

A positive proportion of some quadratic number fields with infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower

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Received: 14 December 2014 / Accepted: 8 June 2015
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Abstract We show that a positive proportion of real and imaginary quadratic number fields with 2-class rank equal to 2 have 4-rank equal to 1 or 2 and infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower.

Keywords Class group · Class field tower · Quadratic number fields

Mathematics Subject Classification 11R29 · 11R32 · 11R37

1 Introduction

Let k be a number field, and let C_k be the class group of k . Let k^1 be the Hilbert 2-class field of k , i.e., the maximal unramified (including the infinite primes) abelian field extension of k whose degree over k is a power of 2. Let k^n for n a nonnegative integer, be defined inductively as $k^0 = k$ and $k^{n+1} = (k^n)^1$; then

$$k \subset k^1 \subset k^2 \subset \cdots \subset k^n \subset \cdots$$

is called the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k . If n is the minimal integer such that $k^n = k^{n+1}$, then n is called the length of the tower. If no such n exists, then the tower is said to be of infinite length.

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We define the 2-rank of C_k , denoted by $r_2(k)$, as the dimension of the elementary abelian 2-group C_k/C_k^2 viewed as a vector space over \mathbb{F}_2 :

$$r_2(k) = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(C_k/C_k^2),$$

where \mathbb{F}_2 is the finite field with two elements. We define the 4-rank of C_k , denoted $r_4(k)$ by

$$r_4(k) = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(C_k^2/C_k^4).$$

Assume that k is an imaginary quadratic number field. It is known that the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k is infinite if $r_2(k) \geq 5$ [1, 5]. Also it is known that if $r_4(k) \geq 3$, then k has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [6, 7]. In the case where $r_2(k) = 2$ or 3, the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k may be finite [9, 13]. In the case where $r_2(k) = 4$, it has been conjectured that k has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [13]. This conjecture has been proved in the case where the discriminant of k is divisible by at most one prime $\equiv -1 \pmod{4}$ [14]. Note that for each $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$, there are infinitely many fields k such that

$$r_2(k) = 3, \quad r_4(k) = i$$

and infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [2, 3]. On other hand, it is known by group theory that if $r_2(k) = 2$ and $r_4(k) = 0$, then k has finite Hilbert 2-class field tower of length at most 2 [9]. Moreover, B. Schmithals showed that the quadratic number field $k = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{-25355})$ with $r_2(k) = 2$ has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [17] and it is shown that there exist infinitely many imaginary quadratic number fields k such that

$$r_2(k) = 2, \quad r_4(k) = 1$$

and infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [14]. However, the case $r_2(k) = 2$ and $r_4(k) = 2$ is not treated any where.

Assume that k is a real quadratic number field. It is well known that if $r_2(k) \geq 6$, then the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k is infinite [5]. If $r_4(k) \geq 4$, then k has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [12]. Also a positive proportion of the fields k with $r_2(k) = 5$ for $0 \leq r_4(k) \leq 5$, $r_2(k) = 4$, for $0 \leq r_4(k) \leq 4$ and $r_4 = 3$ for $0 \leq r_4(k) \leq 3$ have infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower [2, 4]. Moreover, there are infinitely many real quadratic number fields k such that

$$r_2(k) = 3, \quad r_4(k) = 1$$

and finite Hilbert 2-class field tower [15]. However, it is not known that there is a positive proportion of real quadratic number fields k such that $r_2(k) = 2$ and $r_4(k) \in \{1, 2\}$ with infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower.

The aim of this article is to study the cases which are not treated in the literature, and then we prove the following theorem.

Theorem 1.1 *For each $i \in \{1, 2\}$, there exist infinitely many imaginary (resp. real) quadratic number fields k such that $r_2(k) = 2$, $r_4(k) = i$ and infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower.*

2 Preliminary results

2.1 Genus theory

Let p be a prime number and K/k be a Galois extension of number fields with degree p and Galois group G . Denote by E_k the unit group of k and $\text{ram}(K/k)$ the number of primes ramified in K/k . Denote by $B(K/k)$ the elementary abelian p -group $E_k/E_k \cap N_{K/k}(K^*)$. We define the p -rank of C_K , denoted $r_p(K)$ as the dimension of the elementary abelian p -group C_K/C_K^p viewed as a vector space over \mathbb{F}_p . We note that $B(K/k)$ is a vector space over \mathbb{F}_p , let $d_p(B(K/k))$ be its dimension.

By classical results of genus theory [8], we have

$$r_p(K) \geq \text{ram}(K/k) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_p}(B(K/k)) - 1;$$

where $\text{ram}(K/k)$ is the number of primes that ramify in the extension K/k , and $N_{K/k}$ is the norm map in the extension K/k . In the case where $p = 2$ and the class number of k is odd, the preceding inequality becomes an equality. Indeed, one can verify that the kernel of the homomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} f : C_K &\longrightarrow C_K^2 \\ C &\longmapsto C^2. \end{aligned}$$

is exactly the invariant group $(C_K)^G$. Hence, we have

$$r_2(K) = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(C_K/C_K^2) = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}((C_K)^G) = \text{ram}(K/k) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(K/k)) - 1.$$

We note that

$$\dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(K/k)) \leq \begin{cases} [k : \mathbf{Q}] & \text{if } k \text{ totally real,} \\ \frac{1}{2}[k : \mathbf{Q}] & \text{if not,} \end{cases}$$

2.2 4-Rank of the class group of quadratic number fields

Let k be a quadratic number field of discriminant d . We shall need the following results of Scholz, Rédei and Reichardt on the 2-class group of real quadratic number fields (see [16, 18] and for more informations, see [11]).

A factorization of the discriminant d into relatively prime discriminants d_1 and d_2 : $d = d_1 \cdot d_2$ is called a C_4 -factorization if

- (1) d is not a sum of two squares and $\left(\frac{d_1}{p_2}\right) = \left(\frac{d_2}{p_1}\right) = 1$ for all primes $p_i | d_i$, or

(2) d is a sum of two squares, $\left(\frac{d_1}{p_2}\right) = \left(\frac{d_2}{p_1}\right) = 1$ for all primes $p_i | d_i$ and $\left(\frac{d_1}{d_2}\right)_4 = \left(\frac{d_2}{d_1}\right)_4$.

Suppose we have a C_4 -factorization of d , and then there exists a cyclic extension over k of order 4 which is unramified outside ∞ . We have the following proposition:

Proposition 2.1 *The 4-rank $r_4(k)$ of k equals the number of independant C_4 -factorizations of d .*

2.3 Golod and Shafarevich inequality and Cebotarev density

Let k be a number field, C_k be the class group of k and E_k be the group of units of k . Then, from [1], we know that the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k is infinite if

$$r_2(k) \geq 2 + 2\sqrt{r_2(E_k) + 1}, \quad (*)$$

where $r_2(E_k)$ is exactly the number of infinite primes of k .

We mention the following form of the Cebotarev density [10].

Proposition 2.2 *Let K/k be a Galois extension with group G . Let $\sigma \in G$. Let $[K : k] = N$, and let c be the number of elements in the conjugacy class of σ in G . Then those primes \mathcal{P} of k which are unramified in K and for which there exists $\mathcal{B}|\mathcal{P}$ such that the Frobenius automorphism of \mathcal{B} in the extension K/k verifies*

$$(\mathcal{B}, K/k) = \sigma$$

have a density, and this density is equal to $\frac{c}{N}$.

3 Proof of Theorem 1.1

To give the proof of Theorem 1.1, we distinguish between two cases:

Imaginary case: the case where $r_2(k) = 2$ and $r_4(k) = 1$ has been studied in [14]. Next, we construct infinitely many imaginary quadratic number fields k such that $r_2(k) = 2$ and $r_4(k) = 2$. Let p and p' be distinct prime numbers such that $p \equiv p' \equiv 1 \pmod{4}$ and $F = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{pp'})$. Denote by F^1 the Hilbert 2-class field of F and $h = [F^1 : F]$. Suppose that h is divisible by 8. Introduce the number field $L = F^1(i)$, the compositum of F^1 and the imaginary quadratic number field $\mathbf{Q}(i)$. It is clear that L/\mathbf{Q} is a Galois extension of degree divisible by $4h$. Let σ be the generator of the Galois group $\text{Gal}(L/F^1)$ of the extension L/F^1 , so σ fixes F^1 and transforms i to $-i$. Let S be the set of primes ℓ of \mathbf{Q} which are unramified in L and for which there exists $\mathcal{B}|\ell$ such that $(\mathcal{B}, L/\mathbf{Q}) = \sigma$. Hence by Proposition 2.2, S has a density equal to $\frac{c}{4h}$, where c is the number of elements in the conjugacy class of σ in $\text{Gal}(L/\mathbf{Q})$. Moreover, let \mathcal{B} be a prime ideal of L over a prime ℓ of S such that $(\mathcal{B}, L/\mathbf{Q}) = \sigma$, then for each prime \mathcal{L} of F^1 under \mathcal{B} , we have

$$(\mathcal{L}, F^1/\mathbf{Q}) = (\mathcal{B}, L/\mathbf{Q})|_{F^1} = 1 \text{ (restriction of } \sigma \text{ to } F^1)$$

since σ acts trivially on F^1 . Hence all primes of S are totally decomposed in F^1 and inert in the extension M/F^1 . It is clear that for each prime ℓ of S , we have $\ell \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$, since ℓ is inert in $\mathbf{Q}(i)$. Also ℓ is decomposed in F , then $\left(\frac{pp'}{\ell}\right) = 1$ and we must have

$$\left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right) = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right) = 1,$$

otherwise, we find $\left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right) = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right) = -1$ and then the prime ideals of F above ℓ will be inert in $F(\sqrt{p})$ which is unramified over F , this is contrary to the fact that all primes of S are totally decomposed in F^1 . So, let $k = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{-pp'\ell})$, where $\ell \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$ and $\left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right) = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right) = 1$. It is clear by Genus theory that, $r_2(k) = 2$. Moreover, since h is divisible by 4, then by Proposition 2.1, $r_4(F) = 1$, and thus, $\left(\frac{p}{p'}\right) = 1$. It follows that we have two independent C_4 -factorizations of the discriminant of k ; hence by Proposition 2.1, the 4-rank of the class group of k is equal to 2. It remains to prove that the Hilbert 2-class field tower of k is infinite. We have the extension $F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1$ is ramified at the archimedean and the ℓ -adic primes of F^1 . The number of infinite primes of F^1 is equal to $[F^1 : \mathbf{Q}] = 2h$, and also since ℓ is totally decomposed in F^1 , the number of ℓ -adic primes of F^1 is equal to $2h$, so $\text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1) = 4h$. On other hand, we have $\dim(B(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1)) \leq [F^1 : \mathbf{Q}] = 2h$ and $r_2(E_{F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})}) = [F^1 : \mathbf{Q}] = 2h$. Hence, since h is divisible by 8, one can readily verify that

$$\text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1)) - 1 \geq 2 + 2\sqrt{r_2(E_{F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})}) + 1}.$$

By Sect. 2.1, we have

$$r_2(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})) \geq \text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/F^1)) - 1,$$

so $F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})$ satisfies the inequality (*) of Sect. 2.3, and consequently $F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})$ has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower. Therefore, since $F^1(\sqrt{-\ell})/k$ is an unramified 2-extension, k has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower.

Real case: First we prove the Theorem for real quadratic number fields k with 2-rank equal to 2 and 4-rank equal to 2. Let $F = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{pp'})$ be the real quadratic number field introduced in the imaginary case and suppose that $h = [F^1 : F]$ is divisible by 8. In [19], the author proves that there exists an infinite set S of primes ℓ of \mathbf{Q} which are totally decomposed in $F^1(\sqrt{E_{F^1}})$, where E_{F^1} is the group of units of F^1 and the Hilbert 2-class field tower of the field $k = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{pp'\ell})$ is infinite. It remains to prove that the infinite family of real quadratic number fields k verifies

$$r_2(k) = r_4(k) = 2.$$

Since each prime $\ell \in S$ is totally decomposed in $F^1(\sqrt{E_{F^1}})/\mathbf{Q}$, in particular is decomposed in $\mathbf{Q}(i)$, $\ell \equiv 1 \pmod{4}$. Therefore, all primes of S are $\equiv 1 \pmod{4}$, and

by genus theory, we have $r_2(k) = 2$. Next we are going to prove that $r_4(k) = 2$, which is reduced by Proposition 2.1 to prove that we have 2 independant C_4 -factorizations of the discriminant $d = \ell pp'$ of k . Since h is divisible by 4 then by Proposition 2.1, the discriminant pp' of the biquadratic number field F has a C_4 factorization, and this means that

$$\left(\frac{p'}{p}\right) = 1 \text{ and } \left(\frac{p}{p'}\right)_4 = \left(\frac{p'}{p}\right)_4. \quad (1)$$

On other hand, since $L = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p}, \sqrt{p'})$ is an abelian unramified extension over F , each prime $\ell \in S$ is totally decomposed in L ; therefore, we must have

$$\left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right) = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right) = 1. \quad (2)$$

The real quadratic number fields $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$ and $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})$ are contained in F^1 . Denote ε_p (resp. $\varepsilon_{p'}$) the fundamental unit of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})$). Since ℓ is totally decomposed in $F^1(\sqrt{E_{F^1}})$, in particular is decomposed in $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_p})$ and in $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_{p'}})$, for each prime ideal \mathcal{L} (resp. \mathcal{L}') of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})$) above $\ell \in S$, \mathcal{L} (resp. \mathcal{L}') is totally decomposed in $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_p})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_{p'}})$). Hence, the value of the norm residue symbol,

$$\left(\frac{\varepsilon_p, \ell}{\mathcal{L}}\right) = (\mathcal{L}, \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_p})/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})) = 1,$$

where the symbol in the middle is the Artin map applied to the prime ideal \mathcal{L} in the extension $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_p})/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$. The same occurs for

$$\left(\frac{\varepsilon_{p'}, \ell}{\mathcal{L}'}\right) = (\mathcal{L}', \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})(\sqrt{\varepsilon_{p'}})/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})) = 1.$$

Therefore, we obtain that all units of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})$) are norms in $M = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p}, \sqrt{\ell})$ (resp. $M' = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'}, \sqrt{\ell})$). Then, we have

$$\dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(M/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p}))) = \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(M'/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'}))) = 0.$$

On other hand, $\text{ram}(M/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})) = \text{ram}(M'/\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})) = 2$ and since the class number of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'})$) is odd, it follows from the discussion of Sect. 2.1 that

$$r_2(M) = r_2(M') = 1.$$

Consequently, the 2-class number of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p\ell})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'\ell})$) is divisible by 4; thus, the 4-rank of the class group of $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p\ell})$ (resp. $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{p'\ell})$) is equal to 1. Hence, using Proposition 2.1, we have the following equalities:

$$\left(\frac{p}{\ell}\right)_4 = \left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right)_4 \quad \text{and} \quad \left(\frac{p'}{\ell}\right)_4 = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right)_4. \quad (3)$$

Combining (1), (2) and (3), the discriminant $pp'\ell$ of k has 2 independent C_4 -factorizations:

$$p \cdot \ell\ell' \quad \text{and} \quad p' \cdot \ell\ell',$$

finishing the proof in the case where $r_2(k) = r_4(k) = 2$.

Now, we give infinitely many real quadratic number fields k such that $r_2(k) = 2$, $r_4(k) = 4$ with infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower.

Let $F = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{pp'})$ be the quadratic number field introduced above and suppose that h is divisible by 32, so we must have

$$\left(\frac{p}{p'}\right) = 1. \quad (4)$$

As in the imaginary case, there exist infinitely many prime numbers $\ell \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$ such that ℓ is totally decomposed in the Hilbert 2-class field F^1 of F , and then we have

$$\left(\frac{\ell}{p}\right) = \left(\frac{\ell}{p'}\right) = 1. \quad (5)$$

Also, by the distribution of prime numbers in an arithmetic progression, there exist infinitely many prime numbers $\ell' \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$ such that

$$\left(\frac{\ell'}{p}\right) = -\left(\frac{\ell'}{p'}\right) = 1. \quad (6)$$

Let $k = \mathbf{Q}(\sqrt{\ell\ell'pp'})$; it is clear by Genus theory that $r_2(k) = 2$. From the equalities (4), (5) and (6), we deduce that we have exactly one C_4 -factorization of the discriminant $\ell\ell'pp'$ of k :

$$p \cdot p'\ell\ell'$$

Therefore, we have $r_4(k) = 1$. On other hand, ℓ is totally decomposed in F^1 , and then the number of ℓ -adic primes of F^1 is equal to $2h$, where $h = [F^1 : F]$. Moreover, by equalities (6), ℓ' is inert in F ; thus, the ℓ' -adic prime of F is principal. So by the reciprocity law applied in the extension F^1/F , the ℓ -adic prime of F is totally decomposed in F^1 , and then the number of ℓ' -adic primes of F^1 is equal to h . Hence the number of ramified primes in the extension $F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1$ is equal to

$$\text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1) = 2h + h = 3h.$$

On other hand, we have $\dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1)) \leq [F^1 : \mathbf{Q}] = 2h$ and $r_2(E_{F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})}) = 4h$. Hence, since $h \geq 32$, one can readily verify that

$$\text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1)) - 1 \geq 2 + 2\sqrt{r_2(E_{F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})})} + 1.$$

By Sect. 2.1, we have

$$r_2(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})) \geq \text{ram}(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1) - \dim_{\mathbb{F}_2}(B(F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/F^1)) - 1,$$

so $F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})$ satisfies the inequality (*) of Sect. 2.3, and consequently $F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})$ has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower. Therefore, since $F^1(\sqrt{\ell\ell'})/k$ is an unramified 2-extension, k has infinite Hilbert 2-class field tower. Hence, the proof of the theorem is now complete.

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