

## Biggins' martingale convergence for branching Lévy processes\*

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### Abstract

A branching Lévy process can be seen as the continuous-time version of a branching random walk. It describes a particle system on the real line in which particles move and reproduce independently in a Poissonian manner. Just as for Lévy processes, the law of a branching Lévy process is determined by its characteristic triplet  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$ , where the branching Lévy measure  $\Lambda$  describes the intensity of the Poisson point process of births and jumps. We establish a version of Biggins' theorem in this framework, that is we provide necessary and sufficient conditions in terms of the characteristic triplet  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$  for additive martingales to have a non-degenerate limit.

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## 1 Introduction and main result

We start by introducing some notation. We denote by  $\mathbf{x} = (x_n)_{n \geq 1}$  a generic non-increasing sequence in  $[-\infty, \infty)$  with  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} x_n = -\infty$ . We view  $\mathbf{x}$  as a ranked sequence of positions of particles in  $\mathbb{R}$ , with the convention that possible particles located at  $-\infty$  should be thought of as non-existing (so particles never accumulate in  $\mathbb{R}$  and the number of particles may be finite or infinite). We thus often identify  $\mathbf{x}$  with a locally finite point measure on  $\mathbb{R}$ ,  $\sum \delta_{x_n}$ , where, by convention, the possible atoms at  $-\infty$  are discarded in this sum. We write  $\mathcal{P}$  for the space of such sequences or point measures.

Then let  $(Z_n)_{n \geq 0}$  be a branching random walk with reproduction law  $\pi$ , where  $\pi$  is some probability measure on  $\mathcal{P}$ . In words, this process starts at generation 0 with a single particle at 0 and the law of  $Z_1$  is given by  $\pi$ . For every particle at generation  $n \geq 1$ , say at position  $x \in \mathbb{R}$ , the sequence of positions of the children of that particle is given by  $x + Y$ , where  $Y$  has the law  $\pi$ , and to different particles correspond independent copies of  $Y$  with law  $\pi$ .

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A classical assumption made to ensure the well-definition of  $(Z_n)$ , i.e. that for all  $n \in \mathbb{N}$  there are only finitely many particles in the positive half-line, is that there exists  $\theta \geq 0$  such that

$$m(\theta) := \int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \pi(d\mathbf{x}) = \mathbb{E}(\langle Z_1, e_\theta \rangle) < \infty \tag{1.1}$$

where we denote by  $\langle \mathbf{x}, g \rangle = \sum_{n \geq 1} g(x_n)$  for all measurable nonnegative functions  $g$ , and  $e_\theta : x \in \mathbb{R} \mapsto e^{\theta x}$ . In particular, we have  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle = \sum e^{\theta x_n}$ . It is common knowledge –and a simple application of the branching property– that  $\mathbb{E}(\langle Z_n, e_\theta \rangle) = m(\theta)^n$  and that the process

$$W_n := m(\theta)^{-n} \langle Z_n, e_\theta \rangle, \quad n \geq 0$$

is a nonnegative martingale. The question of whether its terminal value  $W_\infty$  is non-degenerate has a fundamental importance and was solved by Biggins [6] under the additional assumption that

$$m'(\theta) := \int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum x_j e^{\theta x_j} \pi(d\mathbf{x}) \quad \text{exists and is finite.} \tag{1.2}$$

Note that by (1.1),  $m$  can be defined, for any  $z \in \mathbb{C}$  with  $\Re z = \theta$  by

$$m(z) := \int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_z \rangle \pi(d\mathbf{x}) = \mathbb{E}(\langle Z_1, e_z \rangle),$$

in which case  $m'(\theta)$  is the complex derivative of the function  $m$  at point  $\theta$ , justifying the notation in (1.2).

Specifically, [6, Lemma 5] states that  $\mathbb{E}(W_\infty) = 1$ , or equivalently that  $(W_n)_{n \geq 0}$  is uniformly integrable, if and only if

$$\theta m'(\theta)/m(\theta) < \log m(\theta) \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \log^+ \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \pi(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty. \tag{1.3}$$

If (1.3) does not hold, then  $W_\infty = 0$  a.s. This result has later been improved by Alsmeyer and Iksanov [1], who obtained a necessary and sufficient condition for the uniform integrability of  $(W_n)_{n \geq 0}$  without the additional integrability condition (1.2).

Recall that, by log-convexity of the function  $m$ , the first inequality of (1.3) entails that  $m(0) = \mathbb{E}(\langle Z_1, 1 \rangle) > 1$ , i.e. the Galton-Watson process  $(\langle Z_n, 1 \rangle)_{n \geq 0}$  is supercritical. In particular, the branching random walk  $Z$  survives with positive probability. Biggins [6] further pointed out that when the martingale  $(W_n)_{n \geq 0}$  is uniformly integrable, the event  $\{W_\infty > 0\}$  actually coincides a.s. with the non-extinction event of the branching random walk.

The purpose of this work is to present a version of Biggins' martingale convergence theorem for branching Lévy processes, a family of branching processes in continuous time that was recently introduced in [5]. Branching Lévy processes bear the same relation to branching random walks as Lévy processes do to random walks: a branching Lévy process  $(Z_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is a point-measure valued process such that for every  $r > 0$ , its discrete-time skeleton  $(Z_{nr})_{n \geq 0}$  is a branching random walk. This is a natural extension of the notion of continuous-time branching random walks<sup>1</sup> as considered by Uchiyama [17], or the family of branching Lévy processes considered by Kyprianou [11]; another subclass also appeared in the framework of so-called compensated-fragmentation processes, see [3].

The dynamics of a branching Lévy process can be described informally as follows. The process starts at time 0 with a unique particle located at the origin. As time passes, this particle moves according to a certain Lévy process, while making children around

<sup>1</sup>Which can be thought of as branching compound Poisson processes.

its position in a Poissonian fashion. Each of the newborn particles immediately starts an independent copy of this branching Lévy process from its current position. We stress that a jump of a particle may be correlated with its offspring born at the same time.

The law of a branching Lévy process  $(Z_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is characterized by a triplet  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$ , where  $\sigma^2 \geq 0$ ,  $a \in \mathbb{R}$  and  $\Lambda$  is a sigma-finite measure on  $\mathcal{P}$  without atom at  $\{(0, -\infty, \dots)\}$ , which satisfies

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} (1 \wedge x_1^2) \Lambda(dx) < \infty. \tag{1.4}$$

Furthermore, we need another integrability condition for  $\Lambda$  that depends on a parameter  $\theta \geq 0$ ; which is henceforth fixed. Specifically, we request

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} (\mathbf{1}_{\{x_1 > 1\}} e^{\theta x_1} + \sum_{k \geq 2} e^{\theta x_k}) \Lambda(dx) < \infty. \tag{1.5}$$

The term  $\sigma^2$  is the Brownian variance coefficient of the trajectory of a particle,  $a$  is the drift term, and the branching Lévy measure  $\Lambda$  encodes both the distribution of the jumps of particles, and the branching rate and distribution of their children. The assumption (1.5) guarantees the well-definition and the absence of local explosion in the branching Lévy process.

The integrability conditions (1.4) and (1.5) enable us to define for every  $z \in \mathbb{C}$  with  $\Re z = \theta$

$$\kappa(z) := \frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 z^2 + az + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \left( e^{zx_1} - 1 - zx_1 \mathbf{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}} + \sum_{k \geq 2} e^{zx_k} \right) \Lambda(dx). \tag{1.6}$$

We call  $\kappa$  the cumulant generating function of  $Z_1$ ; to justify the terminology, recall from Theorem 1.1(ii) in [5] that for all  $t \geq 0$ , we have

$$\mathbb{E}(\langle Z_t, e_z \rangle) = \exp(t\kappa(z)).$$

In particular, in terms of the (skeleton) branching random walk  $(Z_n)_{n \geq 0}$  obtained by sampling  $Z$  at integer times, we have the identities

$$m(\theta) = \exp(\kappa(\theta)) \quad \text{and} \quad m'(\theta) = \kappa'(\theta) \exp(\kappa(\theta)),$$

where  $\pi$  is the law of  $Z_1$ ,  $m(\theta)$  and  $m'(\theta)$  are defined in (1.1) and (1.2), and

$$\kappa'(\theta) = \sigma^2 \theta + a + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \left( x_1 (e^{\theta x_1} - \mathbf{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}}) + \sum_{k \geq 2} x_k e^{\theta x_k} \right) \Lambda(dx). \tag{1.7}$$

The well-definition and finiteness of the above integral is equivalent to the well-definition and finiteness of  $m'(\theta)$ . Throughout the rest of the article, we assume  $\kappa'(\theta)$  in (1.7) to be well-defined and finite.

We are now able to state our version of Biggins' martingale convergence theorem in branching Lévy processes settings.

**Theorem 1.1.** *Let  $(Z_t)_{t \geq 0}$  be a branching Lévy process with characteristic triplet  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$ . The martingale  $W$  given by*

$$W_t := \exp(-t\kappa(\theta)) \langle Z_t, e_\theta \rangle \quad \text{for all } t \geq 0,$$

*is uniformly integrable if and only if*

$$\theta \kappa'(\theta) < \kappa(\theta) \tag{1.8}$$

and

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_{\theta} \rangle (\log \langle \mathbf{x}, e_{\theta} \rangle - 1)^+ \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty. \tag{1.9}$$

Otherwise, the terminal value  $W_{\infty}$  equals 0 a.s.

**Remark 1.2.** When the branching Lévy measure  $\Lambda$  is finite, the integrability condition (1.9) is equivalent to the analog of (1.3), namely

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_{\theta} \rangle \log^+ \langle \mathbf{x}, e_{\theta} \rangle \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty.$$

However, when  $\Lambda$  is an infinite measure, the inequality above is a strictly stronger requirement than (1.9).

Of course, the continuous time martingale  $W$  is uniformly integrable if and only if this is the case for its discrete time skeleton  $(W_n)_{n \geq 0}$ , and one might expect that our statement should readily be reduced to Biggins' theorem. Condition (1.8) should certainly not come as a surprise, since it merely rephrases the first inequality in (1.3). Thus everything boils down to verifying that Condition (1.9) is equivalent to the  $L \log^+ L$  integrability condition in (1.3).

However, the latter does not seem to have a straightforward proof (at least when  $\Lambda$  is infinite), the difficulty stems from the fact that there is no simple expression for the law  $\pi$  of  $Z_1$  in terms of the characteristics  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$ . Specifically, we cannot evaluate directly  $\mathbb{E}(\langle Z_1, e_{\theta} \rangle \log^+ \langle Z_1, e_{\theta} \rangle)$ ; only expectations of linear functionals of  $Z_1$  can be computed explicitly in terms of the characteristics of the branching Lévy process. We shall thus rather establish Theorem 1.1 by an adaptation of the arguments of Lyons [14] for proving Biggins' martingale convergence for branching random walks, using a version of the celebrated spinal decomposition, and properties of Poisson random measures.

**Remark 1.3.** It is well-known that for branching random walks, the law of the terminal value  $W_{\infty}$  is a fix point of a smoothing transform (see e.g. Liu [13]), more precisely

$$W_{\infty} \stackrel{(d)}{=} \sum_{j \in \mathbb{N}} e^{\theta x_j - t\kappa(\theta)} W_{\infty}^{(j)}, \tag{1.10}$$

where  $\mathbf{x} = (x_n)$  is a random variable in  $\mathcal{P}$  with same law as  $Z_1$ , and  $(W_{\infty}^{(j)})$  are i.i.d. copies of  $W_{\infty}$  independent of  $\mathbf{x}$ . As observed above, the law of  $Z_1$  cannot be obtained as a simple expression in terms of the characteristic of a branching Lévy process. However, using classical approximation techniques, one can still get a functional equation for the Laplace transform of  $W_{\infty}$ . More precisely, setting  $w(y) = \mathbb{E}(\exp(e^{-\theta y} W_{\infty}))$ , (1.10) yields

$$\forall y \in \mathbb{R}, \quad w(y) = \mathbb{E} \left( \prod_{j \in \mathbb{N}} w(y - x_j + tc_{\theta}) \right),$$

with  $\mathbf{x}$  sampled again with same law as  $Z_1$  and  $c_{\theta} = \kappa(\theta)/\theta$ . Using approximation by branching Lévy processes with finite birth intensity, one can then check that  $w$  is a solution of the equation

$$\frac{1}{2} \sigma^2 w''(y) + (c_{\theta} - a)w'(y) + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \prod_{j \in \mathbb{N}} w(y - x_j) - w(y) + x_1 \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}} w'(y) \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) = 0,$$

i.e. a traveling wave solution of a generalized growth-fragmentation equation. We refer to Berestycki, Harris and Kyprianou [2] for a detailed study in the framework of homogeneous fragmentations. In particular, observe that the law of  $W_{\infty}$  does not depend on the value of characteristic  $a$  of the branching Lévy process.

In the same vein, recall from Theorem 1 of Biggins [7] that for  $p \in (1, 2]$ , the martingale  $W$  converges in  $p$ -th mean whenever

$$\mathbb{E}(W_1^p) < \infty \quad \text{and} \quad \kappa(p\theta) < p\kappa(\theta).$$

The same approach also enables us to make this criterion explicit in terms of the branching Lévy measure  $\Lambda$ .

**Proposition 1.4.** *Let  $p \in (1, 2]$ . If  $\kappa(p\theta) < p\kappa(\theta)$ ,*

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle^p \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > 2\}} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty, \tag{1.11}$$

and  $\kappa(q\theta) < \infty$  for some  $q > p$ , then the martingale  $W$  is bounded in  $L^p$ .

**Remark 1.5.** When the branching Lévy measure  $\Lambda$  is finite, (1.11) is equivalent to the simpler  $\int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle^p \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty$ . However, when  $\Lambda$  is infinite, one always has that<sup>2</sup>  $\Lambda(1/2 \leq \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2) = \infty$ , which explains the role of the indicator function in (1.11). The additional assumption that  $\kappa(q\theta) < \infty$  for some  $q > p$  is also needed in our proof to bound the contribution of the infinitely many birth events with  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2$ .

We do not address here the issue of uniform convergence in the variable  $\theta$ ; see Biggins [7] for branching random walks, and further Theorem 2.3 in Dadoun [8] in the setting of compensated fragmentations. However, as observed in [7], Proposition 1.4 is a key step in this direction.

The two statements of this Introduction are established in the next section.

## 2 Proofs

In this section, we start by summarizing the construction of the branching Lévy process with characteristics  $(\sigma^2, a, \Lambda)$  as a particle system, referring to Sections 4 and 5 in [5] for a detailed account. We shall then present a version of the spinal decomposition tailored for the purpose of this proof, and finally adapt the approach of Lyons [14] to establish Theorem 1.1 and Proposition 1.4.

We first consider a Poisson point process  $\mathcal{N}(dt, d\mathbf{x})$  on  $[0, \infty) \times \mathcal{P}$  with intensity  $dt \otimes \Lambda(d\mathbf{x})$ , and an independent Brownian motion  $(B_t)_{t \geq 0}$ . Thanks to the assumptions (1.4) and (1.5), we can define

$$\xi_t := \sigma B_t + at + \int_{[0,t] \times \mathcal{P}} x_1 \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}} \mathcal{N}^{(c)}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) + \int_{[0,t] \times \mathcal{P}} x_1 \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_1| \geq 1\}} \mathcal{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x})$$

for every  $t \geq 0$ , where the first Poissonian integral is taken in the compensated sense; see e.g. Section 12.1 in Last and Penrose [12]. So  $(\xi_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is a Lévy process with characteristic exponent  $\Phi$  given by the Lévy-Khintchin formula

$$\Phi(r) := -\frac{\sigma^2}{2} r^2 + iar + \int_{\mathcal{P}} (e^{irx_1} - 1 - irx_1 \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}}) \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}), \quad r \in \mathbb{R},$$

in the sense that  $\mathbb{E}(\exp(ir\xi_t)) = \exp(t\Phi(r))$ .

One should view  $(\xi_t)_{t \geq 0}$  as describing the trajectory of the initial particle in the process (the Eve particle in the terminology of [4]). Further, for each atom of  $\mathcal{N}$ , say  $(t, \mathbf{x})$ , we view  $t$  as the time at which the Eve particle jumps from position  $\xi_{t-}$  to  $\xi_t = \xi_{t-} + x_1$ , while begetting a sequence of children located at  $\xi_{t-} + x_2, \xi_{t-} + x_3, \dots$ . Then, using independent copies of  $(\mathcal{N}, B)$ , we let in turn each newborn particle evolve

<sup>2</sup>Indeed, for all  $\epsilon > 0$ , (1.4) implies that  $\Lambda(|x_1| > \epsilon) < \infty$  and (1.5) that  $\Lambda(\sum_{j=2}^\infty e^{\theta x_j} > \epsilon) < \infty$ , thus  $\Lambda(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \notin [1 - \delta, 1 + \delta]) < \infty$  for all  $\delta > 0$ .

(starting from its own birth time and location) and give birth to its own progeny just as the Eve particle, and so on, and so forth. The branching Lévy process  $Z = (Z_t)_{t \geq 0}$  is then obtained by letting  $Z_t$  denote the random point measure whose atoms are given by the positions of the particles in the system at time  $t$ .

We then introduce the tilted branching Lévy measure  $\widehat{\Lambda}$  on  $\mathcal{P}$ , defined by

$$\widehat{\Lambda}(d\mathbf{x}) := \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}),$$

and point first at the following elementary fact:

**Lemma 2.1.** *If (1.9) is fulfilled, then it holds for every  $c > 0$  that*

$$\int_0^\infty \widehat{\Lambda}(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{ct} + 1) dt < \infty;$$

whereas if (1.9) fails, then it holds for every  $c > 0$  and  $s > 0$  that

$$\int_s^\infty \widehat{\Lambda}(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{ct}) dt = \infty.$$

*Proof.* Note first the identities

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^\infty \widehat{\Lambda}(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^t + 1) dt &= \int_0^\infty dt \int_{\mathcal{P}} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^t + 1\}} \\ &= \int_{\mathcal{P}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle (\log \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle - 1)^+ \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}). \end{aligned}$$

Since (1.4) and (1.5) readily entail  $\widehat{\Lambda}(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > b) < \infty$  for every  $b > 1$ , the first claim follows. The proof for the second is similar.  $\square$

We next prepare some material for the spinal decomposition. We write  $\mathbb{P}$  for the law of  $(Z_t)_{t \geq 0}$ ,  $(\mathcal{F}_t)_{t \geq 0}$  for its natural filtration, and use the martingale  $W = (W_t)_{t \geq 0}$  to introduce the tilted probability measure

$$\widehat{\mathbb{P}}_{|\mathcal{F}_t} = W_t \cdot \mathbb{P}_{|\mathcal{F}_t}.$$

We also set

$$\widehat{a} := a + \theta \sigma^2 + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \left( \sum_{k \geq 1} x_k e^{\theta x_k} \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_k| < 1\}} - x_1 \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_1| < 1\}} \right) \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}),$$

where (1.4) and (1.5) ensure that the integral above is well-defined and finite.

Then let  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}(dt, d\mathbf{x})$  be a Poisson point process on  $[0, \infty) \times \mathcal{P}$  with intensity  $dt \otimes \widehat{\Lambda}(d\mathbf{x})$ , and recall that  $(B_t)_{t \geq 0}$  denotes an independent Brownian motion. For each atom of  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$ , say  $(t, \mathbf{x})$ , we sample independently of the other atoms an index  $n \geq 1$  with probability proportional to  $e^{\theta x_n}$  and denote it by  $*$ , omitting the dependence in  $(t, \mathbf{x})$  in the notation for the sake of simplicity. In particular  $\mathbb{P}(* = n | \widehat{\mathcal{N}}) = e^{\theta x_n} / \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle$ . Next note, again thanks to (1.4) and (1.5), that

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum_{n \geq 1} e^{\theta x_n} (1 \wedge x_n^2) \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) < \infty.$$

This enables us to define the (compensated) Poissonian integrals below and set

$$\widehat{\xi}_t := \sigma B_t + \widehat{a}t + \int_{[0,t] \times \mathcal{P}} x_* \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_*| < 1\}} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}^{(c)}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) + \int_{[0,t] \times \mathcal{P}} x_* \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_*| \geq 1\}} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x})$$

for  $t \geq 0$ . Plainly,  $\widehat{\xi}$  is another Lévy process, which is referred to as the spine.

**Lemma 2.2.** *The characteristic exponent of  $\widehat{\xi}$  is given by*

$$\widehat{\Phi}(r) := \kappa(\theta + ir) - \kappa(\theta), \quad r \in \mathbb{R},$$

and it holds that

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} t^{-1} \widehat{\xi}_t = \kappa'(\theta) \quad \text{a.s.}$$

*Proof.* By Poissonian calculus, we get  $\mathbb{E} \left( \exp(ir \widehat{\xi}_t) \right) = \exp(t \widehat{\Phi}(r))$  with

$$\widehat{\Phi}(r) = -\frac{\sigma^2}{2} r^2 + i \widehat{a} r + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum_{n \geq 1} e^{\theta x_n} (e^{ir x_n} - 1 - ir x_n \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_n| < 1\}}) \Lambda(\mathrm{d}\mathbf{x})$$

and the first claim follows readily by substitution. Further, the random variable  $\widehat{\xi}_1$  is integrable with expectation

$$\widehat{a} + \int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} x_n e^{\theta x_n} \mathbb{1}_{\{|x_n| \geq 1\}} \Lambda(\mathrm{d}\mathbf{x}).$$

Again after substitution, we find  $\mathbb{E}(\widehat{\xi}_1) = \kappa'(\theta)$ , and we conclude applying the law of large numbers for Lévy processes that  $\widehat{\xi}_t \sim \kappa'(\theta)t$  as  $t \rightarrow \infty$ , a.s.  $\square$

We can now provide a description of the spinal decomposition for the branching Lévy process, which is tailored for our purpose. In this direction, we construct a particle system much in the same way as we did for branching Lévy processes, except that we use the Poisson point process  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  instead of  $\mathcal{N}$ , and the trajectory  $\widehat{\xi}$  to define the so-called Eve particle and its offspring. Specifically, for each atom, say  $(t, \mathbf{x})$ , of  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$ , we view  $t$  as the time when the spine jumps to position  $\widehat{\xi}_{t-} + x_*$ , while giving birth to a sequence of children located at  $\widehat{\xi}_{t-} + x_j$  for all  $j \neq *$ . Each of the newborn particles immediately starts an independent copy of the original branching Lévy process  $Z$  from its current position. Writing  $\widehat{Z}_t$  for the random point measure whose atoms are given by the positions of the particles in the system at time  $t$ , we are now able to state a simple version of the spine decomposition, and refer to Theorem 5.2 of Shi and Watson [16] for a more detailed version in the setting of compensated fragmentations.

**Lemma 2.3.** *The process  $\widehat{Z} = (\widehat{Z}_t)_{t \geq 0}$  above has the same law as  $Z$  under  $\widehat{\mathbb{P}}$ .*

For the reader's convenience, we sketch a proof of this statement.

*Proof.* We assume in a first time that  $Z$  has a finite birth intensity, in the sense that

$$\int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum_{n \geq 2} \mathbb{1}_{\{x_n > -\infty\}} \Lambda(\mathrm{d}\mathbf{x}) < \infty. \tag{2.1}$$

In this case, the branching Lévy process is of the type considered by Kyprianou [11], it can be viewed as a classical Uchiyama-type branching random walk to which independent spatial displacements are superposed. Specifically, each particle moves according to an independent Lévy process until an exponential time of parameter  $\Lambda(x_1 = -\infty \text{ or } x_2 > -\infty)$  at which a death or reproduction event occurs. Lemma 2.3 is then a simple instance of the spinal decomposition for branching Markov processes, that can be found in [10] (see also [15, Section 3] for an overview of similar results).

To treat the general case, we use the observation made in [5, Section 5] that any branching Lévy process can be constructed as the increasing limit of branching Lévy processes with finite birth intensity. Specifically, for any  $n \in \mathbb{N}$  and  $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{P}$ , we set

$$\pi_n(\mathbf{x}) = (x_j - \infty \mathbb{1}_{\{x_j < -n\}}, j \in \mathbb{N}),$$

that is,  $\pi_n(\mathbf{x})$  is obtained from  $\mathbf{x}$  by deleting every particle located in  $(-\infty, -n)$ . We denote by  $Z^{(n)}$  the branching Lévy process obtained from  $Z$  using the image of the point measure  $\mathcal{N}$  by  $(t, \mathbf{x}) \mapsto (t, \pi_n(\mathbf{x}))$ . In words,  $Z^{(n)}$  is obtained from  $Z$  by killing each particle (of course together with its own descent) at the time it makes a jump smaller than  $-n$ . We write  $\kappa^{(n)}$  for the cumulant generating function of  $Z^{(n)}$  and  $W^{(n)}$  for the additive martingale

$$W_t^{(n)} = \exp(-t\kappa^{(n)}(\theta)) \langle Z_t^{(n)}, e_\theta \rangle.$$

We construct  $\widehat{Z}^{(n)}$  in a similar way, that is by killing every particle in  $\widehat{Z}$  at the time it makes a jump smaller than  $-n$ . Beware that  $\widehat{Z}^{(n)}$  is different from the point measure valued process  $\widehat{Z}^{(n)}$  which is associated the branching Lévy process  $Z^{(n)}$ , as described earlier in this section. Nevertheless, there is a simple connection between the two: if we write

$$T_*^{(n)} := \inf\{t > 0 : \widehat{\xi}_t - \widehat{\xi}_{t-} < -n\},$$

for the time at which the spine particle of  $\widehat{Z}$  is killed in  $\widehat{Z}^{(n)}$ , then for every  $t \geq 0$ , the processes  $(\widehat{Z}_s^{(n)} : 0 \leq s \leq t)$  and  $(\widehat{Z}_s^{(n)} : 0 \leq s \leq t)$  have the same law conditionally on  $T_*^{(n)} > t$ .

Indeed, observe that the waiting time  $T_*^{(n)}$  can be rewritten

$$T_*^{(n)} = \inf\{t > 0 : (t, \mathbf{x}) \text{ atom of } \widehat{\mathcal{N}} \text{ with } x_* < -n\},$$

hence, conditionally on  $T_*^{(n)} > t$ ,  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  is a Poisson point process conditioned on the fact that each atom  $(s, \mathbf{x})$  with  $s < t$  satisfies  $x_* \geq -n$ . By classical Poissonian properties, the image measure of this process by  $(\text{Id}, \pi_n)$  is a Poisson point process with intensity  $dt \widehat{\Lambda}^{(n)}(dx)$ , where  $\widehat{\Lambda}^{(n)}$  is the image measure of  $\widehat{\Lambda}$  by  $\pi_n$ . Moreover, note that for each atom  $(s, \mathbf{x}^{(n)})$  of that censored Poisson point process, the mark is sampled at random, and we have  $* = j$  with probability  $e^{\theta x_j^{(n)}} / \langle \mathbf{x}^{(n)}, e_\theta \rangle$ .

The branching Lévy process  $Z^{(n)}$  has finite birth intensity, and we now see from its spinal decomposition that the law of  $\widehat{Z}^{(n)}$  on  $\mathcal{F}_t$  conditionally on  $T_*^{(n)} > t$ , is the same as  $W_t^{(n)} \cdot \mathbb{P}|_{\mathcal{F}_t}$ . Since  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} T_*^{(n)} = \infty$  a.s., and  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} W_t^{(n)} = W_t$  in  $L^1(\mathbb{P})$  (by monotone convergence), we easily conclude that the spinal decomposition also holds for  $Z$ .  $\square$

By a classical observation (see Exercice 3.6 in [9, p. 210]), the proof of Theorem 1.1 amounts to establishing that  $\widehat{\mathbb{P}}$ -a.s.,  $\limsup_{t \rightarrow \infty} W_t < \infty$  if the conditions (1.8) and (1.9) hold, and  $\limsup_{t \rightarrow \infty} W_t = \infty$  otherwise. As a consequence of Lemma 2.3, if we write

$$\widehat{W}_t := e^{-t\kappa(\theta)} \langle \widehat{Z}_t, e_\theta \rangle,$$

then the process  $\widehat{W}$  has the same law as  $W$  under  $\widehat{\mathbb{P}}$ , so the next statement entails the second part of Theorem 1.1.

**Lemma 2.4.** *If (1.9) fails, then  $\limsup_{t \rightarrow \infty} \widehat{W}_t = \infty$  a.s.*

*Proof.* From the construction of  $\widehat{Z}$ , we observe for every atom  $(t, \mathbf{x})$  of  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$ , by focusing on the spine and its children which are born at time  $t$ , that there is the bound

$$\widehat{W}_t \geq \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{t-} - t\kappa(\theta)) \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle.$$

Fix  $c > 0$  with  $-c < \theta \kappa'(\theta) - \kappa(\theta)$ , and recall from Lemma 2.1 that the failure of (1.9) entails that

$$\int_s^\infty \widehat{\Lambda}(\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{ct}) dt = \infty \quad \text{for every } s > 0.$$

This implies that the set of times  $t \geq 0$  such that the Poisson point process  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  has an atom  $(t, \mathbf{x})$  with  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{ct}$  is unbounded a.s., and an appeal to Lemma 2.2 completes the proof.  $\square$



Since we already know from Biggins' theorem that  $W_\infty = 0$  a.s. when (1.8) fails, we may now turn our attention to the situation where (1.8) and (1.9) both hold, and recall that our goal is then to prove that  $\limsup_{t \rightarrow \infty} \widehat{W}_t < \infty$  a.s. In this direction, we first write

$$\widehat{W}_t = \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_t - t\kappa(\theta)) + (\widehat{W}_t - \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_t - t\kappa(\theta))). \tag{2.2}$$

Thanks to Lemma 2.2 and (1.8), we know that

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_t - t\kappa(\theta)) = 0 \quad \text{a.s.}$$

We then write  $\widehat{\sigma}$  for the sigma-field generated by the Poisson point process  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  and the random indices  $*$  which are selected for each of its atoms. Viewing the second term in the right-hand side of (2.2) as the contribution of the descendants of the children of the spine which were born before time  $t$ , we get from the spinal decomposition and the martingale property of  $W$  for the branching Lévy process, that there is the identity

$$\begin{aligned} W_t^* &:= \mathbb{E} \left( \widehat{W}_t - \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_t - t\kappa(\theta)) \middle| \widehat{\sigma} \right) \\ &= \int_{[0,t] \times \mathcal{P}} \sum_{k \neq *} \exp(\theta(\widehat{\xi}_{s-} + x_k) - s\kappa(\theta)) \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}). \end{aligned} \tag{2.3}$$

By the conditional Fatou lemma, it now suffices to verify that the process  $W^*$  remains bounded a.s. The lemma below thus completes the proof of Theorem 1.1.

**Lemma 2.5.** *If (1.8) and (1.9) both hold, then  $\sup_{t \geq 0} W_t^* < \infty$  a.s.*

*Proof.* The process  $W^*$  has non-decreasing paths, so we have to check that  $W_\infty^* < \infty$  a.s.

Thanks to (1.9), we pick  $c > 0$  sufficiently small so that  $\theta\kappa'(\theta) - \kappa(\theta) < -c$ , and then, thanks to Lemma 2.2, we know that the probability of the event

$$\Omega_b := \{ \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - s\kappa(\theta)) \leq be^{-cs} \text{ for all } s \geq 1 \}$$

converges to 1 as  $b \rightarrow \infty$ . Therefore, we conclude that

$$\sup_{s \geq 0} \frac{\exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - s\kappa(\theta))}{e^{-cs}} < \infty, \quad \text{a.s.}$$

Hence we only need to check the finiteness of the Poissonian integral

$$\int_{[0,\infty) \times \mathcal{P}} e^{-cs} \sum_{k \neq *} e^{\theta x_k} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}).$$

In this direction, fix  $0 < c' < c$ . Since  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  is a Poisson point process with intensity  $ds \otimes \widehat{\Lambda}(d\mathbf{x})$ , it follows from Lemma 2.1 that the set of times  $s \geq 0$  such  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  has an atom  $(s, \mathbf{x})$  with  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{c's} + 1$  is finite a.s., and *a fortiori*

$$\int_{[0,\infty) \times \mathcal{P}} e^{-cs} \sum_{k \neq *} e^{\theta x_k} \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > e^{c's} + 1\}} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) < \infty \quad \text{a.s.}$$

On the other hand, again by Poissonian calculus,

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{E} \left( \int_{[0, \infty) \times \mathcal{P}} e^{-cs} \sum_{k \neq *} e^{\theta x_k} \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq e^{c's} + 1\}} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) \right) \\ &= \int_0^\infty ds e^{-cs} \int_{\mathcal{P}} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) \sum_{j \geq 1} e^{\theta x_j} \sum_{k \neq j} e^{\theta x_k} \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq e^{c's} + 1\}} \\ &\leq \int_0^\infty ds e^{-cs} \int_{\mathcal{P}} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) \mathbb{1}_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq e^{c's} + 1\}} \left( e^{\theta x_1} \sum_{k \geq 2} e^{\theta x_k} + \sum_{j \geq 2} e^{\theta x_j} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \right) \\ &\leq \int_0^\infty ds e^{-cs} \int_{\mathcal{P}} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) 2(e^{c's} + 1) \sum_{k \geq 2} e^{\theta x_k}, \end{aligned}$$

where we used that the conditional probability given  $\mathbf{x}$  that  $* = j$  equals  $e^{\theta x_j} / \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle$  for the first equality and that the Poisson random measure  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x})$  has intensity  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle ds \Lambda(d\mathbf{x})$ . By (1.5), the right-hand side is finite, which completes the proof.  $\square$

Finally, we turn our attention to the proof of Proposition 1.4.

*Proof of Proposition 1.4.* Thanks to Theorem 1 of Biggins [7], it is enough to check that, under the assumptions of the statement, one has  $\mathbb{E}(W_1^p) < \infty$ , or equivalently, that

$$\widehat{\mathbb{E}}(W_1^{p-1}) = \mathbb{E}(\widehat{W}_1^{p-1}) < \infty.$$

In this direction, we use the decomposition (2.2) and note first, using Lemma 2.2, that

$$\mathbb{E} \left( \exp((p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_1 - \kappa(\theta))) \right) = \exp(\kappa(p\theta) - p\kappa(\theta)) < 1. \tag{2.4}$$

Recall that  $W_t^*$  denotes the conditional expectation of the second term of the sum in the right-hand side of (2.2) given the sigma-field generated by the Poisson point process  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  and the random indices  $*$  which are selected for each of its atoms. Since  $0 < p-1 < 1$ , thanks to the conditional version of Jensen's inequality, it suffices to check that  $\mathbb{E}((W_1^*)^{p-1}) < \infty$ .

In this direction, we use (2.3) and further distinguish the atoms  $(s, \mathbf{x})$  of  $\widehat{\mathcal{N}}$  depending on whether  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2$  or not, and write

$$W_1^* \leq AB + C \tag{2.5}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \sup\{\exp((\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - \kappa(\theta)s)) : 0 \leq s \leq 1\}, \\ B &= \int_{[0,1] \times \{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2\}} \sum_{i \neq *} e^{\theta x_i} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}), \\ C &= \int_{[0,1] \times \{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > 2\}} \exp(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - \kappa(\theta)s) \sum_{i \neq *} e^{\theta x_i} \widehat{\mathcal{N}}(ds, d\mathbf{x}). \end{aligned}$$

First, it follows from Lemma 2.2 that the process

$$M_s = \exp((p-1)\theta \widehat{\xi}_s - (\kappa(p\theta) - \kappa(\theta))s), \quad s \geq 0$$

is a martingale. From our assumption  $\kappa(q\theta) < \infty$  for some  $q > p$ , we further see that

$$\mathbb{E}(M_1^{(q-1)/(p-1)}) < \infty,$$

and then, from Doob's inequality, that

$$\mathbb{E} \left( \sup_{0 \leq s \leq 1} \exp((q-1)\theta \widehat{\xi}_s) \right) < \infty.$$

This proves that

$$\mathbb{E}(A^{q-1}) < \infty. \tag{2.6}$$

We next check that  $B$  has a finite exponential moment. Observe from a combination of the formula for the Laplace transform of Poissonian integrals and Campbell's formula (see, e.g. Sections 2.2 and 3.3 in [12]), that for every Poisson random measure  $N$  and every nonnegative function  $f$ , there is the identity

$$\mathbb{E} \left( \exp \left( \int f(y) N(dy) \right) \right) = \exp \left( \mathbb{E} \left( \int (e^{f(y)} - 1) N(dy) \right) \right).$$

This gives

$$\begin{aligned} \log \mathbb{E}(\exp(B)) &= \mathbb{E} \left( \int_{[0,1] \times \{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2\}} \left( \exp \left( \sum_{i \neq * } e^{\theta x_i} \right) - 1 \right) \widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) \right) \\ &\leq e^2 \mathbb{E} \left( \int_{[0,1] \times \{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2\}} \sum_{i \neq * } e^{\theta x_i} \widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) \right). \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\widehat{N}$  is a Poisson random measure with intensity  $ds \times \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \Lambda(d\mathbf{x})$ , another application of Campbell's formula enables us to express the last quantity in the form

$$\begin{aligned} &e^2 \int_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2\}} \sum_{k \geq 1} e^{\theta x_k} \sum_{j \neq k} e^{\theta x_j} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) \\ &\leq e^2 \int_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \leq 2\}} \left( e^{\theta x_1} \sum_{j \geq 2} e^{\theta x_j} + \sum_{k \geq 2} e^{\theta x_k} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle \right) \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}) \\ &\leq 4e^2 \int_{\mathcal{P}} \sum_{j \geq 2} e^{\theta x_j} \Lambda(d\mathbf{x}). \end{aligned}$$

By (1.5) the last quantity is finite. This entails  $\mathbb{E}(\exp(B)) < \infty$ , and a *fortiori* that  $\mathbb{E}(B^{(p-1)(q-1)/(q-p)}) < \infty$ . We conclude by Hölder's inequality from (2.6) that

$$\mathbb{E}((AB)^{p-1}) < \infty. \tag{2.7}$$

Finally, we turn our attention to  $C$ . Since  $0 < p - 1 \leq 1$  and  $\widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x})$  is a (random) point measure, for every nonnegative process  $(H_s)_{s \geq 0}$ , the inequality

$$\left( \int_{[0,1] \times \mathcal{P}} H_s \widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x}) \right)^{p-1} \leq \int_{[0,1] \times \mathcal{P}} H_s^{p-1} \widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x})$$

holds, as  $\|\mathbf{y}\|_{1/(p-1)} \leq \|\mathbf{y}\|_1$  for all real-valued sequences  $\mathbf{y}$ . Hence, there is the inequality

$$C^{p-1} \leq \int_{[0,1] \times \{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > 2\}} \exp((p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - \kappa(\theta)s)) \left( \sum_{i \neq * } e^{\theta x_i} \right)^{p-1} \widehat{N}(ds, d\mathbf{x}).$$

The left-continuous process  $s \mapsto \exp((p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_{s-} - \kappa(\theta)s))$  is predictable; recall further that the conditional probability given  $\mathbf{x}$  that  $* = k$  equals  $e^{\theta x_k} / \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle$ , and that the

Poisson point measure  $\widehat{N}(ds, dx)$  has intensity  $\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle ds \Lambda(dx)$ . We now see that  $\mathbb{E}(C^{p-1})$  can be bounded from above by

$$\int_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > 2\}} \sum_{k \geq 1} e^{\theta x_k} \left( \sum_{i \neq k} e^{\theta x_i} \right)^{p-1} \Lambda(dx) \times \mathbb{E} \left( \int_0^1 e^{(p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_s - \kappa(\theta)s)} ds \right).$$

Finally, recall from (2.4) that

$$\mathbb{E}(e^{(p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_s - \kappa(\theta)s)}) = \mathbb{E}(e^{(p-1)(\theta \widehat{\xi}_s - \kappa(\theta)s)}) \leq 1 \quad \text{for all } s \geq 0,$$

thus  $\mathbb{E}(C^{p-1}) \leq \int_{\{\langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle > 2\}} \langle \mathbf{x}, e_\theta \rangle^p \Lambda(dx)$ . We conclude from (1.11) that  $\mathbb{E}(C^{p-1}) < \infty$ , and hence, from (2.5) and (2.7), that  $\mathbb{E}((W_1^*)^{p-1}) < \infty$ . This completes the proof.  $\square$

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