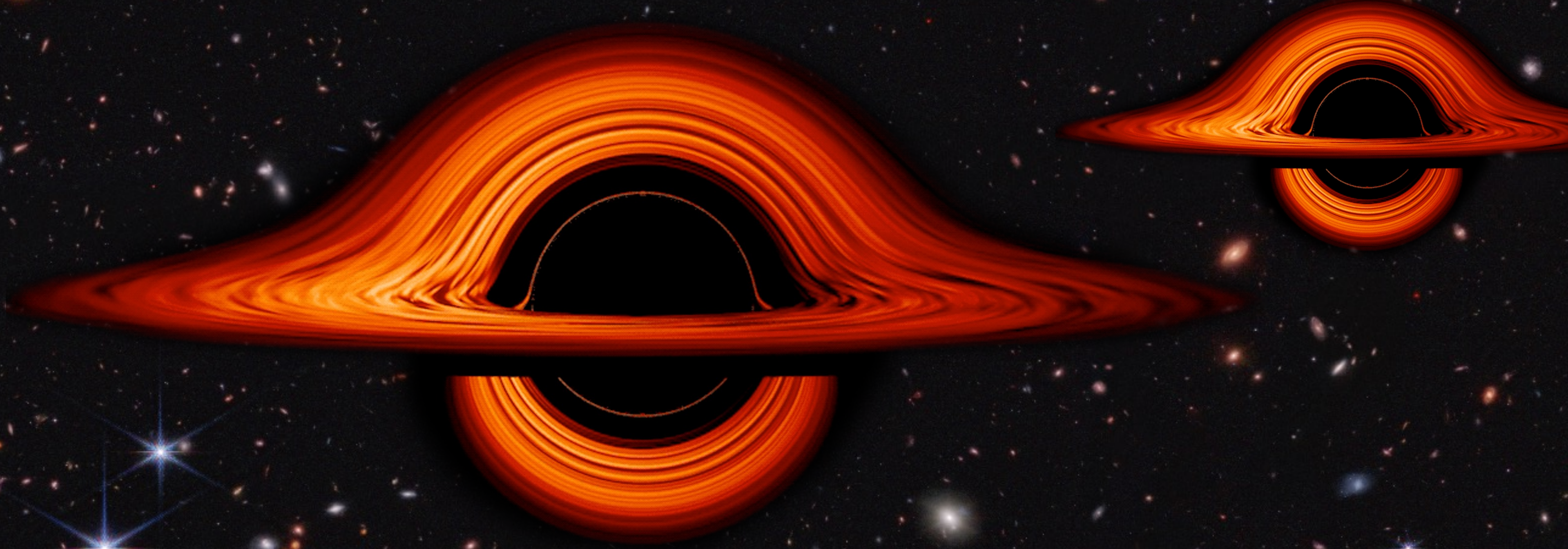
GRAVITATIONAL WAVE ASTRONOMY NORTH WEST

11 June 2025

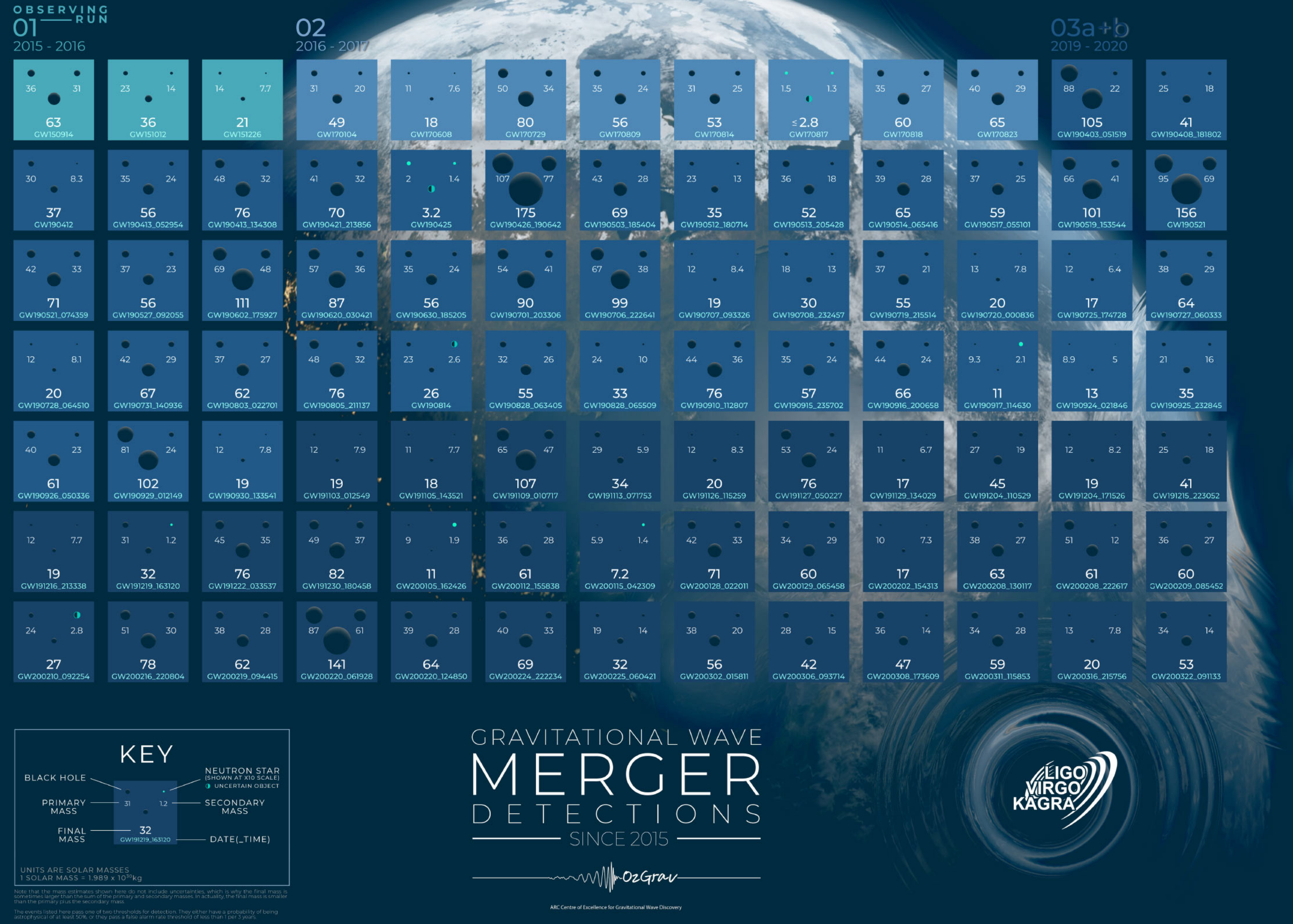
Characterizing the Properties of the Observed BBH Population



Jaxen Godfrey

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

GWANW 2025


OBSERVING RUN
01
2015 - 2016
02
2016 - 2017
03a+b
2019 - 2020
36 31 63 GW150914
23 14 36 GW151012
14 7.7 21 GW151226
31 20 49 GW170104
11 7.6 18 GW170608
50 34 80 GW170729
35 24 56 GW170809
31 25 53 GW170814
1.5 1.3 ≤2.8 GW170817
35 27 60 GW170818
40 29 65 GW170823
88 22 105 GW190403_051519
25 18 41 GW190408_181802
30 8.3 37 GW190412
35 24 56 GW190413_052954
48 32 76 GW190413_134308
41 32 70 GW190421_213856
2 1.4 3.2 GW190425
107 77 175 GW190426_190642
43 28 69 GW190503_185404
23 13 35 GW190512_180714
36 18 52 GW190513_205428
39 28 65 GW190514_065416
37 25 59 GW190517_055101
66 41 101 GW190519_153544
95 69 156 GW190521
42 33 71 GW190521_074359
37 23 56 GW190527_092055
69 48 111 GW190602_175927
57 36 87 GW190620_030421
35 24 56 GW190630_185205
54 41 90 GW190701_203306
67 38 99 GW190706_222641
12 8.4 19 GW190707_093326
18 13 30 GW190708_232457
37 21 55 GW190719_215514
13 7.8 20 GW190720_000836
12 6.4 17 GW190725_174728
38 29 64 GW190727_060333
12 8.1 20 GW190728_064510
42 29 67 GW190731_140936
37 27 62 GW190803_022701
48 32 76 GW190805_211137
23 2.6 26 GW190814
32 26 55 GW190828_063405
24 10 33 GW190828_065509
44 36 76 GW190910_112807
35 24 57 GW190915_235702
44 24 66 GW190916_200658
9.3 2.1 11 GW190917_114630
8.9 5 13 GW190924_021846
21 16 35 GW190925_232845
40 23 61 GW190926_050336
81 24 102 GW190929_012149
12 7.8 19 GW190930_133541
12 7.9 19 GW191103_012549
11 7.7 18 GW191105_143521
65 47 107 GW191109_010717
29 5.9 34 GW191113_071753
12 8.3 20 GW191126_115259
53 24 76 GW191127_050227
11 6.7 17 GW191129_134029
27 19 45 GW191204_110529
12 8.2 19 GW191204_171526
25 18 41 GW191215_223052
12 7.7 19 GW191216_213338
31 1.2 32 GW191219_163120
45 35 76 GW191222_033537
49 37 82 GW191230_180458
9 1.9 11 GW200105_162426
36 28 61 GW200112_155838
5.9 1.4 7.2 GW200115_042309
42 33 71 GW200128_022011
34 29 60 GW200129_065458
10 7.3 17 GW200202_154313
38 27 63 GW200208_130117
51 12 61 GW200208_222617
36 27 60 GW200209_085452
24 2.8 27 GW200210_092254
51 30 78 GW200216_220804
38 28 62 GW200219_094415
87 61 141 GW200220_061928
39 28 64 GW200220_124850
40 33 69 GW200224_222234
19 14 32 GW200225_060421
38 20 56 GW200302_015811
28 15 42 GW200306_093714
36 14 47 GW200308_173609
34 28 59 GW200311_115853
13 7.8 20 GW200316_215756
34 14 53 GW200322_091133
KEY
BLACK HOLE
NEUTRON STAR (SHOWN AT X10 SCALE)
UNCERTAIN OBJECT
PRIMARY MASS
31
1.2
SECONDARY MASS
FINAL MASS
32
GW191219_163120
DATE(_TIME)
UNITS ARE SOLAR MASSES
1 SOLAR MASS = 1.989 x 10^30kg
Note that the mass estimates shown here do not include uncertainties, which is why the final mass is sometimes larger than the sum of the primary and secondary masses. In actuality, the final mass is smaller than the primary plus the secondary mass.
The events listed here pass one of two thresholds for detection. They either have a probability of being astrophysical of at least 50%, or they pass a false alarm rate threshold of less than 1 per 3 years.
GRAVITATIONAL WAVE
MERGER
DETECTIONS
SINCE 2015
OzGrav
ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery
LIGO
VIRGO
KAGRA

The “theoretical” challenge of BBH formation: separation

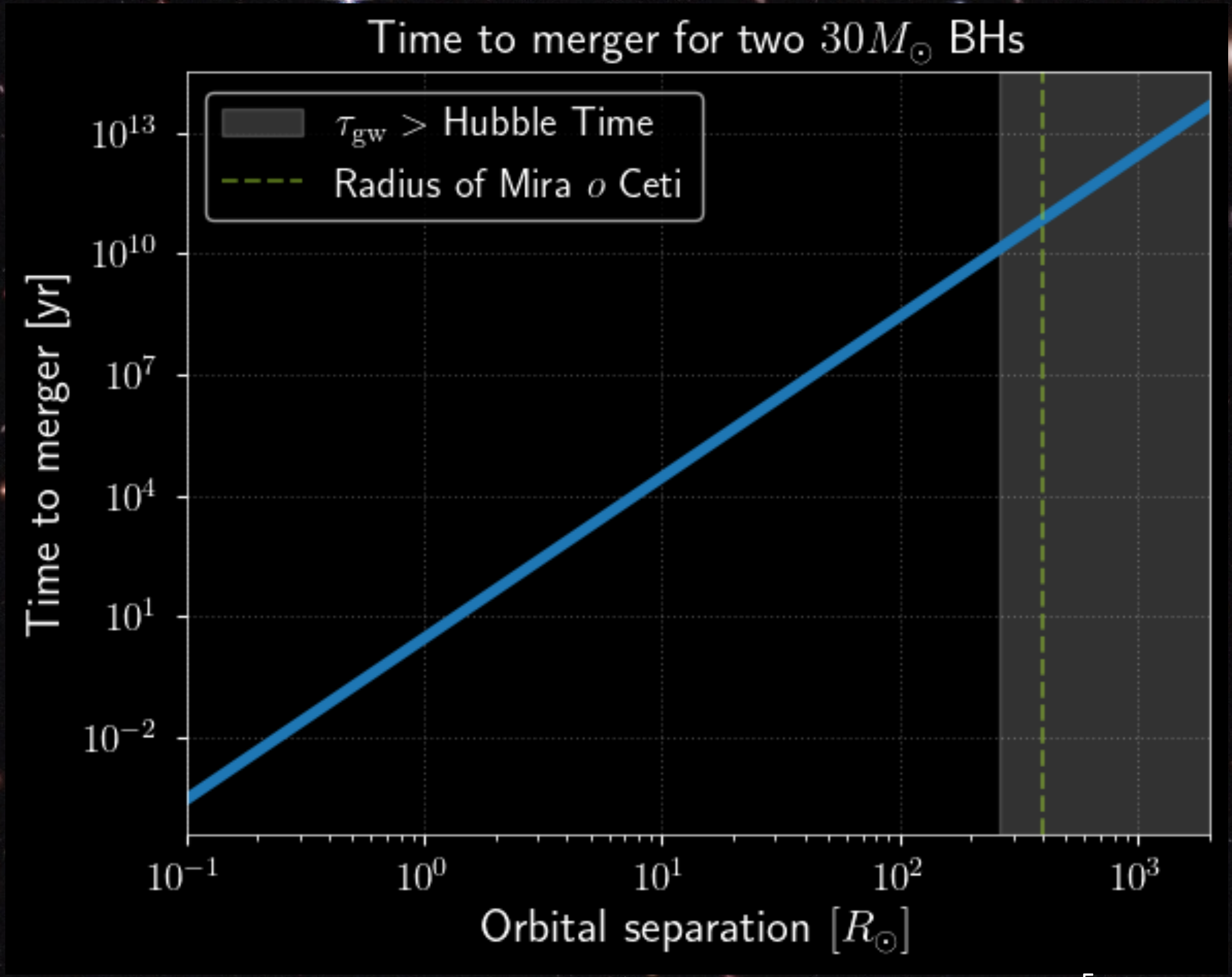
The separation challenge

Time to merger:

$$t_{GW} = \frac{5}{64} \frac{a^4 c^5}{4G^3 m_1 m_2 (m_1 + m_2)}$$

Luminosity:

$$L = \frac{32}{5} \frac{m_1^2 m_2^2 (m_1 + m_2)}{a^5}$$



Theories to overcome the challenge

"Field" formation

- Common Envelope
- Stable mass transfer
- Chemically homogeneous evolution
- Population-III stars
- Triples/Multiples

Dynamical formation

- Globular clusters
- Young/Open star clusters
- Nuclear star clusters

"Field" formation

- Common Envelope
- Stable mass transfer
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Dynamical formation

- Globular clusters
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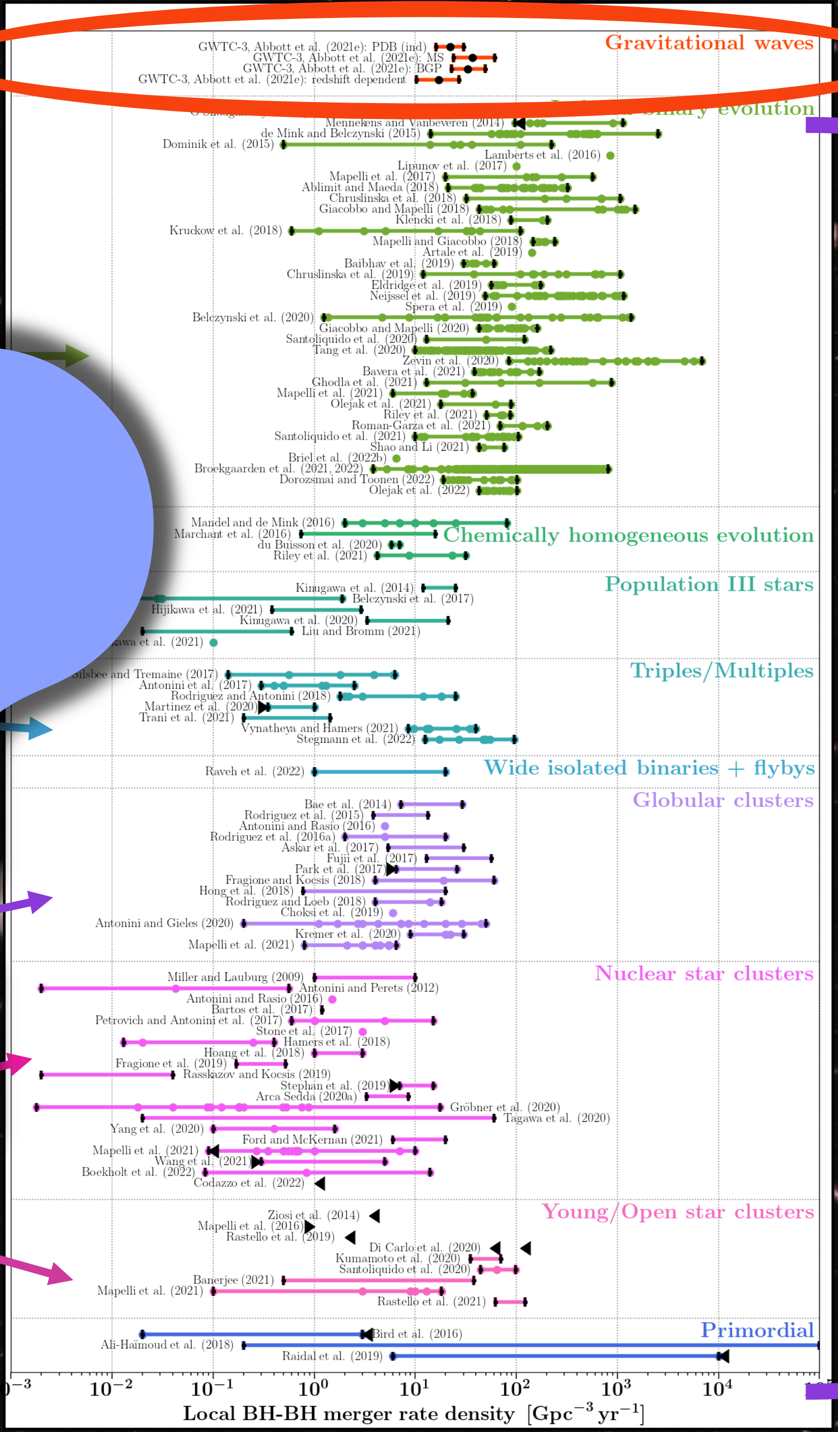
- Nuclear star clusters

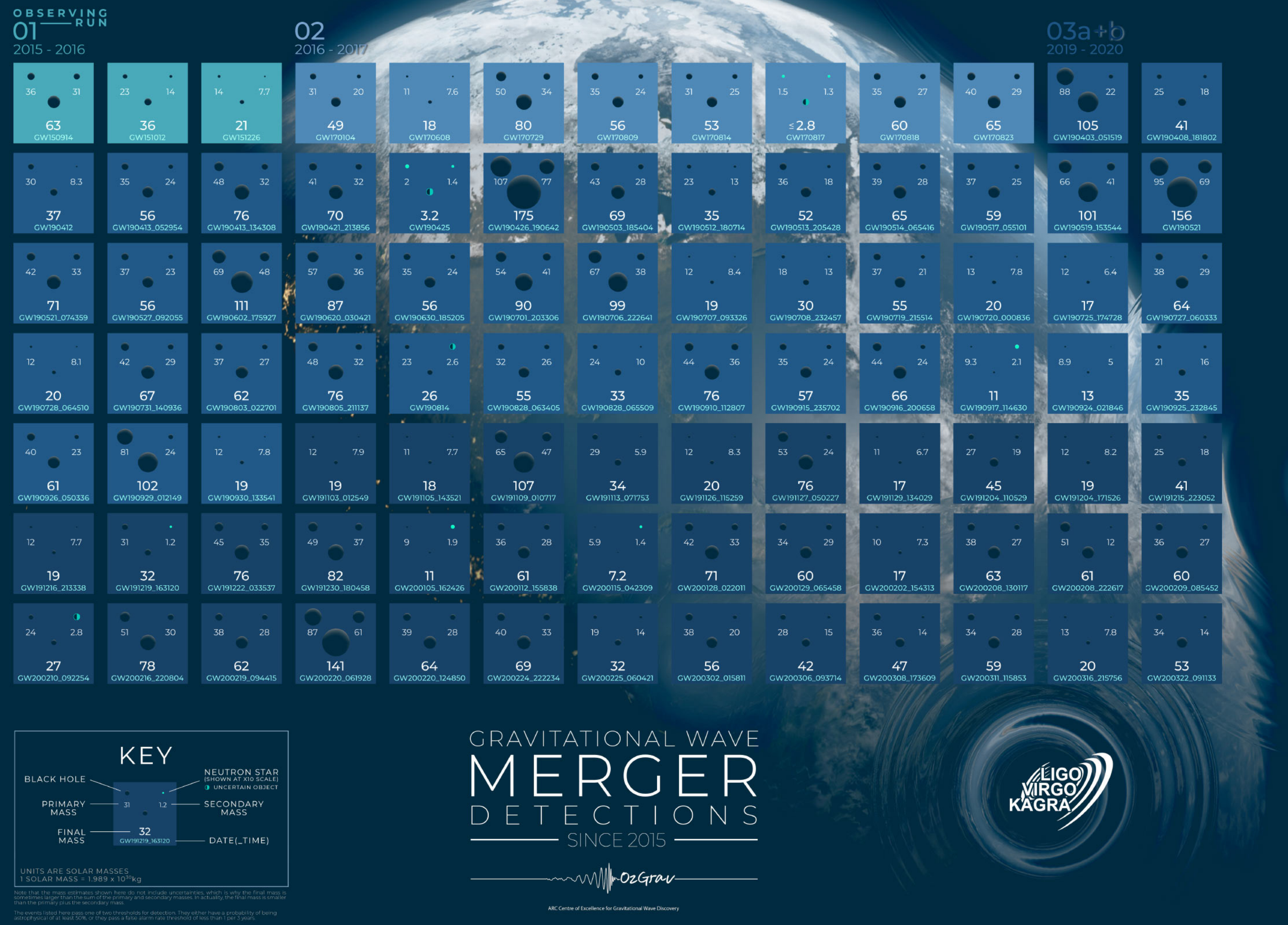
?

Observations



Theoretical Predictions

Mandel & Broekgaarden, 2022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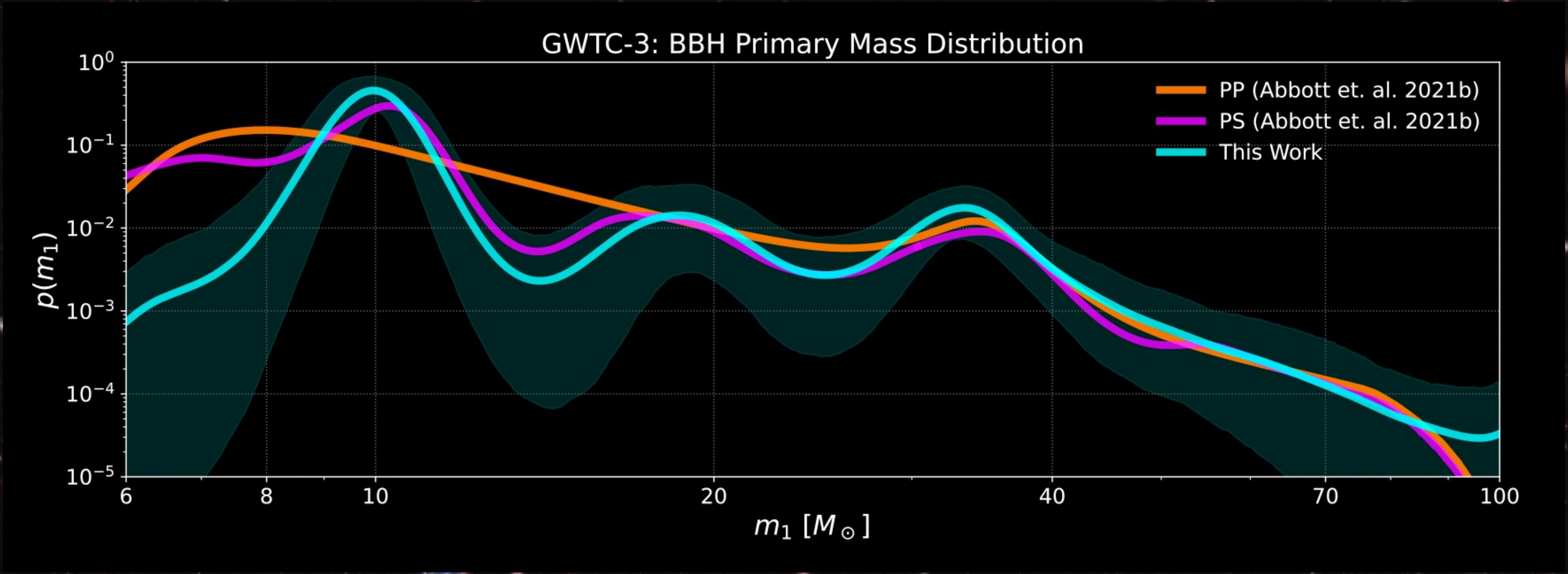


Edelman, et. al. 2022

Catalog of single event posteriors:

$$p\left(\{\overrightarrow{\theta^i}\}\middle|\{\overrightarrow{d^i}\}\right)$$

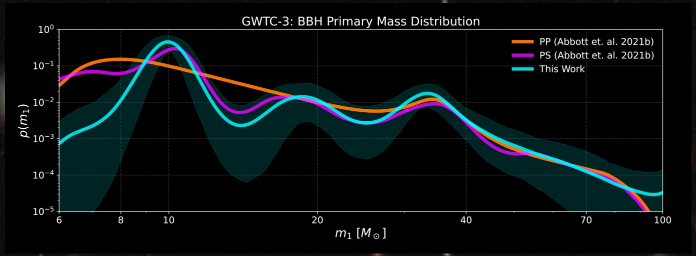
Parameter estimation algorithm

GWINFERNO

Gravitational Wave Hierarchical Inference with Numpyro

$$p(\vec{\Lambda}|\{\overrightarrow{d^i}\})$$

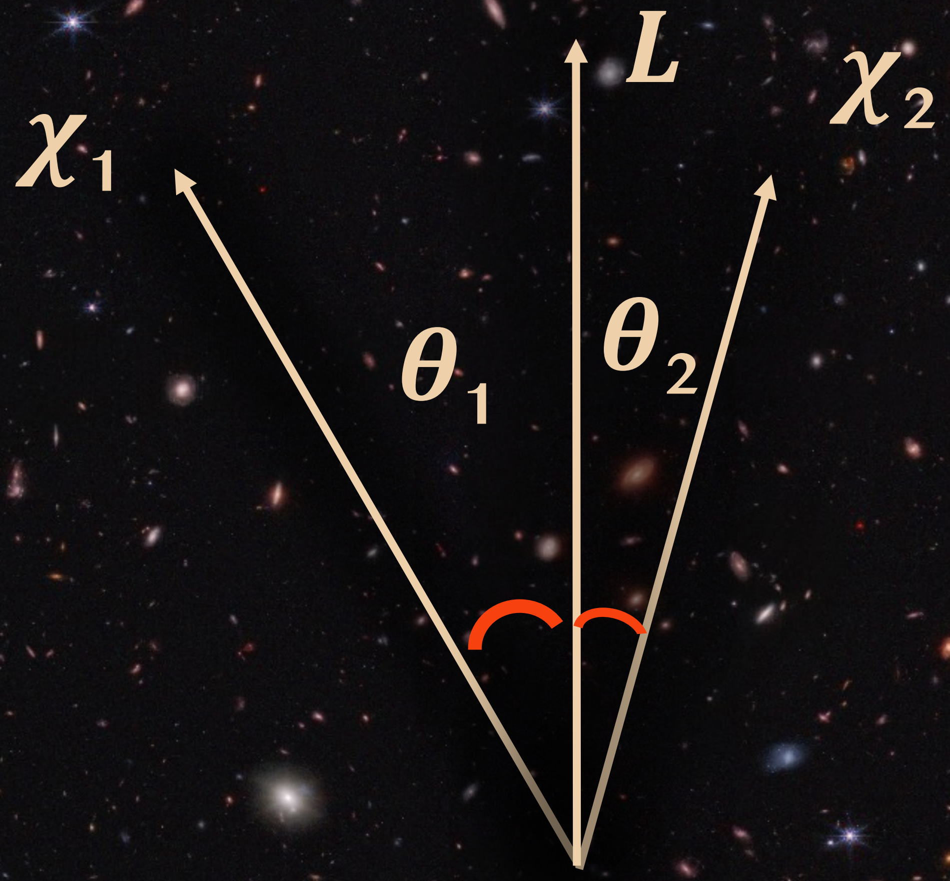
$$p(\vec{\theta}|\vec{\Lambda})$$

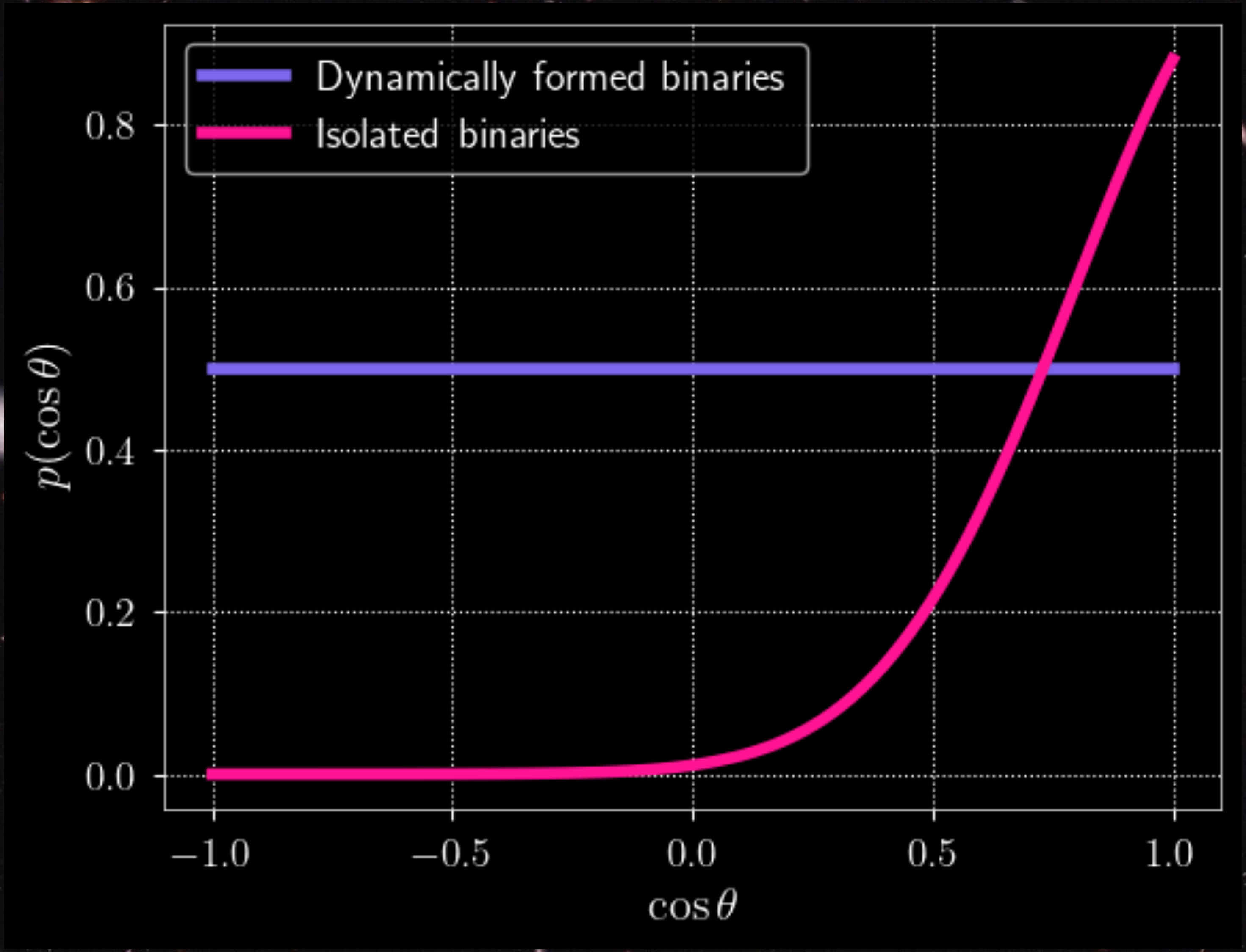


Binary black hole spin

Magnitude: $\chi_1, \chi_2 \in [\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{1}]$

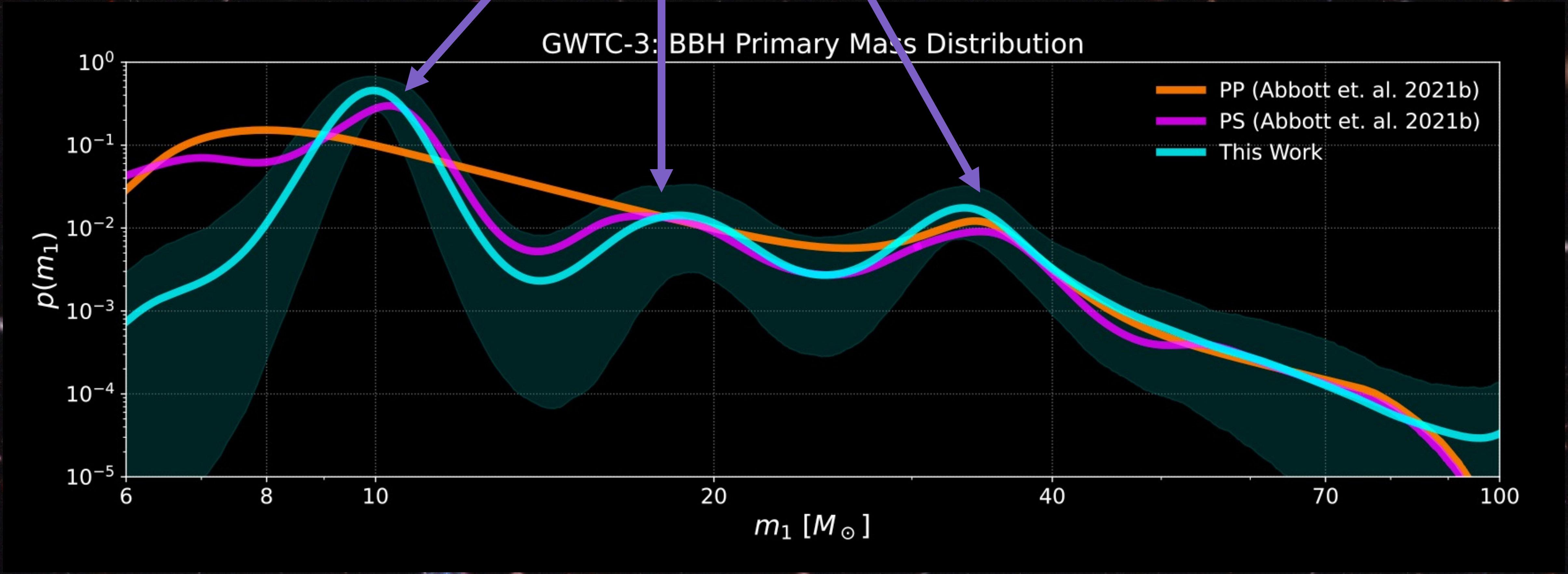
"Tilt": $\cos\theta_1, \cos\theta_2 \in [-\mathbf{1}, \mathbf{1}]$




Dynamically formed binaries
Isolated binaries
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0.0
$p(\cos\theta)$
−1.0
−0.5
0.0
0.5
1.0
$\cos\theta$

Proposition: Features in the BBH mass distribution may be correlated with different spin properties

Features



Edelman, et. al. 2022

Isolated Peak Model

$$p(m_1|\vec{\Lambda}) = f_p\mathcal{N}(m_1|\mu,\sigma) + (1-f_p)\mathcal{B}_n(m_1|\vec{\alpha}_{n,m})$$

Gaussian

B-Spline

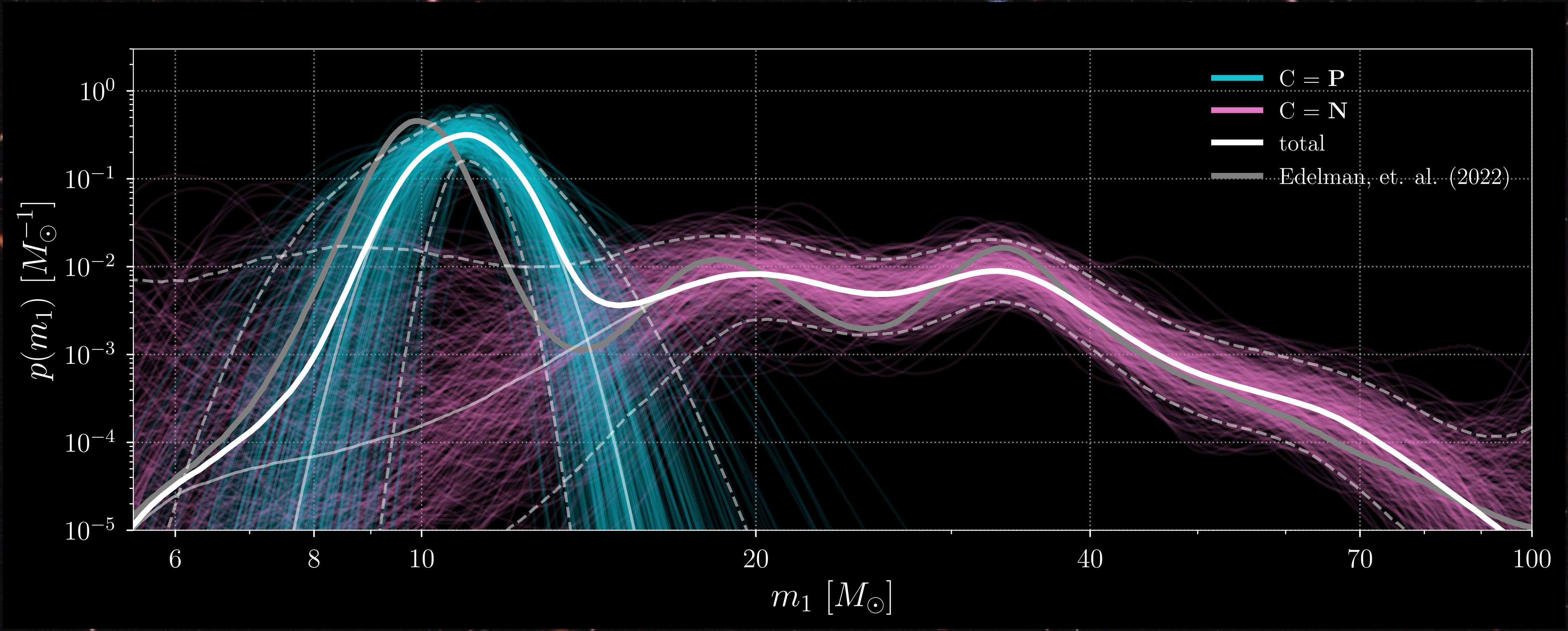
$$p(m_1,\cos\theta\,|\vec{\Lambda}) = f_p\mathcal{N}(m_1|\mu,\sigma)\,\mathcal{B}_p(\cos\theta\,|\vec{\alpha}_{p,\theta}) + (1-f_p)\mathcal{B}_n(m_1|\vec{\alpha}_{n,m})\,\mathcal{B}_n(\cos\theta\,|\vec{\alpha}_{n,\theta})$$

B-Spline

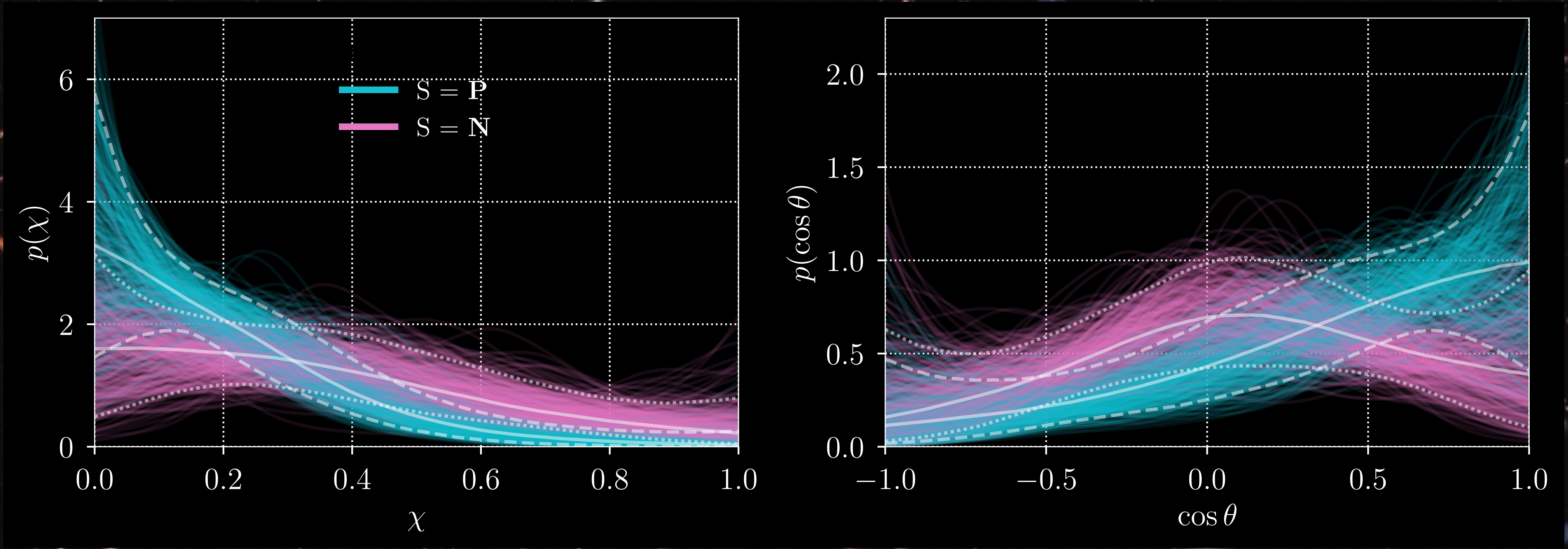
B-Spline

B-Spline

Results: mass distribution

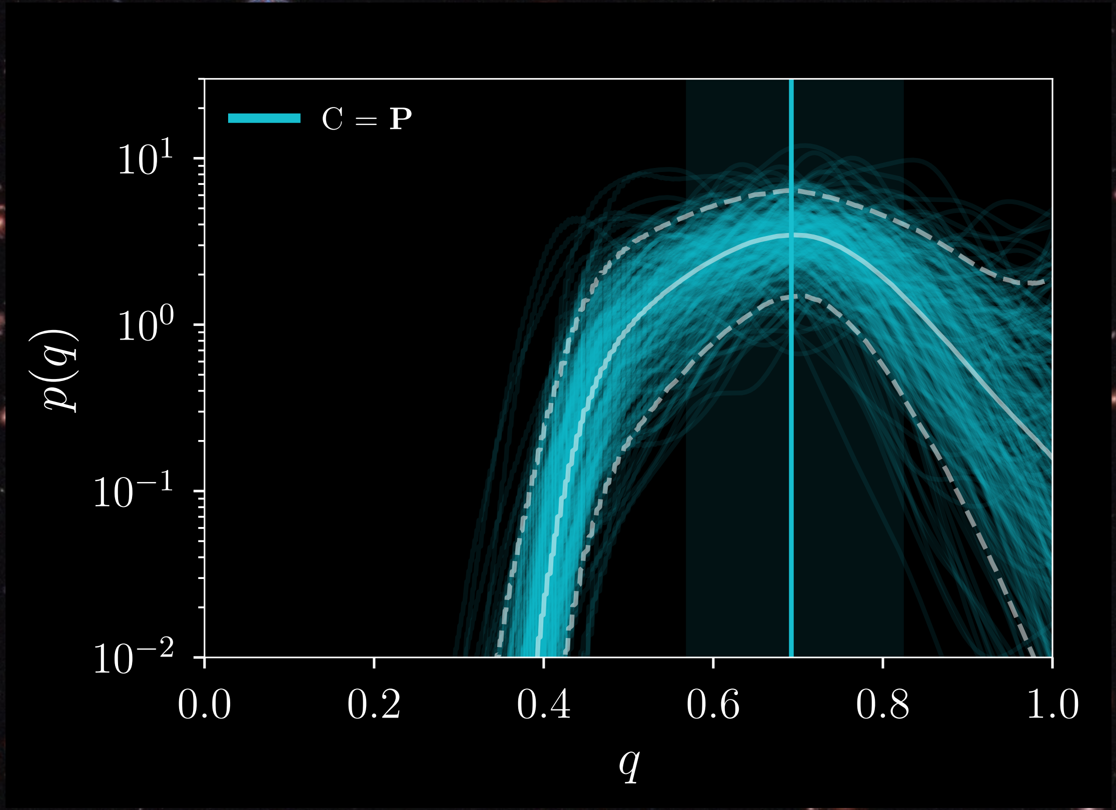


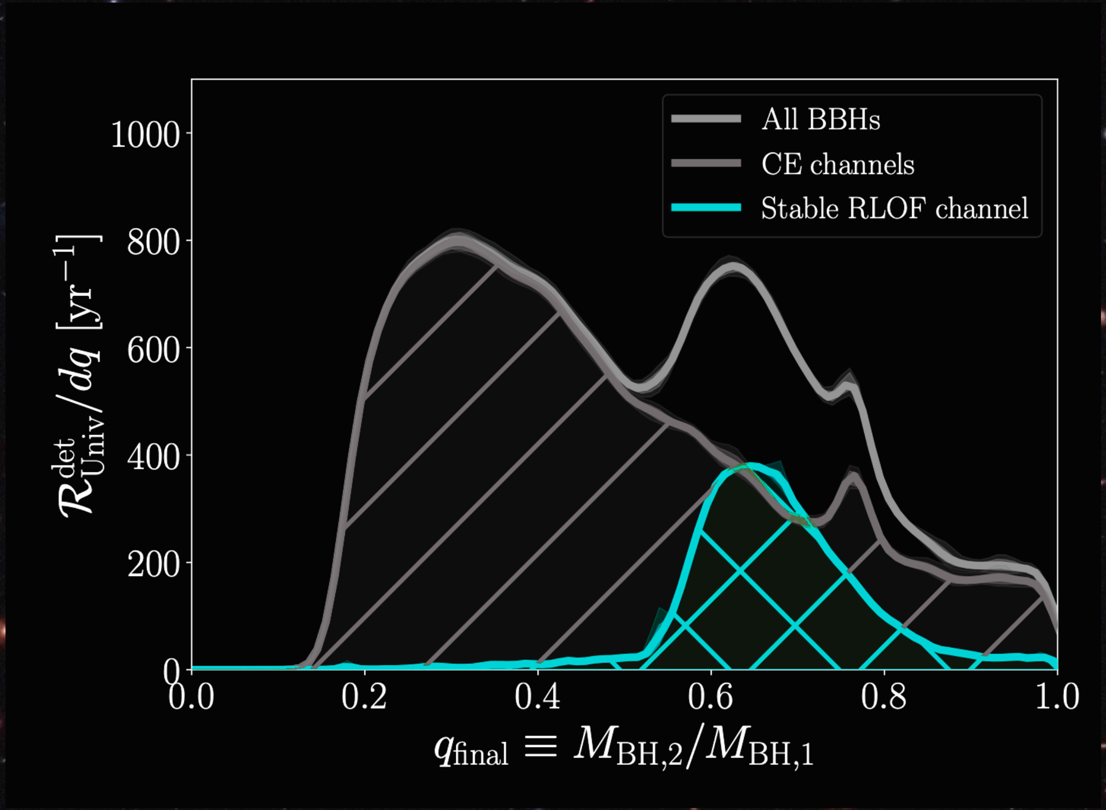
Results: spin distributions



10 $M_\odot$ peak consistent with aligned spins!

Results: Mass Ratio





Towards direct constraints of formation physics: stable mass transfer channel

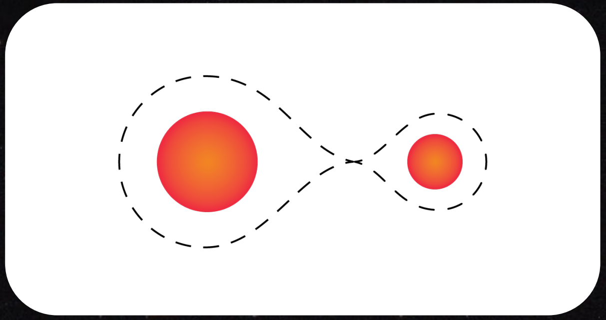
Mass transfer in isolated binaries

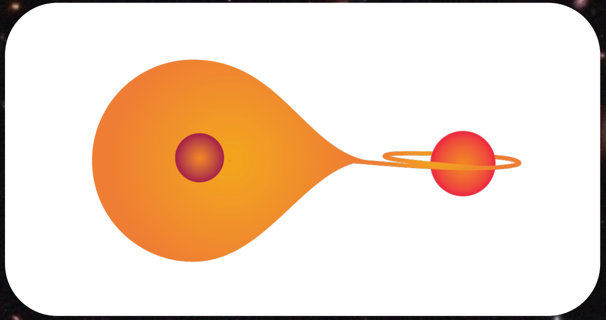
- Star expands past Roche lobe
- Mass loss causes radius to change

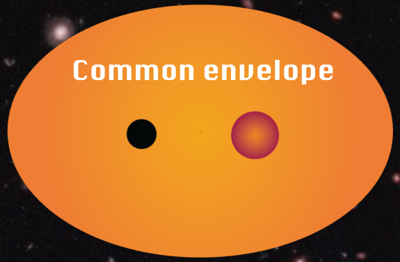
$$R_* \sim M_*^{\zeta_*} \qquad \zeta_* = \frac{\partial \ln R_*}{\partial \ln M_*}$$

- Also causes Roche lobe radius change

$$R_{RL} \sim M_*^{\zeta_{RL}} \qquad \zeta_{RL} = \frac{\partial \ln R_{RL}}{\partial \ln M_*}$$



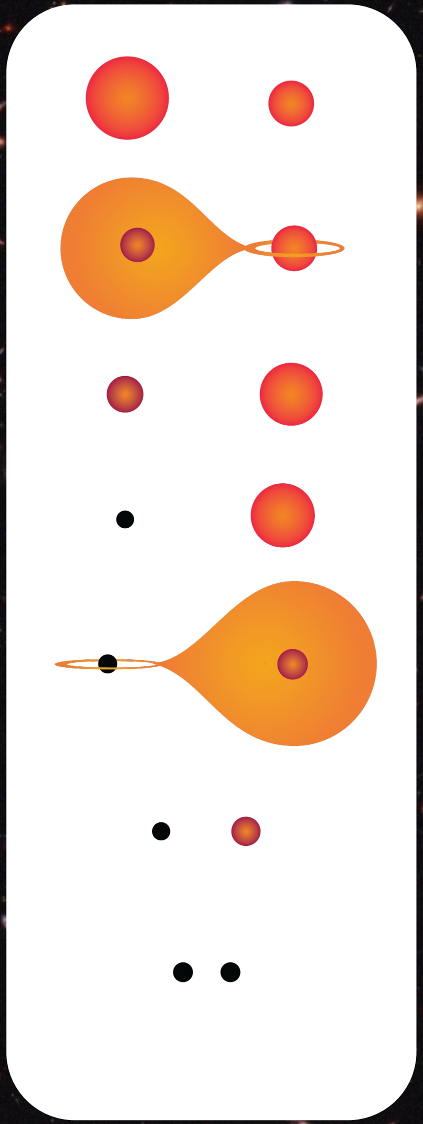




unstable mass transfer

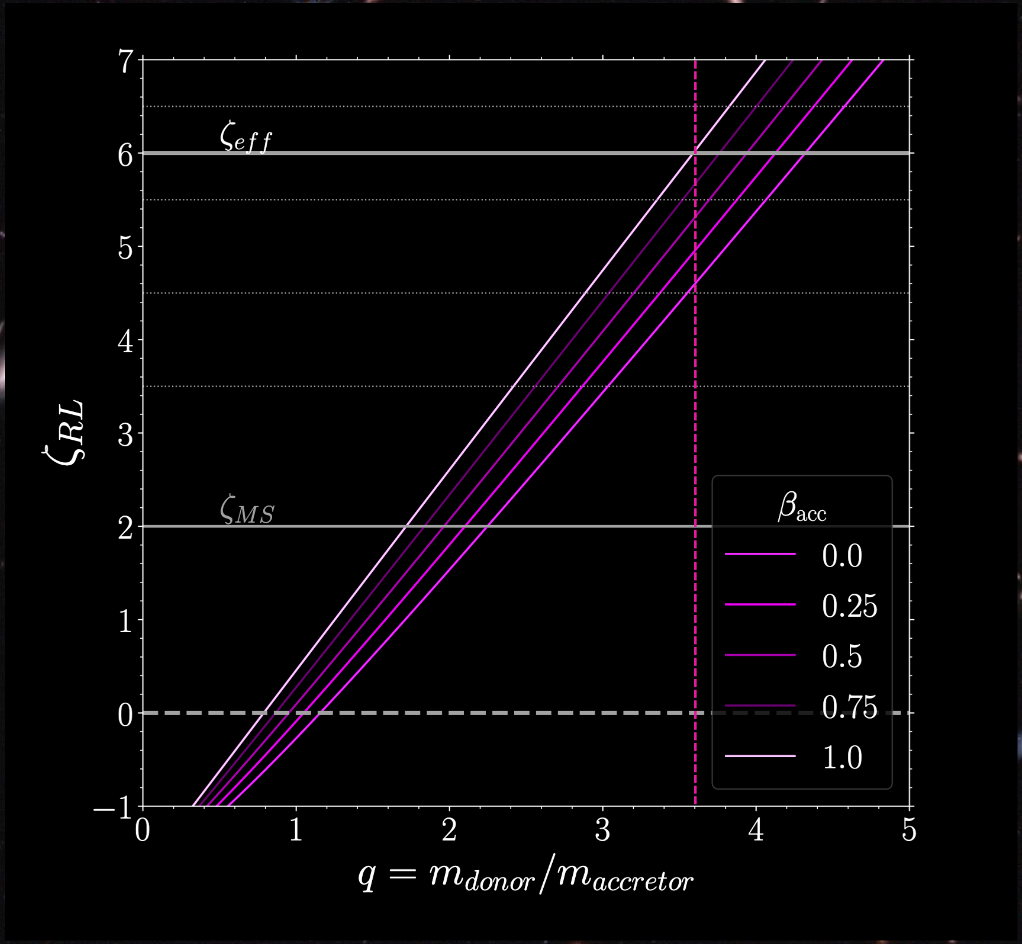
Stable if: $\zeta_* \geq \zeta_{RL}$

Stable mass transfer channel



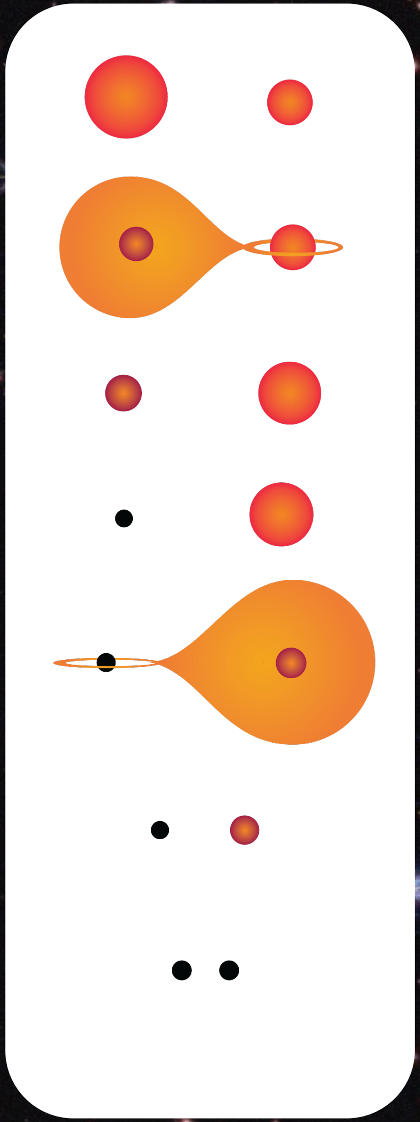
$q_{D,A} < q_{\mathrm{crit},1}$

$q_{D,A} < q_{\mathrm{crit},2}$



van Son et. al, 2022

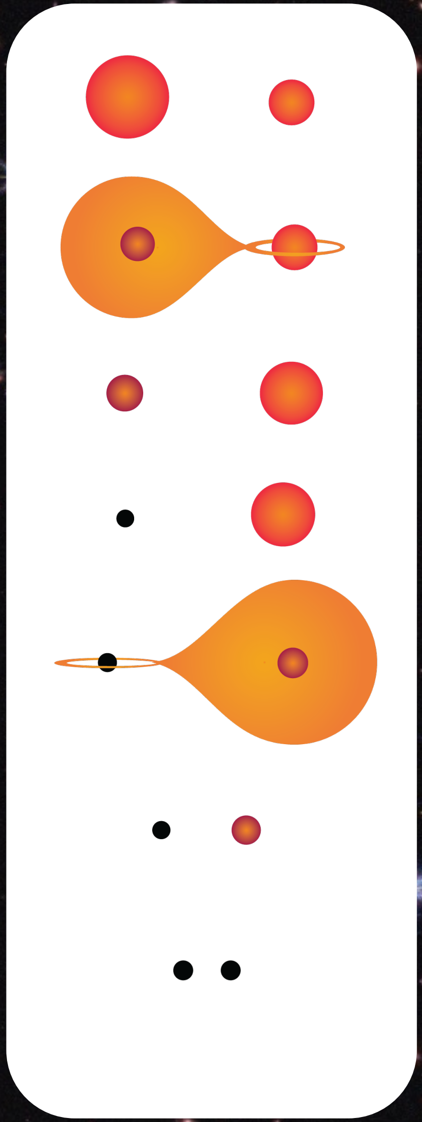
Stable mass transfer channel



Model for BBH mass ratio distribution

$$p(q|\vec{\Lambda})$$

Stable mass transfer channel



f_{core}

$f_{\mathrm{SN,a}}$

$\beta_{\mathrm{acc}} = 0$

$q_{\mathrm{crit},1}$, β_{acc}

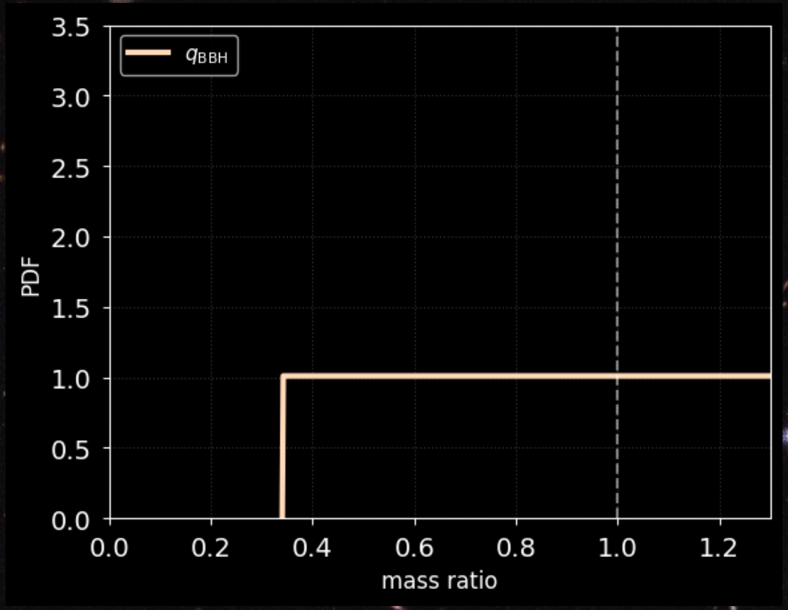
$q_{\mathrm{crit},2}$

f_{core}

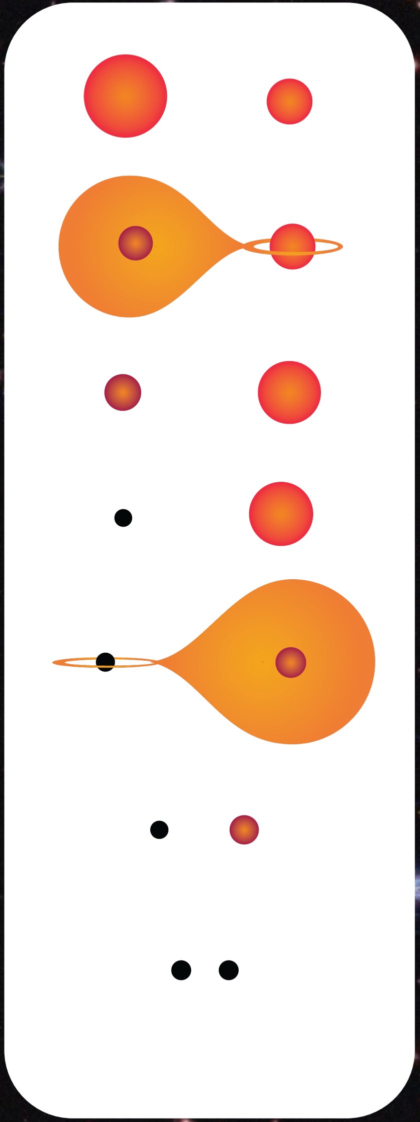
$f_{\mathrm{SN},b}$

Model for BBH mass ratio distribution

$$p(q|\vec{\Lambda})$$



Stable mass transfer channel



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$f_{\mathrm{SN},b}$

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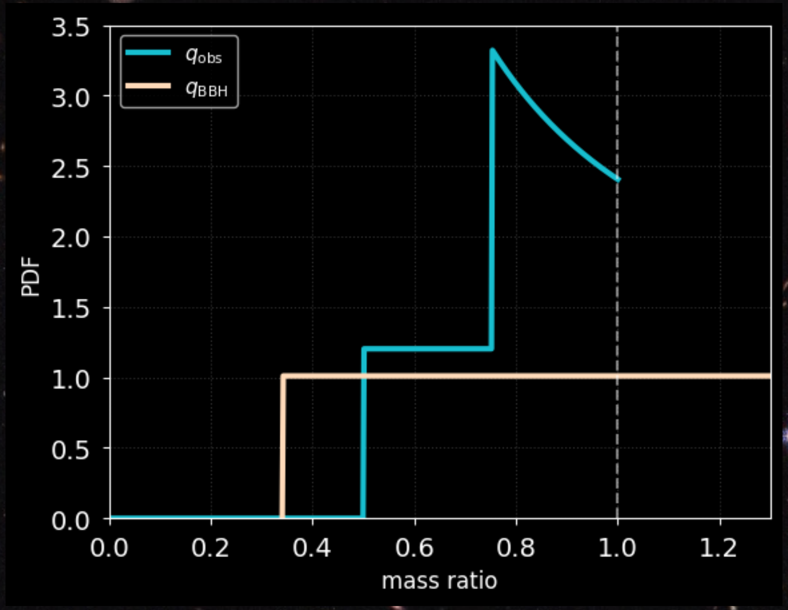


What are $\vec{\Lambda}$?

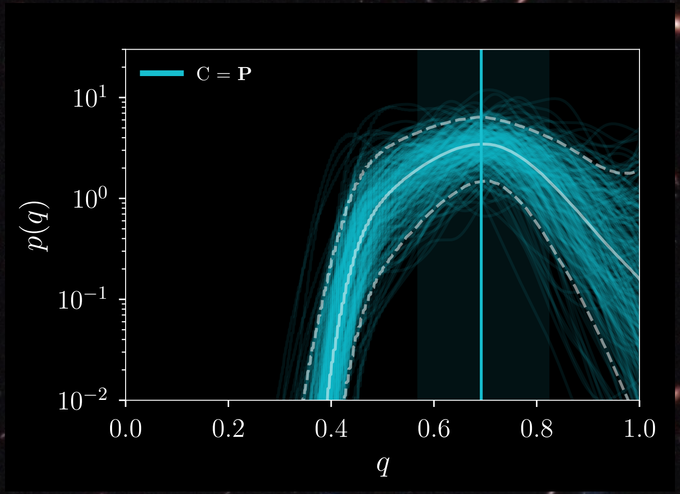
ζ_*

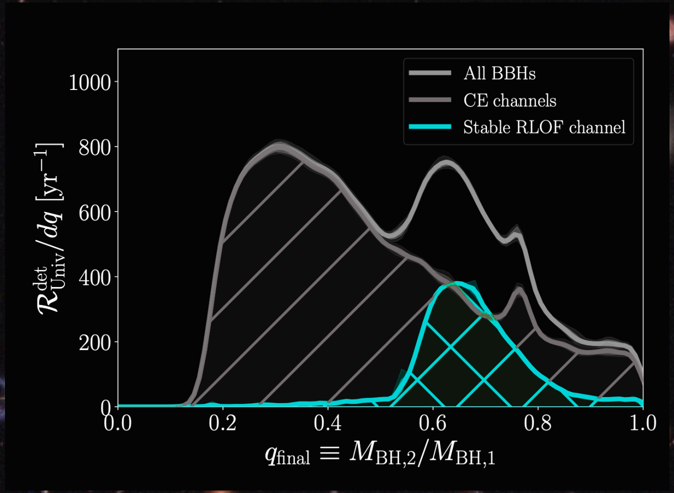
f_{core}

$f_{\mathrm{SN,a}}$

$f_{\mathrm{SN},b}$

β_{acc}





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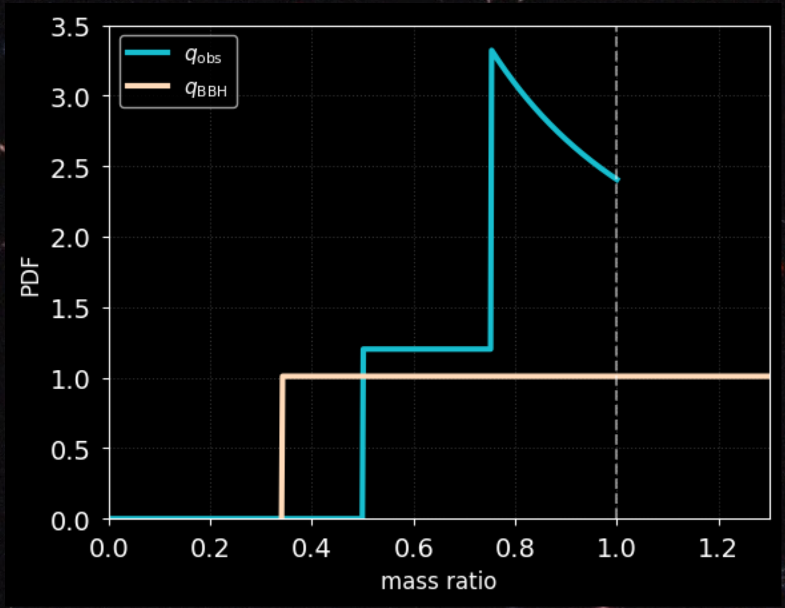

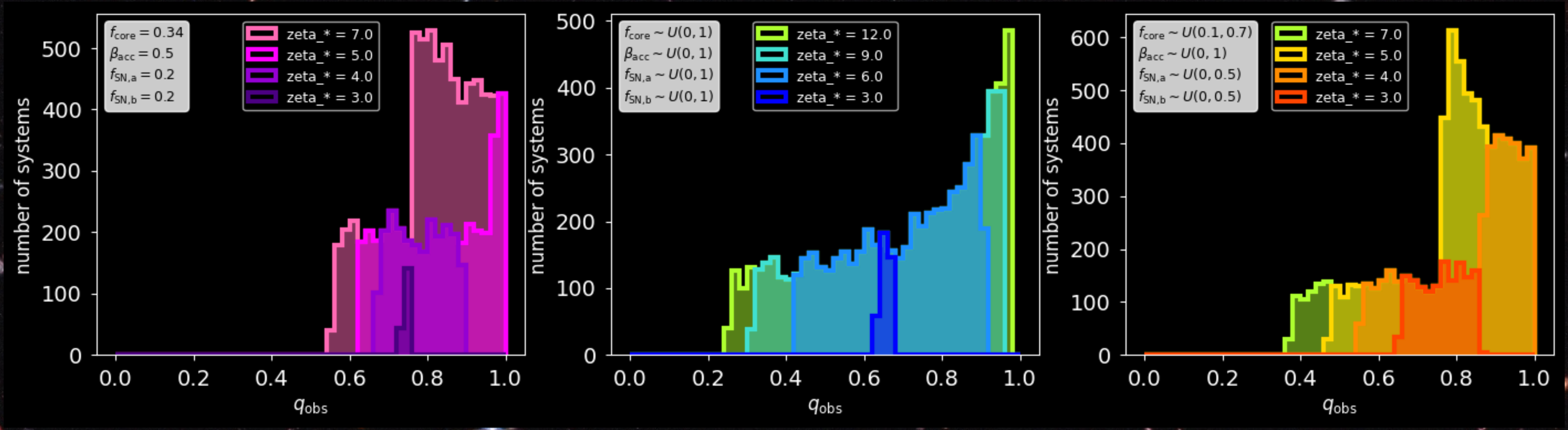
$f_{core} = 0.34$
$\beta_{acc} = 0.5$
$f_{SN,a} = 0.2$
$f_{SN,b} = 0.2$
zeta_* = 7.0
zeta_* = 5.0
zeta_* = 4.0
zeta_* = 3.0
number of systems
q_{obs}
$f_{core} \sim U(0,1)$
$\beta_{acc} \sim U(0,1)$
$f_{SN,a} \sim U(0,1)$
$f_{SN,b} \sim U(0,1)$
zeta_* = 12.0
zeta_* = 9.0
zeta_* = 6.0
zeta_* = 3.0
number of systems
q_{obs}
$f_{core} \sim U(0.1, 0.7)$
$\beta_{acc} \sim U(0,1)$
$f_{SN,a} \sim U(0, 0.5)$
$f_{SN,b} \sim U(0, 0.5)$
zeta_* = 7.0
zeta_* = 5.0
zeta_* = 4.0
zeta_* = 3.0
number of systems
q_{obs}

Thank you!

GW INFERNO

Gravitational Wave Hierarchical Inference with Numpyro

@jblazeart