

# QUANTITATIVE SHEAF THEORY

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ABSTRACT. We introduce a notion of complexity of a complex of  $\ell$ -adic sheaves on a quasi-projective variety and prove that the six operations are “continuous”, in the sense that the complexity of the output sheaves is bounded solely in terms of the complexity of the input sheaves. A key feature of complexity is that it provides bounds for the sum of Betti numbers that, in many interesting cases, can be made uniform in the characteristic of the base field. As an illustration, we discuss a few simple applications to horizontal equidistribution results for exponential sums over finite fields.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since its invention, and especially since Deligne’s proof [7] of the strongest form of the Riemann Hypothesis over finite fields, étale cohomology has exerted a considerable influence on analytic number theory. Its applications very often rely on estimates for the dimension of various étale cohomology spaces, which appear in “implicit constants” arising from the Grothendieck–Lefschetz trace formula combined with the Riemann Hypothesis and depend on the characteristic  $p$  of the finite fields under consideration. This characteristic is typically itself a variable going to infinity, and getting uniform estimates in terms of  $p$  turns out to be the crucial difficulty. Except for very simple cases, uniformity of such estimates is *not* a formal feature of étale cohomology (for examples and further discussion, see, e.g., [22, 11.11]).

In recent years, this issue has been particularly visible in a series of works by Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel (see, e.g., [13] and [14]) that make extensive use of very general sheaves on curves in various problems of analytic number theory. Due to the simpler nature of curves (essentially, the Euler–Poincaré characteristic controls the sum of Betti numbers, and has an expression in terms of “simple” local invariants), they obtained a satisfactory theory, phrased in terms of a “complexity” invariant of an  $\ell$ -adic sheaf on a

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W. S. was supported by Dr. Max Rössler, the Walter Haefner Foundation and the ETH Zürich Foundation. A. F. and E. K. are supported by the DFG-SNF lead agency program grant 200020L\_175755. J. F. is partially supported by the grant ANR-18-CE40-0017 of the Agence Nationale de la Recherche.

curve over a finite field, which they called the “(analytic) conductor”. The key feature of this theory is that *most natural operations on sheaves and the analytic resulting estimates* depend on the “input” sheaves only through their conductor (see, e.g., [13, Th. 1.5]).

In this paper, we develop a similar theory for higher-dimensional quasi-projective algebraic varieties over any field. (Being a geometric invariant, the complexity is defined by base change to an algebraically closure of the base field, so most of this paper will only deal with algebraically closed fields.) This leads to very general estimates that solve most of the known problems of estimating Betti numbers in analytic number theory.

We now state somewhat informally the definition of complexity and some of the key statements, focusing for simplicity on sheaves on affine space  $\mathbf{A}^n$ . Let  $k$  be an algebraically closed field and  $\ell$  a prime number different from the characteristic of  $k$ . We will define:

- A non-negative integer  $c(A)$  for any object  $A$  of the bounded derived category of constructible sheaves  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^n, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$  (Definitions 6.4 and 3.2). Letting  $u$  denote the open immersion of  $\mathbf{A}^n$  in  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , the integer  $c(A)$  is defined as the maximum over integers  $0 \leq m \leq n$  of the sum of the Betti numbers of the pullback of the extension by zero  $u_!A$  to a “generic” linear subspace of dimension  $m$  of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ .
- A non-negative integer  $c(f)$  for any morphism  $f: \mathbf{A}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^m$  (Definition 6.7). In general, this is also defined in terms of sums of Betti numbers, but admits in the case at hand a completely explicit bound that only involves the degrees of the polynomials defining  $f$  (see Proposition 6.21).

We will then prove the following result (Theorem 6.9). In the statement,  $D(A)$  denotes the Verdier dual of  $A$  and all functors and operations are considered in the derived sense (so, e.g., we write  $f_*$  instead of  $Rf_*$ ).

**Theorem 1.1.** *For any  $f: \mathbf{A}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^m$ , for any objects  $A$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^n)$ , and any object  $C$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^m)$ , the following estimates hold:*

$$\begin{aligned} c(D(A)) &\ll c(A), \\ c(A \otimes B) &\ll c(A)c(B), \quad c(\mathcal{H}om(A, B)) \ll c(A)c(B), \\ c(f^*C) &\ll c(f)c(C), \quad c(f^!C) \ll c(f)c(C), \\ c(f_!A) &\ll c(f)c(A), \quad c(f_*A) \ll c(f)c(A). \end{aligned}$$

*In all these estimates, the implied constants depend only on the pair of integers  $(n, m)$  and are effective.*

Over finite fields, the conjunction of the Riemann Hypothesis and the theory of complexity yields the following “quasi-orthogonality” statement (Theorem 7.13):

**Theorem 1.2.** *Suppose that  $k$  is the algebraic closure of a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$ , and let  $A$  and  $B$  be irreducible perverse sheaves on  $\mathbf{A}^n$  defined over  $\mathbf{F}$  that are pure of weight zero, with trace functions  $t_A$  and  $t_B$  respectively. Then the estimate*

$$\sum_{x \in \mathbf{F}^n} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} \ll c(A)c(B)|\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$$

*holds if  $A$  and  $B$  are not geometrically isomorphic, whereas in case they are the estimate*

$$\sum_{x \in \mathbf{F}^n} |t_A(x)|^2 = 1 + O(c(A)^2|\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2})$$

*holds. In both estimates, the implied constants depend only on  $n$  and are effective.*

**Remark 1.3.** Readers from analytic number theory who are unfamiliar with perverse sheaves may be surprised that these sums are not written as averages, in comparison with

statements like those in [13]. This is due to the normalization inherent to the definition of weights in this setting: for instance, for a perverse sheaf  $M$  on  $\mathbf{A}^1$  that is a single lisse sheaf sitting in degree  $-1$ , being pure of weight zero means that the eigenvalues of Frobenius at all points have modulus  $|\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$  (and not 1, as is the case for a lisse sheaf that is pointwise pure of weight zero).

We highlight one first rather simple application (see part (1) of Corollary 7.23), which gives a positive answer to a question of Katz [25, p. 8 and 12.6.6].

**Theorem 1.4.** *Let  $n \geq 1$  and  $e \geq 1$  be integers. Let  $D(n, e)$  be the space of Deligne polynomials of degree  $e$  in  $n$  variables, i.e. those for which the homogeneous part of degree  $e$  defines a non-singular hypersurface in  $\mathbf{P}^{n-1}$ . For each  $f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$ , set*

$$S(f; p) = \frac{1}{p^{n/2}} \sum_{x \in \mathbf{F}_p^n} e\left(\frac{f(x)}{p}\right).$$

*The families  $(S(f, p))_{f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)}$  become equidistributed as  $p \rightarrow +\infty$  with respect to the image under the trace of the probability Haar measure on the unitary group  $U_{(e-1)n}(\mathbf{C})$ .*

We now comment on the approach that we use. Previous Betti number bounds, such as those of Bombieri [4], Adolphson–Sperber [1] and Katz [24], focused primarily on bounding cohomology groups involving certain very explicit sheaves, namely Artin–Schreier and Kummer sheaves. It is possible to apply these bounds to a sheaf cohomology problem involving, say, higher-rank Kloosterman sheaves, but only after unraveling their definition to recast the problem entirely in terms of Artin–Schreier sheaves. When more complicated operations are performed (for example, additive or multiplicative convolution, or Fourier transform), this process of re-interpretation becomes exceedingly cumbersome.

Our approach is instead built around the six functors formalism of étale cohomology, and is closely related to the characteristic classes constructed by Saito [35]. We define the “complexity” of an arbitrary bounded complex of constructible  $\ell$ -adic sheaves on a quasi-projective variety, and prove that it satisfies essentially all desired properties suggested by the case of curves and the requirements of applications to analytic number theory. In particular, the complexity of common sheaves such as Artin–Schreier, Kummer and Kloosterman sheaves can be easily calculated, and it turns out to be bounded independently of the characteristic of the underlying field, which is the key uniformity property that we seek.

**Remark 1.5.** In fact, the complexity of a sheaf on an algebraic variety will also depend on a chosen quasi-projective embedding of the variety; this seems unavoidable to have a theory with good properties, as we explain in Example 6.1.

We believe that this framework has a number of good properties, among which:

- (1) Since the deeper aspects of étale cohomology are built primarily around the six functors perspective, rather than the cohomology of varieties with coefficients in some simple explicit sheaves, this framework behaves much better in arguments where sophisticated techniques of étale cohomology are used.
- (2) Many applications of exponential sum bounds from étale cohomology revolve around exponential sums that are produced from simpler ones by applying analytic tools like changes of variables, summation over some variables, Fourier transform, etc. Through the “function-sheaf dictionary”, each of these usually corresponds to an operation on the sheaf side, which is constructed by means of the six functors (e.g., summation is direct image with compact support, etc). Since we control the

growth of the complexity under the six functors, we obtain automatically a good control of the estimates in such operations.

As we will see, almost all of the bounds for the complexity of the output sheaf of some cohomology operation are linear in the complexity of the input sheaf. Although this is not always needed for applications, it shows that the theory has good structural properties.

**An interpretation.** As suggested by Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel in the special case of curves, the “quantitative sheaf theory” that is developed in this paper can be thought of as defining the complexity of étale  $\ell$ -adic sheaves in such a way that most (if not all) usual operations in étale cohomology are “continuous”, in the sense that applying the operation to a sheaf with a given complexity  $c$  will lead to another one with complexity bounded only in terms of  $c$ . Thus, we think of the complexity as being similar to a (semi)-norm on a topological vector space, with functors on categories of sheaves playing the role of (often linear) maps between vector spaces. For instance, the “continuity” of Deligne’s  $\ell$ -adic Fourier transform (first observed in dimension one in [14, Prop. 8.2]) turns out to be one of the most essential features of applications of étale cohomology to analytic number theory.

**Outline of the paper.** Although the complexity is defined in terms of sums of Betti numbers, the proof of its main properties deeply relies on Saito’s construction [35] of the characteristic cycle of  $\ell$ -adic complexes. We survey what we require from this theory in Section 2, and prove a small complement on characteristic cycles of tensor products (Theorem 2.2). In Section 3, we formally define the complexity on projective space, we establish a few simple lemmas concerning “generic” injective linear maps, and most importantly we connect this approach with the characteristic cycle (Proposition 3.16). Section 4 is of technical nature: we define and prove the existence of certain objects called “test sheaves” that will ultimately lead to a comparison of the complexity with a norm of the characteristic cycle. Section 5 uses these results to establish the first fundamental result, namely a bilinear bound for the complexity of the tensor product (Theorem 5.1). Then Section 6 can rather quickly exploit the formalism of étale cohomology to establish the general version of Theorem 1.1, namely Theorem 6.9; later subsections derive various other “continuity” properties. Finally, Section 7 gives some fundamental examples (such as Artin–Schreier and Kummer sheaves) and summarizes a few direct applications (including forms of the Riemann Hypothesis, such as Theorem 1.2, the finiteness statement of Corollary 7.15, and a form of Deligne’s equidistribution theorem, from which Theorem 1.4 follows). In the concluding Section 8, we explain how all the basic estimates can be stated with explicit constants.

## Notation.

*Algebraic geometry.* We fix throughout a prime number  $\ell$  and we denote by  $k$  a field, algebraically closed unless otherwise specified, in which  $\ell$  is invertible.

By an *algebraic variety* over a (not necessarily algebraically closed) field  $k$ , we mean a reduced and separated scheme of finite type over the spectrum of  $k$ .

By a *geometric generic point* of an irreducible variety  $X$  over a separably closed field  $k'$ , we mean, as is customary in the theory of étale cohomology, a map  $\text{Spec } k' \rightarrow X$  such that the image of the underlying map on points consists of the generic point of  $X$ .

Let  $X$  be a scheme of finite type over  $k$ . We denote by  $D_c^b(X)$  the bounded derived category of constructible complexes of  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ -sheaves on  $X$  (see, e.g., [28, II.5]). We will

usually write distinguished triangles simply as

$$A \longrightarrow B \longrightarrow C.$$

For any object  $K$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and any integer  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , we denote by  $H^i(X, K)$  and  $H_c^i(X, K)$  the étale cohomology and the étale cohomology with compact support groups of  $X$  with coefficients in  $K$ , and we write

$$h^i(X, K) = \dim H^i(X, K), \quad h_c^i(X, K) = \dim H_c^i(X, K)$$

for the corresponding Betti numbers.

When applied to objects of  $D_c^b(X)$ , the symbols  $f_!$  and  $f_*$  always refer to the derived functors; the tensor product and the hom functor of objects of  $D_c^b(X)$  are also always derived functors. We denote by  $D(A)$  the Verdier dual of an object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ .

Given an algebraic variety  $X$  over  $k$  and objects  $A$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , the *shriek tensor product* of  $A$  and  $B$  is the object

$$A \otimes_! B = \Delta^!(A \boxtimes B)$$

of  $D_c^b(X)$ , where  $\Delta: X \rightarrow X \times X$  denotes the diagonal morphism. It is related to the usual tensor product by the duality

$$D(A \otimes_! B) = D(A) \otimes D(B).$$

We often use the projection formula in the derived category (see, e.g., [17, Th. 7.4.7 (i)]): for a morphism  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  of algebraic varieties over  $k$ , and for objects  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(Y)$ , there is a canonical isomorphism

$$f_!(A \otimes f^*B) \simeq f_!A \otimes B.$$

We also recall the excision triangle: let  $i: Z \rightarrow X$  be a closed immersion and  $j: U \rightarrow X$  the complementary open immersion, all varieties being defined over  $k$ . For any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and any morphism  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  over  $k$ , there is a distinguished triangle

$$(f \circ j)_!j^*A \longrightarrow f_!A \longrightarrow (f \circ i)_!i^*A$$

in the category  $D_c^b(Y)$  (see, e.g., [17, Th. 7.4.4 (iii)]).

*Finite fields.* In some sections (e.g., Sections 6.10 and 7.6), we will work over finite fields. We usually denote by  $\mathbf{F}$  such a field, which is always assumed to have characteristic different from  $\ell$ . For integers  $n \geq 1$ , we then denote by  $\mathbf{F}_n$  the extension of  $\mathbf{F}$  of degree  $n$  inside some fixed algebraic closure of  $\mathbf{F}$  (which often will be the field  $k$ ).

Let  $X$  be an algebraic variety over  $\mathbf{F}$ . For any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and any finite extension  $\mathbf{F}_n$  of  $\mathbf{F}$ , we denote by

$$t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n): X(\mathbf{F}_n) \longrightarrow \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$$

the *trace function* of  $A$  on  $\mathbf{F}_n$ . We refer the reader to [34, §1] for the basic formalism of trace functions in this generality. We will also write  $t_A(x) = t_A(x; \mathbf{F})$  for  $x \in X(\mathbf{F})$ .

In all arguments involving the formalism of weights (in the sense of Deligne), we will fix an isomorphism  $\iota: \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow \mathbf{C}$  and use it to identify both fields, viewing in particular the trace functions as taking complex values. Weights are then considered to be defined only with respect to  $\iota$ , e.g. we write “pure of weight zero” instead of “ $\iota$ -pure of weight zero”.

Given a real number  $w$  and an element  $|\mathbf{F}|^w$  in  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  corresponding to a choice of  $|\mathbf{F}|^w$  in  $\mathbf{C}$  through the isomorphism  $\iota$ , we write  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell(w)$  for the pullback to  $X$  of the rank-one  $\ell$ -adic sheaf on  $\text{Spec}(\mathbf{F})$  on which Frobenius acts through multiplication by  $|\mathbf{F}|^w$ . This allows one to define twists  $A(w) = A \otimes \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell(w)$  for any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , and hence to reduce questions about pure sheaves of some weight to those of weight zero.

*The Euler–Poincaré characteristic.* We recall the Euler–Poincaré characteristic formula for a perverse sheaf on a smooth curve (see, e.g., [34, Th. 2.2.1.2] for the projective case, from which the general case follows by considering the extension by zero to the compactification). Let  $k$  be the algebraic closure of a finite field,  $C$  a smooth curve over  $k$ , and  $\overline{C}$  the smooth projective compactification of  $C$ . Let  $A$  be a perverse sheaf on  $C$ . We denote by

$$\text{rank}(A) = \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_\eta$$

the *generic rank* of  $A$  and, for a closed point  $x$  of  $C$ , we write

$$\text{drop}_x(A) = \text{rank}(A) - \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_x$$

$$\text{jump}_x(A) = \dim \mathcal{H}^0(A)_x.$$

For a closed point  $x$  of  $\overline{C}$ , we denote by  $\text{swan}_x(A)$  the *Swan conductor* at  $x$  of the cohomology sheaf  $\mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)$ . We further set

$$\text{loc}(A) = \sum_{x \in C} (\text{drop}_x(A) + \text{jump}_x(A) + \text{swan}_x(A)) + \sum_{x \in \overline{C} - C} \text{swan}_x(A),$$

where both sums run over closed points.

In these terms, the Grothendieck–Ogg–Shafarevitch formula for the Euler–Poincaré characteristic with compact support of  $A$  takes the form

$$\chi_c(C, A) = \text{rank}(A) \chi_c(C, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[1]) - \text{loc}(A).$$

The same result holds for the usual Euler–Poincaré characteristic  $\chi(C, A)$  since both are in fact equal for any constructible sheaf on any variety by a theorem of Laumon [33].

If  $\mathcal{F}$  is a middle-extension sheaf on  $C$  (by which we mean that there exists a non-empty open subset  $j: U \hookrightarrow C$  such that  $\mathcal{F}$  is lisse on  $U$  and  $\mathcal{F} \simeq j_* j^* \mathcal{F}$ ), then  $A = \mathcal{F}[1]$  is a perverse sheaf on  $C$  satisfying  $\mathcal{H}^{-1}(A) = \mathcal{F}$ . We use the notation  $\text{rank}(\mathcal{F})$ ,  $\text{drop}_x(\mathcal{F})$ ,  $\text{swan}_x(\mathcal{F})$  and  $\text{loc}(\mathcal{F})$  accordingly; note that in this case  $\text{jump}_x(A) = 0$  holds for all  $x$ .

*Asymptotic notation.* For complex-valued functions  $f$  and  $g$  defined on a set (or on some objects of a category, in which case the values of  $f$  and  $g$  are assumed to only depend on their isomorphism classes), the notation  $f \ll g$  and  $f = O(g)$  are synonymous; they mean that there exists a real number  $c \geq 0$  such that, for all  $x$  in the relevant set (or all objects in the category), the inequality  $|f(x)| \leq cg(x)$  holds. We call a value of  $c$  an “implied constant”, and we may point out its (in)dependency on some additional parameters. We also write  $f \asymp g$  whenever both  $f \ll g$  and  $g \ll f$  hold.

**Remarks on the text.** All the important ideas of this paper are solely due to W. Sawin, and were worked out in 2015 and 2016 while he was an ETH–ITS Junior Fellow. The current text was written by A. Forey, J. Fresán and E. Kowalski, based on the original draft by W. Sawin, in view of the applications to equidistribution results for exponential sums on commutative algebraic groups in the forthcoming work [10]. The quantitative form of the generic base change theorem is due to A. Forey.

## 2. CHARACTERISTIC CYCLES

In this section, we recall some properties of the characteristic cycles and the characteristic classes of complexes of étale sheaves as defined by Beilinson [2] and T. Saito [35]. We also prove a small complement (Theorem 2.2) regarding the compatibility of characteristic cycles with tensor products.

Let  $X$  be a smooth scheme over a perfect field  $k$ . In [35], characteristic cycles are defined for complexes of sheaves of  $\Lambda$ -modules on  $X$ , where  $\Lambda$  is a finite local ring whose

residue characteristic  $\ell$  is invertible in  $k$  (for example  $\Lambda = \mathbf{Z}/\ell^n\mathbf{Z}$ ). It was observed by Umezaki, Yang and Zhao [37, Section 5] that the whole theory can be readily adapted to the case of  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ -coefficients. In what follows, we implicitly rely on [37] in order to apply Saito's results to  $\Lambda = \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ .

Assume that  $X$  has pure dimension  $n$ . The *characteristic cycle*  $\text{CC}(A)$  of a complex  $A$  in  $\text{D}_c^b(X)$  is an algebraic cycle on the cotangent bundle  $T^*X$  of  $X$  of the form

$$\text{CC}(A) = \sum_i m_i C_i,$$

where  $m_i$  is an integer and  $C_i$  is a closed conical (i.e. stable under the action of  $\mathbf{G}_m$ ) subset of  $T^*X$  of dimension  $n$ . We refer the reader to [35, Def. 5.10] for the precise definition of the multiplicities  $m_i$ , and simply indicate some of the relevant properties of the characteristic cycle. The support  $\text{SS}(A)$  of  $\text{CC}(A)$  is called the *singular support* of  $A$  and was previously defined by Beilinson in [2].

If  $A$  is perverse, then  $\text{CC}(A)$  is effective (i.e.  $m_i \geq 0$  for every  $i$ ) by [35, Prop. 5.14].

The main property of the characteristic cycle is an index formula (see [35, Th. 7.13]) according to which, if  $X$  is a smooth projective variety over an algebraically closed field  $k$ , the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of  $A$  can be computed as the intersection number

$$\chi(X, A) = (\text{CC}(A) \cdot [T_X^*X]).$$

In this formula,  $T_X^*X$  denotes the zero section of  $T^*X$ , and the intersection is well-defined since the support of  $\text{CC}(A)$  has pure dimension  $n$ .

**Example 2.1.** Let  $X$  be a smooth projective curve and  $\mathcal{F}$  a lisse sheaf on a dense open subset  $j: U \rightarrow X$ . The characteristic cycle of the perverse sheaf  $A = j_!\mathcal{F}[1]$  is given by

$$\text{CC}(A) = \text{rank } \mathcal{F} \cdot [T_X^*X] + \sum_{x \in X \setminus U} (\text{rank } \mathcal{F} + \text{swan}_x A) [T_x^*X],$$

where  $T_x^*X$  stands for the conormal bundle of  $x$  in  $T^*X$ . In this situation, the index formula amounts to the Grothendieck–Ogg–Shafarevich formula.

Another deep result is the compatibility of the characteristic cycle with pullbacks. Let  $h: W \rightarrow X$  be a morphism between smooth schemes of pure dimensions  $m$  and  $n$  respectively and  $C \subset T^*X$  a closed conical subset. Let

$$h^*C = W \times_X C \subset W \times_X T^*X$$

be the pullback of  $C$ , and denote by  $K \subset W \times_X T^*X$  the preimage of the zero section  $T_W^*W$  by the map  $dh: W \times_X T^*X \rightarrow T^*W$ . Following [35, Def. 3.3 and 7.1], we say that the map  $h$  is *properly  $C$ -transversal* if the intersection  $h^*C \cap K$  is a subset of  $W \times_X T_X^*X$  and each irreducible component of  $h^*C$  has dimension  $m$ . This implies in particular that the restriction of  $dh$  to  $h^*C$  is finite (by [2, Lem. 1.2. (ii)] or [35, Lem. 3.1]). Hence, given a cycle  $Z$  supported on the irreducible components of  $C$ , we can define its pullback  $h^!Z \subset T^*W$  as  $(-1)^{m-n}$  times the push-forward along the finite map  $h^*C \rightarrow T^*W$  of the preimage of  $Z$  in  $W \times_X T^*X$  (see [35, Def. 7.1]).

The main theorem of Beilinson and Saito [35, Th. 7.6] regarding pullbacks says that, if  $A$  is an object of  $\text{D}_c^b(X)$  and  $h: W \rightarrow X$  is a properly  $\text{SS}(A)$ -transversal morphism, then the equality

$$\text{CC}(h^*A) = h^! \text{CC}(A)$$

holds. For example, smooth morphisms are automatically properly  $\text{SS}(A)$ -transversal by [35, Lem. 3.4], and in that case the theorem essentially amounts to the statement

that, for smooth varieties  $X$  and  $Y$  and objects  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(Y)$ , the equality

$$\mathrm{CC}(A \boxtimes B) = \mathrm{CC}(A) \times \mathrm{CC}(B),$$

holds in  $T^*(X \times Y) = T^*X \times T^*Y$ , see [36, Th.2.2] for details.

In what follows, vector bundles on schemes are viewed as schemes in the usual way. A sum of vector bundles  $V + W$  is isomorphic to their fiber product over the base, whereas the product  $V \times W$  is their product as schemes, and hence is a vector bundle on the product of the bases. As for  $T^*X$ , a closed subset of a vector bundle is said to be *conical* if it is invariant under the scaling action of  $\mathbf{G}_m$ . Given a vector bundle  $V$  on a variety  $X$ , we denote by  $\overline{V} = \mathbf{P}(V + \mathcal{O}_X)$  the projective bundle compactifying  $V$ , which admits a decomposition  $\overline{V} = V \cup \mathbf{P}(V)$ .

The main result of this section is the following theorem concerning characteristic cycles of tensor products of sheaves.

**Theorem 2.2.** *Let  $X$  be a smooth variety over  $k$  of pure dimension  $n$ . Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $D_c^b(X)$ . Consider the summation and the inclusion maps*

$$s: T^*X + T^*X \rightarrow T^*X, \quad i: T^*X + T^*X \rightarrow T^*X \times T^*X.$$

*Assume that  $\mathrm{SS}(A) \cap \mathrm{SS}(B)$  is supported on the zero section and that each irreducible component of  $\mathrm{SS}(A) \times_X \mathrm{SS}(B)$  has dimension at most  $n$ . Then:*

- (1) *Each irreducible component of  $\mathrm{SS}(A) \times_X \mathrm{SS}(B)$  has dimension equal to  $n$ .*
- (2) *The equality  $i^*(\mathrm{SS}(A) \times \mathrm{SS}(B)) = \mathrm{SS}(A) \times_X \mathrm{SS}(B)$  holds.*
- (3) *The restriction of  $s$  to  $\mathrm{SS}(A) \times_X \mathrm{SS}(B)$  is a finite map to  $T^*X$ .*
- (4) *The following equality holds*

$$\mathrm{CC}(A \otimes B) = (-1)^n s_* i^* (\mathrm{CC}(A) \times \mathrm{CC}(B)),$$

*where the pullback and the pushforward are taken in the sense of intersection theory. (By (1) and (2), the inverse image  $i^*(\mathrm{SS}(A) \times \mathrm{SS}(B))$  has the expected dimension, so the intersection-theoretic pullback is well-defined.)*

- (5) *Assume that  $X$  is projective. Let  $\overline{\mathrm{CC}(A)}$  and  $\overline{\mathrm{CC}(B)}$  be the closures of  $\mathrm{CC}(A)$  and  $\mathrm{CC}(B)$  inside the projective bundle  $\overline{T^*X}$ . Then the equality*

$$\chi(X, A \otimes B) = (-1)^n \mathrm{CC}(A) \cdot \mathrm{CC}(B) = (-1)^n \overline{\mathrm{CC}(A)} \cdot \overline{\mathrm{CC}(B)}$$

*holds, where the dots denote intersection numbers of algebraic cycles.*

The proof of the theorem relies on the following lemma.

**Lemma 2.3.** *Let  $X$  be a variety over  $k$  and let  $V$  be a vector bundle on  $X$ . Let  $C_1, C_2 \subseteq V$  be conical subsets and  $\overline{C_1}$  and  $\overline{C_2}$  their closures inside the projective bundle  $\overline{V}$ . The following two conditions are equivalent:*

- (1)  *$C_1 \cap C_2$  is contained in the zero section of  $V$ .*
- (2)  *$\overline{C_1} \cap \overline{C_2}$  does not intersect  $\mathbf{P}(V)$  inside  $\overline{V}$ .*

*Proof.* The intersection  $\overline{C_1} \cap \overline{C_2}$  is proper, as a closed subset of  $\overline{V}$ . Taking the decomposition  $\overline{V} = V \cup \mathbf{P}(V)$  into account, if condition (2) holds, then  $\overline{C_1} \cap \overline{C_2}$  is also affine, being a closed subset of  $V$ . Therefore,  $\overline{C_1} \cap \overline{C_2}$  is a finite conical subset of  $V$ , and is hence contained in the zero section. Conversely, (1) implies (2) because if  $x$  is a point of  $\overline{C_1} \cap \overline{C_2}$  that lies in  $\mathbf{P}(V)$ , then the line in  $V$  corresponding to  $x$  is contained in  $C_1 \cap C_2$ , which therefore is not just the zero section.  $\square$



*Proof of Theorem 2.2.* We first prove statement (1). Since  $\text{SS}(A) \times_X \text{SS}(B)$  is the intersection of the inverse images of  $\text{SS}(A)$  and  $\text{SS}(B)$  inside  $T^*X + T^*X$  (i.e. the intersection of two  $2n$ -dimensional schemes inside a smooth variety of dimension  $3n$ ), each of its irreducible components has dimension at least  $n$ , and hence equal to  $n$  by assumption.

Statement (2) follows from the fact that pullback by  $i$  identifies the sum  $T^*X + T^*X$  with  $T^*X \times_X T^*X$  seen as a closed subset of  $T^*X \times T^*X$ . In the rest of the proof, we will make this identification.

To prove (3), observe that  $s: T^*X + T^*X \rightarrow T^*X$  is a map of vector bundles on  $X$ . Since  $\text{SS}(A)$  and  $\text{SS}(B)$  are conical and  $\text{SS}(A) \cap \text{SS}(B)$  is a subset of the zero section  $T_X^*X$  of  $T^*X$ , the intersection of  $\text{SS}(A) \times_X \text{SS}(B)$  and the pullback along  $s$  of  $T_X^*X$  is contained in the zero section of  $T^*X + T^*X$ . Hence, the restriction of  $s$  to  $\text{SS}(A) \times_X \text{SS}(B)$  is finite by [35, Lem. 3.1].

We now turn to (4). Recall that the characteristic cycle of the exterior product  $A \boxtimes B$  is equal to  $\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)$  and that the tensor product  $A \otimes B$  is given by  $\Delta^*(A \boxtimes B)$ , where  $\Delta: X \rightarrow X \times X$  denotes the diagonal map. We will compute  $\text{CC}(A \otimes B)$  using the compatibility of characteristic cycles with pullbacks [35, Th. 7.6]. For this, we need to show that  $\Delta$  is a properly  $\text{SS}(A) \times \text{SS}(B)$ -transversal morphism.

From part (2), we know that every irreducible component of  $\Delta^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B))$  has dimension  $\dim X$ . For the transversality condition, consider the maps

$$T^*X \xleftarrow{s} T^*X + T^*X \xrightarrow{i} T^*(X \times X).$$

We need to check that the intersection of  $i^*(\text{SS}(A) \times \text{SS}(B))$  with the preimage of the zero section  $T_X^*X$  by the map  $s$  is contained in the zero section of  $T^*X + T^*X$ . But this is precisely the condition we checked in the proof of (3), and is in fact equivalent to (3) by [35, Lem. 3.1]. Hence, [35, Th. 7.6] applies to  $\Delta$  and  $A \boxtimes B$ , which yields the equality

$$\text{CC}(\Delta^*(A \boxtimes B)) = \Delta^! \text{CC}(A \boxtimes B).$$

Combining this with the first part of the proof and the definition of  $\Delta^!$ , we get

$$\text{CC}(A \otimes B) = \text{CC}(\Delta^*(A \boxtimes B)) = \Delta^! \text{CC}(A \boxtimes B) = (-1)^n s_* i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)).$$

Let us finally prove (5). By the index formula [35, Th. 7.13], the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of  $A \otimes B$  is the intersection number of  $\text{CC}(A \otimes B)$  with the zero section  $[T_X^*X]$ . Using part (4), it is hence given by

$$(-1)^n [T_X^*X] \cdot s_* i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)).$$

By the projection formula in intersection theory (see, e.g., [19, Prop. 8.3(c)]), the equality

$$[T_X^*X] \cdot s_* i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)) = s^*[T_X^*X] \cdot i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B))$$

holds, as long as the restriction of  $s$  to the support of  $i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B))$  is a proper map. Taking into account that the support of  $i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B))$  is  $\text{SS}(A) \times_X \text{SS}(B)$ , this is indeed the case by part (3). Now,  $s^*[T_X^*X]$  is the closed subset in  $T^*X + T^*X$  consisting of those elements with zero sum. Being conical,  $\text{CC}(B)$  is in particular invariant under multiplication by  $-1$ , hence the equality

$$s^*[T_X^*X] \cdot i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)) = d_*[T^*X] \cdot i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)),$$

where  $d: T^*X \rightarrow T^*X + T^*X$  is the diagonal map. Since  $d$  is a closed immersion, the projection formula yields

$$d_*[T^*X] \cdot i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)) = [T^*X] \cdot d^* i^*(\text{CC}(A) \times \text{CC}(B)).$$

Furthermore,  $i \circ d$  is the diagonal map  $\delta: T^*X \rightarrow T^*X \times T^*X$ , so the equality

$$\begin{aligned} [T^*X] \cdot d^*i^*(\mathrm{CC}(A) \times \mathrm{CC}(B)) &= [T^*X] \cdot \delta^*(\mathrm{CC}(A) \times \mathrm{CC}(B)) \\ &= \mathrm{CC}(A) \cdot \mathrm{CC}(B) \end{aligned}$$

holds. Combining all these identities we get the first equality of (5). Finally, the equality

$$\overline{\mathrm{SS}(A)} \cap \overline{\mathrm{SS}(B)} = \mathrm{SS}(A) \cap \mathrm{SS}(B).$$

follows from Lemma 2.3, and this implies the equality of intersection numbers

$$\mathrm{CC}(A) \cdot \mathrm{CC}(B) = \overline{\mathrm{CC}(A)} \cdot \overline{\mathrm{CC}(B)},$$

which completes the proof.  $\square$

The following definition is taken from Saito [35, Def. 6.7].

**Definition 2.4** (Characteristic class). The *characteristic class*  $\mathrm{cc}(A)$  of an object  $A$  of  $\mathrm{D}_c^b(X)$  is the image of  $\overline{\mathrm{CC}(A)}$  under the isomorphism

$$\mathrm{CH}^n(\overline{T^*\mathbf{P}^n}) \cong \mathrm{CH}^*(\mathbf{P}^n)$$

defined in [35, (6.12)]. The total Chow group  $\mathrm{CH}^*(\mathbf{P}^n)$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbf{Z}^{n+1}$ , with generators the classes of linear subspaces of dimension 0 to  $n$ . Using this, we will view  $\mathrm{cc}(A)$  as an element of  $\mathbf{Z}^{n+1}$ . The lattice  $\mathbf{Z}^{n+1}$  inherits the intersection pairing of  $\mathrm{CH}^n(\overline{T^*\mathbf{P}^n})$ , and this pairing is independent of the base field  $k$ .

**Lemma 2.5.** *Let  $0 \leq m \leq n$  be an integer, and let  $K_m$  denote the constant  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ -sheaf on an  $m$ -dimensional linear subspace of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , extended by zero and placed in degree  $-m$ . Then the characteristic cycle  $\mathrm{CC}(K_m)$  is the conormal bundle of that  $m$ -dimensional subspace, and the characteristic classes  $\mathrm{cc}(K_0), \dots, \mathrm{cc}(K_n)$  form a basis of  $\mathrm{CH}^*(\mathbf{P}^n) \otimes \mathbf{Q}$ . In particular,  $\mathrm{cc}(K_0), \dots, \mathrm{cc}(K_n)$  form a basis of  $\mathbf{Q}^{n+1}$  independent of  $k$  and  $\ell$ .*

*Proof.* The first statement follows from [35, Lem. 5.11(1) and 5.13(2)]. Since the characteristic classes  $\mathrm{cc}(K_0), \dots, \mathrm{cc}(K_n)$  lie on an  $(n+1)$ -dimensional space, in order to prove that they form a basis, it suffices to show that they are linearly independent. We will do this by proving that the matrix of intersection numbers  $\mathrm{cc}(K_{m_1}) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(K_{m_2})$  is invertible. If  $m_1 + m_2 < n$ , then generic subspaces of dimensions  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  do not intersect, so neither do their conormal bundles, and hence the intersection number is 0. If  $m_1 + m_2 = n$ , then a generic  $m_1$ -dimensional subspace and a generic  $m_2$ -dimensional subspace intersect transversely at a single point, so their conormal bundles intersect transversely at a single point as well, and hence have intersection number 1. Thus, the intersection matrix is invertible. The last sentence is just a restatement of this, except for the independence of  $k$  and  $\ell$ , which follows from observing that the isomorphism [35, (6.12)], applied to the closure of the conormal bundle of an  $m$ -dimensional subspace, can be defined integrally and so is independent of the characteristic.  $\square$

### 3. COMPLEXITY AND GENERIC LINEAR MAPS

In this section, we define the complexity of a complex of sheaves on projective space and we establish a few results about generic linear maps between projective spaces and their relationship with characteristic cycles.

**Definition 3.1.** Let  $k$  be an algebraically closed field. Let  $0 \leq m \leq n$  be integers. Let  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  be the variety of  $(n+1) \times (m+1)$  matrices of maximal rank, so that in particular  $M_k^{n+1, n+1}$  is equal to  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ . Given an extension  $k'$  of  $k$  and  $\mathbf{a} \in M^{n+1, m+1}(k')$ , we denote by  $l_{\mathbf{a}}: \mathbf{P}_{k'}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_{k'}^n$  the associated linear map.

In the case  $m = n$ , in which  $\mathbf{a}$  is an invertible matrix and  $l_{\mathbf{a}}$  is an automorphism, we may also use  $l_{\mathbf{a}}$  to refer to the induced map on any scheme depending functorially on  $\mathbf{P}^n$  (e.g., its cotangent bundle).

Here is the key definition of this article. Although it is closely related to characteristic cycles, as we will see, we have chosen to define it rather in terms of Betti numbers, so it can be used more directly in situations where some Betti numbers can be computed.

**Definition 3.2** (Complexity of a complex of sheaves on projective space). Let  $k$  be a field and let  $n \geq 0$  be an integer. For each  $0 \leq m \leq n$ , let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ . The *complexity*  $c(A)$  of an object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$  is the non-negative integer

$$c(A) = \max_{0 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A).$$

When working with this definition, we will often use the projection formula to write

$$h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A) = h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell),$$

which gives a slightly different expression for the complexity. Since étale cohomology is invariant under base change of algebraically closed fields, the value of  $c(A)$  is independent of the choice of the field of definition  $k'$ , and we will often drop it from the notation.

**Proposition 3.3.** *Let  $A$  be an object of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . The complexity  $c(A)$  vanishes if and only if  $A = 0$ . More precisely, let  $d_j$  be the dimension of the support of the cohomology sheaf  $\mathcal{H}^j(A)$  and let  $r_j$  be the maximum of the generic ranks of the restrictions of  $\mathcal{H}^j(A)$  to the irreducible components of maximal dimension of its support. Setting  $d = \max_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} d_j$  and  $r = \sum_{\substack{j \in \mathbf{Z} \\ d_j = d}} r_j$ , the inequality  $c(A) \geq r$  holds.*

*Proof.* Set  $m = n - d$  and let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ . The cohomology sheaf  $\mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A) = l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* \mathcal{H}^j(A)$  vanishes in degrees  $j$  such that  $d_j < d$ , whereas it has finite support  $S_j$  for all  $j$  such that  $d_j = d$ . Therefore, the Betti number  $h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A))$  vanishes for  $i \neq 0$  and is equal to the sum of the dimensions of the stalks of  $\mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)$  at points of  $S_j$  for  $i = 0$ . By definition, there is a point of  $S_j$  at which the stalk has dimension  $r_j$ , and hence the inequality  $h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \mathcal{H}^0(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)) \geq r_j$  holds for all  $j$  such that  $d_j = d$ .

It follows from this vanishing that the spectral sequence

$$H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)) \implies H^{i+j}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)$$

degenerates at the first page, hence an isomorphism

$$H^j(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A) \cong H^0(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)).$$

By definition of complexity, we then get

$$c(A) \geq \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} h^j(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A) = \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} h^0(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \mathcal{H}^j(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)) \geq \sum_{\substack{j \in \mathbf{Z} \\ d_j = d}} r_j = r,$$

which concludes the proof, since  $r = 0$  if and only if  $A = 0$ .  $\square$

We will make several arguments involving generic points on different spaces of linear maps. The next two lemmas describe all the properties we will need about relationships between different generic points.

**Lemma 3.4.** *Let  $X$  and  $Y$  be geometrically irreducible affine varieties over a field  $k$ . Let  $x \in X(k')$  and  $y \in Y(k')$  be points defined over a field extension  $k'$  of  $k$ . Let  $k(x)$  and  $k(y)$  be the fields generated by the coordinates of  $x$  and  $y$  respectively. If  $x$  is a geometric generic point of  $X_k$  and  $y$  is a geometric generic point of  $Y_{k(x)}$ , then  $x$  is a geometric generic point of  $X_{k(y)}$ .*

*Proof.* Consider the field  $k(x, y)$  generated by the coordinates of  $x$  and  $y$ . Because  $y$  is a geometric generic point of  $Y_{k(x)}$ , this field has transcendence degree  $\dim Y$  over  $k(x)$ , which itself has transcendence degree  $\dim X$  over  $k$  because  $x$  is a geometric generic point of  $Y_{k(x)}$ , so  $k(x, y)$  has transcendence degree  $\dim X + \dim Y$  over  $k$ . Hence, because  $k(y)$  has transcendence degree at most  $\dim Y$  over  $k$ , the field  $k(x, y)$  has transcendence degree at least  $\dim X$  over  $k(y)$ . This implies that  $x$  is a geometric generic point of  $X_{k(y)}$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 3.5.** *Let  $\mathbf{a}$  be an element  $M^{n+1, m+1}(k)$  and let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ . Then  $\mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}$  is a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ .*

*Proof.* Because  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  acts transitively on  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ , the map  $g \mapsto \mathbf{g}g$  from  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$  to  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  is surjective, and hence dominant, so the image of  $\mathbf{g}$  under this map is a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 3.6.** *Let  $k$  be a field and let  $0 \leq m < n$  be integers. Let  $\mathbf{a}$ ,  $\mathbf{g}$ , and  $\mathbf{h}$  be points of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ ,  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ , and  $\mathrm{GL}_{m+1, k}$  respectively, all defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ . Let  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}\mathbf{h}^{-1}$ . Let  $k(\mathbf{a})$  be the subfield of  $k'$  generated by the coordinates of  $\mathbf{a}$ , and similarly for  $k(\mathbf{g})$ ,  $k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})$ , and so on. Assume that  $\mathbf{g}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{a})}$  and that  $\mathbf{h}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{m+1, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})}$ . Then:*

- (1)  $\mathbf{b}$  is a geometric generic point of  $M_{k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})}^{n+1, m+1}$  and  $\mathbf{h}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{m+1, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})}$ .
- (2) If, in addition,  $\mathbf{a}$  is a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ , then  $\mathbf{g}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{a})}$ .

*Proof.* By Lemma 3.4, because  $\mathbf{g}$  is generic over  $k(\mathbf{a})$  and  $\mathbf{h}$  is generic over  $k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})$ ,  $\mathbf{g}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})}$ .

Because  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  acts transitively on  $M^{n+1, m+1}$  by left multiplication, applying a geometric generic point  $\mathbf{g}$  of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})}$  to a point  $\mathbf{a}\mathbf{h}^{-1}$  of  $M_{k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})}^{n+1, m+1}$  produces a geometric generic point  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}\mathbf{h}^{-1}$  of  $M_{k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})}^{n+1, m+1}$ .

By Lemma 3.4, because  $\mathbf{h}$  is geometric generic over  $k(\mathbf{a})$  and  $\mathbf{b}$  is geometric generic over  $k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{h})$ , it follows that  $\mathbf{h}$  is geometric generic over  $k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$ .

The last claim, that  $\mathbf{g}$  is geometric generic over  $k(\mathbf{a})$  if  $\mathbf{a}$  is geometric generic over  $k(\mathbf{g})$ , follows immediately from Lemma 3.4.  $\square$

**Definition 3.7.** For  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}$  in  $k$ , let  $\mathrm{Diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})$  be the diagonal matrix in  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}(k)$  whose diagonal entries are  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}$ .

**Lemma 3.8.** *Let  $k$  be a field and let  $n \geq 0$  be an integer. Let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ , and let  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}$  be independent transcendentals over the field  $k(\mathbf{g})$  generated by the matrix coefficients of  $\mathbf{g}$ . Then:*

- (1)  $\mathbf{g} \mathrm{Diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}) \mathbf{g}^{-1}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ .
- (2) For all  $m$  from 0 to  $n+1$ ,  $\mathbf{g} \mathrm{Diag}(1, \dots, 1, \lambda_{m+1}, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k}$ .

*Proof.* Because  $(\mathbf{g}, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1} \times \mathbf{G}_m^{n+1}$ , to check that an element of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{g}, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})}$  expressed as a function of  $(\mathbf{g}, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})$  is a

geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$ , it suffices to check that the function is a dominant map from  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k} \times \mathbf{G}_m^{n+1}$  to  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$ . For  $\mathbf{g} \mathrm{Diag}(1, \dots, 1, \lambda_{m+1}, \dots, \lambda_{n+1})$ , dominance is simply the fact that  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  acts transitively on itself by left multiplication and for  $\mathbf{g} \mathrm{Diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}) \mathbf{g}^{-1}$  dominance is the well-known fact that generic matrices are diagonalizable.  $\square$

**Lemma 3.9.** *Let  $k$  be a field and let  $m$  and  $m'$  satisfy  $0 \leq m, m' \leq n, 0 \leq m + m' - n$ . Let  $\mathbf{a}$  and  $\mathbf{a}'$  be independent geometric generic points of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  and  $M_k^{n+1, m'+1}$  defined over a field  $k'$ , i.e. such that  $\mathbf{a}'$  is a geometric generic of  $M_{k(\mathbf{a})}^{n+1, m'+1}$ . Then there exists a geometric generic point  $\mathbf{b}$  of  $M_k^{n+1, m+m'-n+1}$  such that the image of  $l_{\mathbf{b}}$  is the intersection of the image of  $l_{\mathbf{a}}$  and  $l_{\mathbf{a}'}$  and such that  $l_{\mathbf{a}*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell} \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}'*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell} = l_{\mathbf{b}*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell}$ .*

*Proof.* View  $\mathbf{a}$  and  $\mathbf{a}'$  as matrices of elements defined over  $k'$ . We can view  $l_{\mathbf{a}}(x) - l_{\mathbf{a}'}(y)$  as a linear map from  $k'^{m+1+m'+1}$  to  $k'^{n+1}$ . Because  $\mathbf{a}$  and  $\mathbf{a}'$  are generic and  $m + m' - n \geq 0$ , this map is surjective, with kernel of dimension  $m + m' + 1 - n$ . We can choose a basis for this kernel by row reduction, and then let the columns of  $\mathbf{b}$  be  $\mathbf{a}$  (equivalently  $\mathbf{a}'$ ) applied to the vectors in this basis.

We can check that the point  $\mathbf{b}$  is generic by restricting to the special case where the first  $m + m' + 1 - n$  columns of  $\mathbf{a}$  agree with the first  $m + m' + 1 - n$  columns of  $\mathbf{a}'$ , and the other columns are generic. In this case,  $\mathbf{b}$  will consist of exactly these columns. Since some specialization of generic matrices maps to a generic matrix, generic matrices also map to a generic matrix.

The last claim, on pushforwards, follows from the definition and the calculation of the intersection of the image.  $\square$

**Lemma 3.10.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be two perverse sheaves on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ . For  $\mathbf{g} \in \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}(k')$  a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n,k}$ ,  $A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B[-n]$  is perverse.*

*Proof.*  $A \boxtimes B$  is perverse, and the universal sheaf  $A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B$  on  $\mathbf{P}^n \times \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  is the pullback of  $A \boxtimes B$  by a smooth morphism of relative dimension  $(n+1)^2 - n$ , so by [3, 4.2.5] is perverse after shifting by  $(n+1)^2 - n$ . We then take the pullback to the fiber over a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$ , which preserves perversity after shifting by  $-(n+1)^2$  by definition of perversity.  $\square$

**Lemma 3.11.** *Let  $\mathbf{a}$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$ . Let  $A$  be an object of  $\mathrm{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . Then  $\mathrm{D}(l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A) = l_{\mathbf{a}}^* \mathrm{D}(A)[2(m-n)]$ , and if  $A$  is perverse, then  $l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A[m-n]$  is perverse.*

*Proof.* We can view the linear map  $l_{\mathbf{a}}$  as the composition of the map  $x \mapsto (x, \mathbf{a})$  from  $\mathbf{P}^m$  to  $\mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1}$  with the matrix multiplication map  $\mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ . The matrix multiplication map is smooth of relative dimension  $(m+1)(n+1) + m - n$  and the pullback to the geometric generic point is an inverse limit of open immersions. As in the previous lemma, the former preserve perversity after shifting by  $(m+1)(n+1) + m - n$  and the later after shifting by  $-(m+1)(n+1)$ . The statements for duals follows from the fact that  $f^! = f^*(d)[2d]$  if  $f$  is a smooth morphism of relative dimension  $d$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 3.12.** *Let  $0 \leq m \leq n-1$  be an integer, and let  $A$  be a perverse sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ . There exists a dense open subset  $U \subset M^{n+1, m+1}$  such that, for any geometric generic point  $\mathbf{a}$  of  $M^{n+1, m+1}$  and for any  $\mathbf{b} \in U$ , the complex  $l_{\mathbf{b}}^* A[m-n]$  is perverse and satisfies*

$$h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A) = h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{b}}^* A)$$

for every  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ .

*Proof.* Similarly to the proof of Lemma 3.11, we view the linear map  $l_{\mathbf{b}}$  as the composition of the map  $x \mapsto (x, \mathbf{b})$  from  $\mathbf{P}^m$  to  $\mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1}$  with the matrix multiplication map  $\text{mult}: \mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ . One obtains a dense open subset  $U_1 \subset M^{n+1, m+1}$  such that for  $\mathbf{b} \in U_1$ , the complex  $l_{\mathbf{b}}^* A[m-n]$  is perverse by repeatedly applying [28, Lem. 6.3]. For the second property, one can choose a dense open subset  $U_2 \subset M^{n+1, m+1}$  such that the complex  $p_* \text{mult}^* A$  is lisse. From the proper base change theorem one deduces that the equality  $h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A) = h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{b}}^* A)$  holds for every  $\mathbf{b} \in U_2$ .  $\square$

We need the following corollary of Theorem 2.2.

**Corollary 3.13.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . For each geometric generic point  $\mathbf{g}$  of  $\text{GL}_{n+1, k}$  over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ , the following equality holds:*

$$\chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) = (-1)^n \overline{\text{CC}(A)} \cdot \overline{\text{CC}(B)}.$$

*Proof.* We will check that the singular supports of  $A$  and  $l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B$  fulfil the conditions of Theorem 2.2. From (5) of loc. cit. we will then get the equality

$$\chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) = (-1)^n \overline{\text{CC}(A)} \cdot \overline{\text{CC}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)} = (-1)^n \overline{\text{CC}(A)} \cdot \overline{\text{CC}(B)},$$

where the second identity follows from deformation-invariance of intersection numbers, on noting that  $\overline{\text{CC}(B)}$  and  $\overline{\text{CC}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)} = l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \overline{\text{CC}(B)}$  lie in a family parameterized by  $\text{GL}_{n+1}$

The first condition is that  $\text{SS}(A) \cap \text{SS}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)$  is contained in the zero section. In view of Lemma 2.3, this amounts to showing that  $\overline{\text{SS}(A)} \cap \overline{\text{SS}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)}$  does not intersect  $\mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n)$  inside  $T^* \mathbf{P}^n$ . Note the equality  $\overline{\text{SS}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)} = l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \overline{\text{SS}(B)}$ . Because  $\text{GL}_{n+1}$  acts transitively on  $\mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n)$ , the intersection  $\overline{\text{SS}(A)} \cap l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \overline{\text{SS}(B)} \cap \mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n)$  has dimension

$$\begin{aligned} \dim \left( \overline{\text{SS}(A)} \cap \mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n) \right) + \dim \left( \overline{\text{SS}(B)} \cap \mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n) \right) - \dim \left( \mathbf{P}(T^* \mathbf{P}^n) \right) \\ = (n-1) + (n-1) - (2n-1) = -1 \end{aligned}$$

for general  $\mathbf{g}$ , and is thus empty.

The second condition is that every irreducible component of

$$\text{SS}(A) \times_{\mathbf{P}^n} \text{SS}(l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) = \text{SS}(A) \times_{\mathbf{P}^n} l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \text{SS}(B)$$

has dimension at most  $n$ . It is sufficient to prove that every irreducible component of the scheme over  $\text{GL}_{n+1}$  whose fiber over a point  $\mathbf{h}$  is  $\text{SS}(A) \times_{\mathbf{P}^n} l_{\mathbf{h}}^* \text{SS}(B)$  has dimension at most  $(n+1)^2 + n$ , because then the generic fiber has dimension at most  $n$ . This scheme maps to  $\text{SS}(A) \times \text{SS}(B)$ , which has dimension  $2n$ , and the fiber over any point consists of all elements of  $\text{GL}_{n+1}$  that send one point in  $\mathbf{P}^n$  to another, so the fiber has dimension  $(n+1)^2 - n$  and the total space has dimension  $(n+1)^2 + n$ , as desired.  $\square$

**Lemma 3.14.** *There exists a unique linear map  $f_n: \mathbf{Z}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{Z}^n$  such that, for any perverse sheaf  $A$  on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  and any geometric generic point  $\mathbf{b}$  of  $M_k^{n+1, n}$ , the equality*

$$\text{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^* A) = f_n(\text{cc}(A))$$

*holds. This linear map does not depend on  $k$  and  $\ell$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $K_m$  be the perverse sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}^{n-1}$  described in Lemma 2.5.

It does not matter what geometric generic point  $\mathbf{b}$  of  $M_k^{n+1, n}$  we take, because any pair of geometric generic points defined over two different fields are isomorphic after a suitable extension of both fields. Let  $\mathbf{a}$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, n}$ ,  $\mathbf{g}$  a geometric generic point of  $\text{GL}_{n+1, k(\mathbf{a})}$ , and  $\mathbf{h}$  a geometric generic point of  $\text{GL}_{n, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})}$ . Let  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}\mathbf{h}^{-1}$ . Then by Lemma 3.6,  $\mathbf{b}$  is a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, n}$  and so we may work with  $\mathbf{b}$ .

Furthermore,  $\mathbf{h}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n,k(\mathbf{b})}$  by Lemma 3.6, and hence Corollary 3.13 yields the equality

$$\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(K_m) = \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A \otimes l_{\mathbf{h}^{-1}}^*K_m).$$

Furthermore, since  $\mathbf{h}$  is generic, the right-hand side is equal to

$$\begin{aligned} \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{h}}^*l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A \otimes K_m) &= \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{a}}^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A \otimes K_m) \\ &= \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}*}K_m) = \mathrm{cc}(A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{a}*}K_m) \end{aligned}$$

by the projection formula and Corollary 3.13, along with the fact that  $\mathbf{g}$  is a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k(\mathbf{a})}$ . Thus,  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(K_m)$  is a linear function of  $\mathrm{cc}(A)$ .

Because the  $\mathrm{cc}(K_m)$  form a basis, by Lemma 2.5, the pairings  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(K_m)$  of  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A)$  with that basis can be used as coordinates of  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A)$ . Because these pairings are linear functions of  $\mathrm{cc}(A)$ , the class  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^*A)$  is a linear function of  $A$ .

By Lemma 2.5, the characteristic classes  $\mathrm{cc}(K_m)$  and  $\mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{a}*}K_m)$  (which is just  $\mathrm{cc}(K_m)$  in a different projective space) are independent of  $\ell$  and  $k$ , and so the linear map is independent of  $\ell$  and  $k$ .  $\square$

**Definition 3.15.** For  $n \geq 0$ , let  $f_n: \mathbf{Z}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{Z}^n$  be the linear map uniquely determined in Lemma 3.14. We define inductively a bilinear form  $b_n: \mathbf{Z}^{n+1} \times \mathbf{Z}^{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{Z}$  by setting  $b_0(x, y) = xy$  for  $(x, y) \in \mathbf{Z} \times \mathbf{Z}$  and

$$b_n(x, y) = x \cdot y + 4b_{n-1}(f_n(x), f_n(y))$$

for  $n \geq 1$  and  $(x, y) \in \mathbf{Z}^{n+1} \times \mathbf{Z}^{n+1}$ , where  $x \cdot y$  is the canonical scalar product on  $\mathbf{Z}^{n+1}$ .

**Proposition 3.16.** For any perverse sheaves  $A$  and  $B$  in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ , and for any geometric generic point  $\mathbf{g}$  of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$  defined over  $k'$ , the following holds:

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) \leq b_n(\mathrm{cc}(A), \mathrm{cc}(B)).$$

*Proof.* We prove this proposition by induction on  $n$ . The case  $n = 0$  is trivial, as then  $A$  and  $B$  are simply vector spaces, their characteristic classes are their dimensions, and the sum of Betti numbers is the product of the dimensions.

Assume the inequality holds in dimension  $n - 1$  and let  $A$  and  $B$  be perverse sheaves in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}^n)$ . By Lemma 3.10, the object  $A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B[-n]$  is perverse. Let

$$\sigma = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B),$$

the quantity to estimate.

Let  $\mathbf{a} \in M^{n+1,n}(k')$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_{k(\mathbf{g})}^{n+1,n}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ .

By the definition of the Euler–Poincaré characteristic, we have

$$\begin{aligned} h^{-n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) &= (-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) + \sum_{i \neq -n} (-1)^{i+n+1} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) \\ &\leq (-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) + \sum_{i \neq -n} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B). \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma &= \sum_{i < -n} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) + h^{-n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) + \sum_{i > -n} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) \\ &\leq 2 \sum_{i < -n} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) + (-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) + 2 \sum_{i > -n} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, A \otimes l_g^* B).\end{aligned}$$

By excision and Artin's theorem on cohomological dimension of affine varieties, the canonical map

$$H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) \rightarrow H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^*(A \otimes l_g^* B))$$

is an isomorphism in degrees less than  $-n$ . Because duality exchanges  $l_a^*$  and  $l_a^!$ , and because the dual of  $A \otimes l_g^* B[-n]$  is also perverse, the canonical map

$$H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^!(A \otimes l_g^* B)) \rightarrow H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B)$$

is an isomorphism in degrees greater than  $-n$ . Thus we obtain

$$\sigma \leq 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^*(A \otimes l_g^* B)) + (-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) + 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^!(A \otimes l_g^* B)).$$

For a geometric generic point  $\mathbf{a}$ , the functor  $l_a^!$  coincides with  $l_a^*$ , up to a shift and Tate twist, and hence

$$\sigma \leq 4 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^*(A \otimes l_g^* B)) + (-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B).$$

Now we observe that  $l_a^*(A \otimes l_g^* B) = l_a^* A \otimes l_a^* l_g^* B$ . Take  $\mathbf{h}$  to be a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{m+1, k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})}$  and  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{g} \mathbf{a} \mathbf{h}^{-1}$ . Then  $l_a^* l_g^* B = l_{\mathbf{h}}^* l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B$ . By Lemma 3.6,  $\mathbf{h}$  is generic over  $k(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$ . Together with the induction hypothesis and Lemma 3.14, we deduce that

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_a^* A \otimes l_{\mathbf{h}}^* l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B) \leq b_{n-1}(\mathrm{cc}(l_a^* A), \mathrm{cc}(l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B)) = b_{n-1}(f_n(\mathrm{cc}(A)), f_n(\mathrm{cc}(B))).$$

Finally, since

$$(-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_g^* B) = \mathrm{cc}(A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(B)$$

(Lemma 3.13) we obtain  $\sigma \leq b_n(\mathrm{cc}(A), \mathrm{cc}(B))$  by definition of  $b_n$ .  $\square$

#### 4. TEST SHEAVES

The main result of this section is the construction, achieved in Corollary 4.12, of a specific basis of the group  $\mathrm{CH}(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ , which will play an essential role in controlling the complexity of a tensor product in the next section.

**Definition 4.1** (Test sheaf). A *test sheaf* on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  is a perverse sheaf  $A$  on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  such that, for any field extension  $k'$  of  $k$ , any perverse sheaf  $B$  on  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n$ , and any generic point  $\mathbf{g}$  of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k'}$  defined over an algebraically closed field extension  $k''$  of  $k'$ , the cohomology group  $H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)$  vanishes in all degrees  $i \neq -n$ .

For example, a skyscraper sheaf  $A$  on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  is a test sheaf, since the object  $A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B$  is zero itself in that case. Test sheaves are most useful when they have a certain form, as highlighted in the next definition:

**Definition 4.2** (Strong test sheaf). Let  $d \geq 1$  be an integer. A *strong test sheaf of depth  $d$*  on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  is a test sheaf  $A$  that admits a filtration

$$0 = F_0 \subset F_1 \cdots \subset F_d = A$$



such that, for  $1 \leq j \leq d$ , the quotient  $F_j/F_{j-1}$  is isomorphic to a perverse sheaf (see Lemma 3.11) of the form  $l_{\mathbf{a}_j*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[m_j]$  for some  $0 \leq m_j \leq n$  and some  $\mathbf{a}_j \in M^{n+1, m_j+1}(k)$ .

Strong test sheaves have the following crucial property:

**Proposition 4.3.** *Let  $A$  be a strong test sheaf of depth  $d$  on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ . The inequality*

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} |\mathrm{cc}(A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(\mathcal{H}^i(B))| \leq dc(B)$$

holds for any field extension  $k'$  of  $k$  and any object  $B$  of  $\mathrm{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n)$ .

*Proof.* Denote by  $(F_j)_{1 \leq j \leq d}$  the terms of the filtration of Definition 4.2.

Let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k'}$ . By Corollary 3.13, we have:

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} |\mathrm{cc}(A) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(\mathcal{H}^i(B))| &= \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} |\chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \mathcal{H}^i(B))| \\ &\leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} h^j(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \mathcal{H}^i(B)). \end{aligned}$$

Since  $A$  is a test sheaf, the vanishing  $H^j(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \mathcal{H}^i(B)) = 0$  holds for  $j \neq -n$ , and hence the spectral sequence computing  $H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)$  via the perverse filtration on  $B$  degenerates at the first page. It follows that

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} h^j(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* \mathcal{H}^i(B)) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B).$$

On the other hand, the spectral sequence associated to the filtration  $(F_j)$  of  $A$  yields the inequality of sums of Betti numbers

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \leq \sum_{j=1}^d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, (F_j/F_{j-1}) \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B).$$

By assumption, there exist isomorphisms  $F_j/F_{j-1} = l_{\mathbf{a}_j*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[m_j]$  for some  $m_j \leq n$  and some  $k$ -point  $\mathbf{a}_j$  of  $M^{n+1, m_j+1}$ , so that the following equalities hold:

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{j=1}^d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, (F_j/F_{j-1}) \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) &= \sum_{j=1}^d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_j*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{m_j}, l_{\mathbf{a}_j}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B). \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\mathbf{g}$  is generic over  $k'$ , the product  $\mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}_j$  is a generic point of  $M_{k'}^{n+1, m_j+1}$ , and therefore the definition of  $c(B)$  implies the inequality

$$\sum_{j=1}^d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{m_j}, l_{\mathbf{a}_j}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \leq \sum_{j=1}^d c(B) = dc(B),$$

which concludes the proof.  $\square$

We will now construct strong test sheaves forming a basis of  $\mathrm{CH}(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ .

**Lemma 4.4.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $\mathrm{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . Let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n, k}$ . Then we have a canonical isomorphism*

$$A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B \cong A \otimes_l l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B.$$

*Proof.* Let  $l: \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathrm{GL}_{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  be the universal morphism given by

$$l(x, h) = (h \cdot x, h)$$

and  $\pi: \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathrm{GL}_{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  the projection. Then  $A \otimes l_g^* B$  and  $A \otimes_l l_g^* B$  are the generic fibers of  $\pi^* A \otimes l^* \pi^* B$  and  $\pi^* A \otimes_l l^* \pi^* B$  respectively, so it suffices to prove that  $\pi^* A \otimes l^* \pi^* B$  and  $\pi^* A \otimes_l l^* \pi^* B$  are isomorphic.

Consider the morphism  $(\pi, \pi \circ l): \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathrm{GL}_{n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{P}^n$ . This is a smooth morphism, because the group action of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  is transitive. Since  $\otimes$  and  $\otimes_l$  both commute with smooth pullbacks, we obtain isomorphisms

$$\begin{aligned} \pi^* A \otimes l^* \pi^* B &= (\pi, \pi \circ l)^* (\mathrm{pr}_1^* A \otimes \mathrm{pr}_2^* B), \\ \pi^* A \otimes_l l^* \pi^* B &= (\pi, \pi \circ l_g)^* (\mathrm{pr}_1^* A \otimes_l \mathrm{pr}_2^* B), \end{aligned}$$

so that it is enough to prove that  $\mathrm{pr}_1^* A \otimes \mathrm{pr}_2^* B$  and  $\mathrm{pr}_1^* A \otimes_l \mathrm{pr}_2^* B$  are isomorphic. But this is true, since they are both isomorphic to  $A \boxtimes B$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 4.5.** *Let  $n \geq 0$  be an integer. Let  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  be hyperplanes in  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  that intersect transversely, and consider the commutative diagram*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{P}_k^n - H_1 & \xrightarrow{a} & \mathbf{P}_k^n \\ b \uparrow & & \uparrow c \\ \mathbf{P}_k^n - (H_1 \cup H_2) & \xrightarrow{d} & \mathbf{P}_k^n - H_2. \end{array}$$

*The object  $a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n]$  is isomorphic to  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n]$  and is a test sheaf.*

*Proof.* By adjunction, there is a natural morphism  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  extending the identity on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n - (H_1 \cup H_2)$ , and it suffices to prove that this map is an isomorphism on stalks at all geometric points of  $H_1 \cup H_2$ . This is obvious save for points of the intersection  $H_1 \cap H_2$ . For those, we argue as follows: since  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  intersect transversely, étale locally around each such point the diagram looks like

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathbf{A}_k^{n-2} \times (\mathbf{A}_k^1 - \{0\}) \times \mathbf{A}_k^1 & \xrightarrow{a} & \mathbf{A}_k^n \\ b \uparrow & & \uparrow c \\ \mathbf{A}_k^{n-2} \times (\mathbf{A}_k^1 - \{0\}) \times (\mathbf{A}_k^1 - \{0\}) & \xrightarrow{d} & \mathbf{A}_k^{n-2} \times \mathbf{A}^1 \times (\mathbf{A}_k^1 - \{0\}). \end{array}$$

Expressing the constant sheaf on the down left corner as an exterior product and letting  $j: \mathbf{A}^1 - \{0\} \hookrightarrow \mathbf{A}^1$  denote the inclusion, the Künneth formula then implies that the map  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  is locally given by the identity on  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \boxtimes j_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \boxtimes j_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ .

We now proceed to the proof that  $a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n] \simeq c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n]$  is a test sheaf. First of all, we check that  $a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n]$  is perverse. Indeed, all maps in the diagram are affine open immersions, and the direct image and exceptional direct image by those preserve perversity. Next, let  $B$  be a perverse sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  and let  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ . We have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n] \otimes l_g^* B) &= \mathrm{H}^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, c_!(d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes c^* l_g^* B)) \\ &= \mathrm{H}_c^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_2, d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes c^* l_g^* B) \\ &= \mathrm{H}_c^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_2, c^*(c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_g^* B)). \end{aligned}$$

The object  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_g^* B$  is perverse by Lemma 3.10. Since pullbacks by open immersions preserve perversity, the object  $c^*(c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes c^* l_g^* B)$  is a perverse sheaf on the affine variety  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_2$ , and hence its compactly supported cohomology vanishes when  $i+n < 0$  by Artin's vanishing theorem.

Dually, using Lemma 4.4, we get

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[n] \otimes l_g^* B) &= \mathrm{H}^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_g^* B) \\
&= \mathrm{H}^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, a_*(b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes a^* l_g^* B)) \\
&= \mathrm{H}^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_1, b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes a^* l_g^* B) \\
&= \mathrm{H}^{i+n}(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_1, a^*(a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_g^* B)).
\end{aligned}$$

Arguing as above using Lemma 4.4, we see that  $a^*(a_* b_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_g^* B)$  is a perverse sheaf on the affine variety  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n - H_1$ , so that its cohomology vanishes for  $i + n > 0$  by Artin's vanishing theorem. This completes the proof.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.6.** *Let  $\mathbf{a} \in M_k^{n+1, m+1}(k)$ . If  $A$  is a test sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_k^m$ , then  $l_{\mathbf{a}*} A$  is a test sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $B$  be a perverse sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n$  and let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a generic point in  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1, k'}$ . By the projection formula, we have

$$\mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}*} A \otimes l_g^* B) = \mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}}^* l_g^* B).$$

Let  $\mathbf{h}$  be a generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{m+1, k'}(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g})$  and let  $\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}\mathbf{h}^{-1}$ . Let  $k'' = k'(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{g}, \mathbf{h})$ . By Lemma 3.6, the point  $\mathbf{b}$  is a generic linear embedding and  $\mathbf{h}$  is generic over the field of definition of  $k'(\mathbf{b})$ , so that

$$\mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}}^* l_g^* B) = \mathrm{H}^i(\mathbf{P}_{k''}^m, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{h}}^* l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B) = \mathrm{H}^{i+n-m}(\mathbf{P}_{k''}^m, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{h}}^* l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B[m-n]).$$

Because  $\mathbf{b}$  is generic, the object  $l_{\mathbf{b}}^* B[m-n]$  is perverse by Lemma 3.11, and therefore this cohomology group vanishes for  $i + n - m \neq -m$ , i.e., for  $i \neq -n$ .  $\square$

**Definition 4.7.** For each integer  $0 \leq m \leq n$ , pick a point  $\mathbf{a}_m \in M^{n+1, m+1}(k)$  and pick transversal hyperplanes  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  in  $\mathbf{P}_k^m$ . As in Lemma 4.5, let  $c: \mathbf{P}_k^m - H_2 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_k^m$  and  $d: \mathbf{P}_k^n - (H_1 \cup H_2) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_k^m - H_2$  be the corresponding immersions. Define the  $m$ -th standard test sheaf  $A_m$  by

$$A_m = l_{\mathbf{a}_m*} c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[m].$$

**Remark 4.8.** In the case  $n = 0$ , choosing  $\mathbf{a}_0$  amounts to choosing a  $k$ -point of  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ , the only possible choices for  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  are the empty hyperplanes in  $\mathbf{P}_k^0 = \mathrm{Spec} k$ , and  $A_0$  is a skyscraper sheaf supported at the chosen point.

**Corollary 4.9.** *For each  $0 \leq m \leq n$ , the object  $A_m$  is a strong test sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$  of depth at most 4.*

*Proof.* The fact that  $A_m$  is a test sheaf follows from applying Lemma 4.5 and Lemma 4.6. Because  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m*}$  preserves constant sheaves on linear subspaces, it preserves any filtration into constant sheaves on linear subspaces of the type required for a strong test sheaf, and thus it suffices to find such a filtration on  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ .

We use the notation of Lemma 4.5. Let  $h$  be the closed immersion of  $H_2$  into  $\mathbf{P}_k^m$ . Since  $c$  is an open immersion, there is a base change isomorphism  $d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell = c^* a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ . By adjunction, there is hence a morphism  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell = c_! c^* a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ , which is an isomorphism away from  $H_2$ . Because  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  vanishes on  $H_2$ , the morphism  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  has mapping cone  $h^* a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ . The complex  $a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  has a filtration whose associated quotients are the constant sheaf and a shift of the constant sheaf on  $H_1$ , so  $h^* a_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  has a filtration whose associated quotients are the constant sheaf on  $H_2$  and a shift of the constant sheaf on the intersection  $H_1 \cap H_2$ . The mapping cone triangle gives the desired filtration of  $c_! d_* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ .  $\square$

**Remark 4.10.** (1) One can also give a proof “by pure thought” of this proposition, based on the fact that  $A_m$  is equivariant for the subgroup of  $\mathrm{PGL}_{m+1}$  acting on  $\mathbf{P}_k^m$  and preserving the hyperplanes  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ . Because this group action has finitely many orbits, and its stabilizers are connected, one can show that the only irreducible elements of the category of perverse sheaves invariant under this group are the intersection cohomology complexes of the closures of the orbits, which in this case are simply the constant sheaves on  $\mathbf{P}^m$ ,  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ , and  $H_1 \cap H_2$ . An analogous method is used in the theory of the geometric Satake isomorphism to classify perverse sheaves on the affine Grassmanian that are equivariant for the left action of the formal arc group (see, e.g., [20, proof of Prop. 1]).

(2) The standard test sheaves depend on the choices in Definition 4.7; whenever we use them, we assume implicitly these choices have been made for all  $m$ , and that they are the same in the remainder of the arguments.

**Lemma 4.11.** *Let  $(A_j)_{0 \leq j \leq n}$  be standard test sheaves. The following holds:*

$$\mathrm{cc}(A_{m_1}) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(A_{m_2}) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } m_1 + m_2 < n, \\ 1 & \text{if } m_1 + m_2 = n. \end{cases}$$

*Proof.* This is a straightforward consequence of Corollary 3.13, which identifies the intersection number  $\mathrm{cc}(A_{m_1}) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(A_{m_2})$  with  $(-1)^n \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_{m_1} \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A_{m_2})$ . Indeed, the support of  $A_m$  is of dimension  $m$ . If  $m_1 + m_2 < n$ , it follows that the support of  $A_{m_1}$  does not intersect that of  $A_{m_2}$  after generic translation, and consequently their tensor product vanishes, from which  $\mathrm{cc}(A_{m_1}) \cdot \mathrm{cc}(A_{m_2}) = 0$  follows. Similarly, if  $m_1 + m_2 = n$ , the support of  $A_{m_1}$  intersects that of  $A_{m_2}$  after generic translation at a single point. At this point, both sheaves have stalk  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell}$ , so their tensor product is a skyscraper sheaf and has Euler–Poincaré characteristic 1.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.12.** *Let  $(A_j)_{0 \leq j \leq n}$  be standard test sheaves on  $\mathbf{P}_k^n$ . Then  $(\mathrm{cc}(A_i))_{0 \leq i \leq n}$  is a basis of  $\mathrm{CH}(\mathbf{P}_k^n) \simeq \mathbf{Q}^{n+1}$ .*

*Proof.* Indeed, by Lemma 4.11, the matrix of intersection pairings between the characteristic classes  $\mathrm{cc}(A_i)$  is invertible.  $\square$

## 5. COMPLEXITY OF A TENSOR PRODUCT

In this section, we prove the crucial theorem showing that the complexity controls the sum of Betti numbers of a tensor product of complexes of  $\ell$ -adic sheaves, namely:

**Theorem 5.1.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . Then the estimate*

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B) \ll c(A)c(B)$$

*holds, with an implied constant that only depends on  $n$ .*

Before starting the proof, we show how this implies an important corollary.

**Corollary 5.2.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . Then the estimate*

$$c(A \otimes B) \ll c(A)c(B)$$

*holds, with an implied constant that only depends on  $n$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$ . For  $0 \leq m \leq n$ , let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a geometric generic point of  $M_k^{n+1,m+1}$ . From the definition of complexity and Theorem 5.1,

we get the estimate

$$\begin{aligned} c(A \otimes B) &= \sup_{0 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \\ &\ll c(A) \sup_{0 \leq m \leq n} c(B \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell). \end{aligned}$$

For  $0 \leq m' \leq n$ , let  $\mathbf{a}'_{m'}$  be a generic point of  $M_{k(\mathbf{a}_m)}^{n+1, m'+1}$ . Again by definition, the complexity above is given by

$$c(B \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) = \sup_{0 \leq m' \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, B \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}'_{m'}^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$$

for any  $m \leq n$ . By Lemma 3.9, the equality  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}'_{m'}^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell = l_{\mathbf{b}^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  holds for a generic element  $\mathbf{b}$  of  $M_k^{n+1, m+m'-n+1}$ . This implies the inequality

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, B \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}_m^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes l_{\mathbf{a}'_{m'}^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \leq c(B)$$

for any  $m$  and  $m'$ , from which the result follows.  $\square$

The strategy for proving Theorem 5.1 consists in first establishing a “generic” version of it, and then deducing from this the precise statement. We denote by  $(A_m)_{0 \leq m \leq n}$  the family of test sheaves from Definition 4.7. For  $x \in \mathbf{R}^{n+1} = \text{CH}^*(\mathbf{P}^n) \otimes \mathbf{R}$ , set

$$\|x\| = \sum_{m=0}^n |x \cdot \text{cc}(A_m)|$$

Because  $(\text{cc}(A_m))_{0 \leq m \leq n}$  is a basis of  $\text{CH}(\mathbf{P}^n)$  by Corollary 4.12 and the intersection form is non-degenerate, this is simply the  $\ell^1$ -norm in the dual basis, and in particular defines a norm on  $\mathbf{R}^{n+1}$ .

**Proposition 5.3.** *For any object  $B$  of  $\text{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ , the following inequality holds:*

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\text{cc}({}^p \mathcal{H}^i(B))\| \leq 4(n+1)c(B).$$

*Proof.* Because  $A_m$  and  ${}^p \mathcal{H}^p(B)$  are perverse sheaves, their characteristic cycles are effective, and hence their characteristic classes have non-negative dot product. Hence, by Proposition 4.3, the inequality

$$\sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} |\text{cc}({}^p \mathcal{H}^p(B)) \cdot \text{cc}(A_m)| = \sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} \text{cc}({}^p \mathcal{H}^p(B)) \cdot \text{cc}(A_m) \leq 4c(B).$$

holds for all  $0 \leq m \leq n$ . Thus, we have

$$\sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\text{cc}({}^p \mathcal{H}^p(B))\| = \sum_{m=0}^n \sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} |\text{cc}({}^p \mathcal{H}^p(B)) \cdot \text{cc}(A_m)| \leq 4(n+1)c(B). \quad \square$$

The second part of the next corollary shows that the complexity of a complex of sheaves is, up to constants, the sum of the norms of the characteristic cycles of its perverse cohomology sheaves.

**Corollary 5.4.** *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $\text{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ .*

(1) For  $\mathbf{g}$  a generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$  defined over  $k'$ , the estimate

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \ll c(A)c(B)$$

holds, with an implied constant that only depends on  $n$ .

(2) We have

$$c(B) \asymp \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}(\mathcal{H}^i(B))\|,$$

where the implied constants depend only on  $n$ .

*Proof.* For the proof of (1), we apply the spectral sequences associated to the perverse filtrations of  $A$  and  $B$  to get

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \leq \sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{q \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, {}^p\mathcal{H}^p(A) \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* {}^p\mathcal{H}^q(B)).$$

Applying Proposition 3.16, and denoting by  $M_n$  the norm of the bilinear form  $b_n$ , so that the inequality  $b_n(\alpha, \beta) \leq \|\alpha\| \|\beta\|$  holds for any  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , we get

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \leq M_n \sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{q \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}({}^p\mathcal{H}^p(A))\| \|\mathrm{cc}({}^p\mathcal{H}^q(B))\|,$$

which is at most  $16(n+1)^2 M_n c(A)c(B)$  by Proposition 5.3.

For (2), one bound follows from Proposition 5.3. In the other direction, we begin as above (with the same  $\mathbf{g}$ ) until we reach the bound

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \ll \sum_{p \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}({}^p\mathcal{H}^p(A))\| \sum_{q \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}({}^p\mathcal{H}^q(B))\|.$$

Taking  $A = l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ , where  $\mathbf{a}_m$  is an arbitrary linear map defined over  $k$ , this gives

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \ll \sum_{q \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}({}^p\mathcal{H}^q(B))\|$$

for  $0 \leq m \leq n$ . This implies the desired bound, since  $\mathbf{g}\mathbf{a}_m$  is a generic point of  $M_k^{n+1, m+1}$  by Lemma 3.5.  $\square$

Our main theorem in this section is the same as Corollary 5.4, but without the generic pullback  $l_{\mathbf{g}}^*$ . To remove it, we will use a double induction strategy. We view a generic point  $\mathbf{g} \in \mathrm{GL}_{n+1}$  as a generic diagonal matrix conjugated by a generic invertible matrix. We will show that the theorem remains true if some of the entries of the diagonal matrix are set to 1, by induction on the number of entries. Once all the diagonal entries are set to 1, any conjugate is the identity matrix, and so we obtain our desired statement.

At each step, we have a family of cohomology groups parameterized by  $\mathbf{G}_m$ , i.e. a complex of sheaves on  $\mathbf{G}_m$ , and we want to bound the stalk at the identity using the stalk at the generic point. In general, the stalk at the generic point could be very small and the stalk at the identity could still be very large. However, we will now show that this cannot happen as long as we also control the cohomology. In our case, it turns out that controlling the cohomology corresponds to a lower-dimensional version of the problem, and we may use induction on the dimension to achieve our goal.

**Lemma 5.5.** *For each object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{G}_{m,k})$ , the inequality*

$$(1) \quad \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_1 \leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_\eta + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A)$$

holds, where  $\eta$  denotes the generic point of  $\mathbf{G}_{m,k}$ .

*Proof.* The spectral sequence associated to a perverse filtration of  $A$  gives the inequality

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_1 \leq \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(\mathbb{P} \mathcal{H}^j(A))_1.$$

Because perverse sheaves are supported in a single degree at the generic point, we have

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_\eta = \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(\mathbb{P} \mathcal{H}^j(A))_\eta.$$

Because the compactly-supported cohomology of an affine curve with coefficients in a perverse sheaf is supported in degrees 0 and 1, the spectral sequence for the perverse filtration of  $A$  degenerates and

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A) = \sum_{j \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, \mathbb{P} \mathcal{H}^j(A)).$$

Therefore, it is sufficient to prove the inequality (1) when  $A$  is a perverse sheaf.

If  $A$  is perverse, most of the terms in the sums in (1) vanish. Removing all the terms that are known to vanish, the desired inequality can be stated as

$$\dim \mathcal{H}^0(A)_1 + \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_1 \leq \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_\eta + h_c^0(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A) + h_c^1(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A).$$

Since  $\dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_1 \leq \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A)_\eta$ , it suffices to show that

$$\dim \mathcal{H}^0(A)_1 \leq h_c^0(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A) + h_c^1(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A)$$

or even

$$\chi(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, A) \geq \dim \mathcal{H}^0(A)_1.$$

This follows from the Euler–Poincaré characteristic formula for perverse sheaves on smooth curves, where the local term at a the point 1 is at least  $\dim \mathcal{H}^0(A)_1$ , all other local terms are non-negative, and the global term is a multiple of the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of  $\mathbf{G}_m$  and hence vanishes.  $\square$

Let  $n \geq 1$  be an integer. Let  $\mathbf{g} \in GL_{n+1,k}$ . The fixed points of the linear map  $l_{\mathbf{g}}$  are the projectivizations of the eigenspaces of  $\mathbf{g}$ . In particular, for any  $\lambda \neq 1$ , the fixed points of  $l_{\text{Diag}(\mu, 1, \dots, 1)}$  on  $\mathbf{P}^n$  consist of the isolated point  $x_0 = [1 : 0 : \dots : 0]$  and the hyperplane  $H_0 = \{[0 : a_1 : \dots : a_n]\}$ . We identify  $H_0$  with  $\mathbf{P}^{n-1}$ .

In the next two lemmas, we will denote by  $U \subseteq \mathbf{P}^n$  the complement of  $\{x_0\} \cup H_0$ , by  $j: U \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  the corresponding open immersion, and by  $\pi: U \rightarrow H_0 \simeq \mathbf{P}^{n-1}$  the projection map from  $U$  to the hyperplane  $H_0$ . We also denote by  $p: \{x_0\} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  the closed immersion of the isolated fixed point and by  $h: H_0 = \mathbf{P}^{n-1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  the closed immersion of the hyperplane.

**Lemma 5.6.** *Let  $n \geq 1$  be an integer. Let  $A$  and  $B$  be objects of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ . Let  $\lambda$  be a geometric generic point of  $\mathbf{G}_{m,k}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ . With notation as above, the following inequality holds:*

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B) &\leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\lambda, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B) \\ &\quad + 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\text{Spec}(k), p^* A \otimes p^* B) + 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^{n-1}, h^* A \otimes h^* B) \\ &\quad + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^{n-1}, \pi_! j^* A \otimes \pi_! j^* B). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* Let  $K$  be the pushforward of  $A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\mu, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B$  from  $\mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{G}_m$  to  $\mathbf{G}_m$ , where  $\mathbf{G}_m$  has coordinate  $\mu$ . Proper base change yields the equalities

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(K)_1 &= \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B), \\ \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \mathcal{H}^i(K)_\eta &= \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\lambda, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B). \end{aligned}$$

Hence, by Lemma 5.5, it suffices to prove the inequality

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, K) &\leq 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\text{Spec}(k), p^* A \otimes p^* B) \\ &\quad + 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^{n-1}, z^* A \otimes z^* B) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^{n-1}, (\pi_! j^* A) \otimes (\pi_! j^* B)). \end{aligned}$$

By the Leray spectral sequence, the equality

$$(2) \quad \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{G}_{m,k}, K) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{G}_m, A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\mu, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B).$$

holds. To compute the right-hand side, we partition  $\mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{G}_m = X_0 \cup X_1 \cup X_2$  where

$$X_0 = \{x_0\} \times \mathbf{G}_m, \quad X_1 = H_0 \times \mathbf{G}_m, \quad X_2 = U \times \mathbf{G}_m.$$

Note that  $X_0$  and  $X_1$  are closed, and  $X_2$  is open. By excision, the right-hand side of (2) is bounded by

$$\sum_{j=0}^2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_j, A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\mu, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B).$$

Since  $X_0$  and  $X_1$  are fixed points of  $l_{\text{Diag}(\lambda, 1, \dots, 1)}^*$  for all  $\lambda$ , the restriction of  $A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\lambda, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B$  to either of them is the same as the restriction of  $A \otimes B$ . The Künneth formula gives

$$\begin{aligned} H_c^*(X_0, A \otimes B) &\simeq H^*(\{x_0\}, A \otimes B) \otimes H_c^*(\mathbf{G}_m, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \\ H_c^*(X_1, A \otimes B) &\simeq H^*(H_0, A \otimes B) \otimes H_c^*(\mathbf{G}_m, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell), \end{aligned}$$

and hence (since the sum of Betti numbers of  $\mathbf{G}_m$  is equal to 2) we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_0, A \otimes B) &= 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\{x_0\}, A \otimes B) = 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\text{Spec}(k), p^* A \otimes p^* B) \\ \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_1, A \otimes B) &= 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(H_0, A \otimes B) = 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^{n-1}, h^* A \otimes h^* B). \end{aligned}$$

Finally, note that the  $\mathbf{G}_m$ -action on  $U$  is free, so that  $X_2$  is the space of pairs of points  $(x, y)$  in  $U \times U$  such that  $x$  and  $y$  lie in the same orbit of the  $\mathbf{G}_m$ -action. This is isomorphic to the fiber product of  $U$  with itself over the quotient  $U/\mathbf{G}_m$ . There is an isomorphism  $U/\mathbf{G}_m \simeq H_0 \simeq \mathbf{P}^{n-1}$  induced by  $\pi$ , hence the equality

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_2, A \otimes l_{\text{Diag}(\lambda, 1, \dots, 1)}^* B) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(U \times_{\mathbf{P}^{n-1}} U, j^* A \otimes j^* B),$$

By the Künneth formula (or the projection formula applied twice), the right-hand side is also equal to

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(U, A \otimes \pi_! j^* B) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{P}_k^{n-1}, \pi_! j^* A \otimes \pi_! j^* B).$$

Gathering all these computations, we obtain the result.  $\square$



**Lemma 5.7.** *Let  $n \geq 1$ . Let  $A$  be an object of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$  and let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a geometric generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ . We have*

$$\begin{aligned} c(h^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) &\leq c(A), \\ c(\pi_!j^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) &\leq 3c(A), \\ \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathrm{Spec}(k'), p^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) &\leq c(A). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* For each  $0 \leq m \leq n-1$ , let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a generic point of  $M_{k(\mathbf{g})}^{n,m+1}$ . By definition, we have

$$c(h^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) = \sup_m \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* h^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A).$$

The composition  $l_{\mathbf{g}} \circ h \circ l_{\mathbf{a}_m}$  is a general linear embedding from  $\mathbf{P}^m$  to  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , and hence this quantity is  $\leq c(A)$  by definition.

For any  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , by proper base change, the space  $H^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* \pi_!j^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A)$  is isomorphic to

$$(3) \quad H^i(\pi^{-1}l_{\mathbf{a}_m}(\mathbf{P}^m), l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A).$$

The inverse image  $\pi^{-1}l_{\mathbf{a}_m}(\mathbf{P}^m)$  is of the form

$$L - \{x_0\} - (H_0 \cap L)$$

where  $L$  is a general  $(m+1)$ -dimensional subspace of  $\mathbf{P}^n$  that contains  $x_0$ . By excision, the sum of the Betti numbers (3) is at most

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(L, l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\{x_0\}, l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(H_0 \cap L, l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A).$$

Each of these is bounded by  $c(A)$  (since  $\mathbf{a}_m$  and  $l_{\mathbf{g}}$  are general, see Lemmas 3.4 and 3.5), hence  $c(\pi_!j^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) \leq 3c(A)$ .

Finally,  $l_{\mathbf{g}} \circ p$  is the inclusion map of a generic point, so

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathrm{Spec}(k'), p^*l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A) \leq c(A)$$

by the definition of  $c(A)$ , □

We are finally ready to prove the main theorem of this section.

*Proof of Theorem 5.1.* We prove the theorem by induction on  $n \geq 0$ . The theorem holds for  $n = 0$ , because  $A$  and  $B$  are then simply complexes of vector spaces so

$$c(A) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^0, A)$$

hence

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^0, A \otimes B) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^0, A) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^0, B).$$

Now assume that  $n \geq 1$  and that Theorem 5.1 holds for  $\mathbf{P}^{n-1}$ .

Let  $\mathbf{g}$  be a generic point of  $\mathrm{GL}_{n+1,k}$  and let  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}$  be independent transcendentals over  $k(\mathbf{g})$ . Let  $k'$  be an algebraically closed extension of  $k(\mathbf{g})$  containing  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}$ . For  $1 \leq m \leq n+1$ , we denote

$$\delta_m = \mathrm{Diag}(1, \dots, 1, \lambda_m, \dots, \lambda_{n+1}).$$

Then

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathrm{Diag}(1, \dots, 1)}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^*A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^*B).$$

On the other hand, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\delta_{n+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) &= \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A \otimes l_{\mathbf{g}^{\delta_{n+1} \mathbf{g}^{-1}}}^* B) \\ &\ll c(A)c(B) \end{aligned}$$

by Corollary 5.4(1) and Lemma 3.8, (1).

Therefore, using a telescoping sum, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, A \otimes B) &= \sum_{m=1}^{n+1} \left( \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A \otimes l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) - \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A \otimes l_{\delta_m}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \right) \\ &\quad + O(c(A)c(B)). \end{aligned}$$

By Lemma 5.6, for a fixed  $m$ , the term between parentheses is

$$\begin{aligned} &\leq 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\text{Spec } k', p^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A \otimes p^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \\ &\quad + 2 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, z^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A \otimes z^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) \\ &\quad + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, (\pi_! j^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A) \otimes (\pi_! j^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)). \end{aligned}$$

Applying the induction hypothesis, this is

$$\ll 2c(p^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A)c(p^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) + 2c(z^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A)c(z^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B) + c(\pi_! j^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* A)c(\pi_! j^* l_{\delta_{m+1}}^* l_{\mathbf{g}}^* B)$$

and finally, applying Lemma 5.7 and Lemma 3.8 (2), this is

$$\leq 2c(A)c(B) + 2c(A)c(B) + 9c(A)c(B) = 13c(A)c(B).$$

This concludes the proof.  $\square$

## 6. QUANTITATIVE SHEAF THEORY ON QUASI-PROJECTIVE VARIETIES

The goal of this section is to define the complexity of objects of the derived category for any quasi-projective algebraic variety over a field, or rather the pair consisting of such a variety and a given quasi-projective embedding.

**6.1. Definitions of the complexity and continuity of the six operations.** It turns out that it is not really possible to define a complexity invariant of sheaves on an algebraic property, with its expected properties, that only depends on the algebraic variety.

**Example 6.1.** A hypothetical canonical complexity invariant  $c(A)$  for objects  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  should of course be invariant under automorphisms of  $X$ . Another basic requirement for applications of a complexity invariant should be that, if  $\mathbf{F}$  is a finite field and  $k$  an algebraic closure of  $\mathbf{F}$ , then there should be, up to isomorphism over  $k$ , only finitely many irreducible perverse sheaves of bounded complexity (see Corollary 7.15). However, there are examples of algebraic varieties  $X$  over  $\mathbf{F}$  with infinitely many  $\mathbf{F}$ -automorphisms and perverse sheaves  $A$  on  $X$  such that there are infinitely many pairwise non-isomorphic perverse sheaves among the  $\sigma^* A$  for such automorphisms  $\sigma$  (e.g., let  $X$  be the affine plane, and let  $A$  be a suitable shift of  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  on an irreducible plane curve).

We will work instead in the following category:

**Definition 6.2.** Let  $k$  be a field, not necessarily algebraically closed. The category  $\text{QP}(k)$  of *quasi-projective varieties over  $k$  with a given embedding* is the category with objects given by pairs  $(X, u)$  consisting of an algebraic variety  $X$  over  $k$  and a locally closed immersion  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_k^n$  for some integer  $n \geq 0$ , called the *embedding dimension* of  $(X, u)$ . The morphisms in  $\text{QP}(k)$  are the morphisms of schemes.

**Remark 6.3.** (1) Recall that a locally closed immersion  $u$  is a morphism that can be factored as  $u = i \circ j$ , where  $j$  is an open immersion and  $i$  is a closed immersion.

(2) We will often simply denote by  $X$  the pair  $(X, u)$ , when no confusion is possible, and call this simply a *quasi-projective variety*.

**Definition 6.4** (Complexity of a complex of sheaves on a quasi-projective variety). Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over an algebraically closed field  $k$ . The *complexity relative to  $u$*  of an object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  is the non-negative integer

$$c_u(A) = c(u_!A).$$

We will simply speak of the complexity of  $A$ , when the embedding is clearly understood.

**Remark 6.5.** By Proposition 3.3, the complexity  $c_u(A)$  vanishes if and only if  $A = 0$ .

The first main objective is to prove that the complexity is under control when performing all usual operations, starting with Grothendieck's six functors (i.e., in the language used in the introduction, these functors are "continuous"). For this purpose, we will also define a complexity for morphisms.

**Definition 6.6** (Complexity of a locally closed immersion). Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$ . We define the complexity of  $u$  to be  $c(u) = c_u(\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) = c(u_!\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$ .

**Definition 6.7** (Complexity of a morphism). Let  $f: (X, u) \rightarrow (Y, v)$  be a morphism in  $\text{QP}(k)$ . Let  $m$  (resp.  $n$ ) be the embedding dimension of  $X$  (resp.  $Y$ ). For integers  $0 \leq p \leq m$  and  $0 \leq q \leq n$ , let  $\mathbf{a}_p$  and  $\mathbf{b}_q$  be geometric generic points of  $M_k^{m+1, p+1}$  and  $M_k^{n+1, q+1}$  respectively, all defined over a common algebraically closed field  $k'$ . The *complexity of the morphism  $f$  relative to  $(u, v)$*  is defined as

$$c_{u,v}(f) = \max_{0 \leq p \leq m} \max_{0 \leq q \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_{k'}, u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes f^*v^*l_{\mathbf{b}_q^*} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell).$$

**Remark 6.8.** These definitions are compatible in the sense that, for a locally closed immersion  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ , using Lemma 3.9, we have  $c_{u, \text{Id}}(u) = c(u)$ .

In a similar vein, if  $i: X \rightarrow Y$  is an immersion of quasi-projective varieties  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$ , such that  $u = v \circ i$ , then  $c_{u,v}(i) = c(u)$ , which can be seen readily from the definition, the projection formula and Lemma 3.9.

The fundamental result is the following:

**Theorem 6.9** (Continuity of the six operations). *Let  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$  be quasi-projective varieties over  $k$ , and let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a morphism. For objects  $A$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and  $C$*

of  $D_c^b(Y)$ , the following estimates hold:

$$\begin{aligned}
(4) \quad & c_u(D(A)) \ll c(u)c_u(A) \\
(5) \quad & c_u(A \otimes B) \ll c_u(A)c_u(B) \\
(6) \quad & c_u(A \otimes_! B) \ll c(u)^3 c_u(A)c_u(B) \\
(7) \quad & c_u(\mathcal{H}om(A, B)) \ll c(u)c_u(A)c_u(B) \\
(8) \quad & c_u(f^*C) \ll c_{u,v}(f)c_v(C) \\
(9) \quad & c_v(f_!A) \ll c_{u,v}(f)c_u(A) \\
(10) \quad & c_u(f^!C) \ll c(u)c(v)c_{u,v}(f)c_v(C) \\
(11) \quad & c_v(f_*A) \ll c(u)c(v)c_{u,v}(f)c_u(A).
\end{aligned}$$

In all these estimates, the implied constants only depend on the embedding dimensions of  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$ .

In the next subsection, we will prove Theorem 6.9. In later subsections, we will then handle similarly a number of additional operations, e.g., decomposing a complex into irreducible perverse sheaves.

**Remark 6.10.** Let  $k_0$  be a field of characteristic coprime to  $\ell$ . For any quasi-projective variety  $(X_0, u_0)$  over  $k_0$ , and for any object  $A_0$  of  $D_c^b(X_0)$ , we denote  $c_{u_0}(A_0) = c_u(A)$ , where  $(X, u)$  is the base change of  $(X_0, u_0)$  to an algebraically closed field  $k$  containing  $k_0$  and  $A$  is the base change of  $A_0$ . Similarly, for a morphism  $f_0: (X_0, u_0) \rightarrow (Y_0, v_0)$ , we define  $c_{u_0, v_0}(f_0) = c_{u,v}(f)$ , where  $f$  is the base change of  $f_0$  to an algebraically closed field.

Since the complexity is independent of the base algebraically closed field, the same holds for the complexity over non-algebraically closed fields.

**Remark 6.11.** Theorem 1.1 follows from Theorem 6.9 applied to  $X = \mathbf{A}^n$  and  $Y = \mathbf{A}^m$  with  $u$  and  $v$  the standard open immersions to  $\mathbf{P}^n$  and  $\mathbf{P}^m$  respectively.

**6.2. Proof of the continuity of the six functors.** We begin with a lemma concerning complexes on projective space.

**Lemma 6.12.** For each object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}_k^n)$ , the equality  $c(A) = c(D(A))$  holds.

*Proof.* Let  $\mathbf{a}$  be a geometric generic point of  $M^{n+1, m+1}$ . Using Verdier duality and Lemma 3.11, the computation

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, D(l_{\mathbf{a}}^* A)) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}}^* D(A)),$$

yields  $c(A) = c(D(A))$  by definition of complexity.  $\square$

*Proof of (4).* The equalities  $c_u(D(A)) = c(u_! D(A)) = c(u_* D(A) \otimes u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$  hold by definition, and hence we get the estimate

$$c_u(D(A)) = c(D(u_! A) \otimes u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \ll c(D(u_! A))c(u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) = c(u_! A)c(u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) = c_u(A)c(u)$$

by combining Corollary 5.2 and Lemma 6.12.  $\square$

*Proof of (5) and (6).* By definition, we have  $c_u(A \otimes B) = c(i_!(A \otimes B))$ . Then by Corollary 5.2, we obtain

$$c_u(A \otimes B) = c(u_!(A \otimes B)) = c(u_! A \otimes u_! B) \ll c(u_! A)c(u_! B) = c_u(A)c_u(B).$$

Combining this with (4), we obtain (6).  $\square$

*Proof of (7).* We have by definition

$$c_u(\mathcal{H}\text{om}(A, B)) = c_u(D(A) \otimes B) \ll c_u(D(A))c_u(B) \ll c(u)c_u(A)c_u(B),$$

by applying (5) and (4).  $\square$

*Proof of (8) and (9).* Let  $m$  be the embedding dimension of  $X$  and  $n$  that of  $Y$ . By definition, we have

$$c_u(f^*C) = c(u_!f^*C) = \max_{0 \leq p \leq m} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^p, l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^* u_!f^*C).$$

Applying three times the projection formula, we have for any  $p$  and  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$

$$h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^p, l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^* u_!f^*C) = h_c^i(Y_{k'}, f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes C).$$

Applying the Leray spectral sequence for étale cohomology with compact support to the morphism  $v: Y \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ , we derive

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(Y_{k'}, f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes C) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n_Y}, v_!f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes v_!C).$$

Then, by Theorem 5.1 and the definition, we get

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, v_!f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes v_!C) \ll c_v(f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)c_v(C).$$

Thus

$$c_u(f^*C) \ll c_v(C) \max_{0 \leq p \leq m} c_v(f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell).$$

Applying again the definition and the projection formula three times, we have

$$\begin{aligned} c_v(f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) &= \max_{0 \leq q \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^q, l_{\mathbf{b}_q}^* v_!f_!u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \\ &= \max_{0 \leq q \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X_{k'}, f^*v^*l_{\mathbf{b}_q}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes u^*l_{\mathbf{a}_p}^*\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \end{aligned}$$

for any  $p$ . This concludes the proof of (8) by definition of  $c_{u,v}(f)$ , and the proof of (9) is similar.  $\square$

*Proof of (10) and (11).* From  $f^!C = D(f^*D(C))$  we get the estimates

$$c_u(f^!C) \ll c(u)c_u(f^*D(C)) \ll c(u)c_{u,v}(f)c_v(D(C)) \ll c(u)c(v)c_{u,v}(f)c_v(C)$$

by (4) and (8). This establishes (10), and (11) is proved similarly using (9).  $\square$

We can also bound the complexity, with respect to the Segre embedding, of the external tensor product.

**Proposition 6.13.** *Let  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$  be quasi-projective algebraic varieties over  $k$  with respective embedding dimensions  $n$  and  $m$ . Let  $u \boxtimes v$  be the composition  $s \circ (u \times v)$  where*

$$s: \mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{P}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^{(n+1)(m+1)-1}$$

*is the Segre embedding. Then  $(X \times Y, u \boxtimes v)$  is a quasi-projective algebraic variety over  $k$ .*

*For objects  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(Y)$ , we have*

$$c_{u \boxtimes v}(A \boxtimes B) \ll c_{u \boxtimes v, u}(p_1)c_{u \boxtimes v, v}(p_2)c_u(A)c_v(B).$$

*where the implied constant depends on  $(n, m)$ .*

*Proof.* Letting  $p_1: X \times Y \rightarrow X$  and  $p_2: X \times Y \rightarrow Y$  denote the projections, the estimate

$$c_{u \boxtimes v}(A \boxtimes B) \ll c_{u \boxtimes v}(p_1^* A) c_{u \boxtimes v}(p_2^* B)$$

holds by (5). Since the first factor on the right-hand side satisfies

$$c_{u \boxtimes v}(p_1^* A) \ll c_{u \boxtimes v, u}(p_1) c_u(A)$$

by (8), and similarly for  $c_{u \boxtimes v}(p_2^* B)$ , the result follows.  $\square$

**Remark 6.14.** One should be estimate the factors  $c_{u \boxtimes v, u}$  and  $c_{u \boxtimes v, v}$  in terms of  $c(u)$  and  $c(v)$ . Indeed, this amounts to estimating the cohomology of  $u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \boxtimes v_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  on  $\mathbf{P}^n \times \mathbf{P}^m$  restricted to the intersection of a general linear subspace with the inverse image of a general linear subspace under the Veronese embedding. One can bound this by

$$c_s(u_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \boxtimes v_! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) c_s(\mathcal{F}),$$

where  $\mathcal{F}$  is the constant sheaf on the intersection of a general linear subspace with the inverse image of a general linear subspace under the Veronese, and then attempt to estimate the two factors separately.

### 6.3. Linear operations.

**Proposition 6.15.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$ .*

(1) *For any distinguished triangle  $A_1 \rightarrow A_2 \rightarrow A_3$  in  $D_c^b(X)$ , the following holds:*

$$c_u(A_2) \leq c_u(A_1) + c_u(A_3),$$

$$c_u(A_1) \leq c_u(A_2) + c_u(A_3),$$

$$c_u(A_3) \leq c_u(A_1) + c_u(A_2).$$

(2) *For any objects  $A$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , the following equality holds:*

$$c_u(A \oplus B) = c_u(A) + c_u(B).$$

(3) *Let  $A$  be an object of  $D_c^b(X)$ . For any  $h \in \mathbf{Z}$ , the following equality holds:*

$$c_u(A[h]) = c_u(A).$$

*Proof.* The first bound in (1), as well as (2) and (3), follow immediately from the definition  $c_u(A) = c(u_! A)$  and the expression of the complexity in terms of Betti numbers. The second and third inequalities are then deduced from the first (and from (3)) using the distinguished triangles  $A_2 \rightarrow A_3 \rightarrow A_1[1]$  and  $A_3[-1] \rightarrow A_1 \rightarrow A_2$ .  $\square$

In general, it is not obvious how sharp the first inequality  $c(A_2) \leq c(A_1) + c(A_3)$  is. However, in the important special case of the decomposition of a perverse sheaf into its irreducible constituents, there is a satisfactory estimate.

**Theorem 6.16.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$ . Let  $A$  be an object of  $D_c^b(X)$ . For any  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , let  $n_i$  be the length of  ${}^p \mathcal{H}^i(A)$  in the abelian category of perverse sheaves and let  $(A_{i,j})_{1 \leq j \leq n_i}$  be the family of its Jordan-Hölder factors, repeated with multiplicity. Then the estimates*

$$c_u(A) \leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} c_u(A_{i,j}) \ll c(u) c_u(A)$$

hold, with an implied constant that only depends on the embedding dimension of  $(X, u)$ .

*Proof.* The first inequality follows immediately from the previous proposition. We prove the second one.

For  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , let  $m_i$  be the length of  ${}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u_!A)$  in the category of perverse sheaves on the projective space target of  $u$ , and let  $(B_{i,j})_{1 \leq j \leq m_i}$  be the Jordan-Hölder factors (repeated with multiplicity) of these perverse sheaves.

Let  $\bar{X}$  be the closure of the image of  $u$ . The  $B_{i,j}$  are irreducible perverse sheaves with support contained in  $\bar{X}$ , and hence each  $u^*B_{i,j}$  is either zero or is an irreducible perverse sheaf on  $X$ .

Because  $u_!A$  is supported in  $\bar{X}$ , its perverse filtration is stable under pullback to  $\bar{X}$ . The perverse filtration is always stable under open immersions; since  $u$  is a locally closed immersion, it follows that it is stable under  $u^*$ .

Therefore we have  ${}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(A) = {}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u^*u_!A) = u^*{}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u_!A)$ . This perverse sheaf is an iterated extension of  $u^*B_{i,j}, \dots, u^*B_{i,m_i}$ ; by the uniqueness of the Jordan-Hölder factors, the perverse sheaves  $u^*B_{i,1}, \dots, u^*B_{i,m_i}$  which do not vanish coincide with the  $A_{i,1}, \dots, A_{i,n_i}$ , including multiplicity. We may therefore assume that the equality  $u^*B_{i,j} = A_{i,j}$  holds for  $1 \leq j \leq n_i$  and  $u^*B_{i,j} = 0$  for  $j > n_i$ .

Then we have

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} c_u(A_{i,j}) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} c_u(u^*B_{i,j}) \ll c(u) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{m_i} c(B_{i,j}) \ll c(u) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{m_i} \|\mathrm{cc}(B_{i,j})\|,$$

by using (8) and Corollary 5.4 (2).

On the other hand, we have

$$\mathrm{cc}({}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u_!A)) = \sum_{j=1}^{m_j} \mathrm{cc}(B_{i,j}).$$

Since the  $B_{i,j}$  are perverse sheaves, their characteristic cycles are effective. The norm on  $\mathbf{R}^{n+1}$  is additive on the cone of effective cycles, hence the equality

$$\|\mathrm{cc}({}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u_!A))\| = \sum_{j=1}^{m_i} \|\mathrm{cc}(B_{i,j})\|.$$

The estimate

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} c_u(A_{i,j}) \ll c(u) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \|\mathrm{cc}({}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^i(u_!A))\| \ll c(u)c(u_!A) = c(u)c_u(A)$$

then follows by Proposition 5.3.  $\square$

**Corollary 6.17.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$  and  $w: W \rightarrow X$  the embedding of a locally closed subvariety. For each object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(W)$ , the middle extension  $w_{!*}A$  in  $D_c^b(X)$  satisfies*

$$\begin{aligned} c_{u \circ w}(A) &\ll c(u \circ w)c(w_{!*}A), \\ c(w_{!*}A) &\ll (c(u)c(u \circ w))^2 c_{u \circ w}(A), \end{aligned}$$

where the implied constants only depend on the embedding dimension of  $u$ .

*Proof.* We recall that  $w_{!*}A$  is the image of the canonical morphism

$${}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^0(w_!A) \rightarrow {}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^0(w_*A)$$

of perverse sheaves. We have  $A = w^*w_{!*}A$ , and hence the estimates

$$c_{u \circ w}(A) = c_{u \circ w}(w^*w_{!*}A) \ll c_{u \circ w, u}(w)c_u(w_{!*}A) = c(u \circ w)c_u(w_{!*}A)$$

follow from (8) and Remark 6.8.

Conversely, by definition and Proposition 6.15, we have the bound

$$c_u(w_{!*}A) \leq c_u({}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^0(w_!A)) + c_u({}^{\mathbf{p}}\mathcal{H}^0(w_*A)).$$

Then Theorem 6.16, combined with (9) and (11) and Remark 6.8 again, implies that

$$c_u(w_{!*}A) \ll c(u)(c_u(w_!A) + c(w_*A)) \ll c(u)(c(u \circ w) + c(u \circ w)^2 c(u)) c_{u \circ w}(A).$$

□

**6.4. Nearby and vanishing cycles.** In this section, we prove the continuity of the functors of nearby and vanishing cycles.

Let  $S$  be the spectrum of a strictly Henselian discrete valuation ring, with special point  $\sigma$  and generic point  $\eta$ . Let  $\bar{\eta}$  be a geometric generic point. Let  $f: X \rightarrow S$  be a quasi-projective morphism of finite type, with locally closed embedding  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$ . Let  $X_\sigma$  and  $X_\eta$  denote the fibers of  $f$  over  $\sigma$  and  $\eta$ , respectively. We also consider  $u_\sigma: X_\sigma \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  and  $u_\eta: X_\eta \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ , but will drop the subscripts  $\sigma$  and  $\eta$  when no confusion can arise. For an object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , we denote by  $A_\sigma$  and  $A_\eta$  the restrictions of  $A$  to  $X_\sigma$  and  $X_\eta$ .

We denote by  $\Psi_f$  (resp.  $\Phi_f$ ) the functor of nearby cycles (resp. the functor of vanishing cycles) from  $D_c^b(X)$  to  $D_c^b(X_\sigma)$ .

**Theorem 6.18.** *Let  $X, S$  and  $f$  be as above. For  $A \in D_c^b(X)$ , we have*

$$\begin{aligned} c_u(\Psi_f(A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_u(A_\eta), \\ c_u(\Phi_f(A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_u(A_\eta) + c_u(A_\sigma). \end{aligned}$$

Before starting the proof, recall the following compatibilities of the nearby cycle functor. Let  $h: X' \rightarrow X$  be an  $S$ -morphism, and  $f' = f \circ h$ . Recall from [9, Exp. XIII (2.1.7.1)] that, if  $h$  is proper, there is a canonical isomorphism

$$(12) \quad \Psi_f h_* \rightarrow h_* \Psi_{f'}$$

by proper base change. Moreover, if  $h$  is smooth then by [9, Exp. XIII (2.1.7.2)], there is a canonical isomorphism

$$(13) \quad h^* \Psi_f \rightarrow \Psi_{f'} h^*.$$

*Proof.* By definition of the vanishing cycles, there is a distinguished triangle

$$A_\sigma \rightarrow \Psi_f(A) \rightarrow \Phi_f(A),$$

and hence the inequality  $c_u(\Phi_f(A)) \leq c_u(A_\sigma) + c_u(\Psi_f(A))$  holds by Proposition 6.15. Thus it is enough to prove the first inequality.

We first assume that  $f$  is proper, so that  $u$  is a closed immersion. Using (12) with  $h = u$ , we can replace  $X$  by  $\mathbf{P}_S^m$  and  $A$  by  $u_!(A)$ .

From (12), we deduce that for every  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$

$$(14) \quad h^i(X_{\bar{\eta}}, A_{\bar{\eta}}) = h^i(X_\sigma, \Psi_f(A)).$$

By definition, we have

$$c_u(\Psi_f(A)) = \max_{0 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^*(A_\eta)),$$

where  $\mathbf{a}_m$  is a geometric generic point of  $M_{k(\sigma)}^{n+1, m+1}$  defined over an algebraically closed field  $k'$ , and similarly for  $c_u(A_\eta)$ . As in the proof of Lemma 3.11, we view  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m}$  as the composition of the map  $s: x \mapsto (x, \mathbf{a}_m)$  from  $\mathbf{P}^m$  to  $\mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1}$  with the matrix



multiplication map  $p: \mathbf{P}^m \times M^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ . We still denote by  $p$  the smooth map  $\mathbf{P}_S^m \times_S M_S^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$ . By (13), there is an isomorphism

$$(15) \quad p^* \Psi_f \rightarrow \Psi_f p^*,$$

where we still denote by  $f$  the natural morphism  $\mathbf{P}_S^m \times_S M_S^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow S$ .

Let  $S'$  be the strict localization of  $M_S^{m+1, n+1}$  at the point  $\mathbf{a}_m$  and  $s: S' \rightarrow M_S^{m+1, n+1}$  the localization map. It is the spectrum of a strictly Henselian discrete valuation ring, with special point  $\sigma'$  and generic point  $\eta'$ , send respectively to  $\sigma$  and  $\eta$  by the canonical morphism  $s: S' \rightarrow S$ .

The situation is similar to the discussion preceding [6, Lem. 3.3]. Set  $\tilde{k} = k(\bar{\eta}) \times_{k(\eta)} k(\eta')$ , which is the fraction field of the strict localization of  $M_{\bar{S}}^{m+1, n+1}$ , where  $\bar{S}$  is the normalization of  $S$  in  $\bar{\eta}$ . We have  $\text{Gal}(\bar{\eta}/\eta) = \text{Gal}(\tilde{k}/\eta')$ . Let  $\bar{\eta}'$  the spectrum of an algebraic closure of  $\tilde{k}$  and  $P = \text{Gal}(\bar{\eta}'/\tilde{k})$ , which is a pro- $p$  group for  $p$  the characteristic exponent of  $k$ .

Let  $f': \mathbf{P}_{S'}^n \rightarrow S'$  be the strict localization at  $\mathbf{a}_m$  of the morphism  $\mathbf{P}_S^m \times_S M_S^{m+1, n+1} \rightarrow M_S^{m+1, n+1}$ . We have the following cartesian diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \mathbf{P}_{S'}^n & \xrightarrow{f'} & S' & & \\ \downarrow s & & \downarrow s & & \\ \mathbf{P}_S^m \times_S M_S^{m+1, n+1} & \longrightarrow & M_S^{m+1, n+1} & \longrightarrow & S. \\ & & \searrow f & \nearrow & \end{array}$$

As recalled in (13), there is an isomorphism

$$(16) \quad s^* \Psi_f \rightarrow \Psi_{s \circ f'} s^*.$$

By [6, Lem. 3.3], for every object  $B$  of  $\text{D}_c^b(\mathbf{P}_{S'}^n)$  and  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , the equality

$$(17) \quad \psi_{s \circ f'}(B) = (\psi_{f'}(B))^P$$

holds. In particular,

$$(18) \quad h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k(\sigma)}^n, \psi_{s \circ f'}(B)) \leq h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \psi_{f'}(B)).$$

Combining equations (15), (16) and (17), we find

$$(19) \quad l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* \psi_f(A) = s^* p^* \psi_f(A) = s^* \psi_f(p^* A) = \psi_{s \circ f'}(s^* p^* A) = \psi_{f'}(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)^P.$$

Hence by (18),

$$(20) \quad h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* \psi_f(A)) \leq h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \psi_{f'}(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)).$$

By (14) applied to  $f'$ , we have

$$(21) \quad h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, \psi_{f'}(l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)) = h^i(\mathbf{P}_{\bar{\eta}'}^n, (l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A)_\eta) = h^i(\mathbf{P}_{\bar{\eta}'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^*(A_{\bar{\eta}'})).$$

Combining (20) and (21), we find the sought-after inequality

$$c(\psi_f(A)) \leq c(A_\eta).$$

We now come back to the general case. We factor the immersion  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$  as  $i \circ j$ , where  $i$  is a closed immersion and  $j$  is an open immersion.

By the first step, applied to  $j_!A$  and the morphism  $\bar{f}$  given by the composition of  $i$  and the projection  $\mathbf{P}_S^n \rightarrow S$ , we get  $c_i(j_!(A)_\eta) \leq c_i(\Psi_{\bar{f}}j_!A)$ . By (13), the object  $j^*\Psi_{\bar{f}}j_!A$  is isomorphic to  $\Psi_f(A)$ , and hence the following holds by (8) and Remark 6.8:

$$\begin{aligned} c_u(\Psi_f(A)) &\ll c_{u,i}(j_\sigma)c_i(\Psi_{\bar{f}}j_!A) \\ &\leq c_{u,i}(j_\sigma)c_i(j_!A_\eta) \\ &= c_{u,i}(j_\sigma)c_u(A_\eta) = c(u_\sigma)c_u(A_\eta). \end{aligned}$$

□

**Corollary 6.19.** *Let  $k$  be an algebraically closed field,  $f: (X, u) \rightarrow (S, v)$  a flat morphism of quasi-projective varieties over  $k$ , with  $S$  smooth and irreducible of dimension 1. Let  $\sigma$  be a closed point of  $S$ . Let  $S_{(\sigma)}$  be the strict localization of  $S$  at  $\sigma$ . Denote by  $\Psi_f$  and  $\Phi_f$  the nearby and vanishing cycles functors of the base change of  $f$  to  $S_{(\sigma)}$ , which we view as functors from  $D_c^b(X)$  to  $D_c^b(X_\sigma)$ . For any  $A \in D_c^b(X)$ , the following estimates hold:*

$$\begin{aligned} c_u(\Psi_f(A)) &\ll c_{u,v}(f)^2c_u(A), \\ c_u(\Phi_f(A)) &\ll c_{u,v}(f)^2c_u(A). \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* Let  $\Gamma$  be the graph of  $f$  in  $X \times_k S$ . Denote by  $h: X \rightarrow \Gamma$  the canonical  $S$ -morphism, and denote by  $f'$  the projection  $\Gamma \rightarrow S$ . Let further  $u: \Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$  be the canonical embedding induced by  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_k^n$ .

The formula (12) in the proof of Theorem 6.18 shows that the canonical morphism  $\Psi_{f'}h_{\eta*} \rightarrow h_{\sigma*}\Psi_f$  is an isomorphism. Moreover,  $h_\eta$  and  $h_\sigma$  are the identity morphisms of the quasi-projective schemes  $X_\eta$  and  $X_\sigma$ . By Theorem 6.18 applied to the strict localization at  $\sigma$  of  $f': \Gamma \rightarrow S$  and  $h_*A$ , the following estimates hold:

$$\begin{aligned} c_{u_\sigma}(\Psi_{f'}(h_*A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_{u_\eta}(h_*A_\eta) \\ c_{u_\sigma}(\Phi_{f'}(h_*A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_{u_\eta}(h_*A_\eta) + c_{u_\sigma}(h_*A_\sigma). \end{aligned}$$

Using the base change isomorphism previously quoted, this implies that

$$\begin{aligned} c_{u_\sigma}(\Psi_f(A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_{u_\eta}(A_\eta) \\ c_{u_\sigma}(\Phi_f(A)) &\ll c(u_\sigma)c_{u_\eta}(A_\eta) + c_{u_\sigma}(A_\sigma). \end{aligned}$$

We will now show that

$$\begin{aligned} c_{u_\sigma}(A_\sigma) &\ll c_{u,v}(f)c_u(A) \\ c(u_\sigma) &\ll c_{u,v}(f) \\ c_{u_\eta}(A_\eta) &\ll c_{u,v}(f)c_u(A), \end{aligned}$$

which will conclude the proof.

First, let  $\delta_\sigma \in D_c^b(S)$  be the rank one skyscraper sheaf supported at  $\sigma \in S$ . We have  $c_v(\delta_\sigma) = 1$  and  $f^*\delta_\sigma$  is the constant sheaf supported on  $X_\sigma$ , so that by Theorem 6.9, we obtain  $c_u(f^*\delta_\sigma) \ll c_{u,v}(f)c_v(\delta_\sigma)$ . Hence, the estimate  $c(u_\sigma) = c_u(f^*\delta_\sigma) \ll c_{u,v}(f)$  holds. This prove the second inequality.

Moreover, we have  $A_\sigma = A \otimes \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell|X_\sigma}$ , and hence the estimate  $c_{u_\sigma}(A_\sigma) \ll c_u(A)c(u_\sigma)$  holds by Theorem 6.9, and combined with the second inequality, we obtain the first one.

For the third inequality, let  $\mathbf{b}$  a geometric generic point of  $M^{n_S, n_S+1}$  such that the intersection of  $S$  and the image of  $\mathbf{b}$  in  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n_S}$  is finite. We have:

$$c_{u_\eta}(A_\eta) \leq c_u(A \otimes f^*l_{\mathbf{b}*}\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$$

since  $S$  and the image of  $\mathbf{b}$  intersect at geometric generic points of  $S$ , and then

$$c_u(A \otimes f^*l_{\mathbf{b}*}\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \ll c_u(A)c_{u_\sigma}(f^*l_{\mathbf{b}*}\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \leq c_u(A)c_{u,v}(f)$$

by Theorem 6.9 and the definition of  $c_{u,v}(f)$ .  $\square$

**6.5. Uniformity in families.** In Theorem 6.9, the factors  $c(u)$  or  $c_{u,v}(f)$  appear. The next proposition ensures that these are bounded in algebraic families; the consequence is that for all practical purposes, they will behave as constants in applications.

**Proposition 6.20.** *Let  $S$  be a noetherian scheme in which  $\ell$  is invertible. Let  $X$  be a scheme of finite type over  $S$ , and let  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$  be a locally closed immersion of schemes over  $S$ , so that for each geometric points  $s$  of  $S$ , the pair  $(X_s, u_s)$  is a quasi-projective variety over the algebraically closed field  $k(s)$ . Then:*

- (1) *There exists a constant  $M_1$ , depending only on  $(X, S, u)$ , such that the inequality  $c(u_s) \leq M_1$  holds for all  $s$ .*
- (2) *For any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , there exists a constant  $M_2$ , depending on  $(X, S, u, A)$ , such that the inequality  $c_{u_s}(A_s) \leq M_2$  holds for all  $s$ .*
- (3) *Let  $Y$  be a scheme over  $S$  and let  $v: Y \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^{n'}$  be a locally closed immersion of schemes over  $S$ . Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a morphism of schemes over  $S$ . Then there exists a constant  $M_3$ , depending only on  $(X, S, u, Y, v, f)$  such that the inequality  $c_{u_s, v_s}(f_s) \leq M_3$  holds for all  $s$ .*

*Proof.* By definition  $c(u_s)$ , part (1) will follow from (2) applied to  $A = \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ .

We now prove (2). Let  $0 \leq m \leq n$  be an integer. Let  $r: M_S^{n+1, m+1} \times_S \mathbf{P}_S^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_S^n$  be the morphism defined by  $r(\mathbf{a}, x) = l_{\mathbf{a}}(x)$ . Consider the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \xrightarrow{u} \mathbf{P}_S^n & \xleftarrow{r} M_S^{n+1, m+1} \times_S \mathbf{P}_S^m \\ & & \downarrow \text{pr}_1 \\ & & M_S^{n+1, m+1}. \end{array}$$

Let  $s$  be a geometric point of  $S$ . Let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a geometric generic point of the fiber of  $M_S^{n+1, m+1}$  over  $s$ . Let  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ . By the proper base change theorem, the equality

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* u_{s!} A_s) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(\text{pr}_{1*} r^* u_! A)_{\mathbf{a}_m}$$

holds. Since  $u$  is a locally closed immersion and  $r$  and  $\text{pr}_1$  are morphisms of finite type, the complex  $\text{pr}_{1*} r^* u_! A$  is an object of  $D_c^b(M_S^{n+1, m+1})$ , so by constructibility, the sum above is bounded as  $s$  varies.

For (3), we argue in a similar way with  $M_S^{n+1, m+1} \times_S M_S^{n'+1, m'+1}$ .  $\square$

For instance, if  $f: \mathbf{A}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^m$  is a morphism given by  $m$  polynomials in  $n$  variables, of degree at most  $d$ , then (with the standard embeddings  $u: \mathbf{A}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  and  $v: \mathbf{A}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^m$ ) it follows that there exists a constant  $b(n, m, d)$  such that the inequality  $c_{u,v}(f) \leq b(n, m, d)$  holds for all  $f$  (using the universal family of such polynomials). We can in fact make some cases fully explicit by appealing to results of Katz [24]. Since this can be useful in some applications, we spell out one such case. For non-negative integers  $N, r$  and  $d$ , set

$$B(N, r, d) = 6 \cdot 2^r \cdot (3 + rd)^{N+1}.$$

**Proposition 6.21.** *Let  $r, d, n_1$  and  $n_2$  be non-negative integers. Let  $X$  be a closed subvariety of  $\mathbf{A}^{n_1}$  over  $k$  defined by  $r$  equations of degree at most  $d$ . Let  $Y$  be any subvariety of  $\mathbf{A}_k^{n_2}$ . Let  $u$  and  $v$  be the natural immersions of  $\mathbf{A}^{n_1}$  and  $\mathbf{A}^{n_2}$  in  $\mathbf{P}^{n_1}$  and  $\mathbf{P}^{n_2}$  respectively. For any morphism  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  defined by  $n_2$  polynomials of degree at most  $d$ , the following inequality holds:*

$$c_{u,v}(f) \leq B(n_1, n_2 + r, d).$$

*Proof.* By definition, the complexity  $c_{u,v}(f)$  is the maximum over integers  $m_1 \leq n_1$  and  $m_2 \leq n_2$  of the sum of the compactly supported Betti numbers (with  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ -coefficients) of the intersection of  $X$  with a generic linear subspace of dimension  $m_1$  in  $\mathbf{P}^{n_1}$  and with the pullback by  $f$  of a generic linear subspace of dimension  $m_2$  in  $\mathbf{P}^{n_2}$ .

The intersection of the first linear subspace with  $\mathbf{A}^{n_1}$  is an affine space of dimension  $n_1$ . Its intersection with  $X$  is defined by  $r$  equations of degree at most  $d$ , and the pullback of a linear subspace is defined by  $n_2 - m_2$  linear combinations of the polynomials defining  $f$ , which are hence also of degree at most  $d$ . By [24, Cor. of Th. 1, p. 34], we deduce the inequalities

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X, u^* l_{\mathbf{a}_{m_1}}^* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \otimes f^* v^* l_{\mathbf{b}_{m_2}}^* \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \leq B(m_1, n_2 - m_2 + r, d) \leq B(n_1, n_2 + r, d)$$

(with notation as in Definition 6.7) for all  $m_1$  and  $m_2$ , and the result follows.  $\square$

**Remark 6.22.** In some cases, Katz's remark in [24, p. 43] leads to better estimates.

**6.6. The open set of lissity of a complex.** Another invariant governed by the complexity is the degree of the complement of a dense open set where an object of the derived category is lisse (i.e., where all its cohomology sheaves are lisse). Below, by *degree* of a subvariety  $Z$  of projective space, we mean the sum of the degrees of its irreducible components (which may have different dimensions).

**Theorem 6.23.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be an irreducible quasi-projective variety over  $k$ . Let  $A$  be an object of  $D_c^b(X)$ . Let  $Z$  be the complement of the maximal open subset where  $X$  is smooth and  $A$  is lisse. Then the estimate*

$$\deg(u(Z)) \ll (3 + s)c(u)c_u(A)$$

*holds, where the degrees are computed in the projective space target of  $u$ , and  $s$  is the degree of the codimension 1 part of the singular locus of  $X$ .*

*Proof.* We first assume that  $A$  is an irreducible perverse object. Let  $n$  be the embedding dimension of  $(X, u)$ . Let  $S$  be the support of  $A$ .

If  $S$  has codimension  $m \geq 1$ , then  $A$  is lisse (being zero) outside  $S$ ; we will show that the inequality  $c_u(A) \geq \deg(u(S))$  holds. Indeed, let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a generic element of  $M^{m+1, n+1}$ , so that  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m}: \mathbf{P}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  is a generic linear embedding that intersects  $S$  in  $\deg(u(S))$  general points. The complex  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* u_! A$  is then supported on  $\deg(u(S))$  points and non-zero on each of them, so the sum of its Betti numbers is  $\geq \deg(u(S))$ , which gives the stated bound.

Now assume that  $S$  is equal to  $X$ . In case  $A$  is lisse on the non-singular locus of  $X$ , the subset  $Z$  is the singular locus of  $X$ , and the statement trivially holds since the left-hand side of the estimate is independent of  $A$ . Otherwise,  $Z$  has codimension 1 in  $X$ . Indeed, were its codimension bigger,  $A$  would be lisse on the non-singular locus of  $X$  by purity of the branching locus [21, Exp. X, Cor. 3.3]. Let  $d$  be the degree of  $u(Z)$ . Set  $m = 1 + \text{codim}(u(X))$ , and let  $\mathbf{a}_m$  be a generic element of  $M^{m+1, n+1}$ , so that  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m}: \mathbf{P}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  is a generic linear embedding that intersects the support of  $A$  in a curve  $C$ , of which  $d$  points lie in the singular locus  $Z$ . Let  $j$  be the embedding of  $C$  in  $X$ . Moreover, let  $\tilde{C}$  be the normalization of  $C$  and let  $\pi: \tilde{C} \rightarrow C$  be the canonical morphism.

We can view the pullback  $j^* A$  of  $A$  to  $C$  as obtained first by pullback along a smooth morphism  $M^{m+1, n+1} \times \mathbf{P}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ , followed by pullback to the geometric generic fiber. Thus any property of  $A$  that is preserved by smooth pullback and by restriction to the geometric generic fiber will be preserved by pullback to  $C$ . In particular, by Lemma 3.11 a shift of  $j^* A$  is perverse on  $C$ , and because an irreducible perverse sheaf on a curve is a shift of a middle-extension sheaf, the pullback  $j^* A$  is a shift of a middle extension

sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$ . In addition,  $\mathcal{F}$  is not lisse on at least  $d$  points, since neither smooth pullback nor restriction to the geometric generic fiber can make a singular point disappear.

Let  $\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$  be the middle extension of  $\pi^*\mathcal{F}$  from the maximal open set where it is lisse; then  $\mathcal{F}$  is canonically isomorphic to  $\pi_*\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$ , since both are middle-extension sheaves on  $C$  that are isomorphic on a dense open set. Let  $d'$  be the number of points where  $\mathcal{F}$  is not lisse and that are not contained in the singular support of  $C$ . We have  $d \leq d' + s$  and  $\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$  is not lisse in at least  $d'$  points.

From the equalities

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* u_! A) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(C, j^* A) = h_c^i(C, \mathcal{F}) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\tilde{C}, \tilde{\mathcal{F}}),$$

we get

$$-\chi_c(\tilde{C}, \tilde{\mathcal{F}}) \leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(\mathbf{P}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* u_! A) \leq c_u(A).$$

Let  $r$  be the “generic rank of  $A$ ” in the sense of Proposition 3.3. By Proposition 3.3,  $r \leq c_u(A)$ . Since  $l_{\mathbf{a}_m}$  is a generic linear embedding,  $r$  is also the “generic rank of  $j^*A$ ” in the sense of Proposition 3.3. Since  $j^*A$  is a shifted middle-extension sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$ ,  $r$  is also the generic rank of  $\mathcal{F}$ , *i.e.* the rank of a lisse sheaf of which  $\mathcal{F}$  is the middle extension. Since  $\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$  be the middle extension of  $\pi^*\mathcal{F}$  from the maximal open set where it is lisse,  $r$  is also the generic rank of  $\tilde{\mathcal{F}}$ . Using the Grothendieck-Ogg-Shafarevich formula, we get  $\chi_c(\tilde{C}, \tilde{\mathcal{F}}) \leq d' - 2r$ . From this we derive the inequalities

$$d' \leq 2r + c_u(A) \leq 3c_u(A).$$

We finally get

$$d \leq d' + s \leq (3 + s)c_u(A),$$

since  $c_u(A) \geq 1$ .

Now consider the general case. For  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , let  $n_i$  be the length of  ${}^p\mathcal{H}^u(A)$  and let  $(A_{i,j})_{1 \leq j \leq n_i}$  be the Jordan–Hölder factors of  ${}^p\mathcal{H}^i(A)$ , repeated with multiplicity. The object  $A$  is lisse on the intersection over  $i$  and  $j$  of the maximal open sets  $U_{i,j}$  where  $A_{i,j}$  is lisse. (Note that all the irreducible perverse factors of a lisse sheaf are lisse, so that if  $A_{i,j}$  is not lisse at a point, then neither is  $A$ ).

By the case of perverse sheaves, the complement of  $U_{i,j}$  is the union of subvarieties with total degree  $\leq (3 + s)c_u(A_{i,j})$ . Thus, we obtain subvarieties  $Z_i$  with

$$\sum_{i=1}^m \deg(Z_i) \leq (3 + s) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} c_u(A_{i,j}) \ll (3 + s)c(u)c_u(A)$$

by Theorem 6.16. □

**6.7. Complexity of the cohomology sheaves of a complex.** In this section, we consider an analogue of Theorem 6.16 where the Jordan–Hölder components of the perverse cohomology sheaves are replaced by the ordinary cohomology sheaves. This is a case where we will only be able to prove “continuity” abstractly, without explicit estimates.

Precisely, we have:

**Proposition 6.24.** *The exist a function  $N: \mathbf{R}^+ \times \mathbf{R}^+ \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^+$  with the following property: for any quasi-projective algebraic variety  $(X, u)$  over  $k$  with embedding dimension  $n$ , and for any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , the following inequality holds:*

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c_u(\mathcal{H}^i(A)) \leq N(n, c_u(A)).$$

We begin with two lemmas.

**Lemma 6.25.** *For any non-negative integers  $d$  and  $n$ , there exists  $C(d, n) \geq 0$  such that, for any algebraically closed field  $k$ , for any prime  $\ell$  invertible in  $k$ , and for any closed immersion  $u: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  whose image is a union of irreducible subvarieties of total degree  $d$ , the inequalities*

$$\begin{aligned} c(u) &\leq C(d, n) \\ \deg(X_s) &\leq C(d, n) \end{aligned}$$

hold, where  $X_s$  is the singular locus of  $X$ .

*Proof.* The theory of Chow varieties [29] provides a quasi-projective scheme  $\text{Chow}_{d,n}$  over  $k$  whose points “are” the closed immersions  $i: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  whose image is a union of irreducible subvarieties of total degree  $d$ . The first inequality follows then from Proposition 6.20 (1), and the second is a consequence of the constructibility of the function that maps a point of  $\text{Chow}_{d,n}$  to the degree of the singular locus of the corresponding quasi-projective variety.  $\square$

**Lemma 6.26.** *For any non-negative integers  $d$  and  $n$ , there exists  $C(d, n) \geq 0$  with the following property. For any algebraically closed field  $k$ , for any prime  $\ell$  invertible in  $k$ , for any quasi-projective variety  $(X, u)$  over  $k$  with embedding dimension  $n$ , and for any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  with  $c_u(A) \leq d$ , there exists a stratification*

$$X_{n+1} \subseteq X_n \subseteq X_{n-1} \subseteq \dots \subseteq X_1 \subseteq X$$

of  $X$  such that

- For all  $i$ , the subvariety  $X_i - X_{i-1}$  is smooth.
- For all  $i$ , the object  $A$  is lisse on  $X_i - X_{i-1}$ .
- For all  $i$ , the subvariety  $X_i$  is a union of at most  $C(d, n)$  subvarieties of degree  $\leq C(d, n)$ .
- For all  $i$ , the inequality  $c(u_i) \leq C(d, n)$  holds, where  $u_i: X_i - X_{i+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  is the natural immersion.

*Proof.* The equality  $c_u(A) = c(u_!A)$  holds by definition, so we may replace  $X$  with the projective space  $\mathbf{P}^n$  (and  $u$  with the identity), and  $A$  with  $u_!A$ , provided we describe the subvarieties  $X_i$  as forming a stratification of the support of  $A$ .

Indeed, we define  $X_1$  to be the support of  $A$ , and then inductively  $X_{i+1}$  to be the complement in  $X_i$  of the maximal smooth open subset of  $X_i$  on which  $A$  is lisse. On noting the inequality  $\dim(X_{i+1}) < \dim(X_i)$ , this provides a stratification of the support of  $A$  with at most  $n+1$  non-empty subvarieties. We denote by  $v_i$  the immersion  $X_i \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$ .

We now prove by induction on  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq n+1$  that  $X_i$  is a union of varieties whose total degree is bounded in terms of  $(d, n)$  only, and that  $c(v_i)$  is bounded in terms of  $(d, n)$  only.

Since  $X_1$  is the support of  $A$ , either  $X_1$  is equal to  $\mathbf{P}^n$  or it is the complement of the maximum open subset on which  $A$  is lisse (in fact, zero). In the second case, Lemma 6.23 shows that  $X_1$  is a union of varieties of degree at most  $3c_u(A)$ . In the first case, the same inequality holds trivially. Then by the first inequality in Lemma 6.25, the complexity  $c(v_1)$  has a bound in terms of  $c_u(A)$  and  $n$ , and hence in terms of  $(d, n)$ . This establishes the base case of the induction.

Assume that the induction assumption holds for some  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . Then, by (8), we obtain  $c_{v_i}(v_i^*A) \leq c_{v_i, \text{Id}}(v_i) c(A) = c(v_i) c(A)$ . By the definition of  $X_{i+1}$ , applying Lemma 6.23 and the second inequality of Lemma 6.25, we deduce that  $X_{i+1}$  is a

union of varieties of total degree bounded in terms of  $(d, n)$  only. The first inequality of Lemma 6.25 applied once more shows that  $c(v_{i+1})$  is bounded in terms of  $(d, n)$  only. This completes the induction.

It only remains to bound the complexity of the immersions  $u_i$ . The excision triangle gives

$$u_i! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \longrightarrow v_i! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \longrightarrow v_{(i+1)!} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$$

in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}^n)$ , and hence the inequality

$$c(u_i) = c(u_i! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) \leq c(v_i! \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) + c(v_{(i+1)!} \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) = c(v_i) + c(v_{i+1})$$

follows by Proposition 6.15 (1).  $\square$

*Proof of Proposition 6.24.* We apply the previous lemma with  $d = c_u(A)$ ; let  $C(d, n) \geq 0$  be the corresponding number and let

$$X_{n+1} \subseteq X_n \subseteq X_{n-1} \subseteq \dots X_1 \subseteq X$$

be a stratification of  $X$  with the properties of the lemma.

Applying excision repeatedly and Proposition 6.15 (1), we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c_u(\mathcal{H}^j(A)) &= \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c(u_i! \mathcal{H}^j(A)) \\ &\leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \sum_{j=1}^{n+1} c(u_j! u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)) = \sum_{j=1}^{n+1} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c(u_j! u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)). \end{aligned}$$

Applying (9) to  $f = u_j$  viewed as a morphism from  $(X_j - X_{j+1}, u_j)$  to  $(\mathbf{P}^n, \text{Id})$ , we have

$$c(u_j! u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)) \ll c_{u_j, \text{Id}}(u_j) c_{u_j}(u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)) = c(u_j) c_{u_j}(u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A))$$

for all  $i$  and  $j$ . By construction,  $u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)$  is lisse on the smooth scheme  $X_j - X_{j+1}$ ; since the perverse homology sheaves and the usual homology sheaves of a lisse sheaf on a smooth scheme agree, the estimates

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c(u_j! u_j^* u_i! \mathcal{H}^i(A)) \ll c(u_j) \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c_{u_j}({}^p \mathcal{H}^i(u_j^* u_i! A)) \ll c(u_j)^2 c_{u_j}(u_j^* u_i! A)$$

hold by Theorem 6.16. Applying (8), we get

$$c_{u_j}(u_j^* u_i! A) \ll c(u_j) c(u_i! A) = c(u_j) c_u(A),$$

and therefore

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c_u(\mathcal{H}^j(A)) \ll c_u(A) \sum_{j=1}^{n+1} c(u_j)^3$$

is bounded in terms of  $(n, d)$  only, since  $c(u_j) \leq C(d, n)$  for all  $j$ .  $\square$

**6.8. Generic base change.** We now prove an effective version of Deligne's generic base change theorem [6, Th. finitude, 1.9]. This argument is due to A. Forey.

**Theorem 6.27.** *Let  $(X, u)$ ,  $(Y, v)$  and  $(S, w)$  be quasi-projective algebraic varieties over  $k$ . Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  and  $g: Y \rightarrow S$  be morphisms.*

*For any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , there exists an integer  $N \geq 0$ , depending only on  $c_u(A)$  and  $(f, g, u, v, w)$ , and a dense open set  $U \subset S$  such that*

- (i) *The image of the complement of  $U$  has degree  $\leq N$ .*
- (ii) *The object  $f_* A$  is of formation compatible with any base change  $S' \rightarrow U \subset S$ .*

**Remark 6.28.** The original generic base change theorem is stated for a constructible sheaf of  $R$ -modules, where  $R$  is a Noetherian ring satisfying  $nR = 0$  for some integer  $n$  that is invertible in  $S$ , and  $S$  is not supposed to be defined over a field  $k$ . An additional statement of the theorem is the constructibility of  $f_*A$  on  $Y_U$ . In the setting of the above statement, it is already known that  $f_*A$  is constructible, precisely by applying [6, Th. finitude, 1.9] to  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  over  $k$ . However, in order to understand the complexity of the complement of the open set  $U$  over which  $f_*A$  is of formation compatible with base change, we will have to redo the whole proof, following closely Deligne’s argument (see also [17, Th. 9.3.1]).

In this section, we will often write simply  $c(X)$  for the complexity  $c(u)$ , where  $(X, u)$  is a quasi-projective variety. Recall also from Remark 6.8 that if  $i: Z \rightarrow X$  is an immersion, then  $c_{u \circ i, u}(i) = c(Z)$ .

Before starting the proof, we state a useful lemma.

**Lemma 6.29.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$  of embedding dimension  $n$ . There exists a finite open cover  $(U_i)$  of  $X$  into at most  $\dim(X) + 1$  affine subvarieties with open immersions  $u_i: U_i \rightarrow X$  such that  $c_{u \circ u_i, u}(u_i) = c(U_i)$  is bounded in terms of  $c(u) = c(X)$  and  $n$ .*

*Proof.* The image of  $u$  in  $\mathbf{P}^n$  can be written as  $Z - W$ , where  $Z$  and  $W$  are closed subvarieties of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ . As in the proof of Lemma 6.26, by Theorem 6.23 the degrees of  $Z$  and  $W$  are bounded in terms of  $c(u)$  and  $n$ . Let  $H$  be a hypersurface of  $\mathbf{P}^n$  such that  $W \subset H$  but  $Z \not\subset H$ . One can choose  $H$  of degree at most the degree of  $W$ . Then set  $U_1 = Z - H$ , which is an affine open subset of  $Z - W$ , of complexity bounded by the degrees of  $Z$  and  $H$ . Since  $\dim(Z \cap H) < \dim(Z)$ , one can conclude by induction: the affine opens of  $Z \cap H$  that are obtained are restrictions of affine open of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , and hence their restrictions to  $Z$  produce affine opens of  $Z - W$ , which, together with  $U_1$ , cover  $Z - W$ .  $\square$

During the proof of Theorem 6.27, we will repeatedly consider subschemes of  $X$ ,  $Y$  and  $S$ . These will always implicitly be considered with the locally closed embedding inherited from  $X$ ,  $Y$  or  $S$ . All complexities will be computed with respect to those implicit embeddings, and hence we will simplify the notation by dropping the embedding from the complexity. Moreover, whenever we say that we can shrink  $S$ , we mean that we can replace  $S$  by a dense open subset whose complement has bounded degree in terms of  $c(A)$ .

*Proof of Theorem 6.27.* Working successively with each irreducible component of  $S$ , there is no loss of generality in assuming, as we do from now on, that  $S$  is irreducible.

**Step 1.** Consider first the particular case where  $S = Y$ ,  $X$  is smooth of pure relative dimension  $d$  over  $S$ , and where  $A$  is a lisse sheaf such that  $R^i f_i A'$  is lisse for each  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$ , where  $A'$  denotes the “naive” dual  $A' = \mathcal{H}om(A, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$  (a non-derived sheaf homomorphism). Then Deligne [6, Th. finitude, 2.1] proves the result with  $U = S$ .

**Step 2.** We now assume that  $S = Y$ ,  $X$  is smooth over  $S$  of pure relative dimension  $d$ , and that  $A$  is a lisse sheaf. Let again  $A' = \mathcal{H}om(A, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$ ; by (9) and Theorem 6.23, there exists an open set  $U \subset S$  whose complement has degree bounded in terms of  $c(A')$ , and hence in terms of  $c(A)$ , such that  $f_i A'$  is lisse on  $U$ . Over the dense open set  $U$ , we are in the situation of Step 1, and hence the result holds in this case too.

**Step 3.** We now perform some reductions for the proof of the general case. We first observe that the problem is local on  $Y$ , so that we may assume that  $Y$  affine. Using a finite affine cover of  $X$  and excision, we may also assume that  $X$  is affine. Note that the



complexity of the restriction of  $A$  to those affine open subsets is bounded in terms of  $c(A)$  by (8).

Up to reducing  $X$  again, we can now factor  $f$  as  $f = u \circ g$ , with  $g$  a proper morphism and  $u$  an open immersion (this is a form of Nagata's compactification theorem).

By proper base change, the result holds for the morphism  $g$  with  $U = S$ , and hence it is enough to prove the result when  $f$  is an open immersion with dense image. We will then prove the result by induction on the relative dimension  $n \geq 0$  of  $X$  over  $S$ .

For  $n = 0$ , since  $X$  and  $Y$  are of dimension 0 over  $S$ , up to shrinking  $S$  to a dense open subset (whose complement is of degree bounded in terms of  $X$  and  $Y$ ), we have  $X = Y$ . Hence the result holds.

We now consider  $n \geq 1$ , and assume that the result holds for relative dimension up to  $n - 1$ .

We will prove below the following sublemma:

**Lemma 6.30.** *With notation and assumption as before, up to shrinking  $S$ , there exists a dense open subset  $Y' \subset Y$  such that the result holds over  $Y'$  and such that the complement of  $Y'$  in  $Y$  is finite of bounded degree over  $S$ .*

**Step 4.** Under the conditions of Step 3, we further assume that  $X$  is smooth over  $S$  and that  $A$  is a lisse sheaf. We can replace  $Y$  by its closure in the image of  $v$ , and hence assume that  $Y$  is projective over  $S$ . Using Lemma 6.30, we can assume that there exists  $Y' \subset Y$  such that the result holds for  $Y'$  and that  $Y - Y'$  is finite over  $S$  of bounded degree. We then have the following commutative diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & Y' & & \\
 & & \downarrow j & & \\
 X & \xrightarrow{f} & Y & \xleftarrow{i} & Y - Y' \\
 & \searrow a & \downarrow b & \swarrow c & \\
 & & S & & 
 \end{array}$$

By Step 2, up to shrinking  $S$ , the object  $a_*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change. By the choice of  $Y'$  (after again shrinking  $S$ ) the object  $j^*f_*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change. By the proper base change, the same holds for  $b_*j_*j^*f_*A$ . Now we have a distinguished triangle

$$j_*j^*f_*A \longrightarrow f_*A \longrightarrow i_*i^*f_*A$$

Applying  $b_*$  to it, we get the distinguished triangle

$$b_*j_*j^*f_*A \longrightarrow a_*A \longrightarrow c_*i^*f_*A$$

Since the first two complexes in this triangle are of formation compatible with any base change, the same holds for the third one, namely  $c_*i^*f_*A$ . Since  $c$  is finite, this implies that  $i^*f_*A$  also has the same property. Hence in the first triangle, the first and third complexes are of formation compatible with any base change, and hence the middle one, namely  $f_*A$ , also has this property. This finishes the proof in this case.

**Step 5.** We now show how to reduce the situation (after the reduction in Step 3) to that of Step 4. We will also prove below the following additional sublemma:

**Lemma 6.31.** *There exists an open dense subset  $V$  of  $X$  that is smooth over  $S$  and with complement of bounded degree.*

By Proposition 6.24, the complexities of the cohomology sheaves of  $A$  are bounded in terms of  $c(A)$ ; hence, up to replacing  $A$  by each of its cohomology sheaves in turn, we reduce to the case where  $A$  is a sheaf. If the support of  $A$  is not dense in  $X$ , then the support has relative dimension  $\leq n - 1$ , and we are done by induction. If the support of  $A$  is dense in  $X$ , then by Theorem 6.23, up to shrinking  $V$ , we may assume that the restriction of  $A$  to  $V$  is a lisse sheaf. Applying induction to the restriction of  $A$  to  $X - V$  and excision, we can assume that  $A$  is a lisse sheaf supported on  $V$ .

Let  $j$  be the open immersion  $V \rightarrow X$ . By Step 2, the result holds for  $j$ , and hence up to shrinking  $S$ , we may assume that  $j_*j^*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change. Choose a cone  $C$  of the canonical adjunction morphism  $A \rightarrow j_*j^*A$ . By definition, we have a distinguished triangle

$$A \longrightarrow j_*j^*A \longrightarrow C$$

and the cohomology of  $C$  is supported in  $Z = X - V$ . Since the first two complexes are of formation compatible with any base change, the same is true for  $C$ . By Theorem 6.9 and Proposition 6.15, the complexity of the restriction of  $C$  to  $Z$  is bounded in terms of the complexity of  $A$ . Since the relative dimension of  $Z$  is  $< n$ , the induction hypothesis applies to the closed immersion  $Z \rightarrow X$  and to the restriction of  $C$  to  $Z$ . Hence, up to shrinking  $S$ , we can assume that  $f_*C$  is of formation compatible with any base change.

We then apply  $f_*$  to the previous distinguished triangle and obtain

$$f_*A \rightarrow (fj)_*j^*A \rightarrow f_*C$$

By Step 2 again, the result holds for the open immersion  $fj: V \rightarrow Y$ , so that after shrinking  $S$ , the object  $(fj)_*j^*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change. Since we have seen that this also holds for  $f_*C$ , we deduce that  $f_*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change, as desired.  $\square$

We now prove the sublemmas above.

*Proof of Lemma 6.30.* The problem is local on  $Y$ , so by Lemma 6.29, we can also assume that  $Y$  is affine over  $S$ . Hence we assume that  $Y \subset \mathbf{A}_S^r$ , where the choice of coordinates is induced by  $v$ .

For  $1 \leq i \leq r$ , consider the  $i$ -th coordinate projection  $p_i: Y \rightarrow \mathbf{A}_S^1$ . We view  $X$  and  $Y$  as  $\mathbf{A}_S^1$ -schemes using  $p_i$  as structure morphism. The relative dimension of  $X$  and  $Y$  is then  $\leq n - 1$ , and hence we can apply the induction hypothesis to this situation. We find a dense open subset  $U_i \subset \mathbf{A}_S^1$  such that the complement of  $U_i$  in  $\mathbf{A}_S^1$  is of degree bounded in terms of  $c(A)$ , and such that  $f_*A$  is of formation compatible with any base change  $S' \rightarrow U_i \subset \mathbf{A}_S^1$ .

Define

$$Y' = \bigcup_{1 \leq i \leq r} p_r^{-1}(U_i).$$

Since the complexity of the  $U_i$  is bounded in terms of  $c(A)$ , the same holds for  $Y'$ . From the definition of  $U_i$ , the result holds for the restriction of  $f$  to  $X' = f^{-1}(Y')$ . Since

$$Y - Y' = (\mathbf{A}_S^1 - U_1) \times_S \cdots \times_S (\mathbf{A}_S^1 - U_r) \longrightarrow S$$

is generically finite, there exists a dense open  $S' \subset S$  over which this morphism is finite. The degree of  $S - S'$  is bounded in terms of the degrees of  $\mathbf{A}_S^1 - U_i$ , for  $i = 1 \dots, r$ , and hence is itself bounded in terms of  $c(A)$ , which ends the proof of the sublemma.  $\square$

*Proof of Lemma 6.31.* This can be achieved after shrinking  $S$ , and performing a base change along a finite surjective radicial morphism, which does not affect étale cohomology, and reducing  $X$ .

To be more precise, we describe these steps concretely, so that the effectivity is clear. Recall that  $X$  is assumed to be affine, with a fixed closed embedding into  $\mathbf{A}_S^r$  for some integer  $r \geq 0$ . By the effective version of generic flatness, see for example [38, Th. 2.45], we find a dense open subset  $S'$  of  $S$  over which  $X$  is flat and such that the complement of  $S'$  in  $S$  is of bounded degree. We may therefore assume that  $X$  is flat over  $S$ . To obtain smoothness, we use the Jacobian criterion. We want to define  $U$  to be the complement in  $X$  of the vanishing locus of the Jacobian ideal, which is indeed of bounded degree. However, for this to define a dense open subset of  $X$ , we need to perform first a base change along a finite surjective radicial morphism  $S' \rightarrow S$ , then replace  $X$  and  $Y$  by their reductions. The degree of the finite surjective radicial morphism is determined by the degrees (according to the affine embedding of  $S$ ) of the coefficients of the polynomials defining  $X$  in  $\mathbf{A}_S^r$ , and hence is bounded. Once the result is known for  $X_{S'}$  over  $S'$ , we conclude the proof by considering the image  $U$  of the dense open subset of  $S'$  by the morphism  $S' \rightarrow S$ , since the degree of the complement of  $U$  is still bounded.  $\square$

**6.9. Tannakian operations.** Let  $(X, u)$  be a connected quasi-projective algebraic variety over  $k$ . Associated with a lisse  $\ell$ -adic sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $X$ , with monodromy group  $G$ , and an algebraic representation  $\rho: G \rightarrow \mathrm{GL}_N(\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell)$  is a lisse sheaf  $\ell$ -adic  $\rho(\mathcal{F})$  constructed as follows: if  $\pi$  is the representation of the étale fundamental group of  $X$  that corresponds to  $\mathcal{F}$ , whose image lies in  $G$ , then  $\rho(\mathcal{F})$  corresponds to  $\rho \circ \pi$ .

The following lemma is very useful in deriving properties of  $\rho(\mathcal{F})$  from those of  $\mathcal{F}$ .

**Lemma 6.32.** *Let  $G \subset \mathrm{GL}_N$  be a reductive group over an algebraically closed field of characteristic zero and denote by  $\mathrm{Std}$  its tautological  $N$ -dimensional representation.*

*For any algebraic irreducible representation  $\rho: G \rightarrow \mathrm{GL}(V)$ , there exist non-negative integers  $(a, b)$  such that  $\rho$  is a subrepresentation of  $\mathrm{Std}^{\otimes a} \otimes \mathrm{D}(\mathrm{Std})^{\otimes b}$ . If the determinant of  $\mathrm{Std}$  has finite order, there exists such a pair with  $b = 0$ .*

*Proof.* For the first part of the statement, see, e.g., [5, Th. III.4.4] in the case of compact Lie groups, and use the equivalence of categories between reductive groups and compact Lie groups.

When the determinant has finite order, it suffices to prove that the contragredient of the tautological representation is a subrepresentation of a tensor power of the standard representation. But, using brackets to denote multiplicity, for  $a \geq 0$ , we have

$$\langle \mathrm{D}(\mathrm{Std}), \mathrm{Std}^{\otimes a} \rangle = \langle \mathbf{1}, \mathrm{Std}^{\otimes(a+1)} \rangle$$

and if  $\det(\mathrm{Std})^m = \mathbf{1}$  for some  $m \geq 1$ , we have  $\langle \mathbf{1}, \mathrm{Std}^{\otimes mN^m} \rangle \geq 1$ , simply because  $\mathrm{Std}^{\otimes m}$  is an  $N^m$ -dimensional representation of  $G$  with image in (a conjugate of)  $\mathrm{SL}_{N^m}$ , and for any  $n \geq 1$ , the tautological representation  $\tau$  of  $\mathrm{SL}_n$  has the property that  $\tau^{\otimes n}$  contains the trivial representation (the dual of the determinant, seen as a multilinear form, is a non-zero invariant vector in  $\tau^{\otimes n}$ ; this invariant is of course also a non-zero invariant for the corresponding tensor power of the image of the representation  $\rho^{\otimes m}$ .)  $\square$

**Proposition 6.33.** *With notation as above, assume that the group  $G$  is semisimple. There exists an integer  $a \geq 0$ , depending only on  $\rho$ , such that*

$$c_u(\rho(\mathcal{F})) \ll c_u(\mathcal{F})^a,$$

where the implied constant depends only on the embedding dimension of  $u$ .

*Proof.* By Lemma 6.32, there exists a non-negative integer  $a$  such that  $\rho$  is a direct summand of  $\text{Std}^{\otimes a}$ , where  $\text{Std}$  denotes the standard faithful representation of  $G$ , corresponding to the sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$ . Hence the sheaf  $\rho(\mathcal{F})$  is a direct summand of  $\mathcal{F}^{\otimes a}$ . Thus

$$c_u(\rho(\mathcal{F})) \leq c_u(\mathcal{F}^{\otimes a}) \ll c_u(\mathcal{F})^a$$

by Proposition 6.15 (2) and parts (4) and (5) of Theorem 6.9.  $\square$

**Remark 6.34.** In the case of curves, the estimate can be strengthened considerably to

$$c_u(\rho(\mathcal{F})) \ll \dim(\rho)c_u(\mathcal{F})$$

by using the “local” formula of Theorem 7.3 below (see [23, Ch. 3] for arguments of this kind). It would be very interesting to know whether such a strong bound holds in general.

In some applications, it is natural to try to improve on this bound by estimating  $a$  effectively, or in other words, to make Lemma 6.32 effective. We record here one such estimate, since this might be of interest for other applications.

Let  $N \geq 1$  be an integer and let  $G \subset \text{GL}_N$  be a reductive algebraic group over an algebraically closed field of characteristic zero. We denote by  $\text{Std}$  the tautological faithful representation of  $G$  in  $\text{GL}_N$ .

**Definition 6.35.** For any irreducible algebraic representation  $\rho$  of  $G$ , we define

$$w(\rho) = \min \{a + b \mid \rho \text{ is a subrepresentation of } \text{Std}^{\otimes a} \otimes \text{D}(\text{Std})^{\otimes b}\}.$$

Lemma 6.32 means that  $w(\rho)$  is finite for all irreducible algebraic representations  $\rho$  of  $G$ .

**Proposition 6.36.** Let  $\Lambda$  be the weight lattice of the identity component  $G_0$  of  $G$ . Fix a norm, denoted by  $\|\lambda\|$ , on  $\Lambda$ . For any irreducible algebraic representation  $\rho$  of  $G$ , the inequality

$$w(\rho) \leq \alpha \max_i \|\lambda_i\| + \beta$$

holds for some real numbers  $\alpha, \beta \geq 0$ , where the  $\lambda_i$  are the highest weights of the irreducible components of the restriction of  $\rho$  to  $G_0$ .

*Proof.* In this proof, we will say that a pair  $(a, b)$  is a *spot* for a representation  $\rho$  of  $G$  if  $\rho$  appears as a subrepresentation of  $\text{Std}^{\otimes a} \otimes \text{D}(\text{Std})^{\otimes b}$ .

Let  $r$  be the semi-simple rank of  $G$ . For a positive dominant weight  $\lambda$  in  $\Lambda$ , we denote by  $\pi_\lambda$  the irreducible representation of  $G^0$  with highest weight  $\lambda$ .

We first assume that  $G$  is a connected semisimple group. In this case, the representation  $\rho$  is associated to a single highest-weight  $\lambda$ . Moreover, we can choose a basis  $(e_i)$  of the root lattice tensored with  $\mathbf{R}$  such that a Weyl chamber can be identified with the cone of vectors with coordinates  $\geq 0$ .

For integers  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , we denote by  $\lambda_i$  be the weight in the line spanned by  $e_i$  with minimal  $i$ -th coordinate, and we write  $\lambda_i = x_i e_i$  for some integer  $x_i \geq 1$ . Further, for each  $i$ , we fix spots  $(a_i, b_i)$  of  $\pi_{\lambda_i}$  (which exist by Lemma 6.32).

We denote by  $A$  the finite set of positive dominant weights  $\mu$  such that each coordinate of  $\mu$  is  $\leq x_i$  for all  $i$ . For each  $\mu \in A$ , we fix spots  $(a_\mu, b_\mu)$  of  $\pi_\mu$ .

By subtracting from a weight  $\lambda$  of  $G$  suitable multiples of  $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$ , until all coordinates are  $\leq x_i$ , we see that we may write

$$\lambda = \mu + \sum_{i=1}^r n_i \lambda_i$$

where  $\mu \in A$  and  $0 \leq n_i \leq \ell_i(\lambda)$  for some linear maps  $\ell_i: \Lambda \rightarrow \mathbf{Z}$ . From highest weight theory, the representation  $\rho$  with highest weight  $\lambda$  is a summand of

$$\pi_\mu \otimes \bigotimes_{1 \leq i \leq r} \pi_{\lambda_i}^{\otimes n_i}.$$

Hence, by definition, the pair  $(a, b)$  defined by

$$a = a_\mu + \sum_{i=1}^r n_i a_i, \quad b = b_\mu + \sum_{i=1}^r n_i b_i,$$

is a spot of  $\rho$ . We have then

$$w(\rho) \leq a + b \leq \alpha + \beta \|\lambda\|$$

where

$$\alpha = \max_{\mu \in A} (a_\mu + b_\mu), \quad \beta = \max_{1 \leq i \leq r} \|\ell_i\| \times \sum_{i=1}^r (a_i + b_i)$$

(with the usual norm for linear maps  $\Lambda \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$  with respect to the given norm on  $\Lambda$ ).

Assume now that  $G$  is a connected reductive group. We construct the weights  $\lambda_i$  and  $A$  of the derived group of  $G$  as before, then lift them (keeping the notation) to the whole group. Let further  $(\gamma_j)_{1 \leq j \leq k}$  be a basis of the subspace of the weights whose associated representations are trivial on the derived group.

For any highest weight  $\lambda$  of  $G = G^0$ , the representation  $\pi_\lambda$  can then be expressed as a summand of a representation of the form

$$\pi_\mu \otimes \bigotimes_{1 \leq i \leq r} \pi_{\lambda_i}^{\otimes n_i} \otimes \bigotimes_{1 \leq j \leq k} \pi_{\gamma_j}^{\otimes m_j}$$

where, as before, the  $n_i$  and  $m_j$  are bounded by linear functions of  $\lambda$ . This leads to a bound of the desired type as in the semisimple case.

Finally, we consider the general case. Let  $\text{Std}_0$  be the tautological representation of  $G_0$ . Note that for any non-negative integers  $(a, b)$ , the representation

$$(22) \quad \text{Ind}(\text{Std}_0^{\otimes a} \otimes \text{D}(\text{Std}_0)^{\otimes b})$$

contains  $\text{Std}^{\otimes a} \otimes \text{D}(\text{Std})^{\otimes b}$  as a subrepresentation. Moreover, by Frobenius reciprocity, the multiplicity of  $\rho$  in (22) is the dimension of the space of  $G_0$ -morphisms from the restriction  $\rho_0$  of  $\rho$  to  $G_0$  to  $\text{Std}_0^{\otimes a} \otimes \text{D}(\text{Std}_0)^{\otimes b}$ . For an irreducible component  $\rho'$  of  $\rho_0$ , this space is non-zero for some  $(a, b)$  with  $a + b = w(\rho')$ . The bound then follows from the case of connected groups.  $\square$

**6.10. Independence of  $\ell$ .** In this section, we prove that the complexities of a compatible system of  $\ell$ -adic sheaves are largely independent of  $\ell$ , following ideas from Katz [24].

We fix a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$  and assume that  $k$  is an algebraic closure of  $\mathbf{F}$ . We use the notation from the notation section of the introduction.

We fix a quasi-projective variety  $(X, u)$  over  $\mathbf{F}$  and a field  $K$  of characteristic zero.

In order to vary the prime  $\ell$ , we make the following definitions. Let  $\Lambda$  be a non-empty set and let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a family  $(\ell_\lambda, \iota_\lambda)_{\lambda \in \Lambda}$  of pairs where each  $\ell_\lambda$  is a prime number invertible in  $\mathbf{F}$  and  $\iota_\lambda$  is a field embedding of the given field  $K$  in  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell_\lambda}$ .

**Definition 6.37.** An  $\mathcal{S}$ -compatible system of complexes on  $X$  is a family  $(A_\lambda)_{\lambda \in \Lambda}$  consisting of objects  $A_\lambda$  of  $\text{D}_c^b(X, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell_\lambda})$  such that the following conditions hold:

- for any  $\lambda \in \Lambda$ , any finite extension  $\mathbf{F}_n$  of  $\mathbf{F}$ , and any  $x \in X(\mathbf{F}_n)$ , the trace  $t_{A_\lambda}(x; \mathbf{F}_n)$  takes values in the subfield  $\iota_\lambda(K)$  of  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell_\lambda}$ ;

- for any  $\lambda, \mu$  in  $\Lambda$ , any finite extension  $\mathbf{F}_n$  of  $\mathbf{F}$ , and any  $x \in X(\mathbf{F}_n)$ , we have

$$\iota_\lambda^{-1} t_{A_\lambda}(x; \mathbf{F}_n) = \iota_\mu^{-1} t_{A_\mu}(x; \mathbf{F}_n).$$

**Lemma 6.38.** *Let  $(A_\lambda)_{\lambda \in \Lambda}$  be an  $\mathcal{S}$ -compatible family on  $X$ . The Euler–Poincaré characteristic  $\chi_c(X \times k, A_\lambda)$  of  $A_\lambda$  is independent of  $\lambda$ .*

*Proof.* For any  $\lambda$ , it follows from the assumption that the  $L$ -function of  $A_\lambda$  is independent of  $\lambda$ . From the expression for this  $L$ -function given by the Grothendieck–Lefschetz formula, we know that  $\chi_c(X \times k, A_\lambda)$  is the degree of this rational function (degree of the numerator minus degree of the denominator), and hence is independent of  $\lambda$ .  $\square$

We then have the following result:

**Theorem 6.39.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be as above.*

(1) *Let  $n \geq 0$  be an integer and let  $(A_\lambda)_\lambda$  be an  $\mathcal{S}$ -compatible system of perverse sheaves on  $\mathbf{P}_\mathbf{F}^n$ . Then for  $\lambda$  and  $\mu$  in  $\Lambda$ , we have*

$$c(A_\lambda) \asymp c(A_\mu),$$

where the implied constants depend only on  $n$ .

(2) *Let  $(X, u)$  be a smooth quasi-projective variety over  $\mathbf{F}$  and  $(\mathcal{F}_\lambda)_\lambda$  an  $\mathcal{S}$ -compatible system of lisse sheaves on  $X$ . Then for all  $\lambda$  and  $\mu$  in  $\Lambda$ , we have*

$$c_u(\mathcal{F}_\lambda) \asymp c_u(\mathcal{F}_\mu),$$

where the implied constants depend only on the embedding dimension of  $(X, u)$ .

*Proof.* (1) We argue by induction on  $n$ , following the strategy of Katz [24, Th. 7]. It is enough to prove the estimate

$$c(A_1) \ll c(A_2)$$

for two compatible perverse sheaves  $A_1$  in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}^n, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell_1})$  and  $A_2$  in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}^n, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_{\ell_2})$ , with an implied constant that only depends on  $n$ .

If  $n = 0$ , then  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  are vector spaces of the same dimension and  $c(A_1) = c(A_2)$  is their common dimension.

We now fix  $n \geq 1$  and assume that the result is known on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  where  $0 \leq m \leq n - 1$ .

For  $0 \leq m \leq n - 1$ , we pick a geometric generic point  $\mathbf{a}_m \in M^{n+1, m+1}(k')$  for some algebraically closed field  $k'$ .

Let  $0 \leq m \leq n - 1$ . By applying Lemma 3.12 to  $A_1$  and  $A_2$ , we find open dense subsets  $U_{m,1}$  and  $U_{m,2}$  of  $M^{n+1, m+1}$  satisfying the properties of Lemma 3.12. Up to replacing  $\mathbf{F}$  by a finite extension, which we may do, we can assume that  $(U_{m,1} \cap U_{m,2})(\mathbf{F})$  is non-empty for all  $m$ , and we then pick  $\mathbf{b}_m \in (U_{m,1} \cap U_{m,2})(\mathbf{F})$ , again for all  $m$ . The complexes  $l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_1[m-n]$  and  $l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_2[m-n]$  on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  over  $\mathbf{F}$  are perverse and form a compatible system; hence, by the induction hypothesis,

$$(23) \quad c(l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_1) \asymp c(l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_2),$$

where the implied constants depend only on  $n$ . We have

$$\max_{0 \leq m \leq n-1} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A_1) = \max_{0 \leq m \leq n-1} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_1),$$

again by Lemma 3.12. Hence

$$(24) \quad \max_{0 \leq m \leq n-1} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A_1) = c(l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_1),$$

by the definition of the complexity and Lemma 3.6.

Together with (23), it follows that

$$\begin{aligned}
c(A_1) &= \max_{0 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A_1) \leq \max_{0 \leq m \leq n-1} \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^m, l_{\mathbf{a}_m}^* A_1) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_n}^* A_1) \\
&\ll c(l_{\mathbf{b}_m}^* A_2) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_n}^* A_1) \\
&\ll c(A_2) + \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_n}^* A_1).
\end{aligned}$$

Since the geometric generic point  $\mathbf{a}_n \in M_{k'}^{n+1, n+1}$  induces an isomorphism  $l_{\mathbf{a}_n}$  of  $\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n$ , it is enough to show that

$$\sigma_1 = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) \ll c(A_2)$$

Arguing as in the proof of Proposition 3.16, we have

$$h^0(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) = \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + \sum_{i < 0} (-1)^{i+1} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + \sum_{i > 0} (-1)^{i+1} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1),$$

and therefore

$$\begin{aligned}
\sigma_1 &= \sum_{i < 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + h^0(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + \sum_{i > 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) \\
&\leq 2 \sum_{i < 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + 2 \sum_{i > 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1).
\end{aligned}$$

By excision and Artin's vanishing theorem for affine varieties, the canonical map

$$H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) \rightarrow H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^* A_1)$$

is an isomorphism for  $i < 0$ . Similarly, because the dual of a perverse sheaf is perverse, and duality exchanges  $l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^*$  and  $l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^!$ , the canonical map

$$H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^! A_1) \rightarrow H^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1)$$

is an isomorphism for  $i > 0$ . Since  $l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}$  is a closed immersion, the functors  $l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^*$  and  $l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^!$  are equal up to a shift and a Tate twist. Hence

$$\begin{aligned}
\sigma_1 &= 2 \sum_{i < 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^* A_1) + \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_1) + 2 \sum_{i > 0} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^! A_1) \\
&\leq 4 \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^{n-1}, l_{\mathbf{a}_{n-1}}^* A_1) + \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_2)
\end{aligned}$$

using Lemma 6.38. Hence

$$\sigma_1 \ll c(A_2) + \chi(\mathbf{P}_{k'}^n, A_2) \ll c(A_2),$$

by (23) and (24), and the elementary Proposition 7.1 below.

(2) The proof is similar, using the obvious adaptation of Lemma 3.12 to lisse sheaves, and the fact that the dual of a lisse sheaf on a smooth scheme is lisse. Alternatively, but at the cost of adding a dependency of the implied constants on  $c(u)$ , we may use [18, Theorem 3] to reduce to (1); indeed, this shows that the middle extensions  $u_{!*} A_\lambda$  of the components of a compatible system of lisse sheaves is a compatible system of perverse sheaves on the projective space target of  $u$ , and one can apply Corollary 6.17 to bound the complexity of the middle extensions.  $\square$

**6.11. Complex conjugation.** In this section, we work over a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$  and  $k$  is an algebraic closure of  $\mathbf{F}$ . We use the notation for trace functions from the introduction.

In applications to analytic number theory, taking the complex conjugate of  $t_A$  is a natural operation, but this has no canonical counterpart at the level of  $D_c^b(X)$ . Nevertheless, we have the following result:

**Proposition 6.40.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective algebraic variety over  $\mathbf{F}$ . Given any mixed object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , there exists a mixed object  $A'$  of  $D_c^b(X)$  such that*

$$t_{A'}(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n) = \overline{t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n)} \quad \text{for any } n \quad \text{and} \quad c_u(A') \ll c(u)c_u(A),$$

where the implied constant depends only on the embedding dimension of  $u$ . Moreover, the association  $A \rightarrow A'$  can be done functorially.

*Proof.* For each  $n \geq 1$ , the trace function  $t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n)$  is the restriction to the set  $X(\mathbf{F}_n)$  of  $\mathbf{F}_n$ -rational points of  $X$  of the trace function of the complex  $u_!A$  on  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , which is again mixed if so is  $A$ . Assume that we have found a mixed object  $\tilde{A}$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{P}^n)$  that “works” for  $u_!A$ , then  $A' = u^*\tilde{A}$  works for  $A$ , and

$$c_u(A') \ll c(u)c(\tilde{A}) \ll c(u)c(u_!A) = c(u)c_u(A),$$

where the first bound is Theorem 6.9 (8). Thus, we may assume that  $X = \mathbf{P}^n$  (with the identity embedding).

We first assume that  $A$  is a perverse sheaf. If  $A$  is pure of weight zero, then we can take  $A' = D(A)$  by a result of Gabber ([18, Th. 3]; see [25, p. 31] for an elucidation of this application of Gabber’s result); then  $A'$  is also pure of weight zero and  $c(A') = c(A)$  by Lemma 6.12. If  $A$  is pure of weight  $w$ , then we can simply take  $A' = D(A(w))(-w)$ , which is pure of weight  $w$ .

Suppose now that  $A$  is a mixed perverse sheaf. Let  $(F_j)$  be the canonical weight filtration on  $A$ , with quotients  $F_{j+1}/F_j$  pure of weight  $w_j$  (see [3, Th. 5.3.5]). We claim first that

$$\sum_j c(F_{j+1}/F_j) \ll c(A).$$

Indeed, since the quotients are perverse sheaves, we have

$$\sum_j c(F_{j+1}/F_j) \ll \sum_j \|\text{cc}(F_{j+1}/F_j)\| = \left\| \sum_j \text{cc}(F_{j+1}/F_j) \right\| = \|\text{cc}(A)\| \ll c(A)$$

by Corollary 5.4 and the fact that the characteristic cycles of perverse sheaves are effective (compare with the end of the proof of Theorem 6.16). In view of the equality

$$t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n) = \sum_j t_{F_{j+1}/F_j}(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n)$$

for all  $n \geq 1$ , we can take

$$A' = \bigoplus_j D((F_{j+1}/F_j)(w_j))(-w_j),$$

which is a mixed perverse sheaf with complexity

$$c(A') = \sum_j c(D(F_{j+1}/F_j)) = \sum_j c(F_{j+1}/F_j) \ll c(A),$$

by Lemma 6.12 and the above.



Finally, in the general case, if  $A$  is a mixed complex of weights  $\leq w$ , then its perverse cohomology sheaves  ${}^p\mathcal{H}^i(A)$  are mixed of weights  $\leq w + i$  for all  $i \in \mathbf{Z}$  by [3, Th. 5.4.1] and we have

$$t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} (-1)^i t_{{}^p\mathcal{H}^i(A)}(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n)$$

for all  $n \geq 1$ .

For all  $i$ , let  $A'_i$  be a mixed perverse sheaf satisfying the conditions of the proposition for  ${}^p\mathcal{H}^i(A)$ . We can define

$$A' = \bigoplus_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} A'_i,$$

which satisfies

$$c(A') = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c(A'_i) \ll \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} c({}^p\mathcal{H}^i(A)) \ll c(A)$$

by the previous case. □

**Remark 6.41.** In practice, the conjugate of the trace functions that occur in concrete applications are often clearly trace functions with essentially the same complexity (e.g., the conjugate of the trace function of an Artin–Schreier sheaf  $\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}$  is simply  $\mathcal{L}_{\psi(-f)}$ ). Nevertheless, Proposition 6.40 might be useful for certain theoretical arguments.

**Remark 6.42.** In fact, the assumption that  $A$  is a mixed object is always satisfied thanks to the deep theorem of L. Lafforgue that an irreducible lisse sheaf with determinant of finite order on a normal variety  $X$  is pure of weight zero (see [32, Prop. VII.7 (i)]). We briefly sketch how to deduce from this that  $A$  is mixed. By definition, it suffices to treat the case where  $A$  is a constructible sheaf and, by induction on the dimension of  $X$ , we can even suppose that  $A$  is lisse. The successive quotients of a Jordan–Hölder filtration of  $A$  are then irreducible lisse sheaves; up to a twist by some  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell(w)$ , their determinant is of finite order by geometric class field theory (see [7, (1.3.6)]), and hence they are pure thanks to Lafforgue’s theorem.

## 7. EXAMPLES AND APPLICATIONS

**7.1. Sums of Betti numbers.** One of the most useful properties of the complexity is that it controls Betti numbers, as the following proposition shows.

**Proposition 7.1.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$ . For any  $A$  in  $D_c^b(X)$ , the following holds:*

$$\begin{aligned} |\chi_c(X, A)| &\leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X, A) \leq c_u(A), \\ |\chi(X, A)| &\leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(X, A) \ll c(u)c_u(A). \end{aligned}$$

*Moreover, the implied constant in the second estimate only depends on the embedding dimension of  $(X, u)$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $n$  be the embedding dimension of  $(X, u)$ . For each object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ , the equality  $h_c^i(X, A) = h^i(\mathbf{P}_k^n, u_!A)$  holds. Since étale cohomology is invariant under extension of scalars to an algebraically closed field  $k'$  and  $l_{a_n}: \mathbf{P}_{k'}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_{k'}^n$  is an isomorphism, the first bound is a straightforward consequence of the definition of the complexity  $c_u(A)$ . On noting that Verdier duality implies  $\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h^i(X, A) = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X, D(A))$ , the second estimate then follows from the first one and the estimate  $c_u(D(A)) \ll c(u)c_u(A)$  from (4), with an implied constant that only depends on  $n$ . □

**Remark 7.2.** The converse estimate

$$c_u(A) \ll \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(X, A)$$

does not hold in general, since the right-hand side is independent of  $u$ , whereas we have seen in Example 6.1 that there is no reasonable intrinsic notion of complexity of an object of  $D_c^b(X)$ . This can also be seen concretely, for instance in the case of curves.

**7.2. Complexity of sheaves on curves.** In the case of curves, we can write down an explicit formula for the complexity.

**Theorem 7.3.** *Let  $(C, u)$  be a smooth connected quasi-projective curve over  $k$ . Let  $\overline{C}$  be the smooth compactification of  $C$ , and denote by  $g$  the genus of  $\overline{C}$ , by  $n$  the number of points of  $\overline{C} - C$ , and by  $d$  the degree of  $u(C)$ .*

(1) *The complexity of an object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(C)$  is given by*

$$(25) \quad c_u(A) = \max\left(d \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_\eta, \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(C, A)\right),$$

where  $\eta$  stands for the generic point of  $C$ .

(2) *If  $A$  is a perverse sheaf on  $C$ , the following inequalities hold:*

$$\max(d, 2g + n - 2) \operatorname{rank}(A) + \operatorname{loc}(A) \leq c_u(A) \leq \max(d, 2g + n + 2) \operatorname{rank}(A) + \operatorname{loc}(A).$$

(3) *If  $\mathcal{F}$  is a middle-extension sheaf on  $C$ , the following inequalities hold:*

$$\max(d, 2g + n - 2) \operatorname{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \operatorname{loc}(\mathcal{F}) \leq c_u(\mathcal{F}) \leq \max(d, 2g + n + 2) \operatorname{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \operatorname{loc}(\mathcal{F}).$$

*Proof.* Part (1) is simply a translation of the definition of  $c_u(A)$ .

To deduce (2), we first note that a perverse sheaf  $A$  satisfies

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(A)_\eta = \dim \mathcal{H}^{-1}(A) = \operatorname{rank}(A).$$

Writing the sum of Betti numbers as

$$\sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(C, A) = -\chi_c(C, A) + 2h^0(C, A) + 2h^{-2}(C, A),$$

we then have

$$-\chi_c(C, A) \leq \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(C, A) \leq -\chi_c(C, A) + 4 \operatorname{rank}(A).$$

Taking the equality  $\chi_c(C, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell[1]) = 2g - 2 + n$  into account, the statement then follows from the Grothendieck–Ogg–Shafarevitch formula.

Finally, (3) is a special case of (2), for the perverse sheaf  $A = \mathcal{F}[1]$ .  $\square$

As a corollary, we can now compare the complexity defined in this paper with the “analytic conductor” of Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel for the affine line over the algebraic closure of a finite field. Precisely, for a middle-extension sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $\mathbf{A}^1$  over such a field, the latter is defined in [14, Def. 1.13] as

$$c_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) = \operatorname{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \operatorname{loc}_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F})$$

$$\operatorname{loc}_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) = (\text{number of singular points of } \mathcal{F} \text{ in } \mathbf{P}^1) + \sum_{x \in \mathbf{P}^1} \operatorname{swan}_x(\mathcal{F}).$$

**Corollary 7.4.** *For a middle-extension sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $\mathbf{A}^1$  over a finite field, the inequalities*

$$c_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) \leq c_u(\mathcal{F}) \leq 3c_{\text{fkm}}^2(\mathcal{F})$$

*hold, with  $u$  the obvious embedding  $\mathbf{A}^1 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$  of degree 1.*

*Proof.* We apply Theorem 7.3 with  $g = 0$ ,  $n = 1$ , and  $d = 1$ . On noting the inequality  $\text{drop}_x(\mathcal{F}) \leq \text{rank}(\mathcal{F})$ , the upper-bound in (3) leads to

$$\begin{aligned} c_u(\mathcal{F}) &\leq 3 \text{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \text{loc}(\mathcal{F}) \leq 3 \text{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \text{rank}(\mathcal{F}) \text{loc}_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) \\ &\leq 3 \text{rank}(\mathcal{F}) c_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) \leq 3 c_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F})^2. \end{aligned}$$

In addition, the inequality  $\text{loc}_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) \leq \text{loc}(\mathcal{F})$  holds, hence the inequalities

$$c_{\text{fkm}}(\mathcal{F}) \leq \text{rank}(\mathcal{F}) + \text{loc}(\mathcal{F}) \leq c_u(\mathcal{F})$$

by the lower-bound in loc. cit. □

**7.3. Artin–Schreier and Kummer sheaves.** In this section,  $k$  is the algebraic closure of a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$ . Given an  $\ell$ -adic additive character  $\psi: \mathbf{F} \rightarrow \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell^\times$  (resp. an  $\ell$ -adic multiplicative character  $\chi: \mathbf{F}^\times \rightarrow \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell^\times$ ), we denote by  $\mathcal{L}_\psi$  (resp.  $\mathcal{L}_\chi$ ) the corresponding *Artin–Schreier sheaf* on  $\mathbf{A}^1$  over  $\mathbf{F}$  (resp. the *Kummer sheaf* on  $\mathbf{G}_m$  over  $\mathbf{F}$ ), as defined, e.g., in [6, Sommes exp.]. These are lisse sheaves of rank one; the Artin–Schreier sheaf is wildly ramified at  $\infty$  if  $\psi$  is non-trivial, whereas the Kummer sheaf is tamely ramified at 0 and  $\infty$  if  $\chi$  is non-trivial. We also denote by  $\mathcal{L}_\psi$  and  $\mathcal{L}_\chi$  the middle extensions of these sheaves to  $\mathbf{P}^1$ .

**Proposition 7.5.** *Let  $C = \mathbf{P}^1$  over  $k$  and  $u = \text{Id}$ .*

- (1) *For any non-trivial additive character  $\psi$  of  $\mathbf{F}$ , we have  $c_u(\mathcal{L}_\psi) = 1$ .*
- (2) *For any non-trivial multiplicative character  $\chi$  of  $\mathbf{F}^\times$ , we have  $c_u(\mathcal{L}_\chi) = 1$ .*

*Proof.* These follow from Theorem 7.3 (1) by the standard knowledge of the relevant Betti numbers. □

We can now easily estimate the complexity of more general Artin–Schreier and Kummer sheaves, which are building blocks of many of the sheaves used in applications to analytic number theory.

**Definition 7.6.** Let  $X$  be a scheme over  $\mathbf{F}$  and  $U$  a dense open subset of  $X$ . Let  $j$  be the open immersion  $U \rightarrow X$ . For each morphism  $f: U \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^1$ , we define the *Artin–Schreier sheaf*  $\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}$  on  $X$  as  $\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)} = j_! f^* \mathcal{L}_\psi$ . For each morphism  $g: U \rightarrow \mathbf{G}_m$ , we define the *Kummer sheaf*  $\mathcal{L}_{\chi(g)}$  on  $X$  as  $\mathcal{L}_{\chi(g)} = j_! g^* \mathcal{L}_\chi$ .

Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety over  $k$ , and let  $v: \mathbf{A}^1 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$  be the obvious embedding (or its restriction to  $\mathbf{G}_m$ ). Combined with (8) and (9), Proposition 7.5 gives the estimates

$$\begin{aligned} c_u(\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}) &\ll c_{u \circ j, u}(j) c_{u \circ j, v}(f) \\ c_u(\mathcal{L}_{\chi(g)}) &\ll c_{u \circ j, u}(j) c_{u \circ j, v}(g), \end{aligned}$$

(with the same notation as above, and when  $\psi$  and  $\chi$  are non-trivial), where the implied constants only depend on the embedding dimension of  $u$ . According to the remark following Proposition 6.20, these quantities are uniformly bounded if  $f$  or  $g$  varies among morphisms with “bounded degree”. One can sometimes be more explicit, using tools like Proposition 6.21. Here is a simple example:

**Corollary 7.7.** *Let  $f_1$  and  $f_2$  be polynomials in  $n$  variables over  $k$ , with  $f_2$  non-zero. Let  $U \subset \mathbf{A}^n$  be the open set where  $f_2$  does not vanish. Let  $f = f_1/f_2: U \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^1$ . Then the following estimate holds:*

$$c_u(\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}) \ll (4 + \deg(f_1) + \deg(f_2))^{n+2}$$

where  $u$  is the standard embedding  $\mathbf{A}^n \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^n$  and the implied constant only depends on  $n$ .

*Proof.* Apply the bound above combined with Proposition 6.21, viewing  $U$  as the subscheme of  $\mathbf{A}^{n+1}$  defined by the equation  $f_2(x)y = 1$ , and the morphism  $f: U \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^1$  as the morphism  $(x, y) \mapsto f_1(x)y$ .  $\square$

**7.4. Further examples.** We collect here a few more examples of “standard” sheaves whose complexity is easily estimated. Again,  $k$  is the algebraic closure of a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$ .

**Proposition 7.8.**

(1) Let  $\mathcal{K}$  be any hypergeometric sheaf on  $\mathbf{G}_m$  in the sense of Katz. We have

$$c_u(\mathcal{K}) \ll \text{rank}(\mathcal{K})$$

where the implied constant is absolute and  $u$  is the standard embedding  $\mathbf{G}_m \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$ .

(2) Let  $(E, u)$  be an elliptic curve over  $\mathbf{F}$  embedded in  $\mathbf{P}^2$  as a cubic curve. Let  $\theta$  be a non-trivial character  $E(\mathbf{F}) \rightarrow \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell^\times$ , and let  $\mathcal{L}_\theta$  be the associated character sheaf defined by the Lang isogeny. Then  $c_u(\mathcal{L}_\theta) = 3$ .

(3) Let  $\{x_1, \dots, x_4\}$  be four distinct points in  $\mathbf{P}^1(\mathbf{F})$ . Let  $\mathcal{F}$  be an irreducible middle-extension sheaf on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  over  $\mathbf{F}$  with unipotent local monodromy at those four points.<sup>1</sup> Then  $c(\mathcal{F}) = 2$ .

*Proof.* All these statements follow straightforwardly from calculating Betti numbers and Theorem 7.3, (1).

In the case of a hypergeometric sheaf, its cohomology is either zero or one-dimensional, with the first case occurring when one of the characters  $\chi_1, \dots, \chi_k$  is trivial.

In case (2), we apply (25) with  $(n, g, d) = (0, 1, 3)$ . The rank of  $\mathcal{L}_\theta$  is 1, so the first term in the maximum is equal to 3. The second term is 0, since  $h^i(E, \mathcal{L}_\theta) = 0$  for all  $i$  by the assumption that  $\theta$  is non-trivial.

In case (3), we apply the formula with  $(n, g, d) = (0, 0, 1)$ . The first term in the maximum is 2 since the rank of  $\mathcal{F}$  is 2. In the second term, we have

$$h^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{F}) = h^2(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{F}) = 0,$$

since  $\mathcal{F}$  is an irreducible middle-extension sheaf of rank 2. Thus the sum of Betti numbers is equal to  $-\chi(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{F})$ . The Euler–Poincaré characteristic formula for  $\mathcal{F}$  gives

$$\chi(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{F}) = 2\chi(\mathbf{P}^1, \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell) - 4 \times 1 = 0$$

Hence the sum of the Betti numbers vanishes and  $c(\mathcal{F}) = 2$ .  $\square$

**7.5. Tame ramification.** When a sheaf naturally appears in higher dimension without being obtained from simpler sheaves by means of Grothendieck’s six functors, one may still be able to estimate its complexity, using either the direct definition of complexity, or sometimes the uniformity statement of Proposition 6.20. We illustrate this here with some results involving tame ramification.

**Proposition 7.9.** Let  $X$  be a smooth scheme over  $k$ , let  $j: X \rightarrow \overline{X}$  an embedding into a smooth scheme  $\overline{X}$  such that the complement  $D = \overline{X} \setminus X$  is a divisor with normal crossings. Let  $i: \overline{X} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}_k^n$  be a closed immersion, and let  $\mathcal{F}$  be a lisse sheaf on  $X$  that is tamely ramified along  $D$ . Then the estimate  $c_{i \circ j}(\mathcal{F}) \ll \text{rank}(\mathcal{F})c(i \circ j)$  holds.

*Proof.* Let  $d = \dim(X)$ . The object  $\mathcal{F}[d]$  is perverse since  $\mathcal{F}$  is a lisse sheaf on a smooth scheme of dimension  $d$ . Since  $j$  is an affine open immersion, the object  $j_*\mathcal{F}[d]$  is perverse

<sup>1</sup> Deligne and Flicker [8, Prop. 7.1] have proved that there are  $|\mathbf{F}|$  such sheaves up to isomorphism and  $\mathbf{F}$ -twisting.

on  $\overline{X}$ , and since  $i$  is a closed immersion, the object  $A = i_{!j_!}\mathcal{F}[d]$  is also a perverse sheaf (see [3, Cor. 4.1.3]). Since  $A$  is perverse, Corollary 5.4 (2) and Lemma 2.5 yield

$$c_{i \circ j}(\mathcal{F}) = c(A) \ll \| \text{CC}(A) \| \ll \sup_{0 \leq m \leq n} | \text{CC}(A) \cdot \text{CC}(K_m) |,$$

where  $K_m$  is the constant sheaf on a generic  $m$ -dimensional subspace of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ .

By Theorem 2.2,  $| \text{CC}(A) \cdot \text{CC}(K_m) |$  is the absolute value of the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of the pullback of  $A$  to a generic  $m$ -dimensional subspace, or equivalently the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of the restriction of  $\mathcal{F}$  to the intersection of a generic  $m$ -dimensional subspace with  $X$ .

For a generic  $m$ -dimensional subspace  $H$ , the intersection  $H \cap \overline{X}$  is smooth, the intersection with  $\overline{D}$  has normal crossings, and the restriction of  $\mathcal{F}$  has tame ramification around the intersection with  $D$ .

This implies that  $\chi(X \cap H, \mathcal{F}) = \text{rank}(\mathcal{F})\chi(X \cap H)$ , and since the linear subspace  $H$  is generic, the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of  $X \cap H$  is bounded by  $c(i \circ j)$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 7.10.** *Let  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$  be quasi-projective algebraic varieties over  $k$ , and let  $\pi: Y \rightarrow X$  be a finite étale covering. Assume that  $v$  is the composition of an embedding into a smooth normal crossings compactification  $\overline{Y}$  with a closed immersion. Let  $\mathcal{F}$  be a lisse sheaf on  $X$  such that  $\pi^*\mathcal{F}$  is tamely ramified along  $\overline{Y} - Y$ . Then the estimate*

$$c_u(\mathcal{F}) \ll \text{rank}(\mathcal{F})c_{v,u}(\pi)c(v),$$

holds, with an implied constant that only depends on the embedding dimensions of  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$ .

*Proof.* The composition of the adjunction maps

$$\mathcal{F} \rightarrow \pi_*\pi^*\mathcal{F} = \pi_!\pi^*\mathcal{F} \rightarrow \mathcal{F},$$

is the multiplication by the degree of  $\pi$ . The sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$  is hence a direct factor of  $\pi_!\pi^*\mathcal{F}$ , and the estimates

$$c_u(\mathcal{F}) \leq c_u(\pi_!\pi^*\mathcal{F}) \ll c_{v,u}(\pi)c_v(\pi^*\mathcal{F}) \ll \text{rank}(\mathcal{F})c_{v,u}(\pi)c(v),$$

hold by Proposition 6.15, Theorem 6.9 (9), and Proposition 7.9 applied to  $\pi^*\mathcal{F}$  on  $Y$ .  $\square$

**7.6. The Riemann Hypothesis.** In this section, we record the general “quasi-orthogonality” version of the Riemann Hypothesis over finite fields arising from Deligne’s work and the theory of complexity developed here.

We work over a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$ , and assume that  $k$  is an algebraic closure of  $\mathbf{F}$ . We fix an isomorphism  $\iota$  from  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  to  $\mathbf{C}$  to define weights, as explained in the notation section. The notation for trace functions is also recalled there.

We first explain the type of bounds for values of trace functions of perverse sheaves that can be obtained using the complexity.

**Proposition 7.11.** *Let  $(X, u)$  be a quasi-projective variety on  $\mathbf{F}$  of pure dimension  $d$ . Let  $M$  be a perverse sheaf on  $X$  that is pure of weight zero.*

- (1) *For any  $x \in X(\mathbf{F})$ , the estimate  $t_M(x) \ll c_u(M)$  holds.*
- (2) *If  $M$  is geometrically irreducible and its support is equal to  $X$ , then the following estimate holds:*

$$t_M(x) \ll c_u(M)|\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}.$$

- (3) *There exists a stratification of  $X$  over  $k$  into locally closed strata  $S_j$  that are irreducible and smooth of pure dimension  $d_j$  such that the degree of  $u(S_j)$  is bounded in terms of  $c_u(M)$  and the estimate*

$$t_M(x) \ll c_u(M) |\mathbf{F}|^{\frac{\max\{-d, -d_j - 1\}}{2}}$$

*holds for all  $j$  and all  $x \in S_j(\mathbf{F})$ .*

*In all these estimates, the implied constants only depend on the embedding dimension of  $u$ .*

*Proof.* (1) The perversity of  $M$  implies the vanishing of the cohomology sheaves  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$  in all degrees  $i > 0$  and  $i < -d$ . By the definition of weights for perverse sheaves, if  $M$  is pure of weight zero, then  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$  is pointwise pure of weight  $i$ , which means that the eigenvalues of Frobenius acting on the stalks  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)_x$  all have modulus  $|\mathbf{F}|^{i/2} \leq 1$ . Therefore, the inequality

$$|t_M(x)| \leq \sum_{-d \leq i \leq 0} |t_{\mathcal{H}^i(M)}(x)| \leq \sum_{-d \leq i \leq 0} \dim \mathcal{H}^i(M)_x$$

holds, and it suffices to estimate the dimensions of the stalks of  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$ . From (8) applied to the morphism  $x: \text{Spec}(\mathbf{F}) \rightarrow X$ , we derive the estimates

$$(26) \quad \dim \mathcal{H}^i(M)_x \leq c_{u \circ x}(x^*M) \ll c_{u \circ x, u}(x) c_u(M) = c(u \circ x) c_u(M) \ll c_u(M),$$

and hence the estimate  $|t_M(x)| \ll c_u(M)$  as claimed.

(2) If we assume, moreover, that  $M$  is a geometrically irreducible perverse sheaf with support  $X$ , by [3, Th. 4.3.1 (ii)] there exists a dense open subset  $j: U \rightarrow X$  and a lisse sheaf  $\mathcal{F}$  on  $U$  such that  $M$  is the middle extension  $j_{!*} \mathcal{F}[d]$ . Then  $\mathcal{H}^0(M)$  vanishes by [3, Prop. 2.2.4], so that the eigenvalues of Frobenius have modulus  $\leq |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$  and the same argument as in (1) yields the stronger estimate  $|t_M(x)| \ll c_u(M) |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$ .

(3) By Theorem 6.23, there exists a stratification of  $X$  into locally closed strata  $S_j$  such that the restriction of  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$  to each  $S_j$  is lisse and the degree of  $u(S_j)$  is bounded in terms of  $c_u(M)$ . By [3, Prop. 2.2.4], the inequality  $\dim \text{Supp}(\mathcal{H}^i(M)) < -i - 1$  holds for all  $-i < d$ . Since  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$  restricts to a lisse sheaf on  $S_j$  is lisse, we must have  $d_j < -i$  whenever  $\mathcal{H}^i(M)$  is non-zero and  $d_j \neq d$ .  $\square$

**Remark 7.12.** The following example shows that the estimates in Proposition 7.11 are best possible in general. Assume that the finite field satisfies  $|\mathbf{F}| \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ . Let  $\chi$  be a non-trivial multiplicative character of order three of  $\mathbf{F}$  and let  $\mathcal{L}_\chi$  be the associated Kummer sheaf on  $\mathbf{G}_m$ . Denote by  $j: U \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^n$  the inclusion of the complement of the hypersurface  $F \subset \mathbf{A}^n$  given by the equation

$$x_1^3 + \cdots + x_n^3 = 0.$$

Let  $\mathcal{F}$  be the lisse sheaf  $\mathcal{L}_{\chi(x_1^3 + \cdots + x_n^3)}(-n/2)$  on  $U$  and let  $M = j_{!*}(\mathcal{F}[n])$  be its middle-extension to  $\mathbf{A}^n$ , shifted to make it perverse. Then  $M$  is a geometrically irreducible perverse sheaf of weight zero and the equality  $|t_M(x)| = |\mathbf{F}|^{-n/2}$  holds for all  $x \in U(\mathbf{F})$ . We claim that, at the origin, the trace function of  $M$  satisfies  $|t_M(0)| = |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$ .

To see this, let  $h: X' \rightarrow \mathbf{A}^n$  denote the blow-up of  $\mathbf{A}^n$  at the origin,  $E \simeq \mathbf{P}^{n-1}$  the exceptional divisor,  $F'$  the strict transform of  $F$ , and  $j': U' \rightarrow X'$  the inclusion of the inverse image  $U' = h^{-1}(U)$  of  $U$ . We define  $\mathcal{F}' = h^* \mathcal{F}$  and  $M' = j'_{!*}(\mathcal{F}'[n])$ . Since  $\chi$  is a character of order three, a local computation shows that  $\mathcal{F}'$  extends to a lisse sheaf outside  $F'$  (for example, in the affine chart given by  $y_1 = 1$  and  $y_i = x_i/x_1$  for  $i = 2, \dots, n$ , this follows from the equality  $\mathcal{L}_{\chi(x_1^3 + \cdots + x_n^3)} = \mathcal{L}_{\chi(x_1^3(1 + y_2^3 + \cdots + y_n^3))} = \mathcal{L}_{\chi(1 + y_2^3 + \cdots + y_n^3)}$ ). Since

$F'$  is a smooth divisor, the perverse sheaf  $M'$  is the extension by zero of the shift of this lisse sheaf to  $X'$ . Hence, its trace function at a point  $y = [y_1 : \cdots : y_n] \in E(\mathbf{F})$  equals

$$t_{M'}(y) = \begin{cases} \chi(y_1^3 + \cdots + y_n^3) & \text{if } y_1^3 + \cdots + y_n^3 \neq 0, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

By the decomposition theorem [3], the perverse sheaf  $M$  is a direct factor of  $h_!(M')$ , and since  $h$  is an isomorphism outside the origin, the other irreducible components of  $h_!(M')$  are skyscraper sheaves supported at zero. By the Grothendieck–Lefschetz trace formula, the trace function of  $M$  at 0 is equal to

$$\frac{1}{|\mathbf{F}|^{n/2}} \sum_{\substack{[y_1 : \cdots : y_n] \in \mathbf{P}^{n-1}(\mathbf{F}) \\ y_1^3 + \cdots + y_n^3 \neq 0}} \chi(y_1^3 + \cdots + y_n^3),$$

and this sum has modulus  $|\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$ .

**Theorem 7.13** (Quasi-orthogonality). *Let  $\mathbf{F}$  be a finite field of characteristic different from  $\ell$ . Let  $(X, u)$  be a geometrically irreducible quasi-projective algebraic variety of dimension  $d$  over  $\mathbf{F}$ .*

(1) *Assume that  $X$  is smooth. Let  $A$  and  $B$  be  $\ell$ -adic constructible sheaves on  $X$ . Suppose that  $A$  and  $B$  are mixed of weights  $\leq 0$  and that there exists a dense open subset  $U$  of  $X$  on which  $A$  and  $B$  are lisse sheaves, pure of weight zero, and geometrically irreducible. Then there exists a complex number  $\alpha$  of modulus 1 such that the estimate*

$$\left| \frac{1}{|\mathbf{F}|^d} \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F})} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} - \alpha \delta(A, B) \right| \ll c(u) c_u(A) c_u(B) |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2} + c(u) (c_u(A) + c_u(B)) |\mathbf{F}|^{-1}$$

*holds, with  $\delta(A, B) = 1$  if  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically isomorphic over  $U$  and  $\delta(A, B) = 0$  otherwise.*

(2) *Let  $A$  and  $B$  be geometrically irreducible  $\ell$ -adic perverse sheaves on  $X$ . Suppose that  $A$  and  $B$  are pure of weight zero. Then there exists a complex number  $\alpha$  of modulus 1 such that the estimate*

$$\left| \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F})} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} - \alpha \delta(A, B) \right| \ll c(u) c_u(A) c_u(B) |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2}$$

*holds, with  $\delta(A, B) = 1$  if  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically isomorphic and  $\delta(A, B) = 0$ .*

*In both estimates, the implied constant only depends on the embedding dimension of  $u$ .*

*Proof.* We start with (1). Since  $B$  restricts (up to a shift and a Tate twist) to a perverse sheaf of weight zero on  $U$ , the proof of Proposition 6.40 shows that  $\overline{t_B}$  coincides with the trace function of  $D(B)$  on  $U(\mathbf{F})$ . Since  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically irreducible, the object  $A \otimes D(B)$  has non-trivial cohomology with compact support in top degree  $2d$  if and only if  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically isomorphic, and in that case this cohomology is one-dimensional. By [25, Lem. 1.8.1], if  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically isomorphic, there is an isomorphism  $B \simeq A \otimes \alpha^{\deg}$  for a unique  $\alpha \in \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ , which has modulus 1 when viewed as a complex number. Arguing as in the proof of Katz’s orthogonality theorem [25, Th. 1.7.2], the combination of the Grothendieck–Lefschetz trace formula and Deligne’s Riemann Hypothesis thus gives the estimate

$$\left| \frac{1}{|\mathbf{F}|^d} \sum_{x \in U(\mathbf{F})} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} - \alpha \delta(A, B) \right| \leq \sigma |\mathbf{F}|^{-1/2},$$

where  $\sigma$  denotes the sum of Betti numbers

$$\sigma = \sum_{i \in \mathbf{Z}} h_c^i(U_{\overline{\mathbf{F}}}, A \otimes D(B)).$$

By Proposition 7.1 and (5), this quantity is bounded by

$$\sigma \ll c(A \otimes D(B)) \ll c_u(A)c_u(D(B)) \ll c(u)c_u(A)c_u(B).$$

On the other hand, on the complement  $X - U$ , the functions  $t_A$  and  $\overline{t_B}$  are bounded by the generic rank of  $A$  and  $B$  respectively, which are in turn bounded by their complexity taking (26) into account. This gives the estimate

$$\left| \frac{1}{|\mathbf{F}|^d} \sum_{x \in (X-U)(\mathbf{F})} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} \right| \ll c_u(A)c_u(B)|(X-U)(\mathbf{F})||\mathbf{F}|^{-d}.$$

We then note that  $U$  is contained in the intersection of the maximal open set  $U_1$  where  $A$  is lisse and the maximal open set  $U_2$  where  $B$  is lisse, and hence the estimates

$$\deg(X - U) \ll \deg(X - U_1) + \deg(X - U_2) \ll c(u)(c_u(A) + c_u(B))$$

hold by Theorem 6.23 (recall that  $X$  is assumed to be smooth). We conclude using the classical bound  $|(X - U)(\mathbf{F})| \leq \deg(X - U)|\mathbf{F}|^{\dim(X-U)}$ .

The proof of (2) is the same, except that the term  $|\mathbf{F}|^{-d}$  does not appear due to the normalization of weights for perverse sheaves (see Remark 1.3) and that we do not need to treat the sum over points of  $X - U$ .  $\square$

Taking  $X = \mathbf{A}^n$ , the second statement immediately implies Theorem 1.2.

**Remark 7.14.** In the setting of part (2) of Theorem 7.13, suppose that one knows that there is  $\beta \geq 0$  such that

$$H_c^i(X_{\overline{\mathbf{F}}}, A \otimes D(B)) = 0$$

for  $i \geq -\beta$  (the case  $\beta = 0$  corresponds to the assumption that  $A$  and  $B$  are not geometrically isomorphic). Then by the same argument and the Riemann Hypothesis, we obtain the stronger estimate

$$\sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F})} t_A(x) \overline{t_B(x)} \ll c(u)c_u(A)c_u(B)|\mathbf{F}|^{-(\beta+1)/2}.$$

The case where  $\beta = \dim(X) - 1$  corresponds to full square-root cancellation for the sum over  $X(\mathbf{F})$ .

A basic finiteness statement follows from this result:

**Corollary 7.15.** *Let  $\mathbf{F}$  be a finite field of characteristic different from  $\ell$ . Let  $(X, u)$  be a geometrically irreducible quasi-projective algebraic variety over  $\mathbf{F}$ .*

*For any  $c \geq 1$ , there are, up to geometric isomorphism, only finitely many  $\ell$ -adic perverse sheaves  $A$  on  $X$  of complexity  $c_u(A) \leq c$  that are geometrically irreducible and pure of weight zero.*

*Proof.* By Theorem 7.13, applied to finite extensions of  $\mathbf{F}$ , we first see that there exists a finite extension  $\mathbf{F}_n$  of  $\mathbf{F}$  (depending on  $c$ ) such that the condition  $t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n) = t_B(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n)$  implies that  $A$  and  $B$  are geometrically isomorphic, for irreducible perverse sheaves  $A$  and  $B$  of weight zero on  $X$  with  $c_u(A) \leq c$  and  $c_u(B) \leq c$ . Moreover, we can also ensure that  $X(\mathbf{F}_n)$  is not empty and that  $t_A(\cdot; \mathbf{F}_n) \neq 0$  when  $c_u(A) \leq c$ .



Replacing  $\mathbf{F}$  by  $\mathbf{F}_n$ , it is then enough to prove that there are only finitely many functions  $t_A$  for irreducible perverse sheaves of weight zero with  $c_u(A) \leq c$ , up to geometric isomorphism. Let  $C(X(\mathbf{F}_n))$  be the finite-dimensional Hilbert space of functions  $X(\mathbf{F}) \rightarrow \mathbf{C}$  with norm

$$\|f\| = \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F})} |f(x)|^2.$$

Theorem 7.13 again implies that for  $A$  not geometrically isomorphic to  $B$  with  $c_u(A) \leq c$  and  $c_u(B) \leq c$ , the functions  $t_A/\|t_A\|$  and  $t_B/\|t_B\|$ , viewed as elements of the unit sphere of  $C(X(\mathbf{F}_n))$ , make an angle  $\geq \theta$  for some  $\theta > 0$  independent of  $A$  and  $B$ . It is well-known that there can only be finitely many such vectors.  $\square$

**Remark 7.16.** This argument can be made quantitative, although it is probably far from sharp; see [11] for the case of curves.

**7.7. Examples.** We collect here for ease of reference some immediate corollaries of the formalism of Section 6. These contain and generalize all the basic “continuity” estimates of Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel in the case of curves.

**Example 7.17 (Fourier Transform).** Let  $\mathbf{F}$  be a finite field. Let  $n \geq 1$  be an integer and let  $X = \mathbf{A}^n$  viewed as a commutative algebraic group over  $\mathbf{F}$ , with the obvious embedding in  $\mathbf{P}^n$  to define the complexity. Let  $\psi$  be a fixed non-trivial  $\ell$ -adic additive character of  $\mathbf{F}$  and consider the Artin–Schreier sheaf  $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_{\psi(x \cdot y)}$  of rank 1 on  $\mathbf{A}^n \times \mathbf{A}^n$ , where  $x \cdot y$  is the standard inner-product. Deligne defined the  $\ell$ -adic Fourier transform  $\text{FT}_\psi$  as the functor  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^n) \rightarrow D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^n)$  given by

$$\text{FT}_\psi(A) = p_{2,!}(p_1^*A \otimes \mathcal{L}) = p_{2,*}(p_1^*A \otimes \mathcal{L})$$

(see [34, 1.2.1.1]; the equality of the two expressions is a highly non-trivial fact, often referred to as “the miracle of the Fourier transform”).

From the results of Section 6 and Corollary 7.7, we therefore deduce:

**Proposition 7.18.** *There exists an integer  $N \geq 0$ , depending only on  $n$ , such that*

$$c(\text{FT}_\psi(A)) \leq Nc(A)$$

*holds for any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^n)$ .*

The results of Section 8, together with Propositions 6.21 and 7.5, lead to explicit estimates for  $N$ . These are growing at least as fast as  $n!$ , and it might be interesting to have a better estimate for this “norm” of the  $\ell$ -adic Fourier transform.

For  $n = 1$ , Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel proved the inequality

$$c_{\text{fkm}}(\text{FT}_\psi(A)) \leq 10c_{\text{fkm}}(A)^2$$

(for middle-extension Fourier sheaves) in [14, Prop. 8.2]; this estimate plays an essential role in many analytic applications, and one can expect similar use of Proposition 7.18.

**Example 7.19 (Other cohomological transforms).** Let  $(X, u)$  and  $(Y, v)$  be quasi-projective varieties over  $k$ . Let  $K$  be an object of  $D_c^b(X \times Y)$ . Let  $T_K: D_c^b(X) \rightarrow D_c^b(Y)$  be the “cohomological transform with kernel  $K$ ”, i.e., the functor such that

$$T_K(A) = p_{2,!}(p_1^*A \otimes K),$$

where  $p_1: X \times Y \rightarrow X$  and  $p_2: X \times Y \rightarrow Y$  are the projections.

Applying again the formalism, there exists a constant  $N_K$ , depending on  $K$ , such that

$$c_v(T_K(A)) \leq N_K c_u(A)$$

for any object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(X)$ . Precisely, this holds with

$$N_K = c_{u \times v, v}(p_2) c_{u \times v, v}(p_1) c_{u \times v}(K)$$

(where  $u \times v$  is used to denote the composition of  $u \times v$  with the Segre embedding of the product of the projective spaces target of  $u$  and  $v$ ; as in the case of the Fourier transform, other embeddings of  $X \times Y$  might be possible).

In the very special case where  $X = Y = \mathbf{A}^1$  (over finite fields) and  $K$  a rank 1 Artin–Schreier or Kummer sheaf on  $\mathbf{A}^2$ , we can apply Corollary 7.7 to estimate the complexity of the kernel sheaf; a weaker form of the resulting estimate was proved by Fouvry, Kowalski and Michel [15, Th. 2.3].

Other special cases that have been already considered (when  $n = 1$ ) for  $X = Y = \mathbf{A}^1$  or  $X = Y = \mathbf{G}_m$  are additive convolution and multiplicative convolution.

More generally, let  $G$  be a commutative quasi-projective algebraic group over  $k$ , with a given locally closed embedding  $u$ . Let  $\sigma: G \times G \rightarrow G$  be the addition morphism. We have two convolution functors

$$*: D_c^b(G) \times D_c^b(G) \rightarrow D_c^b(G), \quad *! : D_c^b(G) \times D_c^b(G) \rightarrow D_c^b(G)$$

defined by

$$A * B = \sigma_*(A \boxtimes B), \quad A *! B = \sigma_!(A \boxtimes B).$$

Use the composition of the Segre embedding with  $u \times u$  to embed  $G \times G$  in projective space.<sup>2</sup> Then by (11) and (9) and Proposition 6.13, there exists an integer  $N$  such that the inequalities

$$c_u(A * B) \leq N c_u(A) c_u(B), \quad c_u(A *! B) \leq N c_u(A) c_u(B)$$

hold for all objects  $A$  and  $B$  of  $D_c^b(G)$ .

**Example 7.20** (Gowers uniformity sheaves). Let  $(G, u)$  be a commutative quasi-projective algebraic group over a field  $k_0$ , with addition map  $\sigma: G \times G \rightarrow G$ .

For a given object  $A$  of  $D_c^b(G)$  and an integer  $d \geq 0$ , let  $\pi_d$  be the morphism  $G^{d+1} \rightarrow G$  given by  $(x, h_1, \dots, h_d) \mapsto x$ . Then we define the “uniformity object”  $U_d(A)$  by

$$U_d(A) = \pi_{d,!} \left( \bigotimes_I D^{|I|} (f_I^* A) \right),$$

where the tensor product is over all subsets  $I$  of  $\{0, \dots, d-1\}$  and

$$f_I(x, h_1, \dots, h_d) = f \left( x + \sum_{i \in I} h_i \right).$$

Thus, there exists  $N_d \geq 0$  such that the following inequality holds:

$$c_u(U_d(A)) \leq N_d c_u(A)^{2^d}.$$

The point of this construction is that (up to normalization), in the case where  $k_0$  is a finite field, the trace function of  $U_d(A)$  (essentially) satisfies

$$\sum_{x \in \mathbf{F}} t_{U_d(A)}(x) = \|t_A\|_{U_d}^{2^d},$$

where  $\|f\|_{U_d}$  is the  $d$ -Gowers norm for a complex-valued function on the finite group  $G(\mathbf{F})$ .

For  $G = \mathbf{G}_a$ , this construction is implicitly used in [12] to obtain an “inverse theorem” for Gowers norms of one-variable trace functions.

<sup>2</sup> For certain groups, such as affine groups, one can also use other embeddings.

**Example 7.21** (Sum-product sheaves). In [30] and [31], special cases of the following construction are applied to Kloosterman sheaves: given an input object  $A$  in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^1)$  and an integer  $l \geq 1$ , one constructs a “sum-product” object

$$B_l = \bigotimes_{1 \leq i \leq l} f_i^* A \otimes f_{i+l}^* D(A)$$

on  $\mathbf{A}^{2+2l}$ , with coordinates  $(r, s, \mathbf{b})$ , by means of the functions  $f_i(r, s, \mathbf{b}) = r(s + b_i)$ . It follows from the general formalism that, performing this construction with *any* input object  $A$  in  $D_c^b(\mathbf{A}^1)$ , we have

$$c_v(B_l) \leq N_l c_u(A)^{2l}$$

for some constant  $N_l$  depending only on  $l$  (the embeddings are the standard embeddings  $u: \mathbf{A}^1 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$  and  $v: \mathbf{A}^{2l+1} \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^{2l+1}$ ).

**7.8. Equidistribution.** Using the theory of complexity developed in this paper, the “horizontal” version of Deligne’s Equidistribution Theorem formulated by Katz in the case of curves [23, Ch. 3] admits a straightforward extension to higher-dimensional varieties. As before, we fix an isomorphism  $\iota: \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell \rightarrow \mathbf{C}$  through which both fields are identified.

**Theorem 7.22.** *Let  $N \geq 1$  be an integer and let  $(X, u)$  be a smooth and connected quasi-projective scheme over  $\text{Spec}(\mathbf{Z}[1/N])$  with geometrically irreducible generic fiber. For each prime  $p$  not dividing  $N$ , let  $(X_{\mathbf{F}_p}, u_p)$  denote the reduction of  $(X, u)$  modulo  $p$ . Let  $\mathcal{P}$  be an infinite set of primes not dividing  $Nl$ , and assume that we are given, for each  $p \in \mathcal{P}$ , a lisse  $l$ -adic sheaf  $\mathcal{F}_p$  on  $X_{\mathbf{F}_p}$  that is pure of weight zero and whose complexity satisfies  $c_{u_p}(\mathcal{F}_p) \ll 1$ .*

*Assume that, for each  $p \in \mathcal{P}$ , the geometric and arithmetic monodromy groups of  $\mathcal{F}_p$  coincide and are isomorphic to a fixed semisimple (i.e., the connected component of the identity is semisimple) algebraic group  $G$ . Let  $K$  be a maximal compact subgroup of  $G(\mathbf{C})$ .*

*For  $p \in \mathcal{P}$  and  $x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)$ , let  $\theta_p(x)$  be the unique conjugacy class in  $K$  that intersects the conjugacy class of the semisimplification of the image in  $G$  of the Frobenius at  $x$  relative to  $\mathbf{F}_p$ , so that the equality*

$$\text{Tr}(\theta_p(x)) = \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)} t_{\mathcal{F}_p}(x)$$

*holds. Then the families  $(\theta_p(x))_{x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)}$  become equidistributed as  $p \rightarrow +\infty$  in the space of conjugacy classes of  $K$ , with respect to the Haar probability measure.*

*Proof.* Let  $d$  be the relative dimension of  $X$  over  $\text{Spec}(\mathbf{Z}[1/N])$ . Shrinking  $\mathcal{P}$  if necessary, we may assume that  $X_{\mathbf{F}_p}$  is a smooth and geometrically connected variety of dimension  $d$  and that  $X(\mathbf{F}_p)$  is not empty for all primes  $p$  in  $\mathcal{P}$ . In fact, the number of  $\mathbf{F}_p$ -points behaves asymptotically like  $|X(\mathbf{F}_p)| \sim p^d$  as  $p \rightarrow +\infty$  by the Lang–Weil estimate.

Each sheaf  $\mathcal{F}_p$  corresponds to a representation of the fundamental group  $\pi_1(X_{\mathbf{F}_p})$  of  $X_{\mathbf{F}_p}$ . According to the Weyl Criterion, equidistribution follows from the vanishing

$$(27) \quad \lim_{p \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{1}{|X(\mathbf{F}_p)|} \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)} \text{Tr}(\rho(\theta_p(x))) = 0$$

for any non-trivial irreducible representation  $\rho$  of  $K$ . By the correspondance between semisimple algebraic groups and compact Lie groups, such a representation  $\rho$  corresponds uniquely to an algebraic irreducible representation of the algebraic group  $G$ , which is still denoted by  $\rho$ . The lisse sheaf  $\rho(\mathcal{F}_p)$  on  $X_{\mathbf{F}_p}$  (see Section 6.9) satisfies

$$\text{Tr}(\rho(\theta_p(x))) = t_{\rho(\mathcal{F}_p)}(x)$$

for all  $x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)$ . Moreover, this sheaf is of weight zero (the group  $G$  being semisimple, it is a subsheaf of some tensor power  $\mathcal{F}^{\otimes a}$  by Lemma 6.32), geometrically irreducible (since its arithmetic and geometric monodromy group are equal), and non-trivial. By the Riemann Hypothesis (Theorem 7.13, (1)), applied with  $B = \overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$ , the estimate

$$\frac{1}{p^d} \sum_{x \in X(\mathbf{F}_p)} \mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\theta_p(x))) \ll c_{u_p}(\rho(\mathcal{F}_p)) p^{-1/2}$$

holds for all  $p \in \mathcal{P}$ . By Proposition 6.33, there exists an integer  $a \geq 0$ , depending only on  $\rho$ , such that

$$c_{u_p}(\rho(\mathcal{F}_p)) \ll c_{u_p}(\mathcal{F})^a.$$

Since we assumed that  $c_{u_p}(\mathcal{F}_p)$  is bounded, this estimate implies (27).  $\square$

In practice, some multi-variable cases of this theorem could be proved by applying the Deligne–Katz equidistribution theorems to families of curves covering  $X$ .

Katz–Sarnak [27, §9.6] and Katz [25, Ch. 12] have proved earlier statements of the same kind, but assuming that  $\mathcal{F}_p$  is the base change to  $\mathbf{F}_p$  of a “common” sheaf or perverse sheaf on  $X/\mathbf{Z}[1/N]$ .

In fact, we now show that Theorem 7.22 gives a positive answer to the question of Katz [25, p. 8 and 12.6.6] concerning equidistribution of certain higher-dimensional families of additive character sums. This illustrates that the theory of complexity can, to a certain extent, obviate the lack of a theory of exponential sums over  $\mathbf{Z}$  (the second part implies Theorem 1.4 from the introduction).

Let  $n \geq 1$  and  $e \geq 1$  be integers. Let  $P(n, e)$  be the space of polynomials of degree  $e$  in  $n$  variables and  $P(n, e, \text{odd})$  the subspace consisting of odd polynomials, by which we mean that only monomials of odd degree have non-zero coefficients.

For  $p$  prime and  $f \in P(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$ , set

$$S(f; p) = \frac{1}{p^{w(f)/2}} \sum_{x \in \mathbf{F}_p^n} e\left(\frac{f(x)}{p}\right),$$

where  $w(f)$  is the smallest integer such that the vanishing

$$H_c^i(\mathbf{A}_{\overline{\mathbf{F}}_p}^n, \mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}) = 0$$

holds for  $i > w(f)$ .

**Corollary 7.23.** *Let  $n \geq 1$  and  $e \geq 1$  be integers. Set  $K_n = \mathrm{U}_{(e-1)n}(\mathbf{C})$  and, for odd  $e$ ,*

$$K_{n, \text{odd}} = \begin{cases} \mathrm{USp}_{(e-1)n}(\mathbf{C}) & \text{if } n \text{ is odd,} \\ \mathrm{O}_{(e-1)n}(\mathbf{C}) & \text{if } n \text{ is even.} \end{cases}$$

- (1) *The families  $(S(f; p))_{f \in P(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)}$  become equidistributed as  $p \rightarrow +\infty$  with respect to the measure which is the image under the trace of the probability Haar measure on  $K_n$ .*
- (2) *Suppose that  $e$  is odd. The families  $(S(f; p))_{f \in P(n, e, \text{odd})(\mathbf{F}_p)}$  become equidistributed as  $p \rightarrow +\infty$  with respect to the measure which is the image under the trace of the probability Haar measure on  $K_{n, \text{odd}}$ .*

*Proof.* Note that  $P(n, e)$  is a dense open subset of the affine space of polynomials of degree  $\leq e$  in  $n$  variables. Let  $D(n, e) \subset P(n, e)$  denote the dense open subset of Deligne polynomials (namely, those for which the homogeneous part of highest degree defines a smooth hypersurface in  $\mathbf{P}^{n-1}$ ) and let  $D(n, e, \text{odd}) \subset P(n, e, \text{odd})$  be the subset of odd Deligne polynomials. Both  $D(n, e)$  and  $D(n, e, \text{odd})$  are smooth schemes over  $\mathbf{Z}$ .

Because (by the Riemann Hypothesis) the estimate

$$|S(f; p)| \leq \sum_{i \leq w(f)} h_c^i(\mathbf{A}_{\mathbf{F}_p}^n, \mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}) \ll c(\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f)}) \ll 1$$

holds for all  $p$  and  $f \in P(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$ , it is enough to prove the equidistribution of sums for  $f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$  (resp.  $f \in D(n, e, \text{odd})(\mathbf{F}_p)$ ).

We first handle separately the cases  $e = 1$  and  $e = 2$ . If  $e = 1$ , the sum  $S(f; p)$  vanishes for any non-zero linear polynomial  $f$ . Since  $K_0 = U_0(\mathbf{C})$  is the trivial group, whose only element has trace zero, the equidistribution holds in that case.

If  $e = 2$ , then  $K_2 = U_1(\mathbf{C})$  is the unit circle. Write a polynomial  $f \in D(n, 2)(\mathbf{F}_p)$  as

$$f(x) = Q(x) + \lambda(x) + \mu,$$

where  $Q$  is a non-degenerate quadratic form,  $\lambda$  a linear form and  $\mu$  a constant. For each prime  $p \geq 3$ , it is an elementary consequence of the fact that normalized Gauss sums have modulus one that  $|S(f; p)| = 1$ . Let  $h \geq 1$  be an integer. Then

$$\sum_{f \in D(n, 2)(\mathbf{F}_p)} S(f; p)^h = \frac{1}{p^{nh/2}} \sum_{x_1, \dots, x_h \in \mathbf{F}_p^n} \sum_{Q, \lambda} e\left(\frac{1}{p} \left(\sum_i (Q(x_i) + \lambda(x_i))\right)\right) \sum_{c \in \mathbf{F}_p} e\left(\frac{hc}{p}\right).$$

This vanishes as soon as  $p > h$ . If  $h \leq -1$ , we obtain the same conclusion after noting that  $S(f; p)^{-1} = \overline{S(f; p)} = S(-f; p)$ . Thus

$$\lim_{p \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{1}{|D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)|} \sum_{f \in D(n, 2)(\mathbf{F}_p)} S(f; p)^h = 0$$

for any non-zero integer  $h$ , which proves equidistribution in  $U_1(\mathbf{C}) = K_2$ .

We now assume that  $e \geq 3$ . Let  $N = (e-1)^n$ . For  $p$  prime, let  $\psi$  be an  $\ell$ -adic character with trace function  $x \mapsto e(x/p)$ , under the identification of  $\overline{\mathbf{Q}}_\ell$  and  $\mathbf{C}$ . On  $\mathbf{A}^n \times D(n, e)$  over  $\mathbf{F}_p$  with coordinates  $(x, f)$  we have the Kummer sheaf  $\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f(x))}$ . Define

$$\mathcal{D}_p = p_{2,!} \mathcal{L}_{\psi(f(x))}(n/2)[n],$$

where  $p_2: \mathbf{A}^n \times D(n, e) \rightarrow D(n, e)$  denotes the projection to the second factor, so that

$$S(f; p) = (-1)^n t_{\mathcal{D}_p}(f)$$

by the trace formula. This is *a priori* an object of the derived category of  $D(n, e)$  over  $\mathbf{F}_p$ , but Deligne has shown that  $\mathcal{D}_p$  is in fact a lisse sheaf of rank  $N$  and pure of weight zero for each prime  $p$  not dividing  $e$  and each  $f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$  (see [25, Cor. 3.5.11, Cor. 3.5.12]).

We first prove (2), which fits exactly the statement of Theorem 7.22. The relevant monodromy groups have been computed by Katz [25, Th. 12.6.3]: if  $p \geq 7$  and  $p \nmid e$ , the geometric and arithmetic monodromy groups of the restriction  $\mathcal{F}_p$  of  $\mathcal{D}_p$  to  $D(n, e, \text{odd})$  coincide and are equal to  $\text{Sp}_N$  if  $n$  is odd and to  $\text{O}_N$  if  $n$  is even (precisely, these references show that the geometric monodromy group is as stated, but by [25, Th. 3.10.6], these sheaves are arithmetically self-dual, so their arithmetic monodromy groups cannot be bigger). Hence  $K_{n, \text{odd}}$  is a maximal compact subgroup of the geometric monodromy group for any  $p$ . Moreover, denoting by  $i$  the closed immersion  $D(n, e, \text{odd}) \rightarrow D(n, e)$ , the estimate

$$c(\mathcal{F}_p) = c(i^* p_{2,!} \mathcal{L}(\psi(f(x)))) \ll c(i) c(p_2) c(\mathcal{L}_{\psi(f(x))})$$

holds by (8) and (9) for any prime  $p$ , where the complexities are computed using the embeddings of  $\mathbf{A}^n$ ,  $D(n, e)$  and their product and subschemes are induced by the natural embeddings of affine spaces in the projective space of the same dimension.

By the bound in Section 7.3 and by Theorem 6.20, we deduce that  $c(\mathcal{F}_p) \ll 1$  for all  $p$ , where the implied constant depends on  $(e, n)$  only. Thus the equidistribution in (2) follows from Theorem 7.22.

We now come back to (1). Here we note that, as above, we have  $c(\mathcal{D}_p) \ll 1$  for all  $p$ , but the setting is not exactly that of Theorem 7.22. Indeed, Katz proved [25, Th. 6.8.34] that the geometric monodromy group of  $\mathcal{D}_p$ , for  $p \geq 7$  such that  $p \nmid e(e-1)$ , is the group

$$G_{2p} = \{g \in \mathrm{GL}_N \mid \det(g)^{2p} = 1\},$$

which depends on  $p$ . We argue then by repeating the use of the Weyl Criterion in the proof of Theorem 7.22.

For  $f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)$ , we denote by  $\theta_p(f)$  the conjugacy class in  $G_p$  corresponding to the Frobenius at  $f$ , whose trace is equal to  $S(f; p)$ . Let  $\rho$  be a non-trivial irreducible representation of  $\mathrm{U}_N(\mathbf{C})$ , which can also be viewed as a representation of  $\mathrm{GL}_N$ . The lisse sheaf  $\rho(\mathcal{D}_p)$  satisfies  $c(\rho(\mathcal{D}_p)) \ll 1$  for all  $p$  (as in loc. cit.). The restriction of  $\rho$  to  $G_{2p}$  is a direct sum of a bounded number of irreducible representations. We claim that if  $p$  is large enough, depending on  $\rho$ , then this restriction does not contain the trivial representation of  $G_{2p}$ . Indeed, by Frobenius reciprocity, the multiplicity of the trivial representation is equal to the sum over  $h \in \mathbf{Z}$  of the multiplicity of the character  $\det(\cdot)^{2ph}$  in  $\rho$ , i.e., it is equal to one if  $\rho = \det(\cdot)^{2ph}$  for some non-zero  $h$  (because  $\rho$  is non-trivial), and zero otherwise. The first case cannot occur if  $p$  is large enough, hence the claim.

Now applying the Riemann Hypothesis as above to each irreducible subrepresentation of  $\rho(\mathcal{D}_p)$ , we obtain

$$\frac{1}{|D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)|} \sum_{f \in D(n, e)(\mathbf{F}_p)} \mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\theta_p(f))) \ll p^{-1/2}$$

for all  $p$ , where the implied constant depends on  $(n, e, \rho)$ . This implies the equidistribution in (2).  $\square$

In the forthcoming paper [10], the three last-named authors will use the theory of complexity, among other tools, to study the equidistribution of families of exponential sums arising as Fourier–Mellin transforms of trace functions on commutative algebraic groups, generalizing the equidistribution theorems of Deligne [7] (for powers of  $\mathbf{G}_a$ , through the Fourier transform) and Katz [26] (for  $\mathbf{G}_m$ ), see [16] for a survey. This has applications, also discussed in [10], to the study of the variance of arithmetic functions over function fields in arithmetic progressions.

We state here (a form of) the basic result, in the “vertical” direction (see [10, Th. 1.1.1]).

**Theorem 7.24.** *Let  $(G, u)$  be a quasi-projective geometrically connected commutative algebraic group over a finite field  $\mathbf{F}$ . Let  $A$  be a geometrically irreducible perverse sheaf on  $G$  which is pure of weight zero. There exists a complex reductive algebraic group  $G_A$  with a maximal compact subgroup  $K_A$ , and for all  $n \geq 1$  there exists a subset  $\widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)$  of the character group of  $G(\mathbf{F}_n)$  such that*

- (1) *For each  $n \geq 1$ , the following estimate holds;*

$$|\widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)| = |G(\mathbf{F}_n)| + O(|\mathbf{F}|^{n(\dim(G)-1)}).$$

- (2) *For all integers  $n \geq 1$  and all characters  $\chi \in \widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)$ , there exists a conjugacy class  $\theta_\chi$  in  $K_A$  such that*

$$\frac{1}{|G(\mathbf{F}_n)|} \sum_{x \in G(\mathbf{F}_n)} t_A(x; \mathbf{F}_n) \chi(x) = \mathrm{Tr}(\theta_\chi).$$

(3) As  $N \rightarrow +\infty$ , the families  $(\theta_\chi)_{\chi \in \widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)}$  become equidistributed on average in the space  $K_A^\sharp$  of conjugacy classes of  $K_A$ , in the sense that the equality

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{1}{N} \sum_{1 \leq n \leq N} \frac{1}{|\widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)|} \sum_{\chi \in \widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)} f(\theta_\chi) = \int_{K_A} f(g) d\mu(g),$$

holds for any continuous conjugacy-invariant function  $f: K_A \rightarrow \mathbf{C}$ , where the measure is the probability Haar measure on  $K_A$  and the terms for which  $\widehat{G}_{nr}(\mathbf{F}_n)$  is empty are omitted from the sum over  $n$ .

## 8. EFFECTIVE BOUNDS

It is clear that the implied constants in our bounds for all of Grothendieck's six functors can be made effective as long as the constant in Theorem 5.1 can be made effective.

**Theorem 8.1.** *We can take the implied constant in Theorem 5.1 to be*

$$\frac{2^{16}}{3^4} e^{4/13} 13^n (n+2)!.$$

We do not give a full proof of this, but we sketch how the arguments leading up to the proof of Theorem 5.1 can be modified to give this precise bound.

*Sketch of proof.* The primary issue is to control the bilinear form of Corollary 5.4. It is convenient to calculate with this bilinear form in a basis generated by constant sheaves (identical to that of Lemma 2.5 up to a sign). Let  $e_m$  be the class of  $\overline{\text{CC}(K_m)}$  for  $K_m$  the constant sheaf on an  $m$ -dimensional subspace, so that  $e_0, \dots, e_n$  form a basis of the vector space  $\text{CH}^n(\overline{T^*\mathbf{P}^n}) \otimes \mathbf{Q}$ . By Theorem 2.2, the intersection pairing

$$e_{m_1} \cdot e_{m_2} = \overline{\text{CC}(K_{m_1})} \cdot \overline{\text{CC}(K_{m_2})}$$

is equal to  $(-1)^n$  times the Euler–Poincaré characteristic of the intersection of a general  $m_1$ -dimensional subspace and a general  $m_2$ -dimensional subspace. This intersection is a projective space of dimension  $m_1 + m_2 - n$ , and hence has Euler–Poincaré characteristic  $\min(m_1 + m_2 + 1 - n, 0)$ , so the intersection number is  $(-1)^n \min(m_1 + m_2 + 1 - n, 0)$ .

By construction, the function of Lemma 3.14 is easy to calculate with respect to this basis: it sends  $e_m$  to  $e_{m-1}$ . Therefore, the bilinear form of Lemma 5.4 satisfies  $f(e_{m_1}, e_{m_2}) = g(m_1 + m_2 + 1 - n)$  with

$$g(x) = \sum_{k=0}^x 4^k (x - k) = \frac{4^{x+2} - 3x - 4}{9}$$

for  $x \geq 0$  and  $g(x) = 0$  for  $x \leq 0$ . For simplicity, we will upper-bound it by the simpler bilinear form  $f$  such that  $f(e_{m_1}, e_{m_2}) = 4^{m_1+m_2+3-n}/9$ .

Set  $e'_i = \sum_{j \leq i} 2^{i-j} e_j$ . Then  $e'_0, \dots, e'_n$  also form a basis. Fix a norm  $\|\cdot\|$  on the vector space  $\text{CH}^n(\overline{T^*\mathbf{P}^n}) \otimes \mathbf{R}$  which is the  $\ell^\infty$  norm in this basis. This basis is convenient because the intersection of  $e'_i$  with the characteristic cycle of a test sheaf supported on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  is 1 if  $m + i = n$  and 0 otherwise. To check this, it suffices to check that the intersection number of  $e_i$  with the characteristic cycle of a test sheaf supported on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  is equal to 1 if  $i + m = n$ , to  $-2$  if  $i + m - n = 1$ , and to 0 otherwise. This follows from the fact that the tensor product of  $K_i$  with the test sheaf supported on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  is the test sheaf supported on  $\mathbf{P}^{i+m-n}$ , which has Euler–Poincaré characteristic equal to 1 if  $i + 2 - n = 0$ , to  $-2$  if  $i + m - n = 1$ , and to 0 otherwise.

Because the intersection number of  $e'_i$  with the characteristic cycle of a test sheaf is equal to 1 on  $\mathbf{P}^m$  if  $m + i = n$  and to 0 otherwise, Proposition 5.3 then shows that for a perverse sheaf  $A$ , the norm  $\|\overline{\text{CC}}(A)\|$  is bounded by  $4(n + 1)c(A)$ .

Rewriting the bilinear form  $f$  in the basis  $e'_i$  gives:

$$\begin{aligned} f(e'_{i_1}, e'_{i_2}) &= \sum_{j_1 \leq i_1} \sum_{j_2 \leq i_2} \frac{2^{i_1-j_1} 2^{i_2-j_2} 4^{j_1+j_2+3-n}}{9} = \frac{2^{i_1+i_2} 4^{3-n}}{9} \left( \sum_{j_1 \leq i_1} 2^{j_1} \right) \left( \sum_{j_2 \leq i_2} 2^{j_2} \right) \\ &\leq \frac{2^{i_1+i_2} 4^{4-n}}{9} 2^{i_1+1} 2^{i_2+1} = \frac{4^{i_1+i_2+4-n}}{9}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the total norm of the bilinear form is at most

$$\sum_{i_1=0}^n \sum_{i_2=0}^n \frac{4^{i_1+i_2+4-n}}{9} = \frac{4^{4-n}}{9} \left( \sum_{i=0}^n 4^i \right)^2 = \frac{4^{4-n}}{9} \left( \frac{4^{n+1}}{3} \right)^2 = \frac{4^{6+n}}{3^4}$$

and the constant of Corollary 5.4 involves an extra factor of  $16(n + 1)^2$  coming from the constant of Proposition 5.3, for a total of  $(n + 1)^2 4^{8+n}/3^4$ .

Let  $b_n$  be the constant in Theorem 5.1 in dimension  $n$ . Then we can see from the induction argument that there are  $n$  terms (it may appear to be  $n + 1$ , but we may set  $\lambda_1 = 1$  at the start by scaling the whole matrix, which does not affect the automorphism of  $\mathbf{P}^n$ ), each of size  $13b_{n-1}c(A)c(B)$ , plus one term coming from Corollary 5.4 of size  $4^{8+n}(n + 1)^2 c(A)c(B)/3^4$ , so we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} b_n &= 13nb_{n-1} + \frac{4^{8+n}}{3^4}(n + 1)^2 = \sum_{k=0}^n 13^{n-k} \frac{n!}{k!} \frac{4^{8+k}(k + 1)^2}{3^4} = n! 13^n \sum_{k=0}^n \frac{4^{8+k}(k + 1)^2}{3^4 13^k k!} \\ &\leq (n + 1)^2 n! 13^n \frac{2^{16}}{3^4} e^{4/13} \leq (n + 2)! 13^n \frac{2^{16}}{3^4} e^{4/13}, \end{aligned}$$

as we wanted to show.  $\square$

**Remark 8.2.** Being more careful in the numerical arguments would lead to a significantly improved constant (the dominant terms in the sum defining  $b_n$  are those for small  $k$ , and for such values our bounds could see significant improvement, e.g. we could use the constant 1 in Corollary 5.4 for  $k = 0$  instead of  $2^{16}/3^4$ ), and some minor adjustments to the algebraic geometry can lower the base of the exponent  $13^n$ , but we do not know how to improve on the factorial growth, except in characteristic zero where a completely different argument offers exponential growth.

From this statement, it is completely straightforward to make explicit the inequalities of Section 6, because all the implicit constants in those inequalities come from repeated applications of Theorem 5.1, which can be replaced with this effective version.

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