

## Boundedness of integral operators on decreasing functions

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We continue the study of the boundedness of the operator

$$S_a f(t) = \int_0^\infty a(s)f(st) ds$$

on the set of decreasing functions in  $L^p(w)$ . This operator was first introduced by Braverman and Lai and also studied by Andersen, and although the weighted weak-type estimate  $S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}(w)$  was completely solved, the characterization of the weights  $w$  such that  $S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)$  is bounded is still open for the case in which  $p > 1$ . The solution of this problem will have applications in the study of the boundedness on weighted Lorentz spaces of important operators in harmonic analysis.

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### 1. Introduction and motivation

Let  $L^0(\mu)$  be the set of  $\mu$ -measurable functions on  $\mathcal{M}$  and similarly for  $L^0(\nu)$ , where  $(\mathcal{M}, \mu)$  and  $(\mathcal{N}, \nu)$  are two  $\sigma$ -finite measure spaces, and let us consider such operators  $T$  that satisfy the inequality

$$(Tf)^*_\nu(t) \leq C \int_0^\infty a(s)f^*_\mu(st) ds \quad (1.1)$$

for a certain positive and locally integrable function  $a$  and some positive constant  $C$  independent of  $t$ . We recall that  $f^*_\mu$  is the decreasing rearrangement of  $f$  with respect to the measure  $\mu$  [5],

$$f^*_\mu(t) = \inf\{s > 0; \mu(\{x \in \mathcal{M}; |f(x)| > s\}) \leq t\},$$

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and similarly for  $(Tf)_\nu^*$ . Let  $w$  be a positive and locally integrable function (that we call a weight) in  $(0, \infty)$  and set

$$L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) = \{f \in L^p(w) : f \text{ is positive and decreasing}\}$$

with

$$\|f\|_{L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)} = \left( \int_0^\infty f(t)^p w(t) dt \right)^{1/p}.$$

Let us also consider the weighted Lorentz space defined by [11, 12]:

$$A_\mu^p(w) = \left\{ f \in L^0(\mu) : \|f\|_{A_\mu^p(w)} = \left( \int_0^\infty (f_\mu^*(t))^p w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} < \infty \right\}.$$

These spaces include as particular cases the weighted Lebesgue spaces  $L^p(w)$  and the classical Lorentz spaces  $A^p(w)$  and are a unified framework to study weighted inequalities for many important operators in harmonic analysis (see, for example, [3, 7, 18] and references therein).

If not otherwise indicated, throughout this paper  $0 < p < \infty$ .

Now, if we define

$$S_a f(t) = \int_0^\infty a(s) f(st) ds,$$

where  $a$  is a positive and locally integrable function, we clearly have the following result.

LEMMA 1.1. *If  $T$  satisfies (1.1) and*

$$S_a : L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)$$

*is bounded, then so is*

$$T : A_\mu^p(w) \rightarrow A_\nu^p(w).$$

Important examples of operators  $T$  as above are the following.

(I) The Hardy–Littlewood maximal operator

$$Mf(x) = \sup_{r>0} \frac{1}{|B(0, r)|} \int_{B(0, r)} |f(y)| dy$$

satisfies (1.1) for  $a(s) = \chi_{(0,1)}(s)$  whenever  $d\mu = d\nu = u dx$  with  $u$  a weight in the Muckenhoupt class  $A_1$  [4, 15]. In this case, the corresponding operator  $S_a$  is the Hardy operator whose boundedness on  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  has been extensively studied and the characterization is the class of weights  $B_p$  [3]:

$$r^p \int_r^\infty \frac{w(t)}{t^p} dt \leq C \int_0^r w(t) dt$$

for some  $C > 0$  independent of  $r > 0$ . For several properties concerning this class of weights we refer the reader to [19]. In particular, we shall use the characterization

$$w \in B_p \iff \exists \varepsilon > 0; \bar{W}(t) \leq C t^{p-\varepsilon} \quad \forall t > 1,$$

where

$$\bar{W}(t) = \sup_{s>0} \frac{W(ts)}{W(s)}.$$

(II) If  $T = H$  is the Hilbert transform

$$Hf(x) = \text{P. V.} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \frac{f(x-y)}{y} dy,$$

then it is known (see [4]) that, if  $u \in A_1$ ,

$$(Tf)_u^*(t) \lesssim \frac{1}{t} \int_0^t f_u^*(s) ds + \int_t^\infty f_u^*(s) \frac{ds}{s} = \int_0^\infty \min\left(1, \frac{1}{u}\right) f^*(tu) du, \quad (1.2)$$

and hence  $T$  satisfies (1.1) for  $a(u) = \min(1, 1/u)$ . In this case,  $S_a$  is the so-called Calderón operator [5, ch. 3, pp. 141–142].

In fact, all operators  $T$  that are of joint weak type  $(1, 1; \infty, \infty)$  with respect to the measures  $\mu$  and  $\nu$  (see [5, ch. 3, p. 143]) satisfy (1.2). In particular, if  $\mu$  and  $\nu$  are the Lebesgue measure, examples of such operators are the Riesz transform and some singular integral operators.

Now, if  $a(t) = (1/t)\chi_{(1,\infty)}$ , then

$$S_a f(t) = \int_t^\infty f(s) \frac{ds}{s}$$

is the conjugate Hardy operator and it is known [16] that, in this case, the strong boundedness of  $S_a$  on  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  is characterized (for every  $p > 0$ ) by the condition that  $w \in B_\infty^*$ ; that is,

$$\sup_{r>0} \frac{1}{W(r)} \int_0^r \frac{W(s)}{s} ds < \infty.$$

It follows that the boundedness of the Calderón operator is characterized by  $w \in B_p \cap B_\infty^*$  [16, 18].

(III) Let

$$T_\varphi f(x) = \sup_{h>0} \frac{1}{h} \int_0^h \varphi\left(\frac{t}{h}\right) |f(x-t)| dt,$$

where  $\varphi$  is a positive and integrable function with compact support in  $(0, 1)$ . Then, as was proved in [8], we have that

$$(T_\varphi f)^*(s) \leq C \int_0^1 \varphi^*(t) f^*(ts) dt, \quad s \in (0, \infty).$$

For example, for every  $0 < \alpha \leq 1$ , the operators

$$M_\alpha^+ f(x) = \sup_{r>x} \frac{1}{(r-x)^\alpha} \int_x^r \frac{|f(s)|}{(r-s)^{1-\alpha}} ds$$

and

$$M_\alpha^- f(x) = \sup_{r<x} \frac{1}{(x-r)^\alpha} \int_r^x \frac{|f(s)|}{(s-r)^{1-\alpha}} ds$$

are of this kind. These operators were studied in [8, 13, 17] in connection with the  $C_\alpha$  summability criterion for the Lebesgue differentiation theorem.

(IV) Also, if we have a sublinear operator  $T$  that is bounded in  $L^\infty$  and satisfies a restricted weak-type inequality

$$T: L^{p,1}(\mu) \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}(\nu),$$

then standard techniques show that, for any  $t \in (0, \infty)$ ,

$$(Tf)_\nu^*(t) \lesssim \int_0^1 s^{1/p-1} f_\mu^*(st) \, ds.$$

(V) Given  $1 \leq p, q \leq \infty$ , the Lorentz maximal operator defined as

$$M_{p,q}f(x) = \sup_{x \in Q} \frac{\|f\chi_Q\|_{L^{p,q}}}{|Q|^{1/p}}$$

was considered in [10] and it was proved that, for any  $t \in (0, \infty)$ ,

$$((M_{p,q}f)^*(t))^q \leq \int_0^1 f^*\left(\frac{st}{3^n}\right)^q s^{q/p-1} \, ds.$$

(VI) More generally, given a rearrangement invariant space  $X$  on  $\mathbb{R}^n$ , the Hardy–Littlewood maximal operator  $M_X$  associated with the space  $X$  was considered in [14]:

$$M_X f(x) = \sup_{x \in Q} \|f\|_{X,Q},$$

where  $\|f\|_{X,Q} = \|\tau_{l(Q)}(f\chi_Q)\|_X$  with  $l(Q)$  the side length of the cube  $Q$  and  $\tau_\delta f(x) = f(\delta x)$  is the dilation operator. It was also proved that

$$(M_X f)^*(t) \leq \int_0^1 f^*\left(\frac{st}{3^n}\right) \, d\varphi_X(s), \quad t \in (0, \infty),$$

$\varphi_X$  being the fundamental function of  $X$ . Using this inequality, Mastyló and Pérez prove that, under certain submultiplicity hypotheses on  $\varphi_X$ ,  $M_X$  is bounded on  $L^p$ .

All these examples provide motivation to continue the investigation of the boundedness property of  $S_a$  on the cone of decreasing functions. This operator was first introduced by Braverman [6] and Lai [9] and was also studied by Andersen [2]. In particular, we mention that if  $L_{\text{dec}}^{p,\infty}(w)$  is the set of measurable decreasing functions such that

$$\|f\|_{L^{p,\infty}(w)} = \sup_{t>0} f(t)W(t)^{1/p} < \infty$$

and

$$L_{\text{dec}}^{p,1}(w) = \left\{ f \downarrow; \|f\|_{L_{\text{dec}}^{p,1}(w)} = \int_0^\infty f(t)W(t)^{1/p-1}w(t) \, dt < \infty \right\},$$

then it is very easy to see that

$$S_a: L_{\text{dec}}^{p,\infty}(w) \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}(w) \tag{1.3}$$

is bounded if and only if

$$\sup_{t>0} W^{1/p}(t) \int_0^\infty a(s) \frac{1}{W^{1/p}(st)} \, ds < \infty, \tag{1.4}$$

and

$$S_a : L^{p,1}_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^{p,1}(w) \tag{1.5}$$

is bounded if and only if

$$\sup_{r>0} \frac{1}{W^{1/p}(r)} \int_0^\infty a(s)W^{1/p}\left(\frac{r}{s}\right) ds < \infty. \tag{1.6}$$

To see this, just observe that in the first case it is enough to have that

$$\|S_a W^{-1/p}\|_{L^{p,\infty}(w)} < \infty,$$

while in the second case it is enough to check that  $S_a$  is bounded on characteristic decreasing functions; that is,

$$\sup_{r>0} \frac{\|S_a \chi_{(0,r)}\|_{L^{p,1}(w)}}{\|\chi_{(0,r)}\|_{L^{p,1}(w)}} < \infty.$$

Also, the complete characterization of the weights for which

$$S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}(w)$$

is bounded is known (see theorem 2.3), but the complete characterization of the weights  $w$  such that

$$S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^p(w) \tag{1.7}$$

is bounded is still an open problem for the case in which  $p > 1$ ; the continued investigation of this open case is the main goal of this paper.

From now on,

$$A(t) = \int_0^t a(s) ds, \quad W(t) = \int_0^t w(s) ds$$

and, in general,  $U(t) = \int_0^t u(s) ds$  for any function  $u$ . We shall write simply  $\|S_a\|$  to indicate the norm of the operator in (1.7); that is,  $\|S_a\|_{L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)}$ .

Also,  $C$  will denote a constant independent of the parameters involved and, as usual, the symbol  $\lesssim$  denotes that an inequality  $\leq$  holds up to some constant  $C$  and, similarly,  $\approx$  means that both  $\lesssim$  and  $\gtrsim$  hold.

## 2. Previously known results

In the study of (1.7), the following class of weights has a fundamental role (see theorems 2.4–2.6).

DEFINITION 2.1. We say that a weight  $w$  in  $(0, \infty)$  is in  $B^a_p$  if

$$\|w\|_{B^a_p}^p = \sup_{r>0} \frac{1}{W(r)} \int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt < \infty. \tag{2.1}$$

First of all, we observe that since

$$\int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \geq \int_0^r A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \geq A^p(1)W(r)$$

we have that, if  $A(1) \neq 0$ ,  $w \in B_p^a$  if and only if

$$\int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \approx W(r). \quad (2.2)$$

In fact, if  $A(1) = 0$  but  $W$  satisfies the  $\Delta_2$ -condition, that is,

$$W(2t) \lesssim W(t) \quad \forall t > 0, \quad (2.3)$$

then one can also see that  $w \in B_p^a$  if and only if (2.2) holds. Moreover, if  $w$  satisfies the doubling property, we can assume, without loss of generality, that  $A(1) \neq 0$ , since if  $A(1) = 0$ , we can consider  $a(s) + \chi_{(1/2,1)}(s)$  and the boundedness on  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  of this new operator is the same as that of the original one. Let us also mention, for the sake of completeness and to answer a question from the referee, that, for an arbitrary  $a$ , we do not know how (1.4), (1.6) and (2.1) relate to each other.

Finally, we have to mention that, in general,  $w \in B_p^a$  does not imply that  $W$  satisfies the  $\Delta_2$ -condition (2.3) since there are weights in the class  $B_\infty^*$  whose primitives are not doubling, as the example  $w(t) = e^t$  shows.

However, the following result proves that, in many other cases, we do have the following property.

**PROPOSITION 2.2.** *Let us assume that there exists  $r_0 < 1$  such that  $A(r_0) \neq 0$ . Then, if  $w \in B_p^a$ , we have that  $W$  satisfies the doubling property.*

*Proof.* We have that, for every  $r > 0$ ,

$$A^p(r_0)W\left(\frac{r}{r_0}\right) \leq \int_0^{r/r_0} A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \leq \int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \lesssim W(r),$$

and since  $1/r_0 > 1$  the result follows.  $\square$

Also, observe that if  $w \in B_p^a \cap L^1$ , we have that, for every  $r > 0$ ,

$$\int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^{r/t} a(s) ds \right)^p w(t) dt \lesssim \int_0^\infty w(t) dt,$$

and hence it follows by the monotone convergence theorem that

$$\int_0^\infty a(s) ds < \infty.$$

Consequently,

$$B_p^a \cap L^1 \neq \emptyset \quad \implies \quad a \in L^1.$$

The following result gives the complete characterization of the weak-type boundedness.

THEOREM 2.3 (Andersen [2]).

(i) If  $0 < p \leq 1$ ,

$$S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}}(w) \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}(w) \tag{2.4}$$

is bounded if and only if, for every  $0 < s, r < \infty$ ,

$$A^p\left(\frac{s}{r}\right)W(r) \lesssim W(s).$$

(ii) If  $p > 1$ , (2.4) holds if and only if

$$\sup_{r>0} W^{1/p}(r) \left( \int_0^\infty A^{p'}\left(\frac{s}{r}\right)W^{-p'}(s)w(s) ds \right)^{1/p'} < \infty, \tag{2.5}$$

or, equivalently,

$$\sup_{r>0} W^{1/p}(r) \left( \int_0^\infty A^{p'-1}(s)W^{1-p'}(sr)a(s) ds \right)^{1/p'} < \infty.$$

With respect to (1.7), the following results are already known.

THEOREM 2.4 (Lai [9]). If  $0 < p < \infty$  and (1.7) holds, then  $w \in B_p^a$  and  $\|w\|_{B_p^a} \leq \|S_a\|$ .

*Proof.* It is enough to apply the hypothesis to the case  $f = \chi_{(0,r)}$ . □

THEOREM 2.5 (Lai [9]). For every  $0 < p \leq 1$ , (1.7) holds if and only if  $w \in B_p^a$ .

THEOREM 2.6 (Lai [9]). Let  $p > 1$  and let  $a$  be such that  $A$  is quasi-submultiplicative in  $(0, 1)$  and in  $(1, \infty)$ ; that is, there exists  $c > 0$ , such that, for every  $0 < r, s \leq 1$  or  $1 \leq r, s < \infty$ ,

$$A(rs) \leq cA(r)A(s).$$

Then (1.7) holds if and only if  $w \in B_p^a$ .

REMARK 2.7. Let  $p > 1$ . Then, clearly

$$1 \in B_p^a \iff \int_0^\infty A^p(s) \frac{ds}{s^2} < \infty, \tag{2.6}$$

while by theorem 2.3 we have that if  $w = 1$ ,  $S_a : L^p_{\text{dec}} \rightarrow L^{p,\infty}$  is bounded if and only if

$$\int_0^\infty A^{p'}(s) \frac{1}{s^{p'}} ds < \infty. \tag{2.7}$$

Therefore, it is clear that if  $p = 2$ , then condition (2.6) matches condition (2.7). But given  $p \neq 2$ , we can find a function  $a$  satisfying one and only one of these two conditions; that is, in general  $w \in B_p^a$  and (2.4) are independent. This has two important consequences:

- (i) the weak-type boundedness (2.4) does not imply (1.7) in the case  $p > 1$ ;
- (ii) in general,  $w \in B_p^a$  is not sufficient to have (1.7).

Another way of proving this last observation is the following: if  $w \in B_p^a$ , we have that  $g(t) = A(1/t) \in L^p(w)$ , and hence if (1.7) holds, we would have that  $S_a g(t) < \infty$  for every  $t > 0$ , which implies that

$$\int_0^\infty a(s)A\left(\frac{1}{s}\right) ds < \infty. \quad (2.8)$$

Now let us take, for  $\alpha > 1$ ,

$$a(s) = \frac{s^{1/p-1}}{(1 + |\log s|)^{\alpha/p}}.$$

One can then see that  $A(s) \approx s^{1/p}/(1 + |\log s|)^{\alpha/p}$  and, by (2.6), we obtain that  $1 \in B_p^a$  but (2.8) does not hold if  $p \geq 2\alpha$ .

**COROLLARY 2.8.** *If  $S_a$  satisfies (1.7) and  $p > 1$ , then*

$$\sup_{r>0} \left( \int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} \left( \int_0^\infty A^{p'}\left(\frac{s}{r}\right)W^{-p'}(s)w(s) ds \right)^{1/p'} < \infty.$$

*Proof.* The proof follows immediately by writing the conditions  $w \in B_p^a$  and (2.5).  $\square$

Before going on, for the sake of completeness let us now state some other important examples, which can also be found in [2, 9].

(i) If  $a(t) = e^{-t} \in L^1(\mathbb{R})$ , we obtain that

$$S_a f(x) = \int_0^\infty e^{-t} f(xt) dt = \frac{1}{x} \mathcal{L}f\left(\frac{1}{x}\right), \quad (2.9)$$

where  $\mathcal{L}$  is the Laplace transform. In this case  $A(t) = 1 - e^{-t}$ .

(ii) If  $a(t) = (1-t)^\alpha \chi_{(0,1)}(t)$  with  $\alpha > -1$ , we obtain the Riemann–Liouville operator

$$R_\alpha f(x) = \int_0^1 (1-s)^\alpha f(xs) ds = \frac{1}{x^{\alpha+1}} \int_0^x (x-t)^\alpha f(t) dt. \quad (2.10)$$

In this case,

$$A(t) = \int_0^t (1-s)^\alpha \chi_{(0,1)}(s) ds = \int_0^{\min(t,1)} (1-s)^\alpha ds \approx (1-t)_+^{\alpha+1} - 1.$$

### 3. The $B_p^a$ class of weights

Henceforth, we shall assume that  $p > 1$ .

**THEOREM 3.1.**  *$w \in B_p^a$  if and only if*

$$S_a : L_{\text{dec}}^{p,1}(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)$$

*is bounded.*



*Proof.* To obtain the sufficient condition, it is enough to apply the boundedness hypothesis to  $f = \chi_{(0,r)}$ . Conversely, writing  $S_a f$  in terms of the distribution function  $\lambda_f(y) = |\{x; |f(x)| > y\}|$ , we have that

$$S_a f(t) = \int_0^\infty A\left(\frac{\lambda_f(y)}{t}\right) dy \tag{3.1}$$

and using Minkowski's inequalities we have that

$$\begin{aligned} \|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)} &= \left( \int_0^\infty S_a f(t)^p w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} \\ &= \left( \int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^\infty A\left(\frac{\lambda_f(y)}{t}\right) dy \right)^p w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} \\ &\leq \int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^\infty A\left(\frac{\lambda_f(y)}{t}\right)^p w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} dy \\ &\lesssim \int_0^\infty W(\lambda_f(y))^{1/p} dy \\ &\approx \|f\|_{L^{p,1}(w)}, \end{aligned}$$

and the result follows. □

**PROPOSITION 3.2.** *If  $w \in B_p^a$  satisfies (2.2), then, for every decreasing function,*

$$\|f\|_{L^p(w)} \lesssim \|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)}.$$

*Proof.* If  $w \in B_p^a$ , then  $\int_0^\infty A^p(r/t)w(t) dt \lesssim W(r)$ , and hence

$$\int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt < \infty.$$

Now, by (2.2),

$$\begin{aligned} W(r) &\lesssim \int_0^r A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right)w(t) dt = \int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^r A^{p-1}\left(\frac{s}{t}\right)a\left(\frac{s}{t}\right) \frac{ds}{t} \right) w(t) dt \\ &= \int_0^r \left( \int_0^\infty A^{p-1}\left(\frac{s}{t}\right)a\left(\frac{s}{t}\right)w(t) \frac{dt}{t} \right) ds, \end{aligned}$$

and thus, for every decreasing function  $f$ ,

$$\int_0^\infty f^p(s)w(s) ds \lesssim \int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^\infty f^p(s)A^{p-1}\left(\frac{s}{t}\right)a\left(\frac{s}{t}\right) \frac{ds}{t} \right) w(t) dt.$$

Now, in the inner expression, if we write  $h_t(y) = f(ty)$ , we obtain that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^\infty f^p(s)A^{p-1}\left(\frac{s}{t}\right)a\left(\frac{s}{t}\right) \frac{ds}{t} &\approx \int_0^\infty y^{p-1}A^p(\lambda_{h_t}(y)) dy \lesssim \left( \int_0^\infty A(\lambda_{h_t}(y)) dy \right)^p \\ &= \left( \int_0^\infty a(y)h_t(y) ds \right)^p = S_a f(t)^p \end{aligned}$$

and the result follows. □

As a consequence, if (1.7) and (2.2) hold, then

$$\|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)} \approx \|f\|_{L^p(w)}.$$

PROPOSITION 3.3. *If  $w \in B_p^a$ , then*

$$\sup_{t>0} A^p\left(\frac{1}{t}\right) \bar{W}(t) < \infty,$$

and in fact

$$\bar{W}^{1/p}(t) \lesssim \frac{1}{\sup_s [A(s/t)A(1/s)]}. \quad (3.2)$$

*Proof.* We have that, for every  $s > 0$ ,

$$A^p\left(\frac{r}{s}\right) W(s) = A^p\left(\frac{r}{s}\right) \int_0^s w(t) dt \leq \int_0^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right) w(t) dt \lesssim W(r),$$

and hence

$$\frac{W(s)}{W(r)} \lesssim \frac{1}{A^p(r/s)}.$$

Therefore, for every  $t > 0$ ,

$$\bar{W}(1/t) = \sup_{r>0} \frac{W(r/t)}{W(r)} \lesssim \frac{1}{A^p(t)}. \quad (3.3)$$

Now, since  $\bar{W}$  is submultiplicative, i.e.  $\bar{W}(uv) \leq \bar{W}(u)\bar{W}(v)$ , we obtain that

$$\bar{W}(t) \leq \bar{W}\left(\frac{t}{s}\right) \bar{W}(s) \lesssim \frac{1}{A^p(s/t)A^p(1/s)}$$

and the result follows by taking the infimum in  $s > 0$ .  $\square$

COROLLARY 3.4. *If  $a \notin L^1$ , then*

$$B_p^a \subset B_\infty^*.$$

*Proof.* We have that  $A(\infty) = \infty$ , and hence (3.2) implies that  $\bar{W}(0^+) = 0$ , which is equivalent (see [1]) to  $w \in B_\infty^*$ .  $\square$

REMARK 3.5. If  $a \in L^1$ , it is immediate to see that the  $B_p^a$  condition reads

$$\int_r^\infty A^p\left(\frac{r}{t}\right) w(t) dt \lesssim W(r). \quad (3.4)$$

Moreover, in this case, if we write

$$S_a f(t) = \int_0^\infty a(s)f(st) ds = \int_0^1 a(s)f(st) ds + \int_1^\infty a(s)f(st) ds,$$

we have that

$$\int_1^\infty a(s)f(st) ds \leq f(t) \int_1^\infty a(s) ds,$$

and hence we only have to study the first part of the operator; that is,

$$\tilde{S}_a f(t) = \int_0^1 a(s) f(st) \, ds.$$

PROPOSITION 3.6. *If (1.7) holds for some  $w \neq 0$ , then*

$$\inf_{t>0} A(t)A\left(\frac{1}{t}\right) = 0$$

and

$$\sup_{t>0} A(t)A\left(\frac{1}{t}\right) < \infty.$$

*In particular,  $A$  cannot be quasi-submultiplicative in  $(0, \infty)$ .*

*Proof.* Let us assume that  $\inf_{t>0} A(t)A(1/t) = C > 0$ . Then, since  $w \in B_p^a$ , using (2.8),

$$\int_0^\infty a(s) \frac{1}{A(s)} \, ds \leq \frac{1}{C} \int_0^\infty a(s)A\left(\frac{1}{s}\right) \, ds < \infty,$$

which is a contradiction since the integral on the left is clearly not finite.

To prove the second part, we observe that if  $\sup_{t>0} A(t)A(1/t) = \infty$ , then necessarily  $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} A(t)A(1/t) = \infty$  and we arrive at the same contradiction.  $\square$

REMARK 3.7. By (3.4), it follows that if  $a \in L^1$  and there exists  $\alpha > 0$  such that  $A(x) \approx x^\alpha$  for every  $x \in (0, 1)$ , then  $B_p^a = B_{p\alpha}$ .

In particular (see also [9]), the following hold.

- (1) If  $a_{\mathcal{L}} = e^{-t}$  is the function associated with the Laplace transform as in (2.9), we have that, for every  $p > 0$ ,  $B_{a_{\mathcal{L}}} = B_p$ .
- (2) If  $a_{\mathcal{RL}}$  is the function associated with the Riemann–Liouville operator (2.10), we have that, for every  $p > 0$ ,  $B_{a_{\mathcal{RL}}} = B_p$ .

#### 4. Sufficient conditions

PROPOSITION 4.1. *If*

$$\int_0^\infty a(s) \bar{W}^{1/p} \left(\frac{1}{s}\right) \, ds < +\infty, \tag{4.1}$$

*then  $S_a$  is bounded from  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$ .*

*Proof.* We have that

$$\begin{aligned} \|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)} &= \left\| \int_0^\infty a(s) f(st) \, dt \right\|_{L^p(w)} \leq \int_0^\infty a(s) \|f(s \cdot)\|_{L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)} \, ds \\ &\leq \|f\|_{L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)} \int_0^\infty a(s) \|D_{1/s}\|_{L^p(w)} \, ds, \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \|D_{1/s}\|_{L^p(w)} &= \sup_{f \downarrow} \frac{(\int_0^\infty f(st)^p w(t) dt)^{1/p}}{(\int_0^\infty f(t)^p w(t) dt)^{1/p}} \\ &= \sup_{f \downarrow} \frac{(\int_0^\infty f(y)^p w(y/s)(dy/s))^{1/p}}{(\int_0^\infty f(t)^p w(t) dt)^{1/p}} \\ &= \sup_{r>0} \frac{(\int_0^r w(y/s)(dy/s))^{1/p}}{(\int_0^r w(t) dt)^{1/p}} \\ &= \left[ \sup_{r>0} \frac{W(r/s)}{W(r)} \right]^{1/p} \\ &= \bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right)^{1/p}, \end{aligned}$$

and the result follows. □

REMARK 4.2. If (4.1) holds, then

$$\sup_{t>0} W^{1/p}(t) \int_0^\infty a(s) \frac{1}{W^{1/p}(st)} ds \leq \int_0^\infty a(s) \bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right) ds < +\infty$$

and similarly

$$\sup_{r>0} \frac{1}{W^{1/p}(r)} \int_0^\infty a(s) W^{1/p} \left( \frac{r}{s} \right) ds \leq \int_0^\infty a(s) \bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right) ds < +\infty,$$

and thus, by (1.4) and (1.6), we have that  $S_a$  satisfies both (1.3) and (1.5).

PROPOSITION 4.3. *If*

$$\int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^\infty A \left( \frac{s}{t} \right)^{p'} W(s)^{-p'} w(s) ds \right)^{p/p'} w(t) dt < +\infty, \tag{4.2}$$

then  $S_a f$  is bounded from  $L^p_{dec}(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$ .

*Proof.* We have that

$$\|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)}^p = \int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^\infty a(s) f(st) ds \right)^p w(t) dt \leq \|f\|_{L^p(w)}^p \int_0^\infty H(t)^p w(t) dt,$$

where

$$H(t) = \sup_{f \downarrow} \frac{\int_0^\infty a(s) f(st) ds}{(\int_0^\infty f(s)^p w(s) ds)^{1/p}} = \sup_{f \downarrow} \frac{\int_0^\infty (1/t) a(s/t) f(s) ds}{(\int_0^\infty f(s)^p w(s) ds)^{1/p}},$$

and the result follows using Sawyer’s formula [18]. □

By considering the case of the Hardy operator and  $w = 1$ , we see that (4.2) is not a necessary condition for the boundedness of  $S_a$  from  $L^p_{dec}(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$ .

REMARK 4.4. Another expression equivalent to (4.2) (see [18]) is

$$\int_0^\infty \left[ \int_0^\infty \left( \int_y^\infty \frac{a(s)}{W(st)} ds \right)^{p'/p} a(y) dy \right]^{p/p'} w(t) dt < \infty.$$

PROPOSITION 4.5.

- (a) If  $a \in L^1$  and there exists  $\varepsilon > 0$  such that  $w \in B_{p-\varepsilon}^a$ , then  $S_a$  satisfies (1.7).
- (b) If  $a \notin L^1$ ,  $\text{supp } a \subset (r, +\infty)$  for some  $r > 0$  and, for every  $t > 1$  and some  $\alpha > 1$ ,

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \lesssim \frac{1}{A(t)(1 + \log^+ A(t))^\alpha}, \tag{4.3}$$

then  $S_a$  satisfies (1.7). In particular, this is the case if there exists  $\varepsilon > 0$  such that  $w \in B_{p+\varepsilon}^a$ .

*Proof.* (a) By (3.3), we have that

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \lesssim \frac{1}{A(t)^{(p-\varepsilon)/p}}.$$

Hence,

$$\int_0^1 a(s) \bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right)^{1/p} ds \leq \int_0^1 a(s) A^{(\varepsilon-p)/p}(s) ds \approx A^{\varepsilon/p}(1) < \infty.$$

On the other hand, since  $a \in L^1$ ,

$$\int_1^\infty a(s) \bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right)^{1/p} ds \leq \bar{W}(1)^{1/p} \int_1^\infty a(s) ds < \infty,$$

and hence (4.1) holds and the result follows.

Similarly, to prove (b) we observe that in this case, if  $N$  is such that  $A(N) \neq 0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^\infty a(s) \bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right)^{1/p} ds &= \int_r^\infty a(s) \bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{s} \right)^{1/p} ds \\ &\lesssim 1 + \int_N^\infty \frac{a(s)}{A(s)(1 + \log^+ A(s))^\alpha} ds < \infty \end{aligned}$$

and the result follows. □

### 5. Self-improving properties of $B_p^a$

A well-known fact of the  $B_p$  class is the so-called  $p - \varepsilon$  property that says that, for every  $w \in B_p$ , there exists  $\varepsilon > 0$  such that  $w \in B_{p-\varepsilon}$ . Since  $B_{p-\varepsilon} \subset B_p$ , we say that the weights in the class  $B_p$  satisfy a self-improving property.

In this section, we study conditions on the function  $a$  such that the class  $B_p^a$  satisfies certain self-improving properties. Before that, we mention that in the proof

of theorem 2.6, Lai decomposes the operator  $S_a$  into two parts that are treated separately, namely,

$$S_a f(t) = \int_0^1 a(s)f(st) ds + \int_1^\infty a(s)f(st) ds := S_a^1 f(t) + S_a^2 f(t).$$

In fact, what is proved in [2, 9] is the following result. We shall present in this paper a new proof of it.

THEOREM 5.1.

- (a) *If  $A$  is quasi-submultiplicative in  $(0, 1)$ , then  $S_a^1$  is bounded from  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$  if and only if  $w \in B_p^a$ .*
- (b) *If  $A$  is quasi-submultiplicative in  $(1, \infty)$ , then  $S_a^2$  is bounded from  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$  if and only if  $w \in B_p^a$ .*

Our proof will be an immediate consequence of proposition 4.5 and the following and more general result. But first we need to recall an easy lemma concerning submultiplicative functions [1].

LEMMA 5.2.

- (i) *If  $\varphi: (0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$  is an increasing submultiplicative function, then*

$$\varphi(\lambda) < 1 \quad \text{for some } \lambda \in (0, 1)$$

*if and only if*

$$\varphi(x) \lesssim \frac{1}{(1 + \log(1/x))^\alpha} \quad \forall \alpha > 0, \quad 0 < x < 1.$$

- (ii) *For every submultiplicative increasing function  $\varphi$  defined in  $[1, \infty)$ ,*

$$\varphi(\lambda) < \lambda \quad \text{for some } \lambda > 1 \quad \iff \quad \exists \gamma < 1: \varphi(x) \lesssim x^\gamma \quad \forall x > 1.$$

PROPOSITION 5.3.

- (a) *If  $a$  is supported in  $(0, 1)$  and  $A$  is quasi-submultiplicative in  $(0, 1)$ , then  $B_p^a$  satisfies the  $p - \varepsilon$  property; that is,*

$$\forall w \in B_p^a \quad \exists \varepsilon > 0: w \in B_{p-\varepsilon}^a.$$

- (b) *If  $a$  is supported in  $(1, \infty)$  and  $A$  is quasi-submultiplicative in  $(1, \infty)$ , then, for every  $t > 1$ ,  $B_p^a$  satisfies (4.3).*

*Proof.* First of all, we can assume without loss of generality (just by changing  $A$  to  $cA$ ) that  $A$  is submultiplicative in  $(0, 1)$  or  $(1, \infty)$  and also that  $A$  is strictly increasing.

(a) In this case, we can assume that

$$A: [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, \|a\|_1]$$

is bijective. Then one can easily see that  $1/A^{-1}$  is also submultiplicative and by (3.3) we obtain that, for every  $y > 1$ ,

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) \lesssim y.$$

We then observe that there are two options: either, for every  $y > 1$ ,

$$y < \bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right),$$

and hence, for every  $t < 1$ ,

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \approx \frac{1}{A(t)}, \tag{5.1}$$

or there exists  $y > 1$  such that

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) < y.$$

In this last case, by lemma 5.2(ii), we obtain that there exists  $\gamma < 1$  such that

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) \lesssim y^\gamma,$$

or equivalently, for every  $t < 1$ ,

$$\bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \lesssim \frac{1}{A(t)^{\gamma p}},$$

from which the result follows by (4.1).

Finally, if (5.1) holds, then one can easily check that  $A(x) \approx x^\alpha$  for some  $\alpha$  and every  $x \in (0, 1)$ , and hence by remark 3.7 we obtain that  $w \in B_{p\alpha}$ . Consequently,  $w \in B_{p\alpha-\varepsilon}$  for some  $\varepsilon$ , which implies that

$$\bar{W} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \lesssim \frac{1}{t^{p\alpha-\varepsilon}},$$

and this contradicts (5.1).

(b) To prove this part, we consider

$$A: [1, +\infty) \rightarrow [0, +\infty)$$

to be bijective. Then, as before, we have that  $1/A^{-1}$  is submultiplicative and by (3.2), for every  $y > 0$ ,

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) \lesssim y.$$

Then, since  $A^{-1}(0) = 1$ , there exists  $y > 1$  such that

$$\frac{1}{y} \bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) < 1.$$

In this case, by lemma 5.2(i), we obtain, for example, that

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{A^{-1}(1/y)} \right) \lesssim \frac{y}{(1 + \log(1/y))^2},$$

or equivalently, for every  $t > 1$ ,

$$\bar{W}^{1/p} \left( \frac{1}{t} \right) \lesssim \frac{1}{A(t)(1 + \log^+ A(t))^2},$$

and the result follows. □

*Proof of theorem 5.1.* The proof is an immediate consequence of propositions 5.3 and 4.5. □

REMARK 5.4. If

$$A(x) = x^{1/p} \frac{1}{\log x} \chi_{(0,1/2)}(x),$$

we have that

$$\int_0^1 A^p(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} = \int_0^{1/2} \frac{dx}{x \log^p x} < \infty,$$

and hence  $1 \in B_p^a$  but  $1 \notin B_q^a$  for any  $q < p$ . Hence, in general, property  $p - \varepsilon$  does not hold.

For the case in which  $A \notin L^\infty$  we also have the following result.

THEOREM 5.5. *If  $A \notin L^\infty$  and (1.7) holds, then there exists  $\delta > 0$  such that*

$$S_{a_\delta} : L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)$$

*is bounded, where*

$$a_\delta(s) = \frac{1}{s^{1-\delta}} \int_0^s a(y) \frac{dy}{y^\delta}.$$

*Proof.* By proposition 3.4,  $w \in B_\infty^*$ , and hence, if  $Qf(t) = \int_t^\infty f(s)(ds/s)$ , we have that, for every  $h$  decreasing,

$$\|Qh\|_{L^p(w)} \lesssim \|h\|_{L^p(w)},$$

and hence, in particular,

$$\|QS_a f\|_{L^p(w)} \lesssim \|S_a f\|_{L^p(w)} \lesssim \|f\|_{L^p(w)}.$$

Now,

$$QS_a f(t) = \int_t^\infty S_a f(s) \frac{ds}{s} = \int_t^\infty \int_0^\infty a(y) f(sy) dy \frac{ds}{s} = \int_0^\infty f(st) \frac{A(s)}{s} ds,$$



and hence we obtain that  $S_{b_1}$  is bounded on  $L^p(w)$  with constant less than or equal to  $K = \|S_a\| \|Q\|$ , where  $b_1(s) = A(s)/s$ . If we repeat the argument, we obtain that  $S_{b_n}$  is bounded with constant less than or equal to  $K^n$ , where

$$b_n(s) = \frac{B_{n-1}(s)}{s} = \dots = \frac{1}{(n-1)!s} \int_0^s a(y) \left(\log^+ \frac{s}{y}\right)^{n-1} dy.$$

Now, if we take  $B > K$ , we construct the operator

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{B^n} S_{b_n} f(t) = \int_0^{\infty} \frac{1}{s} \left( \int_0^s \left(\frac{s}{y}\right)^{1/B} a(y) dy \right) f(st) ds,$$

and the result follows taking  $\delta = 1/B$ . □

### 6. Iterative operators

In this section we consider the iteration operators

$$S_a^{(n)} f(t) = S_a(S_a^{(n-1)} f)(t)$$

and we assume, for simplicity, that

$$A(1) = 1.$$

LEMMA 6.1. *For every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , it holds that  $S_a^{(n)} f(t) = S_{a_n} f(t)$ , where*

$$A_n(t) = \int_0^{\infty} a(s) A_{n-1}\left(\frac{t}{s}\right) ds \tag{6.1}$$

with  $A_1 = A$ .

*Proof.* For  $n = 2$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} S_a(S_a f)(t) &= \int_0^{\infty} a(s) S_a f(st) ds \\ &= \int_0^{\infty} a(s) \int_0^{\infty} a(y) f(sty) dy ds \\ &= \int_0^{\infty} f(zt) \int_0^{\infty} a(s) a\left(\frac{z}{s}\right) \frac{ds}{s} dz \\ &= \int_0^{\infty} a_2(z) f(zt) dz \end{aligned}$$

and

$$A_2(z) = \int_0^z a_2(u) du = \int_0^{\infty} a(s) A\left(\frac{z}{s}\right) ds.$$

The result then follows by induction since, by (3.1),

$$\begin{aligned} S_a(S_{a_{n-1}} f)(t) &= \int_0^{\infty} a(s) \left( \int_0^{\infty} A_{n-1}\left(\frac{\lambda_f(y)}{st}\right) dy \right) ds \\ &= \int_0^{\infty} A_n\left(\frac{\lambda_f(y)}{t}\right) dy. \end{aligned} \tag{□}$$

From here it follows that, for every  $t > 0$  and every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,

$$A_n(t) \geq A_{n-1}(t) \geq A(t).$$

Therefore,

$$B_p^{a_n} \subset B_p^{a_{n-1}} \subset \dots \subset B_p^a$$

and we also have the following proposition.

PROPOSITION 6.2. For every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,

$$S_a : L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) \rightarrow L^p(w) \iff S_{a_n} : L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) \rightarrow L^p(w).$$

COROLLARY 6.3. If (1.7) holds, then, for every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $w \in B_p^{a_n}$ , and in fact

$$\|w\|_{B_p^{a_n}} \leq \|S_a\|^n.$$

As in proposition 3.6, we obtain the following proposition.

PROPOSITION 6.4. If  $a$  satisfies that, for some  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,

$$\inf_{t>0} A(t)A_n\left(\frac{1}{t}\right) > 0$$

or

$$\sup_{t>0} A(t)A_n\left(\frac{1}{t}\right) = +\infty,$$

then there is no weight  $w \neq 0$  such that  $S_a$  is bounded from  $L_{\text{dec}}^p(w)$  to  $L^p(w)$ .

THEOREM 6.5. Let us assume that  $S_a$  satisfies (1.7). Then, for every  $\lambda > \|S_a\|$ , there exists a locally integrable function in  $(0, \infty)$ ,  $a_{\infty, \lambda}$ , such that

$$A(t) + \frac{1}{\lambda} \int_0^\infty a(s)A_{\infty, \lambda}\left(\frac{t}{s}\right) ds = A_{\infty, \lambda}(t), \quad t > 0, \quad (6.2)$$

and

$$S_{a_{\infty, \lambda}} : L_{\text{dec}}^p(w) \rightarrow L^p(w)$$

is bounded.

*Proof.* Set  $a_{\infty, \lambda}$  such that

$$A_{\infty, \lambda}(t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{A_n(t)}{\lambda^n}. \quad (6.3)$$

Using lemma 6.1 we obtain that

$$S_{a_{\infty, \lambda}} f(t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{S_a^{(n)} f(t)}{\lambda^n},$$

and hence, since  $\lambda > \|S_a\|$ , the result follows immediately. Finally, (6.2) follows easily from (6.1) and the definition of  $A_{\infty, \lambda}$ .  $\square$

We observe that, for every  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,

$$B_p^{a_\infty, \lambda} \subset B_p^{a_n} \subset B_p^a.$$

COROLLARY 6.6. *If (1.7) holds, then, for every  $\lambda > \|S_a\|$ :*

(i)  $w \in B_p^{a_\infty, \lambda}$ ;

(ii)  $\sup_{r>0} W^{1/p}(r) \left( \int_0^\infty A_{\infty, \lambda}^{p'} \left( \frac{s}{r} \right) W^{-p'}(s) w(s) ds \right)^{1/p'} < \infty.$

Equivalently (in the same way as in corollary 2.8),

$$\sup_{r>0} \left( \int_0^\infty A_{\infty, \lambda}^p \left( \frac{r}{t} \right) w(t) dt \right)^{1/p} \left( \int_0^\infty A_{\infty, \lambda}^{p'} \left( \frac{s}{r} \right) W^{-p'}(s) w(s) ds \right)^{1/p'} < \infty. \tag{6.4}$$

REMARK 6.7. If  $a(s) = \chi_{(0,1)}$ , then one can see (solving the corresponding differential equation) that the solution to (6.2) is given by

$$A_{\infty, \lambda}(t) = \begin{cases} \frac{\lambda}{\lambda - 1} t^{1-1/\lambda} & \text{if } 0 < t < 1, \\ \frac{\lambda}{\lambda - 1} & \text{if } t \geq 1. \end{cases}$$

Moreover, one can also check that the condition  $w \in B_p^{a_\infty, \lambda}$  corresponds to the  $p - \varepsilon$  property of the  $B_p$  weights.

REMARK 6.8. We make the final remark that, from corollary 2.8 and proposition 6.2, (1.7) implies that the quantity

$$K = \sup_{r, n} \left( \int_0^\infty A_n^p \left( \frac{r}{t} \right) w(t) dt \right)^{1/np} \left( \int_0^\infty A_n^{p'} \left( \frac{s}{r} \right) W^{-p'}(s) w(s) ds \right)^{1/np'}$$

is finite, and thus one can easily see that we can define  $A_{\infty, \lambda}$  for every  $\lambda > K$  as in (6.3) and we have that  $w \in B_p^{a_\infty, \lambda}$  and both (6.2) and (6.4) hold.

A final question: is (6.4) sufficient to have (1.7) whenever  $\lambda > K$ ?

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