

# A Problem inspired from the Cantor Set

Vincent Mercieca

Required to find a subset of  $[0, 1] \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  which is dense, does not contain intervals of  $[0, 1]$ , and whose measure lies between 0 and 1.

Define

$$A_1 = \left[ \frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3} \right]$$

$$A_2 = \left[ \frac{1}{3^3}, \frac{2}{3^3} \right] \cup \left[ \frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{3^3}, \frac{2}{3} + \frac{2}{3^3} \right]$$

... etc. Then define  $A = \bigcup_{\infty} A_i \subseteq [0, 1]$ .

The length of the first interval:  $a_0 = 1$  The length of the second interval:

$$a_1 = \frac{1 - \frac{1}{3}}{2} = \frac{1}{3}$$

The length of the third interval:

$$a_2 = \frac{a_1 \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2\right)}{2} = \frac{\left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2\right)}{2^2}$$

The length of the fourth interval:

$$a_3 = \frac{\left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^3\right)}{2^3}$$

Therefore  $|A_1| = \frac{1}{3}a_0 = \frac{1}{3}$ ,  $|A_2| = \frac{2}{3^2}a_1, \dots$

Therefore  $|\bigcup_{\infty} A_i| = \frac{1}{3}a_0 + \frac{2}{3^2}a_1 + \frac{2^2}{3^3}a_2 + \frac{2^3}{3^4}a_3 + \dots$

Let  $S_{\infty} = |\bigcup_{\infty} A_i|$ , then

$$\begin{aligned} S_{\infty} &= \frac{1}{3} + \frac{\left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right)}{3^2} + \frac{\left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2\right)}{3^3} + \frac{\left(1 - \frac{1}{3}\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^2\right) \left(1 - \left(\frac{1}{3}\right)^3\right)}{3^4} + \dots \\ S_{\infty} &= \frac{1}{3} + \frac{(3-1)}{3^3} + \frac{(3-1)(3^2-1)}{3^6} + \frac{(3-1)(3^2-1)(3^3-1)}{3^{10}} + \dots \\ &\quad \dots + \frac{(3-1)(3^2-1) \dots (3^{n-1}-1)}{3^{\frac{n}{2}(n+1)}} + \dots \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} S_\infty &< \frac{1}{3} + \frac{3}{3^3} + \frac{3 \cdot 3^2}{3^6} + \frac{3 \cdot 3^2 \cdot 3^3}{3^{10}} + \cdots \\ &\implies S_\infty < \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{3^2} + \frac{1}{3^3} + \frac{1}{3^4} + \cdots \\ &\implies S_\infty < \frac{\frac{1}{3}}{1 - \frac{1}{3}} = \frac{\frac{1}{3}}{\frac{2}{3}} = \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

Also  $S_\infty > \frac{1}{3}$ , hence  $\frac{1}{3} < S_\infty < \frac{1}{2}$ .

Thus if we consider all the irrational numbers in these intervals  $A_i$ , then we obtain a subset of  $[0, 1]$  which is dense, contains no intervals, and its measure is between  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ .