Sourcing Axions in the Magnetospheres of Neutron Stars

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Based on work together with Samuel J. Witte, Anirudh Prabhu, Christoph Weniger, Alex Chen & Fábio Cruz

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Introduction

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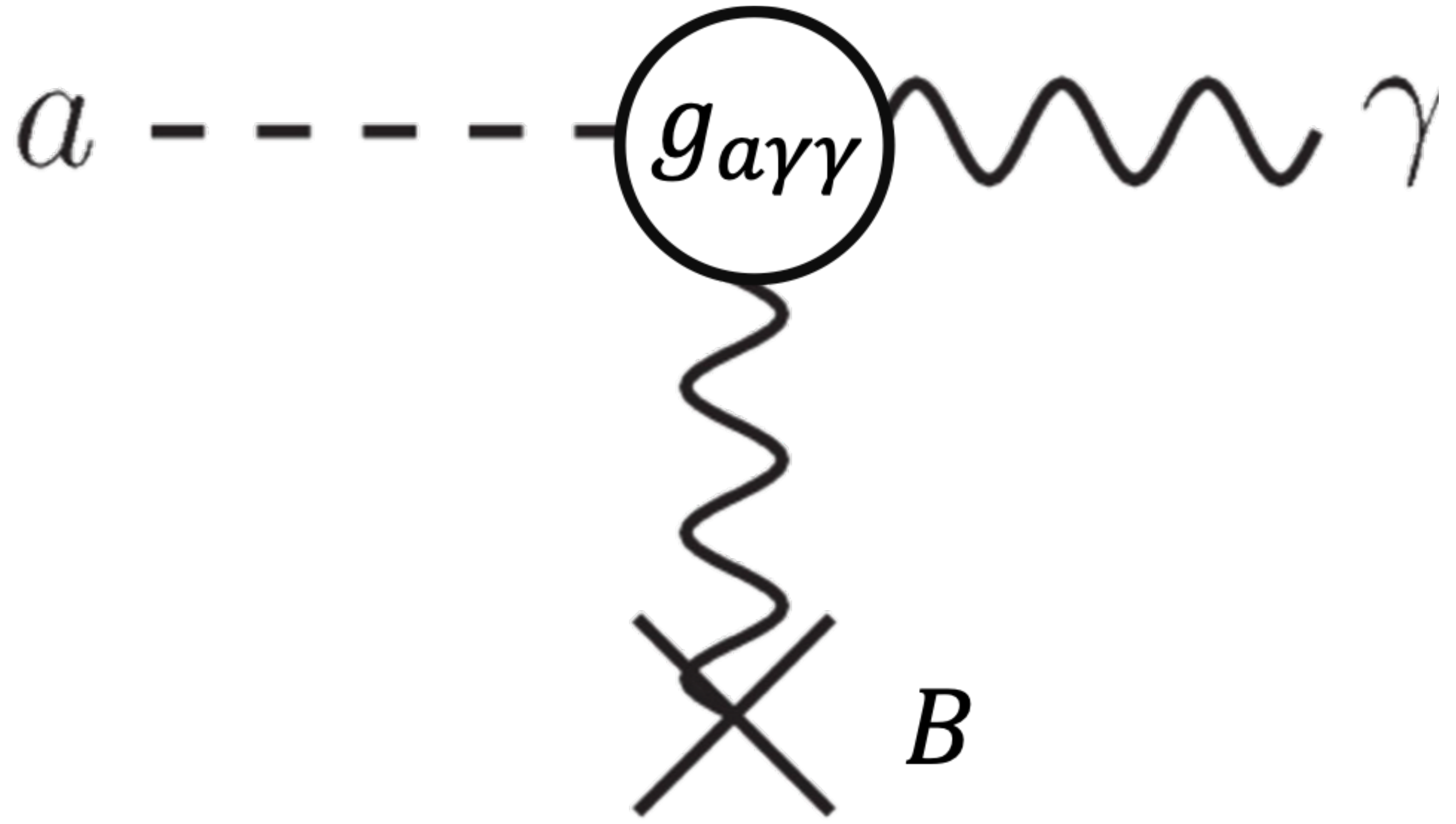
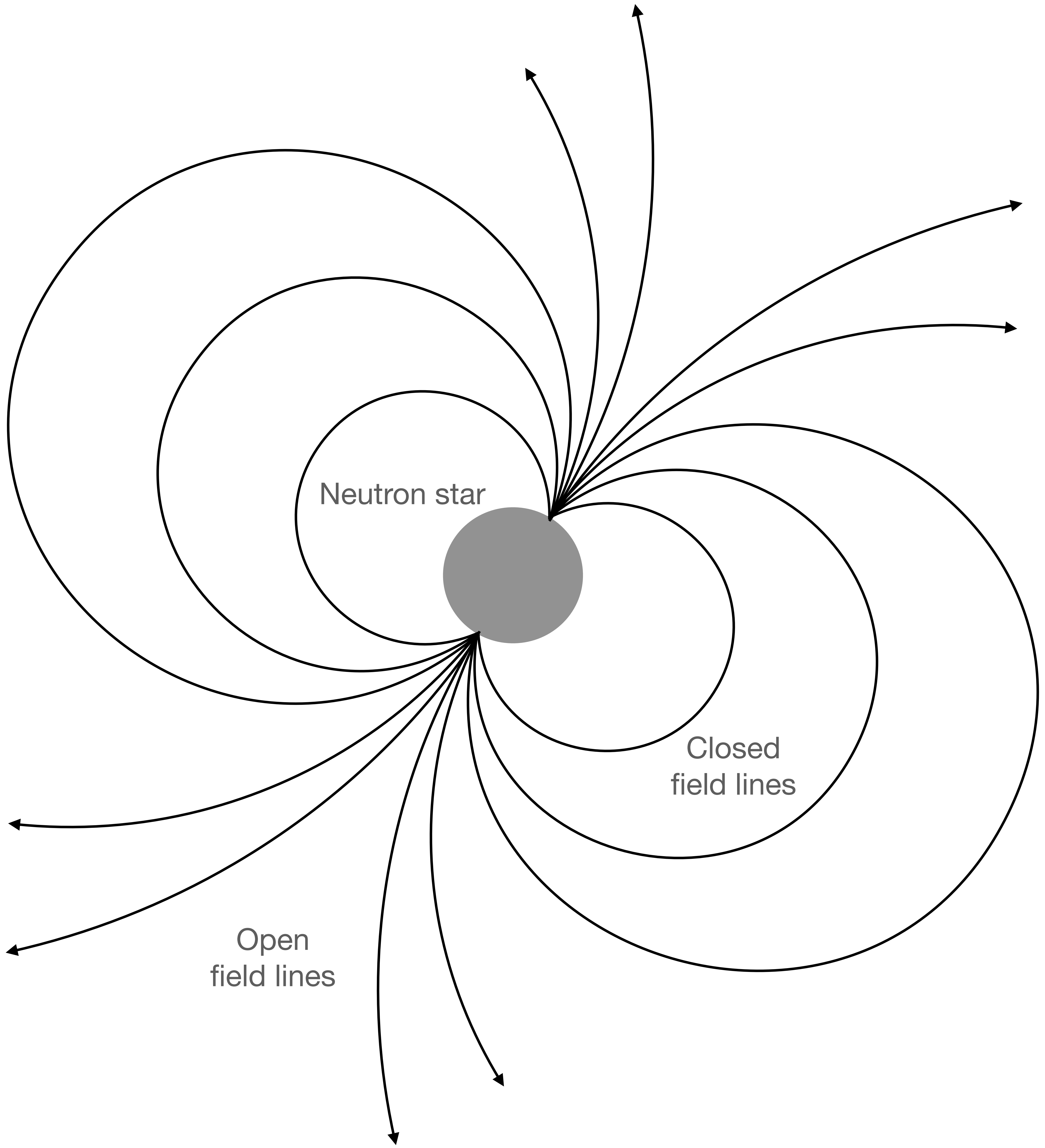
- Axion production is facilitated by the coupling to the electromagnetic field via

$$L_{a\gamma} = -\frac{1}{4} g_{a\gamma\gamma} F_{\mu\nu} \tilde{F}^{\mu\nu} a = -\frac{1}{4} g_{a\gamma\gamma} \vec{E} \cdot \vec{B} a$$



Sourcing of axions in vacuum gaps



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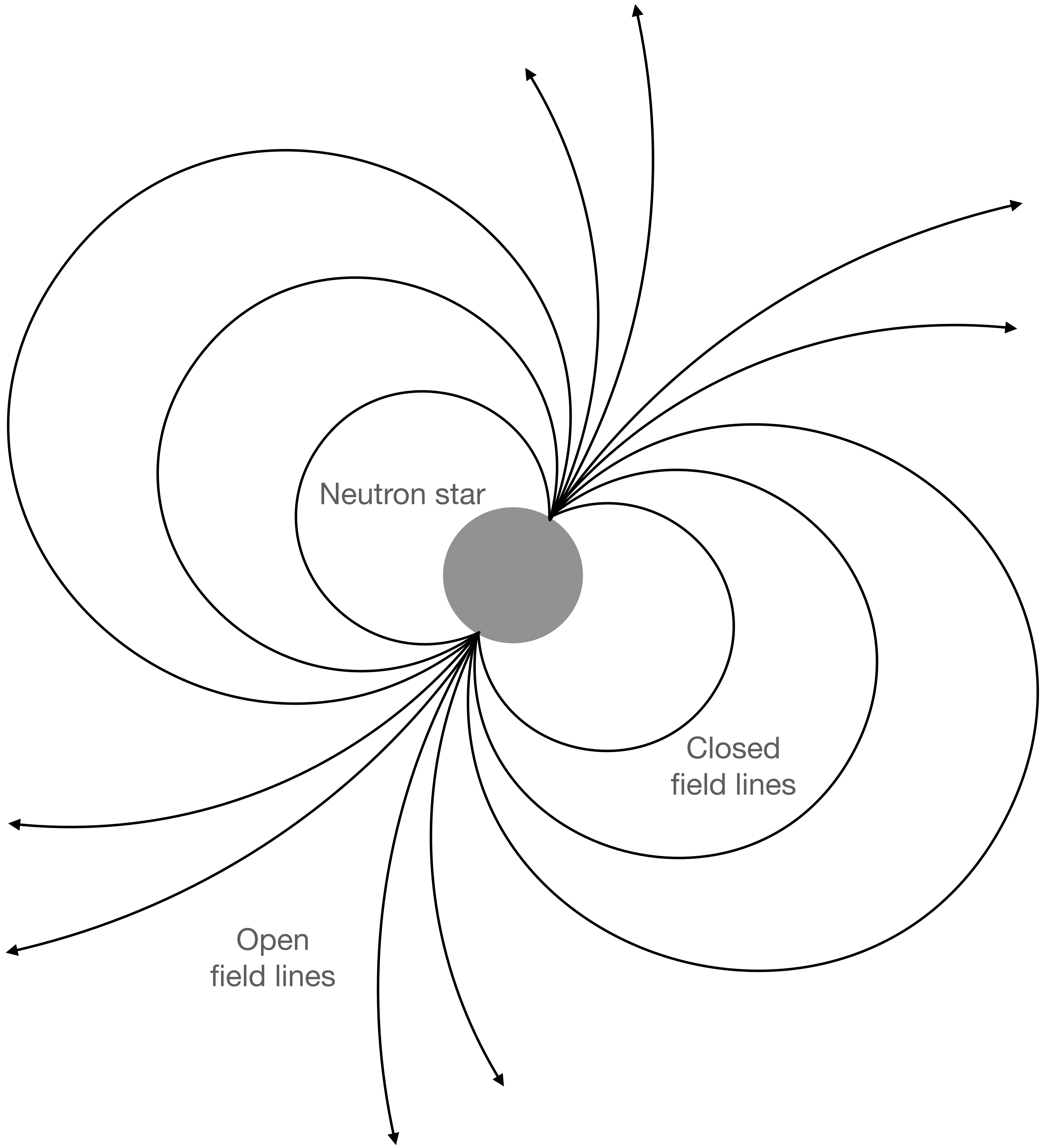

- Vacuum gap regions admit a non-zero $\vec{E} \cdot \vec{B}$, allowing for the sourcing of axions

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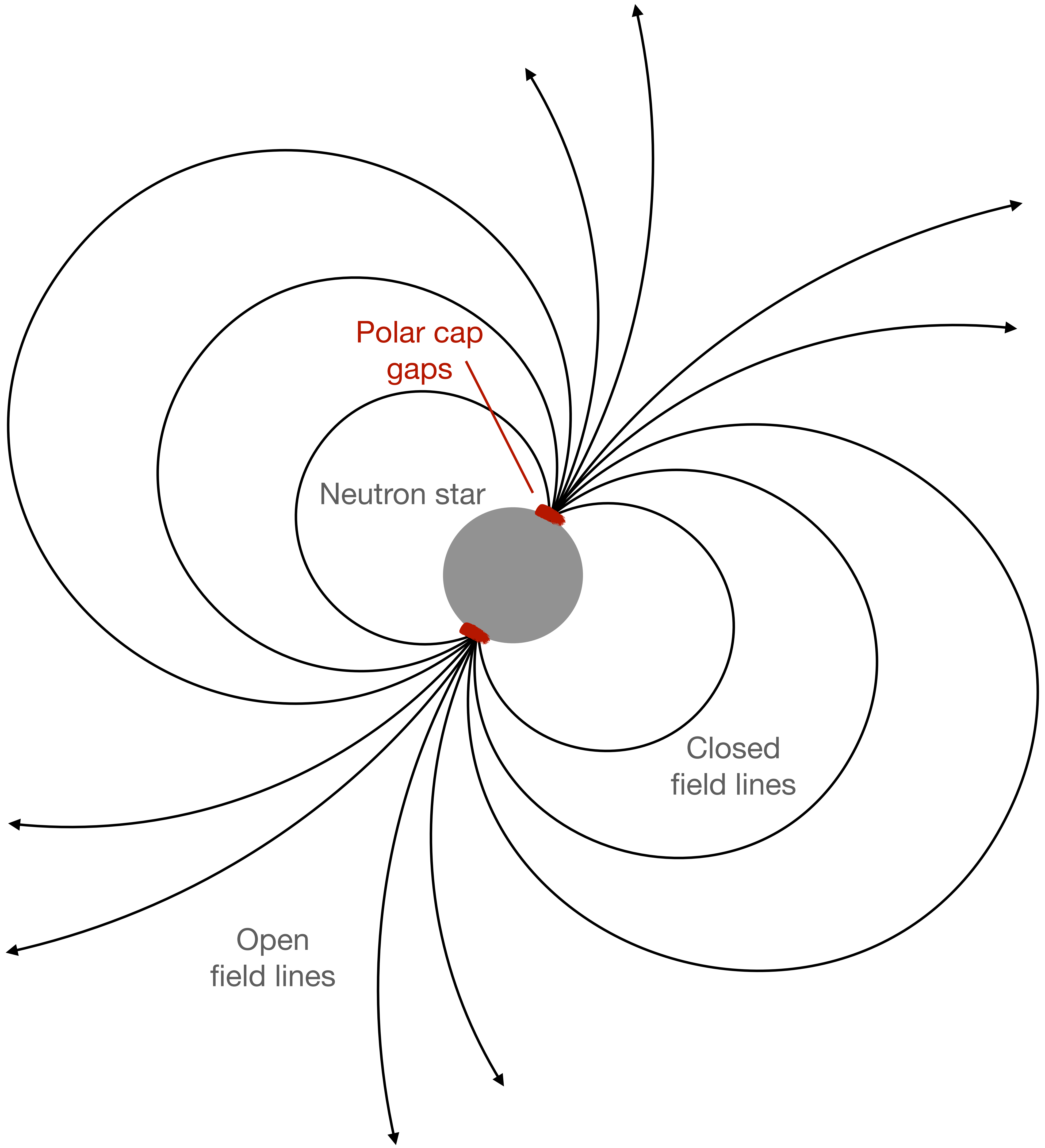

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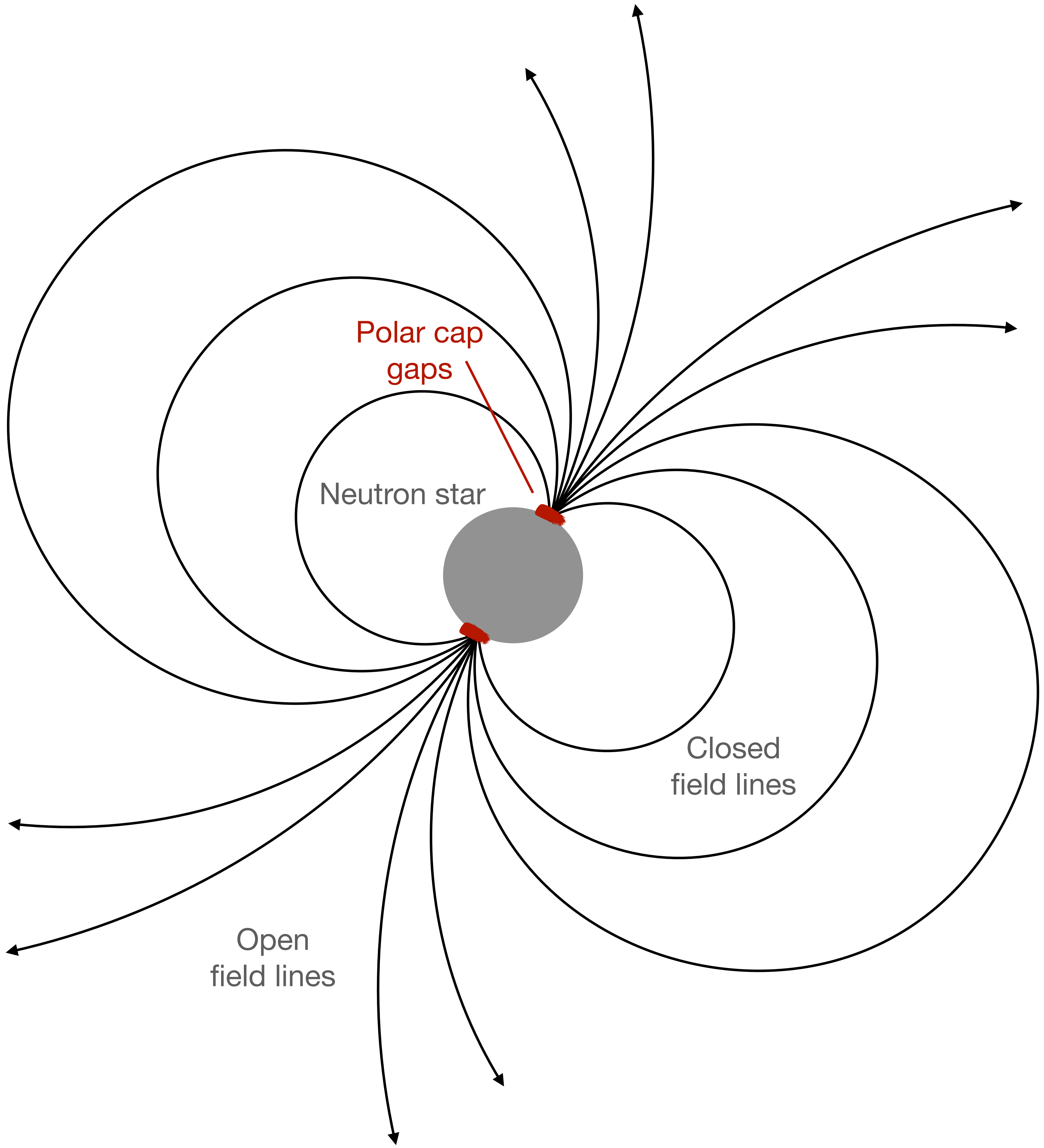
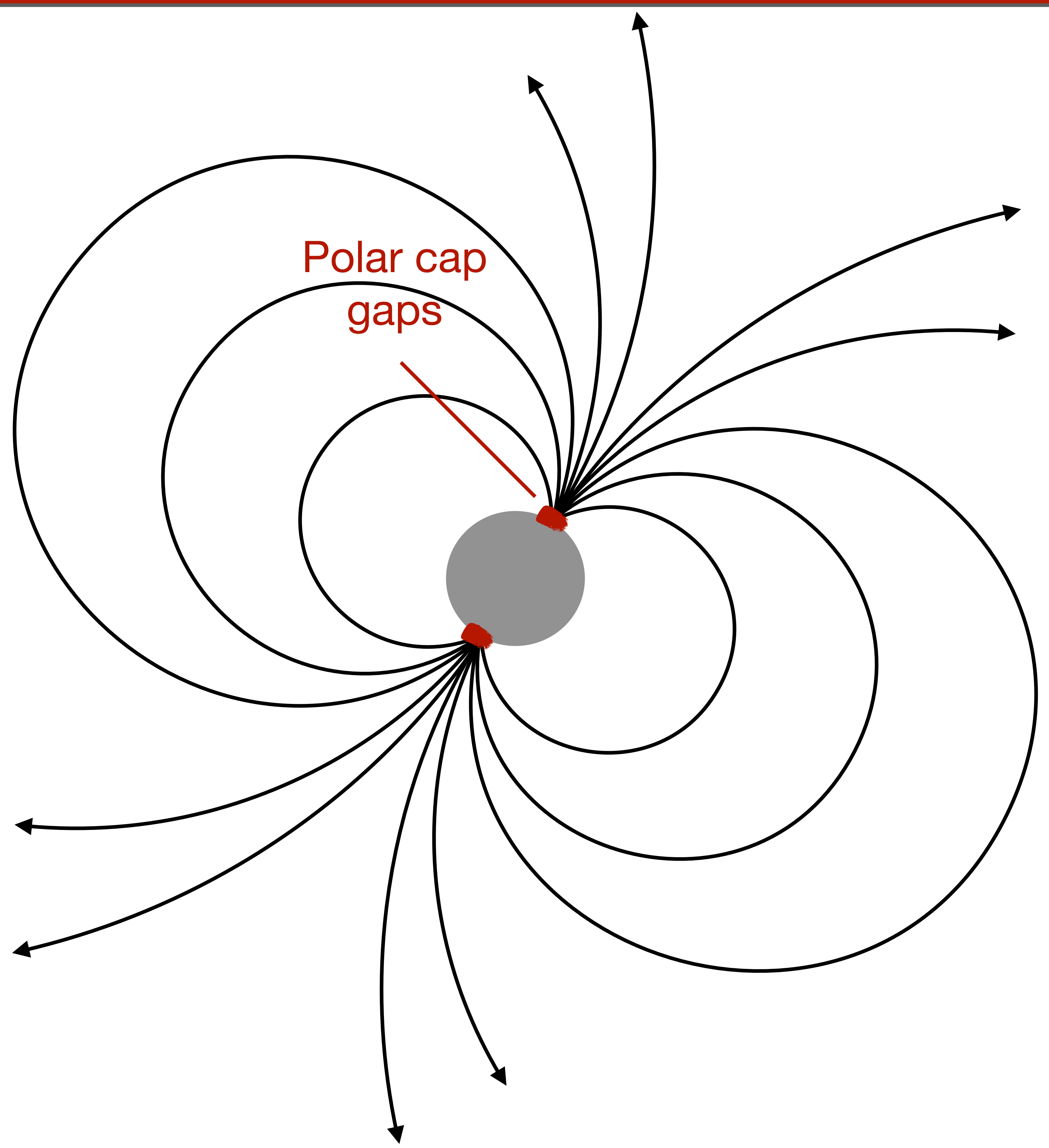


- Vacuum gap regions admit a non-zero $\vec{E} \cdot \vec{B}$, allowing for the sourcing of axions

- Due to the unstable nature of the gaps the electric field, and thereby $\vec{E} \cdot \vec{B}$, within the gaps is oscillatory

Prabhu, 2021 (arXiv 2104.14569)

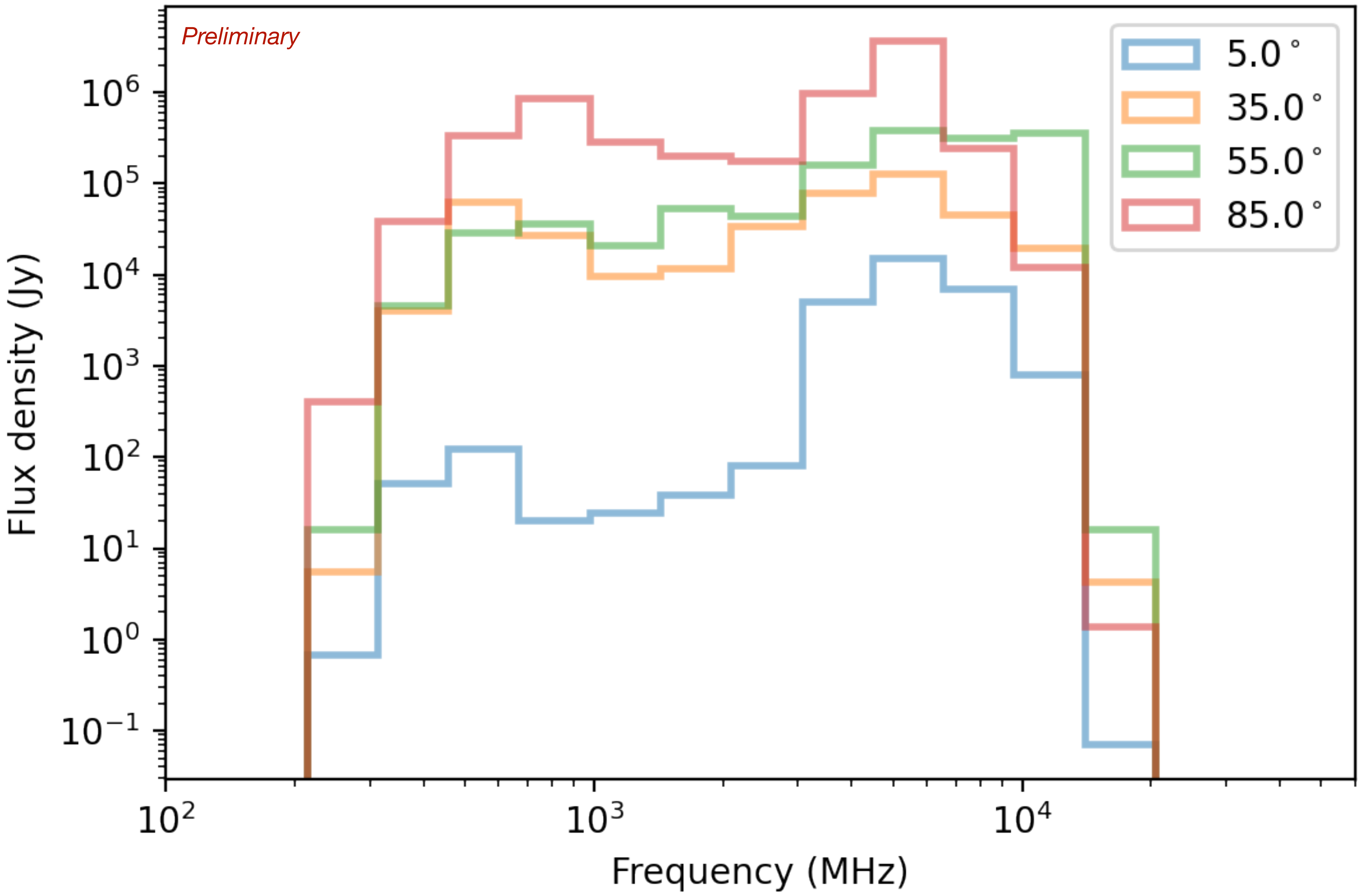
Sourcing of axions in vacuum gaps



- The oscillating electric field in the gap determines the initial axion spectrum
- Initial axion energies correspond to Fourier modes of the electric field oscillation
- Axions are produced relativistically and in all possible directions

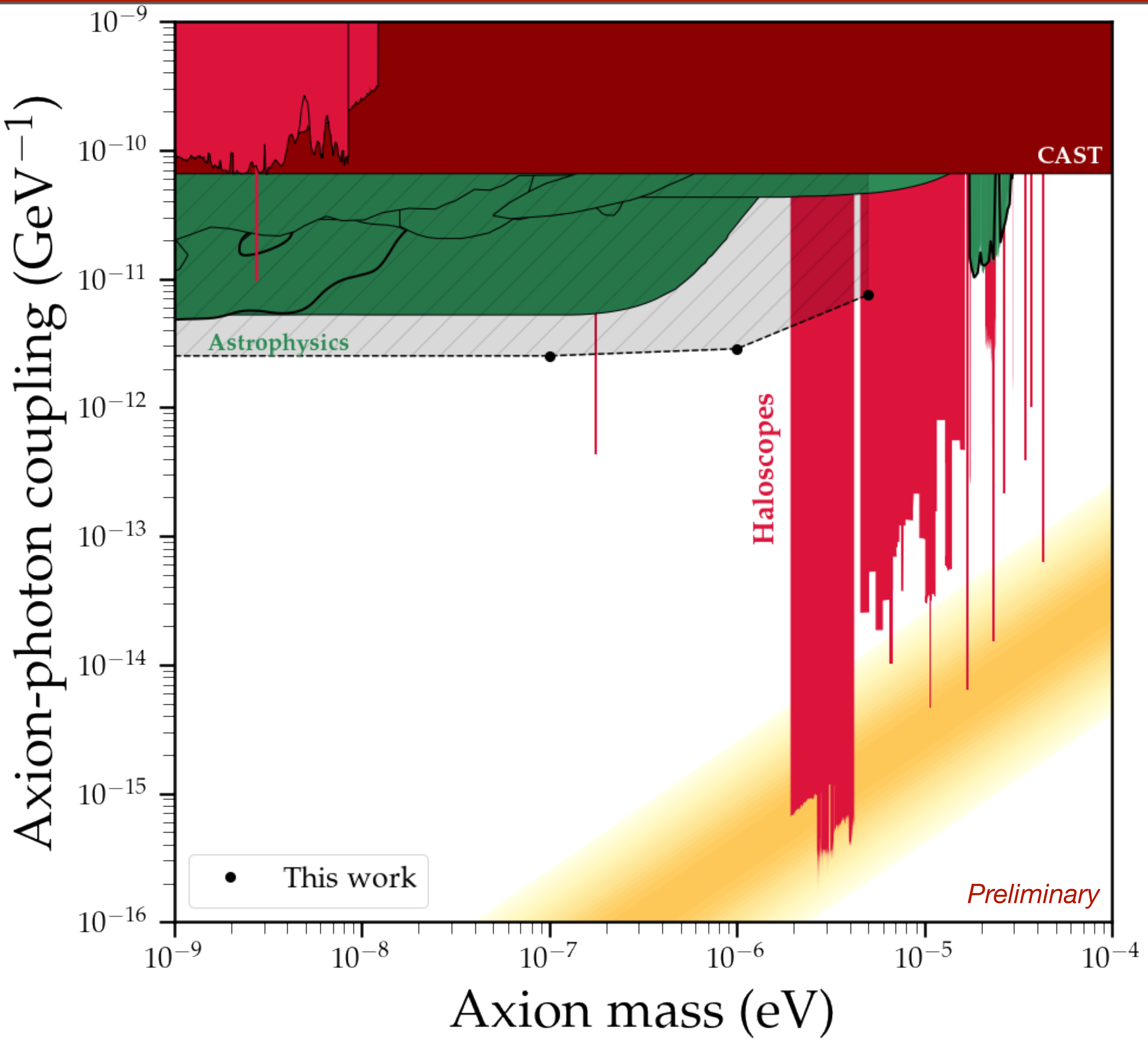
Prabhu, 2021 (arXiv 2104.14569)

Example radio spectrum



- Axion parameters:
  - $m_a = 1.0 \times 10^{-6}\,\mathrm{eV}$
  - $g_{a\gamma\gamma} = 7.0 \times 10^{-11}\,\mathrm{GeV}^{-1}$

Limits on $g_{a\gamma\gamma}$



Made using:
https://github.com/cajohare/AxionLimits

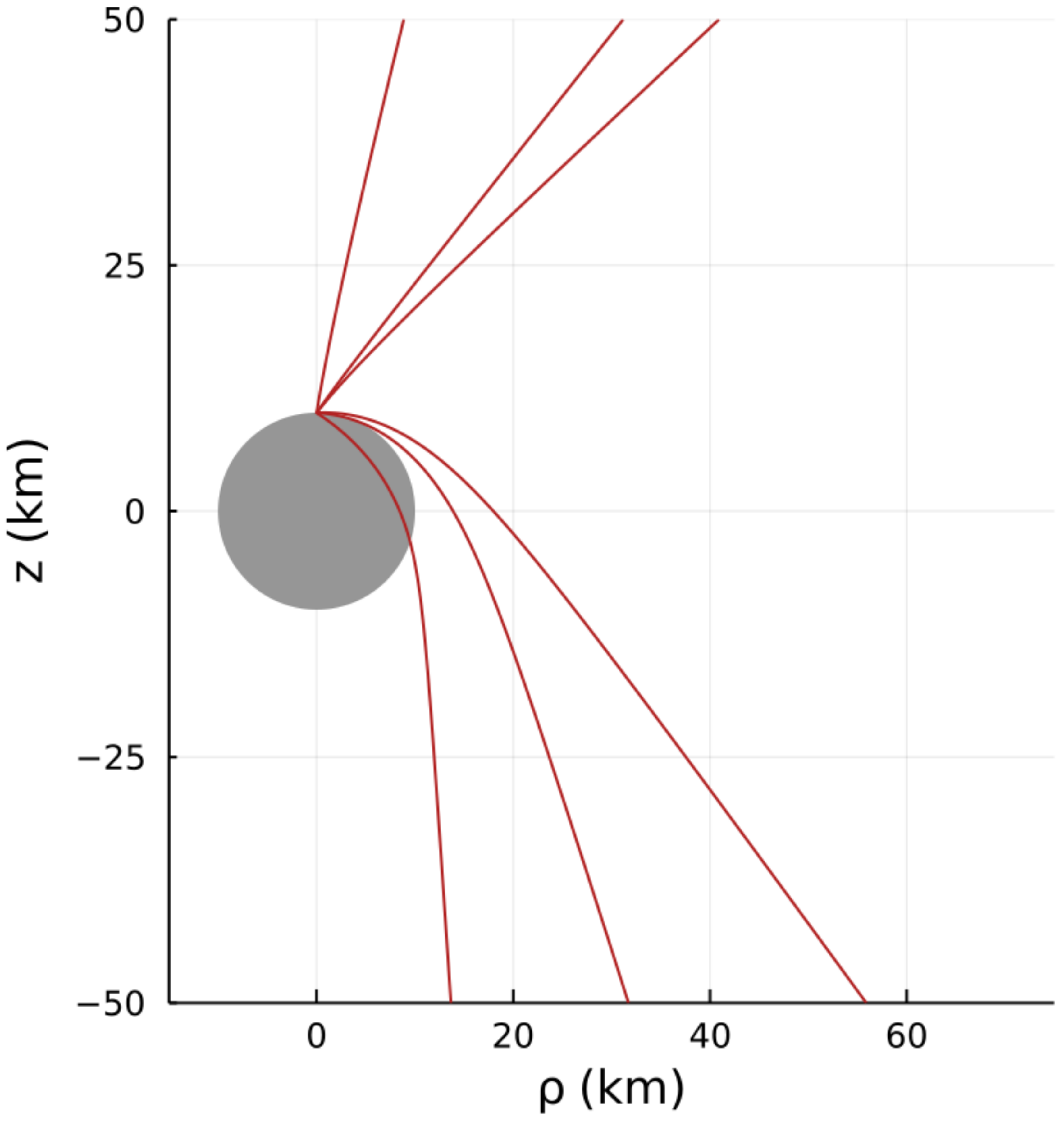
Conclusions

- Axions can be sourced in neutron star vacuum gaps
- Our ray-tracing pipeline facilitates an end-to-end calculation from the initial axion spectrum to the final radio flux
- Method yields strong constraints on $g_{a\gamma\gamma}$ for $m_a \approx 10^{-9} - 10^{-5}\,\mathrm{eV}$, more results to follow

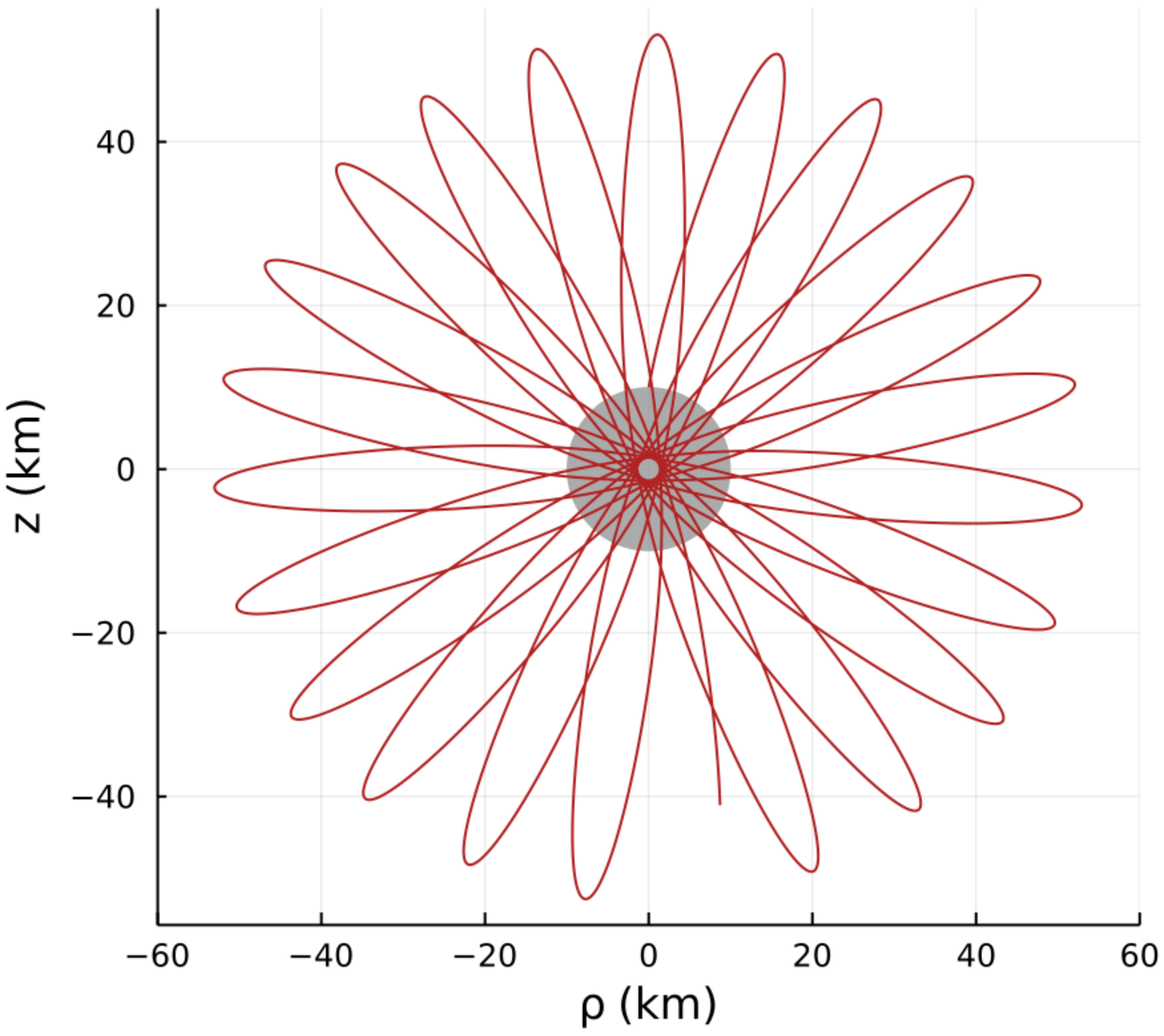
Thank you for your attention!

Backup slides

Axion trajectories

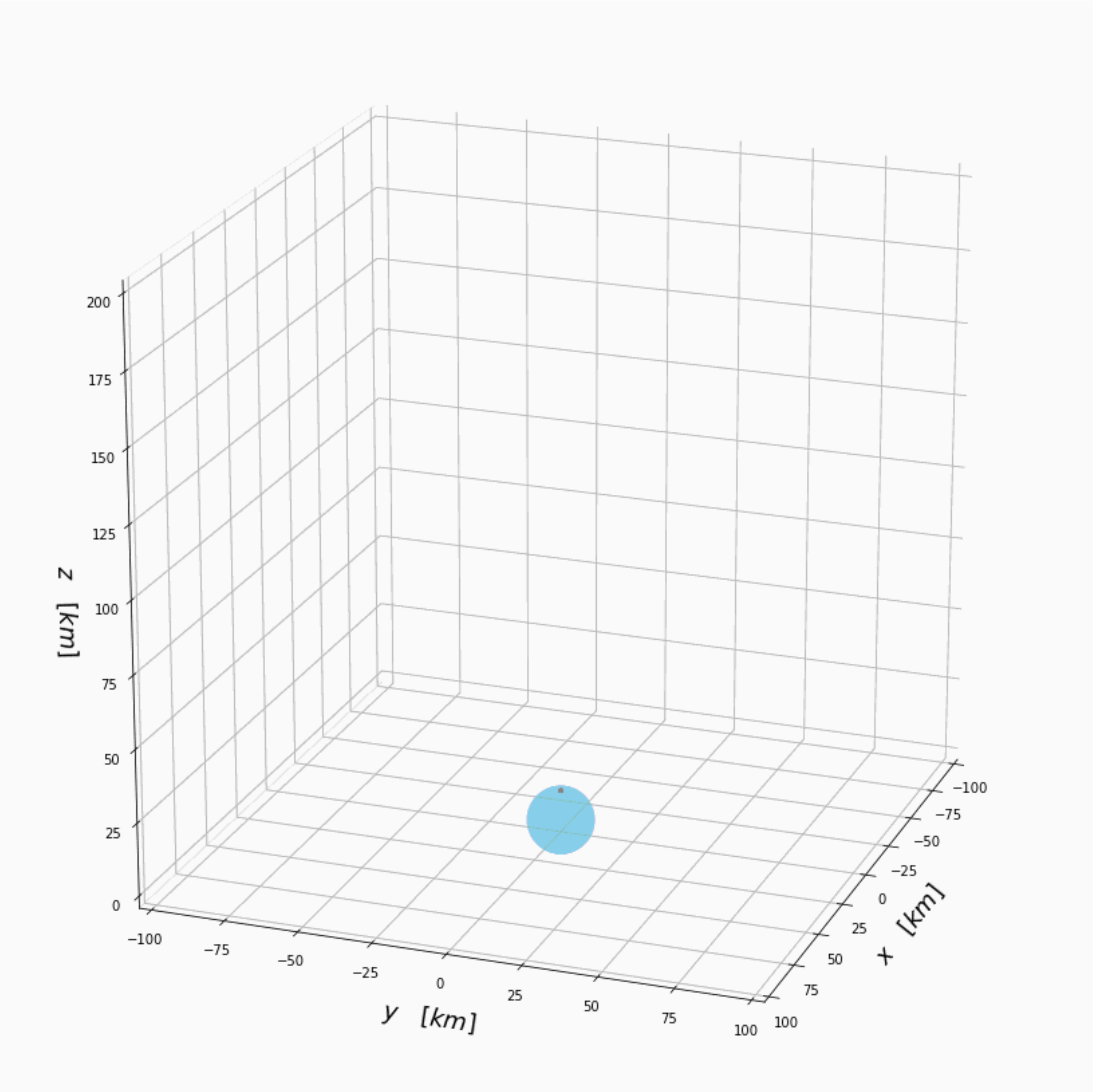


Escaping axions



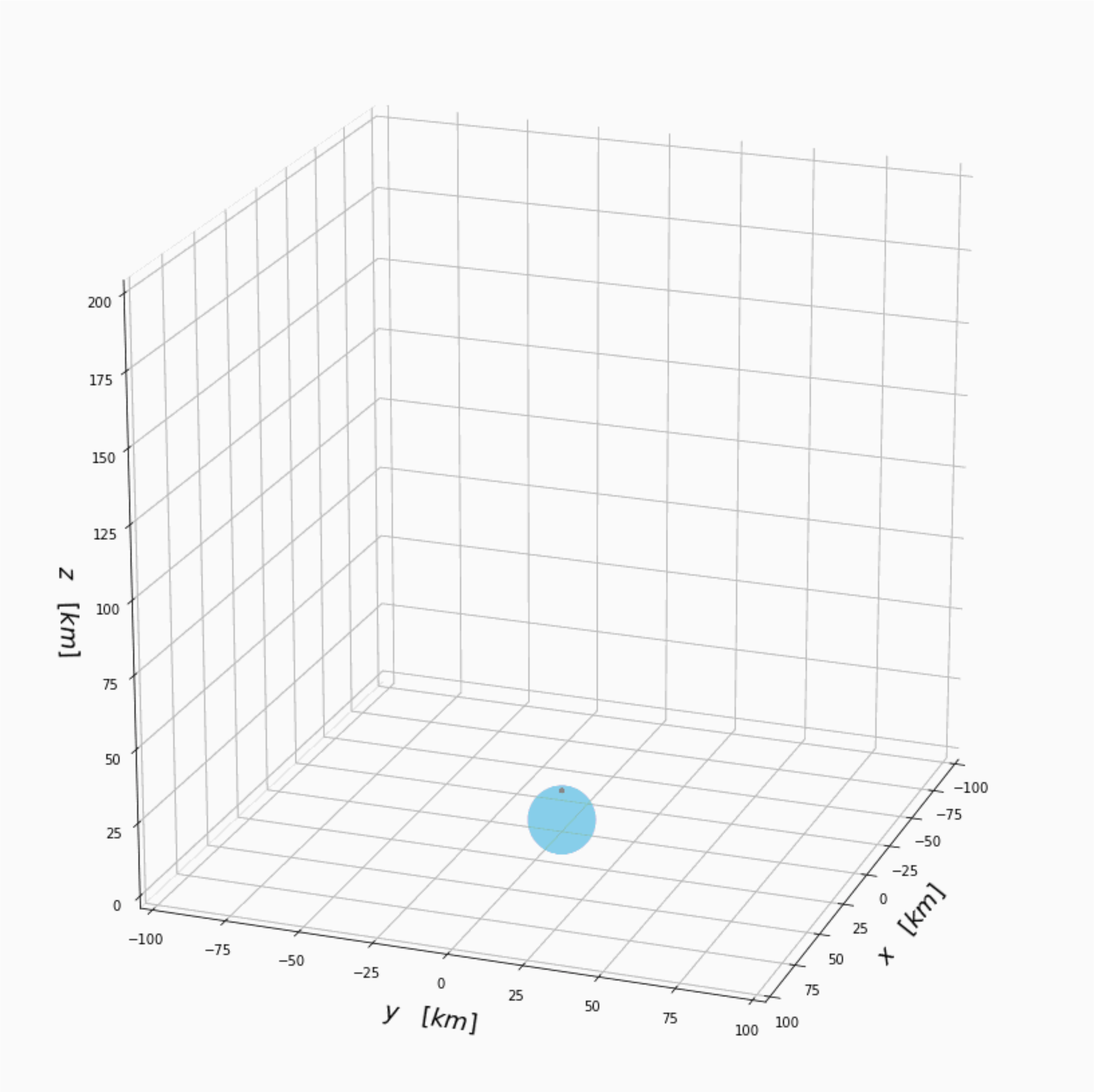
Bound-state axions

Axion propagation



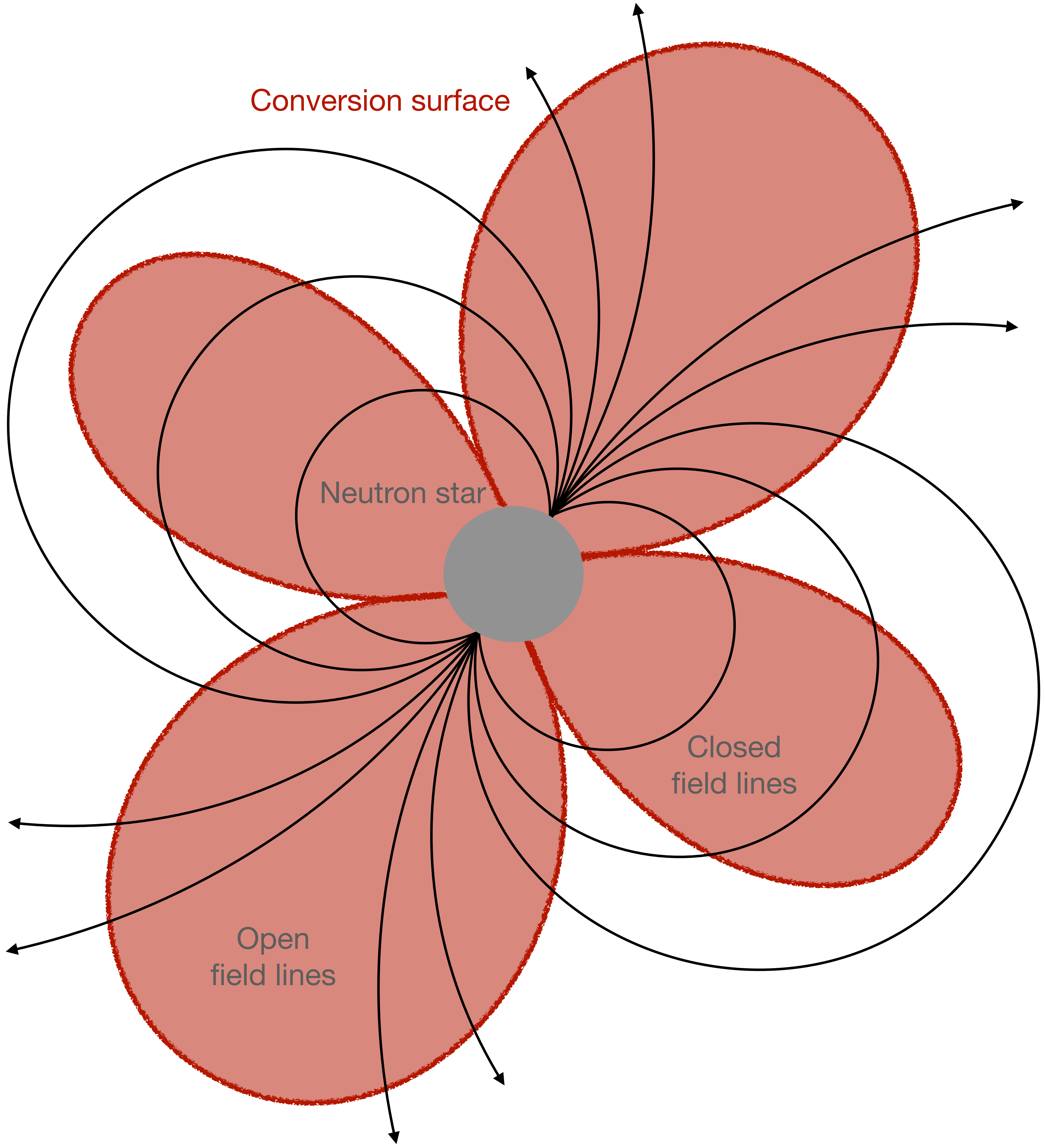
Credit: Samuel J. Witte

Axion propagation



Credit: Samuel J. Witte

Resonant axion-photon conversion

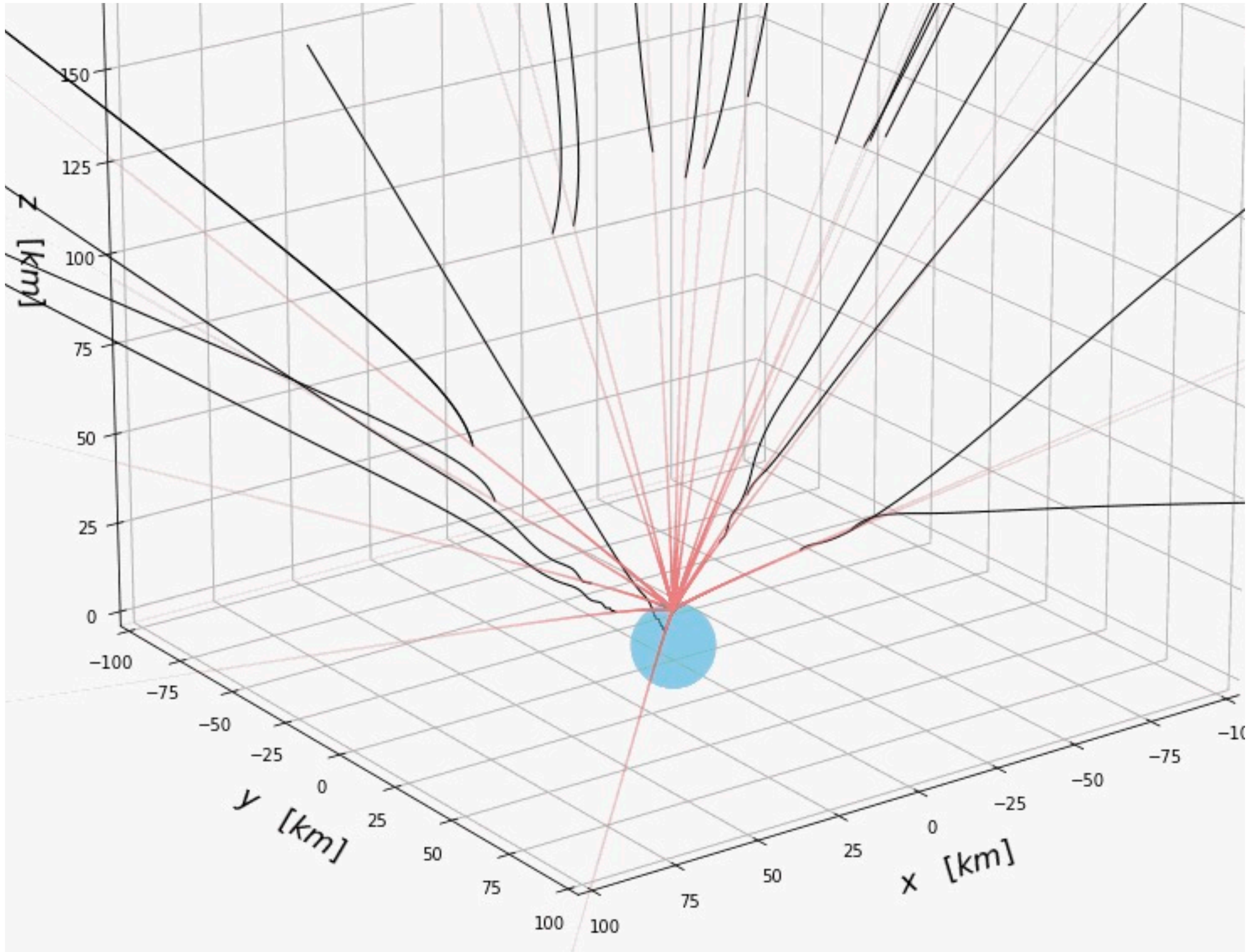


- For non-relativistic axions resonant conversion occurs when $\omega_p \approx m_a$, defining a conversion surface around the NS
- For relativistic axions angular dependencies enter the resonance condition, and the conversion surface isn't as well-defined

Hook, Kahn, Safdi, Sun, 2018 (arXiv 1804.03145)

Witte, **DN**, Edwards, Weniger, 2021 (arXiv 2104.07670)

Photon propagation



- Photon trajectories are heavily affected by the plasma in the magnetosphere

- Photon evolution is governed by the ray-tracing equations

$$\frac{d\vec{x}}{dt} = \nabla_k \omega(\vec{x}, \vec{k}, t)$$

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Witte, **DN**, Edwards, Weniger, 2021 (arXiv 2104.07670)

Complete pipeline

(1) Calculate initial axion spectrum

↓

(2) Axion propagation

↓

(3) Compute resonant axion-photon conversion

↓

(4) Photon propagation

↓

(5) Find final radio flux