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Extensions of Banach spaces and their applications

An extension of a Banach space X by a Banach space Y is a short exact sequence $0 \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z \rightarrow X \rightarrow 0$. We discuss two basic problems concerning extensions of Banach spaces which were solved in the 1970's. Our main goal is to show how the solution of these problems has led over the last 30 years to the development of a general theory which has found links with harmonic analysis, operator theory and approximation theory.