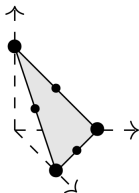


Tropical Geometry of Probabilistic Programming Languages

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POPL26, Rennes

16 January, 2026

Outline

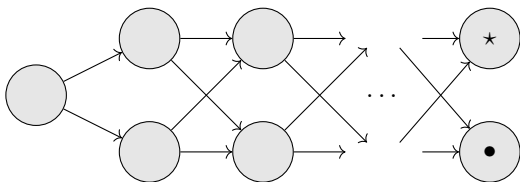
- 1 Probabilistic Models and Probabilistic Languages
- 2 Going to the Tropics: Inference and Newton Polytope
- 3 Interpretation as Formal Power Series
- 4 Tropical Intersection Type System

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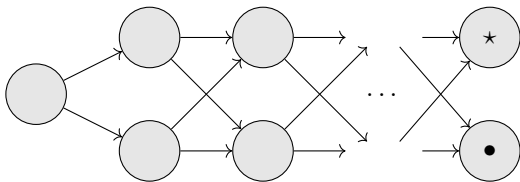
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Probabilistic Models:

Probabilistic Models: compact representation of *very large* event spaces
(e.g. Bayesian networks, Hidden Markov models)

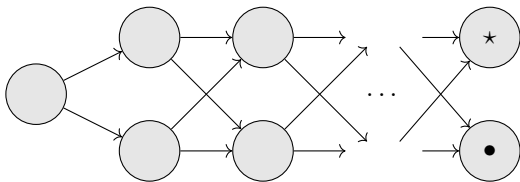


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2^n possible trajectories $\alpha_1\alpha_2\dots\alpha_n \in \{0,1\}^n$

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Statistical inference:

Probability of reaching ★?

Trajectories with **highest** probability?

Probabilistic Languages:

Probabilistic Languages:

compact and user-friendly specification of models via *programs*

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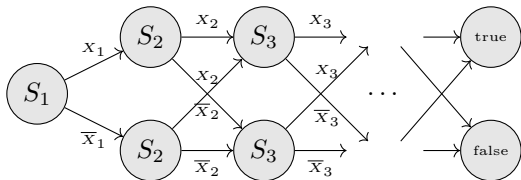
compact and user-friendly specification of models via *programs*

$$M := (\lambda x.x \oplus_{X_1} x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_{X_2} x) \dots (\lambda x.x \oplus_{X_{n-1}} x)(\text{true} \oplus_{X_n} \text{false})$$

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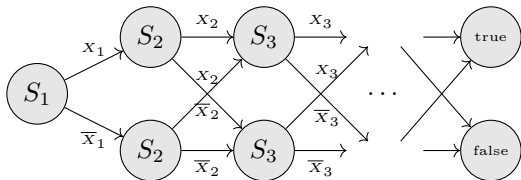
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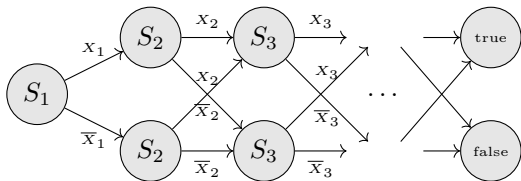
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 Statistical inference \rightarrow computational behavior of M :

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 Statistical inference \rightarrow computational behavior of M :

 Probability that $M \rightarrow \text{true}$?

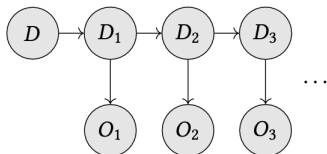
 Reductions $M \rightarrow \text{true}$ of **highest** probability?

Probabilistic Languages:

compact and user-friendly specification of models via *programs*

$$M := (\text{fix } B)(ND) : \text{Bool}, \text{ where } B \text{ is}$$

$$\lambda f x. \text{ifz}(x, \text{ifz}(O0, f(N0), 1), \text{ifz}(O1, f(N1), 1)) : (\text{Bool} \rightarrow \text{Bool}) \rightarrow \text{Bool} \rightarrow \text{Bool}$$



Statistical inference \rightarrow computational behavior of M :

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Probability that $M \rightarrow \text{true}$: sum over all reductions ($X^0 = X, X^1 = \bar{X}$):

$$\sum_{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \in \{0,1\}} X_1^{\alpha_1} \dots X_n^{\alpha_n} = (X_1 + \bar{X}_1)(X_2 + \bar{X}_2) \dots (X_n + \bar{X}_n) = 1$$

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Maximum a posteriori probability:

$$\max_{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \in \{0,1\}} \{X_1^{\alpha_1} \dots X_n^{\alpha_1}\}$$

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Maximum a posteriori probability:

equivalently, *minimum* a posteriori *negative log*-probability,

$$-\log \left(\max_{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \in \{0,1\}} \{X_1^{\alpha_1} \dots X_n^{\alpha_n}\} \right)$$

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equivalently, *minimum* a posteriori *negative log-probability*,

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Tropicalisation: move from $([0, 1], +, \times)$ to $\mathbb{T} := ([0, +\infty], \min, +)$

A tropical curve needs *not* depend on **all** its monomials:

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$$X^4 + 4X^3\bar{X} + 6X^2\bar{X}^2 + 4X\bar{X}^3 + \bar{X}^4 \quad X^4 + \bar{X}^4$$

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$$\min\{4X, 3X + \bar{X}, 2X + 2\bar{X}, X + 3\bar{X}, 4\bar{X}\}$$

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$$\mathfrak{t}^!(X^4 + 4X^3\bar{X} + 6X^2\bar{X}^2 + 4X\bar{X}^3 + \bar{X}^4) = \mathfrak{t}^!(X^4 + \bar{X}^4)$$

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Tropicalisation

For s a formal power series in n variables, $\mathfrak{t}^!s : \mathbb{T}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$ is its evaluation within tropical numbers

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$$t!(X^4 + 4X^3\bar{X} + 6X^2\bar{X}^2 + 4X\bar{X}^3 + \bar{X}^4) = t!(X^4 + \bar{X}^4)$$

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Tropicalisation

For s a formal power series in n variables, $t!s : \mathbb{T}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$ is its evaluation within tropical numbers

Key idea: $t!s$ actually depends on **many less** monomials than s .

The s above expresses the reductions of the program

$$(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\text{true}$$

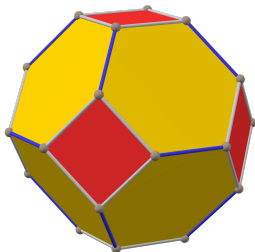
Only **2** monomials out of 5

⇒ maximum probabilities achieved by “all left” and “all right” strategies

Newton polytope: for a polynomial $s = \sum_{(i_1, \dots, i_n)} s_{i_1 \dots i_n} x_1^{i_1} \dots x_n^{i_n}$,

$$NP(s) = \text{Convex Hull}(\{(i_1, \dots, i_n) \mid s_{i_1 \dots i_n} \neq 0\}) \subset \mathbb{R}^n$$

Call s_{NP} the restriction of s to the **vertices** of $NP(s)$.

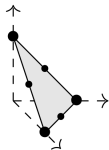


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$$\begin{aligned} NP((x_1 + x_2 + x_3)^2) &= NP(x_1^2 + 2x_1x_2 + 2x_1x_3 + x_2^2 + 2x_2x_3 + x_3^2) \\ &= \text{CH}(\{(2, 0, 0), (1, 1, 0), (1, 0, 1), (0, 2, 0), (0, 1, 1), (0, 0, 2)\}) \\ &= \text{CH}(\{(2, 0, 0), (0, 2, 0), (0, 0, 2)\}) \end{aligned}$$



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Our idea: **Minimal** Newton polytope:

$$NP_{\min}(s) = \text{Convex Hull}\{\text{minimal vertices of } NP(s)\} \subset \mathbb{R}^n$$

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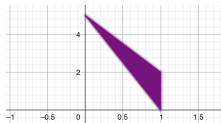
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- $NP(3x_1 + 2x_1x_2^2 + x_2^5) = \text{CH}\{(1, 0), (1, 2), (0, 5)\}$
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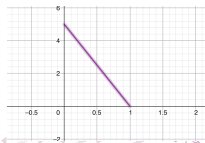
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Tropical Geometry¹ is useful for Statistical Inference:

⇒ efficient methods to study *most likely* trajectories in Bayesian networks


¹[Pachter, Sturmfeld, 2004] Tropical Geometry of Statistical Models, PNAS

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For a polynomial s in n variables, $NP(s), NP_{\min}(s)$ have $\mathcal{O}((\deg p)^{2n-1})$ vertices that can be computed efficiently from s .

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By restricting to the vertices of $NP_{\min}(s)$ we *reduce the space of possible solutions* to a **inference** optimisation problems like:

Given a probabilistic model expressed via some (large) polynomial s on parameters x_1, \dots, x_n , compute a “small” set S of trajectories such that:

- for every observation $\vec{\sigma}$ and assignment $\vec{x} \mapsto \vec{p}$, the most likely explanation of $\vec{\sigma}$ wrt to \vec{p} is in S .

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Our idea: Import **Tropical Geometry** tools inside PLT:

⇒ PL-oriented methods to study *most likely* reductions *directly on programs*

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- 1 Define $NP_{\min}(M)$ with PLT compositional tools
- 2 Estimate $NP_{\min}(M)$ in a compositional PL-oriented way

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Language $PCF\langle X_1, \dots, X_n \rangle$: PCF + **parametric** coin flip $M \oplus_{X_i} N$

Semantics: We adapt the well-known **Weighted Relational Model** $QRel_!$ of PCF

type \mapsto set of indeces

term \mapsto family of formal power series
with coefficients in Q

$$\llbracket \text{Bool} \rrbracket = \{true, false\} \quad \llbracket \text{Nat} \rrbracket = \mathbb{N} \quad \llbracket A \rightarrow B \rrbracket = !\llbracket A \rrbracket \times \llbracket B \rrbracket$$

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Parametric interpretation of $PCF\langle X_1, \dots, X_n \rangle$

Take $Q =$ semiring of formal power series in variables $X_1, \overline{X}_1, \dots, X_n, \overline{X}_n$ and coefficients in \mathbb{N}^∞ . For each $b \in \llbracket B \rrbracket$, we can define a formal power series

$$\llbracket x : A \vdash M : B \rrbracket_b$$

in variables $X_1, \overline{X}_1, \dots, X_n, \overline{X}_n, x_{\llbracket A \rrbracket}$ and coefficients in \mathbb{N}^∞ .

A program $M : \text{Bool}$ is interpreted as the two fps $\llbracket M \rrbracket_{true}$, $\llbracket M \rrbracket_{false}$ below:

$$\llbracket M \rrbracket_b = \sum_{\vec{i}, \vec{j} \in \mathbb{N}^n} \#_{\vec{i}, \vec{j}} X_1^{i_1} \bar{X}_1^{j_1} \cdots X_n^{i_n} \bar{X}_n^{j_n}$$

with $\#_{\vec{i}, \vec{j}} \in \mathbb{N}^\infty$ the number of reductions to b of weight $X_1^{i_1} \bar{X}_1^{j_1} \cdots X_n^{i_n} \bar{X}_n^{j_n}$.

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$$\llbracket (\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\text{true} \rrbracket_{true} = (X + \bar{X})^4$$

A program $M : \text{Bool}$ is interpreted as the two fps $\llbracket M \rrbracket_{true}$, $\llbracket M \rrbracket_{false}$ below:

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$$\llbracket \text{fix}(\lambda x.x \oplus_X \text{true}) \rrbracket_{true} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} X^n \bar{X}$$

Our idea: **A Finitary Claim about $\text{PCF}\langle\vec{X}\rangle$**

for all $\text{PCF}\langle\vec{X}\rangle$ programs $M : \text{Bool}$ there is a **finite** set of reductions S such that, for all assignments $\vec{X} \mapsto \vec{p}$, S contains a most likely reduction;

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equivalently, there is $d \in \mathbb{N}$ such that, for all assignments $\vec{X} \mapsto \vec{p}$, a reduction of highest probability is always found among those with at most d choices.

For s formal power series in n variables and coefficients in \mathbb{N}^∞ , $\mathbf{t}^!s : \mathbb{T}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$

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Theorem 3. (all discrete fps collapse)

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Definition.

The **tropical degree** $\mathfrak{d}_b(M)$ (for $b = \text{true}, \text{false}$) of a program $M : \text{Bool}$ is the *smallest* degree of a polynomial s_0 such that $\mathbf{t}^![[M]]_b = \mathbf{t}^!s_0$.

The **(minimal) Newton Polytope** of M is $NP_{\min}(s_0)$.

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Theorem 4. (tropical degree is undecidable)

Both problems “is $\mathfrak{d}_b(M) < d$?” and “is $\mathfrak{d}_b(M) = d$?” are Π_1^0 -hard.

Outline


- 1 Probabilistic Models and Probabilistic Languages
- 2 Going to the Tropics: Inference and Newton Polytope
- 3 Interpretation as Formal Power Series
- 4 Tropical Intersection Type System**

We adapt non-idempotent intersection types²: For $\Gamma \vdash M : A$, $\gamma \in \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, $a \in \llbracket A \rrbracket$,

$$M : \langle \gamma \vdash^s a \rangle$$

with s a polynomial in variables $X_1, \bar{X}_1, \dots, X_n, \bar{X}_n$ and coefficients in \mathbb{N}

Each monomial of s records a reduction that the derivation has explored

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⇒ Our idea: record in s as few reductions (of M to a given γ) as possible
& many enough to hope finding a most likely reduction

⇒ Need to compare different reductions

⇒ many typing derivations at once

$$M : \left\langle \gamma_j \vdash^{s_j} a_j \right\rangle_{j \in J}$$

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$$\frac{\gamma \vdash M : [a_1] \multimap \dots \multimap [a_k] \multimap b \quad \delta_1 \vdash N_1 : a_1 \quad \dots \quad \delta_k \vdash N_k : a_k}{\gamma + \sum_i \delta_i \vdash MN_1 \dots N_k : b}$$

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The polynomial $s_0 s_1 \dots s_k$ may have $\mathcal{O}((2n+k)^k)$ monomials!

Problem: It might grow **too large** in k

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Solution: Given *minimal* polynomials s_0, \dots, s_k , a “**Viterbi-Newton**”
algorithm $\text{VN}(s_0, \dots, s_k)$ computes the *minimal* polynomial $\left(\prod_{i=0}^k s_i \right)_{\min}$.

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The polynomial $s_0 s_1 \dots s_k$ may have $\mathcal{O}(\binom{2n+k}{k}) \approx \mathcal{O}((k+1)^{4n-1})$ monomials!

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$$(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\text{true} : \langle \vdash^{X^3 + \bar{X}^3} \text{true} \rangle$$

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\frac{x : \langle x : [[a] \multimap a] \vdash^1 [a] \multimap a \rangle \quad x : \langle x : [[a] \multimap a] \vdash^1 [a] \multimap a \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle x : [[a] \multimap a] \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [a] \multimap a \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [[a] \multimap a] \multimap [a] \multimap a \rangle}} \quad
\frac{x : \langle x : [[1] \multimap 1] \vdash^1 [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \quad x : \langle x : [[1] \multimap 1] \vdash^1 [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle x : [[1] \multimap 1] \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [[1] \multimap 1] \multimap [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}} \quad
\frac{x : \langle x : [1] \vdash^1 1 \rangle \quad x : \langle x : [1] \vdash^1 1 \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle x : [1] \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} 1 \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}} \\
\frac{(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X^2+\bar{X}^2} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \quad (\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X^3+\bar{X}^3} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}{(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)1 : \langle \vdash^{X^3+\bar{X}^3} 1 \rangle}}{1 : \langle \vdash^1 1 \rangle}
\end{array}$$

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$$\frac{\frac{\frac{x : \langle [a] \multimap a \rangle \vdash^1 [a] \multimap a \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle [a] \multimap a \rangle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [a] \multimap a \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [a] \multimap a \rangle \multimap [a] \multimap a \rangle}}{\frac{\frac{\frac{x : \langle [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \vdash^1 [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \multimap [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{\frac{\frac{\frac{x : \langle [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \vdash^1 [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}{x \oplus_X x : \langle [1] \multimap 1 \rangle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X+\bar{X}} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{\frac{(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X^2+\bar{X}^2} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}{(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)\lambda x.x \oplus_X x : \langle \vdash^{X^2+\bar{X}^2} [1] \multimap 1 \rangle}}}{(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)(\lambda x.x \oplus_X x)1 : \langle \vdash^{X^3+\bar{X}^3} 1 \rangle}}}{1 : \langle \vdash^1 1 \rangle}}$$

$$\frac{M : \left\langle \vdash^{X^2 + \bar{X}^2} [a] \multimap b \right\rangle \quad N : \left\langle \vdash^{X + \bar{X}} a \right\rangle}{MN : \left\langle \vdash^{X^3 + \bar{X}^3} b \right\rangle}$$

$$\mathbf{VN}(X^2 + \bar{X}^2, X + \bar{X}) = \left((X^2 + \bar{X}^2)(X + \bar{X}) \right)_{\min} = X^3 + \bar{X}^3$$

Theorem 5. For all $M : \text{Bool}$ there exists a derivation π of $M : \langle \vdash^s : \text{true} \rangle$ such that $s = NP_{\min}(M)$ and so $\text{deg } s = \mathfrak{d}_{\text{true}}(M)$.

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Solution to Inference tasks

- from $NP_{\min}(M)$, one can trace back an associated maximal reduction
- from each vertex μ of $NP_{\min}(s)$ one can find (via standard linear optimisation techniques) an assignment $\vec{X}, \overline{\vec{X}} \mapsto \vec{p}, (1 - \vec{p})$ that makes the reduction μ a most likely explanation.

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Limitation: $\mathfrak{d}_{\text{true}}(M)$ is undecidable!

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\Rightarrow Our idea

The user can still perform **proof-search** within our typing system and *stop* when increasing the proof does not add new monomials!

Perspectives:

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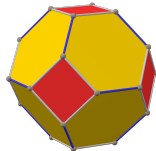
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Thank you!



$$\begin{array}{c}
 \frac{}{M : \emptyset} \emptyset \quad \frac{}{x : \langle x : [a_i] \vdash^1 a_i \rangle_{i \in I}} \text{id} \quad \frac{}{n : \langle \vdash^1 n \rangle_{\{\star\}}} n \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\text{succ } M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i + 1 \rangle_{i \in I}} S \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\text{pred } M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i - 1 \rangle_{i \in I}} P \\
 \\
 \frac{M : \langle \gamma_0 \vdash^{s_0} 0 \mid \gamma_{i+1} \vdash^{s_{i+1}} i + 1 \rangle_{i \in I \subset \mathbb{N}} \quad N : \langle \delta_j \vdash^{t_j} a_j \rangle_{j \in J_0} \quad P : \langle \delta'_j \vdash^{t'_j} a'_j \rangle_{j \in J_1}}{\text{ifz}(M, N, P) : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_0 + \delta_j \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_0, t_j)} a_j \mid \gamma_{i+1} + \delta'_j \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_{i+1}, t'_j)} a'_j \rangle_{i \in I, j \in J_0 + J_1}} \text{ifz} \\
 \\
 \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} a_i \rangle_{i \in I} \quad N : \langle \gamma_j \vdash^{s'_j} a_j \rangle_{j \in J}}{M \oplus_X N : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i \cdot X} a_i \mid \gamma_j \vdash^{s'_j \cdot \bar{X}} a_j \rangle_{i \in I, j \in J}} \oplus \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i x : m_i \vdash^{s_i} b_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\lambda x. M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} m_i \multimap b_i \rangle_{i \in I}} \lambda \\
 \\
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 \end{array}$$

In all derivable $M : \langle \gamma \vdash^s a \rangle$, s is minimal and $|s| \in \mathcal{O}(|\pi|^{2n-1})$

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 \frac{}{M : \emptyset} \emptyset \quad \frac{}{x : \langle x : [a_i] \vdash^1 a_i \rangle_{i \in I}} \text{id} \quad \frac{}{n : \langle \vdash^1 n \rangle_{\{\star\}}} n \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\text{succ } M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i + 1 \rangle_{i \in I}} S \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\text{pred } M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} n_i - 1 \rangle_{i \in I}} P \\
 \\
 \frac{M : \langle \gamma_0 \vdash^{s_0} 0 \mid \gamma_{i+1} \vdash^{s_{i+1}} i + 1 \rangle_{i \in I \subset \mathbb{N}} \quad N : \langle \delta_j \vdash^{t_j} a_j \rangle_{j \in J_0} \quad P : \langle \delta'_j \vdash^{t'_j} a'_j \rangle_{j \in J_1}}{\text{ifz}(M, N, P) : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_0 + \delta_j \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_0, t_j)} a_j \mid \gamma_{i+1} + \delta'_j \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_{i+1}, t'_j)} a'_j \rangle_{i \in I, j \in J_0 + J_1}} \text{ifz} \\
 \\
 \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} a_i \rangle_{i \in I} \quad N : \langle \gamma_j \vdash^{s'_j} a_j \rangle_{j \in J}}{M \oplus_X N : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i \cdot X} a_i \mid \gamma_j \vdash^{s'_j \cdot \bar{X}} a_j \rangle_{i \in I, j \in J}} \oplus \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_{i_0} x : m_i \vdash^{s_i} b_i \rangle_{i \in I}}{\lambda x. M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} m_i \multimap b_i \rangle_{i \in I}} \lambda \\
 \\
 \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} m_i \multimap b_i \rangle_{i \in I} \quad N : \langle \langle \delta_{ij} \vdash^{s'_{ij}} m_{ij} \rangle_{j \in J_i} \rangle_{i \in I}}{MN : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_i + \sum_j \delta_{ij} \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_i, s'_{i1}, \dots, s'_{ip_i})} b_i \rangle_{i \in I}} @ \quad \frac{M : \langle \gamma_i \vdash^{s_i} m_i \multimap b_i \rangle_{i \in I} \quad YM : \langle \langle \delta_{ij} \vdash^{s'_{ij}} m_{ij} \rangle_{j \in J_i} \rangle_{i \in I}}{YM : \text{merge} \langle \gamma_i + \sum_j \delta_{ij} \vdash^{\text{VN}(s_i, s'_{i1}, \dots, s'_{ip_i})} b_i \rangle_{i \in I}} Y
 \end{array}$$

In all derivable $M : \langle \gamma \vdash^s a \rangle$, s is minimal and $|s| \in \mathcal{O}(|\pi|^{2n-1})$

If M is affine, stable derivation efficient $|\pi| \in \mathcal{O}(\mathfrak{d}_{\text{true}}(M) |M| 3^t)$, while the number of reductions is (at least) in $\mathcal{O}(2^{|M|})$.