

1 **The second parameter regime of the viscosity for quasi-steady state of sawtooth**
2 **in Tokamaks**

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9 **Abstract:**

10 The influence of the viscosity and the plasma beta on dynamics of sawtooth
11 oscillations in Tokamaks is systematically conducted with the three-dimensional,
12 toroidal, and compressible MHD code CLT. It is found that there are two parameter
13 regimes of the viscosity for achieving a steady-state. With sufficiently high or low
14 viscosity, the system eventually evolves into a steady-state. In the intermediate regime
15 of the viscosity, the sawtooth exhibits a normal sawtooth oscillation. Since present
16 Tokamaks operate in the very low viscosity regime, the quasi-steady state in the low
17 viscosity and high plasma beta is more relevant to experimental conditions. In the
18 steady-state, the mode structure is non-axisymmetric with the $m/n=1/1$ helicity, and
19 the safety factor in the core becomes flattened, which may be related to the stationary
20 state observed in DIII-D and some other Tokamaks. This finding of the steady-state in
21 the low viscosity and high plasma beta regime might be helpful for future ITER
22 steady-state operations.

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I. Introduction

Sawtooth is a periodic relaxation of the core plasma temperature. It is a common phenomenon for the magnetic confinement fusion device, whose central safety factor falls below one. [1-6] There are at least three different kinds of sawtooth oscillations, i.e., normal sawtooth, [1, 7] small sawtooth, [8] and compound sawtooth. [9] The normal sawtooth is dangerous for Tokamak operations as it can not only flatten center plasma temperature but also trigger neo-classical tearing modes in nearby resonant surfaces. [10-12]. It results in a significant reduction of energy confinement. However, the small sawtooth is less likely to trigger neo-classical tearing modes [13], and the temperature reduction caused by the small sawtooth crash is tolerable for the fusion reactor. [14] Besides, the small sawtooth is beneficial in preventing impurity accumulation in the core region. Consequently, a sawtooth crash with a small amplitude has been adopted in future fusion reactors. [15]

It is widely known that sawtooth behavior closely relates to the heating power of Tokamaks. In early small Tokamaks, the heating power is mainly from Ohm heating, and the sawtooth occurred in such Tokamaks is the normal sawtooth. [1] In advanced Tokamaks, there are many auxiliary heating methods, such as ion cyclotron resonance heating (ICRH), neutral beam injection (NBI), electron cyclotron resonance heating (ECRH), and lower hybrid current drive (LHCD). [6, 16-25] With additional heating power, the sawtooth period can be quite different from that, in which Ohm heating is dominant. One approach to control the sawtooth is intentionally decreasing the sawtooth period to achieve the small sawtooth or even a stationary state through additional heating. [26]

Due to the importance of sawtooth control, efforts have been made to investigate small-amplitude sawtooth and steady-state of sawtooth. [26-43] But the mechanism of the steady-state is still not clear, and it is worthy of studying further. A systematical simulation study with different plasma beta and viscosities is carried out to investigate the dynamics of sawtooth oscillations. It is found that a normal sawtooth oscillation takes place only in the intermediate parameter regime of the viscosity. With a

relatively high or low viscosity, the sawtooth oscillation quickly evolves into the small sawtooth or steady-state. In the low viscosity regime, the steady-state mainly results from the balance between the magnetic flux pumped by the dynamo effect and the flux carried away by non-axisymmetric plasma flow. It is also found that the intermediate regime of the viscosity becomes border with decreasing the thermal plasma beta.

In present experiments with a higher plasma beta and a lower viscosity (such as DIII-D[26], MAST[44], JET[37] and JT-60U[45]), it is more likely to achieve the steady-state with low viscosity. In the steady-state, the non-axisymmetric mode structure in the core region has the $m/n=1/1$ helicity, and with $q \approx 1$ in the core region, which is also consistent with that observed in DIII-D.[26]

II. Model description

In dimensionless units, the compressible resistive MHD equations used in CLT[46-49] is given as follows:

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} = -\nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v}) + \nabla \cdot [D \nabla (\rho)] \quad , (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial p}{\partial t} = -\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla p - \Gamma p \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} + \nabla \cdot [\kappa_{\perp} \nabla (p - p_0)] + \nabla \cdot [\kappa_{\parallel} \nabla_{\parallel} p] \quad , (2)$$

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} = -\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla \mathbf{v} + (\mathbf{J} \times \mathbf{B} - \nabla p) / \rho + \nabla \cdot [\nu \nabla (\mathbf{v})] \quad , (3)$$

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = -\nabla \times \mathbf{E} \quad , (4)$$

$$\mathbf{E} = -\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B} + \eta (\mathbf{J} - \mathbf{J}_0) \quad , (5)$$

$$\mathbf{J} = \nabla \times \mathbf{B} \quad , (6)$$

where ρ , p , \mathbf{v} , \mathbf{B} , \mathbf{E} , and \mathbf{J} denote the plasma density, the plasma pressure, the electron pressure, the velocity, the magnetic field, the electric field, and the current density, respectively. The subscript “0” denotes the initial equilibrium quantities. $\Gamma (= 5/3)$ is the ratio of specific heat of plasma. η , D , κ_{\perp} , κ_{\parallel} , and ν are resistivity, diffusion coefficient, perpendicular and parallel thermal conductivity, and viscosity,

respectively. The variables are normalized as follows: $\mathbf{B}/B_0 \rightarrow \mathbf{B}$, $\mathbf{x}/a \rightarrow \mathbf{x}$, $\rho/\rho_0 \rightarrow \rho$, $\mathbf{v}/v_A \rightarrow \mathbf{v}$, $t/t_A \rightarrow t$, $p/(B_0^2/\mu_0) \rightarrow p$, $\mathbf{J}/(B_0/\mu_0 a) \rightarrow \mathbf{J}$, and $\mathbf{E}/(v_A B_0) \rightarrow \mathbf{E}$, where a is the minor radius, $v_A = B_0/\sqrt{\mu_0 \rho_0}$ is the Alfvén speed, and $t_A = a/v_A$ is the Alfvén time. B_0 and ρ_0 are the initial magnetic field and plasma density at the magnetic axis, respectively. The resistivity η , the diffusion coefficient D , the perpendicular and parallel thermal conductivity κ_\perp and κ_\parallel , and the viscosity ν are normalized as follows: $\eta/(\mu_0 a^2/t_A) \rightarrow \eta$, $D/(a^2/t_A) \rightarrow D$, $\kappa_\perp/(a^2/t_A) \rightarrow \kappa_\perp$, $\kappa_\parallel/(a^2/t_A) \rightarrow \kappa_\parallel$, and $\nu/(a^2/t_A) \rightarrow \nu$, respectively. In CLT, $\eta(\mathbf{J}-\mathbf{J}_0)$ in eq. (5) acts as the magnetic pump [26] to recover the magnetic flux and produce periodic sawtooth oscillations.

III. Simulation results

A. Sawtooth oscillations with High β

A toroidal Tokamak configuration with aspect ratio $R_0/a = 4/1$ is chosen in our simulations. The initial q and pressure profiles are shown in Figure 1. The most unstable mode in the system is the $m/n=1/1$ resistive kink mode instability, where m and n are the poloidal and toroidal mode numbers, respectively. The initial equilibrium is obtained from the NOVA code. [50] The grids used in the present paper are $256 \times 32 \times 256$ (R, ϕ, Z). The convergence of the code has been ensured by varying both the resolutions of time and space. In this subsection, we carry out different viscosities: $\nu_0=1.0 \times 10^{-3}$, $\nu_0=1.0 \times 10^{-4}$, $\nu_0=2.0 \times 10^{-5}$, and $\nu_0=6.0 \times 10^{-6}$ to investigate how the viscosity plays role on dynamics of sawtooth oscillations with high plasma beta, $\beta \sim 3.8\%$. The resistivity $\eta = 2.5 \times 10^{-6}$ is chosen only for saving computational time. Other parameters are chosen to be $D = 1.0 \times 10^{-4}$, $\kappa_\perp = 2.0 \times 10^{-5}$, and $\kappa_\parallel = 5 \times 10^{-2}$.

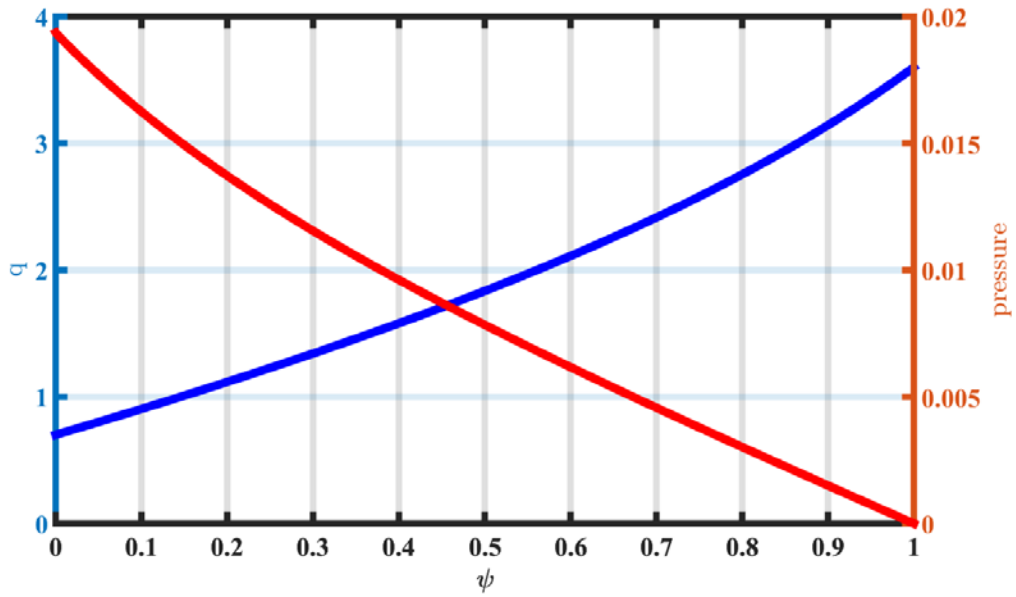


Figure 1 Initial safety factor q and pressure profiles.

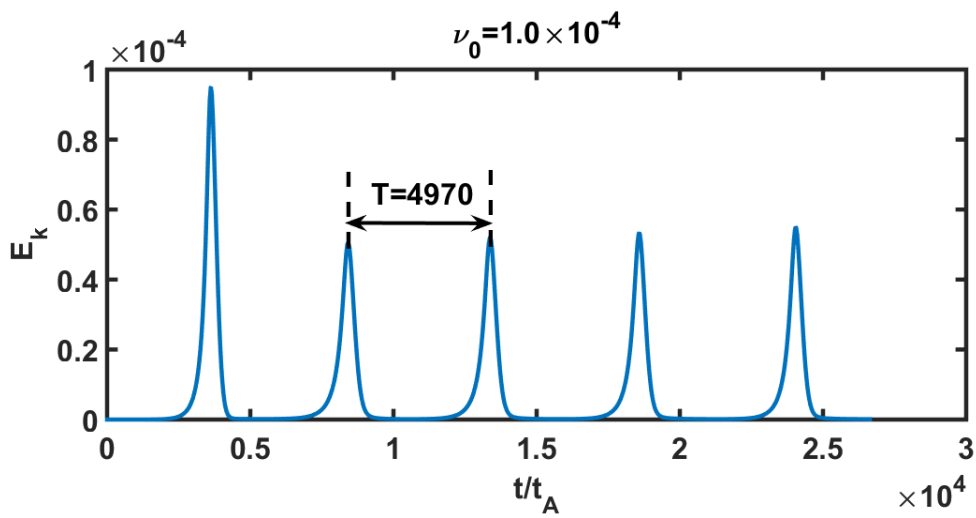


Figure 2 Evolution of the kinetic energy with $\nu_0=1.0 \times 10^{-4}$. The period of the normal sawtooth oscillation is $T \sim 4970 t_A$.

The evolution of kinetic energy for the case with $\nu_0=1.0 \times 10^{-4}$ is shown in Figure 2. As we can see, the oscillation exhibits the normal sawtooth oscillation with

the period $T \sim 4970t_A$. The evolution of the plasma pressure profile along $Z=0$ and $\varphi = 0$ is shown in Figure 3. The pressure profile also exhibits periodic oscillations with the period $T \sim 4970t_A$. Since the normal sawtooth has been intensively investigated in past decades, [51, 52] we will not discuss the normal sawtooth in detail in the present paper.

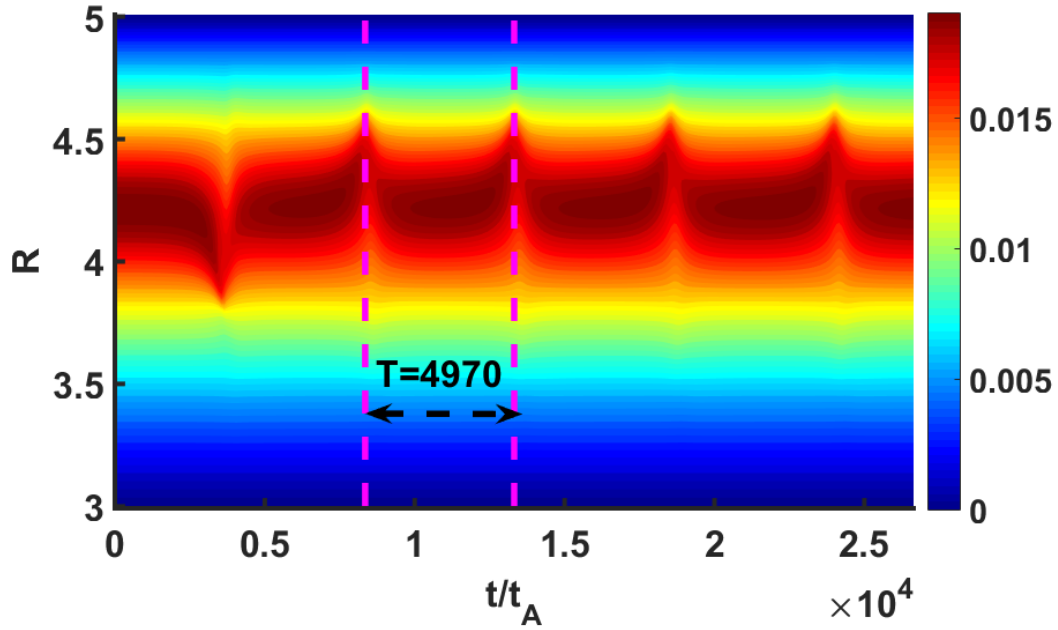


Figure 3 Evolution of the plasma pressure profile along $Z=0$ and $\varphi = 0$. The pressure profile exhibits periodic oscillations with the period $T \sim 4970t_A$.

However, with lower viscosity, the sawtooth could turn into a small sawtooth oscillation. The evolutions of the kinetic energy and the pressure profile for the case with $\nu_0 = 2.0 \times 10^{-5}$ are shown in Figures 4 and 5, respectively. It indicates that the period of the small sawtooth oscillations is reduced to $T \sim 1300t_A$. The pressure of the hot core is much lower during the small sawtooth than the normal sawtooth, which suggests that, after the first massive pressure crash, the system is never fully recovered during the small sawtooth (Figure 5) while it is almost fully recovered during the normal sawtooth (Figure 3). Such kind of behavior could also be seen from the Poincare plots of magnetic fields (Figure 6 a and b). During the small

sawtooth, the $m/n=1/1$ magnetic island does not fill up the whole mixed region, while, it does in the normal sawtooth. During the small sawtooth oscillations, the island only periodically increases and decreases.

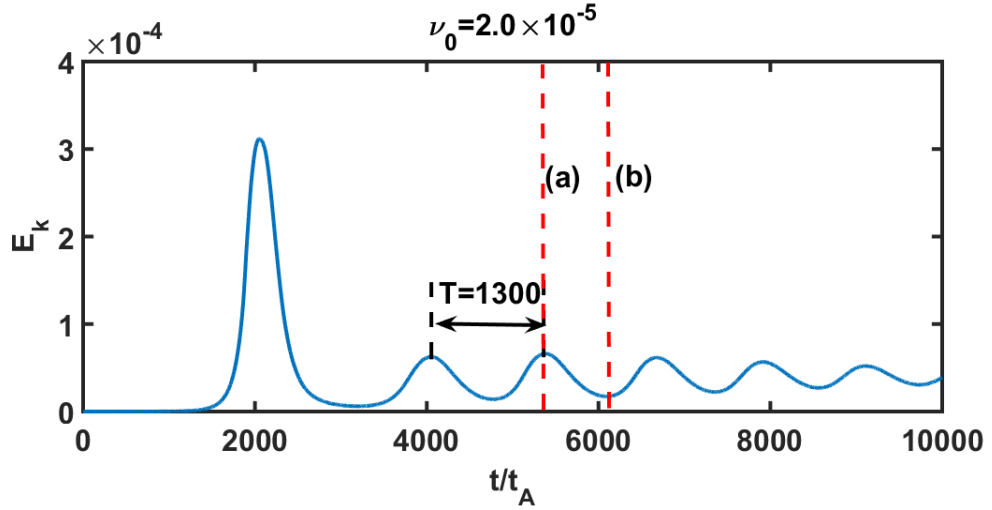


Figure 4 Evolution of the kinetic energy with $\nu_0=2.0\times 10^{-5}$. The sawtooth shows small oscillations with a shorter period $T\sim 1300t_A$. The peak time (a) $t = 5328t_A$ and the end time (b) $t = 6127t_A$ of the third cycle are labeled with vertical red dash lines.

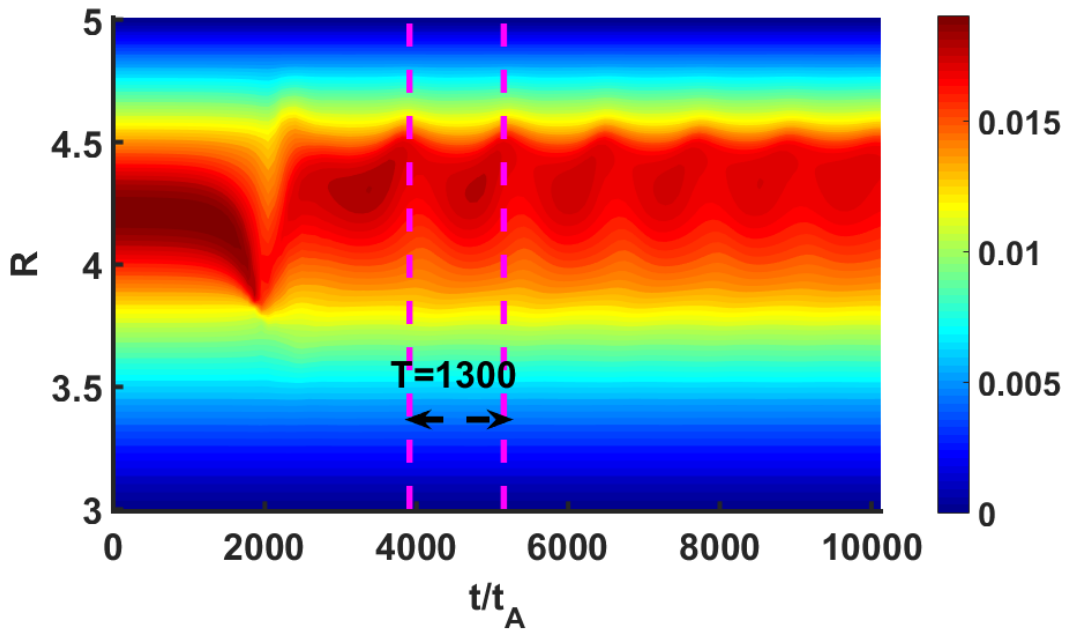


Figure 5 Evolution of the pressure profile at $Z=0$ with $\nu_0=2.0\times 10^{-5}$. It is clear that, after the first crash, the pressure of the hot core is much lower for the small sawtooth

than for the normal sawtooth, which suggests that the system is not able to fully recover during the small sawtooth.

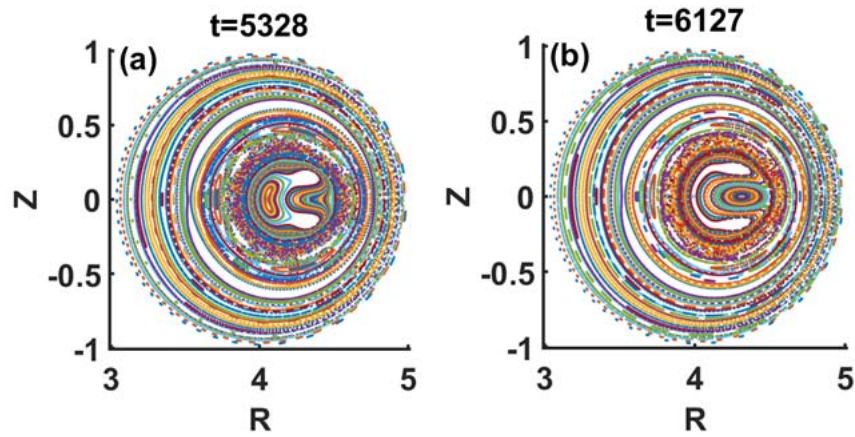


Figure 6 Poincaré plots of magnetic fields at (a) $t = 5328t_A$ and (b) $t = 6127t_A$ for the small sawtooth. The $m/n=1/1$ magnetic island is not fully developed as it does in the normal sawtooth oscillation.

With sufficiently low viscosity $\nu_0=6.0 \times 10^{-6}$, the system evolves into a steady-state. As shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8, the kinetic energy and the pressure profile almost remain unchanged after $t = 6000t_A$, which means that the system could self-consistently evolve into the steady-state. The Poincaré plots in the steady-state are shown in Figure 9. In the final stage, the $m/n=1/1$ magnetic island occupies a large region, and the system reaches the steady-state with non-asymmetric magnetic field, which is similar to the hybrid scenario which is often observed in many experiments. [26, 35, 44, 45, 53, 54] The small sawtooth and steady-state presented in the paper are similar to the results from M3D-C1.[27, 28]

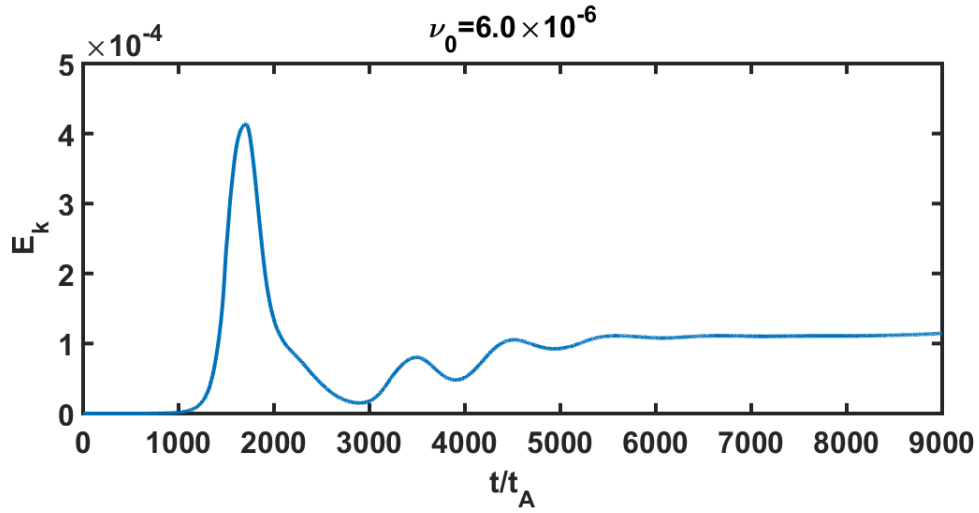


Figure 7 Evolution of kinetic energy of the case with $\nu_0=6.0 \times 10^{-6}$. After the first crash, the system evolves into a stationary state, and the kinetic energy almost remains unchanged after $t = 6000t_A$.

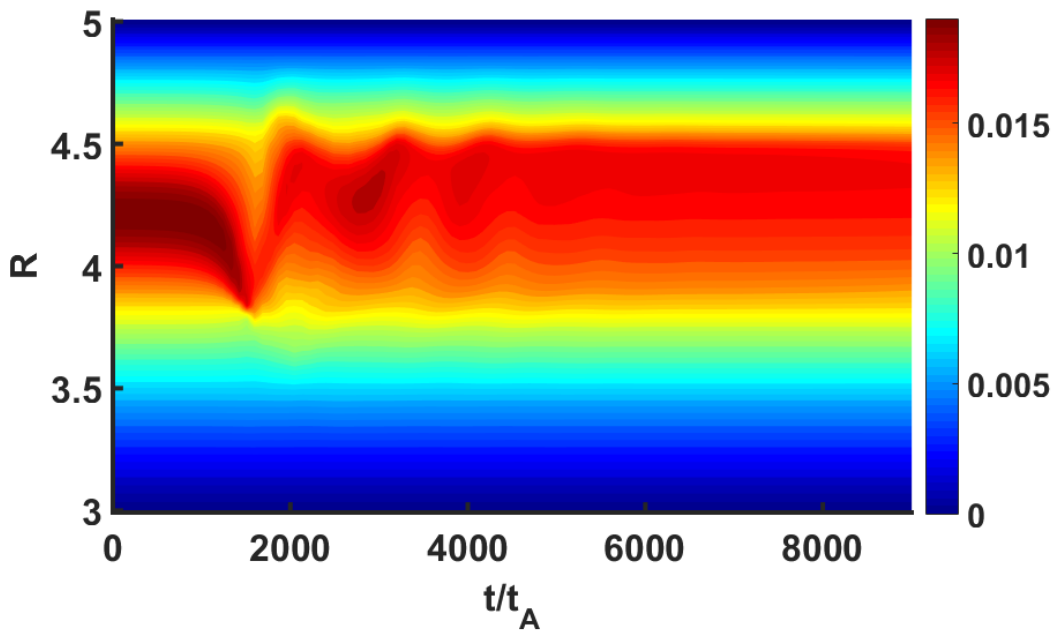


Figure 8 Evolution of pressure profile at $Z=0$ with $\nu_0=6.0 \times 10^{-6}$. After $t = 6000t_A$, the pressure profile almost remains unchanged.

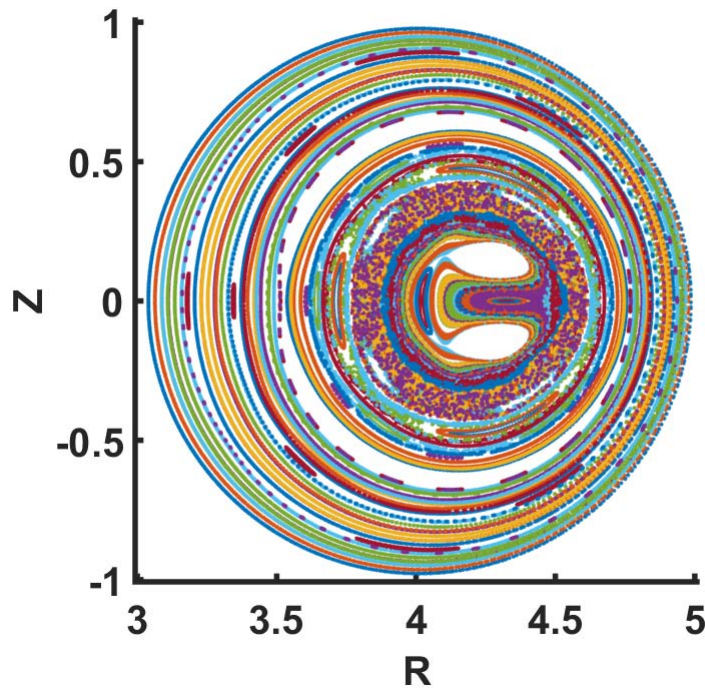


Figure 9 Poincaré plots in the steady-state of sawtooth oscillations with low viscosity ($\nu_0=6.0\times 10^{-6}$).

When we choose an extremely high viscosity, $\nu_0=1.0\times 10^{-3}$, it is found that the oscillation could also gradually evolves into a steady-state, as shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11. The kinetic energy and the pressure profiles remain almost unchanged after $t = 25000t_A$. The Poincaré plots of the magnetic field at the steady-state stage is shown in Figure 12.

From the simulation results given in the subsection, it indicates that the system can both turn into the steady-state with relatively high or low viscosity. The normal sawtooth oscillation can only take place in the intermediate viscosity regime.

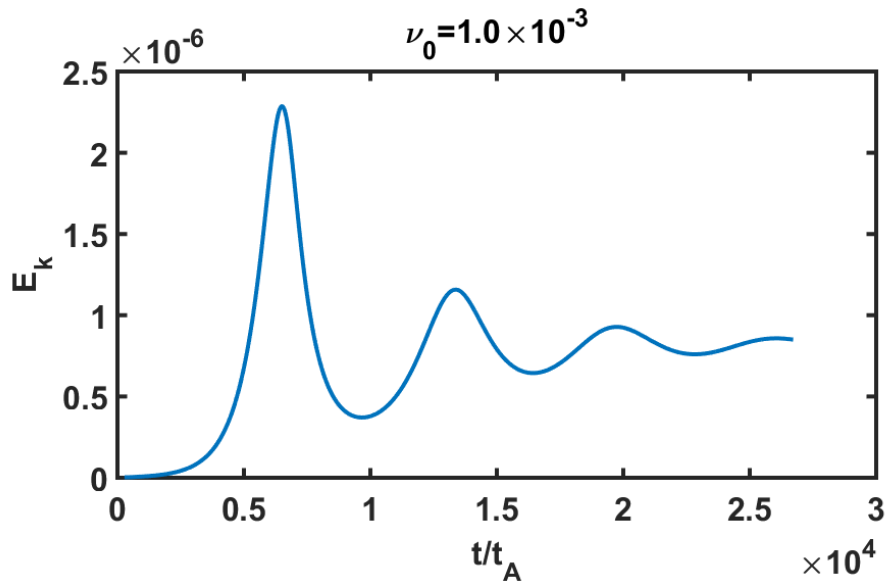


Figure 10 Evolution of the kinetic energy with $\nu_0 = 1.0 \times 10^{-3}$. After several cycles, the system eventually evolves into a stationary state and the kinetic energy almost remains unchanged after $t = 25000t_A$.

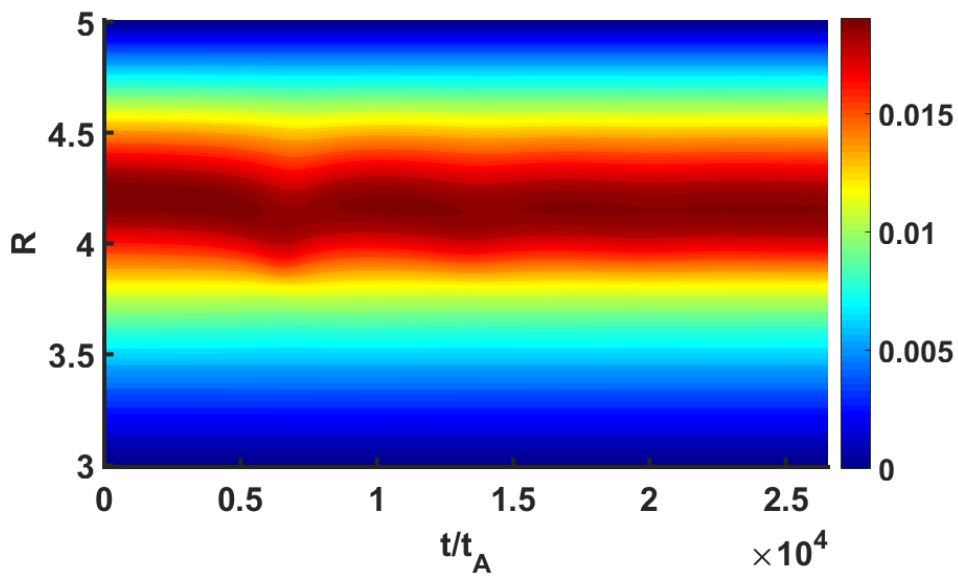


Figure 11 Evolution of the pressure profile at $Z=0$ with $\nu_0 = 1.0 \times 10^{-3}$. After $t = 25000t_A$, the pressure profile almost remains unchanged.

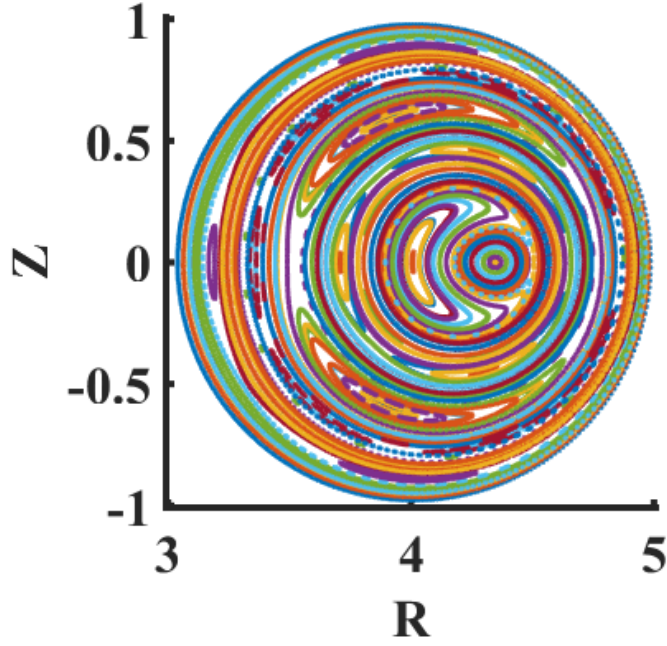


Figure 12 Poincaré plots in the steady-state of sawtooth oscillations with high viscosity ($\nu_0=1.0\times 10^{-3}$).

B. Sawtooth oscillations with low β

It should be noted that Shen et al. [29] only presented the sawtooth behavior in the regime of the viscosity $\nu \geq 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$ with a low plasma beta, $\beta = 0.2\%$. Their results indicate that the system exhibits a normal sawtooth oscillation with the lower viscosity while the sawtooth eventually evolves into a steady-state with the higher viscosity. Therefore, we carry out a series of simulations with a broader parameter regime of the viscosity and the same plasma beta, $\beta = 0.2\%$ to check whether the system could turn into the steady-state with sufficient low viscosity. Other parameters and the initial profiles are the same as in Section III. A. The evolutions of the kinetic energy with $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-3}$, $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-4}$, $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$, and $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-6}$ are shown in Figure 13. With $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-3}$, the oscillation evolves into a steady-state after several oscillations, and it remains the normal sawtooth with $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-4}$ or $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$, which is similar to the Figure 10 in Ref. [29]. It is interestingly noted

that with sufficient low viscosity ($\nu=1.0\times 10^{-6}$), the system can also turn into the steady-state, which is not presented in Ref. [29].

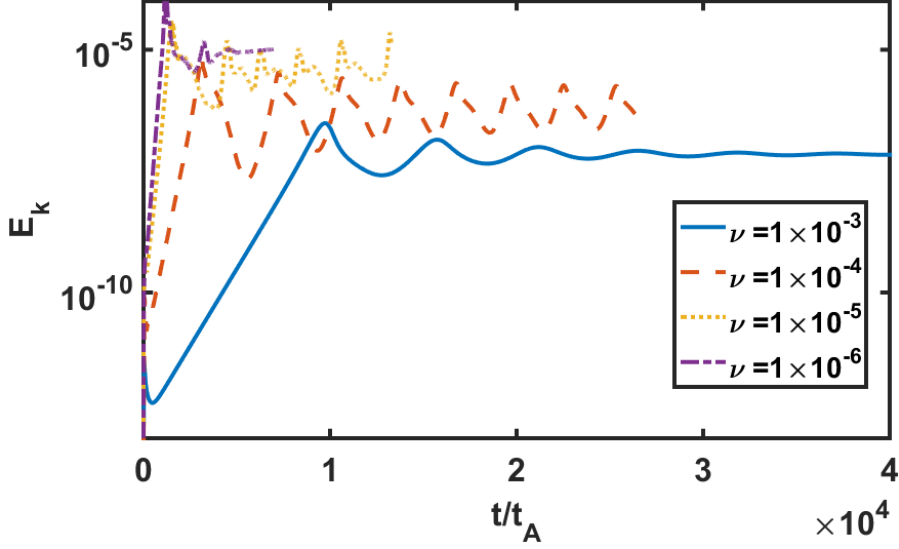


Figure 13 Evolutions of the kinetic energy with $\nu=1.0\times 10^{-3}$, $\nu=1.0\times 10^{-4}$, $\nu=1.0\times 10^{-5}$ and $\nu=1.0\times 10^{-6}$.

C. β scanning

From Subsection III. A and B, the middle parameter regime for the normal sawtooth is broadened when the plasma beta is lower. Therefore, we systematically investigate the influence of β on dynamics of the sawtooth oscillations. The long-time behaviors of the sawtooth oscillation with different β and viscosity are shown in Figure 14. The normal sawtooth oscillations are labeled with blue diamonds. Since the small sawtooth oscillations reach a steady-state after several cycles, we label both small sawtooth oscillations and steady-states with red squares. As shown in Figure 14, the normal sawtooth only occurs with intermediate viscosity while the small sawtooth or the steady-state happen with high viscosity ($\nu \geq 1.0\times 10^{-3}$) or low viscosity regime ($\nu \leq 1.0\times 10^{-5}$). It is obvious that the steady-state discussed in Ref. [29] is just the steady-state in the high viscosity regime.

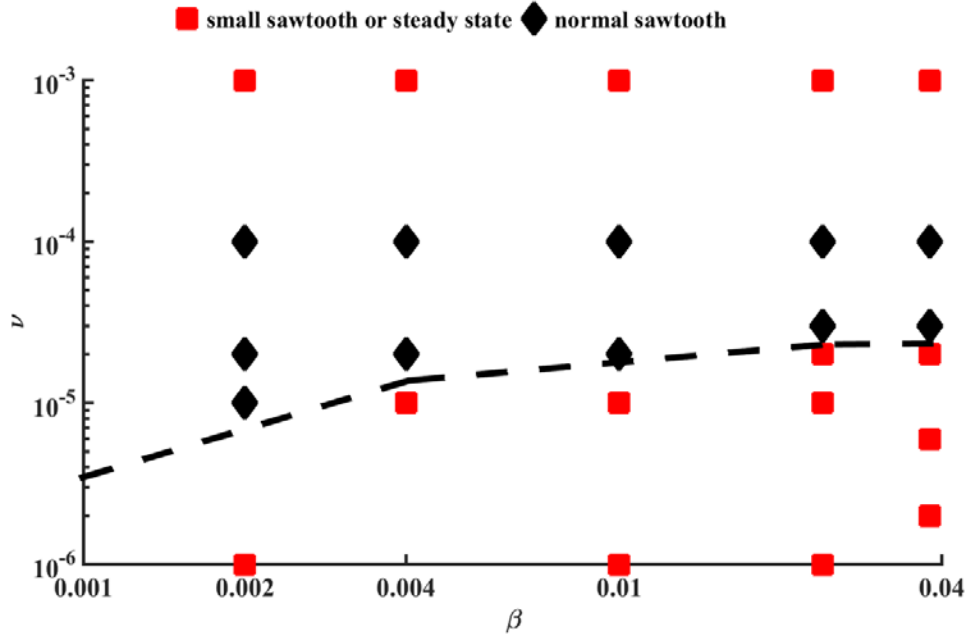


Figure 14 Long-time behavior of sawtooth oscillations with different β and viscosity.

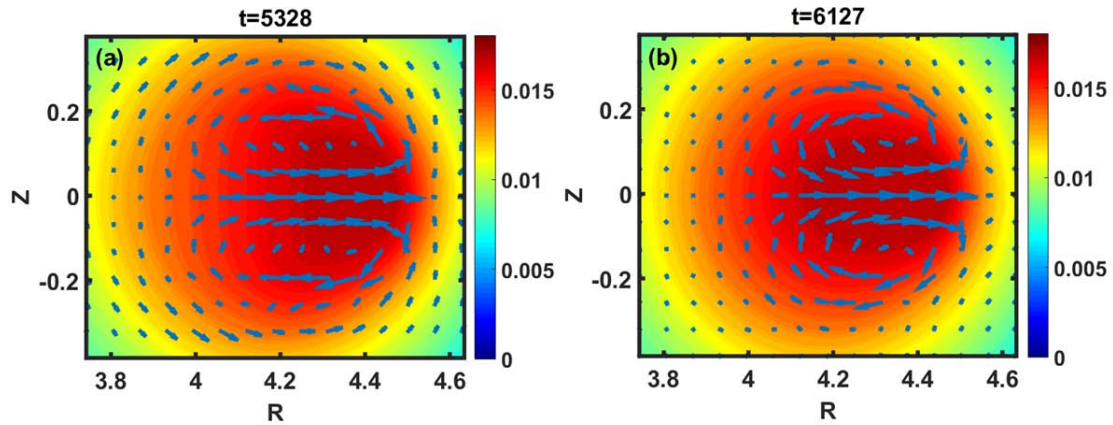


Figure 15 Flow patterns (the arrows) and pressure distributions (the contour plot) at (a) $t = 5328t_A$ just before the crash and (b) $t = 6127t_A$ after the crash for a small sawtooth. The flow is not entirely damped out at the end of the small sawtooth cycle. All the vectors are normalized by the maximum velocity in (a).

D. Physical reasons for achieve the second type of steady-state

From the discussions above, we know that the behavior of the system will be (a) a steady-state with extremely high viscosity, (b) a normal sawtooth with medium viscosity, (c) small sawtooth oscillations with lower viscosity, and (d) a steady-state

with sufficient low viscosity. The steady-state with extremely high viscosity is easy to understand- the system is stuck since the viscosity is extremely high. However, why could the system reach a steady-state with a sufficient low viscosity?

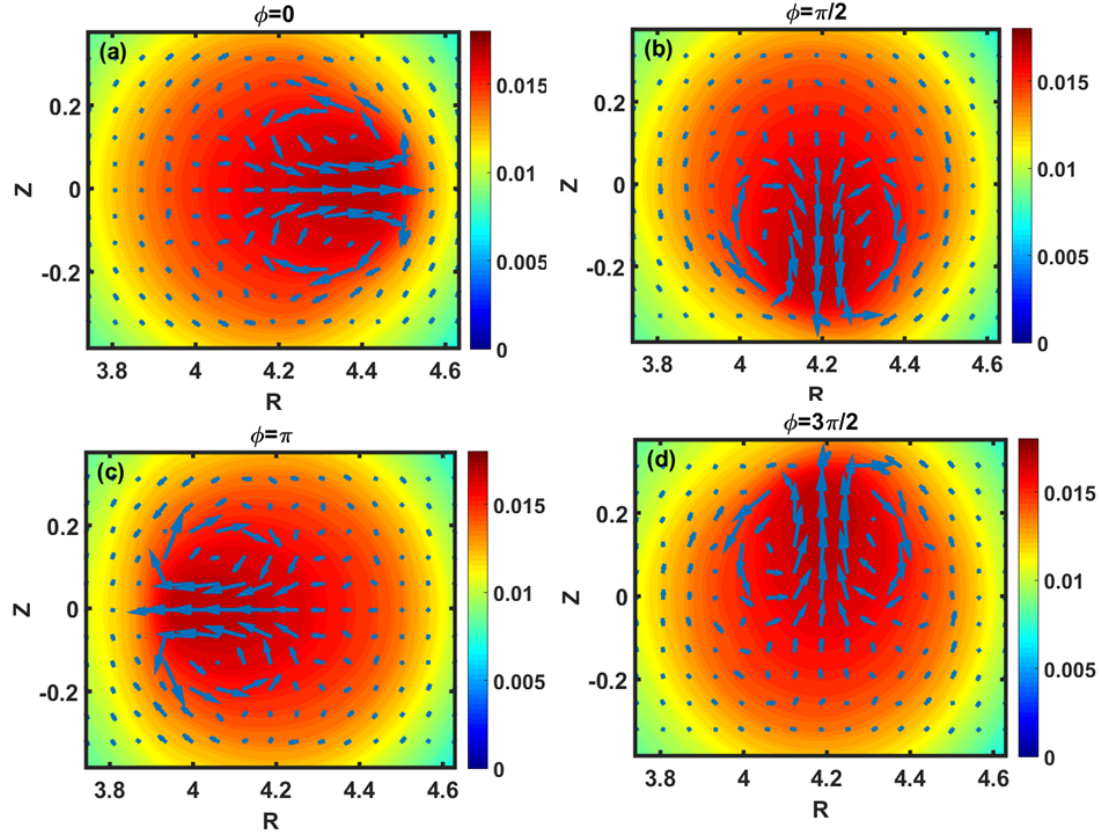


Figure 16 Flow patterns of the stationary state at $\phi=0$, $\phi=\pi/2$, $\phi=\pi$ and $\phi=3\pi/2$, respectively. All the vectors are normalized by the maximum velocity during the simulations of the steady-state. It is evident that there exists a strong residual flow with $m/n=1/1$ helicity at the steady-state.

From the evolutions of kinetic energy Figure 2, Figure 4 and Figure 7, there exists a remarkable difference in the three kinds of sawtooth- the residual flow after each sawtooth cycle. As shown in Figure 2, there is no residual flow since the kinetic energy is almost zero after each cycle. For the small sawtooth oscillations and the second type steady-state, the residual flow is notable (Figure 15 and Figure 16). It should be noted that, the magnetic flux is frozen in the plasma except for the reconnection region. Since the direction of the residual flow is from the core to the reconnection region, it continuously carries magnetic flux into the reconnection region due to the frozen in condition. It also should be noted that, in our model, the

new pumped magnetic flux is mainly due to the dynamo effect in the Ohm's Law (Eq. 5). Since the toroidal current is significantly reduced from the initial value, new magnetic flux is continuously pumped in the core region. The reason for the system reaching a steady-state is the balance between the new pumped magnetic flux in the core region and the flux loss in the reconnection region and the 'bridge' is the residual flow. The current profiles for the initial equilibrium and two types of steady-state are shown in Figure 17, which could clearly indicate the mechanism for the steady-state, i. e. a dynamo in the core region, a thin and sharp current sheet at the resonant surface, and a strong residual flow (Figure 16).

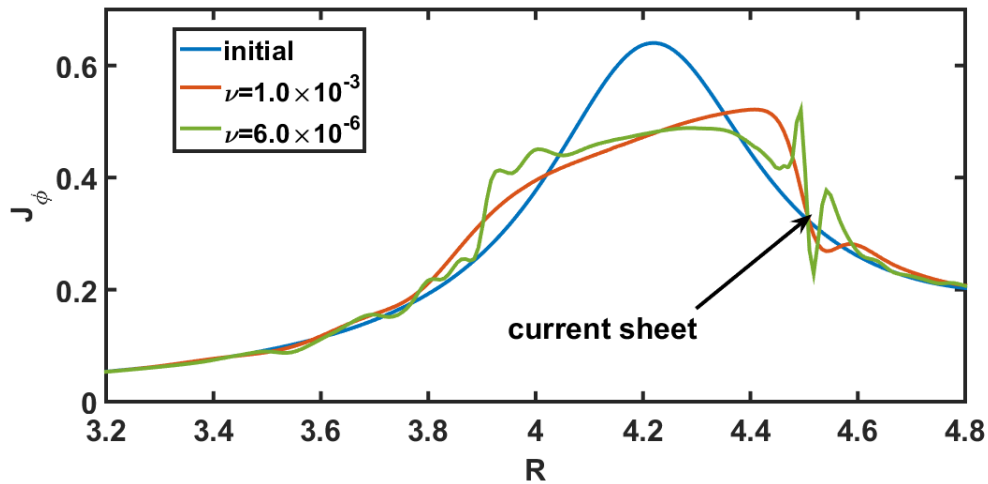


Figure 17 The current profiles for the initial equilibrium and two types of steady-state.

It also should be noted that the intermediate regime of the viscosity for the normal sawtooth becomes border with decreasing plasma beta (Figure 14). The lower boundary of the intermediate regime increases from $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-6}$ for the low β cases to $\nu = 2.0 \times 10^{-5}$ for the high β cases. The reason is that the lower β , the lower residual flow (Figure 18), and then lower viscosity is needed for achieving the steady-state.

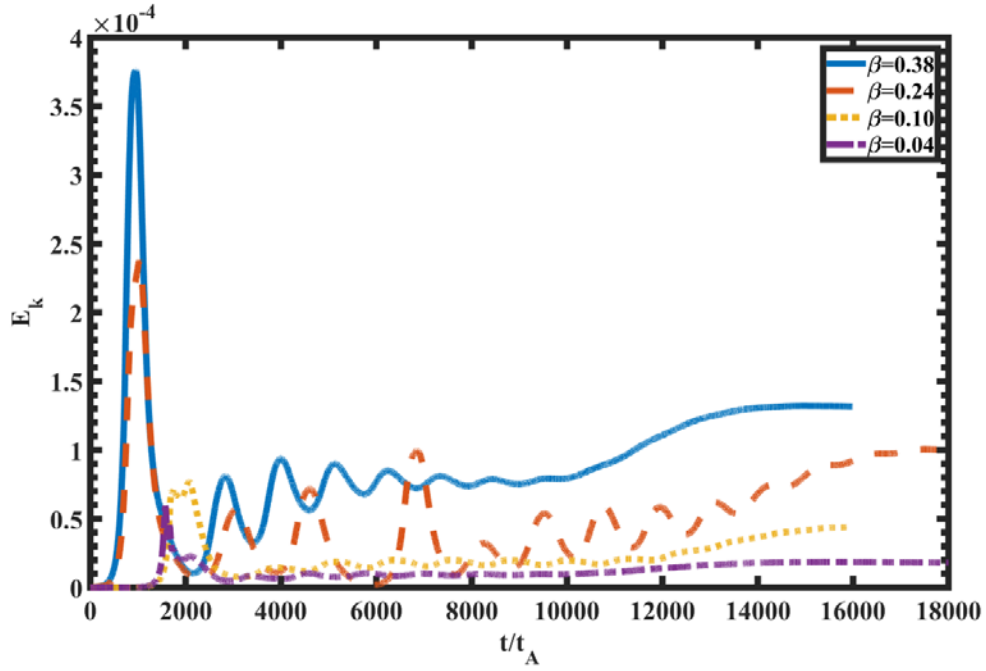


Figure 18 Kinetic energy evolutions with $\nu = 1.0 \times 10^{-5}$ and different β .

IV. Discussion

A systematical simulation study is conducted to investigate the influence of viscosity and plasma beta on dynamics of sawtooth oscillations. It is found that there are two parameter regimes of the viscosity for achieving the steady-state of the sawtooth oscillations. With sufficient high or low viscosity, the system eventually evolves into a small sawtooth oscillation or a quasi-steady state. In the intermediate viscosity, it becomes a normal sawtooth.

With sufficient low viscosity, the residual flow after each sawtooth cycle could be sufficient strong. Due to the frozen in condition, the residual flow could continuously transfer the magnetic flux in the core region to the reconnection region. Then a balance between the new magnetic flux pumped by the dynamo effect in the core region and magnetic flux loss in the reconnection region.

It is also found that the transition viscosity between the normal sawtooth and the small sawtooth or the steady-state increases with increasing β . It is because the residual flow increases with increasing β , and a higher viscosity is needed to

suppress the residual flow.

It should be noted that, although a steady-state could be achieved in the parameter regime of high viscosity and low beta in the numerical simulations, it is unlikely relevant to present Tokamaks, since the plasma beta is high and the viscosity is low in modern Tokamaks. However, the steady-state in the low viscosity and the high plasma beta regime might be related to the stationary state observed in present Tokamaks.[37, 44, 45] In the steady-state, the mode structure is non-axisymmetric with the $m/n=1/1$ helicity.

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