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Near-threshold vector meson production and gravitational form factors

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BNL/RIKEN BNL

QCD evolution, Jefferson Lab, May 19-23, 2025

Proton electromagnetic form factors (1950s~)

EM form factors from elastic scattering

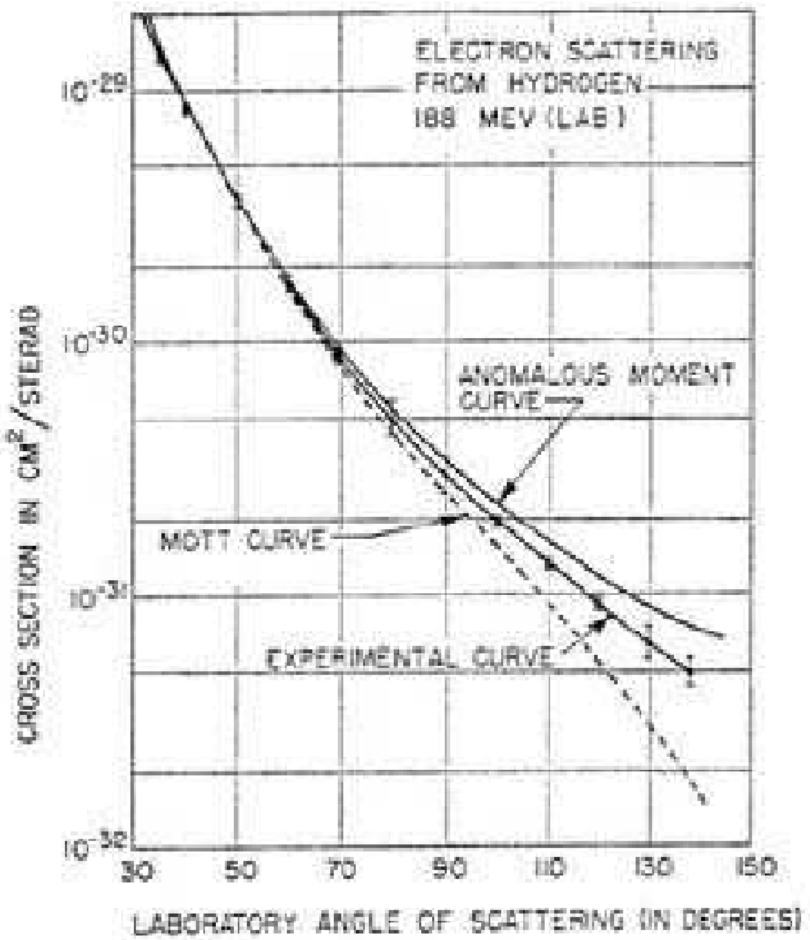
$$\langle p'|J^\mu(0)|p\rangle = \bar{u}(p')\left[\gamma^\mu F_1 + \frac{i\sigma^{\mu\nu}\Delta_\nu}{2m}F_2\right]u(p)$$

Electric form factor

$$G_E(t) = F_1(t) + \frac{t}{4M^2}F_2(t)$$

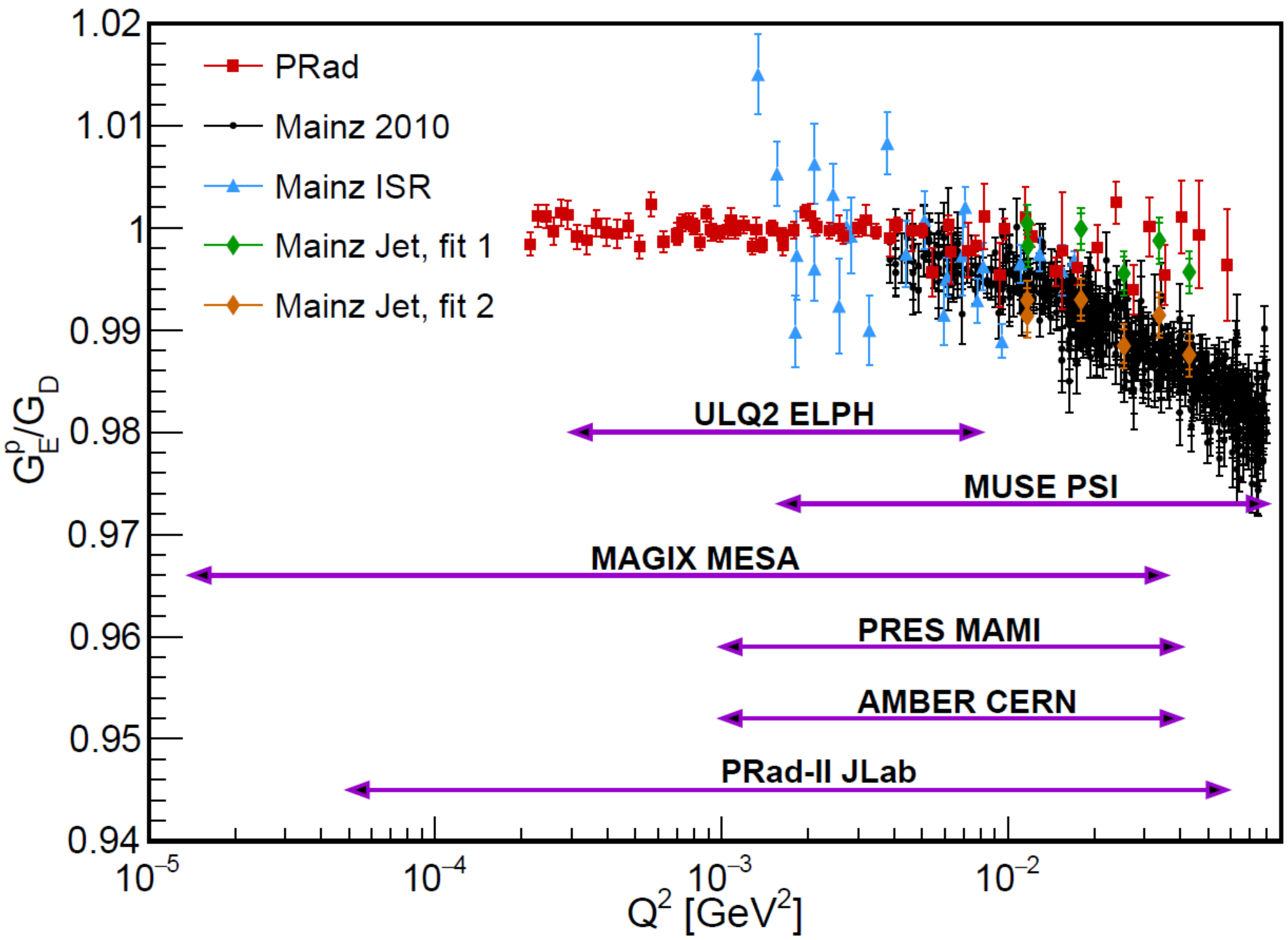
Proton charge radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle = 6\frac{dG_E(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0} \sim (0.8\ \mathrm{fm})^2$$

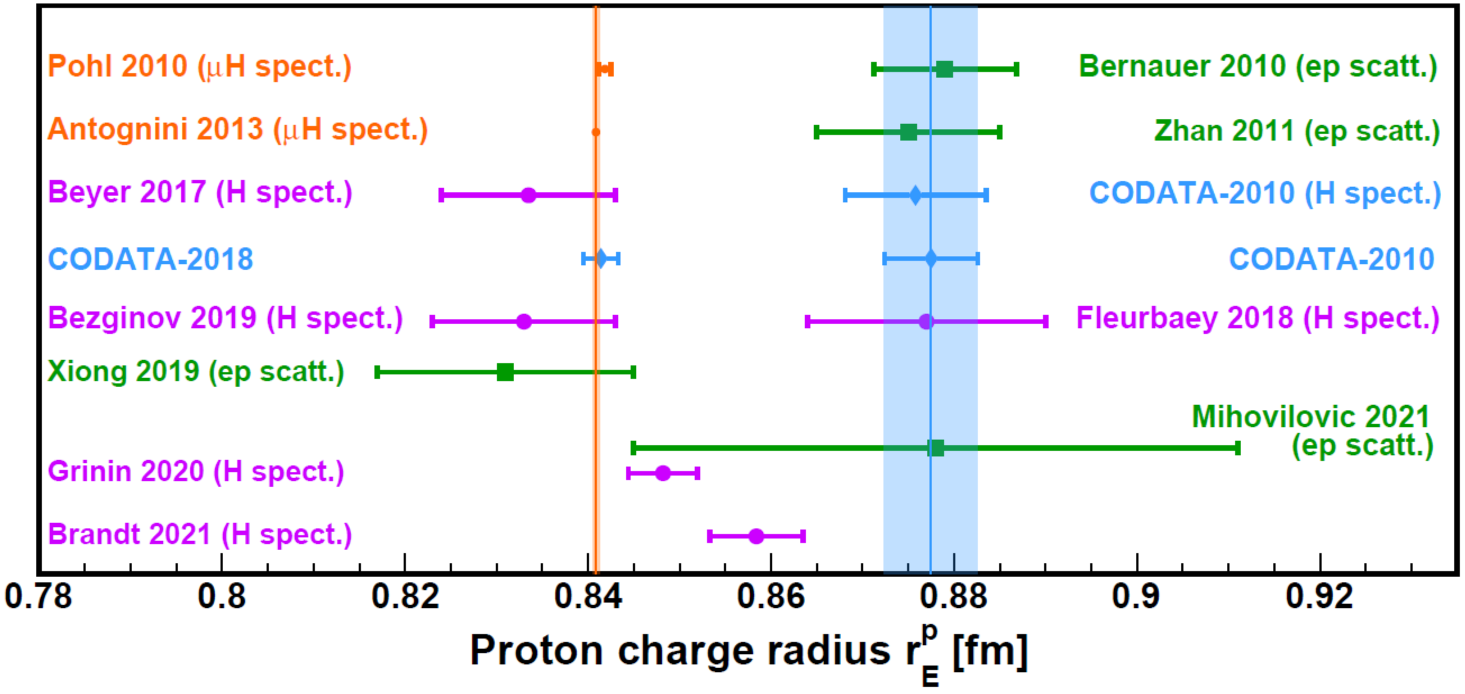


Elastic scattering 70 years later

Xiong, Peng, 2302.13818



Proton radius puzzle?



Both CODATA and PDG now recommend the smaller value ~0.84fm.

Several future experiment planned, aim for less than 1% precision

PRad (2019) $$r_p = 0.831 \pm 0.007_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.012_{\text{syst}}$$

Radius zoo

2312.12984

Charge radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_c = \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x} x^2 \rho_c(\boldsymbol{x})}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} \rho_c(\boldsymbol{x})} = \frac{6}{G_E(0)} \frac{dG_E(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0}$$

Magnetic radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_M = \frac{6}{G_M(0)} \frac{dG_M(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0}$$

Baryon number radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_B = \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x} x^2 \rho_B(\boldsymbol{x})}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} \rho_B(\boldsymbol{x})}$$

Mass radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_m = \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x}\, x^2 T^{00}(\boldsymbol{x})}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} T^{00}(\boldsymbol{x})} = 6\frac{dA(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0} - \frac{3D(0)}{2M^2}$$

Scalar radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_s = \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x}\, x^2 T^{\mu}_{\mu}(\boldsymbol{x})}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} T^{\mu}_{\mu}(\boldsymbol{x})} = 6\frac{dA(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0} - \frac{9D(0)}{2M^2}$$

Tensor radius

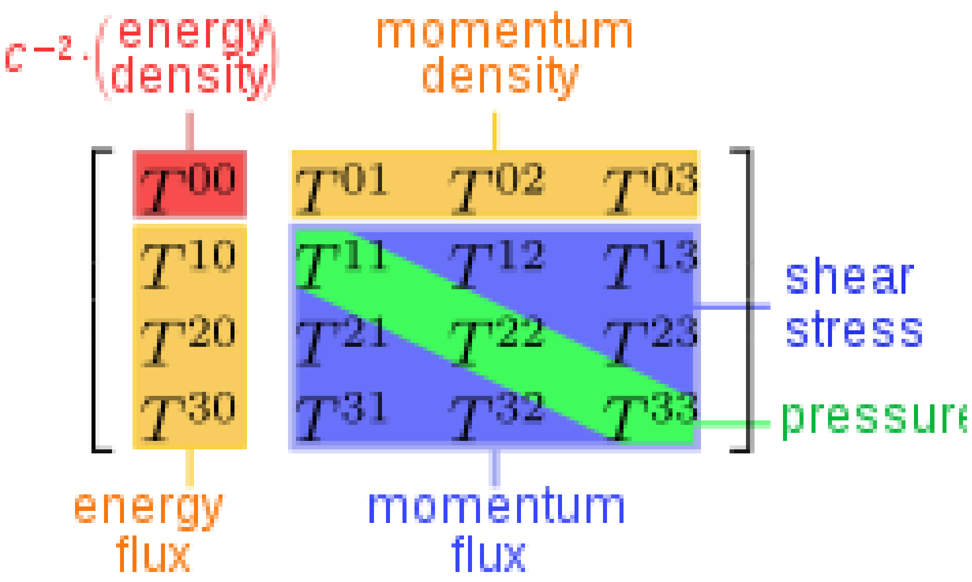
$$\langle r^2\rangle_t \equiv \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x}\, x^2 \left(T^{00}(\boldsymbol{x}) + \frac{1}{2}T_{ii}(\boldsymbol{x})\right)}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} \left(T^{00} + \frac{1}{2}T_{ii}\right)} = 6\frac{dA(t)}{dt}\bigg|_{t=0}$$

Mechanical radius

$$\langle r^2\rangle_{mech} = \frac{\int d\boldsymbol{x} x^2 \frac{x_i x_j}{x^2} T_{ij}(\boldsymbol{x})}{\int d\boldsymbol{x} \frac{x_i x_j}{x^2} T_{ij}(\boldsymbol{x})} = \frac{6D(0)}{\int_{-\infty}^{0} dt D(t)}$$

…

Gravitational form factors



QCD energy momentum tensor

$$T^{\mu\nu} = \sum_f \bar{\psi}_f \gamma^{(\mu} iD^{\nu)} \psi_f - F^{\mu\rho} F^{\nu}{}_{\rho} + \frac{g^{\mu\nu}}{4} F^{\alpha\beta} F_{\alpha\beta}$$

Associated form factors

$$\langle P' | T^{\mu\nu} | P \rangle = \bar{u}(P') \left[A(t) \gamma^{(\mu} \bar{P}^{\nu)} + B(t) \frac{\bar{P}^{(\mu} i\sigma^{\nu)\alpha} \Delta_\alpha}{2M} + D(t) \frac{\Delta^\mu \Delta^\nu - g^{\mu\nu} \Delta^2}{4M} \right] u(P)$$

Nucleon D-term in the Sakai-Sugimoto model

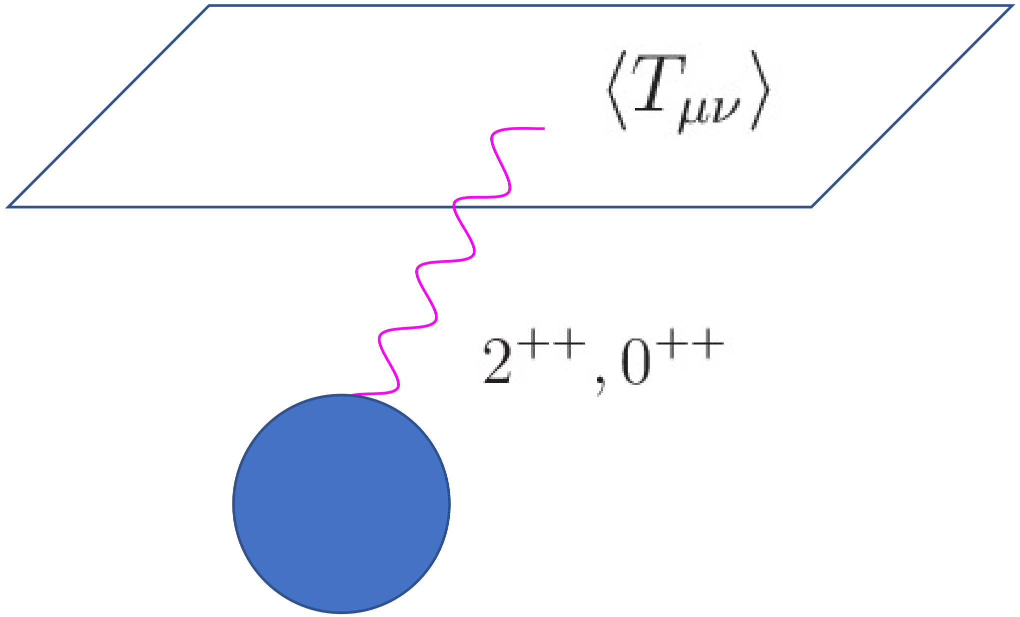
Fujita, YH, Sugimoto, Ueda (2022)

Baryons = instantons on D8 branes in type-IIA superstring

QFT energy momentum tensor from holographic renormalization

Graviton in 7D AdS = QCD glueballs

Glueball dominance in large-Nc QCD



$$D(|\vec{k}|) \sim \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{c_n^{\mathrm{T}}(|\vec{k}|)}{\vec{k}^2 + (m_n^{\mathrm{T}})^2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{c_n^{\mathrm{S}}(|\vec{k}|)}{\vec{k}^2 + (m_n^{\mathrm{S}})^2}$$

See also Mamo, Zahed (2021)

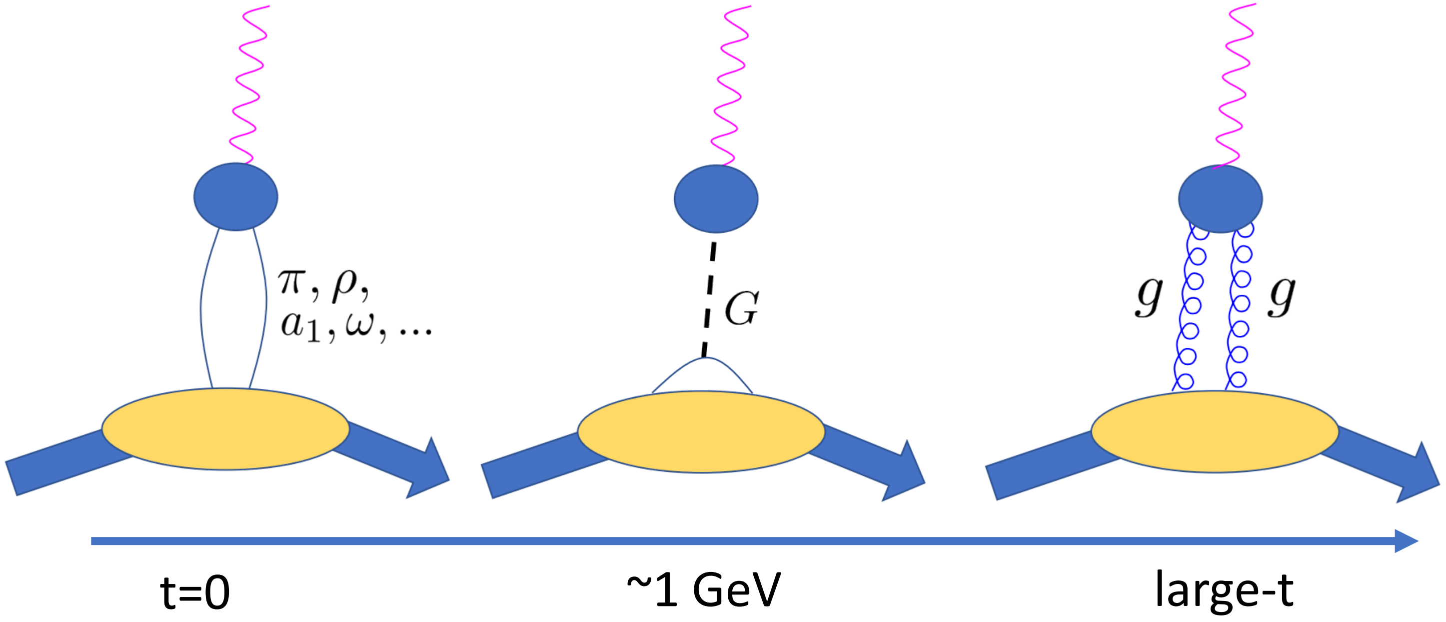
At $t = |\vec{k}|^2 = 0$, the infinite sum can be performed in a closed form

Numerical result (revised in Sugimoto, Tsukamoto, 2503.19492)

$$D(0) = -3.42 + 1.36 = -2.06$$

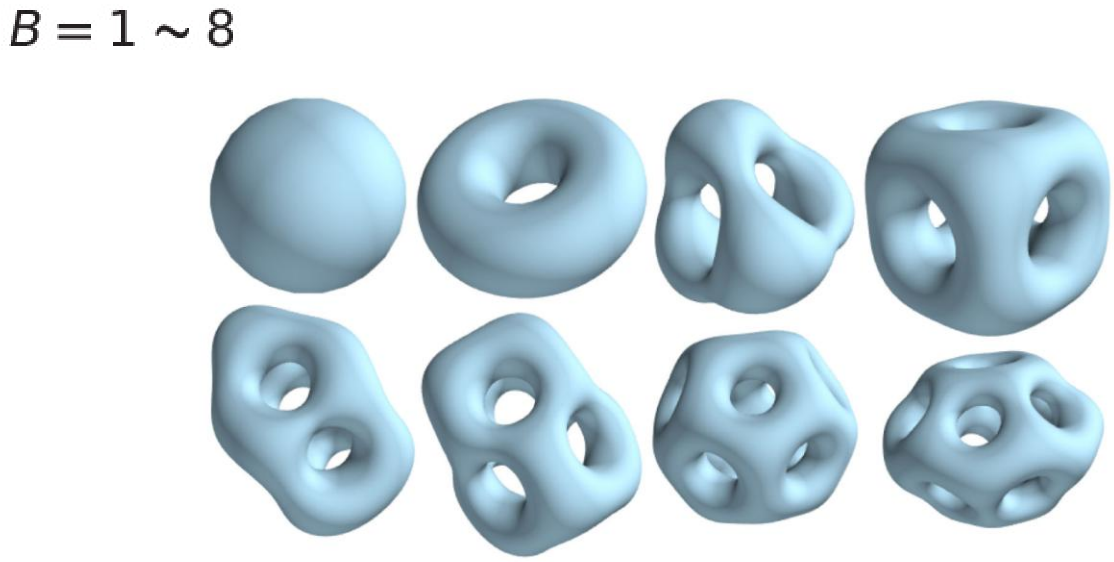
Negative (attractive) contribution from isovector mesons $\pi, \rho, a_1, \cdots$

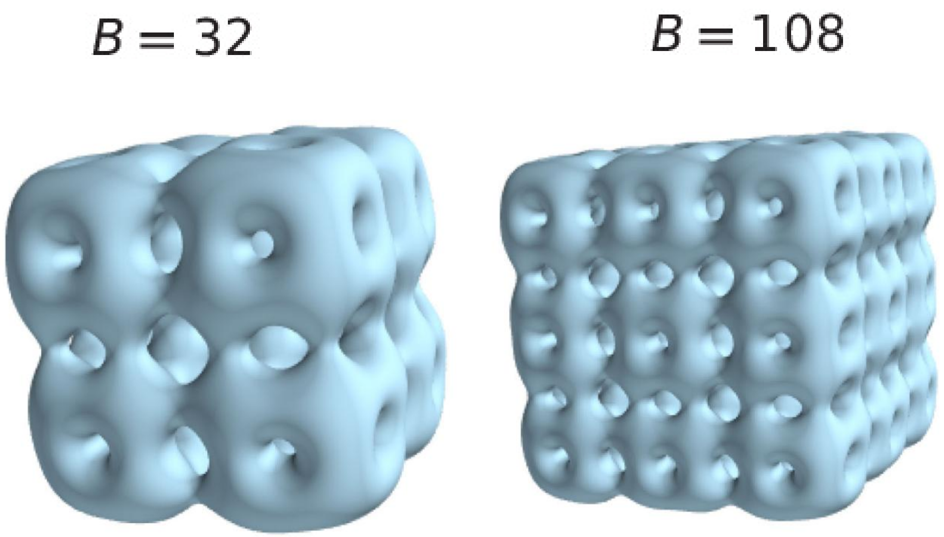
Positive (replusive) contribution from isoscalar mesons ω



D-term of atomic nuclei in the Skyrme model

Martin-Caro, Huidobro, YH 2304.05994
2312.12984





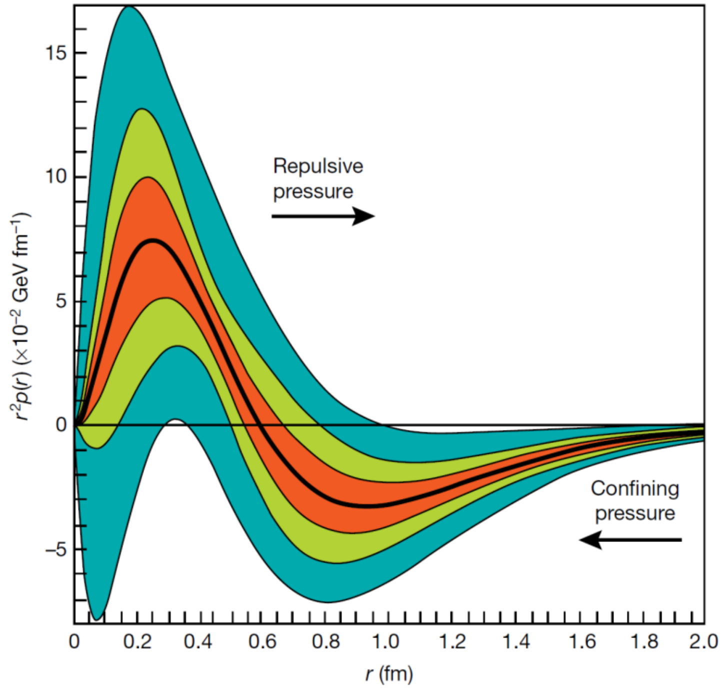
B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	$8a$	$8b$	32	108
$D(0)$	-3.701	-13.126	-26.757	-43.304	-62.72	-85.95	-106.596	-128.368	-140.816	-1.874×10^3	-2.152×10^4

The value D(0) grows quickly with increasing B

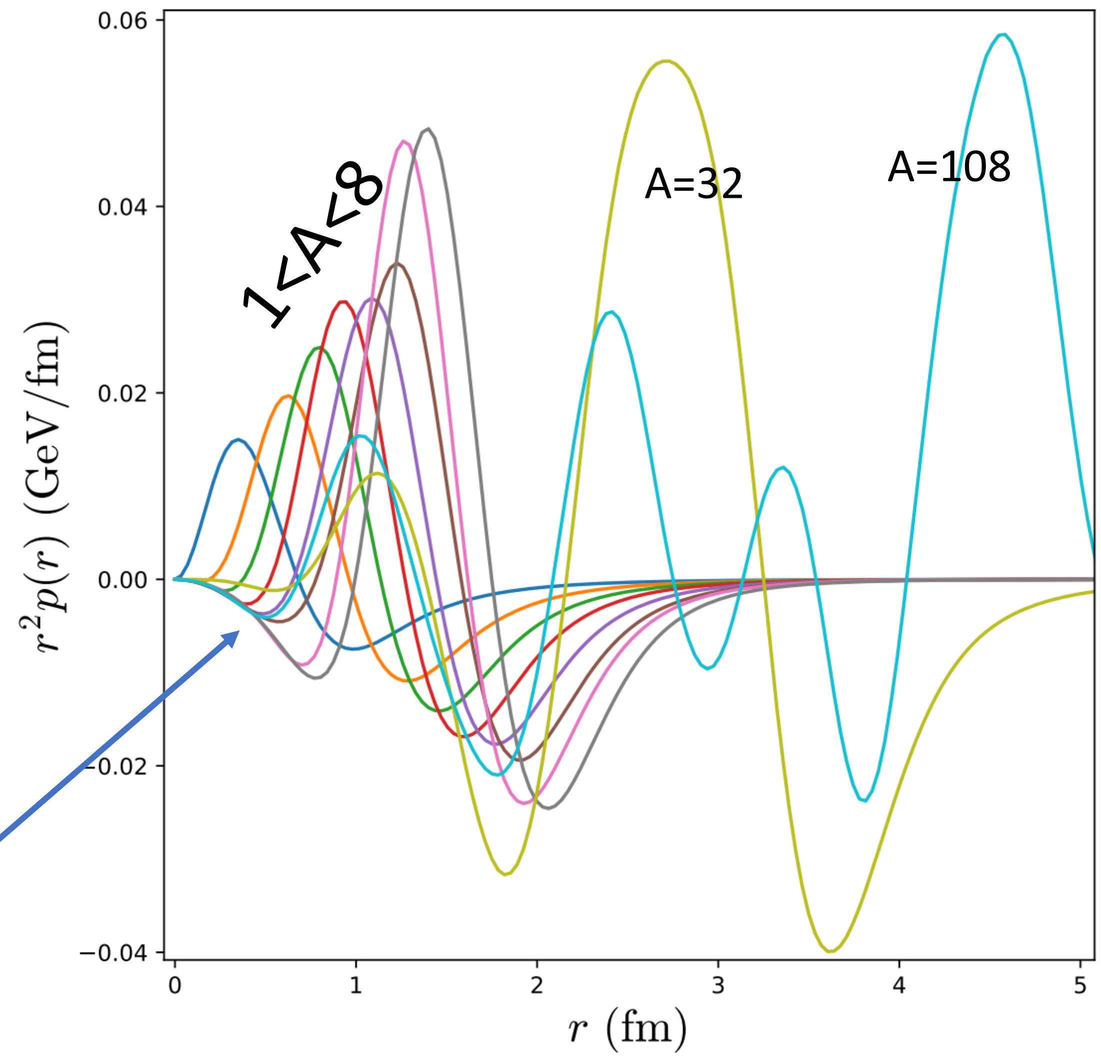
cf. Polyakov (2003); Liuti, Taneja (2005); Guzey, Siddikov (2005)

`Pressure' inside nucleon and nuclei

Burkert, Elouadrhiri, Girod (2018)



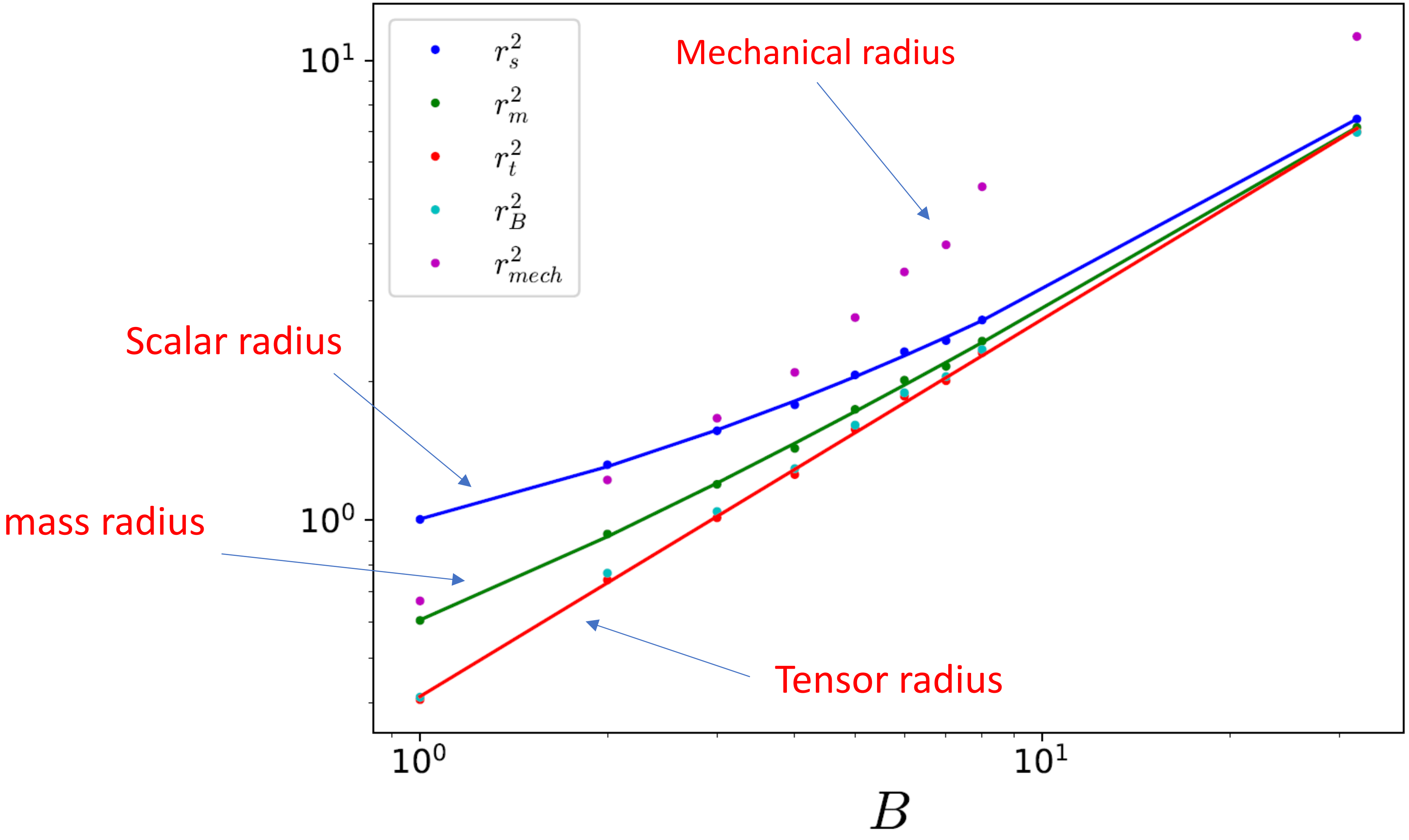
Martin-Caro, Huidobro, YH, 2312.12984



Negative pressure near the core for nuclei A>1
see also, Freese, Cosyn (2022), He, Zahed (2023)

Nuclear radii

Martin-Caro, Huidobro, YH, 2312.12984



$$\langle r^2\rangle_s = \langle r^2\rangle_m - \frac{3D(0)}{M^2}$$

$$\frac{D(0)}{M^2} \propto B^{\beta-2}$$

Experimental study of GFFs?

- Introduced theoretically in the 60s.
- Received far less attention than EM form factors, not because they are less interesting/important.
- The obvious reason: We cannot measure them directly!

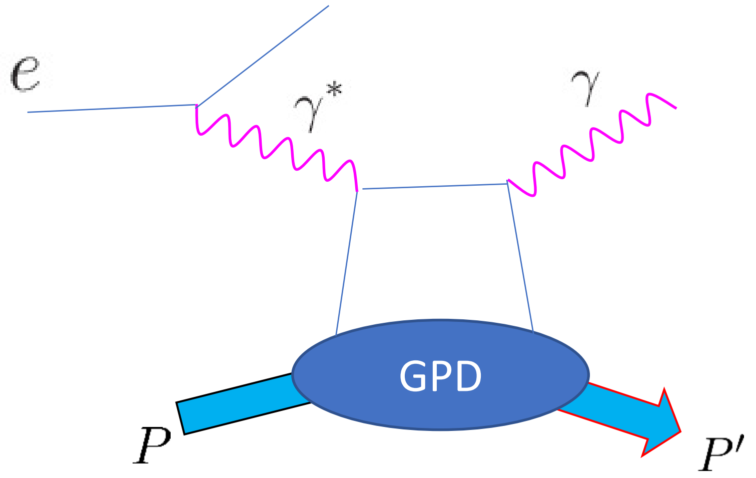
One-graviton exchange cross section $$\frac{d\sigma}{dt} \sim G_N^2 \frac{s^2}{t^2}$$

$$G_N \sim 1/M_P^2 \qquad M_P \sim 10^{19}\ \mathrm{GeV}$$

- There are, however, indirect ways to measure them.

Quark D-term from Deeply Virtual Compton Scattering

$$D = D_u + D_d + D_s + D_g + \cdots$$



$D_{u,d}$ related to the subtraction constant in the dispersion relation for the Compton form factor

Teryaev (2005)

$$\mathrm{Re}\mathcal{H}_q(\xi,t) \quad = \quad \frac{1}{\pi}\int_{-1}^{1} dx \mathrm{P}\frac{\mathrm{Im}\mathcal{H}_q(x,t)}{\xi - x} + 2\int_{-1}^{1} dz \frac{D_q(z,t)}{1-z}$$

$$\int_{-1}^{1} dz z D_q(z,t) = D_q(t)$$

1 graviton $\approx$ 2 photons

1+1=2

After all, 1 graviton $\neq$ 2 photons

1+1= anything

$$\int_{-1}^{1} dz \frac{D_q(z,t)}{1-z}$$

what is measurable

$$\int_{-1}^{1} dz z D_q(z,t)$$

what we want

2-photon state couples to operators with arbitrary spin.
How can one isolate the spin-2 component?

$$\frac{1}{1-z} = 1 + z + z^2 + z^3 + \cdots$$

spin-2 (EMT)

spin-4

$$d_1^{uds}(t=0, 2\ \mathrm{GeV}^2) = \quad -1.7 \pm 21$$

$$d_3^{uds}(t=0, 2\ \mathrm{GeV}^2) = \quad 0.7 \pm 15$$

$$d_1^{g}(t=0, 2\ \mathrm{GeV}^2) = \quad -2 \pm 30$$

$$d_3^{g}(t=0, 2\ \mathrm{GeV}^2) = \quad 0.1 \pm 2.3$$

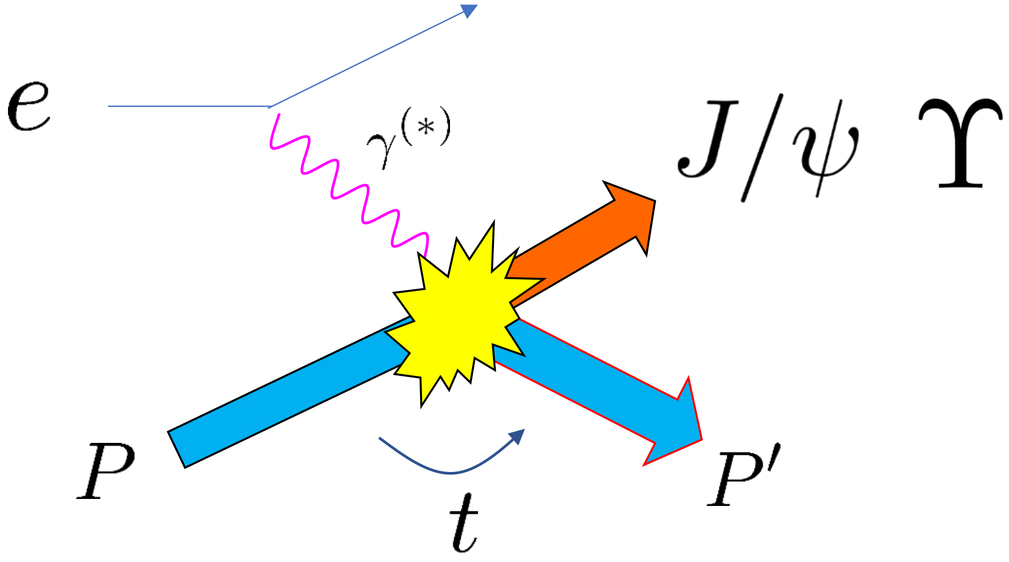
(NLO n=3 radiativ

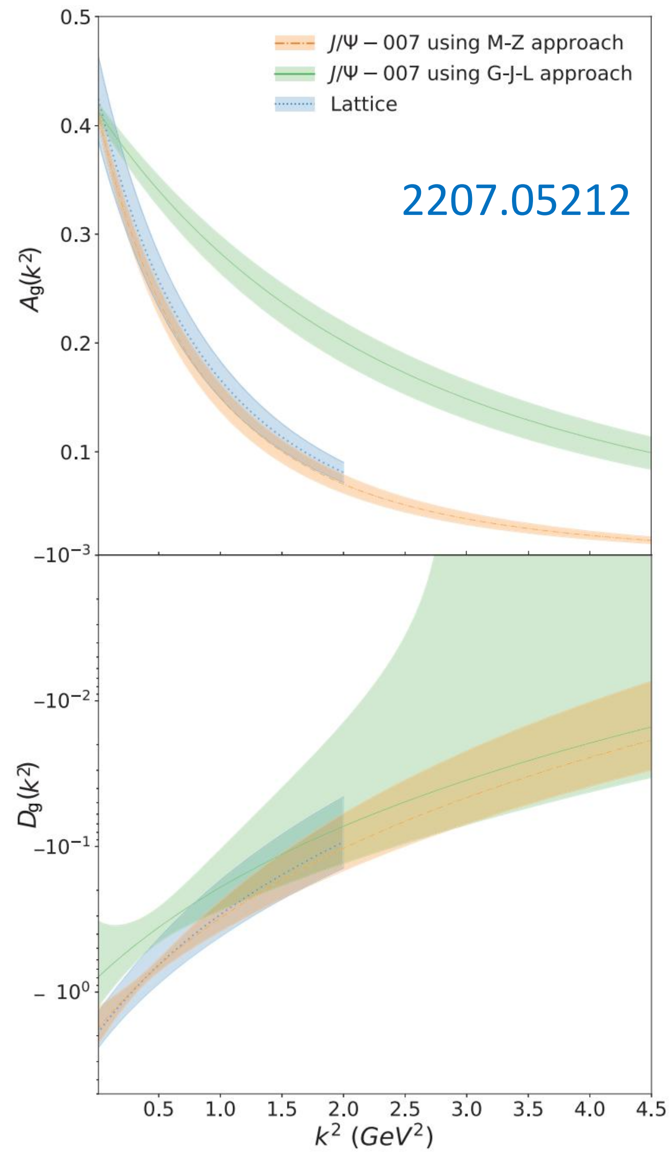
current precision: 1000%

Dutrieux, Meisgny, Mezrag, Moutarde (2024)

talk by Martinez-Fernandez on Monday

Quarkonium photo-production near threshold



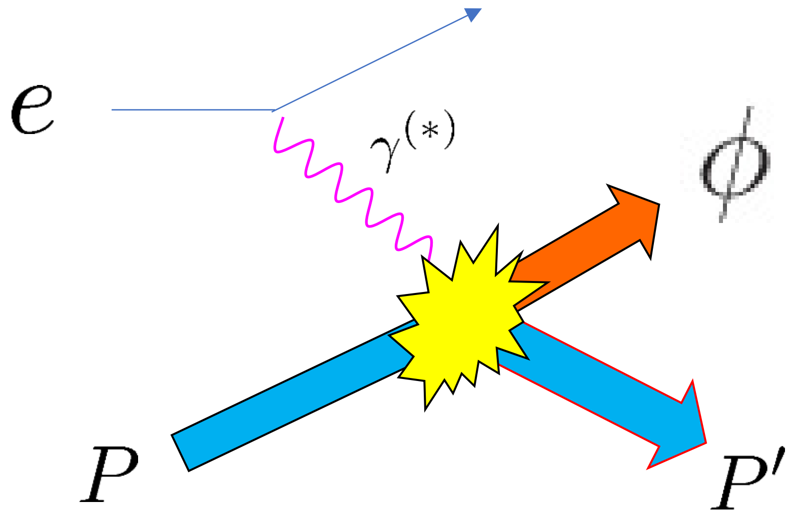


Ongoing experiments at JLab, future measurement at EIC?

Originally proposed by Kharzeev, Satz, Syamtomov, Zinovev (1997) to probe the gluon condensate.

One can also study gluon GFFs in this process YH, Yang (2018)

ϕ -meson electro-production near threshold



YH, Strikman (2021)
YH, Klest, Passek-K, Schoenleber (2025)

Complementary to J/ψ .
Measurement can be done in parallel (SoLID).

Need more than one observable for global analysis.

As sensitive to gluons as in J/ψ production (maybe even better).
Unique channel for strangeness GFFs.
Standard GPD factorization. No uncertainty from NRQCD.
Alternative scenarios for J/ψ photoproduction? Less ambiguity for ϕ electroproduction

Factorization only for the longitudinally polarized photon
L/T separation crucial → SoLID and EIC?

Again, 1 graviton $\neq$ 2 gluons

what is measurable

$$\int_{-1}^{1} \frac{dx}{x}\left(\frac{1}{\xi - x - i\epsilon} - \frac{1}{\xi + x - i\epsilon}\right) H_g(x,\xi,t)$$

what we want

$$\int_{-1}^{1} dx H_g(x,\xi,t) = A_g(t) + \xi^2 D_g(t)$$

Essentially the same problem as in the extraction of quark D-term from DVCS

HOWEVER, two important differences

Leading contribution from non-valence partons (gluon, strangeness)
There is a tunable skewness parameter ξ which becomes large near the threshold.

Threshold approximation

YH, Strikman 2102.12631 (Mellin moment)
Guo, Ji, Liu 2103.11506 (Mellin moment)
Guo, Ji, Yuan 2308.13006 (conformal moment)

what is measurable

what we want

$$\int_{-1}^{1} dx \frac{1}{\xi - x - i\epsilon} \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} H^{q(+)}(x,\xi,t,\mu^2) \\ \frac{1}{x} H^{g}(x,\xi,t,\mu^2), \end{cases} \approx \frac{2}{\xi^2}\frac{5}{4}\left(A^a(t,\mu^2) + \xi^2 D^a(t,\mu^2)\right)$$

Keep only the first term in the conformal partial wave expansion

Very good approximation when $\xi = \mathcal{O}(1)$ and for gluon and strangeness GPDs
(but not for light-quark GPDs)

Recently extended to NLO Guo, Yuan, Zhao, 2501.10532 → talk by Yuxun
YH, Klest, Passek-K, Schoenleber, 2501.12343
YH, Schoenleber 2502.12061

Example: NLO ϕ -electroproduction

YH, Klest, Passek-K, Schoenleber (2025)

Compare the full NLO amplitude (Muller et al. (2013)) with the truncated version, also at NLO

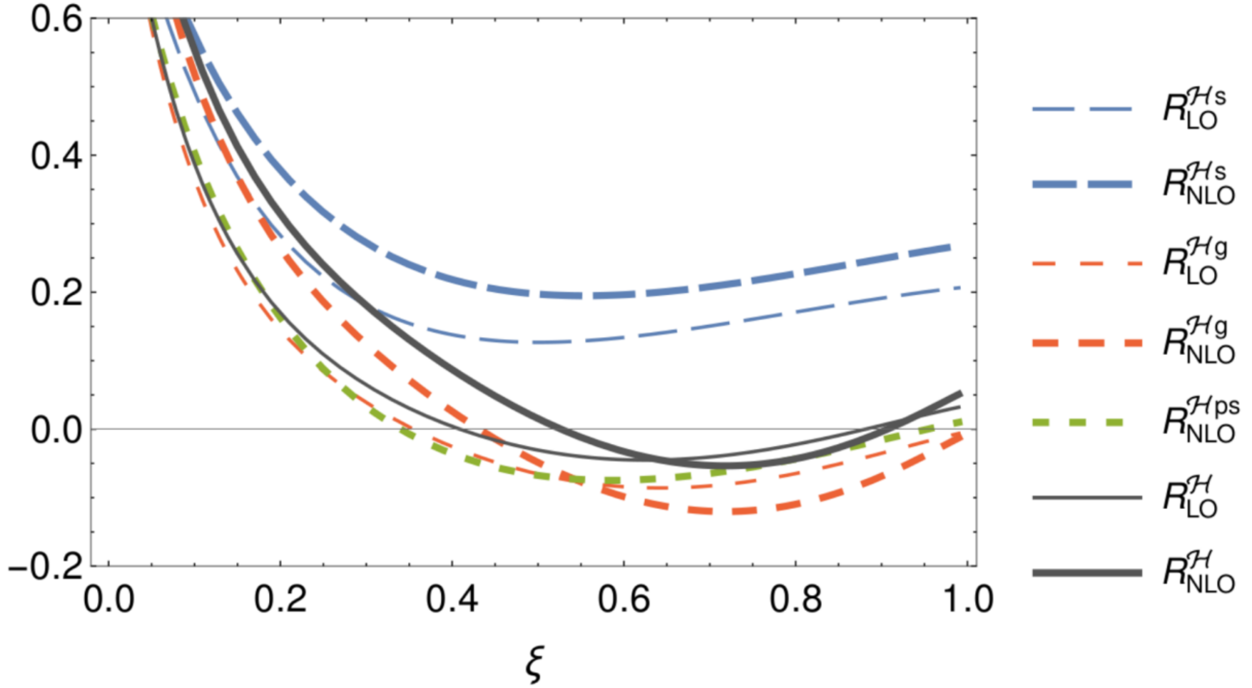
$$\mathcal{H}(\xi,t,Q^2) \approx \frac{2\kappa}{\xi^2}\frac{15}{2}\Bigg[\left\{\alpha_s(\mu)+\frac{\alpha_s^2(\mu)}{2\pi}\left(25.7309-2n_f+\left(-\frac{131}{18}+\frac{n_f}{3}\right)\ln\frac{Q^2}{\mu^2}\right)\right\}(A_s(t,\mu)+\xi^2 D_s(t,\mu))$$
$$+\frac{\alpha_s^2}{2\pi}\left(-2.3889+\frac{2}{3}\ln\frac{Q^2}{\mu^2}\right)\sum_q (A_q+\xi^2 D_q)+\frac{3}{8}\left\{\alpha_s+\frac{\alpha_s^2}{2\pi}\left(13.8682-\frac{83}{18}\ln\frac{Q^2}{\mu^2}\right)\right\}(A_g+\xi^2 D_g)\Bigg]$$

Goloskokov-Kroll (GK) model for nucleon GPD

Truncation error

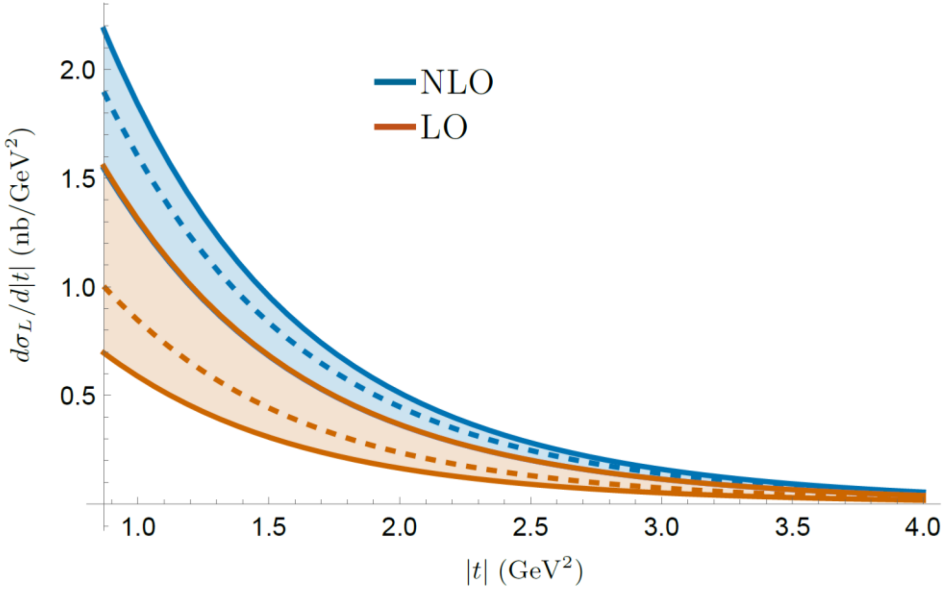
$$R = 1 - \frac{|\mathcal{H}_{\text{full}}|}{\mathcal{H}_{\text{trunc}}}$$

less than 10% for $\xi \gtrsim 0.4$



ϕ -electroproduction at NLO

YH, Klest, Passek-K, Schoenleber (2025)

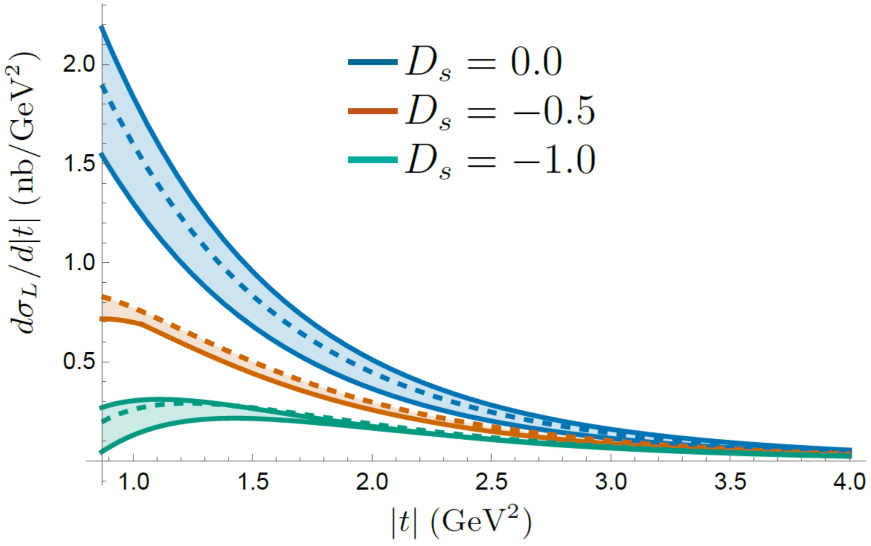


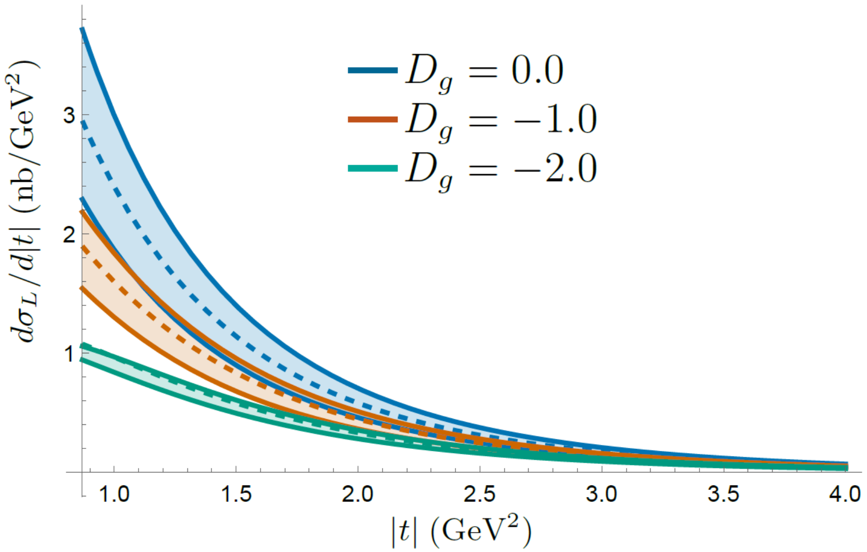
Dominated by gluons.

Cancellation between LO strangeness and NLO valence

Strangeness can make an impact if $D_s = O(1)$

Combined fit to J/psi production data

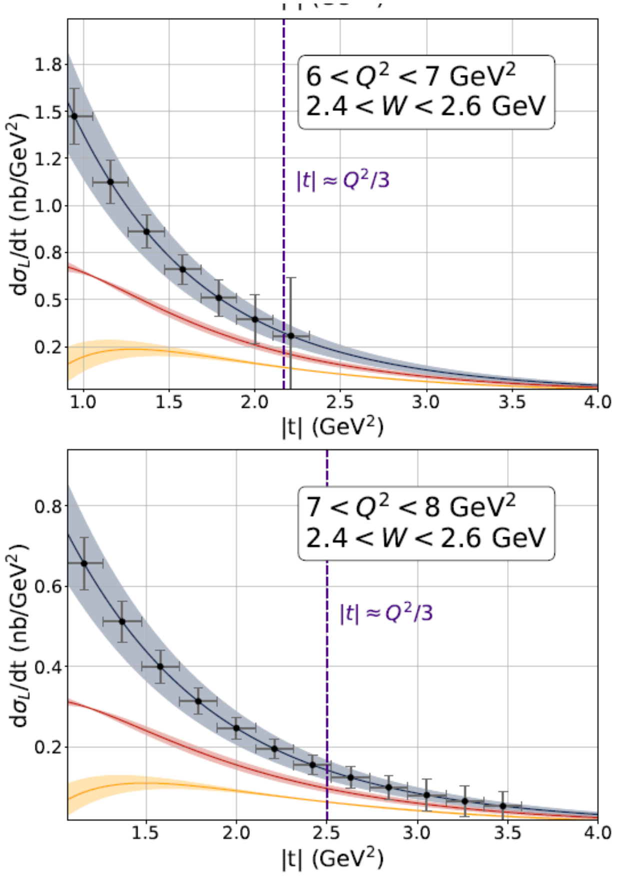


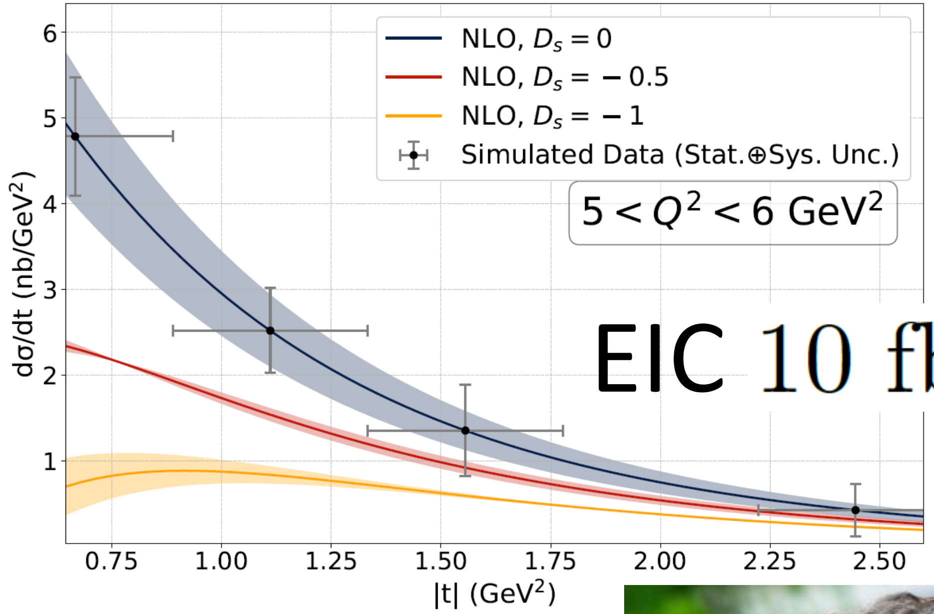


ϕ -electroproduction: feasibility study

YH, Klest, Passek-K, Schoenleber (2025)

SoLID $43.2\ \text{ab}^{-1}$





EIC $10\ \text{fb}^{-1}$

Looks like a feasible measurement!

Pion GFFs from Sullivan process

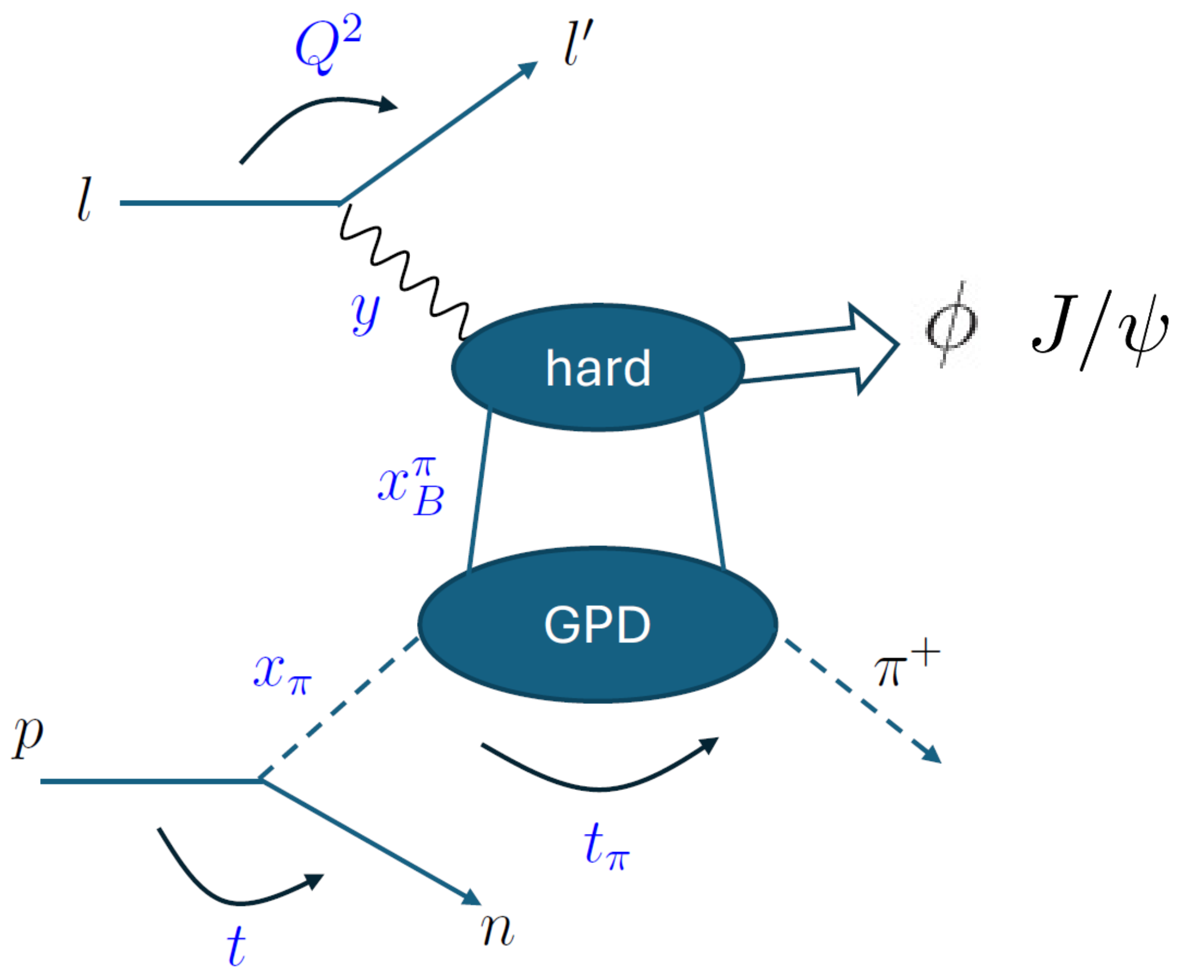
YH, Schoenleber (2025)

Originally proposed in 1972 to access the pion EM form factors

Pion GPDs from DVCS

Amrath, Diehl, Lansberg (2008)
Chavez, et al. (2022)

Pion GFFs from
J/ψ photoproduction
ϕ electroproduction
near threshold



Sullivan process near threshold

Measure the cross section $\frac{d\sigma}{dx_B dx_\pi}$

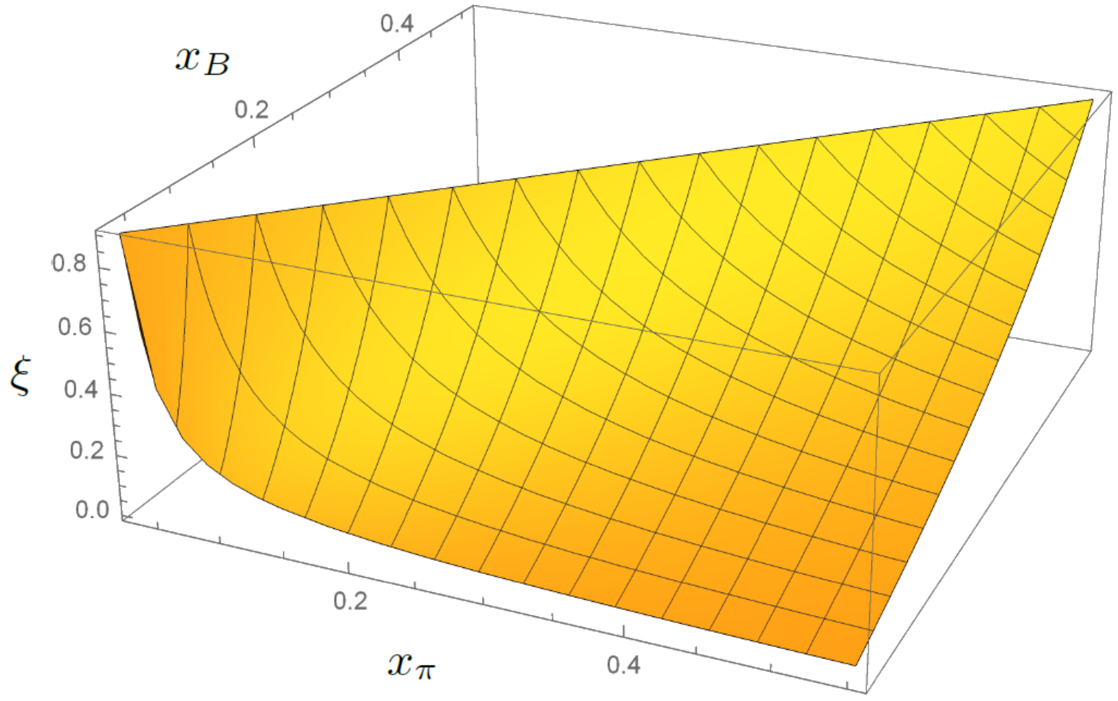
$$x_\pi = \frac{p_\pi \cdot l}{p \cdot l} \qquad x_B = \frac{Q^2}{2p \cdot q}$$

Threshold region along the diagonal line

$$x_B \approx x_\pi$$

Thanks to the light pion mass, relatively easier to achieve large skewness while keeping t small

$$t_{min} = -\frac{4\xi^2 m_\pi^2}{1-\xi^2}$$



Threshold approximation

Input: Pion GPD at $\mu^2 = 10\,\mathrm{GeV}^2$

Chavez et al. 2110.06052

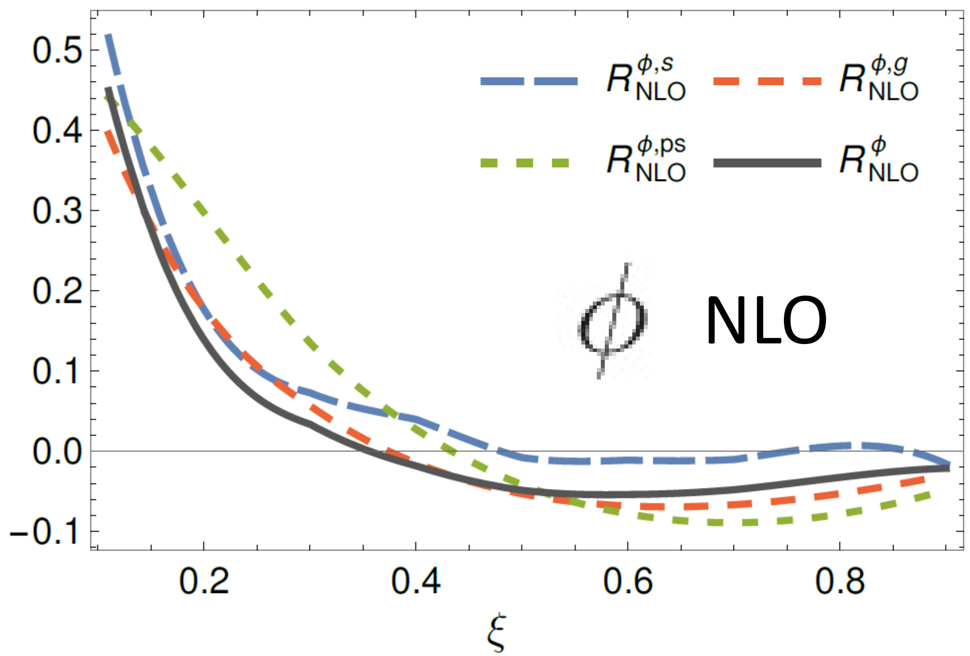
From the soft pion theorem

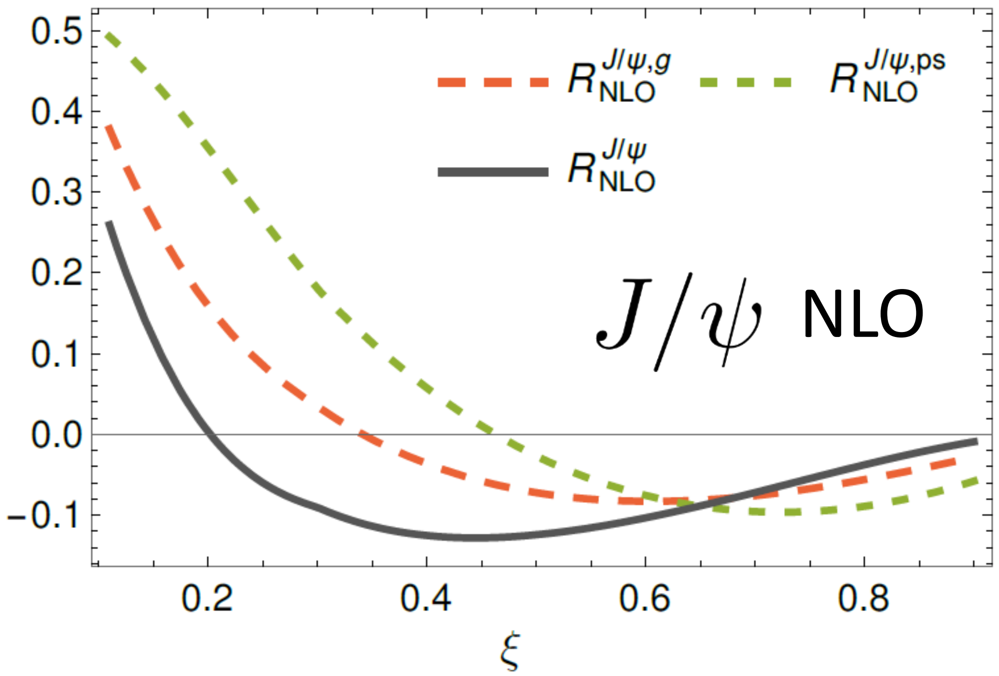
$$D_a(0) = -A_a(0) \qquad a = u, d, s, g, \cdots$$

Truncation error

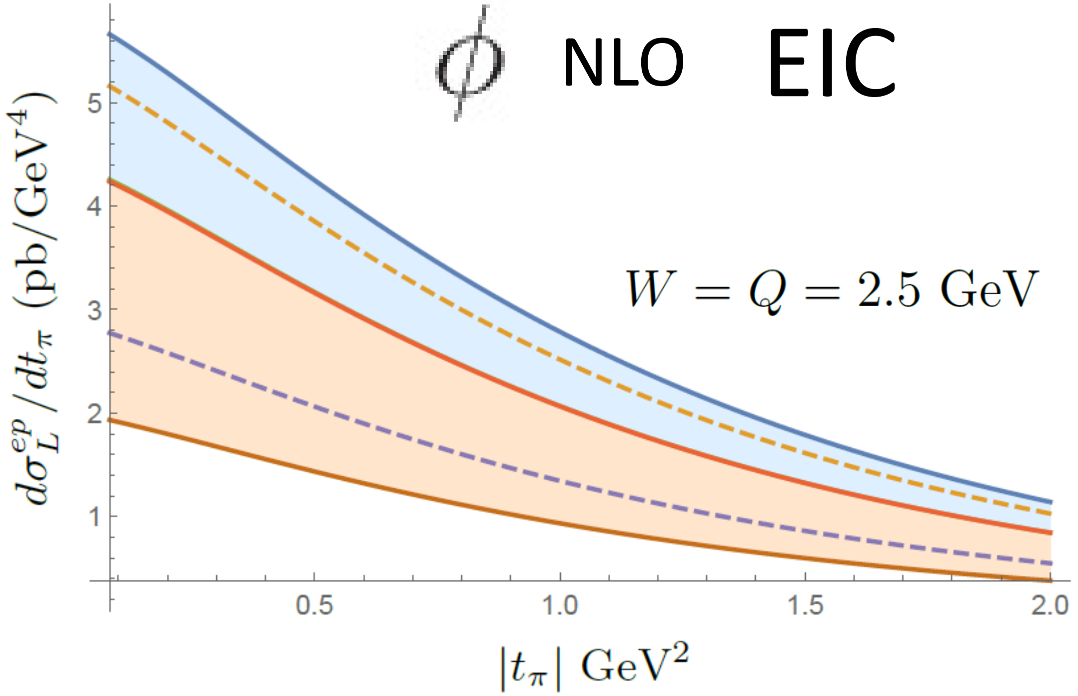
$$R = 1 - \frac{|\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{full}}|}{\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{trunc}}}$$ ~10%

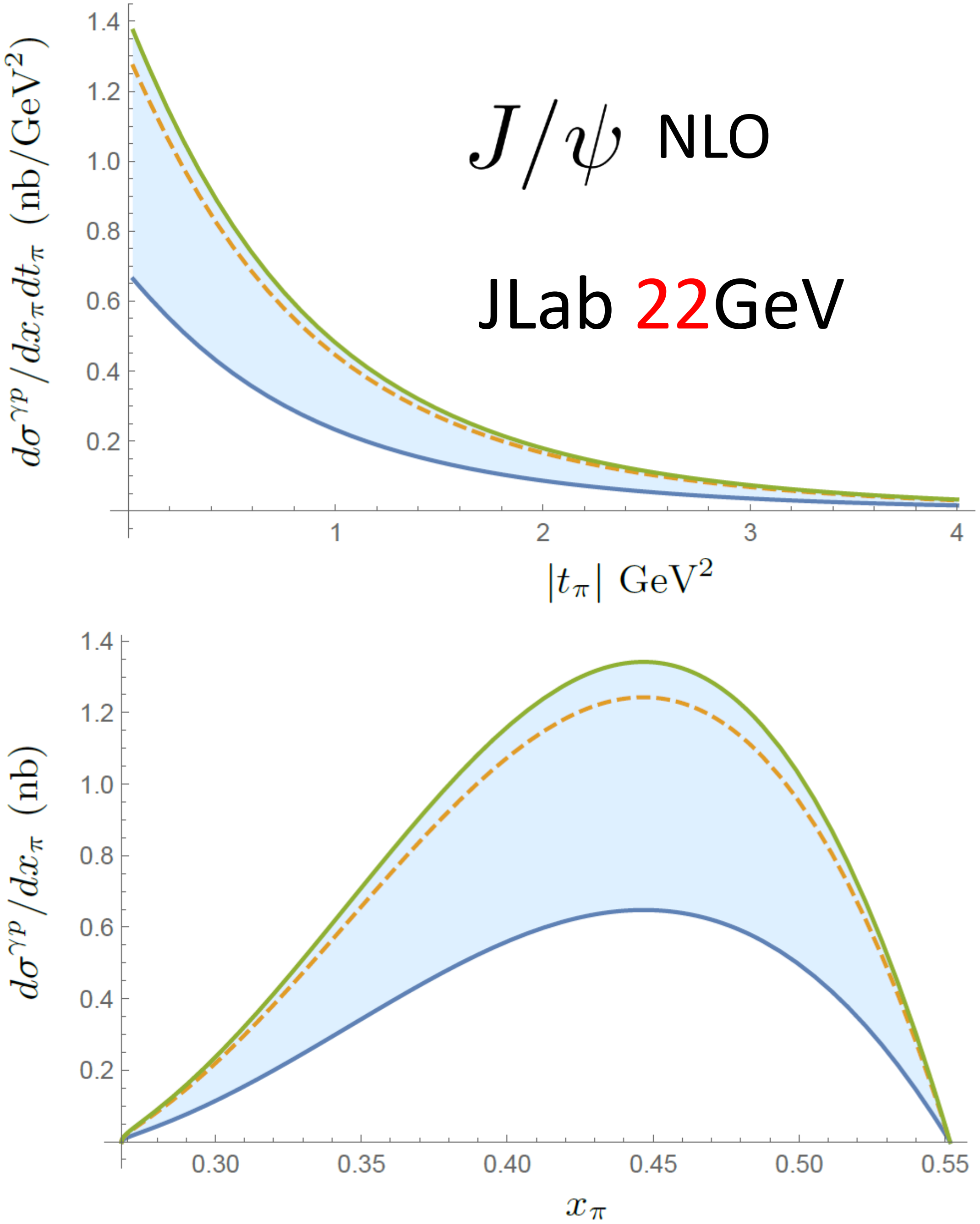
Cross section dominated by pion GFFs





Prediction for JLab and EIC





Cross section well in the measurable range

Conclusions

- J/ψ photo(electro-)production and ϕ electroproduction:
  Currently the best theory case for accessing the proton/pion GFFs.

- Experimental feasibility test at SoLID and EIC for proton target.

- j=1 truncation works very well at NLO. Avoid the notorious deconvolution problem of GPDs at the cost of making ~10% errors. Aim for 10% precision.