Chapter 1

The Accelerating Universe

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1.1 Introduction and History

In this article we review the discovery of the accelerating universe using type Ia supernovae. We then outline ways in which dark energy – component that causes the acceleration – is phenomenologically described. We finally describe principal cosmological techniques to measure large-scale properties of dark energy. This chapter therefore complements articles by Caldwell and Linder (2010) in this book who describe theoretical understanding (or lack thereof) of the cause for the accelerating universe.

Evidence for the missing component. Inflationary theory [Guth (1981)] explains how tiny quantum-mechanical fluctuations in the early universe could grow to become structures we see on the sky today. One of the factors that motivated inflation is that it predicts that the total energy density relative to the critical value is unity, \( \Omega \equiv \rho / \rho_{\text{crit}} = 1 \). This inflationary prediction convinced many theorists that the universe is precisely flat.

Around the same time that inflation was proposed, a variety of dynamical probes of the large-scale structure in the universe were starting to indicate that the matter energy density is much lower than the value needed to make the flat. Perhaps the most specific case was made by the measurements of the clustering of galaxies, which are sensitive to the parameter combination \( \Gamma \equiv \Omega_M h \), where \( \Omega_M \) is the energy density in matter relative to critical, and \( h \) is the Hubble constant in units of 100 km/s/Mpc. The measured value at the time was \( \Gamma \approx 0.25 \) (with rather large errors). One way to preserve a flat universe was to postulate that the Hubble constant itself was much lower than the measurements indicated (\( h \sim 0.7 \)), so that \( \Omega_M = 1 \) but \( h \sim 0.3 \) [Bartlett et al. (1995)]. Another possibility was the presence of Einstein’s cosmological constant (see the Caldwell article in this book), which was
suggested as far back as 1984 as the possible missing ingredient that could alleviate tension between data and matter-only theoretical predictions \cite{Peebles1984,Turner1984} by making the universe older, and allowing flatness with a low value of the matter density.

1.2 Type Ia supernovae and cosmology

The revolutionary discovery of the accelerating universe took place in the late 1990s, but to understand it and its implications, we have to step back a few decades.

**Type Ia supernovae.** Type Ia supernovae (SN Ia) are explosions seen to distant corners of the universe, and are thought to be cases where a rotating carbon-oxygen white dwarf accretes matter from a companion star, approaches the Chandrasekhar limit, starts thermonuclear burning, and then explodes. The Ia nomenclature refers to spectra of SN Ia, which have no hydrogen, but show a prominent Silicon (Si II) line at 6150 Å.

SN Ia had been studied extensively by Fritz Zwicky who also gave them their name \cite{Baade1934}, and by Walter Baade, who noted that SN Ia have very uniform luminosities \cite{Baade1938}. Light from type Ia supernovae brightens and fades over a period of about a month; at its peak flux, a SN Ia can be a sizable fraction of the luminosity of the entire galaxy in which it resides.

**Standard candles.** It is very difficult to measure distances in astronomy. It is relatively easy to measure the angular location of an object; we can also get excellent measurement of the object’s redshift $z$ from its spectrum, by observing the shift of known spectral lines due to expansion of the universe ($1 + z = \lambda_{\text{observed}}/\lambda_{\text{emitted}}$).

But the distance measurements traditionally involve empirical — and uncertain — methods: parallax, period-luminosity relation of Cepheids, main-sequence fitting, surface brightness fluctuations, etc. Typically, astronomers construct an unwieldy “distance ladder” to measure distance to a galaxy: they use one of these relations (say, parallaxes – apparent shifts due to Earth’s motion around the Sun) to calibrate distances to nearby objects (e.g. variable stars Cepheids), then go from those objects to more distant ones using another relation that works better in that distance regime. In this process the systematic errors add up, making the distance ladder flimsy.

“Standard candles” are hypothetical objects that have a nearly fixed luminosity (that is, fixed intrinsic power that they radiate). Having standard candles would be useful since then we could infer distances to objects just by using the flux-luminosity inverse square law

$$f = \frac{L}{4\pi d_L^2} \quad (1.1)$$
where $d_L$ is the luminosity distance which can be predicted given the object’s redshift and contents of the universe (i.e. energy densities of matter and radiation relative to the critical density which makes the universe spatially flat, as well as other components such as radiation). In fact, we don’t even need to know the luminosity of the standard candle to be able to infer relative distances to objects.

In astronomy, flux is often expressed in terms of apparent magnitude – a logarithmic measure of flux, and luminosity is related to the absolute magnitude of the object. So, in astronomical units, Eq. (1.1) reads

$$m - M = 5 \log_{10} \left( \frac{d_L}{10 \text{ pc}} \right)$$

where the quantity on the left-hand side is also known as the distance modulus. For an object that is 10 parsecs away, the distance modulus is zero. For a standard candle, the absolute magnitude $M$ (or, equivalently, luminosity $L$) is known to be approximately the same for each object. Therefore, measurements of the apparent magnitude to each object provide information about the luminosity distance, and thus the makeup of the universe.

Finding SN. The fact that SN Ia can potentially be used as a standard candle has been realized long ago, at least as far back as the 1970s [Kowal (1968); Colgate (1979)]. However, a major problem is to find a method to schedule telescopes to discover SN before they happen. If we point a telescope at a galaxy and wait for the SN to go off, we will wait several hundred years. There had been a program in the 1980s to find supernovae [Norgaard-Nielsen et al. (1989)] but, partly due to inadequate technology and equipment available at the time, it discovered only one SN, and after the peak of the light-curve.

The first major breakthrough came in the 1990s when two teams of SN researchers Supernova Cosmology Project (SCP; led by Saul Perlmutter and organized in the late 1980s) and High-z Supernova Search Team (Highz; organized in the mid 1990s and led, at the time, by Brian Schmidt) developed an efficient approach to use world’s most powerful telescopes working in concert to discover and follow up high-redshift SN, and thus complement the existing efforts at lower redshift led by the Calán/Tololo collaboration [Hamuy et al. (1996)]. These teams had been able to essentially guarantee that they would find batches of SN in each run. [For popular reviews of these exciting developments, see Kirshner (2002) and Perlmutter and Schmidt (2003).]

The second breakthrough came in 1993 by Mark Phillips, astronomer working in Chile [Phillips (1993)]. He noticed that the SN luminosity – or absolute magnitude – is correlated with the decay time of SN light curve. Phillips considered the quantity $\Delta m_{15}$, the attenuation of the flux of SN between the light maximum and 15 days past the maximum. He found that $\Delta m_{15}$ is strongly correlated with the intrinsic brightness of SN; see the left panel of Fig. 1.1. The “Phillips relation” roughly goes as
Broader is brighter.

In other words, supernovae with broader light-curves have a larger intrinsic luminosity. One way to quantify this relation is to use a “stretch” factor which is a (calibration) parameter that measures width of a light curve [Perlmutter et al. (1999)]; see the right panel of Fig. 1.1. By applying the correction based upon the Phillips relation, astronomers found that the intrinsic dispersion of SN, which is of order \( \sim 0.5 \) magnitudes, can be brought down to \( \delta m \sim 0.2 \) magnitudes once we correct each SN luminosity using its stretch factor. Note that the final dispersion in magnitudes corresponds to the error in distance of \( \delta d_L/d_L = (\ln(10)/5) \delta m \simeq 0.5 \delta m \sim 0.1 \).

The Phillips relation was the second key ingredient that enabled SN Ia to achieve precision needed to probe contents of the universe accurately.

The third key invention was the development of techniques to correct SN magnitudes for dimming by dust, or 'extinction', out of multi-color observation of SN light [Riess et al. (1996a,b)]. Such corrections are an important part of SN cosmology to this day [Jha et al. (2007); Guy et al. (2007); Conley et al. (2008)].

Finally, the fourth and perhaps most important ingredient for the discovery of dark energy was development and application of charge-coupled devices (CCDs) in observational astronomy. Both teams of SN hunters used the CCDs, which had originally been installed at telescopes at Kitt Peak and Cerro Tololo [Kirshner (2009)].

Some of the early results came out in the period of 1995-1997; however these results were based on a handful of high-redshift SN and had large errors (e.g. [Perlmutter et al. (1997); Garnavich et al. (1998); Perlmutter et al. (1998)]).

The discovery of dark energy. The definitive results, based on \( \sim 50 \) SN by either team that combined the nearby sample previously observed by the Calán/Tololo collaboration and the newly acquired and crucial sample of high-redshift SN, came out soon thereafter [Riess et al. (1998); Perlmutter et al. (1999)]. The results of the two teams agreed, and indicated that more distant SN are dimmer than would be expected in a matter-only universe; see Fig. 1.2. In other words, the universe’s expansion rate is speeding up, contrary to expectation from the matter-dominated universe with any amount of matter and regardless of curvature.

Phrased yet differently, the data indicate universe that is accelerating – that is presence of a new component with strongly negative pressure. This can easily be seen from the acceleration equation, which is one of Einstein’s equations applied to the case of the homogeneous universe

\[
\frac{\ddot{a}}{a} = -\frac{4\pi G}{3} (\rho + 3p) = -\frac{4\pi G}{3} (\rho_M + \rho_{DE} + 3p_{DE})
\]  \hspace{1cm} (1.3)

where \( \rho \) and \( p \) are the energy density and pressure of components in the universe, assuming they are matter and a new component we call dark energy (radiation is negligible relative to matter at redshifts much less than \( \sim 10^3 \), and the pressure of matter is always negligible). If the universe is accelerating, then \( \ddot{a} > 0 \), and the only
way it can be is if the pressure of the new component is strongly negative. Phrased in terms of equation of state, $w \equiv p_{DE}/\rho_{DE} < -1/3$ regardless of the density of matter $\rho_M$.

The discovery of the accelerating universe with supernovae was a watershed event in modern cosmology, and the aforementioned two discovery papers are among the most cited physics papers of all time. This component that makes the universe accelerate was soon named “dark energy” by the theoretical cosmologist Michael Turner [Huterer and Turner (1999)].

The SN data are illustrated in Fig. 1.2, where upwards of 500 SN measurements from the Union2 compilation [Amanullah et al. (2010)] have been binned in redshift. The blue line shows a model that fits the data, where acceleration happens at late epochs in the history of the universe (i.e. starting a few billion years ago, and billions of years after the Big Bang). For illustration, we also show three representative matter-only models in green, with open, closed and flat geometry, neither of which fits the data well. Finally, the red curve shows a model that always exhibits acceleration, and it too does not fit the SN data which show a characteristic “turnover” in the magnitude vs. redshift plot.
Fig. 1.2 Evidence for transition from deceleration in the past to acceleration today. The blue line shows a model that fits the data, where acceleration happens at late epochs in the history of the universe (i.e. starting a few billion years ago, and billions of years after the Big Bang). For illustration, we also show three representative matter-only models in green, with open, closed and flat geometry. Finally, the red curve shows a model that always exhibits acceleration, and it too does not fit the SN data which show a characteristic “turnover” in the magnitude vs. redshift plot. The plot uses binned data from the Union2 compilation [Amanullah et al. (2010)] containing 557 SN.

**Observable and inferred quantities with SN Ia.** The luminosity distance \(d_L\) is related to the cosmological parameters via

\[
d_L = (1+z) \frac{H_0^{-1}}{\sqrt{\Omega_K}} \sinh \left[ \sqrt{\Omega_K} \int_0^z \frac{dz'}{\sqrt{\Omega_M(1+z)^3 + \Omega_{DE}(1+z)^{(3(1+w))} + \Omega_R(1+z)^3 + \Omega_K(1+z)^2}} \right]
\]

where the key term in this expression featuring \(\sinh(x)\) for \(\Omega_K > 0\) (open universe) effectively turns into \(\sin(x)\) (closed universe; \(\Omega_K < 0\)) or just \(x\) (flat universe; \(\Omega_K = 0\)). Here \(\Omega_M\), \(\Omega_R\), and \(\Omega_{DE}\) are the energy densities of matter (visible plus dark), radiation (mainly cosmic microwave background (CMB) photons), and dark energy relative to critical density, and \(\Omega_K = 1 - \Omega_M - \Omega_R - \Omega_{DE}\).

Now Eq. (1.2) can be rewritten as

\[
m \equiv 5 \log_{10}(H_0d_L) + \mathcal{M}
\]

where the "script-M" factor is defined as

\[
\mathcal{M} \equiv M - 5 \log_{10} \left( \frac{H_0}{\text{Mpc}^{-1}} \right) + 25.
\]

Note that \(\mathcal{M}\) is a dummy parameter that captures two uncertain quantities: the absolute magnitude (i.e. intrinsic luminosity) of a supernova, \(M\), and the Hub-
The Accelerating Universe

Fig. 1.3 Magnification distribution for lensing of a supernova at $z = 1.5$ in the usual ΛCDM cosmology (black curve). Other curves show how the distribution both narrows and becomes more gaussian as we average over more SN. Adopted from Holz and Linder (2006).

ble constant $H_0$. We typically do not know $M$, and we need to marginalize (i.e. integrate) over all values of this parameter in the cosmological analysis.

The situation is now clear: astronomers measure $m$, which is inferred, for example, from the flux at the peak of the light curve. Then they measure the redshift of SN host galaxy. With the sufficient number of SN measurements, they can marginalize over the parameter $M$ and be left with, effectively, measurements of luminosity distance vs. redshift. A plot of either $m(z)$ or $d_L(z)$ is called the Hubble diagram.

These results have been greatly strengthened since, with many hundreds of SN Ia currently indicating same results, but with smaller errors, compared to the original 1998-99 papers Knop et al. (2003); Riess et al. (2004); Astier et al. (2006); Riess et al. (2007); Wood-Vasey et al. (2007); Kessler et al. (2009); Hicken et al. (2009); Amanullah et al. (2010)]. Meanwhile, other cosmological probes have come in with results confirming the SN results (see the right panel of Fig. 1.4).

Systematic errors. Systematic errors may creep up in SN observations, and stand in the way of making SN Ia a more precise tool of cosmology. Here we list a few prominent sources of error, and ways in which they are controlled:

- Extinction: is it possible that SN appear dimmer simply because of extinction by dust particles scattered between us and distant SN? Fortunately there are ways to stringently control (and correct for) extinction, by observing SN in different wavelength bands. But also, if extinction were to be responsible for the appearance of dimming, then we would expect more distant SN to appear uniformly more dim. Moreover, a “turnover” in the SN Hubble diagram has been clearly observed (e.g. Riess et al. (2004)) indicating that the universe is matter dominated at high $z$. The turnover
cannot easily be explained by extinction.

- **Evolution:** is it possible that SN evolve, so that we are seeing a different population at higher redshift that is intrinsically dimmer (violating the assumption of a standard candle)? SN Ia do not own a “cosmic clock”; rather, they respond to their local environment, in addition to being ruled by the physics of accretion/explosion. So, by observing various signatures, in particular in SN spectra, researchers can identify local environmental conditions, and even go so far to compare only like-to-like SN (resulting, potentially, in several Hubble diagrams, one for each subspecies). First such comparisons have been made recently.

- **Typing:** is it possible that non-Ia supernovae have crept in the samples used for dark energy analysis? This question is rather easy to answer, as SN Ia possess characteristic spectral lines which uniquely identify these SN. Accurate typing, however, becomes more challenging for SN surveys which cannot afford to take spectra of all SN; upcoming and future imaging surveys such as the Dark Energy Survey (DES) or Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) are examples. For those surveys, one will have to apply sophisticated tests based on photometric information alone to establish whether or not a given supernova is type Ia.

- **K-corrections:** As SN Ia are observed at larger and larger redshifts, their light is shifted to longer wavelengths. Since astronomical observations are normally made in fixed band passes on Earth, corrections need to be applied to account for the differences caused by the spectrum shifting within these band passes, and error in these corrections needs to be tightly controlled.

- **Gravitational lensing:** distant SN are gravitationally lensed by matter along the line of sight, making them magnified or demagnified, and thus appearing brighter or dimmer. The lensing effect goes roughly as $z^2$ and is non-negligible only for high-z SN; $z \gtrsim 1.2$. The mean magnification is zero (owing to a theorem that the total light is conserved), but the distribution is skewed, meaning that most SN get demagnified but occasional ones get strongly magnified. The way to protect against biases due to gravitational lensing is to seek “safety in numbers” [Holz and Linder (2005)]: simply put, if we collect enough SN at any given redshift (in practice, ~ 50 SN per $\Delta z = 0.1$), the effects of gravitational lensing will average down to near zero; see Fig. [1.3]

At the present time the SN systematic errors are well controlled, and are comparable to the statistical errors. The factor that gives undisputed credence to the result that the universe is accelerating, however, is confirmation with the galaxy clustering (the baryon acoustic oscillations, to be described later in this article), and the CMB constraints; see Fig. [1.4]. In fact, even if one completely drops the SN constraints from the analysis, the combination of the galaxy clustering and the
CMB firmly points to the existence of dark energy!

### 1.3 Parametrizations of dark energy

**Introduction.** The absence of a consensus model for cosmic acceleration presents a challenge in trying to connect theory with observations. For dark energy, the equation-of-state parameter $w$ provides a useful phenomenological description; because it is the ratio of pressure to energy density, it is also closely connected to the underlying physics. On the practical side, determining a free function is more difficult than measuring parameters. We now review a variety of formalisms that have been used to describe and constrain dark energy.

First, let us recall some basics. From continuity equation, $\dot{\rho} + 3H(p + \rho) = 0$, we can calculate the dark energy density as a function of redshift for an arbitrary equation of state $w(z)$$

$$
\rho_{\text{DE}}(z) = \rho_{\text{DE},0} \exp \left( 3 \int_0^z (1 + w(z')) d\ln(1 + z') \right).
$$

(1.7)

**Parametrizations.** The simplest parameterization of dark energy is

$$
w = \text{const}.
$$

(1.8)
This form fully describes vacuum energy \((w = -1)\) or topological defects \((w = -N/3\) with \(N\) an integer dimension of the defect – 0 for monopoles, 1 for strings, 2 for domain walls). Together with \(\Omega_{\text{DE}}\) and \(\Omega_{\text{M}}\), \(w\) provides a 3-parameter description of the dark-energy sector (2 parameters if flatness is assumed). However, it does not describe scalar field or modified gravity models which generically have a time-varying \(w\).

A number of two-parameter descriptions of \(w\) have been explored in the literature, e.g., \(w(z) = w_0 + w'z\) \([\text{Cooray and Huterer (1999)}]\). For low redshift they are all essentially equivalent, but for large \(z\), some lead to unrealistic behavior, e.g., \(w \ll -1\) or \(\gg 1\). The parametrization \([\text{Linder (2003)}]\)

\[
\begin{align*}
  w(a) &= w_0 + w_a (1 - a) = w_0 + w_a \frac{z}{1+z} \\
  &\quad (1.9)
\end{align*}
\]

where \(a = 1/(1+z)\) is the scale factor, avoids this problem, fits many scalar field and some modified gravity behaviors, and leads to the most commonly used description of dark energy, namely \((\Omega_{\text{DE}}, \Omega_{\text{M}}, w_0, w_a)\). The energy density is then

\[
\rho_{\text{DE}}(a) = \rho_{\text{DE},0} a^{3(1+w_0+w_a)} e^{-3(1-a)w_a}. 
\]

(1.10)

More general expressions have been proposed. However one problem with introducing more parameters is that additional parameters make the equation of state very difficult to measure, while the parametrizations are still \textit{ad hoc} and not well motivated from either theory or measurements’ point of view.

Finally, it is useful to mention one simple way to elucidate redshift where the measurement accuracy of the equation of state, for a given survey is highest. Two-parameter descriptions of \(w(z)\) that are linear in the parameters entail the existence of a “pivot” redshift \(z_p\) at which the measurements of the two parameters are uncorrelated and the error in \(w_p \equiv w(z_p)\) reaches a minimum; see the left panel of Fig. 1.5. Writing the equation of state in Eq. (1.9) in the form

\[
\begin{align*}
  w(a) &= w_p + (a_p - a)w_a \\
  &\quad (1.11)
\end{align*}
\]

it is easy to translate constraints from the \((w_0, w_a)\) to \((w_p, w_a)\) parametrization, as well as determine \(a_p\) (or \(z_p\)), for any particular data set. This is useful, as measurements of the equation of state at the pivot point might provide most useful information in ruling out models (e.g. ruling out \(w = -1\)).

**Direct reconstruction.** Another approach is to directly invert the redshift-distance relation \(r(z)\) measured from SN data to obtain the redshift dependence of \(w(z)\) in terms of the first and second derivatives of the comoving distance \([\text{Huterer and Turner (1999); Nakamura and Chiba (1999); Starobinsky (1998)}]\),

\[
1 + w(z) = \frac{1+z}{3} \frac{3H_0^2\Omega_M (1+z)^2 + 2(d^2 r/dz^2)/(dr/dz)^3}{H_0^2\Omega_M (1+z)^3 - (dr/dz)^2}. 
\]

(1.12)
Assuming that dark energy is due to a single rolling scalar field, the scalar potential $V(\phi)$ can also be reconstructed. Others have suggested reconstructing the dark energy density \cite{Wang and Mukherjee (2004), Wang and Tegmark (2005)}:

$$\rho_{DE}(z) = \frac{3}{8\pi G} \left[ \frac{1}{(dr/dz)^2} - \Omega_M H_0^2 (1+z)^3 \right]. \quad (1.13)$$

Direct reconstruction is the only approach that is truly model-independent. However, it comes at a price - taking derivatives of noisy data. In practice, one must fit the distance data with a smooth function, and the fitting process introduces systematic biases. While a variety of methods have been pursued \cite{Huterer and Turner (2001), Weller and Albrecht (2002)}, it appears that direct reconstruction is too challenging and not robust even with SN Ia data of excellent quality \cite{Holsclaw et al. (2010)}. And while the reconstruction of $\rho_{DE}(z)$ is easier since it involves only first derivatives of distance, $w(z)$ is more useful a quantity since it contains more information about the nature of dark energy than $\rho_{DE}(z)$. \cite{For a review of dark energy reconstruction methods, see Sahni and Starobinsky (2006).}

**Principal components.** The cosmological function that we are trying to determine — $w(z)$, $\rho_{DE}(z)$, or $H(z)$ — can be expanded in terms of principal components, a set of functions that are uncorrelated and orthogonal by construction \cite{Huterer and Starkman (2003)}. In this approach, the data determine which components are measured best.

For example, suppose we parametrize $w(z)$ in terms of piecewise constant values $w_i$ ($i = 1, \ldots, N$), each defined over a small redshift range $(z_i, z_i + \Delta z)$. In the limit of small $\Delta z$ this recovers the shape of an arbitrary dark energy history (in practice, $N \gtrsim 20$ is sufficient), but the estimates of the $w_i$ from a given dark energy probe will be very noisy. Principal Component Analysis extracts from those noisy estimates the best-measured features of $w(z)$. We find the eigenvectors $e_i(z)$ of the inverse covariance matrix for the parameters $w_i$ and the corresponding eigenvalues $\lambda_i$. The equation-of-state parameter is then expressed as

$$1 + w(z) = \sum_{i=1}^{N} \alpha_i e_i(z), \quad (1.14)$$

where the $e_i(z)$ are the principal components. The coefficients $\alpha_i$, which can be computed via the orthonormality condition

$$\alpha_i = \int (1 + w(z)) e_i(z) dz \quad (1.15)$$

are each determined with an accuracy $1/\sqrt{\lambda_i}$. Several of these components are shown for a future SN survey in the right panel of Fig. 1.5, while measurements of the first six PCs of the equation of state from the current (and predictions for future) data are shown in Fig. 1.6.

There are multiple advantages of using the PCs of dark energy (of either the equation of state $w(z)$, or of $\rho_{DE}(z)$ or $H(z)$):
Fig. 1.5  Left panel: Example of forecast constraints on \( w(z) \), assuming \( w(z) = w_0 + w'z \). The “pivot” redshift, \( z_p \approx 0.3 \), is where \( w(z) \) is best determined. Adopted from Huterer and Turner (2001). Right panel: The four best-determined (labelled 1-4) and two worst-determined (labelled 49, 50) principal components of \( w(z) \) for a future SN Ia survey such as SNAP, with several thousand SN in the redshift range \( z = 0 \) to \( z = 1.7 \). Adopted from Huterer and Starkman (2003).

- The method is as close to “model independent” as one can realistically get;
- Data tells us what we measure and how well; there are no arbitrary parametrizations imposed;
- One can use this approach to design a survey that is most sensitive to the dark energy equation-of-state parameter in some specific redshift interval...
- ...or to study how many independent parameters are measured well by a combination of cosmological probes (i.e. how many PCs have \( \sigma(\alpha_i) \) or \( \sigma(\alpha_i)/\alpha_i \) less than some threshold value [de Putter and Linder (2008)].

There are a variety of useful extensions of this method, including uncorrelated measurements of the equation-of-state parameters in redshift intervals [Huterer and Cooray (2005)].

**Figures of Merit.** We finally discuss the so-called figures of merit (FoMs) for dark energy experiments. A FoM is a number, or collection of numbers, that serve as simple and quantifiable metrics by which to evaluate the accuracy of constraints on dark energy parameters from current and proposed experiments. For example, marginalized accuracy in the (constant) equation of state, \( w \), could serve as a figure of merit – since a large FoM is “good”, we could simply define FoM = \( 1/\sigma_w \), or \( 1/\sigma_w^m \) where \( m \) is some positive power.

The most commonly discussed figure of merit is that proposed by the Dark Energy Task Force [Albrecht et al. (2006), though this proposal goes back to Huterer and Turner (2001)], which is essentially inverse area in the \( w_0-w_a \) plane. For uncorrelated \( w_0 \) and \( w_a \) this would be \( \propto 1/(\sigma_{w_0}\times\sigma_{w_a}) \); because the two are typically
The Accelerating Universe

1.4 Other probes of dark energy

In addition to type Ia supernovae, there are several other important probes of dark energy. These probes operate using very different physics, and have very different systematic errors.
The principal probes, in addition to SN Ia, are baryon acoustic oscillations, weak gravitational lensing, and galaxy cluster abundance. We will now discuss each of those in turn. Additionally, there are secondary probes of dark energy — ones that might be useful for DE, but are currently not as well developed as the primary probes. We will discuss these briefly as well.

**Baryon acoustic oscillations (BAO).** BAO refers to the signature of acoustic oscillations which are imprinted into the present-day correlations of galaxies by baryonic physics at the epoch of recombination (for a popular review, see Eisenstein (2005)). Measurements of the length scale characteristic of these oscillations, roughly $100\,h^{-1}\text{Mpc}$ comoving, enable inferring the angular diameter distance out to galaxies probed in a survey, and thus a robust way to measure the energy contents of the universe.

Note that the power spectrum of density perturbations in dark matter, $P(k)$, is mainly sensitive to the density in matter (relative to critical), $\Omega_M$. If we assume a flat universe (either motivated by the inflationary “prior”, or by recent data), then $\Omega_{DE} = 1 - \Omega_M$ and measurements of the broad-band shape of the power spectrum can get the dark energy density, but not the equation of state $w$.

However, the small ($\sim 10\%$) oscillations in the power spectrum provide much more information about DE. The BAO data determine the ratio of the sound horizon at last scattering to the quantity $D_V(z) \equiv [zr^2(z)/H(z)]^{1/3}$ at the measured redshift; given that the sound horizon is independently determined rather accu-
rately, the BAO approximately provides measurement of distance to the redshift where the galaxies reside. For example, Percival et al. (2010) analyze combined data from 2-degree Field Galaxy Redshift Survey and the Sloan Digital Sky Survey which measure the clustering at mean redshifts \( z = 0.2 \) and \( z = 0.35 \) respectively.

Key to successful application of baryon acoustic oscillations are redshift measurements of galaxies in the sample. We need the galaxy redshifts in order to know where to “put them” in three dimensions, and thus to reconstruct the precise length scale at which the slight excess of clustering occurs. Another systematic that needs to be understood is the bias of galaxies in the sample (whose clustering we measure) to the underlying dark matter (whose clustering we can predict); if the bias has scale-dependent features on scales of \( \sim 100 \text{Mpc} \), then the systematic errors creep in. Future surveys that plan to utilize this method typically propose measuring redshifts of millions of galaxies, and the goal is to go deep (\( z \sim 1 \), and beyond) and have wide angular coverage as well.

Let us finally say a few words about the measured quantity, the power spectrum. In the dimensionless form, it is given by

\[
\Delta^2(k) = \frac{k^4 P(k)}{2\pi^2} = A \frac{1}{25 \Omega_M^2} \left( \frac{k}{k_{\text{piv}}} \right)^{n-1} \left( \frac{k}{H_0} \right)^4 D(z) T^2(k) T_{\text{nl}}(k), \tag{1.18}
\]

where \( A \) is the normalization of the power spectrum (for the concordance cosmology, \( A \approx 4 \times 10^{-9} \)), \( k_{\text{piv}} \) is the “pivot” around which we compute the spectral index \( n \) \( (k_{\text{piv}} = 0.002 \text{Mpc}^{-1} \) is often used); \( D(z) \) is the linear growth of perturbations normalized to unity today; \( T(k) \) is the transfer function that describes evolution of fluctuations inside the horizon and across the matter-radiation transition epoch and which encodes the BAOs; \( T_{\text{nl}} \) is a prescription for the nonlinear power spectrum which is relevant at small scales (e.g. \( k \gtrsim 0.2 \text{hMpc}^{-1} \) today). Notice that \( \Delta^2 \propto k^{n+3} \), and thus \( P(k) \propto k^n \), with \( n \approx 1 \), was predicted by Harrison, Zeldovich and Peebles in the late 1960s; this was a decade before inflation was proposed, and about three decades before measurements confirmed that \( n \approx 1 \)!

**Weak gravitational lensing.** The gravitational bending of light by structures in the Universe distorts or shears images of distant galaxies; see the left panel of Fig. 1.8. This distortion allows the distribution of dark matter and its evolution with time to be measured, thereby probing the influence of dark energy on the growth of structure (for a detailed review, see e.g. Bartelmann and Schneider (2001); for brief reviews, see Hoekstra and Jain (2008) and Huterer (2010)).

Gravitational lensing produces distortions of images of background galaxies. These distortions can be described as mapping between the source plane \((S)\) and image plane \((I)\)

\[
\delta x^S_i = A_{ij} \delta x^I_j, \tag{1.19}
\]

where \( \delta x \) are the displacement vectors in the two planes and \( A \) is the distortion matrix

\[
A = \begin{pmatrix}
1 - \kappa - \gamma_1 & -\gamma_2 \\
-\gamma_2 & 1 - \kappa + \gamma_1
\end{pmatrix}. \tag{1.20}
\]
The deformation is described by the convergence $\kappa$ and complex shear $(\gamma_1, \gamma_2)$; the total shear is defined as $|\gamma| = \sqrt{\gamma_1^2 + \gamma_2^2}$. We are interested in the weak lensing limit, where $\kappa, |\gamma| \ll 1$. Magnification can be expressed in terms of $\kappa$ and $\gamma_1, 2$ as

$$\mu = \frac{1}{1 - \kappa^2 - |\gamma|^2} \approx 1 + 2\kappa + O(\kappa^2, \gamma^2), \quad (1.21)$$

where the second approximate relation holds in the weak lensing limit.

We can theoretically predict convergence and shear, given a sample of sources with known redshift distribution and cosmological parameter values. The convergence in any particular direction on the sky $\hat{n}$ is given by the integral along the line-of-sight

$$\kappa(\hat{n}, \chi) = \int_0^\chi W(\chi') \delta(\chi') \, d\chi', \quad (1.22)$$

where $\delta$ is the perturbation in matter energy density and $W(\chi)$ is the geometric weight function describing the lensing efficiency of foreground galaxies. The most efficient lenses lie about half-way between us and the source galaxies whose shapes we measure.

The statistical signal due to gravitational lensing by large-scale structure is termed “cosmic shear.” The cosmic shear field at a point in the sky is estimated by locally averaging the shapes of large numbers of distant galaxies. The primary statistical measure of the cosmic shear is the shear angular power spectrum measured as a function of source galaxy redshift $z_s$. (Additional information is obtained by measuring the correlations between shears at different redshifts or with foreground lensing galaxies.)
The convergence can be transformed into multipole space \( \kappa_{lm} = \int d\hat{n} \kappa(\hat{n}, \chi) Y^*_{lm}(\hat{n}) \), and the power spectrum is defined as the two-point correlation function (of convergence, in this case) \( \langle \kappa_{\ell m} \kappa_{\ell' m'} \rangle = \delta_{\ell \ell'} \delta_{m m'} P^\kappa_{\ell} \). The angular power spectrum is

\[
P^\kappa_\ell(z_s) \simeq P^\kappa_\ell(z_s) = \int_0^{z_s} \frac{dz}{H(z)d_A(z)} W(z)^2 P\left(k = \frac{\ell}{d_A(z)}; z\right),
\]

where \( \ell \) denotes the angular multipole, \( d_A(z) = (1 + z)^{-2} d_L(z) \) is the angular diameter distance, the weight function \( W(z) \) is the efficiency for lensing a population of source galaxies and is determined by the distance distributions of the source and lens galaxies, and \( P(k, z) \) is the usual power spectrum of density perturbations.

Notice the integral along the line of sight: essentially, weak lensing projects the density fluctuations between us and the galaxies whose shear we measure.

The dark-energy sensitivity of the shear angular power spectrum comes from two factors:

- **geometry** – the Hubble parameter, the angular-diameter distance, and the weight function \( W(z) \); and
- **growth of structure** – through the redshift evolution of the power spectrum \( P(k, z) \) (or more precisely, from the function \( D(z) \) in Eq. (1.18)).

The three-point correlation function of cosmic shear is also sensitive to dark energy, and provides important complementary information about dark energy (e.g. Takada and Jain (2004)).

The statistical uncertainty in measuring the shear power spectrum on large scales is

\[
\Delta P^\gamma_\ell = \sqrt{\frac{2}{(2\ell + 1) f_{\text{sky}}}} \left[ P^\gamma_\ell + \frac{\sigma^2(\gamma_i)}{n_{\text{eff}}} \right],
\]

where \( f_{\text{sky}} \) is the fraction of sky area covered by the survey (\( f_{\text{sky}} = 0.5 \) for half-sky, etc), \( \sigma^2(\gamma_i) \) is the variance in a single component of the (two-component) shear (this number is \( \sim 0.2 \) for typical measurements), and \( n_{\text{eff}} \) is the effective number density per steradian of galaxies with well-measured shapes. The first term in brackets dominates on large scales, and comes from sample variance (also known as cosmic variance) due to the fact that only a finite number of samples of structures are available in our universe. The second term dominates on small scales, and represents the shot-noise from the variance in galaxy ellipticities (“shape noise”) combined with a finite number of galaxies, hence the inverse proportionality to \( n_{\text{eff}} \).

The principal systematic errors in weak lensing measurements come from the limitations in measuring galaxy shapes accurately. There are also systematic uncertainties due to limited knowledge of the redshifts of source galaxies: because taking spectroscopic redshifts of most source galaxies will be impossible (they number in many millions), one has to rely to approximate photometric redshift techniques,
Clusters of galaxies. Galaxy clusters are the largest virialized objects in the Universe. Therefore, not only can they be observed, but also their number density can be predicted quite reliably, both analytically and from numerical simulations. Comparing these predictions to measurements from the large-area cluster surveys that extend to high redshift \( z \gtrsim 1 \) can provide precise constraints on the cosmic expansion history.

The absolute number of clusters in a survey of solid angle \( \Omega_{\text{survey}} \) centered at redshift \( z \) and in the shell of thickness \( \Delta z \) is given by

\[
N(z, \Delta z) = \Omega_{\text{survey}} \int_{z-\Delta z/2}^{z+\Delta z/2} n(z, M_{\text{min}}(z)) \frac{dV(z)}{d\Omega} dz,
\]

where \( M_{\text{min}} \) is the minimal mass of clusters in the survey (usually of order \( 10^{14} M_\odot \)). Note that knowledge of the minimal mass is extremely important, since the mass

Fig. 1.9 Left panel: Predicted cluster counts for a survey covering 4,000 sq. deg. that is sensitive to halos more massive than \( 2 \times 10^{14} M_\odot \), for 3 flat cosmological models with fixed \( \Omega_M = 0.3 \) and \( \sigma_8 = 0.9 \). Lower panel shows fractional differences between the models in terms of the estimated Poisson errors. From Mohr (2005). Right panel: Measured mass function \(- n(z, M_{\text{min}}(z)) \) – in our notation – from the 400 square degree survey of ROSAT clusters followed up by Chandra. Adopted from Vikhlinin et al. (2009).

where one gets redshift information from multiple-wavelength (i.e. multi-color) observations.

The right panel of Fig. 1.8 shows the dependence on the dark energy of the shear power spectrum and an indication of the statistical errors expected for a survey such as LSST, assuming a survey area of 15,000 sq. deg. and effective source galaxy density of \( n_{\text{eff}} = 30 \) galaxies per sq. arcmin, and divided into two radial slices. Current surveys cover a more modest \( \sim 100 \) square degrees, with a comparable or slightly lower galaxy density. Note that the proportionality of errors to \( f_{\text{sky}}^{-1/2} \) means that large sky coverage is at a premium.
The mass function $n(z, M_{\text{min}}(z))$ is exponentially decreasing with $M$, so that most of the contribution comes from a small range of masses just above $M_{\text{min}}$. The mass function is key to theoretical predictions, and it is usually obtained from a combination of analytic and numerical results; the original mass function used in cosmology is the 36-year old Press-Schechter mass function [Press and Schechter (1974)], and the more recent work provides fitting functions to simulations’ results that are accurate to several percent [Tinker et al. (2008)]. Furthermore, the volume element can easily be related to comoving distance $r(z)$ and the expansion rate $H(z)$ via $dV(z)/(d\Omega\, dz) = r^2(z)/H(z)$, and it is known exactly for a given cosmological model.

The sensitivity of cluster counts to dark energy arises – as in the case of weak lensing – from two factors:

- **geometry**, the term $dV(z)/(d\Omega\, dz)$ in Eq. (1.25) is the comoving volume element
- **growth of structure**, the mass function $n(z, M_{\text{min}}(z))$ depends on the evolution of density perturbations.

The mass function’s near-exponential dependence upon the power spectrum is at the root of the power of clusters to probe dark energy. More specifically, the mass function explicitly depends on the amplitude of mass fluctuations smoothed on some scale $R$

$$
\sigma^2(R, z) = \int_0^\infty \Delta^2(k, z) \left(\frac{3j_1(kR)}{kR}\right)^2 d\ln k
$$

(1.26)

where $\Delta^2(k, z)$ is the dimensionless power spectrum defined in Eq. (1.18), while $R$ is traditionally taken to be $\sim 8\, h^{-1}\text{Mpc}$ at $z = 0$ and roughly corresponds to the typical size of a galaxy cluster. The term in angular parentheses is the Fourier transform of the top-hat window that averages out the perturbations over regions of radius $R$.

Systematic errors in cluster counts mainly concern uncertainty in how to convert from an observable quantity (X-ray light, gravitational lensing signal, etc) to the mass of a cluster. Current best estimates of mass are at the level of several tens of percent per cluster, and there is ongoing effort to find observable quantities, or combinations thereof, that are tightly correlated with mass.

The left panel of Fig. 1.9 shows the sensitivity to the dark energy equation-of-state parameter of the expected cluster counts for the South Pole Telescope and the Dark Energy Survey. At low to intermediate redshift, $z < 0.6$, the differences are dominated by the volume element; at higher redshift, the counts are most sensitive to the growth rate of perturbations. The right panel shows measurements of the mass function using recent X-ray observations of clusters.

**Summary of principal probes.** Figure 1.4 adopted from Amanullah et al. (2010), summarizes constraints in the $\Omega_M-\Omega_\Lambda$ and $\Omega_M-w$ planes (the latter assuming...
Table 1.1 Comparison of dark energy probes, adopted from Frieman et al. (2008). CDM refers to Cold Dark Matter paradigm, FoM is the Figure-of-Merit for dark energy surveys defined in the Dark Energy Task Force (DETF) report, whileSZ refers to Sunyaev-Zeldovich effect.

| Method | Strengths | Weaknesses | Systematics |
|--------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| WL     | growth+geometry, Large FoM | CDM assumptions | Shear systematics, Photo-z |
| SN     | pure geometry, mature | complex physics | evolution, dust extinction |
| BAO    | pure geometry, low systematics | coarse-grained information | bias, non-linearity, redshift distortions |
| CL     | growth+geometry, X-ray+SZ+optical | CDM assumptions | mass-observable, selection function |

a flat universe) from CMB, BAO and SN Ia. In Table 1.1 we list the principal strengths and weaknesses of the four principal probes of DE. Control of systematic errors — observational, instrumental and theoretical — is crucial for these probes to realize their intrinsic power in constraining dark energy.

**Role of the CMB.** While the CMB provides precise cosmological constraints, by itself it has little power to probe dark energy. The reason is simple: the CMB provides a single snapshot of the Universe at a time when dark energy contributed a tiny part of the total energy density (a part in $10^9$ if dark energy is the vacuum energy, or when $w = -1$). Nevertheless, the CMB plays a critical supporting role by determining other cosmological parameters, such as the spatial curvature and matter density, to high precision, thereby considerably strengthening the power of the methods discussed above. Essentially, what we get from the CMB is a single measurement of the angular diameter distance to recombination, $d_A(z \approx 1000)$ — therefore it provides a single very accurate measurement of the parameters $\Omega_M$, $\Omega_{DE}$ (if we do not assume a flat universe), and $w$ (or $w(z)$ if we don’t assume that the equation of state is constant). So, while the CMB alone suffers from degeneracy between the DE parameters, it is indispensable in breaking parameter degeneracies present in other cosmological probes; see Frieman et al. (2003) for more details. Data from the Planck CMB mission, launched in 2009, will therefore strongly complement those from dark energy surveys.

**Secondary probes.** There are a number of secondary probes of dark energy; here we review some of them.

- The Integrated Sachs-Wolfe (ISW) effect provided a confirmation of cosmic acceleration. ISW impacts the large-angle structure of the CMB anisotropy, but low-$\ell$ multipoles are subject to large cosmic variance, limiting the power of this probe. Nevertheless, ISW is of interest because it is able to reveal the imprint of large-scale dark-energy perturbations [Hu and Scranton (2004)].
Gravitational radiation from inspiraling binary neutron stars or black holes can, if detected in the future, serve as “standard sirens” to measure absolute distances [Holz and Hughes (2005)]. If their redshifts can be determined, then they could be used to probe dark energy through the Hubble diagram [Dalal et al. (2006)].

Long-duration gamma-ray bursts have been proposed as standardizable candles [Schaefer (2003)], but their utility as cosmological distance indicators that could be competitive with or complementary to SN Ia has yet to be established.

The optical depth for strong gravitational lensing (multiple imaging) of QSOs or radio sources has been proposed and used to provide independent evidence for dark energy, though these measurements depend on modeling the density profiles of lens galaxies.

The redshift drift effect (also known as the Sandage-Loeb effect [Sandage (1962); Loeb (1998)]) – the redshift change of an object measured using extremely high-resolution spectroscopy over a period of 10 years or more – may some day be useful in constraining the expansion history at higher redshift, $2 \lesssim z \lesssim 5$ [Corasaniti et al. (2007)].

Polarization measurements from distant galaxy clusters – which probe the quadrupole of the CMB radiation at the epoch when the cluster light was emitted, and therefore the gravitational potential at that epoch – in principle provide a sensitive probe of the growth function and hence dark energy [Cooray et al. (2004)].

The relative ages of galaxies at different redshifts, if they can be determined reliably, provide a measurement of $dz/dt$ and, from

$$t(z) = \int_0^{t(z)} dt' = \int_z^{\infty} \frac{dz'}{(1 + z')H(z')} ,$$

measure the expansion history directly [Jimenez and Loeb (2002)].

1.5 The accelerating universe: summary

There are the five important things to know about dark energy:

1. Dark energy has negative pressure. It can be described with its energy density relative to critical today $\Omega_{DE}$, and equation of state $w \equiv p_{DE}/\rho_{DE}$; the cosmological constant (or vacuum energy) has $w = -1$ precisely and at all times. More general explanations for dark energy may have constant or time dependent equation of state. Assuming constant $w$, current constraints roughly give $w \approx -1 \pm 0.1$. Measuring the equation of state (and its time dependence) may help understand the nature of dark energy, and is a key goal of modern cosmology.
Fig. 1.10 Current and future figures of merit (FoM) for dark energy surveys, based on the principal-component (PC) based FoM from Eq. (1.17). Top panel: PC figures of merit $\text{FoM}^{(\text{PC})}_n$ with forecasted uncertainties for a combination of planned and ongoing space telescopes SNAP(SN)+Planck and with measured uncertainties for already completed surveys Union+WMAP. Bottom panel: Ratios of $\text{FoM}^{(\text{PC})}_n$ forecasts to current values. In both panels, point types indicate different quintessence model classes: flat (solid points) or non-flat (open points), either with (squares) or without (circles) early dark energy. Adopted from Mortonson et al. (2010).

(2) The accelerating universe quenches gravitational collapse of large structures and suppresses the growth of density perturbation: whenever dark energy dominates, structures do not grow, essentially because the expansion is too rapid.

(3) Dark energy comes to dominate the density of the universe only recently, at $z \lesssim 1$. At earlier epochs, dark energy density is small relative to matter density.

(4) Dark energy is spatially smooth. It affects both the geometry (that is, distances in the universe) and the growth of structure (that is, clustering and abundance of galaxies and clusters of galaxies).

(5) Dark energy can be probed using a variety of cosmological probes that measure geometry (i.e. the expansion history of the universe) and the growth of structure. Control of systematic errors in these cosmological probes is key to their success in measuring the properties of dark energy.
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