Dissertation Summary (Discussion, Conclusions, and Future Work)

Notes:

* After taking points out there isn’t a noticeable difference between mean of MSE from cross validation without all points and score seismic constraints function which returns the MSE between the moho estimate and the point constraints for all the points.
* Andes problem should be able to be solved by modelling the subducting slab. The method of cross validation should in theory be very similar in an area without much tectonic activity when compared to South America e.g. Africa, model will just be better due to lack of deep moho. Crust1.0 no model of subducting slab either, but this method still has discrepancies with this. Deeper moho is less variation can be seen in model so leads to underestimation under Andes. Not just subduction zone that causes problems, only one density value that is being constrained for seismic models. Unlikely that estimate of one value will change. In Africa difference won’t be that large.
* Or if were still using south America instead of using a “random” selection for the training set in cross validation by taking say 2/3 of points out based on their geographical location (in blocks) try with Haas method not Uieda 2017.
* Adding in more degrees of freedom in density estimations, like the seismic regionalisation method used in Haas 2020 and this should decrease the mean errors between the model and seismic constraints. However issue arises with manually choosing how many different regions there will be given the exponential increase in computational time in accordance to increasing the number of regions with differing densities.

Summary:

The results attained from the procedure of cross validation indicate that there is not a noticeable difference between the mean of the errors when comparing all the different training sizes. This result is the same for both models with and without the added underplating of Mariani (2013) with variations in both being around 0.1km meaning that for this model the size of the testing set does not matter as all sizes above 2/3 of the data will arrive at the same conclusion. It is worth noting though that the model with the intrusion implemented has on average higher RMS values than that without the intrusion but was initially expected. The residual values between the model and the point estimates show that the error on the whole model was around 2.3-2.6km but this likely varies from region to region. However, this is a viable method to estimate Moho model errors using cross validation that can be extended past just South America and to different parts of the Earth given that there are seismic point estimates to carry out the method of repeated random sub-sample validation.

Modelling a subducting slab to combat uncertainty

Given the fact that the RMS error values give one singular uncertainty on the model this can be skewed by few large disparities between the model and the point estimates. This is very much so the case, in the Andes due to the active plate tectonics in the area leading to a sharp increase in Moho depth when compared to the surrounding depths, something which cannot be modelled properly due to the regularization parameter which keeps the model smooth and without sharp vertical variations over short distances. Given that the regularization parameter was selected through hold-out cross validation it is not plausible to change this value as it can cause instability in other parts of the model, where Moho depths are estimated well when comparing to previous results. One solution that Uieda & Barbosa (2017) has was to implement a separate smoothness regularization for areas in South America such as the Andes or not to have one for these regions at all. Another solution to this problem that may be easier to implement into the code would be to model the subducting Nazca plate using a Slab2 model from rockhound (<https://www.fatiando.org/rockhound/dev/gallery/slab2.html#sphx-glr-gallery-slab2-py>). The only issue with this is that in the model the crust and lithosphere thickness and density would have to be assumed and then these can be mapped onto tesseroids. This procedure will address the shallow Moho under the Andes and the surrounding area and should in theory decrease the MSE values attained from the repeated random sub-sample validation. On top of this it would be straight forward to see how much this method would improve the error estimates on the model by comparing the difference between identically derived models with the only change being one notebook including the Slab2 model and the other not. With the deep Moho values (upwards of 40km) being underestimated in South America for many models including [insert models here, should be found in the literature review] one way to obtain better MSE values would be to change the location of the model to an area that lacks significant tectonic activity. One possible region would be Africa although it does have tectonic activity most notably the East African rift zone although the Moho depths in this region do not surpass 50km. However, if using the same procedure of cross validation here then Africa would present the same issue as South America with the locations and clustering of seismic point data around the coast of the continent. This issue like that of South America would be due to the environment in central Africa along with financial hardship as seismic surveys are expensive to carry out. Although overall the RMS values or errors on the model should be lower as the model can be fit better to the seismic point estimates through regularization keeping the Moho surface smooth.

Even if the focus was turned back to South America the CRUST1.0 model used (Laske et al. 2013) doesn’t consider and model the subducting slab either, though taking this into account the final Moho depth model produced using the code from Uieda & Barbosa (2017) has discrepancies with the CRUST1.0 model. The main reason for this is that CRUST1.0 uses seismic point estimates and extrapolates them for regions where no data is present. For South America this most notably is the Amazon Rainforest, on the other hand the Uieda model is computed using gravitational data. One area where these models somewhat disagree is in the Andes and just to the east of the vast mountain range. The CRUST model predicts a deeper Moho through extrapolation due to the isostatic balancing from the Andes whereas this part is modelled to be much shallower in Uieda & Barbosa (2017) as there is gravity data for the foreland basins.

Blocked testing sets

The procedure used here as mentioned used repeated random sub-sample validation to estimate the errors on the model as a result the singular error value attained is the average error on the whole model across the continent of South America. This as a bigger picture doesn’t give a lot of information as the areas of larger and smaller disparity are not known. Rather than using “random” sampling of the data to separate it into the training and testing set instead the data can be split up using a method of “Blocking”. By selecting points for the testing set by geographical area rather than randomly an uncertainty estimate can be calculated for just the region that the seismic point estimates span. By using this method the likely larger errors seen in the Andes can be separated from the areas of the continent where the model and the point estimates agree very well with each other leading to smaller RMS values in blocked areas with small disparities. However, “Blocking” with limited seismic estimates in some regions and large quantities of these estimates grouped in tight clusters may lead to different validating sizes, which as seen in the results is not much of a problem as the 3 different sizes used achieved very similar mean RMS values. For this method to work the blocked regions must be of equal or similar size as a testing size of 100 points cannot be compared to a section with only 10 seismic point estimates. So when implementing “Blocking” for South America areas where there are a large proportion of seismic points such as the Andes may have to be split into two or more regions. However, rather than gaining an error estimate for the model for the Andes or another high cluster region as a whole there would be multiple error values attained and would account as a separate RMS value per region. This uneven cluster would lead to errors for regions of possibly vastly different sizes depending on the testing size collected, with the smaller the subset the more areas there are and likely the more computationally expensive the process will be.

Degrees of freedom in density estimations

The code implemented by Uieda & Barbosa (2017) as mentioned uses cross validation to estimate the best model hyperparameters before producing the final model. In many places the model has large disparities with the seismic point estimates and is partially due to the singular density contrast used across the whole continent for the model. South America is a tectonically active region and will have geological units vastly ranging in densities from the less dense sedimentary rocks and basins to the very dense igneous intrusions. So one way of accounting for this is adding in more degrees of freedom in density estimations. This method has been implemented in Haas (2020) using seismic regionalization that splits up the continent of South America into 6 different density contrasts. These density values are attained by using surface-wave tomographic models seen in Schaeffer and Lebedev (2015). If this method were implemented into this code then it is likely that the mean errors between the model and the seismic constrains would decrease as the model created through inversion will better fit the seismic points whilst still having a smooth solution through a regularization coefficient.

However, the main issue that arises is that the model requires the user to manually choose how many different regions there will be. For every extra region added to the model there will be an exponential increase in the computational time, and after a certain number of different density contrasts adding more will not improve the model. Hence a trade-off is needed between the number of regions and the computational time. In Haas (2020) as mentioned 6 regions with different density contrasts were used and comparing this model to Uieda & Barbosa (2017) the frequency of residuals is clustered more towards smaller values whereas the latter model has a slightly higher representation when it comes to larger residual Moho depths [Insert figure from Haas 2020, in figures section]. A possible future avenue could be to put the computational time aside and seeing how many different density regions can be implemented into the code until adding more in does not decrease the mean size of the Moho residuals between the model and point estimates.