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# M-theory from E8

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**Abstract.** Bars, Sezgin and Nishino have proposed super Yang-Mills theory in  $D = 12$  and beyond. Here we consider M-theory in signature  $(10,1)$  as a reduction of signature  $(10,2)$ , using a projection of  $e_{8(-24)}$  along  $b_2$ . The projection gives a visual decomposition of  $e_{8(-24)}$  that makes the vector of  $\mathfrak{so}(10,2)$  and its spinor manifest. Reduction along a time direction yields an  $\mathfrak{so}(10,1)$  invariant subspace that we associate with the spacetime of  $D = 11$  M-theory.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of super Yang-Mills beyond  $D = 11$  with multiple time degrees of freedom was undertaken by Bars, Sezgin and Nishino [1, 2, 6]. Such higher dimensional Yang-Mills theories are especially of interest for quantum gravity in that  $D = 10$  super Yang-Mills is used for a matrix formulation of M-theory [7].

It was noticed the algebraic structure of super Yang-Mills in  $D = 10, 12, 14$  is captured by the exceptional Lie algebras  $e_{6(-26)}$ ,  $e_{7(-25)}$ , and  $e_{8(-24)}$ , respectively [8]. Such Yang-Mills theories were dubbed *exceptional Yang-Mills theories* and defined to arbitrary dimension using the novel mathematical framework of *exceptional periodicity* [5] and its *magic star* projections along  $a_2$  [3, 4, 5]. In this analysis, we use a projection of  $e_{8(-24)}$  along  $b_2$  to show the vector and spinor of M-theory in  $D = 10 + 2$  can be recovered. Algebraically, this is tantamount to splitting the fundamental **56** of  $e_{7(-25)}$  as a Freudenthal triple system into  $\mathbf{12} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{12}$ . By nullifying a timelike coordinate of the **12** one recovers an  $\mathfrak{so}(10,1)$  invariant subspace we associate with the total space of  $D = 11$  M-theory.

## M-THEORY

M-theory in  $D = 10 + 1$  can be studied as a Yang-Mills theory starting with a 3-form  $C_{(3)}$ . Taking the electric field strength  $F_{(4)} = dC_{(3)}$ , gives a  $p$ -brane source called the M2-brane. Taking the Hodge dual of  $F_{(4)}$  yields  $\tilde{F}_{(7)}$  with 5-dimensional magnetic source called the M5-brane. The spinor is given by a **32**.

Consider the 5-grading of  $e_{7(-25)}$ :

$$e_{7(-25)} = \mathbf{1} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus (\mathfrak{so}(10,2) \oplus \mathbf{1}) \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{1}. \quad (1)$$

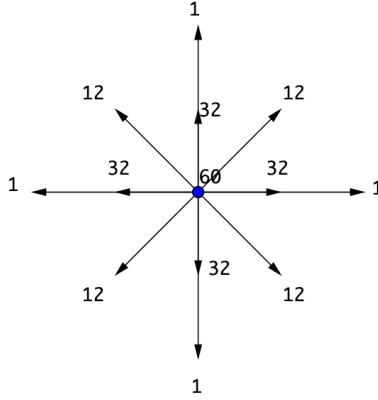
The 5-grading reveals an  $\mathfrak{so}(10,2)$  adjoint representation, as well as its **32** spinor, ingredients suitable for the study of M-theory. What is lacking is the **12** vector of  $\mathfrak{so}(10,2)$ . In the next section, we show this can be recovered if we use the larger algebra  $e_{8(-24)}$ .

## E8 AND M-THEORY

The structure of  $D = 10 + 2$  Yang-Mills is almost encoded by the 5-grading of  $e_{7(-25)}$ . To complete the structure, one needs a **12** vector of  $\mathfrak{so}(10,2)$ .

Consider the following decomposition of  $e_{8(-24)}$ , that makes the 5-grading of  $e_{7(-25)}$  manifest:

$$e_{8(-24)} = \mathbf{1} \oplus (\mathbf{12} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{12}) \oplus [(\mathbf{1} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus (\mathfrak{so}(10,2) \oplus \mathbf{1}) \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{1}) \oplus \mathbf{1}] \oplus (\mathbf{12} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{12}) \oplus \mathbf{1}. \quad (2)$$



**FIGURE 1.** A projection of  $e_{8(-24)}$  along a  $b_2$  (Courtesy of P. Truini).

Figure 1 depicts a projection of  $e_{8(-24)}$  along a  $b_2$ , giving a visual depiction of the decomposition of  $e_{8(-24)}$  with manifest  $\mathfrak{so}(10, 2)$  adjoint, spinor and vector representations. The  $\mathbf{12} \oplus \mathbf{32} \oplus \mathbf{12} = \mathbf{56}$  gives a decomposition of the fundamental of  $e_{7(-25)}$  as a Freudenthal triple system (FTS) in terms of the  $\mathbf{12}$  vector of  $\mathfrak{so}(10, 2)$ .

## SPIN FACTORS AND YANG-MILLS

Through the lens of Jordan algebras, the  $\mathbf{12}$  vector of  $\mathfrak{so}(10, 2)$  can be expressed as:

$$\mathbf{12} = (J_2(\mathbb{O}) \oplus \mathbb{R}) \oplus \mathbb{R} \quad (3)$$

where the  $J_2(\mathbb{O})$  spin factor part contributes a  $(9, 1)$  signature when an element is written with lightcone coordinates on the diagonal. Embedded in  $J_3(\mathbb{O})$ , an  $\mathbb{R}$  is a scalar coordinate from the third diagonal entry of a  $3 \times 3$  hermitian matrix. The additional copy of  $\mathbb{R}$  is the corresponding scalar diagonal of  $J_3(\mathbb{O})$  embedded in its FTS, which is the fundamental  $\mathbf{56}$  of  $e_{7(-25)}$ . In terms of signature, the third diagonal of  $J_3(\mathbb{O})$  enhances the  $(9, 1)$  signature to  $(10, 1)$ , and the additional real coordinate gives  $(10, 2)$  signature.

One can descend to  $(10, 1)$  by either nullifying a timelike coordinate in the  $J_2(\mathbb{O})$  spin factor (which transforms as a  $\mathbf{10}$  of  $\mathfrak{so}(9, 1)$ ) or the corresponding diagonal coordinate of the FTS. As  $J_2(\mathbb{O})$  can be used to give a matrix formulation of M-theory in  $D = 10 + 1$  in the infinite momentum frame (where the third diagonal coordinate of  $J_3(\mathbb{O})$  becomes a point at infinity), we associate the vector space  $\mathbf{12} = (J_2(\mathbb{O}) \oplus \mathbb{R}) \oplus \mathbb{R}$  with the total space of M-theory in  $D = 10 + 2$  signature. This is sufficient to show a matrix formulation of M-theory in  $D = 10 + 1$  can be recovered from  $e_{8(-24)}$  after a timelike coordinate reduction.

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