

Cosmology of generic features of string theory



Michele Cicoli

Bologna Univ. and INFN

GGI, 24 July 2026



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Based on recent papers in collaboration with:

Braun, Brunelli, Caraffi, Carta, Chauhan, Chinaia, Hassan, Krippendorf, Lin, Lorenzoni, Maharana, McDonough, Milioli, Piantadosi, Qoreishi, Padilla, Pedro, Schachner, Vagnoni, Valandro

See also: 'String cosmology: from the early universe to today'

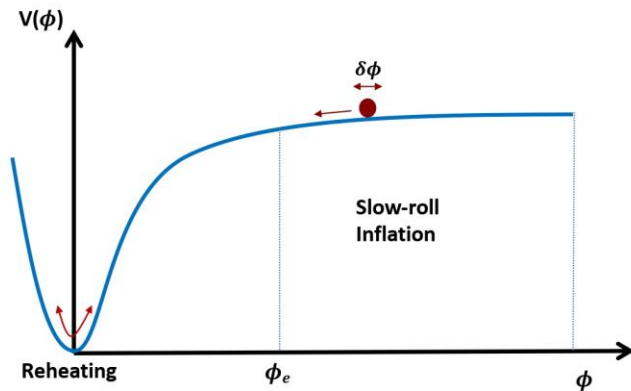
MC, Conlon, Maharana, Parameswaran, Quevedo, Zavala

Cosmology and string theory

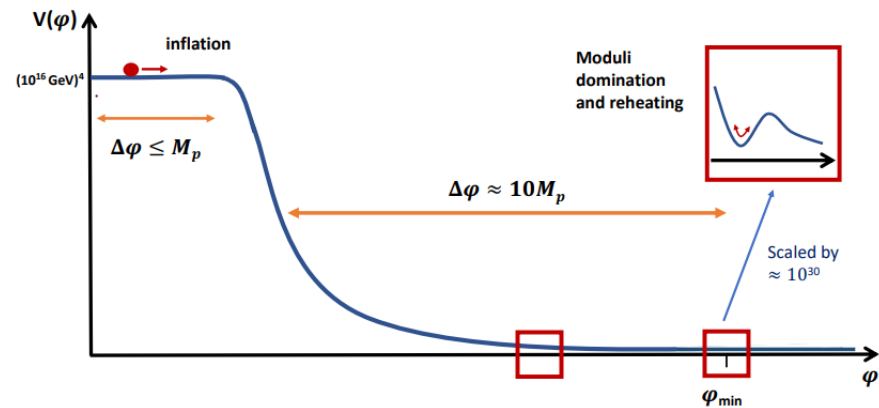
[MC, Conlon, Maharana, Parameswaran, Quevedo, Zavala]

- 4 cosmological epochs where string theory is needed to control Planck scale physics:

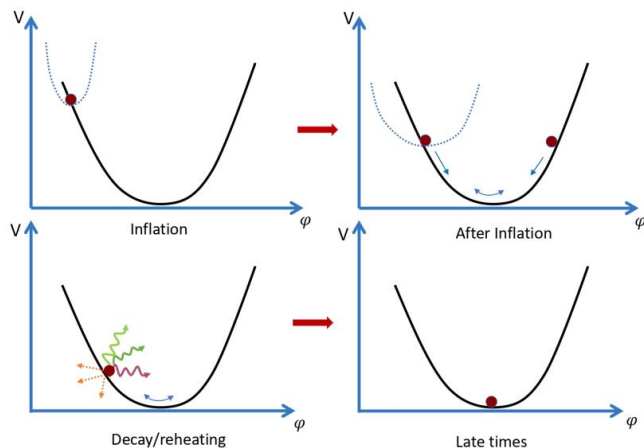
i) Small and large field inflation



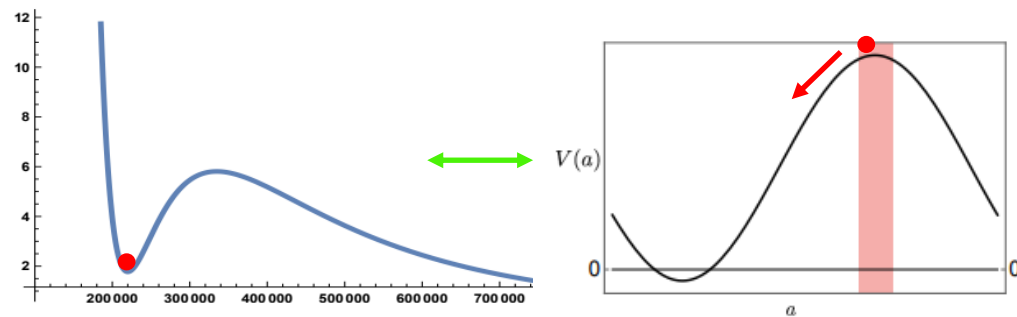
ii) Kination after inflation



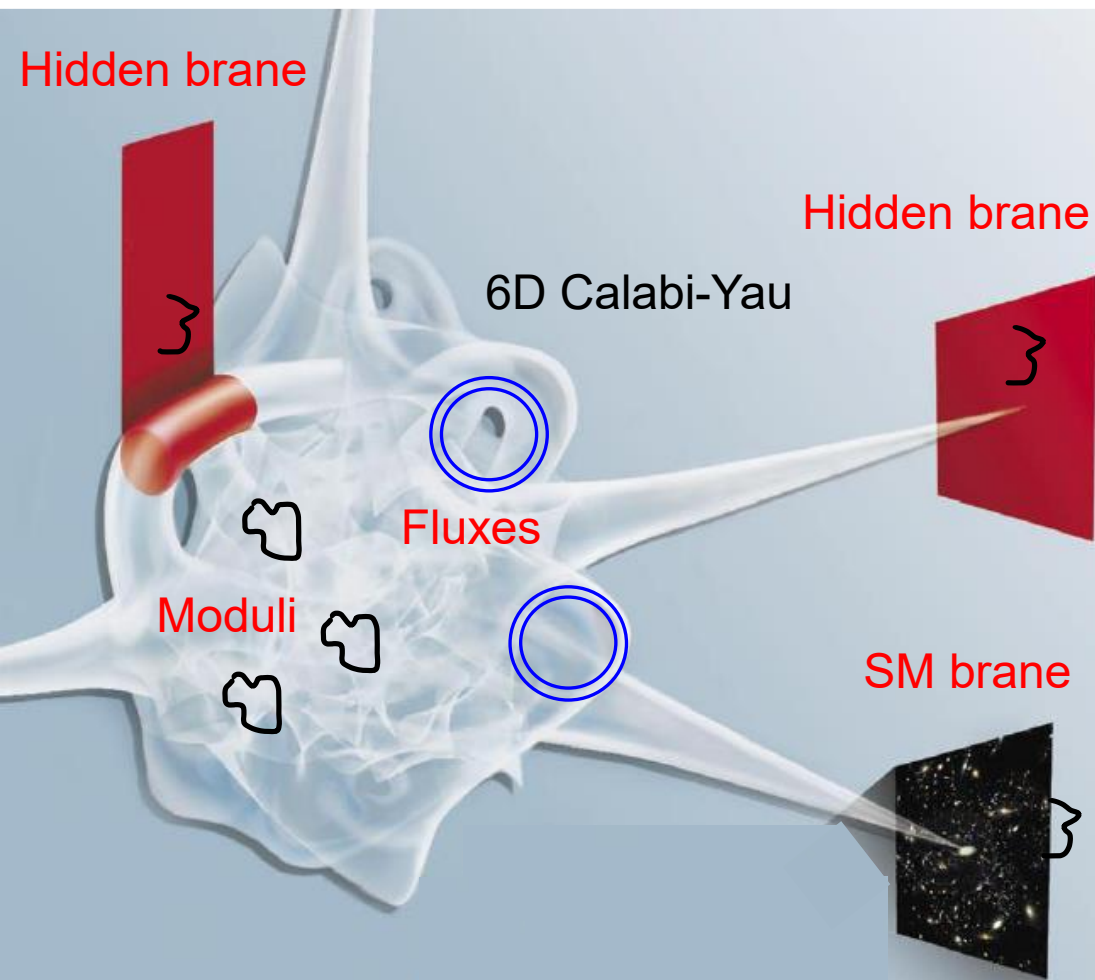
iii) Reheating



iv) Dark energy



4D string models

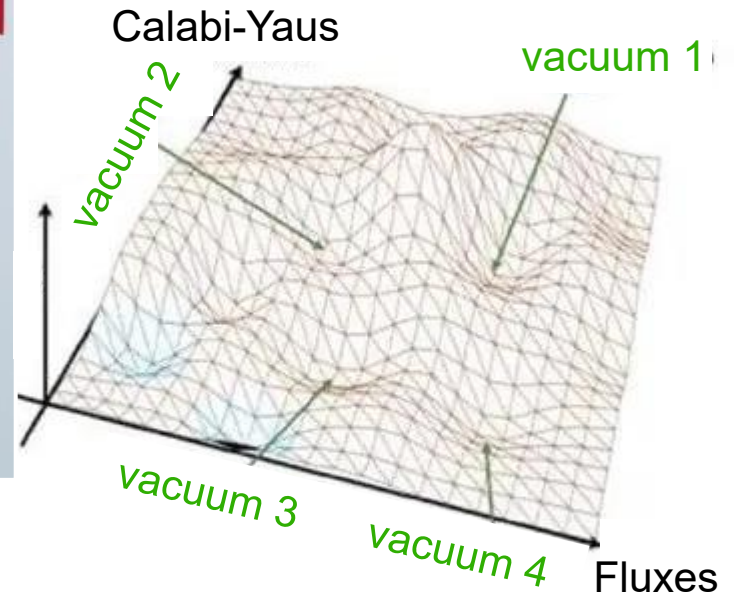


10D string theory compactified on 6D CY

KK 0-modes of 10D metric yield 4D moduli ϕ

ϕ -dependent EFT: $g_{YM}(\phi)$, $Y_{ijk}(\phi)$, $M_{SUSY}(\phi)$,
 $m_\phi(\phi)$, $H_{inf}(\phi)$, $\Lambda(\phi)$, ...

Moduli stabilisation: generate $V(\phi)$ to fix $\langle\phi\rangle$
 at minimum



Landscape of string vacua $\longrightarrow$ vacua which reproduce SM + **slow-roll inflation** driven by ϕ

Type IIB 4D EFT

- Focus on 4D EFT of type IIB flux compactification on CY orientifolds

- Closed string moduli:

i) axio-dilaton $S = g_s^{-1} + iC_0$

ii) complex structure (shape) moduli $z_\alpha \quad \alpha = 1, \dots, h^{1,2}$

ii) Kaehler (size) moduli $T_i = \tau_i + i\theta_i \quad i = 1, \dots, h^{1,1}$

- Tree-level Kahler potential and superpotential

$$K = -2 \ln \mathcal{V}(\tau_i) - \ln(S + \bar{S}) - \ln(-i \int \Omega(z_\alpha) \wedge \bar{\Omega})$$

$$W = \int (F_3 + iSH_3) \wedge \Omega = W(S, z_\alpha)$$

- Tree-level F-term potential for $\partial_T W = 0$ and no-scale cancellation: $K^{T\bar{T}} K_T K_{\bar{T}} = 3$

$$V = e^K (|D_Z W|^2 + |D_S W|^2) \geq 0$$

- Fix S and z-moduli at $|D_Z W| = |D_S W| = 0 \quad \longrightarrow \quad W_0 = \langle W(S, z_\alpha) \rangle \sim 0(1)$

- SUSY-breaking (due to $F^T \neq 0$) Minkowski minimum with flat T-moduli

- Mass spectrum: $m_z \sim m_s \sim m_{3/2} \sim \frac{|W_0| M_p}{\mathcal{V}} \gg m_T = 0$

Numerical flux vacua

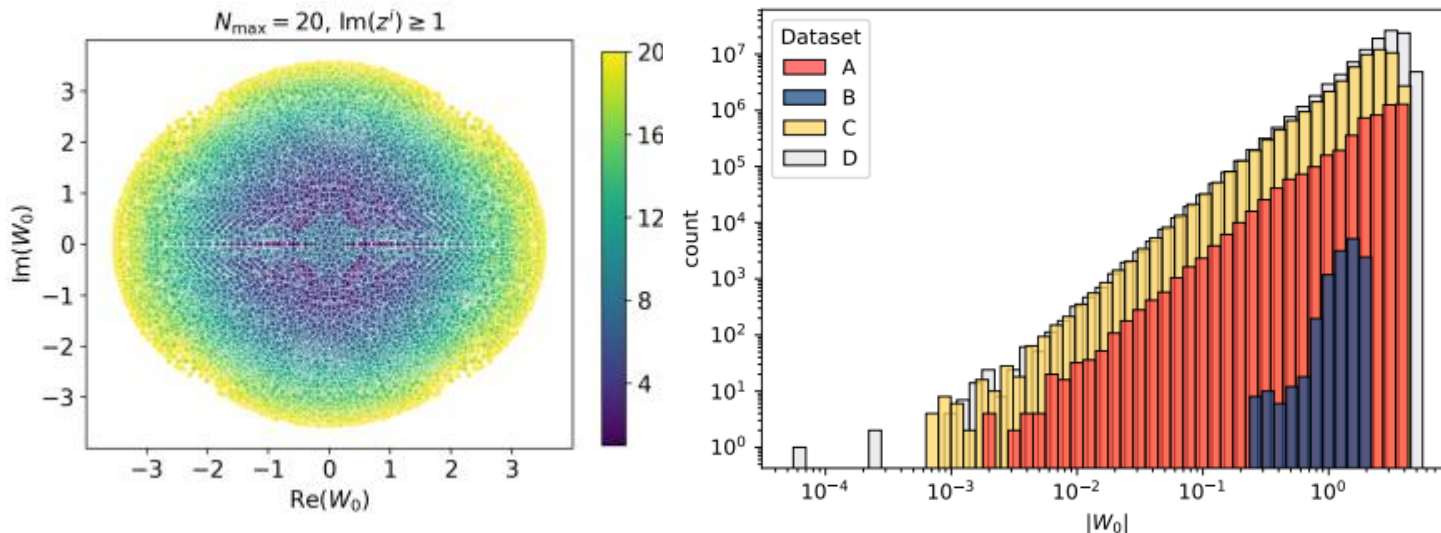
[Chauhan,MC,Krippendorf,Maharana,Piantadosi,Schachner]

- Numerical searches of flux vacua using Machine Learning (JAXVacua)
- Exhaustive searches in targeted regions of moduli space of type IIB Calabi-Yau flux vacua
- Example with $h^{1,2} = 2$: $\mathbb{CP}^4_{[1,1,1,6,9]}$ at $\mathbb{Z}_6 \times \mathbb{Z}_{18}$ symmetric locus

Name	$\text{Im}(z^i)$	s	$N_{\max}$	$\#h$	$\#f$	$\#(f,h)$	$\mathcal{N}_{\text{vac}}$	exhaustive ⁷
A	[2, 3]	$[\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}, 20]$	34	82,082	1,849,426	5,134,862	5,140,872	Yes
B	[2, 5]	$[\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}, 10]$	10	1,900	6,340	12,160	12,196	Yes
C	[1, 10]	$[\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}, 50]$	34	3,652,744	21,043,832	50,652,686	50,884,086	No
D	[2, 10]	$[\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}, 10]$	50	5,909,012	45,886,900	123,075,206	123,408,240	No

Compare with 15392 solutions of Finding *all* flux vacua in an explicit example [Martinez-Pedrerera et al, 2012]

- Distribution of $|W_0|$



$$m_{\text{mod}} \propto m_{3/2}$$

$$m_{3/2} \sim \frac{|W_0| M_p}{\nu}$$

- $|W_0| = 5.547 \times 10^{-5}$ for dataset D without perturbatively flat vacua

Numerical flux vacua

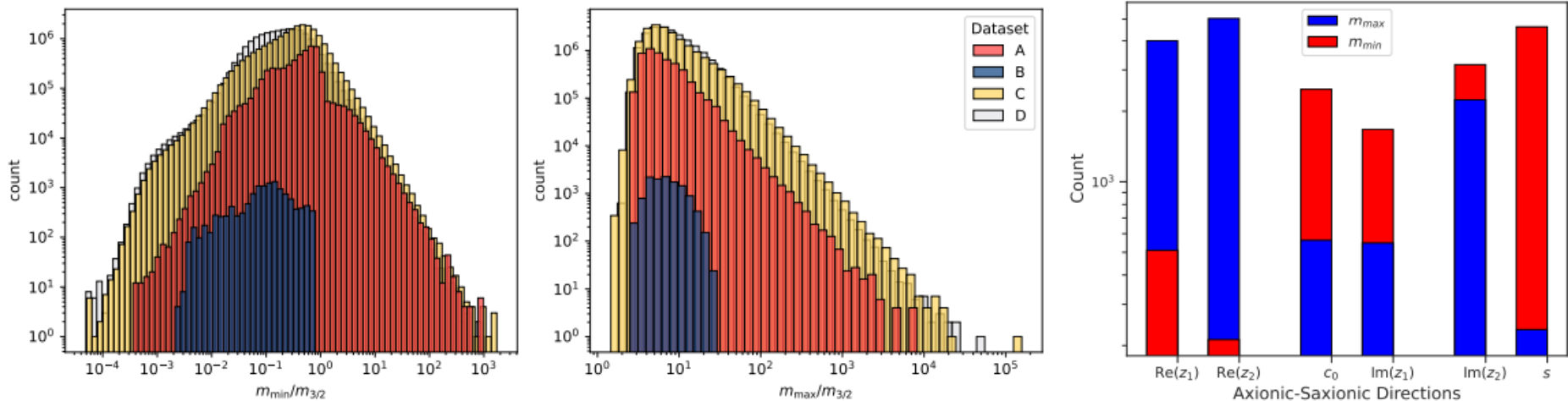
[Chauhan,MC,Krippendorf,Maharana,Piantadosi,Schachner]

- No continuous flux approx. $\longrightarrow$ distribution of **actual** flux vacua beyond [Denef,Douglas]

$$\mathcal{N}_{\text{vac}} = \begin{cases} (7.17 \pm 1.19) \times 10^{-3} \times (N_{\text{max}})^{5.80 \pm 0.05} & \text{dataset A} \\ (7.00 \pm 4.19) \times 10^{-2} \times (N_{\text{max}})^{4.91 \pm 0.34} & \text{dataset B} \\ (1.24 \pm 0.20) \times (N_{\text{max}})^{5.05 \pm 0.06} & \text{dataset C} \\ (4.89 \pm 1.18) \times 10^{-2} \times (N_{\text{max}})^{5.63 \pm 0.08} & \text{dataset D} \end{cases}$$

$$\mathcal{N}_{\text{stat}} = (N_{\text{max}})^6 \times \begin{cases} (0.00483 \pm 1.88 \times 10^{-6}) & \text{dataset A} \\ (0.01535 \pm 7.64 \times 10^{-6}) & \text{dataset B} \\ (0.17458 \pm 8.65 \times 10^{-5}) & \text{dataset C} \\ (0.02886 \pm 1.32 \times 10^{-5}) & \text{dataset D} \end{cases}$$

- Distribution of **moduli masses**



dataset B

$\longrightarrow$ **axions** heavier than **saxions** and **dilaton** lightest mode

Numerical flux vacua

[Chauhan,MC,Krippendorf,Maharana,Piantadosi,Schachner]

- Principal Component Analysis to find **patterns** of variations of flux quanta:
 - Diagonalise **covariant matrix** via orthogonal basis of **principal components** (eigenvectors)
 - Eigenvalues** give **variance** along that direction in flux space

Dataset	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	PC6
A	0.740	0.095	0.077	0.055	0.025	0.006
B	0.638	0.187	0.087	0.043	0.031	0.011

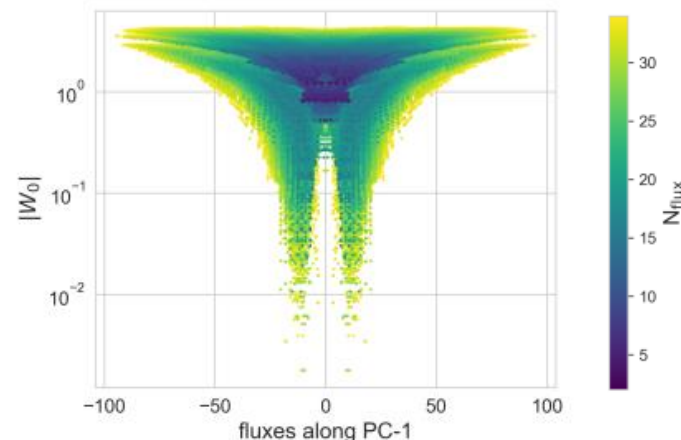
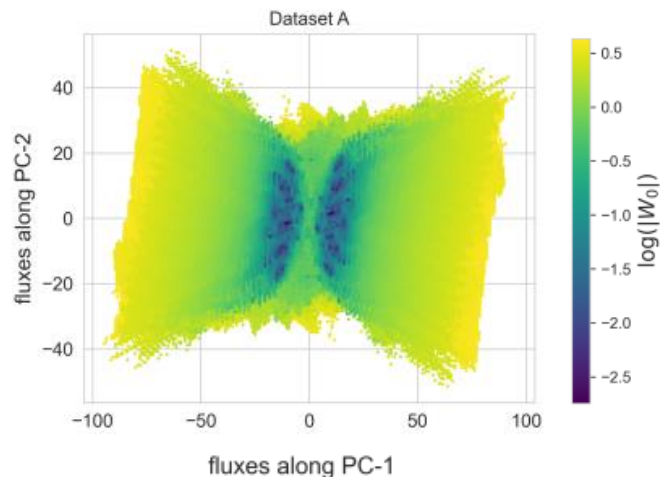


Parameter compression:
12D flux space effectively
reduced to 5D!

PC	$(f_1)^1$	$(f_1)^2$	$(f_1)^3$	$(f_2)^1$	$(f_2)^2$	$(f_2)^3$	$(h_1)^1$	$(h_1)^2$	$(h_1)^3$	$(h_2)^1$	$(h_2)^2$	$(h_2)^3$
PC1	0.069	0.920	0.371	0.001	0.016	0.002	0.086	0.020	-0.009	0.000	0.007	0.056
PC2	0.280	-0.015	0.044	0.001	0.123	-0.148	-0.059	-0.926	-0.146	0.000	-0.005	-0.023
PC3	0.833	0.038	-0.247	0.001	-0.082	0.444	-0.039	0.174	-0.087	0.000	0.002	-0.029

dataset A

- Correlations** between flux quanta and $|W_0|$



Inflating with Kaehler moduli

- **Slow-roll inflation** driven by **Kaehler moduli** τ with **canonical inflaton** ϕ

$$V(\phi) = V_0[1 - g(\phi)] \simeq V_0 \quad \text{with} \quad g(\phi) \ll 1 \quad \text{for} \quad \phi \gg 1$$

- **Volume** $\mathcal{V}$ couples to all sources of energy due to $e^K = \mathcal{V}^{-2}$

→ no ϕ -independent **plateau** if $\phi \equiv \mathcal{V}$

→ ϕ should be a direction $\perp \mathcal{V}$: $\phi \equiv \tau_\phi$

- Each term in V depends on $\mathcal{V}$

→ $V(\phi) \simeq V_0$ if leading dynamics fixes $\mathcal{V}$ but not τ_ϕ

→ $\phi \equiv \tau_\phi$ is a leading order flat direction with an **approximate shift symmetry**

[Burgess,MC,Quevedo,Williams][Burgess,MC,deAlwis,Quevedo]

- Type IIB Kaehler sector:

tree-level: **no-scale** cancellation $V_{tree}(\tau_i) = 0$

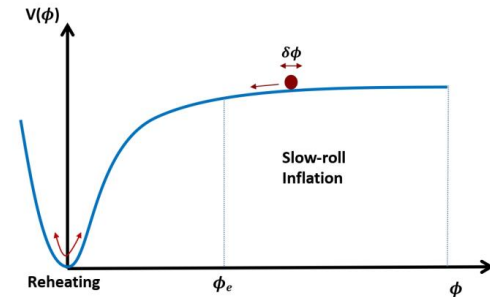
$O(\alpha'^2 g_s^2)$: **extended no-scale** cancellation $V_{\alpha'^2 g_s^2}(\tau_i) = 0$ [MC,Conlon,Quevedo]

$O(\alpha'^3)$: leading **no-scale breaking** effect lift only $\mathcal{V}$ $V_{\alpha'^3}(\tau_i) \sim \mathcal{V}^{-3}$ [Becker et al]

$O(\alpha'^4 g_s^2)$ or $O(\alpha'^3 F^4)$: **subleading** quantum effects lift τ_ϕ which drives **inflation**

Plateau inflation with Kaehler moduli

$$V(\phi) = V_0[1 - g(\phi)]$$



- Non-perturbative Blow-up Inflation:

$$g(\phi) \propto e^{-a \nu^{2/3} \phi^{4/3}} \quad \text{with} \quad r \sim 10^{-10} \quad \Delta\phi \ll M_p$$

[Conlon,Quevedo][Bond et al]

- Non-perturbative Fibre Inflation:

$$g(\phi) \propto e^{-b e^{c\phi}} \quad \text{with} \quad r \sim 10^{-5} \quad \Delta\phi \sim 0.1 M_p$$

[MC,Pedro,Tasinato][Luest,Zhang]

- Loop Fibre Inflation:

$$g(\phi) \propto e^{-p\phi} \quad \text{with} \quad r \sim 0.007 \quad \Delta\phi \sim 5 M_p$$

[MC,Burgess,Quevedo][Broy et al]
[MC,Ciupke,deAlwis,Muia]
[MC,Grassi,Lacombe,Pedro]

- Loop Blow-up Inflation:

$$g(\phi) \propto \frac{1}{\nu^{1/3} \phi^{2/3}} \quad \text{with} \quad r \sim 10^{-5} \quad \Delta\phi \sim 0.1 M_p$$

[Bansal,Brunelli,MC,Hebecker,Kuespert]

Explicit CY example with branes and fluxes



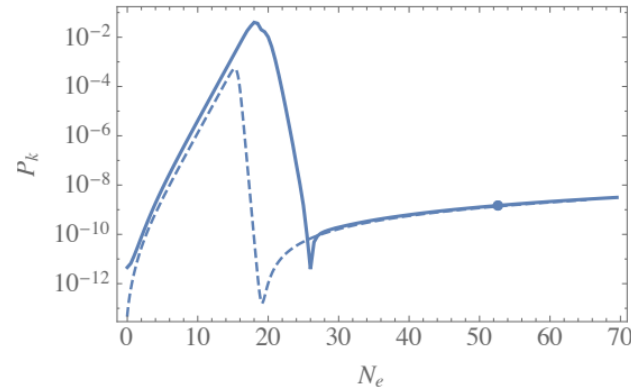
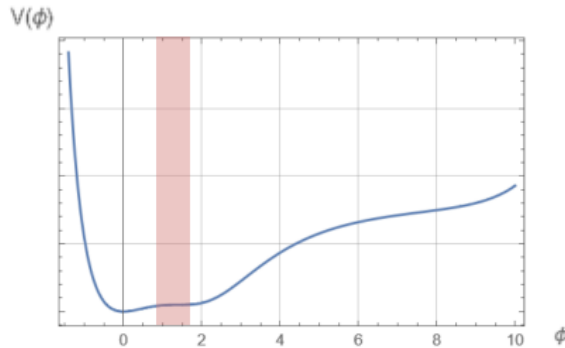
PBHs and secondary GWs in Fibre Inflation

- **LVS** in fibred CY: $V = V_{lead}(\mathcal{V}, \tau_{dP}, \theta_{dP}) + V_{inf}(\tau_{K3}) + V_{sub}(\theta_{P1}, \theta_{K3})$ $\mathcal{V} = t_{P1}\tau_{K3} - \tau_{dP}^{3/2}$

- Loop Fibre Inflation: [MC,Burgess,Quevedo]

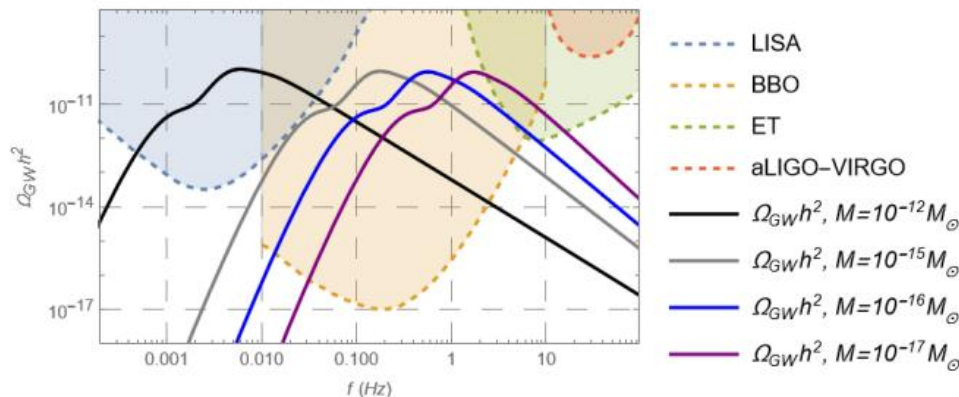
$$V_{inf} \simeq V_0(1 - \frac{4}{3}e^{-\phi/\sqrt{3}}) \quad \text{and} \quad H_{inf} \simeq 10^{-5}M_p$$

- **PBHs** with $10^{-17}M_\odot \lesssim M_{PBH} \lesssim 10^{-11}M_\odot$ from **ultra slow roll** with θ_{P1} and θ_{K3} as **spectators**



[MC,Diaz,Pedro]

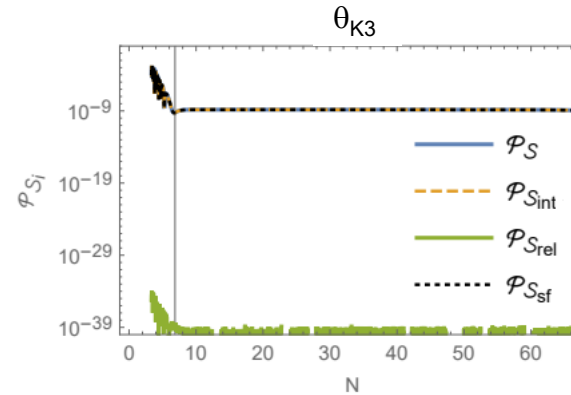
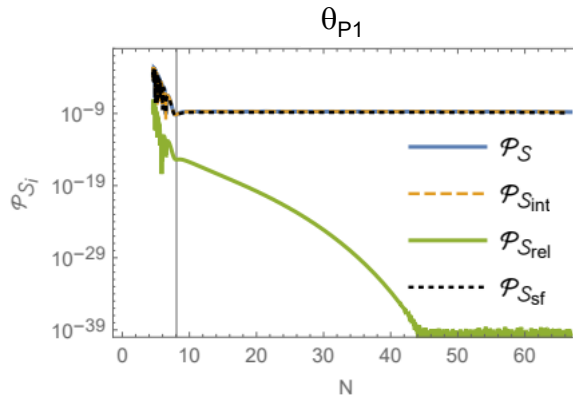
- Detectable **secondary GWs**:



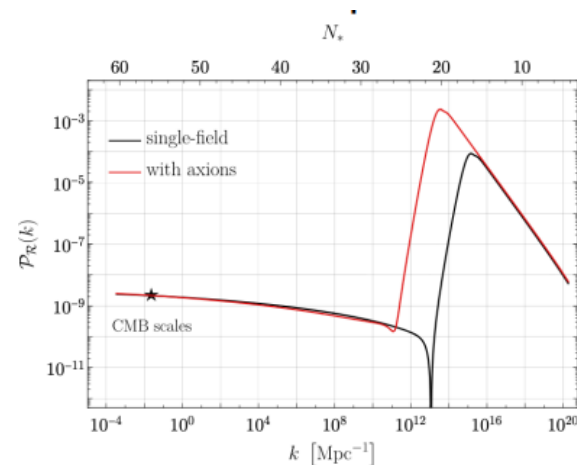
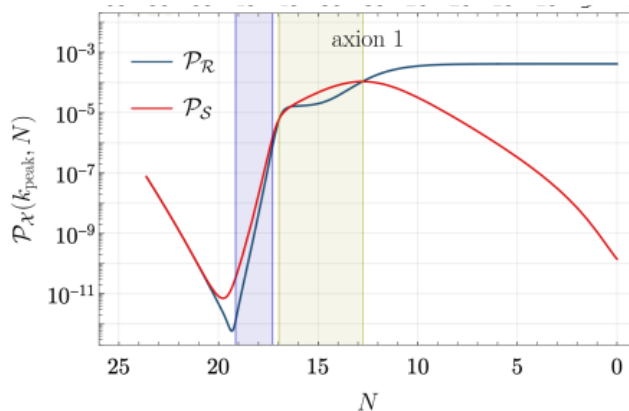
[MC,Pedro,Pedron]

Spectator axions and PBHs in Fibre Inflation

- Decaying isocurvature modes if θ_{P1} and θ_{K3} are ultra-light [MC, Guidetti, Muia, Pedro, Vacca]



- Motion along θ_{K3} during ultra slow roll if $m_{\theta_{K3}} \sim 0.1 H$
 - isocurvature modes source curvature modes due to non-zero turning rate
 - θ_{K3} helps reducing tuning on V to obtain PBHs

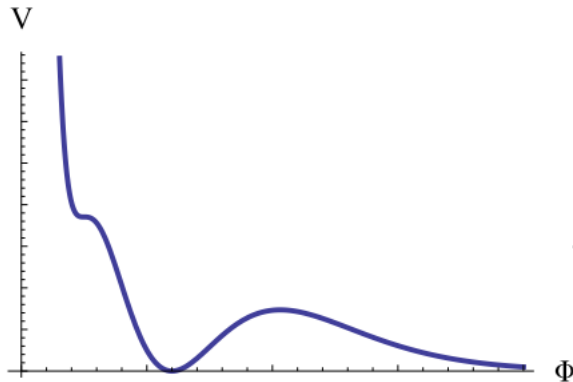


WIP: [MC, Lorenzoni, McDonough, Pedro]

Kination after volume inflation

- Modulus domination after inflation can be matter (Fibre Infl.) but also kination
- Example: Volume inflation around inflection point

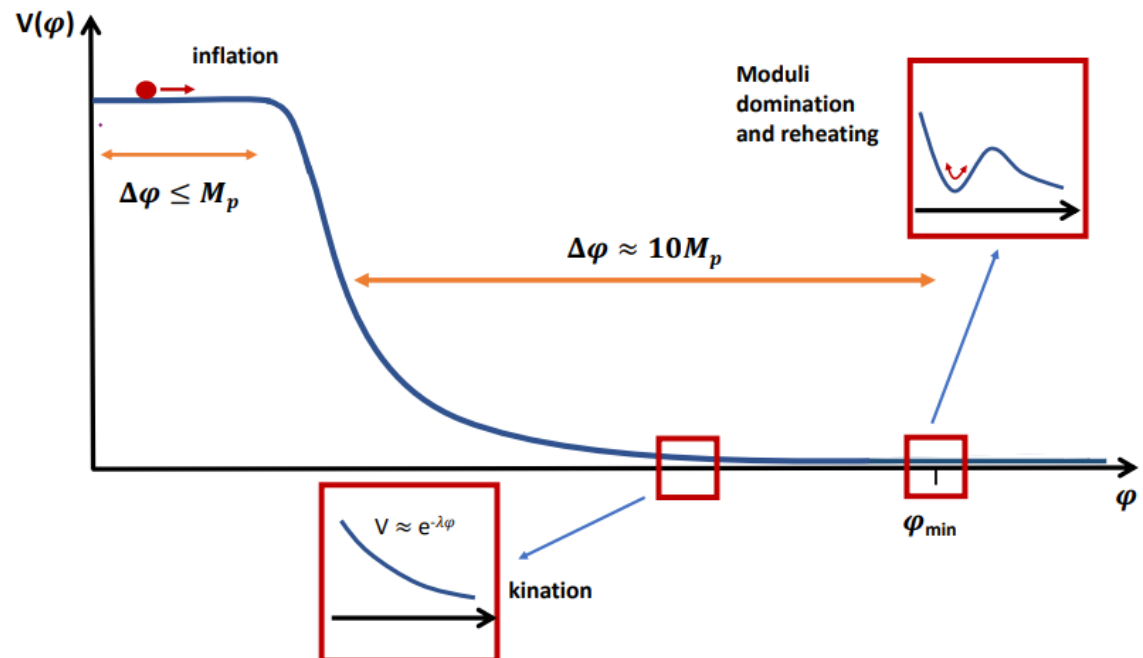
[Conlon,Kallosh,Linde,Quevedo] [MC,Muia,Pedro]



$$V(\Phi) = V_0 \left[\left(1 - \kappa_{np} \Phi^{3/2}\right) e^{-\sqrt{\frac{27}{2}}\Phi} + \kappa_{g_s} e^{-\frac{10}{\sqrt{6}}\Phi} + \kappa_{F(b)} e^{-\frac{11}{\sqrt{6}}\Phi} + \kappa_{D3} e^{-\sqrt{6}\Phi} \right]$$

to get high scale inflation and low-energy SUSY as $m_{3/2} \sim \frac{W_0 M_p}{\nu}$

zoom



Kination after brane-antibrane inflation

- Rolling moduli after brane-antibrane inflation

$$V(\phi) = C_0 \left(1 - \frac{C_1}{\phi^4} \right) \quad \phi = \sqrt{T_{D3}} r$$

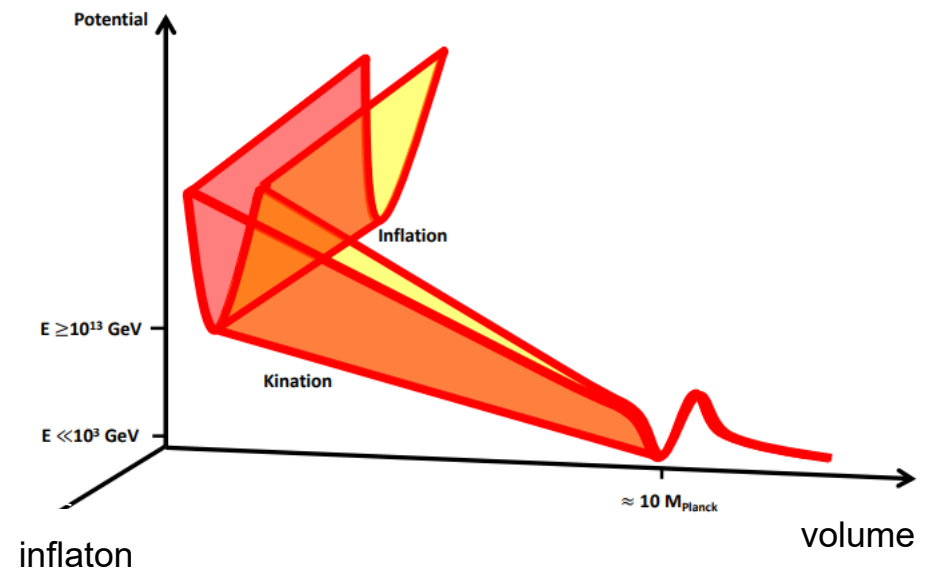
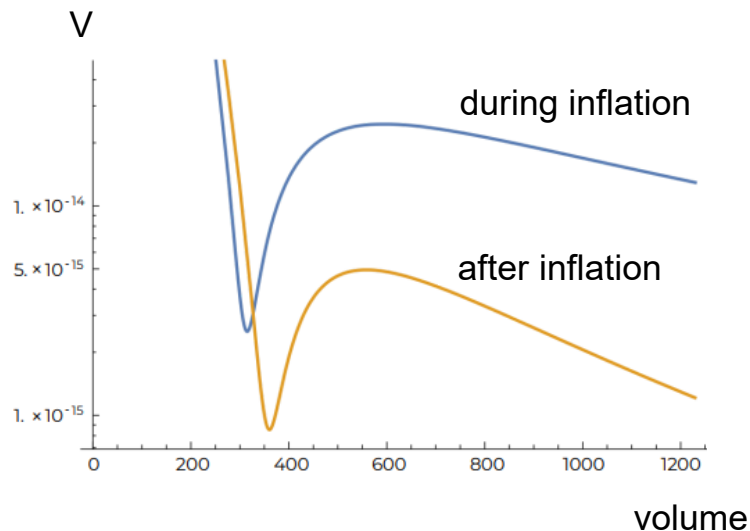
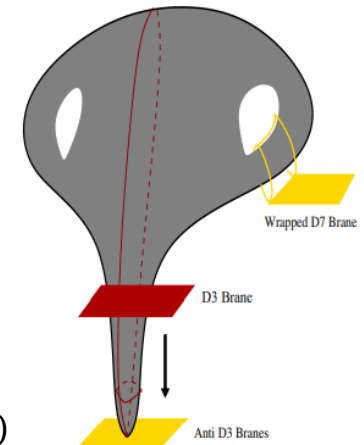
- D3-antiD3 inflation without η -problem due perturbative $\mathcal{V}$ fixing

$$\mathcal{V}^{2/3} = \sigma = \tau - \frac{1}{6} (M_{KK} r)^2 \rightarrow \tau \quad \text{at end of inflation}$$

- During inflation: $V \simeq \frac{1}{3\sigma^2} \left(W_X - \frac{3g_s W_0}{\sigma} \right)^2 + \frac{3\xi W_0^2}{4g_s^{3/2} \sigma^{9/2}} \quad W = W_0 + X W_X(r)$

- Brane annihilation after inflation: $W_X \rightarrow 0 \quad \longrightarrow \quad \frac{V}{3W_0^2} \simeq \frac{\alpha}{\tau^4} - \frac{\xi\sqrt{g_s}}{4c\tau^{9/2}} \left(\ln \tau - \frac{c}{g_s^2} \right)$

[MC, Hughes, Kamal, Marino, Quevedo, Ramos, Villa]



A cosmic superstring network?

- Generic stringy features after inflation:

i) Fundamental strings: initial population of string loops

ii) Evolving moduli: kination due to rolling volume $\mathcal{V}$

iii) Field-dependent scales: tension of F-strings controlled by $\mathcal{V}$

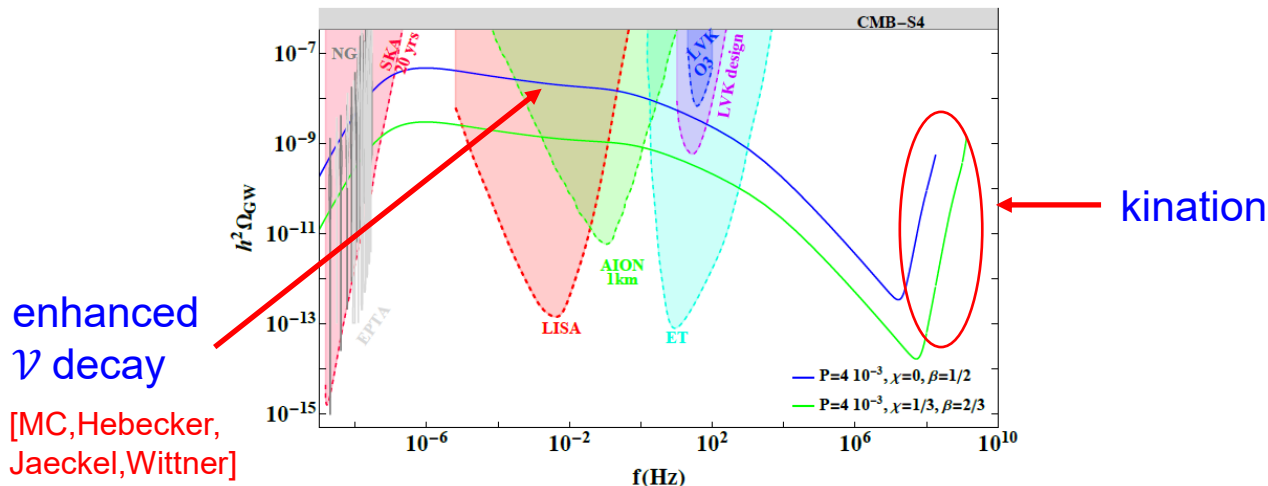
$$\mu \simeq M_s^2 \simeq \frac{M_p^2}{\mathcal{V}} = M_p^2 e^{-\sqrt{6} \beta \phi / M_p} \quad \beta = 1/2$$

- Volume increases $\longrightarrow$ decreasing tension $\longrightarrow 2H + \frac{\dot{\mu}}{\mu} < 0$

$\longrightarrow$ growth of comoving radius of cosmic strings [Conlon,Copeland,Hardy,Gonzales]

$\longrightarrow$ strings can percolate and form a network with emission of high freq GWs

[Ghoshal,Revello,Villa]

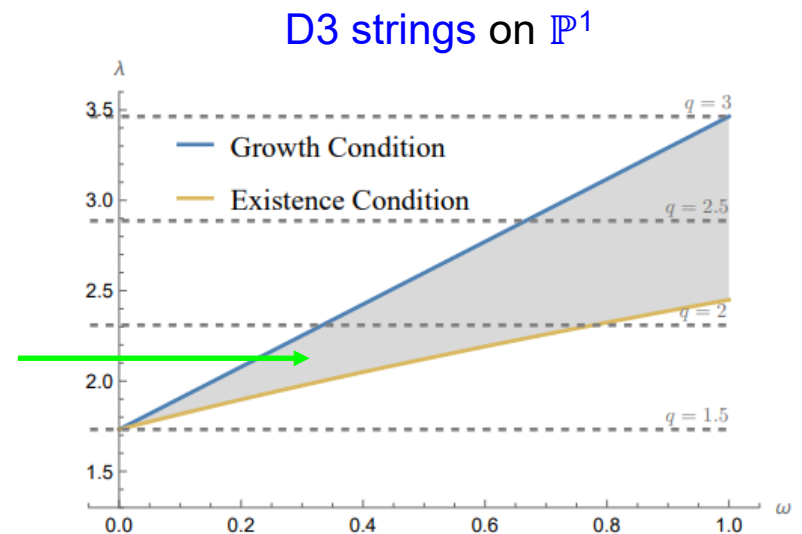
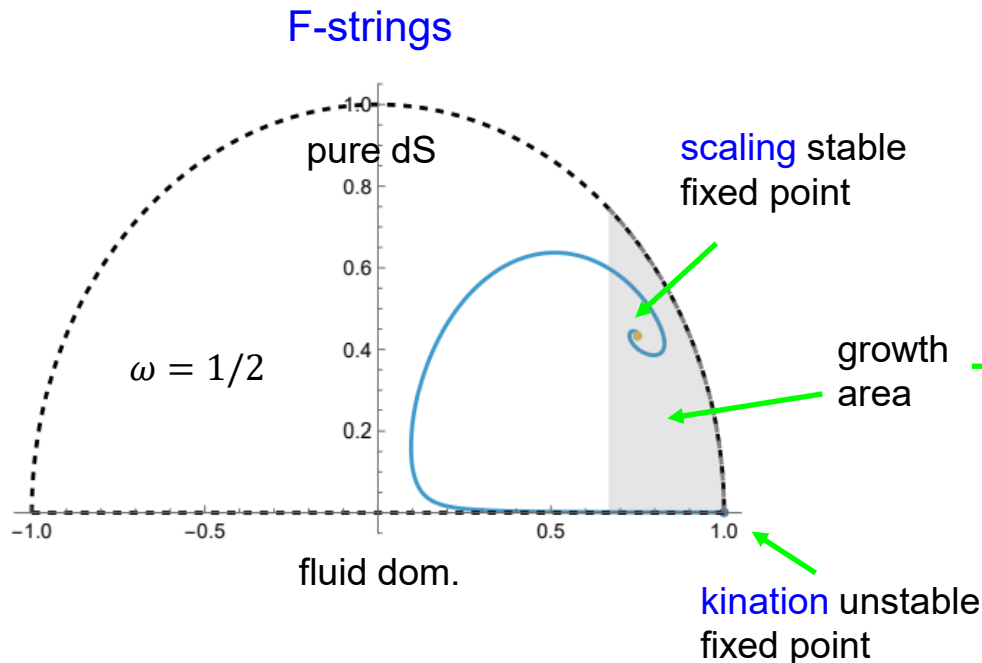


Growth of cosmic strings

- 3 regimes for **growth** of comoving radius:
 - i) F-strings during **kination** [Conlon,Copeland,Hardy,Gonzales][Revello,Villa]
 - ii) F-strings in **scaling fixed points**
 - iii) **Effective strings** from D3s or NS5s on fibration cycles
- Dynamical system:

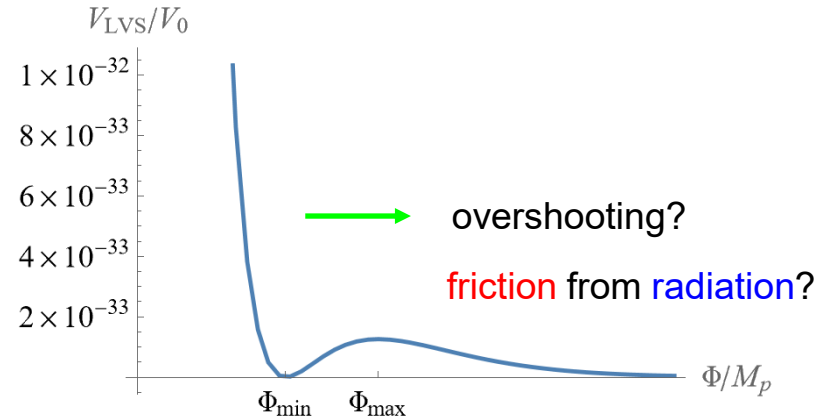
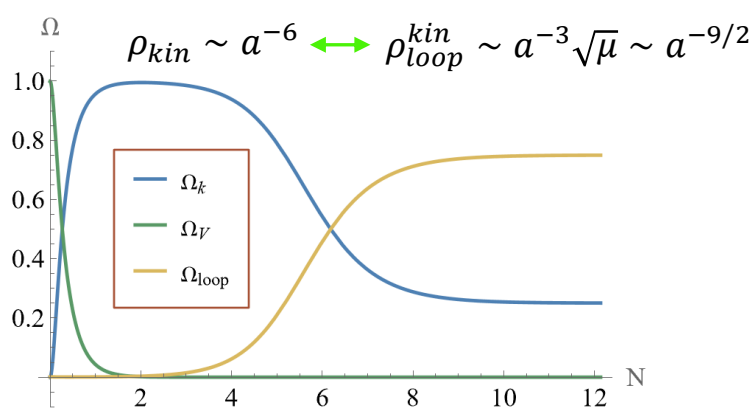
strings with ϕ -dependent μ and negligible ρ_{loop} + fluid + ϕ with $V(\phi) = V_0 e^{-\lambda\phi}$

[Brunelli,MC,Pedro]



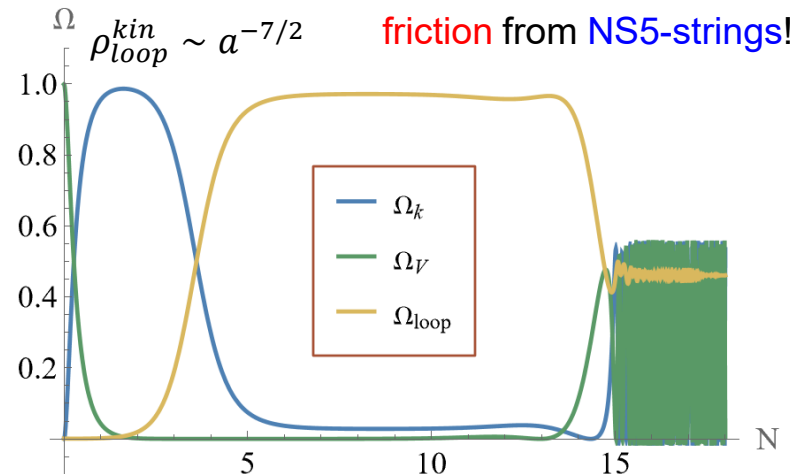
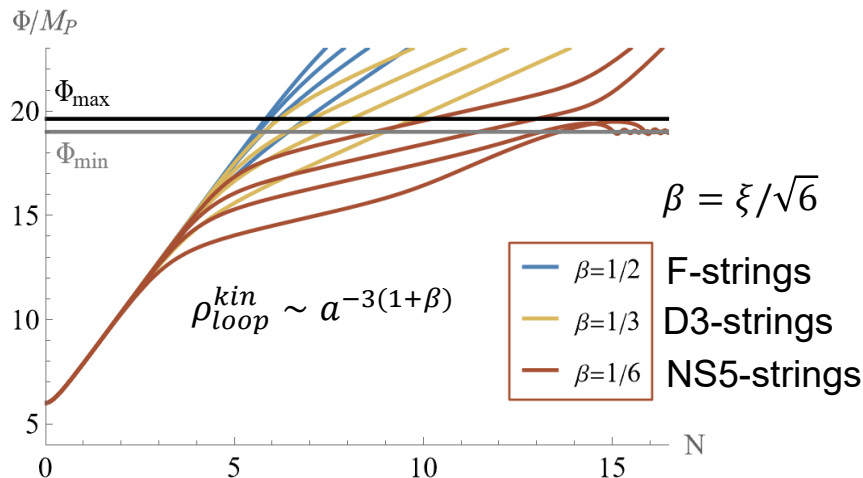
Cosmic strings and overshooting

- If ρ_{loop} is not negligible, new **loop tracker** for **F-strings** [Gonzalez, Conlon, Copeland, Hardy]



- No overshooting of **LVS** minimum for **NS5-strings** without radiation! [Brunelli, MC, Pedro]

$$V_{\text{LVS}}(\Phi) = V_0 \left[(1 - \epsilon \Phi^{3/2}) e^{-3\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}} \Phi} + \delta e^{-2\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}} \Phi} \right]$$



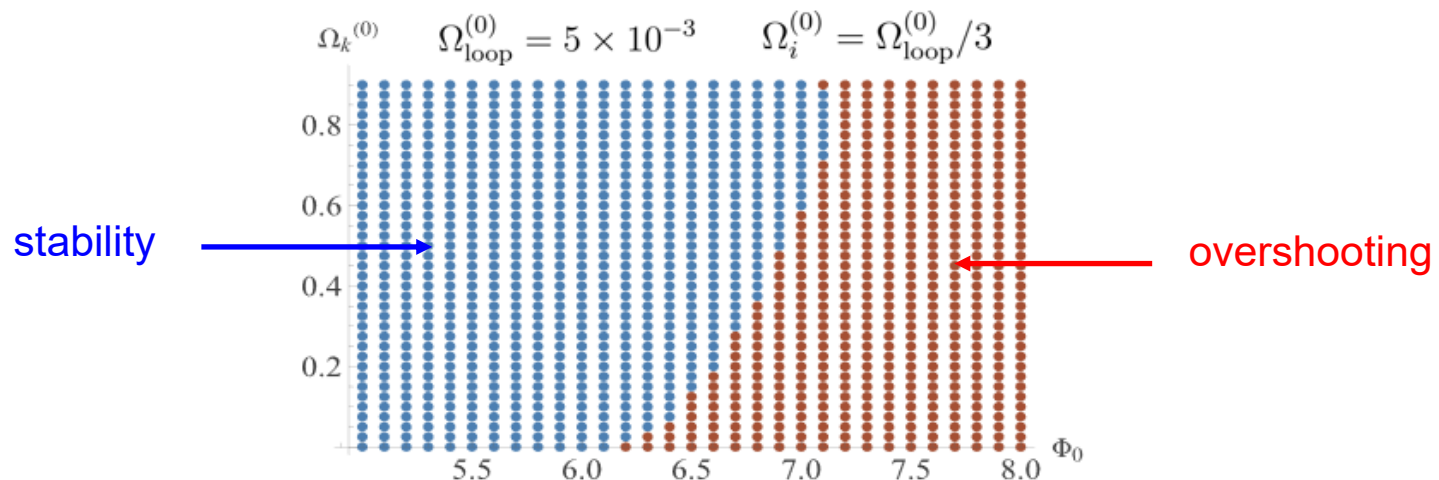
General case with all types of strings

WIP: [Brunelli,MC,Hassan,Pedro,Qoreishi]

- General case:

i) Non-zero initial velocity of $\phi \longrightarrow \Omega_k^{(0)} \neq 0$

ii) F-strings, D3-strings and NS5-strings $\longrightarrow \Omega_F^{(0)} \neq 0 \quad \Omega_3^{(0)} \neq 0 \quad \Omega_5^{(0)} \neq 0$



- Larger initial velocities improve stability since kination is reached earlier

$\longrightarrow$ friction from NS5-strings acts sooner

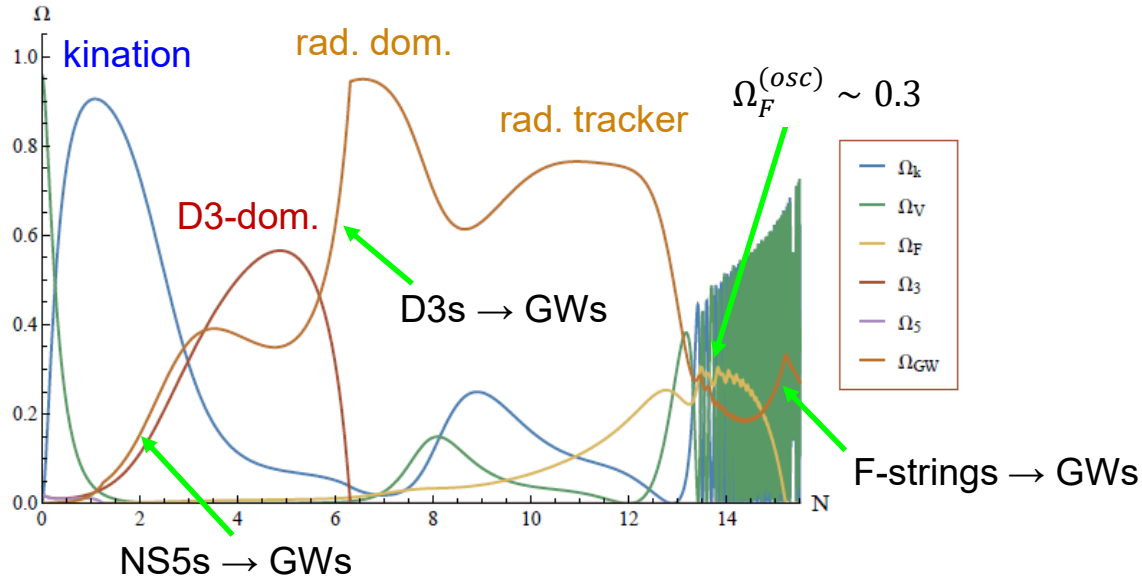
- Need to include GW production from string loop decays since: [Conlon,Copeland,Hardy,Gonzales]

$$\delta_i \equiv \frac{\Gamma_{GW,i}}{H} \sim \frac{\gamma \mu_i}{M_p^2 \ell_i H} \sim \frac{\gamma}{\mathcal{V}^{2\beta} \ell_i H} \quad \text{for} \quad \begin{cases} \gamma \sim 10 \\ \mathcal{V}_0 \sim 10^3 \\ \ell_0 H \sim 0.1 \end{cases} \longrightarrow \begin{cases} \delta_{NS5}^{(0)} \sim 10 \\ \delta_{D3}^{(0)} \sim 10^{-1} \\ \delta_F^{(0)} \sim 10^{-3} \end{cases}$$

General case with all types of strings

WIP: [Brunelli,MC,Hassan,Pedro,Qoreishi]

- No overshooting due to friction from GW radiation from string loop decays:



$$\Phi_0 = 6$$

$$\Omega_k^{(0)} = \Omega_{GW}^{(0)} = 0$$

$$\Omega_{NS5}^{(0)} = \Omega_{D3}^{(0)} = 0.02$$

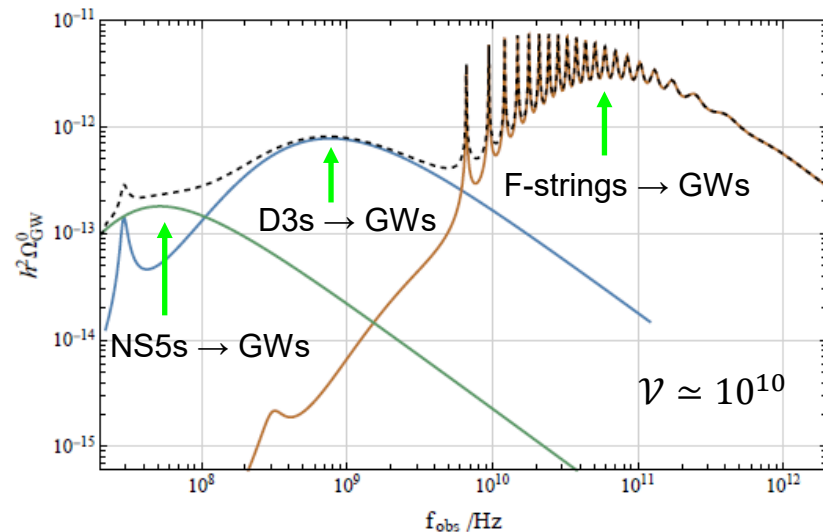
$$\Omega_F^{(0)} = 10^{-3}$$

- Multiple peaks of GWs at GHz range for loop-enhanced $\mathcal{V}$ decay

$$\Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow hh} \sim c_{loop}^2 \left(\frac{M_{soft}}{m_{\mathcal{V}}} \right)^4 \frac{m_{\mathcal{V}}^3}{M_p^2}$$

$$M_{soft} \gg m_{\mathcal{V}} \longrightarrow \Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow hh} \gg m_{\mathcal{V}}^3 / M_p^2$$

[MC,Hebecker,Jaekel,Wittner]



Reheating from volume decay

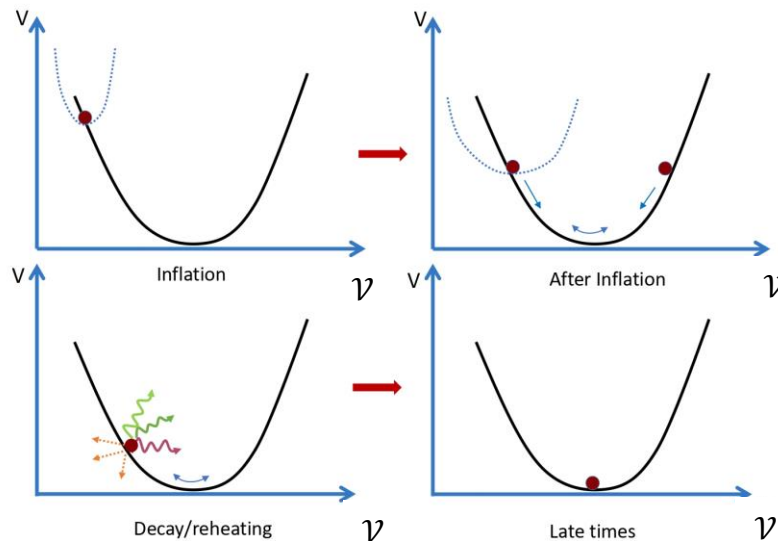
- Non-standard cosmology after inflation:

i) Inflation $\rightarrow$ matter dom. from inflaton ϕ oscillations $\rightarrow$ rad. dom. after ϕ decay
 $\rightarrow$ matter dom. from volume $\mathcal{V}$ oscillations $\rightarrow$ reheating from $\mathcal{V}$ decay

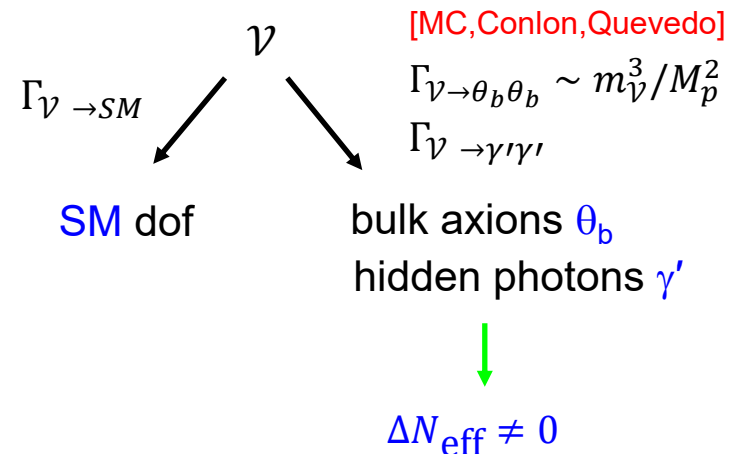
ii) Inflation $\rightarrow$ kination from volume $\mathcal{V}$ rolling $\rightarrow$ rad. dom. after string loop decay
 $\rightarrow$ matter dom. from volume $\mathcal{V}$ oscillations $\rightarrow$ reheating from $\mathcal{V}$ decay

$\rightarrow$ Reheating from $\mathcal{V}$ decay in general

$\rightarrow$ dark radiation, non-thermal dark matter, Affleck-Dine baryogenesis,...



$$N_e \simeq 57 + \frac{1}{4} \ln r - \frac{1}{4} N_\phi - \frac{1}{4} N_\mathcal{V} + \frac{1}{4} \ln \left(\frac{\rho_*}{\rho_{end}} \right)$$



Dark radiation from bulk axions

- Bulk axions θ_b enjoy a perturbative shift symmetry $\longrightarrow$ K_{pert} depends just on $\mathcal{V} \sim \tau_b^{3/2}$

$$K_{\text{pert}} = -2 \ln \mathcal{V} + K_{\text{corr}}(\mathcal{V}) = -3 \ln \tau_b + \dots \quad T_b = \tau_b + i\theta_b$$

- Shift symmetry broken by non-perturbative effects $\longrightarrow$ θ_b is ultra-light

$$W_{\text{non-pert}} = e^{-a_b T_b} \propto e^{-a_b \mathcal{V}^{2/3}} \ll 1 \quad \longrightarrow \quad m_{\theta_b} \sim e^{-a_b \mathcal{V}^{2/3}} M_p \ll m_{\mathcal{V}} \sim \frac{W_0 M_p}{\mathcal{V}^{3/2}}$$

- $\mathcal{V}$ - θ_b coupling from kinetic terms

$$\frac{1}{4} \frac{\partial^2 K}{\partial \tau_b^2} (\partial_\mu \tau_b \partial^\mu \tau_b + \partial_\mu \theta_b \partial^\mu \theta_b) = \frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu \phi \partial^\mu \phi + \frac{1}{2} e^{-2\sqrt{2/3}\phi} \partial_\mu \vartheta_b \partial^\mu \vartheta_b \quad \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \tau_b = e^{\sqrt{2/3}\phi/M} \\ \theta_b = \sqrt{2/3} \vartheta_b \end{array} \right.$$

$$\longrightarrow \sqrt{\frac{2}{3}} \frac{\phi}{M_p} \partial_\mu \vartheta_b \partial^\mu \vartheta_b$$

- Model-independent $\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \theta_b \theta_b$ decay rate [MC, Conlon, Quevedo]

$$\Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \theta_b \theta_b} = \frac{1}{48\pi} \frac{m_{\mathcal{V}}^3}{M_p^2} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \Delta N_{\text{eff}} \neq 0$$

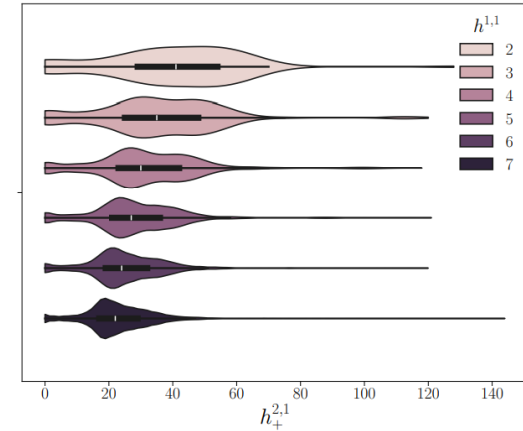
Bulk hidden photons

- Bulk hidden photons γ' from dimensional reduction of C_4

$$C_4 = D_2^i(x) \wedge \widehat{D}_i + V^\lambda(x) \wedge \alpha_\lambda + U^\lambda(x) \wedge \beta_\lambda + \rho_i(x) \widetilde{D}^i \quad \lambda = 1, \dots, h_+^{1,2}$$

- $h_+^{1,2} \gg 1$ for CYs in Kreuzer-Skarke list with $2 \leq h^{1,1} \leq 7$

[Sheridan et al]



- Charged modes are D3s wrapping 3-cycle Σ_3 with mass

$$m_{D3} \simeq T_{D3} \text{Vol}(\Sigma_3) \gg M_s$$

→ no light charged modes → no Stueckelberg/Higgs mechanism → massless γ'

[$m_{\gamma'} \geq M_s$ for torsional cycles]

- Gauge kinetic function depends on complex str moduli z^a $a = 1, \dots, h_+^{1,2}$ [Camara, Ibanez, Marchesano]

$$\text{Re}(f_{\lambda\kappa}) X_{\mu\nu}^\lambda X^{\mu\nu,\kappa} \quad f_{\lambda\kappa} = \frac{i}{2} \partial_{\lambda\kappa}^2 F(z) \Big|_{z^a=0} \quad \forall a = 1, \dots, h_+^{1,2}$$

$$F(z) = -\frac{1}{6} k_{IJK} z^I z^J z^K + \dots \quad I, J, K = 1, \dots, h^{1,2} \quad \longrightarrow \quad f_{\lambda\kappa}(z) \sim k_{\lambda\kappa a} z^a$$

- Kinetic mixing with SM photon on D7s wrapped on 4-cycle Σ_4 [Grimm, Louis][Jockers, Louis]

$$\chi X_{\mu\nu}^\lambda F^{\mu\nu} \quad \chi \propto \int_{\Sigma_4} A \wedge i^* \alpha_\lambda \quad \longrightarrow \quad \chi = \chi(a_{\tilde{I}}, \zeta^A, z^a) \quad \begin{array}{l} a_{\tilde{I}} = \text{Wilson lines} \\ \zeta^A = \text{D7 deformations} \end{array}$$

Bulk hidden photons

- Lagrangian for **photon** and **bulk hidden photon** γ'

$$-Re(f_{vis})(T) F^{\mu\nu} F_{\mu\nu} - Re(f_{hid})(z) X^{\mu\nu} X_{\mu\nu} + \epsilon(z, a, \zeta) X^{\mu\nu} F_{\mu\nu} + J_{vis}^\mu A_\mu + \overset{0}{\parallel} J_{hid}^\mu V_\mu - \frac{1}{2} \overset{0}{\parallel} m_{\gamma'}^2 V_\mu V^\mu$$

$$\longrightarrow -\frac{1}{4} F^{\mu\nu} F_{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{4} X^{\mu\nu} X_{\mu\nu} + \frac{\epsilon}{2} X^{\mu\nu} F_{\mu\nu} + g_{vis} J_{vis}^\mu A_\mu \quad \epsilon \sim \frac{\chi}{\sqrt{Re(f_{vis})Re(f_{hid})}} \sim g_{vis} g_{hid} \chi \ll 1$$

- Non-unitary transformation

$$A_\mu = \frac{\hat{A}_\mu}{\sqrt{1 - \epsilon^2}} \quad V_\mu = \hat{V}_\mu + \frac{\epsilon}{\sqrt{1 - \epsilon^2}} \hat{A}_\mu$$

$$\longrightarrow \boxed{-\frac{1}{4} \hat{F}^{\mu\nu} \hat{F}_{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{4} \hat{X}^{\mu\nu} \hat{X}_{\mu\nu} + \hat{g}_{vis} J_{vis}^\mu \hat{A}_\mu}$$

- Small correction to **U(1)-charge**: $\hat{g}_{vis} \simeq g_{vis} \left(1 + \frac{1}{2} \epsilon^2\right) \longrightarrow$ tiny effect on GUT unification

$\longrightarrow$ **bulk hidden photons** are **super-hidden**

- Observations:

i) **Collider signals** for low-scale ~~SUSY~~ from **hidden photini** mixed with **Bino** [Arvanitaki et al]

ii) **Dipole moments** from γ' coupling to visible matter via **dim 6 operators** [Coudarchet et al]

- Gravitational production** from $\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \gamma' \gamma'$ decay at **reheating**? $\longrightarrow \Delta N_{\text{eff}} \neq 0$

Dark radiation from bulk hidden photons

- Moduli coupling to γ' from **gauge kinetic function**

WIP: [Caraffi, Chinaia, MC, Lin]

$$\text{Re}(f_{hid}(z)) X^{\mu\nu} X_{\mu\nu} \longrightarrow \text{only cx str moduli } z \text{ couple directly to } \gamma'$$

- Volume $\mathcal{V}$ coupling to γ' induced by **kinetic mixing** between $\mathcal{V}$ and z

$$K = -2 \ln \mathcal{V} - 3 \ln(z + \bar{z}) + \frac{f(z+\bar{z})}{\mathcal{V}^{2/3}} + \frac{c}{\mathcal{V}} + \dots$$

- Canonical normalisation** at minimum with $\text{Re}(z) \equiv u$

$$\frac{\hat{u}}{\langle u \rangle} \simeq O(\mathcal{V}^{-2/3})\phi + O(1)\chi$$

$$\longrightarrow \mathcal{V}\text{-suppressed } \mathcal{V}\text{-}\gamma' \text{ coupling at } O(\alpha'^2) \text{ level: } g_{\mathcal{V}\gamma'} \frac{\phi}{M_p} X^{\mu\nu} X_{\mu\nu} \quad g_{\mathcal{V}\gamma'} \sim \frac{1}{\mathcal{V}^{2/3}} \ll 1$$

$$\longrightarrow \text{negligible contribution to } \Delta N_{\text{eff}} \text{ since (for } \mathcal{V} \gtrsim 10^3 \quad N_{\gamma'} \sim 100 \text{)}$$

$$\Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \gamma' \gamma'} \sim g_{\mathcal{V}\gamma'}^2 N_{\gamma'} \frac{m_{\mathcal{V}}^3}{M_p^2} \sim \mathcal{V}^{-4/3} N_{\gamma'} \Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \theta_b \theta_b} \lesssim 10^{-2} \Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \theta_b \theta_b} \ll \Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \theta_b \theta_b} \longrightarrow \Delta N_{\text{eff}} \rightarrow 0$$

- $\Gamma_{z \rightarrow \gamma' \gamma'} \gg \Gamma_{\mathcal{V} \rightarrow \gamma' \gamma'}$ since $g_{z\gamma'} \sim 1$ but **z-moduli** are **heavy** $\longrightarrow$ tiny initial displacement

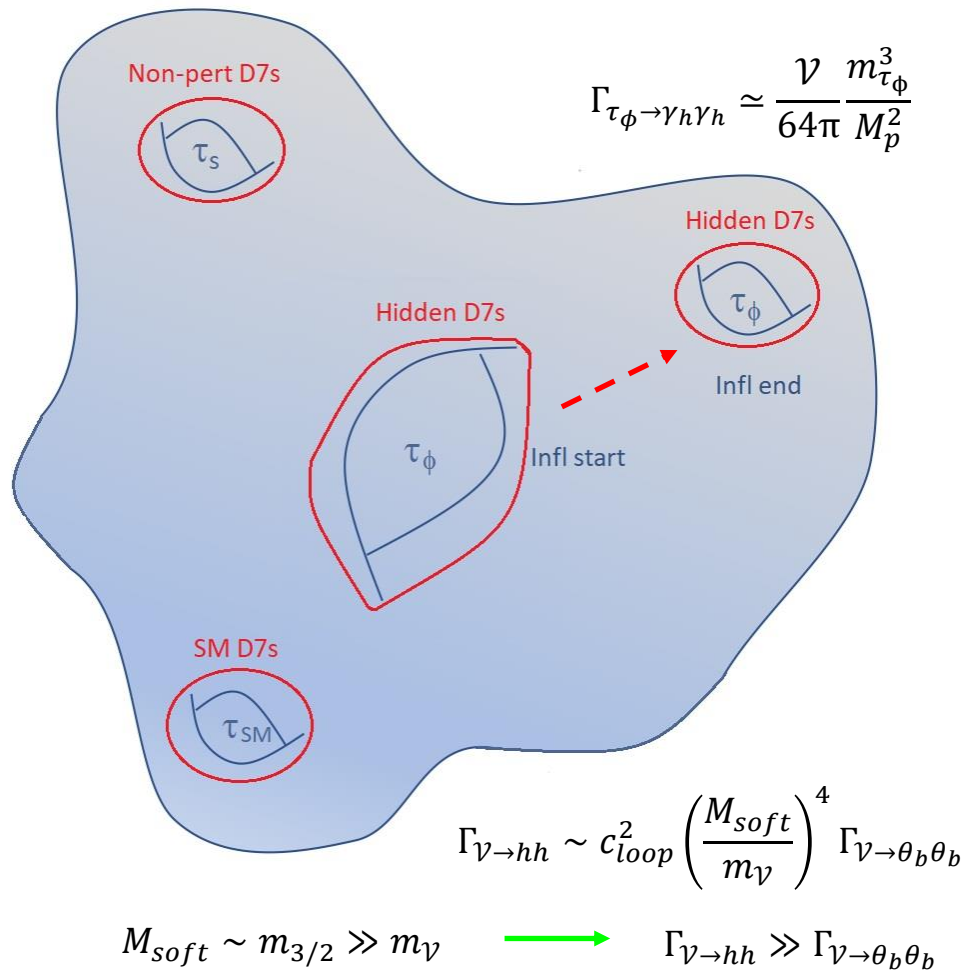
$$\longrightarrow \text{no z-moduli domination or dilution of } \gamma' \text{ by } \mathcal{V} \text{ decay} \longrightarrow \Delta N_{\text{eff}} \rightarrow 0$$

BUT **big challenge** if some **z-moduli** are **light** as predicted in general by **tadpole conjecture**

[Bena, Blaback, Grana, Lust]

Loop blowup inflation with SM on D7s

[Bansal, Brunelli, MC, Hebecker, Kuespert]



[MC, Hebecker, Jaeckel, Wittner]

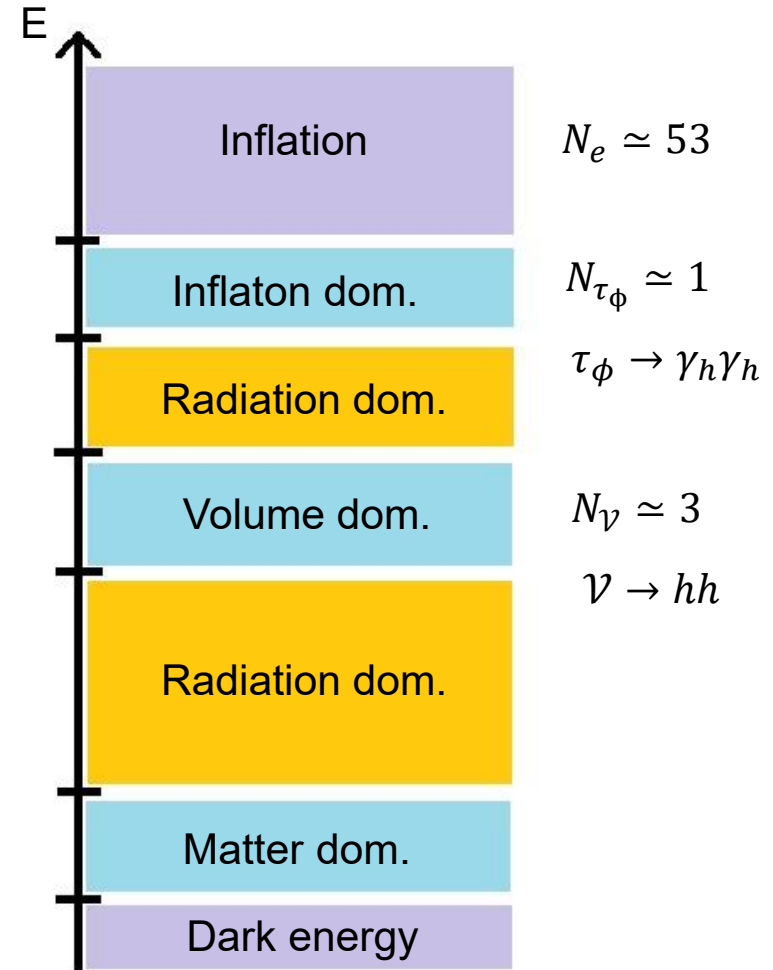
Predictions:

$$n_s \simeq 0.9765$$

$$r \simeq 1.7 \times 10^{-5}$$

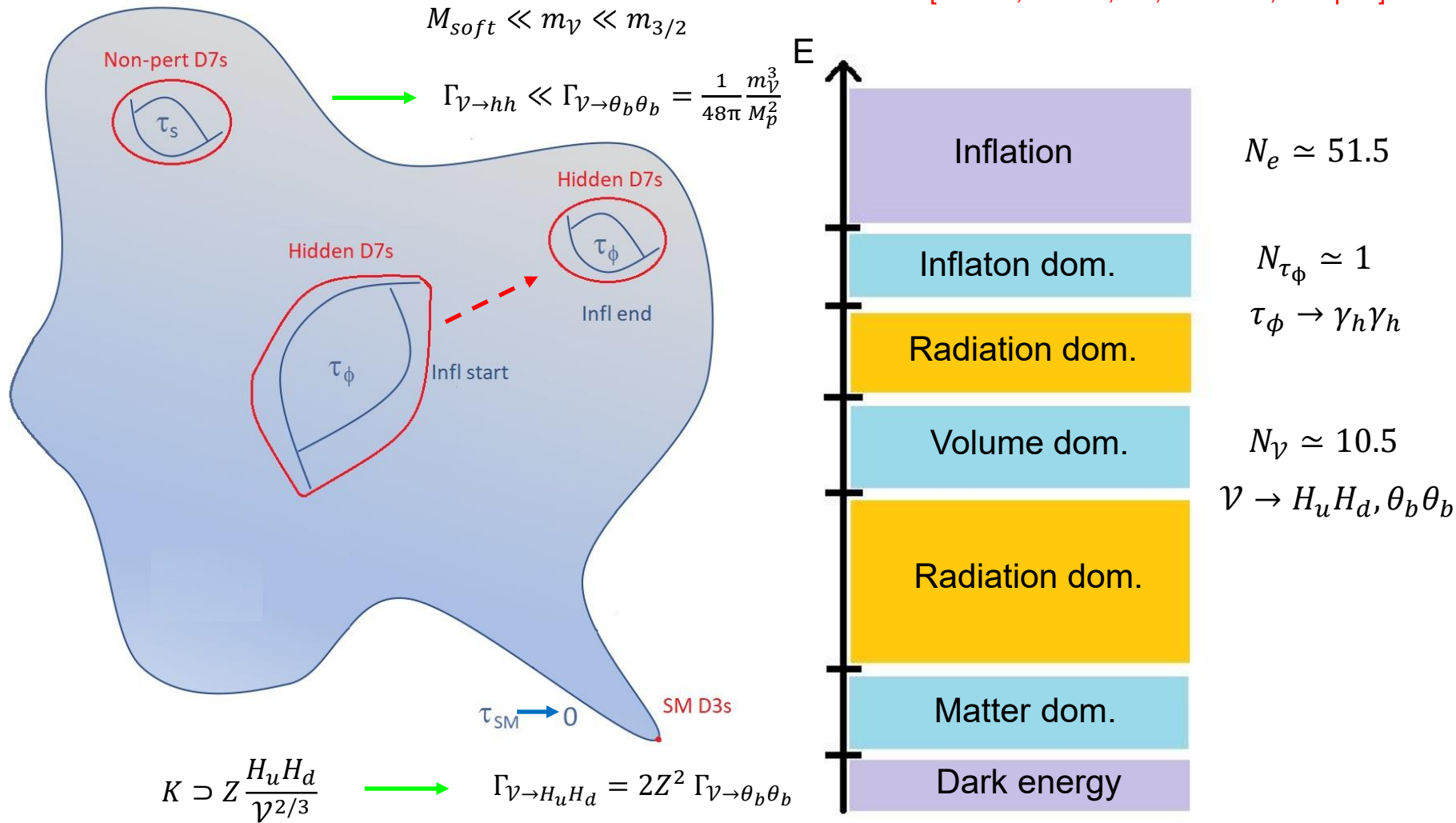
$$T_{\text{rh}} \simeq 4 \times 10^{10} \text{ GeV}$$

$$\Delta N_{\text{eff}} \simeq 0$$



Loop blowup inflation with SM on D3s

[Bansal, Brunelli, MC, Hebecker, Kuespert]



Predictions:

$$n_s \simeq 0.9757 \quad r \simeq 1.8 \times 10^{-5} \quad T_{rh} \simeq 1 \times 10^8 \text{ GeV} \quad \Delta N_{eff} \simeq \frac{1.43}{Z^2} \neq 0$$

Dark energy from axions

- Quintessence **as hard as dS** + extra challenges (fifth forces, right scales, radiative stability)
- **Metastable dS** seems **easier** to build [MC, De Alwis, Maharana, Muia, Quevedo]
[MC, Cunillera, Padilla, Pedro]
- But what if **quintessence** is preferred by **data**? (DESI? Euclid?)
- **Best candidate**: **axion quintessence**
- $V_{\text{lead}}(\mathcal{V})$ has a **SUSY breaking Minkowski** vacuum and **axion ϕ is flat**
- $V_{\text{sub}}(\phi, \mathcal{V}) \ll V_{\text{lead}}(\mathcal{V})$ generated by **non-perturbative** effects

i) **Hierarchy** allows $V_{\text{sub}} \sim 10^{-120} M_p^4$ for $M_s > M_{\text{soft}} \gtrsim 1 \text{ TeV}$ and $m_{\mathcal{V}} \gtrsim 30 \text{ TeV} \rightarrow$ no CMP

$$V_{\text{sub}}(\phi, \mathcal{V}) \sim \underbrace{e^{-\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}} \frac{M_p}{f}} M_p^4}_{10^{-120} \text{ for } f \sim 0.003 M_p} \left[1 - \cos\left(\frac{\phi}{f}\right) \right] \quad f = \sqrt{3/2} \frac{M_p}{a \mathcal{V}^{2/3}}$$

natural + EFT **under control**
 $m_{\mathcal{V}} \sim 10^{13} \text{ GeV}$

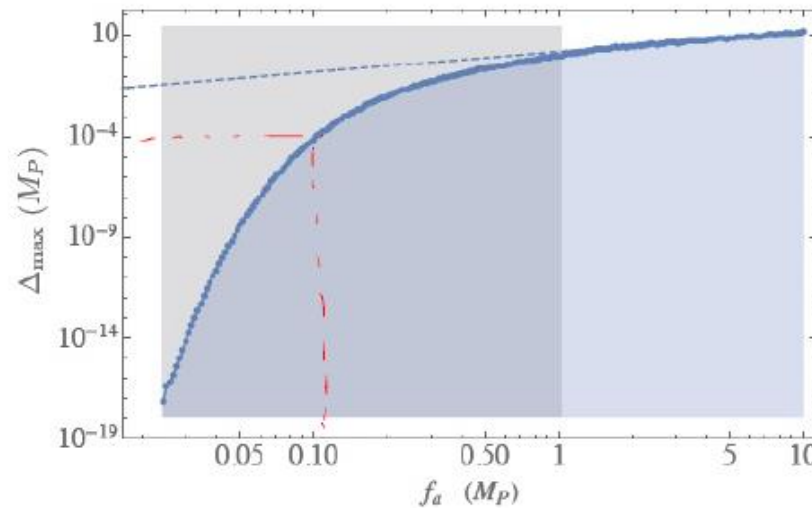
ii) **Radiative stability** due to **perturbative shift symmetry**

iii) **No fifth-force problem**

- But axion potential yields **acceleration** only for $f \gtrsim M_p$
- **Never** obtained in **EFT** + forbidden by **WGC**
- For $f < M_p$ can have **axion hilltop quintessence**

Hilltop and initial conditions

- How **close** should ϕ be to the **maximum** to get **acceleration** with $\omega_\phi \simeq -1$ and $\Omega_\phi \simeq 0.7$?



[MC,Cunillera,Padilla,Pedro]

- Quantum diffusion** during inflation causes fluctuations $\Delta\phi \sim H_{inf}$
- Need $H_{inf} \lesssim \Delta_{max}$
 - i) $f \simeq 0.1 M_p \longrightarrow H_{inf} \lesssim 10^{-4} M_p \sim 10^{14} \text{ GeV}$ but can get **DE scale** for $f \simeq 0.1 M_p$?
 - ii) $f \simeq 0.02 M_p \longrightarrow H_{inf} \lesssim 10^{-18} M_p \sim 1 \text{ GeV}$ tiny and even lower for $f \simeq 0.003 M_p$
- In (i) use **poly-instantons** to generate axion potential with right **DE scale** [MC,Padilla,Pedro]
- In (ii) use **axion alignment** [Kim,Nilles,Peloso] to get an effective $f \simeq 0.1 M_p$

Quintessence from poly-instantons

- LVS in fibred CY: $\mathcal{V} = t_{P1} \tau_{K3} - \tau_{dP}^{3/2}$

[MC, Padilla, Pedro]

$$V = V_{lead}(\mathcal{V}, \tau_{dP}, \theta_{dP}) + V_{inf}(\tau_{K3}) + V_{sub}(\theta_{P1}, \theta_{K3})$$

- Loop Fibre Inflation: [MC, Burgess, Quevedo]

$$V_{inf} \simeq V_0 \left(1 - \frac{4}{3} e^{-\phi/\sqrt{3}}\right) \quad \text{and} \quad H_{inf} \simeq 10^{-5} M_p$$

- 2 ultra-light axions: θ_{P1} = spectator (0.2% of DM) + θ_{K3} = DE via poly-instantons

$$W = W_{LVS} + e^{-a T_{P1}} + e^{-b T_{K3}} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{[Blumenhagen, Schmidt-Sommerfeld]} \\ \text{[Luest, Zhang]} \end{array}$$

- Axion potential:

$$V_{sub} \sim e^{-a\tau_{P1}} \left[1 - \cos\left(\frac{\psi}{g}\right)\right] + e^{-a\tau_{P1} - b\tau_{K3}} \left[1 - \cos\left(\frac{\psi}{g} + \frac{\phi}{f}\right)\right]$$

$$\text{fix } \psi = 0 \quad \longrightarrow \quad V_{DE} \sim e^{-1/f - 1/g} \left[1 - \cos\left(\frac{\phi}{f}\right)\right]$$

$$f = \frac{N}{2\sqrt{2}\pi\tau_{K3}} M_p \simeq 0.1 M_p \quad \text{and} \quad g = \frac{M}{2\pi\tau_{P1}} M_p \simeq 0.005 M_p$$

- Numerical results:

$$\tau_{K3} \sim O(5) \quad \tau_{P1} \sim O(500) \quad N \sim O(10) \quad M \sim O(10)$$

$$m_{\theta_{P1}} \simeq 10^{-29} \text{ eV} \quad m_{\theta_{K3}} \simeq 10^{-32} \text{ eV}$$

Quintessence from poly-instantons

- 2 challenges for model building:

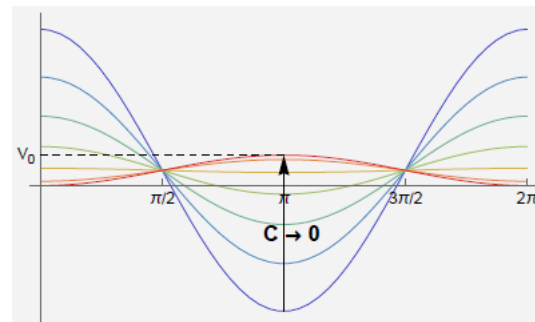
i) $f \simeq 0.1 M_p$ needs **tuning** of **initial conditions** $|\phi_0 - \pi f| \lesssim 10^{-4} M_p$ [MC, Cunillera, Padilla, Pedro]

ii) **Poly-instantons** on **Wilson divisors** ($h_+^{10} = 1, h_-^{20} = 0$), not on **K3s** ($h_+^{10} = h_+^{20} = 0, h_-^{20} = 1$)
[Blumenhagen, Schmidt-Sommerfeld]

- To address (i) use dependence on open string C **WIP**: [MC, Vagnoni]

$$W = W_{LVS} + A(C) e^{-c T_{K3}} + e^{-a T_{P1}} + e^{-b T_{K3}} \quad m_C < m_\phi(C) < H$$

Inflation $\rightarrow \phi$ relaxes at $\phi_{min} = \pi f$
 $\rightarrow C$ moves to $C = 0$ where $A(C) = 0 \rightarrow \phi$ sits at $\phi_{max} = \pi f$



- 2 options to address (ii):

1) Poly-instantons on **Wilson divisors** with $\tau_W = \tau_{K3} - \tau_{dP} \simeq \tau_{K3}$ [Luest, Zhang]

2) Poly-instantons on **K3-like** divisors for **O3-planes** [Caraffi, Carta, MC]

$$\chi^\sigma(D) = \sum_{i=0}^2 (-1)^i (h_+^{i0} - h_-^{i0}) = -\frac{1}{4} \sum_i k_{DDO7_i} + \frac{1}{4} N_{O3}^D \quad [\text{Cvetic, Garcia-Etxebarria, Halverson}]$$

for **K3-like D** with $k_{DDO7_i} = 0 \forall i \quad \longrightarrow \quad \chi^\sigma = 1 + h_+^{20} - h_-^{20} = \frac{1}{4} N_{O3}^D$

if $N_{O3}^D = 0$	$\longrightarrow$	$\chi^\sigma = 1 + h_+^{20} - h_-^{20} = 0$	$\longrightarrow$	$h_+^{20} = 0, h_-^{20} = 1$	NO
if $N_{O3}^D = 8$	$\longrightarrow$	$\chi^\sigma = 1 + h_+^{20} - h_-^{20} = 2$	$\longrightarrow$	$h_+^{20} = 1, h_-^{20} = 0$	YES

ADD and the Dark Dimension

- Bound on large EDs: $M_{KK} \gtrsim meV$
 - ia) ADD: 2 large EDs with $M_{KK}^{6D} \sim meV$ and $M_6 \sim TeV$ [Arkani-Hamed,Dimopoulos,Dvali]
→ hierarchy problem
 - ib) SLED: 2 large SUSY EDs with $M_{KK}^{6D} \sim m_{3/2} \sim meV$ and $V \sim (M_{KK}^{6D})^2 m_{3/2}^2 \sim meV^4$
→ hierarchy probl. + dark energy [Aghababaie,Burgess,Parameswaran,Quevedo]
 - ii) DD: 1 large ED with $M_{KK}^{5D} \sim meV$ and $V \sim (M_{KK}^{5D})^4 \sim meV^4$ [Montero,Vafa,Valenzuela]
→ dark energy
- Challenges:
 - i) Need string embedding to have quantitative control
 - ii) No known accelerating solutions at boundary of moduli space
 - iii) $V \sim (M_{KK}^{6D})^2 m_{3/2}^2$ and $V \sim (M_{KK}^{5D})^4$ ruined by larger loops of bulk/brane fields? SM loops?
 - iv) Hard to fix moduli at anisotropic CY with 1 or 2 large EDs with $M_{KK} \sim meV$
[first attempt at anisotropic LVS stabilisation [MC,Burgess,Quevedo]]
 - v) Tension with pheno: low SUSY breaking, CMP, fifth-forces, moduli DM overprod., inflation

Moduli stabilisation for ADD and the Dark Dimension

[Braun, MC, Milioli, Valandro]

- Moduli stabilisation for **anisotropic** string compactifications with **1** (DD) or **2** (ADD) **large EDs**

i) **Large EDs**: via type IIB **LVS** where $\mathcal{V}$ is **exponentially large**

ii) **Anisotropy**: via CY = **small 4D K3** fibre over **large 2D $\mathbb{P}^1$** base

ADD for **isotropic $\mathbb{P}^1$** $\longleftrightarrow$ DD for **anisotropic $\mathbb{P}^1$** (**Tyurin degeneration**)

- $\mathcal{V} \simeq t_{P1} \tau_{K3}$ where $t_{P1} = \ell_L R$ controls **2D $\mathbb{P}^1$** size while $\tau_{K3} = \ell_{K3}^4$ controls **4D K3** size
- Leading **LVS** order: $O(\alpha'^3)$ + non-pert. effects fix $\mathcal{V} \sim e^{c/g_s} \gg 1$ leaving τ_{K3} **flat**
- Subleading order: τ_{K3} lifted by $O(g_s^2 \alpha'^4)$ loops and $O(\alpha'^3 F^4)$ corrections

$$V_{\text{sub}} \simeq \frac{W_0^2}{\mathcal{V}^3} \left(-\frac{A}{\sqrt{\tau_{K3}}} + \frac{B}{\tau_{K3}} \right) \quad \begin{aligned} A &\equiv g_s c_{\text{loop}} \\ B &\equiv \sqrt{g_s} c_{F^4} W_0^2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\Lambda^2 \text{Str}(M^2) \sim (M_{KK}^{10D})^2 m_{3/2}^2 \quad V_{F^2} (m_{3/2}/M_{KK}^{5D})^2$$

- **2** cases depending on W_0 :

1) $W_0 \sim O(10)$: **AdS min** at $\tau_{K3} \simeq \left(\frac{2B}{A}\right)^2 \sim O(5)$ with $\langle V_{\text{sub}} \rangle \simeq -\frac{B W_0^2}{\mathcal{V}^3 \langle \tau_{K3} \rangle}$ $\begin{cases} \text{ADD: } \langle V_{\text{sub}} \rangle \sim - (M_{KK}^{6D})^3 M_p \\ \text{DD: } \langle V_{\text{sub}} \rangle \sim - (M_{KK}^{5D})^2 M_p^2 \end{cases}$

$\longrightarrow$ uplifting to **dS min** with $\langle V_{\text{sub}} \rangle \sim M_{KK}^4$

2) $W_0 \ll 1 \Rightarrow B \ll A$: **quintessence** with $V \simeq V_0 e^{-c\phi}$ and $c = 1/\sqrt{3}$

$\longrightarrow$ tune $\tau_{K3} \sim O(5)$ and W_0 to get $V \sim \text{meV}^4$ $\begin{cases} \text{ADD: } W_0 \sim 10^{-12} \\ \text{DD: } W_0 \sim 10^{-27} \end{cases}$

[no interacting DM-DE with $M_{KK}^{5D} \simeq M_{KK,0}^{5D} e^{+\phi/c}$ as ruled out]

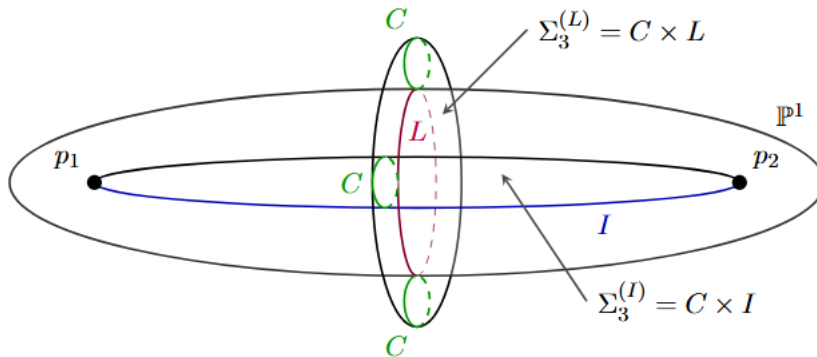
Anisotropy and mass scales

[Braun,MC,Milioli,Valandro]

- Complex structure stabilisation fixes shape of $\mathbb{P}^1$ controlled by $u = \ell_L / R$

i) ADD for isotropic $\mathbb{P}^1$ ($\ell_L \sim R$)

ii) DD for anisotropic $\mathbb{P}^1$ ($\ell_L \ll R$) in Tyurin degeneration limit



$$\text{Vol}(\Sigma_3^{(I)}) \simeq \int_{C \times I} \Omega_3 \gg \text{Vol}(\Sigma_3^{(L)}) \simeq \int_{C \times L} \Omega_3$$

$$r \equiv \frac{\sqrt{\tau_{K3}}}{t_{P1}} \ll 1 \quad u = \ell_L / R \ll 1$$

- Relevant mass scales

$$M_s \simeq \frac{M_p}{\sqrt{\mathcal{V}}} \quad M_{KK}^{10D} \simeq \frac{1}{\ell_{K3}} \simeq \frac{M_s}{\tau_{K3}^{1/4}} \quad M_{KK}^{5D} \simeq \frac{1}{R} \simeq u M_{KK}^{5D} \quad M_{KK}^{6D} \simeq \frac{1}{\ell_L} \simeq \frac{M_s^2}{M_p} \sqrt{\frac{\tau_{K3}}{u}} \quad m_{3/2} \simeq \frac{M_p}{\mathcal{V}}$$

$$m_{dP} \simeq m_{\theta_{dP}} \simeq m_{3/2} \ln \left(\frac{M_p}{m_{3/2}} \right) \quad m_{\mathcal{V}} \simeq m_{3/2} \sqrt{\frac{m_{3/2}}{M_p}} \quad m_r \simeq \frac{m_{\mathcal{V}}}{\sqrt{\tau_{K3}}} \quad m_{\theta_{P1}} \simeq m_{\theta_{K3}} \simeq 0$$

	$t_{\mathbb{P}^1}$	u	$\mathcal{V}$	ℓ_{K3}	ℓ_L	R	M_{KK}^{5D}	M_{KK}^{6D}	M_s	m_{dP}	$m_{3/2}$	$m_{\mathcal{V}}$	m_r
ADD	10^{30}	1	$5 \cdot 10^{30}$	$1.5 \ell_s$	$10^{15} \ell_s$	$10^{15} \ell_s$	-	1 meV	10^3 GeV	100 meV	1 meV	10^{-18} eV	10^{-18} eV
DD	10^{26}	10^{-8}	$5 \cdot 10^{26}$	$1.5 \ell_s$	$10^9 \ell_s$	$10^{17} \ell_s$	1 meV	0.1 MeV	10^5 GeV	10^3 eV	1 eV	10^{-12} eV	10^{-12} eV
DD	10^{20}	10^{-20}	$5 \cdot 10^{20}$	$1.5 \ell_s$	$1.0 \ell_s$	$10^{20} \ell_s$	1 meV	-	10^8 GeV	1 GeV	10 MeV	1 meV	1 meV

$$\tau_{K3} \sim W_0 \sim O(5)$$

- Explicit CY orientifold example with branes and fluxes

Theory and pheno challenges

[Braun, MC, Milioli, Valandro]

- Quantum corrections: absent at $O(g_s^n \alpha')$; extended no-scale at $O(g_s^n \alpha'^2)$ except possibly for

$$\tau_i^{new} = \tau_i + \beta_i \ln \mathcal{V} \quad \begin{cases} \delta V_{K3} \sim \beta_{K3} \frac{W_0^2}{\mathcal{V}^2 \tau_{K3}} & \text{bad: would fix } \tau_{K3} \text{ large} \\ \delta V_{\mathbb{P}^1} \sim \beta_{\mathbb{P}^1} \frac{W_0^2 \sqrt{\tau_{K3}}}{\mathcal{V}^3} & \text{good: could give dS!} \end{cases}$$

- Stabilisation of u : fluxes should yield $O(10^{-3}) \lesssim u \lesssim 1$; instantons might give $u \gtrsim O(10^{-20})$
- Explicit uplifting: several possibilities from $F^U \neq 0$, anti-branes, T-branes, ...
- SUSY breaking: $M_{soft} \lesssim m_{3/2} \lesssim 10 \text{ MeV}$ (gauge mediation is subdominant)
 - non-SUSY SM brane with $M_{soft} \sim M_s$
 - $V \sim M_s^4$ cancelled by brane backreaction?
- CMP: moduli decay after BBN for $m_{mod} \lesssim O(50) \text{ TeV}$ → issue for $m_{dP} \sim 1 \text{ GeV}$ in DD
 - dilution? models without dP?
- Dark matter overproduction: stable moduli for $m_{mod} \lesssim O(10) \text{ MeV}$ → issue for ADD and DD
 - tune ϕ_{in} to avoid $\Omega_\phi h^2 \gg 0.12$

$$\Omega_\phi h^2 \sim 5 \cdot 10^{13} \left(\frac{\phi_{in}}{M_p} \right)^2 \sqrt{\frac{m_\phi}{1 \text{ MeV}}}$$
- Fifth-forces: moduli mediate fifth-forces for $m_{mod} \lesssim O(1) \text{ meV}$ → issue for ADD
 - geometrical sequestering of SM? [inflation ?]

Conclusions

- 4 epochs need string theory to control M_p -physics: inflation, kination, reheating, dark energy
- Machine Learning IIB flux vacua: new vacua, distributions, param. compression, correlations
- Inflation driven by Kaehler moduli due to approximate shift symmetries
- PBHs and secondary GWs from axion isocurvature modes in Fibre Inflation
- Kination from rolling $\mathcal{V}$ after volume inflation and brane-antibrane inflation
- Formation of cosmic superstring network in kination $\longrightarrow$ emission of high freq GWs
- Growth for F-strings in scaling regimes and for NS5 and D3-strings on fibration cycles
- No overshooting due to NS5 and D3-strings decays into GWs $\longrightarrow$ GW peaks at high freq
- Reheating and moduli domination from volume decay
- Negligible dark radiation from bulk axions for high scale SUSY or Giudice-Masiero decay
- Negligible dark radiation from bulk hidden photons if all cx str moduli are heavy
- Dark energy from axion hilltop quintessence via poly-instantons
- Initial conditions from min to max transition and K3-like poly-instantons with O3-planes
- Anisotropic moduli stabilisation for ADD and Dark Dimension
- Tuning to address dark energy + theory and pheno challenges