Squarefree Sets

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Contents

Chapter 1

Background

1.1 Rusza: Difference Sets Without Squares

In this section, we describe the work of Ruzsa on the discrete squarefree difference problem, which provides inspiration for our speculated results for the squarefree subset problem in the continuous setting. Recall that if X and Y are subsets of integers, we let

$$X \pm Y = \{x \pm y : x \in X, y \in Y, x \pm y > 0\}$$

The *differences* of a set X are elements of $X - X$. The *difference set problem* asks to consider how large a subset of the integers can be, whose differences do not contain the square of any positive integer. We let $D(N)$ denote the maximum number of integers which can be selected from $[1, N]$ whose differences do not contain a square.

Example. *The set $X = \{1, 3, 6, 8\}$ is squarefree, because $X - X = \{2, 3, 5, 7\}$, and none of these elements are perfect squares. On the other hand, $\{1, 3, 5\}$ is not a squarefree subset, because $5 - 1 = 4$ is a perfect square.*

It is easily to greedily construct fairly large subsets of the integers by applying a sieve. We start by writing out a large list of integers $1, 2, 3, 4, \ldots, N$. Then, while we still have numbers to pick, we greedily select the smallest number x_* we haven't crossed out of the list, add it to our set X of squarefree numbers, and then cross out all integers y such that $y - x_*$ is a positive square. Thus we cross out x_*, $x_* + 1$, $x_* + 4$, and so on, all the way up to $x_* + m^2$, where m is the largest integer with $x_* + m^2 \leqslant N$. This implies $m \leqslant \sqrt{N - x_*} \leqslant \sqrt{N - 1}$, hence we cross out at most $\sqrt{N - 1} + 1$ integers whenever with add a new element x_* to X. When the algorithm terminates, all integers must be crossed out, and if the algorithm runs n iterations, a union bound gives that we cross out at most $n[\sqrt{N - 1} + 1]$ integers, hence $n[\sqrt{N - 1} + 1] \geqslant N$. It follows that the set X we end up with satisfies

$$|X| \geqslant \frac{N}{\sqrt{N - 1} + 1} = \Omega(\sqrt{N})$$

What's more, this algorithm generates an increasing family of squarefree subsets of the integers as n increases, so we may take the union of these subsets over all N to find an infinite squarefree subset X with $|X \cap [1, N]| = \Omega(\sqrt{N})$.

In 1978, Sárközy proved an upper bound on the size of squarefree subsets of the integers, showing $D(N) = O(N(\log N)^{-1/3+\varepsilon})$ for every $\varepsilon > 0$. In particular, this proves a conjecture of Lovász that every infinite squarefree subset has density zero, because if X is any infinite squarefree subset, then

$$\frac{|X \cap [1, N]|}{N} \leqslant \frac{D(N)}{N} = O(\log(N)^{-1/3+\varepsilon}) = o(1)$$

Sárközy even conjectured that $D(N) = O(N^{1/2+\varepsilon})$ for all $\varepsilon > 0$. This effectively implies the greedy sieve technique of selecting squarefree subsets of the integers is asymptotically optimal. Since the Sieve method doesn't depend on any properties of the set of perfect squares[1], this is incredibly pessimistic. Ruzsa's paper shows we should be more optimistic, taking advantage of the structure of perfect suqares to obtain infinite squarefree subsets X with $|X \cap [1, N]| = \Omega(N^{0.73})$. The method reduces the problem to a finitary problem of maximizing squarefree subsets modulo a squarefree integer m.

Theorem 1. *If m is a squarefree integer, then*

$$D(N) \geqslant \frac{n^{\gamma_m}}{m} = \Omega_m(n^{\gamma_m})$$

where

$$\gamma_m = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{\log_m |R^*|}{m}$$

and R^* denotes the maximal subset of $[1, m]$ whose differences contain no squares modulo m. Setting $m = 65$ gives

$$\gamma_m = \frac{1}{2}\left(1 + \frac{\log 7}{\log 65}\right) = 0.733077\ldots$$

and therefore $D(N) = \Omega(n^{0.7})$. For $m = 2$, we find $D(N) \geqslant \sqrt{N}/2$, which is only slightly worse than the sieve result.

Remark. *Let us look at the analysis of the sieve method backwards. Rather than fixing N and trying to find optimal solutions of $[1, N]$, let's fix a particular strategy (to start with, the sieve strategy), and think of varying N and seeing how the size of the solution given by the strategy on $[1, N]$ increases over time. In our analysis, the size of a solution is directly related to the number of iterations the stategy can produce before it runs out of integers to add to a solution set. Because we apply a union bound in our analysis, the cost of each particular new iteration is the same as the cost of the other iterations. If the cost of each*

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[1]In general, if $S = \{x_1, x_2 < \ldots\}$ is a sequence of positive integers, the sieve strategy on $[1, N]$ products a set containing no 'S differences' with at least $N(1 + K(N))^{-1}$ elements, where $K(N)$ is the greatest integer with $x_{K(N)} \leqslant N - 1$

iteration was independant of N, we could increase the solution size by increasing N by a fixed constant, leading to family of solutions which increases on the order of N. However, as we increase N, the cost of each iteration increases on the order of $\sqrt{N}$, leading to us only being able to perform $N/\sqrt{N} = \sqrt{N}$ iterations for a fixed N. Rusza's method applies the properties of the perfect squares to perform a similar method of expansion. At an exponential cost, Rusza's method increases the solution size exponentially. The advantage of exponentials is that, since Rusza's is based on a particular parameter, a squarefree integer m, we can vary m to make the exponentials match up how we like to obtain a better polynomial lower bound.

The idea of Rusza's construction is to break the problem into exponentially large intervals, upon which we can solve the problem modulo an integer. More generally, Rusza's method works on the problem of constructing subsets of the integers whose differences are d'th powers-free. Let $R \subset [1, m]$ be a subset of integers such that no difference is a power of d modulo m, where m is a *squarefree integer*. Construct the set

$$A = \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^{n} r_k m^k : 0 \leqslant n < \infty, r_k \in \begin{cases} R & d \text{ divides } N \\ [1, m] & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \right\}$$

we claim that A is squarefree. Suppose that we can write

$$\sum (r_k - r'_k) m^k = N^d$$

Let s to be the smallest index with $r_s \neq r'_s$. Then

$$(r_s - r'_s) m^s + M m^{s+1} = N^d$$

where M is some positive integer. If $s = d s_0$, then

$$(N/m^{s_0})^d = (r_s - r'_s) + Mm$$

and this contradicts the fact that $r_s - r'_s$ cannot be a d'th power modulo m. On the other hand, we know m^s divides N^d, but m^{s+1} does not. This is impossible if s is not divisible by d, because primes in N^d occur in multiples of d, and m is squarefree. For any n, we find

$$A \cap [1, m^n] = \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} r_k m^k : r_k \in [1, m], r_k \in R \text{ when } d \text{ divides } k \right\}$$

which therefore has cardinality

$$|R|^{1 + \lfloor n - 1/d \rfloor} m^{n-1-\lfloor n-1/d \rfloor} = m^n \left(\frac{|R|}{m} \right)^{1 + \lfloor n-1/d \rfloor}$$

$$\geqslant m^n \left(\frac{|R|}{m} \right)^{n+1/d} = \frac{(m^{n+1})^{1 - 1/d + \log_m |R|/d}}{m}$$

$$= \frac{(m^{n+1})^{\gamma(m,d)}}{m}$$

where $\gamma(m,d) = 1 - 1/d + \log_m |R|/d$. Therefore, for $m^{n+1} \geqslant k \geqslant m^n$

$$A \cap [1,k] \geqslant A \cap [1,m^n] \geqslant \frac{(m^{n+1})^{\gamma(m,d)}}{m} \geqslant \frac{k^{\gamma(m,d)}}{m}$$

This completes Rusza's construction. Thus we have proved a more general result than was required.

Theorem 2. *For every d and squarefree integer m, we can construct a set X whose differences contain no dth powers and*

$$|X \cap [1,n]| \geqslant \frac{n^{\gamma(d,m)}}{m} = \Omega(n^{\gamma(d,m)})$$

where $\gamma(d,m) = 1 - 1/d + \log_m |R^*|/d$, and R^* is the largest subset of $[1,m]$ containing no d'th powers modulo m.

For $m = 65$, the group $\mathbf{Z}_{65}^* \cong \mathbf{Z}_5^* \times \mathbf{Z}_{13}^*$ has a set of squarefree residues of the form $\{(0,0), (0,2), (1,8), (2,1), (2,3), (3,9), (4,7)\}$, which gives the required value for γ_{65}. Rusza believes that we cannot choose m to construct squarefree subsets of the integers growing better than $\Omega(n^{3/4})$, and he claims to have proved this assuming m is squarefree and consists only of primes congruent to 1 modulo 4. Looking at some sophisticated papers in number theory (Though I forgot to write down the particular references), it seems that using modern estimates this is quite easy to prove. Thus expanding on Rusza's result in the discrete case requires a new strategy, or perhaps Rusza's result is the best possible.

Let $D(N,d)$ denote the largest subset of $[1,N]$ containing no dth powers of positive integer. The last part of Rusza's paper is devoted to lower bounding the polynomial growth of $D(N,d)$ over asymptotically with respect to N. Rusza proves

Theorem 3. *If p is the least prime congruent to one modulo $2d$, then*

$$\limsup_{N \to \infty} \frac{\log D(N,d)}{\log N} \geqslant 1 - \frac{1}{d} + \frac{\log_p d}{d}$$

Proof. The set X we constructed in the last theorem shows that for any m,

$$\frac{\log D(N,d)}{\log n} \geqslant \gamma(d,m) - \frac{\log m}{\log n} = 1 - \frac{1}{d} + \frac{\log_m |R^*|}{d} - \frac{\log m}{\log n}$$

Hence

$$\limsup_{N \to \infty} \frac{\log D(N,d)}{\log n} \geqslant 1 - \frac{1}{d} + \frac{\log_m |R^*|}{d}$$

The claim is then completed by the following lemma. $\square$

Lemma 1. *If p is a prime congruent to 1 modulo $2d$, then we can construct a set $R \subset [1,p]$ whose differences do not contain a dth power modulo p with $|R| \geqslant d$.*

Proof. Let $Q \subset [1, p]$ be the set of powers $1^k, 2^k, \ldots, p^k$ modulo p. We have

$$|Q| = \frac{p-1}{k} + 1$$

This follows because the nonzero elements of Q are the images of the group homomorphism $x \mapsto x^k$ from $\mathbf{Z}_p^*$ to itself. Since $\mathbf{Z}_p^*$ is cyclic, the equation $x^k = 1$ has the same number of solutions as the equation $kx = 0$ modulo $p - 1$, and since $p \equiv 1$ modulo $2k$, there are exactly k solutions to this equation. The sieve method yields a kth power modulo p free subset of size greater than or equal to

$$p/q = \frac{p}{1 + \frac{p-1}{k}} = \frac{pk}{p+k-1} \to k$$

as $p \to \infty$, which is greater than $k-1$ for large enough p (this shows the theorem is essentially trivial for large enough primes, because we don't need to use any particularly interesting properties of the squares to prove the theorem). However, for smaller primes a more robust analysis is required. We shall construct a sequence $b_1, \ldots, b_k \in \mathbf{Z}_p$ such that $b_i - b_j \notin Q$ for any i, j and

$$|B_j + Q| \leqslant 1 + j(q-1)$$

Given $b_1, \ldots, b_j$, let b_{j+1} be any element of

$$(B_j + Q + Q) - (B_j + Q)$$

Since $b_{j+1} \notin B_j + Q$, $b_{j+1} - b_i \notin Q$ for any i. Since $b_{j+1} \in B_j + Q + Q$, the sets $B_j + Q$ and $b_{j+1} + Q$ are not disjoint (note $Q = -Q$ because $p \equiv 1 \bmod 2k$), and so

$$\begin{aligned}
|B_{j+1} + Q| &= |(B_j + Q) \cup (b_{j+1} + Q)| \\
&\leqslant |B_j + Q| + |b_{j+1} + Q| - 1 \\
&\leqslant 1 + j(q-1) + q - 1 \\
&= 1 + (j+1)(q-1)
\end{aligned}$$

This procedure ends when $B_j + Q + Q = B_j + Q$, and this can only happen if $B_j + Q = \mathbf{Z}_p$, because we can obtain all integers by adding elements of Q recursively, so $1 + j(q-1) \geqslant p$, and thus $j \geqslant k$. $\qquad\square$

Corollary. *In the special case of avoiding squarefree numbers, we find*

$$\limsup \frac{\log D(N)}{\log N} \geqslant \frac{1}{2} + \frac{\log_5 2}{2} = 0.71533\ldots$$

which is only slightly worse than the bound we obtain with $m = 65$.

Rusza's leaves the ultimate question of whether one can calculate

$$\alpha = \lim_{N \to \infty} \log D(N) / \log N$$

or even whether it exists at all. The consequence of this would essentially solve the squarefree integers problem, since it would give the exact growth of $D(N) \sim N^\alpha$ in terms of a monomial. Because of how conclusive this problem is, we should not expect to find a nontrivial way to calculate this constant.

1.2 Keleti: Translate Avoiding Sets

Keleti's two page paper constructs a full dimensional subset X of $[0,1]$ such that X intersects $t + X$ in at most one place for each $t \in \mathbf{R}$. Malabika has adapted this technique to construct high dimensional subsets avoiding nontrivial solutions to differentiable functions, and she thinks we can further exploit these ideas to obtain dimension one squarefree sets. The basic, but fundamental idea of Keleti is to introduce memory into Cantor set type constructions so the sets avoid progressions, and have dimension one. At each point in the process, he constructs a nested family of sets $X_0 \supset X_1 \supset \dots$, each set X_n a union of disjoint intervals of the same length l_n. It will be the set $X = \lim X_n$ which avoids translates. Initially, $X_1 = [0,1]$ is the unit interval. To aid in this process, Keletti considers a queue Q with a history of all intervals created from the start to the end of the process, so Q initially just contains $[0,1]$. We then perform the following procedure repeatedly:

- Take an interval I off the front of the queue Q.

- Let X_{n+1} be formed by taking N_{n+1} intervals of length l_{n+1} from each interval J in X_n, with the startpoints of each interval separated by ε_{n+1}. The intervals start directly at the beginning of the interval J, except in the case where $J \subset I$, where we shift the intervals to begin at a distance Δ_{n+1} from the startpoint.

In order for this process to be well defined, we must have $l_1 = N_1 = 1$, $\varepsilon_n \geqslant l_n$, and $\Delta_{n+1} + N_{n+1}\varepsilon_{n+1} \leqslant l_n$. Of course, we must also have $l_n \to 0$, for otherwise we have no fractal structure in our sets. We claim that, with the appropriate choice of parameters, X is a set avoiding translates. In this section, and in the sequel, we shall find it is most convenient to avoid certain configurations by expressing them as a particular equation, whose properties we can then exploit.

Lemma 2. *A set X avoids translates if and only if there do not exists values $x_1 < x_2 \leqslant x_3 < x_4$ in X with $x_2 - x_1 = x_4 - x_3$.*

Proof. Suppose $t + X \cap X$ contains two points $a < b$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that $t > 0$. If $a \leqslant b - t$, then the equation

$$a - (a - t) = t = b - (b - t)$$

satisfies the constraints, since then $a - t < a \leqslant b - t < b$ are all elements of X. We also have
$$(b - t) - (a - t) = b - a$$

which satisfies the constraints if $a - t < b - t \leqslant a < b$. This covers all possible cases. Conversely, if there are $x_1 < x_2 \leqslant x_3 < x_4$ in X with $x_2 - x_1 = t = x_4 - x_3$, then $X + t$ contains $x_2 = x_1 + (x_2 - x_1)$ and $x_4 = x_3 + (x_4 - x_3)$. $\qquad\square$

We now claim that, if the constants l_n, N_n, ε_n, and Δ_n possess suitable properties, then the set X is translation avoiding. We suppose the existence of

7

$x_2 - x_1 = x_4 - x_3$ as in the lemma, with $x_1 < x_2 \leqslant x_3 < x_4$. Since $l_n \to 0$, we know that eventually x_1 is contained in an interval J that x_2, x_3, and x_4 are not contained in. If we follow the procedure to a suitable depth N, when the interval J is taken off the front of the queue Q, the intervals containing x_1 are shifted, whereas the intervals for x_2, x_3, and x_4 are not shifted. To understand what this means, we find the startpoints $x_1^\circ, x_2^\circ, x_3^\circ$, and x_4° to the length l_N intervals containing x_1, x_2, x_3, and x_4. Thus $0 \leqslant x_n - x_n^\circ \leqslant l_N$. If we choose our parameters such that the startpoints $x_1^\circ, \ldots, x_4^\circ$ all lie at integer multiples of ε_N, and $4l_N < \varepsilon_N$, then the equation $x_2 - x_1 = x_4 - x_3$ forces the discrete equation $x_2^\circ - x_1^\circ = x_4^\circ - x_3^\circ$. Now if we also force $x_2^\circ, x_3^\circ, x_4^\circ$ to lie at even multiples of Δ_N, and x_1° to lie at an odd multiple of Δ_N, which is possible by the shifting in the construction, then it is impossible for this equation to hold, so by contradiction, X must be translation invariant.

If we want to determine what makes the startpoints of the intervals in X_n lie at the appropriate multiples of Δ_n, we may assume by induction that the startpoints of X_n lie at integer multiples of Δ_n, and we now try and make the startpoints of X_{n+1} lie at integer multiples of Δ_{n+1}. If $I \subset J$ are two intervals, with $J \subset X_n$ and $I \subset X_{n+1}$, then J starts at some point $A\Delta_n$, and either I is unshifted, and starts at a point $A\Delta_n + B\varepsilon_{n+1}$, or it shifted, and is of the form $A\Delta_n + B\varepsilon_{n+1} + \Delta_{n+1}$. It is clear that the required constraints hold if $A\Delta_n + B\varepsilon_{n+1}$ is an even multiple of Δ_{n+1} for all A and B, and so we obtain the required results if $2\Delta_{n+1} \mid \Delta_n, \varepsilon_{n+1}$.

Thus to summarize, X is well defined and translation invariant provided

$$\Delta_{n+1} + N_{n+1}\varepsilon_{n+1} \leqslant l_n \quad 4l_n < \varepsilon_n \quad 2\Delta_{n+1} \mid \Delta_n, \varepsilon_{n+1}$$

Playing around with these inequalities shows the most elegant choices of parameters guaranteeing all such constraints are

$$N_n = n \quad l_n = 1/8^{n-1}n! \quad \Delta_n = l_n \quad \varepsilon_n = 6l_n$$

We have avoided giving these constants until the end to emphasize *why* Keleti needed to choose these particular constants. Once they are chosen, we end up with a Hausdorff dimension one set. What's more, these parameters also give us a set X with Hausdorff dimension one. The intuitive reason for this is that at the N'th scale of the process, we have $N!$ intervals of length $1/8^{N-1}N!$, and these scales are roughly comparable. The fact that $N!/8^{N-1}N! = o(1)$ implies that our set won't have positive Lebesgue measure, but is sufficiently slowly decaying compared to the number of intervals that we can show the sets have Hausdorff dimension $\geqslant 1 - \varepsilon$ for every ε. For completeness, and to introduce readers to the methods of calculating Hausdorff dimension, we will prove this explicitly.

Lemma 3. *The set $X = \lim X_n$ has Hausdorff dimension one.*

Proof. Recall Frostman's lemma, which says that the s dimensional Hausdorff measure $H_s(X)$ of a Euclidean set X is positive if and only if there is a finite positive Borel measure μ supported on X with $\mu(B_r(x)) \lesssim r^s$, for a universal

constant depending only on μ. If such a measure can be constructed on a set X, it therefore follows that $\dim_{\mathbf{H}}(X) \geqslant s$. Thus to prove X has dimension one, it suffices to construct a probability measure μ on X with $\mu(B_r(x)) \lesssim_s r^s$, for each $s < 1$. We can construct such a measure using what is often called the *mass distribution principle*; we construct a probability measure μ_n supported on X_n in such a way that a weak limit $\mu = \lim \mu_n$ exists, in which case μ is supported on X. To do this, we let μ_1 be the uniform probability measure on $[0,1]$. Then, to construct μ_{n+1} from μ_n, we divide the mass of each interval J in X_n uniformly over the intervals in X_{n+1} contained in J. The distribution functions of these measures converge uniformly, and therefore the μ_n converge weakly to a measure μ supported on X.

Since each X_N consists of $\prod_{n \leqslant N} N_n$ intervals, any one such interval I at this scale has

$$\mu(I) = \prod_{m=1}^{n} \frac{1}{N_m}$$

If J is any interval of length l_n, then $\mu(J)$ can intersect at most two intervals of length l_n in X_n, and so we obtain the general bound

$$\mu(J) \leqslant 2 \prod_{m=1}^{n} \frac{1}{N_m}$$

If we are to hope for a bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$ for every ε, then there exists a constant A_ε such that

$$\prod_{m=1}^{n} \frac{1}{N_m} \leqslant A_\varepsilon l_n^{1-\varepsilon}$$

In order to satisfy this inequality by induction, we would then have

$$\prod_{m=1}^{n+1} \frac{1}{N_m} \leqslant \frac{A_\varepsilon l_n^{1-\varepsilon}}{N_{n+1}} \leqslant A_\varepsilon l_{n+1}^{1-\varepsilon}$$

so in order to obtain this inequality, we need $(l_n/l_{n+1})^{1-\varepsilon} \leqslant N_{n+1}$ for suitably large n. Thus the lengths of the intervals cannot become too small compared to the number N_{n+1} intervals we maintain. However, in order to interpolate this bound, and to obtain a bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$ for all intervals I, and not just the particular length l_n scales, we shall need a tighter for the measures on intervals at the length l_n scale. Using the constants $N_n = n$, and $l_n = 1/8^{n-1}n!$, which we chose above, we find

$$\mu(J) \leqslant \frac{2}{n!} = \frac{2}{n! l_n^{1-\varepsilon}} l_n^{1-\varepsilon} = \frac{2 \cdot 8^{(n-1)(1-\varepsilon)}}{(n!)^\varepsilon} l_n^{1-\varepsilon} \lesssim_\varepsilon \frac{l_n^{1-\varepsilon}}{(n!)^{\varepsilon/2}}$$

To obtain the bound for general intervals I, with $l_{n+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_n$, we cover I by as few as $|I| l_{n+1}^{-1}$ intervals of length l_{n+1}, from which we obtain

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I| l_{n+1}^{-1} \frac{l_{n+1}^{1-\varepsilon}}{(n!)^{\varepsilon/2}} = \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{n+1}(n!)^{1/2}} \right)^\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon} \leqslant \left(\frac{l_n/l_{n+1}}{(n!)^{1/2}} \right)^\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$$

9

and since $l_n/l_{n+1} = O(n) = O((n!)^{1/2})$, we obtain the required bound. Thus we obtain $\dim_{\mathbf{H}}(X) \geqslant 1 - \varepsilon$, and as $\varepsilon \to 0$, we conclude $\dim_{\mathbf{H}}(X) = 1$. $\qquad\square$

Remark. *Here's why we need the tighter bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}/(n!)^{\varepsilon/2}$ at the discrete scales to successively interpolate our bounds to all interval scales, rather than just the simpler bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$. If $l_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_N$, and we cover I by $|I|l_{N+1}^{-1}$ length l_{N+1} intervals, then we obtain that*

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|l_{N+1}^{-1}l_{N+1}^{1-\varepsilon} = |I|l_{N+1}^{-\varepsilon} = \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$$

Similarily, if we cover I by a single length l_N interval, then

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon l_N^{1-\varepsilon} = \left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^{1-\varepsilon} |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$$

If we are to hope that these bounds give us a $\lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$ bound for all ε, then we must have

$$\max_{l_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_N} \min\left(\left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^\varepsilon, \left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^{1-\varepsilon}\right) \lesssim_\varepsilon 1$$

The minimization is maximized when

$$\left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^\varepsilon = \left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^{1-\varepsilon}$$

or when $|I| = l_N^{1-\varepsilon}l_{N+1}^\varepsilon$. Inputting this into the formula, we obtain that

$$\max_{l_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_N} \min\left(\left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^\varepsilon, \left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^{1-\varepsilon}\right) = \left(\frac{l_N}{l_{N+1}}\right)^{\varepsilon(1-\varepsilon)}$$

With the choice of parameters given, we have $l_N/l_{N+1} = 8(n+1)$, and we do not have $(8(n+1))^{\varepsilon(1-\varepsilon)} \lesssim_\varepsilon 1$. Thus, with the bounds we have used, there is no way to obtain a constant coefficient bound for all scales lying inbetween the discrete scales if we use the $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$ bound for the discrete scales. However, the tighter bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}/(n!)^{\varepsilon/2}$ causes the $O(n)$ term for l_N/l_{N+1} to be annihilated, which results in a constant term bound at the continuous range of scales.

Remark. *In Keleti's paper, he also remarks that by replacing the 7 in the choice of l_n with a slowly increasing set of even numbers, one can obtain a Hausdorff dimension one set which is linearly independant over the rational numbers. To see why this works, the condition of linear independence would fail if $a_1 x_1 + \cdots + a_M x_M = 0$, where $x_1 < x_2 < \cdots < x_M$, and $a_1, \ldots, a_M$ are integers with no common factor. Just as before, we find x_n° with $0 \leqslant x_n - x_n^\circ \leqslant l_N$. Provided that $(a_1 + \cdots + a_M)l_N < \varepsilon_N$, and the x_n° lie at integer multiples of ε_N, we conclude that $a_1 x_1^\circ + \cdots + a_M x_M^\circ = 0$. If K is an integer not dividing a_1, then for suitably large N we assume that each $x_2^\circ, \ldots, x_M^\circ$ lies at multiples*

of $K\Delta_N$. Shifting x_1° by a single multiple of Δ_N then breaks the equation from ever occuring in the first place. In order to guarantee this, we must first set $\varepsilon_n = A_n! l_n$ where A_n is an increasing sequence with $A_n \to \infty$. We also guarantee that $x_2^\circ, \ldots, x_M^\circ$ lies at multiples of $A_n! \Delta_n$. This can be guaranteed by induction if $A_{n+1}! \Delta_{n+1} \mid \Delta_n, \varepsilon_{n+1}$. Thus the parameters

$$N_n = n \quad l_n = \frac{1}{2^n n! \prod_{n=1}^N A_n!} \quad \Delta_n = l_n \quad \varepsilon_n = A_n! l_n$$

give a linearly independant set. Assuming the A_n grow incredibly slowly, we can still hope for this set to have Hausdorff dimension one. fI we construct the probability measure μ as before, we find that for any length l_n interval J

$$\mu(J) \leqslant \frac{2}{n!} = \frac{2}{n! l_n^{1-\varepsilon}} l_n^{1-\varepsilon} = \left(\frac{2}{(n!)^\varepsilon} \left(\prod A_m! \right)^{1-\varepsilon} \right) l_n^{1-\varepsilon}$$

We can choose the A_m to grow slowly enough that for any $\varepsilon > 0$,

$$\left(\prod A_m! \right)^{1-\varepsilon} \lesssim_\varepsilon (n!)^{\varepsilon/2}$$

Testing this inequality leads to the fact that $A_{n+1}! \leqslant (n+1)^{\varepsilon/2(1-\varepsilon)}$ must eventually hold for n large enough, so taking $A_n \to \infty$ but growing slower than any polynomial in n satisfies the inequality, i.e. if $A_n!$ is the largest factorial smaller than $\log n$. Thus

$$\mu(J) \lesssim_\varepsilon \frac{l_n^{1-\varepsilon}}{(n!)^{\varepsilon/2}}$$

and the interpolation bound as in the previous problem then guarantee $\mu(I) \lesssim_\varepsilon |I|^{1-\varepsilon}$ for all I, since $l_n/l_{n+1} = O(nA_n!) = O((n!)^{1/2})$.

Remark. *We attempted to obtain a squarefree subset of $[0,1]$ by combining Ruzsa's squarefree discrete strategy with Keleti's decomposition approach to find a high dimensional continuous squarefree set. However, using these techniques we were only able to obtain a dimension 1/2 set, which is only slightly better than a dimension 1/3 set which exists from the general results given by Mathé's result, or Pramanik and Fraser's result, and is much less than the dimension 1 set that Malabika expects.*

1.3 Fraser/Pramanik: Extending Keleti Translation to Smooth Configurations

Inspired by Keleti's result, Pramanik and Fraser obtained a generalization of the queue method which allows one to find sets avoiding solutions to *any* smooth function satisfying suitably mild regularity conditions. To do this, rather than making a linear shift in one of the intervals we avoid as in Keleti's approach, one must use the smoothness properties of the function to find large segments of an interval avoiding solutions to another interval.

Theorem 4. *Suppose that $f : \mathbf{R}^d \to \mathbf{R}$ is a C^1 function, and there are sets $T_1, \ldots, T_d \subset [0,1]$, which each T_n a union of almost disjoint closed intervals of length $1/M$ such that $A \leqslant |\partial_d f(x)|$ and $|\nabla f(x)| \leqslant B$ for $x \in T_1 \times \cdots \times T_d$. There there exists a rational constant c and arbitrarily large integers $N \in M\mathbf{Z}$ for which there exist subsets $S_n \subset T_n$ such that*

(i) *$f(x) \neq 0$ for $x \in S_1 \times \cdots \times S_d$.*

(ii) *For each $n \neq d$, If we split each interval T_n into $1/N$ intervals, then S_n contains an interval of length cN^{1-d} of each of these intervals.*

(iii) *If we split T_d into $1/N$ intervals, then S_d contains a length c/N portion of at least a fraction $1 - 1/M$ of the total number of these intervals. This portion need not be a complete interval, like in the last property, but it is a union of length C_n/N_n^{d-1} intervals.*

Proof. Choosing the sets S_n for $n \neq d$ is easy. We split the intervals T_n into length $1/M$ segments, and define S_n as the union of the first cN^{1-d} portion of them. This satisfies property (ii) of the theorem automatically. Now if $a \in \mathbf{R}^{d-1}$ is chosen, with each $a_k \in T_k$, then the total number of points $x \in T_d$ for which $f(a, x) = 0$ is M. This follows from the fact that T_d can contain at most M intervals of length $1/M$, and as we vary x, because the partial derivative $\partial_d f(a, x)$ is non-vanishing on the interval, the function is monotone on this interval. Define

$$\mathbf{A} = \{a : a_n \text{ is a startpoint of a length } 1/N \text{ segment in } T_n\}$$

Then $|\mathbf{A}| \leqslant N^{d-1}$, since T_n, contained in $[0,1]$, can contain at most N almost disjoint intervals of length $1/N$. This means that if

$$\mathbf{B} = \{x \in T_d : \text{there is } a \in \mathbf{A} \text{ such that } f(a, x) = 0\}$$

is the set of 'bad points' in T_d, then $|\mathbf{B}| \leqslant MN^{d-1}$. Now we filter out a subcollection of intervals I if $|\mathbf{B} \cap I| \leqslant M^3 N^{d-2}$. Then we throw away at most $MN^{d-1}/M^3 N^{d-2} = N/M^2$ intervals. Thus we keep $N/M - N/M^2 = N/M(1 - 1/M)$ intervals, which is $1 - 1/M$ of the total number of intervals in the decomposition of T_d.

Now we split each interval I into intervals of length $C_0 c/N^{d-1}$. If we use the constant C_0 obtained from the lemma below, and we now discard any interval that intersects $\mathbf{B}$, or is adjacent to an interval intersecting $\mathbf{B}$. Since $\mathbf{B} \cap I$ has at most $M^3 N^{d-2}$ points, and I is decomposed into $N^{d-2}/C_0 c$ intervals, what remains is $N^{d-2}/C_0 c - 3M^3 N^{d-2} = (1/C_0 c - 3M^3)N^{d-2}$ intervals, which in total has length

$$(C_0 c/N^{d-1})(1/C_0 c - 3M^3)N^{d-2} = (1 - 3M^3 C_0 c)N$$

Choosing c such that $3M^3 C_0 c < 1 - c$ completes the proof. □

Remark. *The length $1/N$ portion of each interval guaranteed by (iii) is unneccesary to the Hausdorff dimension bound, since the slightly better bounds obtained on scales where an interval is dissected as a $1/N$ are decimated when we eventually divide the further subintervals into $1/N^{d-1}$ intervals. The importance of (iii) is that it implies that the set we will construct has full Minkowski dimension. The reason for this is that Minkowski dimension lacks the ability to look at varying dissection depths at once, and since, at any particular depth, there exists a length $1/N$ dissection, the process appears to Minkowski to be full dimensional, even though at later scales this $1/N$ dissection is dissected into $1/N^{d-1}$ intervals.*

Lemma 4. *For any f and $T_1, \ldots, T_d$, and C, there exists a constant C_0 depending on these quantities, such that for the choice of $S_1, \ldots, S_{d-1}$, for any choice $x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1}$ in each of the sets S_n, if $f(x_1, \ldots, x_{n-1}, x_n) = 0$, then $d(x_n, \mathbf{B}) \leqslant C_0 C/N^{d-1}$.*

Proof. Let J be a d dimensional cube with sidelengths $1/M$ intersecting the zero set of f. The implicit function theorem can then be applied to conclude that, if we write $J = J' \times I$, where J_1 is a cube in $\mathbf{R}^{d-1}$ and I is an interval, that there is a function $g : J' \to \mathbf{R}$ such that $f(x, y) = 0$ for $(x, y) \in J$ if and only if $y = g(x)$. We know that $|\nabla g| \leqslant C/\sqrt{d}$, because if $h(x) = f(x, g(x))$, then

$$0 = \partial_i h(x) = \partial_i f(x, g(x)) + \partial_d f(x, g(x)) \partial_i g(x)$$

Hence for $x \in T_1, \ldots, T_{d-1}$ with $g(x) \in T_d$,

$$|(\nabla g)(x)| \leqslant \frac{|(\nabla f)(x)|}{|(\partial_d f)(x, g(x))|} \leqslant \frac{B}{A}$$

In particular, if $g(x) \in S_d$, then there is $a \in \mathbf{A}$ with

$$|x - a| \leqslant \sum |x_n - a_n| \leqslant \frac{C\sqrt{d}}{N^{d-1}}$$

and now we know

$$|g(x) - g(a)| \leqslant \|\nabla g\|_\infty |x - a| \leqslant \frac{BC\sqrt{d}}{AN^{d-1}}$$

and so $g(a) \in \mathbf{B}$, and we can set $C_0 = [BC\sqrt{d}/A]$. $\qquad\qquad\square$

Remark. *In the paper, the authors state that the N^{1-d} bound for all but the last variable means we cannot get a Hausdorff dimension one set in the process. In certain cases where we can use properties of a particular function f, we can choose much larger sets and get a much better Hausdorff dimension bound. This is what we attempt to do with our strategies.*

How do we use this lemma to construct a set avoiding solutions to f? We form an infinite queue which will eventually filter out all the possible zeroes of

the equation. Divide the interval $[0, 1]$ into d intervals, and consider all orderings of $d - 1$ subsets of these intervals, and add them to the queue. Now on each iteration N of the algorithm, we have a set $X_N \subset [0, 1]$. We take a particular sequence of intervals $T_1, \ldots, T_d$ from the queue, and then use the lemma above to dissect the $X_N \cap T_n$, which are unions of intervals, into sets avoiding solutions to the equation, and describe the remaining points as X_{N+1}. We then add all possible orderings of d intervals created into the end of the queue, and rinse and repeat. The set $X = \lim X_n$ then avoids all solutions to the equation with distinct points.

What remains is to bound the Hausdorff dimension of X by constructing a probability measure supported on X with suitable decay. To construct our probability measure, we begin with a uniform measure on the interval, and then, whenever our interval is refined, we uniformly distribute the volume on that particular interval uniformly over the new refinement. Let μ denote the weak limit of this sequence of probability distributions. At each step n of the process, we let $1/M_n$ denote the size of the intervals at the beginning of the n'th subdivision, $1/N_n$ denote the size of the split intervals in the lemma, and C_n the n'th constant. We have the relation $1/M_{n+1} = C_n/N_n^{d-1}$. If J is a length $1/M_{n+1}$ interval, and $I \subset J$ a length $1/M_n$ interval, then we consider two cases:

- If J is subdivided in the non-specialized manner, then J contains N_n/M_n length C_n/N_n^{d-1} intervals, so $\mu(J) = (M_n/N_n)\mu(I)$.

- In the second case, we have $\geqslant (1 - 1/M_n)(N_n/M_n)N_n^{d-2}$ length C_n/N_n^{d-1} intervals, so

$$\mu(J) \leqslant (M_n/N_n^{d-1})(1 - 1/M_n)\mu(I) \leqslant 2M_n/N_n^{d-1}\mu(I)$$

In either case, $\mu(J) \leqslant (M_n/N_n)\mu(I)$, so by induction, if J is a length $1/M_{N+1}$ interval considered in the process, then

$$\mu(J) \leqslant \prod_{n=1}^{N} (M_n/N_n) = \frac{1}{N_N}\left(\prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right)$$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{C_N^\alpha N_N^{1-\alpha(d-1)}}\prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right)\frac{1}{M_{N+1}^\alpha}$$

If we set

$$N_N = \exp\left(\frac{1}{C_N}\prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right) + O(1)$$

then for every $\alpha < 1/(d-1)$,

$$\mu(J) \lesssim_\alpha \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}\prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right)\frac{1}{M_{N+1}^\alpha}$$

14

Now if I is an arbitrary interval with $1/M_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant 1/M_N$. Then we can apply a covering by length $1/M_{n+1}$ intervals to conclude that

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\alpha M_{N+1}|I| \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \prod_{n=1}^{N} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right) \frac{1}{M_{N+1}^\alpha}$$

$$\leqslant \left(\frac{M_{N+1}}{M_N}\right)^{1-\alpha} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \prod_{n=1}^{N} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right) |I|^\alpha$$

$$M_{N+1}/M_N = (N_N/N_{N-1})^{d-1}(C_{N-1}/C_N)$$

$$\leqslant \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{C_{N-1}} \prod_{n=1}^{N-2} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\left(\frac{N_{N-1}^{d-2}}{C_N} - 1\right)\right) \frac{1}{C_N}$$

On the other hand, we can cover I by a single length $1/M_n$ interval, so

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\alpha \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{N_n^{d-2}}{C_n}\right) \frac{1}{M_N^\alpha}$$

and for any interval J of length $1/M_n$, we can cover J by at most two intervals in this process, so

$$\mu(J) \leqslant 2 \prod_{n=1}^{N} (M_n/N_n)$$

If we are to establish the general bound for Frostman's lemma to apply, we would hope that $\mu(J) \lesssim 1/M_{N+1}^\alpha$ for all $\alpha < 1/d - 1$. If we were to establish this by induction, then we would have a constant A_α such that

$$\prod_{n=1}^{N-1} (M_n/N_n) \leqslant A_\alpha/M_N^\alpha$$

and the inductive case would be established if

$$\prod_{n=1}^{N} (M_n/N_n) \leqslant (A_\alpha/M_N^\alpha)(M_N/N_N) \leqslant A_\alpha/M_{N+1}^\alpha$$

so the inequality would hold if, for sufficiently large N,

$$M_N^{1-\alpha} \leqslant N_N/M_{N+1}^\alpha = C_N^{1/d-1} M_{N+1}^{1/d-1-\alpha}$$

Since M_{N+1} can be parameterized after M_N and C_N are given, by control on the parameter N_N, we can always make this inequality hold if $\alpha < 1/d - 1$. We must have

$$M_{N+1} \geqslant \frac{M_N^{\frac{1-\alpha}{(1/d-1)-\alpha}}}{C_N^{\frac{1}{1-(d-1)\alpha}}}$$

15

Thus M_{N+1} must grow at a polynomial rate in M_N and $1/C_N$ to obtain an α dimensional Frostman's lemma bound, but as $\alpha \to 1/d - 1$, the degree of this polynomial explodes, so if we are to obtain the bound for all $\alpha < 1/(d-1)$ for a single choice of parameters, we must have superpolynomial growth. This is satisfied, for instance, if we pick $M_{N+1} = M_N^N / C_N^N$. Thus

$$M_{N+1} = \prod_{n=1}^{N} \frac{1}{C_n^{N!/(N-n)!}}$$

If we are to obtain an interval for which this works for *all* α, we must have

Lemma 5. *Let I be an interval of length $1/M$ in a certain iteration of the construction, and J an interval of length $1/N$ which contains an interval in the next iteration. Then $\mu(I)/|I| \leqslant \mu(J)/|J| \leqslant 2\mu(I)/|I|$*

Proof. We subdivide I into $N|I|$ intervals of length $1/N$, and we know at least a fraction $1 - 1/M$ contain a union of smaller intervals with measure at least c/N contained in the next iteration. Enumerate these unions as $K_1, \ldots K_L$, where $L \geqslant N|I|(1 - 1/M)$. Then

$$\mu(K_n) = \frac{|K_n|}{\sum_{n=1}^{L} |K_n|} \mu(I) \leqslant \frac{|K_n|}{Lc/N} \mu(I) \leqslant \frac{|K_n|}{c(1-1/M)} \frac{\mu(I)}{|I|}$$

and if $K_n \subset J$, then $\mu(J) = \mu(K_n)$ and $|K_n| \geqslant c|J|$, from which we obtain that

$$\frac{\mu(J)}{|J|} \leqslant \frac{1}{(1-1/M)} \frac{\mu(I)}{|I|} \leqslant 2\frac{\mu(I)}{|I|}$$

where the last point followed because we know $M \leqslant 1/2$, since we subdivide our intervals right at the beginning of the algorithm at least in two.

The interval I decomposes into $|I|/|J|$ intervals of length $|J|$, and we know at least $1 - |I|$ of them contain a portion $c|J|$ of the length $|J|$. Thus

$$\mu(I) \geqslant (1 - |I|)\frac{|I|}{|J|}\mu(J)$$

and so, since $|I| \leqslant 1/2$ after the first division

$$\frac{\mu(J)}{|J|} \leqslant \frac{1}{1-|I|} \frac{\mu(I)}{|I|} \leqslant \frac{2\mu(I)}{|I|}$$

The obvious bound of $|I|/|J|$ intervals implies

$$\mu(I) \leqslant (|I|/|J|)\mu(J)$$

which implies the lower bound

$$\frac{\mu(I)}{|I|} \leqslant \frac{\mu(J)}{|J|}$$

so the ratios are comparable to one another. $\qquad \square$

If we let l_n denote the lengths of the intervals on the n'th iteration, and we let $1/N_n$ denote the lengths . Then if we have a nested family of intervals $J_1, \ldots, J_N$ formed by the $1/N_n$ partitions of $I_1, \ldots, I_N$, then

$$\frac{\mu(J_N)}{|J_N|} \leqslant 2\frac{\mu(I_{N-1})}{|I_{N-1}|} = \frac{2|J_{N-1}|}{|I_{N-1}|}\frac{\mu(J_{N-1})}{|J_{N-1}|} = \frac{2}{l_{N-1}N_{N-1}}\frac{\mu(J_{N-1})}{|J_{N-1}|}$$

Applying this result iteratively, we find that if we have a family of nested family of intervals $I_1, \ldots, I_N$, then we can apply the lemma above iteratively to find

$$\frac{\mu(J_N)}{|J_N|} \leqslant \frac{2}{l_{N-1}N_{N-1}}\frac{\mu(J_{n-1})}{|J_{n-1}|} \leqslant \cdots \leqslant 2^N \prod_{n=1}^{N-1} \frac{1}{l_n N_n}$$

Now

1.4 A Set Avoiding All Functions With A Common Derivative

In the latter part's of their paper, Pramanik and Fraser apply an iterative technique to construct, for each α with $\sum \alpha_n = 0$ and $K > 0$, a set E of positive Hausdorff dimension avoiding solutions to any function $f : \mathbf{R}^d \to \mathbf{R}$ satisfying wth $(\partial_n f)(0) = \alpha_n$,

$$\left| f(x) - \sum \alpha_n x_n \right| \leqslant K \sum_{n \neq 1} (x_n - x_1)^2$$

The set of such f is an uncountable family, which makes this situation interesting. The technique to create such a set relies on another iterative procedure.

Lemma 6. *Let $I \subsetneq [1, d]$ be a strict subset of indices, and $\delta_0 > 0$. Then there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that for any $\lambda > 0$ and two disjoint intervals J_1 and J_2, with J_1 occuring before J_2, and if we set*

$$[a_n, b_n] = \begin{cases} J_1 & n \in I \\ J_2 & n \notin I \end{cases}$$

then for $\delta < \delta_0$, either for all $x_n \in [a_n, a_n + \varepsilon\lambda]$ or for all $x_n \in [b_n - \varepsilon\lambda, b_n]$,

$$\left| \sum \alpha_n x_n \right| \geqslant \delta\lambda$$

Proof. If $C^* = \sum |\alpha_n|$, then for $|x_n - a_n| \leqslant \varepsilon\lambda$,

$$|\sum \alpha_n(x_n - a_n)| \leqslant C^* \varepsilon\lambda$$

Thus if $|\sum \alpha_n a_n| > (\delta + \varepsilon C^*)\lambda$, then $|\sum \alpha_n x_n| \geqslant \delta\lambda$. If this does not occur $\quad\square$

Chapter 2

Ideas for New Work

2.1 Ideas For New Work

A continuous formulation of the squarefree difference problem is not so clear to formulate, because every positive real number has a square root. Instead, we consider a problem which introduces a similar structure to avoid in the continuous domain rather than the discrete. Unfortunately, there is no direct continuous anology to the squarefree subset problem on the interval $[0,1]$, because there is no canonical subset of $[0,1]$ which can be identified as 'perfect squares', unlike in $\mathbf{Z}$. If we only restrict ourselves to perfect squares of a countable set, like perfect squares of rational numbers, a result of Keleti gives us a set of full Hausdorff dimension avoiding this set. Thus, instead, we say a set $X \subset [0,1]$ is (continuously) **squarefree** if there are no nontrivial solutions to the equation $x - y = (u - v)^2$, in the sense that there are no $x, y, u, v \in X$ satisfying the equation for $x \neq y, u \neq v$. In this section we consider some blue sky ideas that might give us what we need.

How do we adopt Rusza's power series method to this continuous formulation of the problem? We want to scale up the problem exponentially in a way we can vary to give a better control of the exponentials. Note that for a fixed m, every elements $x \in [0,1]$ has an essentially unique m-ary expansion

$$x = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{x_n}{m^n}$$

and the pullback to the Haar measure on $\mathbf{F}_m^{\infty}$ is measure preserving (with respect to the natural Haar measure on $\mathbf{F}_m^{\infty}$), so perhaps there is a way to reformulate the problem natural as finding nice subsets of $\mathbf{F}_m^{\infty}$ avoiding squares. In terms of this expansion, the equation $x - y = (u - v)^2$ can be rewritten as

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{x_n - y_n}{m^n} = \left(\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{u_n - v_n}{m^n} \right)^2 = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left(\sum_{k=1}^{n-1} (u_k - v_k)(u_{n-k} - v_{n-k}) \right) \frac{1}{m^n}$$

One problem with this expansion is that the sums of the differences of each element do not remain in $\{0, \ldots, m-1\}$, so the sum on the right cannot be considered an equivalent formal expansion to the expansion on the left. Perhaps $\mathbf{F}_m^\infty$ might be a simpler domain to explore the properties of squarefree subsets, in relation to Ruzsa's discrete strategy. What if we now consider the problem of finding the largest subset X of $\mathbf{F}_m^\infty$ such that there do not exist $x, y, u, v \in \mathbf{F}_m^\infty$ such that if $x, y, u, v \in X$, $x \neq y$, $u \neq v$, then for any n

$$x_n - y_n \neq \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} (u_k - v_k)(u_{n-k} - v_{n-k})$$

What if we consider the problem modulo m, so that the convolution is considered modulo m, and we want to avoid such differences modulo m. So in particular, we do not find any solutions to the equation

$$x_2 - y_2 = (u_1 - v_1)^2$$
$$x_3 - y_3 = 2(u_1 - v_1)(u_2 - v_2)$$
$$x_4 - y_4 = (u_1 - v_1)(u_3 - v_3) + (u_2 - v_2)^2$$
$$\vdots$$

which are considered modulo m. The topology of the p-adic numbers induces a power series relationship which 'goes up' and might be useful to our analysis, if the measure theory of the p-adic numbers agrees with the measure theory of normal numbers in some way, or as an alternate domain to analyze the squarefree problem as with $\mathbf{F}_m^\infty$.

The problem with the squarefree subset problem is that we are trying to optimize over two quantities. We want to choose a set X such that the number of distinct differences $x - y$ as small as possible, while keeping the set as large as possible. This double optimization is distinctly different from the problem of finding squarefree difference subsets of the integers. Perhaps a more natural analogy is to fix a set V, and to find the largest subset X of $[0,1]$ such that $x - y = (u-v)^2$, where $x \neq y \in X$, and $u \neq v \in V$. Then we are just avoiding subsets of $[0,1]$ which avoid a particular set of differences, and I imagine this subset has a large theory. But now we can solve the general subset problem by finding large subsets X such that $(X - X)^2 \subset V$ and X containing no differences in V. Does Rusza's method utilize the fact that the problem is a single optimization? Can we adapt Rusza's method work to give better results about finding subsets X of the integers such that $X - X$ is disjoint from $(X - X)^2$?

2.2   Squarefree Sets Using Modulus Techniques

We now try to adapt Ruzsa's idea of applying congruences modulo m to avoid squarefree differences on the integers to finding high dimensional subsets of $[0,1]$ which satisfy a continuous analogy of the integer constraint. One problem with

the squarefree problem is that solutions are non-scalable, in the sense that if $X \subset [N]$ is squarefree, αX may not be squarefree. This makes sense, since avoiding solutions to $\alpha(x - y) = \alpha^2(u - v)^2$ is clearly not equivalent to the equation $x - y = (u - v)^2$. As an example, $X = \{0, 1/2\}$ is squarefree, but $2X = \{0, 1\}$ isn't. On the other hand, if X avoids squarefree differences modulo N, it *is* scalable by a number congruent to 1 modulo N. More generally, if α is a rational number of the form p/q, then αX will avoid nontrivial solutions to $q(x - y) = p(u - v)^2$, and if p and q are both congruent to 1 modulo N, then X is squarefree, so modulo arithmetic enables us to scale down. Since the set of rational numbers with numerator and denominator congruent to 1 is dense in $\mathbf{R}$, *essentially* all scales of X are continuously squarefree. Since X is discrete, it has Hausdorff dimension zero, but we can 'fatten' the scales of X to obtain a high dimension continuously squarefree set. To initially simplify the situation, we now choose to avoid nontrivial solutions to $y - x = (z - x)^2$, removing a single degree of freedom from the domain of the equation.

So we now fix a subset X of $\{0, \ldots, m - 1\}$ avoiding squares modulo m. We now ask how large can we make ε such that nontrivial solutions to $x - y = (x - z)^2$ in the set

$$E = \bigcup_{x \in X} [\alpha x, \alpha x + \varepsilon)$$

occur in a common interval, if α is just short of $1/m^n$. This will allow us to recursively place a scaled, 'fattened' version of X in every interval, and then consider a limiting process to obtain a high dimensional continuously squarefree set. If we have a nontrivial solution triple, we can write it as $\alpha x + \delta_1, \alpha y + \delta_2$, and $\alpha z + \delta_3$, with $\delta_1, \delta_2, \delta_3 < \varepsilon$. Expanding the solution leads to

$$\alpha(x - y) + (\delta_1 - \delta_2) = \alpha^2(x - z)^2 + 2\alpha(x - z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) + (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2$$

If x, y, and z are all distinct, then, as we have discussed, we cannot have $\alpha(x - y) = \alpha^2(x - z)^2$. if α is chosen close enough to $1/m^n$, then we obtain an approximate inequality

$$|\alpha(x - y) - \alpha^2(x - z)^2| \geqslant \alpha^2$$

(we require α to be close enough to $1/n$ for some n to guarantee this). Thus we can guarantee at least two of x, y, and z are equal to one another if

$$|2\alpha(x - z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) + (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 - (\delta_1 - \delta_2)| < \frac{1}{m^{2n}}$$

We calculate that

$$2\alpha(x - z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) + (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 - (\delta_1 - \delta_2) < 2\alpha(m - 1)\varepsilon + \varepsilon^2 + \varepsilon$$

$$(\delta_1 - \delta_2) - 2\alpha(x - z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) - (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 \leqslant \varepsilon + 2\alpha(m - 1)\varepsilon$$

So it suffices to choose ε such that

$$\varepsilon^2 + [2\alpha(m - 1) + 1]\varepsilon \leqslant \alpha^2$$

20

This is equivalent to picking

$$\varepsilon \leqslant \sqrt{\left(\frac{2\alpha(m-1)+1}{2}\right)^2 + \alpha^2} - \frac{2\alpha(m-1)+1}{2} \approx \frac{\alpha^2}{2\alpha(m-1)+1}$$

We split the remaining discussion of the bound we must place on ε into the three cases where two of x, y, and z are equal, but one is distinct, to determine how small ε must be to prevent this from happening. Now

- If $y = z$, but x is distinct, then because we know $\alpha(x-y) = \alpha^2(x-y)^2$ has no solution in X, we obtain that (provided α is close enough to $1/m^n$),

$$|\alpha(x-y) - \alpha^2(x-y)^2| \geqslant \alpha^2$$

and the same inequality that worked for the case where the three equations are distinct now applies for this case.

- If $x = y$, but z is distinct, we are left with the equation

$$\delta_1 - \delta_2 = \alpha^2(x-z)^2 + 2\alpha(x-z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) + (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2$$

Now $\alpha^2(x-z)^2 \geqslant \alpha^2$, and

$$\delta_1 - \delta_2 - 2\alpha(x-z)(\delta_1 - \delta_3) - (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 < \varepsilon + 2\alpha(m-1)\varepsilon$$

so we need the additional constraint $\varepsilon + 2\alpha(m-1)\varepsilon \leqslant \alpha^2$, which is equivalent to saying

$$\varepsilon \leqslant \frac{\alpha^2}{1 + 2\alpha(m-1)}$$

- If $x = z$, but y is distinct, we are left with the equation

$$\alpha(x-y) + (\delta_1 - \delta_2) = (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2$$

Now $|\alpha(x-y)| \geqslant \alpha$, and

$$(\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 - (\delta_1 - \delta_2) < \varepsilon^2 + \varepsilon$$

$$(\delta_1 - \delta_2) - (\delta_1 - \delta_3)^2 < \varepsilon$$

so to avoid this case, we need $\varepsilon^2 + \varepsilon \leqslant \alpha$, or

$$\varepsilon \leqslant \frac{\sqrt{1 + 4\alpha} - 1}{2} \approx \alpha$$

Provided ε is chosen as above, all solutions in E must occur in a common interval. Thus, if we now replace the intervals with a recursive fattened scaling of X, all solutions must occur in smaller and smaller intervals. If we choose the size of these scalings to go to zero, these solutions are required to lie in a common interval of length zero, and thus the three values must be equal to one

21

another. Rigorously, we set $\varepsilon \approx 1/m^2$, and $\alpha \approx 1/m$, we can define a recursive construction by setting

$$E_1 = \bigcup_{x \in X} [\alpha x, \alpha x + \varepsilon_1)$$

and if we then set X_n to be the set of startpoints of the intervals in E_n, then

$$E_{n+1} = \bigcup_{x \in X_n} (x + \alpha^2 E_n)$$

Then $\bigcap E_n$ is a continuously squarefree subset. But what is it's dimension?

2.3   Idea; Delaying Swaps

By delaying the removing in the pattern removal queue, we may assume in our dissection methods that we are working with sets with certain properties, i.e. we can swap an interval with a dimension one set avoiding translates.

2.4   Squarefree Subsets Using Interval Dissection Methods

The main idea of Keleti's proof was that, for a function f, given a method that takes a sequence of disjoint unions of sets $J_1, \ldots, J_N$, each a union of almost disjoint closed intervals of the same length, and gives large subsets $J'_n \subset J_n$, each a union of almost disjoint intervals of a much smaller length, such that $f(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \neq 0$ for $x_n \in J'_n$. Then one can find high dimensional subsets K of the real line such that $f(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \neq 0$ for a sequence of distinct $x_1, \ldots, x_n \in K$. The larger the subsets J'_n are compared to J_n, the higher the Hausdorff dimension of K. We now try and apply this method to construct large subsets avoiding solutions to the equation $f(x, y, z) = (x - y) - (x - z)^2$. In this case, since solutions to the equation above satisfy $y = x - (x - z)^2$, given J_1, J_2, J_3, finding J'_1, J'_2, J'_3 as in the method above is the same as choosing J'_1 and J'_3 such that the image of $J'_1 \times J'_3$ under the map $g(x, z) = x - (x - z)^2$ is small in J_2. We begin by discretizing the problem, splitting J_1 and J_3 into unions of smaller intervals, and then choosing large subsets of these intervals, and finding large intervals of J_2 avoiding the images of the startpoints to these intervals.

So suppose that J_1, J_2, and J_3 are unions of intervals of length $1/M$, for which we may find subsets $A, B \subset [M]$ of the integers such that

$$J_1 = \bigcup_{a \in A} \left[\frac{a}{M}, \frac{a+1}{M} \right] \qquad J_3 = \bigcup_{b \in B} \left[\frac{b}{M}, \frac{b+1}{M} \right]$$

If we split J_1 and J_3 into intervals of length $1/NM$, for some $N \gg M$ to be specified later (though we will assume it is a perfect square), then

$$J_1 = \bigcup_{\substack{a \in A \\ 0 \leqslant k < N}} \left[\frac{Na+k}{NM}, \frac{Na+k}{NM} + \frac{1}{NM} \right] \qquad J_3 = \bigcup_{\substack{b \in A \\ 0 \leqslant l < N}} \left[\frac{Nb+l}{NM}, \frac{Nb+l}{NM} + \frac{1}{NM} \right]$$

22

We now calculate g over the startpoints of these intervals, writing

$$g\left(\frac{Na+k}{NM}, \frac{Nb+l}{NM}\right) = \frac{Na+k}{NM} - \left(\frac{N(a-b)+(k-l)}{NM}\right)^2$$

$$= \frac{a}{M} - \frac{(a-b)^2}{M^2} + \frac{k}{NM} - \frac{2(a-b)(k-l)}{NM^2} + \frac{(k-l)^2}{(NM)^2}$$

which splits the terms into their various scales. If we write $m = k - l$, then m can range on the integers in $(-N, N)$, and so, ignoring the first scale of the equation, we are motivated to consider the distribution of the set of points of the form

$$\frac{k}{NM} - \frac{2(a-b)m}{NM^2} + \frac{m^2}{(NM)^2}$$

where k is an integer in $[0, N)$, and m an integer in $(-N, N)$. To do this, fix $\varepsilon > 0$. Suppose that we find some value $\alpha \in [0, 1]$ such that S intersects

$$\left[\alpha, \alpha + \frac{1}{N^{1+\varepsilon}}\right]$$

Then there is k and m such that

$$0 \leqslant \frac{kNM - 2N(a-b)m + m^2}{(NM)^2} - \alpha \leqslant \frac{1}{N^{1+\varepsilon}}$$

Write $m = q\sqrt{N} + r$ (remember that we chose N so it's square root is an integer), with $0 \leqslant r < \sqrt{N}$. Then $m^2 = qN + 2qr\sqrt{N} + r^2$, and if $2qr = Q\sqrt{N} + R$, where $0 \leqslant R < \sqrt{N}$, then we find

$$-\frac{R}{M^2 N^{3/2}} - \frac{r^2}{(NM)^2} \leqslant \frac{kM - 2(a-b)m + q + Q}{NM^2} - \alpha \leqslant \frac{1}{N^{1+\varepsilon}} - \frac{R}{M^2 N^{3/2}} - \frac{r^2}{(NM)^2}$$

Thus

$$d(\alpha, \mathbf{Z}/NM^2) \leqslant \max\left(\frac{1}{N^{1+\varepsilon}} - \frac{R}{\sqrt{N}} - \frac{r^2}{N}, \frac{R}{M^2 N^{3/2}} + \frac{r^2}{(NM)^2}\right)$$

If we now restrict our attention to the set S consisting of the expressions we are studying where $R \leqslant (\delta_0/2)\sqrt{N}$, $r \leqslant \sqrt{\delta_0 N/2}$, then if the interval corresponding to α intersects S, then

$$d(\alpha, \mathbf{Z}/NM^2) \leqslant \max\left(\frac{1}{N^{1+\varepsilon}}, \frac{\delta_0}{NM^2}\right)$$

If $N^\varepsilon \geqslant M^2/\delta_0$, then we can force $d(\alpha, \mathbf{Z}/NM^2) \leqslant \delta_0/NM^2$ for all α intersecting S. Thus, if we split J_2 into intervals starting at points of the form

$$\frac{k + 1/2}{NM^2}$$

23

each of length $1/N^{1+\varepsilon}$, then provided $\delta_0 < 1/2$, we conclude that these intervals do not contain any points in S, since

$$d\left(\frac{k+1/2}{NM^2}, \mathbf{Z}/NM^2\right) = \frac{1}{2NM^2} > \frac{\delta_0}{NM^2}$$

So we're well on our way to using Pramanik and Fraser's recursive result, since this argument shows that, provided points in J_1 and J_3 are chosen carefully, we can keep $O_M(1/N^{1+\varepsilon})$ of each interval in J_2, which should lead to a dimension bound arbitrarily close to one.

2.5 Finding Many Startpoints of Small Modulus

To ensure a high dimension corresponding to the recursive construction, it now suffices to show J_1 and J_3 contain many startpoints corresponding to points in S, so that the refinements can be chosen to obtain $O_M(1/N)$ of each of the original intervals. Define T to be the set of all integers $m \in (-N, N)$ with $m = q\sqrt{N} + r$ and $r \leqslant \sqrt{\delta_0 N/2}$ and $2qr = Q\sqrt{N} + R$ with $R \leqslant (\delta_0/2)\sqrt{N}$. Because of the uniqueness of the division decomposition, we find T is in one to one correspondence with the set T' of all pairs of integers (q, r), with $q \in (-\sqrt{N}, \sqrt{N})$ and $r \in [0, \sqrt{N})$, with $r \leqslant \sqrt{\delta_0 N/2}$, $2qr = Q\sqrt{N} + R$, and $R \leqslant (\delta_0/2)\sqrt{N}$. Thus we require some more refined techniques to better upper bound the size of this set.

Let's simplify notation, generalizing the situation. Given a fixed ε, We want to find a large number of integers $n \in (-N, N)$ with a decomposition $n = qr$, where $r \leqslant \varepsilon\sqrt{N}$, and $q \leqslant \sqrt{N}$. The following result reduces our problem to understanding the distribution of the smooth integers.

Lemma 7. *Fix constants A, B, and let $n \leqslant AN$ be an integer. If all prime factors of n are $\leqslant BN^{1-\delta}$, then n can be decomposed as qr with $r \leqslant \varepsilon\sqrt{N}$ and $q \leqslant \sqrt{N}$.*

Proof. Order the prime factors of n in increasing order as $p_1 \leqslant p_2 \leqslant \cdots \leqslant p_K$. Let $r = p_1 \dots p_m$ denote the largest product of the first prime factors such that $r \leqslant \varepsilon\sqrt{N}$. If $r = n$, we can set $q = 1$, and we're finished. Otherwise, we know $rp_{m+1} > \varepsilon\sqrt{N}$, hence

$$r > \frac{\varepsilon\sqrt{N}}{p_{m+1}} \geqslant \frac{\varepsilon\sqrt{N}}{BN^{1-\delta}} = \frac{\varepsilon}{B}N^{\delta-1/2}$$

And if we set $q = n/r$, the inequality above implies

$$q < \frac{nB}{\varepsilon}N^{1/2-\delta} \leqslant \frac{AB}{\varepsilon}N^{3/2-\delta}$$

But now we run into a problem, because the only way we can set $q < \sqrt{N}$ while keeping A, B, and ε fixed constants is to set $\delta = 1$, and $AB/\varepsilon \leqslant 1$. $\quad\square$

Remark. *Should we expect this method to work? Unless there's a particular reason why values of (q, r) should accumulate near $Q = 0$, we should expect to lose all but $N^{-1/2}$ of the N values we started with, so how can we expect to get $\Omega(N)$ values in our analysis. On the other hand, if a number n is suitably smooth, in a linear amount of cases we should be able to divide up primes into two numbers q and r such that r is small and q fits into a suitable value of Q, so maybe this method will still work.*

Regardless of whether the lemma above actually holds through, we describe an asymptotic formula for perfect numbers which might come in handy. If $\Psi(N, M)$ denotes the number of integers $n \leqslant N$ with no prime factor exceeding M, then Karl Dickman showed

$$\Psi(N, N^{1/u}) = N\rho(u) + O\left(\frac{uN}{\log N}\right)$$

This is essentially linear for a fixed u, which could show the set of (q, r) is $\Omega_\varepsilon(N)$, which is what we want. Additional information can be obtained from Hildebrand and Tenenbaum's survey paper "Integers Without Large Prime Factors".

2.6 A Better Approach

Remember that we can write a general value in our set as

$$x = \frac{-2(a-b)m}{NM^2} + \frac{q}{NM^2} + \frac{Q}{NM^2} + \frac{R}{N^{3/2}M^2} + \frac{r^2}{N^2M^2}$$

with the hope of guaranteeing the existence of many points, rather than forcing R to be small, we now force R to be close to some scaled value of $\sqrt{N}$,

$$|R - n\varepsilon\sqrt{N}| = \delta\sqrt{N} \leqslant \varepsilon\sqrt{N}$$

Then

$$x = \frac{-2(a-b)m + q + Q + n\varepsilon + \delta}{NM^2} + \frac{r^2}{N^2M^2}$$

So

$$d\left(x, \mathbf{Z}/NM^2 + n\varepsilon/NM^2\right) \leqslant \frac{\varepsilon}{NM^2} + \frac{1}{4NM^2} = \frac{\varepsilon + 1/4}{NM^2}$$

By the pidgeonhole principle, since $R < \sqrt{N}$, there are $1/\varepsilon$ choices for n, whereas there are

The choice has the benefit of automatically possessing a lot of points by the pidgeonhole principle,

2.7 Boosting the Dimension of Pattern Avoiding Sets by Low Rank Coordinate Changes

We now consider finding subsets of $[0, 1]$ avoiding solutions to the equation $y = f(Tx)$, where $T : \mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R}^m$ is a rank k linear transformation with integer

coefficients with respect to standard coordinates. Fix a constant A bounding the operator norm of T, in the sense that $\|Tx\|_\infty \leqslant A\|x\|_\infty$ for all $x \in \mathbf{R}^n$. If we fix sets $T_0, T_1, \ldots, T_n, \subset [0,1]$, which are unions of intervals of length $1/M$, with startpoints lying on integer multiples of $1/M$. Split each interval of T_a into length $1/N$ intervals, and then set

$$\mathbf{A} = \{x : x_a \text{ is a startpoint of a } 1/N \text{ interval in } T_a\}$$

Since the startpoints of the intervals are integer multiples of $1/N$, $T(\mathbf{A})$ is contained with a rank k sublattice of $(\mathbf{Z}/N)^m$. The operator norm also guarantees $T(\mathbf{A})$ is contained within $[-A, A]^m$. Because of the lattice structure of the image, $\|x - y\|_\infty \geqslant 1/N$ for each distinct pair $x, y \in T(\mathbf{A})$. Since $\mathrm{Im}(T)$ is contained in a k dimensional subplane Σ of $\mathbf{R}^m$. It takes $(2AN/(1-\varepsilon))^k$ cubes with side-length $(1-\varepsilon)/N$ to cover $\Sigma \cap [-A, A]^m$ (This is a rubbish bound, but I don't know if it's worth calculating better constants here, i.e. using Gauss circle type methods). Since each cube can contain only a single element of $T(\mathbf{A})$, there are at most $(2AN/(1-\varepsilon))^k$ points in $T(\mathbf{A})$. Letting $\varepsilon \to 0$ gives that there are at most $(2AN)^k = O_{A,k}(N^k)$ points in $T(\mathbf{A})$. If we define the set of 'bad points' to be

$$\mathbf{B} = \{y \in [0,1] : \text{there is } x \in \mathbf{A} \text{ such that } y = f(T(x))\}$$

Then

$$|\mathbf{B}| = |f(T(\mathbf{A}))| \leqslant |T(\mathbf{A})| = (2A)^k N^k = O_{A,k}(N^k)$$

We can now split each length $1/M$ interval in T_0 into $6(2A)^k N^k = O_{A,k}(N^k)$ intervals of length $1/6M(2A)^k N^k = \Omega_{A,k,M}(1/N^k)$, then because of the bounds on $|\mathbf{B}|$, at least one of these intervals, and it's adjacent intervals, must avoid elements of $\mathbf{B}$. This means that we can pick an interval I with $\mathrm{dist}(I, \mathbf{B}) \geqslant 1/6M(2A)^k N^k = \Omega_{A,k,M}(1/N^k)$. The union of these intervals forms S_0. If f is C^1, and $\|\nabla f\|_\infty \leqslant B$, then

$$|f(Tx) - f(Tx')| \leqslant AB|x - x'|$$

and so we may choose $S_n \subset T_n$ by thickening each startpoint $x \in T_n$ to a length $1/12M(2A)^k N^k = \Omega_{A,k,M}(1/N^k)$ interval with no solutions $y = f(T(x))$, with $x_n \in S_n$, $y \in S_0$. Following the Hausdorff dimension computations in Pramanik and Fraser's paper, this gives a Hausdorff dimension $1/k$ set.

Remark. *If T is a rank k linear transformation with rational coefficients, then there is some integer λ such that λT has integer coefficients, and then the equation $y = f(Tx)$ is the same as the equation $y = f'((\lambda T)(x))$, where $f'(x) = f(x)/\lambda$. Since f' satisfies the same required regularity conditions that f does in the proof above, we conclude that we still get the dimension $1/k$ bound if T has rational rather than integral coefficients.*

Remark. *In Malabika's argument, she used the following approach:*
"We now fix an integer C depending only on A and k, and M, and split S into length $1/N$ subintervals I such that $|\mathbf{B} \cap I| \leqslant N^{k-1}/C$. In this step,

we throw away at most $C(4A)^k N = O_{A,k,M}(N)$ intervals. Since $|T_a| \geqslant 1/M$, T_a contains at least N/M intervals, and so if we choose C small enough that $C(4A)^k \leqslant 1/M$, then there is at least one interval in T_a that we keep. If we now split the remaining intervals into $2N^{k-1}/C$ intervals, which will have length $C/2N^k, \ldots$"

But I don't think this is necessary in the current proof. Is this method important when we look at higher dimensions, or is this a universal simplification?

Remark. *Maybe I should apply my results to augment Mathé's result rather than Pramanik/Fraser, since their results work better in high dimensional space, where we can better employ the low degree polynomials.*

Using the same approach, if we now try to avoid solutions to $y = f(Tx)$, where y is now a vector in $\mathbf{R}^m$, and T has rank k. Consider unions of $1/M$ cubes $T_0, \ldots, T_n$. If we fix startpoints of each x_k forming a full rank lattice spaced by $1/N$, and consider the space $\mathbf{A}$ of products, then there are $O_{A,k}(N^k)$ points in $T(\mathbf{A})$. If we let $\mathbf{B}$ denote the bad points as before, then there can be at most $O_{A,k}(N^k)$ of those. If we now split each $1/M$ cube in T_0 into $O_{A,k}(N^k)$ cubes with sidelengths $\Omega_{A,k,M}(1/N^{k/m})$, then at least one of these cubes must avoid elements of $\mathbf{B}$, and by taking a slightly smaller interval (by a constant again), we may assume that the interval satisfies $\operatorname{dist}(I, \mathbf{B}) \geqslant \Omega_{A,k}(1/MN^{k/m})$. If f is C^1, and $\|Df\|_\infty \leqslant B$, then

$$|f(Tx) - f(Tx')| \leqslant AB|x - x'|$$

so we can thicken the startpoints to cubes with sidelengths $O_{A,k,M}(1/N^{k/m}\sqrt{m}) = O_{A,k,M,m}(1/N^{k/m})$. This should give a dimension m/k set.

Remark. *Because of how we construct our set X, we can find a set avoiding solutions to $y = f(Tx)$ for all rank k rational matrices T, without losing any Hausdorff dimension. Maybe this will help us avoid solutions to more general problems?*

2.8 Extension to Well Approximable Numbers

If the coefficients of the linear transformation T in the equation $y = f(Tx)$ are non-rational, then the images of startpoints under the action of T do not form a lattice, and we therefore cannot use a direct combinatorial argument to find a large set of points y avoiding solutions to $y = f(Tx)$. However, if T is 'very close' to a rational coefficient linear transformation, then we can show the images of the startpoints are 'very close' to a lattice, which will still enable us to find points avoiding solutions by replacing the direct combinatorial approach with a covering argument.

Suppose that T is a real-coefficient linear transformation with the property that for each coefficient x there are infinitely many rational numbers p/q with $|x - p/q| \leqslant 1/q^\alpha$, for some fixed α. For infinitely many K, we can therefore find a linear transformation S with coefficients in $\mathbf{Z}/K$ with each coefficient of

T differing from the corresponding coefficient in S by at most $1/K^\alpha$. Then for each x, we find

$$\|(T - S)(x)\|_\infty \leqslant (n/K^\alpha)\|x\|_\infty$$

If we now consider $T_0, \ldots, T_n$, splitting $T_1, \ldots, T_n$ into length $1/N$ intervals, and considering $\mathbf{A}$ as in the last section, then $S(\mathbf{A})$ lie in a k dimensional sublattice of $(\mathbf{Z}/KN)^m$, hence containing at most $(2A)^k(KN)^k = O_{T,n}((KN)^k)$ points. By our error term calculation of $T - S$, the elements of $T(\mathbf{A})$ are contained in cubes centered at these lattice points with side-lengths $2n/K^\alpha$, or balls centered at these points with radius $n^{3/2}/K^\alpha$. If $\|\nabla f\| \leqslant B$, then the images of the radius $n^{3/2}/K^\alpha$ balls under the action of f are contained in length $Bn^{3/2}/K^\alpha$ intervals. Thus the total length of the image of all these balls under f is $(Bn^{3/2}/K^\alpha)(2A)^k(KN)^k = (2A)^k Bn^{3/2}K^{k-\alpha}N^k$. If $k < \alpha$, then we can take K arbitrarily large, so that there exists intervals with $\text{dist}(I, \mathbf{B}) = \Omega_{A,k,M}(1/N^k)$. But I believe that, after adding the explicit constants in, we cannot let $k = \alpha$.

Remark. *One problem is that, if T has rank k, we might not be able to choose S to be rank k as well. Is this a problem? If T has full rank, then the set of all such matrices is open so if T and S are close enough, S also has rank k, but this need not be true if T does not have full rank.*

Example. *If T has rank 1, then Dirichlet's theorem says that every irrational number x can be approximated by infinitely many p/q with $|x - p/q| < 1/q^2$, so every real-valued rank 1 linear transformation can be avoided with a dimension one bound.*

2.9 Applications of Low Rank Coordinate Changes

Our initial exploration of low rank coordinate changes was inspired by trying to find solutions to the equation

$$y - x = (u - w)^2$$

The solution above gives a Hausdorff dimension $1/2$ set avoiding solutions to this equation. More generally, if X is a set, then given a smooth function f of n variables, we can find a set X of Hausdorff dimension $1/n$ such that there is no $x \in X$, and $y_1, \ldots, y_n \in X - X$ such that $x = f(y_1, \ldots, y_n)$. This is better than the $1/2n$ bound that is obtained by Malabika and Fraser's result.

As a particular special case of our result, for any fixed m, we can find a set $X \subset \mathbf{R}^n$ of full Hausdorff dimension which contains no solutions to

$$a_1 x_1 + \cdots + a_n x_n = 0$$

for *any* rational numbers a_n which are not all zero. Since Malabika/Fraser's technique's solutions are bounded by the number of variables, they cannot let $n \to \infty$ to obtain a linearly independant set over the rational numbers. But

since the Hausdorff dimension of our sets now only depends on the rank of T, rather than the total number of variables in T, we can let $n \to \infty$ to obtain full sets linearly independant over the rationals. More generally, for any smooth function $f : \mathbf{R} \to \mathbf{R}$, we can find a full Hausdorff dimensional set such that there are no solutions

$$y = f(a_1 x_1 + \cdots + a_n x_n)$$

for any n, and for any rational numbers a_n that are not all zero.

The easiest applications of the low rank coordinate change method are probably involving configuration problems involving pairwise distances between m points in $\mathbf{R}^n$, where $m \ll n$, since this can best take advantage of our rank condition. Perhaps one way to encompass this is to avoid m vertex polyhedra in n dimensional space, where $m \ll n$. In order to distinguish this problem from something that can be solved from Mathé's approach, we can probably find a high dimensional set avoiding m vertex polyhedra on a parameterized n dimensional manifold, where $m \ll n$.

2.10 Idea: Generalizing This Problem to low rank smooth functions

Suppose we are able to find dimension $1/k$ sets avoiding configurations $y = g(f(x))$, where f is a smooth function from $\mathbf{R}^n \to \mathbf{R}^m$ of rank k. Then given any function $g(f(x))$, where f has rank k, if $g(f(x)) = 0$, then the implicit function theorem guarantees that there is a cover U_α and functions $h_\alpha : U^k \to \mathbf{R}^{n-k}$ such that for each if $g(f(x)) = 0$, for $x \in U_\alpha$, then there is a subset of k indices I such that $x_{I^c} = h_\alpha(x_I)$.

Then given any function $f(x)$ with rank k, we can use the implicit function theorem to find sets U_α, indices n_α, and functions g_α such that if $f(x) = 0$, for $x \in U_\alpha$, then $x_{n_\alpha} = g_\alpha(x_1, \ldots, \widehat{x_{n_\alpha}}, \ldots, x_n)$. Thus we need only avoid this type of configuration to avoid configurations of a general low rank function. If we don't believe that we are able to get dimension $1/(k-1)$ sets for rank k configurations, then we shouldn't be able to find sets of Hausdorff dimension $1/k$ avoiding configurations of the form $y = f(x)$, where f has rank k.

Remark. *If the functions g_α are only partially defined, this makes the problem easier than if the functions were globally defined, because the constraint condition is now smaller than the original constraint.*

Remark. *This would solve our problem of avoiding $y - x = (u - v)^2$, since if $f(x, y, u, v) = y - x - (u - v)^2$, then*

$$\nabla f$$

2.11 Idea: Algebraic Number Fields

If $\mathbf{Q}(\omega)$ is a quadratic extension of the rational numbers, then the ring of integers in this field form a lattice. Perhaps we can use this to generalize our approach

to avoiding configurations $y = f(Tx)$, where all coefficients of the matrix T lie in some common quadratic extension of the rational numbers.

2.12   Idea: Improving Mathé's Technique

Linear shifts will not change the degree of polynomials, so it is unlikely that my approach can be used to help understand Mathé's result. But it might be useful to learn it anyway.

2.13   A Note on Calculating Hausdorff Dimension

This section considers an inconvenience in the calculation of the Hausdorff dimension of Cantor like sets, and an attempt to resolve it in the most likely of scenarios. In particular, I imagine this has application to the construction of sets via Cantor like interval dissection techniques which result in an α dimensional set K with $H^\alpha(K) = 0$. To prove such sets are α dimensional, we rely on Frostman's lemma, which says that $H^\beta(K) > 0$ if and only if there is a Borel probability measure μ supported on K with $\mu(B_r) \lesssim_\beta r^\beta$. In our case, this can only work for $\beta < \alpha$, not $\beta = \alpha$, and so we have to find an infinite family of approximations for all β.

In a Cantor set construction, we construct a nested family of sets

$$X_0 \supset X_1 \supset X_2 \supset X_3 \supset \dots$$

$X_0 = [0, 1]$, and each X_N is a union of intervals of length l_N obtained by dividing and removing some segments of the intervals X_{N-1} more finely. We then obtain a set X as the limit of the sets X_N. In order to calculate the dimension of X by Frostman's lemma, the most natural probability measure to take is obtained by dividing the mass of the set uniformly.

Because the construction is completely discrete until a limit is taken, it is often simplest to obtain a bound for an interval I whose length is l_N, i.e. the same length as the intervals considered in the process at the scale X_N. The difficulty is then extending this bound to intervals of all lengths, so that the full Frostman's lemma result can be applied. Since Hausdorff dimension is completely locally defined (if we define the local dimension $\dim_{\mathbf{H}}(x) = \lim_{r \downarrow 0} \dim_{\mathbf{H}}(B_r(x) \cap X)$ then $\dim_{\mathbf{H}}(X) = \sup_{x \in X} \dim_{\mathbf{H}}(x)$), it is natural to expect that we can obtain a general bound $\mu(I) \lesssim_\beta |I|^\beta$ given that one has established precisely the same estimate, but restricted to intervals I with $|I| = l_N$, and with $l_N \downarrow 0$. This section concerns itself with a general method of establishing this result.

The main way of extending the results at particular scales to general results is by means of a covering argument. This is done in two ways for a given interval I with $l_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_N$:

- We can cover I by a single interval of length l_N, so

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\beta l_N^\beta = \left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^\beta |I|^\beta$$

- We can cover I by $|I|/l_{N+1}$ intervals of length l_{N+1}, so

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_\beta \frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}} l_{N+1}^\beta = \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^{1-\beta} |I|^\beta$$

For any given I, we can take the minimum of these two bounds. The coefficients then given by this estimate relative to $|I|^\beta$ is

$$\min\left(\left(\frac{l_N}{|I|}\right)^\beta, \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}}\right)^{1-\beta}\right)$$

If we consider the worst case coefficient over all I with $l_{N+1} \leqslant |I| \leqslant l_N$, this gives us the constant

$$\left(\frac{l_N}{l_{N+1}}\right)^{(1-\beta)\beta}$$

so this would complete the argument if l_N/l_{N+1} is upper bounded independantly of N. In most cases, however, this is impossible. We now discuss how we can weaken the condition on the growth rate of the ratio of consecutive discrete lengths by applying a simple trick.

By giving ourselves an epsilon of room, in our covering argument we can replace the l_N^β and l_{N+1}^β bounds with $l_N^{\beta'}$ and $l_{N+1}^{\beta'}$, for any $\beta' \in [\beta, \alpha)$, provided that β' is chosen independantly of N. In this case, we find that for a general interval I, and any $\varepsilon > 0$, by two choices of β' we can obtain

$$\mu(I) \lesssim_{\beta,\varepsilon} \left(\frac{l_N^{1+\varepsilon}}{|I|}\right)^\beta |I|^\beta, \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}^{1-\varepsilon}}\right)^{1-\beta} |I|^\beta$$

Now we find that via the same calculation,

$$\max_{l_{N+1} \leqslant x \leqslant l_N} \min\left(\left(\frac{l_N^{1+\varepsilon}}{|I|}\right)^\beta, \left(\frac{|I|}{l_{N+1}^{1-\varepsilon}}\right)^{1-\beta}\right) = (l_N/l_{N+1})^{\beta(1-\beta)}(l_N l_{N+1})^{\varepsilon\beta(1-\beta)}$$

so now rather than having the ratios l_N/l_{N+1} be upper bounded independantly of N, we can now have the ratios grow inversely proportional to $(l_N l_{N+1})^{\varepsilon\beta(1-\beta)}$. The lengths are likely to easily annihilate the ratios, since the lengths are compounded from many divisions in the algorithm, whereas the ratios occur at a single scale. Thus this bound is likely to be usable in a great many examples.

Example. *Kaleti constructs a full dimensional fractal set avoiding translates of itself using the Cantor set method. He has $l_N = 1/8^{N-1}N!$, in which case $l_N/l_{N+1} = 8N$, which is eventually bounded by $l_N^{-\varepsilon} = (8^{N-1}N!)^\varepsilon$ for any $\varepsilon > 0$.*

Example. *Fraser and Pramanik construct a $1/(d-1)$ dimensional set avoiding nontrivial solutions to a countable family of d variate functions $f(x_1, \ldots, x_d)$. Does our method apply to extend from the discrete scale bound?*

Remark. *If this probability measure fails to satisfy the required bounds, does it follow that the set itself doesn't have the required Hausdorff dimension? Is there a counterexample to this statement?*

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