

Towards Quantum Simulation of Neutrino-Nucleus Many-Body Dynamics

Minoo Kabirnezhad

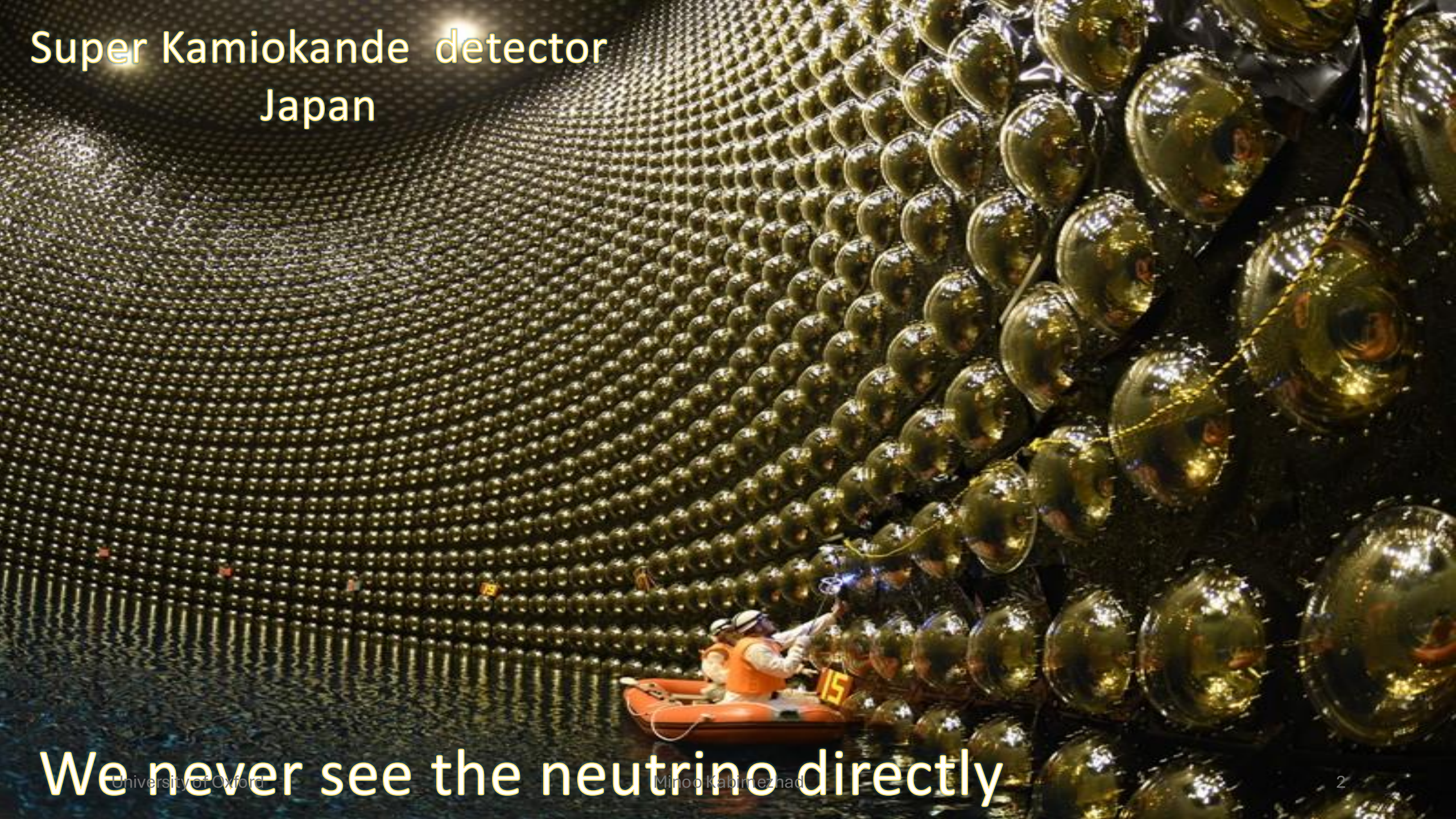
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QuantHEP, Queen Mary University of London

July 15, 2026

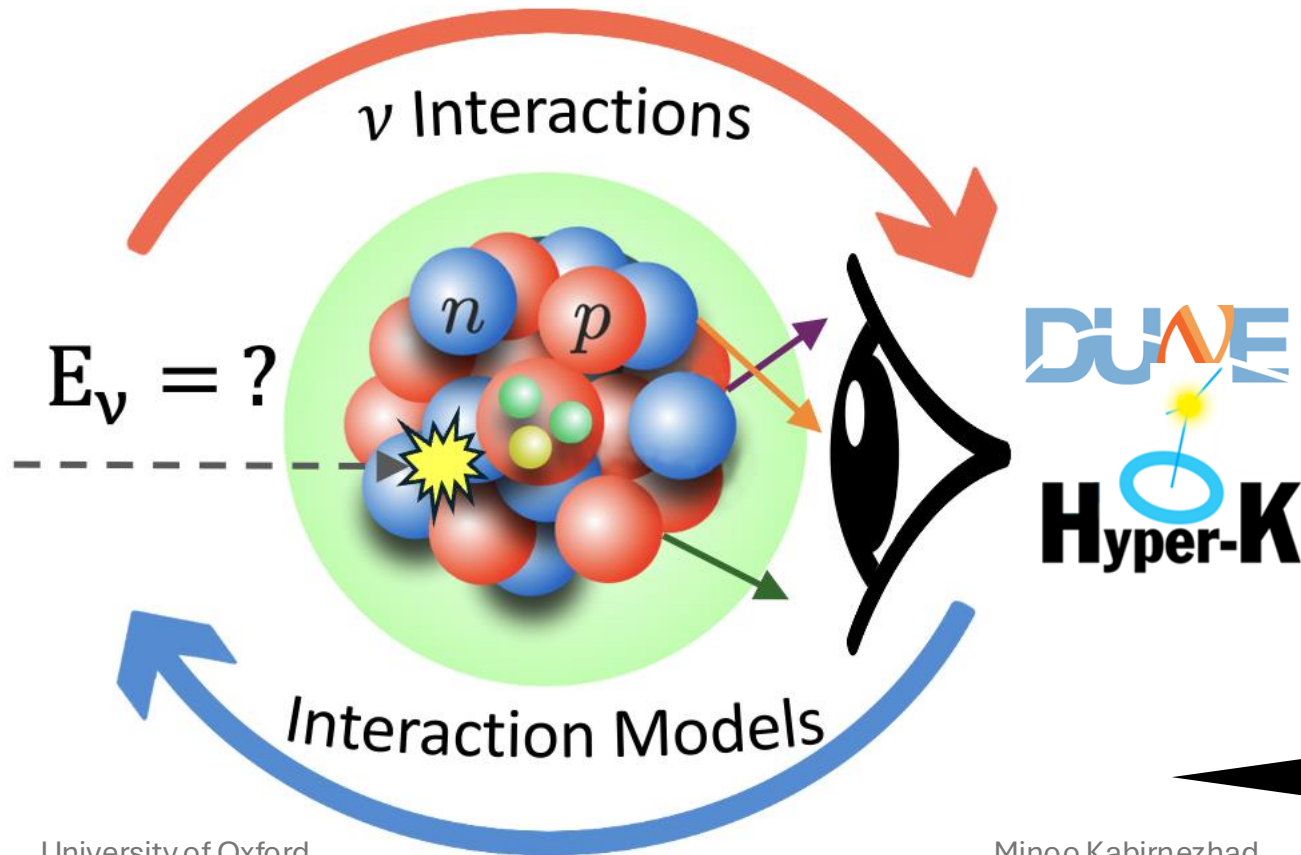


Super Kamiokande detector Japan



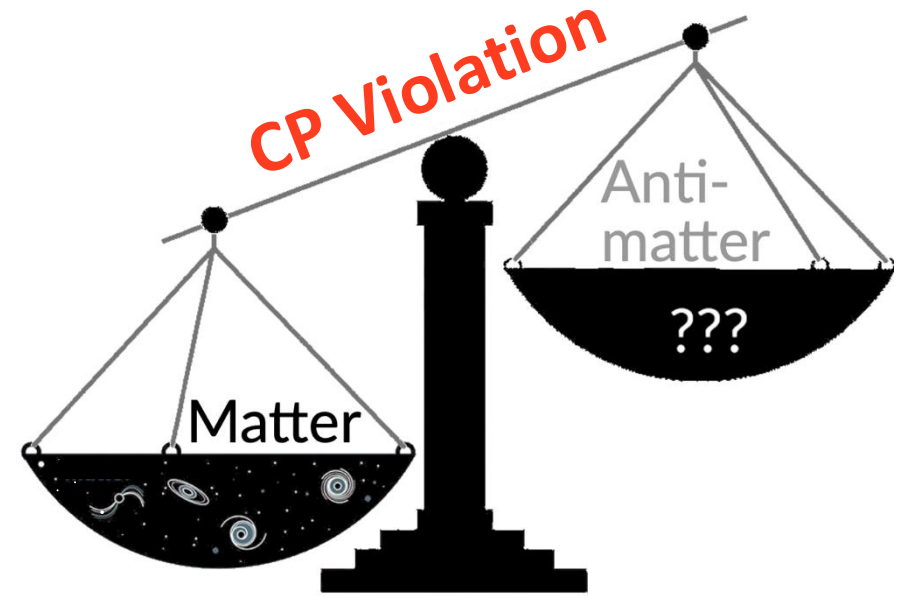
We never see the neutrino directly

The challenge: Seeing the invisible



University of Oxford

Minoo Kabirnezhad

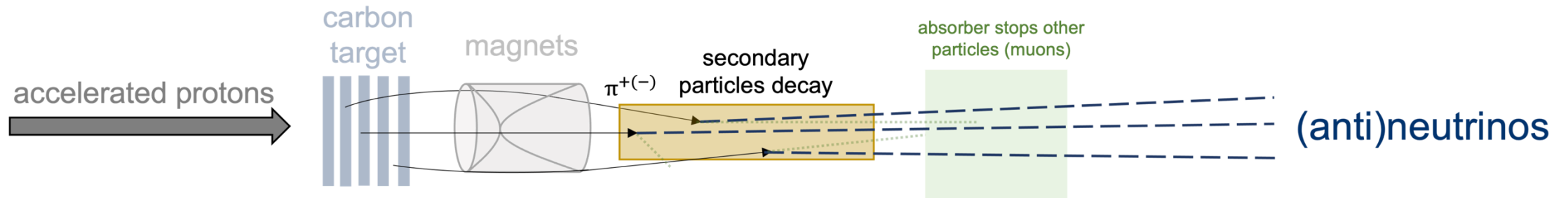


Precision
Measurements

Accurate Prediction

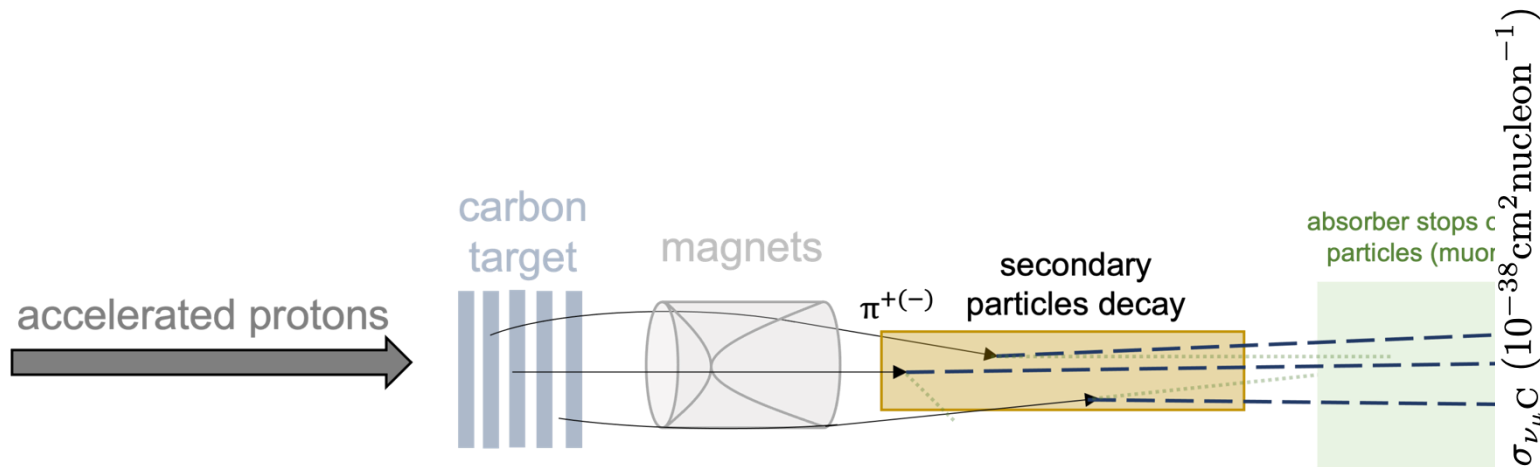
Accelerator-based neutrino experiments

- ν_μ **Beam Source:** Produced from accelerated protons

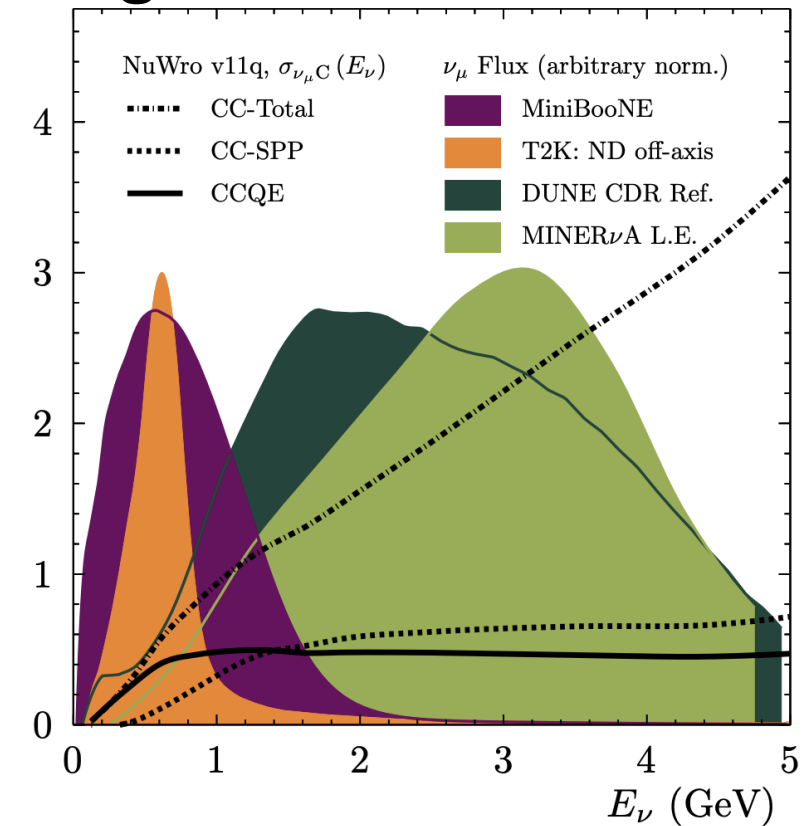


Accelerator-based neutrino experiments

- **ν_μ Beam Source:** Produced from accelerated protons
- **Energy Requirement:** Must be in the few GeV range

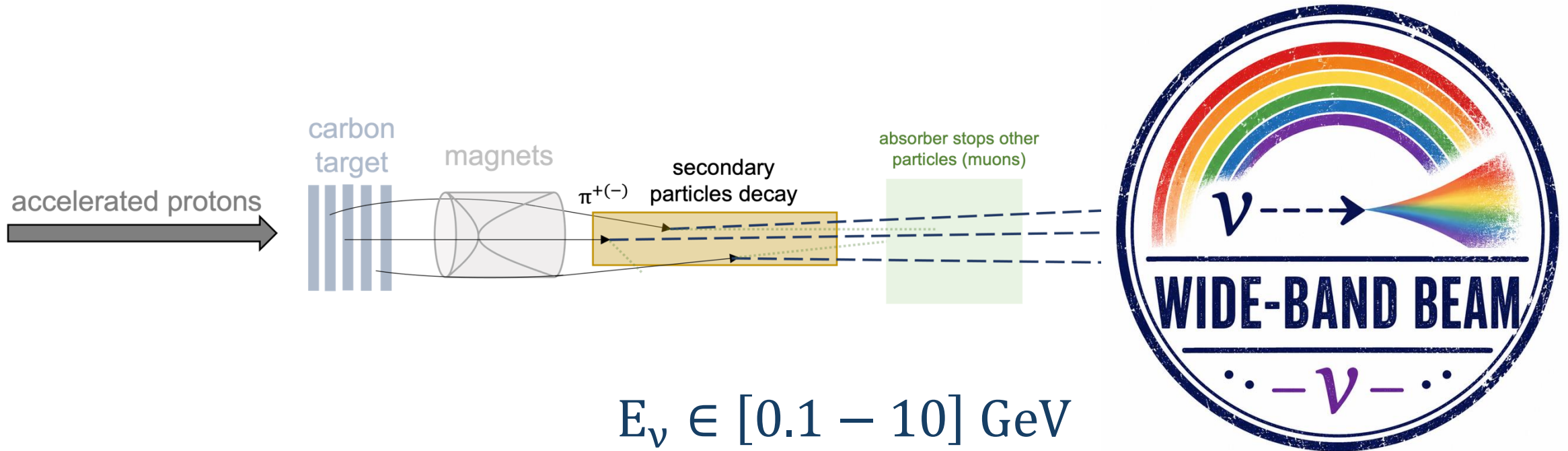


Wide energy
neutrino beam

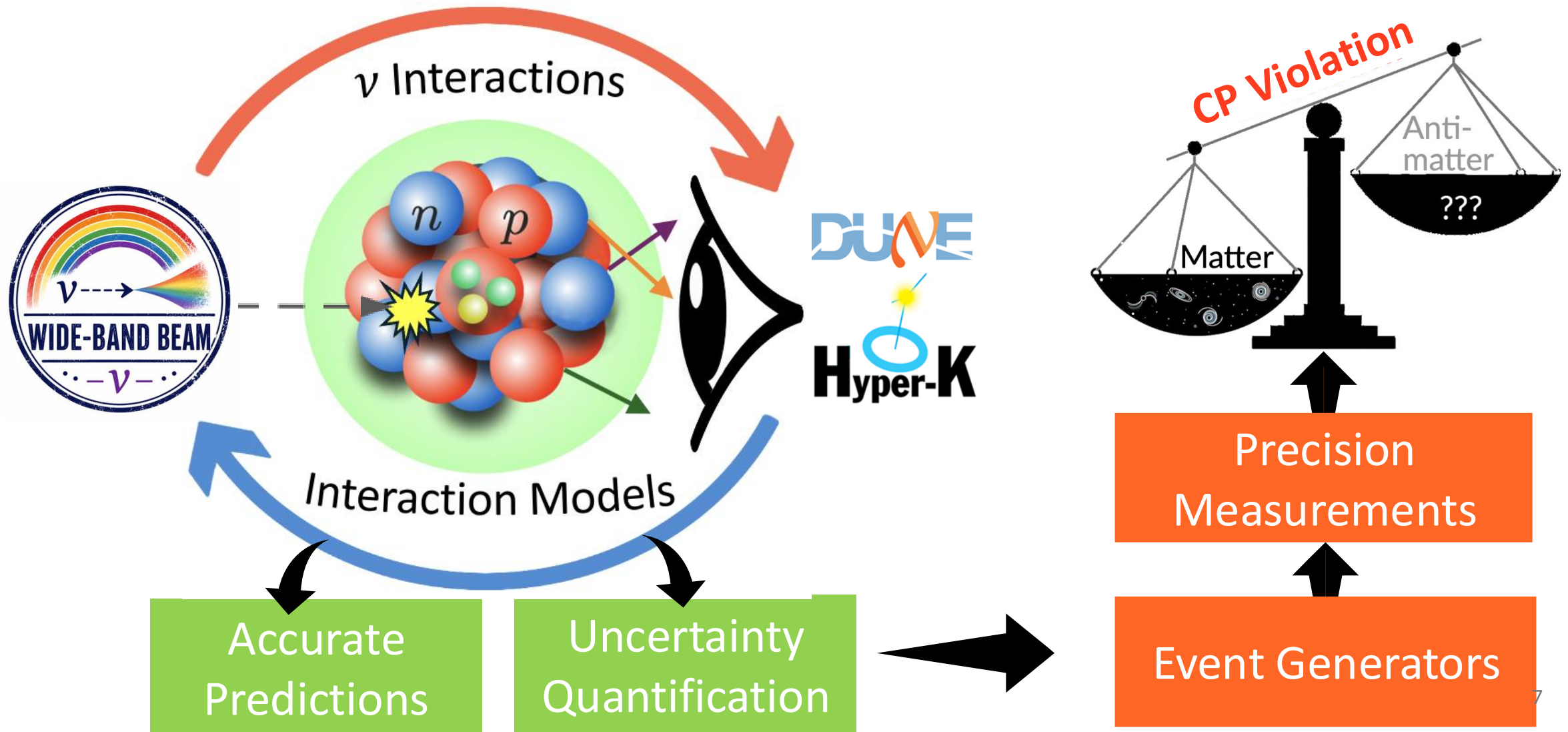


Accelerator-based neutrino experiments

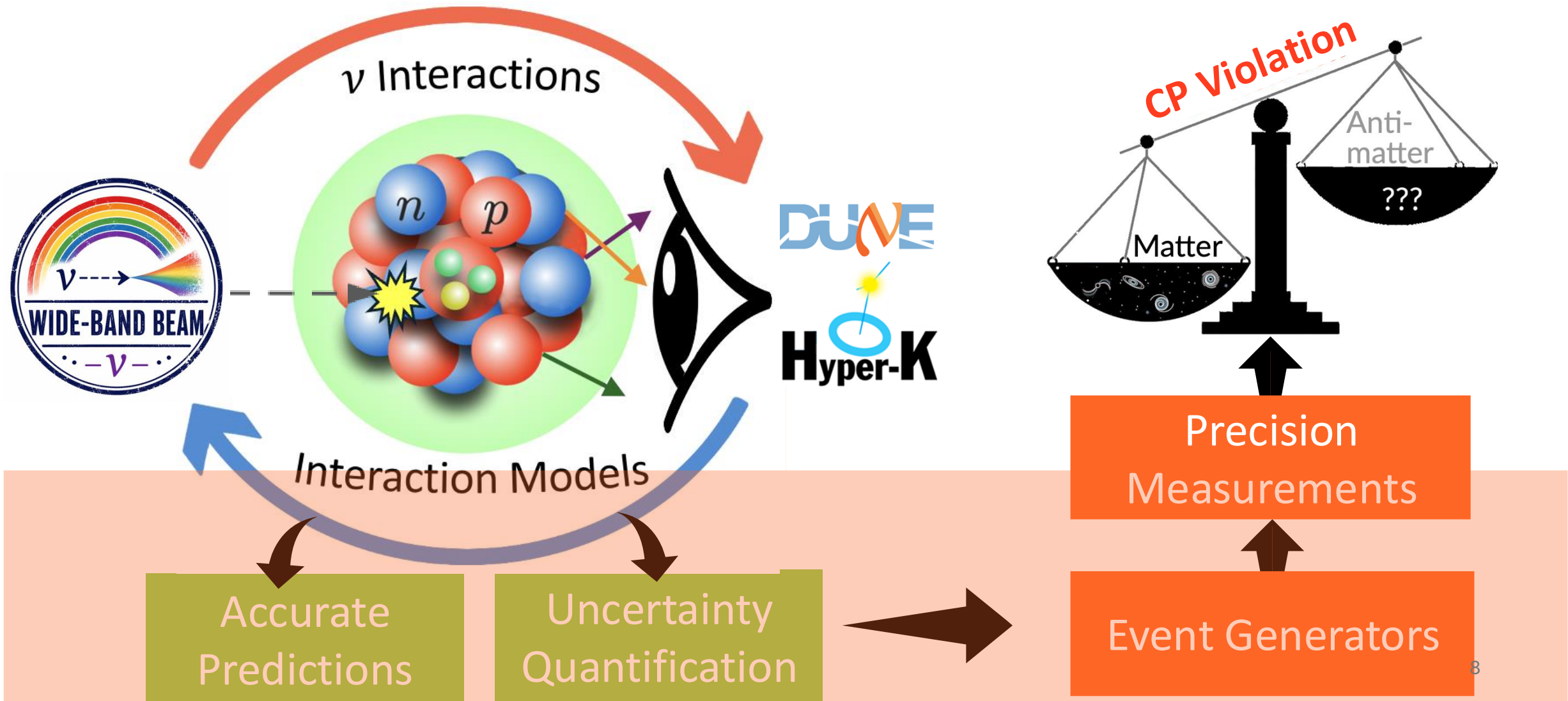
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Unveiling the Neutrino

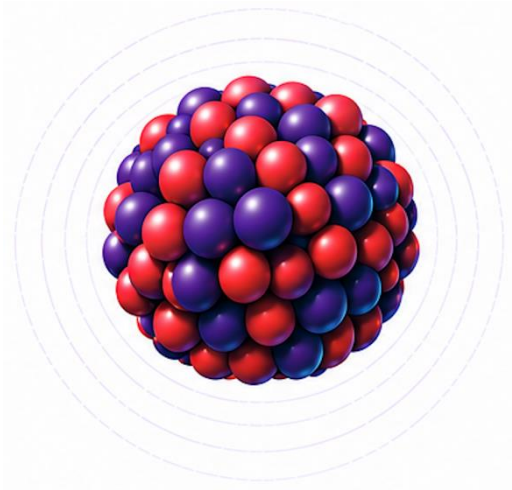


Customised Modelling for Future Discoveries



ν -Nucleus Interaction in Neutrino Experiment

1. Ground state

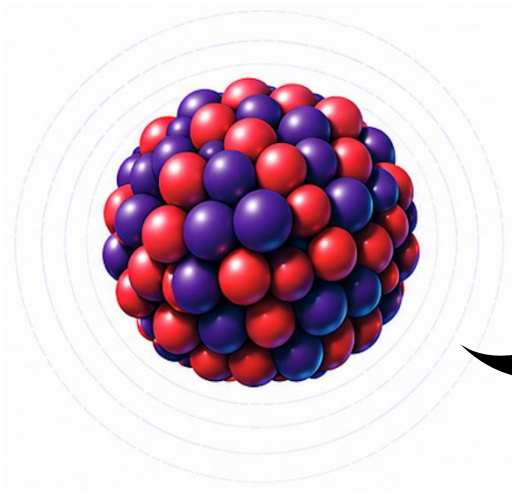


$|\Psi_0\rangle$

- Strongly correlated many-body quantum system
- $H|\Psi_0\rangle = E_0|\Psi_0\rangle$

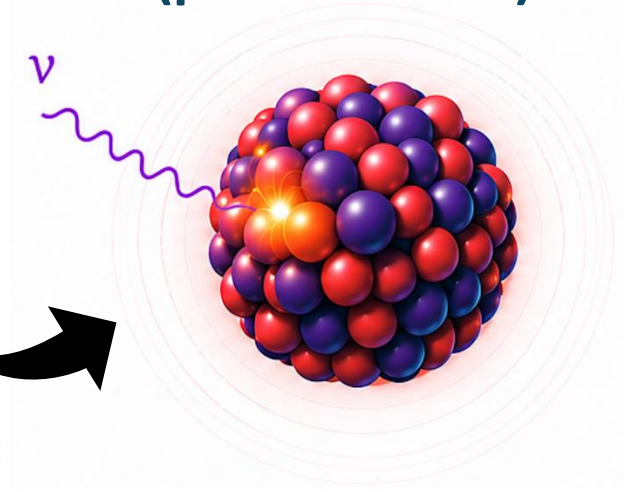
ν -Nucleus Interaction in Neutrino Experiment

1. Ground state



$$|\Psi_0\rangle$$

2. Weak interaction (perturbation)



$$|\Psi_f(0)\rangle = \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

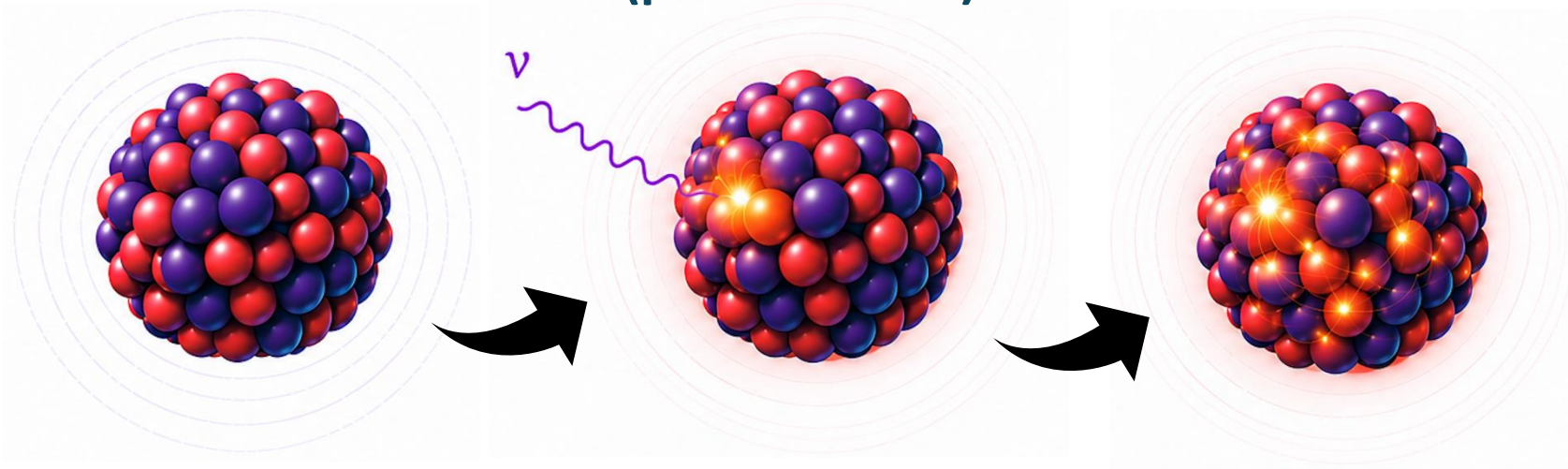
- A neutrino interacts via the weak force and excite nucleus locally

ν -Nucleus Interaction in Neutrino Experiment

1. Ground state

2. Weak interaction
(perturbation)

3. Propagation



- The excitation propagates through the many-body system

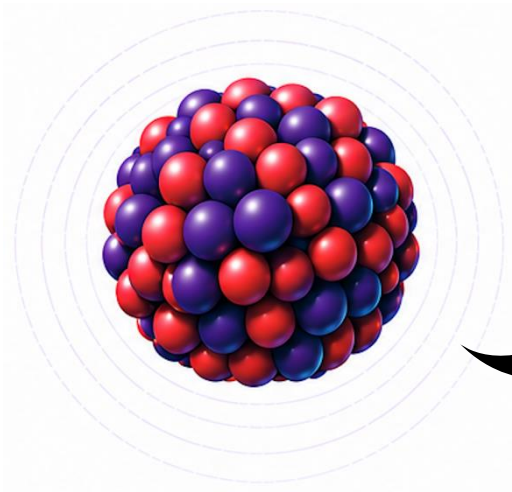
$$|\Psi_0\rangle$$

$$|\Psi_f(0)\rangle = \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

$$|\Psi_f(t)\rangle = e^{-iHt} \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

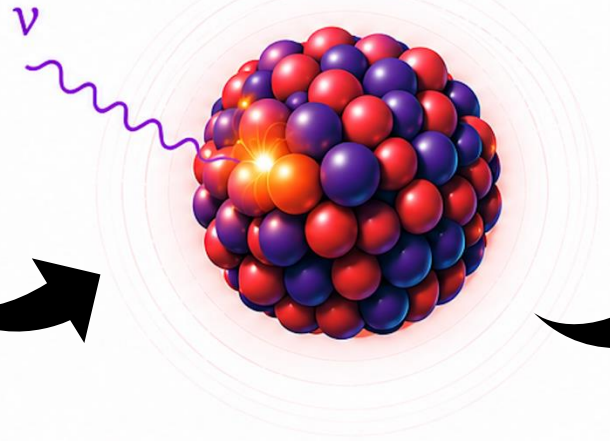
ν -Nucleus Interaction in Neutrino Experiment

1. Ground state



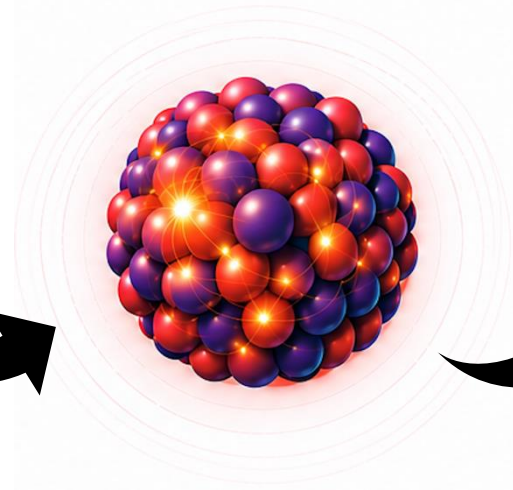
$$|\Psi_0\rangle$$

2. Weak interaction
(perturbation)



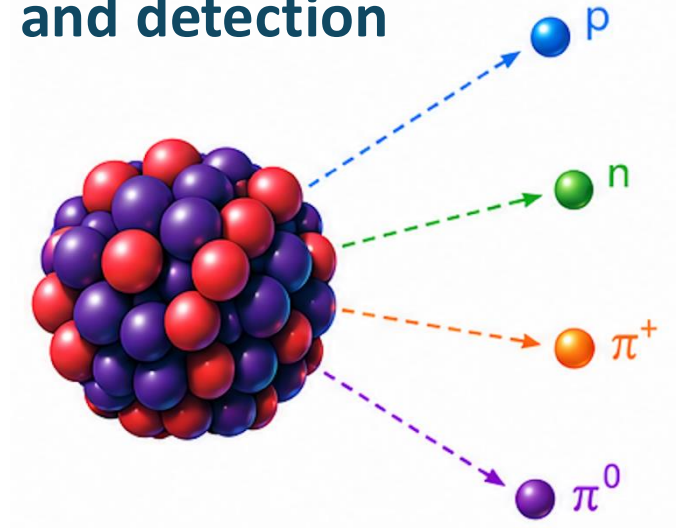
$$|\Psi_f(0)\rangle = \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

3. Propagation

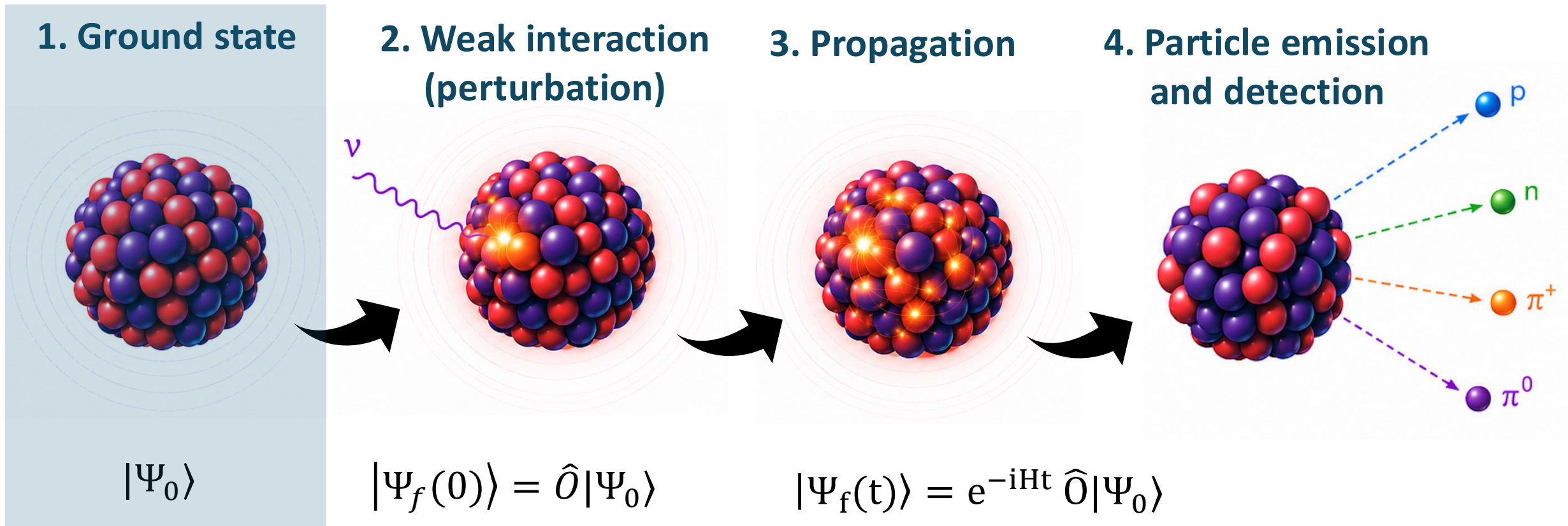


$$|\Psi_f(t)\rangle = e^{-iHt} \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

4. Particle emission
and detection



1. Preparing the Ground state



Not the biggest challenge!

1. Preparing the Ground state

- A nucleus in its ground state is stationary: all measurable quantities remain constant because the state is an energy eigenstate.

$$H | \Psi_0 \rangle = E_0 | \Psi_0 \rangle$$

$$H = T + V_{NN} + V_{3N} + \dots$$

T: kinetic energy of the nucleons

V_{NN} : two-nucleon interactions

V_{3N} : three-nucleon interactions

1. Preparing the Ground state

- The interacting nuclear ground state is a quantum superposition of many-body configurations.
- The number of possible configurations grows exponentially with the size of the nucleus.
- Classical calculations explicitly represent the many-body wavefunction

$$|\Psi_0\rangle = \sum_i c_i |\Phi_i\rangle, \text{ solving for all the } c_i$$

- For ^{40}Ar , assuming 100 single-particle states, the Hilbert space contains

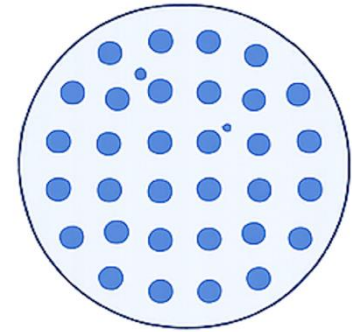
$$\binom{100}{40} \approx 10^{28} \text{ configurations.}$$

Simple case: Non-interacting nucleon

$$H = T$$

- There is only one configuration:

$$|\Psi_0\rangle = |\text{Fermi sea}\rangle$$

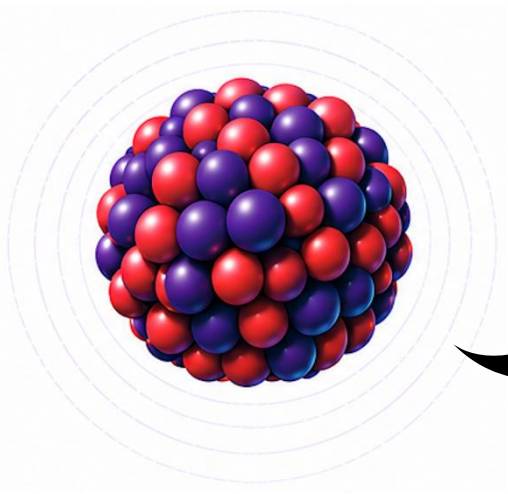


- Occupied ($|k| < k_F$)
- Unoccupied ($|k| > k_F$)

- To achieve the computational speed required for event generation, most neutrino interaction models rely on simplified descriptions of the nuclear dynamics.
- Additional mechanisms are then incorporated to account for missing many-body effects and improve agreement with experimental data.

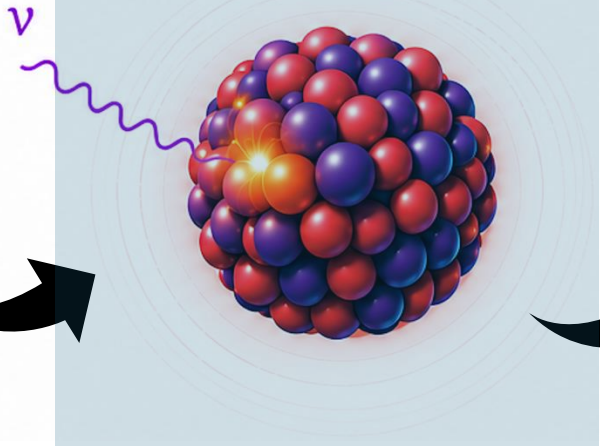
2. Excited state

1. Ground state



$$|\Psi_0\rangle$$

2. Weak interaction (perturbation)



$$|\Psi_f(0)\rangle = \hat{O}|\Psi_0\rangle$$

- The weak transition operator $\hat{O}(q, \omega)$ must be modelled over a broad kinematic region.
- Applying $\hat{O}$ drives the nucleus out of equilibrium, creating a superposition of many excited states.
- The resulting state, $|\Psi_f(0)\rangle$, is not an eigenstate of the nuclear Hamiltonian and therefore evolves in time.

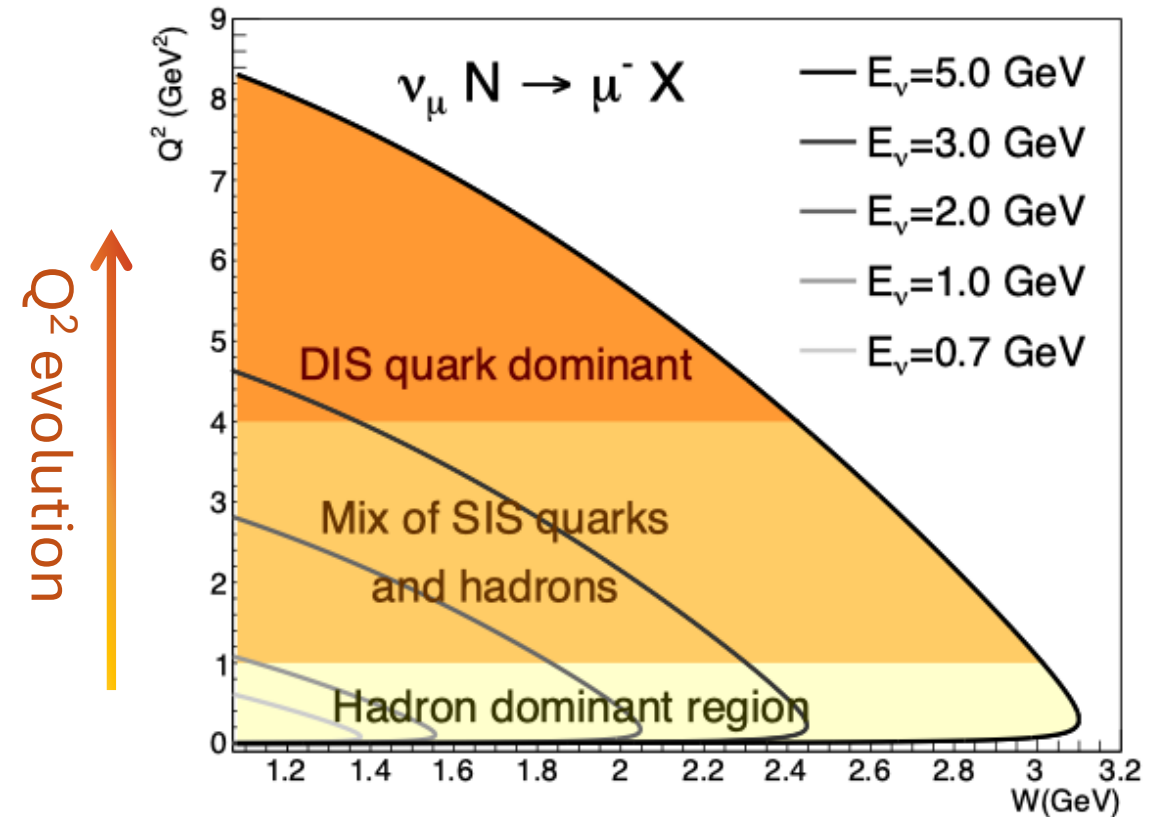
Broad neutrino energy spectrum



wide kinematic coverage

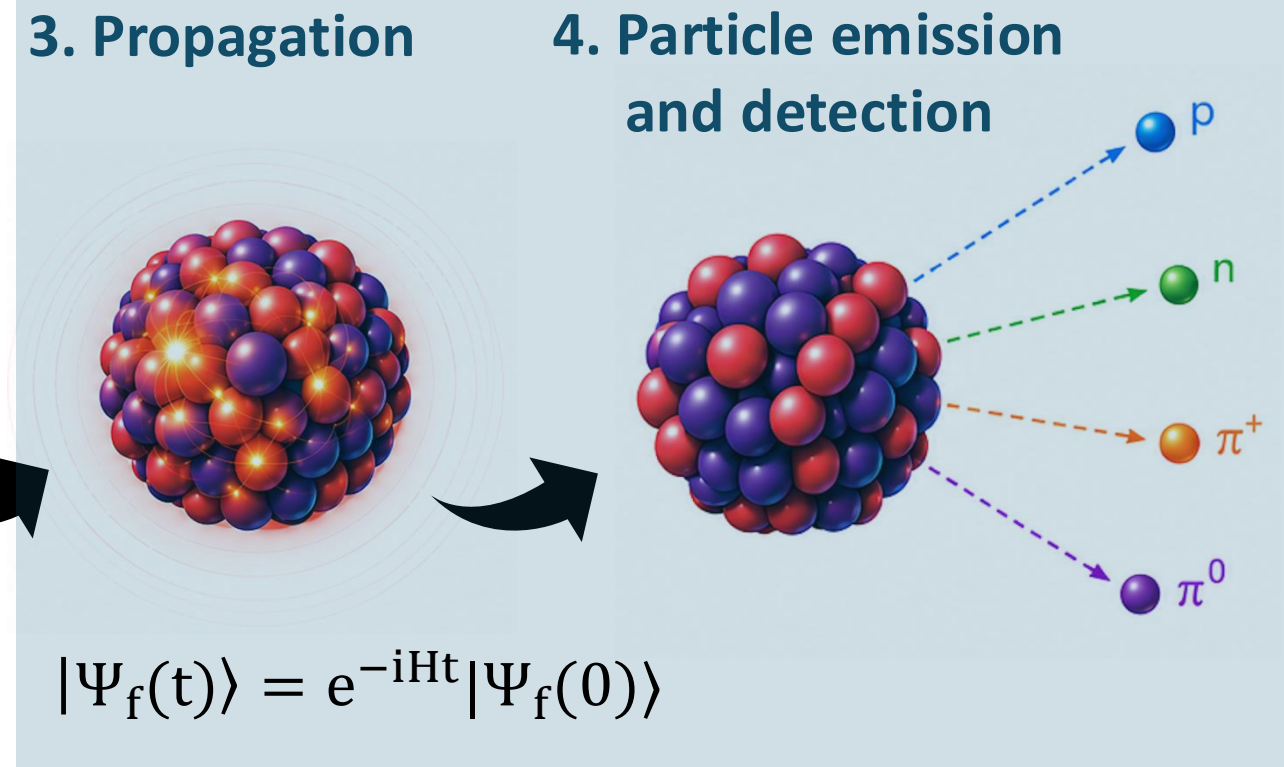


multiple interaction mechanisms contribute

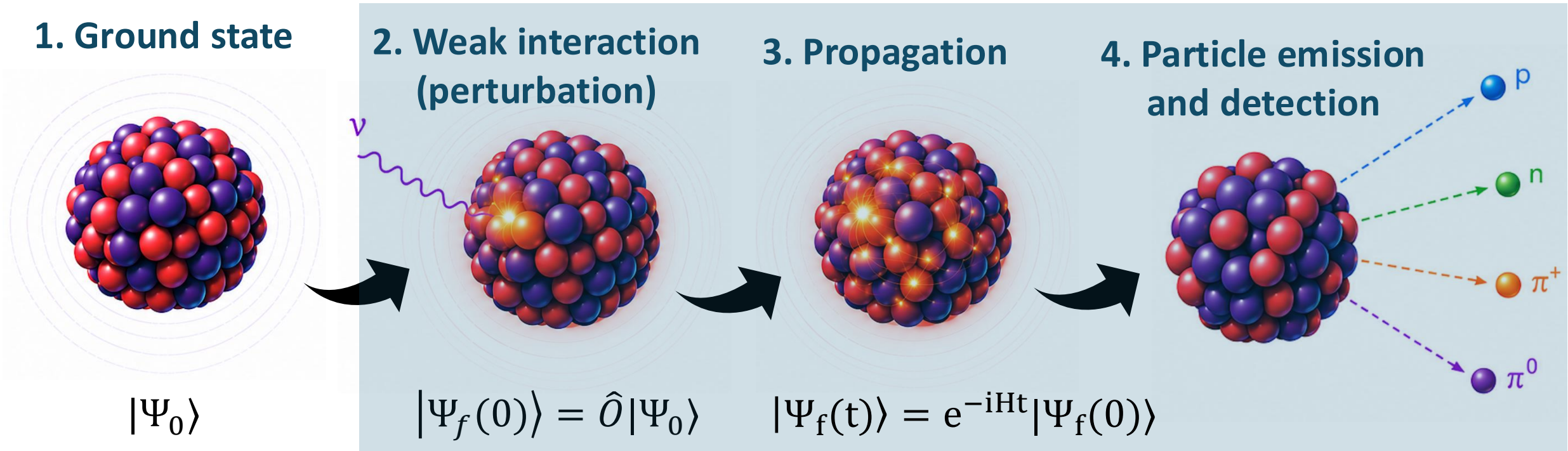


3. Time evolution and particle emission

- What is the time-evolved many-body state, $|\Psi_f(t)\rangle$?
- How does its quantum evolution give rise to the final-state particles observed in the detector?



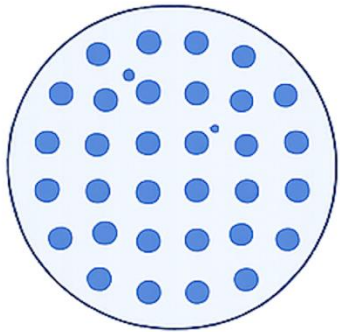
ν -Nucleus Interaction in Neutrino Experiment



The central challenge is predicting how a local quantum excitation propagates through a strongly correlated finite nucleus and ultimately emerges as the particles observed in the detector.

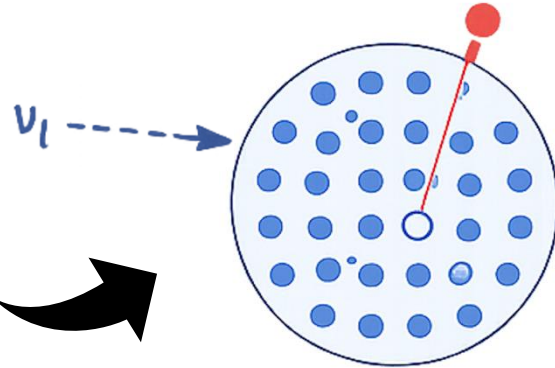
The most simplest case: $H=T$

1. Ground state Fermi sea



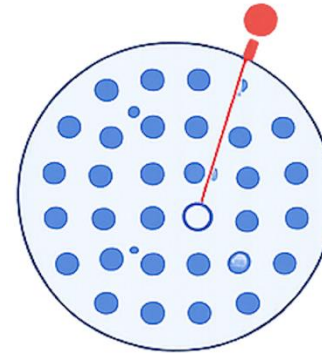
Fermi sea

2. Weak interaction One nucleon is excited



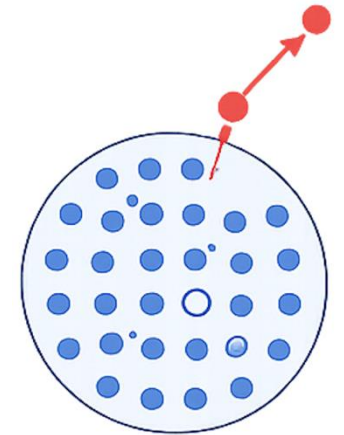
A 1p1h configuration
One particle above K_F
and one hole below K_F

3. Time evolution Under $H=T$



No interaction ->
no scattering,
no Mixing

4. Particle emission and detection



One nucleon leaves

- Occupied ($|k| < k_F$)
- Unoccupied ($|k| > k_F$)

Quantum Advantage for Nuclear Physics

- Quantum technologies offer a fundamentally new way to simulate strongly correlated many-body systems.
- Universal fault-tolerant quantum computers could, in principle, perform exact simulations of nuclear dynamics.
- However, realistic nuclei such as ^{40}Ar require a very large number of logical qubits and deep quantum circuits.

A. Roggero *et al.*, Phys. Rev. D, 101(7), 2020.

J. D. Watson *et al.*, arXiv:2312.05344 (2023).

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- However, realistic nuclei such as ^{40}Ar require a very large number of logical qubits and deep quantum circuits.
- Large-scale fault-tolerant quantum computers are unlikely to be available in the near future.
- This motivates exploring analogue quantum simulation as a near-term alternative.

Why Analogue Quantum Simulation?

- No exponentially large many-body wavefunction needs to be stored.

$$|\Psi_0\rangle = \sum_i c_i |i\rangle$$

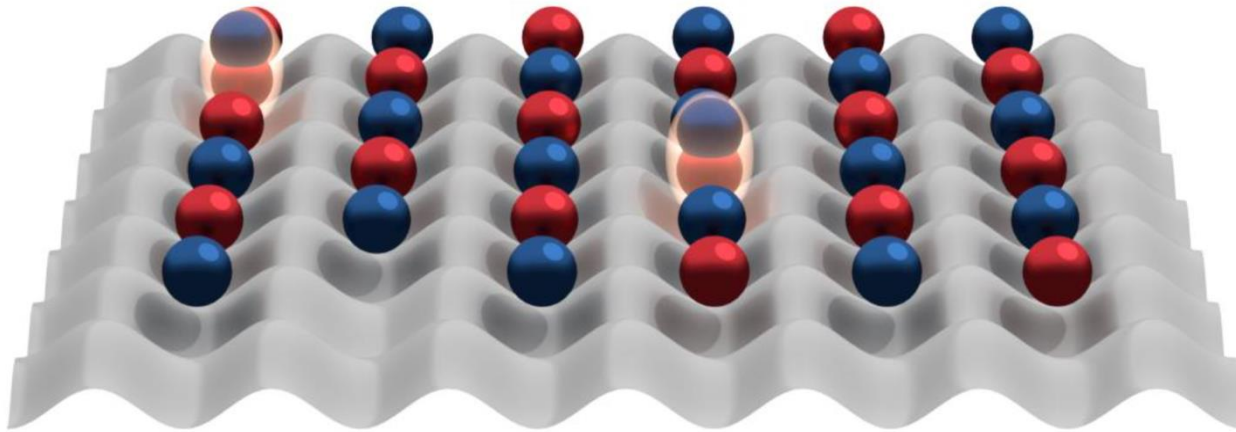
Classical
representation

- Instead, the atoms themselves realize the quantum state.
- The many-body dynamics are realized physically, rather than computed numerically.

Why Ultracold Atoms?

- Largest controllable quantum many-body systems available today ($10^3 - 10^6$ atoms).
- Highly tunable interactions, trapping geometries, and internal degrees of freedom.
- Natural implementation of Hamiltonian time evolution. Direct access to real-time many-body dynamics.
- An ideal platform for exploring nuclear many-body dynamics beyond current classical capabilities.

Can Nature Simulate Itself?



Analogue quantum simulation
with ultracold atoms

Map a complex nuclear system onto a highly controllable quantum platform that obeys the same many-body physics.

Universality Beyond Energy Scales

A. J. Daley *et al.*,
Nature **607**, 667–676 (2022).

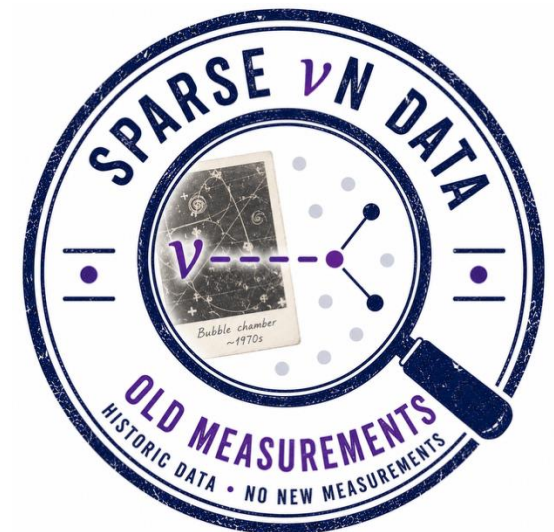
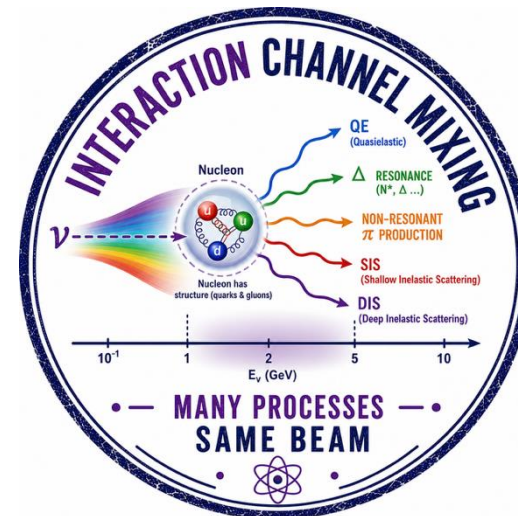
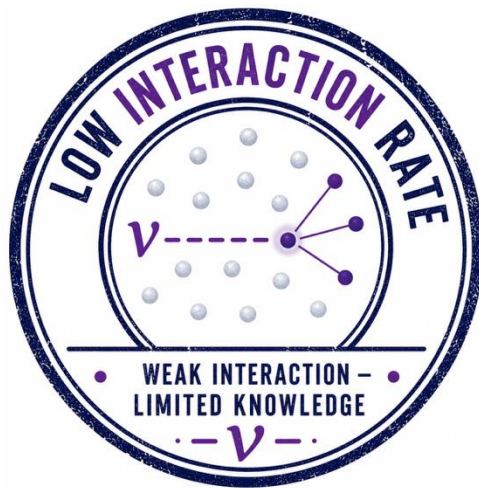
- Nuclei and ultracold atoms differ by many orders of magnitude in energy, length, and time scales.
- Both systems reside close to the **unitary regime**.

$$K_F |a| \gg 1$$

- Near unitarity, many-body dynamics become largely universal and insensitive to the microscopic interaction.
- Matching the relevant dimensionless parameters enables ultracold atoms to reproduce essential aspects of nuclear many-body dynamics.

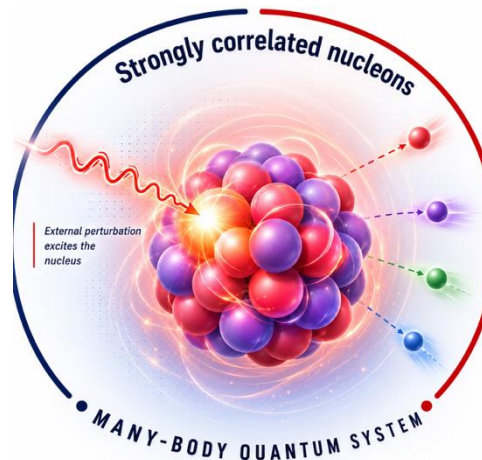
Conclusion & Outlook

- Understanding neutrino-nucleus interactions is essential for precision neutrino oscillation measurements and future discoveries.
- The weak interaction creates a local excitation in a strongly correlated quantum many-body nucleus.



Conclusion & Outlook

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- The weak interaction creates a local excitation in a strongly correlated quantum many-body nucleus.
- Predicting the observed final-state particles requires understanding the real-time evolution of this many-body quantum system.

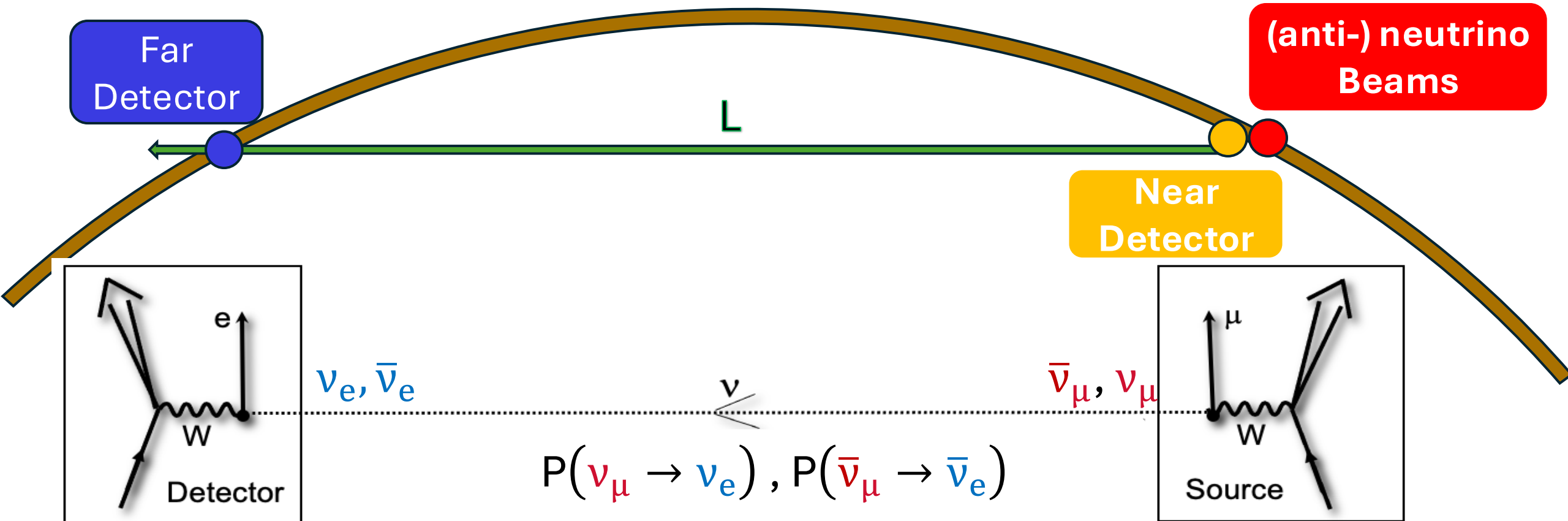


Conclusion & Outlook

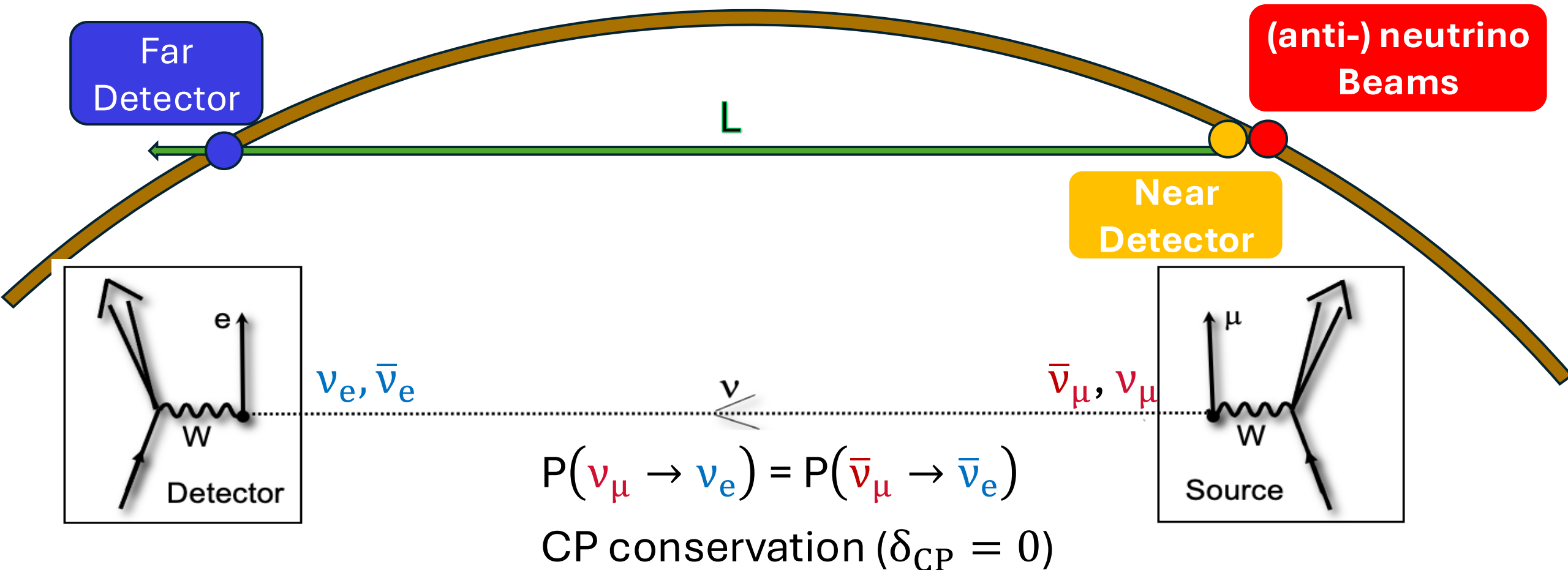
- Understanding neutrino-nucleus interactions is essential for precision neutrino oscillation measurements and future discoveries.
- The weak interaction creates a local excitation in a strongly correlated quantum many-body nucleus.
- Predicting the observed final-state particles requires understanding the real-time evolution of this many-body quantum system.
- Ultracold atoms provide a highly controllable platform to explore universal many-body dynamics beyond the reach of current classical methods.

Backup

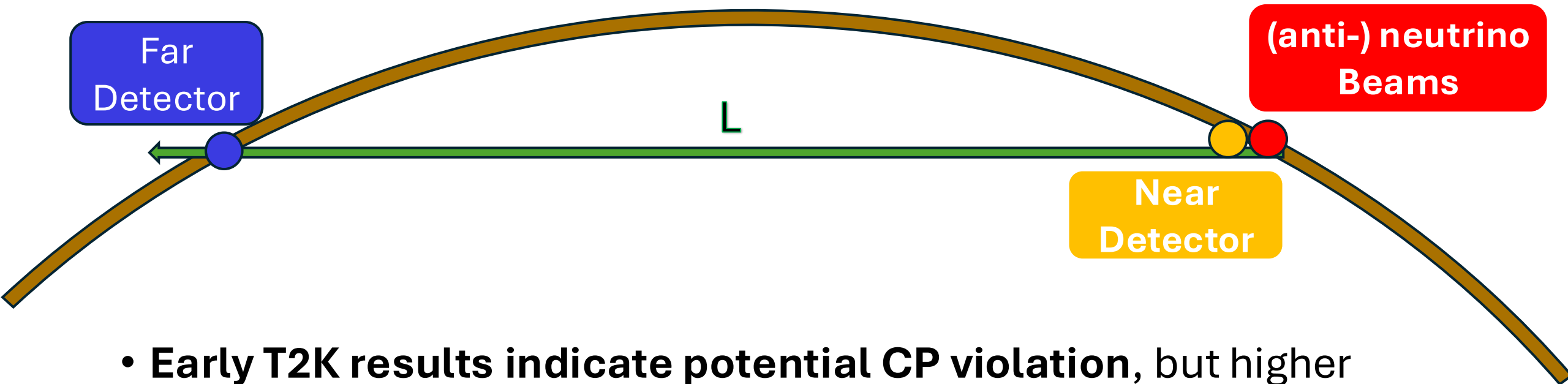
Neutrino Oscillation experiments



Neutrino Oscillation experiments



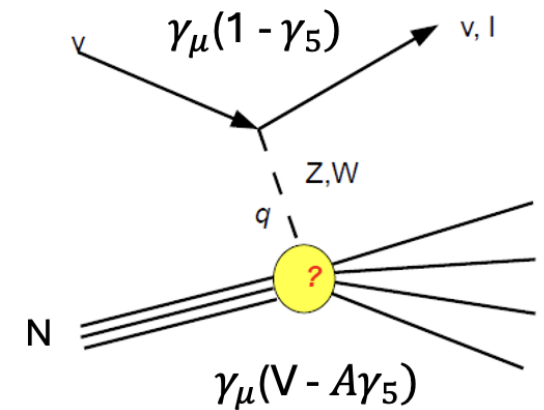
Neutrino Oscillation experiments



- **Early T2K results indicate potential CP violation**, but higher precision measurements are required to confirm this.
- **Cross-section uncertainties remain a major challenge**, impacting the precision of oscillation parameter measurements.

ν -nucleon interaction in the GeV regime

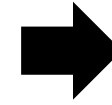
- The nucleon's internal structure modifies the weak interaction.
- The weak current couples through vector and axial-vector currents.
- Form factors determine how the scattering differs from that of a point-like particle.
- Lattice QCD provides first-principles calculations of these form factors, but is currently limited by computational cost and accessible kinematics.
- Experimental data remain essential to determine, constrain, and validate the form factors across the relevant kinematic region.



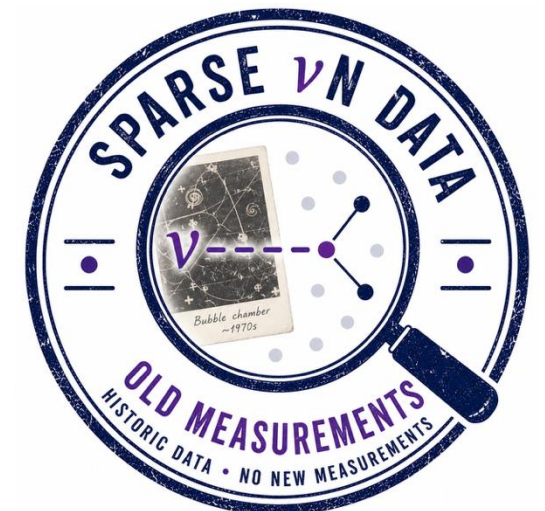
Bubble Chambers

- **Targets:** Hydrogen & deuterium
- **Role:** Pioneered neutrino interaction studies (1960s–1980s)
- **Key Contribution:** Early cross-section measurements
- Now retired, often found in national lab car parks

Big European Bubble
Chamber (BEBC)
CERN

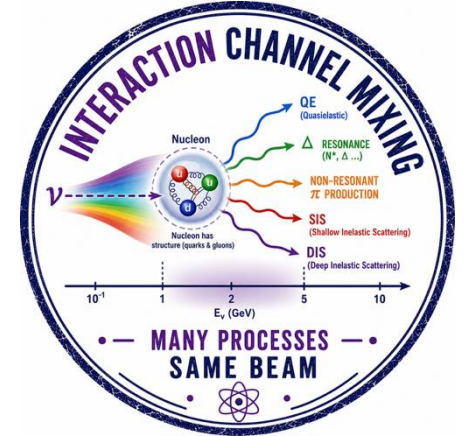


The 15-foot Bubble Chamber
FNAL

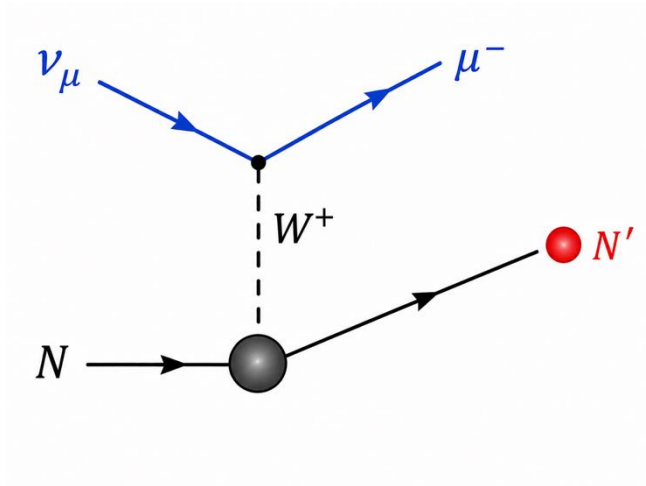


ν -nucleon interactions in the GeV regime

- Wide-Band Beam Drives Many processes

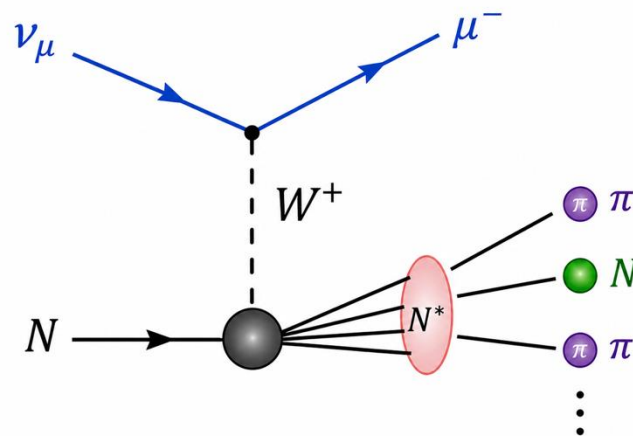


(Quasi-) Elastic scattering

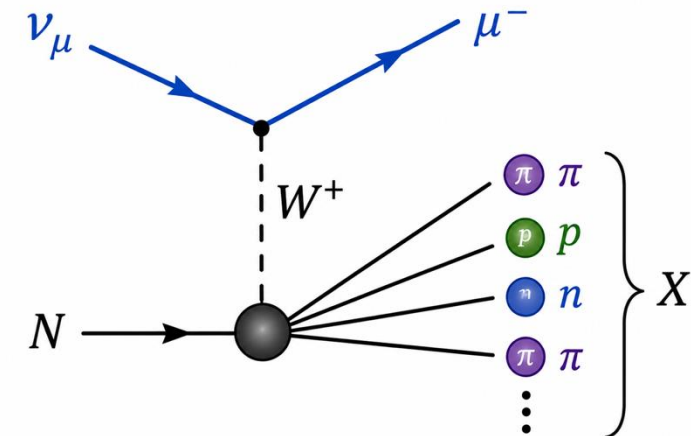


Nucleon remains intact

Inelastic scattering

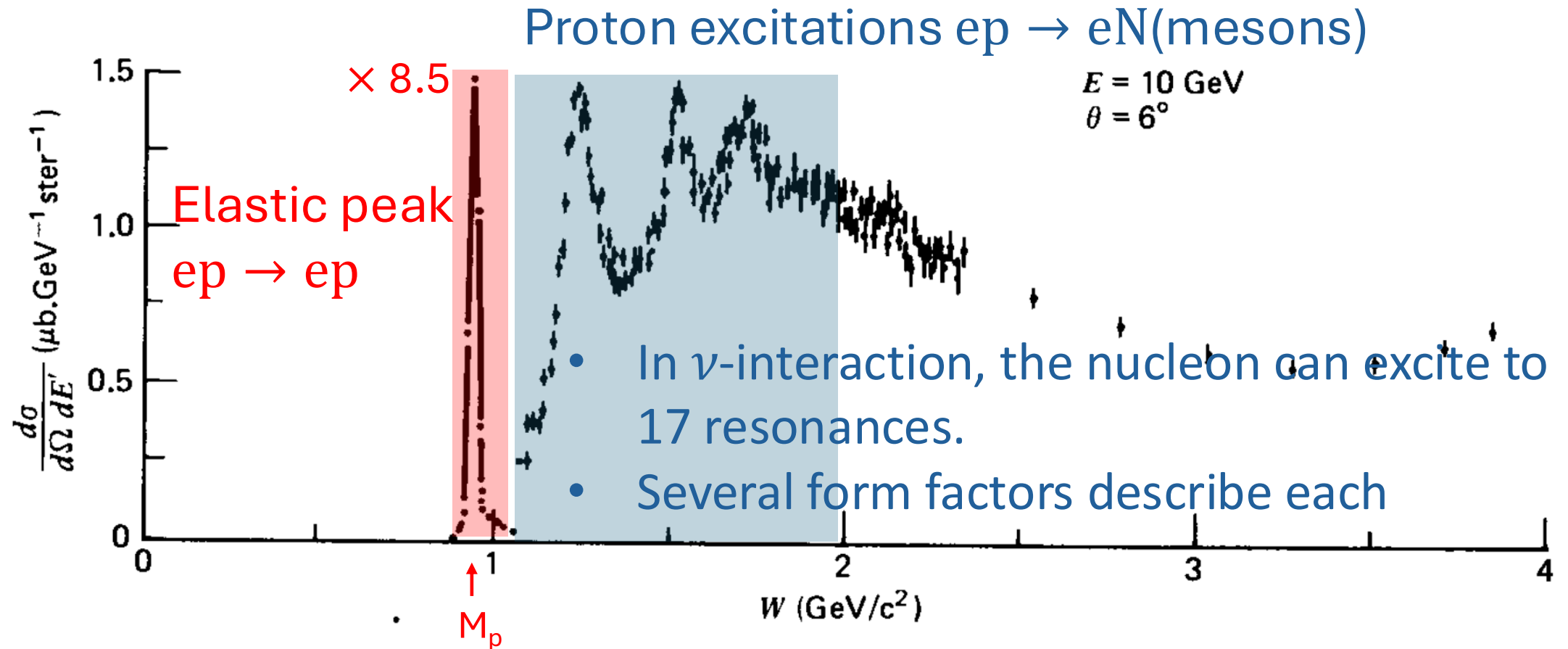


Nucleon excitation



Shallow or deep Inelastic scattering

$ep \rightarrow eX$ cross-section



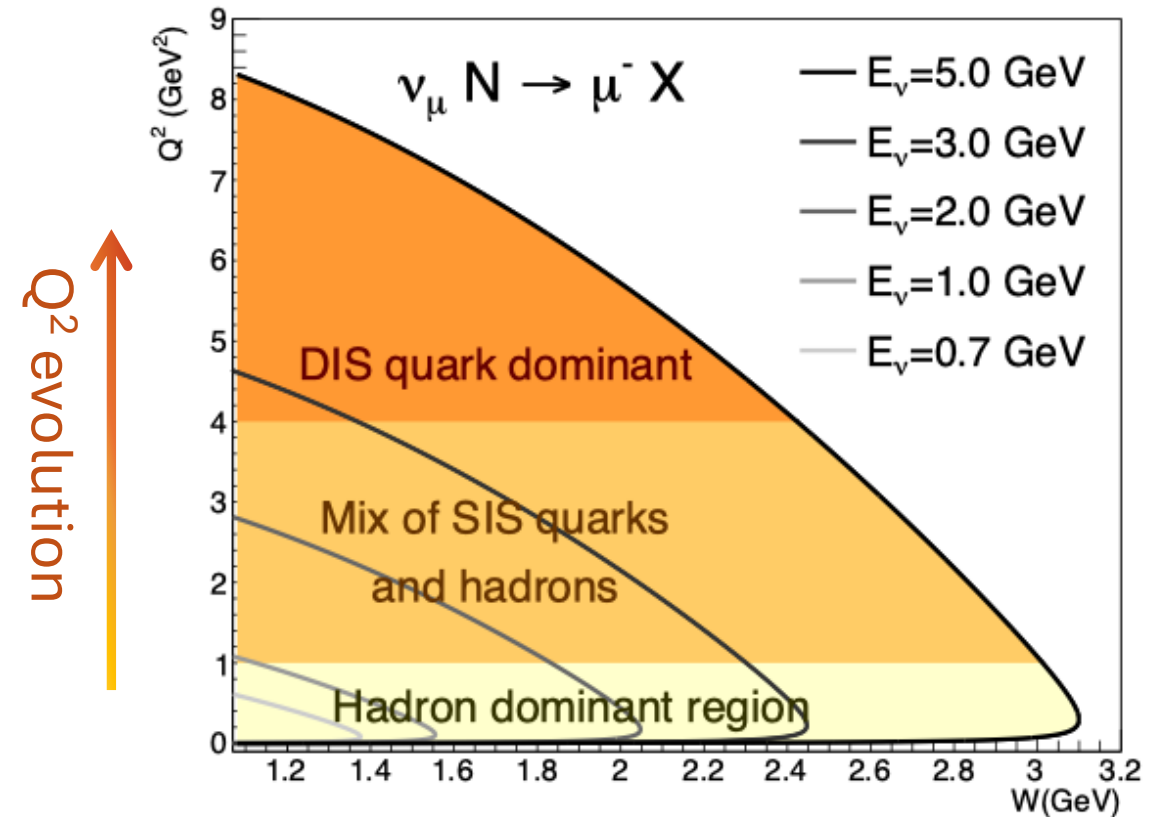
Broad neutrino energy spectrum



wide kinematic coverage



multiple interaction mechanisms contribute

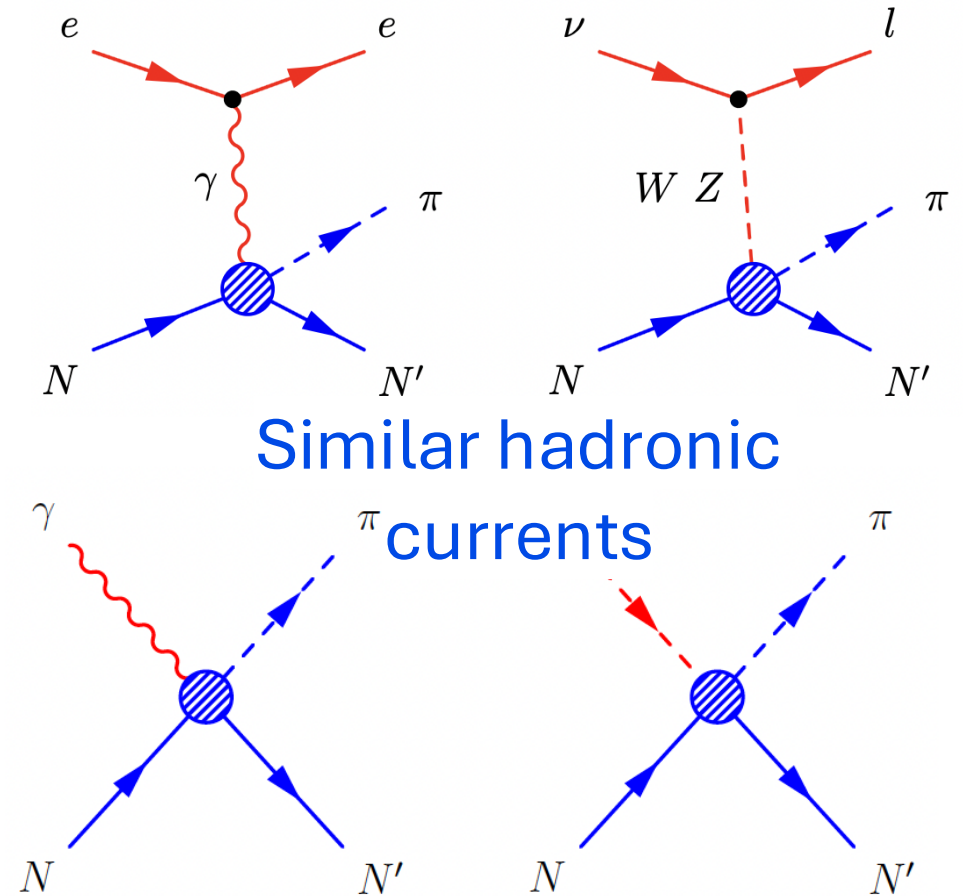


Challenges and Uncertainties in the complex GeV Region

- **Multiple Processes:** The GeV energy range involves a complex interplay of interaction mechanisms on the nucleon, requiring precise knowledge of form factors for each process.
- **Quark-Hadron Transition:** Begins as early as Q^2 , requiring careful treatment.
- **Parametrisation:** Essential for incorporating unknown physics and handling interfering processes.
- **Uncertainty Estimation:** Accurate assessment of theoretical uncertainties is a crucial input for neutrino measurements.
- **Limited data**

Solution for single pion production: MK model

- The MK model comprehensively describes single-pion production in interactions involving **photons, electrons, and neutrinos** with nucleons.
- Phenomenological models in this region must account for numerous processes and parameters.
- A unified model is essential for interpreting all interactions and **maximising data utilisation**.

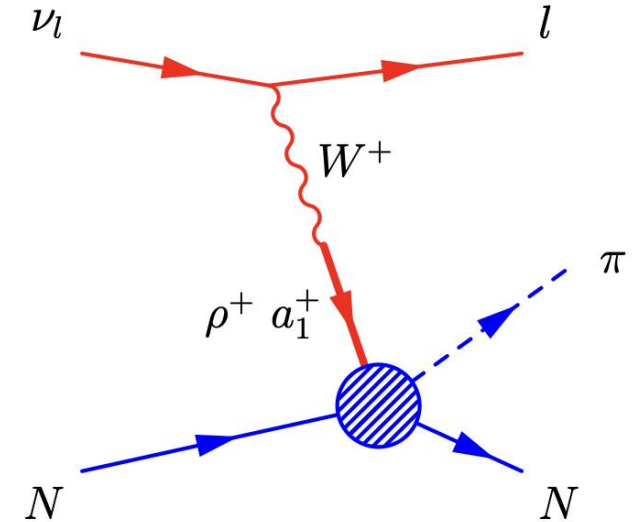


Form Factors in the model

- The Meson dominance model is rooted in the effective Lagrangian of quantum field theory.

1. J. J. Sakurai, Annals Phys.11, 1 (1960)
2. M. Gell-Mann and F. Zachariasen, Phys. Rev. 124, 953 (1961)

- This framework explains the interaction between neutrinos and nucleons through meson exchange.
- The number of parameters in several form factors is reduced by imposing all symmetries and unitarity.
- At large Q^2 , resonance form factors must align with the perturbative QCD constraints.



Data used in the Joint analysis

# data point	Photon, electron, pion, Neutrino Channels	Q ² Range (GeV/C) ²	W Range GeV	Form Factors	
≈ 9800	$\gamma \text{ p} \rightarrow \text{n} + \pi^+ , \gamma \text{ p} \rightarrow \text{p} + \pi^0$	0	1.08 – 2.0	Proton	Vector
≈ 31000	$\text{ep} \rightarrow \text{en} + \pi^+ , \text{ep} \rightarrow \text{ep} + \pi^0$	0.16 – 6.0	1.08 – 2.0		
≈ 2500	$\gamma \text{n} \rightarrow \text{p} + \pi^-$	0	1.08 – 2.0	Neutron	
≈ 700	NEW $\text{en} \rightarrow \text{ep} + \pi^-$	0.4 – 1.0	1.08 – 1.8		
≈ 400	$\pi^+ \text{p} \rightarrow \text{p} + \pi^+ , \pi^- \text{p} \rightarrow \text{p} + \pi^-$	0	1.08 – 2.0	Axial-Vector	
<100	$\nu \text{N} \rightarrow \text{l}^- \text{N} + \pi , \bar{\nu} \text{N} \rightarrow \text{l}^+ \text{N} + \pi$	Q ² >0 Integrated	1.08 – 2.0 Integrated		

Data used in the Joint analysis (Over 6 years!)

# data point	Form factors			
≈ 9800	- These data sets are systematically incorporated into the analysis to parameterise the model. - Through analysis, parameters are evaluated, and the inherent systematic uncertainties in the model are addressed. - Reduced $\chi^2 \approx 1$			
≈ 31000				
≈ 2500				
≈ 700				
≈ 400				
<100	-Vector			
	Integrated	Integrated		

MK model

The MK model comprehensively describes single-pion production in interactions involving **photons, electrons, and neutrinos** with nucleons.

- Meson Dominance (MD) form factor: Maintains **unitarity** and integrates **QCD principles** for both resonant and non-resonant interactions.
- **CVC and PCAC** fulfilment: Ensures model consistency at low Q^2 .
- Q^2 evolution: Utilises QCD calculations and **quark-hadron duality**.
- W evolution: Applies **Regge trajectory** and the Hybrid model.

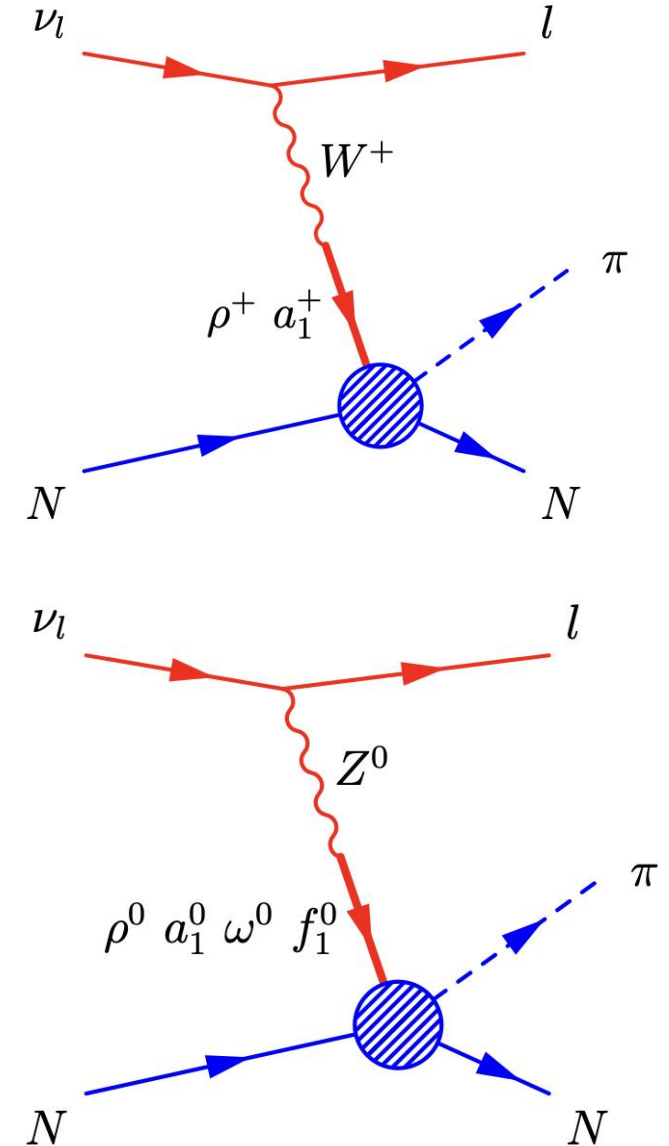
Meson Dominance (MD) model

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2. M. Gell-Mann and F. Zachariasen, Phys. Rev. 124, 953 (1961)

- It establishes connections between vector and axial currents and corresponding meson fields with analogous quantum properties.
- This framework explains the interaction between neutrinos and nucleons through meson exchange.



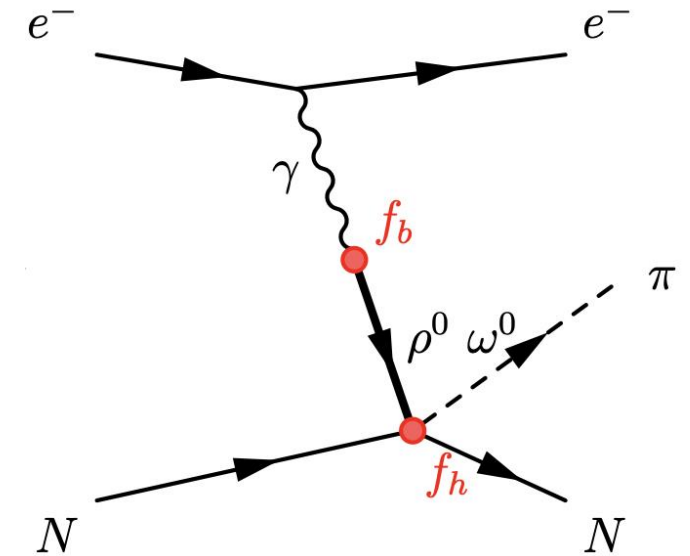
Meson Dominance (MD) model

- MD form factors can be expressed in terms of the meson masses and the coupling strengths, summing over all possible mesons:

$$F_N(Q^2) = \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{m_j^2}{m_j^2 + Q^2} \left(\frac{f_h}{f_b} \right)$$

- Although they do not inherently comply to the unitarity condition (analytic model) or accurately predict behaviour at high Q^2 , they can be **imposed**!

C. Adamuscin *et al.*
Eur. Phys. J. C 28, 115
(2003) Minoo Kabirnezhad



k	ρ -group	$m_{(\rho)k}$ [GeV]	ω -group	$m_{(\omega)k}$ [GeV]
1	$\rho(770)$	0.77526	$\omega(782)$	0.78265
2	$\rho(1450)$	1.465	$\omega(1420)$	1.410
3	$\rho(1700)$	1.720	$\omega(1650)$	1.670
4	$\rho(1900)$	1.885	$\omega(1960)$	1.960
5	$\rho(2150)$	2.150	$\omega(2205)$	2.205
k	a_1 -group	$m_{(a_1)k}$ [GeV]	f_1 -group	$m_{(f_1)k}$ [GeV]
1	$a_1(1260)$	1.230	$f_1(1285)$	1.2819
2	$a_1(1420)$	1.411	$f_1(1420)$	1.4263
3	$a_1(1640)$	1.655	$f_1(1510)$	1.518
4	$a_1(2095)$	2.096	$f_1(1970)$	1.1971

Asymptotic behaviour of form factor

- At large Q^2 , resonance form factors must align with the perturbative QCD constraints.

$L_\alpha(Q^2)$ incorporates QCD contributions in the asymptotic region

$$L_\alpha(Q^2) \rightarrow \begin{cases} 1, & Q^2 \rightarrow 0 \\ C_\alpha \ln^{n_\alpha} \frac{Q^2}{\Lambda_{QCD}}, & Q^2 \rightarrow \infty \end{cases}$$

G. Vereshkov and
N. Volchanskiy
([PRD 2007](#))

$$L_\alpha(Q^2) = 1 + g_\alpha \ln \left(1 + \frac{Q^2}{\Lambda_{QCD}^2} \right)^{n_\alpha}$$

g_α defined as a free
parameter in the fit

$$\Lambda_{QCD} \in [0.19 - 0.24] \text{ GeV}$$

$$n_3 > n_1 > n_2$$

MD form factors used in the model

- For spin 3/2 resonance:

$$F_{\alpha}^{\{A,V\}}(Q^2) = \frac{f_{\alpha}^{\{A,V\}}}{L_{\alpha}(Q^2)} \sum_{k=1}^K \frac{a_{\alpha k}^{\{A,V\}} m_k^2}{m_k^2 + Q^2}, \quad (\alpha = 1 - 3)$$

$$L_{\alpha}(Q^2) = 1 + g_{\alpha} \ln \left(1 + \frac{Q^2}{\Lambda_{\text{QCD}}^2} \right)^{n_{\alpha}}$$

$$g_{\alpha} = g_{1\alpha} + \frac{g_{2\alpha}}{Q^2} + \frac{g_{3\alpha}}{Q^4} + \dots$$

Inspired by the twist expansion

- $a_{\alpha k}$ are constrained by unitarity conditions that also satisfy asymptotic QCD requirements.

New Features of the MK model

- **SIS region (effective treatment):** Previously included only leading (scaling) contributions; now incorporates nonleading (higher-twist) effects.
- **Resonance modelling:** All resonances are described consistently using MD form factors.
 - **Spin-3/2 resonances** are described by Rarita-Schwinger formalism.
 - **Higher-spin resonances:** States such as $F_{15}(1680)$ and $F_{37}(1950)$ are treated within the same framework as spin-3/2.
- **Non-resonant interaction:** Modelled consistently with the Hybrid approach.

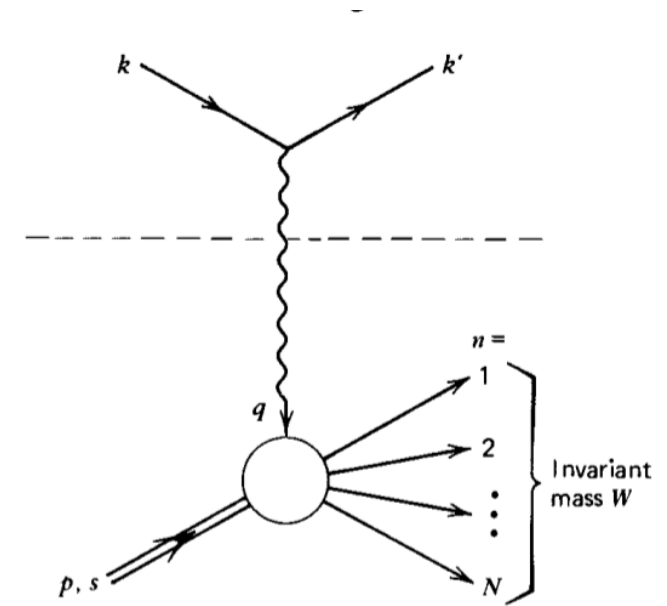
Isospin relation for vector form factor

- If we know proton and neutron form factors, we know vector CC and NC form factors.

reaction	replace $\mathcal{F}_i$ in Eq. (4.7) with
$\ell^- p \rightarrow \ell^- p$	F_i^p
$\ell^- n \rightarrow \ell^- n$	F_i^n
$\nu n \rightarrow \ell^- p$	$F_i^V = F_i^p - F_i^n$
$\nu p \rightarrow \nu p$	$\tilde{F}_i^p = (\frac{1}{2} - 2 \sin^2 \theta_W) F_i^p - \frac{1}{2} F_i^n - \frac{1}{2} F_i^s$
$\nu n \rightarrow \nu n$	$\tilde{F}_i^n = (\frac{1}{2} - 2 \sin^2 \theta_W) F_i^n - \frac{1}{2} F_i^p - \frac{1}{2} F_i^s$

Inelastic scattering

- By Increasing the $Q^2 = -q^2$ we can take a detailed look at the structure of nucleon.
- This can be done by requiring a large energy loss of the bombarding lepton.
- At very large transfer of energy, proton with break up and loses its identity.
- At modest Q^2 proton get excited to baryon resonances such as Δ resonance. The excited state promptly decay to a nucleon and mesons.



Inelastic scattering

- The main challenge now is that we have more than one hadron in the final states and it is not straightforward to calculate the hadron current. Therefore, J^μ has a more complex structure than Elastic scattering

Elastic

$$d\sigma \propto L_{\mu\nu}^e H^{\mu\nu}$$

$$\text{Lepton tensor } L_{\mu\nu}^e = \sum \sum j_\mu^\dagger j_\nu$$

$$\text{Hadron tensor } H_{\mu\nu} = \sum \sum J_\mu^\dagger J_\nu$$

$$\text{Hadron current } J^\mu \propto \bar{u} \Gamma^\mu u$$

Inelastic

$$d\sigma \propto L_{\mu\nu}^e W^{\mu\nu}$$

$$\text{Hadron tensor } W_{\mu\nu} = \sum \sum J_\mu^\dagger J_\nu$$

There are more than single hadron in the final state and the current is complicated.

Inelastic scattering

- The hadronic tensor W serves to parametrise our total ignorance of the form of inelastic hadron current.
- The most general form of the tensor W must be constructed from $g^{\mu\nu}$ and independent momenta p and q .

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{W}^{\mu\nu} &= \frac{1}{2m_N} \sum \langle p | J^\mu(0) | \Delta \rangle \langle \Delta | J^\nu(0) | p \rangle \delta(W^2 - M_R^2) \\ &= -\mathcal{W}_1 g^{\mu\nu} + \frac{\mathcal{W}_2}{m_N^2} p^\mu p^\nu - i\varepsilon^{\mu\nu\sigma\lambda} p_\sigma q_\lambda \frac{\mathcal{W}_3}{2m_N^2} \\ &\quad + \frac{\mathcal{W}_4}{m_N^2} q^\mu q^\nu + \frac{\mathcal{W}_5}{m_N^2} (p^\mu q^\nu + q^\mu p^\nu) + i \frac{\mathcal{W}_6}{m_N^2} (p^\mu q^\nu - q^\mu p^\nu)\end{aligned}$$

γ^μ is not included as we are parametrizing the cross section which is already summed and averaged over spins.

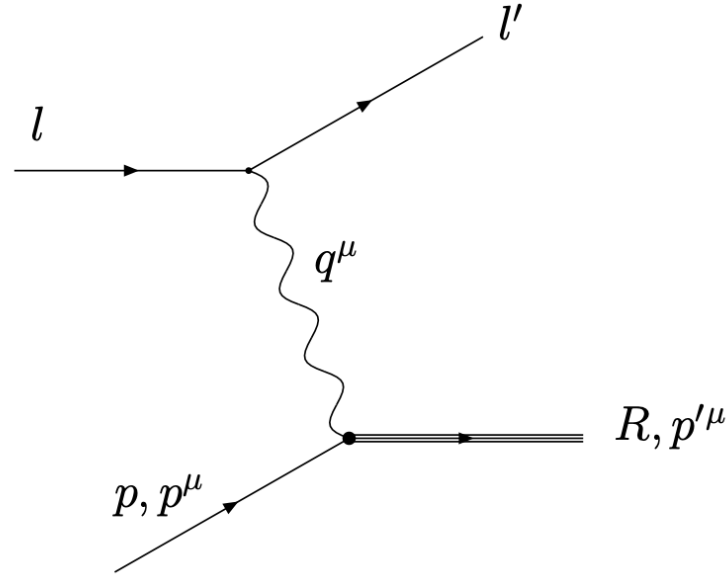
Inelastic scattering

- W_i s are function of the Lorentz scalar variables that can be constructed from four-momenta at the hadronic vertex.
- Unlike elastic scattering, there are two independent variables.

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{W}^{\mu\nu} &= \frac{1}{2m_N} \sum \langle p | J^\mu(0) | \Delta \rangle \langle \Delta | J^\nu(0) | p \rangle \delta(W^2 - M_R^2) \\ &= -\mathcal{W}_1 g^{\mu\nu} + \frac{\mathcal{W}_2}{m_N^2} p^\mu p^\nu - i \varepsilon^{\mu\nu\sigma\lambda} p_\sigma q_\lambda \frac{\mathcal{W}_3}{2m_N^2} \\ &\quad + \frac{\mathcal{W}_4}{m_N^2} q^\mu q^\nu + \frac{\mathcal{W}_5}{m_N^2} (p^\mu q^\nu + q^\mu p^\nu) + i \frac{\mathcal{W}_6}{m_N^2} (p^\mu q^\nu - q^\mu p^\nu)\end{aligned}$$

Resonance production

- $\nu_l N \rightarrow l R$
- Resonance mass: M_R
- Resonance width: Γ_0
- $R = l_{2I,2J}(M_R)$,
 S: $l = 0$,
 P: $l = 1$,
 etc
- Parity: $P = -(-1)^l$



Resonance	M_R	Γ_0	χ_E
$P_{33}(1232)$	1232	117	1
$P_{11}(1440)$	1430	350	0.65
$D_{13}(1520)$	1515	115	0.60
$S_{11}(1535)$	1535	150	0.45
$P_{33}(1600)$	1600	320	0.18
$S_{31}(1620)$	1630	140	0.25
$S_{11}(1650)$	1655	140	0.70
$D_{15}(1675)$	1675	150	0.40
$F_{15}(1680)$	1685	130	0.67
$D_{13}(1700)$	1700	150	0.12
$D_{33}(1700)$	1700	300	0.15
$P_{11}(1710)$	1710	100	0.12
$P_{13}(1720)$	1720	250	0.11
$F_{35}(1905)$	1880	330	0.12
$P_{31}(1910)$	1890	280	0.22
$P_{33}(1920)$	1920	260	0.12
$F_{37}(1950)$	1930	285	0.40