

Double field theory and non-geometry

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- 1 Bibliography
- 2 T-duality
- 3 A brief look at non-geometry
- 4 Double field theory
- 5 The DFT action
- 6 Fluxes and non-geometry
- 7 Geometry of DFT
- 8 Beyond supergravity

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DFT based on a variety of fields:

- Phys.Lett. B242 (1990), Nucl.Phys. B350 (1991), Nucl.Phys. B335 (1990), hep-th/93002036, hep-th/9305073 (original ideas of A. Tseytlin, M. Duff and W. Siegel)
- arXiv:1006.4823 (basis of many recent DFT papers)
- arXiv:1305.1907, arXiv:1306.2643 (reviews of DFT)
- N. Hitchin, M. Gualtieri, D. Waldram et al for generalised geometry

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A brief review of T-duality

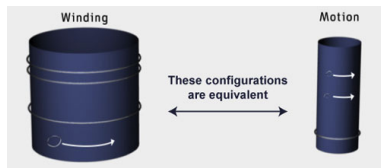
String theory is a theory of extended objects.

String theorists like compact spaces.

Strings on compact spaces

- can have momentum along compact directions
- can wind compact directions (unlike point particles)

String theory is invariant under **exchange of momentum and winding**.



This is known as T-duality.

T-duality changes the radius of the compact direction, e.g. small circle and big circle (and swaps IIA and IIB).

10-D SUGRA background transforms according to Buscher rules.

Simplest example: massless NS-NS fields (common bosonic sector of type IIA and IIB), $g_{(\mu\nu)}$, $B_{[\mu\nu]}$, ϕ .

Buscher rules for T-duality along y are

$$\begin{aligned}g_{yy} &\rightarrow \frac{1}{g_{yy}}, & B_{yi} &\rightarrow -\frac{g_{yi}}{g_{yy}}, \\g_{iy} &\rightarrow \frac{B_{yi}}{g_{yy}}, & B_{ij} &\rightarrow B_{ij} - \frac{g_{yi}B_{yj} - g_{yj}B_{yi}}{g_{yy}}, \\g_{ij} &\rightarrow g_{ij} - \frac{g_{iy}g_{jy} - B_{iy}B_{jy}}{g_{yy}}, & \phi &\rightarrow \phi - \frac{1}{2} \ln |g_{yy}|.\end{aligned}\tag{1}$$

T-duality: Key points

- String spectrum & partition function remains invariant under T-duality.
- Compactified string (SUGRA) solutions are mapped into each other under T-duality.
- T-dualities form a symmetry of SUGRA actions which is hidden in standard formulation.
- These symmetries form the group $O(D, D)$ for D commuting Killing vectors.
- T-duality is inherently stringy: arises from extended nature of string.

Some questions

Why do these groups appear and do they have a fundamental role in string theory (M-theory)?

What is the role of isometries?

What can we learn about string theory / SUGRA?

Can we get viable phenomenological string models?
e.g. deSitter / inflation, moduli stabilisation

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A brief look at non-geometry

Toy model.

a) Consider flat T^3 with $H = dB$ flux:

$$ds^2 = dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2, \quad B_{yz} = Nx. \quad (2)$$

b) T-duality along y gives **twisted torus** :

$$ds^2 = dx^2 + dy^2 + (dz + Nx dy)^2. \quad B_{yz} = 0. \quad (3)$$

As $x \rightarrow x + 2\pi$, $z \rightarrow z - 2\pi Ny$.

c) A further T-duality along z gives **non-geometry**:

$$ds^2 = \frac{1}{1 + N^2 x^2} (dz^2 + dy^2) + dx^2, \quad B_{yz} = \frac{Nx}{1 + N^2 x^2}. \quad (4)$$

As $x \rightarrow x + 2\pi$, metric and B -field are *not* periodic, even up to $SL(2)$ transformation.

T-folds: patching with T-dualities

We can understand what is happening as follows. View T^3 as $S^1 \times T^2$

1.) As we go around the S^1 , $x \rightarrow x + 2\pi$, we patch the B -field with a gauge transformation: $B_{yz} \rightarrow B_{yz} - 2\pi N$.

2.) As we go around the S^1 , we patch with a $SL(2)$ transformation $z \rightarrow z - 2\pi Ny$.

3.) As we go around the S^1 , we patch with a T-duality transformation.

T-duality acts on the patching: label patching transformation by Δ . Then after T-duality, represented by O , $\Delta \rightarrow O^{-1}\Delta O$.

Such backgrounds are called T-folds. Duality is a symmetry of string theory \Rightarrow acceptable patching.

What is the low-energy dynamics of these backgrounds?

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Enter double field theory

T-duality mixes g and B and momentum and winding.

To make T-duality manifest, we need to combine g and B and promote winding to same role as momentum.

Add D coordinates \tilde{x}_μ to represent winding: $X^A = \begin{pmatrix} x^\mu \\ \tilde{x}_\mu \end{pmatrix}$. “String moving on large and small circle.”

Combine metric and Kalb-Ramond form into an $O(D, D)$ element so it transforms as a tensor under $O(D, D)$: generalised metric

$$M_{AB} = \begin{pmatrix} g_{\mu\nu} - B_{\mu\rho} g^{\rho\kappa} B_{\kappa\nu} & -B_{\mu\rho} g^{\rho\nu} \\ g^{\mu\rho} B_{\rho\nu} & g^{\mu\nu} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5)$$

$\mu, \nu = 1, \dots, D$ are spacetime indices.

$A, B = 1, \dots, 2D$ are $O(D, D)$ indices.

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$$M_{AB} = \begin{pmatrix} M_{\mu\nu} & M_\mu{}^\nu \\ M^\mu{}_\nu & M^{\mu\nu} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6)$$

$\mu, \nu = 1, \dots, D$ are spacetime indices.

$A, B = 1, \dots, 2D$ are $O(D, D)$ indices.

$$S = S_{10-D} + S_D . \quad (7)$$

Conservatively: S_{10-D} is our low-energy dynamics ($D = 6$). S_D is compact and described by DFT. It describes the scalar potential of the compactification.

Optimistic: We will see that allowing extra coordinates means we don't need isometries / compactifications. We can make $D = 10$ and describe all directions by DFT.

We should understand the situation $\tilde{\partial}^\mu = 0$. Then generalised tensors live in $TM \oplus T^*M$ and this is the realm of “generalised geometry”. (Hitchin, Gualtieri, . . . , Waldram, . . .)

Different ways to see this is needed:

- $TM \oplus T^*M$ has a natural action of $O(D, D)$.

For $v, w \in TM$, $\xi, \rho \in T^*M$ $\langle v + \xi | w + \rho \rangle = \xi(w) + \rho(v)$.

The $O(D, D)$ metric $\langle | \rangle$ is denoted by

$$\eta_{AB} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \mathbb{I} \\ \mathbb{I} & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (8)$$

- Metric + 2-form have diffeo + gauge symmetry.

Diffeomorphisms are infinitesimally generated by vectors.

Gauge transformations are infinitesimally generated by one-forms.

DFT is an “ $O(D, D)$ -covariantisation” of this by including winding coordinates \tilde{x}_μ . This will give us an action.

Generalised metric satisfies

$$M_{AC}\eta^{CD}M_{DB} = \eta_{AB}, \quad (9)$$

and is unit determinant.

We need another object to have a volume element. This is the generalised dilaton d , an $O(D, D)$ scalar

$$e^{-2d} = \sqrt{g}e^{-2\phi}, \quad (10)$$

where ϕ is string theory dilaton.

Generalised diffeomorphisms

Recall: diffeomorphisms and gauge transformations are generated by a vector ξ^μ + covector λ_μ = generalised vector $U^A = (\xi^\mu, \lambda_\mu)$.

Collective symmetries described by generalised Lie derivative

$$\mathcal{L}_U V^A = U^B \partial_B V^A - V^B \partial_B U^A + \eta^{AB} V^C \eta_{CD} \partial_B U^D. \quad (11)$$

For generalised metric, this gives exactly diffeo + gauge symmetry when you set $\tilde{\partial}^\mu = \frac{\partial}{\partial \tilde{x}_\mu} = 0$.

In GR, the algebra of diffeomorphisms closes:

$$[L_U, L_V] W^A = L_{[U, V]} W^A \quad (12)$$

where $[,]$ is the commutator and Lie bracket, and L the Lie derivative.

Section condition

Does the algebra of generalised diffeomorphisms close?

NO!

$$[\mathcal{L}_U, \mathcal{L}_V] W^A = \mathcal{L}_{[U, V]_C} W^A + \text{junk} \quad (13)$$

YES! if one imposes the “section condition”

$$\eta^{AB} \partial_A f \partial_B g = 0. \quad (15)$$

for any two fields f, g in the theory. This is also “level-matching” condition of string theory.

This condition restricts dependence of any field $f(x^\mu, \tilde{x}_\mu)$ so that f depends at most on D of the coordinates and never on x^z and its dual \tilde{x}_z at the same time (z is a label for a specific index).

This is an $O(D, D)$ covariantisation of the requirement $\tilde{\partial}^\mu = 0$. Both $\tilde{\partial}^\mu = 0$ and $\partial_\mu = 0$ are solutions.

Section condition

Does the algebra of generalised diffeomorphisms close?

Weakly

$$[\mathcal{L}_U, \mathcal{L}_V] W^A \approx \mathcal{L}_{[U, V]_C} W^A \quad (14)$$

YES! if one imposes the “section condition”

$$\eta^{AB} \partial_A f \partial_B g \approx 0. \quad (16)$$

for any two fields f, g in the theory. This is also “level-matching” condition of string theory.

This condition restricts dependence of any field $f(x^\mu, \tilde{x}_\mu)$ so that f depends at most on D of the coordinates and never on x^z and its dual \tilde{x}_z at the same time (z is a label for a specific index).

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We can write a unique action in terms of $O(D, D)$ tensors that is **weakly** a scalar under generalised Lie derivative.

$$S = \int dx d\tilde{x} e^{-2d} \left(\frac{1}{8} M^{AB} \partial_A M^{CD} \partial_B M_{CD} - \frac{1}{2} M^{AB} \partial_A M^{CD} \partial_C M_{BD} \right. \\ \left. + 4M^{AB} \partial_A \partial_B d - \partial_A \partial_B M^{AB} - 4M^{AB} \partial_A d \partial_B d + 4\partial_A M^{AB} \partial_B d \right). \quad (17)$$

$$\mathcal{L}_U S \approx 0. \quad (19)$$

We can write a unique action in terms of $O(D, D)$ tensors that is **weakly** a scalar under generalised Lie derivative.

$$S = \int dx d\tilde{x} e^{-2d} (\partial M)^2 . \quad (18)$$

$$\mathcal{L}_U S \approx 0 . \quad (19)$$

If we now consider the solution of the section condition $\tilde{\partial}^\mu = 0$ we get

$$S = \int dx e^{-2\phi} \sqrt{g} \left(R - \frac{1}{12} H_{\mu\nu\rho} H^{\mu\nu\rho} - 4\nabla_\mu \phi \nabla^\mu \phi + 4\Box\phi \right), \quad (20)$$

where $H = dB$ and R is the Ricci scalar. All indices raised / lowered with $g_{\mu\nu}$. This is the action for the NS-NS sector we are considering.

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We recall the toy model $T^3 = S^1 \times T^2$:

H -flux \rightarrow twisted torus (“geometric flux”) \rightarrow “non-geometric flux”.

Each arrow is a T-duality.

We said that T-duality transforms the patching. Explicitly in DFT:

$$M_{AB}(x + 2\pi) \rightarrow \Delta^T M_{AB}(x) \Delta, \quad (21)$$

where $\Delta \in O(2, 2)$ corresponds to the different patchings (B -field, $SL(2)$, T-duality).

1. The H -flux:

$$(\Delta_1)^A{}_B = \begin{pmatrix} \delta^\mu{}_\nu & 0 \\ \delta B_{\mu\nu} & \delta_\mu{}^\nu \end{pmatrix}, \quad (22)$$

where $\delta B_{xy} = -2\pi N$ is the gauge transformation patching.

2. The “geometric flux”:

$$(\Delta_2)^A{}_B = \begin{pmatrix} A^\mu{}_\nu & 0 \\ 0 & (A^{-T})_\mu{}^\nu \end{pmatrix}, \quad (23)$$

where $A_\mu{}^\nu$ is the $SL(2)$ transformation patching.

3. The “non-geometric flux”:

$$(\Delta_3)^A{}_B = \begin{pmatrix} \delta^\mu{}_\nu & \delta\beta^{\mu\nu} \\ 0 & \delta_\mu{}^\nu \end{pmatrix}, \quad (24)$$

where $\beta^{yz} = -2\pi N$.

O_{12} is the generator of the T-duality going between 1 and 2,
 $\Delta_2 = (O_{12})^{-1} \Delta_1 O_{12}$, etc.

The first two patchings, Δ_1, Δ_2 , look natural in terms of $g_{\mu\nu}, B_{\mu\nu}$: they are just diffeos + gauge transformations.

Since T-duality is a symmetry of strings, how can we see Δ_3 as being natural?

Define generalised vielbeine:

$$M_{AB} = E_A^i E_B^j \delta_{ij} \quad (25)$$

Because of $M\eta^{-1}M = \eta$, the vielbeine satisfy

$$\eta_{AB} = E_A^i E_B^j \eta_{ij}. \quad (26)$$

Therefore, local $O(D) \times O(D)$ can act on the i, j flat indices and preserve these defining equations.

The parameterisation

$$M_{AB} = \begin{pmatrix} g_{\mu\nu} - B_{\mu\rho} B^{\rho}_{\nu} & B_{\mu}{}^{\nu} \\ -B^{\mu}{}_{\nu} & g^{\mu\nu} \end{pmatrix} \quad (27)$$

corresponds to the choice of vielbein

$$E_A{}^i = \begin{pmatrix} e & 0 \\ eB & e^{-T} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (28)$$

where $e^T e = g$. However, an equivalent choice, related by an $O(D) \times O(D)$ transformation gives

$$E_A{}^i = \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{e} & \beta \tilde{e} \\ 0 & \tilde{e}^{-T} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (29)$$

where $\beta^{\mu\nu}$ is a “bivector” and \tilde{e} is in principle different from e .

We see that double field theory contains in general new fields in the “supergravity”!

These appear on the same footing as the usual $g_{\mu\nu}$, $B_{\mu\nu}$ fields.

The DFT action, being written in terms of M_{AB} , describes the dynamics of these fields.

Can these new fields play a role in understanding non-geometry?

The generalised Lie derivative tells us how these fields transform under gauge transformations. These expressions look nice in the section $\partial_\mu = 0$, e.g.

$$\delta_U \beta^{\mu\nu} = U_\rho \tilde{\partial}^\rho \beta^{\mu\nu} + \beta^{\kappa\nu} \tilde{\partial}^\mu U_\kappa + \beta^{\mu\kappa} \tilde{\partial}^\nu U_\kappa + 3\tilde{\partial}^{[\mu} U^{\nu]}. \quad (30)$$

This is just the gauge transformation laws for $B_{\mu\nu}$ with all indices reversed.

Under

$$\Delta_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \delta\beta \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (31)$$

we just have $\beta^{\mu\nu} \rightarrow \beta^{\mu\nu} + \delta\beta^{\mu\nu}$. Thus, this frame is a natural choice for 3:

$$d\tilde{s}^2 = dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2, \quad \beta^{yz} = Nx. \quad (32)$$

We see that this is the reverse of the H -flux example (1).

Fluxes: geometric and non-geometric

What is the analogous “field strength” to H ? It is

$$Q^{\nu\rho}{}_{\mu} = \partial_{\mu}\beta^{\nu\rho}. \quad (33)$$

The different fluxes are all contained in the “generalised torsion”:

$$(\mathcal{L}_{E_i}E_j)^A = \tau^A{}_{BC}E^B{}_iE^C{}_j. \quad (34)$$

This is not $O(D) \times O(D)$ invariant! In the usual frame

$$E = \begin{pmatrix} e & 0 \\ eB & e^{-T} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (35)$$

we find the “geometric fluxes”

$$\begin{aligned} \tau^{\mu}{}_{\nu\rho} &\sim T^{\mu}{}_{\nu\rho}, & \tau_{\mu\nu\rho} &\sim H_{\mu\nu\rho}, \\ \tau_{\mu\nu}{}^{\rho} &= 0, & \tau^{\mu\nu\rho} &= 0. \end{aligned} \quad (36)$$

where $T \sim [e, e]$.

In the “reversed” frame with β

$$E = \begin{pmatrix} e & \beta e^{-T} \\ 0 & e^{-T} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (37)$$

we have instead

$$\begin{aligned} \tau^\mu{}_{\nu\rho} &= 0, \\ \tau_{\mu\nu\rho} &= 0, \\ \tau_\mu{}^{\nu\rho} &\sim Q^{\nu\rho}{}_\mu, \\ \tau^{\mu\nu\rho} &\sim R^{\mu\nu\rho}, \end{aligned} \quad (38)$$

where $R^{\mu\nu\rho} = \tilde{\partial}[\mu\beta\nu\rho]$.

When talking about fluxes we need to make sure they are globally well-defined. Consider the toy model:

In the third scenario with the T-duality patching, neither $T^\mu{}_{\nu\rho}$ nor $H_{\mu\nu\rho}$ are well-defined when going around $x \rightarrow x + 2\pi$. But, in the “reversed” frame, $Q^{yz}{}_x$ is globally well-defined. Thus, “reversed frame” is preferred!

We have found a new object $R^{\mu\nu\rho} = \tilde{\partial}^{[\mu} \beta^{\nu\rho]}$. What is it?

Recall the toy model. Calculating the fluxes in a frame so that they are globally well-defined, we find each T-duality raised an index on the flux:

$$H_{yzx} \rightarrow T^y{}_{zx} \rightarrow Q^{yz}{}_x. \quad (39)$$

We have run out of directions to T-dualise to get $R^{\mu\nu\rho}$. However, in DFT we can T-dualise along non-isometries and get the final step.

$$Q^{yz}{}_x \rightarrow R^{yzx}. \quad (40)$$

This solution explicitly involves the dual coordinates \tilde{x} .

This chain of dualities involved fully geometric backgrounds as well as non-geometric ones.

Can we find “fully non-geometric” backgrounds where T-duality does not give a geometric background?

We have “geometrical” objects τ^A_{BC} that in some frames capture the fluxes of these backgrounds.

What is the “characteristic class” that picks up the patching?

What next?

- DFT describes the low-energy dynamics of all the fluxes, including “non-geometric” Q and R .
- We can describe them geometrically.
- These non-geometric fluxes are important in providing a higher-dimensional origin for all gauged supergravities (some were previously orphaned).
- Non-geometric compactifications could give interesting scalar potentials, e.g. moduli stabilisation, deSitter, inflation?
- What sources these non-geometric fluxes? Exotic branes?
- Relax section condition and move beyond SUGRA. More than a rewriting.
- M-theory and U-duality.

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The action of DFT is a great success: it is manifestly T-duality invariant, it is weakly a generalised scalar and it reproduces the right SUGRA action in the right duality frame.

$$S \sim \int dx d\tilde{x} (\partial M)^2 . \quad (41)$$

However, it is not manifestly geometric: the terms are not tensors under generalised diffeomorphisms.

Recall: $\mathcal{L} \neq L$. Generalised diffeomorphisms are not just “doubled” diffeomorphisms!

We need to find new tensors. Analogues of Levi-civita connection fail (and curvature objects analogous to Riemann curvature cannot be defined in M-theory extension!)

Curvature-less but torsionful connections

However, one can use a flat connection

$$\Gamma^A{}_{BC} = E^A{}_i \partial_B E_C^i . \quad (42)$$

This has vanishing curvature but non-zero torsion: $\tau^A{}_{BC}$.

$$\left(\mathcal{L}_U^\nabla - \mathcal{L}_U^\partial \right) V^a = \tau^A{}_{BC} U^B V^C . \quad (43)$$

This is the same as the equation for $\tau^A{}_{BC}$ given before. This is the τ which contains all the fluxes.

We can write down a “teleparallel” action in terms of this torsion

$$S \sim \int dx d\tilde{x} (\tau)^2 . \quad (44)$$

Note that neither the connection

$$\Gamma^A_{BC} = E^A_i \partial_B E_C^i, \quad (45)$$

nor the torsion τ^A_{BC} are $O(D) \times O(D)$ invariant! We construct the action by requiring this local invariance at the level of the action.

$$S \sim \int dx d\tilde{x} \tau^2 \quad (46)$$

is for obvious reasons also known as “flux formalism” of DFT.

If we compactify D dimensions, thanks to DFT, we now have the scalar potential in terms of “geometric” and “non-geometric” fluxes.

How can we turn the fluxes on?

Tori don't work because the fluxes will “push” the tori. Need to use Scherk-Schwarz compactification.

Let $X = (\mathbb{X}, \mathbb{Y})$ and consider a dimensional reduction such that

$$V^A(\mathbb{X}, \mathbb{Y}) = W^A{}_b(\mathbb{Y}) \hat{V}^b(\mathbb{X}), \quad W^A{}_b \in O(D, D), \quad (47)$$

and similarly for all other tensors. This gives a gauged supergravity, with the twists W entering in the action only in the combinations of

$$f^a{}_{bc} = 3\eta^{ae}\eta_{d[e} W^A{}_b W^B{}_c] \partial_A (W^{-1})^d{}_B. \quad (48)$$

These will be the structure constants of your gauged group.

In fact, they are related to the reduced torsion components $\tau^A{}_{BC}$:

$$\tau^A{}_{BC}(\mathbb{X}, \mathbb{Y}) = W^A{}_a (W^{-1})_B{}^b (W^{-1})_C{}^c (\hat{\tau}^a{}_{bc}(\mathbb{X}) + f^a{}_{bc}), \quad (49)$$

where $\hat{\tau}^a{}_{bc}$ is defined analogously to $\tau^A{}_{BC}$ in terms of hatted quantities.

Gauged SUGRA reductions

If we do a Scherk-Schwarz compactification on normal 10-D type II SUGRA, we do not get all lower-dimensional gauged SUGRAs.

Some lower-dimensional GSUGRAs can be obtained by directly gauging lower-dimensional SUGRAs.

All such gauged SUGRAs can be classified by the “embedding tensor” $\theta^a{}_{bc}$: how the gauged subgroup embeds in the $O(D, D)$ group.

Group theory shows that $\theta^a{}_{bc}$ and $f^a{}_{bc}$ agree. But some $f^a{}_{bc}$ components are set to zero through this reduction. Why does this happen and how can we remedy this?

IS STRING THEORY NOT THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING???

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The section condition $\eta^{AB}\partial_A \otimes \partial_B \approx 0$ means we are really only ever dealing with D dimensions.

So far everything is but a rewriting of supergravity actions! So the same facts are still true for GSUGRAs.

We can go beyond SUGRA. $\eta^{AB}\partial_A \otimes \partial_B \approx 0$ is sufficient but not necessary for consistency of theory.

A more relaxed condition can be used.

A new look at Scherk-Schwarz compactifications

All consistency requirements (closure of algebra, invariance of action under generalised diffeomorphisms, ...) can now be satisfied by:

$$\begin{aligned}\eta^{ab}\partial_a\hat{g}(\mathbb{X})\partial_b\hat{h}(\mathbb{X}) &\approx 0, \\ \eta^{ab}\partial_a W\partial_b\hat{g}(\mathbb{X}) &\approx 0,\end{aligned}\tag{50}$$

and Jacobi identity

$$f^e{}_{[ab}f^f{}_{c]d} = 0.\tag{51}$$

We do not impose

$$\eta^{AB}\partial_A W\partial_B W \neq 0.\tag{52}$$

Thus, we do not impose the *full* section condition.

These relaxed compactifications contain some dependence on winding coordinates \tilde{x}_μ .

This is the final ingredient to get the remaining gauged SUGRAs!

These other gauged SUGRAs have non-geometric fluxes turned on in the scalar potential.

Thus, DFT provides a higher-dimensional origin for these previously orphaned SUGRAs.