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We give an introduction to a theory of b-functions, i.e. Bernstein-Sato polynomials. After reviewing some facts from D-modules, we introduce b-functions including the one for arbitrary ideals of the structure sheaf. We explain the relation with singularities, multiplier ideals, etc., and calculate the b-functions of monomial ideals and also of hyperplane arrangements in certain cases.

1. D-modules.

1.1. Let X be a complex manifold or a smooth algebraic variety over C. Let \mathcal{D}_X be the ring of partial differential operators. A local section of \mathcal{D}_X is written as

$$\sum_{\nu \in \mathbf{N}^n} a_{\nu} \partial_1^{\nu_1} \cdots \partial_n^{\nu_n} \in \mathcal{D}_X \quad \text{with } a_{\nu} \in \mathcal{O}_X,$$

where $\partial_i = \partial/\partial x_i$ with (x_1, \ldots, x_n) a local coordinate system. Let F be the filtration by the order of operators i.e.

$$F_p \mathcal{D}_X = \left\{ \sum_{|\nu| \leq p} a_{\nu} \partial_1^{\nu_1} \cdots \partial_n^{\nu_n} \right\},$$

where $|\nu| = \sum_{i} \nu_{i}$. Let $\xi_{i} = \operatorname{Gr}_{1}^{F} \partial_{i} \in \operatorname{Gr}_{1}^{F} \mathcal{D}_{X}$. Then

(1.1.1)
$$\operatorname{Gr}^{F} \mathcal{D}_{X} := \bigoplus_{p} \operatorname{Gr}_{p}^{F} \mathcal{D}_{X} = \bigoplus_{p} \operatorname{Sym}^{p} \Theta_{X} (= \mathcal{O}_{X}[\xi_{1}, \dots, \xi_{n}] \text{ locally}),$$
$$\mathcal{S}pec_{X} \operatorname{Gr}^{F} \mathcal{D}_{X} = T^{*} X.$$

1.2 Definition. We say that a left \mathcal{D}_X -module M is coherent if it has locally a finite presentation

$$\bigoplus \mathcal{D}_X \to \bigoplus \mathcal{D}_X \to M \to 0.$$

- 1.3. Remark. A left \mathcal{D}_X -module M is coherent if and only if it is quasi-coherent over \mathcal{O}_X and locally finitely generated over \mathcal{D}_X . (It is known that $\operatorname{Gr}^F \mathcal{D}_X$ is a noetherian ring, i.e. an increasing sequence of locally finitely generated $\operatorname{Gr}^F \mathcal{D}_X$ -submodules of a coherent $\operatorname{Gr}^F \mathcal{D}_X$ -module is locally stationary.)
- **1.4. Definition.** A filtration F on a left \mathcal{D}_X -module M is good if (M, F) is a coherent filtered \mathcal{D}_X -module, i.e. if $F_p\mathcal{D}_XF_qM\subset M_{p+q}$ and $\mathrm{Gr}^FM:=\bigoplus_p\mathrm{Gr}_p^FM$ is coherent over $\mathrm{Gr}^F\mathcal{D}_X$.
- **1.5. Remark.** A left \mathcal{D}_X -module M is coherent if and only if it has a good filtration locally.

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1.6. Characteristic varieties. For a coherent left \mathcal{D}_X -module M, we define the characteristic variety $\mathrm{CV}(M)$ by

(1.6.1)
$$CV(M) = \operatorname{Supp} \operatorname{Gr}^{F} M \subset T^{*} M,$$

taking locally a good filtration F of M.

- 1.7. Remark. The above definition is independent of the choice of F. If $M = \mathcal{D}_X/\mathcal{I}$ for a coherent left ideal \mathcal{I} of \mathcal{D}_X , take $P_i \in F_{k_i}\mathcal{I}$ such that the $\rho_i := \operatorname{Gr}_{k_i}^F P_i$ generate $\operatorname{Gr}^F \mathcal{I}$ over $\operatorname{Gr}^F \mathcal{D}_X$. Then $\operatorname{CV}(M)$ is defined by the $\rho_i \in \mathcal{O}_X[\xi_1, \ldots, \xi_n]$.
- 1.8. Theorem (Sato, Kawai, Kashiwara [39], Bernstein [2]). We have the inequality dim $CV(M) \ge \dim X$. (More precisely, CV(M) is involutive, see [39].)
- 1.9. Definition. We say that a left \mathcal{D}_X -module M is holonomic if it is coherent and dim $CV(M) = \dim X$.

2. De Rham functor.

2.1. Definition. For a left \mathcal{D}_X -module M, we define the de Rham functor DR(M) by

$$(2.1.1) M \to \Omega^1_X \otimes_{\mathcal{O}_X} M \to \cdots \to \Omega^{\dim X}_X \otimes_{\mathcal{O}_X} M,$$

where the last term is put at the degree 0. In the algebraic case, we use analytic sheaves or replace M with the associated analytic sheaf $M^{\operatorname{an}} := M \otimes_{\mathcal{O}_X} \mathcal{O}_{X^{\operatorname{an}}}$ in case M is algebraic (i.e. M is an \mathcal{O}_X -module with \mathcal{O}_X algebraic).

- **2.2. Perverse sheaves.** Let $D_c^b(X, \mathbf{C})$ be the derived category of bounded complexes of \mathbf{C}_X -modules K with \mathcal{H}^jK constructible. (In the algebraic case we use analytic topology for the sheaves although we use Zariski topology for constructibility.) Then the category of perverse sheaves $\operatorname{Perv}(X, \mathbf{C})$ is a full subcategory of $D_c^b(X, \mathbf{C})$ consisting of K such that
- (2.2.1) $\dim \operatorname{Supp} \mathcal{H}^{-j} K \leq j, \quad \dim \operatorname{Supp} \mathcal{H}^{-j} \mathbf{D} K \leq j,$

where $\mathbf{D}K := \mathbf{R}\mathcal{H}om(K, \mathbf{C}[2\dim X])$ is the dual of K, and $\mathcal{H}^{j}K$ is the j-th cohomology sheaf of K.

- **2.3. Theorem** (Beilinson, Bernstein, Deligne [1]). Perv (X, \mathbb{C}) is an abelian category.
- **2.4. Theorem** (Kashiwara). If M is holonomic, then DR(M) is a perverse sheaf. Outline of proof. By Kashiwara [19], we have $DR(M) \in D_c^b(X, \mathbb{C})$, and the first condition of (2.2.1) is verified. Then the assertion follows from the commutativity

2.5. Example. $DR(\mathcal{O}_X) = \mathbf{C}_X[\dim X]$.

of the dual **D** and the de Rham functor DR.

2.6. Direct images. For a closed immersion $i: X \to Y$ such that X is defined by $x_i = 0$ in Y for $1 \le i \le r$, define the direct image of left \mathcal{D}_X -modules M by

$$i_+M:=M[\partial_1,\ldots,\partial_r].$$

(Globally there is a twist by a line bundle.) For a projection $p: X \times Y \to Y$, define $p_+M = \mathbf{R}p_*\mathrm{DR}_X(M)$.

In general, $f_+ = p_+ i_+$ using f = pi with i graph embedding. See [4] for details.

2.7. Regular holonomic D-modules. Let M be a holonomic \mathcal{D}_X -module with support Z, and U be a Zariski-open of Z such that $\mathrm{DR}(M)|_U$ is a local system up to a shift. Then M is regular if and only if there exists locally a divisor D on X containing $Z \setminus U$ and such that M(*D) is the direct image of a regular holonomic \mathcal{D} -module 'of Deligne-type' (see [11]) on a desingularization of $(Z, Z \cap D)$, and $\mathrm{Ker}(M \to M(*D))$ is regular holonomic (by induction on dim $\mathrm{Supp}\,M$).

Note that the category $M_{rh}(\mathcal{D}_X)$ of regular holonomic \mathcal{D}_X -modules is stable by subquotients and extensions in the category $M_h(\mathcal{D}_X)$ of holonomic \mathcal{D}_X -modules.

- 2.8. Theorem (Kashiwara-Kawai [24], [22], Mebkhout [28]).
- (i) The structure sheaf \mathcal{O}_X is regular holonomic.
- (ii) The functor DR induces an equivalence of categories

(2.8.1)
$$DR: M_{rh}(\mathcal{D}_X) \xrightarrow{\sim} Perv(X, \mathbb{C}).$$

(See [4] for the algebraic case.)

3. b-Functions.

3.1. Definition. Let f be a holomorphic function on X, or $f \in \Gamma(X, \mathcal{O}_X)$ in the algebraic case. Then we have

$$\mathcal{D}_X[s]f^s\subset \mathcal{O}_X[rac{1}{f}][s]f^s \quad ext{where } \partial_i f^s=s(\partial_i f)f^{s-1},$$

and $b_f(s)$ is the monic polynomial of the least degree satisfying

$$b_f(s)f^s = P(x, \partial, s)f^{s+1}$$
 in $\mathcal{O}_X[\frac{1}{f}][s]f^s$,

with $P(x, \partial, s) \in \mathcal{D}_X[s]$. Locally, it is the minimal polynomial of the action of s on $\mathcal{D}_X[s]f^s/\mathcal{D}_X[s]f^{s+1}$.

We define $b_{f,x}(s)$ replacing \mathcal{D}_X with $\mathcal{D}_{X,x}$.

- **3.2. Theorem** (Sato [38], Bernstein [2], Bjork [3]). The b-function exists at least locally, and exists globally in the case X affine variety with f algebraic.
- **3.3. Observation.** Let $i_f: X \to \widetilde{X} := X \times \mathbf{C}$ be the graph embedding. Then there are canonical isomorphisms

$$(3.3.1) \qquad \widetilde{M} := i_{f+} \mathcal{O}_X = \mathcal{O}_X[\partial_t] \delta(f-t) = \mathcal{O}_{X \times \mathbf{C}} \left[\frac{1}{f-t} \right] / \mathcal{O}_{X \times \mathbf{C}},$$

where the action of ∂_i on $\delta(f-t) (=\frac{1}{f-t})$ is given by

(3.3.2)
$$\partial_i \delta(f - t) = -(\partial_i f) \partial_t \delta(f - t).$$

Moreover, f^s is canonically identified with $\delta(f-t)$ setting $s=-\partial_t t$, and we have a canonical isomorphism as $\mathcal{D}_X[s]$ -modules

(3.3.3)
$$\mathcal{D}_X[s]f^s = \mathcal{D}_X[s]\delta(f-t).$$

- **3.4.** V-filtration. We say that V is a filtration of Kashiwara-Malgrange if V is exhaustive, separated, and satisfies for any $\alpha \in \mathbf{Q}$:
 - (i) $V^{\alpha}\widetilde{M}$ is a coherent $\mathcal{D}_{X}[s]$ -submodule of \widetilde{M} .
 - (ii) $tV^{\alpha}\widetilde{M} \subset V^{\alpha+1}\widetilde{M}$ and = holds for $\alpha \gg 0$.
 - (iii) $\partial_t V^{\alpha} \widetilde{M} \subset V^{\alpha-1} \widetilde{M}$.
 - (iv) $\partial_t t \alpha$ is nilpotent on $Gr_V^{\alpha} \widetilde{M}$.

If it exists, it is unique.

3.5. Relation with the b-function. If X is affine or Stein and relatively compact, then the multiplicity of a root α of $b_f(s)$ is given by the minimal polynomial of $s-\alpha$ on

(3.5.1)
$$\operatorname{Gr}_{V}^{\alpha}(\mathcal{D}_{X}[s]f^{s}/\mathcal{D}_{X}[s]f^{s+1}),$$

using $\mathcal{D}_X[s]f^s = \mathcal{D}_X[s]\delta(f-t)$ with $s = -\partial_t t$.

Note that $V^{\alpha}\widetilde{M}$ and $\mathcal{D}_{X}[s]f^{s+i}$ are 'lattices' of \widetilde{M} , i.e.

$$(3.5.2) V^{\alpha}\widetilde{M} \subset \mathcal{D}_{X}[s]f^{s+i} \subset V^{\beta}\widetilde{M} \text{for } \alpha \gg i \gg \beta,$$

and $V^{\alpha}\widetilde{M}$ is an analogue of the Deligne extension with eigenvalues in $[\alpha, \alpha + 1)$. The existence of V is equivalent to the existence of $b_f(s)$ locally.

- **3.6. Theorem** (Kashiwara [21], [23], Malgrange [27]). The filtration V exists on $\widetilde{M} := i_{f+}M$ for any holonomic \mathcal{D}_X -module M.
- **3.7. Remarks.** (i) There are many ways to prove this theorem, since it is essentially equivalent to the existence of the b-function (in a generalized sense). One way is to use a resolution of singularities and reduce to the case where CV(M) has normal crossings, if M is regular.
 - (ii) The filtration V is indexed by \mathbf{Q} if M is quasi-unipotent.
- 3.8. Relation with vanishing cycle functors. Let $\rho: X_t \to X_0$ be a 'good' retraction (using a resolution of singularities of (X, X_0)), where $X_t = f^{-1}(t)$ with $t \neq 0$ sufficiently near 0. Then we have canonical isomorphisms

(3.8.1)
$$\psi_f \mathbf{C}_X = \mathbf{R} \rho_* \mathbf{C}_{X_t}, \quad \varphi_f \mathbf{C}_X = \psi_f \mathbf{C}_X / \mathbf{C}_{X_0},$$

where $\psi_f \mathbf{C}_X, \varphi_f \mathbf{C}_X$ are nearby and vanishing cycle sheaves, see [13].

Let F_x denote the Milnor fiber around $x \in X_0$. Then

(3.8.2)
$$(\mathcal{H}^j \psi_f \mathbf{C}_X)_x = H^j(F_x, \mathbf{C}), \quad (\mathcal{H}^j \varphi_f \mathbf{C}_X)_x = \widetilde{H}^j(F_x, \mathbf{C}).$$

For a \mathcal{D}_X -module M admitting the V-filtration on $\widetilde{M} = i_{*+}M$, we define \mathcal{D}_X -modules

(3.8.3)
$$\psi_f M = \bigoplus_{0 < \alpha \le 1} \operatorname{Gr}_V^{\alpha} \widetilde{M}, \quad \varphi_f M = \bigoplus_{0 \le \alpha < 1} \operatorname{Gr}_V^{\alpha} \widetilde{M}.$$

3.9. Theorem (Kashiwara [23], Malgrange [27]). For a regular holonomic \mathcal{D}_X -module M, we have canonical isomorphisms

(3.9.1)
$$DR_X \psi_f(M) = \psi_f DR_X(M)[-1],$$

$$DR_X \varphi_f(M) = \varphi_f DR_X(M)[-1],$$

and $\exp(-2\pi i \partial_t t)$ on the left-hand side corresponds to the monodromy T on the right-hand side.

3.10. Definition. Let

$$R_f = \{\text{roots of } b_f(-s)\},\$$

$$\alpha_f = \min R_f$$

 m_{α} : the multiplicity of $\alpha \in R_f$.

(Similarly for $R_{f,x}$, etc. for $b_{f,x}(s)$.)

3.11. Theorem (Kashiwara [20]). $R_f \subset \mathbf{Q}_{>0}$.

(This is proved by using a resolution of singularities.)

- 3.12. Theorem (Kashiwara [23], Malgrange [27]).
 - (i) $e^{-2\pi i R_f} = \{ \text{the eigenvalues of } T \text{ on } H^j(F_x, \mathbb{C}) \text{ for } x \in X_0, j \in \mathbb{Z} \},$
 - (ii) $m_{\alpha} \leq \min\{i \mid N^i \psi_{f,\lambda} \mathbf{C}_X = 0\}$ with $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i \alpha}$,

where
$$\psi_{f,\lambda} = \operatorname{Ker}(T_s - \lambda) \subset \psi_f$$
, $N = \log T_u$ with $T = T_s T_u$.

(This is a corollary of the above Theorem (3.9) of Kashiwara and Malgrange.)

4. Relation with other invariants.

4.1. Microlocal b-function. We define $\widetilde{R}_f, \widetilde{m}_{\alpha}, \widetilde{\alpha}_f$ with $b_f(s)$ replaced by the microlocal (or reduced) b-function

(4.1.1)
$$\widetilde{b}_f(s) := b_f(s)/(s+1).$$

This $\widetilde{b}_f(s)$ coincides with the monic polynomial of the least degree satisfying

$$(4.1.2) \widetilde{b}_f(s)\delta(f-t) = \widetilde{P}\partial_t^{-1}\delta(f-t) \text{with } \widetilde{P} \in \mathcal{D}_X[s,\partial_t^{-1}].$$

Put $n = \dim X$. Then

4.2. Theorem. $\widetilde{R}_f \subset [\widetilde{\alpha}_f, n - \widetilde{\alpha}_f], \quad \widetilde{m}_{\alpha} \leq n - \widetilde{\alpha}_f - \alpha + 1.$

(The proof uses the filtered duality for φ_f , see [35].)

4.3. Spectrum. We define the spectrum by $Sp(f,x) = \sum_{\alpha} n_{\alpha} t^{\alpha}$ with

(4.3.1)
$$n_{\alpha} := \sum_{j} (-1)^{j-n+1} \dim \operatorname{Gr}_{F}^{p} \widetilde{H}^{j}(F_{x}, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda},$$

where $p = [n - \alpha]$, $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i\alpha}$, and F is the Hodge filtration (see [12]) of the mixed Hodge structure on the Milnor cohomology, see [44]. We define

(4.3.2)
$$E_f = \{ \alpha \mid n_\alpha \neq 0 \}$$
 (called the exponents).

- **4.4. Remarks.** (i) If f has an isolated singularity at the origin, then $\widetilde{\alpha}_{f,x}$ coincides with the minimal exponent as a corollary of results of Malgrange [26], Varchenko [45], Scherk-Steenbrink [41].
- (ii) If f is weighted-homogeneous with an isolated singularity at the origin, then by Kashiwara (unpublished)

$$(4.4.1) \widetilde{R}_f = E_f, \max \widetilde{R}_f = n - \widetilde{\alpha}_f, \widetilde{m}_\alpha = 1 \ (\alpha \in \widetilde{R}_f).$$

If $f = \sum_i x_i^2$, then $\tilde{\alpha}_f = n/2$ and this follows from the above Theorem (4.2). By Steenbrink [42], we have moreover

$$Sp(f,x) = \prod_{i} (t - t^{w_i})/(t^{w_i} - 1),$$

where (w_1, \ldots, w_n) is the weights of f, i.e. f is a linear combination of monomials $x_1^{m_1} \cdots x_n^{m_n}$ with $\sum_i w_i m_i = 1$.

4.5. Malgrange's formula (isolated singularities case). We have the Brieskorn lattice [5] and its saturation defined by

(4.5.1)
$$H''_f = \Omega^n_{X,x}/df \wedge d\Omega^{n-2}_{X,x}, \quad \widetilde{H}''_f = \sum_{i>0} (t\partial_t)^i H''_f \subset H''_f[t^{-1}].$$

These are finite $C\{t\}$ -modules with a regular singular connection.

4.6. Theorem (Malgrange [26]). The reduced b-function $\widetilde{b}_f(s)$ coincides with the minimal polynomial of $-\partial_t t$ on $\widetilde{H}''_f/t\widetilde{H}''_f$.

(The above formula of Kashiwara on b-function (4.4.1) can be proved by using this together with Brieskorn's calculation.)

4.7. Asymptotic Hodge structure (Varchenko [45], Scherk-Steenbrink [41]). In the isolated singularity case we have

$$(4.7.1) F^p H^{n-1}(F_x, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} = \mathrm{Gr}_V^{\alpha} H_f'',$$

using the canonical isomorphism

(4.7.2)
$$H^{n-1}(F_x, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} = Gr_V^{\alpha} H_f''[t^{-1}],$$

where $p = [n - \alpha]$, $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i\alpha}$, and V on $H_f''[t^{-1}]$ is the filtration of Kashiwara and Malgrange.

(This can be generalized to the non-isolated singularity case using mixed Hodge modules.)

4.8. Reformulation of Malgrange's formula. We define

(4.8.1)
$$\widetilde{F}^p H^{n-1}(F_x, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} = \mathrm{Gr}_V^{\alpha} \widetilde{H}_f'',$$

using the canonical isomorphism (4.7.2), where $p = [n - \alpha], \lambda = e^{-2\pi i\alpha}$. Then

(4.8.2)
$$\widetilde{m}_{\alpha} = \text{ the minimal polynomial of } N \text{ on } Gr_{\widetilde{F}}^{p} H^{n-1}(F_{x}, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda}.$$

4.9. Remark. If f is weighted homogeneous with an isolated singularity, then

(4.9.1)
$$\widetilde{F} = F$$
, $\widetilde{R}_f = E_f$ (by Kashiwara).

If f is not weighted homogeneous (but with isolated singularities), then

$$(4.9.2) \widetilde{R}_f \subset \bigcup_{k \in \mathbf{N}} (E_f - k), \ \widetilde{\alpha}_f = \min \widetilde{R}_f = \min E_f.$$

4.10. Example. If $f = x^5 + y^4 + x^3y^2$, then

$$E_f = \left\{ \frac{i}{5} + \frac{j}{4} : 1 \le i \le 4, \ 1 \le j \le 3 \right\}, \quad \widetilde{R}_f = E_f \cup \left\{ \frac{11}{20} \right\} \setminus \left\{ \frac{31}{20} \right\}.$$

More generally, if f = g + h with g weighted homogeneous and h is a linear combination of monomials of higher degrees, then $E_f = E_g$ but $\widetilde{R}_f \neq \widetilde{R}_g$ if f is a non trivial deformation.

4.11. Relation with rational singularities [34]. Assume $D := f^{-1}(0)$ is reduced. Then D has rational singularities if and only if $\widetilde{\alpha}_f > 1$. Moreover, $\omega_D/\rho_*\omega_{\widetilde{D}} \simeq F_{1-n}\varphi_f\mathcal{O}_X$, where $\rho:\widetilde{D}\to D$ is a resolution of singularities.

In the isolated singularities case, this was proved in 1981 (see [31]) using the coincidence of $\tilde{\alpha}_f$ and the minimal exponent.

4.12. Relation with the pole order filtration [34]. Let P be the pole order filtration on $\mathcal{O}_X(*D)$, i.e. $P_i = \mathcal{O}_X((i+1)D)$ if $i \geq 0$, and $P_i = 0$ if i < 0. Let F be the Hodge filtration on $\mathcal{O}_X(*D)$. Then $F_i \subset P_i$ in general, and $F_i = P_i$ on a neighborhood of x for $i \leq \widetilde{\alpha}_{f,x} - 1$.

(For the proof we need the theory of microlocal b-functions [35].)

4.13. Remark. In case $X = \mathbf{P}^n$, replacing $\widetilde{\alpha}_{f,x}$ with [(n-r)/d] where $r = \dim \operatorname{Sing} D$ and $d = \deg D$, the assertion was obtained by Deligne (unpublished).

5. Relation with multiplier ideals.

5.1. Multiplier ideals. Let $D = f^{-1}(0)$, and $\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha D)$ be the multiplier ideals for $\alpha \in \mathbf{Q}$, i.e.

(5.1.1)
$$\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha D) = \rho_* \omega_{\widetilde{X}/X}(-\sum_i [\alpha m_i] \widetilde{D}_i),$$

where $\rho: (\widetilde{X}, \widetilde{D}) \to (X, D)$ is an embedded resolution and $\widetilde{D} = \sum_i m_i \widetilde{D}_i := \rho^* D$. There exist jumping numbers $0 < \alpha_0 < \alpha_1 < \cdots$ such that

(5.1.2)
$$\mathcal{J}(X,\alpha_jD) = \mathcal{J}(X,\alpha D) \neq \mathcal{J}(X,\alpha_{j+1}D) \quad \text{for} \quad \alpha_j \leq \alpha < \alpha_{j+1}.$$

Let V denote also the induced filtration on

$$\mathcal{O}_X \subset \mathcal{O}_X[\partial_t]\delta(f-t).$$

5.2. Theorem (Budur, S. [10]). If α is not a jumping number,

(5.2.1)
$$\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha D) = V^{\alpha} \mathcal{O}_{X}.$$

For α general we have for $0 < \varepsilon \ll 1$

(5.2.2)
$$\mathcal{J}(X,\alpha D) = V^{\alpha+\varepsilon}\mathcal{O}_X, \quad V^{\alpha}\mathcal{O}_X = \mathcal{J}(X,(\alpha-\varepsilon)D).$$

Note that V is left-continuous and $\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha D)$ is right-continuous, i.e.

$$(5.2.3) V^{\alpha}\mathcal{O}_{X} = V^{\alpha-\varepsilon}\mathcal{O}_{X}, \quad \mathcal{J}(X,\alpha D) = \mathcal{J}(X,(\alpha+\varepsilon)D).$$

The proof of (5.2) uses the theory of bifiltered direct images [32], [33] to reduce the assertion to the normal crossing case.

As a corollary we get another proof of the results of Ein, Lazarsfeld, Smith and Varolin [16], and of Lichtin, Yano and Kollár [25]:

- 5.3. Corollary.
- (i) {Jumping numbers ≤ 1 } $\subset R_f$, see [16].
- (ii) $\alpha_f = \text{minimal jumping number, see [25]}$.

Define $\alpha'_{f,x} = \min_{y \neq x} \{\alpha_{f,y}\}$. Then

5.4. Theorem. If $\xi f = f$ for a vector field ξ , then

(5.4.1)
$$R_f \cap (0, \alpha'_{f,x}) = \{\text{Jumping numbers}\} \cap (0, \alpha'_{f,x}).$$

(This does not hold without the assumption on ξ nor for $[\alpha'_{f,x}, 1)$.)

For the constantness of the jumping numbers under a topologically trivial deformation of divisors, see [14].

6. b-Functions for any subvarieties.

6.1. Let Z be a closed subvariety of a smooth X, and $f = (f_1, \ldots, f_r)$ be generators of the ideal of Z (which is not necessarily reduced nor irreducible). Define the action of t_j on

$$\mathcal{O}_X\left[\frac{1}{f_1\cdots f_r}\right][s_1,\ldots,s_r]\prod_i f_i^{s_i},$$

by $t_j(s_i) = s_i + 1$ if i = j, and $t_j(s_i) = s_i$ otherwise. Put $s_{i,j} := s_i t_i^{-1} t_j$, $s = \sum_i s_i$. Then $b_f(s)$ is the monic polynomial of the least degree satisfying

$$(6.1.1) b_f(s) \prod_i f_i^{s_i} = \sum_{k=1}^r P_k t_k \prod_i f_i^{s_i},$$

where P_k belong to the ring generated by \mathcal{D}_X and $s_{i,j}$.

Here we can replace $\prod_i f_i^{s_i}$ with $\prod_i \delta(t_i - f_i)$, using the direct image by the graph of $f: X \to \mathbb{C}^r$. Then the existence of $b_f(s)$ follows from the theory of the V-filtration of Kashiwara and Malgrange. This b-function has appeared in work of Sabbah [30] and Gyoja [18] for the study of b-functions of several variables.

- **6.2. Theorem** (Budur, Mustață, S. [8]). Let $c = codim_X Z$. Then $b_Z(s) := b_f(s-c)$ depends only on Z and is independent of the choice of $f = (f_1, \ldots, f_r)$ and also of r.
- **6.3. Equivalent definition.** The b-function $b_f(s)$ coincides with the monic polynomial of the least degree satisfying

$$(6.3.1) b_f(s) \prod_i f^{s_i} \in \sum_{|c|=1} \mathcal{D}_X[\mathbf{s}] \prod_{c_i < 0} \binom{s_i}{-c_i} \prod_i f_i^{s_i + c_i},$$

where $c = (c_1, \ldots, c_r) \in \mathbf{Z}^r$ with $|c| := \sum_i c_i = 1$. Here $\mathcal{D}_X[\mathbf{s}] = \mathcal{D}_X[s_1, \cdots, s_r]$. This is due to Mustață, and is used in the monomial ideal case. Note that the

This is due to Mustață, and is used in the monomial ideal case. Note that the well-definedness does not hold without the term $\prod_{c_i < 0} \binom{s_i}{-c_i}$.

We have the induced filtration V by

$$\mathcal{O}_X \subset i_{f+}\mathcal{O}_X = \mathcal{O}_X[\partial_1,\ldots,\partial_r]\prod_i \delta(t_i-f_i).$$

6.4. Theorem (Budur, Mustață, S. [8]). If α is not a jumping number,

(6.4.1)
$$\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha Z) = V^{\alpha} \mathcal{O}_{X}.$$

For α general we have for $0 < \varepsilon \ll 1$

(6.4.2)
$$\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha Z) = V^{\alpha + \varepsilon} \mathcal{O}_X, \quad V^{\alpha} \mathcal{O}_X = \mathcal{J}(X, (\alpha - \varepsilon)Z).$$

6.5. Corollary (Budur, Mustață, S. [8]). We have the inclusion

(6.5.1) {Jumping numbers}
$$\cap [\alpha_f, \alpha_f + 1) \subset R_f$$
.

6.6. Theorem (Budur, Mustată, S. [8]). If Z is reduced and is a local complete intersection, then Z has only rational singularities if and only if $\alpha_f = r$ with multiplicity 1.

7. Monomial ideal case.

7.1. Definition. Let $\mathfrak{a} \subset \mathbf{C}[x] := \mathbf{C}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ a monomial ideal. We have the associated semigroup defined by

$$\Gamma_{\mathfrak{a}} = \{ u \in \mathbf{N}^n \mid x^u \in \mathfrak{a} \}.$$

Let P_a be the convex hull of Γ_a in $\mathbb{R}^n_{>0}$. For a face Q of P_a , define

 M_Q : the subsemigroup of \mathbb{Z}^n generated by u-v with $u \in \Gamma_a$, $v \in \Gamma_a \cap Q$.

$$M'_Q = v_0 + M_Q$$
 for $v_0 \in \Gamma_a \cap Q$ (this is independent of v_0).

For a face Q of P_a not contained in any coordinate hyperplane, take a linear function with rational coefficients $L_Q: \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R}$ whose restriction to Q is 1. Let

 V_Q : the linear subspace generated by Q.

$$e=(1,\ldots,1).$$

$$R_Q = \{L_Q(u) \mid u \in (e + (M_Q \setminus M_Q')) \cap V_Q\},\$$

$$R_{\mathfrak{a}} = \{ \text{roots of } b_{\mathfrak{a}}(-s) \}.$$

7.2. Theorem (Budur, Mustață, S. [9]). We have $R_a = \bigcup_Q R_Q$ with Q faces of P_a not contained in any coordinate hyperplanes.

Outline of the proof. Let $f_j = \prod_i x_i^{a_{i,j}}$, $\ell_i(s) = \sum_j a_{i,j} s_j$. Define

$$g_c(\mathbf{s}) = \prod_{c_i < 0} \binom{s_i}{-c_i} \prod_{\ell_i(c) > 0} \binom{\ell_i(\mathbf{s}) + \ell_i(c)}{\ell_i(c)}.$$

Let $I_a \subset \mathbb{C}[\mathbf{s}]$ be the ideal generated by $g_c(\mathbf{s})$ with $c \in \mathbb{Z}^r, \sum_i c_i = 1$. Then

7.3. Proposition (Mustață). The b-function $b_a[s]$ of the monomial ideal a is the monic generator of $C[s] \cap I_a$, where $s = \sum_i s_i$.

Using this, Theorem (7.2) follows from elementary computations.

7.4. Case n=2. Here it is enough to consider only 1-dimensional Q by (7.2). Let Q be a compact face of P_a with $\{v^{(1)}, v^{(2)}\} = \partial Q$, where $v^{(i)} = (v^{(i)}_1, v^{(i)}_2)$ with $v^{(1)}_1 < v^{(2)}_1, v^{(2)}_2 > v^{(2)}_2$. Let

G: the subgroup generated by u-v with $u,v\in Q\cap \Gamma_a$.

 $v^{(3)} \in Q \cap \mathbb{N}^2$ such that $v^{(3)} - v^{(1)}$ generates G.

$$S_Q = \{(i, j) \in \mathbf{N}^2 \mid i < v_1^{(3)}, j < v_2^{(1)}\}.$$

$$S_Q^{[1]} = S \cap M_Q', \ S_Q^{[0]} = S_Q \setminus S_Q^{[1]}.$$

Then

$$R_Q = \{ L_Q(u+e) - k \mid u \in S_Q^{[k]} (k=0,1) \}.$$

In the case $Q \subset \{x = m\}$, we have $R_Q = \{i/m \mid i = 1, ..., m\}$.

7.5. Examples. (i) If $a = (x^a y, xy^b)$, with $a, b \ge 2$, then

$$R_a = \left\{ \frac{(b-1)i + (a-1)j}{ab-1} \, \middle| \, 1 \le i \le a, \, 1 \le j \le b \right\}.$$

(ii) If $a = (xy^5, x^3y^2, x^5y)$, then $S_Q^{[1]} = \emptyset$ and

$$R_a = \left\{ \frac{5}{13}, \frac{i}{13} (7 \le i \le 17), \frac{19}{13}, \frac{j}{6} (3 \le j \le 9) \right\}.$$

(iii) If $\mathfrak{a}=(xy^5,x^3y^2,x^4y)$, then $S_Q^{[1]}=\{(2,4)\}$ for $\partial Q=\{(1,5),(3,2)\}$ with $L_Q(v_1,v_2)=(3v_1+2v_2)/13$, and

$$R_a = \left\{ \frac{i}{13} \ (5 \le i \le 17), \ \frac{j}{5} \ (2 \le j \le 6) \right\}.$$

Here 19/13 is shifted to 6/13.

7.6. Comparison with exponents. If n = 2 and f has a nondegenerate Newton polygon with compact faces Q, then by Steenbrink [43]

$$E_f \cap (0,1] = \bigcup_Q E_Q^{\leq 1} \quad \text{with} \quad E_Q^{\leq 1} = \{ L_Q(u) \mid u \in \overline{\{0\} \cup Q} \cap \mathbf{Z}_{>0}^2 \},$$

where $\overline{\{0\} \cup Q}$ is the convex hull of $\{0\} \cup Q$. Here we have the symmetry of E_f with center 1.

7.7. Another comparison. If $a = (x_1^{a_1}, \dots, x_n^{a_n})$, then

$$R_{a} = \left\{ \sum_{i} p_{i} / a_{i} \mid 1 \leq p_{i} \leq a_{i} \right\}.$$

On the other hand, if $f = \sum_{i} x_i^{a_i}$, then

$$\widetilde{R}_f = E_f = \left\{ \sum_i p_i / a_i \mid 1 \le p_i \le a_i - 1 \right\}.$$

8. Hyperplane arrangements.

- **8.1.** Let D be a central hyperplane arrangement in $X = \mathbb{C}^n$. Here, central means an affine cone of $Z \subset \mathbb{P}^{n-1}$. Let f be the reduced equation of D and $d := \deg f > n$. Assume D is not the pull-back of $D' \subset \mathbb{C}^{n'}(n' < n)$.
- **8.2. Theorem.** (i) $\max R_f < 2 \frac{1}{d}$. (ii) $m_1 = n$.

Proof of (i) uses a partial generalization of a solution of Aomoto's conjecture due to Esnault, Schechtman, Viehweg, Terao, Varchenko ([17], [40]) together with a generalization of Malgrange's formula (4.8) as below:

8.3. Theorem (Generalization of Malgrange's formula) [36]. There exists a pole order filtration P on $H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda}$ such that if $(\alpha + \mathbb{N}) \cap R'_f = \emptyset$, then

(8.3.1)
$$\alpha \in R_f \Leftrightarrow \operatorname{Gr}_P^p H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} \neq 0,$$

with $p = [n - \alpha], \lambda = e^{-2\pi i \alpha}$, where $R'_f = \bigcup_{x \neq 0} R_{f,x}$.

This reduces the proof of (8.2)(i) to

(8.3.2)
$$P^{i}H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} = H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda},$$

for i = n - 1 if $\lambda = 1$ or $e^{2\pi i/d}$, and i = n - 2 otherwise.

8.4. Construction of the pole order filtration P. Let $U = \mathbf{P}^{n-1} \setminus Z$, and $F_0 = f^{-1}(0) \subset \mathbf{C}^n$. Then $F_0 = \widetilde{U}$ with $\pi : \widetilde{U} \to U$ a d-fold covering ramified over Z. Let $L^{(k)}$ be the local systems of rank 1 on U such that $\pi_*\mathbf{C} = \bigoplus_{0 \le i < d} L^{(k)}$ and T acts on $L^{(k)}$ by $e^{-2\pi ik/d}$. Then

(8.4.1)
$$H^{j}(U, L^{(k)}) = H^{j}(F_{0}, \mathbf{C})_{\mathbf{e}(-k/d)},$$

and P is induced by the pole order filtration on the meromorphic extension $\mathcal{L}^{(k)}$ of $L^{(k)} \otimes_{\mathbf{C}} \mathcal{O}_U$ over \mathbf{P}^{n-1} , see [15], [36], [37]. This is closely related to:

8.5. Solution of Aomoto's conjecture ([17], [40]). Let Z_i be the irreducible components of Z ($1 \le i \le d$), g_i be the defining equation of Z_i on $\mathbf{P}^{n-1} \setminus Z_d$ (i < d), and $\omega := \sum_{i < d} \alpha_i \omega_i$ with $\omega_i = dg_i/g_i$, $\alpha_i \in \mathbf{C}$. Let ∇ be the connection on \mathcal{O}_U such that $\nabla u = du + \omega \wedge u$. Set $\alpha_d = -\sum_{i < d} \alpha_i$. Then $H_{\mathrm{DR}}^{\bullet}(U, (\mathcal{O}_U, \nabla))$ is calculated by

$$(\mathcal{A}_{\alpha}^{\bullet}, \omega \wedge)$$
 with $\mathcal{A}_{\alpha}^{p} = \sum C\omega_{i_{1}} \wedge \cdots \wedge \omega_{i_{p}}$,

if $\sum_{Z_i\supset L}\alpha_i\notin \mathbb{N}\setminus\{0\}$ for any dense edge $L\subset Z$ (see (8.7) below). Here an edge is an intersection of Z_i .

For the proof of (8.2)(ii) we have

8.6. Proposition. $N^{n-1}\psi_{f,\lambda}\mathbf{C}\neq 0$ if $\mathrm{Gr}_{2n-2}^WH^{n-1}(F_x,\mathbf{C})_{\lambda}\neq 0$.

(Indeed, $N^{n-1}: \operatorname{Gr}_{2n-2}^W \psi_{f,\lambda} \mathbf{C} \xrightarrow{\sim} \operatorname{Gr}_0^W \psi_{f,\lambda} \mathbf{C}$ by the definition of W, and the assumption of (8.6) implies $\operatorname{Gr}_{2n-2}^W \psi_{f,\lambda} \mathbf{C} \neq 0$.)

Then we get (8.2)(ii), since $\omega_{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge \omega_{i_{n-1}} \neq 0$ in $\operatorname{Gr}_{2n-2}^W H^{n-1}(\mathbf{P}^{n-1} \setminus Z, \mathbf{C}) = \operatorname{Gr}_{2n-2}^W H^{n-1}(F_x, \mathbf{C})_1$.

8.7. Dense edges. Let $D = \bigcup_i D_i$ be the irreducible decomposition. Then $L = \bigcap_{i \in I} D_i$ is called an edge of D $(I \neq \emptyset)$,

We say that an edge L is dense if $\{D_i/L \mid D_i \supset L\}$ is indecomposable. Here $\mathbb{C}^n \supset D$ is called decomposable if $\mathbb{C}^n = \mathbb{C}^{n'} \times \mathbb{C}^{n''}$ such that D is the union of the pull-backs from $\mathbb{C}^{n'}$, $\mathbb{C}^{n''}$ with n', $n'' \neq 0$.

Set $m_L = \#\{D_i \mid D_i \supset L\}$. For $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$, define

$$\mathcal{DE}(D) = \{ \text{dense edges of } D \}, \quad \mathcal{DE}(D, \lambda) = \{ L \in \mathcal{DE}(D) \mid \lambda^{m_L} = 1 \}.$$

We say that L, L' are strongly adjacent if $L \subset L'$ or $L \supset L'$ or $L \cap L'$ is non-dense. Let

$$m(\lambda) = \max\{|S| \mid S \subset \mathcal{DE}(D, \lambda) \text{ such that}$$

any $L, L' \in S$ are strongly adjacent $\}$.

- **8.8. Theorem** [37]. $m_{\alpha} \leq m(\lambda)$ with $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i \alpha}$.
- 8.9. Corollary. $R_f \subset \bigcup_{L \in \mathcal{DE}(D)} \mathbf{Z} m_L^{-1}$.
- **8.10. Corollary.** If $GCD(m_L, m_{L'}) = 1$ for any strongly adjacent $L, L' \in \mathcal{DE}(D)$, then $m_{\alpha} = 1$ for any $\alpha \in R_f \setminus \mathbf{Z}$.

Theorem 2 follows from the canonical resolution of singularities $\pi: (\widetilde{X}, \widetilde{D}) \to (\mathbf{P}^{n-1}, D)$ due to [40], which is obtained by blowing up along the proper transforms of the dense edges. Indeed, mult $\widetilde{D}(\lambda)_{\mathrm{red}} \leq m(\lambda)$, where $\widetilde{D}(\lambda)$ is the union of \widetilde{D}_i such that $\lambda^{\widetilde{m}_i} = 1$ and $\widetilde{m}_i = \mathrm{mult}_{\widetilde{D}_i} \widetilde{D}$.

8.11. Theorem (Mustață [29]). For a central arrangement,

(8.11.1)
$$\mathcal{J}(X, \alpha D) = I_0^k \text{ with } k = [d\alpha] - n + 1 \text{ if } \alpha < \alpha_f',$$

where I_0 is the ideal of 0 and $\alpha'_f = \min_{x \neq 0} \{\alpha_{f,x}\}.$

(This holds for the affine cone of any divisor on \mathbf{P}^{n-1} , see [36].)

- **8.12. Corollary.** We have dim $F^{n-1}H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\mathbf{e}(-k/d)} = \binom{k-1}{n-1}$ for $0 < \frac{k}{d} < \alpha'_f$, and the same holds with F replaced by P.
- 8.13. Corollary. $\alpha_f = \min(\alpha_f', \frac{n}{d}) < 1$.

(Note that α_f coincides with the minimal jumping number.)

8.14. Generic case. If D is a generic central hyperplane arrangement, then

$$(8.14.1) b_f(s) = (s+1)^{n-1} \prod_{j=n}^{2d-2} (s+\frac{j}{d})$$

by U. Walther [46] (except for the multiplicity of -1). He uses a completely different method.

Note that Theorems (8.2) and (8.8) imply that the left-hand side divides the right-hand side of (8.14.1), and the equality follows using also (8.12).

- **8.15. Explicit calculation.** Let $\alpha = k/d$, $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i\alpha}$ for $k \in \{1, ..., d\}$. If $\alpha \geq \alpha'_f$, we assume there is $I \subset \{1, ..., d-1\}$ such that |I| = k-1, and the condition of [40]
- (8.15.1) $\sum_{Z_i\supset L}\alpha_i\notin \mathbf{N}\setminus\{0\} \text{ for any dense edge }L\subset Z,$

is satisfied for

(8.15.2)
$$\alpha_i = 1 - \alpha \text{ if } i \in I \cup \{d\}, \text{ and } -\alpha \text{ otherwise.}$$

Let V(I) be the subspace of $H^{n-1}\mathcal{A}^{\bullet}_{\alpha}$ generated by

$$\omega_{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge \omega_{i_{n-1}}$$
 for $\{i_1, \ldots, i_{n-1}\} \subset I$.

8.16. Theorem. Let $\alpha = k/d$, $\lambda = e^{-2\pi i\alpha}$ for $k \in \{1, \ldots, d\}$. Then

- (a) If k = d 1 or d, then $\alpha \in R_f$, $\alpha + 1 \notin R_f$.
- (b) If $\alpha < \alpha'_f$, then $\alpha \in R_f \Leftrightarrow k \geq d$.
- (c) If $\binom{k-1}{n-1}$ < dim $H^{n-1}(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda}$, then $\alpha + 1 \in R_f$.
- (d) If $\alpha < \alpha'_f$, $\alpha \notin R'_f + \mathbf{Z}$ and $\binom{k-1}{n-1} = \chi(U)$, then $\alpha + 1 \notin R_f$.
- (e) If $\alpha \geq \alpha'_f$ and $V(I) \neq 0$, then $\alpha \in R_f$.
- (f) If $\alpha \geq \alpha'_f$ and $V(I) = H^{n-1}\mathcal{A}^{\bullet}_{\alpha}$, then $\alpha + 1 \notin R_f$.
- **8.17. Theorem** [37]. Assume n = 3, $mult_z Z \le 3$ for any $z \in Z \subset \mathbf{P}^2$, and $d \le 7$. Let ν_3 be the number of triple points of Z, and assume $\nu_3 \ne 0$. Then

$$(8.17.1) b_f(s) = (s+1) \prod_{i=2}^4 (s+\frac{i}{3}) \prod_{j=3}^r (s+\frac{j}{d}),$$

with r = 2d - 2 or 2d - 3. We have r = 2d - 2 if $\nu_3 < d - 3$, and the converse holds for d < 7. In case d = 7, we have r = 2d - 3 for $\nu_3 > 4$, however, for $\nu_3 = 4$, r can be both 2d - 2 and 2d - 3.

8.18. Remarks. (i) We have $\nu_3 < d-3$ if and only if

(8.18.1)
$$\chi(U) = \frac{(d-2)(d-3)}{2} - \nu_3 > \frac{(d-3)(d-4)}{2} = {d-3 \choose 2}.$$

- (ii) By (8.4.1) we have $\chi(U) = h^2(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda} h^1(F_0, \mathbf{C})_{\lambda}$ if $\lambda^d = 1$ and $\lambda \neq 0$.
- (iii) Let ν_i' be the number of *i*-ple points of $Z' := Z \cap \mathbb{C}^2$. Then by [6]

$$(8.18.2) b_0(U) = 1, b_1(U) = d - 1, b_2(U) = \nu_2' + 2\nu_3',$$

- **8.19. Examples.** (i) For $(x^2-1)(y^2-1)=0$ in \mathbb{C}^2 with d=5, (8.17.1) holds with r=7, and $8/5 \notin R_f$. In this case we do not need to take I, because $(d-2)/d=3/5 < \alpha'_f = 2/3$. We have $b_1(U) = b_2(U) = 4$ and $h^2(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda} = \chi(U) = 1$ if $\lambda^5 = 1$ and $\lambda \neq 1$. So $j/5 \in R_f$ for $3 \leq j \leq 7$ by (a), (b), (c), and $8/5 \notin R_f$ by (d).
- (ii) For $(x^2-1)(y^2-1)(x+y)=0$ in \mathbb{C}^2 with d=6, (8.17.1) holds with r=9, and $10/6 \notin R_f$. In this case we have $b_1(U)=5, b_2(U)=6, \chi(U)=2, h^1(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda}=1, h^2(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda}=3$ for $\lambda=e^{\pm 2\pi i/3}$. Then $4/6\in R_f$ by (e) and $10/6\notin R_f$ by (f), where I^c corresponds to (x+1)(y+1)=0. For other j/6, the argument is the same as in (i).
- (iii) For $(x^2 y^2)(x^2 1)(y + 2) = 0$ in \mathbb{C}^2 with d = 6, (8.17.1) holds with r = 10, and $10/6 \in R_f$. In this case we have $b_1(U) = 5$, $b_2(U) = 9$, $\chi(U) = 5$, $h^1(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda} = 0$, $h^2(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda} = 5$ for $\lambda = e^{\pm 2\pi i/3}$. Then $4/6 \in R_f$ by (e) and $10/6 \in R_f$ by (c), where I^c corresponds to (x + 1)(y + 2) = 0.
- (iv) For $(x^2 y^2)(x^2 1)(y^2 1) = 0$ in \mathbb{C}^2 with d = 7, (8.17.1) holds with r = 11, and $12/7 \notin R_f$. In this case we have $b_1(U) = 6$, $b_2(U) = 9$, $\chi(U) = 4$, $h^2(F_0, \mathbb{C})_{\lambda} = 4$ if $\lambda^7 = 1$ and $\lambda \neq 1$. Then $5/7 \in R_f$ by (e) and $12/7 \notin R_f$ by (f), where I^c corresponds to (x + 1)(y + 1) = 0. Note that 5/7 is not a jumping number.

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