

# New life in quadratic theories of gravity

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Work in collaboration with  
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# Motivation

General Relativity successful low energy theory

$$S_{EH} = \frac{1}{2\kappa^2} \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} R \quad \kappa = \sqrt{8\pi G}$$

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When we try to make a quantum formulation of the theory several problems appear

# Motivation

In usual QFT, causality is defined as

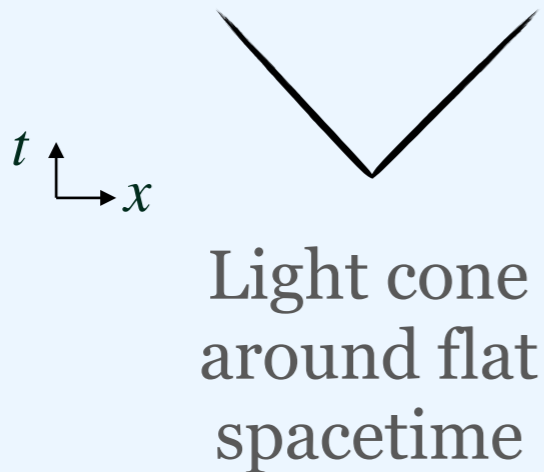
$$[\phi(x), \phi(y)] = 0, \quad (x - y)^2 < 0$$

Spacelike  
separations

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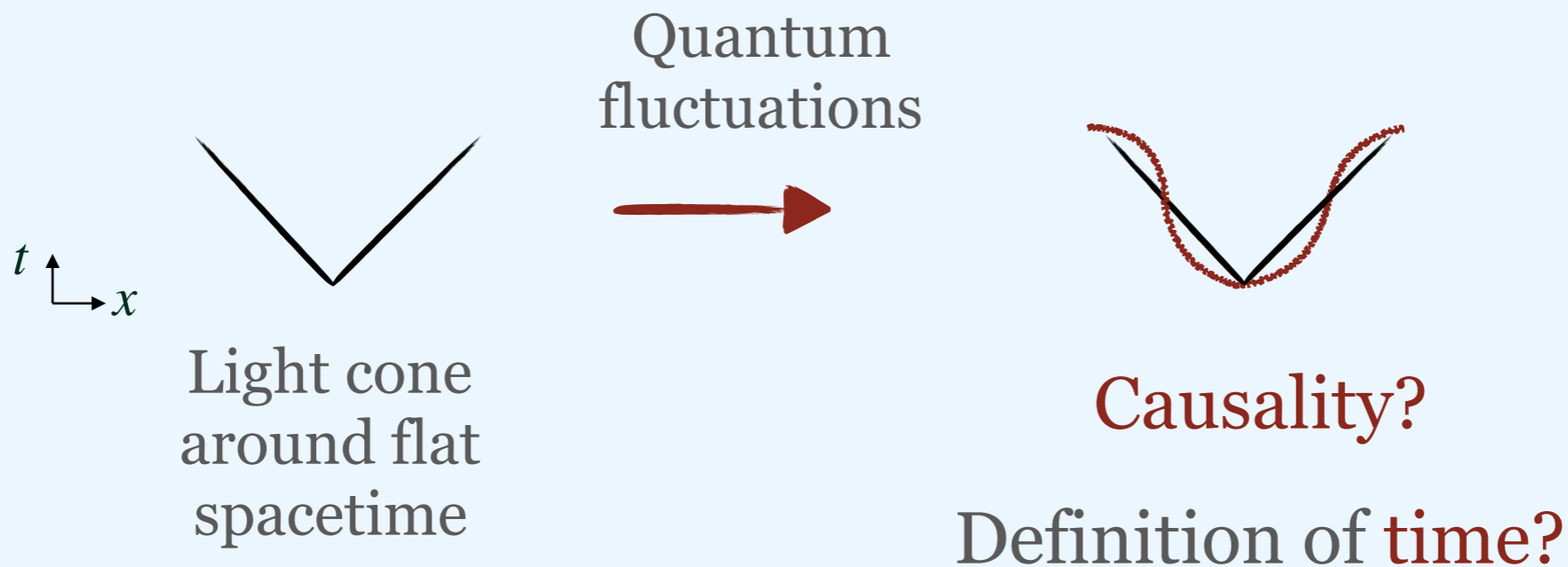
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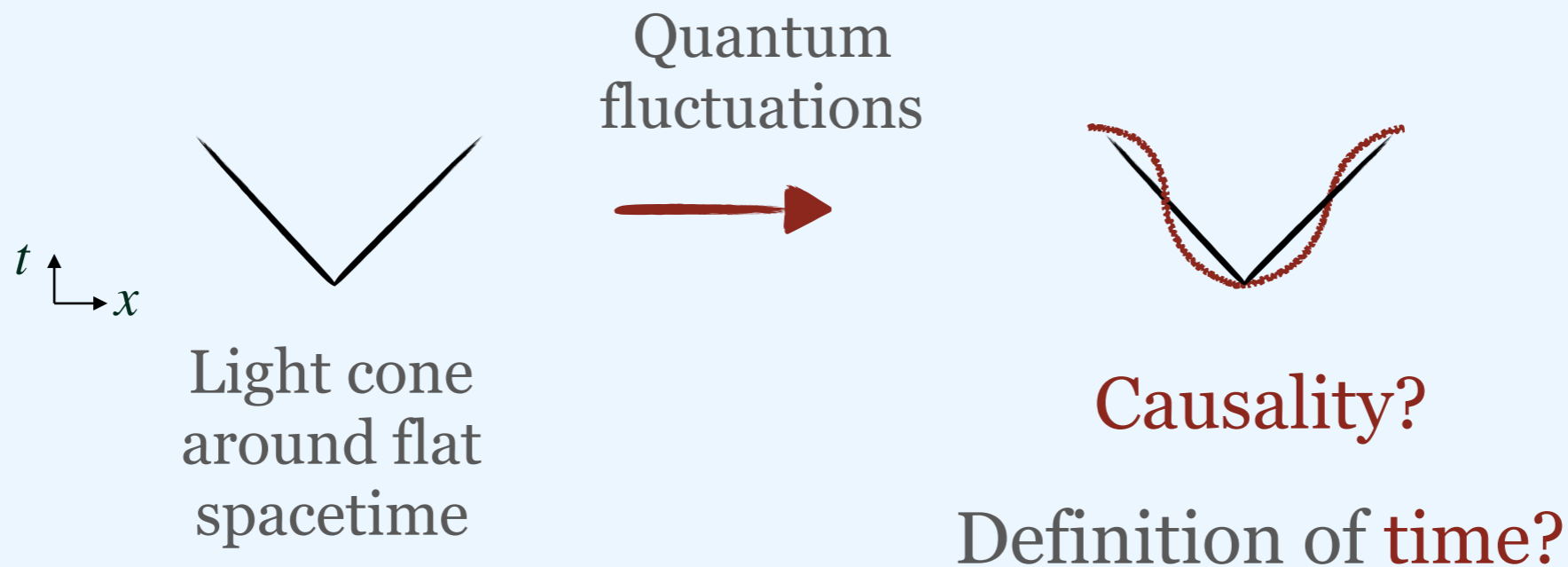
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Does a fundamental QFT exist for the gravitational interaction?

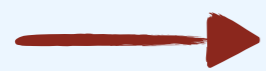
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It could be that at **high energies** the metric is not the fundamental quantity in a quantum theory of gravity



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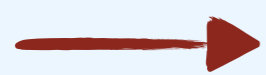
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At low energies, **effective description** in terms of spacetime variables

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Even if we do not know anything about the **non-perturbative** part, we can do a **perturbative analysis**

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→ At low energies, **effective description** in terms of spacetime variables

Even if we do not know anything about the **non-perturbative** part, we can do a **perturbative analysis**

→ **Background field method**

B. De Witt (1967)

Metric perturbations around fixed background

't Hooft and Veltman (1974)

# Motivation

Around a fixed background spacetime we can use the usual QFT formalism and study the theory in the perturbation limit

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One-loop      Two-loop

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Pure gravity non renormalizable at **two loops** Goroff and Sagnotti (1985)



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Dimensionless couplings  $\longrightarrow$  Renormalizable

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Closest analogy to a YM theory of gravity

$$R_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} = \partial_\rho \Gamma^\mu_{\nu\sigma} - \partial_\sigma \Gamma^\mu_{\nu\rho} + \Gamma^\mu_{\lambda\rho} \Gamma^\lambda_{\nu\sigma} - \Gamma^\mu_{\lambda\sigma} \Gamma^\lambda_{\nu\rho} \quad \text{Field strength}$$

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Propagators falling as  $\sim \frac{1}{p^4}$

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**Propagators** falling as  $\sim \frac{1}{p^4}$

Källén-Lehmann spectral representation

$$\Delta(p) = \int_0^\infty d\mu^2 \rho(\mu^2) \frac{1}{p^2 - \mu^2 + i\epsilon} \quad \rho(\mu^2) \geq 0$$

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**Ghost and/or tachyons**

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Unitarity is lost

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First order  metric and connection independents

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$$R_{\nu\rho\sigma}^{\mu} \sim \nabla_{\nu}\Gamma_{\rho\sigma}^{\mu}$$

A single derivative in  
the curvature

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Possible **UV completion** of GR?

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Possible **UV completion** of GR?

A. Salvio and A. Strumia (2014)

M. B. Einhorn and T. Jones (2017)

J. F. Donoghue and G. Menezes (2018)

# Motivation

Lee-Wick type of mechanisms

T. D. Lee and G. C. Wick (1969)



Able to fix unitarity diagram by  
diagram

Nevertheless, this mechanism cannot be implemented into  
the path integral formalism

D. G. Boulware and D. Gross (1969)

# Outline

- **First order** formalism vs. **Second order** formalism
- First order **quadratic gravity**
- Physical content of the **connection**
- The **coupling to matter** in first order formalism
- Summary and Outlook



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## First order formalism vs. Second order formalism

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SO

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$\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$

Fixed relation

$$\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu} = \frac{1}{2} g^{\mu\lambda} \left( \partial_{\nu} g_{\lambda\rho} + \partial_{\rho} g_{\lambda\nu} - \partial_{\lambda} g_{\nu\rho} \right)$$

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$$\delta S_{SO} = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \left( -R^{\mu\nu} + \frac{1}{2} R g^{\mu\nu} \right) \delta g_{\mu\nu} \quad \underline{\text{Einstein's field equation}}$$

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FO  $g_{\mu\nu}$   $\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$  Independent fields

$$\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu} = \left\{ \begin{matrix} \mu \\ \nu \ \rho \end{matrix} \right\} + K_{\nu\rho}^{\mu} + L_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$$

Levi-Civita  
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Levi-Civita connection

Contorsion tensor

$$\frac{1}{2}g^{\rho\sigma} \left( T_{\mu\sigma\nu} + T_{\nu\sigma\mu} - T_{\mu\nu\sigma} \right)$$



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<div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">FO</div>	$g_{\mu\nu}$	$\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$	<u>Independent fields</u>
$\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^{\mu} = \left\{ \begin{matrix} \mu \\ \nu \quad \rho \end{matrix} \right\}$	$+$	$K_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$	$+$
$L_{\nu\rho}^{\mu}$	Contorsion tensor $\frac{1}{2}g^{\rho\sigma} (T_{\mu\sigma\nu} + T_{\nu\sigma\mu} - T_{\mu\nu\sigma})$		Related to non-metricity $Q_{\mu\nu\rho} = \nabla_{\mu}g_{\nu\rho}$
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Levi-Civita connection      Contorsion tensor      Related to non-metricity

$$\frac{1}{2}g^{\rho\sigma} \left( T_{\mu\sigma\nu} + T_{\nu\sigma\mu} - T_{\mu\nu\sigma} \right) \quad Q_{\mu\nu\rho} = \nabla_{\mu}g_{\nu\rho}$$

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For the EH action SO and FO **classically**  
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The equivalence also holds at one loop order J. Anero and RS (2017)

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The **Riemann tensor** does not enjoy the **usual symmetries**

$$\text{LC} \quad R_{[\mu\nu]\rho\sigma} \quad R_{\mu\nu[\rho\sigma]} \quad R_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} = R_{\rho\sigma\mu\nu}$$

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Two different traces of the Riemann tensor

$$R^+[\Gamma]_{\nu\sigma} = g^{\mu\rho} R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$$

$$R^-[\Gamma]_{\mu\sigma} = g^{\nu\rho} R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$$

$$\mathcal{R}[\Gamma]_{\rho\sigma} = g^{\mu\nu} R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$$

$$\mathcal{R}_{\mu\nu} = R_{\mu\nu}^+ - R_{\nu\mu}^-$$

$$R^+ = g^{\mu\nu} R_{\mu\nu}^+ = -g^{\mu\nu} R_{\mu\nu}^- = -R^-$$

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$$R_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}, \quad R_{\mu\nu}^+, \quad R_{\mu\nu}^-, \quad R$$

# First order quadratic gravity

The most general first order quadratic action reads

$$S_{FOQ} = \int d^4x \sqrt{-g} \sum_{I=1}^{I=12} g_I O^I$$

$$O_I = R_{\nu\rho\sigma}^{\mu} (D_I)_{\mu\mu'}^{\nu\rho\sigma\nu'\rho'\sigma'} R_{\nu'\rho'\sigma'}^{\mu'}$$

$D_I$ : Function of metrics and deltas

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$D_I$ : Function of metrics and deltas

The theory is **Weyl invariant**

$$g_{\mu\nu} \longrightarrow \Omega^2(x) g_{\mu\nu}$$

$$\Gamma_{\mu\nu}^{\lambda} \longrightarrow \Gamma_{\mu\nu}^{\lambda}$$

$$O_I \longrightarrow \Omega^{-4} O_I$$

$$\sqrt{-g} \longrightarrow \Omega^4 \sqrt{-g}$$



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Dominates in the IR

I. Shapiro and S. D. Odintsov (1986)

S. L. Adler (1988)

P. G. Ferreira, T. Hill and G. Ross (2018)

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Bigger solution space, **where does gravitation live?**

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As we will see, a **proliferation of spins** occurs. It is crucial to check that we do not have **ghosts** encoded in those propagating spin components.

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We take the EH action and expand the metric around flat space

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Interaction between two index tensors



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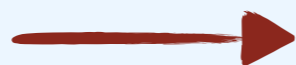
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We want to decompose a two index symmetric tensor in its spin components

Spin projectors



Four index operators that project onto a certain spin

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

To project into the different components we have

$$k^\mu = \delta_0^\mu$$

In the rest frame

$$\theta_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{\mu\nu} - \frac{k_\mu k_\nu}{k^2}$$

$$\omega_{\mu\nu} = \frac{k_\mu k_\nu}{k^2}$$

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## Barnes-Rivers Projectors

$$s = 2 : \quad h_{ij}^T \equiv h_{ij} - \frac{1}{3}h\delta_{ij}$$

$$s = 1 : \quad h_{0i}$$

$$s = 0 : \quad h_{00}$$

$$s = 0 : \quad h \equiv \delta^{ij}h_{ij}$$

Barnes (1963) Rivers (1964)

P. Van Nieuwehuizen (1973)

Different spin  
representations  $SO(3)$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

To project into the different components we have

$$k^\mu = \delta_0^\mu \quad \theta_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{\mu\nu} - \frac{k_\mu k_\nu}{k^2} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{Projects onto spatial indices}$$

$$\omega_{\mu\nu} = \frac{k_\mu k_\nu}{k^2} \quad \longrightarrow \quad \text{Projects onto time indices}$$

## Barnes-Rivers Projectors

$$s = 2 : \quad h_{ij}^T \equiv h_{ij} - \frac{1}{3}h\delta_{ij} \quad \rightarrow \quad (P_2)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} \equiv \frac{1}{2} \left( \theta_\mu^\rho \theta_\nu^\sigma + \theta_\mu^\sigma \theta_\nu^\rho \right) - \frac{1}{3} \theta_{\mu\nu} \theta^{\rho\sigma}$$

$$s = 1 : \quad h_{0i} \quad \rightarrow \quad (P_1)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} \equiv \frac{1}{2} \left( \theta_\mu^\rho \omega_\nu^\sigma + \theta_\mu^\sigma \omega_\nu^\rho + \theta_\nu^\rho \omega_\mu^\sigma + \theta_\nu^\sigma \omega_\mu^\rho \right)$$

$$s = 0 : \quad h_{00} \quad \rightarrow \quad (P_0^w)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} \equiv \omega_{\mu\nu} \omega^{\rho\sigma}$$

$$s = 0 : \quad h \equiv \delta^{ij} h_{ij} \quad \rightarrow \quad (P_0^s)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} \equiv \frac{1}{3} \theta_{\mu\nu} \theta^{\rho\sigma}$$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

These projectors add up to the identity

$$(P_2)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_1)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^w)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^s)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} = I_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma}$$

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We are interested in forming a basis of four index projectors

→ 5 independent monomials with this symmetry

$$M_1 \equiv k_\mu k_\nu k_\rho k_\sigma$$

$$M_2 \equiv k_\mu k_\nu \eta_{\rho\sigma}$$

$$M_3 \equiv k_\mu k_\sigma \eta_{\nu\rho}$$

$$M_4 \equiv \eta_{\mu\nu} \eta_{\rho\sigma}$$

$$M_5 \equiv \eta_{\mu\rho} \eta_{\nu\sigma}$$

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These projectors add up to the identity

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$$M_4 \equiv \eta_{\mu\nu} \eta_{\rho\sigma}$$

$$M_5 \equiv \eta_{\mu\rho} \eta_{\nu\sigma}$$

One extra operator  
in the basis

$$(P_0^\times)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \left( \omega_{\mu\nu} \theta^{\rho\sigma} + \theta_{\mu\nu} \omega^{\rho\sigma} \right)$$



# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

These projectors add up to the identity

$$(P_2)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_1)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^w)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^s)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} = I_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma}$$

Strategy

Take 
$$K_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} = \sum_i c_i P_{i\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

These projectors add up to the identity

$$(P_2)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_1)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^w)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} + (P_0^s)_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} = I_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma}$$

Strategy

Take 
$$K_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} = \sum_i c_i P_{i\mu\nu\rho\sigma}$$

Divide the quadratic piece in the different spin components

$$h^{\mu\nu} \left( \sum_i c_i P_{i\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \right) h^{\rho\sigma} = \sum_i h_i^{\mu\nu} \square h_{\mu\nu}^i$$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

So now we can decompose any four index operator into the spin projectors

$$S_{EH+gf} = \frac{1}{2} \int d^4x -\frac{1}{4} h^{\mu\nu} \left( P_2 + P_1 - \frac{1}{2} P_0^s + \frac{1}{2} P_0^w - \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} P^\times \right)_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \square h^{\rho\sigma}$$

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Inverting the operator we get the propagator and the free energy

D. Dicus and S. Willenbrock (1969)

$$W [T_{(1)}, T_{(2)}] = \int d^4x T_{(1)}^{\mu\nu} \Delta_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} T_{(2)}^{\rho\sigma} = \int d^4x \left( T_{(1)}^{\mu\nu} \left( P_2 - \frac{1}{2} P_0^s \right)_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} T_{(2)}^{\rho\sigma} \right)$$

Interaction between  
external sources

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

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Inverting the operator we get the propagator and the free energy

D. Dicus and S. Willenbrock (2004)

$$W [T_{(1)}, T_{(2)}] = \int d^4x T_{(1)}^{\mu\nu} \Delta_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} T_{(2)}^{\rho\sigma} = \int d^4x \left( T_{(1)}^{\mu\nu} \left( P_2 \ominus \frac{1}{2} P_0^s \right)_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} T_{(2)}^{\rho\sigma} \right)$$

Positive definite

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

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On-shell  
asymptotic states



A single spin 2  
field propagates

$$h_{\mu\nu}^{TT}$$

Graviton

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

So now we can decompose any four index operator into the spin projectors

$$S_{EH+gf} = \frac{1}{2} \int d^4x -\frac{1}{4} h^{\mu\nu} \left( P_2 + P_1 - \frac{1}{2} P_0^s + \frac{1}{2} P_0^w - \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} P^\times \right)_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \square h^{\rho\sigma}$$

## Summary

**Spin-2 and Spin-0** components mediating the interaction between external sources (off-shell)

**Spin-2** massless unique asymptotic state  
**Graviton**

# Physical content of $A_{\mu\nu\lambda}$

We are working with **symmetric connections**

$$A_{\mu\nu\lambda} \in \mathcal{A} \equiv T_x \otimes \text{Sym}(T_x \otimes T_x)$$



# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

We are working with **symmetric connections**

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$$\begin{array}{c}
 40 \\
 \text{independent} \\
 \text{components}
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \square \square \otimes \square \\
 \otimes
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{c}
 \square \square \\
 \oplus \\
 \square
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{c}
 \square \square \square \\
 \text{Totally} \\
 \text{Symmetric} \\
 \text{part}
 \end{array}$$

$$\{2,0\} \otimes \{1\} = \{3,0\} \oplus \{2,1\}$$

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$$A_{\mu\nu\lambda} \in \mathcal{A} \equiv T_x \otimes \text{Sym}(T_x \otimes T_x)$$

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 \square \square \\
 \square
 \end{array} \oplus \begin{array}{c}
 \square \square \square
 \end{array} \\
 \text{Hook part} \qquad \text{Totally} \\
 \qquad \qquad \qquad \text{Symmetric} \\
 \qquad \qquad \qquad \text{part}
 \end{array}$$

$$\underline{20}_H = 2(\underline{2}) \oplus 3(\underline{1}) \oplus (\underline{0})$$

$$\underline{20}_S = (\underline{3}) \oplus (\underline{2}) \oplus 2(\underline{1}) \oplus 2(\underline{0})$$

$$P_H + P_S = I$$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

We are working with **symmetric connections**

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$$\square\square \otimes \square = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \square \\ \hline \square \\ \hline \end{array} \oplus \square\square\square$$

We have 22 independent monomials with this symmetry

→ **22 projectors** in the basis  $(P_i)^{\mu\nu\lambda}_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$

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We need 10 extra spin operators with mixed symmetry

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$$\square\square \otimes \square = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \square \\ \hline \square \\ \hline \end{array} \oplus \square\square\square$$

We have 22 independent monomials with this symmetry

→ **22 projectors** in the basis  $(P_i)^{\mu\nu\lambda}_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$

We need 10 extra spin operators with mixed symmetry

One spin-3, four spin-2, eleven spin-1 and six spin-0

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

In FOQG around flat space

$$g_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{\mu\nu} + \kappa h_{\mu\nu}$$

$$\Gamma_{\mu\nu}^{\lambda} = \bar{\Gamma}_{\mu\nu}^{\lambda} + A_{\mu\nu}^{\lambda}$$

$$A_{\alpha\beta\gamma} K_{\mu\nu\lambda}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} A^{\mu\nu\lambda} + h^{\mu\nu} M_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} h^{\rho\sigma} + h^{\mu\nu} N_{\mu\nu}^{\rho\sigma} A_{\lambda\rho\sigma}^{\lambda}$$

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

In **FOQG** around flat space

$$A_{\alpha\beta\gamma} K_{\mu\nu\lambda}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} A^{\mu\nu\lambda}$$

All the dynamics  
encoded in the gauge  
field

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

In **FOQG** around flat space  $A_{\alpha\beta\gamma} K_{\mu\nu\lambda}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} A^{\mu\nu\lambda}$  All the dynamics encoded in the gauge field

Taking for instance the simpler action

$$S_{FOQ} \equiv \int d^n x \sqrt{-g} \left( \alpha R[\Gamma]^2 + \beta R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu} + \gamma R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \right)$$



# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

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$$S_{FOQ} \equiv \int d^n x \sqrt{-g} \left( \alpha R[\Gamma]^2 + \beta R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu} + \gamma R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \right)$$

$\mathcal{P}$  Hook       $\mathcal{P}$  Symmetric       $\mathcal{P}$  Mixed

$$\begin{aligned} (K_{FOQ})_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} = & \left( -2(2\gamma + \beta) \mathcal{P}_0^s - (4\gamma + 9\alpha + 2\beta) \mathcal{P}_0^s + (2\gamma - \beta) \mathcal{P}_0^x - \frac{4}{3}(3\gamma + 5\beta) \mathcal{P}_1^s \right. \\ & - 2\gamma \mathcal{P}_1^s - \frac{4}{3}(3\gamma + \beta) \mathcal{P}_1^t - (2\gamma + \beta) \mathcal{P}_1^{wx} + 4\beta \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} - 2(2\gamma + \beta) (\mathcal{P}_2 + \mathcal{P}_2) \\ & \left. - 4\gamma \mathcal{P}_2^s + 2(\beta + \gamma) \mathcal{P}_2^x - 4\gamma \mathcal{P}_3 \right)_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

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**Spin-3** is present and comes from the Riemann squared terms

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

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We have in principle three **Spin-2** components

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

Taking for instance the simpler action

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We have in principle three **Spin-0**  
and four **Spin-1** components

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

Taking for instance the simpler action

$$S_{FOQ} \equiv \int d^n x \sqrt{-g} \left( \alpha R[\Gamma]^2 + \beta R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu} + \gamma R[\Gamma]_{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} R[\Gamma]^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \right)$$

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Which ones appear in the **propagator**? Which ones survive **on-shell**?

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

We need a gauge fixing to invert the operator

$$S_{gf} = \frac{1}{\chi} \int d^4x \eta^{\mu\nu} \eta^{\rho\sigma} \eta_{\tau\lambda} A_{\mu\nu}^{\tau} \square A_{\rho\sigma}^{\lambda}$$

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$\mathcal{P}$  Hook       $\mathcal{P}$  Symmetric       $\mathcal{P}$  Mixed

$$\begin{aligned} (K_{gf})_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} &= \frac{1}{\chi} \left( \mathcal{P}_0^w + 3 \mathcal{P}_0^s + 3 \mathcal{P}_0^s - 3 \mathcal{P}_0^x + \mathcal{P}_0^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_0^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1 - \frac{5}{3} \mathcal{P}_1^s + \mathcal{P}_1^w \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \frac{2}{3} \mathcal{P}_1^t - \mathcal{P}_1^{wx} + \mathcal{P}_1^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sx} + 4 \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} \right)_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \square \end{aligned}$$

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$\mathcal{P}$  Hook       $\mathcal{P}$  Symmetric       $\mathcal{P}$  Mixed

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Important to note: **no spin-2 or spin-3 in the gauge fixing!**



# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

If we make  $\beta = \gamma = 0$

$$\begin{aligned} (K_{R^2+\text{gf}})^{\mu\nu \rho\sigma}_{\tau \lambda} &= \frac{1}{\chi} \left( P_0^w + 3 P_0^s + (3 - 9\chi) \mathcal{P}_0^s - 3 \mathcal{P}_0^x + \mathcal{P}_0^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_0^{ws} + P_1^w - \frac{5}{3} P_1^s \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \mathcal{P}_1^w + \frac{2}{3} \mathcal{P}_1^t - \mathcal{P}_1^{wx} + \mathcal{P}_1^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sx} + 4 \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} \right)_{\tau \lambda}^{\mu\nu \rho\sigma} \square \end{aligned}$$

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**No spin-2  
or spin-3**

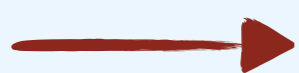
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If we make  $\beta = \gamma = 0$

$$(K_{R^2+\text{gf}})^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}_{\tau\lambda} = \frac{1}{\chi} \left( P_0^w + 3 P_0^s + (3 - 9\chi) \mathcal{P}_0^s - 3 \mathcal{P}_0^x + \mathcal{P}_0^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_0^{ws} + P_1^w - \frac{5}{3} P_1^s \right. \\ \left. + \mathcal{P}_1^w + \frac{2}{3} \mathcal{P}_1^t - \mathcal{P}_1^{wx} + \mathcal{P}_1^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sx} + 4 \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} \right)_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \square$$

**No spin-2 or spin-3**

The projection onto spin-2 and spin-3 are zero modes



We would need to gauge fix them

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

If we make  $\beta = \gamma = 0$

$$(K_{R^2+\text{gf}})^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma}_{\tau\lambda} = \frac{1}{\chi} \left( P_0^w + 3 P_0^s + (3 - 9\chi) \mathcal{P}_0^s - 3 \mathcal{P}_0^x + \mathcal{P}_0^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_0^{ws} + P_1^w - \frac{5}{3} P_1^s \right. \\ \left. + \mathcal{P}_1^w + \frac{2}{3} \mathcal{P}_1^t - \mathcal{P}_1^{wx} + \mathcal{P}_1^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sx} + 4 \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} \right)_{\tau\lambda}^{\mu\nu\rho\sigma} \square$$

**No spin-2  
or spin-3**

The projection onto spin-2 and spin-3 are zero modes

→ We would need to gauge fix them

In fact, for  $R^2$  there are 13 zero modes

# Physical content of $A_{\mu(\nu\lambda)}$

For  $\alpha \neq \beta \neq \gamma \neq 0$  we can invert the operator in order to get the **propagator**. In doing so, **all the projectors of the basis appear**.

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To see the asymptotic states, we need to compute the **equations of motion for the different spin pieces** of the connection.

We have not found any obvious problem with the **spin-3 piece** so far. A full analysis of this piece is needed in order to see if inconsistencies appear.



# Outline

- **First order** formalism vs. **Second order** formalism
- First order **quadratic gravity**
- Physical content of the **connection**

The **coupling to matter** in first order formalism

- Summary and Outlook

# The coupling to matter in FO

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We are interested in the **coupling of fermions to gravity in first order formalism**, as they turn out to be a source of **torsion**.

This constitutes a difference between first order linear gravity and second order linear gravity, not present in the case of pure gravity.

# Coupling of fermions in FO

We take the minimal coupling of fermions to gravity. To do that, we need to change to the vielbein formalism

$$\underline{e_a^\mu} \quad \omega_\mu^{ab} \quad \text{Independent}$$

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$$S_{DEH} \equiv -\frac{1}{\kappa^2} \int d^4x \, e \, \frac{1}{2} e_a^\mu e_b^\nu R_{\mu\nu}^{ab}[\omega] + \frac{i}{2} \int d^4x \, e \left( \bar{\psi} e_a^\mu \gamma^a \nabla_\mu \psi - \nabla_\mu \bar{\psi} e_a^\mu \gamma^a \psi \right)$$

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Variations with respect to the vierbein

$$\underline{G_\mu^a + \kappa T_\mu^a = 0}$$

Not symmetric!

$$T_\mu^a = \frac{i}{2} \kappa \left( \bar{\psi} \gamma^a \nabla_\mu \psi - \nabla_\mu \bar{\psi} \gamma^a \psi \right) - \frac{i}{2} \kappa e_\mu^a \left( \bar{\psi} \gamma^\nu \nabla_\nu \psi - \nabla_\nu \bar{\psi} \gamma^\nu \psi \right)$$

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Fermions act like a **source of torsion**



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The antisymmetric part of the variations with respect to the spin connection

$$T_{\nu\lambda\rho} = \frac{\kappa^2}{2} \epsilon_{\nu\lambda\rho\sigma} J_5^\sigma$$

Totally antisymmetric torsion  
proportional to the axial current

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Dirac-EH action with **torsion**      Dirac-EH action with **no torsion**

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Extra quartic contact  
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Nevertheless, suppressed by the Planck mass

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What form does the torsion have when coupling fermions in FOQG?



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- In principle, this theory is richer in its field content: we have spin-3, spin-2, spin-1 and spin-0 components
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- The theory must undergo a spontaneous symmetry breaking so that EH dominates in the IR

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What are the sources of the connection?

Is the free energy positive definite?



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Are there ghostly degrees of freedom?

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Can we reintroduce it in the action?

What kind of new interactions do we get?

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- The spin-3 part is worth of deeper study

C. Aragone and S. Deser (1979)

M. A. Vasiliev (1988)

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Are there any inconsistencies in the interactions?

Thank you for your attention

# Backup

## Possible sources

$$J_{\alpha\beta\gamma} \equiv Ak_{\alpha} \eta_{\beta\gamma} + B(k_{\beta}\eta_{\alpha\gamma} + k_{\gamma}\eta_{\alpha\beta})$$

$$J_{\alpha\beta\gamma} = Aj_{\alpha}T_{\beta\gamma} + B(j_{\beta}T_{\alpha\gamma} + j_{\gamma}T_{\alpha\beta})$$

## Zero modes

$$Z_1 \equiv (P_0^w + P_0^s - \mathcal{P}_0^{ws})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_2 \equiv (-P_1^w + P_1^s + 3\mathcal{P}_1^w - \frac{3}{8}\mathcal{P}_1^{sw} - \frac{3}{2}\mathcal{P}_1^{wst})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_3 \equiv (2\mathcal{P}_1^w + \mathcal{P}_1^t - \frac{3}{2}\mathcal{P}_1^{sw})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_4 \equiv (-2P_1^w + \mathcal{P}_1^w + \mathcal{P}_1^{ws} - \frac{1}{8}\mathcal{P}_1^{sw} - \frac{1}{2}\mathcal{P}_1^{wst})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_5 \equiv (-2P_1^w + \mathcal{P}_1^w - \frac{3}{4}\mathcal{P}_1^{sw} + \mathcal{P}_1^{sx} - \mathcal{P}_1^{wst})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_6 \equiv (-\frac{7}{6}P_1^w + \frac{14}{3}\mathcal{P}_1^w - \frac{21}{16}\mathcal{P}_1^{ws} + \mathcal{P}_1^{ss} - \frac{7}{4}\mathcal{P}_1^{wst})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_7 \equiv (\mathcal{P}_1^s)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_8 \equiv (\mathcal{P}_1^{wx})_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_9 \equiv (P_2)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_{10} \equiv (\mathcal{P}_2)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_{11} \equiv (\mathcal{P}_2^s)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_{12} \equiv (\mathcal{P}_2^x)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$

$$Z_{13} \equiv (P_3)_{\lambda\mu\nu}^{\alpha\beta\gamma} \Omega_{\alpha\beta\gamma}$$