

Entrainment effects in the inner crust and outer core of a neutron star

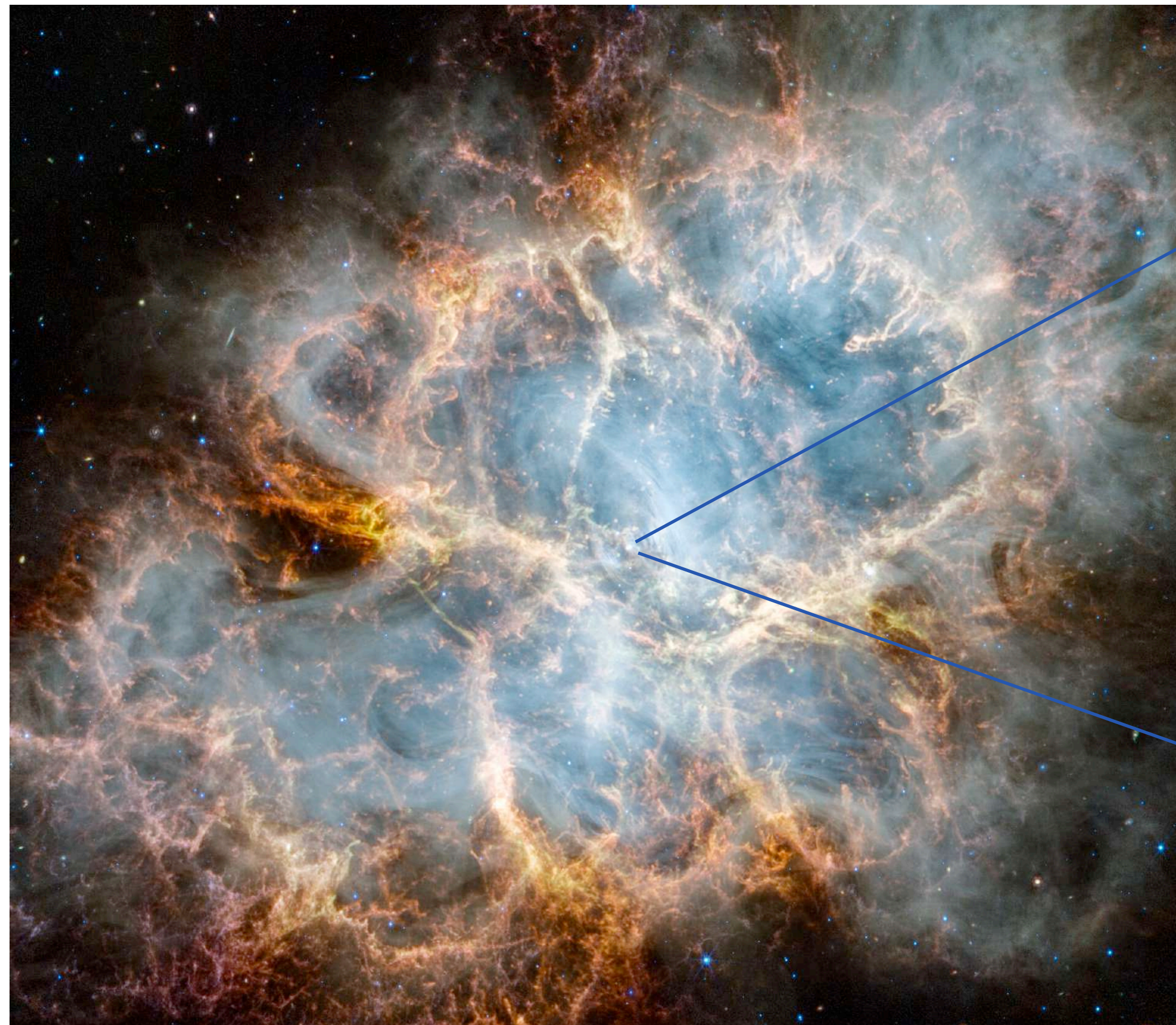
Nicolas Chamel

Université Libre de Bruxelles



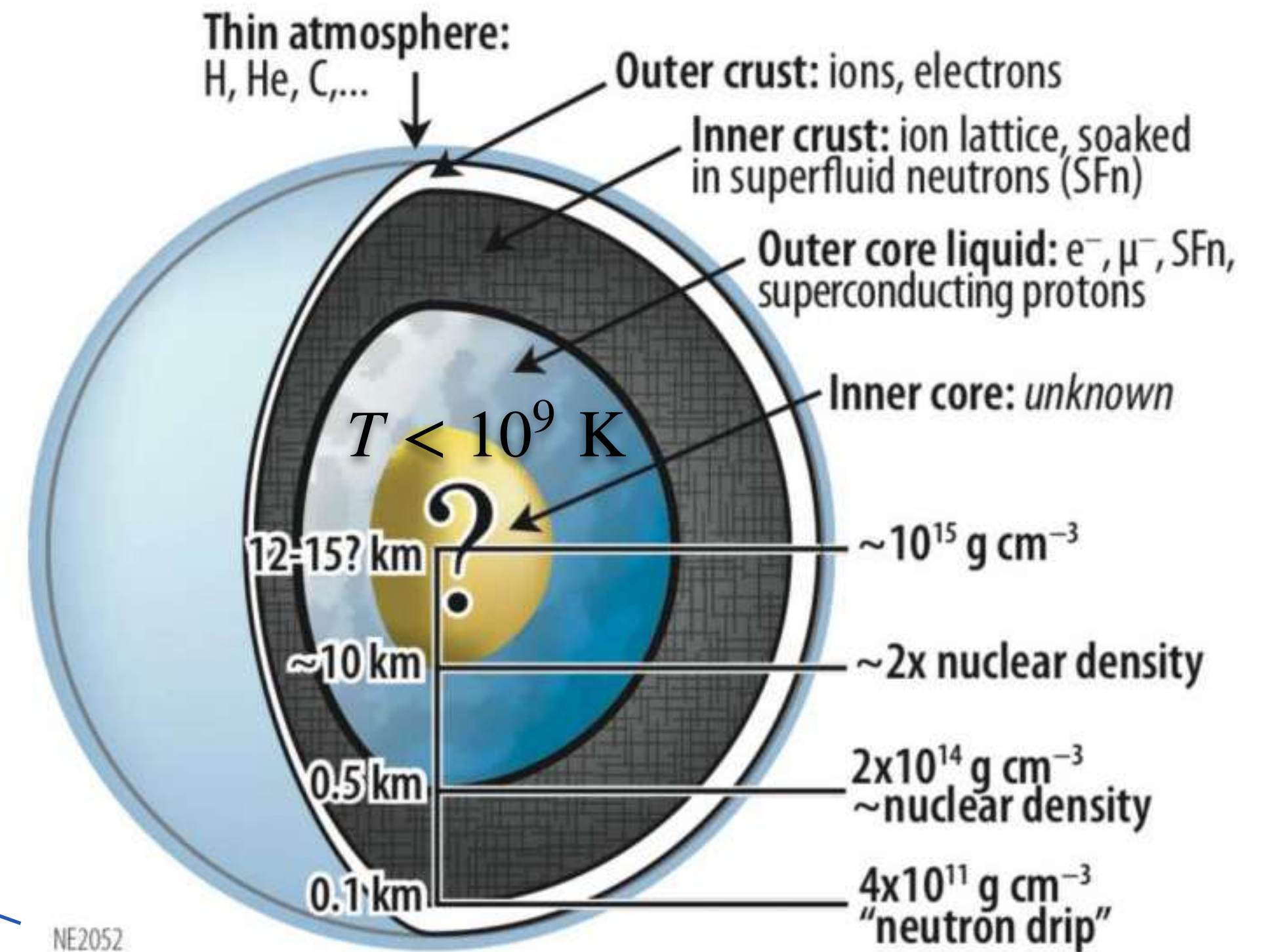
Neutron stars are cool

Neutron stars are the extremely compact remnants of gravitational core-collapse supernova explosions. **Initially very hot ($T \sim 10^{12}$ K), they cool down to 10^9 K within days.**



NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, T. Tamim (Princeton University)

$1 - 2 M_{\odot}$
 $A \sim 10^{57}$



Gendreau et al., Proc. SPIE 8443, Space Telescopes and Instrumentation 2012: Ultraviolet to Gamma Ray, 844313; <https://doi.org/10.1117/12.926396>

$$\Delta \sim 1 \text{ MeV } (T_C \sim 10^{10} \text{ K})$$

$$\varepsilon_F \sim 10 - 100 \text{ MeV } (T_F \sim 10^{11} - 10^{12} \text{ K})$$

Super clocks with glitches

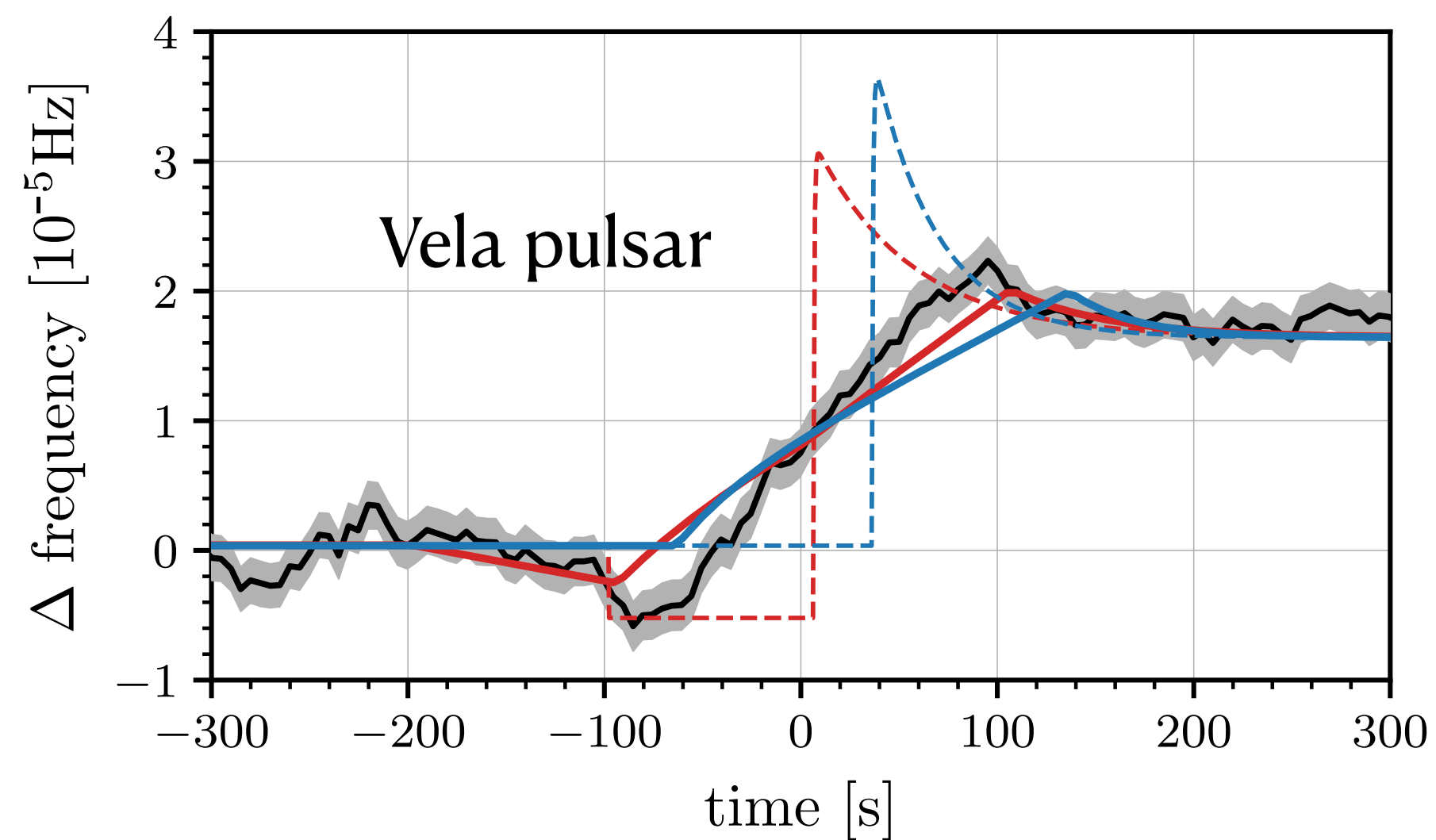
Pulsars are spinning very rapidly with extremely stable periods, $P \gtrsim 1$ ms and $\dot{P} \sim 10^{-21}$, outperforming the best atomic clocks!

- Still, more than 200 pulsars **suddenly spin up** (< minute) in some cases multiple times
- This is observed in radio timing as **frequency glitches**

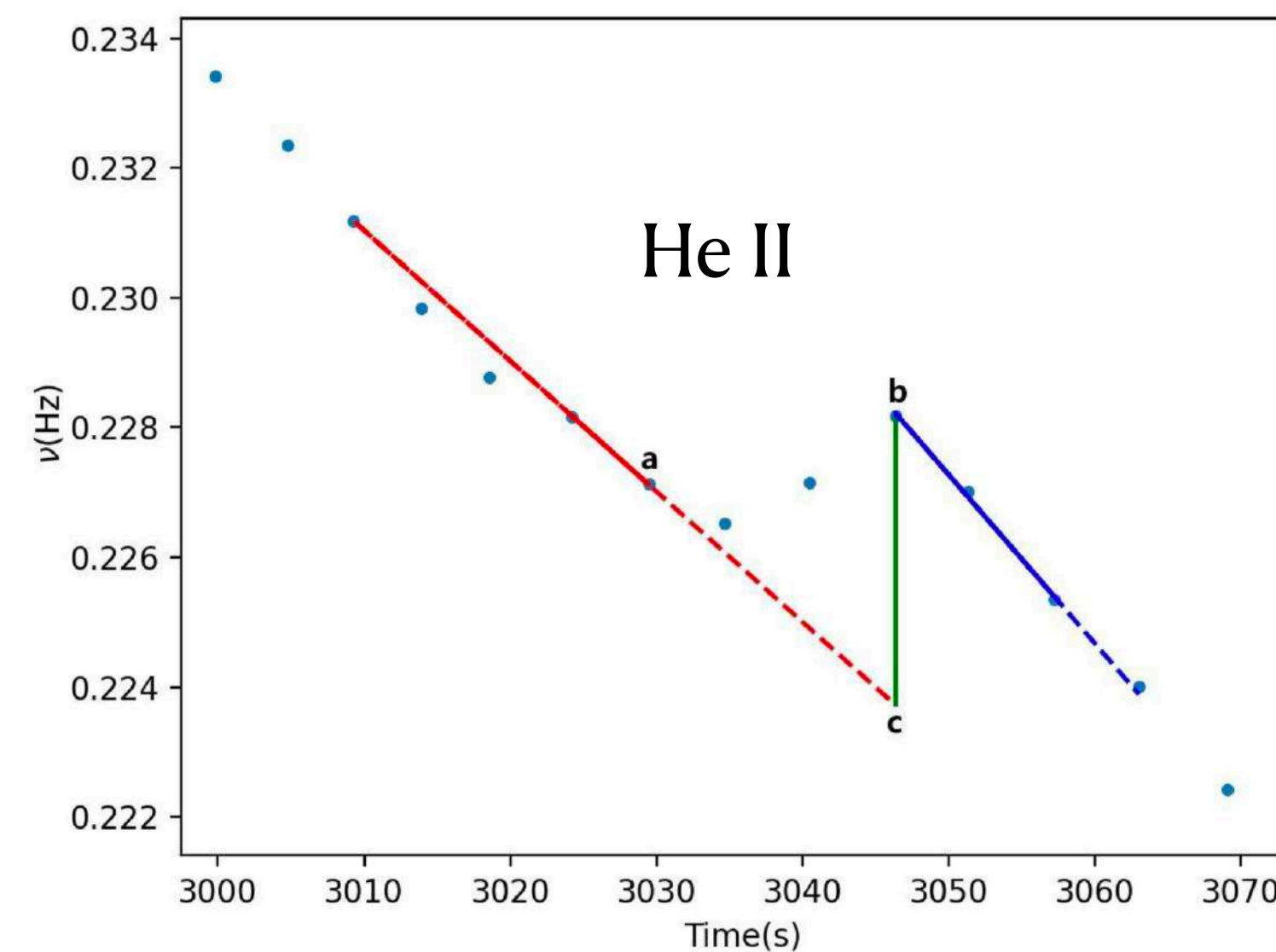
Antonopoulou, Haskell, Espinoza, *Rep. Prog. Phys.* 85, 126901 (2022); Zhou et al., *Universe* 8, 641 (2022)

Similar phenomena have been **experimentally observed in superfluid helium**

J.S. & S.J. Tsakadze, *JLTP* 39, 649 (1980)



Ashton et al., *Nature Astronomy* 3, 1143 (2019)



Haoyang Zhou & R. Zieve (2025)



Pulsar glitches provide the most compelling evidence for the superfluid dynamics

Mutual entrainment in superfluid neutron-star cores

Neutron and proton superfluids are mutually entrained by **nondissipative effects** of the kind originally discussed by Andreev & Bashkin for ^4He - ^3He superfluid mixtures.

Andreev & Bashkin, *Sov. Phys. JETP* 42, 164 (1975)

The mass currents ρ_q ($q=n,p$) are not aligned with the superfluid velocities V_q (in the normal-fluid frame):

$$\begin{aligned}\rho_n &\equiv \rho_n \mathbf{v}_n = \rho_{nn} \mathbf{V}_n + \rho_{np} \mathbf{V}_p \\ \rho_p &\equiv \rho_p \mathbf{v}_p = \rho_{pn} \mathbf{V}_n + \rho_{pp} \mathbf{V}_p\end{aligned}$$

Neutron vortices carry a fractional magnetic quantum flux:

$$\Phi_\star = \int \mathbf{B} \cdot d\mathbf{S} = \frac{\rho_{pn}}{\rho_{pp}} \Phi_0 \quad \text{with} \quad \Phi_0 = \frac{hc}{2e}$$

Sedrakyan & Shakhabasyan, *Astrofizika* 8, 557 (1972); *ibid.* 16, 727 (1980)

Electrons scattering off the magnetic field leads to a **dissipative drag force** between the neutron superfluid and all the charged particles

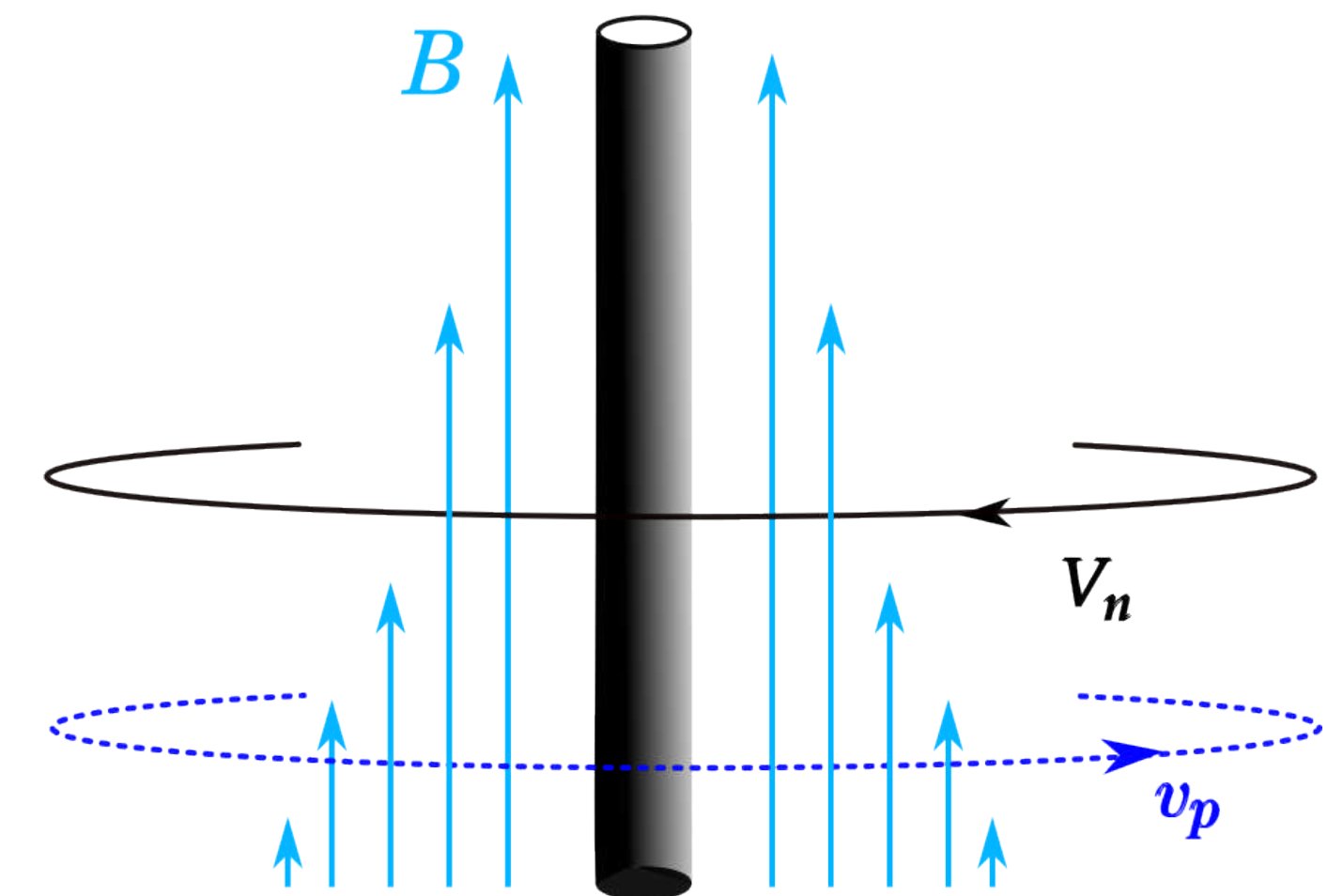
Alpar, Langer, Sauls, *ApJ* 282, 533 (1984)

However, the induced magnetic field may exceed the critical one leading to **clusters of quantised proton fluxoids**

Sedrakian & Sedrakian, *ApJ* 447, 305 (1995)

With implications for pulsar glitches

Sourie & Chamel, *MNRAS* 493, L98 (2020)



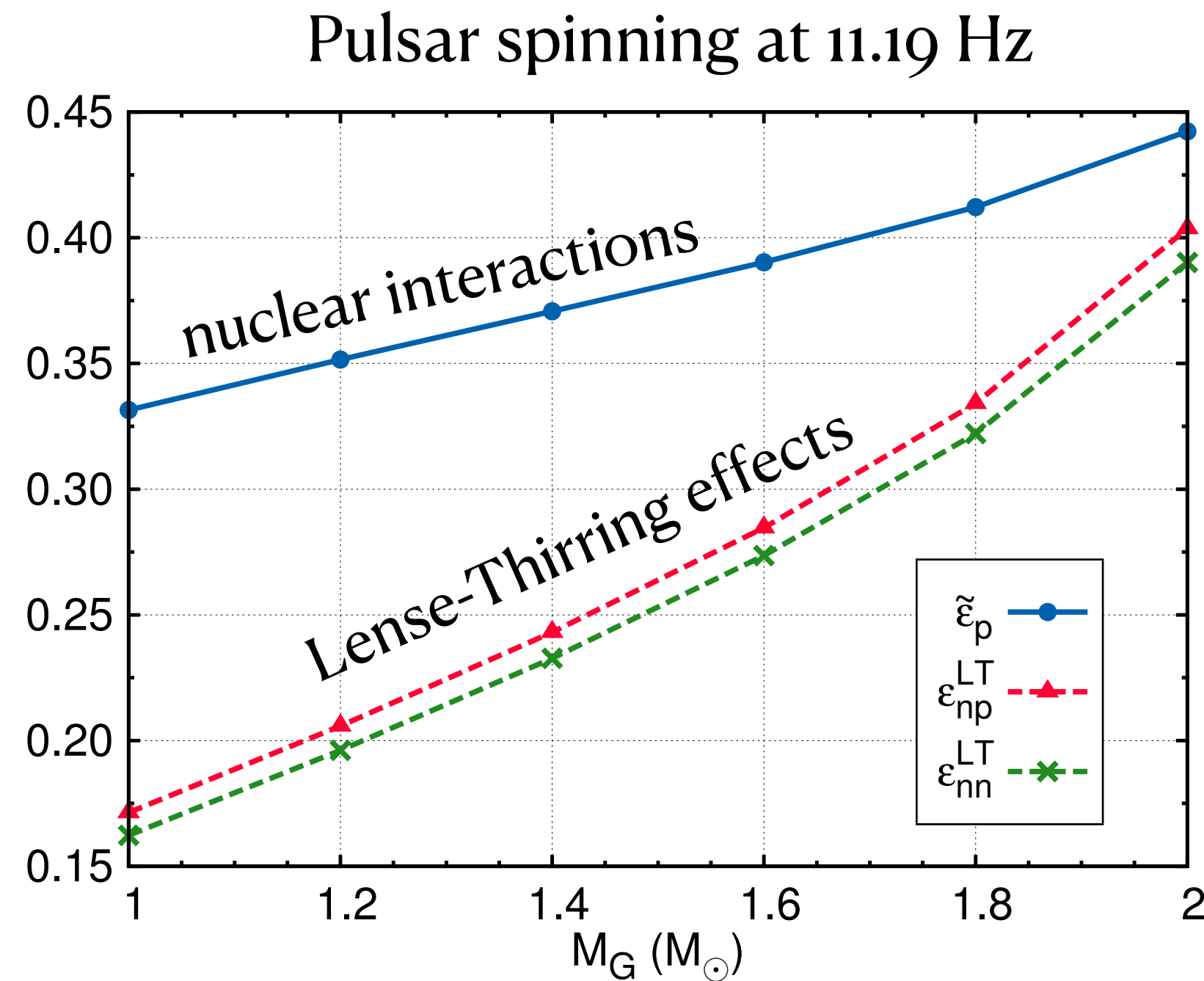
Mutual entrainment in superfluid neutron-star cores

At the global scale of a rotating neutron star, the averaged angular momenta can be decomposed as

$$\begin{aligned} J_n &= I_{nn}\Omega_n + I_{np}\Omega & I_n &= I_{nn} + I_{np} & I_{np} &= I_{pn} \\ J_p &= I_{pn}\Omega_n + I_{pp}\Omega & I_p &= I_{pn} + I_{pp} \end{aligned}$$

General relativity induces additional entrainment couplings due Lense-Thirring effects

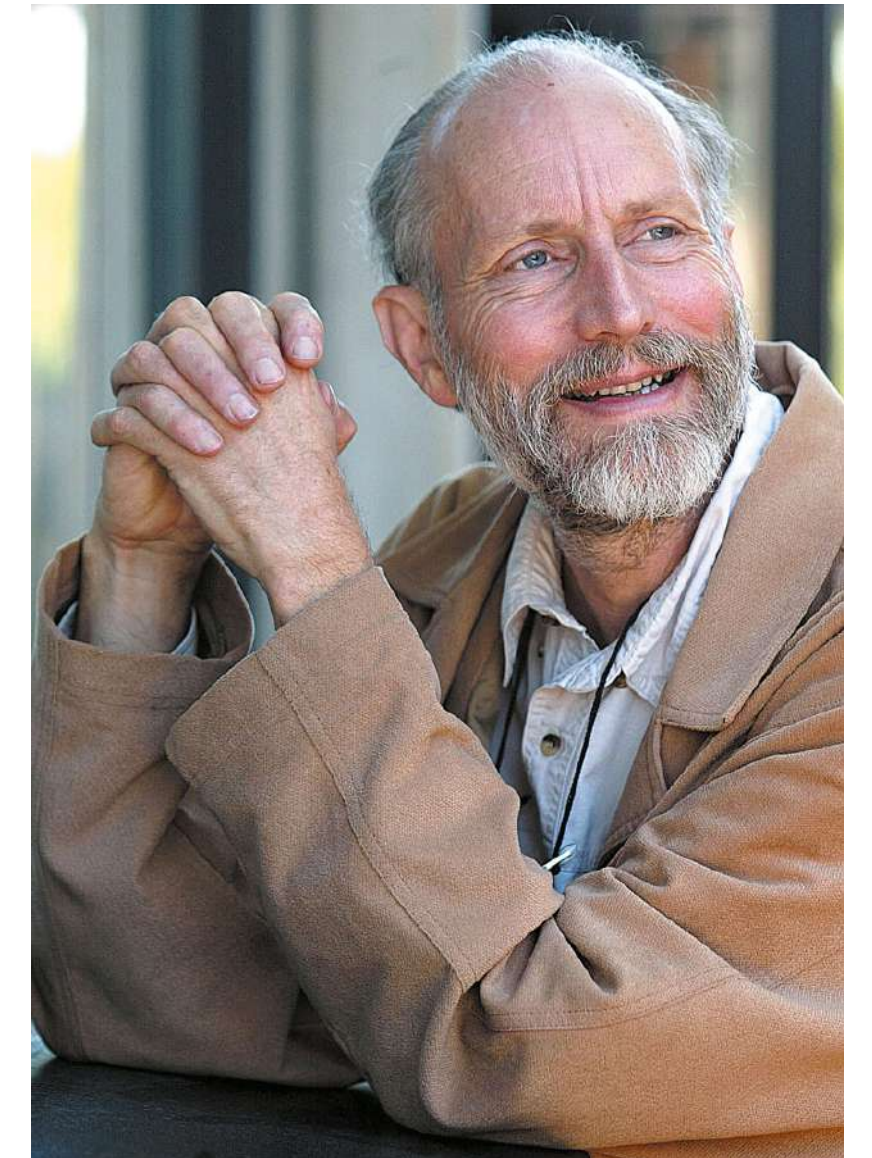
Carter, *Ann. Phys.* 95, 53 (1975)



$$\frac{I_{XY}}{I_X} = \frac{\tilde{\epsilon}_X - \epsilon_{YX}^{LT}}{1 - \epsilon_{YX}^{LT} - \epsilon_{XX}^{LT}}$$

- $\tilde{\epsilon}_X$ is the entrainment effect caused by nuclear interactions
- ϵ_{XY}^{LT} is the frame-dragging effect on fluid Y caused by fluid X

Sourie et al., *Phys. Rev. D* 93, 083004 (2016); *MNRAS* 464, 4641 (2017)



Nuclear superfluid dynamics within TDHFB

The dynamics of nuclear systems can be described by the **time-dependent Hartree-Fock-Bogoliubov equations** ($q=n,p$)

$$\begin{pmatrix} h_q(\mathbf{r}, t) - \mu_q & \Delta_q(\mathbf{r}, t) \\ \Delta_q(\mathbf{r}, t)^* & -h_q(\mathbf{r}, t)^* + \mu_q \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \psi_1^{(q)}(\mathbf{r}, t) \\ \psi_2^{(q)}(\mathbf{r}, t) \end{pmatrix} = i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \begin{pmatrix} \psi_1^{(q)}(\mathbf{r}, t) \\ \psi_2^{(q)}(\mathbf{r}, t) \end{pmatrix}$$

These resemble the **Bogoliubov - De Gennes equations** but the Hamiltonian is generally more complicated

$$h_q(\mathbf{r}, t) \equiv -\nabla \cdot \frac{\hbar^2}{2m_q^\oplus(\mathbf{r}, t)} \nabla + U_q(\mathbf{r}, t) - \underbrace{\frac{i}{2} \{I_q(\mathbf{r}, t), \nabla\}}_{\text{contribution from the flow}} + \dots$$

contribution from the flow

$$\frac{\hbar^2}{2m_q^\oplus(\mathbf{r}, t)} = \frac{\delta E}{\delta \tau_q(\mathbf{r}, t)} \quad \text{and} \quad I_q(\mathbf{r}, t) = \frac{\delta E}{\delta \mathbf{j}_q(\mathbf{r}, t)} \quad \text{arise from the same couplings in the energy because of Galilean invariance:}$$

$$E = \dots C_+ \left[(n_n + n_p)(\tau_n + \tau_p) - (\mathbf{j}_n + \mathbf{j}_p)^2 \right] + C_- \left[(n_n - n_p)(\tau_n - \tau_p) - (\mathbf{j}_n - \mathbf{j}_p)^2 \right]$$

corresponding to **effective 2-body contact interactions** with terms of the form

$$p_{ij}^2 \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) + \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) p_{ij}^2 \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{p}_{ij} \cdot \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) \mathbf{p}_{ij} \quad \text{with} \quad \mathbf{p}_{ij} = -i\hbar(\nabla_i - \nabla_j)/2$$

$$\text{If } C_\pm = 0, \quad m_q^\oplus(\mathbf{r}, t) = m_q \quad \text{and} \quad I_q(\mathbf{r}, t) = 0$$

Entrainment effects from TDHFB

The **superfluid velocity** is defined from the pair potential

$$\Delta_q(\mathbf{r}, t) = |\Delta_q(\mathbf{r}, t)|e^{i\phi_q(\mathbf{r}, t)} \quad \text{by} \quad \mathbf{V}_q(\mathbf{r}, t) = \frac{\hbar}{2m_q} \nabla \phi_q(\mathbf{r}, t) \quad \text{VS}$$

The **mass current** is given by

$$\rho_q(\mathbf{r}, t) = \frac{m_q}{m_q^\oplus(\mathbf{r}, t)} \hbar \mathbf{j}_q(\mathbf{r}, t) + \rho_q(\mathbf{r}, t) \frac{\mathbf{I}_q(\mathbf{r}, t)}{\hbar}$$

In **homogeneous matter with stationary flows**, the TDHFB equations can be solved exactly at any temperature T

For $T \ll T_{cq}$ and $V_q \leq V_{Lq}$

$$\rho_{nn} = \frac{1}{2}\rho(1 + \eta) - \frac{1}{4}\rho(1 - \eta^2)(1 - \Upsilon)$$

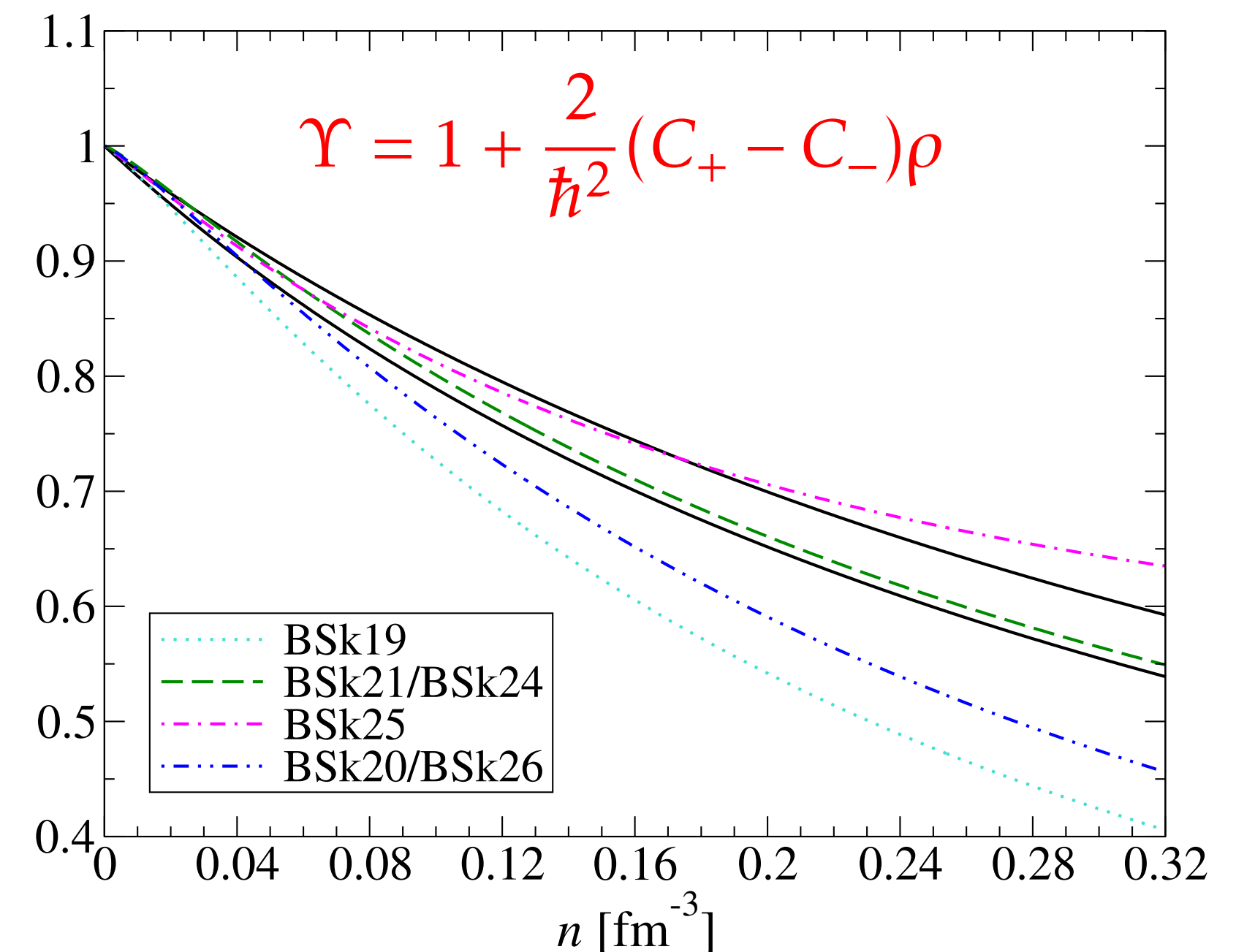
$$\rho_{pp} = \frac{1}{2}\rho(1 - \eta) - \frac{1}{4}\rho(1 - \eta^2)(1 - \Upsilon)$$

$$\rho_{np} = \frac{1}{4}\rho(1 - \eta^2)(1 - \Upsilon) = \rho_{pn}$$

$$\rho = \rho_n + \rho_p$$

$$\eta = (\rho_n - \rho_p)/\rho$$

Entrainment effects can be large independently of the pairing gaps



Entrainment in neutron-star crust



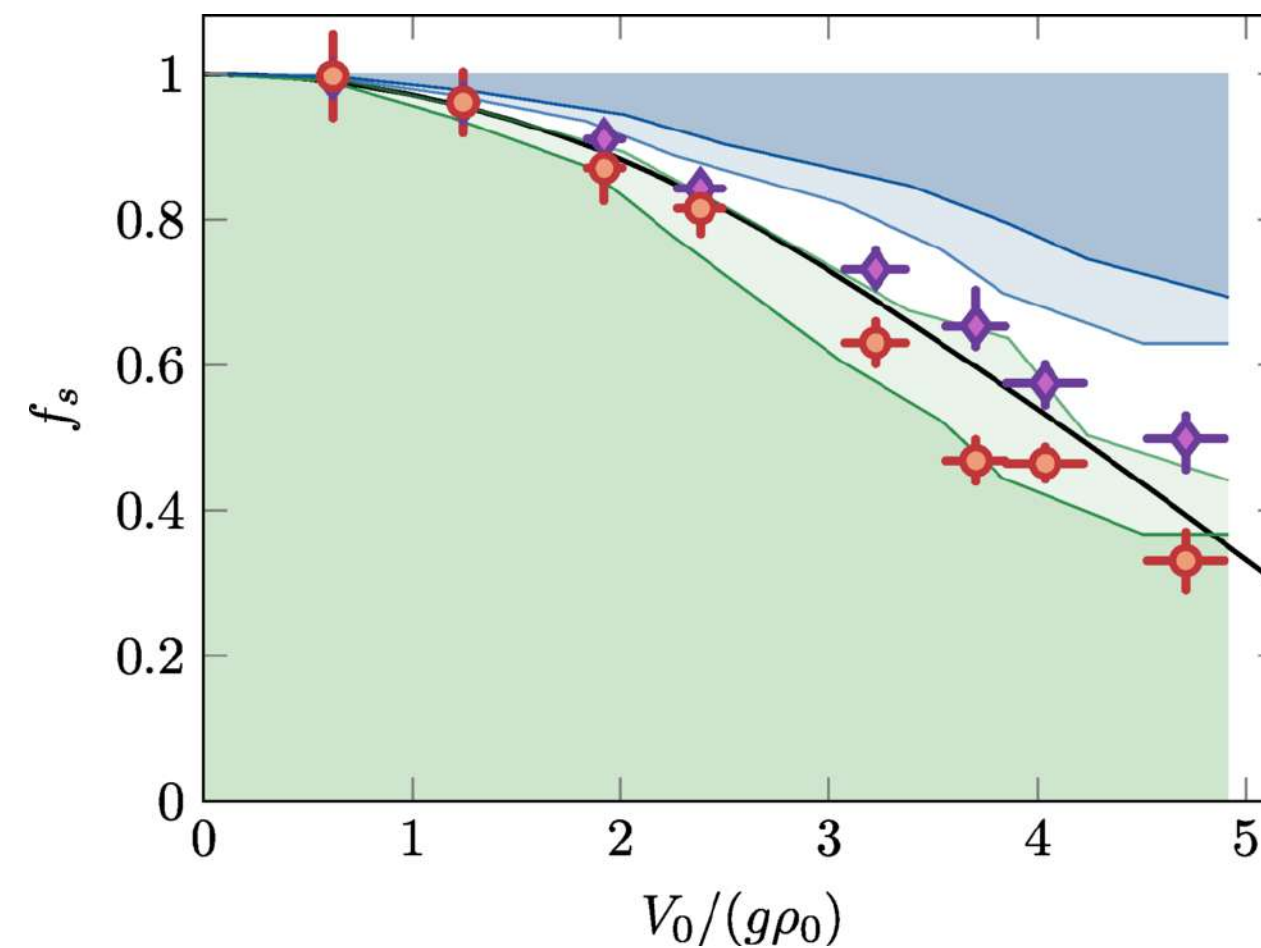
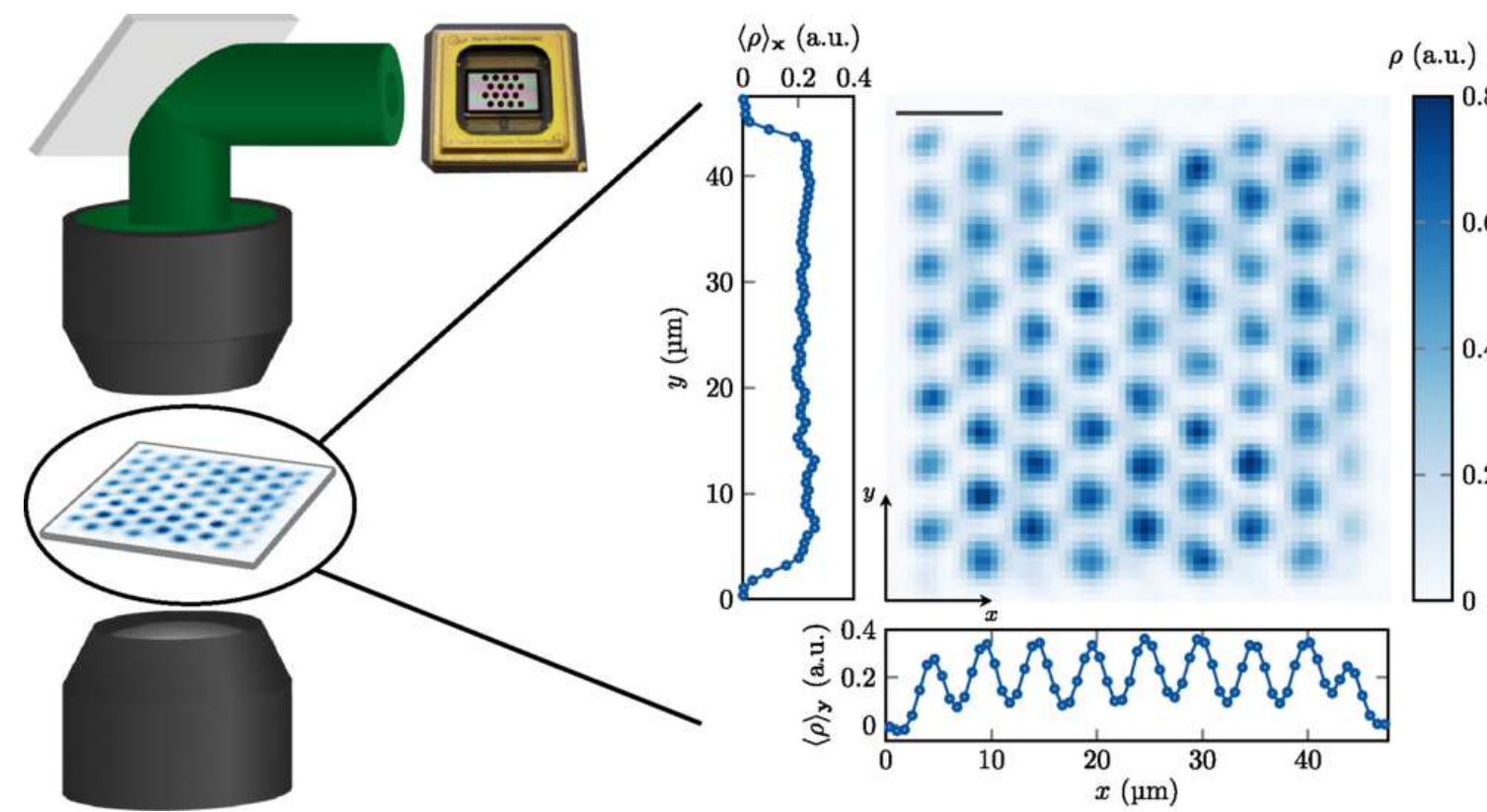
Whenever translational symmetry is broken, a superflow with velocity \mathbf{V} induces a mass current $\bar{\rho} = \rho_s \mathbf{V}$

Superfluid fraction $f_s \equiv \frac{\rho_s}{\bar{\rho}} < 1$ Leggett, J. Stat. Phys. 93, 927 (1998)

Such depletion has been measured in bosonic condensates of cold atoms in optical traps and supersolids

Chauvet et al., PRL 130, 226003 (2023); Tao et al., PRL 131, 163401 (2023); Rabec et al., PRL 136, 133401 (2026); Biagioni et al., Nature 629, 773 (2024)

Rabec et al. (2026)



... and has been studied in fermionic condensates

Orso, PRL 99, 250402 (2007)

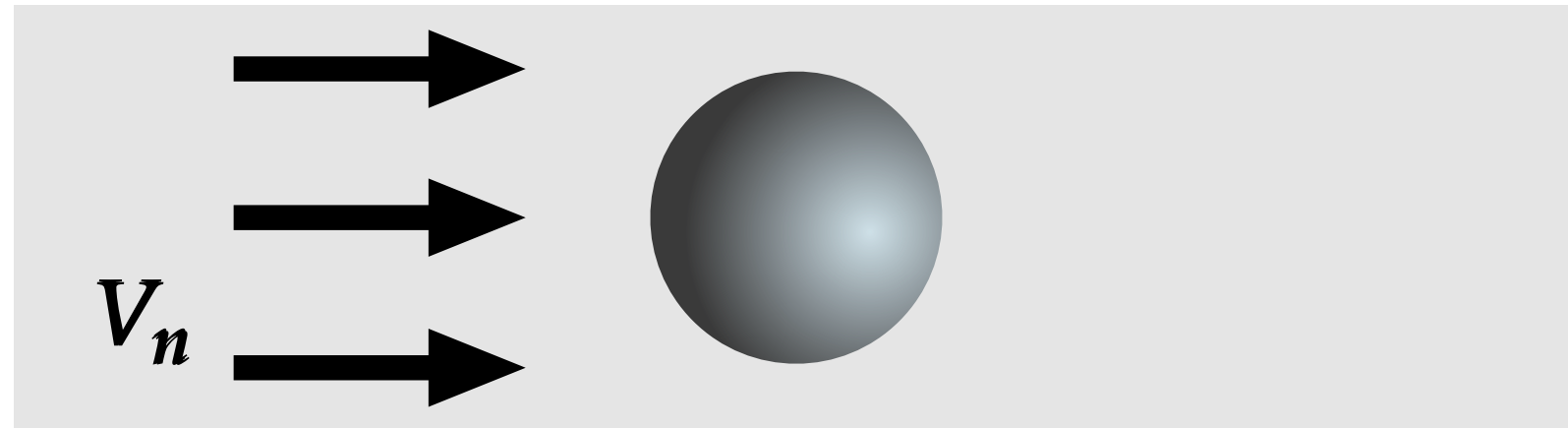
Orso & Stringari, PRA 109, 023301 (2024)

A similar effect was predicted in the inner crust of a neutron star

Carter, Chamel, Haensel, Nucl. Phys. A748, 675 (2005)

Entrainment and effective masses

In the crust frame

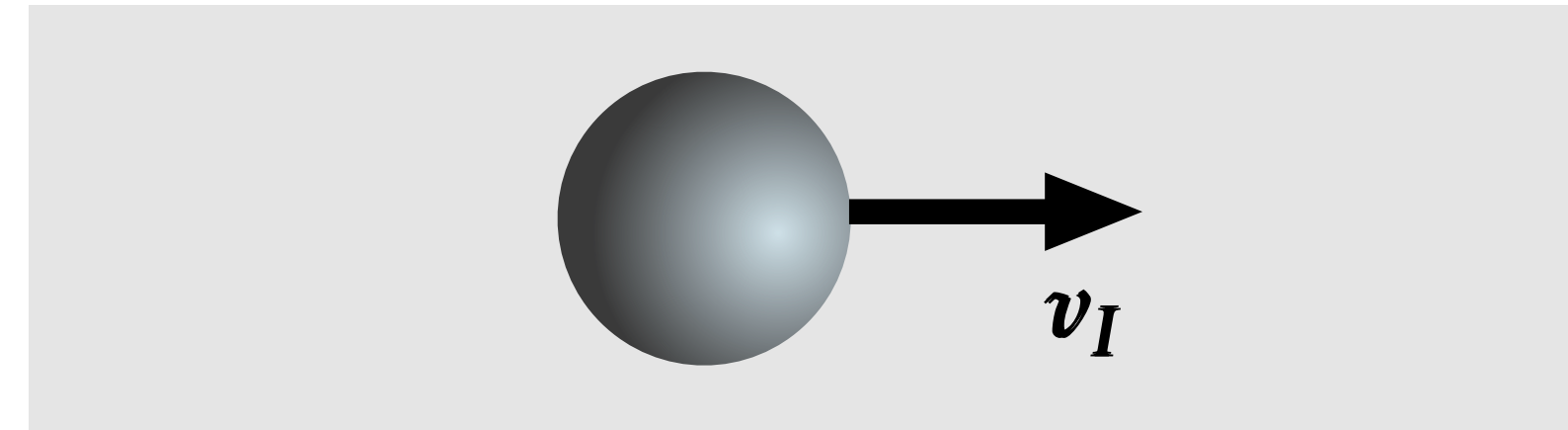


A neutron superflow with velocity V_n induces an average neutron mass current

$$\bar{\rho}_n = \rho_{n,s} V_n = \bar{\rho}_n \frac{m_n}{m_n^*} V_n$$

It is as if neutrons had an **effective mass** $m_n^* > m_n$

In the superfluid frame



Ions moving with a velocity $v_I = -V_n$ carry on average a mass current

$$\bar{\rho}_I = n_I m_I^* v_I$$

as if they had an **effective mass** m_I^*

These are two different aspects of the same entrainment effects

$$m_n^* = m_n \frac{\bar{\rho}_n}{\rho_{n,s}}$$

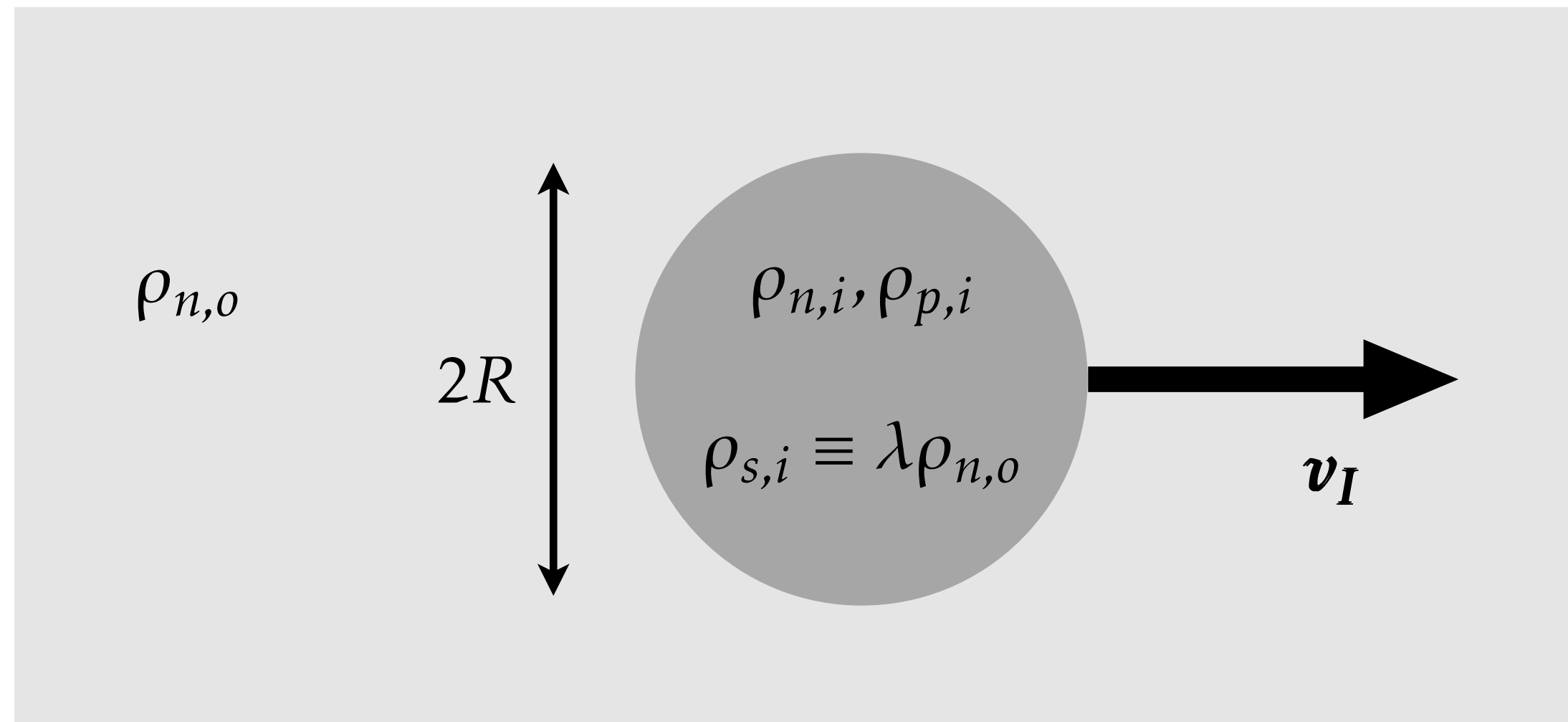
$$m_I^* = \frac{\bar{\rho} - \rho_{n,s}}{n_I}$$

The fraction $1 - \rho_{n,s}/\bar{\rho}_n$ of neutrons are **entrained** by the crust

Carter, Chamel, Haensel, Int. J. Mod. Phys. D15, 777 (2006)

Effective ion mass from hydrodynamics

The effective mass of a single ion can be calculated from **classical hydrodynamics assuming potential flow**



$$\text{Effective ion mass } m_I^\star = m_I + \frac{(\lambda - 1)^2}{\lambda + 2} m_d$$

$$\text{Mass of displaced neutrons } m_d = \frac{4}{3} \pi R^3 \rho_{n,o}$$

$$\text{Mass of nucleons transported by ions } m_I = m_I^0 - \frac{4}{3} \pi R^3 \rho_{s,i}$$

$$\text{Mass of nucleons located inside ions } m_I^0 = \frac{4}{3} \pi R^3 (\rho_{n,i} + \rho_{p,i})$$

Epstein & Baym, ApJ 328, 680 (1988); 333, 880 (1988)

The mass density $\rho_{s,i} \equiv \lambda \rho_{n,o}$ of nucleons participating to the superfluid motion be determined by hydrodynamics alone

- Impenetrable ions $\rho_{s,i} = 0$ Sedrakian, Astr. Sp. Sci. 236, 267(1996)

$$m_I = Z m_p + N m_n$$

- All nucleons are superfluid $\rho_{s,i} = \rho_{n,i} + \rho_{p,i}$ Magierski & Bulgac, Nucl. Phys. A738, 143 (2004)

$$m_I = 0$$

- Permeable ions $\rho_{s,i} = \rho_{n,o}$ Martin & Urban, PRC 94, 065801 (2016)

$$m_I = Z m_p$$

A more microscopic approach is needed

Superfluid density and Bragg scattering

Band theory of solids

For neutrons flowing in a **periodic potential** $U_n(\mathbf{r})$ with velocities $V_n \ll V_{Ln}$ in the limit of **weak pairing** $\Delta \ll \varepsilon_F$

$$\rho_{n,s} \approx \frac{m_n^2}{12\pi^3 \hbar^2} \sum_{\alpha} \int_{\text{BZ}} d^3\mathbf{k} \delta(\varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}} - \varepsilon_F) |\nabla_{\mathbf{k}} \varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}|^2 = \frac{m_n^2}{12\pi^3 \hbar^2} \sum_{\alpha} \int_{\mathcal{F}} |\nabla_{\mathbf{k}} \varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}| d\mathcal{S}^{(\alpha)}$$

Carter, Chamel, Haensel, Nucl. Phys. A748, 675 (2005)

Same expression as obtained for a dilute Fermi superfluid in a 1D optical lattice

Pitaevskii, Stringari, Orso, PRA71, 053602 (2005)

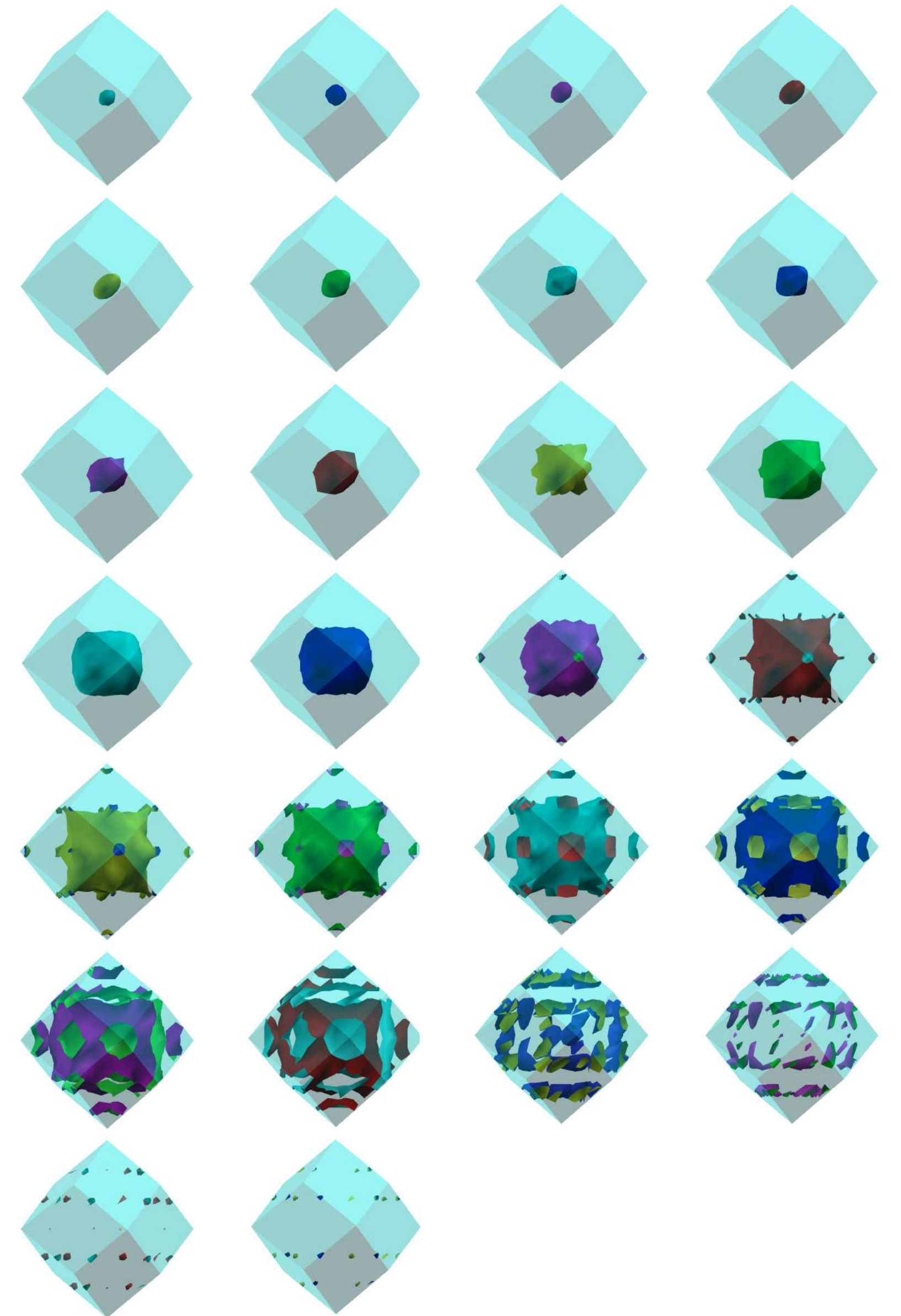
In intermediate layers at densities $\sim 0.005\text{-}0.04 \text{ fm}^{-3}$

Bragg scattering leads to **strong distortions of the Fermi surface**

- locally flat bands $|\nabla_{\mathbf{k}} \varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}| \sim 0$
- shrinking of Fermi surface $\mathcal{S}_F \ll 4\pi k_F^2$

The superfluid fraction is suppressed $\rho_{n,s} \sim 10\% \bar{\rho}_n$

Chamel, Nucl. Phys. A747, 109 (2005)



Chamel, PRC 85, 035801 (2012)

Superfluid density and pairing

Including constant BCS pairing

$$\rho_{n,s} = \frac{m_n^2}{24\pi^3\hbar^2} \sum_{\alpha} \int_{\text{BZ}} d^3\mathbf{k} |\nabla_{\mathbf{k}} \varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}|^2 \frac{\Delta^2}{\sqrt{(\varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}} - \varepsilon_F)^2 + \Delta^2}^3}$$

Carter, Chamel, Haensel, Nucl. Phys. A759, 441 (2005)

Extension to $h_n(\mathbf{r}) = -\nabla \cdot \frac{\hbar^2}{2m_n^{\oplus}(\mathbf{r})} \nabla + U_n(\mathbf{r}) - \frac{i}{2} [\mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r}) \cdot \nabla + \nabla \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r})]$

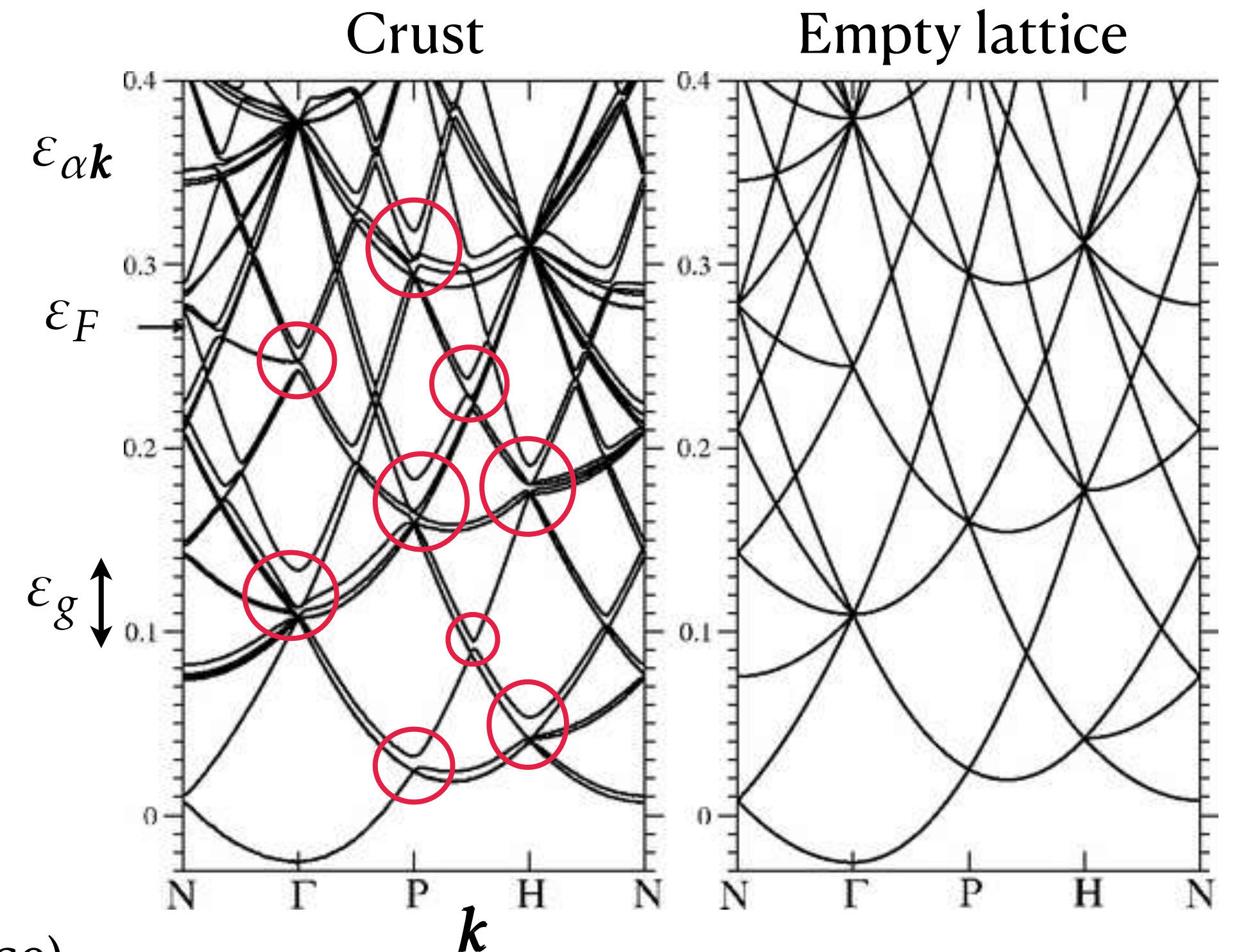
$$\rho_{n,s} = \frac{m_n^2}{24\pi^3\hbar^2} \sum_{\alpha} \int_{\text{BZ}} d^3\mathbf{k} \left(1 - \frac{\varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0}{\sqrt{(\varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 - \varepsilon_F)^2 + \Delta_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^2}} \right) \nabla_{\mathbf{k}} \cdot \nabla_Q \varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}+Q}$$

intraband coupling

Chamel, PRC 111, 045803 (2025)

- This converges to the **exact result in homogeneous matter** (empty lattice)
- The superfluid fraction is almost independent of $\Delta_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}$
- This expression is valid when pairing gaps $\Delta_{\alpha\mathbf{k}} \ll$ band gaps $\varepsilon_g \sim 10$ keV

Watanabe & Pethick, PRL119, 062701 (2017); Almirante & Urban, PRL135, 132701 (2025)

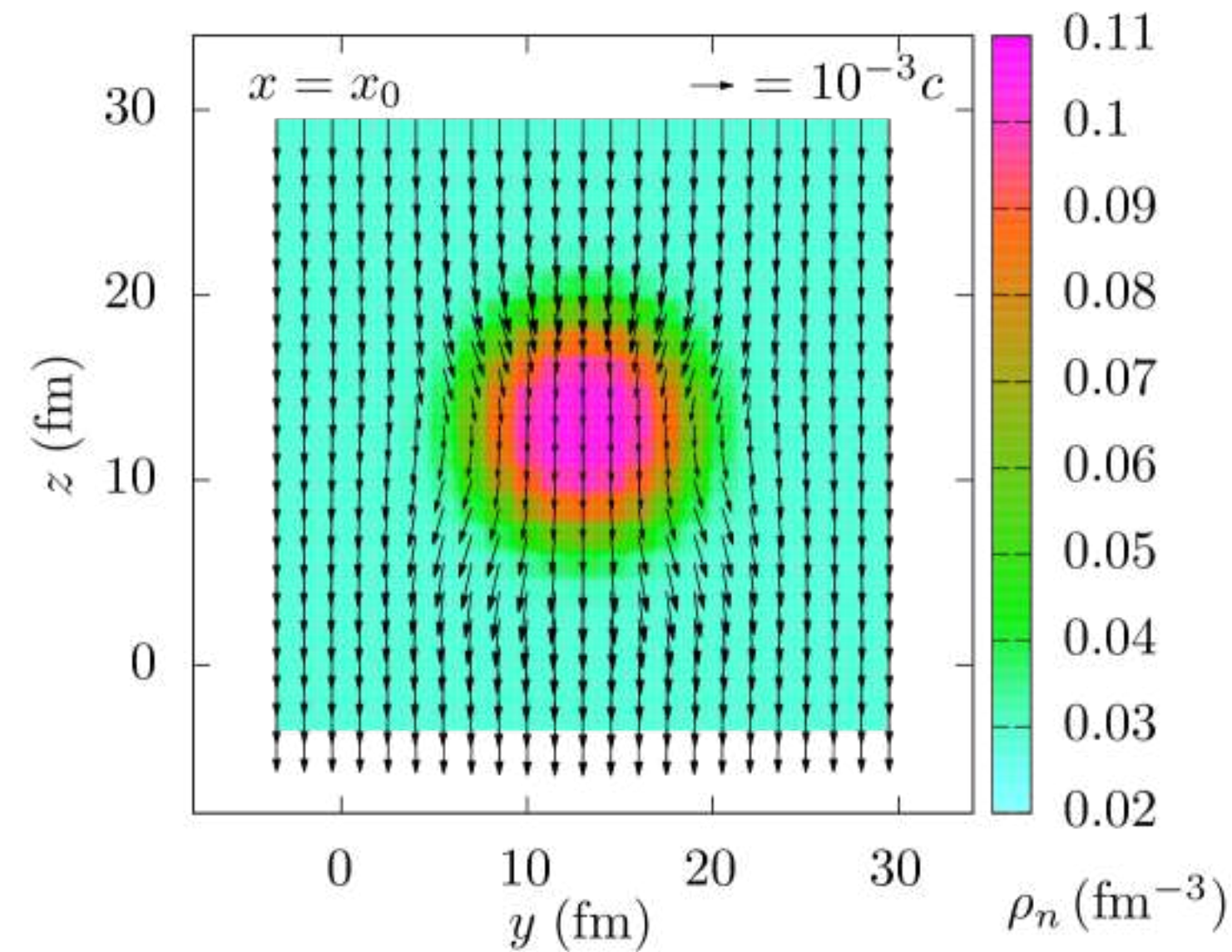


Chamel, PRC 85, 035801 (2012)

However this condition is generally not fulfilled except for the shallowest layers

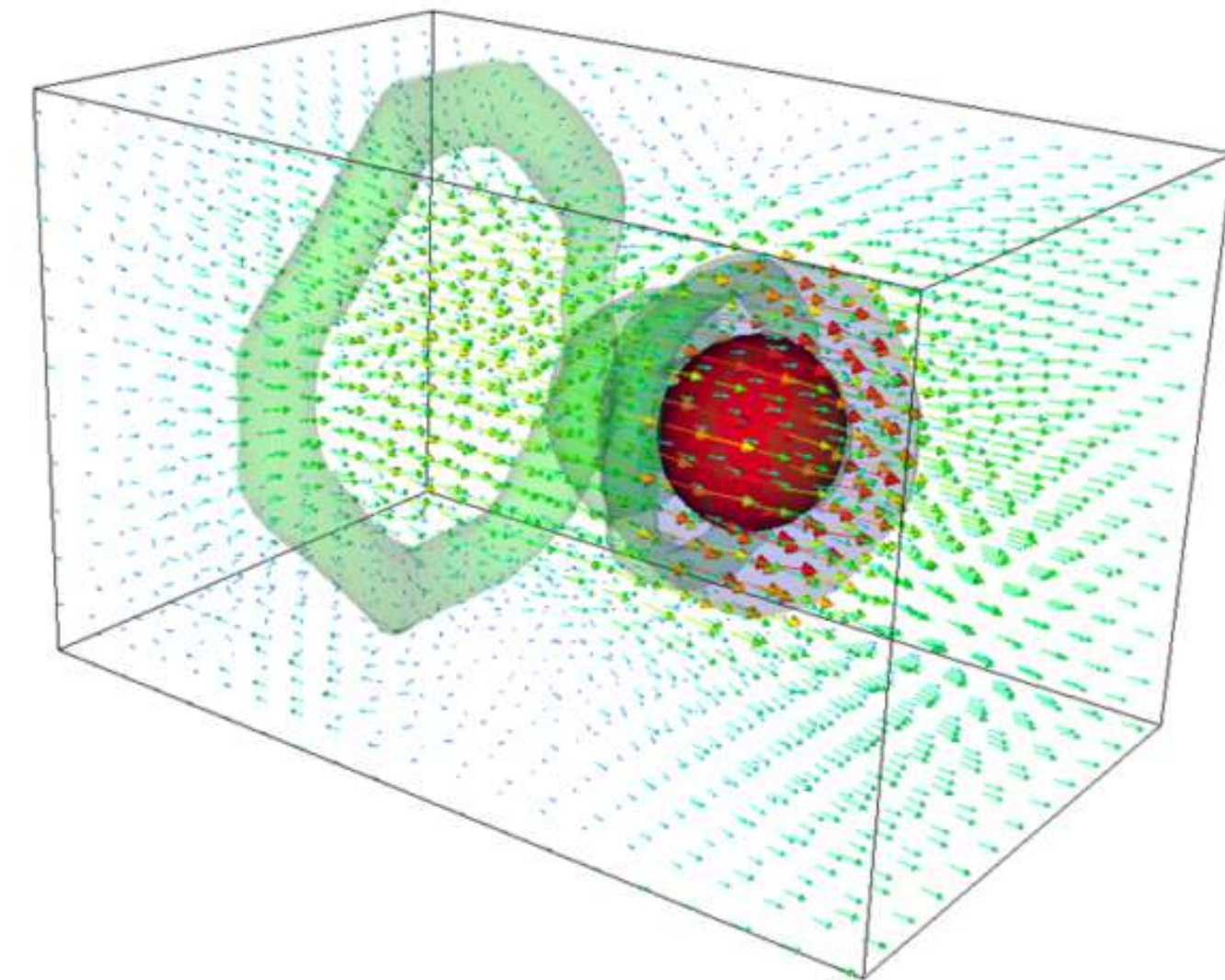
(TD)HFB in the crust

$\rho_{n,s}$ from stationary superflow through a lattice



Almirante, Kaskitsi, Urban (2026)

m_I^* from motion of a single ion in a superfluid



Peçak et al., PRX 14, 041054 (2024)

Solving numerically the TDHFB equations is very challenging:

- coupled equations for both neutrons and protons
- the number of nucleons per lattice site can be huge $\sim 10^3$
- full 3D (TD)HFB equations must be considered
- very different scales (lattice spacing ~ 100 fm vs cluster size ~ 10 fm, coherence length)
- calculations must be repeated for different superfluid velocities

Unlike atoms in periodic traps, each crustal layer is a different material with unknown composition and structure

Linear response theory within TDHFB

Approximations:

- crustal composition from 4th order extended Thomas-Fermi method with shell corrections (fast HFB approx.)
- BCS pairing (proximity effects tend to smooth out pairing fluctuations)
- Stationary flow with an average superfluid velocity $\bar{V}_n \equiv \frac{1}{\Omega} \int d^3\mathbf{r} V_n(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{\hbar\mathbf{Q}}{m_n}$

In the linear current response $\bar{V}_n \ll V_{n,c} \sim \frac{\Delta_{F,n}}{\hbar k_{F,n}}$ (likely a very good approximation for most isolated pulsars)

$$\rho_{n,s} = \frac{1}{\Omega} \int d^3\mathbf{r} \rho_n(\mathbf{r}) \left[\frac{m_n}{m_n^\oplus(\mathbf{r})} + \frac{m_n}{3\hbar^2} \nabla_Q \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r}) \right] \quad \text{entrainment effects similar to those in the core}$$

$$+ \frac{m_n^2}{24\pi^3} \sum_{\alpha \neq \beta} \int d^3\mathbf{k} \frac{\xi_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 \xi_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0 - E_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 E_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0 + \Delta_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 \Delta_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0}{E_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 E_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0 (E_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 + E_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0)} \mathbf{v}_{\beta\mathbf{k},\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 \cdot \left\{ \mathbf{v}_{\alpha\mathbf{k},\beta\mathbf{k}}^0 + \frac{1}{6\hbar^2} \sum_{\sigma} \int d^3\mathbf{r} \varphi_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0(\mathbf{r}, \sigma)^* [\nabla_Q \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r}) \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{p} \nabla_Q \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r})] \varphi_{\beta\mathbf{k}}^0(\mathbf{r}, \sigma) \right\}$$

interband coupling

entrainment effects from inhomogeneities

where $E_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 = \sqrt{\varepsilon_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0 + |\Delta_{\alpha\mathbf{k}}^0|^2}$ and $\nabla_Q \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r}) = \int d^3\mathbf{r}' f[\mathbf{r}, \nabla_Q \cdot \mathbf{I}_n(\mathbf{r}')]$

nonlocal

Entrainment and lattice vibrations

Unlike optical traps in laboratory experiments, the crust of a neutron star is not perfectly rigid

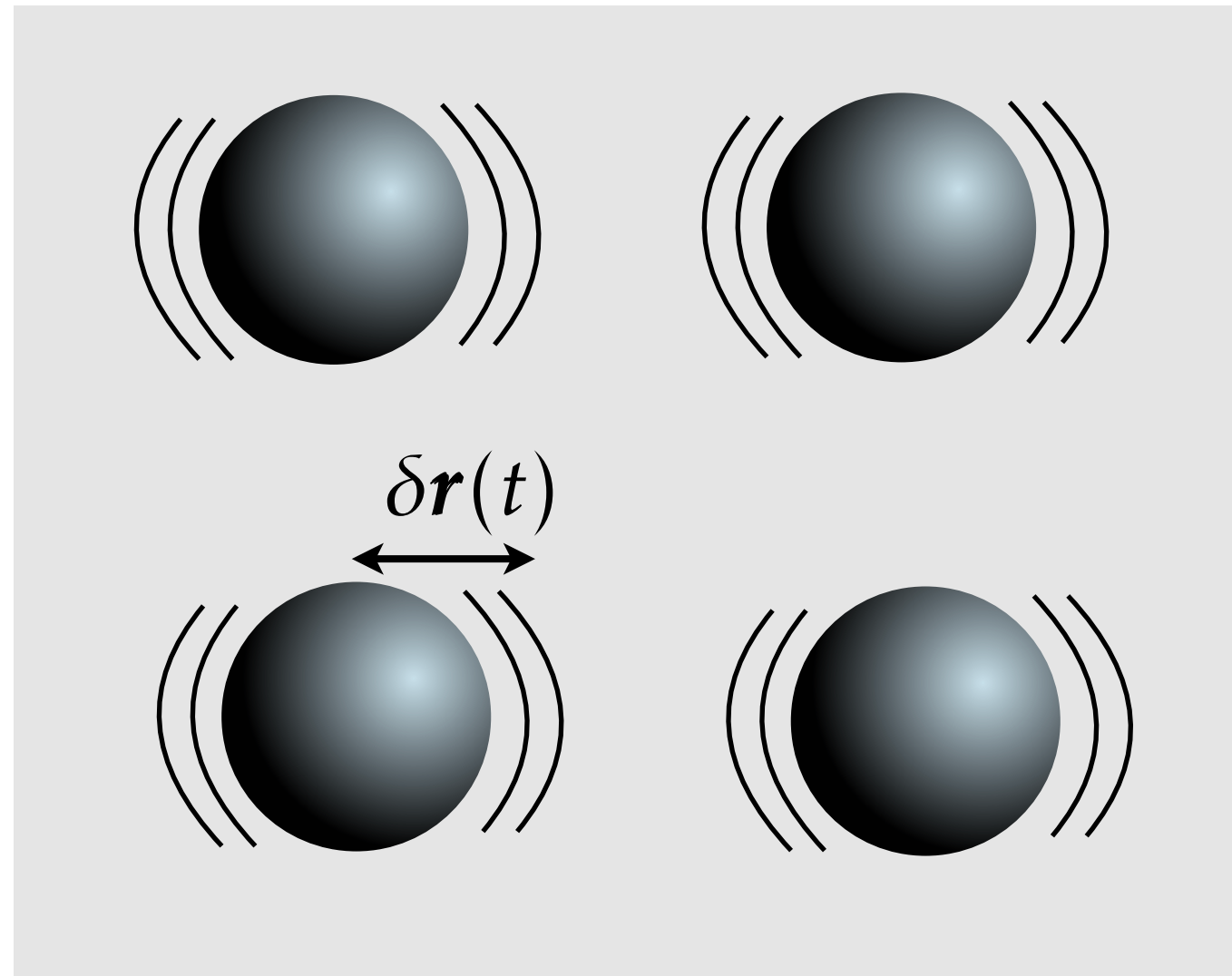
The superfluid motion couples to crustal vibrations

Pethick, Chamel, Reddy, PTPS 186, 9 (2010)

Quantum zero-point motion of ions can be included through the Debye-Waller factor

$$\tilde{U}_n(\mathbf{G}) \equiv \frac{1}{\Omega} \int d^3\mathbf{r} U_n(\mathbf{r}) \exp(-i\mathbf{G} \cdot \mathbf{r}) \rightarrow \tilde{U}_n(\mathbf{G}) \exp\left(-\frac{1}{6} G^2 \langle \delta\mathbf{r}(t)^2 \rangle\right)$$

Bragg scattering is reduced



Self-consistency problem

- Lattice vibrations influence the superfluid motion and the ion effective mass $m_I^\star = \frac{\bar{\rho} - \rho_{n,s}}{n_I}$
- In turn, this changes $\langle \delta\mathbf{r}(t)^2 \rangle \approx \frac{3\hbar \langle \omega_I^\star / \omega_{ph} \rangle}{2m_I^\star \omega_I^\star}$ where $\omega_I^\star = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi Z^2 e^2 n_I}{m_I^\star}}$

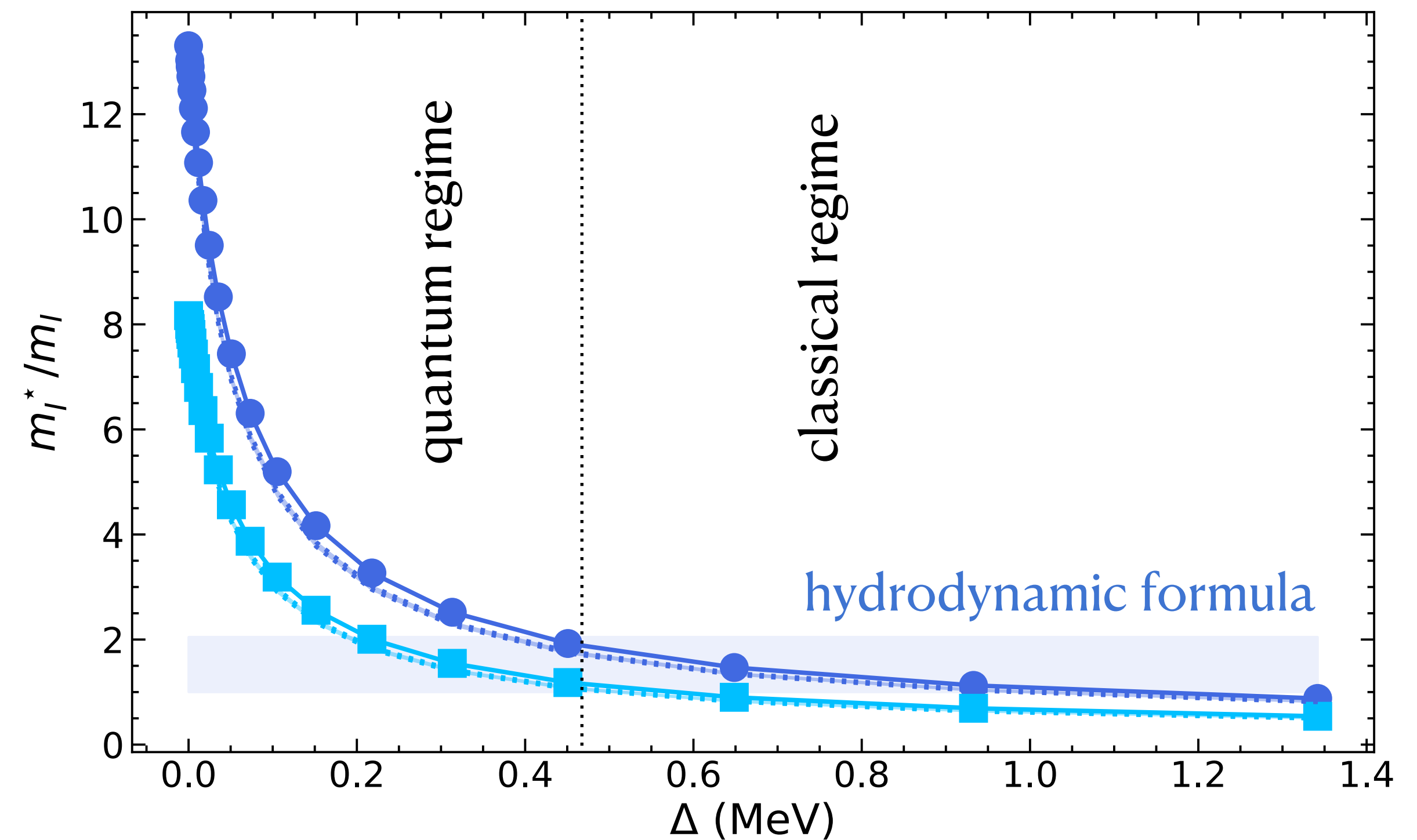
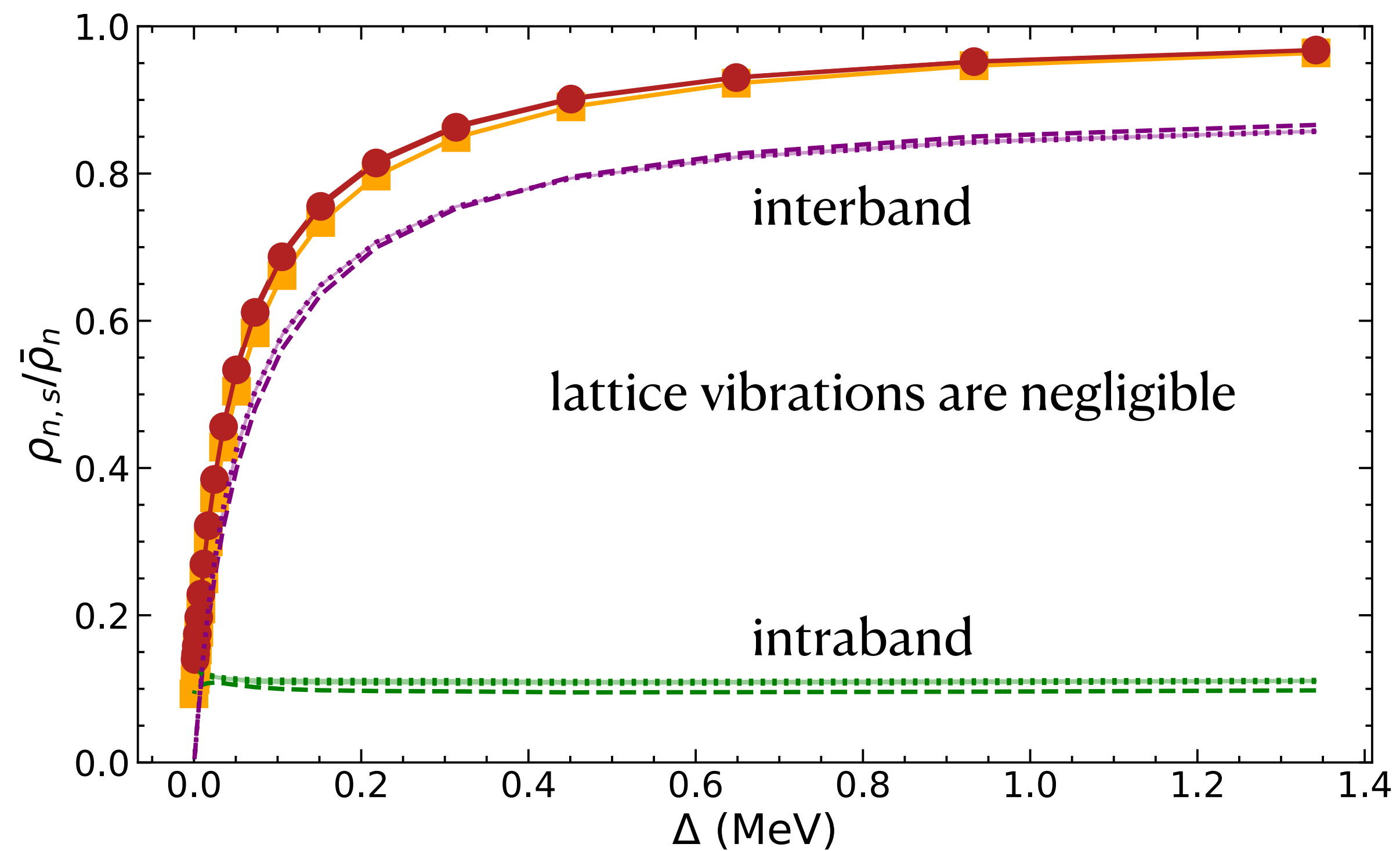
Chamel, PRC 111, 055803 (2025)

Superfluid fraction and effective ion mass

3D band-structure calculations in different crustal layers:

- $\sim 10^3$ bands
- $\sim 10^3$ Bloch wave vectors
- spatial grid with up to $25 \times 25 \times 25$ points

$$\bar{n} = 0.04 \text{ fm}^{-3}$$

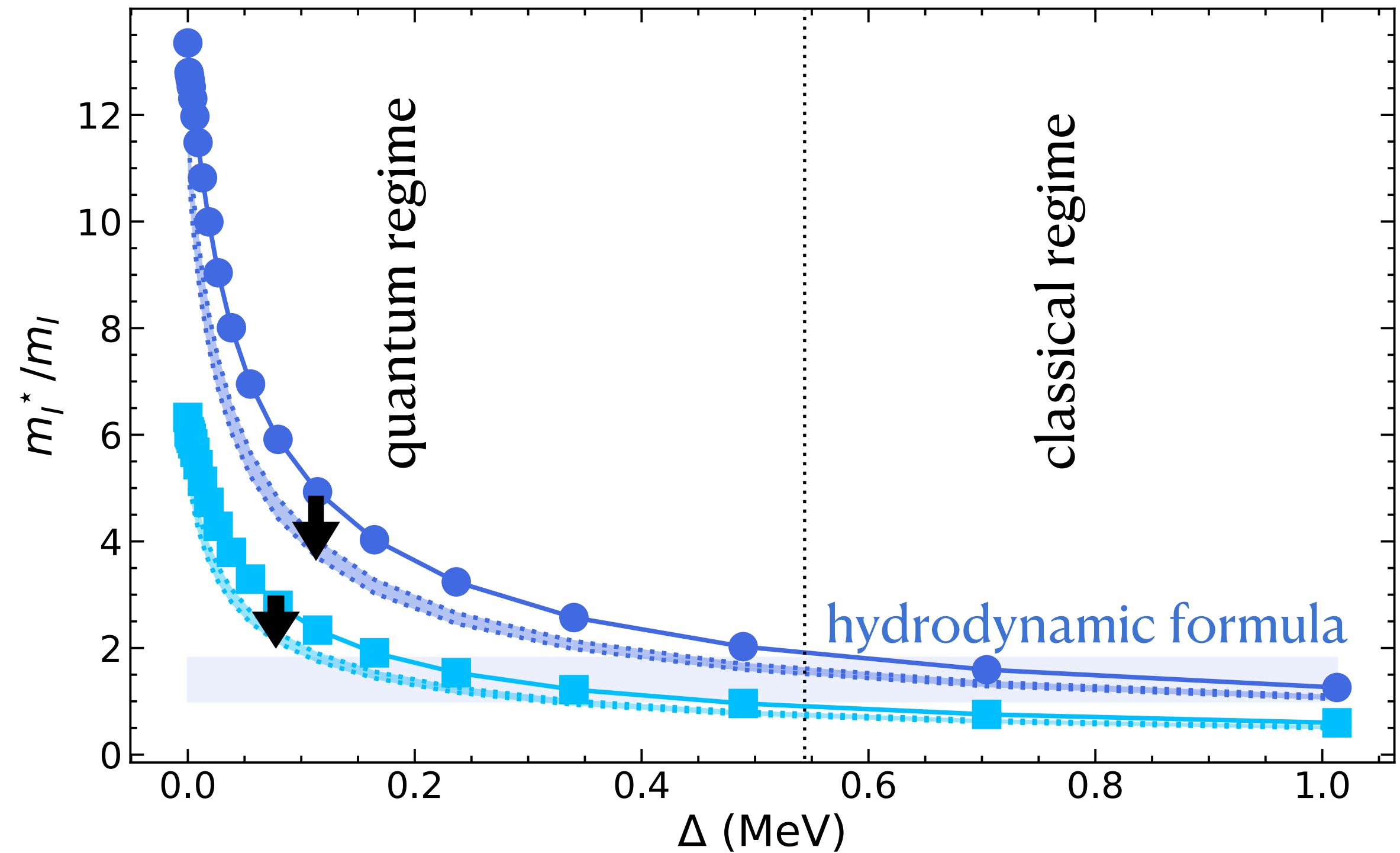
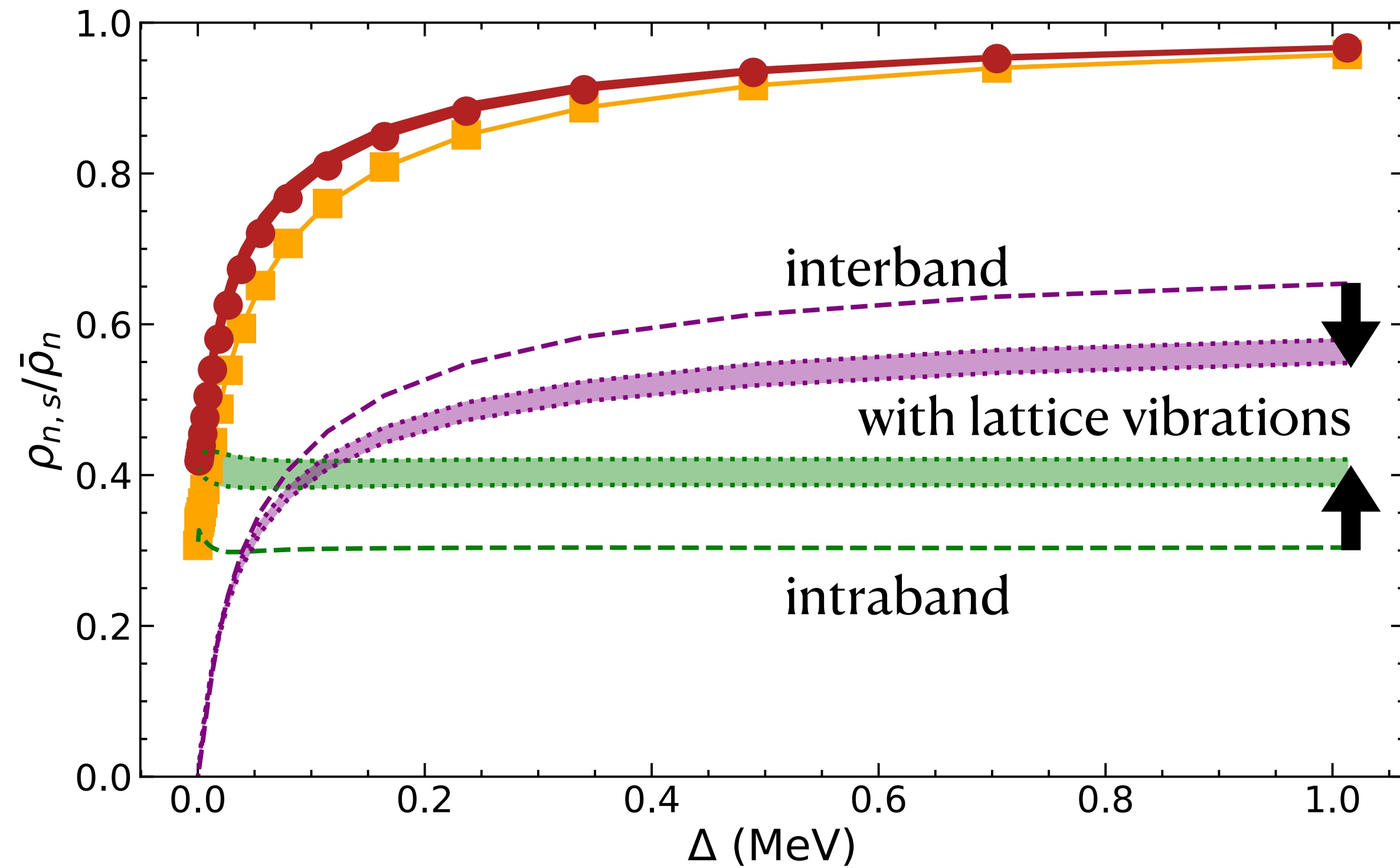


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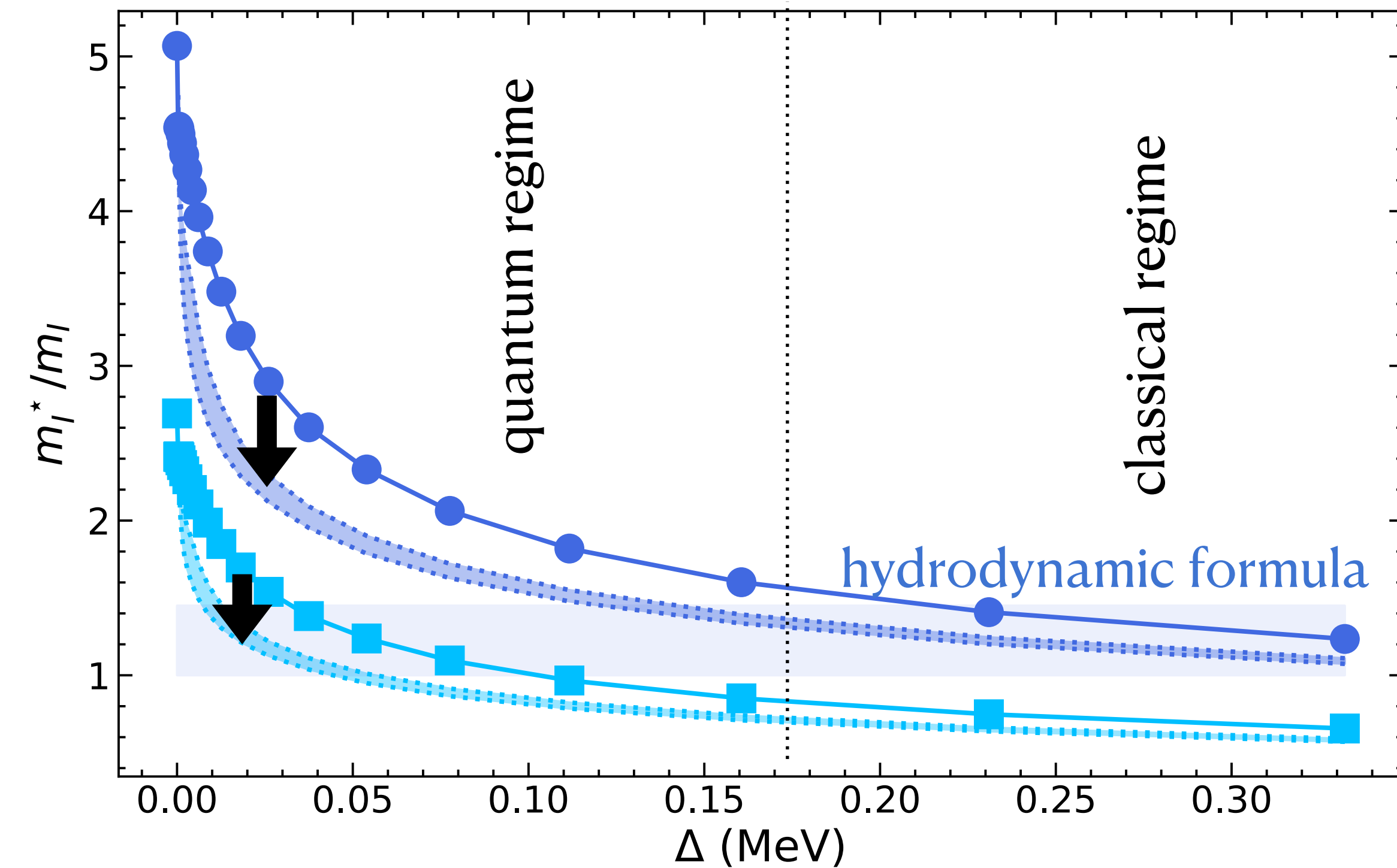
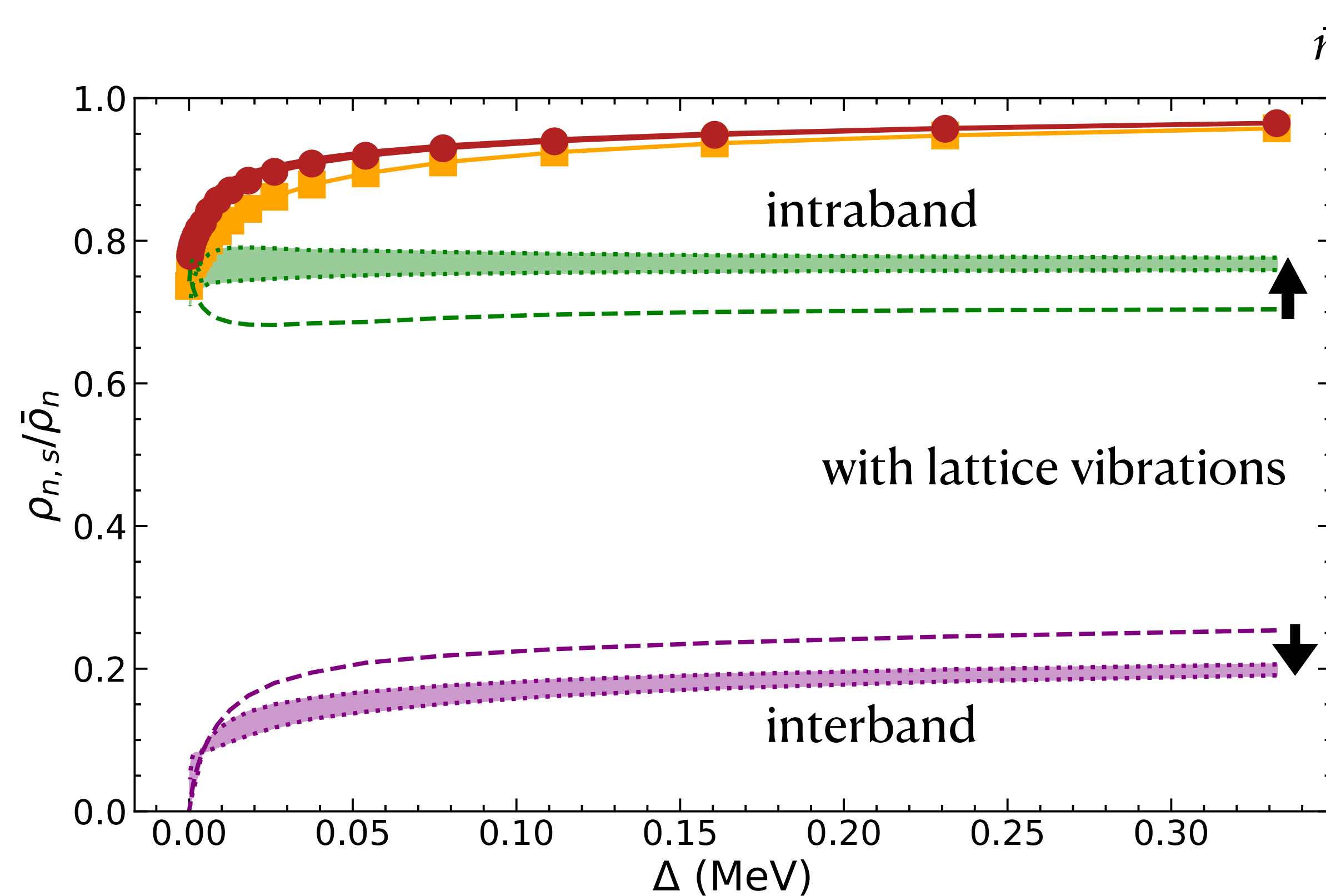
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Superfluid fraction and effective ion mass

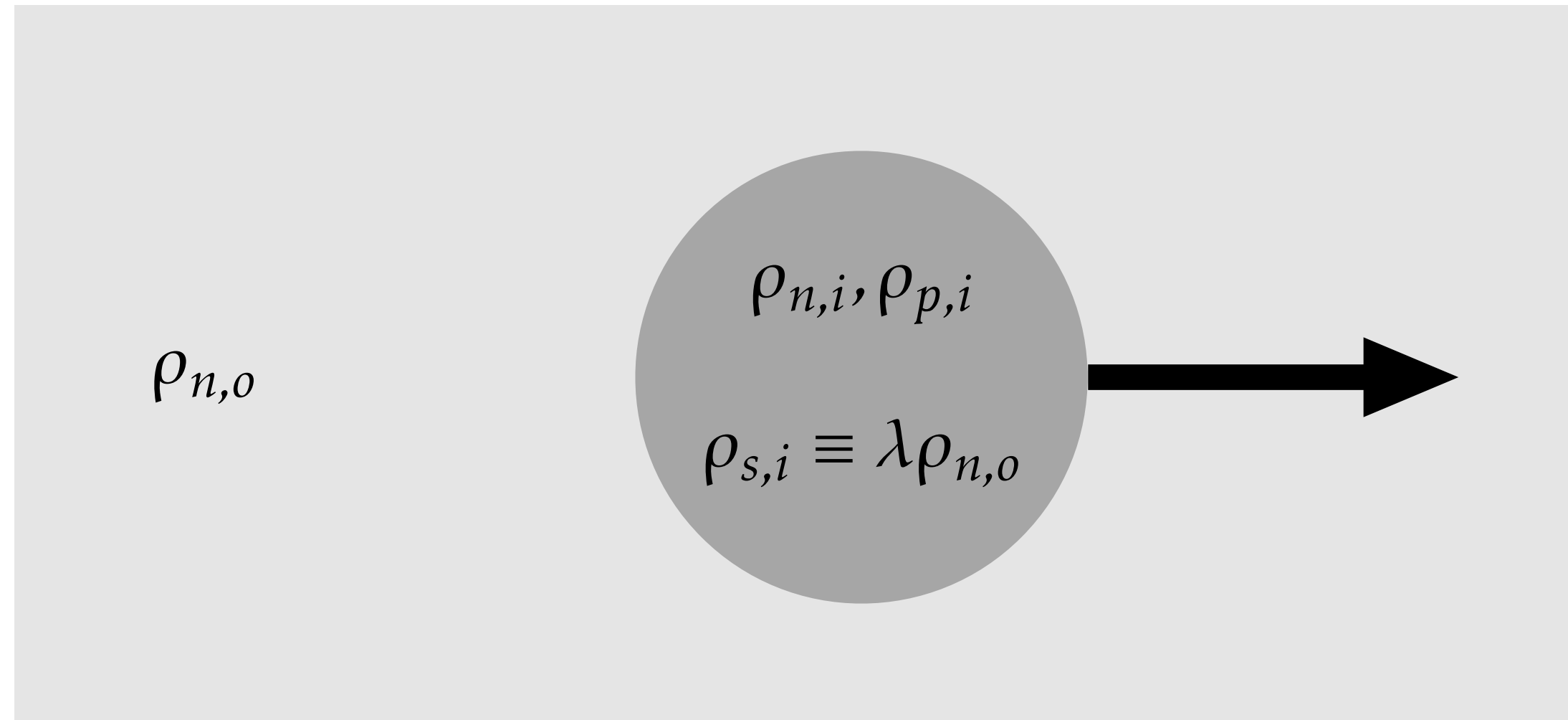
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Effective ion mass from hydrodynamics

The effective mass of a single ion can be calculated from **classical hydrodynamics assuming potential flow**



Effective ion mass $\frac{m_I^*}{m_I} = 1 + \frac{(\lambda - 1)^2}{\lambda + 2} \frac{\rho_{n,o}}{\rho_{p,i} + \rho_{n,i} - \lambda \rho_{n,o}}$

Epstein & Baym, ApJ 328, 680 (1988); 333, 880 (1988)

$\rho_{s,i}$ must be **finetuned in each layer** to reproduce band-structure results in the strong pairing (hydrodynamic) limit

- at low densities $\rho_{s,i} \ll \rho_{n,i}$ (impenetrable ions)
- near the crust-core interface $\rho_{s,i} \sim \rho_{n,i}$ (fully permeable ions)

This ambiguity can be avoided by solving instead the hydrodynamic equations with **realistic nucleon distributions**

Almirante, Kaskitsi, Urban (2026)

This implicitly assumes $\xi \ll R$, but this can only be checked from HFB calculations...

Conclusions

Entrainment effects in neutron-star crust and core can be described consistently within the (TD)HFB framework

In the core:

- Entrainment arises from the **momentum-dependence** of the neutron-proton (contact) interactions

$$p_{ij}^2 \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) + \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) p_{ij}^2 \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{p}_{ij} \cdot \delta(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{r}_j) \mathbf{p}_{ij} \quad \text{with} \quad \mathbf{p}_{ij} = -i\hbar(\nabla_i - \nabla_j)/2$$

In the crust:

- Entrainment arises additionally from **translational symmetry breaking**
- The superfluid fraction and effective ion mass are two facets of the same effects: $m_I^\star = \frac{\bar{\rho} - \rho_{n,s}}{n_I}$
- **The superfluid fraction can be large** $\rho_{n,s}/\bar{\rho}_n \gtrsim 90\%$ due to **interband response** in agreement with Almirante & Urban
- But entrainment is **sensitive to pairing gaps** $\Delta_{\alpha k}$
- $m_I^\star \gg m_I$ for small $\Delta_{\alpha k}$ and in any case $m_I^\star > Z m_p$
- Entrainment is **slightly reduced by lattice vibrations**

More systematic calculations using different functionals and including shallower layers are still needed