

Soft and Hard Probe with Hydrodynamic Attractors

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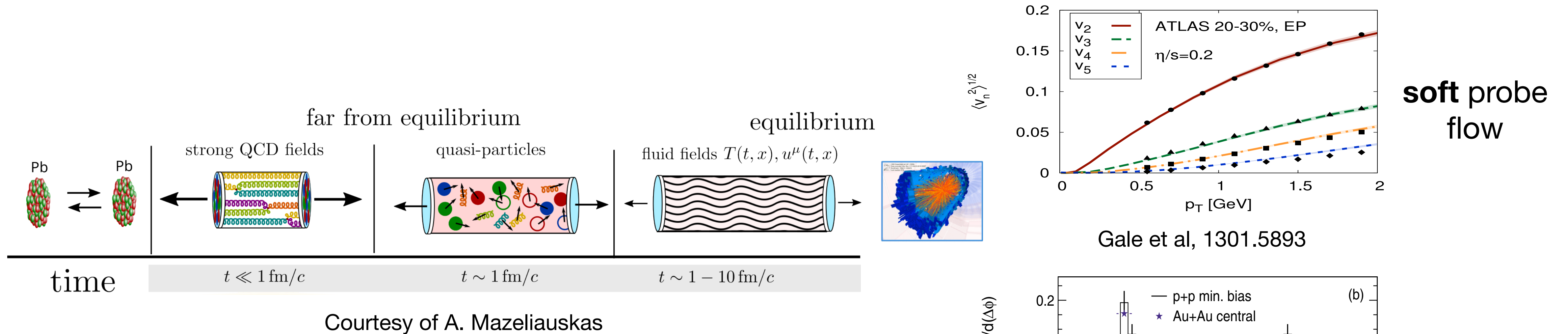
ECT Trento Italy

09/25/2025

Motivation

Thermalization of QGP far from equilibrium

- Heavy-ion collisions: fast thermalization & hydrodynamization.

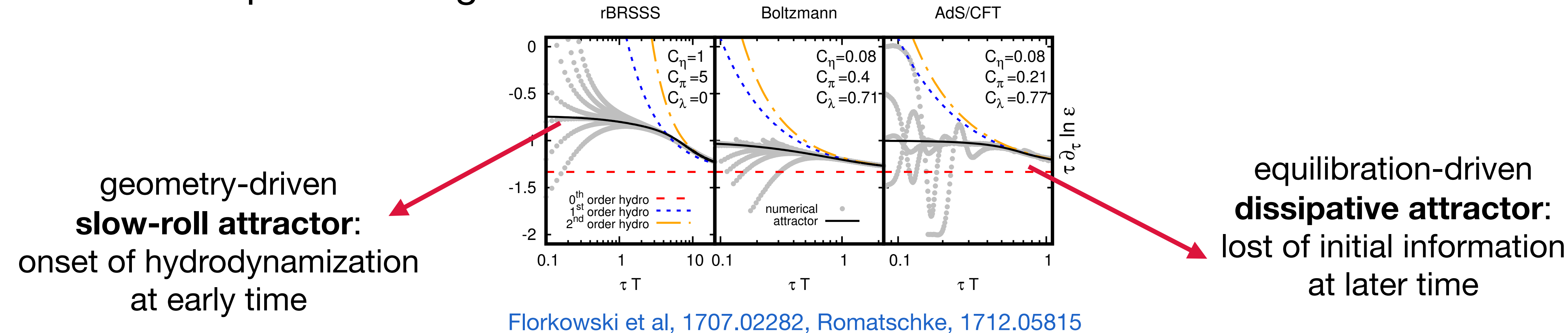


Challenges:

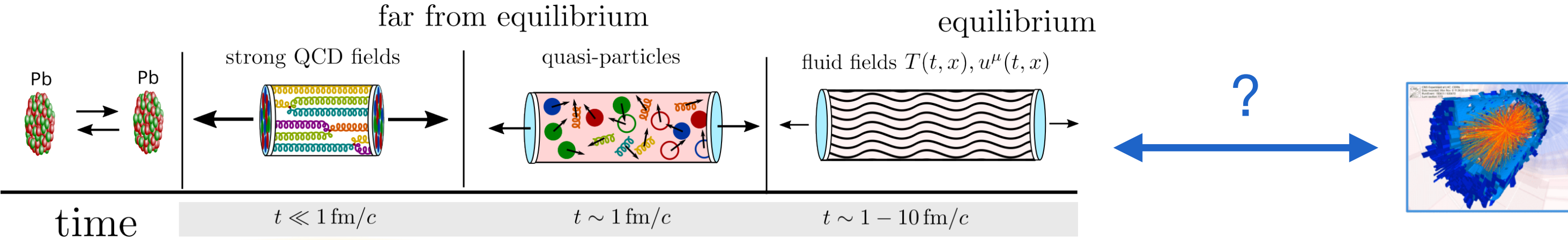
- Experiment:** measurement only at freezeout in momentum space;
- Theory:** legacy of non-hydrodynamic modes. [Yi Yin's talk](#)

Attractors

- **Attractors** serve as a bridge connecting the far-from-equilibrium regime to the near-equilibrium regime.



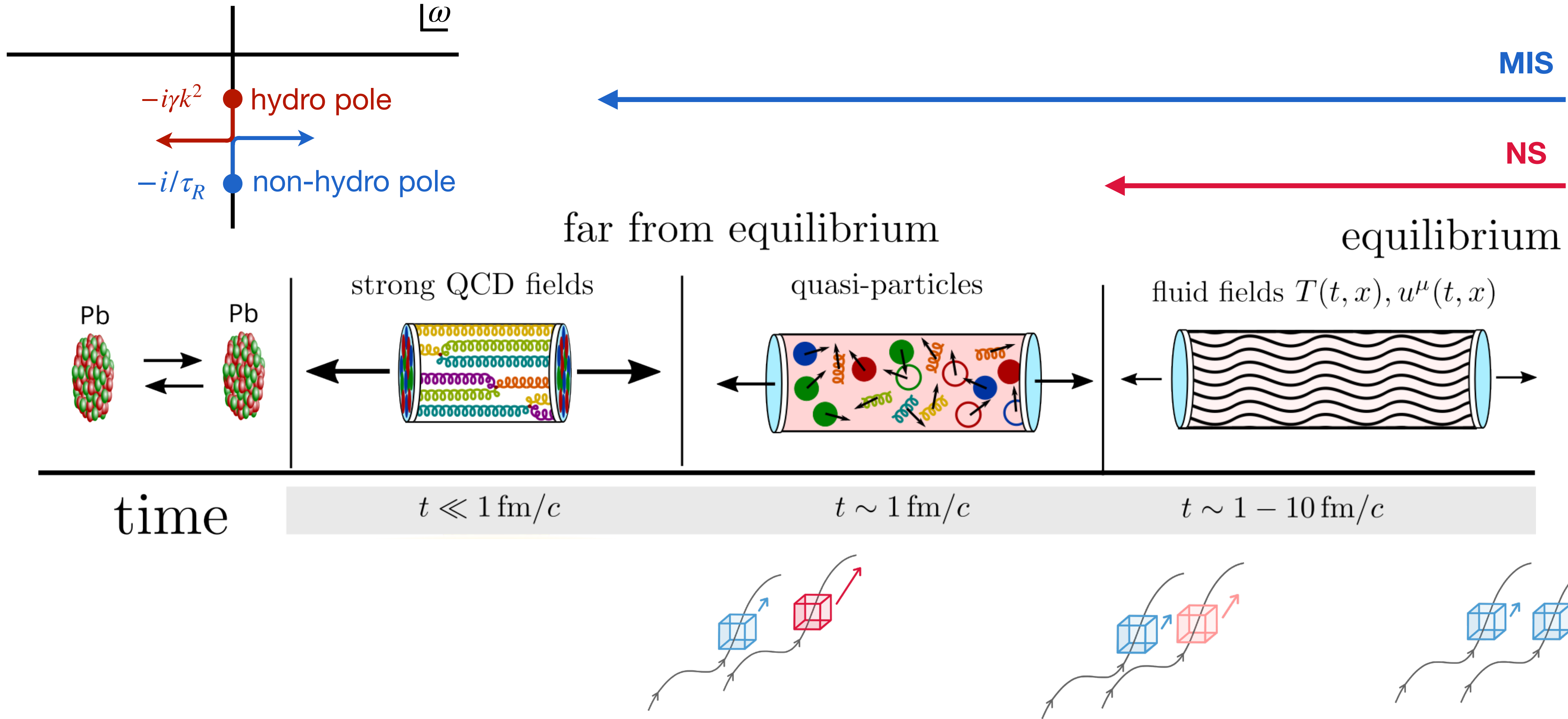
Hydrodynamic attractor offers a reliable description of the non-equilibrium fluid dynamics (via [resummation](#)) as long as the contribution from all **non-hydrodynamic** modes can be neglected.



- The **motivation** of this talk: understand the role of attractors in interpreting the data from heavy-ion collision experiments.

From NS to MIS equations

- We consider a toy model for QCD, i.e., MIS-like theory, that *extend the applicability* of conventional NS hydrodynamics.



The simplest MIS-like equations

- The simplest scenario: Bjorken fluids that is

Heller et al, 1503.07514

1) 0+1D boost-invariant:

τ (time) dependence only, transversely homogeneous

2) conformal:

T (temperature) measures the energy scale

A (anisotropy) measures the thermalization

- The EOM for the dynamic system $\Psi = (T(\tau), A(\tau))$: Blaizot et al, 2106.10508

$$\tau \partial_\tau \Psi(\tau) = -M(\tau) \Psi(\tau) + V \quad \text{where} \quad M(\tau) = \begin{pmatrix} 1/3 & -T(\tau)/18 \\ \tau A(\tau)/C_\tau & 2A(\tau)/9 \end{pmatrix} \quad V = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 8C_\eta/C_\tau \end{pmatrix}$$

NB: Quantum gases: $\nabla \cdot u = 1/\tau \sim \dot{a}/a$ Fujii et al, 2404.12921, Heller et al, 2507.02838

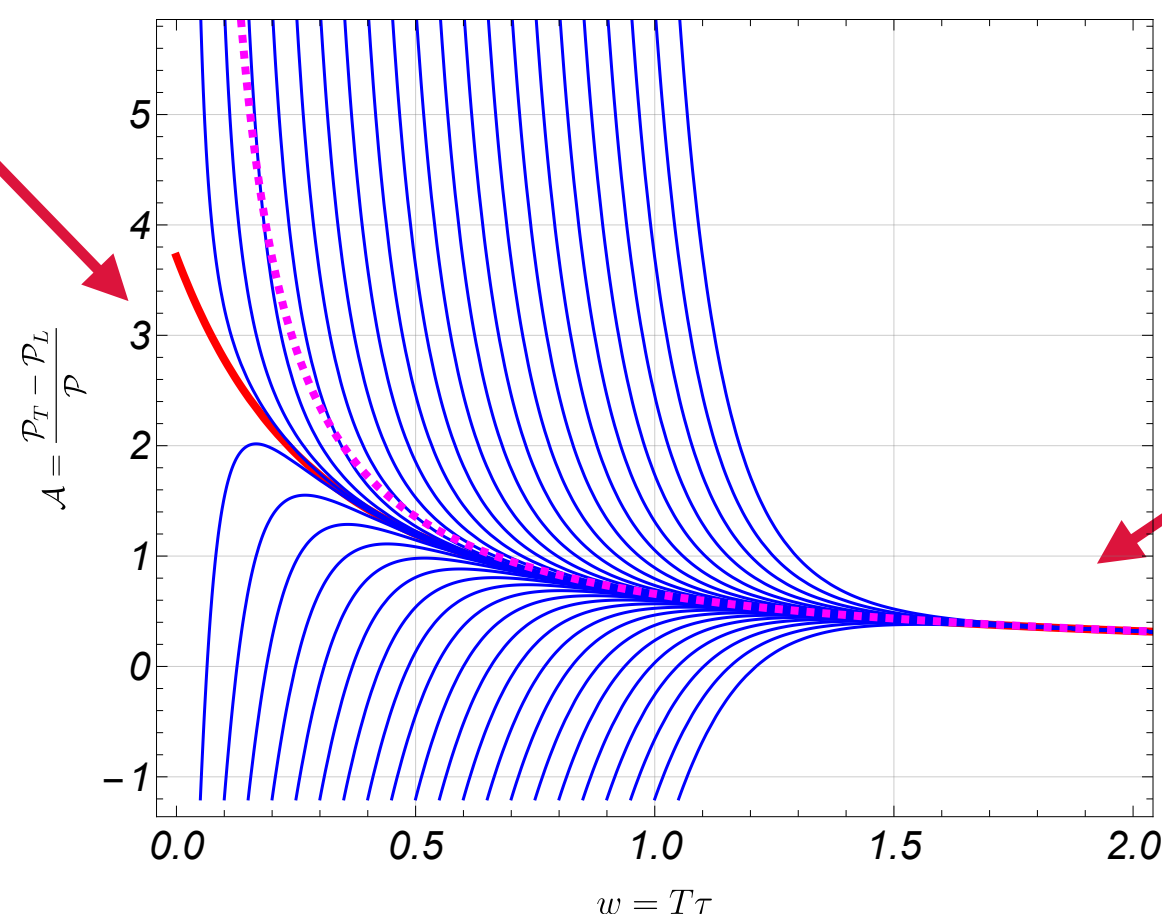
Asymptotic solutions

- Early-time *attractor* solutions:

$$T(\tau) \sim \mu(\mu\tau)^{-\frac{1-\alpha}{3}}(1 + \dots)$$

$$A(\tau) \sim 6\alpha(1 + \dots)$$

slow-roll attractor



Heller et al, 1503.07514

$$\alpha = \sqrt{C_\eta/C_\tau}$$

μ : integration constant parametrizing attractor

- Later-time asymptotic solutions

$$T(\tau) \sim \Lambda(\Lambda\tau)^{-\frac{1}{3}}(1 + \dots)$$

$$+ C_\infty e^{-\frac{3}{2C_\tau}(\Lambda\tau)^{2/3}}(\Lambda\tau)^{-\frac{2}{3}(1-\alpha^2)}(1 + \dots)$$

$$A(\tau) \sim 8C_\eta(\Lambda\tau)^{-\frac{2}{3}}(1 + \dots)$$

$$+ f(C_\infty)e^{-\frac{3}{2C_\tau}(\Lambda\tau)^{2/3}}(\Lambda\tau)^{-\frac{1}{3}+\alpha^2}(1 + \dots)$$

hydrodynamic attractor

+ transseries (non-hydrodynamic) modes

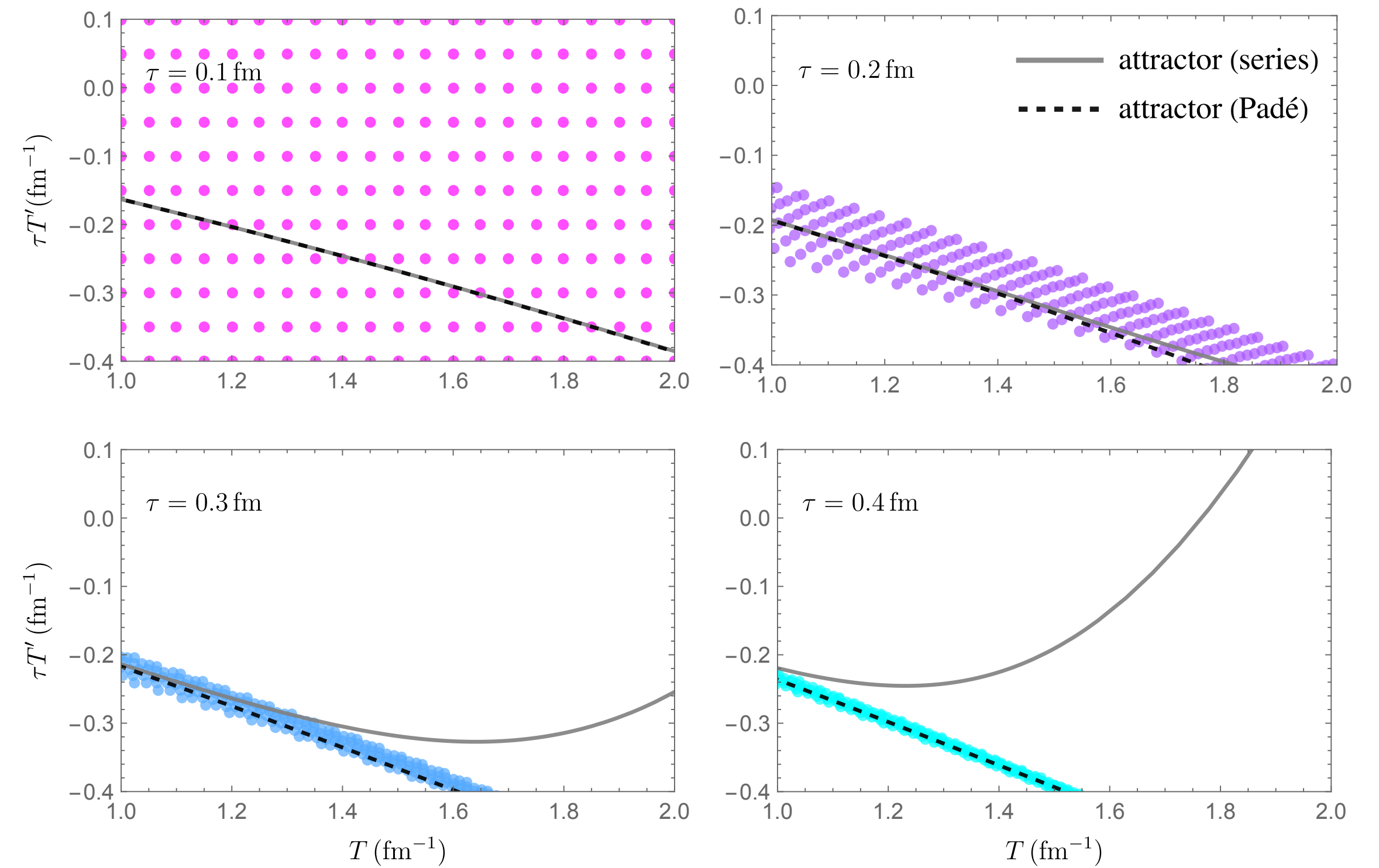
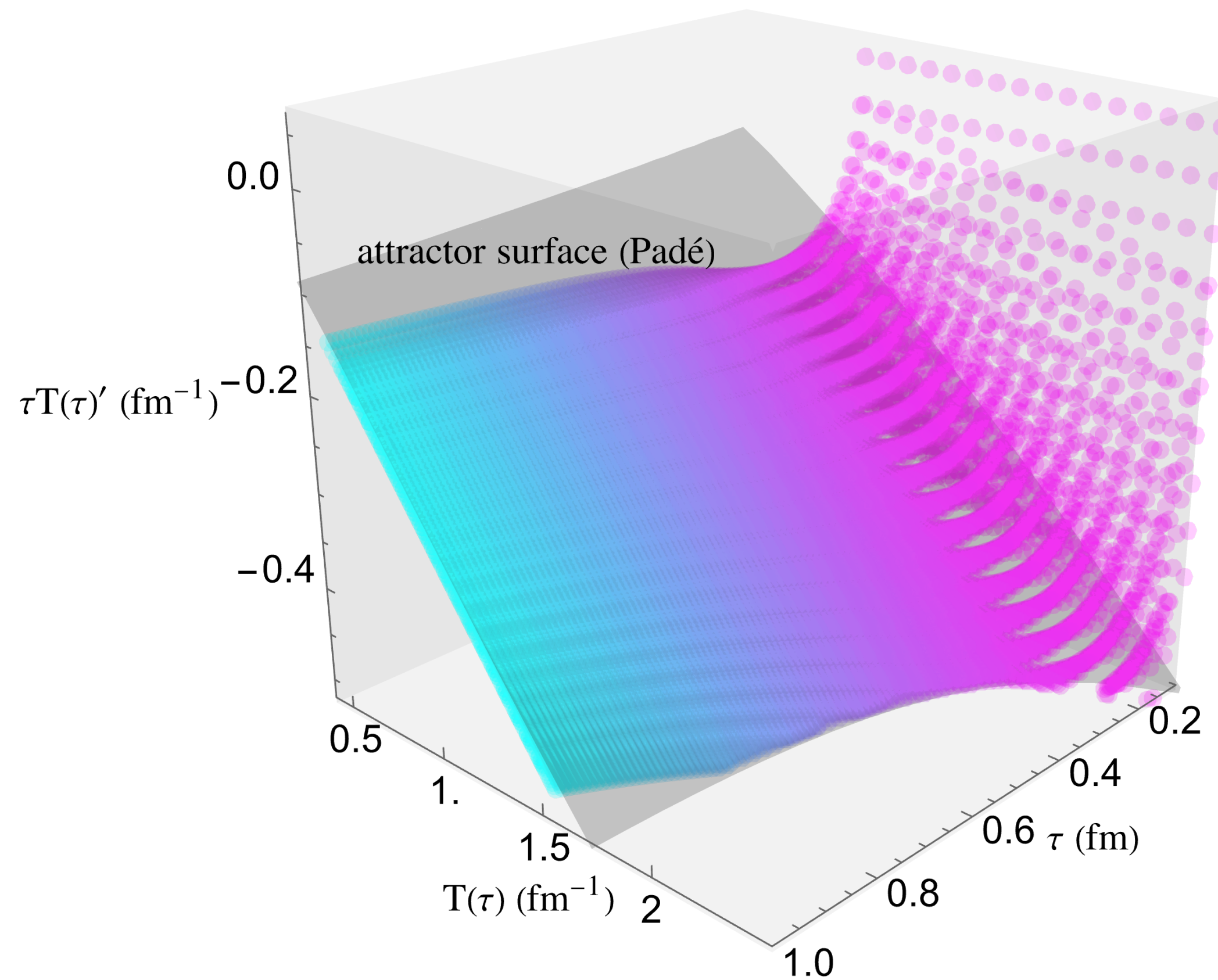
XA and Spalinski, 2312.17237

Aniceto et al, 2401.06750

Λ, C_∞ : integration constant

Early-time attractor in phase space

- Trajectories in phase space rapidly approach the early-time *attractor surface*.



snapshot of $(\tau T', T)$ plane at different τ

Beyond attractor

Limitation of the simplest model

- 0+1D Bjorken model: too simple to be true.
 - It assumes infinitely large and homogeneous transverse plane.
 - It has only two initial conditions.
 - It predicts very few observables.



Multiplicity of hadrons
Photon/dilepton spectrum
...



Collective flow
Jet
...

- 2+1D full hydrodynamics: too difficult to handle.

Idea: 0+1D attractor background + 2+1D perturbations

cf Denicol's talk

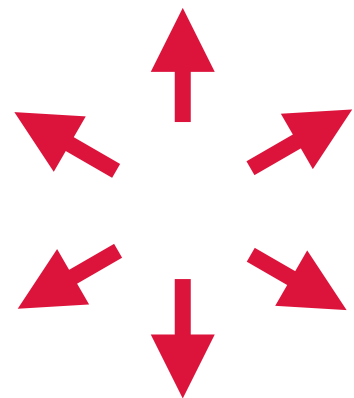
Linear perturbations

- Linearization the full system around attractor background:

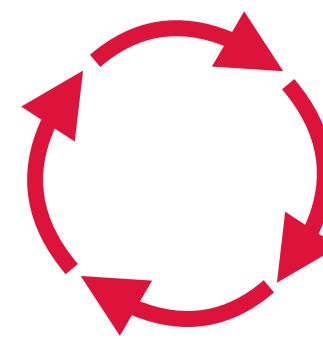
$$\partial_\nu T^{\mu\nu} = \partial_\nu (T^{\mu\nu}_{\text{attractor}} + \delta T^{\mu\nu}) = 0 \quad \longrightarrow \quad \begin{cases} \partial_\nu T^{\mu\nu}_{\text{attractor}} = 0, \\ \partial_\nu \delta T^{\mu\nu} = 0. \end{cases}$$

6 independent fields: $\phi = (\delta T, \delta\theta, \delta\omega, \delta\pi_{11}, \delta\pi_{22}, \delta\pi_{12})(\tau, \mathbf{x})$ $i = 1, 2$

fluid divergence $\delta\theta \equiv \partial_i \delta u_i$



vorticity $\delta\omega \equiv \epsilon_{ij} \partial_i \delta u_j$



shear stress tensor $\delta\pi_{ij}$



- The EOM for the dynamic system:

For NS limit, cf Floerchinger et al, 1108.5535

$$\partial_\tau \phi_i(\tau, \mathbf{k}) = M_{ij}(\tau, \mathbf{k}) \phi_j(\tau, \mathbf{k})$$

Asymptotic solutions at late time

- When $\tau \rightarrow \infty$, $k \neq 0$, solutions perturbed around attractor are transseries:

$$\delta T(\mathbf{k}) \sim C_i(k) e^{-S_i \tau^{b_i} + \dots} \tau^{\beta_i} (1 + \dots) \quad i = 1, 2, 3, 4$$

$$\delta \omega(\mathbf{k}) \sim C_i(k) e^{-S_i \tau^{b_i} + \dots} \tau^{\beta_i} (1 + \dots) \quad i = 5, 6$$

$C_1(k), \dots, C_6(k)$: $6N_k$ integration constants $\delta \hat{\theta}$ and $\delta \hat{\pi}_{ij}$ are determined dependently

- Attractor is asymptotically **stable** ($\text{Re } S_i > 0$) against transverse perturbations.
 - Hydrodynamic attractor exists in 2+1D.
 - Non-hydrodynamic (non-perturbative) behavior is important at later time.

Zero wavenumber modes

- When $\tau \rightarrow \infty$, $k = 0$ modes need to be considered separately:

$$\delta u_i \sim C_i \tau^{1/3} (1 + \dots) \quad i = 1, 2 \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{mild growth due to momentum conservation}$$

$$\delta T \sim C_3 (1 + \dots) + C_4 e^{-\frac{3}{2C_\tau} \tau^{2/3}} \tau^{-\frac{2}{3}(1-\alpha^2)} (1 + \dots)$$

$$\delta \pi_{11} - \delta \pi_{22} \sim C_5 e^{-\frac{3}{2C_\tau} \tau^{2/3}} \tau^{\frac{2}{3}\alpha^2} (1 + \dots)$$

reproduces the background transseries

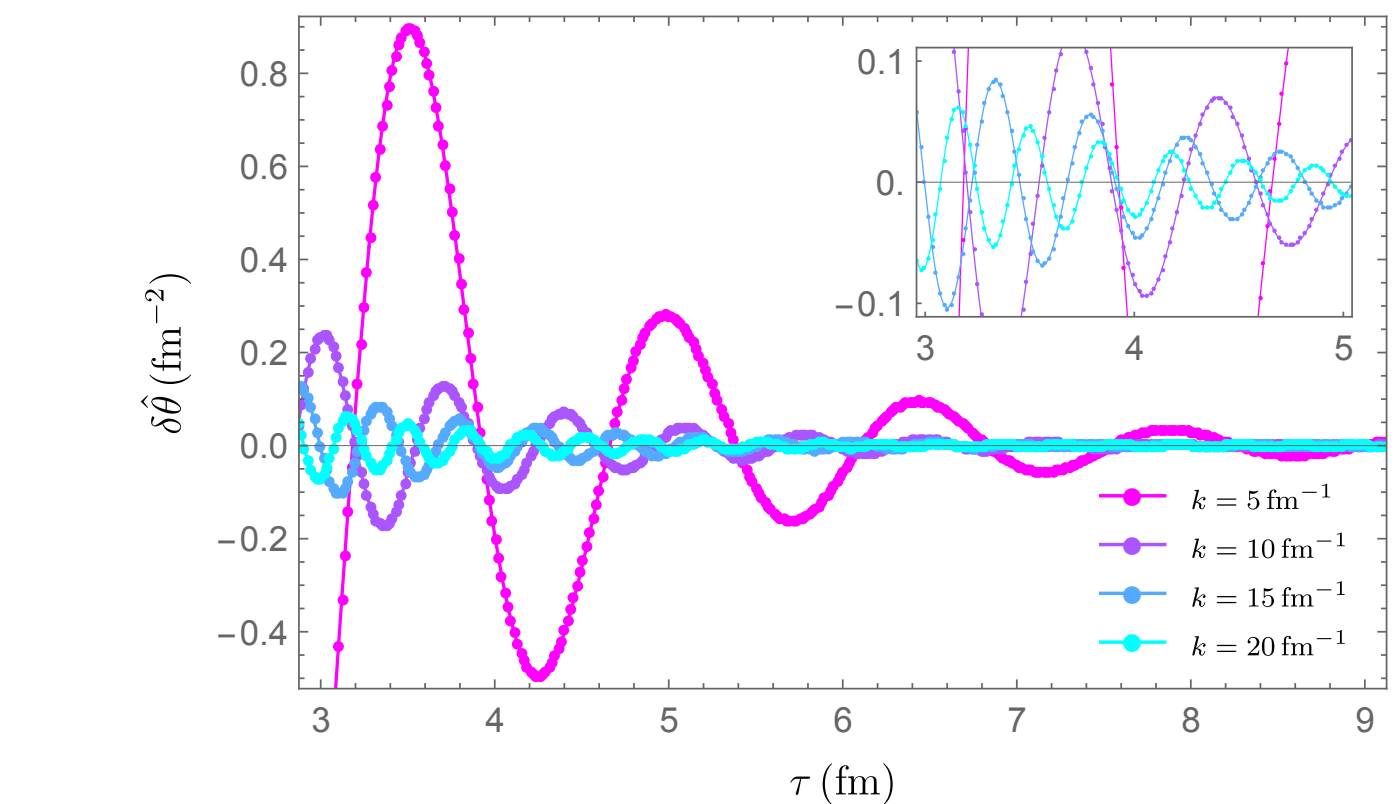
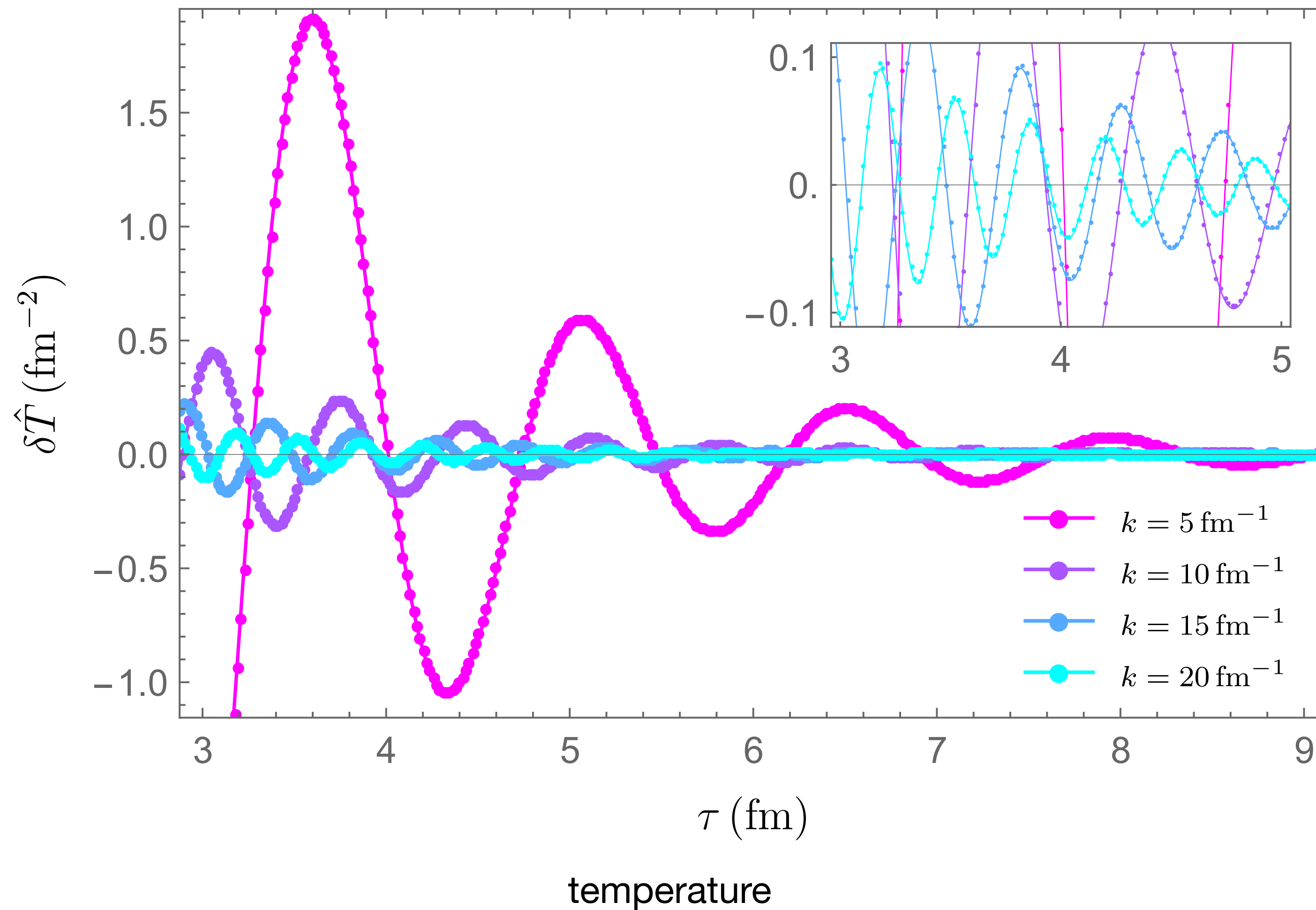
$$\delta \pi_{12} \sim C_6 e^{-\frac{3}{2C_\tau} \tau^{2/3}} \tau^{\frac{2}{3}\alpha^2} (1 + \dots)$$

Observables are extracted from a **finite** set of asymptotic data $C_n(\mathbf{k})$.

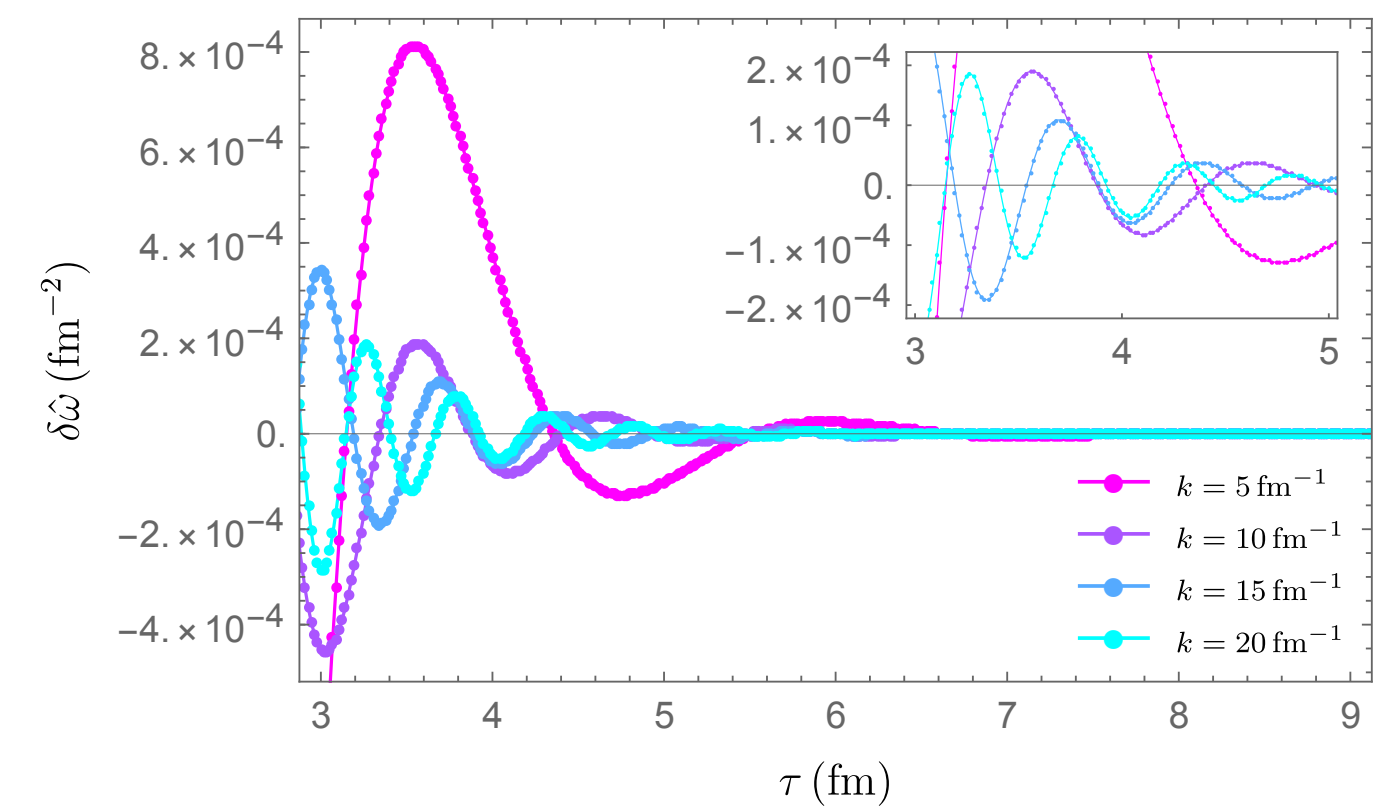
of data: $6 \times N_k$

Matching to numerics

- The analytic solutions (solid curves) fit the numerics (discrete points) even at $\tau = 3$ fm.



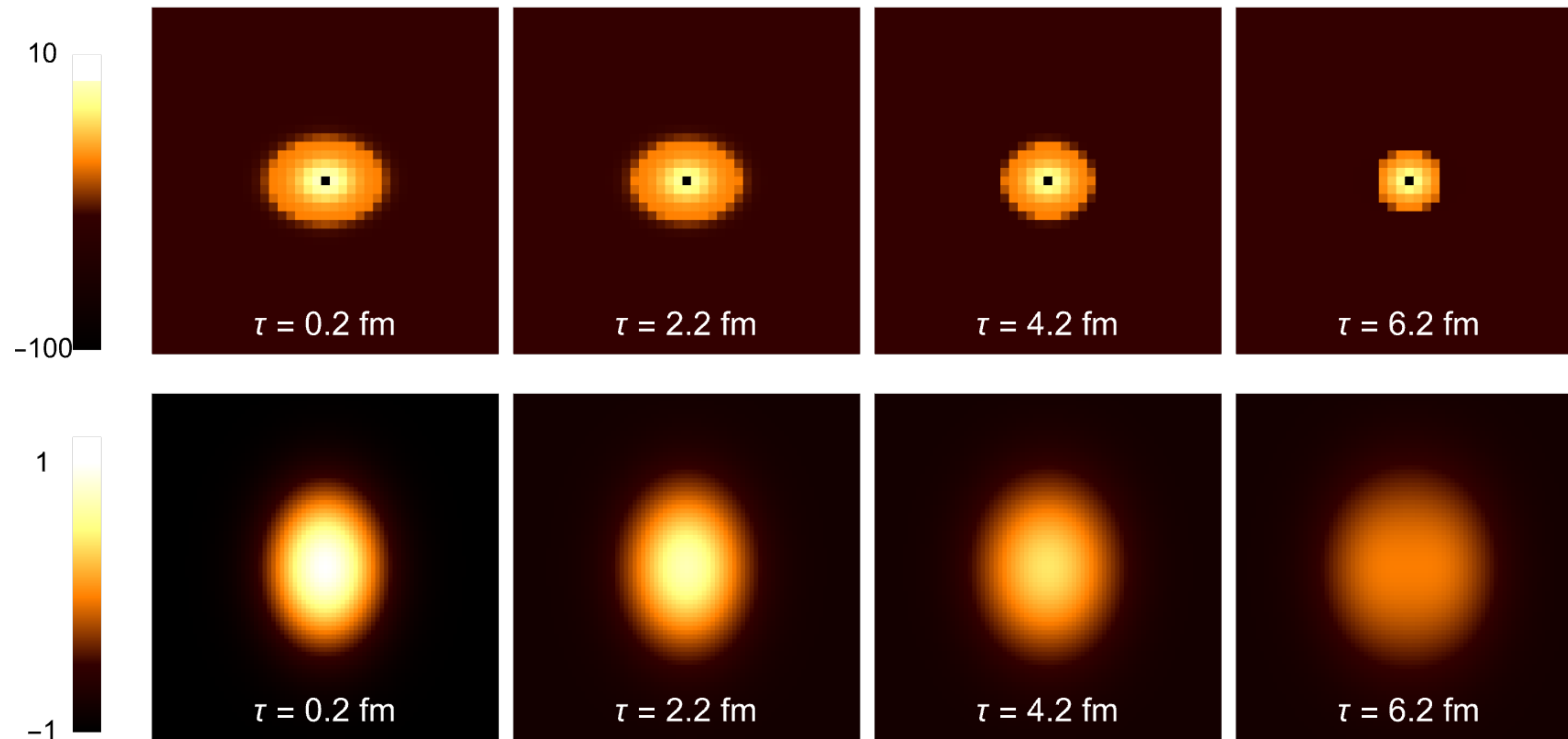
fluid divergence



vorticity

Transverse tomography

- Transverse information is encoded in a finite set of Fourier modes via FFT.



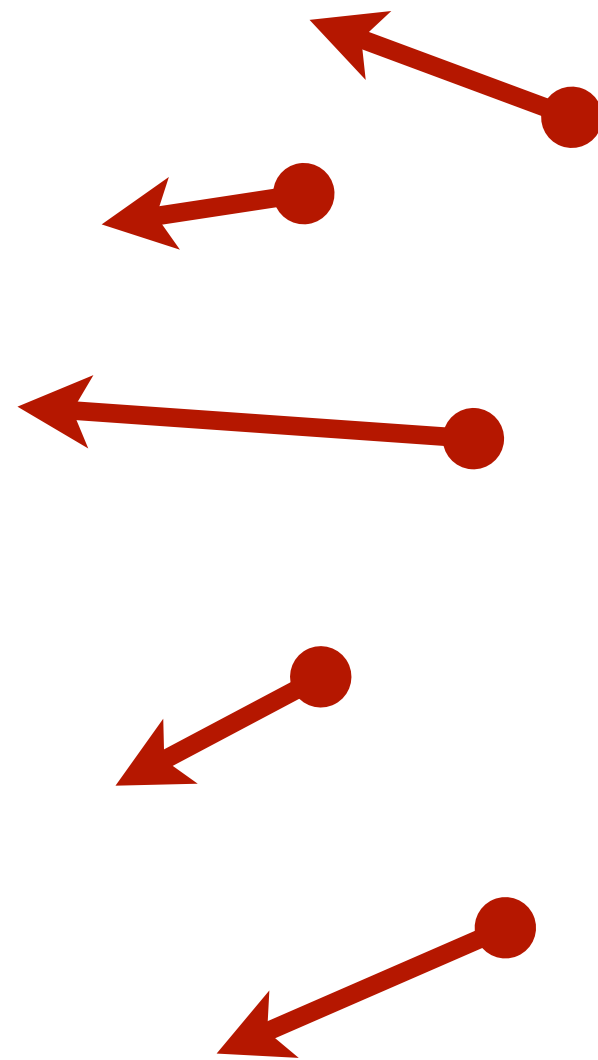
Evolution of temperature (energy density) in transverse spaces

Soft probe: flow

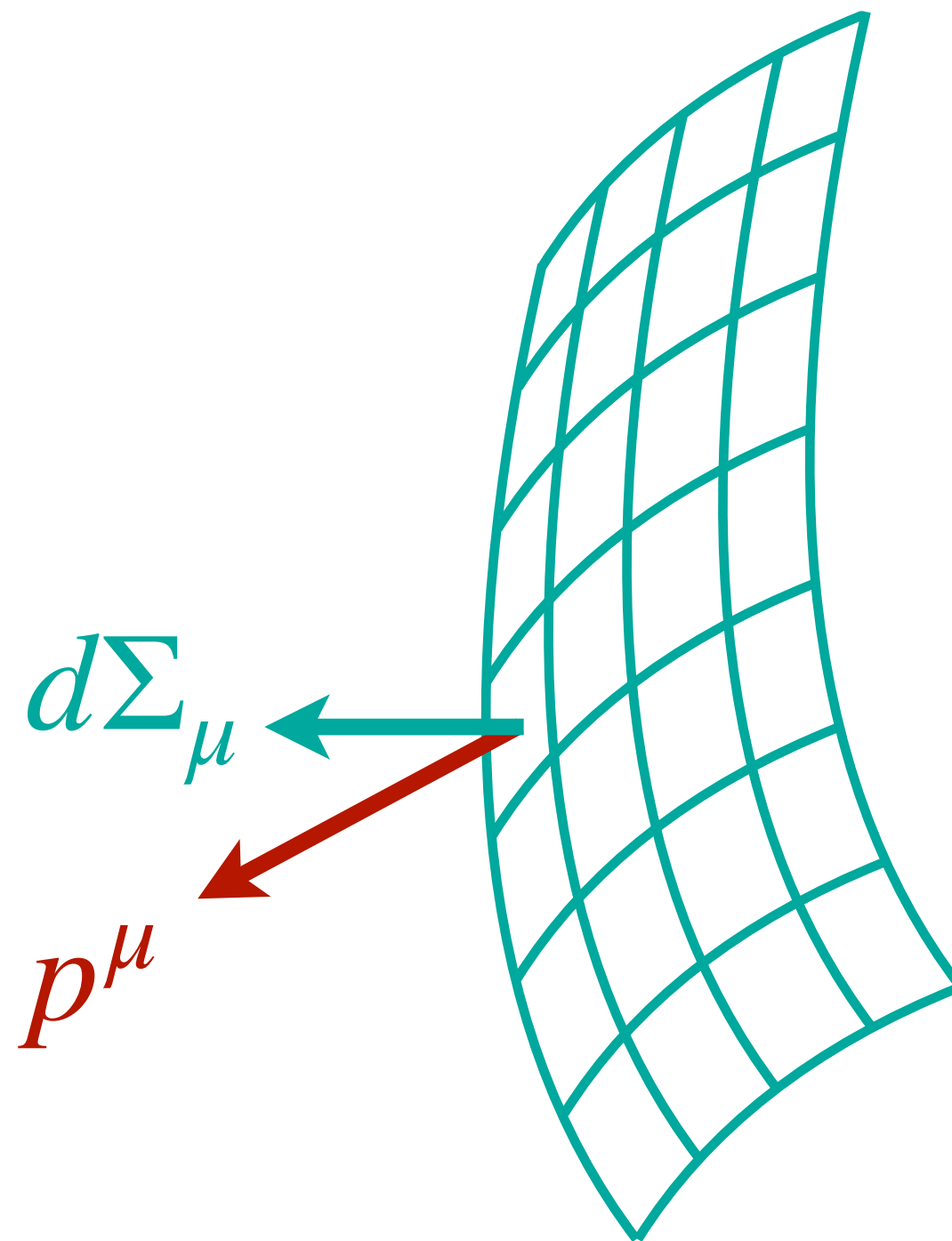
Cooper-Frye freezeout

- Cooper-Frye formula Cooper and Frye, 1974

particle
in momentum space

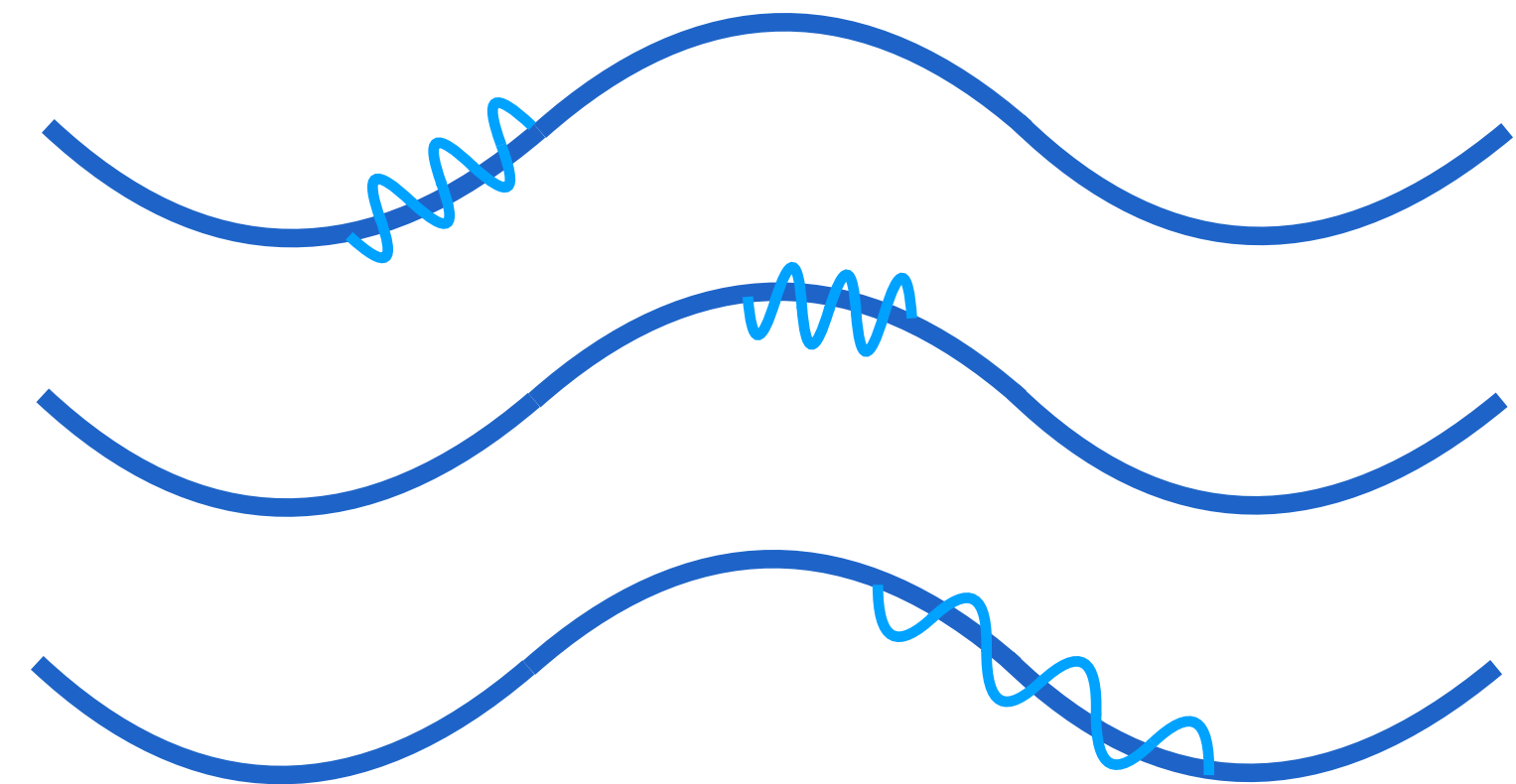


$$E \frac{dN}{dp^3} = \int_{\Sigma} f(x, p) p^{\mu} d\Sigma_{\mu}$$



fluids
in position space

$$f(x, p) = f(T^{\mu\nu}(x), p) = e^{u \cdot p/T} (1 + \mathcal{O}(p))$$



Collectivity: analytic results

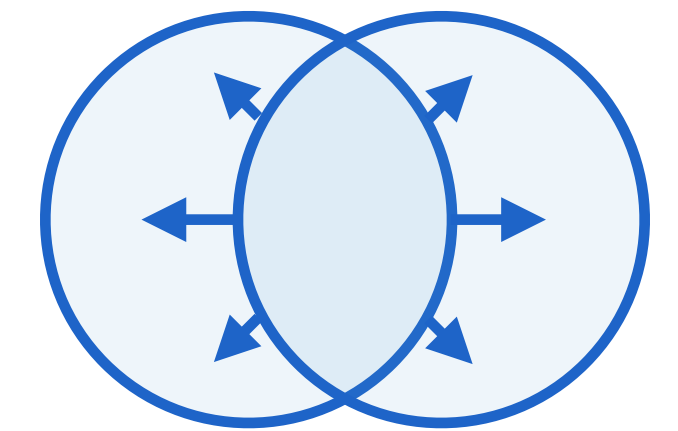
- Cooper-Frye freezeout

For NS limit w/o perturbations, cf Teaney, 2003

$$\frac{dN(p_{\perp}, \phi)}{p_{\perp} dp_{\perp} d\phi dy} = \frac{m_{\perp} \tau \Sigma}{(2\pi)^3} \left\{ \underbrace{2K_1(\hat{m}_{\perp}) + \frac{1}{12} [\hat{p}_{\perp}^2 K_1(\hat{m}_{\perp}) - 2\hat{m}_{\perp} K_2(\hat{m}_{\perp})]}_{F_0} \overset{\text{pressure anisotropy}}{\color{blue}A} + \text{perturbations} \right\}$$

- Collective expansion

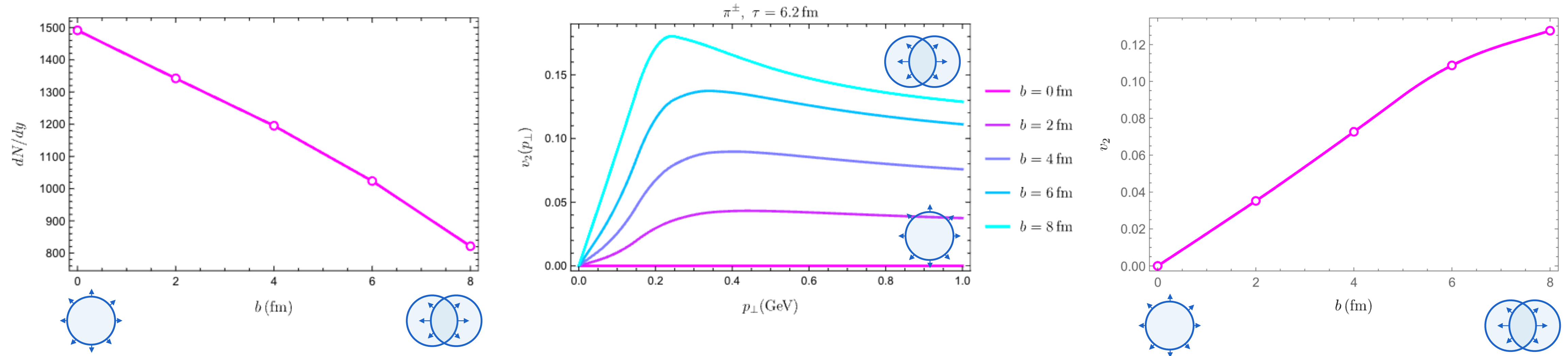
$$\frac{dN(p_{\perp}, \phi)}{p_{\perp} dp_{\perp} d\phi dy} = v_0(p_{\perp}) \left(1 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} 2v_n(p_{\perp}) \cos(n\phi) \right)$$



$$v_0(\hat{p}_{\perp}) \sim \frac{m_{\perp} \tau_f \Sigma}{(2\pi)^3} (F_0 + \text{perturbations}) \quad v_1(\hat{p}_{\perp}), v_2(\hat{p}_{\perp}) \sim \frac{\text{perturbations}}{4F_0 + \text{perturbations}}$$

Collectivity: numerical results

- Numerical results qualitatively *agree* with experiments.



Hard probe: jet

Jet-medium interaction

- The total energy of jet and fluid system is conserved:

$$\partial_\nu T^{\mu\nu} = \partial_\nu (T_{\text{attractor}}^{\mu\nu} + \delta T^{\mu\nu} + T_{\text{jet}}^{\mu\nu}) = 0$$

- Attractor provides a background for the jet-medium interactions:

$$\begin{cases} \partial_\nu T_{\text{attractor}}^{\mu\nu} = 0, \\ \partial_\nu \delta T^{\mu\nu} = - \partial_\nu T_{\text{jet}}^{\mu\nu} = J^\mu. \end{cases}$$



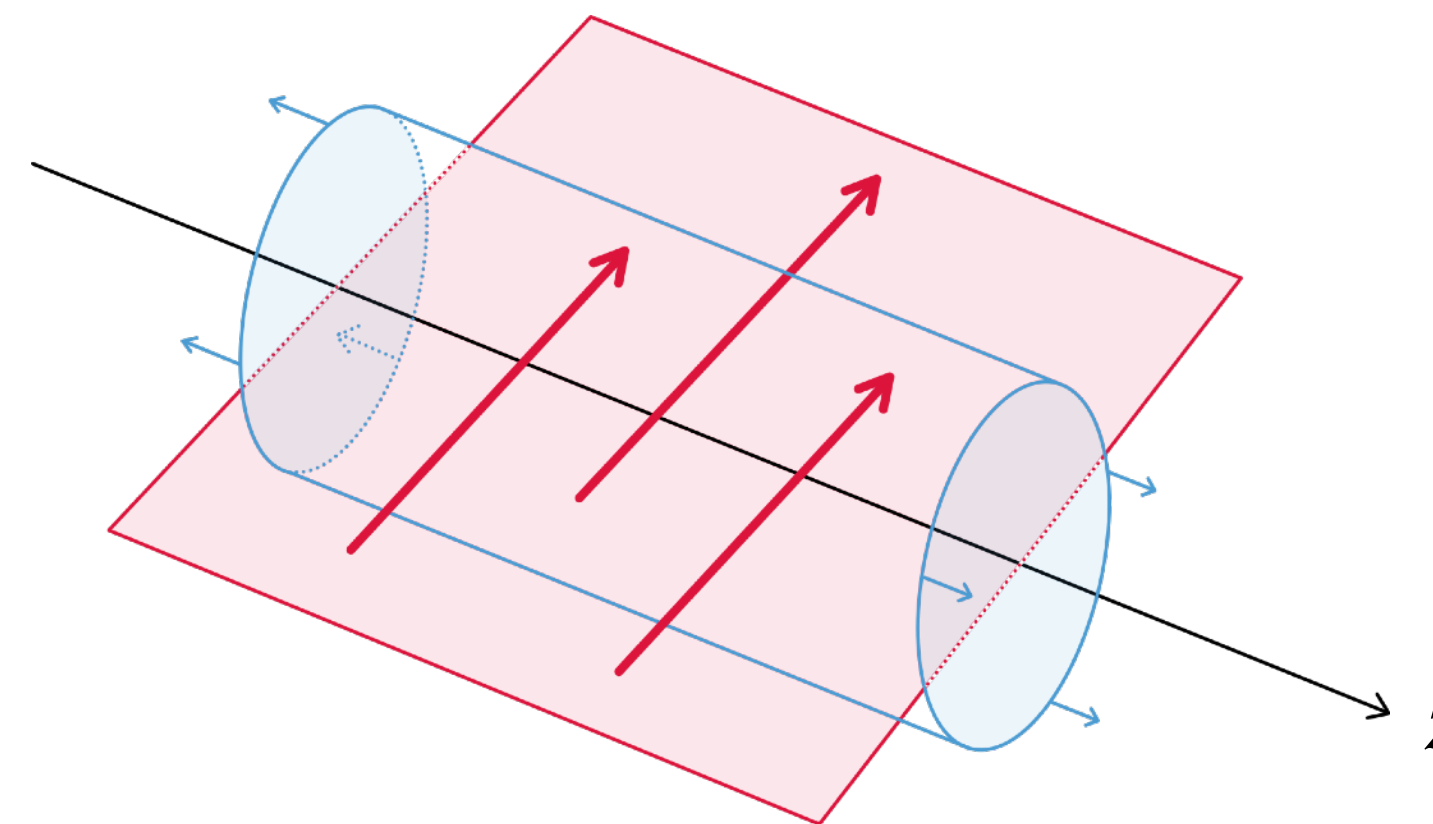
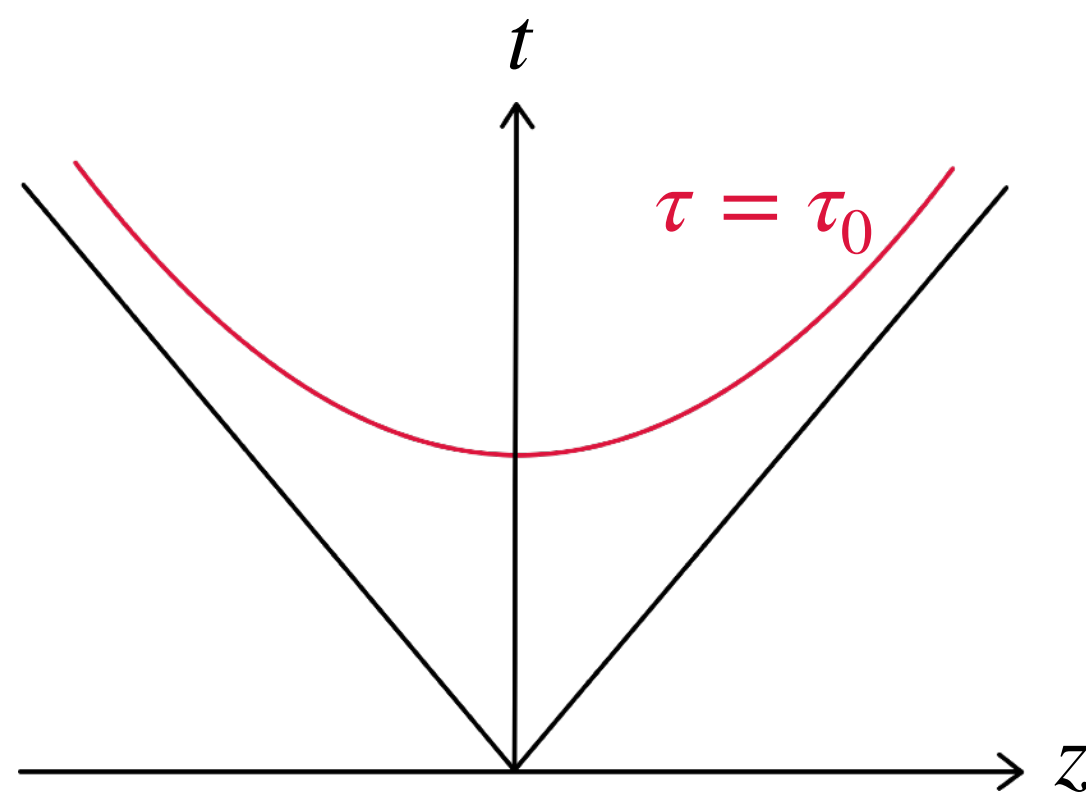
Jet in Trento's Adige River

Boost-invariant jet

- A knife-shape jet resulted from boost-invariant assumption, which

Yan et al, 1707.09519

- captures main effects qualitatively;
- characterizes the longest wavelength modes along rapidity.



- Jet source current:

$$J^\mu = f^\mu(t) n_{\text{jet}}(t, \mathbf{x})$$

effective drag force

spacetime distribution of source, e.g,

$$f^\mu(t) = \frac{dE}{dt} u_s^\mu$$

$$n_{\text{jet}}(t, \mathbf{x}) \sim \delta^{(2)}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_s(\tau))$$

Energy loss

- We assume the BBMG energy loss formalism

Betz, Gyulassy and Torrieri, 1102.5416

$$\frac{dE}{d\tau} = \kappa \left(\frac{E}{T} \right)^a (\tau T)^z T^2$$

κ : jet-medium coupling
 a : jet-energy dependence
 z : path-length dependence

model	(a, z)	applicable regime
Bethe-Heitler limit	(1, 0)	additive single scattering
N=4 SYM	(0, 0)	pQCD elastic, non-relativistic heavy quark
LPM factorization limit	(0, 1)	pQCD radiative, weakly coupled
AdS/CFT	(0, 2)	light quark, strongly coupled

- Energy loss formula may fall into BBMG classification in certain limit, e.g.,

$$\frac{dE}{d\tau} = \frac{4E_{\text{in}}\tau^2}{\pi\ell_{\text{stop}}^2\sqrt{\ell_{\text{stop}}^2 - \tau^2}} \sim (\tau T)^2 T^2 \longrightarrow (0,2) \text{ class}$$

Chesler et al, 1402.6756

$\ell_{\text{stop}} \gg \tau, R$
 (energetic partons / small systems)

Asymptotic jet solutions at late time

- Inhomogeneous EOM

$$\partial_\tau \phi_i(\tau, \mathbf{k}) = M_{ij} \phi_j(\tau, \mathbf{k}) + J_i(\tau, \mathbf{k})$$

- The late-time asymptotic solutions can be found by Wronskian:

$$\delta\phi(\tau, \mathbf{k}) = \sum_i C_i(k) \delta\phi_i(\tau, \mathbf{k}) + \delta\phi_p(\tau, \mathbf{k})$$

- The particular solutions have the universal *power-law* behavior, e.g.,

$$\delta T_p(\tau, \mathbf{k}) \sim i n_{\text{jet}}(\mathbf{k}) e^{-i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}_s(\tau)} \frac{\Gamma_T (\mathbf{v}_s \cdot \mathbf{k})^2 + (\mathbf{v}_s \times \mathbf{k})^2}{\mathbf{v}_s \cdot \mathbf{k} (\Gamma_L (\mathbf{v}_s \cdot \mathbf{k})^2 + (\mathbf{v}_s \times \mathbf{k})^2)} (\Lambda\tau)^\beta (1 + \mathcal{O}(\tau^{-1/3}))$$

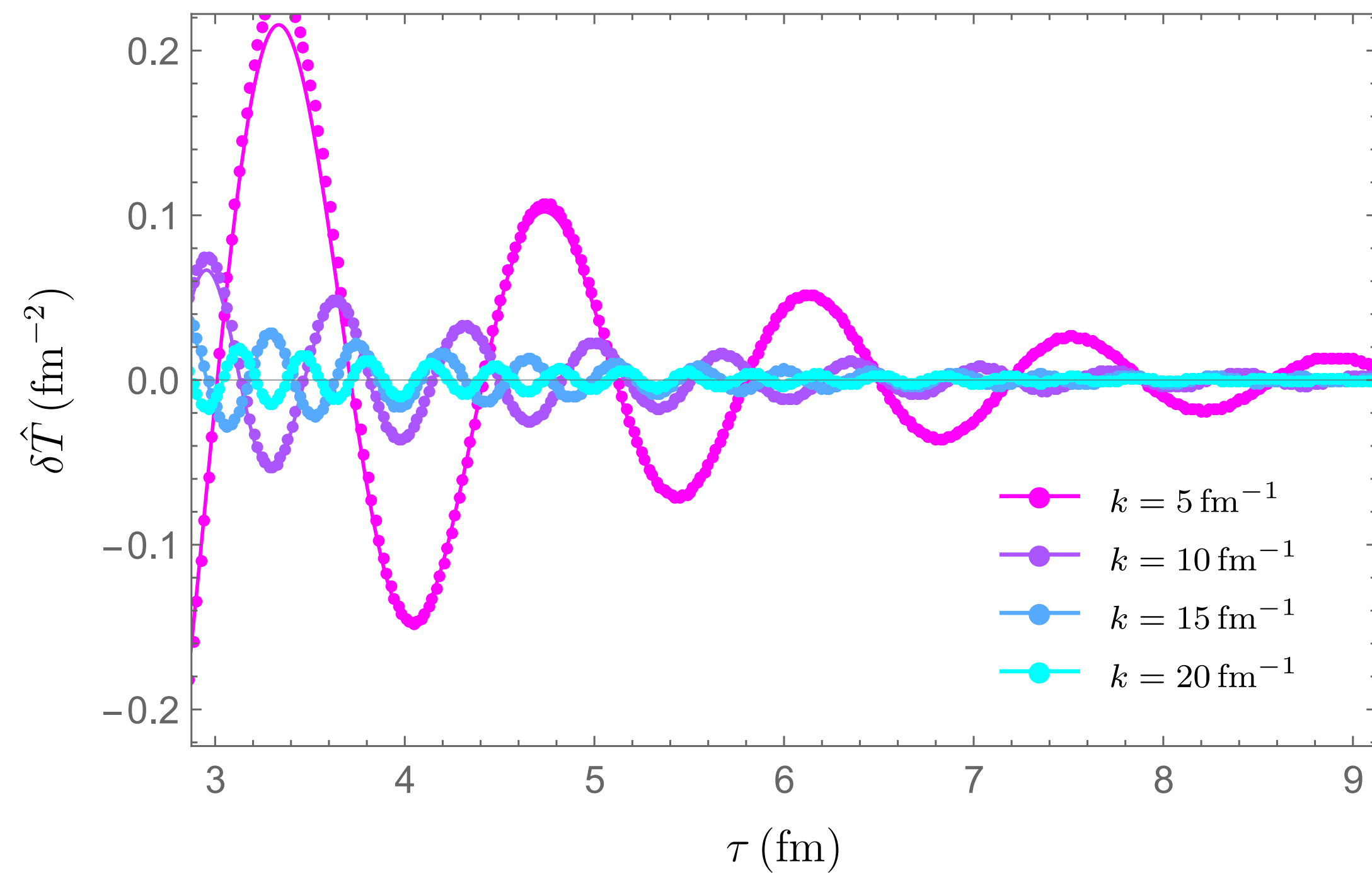
Kevin/Shock wave structure

$$\Gamma_L = 1 - \frac{v_s^2}{c^2}, \quad \Gamma_T = 1 - \frac{3v_s^2}{2\alpha^2}$$

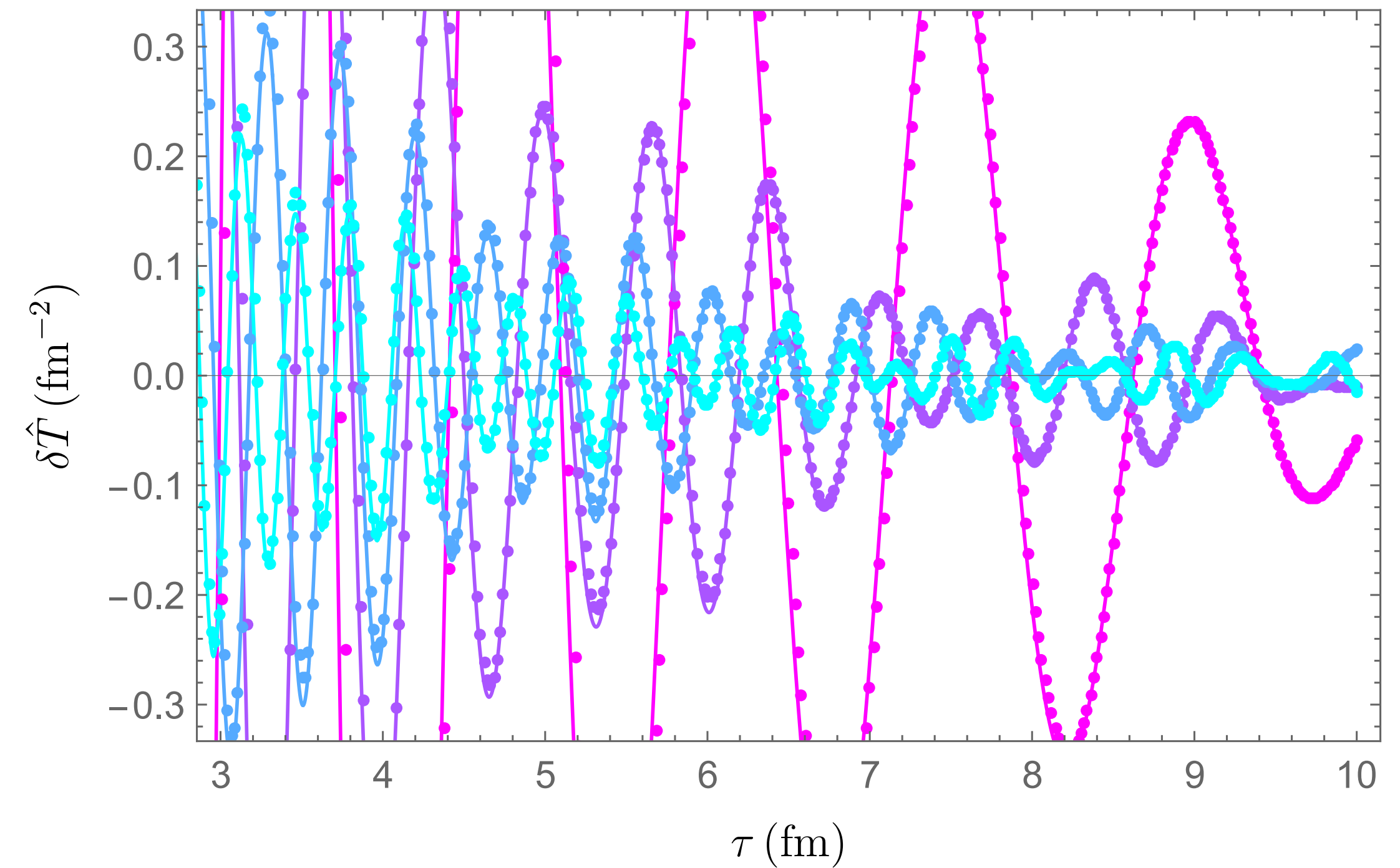
leading power-law exponents $\beta = -\frac{1}{3} \left(1 + \frac{2(a+z)}{a-1} \right)$

Matching to numerics

- The analytic solutions (solid curves) fit the numerics (discrete points) even at $\tau = 3$ fm (with the same initial conditions C_i 's).



w/o jet

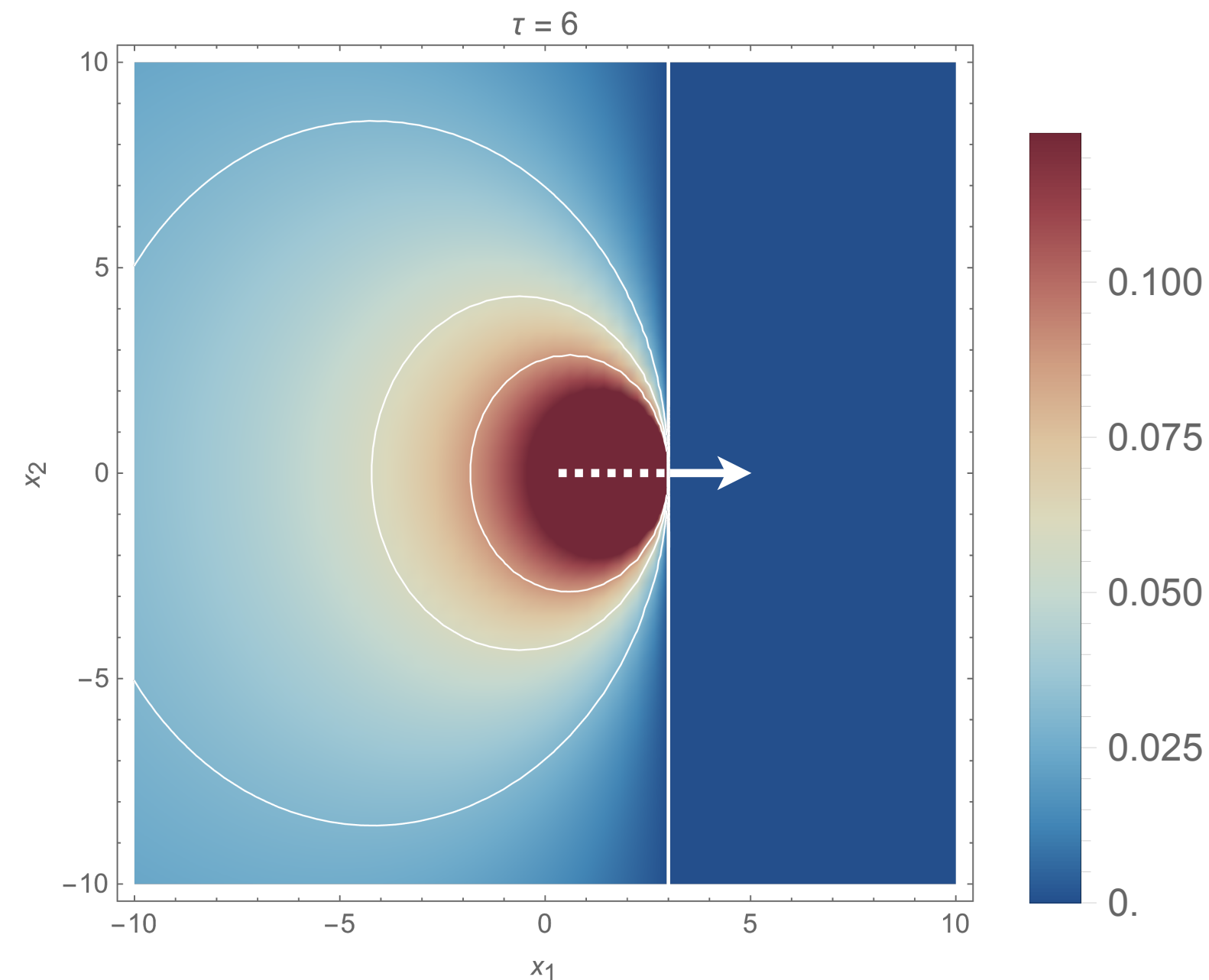


w/ jet

Jet wake: analytic results

- Transition from subsonic to supersonic wave via *analytic* inverse FT of δT_p .

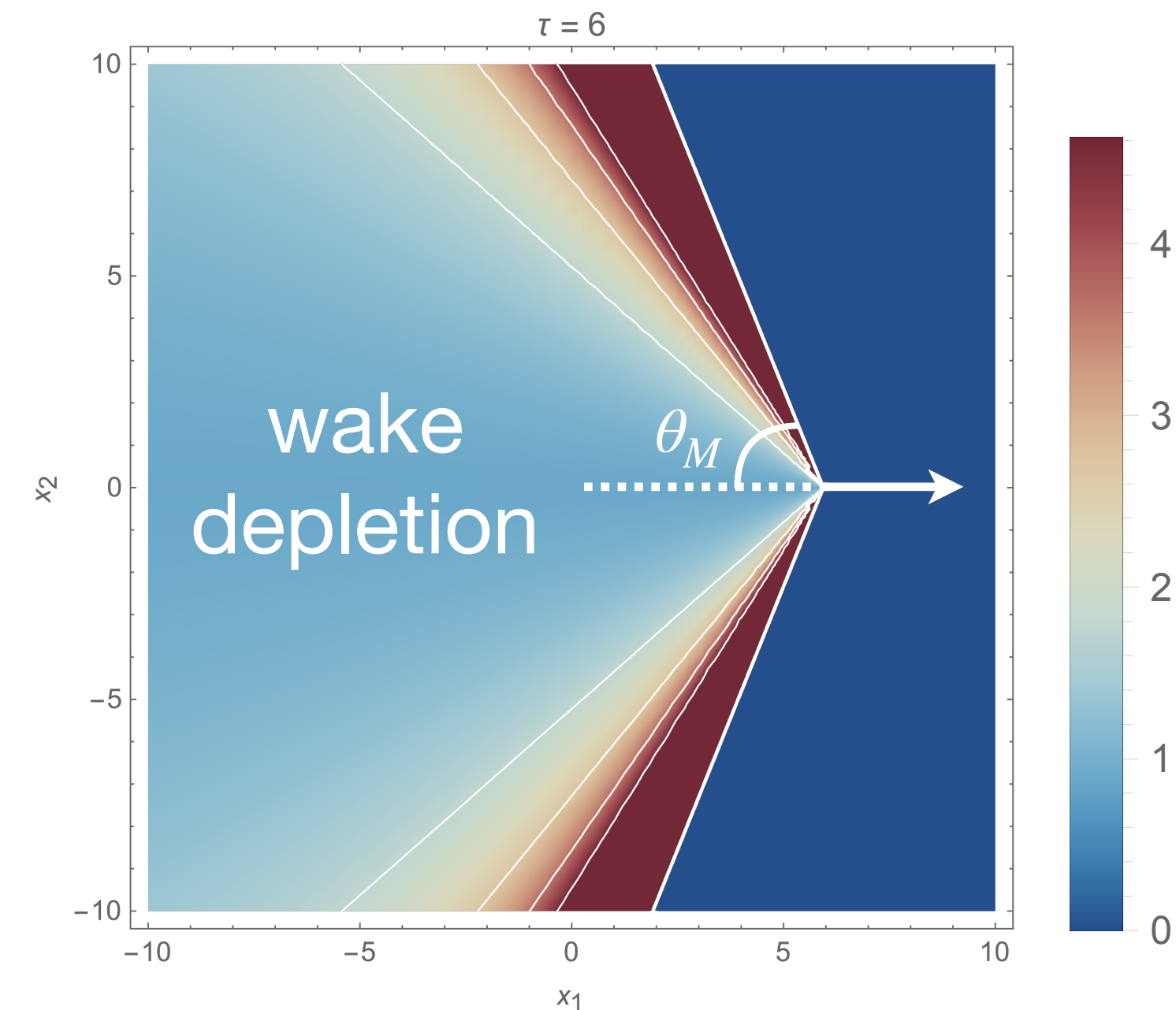
preliminary



Subsonic: $v_s = 0.50$

Kevin wave with Doppler effect

MIS speed of sound $c_\infty = \sqrt{(1 + 4\alpha^2)/3} \sim 0.92$ (cf conformal speed of sound $\sqrt{1/3} \sim 0.58$)

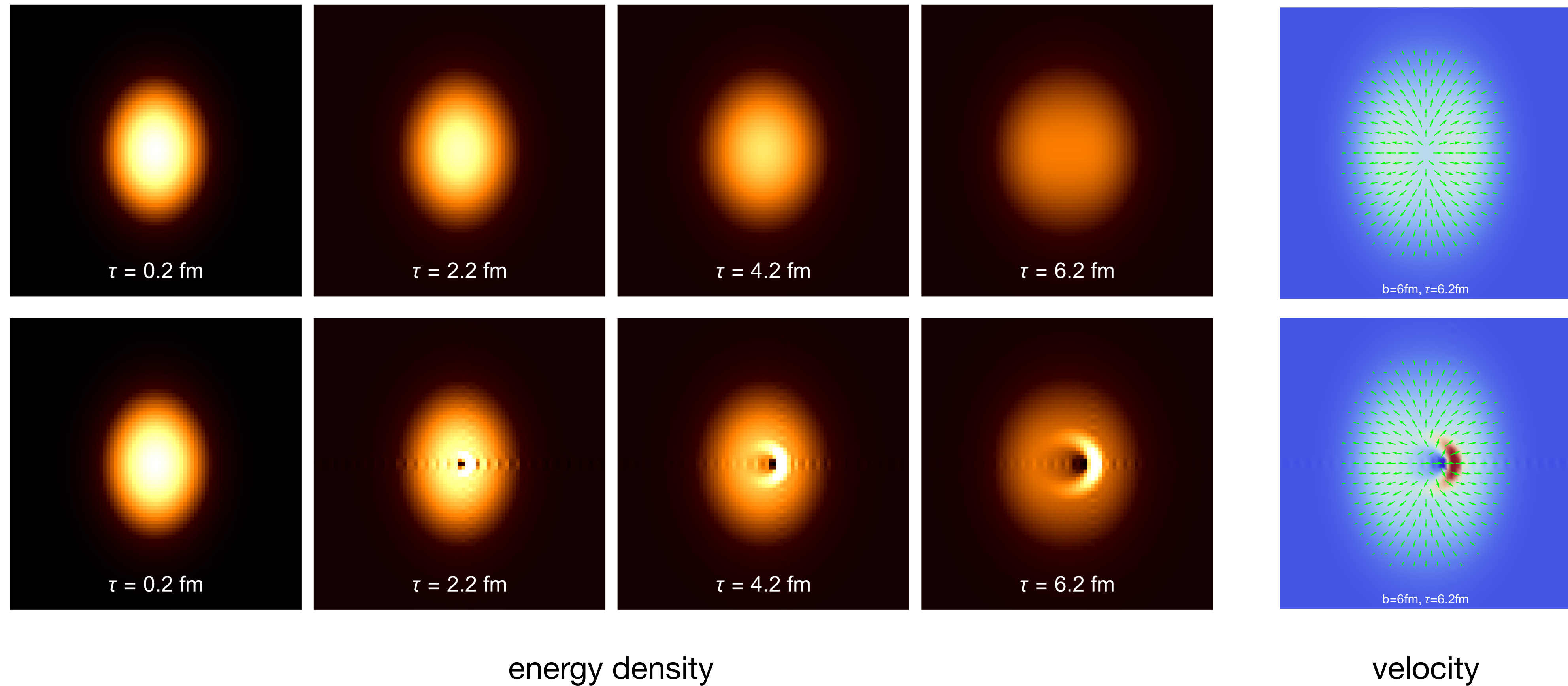


Supersonic: $v_s = 0.99$

Shock wave with Mach cone angle
 $\arcsin \theta_M = \arcsin c_\infty / v_s \sim 68^\circ$

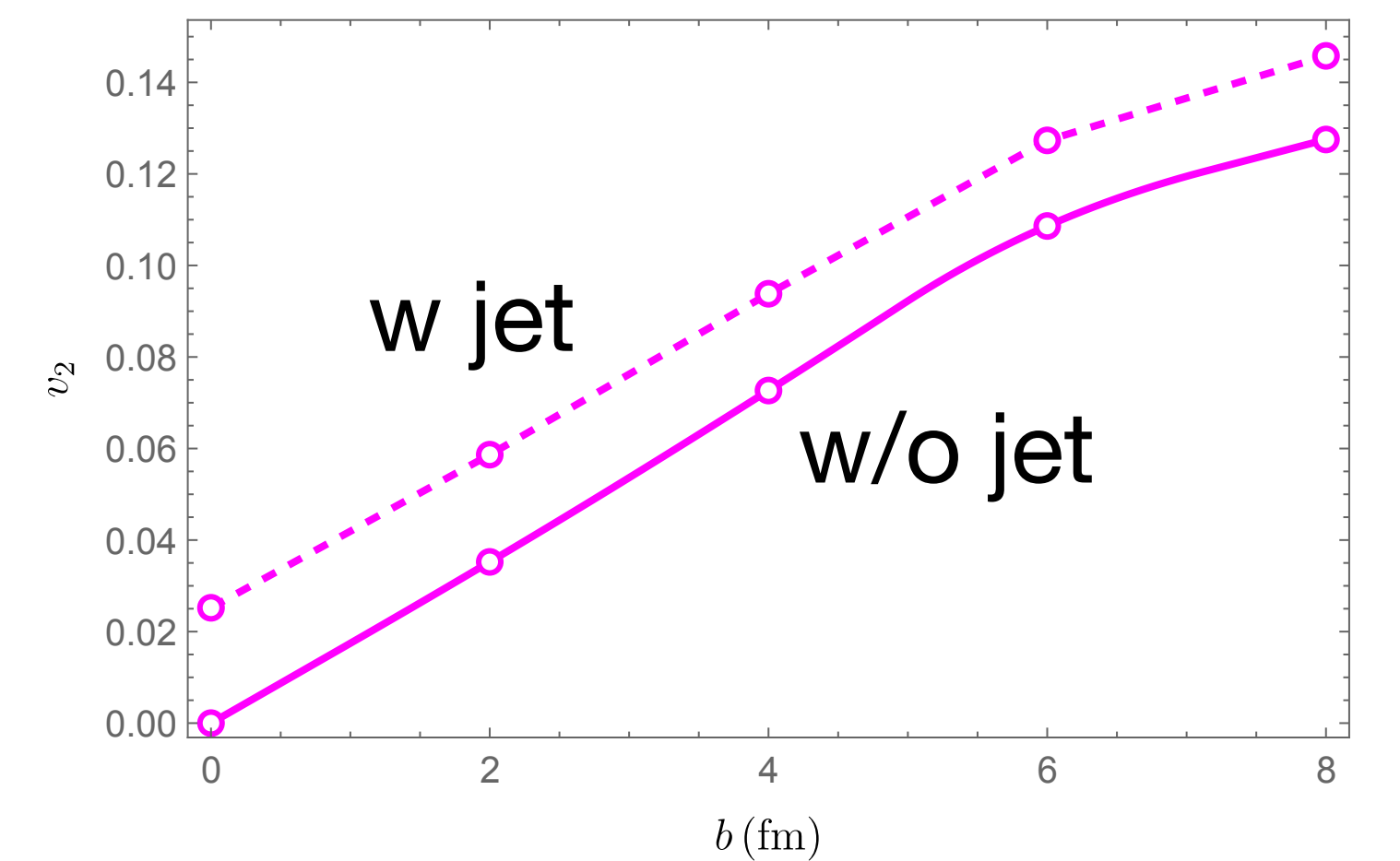
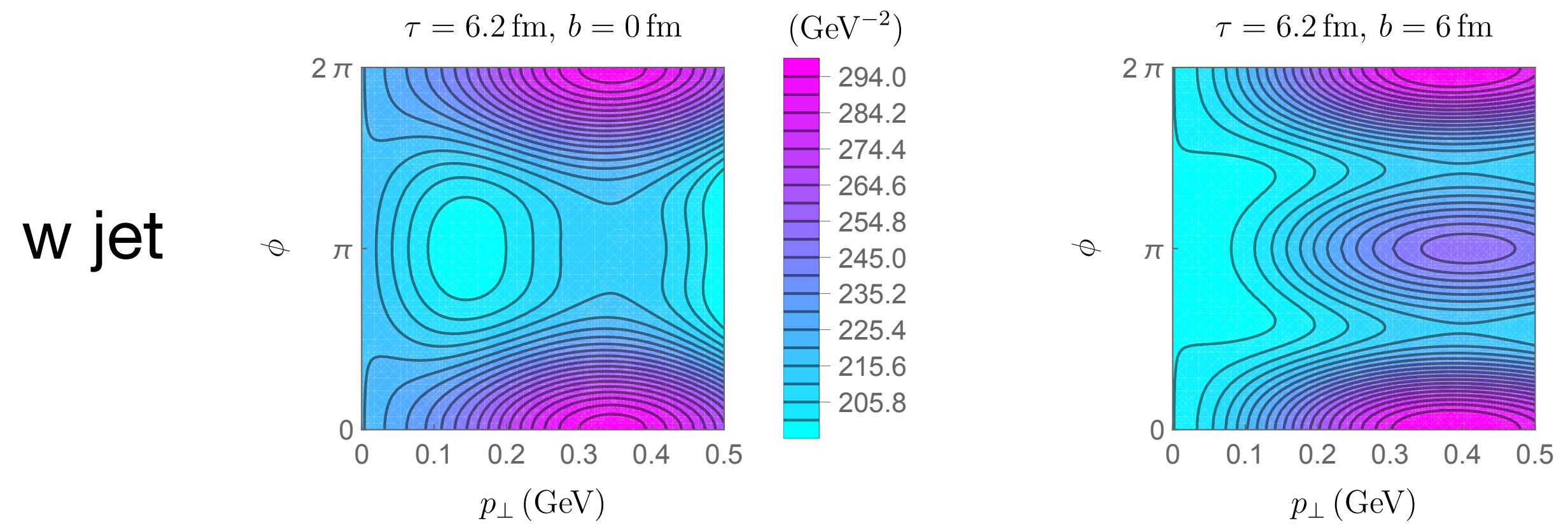
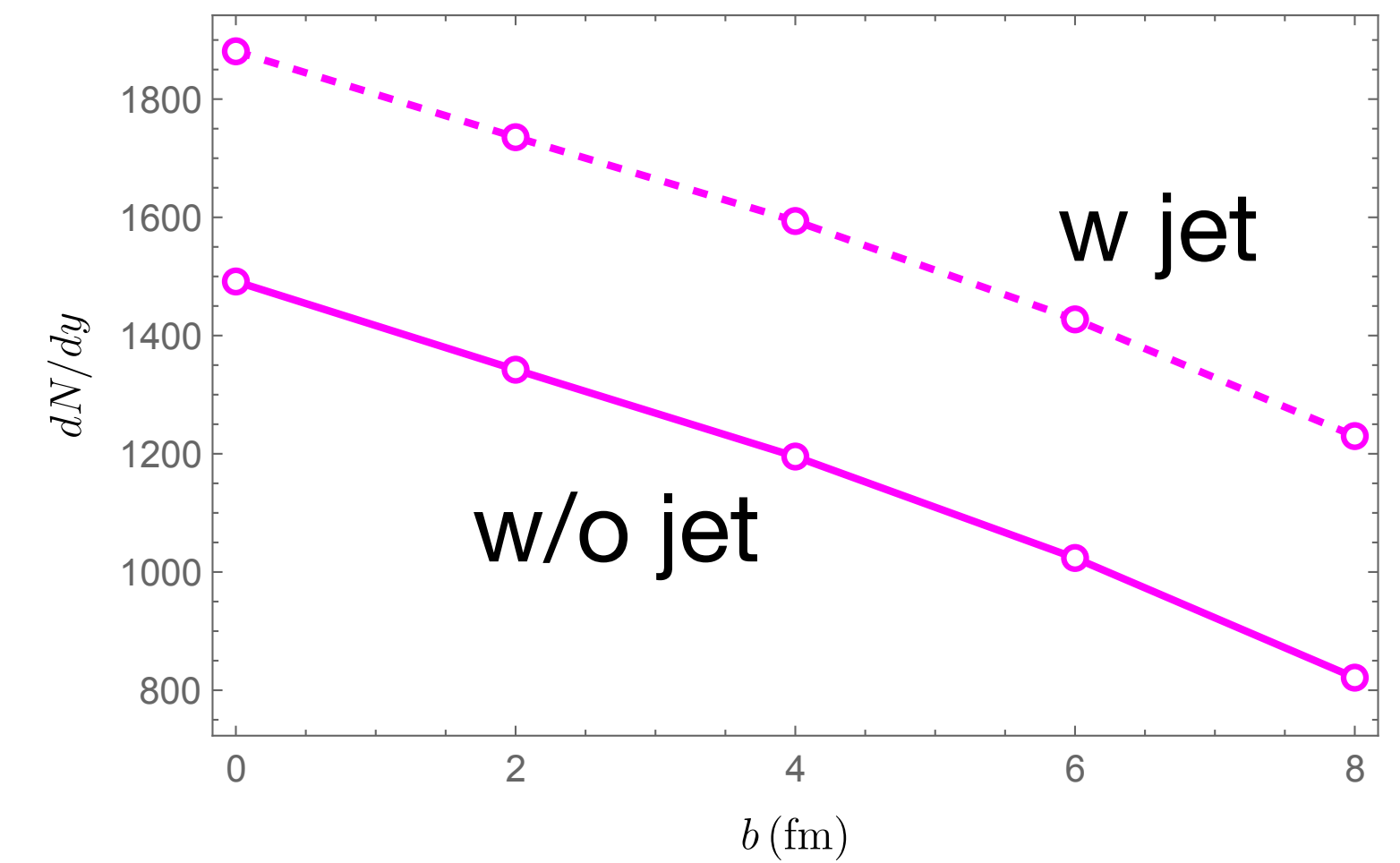
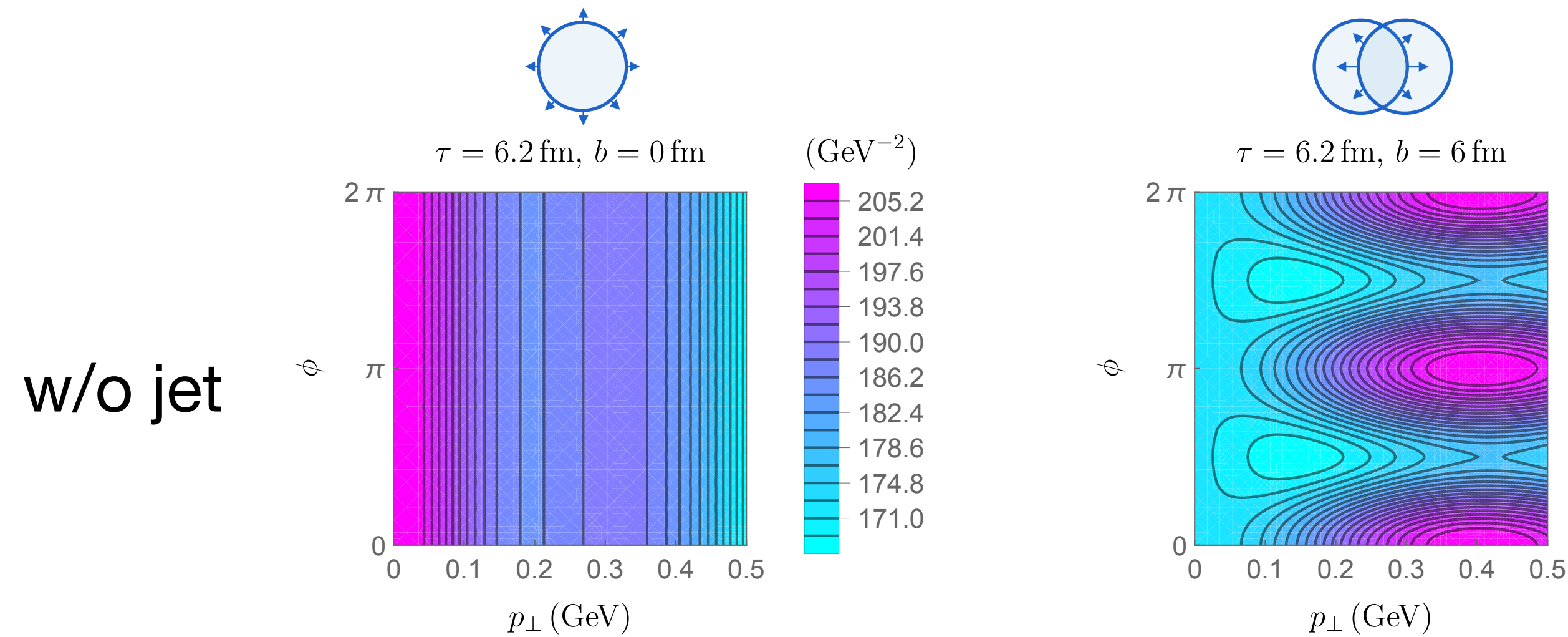
Jet wake: numerical results

- The transverse tomography *with background*.



Collectivity with jet: multiplicities

- Comparison of flow observables without jet (solid) and with jet (dashed)



multiplicity distribution

Disentangle the jet wake from QGP medium?

- Multiplicity subtracted by background

preliminary

$$\frac{d\Delta N(\phi)}{d\phi dy} \equiv \frac{dN(\phi)}{d\phi dy} - \frac{dN}{2\pi dy} = \frac{dN}{2\pi dy} \Sigma \tau_{fo} f(T_{fo}, m) \langle \delta\pi_{ii} \rangle \cos(2\phi)$$

\downarrow
Isotropic background

$$\langle \delta\pi_{ii} \rangle \sim \tau^\beta$$
$$\beta = -\frac{1}{3} \left(1 + \frac{2(a+z)}{a-1} \right)$$

which suggests at high collision energies, approximately

$$\frac{d\Delta N(\phi)}{d\phi dy} / \frac{dN}{2\pi dy} \sim \left[\tau_{fo}(\sqrt{s}) \right]^{1+\beta}$$

Can the power-law behavior be measurable in experiments?

Recap

- Hydro attractors provide a background for theoretical analysis for observables.
- Soft modes are dominated by non-perturbative transseries.
- Jet wakes dominate at late time; shock wave and energy loss may be measurable.

Outlook

- More realistic setup: e.g., with rapidity dependence;
- Other contexts: e.g., cold quantum gases, cosmology, stochastic sources;
- Complementary methods: e.g., kinetic theory, holography, top-down approaches.

Thank You