THE CONJUGATE DIMENSION OF ALGEBRAIC NUMBERS

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Abstract

We find sharp upper and lower bounds for the degree of an algebraic number in terms of the \( \mathbb{Q} \)-dimension of the space spanned by its conjugates. For all but seven non-negative integers \( n \), the largest degree of an algebraic number whose conjugates span a vector space of dimension \( n \) is equal to \( 2^n n! \). The proof, which covers also the seven exceptional cases, uses a result of Feit on the maximal order of finite subgroups of \( \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}) \); this result depends on the classification of finite simple groups. In particular, we construct an algebraic number of degree 1152 whose conjugates span a vector space of dimension only 4.

We extend our results in two directions. We consider the problem when \( \mathbb{Q} \) is replaced by an arbitrary field, and prove some general results. In particular, we again obtain sharp bounds when the ground field is a finite field, or a cyclotomic extension \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_l) \) of \( \mathbb{Q} \). Also, we look at a multiplicative version of the problem by considering the analogous rank problem for the multiplicative group generated by the conjugates of an algebraic number.

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1. Introduction

Let \( \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) be an algebraic closure of the field \( \mathbb{Q} \) of rational numbers, and let \( \alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \). Let \( \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) be the conjugates of \( \alpha \) over \( \mathbb{Q} \), with \( \alpha_1 = \alpha \). Then \( d \) is the degree \( d(\alpha) := [\mathbb{Q}(\alpha) : \mathbb{Q}] \), the dimension of the \( \mathbb{Q} \)-vector space spanned by the powers of \( \alpha \). In contrast, we define the conjugate dimension \( n = n(\alpha) \) of \( \alpha \) as the dimension of the \( \mathbb{Q} \)-vector space spanned by \( \{\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d\} \).

In this paper we compare \( d(\alpha) \) and \( n(\alpha) \). By linear algebra, \( n \leq d \). If \( \alpha \) has non-zero trace and has Galois group equal to the full symmetric group \( S_d \), then \( n = d \) (see [21; Lemma 1]). On the other hand, it is shown in [5] that \( n \) can be as small as \( \lfloor \log_2 d \rfloor \). It turns out that \( n \) can be even smaller. Our first main result gives the minimum and maximum values of \( d \) for fixed \( n \).

**Theorem 1** Fix an integer \( n \geq 0 \). If \( \alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) has \( n(\alpha) = n \), then the degree \( d = d(\alpha) \) satisfies \( n \leq d \leq d_{\max}(n) \), where \( d_{\max}(n) \) is defined by Table 1, equalling \( 2^n n! \) for all \( n \neq \{2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10\} \). Furthermore, for each \( n \geq 1 \), there exists \( \alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) attaining the lower and upper bounds.

We refer to those \( n \) with \( d_{\max}(n) \neq 2^n n! \) as exceptional. To attain \( d = d_{\max}(n) \), we will use \( \alpha \) for which the extension \( \mathbb{Q}(\alpha)/\mathbb{Q} \) is Galois with Galois group isomorphic to a maximal-order finite subgroup \( G \) of \( \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}) \) given in Table 1.

The groups \( W(\cdot) \) are the Weyl groups of classical Lie algebras acting on their maximal tori (see, for instance, [10]). They are all reflection groups: each is generated by those elements that act on \( \mathbb{Q}^n \) by reflection in some hyperplane. For the standard fact that the negative identity matrix \(-I\) is not in \( W(E_6) \), see for instance [10, p. 82]. In particular, \( W(B_n) = W(C_n) = (\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z})^n \rtimes S_n \) is better known as the signed permutation group, the group of \( n \times n \) matrices with entries in \( \{-1, 0, 1\} \) having exactly one non-zero entry in each row and each column.

Feit [6] proved that for each \( n \) a subgroup of \( \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}) \) of maximal finite order is conjugate to the group given in Table 1. (The paper [6] is just a statement of results—no proofs.) Feit’s result uses unpublished work of Weisfeiler depending on the classification theorem for finite simple groups (see also [11, p. 185]). See http://weisfeiler.com/boris/philinq-8-28-2000.html for the sad tale of Weisfeiler’s disappearance.

The inequality \( d \leq d_{\max}(n) \) comes from studying the span of \( \{\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d\} \) as a representation of \( \text{Gal}(\mathbb{Q}(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d)/\mathbb{Q}) \). To prove the existence of examples where this upper bound is attained, we

### Table 1: Maximal-order finite subgroups of \( \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( d_{\max}(n)/(2^n n!) )</th>
<th>Maximal-order subgroup ( G )</th>
<th>( d_{\max}(n) = #G )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>( W(G_2) )</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>( W(F_4) )</td>
<td>1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>( \langle W(E_6), -I \rangle )</td>
<td>103680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>( W(E_7) )</td>
<td>2903040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>135/2</td>
<td>( W(E_8) )</td>
<td>696729600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15/2</td>
<td>( W(E_8) \times W(A_1) )</td>
<td>1393459200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>( W(E_8) \times W(G_2) )</td>
<td>8360755200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all other ( n )</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>( W(B_n) = W(C_n) = (\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z})^n \rtimes S_n )</td>
<td>( 2^n n! )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1) observe that if $G$ is one of the maximal-order finite subgroups of $\text{GL}_d(\mathbb{Q})$ listed in Table 1, then the $G$-invariant subfield $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G$ of $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ is purely transcendental, say $\mathbb{Q}(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ (whence $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)/\mathbb{Q}(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ is a Galois extension with Galois group $G$).

(2) apply Hilbert irreducibility to obtain a Galois extension $K$ of $\mathbb{Q}$ with Galois group $G$, and

(3) choose $\alpha \in K$ generating a suitable subrepresentation of $G$.

Moreover, we give explicit examples for all $n$ except 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and outline an explicit construction in these remaining five cases.

Many of the arguments work over base fields other than $\mathbb{Q}$, so we generalize as appropriate (Theorem 14). In particular, Theorem 15 generalizes Theorem 1 by giving the minimal and maximal degrees over any cyclotomic base field $(\text{Theorem 14})$. In particular, Theorem 15 generalizes Theorem 1 by giving the minimal and maximal construction in these remaining five cases.

2. Degree and conjugate dimension over fields in general

2.1. Representations

Let $k$ be a field, and let $k^s$ be a separable closure of $k$. If $\alpha \in k^s$, then let $d = d(\alpha)$ be the degree $[k(\alpha) : k]$, and let $n = n(\alpha)$ be the conjugate dimension of $\alpha$ (over $k$), defined as the dimension of the $k$-vector space $V(\alpha)$ spanned by the conjugates $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d$ of $\alpha$ in $k^s$.

**PROPOSITION 2** With notation as above, let $K = k(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d)$ and let $G = \text{Gal}(K/k)$. Then there exists a faithful $n$-dimensional $k$-representation of $G$.

**Proof.** Since $\{\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d\}$ is $G$-stable, the $G$-action on $K$ restricts to a $G$-action on $V(\alpha)$. If $g \in G$ acts trivially on $V(\alpha)$, then $g$ fixes each $\alpha_i$, so $g$ is the identity on $K$. Thus $V(\alpha)$ is a faithful $k$-representation of $G$. Finally, $\dim_k V(\alpha) = n$, by definition.

A partial converse will be given in Proposition 5 below, whose proof relies on the following representation-theoretic result.

**LEMMA 3** Let $k$ be a field of characteristic 0, and let $G$ be a finite group. Let $V$ be a $kG$-submodule of the regular representation $kG$. Assume that $G$ acts faithfully on $V$. Then $V = (kG)\alpha$ for some $\alpha \in V$ with $\text{Stab}_G(\alpha) = \{1\}$.

**Proof.** Since $k$ has characteristic zero, $V$ is a direct summand (and hence a quotient) of the regular representation, so the $kG$-module $V$ can be generated by one element. An element $\alpha \in V$ fails to generate $V$ as a $kG$-module if and only if $\{g\alpha : g \in G\}$ fails to span $V$, and this condition can be expressed in terms of the vanishing of certain minors in the coordinates of $\alpha$ with respect to a basis of $V$. Thus the set $Z := \{\alpha \in V : (kG)\alpha \neq V\}$ of such elements is contained in the zeros of some non-zero polynomial in the coordinates. Also, for each $g \in G - \{1\}$, the set $V^g := \{v \in V : gv = v\}$ is a proper subspace of $V$, since $V$ is faithful. Since $k$ is infinite, we can choose $\alpha \in V$ outside $Z$ and each $V^g$ for $g \neq 1$. 

Let $k$ be a field of characteristic 0, and let $G$ be a finite group. Suppose that $G = \text{Gal}(K/k)$ for some Galois extension $K$ of $k$, and that there is a faithful $n$-dimensional subrepresentation $V$ of the regular representation of $G$ over $k$. Then there exists $\alpha \in K$ with $n(\alpha) = n$ and $d(\alpha) = [K : k] = \#G$.

**Proof.** By the Normal Basis Theorem, $K$, as a representation of $G$ over $k$, is isomorphic to the regular representation. Hence we may identify $V$ with a subrepresentation of $K$. Lemma 3 gives an element $\alpha \in V$ whose $G$-orbit has size $\#G$ and spans the $n$-dimensional space $V$.

### 2.2. Invariant subfields

**Proposition 6.** Let $G$ be one of the groups in Table 1, viewed as a subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$. Then for any field $k$ of characteristic 0, the invariant subfield $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G$ is purely transcendental over $k$.

**Proof.** We may assume $k = \mathbb{Q}$. Chevalley [3] proved that if $G$ is a finite reflection group, then $\mathbb{Q}[x_1, \ldots, x_n]^G = \mathbb{Q}[f_1, \ldots, f_n]$ for some homogeneous polynomials $f_i$. In this case, we have $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G = \mathbb{Q}(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ as desired.

The only remaining case is $n = 6$ and $G = \langle W(E_6), -I \rangle$. Here $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_6)^{W(E_6)} = \mathbb{Q}(I_2, I_6, I_8, I_9, I_{12}, I_{16})$, where each $I_j$ is a homogeneous polynomial of degree $j$, given explicitly for instance in [7] (see also [10, p. 59]). Moreover $-I \in G$ acts on this subfield by $I_j \mapsto (-1)^j I_j$, so $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_6)^G = \mathbb{Q}(I_2, I_6, I_8, I_{12}, I_{16}^2, I_{19}^2)$.

**Remark 7.** Let $G$ be a finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{R})$. Coxeter showed [4] that $\mathbb{R}[x_1, \ldots, x_n]^G$ is a polynomial ring over $\mathbb{R}$ in $n$ algebraically independent generators if $G$ is a finite reflection group. Shephard and Todd proved that this sufficient condition on $G$ is also necessary ( [17, Theorem 5.1], see also [10, p. 65]). For example, $G = \langle W(E_6), -I \rangle$ is not a finite reflection group, and the $\mathbb{R}$-algebra $\mathbb{R}[x_1, \ldots, x_6]^G = \mathbb{R}[I_2, I_6, I_8, I_{12}, I_{16}^2, I_{19}^2]$ cannot be generated by six polynomials.

### 2.3. Hilbert irreducibility

It is well known that the field $\mathbb{Q}$ is Hilbertian—see for instance [16, Theorem 3.4.1] (a form of the Hilbert irreducibility theorem). This implies that Galois extensions of purely transcendental extensions $\mathbb{Q}(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ can be specialized to Galois extensions of $\mathbb{Q}$ having the same Galois group [16, Corollary 3.3.2].

**Proposition 8.** Let $k$ be a Hilbertian field. Let a finite subgroup $G$ of $\text{GL}_n(k)$ act on $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ so that the action on the span of the indeterminates $x_i$ corresponds to the inclusion of $G$ in $\text{GL}_n(k)$. If the invariant subfield $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G$ is purely transcendental over $k$, then there exists a finite Galois extension $K$ of $k$ with Galois group $G$.
Proof. By assumption $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G = k(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ for some algebraically independent $f_i$. By Galois theory, $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ is a Galois extension of $k(f_1, \ldots, f_n)$ with Galois group $G$. Now use the assumption that $k$ is Hilbertian to specialize.

Corollary 9 If $k$ is a Hilbertian field, and $G$ is one of the groups in Table 1, then $G$ is realizable as a Galois group over $k$.

Proof. Combine Propositions 6 and 8. For background material on Hilbert irreducibility see [15] or [16].

3. Degree and conjugate dimension over $\mathbb{Q}$

3.1. Proof of Theorem 1

Proof. The inequality $n \leq d$ is immediate. Examples with equality exist by Proposition 5 applied to the standard permutation representation $S_n \hookrightarrow \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$, since $S_n$ is realizable as a Galois group over $\mathbb{Q}$ (see [16, p. 42], for example).

On the other hand, $d \leq \#G \leq d_{\text{max}}(n)$, where $G$ is the Galois group of $\alpha$ over $k$, because of Proposition 2, since $d_{\text{max}}(n)$ is the size of the largest finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$.

Finally, we prove that $d = d_{\text{max}}(n)$ is possible for each $n \geq 1$. Let $G$ be a maximal finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$, as in Table 1. The given $n$-dimensional faithful representation of $G$ is a representation of the regular representation, since otherwise it would contain some irreducible subrepresentation with multiplicity greater than 1, which could be removed once to produce a faithful subrepresentation on a lower-dimensional subspace, contradicting the fact that the function $d_{\text{max}}(n)$ is strictly increasing. (Alternatively, this could be deduced from the fact that the given representation is irreducible for all $n \neq 9$, 10, and is a direct sum of distinct irreducible representations for $n = 9$ and $n = 10$.) Moreover, Corollary 9 shows that $G$ is realizable as a Galois group over $\mathbb{Q}$. Thus Proposition 5 yields $\alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ with $n(\alpha) = n$ and $d(\alpha) = \#G = d_{\text{max}}(n)$.

3.2. Explicit numbers attaining $d_{\text{max}}(n)$

In theory, given $n \geq 1$, we can construct explicit $\alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ with $n(\alpha) = n$ and $d(\alpha) = d_{\text{max}}(n)$ as follows. Let $G$ be a maximal-order finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q})$. Take $e_j$ to be the column vector in $\mathbb{Z}^n$ having $j$th entry 1 and the rest 0, let $G_1$ be the stabilizer of $e_1$ under the left action of $G$, and put $N = |G : G_1|$, the size of the orbit of $e_1$ under this action. For most of the groups we consider, all of $e_1, \ldots, e_n$ are in this orbit, and so we denote the whole orbit by $e_1, e_2, \ldots, e_N$. We then find an auxiliary polynomial $P_N$ of degree $N$, irreducible over $\mathbb{Q}$, whose splitting field has Galois group $G$ over $\mathbb{Q}$. Further, $n$ zeros $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_n$ of $P_N$ can be chosen so that the full list of conjugates $\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_N$ of $\beta_1$ are the $(\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_n)e_j$ for $j = 1, \ldots, N$.

The auxiliary polynomial $P_N$ arises, at least generically, as follows: by Proposition 6, we can write $\mathbb{Q}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G = \mathbb{Q}(I_1, \ldots, I_n)$, where the $I_j$ are $G$-invariant homogeneous polynomials in the $x_i$. Choose $c_1, \ldots, c_n \in \mathbb{Q}$, and define a zero-dimensional variety $V$ by the polynomial equations

$$I_1(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = c_1,$$

$$\vdots$$

$$I_n(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = c_n.$$
Then successively eliminate $x_n, x_{n-1}, \ldots, x_2$ to get a monic polynomial $R(x_1)$ of degree $d_R$ given by $d_R = \prod_{j=1}^n \deg I_j$. Clearly $\mathbf{x}g \in \mathcal{V}$ for any $\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{V}$ and $g \in G$, so the multiset of zeros of $R$ is \( \{ xg e_j \mid g \in G \} \), which consists of $\#G_1$ copies of $[x e_j \mid j = 1, \ldots, N]$. Thus $R(x_1) = P_N(x_1)^{\#G_1}$ for some polynomial $P_N$. For reflection groups and unitary reflection groups we can choose the $I_j$ so that $d_R = \#G$; in this case $P_N$ has degree $N$. The polynomial $P_N$ is our auxiliary polynomial.

Choose $b_1, \ldots, b_n \in \mathbb{Q}$ such that $b_1 x_1 + \cdots + b_n x_n$ is not fixed by any $g \in G$ except the identity. Then $\alpha = b_1 \beta_1 + \cdots + b_n \beta_n$ has $n(\alpha) = n$ and degree $d_{\text{max}}(n)$, its conjugates being $(\beta_1, \ldots, \beta_n)g(b_1, \ldots, b_n)^T$ for $g \in G$. (This is the standard ‘primitive element’ construction for the Galois closure of $\mathbb{Q}(\beta)$.) For most choices of $(c_1, \ldots, c_n)$ (that is, for all choices outside a ‘thin set’, in the sense of [16]), this construction will produce the required $\alpha$. For small $n$ (such as $n = 2$, considered in sections 3.4 and 4.2), this procedure works well. For much larger $n$, however, the elimination process becomes impractical. Also, it becomes hard to check whether a particular choice of $(c_1, \ldots, c_n)$ yields a suitable $\alpha$. The difficulty is to choose $c_1, \ldots, c_n$ so that not only is $P_N$ irreducible, but also it has Galois group $G$ (instead of a subgroup). For this reason, the following sections discuss more practical ways of constructing $\alpha$, in the non-exceptional case and for $n = 4$.

For the larger exceptional values of $n$, even these methods would require special treatment for each value, and the large size of $\#G$ (see Table 1) has dissuaded us from trying to do the same for these $n$. One approach to constructing $\alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ attaining $d_{\text{max}}(n)$ for $6 \leq n \leq 10$ is to start with Shioda’s beautiful analysis relating the Weyl groups of $E_6, E_7, E_8$ and their invariant rings with the Mordell–Weil lattices of rational elliptic surfaces with an additive fibre. For instance, in [18, pp.484–5] Shioda uses this theory to exhibit a monic polynomial in $\mathbb{Z}[X]$ with Galois group $W(E_7)$, whose roots are the images of the 56 minimal vectors of the $E_7^\ast$ lattice under a $\mathbb{Q}$-linear, $W(E_7)$-equivariant map from $P_{E_7} \otimes \mathbb{Q}$ to $\overline{\mathbb{Q}}$. The image under this map of any vector in $E_7 \otimes \mathbb{Q}$ with trivial stabilizer in $W(E_7)$ (that is, in the interior of a Weyl chamber) is then an $\alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}}$ with $n(\alpha) = 7$ and $d(\alpha) = \#W(E_7) = d_{\text{max}}(7)$. A similar construction will work for $n = 8$, and (combined with the analysis of algebraic numbers of conjugate dimension 1, 2) also for $n = 9, 10$. The case $n = 6$ will require additional work, because Shioda’s construction, which yields Galois group $W(E_6)$, will have to be modified to produce $(W(E_6), -I)$.

### 3.3. Explicit numbers attaining $d_{\text{max}}(n)$ for non-exceptional $n$

**Proposition 10** Let $k$ be a field of characteristic not $2$ and let $n \geq 2$. Suppose $f(\mathbf{x}) = x^d - a_1 x^{d-1} - \cdots - (-1)^n a_n \in k[\mathbf{x}]$ is a separable polynomial of degree $n$ with Galois group $S_n$ and discriminant $\Delta$. Let $r_1, \ldots, r_n \in \overline{k}$ be the zeros of $f(\mathbf{x})$. Choose a square root $\sqrt{r_i}$ of each $r_i$, and let $K = k(\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n})$. If $a_n \not\in \Delta^2 k^{n^2}$ and either $n$ is even or $r_i \not\in k^2(k(r_i))^{2}$, then $[K : k] = 2^n n!$.

**Proof.** The action of the group $G := \text{Gal}(K/k)$ on $\{ \sqrt{r_1}, -\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n}, -\sqrt{r_n} \}$ is faithful and preserves the partition $\{ [\sqrt{r_1}, -\sqrt{r_1}], \ldots, [\sqrt{r_n}, -\sqrt{r_n}] \}$, so $G$ is a subgroup of the signed permutation group $W(B_n)$. Recall that $W(B_n)$ is a semidirect product

$$0 \to V \to W(B_n) \to S_n \to 1,$$

where $V$ as a group with $S_n$-action is the standard permutation representation of $S_n$ over $\mathbb{F}_2$. Since $f$ has Galois group $S_n$, the group $G$ surjects onto the quotient $S_n$ of $W(B_n)$. Considering the conjugation action of $G$ on itself gives a (possibly non-split) exact sequence

$$0 \to W \to G \to S_n \to 1.$$
for some subrepresentation \( W \) of \( V \). The only subrepresentations of \( V \) are \( \mathbb{P}_2 \) with trivial \( S_n \)-action, the sum-zero subspace of \( V = \mathbb{P}_2 \), and \( V \) itself. If \( W = V \), we are done.

If \( W \) is contained in the sum-zero subspace, then \( W \) acts trivially on the square root \( \beta := \sqrt{r_1} \ldots \sqrt{r_n} \) of \( a_n \). Hence the action of \( G \) on \( \beta \) is given by either the trivial character or the sign character of \( S_n \). Thus either \( \beta \in k \) or \( \beta \sqrt{\Delta} \in k \). Squaring yields \( a_n \in \Delta^2k^{+2} \), contrary to assumption.

The only remaining case is where \( n \) is odd and \( W = \mathbb{P}_2 \). Then \( W \) acts trivially on the square root \( \beta_1 := \sqrt{r_2} \sqrt{r_3} \ldots \sqrt{r_n} \) of \( r_2 r_3 \ldots r_n = a_n/r_1 \). Hence the action of \( \text{Gal}(K/k(r_1)) \) on \( \beta_1 \) is given by either the trivial character or the sign character of \( S_{n-1} = \text{Gal}(k(r_1, \ldots , r_n)/k(r_1)) \). Thus either \( \beta_1 \in k(r_1) \) or \( \beta_1 \sqrt{\Delta} \in k(r_1) \). Squaring shows that \( r_1 \in k^*k^{(r_1)^{+2}} \), again contrary to assumption.

In the situation of Proposition 10, when its hypotheses are satisfied, we can take the auxiliary polynomial to be \( P_{2n}(x) = f(x^2) \).

The following corollary is needed in section 3.5.

**Corollary 11** Let \( n \geq 2 \). Suppose \( f(x) = x^n - a_1 x^{n-1} + \cdots + (-1)^n a_n \in k[x] \) is a polynomial of degree \( n \) over a field \( k \subseteq \mathbb{R} \), with Galois group \( S_n \). Suppose that the zeros \( r_1, \ldots , r_n \) of \( f(x) \) are real and satisfy \( r_1 < 0 < r_2 < \cdots < r_n \). Choose a square root \( \sqrt{r_1}, \sqrt{r_2}, \ldots , \sqrt{r_n} \) for each \( r_i \), and let \( K = k(\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots , \sqrt{r_n}) \). Then \([K:k] = 2^n n!\).

**Proof.** It suffices to check the hypotheses of Proposition 10. The discriminant \( \Delta \) satisfies \( \Delta > 0 \), but \( a_n = r_1 \ldots r_n < 0 \), so \( a_n \notin \Delta^{+2}k^{+2} \).

If \( r_1 \in k^*k^{(r_1)^{+2}} \), say \( r_1 = cy_1^2 \) with \( c \in k^* \) and \( y_1 \in k(r_1) \), then applying an automorphism yields \( r_2 = cy_2^2 \) with \( y_2 \in k(r_2) \). These two equations force \( c < 0 \) and \( c > 0 \), respectively, a contradiction.

**Proposition 12** For \( n = 1 \) let \( r_1 = 2 \), while for \( n \geq 2 \) let \( r_1, \ldots , r_n \in \overline{Q} \) be the zeros of \( f(x) = x^n + (-1)^n (x-1) \). Choose a square root of each \( r_i \), and let \( \alpha = \sqrt{r_1^2+2r_2^2+\cdots+n\sqrt{r_n}} \). Then \( n(\alpha) = n \) and \( d(\alpha) = 2^n n! \).

**Proof.** By [16, p. 42], the polynomial \( (-1)^n f(-x) = x^n - x - 1 \) has Galois group \( S_n \) over \( \mathbb{Q} \), so \( f(x) \) has Galois group \( S_n \) over \( \mathbb{Q} \). Also by [16, p. 42], each inertia group of \( \text{Gal}(\mathbb{Q}(r_1, \ldots , r_n)/\mathbb{Q}) \) is either trivial or generated by a transposition; it follows that the same is true for the Galois group \( G \) of \( f \) over \( \mathbb{Q}(i) \). The group \( G \) has index at most 2 in \( S_n \), so \( G \) is \( S_2 \) or \( A_n \). We claim that \( G = S_n \).

For \( n = 2 \) we check this directly.

Take \( n \geq 3 \). If \( G = A_n \), then as \( G \) would contain no transpositions, all the inertia groups in \( G \) would be trivial, and \( \mathbb{Q}(i) \) would have an \( A_n \)-extension unramified at all places. The existence of such an extension contradicts the Minkowski discriminant bound for \( n \geq 4 \), and contradicts class field theory for \( 3 \leq n \leq 4 \). Thus \( G = S_n \).

In particular, if \( \Delta \) is the discriminant of \( f(x) \), then \( \Delta \neq \mathbb{Q}(i)^{+2} \), so \( |\Delta| \neq \mathbb{Q}^{+2} \). Therefore \( a_n := -1 \) is not in \( \Delta^{+2}k^{+2} \).

We now finish checking the hypotheses in Proposition 10 by showing that the assumptions \( n \) odd and \( r_1 \in \mathbb{Q}^*(r_1)^{+2} \) lead to a contradiction. Suppose \( n \) odd, and \( r_1 = cy^2 \), with \( c \in \mathbb{Q}^* \) and \( y \in \mathbb{Q}(r_1)^{+2} \). Taking \( N_{\mathbb{Q}(r_1)/\mathbb{Q}} \) of both sides yields \( (-1)^n c^n \equiv c^n \pmod{\mathbb{Q}^{+2}} \). Since \( n \) odd, \( c \equiv -1 \pmod{\mathbb{Q}^{+2}} \). Without loss of generality, \( c = -1 \). Since \( y \) generates \( \mathbb{Q}(r_1) \), the monic minimal polynomial \( g(t) \in \mathbb{Q}[t] \) of \( y \) is of degree \( n \). Write \( g(t)g(-t) = h(t^2) \) for some polynomial \( h \in \mathbb{Q}[x] \). Substituting \( t = y \) shows that \( h(-r_1) = 0 \), but \( h \) has degree \( n \), so \( h(x) = f(-x) \).
Thus the polynomial \(-f(t^2) = t^{2n} - t^2 - 1\) factors as \(-g(t)g(-t)\). However, it is known to be irreducible (Ljunggren [12, Theorem 3]).

By Proposition 10, the field \(K = \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n})\) has degree \(2^n!\). Each \(\sqrt{r_i}\) lies outside the field generated by the other square roots over \(\mathbb{Q}(r_1, \ldots, r_n)\), so \(\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n}\) are linearly independent over \(\mathbb{Q}\). The conjugates of \(\alpha\) are the numbers of the form \(\sum_{j=1}^{n} \epsilon_j (\sqrt{r_j})^j\), where \(\epsilon_j \in S_n\) and \(\epsilon_1, \ldots, \epsilon_n \in \{\pm 1\}\). The linear independence of the square roots guarantees that these \(2^n!\) elements are distinct.

3.4. An explicit number attaining \(d_{\text{max}}(n)\) for \(n = 2\)

For \(n = 2\), we can take \(P_2(x) = x^6 - 2\). Taking one zero \(\beta\) of \(P_2\), all zeros are spanned by the two zeros \(\beta, \omega_3\beta\), where \(\omega_3\) is a primitive cube root of unity. Then \(\alpha = \beta + 3\omega_3\beta\) has \(n(\alpha) = 2\) and \(d(\alpha) = 12\), and minimal polynomial \(y^{12} + 572y^6 + 470596\).

Remark 13 This example can be produced using the procedure outlined in section 3.2, as follows.

The group \(W(G_2)\) from Table 1 equals \(\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}\) and has invariants \(I_1 = x_1^2 - x_1 x_2 + x_2^2\) and \(I_2 = (x_1 x_2 (x_1 - x_2))^2\). Taking \(c_1 = 0, c_2 = 2, b_1 = 1, b_2 = -3\), we get the minimal polynomial of \(\alpha\) as the \(x_2\)-resultant of \(I_1(y + 3x_2, x_2)\) and \(I_2(y + 3x_2, x_2) - 2\).

3.5. An explicit number attaining \(d_{\text{max}}(n)\) for \(n = 4\)

For \(n = 4\), one maximal-order finite subgroup of \(\text{GL}_4(\mathbb{Q})\) is the order-1152 group \(W(F_4)\) generated by its index-3 subgroup \(W(B_4)\) (of order 384) and the order-2 matrix

\[
\begin{pmatrix}
1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \\
1 & 1 & -1 & -1 \\
1 & -1 & -1 & 1
\end{pmatrix}.
\]

Thus by Galois correspondence we should be able to apply the construction of section 3.2 for \(\beta\) defined over a suitable cubic extension of \(\mathbb{Q}\). And indeed, this is possible.

Define \(s_{2k} = z_{2k}^2 + z_{2k}^4 + z_{2k}^8 + z_{2k}^{12}\) for \(k = 1, 2, \ldots\). Four independent homogeneous invariants for \(W(F_4)\) are known [13] to be

\[
I_{2k} = (8 - 2^{2k-1})s_{2k} + \sum_{j=1}^{k-1} \binom{2k}{2j}s_{2j} s_{2k-2j}
\]

for \(k = 1, 3, 4, 6\). Using the Newton identities and with the help of MAPLE these can be written entirely as polynomials in \(s_2, s_4, s_6, s_8\) as follows:

\[
I_2 = 6s_2, \quad I_6 = -24s_6 + 30s_2 s_4, \quad I_8 = -120s_8 + 56s_2 s_6 + 70s_4^2.
\]

\[
I_{12} = -540s_4 s_8 + 244s_6^2 - 1365s_2^2 s_8 + \frac{1365}{2}s_2^3 s_4 + 255s_4^3
\]

\[
-710s_2^4 s_4 + 1250s_2^3 s_6 + \frac{159}{2}s_6^2 + 110s_2 s_4 s_8.
\]

We now use resultants to eliminate \(s_4\) and \(s_6\). This shows that \(s_8\) is cubic over \(\mathbb{Q}(I_2, I_6, I_8, I_{12})\).
and also that \( s_4, s_6 \in \mathbb{Q}(I_2, I_6, I_8, I_{12})(s_8) \). Specifically, we take \( I_2 = 6s_2 = 30, I_6 = 1410, I_8 = 13670 \) and \( I_{12} = 1161749 \), and then \( \gamma := s_8 \) (the real root, say) satisfies
\[
y^4 + \frac{5735}{32} y^2 + \frac{8511288377}{36864} y - \frac{114051068048293}{6220800} = 0.
\]
Then, with the Newton identities, we compute the values of the elementary symmetric functions of the \( z_i^2 \). This gives a polynomial \( Q_4 \) satisfied by the \( z_i^2 \):
\[
Q_4(x) = x^4 - 5x^3 + \frac{20261200695}{3175710433} x^2 + \frac{34560}{3175710433} x^2 y^2 - \frac{47690820}{3175710433} x^2 y
+ \frac{9527131299}{72000} x - \frac{28800}{3175710433} x y^2 + \frac{39742350}{3175710433} x y - \frac{203476507483}{38108525196}.
\]
We write its zeros as \( \beta_1^2, \beta_2^2, \beta_3^2, \beta_4^2 \) say. They are real and close to \(-1, 1, 2 \) and 3. (The values for the invariants were chosen to be close to the values they would have had if \( z_i^2, i = 1, \ldots, 4 \), had been \( -1, 1, 2, 3 \).) Furthermore, its discriminant 2239679999/97200 is not a square in \( \mathbb{Q}(\gamma) \).

Now, shifting \( x \) in this quartic by \( 5/4 \) to obtain a polynomial \( z^4 + b_2 z^2 + b_1 z + b_0 \) having zero cubic term, its cubic resolvent \( z^3 + 2b_2 z^2 + (b_3^2 - 4b_0)z - b_1^2 \) is readily checked to be irreducible over \( \mathbb{Q}(\gamma) \). Hence by [8, Example 14.7, p. 117], the Galois closure of \( \mathbb{Q}(\gamma, \beta) \) over \( \mathbb{Q}(\gamma) \) has Galois group \( S_4 \). Then, as \( \beta_1^2 < 0 < \beta_2^2 < \beta_3^2 < \beta_4^2 \), we have \( [\mathbb{Q}(\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4) : \mathbb{Q}] = 2^4 \cdot 4! = 384 \), on applying Corollary 11 with \( k = \mathbb{Q}(\gamma) \).

If we now take the resultant of \( Q_4(x^2) \) and the minimal polynomial of \( \gamma \), to eliminate \( \gamma \), we obtain the degree-24 auxiliary polynomial
\[
P_{24}(x) = x^{24} - 15x^{22} + \frac{375}{4} x^{20} - \frac{2405}{8} x^{18} + \frac{65435}{128} x^{16} - \frac{25905}{64} x^{14} - \frac{181583}{3072} x^{12} + \frac{8367137}{18432} x^{10} - \frac{28198575}{65536} x^8 + \frac{1338226651}{5308416} x^6 - \frac{895964239}{8847360} x^4 + \frac{4234139}{294912} x^2 - \frac{24389830879}{1592524800}.
\]
This polynomial is irreducible, with zeros \( 1/2(\pm \beta_1 \pm \beta_2 \pm \beta_3 \pm \beta_4) \) as well as \( \pm \beta_1, \pm \beta_2, \pm \beta_3, \pm \beta_4 \). Now \( (1, 2, 3, 5)^T \) is not a fixed point of any \( g \neq I \) in \( W(F_4) \). It follows that \( \alpha = \beta_1 + 2\beta_2 + 3\beta_3 + 5\beta_4 \) has \( n(\alpha) = 4 \) and degree \( d(\alpha) = 1152 \), its conjugates being the numbers \( (\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4)g(1, 2, 3, 5)^T \) for \( g \in W(F_4) \).

4. Conjugate dimensions over other fields

4.1. General results

The conjugate dimension can behave differently if we use ground fields other than \( \mathbb{Q} \). For a field \( k \) and a positive integer \( n \), let \( D(k, n) \) be the maximal degree of \( \alpha \in k^d \) of \( k \)-conjugate dimension at most \( n \). For instance \( D(\mathbb{Q}, n) = d_{\text{max}}(n) \). If the degree is unbounded, we set \( D(k, n) = \infty \). This can happen even for Hilbertian fields of characteristic zero. For example, \( D(\mathbb{C}(t), 1) = \infty \), because for each \( d \geq 1 \) a \( d \)-th root of \( t \) generates the Galois extension \( \mathbb{C}(t^{1/d}) \) of degree \( d \), and all conjugates of \( t^{1/d} \) generate the same 1-dimensional space. Nevertheless we can generalize some of our results to various ground fields other than \( \mathbb{Q} \). We obtain the following.
THEOREM 14
(i) If $k$ is a number field of degree $m$ over $\mathbb{Q}$, then $d_{\text{max}}(n) \leq D(k, n) \leq d_{\text{max}}(mn)$ for all $n \geq 1$.

(ii) If $k$ is a Hilbertian field of characteristic not dividing $\ell$ and $k$ contains the $\ell$th roots of unity, then $D(k, n) \geq \ell^n n!$.

(iii) If $k$ is a finitely generated transcendental extension of $\mathbb{C}$, then $D(k, n) = \infty$ for all $n \geq 1$.

(iv) If $k$ is a finite field of $q$ elements, then $D(k, n) = q^n - 1$.

(v) If $k$ is a finitely generated transcendental extension of a finite field $k_0$, then $D(k, 1) = q - 1$, where $q$ is the size of the largest finite subfield of $k$, and $D(k, n) = \infty$ for all $n \geq 2$.

Proof. (i) By Proposition 2, if $\alpha \in k^s$ has degree $d$ and conjugate dimension $n$ then there exists a $d$-element subgroup of $\text{GL}_n(k)$. If $[k : \mathbb{Q}] = m$, then an $n$-dimensional vector space over $k$ can be viewed as an $mn$-dimensional vector space over $\mathbb{Q}$, so we get an injection $\text{GL}_n(k) \hookrightarrow \text{GL}_{mn}(\mathbb{Q})$. Hence $d \leq d_{\text{max}}(mn)$. For the lower bound, note that the specialization made in Proposition 8 can, by [15, Theorem 46, p. 298], be made in such a way that the minimal polynomial of the algebraic number with conjugate dimension $n$ remains irreducible over the field $k$. This gives an example of an algebraic number of degree $d_{\text{max}}(n)$ over $k$ and $k$-conjugate dimension at most $n$, so $d_{\text{max}}(n) \leq D(k, n)$.

(ii) If $k$ contains the $\ell$th roots of unity then $\text{GL}_n(k)$ contains the group of size $\ell^n n!$ consisting of the permutation matrices whose entries are $\ell$th roots of unity in $k$. Moreover, the invariant ring of this group is polynomial, being generated by the elementary symmetric functions of the $\ell$th powers of the coordinates. Thus the invariant field is purely transcendental over $k$. Therefore, by Propositions 5 and 8, there exist $\alpha \in k^s$ of conjugate dimension $n$ and degree $\ell^n n!$.

(iii) This follows from (ii), using the fact that every such field is Hilbertian [15, Theorem 49, p. 308].

(iv) The Galois group of any $k(\alpha)/k$ with $n(\alpha) = n$ must be contained in $\text{GL}_n(k)$, but must also be cyclic because $k$ is a finite field $\mathbb{F}_q$. Hence $\#G \leq q^n - 1$, as may be seen using the characteristic equation of an invertible matrix in $\text{GL}_n(k)$. We claim that the field of $q^{n - 1}$ elements is generated by an element $\alpha$ of conjugate dimension $n$ over $k$. Let $g$ be a generator of $\mathbb{F}_q^*$, and let $f(x) = \sum_{i=0}^n c_i x^i$ be its minimal polynomial over $\mathbb{F}_q$. Let $\alpha \in \mathbb{F}_q^*$ be a zero of $\sum_{i=0}^n c_i X^i$. Make the $\mathbb{F}_q$-vector space $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]$ into a module over the polynomial ring $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]$ by letting $\tau$ act as the endomorphism $z \mapsto z^g$. Then the ideal $I$ of $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]$ that annihilates $\alpha$ contains $f(\tau)$, but $I \neq (1)$. Since $f$ is irreducible, $I = (f(\tau))$. Thus the $\mathbb{F}_q$-span of $\alpha$ and its conjugates is an $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]$-module isomorphic to $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]/(f(\tau))$. In particular, $n(\alpha) = \deg f = n$. Also $d(\alpha)$ is the smallest $d$ such that $\tau^d(\alpha) = \alpha$, which is the smallest $d$ such that $\tau^d = 1$ in $\mathbb{F}_q[\tau]/(f(\tau))$; by choice of $g$, we get $d = q^n - 1$.

(v) Without loss of generality, suppose that $k_0$ is the largest finite subfield of $k$, so $\#k_0 = q$. Suppose $\alpha \in \overline{k}$ has $n(\alpha) = 1$. Proposition 2 bounds $d(\alpha)$ by the size of the largest finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_1(k) = k^\ast$. Elements of finite order in $k^\ast$ are roots of unity, hence contained in $k_0^\ast$. Thus $D(k, 1) \leq q - 1$. The opposite inequality follows from (ii) since, by [15, Theorem 47, p. 301], $k$ is Hilbertian.

Now suppose $n \geq 2$. Choose a finite Galois extension $L$ of $k$ with $[L : k] = n - 1$. (For instance, let $L$ be the compositum of a suitable subfield of a cyclotomic extension of $k$ with some
Artin–Schreier extensions of \( k \). Let \( V \) be the pullback of a \( \mathbb{F}_q \)-span of a \( \text{Gal}(L/k) \)-stable finite subset of \( L \) that spans \( L \) as a \( k \)-vector space. Define

\[
P_{V,\varepsilon}(X) := \prod_{\varepsilon \in V} (X - \varepsilon) + k[X, \varepsilon],
\]

where \( \varepsilon \) is an indeterminate. Then \( P_{V,0}(X) \) is a \( q \)-linearized polynomial in \( X \), that is, a \( k \)-linear combination of \( X, X^q, X^{q^2}, \ldots \). (See [9, Corollary 1.2.2], for instance.) It has distinct roots, namely the elements of \( V \). Therefore \( P_{V,\varepsilon}(X) \), considered as a polynomial in \( X \), has distinct roots, which constitute a translate of \( V \) in the separable closure of \( k(\varepsilon) \). Moreover, \( P_{V,\varepsilon}(X) \) is irreducible, because it is a monic polynomial in \( \varepsilon \) of degree 1. Since \( k \) is Hilbertian, it contains \( c \neq 0 \) such that \( P_{V,\varepsilon} \in k[X] \) is irreducible. Let \( \alpha \) be a zero of \( P_{V,\varepsilon} \). Then \( \alpha \) is an element of \( k^\ell \) of degree \( \#V \).

Since the set of conjugates of \( \alpha \) is \( \{ \alpha + v \mid v \in V \} \), the \( k \)-span of this set is equal to the span of \( V \cup \{ \alpha \} \). However \( \alpha \notin L \) since \( d(\alpha) = \#V \geq q^{n-1} > n - 1 \). So, as the \( k \)-span of \( V \) is \( L \), \( n(\alpha) = [L : k] + 1 = n \). Thus \( D(k, n) \geq \#V \). Since \( V \) can be taken arbitrarily large, \( D(k, n) = \infty \).

4.2. Results for cyclotomic fields

Theorem 1 generalizes to finite cyclotomic extensions of \( \mathbb{Q} \). Let \( \omega_\ell \) be a primitive \( \ell \)-th root of unity.

**Theorem 15** Fix an integer \( n \geq 0 \) and an even integer \( \ell \geq 4 \). If \( \alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) has conjugate dimension \( n \) over \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell) \) then the degree \( d \) of \( \alpha \) over \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell) \) satisfies

\[
n \leq d \leq D(\mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell), n),
\]

where \( D(\mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell), n) \) is defined by Table 2. In particular, \( D(\mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell), n) = \ell^n n! \) for

\[
(n, \ell) \notin \{ (2, 4), (2, 8), (2, 10), (2, 20), (4, 4), (4, 6), (4, 10), (5, 4), (6, 6), (6, 10), (8, 4) \}.
\]

Furthermore, for each pair \( (n, \ell) \) with \( n \geq 1 \) and \( \ell \geq 4 \) even, there exist \( \alpha \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}} \) attaining the lower and upper bounds.

Table 2 is a list of groups isomorphic to maximal-order finite subgroups \( G \) of \( \text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell)) \), quoted from Feit [6]. (An error in the first line of his table has been corrected.) In this table \( ST_j \) refers to the \( j \)-th unitary reflection group in [17, Table VII], and the wreath product \( G \wr S_n \) is the semidirect product \( (G \times \cdots \times G) \rtimes S_n \) in which \( S_n \) acts on the \( n \)-fold product of \( G \) by permuting the coordinates; see also [20, Table 7.3.1].

**Proof.** The proof is a generalization of that of Theorem 1. For fixed \( \ell \), \( D(\mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell), n) \) is a strictly increasing function of \( n \). Thus to carry over the proof, it remains to show that the invariant subfield \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell)^{(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G} \) is purely transcendental over \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell) \) in each case of Table 2. This is immediate for all the Shephard–Todd groups in the table, by the extension of Chevalley’s theorem to unitary reflection groups by Shephard and Todd ([17]; see also [2, p. 115, Theorem 4; 10, p. 65]). For example, when \( G = (\mathbb{Z}/\ell \mathbb{Z})^n \rtimes S_n \), the field of invariants \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell)(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G \) is \( \mathbb{Q}(\omega_\ell)(e_1, \ldots, e_n) \), where \( e_j \) is the \( j \)-th elementary symmetric function of \( x_1, \ldots, x_n \). The three remaining cases are handled by Lemma 17 below.

**Lemma 16** Let \( k \) be a field. Let the symmetric group \( S_m \) act on

\[
K = k(x_1^{(1)}, \ldots, x_1^{(m)}; \ldots; x_n^{(1)}, \ldots, x_n^{(m)}),
\]

by acting on the superscripts. Then \( K^{S_m} \) is purely transcendental over \( k \).
Table 2 Maximal-order subgroups of $\text{GL}_n(\mathbb{Q}(\omega))$ for $\ell \geq 4$ even

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$\ell$</th>
<th>$D(\mathbb{Q}(\ell), n)/(\ell^n n!)$</th>
<th>Maximal-order subgroup $G$</th>
<th>$D(\mathbb{Q}(\ell), n) = #G$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_8 = \langle \text{GL}_2(\mathbb{F}_3), \omega_4 I \rangle$</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_9 = \langle \text{GL}_2(\mathbb{F}_3), \omega_8 I \rangle$</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{16} = \langle \omega_8 I \rangle \times \text{SL}_2(\mathbb{F}_5)$</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{17} = \langle \text{SL}_2(\mathbb{F}<em>5), \omega</em>{20} I \rangle$</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15/2</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{31}$</td>
<td>46080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{32}$</td>
<td>155520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{16} \wr S_2$</td>
<td>720000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{31} \times \langle \omega_4 I \rangle$</td>
<td>184320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7/6</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{34}$</td>
<td>39191040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{16} \wr S_3$</td>
<td>1296000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45/28</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_{31} \wr S_2$</td>
<td>4246732800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\ell \geq 4$ even, $n \neq 2$, $\ell$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$\text{ST}_2(\ell, 1, n) = (\mathbb{Z}/\ell \mathbb{Z})^n \rtimes S_n$</td>
<td>$\ell^n n!$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proof. If $E/F$ is a Galois extension of fields with Galois group $G$, and $V$ is an $E$-vector space equipped with a semilinear action of $G$, there exists an $E$-basis of $V$ consisting of $G$-invariant vectors [19, II.5.8.1].

Apply this to $E = k(x_1^{(1)}, \ldots, x_1^{(m)})$, $G = S_m$, $F = E^G$ (the purely transcendental extension of $k$ generated by the symmetric functions in $x_1^{(1)}, \ldots, x_1^{(m)}$), and $V$ the $E$-subspace of $K$ spanned by all the $x_i^{(j)}$ with $i \geq 2$. Choose an $E$-basis $\{v_i\}$ of $G$-invariant vectors as above. Let $K_0 = k(\{v_i\})$. Since $E K_0 = K$, we have $[K : K_0] \leq [E : F] = m!$ On the other hand, $K_0 \subseteq K^G$ with $[K : K^G] = m!$, so $K_0 = K^G$. Since the $x_i^{(j)}$ are algebraically independent over $E$, the $v_i$ are algebraically independent over $k$.

Lemma 17 Let $k$ be a field, and let $G$ be a finite subgroup of $\text{GL}_m(k)$ whose field of invariants $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G$ is purely transcendental over $k$. Let $G \wr S_m$ act on

$$L = k(x_1^{(1)}, \ldots, x_1^{(m)}, \ldots, x_n^{(1)}, \ldots, x_n^{(m)})$$

by letting the $i$th of the $m$ copies of $G$ act linearly on the span of $x_1^{(i)}, \ldots, x_n^{(i)}$ while $S_m$ acts on the superscripts. Then $L^{G \wr S_m}$ is purely transcendental over $k$.

Proof. Since $G \wr S_m$ is a semidirect product of $S_m$ by $G^m$, we have $L^{G \wr S_m} = (L^{G^m})^{S_m}$. If $k(x_1, \ldots, x_n)^G = k(I_1, \ldots, I_n)$, then

$$L^{G^m} = k(I_1^{(1)}, \ldots, I_n^{(1)}, \ldots, I_1^{(m)}, \ldots, I_n^{(m)}),$$

and $S_m$ acts on this by acting on superscripts. Now apply Lemma 16.
EXAMPLE Using the elimination procedure outlined in section 3.2, we can give an example of an algebraic number $\alpha$ of degree 96 over $\mathbb{Q}(i)$ with $\mathbb{Q}(i)$-conjugate dimension 2 and Galois group $ST_8$, as in Table 2. Now $ST_8 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & i \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$, with invariants

$$I_8(x_1, x_2) = x_1^8 + 4(1 + i)x_1^7 x_2 + 14i x_1^6 x_2^2 - 14(1 - i)x_1^5 x_2^3 - 21x_1^4 x_2^4 - 14(1 + i)x_1^3 x_2^5 - 14i x_1^2 x_2^6 + 4(1 - i)x_1 x_2^7 + x_2^8,$$

$$I_{12}(x_1, x_2) = 2x_1^{12} + 12(1 + i)x_1^{11} x_2 + 66i x_1^{10} x_2^2 - 110(1 - i)x_1^{9} x_2^3 - 231 x_1^8 x_2^4 - 132(1 + i)x_1^7 x_2^5 - 321 x_1^6 x_2^6 - 110(1 + i)x_1^5 x_2^7 - 66i x_1^4 x_2^8 + 12(1 - i)x_1 x_2^{11} + 2 x_2^{12}.$$

The $x_2$-resultant of $I_8 = 1 - i$ and $I_{12} = 1$ is $P_{24}(x)^4$, where the auxiliary polynomial $P_{24}$ is

$$P_{24}(x) = 27x^{24} - 270(1 + i)x^{16} + 270x^{12} - 810ix^8 + 54(1 + i)x^4 - 9 + 8i.$$

Two zeros $\beta$ and $\beta'$ of $P_{24}$ can be chosen so that the conjugates of $\beta$ are

$$o\beta, \quad o\beta', \quad o(\beta + \beta'), \quad o(\beta - \beta'), \quad o((1 + i)\beta + \beta'), \quad o((1 + i)\beta - \beta'),$$

where $o \in \{\pm 1, \pm i\}$. Then $\alpha = \beta + 2\beta'$ has degree 96 over $\mathbb{Q}(i)$, with conjugates $((\beta, \beta'))g(1, 2)^T$ for $g \in ST_8$. The minimal polynomial of $\alpha$ can be computed directly as the resultant with respect to $x_2$ of $I_8(y - 2x_2, x_2) - 1 - i$ and $I_{12}(y - 2x_2, x_2) - 1$.

4.3. $D(k, n)$ depends on more than $\ell$ and $n$

Let $k$ be a number field, and let $\ell$ be the number of roots of unity in $k$. It seems reasonable to guess, as in the case of cyclotomic fields $\mathbb{Q}(\omega_m)$, that $D(k, n) = \ell^n n!$ for all but finitely many $n$. However, it is possible that two number fields $\ell$ and $\ell'$ contain the same number of roots of unity, but $D(k, n) \neq D(k', n)$ for some $n$. For example, we can take $k = \mathbb{Q}(\cos(2\pi/m), \sin(2\pi/m))$, where $m > 6$, and $k' = \mathbb{Q}$. In both cases $\ell = 2$, but $D(k, 2) > D(\mathbb{Q}, 2) = 12$. Indeed, there exist $a, b \in k$ such that $\alpha = \sqrt{\mathbb{Q}(1 + b\omega_m)}$ is of degree $2m > 12$ over $k$. Its conjugate dimension over $k$ is 2; its conjugates are spanned by $\sqrt[2]{\alpha}$ and $\sqrt[2]{\alpha}$. This example also shows that the number of exceptional cases can be arbitrarily large, since we may simply take $m$ with $2m > 2n!$.

Another example is $D(\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5}), 3) \geq 120$, obtained from the icosahedral subgroup of $GL_3(\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{5}))$ (reflection group $ST_23$) via Propositions 5 and 8.

5. Multiplicative conjugate rank

Instead of the dimension $n(\alpha)$ of the $\mathbb{Q}$-vector space spanned by the $d$ conjugates $\alpha_i$ of an algebraic number $\alpha$, we may consider the rank $r(\alpha)$ of the multiplicative subgroup of $\mathbb{Q}^*$ they generate. We call this the (multiplicative) conjugate rank of $\alpha$. As before, we have the trivial inequality $r(\alpha) \leq d(\alpha)$, which is sharp in the case of maximal Galois group (again by [21, Lemma 1]). Unlike in the additive case, we can have no non-trivial lower bound without some further hypothesis, because if $\alpha$ is a root of unity then $r(\alpha) = 0$ while $d(\alpha)$ is unbounded. However, also unlike the additive case, we have the following result over a very general field. The main difficulty in the proof below is to show that this bound is sharp for Hilbertian fields.
Theorem 18 Suppose that $\alpha$ is separable and algebraic of degree $d(\alpha)$ over a field $k$, and the multiplicative subgroup of $(k^t)^*$ generated by the conjugates $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d$ of $\alpha$ is torsion-free. Then the rank $r(\alpha)$ of this subgroup satisfies $r(\alpha) \leq d(\alpha) \leq d_{\text{max}}(r(\alpha))$, with $d_{\text{max}}(\cdot)$ defined by Table 1 as before. If $k$ is Hilbertian, then for each integer $r \geq 1$ there are $\alpha \in k^t$ of conjugate rank $r$ attaining the lower and upper bounds.

The upper bound is given by the same function $d_{\text{max}}(\cdot)$ that we found for the conjugate dimension over $\mathbb{Q}$, and this bound is independent of the ground field $k$, although it need not always be sharp.

Proof. For any $\alpha \in k^t$, let $\Gamma = \gamma(\alpha)$ be the multiplicative group generated by the $\alpha_i$. We observed already that the lower bound $d(\alpha) \geq r(\alpha)$ is immediate. For the upper bound, we argue as we did for $n(\alpha)$. The Galois group $G$ acts faithfully on $\Gamma$. By hypothesis, $\Gamma \cong \mathbb{Z}(\alpha)$, so $G$ acts faithfully also on $\mathbb{Z}[\gamma(\alpha)]$, which is a $\mathbb{Q}$-vector space of dimension $r(\alpha)$. Hence $\#G$ is bounded above by $d_{\text{max}}(r(\alpha))$, the size of the largest finite subgroup of $\text{GL}(r(\alpha))(\mathbb{Q})$. Hence $d(\alpha) \leq \#G \leq d_{\text{max}}(r(\alpha))$.

The proof that there are examples attaining equality when $k$ is Hilbertian uses two corollaries of the following technical result.

Proposition 19 Let $L/k$ be a finite Galois extension of fields with Galois group $G$, and suppose that $k$ is not algebraic over a finite field. Then the $\mathbb{Z}G$-module $L^*$ contains a free $\mathbb{Z}G$-module of rank 1.

Proof. For each $g \in G - \{1\}$, choose $a_g \in L$ that is not fixed by $g$. Choose $b \in L$ that is not algebraic over a finite field. Let $S$ be the union of the $G$-orbits of the $a_g$ and of $b$. Then $S$ is finite. Let $L_0$ be the minimal subfield of $L$ containing $S$. Let $k_0$ be the subfield $(L_0)^G$ fixed by $G$. The action of $G$ on $S$ is faithful, so $G$ acts faithfully on $L_0$, and $L_0/k_0$ is Galois with group $G$. In this way we reduce to the case where $k$ and $L$ are finitely generated fields (finitely generated over their minimal subfield).

Choose finitely generated $\mathbb{Z}$-algebras $A \subseteq B$ with fraction fields $k$ and $L$, respectively. Without loss of generality we may assume, by localization, that $B$ is a finite étale Galois algebra over $A$. Since $L$ is not algebraic over a finite field, $\dim A = \dim B \geq 1$. By [14, Theorem 4], there is a maximal ideal $m_1$ of $B$ lying over a maximal ideal $m$ of $A$ such that the residue field extension $B/m_1$ over $A/m$ is trivial. Thus $m$ splits completely: if $n = \#G$, there are $n$ distinct maximal ideals $m_1, \ldots, m_n$ of $B$ lying over $m$, and they are are permuted transitively by $G$. By [1, Proposition 1.11], there exists a non-zero $\beta = m_1$ lying outside all of $m_2, \ldots, m_n$. We can label the conjugates $\beta_i$ of $\beta$ so that $\beta_i \in m_j$ if and only if $i = j$. Any non-trivial relation $\prod_{i=1}^{m} \beta_i^{b_i} = 1$ with $b_i \in \mathbb{Z}$, would, after moving the factors with negative exponent to the other side, give an equality between an element in $m_i$ and an element outside $m_i$, for some $i$. Hence the $\mathbb{Z}G$-module generated by $\beta$ in $L^*$ is free of rank 1.

Corollary 20 Let $k$ be a field that is not algebraic over a finite field. If $k$ has a Galois extension with Galois group $G$, then there exists $\alpha \in (k^t)^*$ with $r(\alpha) = d(\alpha) = r$.

Proof. Let $L$ be the $S_r$-extension of $k$. By Proposition 19, the $\mathbb{Z}S_r$-module $L^*$ contains a copy of $\mathbb{Z}S_r$, which contains a copy of the $\mathbb{Z}S_r$-module $\mathbb{Z}$ on which $S_r$ acts by permuting coordinates. The element $(1, 0, \ldots, 0) \in \mathbb{Z}$ corresponds to $\alpha \in L^*$ with the desired properties.

Corollary 21 Let $k$ be a field that is not algebraic over a finite field, and let $G$ be a finite group. Suppose that $G = \text{Gal}(K/k)$ for some Galois extension $K$ of $k$, and that there is a faithful
r-dimensional subrepresentation $V$ of the regular representation of $G$ over $\mathbb{Q}$. Then there exists $\alpha \in K^*$ whose conjugates generate a torsion-free multiplicative group with $r(\alpha) = r$ and $d(\alpha) = [K : k] = \#G$.

Proof. Apply Proposition 19 and then Lemma 3 with $k = \mathbb{Q}$. This gives $\alpha \in K^* \otimes \mathbb{Z} \mathbb{Q}$ with the desired properties, and we replace $\alpha$ by a power so that it is represented by an element of $K^*$.

We now prove the final statement of Theorem 18. Since $k$ is Hilbertian, $k$ has $S_r$-extensions for all $r$. In particular, $k$ is not algebraic over a finite field. Applying Corollary 20 yields $\alpha$ with $r(\alpha) = d(\alpha) = r$. Combining Corollaries 9 and 21 gives a different $\alpha$ with $r(\alpha) = r$ and $d(\alpha) = \text{dmax}(r)$, for any $r \geq 1$.

We end by giving an explicit algebraic number of conjugate rank $n$ and degree $2^n n!$ over $\mathbb{Q}$.

**Proposition 22**. Let $\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n}$ be as in Proposition 12. Let $s_i = (1 + \sqrt{r_i})/(1 - \sqrt{r_i})$ and $\alpha = s_1 s_2^2 \cdots s_n^n$. Then $r(\alpha) = n$ and $d(\alpha) = 2^n n!$ over $\mathbb{Q}$.

Proof. The proof of Proposition 12 showed that $[\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{r_1}, \ldots, \sqrt{r_n}) : \mathbb{Q}] = 2^n n!$, so its Galois group $G$ is the signed permutation group $W(B_n)$. The elements of $G$ act on $\alpha$ by permuting the exponents $1, 2, \ldots, n$ and changing their signs independently. In particular, the group generated by the conjugates of $\alpha$ is of finite index in the subgroup generated by the $s_i$. On the other hand, the $s_i$ are multiplicatively independent since they are not roots of unity and since there is an automorphism inverting any one of them while fixing all the others. Thus $\alpha$ has $2^n n!$ distinct conjugates, and they generate a subgroup of rank $n$.

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