INNER MODEL OPERATORS
AND THE CONTINUUM HYPOTHESIS

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ABSTRACT. Assuming AD, every inner model operator satisfies the continuum hypothesis.

We work in ZF + DC, and usually assume the axiom of determinacy (AD). For an introduction to AD, see [3 or 7]. In this paper, degree always means Turing degree. A cone of degrees is a set of the form \{d: d_0 \leq_T d\}. AD implies that the filter generated by the cones is a (countably complete) ultrafilter [7, 7D.15]. Almost everywhere (a.e.) will always refer to this measure. A real is a subset of \( \omega \).

DEFINITION. An inner model operator (or IMO) is a function \( M: x \mapsto (M_x, \leq_x) \) with domain \( P(\omega) \) such that, for all reals \( x \), \( M_x \) is a transitive (set) model of ZFC, \( \leq_x \) is a well-ordering of \( P(\omega) \cap M_x \), and the following three properties hold:

1. For any \( x, y \subset \omega \), if \( x \equiv_T y \) then \( M_x = M_y \).
2. For any \( x \subset \omega \), \( x \in M_x \).
3. For any \( x \subset \omega \), \( f^x \in M_x \), where \( f^x \) is the function with domain \( \{ y \subset \omega : y \equiv_T x \} \) and such that \( f^x(y) \) is \( \leq_y \).

This concept was introduced by Steel [9]. The above definition is a variant of his. This concept is meant to be considered under the hypothesis of AD, or some weak form of that axiom. Usually one identifies IMO’s which agree almost everywhere.

The canonical example of an IMO is the map \( x \mapsto L(x) \). Any construction which relativizes to a real in a degree-invariant way gives an IMO. We give some other examples below. The definition is intended to be a formalization of the notion of a “natural” model; assuming AD, it excludes many “unnatural” models such as forcing models.

Examples of inner model operators. 1. \( x \mapsto L(x) \). This is an abuse of the language; what we really mean is \( x \mapsto (L^\text{\textit{L}}(x), \leq_{L(x)}) \), where \( \leq_{L(x)} \) is the canonical constructibility ordering. We will similarly abuse the language in all the following examples. All these examples have canonical well-orderings. In this paper we will only be concerned with reals and sets of reals in the model, so we might as well cut the universe off at a strongly inaccessible cardinal. (AD implies that \( \aleph_1 \) will be strongly inaccessible in any transitive model of ZFC.)

2. \( x \mapsto \text{the minimal model of ZFC containing } x \).
3. \( x \mapsto L(x^\#) \).

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4. More generally, for any jump operator $J$, $x \mapsto L(J(x))$ is an IMO. A jump operator is a degree-invariant, $\leq^J$-increasing function from reals to reals with enough uniformity to make (3) in the definition of IMO hold. (We give a more precise definition later.)

5. $x \mapsto L[\mu, x]$, where $\mu$ is a fixed normal measure on some cardinal.

6. There are generalizations of the $L[\mu]$ construction to stronger large cardinal properties, for example Mitchell's models for coherent sequences of measurables and for hypermeasurables [5, 6]. These give rise to IMO's.

7. $x \mapsto K(x)$, where $K(x)$ is the core model [2] relativized to $x$.

8. Assuming projective determinacy, there exist analogs of $L$ for the higher levels of the analytical hierarchy. For example, $P(\omega) \cap L$ is the largest countable $\Sigma^1_2$ subset of $P(\omega)$; analogously, for any $n$, there is a model $L^{2n}$ such that $P(\omega) \cap L^{2n}$ is the largest countable $\Sigma^1_{2n}$ set. There are other classes of analogs, too, since generalizing different properties of $L$ gives different models. The following is a list of the analogs of $L$ which have appeared in the literature:

- $M^2, M^3, M^4, M^5, \ldots$ [1].
- $L^2, L^4, L^6, L^8, \ldots$ [1].
- $H_1, H_2, H_3, H_7, \ldots$ [7, 8G].
- $L(Q_1), L(Q_3), L(Q_5), L(Q_7), \ldots$ [4].
- $M^2 = L^2 = H_1 = L(Q_1) = L$. These models all have canonical well-orderings and all relativize. Hence each of these models corresponds to an IMO.

9. There are also analogs of $L$, similar to those of Example 8, for pointclasses beyond the projective hierarchy, such as the inductive sets or $(\Sigma^1_2)^{L[R]}$. These also give IMO's.

10. $x \mapsto \text{HOD}(x)$.

Next we consider an example of something that is not an IMO. For the moment, work in ZF + DC + $(\forall x \in \omega) (x^2 \exists)$ exists). Then for any $x \in \omega$ there is a $y \in \omega$ such that $y$ is Cohen-generic over $L(x)$. But is there an IMO $\mathcal{M}$ such that $M_x = L(x, y)$ where $y$ is Cohen-generic over $L(x)$? Assuming the axiom of choice the answer is obviously yes—for each degree $d$, just choose a $y$ and a well-ordering of $L(d, y)$. (Without the axiom of choice, one can prove the existence of a function taking each $x$ to a $y$ which is generic over $L(x)$, for example, by taking the least $y$ with respect to the canonical well-ordering of $L(x^2)$. However, this function is not degree-invariant.) Without choice, it is conceivable that the answer is no.

Assuming AD, no such IMO exists. The following theorem of Steel [9] rules out this and many other forcing models: For any IMO $\mathcal{M}$, for a.e. $x$, either $(P(\omega) \cap M_x) \subset L(x)$ or $x^2 \in M_x$.

**Definition.** $\mathcal{M} \models \psi$ means that, for a.e. $x$, $M_x \models \psi$.

Note that under AD, for any $\mathcal{M}$ and $\psi$, either $\mathcal{M} \models \psi$ or $\mathcal{M} \models \neg \psi$.

**Theorem.** Assume AD. Let $\mathcal{M}$ be an IMO. Then $\mathcal{M} \models \text{CH}$.

**Remarks and questions.** 1. Woodin has shown (assuming ZF + DC + $(\forall x \in \omega) (x^2 \exists)$ exists)) that there is an IMO $\mathcal{N}$ such that $\mathcal{N} \models 2^{\aleph_1} > \aleph_3$. This question is open for $2^{\aleph_1} = \aleph_2$ and also open for $\Diamond$. Woodin's models $\mathcal{N}_x$ are obtained by forcing
over $L(x)$; the forcing used has the property that the generic object can be built in a
degree-invariant way.

2. Assuming $AD_R$, there exist degree-invariant maps $x \mapsto M_x$ where $M_x = (ZF +
- AC)$, and in fact $M_x = (ZF + DC + AD)$. This is proved in Solovay [8].

3. For examples (1)–(9) it was already known that CH holds in these models. Example (10) gives
a new result. It was known that $HOD^{[\mathbb{R}]} = CH$, and similarly relativized to $x$, but
it was not known for other $HOD$'s, e.g. the $HOD$ of the world of
AD$_R$ (which is not equal to $HOD^{[\mathbb{R}]}$). The fact that $HOD(x) = CH$, for a.e. $x$,
leads to an obvious question: What about $x = 0$? Assuming $ZF + DC + AD_R +
V = L[\mathbb{P}(\mathbb{R})]$, does $HOD \models CH$?

4. Under any reasonable notion of definability, definable determinacy implies that
definable IMO's satisfy CH. For example, projective determinacy implies that, for
any projective IMO $\mathcal{M}$, $\mathcal{M} \models CH$. $\mathcal{M}$ is projective if the following two relations on
reals are projective:

$$\{(x, y) : y \in M_x\}, \quad \{(x, y, z) : y \in M_x \& z \in M_x \& y \leq z\}.$$

Note that examples (1)–(3) and (5)–(8) are projective IMO's.

The rest of this paper consists of a proof of the theorem. We first need a sequence of lemmas. We work in $ZF + DC$, and state additional axioms in the hypotheses of the
lemmas.

**Lemma 1.** Assume the axiom of choice. Let $C \subset P(\omega)$. Suppose that for any $x$,
y $\in C$, either $x \leq_T y$ or $y \leq_T x$. Then $\text{card}(C) \leq \aleph_1$.

**Definition.** A jump operator is a pair $(d, J)$ where $d$ is a degree and $J$ is a
function from $\{x \in \omega : d \leq_T x\}$ into $P(\omega)$ such that:

(1) $J$ is uniformly degree-invariant, i.e. there is a function $f : \omega \to \omega$ such that, for
all $e \in \omega$, for all $x, y \geq_T d$, if $x \equiv_T y$ via $e$ then $J(x) \equiv_T J(y)$ via $f(e)$,

(2) $J$ is $\leq_T$-increasing, i.e., for all $x \geq_T d$, $x \leq_T J(x)$.

**Lemma 2 (Steel [9]).** Assume AD. If $J_1$ and $J_2$ are jump operators, then for a.e. $x$,
either $J_1(x) \leq_T J_2(x)$ or $J_2(x) \leq_T J_1(x)$.

**Lemma 3.** Let $\mathcal{M}$ be an IMO. There are functions $x \mapsto C_x$, $x \mapsto \xi_x$, and $x \mapsto \phi_x$
with the following properties:

(1) For all $x \in \omega$,

(a) $C_x \subset (P(\omega) \cap M_x)$, $\xi_x$ is an ordinal, and $\phi_x$ is a one-to-one function from $C_x$
onto $\xi_x$,

(b) $C_x$, $\xi_x$, and $\phi_x$ are in $M_x$,

(c) $M_x \models \text{card}(C_x) = 2^{\aleph_0}$,

(d) for all $z \in C_x$, $x \leq_T z$.

(2) For all $x$, $y \in \omega$ such that $x \equiv_T y$,

(a) $\xi_x = \xi_y$,

(b) for any $v$ and $w$, if $v \in C_x$, $w \in C_y$, and $\phi_x(v) = \phi_y(w)$ then $v \equiv_T w$.

Moreover, this is uniform in the following sense. There is a function $g : \omega \to \omega$ such
that for any \( v \) and \( w \) and any \( e \in \omega \), if \( v \in C_x \), \( w \in C_y \), \( \phi_x(v) = \phi_y(w) \) and \( x \equiv_T y \) via \( e \), then \( v \equiv_T w \) via \( g(e) \).

**Proof.** Let \( \mathcal{M} : x \mapsto (M_x, \leq_x) \) be an IMO. Let

\[
\xi_x = \sup \{ \text{order type of } y : y \equiv x \text{ via } e \}.
\]

For \( \eta < \xi_x \), let \( v^\eta_x \) be the real which is the join of \( x'' \) and

\[
\{(e, i) \in \omega^2 : (\exists y, w \subseteq P(\omega))(y \equiv x \text{ via } e \& w \in M_x \& \text{ the rank of } w \text{ in } y \leq \eta \& i \in w)\}\.
\]

Then let \( C_x = \{ v^\eta_x : \eta < \xi_x \} \) and let \( \phi_x(v^\eta_x) = \eta \). This works. It follows from (2) and (3) in the definition of IMO that everything is in the model \( M_x \). The reason (1c) holds is that every real in \( M_x \) is recursive in an element of \( C_x \).

**Proof of Theorem.** Fix an IMO \( \mathcal{M} \) and fix maps \( x \mapsto C_x \), \( x \mapsto \xi_x \), and \( x \mapsto \phi_x \) satisfying Lemma 3 for \( \mathcal{M} \). By applying Lemma 1 inside the model \( M_x \), we see that to show that \( M_x \models \text{CH} \), it will suffice to show that

\[
(\forall z_1, z_2 \in C_x)(\text{either } z_1 \leq_T z_2 \text{ or } z_2 \leq_T z_1).
\]

Note that by part (2) of Lemma 3, \((\star)\) depends only on the Turing degree of \( x \). Suppose that the theorem is false. Then \((\star)\) is false on a cone, say the cone above \( d_0 \).

For every \( x \geq_T d_0 \), let \( z_1(x) \) and \( z_2(x) \) be the \( \phi_x \)-least counterexample to \((\star)\). By Lemma 3(1d), the maps \( x \mapsto z_i(x) \) are \( \leq_T \)-increasing, and by Lemma 3(2b) they are uniformly degree-invariant, that is, they are jump operators. For \( x \geq_T d_0 \), \( z_1(x) \not\leq_T z_2(x) \) and \( z_2(x) \not\leq_T z_1(x) \). This contradicts Lemma 2.

**References**


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