Relaxing supernova constraints

How nucleophobic axions survive finite-density corrections

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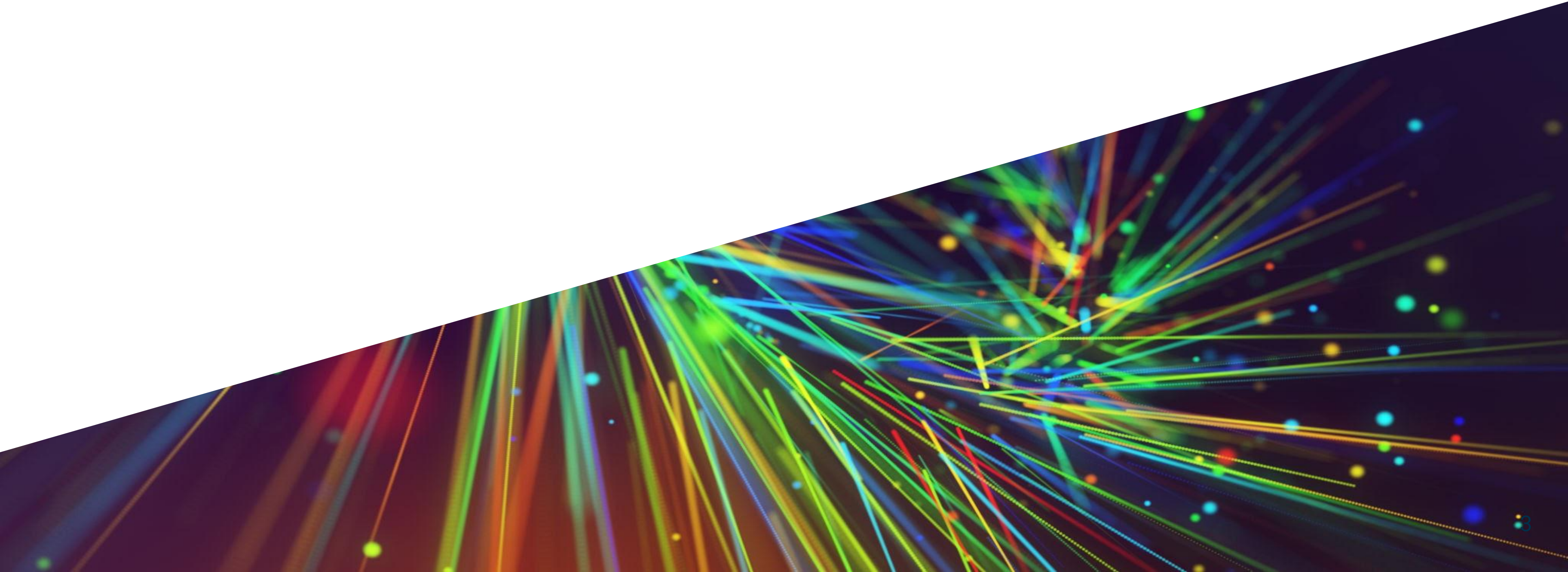
Outline

1. The QCD axion
2. Supernova bound and nucleophobic axion models
3. Finite density effects

The QCD axion



The strong CP problem

$$\mathcal{L}_{\mathrm{QCD}} \supset \frac{\vartheta g_s^2}{32\pi^2} G^a_{\mu\nu} \tilde{G}^{a,\mu\nu} - \sum_q e^{i\vartheta_q} m_q \bar{q} q$$

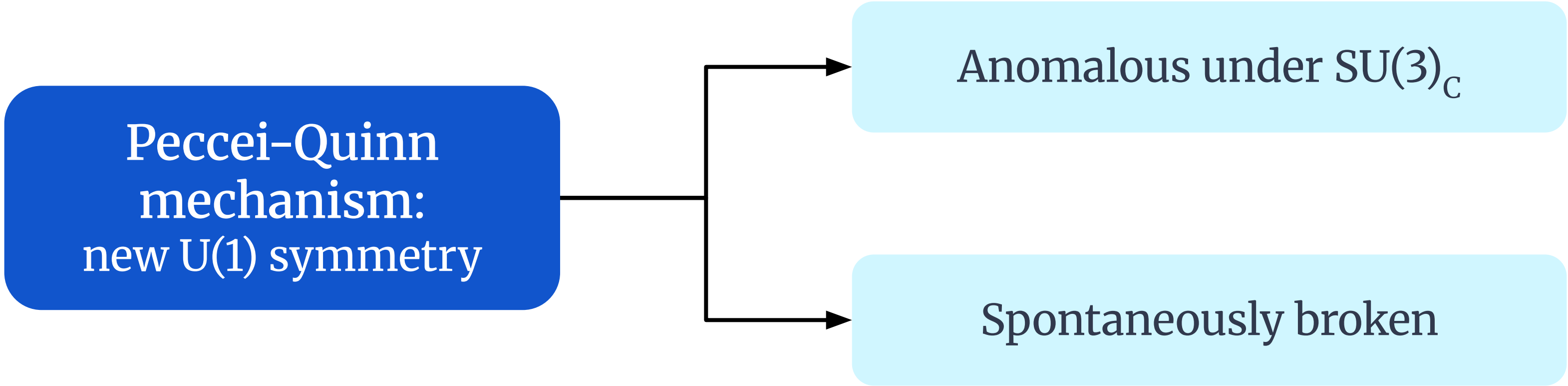
CP violating

$$\bar{\vartheta} = \vartheta + \vartheta_q \xrightarrow{\text{nEDM}} |\bar{\vartheta}| \lesssim 10^{-10}$$

Strong CP problem

The QCD axion

- Possible dynamical solution to the strong CP problem $|\bar{\vartheta}| \lesssim 10^{-10}$
- Candidate for cold dark matter via misalignment mechanism



QCD axion models

Described through an EFT

$$\mathcal{L}_a = \frac{1}{2}(\partial_\mu a)^2 + \frac{g_s^2}{32\pi^2}\frac{a}{f_a}G^a_{\mu\nu}\tilde{G}^{a,\mu\nu} + \frac{1}{4}\,g^0_{a\gamma}\,aF_{\mu\nu}\tilde{F}^{\mu\nu}$$
$$+ \frac{\partial_\mu a}{2f_a}\bar{q}\,c^0_q\,\gamma^\mu\gamma_5 q - \bar{q}_L M_q q_R + \text{h.c.}$$

QCD axion models:
UV completions of axion EFT

Benchmark axion models

QCD axion models:
UV completions of axion EFT

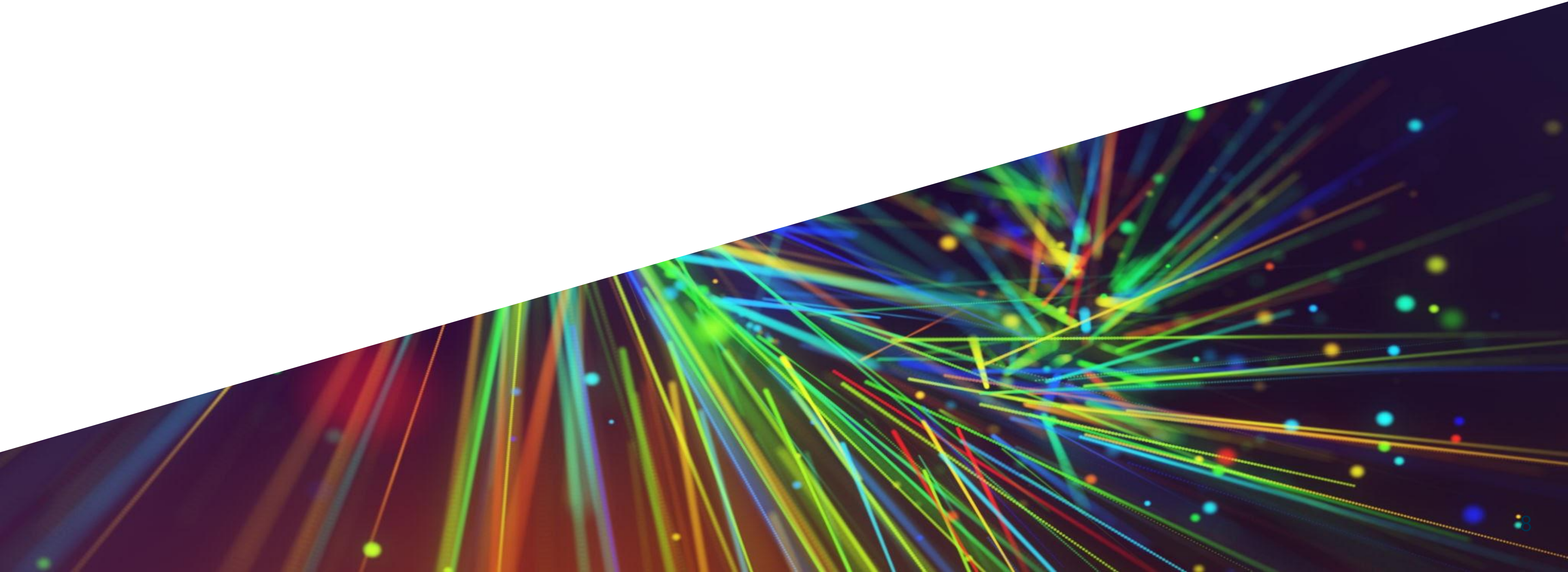
KSVZ model:

- PQ anomaly generated by heavy coloured fermions
- Additional scalar singlet

DFSZ model:

- PQ anomaly generated by SM quarks
- Scalar sector: two Higgs doublets and a scalar singlet

Supernova bound and nucleophobic axion models



SN1987A axion bound

SN1987A event: ~ 30 supernova neutrinos observed

New BSM weakly interacting particle → New cooling channel for the supernova → Reduced neutrino burst duration

For a 1 $M_\odot$ supernova core

$$L_a \lesssim 2 \times 10^{52}\ \mathrm{erg\ s}^{-1} \overset{\text{Benchmark models}}{\Longrightarrow} f_a \gtrsim 10^8\ \mathrm{GeV}$$

Is it possible to relax this bound?

Nucleophobic axion models

[L. Di Luzio *et al.*, 1712.04940]

$$\mathcal{L}_a \supset \frac{\partial_\mu a}{2f_a} c_N \bar{N}\gamma^\mu\gamma_5 N \quad \xrightarrow{\text{Matching}} \quad \begin{cases} c_p + c_n = 0.50(5)(c_u^0 + c_d^0 - 1) - 2\delta_s \\ c_p - c_n = 1.273(2)(c_u^0 - c_d^0 - \underline{f_{ud}}) \end{cases}$$

$$f_{ud} = \frac{1-z}{1+z}, \qquad z = \frac{m_u}{m_d}$$

Nucleophobic axion models $\Rightarrow$ Suppression of axion-nucleon couplings

- Require nonuniversal Peccei-Quinn charges for the SM quarks
- Yield flavour violating couplings

$$\begin{cases} c_p + c_n \approx 0 \implies c_u^0 + c_d^0 \approx 1 \\ c_p - c_n \approx 0 \implies c_u^0 - c_d^0 \approx f_{ud} \approx 1/3 \end{cases}$$

The M1 nucleophobic model

M1 model:

$\tan\beta = \langle H_2\rangle / \langle H_1\rangle$

Scalar sector:

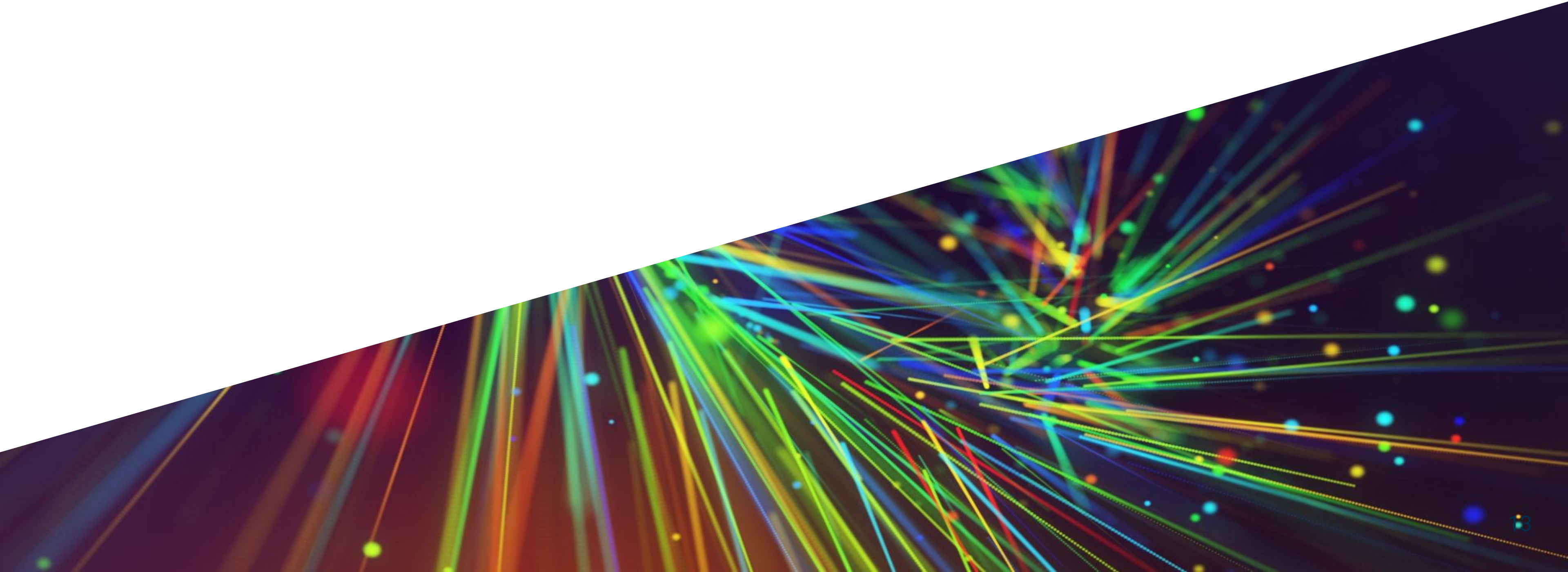
Field	Representation	PQ charge
H_1	$(1, 2, -½)_{SM}$	$-s_\beta^2$
H_2	$(1, 2, -½)_{SM}$	c_β^2
Φ	$(1, 0, 0)_{SM}$	1

Quark sector:

Field	Representation	PQ charge
Q_L	$(3, 2, ⅙)_{SM}$	(0, 0, 1)
U_R	$(3, 1, ⅔)_{SM}$	$(s_\beta^2, s_\beta^2, s_\beta^2)$
D_R	$(3, 1, -⅓)_{SM}$	$(c_\beta^2, c_\beta^2, c_\beta^2)$

Nucleophobic for $\tan\beta \simeq \sqrt{2}$

Finite density effects



Corrections to the SN1987A bound

Renormalisation group corrections	Finite density corrections
• Matching to QCD at the Peccei-Quinn breaking scale $v_a \sim f_a \gtrsim 10^8$ GeV • Necessity to take into account the running of couplings from the PQ scale to the EW scale	• Density in the core of the supernova close to the nuclear saturation density $n_0 = 0.16\ \mathrm{fm}^{-3}$ • Necessity to account for modifications in the axion-nucleon interactions

Finite density effects

[R. Balkin *et al.*, 2003.04903]

Axion-nucleon couplings

$$\begin{cases} c_p = g_A \frac{c_u - c_d}{2} + g_0^{ud} \frac{c_u + c_d}{2} \\ c_n = -g_A \frac{c_u - c_d}{2} + g_0^{ud} \frac{c_u + c_d}{2} \end{cases}$$

In a highly dense environment

- Axion-quark couplings change due to modification of chiral condensate

$$\zeta_{qq}(n) \equiv \frac{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_n}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} = 1 + \frac{1}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} \frac{\partial \Delta E(n)}{\partial m_q}, \qquad q = u, d, s$$

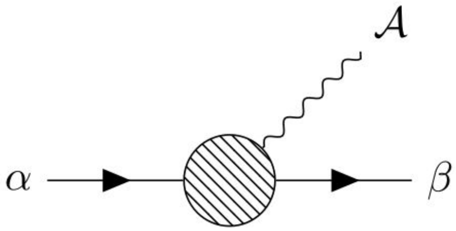
Hellmann-Feynman theorem

- Matrix elements g_A and g_0^{ud} are corrected too

Corrections to matrix elements

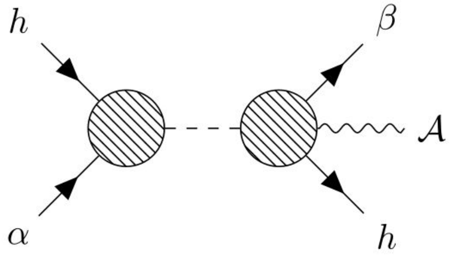
[T. S. Park *et al.*, 1997]

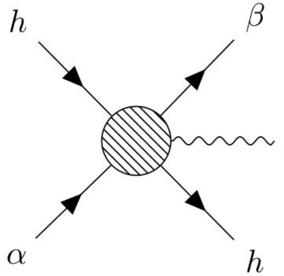
Fermi gas approximation $\Rightarrow$ $|F\rangle = \prod_{h \in F} a_h^\dagger |0\rangle$ $\quad \langle \beta | J_5^{\pm,i} | \alpha \rangle \to \langle \beta; F | J_5^{\pm,i} | \alpha; F \rangle$



~ $(g_A)_0$

In medium $\longrightarrow$





~ δg_A

$$\frac{(g_A)_n}{(g_A)_0} = 1 + \frac{n}{\Lambda_\chi f_\pi^2}\left[\frac{c_D}{4(g_A)_0} - \frac{I(m_\pi/k_F)}{3}\left(2\hat{c}_4 - \hat{c}_3 + \frac{\Lambda_\chi}{2m_N}\right)\right]$$

$$\frac{(g_0^{ud})_n}{(g_0^{ud})_0} = 1 + \kappa \frac{n}{n_0}$$

Missing LECs

Is nucleophobia compatible with finite density effects?

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Do finite density effects jeopardize axion nucleophobia in supernovae?

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Nucleophobic axion models, wherein axion couplings to both protons and neutrons are simultaneously suppressed, can relax the stringent constraints from SN 1987A. However, it remains uncertain whether these models maintain their nucleophobic property under the influence of finite baryon density effects. These are especially relevant in astrophysical environments near saturation density, such as supernovae (SNe). In this study, we demonstrate that the nucleophobic solution remains viable also at finite density. Furthermore, we show that the SN axion bound relaxes significantly in nucleophobic models, even when accounting for the integration over the nonhomogeneous environment of the SN core.

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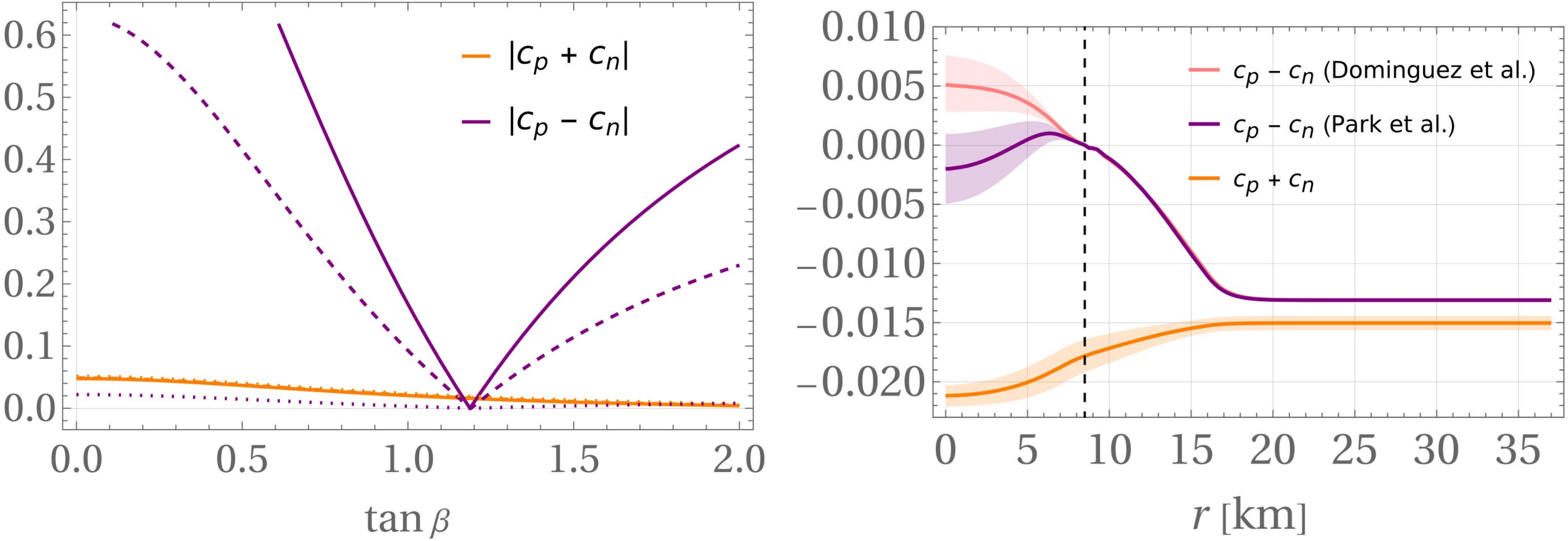
What about nucleophobia?



[L. Di Luzio, VF, F. Mescia, M. Giannotti, E. Nardi, 2025]

Recent developments

- New formalism for in-medium effects based on a thorough ChPT expansion [K. Springmann *et al.*, 2410.10945]
- New model-independent tree-level axion production channel in supernovae
  [K. Springmann *et al.*, 2410.19902]

$$\mathcal{L}^{(2)}_{\pi N} \supset -\hat{c}_5 m_\pi^2 \frac{4z}{(1+z)^2} \bar{N} \left(\frac{\pi^a a}{f_\pi f_a} \right) \tau^a N$$

Conclusions

Next steps:

- Update the SN1987A bound with
  - Finite density corrections
  - New production channels ➜ Pion production, model-independent channel
- Estimate the relevance of the new model-independent axion production channel
  - Implications on the SN1987A bound
  - New detection channel?
- Extend the finite density formalism to other BSM particles
  - Dark photon
  - Dark scalars

Thank you!

BACKUP SLIDES

Hellmann-Feynman theorem

Theorem (Hellmann-Feynman)

Let $\hat{H}_\lambda$ be a Hamiltonian operator depending upon a continuous parameter λ and let $|\psi_\lambda\rangle$ be an eigenstate of $\hat{H}_\lambda$ depending implicitly on λ, with eigenvalue E_λ. Then

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}E_\lambda}{\mathrm{d}\lambda} = \left\langle \psi_\lambda \middle| \frac{\mathrm{d}\hat{H}_\lambda}{\mathrm{d}\lambda} \middle| \psi_\lambda \right\rangle$$

In particular, the QCD vacuum energy density satisfies

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\mathcal{E}_0}{\mathrm{d}m_q} = \left\langle 0 \middle| \frac{\mathrm{d}\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{QCD}}}{\mathrm{d}m_q} \middle| 0 \right\rangle = \langle 0|\bar{q}q|0\rangle \quad \text{since} \quad \mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{QCD}} \supset \sum_q m_q \bar{q}q$$

Linear approximation

Neglecting interactions between nucleon and relativistic corrections, the in-medium shift of the QCD vacuum energy is $\Delta E(n) = \sum_{x=n,p,\ldots} m_x n_x$, so that, from the Hellmann-Feynman theorem,

$$\zeta_{\bar{q}q}(n) \equiv \frac{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_n}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} = 1 + \frac{1}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} \frac{\partial \Delta E(n)}{\partial m_q}$$

$$= 1 + \frac{1}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} \sum_x n_x \frac{\partial m_x}{\partial m_q}$$

Corrections to axion-quark couplings

$$m_q \to \frac{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_n}{\langle \bar{q}q \rangle_0} \times m_q$$

$$(Q_a^*)_0 = \frac{\text{diag}(1, z)}{1+z}, \qquad z = \frac{m_u}{m_d} \quad \longrightarrow \quad (Q_a^*)_n = \frac{\text{diag}(1, zZ)}{1+zZ}, \qquad Z = \frac{\langle \bar{u}u \rangle_n}{\langle \bar{d}d \rangle_n}$$

$$\boxed{(c_q)_0 \to (c_q)_n = c_q^0 - [(Q_a^*)_n]_q}$$