

ROOTS OF EHRHART POLYNOMIALS OF GORENSTEIN FANO POLYTOPES

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ABSTRACT. Given arbitrary integers k and d with $0 \leq 2k \leq d$, we construct a Gorenstein Fano polytope $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ of dimension d such that (i) its Ehrhart polynomial $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ possesses d distinct roots; (ii) $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ possesses exactly $2k$ non-real roots and $d - 2k$ real roots; (iii) the real part of each of the non-real roots is equal to $-1/2$; (iv) all of the real roots belong to the open interval $(-1, 0)$.

Recently, many research papers on convex polytopes, including [2], [3], [4], [5], [8], [9] and [18], discuss roots of Ehrhart polynomials. One of the fascinating topics is the study on roots of Ehrhart polynomials of Gorenstein Fano polytopes.

Let $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be an integral convex polytope of dimension d and $\partial\mathcal{P}$ its boundary. (An integral convex polytope is a convex polytope all of whose vertices have integer coordinates.) Given integers $n = 1, 2, \dots$, we write $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ for the number of integer points belonging to $n\mathcal{P}$, where $n\mathcal{P} = \{n\alpha : \alpha \in \mathcal{P}\}$. In other words,

$$i(\mathcal{P}, n) = |n\mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^N|, \quad n = 1, 2, \dots$$

In the late 1950's Ehrhart succeeded in proving that $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ is a polynomial in n of degree d with $i(\mathcal{P}, 0) = 1$. We call $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ the *Ehrhart polynomial* of \mathcal{P} . Ehrhart's "loi de r eciprocit e" guarantees that

$$(-1)^d i(\mathcal{P}, -n) = i^*(\mathcal{P}, n), \quad n = 1, 2, \dots,$$

where $i^*(\mathcal{P}, n) = |n(\mathcal{P} \setminus \partial\mathcal{P}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^N|$.

We define the sequence $\delta_0, \delta_1, \delta_2, \dots$ of integers by the formula

$$(1 - \lambda)^{d+1} \left[1 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} i(\mathcal{P}, n) \lambda^n \right] = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \delta_j \lambda^j.$$

Since $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ is a polynomial in n of degree d with $i(\mathcal{P}, 0) = 1$, a fundamental fact on generating functions ([21, Corollary 4.3.1]) guarantees that $\delta_j = 0$ for every $j > d$. The sequence

$$\delta(\mathcal{P}) = (\delta_0, \delta_1, \dots, \delta_d)$$

is called the δ -vector of \mathcal{P} . Thus $\delta_0 = 1$ and $\delta_1 = |\mathcal{P} \cap \mathbb{Z}^N| - (d + 1)$. Each δ_j is non-negative (Stanley [20]). If $\delta_d \neq 0$, then $\delta_1 \leq \delta_j$ for every $1 \leq j < d$ ([12]).

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It follows from loi de réciprocité that

$$(1) \quad \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} i^*(\mathcal{P}, n)\lambda^n = \frac{\sum_{j=0}^d \delta_{d-j}\lambda^{j+1}}{(1-\lambda)^{d+1}}.$$

In particular, $\delta_d = |(\mathcal{P} \setminus \partial\mathcal{P}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^N|$. Moreover, it follows from (1) that

$$(2) \quad \max\{i : \delta_i \neq 0\} + \min\{i : i(\mathcal{P} \setminus \partial\mathcal{P}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^N \neq \emptyset\} = d + 1.$$

We refer the reader to [6], [10], [21], [22], [23] and [24] for further information on Ehrhart polynomials and δ -vectors.

A *Fano polytope* is an integral convex polytope $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ of dimension d such that the origin of \mathbb{R}^d is a unique integer point belonging to the interior $\mathcal{P} \setminus \partial\mathcal{P}$ of \mathcal{P} . A Fano polytope is called *Gorenstein* if its dual polytope is integral. (Recall that the dual polytope \mathcal{P}^\vee of a Fano polytope \mathcal{P} is the convex polytope which consists of those $x \in \mathbb{R}^d$ such that $\langle x, y \rangle \leq 1$ for all $y \in \mathcal{P}$, where $\langle x, y \rangle$ is the usual inner product of \mathbb{R}^d .) A Gorenstein Fano polytope is often said to be a *reflexive polytope*. Gorenstein Fano polytopes are classified when $d \leq 4$ in [14] and [15], and the relevance of Gorenstein Fano polytopes to Mirror Symmetry is studied in [1]. We refer the reader to [1], [13], [14], [15] and [17] for related works on toric Fano varieties or Gorenstein toric Fano varieties.

Let $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ be a Fano polytope with $\delta(\mathcal{P}) = (\delta_0, \delta_1, \dots, \delta_d)$ its δ -vector. It follows from [1] and [11] that the following conditions are equivalent:

- \mathcal{P} is Gorenstein;
- $\delta(\mathcal{P})$ is symmetric, i.e., $\delta_j = \delta_{d-j}$ for every $0 \leq j \leq d$;
- $i(\mathcal{P}, n) = (-1)^d i(\mathcal{P}, -n - 1)$.

Let $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ be an integral convex polytope of dimension d and $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ its Ehrhart polynomial. A complex number $a \in \mathbb{C}$ is called a *root* of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ if $i(\mathcal{P}, a) = 0$. Let $\Re(a)$ denote the real part of $a \in \mathbb{C}$. An outstanding conjecture given in [2] says that every root $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ satisfies $-d \leq \Re(a) \leq d - 1$.

When $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ is a Gorenstein Fano polytope, since $i(\mathcal{P}, n) = (-1)^d i(\mathcal{P}, -n - 1)$, the roots of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ are distributed symmetrically in the complex plane with respect to the line $\Re(z) = -1/2$. Thus, in particular, if d is odd, then $-1/2$ is a root of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$.

It is well-known that the regular unit crosspolytope is a Gorenstein Fano polytope and the d roots of its Ehrhart polynomial have real part $-1/2$ for any dimension d . It is also known [3, Proposition 1.8] that if all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ of an integral convex polytope $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ of dimension d satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$, then \mathcal{P} is unimodular isomorphic to a Gorenstein Fano polytope whose volume is at most 2^d . In a recent work [8], the roots of the Ehrhart polynomials of smooth Fano polytopes with small dimensions are completely determined.

In [7], there is a question whether there is a Fano variety the roots α of whose Hilbert polynomial do not satisfy $-1 < \Re(\alpha) < 0$. Moreover, the vertical line $\Re(\alpha) = -1/2$ is the bisector of the vertical strip $-1 < \Re(\alpha) < 0$. By taking these into consideration, we prove the following:

Theorem 0.1. *Given arbitrary non-negative integers k and d with $0 \leq 2k \leq d$, there exists a Gorenstein Fano polytope $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ of dimension d such that*

- (i) $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ possesses d distinct roots;
- (ii) $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ possesses exactly $2k$ non-real roots and $d - 2k$ real roots;

- (iii) the real part of each of the non-real roots is equal to $-1/2$;
- (iv) all of the real roots belong to the open interval $(-1, 0)$.

Proof. Let $\mathbf{e}_1, \dots, \mathbf{e}_d$ denote the canonical unit vectors of \mathbb{R}^d . Let $\mathcal{Q} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ be the convex polytope that is the convex hull of $\mathbf{e}_1, \dots, \mathbf{e}_{2k}$ and $-(\mathbf{e}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{e}_{2k})$. Then \mathcal{Q} is an integral convex polytope of dimension $2k$ with $\delta(\mathcal{Q}) = (1, 1, \dots, 1) \in \mathbb{Z}^{2k+1}$.

In general, when $\mathcal{F} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ is a d -dimensional integral convex polytope, if we define $\mathcal{F}' \subset \mathbb{R}^{N+1}$ by setting the convex hull of $\mathcal{F} \cup \{\mathbf{e}_{N+1}\}$, then one has

$$i(\mathcal{F}', n) = 1 + \sum_{k=1}^n i(\mathcal{F}, k).$$

It then follows that

$$\delta(\mathcal{F}') = (\delta(\mathcal{F}), 0) \in \mathbb{Z}^{d+2}.$$

Let $\mathcal{Q}^c \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ be the convex polytope that is the convex hull of $\mathcal{Q} \cup \{\mathbf{e}_{2k+1}, \dots, \mathbf{e}_d\}$. Then $\delta(\mathcal{Q}^c) = (\delta(\mathcal{Q}), 0, \dots, 0) \in \mathbb{Z}^{d+1}$. Hence, by (2), the convex polytope $(d - 2k + 1)\mathcal{Q}^c$ possesses a unique integer point \mathbf{a} in its interior. Now, write $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ for the integral convex polytope $(d - 2k + 1)\mathcal{Q}^c - \mathbf{a}$. Then \mathcal{P} is a Fano polytope.

Since

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} i(\mathcal{Q}^c, n)\lambda^n = \frac{1 + \lambda + \lambda^2 + \dots + \lambda^{2k}}{(1 - \lambda)^{d+1}},$$

one has

$$\begin{aligned} i(\mathcal{Q}^c, n) &= \sum_{i=n-2k}^n \binom{d+i}{d} = \sum_{i=0}^{2k} \binom{d+(n-2k)+i}{d} \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{2k} \binom{d+n-(2k-i)}{d} = \sum_{i=0}^{2k} \binom{n+d-i}{d} \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{2k} \left(\binom{n+d-i+1}{d+1} - \binom{n+d-i}{d+1} \right) \\ &= \binom{n+d+1}{d+1} - \binom{n+d-2k}{d+1} \\ &= \frac{1}{(d+1)!} \prod_{i=1}^{d-2k} (n+i) \left(\prod_{i=0}^{2k} (n+d+1-i) - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} (n-i) \right). \end{aligned}$$

Since

$$i(\mathcal{P}, n) = i((d - 2k + 1)\mathcal{Q}^c, n) = i(\mathcal{Q}^c, (d - 2k + 1)n),$$

one has

$$i(\mathcal{P}, n) = \frac{(d - 2k + 1)^{d+1}}{(d + 1)!} \prod_{i=1}^{d-2k} \left(n + \frac{i}{d - 2k + 1} \right) F(n),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} F(n) &= \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d+1-i}{d-2k+1} \right) - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n - \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d+1-(2k-i)}{d-2k+1} \right) - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n - \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Thus we obtain the following equalities:

$$\begin{aligned} \prod_{i=1}^{d-2k} \left(-n-1 + \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right) &= (-1)^{d-2k} \prod_{i=1}^{d-2k} \left(n + \frac{d-2k+1-i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= (-1)^{d-2k} \prod_{i=1}^{d-2k} \left(n + \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right); \\ F(-n-1) &= \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(-n-1 + \frac{d+1-i}{d-2k+1} \right) - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(-n-1 - \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= (-1)^{2k+1} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d-2k+1-d-1+i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &\quad - (-1)^{2k+1} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d-2k+1+i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= (-1)^{2k} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d-2k+1+i}{d-2k+1} \right) - (-1)^{2k} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n - \frac{2k-i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= (-1)^{2k} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n + \frac{d+1-i}{d-2k+1} \right) - (-1)^{2k} \prod_{i=0}^{2k} \left(n - \frac{i}{d-2k+1} \right) \\ &= (-1)^{2k} F(n). \end{aligned}$$

It then follows that

$$(-1)^d i(\mathcal{P}, -n-1) = i(\mathcal{P}, n),$$

which implies that \mathcal{P} is Gorenstein. Hence our work is to show that \mathcal{P} enjoys the required properties (i)–(iv).

Now, since

$$-\frac{d+1-(2k-i)}{d-2k+1} < -\frac{1}{2} < \frac{i}{d-2k+1}$$

and since

$$-\frac{d+1-(2k-i)}{d-2k+1} + \frac{i}{d-2k+1} = -1,$$

Lemma 0.2 below guarantees that $F(n)$ possesses $2k$ distinct roots, and each of them is a non-real root with $-1/2$ its real part. Finally, the real roots of $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ are

$$-\frac{i}{d-2k+1}, \quad 1 \leq i \leq d-2k.$$

Each of those roots belongs to the open interval $(-1, 0)$, as desired. \square

Lemma 0.2. *Let $\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_{2k}$ and $\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_{2k}$ be rational numbers satisfying $\alpha_i < -1/2 < \beta_i$ and $\alpha_i + \beta_i = -1$ for all i . Let*

$$f(x) = \prod_{i=0}^{2k} (x - \alpha_i) - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} (x - \beta_i)$$

be a polynomial in x of degree $2k$. Then $f(x)$ possesses $2k$ distinct roots, and each of them is a non-real root with $-1/2$ its real part.

Proof. We employ a basis technique appearing in [19]. Let $a \in \mathbb{C}$ with $\Re(a) > -1/2$. Since $\alpha_i < \beta_i$ and $\alpha_i + \beta_i = -1$, it follows that

$$\begin{aligned} |a - \alpha_i|^2 - |a - \beta_i|^2 &= (\Re(a) - \alpha_i)^2 - (\Re(a) - \beta_i)^2 \\ &= (2\Re(a) - \alpha_i - \beta_i)(\beta_i - \alpha_i) \\ &= (2\Re(a) + 1)(\beta_i - \alpha_i) \\ &> 0. \end{aligned}$$

Hence we have $|a - \alpha_i| > |a - \beta_i|$. Thus $\prod_{i=0}^{2k} |a - \alpha_i| > \prod_{i=0}^{2k} |a - \beta_i|$. Hence $f(a) \neq 0$. Similarly, if $a \in \mathbb{C}$ with $\Re(a) < -1/2$, then $|a - \alpha_i| < |a - \beta_i|$ for all i . Thus $\prod_{i=0}^{2k} |a - \alpha_i| < \prod_{i=0}^{2k} |a - \beta_i|$. Hence $f(a) \neq 0$. Consequently, all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $f(x)$ satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$.

Substituting $y = x + 1/2$ and $\gamma_i = \beta_i + 1/2$ in $f(x)$, it follows that each of the roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of the polynomial

$$g(y) = \prod_{i=0}^{2k} (\gamma_i + y) + \prod_{i=0}^{2k} (\gamma_i - y)$$

in y of degree $2k$ satisfies $\Re(a) = 0$. Since $\gamma_i > 0$, one has $g(0) \neq 0$. Hence $g(y)$ possesses no real root. Thus all roots of $f(x)$ are non-real roots.

What we must prove is that $g(y)$ possesses $2k$ distinct roots. Let $b \in \mathbb{R}$ and let $\theta_i(b)$ be the argument of $\gamma_i + b\sqrt{-1}$, where $-\pi/2 < \theta_i(b) < \pi/2$. Then $b\sqrt{-1}$ is a root of $g(y)$ if and only if

$$\prod_{i=0}^{2k} e^{\sqrt{-1} \theta_i(b)} = - \prod_{i=0}^{2k} e^{-\sqrt{-1} \theta_i(b)}.$$

In other words, $b\sqrt{-1}$ is a root of $g(y)$ if and only if

$$\prod_{i=0}^{2k} e^{2\sqrt{-1} \theta_i(b)} = -1,$$

which is equivalent to saying that

$$\sum_{i=0}^{2k} \theta_i(b) \equiv \frac{\pi}{2} \pmod{\pi}.$$

Now, we study the function $h(y) = \sum_{i=0}^{2k} \theta_i(y)$ with $y \in \mathbb{R}$. Since $\gamma_i > 0$, it follows that $h(y)$ is strictly increasing with

$$\lim_{y \rightarrow \infty} h(y) = k\pi + \pi/2, \quad \lim_{y \rightarrow -\infty} h(y) = -(k+1)\pi + \pi/2.$$

Hence the equation

$$h(y) \equiv \frac{\pi}{2} \pmod{\pi}$$

possesses $2k$ distinct real roots, as desired. □

Here is an example of Theorem 0.1.

Example 0.3. Let $k = 1$ and $d = 4$. Then there exists a 4-dimensional Gorenstein Fano polytope $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathbb{R}^4$ such that $i(\mathcal{P}, n)$ satisfies the properties (i)–(iv) of Theorem 0.1. In fact, we define \mathcal{Q}^c by setting the convex hull of

$$\{(1, 0, 0, 0), (0, 1, 0, 0), (-1, -1, 0, 0), (0, 0, 1, 0), (0, 0, 0, 1)\}.$$

Then $3\mathcal{Q}^c$ contains a unique integer point $(0, 0, 1, 1)$ in its interior. Thus $\mathcal{P} := 3\mathcal{Q}^c - (0, 0, 1, 1)$ is a Gorenstein Fano polytope, which is the convex hull of

$$\{(3, 0, -1, -1), (0, 3, -1, -1), (-3, -3, -1, -1), (0, 0, 2, -1), (0, 0, -1, 2)\}.$$

It can be computed easily that the Ehrhart polynomial of \mathcal{P} is equal to

$$\frac{81}{8}n^4 + \frac{81}{4}n^3 + \frac{135}{8}n^2 + \frac{27}{4}n + 1$$

and its roots are

$$-\frac{1}{3}, -\frac{2}{3}, -\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\sqrt{-7}}{6} \text{ and } -\frac{1}{2} - \frac{\sqrt{-7}}{6}.$$

Remark 0.4. (a) It is disproved in [8] that all of the roots α of the Hilbert polynomial of any Fano variety satisfy $-1 < \Re(\alpha) < 0$, the so-called *canonical strip hypothesis*, which is stated in [7]. On Theorem 0.1, however, all of the roots of Ehrhart polynomials of our Gorenstein Fano polytopes satisfy this condition. In more detail, they satisfy *the narrowed canonical strip hypothesis*, which is the condition $-1 + 1/(d+1) \leq \Re(\alpha) \leq -1/(d+1)$. Moreover, if we set $2k = d$ when d is even or $2k = d - 1$ when d is odd, then they also satisfy *the canonical line hypothesis*, which is the condition $\Re(\alpha) = -1/2$.

(b) We should consider the connections of the Ehrhart polynomials of our Gorenstein Fano polytopes with L -functions. Let $i(\mathcal{P}, s)$ be the Ehrhart polynomial of our Gorenstein Fano polytope \mathcal{P} with $2k = d$ when d is even or with $2k = d - 1$ when d is odd. Then we set $z(s) = i(\mathcal{P}, -s)$. Then the function equation

$$z(1-s) = (-1)^d z(s)$$

holds and all of its roots α satisfy $\Re(\alpha) = 1/2$, which is, of course, the Riemann zeta function.

Example 0.5. Let G be a finite connected graph on the vertex set $V(G) = \{1, \dots, d\}$ with $E(G)$ its edge set. We assume that G possesses no loop and no multiple edge. Let $\mathbf{e}_1, \dots, \mathbf{e}_d$ denote the canonical unit vectors of \mathbb{R}^d . For an edge $e = \{i, j\}$ of G with $i < j$, we define $\rho(e)$ and $\mu(e)$ of \mathbb{R}^d by setting $\rho(e) = \mathbf{e}_i - \mathbf{e}_j$ and $\mu(e) = \mathbf{e}_j - \mathbf{e}_i$. Write $\mathcal{P}_G^\pm \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ for the convex polytope which is the convex hull of $\{\rho(e) : e \in E(G)\} \cup \{\mu(e) : e \in E(G)\}$. Let $\mathcal{H} \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ denote the hyperplane defined by the equation $\sum_{i=1}^d x_i = 0$. Then $\mathcal{P}_G^\pm \subset \mathcal{H}$. Identifying \mathcal{H} with \mathbb{R}^{d-1} , it turns out that $\mathcal{P}_G^\pm \subset \mathbb{R}^{d-1}$ is a Gorenstein Fano polytope of dimension $d - 1$. (In detail, see [16, Proposition 3.2].) One of the research problems is to find a combinatorial characterization of the finite graphs G for which all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}_G^\pm, n)$ satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$.

For example, if C is a cycle of length 6, then all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}_C^\pm, n)$ satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$. However, if C is a cycle of length 7, then there is a root $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}_C^\pm, n)$ with $\Re(a) \neq -1/2$.

If G is a tree, then \mathcal{P}_G^\pm is unimodular isomorphic to the regular unit crosspolytope of dimension $d - 1$, which is the convex hull of $\{\pm \mathbf{e}_1, \dots, \pm \mathbf{e}_{d-1}\}$ in \mathbb{R}^{d-1} . Hence the δ -vector of \mathcal{P}_G^\pm is $\delta(\mathcal{P}_G^\pm) = \binom{d-1}{0}, \binom{d-1}{1}, \dots, \binom{d-1}{d-1}$. Thus, by using [19] again, all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}_G^\pm, n)$ satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$.

Let G be a complete bipartite graph of type $(2, d - 2)$. Thus the edges of G are either $\{1, j\}$ or $\{2, j\}$ with $3 \leq j \leq d$. Let $\delta(\mathcal{P}_G^\pm) = (\delta_0, \delta_1, \dots, \delta_{d-1})$. Then

$$\sum_{k=0}^{d-1} \delta_k x^k = (1+x)^{d-3} (1 + 2(d-2)x + x^2).$$

It has been conjectured that all roots $a \in \mathbb{C}$ of $i(\mathcal{P}_G^\pm, n)$ satisfy $\Re(a) = -1/2$ in [16].

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