

Effective Versions of Strong Measure Zero

Matt Rayman
Iowa State University

STACS 2026
March 11, 2026

Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.

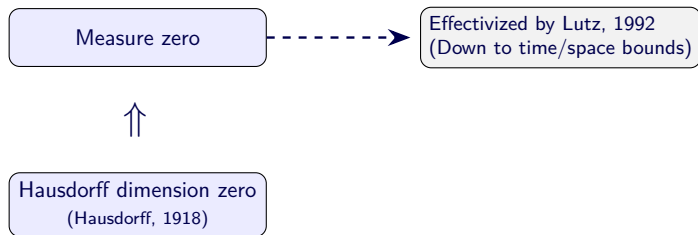
Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.



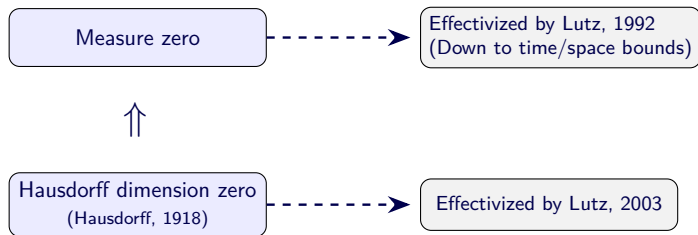
Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.



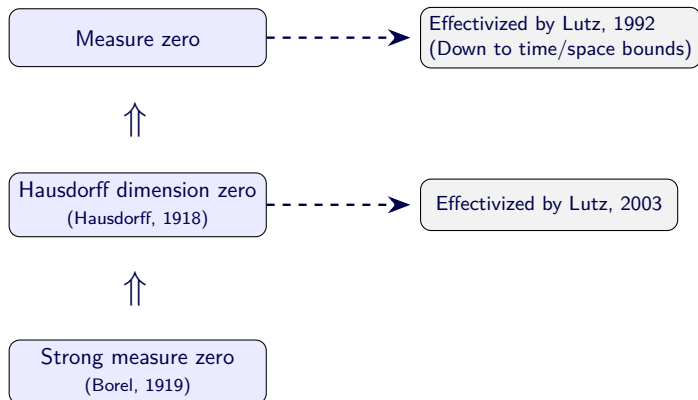
Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.



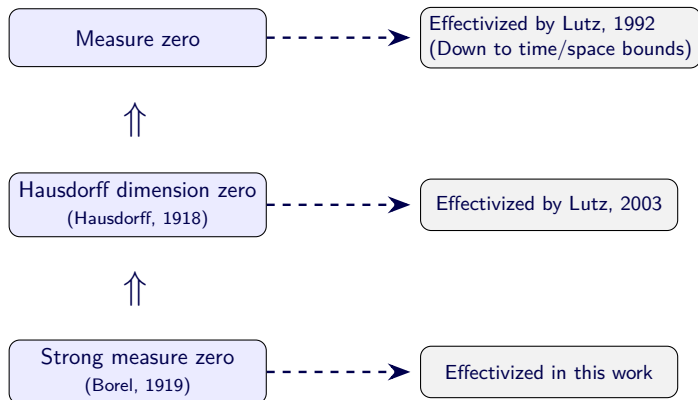
Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.



Smallness Notions and Their Effectivizations

Measure, dimension, and strong measure zero define three levels of "smallness" for sets.



Strong Measure zero

Let $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ and $C_w = \{S \in \mathbf{C} \mid w \sqsubseteq S\}$.

- X has *measure zero* if for every $\epsilon > 0$ there is a set $A \subseteq \{0, 1\}^*$ with
 1. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{w \in A} C_w$
 2. $\sum_{w \in A} 2^{-|w|} < \epsilon$

Strong Measure zero

Let $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ and $C_w = \{S \in \mathbf{C} \mid w \sqsubseteq S\}$.

- X has *measure zero* if for every $\epsilon > 0$ there is a set $A \subseteq \{0, 1\}^*$ with
 1. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{w \in A} C_w$
 2. $\sum_{w \in A} 2^{-|w|} < \epsilon$
- (Borel 1919) X has *strong measure zero* (SMZ) if for every sequence $(\epsilon_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ there is $(w_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ with
 1. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{n \in \mathbb{N}} C_{w_n}$
 2. $2^{-|w_n|} \leq \epsilon_n$ for all n

Strong Measure zero

Let $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ and $C_w = \{S \in \mathbf{C} \mid w \sqsubseteq S\}$.

- X has *measure zero* if for every $\epsilon > 0$ there is a set $A \subseteq \{0, 1\}^*$ with
 1. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{w \in A} C_w$
 2. $\sum_{w \in A} 2^{-|w|} < \epsilon$
- (Borel 1919) X has *strong measure zero* (SMZ) if for every sequence $(\epsilon_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ there is $(w_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ with
 1. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{n \in \mathbb{N}} C_{w_n}$
 2. $2^{-|w_n|} \leq \epsilon_n$ for all n

Observation: If X is countable then X has strong measure zero.

Borel's Conjecture

- Borel 1919: Conjectured that a set has strong measure zero if and only if it is countable.

Borel's Conjecture

- Borel 1919: Conjectured that a set has strong measure zero if and only if it is countable.
- Sierpiński 1928: There are uncountable strong measure zero sets assuming CH.

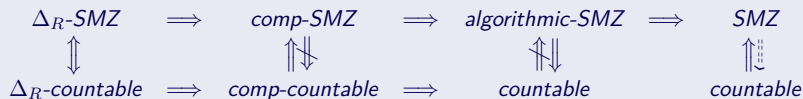
Borel's Conjecture

- Borel 1919: Conjectured that a set has strong measure zero if and only if it is countable.
- Sierpiński 1928: There are uncountable strong measure zero sets assuming CH.
- Laver 1976: There is a model of ZFC where the conjecture holds.

Borel's Conjecture

- Borel 1919: Conjectured that a set has strong measure zero if and only if it is countable.
- Sierpiński 1928: There are uncountable strong measure zero sets assuming CH.
- Laver 1976: There is a model of ZFC where the conjecture holds.
- In this work effective versions of SMZ are defined with

Theorem



$$\text{algorithmic-SMZ} \iff \text{NCR}$$

Odds Supermartingales (Higuchi and Kihara)

- An *odds function* is a function $O : \{0,1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)$.

Odds Supermartingales (Higuchi and Kihara)

- An *odds function* is a function $O : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)$.
- An *O-supermartingale* is a function $d : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ satisfying

$$d(w) \geq \frac{d(w0)}{O(w0)} + \frac{d(w1)}{O(w1)}$$

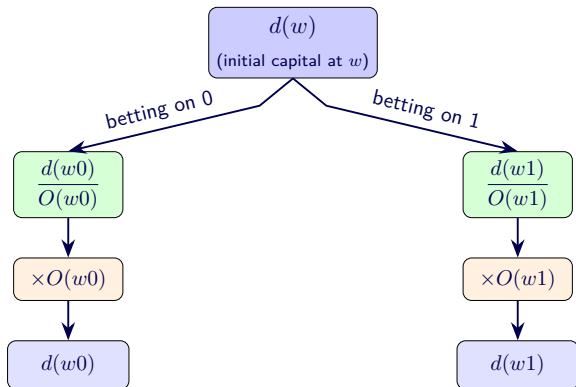
for all w .

Odds Supermartingales (Higuchi and Kihara)

- An *odds function* is a function $O : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)$.
- An O -*supermartingale* is a function $d : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ satisfying

$$d(w) \geq \frac{d(w0)}{O(w0)} + \frac{d(w1)}{O(w1)}$$

for all w .



Odds Supermartingales (Higuchi and Kihara)

- An acceptable odds function is a function $O : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)$ with $\prod_{w \sqsubseteq S} O(w) = \infty$ for all $S \in \mathbf{C}$.

Odds Supermartingales (Higuchi and Kihara)

- An acceptable odds function is a function $O : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)$ with $\prod_{w \sqsubseteq S} O(w) = \infty$ for all $S \in \mathbf{C}$.

Theorem (Higuchi and Kihara 2014)

$X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ has strong measure zero if and only if for every acceptable odds function O there is a O -supermartingale d with

$$\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} d(S[0 \dots n]) = \infty$$

for all $S \in X$.

Our Effective Strong Measure Zero

- Let Δ be a level of effectivity (complexity/computability).

Our Effective Strong Measure Zero

- Let Δ be a level of effectivity (complexity/computability).

Definition

$X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ has Δ -strong measure zero if there is a functional $F : (\{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [1, \infty)) \rightarrow (\{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [0, \infty))$ in Δ such that for every acceptable odds function O :

1. $F(O)$ is an O -supermartingale.
2. $\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} F(O)(S[0 \dots n]) = \infty$ for all $S \in X$.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
- The *result* of a constructor δ is the sequence $R(\delta) \in \mathbf{C}$ such that $\delta^i(\lambda) \sqsubset R(\delta)$ for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
- The *result* of a constructor δ is the sequence $R(\delta) \in \mathbf{C}$ such that $\delta^i(\lambda) \sqsubset R(\delta)$ for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$.
- A set $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ is Δ -*countable* if there is a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ with the following properties.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
- The *result* of a constructor δ is the sequence $R(\delta) \in \mathbf{C}$ such that $\delta^i(\lambda) \sqsubset R(\delta)$ for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$.
- A set $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ is Δ -countable if there is a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ with the following properties.
 1. $\delta \in \Delta$.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
- The *result* of a constructor δ is the sequence $R(\delta) \in \mathbf{C}$ such that $\delta^i(\lambda) \sqsubset R(\delta)$ for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$.
- A set $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ is Δ -countable if there is a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ with the following properties.
 1. $\delta \in \Delta$.
 2. For each $k \in \mathbb{N}$, if we write $\delta_k(w) = \delta(k, w)$, then the function δ_k is a constructor.

Effective Borel Conjecture

Lutz 1992: Defined a notion of effective countability at the computable/resource bounded levels.

- A *constructor* is a function $\delta : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ such that $x \sqsubset \delta(x)$ holds for all $x \in \{0, 1\}^*$.
- The *result* of a constructor δ is the sequence $R(\delta) \in \mathbf{C}$ such that $\delta^i(\lambda) \sqsubset R(\delta)$ for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$.
- A set $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ is Δ -countable if there is a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ with the following properties.
 1. $\delta \in \Delta$.
 2. For each $k \in \mathbb{N}$, if we write $\delta_k(w) = \delta(k, w)$, then the function δ_k is a constructor.
 3. $X \subseteq \{R(\delta_k) \mid k \in \mathbb{N}\}$.

Lemma

If X is Δ -countable then it has Δ -strong measure zero.

Lemma

If X is Δ -countable then it has Δ -strong measure zero.

proof sketch:

- Let $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ witness X being Δ -countable.
- Let O be an odds function.

Lemma

If X is Δ -countable then it has Δ -strong measure zero.

proof sketch:

- Let $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ witness X being Δ -countable.
- Let O be an odds function.
- for each $k \in \mathbb{N}$ let d_k be defined as:
 - $d_k(\lambda) = 2^{-k}$.
 - $d_k(w) = 2^{-k} \prod_{x \sqsubset w} O(x)$ if $w \sqsubset R(\delta_k)$ and 0 otherwise.

Lemma

If X is Δ -countable then it has Δ -strong measure zero.

proof sketch:

- Let $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ witness X being Δ -countable.
- Let O be an odds function.
- for each $k \in \mathbb{N}$ let d_k be defined as:
 - $d_k(\lambda) = 2^{-k}$.
 - $d_k(w) = 2^{-k} \prod_{x \sqsubset w} O(x)$ if $w \sqsubset R(\delta_k)$ and 0 otherwise.
- output $d = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}} d_k$.

Lemma

If X is Δ -countable then it has Δ -strong measure zero.

proof sketch:

- Let $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ witness X being Δ -countable.
- Let O be an odds function.
- for each $k \in \mathbb{N}$ let d_k be defined as:
 - $d_k(\lambda) = 2^{-k}$.
 - $d_k(w) = 2^{-k} \prod_{x \sqsubset w} O(x)$ if $w \sqsubset R(\delta_k)$ and 0 otherwise.
- output $d = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}} d_k$.

Time/Space Bounded Borel Conjecture

Lemma

If X has Δ -strong measure zero for time/space bounded Δ then it is Δ -countable.

So the time/space bounded version of Borel's conjecture holds.

Time/Space Bounded Borel Conjecture

Lemma

If X has Δ -strong measure zero for time/space bounded Δ then it is Δ -countable.

So the time/space bounded version of Borel's conjecture holds.

Corollary

NP has strong measure zero in E if and only if

$$\text{NP} \cap \text{E} \subseteq \text{DTIME}(2^{kn})$$

for some fixed $k \in \mathbb{N}$.

Computable Borel Conjecture

Does NOT hold.

Computable Borel Conjecture

Does NOT hold.

Definition

$S \in \mathbf{C}$ is *almost constructible* if there exists a computable

$$\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\} \times \{0, 1\}^*$$

and for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $w \sqsubseteq S$ we have

1. $\delta(n, w) = (b, x)$ where $|x| = n$ and
2. $wb \sqsubseteq S$ or $wx \sqsubseteq S$

Computable Borel Conjecture

Does NOT hold.

Definition

$S \in \mathbf{C}$ is *almost constructible* if there exists a computable

$$\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow \{0, 1\} \times \{0, 1\}^*$$

and for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $w \sqsubseteq S$ we have

1. $\delta(n, w) = (b, x)$ where $|x| = n$ and
2. $wb \sqsubseteq S$ or $wx \sqsubseteq S$

- Example: Let

$$f(n) = \max\{t \in \mathbb{N} \mid \exists k \leq n \text{ and } M_k(k) \text{ halts in exactly } t \text{ steps}\}$$

and

$$S = \text{Graph}(f) = \{\langle n, f(n) \rangle \mid n \in \mathbb{N}\}.$$

Then S is almost constructible but not decidable.

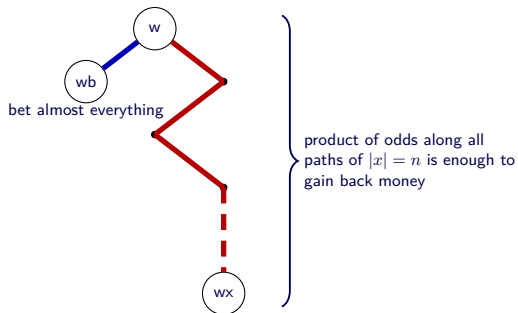
Lemma

Every almost constructible sequence has computable strong measure zero

Computable Borel Conjecture

Lemma

Every almost constructible sequence has computable strong measure zero



An *outer premeasure* is function $\mu : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ satisfying the following for all $w \in \{0, 1\}^*$, $a \in \{0, 1\}$ and $S \in \mathbf{C}$.

1. (monotone) $\mu(w) \geq \mu(wa)$.
2. (subadditive) $\mu(w) \leq \mu(w0) + \mu(w1)$.
3. (atomless) $\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mu(S[0 \dots n]) = 0$.

Outer Premeasures

An *outer premeasure* is function $\mu : \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ satisfying the following for all $w \in \{0, 1\}^*$, $a \in \{0, 1\}$ and $S \in \mathbf{C}$.

1. (monotone) $\mu(w) \geq \mu(wa)$.
2. (subadditive) $\mu(w) \leq \mu(w0) + \mu(w1)$.
3. (atomless) $\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mu(S[0 \dots n]) = 0$.

Lemma (Higuchi and Khiara 2014)

$X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ has strong measure zero if and only if it has measure zero with respect to all outer premeasures.

Never Continuously Random (NCR)

NCR (Reimann, Slaman 2008):

- A Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ is a sequence of uniformly Σ_1^0 sets $(W_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ relative to r_μ with $\mu(W_n) \leq 2^{-n}$ for all n .
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ passes a Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ if $S \notin \bigcap_{n \in \mathbb{N}} W_n$.
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ is μ -random if it passes every Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ for some representation r_μ of μ .
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ is in NCR if it is not μ -random for any continuous **probability measure** μ .

Never Continuously Random (NCR)

NCR (Reimann, Slaman 2008):

- A Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ is a sequence of uniformly Σ_1^0 sets $(W_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ relative to r_μ with $\mu(W_n) \leq 2^{-n}$ for all n .
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ passes a Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ if $S \notin \bigcap_{n \in \mathbb{N}} W_n$.
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ is μ -random if it passes every Martin-Löf- μ test relative to r_μ for some representation r_μ of μ .
- $S \in \mathbf{C}$ is in NCR if it is not μ -random for any continuous **probability measure** μ .

Theorem

S has algorithmic (lower semicomputable) strong measure zero if and only if it is NCR.

However, classically NCR corresponds to universal measure zero.

Δ -strong measure zero can be characterized in terms of effective covers similar to Borel's original definition.

Theorem

A set X has Δ -strong measure zero if and only if there is an oracle Turing machine M in Δ such that for every infinite $A \subseteq \mathbb{N}$:

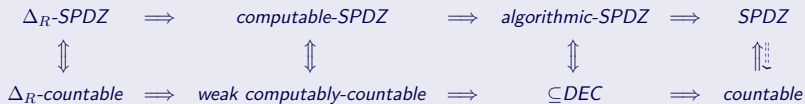
- 1. If $n \in A$ then $M^A(n) = w$ for some w with $|w| = n$ (or does not halt for lower semicomputable).*
- 2. For every $S \in X$ there exists an $n \in A$ such that $M^A(n) \subseteq S$.*

Thank you!

Strong Packing Dimension Zero

Require success in the limit inferior instead:

Theorem



- A *weak constructor* is a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow (\{0, 1\}^*)^b$ for some $b \in \mathbb{N}$ satisfying $w \in \delta(n) \Rightarrow \exists u \in \delta(n-1)$ with $u \sqsubset w$ for all $n \in \mathbb{N}^+$.
- The *result* of a weak constructor is the set $\{S \in \mathbf{C} \mid \forall n \in \mathbb{N} \exists w \in \delta(n) \ w \sqsubseteq S\}$.
- A set $X \subseteq \mathbf{C}$ is weakly Δ -countable if there exists a function $\delta : \mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathcal{P}\{0, 1\}^*$ meeting the following properties.
 1. $\delta \in \Delta$.
 2. For each $k \in \mathbb{N}$, if we write $\delta_k(n) = \delta(k, n)$, then the function δ_k is a weak constructor.
 3. $X \subseteq \bigcup_{k \in \mathbb{N}} R(\delta_k)$.

Complexity of Computable SMZ Sequences

Lemma

Let X be a Σ_2^0 set. Then the following are equivalent.

- 1. X is strongly coverable*
- 2. X is algorithmically strongly coverable*
- 3. X is computably strongly coverable*

Moreover 1 and 2 are equivalent for every union of Π_1^0 sets.

Complexity of Computable SMZ Sequences

Lemma

Let X be a Σ_2^0 set. Then the following are equivalent.

- 1. X is strongly coverable*
- 2. X is algorithmically strongly coverable*
- 3. X is computably strongly coverable*

Moreover 1 and 2 are equivalent for every union of Π_1^0 sets.

Theorem (Cenzer et al. [?])

Let α be a computable ordinal. Then there is a countable Π_1^0 class containing x with $x \equiv_T \emptyset^{(\alpha)}$.

Complexity of Computable SMZ Sequences

Lemma

Let X be a Σ_2^0 set. Then the following are equivalent.

- 1. X is strongly coverable*
- 2. X is algorithmically strongly coverable*
- 3. X is computably strongly coverable*

Moreover 1 and 2 are equivalent for every union of Π_1^0 sets.

Theorem (Cenzer et al. [?])

Let α be a computable ordinal. Then there is a countable Π_1^0 class containing x with $x \equiv_T \emptyset^{(\alpha)}$.

Corollary

for every computable ordinal α there is a x with $x \equiv_T \emptyset^{(\alpha)}$ and $\{x\}$ having computable strong measure zero.

This matches a result of NCR (Kjos-Hanssen, Montalbán 2005).