

# Smoking gun for self-interacting dark matter ?

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Based on 1504.06576 and 1308.3419  
with F Kahlhoefer, J Kummer, M Frandsen and S Sarkar

(and slides from F Kahlhoefer)

# Motivation: Cosmology

- The collisionless cold dark matter paradigm fits perfectly at large scales
- There are however various discrepancies between N-body simulations of collisionless cold DM and astrophysical observations on galactic scales (but baryons...):

- Cusp-vs-core problem

Moore (1994)  
Flores, Primack: astro-ph/9402004

- Missing-satellite problem

Klypin et al.: astro-ph/9901240  
Moore et al.: astro-ph/9907411

- Too-big-to-fail problem

Boylan-Kolchin, Bullock, Kaplinghat:  
1103.0007, 1111.2048

DM self-interactions may solve these problems

Spiegel & Steinhard: astro-ph/9909386

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Covered yesterday by Zackaria Chacko, Hai-Bo Yu

DM self-interactions may solve these problems

Spergel & Steinhard: astro-ph/9909386

# Motivation: Particle physics

- Dark sector often assumed to be simple, mainly because we don't know much...
- Large self-interactions are natural in models with a complex dark sector (e.g. with a new gauge group), or light mediators, e.g.
  - Strongly interacting DM Kusenko, Steinhardt: astro-ph/0106008
  - Mirror DM Berezhiani, Dolgov, Mohapatra: hep-ph/9511221  
Mohapatra, Nussinov, Teplitz: hep-ph/0111381
  - Atomic DM Kaplan, Krnjaic, Rehermann, Wells: 0909.0753  
Cyr-Racine, Sigurdson: 1209.5752
- Bonus: We can potentially study the dark sector even if DM has highly suppressed couplings to Standard Model particles.

# How large a cross section?

- To be observable on astrophysical scales, self-interaction cross sections have to be large, typically

$$\sigma / m_\chi \sim 1 \text{ cm}^2/\text{g} \sim 2 \text{ barns}/\text{GeV}$$

- The nucleon nucleon scattering cross section  $\sim 20\text{b}$  at low energies
- The typical cross section of a WIMP is 20 orders of magnitude smaller!
- Potential impact:  
Evidence for DM self-interactions on astrophysical scales would rule out most popular models for DM, such as supersymmetric WIMPs, gravitinos, axions...

# Constraints on self-interactions

- Various astrophysical observations give constraints on SIDM:

Randall et al 0704.0261

- Bullet cluster
- Subhalo evaporation rate
- Halo ellipticity
- Core density in clusters and dwarfs



Gnedin, Ostriker: astro-ph/0010436

Miralda-Escude (2002)

Yoshida et al.: astro-ph/0006134

Dave et al.: astro-ph/0006218

- (Some of) these constraints seemed to be very strong, implying  $\sigma/m_\chi < 0.1$  cm<sup>2</sup>/g, which is too small to give observable effects
- Constraints apply for particular velocities and can be easily evaded by assuming a velocity dependence of the cross section

# Constraints on self-interactions

- Various astrophysical observations give constraints on SIDM:

Randall et al 0704.0261



- Bullet cluster

- Subhalo evaporation rate

- Halo ellipticity

- $\rho$

More recent numerical simulations indicate that the conventional bounds on DM self-interactions have been significantly overstated

Velocity-independent DM self-interactions with  $\sigma/m_\chi \sim 1 \text{ cm}^2/\text{g}$  may still be viable.

Rocha et al.: 1208.3025  
 Peter et al.: 1208.3026  
 Meralda-Escude (2002)

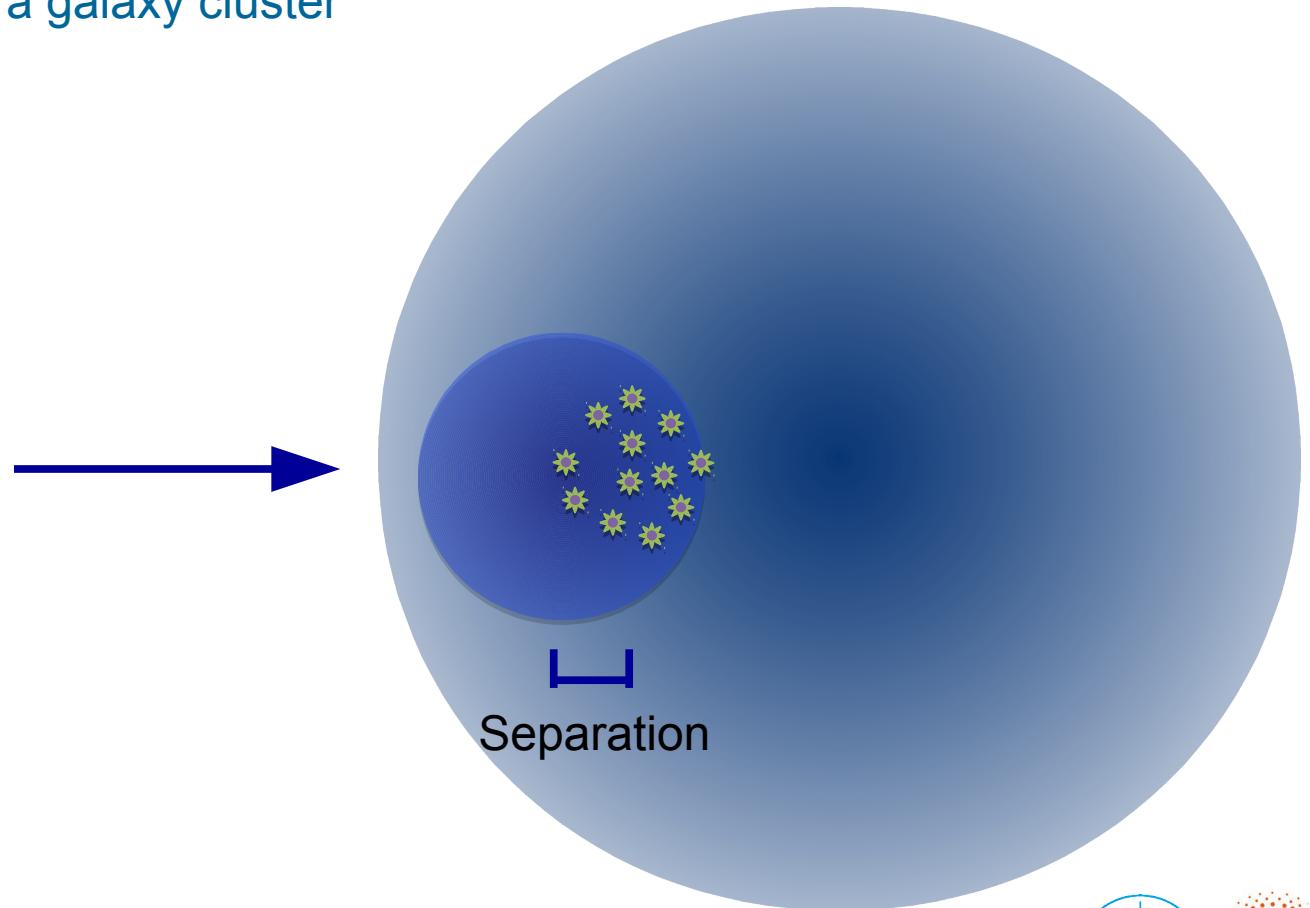
Yoshida et al.: astro-ph/0006134  
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# Smoking gun?

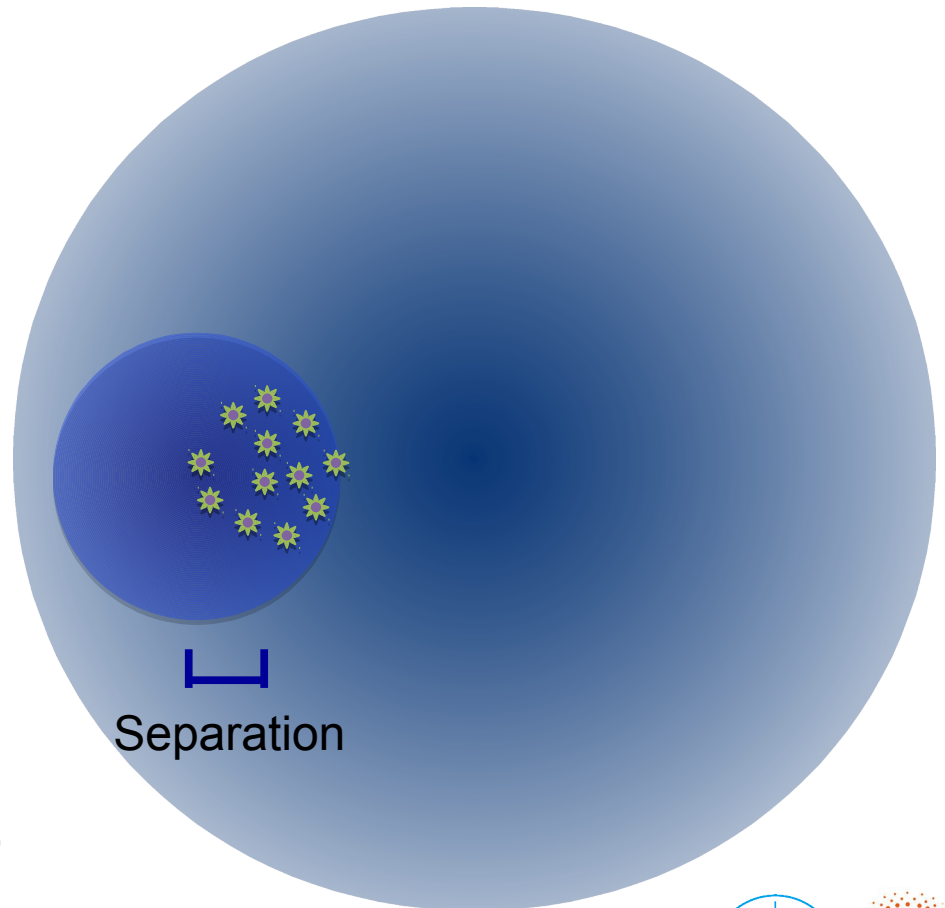
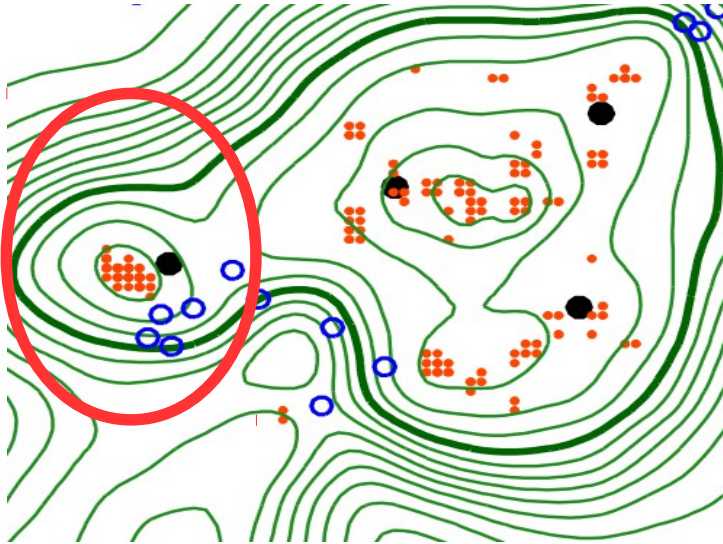
- Smoking gun signal? Separation between dark matter halo and stars of a galaxy falling into a galaxy cluster





# Smoking gun?

- Smoking gun signal? Separation between dark matter halo and stars of a galaxy falling into a galaxy cluster



- Recently been **observed in A3827**

# Evidence in Abell 3827?

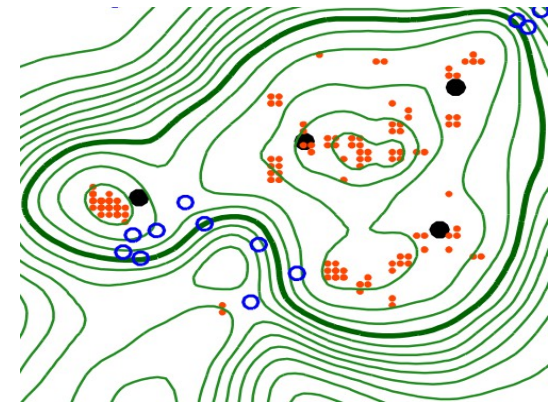
## The behaviour of dark matter associated with 4 bright cluster galaxies in the 10kpc core of Abell 3827

Massey et al., arXiv:1504.03388

“The best-constrained offset is  $1.62 \pm 0.48$  kpc, where the 68% confidence limit includes both statistical error and systematic biases in mass modelling. [...] if interpreted solely as evidence for self-interacting dark matter, this offset implies a cross-section

$$\sigma/m \sim (1.7 \pm 0.7) \times 10^{-4} \left( \frac{t_{\text{infall}}}{10^9 \text{ yrs}} \right)^{-2} \text{ cm}^2/\text{g}.$$

where  $t$  is the infall duration.”



Two arguments for this unique sensitivity:

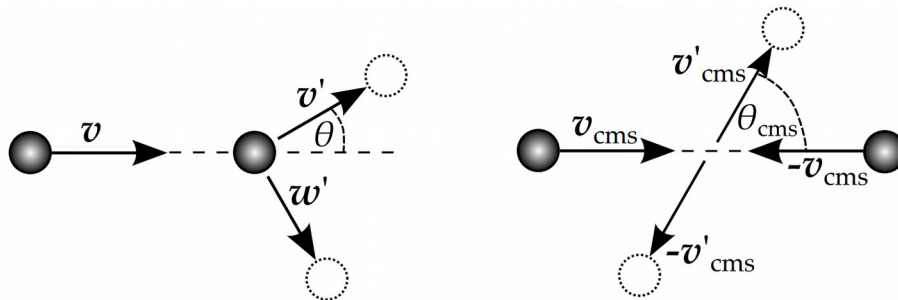
1. A3827 is strongly lensed, allowing for a much more precise measurement of the separation
2. The subhalo under consideration has been falling towards the centre of A3827 for a very long time, so self-interactions have had plenty of time to affect the trajectory of the subhalo

# Evidence in Abell 3827?

What has been neglected in this simplistic analysis?

- > The stars and the DM subhalo are assumed to develop completely independently, i.e. even a tiny difference in the acceleration can lead to sizeable differences in their trajectories.
  - This neglects the crucial fact that initially the stars are gravitationally bound to the DM subhalo and can only be separated from it if external forces are comparable to the gravitational attraction within the system.
- > The effective drag force on the DM subhalo is assumed to be constant throughout the evolution of the system.
  - However the rate of DM self-interactions depends both on the velocity of the subhalo and the background DM density, both of which will vary along the trajectory of the subhalo.
- > So how to do a better estimate? Think about the type of self interaction first...

# The particle physics picture



The momentum transfer in a collision of two DM particles is completely fixed by the scattering angle. Averaging over many DM particles, the effective momentum transfer is given by

$$\sigma_T = 4\pi \int_0^1 d \cos \theta_{\text{cms}} (1 - \cos \theta_{\text{cms}}) \frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega_{\text{cms}}}$$

This is the quantity typically studied

However, this is not all that matters...

Can be obtained with **rare scatters and large momentum transfer** (e.g. isotropic scattering) or **frequent scatters with small momentum transfer** (e.g. long range interactions)

# Frequent interactions

- Frequent DM self-interactions imply many scatters for all particles and therefore lead to a deceleration of the overall DM halo.
- This deceleration can be described in terms of an effective drag force

$$\frac{F_{\text{drag}}}{m_{\text{DM}}} = \frac{\tilde{\sigma}}{4 m_{\text{DM}}} \rho v_0^{2m} \leftarrow \begin{cases} m = 1 & \text{for velocity-independent interactions} \\ m = -1 & \text{for long-range interactions} \end{cases}$$

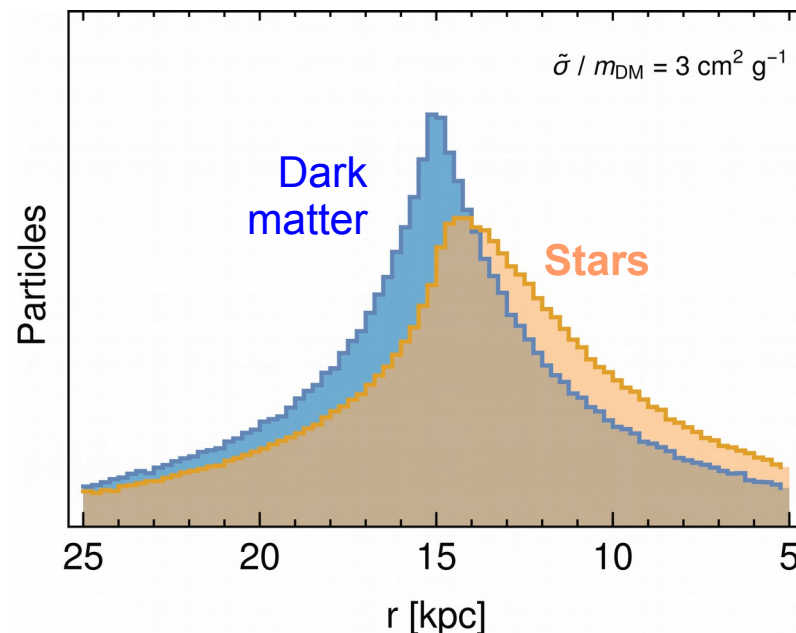
Long range interactions which would give a sizable effect at  $v \sim 1000$  km/s are strongly constrained by low-velocity systems (one could imagine a cutoff due to finite mediator mass though...)

# Expectations for frequent interactions

- In the presence of a drag force, a DM subhalo falling into a galaxy cluster will retain its shape, since the drag force affects all DM particles equally.
- In the decelerating frame of the DM subhalo, stars will experience a fictitious accelerating force.
- The resulting tilt in the effective potential will shift the distribution of stars relative to the DM halo.
- Moreover, some stars can escape and will end up travelling ahead of the DM halo.
- Both of these effects can lead to a separation between the peak of the distribution of stars and the centroid of the DM halo.

# Results frequent interactions

Simplified numerical simulation:  
Trace the motion of a set of test  
particles (DM and stars) in a time-  
dependent gravitational potential.



- As expected, the peaks of the two distributions are slightly shifted.
- The dark matter halo retains its form.
- However the tail of the distribution of stars is enhanced in the forward direction due to stars that have escaped from the gravitational potential of the subhalo.



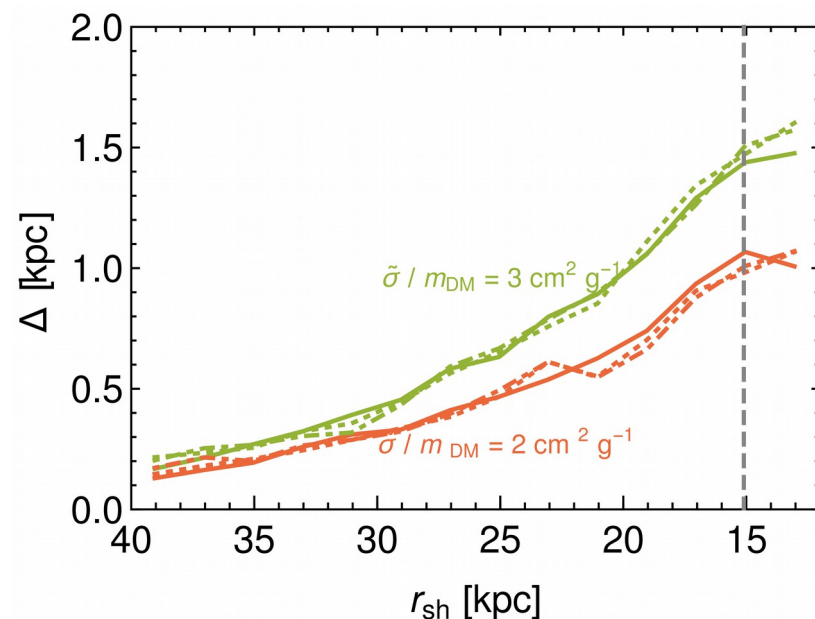
# What is the observable separation?

There are some subtleties as to how to define the separation

It is not sensible to just calculate the subhalo position including all initially bound particles, because particles that have escaped would strongly bias the centroid position.

It is also not sensible to just determine the peak position, which (for the DM distribution) cannot be obtained observationally.

For a realistic estimate we include only particles within the iso-density contour containing 20% of the total mass of the DM subhalo (corresponding roughly to the inner 4 kpc) and some alternatives



The cross section required to obtain a separation of 1.5 kpc is about

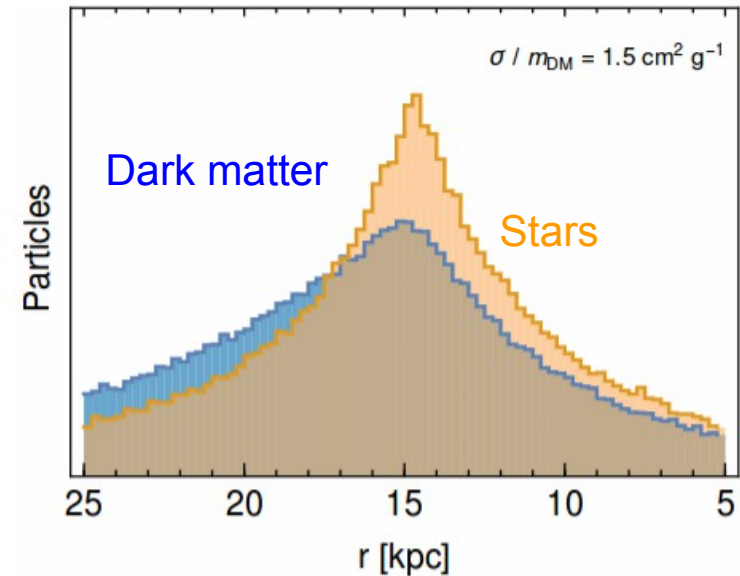
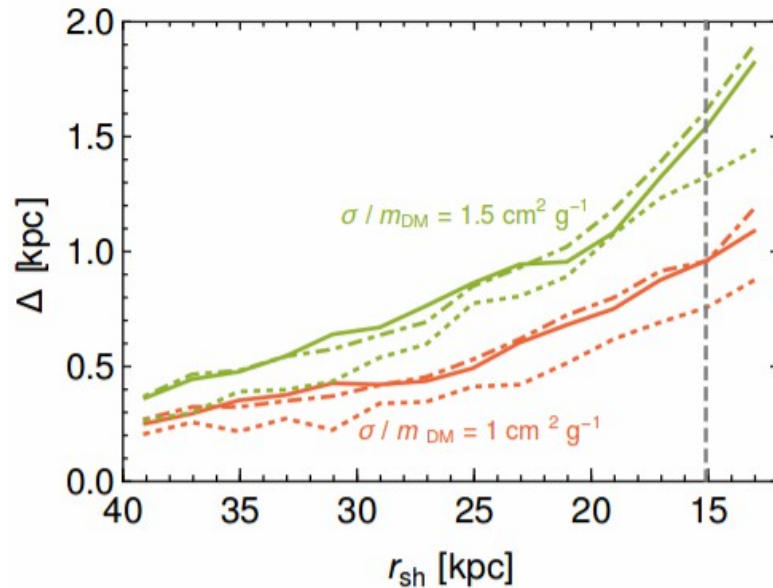
$$\sigma/m_{\chi} \sim 3 \text{ cm}^2/\text{g}.$$



# Rare self interactions

- Rare self-interactions mean that for a typical DM particle the probability for multiple scattering is negligible.
- A significant fraction of DM particles will not experience any scattering at all and therefore behave just like (equally collisionless) stars.
- On the other hand, whenever a DM scatters, it will often receive such a high momentum transfer, that it escapes from the subhalo.
- A separation between the DM subhalo and stars can also occur in this case, but the separation is due to DM particles leaving the subhalo in the backward direction or being kicked into very elliptical orbits.

# Results rare self interactions



- The cross section required to obtain a separation of 1.5 kpc is about  $\sigma / m_{\chi} \sim 1.5 \text{ cm}^2 / \text{g}$ .
- Note that the separation is mainly due to differences in the shapes of the two respective distributions, while the peaks of the distributions remain coincident.

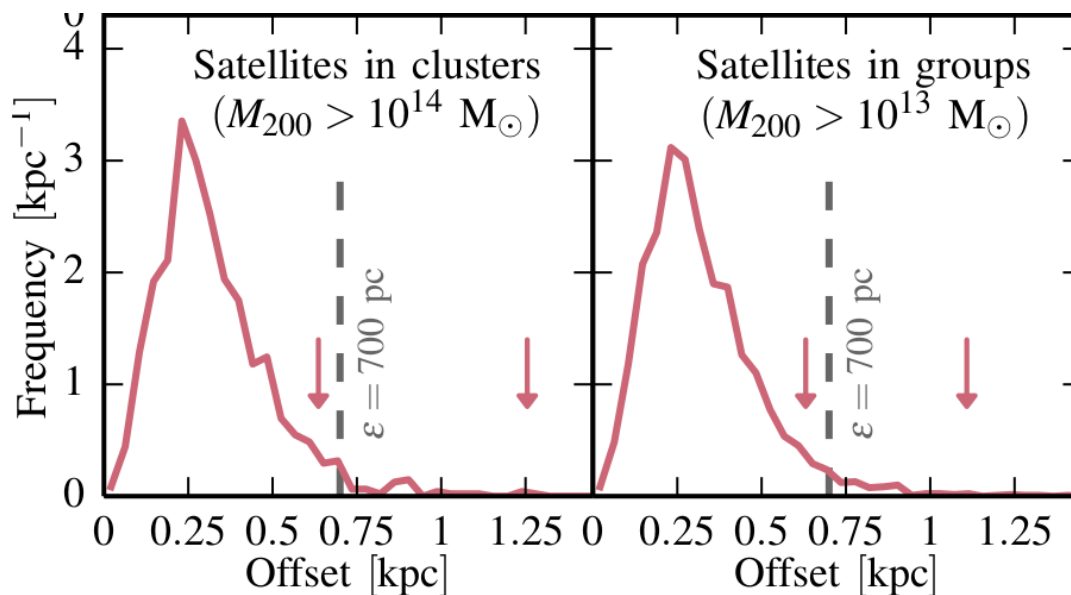
# What type of self interaction?

- The case of contact interactions can potentially be distinguished from the case of an effective drag force by studying in detail the shape of the DM subhalo and the relative position of the peaks of the two distributions.
- **Contact interactions:** the DM subhalo is expected to be deformed due to the scattered DM particles leaving the subhalo in the backward direction, such that the position of the centroid depends sensitively on the centroid definition.
- **Effective drag force:** we expect the DM subhalo to retain its shape, while the distribution of stars will be both shifted and deformed.

# Have we really seen DM self interactions?

To answer this need to know how likely other astrophysical explanations are

Recent hydrodynamical cosmological simulations to measure offsets between the centres of stellar and dark matter components of galaxies.



1505.05470

Offset  $> 1.5 \text{ kpc}$  in less than 99.8% (random directionality)

The remaining 0.2% had recent mergers with other satellites

# Summary

- > Self interacting dark matter could solve some problems of the collisionless cold dark matter paradigm and can arise naturally in more complex dark sectors
- > Orthogonal handle on properties of DM: We can potentially study the dark sector even if DM has highly suppressed couplings to Standard Model particles.
- > Subhalos falling into galaxy clusters are a novel and interesting probe of DM self-interactions.
- > Both effective drag forces (from frequent self-interactions) and rare self-interactions can lead to a separation between the DM subhalo and the stars (potentially distinguishable).
- > An explanation of the separation observed in A3827 requires DM self-interactions of  $\sigma/m_\chi > 1 \text{ cm}^2/\text{g}$ .
- > Consequently, this interpretation is highly testable (if not already excluded) using other galaxy clusters.
- > If interpretation true, WIMPs, axions, etc are excluded as DM candidates

# Thank you!