

A DEFINITION AND SOME CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTIES OF PSEUDO-STOPPING TIMES

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Dedicated to David Williams

Recently, Williams [*Bull. London Math. Soc.* **34** (2002) 610–612] gave an explicit example of a random time ρ associated with Brownian motion such that ρ is not a stopping time but $\mathbb{E}M_\rho = \mathbb{E}M_0$ for every bounded martingale M . The aim of this paper is to characterize such random times, which we call pseudo-stopping times, and to construct further examples, using techniques of progressive enlargements of filtrations.

1. Introduction. Let $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, (\mathcal{F}_t)_{t \geq 0}, \mathbb{P})$ be a filtered probability space, and $\rho: (\Omega, \mathcal{F}) \rightarrow (\mathbb{R}_+, \mathcal{B}(\mathbb{R}_+))$ be a random time. We recall that the space \mathcal{H}^1 is the Banach space of (càdlàg) (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales (M_t) such that

$$\|M\|_{\mathcal{H}^1} = \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{t \geq 0} |M_t| \right] < \infty.$$

DEFINITION 1. We say that ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time if, for every (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale (M_t) in \mathcal{H}^1 , we have

$$(1.1) \quad \mathbb{E}M_\rho = \mathbb{E}M_0.$$

REMARK 1. It is equivalent to assume that (1.1) holds for bounded martingales, since these are dense in \mathcal{H}^1 .

We indicate immediately that a class of pseudo-stopping times with respect to a filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) , which are not in general (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times, may be obtained by considering stopping times with respect to a larger filtration (\mathcal{G}_t) such that (\mathcal{F}_t) is immersed in (\mathcal{G}_t) , that is, every (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale is a (\mathcal{G}_t) -martingale. This situation is described in [3] and referred to there as the (H) hypothesis. We shall discuss this situation in more detail in Section 3. For now, we give a well-known example: let

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$B_t = (B_t^1, \dots, B_t^d)$ be a d -dimensional Brownian motion, and $R_t = |B_t|$, $t \geq 0$, its radial part; it is well known that

$$(\mathcal{R}_t \equiv \sigma\{R_s, s \leq t\}, t \geq 0),$$

the natural filtration of R , is immersed in $(\mathcal{B}_t \equiv \sigma\{B_s, s \leq t\}, t \geq 0)$, the natural filtration of B . Thus, an example of (\mathcal{R}_t) -pseudo-stopping time is

$$T_a^{(1)} = \inf\{t, B_t^1 > a\}.$$

Recently, Williams [20] showed that, with respect to the filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) generated by a one-dimensional Brownian motion $(B_t)_{t \geq 0}$, there exist pseudo-stopping times ρ which are not (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times. Williams' example is the following: let

$$T_1 = \inf\{t : B_t = 1\} \quad \text{and} \quad \sigma = \sup\{t < T_1 : B_t = 0\};$$

then

$$\rho = \sup\{s < \sigma : B_s = S_s\} \quad \text{where} \quad S_s = \sup_{u \leq s} B_u$$

is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time. This paper has two main aims:

- to understand better the nature of pseudo-stopping times;
- to construct further examples of pseudo-stopping times.

In Section 2 with the help of the theory of progressive enlargements of filtrations, we give some equivalent properties for ρ to be a pseudo-stopping time. We also comment there on the difference between (1.1) and the property

$$(1.2) \quad \mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_\rho] = M_\rho$$

for every uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale (M_t) , which was shown by Knight and Maisonneuve [12] to be equivalent to ρ being a (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time.

In Section 3 we give some other examples of pseudo-stopping times. We associate with the end L of a given (\mathcal{F}_t) predictable set Γ , that is,

$$L = \sup\{t : (t, \omega) \in \Gamma\},$$

a pseudo-stopping time $\rho < L$ in a manner which generalizes Williams' example. We also link the pseudo-stopping times with randomized stopping times.

In Section 4 we give a discrete time analogue of the Williams random time ρ . This approach is based on the analogue of Williams' path decomposition proposed by Le Gall for the standard random walk [13].

2. Some characteristic properties of pseudo-stopping times.

2.1. *Basic facts about progressive enlargements.* We recall here some basic results about the progressive enlargement of a filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) by a random time ρ . All these results may be found in [4, 9, 11, 17, 21].

We enlarge the initial filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) with the process $(\rho \wedge t)_{t \geq 0}$, so that the new enlarged filtration $(\mathcal{F}_t^\rho)_{t \geq 0}$ is the smallest filtration containing (\mathcal{F}_t) and making ρ a stopping time. A few processes will play a crucial role in our discussion:

- the (\mathcal{F}_t) -supermartingale

$$(2.1) \quad Z_t^\rho = \mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t]$$

- chosen to be càdlàg, associated to ρ by Azéma (see [9] for detailed references);
- the (\mathcal{F}_t) -dual optional and predictable projections of the process $\mathbf{1}_{\{\rho \leq t\}}$, denoted, respectively, by A_t^ρ and a_t^ρ ;
- the càdlàg martingale

$$\mu_t^\rho = \mathbb{E}[A_\infty^\rho | \mathcal{F}_t] = A_t^\rho + Z_t^\rho,$$

which is in $\text{BMO}(\mathcal{F}_t)$ (see [4] or [21]). We recall that the space of BMO martingales (see [6] for more details and references) is the Banach space of (càdlàg) square integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales (Y_t) which satisfy

$$\|Y\|_{\text{BMO}}^2 = \text{esssup}_T \mathbb{E}[(Y_\infty - Y_{T-})^2 | \mathcal{F}_T] < \infty,$$

where T ranges over all (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times.

We also consider the Doob–Meyer decomposition of (2.1):

$$Z_t^\rho = m_t^\rho - a_t^\rho.$$

If ρ avoids any (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time, that is, to say $P[\rho = T > 0] = 0$ for any stopping time T , then $A_t^\rho = a_t^\rho$ is continuous.

Finally, we recall that every (\mathcal{F}_t) -local martingale (M_t) , stopped at ρ , is a (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -semimartingale, with canonical decomposition:

$$(2.2) \quad M_{t \wedge \rho} = \widetilde{M}_t + \int_0^{t \wedge \rho} \frac{d\langle M, \mu^\rho \rangle_s}{Z_{s-}^\rho},$$

where (\widetilde{M}_t) is an (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -local martingale.

REMARK 2. We also recall that, in a filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) where all martingales are continuous, $A_t^\rho = a_t^\rho$ since optional processes are predictable (see [18], Chapter IV).

2.2. *A characterization of pseudo-stopping times.* We now discuss some characteristic properties of pseudo-stopping times. We assume throughout that $\mathbb{P}[\rho = \infty] = 0$.

THEOREM 1. *The following four properties are equivalent:*

- (1) ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time, that is, (1.1) is satisfied;
- (2) $\mu_t^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s.,
- (3) $A_\infty^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s.,
- (4) every (\mathcal{F}_t) -local martingale (M_t) satisfies

$$(M_{t \wedge \rho})_{t \geq 0} \text{ is a local } (\mathcal{F}_t^\rho)\text{-martingale.}$$

If, furthermore, all (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales are continuous, then each of the preceding properties is equivalent to

- (5)

$$(Z_t^\rho)_{t \geq 0} \text{ is a decreasing } (\mathcal{F}_t) \text{ predictable process.}$$

PROOF. (1) \Rightarrow (2). For every square integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale (M_t) , we have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^\infty M_s dA_s^\rho\right] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty A_\infty^\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty \mu_\infty^\rho].$$

Since $\mathbb{E}M_\rho = \mathbb{E}M_0 = \mathbb{E}M_\infty$, we have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty A_\infty^\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty \mu_\infty^\rho].$$

Consequently, $\mu_\infty^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s., hence, $\mu_t^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s., which is equivalent to $A_\infty^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s. Hence, (2) and (3) are equivalent.

(2) \Rightarrow (4). This is a consequence of the decomposition formula (2.2).

(4) \Rightarrow (1). It suffices to consider any \mathcal{H}^1 -martingale (M_t) , which, assuming (4), satisfies $(M_{t \wedge \rho})_{t \geq 0}$ is a martingale in the enlarged filtration (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) . Then, as a consequence of the optional stopping theorem applied in (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) at time ρ , we get

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_0],$$

hence, ρ is a pseudo-stopping time.

Finally, in the case where all (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales are continuous, we show the following:

- (a) (2) \Rightarrow (5). If ρ is a pseudo-stopping time, then Z_t^ρ decomposes as

$$Z_t^\rho = 1 - A_t^\rho.$$

As all (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales are continuous, optional processes are, in fact, predictable, and so (Z_t^ρ) is a predictable decreasing process.

(b) (5) \Rightarrow (2). Conversely, if (Z_t^ρ) is a predictable decreasing process, then, from the unicity in the Doob–Meyer decomposition, the martingale part μ_t^ρ is constant, that is, $\mu_t^\rho \equiv 1$, a.s. Thus, (2) is satisfied. \square

In the next proposition, we deal with uniformly integrable martingales (M_t) instead of martingales in \mathcal{H}^1 (or \mathcal{H}^2, \dots).

PROPOSITION 1. *The following properties are equivalent:*

- (1) ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time;
- (2) for every uniformly integrable martingale,

$$\mathbb{E}[|M_\rho|] \leq \mathbb{E}[|M_\infty|].$$

REMARK 3. In fact, we shall further show in the next proof that, for ρ a pseudo-stopping time and for (M_t) any uniformly integrable martingale,

$$\mathbb{E}[|M_\rho|] < \infty \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty].$$

PROOF OF PROPOSITION 1. (1) \Rightarrow (2). If (M_t) is uniformly integrable, it may be decomposed as

$$(2.3) \quad M_t = M_t^{(+)} - M_t^{(-)},$$

where

$$M_t^{(+)} = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty^+ | \mathcal{F}_t] \quad \text{and} \quad M_t^{(-)} = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty^- | \mathcal{F}_t].$$

[Note that M_∞^\pm indicate the positive and negative parts of M_∞ , whereas $(M_t^{(\pm)})$ are the martingales with terminal values M_∞^\pm .] Thus, to prove (2), it suffices to prove

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty],$$

under the further assumption that $M \geq 0$. In this latter case, we have $M_t = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_t]$, with $M_\infty \geq 0$. Now let

$$M_t^{(n)} = \mathbb{E}[(M_\infty \wedge n) | \mathcal{F}_t].$$

$(M_t^{(n)})$ is a bounded martingale, hence, we have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty^{(n)}] = \mathbb{E}[M_\rho^{(n)}].$$

Doob's maximal inequality yields

$$\mathbb{P}\left[\sup_{t \geq 0} (M_t - M_t^{(n)}) > \varepsilon\right] \leq \frac{1}{\varepsilon} \mathbb{E}[M_\infty - M_\infty^{(n)}],$$

so that $(M_\rho^{(n)})$ converges to (M_ρ) in probability; but the sequence $(M_\rho^{(n)})$ is increasing, so it, in fact, converges almost surely. Hence, the monotone convergence theorem yields

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty] = \mathbb{E}[M_\rho].$$

Finally, going back to (2.3) in the general case, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[|M_\rho|] &\leq \mathbb{E}[M_\rho^{(+)} + M_\rho^{(-)}] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[M_\infty^+ + M_\infty^-] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[|M_\infty|]. \end{aligned}$$

Hence, (2) holds. Further, we may now write

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[M_\rho] &= \mathbb{E}[M_\rho^{(+)} - M_\rho^{(-)}] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[M_\infty^+ - M_\infty^-] \\ &= \mathbb{E}[M_\infty]. \end{aligned}$$

(2) \Rightarrow (1). We need only apply property (2) to any martingale (M_t) taking values in $[0, 1]$. Thus,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[M_\rho] &\leq \mathbb{E}[M_\infty], \\ \mathbb{E}[1 - M_\rho] &\leq \mathbb{E}[1 - M_\infty]. \end{aligned}$$

But, since the sums on both sides add up to 1, we must have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty].$$

Hence, ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time. \square

As an application of the theorem, we can check that in Williams' example, his time ρ associated with a Brownian motion is a pseudo-stopping time. Indeed, the dual predictable (= optional) projection A_t^ρ of $\mathbf{1}_{\{\rho \leq t\}}$ is $\max_{s \leq t \wedge T_1} B_s$ [19, 20] and $A_\infty^\rho \equiv 1$.

2.3. *Around the result of Knight and Maisonneuve.* We now comment on the statement of the third property in Theorem 1.

For the properties of the different sigma fields $\mathcal{F}_\rho, \mathcal{F}_{\rho+}, \mathcal{F}_{\rho-}$, associated with a general random time ρ , the reader can consult [19] or [21]. Here, we just recall their definitions:

DEFINITION 2. Three classical σ -fields associated with a filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) and any random time ρ are the following:

- $\mathcal{F}_{\rho+} = \sigma\{z_\rho, (z_t) \text{ any } (\mathcal{F}_t) \text{ progressively measurable process}\};$
- $\mathcal{F}_\rho = \sigma\{z_\rho, (z_t) \text{ any } (\mathcal{F}_t) \text{ optional process}\};$
- $\mathcal{F}_{\rho-} = \sigma\{z_\rho, (z_t) \text{ any } (\mathcal{F}_t) \text{ predictable process}\}.$

The result of Knight and Maisonneuve which was recalled in the Introduction may be stated as follows:

THEOREM 2. *If for all uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales (M_t) , one has*

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_\rho] = M_\rho \quad \text{on } \{\rho < \infty\},$$

then ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time (the converse is Doob's optional stopping theorem).

Refining slightly the argument in [12], we obtain the following:

THEOREM 3. *If for all bounded (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales (M_t) , one has*

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \sigma\{M_\rho, \rho\}] = M_\rho \quad \text{on } \{\rho < \infty\},$$

then ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time.

PROOF. For $t \geq 0$, we have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty \mathbf{1}_{(\rho \leq t)}] = \mathbb{E}[M_\rho \mathbf{1}_{(\rho \leq t)}] = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^t M_s dA_s^\rho\right] = \mathbb{E}[M_\infty A_t^\rho].$$

Comparing the two extreme terms, we get

$$\mathbf{1}_{(\rho \leq t)} = A_t^\rho,$$

that is, ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time. \square

An interesting open question in view of what has been proved for pseudo-stopping times is whether $\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | M_\rho] = M_\rho$, on $\{\rho < \infty\}$ is equivalent to ρ being a stopping time.

To illustrate the result of Knight and Maisonneuve, we show explicitly how, in the framework of Williams' example, M_ρ and $\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_\rho]$ differ, for

$$M_t = \exp\left(\lambda B_{t \wedge T_1} - \frac{\lambda^2}{2}(t \wedge T_1)\right), \quad \lambda > 0.$$

We write

$$\begin{aligned} (2.4) \quad M_\infty &= \exp\left(\lambda - \frac{\lambda^2}{2}T_1\right) \\ &= \exp(\lambda) \exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2}(\rho + (\sigma - \rho) + (T_1 - \sigma))\right). \end{aligned}$$

We now recall Williams' path decomposition results for $(B_u)_{u \leq T_1}$ on the intervals $(0, \rho)$, (ρ, σ) , (σ, T_1) :

- $(B_{\sigma+u})_{u \leq T_1 - \sigma}$ is a BES(3) process, independent of \mathcal{F}_σ ; hence, we have

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2}(T_1 - \sigma)\right) \middle| \mathcal{F}_\sigma\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2}(T_1 - \sigma)\right)\right] = \frac{\lambda}{\sinh(\lambda)}.$$

- S_ρ , where $S_s = \sup_{u \leq s} B_u$, is uniformly distributed on $(0, 1)$;

- Conditionally on $S_\rho = h$, the processes $(B_u)_{u \leq \rho}$ and $(B_{\sigma-u})_{u \leq \sigma-\rho}$ are two independent Brownian motions considered up to their first hitting time of h . Consequently, we have

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2}(\sigma - \rho)\right) \middle| \mathcal{F}_\rho\right] = \exp(-\lambda S_\rho).$$

Plugging this information in (2.4), we obtain

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_\rho] = \exp\left(\lambda(1 - B_\rho) - \frac{\lambda^2}{2}\rho\right) \left(\frac{\lambda}{\sinh(\lambda)}\right),$$

while

$$(2.5) \quad M_\rho = \exp\left(\lambda B_\rho - \frac{\lambda^2}{2}\rho\right)$$

and these two quantities are obviously different.

2.4. *Further properties of pseudo-stopping times.* Besides the assumption that ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time, we also make the hypothesis that ρ avoids all (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times. We saw that, in this case,

$$a_t^\rho = A_t^\rho = 1 - Z_t^\rho$$

is continuous.

For simplicity, we shall write (Z_u) instead of (Z_u^ρ) .

PROPOSITION 2. *Under the previous hypotheses, for all uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales (M_t) , and all bounded Borel measurable functions f , one has*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[M_\rho f(Z_\rho)] &= \mathbb{E}[M_0] \int_0^1 f(x) dx \\ &= \mathbb{E}[M_\rho] \int_0^1 f(x) dx. \end{aligned}$$

REMARK 4. On the other hand, it is not true that

$$(2.6) \quad \mathbb{E}[M_\infty f(Z_\rho)] = \mathbb{E}[M_\rho f(Z_\rho)],$$

for every bounded Borel function f . Indeed, from Proposition 2, the right-hand side of (2.6) is equal to

$$\mathbb{E}\left[M_\infty \int_0^1 f(x) dx\right].$$

Thus, our hypothesis (2.6) would imply the absurd equality between $f(Z_\rho)$ and $\int_0^1 f(x) dx$.

PROOF OF PROPOSITION 2. Under our assumptions, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[M_\rho f(Z_\rho)] &= \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^\infty M_u f(Z_u) dA_u^\rho\right] \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^\infty M_u f(1 - A_u^\rho) dA_u^\rho\right] \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[M_\infty \int_0^\infty f(1 - A_u^\rho) dA_u^\rho\right] \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[M_\infty \int_0^1 f(1 - x) dx\right] \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[M_\infty \int_0^1 f(x) dx\right]. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

Taking $M_t \equiv 1$, we find that (Z_ρ) is uniformly distributed on $(0, 1)$, which is already known [11, 21] since (recalling that Z_u is decreasing)

$$Z_\rho = \inf_{u \leq \rho} Z_u.$$

In fact, we have a stronger result: under all changes of probability on \mathcal{F}_ρ , of the form

$$d\mathbb{Q} = M_\rho d\mathbb{P},$$

where (M_t) is a positive uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale such that $\mathbb{E}[M_0] = 1$, the law of Z_ρ (is unchanged and) is uniform.

COROLLARY 1. Under the assumptions of Proposition 2, we have

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\rho | Z_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[M_0].$$

On the other hand, the quantity $\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | Z_\rho]$ is not easy to evaluate, as is seen with Williams' example, and is different from $\mathbb{E}[M_\rho | Z_\rho]$. Indeed, in this framework and with the already used notation,

$$\mathbb{E}[M_\infty | Z_\rho] = \exp(\lambda) \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2} T_1\right) \middle| B_\rho\right].$$

Decomposing again T_1 as $T_1 = \rho + (\sigma - \rho) + (T_1 - \sigma)$, and using Williams path decomposition, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[M_\infty | Z_\rho] &= \exp(\lambda) \left(\frac{\lambda}{\sinh(\lambda)}\right) \exp(-\lambda B_\rho) \mathbb{E}\left[\exp\left(-\frac{\lambda^2}{2} \rho\right) \middle| B_\rho\right] \\ &= \left(\frac{2\lambda}{1 - \exp(-2\lambda)}\right) \exp(-2\lambda B_\rho). \end{aligned}$$

COROLLARY 2. *The family $\{M_\rho; M$ uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale $\}$ is not dense in $L^1(\mathcal{F}_\rho)$.*

This negative result led us to look for some representation of the generic element of $L^1(\mathcal{F}_\rho)$ in terms of (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales taken at time ρ on one hand, and the variable Z_ρ , on the other hand.

PROPOSITION 3. (i) *Let $K : [0, 1] \times \mathbb{R}_+ \times \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ be a $\mathcal{B}_{[0,1]} \otimes \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{F}_\bullet)$ measurable process, where $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{F}_\bullet)$ denotes the (\mathcal{F}_t) predictable σ -field on $\mathbb{R}_+ \times \Omega$. Then*

$$(2.7) \quad \mathbb{E}[K(1 - Z_\rho, \rho)] = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^1 dy K(y, \alpha_y)\right],$$

where

$$\alpha_y = \inf\{u : A_u^\rho > y\}.$$

(ii) *Let $(H_u, u \geq 0)$ be a bounded predictable process. Define a measurable family $(M_t^y)_{t \geq 0}$ of martingales through their terminal values*

$$M_\infty^y = H_{\alpha_y}.$$

Then

$$H_\rho = M_\rho^{1-Z_\rho} \quad a.s.$$

PROOF. (i) This follows from the monotone class theorem, once we have shown

$$(2.8) \quad \mathbb{E}[f(1 - Z_\rho)H_\rho] = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^1 dy f(y)H_{\alpha_y}\right]$$

for every bounded predictable process H and every Borel bounded function f . But, this identity follows from the fact that $1 - Z_\rho = A_\rho$; and so

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[f(A_\rho)H_\rho] &= \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^\infty dA_u f(A_u)H_u\right] \\ &= \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^1 dy f(y)H_{\alpha_y}\right]. \end{aligned}$$

We shall prove the second statement by showing that, for every bounded (k_u) predictable process,

$$\mathbb{E}[k_\rho H_\rho] = \mathbb{E}[k_\rho M_\rho^{1-Z_\rho}].$$

From (2.7), we deduce

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[k_\rho M_\rho^{1-Z_\rho}] &= \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^1 dy M_{\alpha_y}^y k_{\alpha_y}\right] \\ &\stackrel{(a)}{=} \int_0^1 dy \mathbb{E}[M_\infty^y k_{\alpha_y}] \\ &\stackrel{(b)}{=} \int_0^1 dy \mathbb{E}[H_{\alpha_y} k_{\alpha_y}] \\ &\stackrel{(c)}{=} \mathbb{E}[k_\rho H_\rho] \end{aligned}$$

[(a) follows from the optional stopping theorem for (M_t^y) ; (b) follows from the definition of M_∞^y ; (c) is another consequence of (2.7)]. Comparing the extreme terms in the above, we get

$$H_\rho = M_\rho^{1-Z_\rho}. \quad \square$$

3. Some systematic constructions and some examples of pseudo-stopping times.

3.1. *First constructions.* Here we discuss some combinations of several pseudo-stopping times which yield a pseudo-stopping time. Here is a first easy result:

PROPOSITION 4. *Let ρ be a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time and let τ be a (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -stopping time. Then $\rho \wedge \tau$ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time.*

PROOF. Let M be any uniformly integrable (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale. We know that $M_{t \wedge \rho}$ is a uniformly integrable martingale in the enlarged filtration (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) and ρ is a stopping time in this filtration. If τ is also a (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -stopping time, then so is $\rho \wedge \tau$. Hence, $\mathbb{E}M_{\rho \wedge \tau} = \mathbb{E}M_0$. \square

EXAMPLE 1. Let ρ be as in Williams' example. Let $0 < a < 1$, and $T_a = \inf\{t > 0 : B_t = a\}$. Then

$$\rho_a = \rho \wedge T_a, \quad 0 < a < 1,$$

is an increasing family of pseudo-stopping times.

REMARK 5. As a further comment about Proposition 4, we remark that pseudo-stopping times do not inherit all the “nice” properties of stopping times. As an example, a pseudo-stopping time of a given filtration does not remain, in general, a pseudo-stopping time in a larger filtration, whereas a stopping time does. Indeed, keep the same notation as in Section 2.3 and look at the pseudo-stopping

time ρ in the larger filtration (\mathcal{F}_t^σ) . Using the computations we have already done in Section 2.3 and the projections formula (see [4], page 186), we get

$$\mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t^\sigma] = \frac{1 - \max_{s \leq t \wedge T_1} B_s}{1 - B_{t \wedge T_1}^+},$$

which is not decreasing. In fact, any end of predictable set that avoids stopping times is not a pseudo-stopping time. We shall see it in the next subsection.

3.2. *A generalization of Williams' example.* To keep the discussion as simple as possible, we assume that we are working with an original filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) such that:

- All (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingales are continuous [e.g., (\mathcal{F}_t) is the Brownian filtration].
- Moreover, we consider L , the end of a (\mathcal{F}_t) predictable set, such that for every (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time T , $\mathbb{P}[L = T] = 0$.

Under these two conditions, the supermartingale $Z_t = P[L > t | \mathcal{F}_t]$ associated with L is a.s. continuous, and satisfies $Z_L = 1$. Then we let

$$\rho = \sup \left\{ t < L : Z_t = \inf_{u \leq L} Z_u \right\}.$$

The following holds:

PROPOSITION 5. (i) $I_L = \inf_{u \leq L} Z_u$ is uniformly distributed on $[0, 1]$; (see [21]).

(ii) The supermartingale $Z_t^\rho = P[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t]$ associated with ρ is given by

$$Z_t^\rho = \inf_{u \leq t} Z_u.$$

As a consequence, ρ is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time.

PROOF. (i) Let

$$T_b = \inf\{t, Z_t \leq b\}, \quad 0 < b < 1,$$

then

$$\mathbb{P}[I_L \leq b] = \mathbb{P}[T_b < L] = \mathbb{E}[Z_{T_b}] = b.$$

(ii) Note that, for every (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping time T , we have

$$\{T < \rho\} = \{T' < L\},$$

where

$$T' = \inf \left\{ t > T, Z_t \leq \inf_{s \leq T} Z_s \right\}.$$

Consequently, we have

$$\mathbb{E}[Z_T^\rho] = \mathbb{P}[T < \rho] = \mathbb{P}[T' < L] = \mathbb{E}[Z_{T'}] = \mathbb{E}\left[\inf_{u \leq T} Z_u\right],$$

which yields

$$\mathbb{E}[Z_T^\rho \mathbf{1}_{\{T < \infty\}}] = \mathbb{E}\left[\inf_{u \leq T} Z_u \mathbf{1}_{\{T < \infty\}}\right],$$

since (Z_u^ρ) and (Z_u) converge to 0 as $u \rightarrow \infty$. We now deduce the desired result from the optional section theorem. \square

In the literature about enlargements of filtrations ([9, 11, 21], etc.), a number of explicit computations of supermartingales associated to various L 's have been given. We shall use some of these computations to produce some examples of pseudo-stopping times, with the help of the proposition.

(1) First let us check again that we recover the example of Williams from the proposition. With the notation of the Introduction ($L = \sigma$), it is not hard to see that (see [19])

$$Z_t = 1 - B_{t \wedge T_1}^+$$

Hence,

$$\rho = \sup\{s < \sigma : B_s = S_s\}.$$

(2) Consider $(R_t)_{t \geq 0}$ a three-dimensional Bessel process, starting from zero, its filtration (\mathcal{F}_t) , and

$$L = L_1 = \sup\{t : R_t = 1\}.$$

Then

$$(3.1) \quad \rho = \sup\left\{t < L : R_t = \sup_{u \leq L} R_u\right\}$$

is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time. This follows from the fact that

$$Z_t^L = 1 \wedge \frac{1}{R_t},$$

hence, (3.1) is equivalent to

$$\rho = \sup\left\{t < L : Z_t^L = \inf_{u \leq L} Z_u^L\right\},$$

and from the above proposition,

$$Z_t^\rho = 1 \wedge \left(\frac{1}{\sup_{u \leq t} R_u}\right).$$

We can generalize further this example by noticing that, for $n > 2$, we have for $(R_t)_{t \geq 0}$ a BES(n), $Z_t^L = 1 \wedge (\frac{1}{R_t})^{n-2}$. More generally, let us consider a transient diffusion (X_t) . Let s be a scale function such that $s(-\infty) = 0$ and $s(x) > 0$. Let

$$L_a = \sup\{t; X_t = a\},$$

the last passage time at level a . We have (see [16])

$$Z_t^{L_a} = 1 \wedge \frac{s(X_t)}{s(a)}.$$

Thus,

$$\rho_a = \sup\left\{t < L_a : s(X_t) = \inf_{u \leq L_a} s(X_u)\right\}$$

is a pseudo-stopping time in the natural filtration of (X_t) . For example, consider the case of a Brownian motion with a negative drift:

$$X_t \equiv x + \mu t + \sigma B_t, \quad \mu < 0.$$

In this case, the scale function is

$$s(x) = \exp\left(-\frac{2\mu x}{\sigma^2}\right).$$

Hence,

$$\rho_a = \sup\left\{t < L_a : \mu t + \sigma B_t = \inf_{u \leq L_a} (\mu u + \sigma B_u)\right\}$$

is a pseudo-stopping time in the natural filtration of (B_t) .

- (3) Consider $(B_u)_{u \geq 0}$ a one-dimensional Brownian motion, (\mathcal{F}_t) its filtration, and

$$g_t = \sup\{s < t : B_s = 0\},$$

then

$$(3.2) \quad \rho_t = \sup\left\{s < g_t : \frac{|B_s|}{\sqrt{t-s}} = \sup_{u < g_t} \frac{|B_u|}{\sqrt{t-u}}\right\}$$

is a \mathcal{F}_t -pseudo-stopping time. Again, this follows from the fact that ρ_t is, in fact, defined from $g_t (= L)$, as in the framework preceding the proposition, since

$$Z_u^{g_t} \equiv \Phi\left(\frac{|B_u|}{\sqrt{t-u}}\right),$$

with $\Phi(x) = \mathbb{P}(|N| \geq x)$, where N is a standard Gaussian variable.

(4) We can reinterpret the previous example via a deterministic time-change. We remark that we can write

$$\frac{B_u}{\sqrt{1-u}} = Y_{\log(1/(1-u))},$$

where $(Y_s)_{s \geq 0}$ is an Ornstein–Uhlenbeck process satisfying

$$Y_s = \beta_s + \frac{1}{2} \int_0^s du Y_u.$$

We then deduce from Example 3 that

$$\rho' = \sup \left\{ s < L'_0 : |Y_s| = \sup_{u \leq L'_0} |Y_u| \right\}$$

is a (\mathcal{F}'_t) -pseudo-stopping time, where

$$L'_0 \equiv \log \left(\frac{1}{1-g_1} \right) = \sup \{s > 0, Y_s = 0\}$$

and (\mathcal{F}'_t) is the natural filtration of (Y_t) .

As for Williams' example, none of these pseudo-stopping times remains a pseudo-stopping time in the larger filtration (\mathcal{F}^L_t) . This is a consequence of a result of Azéma [1].

PROPOSITION 6. *Let L be the end of a predictable set such that $\mathbb{P}[L = T] = 0$. Then L is not a pseudo-stopping time.*

PROOF. From a result of Azéma [1], as $A_t^L = a_t^L$ is continuous, the law of A_∞^L is the exponential law of parameter 1, while for pseudo-stopping times, the law of A_∞^L is δ_1 , the Dirac mass at one. Hence, L cannot be a pseudo-stopping time. \square

3.3. Further examples. In this section we shall link pseudo-stopping times with other random times that appear in the literature. In particular, we will see that the random times allowing the (H) hypothesis (see [7]) to hold are special cases of pseudo-stopping times.

3.3.1. The hypothesis (H). First, we give the following obvious result:

PROPOSITION 7. *If ρ is a random time that is independent from \mathcal{F}_∞ , then it is a pseudo-stopping time.*

EXAMPLE 2. If ρ is an exponential time of parameter λ that is independent from \mathcal{F}_∞ , then it is a pseudo-stopping time.

EXAMPLE 3. Another example is given by what Williams [20] calls a “silly” time:

$$\rho = \frac{1}{1 + |B_2 - B_1|},$$

which is independent from \mathcal{F}_1 .

Now suppose that our probability space supports a uniform random variable Θ on $(0, 1)$ that is independent of the sigma field \mathcal{F}_∞ . Assume we are given an (\mathcal{F}_t) -adapted increasing and continuous process satisfying $A_0 = 0$ and $A_\infty = 1$. Let us consider the random time defined by

$$\rho = \inf\{t; A_t > \Theta\}.$$

It is not difficult to check that

$$(3.3) \quad \mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t] = 1 - A_t.$$

Hence, we can state the following:

PROPOSITION 8. *Let (A_t) be a nonincreasing, continuous and adapted process such that*

$$A_0 = 1,$$

$$A_\infty = 0.$$

Then, if our probability space supports a uniform random variable Θ on $(0, 1)$ that is independent of the sigma field \mathcal{F}_∞ , there always exists a pseudo-stopping time ρ such that $Z_t^\rho = A_t$, for $t \geq 0$.

We have thus constructed a pseudo-stopping time associated with a given continuous process (A_t) . This construction is well known, see [8] for more details and references.

But the pseudo-stopping times that are constructed in the way of (3.3) enjoy the following noticeable property [5, 8]:

$$(3.4) \quad \mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t] = \mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_\infty].$$

Random times with this property are often used in the literature on default modeling (see [7, 8]) and were studied in [3, 5]. There are several equivalent formulations for (3.4). Before we mention them, let us notice that any random time satisfying (3.4) is a pseudo-stopping time. In fact, we have a stronger result: every (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale is an (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -martingale (see [5]). Thus, the fourth statement in Theorem 1 is satisfied.

Now let us consider the (H) hypothesis in our framework of progressive enlargement with a random time ρ : every (\mathcal{F}_t) -square integrable martingale is an (\mathcal{F}_t^ρ) -square integrable martingale. This hypothesis was studied, in a general framework, by Dellacherie and Meyer [5] and Brémaud and Yor [3]. It is equivalent to one of the following hypothesis (see [7] for more references):

- (1) $\forall t$, the σ -algebras \mathcal{F}_∞ and \mathcal{F}_t^ρ are conditionally independent given \mathcal{F}_t .
- (2) For all bounded \mathcal{F}_∞ -measurable random variables \mathbf{F} and all bounded \mathcal{F}_t^ρ -measurable random variables \mathbf{G}_t , we have

$$\mathbb{E}[\mathbf{F}\mathbf{G}_t|\mathcal{F}_t] = \mathbb{E}[\mathbf{F}|\mathcal{F}_t]\mathbb{E}[\mathbf{G}_t|\mathcal{F}_t].$$

- (3) For all bounded \mathcal{F}_t^ρ -measurable random variables \mathbf{G}_t ,

$$\mathbb{E}[\mathbf{G}_t|\mathcal{F}_\infty] = \mathbb{E}[\mathbf{G}_t|\mathcal{F}_t].$$

- (4) For all bounded \mathcal{F}_∞ -measurable random variables \mathbf{F} ,

$$\mathbb{E}[\mathbf{F}|\mathcal{F}_t^\rho] = \mathbb{E}[\mathbf{F}|\mathcal{F}_t].$$

- (5) For all $s \leq t$,

$$\mathbb{P}[\rho \leq s|\mathcal{F}_t] = \mathbb{P}[\rho \leq s|\mathcal{F}_\infty].$$

Thus, pseudo-stopping times may be considered as a generalized or a weakened form of the (H) hypothesis, since then local martingales in the initial filtration remain local martingales in the enlarged one up to time ρ . Moreover, for most of the examples we have considered, such as Williams', (3.4) is not satisfied.

3.3.2. *Randomized stopping times and Föllmer measures.* Now we give a relation between pseudo-stopping times and randomized stopping times as presented in [15]. First we give some definitions. We always consider a given probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, (\mathcal{F}_t)_{t \geq 0}, \mathbb{P})$.

DEFINITION 3. A randomized random variable on $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ is a probability measure μ on $([0, \infty] \times \Omega, \mathcal{B}([0, \infty]) \otimes \mathcal{F})$ such that its projection on Ω is equal to \mathbb{P} .

For example, let ρ be a random time; then μ_ρ defined by

$$\mu_\rho(X) = \mathbb{E}[X_\rho],$$

for all bounded measurable processes (X_t) , is a randomized random variable.

We know from a result of Föllmer (see [6]) that there exists an increasing càdlàg process (A_t) such that $A_0 = 0$ and

$$\mu(X) = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^\infty X_s dA_s\right],$$

for all nonnegative process (X_t) . The fact that the projection on Ω is equal to \mathbb{P} means that $A_\infty = 1$, a.s.

DEFINITION 4. If the process (A_t) associated with μ on $([0, \infty] \times \Omega, \mathcal{B}([0, \infty]) \otimes \mathcal{F})$ is adapted, then we say that μ is a randomized stopping time.

By considering the new space $\overline{\Omega} = [0, 1] \times \Omega$ endowed with the σ -fields $\overline{\mathcal{F}} = \mathcal{B}([0, 1]) \otimes \mathcal{F}$, $\overline{\mathcal{F}}_t = \mathcal{B}([0, 1]) \otimes \mathcal{F}_t$ (augmented in the usual way) and the probability measure $\overline{\mathbb{P}} = \lambda \otimes \mathbb{P}$, it is possible to show that, for every randomized stopping time μ , there exists a stopping time ρ in this new filtered space such that

$$\mu(X) = \overline{\mathbb{E}}[X_\rho],$$

for all bounded measurable process (X_t) on $([0, \infty] \times \Omega, \mathcal{B}([0, \infty]) \otimes \mathcal{F})$. We take the convention that a random variable H on Ω can be considered as the random variable on $\overline{\Omega}: (u, \omega) \rightarrow H(\omega)$. Conversely, to every stopping time of $\overline{\mathcal{F}}_t$, there corresponds a randomized stopping time.

This construction is always carried on the enlarged space $\overline{\Omega}$. The third statement in Theorem 1 allows us to use pseudo-stopping times to construct randomized stopping times without enlarging the initial space.

PROPOSITION 9. *Let ρ be a pseudo-stopping time and A_t^ρ the (\mathcal{F}_t) dual optional projection of the process $\mathbf{1}_{\{\rho \leq t\}}$. Then the Föllmer measure μ associated with A_t^ρ is a randomized stopping time. Moreover, for every bounded or non-negative (\mathcal{F}_t) optional process (X_t)*

$$\mu(X) = \mathbb{E}[X_\rho].$$

3.3.3. *Randomized stopping times and families of stopping times.*

PROPOSITION 10. *Let $(T_u)_{u \geq 0}$ be a family of (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times and S a positive random variable, independent of (\mathcal{F}_∞) . Then*

$$\rho = T_S$$

is a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time.

PROOF. Let (M_t) be a bounded (\mathcal{F}_t) -martingale;

$$\mathbb{E}[M_{T_S}] = \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{E}[M_{T_S} | S]] = \mathbb{E}[M_0]. \quad \square$$

The previous proposition shows that any independently time changed family of stopping times is a pseudo-stopping time. In fact, this proposition admits a converse: every pseudo-stopping time is, in law, a time changed family of stopping times. More precisely:

PROPOSITION 11. *Let ρ be a (\mathcal{F}_t) -pseudo-stopping time, which avoids all (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times, and $Z_t = \mathbb{P}[\rho > t | \mathcal{F}_t]$ its associated supermartingale. Set*

$$\alpha_u \equiv \inf\{t \geq 0, (1 - Z_t) > u\}, \quad 0 \leq u \leq 1,$$

the right-continuous generalized inverse of the increasing continuous process $(1 - Z_t)$. Then $(\alpha_u)_{0 \leq u \leq 1}$ is a family of (\mathcal{F}_t) -stopping times and

$$\rho \stackrel{\text{law}}{=} \alpha_U,$$

where U is a random variable with uniform law, independent of \mathcal{F}_∞ .

PROOF. The fact α_u is a stopping time, for all u , follows from

$$\{\alpha_u \leq t\} = \{u \leq (1 - Z_t)\} \quad \forall t \geq 0.$$

From (2.8), we also have

$$\mathbb{E}[g(\rho)] = \mathbb{E}\left[\int_0^1 g(\alpha_u) du\right],$$

for any bounded Borel function g . This establishes: $\rho \stackrel{\text{law}}{=} \alpha_U$. \square

4. A discrete analogue: the coin-tossing case. Let $(X_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be the standard random walk with Bernoulli increments. In his paper [13], Le Gall proved an analogue of Williams' path decomposition for (X_n) . To fix ideas, we shall consider the canonical space $\Omega = \mathbb{Z}^{\mathbb{N}}$ endowed with the product σ -field. (X_n) will be the coordinate process and $(\mathbb{P}_x)_{x \in \mathbb{Z}}$ the family of probability laws which make (X_n) the standard random walk with Bernoulli increments. We also denote by $(\mathbb{Q}_x)_{x \in \mathbb{N}}$ the unique family of probability measures such that (X_n, \mathbb{Q}_x) is a Markov chain with transition probabilities:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{Q}_0[X_1 = 1] &= 1 \\ \text{if } x \geq 1 \quad \mathbb{Q}_x[X_1 = x + 1] &= \frac{1}{2} \left(1 + \frac{1}{x}\right), \\ \mathbb{Q}_x[X_1 = x - 1] &= \frac{1}{2} \left(1 - \frac{1}{x}\right). \end{aligned}$$

Now let $p \geq 1$ and define

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_p &= \inf\{k; X_k = p\}, \\ \eta &= \sup\{k \leq \sigma_p : X_k = 0\}, \\ m &= \sup\{X_k, k \leq \eta\}, \\ \gamma &= \inf\{k \geq 0; X_k = m\}. \end{aligned}$$

Then under \mathbb{P}_0 the following hold:

- (1) The processes $(X_k)_{0 \leq k \leq \eta}$ and $(X_{\eta+k})_{0 \leq k \leq \sigma_p - \eta}$ are independent, with the second being distributed as $(X_k)_{0 \leq k \leq \sigma_p}$ under \mathbb{Q}_0 ;
- (2) m is uniformly distributed on $\{0, 1, \dots, p - 1\}$;
- (3) Conditionally on $\{m = j\}$, the processes $(X_k)_{0 \leq k \leq \gamma}$ and $(X_{\eta-k})_{0 \leq k \leq \eta - \gamma}$ are independent, the first being distributed as $(X_k)_{0 \leq k \leq \sigma_j}$ under \mathbb{P}_0 , and the second as $(X_k)_{0 \leq k \leq \sigma_{j+1} - 1}$ under \mathbb{Q}_0 .

PROPOSITION 12. *If $(M_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ is a bounded martingale, then*

$$\mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma] = \mathbb{E}_0[M_0],$$

and, thus, γ is a pseudo-stopping time.

PROOF. We have

$$M_n = f_n(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n),$$

for a sequence of bounded measurable functions f_n depending only on n variables. Thus, for any bounded function f ,

$$\mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma f(m)] = \mathbb{E}_0[\mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma | m] f(m)].$$

But

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma | m = j] &= \mathbb{E}_0[f_{\sigma_j}(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_{\sigma_j})] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_0[M_{\sigma_j}] = \mathbb{E}_0[M_0]. \end{aligned}$$

Thus, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma f(m)] &= \mathbb{E}_0[M_\gamma] \mathbb{E}_0[f(m)] \\ &= \mathbb{E}_0[M_\infty] \mathbb{E}_0[f(m)]. \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

REMARK 6. Again (as in the continuous time setting), note that, in general,

$$\mathbb{E}_0[M_\infty | \mathcal{F}_\gamma] \neq M_\gamma.$$

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