

# Chiral Transport of Hot Carriers in Graphene in the Quantum Hall Regime

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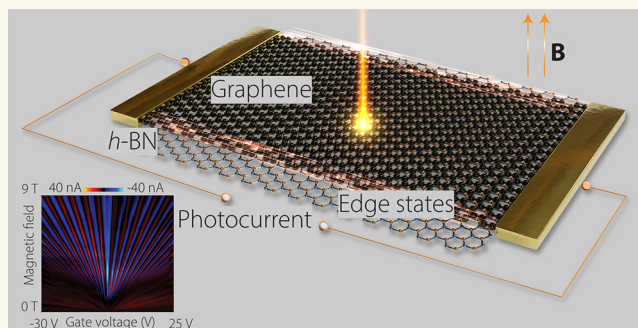
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**ABSTRACT:** Photocurrent (PC) measurements can reveal the relaxation dynamics of photoexcited hot carriers beyond the linear response of conventional transport experiments, a regime important for carrier multiplication. Here, we study the relaxation of carriers in graphene in the quantum Hall regime by accurately measuring the PC signal and modeling the data using optical Bloch equations. Our results lead to a unified understanding of the relaxation processes in graphene over different magnetic field strength regimes, which is governed by the interplay of Coulomb interactions and interactions with acoustic and optical phonons. Our data provide clear indications of a sizable carrier multiplication. Moreover, the oscillation pattern and the saturation behavior of PC are manifestations of not only the chiral transport properties of carriers in the quantum Hall regime but also the chirality change at the Dirac point, a characteristic feature of a relativistic quantum Hall effect.

**KEYWORDS:** graphene, quantum Hall effect, photocurrent, carrier multiplication, carrier relaxation, Auger effect, chiral electron transport



Chiral transport is a signature feature in many topological systems<sup>1,2</sup> and results from restrictions in the motion of a particle at the edge of a gapped two-dimensional system to a single direction.<sup>1,3,4</sup> In quantum Hall systems, the edge chirality of the charge carriers is determined by the direction of the magnetic field.<sup>3,5,6</sup> A special case is the quantum Hall effect in graphene where the relativistic nature of the electrons leads to particle-hole symmetry, and the absence of an intrinsic band gap allows for both the relaxation of carriers and the tunability of the Fermi level across the Dirac point. Importantly, carriers within Landau levels (LLs) across the Dirac point have opposite edge chirality,<sup>7–10</sup> with an exception of the zeroth LL (LL<sub>0</sub>).<sup>11–13</sup> Therefore, in optical experiments which excite electrons from LLs far below the Dirac point to LLs high above, an interesting interplay occurs between carriers of different types (electrons and holes) within LLs of potentially different edge chiralities.<sup>9,14</sup> In particular, the edge chirality of a carrier may change during the relaxation process depending on the energy of the Fermi level with respect to the Dirac point, and in addition, the relaxation rates of electrons and holes may change and become unequal depending on the position of the Fermi level within a given LL. The result is a rich variety of photocurrent (PC) patterns, reflecting the interplay of topological properties of LLs as well

as the uncharacteristic relaxation dynamics, whose detailed measurements are reported here, along with a microscopic modeling and an intuitive picture that together form a cohesive explanation of the observed behavior, and at the same time provides insight in role of different relaxation channels, including carrier–carrier and carrier–phonon scattering.

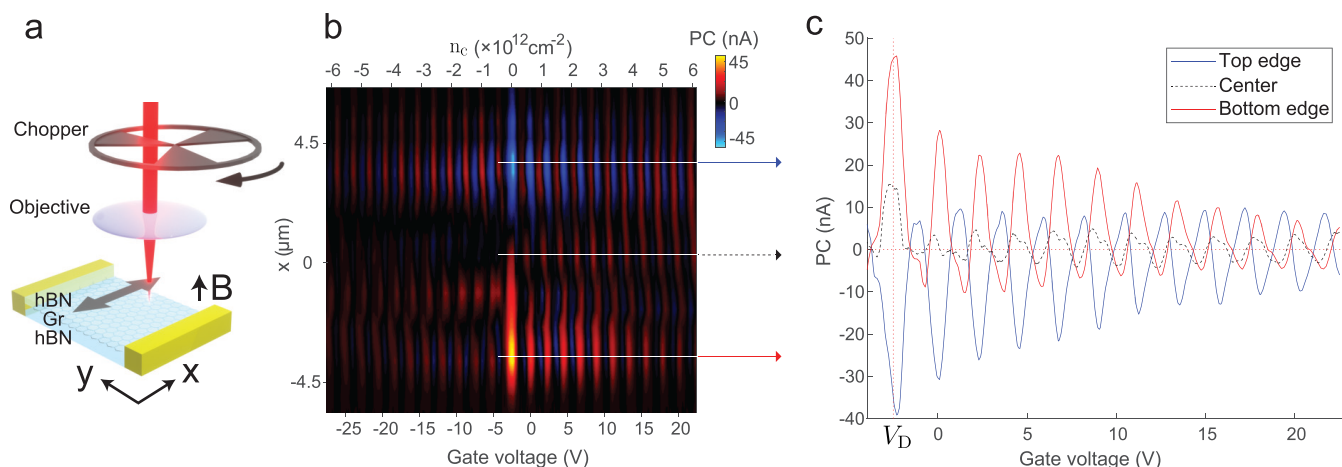
Qualitative studies of the PC in the quantum Hall regime have been reported.<sup>9,14–17</sup> An intuitive picture based on a relaxation bottleneck for either excited electrons or excited holes has been given in ref 9, but invoking a competing interpretation, the PC has also been explained with heating effects.<sup>15,16,18</sup> A unified picture of the PC, based on and backed by a quantitative model, has still been missing. Possible contributions from carrier multiplication (CM)<sup>9,19–21</sup> have been considered in the context of hot carrier relaxation, but despite many attempts with optical methods,<sup>22–24</sup> definitive

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**Figure 1.** Schematics of the setup and the spatial profile of PC. (a) Schematics of the setup, illustrating that the PC is measured along the center line of the sample in the  $x$  direction (gray arrow) as a function of position and gate voltage. The PC is measured at  $+B$  and  $-B$ . The PCs of two opposite fields are subtracted to isolate the contribution to the PC which depends on the orientation of the  $B$ -field, plotted in (b) for  $B = 4.5$  T. The much weaker contribution which is independent from the orientation of  $B$  is shown in Figure S5 in the [Supporting Information](#). (b) Measured PC as a function of the  $x$  position and gate voltage. Prominent PC oscillations are observed on the edges (located at  $x = \pm 4.5 \mu\text{m}$ ), whereas the PC is minimal in the bulk (located around  $x = 0 \mu\text{m}$ ). This indicates that the PC is predominately attributed to the edge states. (c) Cuts of the PC on the edges as a function of gate voltage. The zeros of the PC at high LLs match with the even fillings (ignoring spin) of the LLs (systematically shown in [Figure 2a](#)). PC oscillations on the two edges have opposite polarities, indicating that the PC is related to the chiral transport of carriers on the edges.

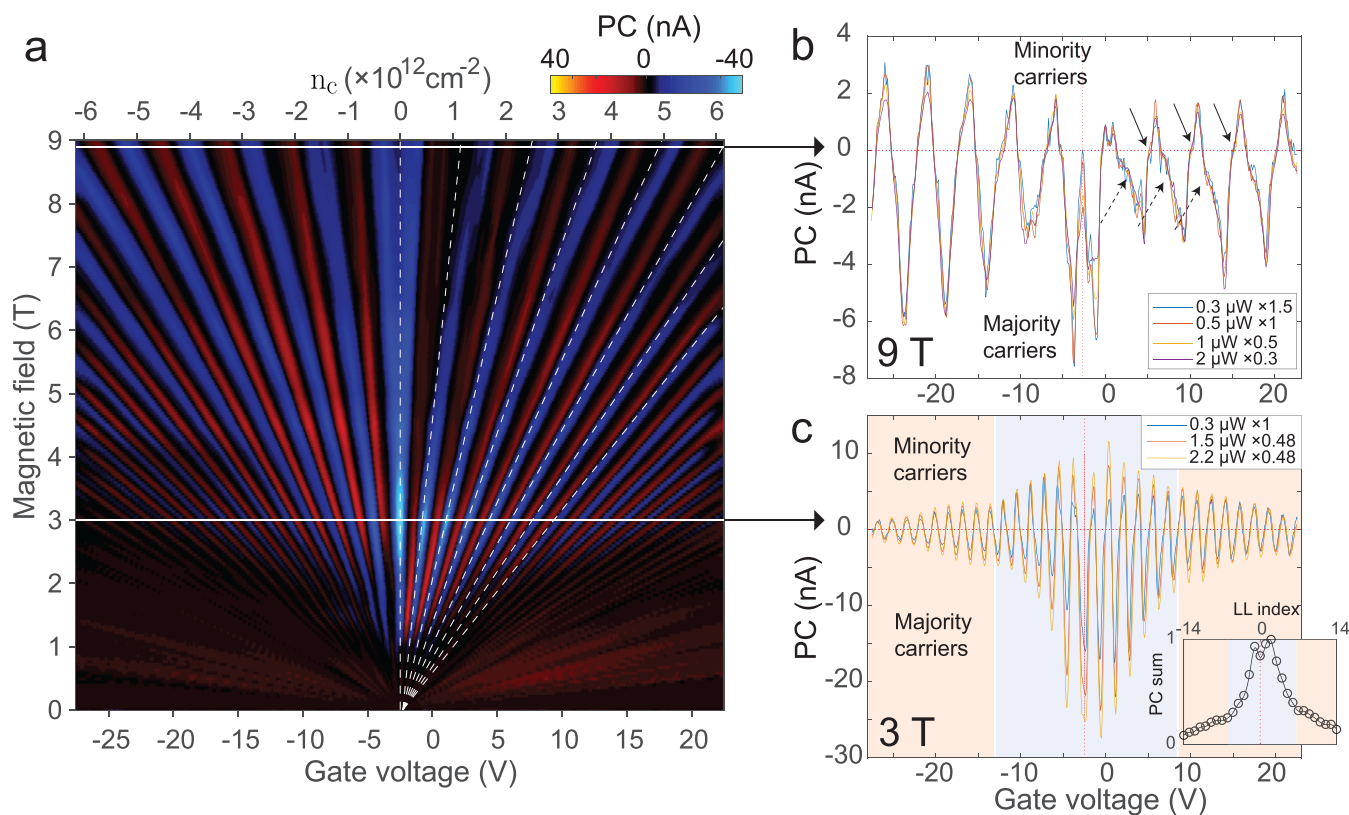
evidence of CM in a Landau quantized monolayer graphene using electric measurements is still ambiguous.<sup>16,25,26</sup> Experimentally, PC measurements from graphene in the quantum Hall regime are commonly obscured by the sample's substantially varying impedance when sweeping the Fermi level through many LLs. In addition, spatial scans of PC can be correlated with inhomogeneous doping and charge puddles.<sup>9</sup> These make the analysis of the PC mechanism even more challenging.

Here, we address these technical challenges by using a trans-impedance amplifier (TIA). This allows an accurate and precise measurement of PC, independent of the sample's varying impedance,<sup>27–29</sup> while simultaneously keeping other parameters strictly controlled. At fixed magnetic fields, we observe prominent PC oscillations with opposite polarities on each of the two edges of the sample, as the Fermi level is swept through LLs. On top of these oscillations, our measurement technique reveals a rich additional structure of the PC, which provides clear insight into the microscopic processes which are at work when generating the out-of-equilibrium currents. These details include an envelope curve of the oscillations (especially in weak magnetic fields), a nonsinusoidal shape of the oscillations (especially in strong magnetic fields), as well as a characteristic dip of the PC at the Dirac point. In addition, we find the PC saturates with optical intensity and the critical power of this saturation changes as the Fermi level sweeps through LLs. By applying a model using optical Bloch equations to simulate the PC, and by matching the model data to the observed PC, we obtain crucial hints related to the carrier relaxation in graphene. Specifically, our quantitative model of the non-equilibrium dynamics contains the scattering of excited carriers with acoustic and optical phonons, as well as Coulomb carrier–carrier interactions. The PC is then calculated based on hot carrier populations and their edge chiralities (group velocities) arising from energy dispersions on the edges. Agreement between experiment and model does not only confirm the qualitative picture based on a relaxation

bottleneck, but it also provides compelling evidence of CM. The simulation indicates that the PC oscillation is due to the alternating balance of available number of states for electrons and holes as we sweep the Fermi level through quantized LLs. As carriers relax across the Dirac point, the PC contributions from electrons and holes change from constructive to destructive, explaining the observed pattern of critical saturation powers. In addition, we find that the simulated PC matches the measurement at high magnetic fields only when Coulomb scattering is included, revealing evidence for CM. Our work provides a study of carrier relaxation processes using continuous excitation, which extends beyond the ultrafast regime studied in most pump–probe measurements. In addition, our evidence of the long-coveted electrically measured CM will contribute to applications of graphene as efficient light detection devices. Finally, based on our model, PC may be used to explore additional topological phenomena in the emerging fields of 2D materials and twistrionics.<sup>30,31</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Experimental Observations.** The experimental setup is shown in [Figure 1a](#). We focus a stabilized weak continuous-wave (CW) laser ( $<10 \mu\text{W}$ ,  $\lambda = 940 \text{ nm}$ ) on a two-terminal square sample with dimensions ( $\sim 10 \mu\text{m}$ ) much larger than the laser spot ( $\sim 1 \mu\text{m}$ ). The sample is at a temperature  $\sim 4 \text{ K}$  and has a mobility of  $13100 \text{ cm}^2/(\text{Vs})$ . The laser is chopped by a mechanical chopper with a frequency  $\sim 300 \text{ Hz}$ . We move the laser spot position on the sample and record the PC as a function of the gate voltage through two electrical contacts. The sample is not biased by any external voltage. The PC is measured via a homemade TIA which converts current to voltage independent of the sample's substantially varying impedance when sweeping the Fermi level through many LLs. This guarantees accurate measurements of the PC, including the corresponding current amplitude envelopes (see [Supporting Information](#) for discussions) as well as minimizes the Johnson–Nyquist noise from the sample.<sup>29</sup> The voltage output



**Figure 2.** Magnetic field dependence of the PC on the edge. (a) PC on the top sample edge as a function of field strength and gate voltage is plotted, showing the Landau fan for the PC. The excitation power used is  $1 \mu\text{W}$ . Data for  $0.3$  and  $2 \mu\text{W}$  are shown in Figure S6 in the Supporting Information. The dashed white lines are even fillings of LLs (ignoring spin) extracted from the transport fan (see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information). As  $E_F$  is scanned, each LL (except the 0th) gives rise to a positive and a negative PC peak. (b) Cuts of PC for various pump powers at a high field of  $9 \text{ T}$ , scaled by factors given in the legend. The shape of the oscillations shows that polarity changes at even fillings (dashed black arrows) are smoother than those at odd fillings (solid black arrows). We also see a prominent dip at the Dirac point which is due to efficient carrier relaxation when  $E_F = 0$ . (c) Cuts of the PC (scaled vertically by factors shown in the legend) for various pump powers at a low field of  $3 \text{ T}$ . Based on measurements and simulations, the side with a more substantial envelope (the negative side) is attributed to the majority carriers and the other (the positive side) to the minority carriers, as marked in (b,c). The scaled PC cuts overlap well for high LLs but not near the Dirac point, indicating inhomogeneous PC power dependence with respect to LLs. In addition, we sum over the absolute values of the two PC peaks originating from the same LL and plot as a function of LL index in the inset of (c). The plot shows two regimes shaded in yellow and blue, where the blue regime has larger slopes than the yellow, indicating different mechanisms, consistent with our model. Error bars are smaller than markers. Measurements on the other sample, showing the same behaviors, are given in the Supporting Information.

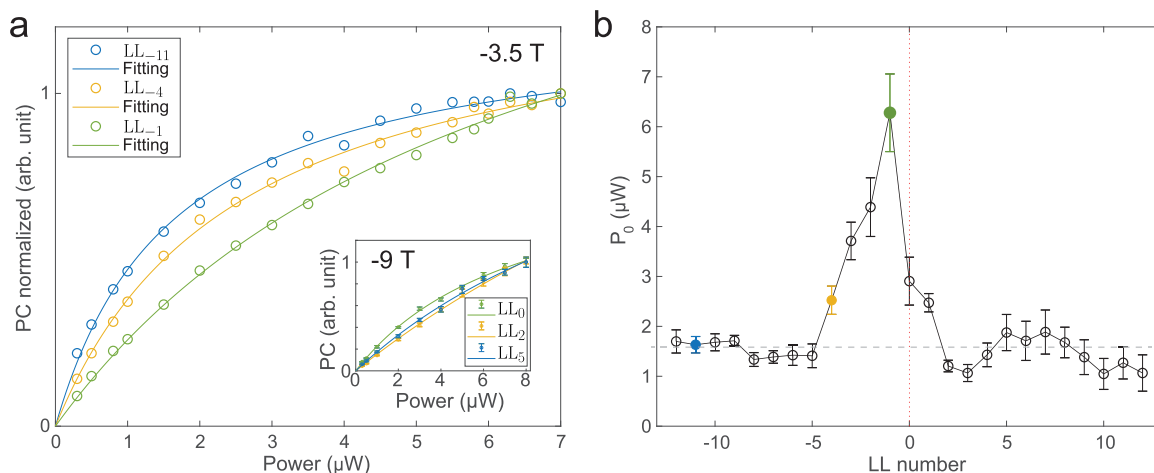
of the TIA is measured with a lock-in amplifier which is frequency-locked with the chopped laser. Our measurements are repeated on two samples (see Supporting Information).

First, we spatially map the PC on the sample at a fixed magnetic field, as illustrated in Figure 1a with experimental data in Figure 1b. Specifically, we stabilize the laser spot at a fixed position on the center line of the sample and record the PC as a function of the gate voltage. Then we scan the laser spot position from edge to edge along the perpendicular center line to obtain a two-dimensional plot (vs  $x$  and gate voltage). We find that the strength and polarity of the PC depend on the position of the laser, as we scan the laser spot across the sample, along the center line, as shown in Figure 1a, and the gate voltage, controlling the Fermi level ( $E_F$ ) in the sample. We have determined that the PC is independent of the laser polarization. Thus, we ignore the spin degree of freedom and define even fillings as  $E_F$  in the middle of LLs, whereas odd fillings as in the middle of LL gaps. Next, we reverse the magnetic field, and we find that the PC signals are approximately reversed as well, especially when the laser spot is close to a sample edge. Therefore, we subtract the scans for

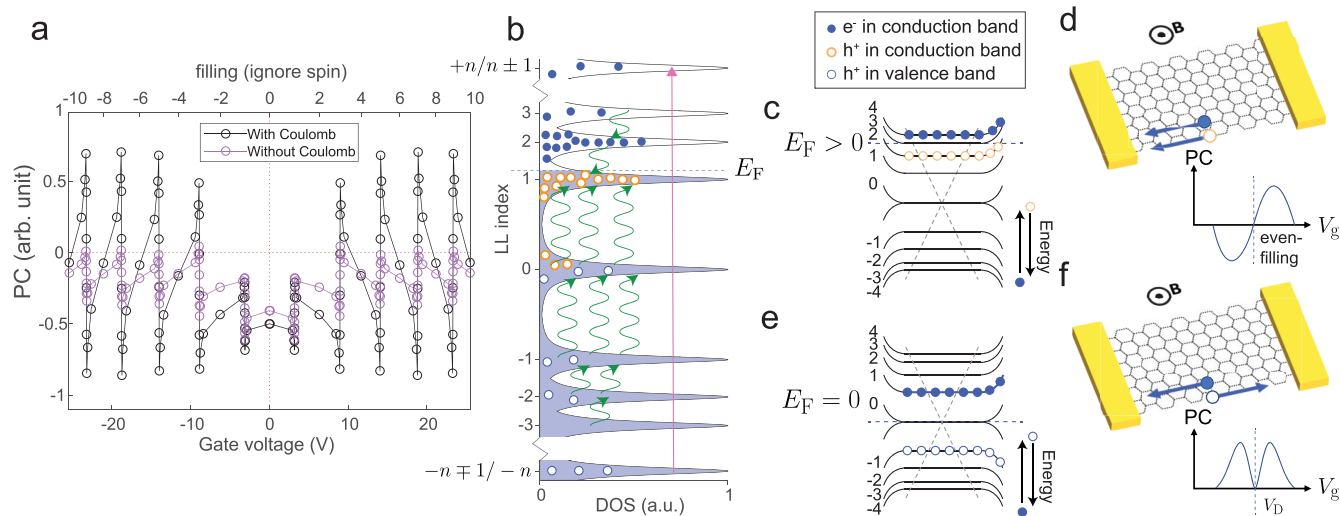
$+B$  and  $-B$  to separate the PC contribution which is dependent on the orientation of  $B$  ("orientation-dependent PC") from the one which is independent from the orientation of the  $B$ -field. The orientation-dependent PC is plotted in Figure 1b as a function of laser spot position and the gate voltage. The much weaker orientation-independent PC, caused by direct diffusion,<sup>32</sup> is shown in Figure S5 in the Supporting Information. In Figure 1c, we further visualize our data by showing cuts of the orientation-dependent PC as a function of gate voltage at three different positions on the sample: top edge, bottom edge, center. These plots highlight various features of the PC measurement: First, the orientation-dependent PC is strongly enhanced at the edges. Second, the PC oscillates with the gate voltage, and is strongest at the edges. Third, opposite edges give PC oscillations with opposite polarities. Fourth, PC peak values decrease as the backgate voltage increases away from the Dirac point.

We repeat our measurement on the top edge at different magnetic field strength up to  $9 \text{ T}$ . We find that the PC exhibits a Landau fan, shown in Figure 2a. Notably, this fan closely resembles the fan seen in conventional transport measure-





**Figure 3.** Power saturation behaviors of PC at various LLs. (a) Normalized PC at various LLs on the majority carriers side, as a function of optical power at 3.5 T. We observe little sign of PC saturation for  $LL_{-1}$ , while for LLs with larger indices ( $LL_{-4}$  and  $LL_{-11}$ ), the PC is saturated more easily. The largest contribution to this effect is the carriers (electrons and holes) from above or below the Dirac point. At high LLs, the PC is proportional to the subtraction of hot electrons and hole populations, which is limited by the relaxation rates difference (relaxation bottleneck). In contrast, for the low LLs, the PC is given as a sum over the populations of the two. In comparison, at a higher field of 9 T, there is little sign of saturation as shown in the inset. The error bars in (a) are smaller than the markers. (b) Fitted saturation powers  $P_0$  of the data shown in (a) as a function of the corresponding LL index. For high LLs,  $P_0$  remains flat (gray dashed line as a guide for the eyes) which is a result of the relaxation bottlenecks for  $E_F$  at different high LLs saturated at the same power. The error bars represent 95% confidence of fittings.



**Figure 4.** Modeling and simulations of the PC. (a) Simulated PC with and without Coulomb interactions as a function of gate voltage. The simulated PC with Coulomb interactions match the measured PC at 9 T shown in Figure 2b, whereas the simulation without Coulomb interactions does not, showing the importance of contributions from Coulomb interactions in the PC. In particular, without a Coulomb interaction, the simulated PC decreases with gate voltage away from the Dirac point, whereas the opposite trend appears for the case with Coulomb, which matches with the observation in Figure 2b. In addition, the simulations with Coulomb interactions have asymmetries between the positive and negative PC peaks away from the Dirac point that match well with the data represented in Figure 2b, whereas the simulations without Coulomb interactions do not. Moreover, the asymmetric LL PC peak shape also matches the observations (see arrows in Figure 2b). (b) Illustration of the excitation and carrier relaxations across LLs. Selection rules allow optical excitations of carriers between LLs  $-n$  and  $n \pm 1$ ,  $-n \pm 1$ , and  $n$ . Depending on  $E_F$ , excited electrons and holes may relax to the same side of the Dirac point. These electrons and holes share the same edge chirality (e.g., the holes above the Dirac point, orange hollow circles, and the electrons, blue solid dots) and therefore give rise to the destructive part of the PC. (c,d) Illustrations of electrons and holes on the same side of the Dirac point having the same edge chirality, giving a destructive PC. (e,f) Illustrations of electrons and holes on different sides of the Dirac point having opposite edge chiralities, giving a constructive PC.

ments (transport measurements are plotted in the Supporting Information). Additional features of the PC measurement are revealed by comparing PC slices at different fields, e.g., at 9 and 3 T as shown in Figure 2b,c for various laser intensities, where each PC slice is scaled vertically such that all of the slices overlap at large backgate voltages. At low field (Figure

2c), the PC peaks form an envelope with larger PC values closer to the Dirac point, while the envelope diminishes at high field (Figure 2b). The envelope at low field can be separated into two regimes, with different slopes of PC as a function of gate voltage. This is highlighted in the inset of Figure 2c, where we sum over the absolute value of two PC peaks (positive and

negative) arising from the same LL and plot as a function of LL index. The positive PC values are due to minority carriers (i.e., electrons in the valence band or holes in the conduction band), whereas the negative PC values are due to majority carriers (i.e., holes in the valence band or electrons in the conduction band), indicated on the left of Figure 2c. This is discussed below.

Finally, we study the PC amplitude dependence on the laser intensity. By comparing the maximum PC amplitudes (negative PC values in Figure 2c, which is due to majority carriers) at various LLs with different laser intensity, shown in Figure 3a, we find that when the magnetic field is low, the PC exhibits only weak saturation when the Fermi level is near the Dirac point. But when the Fermi level is away from the Dirac point (above  $LL_{\pm 5}$ ), the PC saturates at a constant laser power as shown in Figure 3b. The saturation powers  $P_0$  are fitted with the saturable absorber model:<sup>33,34</sup>

$$J \propto \frac{P/P_0}{1 + P/P_0} \quad (1)$$

The extracted  $P_0$  corresponding to  $LL_{-12}$  to  $LL_{+12}$  is plotted in Figure 3b.

**Theoretical Model.** In order to model our data, we first recall that quantum Hall systems are insulating in the bulk, but have  $B$  dependent chiral transport on the edge when  $E_F$  is within a LL gap. Therefore, we assume that the PC part which depends on the orientation of  $B$  is given by intralevel currents from the system edge. We denote the carrier population by  $n_{\nu,k}$  where  $\nu$  is the LL index, and  $k$  is the wavenumber. The population shall refer to electrons above the Fermi level and to holes below the Fermi level. The PC generated by excited carriers is given by  $J \sim \sum_{\nu} \int dk q_{\nu} v_{\nu,k} k n_{\nu,k}$  where  $v_{\nu,k}$  is the group velocity of the given level, and  $q_{\nu}$  takes into account the charge of the carrier:  $q_{\nu} = 1$  when  $\nu$  is below the Fermi level;  $q_{\nu} = -1$  when  $\nu$  is above the Fermi level. Specifically,  $q_{\nu} = 0$  when  $\nu$  is at the Fermi level (i.e., for carriers within the LL where the Fermi level is located) accounts for the existence of both electrons and holes in the vicinity of the Fermi level, as well as for the divergent phonon coupling strength, where the divergent acoustic phonon coupling strength  $\propto 1/\omega$  in the limit of small frequencies.<sup>20</sup> To simplify the situation, we assume a constant group velocity  $v_{\nu,k} = v_{\nu}$ , whose precise value depends on the position of the laser spot on the sample. With this simplification, the current will be determined by the average population of the LL,  $n_{\nu} \sim \int dk n_{\nu,k}$ . Due to opposite velocities on the two edges,  $v_{\nu}$  changes sign as the laser is moved from one edge to the opposite edge, explaining the PC polarity flip from edge to edge shown in Figure 1b.

At a fixed laser position, due to opposite edge chirality of LLs  $\nu$  and  $-\nu$ , the velocities take opposite values:  $v_{\nu} = -v_{-\nu}$ , as illustrated in Figure 4e,f. In view of the otherwise identical transport properties in LLs, we take the group velocity to be a constant, i.e.,  $|v_{\nu}| = v$ .<sup>35,36</sup> An exception from this occurs when  $\nu = 0$  ( $LL_0$ ), where the lack of well-defined edge chirality yields  $v_0 = 0$  due to non-equilibrium distributions.<sup>11,12</sup> With these simplifications, the PC signal is

$$J \sim v \sum_{\nu \neq 0} q_{\nu} \text{sign}(\nu) n_{\nu}$$

This is similar to the Shockley–Ramo theorem<sup>37,38</sup> except that here the group velocities are given by the edge chirality rather than an electric field.

To determine the average LL population  $n_{\nu}$ , we employ the optical Bloch equations, as described in details in the Methods section. They determine the steady state in the presence of optical excitation and different relaxation channels (acoustic phonons, optical phonons, Coulomb scatterings). The result of our PC simulation is shown in Figure 4a. In particular, our PC model reproduces the PC oscillations as a function of gate voltage seen in the experiment. With all relaxation channels considered, the envelope of the simulated current matches with the experimentally obtained envelope in the high field regime. This is understood as certain assumptions in our simulation implicitly assume a strong magnetic field. Specifically, we neglected mixing between LLs, and the number of LLs in the simulation was limited to 21, which is close to the resolvable number of LLs (see Methods).

**Discussion.** The part of PC which depends on the orientation of the  $B$ -field is dominated by carriers at the edge (see Figure 1b). If all carriers on the edge contribute equally to the PC, the measured PC should not oscillate. To explain the prominent PC oscillations on the edge, we develop an effective model where the PC is due to the hot carriers whereas the carriers near  $E_F$  have little contribution due to the divergent acoustic phonon coupling strength between electrons and holes at  $E_F$  which has been elaborated above.

The polarity of edge current has two contributions. First, it depends on the chirality of the particular edge state,<sup>9</sup> which is incorporated in our theoretical model through the opposite group velocities for LLs above and below the Dirac point, as shown in Figure 4c–f. Second, the current polarity also depends on the charge of the hot carrier. Thus, if the Fermi level is sufficiently far away from the Dirac point, all hot carriers in the vicinity of the Fermi level will be on the same side of the Dirac point and contribute to the PC with the same edge chirality.<sup>39,40</sup> However, electrons and holes contribute with opposite charges, therefore, in this case the PC signal reflects a mismatch (a subtraction) between the number of hot electron carriers and hole carriers. The magnitude of this mismatch crucially depends on the position of the Fermi energy within the LL. More specifically, as we sweep  $E_F$  through a LL, the available number of states for electrons and holes alternates (illustrated in Figure 4b), generating unbalanced carrier numbers in accordance with Fermi's golden rule. This mechanism pictorially explains the PC oscillations (cf. also ref 9) which are also reproduced by our microscopic quantitative model invoking the relaxation of carriers, with edge chirality after photoexcitation. Details of the oscillation asymmetries, oscillation envelop structure, and the shape of oscillations are discussed below in the context of our model.

In the low field case (see Figure 2c for instance), asymmetries in the absolute values of the maximum PC between the majority and minority side are present at lower backgate voltage, i.e., near the Dirac point. As the Fermi level nears the Dirac point, the occupation of chiral edge states both above and below the Dirac point must be considered. Without considering carrier type, edge states on opposite sides of the Dirac point have opposite chirality. Thus, if a carrier population extends across the Dirac point, populations of the same carrier type on each side of the Dirac point contribute to opposite PC directions. Therefore, hot carrier populations above the Dirac point will add constructively with opposite carrier types below the Dirac point and destructively with opposite carrier types on the same side of the Dirac point,<sup>9</sup> leading to asymmetries in the maxima of the absolute values of

PC oscillations (Figure 2c). In both the experimental data, Figures 1c and 2, and in the simulation data, Figure 4a, we observe this asymmetry between positive and negative PC peaks.

This asymmetry manifests differently in high and low magnetic fields. In the high field case, due to the larger LL gaps, there are less LLs for relaxation compared to the low field case. As a result, most of the relevant LLs have well-defined edge chiralities. Therefore, the asymmetry manifests as a constant offset to PC for all LLs, which is shown in both the simulation (Figure 4a) and measurements (Figure 2b). In the low magnetic field case, the excitation energy corresponds to LLs with much larger index. These high LLs are merged together (measurements shown in Figure S9 in the Supporting Information), and thus they do not have well-defined edge chirality due to the lack of gaps.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in this case, the distribution of hot carriers only affects the PC peaks when  $E_F$  is in the low LLs and form the envelope as seen in Figure 2c, and it is elaborated next.

The concept of opposite carrier types on opposite sides of the Dirac point adding constructively to the PC reaches an extreme when the Fermi level is within the zeroth LL in the low field, again as shown in Figure 2c. With the Fermi level at the Dirac point, electrons necessarily belong to LLs above the Dirac point, whereas holes necessarily belong to LLs below the Dirac point. Together with the opposite edge chirality of electrons and holes regardless of their LL index, this leads to a situation in which their PC contributions are always constructive<sup>14</sup> and no polarity change can occur. Thus, in the low magnetic-field case, this situation gives rise to an envelop in the PC oscillation, in which the majority carrier side is peaking near the Dirac point. While when  $E_F$  moves away from the Dirac point, the constructive component is reduced as the distribution of hot carriers moves across the Dirac point. When  $E_F$  is far away from the Dirac point in this low magnetic field case, electrons and holes are mostly located on the same side of the Dirac point, so that electron and hole current contributions add destructively and the PC oscillations are almost symmetric. The two regimes:  $E_F$  near and away from the Dirac point, are indicated using different background shading colors in Figure 2c. In addition, in the inset in Figure 2c, we sum over the absolute values of PC peaks belonging to the same LL to highlight the different slopes of the PC amplitudes versus backgate voltage. The two regimes—one close to and one away from the Dirac point—are clear, reflecting our model.

When the field strength is high, an important caveat to our model is the fast relaxation of both types of carriers when  $E_F = 0$ . This results in a dip of the PC at the Dirac point and it is seen in the strong field data of Figure 2b and the simulation in Figure 4a. This dip in our data is not due to sublattice symmetry breaking from a Moiré pattern<sup>41,42</sup> or interaction-induced valley symmetry breaking of the LL<sub>0</sub>,<sup>13,43–45</sup> since none of the corresponding features, such as the minibands and LL splittings, is observed in our transport measurements (see Figure S2 in the Supporting Information).

Using the PC envelopes, we see evidence for carrier multiplication.<sup>19,23</sup> Specifically, in Figure 2c, as we sweep  $E_F$  from high LLs to the Dirac point, the majority carrier PC peaks increase in amplitude, as a consequence of minority carriers starts to distribute across the Dirac point, which is discussed above. This alone is not an evidence of CM, but carrier distribution around the Dirac point. However, the minority

carrier peaks grow as well and the only explanation of both the majority and minority carrier PC peaks increase in our model is that carriers are multiplied as they relax from high LLs to low LLs. This is also accompanied by simulations: by turning off the Coulomb interactions, simulations show much weaker PC, and the simulated envelope (Figure 4a) matches the measured one at high field (Figure 2b) only if Coulomb scattering is taken into account.

The unique shape of the individual oscillations within a LL is well-represented in our theoretical model and is strikingly similar to our high-magnetic field experimental data. This asymmetry in the individual oscillation shape gives insight into the hot-carrier relaxation process. In particular, when  $E_F$  sweeps pass the even filling point in a LL, hot carriers of one type slowly outnumber the other type, leading to a smooth PC polarity flip. In contrast, when the LL is gapped and  $E_F$  sweeps pass an odd filling point in the LL, the number of available states for relaxation quenches. This creates a relaxation bottleneck for one carrier type, whereas relaxation from the other carrier type emerges, leading to a shape change in PC. This is seen in the experimental data of Figure 2b, where the oscillations are clearly not sinusoidal. At positive gate voltage, we note that positive PC peaks are not aligned exactly in the middle of two negative PC peaks. Instead, they are shifted toward the Dirac point, which makes the PC polarity changes at odd fillings (marked by solid black arrows in Figure 2b) more abrupt than the ones at even fillings (marked by dashed black arrows in Figure 2b). This feature is matched in our simulation (Figure 4a).

Experimental data related to PC saturation are shown in Figure 3 and can provide additional insights to carrier distributions. We observe that the PC for low LLs does not saturate, whereas the high LL PC saturates much easier. This is consistent with our model since the PC for low LLs is mainly a sum of the electron and hole currents, whereas in the high LL regime, the PC saturates much easier since it is the difference of electron and hole currents and thus bottlenecked by the difference of relaxation rates of electrons and holes.<sup>25,46</sup> This is evidenced by the observed markedly different saturation powers,  $P_0$  for low and high LL (Figure 3b) which supports the different mechanisms of the PC generation in these two regimes. In addition, in Figure 2c, we see the scaled PCs measured as a function of different laser powers overlap well in the high LLs but do not for the low ones, indicating inhomogeneous PC power dependence with respect to LLs.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we accurately measure the PC in graphene in the quantum Hall regime by using a TIA. The improved accuracy allows us to correlate particular experimental features with our theory and simulations to form a coherent model of PC in the quantum Hall system. In particular, the balance between hot electrons and hot holes oscillates with the alternating available number of states for electrons and holes near the Fermi level, as it is swept through LLs. The chiral current contributions from these hot carriers are determined by the edge chirality of carriers originated from the confinement dispersion, together with their charge. As a consequence of the flipped edge chirality across the Dirac point as well as a hot carrier distribution over LLs, PC shows different saturation behaviors when the Fermi level is close or away from the Dirac point. In addition, inclusion of the carrier multiplication and Coulomb interaction is imperative to



explain the simultaneously growing majority and minority carrier PC peaks in the low field and the PC oscillation pattern in the high field.

We believe our coherent model of PC from graphene in the quantum Hall regime will push the development of applications using graphene such as single-photon detection<sup>47–49</sup> and light harvesting,<sup>50,51</sup> as an electrically measured CM has been long-coveted.<sup>25</sup> Novel quantum Hall regimes, with modified optical properties, can be realized with a giant synthetic gauge field.<sup>52</sup> Our findings will also facilitate exploring additional physics such as studies of twistrionics.<sup>53</sup> In this context, an interesting application of PC measurements are the different Chern insulating phases,<sup>30,31</sup> characterized by different nonzero Chern numbers. Although Chern numbers are defined by the linear response of the system, it can be expected that also the PC, as a far-from-equilibrium probe, carries some signatures of the topological index—to some extent similar to the chirality trace discussed in the present article. Moreover, photocurrent measurements might prove useful to investigate extended states in topological quantum devices by using twisted light.<sup>54</sup> In addition, they may provide a different angle for studying and distinguishing topological edge currents<sup>55–57</sup> and the recently confirmed nontopological edge currents.<sup>58,59</sup> Finally, another interesting application could be the control of the CM.<sup>60</sup>

## METHODS

**Sample Fabrication.** Graphene was exfoliated from natural graphite crystals (HQ Graphene) and hBN was exfoliated from a synthetic crystal.<sup>61</sup> Both materials were exfoliated using the Scotch-tape method on two different Si substrates with a dry-grown 90 nm thick SiO<sub>2</sub> layer on top. Monolayer graphene and 10–15 nm thick hBN were identified based on the color contrast on their respective substrates by an optical microscope. Thicknesses of each material were later confirmed by micro-Raman<sup>62</sup> and atomic force microscopy. Heterostructures of hBN/graphene/hBN were assembled by a hot pick-up method<sup>63</sup> on the same type of substrates. The backside of the substrates was metallized and used as a backgate. Assembled heterostructures were shaped into squares of different sizes, ranging from 3 μm × 3 μm to 10 μm × 10 μm, by electron-beam (e-beam) lithography. The heterostructures were etched by reactive-ion etching (RIE) employing an 80 nm thick Al hard mask deposited in an e-beam evaporator. Graphene and hBN were etched selectively by O<sub>2</sub> and SF<sub>6</sub> plasma, respectively, to expose edges of graphene. The hard mask was removed in tetramethylammonium hydroxide solution after etching. The graphene edges were exposed along all four sides of the square-shaped heterostructures. Two of the graphene edges exposed on the opposite sides of the square were metallized to realize electrical contacts.<sup>64</sup> The Cr/Pd/Au (2/5/80 nm) contacts were patterned by e-beam lithography and slightly overlapped the heterostructures. They were deposited in an e-beam evaporator at the base pressure of 10<sup>–6</sup> mbar. Fabricated devices were wire-bonded to chip carriers for the electrical and PC measurements.

**Transport and PC Measurements.** Standard transport measurements are obtained with low frequency lock-in technique with an excitation current of 20 nA at 13 Hz. Each transport data point is an average of 10 measurements. Gate voltage sweeping is achieved using a DC source measure unit (Keithley 2400). The gate voltage is ramped with a step size of 5 mV, and between two steps, a wait time of 10 ms is added to avoid hysteresis. Every 10 steps, we wait another 200 ms. The sample resistance is measured every 20 or 100 mV depending on the total scan range of gate voltage. PC measurements are obtained with a chopped laser at 308 Hz. The intensity, polarization, and wavelength of the laser are stabilized at a frequency of 30 Hz to ensure accurate measurements. Further information are given in the [Supporting Information](#). The sample, inside a variable temperature insert (VTI), is mounted on top of a piezo-electric stack

(scanners (ANSxy100) and positioners (ANPx101, ANPz201), with a total resolution of sub-nanometers). It is cooled down to 4 K, and an out-of-plane magnetic field up to 9 T can be applied. The VTI has an optical window on top and a confocal microscope is built above to optically resolve the sample. The excitation laser is illuminated through the same window and the laser spot's position with respect to the sample can be monitored with the microscope and can be adjusted with the stack as well as a piezo-controlled mirror mount. The sample is not biased. The two electrodes of the sample are connected to the TIA located outside the cryostat and the outputs of the TIA are connected with the frequency-locked lock-in amplifier (SR860). Each data point of the PC is an average of 10 measurements. Details of the TIA can be found in the [Supporting Information](#).

**Optical Bloch Equations.** For a theoretical description of the system dynamics, we employ optical Bloch equations for Landau quantized graphene.<sup>19,20,54</sup> The population of LL<sub>*i*</sub> (averaged over all orbitals) is denoted by ρ<sub>*i*</sub>, and the (averaged) polarization between two LLs is denoted by P<sub>*ij*</sub>. Their equations of motion read as follows:

$$\dot{\rho}_i = 2\text{sign}(i)\text{Re}(\Omega_{ij}P_{ij}) + S_i^{(\text{in})}(1 - \rho_i) - S_i^{(\text{out})}\rho_i \quad (2)$$

$$\dot{P}_{ij} = -\Omega_{ij}^*(\rho_i - \rho_j) - \frac{\Gamma_0}{\hbar}P_{ij} \quad (3)$$

Here, we choose the rotating frame of the light field, in which we further employ the rotating wave approximation. With this, the Rabi frequency Ω<sub>*ij*</sub> takes nonzero values Ω<sub>0</sub> only for two resonant pairs of Landau levels, (i, j) = (n<sub>min</sub>, n<sub>max</sub> - 1) and (i, j) = (n<sub>min</sub> + 1, n<sub>max</sub>). For the modeling, we assume n<sub>min</sub> = -10 and n<sub>max</sub> = 10. This is because that the number of resolvable LLs in the sample #2065 is ~29, and this number does not change with B,<sup>65</sup> and we limit the total number of LLs to 21 due to computational cost. Choosing the electromagnetic vector potential for the light field at a constant value A = 5 × 10<sup>–10</sup> Vs/m, the Rabi frequency is given by Ω<sub>0</sub> =  $\frac{e}{m_e}M_{ij}A$  = 200 GHz, with an optical matrix element between nonzero Landau levels M<sub>*ij*</sub> = 2.25 × 10<sup>9</sup> m<sup>–1</sup>.<sup>20</sup> The scattering terms S<sub>*i*</sub><sup>(in)</sup> and S<sub>*i*</sub><sup>(out)</sup> are given in the [Supporting Information](#). The effect of scattering on the polarization is accounted by the dephasing Γ<sub>0</sub>, combined with the scattering at impurities which are responsible for Landau level broadening. We take Γ<sub>0</sub> as a phenomenological quantity, which roughly can be chosen in a range between Γ<sub>0</sub> = 5–10 meV to achieve good matches.

## ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsnano.2c05502>.

Calculation of scattering rates and pseudopotentials, experimental details of transport and PC measurements, and additional data ([PDF](#))

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## Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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