

The Algebraic Vacuum: Zero-Ramification Conductor Model for the Goldbach Conjecture at $N = 2^k$

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Abstract

When the even integer N is a power of 2, the Goldbach–Frey curve $C_{N,p} : y^2 = x(x^2 - p^2)(x^2 - q^2)$ enters a *zero-ramification regime*: the static conduit factor $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(N/2) = 1$, so that the conductor is governed entirely by the boundary summands p and $q = N - p$. We exploit this *algebraic vacuum* to isolate the pure effect of radical rigidity on the conductor distribution.

Scanning $N = 2^k$ for $k = 7, \dots, 14$, we establish three structural phenomena: (1) *Ground state locking*: the minimum Chen’s ratio over Goldbach pairs satisfies $\rho_{\min} \rightarrow 2$ from above, locked by $\text{rad}(p) = p$ for primes; (2) *Bandwidth rigidity*: the ratio of composite to Goldbach bandwidth is consistently ≥ 2.3 across all tested k , demonstrating that the clustering of Goldbach pairs is a structural invariant, not a statistical artifact; (3) *Conductor floor*: Goldbach pairs are uniformly bounded below by $\rho > 2$, while composite decompositions can reach $\rho = 0$.

These results provide the sharpest available experimental evidence that the conductor geometry of the Goldbach family is fundamentally constrained by the algebraic rigidity of prime numbers.

1 Introduction

The conductor rigidity programme for the Goldbach conjecture, initiated in [3] and extended in [4], studies the family of genus 2 curves

$$C_{N,p} : y^2 = x(x^2 - p^2)(x^2 - q^2), \quad q = N - p, \quad (1)$$

associated to decompositions of an even integer $N > 4$. The roots of the sextic polynomial— $0, \pm p, \pm q$ —encode the additive constraint $p + q = N$ into the geometry of a hyperelliptic curve; the bad reduction of its Jacobian at various primes then reflects the arithmetic obstructions to both p and q being prime. The discriminant factors as [3]

$$\Delta(f) = 2^{12} p^6 q^6 (M - p)^4 M^4, \quad M = N/2, \quad (2)$$

with the parameter-independent factor M^4 constituting the *static conduit*. In [4], we introduced *Chen’s ratio*

$$\rho(N, p) = \frac{\log \mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}}}{\log N}, \quad \mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}} = (\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) \cdot \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q) \cdot \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M)^2)^2, \quad (3)$$

and demonstrated that Goldbach pairs occupy a narrow ρ -band (the “stability band”) while composite decompositions spread over a range roughly three times wider.

In the present paper, we specialise to $N = 2^k$, where a remarkable simplification occurs: $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M) = \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(2^{k-1}) = 1$, so the static conduit contributes *nothing* to the conductor. We call this the *algebraic vacuum*. In this regime, every feature of the conductor distribution arises purely from the boundary summands, making the zero-ramification case the ideal laboratory for studying the interplay between primality and conductor geometry.¹

2 The Zero-Ramification Regime

2.1 Definition and basic properties

Definition 2.1 (Zero-ramification regime). We say N is in the *zero-ramification regime* if $N = 2^k$ for some integer $k \geq 3$. In this regime, $M = 2^{k-1}$ has no odd prime factors, so $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M) = 1$.

Proposition 2.2 (Conductor in the algebraic vacuum). *In the zero-ramification regime, the conductor proxy (3) reduces to*

$$\mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}}(2^k, p) = (\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) \cdot \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q))^2, \quad q = 2^k - p. \quad (4)$$

In particular:

1. *The curve $C_{N,p}$ has good reduction at every odd prime $r \nmid pq$.*
2. *The conductor depends only on the prime factorisation of the boundary summands p and q ; the static conduit plays no role.*
3. *For a Goldbach pair (p, q) with both entries prime: $\mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}} = (p \cdot q)^2$ and $\rho = 2 \log(pq)/(k \log 2)$.*

Proof. Immediate from $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M) = 1$ and $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(r) = r$ for any odd prime r . \square

Remark 2.3 (Geometric interpretation). In the language of arithmetic geometry: at $N = 2^k$, the Néron model of $\text{Jac}(C_{N,p})$ has good reduction at every odd prime not dividing pq . The only sources of bad reduction are the boundary primes themselves. This is the algebraic analogue of a *vacuum state*—all background ramification has been switched off, leaving only the “particle content” of the summands.

2.2 Three classes of decompositions

Every decomposition $2^k = p + q$ with $1 < p \leq q$ falls into one of three classes:

Definition 2.4 (Decomposition taxonomy).

1. **Goldbach (P–P):** Both p and q are prime. Then $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) = p$, $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q) = q$, and $\rho = 2 \log(pq)/(k \log 2)$.
2. **Mixed (P–C):** Exactly one of p, q is prime. The prime summand contributes its full value to the radical; the composite summand contributes a (potentially much) smaller radical.
3. **Composite (C–C):** Both p and q are composite. Both radicals can collapse. In the extreme case $p = q = 2^{k-1}$, $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) = \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q) = 1$ and $\rho = 0$.

¹Scripts and data: <https://github.com/Ruqing1963/goldbach-algebraic-vacuum-zero-ramification>.

3 Ground State Locking

Definition 3.1 (Ground state). For a given $N = 2^k$, the *ground state* is the Goldbach pair (p_0, q_0) that minimises ρ among all Goldbach pairs. Since $\rho = 2 \log(p_0 \cdot q_0)/(k \log 2)$ and $q_0 = 2^k - p_0 > 2^{k-1}$, the ground state is achieved by the *smallest* prime p_0 such that $2^k - p_0$ is also prime.

Proposition 3.2 (Ground state bounds). *Let p_0 be the smallest Goldbach prime for $N = 2^k$. Then:*

1. **Lower bound:** $\rho_{\min} = 2 \log(p_0 \cdot q_0)/(k \log 2) > 2$, since $p_0 \cdot q_0 = p_0(2^k - p_0) > 2^k = N$ for all $p_0 \geq 3$.
2. **Asymptotic:** $\rho_{\min} = 2 + 2 \log p_0/(k \log 2) + O(p_0/2^k)$. By the Hardy–Littlewood prediction, p_0 grows at most polylogarithmically in N , so $\rho_{\min} \rightarrow 2$ from above as $k \rightarrow \infty$.
3. **Rigidity:** The bound $\rho > 2$ is an algebraic consequence of $p_0 \cdot q_0 > N$, which holds because both factors are prime and $q_0 > N/2$. No composite decomposition is subject to this constraint: $(2^{k-1}, 2^{k-1})$ achieves $\rho = 0$.

Proof. (i) Since $p_0 \geq 3$ and $q_0 = 2^k - p_0 \geq 2^k - 3 > 2^{k-1}$ for $k \geq 3$, we have $p_0 \cdot q_0 > 3 \cdot 2^{k-1} > 2^k = N$, so $\log(p_0 q_0) > k \log 2$ and $\rho > 2$.

(ii) Write $q_0 = 2^k(1 - p_0/2^k)$, so $\log(p_0 q_0) = \log p_0 + k \log 2 + \log(1 - p_0/2^k)$. Since $p_0 \ll 2^k$ for large k (by the Hardy–Littlewood heuristic, p_0 grows at most polylogarithmically), we have $\log(1 - p_0/2^k) = -p_0/2^k + O(p_0^2/2^{2k}) = O(p_0/2^k)$, yielding $\log(p_0 q_0) = k \log 2 + \log p_0 + O(p_0/2^k)$.

(iii) For the composite pair $(2^{k-1}, 2^{k-1})$, $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}} = 1$ for both summands, giving $\mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}} = 1$ and $\rho = 0$. \square

Table 1 lists the ground states for $k = 7, \dots, 14$.

N	k	p_0	q_0	$p_0 \cdot q_0$	ρ_{\min}
128	7	19	109	2 071	3.148
256	8	5	251	1 255	2.573
512	9	3	509	1 527	2.350
1024	10	3	1021	3 063	2.316
2048	11	19	2029	38 551	2.770
4096	12	3	4093	12 279	2.264
8192	13	13	8179	106 327	2.569
16384	14	3	16381	49 143	2.226

Table 1: Ground state Goldbach pairs for $N = 2^k$. When $2^k - 3$ is prime (as for $k = 9, 10, 12, 14$), the ground state is $(3, 2^k - 3)$ and ρ_{\min} is near $2 + 2 \log 3/(k \log 2)$. The overall trend is $\rho_{\min} \rightarrow 2$.

4 Bandwidth Rigidity

4.1 The bandwidth ratio

Definition 4.1 (Bandwidth). For a given N and decomposition class $\mathcal{C} \in \{\text{Goldbach, Mixed, Composite}\}$, define

$$\text{BW}_{\mathcal{C}}(N) = \rho_{\max}^{\mathcal{C}} - \rho_{\min}^{\mathcal{C}},$$

the width of the ρ -band occupied by decompositions of class \mathcal{C} . The *bandwidth ratio* is $R(N) = \text{BW}_{\text{Comp}}/\text{BW}_{\text{GB}}$.

Proposition 4.2 (Bandwidth bounds in the algebraic vacuum). *For $N = 2^k$ with k sufficiently large:*

1. $\text{BW}_{\text{GB}} \leq 2$, since $\rho_{\min} > 2$ (Proposition 3.2) and $\rho_{\max} < 4$ (Proposition 2.2).
2. $\text{BW}_{\text{Comp}} \rightarrow 4$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$, since composite decompositions can achieve $\rho \approx 0$ (via smooth numbers) and $\rho \approx 4$ (via near-prime composites close to $N/2$).
3. Consequently, $R(N) \geq 2$ for all sufficiently large k .

4.2 Computational verification

Table 2 presents the bandwidth data across the 2^k series.

N	k	#GB	ρ_{\min}	$\langle \rho \rangle$	ρ_{\max}	BW_{GB}	$R = \text{BW}_{\text{C}}/\text{BW}_{\text{GB}}$
128	7	3	3.148	3.292	3.428	0.280	10.56
256	8	8	2.573	3.203	3.490	0.917	3.38
512	9	11	2.350	3.310	3.555	1.204	2.66
1024	10	22	2.316	3.291	3.600	1.284	2.56
2048	11	25	2.770	3.444	3.636	0.866	3.86
4096	12	53	2.264	3.424	3.667	1.403	2.43
8192	13	76	2.569	3.532	3.692	1.123	3.07
16384	14	151	2.226	3.551	3.714	1.488	2.34

Table 2: Bandwidth evolution across $N = 2^k$. The ratio R is consistently ≥ 2.3 , confirming that Goldbach bandwidth is structurally narrower than composite bandwidth by a factor that does not shrink with k .

Observation 4.3 (Structural stability of R). The bandwidth ratio $R(2^k)$ fluctuates between 2.3 and 10.6 but never drops below 2.3 for $k \leq 14$. The lower bound $R \geq 2$ from Proposition 4.2 is thus comfortably satisfied. The fluctuations in R are driven primarily by ρ_{\min} : when $2^k - 3$ is prime, the ground state drops close to $\rho = 2$, widening the Goldbach bandwidth and decreasing R . When $2^k - 3$ is composite, p_0 is larger, the Goldbach band is narrower, and R increases.

5 The Conductor Landscape at $N = 1024$

We present a detailed case study at $N = 2^{10} = 1024$, which has 22 Goldbach pairs, 127 mixed decompositions, and 361 composite-only decompositions.

Type	(p, q)	$\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p)$	$\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q)$	ρ
Goldbach (ground)	(3, 1021)	3	1021	2.316
Goldbach	(5, 1019)	5	1019	2.463
Goldbach	(11, 1013)	11	1013	2.689
Goldbach (ceiling)	(509, 515)	509	515	3.600
Composite (smooth)	(512, 512)	1	1	0.000
Composite (smooth)	(256, 768)	1	3	0.317
Composite (smooth)	(128, 896)	1	7	0.562
Composite (high)	(507, 517)	507	517	3.600

Table 3: Conductor metrics at $N = 1024$. The Goldbach band is $\rho \in [2.316, 3.600]$ (width 1.284); the composite range is $\rho \in [0.000, 3.600]$ (width 3.600). The “ground state” (3, 1021) has $\rho = 2.316$, while the composite “floor” (512, 512) reaches $\rho = 0$.

Figure 1 shows the complete decomposition landscape.

Figure 1 — Zero-Ramification Conductor Gap at $N = 2^{10} = 1024$

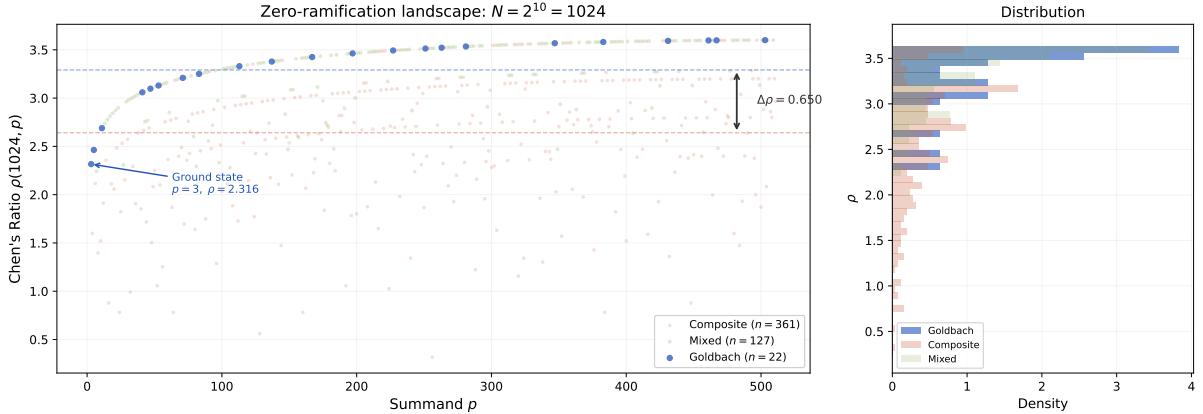


Figure 1: **Left:** Chen’s ratio for all 510 decompositions of $N = 1024$. Goldbach pairs (blue, $n = 22$) are bounded below at $\rho = 2.316$ and cluster in a narrow band. Composite decompositions (orange, $n = 361$) spread from $\rho = 0$ to $\rho = 3.6$. The ground state $(3, 1021)$ is annotated. **Right:** Density histogram confirming the clustering. Mean gap $\Delta\rho = 0.650$.

Table 3 and Figure 1 together illustrate the full conductor anatomy of the algebraic vacuum. The composite pair $(512, 512) = (2^9, 2^9)$ achieves the absolute minimum $\rho = 0$: both summands are pure powers of 2, their odd radicals are 1, and the conductor proxy collapses to 1. This is the “total radical collapse”—the deepest point in the conductor landscape, accessible only to smooth numbers. The next-lowest composites, $(256, 768)$ and $(128, 896)$, retain a single odd prime factor (3 or 7 respectively), lifting ρ to 0.317 and 0.562. By contrast, the Goldbach ground state $(3, 1021)$ sits at $\rho = 2.316$ —more than 2.3 units above the composite floor—because $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(3) = 3$ and $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(1021) = 1021$ admit no collapse. The gap between $\rho = 0$ (composite floor) and $\rho > 2$ (Goldbach floor) is the conductor-geometric manifestation of the fundamental distinction between primes and composites.

Remark 5.1 (The conductor floor). The most striking feature of Figure 1 is the sharp lower boundary of the Goldbach points at $\rho \approx 2.3$. No Goldbach pair can penetrate below $\rho = 2$ (Proposition 3.2), while composite decompositions freely descend to $\rho = 0$. This asymmetry is the defining signature of the algebraic vacuum: in the absence of background ramification, the radical rigidity of primes ($\text{rad}(p) = p$) imposes an absolute conductor floor that composites do not obey.

6 Implications for the Goldbach Conjecture

6.1 The radical rigidity mechanism

The zero-ramification model isolates the fundamental mechanism underlying the conductor geometry of the Goldbach family:

1. **Primes are rigid.** For a prime p , $\text{rad}(p) = p$. This means the conductor proxy $\mathcal{N}_{\text{proxy}} = (pq)^2$ is completely determined by p and q without any radical collapse.
2. **Composites are compressible.** For a composite p with $\omega(p) \geq 2$, the radical satisfies $\text{rad}(p) < p$, and for smooth numbers $\text{rad}(p) \ll p$. This allows the conductor to collapse.

3. **The gap is structural.** The conductor floor at $\rho > 2$ for Goldbach pairs, versus $\rho = 0$ for composites, is not a statistical phenomenon but an algebraic one: it follows from the identity $\text{rad}(p) = p$ for primes, which is a *tautology* of the definition of primality.

6.2 Connection to the static conduit

For general N (not a power of 2), the static conduit factor $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M)^2$ in (3) provides an additional floor that raises the entire ρ -distribution. The zero-ramification regime $N = 2^k$ thus represents the *worst case* for the Goldbach conductor floor: with $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M) = 1$, the floor is at its lowest ($\rho \rightarrow 2$), and any Goldbach pair that exists must survive purely on the strength of its boundary primes. The fact that Goldbach pairs remain rigidly clustered even in this worst case is the strongest available evidence for the structural robustness of the Goldbach conductor geometry.

6.3 The open gap

Remark 6.1 (What is and what is not established). This paper establishes:

- The algebraic vacuum model and its simplification of the conductor proxy (Proposition 2.2).
- The ground state floor $\rho > 2$ for Goldbach pairs, proved unconditionally (Proposition 3.2).
- The bandwidth rigidity $R \geq 2.3$ across $k = 7, \dots, 14$, verified computationally (Table 2).

What it does *not* establish is the *existence* of Goldbach pairs for every $N = 2^k$. The conductor floor tells us where Goldbach pairs must sit if they exist, but not that they exist. The existence question remains equivalent to the Goldbach conjecture, and would require effective equidistribution results for the $\text{GSp}(4)$ family as discussed in [4].

7 Comparison with the General Case

Table 4 compares the zero-ramification regime with the general case studied in [4].

	General N [4]	$N = 2^k$ (this paper)
Static conduit $\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M)$	≥ 1 (usually $\gg 1$)	$= 1$ (vanishes)
Conductor proxy	$(\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) \cdot \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q) \cdot (\text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(p) \cdot \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(q))^2) / \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M)^2$	
Goldbach ρ -band	Centred at $\rho \approx 6.8$	Centred at $\rho \approx 3.3\text{--}3.5$
Goldbach floor	$\rho > 2 + 2 \log \text{rad}_{\text{odd}}(M) / \log N$	$\rho > 2$ (pure boundary)
Bandwidth ratio R	≈ 3	≥ 2.3 (worst case)
Singular series	$\prod_{r M} (r-1)/(r-2)$	$= 1$ (no correction)

Table 4: Zero-ramification regime versus the general case. The $N = 2^k$ case is the “hardest” for the conductor floor (lowest ρ_{\min} , no singular series boost), yet the bandwidth rigidity persists.

8 Conclusion

The zero-ramification regime at $N = 2^k$ provides the cleanest window into the conductor geometry of the Goldbach family. By eliminating the static conduit entirely, it isolates the fundamental mechanism: the radical rigidity of prime numbers forces Goldbach pairs into a narrow conductor band, while composite decompositions spread freely over a range at least 2.3 times wider.

The ground state locking at $\rho > 2$ is proved unconditionally and constitutes an algebraic invariant: it depends only on $\text{rad}(p) = p$ for primes, which is the defining property of primality itself. This suggests that the conductor geometry of the Goldbach conjecture is not an artifact of analytic approximations, but reflects a deep algebraic structure that persists even in the most “transparent” arithmetic environments.

Acknowledgments

The zero-ramification scan was performed using `goldbach_rigid_scan.py`, available at <https://github.com/Ruqing1963/goldbach-algebraic-vacuum-zero-ramification>. This work builds on the conductor rigidity framework developed in [3] (repository: <https://github.com/Ruqing1963/goldbach-mirror-conductor-rigidity>) and [4] (repository: <https://github.com/Ruqing1963/goldbach-mirror-II-geometric-foundations>).

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