

A condition $\Gamma(X)$ (which conjecturally holds for $X=1\cup P(n^2+1))$ expresses the current knowledge on a set $X\subseteq N$ and strengthens the implication (the infiniteness of X is unproven) \wedge (ω >card(X) \Rightarrow $X\subseteq [0,(((24!)!)!)!])$, whereas the statement \exists $X\subseteq N$ $\Gamma(X)$ (which is proven) fails for everyone who for every terminating algorithm with no input knows its output

Agnieszka Kozdęba, Apoloniusz Tyszka

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A condition $\Gamma(X)$ (which conjecturally holds for $X = \{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$) expresses the current knowledge on a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ and strengthens the conjunction (the infiniteness of X is unproven) \wedge (card(X) $< \omega \Rightarrow X \subseteq [0, (((24!)!)!)!]$), whereas the statement $\exists X \subseteq \mathbb{N} \Gamma(X)$ (which is proven) fails for everyone who for every terminating algorithm with no input knows its output

AGNIESZKA KOZDĘBA, APOLONIUSZ TYSZKA

Abstract. Let f(1) = 2, f(2) = 4, and let f(n+1) = f(n)! for every integer $n \ge 2$. Edmund Landau's conjecture states that the set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} of primes of the form $n^2 + 1$ is infinite. Landau's conjecture implies the following unproven statement Φ : $\operatorname{card}(\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1})<\omega\Rightarrow\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}\subseteq[2,f(7)].$ Let B denote the system of equations: $\{x_i! = x_k : i, k \in \{1, \dots, 9\}\} \cup \{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \dots, 9\}\}$. We write down a system $\mathcal{U} \subseteq B$ of 9 equations which has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $(1,\ldots,1)$ and $(f(1),\ldots,f(9))$. Let Ψ denote the statement: if a system $S\subseteq B$ has at most finitely many solutions in positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_9 , then each such solution (x_1, \ldots, x_9) satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_9 \le f(9)$. We write down a system $\mathcal{A} \subseteq B$ of 8 equations. The statement Ψ restricted to the system \mathcal{A} is equivalent to the statement Φ . It heuristically proves the statement Φ . This proof does not yield that $\operatorname{card}(\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}) = \omega$. Algorithms always terminate. We explain the distinction between existing algorithms (i.e. algorithms whose existence is provable in ZFC) and known algorithms (i.e. algorithms whose existence is constructive and currently known to us). Conditions (1)–(5) concern sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$. (1) *There are many* elements of X and it is conjectured that X is infinite. (2) No known algorithm with no input returns the logical value of the statement $card(X) = \omega$. (3) There is a known algorithm that for every $k \in \mathbb{N}$ decides whether or not $k \in X$. (4) There is a known algorithm with no input that computes an integer n satisfying $card(X) < \omega \Rightarrow X \subseteq (-\infty, n]$. (5) There is a known condition C, which can be formalized in ZFC, such that for all except at most finitely many $k \in \mathbb{N}$, k satisfies the condition C if and only if $k \in X$. The simplest known such condition C defines in \mathbb{N} the set X. The set $X = \{k \in \mathbb{N} : (f(7) < k) \Rightarrow (f(7), k) \cap \mathcal{P}_{n^2 + 1} \neq \emptyset\}$ satisfies conditions (1) - (4). A more complicated set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ satisfies conditions (1) - (5). No set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ will satisfy conditions (1) - (4) forever, if for every algorithm with no input, at some future day, a computer will be able to execute this algorithm in 1 second or less. The physical limits of computation disprove this assumption. The statement Φ implies that conditions (1)-(5) hold for $X = \{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$. To define the condition $\Gamma(X)$ from the title, we formulate condition (4) for n = (((24!)!)!)! and take the conjunction of conditions (1)-(4) or the conjunction of conditions (1)-(5).

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Key words and phrases: algorithm with no input returns the logical value of the statement $\operatorname{card}(X) = \omega$, computable and conjecturally infinite set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$, current knowledge on a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$, distinction between existing algorithms and known algorithms, physical limits of computation, primes of the form $n^2 + 1$.

1. DEFINITIONS AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN EXISTING ALGORITHMS AND KNOWN ALGORITHMS Algorithms always terminate. Semi-algorithms may not terminate.

Definition 1. Conditions (1)-(5) concern sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$.

- (1) There are many elements of X and it is conjectured that X is infinite.
- (2) No known algorithm with no input returns the logical value of the statement $card(X) = \omega$.
- (3) There is a known algorithm that for every $k \in \mathbb{N}$ decides whether or not $k \in X$.
- (4) There is a known algorithm with no input that computes an integer n satisfying $\operatorname{card}(X) < \omega \Rightarrow X \subseteq (-\infty, n]$.
- (5) There is a known condition C, which can be formalized in ZFC, such that for all except at most finitely many $k \in \mathbb{N}$, k satisfies the condition C if and only if $k \in X$. The simplest known such condition C defines in \mathbb{N} the set X.

Condition (2) implies that no known proof shows the finiteness/infiniteness of X.

Definition 2. *Let* $\beta = (((24!)!)!)!$.

Lemma 1. $\log_2(\log_2(\log_2(\log_2(\log_2(\log_2(\beta)))))) \approx 1.42298$.

Proof. We ask Wolfram Alpha at http://wolframalpha.com.

Edmund Landau's conjecture states that the set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} of primes of the form n^2+1 is infinite, see [6]–[8]. Let [·] denote the integer part function.

Example 1. The set $X = \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$ satisfies condition (2).

Example 2. The set $X = \begin{cases} \mathbb{N}, & \text{if } [\frac{\beta}{\pi}] \text{ is odd} \\ \emptyset, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$ does not satisfy condition (2) because we know an algorithm with no input that computes $[\frac{\beta}{\pi}]$.

Example 3. ([1], [4], [5, p. 9]). The function

$$\mathbb{N}\ni n \xrightarrow{h} \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if the decimal expansion of } \pi \text{ contains } n \text{ consecutive zeros} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

is computable because $h = \mathbb{N} \times \{1\}$ or there exists $k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$h = (\{0, \dots, k\} \times \{1\}) \cup (\{k+1, k+2, k+3, \dots\} \times \{0\})$$

No known algorithm computes the function h.

Examples 1–3 and the proof of Statement 1 explain the distinction between *existing algorithms* (i.e. algorithms whose existence is provable in *ZFC*) and *known algorithms* (i.e. algorithms whose existence is constructive and currently known to us).

Definition 3. *Let* Φ *denote the following unproven statement:*

$$\operatorname{card}(\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}) < \omega \Rightarrow \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} \subseteq [2,\beta]$$

Landau's conjecture implies the statement Φ . In Section 4, we heuristically prove the statement Φ . This proof does not yield that $\operatorname{card}(\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}) = \omega$.

Statement 1. Condition (4) fails for $X = \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$.

Proof. For every set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$, there exists an algorithm Alg(X) with no input that returns

$$n = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } \operatorname{card}(X) \in \{0, \omega\} \\ \max(X), & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

This *n* satisfies the implication in condition (4), but the algorithm $Alg(\mathcal{P}_{n^2+1})$ is unknown for us because its definition is ineffective.

Proving the statement Φ will disprove Statement 1. Statement 1 cannot be formalized in mathematics because it refers to the current mathematical knowledge. The same is true for Statements 2–4 in the next sections.

Definition 4. We say that an integer n is a threshold number of a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$, if $card(X) < \omega \Rightarrow X \subseteq (-\infty, n]$.

If a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ is empty or infinite, then any integer n is a threshold number of X. If a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ is non-empty and finite, then the all threshold numbers of X form the set $[\max(X), \infty) \cap \mathbb{N}$.

2. The physical limits of computation inspire Open Problems 1 and 2

Open Problem 1. *Is there a set* $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ *, which is well-known in number theory and satisfies conditions* (1)–(4)?

Open Problem 2. *Is there a set* $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ *, which is well-known in number theory and satisfies conditions* (1)–(5)?

Statement 2. The set

$$\mathcal{X} = \{k \in \mathbb{N} : (\beta < k) \Rightarrow (\beta, k) \cap \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} \neq \emptyset\}$$

satisfies conditions (1)-(4).

Proof. Condition (1) holds as $X \supseteq \{0, ..., \beta\}$ and the set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} is conjecturally infinite. By Lemma 1, due to known physics we are not able to confirm by a direct computation that some element of \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} is greater than β , see [3]. Thus condition (2) holds. Condition (3) holds trivially. Since the set

$$\{k \in \mathbb{N} : (\beta < k) \land (\beta, k) \cap \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} \neq \emptyset\}$$

is empty or infinite, the integer β is a threshold number of X. Thus condition (4) holds. \Box

For a non-negative integer n, let g(n) denote the greatest non-negative integer k such that 2^k divides $\max (2^{\beta} \cdot [\frac{n}{\beta}], 1)$.

Lemma 2. The function $g: \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ satisfies $g(0) = \ldots = g(\beta - 1) = 0$ and maps $\mathbb{N} \cap [\beta, \infty)$ onto itself taking every value in $\mathbb{N} \cap [\beta, \infty)$ infinitely many times.

Statement 3. *The set*

 $X = \{n \in \mathbb{N} : g(n)^2 + 1 \text{ has no divisors greater than } 1 \text{ and smaller than } g(n)^2 + 1\}$ satisfies conditions (1) – (5).

Proof. We use Lemma 2 and argue as in the proof of Statement 2.

Proving Landau's conjecture will disprove Statements 2 and 3.

Theorem 1. No set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ will satisfy conditions (1)–(4) forever, if for every algorithm with no input, at some future day, a computer will be able to execute this algorithm in 1 second or less.

Proof. The proof goes by contradiction. We fix an integer n that satisfies condition (4). Since conditions (2)–(4) will hold forever, the semi-algorithm in Figure 1 never terminates and sequentially prints the following sentences:

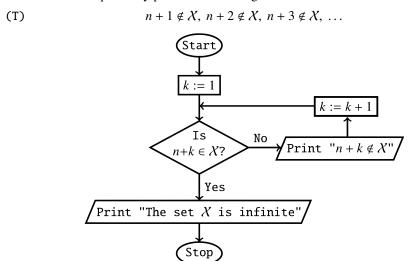


Fig. 1 Semi-algorithm that terminates if and only if the set X is infinite

The sentences from the sequence (T) and our assumption imply that for every integer m > n computed by a known algorithm, at some future day, a computer will be able to confirm in 1 second or less that $(n, m] \cap X = \emptyset$. Thus, at some future day, numerical evidence will support the conjecture that the set X is finite, contrary to the conjecture in condition (1).

The physical limits of computation ([3]) disprove the assumption of Theorem 1.

3. Number-theoretic statements Ψ_n

Let f(1) = 2, f(2) = 4, and let f(n + 1) = f(n)! for every integer $n \ge 2$. Let \mathcal{U}_1 denote the system of equations which consists of the equation $x_1! = x_1$. For an integer $n \ge 2$, let \mathcal{U}_n denote the following system of equations:

$$\begin{cases} x_1! &= x_1 \\ x_1 \cdot x_1 &= x_2 \\ \forall i \in \{2, \dots, n-1\} x_i! &= x_{i+1} \end{cases}$$

The diagram in Figure 2 illustrates the construction of the system \mathcal{U}_n .

$$\underbrace{\left(x_1\right)^{\text{squaring } x_2}}_{!} \overset{!}{\longrightarrow} \underbrace{\left(x_3\right)^{\text{squaring } x_2}}_{!} \overset{!}{\longrightarrow} \underbrace{\left(x_1\right)^{\text{squaring } x_2$$

Fig. 2 Construction of the system \mathcal{U}_n

Lemma 3. For every positive integer n, the system \mathcal{U}_n has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $(1, \ldots, 1)$ and $(f(1), \ldots, f(n))$.

Let B_n denote the following system of equations:

$${x_i! = x_k : i, k \in \{1, \dots, n\}} \cup {x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \dots, n\}}$$

For a positive integer n, let Ψ_n denote the following statement: if a system of equations $S \subseteq B_n$ has at most finitely many solutions in positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_n , then each such solution (x_1, \ldots, x_n) satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_n \le f(n)$. The statement Ψ_n says that for subsystems of B_n with a finite number of solutions, the largest known solution is indeed the largest possible. The statements Ψ_1 and Ψ_2 hold trivially. There is no reason to assume the validity of the statement $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\} \ \Psi_n$.

Theorem 2. For every statement Ψ_n , the bound f(n) cannot be decreased.

Proof. It follows from Lemma 3 because $\mathcal{U}_n \subseteq B_n$.

Theorem 3. For every integer $n \ge 2$, the statement Ψ_{n+1} implies the statement Ψ_n .

Proof. If a system $S \subseteq B_n$ has at most finitely many solutions in positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_n , then for every integer $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}$ the system $S \cup \{x_i! = x_{n+1}\}$ has at most finitely many solutions in positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_{n+1} . The statement Ψ_{n+1} implies that $x_i! = x_{n+1} \le f(n+1) = f(n)!$. Hence, $x_i \le f(n)$.

Theorem 4. Every statement Ψ_n is true with an unknown integer bound that depends on n.

Proof. For every positive integer n, the system B_n has a finite number of subsystems. \Box

4. A CONJECTURAL SOLUTION TO OPEN PROBLEMS 1 AND 2

Lemma 4. For every positive integers x and y, $x! \cdot y = y!$ if and only if

$$(x + 1 = y) \lor (x = y = 1)$$

Lemma 5. (Wilson's theorem, [2, p. 89]). For every integer $x \ge 2$, x is prime if and only if x divides (x - 1)! + 1.

Let \mathcal{A} denote the following system of equations:

$$\begin{cases} x_2! &= x_3 \\ x_3! &= x_4 \\ x_5! &= x_6 \\ x_8! &= x_9 \\ x_1 \cdot x_1 &= x_2 \\ x_3 \cdot x_5 &= x_6 \\ x_4 \cdot x_8 &= x_9 \\ x_5 \cdot x_7 &= x_8 \end{cases}$$

Lemma 4 and the diagram in Figure 3 explain the construction of the system \mathcal{A} .

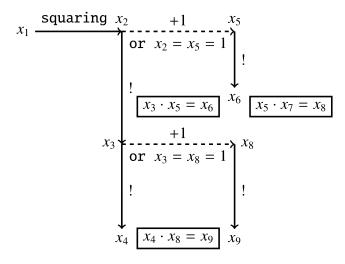


Fig. 3 Construction of the system \mathcal{A}

Lemma 6. For every integer $x_1 \ge 2$, the system \mathcal{A} is solvable in positive integers x_2, \ldots, x_9 if and only if $x_1^2 + 1$ is prime. In this case, the integers x_2, \ldots, x_9 are uniquely determined by the following equalities:

$$x_{2} = x_{1}^{2}$$

$$x_{3} = (x_{1}^{2})!$$

$$x_{4} = ((x_{1}^{2})!)!$$

$$x_{5} = x_{1}^{2} + 1$$

$$x_{6} = (x_{1}^{2} + 1)!$$

$$x_{7} = \frac{(x_{1}^{2})! + 1}{x_{1}^{2} + 1}$$

$$x_{8} = (x_{1}^{2})! + 1$$

$$x_{9} = ((x_{1}^{2})! + 1)!$$

Proof. By Lemma 4, for every integer $x_1 \ge 2$, the system \mathcal{A} is solvable in positive integers x_2, \ldots, x_9 if and only if $x_1^2 + 1$ divides $(x_1^2)! + 1$. Hence, the claim of Lemma 6 follows from Lemma 5.

Lemma 7. There are only finitely many tuples $(x_1, ..., x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^9$, which solve the system \mathcal{A} and satisfy $x_1 = 1$. This is true as every such tuple $(x_1, ..., x_9)$ satisfies $x_1, ..., x_9 \in \{1, 2\}$.

Proof. The equality $x_1 = 1$ implies that $x_2 = x_1 \cdot x_1 = 1$. Hence, $x_3 = x_2! = 1$. Therefore, $x_4 = x_3! = 1$. The equalities $x_5! = x_6$ and $x_5 = 1 \cdot x_5 = x_3 \cdot x_5 = x_6$ imply that $x_5, x_6 \in \{1, 2\}$. The equalities $x_8! = x_9$ and $x_8 = 1 \cdot x_8 = x_4 \cdot x_8 = x_9$ imply that $x_8, x_9 \in \{1, 2\}$. The equality $x_5 \cdot x_7 = x_8$ implies that $x_7 = \frac{x_8}{x_5} \in \{\frac{1}{1}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{2}{1}, \frac{2}{2}\} \cap \mathbb{N} = \{1, 2\}$. □

Conjecture 1. The statement Ψ_9 is true when is restricted to the system \mathcal{A} .

Theorem 5. Conjecture 1 proves the following implication: if there exists an integer $x_1 \ge 2$ such that $x_1^2 + 1$ is prime and greater than f(7), then the set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} is infinite.

Proof. Suppose that the antecedent holds. By Lemma 6, there exists a unique tuple $(x_2, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^8$ such that the tuple (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_9) solves the system \mathcal{A} . Since $x_1^2 + 1 > f(7)$, we obtain that $x_1^2 \ge f(7)$. Hence, $(x_1^2)! \ge f(7)! = f(8)$. Consequently,

$$x_9 = ((x_1^2)! + 1)! \ge (f(8) + 1)! > f(8)! = f(9)$$

Conjecture 1 and the inequality $x_9 > f(9)$ imply that the system \mathcal{A} has infinitely many solutions $(x_1, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^9$. According to Lemmas 6 and 7, the set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} is infinite.

Theorem 6. Conjecture 1 implies the statement Φ .

Proof. It follows from Theorem 5 and the equality f(7) = (((24!)!)!)!.

Theorem 7. The statement Φ implies Conjecture 1.

Proof. By Lemmas 6 and 7, if positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_9 solve the system \mathcal{A} , then

$$(x_1 \ge 2) \land (x_5 = x_1^2 + 1) \land (x_5 \text{ is prime})$$

or $x_1, \ldots, x_9 \in \{1, 2\}$. In the first case, Lemma 6 and the statement Φ imply that the inequality $x_5 \le (((24!)!)!)! = f(7)$ holds when the system \mathcal{A} has at most finitely many solutions in positive integers x_1, \ldots, x_9 . Hence, $x_2 = x_5 - 1 < f(7)$ and $x_3 = x_2! < f(7)! = f(8)$. Continuing this reasoning in the same manner, we can show that every x_i does not exceed f(9).

Statement 4. The statement Φ implies that conditions (1)–(5) hold for $X = \{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$.

Proof. The set \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1} is conjecturally infinite. There are 2199894223892 primes of the form n^2+1 in the interval $[2,10^{28})$, see [7]. These two facts imply condition (1). By Lemma 1, due to known physics we are not able to confirm by a direct computation that some element of $\{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$ is greater than $f(7) = (((24!)!)!)! = \beta$, see [3]. Thus condition (2) holds. Condition (3) holds trivially. The statement Φ implies that β is a threshold number of $X = \{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$. Thus condition (4) holds. The following condition:

k-1 is a square and k has no divisors greater than 1 and smaller than k

defines in \mathbb{N} the set $\{1\} \cup \mathcal{P}_{n^2+1}$. This proves condition (5).

Proving Landau's conjecture will disprove Statement 4. By Statement 4, to define the condition $\Gamma(X)$ from the article title, we formulate condition (4) for n = (((24!)!)!)! and take the conjunction of conditions (1)-(4) or the conjunction of conditions (1)-(5).

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Agnieszka Kozdęba Institute of Mathematics Jagiellonian University Łojasiewicza 6, 30-348 Kraków, Poland E-mail: Agnieszka.Kozdeba@im.uj.edu.pl

Apoloniusz Tyszka Technical Faculty Hugo Kołłątaj University Balicka 116B, 30-149 Kraków, Poland E-mail: rttyszka@cyf-kr.edu.pl