

# Form Factor Uncertainty Analysis for Coherent Neutrino Trident Scattering

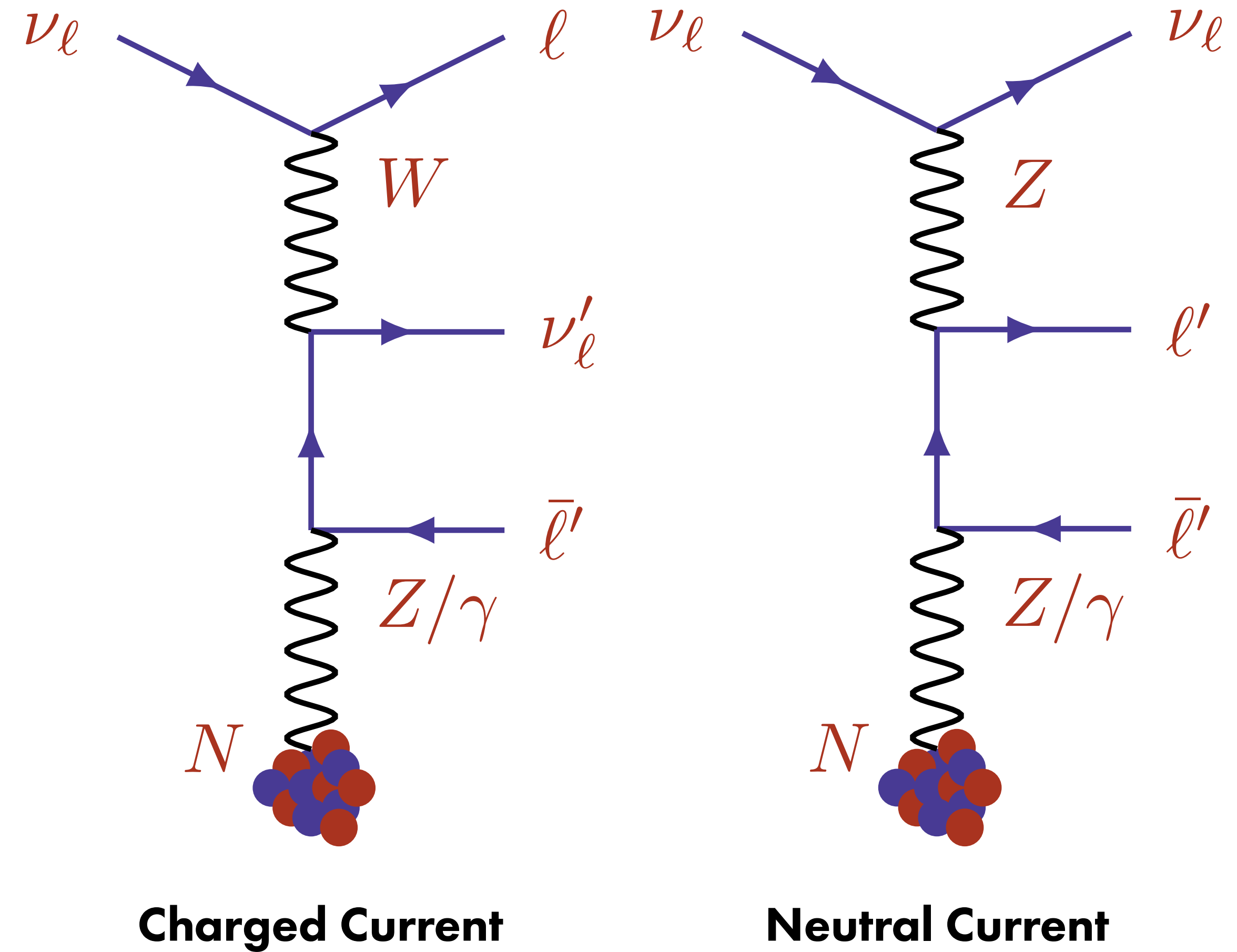
Phenomenology 2026 Symposium

University of Pittsburgh

May 11, 2026

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TABLE II. Expected number of muon-neutrino-induced Standard Model trident events at the DUNE near detector per tonne of argon and year of operation in neutrino mode (first four rows) or antineutrino mode (last four rows). The numbers in parenthesis correspond to the total statistics in the 147-tonne LArTPC for a run of 3 years.

	Coherent	Incoherent
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\mu \mu^+ \mu^-$	$1.17 \pm 0.07$ (516 $\pm$ 31)	$0.49 \pm 0.15$ (216 $\pm$ 66)
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\mu e^+ e^-$	$2.84 \pm 0.17$ (1252 $\pm$ 75)	$0.18 \pm 0.06$ (79 $\pm$ 27)
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e e^+ \mu^-$	$9.8 \pm 0.6$ (4322 $\pm$ 265)	$1.2 \pm 0.4$ (529 $\pm$ 176)
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e \mu^+ e^-$	0 (0)	0 (0)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\mu \mu^+ \mu^-$	$0.72 \pm 0.04$ (318 $\pm$ 18)	$0.32 \pm 0.10$ (141 $\pm$ 44)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\mu e^+ e^-$	$2.21 \pm 0.13$ (975 $\pm$ 57)	$0.13 \pm 0.04$ (57 $\pm$ 18)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e e^+ \mu^-$	0 (0)	0 (0)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e \mu^+ e^-$	$7.0 \pm 0.4$ (3087 $\pm$ 176)	$0.9 \pm 0.3$ (397 $\pm$ 132)

Altmannshofer et al. [1902.06765]



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Channel	T2K-I	T2K-II	MINOS	MINOS+	NO $\nu$ A-I	NO $\nu$ A-II	MINER $\nu$ A
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e e^+ \mu^-$	538	1379	179 (25)	688	71 (14)	291 (73)	140 (13)
	49	126	21 (3)	82	21 (4)	86 (21)	30 (3)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e e^- \mu^+$	23	58	42 (31)	38	10 (57)	41 (296)	8 (89)
	2	5	5 (4)	5	3 (17)	12 (88)	2 (19)
$\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_\mu e^- \mu^+$	2	6	1 (0.2)	4	2 (0.5)	8 (3)	1 (0.09)
	0.3	1	0.3 (0.04)	0.8	0.9 (0.2)	4 (1)	0.3 (0.03)
$\bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\mu e^+ \mu^-$	0.2	0.6	0.4 (0.3)	0.4	0.5 (0.9)	2 (5)	0.06 (0.5)
	0.04	0.1	0.08 (0.06)	0.08	0.2 (0.4)	0.8 (2)	0.02 (0.2)
Total $e^\pm \mu^\mp$	563	1444	222 (56)	730	83 (72)	340 (374)	149 (102)
	52	132	27 (7)	88	25 (22)	102 (114)	32 (22)
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\mu e^+ e^-$	257	659	48 (5)	44	22 (3)	90 (16)	35 (3)
	9	23	3 (0.4)	3	3 (0.6)	00	4 (0.4)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\mu e^- e^+$	10	26	9 (8)	9	2 (16)	8 (83)	2 (23)
	0.4	1	0.7 (0.5)	0.7	0.4 (3)	2 (15)	0.2 (3)
$\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_e e^- e^+$	9	24	3 (0.3)	8	3 (0.9)	12 (5)	2 (0.2)
	0.3	0.8	0.2 (0.03)	0.6	0.7 (0.2)	3 (1)	0.2 (0.02)
$\bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e e^+ e^-$	0.9	2	0.7 (0.6)	0.7	0.8 (2)	3 (10)	0.1 (0.9)
	0.03	0.08	0.06 (0.04)	0.05	0.2 (0.3)	0.8 (1)	0.01 (0.1)
Total $e^+ e^-$	277	711	61 (15)	62	29 (22)	119 (114)	39 (27)
	10	25	4 (1)	4	4 (4)	16 (21)	4 (3)
$\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\mu \mu^+ \mu^-$	29	73	21 (3)	81	7 (2)	28 (11)	17 (2)
	15	38	8 (1)	33	7 (2)	29 (10)	12 (1)
$\bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_\mu \mu^- \mu^+$	1	3	5 (3)	5	1 (7)	4 (35)	1 (11)
	0.7	2	2 (1)	2	1 (6)	4 (30)	0.7 (8)
$\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_e \mu^+ \mu^-$	0.09	0.2	0.09 (0.01)	0.3	0.1 (0.04)	0.4 (0.2)	0.06 (0.007)
	0.04	0.1	0.03 (0.004)	0.1	0.1 (0.03)	0.4 (0.1)	0.03 (0.004)
$\bar{\nu}_e \rightarrow \bar{\nu}_e \mu^+ \mu^-$	0.01	0.03	0.03 (0.02)	0.03	0.04 (0.06)	0.2 (0.3)	0.004 (0.03)
	0.004	0.01	0.01 (0.009)	0.01	0.03(0.05)	0.1 (0.3)	0.003 (0.02)
Total $\mu^+ \mu^-$	30	76	26 (6)	86	9 (9)	37 (47)	18 (13)
	16	40	10 (2)	35	8 (8)	34 (36)	13 (9)

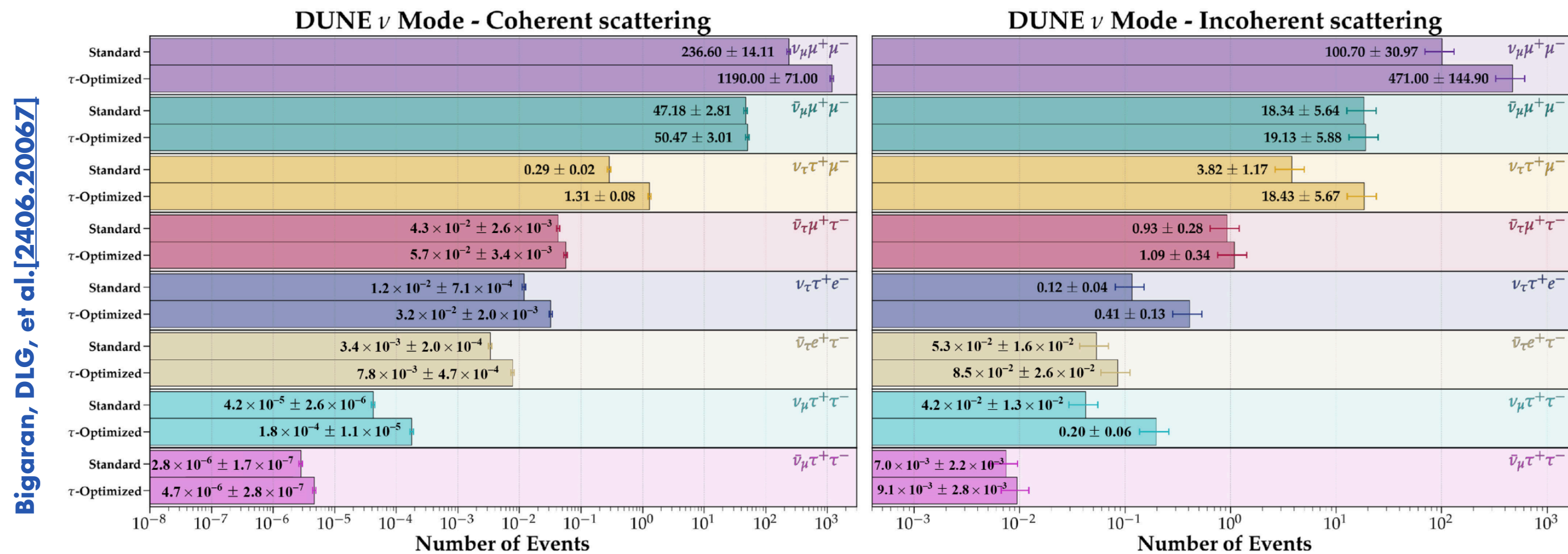


FIG. 3. Number of trident events from coherent (left) and incoherent (right) scattering at DUNE near detector with 67 ton of argon and  $3.3 \times 10^{21}$  POT in the forward horn current mode for both standard and tau-optimized fluxes.

Table 7. Total number of *coherent* (top row) and *diffractive* (bottom row) trident events expected at different non-LAr detectors for each channel. The numbers in parentheses are for the antineutrino running mode, when present. These calculations consider a detection efficiency of 100%.



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  - Unique probe of EW interactions and  $\nu$ -phillic BSM mediators.

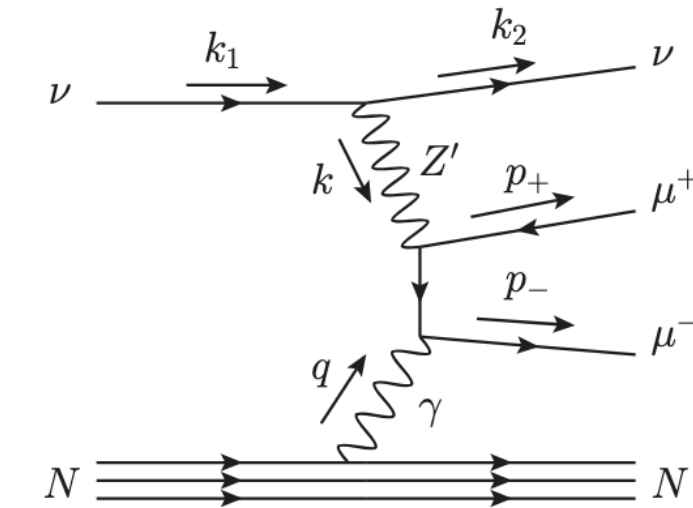
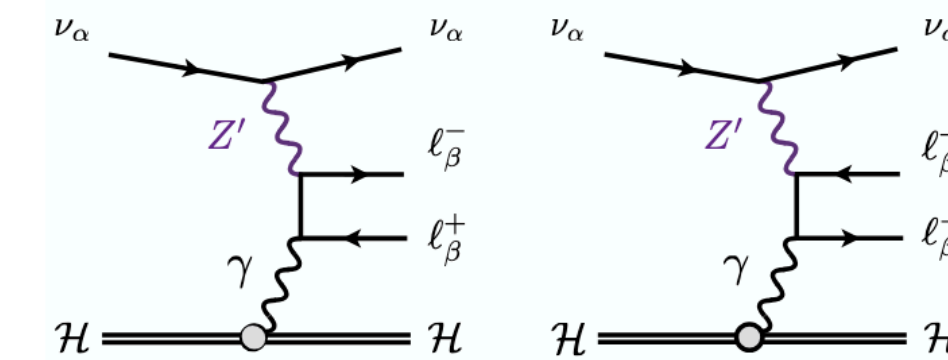


FIG. 1. The leading order contribution of the  $Z'$  to neutrino trident production (another diagram with  $\mu^+$  and  $\mu^-$  reversed is not shown). Other contributions at the same order in  $g'$  are further suppressed by the Fermi scale.

[Altmannshofer et al. \[1406.2332\]](#)

[Ballett et al. \[1902.08579\]](#)



Bethe-Heitler

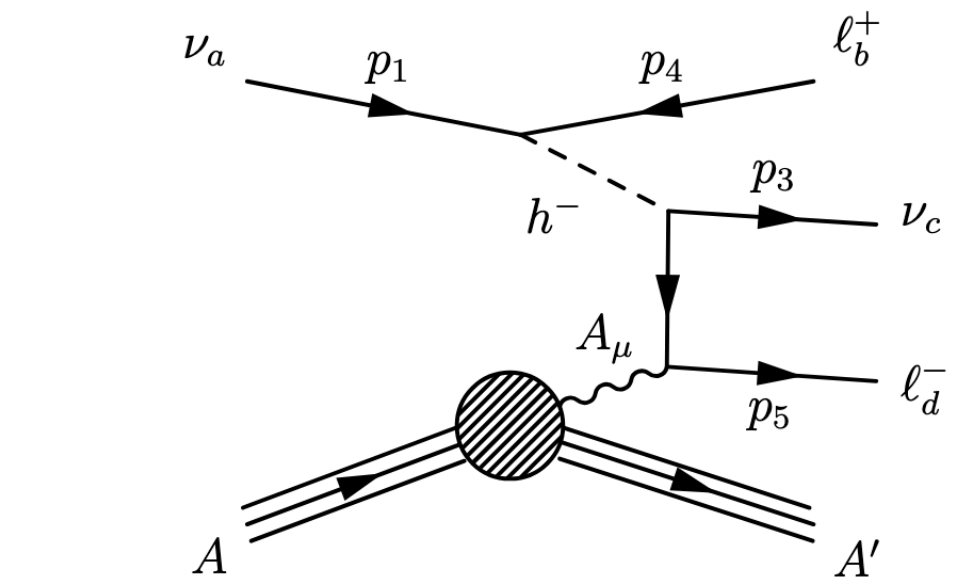
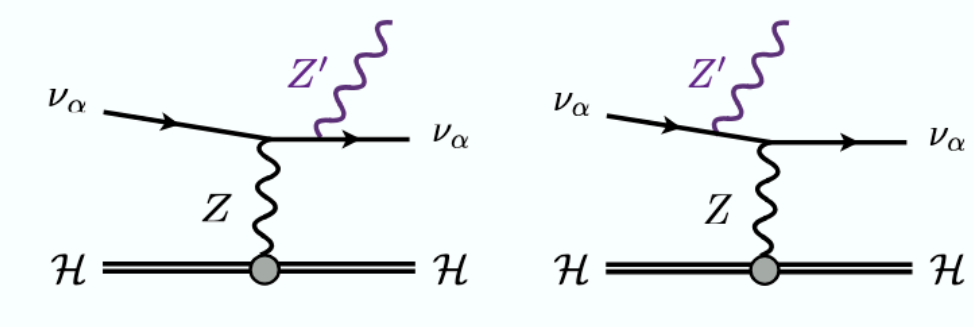


FIG. 1: Neutrino trident production of a charged Weyl lepton pair via a new charged scalar. There are three additional diagrams that can be obtained. The two charged leptons can be of different flavours. The connecting photon can interact with the nucleus (as shown above), or with individual nucleons.

[Magill & Plestid \[1710.08431\]](#)



Dark-Bremsstrahlung

**Figure 1.** The BSM contributions to neutrino trident production considered in our calculation. The diagrams on the top row are referred to as Bether-Heitler contributions due to their resemblance to pair-production. On the bottom row, we show diagrams with a radiative-like  $Z'$  contribution, which allows for the production of on-shell  $Z'$  particles, which subsequently decays into the charged-lepton pair.

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**Accurate SM trident event rates are imperative for proper comparison with BSM predictions!**

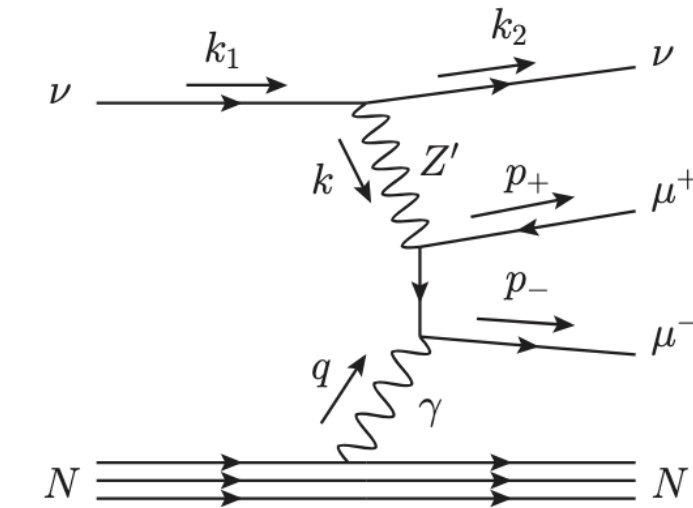
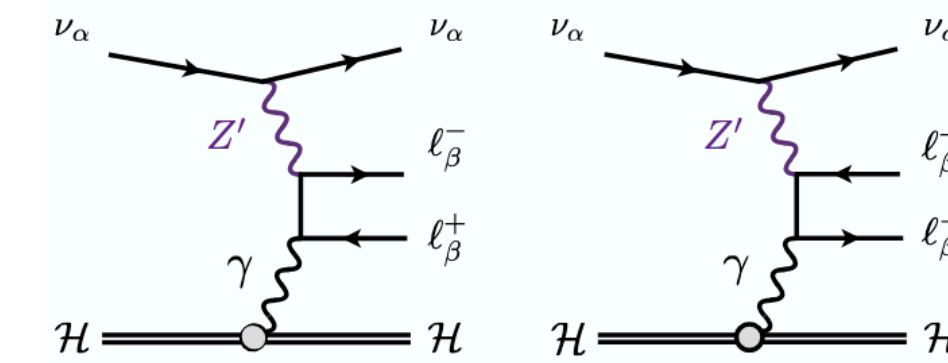


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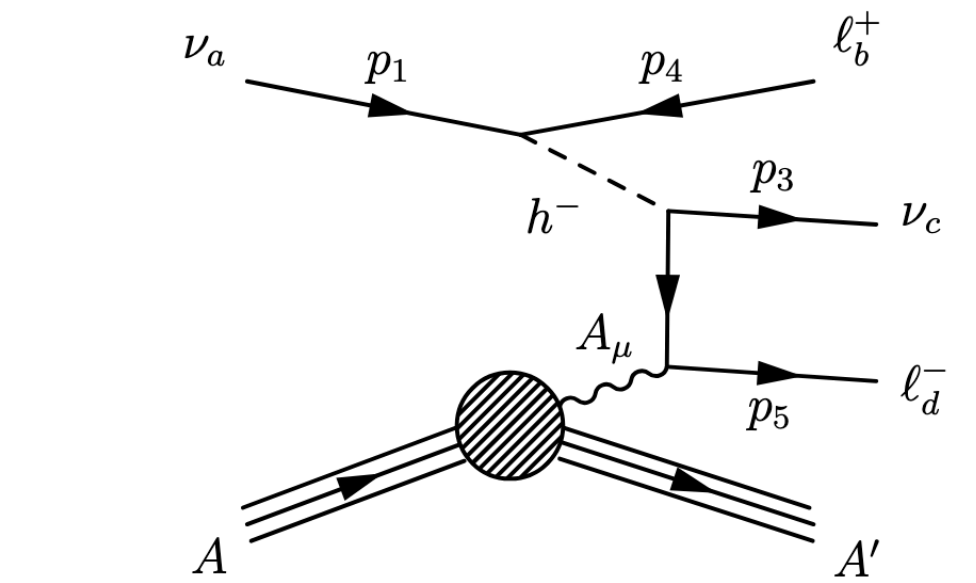
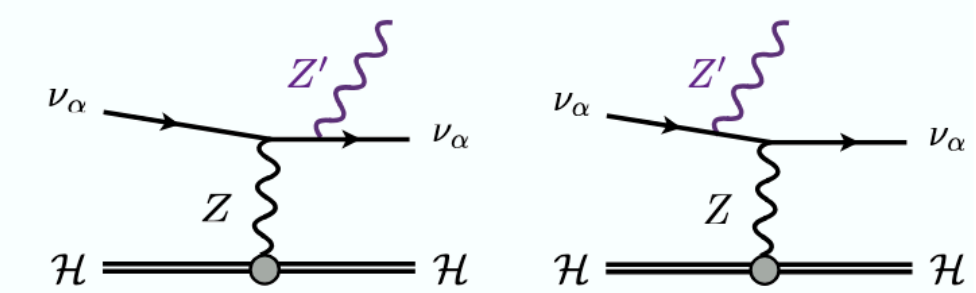


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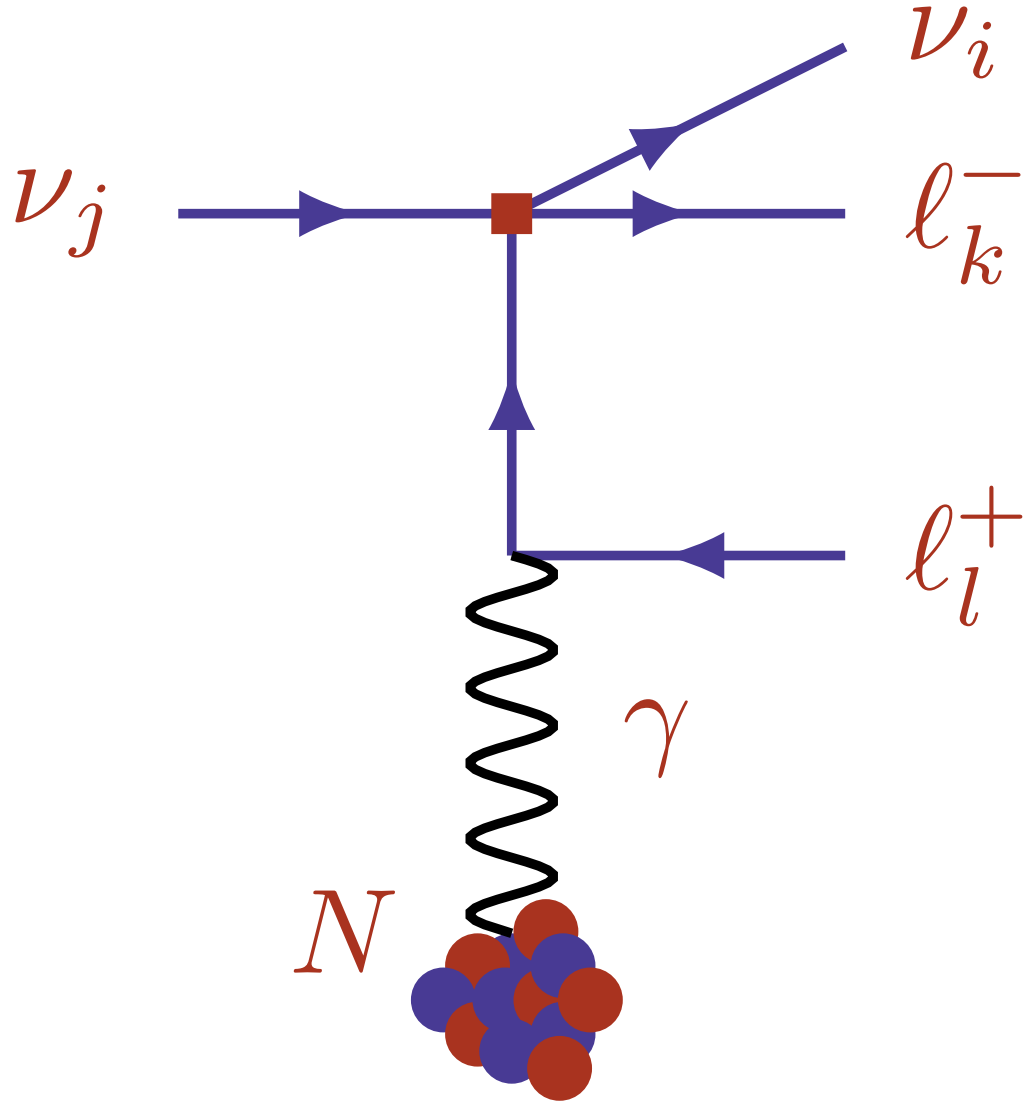
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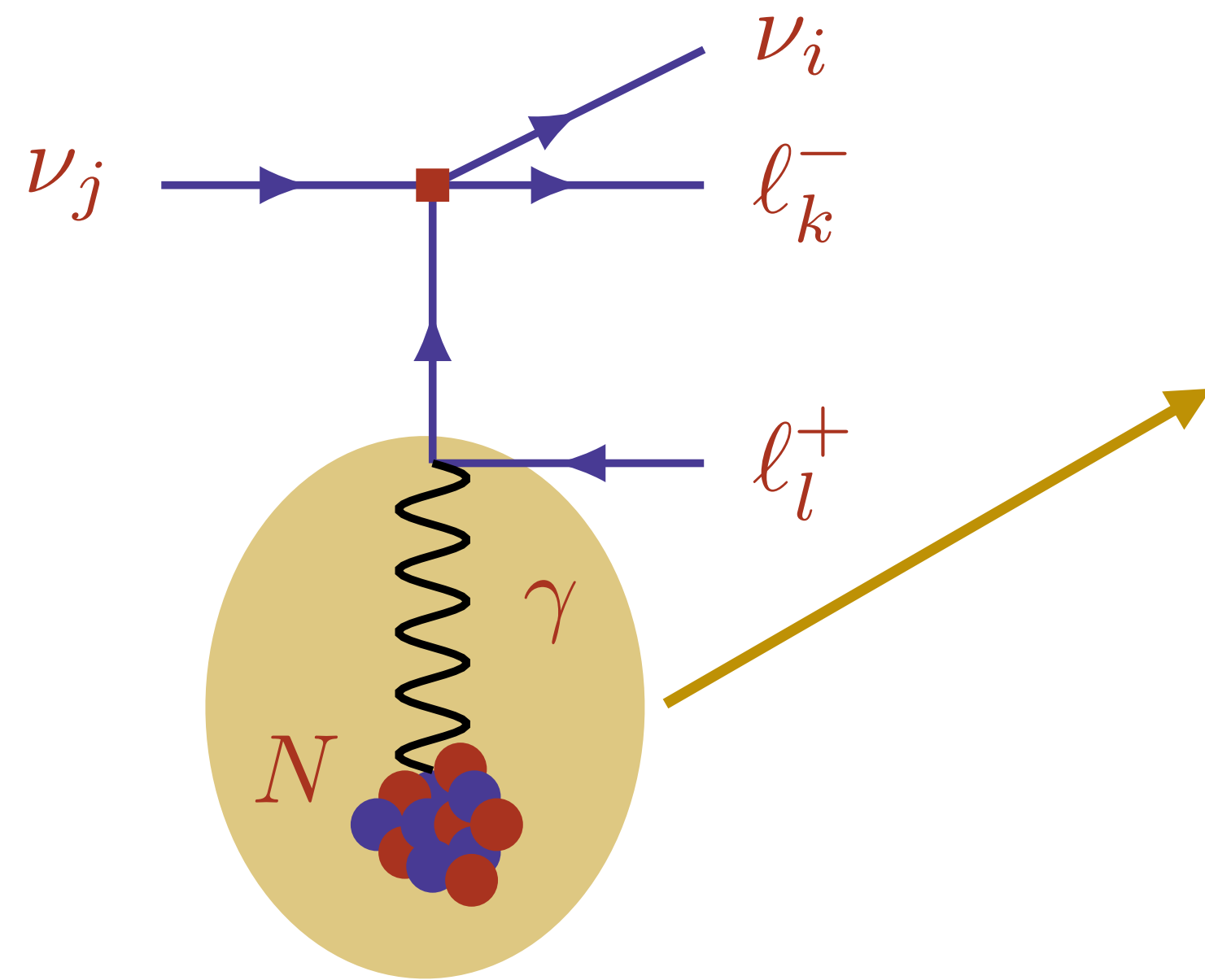
# At accelerator neutrino experiments...



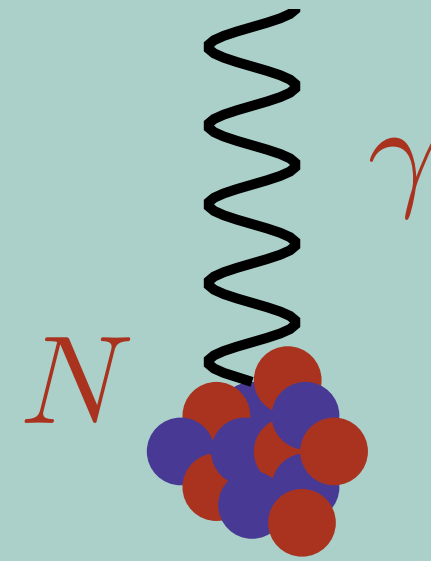
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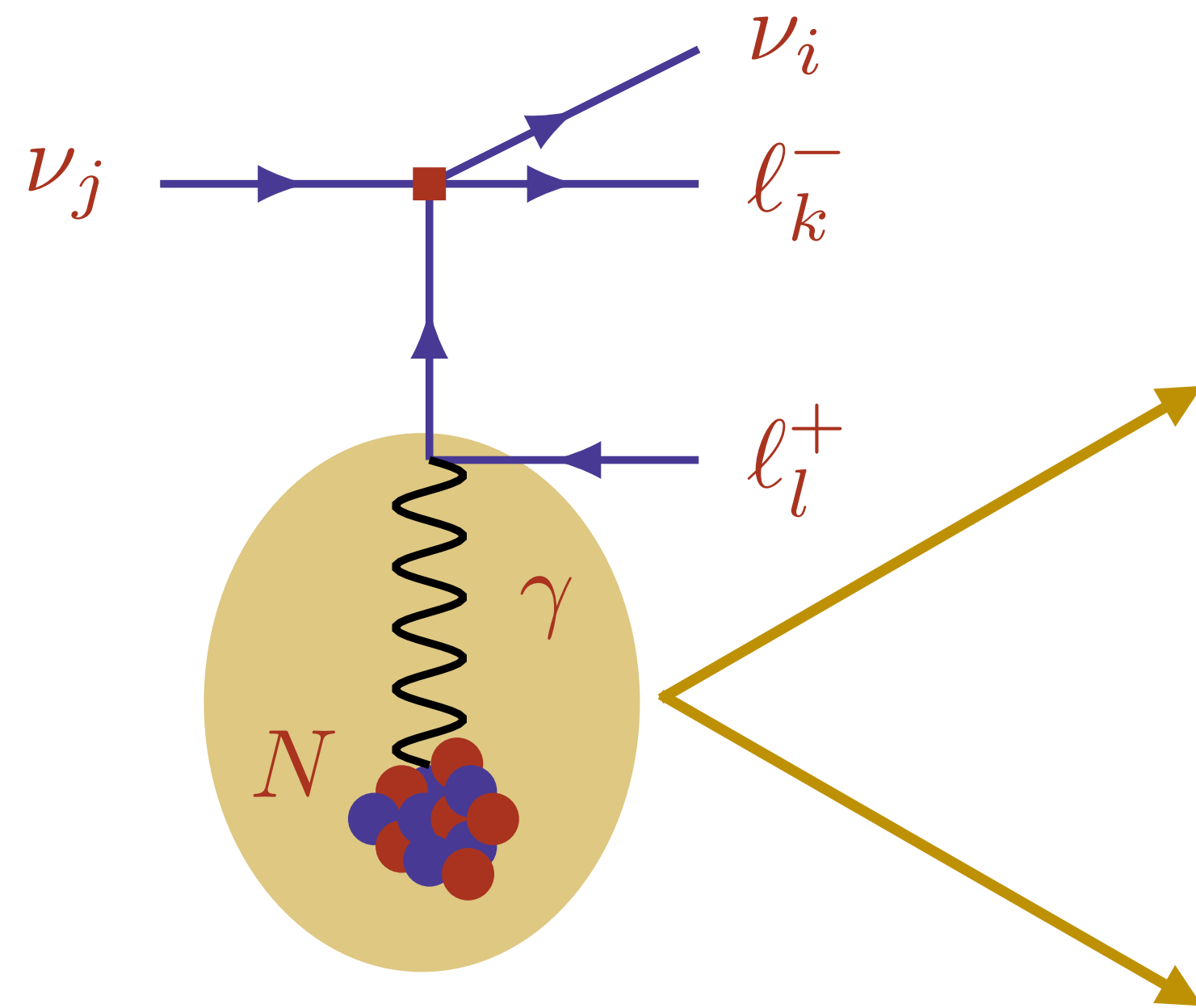


## Coherent Scattering

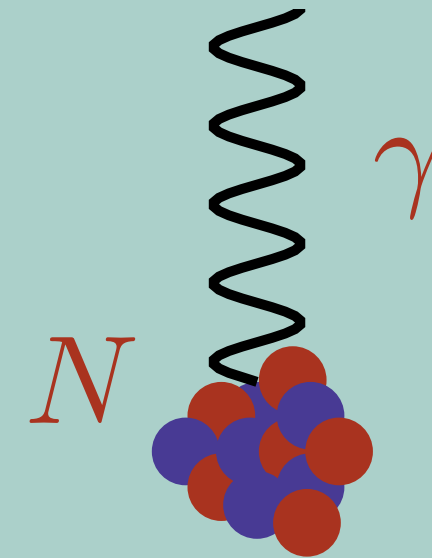


- Nuclear form factor.
- $Z^2$  scaling.
- $\ell^+\ell'^-$  final state.

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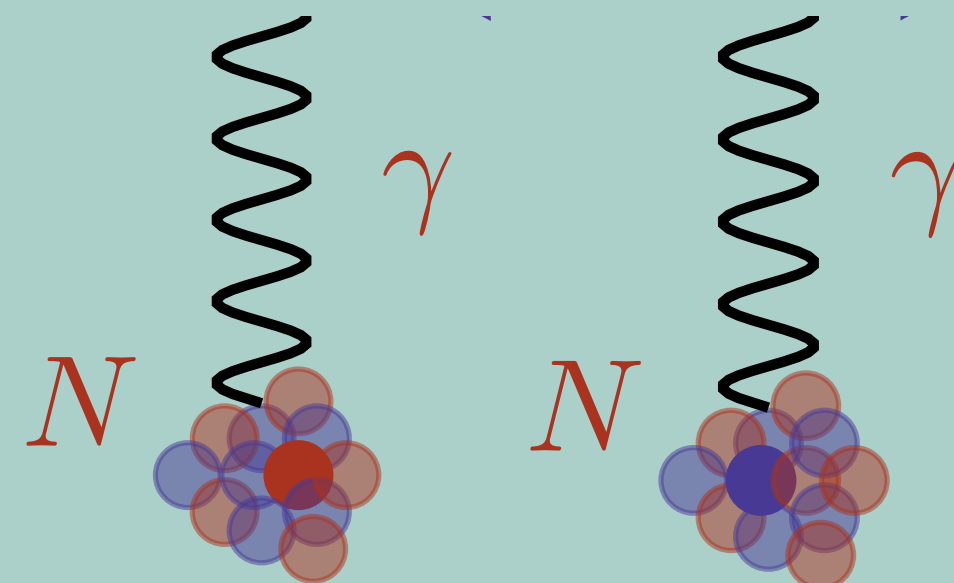


## Coherent Scattering



- Nuclear form factor.
- $Z^2$  scaling.
- $\ell^+ \ell'^-$  final state.

## Incoherent (diffractive) Scattering



- Nucleon form factors.
- $2Z$  scaling.
- $\ell^+ \ell'^- + p(n)$  final state.

# Argon Charged Form Factor

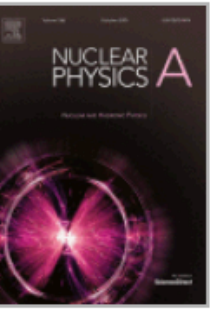


# Argon Charged Form Factor

No experimental data on the  
electromagnetic argon  
nuclear form factor since 1982!



Nuclear Physics A  
Volume 379, Issue 3, 10 May 1982, Pages 396-406



## Elastic electron scattering from $^{40}\text{Ar}$

C.R. Ottermann \*, CH. Schmitt \*\*, G.G. Simon \*\*, F. Borkowski \*\*, V.H. Walther

Institut für Kernphysik, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, D-6500 Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany

### Abstract

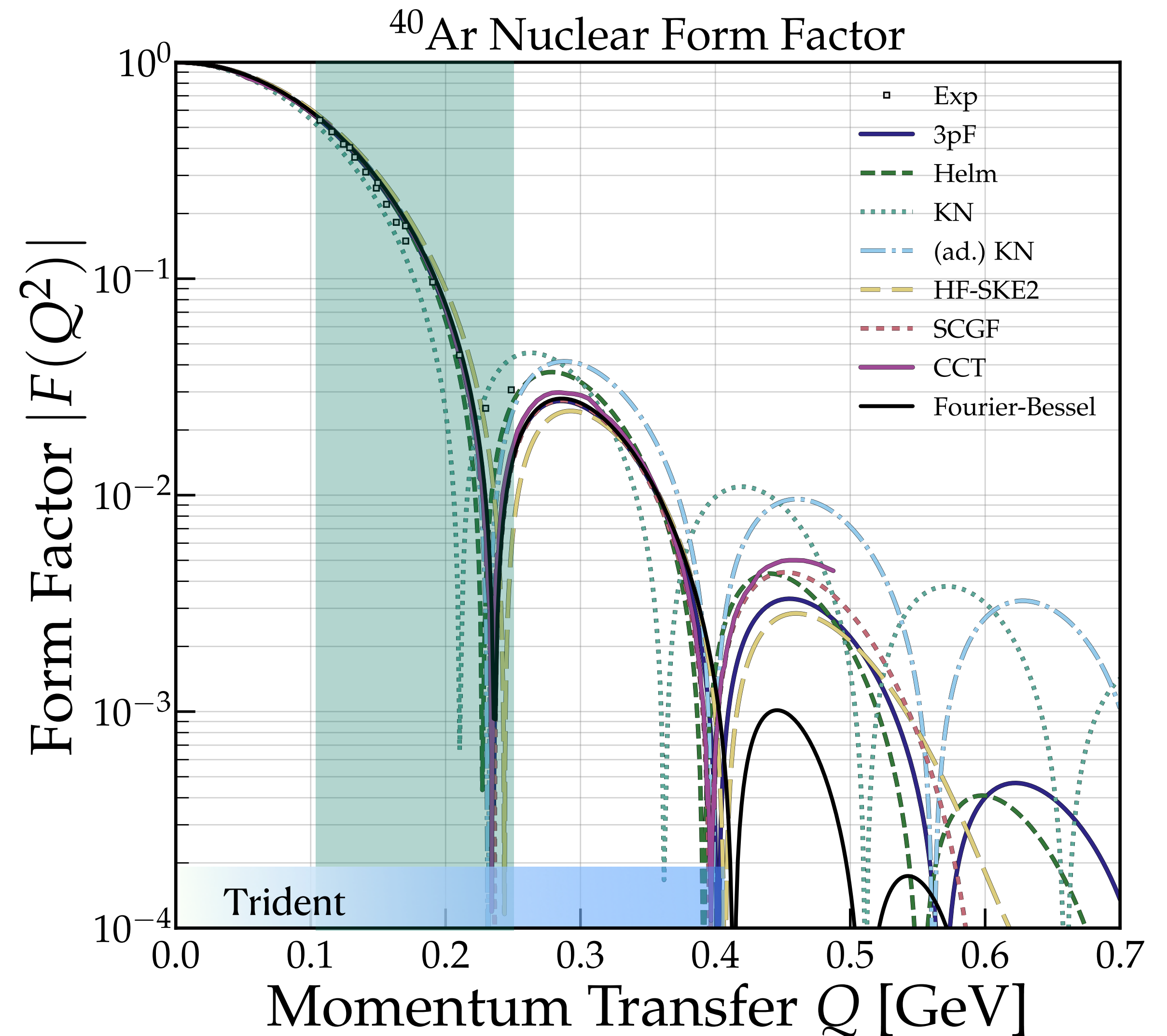
Cross sections for elastic electron scattering from  $^{40}\text{Ar}$  have been measured for the momentum transfer range from 0.59 to  $1.31 \text{ fm}^{-1}$ . We have analyzed with the Fourier-Bessel ansatz our data as well as the data of former experiments. The rms charge radius we have found is  $3.423(14) \text{ fm}$ . The results are in excellent agreement with latest muonic data. Furthermore, we have reanalyzed former  $^{40}\text{Ca}$  data and have discussed the  $^{40}\text{Ca}$ - $^{40}\text{Ar}$  charge distribution.



# Argon Charged Form Factor

No experimental data on the electromagnetic argon nuclear form factor since 1982!

And current data only available for momentum transfers  $Q \sim 0.11 - 0.26$  GeV.

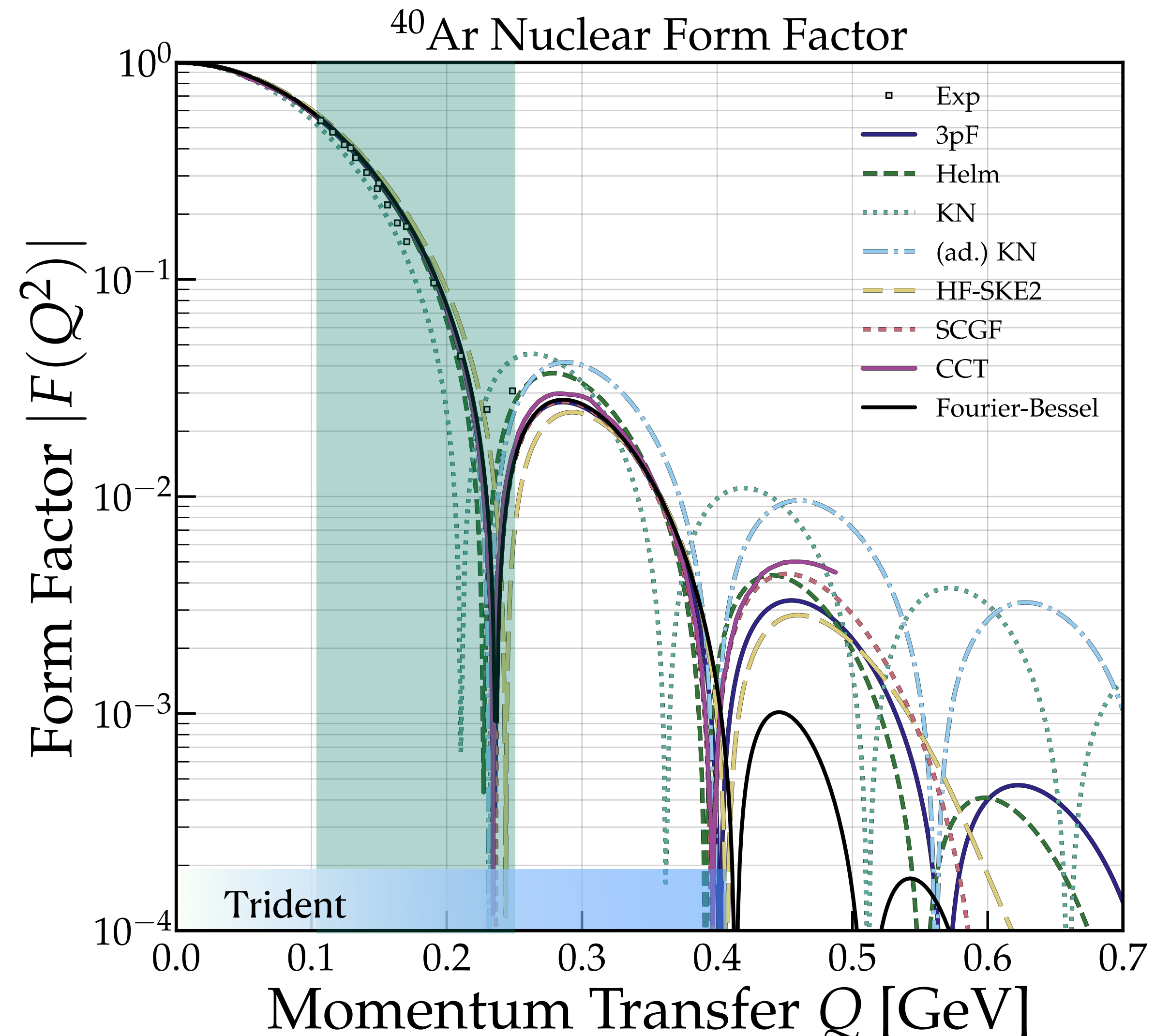


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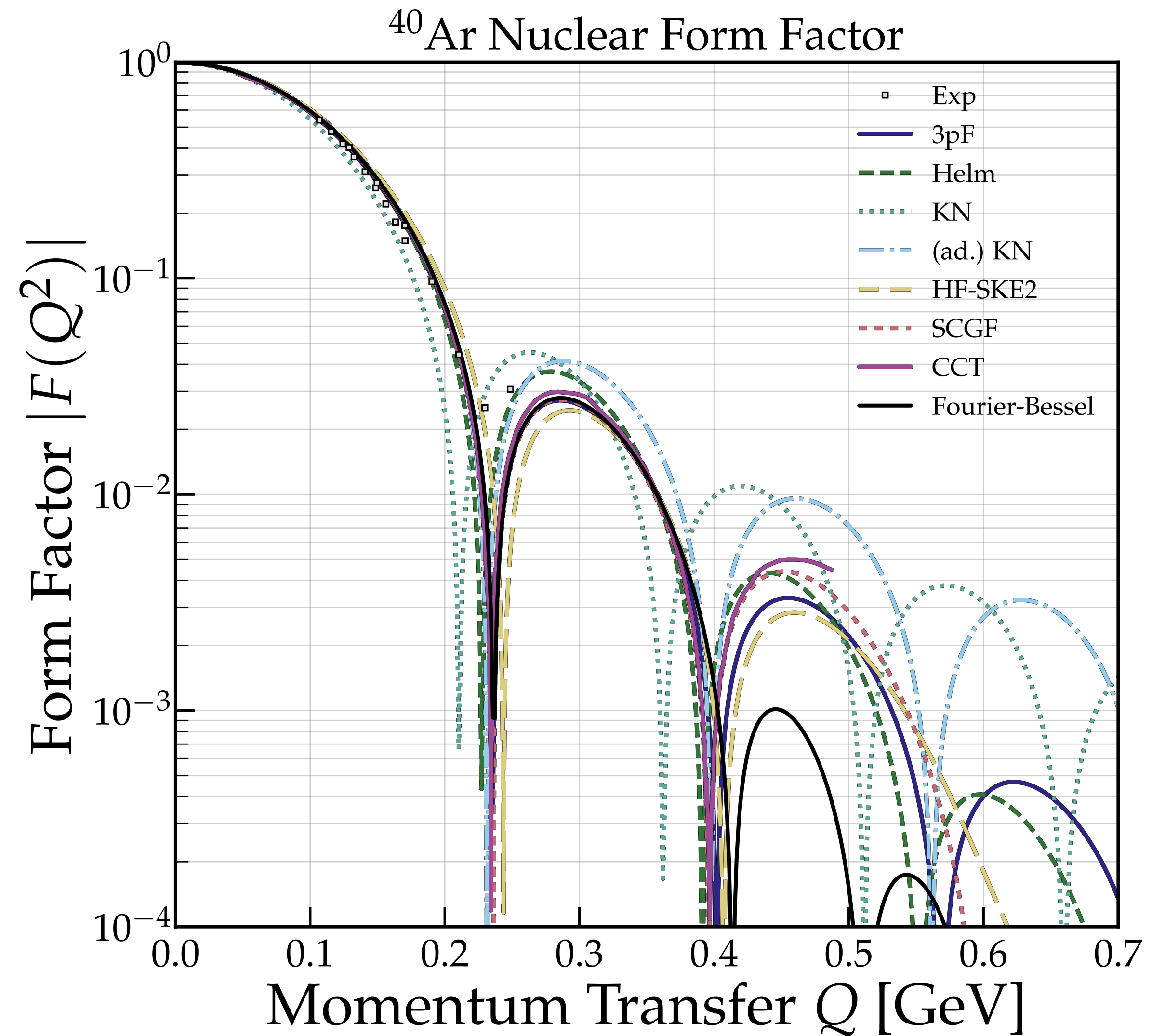
And current data only available for momentum transfers  $Q \sim 0.11 - 0.26$  GeV.

Form factor uncertainty underestimated to be  $\simeq 1\%$  \* based only on Woods-Saxon parameterizations.



# Argon Charged Form Factor

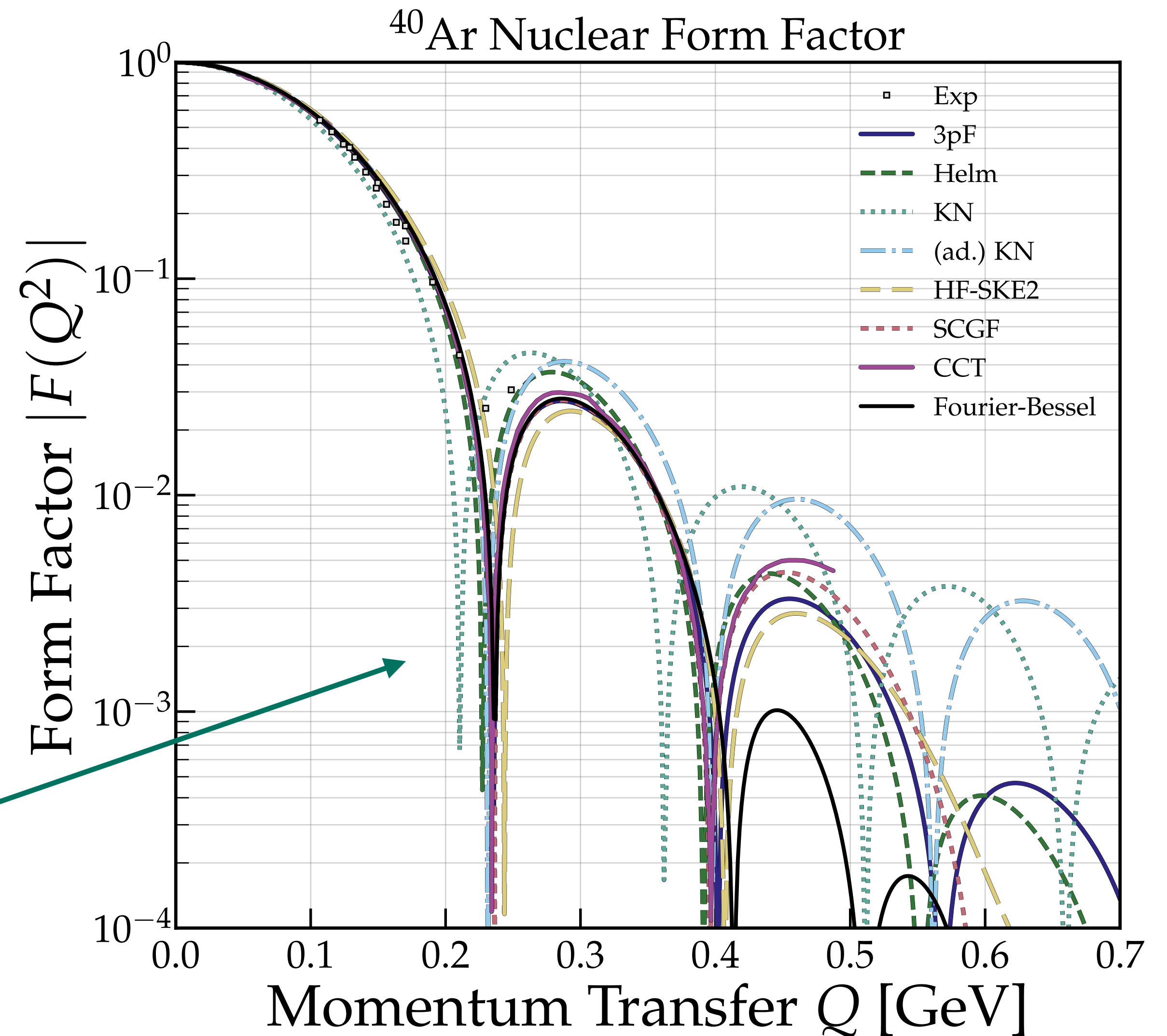
- **Woods-Saxon 3-parameter Fermi**  
De Vries et al. [[Atom. Data Nucl. Data Tabl. 1987](#)]
- **Helm**  
Helm [[Phys. Rev. 1956](#)]
- **Klein-Nystrand**  
Klein & Nystrand [[9902259](#)]
- **Adapted Klein-Nystrand**  
Papoulias et al. [[1911.00916](#)]
- **Hartree-Fock with Skyrme**  
Van Dessel et al. [[2007.03658](#)]
- **Coupled-cluster Theory**  
Payne et al. [[1908.09739](#)]
- **Ab initio Self-Consistent Green's Function**  
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*How impactful can these differences be?*



# Cross Sections

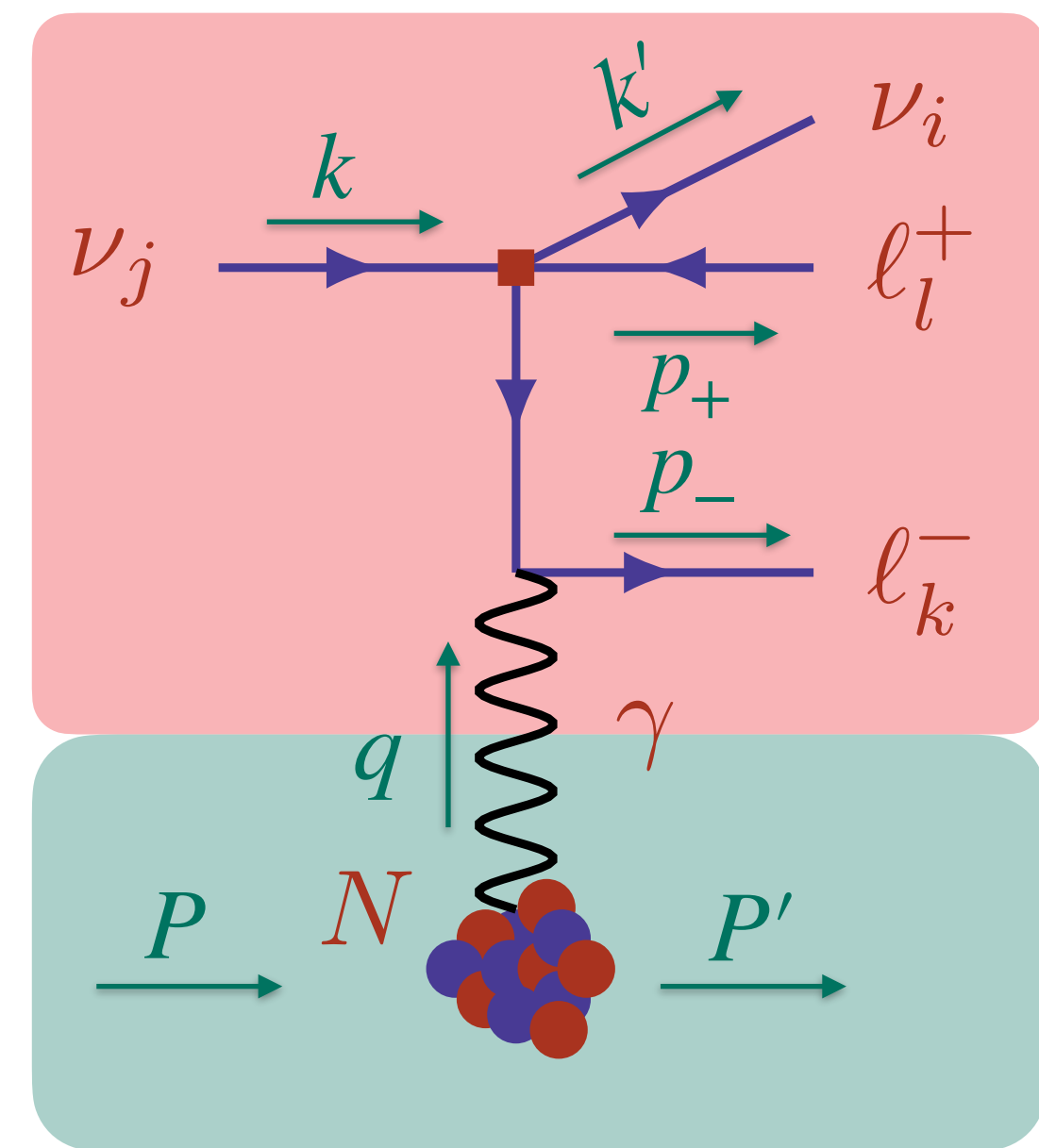


# Cross Sections

$$d\sigma_{\text{coh}} = \frac{Z^2 \alpha_{\text{EM}}^2 G_F^2}{128\pi^6} \frac{1}{m_N E_\nu} \frac{d^3 k'}{2E_{k'}} \frac{d^3 p_+}{2E_+} \frac{d^3 p_-}{2E_-} \frac{d^3 P'}{2E_{P'}} \frac{H_N^{\alpha\beta} L_{\alpha\beta}}{q^4} \delta^4(k - k' - p_+ - p_- + q)$$

# Cross Sections

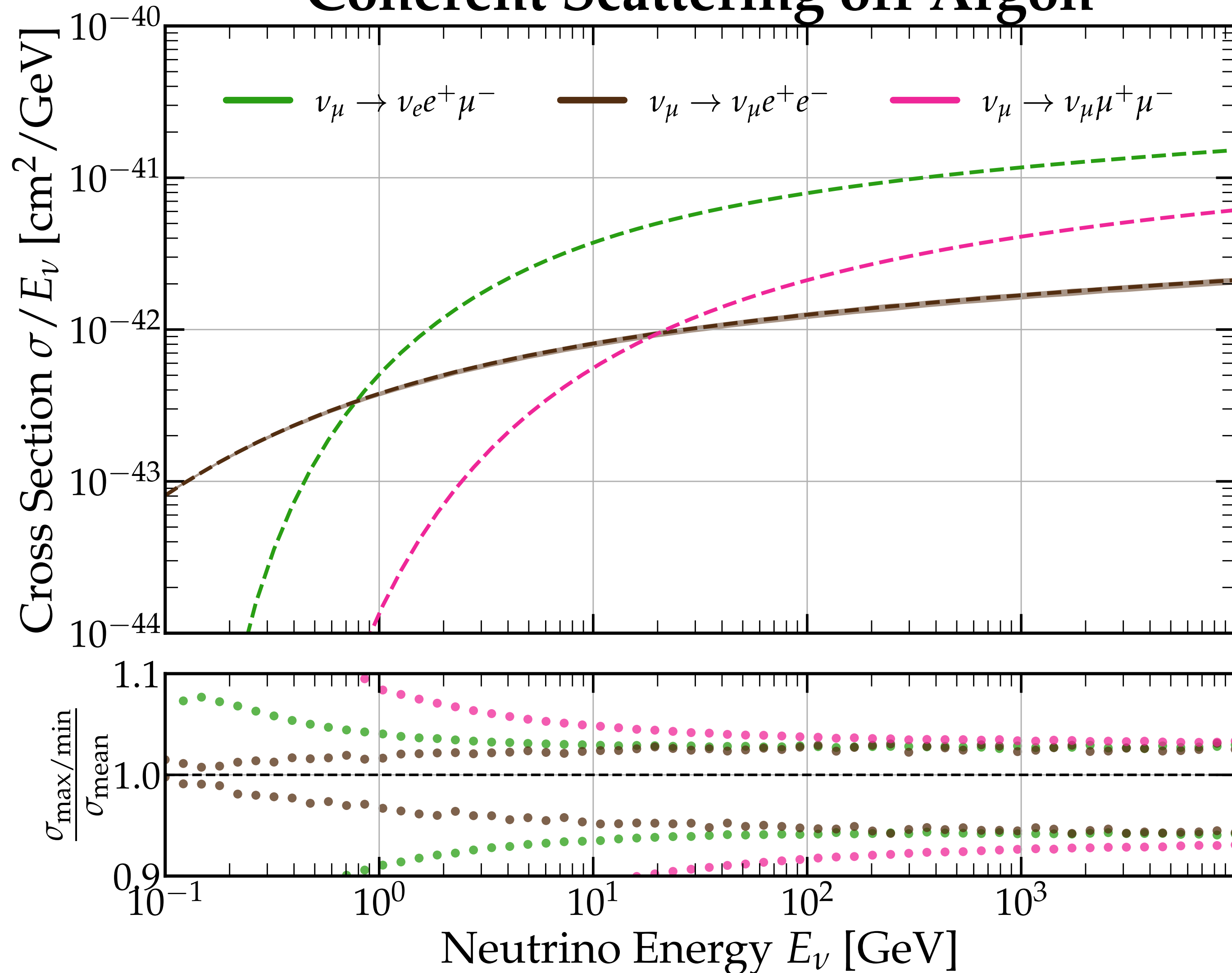
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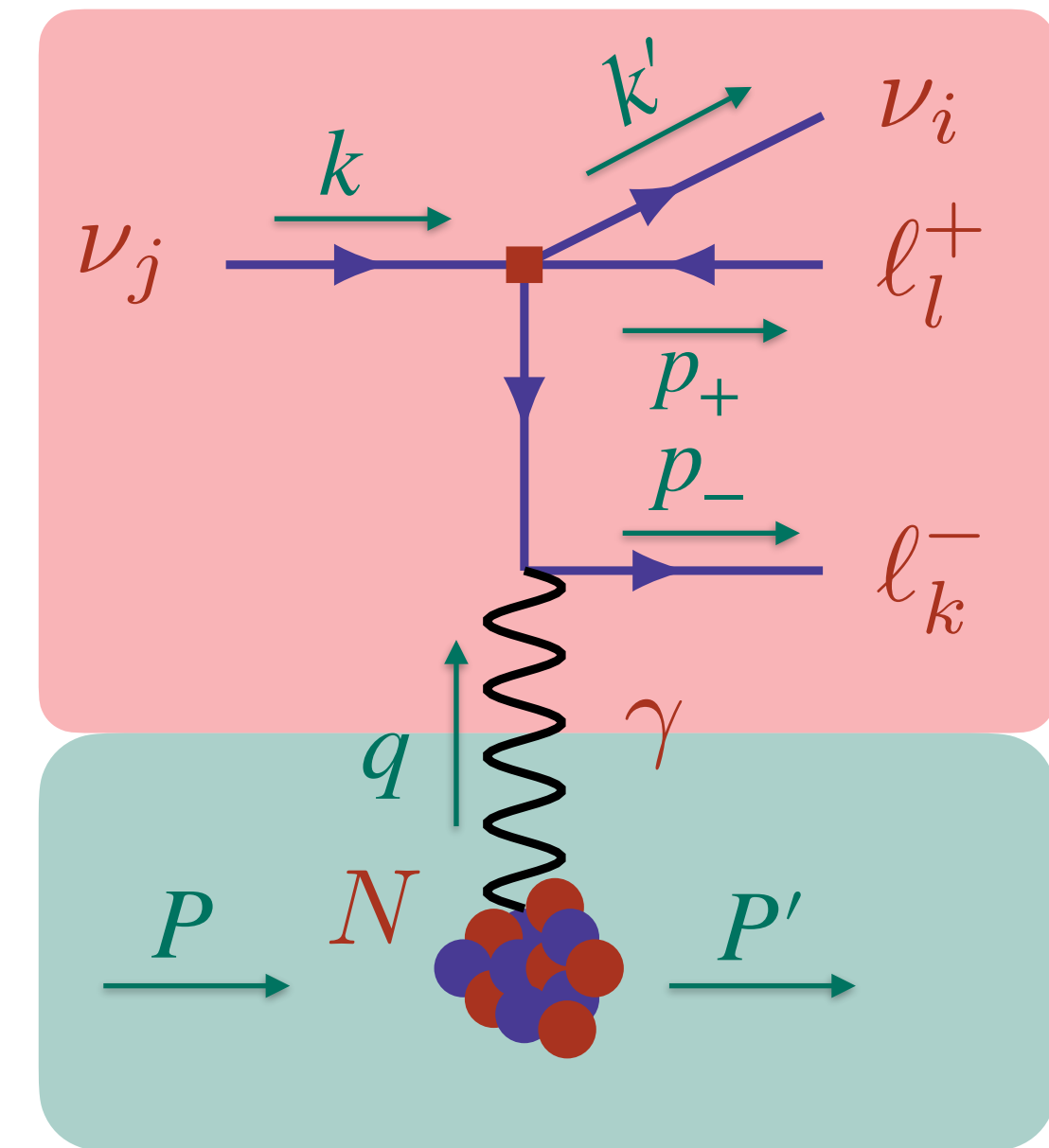
$$H_N^{\alpha\beta} = 4P^\alpha P^\beta [F_N(q^2)]^2$$

# Cross Sections

## Coherent Scattering off Argon



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# Event Rate



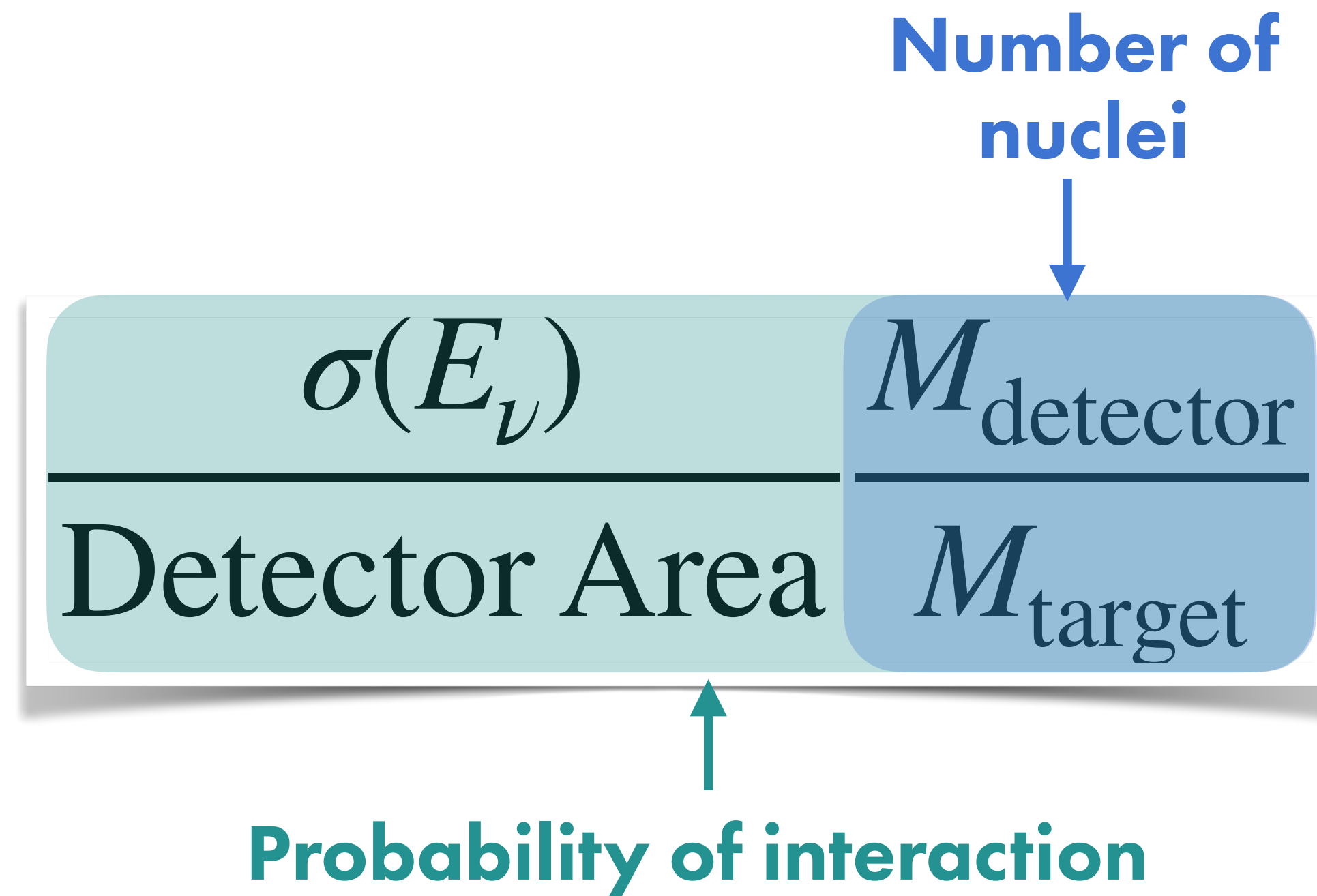
# Event Rate

Number of  
nuclei



$$\frac{M_{\text{detector}}}{M_{\text{target}}}$$

# Event Rate



# Event Rate

Neutrino flux

Number of nuclei

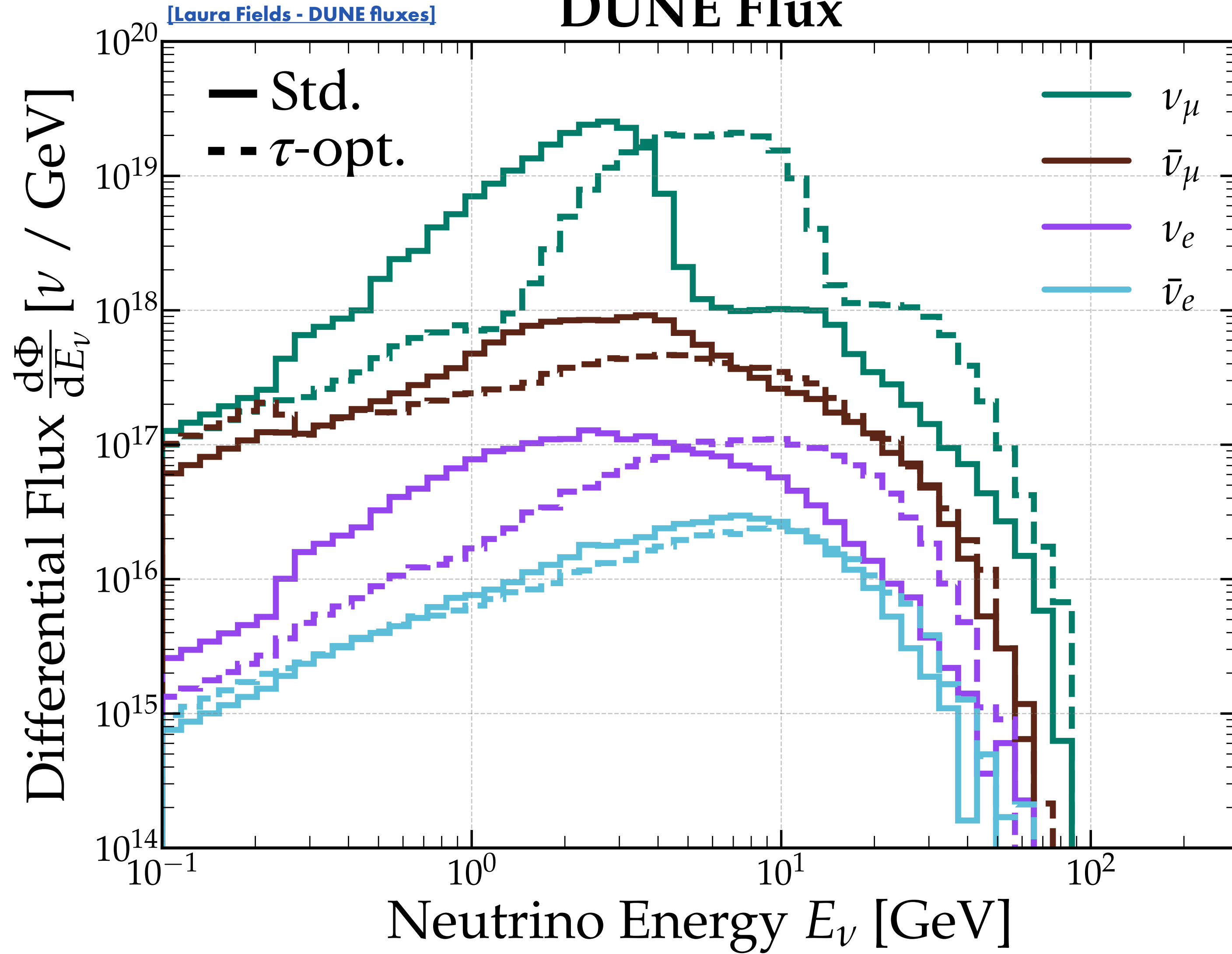
$$N = \int \frac{d\Phi}{dE_\nu} \frac{\sigma(E_\nu)}{\text{Detector Area}} \frac{M_{\text{detector}}}{M_{\text{target}}} dE_\nu$$

Probability of interaction

# Fluxes

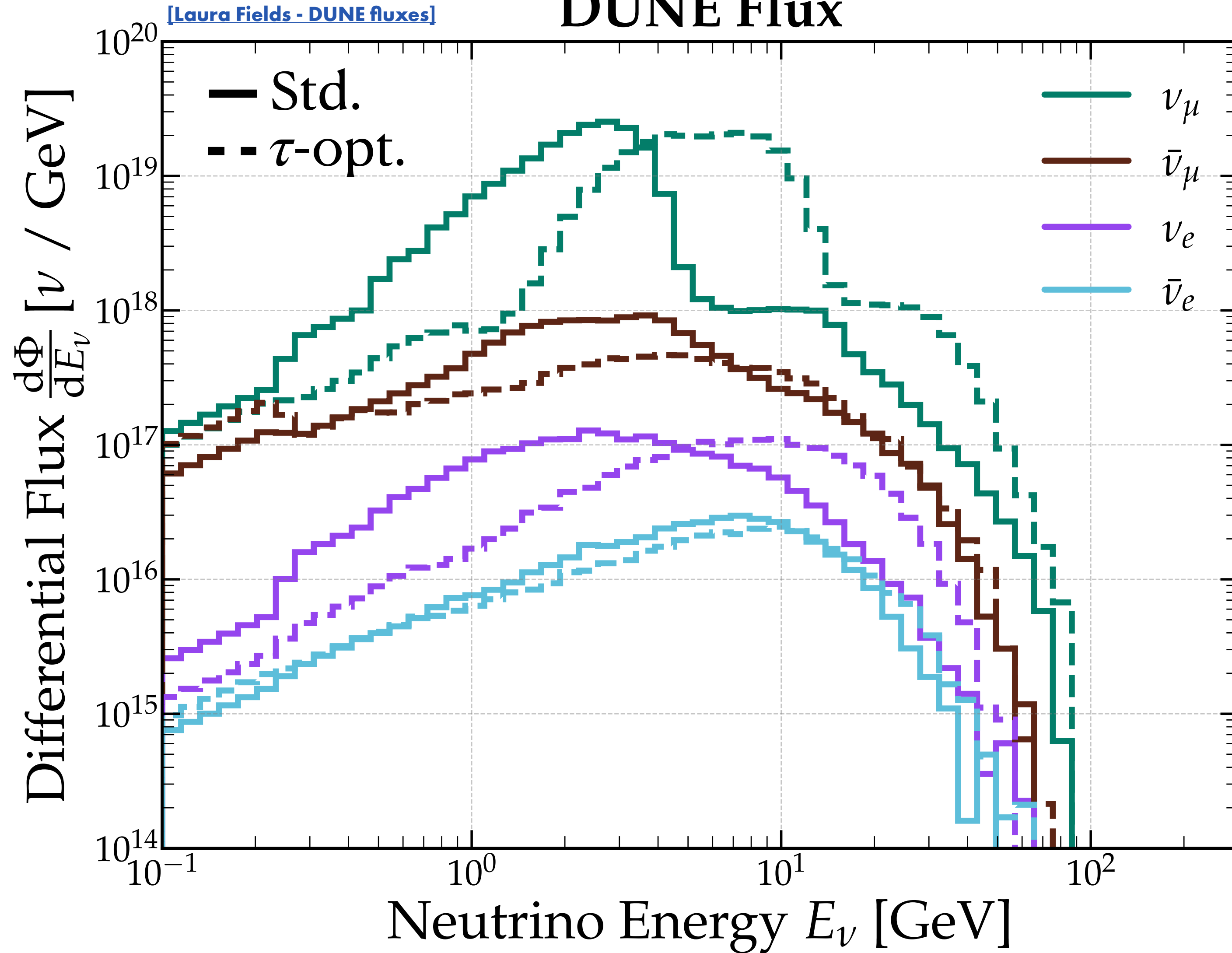
# Fluxes

## DUNE Flux



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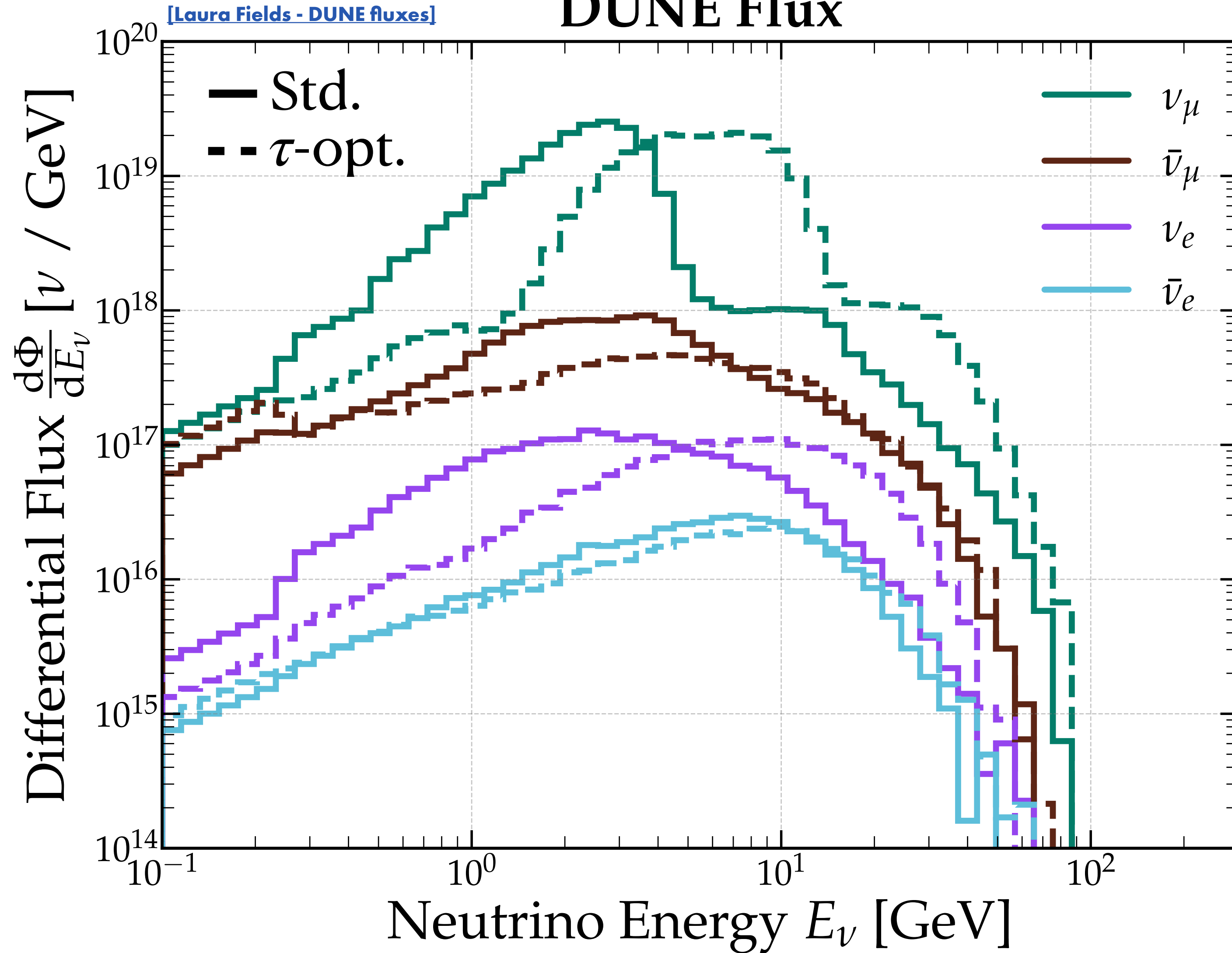


### Standard CP-optimized Flux

- $\nu$ 's mostly in the 1 – 5 GeV range.
- Peak at  $\sim 2$  GeV.
- Better for  $\delta_{CP}$  measurements.

# Fluxes

## DUNE Flux



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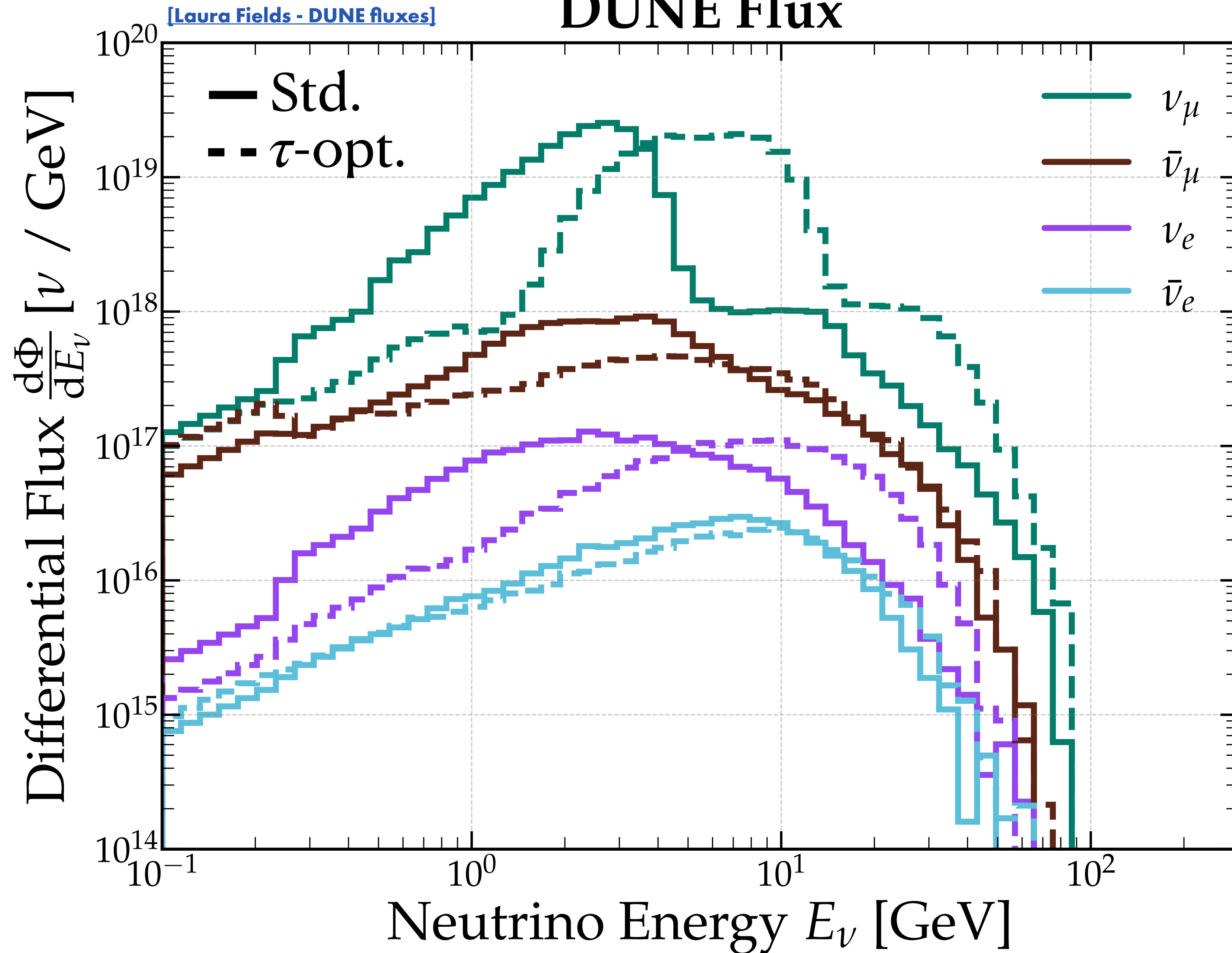
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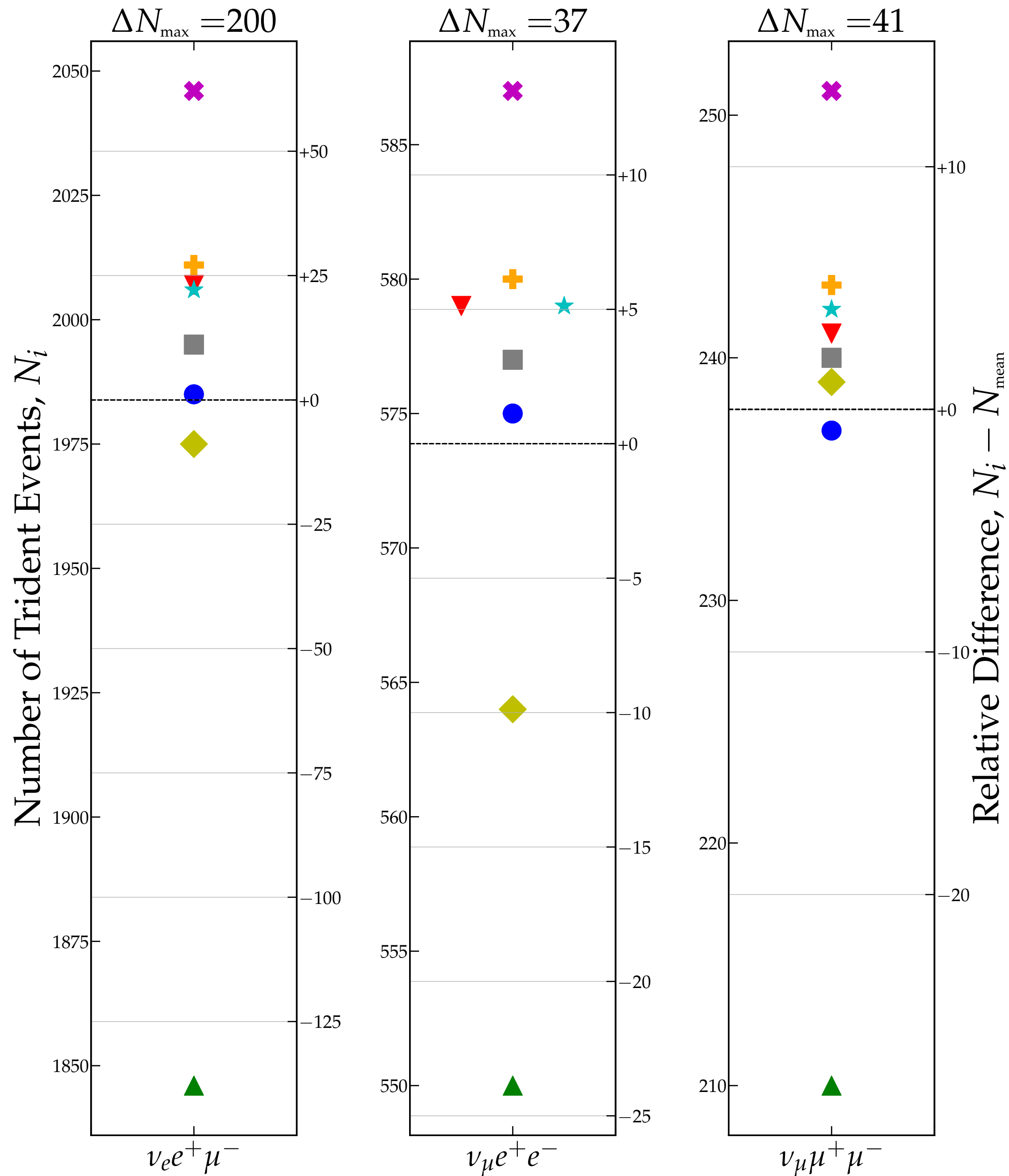
**Exposure:**  $3.3 \times 10^{21}$  POT

**Detector Area:** 5 m  $\times$  3 m

**Detector Mass:** 67 tonnes of  $^{40}_{18}\text{Ar}$

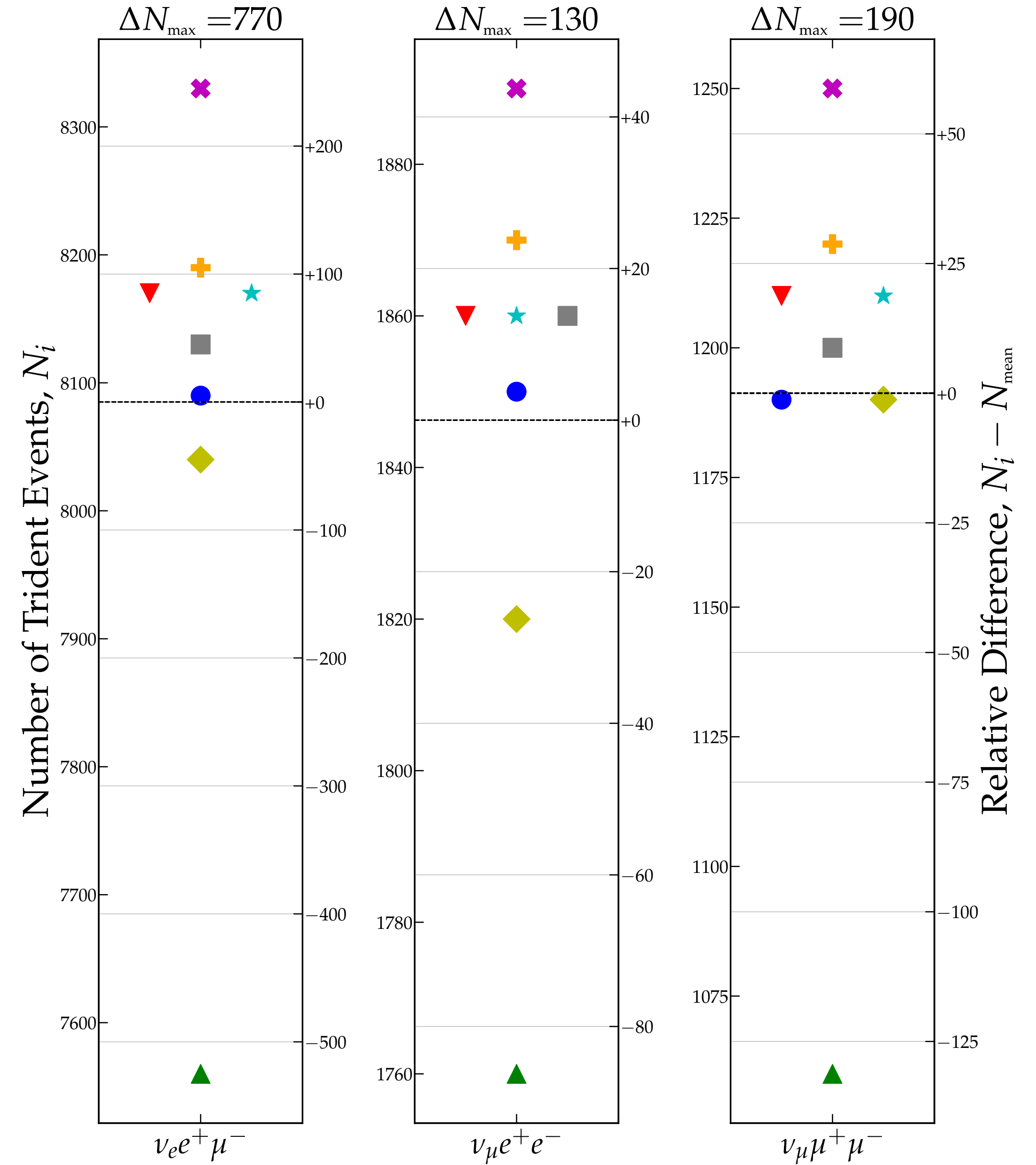
# DUNE Standard Flux $\nu$ -mode

● 3pF    ▼ Helm    ▲ KN    + adKN    ★ FB    ✖ HF-Ske2    ◆ CCT    ■ SCGF



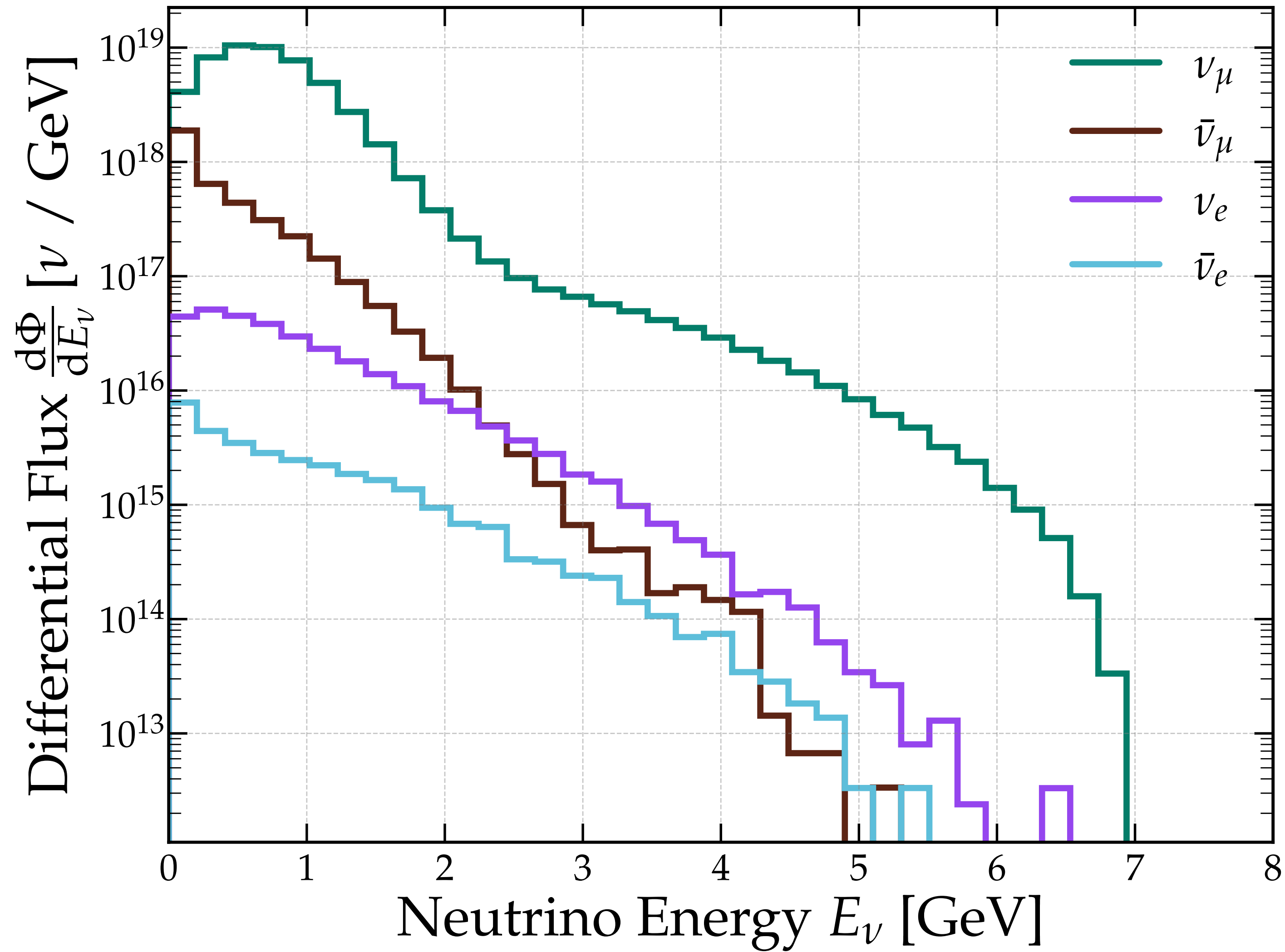
# DUNE Tau-optimized Flux $\nu$ -mode

● 3pF    ▼ Helm    ▲ KN    + adKN    ★ FB    ✖ HF-Ske2    ◆ CCT    ■ SCGF



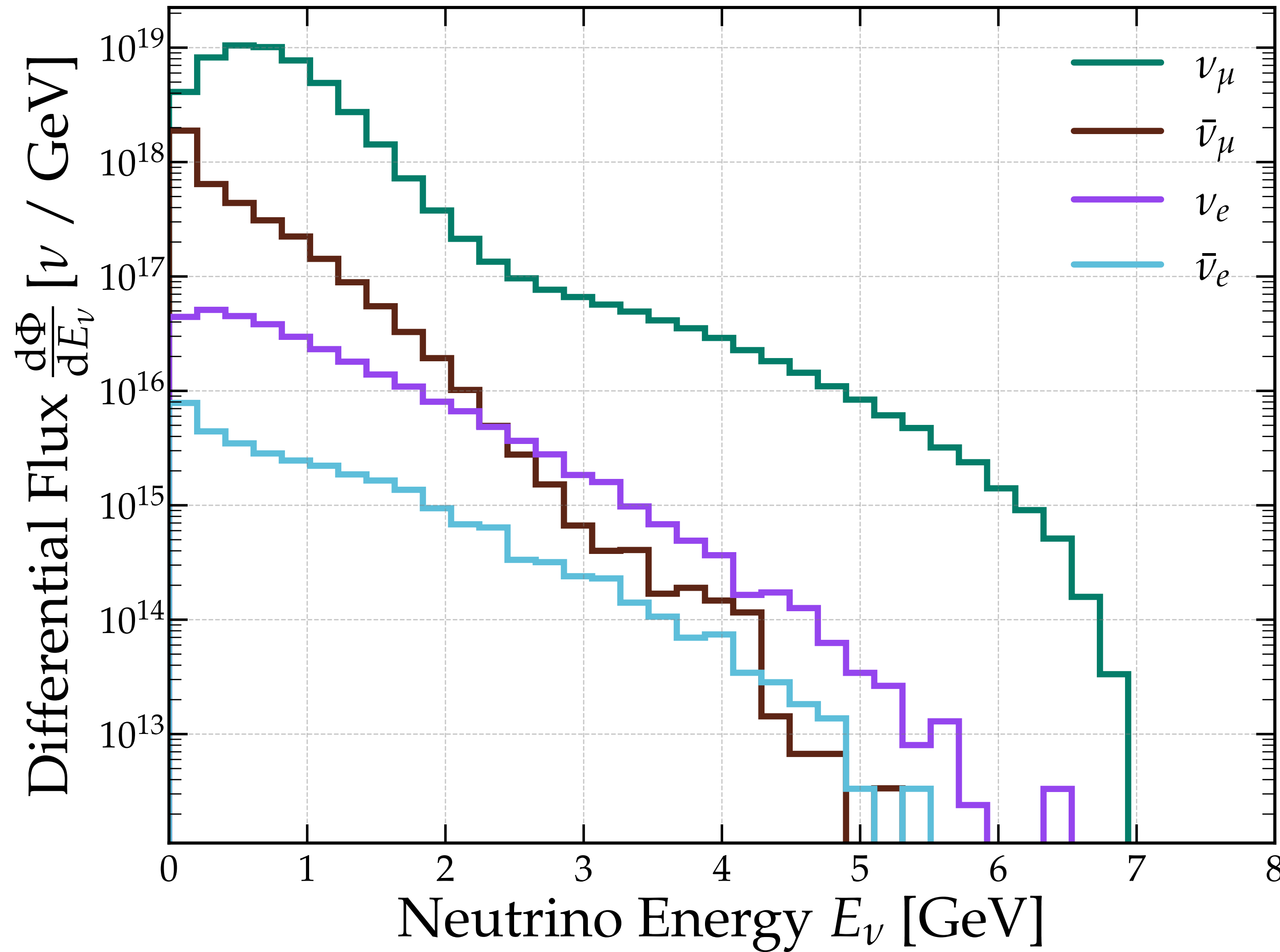
# Fluxes

[Provided by Vishvas Pandey] **SBND BNB Flux**



# Fluxes

[Provided by Vishvas Pandey] **SBND BNB Flux**

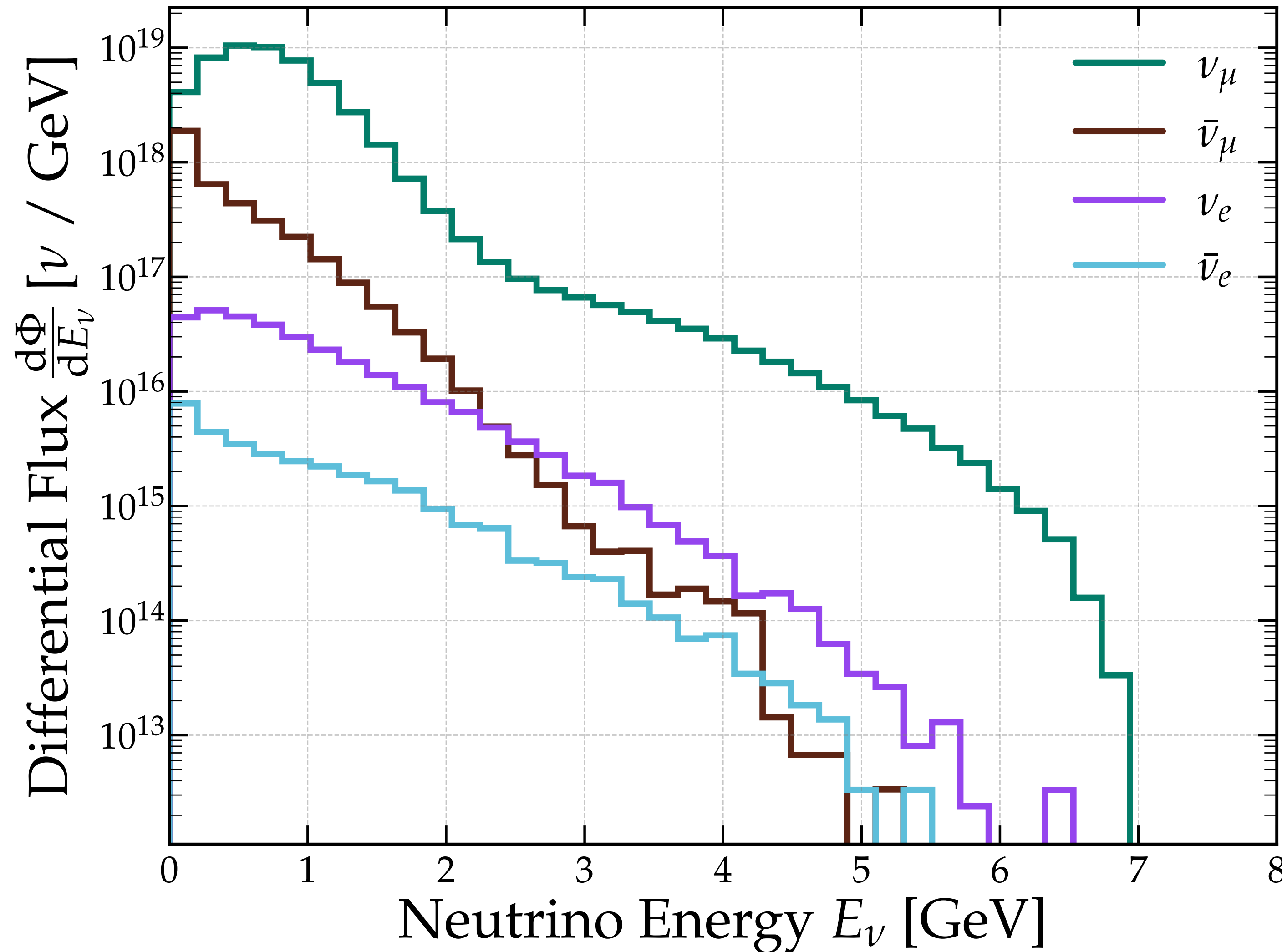


- Flux from on-axis BNB beam at Fermilab
- $\nu$ 's mostly in the  $\lesssim 3$  GeV range
- Peak at  $\sim 500$  MeV

# Fluxes

## SBND BNB Flux

[Provided by Vishvas Pandey]



- Flux from on-axis BNB beam at Fermilab
- $\nu$ 's mostly in the  $\lesssim 3$  GeV range
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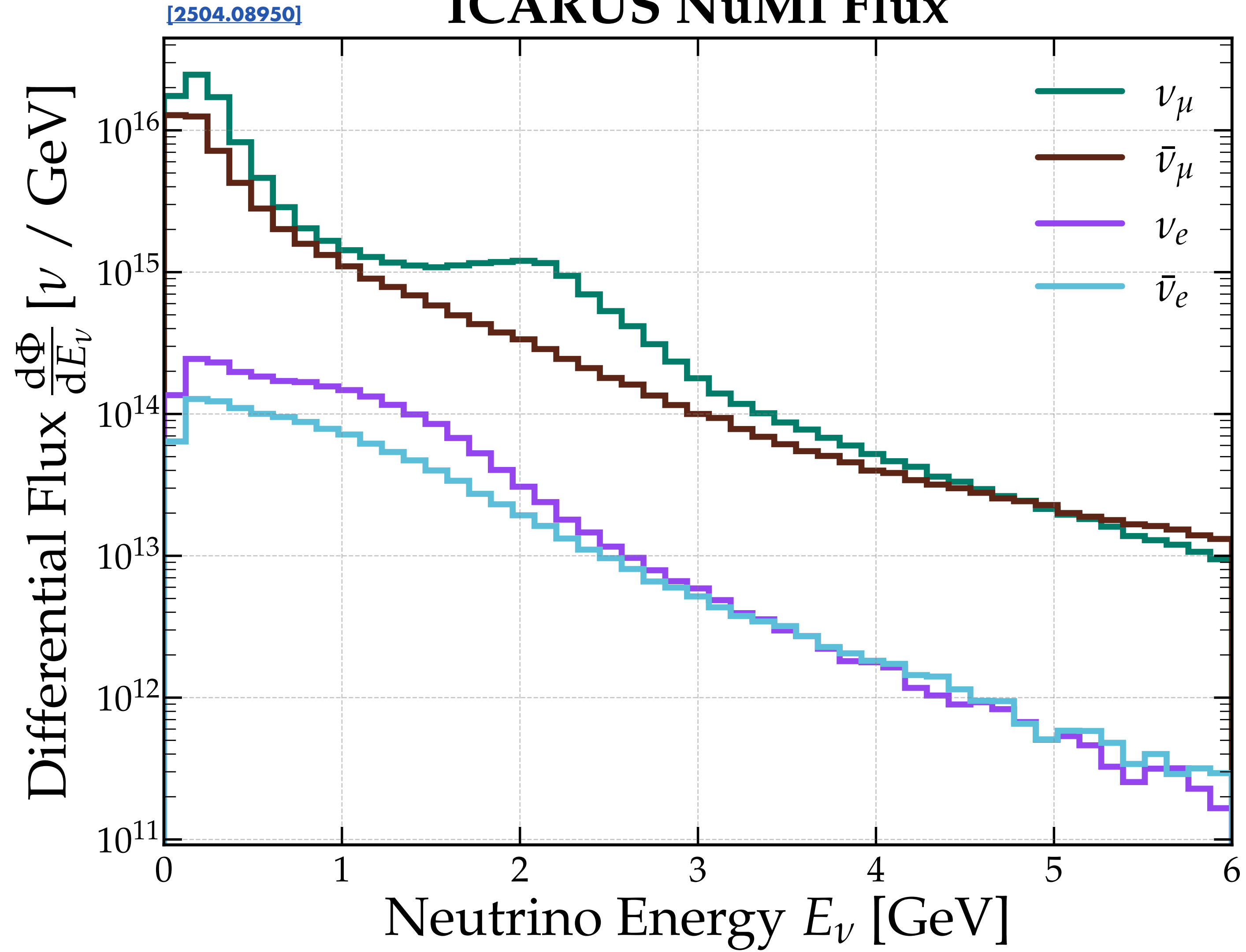
**Exposure:**  $1 \times 10^{21}$  POT

**Detector Area:**  $4 \text{ m} \times 4 \text{ m}$

**Detector Mass:** 112 tonnes of  $^{40}_{18}\text{Ar}$

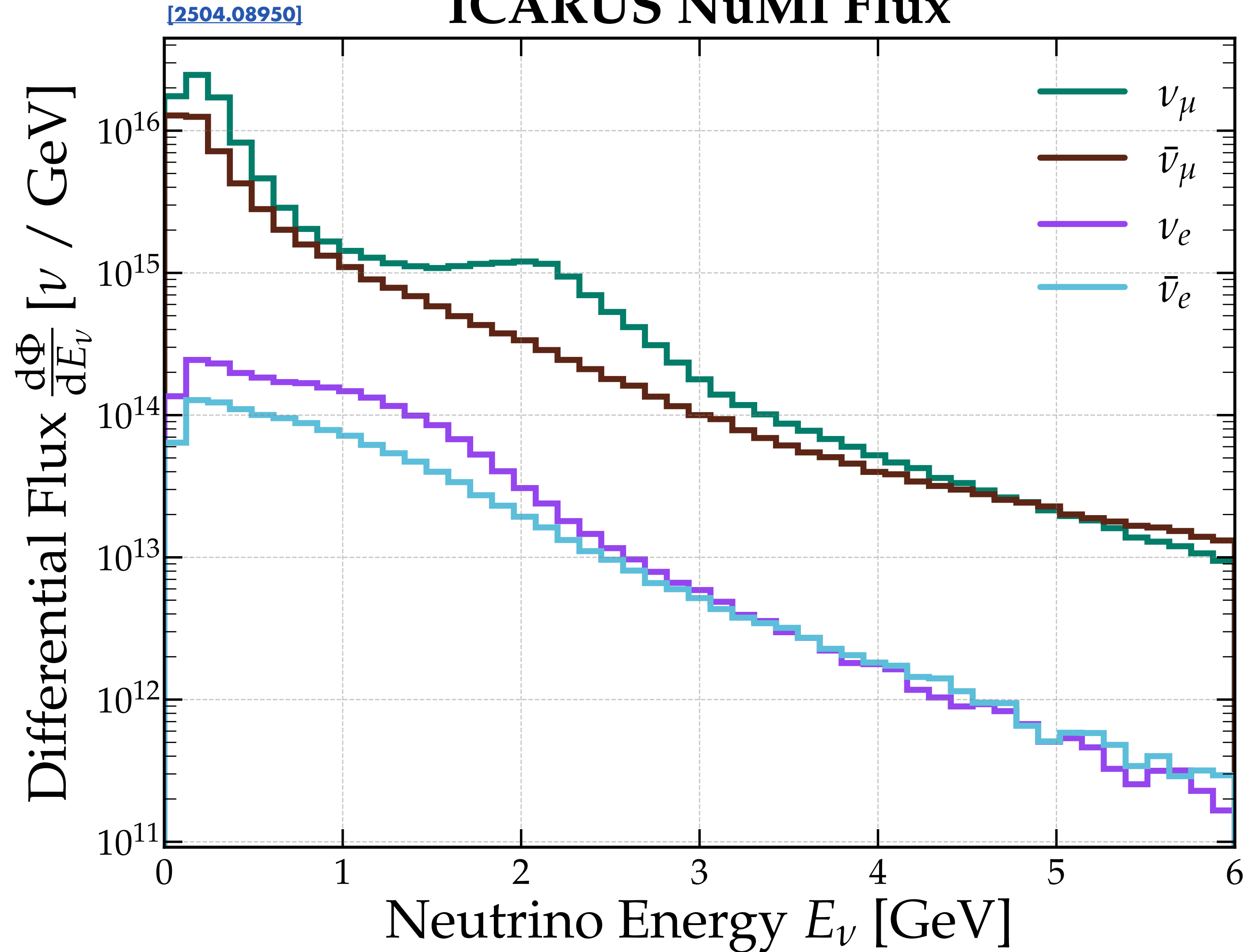
# Fluxes

## ICARUS NuMI Flux



# Fluxes

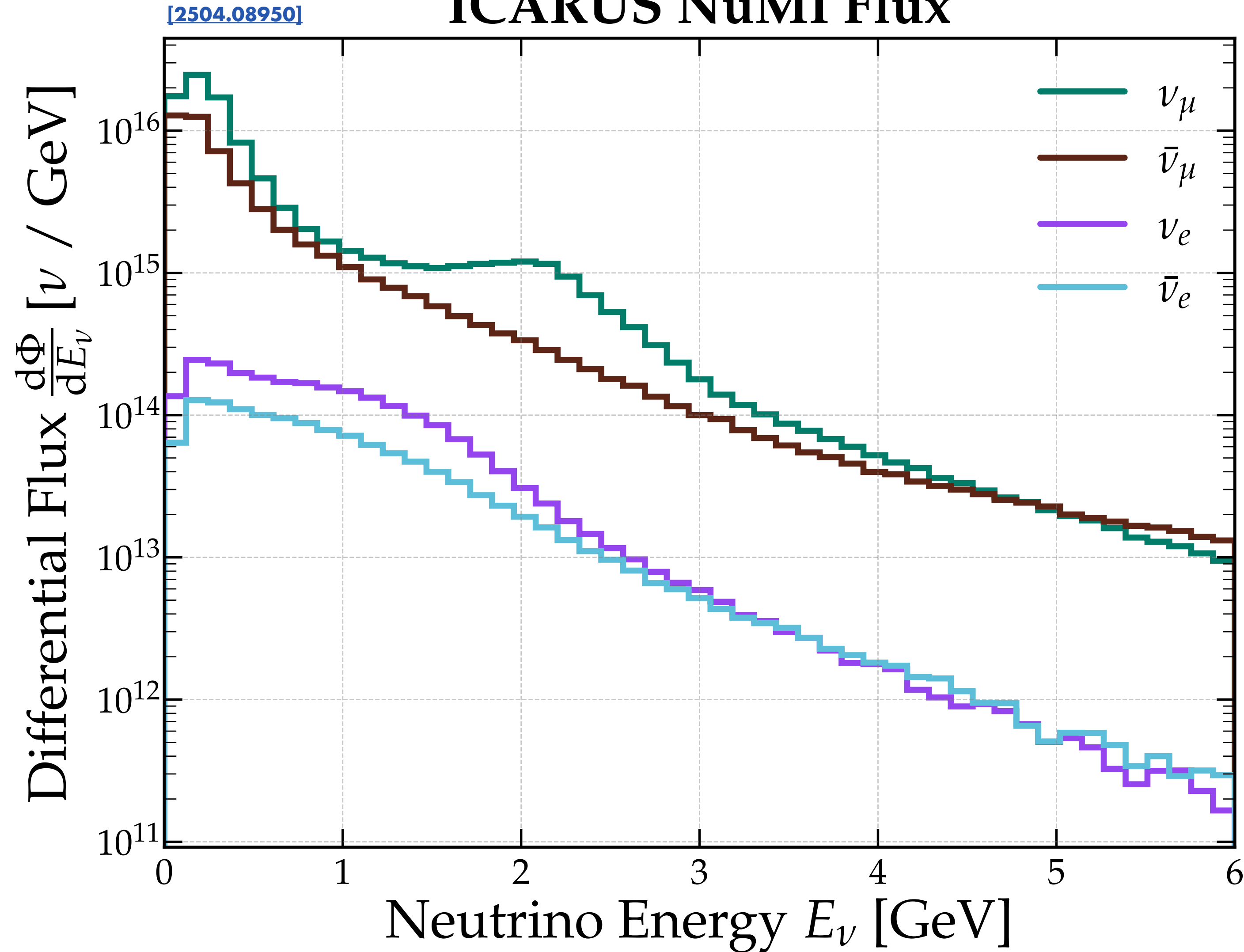
ICARUS NuMI Flux



- Flux from off-axis NuMI beam at Fermilab
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- Peak at  $\sim 200$  MeV

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ICARUS NuMI Flux



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- $\nu$ 's mostly in the  $\lesssim 3$  GeV range
- Peak at  $\sim 200$  MeV

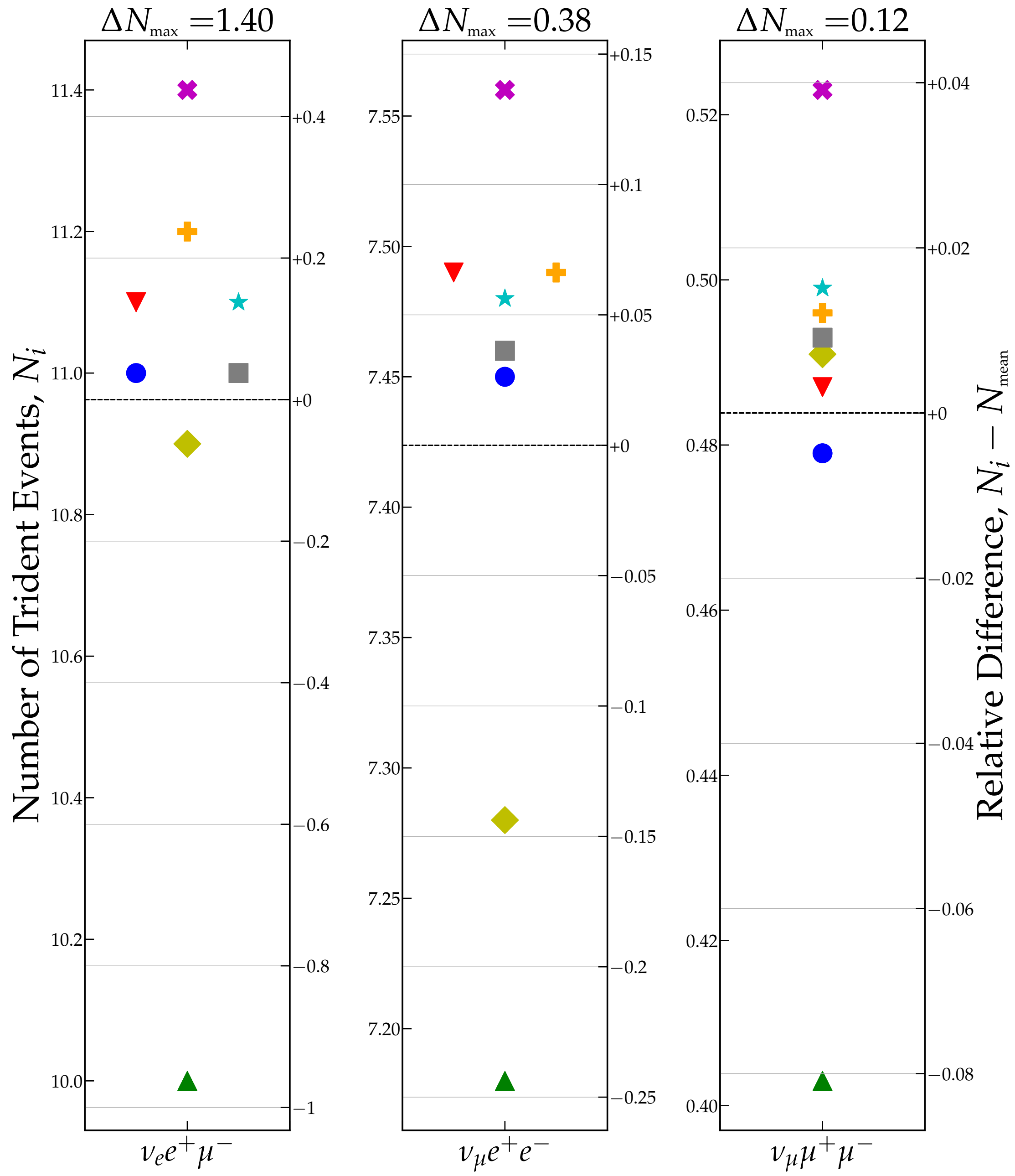
**Exposure:**  $1.8 \times 10^{21}$  POT

**Detector Area:**  $3.6 \text{ m} \times 3.9 \text{ m}$

**Detector Mass:** 476 tonnes of  $^{40}_{18}\text{Ar}$

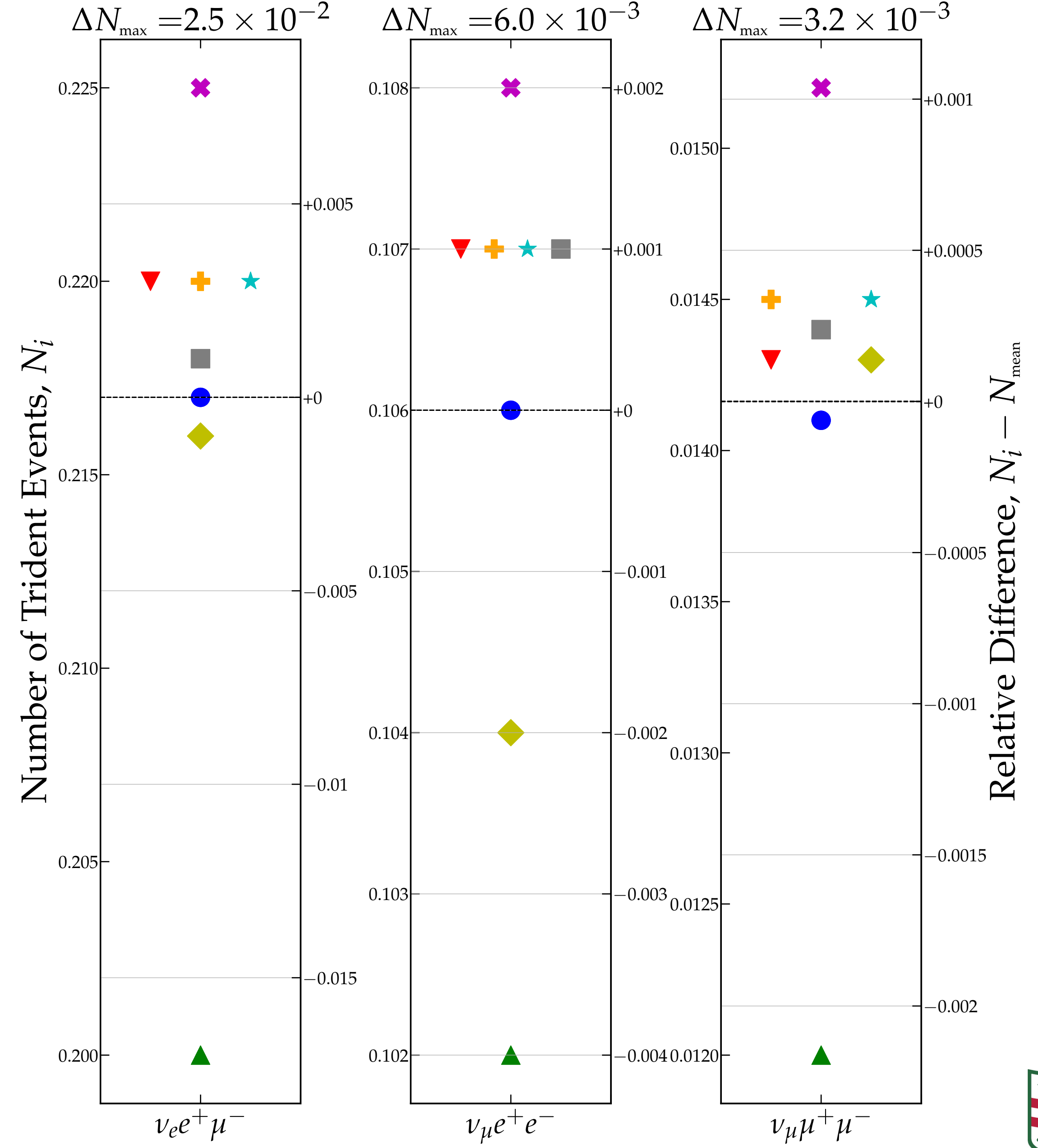
# SBND BNB Flux $\nu$ -mode

● 3pF    ▼ Helm    ▲ KN    + adKN    ★ FB    ✖ HF-Ske2    ◆ CCT    ■ SCGF

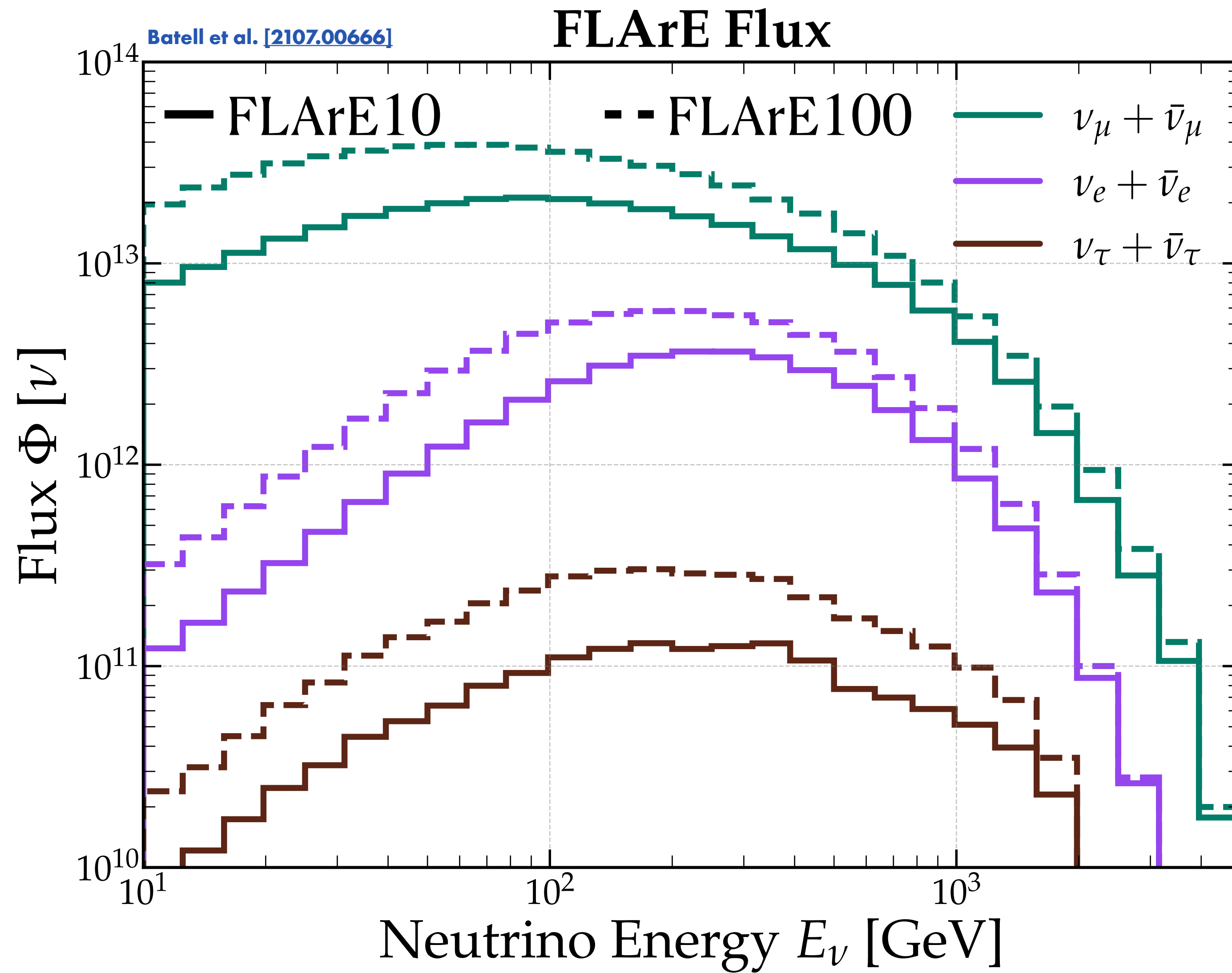


# ICARUS NuMI Flux $\nu$ -mode

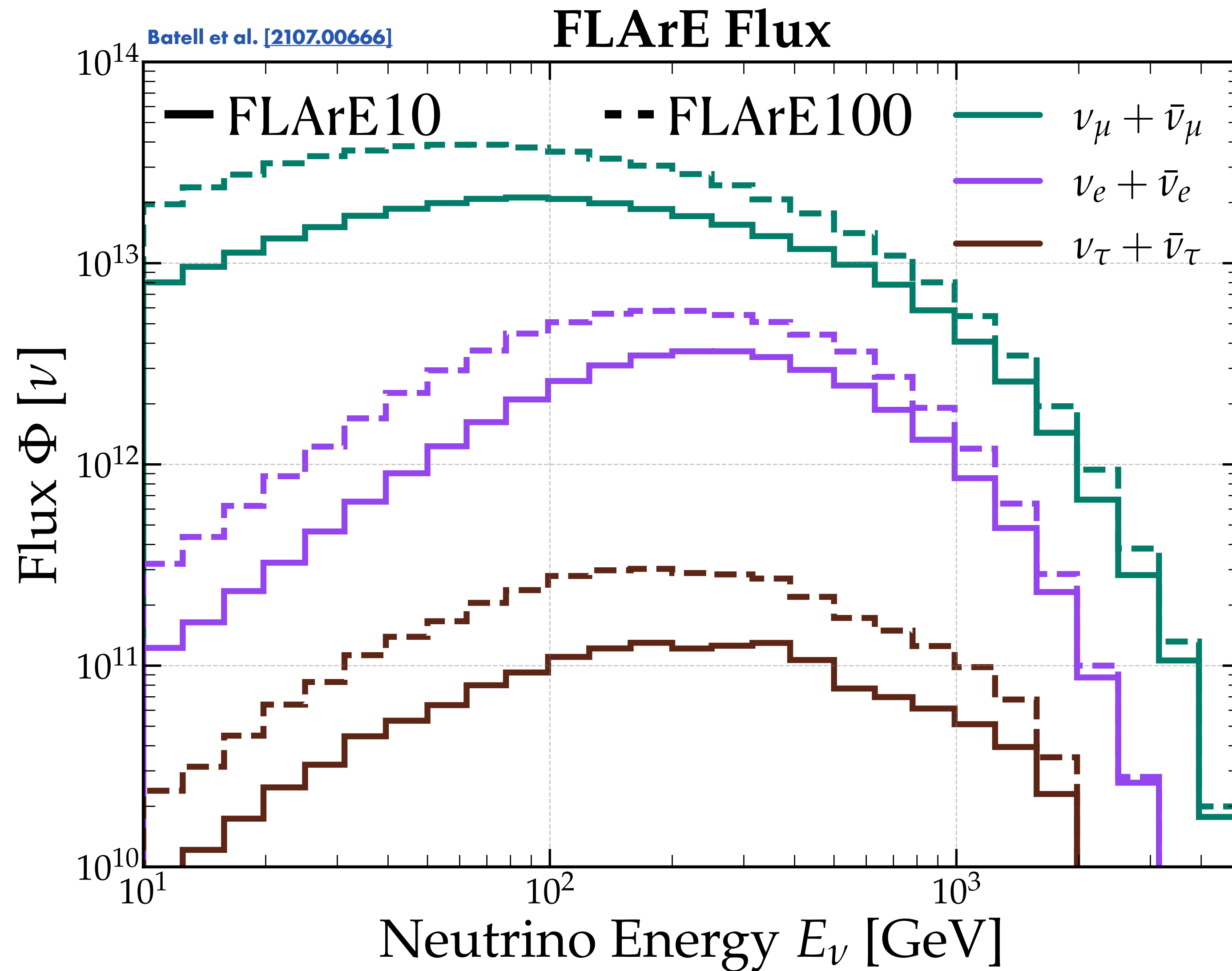
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# Fluxes

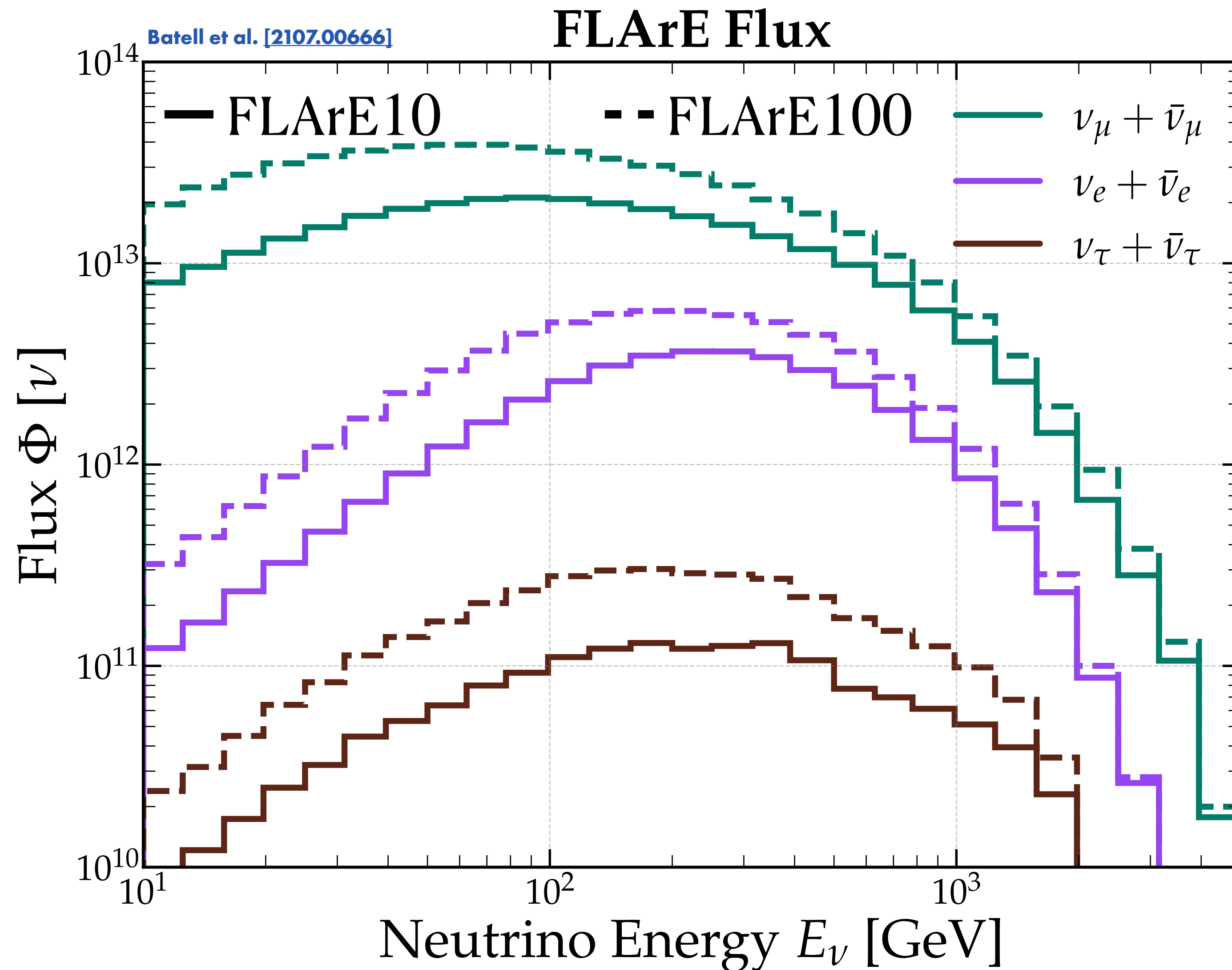


# Fluxes



- Located 620 m from the ATLAS IP
- Generated with the SYBILL 2.3c event generator and the fast neutrino flux simulation [Kling & Nevay \[2105.08270\]](#)

# Fluxes



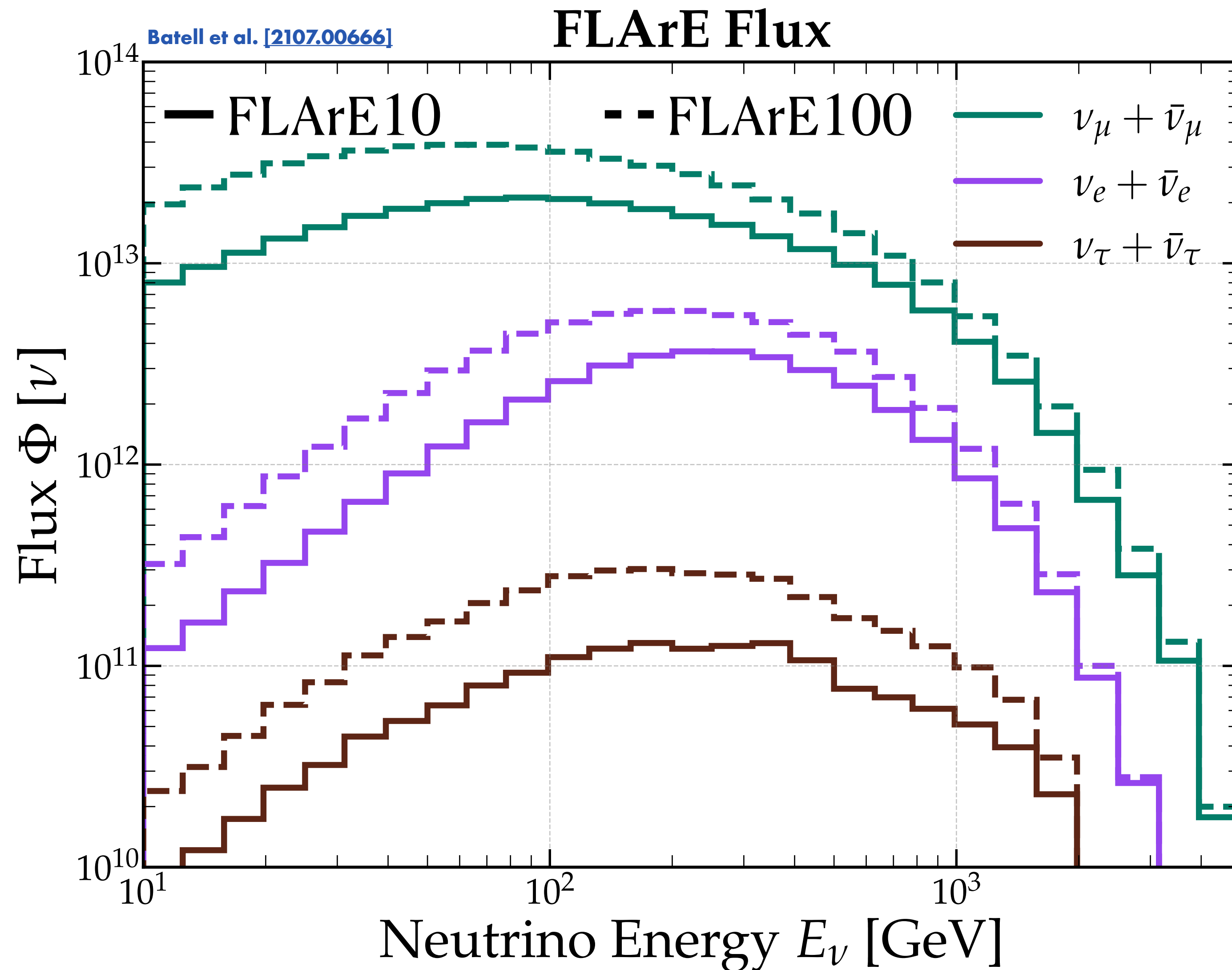
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**Luminosity:** 3000 fb<sup>-1</sup>

**FLArE10**  
**Detector Area:** 1 m × 1 m

**Detector Mass:** 10 tonnes of <sup>40</sup><sub>18</sub>Ar

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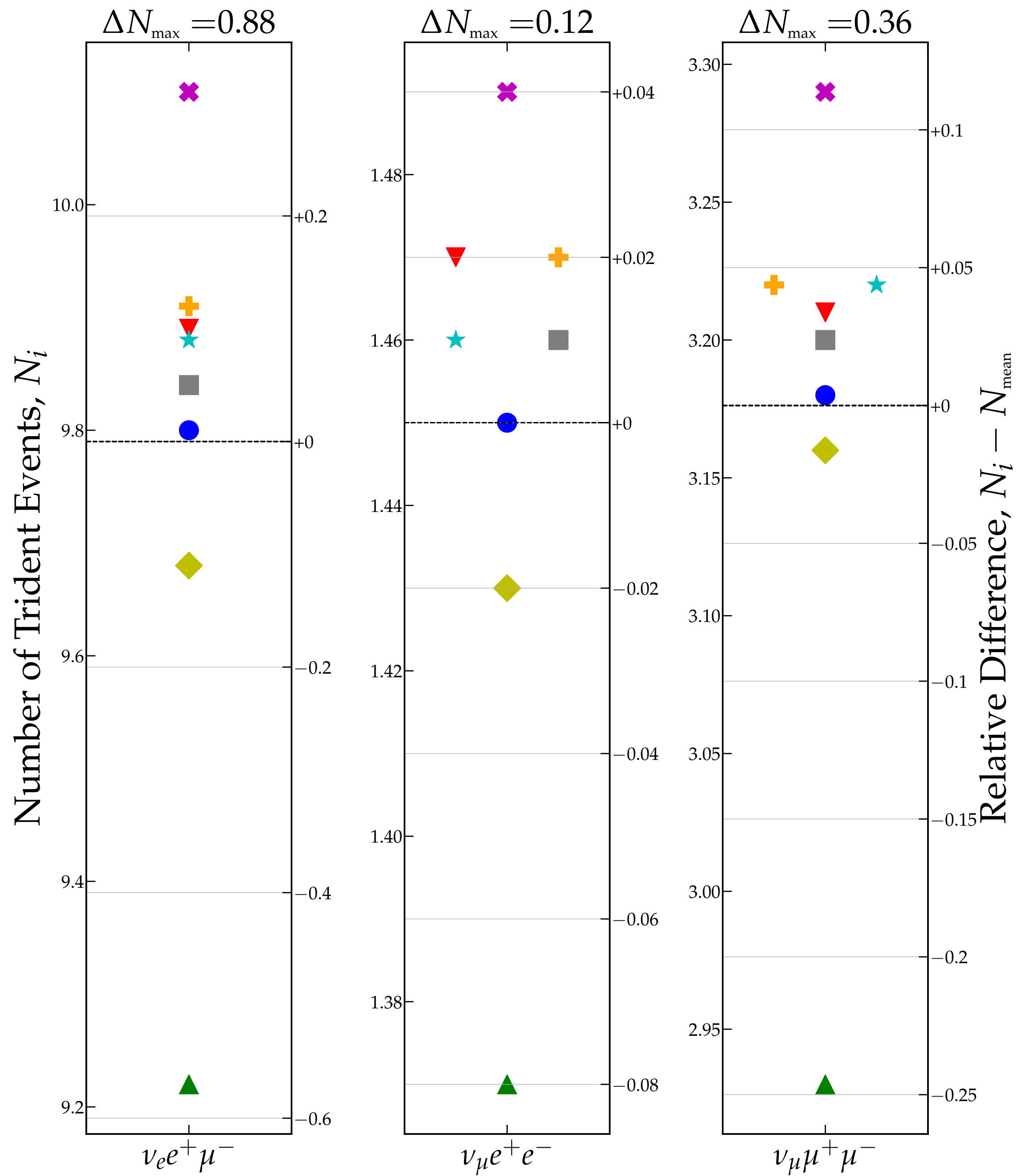
**FLArE100**  
**Detector Area:**  $1.6 \text{ m} \times 1.6 \text{ m}$

**Detector Mass:** 100 tonnes of  $^{40}_{18}\text{Ar}$



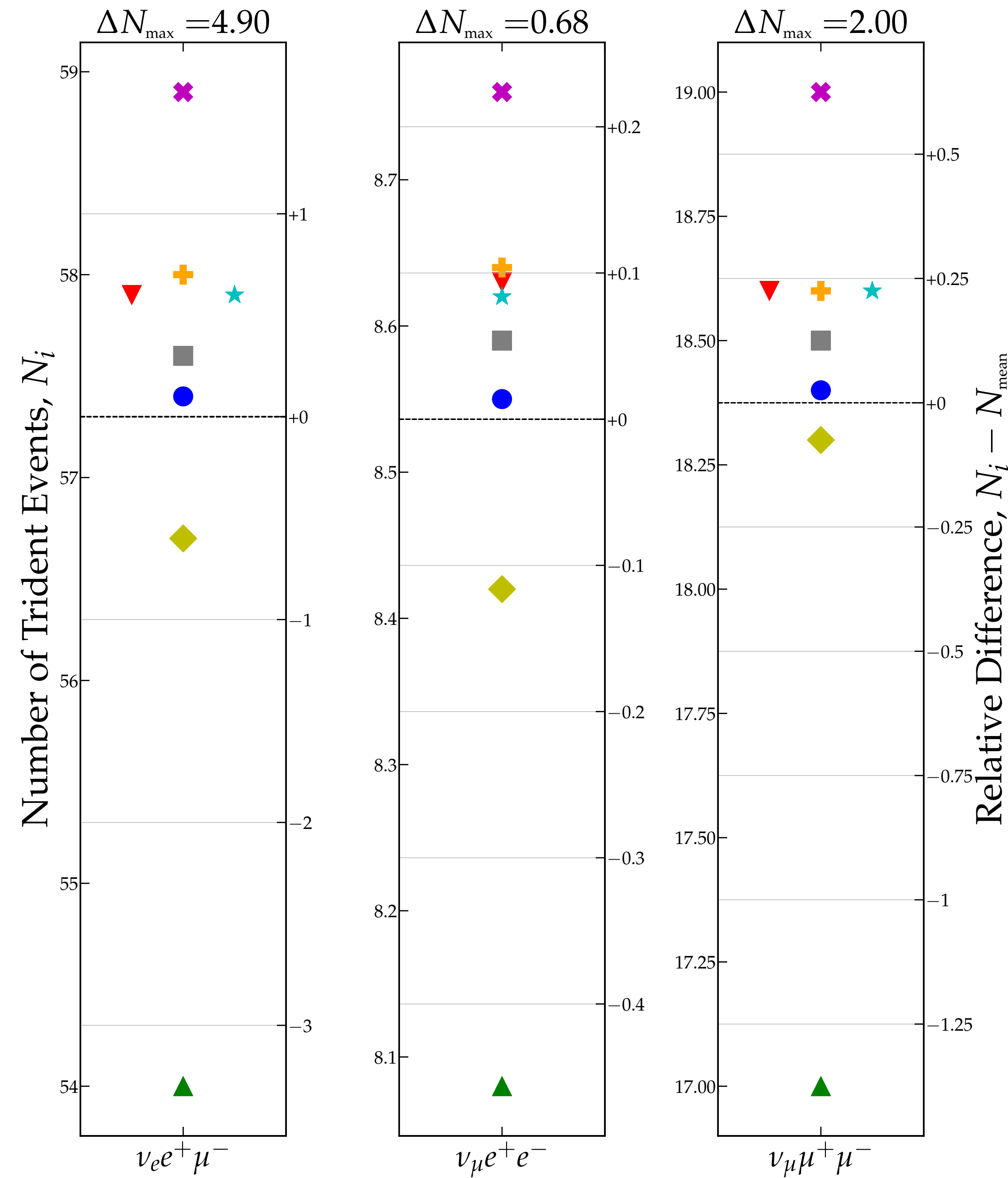
# FLArE10

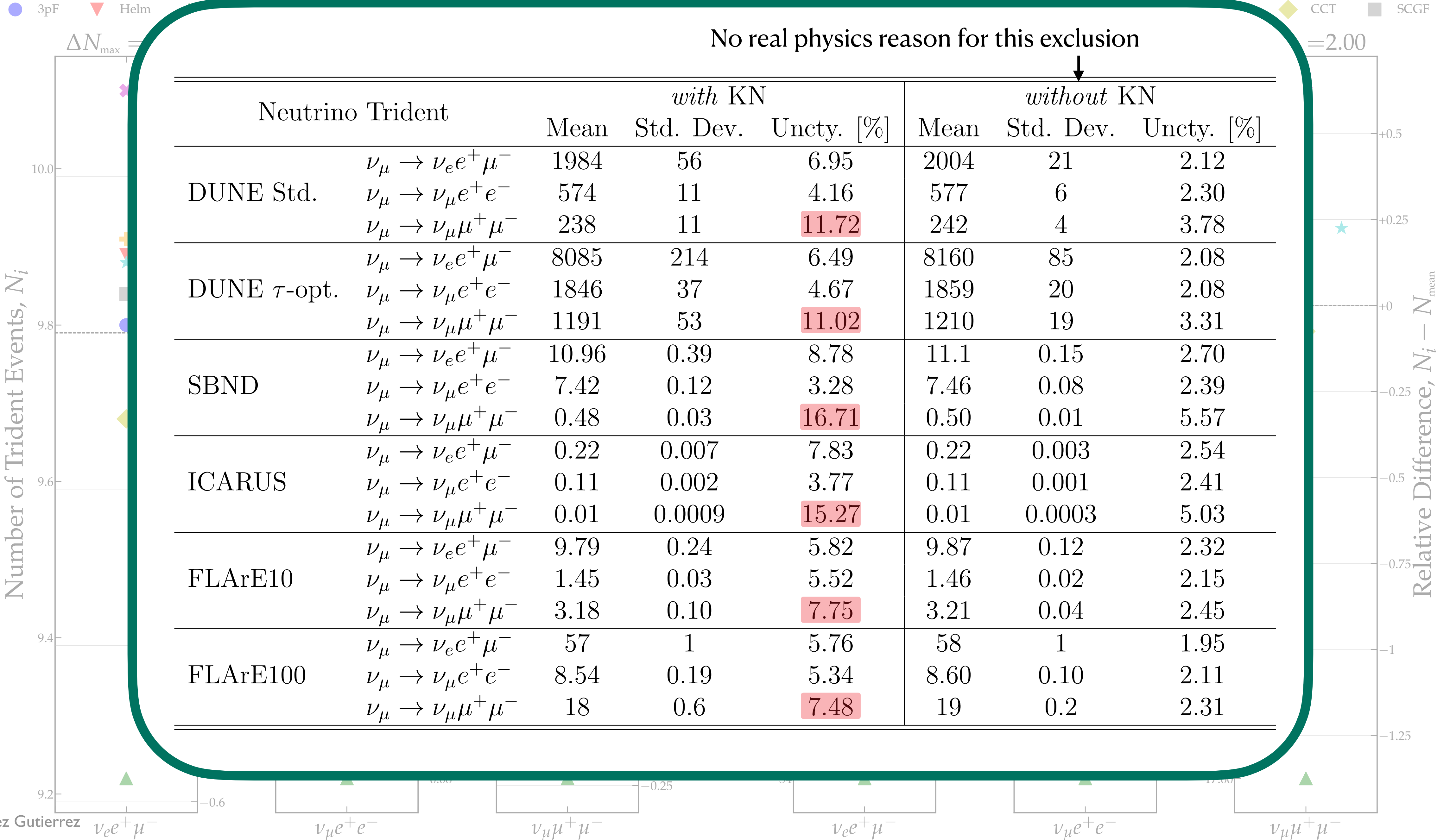
● 3pF    ▼ Helm    ▲ KN    + adKN    ★ FB    ✖ HF-Ske2    ◆ CCT    ■ SCGF



# FLArE100

● 3pF    ▼ Helm    ▲ KN    + adKN    ★ FB    ✖ HF-Ske2    ◆ CCT    ■ SCGF





# Summary



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- Coherent neutrino trident scattering is the dominant channel and requires **accurate SM event rates for proper comparison to BSM predictions**. Neutrino trident event rate **uncertainty mostly coming from nuclear physics**; focus on argon nuclear form factor.
  - Previously underestimated uncertainty of  $\sim 1\%$
  - No experimental data since 1982 and the available data is constrained to small momentum transfer range
  - Calculated cross sections and event rates using multiple popular form factor parameterizations and found uncertainties as high as  $11\%$  and  $\Delta N = 770$  for  $\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e e^+ \mu^-$  with the DUNE  $\tau$ -optimized flux.

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- **New argon electric form factor measurements spanning a wider range of momentum transfer** are imperative to fully explore the physics potential of current and next-generation neutrino experiments!

**Thank you!**

# **Back-up Slides**

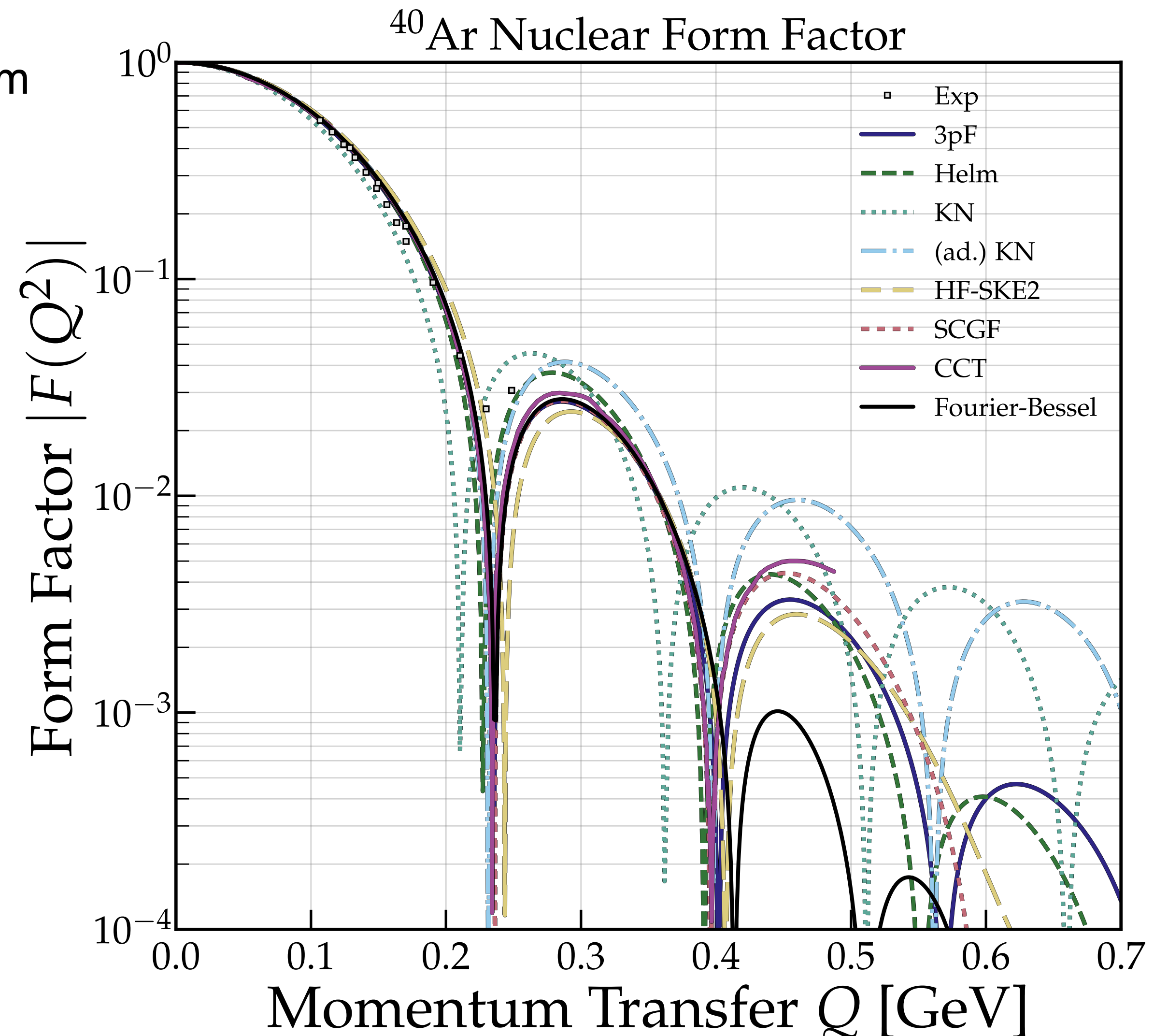
# Argon Charged Form Factor

- Woods-Saxon 3-parameter Fermi: Fourier transform of the spherically symmetric nuclear charge density distribution  $\rho_N(r)$  with

$$\rho_N(r) = \mathcal{N} \frac{1 + \frac{wr^2}{c^2}}{1 + \exp\left(\frac{r-c}{z}\right)},$$

and

$$F_{WS}(Q^2) = \int dr r^2 j_0(Qr) \rho_N(r).$$

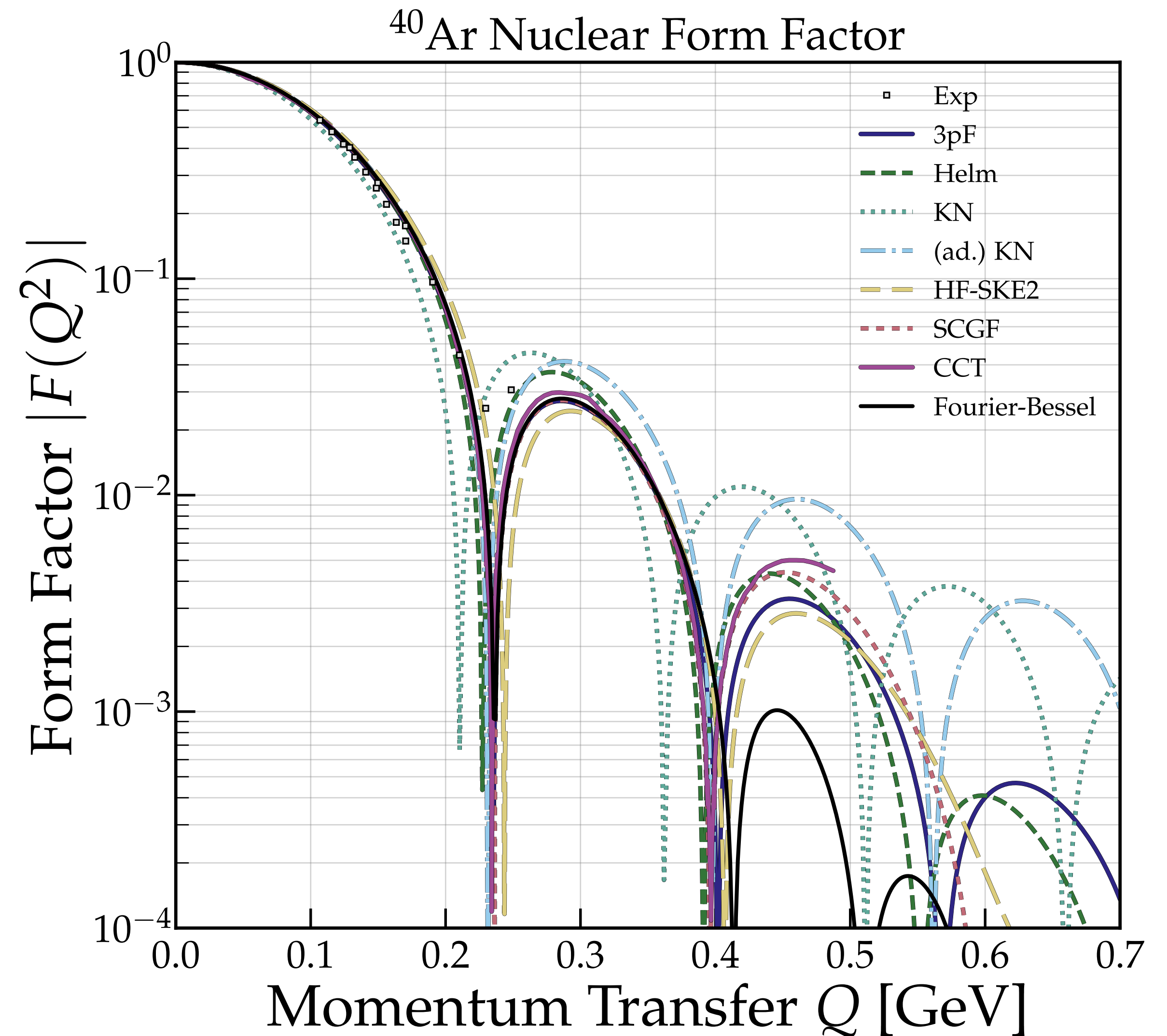


# Argon Charged Form Factor

- **Woods-Saxon 3-parameter Fermi**  
De Vries et al. [*Atom. Data Nucl. Data Tabl.* 1987]

- **Helm**: nuclear charge density distribution is described as a convolution of a uniform density  $\rho_0$  with radius  $R_0$  and a Gaussian profile  $\rho_1$  characterized by a folding width  $s$ , which accounts for the nuclear surface thickness. The form factor is given by

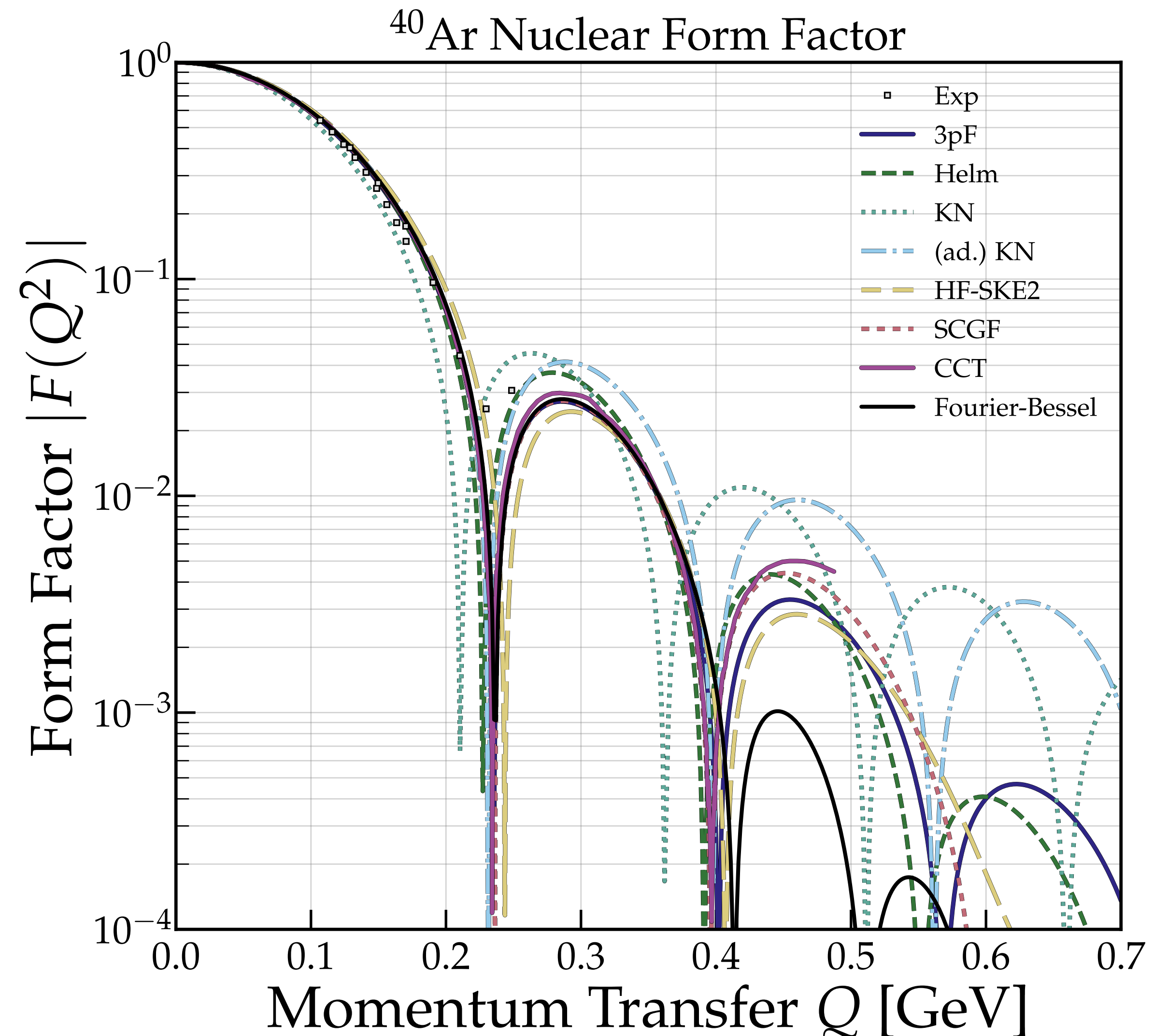
$$F_H(Q^2) = \frac{3j_1(QR_0)}{QR_0} e^{-\frac{Q^2 s^2}{2}}.$$



# Argon Charged Form Factor

- **Woods-Saxon 3-parameter Fermi**  
De Vries et al. [[Atom. Data Nucl. Data Tabl. 1987](#)]
- **Helm**  
Helm [[Phys. Rev. 1956](#)]
- **Klein-Nystrand**: nuclear charge density distribution is modeled as a hard sphere with radius  $(R_A)_{KN} = 1.23 A^{1/3}$  fm convoluted with a Yukawa potential with range  $a = 0.7$  fm acting as a diffuse surface. The form factor is given by

$$F_{KN}(Q^2) = \frac{3j_1(QR_A)}{QR_A} \frac{1}{1 + Q^2a^2}.$$

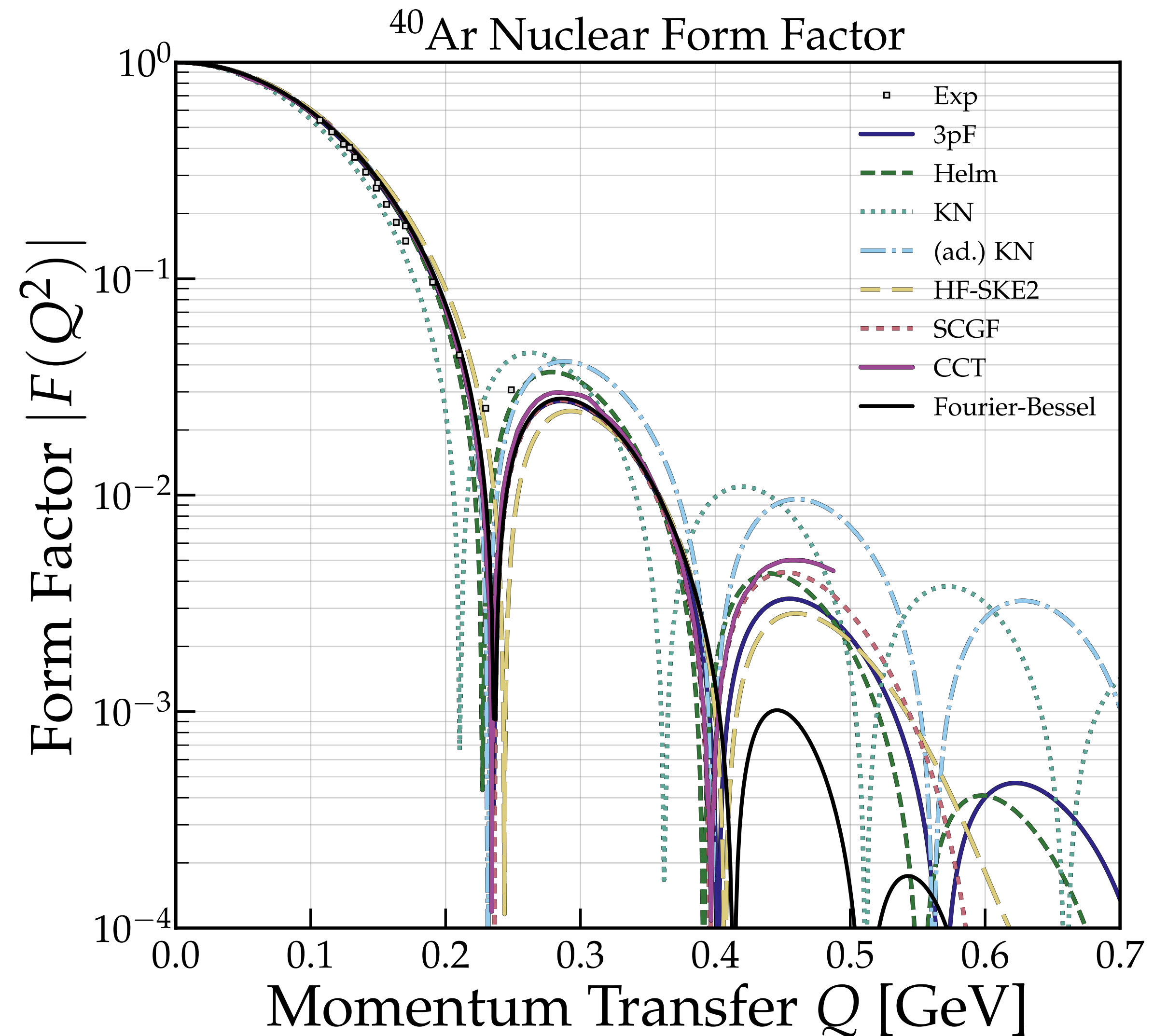


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Helm [[Phys. Rev. 1956](#)]
- **Klein-Nystrand**  
Klein & Nystrand [[9902259](#)]
- **Adapted Klein-Nystrand**: same functional form as Klein-Nystrand but now

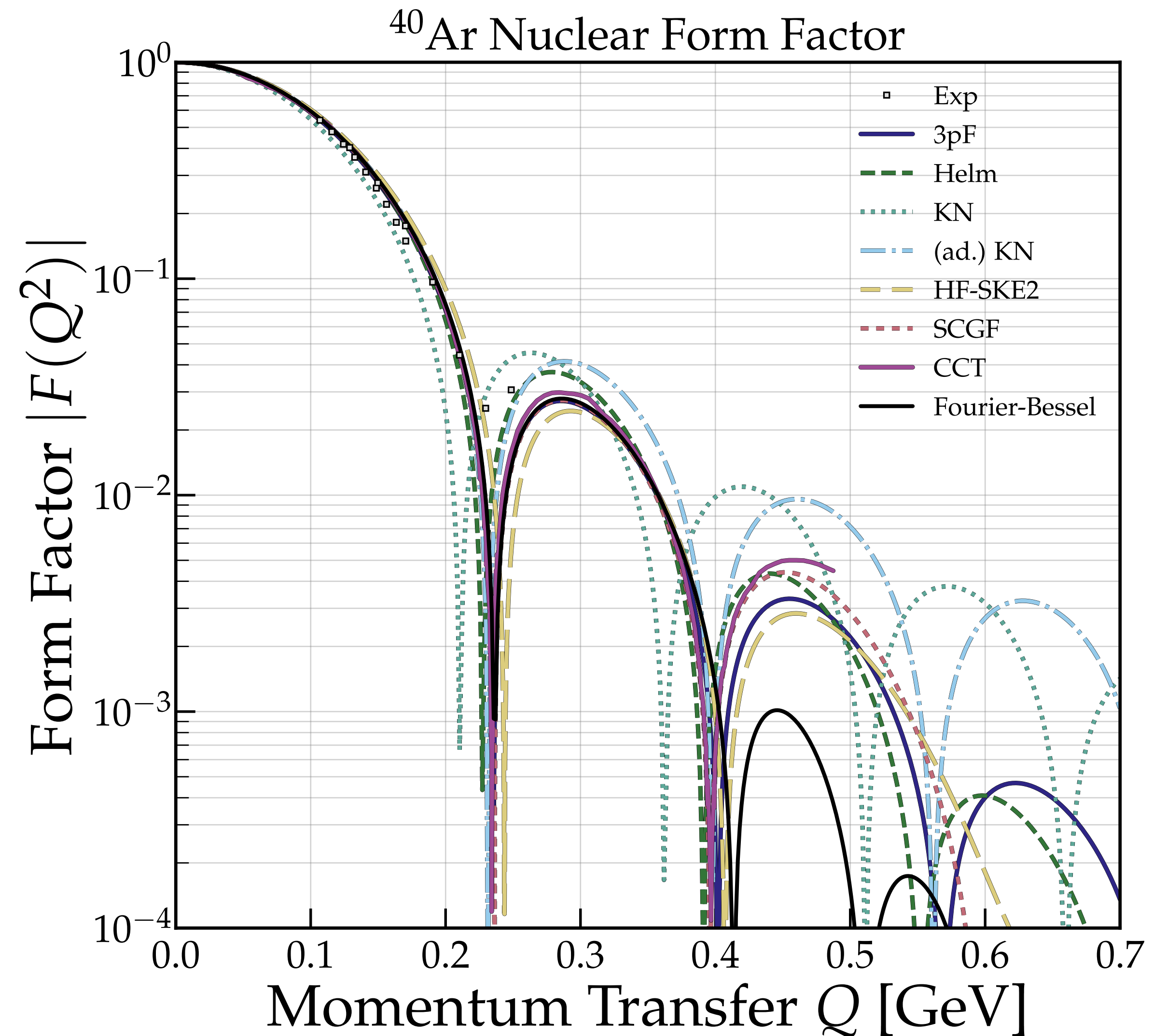
$$(R_A)_{\text{adKN}} = \sqrt{5r_0^2/3 - 10a^2} \text{ fm},$$

with  $r_0$  the measured proton rms radius of the nucleus. For  $^{40}\text{Ar}$ ,  $r_0 = 3.427$  fm.



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Klein & Nystrand [[9902259](#)]
- **Adapted Klein-Nystrand**  
Papoulias et al. [[1911.00916](#)]
- **Hartree-Fock with Skyrme**: solve HF equations with a Skyrme nuclear potential to obtain single-nucleon wave functions for the bound nucleons in the nuclear ground state. Nuclear charge density distribution calculated from the proton wave function.

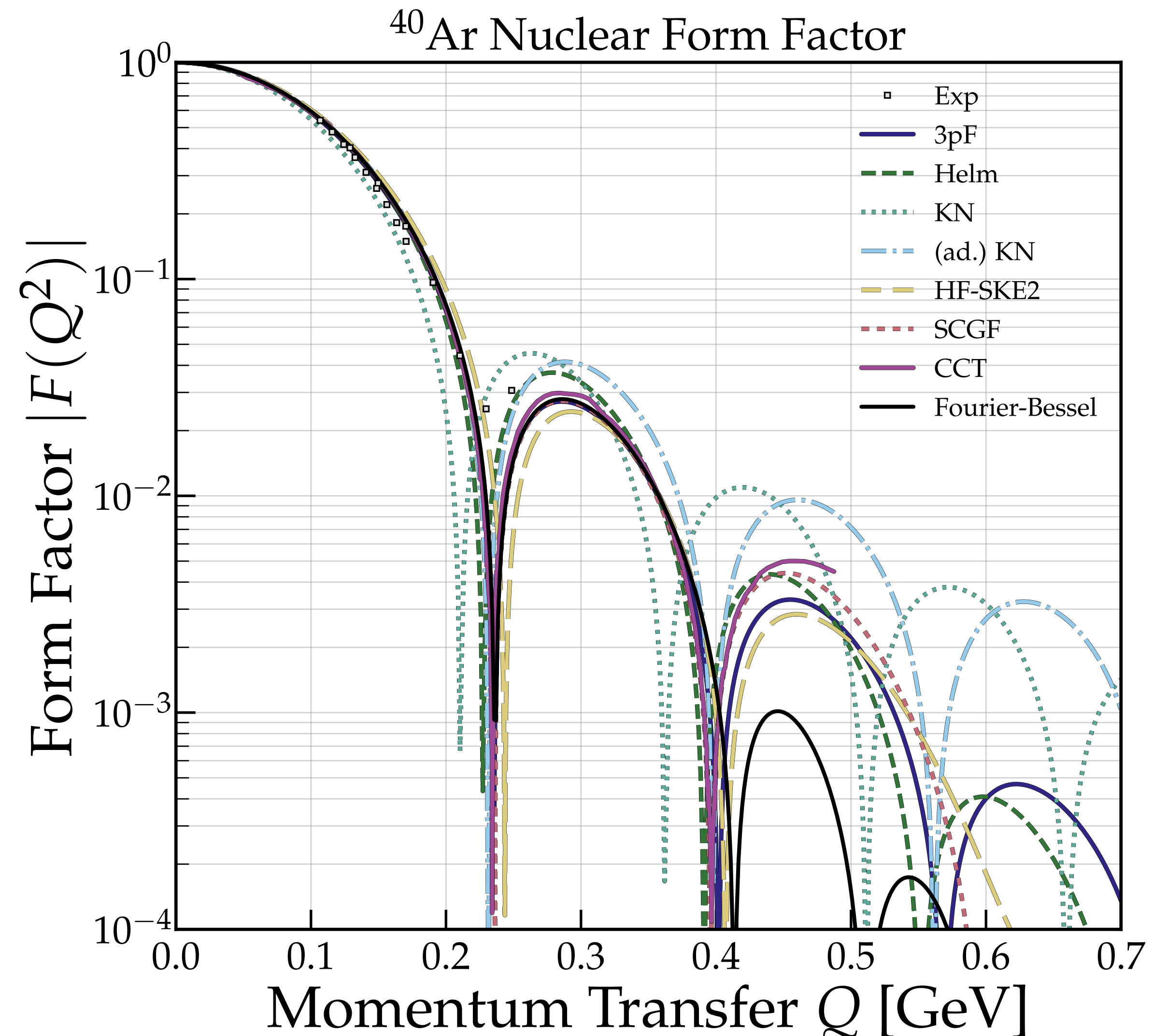


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Papoulias et al. [[1911.00916](#)]
- **Hartree-Fock with Skyrme**  
Van Dessel et al. [[2007.03658](#)]
- **Coupled-cluster Theory**: use coupled-cluster theory to obtain the ground state of  $^{40}\text{Ar}$ , Hamiltonian given by

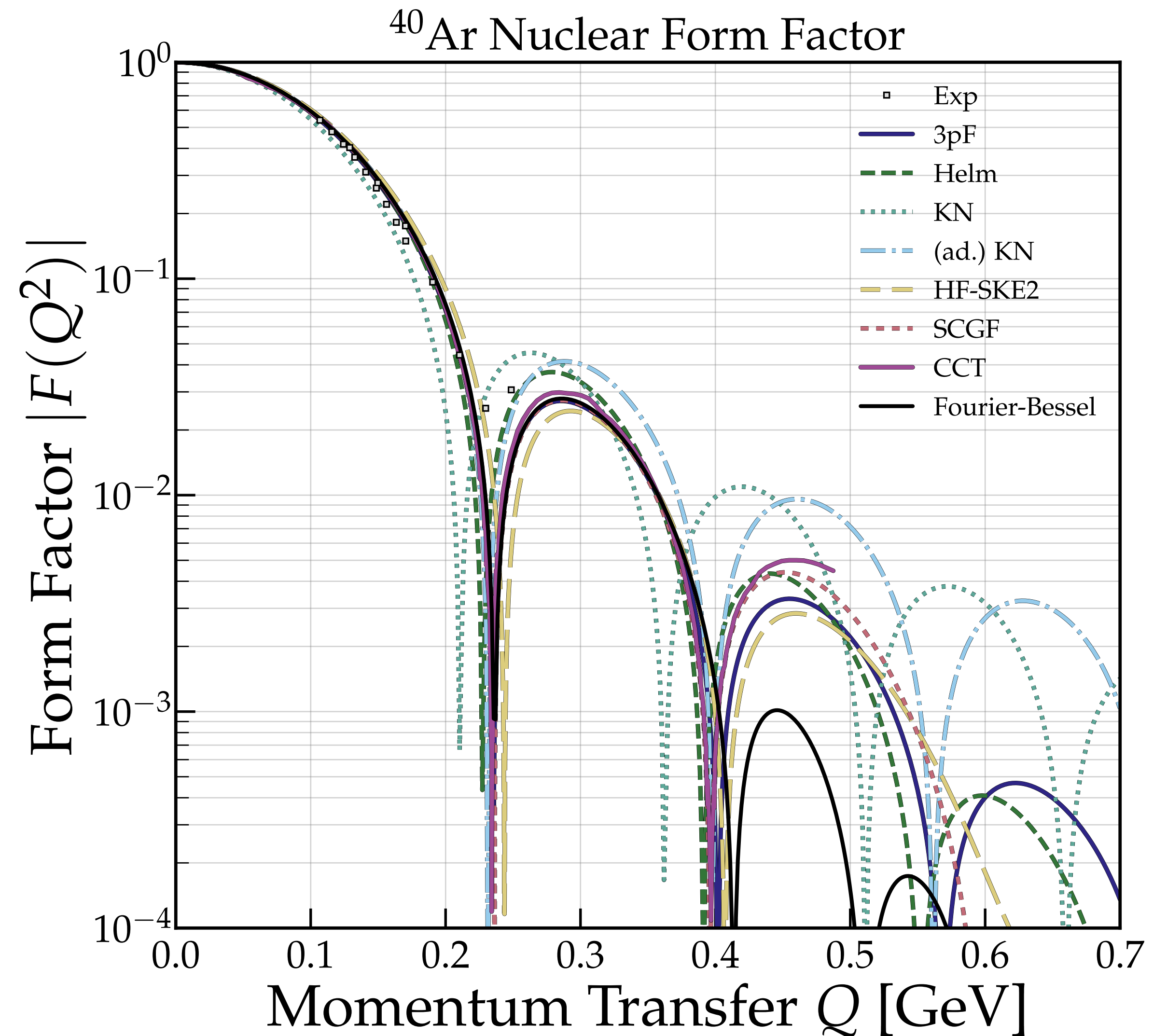
$$\bar{H}_N = e^{-T} H_N e^T$$

where  $T = T_1 + T_2 + T_3$  is the cluster operator and  $H_N$  is the Hamiltonian obtained from the next-to-next-to-leading order expansion in  $\chi$ EFT using the saturated chiral potential  $\text{NNLO}_{\text{sat}}$ .



# Argon Charged Form Factor

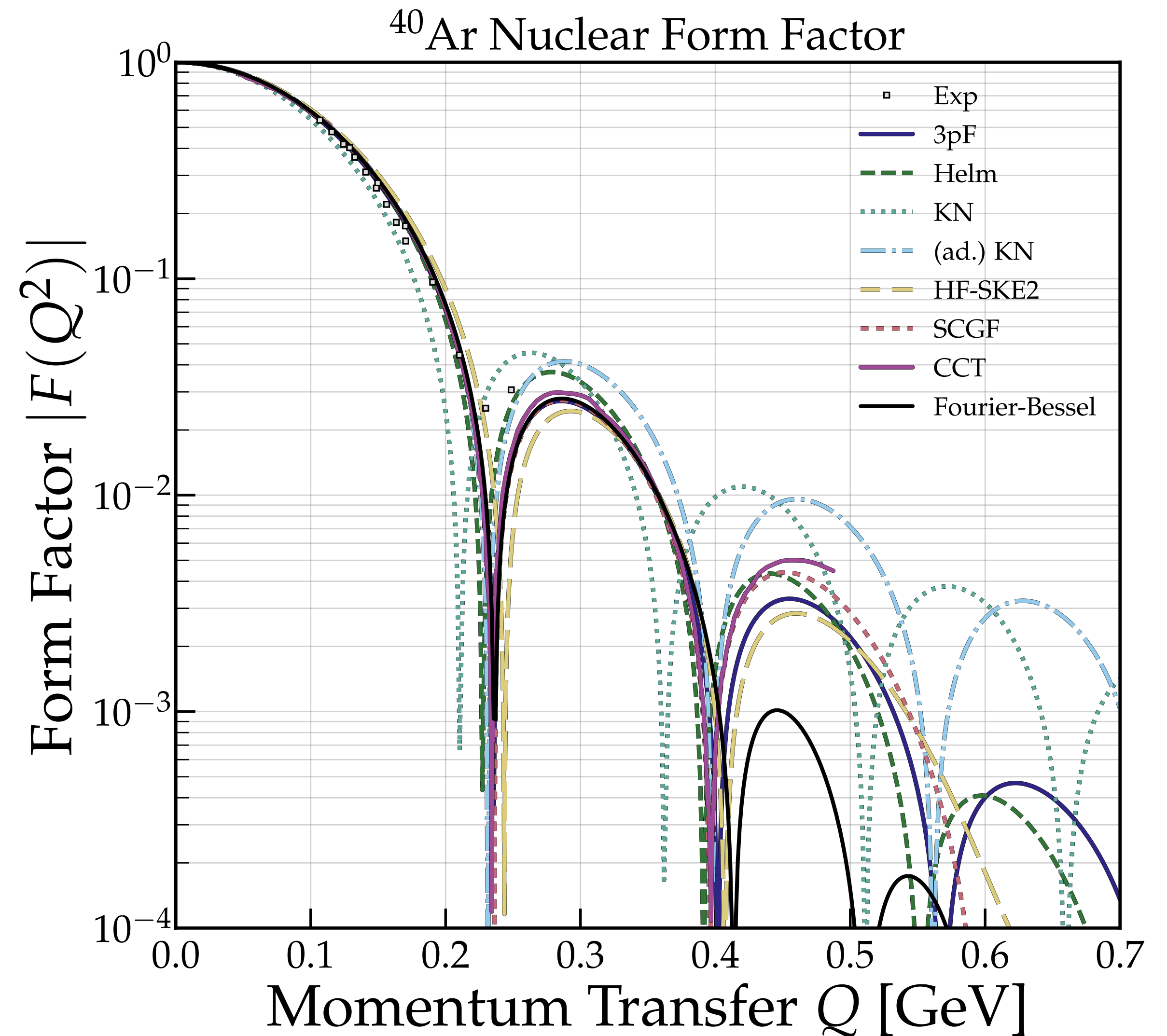
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- **Hartree-Fock with Skyrme**  
Van Dessel et al. [[2007.03658](#)]
- **Coupled-cluster Theory**  
Payne et al. [[1908.09739](#)]
- **Ab initio Self-Consistent Green's Function:**  
iteratively solve the Dyson equation to obtain the Green's function and use it to obtain the ground state of  $^{40}\text{Ar}$ . The Hamiltonian is obtained from the next-to-next-to-leading order expansion in  $\chi\text{EFT}$  using the saturated chiral potential  $\text{NNLO}_{\text{sat}}$ .



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- **Coupled-cluster Theory**  
Payne et al. [[1908.09739](#)]
- **Ab initio Self-Consistent Green's Function**  
Barbieri et al. [[1907.01122](#)]
- **Fourier-Bessel**: use a Fourier-Bessel series expansion for the nuclear charge density distribution

$$\rho_N(r) = \begin{cases} \mathcal{N} \sum_n a_N^{(n)} j_0(n\pi r/R_N) & \text{for } r < R_N \\ 0 & \text{for } r > R_N \end{cases}$$



# Argon Charged Form Factor

