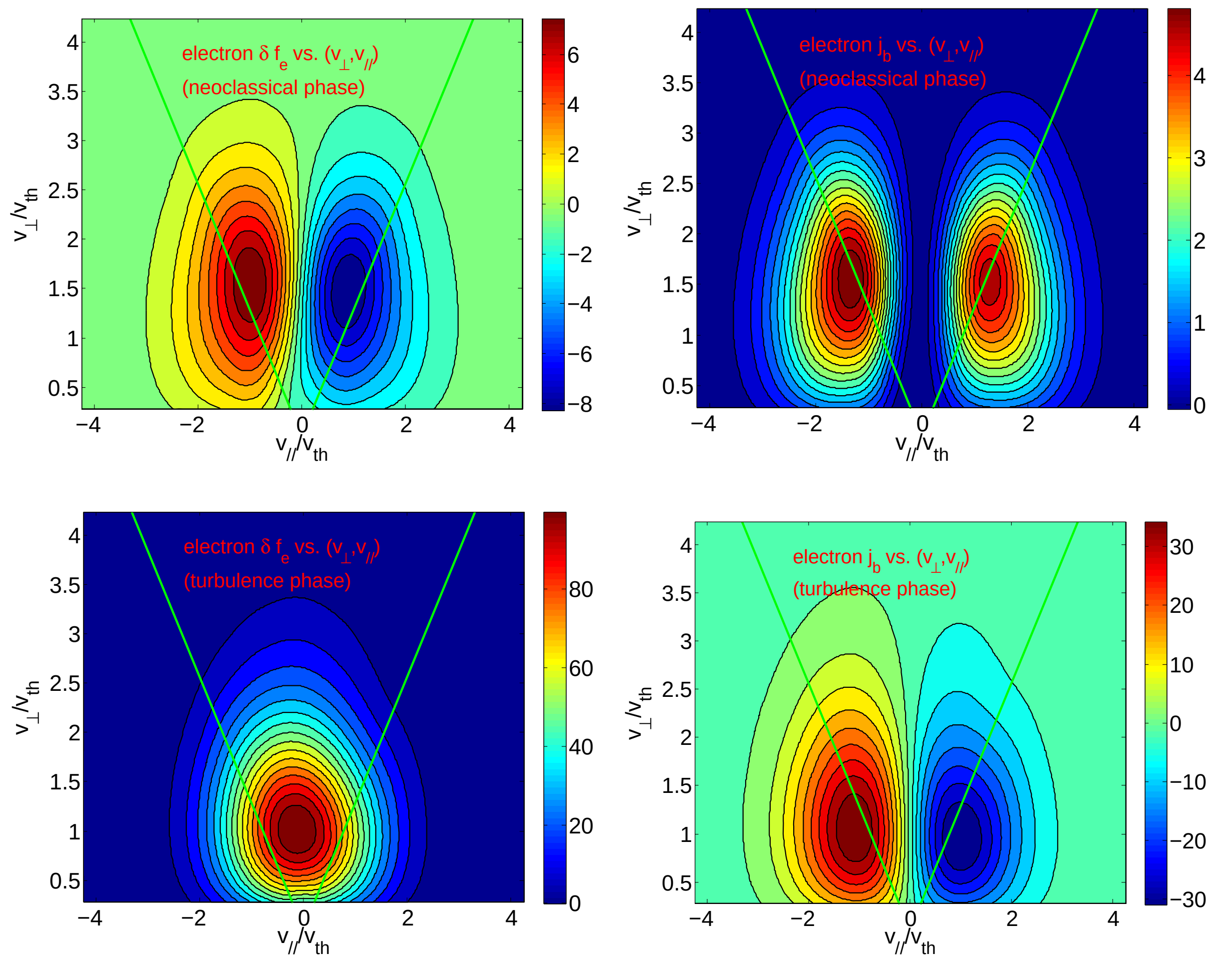
- simulation shows three distinct phases for current development
- current profile significantly modified – total current can be changed too
- fine radial scales presented in electron current





Phase space structure of electron current density is largely changed by turbulence

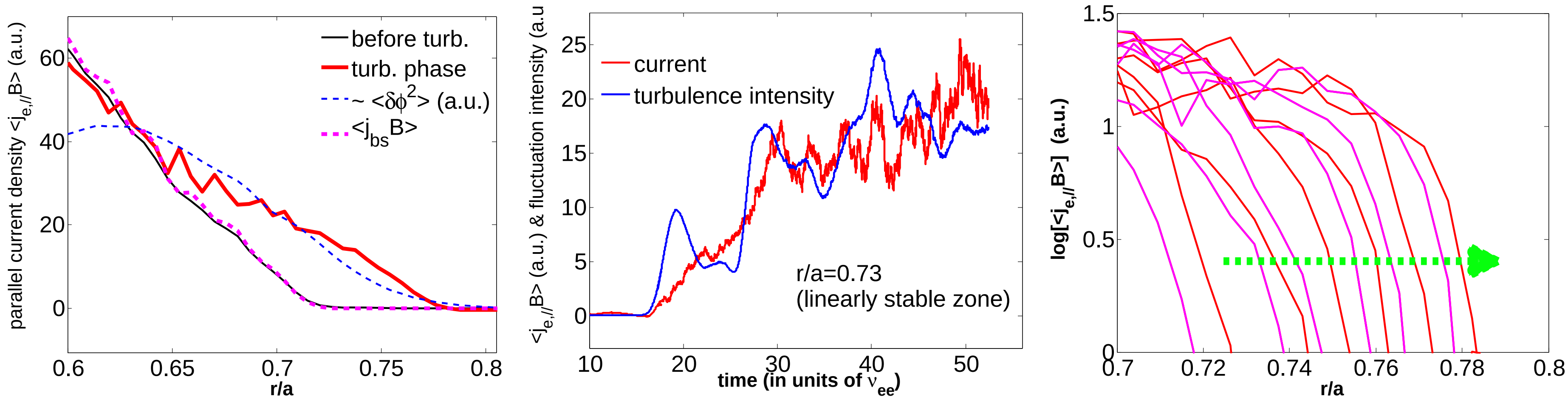




Turbulence Phase $\Longrightarrow$

- Current is mainly carried by electrons around trapped-passing boundary
  - mostly contributed by passing particles
  - considerable contribution from trapped electrons

Significant current can be generated in flat pressure region – nonlocal effect due to turbulence spreading



- Current diffusion via turbulence spreading
- Anomalous current fully driven by fluctuations
- Not associated with local profile gradients

- Possible source for seed current near magnetic axis (?)
- May drive current inside magnetic island (?) → impact NTM dynamics

Underlying physics may link to electron momentum transport and flow generation

- Generalized NC Ohm's law (see Hinton et.al.,'04; Gatto-Chavdarovski,'11)

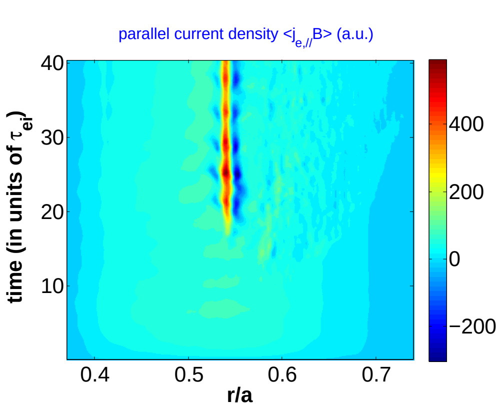
$$\langle (j_{\|} - j_{bs}) B \rangle = \sigma_{neo} \langle E_{\|}^{\text{ind}} B \rangle + \langle j_{dyn} B \rangle$$

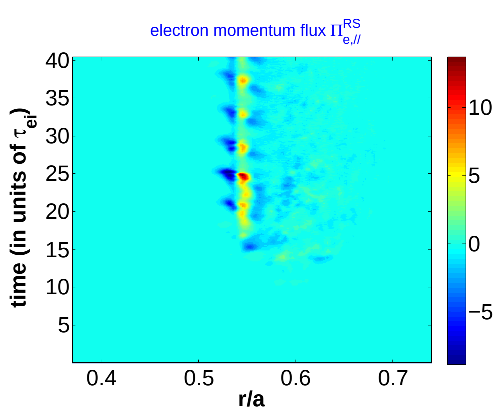
- Parallel acceleration driving a current against resistive decay (Itoh & Itoh, Phys. Lett. A '88; Hinton et. al., PoP'04)

$$j_{\|,turb} \sim \tilde{E}_{\|} \tilde{n}^* e^2 / m_e \nu_{ei} \sim \langle k_{\|} \delta n_k^2 \rangle$$

- Divergence of radial flux of parallel electron momentum (Hinton et.al., '04)

$$j_{\|,turb} \sim \nabla \cdot \Pi_{r,\|} / m_e \nu_{ei}$$

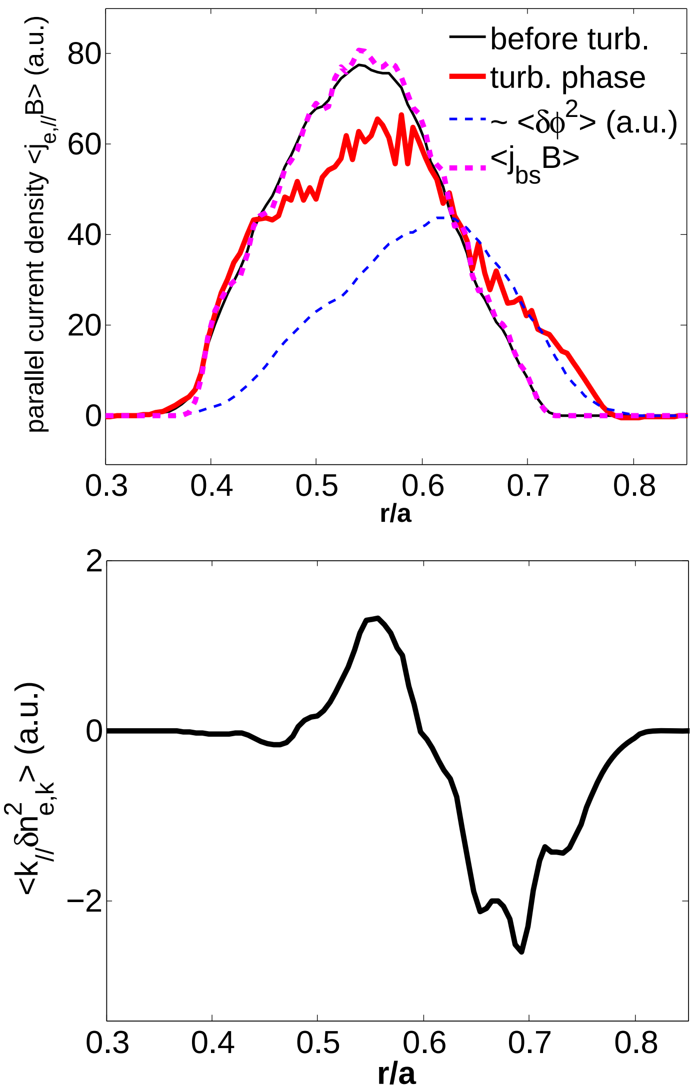




- Significant residual stress contribution $\Pi_{r,\|}^{\text{RS}} \sim \langle k_\theta k_{\|} \delta \phi_k^2 \rangle$ (Wang et.al., IAEA-FEC'12; McDevitt et. al., PoP'17)
  – link to $k_{\|}$-symmetry breaking (Diamond et.al., NF'09)

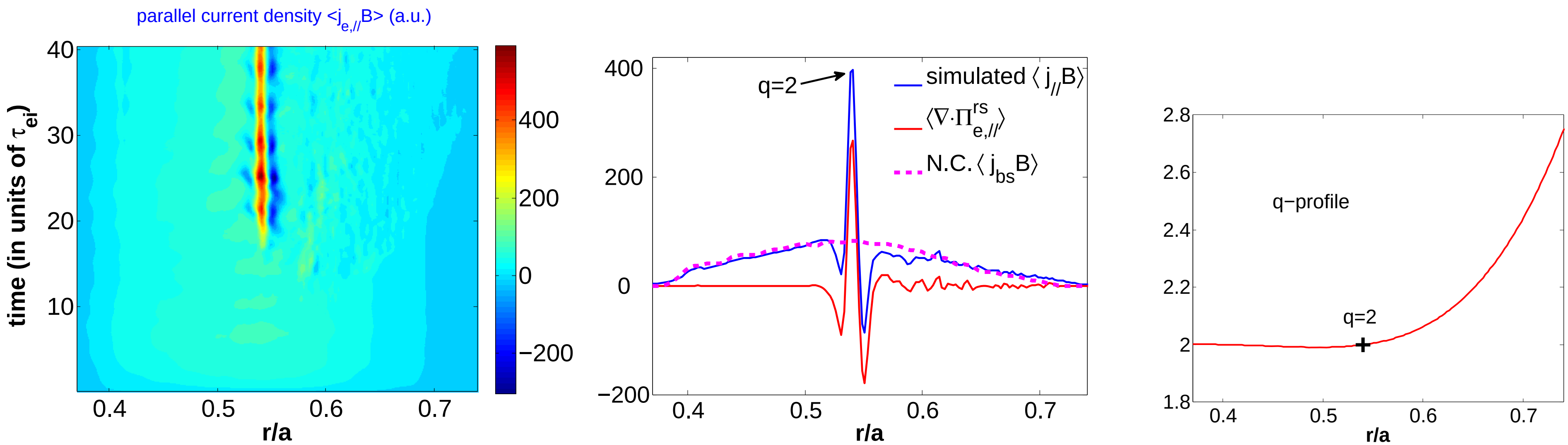
- Finite $\langle k_{\|} \rangle$ is needed for both parallel acceleration and residual stress

Turbulence-induced parallel acceleration seems to drive anomalous current in a large scale



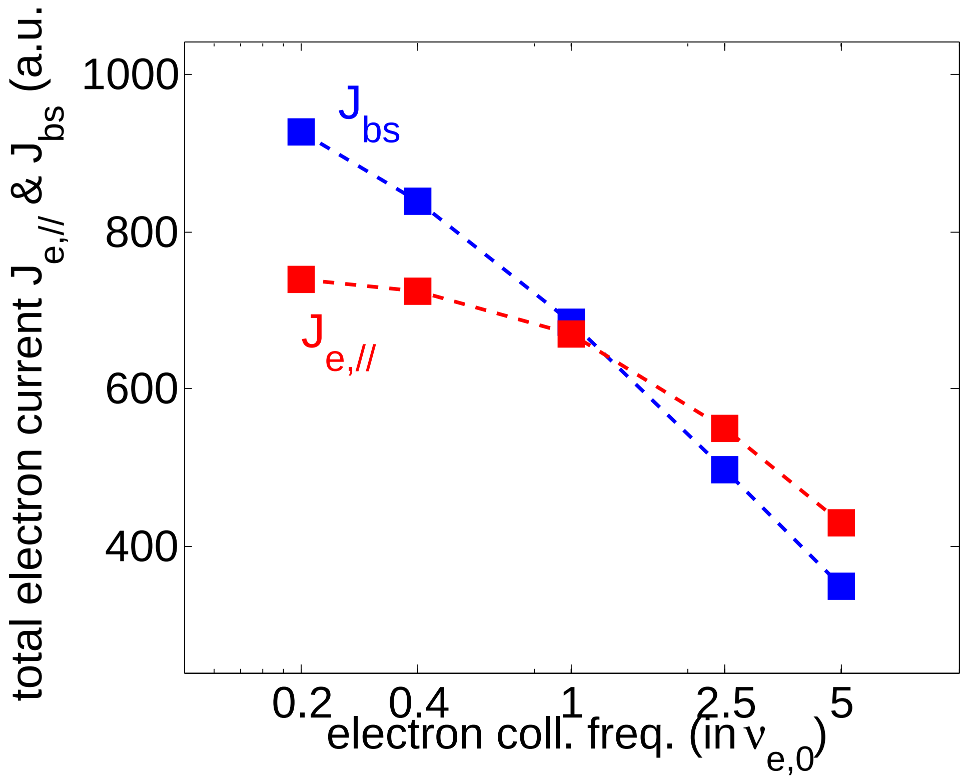
- $k_{\|}$-symmetry breaking can be caused by fluctuation intensity gradient
- $j_{\|,turb}$ direction may link to sign of $\langle k_{\|} \rangle$ and then turb. intensity gradient

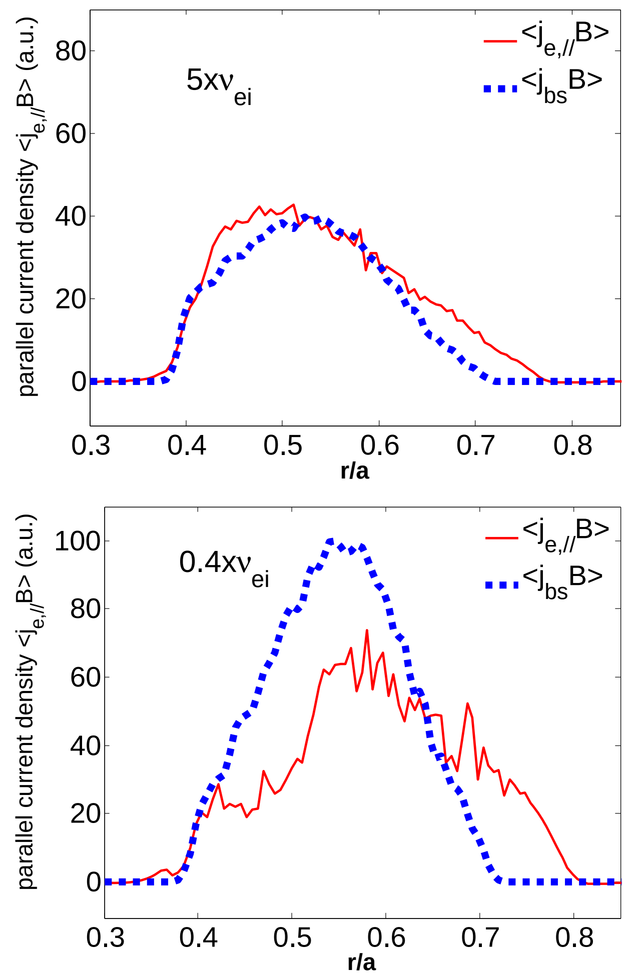
Turbulence-produced electron parallel Reynolds stress drives fine-scale anomalous current near rational surfaces



- radial scale $\sim$ a few ρ_s
- modify current density profile near a rational surface but not total current
- observed close correlation with both turbulence intensity gradient and ZF shear through their effects on $k_{\|}$-symmetry breaking

Turbulence may considerably reduce electron current from NC bootstrap level in low collisionality regime



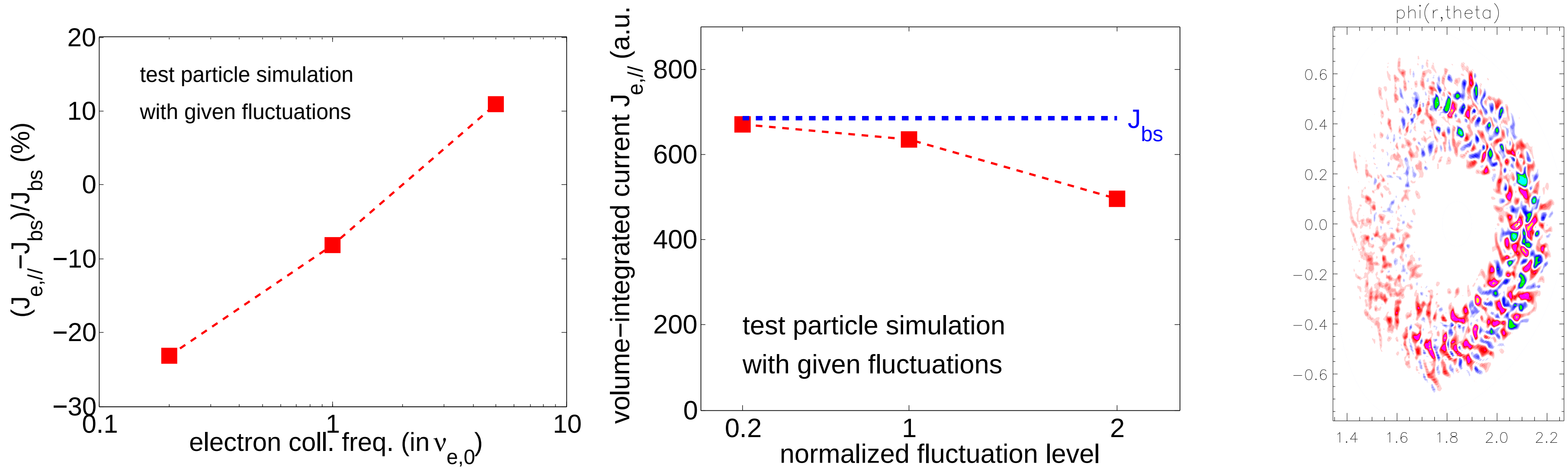


- A critical ν_e^* exists?
  (like intrinsic rotation reversal)

- Reduction of electron current relative to J_{bs} increases as ν_e^* decreases

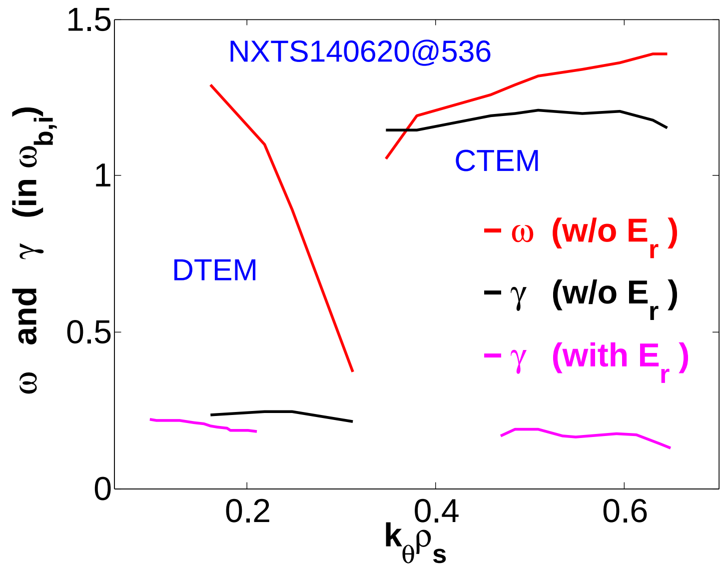
- Possible impact on fully non-inductive steady state operation in burning plasma regime (?)

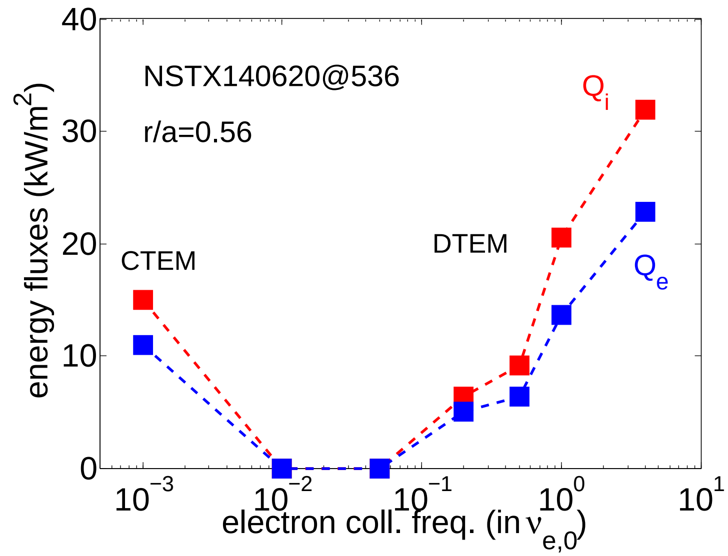
Characteristic dependence of fluctuation induced current generation from test-particle-simulation is consistent



- Test particle simulations with given static fluctuations from NL GTS run
  - close to situations/assumptions that theory is conducted
  - useful for developing and testing theory
- Turbulence induced current reduces bootstrap current in low-ν_* regime
  - consistent with fully nonlinear simulation result
- Self-generated current is reduced as fluctuation level increases

Dissipative-TEM may provide a distinct, key turbulence source for transport and confinement in ST experiments

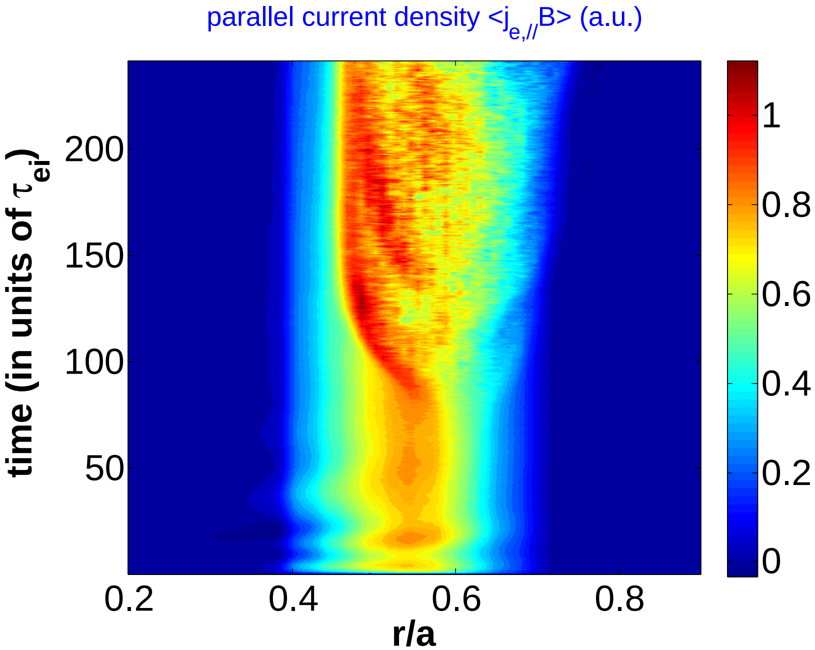


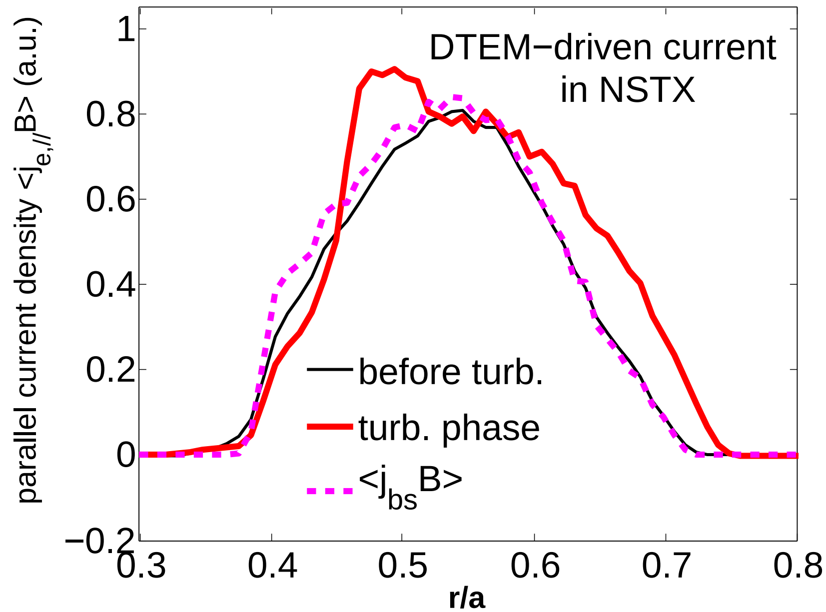


(Wang et. al., NF'15)

- Capable to survive strong $\mathbf{E} \times \mathbf{B}$ shear in NSTX
  (CTEM strongly suppressed by collisions in STs)
- Drives experimentally relevant transport in NSTX
- DTEM driven-transport increases with ν_e
  (possible source for ST H-mode confinement scaling)
- C/DTEM-free regime in low collisionality
  (possibly relevant to NSTX-U & ST-FNSF)

Dissipative-TEM turbulence may significantly modify plasma self-generated current in NSTX





- Increase total current in NSTX where collisionality is relatively high

Summary

Nonlinear global gyrokinetic simulation with consistent turbulent and neoclassical dynamics is used to study plasma current generation

- Plasma self-generated current can be strongly modified by turbulence
  – profile structure; – amplitude; – phase space structure
- Current diffusion induced by turbulence spreading generates finite current in flat pressure region
- Mechanisms include i) electron parallel acceleration; ii) resid. stress drive
  – $k_{\|}$-symmetry breaking plays an important role
  – $j_{\|,turb}$ direction may link to sign of $\langle k_{\|} \rangle$, and then to turbulence intensity and zonal flow profiles
- Turbulence may enhance plasma self-generated current in high-ν_e^* regime, but deduct it in low-ν_e^* regime
  – reduction of electron current relative to J_{bs} increases as ν_e^* decreases
- Self-generated current is reduced as fluctuation level increases

Experimental verification is critical: to examine characteristic trend predicted