

A converse of Cauchy's fundamental sequence theorem

Citation for published version (APA):

Bruijn, de, N. G. (1962). A converse of Cauchy's fundamental sequence theorem. *Simon Stevin : Wis- en Natuurkundig Tijdschrift*, 35(3), 110-112.

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/1962

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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A CONVERSE OF CAUCHY'S FUNDAMENTAL SEQUENCE THEOREM

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Let $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ denote a double sequence of non-negative real numbers ($m, n = 1, 2, \dots$). We shall call it a *strong double sequence* if it has the property that every sequence of real numbers a_1, a_2, \dots satisfying

$$(1) \quad |a_m - a_n| \leq \delta_{mn} \quad (m, n = 1, 2, \dots)$$

is automatically convergent. So Cauchy's theorem on fundamental sequences states that a sufficient condition for $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ to be strong, is that

$$(2) \quad \lim_{m, n \rightarrow \infty} \delta_{mn} = 0$$

(i.e. for every $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists a number $N(\varepsilon)$ such that $m > N(\varepsilon)$, $n > N(\varepsilon)$ imply $|\delta_{mn}| < \varepsilon$).

Condition (2) is not necessary, however. It is, for example, not satisfied by $\delta_{mn} = mn/(m^2 + n^2)$ (as $\delta_{mm} = 1/2$ for all m), but nevertheless this $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ is strong. For, with this $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ we infer from (1), by making $n \rightarrow \infty$ and keeping m fixed, that $\lim a_n$ exists and equals a_m . (So in this case it even follows from (1) that the sequence $\{a_n\}$ is constant.)

We shall show in theorem 1 that (2) is a necessary condition if some extra assumptions are added, viz. symmetry and triangle inequality.

In this connection we remark that, for every double sequence $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ (with $\delta_{mn} \geq 0$), we can construct a double sequence $\{d_{mn}\}$ that satisfies the conditions of theorem 1 and that is equivalent to $\{\delta_{mn}\}$ in the following sense: if $\{a_n\}$ satisfies (1) for all m and n , then it satisfies $|a_m - a_n| \leq d_{mn}$ for all m and n , and vice versa. For d_{mn} we can take the "shortest distance between m and n " to be obtained as follows. Put $e(k, l) = \min(\delta_{kl}, \delta_{lk})$, and

$$d_{mn} = \inf \{e(k_0, k_1) + e(k_1, k_2) + \dots + e(k_{N-1}, k_N)\},$$

the infimum being taken over all possible finite chains of positive integers $m = k_0, k_1, \dots, k_{N-1}, k_N = n$, without any restriction on N other than $N \geq 0$. It is not difficult to prove that $\{d_{mn}\}$ has the required properties, but this is unimportant for our present purpose.

Theorem 1. Let $\{d_{mn}\}$ satisfy

$$(3) \quad d_{mn} \geq 0, \quad d_{mn} = d_{nm}, \quad d_{mn} \leq d_{mk} + d_{kn}$$

for all $m, n, k, = 1, 2, \dots$, and assume that it is a strong double sequence. Then we have

$$(4) \quad \lim_{m, n \rightarrow \infty} d_{mn} = 0.$$

Proof. Assuming that (4) does not hold, we shall show that $\{d_{mn}\}$ is not strong.

First we show (assuming that (3) is true and (4) is false) that there exist infinite sets of natural numbers, S and T , and that there exists a positive number p such that for all $m \in S, n \in T$ we have $d_{mn} > p$.

We shall apply Ramsey's theorem⁽¹⁾ of which a special case⁽²⁾ reads: Let N be the set of all positive integers, and let C be the collection of all sets of two elements from N . Let C be divided into two classes. Then there exists an infinite subset V of N , such that all sets of two elements taken from V belong to one and the same class.

As (4) is false, we can find a number $p > 0$ and a sequence $m_1 < n_1 < m_2 < n_2 < \dots$ such that⁽³⁾

$$d(m_i, n_i) > 2p \quad (i = 1, 2, \dots).$$

C consists of all pairs $\{i, j\}$ with $i \neq j$ ($\{i, j\}$ and $\{j, i\}$ are considered to be the same pair). We put $\{i, j\}$ into class A if $d(m_i, m_j) > p$, and otherwise in class B . Let V be an infinite set of i 's such that all pairs taken from V belong to one and the same class.

⁽¹⁾ F.P. RAMSEY, On a problem of formal logic, *Proc. London Math. Soc.* **30** (1930) 264-286.

⁽²⁾ The general case gives the same result for subsets of k elements from N , and division into r classes (k and r arbitrary positive integers).

⁽³⁾ Occasionally we write $d(m, n)$ instead of d_{mn} , just for typographical reasons.

If all pairs from V belong to A , then we divide V into two infinite subsets V_1 and V_2 . Let S be the set of all m_i with $i \in V_1$, and T the set of all m_i with $i \in V_2$. Obviously $d_{mn} > p$ if $m \in S$, $n \in T$.

If all pairs from V belong to B then we take for S the set of all m_i with $i \in V$, and for T the set of all n_i with $i \in V$. If $m \in S$, $n \in T$ we have $m = m_i$, $n = n_j$ with $i \in V$, $j \in V$, whence

$$d_{mn} = d(m_i, n_j) \geq d(m_j, n_j) - d(m_i, m_j) \geq 2p - p,$$

so again $d_{mn} > p$.

Now that the existence of S , T and p (with $p > 0$, S , T both infinite, $d_{mn} > p$ if $m \in S$, $n \in T$) has been established, we construct a sequence a_1, a_2, \dots by taking

$$a_k = \inf_{m \in S} d_{km} \quad (k = 1, 2, \dots).$$

For all k, l we have

$$a_k + d_{kl} = \inf_{m \in S} (d_{km} + d_{kl}) \geq \inf_{m \in S} d_{lm} = a_l,$$

and similarly $a_l + d_{kl} \geq a_l$, whence $|a_k - a_l| \leq d_{kl}$. Nevertheless the sequence a_1, a_2, \dots diverges, since $a_k = 0$ if $k \in S$, $a_k \geq p$ if $k \in T$. So $\{d_{kl}\}$ is not strong, and our proof is complete.

We give a separate formulation of the result of the first part of the proof of theorem 1, slightly modified with respect to both form and contents:

Theorem 2. Let R be a metric space with infinitely many elements. Then exactly one of the following two statements holds:

a) R contains two infinite subsets S and T with positive distance.

b) R is countable, and if it is arranged into a sequence it becomes a fundamental sequence.

Proof. It only remains to look into the case that R is not countable. Then we can choose a countable subset R_1 . If (a) does not hold for R then it does not hold for R_1 , whence (b) holds for R_1 (as the countable case has already been dealt with). So R_1 can be considered as a fundamental sequence. This implies that R contains at most one point having distance zero to R_1 . Consequently there is a number $p > 0$ such that more than countably many points of R have distance $> p$ to R_1 . So this non-countable set has positive distance to the countable set R_1 .