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ON THE MAXIMUM AND ABSORPTION TIME OF LEFT-CONTINUOUS RANDOM WA--ETC(U)

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ON THE MAXIMUM AND ABSORPTION TIME
OF LEFT-CONTINUOUS RANDOM WALK

by

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Technical Report No. 122, Series 2
Department of Statistics
Princeton University
March 1977

Research sponsored in part by a contract with the
Office of Naval Research, No. N00014-75-C-0453,
awarded to the Department of Statistics, Princeton
University.

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A B S T R A C T

In a recent paper P. J. Green obtained some conditional limit theorems for the absorption time of left-continuous random walk. His methods required certain distributions to have exponentially decreasing tails. Here we take a different approach which will produce Green's results under minimal conditions. Limit theorems are given for the maximum as the initial position of the random walk tends to infinity.

Key words: left continuous random walk; maximum; absorption time; limit theorems; local limit theorems; renewal theorems.

1. INTRODUCTION

We consider a left-continuous random walk $\{S_n; n=0,1,\dots\}$ on the non-negative integers with $\{0\}$ as an absorbing state. Specifically, for $j = 0,1,\dots$, let

$$P\{S_{n+1} = S_n - 1 + j | S_n\} = p_j \quad (S_n > 0), = \delta_{j1} \quad (S_n = 0)$$

where we assume $p_0 > 0$, $p_0 + p_1 < 1$ and that $\{p_j\}$ has unit maximal

span. Write $f(t) = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} p_j t^j$. Recently Green (1976) has obtained ex-

pressions for the distribution of (M,N) where N is the time to absorption and $M = \max\{S_n; n \leq N\}$. In the cases $\alpha = f'(1-) \leq 1$ he obtained some results on the tail behavior of M and limit theorems for N as $M \rightarrow \infty$. However his methods of proof require conditions which appear not to be necessary for the validity of the results. For example when $\alpha = 1$ his stated results involve only $f''(1-)$ which

must necessarily be finite, but their proofs require that $f(s)$ exists for $|s| < 1 + \epsilon$ for some $\epsilon > 0$.

We shall derive alternative representations for some of Green's quantities and use these together with renewal theorems and local limit theorems for the n -step transition probabilities of $\{S_n\}$ when $\alpha = 1$ and, when $\alpha < 1$, for an associated random walk with positive drift, to obtain Green's results under minimal conditions. When $\alpha < 1$ we also obtain limit theorems for N (as $M \rightarrow \infty$) under some weaker moment assumptions (Theorems 4 and 5) and when $\alpha \leq 1$ we obtain limit theorems for N as $S_0 \rightarrow \infty$.

2. THE CASE OF ZERO DRIFT

For $0 \leq s \leq 1$; $k, m = 0, 1, \dots$, let

$$\pi_k(m, s) = E(s^N; M \leq m | S_0 = k). \quad (1)$$

Green (1976) has shown that

$$\pi_k(m, s) = U_{m-k}(s) / U_m(s)$$

where

$$\sum_{j=0}^{\infty} U_j(s) t^j = \frac{p_0 s}{sf(t) - t}$$

which exists if $|t| < g(s)$ where $g(s)$ is the least non-negative solution of $sf(t) = t$. As is well known, $(g(s))^k$ is the probability generating function (p.g.f.) of N when $S_0 = k$. Now define $\bar{f}(t) = sf(tg(s))/g(s)$ ($0 \leq t \leq 1$) which is a p.g.f. for each $s \in (0, 1]$. Define the sequence of functions $\{u_j(s); j=0, 1, \dots\}$ by $u_0(s) \equiv 1$ and

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} u_j(s) t^j = \frac{p_0 s}{g(s)(\bar{f}(t) - t)} \quad (2)$$

3.

whence $U_j(s) = (g(s))^{-j} u_j(s)$ and

$$\pi_k(m,s) = (g(s))^k u_{m-k}(s)/u_m(s). \quad (3)$$

Finally define $\{v_j(s): j=0,1,\dots\}$ by $v_0(s) \equiv 1$ and

$v_j(s) = u_j(s) - u_{j-1}(s)$ ($j=1,2,\dots$) and hence

$$\sum_{j=0}^{\infty} v_j(s) t^j = \frac{p_0 s(1-t)}{g(s)(\bar{f}(t)-t)} \quad (4)$$

and $v_j(s) \geq 0$ ($0 < s \leq 1$); see, for example, Yang (1973, p.448).

It follows from (3) that

$$P(M \leq x | S_0=k) = u_{[x]-k}/u_{[x]} \quad (5)$$

and Green (1976) has shown that

$$E(s^N | M > j) = g(s) v_j(s) u_j / v_j u_j(s) \quad (6)$$

and hence that knowledge of the asymptotic behavior of the u 's and v 's yields limit theorems for M and N . Here $v_j = v_j(1)$ and $u_j = u_j(1)$.

It is pointed out in Pakes (1977) that

$$\sum_{n,j \geq 1} p_{1j}^{(n)} s^n t^j = \frac{tg(s)-t^2}{sf(t)-t} \quad (7)$$

where $p_{1j}^{(n)} = P(S_n=j | S_0=1)$, and hence

$$\sum_{n,j \geq 1} p_{1j}^{(n)} s^n (g(s))^j t^j = g(s) \frac{t(1-t)}{\bar{f}(t)-t}.$$

Thus we obtain the representation

$$v_j(s) = p_0 s (g(s))^{j-1} \sum_{n \geq 1} p_{1,j+1}^{(n)} s^n.$$

Assume now that $\alpha = 1$ and $b = f'(1-) < \infty$. We see that

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$v_j = p_0 G_{1,j+1}$ where $G_{1j} = \sum_{n \geq 1} p_{1j}^{(n)}$ is a Green's function.

Lemma 1 of Pakes (1977) then yields

$$v_j \rightarrow 2p_0/b, \quad u_j \sim 2p_0 j/b. \quad (8)$$

The first relation is a direct consequence of a discrete renewal theorem; we shall enlarge on this below.

Let now $s = s_j = \exp(-\theta b/2j^2)$ ($j=1,2,\dots$). It is easily seen that $(g(s_j))^j \rightarrow \exp(-\theta^{1/2})$. We now make use of the local limit theorem for $p_{1j}^{(n)}$ derived in Pakes (1977):

$$\sup_{j \geq 0} |b n p_{1j}^{(n)} - (2/\pi b)^{1/2} j n^{-1/2} \exp(-j^2/2bn)| \rightarrow 0 \quad (n \rightarrow \infty). \quad (9)$$

Observe that $p_j(n) = p_{1j}^{(n)}/G_{1j}$ defines the distribution of a random variable (r.v.), $A(j)$ say, via $p_j(n) = P(A(j) = n)$.

Letting $n = 2x_j j^2/b$ in (9), where $x_j \rightarrow x > 0$, we obtain from (8) and (9)

$$(2j^2/b)p_j(n) \rightarrow \sigma(x) \equiv (2\pi^{1/2})^{-1} x^{-3/2} \exp(-1/4x)$$

which is the density of the stable law whose Laplace-Stieltjes transform (L.S.T.) is $\exp(-\theta^{1/2})$. It follows (Billingsley (1968) Theorem 7.8) that

$$P(bA(j)/sj^2 \leq x) \rightarrow \int_0^x \sigma(y) dy$$

and finally that

$$v_j(s_j) \rightarrow (2p_0/b) \exp(-2\theta^{1/2}) \quad (j \rightarrow \infty). \quad (10)$$

Note that the convergence here is uniform for $0 \leq \theta \leq A < \infty$.

Let $\psi_j(\theta) = v_j(s_j)$ and $\psi(\theta)$ represent the right hand side of (10). Then

$$j^{-1}u_j(s_j) = j^{-1} + j^{-1} \sum_{k=1}^j [\psi_k(\theta k^2/j^2) - \psi(\theta k^2/j^2)] \\ + j^{-1} \sum_{k=1}^j \psi(\theta k^2/j^2). \quad (11)$$

As $j \rightarrow \infty$ the last term on the right

$$\rightarrow (2p_0/b) \int_0^1 \exp(-2x\theta^{1/2}) dx = (p_0/b)\theta^{-1/2}(1 - \exp(-2\theta^{1/2})).$$

Let $0 > \epsilon > 1$ be given. Then the second term on the right of expression (11)

$$\leq 2\epsilon + j^{-1} \sum_{\epsilon j \leq k \leq j} |\psi_k(\theta k^2/j^2) - \psi(\theta k^2/j^2)|$$

and j can be chosen so large that the summands $\leq \epsilon$.

Thus we find that

$$j^{-1}u_j(s_j) \rightarrow (p_0/b)\theta^{-1/2}(1 - \exp(-2\theta^{1/2})).$$

Combining this with (8) and (10) in (6) yields

Theorem 1. Let $\alpha = 1$ and $b = f''(1-) < \infty$. Then

$$P(bN/2j^2 \leq x | M > j) \rightarrow F(x) \quad (j \rightarrow \infty)$$

where F has L.S.T. $(\exp(-\theta^{1/2})) \theta^{1/2} \operatorname{cosech} \theta^{1/2}$.

Assume now that

$$f(t) = t + (1-t)^\delta L((1-t)^{-1}) \quad (12)$$

where $1 < \delta \leq 2$ and $L(\cdot)$ is slowly varying (s.v.) at infinity.

We then have

$$\sum_{j=0}^{\infty} u_j t^j = p_0 / (1-t)^\delta L((1-t)^{-1})$$

and since $\{u_j\}$ is a non-decreasing sequence, a Tauberian theorem for power series yields

$$u_j \sim p_0 j^{\delta-1} / \Gamma(\delta) L(j) \quad (j \rightarrow \infty).$$

The following result is now an immediate consequence of (5).

Theorem 2. Suppose that (12) holds. Then

$$P(M \leq kx | S_0 = k) \rightarrow [(1 - x^{-1})^+]^{\delta-1} \quad (k \rightarrow \infty).$$

Equation (4) yields $\sum v_j t^j = p_0 / (1 - h(t))$ where $h(t) = (1 - f(t)) / (1 - t)$ is a p.g.f. The discrete renewal theorem (Erickson (1970), eq.(2.3)) shows that if (12) holds and if $3/2 < \delta \leq 1$ then $jv_j/u_j \rightarrow \delta-1$. This also holds when $1 < \delta \leq 3/2$ because the weights of the distribution defined by h are monotonic and corollary 3A of Williamson (1968) then applies. We now have the following generalization of results of Green (1976) and Lindvall (1976) on the tail behavior of M .

Theorem 3. Suppose (12) holds. Then

$$\lim_{j \rightarrow \infty} jP(M > j | S_0 = k) = (\delta-1)k.$$

3. THE CASE OF NEGATIVE DRIFT

In this section we assume $\alpha < 1$. The p.g.f. $\bar{f}(t)$ has mean $1 - g(s)/sg'(s) < 1$ ($0 < s \leq 1$) and hence (2) and the Tauberian theorem for power series implies that

$$u_j(s) \uparrow p_0 g'(s) (s/g(s))^2 \quad (0 < s \leq 1; j \rightarrow \infty). \quad (13)$$

Furthermore the limit function is continuous in $[1 - \epsilon, 1]$ ($0 \leq \epsilon < 1$).

whence by Dini's theorem the convergence at (13) is uniform with respect to $s \in [1 - \epsilon, 1]$. In particular we have

Lemma 1. If $\alpha < 1$ and $s_j \leq 1$, $s_j \rightarrow 1$ ($j \rightarrow \infty$) then

$$u_j(s_j) \rightarrow p_0/(1 - \alpha).$$

Now assume that there exists a solution, D , exceeding unity of the equation $f(t) = t$ and that the p.g.f. $f_D(t) = f(Dt)/D$ can be expanded as

$$f_D(t) = 1 - \delta^{-1}(1-t)^\delta L((1-t)^{-1}) \quad (0 < \delta < 1)$$

or

$$f_D(t) = 1 - a(1-t) + \delta^{-1}(1-t)^\delta L((1-t)^{-1}) \quad (1 < \delta \leq 2)$$

where in the latter case $1 < a = f'(D-) < \infty$ and $L(\cdot)$ is S.V. at infinity. In either case the least positive solution, q , of

$f_D(t) = t$ is $q = D^{-1}$. Let $g_D(s) = qg(s)$; we have

$g_D(s) = sf_D(g_D(s))$. Substitute tD for t in (7) to obtain

$$\sum_{n,j \geq 1} p_{1j}^{(n)} s^n D^j t^j = Dt \frac{g_D(s) - t}{sf_D(t) - t} = D \sum_{n,j \geq 1} q_{1j}^{(n)} s^n t^j \quad (14)$$

where $[q_{ij}^{(n)}]$ is the n -step transition matrix of an absorbing origin left-continuous random walk, $\{Y_n\}$, with increment p.g.f. $f_D(t)/t$ and hence has positive drift. Thus we obtain

$$v_j(s) = p_0 s (g(s))^{j-1} D^{-j} \sum_{n \geq 1} q_{1,j+1}^{(n)} s^n, \quad (15)$$

and setting $Q_{1j} = \sum_{n \geq 1} q_{1j}^{(n)}$ we have

$$D^j v_j = p_0 Q_{1,j+1}. \quad (16)$$

Equation (14) yields $\sum_{j \geq 1} Q_{1j} t^j = t(q-t)/(f_D(t) - t) = t/(1 - d(t))$

where $d(t) = (f_D(t) - q)/(t-q)$ is a p.g.f. Application of the discrete renewal theorem yields

Lemma 2. If $1/2 < \delta < 1$ then

$$j^{1-\delta} L(j) Q_{1j} \rightarrow (1-q)\delta/\Gamma(\delta)$$

and if $\delta > 1$ then

$$Q_{1j} \rightarrow (1-q)/(a-1).$$

The asymptotic behavior of $\{v_j\}$ now follows from (16). It is shown in Pakes (1973) that

$$P(Y_n \leq xB(n) + \Delta n | Y_0 = 1) \rightarrow q + (1-q) H(x) \quad (n \rightarrow \infty)$$

where $\Delta = 0$ if $\delta < 1$, $\Delta = a - 1$ if $\delta > 1$ and $H(\cdot)$ is the D.F. of the stable law whose characteristic function is

$$\phi(\theta) = \exp[\delta^{-1}(\cos(\pi\delta/2))|\theta|^\delta(1-i\theta|\theta|^{-1}\tan(\pi\delta/2))],$$

$B(\cdot)$ is the inverse function of $x^\delta/L(x)$ and has the form $B(n) = n^{1/\delta}M(n)$ where $M(\cdot)$ is S.V. at infinity. Using the representation for $\sum Q_{1j}^{(n)} t^j$ given in §6 of Pakes (1973) and mimicking the proof of the local limit theorem for lattice distributions as presented, for example, by Ibragimov and Linnik (1970), it can be readily checked that the following holds:

$$\sup_j |B(n)Q_{1j}^{(n)} - (1-q)h((j-\Delta n)/B(n))| \rightarrow 0 \quad (n \rightarrow \infty) \quad (17)$$

where $h(x) = H'(x)$. We must now distinguish a number of cases.

(i). $1/2 < \delta < 1$. Let $n = x_j j^\delta / L(j)$ where $x_j \rightarrow x$. Clearly $B(n) \sim jx^{1/\delta}$, and hence if $\{T_j\}$ is a sequence of r.v.'s such that

$P(T_j=n) = q_{1j}^{(n)}/Q_{1j}$, we obtain

$$(j^\delta/L(j)) P(T_j=xj^\delta/L(j)) \rightarrow p(x) \quad (18)$$

where $p(x) = \delta^{-1}\Gamma(\delta)x^{-1/\delta} h(x^{-1/\delta})$ is a density function. This may

be seen by observing that $\int_0^\infty x^{-1/\delta} h(x^{-1/\delta}) dx = \delta M_h(1-\delta)$ where

$M_h(\theta) = \int_0^\infty x^{\theta-1} h(x) dx$ is the Mellin transform of $h(\cdot)$. Now use the

formula (Kawata (1972), p. 272)

$$M_h(\theta) = (\Gamma(1-\theta))^{-1} \int_0^\infty x^{-\theta} \lambda_h(x) dx,$$

where $\lambda_h(\theta) = \exp(-\delta^{-1}\theta^\delta)$ is the L.S.T. of $H(\cdot)$, to obtain

$M_h(1-\delta) = (\Gamma(\delta))^{-1}$. Indeed it is easy to show that

$M_p(\theta) = \Gamma(\delta)\Gamma(\theta)/\delta^{1-\theta}\Gamma(\delta\theta)$. Lemma 2 and (18) now yield

$$Q_{1j}^{-1} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q_{1j}^{(n)} \exp(-\theta n j^{-\delta} L(j)) \rightarrow \xi(\theta)$$

where $\xi(\theta) = \int_0^\infty e^{-\theta x} p(x) dx$.

Under our present assumptions we have $g'(1-) < \infty$ and $g'(1-) = A = (1-\alpha)^{-1}$. It is readily checked that the condition $1/2 < \delta < 1$ implies

$$[\exp(A\theta j^{1-\delta} L(j))] [g(\exp(-\theta j^{-\delta} L(j)))] j^j \rightarrow 1.$$

Using (15) and (16) we can rewrite (6) as

$$E(s^N | M > j) = (g(s))^j (Q_{1,j+1}^{-1} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} q_{1,j+1}^{(n)} s^n) (u_j/u_j(s))$$

and the subsequent result readily follows.

Theorem 4. If $1/2 < \theta < 1$ and $v(j) = j^\delta/L(j)$ then

$$P(N - A_j \leq x v(j) | M > j) \rightarrow \int_0^x p(y) dy \quad (j \rightarrow \infty; x > 0).$$

(ii). $1 < \delta \leq 2$. Now let $n = j/\Delta + x_j B(j)$ in (17), whence

$$B(j)P(T_j = j/\Delta + x_j B(j)) \rightarrow \Delta^{1+1/\delta} h(-x\Delta^{1+1/\delta})$$

and finally

$$[\exp(\theta j/\Delta B(j))] Q_{1j}^{-1} \sum_{n \geq 1} q_{1j}^{(n)} \exp[-\theta n/B(j)] \rightarrow \zeta(\theta)$$

where $\zeta(\theta) = \exp[\delta^{-1} \theta^\delta \Delta^{-1-\delta}]$ is the moment generating function

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} (\exp \theta x) \Delta^{1+1/\delta} h(-x\Delta^{1+1/\delta}) dx. \text{ A special case is } f''(D-) < \infty$$

and $b = Df''(D-) + a - a^2$ which implies that $\delta = 2$, and $B(j) = (bj)^{1/2}$.

We must now consider two cases. First assume that either $1 < \delta < 2$ or if $\delta = 2$ then $L(x) \rightarrow \infty$. Then in a similar manner to case (i)

$$[\exp(A\theta j/B(j))] [g(\exp(-\theta/B(j)))]^j \rightarrow 1$$

which follows on observing that $M(x) \rightarrow \infty$ when $\delta = 2$. The following result is now apparent.

Theorem 5. If $1 < \delta \leq 2$ and $f''(D-) = \infty$ then

$$P(N - A_j \leq x B(j) | M > j) \rightarrow 1 - H(-x\Delta^{1+1/\delta}) \quad (-\infty < x < \infty).$$

For our final case assume that $f''(D-) < \infty$. Letting $B = (f''(1-) + \alpha - \alpha^2)/(1 - \alpha)^3$ we have

$$[\exp(A\theta j^{1/2})] [g(\exp(-\theta j^{-1/2}))]^j \rightarrow \exp(B\theta^2/2).$$

Now let $\mu = A + \Delta^{-1}$ and $\sigma^2 = B + b\Delta^{-3}$. The following result readily follows.

Theorem 6. If $f''(D-) < \infty$ then

$$P(N - \mu j \leq x\sigma j^{1/2} | M > j) \rightarrow \Phi(x), \quad (-\infty < x < \infty)$$

the standard normal distribution function.

This is Green's Theorem 3 but he assumed that $f(s)$ is finite in $|s| < D + \epsilon$ for some $\epsilon > 0$. Lemma 1 and (5) yield the following analogue of Theorem 2.

Theorem 7. Assuming only that $\alpha < 1$,

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} P(M \leq kx | S_0 = k) = 0 \quad (0 \leq x < 1), = 1 \quad (x > 1).$$

Finally Lemmas 1 and 2 yield the following partial refinement of Green's Theorem 1.

Theorem 8. If $f'(D-) < \infty$ then

$$\lim_{j \rightarrow \infty} D^j P(M > j | S_0 = k) = (D^k - 1)(1 - \alpha)/(a - 1).$$

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

14

TR-122-SER-2

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER Technical Report No.122 ✓	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) ON THE MAXIMUM AND ABSORPTION TIME OF LEFT-CONTINUOUS RANDOM WALK.		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Technical rept.
7. AUTHOR Pakes, Anthony G. Pakes		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Department of Statistics Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. ✓		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s) N00014-75-C-0453 ✓
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Office of Naval Research (Code 436) Arlington, Virginia 22217		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE Mar 1977 12
		13. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Produced while Prof. Pakes was serving as a Visiting Research Assistant at Princeton University, on leave from Monash University in Australia.		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) left continuous random walk, maximum, absorption time, limit theorems, local limit theorems, renewal theorems.		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) In a recent paper P.J.Green obtained some conditional limit theorems for the absorption time of left-continuous random walk. His methods required certain distributions to have exponentially decreasing tails. Here a different approach is taken to produce Green's results under minimal conditions. Limit theorems are given for the maximum as the initial position of the random walk tends to infinity.		

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