

Relational Observables in Asymptotically Safe Gravity

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Quantum gravity, hydrodynamics and emergent cosmology

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JOHANNES GUTENBERG
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“There are no local observables
in Quantum Gravity”

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from different theories of Quantum Gravity,
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“Asymptotic Safety is a powerful conjecture, but it
cannot be tested, since it does not furnish a device
to make predictions for physical observables.”

Relational Observables

Ingredients

Asymptotically Safe
Gravity

Relational Observables

Ingredients

Asymptotically Safe
Gravity

Tool

Composite Operator Flow

Relational Observables

Example: The Ricci scalar

$$R(x)?$$

M

Try to specify the point \mathcal{P} where a particular event happens.

Can I measure the curvature at that point?

The scalar curvature at \mathcal{P} is then an observable!

Diffeomorphism invariant theory

Local observables

Rovelli (1991)

Dittrich (2006): arXiv:gr-qc/0507106

Tambornino (2012): arXiv:1109.0740

RF, Percacci (2020): arXiv:2012:04507

Goeller, Höhn, Kirklin (2022), arXiv: 2206.01193

Diffeomorphism invariant theory

Local observables

add matter fields

construct a physical coordinate system

such that

perform a transformation

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Diffeomorphism invariant theory

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Measurements of local fields are possible!

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Physical coordinate frame

$\phi^a(x)$ dynamical fields

Metric $g_{\mu\nu}$

Matter
fields

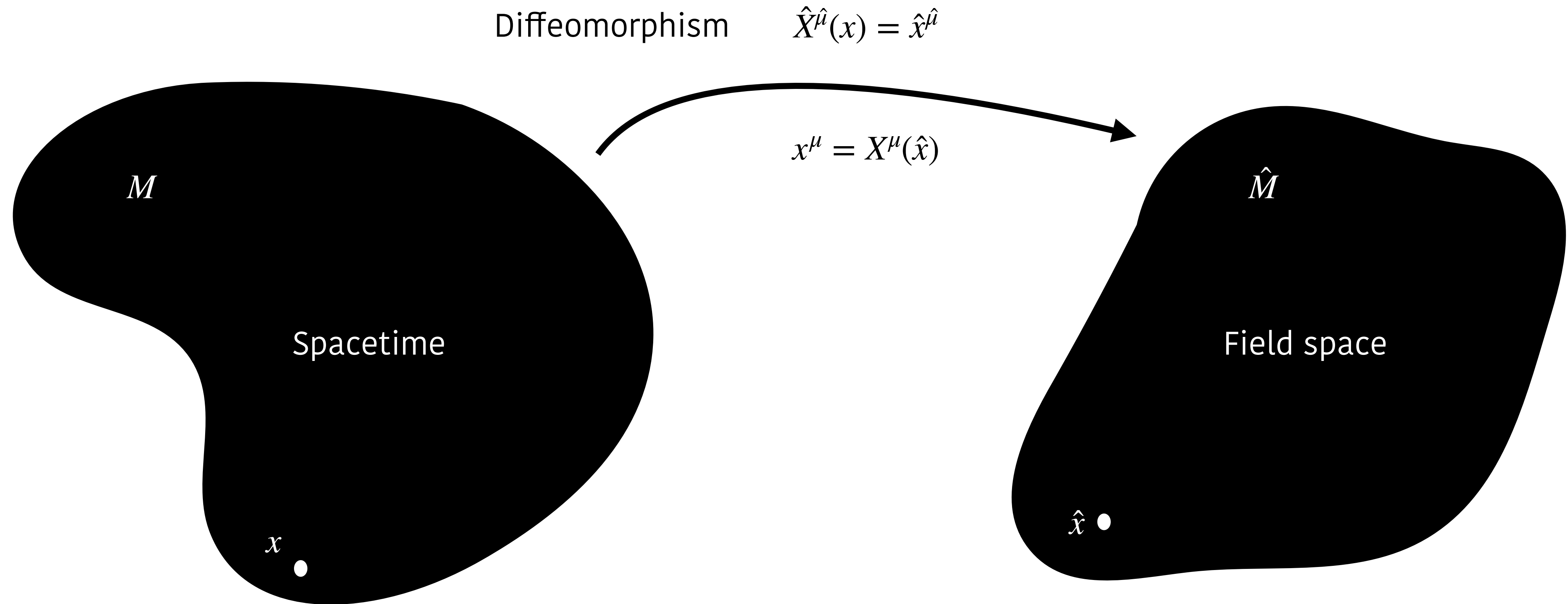
Physical coordinate frame: $\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}(x) = \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}(\phi(x), \partial\phi(x), \dots)$, $\hat{\mu} = 0, 1, 2, 3$

$\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}(x)$
are 4 scalars

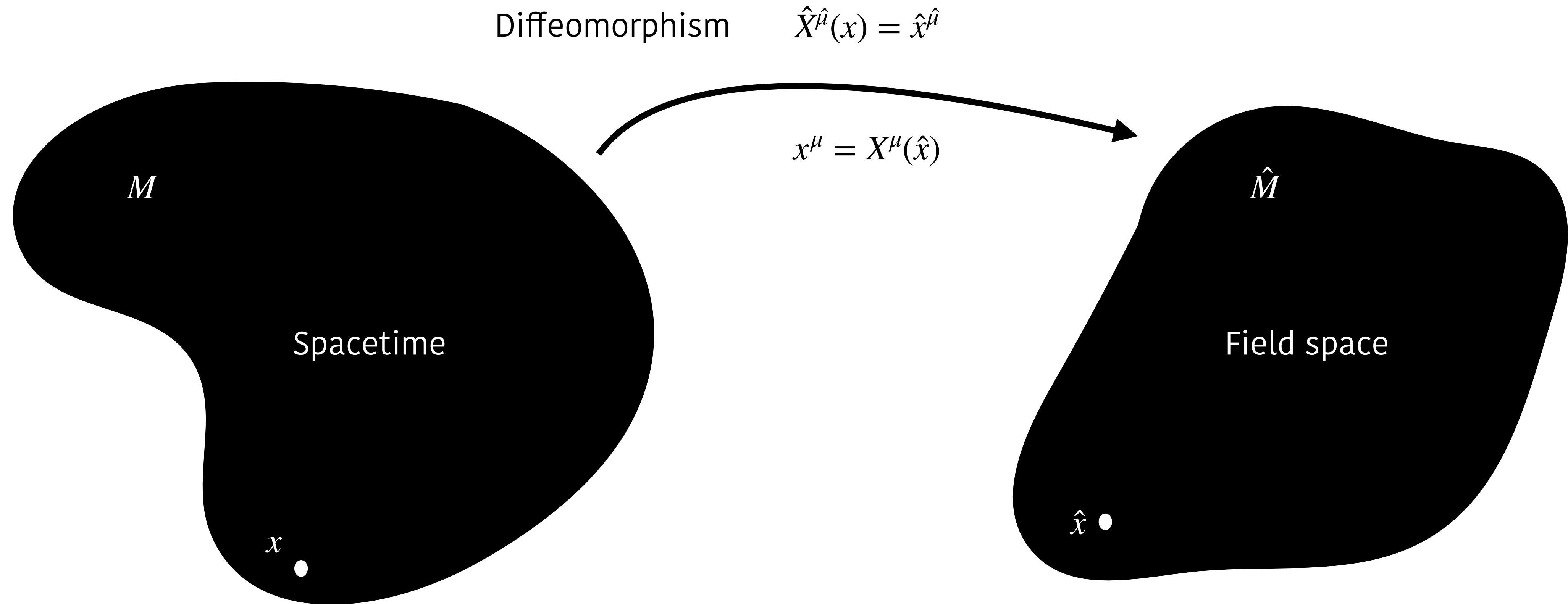
The point \mathcal{P} is labelled by the values that $\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}(x)$'s take at \mathcal{P} .

ASSUME
Invertible map

Physical coordinate frame



Physical coordinate frame



A good choice of scalars $\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}$ may define a good coordinate system for all field configurations ϕ .

Diffeomorphism transformation

Transformation under diffeomorphism $\xi^\mu(x)$

$$\phi_\xi^a = T^a[\phi, \xi]$$

Scalar field

$$\psi_\xi(x) = \psi(\xi(x))$$

Metric

$$g_{(\xi)\mu\nu}(x) = \partial_\mu \xi^\lambda(x) \partial_\nu \xi^\rho(x) g_{\lambda\rho}(\xi(x))$$

Composition identity: $T^a[\phi_\xi, \xi'] = T^a[\phi, \xi \circ \xi']$

Relational Observables

- Transformation under diffeomorphisms \rightarrow transform the dynamical fields into the physical frame:

$$\hat{\phi}^{\hat{a}} = \phi_{\hat{X}}^{\hat{a}}(\hat{x}) = T^{\hat{a}}[\phi, X]$$

Set of local observables at each point \hat{x}

- Check that they are diff-invariant

$$\hat{\phi}_{\xi}^{\hat{a}} = T^{\hat{a}}[\phi_{\xi}, X_{\xi}] = T^{\hat{a}}[\phi_{\xi}, \xi^{-1} \circ X] = T^{\hat{a}}[\phi, X] = \hat{\phi}^{\hat{a}}$$

$X(\hat{x})$ are not scalars

$$x^{\mu} = X^{\mu}(\hat{x})$$

$$X_{\xi}(\hat{x}) = (\xi^{-1} \circ X)(\hat{x})$$

By composition!

Relational Observables

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By composition!

Relational observables

Now we can take any composite operator $\hat{A}[\phi]$

$$\hat{A}[\phi] = A_X[\phi] = A[\hat{\phi}]$$

$$\text{Frame field: } e_{\mu}^{\hat{\mu}}(x) = \partial_{\mu} \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}(x)$$

$$\text{Invariant volume element: } \tilde{e} = \det e_{\mu}^{\hat{\mu}}$$

$$\delta(X(\hat{x}), x) = \tilde{e}(x) \delta(\hat{x}, \hat{X}(x))$$

Product of $e_{\mu}^{\hat{\mu}}(x)$ and $e_{\hat{\mu}}^{\mu}(x)$
depending on the
Relational Observable.

The indices I run over the rank of the
tensor structure.

Relational
Observable

$$\hat{A}^I(\hat{x}) = \int d^4x \tilde{e}(x) \delta(\hat{x}, \hat{X}(x)) E_I^{\hat{I}}(x) A^I(x)$$

Relational Observables - Examples

$$\delta(X(\hat{x}), x) = \tilde{e}(x) \delta(\hat{x}, \hat{X}(x))$$

Relational Ricci scalar

$$\hat{R}(\hat{x}) = R(X(\hat{x})) = \int d^d x \delta(X(\hat{x}), x) R(x) = \int d^d x \tilde{e}(x) \delta(\hat{x}, \hat{X}(x)) R(x)$$

Relational inverse metric

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{g}^{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}}(\hat{x}) &= e_{\hat{\mu}}^{\mu}(X(\hat{x})) e_{\hat{\nu}}^{\nu}(X(\hat{x})) g^{\mu\nu}(X(\hat{x})) = \int d^d x \delta(X(\hat{x}), x) g^{\mu\nu}(x) \\ &= \int d^d x \tilde{e}(x) e_{\hat{\mu}}^{\mu}(X(\hat{x})) e_{\hat{\nu}}^{\nu}(X(\hat{x})) \delta(\hat{x}, \hat{X}(x)) g^{\mu\nu}(x) \end{aligned}$$

Relational Observables

Is there too much freedom?

Which physical coordinate system?

Which composite operator?

Relational Observables

Is there too much freedom?

Which physical coordinate system?

Which composite operator?

No observables!

Relational Observables

Is there too much freedom?

Which physical coordinate system?

Which composite operator?

~~No observables!~~

To many observables!



Asymptotic Safety

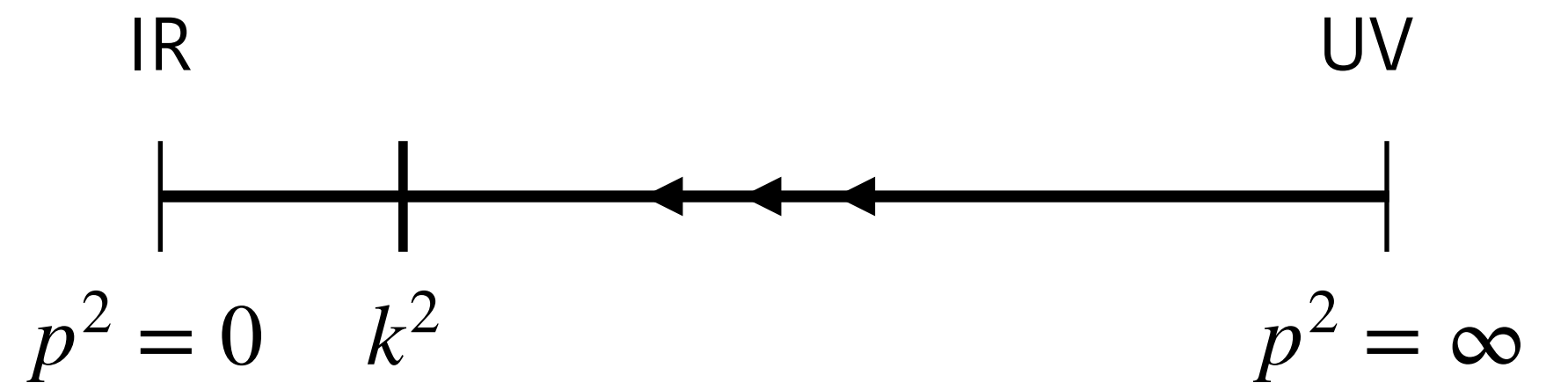
FRGE and Asymptotic Safety

Generating functional
for connected Green's
functions

$$e^{W[J]} = \int \mathcal{D}\varphi e^{-S[\varphi] + \int d^d x J\varphi} \longrightarrow e^{W_k[J]} = \int \mathcal{D}\varphi e^{-S[\varphi] - \Delta S_k[\varphi] + \int d^d x J\varphi}$$

Smooth cutoff
functional

$$\Delta S_k[\phi] = \frac{1}{2} \int_x \phi(-x) \mathcal{R}_k(-\nabla^2) \phi(x)$$



$$\Gamma[\phi] = \int d^d x J\phi - W[J] \longrightarrow \Gamma_k[\phi] = \int d^d x J\phi - W_k[J] - \Delta S_k[\phi]$$

Effective Action

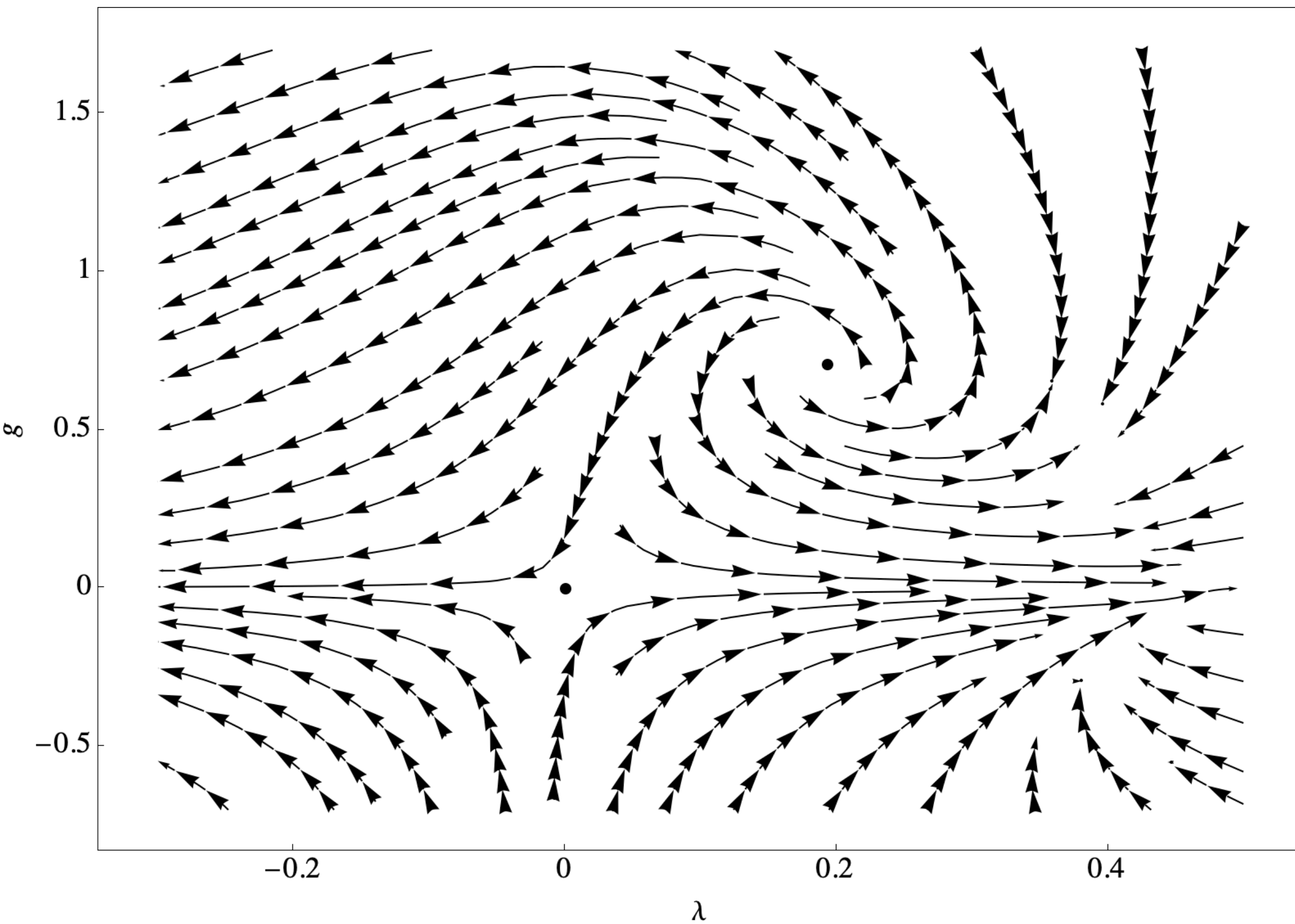
Effective Average Action

Functional
Renormalization
Group Equation

$$k\partial_k \Gamma_k[\phi] = \frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \frac{k\partial_k \mathcal{R}_k}{\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k}$$

FRGE and Asymptotic Safety

$$\Gamma_k = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left(\frac{1}{16\pi G_N(k)} (R - 2\Lambda(k)) + \frac{1}{2} \delta_{AB} g^{\mu\nu} \partial_\mu \varphi^A \partial_\nu \varphi^B \right) + \text{Additional matter}$$



$$\begin{cases} k\partial_k g_k = \beta_g(g, \lambda) \\ k\partial_k \lambda_k = \beta_\lambda(g, \lambda) \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{cases} \beta_g(g_*, \lambda_*) = 0 \\ \beta_\lambda(g_*, \lambda_*) = 0 \end{cases}$$

$g_* = \lambda_* = 0$
Gaussian fixed point

$g_* > 0, \lambda_* > 0$
Non-Gaussian fixed point

ASYMPTOTIC SAFETY

Composite Operator

Composite operator flow equation

Composite operator $\hat{\mathcal{O}}(x)$: function of the field and its derivatives

Expectation value of the observable

$$\langle \hat{\mathcal{O}}(x) \rangle = - \frac{\delta}{\delta \varepsilon(x)} \int (d\hat{\chi}) e^{-S[\hat{\chi}] - \varepsilon \cdot \hat{\mathcal{O}}[\hat{\chi}]} \Big|_{\varepsilon=0}$$

Source

Legendre transform + add regulator

FRG equation

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k[\phi, \varepsilon] = \frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2,0)}[\phi, \varepsilon] + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

Regulator

Composite operator flow equation

Composite
operator
flow
equation

Pagani
equation

$$\int d^d x \varepsilon \partial_t \mathcal{O}_k = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\int d^d x \varepsilon \mathcal{O}_k^{(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

Regulator

Hessian of the
composite operator

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \mathcal{O}_k = \hat{\mathcal{O}} \Big|_{\hat{\chi} \rightarrow \phi}$$

$$\mathcal{O}_{k=0} = \langle \hat{\mathcal{O}} \rangle$$

Composite operator flow equation

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Solving the flow equation for the composite operator gives us a concrete method to compute expectation values of observables.

Composite operator flow equation

Expansion needed

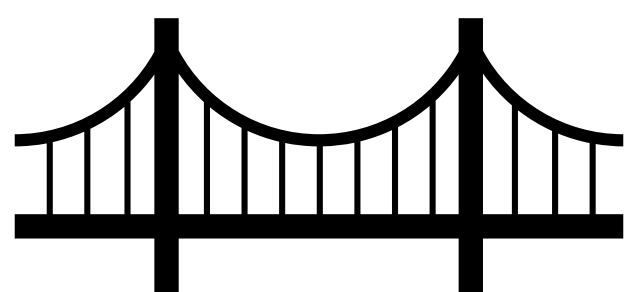
$$\mathcal{O}_k(x) = \sum_i a_i(k) \mathcal{O}_i(x)$$

Stability matrix

$$S_{ij} = \frac{\partial \beta_i}{\partial a_j} = d_i \delta_{ij} + \gamma_{ij}, \quad \partial_t a_j = \sum_i a_i \gamma_{ij}$$

$$-\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(d^d \mathbf{x} \varepsilon(\mathbf{x}) \mathcal{O}_i^{(2)}(\mathbf{x}) \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right] = \sum_j \gamma_{ij} \int d^d \mathbf{x} \varepsilon(\mathbf{x}) \mathcal{O}_j(\mathbf{x})$$

Matrix of scaling dimensions



Composite operator

$\hat{\mathcal{O}}(x)$



Relational observable

$\hat{A}[\phi]$

Relational Effective Average Action

$$\mathcal{O}_k(\hat{x}) = \sum_i a_{\hat{l}_i}(k) \hat{A}_i^{\hat{l}_i}(\hat{x})$$

function of \hat{x}

$$\int d^4\hat{x} \varepsilon(\hat{x}) \mathcal{O}_k(\hat{x}) = \sum_i a_{\hat{l}_i}(k) \int d^4\hat{x} \varepsilon(\hat{x}) \hat{A}_i^{\hat{l}_i}(\hat{x}) = \int d^4x \tilde{e}(x) \varepsilon(\hat{X}(x)) \underbrace{\sum_i a_{\hat{l}_i}(k) E_{i\hat{l}_i}^{\hat{l}_i}(x) A_i^{\hat{l}_i}(x)}_{\mathcal{L}_k^{\text{rel.}}(x)}$$

Relational Effective Average Action

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integral over x with the volume element given by \tilde{e} rather than the usual density $\sqrt{-g}$.

Relational Effective Average Action

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} \equiv \int d^4x \tilde{e}(x) \mathcal{L}_k^{\text{rel.}}(x) := \int d^4x \tilde{e}(x) \sum_i a_{\hat{l}_i}(k) E_{i\hat{l}_i}^{\hat{l}_i}(x) A_i^{\hat{l}_i}(x)$$

Relational Effective Average Action

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Flow of the Relational Effective Average Action

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

Hessian of the relational EEA

Flow of the Relational Effective Average Action

Distinguish between
 Γ_k and $\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}}$

$$\Gamma_k[g, \dots; \varepsilon] = \Gamma_k[g, \dots] + \varepsilon \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}}[g, \dots] + O(\varepsilon^2)$$

$$\Gamma_k \equiv \int d^4x \sqrt{-g(x)} \mathcal{L}_k(x)$$

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k[\phi, \varepsilon] = \frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2,0)}[\phi, \varepsilon] + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} \equiv \int d^4x \tilde{e}(x) \mathcal{L}_k^{\text{rel.}}(x)$$

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

Derivative expansion

Mixing and generation of new observables

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$



How to close the expansion?

Derivative expansion

Mixing and generation of new observables

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

This means that the $\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}$'s only involve a finite number of derivatives.



How to close the expansion?

Pick up terms with a finite number of derivatives acting on $\mathcal{L}_k^{\text{rel.}}(x)$

$E_I^{\hat{I}}$ should be polynomial in derivatives

Derivative expansion

Mixing and generation of new observables

$$\partial_t \Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = -\frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} \left[\left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \left(\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}(2)} \right) \left(\Gamma_k^{(2)} + \mathcal{R}_k \right)^{-1} \partial_t \mathcal{R}_k \right]$$

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How to close the expansion?

Pick up terms with a finite number of derivatives acting on $\mathcal{L}_k^{\text{rel.}}(x)$

$E_I^{\hat{I}}$ should be polynomial in derivatives

Natural basis $\hat{g}^{\mu\nu}, \hat{R}^{\mu\nu}, \dots$

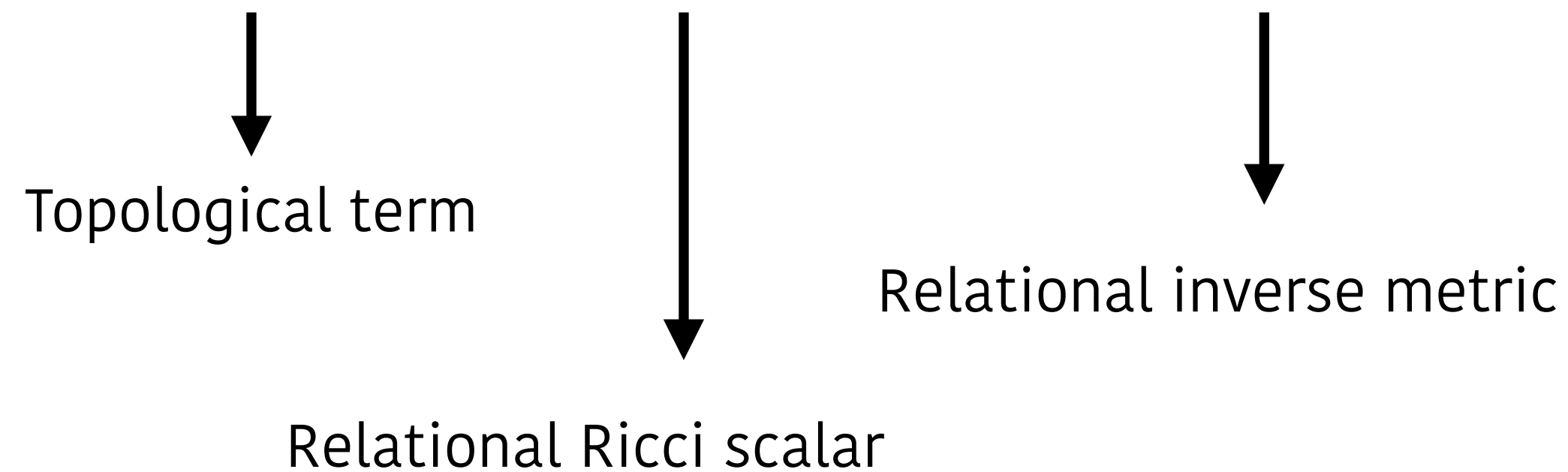
only upper indices!

At each finite order in the derivative expansion, we do not find relational observables corresponding to tensors with lower indices.

First application

Inverse relational metric and relational curvature

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4 \hat{x} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k) \hat{R}(\hat{x}) + \alpha_1(k) \delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}} \hat{g}^{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}}(\hat{x}) \right)$$



$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4 x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k) R + \alpha_1(k) \delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}} g^{\mu\nu} (\partial_{\hat{\mu}} \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}) (\partial_{\hat{\nu}} \hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$

Recipe

1 Find the Fixed Points

2 Identify the relational
observables

Compute the flow of the
relational observables

3 Evaluate scaling dimensions at
Fixed Points

Recipe

1 Find the Fixed Points

$$\Gamma_k = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left(\frac{1}{16\pi G_N(k)} (R - 2\Lambda(k)) + \frac{1}{2} \delta_{AB} g^{\mu\nu} \partial_\mu \varphi^A \partial_\nu \varphi^B \right) + \dots$$

2 Identify the relational observables

$$\varphi^{\hat{\mu}} = \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}$$

Compute the flow of the relational observables

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k) R + \alpha_1(k) \delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}} g^{\mu\nu} (\partial_\mu \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}) (\partial_\nu \hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$

3 Evaluate scaling dimensions at Fixed Points

Results

Matter in Asymptotic Safe Gravity

1

Find the Fixed Points

$$\Gamma_k = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left(\frac{1}{16\pi G_N(k)} (R - 2\Lambda(k)) + \frac{1}{2} \delta_{AB} g^{\mu\nu} \partial_\mu \varphi^A \partial_\nu \varphi^B \right) + \text{Additional matter}$$

Matter content	N_S	N_D	N_V	λ_*	g_*
SM (type II)	4	45/2	12	-1.11626	0.834855
SM (type I)	4	45/2	12	-3.58874	2.59505
SM + SF (type II)	5	45/2	12	-3.79874	2.77608
SM + 3 ν (type II)	4	24	12	-4.83385	3.19355

Asymptotic Safety

Results

2

Compute the flow of the observables

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k)R + \alpha_1(k) \delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}} g^{\mu\nu} (\partial_{\hat{\mu}} \hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}}) (\partial_{\hat{\nu}} \hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$

$$S = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & & & & & & & & & & \\ 0 & 6 + \gamma_g + \frac{g(\eta_\phi - 4)}{\pi(1-2\lambda)^2} & & & & & -\frac{1}{6\pi^2} & & & & \\ 0 & \frac{g(10\eta_\phi\lambda + 4\eta_\phi - 30\lambda - 21)}{9\pi(2\lambda - 1)^3} & & & & & -\frac{1}{24\pi^2} & & & & \\ 0 & -\frac{g^2(\eta_\phi - 4)}{2(2\lambda - 1)^3} & & & & & & 8 + \gamma_g + \frac{g(\eta_\phi - 3)}{6\pi(1-2\lambda)^2} - \frac{5g}{24\pi} & & & \end{pmatrix}$$

Results

Matter in Asymptotic Safe Gravity

3

Evaluate scaling dimensions at
Fixed Points

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k)R + \alpha_1(k)\delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}}g^{\mu\nu}(\partial_{\hat{\mu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}})(\partial_{\hat{\nu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$

Non-Gaussian
Fixed Point

Matter content	θ_0	θ_R	θ_1
SM (type II)	-4	-5.97643	-7.92358
SM (type I)	-4	-5.97467	-7.8177
SM + SF (type II)	-4	-5.97505	-7.80603
SM + 3 ν (type II)	-4	-5.98015	-7.78084

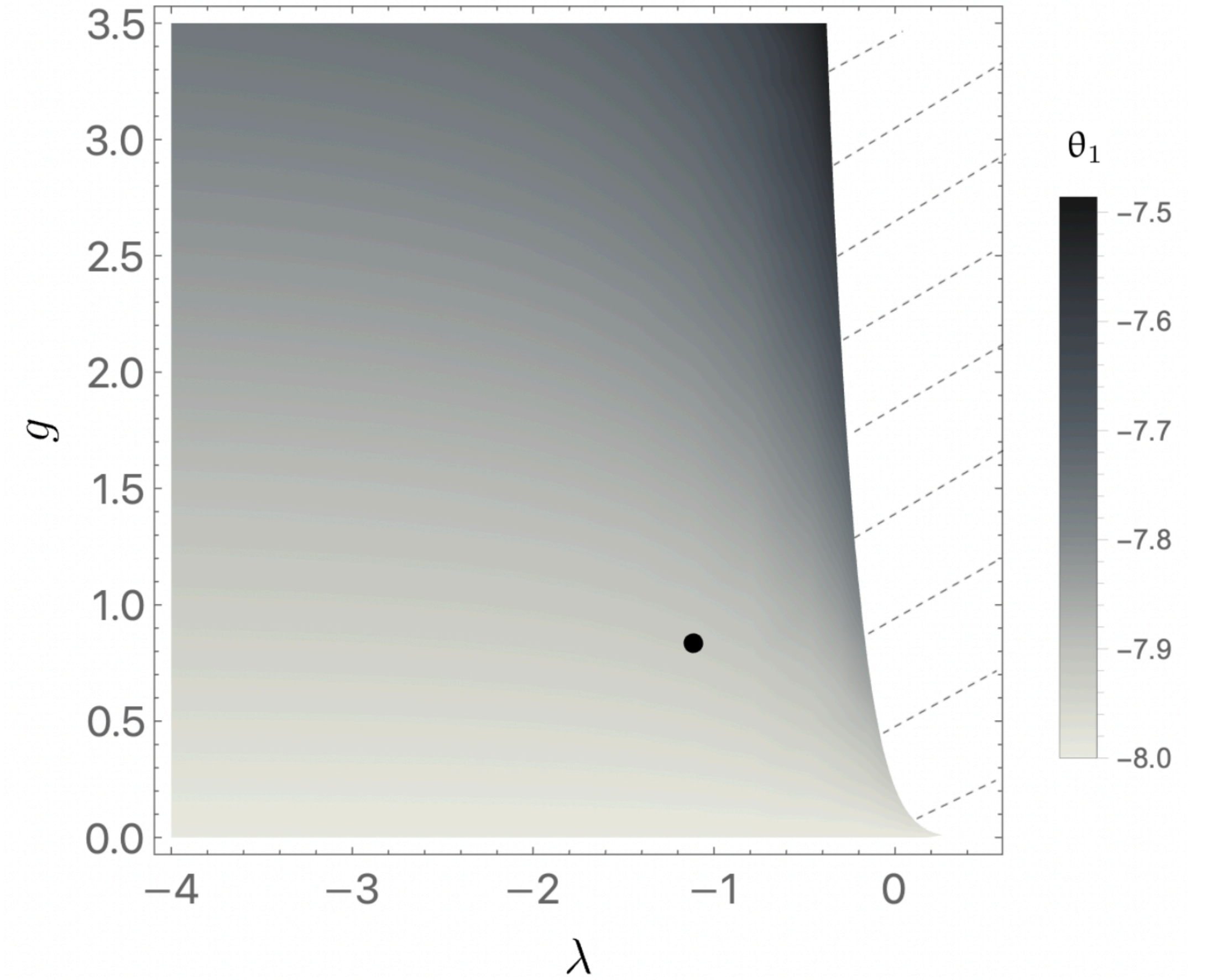
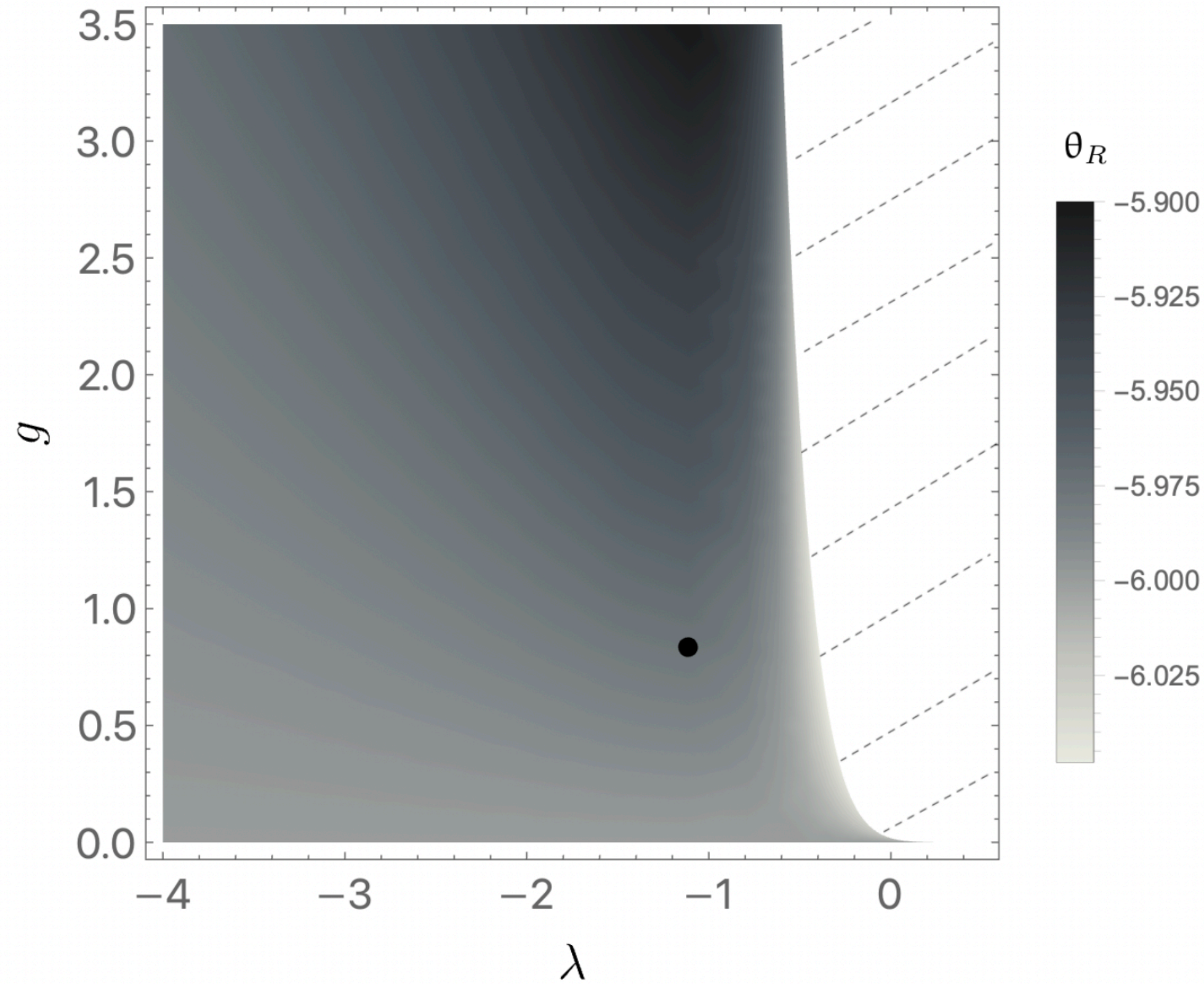
Small
quantum
corrections

More relevant

Asymptotic Safety

Results

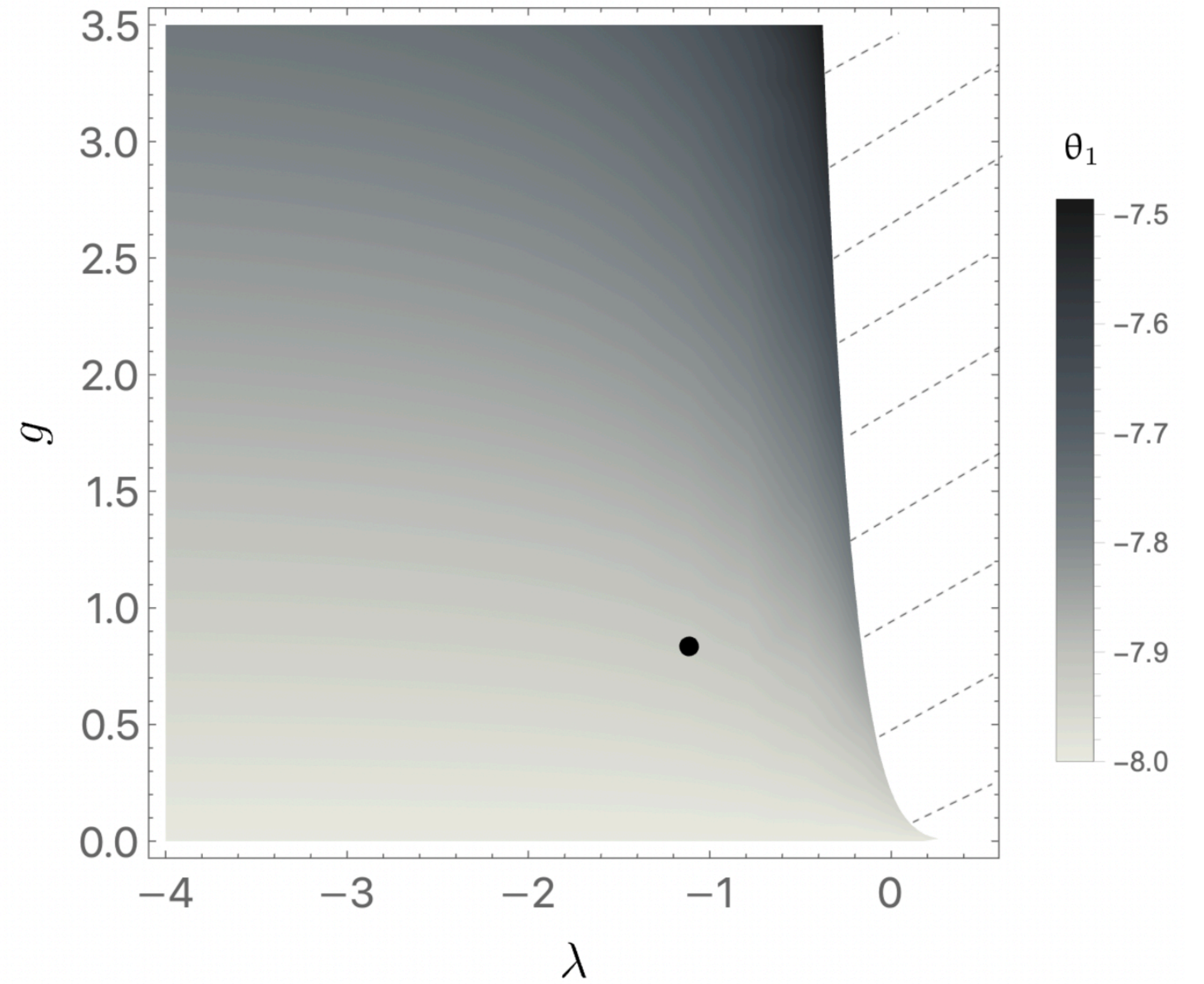
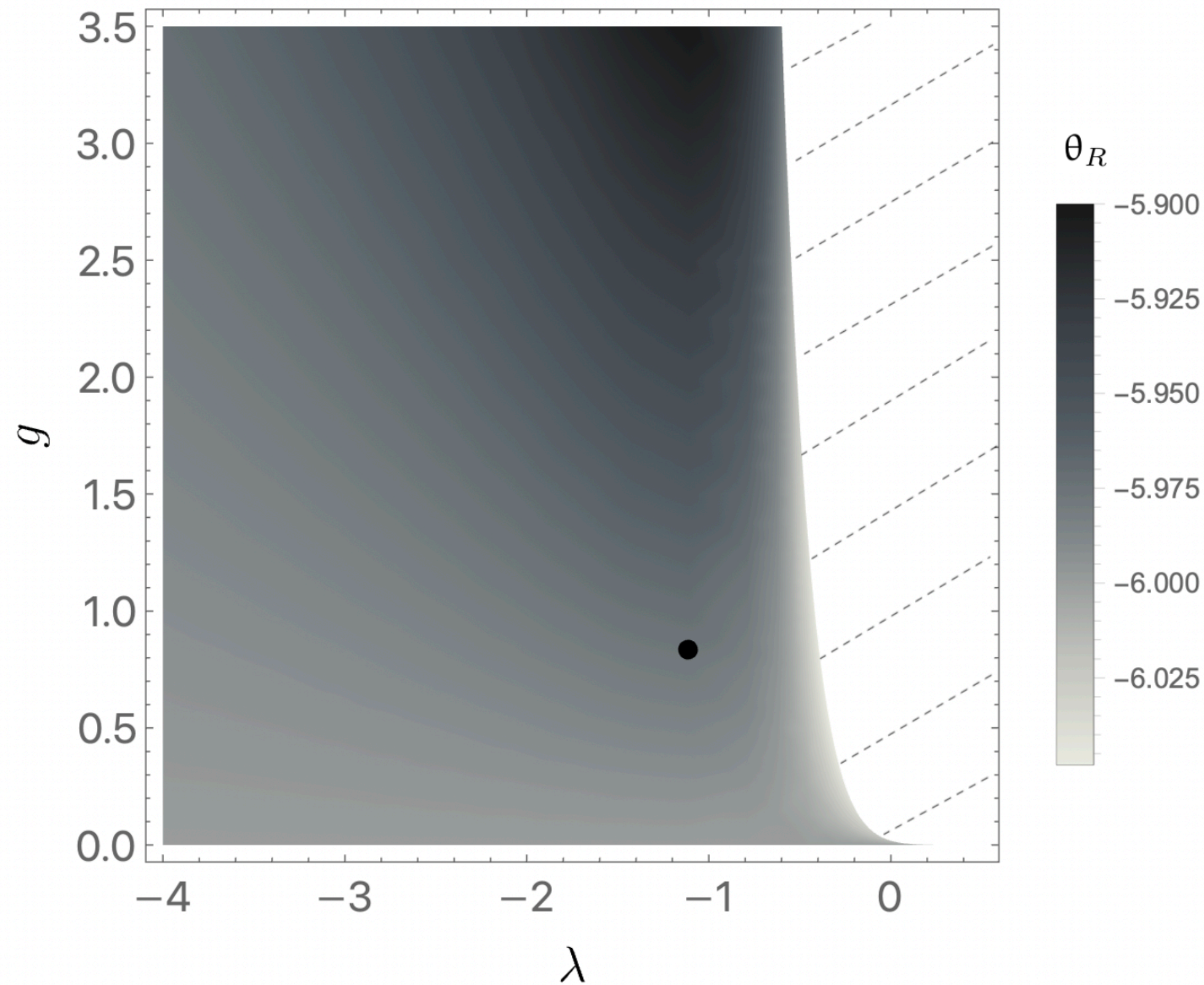
$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k)R + \alpha_1(k)\delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}}g^{\mu\nu}(\partial_{\hat{\mu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}})(\partial_{\hat{\nu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$



Asymptotic Safety

Results

$$\Gamma_k^{\text{rel.}} = \int d^4x \tilde{e} \left(\alpha_0(k) + \alpha_R(k)R + \alpha_1(k)\delta_{\hat{\mu}\hat{\nu}}g^{\mu\nu}(\partial_{\hat{\mu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\mu}})(\partial_{\hat{\nu}}\hat{X}^{\hat{\nu}}) \right)$$



Related to the universal scaling of the observables.

Open questions

Contact with different approaches of quantum gravity?
CDT, Tensor Field Theory

Meaning of the critical exponents

Scaling of correlation functions?

Fixed points:
scale invariance!



Which are good observables?

Is there a good truncation?

Suitable physical coordinate system

Locality - microcausality?

Relational locality/
Relational microcausality

The RG flow is
furnishing a natural set
of subsystems?

Relational Observables in Asymptotically Safe Gravity

Thank you
for your attention.

Quantum gravity, hydrodynamics and emergent cosmology

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