Magnetogenesis and magnetothermal equilibria in turbulent galaxy-cluster plasmas
ALEXANDER SCHekoCHIHIN, University of Oxford

We do not know the exact mechanism of magnetic field generation in magnetised weakly collisional (or collisionless) turbulent plasma. We do know that large-scale MHD motions in such plasmas are subject to fast small-scale kinetic instabilities (mirror and firehose) triggered (at high beta) by pressure anisotropies and that these anisotropies will always arise in a turbulent plasma. Therefore, standard MHD equations cannot be used to describe the turbulent dynamo. I will argue that the likely scenario in such plasmas is explosively fast growth of magnetic fluctuations to dynamical levels. I will further argue that if an efficient turbulent dynamo is assumed, radiative cooling in such plasmas can be balanced in a thermally stable way by turbulent heating, whose rate is set by the condition that plasma locally remains in a marginal state with respect to the mirror and firehose instabilities. This thermal stability suggests that a cooling catastrophe is not inevitable, although whether this old problem is thus resolved depends on whether a number of assumptions about the nonlinear behaviour of the instabilities, strength of turbulence and efficiency of the dynamo are borne out by first-principles microphysical theory, simulations or plasma experiments.

References: