

1           **Intermittency at Earth's bow shock: Measures of**  
2           **turbulence in quasi-parallel and quasi-perpendicular**  
3           **shocks**

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6           **Key Points:**

- 7           • We examine the evolution of turbulent fluctuations across Earth's bow shock us-  
8           ing magnetic spectra, kurtosis and correlation length.  
9           • The power-law magnetic spectra in the shock transition region are found to be dis-  
10          tinct from the solar wind and magnetosheath.  
11          • The correlation length of high-pass filtered fluctuations shows fast reduction of the  
12          driving scale across a quasi-perpendicular shock.

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**Abstract**

Recent simulations and observations have revealed reconnecting current sheets in the turbulent transition region of Earth’s bow shock. However, the link between reconnection in the shock and turbulent reconnection in the magnetosheath is unknown. We have therefore used observations from Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) over four separate bow shock crossings of varying  $\theta_{Bn}$  to characterise turbulence in the shock transition region and how it evolves towards the magnetosheath. We fit power laws to the magnetic spectrum over many short intervals, allowing us to observe the spectrum evolving. We find that we can separate the behaviour of the power-law index in the shock transition region from that of the upstream and downstream plasma when  $\theta_{Bn}$  is in the quasi-perpendicular range ( $45^\circ < \theta_{Bn}$ ) but not when  $\theta_{Bn}$  is quasi-parallel ( $\theta_{Bn} < 45^\circ$ ). Across the shock, we also see a distinct change in the breakpoint location between inertial and ion power-law slopes. We also observe the evolution of scale-independent kurtosis of magnetic fluctuations across the shock, finding that 72.4% of the upstream interval in a quasi-perpendicular shock exhibits a kurtosis  $> 3$  versus 23.1% downstream, compared to a quasi-parallel shock where we see 22.8% upstream and 17.0% downstream. This relationship is more apparent in the quasi-perpendicular case. Finally, we adapt a method for calculating correlation length to include a high-pass filter, allowing us to obtain estimates for changes in correlation length across Earth’s bow shock corrected for the positive bias introduced by large scale shock structures. We find that correlation lengths are a factor of at least 10 smaller in the magnetosheath than in solar wind in a quasi-perpendicular shock but do not vary significantly in an extended quasi-parallel shock with a significant amount of foreshock activity. Upstream structures in both quasi-perpendicular and quasi-parallel shocks can reduce correlation length for short periods of time (10s of seconds).

**Plain Language Summary**

Turbulence is a phenomenon that can arise in anything that behaves like a fluid under certain conditions. The size and shape of turbulent vortices and eddies can tell us a lot about the energy contained within the fluid. For example, highly energetic particles emitted from the Sun form a turbulent, fluid-like plasma called the solar wind. The Earth’s magnetic field acts as an obstacle to the solar wind, forming a shock wave called the bow shock, similar to the shock wave formed by a supersonic jet in air. This shock wave is very complex and introduces an additional source of turbulent structures. In this paper, we looked at the turbulence just before the shock wave, during, and after to learn if its presence fundamentally changes how the energy gets distributed inside a turbulent plasma. We found evidence that turbulence behaves differently in these three areas. In addition, the magnetic field angle relative to the shock wave (i.e. nearly parallel/perpendicular to the shock) also has an effect.

**1 Introduction**

Turbulence is a ubiquitous phenomenon in space plasmas, occurring in systems ranging from star formation (McKee & Ostriker, 2007) to galaxy clusters (Zhuravleva et al., 2014) to planetary magnetospheres (Chasapis et al., 2018) and the solar wind (Alexandrova et al., 2013; Bruno & Carbone, 2013; Kiyani et al., 2015). In collisionless plasmas such as the solar wind, the mechanisms for dissipating energy in turbulence are not well-known (Kiyani et al., 2015), and solving this problem is vital for our understanding of turbulence in general. In the heliosphere, for example, turbulent dissipation is a suggested source of the heating observed in the Solar corona (Cranmer et al., 2015; Klimchuk, 2006). One of several proposed solutions to this dissipation problem is magnetic reconnection (Carbone et al., 1990; Franci et al., 2017), for which local changes in magnetic topology rapidly transfer energy from fields to particles, resulting in particle acceleration and heating (Burch et al., 2016). Some other possible explanations for energy dissipation include wave-particle

63 interactions, driven by cyclotron resonance or kinetic Alfvén waves (Isenberg & Hollweg,  
64 1983; Hollweg, 1999).

65 One advantage of using the local space environment to study plasma turbulence  
66 is that it allows for high-cadence in-situ observation of structures associated with tur-  
67 bulent dissipation, such as reconnecting current sheets. The Magnetospheric Multiscale  
68 (MMS) mission has recently been used to observe electron outflow jets at thin current  
69 sheets - a signature of reconnection - in Earth’s magnetosheath (Phan et al., 2018) and  
70 the bow shock transition region (Gingell et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2017). Recent sim-  
71 ulations (Bessho et al., 2020, 2022; Gingell et al., 2017; Matsumoto et al., 2015) have shown  
72 that processes in the shock foot can generate current sheets and magnetic islands, con-  
73 tributing to the formation of a transition region that can appear turbulent. The prop-  
74 erties of turbulence are also known to vary across different plasma regimes, such as the  
75 solar wind and magnetosheath (Alexandrova, 2008). Furthermore, the properties of tur-  
76 bulence are also known to vary within the magnetosheath, varying with the upstream  
77 shock orientation (Yordanova et al., 2020) and between the sub-solar point and flanks  
78 (Huang et al., 2017; Sahraoui et al., 2020). This paper aims to address a significant open  
79 question when discussing turbulence at the bow shock: Can we measure a difference be-  
80 tween turbulence seen in the bow shock transition region and in the surrounding plasma  
81 (i.e. the solar wind or magnetosheath)?

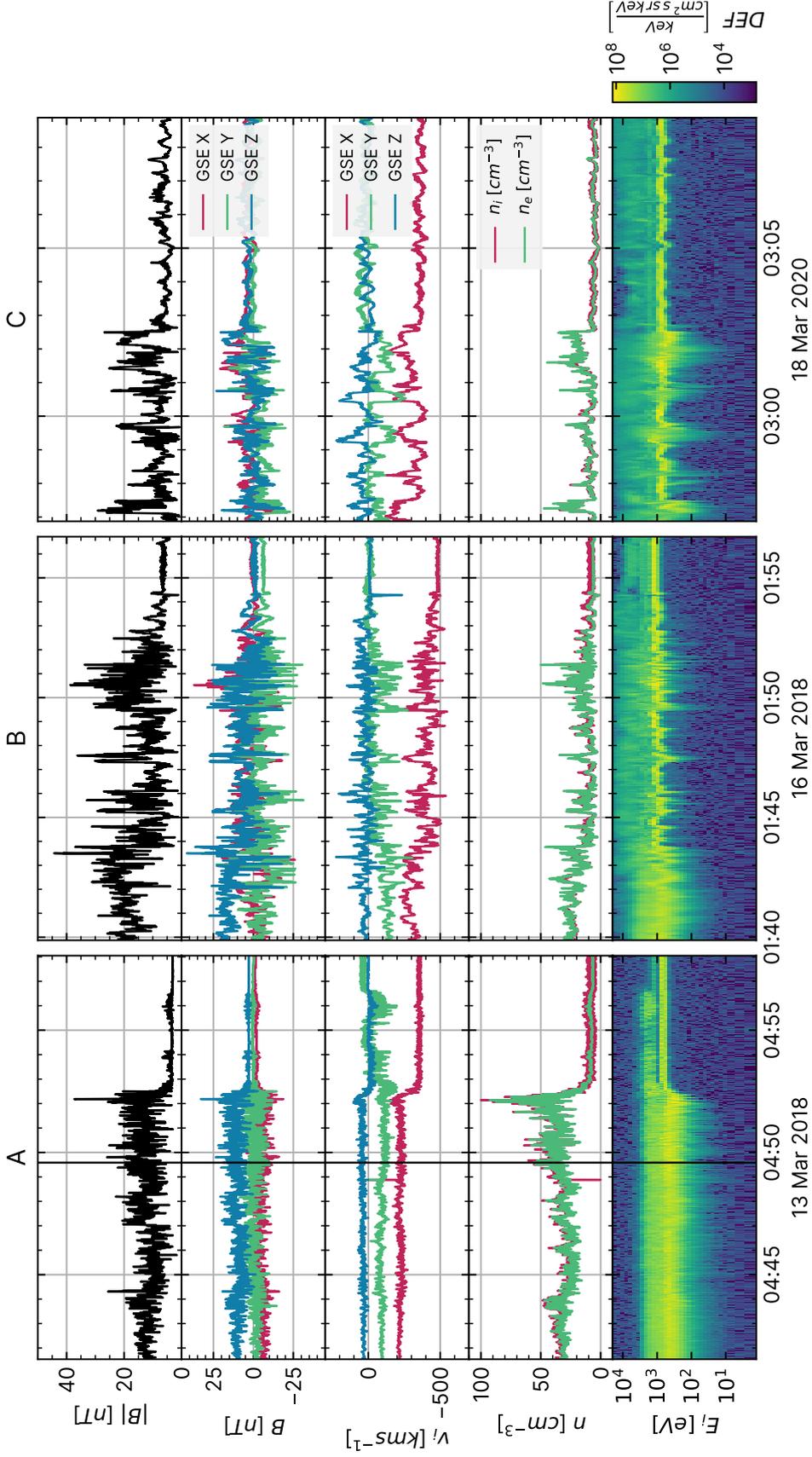
82 We note that some definitions of turbulence require a ‘well-developed’ inertial range,  
83 allowing a complete cascade from the largest, fluid-like scales in the plasma, through the  
84 kinetic regime and ending at the dissipation scale. In the shock transition region, appar-  
85 ently turbulent or disordered fluctuations may be driven by non-linear interactions and  
86 instabilities that arise below the inertial range, but nevertheless appear to cascade and  
87 dissipate energy in the region. For the purposes of this study, we will refer to these pro-  
88 cesses as turbulent, but acknowledge that they may not be fully developed.

89 In this paper, we study the evolution of magnetic fluctuations from the solar wind  
90 to magnetosheath, i.e. across the bow shock, using three different measures of turbulence:  
91 the magnetic spectrum, the kurtosis, and the correlation length (e.g. Stawarz et al., 2019).  
92 From the magnetic spectrum we extract the spectral break between inertial and ion scale  
93 ranges, which is related to local plasma scales such as the ion gyroradius  $\rho_i$ , and iner-  
94 tial length  $d_i$  (Chen et al., 2014; Franci et al., 2015). We also observe an increase in kur-  
95 tosis immediately upstream of a quasi-perpendicular shock that is not observed in a quasi-  
96 parallel case. Finally, we use an adapted method of calculating correlation length to mea-  
97 sure the local stirring scale of the turbulence, and find that the correlation length be-  
98 comes several orders of magnitude smaller when moving from the solar wind to magne-  
99 tosphere.

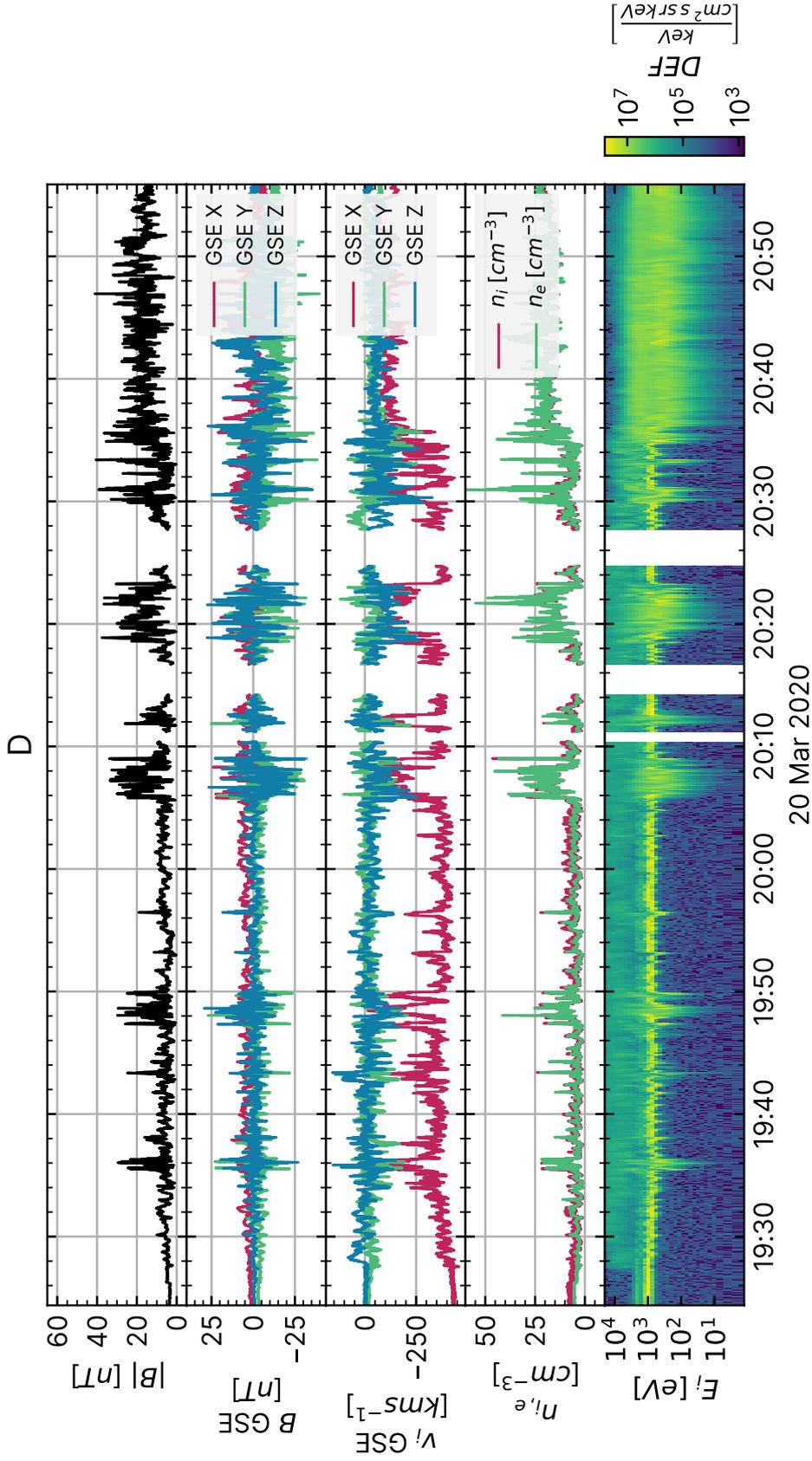
## 100 2 Data Set

101 We explore the bow shock transition using in situ data obtained by the Magneto-  
102 spheric Multiscale (MMS) mission (Burch et al., 2015). Magnetic field data are provided  
103 by the fluxgate magnetometer (FGM) (Russell et al., 2014) and search coil magnetome-  
104 ter (SCM) (Contel et al., 2014). FGM and SCM data are analysed as a merged data set  
105 (FSM) (Argall et al., 2018). Particle data are provided by the Fast Plasma Investiga-  
106 tion’s (FPI) (Pollock et al., 2016) Dual Electron Spectrometer (DES) and Dual Ion Spec-  
107 trometer (DIS). In high-resolution burst mode, the SCM magnetic fields are available  
108 at a sampling frequency of  $F_s = 1/8192$  s, and the particle moments are available at  
109 a cadence of 0.15 s and 0.03 s for ions and electrons, respectively.

110 Four high-resolution (burst) bow shock crossing intervals have been analysed here.  
111 The events were chosen to cover a range of bow shock angles from quasi-perpendicular  
112 to quasi-parallel, where the burst interval was longer than approximately 10 minutes and



**Figure 1.** MMS observations showing events A (left column), B (centre column) and C (right column). Row 1: Magnetic field strength,  $|\mathbf{B}|$ ; Row 2: Magnetic field components,  $\mathbf{B}$ , in GSE coordinates; Row 3: Ion velocity components,  $v_i$  (GSE); Row 4: Proton and electron densities,  $n_{i,e}$ ; Row 5: Ion energy spectrogram. In each of the three cases, MMS crosses the shock from the magnetosheath side into the solar wind. The shock normal angles are  $\theta_{Bn} = 68^\circ, 41^\circ, 35^\circ$  from left to right respectively. The timestamp of Figure 3 is indicated by a vertical black line in the left column.



**Figure 2.** MMS observation of event D, lasting 226 minutes. Rows are the same as Fig.1. The shock normal angle is  $\theta_{B_n} = 17^\circ$ . For this shock, MMS moves from the solar wind into the shock. There are three small gaps in the data starting at 20:10 and ending at 20:30. These gaps sum to less than 6 minutes in total.

113 where the shock was as close to the centre of the burst interval as possible, i.e. an ideal  
114 event would contain a roughly equal amount of solar wind and magnetosheath data. Fig-  
115 ures 1 and 2 provide a summary of each of the events. The intervals on 13 March 2018,  
116 16 March 2018, 18 March 2020 and 20 March 2020 are referred to as intervals A, B, C  
117 and D respectively. Events A-C are  $\sim 15$  minutes in duration, while event D is 226 min-  
118 utes. Table 1 shows plasma parameters averaged over the entire interval, including elec-  
119 tron upstream flow speed  $v_0$ , the acute angle between upstream magnetic field,  $\mathbf{B}$ , and  
120 the shock normal,  $\theta_{Bn}$ , Alfvén Mach number  $M_A$  of the upstream flows, and the ion plasma  
121 beta  $\beta_i$ . The derived parameters  $M_A$  and  $\beta_i$ , along with observed values for  $v_0$  and the  
122 magnetic field, were obtained from OMNI (King, 2005). The shock angle  $\theta_{Bn}$  was cal-  
123 culated using a model from Peredo et al. (1995), using the upstream magnetic field lagged  
124 to the bow shock from OMNI and FPI moments from MMS.

125 The angle between the upstream magnetic field and shock normal angle,  $\theta_{Bn}$ , de-  
126 creases from quasi-perpendicular ( $68^\circ$ ) in event A to quasi-parallel ( $17^\circ$ ) in event D. Quasi-  
127 perpendicular shocks are characterised by near discontinuous transitions from the solar  
128 wind to bow shock. In contrast, a quasi-parallel shock has a more gradual transition and  
129 can often be complicated by upstream waves and instabilities caused by backstreaming  
130 ions in the foreshock. Therefore, the expectation is that structures created by the shock  
131 are more distinct in quasi-perpendicular shock crossings but are only observed for a short  
132 time, whereas a quasi-parallel shock will display a more complex behaviour that is chal-  
133 lenging to separate from the solar wind or magnetosheath.

**Table 1.** Average upstream plasma properties as observed by OMNI and MMS. Data from OMNI were averaged over the same duration as MMS.

| Interval | $\theta_{Bn} [^\circ]$ | $v_0 [kms^{-1}]$ | $M_A$          | $\beta_i$     | Start<br>yyyy/mm/dd hh:mm:ss | End      |
|----------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|----------|
| A        | 68                     | $356.4 \pm 1.0$  | $14.6 \pm 1.1$ | $4.4 \pm 0.7$ | 2018/03/13 04:41:33          | 04:58:02 |
| B        | 41                     | $475.8 \pm 4.7$  | $9.0 \pm 0.7$  | $1.4 \pm 0.3$ | 2018/03/16 01:39:53          | 01:56:43 |
| C        | 35                     | $394.4 \pm 3.9$  | $9.8 \pm 0.8$  | $2.2 \pm 0.5$ | 2020/03/18 02:56:53          | 03:08:52 |
| D        | 17                     | $405.0 \pm 13.8$ | $12.5 \pm 0.7$ | $3.0 \pm 0.6$ | 2020/03/20 19:24:23          | 20:55:52 |

### 134 3 The Magnetic Spectrum

135 In order to examine the evolution of the magnetic spectrum, events A-C were split  
136 into consecutive, non-overlapping windows containing 9 seconds of data per window. Event  
137 D was split into 45s windows to maintain visual clarity over the much longer event. There  
138 are 109, 112, 79 and 97 windows for each event A-D, resulting in  $N \approx 7 \times 10^4$  or  $4 \times$   
139  $10^5$  field measurements per window for 9 or 45s windows respectively. The power spec-  
140 trum of  $\mathbf{B}$  in the spacecraft frame is given as,  $PSD(\mathbf{B}, k)$ , where  $k = 2\pi f/v_0$ ,  $v_0$  is the  
141 bulk flow speed and  $f$  is a discrete frequency increment in the range  $N/f_s \leq f \leq f_s/2$ .  
142 The transformation of frequency  $f$  to wavenumber  $k$  is performed assuming Taylor’s hy-  
143 pothesis, which broadly states that any spacecraft motion is negligible when compared  
144 to the motion of the surrounding plasma, thus allowing us to use the spacecraft time se-  
145 ries to explore the spatial domain. We calculate the trace power spectrum of the mag-  
146 netic field, where components  $B_{x,y,z}$  are pre-filtered with a Hanning window.

147 In a turbulent plasma, the magnetic spectrum often appears as a series of power  
148 laws with different indices,  $P \propto k^\alpha$  (Frisch, 1995). For example, power-law index  $\alpha =$   
149  $-5/3$  corresponds to the inertial range of fluid turbulence (Kolmogorov, 1941), typical  
150 of space plasmas at scales far above ion kinetic scales. At the ion scales,  $\sim d_i$  or  $\sim \rho_i$ ,

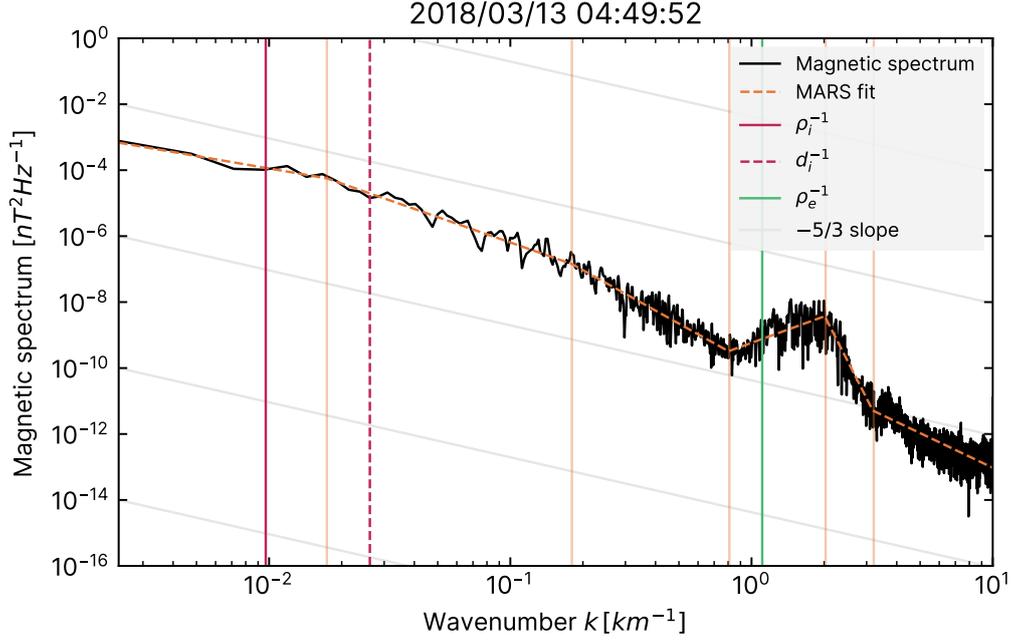
151 solar wind and magnetosheath plasmas typically exhibit a breakpoint below which the  
 152 magnetic spectrum steepens. In this ion kinetic range, the power-law index  $\alpha$  is variable,  
 153 though  $\alpha \approx -2.8$  is typical for the solar wind (Alexandrova et al., 2009; Sahraoui et  
 154 al., 2010). The breakpoint between the fluid MHD scale and the ion kinetic scale is at  
 155 the larger of  $d_i$ , or  $\rho_i$  (Chen et al., 2014) when observing solar wind undisturbed by the  
 156 bow shock. A second breakpoint is often observed at electron kinetic scales, and again  
 157 the slope of the magnetic spectrum is expected to steepen in the electron kinetic range,  
 158 below  $\sim d_e$ . Hence, the magnetic spectrum is expected to comprise three or more dis-  
 159 tinct power laws with different slopes. In order to characterise the power laws of our ob-  
 160 served magnetic spectra, we seek an algorithm that can generate and fit an arbitrary num-  
 161 ber of straight lines to a spectrum, with a variable number of breakpoints. Hence, we  
 162 use the Multivariate Adaptive Regression Splines (MARS) algorithm, developed by (Friedman,  
 163 1991), and implemented by (Milborrow et al., 2011).

164 Figure 3 shows an example of a spectrum obtained from an interval when MMS  
 165 was downstream of the shock during event A, with the resultant MARS fit overlaid. Al-  
 166 though we might expect the breakpoint between the inertial and ion kinetic ranges to  
 167 be located at the larger of  $d_i$  or  $\rho_i$ , we instead observe that this breakpoint occurs at scales  
 168 smaller than  $\rho_i$ . This may be due to the influence of the structure and waves associated  
 169 with the bow shock, or it may be due to differences in turbulence properties in the mag-  
 170 netosheath when compared to the solar wind. We also note that an electron scale wave  
 171 is visible at  $k \approx 2 \text{ km}^{-1}$  as a peak in the spectrum. Similar structures appear intermit-  
 172 tently in all four intervals and are characterised by a dramatic change from positive to  
 173 negative power law index at the electron scale.

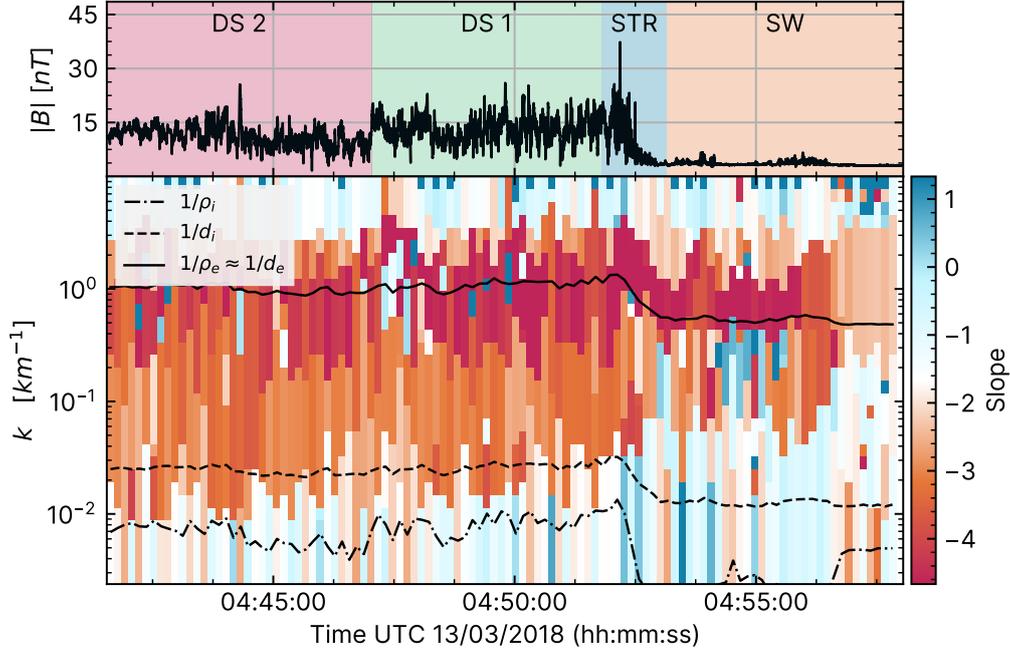
174 Figures 4 and 5 show the evolution of spectral index with time for the intervals A  
 175 and D, respectively. Equivalent plots are given for events B and C in the supplemental  
 176 material, Figures S1 and S2. Each 9 or 45 second window is represented as a vertical slice  
 177 where the index at a given scale corresponds to the MARS fit and consists of multiple  
 178 bars coloured to represent the slope of the magnetic spectrum, spanning the range of scales  
 179 ( $k$ ) observable by MMS over the window duration.

180 We see that in the solar wind immediately preceding the shock, the breakpoint be-  
 181 tween the inertial (MHD) range and the ion (kinetic) range is much less than both  $d_i$   
 182 and  $\rho_i$ . This observation differs from studies, e.g. Chen et al. (2014), who suggest that  
 183 in undisturbed solar wind, the spectral break should be  $d_i$  or greater. However, in the  
 184 magnetosheath close to the shock, we find that the breakpoint shifts to larger scales and  
 185 settles in the expected range  $d_i \leq BP \leq \rho_i$ .

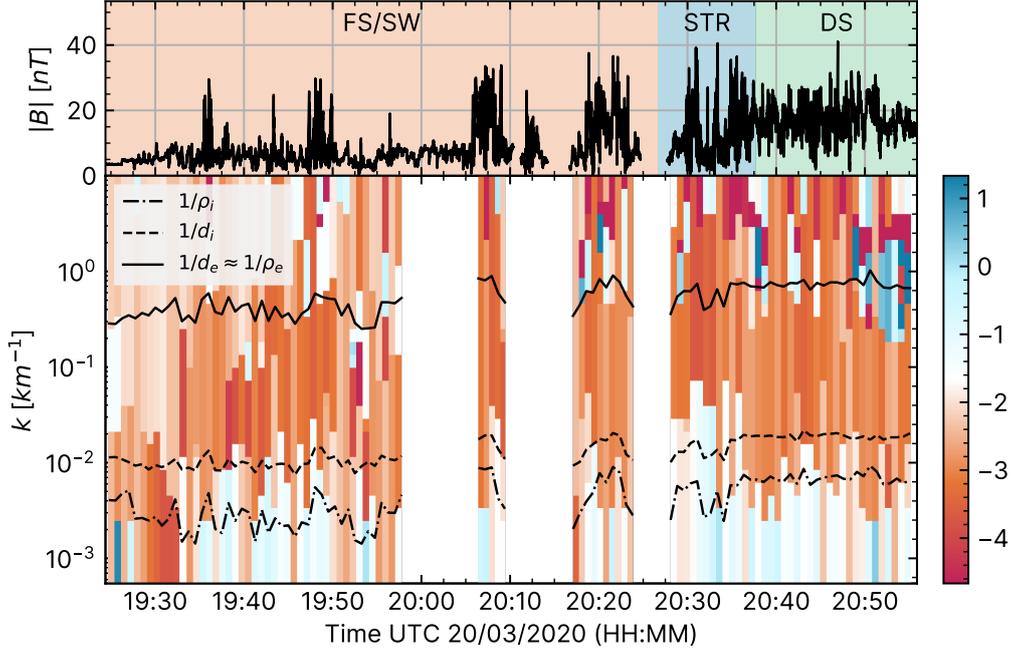
186 Figure 6 shows the average slope as a function of scale,  $k$ , for intervals A and D,  
 187 broken down into subsections based on MMS's location in relation to the shock, e.g. down-  
 188 stream (DS), in the shock transition region (STR), or the solar wind/foreshock (SW/FS).  
 189 The chosen intervals corresponding to each region are shown in Figures 4, 5 for inter-  
 190 vals A and D respectively. Similar figures for intervals B and C are given in the supple-  
 191 mental material, Figures S3 and S4. Errors shown are sample standard deviations from  
 192 all windows within the region. The intuitive expectation is for the slope in the STR to  
 193 be between those in the SW and DS at all scales. That is, we may expect to see the blue  
 194 line (slope in the STR) to be between the green (DS) and yellow (SW) lines at all scales,  
 195 as this would indicate that it is purely a transitional state as solar wind plasma crosses  
 196 the shock and into the magnetosheath. However, we see that at multiple scales, the slope  
 197 in the STR appears to be steeper than both SW and DS plasma, as in the case of electron-  
 198 scale  $k \approx 10^0 \text{ km}^{-1}$ , or shallower, as for the ion scales at  $k \approx 10^{-2} \text{ km}^{-1}$ . The steep-  
 199 ening of the spectra in the transition region at  $k \approx 10^0 \text{ km}^{-1}$  occurs at close to the electron-  
 200 scales. This suggests that an electron-scale process is able to more efficiently dissipate  
 201 energy from electron-scale fluctuations in this region, compared to the adjacent solar wind  
 202 and magnetosheath.



**Figure 3.** A plot of magnetic spectrum for an example  $\sim 6$  s window downstream of the shock on 13/03/2018, illustrated as a vertical black line on Figure 1. Grid lines are shown with a slope of  $-5/3$ . The magnetic spectrum is shown in black. The ion and electron limits ( $\rho_i$  and  $d_{i,e}$ ) are shown as red and green vertical lines. The fit to the spectrum is shown as an orange dashed line, built from chained linear regressions using the MARS method. Vertical orange lines highlight breakpoints determined by the MARS fit. An electron scale wave is visible at approximately  $k \approx 2/\rho_e$ , and this is reflected in the MARS fit by steep upward and downward slopes.



**Figure 4.** Evolution of spectral slopes as a function of time for event A. *Top:* Magnetic field strength,  $|B|$ . Colours refer to downstream (DS 1/2), shock transition region (STR) and solar wind (SW) *Bottom:* Evolution of spectral indices from MARS fit. Note that this does not always split the spectrum into three regions. The colour represents the slope of the power-law fit. Red indicates steeper than  $-5/3$ , while blue is shallower than  $-5/3$ . Breakpoints are indicated by a change in colour. Electron scales,  $\rho_e \approx d_e$  are shown as a solid black line, and ion scales  $d_i$  and  $\rho_i$  are dashed and dot-dashed black lines. Event A is a quasi-perpendicular shock and as a result we get a clear distinction between solar wind and magnetosheath spectra. The ion-inertial breakpoint (BP) is  $\ll d_i$  in the solar wind and rapidly transitions to  $d_i < BP \leq \rho_i$  in the magnetosheath.



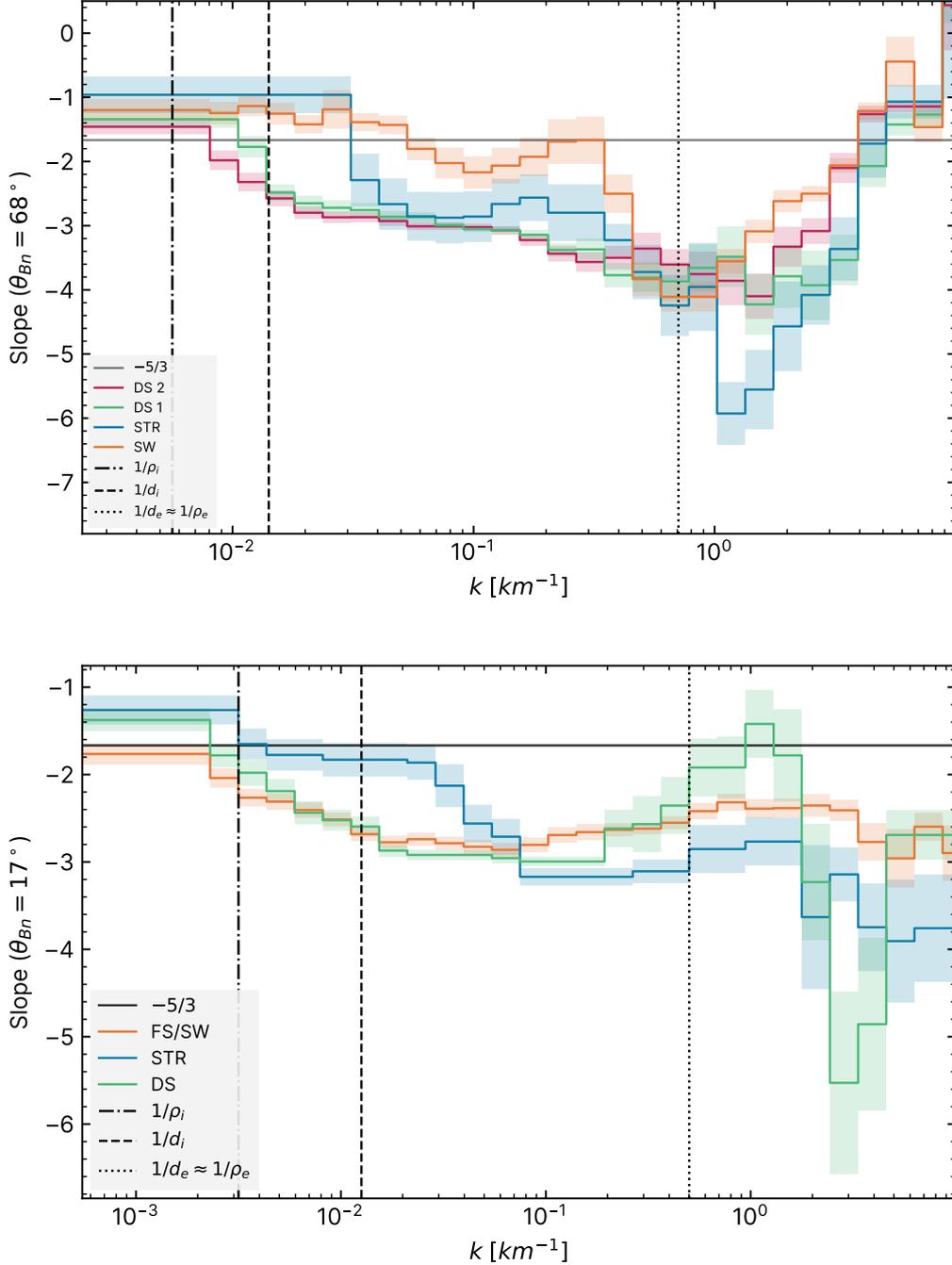
**Figure 5.** Equivalent to Figure 4 for interval D, 20/03/2020. The breakpoint between the MHD and ion ranges moves up from scales smaller than  $d_i$  to in-between  $d_i$  and  $d_e$  as MMS moves progressively further through the shock.

#### 4 Kurtosis

A fundamental method for studying intermittency is to examine deviations from Gaussianity in the distribution of magnetic field fluctuations, for which a typical method is to use the kurtosis (Matthaeus et al., 2015). Intermittency is defined as strong, highly localised gradients, especially at small scales. If the kurtosis  $\kappa(\mathbf{B}) > 3$ , then the magnetic field has an overabundance of extreme gradients relative to a normal distribution, which therefore indicates the existence of intermittent structures.  $\kappa \leq 3$  indicates that intermittency is not present.

Figure 7 shows the kurtosis, independent of scale, for events A and D. events B and C are shown in the supplemental material as figures S5 and S6. The kurtosis is calculated for consecutive windows containing  $10^5$  samples, based on the rule of thumb  $p_{max} = \log N - 1$ , where  $p_{max}$  is the maximum moment (i.e. fourth) and  $N$  is the number of samples (Dudok de Wit et al., 2013). In event A, we see a clear difference in kurtosis between the solar wind and magnetosheath. Intermittency is present upstream of the shock, but there are very few occasions where  $\kappa > 3$  in the downstream. The kurtosis peaks to over 12 approximately 1s after the spacecraft crosses the shock ramp into the solar wind in event A. However, in event D, although we observe three enhancements of kurtosis above 8 which could be related to foreshock structures, similar to the enhancement to 9 in event A that precedes a slight increase in magnetic field strength, there is no clear and obvious shock transition region behaviour.

In order to directly compare the prevalence of intermittent fluctuations across the shock, we next examine the difference between the proportion of bins with  $\kappa > 3$ . For event A, we find that there is a large change across the shock: In the solar wind 72.4% of bins show signs of intermittency, whereas 23.1% of bins do in the magnetosheath. For



**Figure 6.** Average slope as a function of scale for event A (quasi-perpendicular), *top*, and event D (quasi-parallel), *bottom*. Each line represents a subsection of the entire interval, i.e. downstream (DS, red and green) of the shock, the shock transition region (STR, blue), solar wind (SW, orange), or the foreshock (FS, orange) in the case of event D where no part of the interval could be described as pure solar wind. The ‘DS 2’ line is further downstream than ‘DS 1’. See Figures 4 and 5 for a definition of the boundaries. Kinetic scales,  $\rho_i d_i$  and  $d_e$ , are also plotted as dot-dashed, dashed and dotted vertical black lines, respectively. The Kolmogorov  $-5/3$  slope is shown as a horizontal black line. There are occasions in both panels where the STR spectral index lies outside of the transition between SW and DS.

227 quasi parallel event D the shock is assumed to be at 20:35:26, and we observe a much  
 228 lower proportion of intermittent intervals both upstream and downstream, with 22.8%  
 229 in the solar wind and 17.0% in the magnetosheath. We also note that the relative re-  
 230 duction in the proportion of intermittent intervals from solar wind to magnetosheath is  
 231 less than in the quasi-perpendicular event A.

## 232 5 Correlation Length

233 Next, we seek to measure the characteristic size of turbulent fluctuations in the mag-  
 234 netic field. Energy is typically transferred in a ‘cascade’ from large to small scales on av-  
 235 erage, generating magnetic structures at sizes ranging from stirring scales to the scales  
 236 at which energy is dissipated. The correlation length,  $\lambda_c$ , quantifies the average size of  
 237 the largest scale fluctuations visible in the data (Stawarz et al., 2019, 2022) which can  
 238 be associated with the ‘stirring’ scale. Using the autocorrelation function of magnetic  
 239 fluctuations, given by:

$$R(l) \equiv \frac{\langle \text{Tr}[\delta\mathbf{b}(\mathbf{x} + l)\delta\mathbf{b}(\mathbf{x})] \rangle}{\langle |\delta\mathbf{b}|^2 \rangle}, \quad (1)$$

240 We define the correlation length as follows:

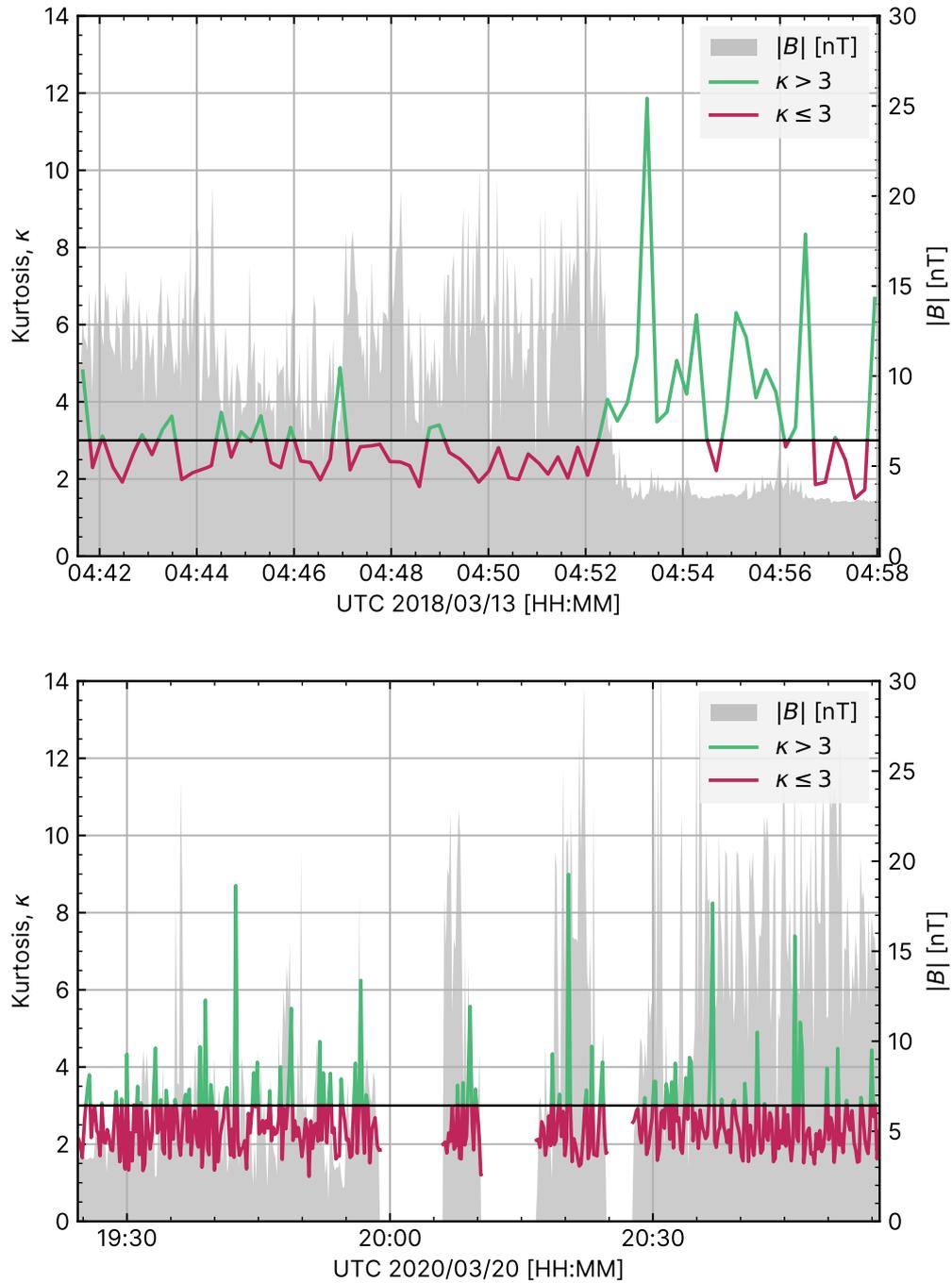
$$\lambda_c \equiv \int_0^\infty R(l) dl. \quad (2)$$

241 Where  $\text{Tr}[\dots]$  is the trace,  $\delta\mathbf{b} \equiv \mathbf{B} - \langle \mathbf{B} \rangle$  and  $l$  is the lag of the autocorrelation.  
 242 This calculation is achieved by integration up to the first zero crossing of  $R(l)$ , or by a  
 243 fit of the form  $R(l) \propto \exp(-l/\lambda_c)$ . We find that results do not differ significantly be-  
 244 tween methods, and we therefore present results using the integration method.

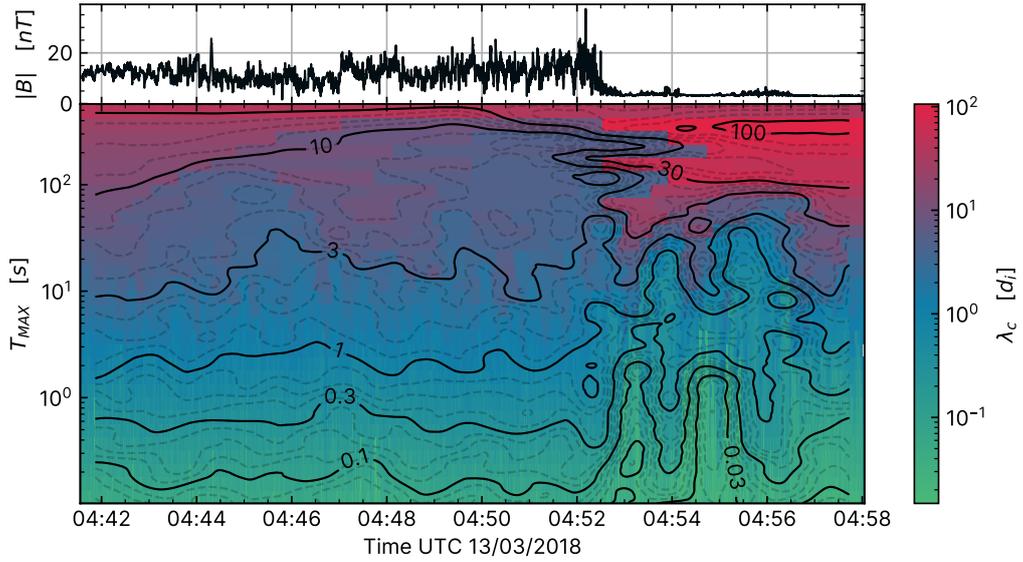
245 Correlation length generally relies on having a data set long enough for a correla-  
 246 tion function to become uncorrelated. However, the region of space near the bow shock  
 247 is a rapidly changing environment dominated by processes unrelated to turbulence. Care  
 248 is therefore needed when selecting what scale of fluctuations should be included. Any  
 249 window of time that includes the shock will have a correlation length that is closely re-  
 250 lated to the crossing time of the shock.

251 In this case, it is more descriptive to examine fluctuations at scales smaller than  
 252 the step-function introduced to the time series by the shock. Therefore, we use a vari-  
 253 able high-pass filter over the event to remove the effect of low frequency variations, such  
 254 as the shock ramp. A 10<sup>th</sup> order Butterworth filter was used, which can be defined by  
 255 the critical frequency,  $F_{crit} \equiv 1/T_{max}$  where  $T_{max}$  is the longest time allowed by the  
 256 filter. By varying  $T_{max}$ , the data is limited exclusively to fluctuations with wavelength  
 257 shorter than  $v_0/2F_{crit}$ . If  $T_{max}$  is less than the period associated with the stirring scale  
 258 of the turbulence, then the measured  $\lambda_c$  will have a dependence on the size of the filter,  
 259 increasing in proportion to  $T_{max}$ . When  $T_{max}$  becomes greater than the period associ-  
 260 ated with the stirring scale,  $\lambda_c$  will appear to plateau, and changes in  $T_{max}$  will not have  
 261 a significant effect on  $\lambda_c$ .

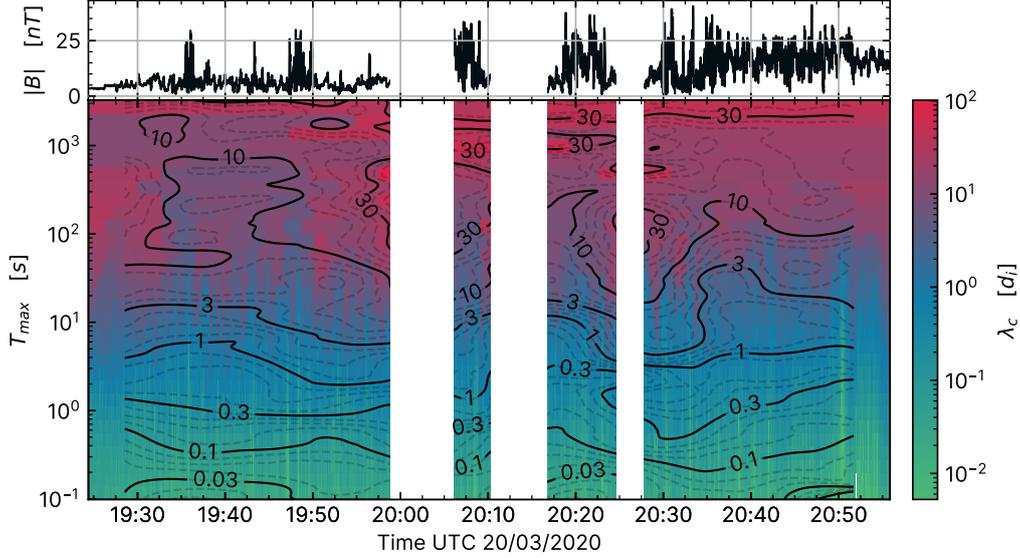
262 Similar to the approach used when discussing the magnetic spectrum, we have split  
 263 the interval into smaller consecutive windows. The range of  $T_{max}$  was chosen to cover  
 264 several decades in duration, and are approximately logarithmically spaced. The entire  
 265 event is filtered according to  $T_{max}$  before being split into windows. Figure 8 describes  
 266 the evolution of the frequency-dependent correlation length for event A. Plateaus - rel-  
 267 atively large spacing between contour lines - indicate that a consistent correlation length  
 268 has been reached. We see that in the solar wind, a consistent  $\lambda_c$  is not reached; the max-  
 269 imum observed correlation length is over  $100d_i$ . However, if MMS had continued to record



**Figure 7.** Kurtosis examined for events A (*top*) and D (*bottom*).  $\kappa > 3$  is shown green, and  $\kappa \leq 3$  is red. A horizontal black line highlights  $\kappa = 3$ .  $|B|$  is displayed for reference as a grey shaded background, with the vertical scale on the right. The quasi-perpendicular event A shows a clear difference between solar wind and magnetosheath, with  $\kappa$  peaking in the shock foot. The quasi-parallel example (event D) does not show a relationship quite as strongly, although some short periods of extreme kurtosis ( $> 8$ ) are present before the shock as well as a smaller spike afterwards.



**Figure 8.** *Upper:* Magnetic field strength,  $|B|$ . *Lower:* Correlation length,  $\lambda_c$ , colour (units of ion inertial length), as a function of time and  $T_{max}$ . The width of each bin is equal to  $T_{max}$  up to  $T_{max} = \text{total interval length}/2$ . Contours of constant  $\lambda_c$  are also plotted in black. Large spacing between contour lines indicates plateaus in  $\lambda_c$ . A plateau indicates that the fluctuations are correlated on scales equal-to or smaller-than  $T_{max}$ . There is an observable difference in  $\lambda_c$  before and after the shock; a large plateau exists between the  $\lambda_c = 3$  and  $\lambda_c = 10$  contour lines immediately downstream of the shock, but in the region upstream of the shock transition region  $\lambda_c$  exceeds  $100 d_i$ . Contour lines were generated on a grid with a horizontal scale of  $123.7 s$ .

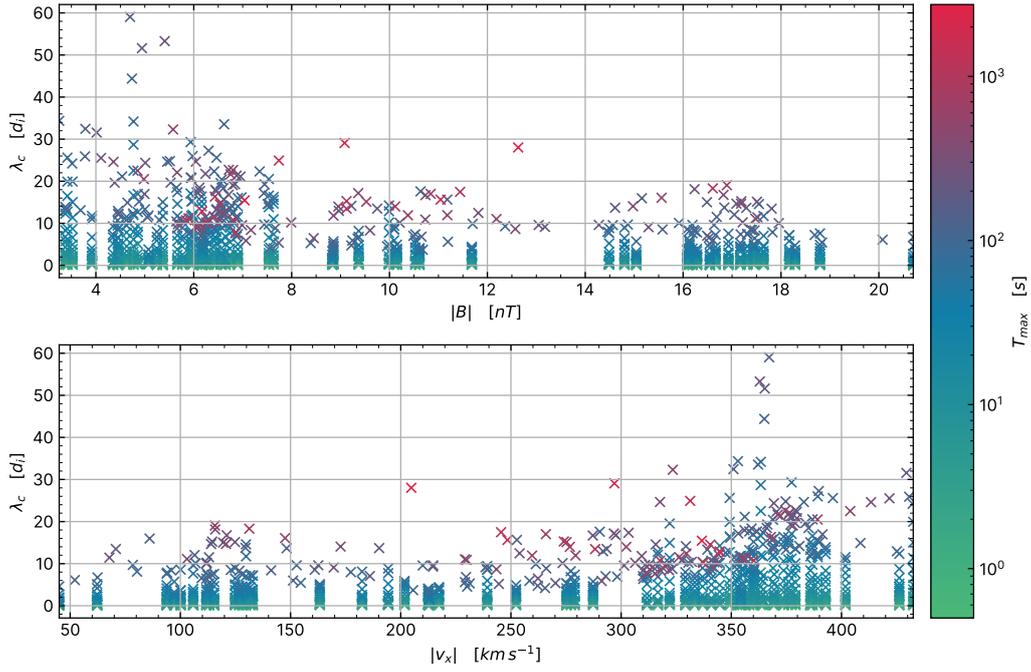


**Figure 9.** Similar to Figure 8 for event D. Unlike in Figure 8, there is no distinct change in correlation length across the shock easily identifiable by eye in this event. Contour lines were generated on a grid with a horizontal scale of 500 s.

270 data further into the solar wind we would likely have seen this increase far higher, given  
 271 that solar wind correlation lengths have been measured by the ACE spacecraft at the  
 272 L1 Lagrange point to be  $0.03\text{--}0.08\text{ }Au$ , which is approximately  $50\text{--}100 \times 10^3 d_i$  (Ragot,  
 273 2022). In the magnetosheath we see a very clear plateau of  $3\text{--}10 d_i$  immediately down-  
 274 stream of the shock, which appears to slowly increase further into the magnetosheath.  
 275 At the point in the magnetosheath furthest from the shock (04 : 42), the correlation  
 276 length may still be in a plateau but with  $\lambda_c > 10 d_i$ .

277 Figure 9 shows an equivalent plot for the quasi-parallel event, D. The correlation  
 278 length on the SW side is approximately  $\lambda_c = 3\text{--}10 d_i$ , however there are foreshock struc-  
 279 tures at 19:36, 19:48, 20:07 and 20:20, which are potential partial shock crossings, which  
 280 strongly indicates that this is not representative of the solar wind, and is instead an ex-  
 281 tended shock transition region or foreshock. These structures may reduce the average  
 282 correlation length, similar to Figure 8. This can be seen in the background colour but  
 283 not in the contour lines, which are generated on a grid size larger than the fluctuations.  
 284 The correlation length after the shock also appears to be in the range  $\lambda_c = 10\text{--}30 d_i$ ,  
 285 slightly larger than what is observed for the quasi-perpendicular event A.

286 Figure 10 presents the same data as Figure 9 (event D), but uses  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and  $|v_{x,i}|$  as  
 287 proxies for distance through the shock. Low  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and high  $|v_x|$  are associated with the  
 288 solar wind, before the shock compresses and increases  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and considerably reduces ion  
 289 velocity. Therefore, high  $|\mathbf{B}|$  and low  $|v_x|$  are associated with the magnetosheath down-  
 290 stream of the shock. We look at the data in this way to mitigate the effects of non-stationarity  
 291 and shock motion. This allows us to quantify Figures 8 and 9 more directly. We can see  
 292 that the peak *observable*  $\lambda_c$  in the solar wind,  $\lambda_c \approx 58 d_i$  is approximately halved af-  
 293 ter the shock crossing to  $\lambda_c \approx 29 d_i$ . As in Figures 8 and 9, we seek consistent corre-  
 294 lation lengths  $\lambda_c$  that are independent of  $T_{max}$ . These are visible in Figure 10 as regions  
 295 where data with high  $T_{max}$  (red crosses) are seen at similar  $\lambda_c$  to those with lower  $T_{max}$   
 296 (blue or green crosses). Consistent correlation lengths are observed for the solar wind  
 297 at  $\lambda_c \approx 25 d_i$ , while in the magnetosheath consistent  $\lambda_c$  are no higher than  $20 d_i$ . Con-



**Figure 10.** *Top:*  $\lambda_c$  against  $|B|$  for different values of  $T_{max}$  (colour) for event D. Higher  $|B|$  is correlated with distance from the shock. Three slopes fit to points of constant  $T_{max}$  are also plotted, a positive slope would correspond to  $\lambda_c$  increasing closer to the shock while a negative slope would be the opposite (decreasing). *Bottom:* Similar to the *top* panel, it shows  $\lambda_c$  against  $|v_x|$  for different  $T_{max}$  (colour). Higher  $|v_x|$  occurs in the solar wind before being slowed by the shock.

298 sistent correlation lengths are most visible in the magnetosheath where  $|\mathbf{B}| = 17 \text{ nT}$   
 299 and  $|v_x| = 120 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ .

300 Finally, there are indications that shock micro-structure and non-stationarity may  
 301 also have an effect on the correlation length. In the quasi-perpendicular case, Figure 8,  
 302 we see two periods of upstream wave activity visible at 04:54 and 04:56 in the top panel,  
 303 both approximately sixty seconds in duration. This causes a significant reduction of  $\lambda_c$   
 304 of approximately a factor of 10 compared to the immediate surroundings, but only for  
 305  $T_{max} \leq 60 \text{ s}$ . Similar structure is also visible within the shock ramp at 04:52:30. These  
 306 upstream wave packets may be partial crossings of the shock foot caused by ripples on  
 307 the shock surface (Johlander et al., 2016). Hence, the features in the filtered correlation  
 308 length may be associated with fluctuations in the foot and ramp associated with this form  
 309 of non-stationarity. A similar effect is also visible, although to a much lesser extent, in  
 310 figure 9, where the periods of large amplitude magnetic field are associated with slightly  
 311 lower correlation lengths than the surroundings extending to longer scales, e.g. at 19 :  
 312 35 between  $T_{max} = 10$  and  $T_{max} = 100$ . This would seem to suggest that there are  
 313 some structures in the shock transition region that can influence the stirring scales in  
 314 a manner more complex than a simple transition from solar wind to magnetosheath.

## 315 6 Conclusions

316 In this study, we used three different measures of turbulence, the magnetic spec-  
 317 trum, scale-independent kurtosis and correlation length, to explore the evolution of the  
 318 solar wind and magnetosheath turbulence across Earth's bow shock. The influence of  
 319 the bow shock transition region on the properties of turbulence is not currently well un-  
 320 derstood. Therefore, by using the magnetic spectrum to observe differences in the tur-  
 321 bulent energy cascade, the kurtosis to explore the properties of intermittency and the  
 322 correlation length to describe changes in stirring scales, we aim to produce a represen-  
 323 tative picture of how turbulence evolves from the solar wind, across the bow shock, and  
 324 downstream into the magnetosheath.

325 We find that the shock transition region displays features in the spacecraft frame  
 326 magnetic spectrum that are different to the turbulence present in the solar wind and mag-  
 327 netosheath. This can be seen as shock transition spectral slopes which are steeper at mul-  
 328 tiple scales than either of their upstream or downstream neighbours (Figure 6). This sug-  
 329 gests shock processes are driving scale dependent energy dissipation at both sub-ion and  
 330 sub-electron scales. This is observed at both quasi-parallel and quasi-perpendicular shocks  
 331 (events A and D,  $\theta_{Bn} = 68^\circ$  and  $17^\circ$  respectively). However, we note that these signa-  
 332 tures are not always so clearly observable. This is the case for events B and C, which  
 333 are not extensively discussed in the main body of this manuscript. Instead, figures show-  
 334 ing structure (or lack thereof) in the magnetic spectral indices and scale-independent kur-  
 335 tosis are shown in the supplemental material. We find that the breakpoint ( $BP$ ) sepa-  
 336 rating the inertial range from the ion range transitions from  $BP \ll d_i$  before the shock,  
 337 to  $d_i \leq BP \leq \rho_i$  in the magnetosheath. This occurred over a 45 s interval for event  
 338 A and a 3 minute interval for event D, suggesting that the time needed for the turbu-  
 339 lent fluctuations to transition from solar wind-like to magnetosheath-like is dependent  
 340 on  $\theta_{Bn}$ .

341 Finally, we have adapted the definition of correlation length to include a high-pass  
 342 filter defined by a critical frequency  $F_{crit}$ , which allowed us to calculate a turbulent cor-  
 343 relation length across the shock that effectively removes the large-scale spectral influ-  
 344 ence of the shock. We found that close to the shock the correlation length is longer on  
 345 the solar wind side than the magnetosheath by a factor of at least 2 when considering  
 346 the maximum  $\lambda_c$ . Plateaus in high-pass filtered correlation length averaged 25 d<sub>i</sub> in the  
 347 solar wind and  $< 20 \text{ d}_i$  in the magnetosheath. This relates to a reduction in size of the  
 348 stirring scale in the magnetosheath when compared to solar wind close to the shock. We

found that upstream structures in the shock transition region can affect the correlation length by introducing new plateaus for short periods of time, on the order of 10s of seconds.

We note that the case studies shown here may not be representative of all shocks. The natural next step is therefore to determine whether the conclusions reached here are representative of the typical quasi-parallel or quasi-perpendicular shock. In a future work, we will compile a statistical survey of shocks across a range of shock normal angles and other plasma parameters, to explore the average behaviour of the bow shock.

## Acknowledgments

J. Plank was supported by STFC studentship ST/V507064/1 (2502298). I. Gingell was supported by the Royal Society University Research Fellowship No. URF\R1\191547.

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the MMS Science Data Center at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) hosted by the University of Colorado, Boulder (<https://lasp.colorado.edu/mms/sdc/public/>), references (Burch et al., 2015; Ergun et al., 2014; Lindqvist et al., 2014; Torbert et al., 2014; Pollock et al., 2016), and NASA/GSFC's Space Physics Data Facility's OMNIWeb service (<https://omniweb.gsfc.nasa.gov/>, references (Lepping et al., 1995; Ogilvie et al., 1995; Smith et al., 1998; McComas et al., 1998).

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