

## REFINED MOTIVIC DIMENSION OF SOME FERMAT VARIETIES

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### Abstract

Using the inductive structure of a Fermat variety by Shioda and Katsura [‘On Fermat varieties’, *Tohoku Math. J.* (2) **31**(1) (1979), 97–115], we estimate the refined motivic dimension of certain Fermat varieties. As an application of our computation, we present an elementary proof of the generalised Hodge conjecture for those varieties.

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### 1. Introduction

The Fermat hypersurface in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  of degree  $m$ , denoted by  $X_m^n$ , is the nonsingular hypersurface in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  defined by the equation  $x_0^m + x_1^m + \cdots + x_{n+1}^m = 0$ . Thanks to the geometric and arithmetic properties that Fermat varieties possess, the classical Hodge conjecture for certain Fermat varieties has been known for years: the Hodge conjecture holds for  $X_m^n$  for  $m$  a prime or at most 20 [7, 8]. One approach to showing this was taken by Shioda. Using the inductive structure of Fermat varieties that Katsura and himself established [9], Shioda described the spaces of Hodge cycles and algebraic cycles in terms of eigenspaces of morphisms on  $H_{\text{prim}}^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q})$ , induced by the action of the group of  $m$ th roots of unity on  $X_m^n$ . This eigenspace description gives rise to a system of linear Diophantine equations, and certain numerical conditions on the solutions of the system imply the Hodge conjecture for  $X_m^n$ . Shioda’s numerical computation also implied the Hodge conjecture for  $X_m^n$  for  $n \leq 10$  and  $m = 21$  [8].

Given a complex smooth projective variety  $X$ , singular cohomology with rational coefficients carry two natural filtrations: the *coniveau* filtration  $N^\bullet$  and the *level* filtration  $\mathcal{F}^\bullet$ . The  $p$ th degree of each filtration generalises the space of algebraic cycles and that of Hodge cycles, respectively. We say that the generalised Hodge conjecture (GHC) holds for  $X$  if the two filtrations coincide. In [5], we defined and explored the properties of the  $m$ th refined motivic dimension  $\mu_m(X)$  of an algebraic variety  $X$ , which

is the smallest integer  $n$  such that any  $\alpha \in \mathcal{F}^m H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  vanishes on the complement of a Zariski closed set, all of whose components have codimension at least  $(i - n)/2$ . Our motivation for the study was to understand the refined motivic dimension as a tool to check the GHC for certain varieties. In this note, we apply our technique to provide an elementary proof of the GHC for  $X_m^n$  in codimension one for any  $m$  and  $n$ , and in codimension two if  $m$  and  $n$  satisfy a certain condition. As a corollary of the main result, we obtain the Hodge conjecture for a four-dimensional Fermat variety  $X_m^4$  of any degree  $m$ .

We collect foundational material that we use throughout the note in Section 2, including a summary of Shioda’s inductive structure of a Fermat variety. The GHC in codimension one and two for Fermat varieties are the contents of Sections 3 and 4, respectively. We finish the note with a general remark on the GHC.

All varieties will be defined over  $\mathbb{C}$ .

### 2. Foundational material

Given a nonsingular projective variety  $X$ , the cohomology  $H^*(X, \mathbb{Q})$  of  $X$  carries two natural filtrations: the *level* filtration  $\mathcal{F}^\bullet$  and the *coniveau* filtration  $N^\bullet$ . The  $p$ th level filtration  $\mathcal{F}^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  is defined to be the largest sub-Hodge structure of  $H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  contained in  $F^p H^i(X, \mathbb{C}) \cap H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$ , where  $F^\bullet$  is the Hodge filtration on  $H^i(X, \mathbb{C})$ . Alternatively,  $\mathcal{F}^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  is exactly the largest rational sub-Hodge structure of  $H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  of level at most  $i - 2p$ . Here, the *level* of a pure Hodge structure  $H = \oplus H^{p,q}$  is defined by

$$\text{level}(H) = \max\{|p - q| \mid \dim H^{p,q} = h^{p,q} \neq 0\} \stackrel{\text{set}}{=} \ell(H).$$

The  $p$ th coniveau filtration  $N^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  is defined to be

$$\begin{aligned} N^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}) &= \sum_{\text{codim}(S, X) \geq p} \ker[H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}) \rightarrow H^i(X - S, \mathbb{Q})] \\ &= \sum_{\text{codim}(S, X) = q \geq p} \text{im}[H^{i-2q}(\tilde{S}, \mathbb{Q}) \rightarrow H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})], \end{aligned}$$

where the sum is taken over all subvarieties  $S$  of  $X$  of  $\text{codim}(S, X) \geq p$  and  $\tilde{S} \rightarrow S$  is a desingularisation of  $S$ . The second description of  $N^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$ , obtained using arguments of Deligne [2], easily implies  $N^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}) \subseteq \mathcal{F}^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$ . We say that the GHC holds for  $i$  and  $p$  [4, 6] if the two filtrations coincide: that is,

$$\text{GHC}(H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}), p) \quad \text{means} \quad N^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}) = \mathcal{F}^p H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}).$$

We simply say that the GHC holds for  $X$  if  $\text{GHC}(H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  holds for any  $i$  and  $p$ . In particular,  $\text{GHC}(H^{2p}(X, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  is the classical Hodge  $(p, p)$ -conjecture. The following lemma states that the GHC can be used to prove the Hodge conjecture.

**LEMMA 2.1** [10].  $\text{GHC}(H^{2p}(X, \mathbb{Q}), p - 1)$  implies  $\text{GHC}(H^{2p}(X, \mathbb{Q}), p)$ .

In [5] we defined and explored a notion of the refined motivic dimension, having in mind its application to the GHC for certain varieties. For a *fixed* integer  $m$ , the  $m$ th refined motivic dimension  $\mu_m(X)$  of  $X$  is the smallest nonnegative integer  $n$  such that any  $\alpha \in \mathcal{F}^m H^i(X, \mathbb{Q})$  vanishes on the complement of a Zariski closed set all of whose components have codimension at least  $(i - n)/2$ . When  $m = 0$ , we recover the motivic dimension  $\mu(X)$  of  $X$  [1]. The refined motivic dimension and the level of the cohomology have the following relation which we will use repeatedly throughout this note.

**LEMMA 2.2** [5, Lemma 2.1]. *Let  $X$  be a smooth projective variety of dimension  $n$ . For each  $m \geq 0$ ,*

- (a)  $\mu_m(X) \geq \mu_{m+1}(X)$ ; and
- (b)  $\mu_m(X) \geq \ell_m \stackrel{\text{set}}{=} \text{level}(\mathcal{F}^m H^*(X, \mathbb{Q})) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \max\{|p - q| \mid h^{pq} \neq 0, p \geq m\}$ , where the equality holds if GHC( $H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}), m$ ) holds for all  $i \geq 2m$ .

Let  $X_m^n$  be the Fermat hypersurface in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  of degree  $m$ : that is,  $X_m^n$  is the nonsingular hypersurface in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  defined by the equation

$$x_0^m + x_1^m + \dots + x_{n+1}^m = 0.$$

A Fermat variety  $X_m^n$  carries an inductive structure [9]: namely, for any positive integers  $r$  and  $s$  such that  $r + s = n$ , there exists a commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & Z_m^{r,s} & \xrightarrow{\pi} & Z_m^{r,s}/G_m \\
 & \swarrow \beta & & \searrow \psi & \swarrow \tilde{\psi} \\
 Y \hookrightarrow & X_m^r \times X_m^s & \xrightarrow{\phi} & X_m^n & \longleftarrow X_m^{r-1} \amalg X_m^{s-1}
 \end{array} \tag{2.1}$$

with the following properties.

- (1)  $\phi : X_m^r \times X_m^s \rightarrow X_m^n$  is a rational map of degree  $m$  defined by

$$\phi(x, y) = [y_{s+1}x_0 : \dots : y_{s+1}x_r : x_{r+1}y_0 : \dots : x_{r+1}y_s],$$

where  $x = [x_0 : x_1 : \dots : x_{r+1}] \in X_m^r$  and  $y = [y_0 : y_1 : \dots : y_{s+1}] \in X_m^s$  and the locus of indeterminacy of  $\phi$  is given by

$$Y = \{(x, y) \in X_m^r \times X_m^s \mid x_{r+1} = y_{s+1} = 0\} \cong X_m^{r-1} \times X_m^{s-1}.$$

- (2)  $\beta : Z_m^{r,s} = \text{Bl}_Y(X_m^r \times X_m^s) \rightarrow X_m^r \times X_m^s$  is the blow-up of  $X_m^r \times X_m^s$  along the smooth centre  $Y$  (of codimension two).
- (3) The composition  $\psi = \phi \circ \beta : Z_m^{r,s} \rightarrow X_m^r \times X_m^s \rightarrow X_m^n$  is a morphism [9, Lemma 1.2].
- (4) The group  $G_m = \{\zeta \in \mathbb{C} \mid \zeta^m = 1\}$  of  $m$ th roots of unity acts on  $X_m^r \times X_m^s$  via

$$(x, y) \mapsto ([x_0 : x_1 : \dots : x_r : \zeta x_{r+1}], [y_0 : y_1 : \dots : y_s : \zeta y_{s+1}]) \text{ for } \zeta \in G_m.$$

This action extends naturally to the blow-up  $Z_m^{r,s}$  and  $\pi : Z_m^{r,s} \rightarrow Z_m^{r,s}/G_m$  is the quotient map,

- (5)  $Z_m^{r,s}/G_m$  is a nonsingular variety of dimension  $n$  [9, Lemma 1.4].
- (6)  $\bar{\psi} : Z_m^{r,s}/G_m \rightarrow X_m^n$  is the blow-up of  $X_m^n$  along the smooth centre  $X_m^{r-1} \amalg X_m^{s-1}$ .
- (7)  $\phi \circ \beta = \psi = \bar{\psi} \circ \pi$ .

In order to show the GHC of a Fermat variety  $X_m^n$ , we check the GHC for the blow-up  $Z_m^{r,s}$  for suitable  $r$  and  $s$  by means of the surjective morphism  $\psi$ . The justification for this approach is the following lemma.

**LEMMA 2.3** [6, Lemma 13.6]. *Let  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  be a surjective morphism of projective algebraic varieties of the same dimension. If  $\text{GHC}(H^i(X, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  holds, then  $\text{GHC}(H^i(Y, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  holds.*

As we mentioned earlier, our strategy to show the GHC of  $X_m^n$  is to estimate refined motivic dimensions of varieties appearing in the inductive structure. We will need the following two lemmas on refined motivic dimension.

**PROPOSITION 2.4** [5, Proposition 2.3]. *Let  $\sigma : Y = \text{Bl}_Z X \rightarrow X$  be the blow-up of a smooth projective variety  $X$  along a smooth centre  $Z$ . Then,*

$$\mu_m(Y) \leq \max\{\mu_m(X), \mu_{m-c}(Z)\} \quad \text{where } c = \text{codim}(Z, X).$$

**LEMMA 2.5.** *With the notation in diagram (2.1),  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  holds if  $\mu_p(Z_m^{r,s}) \leq n - 2p + 1$ .*

**PROOF.** Although this lemma is basically [5, Lemma 3.1], we include the proof here. Suppose  $\mu_p(Z_m^{r,s}) \leq n - 2p + 1$ . Then, by the definition of the  $p$ th motivic dimension, any  $\alpha \in \mathcal{F}^p H^n(Z_m^{r,s}, \mathbb{Q})$  vanishes on the complement of a Zariski closed set, all of whose components have codimension  $\geq (n - \mu_p(Z_m^{r,s}))/2 \geq (n - (n - 2p + 1))/2 = p - 1/2$ . Hence  $\alpha \in N^p H^n(Z_m^{r,s}, \mathbb{Q})$ : that is,  $\text{GHC}(H^n(Z_m^{r,s}, \mathbb{Q}), p)$  holds, and Lemma 2.3 implies  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), p)$ . □

### 3. The generalised Hodge conjecture in codimension one

Throughout this section, we consider the following commutative diagram (derived from diagram (2.1) with  $r = 1$  and  $s = n - 1$ ).

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & Z_m^{1,n-1} & \\
 \beta \swarrow & & \searrow \psi \\
 X_m^0 \times X_m^{n-2} \cong Y & \xrightarrow{\quad} & X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1} \xrightarrow{\quad \phi \quad} X_m^n
 \end{array} \tag{3.1}$$

We prove the GHC in codimension one, as mentioned in earlier.

**THEOREM 3.1.** *The generalised Hodge conjecture  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 1)$  holds for any positive integer  $m$ . In particular,  $\mu_1(X_m^n) = \ell_1(X_m^n) \leq n - 2$ .*

**PROOF.** We use induction on the dimension  $n$  for  $n \geq 2$ , as the Lefschetz (1,1)-theorem implies  $\text{GHC}(H^2(X_m^2, \mathbb{Q}), 1)$ . Assume  $\text{GHC}(H^d(X_m^d, \mathbb{Q}), 1)$  holds for all  $d \leq n - 1$ . By applying Proposition 2.4 (or [5, Corollary 2.4]) to the blow-up  $Z_m^{1,n-1}$ ,

$$\mu_1(Z_m^{1,n-1}) \leq \max\{\mu_1(X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1}), \dim Y\} = \max\{\mu_1(X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1}), n - 2\}, \tag{3.2}$$

where  $Y \cong X_m^0 \times X_m^{n-2}$  is the disjoint union of  $m$  Fermat varieties of degree  $m$  and dimension  $n - 2$ . Furthermore, by [5, Proposition 2.2],

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_1(X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1}) &\leq \max\{\mu_1(X_m^1) + \mu_0(X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(X_m^1) + \mu_1(X_m^{n-1})\} \\ &\leq \max\{0 + \dim X_m^{n-1}, \dim X_m^1 + (n - 3)\} = n - 1, \end{aligned} \tag{3.3}$$

where the induction hypothesis induces the second inequality, as follows. The  $\text{GHC}(H^{n-1}(X_m^{n-1}, \mathbb{Q}), 1)$  implies (by Lemma 2.2)

$$\mu_1(X_m^{n-1}) = \text{level}(\mathcal{F}^1 H^*(X_m^{n-1}, \mathbb{Q})) = \text{level}(\mathcal{F}^1 H^{n-1}(X_m^{n-1}, \mathbb{Q})) \leq n - 3, \tag{3.4}$$

since the cohomology of a hypersurface  $X_m^d$  in  $\mathbb{P}^{d+1}$  is given by

$$H^i(X_m^d, \mathbb{Q}) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for odd } i \\ \mathbb{Q} & \text{for even } i \end{cases} \quad (\text{for } i \neq d = \dim X_m^d),$$

and  $\mathcal{F}^1 H^{n-1}(X_m^{n-1}, \mathbb{Q})$  is the largest sub-Hodge structure of  $H^{n-1}(X_m^{n-1}, \mathbb{Q})$  of level  $\leq n - 3$ . Combining (3.2) and (3.3), we get

$$\mu_1(Z_m^{1,n-1}) \leq \max\{\mu_1(X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1}), \dim Y\} = \max\{n - 1, n - 2\} = n - 1$$

and the desired conclusion follows, by Lemma 2.5. □

The aforementioned Hodge conjecture is an immediate consequence of Lemma 2.1 and Theorem 3.1.

**COROLLARY 3.2.** *The generalised Hodge conjecture holds for a Fermat variety  $X_m^n$  of dimension three or four and any positive integer degree  $m$ .*

### 4. The generalised Hodge conjecture in codimension $p \geq 2$

We apply our method to show the GHC for  $p = 2$  for Fermat varieties of small degree. Recall from [3] that the level of  $H^*(T)$  for a complete intersection  $T$  of hypersurfaces of degree  $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_k$  in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+k}$  can be computed by the formula

$$\ell(T) = \text{level}(H^*(T)) = n - 2r \quad \text{where } r = \left\lfloor \frac{n - \sum_{i \neq s} (d_i - 1) + 1}{d_s = \max\{d_1, \dots, d_k\}} \right\rfloor.$$

In particular, for a Fermat hypersurface  $X_m^n$  in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$ ,

$$\ell(X_m^n) = n - 2r_{n,m} \quad \text{where } r_{n,m} = \left\lfloor \frac{n + 1}{m} \right\rfloor. \tag{4.1}$$

**THEOREM 4.1.** *For  $m \leq 4$ , the generalised Hodge conjecture  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$  holds if the GHC holds for  $X_m^{n-2}$ .*

**PROOF.** Note that the statement holds for  $n \leq 4$  for any  $m$  (Corollary 3.2). We fix an integer  $m$  where  $m \leq 4$ , and we prove Theorem 4.1 by induction on the dimension  $n$  for  $n \geq 5$ . Referring to the diagram (3.1), we estimate  $\mu_2(Z^{1,n-1})$  for  $Z_m^{1,n-1}$  using the properties in [5, Proposition 2.1].

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(Z_m^{1,n-1}) &\leq \max\{\mu_2(X_m^1 \times X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(Y)\} \\ &\leq \max\{\mu_1(X_m^1) + \mu_1(X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(X_m^1) + \mu_2(X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(X_m^{n-2})\} \\ &\leq \max\{n - 3, 1 + \mu_2(X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(X_m^{n-2})\}, \end{aligned} \tag{4.2}$$

where the last inequality holds by Theorem 3.1 and (3.4).

First, suppose  $n = 5$ . Since the GHC holds for  $X_m^n$  for  $n \leq 4$  for any  $m$ ,

$$\mu_2(Z_m^{1,4}) \leq \max\{2, 1 + \mu_2(X_m^4), \mu_0(X_m^3)\} \leq \max\{2, 1 + 0, \ell(X_m^3)\} = 2 = 5 - 2(2) + 1,$$

where  $\ell(X_m^3) \leq 3 - 2r_{3,m} \leq 3 - 2(1) = 1$  for  $m \leq 4$  by (4.1). Hence Lemma 2.5 yields  $\text{GHC}(H^5(X_m^5, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$ . Furthermore, this together with Theorem 3.1, implies that the GHC holds for  $X_m^5$  (for  $m \leq 4$ ) in any codimension, and hence

$$\mu_2(X_m^5) \leq \mu_1(X_m^5) \leq \mu_0(X_m^5) = \ell(X_m^5) = 5 - 2r_{5,m} \leq 3.$$

Next, let  $n > 5$  and suppose  $\text{GHC}(H^d(X_m^d, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$  holds for  $d \leq n - 1$  and the GHC holds for  $X_m^{n-2}$ . This implies  $\mu_2(X_m^{n-1}) = \ell_2(X_m^{n-1}) \leq n - 5$  and  $\mu_0(X_m^{n-2}) = \ell(X_m^{n-2})$ . Furthermore, we can estimate the level  $\ell(X_m^{n-2})$ , by (4.1), to be

$$\ell(X_m^{n-2}) \leq (n - 2) - 2r_{n-2,m} \leq n - 4 \quad \text{since } r_{n-2,m} = \left\lceil \frac{n-1}{m} \right\rceil \geq \left\lceil \frac{5}{4} \right\rceil = 1.$$

By substituting all these estimates into (4.2), we get

$$\begin{aligned} \mu_2(Z_m^{1,n-1}) &\leq \max\{n - 3, 1 + \mu_2(X_m^{n-1}), \mu_0(X_m^{n-2}) = \ell(X_m^{n-2})\} \\ &\leq \max\{n - 3, n - 4, n - 4\} = n - 3 = n - 2(2) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

Once again, Lemma 2.5 finishes the proof of the Theorem. □

**COROLLARY 4.2.**  *$\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$  holds for  $n \leq 8$  and  $m \leq 4$ . In particular, the GHC holds for  $X_m^n$  for  $n \leq 6$  and  $m \leq 4$ .*

**PROOF.** Corollary 3.2 implies  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$  for  $n \leq 6$ . Now Lemma 2.1 implies the GHC for  $X_m^n$  for  $n \leq 6$ . Hence Theorem 4.1 yields  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 2)$  for  $n - 2 \leq 6$ , or, equivalently, for  $n \leq 8$ . □

For the GHC in higher codimension, we present the following example, in which we use a different choice of  $r$  and  $s$ .

**EXAMPLE 4.3.**  *$\text{GHC}(H^8(X_m^8, \mathbb{Q}), 3)$  holds for  $m \leq 4$ .*

**PROOF.** We use  $r = s = 4$  in the inductive structure of Fermat varieties. A similar computation to those above shows

$$\begin{aligned}\mu_3(Z_m^{4,4}) &\leq \max\{\mu_2(X_m^4) + \mu_1(X_m^4), \mu_0(X_m^4), \mu_1(X_m^3) + \mu_0(X_m^3)\} \\ &\leq \max\{\ell(X_m^4), \ell_1(X_m^3) + \ell(X_m^3)\} = 3 = 12 - 2(5) + 1.\end{aligned}$$

Lemmas 2.5 and 2.1 yields  $\text{GHC}(H^8(X_m^8, \mathbb{Q}), 3)$  for  $m \leq 4$ .  $\square$

We finish the note by a few remarks on the GHC of Fermat varieties and that of a smooth hypersurface.

**REMARK 4.4.**

- (1) The Hodge conjecture for a Fermat variety  $X_m^n$  has been known for  $m$  prime or  $m \leq 20$  [7, 8]. For  $m = 21$ , Shioda's argument also implies the Hodge conjecture for  $X_m^n$  of dimension  $n \leq 10$ . Our approach proves the Hodge conjecture of  $X_m^4$  without any restriction on  $m$  (Corollary 3.2).
- (2) By considering hypersurfaces in  $\mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  swept by projective spaces  $\mathbb{P}^k$  of smaller dimension, Lewis obtained many hypersurface examples that satisfy the GHC [6, Ch. 13]. More precisely,  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X, \mathbb{Q}), k)$  holds for any smooth projective hypersurface  $X \subset \mathbb{P}^{n+1}$  of degree  $m$  and dimension  $n$  if  $n, m$  and  $k$  satisfy the inequality

$$(k+1)(n+1-k) - \binom{m+k}{k} \geq n - 2k. \quad (4.3)$$

For the Fermat hypersurface  $X_m^n$ , this result implies  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), 1)$  if  $n+1 \geq m$ , while Theorem 3.1 implies the GHC for  $X_m^n$  in codimension one unconditionally. Furthermore, our method shows  $\text{GHC}(H^n(X_m^n, \mathbb{Q}), k)$  holds for  $(n, m, k) = (5, m, 2), (6, m, 2)$  and  $(8, m, 3)$  for  $m \leq 4$ . These cases do not satisfy (4.3).

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