

General covariance in effective quantum black hole models

Cong Zhang

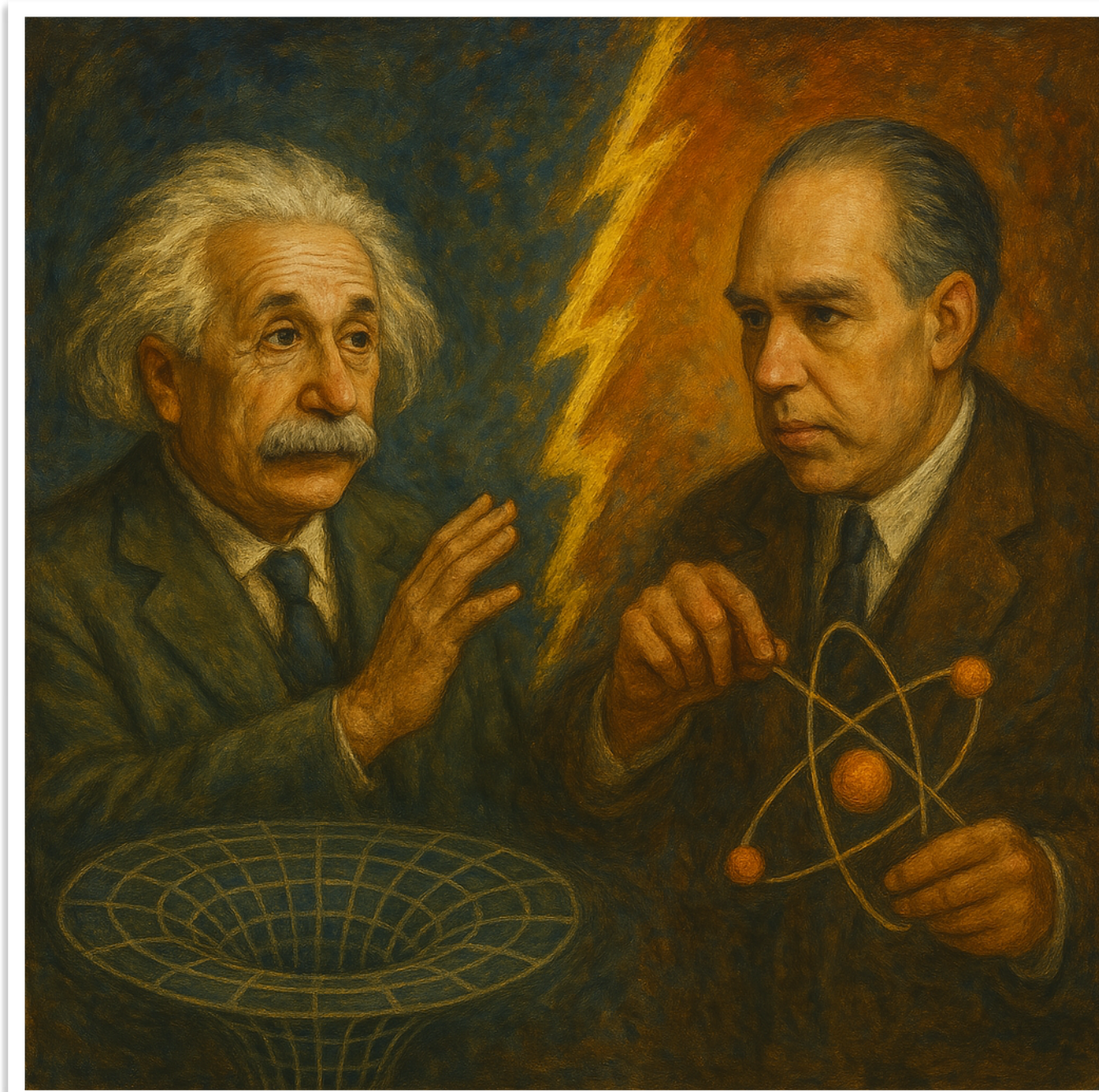
In collaboration with J. Lewandowski, Y. Ma, J. Yang, Z. Cao

Based on: [PRD 111, L081504 \(2025\)](#), [PRD 112, 044054 \(2025\)](#),
[PRD 112, 064049 \(2025\)](#), [ArXiv: 2506.09540](#)

Jerzy Lewandowski Memorial Conference, Sept. 2025



Motivation

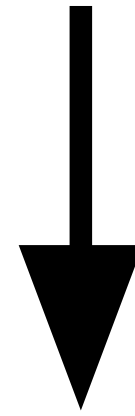


Ununification between GR and QM

- **GR is not the final theory on spacetime;**
- **Quantum gravity to unify of GR and QM;**
- **Effective approach to QG:**
 - Spacetime is described by $g_{\mu\nu}$
 - EOM is modified to $G_{\mu\nu}^{\text{eff}} = 0$

Motivation

Canonical quantum gravity



Hamiltonian formulation

V.S.

General covariance

Space+time

Spacetime

- The requirement of a 3+1 decomposition may potentially obscure general covariance.
- **How can general covariance be restored in the Hamiltonian framework?**

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Investigating this issue in the spherically symmetric gravitation model with $\Sigma \ni (x, \theta, \phi)$

Mathematical settings: spherically symmetric model

- **Phase space:** $(K_I(x), E^I(x))$, $I = 1, 2$;
- **Dynamics:** the **Diff constraints** H_x and **the Ham. constraint** H_{eff} .

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 - H_x is assumed to keep its classical expression, but H_{eff} is **unknown**
 - Assume the following constraint algebra

$$\begin{aligned}\{H_x[N_1^x], H_x[N_2^x]\} &= H_x[N_1^x \partial_x N_2^x - N_2^x \partial_x N_1^x], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N], H_x[M^x]\} &= -H_{\text{eff}}[M^x \partial_x N], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N_1], H_{\text{eff}}[N_2]\} &= H_x[\mu E^1 (E^2)^{-2} (N_1 \partial_x N_2 - N_2 \partial_x N_1)].\end{aligned}$$

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What is the precise meaning of general covariance in the Hamiltonian formulation?

Covariance in canonical formulation

How to solve dynamics in the canonical formulation?

- 1) Choose a lapse function N and a shift vector N^x
- 2) Solve the Hamilton's equation:

$$\dot{K}_I = \{K_I, H_{\text{eff}}[N] + H_x[N^x]\},$$

$$\dot{E}^I = \{E^I, H_{\text{eff}}[N] + H_x[N^x]\};$$

- 3) Define the metric as: $ds^2 = -N^2 dt^2 + \frac{(E^2)^2}{E^1} (dx + N^x dt)^2 + E^1 d\Omega^2$

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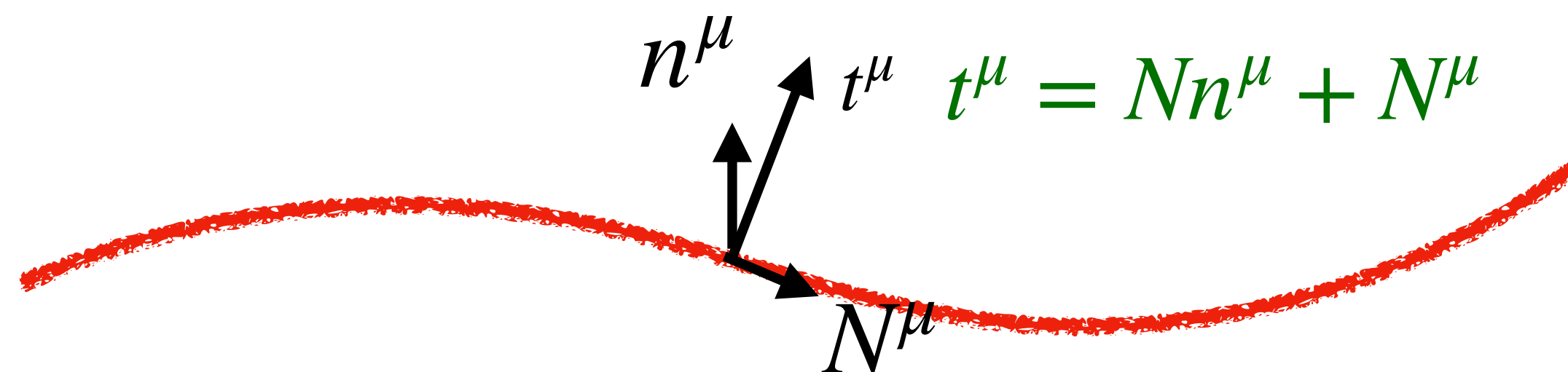
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If the final metric depends on the choice of N and N^x

- No: theory is covariant;
- Yes: theory is not covariant.



General Covariance in Effective QG

$$N^x \rightarrow N^x - \epsilon [N^2 \mu E^1 (E^2)^{-2} \partial_x \alpha + (\mathcal{L}_\beta \mathfrak{N})^x]$$

$$N \rightarrow N + \epsilon [\mathcal{L}_{\alpha \mathfrak{N} + \beta} N + N \mathfrak{N}^\rho \partial_\rho \alpha], \quad \mathfrak{N} = \partial_t - N^x \partial_x$$

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By constraint algebra

$$K_I(x) \rightarrow K_I(x) + \epsilon\{K_I(x), H_{\text{eff}}[\alpha N] + H_x[\beta^x]\}$$

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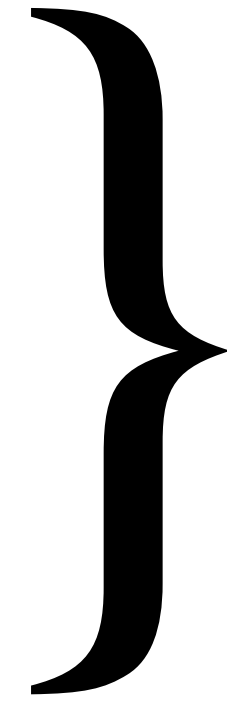
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$$\begin{aligned} \delta g_{\rho\sigma} dx^\rho dx^\sigma &= \mathcal{L}_\alpha \mathfrak{N} + \beta^x (g_{\rho\sigma} dx^\rho dx^\sigma) \\ &+ \left(\frac{\Delta_1}{(E^1)^2} - \frac{2\Delta_2}{E^1 E^2} \right) (dx + N^x dt)^2 - \Delta_1 d\Omega^2 \\ &+ N^2 (1 - \mu) \partial_x \alpha (2 dx dt + 2 N^x (dt)^2) \end{aligned}$$

$$\Delta_I = 0 \text{ if } H_{\text{eff}} \text{ is independent of } \partial_x K_I$$

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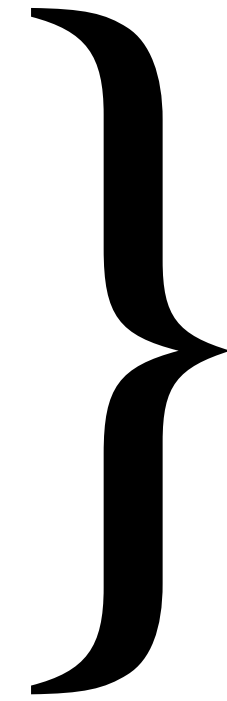
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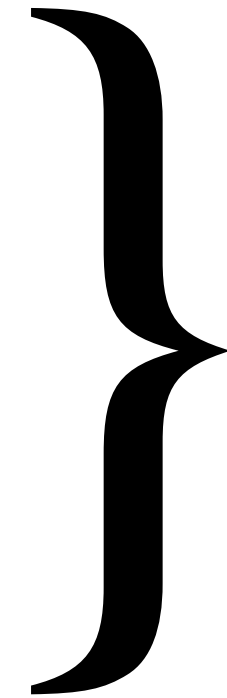
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Gauge trans. = spacetime diff. trans

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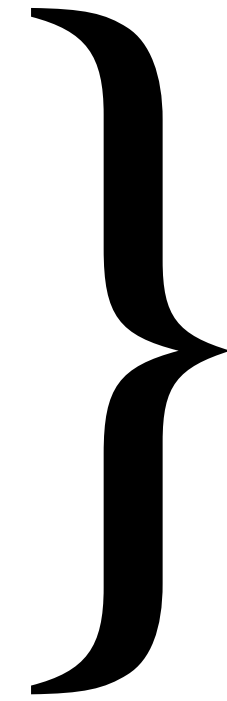
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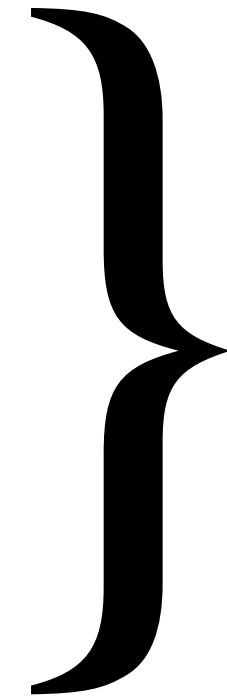
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Two key elements: 1) **the metric**; 2) **the constraints**

General Covariance needs them to be aligned: **fix metric and find H_{eff}**

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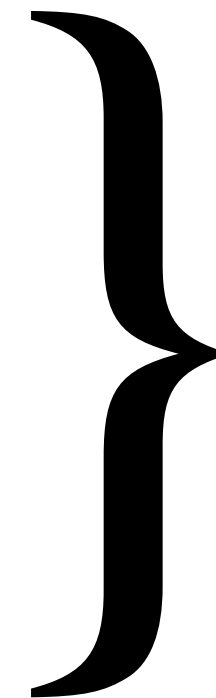
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Two key elements: 1) **the metric**; 2) **the constraints**

General Covariance needs them to be aligned: **fix metric and find H_{eff}**

We cannot use the classical definition of $g_{\mu\nu}$

General Covariance in Effective QG

We introduce the effective metric $g_{ab}^{(\mu)}$ defined by

$$ds_{(\mu)}^2 = -N^2 dt^2 + \frac{(E^2)^2}{\mu E^1} (dx + N^x dt)^2 + E^1 d\Omega^2$$

so that $q_{(\mu)}^{xx} = \mu E^1 (E^2)^{-2}$

[see also other works by M. Bojowald's, A. Alonso-Bardaji, and D. Brizuela, and so on]

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In the classical theory, the factor here has the geometric interpretation of q^{xx} .

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Theorem 1. Suppose the constraint algebra (3.1). The associated Hamiltonian theory is covariant with respect to $g_{\rho\sigma}^{(\mu)}$ given in (3.10), namely equation

$$\delta g_{\rho\sigma}^{(\mu)} = \mathcal{L}_{\alpha \mathfrak{N} + \beta} g_{\rho\sigma}^{(\mu)}$$

holds for all smeared function α and smeared vector field $\beta^x \partial_x$ if and only if

(i) H_{eff} is independent of $\partial_x^n K_1$ for all $n \geq 1$;

(ii) The following equation is satisfied for all phase space independent α and N :

$$\alpha \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[N]\} = \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[\alpha N]\}. \quad (3.19)$$

[CZ, J. Lewandowski, Y. Ma, J. Yang, 2025]

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If H_{eff} exists and if it exists, it is unique?

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Derivative the covariance equation

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+

Covariance conditions:

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Aim: to get the expression of H_{eff}

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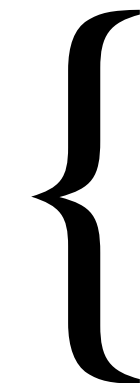
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Aim: to get the expression of H_{eff}

H_{eff} is a scalar density with weight 1



$$H_{\text{eff}} = E^2 F$$

F is a scalar field, i.e. function of elementary scalars

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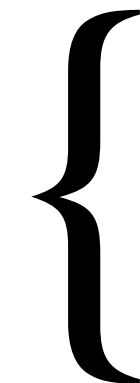
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$$H_{\text{eff}} = E^2 F$$

F is a scalar field, i.e. function of elementary scalars

Additional assumption: $\partial_x^n K_2$ is excluded as in classical theory;

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Covariance conditions:

(i) H_{eff} is independent of $\partial_x^n K_1$ for all $n \geq 1$;

(ii) The following equation is satisfied for all phase space independent α and N :

$$\alpha \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[N]\} = \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[\alpha N]\}. \quad (3.19)$$

Aim: to get the expression of H_{eff}

H_{eff} is a scalar density with weight 1  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} H_{\text{eff}} = E^2 F \\ F \text{ is a scalar field, i.e. function of elementary scalars} \end{array} \right.$

Additional assumption: $\partial_x^n K_2$ is excluded as in classical theory;

F should be a function of basic scalars formed from K_I , E^I , $\partial_x E^I$, $\partial_x^2 E^I$

- $\partial_x^n K_1$ is excluded due to the requirement (1);
- $\partial_x^n E^I$ ($n > 2$) are excluded, otherwise $\{H_{\text{eff}}[N_1], H_{\text{eff}}[N_2]\} = \dots + N_1 \partial_x^{n-1} N_2 - N_2 \partial_x^{n-1} N_1$

Derivative the covariance equation

Constraint algebra:

$$\begin{aligned} \{H_x[N_1^x], H_x[N_2^x]\} &= H_x[N_1^x \partial_x N_2^x - N_2^x \partial_x N_1^x], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N], H_x[M^x]\} &= -H_{\text{eff}}[M^x \partial_x N], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N_1], H_{\text{eff}}[N_2]\} &= H_x[\mu E^1 (E^2)^{-2} (N_1 \partial_x N_2 - N_2 \partial_x N_1)]. \end{aligned}$$


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The remaining basic scalars are: $s_1 = E^1$, $s_2 = K_2$, $s_3 = \frac{K_1}{E^2}$, $s_4 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{E^2}$, $s_5 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{E^2}$, $s_6 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{K_1}$, $s_7 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{K_1}$.

Derivative the covariance equation

Constraint algebra:


$$\begin{aligned}\{H_x[N_1^x], H_x[N_2^x]\} &= H_x[N_1^x \partial_x N_2^x - N_2^x \partial_x N_1^x], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N], H_x[M^x]\} &= -H_{\text{eff}}[M^x \partial_x N], \\ \{H_{\text{eff}}[N_1], H_{\text{eff}}[N_2]\} &= H_x[\mu E^1 (E^2)^{-2} (N_1 \partial_x N_2 - N_2 \partial_x N_1)].\end{aligned}$$

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H_{eff} is a scalar density with weight 1  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} H_{\text{eff}} = E^2 F \\ F \text{ is a scalar field, i.e. function of elementary scalars} \end{array} \right.$

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s_6, s_7 is excluded
because we want H_{eff} to
have regular behavior in
the classical regime

The remaining basic scalars are: $s_1 = E^1, s_2 = K_2, s_3 = \frac{K_1}{E^2}, s_4 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{E^2}, s_5 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{E^2}, s_6 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{K_1}, s_7 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{K_1}.$

Derivative the covariance equation

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$$\alpha \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[N]\} = \{\mu S, H_{\text{eff}}[\alpha N]\}. \quad (3.19)$$

Aim: to get the expression of H_{eff}

H_{eff} is a scalar density with weight 1  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} H_{\text{eff}} = E^2 F \\ F \text{ is a scalar field, i.e. function of elementary scalars} \end{array} \right.$

we finally get

$$H_{\text{eff}} = -2E^2 \left[\partial_{s_1} M_{\text{eff}} + \frac{\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}}{2} s_3 + \frac{\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}}{s_4} s_5 + \mathcal{R} \right], \quad (4.39)$$

where $\mathcal{R}(s_1, M_{\text{eff}})$ is an arbitrary function, and $M_{\text{eff}}(s_1, s_2, s_4)$ satisfies the equations (4.35) and (4.38), i.e.,

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4G^2} &= (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \\ (\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} \mu) \partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}} &= 0.\end{aligned} \quad (4.40)$$

Solutions to the covariance equation

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4G^2} &= (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \\ (\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} \mu) \partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}} &= 0.\end{aligned}\tag{4.40}$$

μ is a function of s_1 and M_{eff}



$$\frac{\mu s_1}{8} [(s_4)^2 + \mathcal{Z}] = \frac{1}{2} (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}})^2, \text{ for arbitrary functions } \mathcal{Z} \text{ of } s_1 \equiv E^1 \text{ and } M_{\text{eff}}$$

Solutions to the covariance equation

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4G^2} &= (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \\ (\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} \mu) \partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}} &= 0.\end{aligned}\tag{4.40}$$

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Solve EOM

→ $M_{\text{eff}} = M$ with $\partial_x M(x) + 2x \mathcal{R}(x^2, M(x)) = 0$.

Solutions to the covariance equation

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4G^2} &= (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \\ (\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} \mu) \partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}} &= 0.\end{aligned}\tag{4.40}$$

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$$ds^2 = \frac{1}{4} N^2 \mathcal{Z} dt_s^2 - \frac{4}{\mu \mathcal{Z}} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2,$$

$$N(x) = \exp \left(2 \int x (\partial_{M_{\text{eff}}} \mathcal{R})(x) dx \right)$$

Solutions to the covariance equation

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4G^2} &= (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \\ (\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} \mu) \partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}} &= 0.\end{aligned}\tag{4.40}$$

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$$N(x) = \exp \left(2 \int x (\partial_{M_{\text{eff}}} \mathcal{R})(x) dx \right)$$

[CZ, Z. Cao, 2025]

Given $ds^2 = -F(x; m) dt_s^2 + H(x; m)^{-1} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2$, → $F = -\frac{1}{4} N^2 \mathcal{Z}, \quad H = -\frac{1}{4} \mu \mathcal{Z}.$

LQG motivated metrics: $\bar{\mu}$ -scheme LQBH

$$ds_{(1)}^2 = -f_1 dt^2 + f_1^{-1} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2,$$

$$f_1 = 1 - \frac{2M}{x} + \frac{\zeta^2}{x^2} \left(1 - \frac{2M}{x}\right)^2,$$

$$M_{\text{eff}}^{(1)} = \frac{\sqrt{s_1}}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{s_1}^3 \sin^2\left(\frac{\xi s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}}\right)}{2\xi^2} - \frac{\sqrt{s_1}(s_4)^2}{8} e^{\frac{2i\xi s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}}},$$

OR

$$f_1 = 1 - \frac{2M}{x} + \frac{4\zeta^2 M^2}{x^4}$$

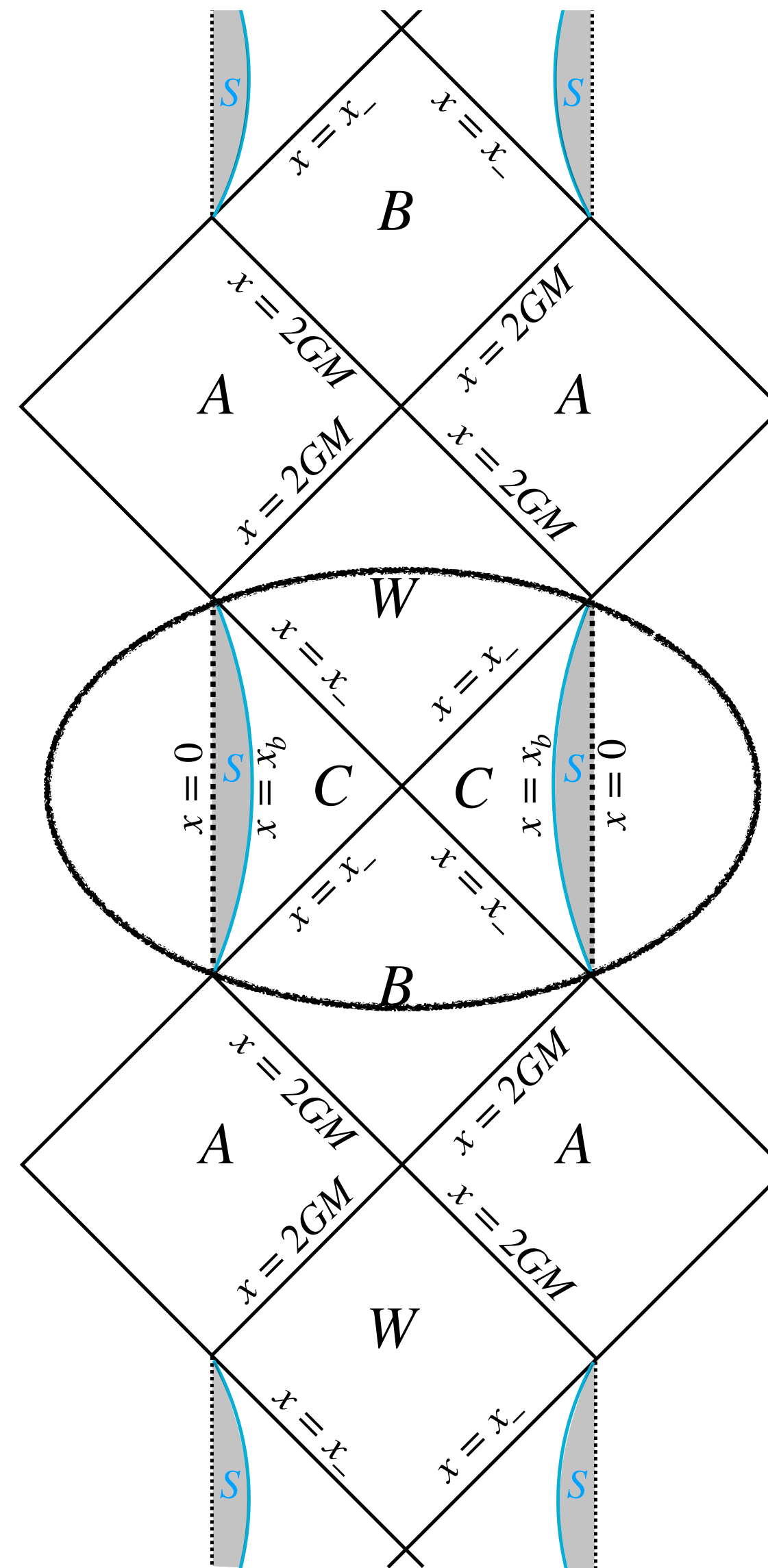
$$M_{\text{eff}} = \frac{\sqrt{s_1}^3}{2\zeta^2} \sin^2 \left(\frac{\zeta s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}} \pm \frac{2\zeta \Xi}{s_1} \right) \mp \frac{s_1 \sqrt{(s_4)^2 - 4} \sin \left(\frac{2\zeta s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}} \pm \frac{4\zeta \Xi}{s_1} \right)}{4\zeta}.$$

for arbitrary $\Xi(s_1, s_4)$

$$s_1 = E^1, s_2 = K_2, s_3 = \frac{K_1}{E^2}, s_4 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{E^2}, s_5 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{E^2}.$$

[CZ, J. Lewandowski, Y. Ma, J. Yang, 2025]

Transition region connecting BH and WH



LQG motivated metrics: $\bar{\mu}$ -scheme LQBH

$$ds_{(2)}^2 = -f_2 dt^2 + \mu_2^{-1} f_2^{-1} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2,$$

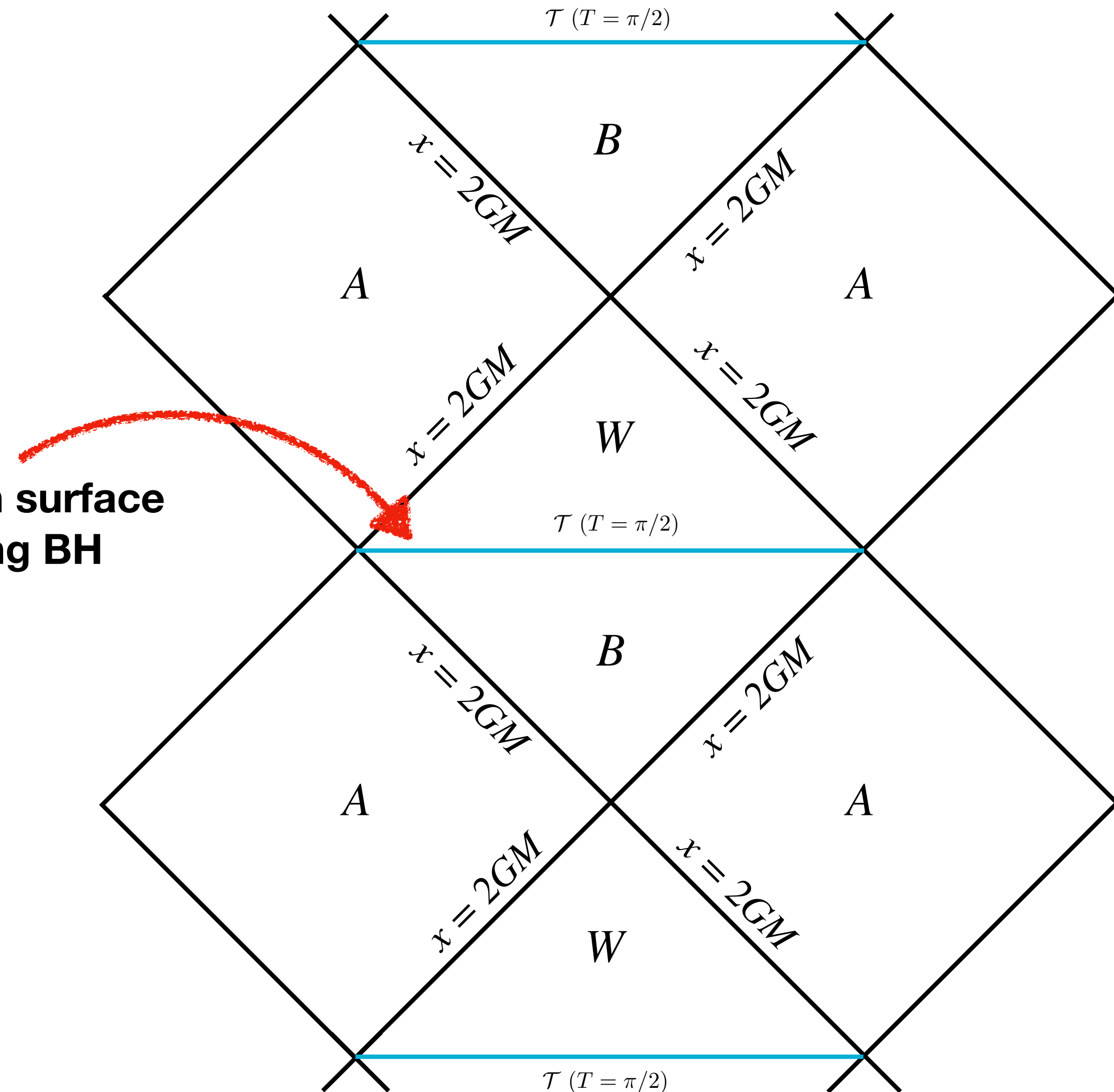
$$f_2 = 1 - \frac{2M}{x}, \quad \mu_2 = 1 + \frac{\zeta^2}{x^2} \left(1 - \frac{2M}{x} \right).$$

$$M_{\text{eff}}^{(2)} = \frac{\sqrt{s_1}}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{s_1}^3 \sin^2\left(\frac{\zeta s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}}\right)}{2\zeta^2} - \frac{\sqrt{s_1} (s_4)^2 \cos^2\left(\frac{\zeta s_2}{\sqrt{s_1}}\right)}{8}$$

[CZ, J. Lewandowski, Y. Ma, J. Yang, 2025]

$$s_1 = E^1, s_2 = K_2, s_3 = \frac{K_1}{E^2}, s_4 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{E^2}, s_5 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{E^2}.$$

**Transition surface
connecting BH
and WH**



A metric without Cauchy horizon

$$ds_{(3)}^2 = -\bar{f}_3^{(n)} dt^2 + \bar{\mu}_3^{-1} (\bar{f}_3^{(n)})^{-1} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2,$$

$$\bar{f}_3^{(n)}(x) = 1 - (-1)^n \frac{x^2}{\zeta^2} \arcsin\left(\frac{2GM\zeta^2}{x^3}\right) - \frac{n\pi x^2}{\zeta^2},$$

$$\bar{\mu}_3(x) = 1 - \frac{4G^2\zeta^4 M^2}{x^6}.$$

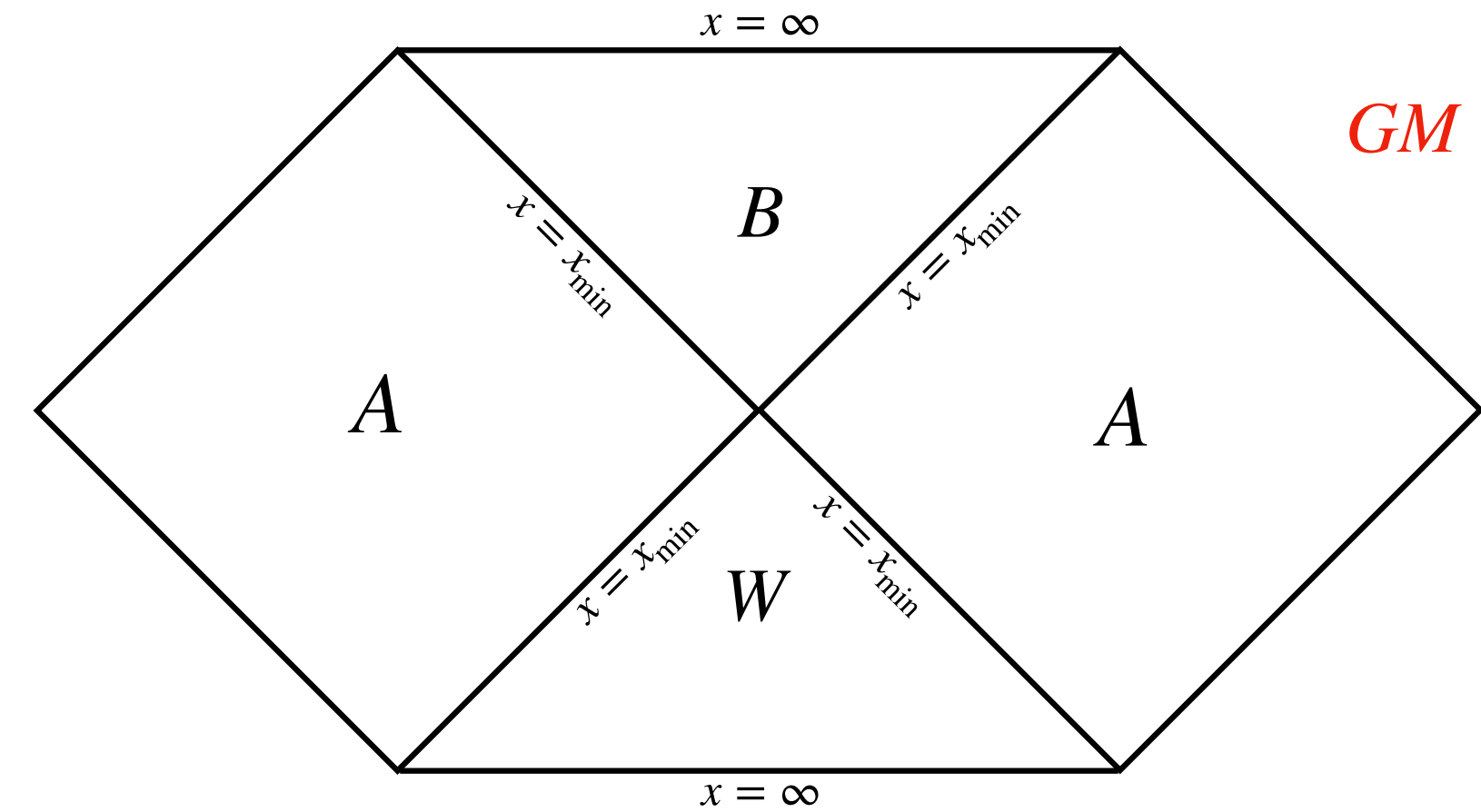
$$M_{\text{eff}}^{(3)} = \frac{\sqrt{s_1}^3}{2G\zeta^2} \sin\left(\frac{\zeta^2}{s_1} \left[1 + (s_2)^2 - \frac{(s_4)^2}{4}\right]\right)$$

[CZ, J. Lewandowski, Y. Ma, J. Yang, 2025]

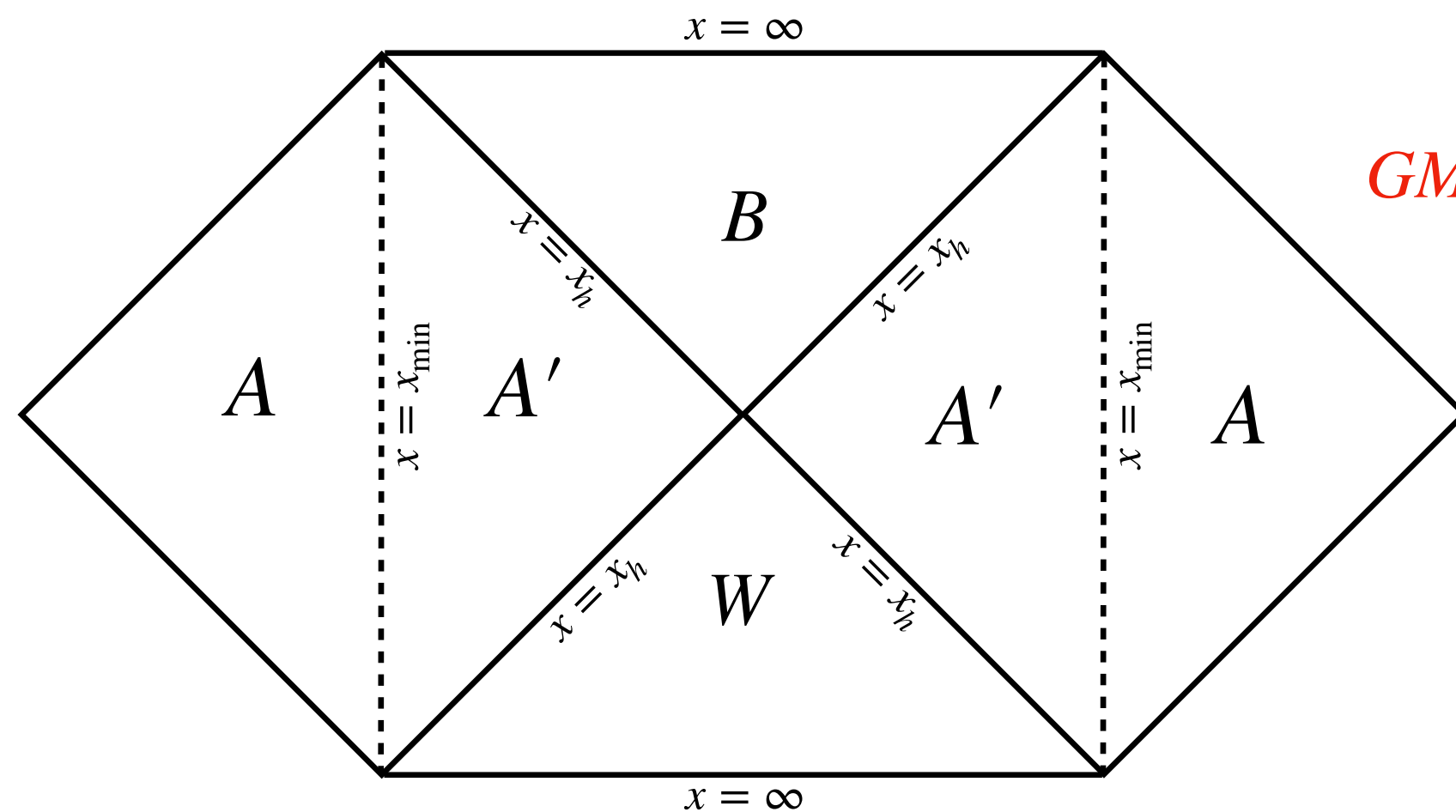
$$m_o = \frac{\zeta}{2} \left(\frac{2}{\pi}\right)^{3/2}.$$

$$(2GM\zeta^2)^{1/3} \equiv x_{\min}.$$

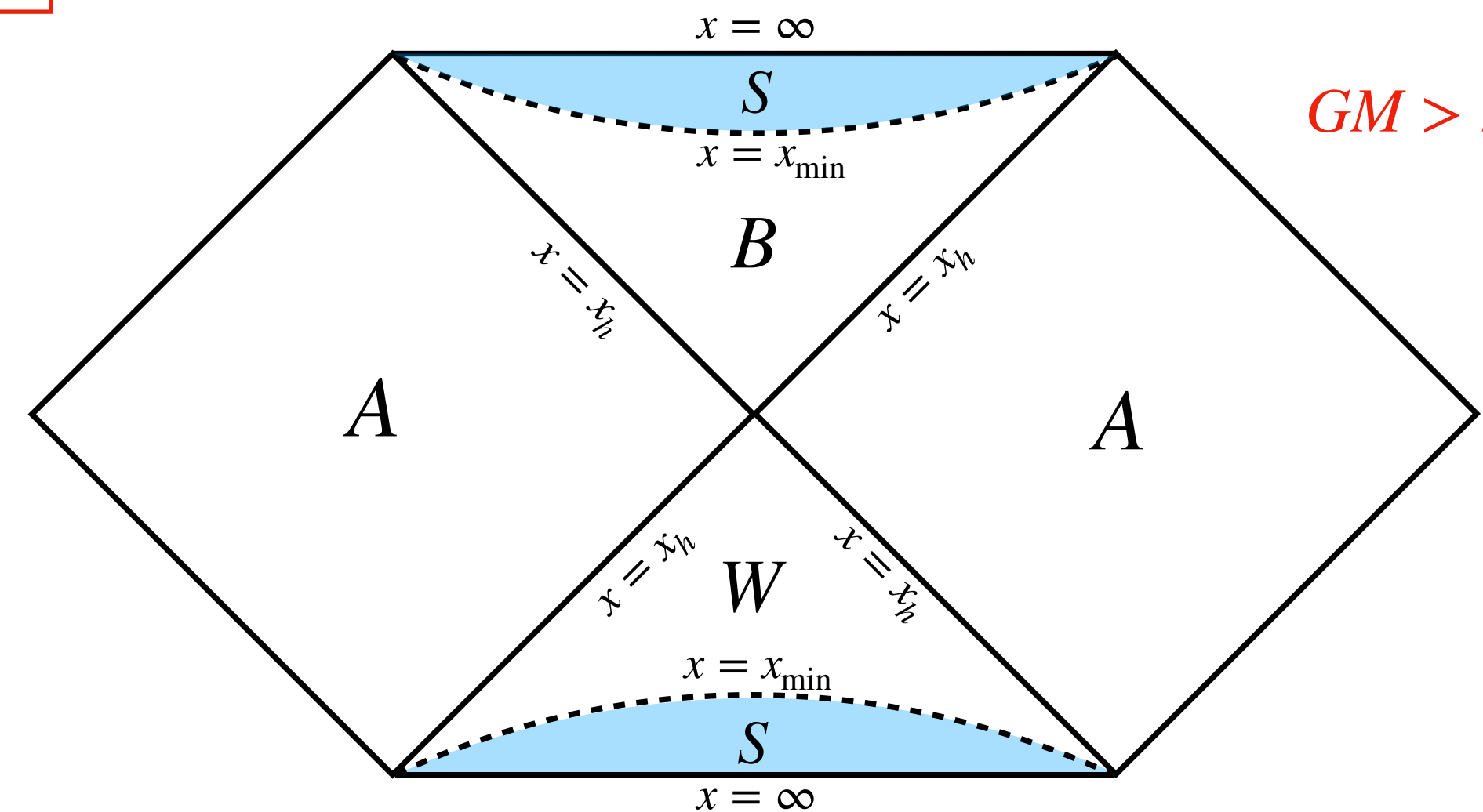
$GM = m_o$



$GM < m_o$



$GM > m_o$



Hayward metric

$$ds^2 = -F_H dt^2 + (F_H)^{-1} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2$$

$$F_H = 1 - \frac{2mx^2}{x^3 + 2\zeta^2 m}.$$

$$s_1 = E^1, s_2 = K_2, s_3 = \frac{K_1}{E^2}, s_4 = \frac{\partial_x E^1}{E^2}, s_5 = \frac{\partial_x s_4}{E^2}.$$

$$\begin{aligned} & - \frac{\left(2\zeta^2 M_{\text{eff}} + \sqrt{s_1}^3\right) \sqrt{(s_4)^2 - 4F_H(M_{\text{eff}}, \sqrt{s_1})}}{8s_1 + 2\zeta^2 ((s_4)^2 - 4)} \\ & = \frac{2\sqrt{s_1}^5 \operatorname{arctanh} \left(\frac{\zeta \sqrt{(s_4)^2 - 4F_H(M_{\text{eff}}, \sqrt{s_1})}}{\sqrt{4s_1 + \zeta^2 ((s_4)^2 - 4)}} \right)}{\zeta \sqrt{4s_1 + \zeta^2 ((s_4)^2 - 4)}^3} \mp \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{s_1} s_2, \end{aligned}$$

Matter coupling: coupled to EM field

Classical theory:

$$A_\rho dx^\rho = \Phi dt + \Gamma dx,$$

$$\Phi = \Psi + \left(N \frac{\sqrt{E^1}}{E^2} + N^x \right) \Gamma.$$

Covariant effective theory:

$$A_\rho^{(\mu)} dx^\rho = \left[\Psi + \left(N \frac{\sqrt{\mu E^1}}{E^2} + N^x \right) \Gamma \right] dt + \Gamma dx,$$

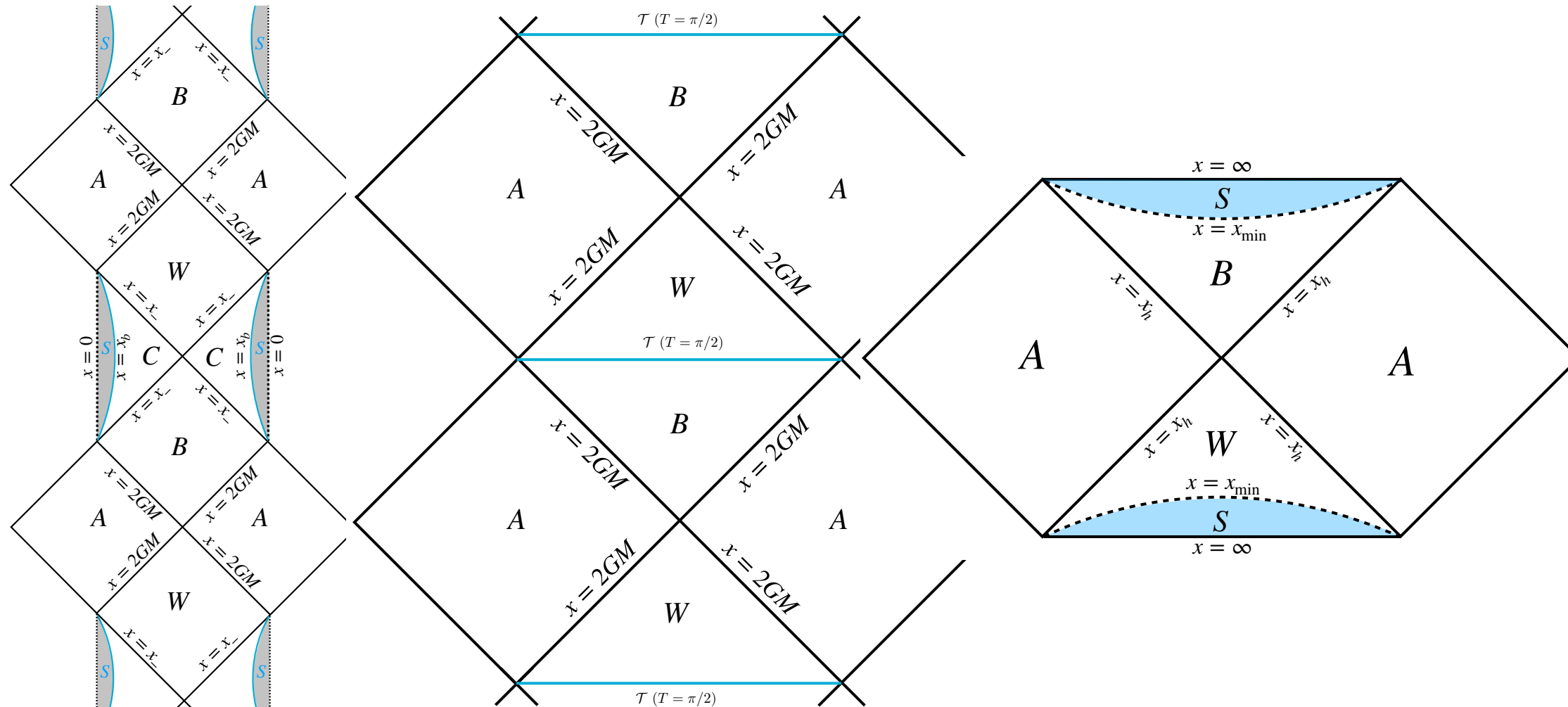
[J. Yang, Y. Ma, CZ, 2025]

Conclusion and outlook

- The sufficient and necessary condition for covariance;

- (i) H_{eff} is independent of derivatives of K_1 ;
- (ii) $\{S(x), H_{\text{eff}}[\alpha N]\} = \alpha(x)\{S(x), H_{\text{eff}}[N]\}$ for any phase space independent functions α and N .

- Three solutions to the covariance equation:



- Covariance equation for the effective Hamiltonian constraint;

$$H_{\text{eff}} = -2E^2 \left[\partial_{s_1} M_{\text{eff}} + \frac{\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}}{2} s_3 + \frac{\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}}{s_4} s_5 + \mathcal{R} \right], \quad (6)$$

where \mathcal{R} is an arbitrary function of s_1 and M_{eff} , and M_{eff} depending on s_1, s_2, s_4 is a solution to:

$$\frac{\mu s_1 s_4}{4} = (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2} \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_2}^2 M_{\text{eff}}, \quad (7a)$$

$$(\partial_{s_2} \mu) \partial_{s_4} M_{\text{eff}} - (\partial_{s_2} M_{\text{eff}}) \partial_{s_4} \mu = 0. \quad (7b)$$

- Reconstruction of dynamics from geometry

$$ds^2 = \frac{1}{4} N^2 \mathcal{Z} dt_s^2 - \frac{4}{\mu \mathcal{Z}} dx^2 + x^2 d\Omega^2,$$

Thanks for your attention!