Cracks in Logic: Examining the Uncountability of Real Numbers through Dedekind Cuts and Rational Density

Kesan Yi
kesan.yi@hotmail.com

April 25, 2026

Abstract

This paper re-examines the logical consistency between the uncountability of real numbers and their definition via Dedekind cuts. By integrating the fundamental property of the density of rational numbers, we argue that the "one-to-one" mapping between a unique cut and a unique real number imposes a logical constraint that contradicts the magnitude jump from a countable backbone to an uncountable set. We propose that if the ordering and uniqueness of real numbers are to be maintained, the prevailing conclusion of uncountability necessitates a re-evaluation of its foundational defining tools.

1 Introduction

In the foundational framework of modern mathematics, the uncountability of the set of real numbers—famously established by Cantor's diagonal argument—and the definition of real numbers via Dedekind cuts are regarded as two harmonized pillars. Mainstream mathematical theory maintains that every Dedekind cut uniquely determines a real number, and that the total cardinality of such cuts is $2^{\aleph_0}$. However, upon a rigorous examination of the logical premises of the "cutting" operation, specifically when integrated with the **density of rational numbers**, a profound logical tension emerges: if real numbers were indeed uncountable, the Dedekind cut would lose its legitimacy as a complete and consistent defining tool.

2 The Essence of Dedekind Cuts: Unique Mapping via a Countable Backbone

The core mechanism of a Dedekind cut is to utilize the ordering of the set of rational numbers $\mathbb{Q}$ to lock a specific "position" by partitioning $\mathbb{Q}$ into two ordered subsets (A, B).

- **Unique Definition:** Each real number is defined by, and only by, one specific partition (A, B) of the rationals.
- **Logical Constraint:** The ordering of real numbers relies entirely on the inclusion relationship of their corresponding rational left-sets A.

This implies that every irrational number (the "gap") is essentially "sandwiched" by its surrounding rational numbers. To define an irrational number within this framework, one must provide its precise and unique cutting coordinates on the rational number line.

3 The Core Argument: Why "One Gap, Multiple Values" is Logically Forbidden

Mainstream mathematics suggests that the "density" of irrational numbers far exceeds that of rationals (measure 1 vs. measure 0). However, by applying the **Density of Rationals**, we derive a necessary deadlock:

3.1 The Constraint of Density

The density of rational numbers stipulates: **Between any two distinct real numbers, there must exist at least one rational number.** This is a fundamental axiom of real numbers as a totally ordered set. If we assume that two or more distinct irrational numbers (say α and β, where $\alpha < \beta$) exist within the "gap" defined by the same Dedekind cut, a rational number q must exist such that $\alpha < q < \beta$.

3.2 Logical Deadlock: Uniqueness of the Gap

If such a rational number q exists between α and β, then:

- For α, q belongs to its right-set B_α (since $q > \alpha$).
- For β, q belongs to its left-set A_β (since $q < \beta$).

Because the left and right sets of these two numbers diverge at point q, the **cuts** (A_α, B_α) and (A_β, B_β) are entirely different.

Conclusion: It is logically impossible for more than one irrational number to occupy a single gap defined by a Dedekind cut. Each determined cutting position is logically locked to a *unique* real number.

4 The Legitimacy Crisis of Dedekind Cuts under Uncountability

Since the possibility of "one gap corresponding to multiple values" is ruled out by the density property, the conclusion that "real numbers are uncountable" challenges the completeness of the Dedekind framework:

1. **Mismatch of Cardinality:** If every irrational number must be uniquely locked by a cut of *countable* rationals, a scale-level leap occurs. It raises the question: How can a positioning system composed of countable building blocks (the rationals) produce uncountable positioning states without violating the uniqueness of the cut?
2. **The Vanishing Real Numbers:** If one insists on uncountability, there would theoretically exist a vast majority of irrational numbers that cannot find their own unique, distinguishable "gap positions" relative to the rational backbone. Such numbers would be logically "indistinguishable" within the Dedekind definition, thus failing the criteria for being distinct elements of an ordered set.

5 Judgments of Independence: Decoupling Tools from Conclusions

Based on the above logic, we propose two key judgments:

- **Judgment A:** If the uncountability of real numbers is accepted as an absolute truth, then the Dedekind cut definition must be viewed as an incomplete tool, as a countable structure cannot provide unique identity codes for an uncountable set of points.

- **Judgment B:** Conversely, if we respect the axiom that "one cut uniquely determines one real number," we must re-evaluate whether the magnitude of "gaps" can logically exceed the magnitude of the "points" defining them.

6 Conclusion: Returning to Logical Self-Consistency

The prevailing view that "the probability of a random cut hitting an irrational number is 100%" implies a density of gaps that overwhelms the rational points. However, if the "position" of every cut is locked by the rational backbone, then the set of irrational numbers is essentially a derivative state of that backbone. Since the backbone is countable and each gap can only accommodate one number due to the density of rationals, the resulting set of positions cannot logically produce a cardinality explosion beyond its defining structure.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express gratitude for the productive discussions with Gemini (Google AI), which provided a critical sounding board for these ideas and assisted in synthesizing the logical arguments presented in this paper.