A Stringy Test of the Weak Gravity Conjecture

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Motivation

Quantum Gravity Conjectures testable in string theory

- in a quantitative manner! [Harlow,Ooguri'18]
 - Check of swampland conjectures and sharper formulation
 - Study manifestations of swampland conjectures in string geometry: (Why) Does mathematics know about QG?

This programme will relate various aspects of

- Kähler geometry of elliptic fibrations
- Arithmetic properties of modular forms
 Topological strings, mirror symmetry and BPS invariants
- Black hole physics/Swampland ideas

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[Harlow,Ooguri'18]

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This covers many aspects of the physics and math discussed by:



Motivation

Swampland/QG Conjectures in 'open string theories'

- No Global Symmetries: [Banks,Dixon'88]; [Harlow,Ooguri'18] Gauge symmetries cannot become global in presence of gravity. What goes wrong if they (seemingly) do?
- 2. Completeness Conjecture: [Polchinski'03] *The full charge lattice should be populated.* Open string charges seem limited - where do the states come from?
- 3. Weak Gravity Conjecture: [Arkani-Hamed,Motl,Nicolis,Vafa'06] $(Sub)Lattice \ of \ charged \ particles \ with \ q^2g_{YM}^2 \ge \#M^2$ What is the correct numerical bound and can it be tested?

A kit interpolating between these is the **Swampland Distance Conjecture** [Ooguri, Vafa'06]!

Main Result

Consider most general F-theory compactification to 6d with 8 supercharges.

Whenever there exists a geometric limit where $g_{\rm YM} \rightarrow 0$ while $M_{\rm Pl}$ fixed, we

- prove the Sublattice Weak Gravity Conjecture
- including the effect of scalar fields
- and determine the index of the relevant sublattice of non-BPS states.
- ✓ Implies by duality similar result for 6d heterotic string (N=(1,0))
- \checkmark Related to BPS state counting in 5d M-theory

F-theory in 6d

Context: F-theory compactified on elliptic ${
m CY}_3$ $Y_3
ightarrow B_2$ [talk by W. Taylor]

Effective theory in $\mathbb{R}^{1,5}$: N = (1,0) supergravity (8 SUSYs) base B_2 : complex Kähler surface 7-branes on complex curve $C \subset B_2$



Couplings:

 $\mathbf{M}_{\mathrm{Pl}}^{4} = 4\pi \mathrm{vol}_{\mathbf{J}}(\mathbf{B}_{2}) \qquad \quad \frac{1}{\mathbf{g}_{\mathrm{YM}}^{2}} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \mathrm{vol}_{\mathbf{J}}(\mathbf{C})$

• non-abelian gauge algebra g:

C contained in discriminant of fibration (wrapped by brane stack)

• abelian gauge algebra $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{u}(1)_A$:

 $C = -\pi_*(\sigma(S_A) \cdot \sigma(S_A))$ (height pairing of rational section S_A)

Gravity and U(1)s

What happens if take $g_{\rm YM} \rightarrow 0$ at $M_{\rm Pl}$ finite?

Field theory intuition:

- 1. Weak Gravity Conjecture [Arkani-Hamed, Motl, Nicolis, Vafa'06], ... Gravity is weakest force.
- 2. In presence of gravity, no global symmetries. [Banks,Dixon'88], ...

General expectation: [Ooguri, Vafa'06], ... [talks by Valenzuela & Shiu]

✓ Offensive limit should be at infinite distance (beyond reach)
 ✓ Effective theory must break down (quantum gravity censorship)
 [Kläwer,Palti'16] [Palti'17] [Grimm,Palti,Valenzuela'18] [Heidenreich,Reece,Rudelius'16/'18]
 [Montero,Shiu,Soler'16] [Andriolo,Junghans,Noumi,Shiu'18] [Blumenhagen...'18] [Hebecker...15]

New: Quantum Gravity Conjectures and U(1)/gauge symmetries in 'open string sector'

Summary of results

Main results: [Lee,Lerche,TW'18]

- 1. For fixed M_{Pl} , limit $g_{\text{YM}} \rightarrow 0$ lies at infinite distance in Kähler moduli space of base B_2 .
- 2. As $g_{YM} \rightarrow 0$, necessarily charged tensionless weakly coupled strings arise in the 6d compactification.
 - 7-brane on C $\operatorname{vol}_{J}(C) \sim t \sim \frac{1}{g_{YM}^{2}} \to \infty$ • 3-brane on curve C_{0} with $C_{0} \cdot C \neq 0$ $\operatorname{vol}_{J}(C_{0}) \sim \frac{1}{t} \to 0$
- 3. The charged tensionless strings imply a breakdown of the effective theory.

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- 1. For fixed M_{Pl} , limit $g_{\text{YM}} \rightarrow 0$ lies at infinite distance in Kähler moduli space of base B_2 .
- 2. As $g_{\rm YM} \rightarrow 0$, necessarily charged tensionless strings arise in the 6d compactification.
- 3. The charged tensionless strings imply a breakdown of the effective theory.
- 4. The tensionless string is the critical 6d heterotic string and is weakly coupled in the tensionless limit.

Its tower of particle excitations can be analyzed quantitatively:

- Charged string excitations satisfy the Completeness Hypothesis.
- A sublattice of charged states satisfies the Sublattice Weak Gravity Conjecture bound - including the effect of scalar fields!



I) Weak Coupling Limit & Kähler geometry

Global limit in Kähler geometry

[Lee,Lerche,TW'18]

Aim: $\frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2} \sim \operatorname{vol}_J(C) \to \infty$ while $M_{\rm Pl} \sim \operatorname{vol}_J(B_2) \equiv 1$ (*)

Result: There must exist another curve C_0 with

 $C_0 \cdot C \neq 0$ and $\operatorname{vol}_J(C_0) \to 0$

General intuition

"On finite volume surface, if one direction gets big, normal direction must get very small".



Global limit in Kähler geometry

 $\frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2} \sim \operatorname{vol}_J(C) \to \infty \quad \text{while} \quad M_{\rm Pl} \sim \operatorname{vol}_J(B_2) \equiv 1 \quad (*)$

May not be possible to take for given B_2 , but if it can be taken, then it is always of the following form:

• 7-brane on C $\operatorname{vol}_J(C) \sim t \sim \frac{1}{g_{\mathrm{YM}}^2} \to \infty$

• curve C_0 with $C_0 \cdot C \neq 0$ $\operatorname{vol}_J(C_0) \sim \frac{1}{t} \to 0$



Quantum Gravity Conjectures

1) No global symmetries.

 \Rightarrow The limit must be at infinite distance in moduli space.

Indeed this is the case here.

Result: Limit $t \to \infty$ at distance $\Delta \sim \log(t) \to \infty$

2) Swampland Distance Conjecture:
[Ooguri,Vafa'06] [Kläwer,Palti'16] [Palti'17] [Heidenreich,Reece,Rudelius'17,'18]
[Grimm,Palti,Valenzuela'18] [Andriolo,Junghans,Noumi,Shiu'18]
[Blumenhagen,Kläwer,Schlechter,Wolf'18]

Infinitely many (charged!) states should become massless at exponential rate.

Present case: Tensionless strings

$$\Delta \sim \log(t), \quad \text{tension} \sim T \sim \operatorname{vol}_J(C_0) \sim \frac{1}{t} \sim e^{-\Delta}$$

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II) Tensionless Strings, Modular Forms & BPS Invariants

Tensionless strings

- 7-brane on C
- D3-brane on \mathbb{P}^1 C_0 with $C_0 \cdot C \neq 0$ and $C_0^2 = 0$ \Rightarrow effective string in 6d



Twisted reduction of N = 4 SYM with varying gauge coupling along C_0 [Martucci'14][Haghighat,Murthy,Vafa,Vandoren'15][Lawrie,Schafer-Nameki,TW'16]

- 2d N = (0, 4) effective theory describes worldsheet theory
- At intersection $C_0 \cap C$:

isolated 3-7 string modes charged under 7-brane gauge group

Analysis of worldsheet theory on $C_0 = \mathbb{P}^1$ with $C_0^2 = 0$:

The effective string is the critical heterotic string propagating in 6d.

Tensionless 6d strings

Case 1) F-theory base B_2 is Hirzebruch

Exists perturbative heterotic dual $r: T^2 \rightarrow \mathcal{K}$ on K3 \mathcal{K} \downarrow \mathbb{P}^1_h

$$(g_s^h)^2 = rac{\mathrm{vol}_J(\mathbb{P}_f^1)}{\mathrm{vol}_J(\mathbb{P}_b^1)} o 0 \quad ext{in tensionless limit}$$

Case 2) General base B_2

- Dual heterotic string on \mathcal{K} is in general not perturbative due to presence of extra NS 5-branes on heterotic side
- Working assumption: Away from these defects heterotic string can be treated 'quasi-perturbatively' (justified in examples)

Elliptic genus of 6d het. string \leftrightarrow Subsector of charged non-BPS states [Schellekens, Warner'87] [Witten'87], ...

$$Z_{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, z) \equiv \operatorname{Tr}_{R}\left[(-1)^{F} F^{2} \boldsymbol{q}^{H_{L}} \bar{\boldsymbol{q}}^{H_{R}} \boldsymbol{\xi}^{\boldsymbol{J}}\right]$$

- $q = e^{2\pi i \tau}$: au complex structure of worldsheet T^2 $\xi^J = e^{2\pi i z J}$: fugacity w.r.t. flavour symmetry e.g. U(1)



$$Z_{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, z) = q^{-1} \sum_{n \ge 0} N(n, r) \, q^n \, \xi^r$$

n: excitation level of string r: U(1) charge

$$Z_{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, z) = \operatorname{Tr}_{R} \left[(-1)^{F} F^{2} q^{H_{L}} \bar{q}^{H_{R}} \xi^{J} \right] = q^{-1} \sum_{n \ge 0} N(n, r) q^{n} \xi^{r}$$
only trace of left-movers
$$\begin{array}{c|c} & & & \\ & & \\ \text{Level-matched (!) physical states by} & & \\ pairing with right-movers & & \\ \Rightarrow \text{ Subsector of particle excitations of the} & & \\ & & \\ \text{6d string} & & \\ \end{array}$$

If (dual) heterotic string is perturbative, can use classic results on CFT of heterotic string [Schellekens,Warner'87]

Otherwise use intriguing duality to M-theory and BPS invariants as pioneered in [Klemm,Mayr,Vafa'96]

Y

Ell. genus must behave well under $SL(2,\mathbb{Z})$ trafo of string worldsheet

(Ratio of) (quasi-)modular forms of weight -2 and certain U(1) fugacity index m

$$\varphi_{\mathbf{w},\mathbf{m}}\left(\frac{a\tau+b}{c\tau+d},\frac{\zeta}{c\tau+d}\right) = (c\tau+d)^{\mathbf{w}}e^{2\pi i\frac{\mathbf{m}\,c}{c\tau+d}\frac{\zeta^2}{2}}\varphi_{\mathbf{w},\mathbf{m}}(\tau,\zeta)$$
$$\varphi_{\mathbf{w},\mathbf{m}}(\tau,\zeta+\lambda\tau+\mu) = e^{-2\pi i\mathbf{m}(\frac{\lambda^2}{2}\tau+2\frac{\lambda\zeta}{2})}\varphi_{\mathbf{w},\mathbf{m}}(\tau,\zeta)$$

- *m* determined by the geometry model dependent!
- This suffices to fix structure of the charged subsector of excitations as a 'function of m'

Fugacity index *m* determined by 't Hooft anomalies of string worldsheet [Schellekens,Warner'86] [Benini,Eager,Hori,Tachikawa'13] [...]

U(1) part of anomaly polynomial computed in [Xu,TW'17]

with



$$Z_{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, z) = \frac{\Phi_{10,m}(\tau, z)}{\eta^{24}(\tau)} = q^{-1} \sum_{n \ge 0} N(n, r) \, q^n \, \xi^r$$

- $\eta^{24}(\tau)$ from zero-point energy
- $\Phi_{10,m}(\tau, z)$: (quasi-)modular Jacobi form of weight w = 10[Eichler,Zagier]

Every such form can be expanded

$$\varphi_{w,m}(\tau,z) = \sum_{\ell \in \mathbb{Z} \mod 2m} h_{\ell}(\tau) \Theta_{m,\ell}(\tau,z)$$
$$\Theta_{m,\ell}(\tau,z) = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} q^{(\ell+2mk)^2/4m} \xi^{\ell+2mk}$$

Subsector with $\ell = 0$ contains: n = mk $r = 2mk \equiv U(1)$ charge q_k

 \implies sublattice of charge lattice with $\mathfrak{q}_k = 2m \, k \, , k \in \mathbb{Z}$ $\mathfrak{q}_k^2 = 4m \, n(k)$ [Lee, Lerche, TW'18]

Explicit computation possible via duality with M-theory [Klemm, Mayr, Vafa'96]

[Haghighat, Iqbal, Kozaz, Lockhart, Vafa'13] [Haghighat, Klemm, Lockhart, Vafa'14]



F-theory in $\mathbb{R}^{1,4} \times S^1$ BPS string wrapped on S^1 wrapping number w and KK momentum k

M-theory in $\mathbb{R}^{1,4}$ BPS particle in 5d M2 brane on $wC_0 + k\mathbb{E}_{\tau}$

Relation: w k = n (excitation number) [Klemm, Mayr, Vafa'96] Index 6d of string non-BPS Gopakumar-Vafa invariants of excitations 5d BPS states

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Index 6d string non-BPS excitations

Gopakumar-Vafa invariants of 5d BPS states

 $Z_{\mathcal{K}}(\tau, z) = -q^{-1} \mathcal{F}_{C_0}^{(0)}(\tau, z) = -q^{-1} \sum N_{C_0}^{(0)}(n, r) q^n \xi^r$

- $\mathcal{F}_{C_0}^{(0)}(\tau, z)$: genus zero prepotential of topological string
- $N_{C_0}^{(0)}(n,r)$: Gopakumar-Vafa (Gromov-Witten) invariants Computable via mirror symmetry for elliptic Y_3

[Klemm,Mayr,Vafa'96][Klemm,Manschot,Wotschke'12][Huang,Katz,Klemm'15], ...

'Modular bootstrap'

- General Ansatz for quasi-modular form $\mathbb{C}[E_2(\tau), E_4(\tau), E_6(\tau); \varphi_{-2,1}(\tau, z), \varphi_{0,1}(\tau, z)] \qquad \text{[Eichler,Zagier]}$ of suitable weight and index
- Match free parameters against explicit BPS numbers via mirror symmetry

Example: $B_2 = dP_2$ [Lee,Lerche,TW'18] topological type of U(1) model with $m_A = 2$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{F}_{C_{0}}^{(0)}(\tau,\xi) &= \frac{q}{1728\eta^{24}} \Big(-23E_{4}^{2}E_{6}\varphi_{-2,1}^{2} + 27E_{4}^{3}\varphi_{-2,1}\varphi_{0,1} + 19E_{6}^{2}\varphi_{-2,1}\varphi_{0,1} - 23E_{4}E_{6}\varphi_{0,1}^{2} \\ &+ E_{2}(-E_{6}^{2}\varphi_{-2,1}^{2} + 2E_{4}E_{6}\varphi_{-2,1}\varphi_{0,1} - E_{4}^{2}\varphi_{0,1}^{2}) \Big) \\ &= -2 + \left(252 + 84\xi^{\pm 1}\right)q \\ &+ \left(116580 + 65164\xi^{\pm 1} + 9448\xi^{\pm 2} + 84\xi^{\pm 3} - 2\xi^{\pm 4}\right)q^{2} \\ &+ \left(6238536 + 3986964\xi^{\pm 1} + 965232\xi^{\pm 2} + 65164\xi^{\pm 3} + 252\xi^{\pm 4}\right)q^{3} \\ &+ \mathcal{O}(q^{4}). \end{aligned}$$



 \Rightarrow Completeness Hypothesis satisfied:

- Each charge q is populated by some state
- Note: Not the case for purely open [p,q] string sector!



Mass shell condition for perturbative string states:

$$M_n^2 = 8\pi T(n-1)$$

Crucial: Valid in pert. limit of het. string = tensionless limit $t \to \infty$

$$M_{\rm Pl}^4 = 4\pi \operatorname{vol}(B_2) \equiv 4\pi, \qquad \frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \operatorname{vol}(C)$$

 $T = 2\pi \operatorname{vol}(C_0).$

with $\operatorname{vol}(C) \operatorname{vol}(C_0) \to 2m$ as $t \to \infty$

Generalisation to several U(1) factors surprisingly complicated: Theory of Lattice quasi-Jacobi forms

- No general generating system is published- active research [Gritsenko,Skoruppa,Zagier to appear]
- Novel examples in [Lee,Lerche,TW'18]



q₂

III) Black Hole physics Scalar Weak Gravity Conjecture

Black holes must be able to decay

[AMNV'06]

⇒ There must exist a state which is 'superextremal' with respect to charged extremal black hole

$$\frac{\mathfrak{q}^2 g_{\mathrm{YM}}^2}{M^2}|_{\mathrm{state}} \stackrel{!}{\geq} \frac{Q^2 g_{\mathrm{YM}}^2}{M^2}|_{\mathrm{B.H.}}$$

1) Which particle(s) should satisfy it?

• Sublattice Weak Gravity Conjecture

There must exist a sublattice of the charge lattice populated by states satisfying the WGC. [Heidenreich,Reece,Rudelius'15/6] [Montero,Shiu,Soler'16]

• Justification:

This condition is stable under dimensional reduction.

Challenge for string theory: How coarse is the sublattice?

$$\frac{\mathfrak{q}^2 g_{\mathrm{YM}}^2}{M^2}|_{\mathrm{state}} \stackrel{!}{\geq} \frac{Q^2 g_{\mathrm{YM}}^2}{M^2}|_{\mathrm{B.H.}}$$

2) Which black holes must be considered?

- In Einstein-Maxwell theory: Extremal Reissner-Nordstrøm black holes
- In SUGRA have extra massless scalar fields and BH solution will involve a profile for scalars

 \implies modification of $\frac{Q}{M}|_{B.H.}$

Analytic solution for special case of dilatonic black hole: [Gibbons, Maeda'88]

•
$$S = \int \sqrt{-g}R + \frac{1}{2}d\phi \wedge *d\phi + \frac{1}{4g_{\rm YM}^2}e^{\alpha\phi}F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu}$$

• WGC bound for decay of (d=6) dilatonic RN black hole:

$$q^2 g_{\rm YM}^2 \stackrel{!}{\ge} \frac{M^2}{M_{\rm Pl}^{d-2}} \left(\frac{d-3}{d-2} + \frac{\alpha^2}{4}\right)$$

[Heidenreich, Reece, Rudelius'15]

How relevant is the dilatonic case? [Lee,Lerche,TW'18]

Consider vicinity of weak coupling point $g_{\rm YM} \rightarrow 0$

- This must lie at infinite distance in moduli space.
- According to Swampland Distance Conjecture, there must appear a tower of exponentially massless fields

 $M^2(\phi) = M^2 e^{-c\phi}$ for a canonically normalised scalar ϕ

If WGC holds in vicinity of weak coupling point for this tower, then also $g_{YM}(\phi)$ depends exponentially on same ϕ :

$$\frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2(\phi)} = \frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2} e^{c\phi}$$

⇒ Dilatonic case universally governs WGC near weak coupling point.

This general prediction is confirmed in F-theory:



• Explicit analysis of 6d (1,0) SUGRA in special limit:

 $S = \int \sqrt{-g}R + \frac{1}{2}d\phi \wedge *d\phi + \frac{1}{4g_{\rm YM}^2}e^{\alpha\phi}F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu} \text{ with } \alpha = 1$

• Resulting QGC bound:

$$q^2 g_{\rm YM}^2 \stackrel{!}{\ge} \frac{M^2}{M_{\rm Pl}^{d-2}} \left(\frac{d-3}{d-2} + \frac{\alpha^2}{4}\right) = \frac{M^2}{M_{\rm Pl}^{d-2}}$$

An a priori different formulation:

Scalar Weak Gravity Conjecture [Palti'17]

There must exist WGC particle(s) such that

Coulomb force
$$\stackrel{!}{\geq}$$
 Gravitational force in d=6 + Yukawa force
 $q^2 g_{\rm YM}^2 \stackrel{!}{\geq} \frac{M^2}{M_{\rm Pl}^{d-2}} \left(\frac{d-3}{d-2} + \frac{1}{M^2} |\partial M|^2\right)$

Near weak coupling point:

- $M^2(\phi) = M^2 e^{-c\phi}$ for a canonically normalised scalar ϕ
- $\frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2(\phi)} = \frac{1}{g_{\rm YM}^2} e^{c\phi}$

 \implies Gives same constraint as via decay of black hole!

$$q^2 g_{\rm YM}^2 \stackrel{!}{\geq} \frac{M^2}{M_{\rm Pl}^{d-2}} \left(\frac{d-3}{d-2} + \frac{\alpha^2}{4}\right) \quad \text{for} \quad \alpha = c$$



Our derivation valid in limit $g_{\rm YM} \rightarrow 0 =$ tensionless limit $t \rightarrow \infty$

- Validity of $M_n^2 = 8\pi T(n-1)$
- $\operatorname{vol}(C)\operatorname{vol}(C_0) \to 2m$

What about general points in moduli space? Corrections? talk by G. Shiu



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Systematic study of Quantum Gravity constraints for 6d open string U(1)s

As gauge symmetry becomes global:

Tower of infinitely many charged from tensionless '6d critical heterotic string'

Different from behaviour of SCFT strings ($C^2 < 0$): Strongly coupled!

Beautiful interplay between geometry, arithmetics, CFT and Quantum Gravity constraints

No global symmetriesKähler geometry of B_2 Swampland Distance ConjectureMori's cone theoremCompleteness HypothesisWeak Jacobi formsScalar Weak Gravity Conj.and their modular properties

How do (Weak) Jacobi forms know about the Weak Gravity Conjectures?

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