

## $\theta$ -CLOSED SUBSETS OF HAUSDORFF SPACES

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A topological property of subspaces of a Hausdorff space, called  $\theta$ -closed, is introduced and used to prove and interrelate a number of different results. A compact subspace of a Hausdorff space is  $\theta$ -closed, and a  $\theta$ -closed subspace of a Hausdorff space is closed. A Hausdorff space  $X$  with property that every continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed is shown to have the property that every  $\theta$ -continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed. Those Hausdorff spaces in which the Fomin  $H$ -closed extension operator commutes with the projective cover (absolute) operator are characterized. An  $H$ -closed space is shown not to be the countable union of  $\theta$ -closed nowhere dense subspaces. Also, an equivalent form of Martin's Axiom in terms of the class of  $H$ -closed spaces with the countable chain condition is given.

1. Preliminaries. For a space  $X$  and  $A \subseteq X$ , the  $\theta$ -closure of  $A$ , denoted as  $\text{cl}_\theta A$ , is  $\{x \in X: \text{every closed neighborhood of } x \text{ meets } A\}$ . The subset  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed if  $\text{cl}_\theta A = A$ . Similarly, the  $\theta$ -interior of  $A$ , denoted as  $\text{int}_\theta A$ , is  $\{x \in X: \text{some closed neighborhood of } x \text{ is contained in } A\}$ . Clearly,  $\text{cl}_\theta A$  is closed and  $\text{int}_\theta A$  is open. The concept of  $\theta$ -closure was introduced by Velicko [15] and used by the authors in [3]. Also introduced in [15] is the concept of a  $H$ -set: a subset  $A$  of a Hausdorff space  $X$  is an  $H$ -set if every cover of  $A$  by sets open in  $X$  has a finite subfamily whose closures in  $X$  cover  $A$ ; this concept was independently introduced in [11] and called  $H$ -closed relative to  $X$ . An open filter is a filter with a filter base consisting of open sets. A maximal open filter is called an open ultrafilter. A filter  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $X$  is said to be free if  $\text{ad}_x \mathcal{F} \neq \emptyset$ , otherwise,  $\mathcal{F}$  is said to be fixed. A subset  $A$  of  $X$  is far from the remainder (f.f.r.) [1] in  $X$  if for every free open ultrafilter  $\mathcal{U}$  on  $X$ , there is open  $U \in \mathcal{U}$  such that  $\text{cl}_x U \cap A = \emptyset$ ; a subset  $A$  of  $X$  is rigid in  $X$  [3] if for every filter base  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $X$  such that  $A \cap \{\text{cl}_\theta F: F \in \mathcal{F}\} = \emptyset$ , there is open set  $U$  containing  $A$  and  $F \in \mathcal{F}$  such that  $\text{cl} U \cap F = \emptyset$ . The following facts are used in the sequel:

(1.1) In  $A \subseteq B \subseteq X$  and  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ , then  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $B$ .

(1.2) A compact subset of a Hausdorff space is  $\theta$ -closed.

(1.3) [15] A  $\theta$ -closed subset of an  $H$ -closed space is an  $H$ -set.

(1.4) [3] Let  $A$  be a subset of a space  $X$ . The following are

equivalent:

- (a)  $A$  is rigid in  $X$ .
  - (b) For any filter base  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $X$ , if  $A \cap \bigcap \{\text{cl}_\theta F : F \in \mathcal{F}\} = \emptyset$ , then for some  $F \in \mathcal{F}$ ,  $A \cap \text{cl}_\theta F = \emptyset$ .
  - (c) For each cover  $\mathcal{A}$  of  $A$  by open subsets of  $X$ , there is a finite subfamily  $\mathcal{B} \subseteq \mathcal{A}$  such that  $A \subseteq \text{int cl}(\bigcup \mathcal{B})$ .
  - (d) For every open filter  $\mathcal{G}$  on  $X$  such that  $A \cap \bigcap \{\text{cl } U : U \in \mathcal{G}\} = \emptyset$ , there is  $U \in \mathcal{G}$  such that  $A \cap \text{cl } U = \emptyset$ ,
- (1.5) [3] Disjoint rigid subsets in a Hausdorff space can be separated by disjoint open sets.
- (1.6) [3] If  $A$  is rigid in  $X$ , then  $A$  is f.f.r. in  $X$ .

Since any closed subset of a regular Hausdorff space is  $\theta$ -closed and since there are regular Hausdorff spaces with noncompact closed subsets, then the converse of 1.2 is false. In [3], it was shown that every rigid subset of a Hausdorff space is an  $H$ -set. Thus, the converse of 1.3 is false since the subset  $X$  in the space  $Y$  described in Example 1.1 in [3] is rigid in  $Y$  but is not  $\theta$ -closed in  $Y$ . On the other hand, by Theorem 4 in [15] a subset of an  $H$ -closed, Urysohn space is  $\theta$ -closed if and only if it is an  $H$ -set. Since an  $H$ -closed regular space is compact, then a subset of an  $H$ -closed, regular space is  $\theta$ -closed if and only if it is compact. By 1.2 and 1.3, the concept of " $\theta$ -closedness" is similar to the concept of " $H$ -closure" in the sense that both are bracketed by the concepts of "compactness" and " $H$ -set".

Also, needed in the sequel is a few definition about semiregularity,  $\theta$ -continuity, and extensions. For a space  $X$ ,  $X_s$  is used to denote  $X$  plus the topology generated by the regular-open subsets (a subset is regular-open if it is the interior of the closure of itself). A space  $X$  is *semi-regular* if  $X = X_s$ ; in particular,  $(X_s)_s = X_s$ .

A function  $f: X \rightarrow Y$ , where  $X$  and  $Y$  are spaces, is  $\theta$ -continuous if for each  $x \in X$  and open subset  $U$  of  $f(x)$ , there is an open subset  $V$  of  $x$  such that  $f(\text{cl } V) \subseteq \text{cl } U$ . The Katětov extension [9] (resp. Fomin extension [5]) of a Hausdorff space  $X$  is denoted as  $\kappa X$  (resp.  $\sigma X$ ); these  $H$ -closed extensions are studied in [12, 13]. In [11], it is shown that if  $Y$  is an  $H$ -closed extension of  $X$ , then there is a continuous surjection  $f: \kappa X \rightarrow Y$  such that  $f(x) = x$  for  $x \in X$ .

2.  $\theta$ -closed subsets of  $H$ -closed spaces. For a space  $X$  and a subset  $A \subseteq X$ , we will let  $X/A$  denote the set  $X$  with  $A$  identified to a point and endowed with the quotient topology.

(2.1) Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space and  $A \subseteq X$ . The following are equivalent:

- (a)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ .
- (b)  $X/A$  is Hausdorff.
- (c)  $A$  is the point-inverse of a continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space.
- (d)  $A$  is the point-inverse of a  $\theta$ -continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space.

*Proof.* The proof of the equivalence of (a) and (b) is straightforward to prove. Clearly, (b) implies (c) and (c) implies (d). To show (d) implies (a), let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a  $\theta$ -continuous function into a Hausdorff space  $Y$ ,  $A = f^{-1}(y)$  for some  $y \in Y$ , and  $x \notin A$ . There is open set  $U$  of  $f(x)$  in  $Y$  such that  $y \notin \text{cl}U$ . Since there is open set  $V$  of  $x$  such that  $f(\text{cl}V) \subseteq \text{cl}U$ , then  $\text{cl}V \cap A = \emptyset$ .

(2.2) Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space and  $A \subseteq X$ . The following are equivalent:

- (a)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .
- (b)  $A$  is rigid in  $X$ .
- (c)  $A$  is f.f.r. in  $X$  and  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ .

*Proof.* (a) implies (b). Let  $\mathcal{A}$  be a cover of  $A$  by open subsets of  $X$ . For  $p \in \kappa X \setminus A$ , let  $U_p$  be an open subset of  $\kappa X$  containing  $p$  such that  $\text{cl}_{\kappa X} U_p \cap A = \emptyset$ . There is a finite subset  $\mathcal{B} \subseteq \mathcal{A}$  and finite subset  $B \subseteq \kappa X \setminus A$  such that

$$\kappa X = \bigcup \{ \text{cl}_{\kappa X} U_p : p \in B \} \cup \bigcup \{ \text{cl}_{\kappa X} V : V \in \mathcal{B} \}.$$

Thus,  $A \subseteq X \setminus \bigcup \{ \text{cl}_X (U_p \cap X) : p \in B \} \subseteq \bigcup \{ \text{cl}_X V : V \in \mathcal{B} \}$ , and by 1.4,  $A$  is rigid in  $X$ .

(b) implies (c). By 1.6,  $A$  is f.f.r. in  $X$ . Suppose  $p \in X \setminus A$ . Then  $A$  and  $p$  are disjoint rigid subsets and, by 1.5, can be separated by disjoint open sets. Hence,  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ .

(c) implies (a). Let  $p \in X \setminus A$ . Since  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ , then there is an open set  $U$  in  $X$  such that  $p \in U$  and  $\text{cl}_X U \cap A = \emptyset$ . Since  $X$  is open in  $\kappa X$ , then  $U$  is open in  $\kappa X$  and  $\text{cl}_{\kappa X} U = \text{cl}_X U \cup B$  where  $B = \{ q \in \kappa X \setminus X : U \in q \}$ . Thus,  $A \cap \text{cl}_{\kappa X} U = \emptyset$ . Suppose  $p \in \kappa X \setminus X$  (thus,  $p \notin A$ ). Then  $p$  is a free open ultrafilter on  $X$  and there is open set  $U \in p$  such that  $\text{cl}_X U \cap A = \emptyset$ . Now,  $U \cup \{p\}$  is open in  $\kappa X$  and contains  $p$  and  $\text{cl}_{\kappa X} (U \cup \{p\}) = \text{cl}_X U \cup B$  where  $B$  is the same as above. Thus,  $A \cap \text{cl}_{\kappa X} (U \cup \{p\}) = \emptyset$ .

By 2.2 and 1.1, it follows that a rigid subset of a Hausdorff space is  $\theta$ -closed in the space.

Let  $X$  and  $Y$  be Hausdorff spaces and  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  a continuous function. We say  $f$  is *absolutely closed* [17] if  $f$  cannot be continuously extended to a proper Hausdorff extension  $Z$  of  $X$  and is

*regular closed* [2] if the image of the closure of an open set is closed. Dickman [2] proved that  $f$  is absolutely closed if and only if  $f$  is regular closed and point-inverses are f.f.r. in  $X$ . By 2.1 and 2.2, this statement converts into the following:

(2.3) Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a continuous where  $X$  and  $Y$  are Hausdorff spaces. The following are equivalent:

- (a)  $f$  is absolutely closed.
- (b)  $f$  is regular closed and point-inverses are f.f.r. in  $X$ .
- (c)  $f$  is regular closed and point-inverses are rigid in  $X$ .

Another consequence of 2.2, in combination with 1.5, is the following result.

(2.4) Disjoint  $\theta$ -closed subsets of an  $H$ -closed space are contained in disjoint open subsets.

In [9], Katětov shows that if every closed subset of an Hausdorff space  $X$  is  $H$ -closed, then  $X$  is compact. Similarly, by 6.1.1 in [3], if every closed subset of a Hausdorff space  $X$  is rigid, then  $X$  is compact. A Hausdorff space  $X$  in which every closed subset is an  $H$ -set is called *C-compact* [16], and there are noncompact, *C-compact* spaces [17, Example 2]. The next result will help us prove a property possessed by *C-compact* spaces.

(2.5) If  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is  $\theta$ -continuous where  $X$  and  $Y$  are Hausdorff and if  $A$  is  $H$ -subset of  $X$ , then  $f(A)$  is an  $H$ -subset of  $Y$ .

*Proof.* Let  $\mathcal{C}$  be cover of  $f(A)$  by open subsets of  $Y$ . For each  $a \in A$ , there is open set  $U_a \in \mathcal{C}$  such that  $f(a) \in U_a$ . There is an open set  $V_a$  of  $X$  such that  $f(\text{cl } V_a) \subseteq \text{cl } U_a$ . There is finite subset  $B \subseteq A$  such that  $A \subseteq \bigcup \{\text{cl } V_a: a \in B\}$ . It follows that  $f(A) \subseteq \bigcup \{\text{cl } U_a: a \in B\}$ .

A Hausdorff space  $X$  is called *functionally compact* [4] if every continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed. A *C-compact* space is functionally compact [4], and by 2.5, every  $\theta$ -continuous function from a *C-compact* space into a Hausdorff space is closed. Clearly, a Hausdorff space  $X$  in which every  $\theta$ -continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed, is functionally compact. Surprisingly, the converse is true. We need the following definition and theorem to prove the converse.

A Hausdorff space  $X$  is called  *$\theta$ -seminormal* [6] if for every  $\theta$ -closed subset  $A \subseteq X$  and every open set  $G$  containing  $A$ , there is regular open set  $R$  such that  $A \subseteq R \subseteq G$ .

(2.6) [6] A Hausdorff space is functionally compact if and only if it is  $H$ -closed and  $\theta$ -seminormal.

(2.7) A Hausdorff space  $X$  is functionally compact if and only if every  $\theta$ -continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed.

*Proof.* The proof of one direction is obvious. To prove the converse, suppose  $X$  is functionally compact and  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is a  $\theta$ -continuous function where  $Y$  is Hausdorff. To prove  $f$  is closed, suppose  $B \subseteq X$  is a closed subset and  $p \in \text{cl}_Y f(B)$ . By Corollary 2.1 in [4],  $X$  is  $H$ -closed. By 2.5,  $f(X)$  is  $H$ -subset and, hence, closed in  $Y$ . So,  $p \in f(X)$ . Assume, by way of contradiction, that  $p \notin f(B)$ . So,  $f^{-1}(p) \subseteq X \setminus B$ . By 2.1,  $f^{-1}(p)$ , is  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$  and by 2.6, there is regular open set  $R$  such that  $f^{-1}(p) \subseteq R \subseteq X \setminus B$ . Now,  $B \subseteq X \setminus R$ , but  $X \setminus R$ , the closure of an open set, is  $H$ -closed by 1.2 in [9]. By 2.5,  $f(X/R)$  is an  $H$ -set, and hence, closed. This leads to a contradiction as  $f(B) \subseteq f(X \setminus R)$  and  $p \notin f(X \setminus R)$ .

*Problem.* Characterize those Hausdorff spaces  $X$  with this property: every weakly  $\theta$ -continuous function from  $X$  into a Hausdorff space is closed. A function  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  is weakly  $\theta$ -continuous [5, 3] if for every  $x \in X$  and open set  $V$  of  $f(x)$ , there is open set  $U$  of  $x$  such that  $f(U) \subseteq \text{cl}_Y V$ . Every compact Hausdorff space has this property; we are unaware of any noncompact Hausdorff space with this property.

3.  $\theta$ -closure in  $H$ -closed extensions. With the use of the next result, we will derive a new characterization of those subsets of a Hausdorff space  $X$  that are  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .

(3.1) If  $Y$  is a Hausdorff extension of  $X$  and  $A$  is a rigid subset of  $X$ , then  $A$  is rigid in  $Y$ .

*Proof.* By 2.2, it suffices to show that  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa Y$ . By 4.4 in [11], there is a continuous surjection  $f: \kappa X \rightarrow \kappa Y$  such that that  $f(x) = x$  for  $x \in X$ . Since  $\kappa X$  is  $H$ -closed, then  $f$  is absolutely closed. Let  $z \in \kappa Y \setminus A$ . Then  $f^{-1}(z)$  is rigid in  $\kappa X$  by 2.3. Using that  $\kappa(\kappa X) = \kappa X$ , it follows by 2.2 that  $A$  is rigid in  $\kappa X$ . By 1.5, there is open set  $U$  in  $\kappa X$  such that  $A \subseteq U$  and  $\text{cl}_{\kappa X} U \cap f^{-1}(z) = \emptyset$ . Let  $W = \kappa Y \setminus f(\text{cl}_{\kappa X} U)$ . Since  $f$  is regular closed by 2.3,  $W$  is open; also,  $z \in W$ . Now,  $f^{-1}(W)$  is open in  $X$  and  $f^{-1}(W) \cap \text{cl}_{\kappa X} U = \emptyset$ . So  $\text{cl}_{\kappa X} f^{-1}(W) \cap A = \emptyset$ . Since  $A = f^{-1}f(A)$  by 1.8 in [13],  $f(\text{cl}_{\kappa X} f^{-1}(W)) \cap A = \emptyset$ . Again, by 2.3,  $f(\text{cl}_{\kappa X} f^{-1}(W))$  is closed implying  $\text{cl}_{\kappa Y} W \cap A = \emptyset$ . Thus,  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa Y$ .

(3.2) Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space and  $A \subseteq X$ . The following

are equivalent:

- (a)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .
- (b)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in every Hausdorff extension of  $X$ .
- (c)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\sigma X$ .
- (d)  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in some  $H$ -closed extension of  $X$ .

*Proof.* By 3.1 and 2.2, (a) implies (b). Clearly, (b) implies (c) and (c) implies (d).

(d) *implies* (a). Suppose  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in an  $H$ -closed extension  $Y$  of  $X$ . By 4.4 in [11], there is a continuous surjection  $f: \kappa X \rightarrow Y$  such that  $f(x) = x$  for  $x \in X$ . Let  $z \in \kappa X \setminus A$ . Since  $f^{-1}f(A) = A$  by 1.8 in [13], then  $f(z) \in Y \setminus A$ . So,  $\{f(z)\}$  and  $A$  are contained in disjoint open sets. By the continuity of  $f$ ,  $\{z\}$  and  $A$  are contained in disjoint open sets. So,  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .

It is not possible to replace “ $H$ -closed” in 3.4(d) by “Hausdorff” as a subset  $A$  of  $X$  can be  $\theta$ -closed in some Hausdorff extension  $Y$  of  $X$  while  $A$  is not  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ . For example, if  $X$  is Hausdorff but not  $H$ -closed, then  $X$  is  $\theta$ -closed in the trivial Hausdorff extension  $X$  of  $X$ , but  $X$  is not  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .

For each Hausdorff space  $X$ , we let  $\theta X$  denote  $\{q: q \text{ is open ultrafilter on } X\}$ . For each open set  $U$  in  $X$ , let  $G(U)$  denote  $\{q \in \theta X: U \in q\}$ ;  $\{G(U): U \text{ open in } X\}$  forms a basis for an extremally disconnected, compact Hausdorff topology on  $\theta X$  [8]. By 5.2 in [13] there is a  $\theta$ -continuous, perfect irreducible function  $\pi: \theta X \rightarrow \sigma X$  defined by  $\pi(q) = q$  for each free open ultrafilter  $q$  on  $X$  and  $\pi(q) = x$  where  $x$  is the unique convergent point of the fixed open ultrafilter  $q$ .

- (3.3) Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space and  $U, V$  open subsets of  $X$ .
- (a)  $G(U) \cap G(V) = G(U \cap V)$  and  $G(U) \cup G(V) = G(U \cup V)$ .
  - (b) If  $x \in X$  and  $\pi^{-1}(x) \subseteq G(U)$ , then  $x \in \text{int}_X \text{cl}_X U$ .

(3.4) If  $X$  is a Hausdorff space and  $A \subseteq X$ , then  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is compact if and only if  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .

*Proof.* Suppose  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is compact. By 3.2, it suffices to show  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\sigma X$ . Suppose  $y \in \sigma X \setminus A$ . By the compactness of  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  and  $\pi^{-1}(y)$ , the Hausdorffness of  $\theta X$ , and 3.3(a), there are open sets  $U$  and  $V$  in  $X$  such that  $\pi^{-1}(A) \subseteq G(U)$ ,  $\pi^{-1}(y) \subseteq G(V)$ , and  $G(U) \cap G(V) = \emptyset$ . Now, by 3.3.(b),  $A \subseteq \text{int}_X \text{cl}_X U$  and  $y \in \text{int}_X \text{cl}_X V$ . Since  $\emptyset = G(U) \cap G(V) = G(U \cap V)$  and since every nonempty open set is contained in some open ultrafilter, then  $U \cap V = \emptyset$ . By 2.14 in [11],  $\text{int}_X \text{cl}_X U \cap \text{int}_X \text{cl}_X V = \emptyset$ . Thus,  $A$  and  $y$  are contained in

disjoint open sets in  $X$  and by 4.1(c) in [11], in  $\kappa X$ .

Conversely, suppose  $A$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$  and, hence, by 3.2,  $\theta$ -closed in  $\sigma X$ . It suffices to show  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is closed in  $\theta X$ . Let  $y \in \theta X \setminus \pi^{-1}(A)$ . Then  $\pi(y) \notin A$ , and there is open neighborhood  $U$  of  $\pi(y)$  in  $\sigma X$  such that  $\text{cl}_{\sigma X} U \cap A = \emptyset$ . So  $\pi^{-1}(A) \cap \pi^{-1}(\text{cl}_{\sigma X} U) = \emptyset$ . But  $y \in \pi^{-1}(\pi(y)) \subseteq \text{int}_{\theta} \pi^{-1}(\text{cl}_{\sigma X} U)$ . Hence,  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is closed in  $\theta X$ .

A liability of the concept " $\theta$ -continuity" is that the restriction of a  $\theta$ -continuous function is not necessarily  $\theta$ -continuous; this fact is emphasized by 3.4. In particular, if  $A$  is a  $\theta$ -closed, but not  $H$ -closed, subspace in an  $H$ -closed space  $Y$  (e.g., the set of nonisolated points of the space  $Y$  of Example 1.1 in [3]), then by 3.4,  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is compact; however,  $\pi|_{\pi^{-1}(A)}: \pi^{-1}(A) \rightarrow Y$  is not  $\theta$ -continuous.

For a Hausdorff space  $X$ , let  $EX$  denote  $\{q \in \theta X: q \text{ is fixed}\}$ . Now,  $\pi^{-1}(X) = EX$  and  $\pi|_{EX}: EX \rightarrow X$  is a  $\theta$ -continuous, perfect, irreducible function (see [8, Th. 10]). Porter and Votaw [13] proved that  $\sigma(EX) = E(\sigma X)$  if and only if the set of nonisolated points of  $EX$  is compact. We now characterize when  $\sigma$  and  $E$  commute in terms of  $X$ .

**COROLLARY (3.5).** *Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space  $\sigma(EX) = E(\sigma X)$  if and only if the set of nonisolated points of  $X$  is  $\theta$ -closed in  $\kappa X$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $A$  be the set of nonisolated points of  $X$ . By Theorem 5.8 in [13],  $\pi^{-1}(A)$  is the set of nonisolated points of  $EX$ . The stated result now follows immediately by 3.4.

It is known that [10] no  $H$ -closed space is the countable union of compact nowhere dense subspaces and that [10] there exists an  $H$ -closed space that is the countable union of closed nowhere dense subspaces. An unsolved problem by Mioduszewski [10] is whether some  $H$ -closed space is the countable union of  $H$ -closed nowhere dense subspaces. We now show that no  $H$ -closed space is the countable union of  $\theta$ -closed nowhere dense subspaces.

(3.6) An  $H$ -closed space is not the countable union of  $\theta$ -closed nowhere dense subspaces.

*Proof.* Assume, by way of contradiction, that  $X$  is an  $H$ -closed space and  $X = \bigcup \{A_n: n \in N\}$  where each  $A_n$  is nowhere dense and  $\theta$ -closed in  $X$ . Since  $X$  is  $H$ -closed, then  $X = \kappa X = \sigma X$  and  $\theta X = EX$ . By 3.4,  $\pi^{-1}(A_n)$  is compact for each  $n \in N$ . If  $\pi^{-1}(A_n)$  contains a nonempty open set, then by the irreducibility and closedness of  $\pi$  [8, Lemma 17],  $\pi(\pi^{-1}(A_n)) = A_n$  contains a nonempty open set. So, each  $\pi^{-1}(A_n)$  is nowhere dense. Hence, the compact Hausdorff

space  $\theta X$  is the countable union of nowhere dense closed subsets, a contradiction.

A space has the *countable chain condition* (c.c.c.) if every family of pairwise disjoint nonempty open sets is countable. One of the equivalent forms (see [14]) of Martin's axiom is the following: Every compact Hausdorff space with ccc is not the union of less than  $c(=2^{\aleph_0})$  closed nowhere dense subsets.

(3.7) Martin's axiom is equivalent to

(\*) every  $H$ -closed space with c.c.c. is not the union of less than  $c$   $\theta$ -closed nowhere dense subsets.

*Proof.* Clearly, (\*) implies the "compact Hausdorff" form of Martin's axiom. Conversely, suppose Martin's axiom is true and  $X$  is an  $H$ -closed space with c.c.c. Since  $X$  is  $H$ -closed, then  $\theta X = EX$ . Using the fact  $\text{int}_x \pi(U) \neq \emptyset$  for every nonempty open set  $U$  of  $EX$ , it follows that  $EX$  has c.c.c. If  $X$  is the union of  $\alpha$ , a cardinal number,  $\theta$ -closed nowhere dense subsets, then, as in the proof of 3.6, the compact Hausdorff space  $EX$  with c.c.c. is also the union of  $\alpha$  closed nowhere dense subsets. Thus, (\*) is true.

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