Internal instability driven by centrifugal force on spherical tokamak

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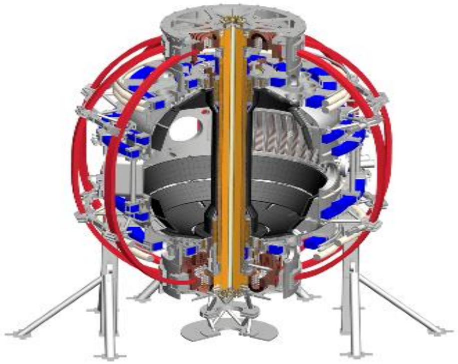


Motivation

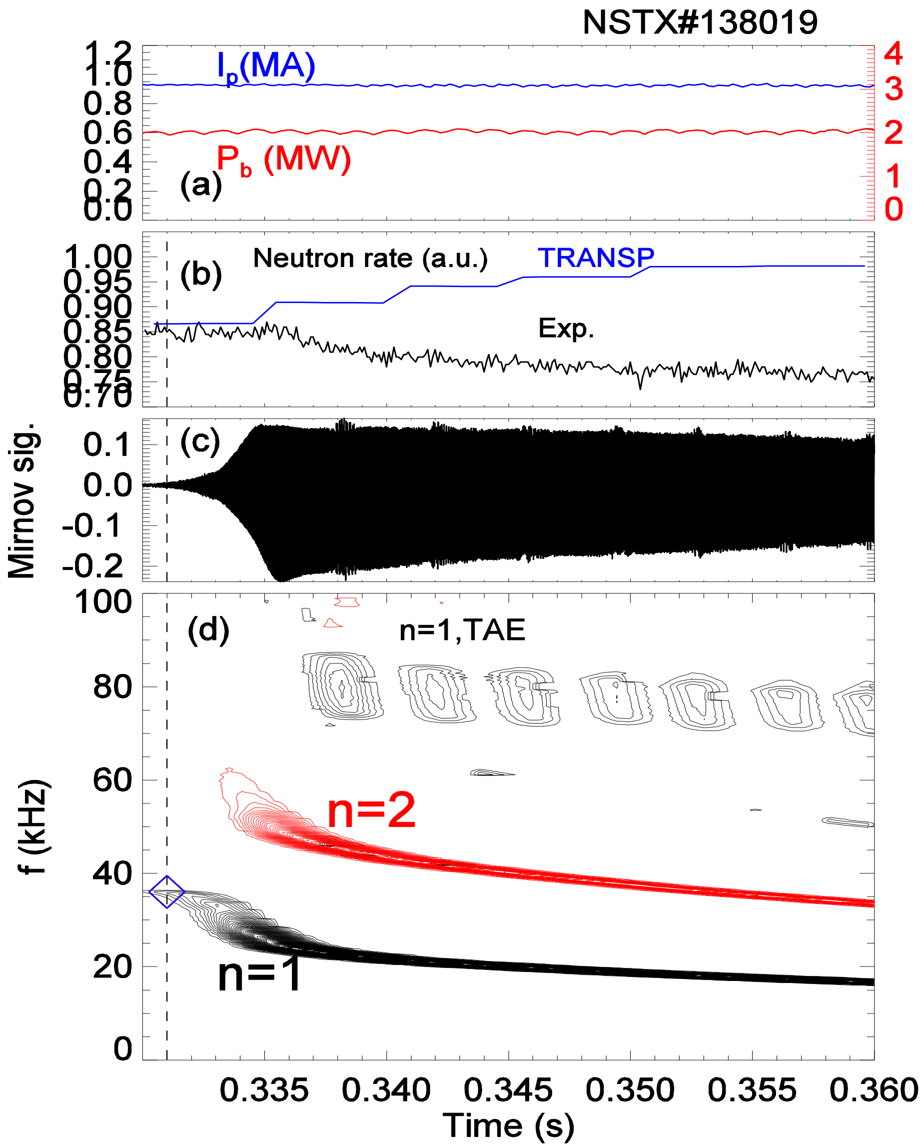
- Low-frequency mode commonly occurs at the early-phase of NSTX discharge

- Some cases can be explained as an ideal external kink (EK) (Menard2014PRL). However, some other cases clearly have no EK, but rather being associated with certain internal MHD instability.

  - At the onset, the mode frequency generally matches the plasma rotation
  - Low-f mode can cause beta saturation, rotation damping and fast-ion loss.

- This work investigates the mechanism for the onset of the internal low-f mode.

- Key message of this work: internal mode driven by centrifugal force



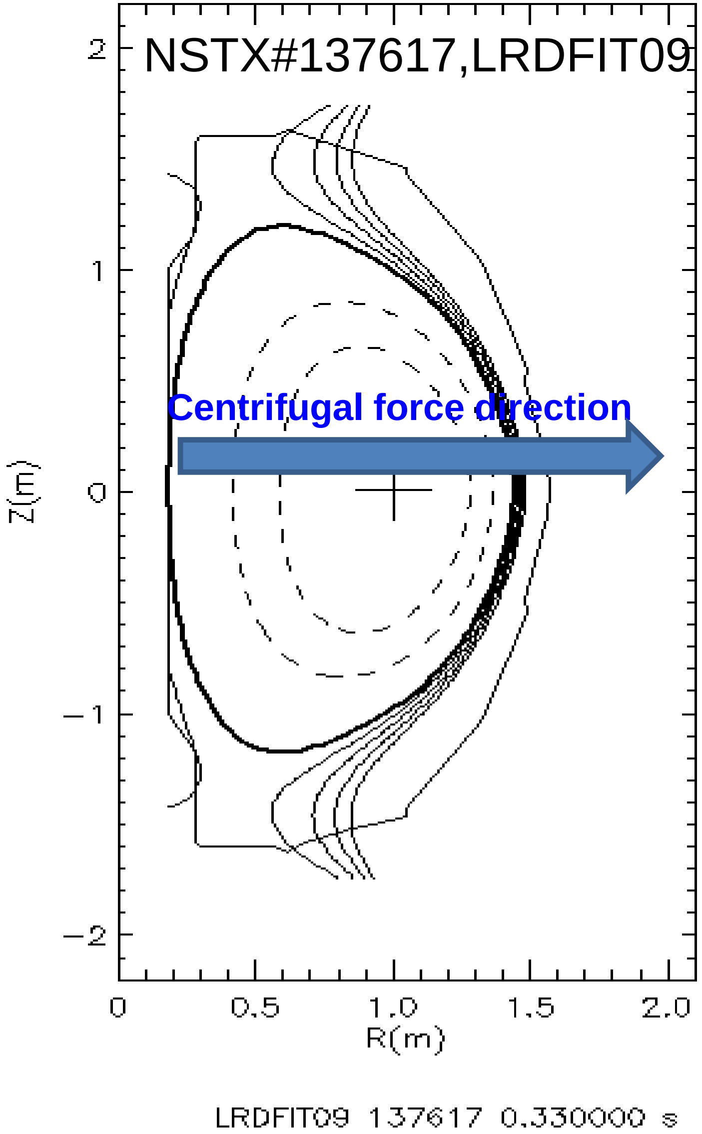
Introduction to centrifugal force (CF)

Perturbed momentum equation:

$$\rho(\gamma + in\Omega)^2\xi = -\nabla \cdot \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{B} + \mathbf{J} \times \mathbf{Q} + 2\rho(\gamma + in\Omega)\Omega\hat{\mathbf{Z}} \times \xi - \boxed{R\hat{\mathbf{R}}\nabla \cdot (\rho\Omega^2\xi)}$$

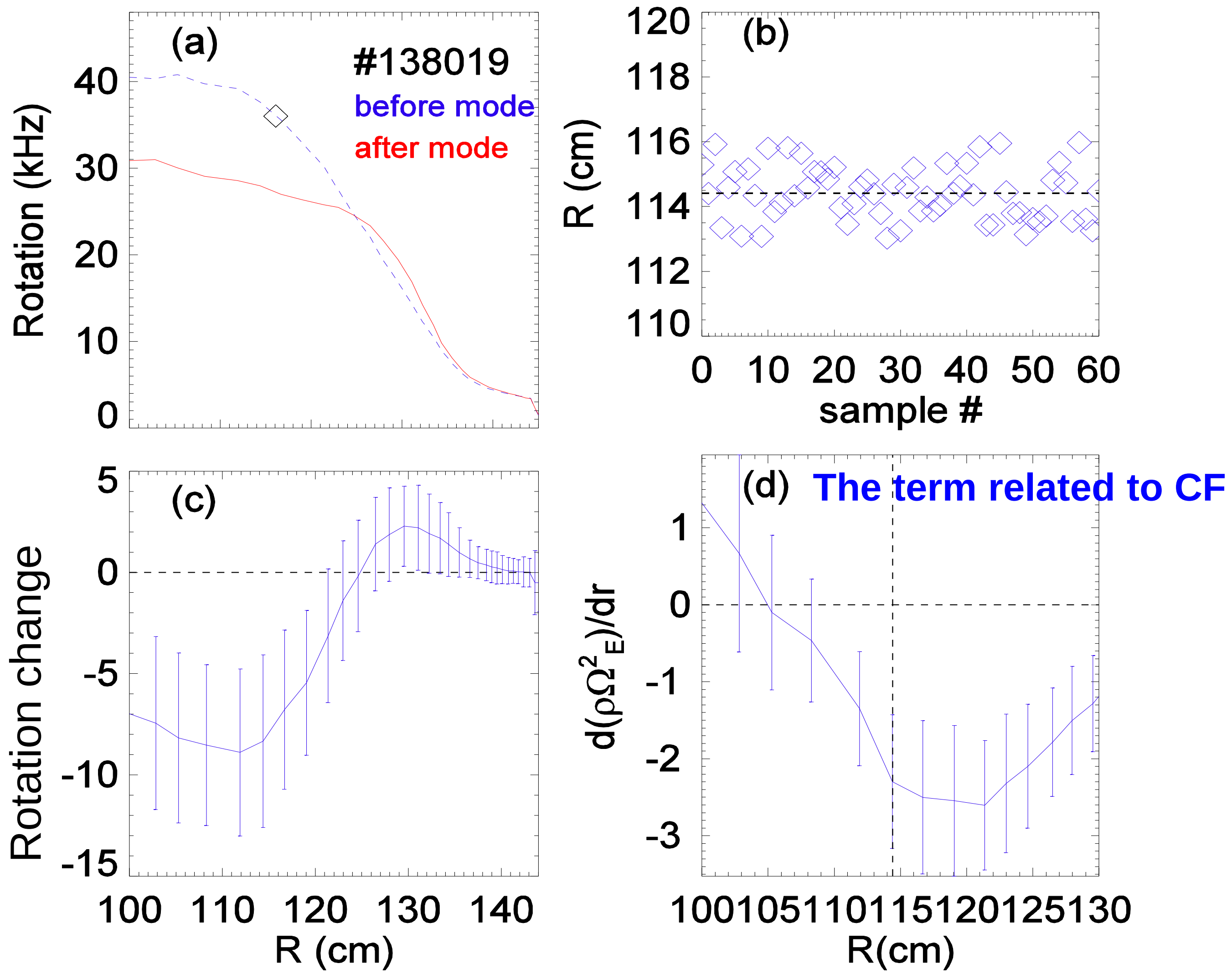
Coriolis force

Centrifugal force.
Always along major radius



Database suggests that the mode is a kind of internal instability

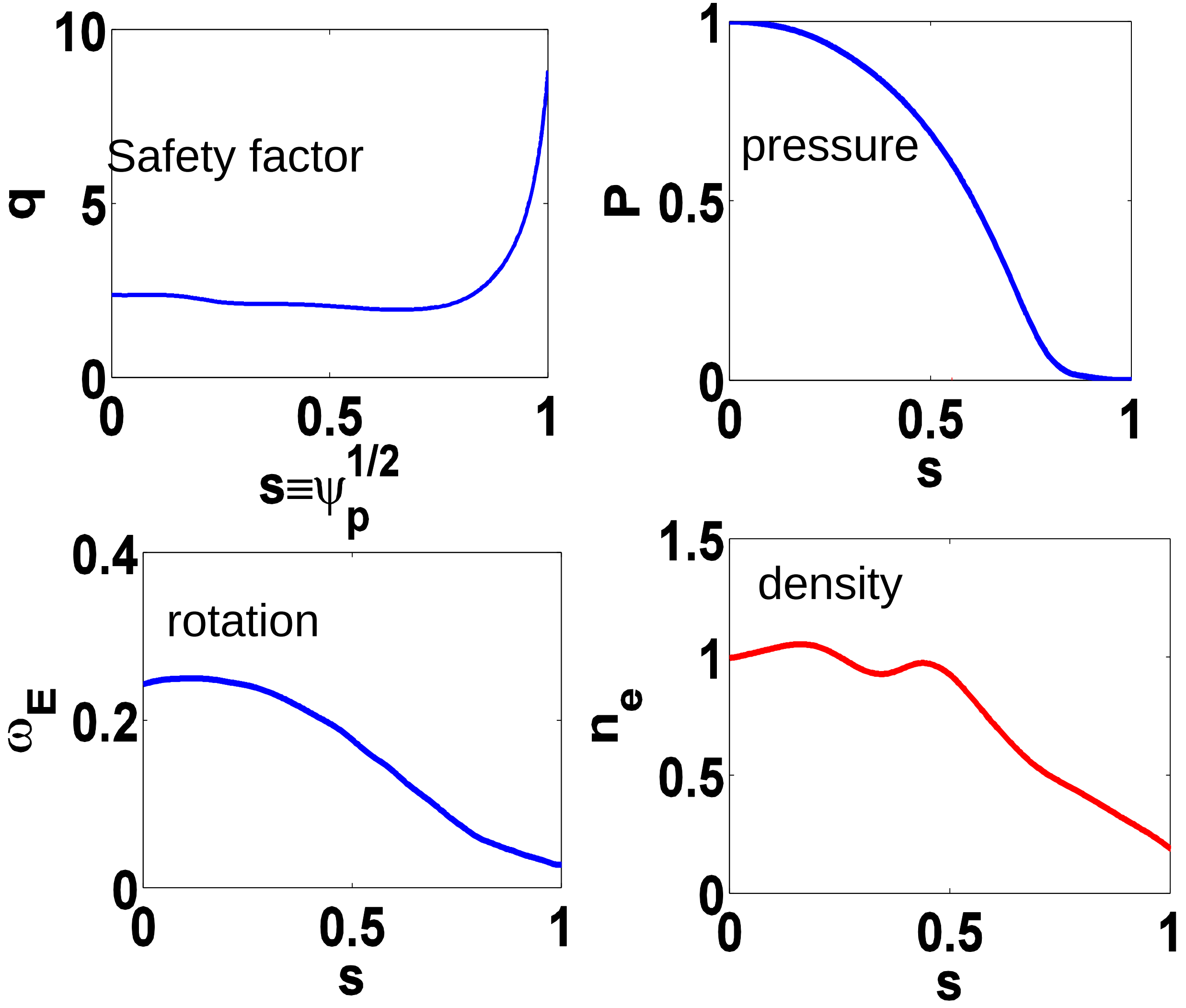
- ◆Low-f mode strongly damps the plasma rotation in the core region
- ◆Identified mode position, based on the mode frequency, is generally localized in the inside region (113-116 cm for the chosen shots)
- ◆Mode is localized in the region with relatively large 'CF'



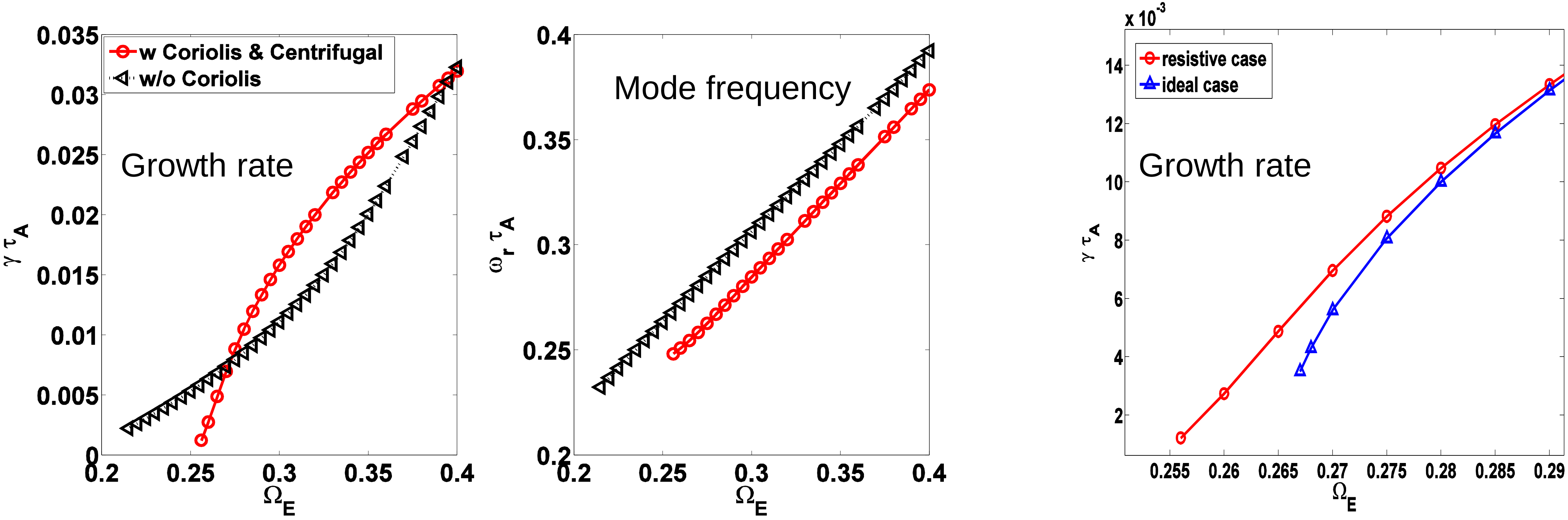
MARS-F is applied to study the effect of centrifugal force on MHD instability

- Equilibria constructed by LRDFIT09. (Magnetics, Pitch angle, Er-correction, Te-iso, MSE, and rotation)

- MARS-F is a full toroidal eigenvalue code



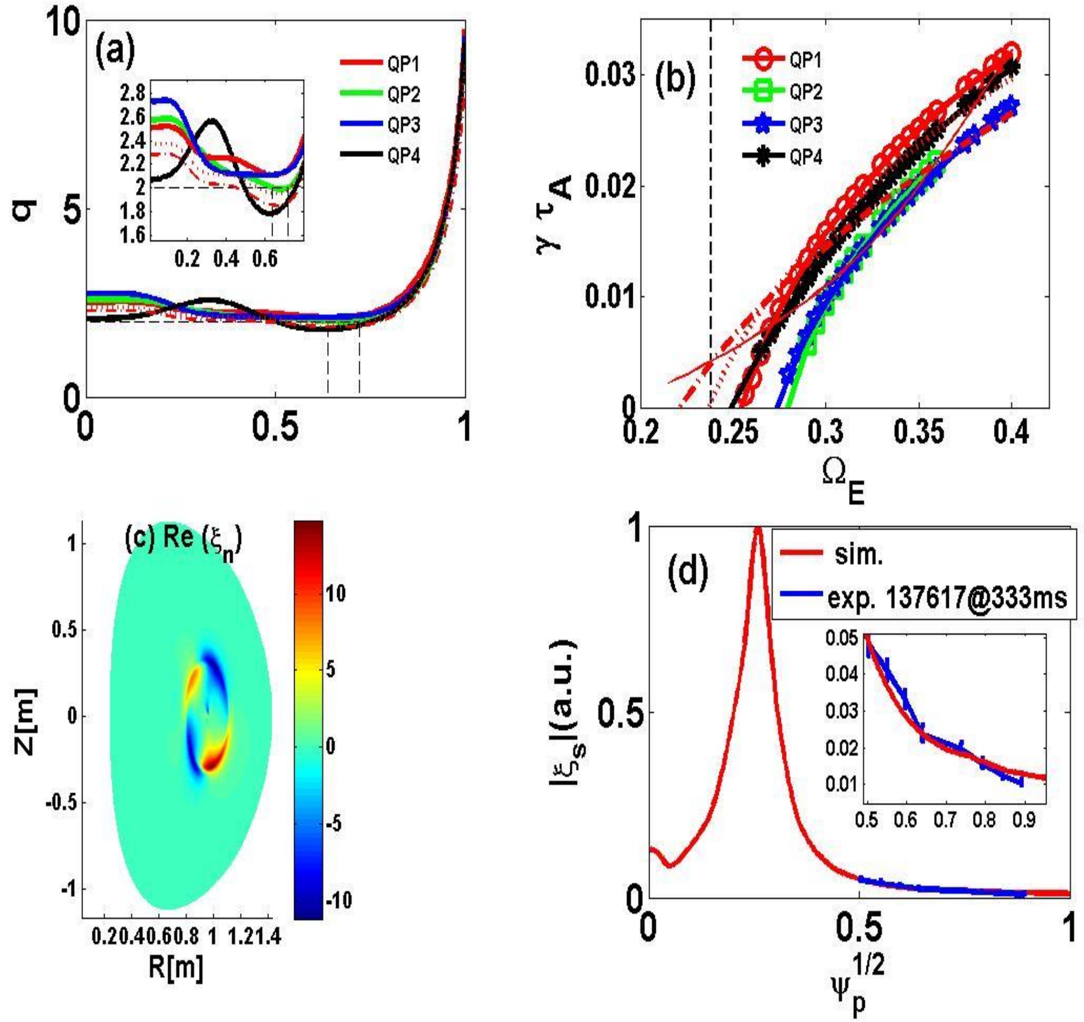
Centrifugal force drives an internal instability



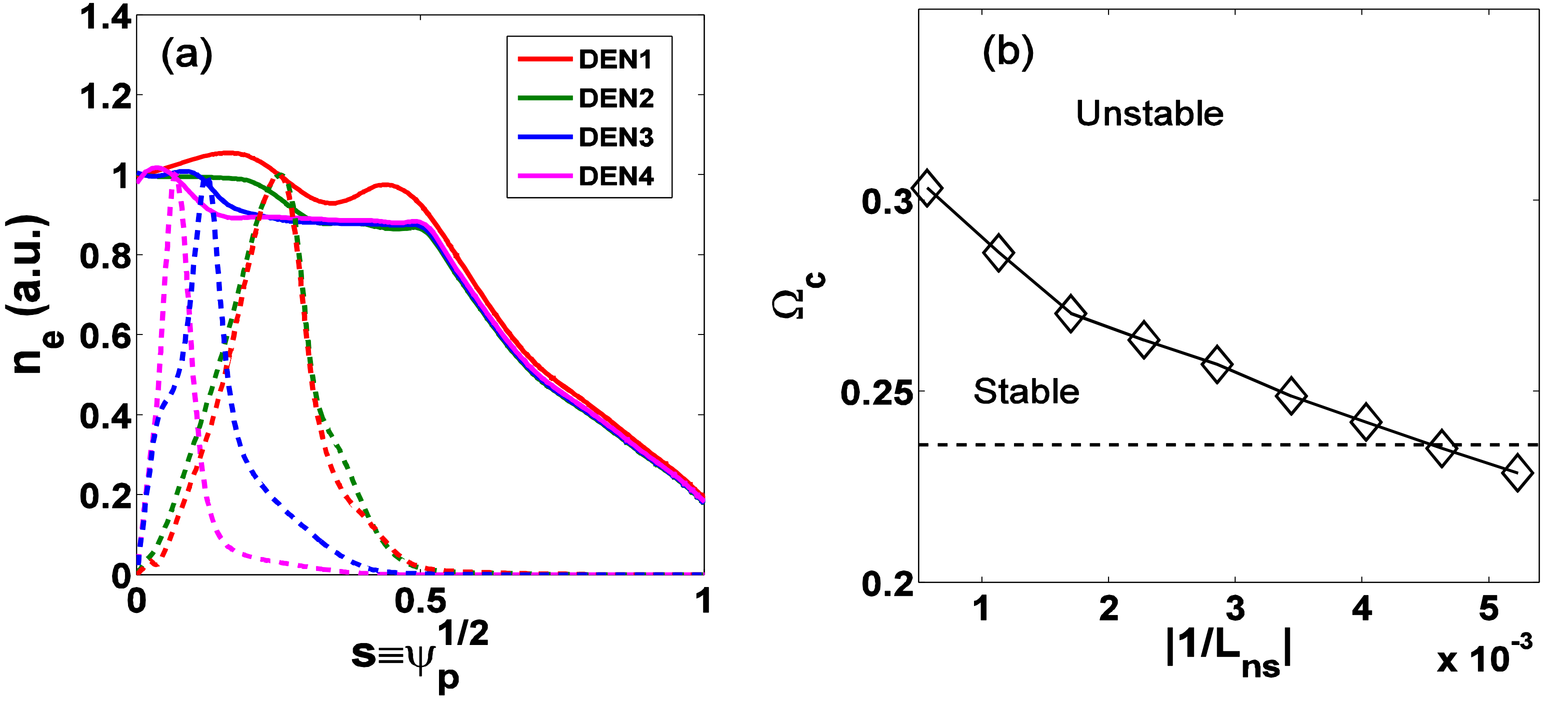
- Centrifugal force can drive an internal instability (mode structure shown in next slide). Here, resistive interchange mode is stable (D_R<0).
- At the marginal point, plasma resistivity slightly enhances the instability

Centrifugal force can drive an kind of internal instability (cont'd)

- Driving of internal instability is robust, and insensitive to the uncertainty of the reconstructed q-profiles.
  - Predicted critical value of rotation (0.25) is close to the experimental value (0.236).
  - Mode frequency (0.23) agrees well with the experiment (0.224)
  - Shape of the displacement in the outer region (sqrt(\psi_p) >0.5) agrees well with the reflectometer measurement. For the core region, USXR is simulated and compared with exp.



Density gradient plays an important role in centrifugal force in the studied case



- ➢ Radial position of the mode sensitively depends on the density profile
- ➢ Critical rotation for driving mode decreases as density gradient increases

Simulated USXR signal basically agrees with experiment

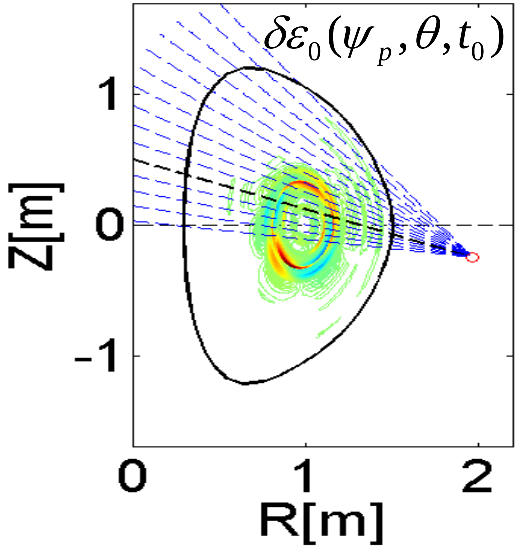
(i) Inverse layer position of S1 in computation agrees with experiment. The inverse layer position has a strong dependence on the mode position.

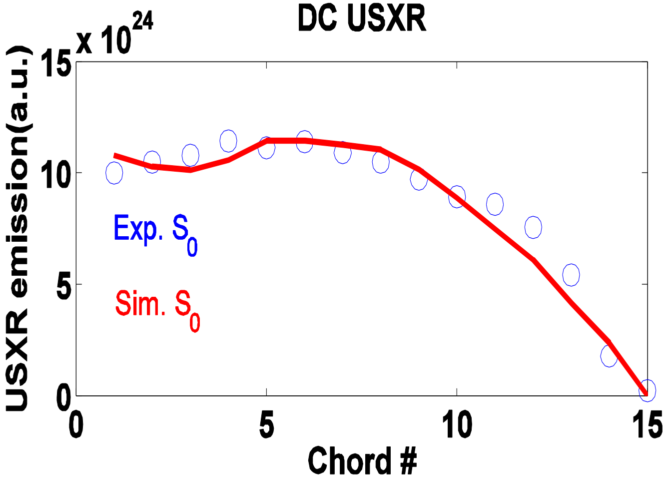
(ii) In chords 1-4, simulation agrees well with experiment. Simulated S1 at chord 6 has a poor agreement with experiment.

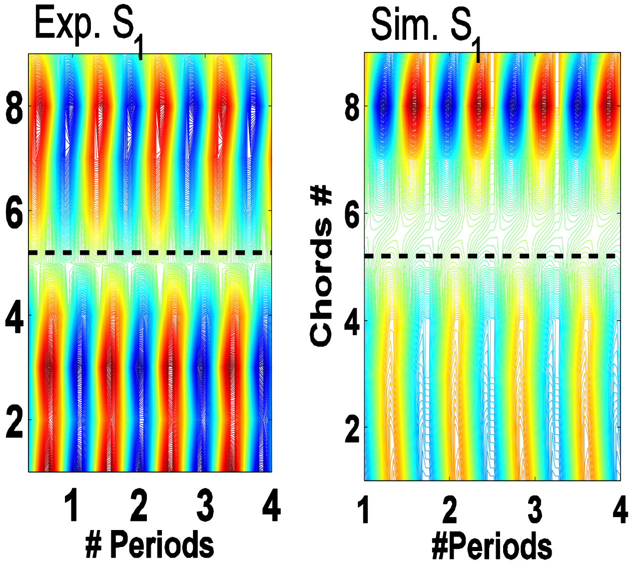
(iii) Discrepancy between the simulated and measured USXR is probably caused by uncertainty in the USXR weight function.

$$S_0 = \int \varepsilon_0(\psi_p)dl, \qquad \varepsilon_0 = n_e n_c f(T_e)$$

$$S_1 = \int \delta\varepsilon_0(\psi_p,\theta,t)dl, \quad \delta\varepsilon_0 = \mathrm{Re}(e^{i\omega_r t}\xi\cdot\nabla s)\frac{\partial\varepsilon_0}{\partial s}$$

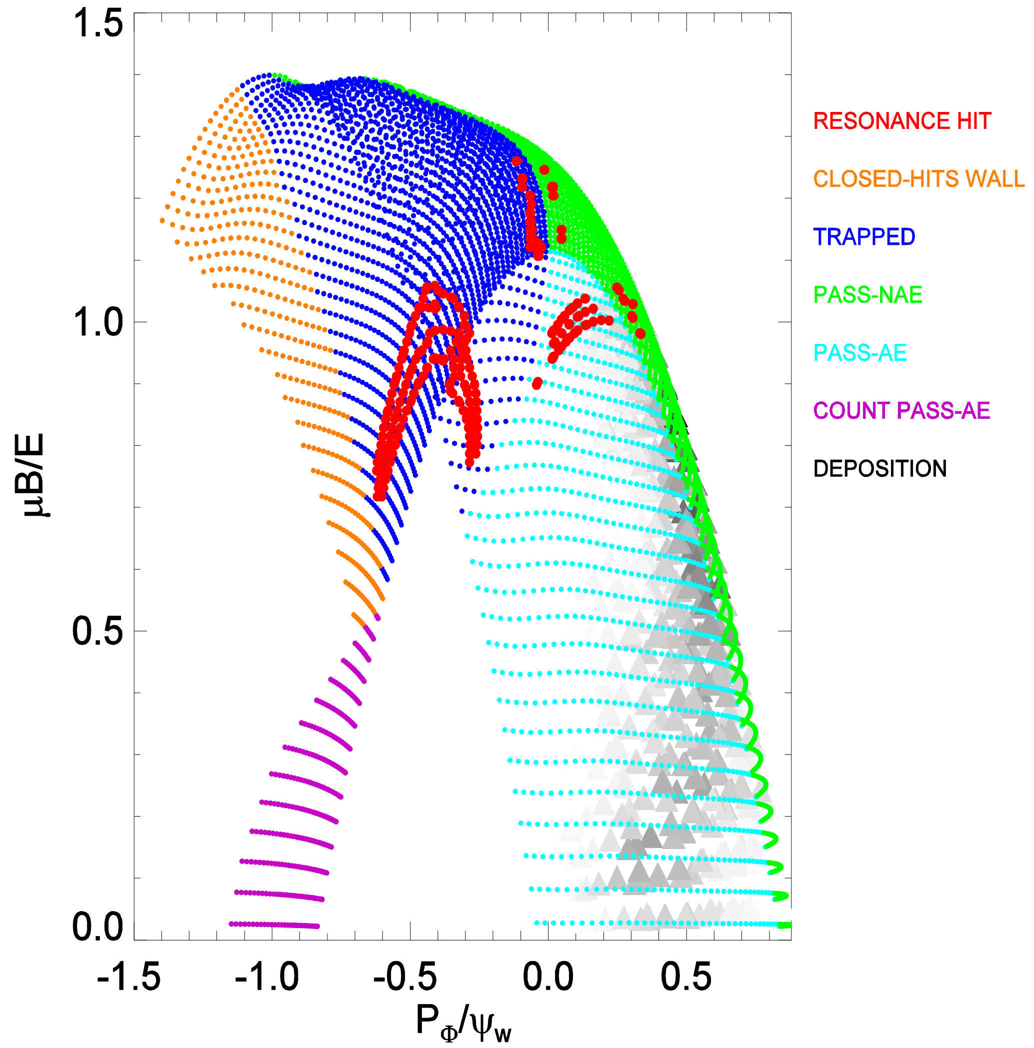






Resonance between the mode and fast ions is NOT important for the studied case

- Both the toroidal and poloidal frequencies of fast ions are computed
- Spatial region for computing orbit is limited in the mode extension region (100-120cm). The corresponding deposition of fast-ion distribution is extracted from TRANSP
- For the mode frequency, three cases are considered: 0, -5 and 5 kHz in plasma frame
- Direct MARS-K computations also confirm minor role played by fast-ion resonances



Summary

- The simulated characteristics of internal instability consistent with experiment.
  - The predicted critical rotation amplitude for driving mode is close to the experimental value.
  - Mode frequency agrees well with the experiment value
  - The shape of the normal displacement basically agrees with the measurements.
  - At the onset of the mode, resonance between the mode and fast ions is NOT important.
  - **Some low-f modes in NSTX are internal instabilities driven by the centrifugal force.**

- Instability drive sensitive to plasma density profile but not to q-profile variation

- Next step: Combine MARS-F with tracking particle code, such as SPIRAL and ORBIT, to study the effect of the mode on the fast-ion redistribution.

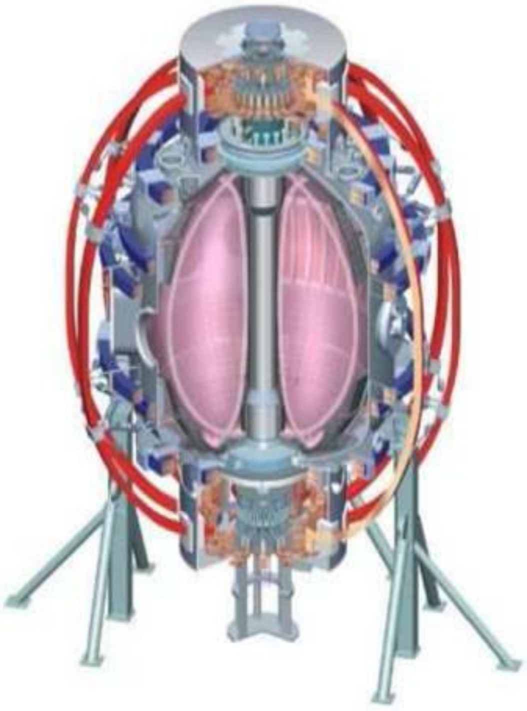
- Back-up slides

What's NSTX?

- National Spherical Torus Experiment (NSTX) is a magnetically confined fusion device with low aspect ratio (spherical tokamak)

- One benefit: reach higher normalized pressure (beta_N), compared with the conventional tokamak

- One mission : Advance the Spherical tokamak (ST) as a candidate for a Fusion Nuclear Science Facility



Major radius	0.85 m
Aspect ratio	1.3
Elongation	2.7
Triangularity	0.8
Plasma current ~	1 MA
Toroidal field	<0.6 T
Pulse length	<2 s

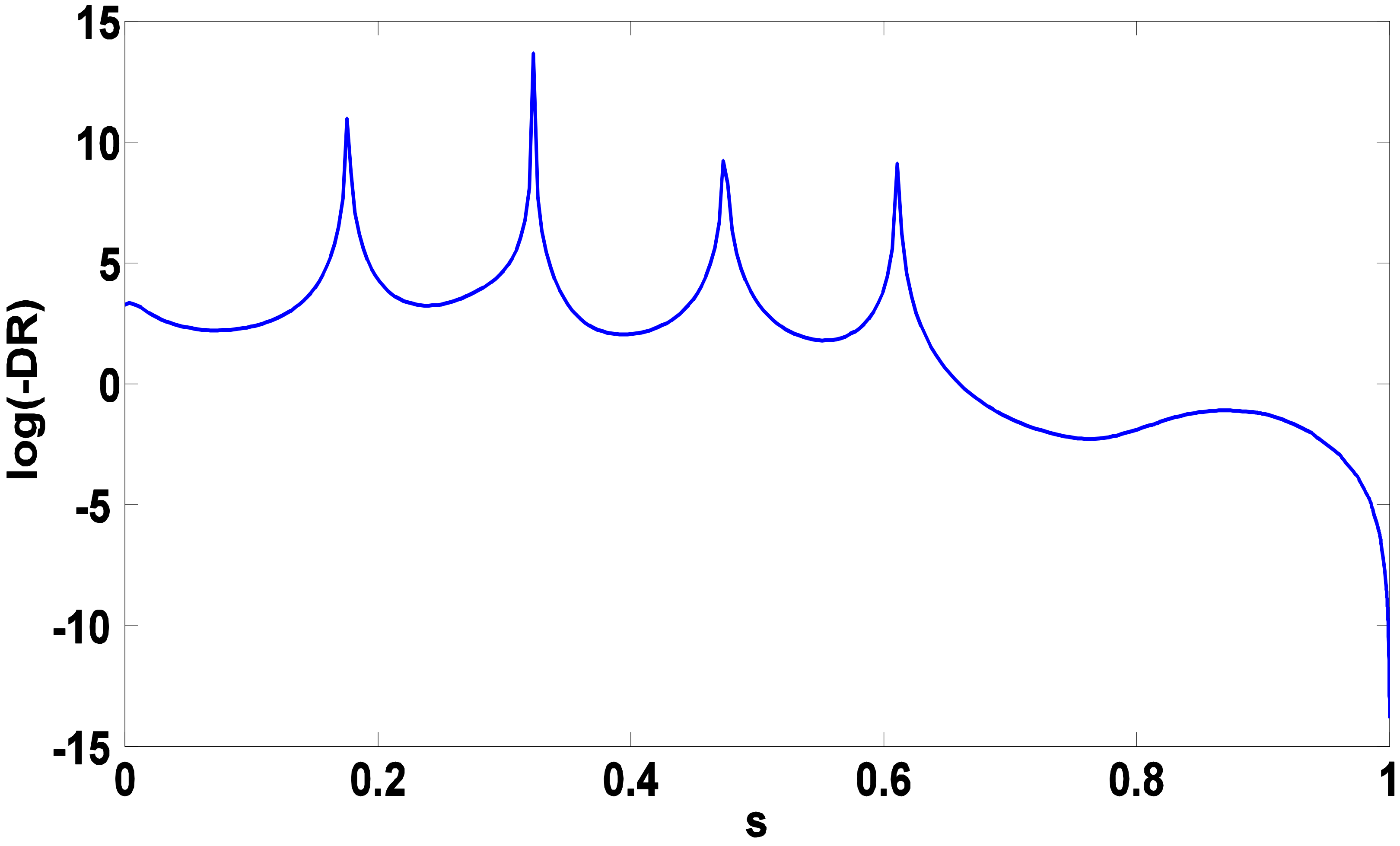
3 Neutral Beam sources

$P_{NBI} \leq 6$ MW

$E_{injection} \leq 95$ keV

$1 < v_{fast}/v_{Alfven} < 5$

Resistive interchange index DR<0 in the whole spatial region



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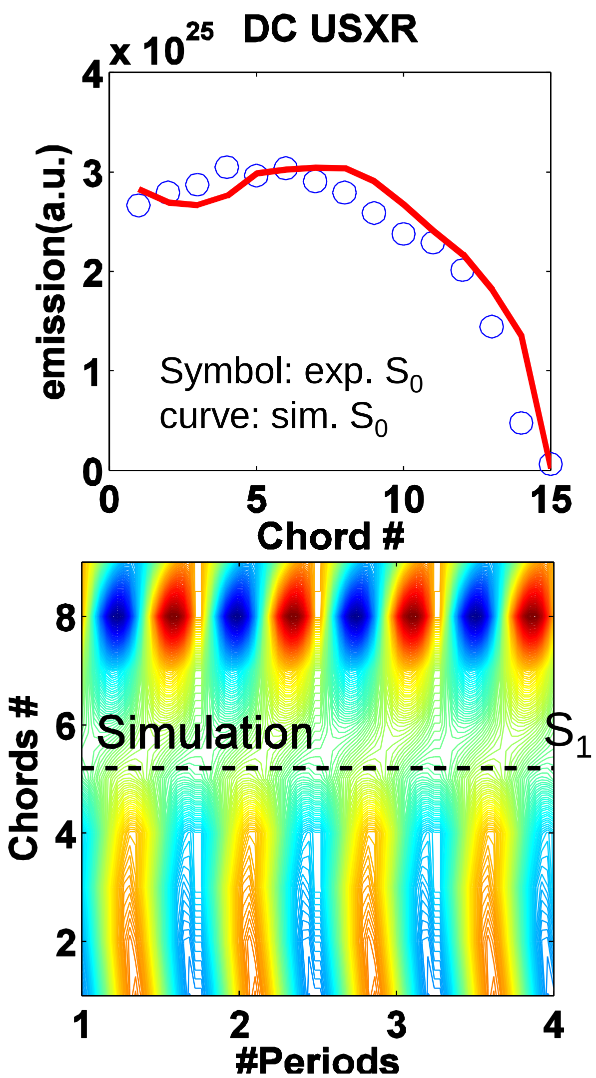
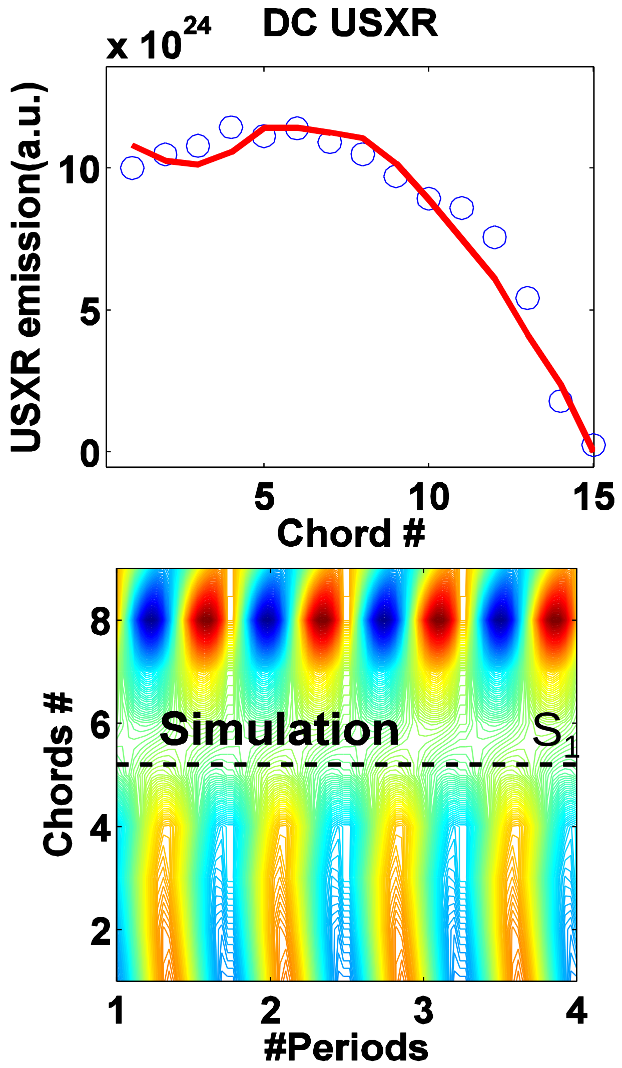
Simulated S1 is insensitive to a slight variation of S0





Discussion about the equilibrium rotation

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Discussion about the equilibrium rotation

- g-file generated by LRDFIT → CHEASE → MARS-F
- LRDFIT reconstruction of the equilibrium includes the measured q-profile for the rotating plasma. Safety factor is the key equilibrium quantity affecting MHD stability.
- CHEASE is a static equilibrium code, which supplies the numerical equilibrium for MARS-F .

■ We neglect the effect of rotation on equilibrium, which leads to the below concerns.

- Magnetic axis positon from CHEASE is about 4cm smaller than that from LRDFIT. During the comparison between simulated and measured USXR, the above axis shift is compensated by horizontally shifting the whole plasma.
- The density gradient in poloidal direction is neglected, which slightly affect the mode growth rate in theory though the second GAM. However, this kind of GAM is not reported in both conventional and spherical tokamaks as we know.
- Given the good agreement between MARS-F simulation and experiments, it is reasonable to believe that the effect of rotation on equilibrium will NOT qualitatively change our key conclusions.