

Strong interaction in dense matter

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Phys. Rev. D105 (2022) 103014, D108 (2023) 043002.

Eur. Phys. J. Spec. Top. (2026), Journal of Subatomic Particles and Cosmology 5 (2026)
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1. Introduction

Motivation

Structure of neutron stars

Observables for dense strongly interacting matter

Axial(vector) meson extended linear σ -model

Parametrization at $T = 0$

Results for eLSM

2. EOS

3. Neutron stars

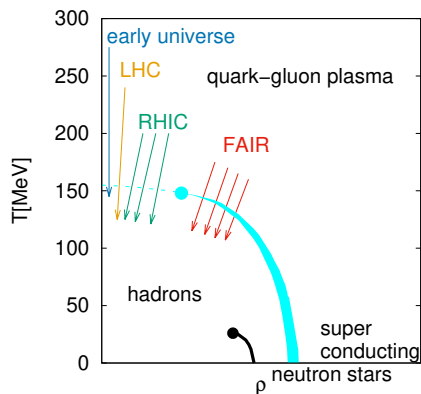
Data and constraints

4. Results for Neutron Stars

Bayesian inference

5. Summary

Dense strongly interacting matter

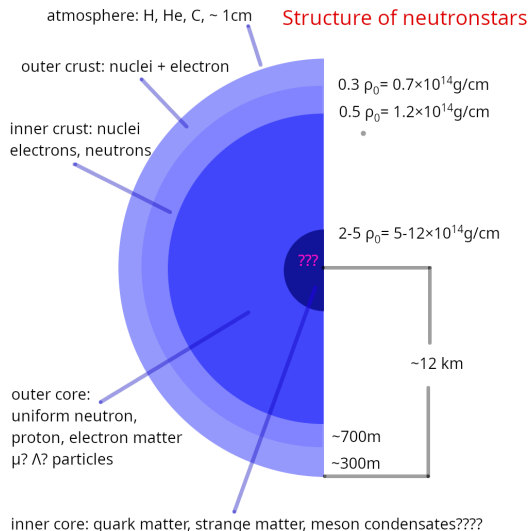


What is the phase diagram and EOS for dense strongly interacting matter?

At $\mu = 0$: lattice and experiments (STAR/PHENIX and ALICE).

For $\mu \gg 0$ no precise theory and no heavy ion experiment.

Neutron Stars a challenge and a possibility



Neutron stars are contain cold, dense matter ($T \approx 0$, $\rho > 3\rho_0$) not available in terrestrial experiments (Laboratory for strong interaction)

What is the structure of neutron stars (what are the constituents), hybrid stars? Superfluids?

YN, YNN interactions are important, three-body repulsion for Λ , Σ (Weise)

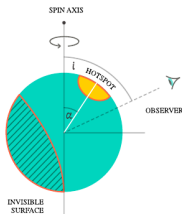
Neutron Star observations

- ▶ Discovering heavy neutron stars $M > 2M_{\odot}$ Demorest, et al., Nature. 467, 1081-1083 (2010). largest mass observed: $2.35 \pm 0.17 M_{\odot}$ (2022) Black Widow (Shapiro-delay: pulsar+another star, at almost full covering the second member of the binary delays the radiation of the pulsar)
- ▶ Advanced gravitation wave detectors: Advanced Ligo, Virgo, Kagra: single neutron stars??. multichannel astronomy
neutron star collision: GW170817 (130 million lightyears)

Modern telescopes: NICER X-ray telescope: precise ($<5\%$) mass and radius measurements (2020) “for nearby” neutron stars,

- ▶ 5 stars yet, but more to come

radiation bent by strong gravity: hotspots observation: M, R



Observables for dense strongly interacting matter

1. Nuclear physics

▶ $\rho = 0$

nucleon-nucleon scattering, YN and YNN data from femtoscopy (ALICE), BB interaction and potential (lattice: HALQCD)

femtoscopy data and HALQCD calculations are consistent

▶ $\rho \approx \rho_0$

masses of nuclei, isobaric analog states, hypernuclei, giant dipole and pigmy resonances, nuclear dipole polarizabilities, neutron skin thickness → normal nuclear density: ρ_0 , binding energy, compressibility, symmetry energy (1st order in asymmetry expanded in density the 0th and 1st term)

2. Perturbative QCD: $\rho \approx 40\rho_0$

N^3 LO calculation, hard thermal loops: $\mu = 2.6$ GeV, $p = 3.8$ GeV/ fm^3 .

T. Gorda, A. Kurkela, et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 127 (2021) 162003, arXiv:2103.05658.

3. Heavy ion collisions: $\rho : 1 - 8\rho_0$

not very conclusive; there are many competing effects, like momentum dependent interaction, nonequilibrium, nonzero temperature

4. Neutron stars: $\rho : 1 - 8\rho_0$

M, R, Λ . Quite strong constraints even with not yet very precise data

Features of our quark meson model

Effective field theory: the same symmetry pattern as in QCD

- ▶ D.O.F's: scalar, pseudoscalar, vector, axial vector nonets,
- ▶ Polyakov loop variables, $\Phi, \bar{\Phi}$ with U^{glue}
- ▶ u,d,s constituent quarks, ($m_u = m_d$)
- ▶ mesonic fluctuations included in the grand canonical potential:

$$\Omega(T, \mu_q) = -\frac{1}{\beta V} \ln(Z)$$

- ▶ Fermion **vacuum** and **thermal** fluctuations
- ▶ Five order parameters ($\phi_N, \phi_S, \Phi, \bar{\Phi}, v_0$) \rightarrow five T/μ -dependent equations

Meson fields - pseudoscalar and scalar meson nonets

$$\Phi_{PS} = \sum_{i=0}^8 \pi_i T_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\eta_N + \pi^0}{\sqrt{2}} & \pi^+ & K^+ \\ \pi^- & \frac{\eta_N - \pi^0}{\sqrt{2}} & K^0 \\ K^- & K^0 & \eta_S \end{pmatrix} (\sim \bar{q}_i \gamma_5 q_j)$$

$$\Phi_S = \sum_{i=0}^8 \sigma_i T_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\sigma_N + a_0^0}{\sqrt{2}} & a_0^+ & K_S^+ \\ a_0^- & \frac{\sigma_N - a_0^0}{\sqrt{2}} & K_S^0 \\ K_S^- & K_S^0 & \sigma_S \end{pmatrix} (\sim \bar{q}_i q_j)$$

Particle content:

Pseudoscalars: $\pi(138)$, $K(495)$, $\eta(548)$, $\eta'(958)$

Scalars: $a_0(980 \text{ or } 1450)$, $K_0^*(800 \text{ or } 1430)$,

(σ_N, σ_S) : 2 of $f_0(500, 980, 1370, 1500, 1710)$

Included fields - vector meson nonets

$$V^\mu = \sum_{i=0}^8 \rho_i^\mu T_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\omega_N + \rho^0}{\sqrt{2}} & \rho^+ & K^{*+} \\ \rho^- & \frac{\omega_N - \rho^0}{\sqrt{2}} & K^{*0} \\ K^{*-} & K^{*0} & \omega_S \end{pmatrix}^\mu$$

$$A^\mu = \sum_{i=0}^8 b_i^\mu T_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{f_{1N} + a_1^0}{\sqrt{2}} & a_1^+ & K_1^+ \\ a_1^- & \frac{f_{1N} - a_1^0}{\sqrt{2}} & K_1^0 \\ K_1^- & K_1^0 & f_{1S} \end{pmatrix}^\mu$$

Particle content:

Vector mesons: $\rho(770)$, $K^*(894)$, $\omega_N = \omega(782)$, $\omega_S = \phi(1020)$

Axial vectors: $a_1(1230)$, $K_1(1270)$, $f_{1N}(1280)$, $f_{1S}(1426)$

Lagrangian (2/1)

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathcal{L}_{\text{Tot}} = & \text{Tr}[(D_\mu \Phi)^\dagger (D_\mu \Phi)] - m_0^2 \text{Tr}(\Phi^\dagger \Phi) - \lambda_1 [\text{Tr}(\Phi^\dagger \Phi)]^2 - \lambda_2 \text{Tr}(\Phi^\dagger \Phi)^2 \\
& - \frac{1}{4} \text{Tr}(L_{\mu\nu}^2 + R_{\mu\nu}^2) + \text{Tr} \left[\left(\frac{m_1^2}{2} + \Delta \right) (L_\mu^2 + R_\mu^2) \right] + \text{Tr}[H(\Phi + \Phi^\dagger)] \\
& + c_1 (\det \Phi + \det \Phi^\dagger) + i \frac{g_2^2}{2} (\text{Tr}\{L_{\mu\nu}[L^\mu, L^\nu]\} + \text{Tr}\{R_{\mu\nu}[R^\mu, R^\nu]\}) \\
& + \frac{h_1}{2} \text{Tr}(\Phi^\dagger \Phi) \text{Tr}(L_\mu^2 + R_\mu^2) + h_2 \text{Tr}[(L_\mu \Phi)^2 + (\Phi R_\mu)^2] + 2h_3 \text{Tr}(L_\mu \Phi R^\mu \Phi^\dagger). \\
& + \bar{\Psi} i \not{\partial} \Psi - g_F \bar{\Psi} (\Phi_S + i\gamma_5 \Phi_{PS}) \Psi + g_V \bar{\Psi} \gamma^\mu \left(V_\mu + \frac{g_A}{g_V} \gamma_5 A_\mu \right) \Psi
\end{aligned}$$

+Polyakov loops

D. Parganlija, P. Kovacs, Gy. Wolf, F. Giacosa, D.H. Rischke, Phys. Rev. D87 (2013) 014011

Lagrangian (2/2)

where

$$D^\mu \Phi = \partial^\mu \Phi - ig_1(L^\mu \Phi - \Phi R^\mu) - ieA_e^\mu [T_3, \Phi]$$

$$\Phi = \sum_{i=0}^8 (\sigma_i + i\pi_i) T_i, \quad H = \sum_{i=0}^8 h_i T_i \quad T_i : U(3) \text{ generators}$$

$$R^\mu = \sum_{i=0}^8 (\rho_i^\mu - b_i^\mu) T_i, \quad L^\mu = \sum_{i=0}^8 (\rho_i^\mu + b_i^\mu) T_i$$

$$L^{\mu\nu} = \partial^\mu L^\nu - ieA_e^\mu [T_3, L^\nu] - \{\partial^\nu L^\mu - ieA_e^\nu [T_3, L^\mu]\}$$

$$R^{\mu\nu} = \partial^\mu R^\nu - ieA_e^\mu [T_3, R^\nu] - \{\partial^\nu R^\mu - ieA_e^\nu [T_3, R^\mu]\}$$

$$\bar{\Psi} = (\bar{u}, \bar{d}, \bar{s})$$

non strange – strange base:

$$\varphi_N = \sqrt{2/3}\varphi_0 + \sqrt{1/3}\varphi_8,$$

$$\varphi_S = \sqrt{1/3}\varphi_0 - \sqrt{2/3}\varphi_8, \quad \varphi \in (\sigma_i, \pi_i, \rho_i^\mu, b_i^\mu, h_i)$$

broken symmetry: non-zero condensates $\langle \sigma_N \rangle, \langle \sigma_S \rangle \longleftrightarrow \phi_N, \phi_S$

Determination of the parameters of the Lagrangian

16 unknown parameters ($m_0, \lambda_1, \lambda_2, c_1, m_1, \mathbf{g}_1, \mathbf{g}_2, h_1, h_2, h_3, \delta_S, \Phi_N, \Phi_S, \mathbf{g}_F, \mathbf{g}_V, \mathbf{g}_A$) \rightarrow Determined by the **min. of χ^2** :

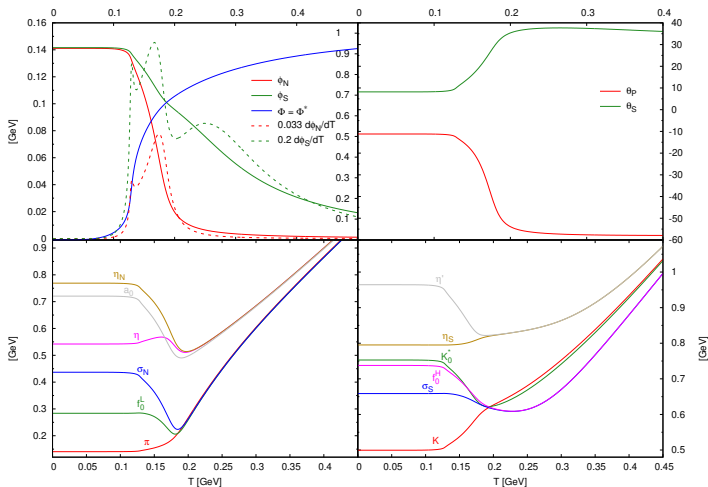
$$\chi^2(x_1, \dots, x_N) = \sum_{i=1}^M \left[\frac{Q_i(x_1, \dots, x_N) - Q_i^{\text{exp}}}{\delta Q_i} \right]^2,$$

where $(x_1, \dots, x_N) = (m_0, \lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots)$, $Q_i(x_1, \dots, x_N)$ calculated from the model, while Q_i^{exp} taken from the PDG

multiparametric minimalization \rightarrow **MINUIT**

- ▶ PCAC \rightarrow 2 physical quantities: f_π, f_K
- ▶ Tree-level masses \rightarrow 15 physical quantities:
 $m_{u/d}, m_s, m_\pi, m_\eta, m_{\eta'}, m_K, m_\rho, m_\phi, m_{K^*}, m_{a_1}, m_{f_1^H}, m_{a_0}, m_{K_s}, m_{f_0^L}, m_{f_0^H}$
- ▶ Decay widths \rightarrow 12 physical quantities:
 $\Gamma_{\rho \rightarrow \pi\pi}, \Gamma_{\phi \rightarrow KK}, \Gamma_{K^* \rightarrow K\pi}, \Gamma_{a_1 \rightarrow \pi\gamma}, \Gamma_{a_1 \rightarrow \rho\pi}, \Gamma_{f_1 \rightarrow KK^*}, \Gamma_{a_0}, \Gamma_{K_S \rightarrow K\pi},$
 $\Gamma_{f_0^L \rightarrow \pi\pi}, \Gamma_{f_0^L \rightarrow KK}, \Gamma_{f_0^H \rightarrow \pi\pi}, \Gamma_{f_0^H \rightarrow KK}$
- ▶ $T_c = 155$ MeV from lattice

With low mass scalars, $m_{f_0^L} = 300$ MeV

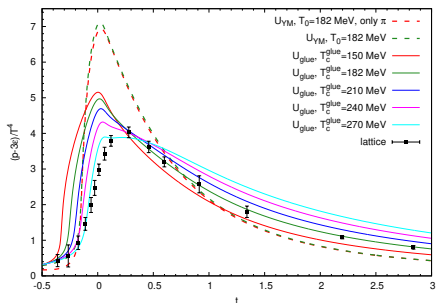


chiral symmetry is restored at high T as the chiral partners (π, f_0^L) , (η, a_0) and (K, K_0^*) , (η', f_0^H) become degenerate

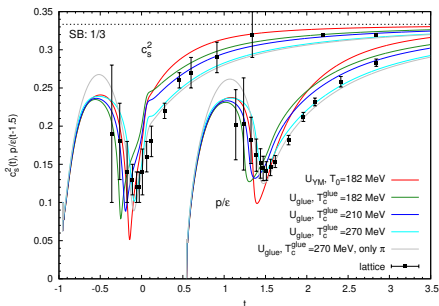
$U(1)_A$ symmetry is not restored, as the axial partners (π, a_0) and (η, f_0^L) do not become degenerate

Observables

interaction measure

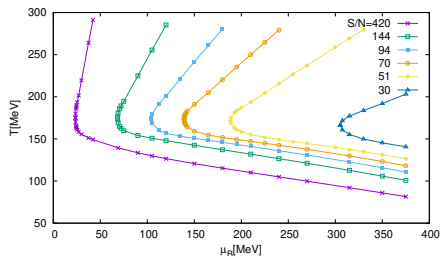


speed of sound



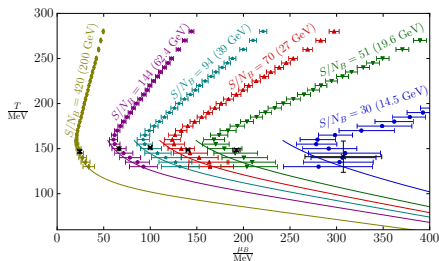
Isentropic trajectories in the $T - \mu_B$ plane

our model, where $\mu_B^{\text{CEP}} > 850 \text{ MeV}$



lattice (analytic continuation)

Günther *et al.*, arXiv:1607.02493



same qualitative behavior of the isentropic trajectories for $\mu_B \leq 400 \text{ MeV}$
 \implies indication that in the lattice result there is no CEP in this region of μ_B

EOS

1. $\rho \leq 2 - 4\rho_0$ ordinary nuclear potentials, CEFT, ...
2. $2 - 4\rho_0 \leq \rho \leq 6 - 8\rho_0$ quark matter model
3. $6 - 8\rho_0 \leq \rho$ extrapolation to the pQCD point

hadronic matter - soft: SFHo

(Steiner, A. W., Hempel, M., Fischer, T. *Astrophys. J.* 774 (2013) 17) and Hempel, M., Schaffner-Bielich, J. *Nucl. Phys.* A837 (2010) 210)

relativistic mean-field model (nucleons, σ, ω, ρ with quartic couplings), with $K=245$ MeV, $L=47.1$ MeV, $m^*/m_n=0.76$.

hadronic matter - stiff: DD2

(S. Typel, et al., *Phys. Rev.* C81 (2010) 015803)

relativistic mean-field + light clusters, $K = 243$ MeV, $L=58$ MeV $m^*/m_n=0.63$

Quark matter: Quark-meson model - chiral $U(3) \times U(3) \rightarrow SU(2) \times U(1)$ model
 degrees of freedom: 4 meson nonets, constituent quarks, Polyakov loops
 condensates: 2 scalar (N,S), Polyakov loops ($T > 0$), vector mesons ($\mu > 0$)

P. Kovács, Zs. Szép, Gy. Wolf, *Phys. Rev.* D93 (2016) 114014

Concatenation

It seems that a strong first order phase transition is ruled out by astrophysical constraints: J.-E. Christian and J. Schaffner-Bielich, Phys. Rev. D 103, 063042 (2021),

The allowed $p(\varepsilon)$ functions are in a rather narrow band, there can be no big jump

Hadron-quark crossover with polynomial interpolation ($\rho = \rho_B$):

$$\varepsilon(\rho_B) = \varepsilon_{hadronic}(\rho_B) \quad \rho_B < \rho_{BL},$$

$$\varepsilon(\rho_B) = \sum_{k=0}^5 C_k \rho_B^k \quad \rho_{BL} \leq \rho_B \leq \rho_{BU}$$

$$\varepsilon(\rho_B) = \varepsilon_{qm}(\rho_B) \quad \rho_{BU} < \rho_B.$$

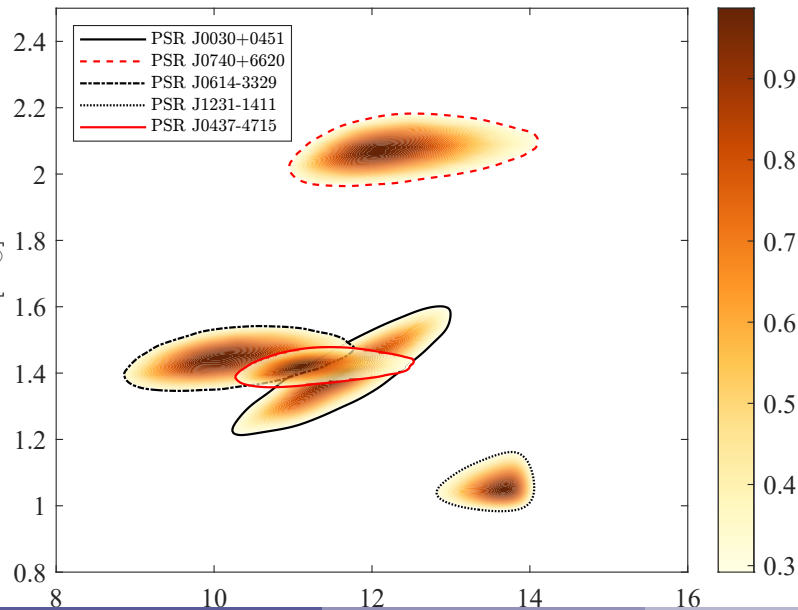
C_k is determined by the requirement that the energy density, ε and its first two derivatives with respect to ρ_B , pressure and sound velocity is continuous at the boundaries.

2 parameters: $\Gamma = 0.5 * (\rho_{BU} - \rho_{BL})$ and $\bar{\rho}_B = 0.5 * (\rho_{BL} + \rho_{BU})$

Data

- ▶ **perturbative QCD** EOS should converge to it keeping $c_s < 1$,
 $\mu_{\text{QCD}} = 2.6 \text{ GeV}$, $n_{\text{QCD}} = 6.471 / \text{fm}^3$, $\rho_{\text{QCD}} = 3823 \text{ MeV} / \text{fm}^3$
- ▶ **Minimal TOV mass constraint**: $M_{\text{TOV}}^{\text{min}} = 2.22 M_{\odot}$: PSR J0952–0607 a black widow pulsar, with a mass $2.35 \pm 0.17 M_{\odot}$,
 There are several pulsars mass above $2M_{\odot}$, using population analysis at the 1σ confidence level $M_{\text{TOV}}^{\text{min}} = 2.22 M_{\odot}$
- ▶ **NICER**: (M,R) values for PSR J0030+0451, PSR J0740+6620, PSR J0614–3329, PSR J1231–1411, and PSR J0437–4715
- ▶ **tidal deformability** GW170817: : $70 < \Lambda(1.4 M_{\odot}) < 720$ Abbot (2019)
 stronger constraint: $70 < \Lambda_{1.4} < 580$, $9.1 \text{ km} < R_{1.4} < 12.8 \text{ km}$
- ▶ **Hess J1731-347** neutron star: mass= $0.77 \pm 0.19 M_{\odot}$, $R = 10.4 \pm 0.8 \text{ km}$
- ▶ **massgap neutron star**: $2.59 \pm 0.09 M_{\odot}$

NICER data



Bayesian inference

Unsetted parameters: $m_\sigma, g_v, \bar{\rho}_B \equiv 0.5(\rho_{BL} + \rho_{BU}), \Gamma \equiv 0.5(\rho_{BU} - \rho_{BL})$

$290 \text{ MeV} \leq m_\sigma \leq 700 \text{ MeV}$

$0 \leq g_v \leq 10$

$2\rho_0 \leq \bar{\rho}_B \leq 5\rho_0$

$\rho_0 \leq \Gamma \leq 4\rho_0$ with the constraint: $\rho_{BL} = \bar{\rho}_B - \Gamma > \rho_0$

We created ~ 18000 EOSs to be used in the Bayesian analysis

Bayes theorem:

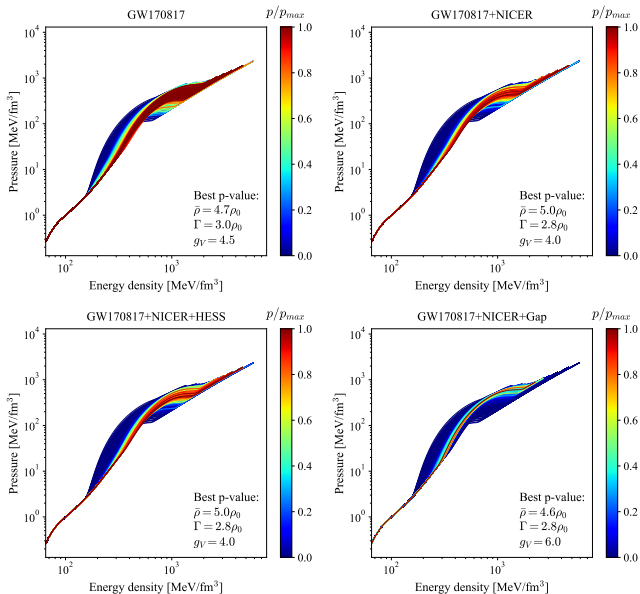
θ is a parameter set, $p(\theta)$ is the prior probability for θ , $p(\text{data}|\theta)$ is the probability that for given θ , the data is measured. Then

$$p(\theta|\text{data}) = \frac{p(\text{data}|\theta)p(\theta)}{p(\text{data})}$$

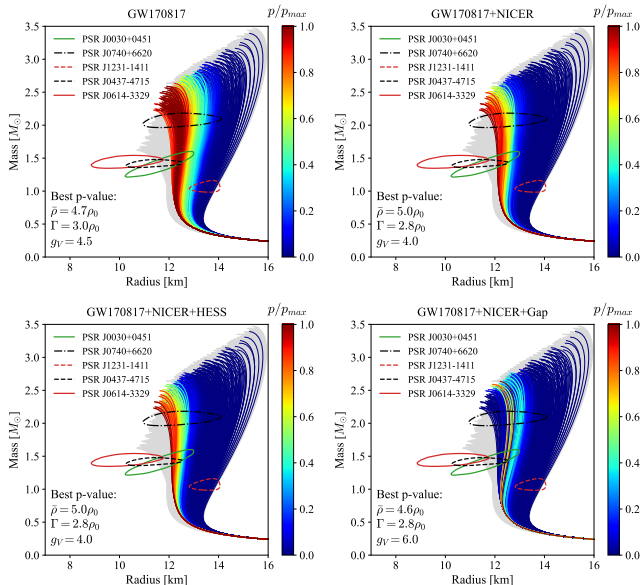
$p(\text{data})$ is a normalization constant. We assume $p(\theta)$ is uniform in the allowed hypersurface. For independent observations:

$$p(\text{data}|\theta) = p(M_{\text{max}}|\theta)p(\text{NICER}|\theta)p(\bar{\Lambda}|\theta)$$

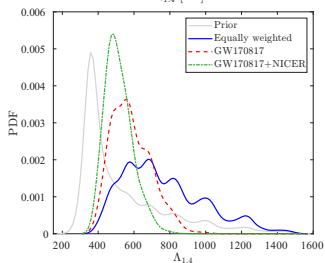
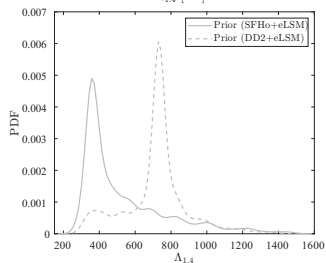
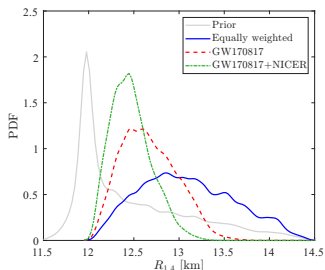
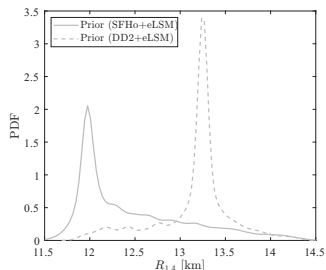
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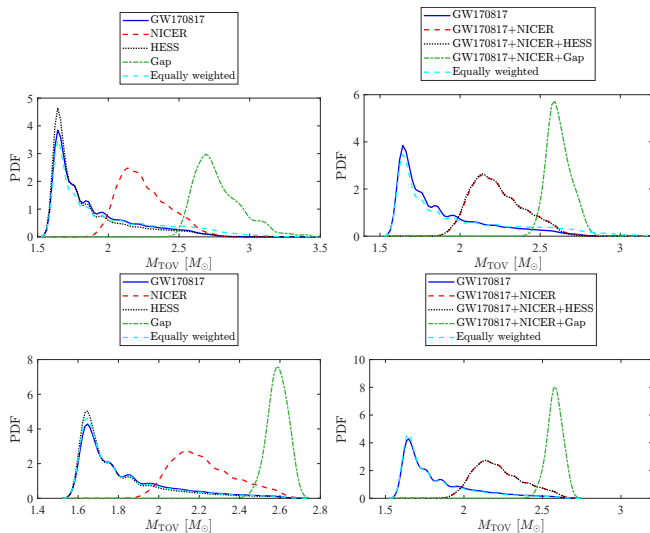
M(R) probabilities



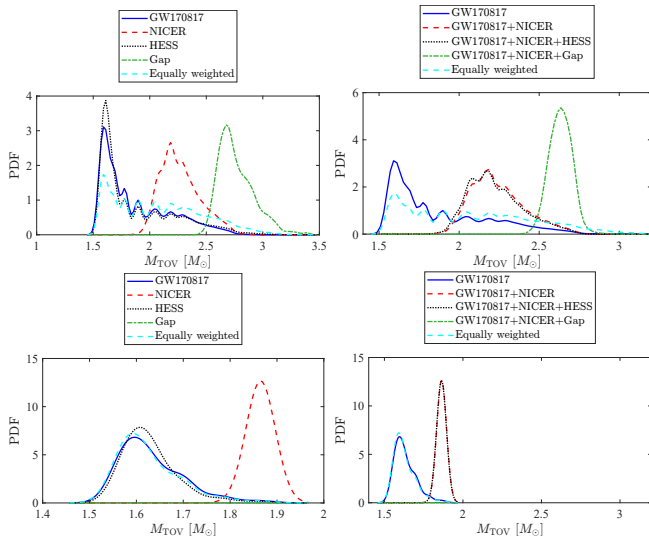
PDF of the radii and tidal deformabilities



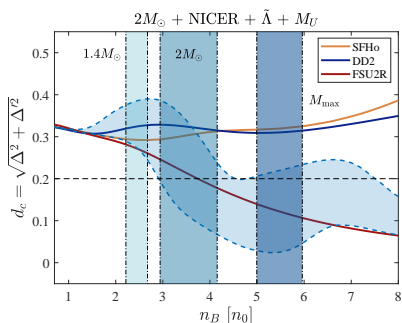
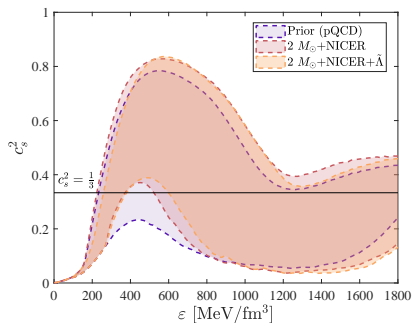
Distribution of the maximal mass (SFHo and DD2)



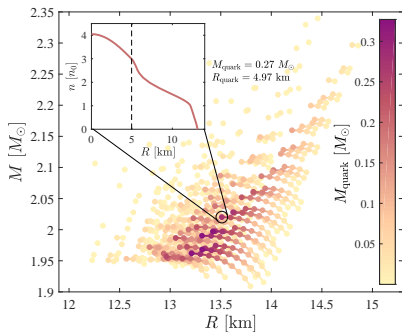
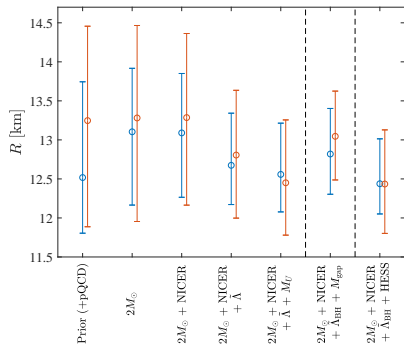
Maximal mass (SFHo and DD2) with strong GW constraint



Sound velocity



Radius and Quark content



Summary and Conclusions

- ▶ Our model can reproduce the lattice calculations at $\mu = 0$
- ▶ With our model we can fulfill the present astronomical constraints
- ▶ The central density do not go above $6\rho_0$.
- ▶ The radius of the neutron stars are 12.8 ± 0.8 km.
- ▶ strangeness should be included into the hadronic model
- ▶ hadronic and quark phase ought to be handled with the same model to drop ad-hoc parameters

Thank you for your attention!