

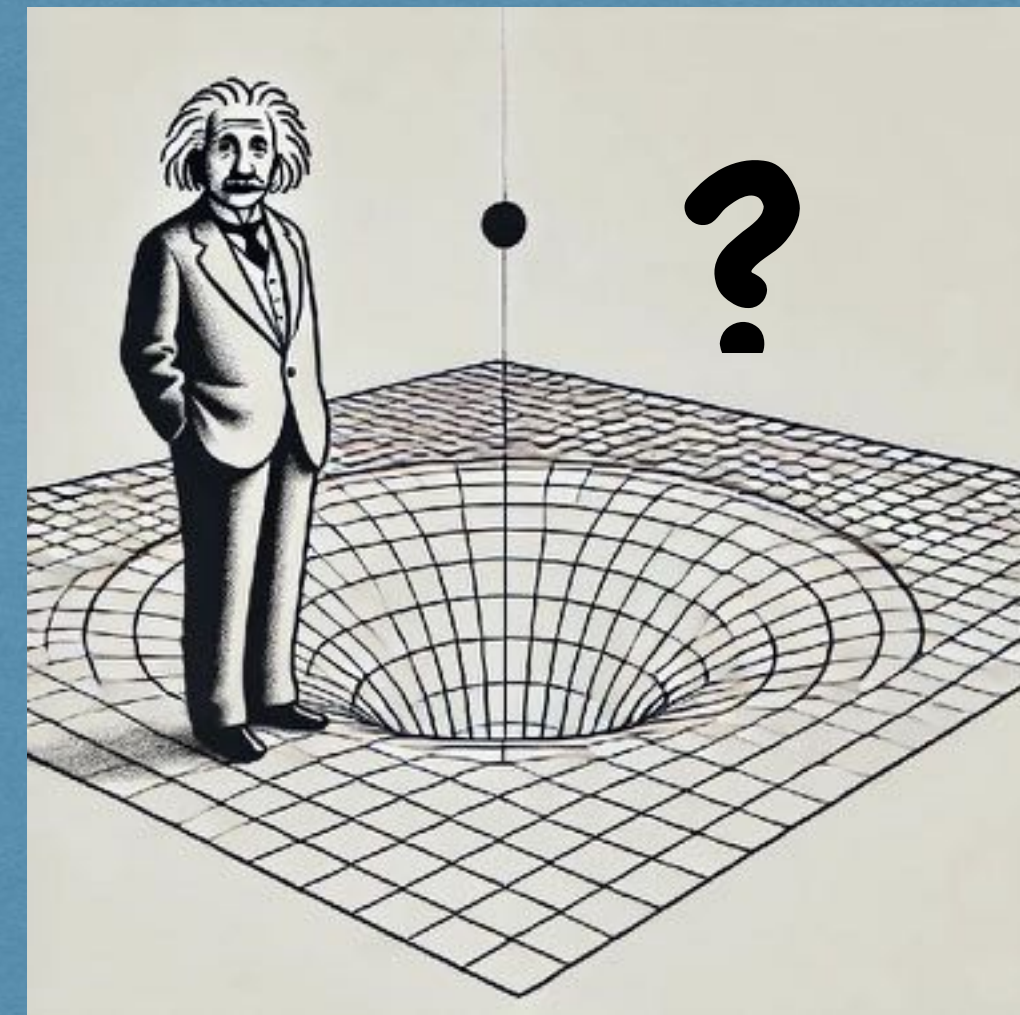
Model-independent tests of gravity with the Weyl potential evolution

Nastassia Grimm

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University of Oxford

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Q1: What is the Weyl potential evolution?

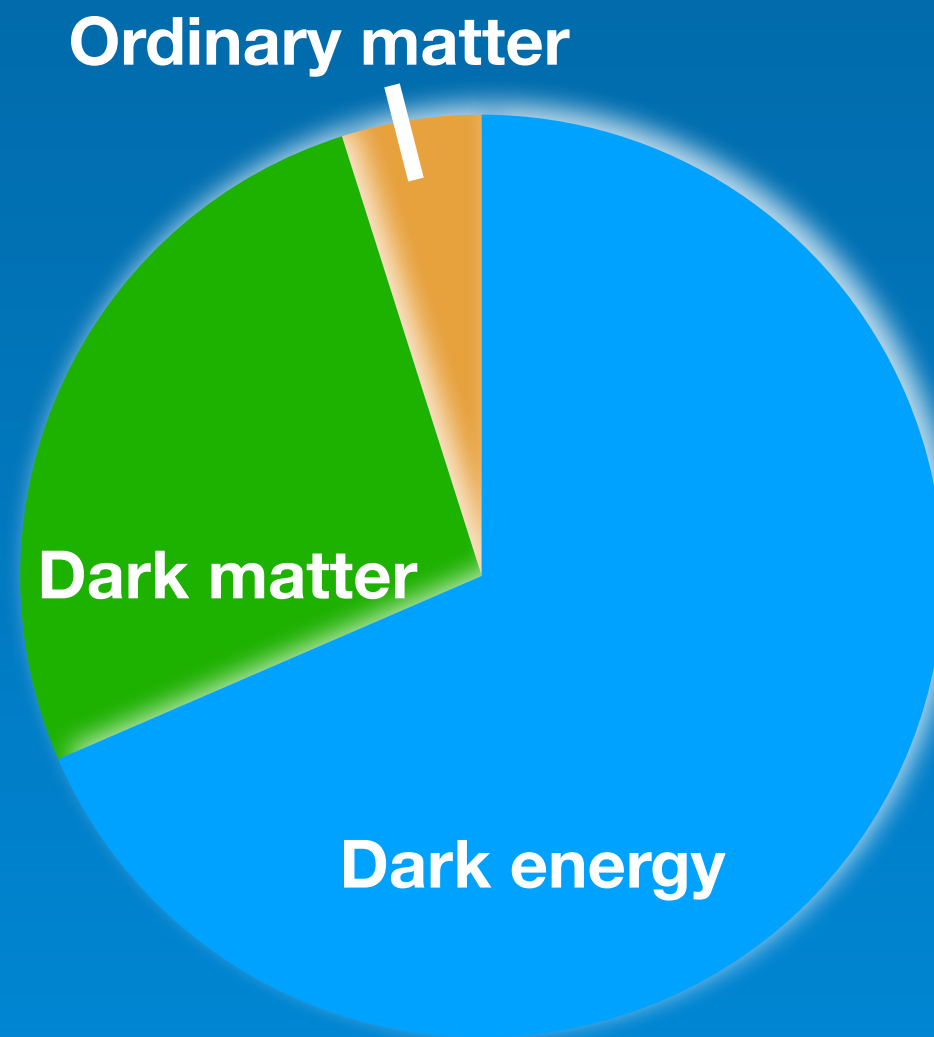
**Q2: How can we use it in combination with
redshift-space distortions?**

**Q3: How is this observable affected by
evolving dark energy?**

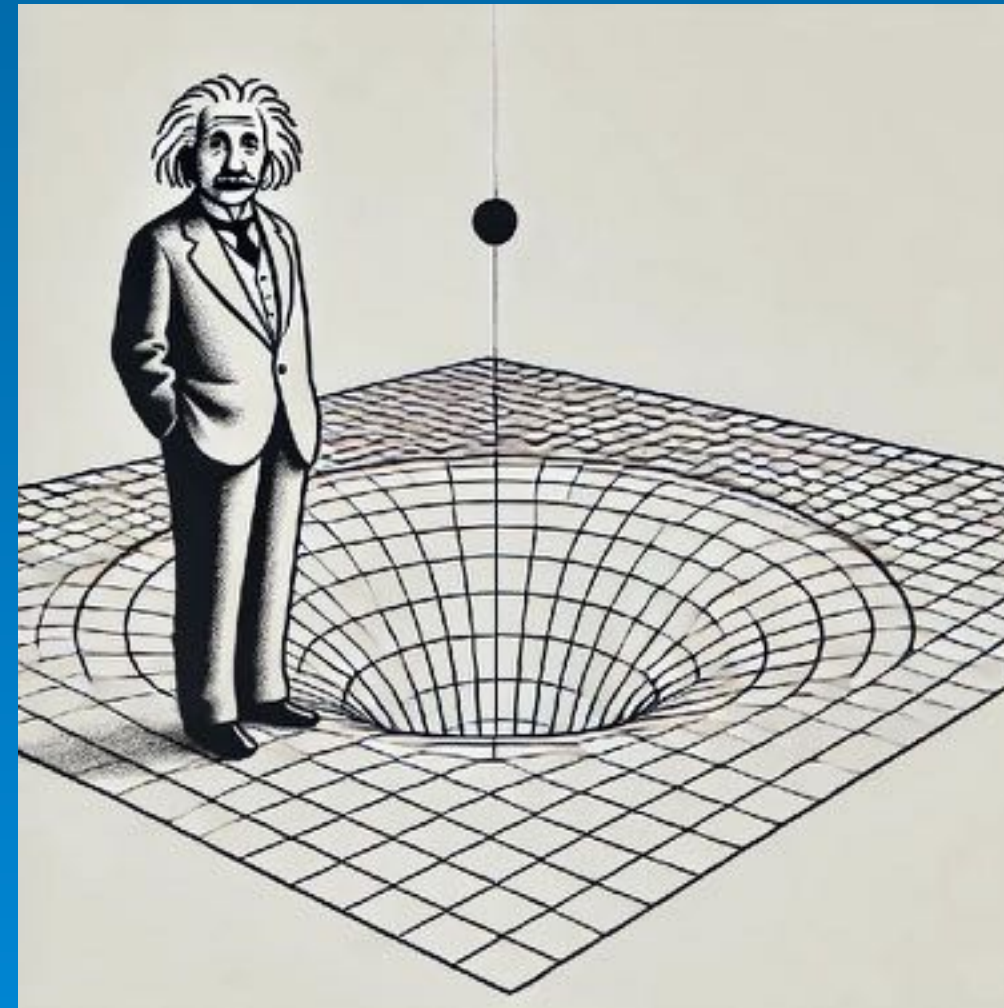
Why should we test gravity?

The Λ CDM model of our Universe:

Energy content of the Universe



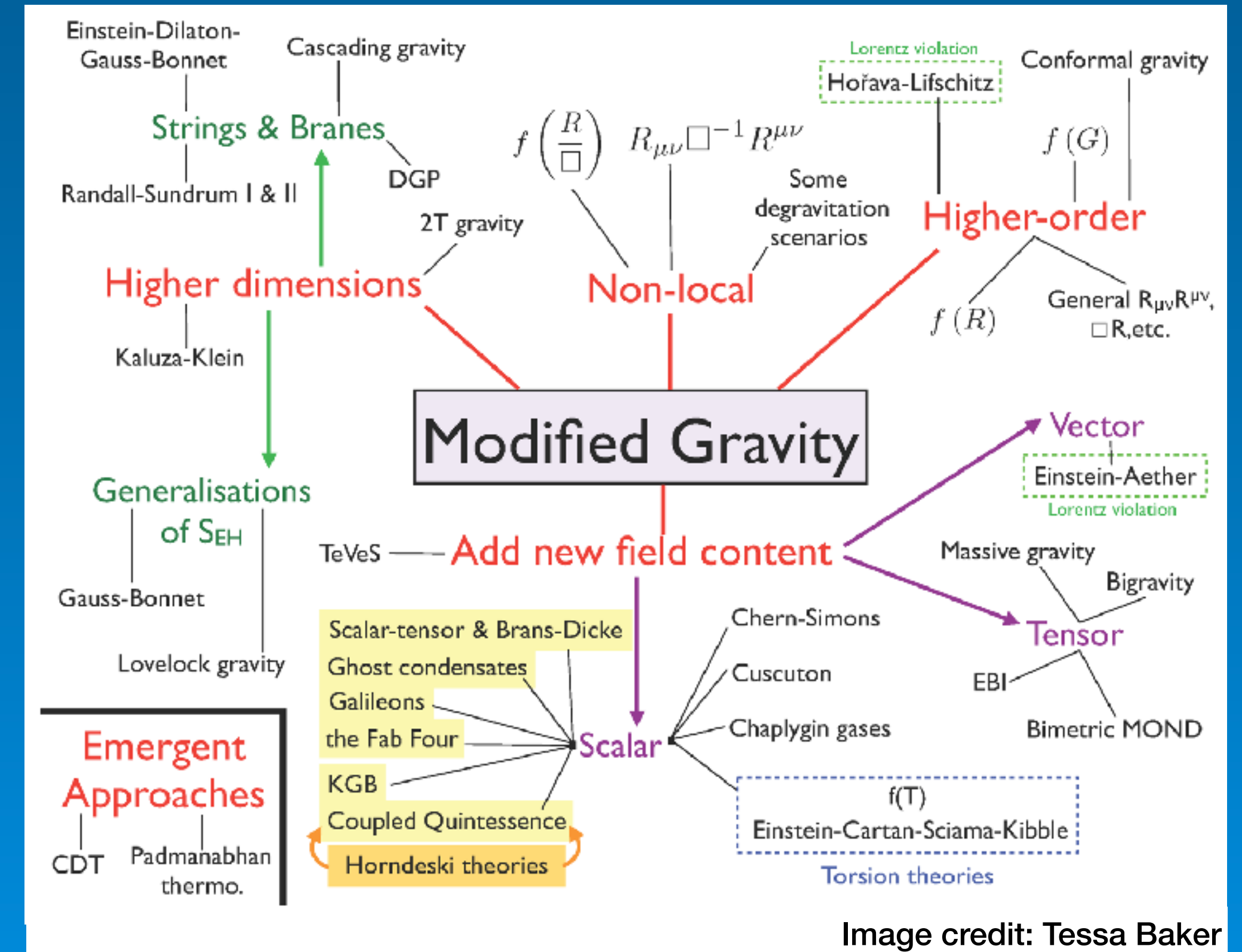
Theory of gravity: General Relativity



Problems:

- Dark energy is not well understood.
- Cosmological tensions exist in various data sets.

Many alternative models are possible:



How can we test modified gravity?

Possibility 1



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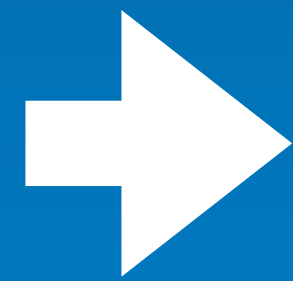


Repeat for each model!

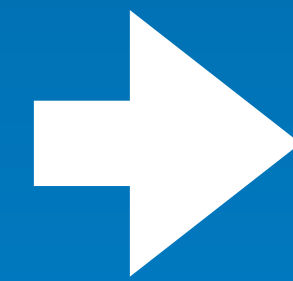
How can we test modified gravity?

Possibility 1

Pick a modified gravity model



Data analysis with additional parameters



Obtain constraints for one model

Repeat for each model!



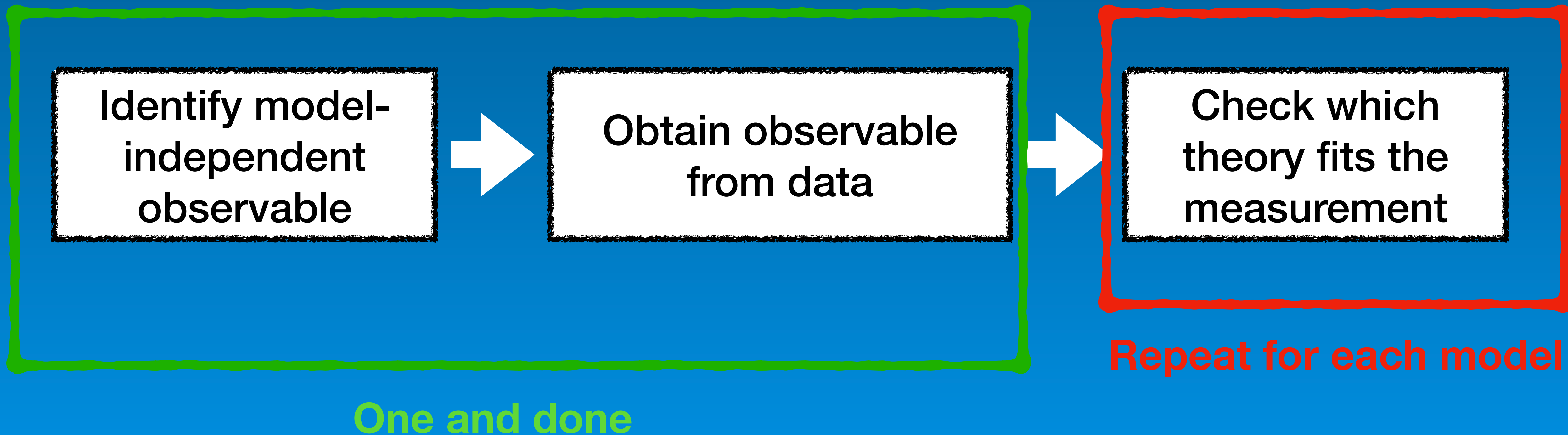
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Possibility 2: Model-independent approach



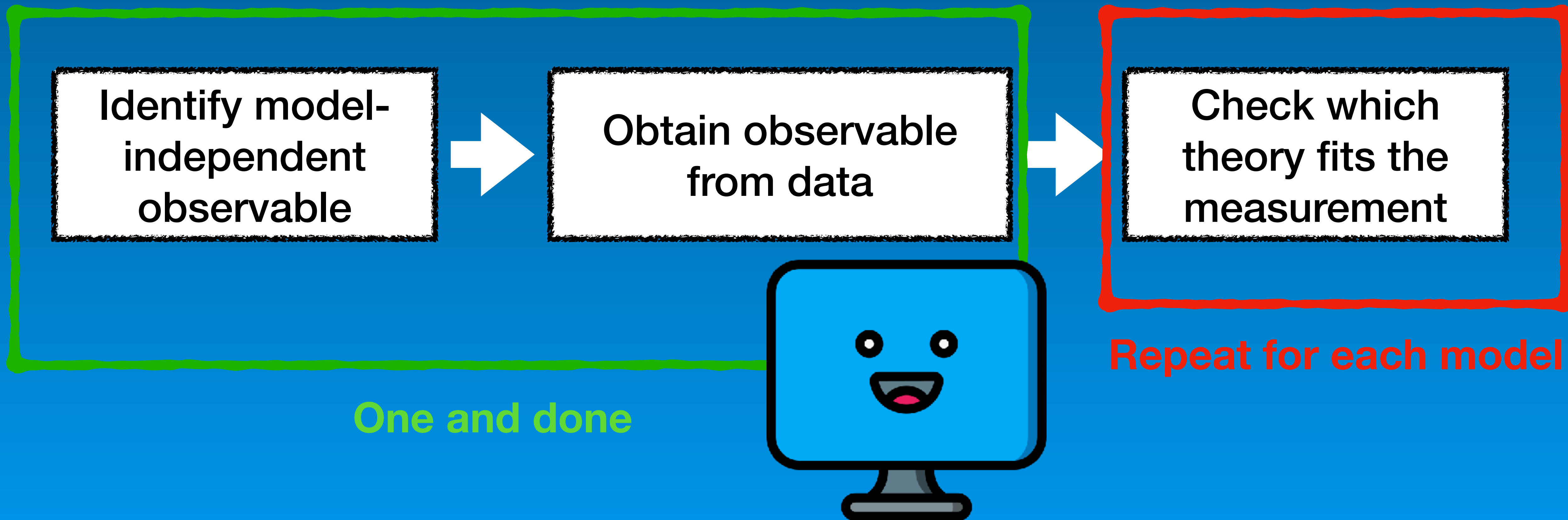
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How can we test modified gravity?

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Model-independent observable for gravitational lensing?

Lensing is directly sensitive to the perturbed geometry of the Universe:

$$ds^2 = -a^2(\tau)(1 + 2\Psi) d\tau^2 + a^2(\tau)(1 - 2\Phi) d\mathbf{x}^2$$

Lensing $\propto \Psi_W = (\Phi + \Psi)/2 \longrightarrow$ Weyl potential

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In General Relativity:

$$\Psi_W \propto D_1(z) \Omega_m(z)$$

Growth of matter
perturbations

Matter content in the
Universe

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In ~~General Relativity:~~
any gravity theory:

$$\Psi_W \propto \cancel{D_1(z) \Omega_m(z)} J(z)$$

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I. Tutusaus, D. Sobral-
Blanco & C. Bonvin
(2022), arXiv:2209.08987

Galaxy-galaxy lensing angular power spectrum

Galaxy-galaxy lensing: The correlation of galaxy positions in the foreground with galaxy shapes in the background.

$$C_{\ell}^{\Delta\kappa}(z_i, z_j) = \frac{3}{2} \int dz n_i(z) \mathcal{H}^2(z) \hat{b}_i(z) \hat{J}(z) B(k_{\ell}, \chi) \frac{P_{\delta\delta}^{\text{lin}}(k_{\ell}, z_*)}{\sigma_8^2(z_*)} \int dz' n_j(z') \frac{\chi'(z') - \chi(z)}{\chi(z)\chi'(z')}$$

lens bin source bin

$$\hat{J}(z) \equiv \frac{J(z)\sigma_8(z)}{D_1(z)} \quad (\text{Weyl evolution}), \quad \hat{b}_i(z) \equiv b_i(z)\sigma_8(z).$$

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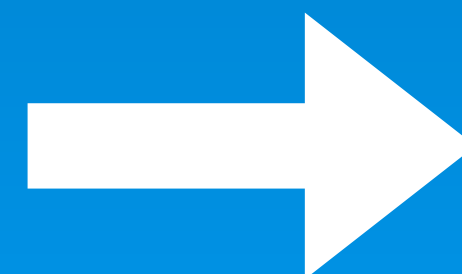
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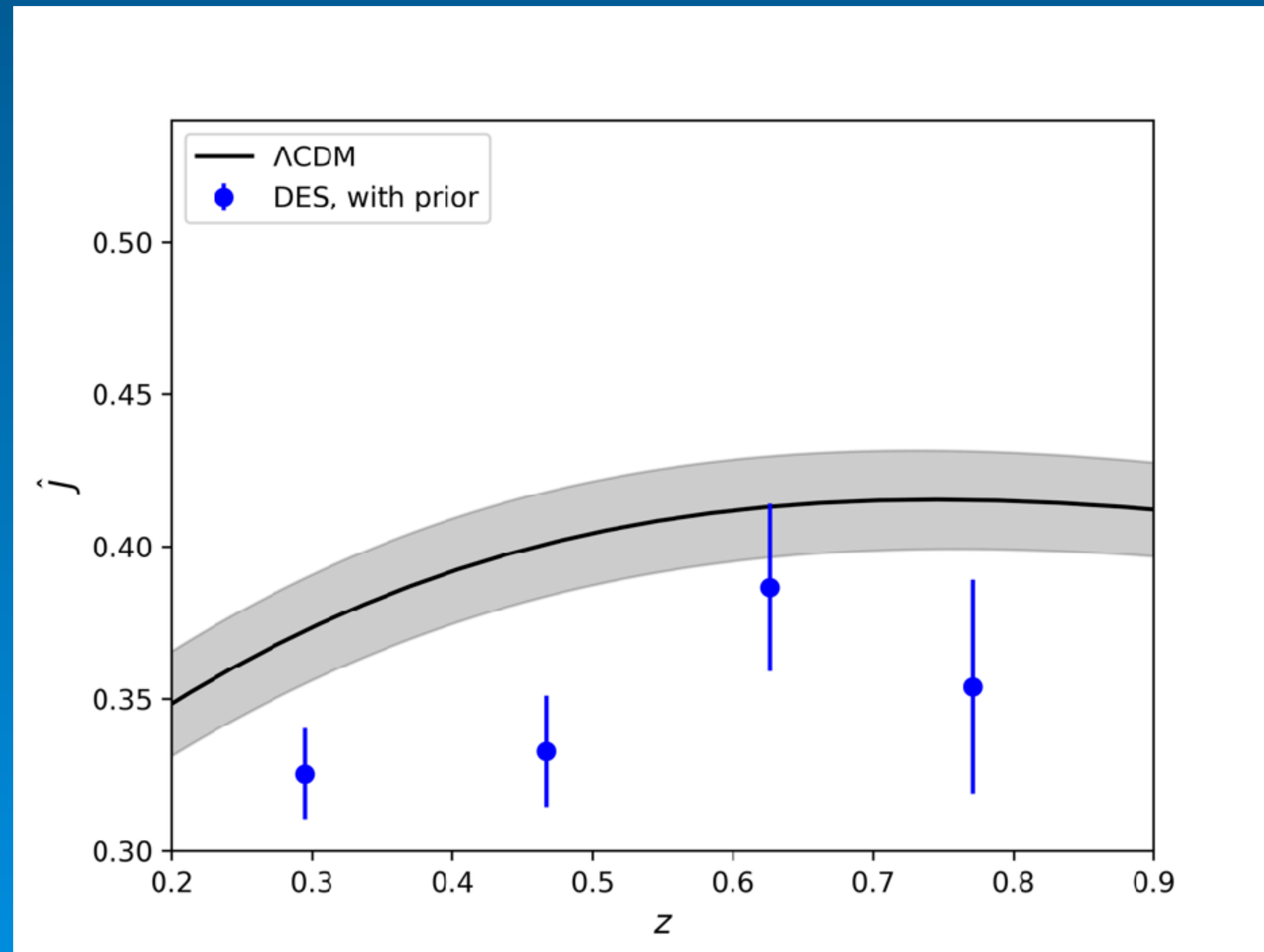
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Combining galaxy-galaxy
lensing and galaxy clustering



Measurement of $\hat{J}(z)$

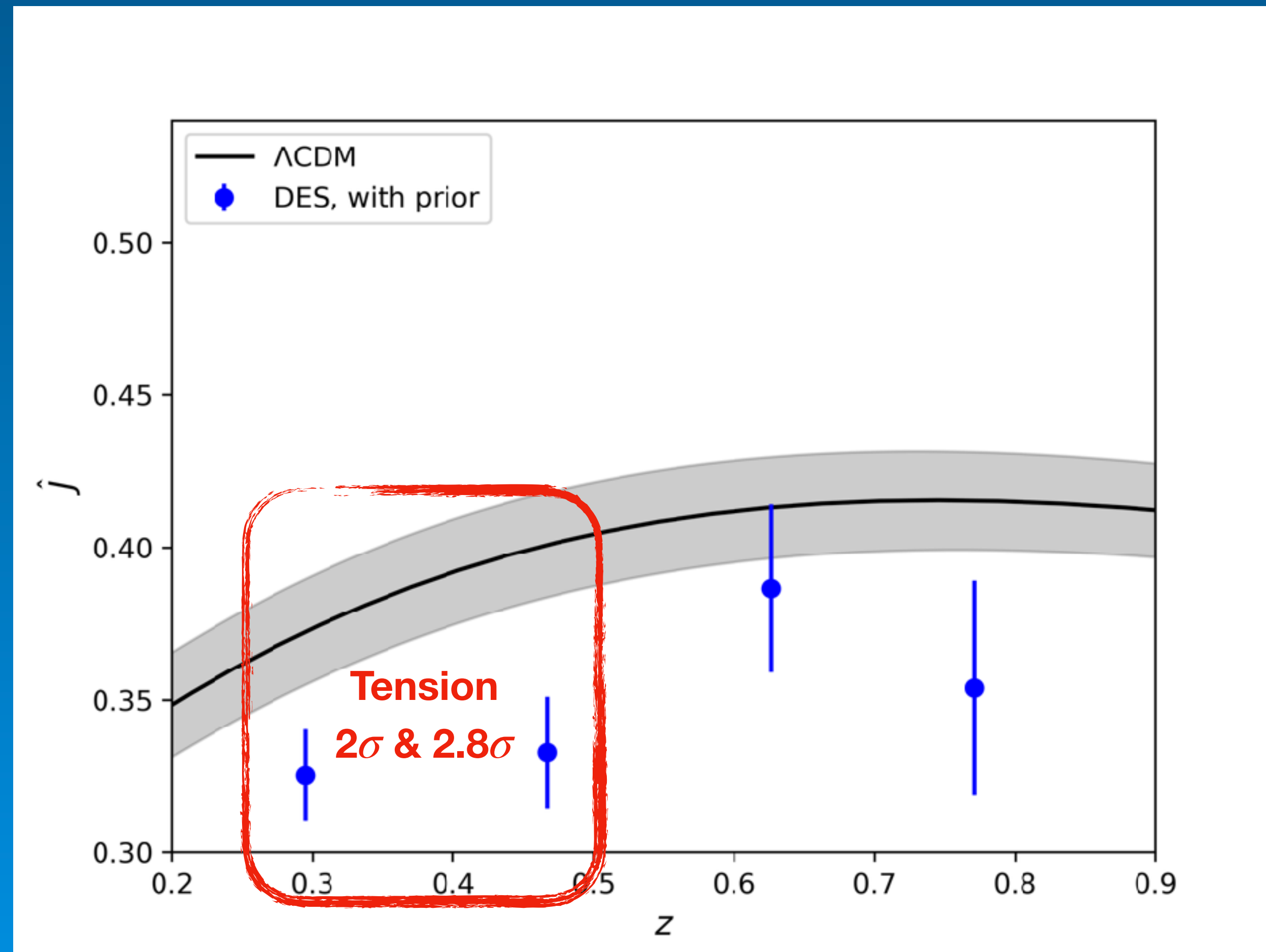
Measurement of $\hat{J}(z)$ from Dark Energy Survey data



I. Tutusaus, C. Bonvin & NG,
arXiv:2312.06434, *Nature
Commun.* 15 (2024) 9295

Measurement in 4 bins of the MagLim sample, 3σ Planck priors

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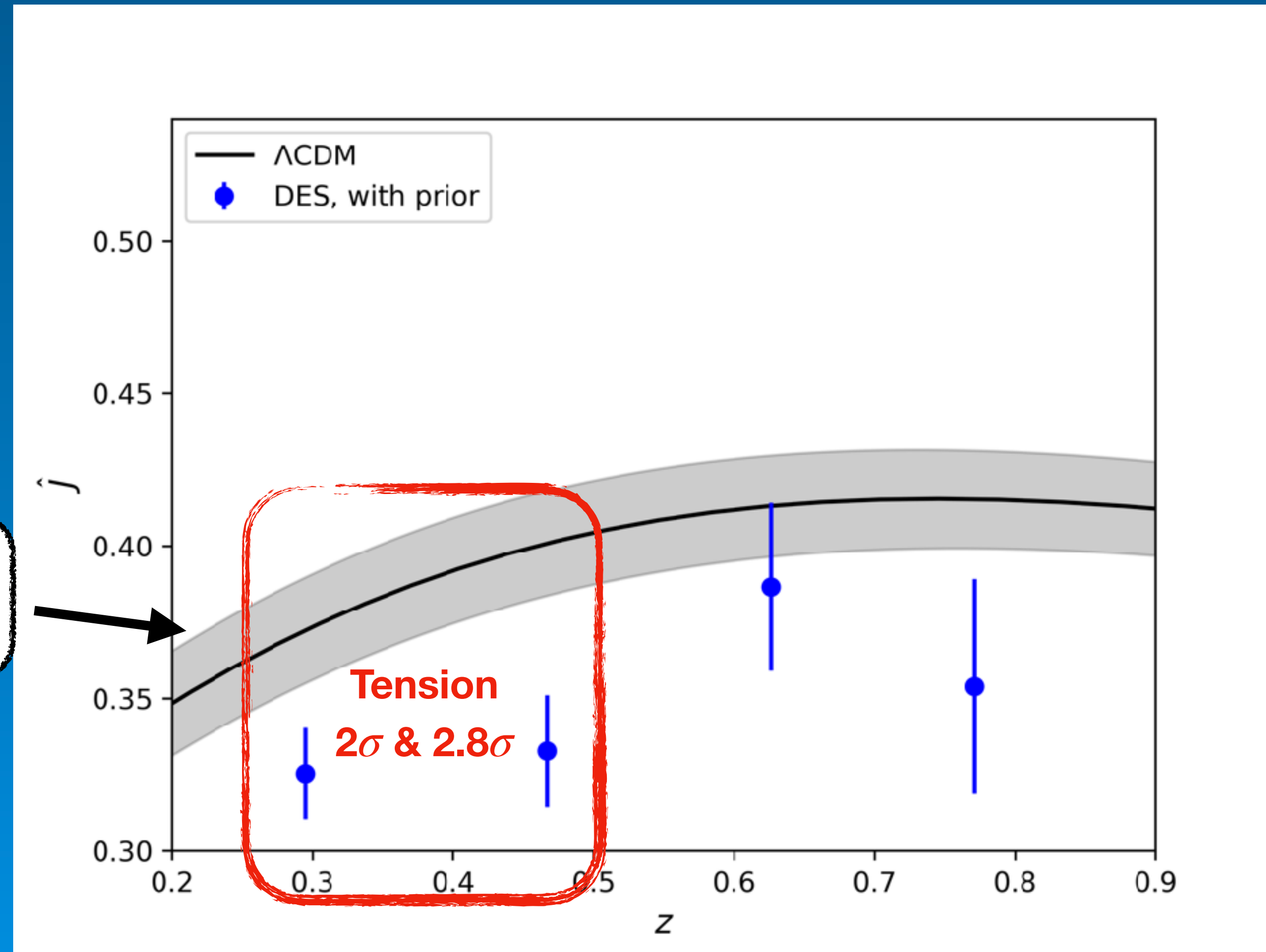


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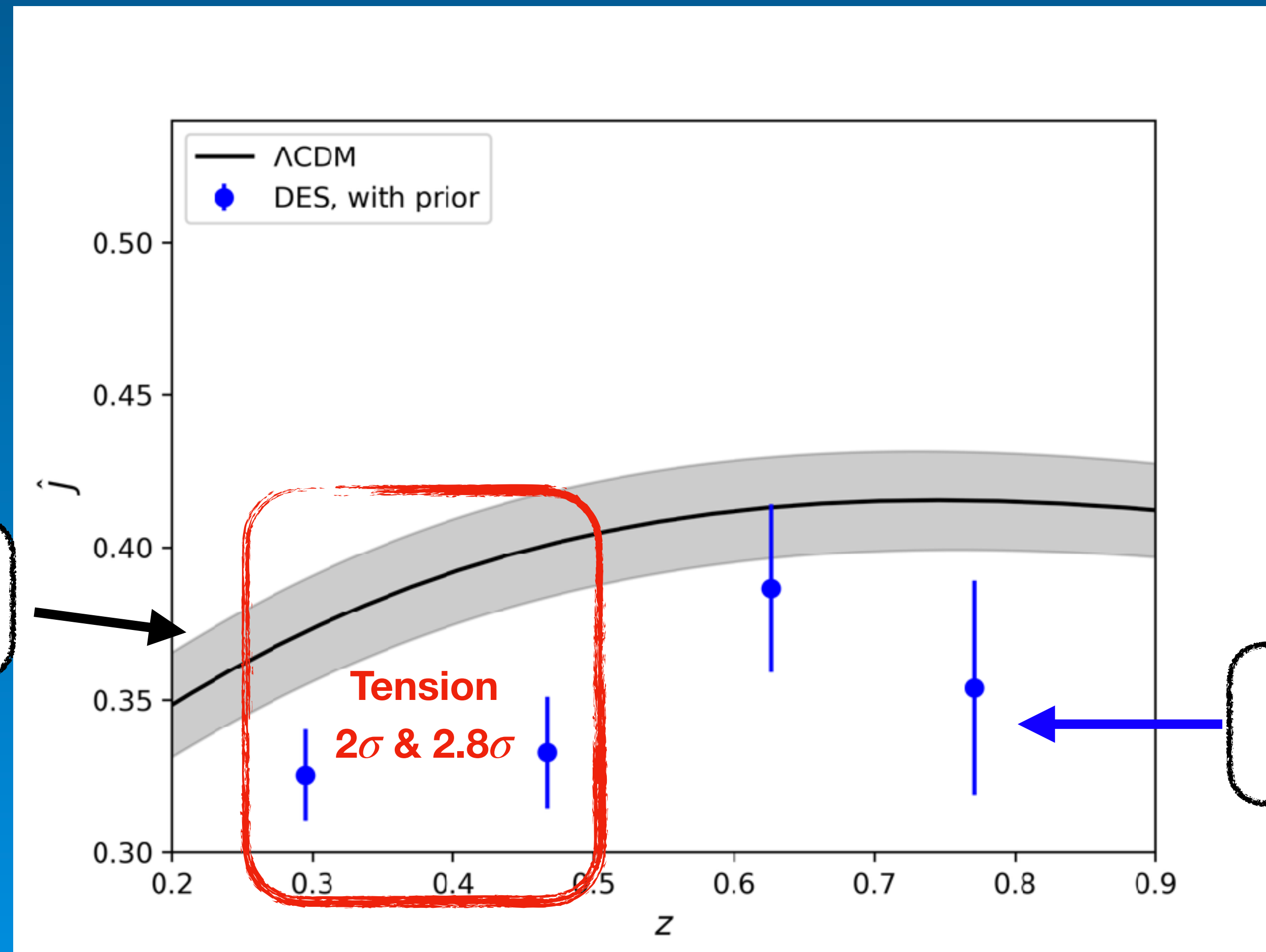
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Measurement in 4 bins of the MagLim sample, 3σ Planck priors

$\hat{J}$ combined with other model-independent observables?

Weak gravitational
lensing



$$\hat{J}(z)$$

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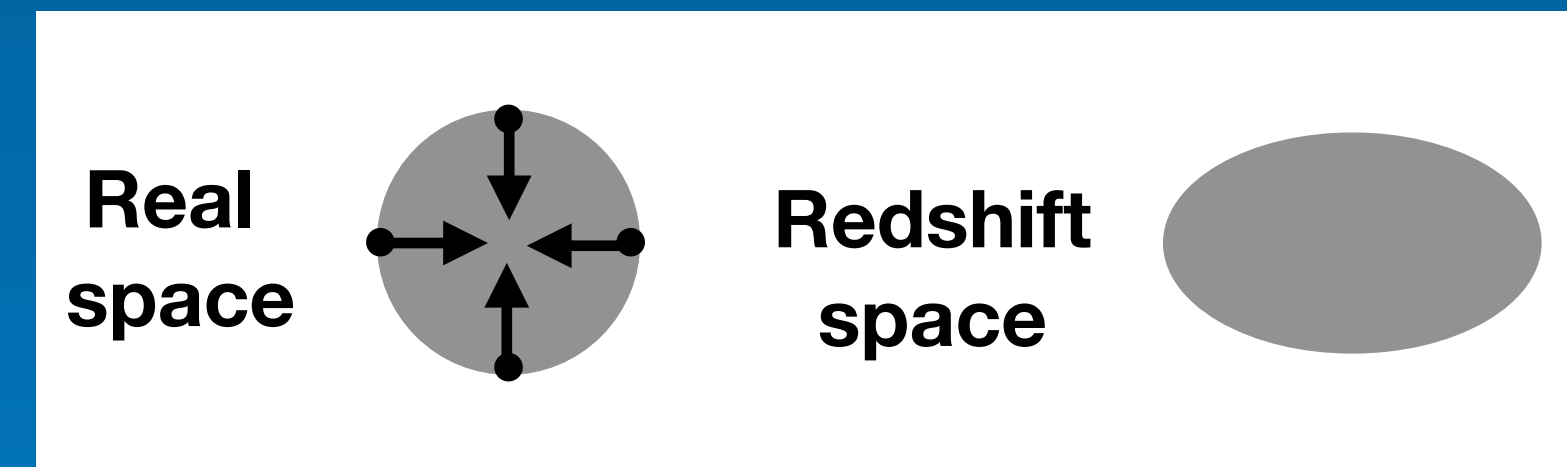


$$\hat{J}(z)$$

Redshift-space
distortions



$$\hat{f}(z) = f\sigma_8$$



f ... growth rate of structure
 σ_8 ... clustering amplitude

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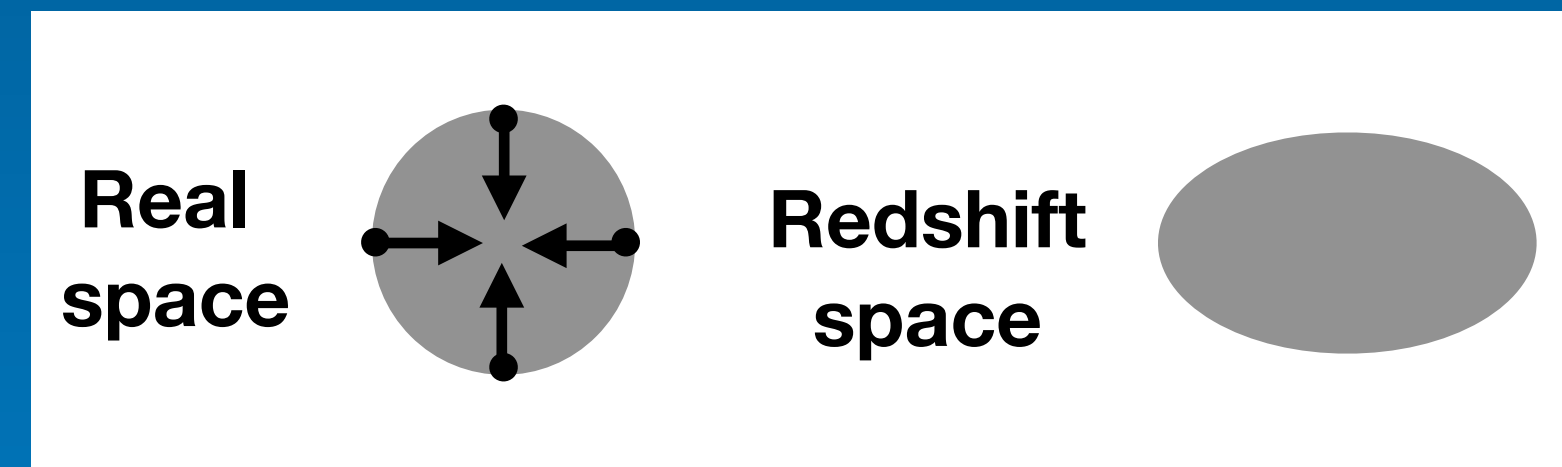
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E_G statistic
(2403.13709, *PRL* 133 (2024) 21)

Test of the Fifth Force
(2502.12843, *Nature Comm.* 16 (2025) 9399)

Null test: Geometry vs. density growth
(2506.04387, *accepted in A&A*)

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$$\mathcal{N}^{\text{grow}}(z) \equiv \frac{d}{dz} \left(\frac{\hat{J}(z)}{\Omega_m(z)} \right) + \frac{\hat{f}(z)}{1+z}$$

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In GR: $\hat{J}(z) = \Omega_m(z)\sigma_8(z).$ $\rightarrow \frac{d}{dz} \left(\frac{\hat{J}(z)}{\Omega_m(z)} \right) = \frac{d\sigma_8}{dz} = -\frac{1}{1+z} \frac{d \ln D_1(a)}{d \ln(a)} \sigma_8(z) = -\frac{\hat{f}(z)}{1+z}.$

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What is this null test sensitive to?

- Effect on the background evolution ($w_0 - w_a$) $\rightarrow$ Does NOT affect $\mathcal{N}^{\text{grow}}$!
- Effect on the growth of structure (parameter μ) $\rightarrow$ Does NOT affect $\mathcal{N}^{\text{grow}}$!
- Effect on the evolution of $\Phi + \Psi$ (parameter Σ) $\rightarrow \mathcal{N}^{\text{grow}} \neq 0$!

Null test: Geometry vs. matter density growth

Problem:

- We need to take derivatives of $\hat{J}(z)$...
- But we only have four values of $\hat{J}(z)$ so far. :(

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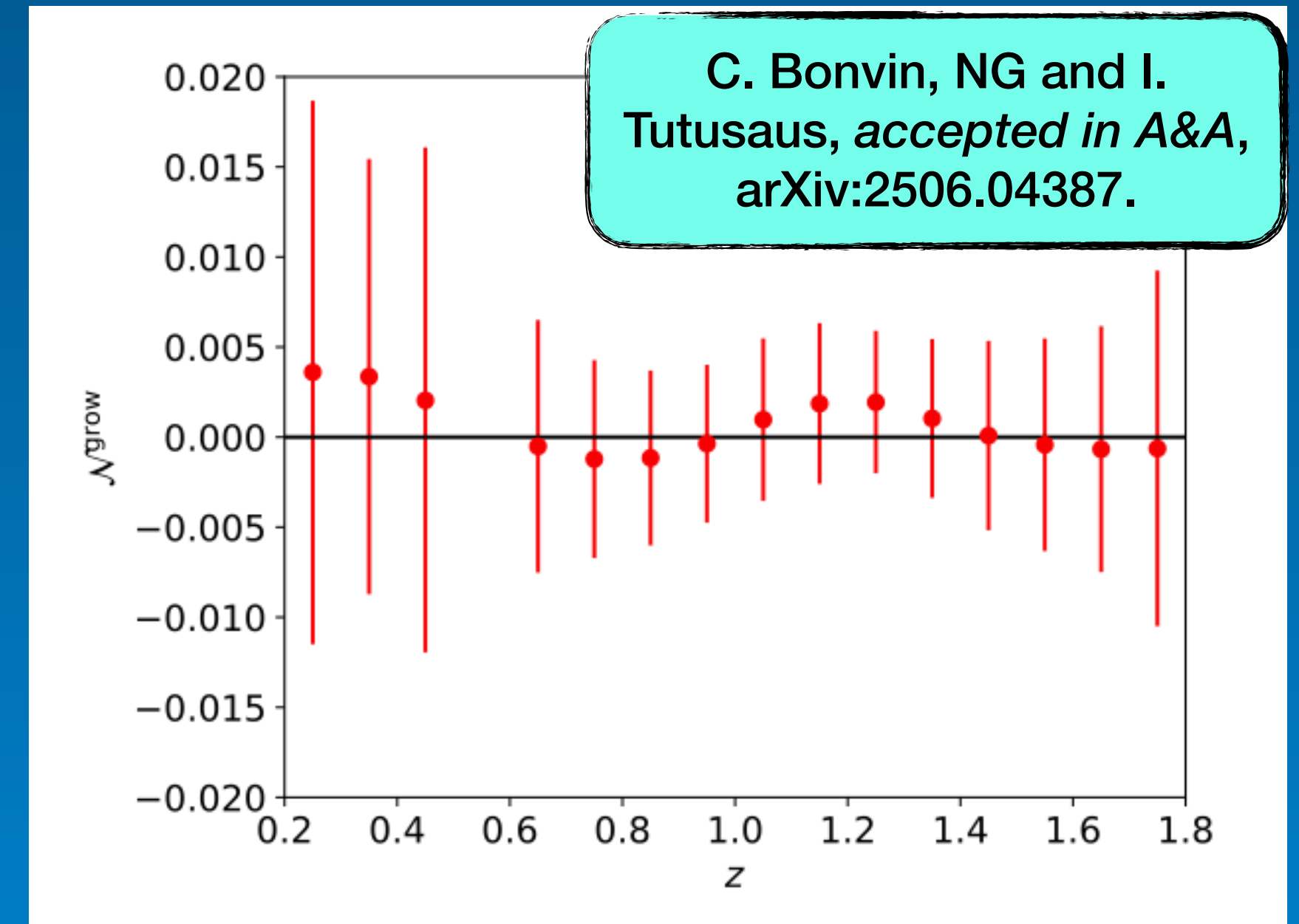
Solution: Wait for future data!

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Forecast for $\hat{J}(z)$ from LSST and $\hat{f}(z)$ from DESI (final data release):

- $\mathcal{N}^{\text{grow}}$ constrained at the level of 0.005.
- Sensitive to 2 – 4 % difference between the evolution of $\Phi + \Psi$ and δ .

One caveat:

In our 2023 paper with DES measurements of $\hat{J}$, we have assumed that the background evolution would be Λ CDM.



Impact of Evolving Dark Energy on the Weyl potential

Observable $\hat{J}(z)$: Model-independent; prediction $\hat{J}(z)_{\text{GR}} = \Omega_m(z)\sigma_8(z)$ depends on specific theory (at background and perturbation level).

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Assumptions on background evolution enter here

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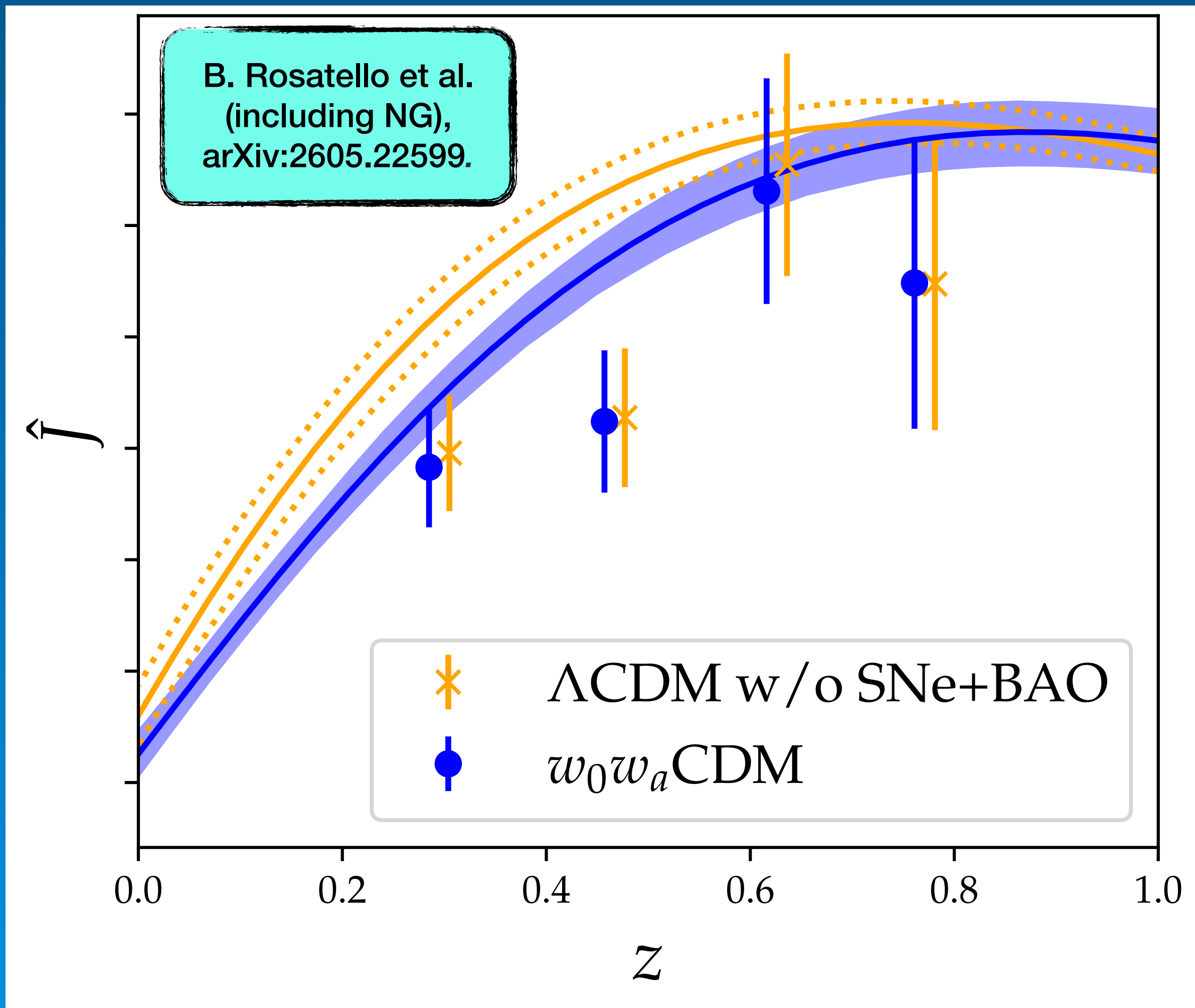
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Recent project on impact of evolving DE on the Weyl potential:

Benedetta Rosatello, Gen Ye, Maria Berti, Isaac Tutusaus, NG & Camille Bonvin; arXiv:2605.22599.

- Redo previous DES analysis, but with evolving dark energy (w0-wa).
- Combining with Planck CMB, DESI DR2 BAO, and SNIa data.

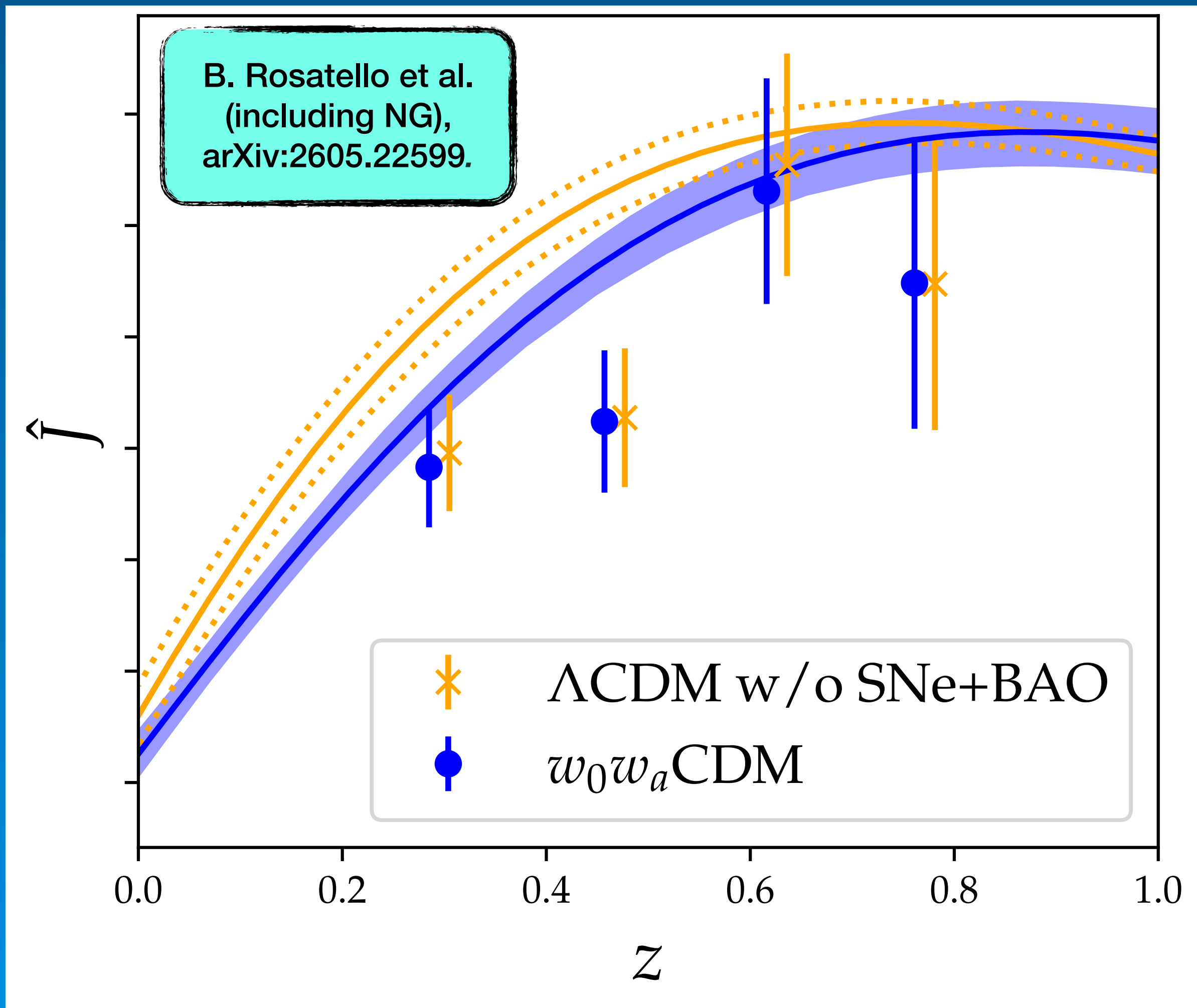
Impact of Evolving Dark Energy on the Weyl potential



Different cases considered:

- **Orange:** LCDM, w/o SNe+BAO data (DES Y3 + full CMB likelihood)
- **Blue:** w_0w_a CDM, using full data set

Impact of Evolving Dark Energy on the Weyl potential



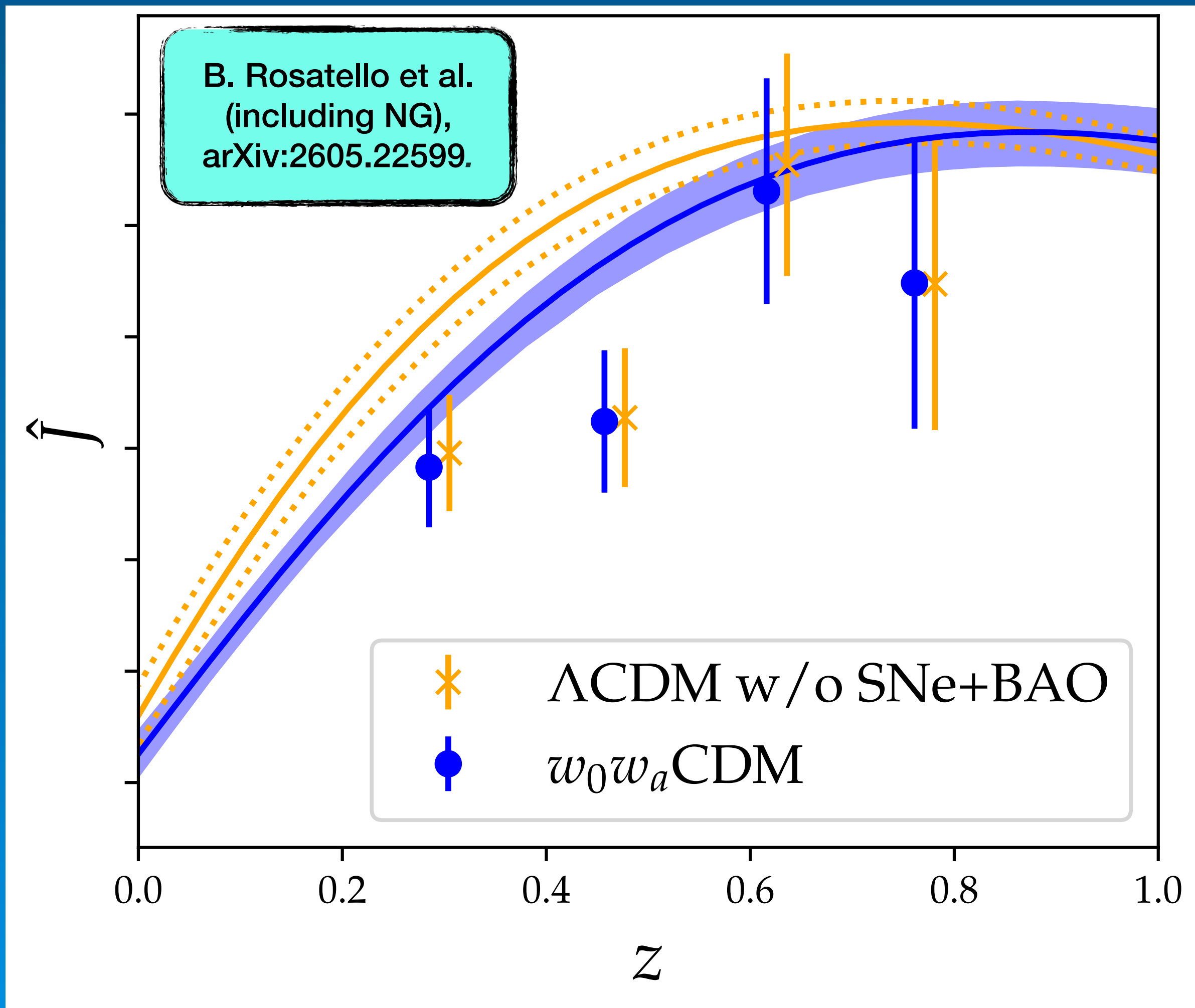
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For both cases, we have:

- 4 measurements of $\dot{J}$
- Theory prediction, depends on background model and cosmological parameters

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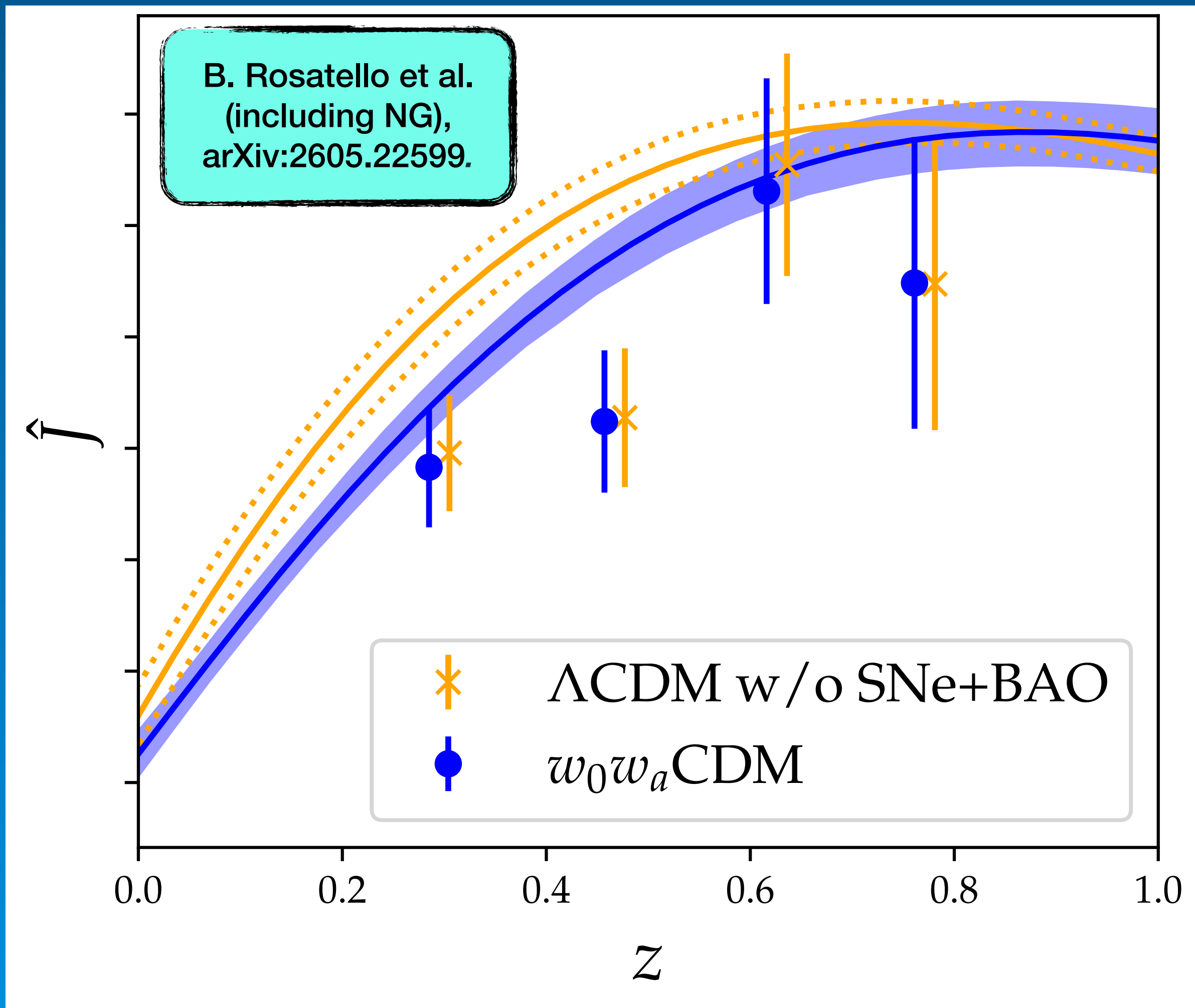
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Tension in second bin:

- 2.8σ : old analysis (Λ CDM, CMB priors)
- 3.1σ : **orange** case (Λ CDM, full CMB likelihood)
- 2.2σ : **blue** case (w_0w_a CDM, full data set)

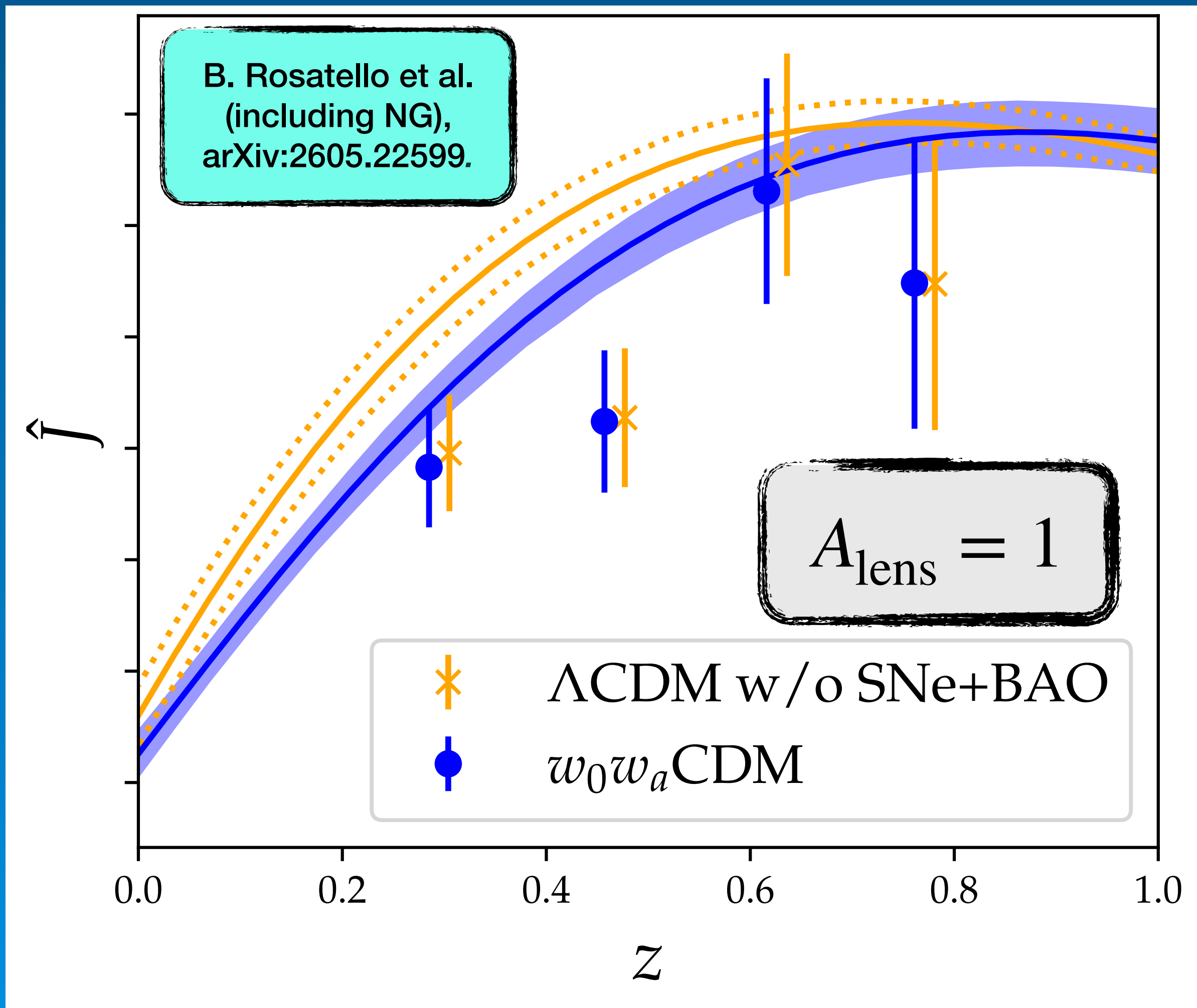
Impact of Evolving Dark Energy on the Weyl potential



Conclusion:

- The measured points vary little between the different cases.
- We can keep on calling $\hat{J}$ *model-independent*. :)
- w_0w_a CDM seems to reduce the tension (lower theory prediction)

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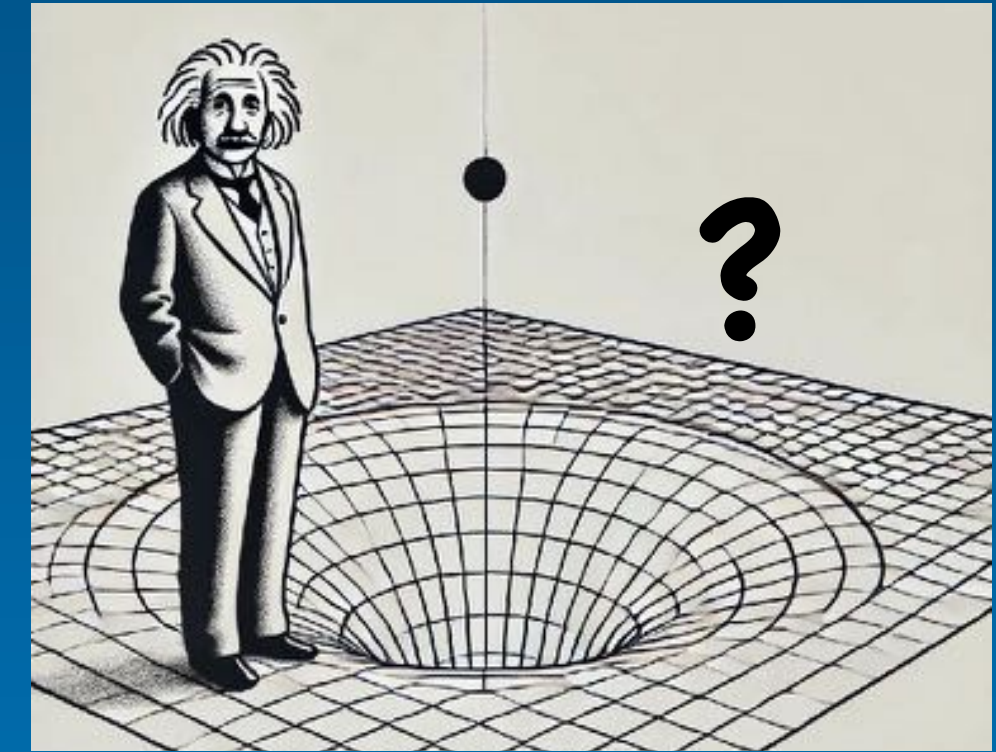
One caveat:

- In this plot: CMB lensing described by GR.
- Varying A_{lens} $\rightarrow$ degrades constraints.

Conclusions

Measurement of Weyl observable $\hat{J}$:

- Achieved with 5-10% precision from DES Y3 data.
- Mild tension of 2.8σ at $z = 0.47$.
- w_0 waCDM reduces the tension.



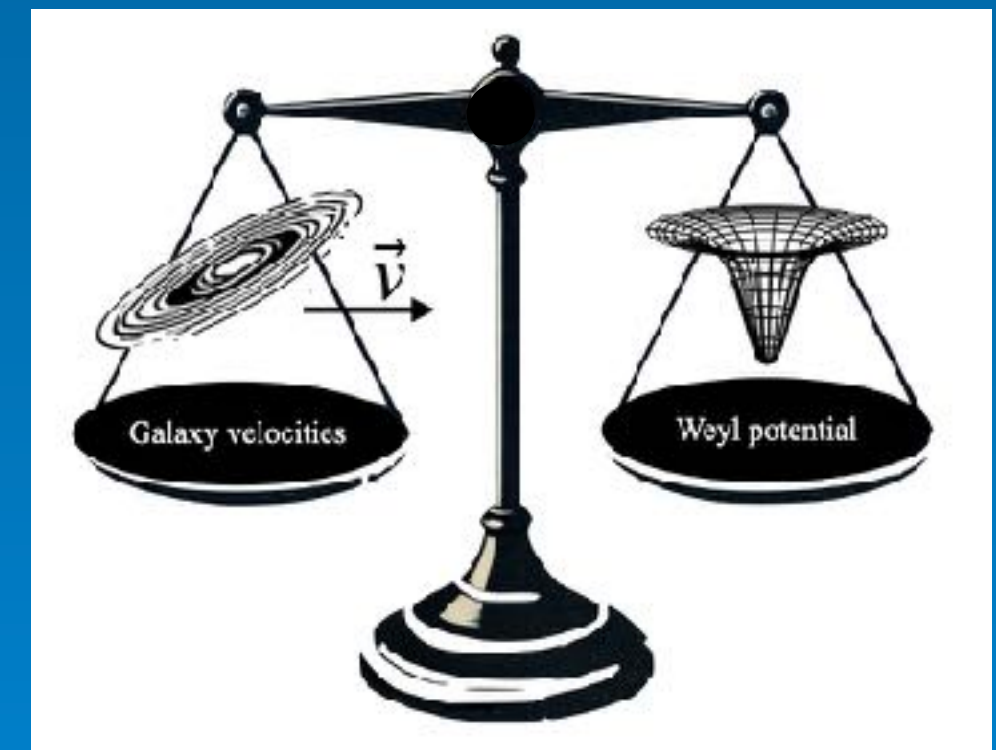
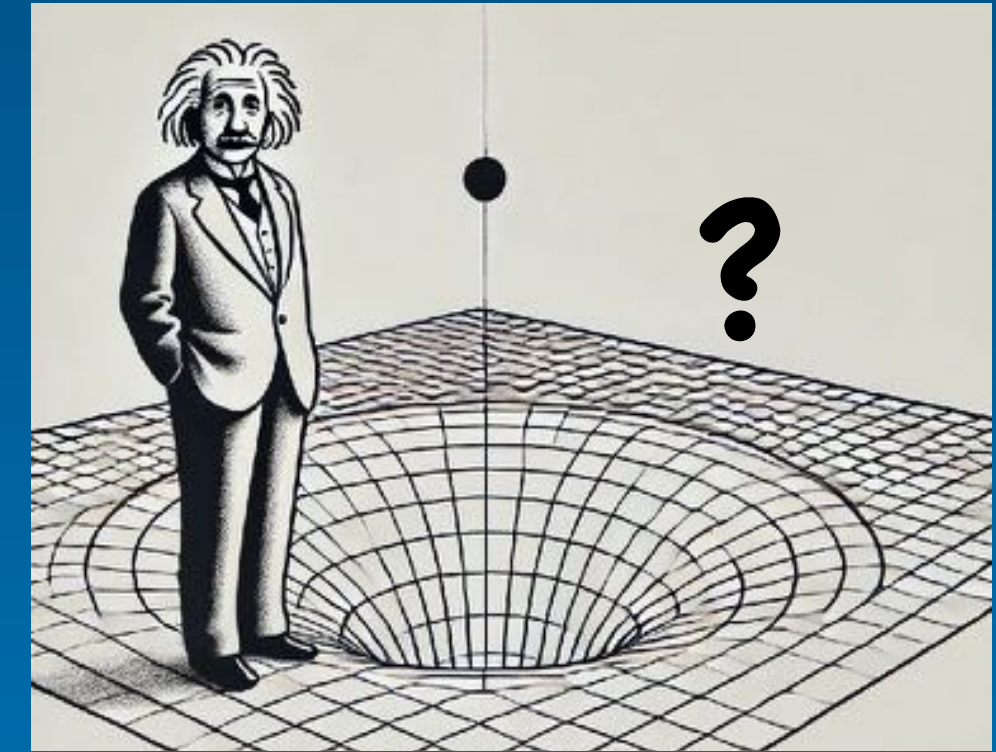
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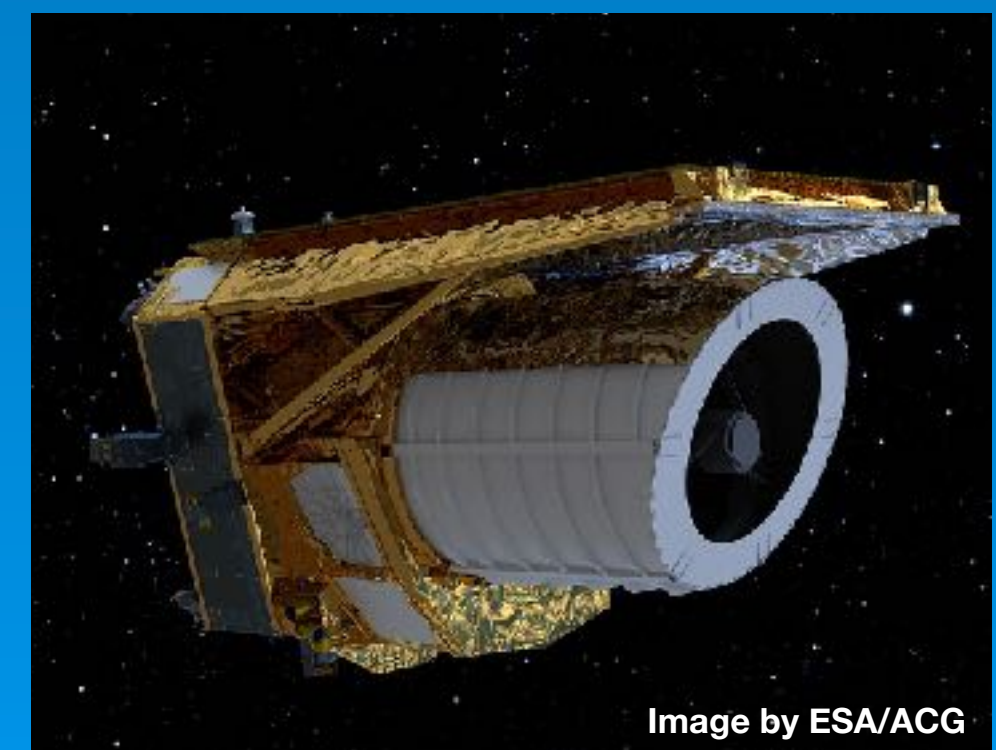
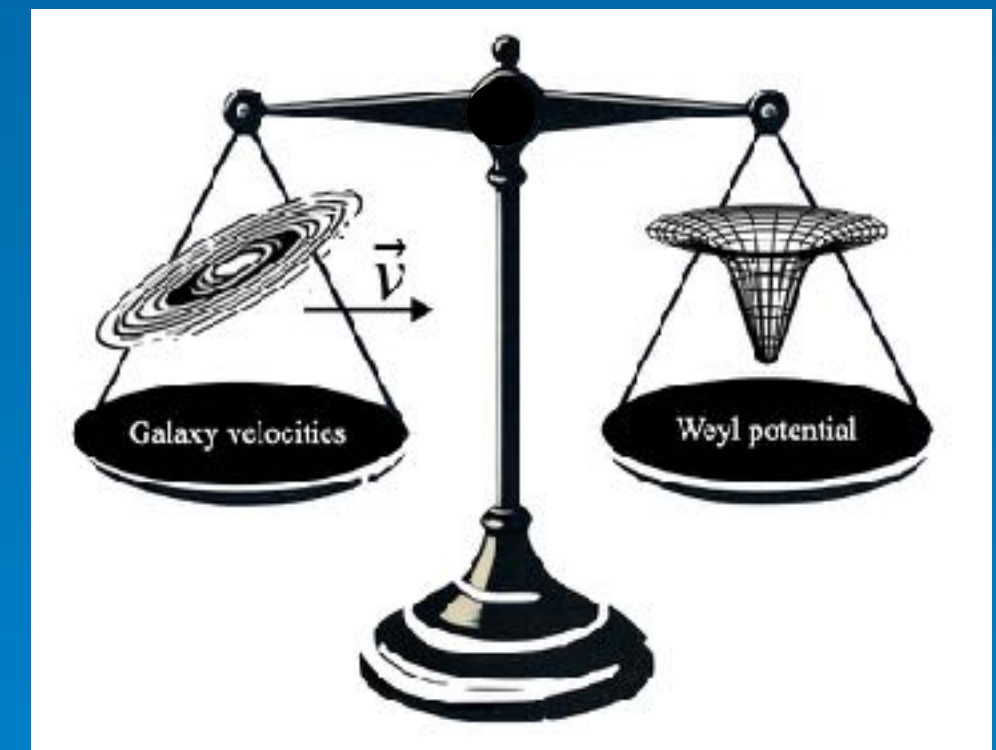
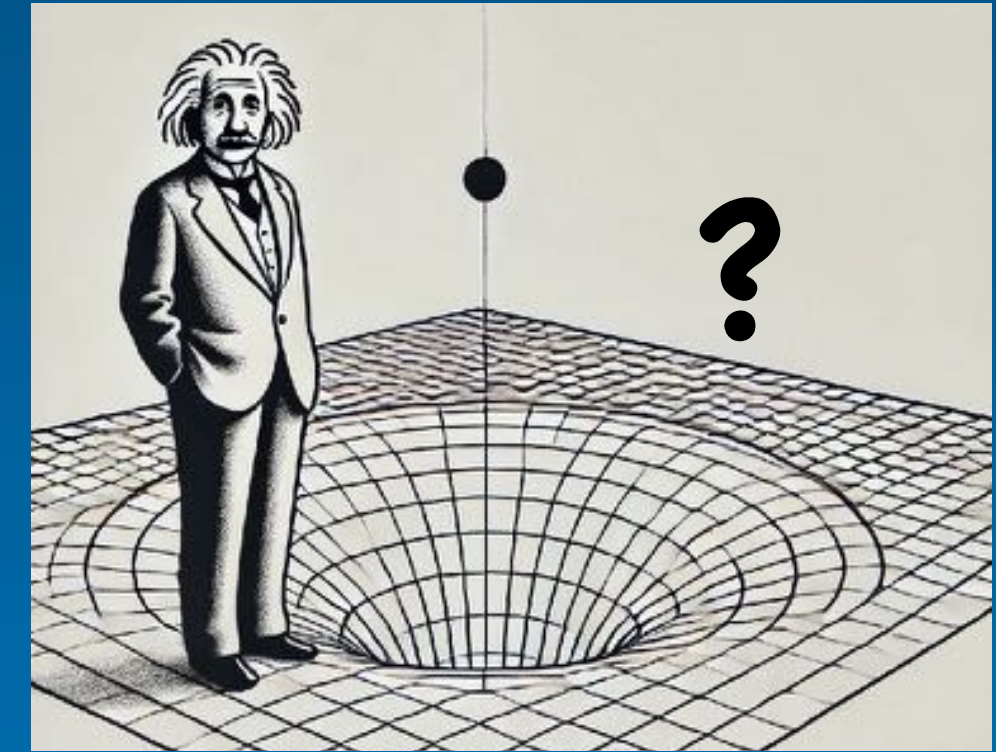
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Ongoing work:

- We need more measurements $\rightarrow$ Euclid!
- Constrain $\hat{J}$ using CMB lensing.



Back-up slides Weyl potential

$\hat{J}(z)$ measurements: some technical details

DES analysis in LCDM:

- 2 x 2pt analysis: galaxy clustering and galaxy-galaxy lensing
- Modified CosmoSIS version with Polychord sampler
- CMB priors (baseline case)
- MagLim sample (lenses), Metacalibration (sources)
- We follow closely the official DES analysis (Porredon et al. 2022):
 - Nuisance parameters for the width and shift of the lenses and shift of the sources
 - Shear calibration bias
 - Intrinsic alignments: NLA model in GR
 - Magnification effects for the lenses: modelled as in GR

w0waCDM analysis with extra data:

- Planck 2018 CMB temperature and polarisation spectra, plik_lite version of likelihood
- BAO measurements from DESI DR2
- Luminosity distance measurements from type Ia supernova, Pantheon+ sample

$\hat{J}(z)$ measurements: results

DES results in LCDM:

	CMB prior		No CMB prior	
	Standard cuts	Pessimistic cuts	Standard cuts	Pessimistic cuts
$\hat{J}(z_1)$	0.325 ± 0.015	0.329 ± 0.028	0.327 ± 0.017	0.335 ± 0.030
$\hat{J}(z_2)$	$0.333^{+0.017}_{-0.019}$	0.324 ± 0.035	$0.328^{+0.019}_{-0.023}$	0.326 ± 0.036
$\hat{J}(z_3)$	$0.387^{+0.026}_{-0.029}$	0.428 ± 0.061	0.388 ± 0.032	0.433 ± 0.063
$\hat{J}(z_4)$	0.354 ± 0.035	0.368 ± 0.075	0.345 ± 0.040	0.370 ± 0.080

New paper with varying w0wa and extra datasets:

Model		$\hat{J}(z = 0.295)$	$\hat{J}(z = 0.467)$	$\hat{J}(z = 0.626)$	$\hat{J}(z = 0.771)$	Tension
Varying A_{lens}	Λ CDM	0.330 ± 0.014	0.337 ± 0.016	0.387 ± 0.025	$0.364^{+0.029}_{-0.033}$	2.1σ
	w_0w_a CDM	$0.325^{+0.014}_{-0.016}$	0.332 ± 0.016	0.386 ± 0.023	$0.365^{+0.029}_{-0.034}$	1.6σ
$A_{\text{lens}} = 1$	Λ CDM	0.324 ± 0.013	0.332 ± 0.016	0.389 ± 0.025	0.362 ± 0.033	3.1σ
	w_0w_a CDM	0.321 ± 0.013	0.331 ± 0.016	0.383 ± 0.025	0.362 ± 0.033	2.2σ
Ref. [6]		0.325 ± 0.015	$0.333^{+0.017}_{-0.019}$	$0.387^{+0.026}_{-0.029}$	0.354 ± 0.035	2.8σ

Results for w0-wa:

Varying A_{lens} :

$$w_0 = -0.855^{+0.054}_{-0.047},$$
$$w_a = -0.48 \pm 0.20.$$

$$w(z) = w_0 + w_a \frac{z}{1+z}$$

A_{lens} fixed to 1:

$$w_0 = -0.830^{+0.051}_{-0.060},$$
$$w_a = -0.67^{+0.22}_{-0.19}.$$

$$w(z) = w_0 + w_a \frac{z}{1+z}$$

Back-up slides Weyl + RSD

The E_G statistic

Theoretically described in Zhang et al. (2007):

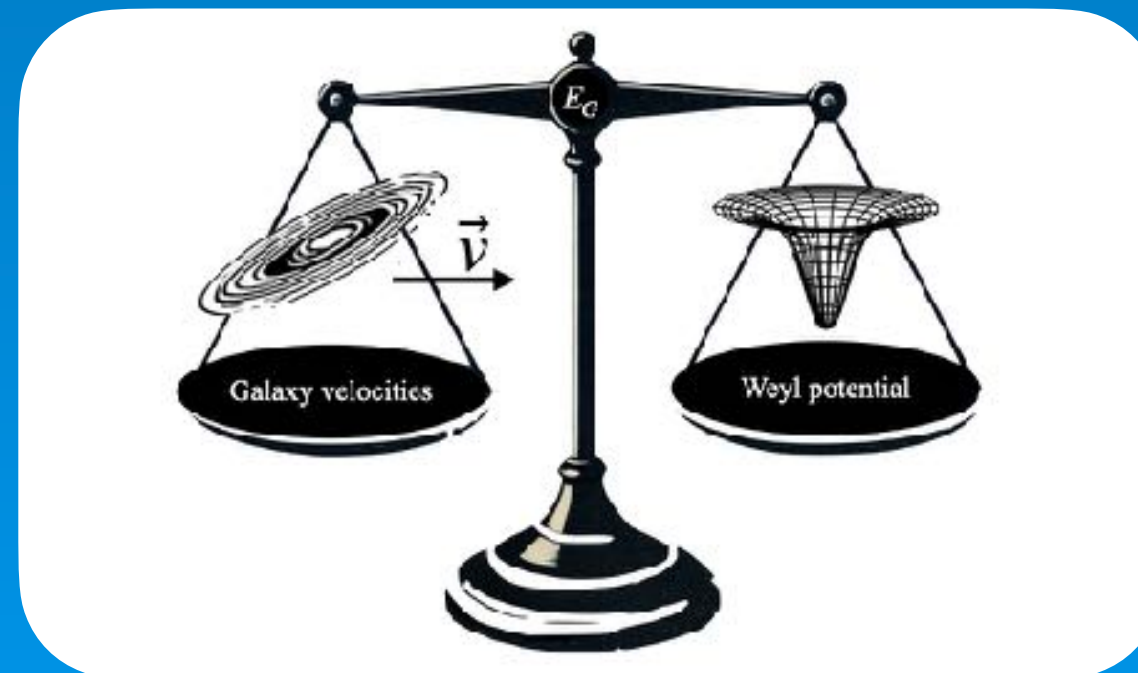
$$E_G(l) = \frac{a}{3H_0^2} \frac{C_{\kappa g}(l)}{C_{gv}(l)}$$

Galaxy-galaxy lensing
Galaxy-velocity correlations

In practise: $E_G(l) \propto \frac{C_{\kappa g}(l)}{(f/b) \cdot C_{gg}(l)}$

New method E_G written as ratio of model-independent observables:

$$E_G(z) = \left(\frac{H(z)}{H_0} \right)^2 \frac{1}{1+z} \frac{\hat{J}(z)}{\hat{f}(z)}$$

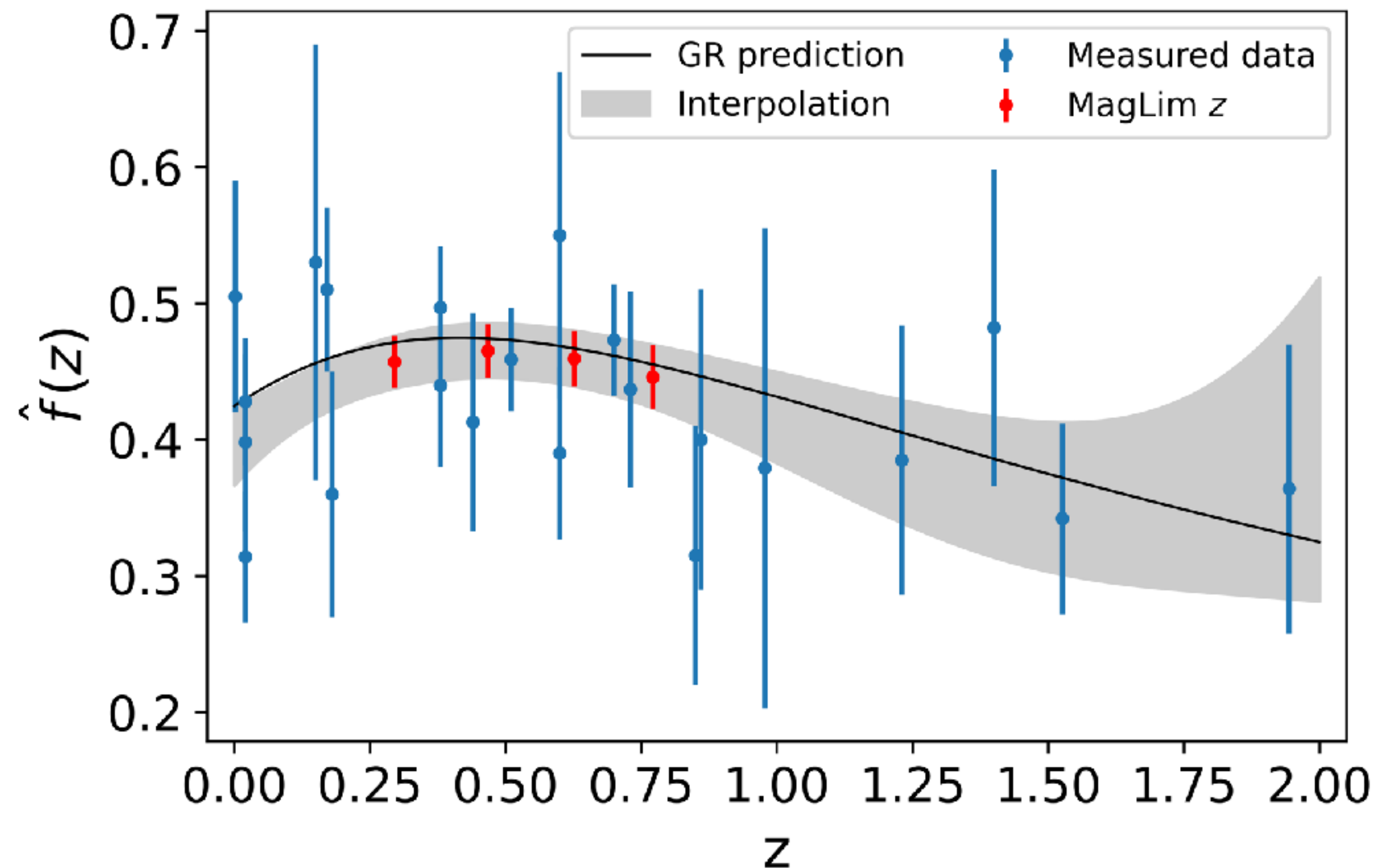


NG, C. Bonvin and I. Tutusaus,
arXiv:2403.13709, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 133 (2024) 9295

Why is it useful?

- Galaxy bias b cancels out.
- Measurements of E_G can be compared to their Λ CDM prediction,
 $E_G = \Omega_{m,0}/f(z)$.

Spline interpolation of $\hat{f}(z)$ data



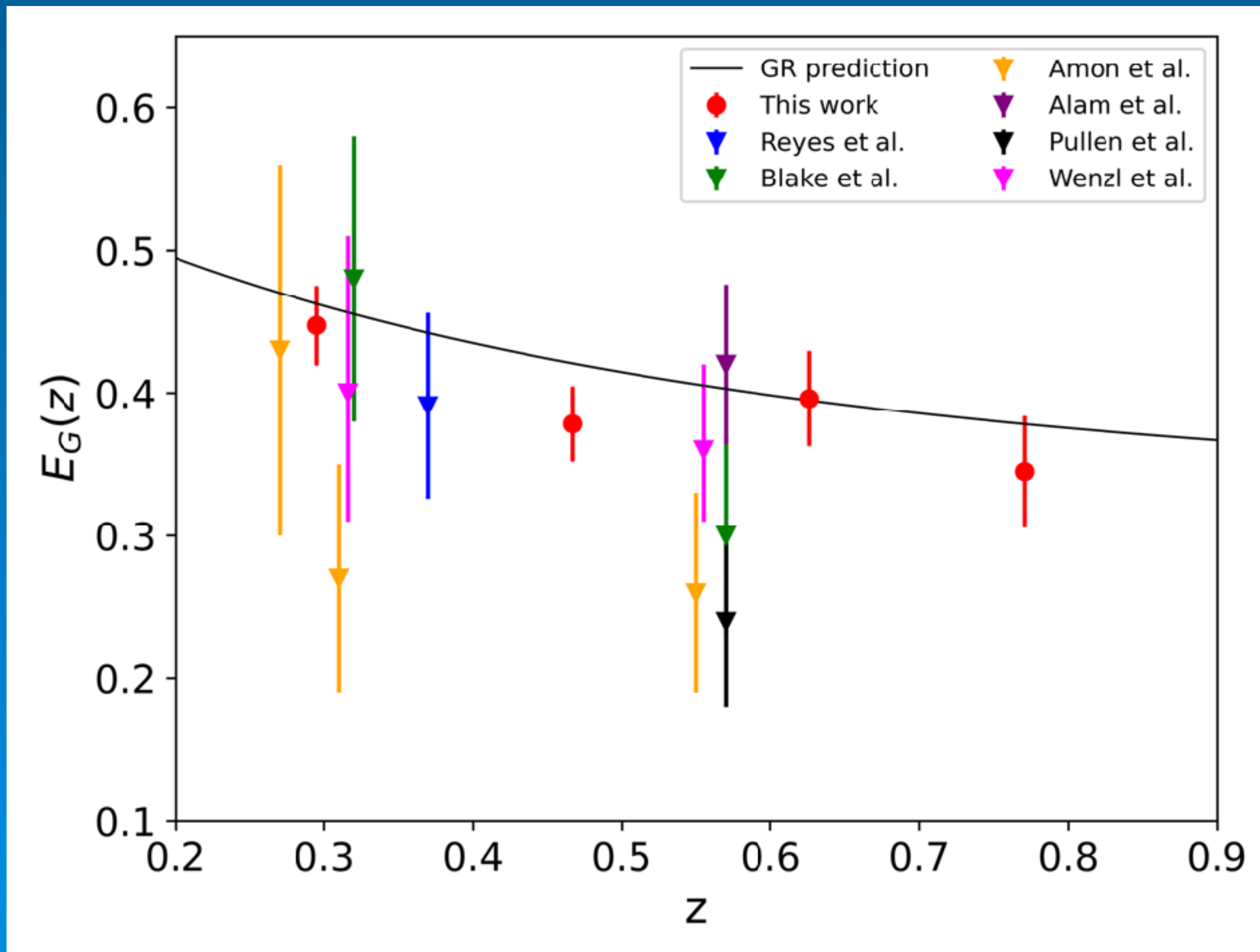
Data:

- 22 measurements of $\hat{f}$ between $z = 0.001$ and $z = 1.944$.
- Based on the Gold-2017 compilation (Nesseris et al. 2017), with updated data from SDSS-IV.

Spline interpolation:

Measurements of $\hat{f}(z)$ at the 4 MagLim effective redshifts with 4-5% precision.

New E_G measurement



Result:

- We can measure E_G with 6–11% precision (compared to 13 – 30% for previous measurements.)
- Agreement with GR (1.6σ deviation in the second bin)

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arXiv:2403.13709, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 133 (2024) 9295

Constraining Euler's equation for dark matter

RSD: Depend on the way galaxies fall into gravitational potentials.

Euler's equation: $V' + V - \frac{k}{\mathcal{H}} (1 + \Gamma) \Psi = 0.$ $\Gamma \dots$ **Fifth force term**

The quantity $\hat{J}$ describes the evolution of $\Phi + \Psi$ ($=2\Psi$ without anisotropic stress).

$$\Rightarrow 1 + \Gamma(z) = \frac{2\hat{f}(z)}{3\hat{J}(z)} \left(1 - \frac{d \ln \mathcal{H}(z)}{d \ln(1+z)} - \frac{d \ln \hat{f}(z)}{d \ln(1+z)} \right)$$

NG, C. Bonvin and I. Tutusaus,
arXiv:2502.12843, *Nature Comm.*
16 (2025) 9399

