Testing the laws of gravity with cosmological data

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Probes of the cosmological model

How fast is the Universe expanding with time?

How fast are structures growing within it?





The WiggleZ Dark Energy Survey



Baryon acoustic peak

• Standard ruler in galaxy clustering pattern which allows the mapping out of cosmic distances





Analysis of BOSS-WiggleZ overlap (2)



Tests of large-scale gravity

• Can tests of G.R. be extended to cosmic scales? And can that yield insight into dark energy?



Tests of large-scale gravity

• Two powerful probes of gravitational physics:



Peculiar velocity measurements

- Simultaneous measurements of distance D and redshift z
- Use standard candle (supernovae, fundamental plane, ...)



Peculiar velocity measurements





- 6dF Galaxy Survey is large southern-sky redshift survey
- 9,000 peculiar velocity measurements using fundamental plane distances [biggest existing sample]
- We measure the velocity power spectrum which is proportional to the growth rate
- Credit to Andrew Johnson!

Results from our velocity fits

We model the likelihood of the observed radial velocities v_i in terms of the covariance C_v

$$L = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi |C_v|}} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \sum_{ij} v_i \, (C_v^{-1})_{ij} \, v_j\right)$$

- Covariance matrix depends on the velocity power spectrum $P_v(k)$ and the errors in the data
- We do Monte Carlo Markov Chain fit for amplitude of P_v(k) in k-bins, i.e. growth rate in k-bins

arXiv: 1404.3799

Results from our velocity fits

• Here is our result : consistency with the prediction with particular sensitivity to large scales



Cosmological consequences

Lensing and clustering : complementarity

- Sensitive to theories of gravity in complementary ways
- General perturbations to FRW metric:

$$ds^2 = \left[1 + 2\psi(x,t)\right] dt^2 - a^2(t) \left[1 - 2\phi(x,t)\right] dx^2$$

- (ψ, ϕ) are metric gravitational potentials, identical in General Relativity but can differ in general theories
- Relativistic particles (e.g. light rays for lensing) collect equal contributions and are sensitive to $(\psi+\phi)$
- Non-relativistic particles (e.g. galaxies infalling into clusters) experience the Newtonian potential ψ

Lensing and clustering : complementarity

• Need overlapping galaxy redshift and lensing surveys!

• What is the gravity generated by the density field?

Lens galaxies: measure their velocities!

Source galaxies: measure lensing of their light!

arXiv: 1507.03086

- Measure cross-correlations between source shapes from CFHTLenS / RCSLenS (to r ~ 25) and lenses from WiggleZ / BOSS (covering 0.15 < z < 0.7)
- Total overlap area ~ 500 deg²
- Shape measurements using "lensfit" give shape density of 14 arcmin⁻² [CFHTLenS] and 6 arcmin⁻² [RCSLenS]
- Source photometric redshift catalogue using BPZ
- Battery of systematic tests of shear measurements, results blinded

• Galaxy-galaxy lensing measurements

• Is E_G scale-independent, and what is its value?

 We find the "gravitational slip" E_G is independent of scale with amplitude consistent with the standard model

• Extension of these tests to higher redshift

2dF Lensing Survey (2dFLenS)

- 50 AAT nights granted for spectroscopic follow-up of southern lensing surveys such as KiDS and DES
- Galaxy lens sample to test gravity by cross-correlating weak lensing distortions and galaxy velocities
- Photo-z calibration samples (direct / cross-correlation)

Taipan Galaxy Survey

- Local Universe survey of ~IM galaxy redshifts (z < 0.3) and ~I00,000 velocities (z < 0.1) starting next year
- 1% measurement of H_0 through baryon acoustic peak
- Perform new tests of General Relativity using combined analyses of the density and velocity fields

Summary

- Apparent existence of dark energy motivates new tests of large-scale gravitational physics
- Two observable signatures are non-relativistic galaxy velocities and relativistic lensing of light
- We have performed new measurements using the latest galaxy redshift, velocity and lensing surveys
- General Relativity + cosmological constant + perturbed FRW metric models remain a good fit
- The quest to understand dark energy continues!