

ERC Starting Grant



The dynamics of black holes: testing the limits of Einstein's theory

DyBHo

Principal Investigator Vitor Cardoso
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From astrophysics to high-energy physics and quantum gravity, black holes (BHs) have acquired an ever increasing role in fundamental physics, and are now part of the terminology of many important branches of theoretical and observational physics. From an astrophysical perspective, it has been established that supermassive BHs lurk at the center of many galaxies and provide fertile ground for stellar growth and evolution. Millions of stellar-mass BHs populate the galaxies, and power violent processes such as γ -ray bursts, etc. In high-energy physics, the gauge/gravity duality has created a powerful framework for the study of strongly coupled gauge theories and found applications in connection with the experimental program on heavy ion collisions at RHIC [?] and LHC [?, ?], among many others. As emphasized by Maldacena and Witten [?, ?], BHs play a special role in the duality: confinement in QCD may be related via the Hawking-Page [?] phase transition to BHs in anti-de Sitter (AdS).

Given the central role that BHs have been claiming in physics, a major task for theoreticians is to understand processes in which they are involved. With the advent of techniques to evolve BH spacetimes numerically, the field is undergoing a phase transition from a promising branch of general relativity to one of the most exciting fields in 21st century research, one that will open up unprecedented opportunities to expand and test our understanding of fundamental physics and the universe.

It is therefore the aim of this project to evolve numerically BHs in generic backgrounds, in a fully non-linear framework. We intend to generalize all the machinery developed in the last 30 years for asymptotically flat, $(3 + 1)$ dimensional spacetimes to other geometries and field equations. This will allow a number of fundamental questions to be tackled, from tests of the cosmic censorship (do event horizons always form to cloth singular behavior in the geometry?) to an understanding of the stability and phase diagrams of these objects and how different field equations can impact on gravitational-wave emission and BH properties.