



DEFINITION OF INTUITIVE SET THEORY

K. K. NAMBIAR

Dedicated to the memory of Professor Narsingh Rao.

ABSTRACT. Two axioms which define intuitive set theory, Axiom of Combinatorial Sets and Axiom of Infinitesimals, are stated. Generalized Continuum Hypothesis is derived from the first axiom, and the infinitesimal is visualized using the latter.

Date: October 2, 2001.

2000 Mathematics Subject Classification. Primary 03E30; Secondary 03E17.

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 1 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)



Introduction

In an earlier paper [1], intuitive set theory was defined as the theory we get when we add the two axioms, *monotonicity* and *fusion*, to ZF theory. Here we attempt to replace these two axioms with, Axiom of Combinatorial Sets and Axiom of Infinitesimals, the motivation being that they are simpler to state and possibly easier to accept.

[Home Page](#)[Title Page](#)[Page 2 of 9](#)[Go Back](#)[Full Screen](#)[Close](#)[Quit](#)

Statement of the Axioms

If k is an ordinal, we will write $\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{k}$ for the cardinality of the set of all subsets of \aleph_α with the same cardinality as k .

Axiom of Combinatorial Sets.

$$\aleph_{\alpha+1} = \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha},$$

where $\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}$ is the cardinality of the set of all subsets of \aleph_α of cardinality \aleph_α .

From the axiom of combinatorial sets, a very significant theorem follows, in fact, the derivation is almost immediate.

[Home Page](#)[Title Page](#)[Page 3 of 9](#)[Go Back](#)[Full Screen](#)[Close](#)[Quit](#)

Generalized Continuum Hypothesis.

$$2^{\aleph_\alpha} = \aleph_{\alpha+1}.$$

Proof.

$$2^{\aleph_\alpha} = \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{0} + \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{1} + \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{2} + \cdots \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_0} + \cdots \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}.$$

Note that $\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{1} = \aleph_\alpha$. Since, there are \aleph_α terms in this addition and $\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{k}$ is a monotonically nondecreasing function of k , we can conclude that

$$2^{\aleph_\alpha} = \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}.$$

Using axiom of combinatorial sets, we get

$$2^{\aleph_\alpha} = \aleph_{\alpha+1}.$$

□

We will accept the fact that every number in the interval $(0, 1]$ can be represented *uniquely* by an *infinite* nonterminating binary sequence.

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 4 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)

For example, the infinite binary sequence

$$.10111111\dots$$

can be recognized as the representation for the number $3/4$ and similarly for other numbers. This in turn implies that an *infinite recursive* subset of positive integers can be used to represent numbers in the interval $(0, 1]$. It is known that the cardinality of the set R of such recursive subsets is \aleph_0 . Thus, every $r \in R$ represents a real number in the interval $(0, 1]$.

We will write

$$\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}_r$$

to represent the cardinality of the set of all those subsets of \aleph_α of cardinality \aleph_α which contain r , and also write

$$\left\{ \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}_r \mid r \in R \right\} = \binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}_R.$$

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 5 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)

We will define a *bonded sack* as a collection which can appear only on the left side of the binary relation \in and not on the right side. What this means is that a bonded sack has to be considered as an integral unit from which not even the axiom of choice can pick out an element. The definition of a bonded sack is very much similar to that of an urelement. Note that a bonded sack is not a set.

Axiom of Infinitesimals.

$$(0, 1] = \left(\begin{matrix} \aleph_\alpha \\ \aleph_\alpha \end{matrix} \right)_R,$$

where $\left(\begin{matrix} \aleph_\alpha \\ \aleph_\alpha \end{matrix} \right)_r$ is a bonded sack.

The concept of a bonded sack is significant in that it puts a limit beyond which the interval $(0, 1]$ cannot be pried any further. The axiom of infinitesimals allows us to visualize the unit interval $(0, 1]$ as

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 6 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)



a set of bonded sacks, with cardinality \aleph_0 . Thus, $\binom{\aleph_\alpha}{\aleph_\alpha}_r$ represents an infinitesimal corresponding to the number r in the interval $(0, 1]$.

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 7 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)



Conclusion

In view of the fact that we can derive the generalized continuum hypothesis from the axiom of combinatorial sets, it is easy to see that we can use the axiom of combinatorial sets and the axiom of infinitesimals for defining intuitive set theory. For an in-depth look at the many research problems of set theory, see [2], where the prospects for mathematical logic are discussed in some detail.

... for a printable version of this paper ...
[click here](#)

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



[Page 8 of 9](#)

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)



- [1] K. K. Nambiar, *Intuitive Set Theory*, Computers and Mathematics with Applications **39** (1999), no. 1-2, 183–185.
- [2] Samuel R. Buss, Alexander S. Kechris, Anand Pillay, and Richard A. Shore, *The Prospects for Mathematical Logic in the Twenty-First Century*, The Bulletin of Symbolic Logic **7** (2001), no. 2, 169–176.

FORMERLY, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI, 110067, INDIA
Current address: 1812 Rockybranch Pass, Marietta, Georgia, 30066-8015
E-mail address: nambiar@mediaone.net

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 9 of 9

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)