

ON σ -SUBNORMAL SUBGROUPS OF FINITE GROUPS

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UDC 512.542

Abstract: Let p be a prime and let $\sigma = \{\{p\}, \{p\}'\}$ be a partition of the set \mathbb{P} of all primes. We prove the following conjecture by Skiba: If each complete Hall set of type σ in a finite group G is reducible to some subgroup H of G then H is σ -subnormal in G .

DOI: 10.1134/S0037446620020093

Keywords: finite group, σ -subnormal subgroup, Hall subgroup, complete Hall set

1. Introduction

Answering a question of Kegel [1] and Wielandt [2], Kleidman proved in [3] that a subgroup H of a finite group G is subnormal in G if $H \cap P$ is a Sylow p -subgroup in H for every Sylow p -subgroup P in G and every prime p .

This result led to the corresponding question for the σ -subnormal subgroups of a finite group which was posed by Skiba in [4] as Question 19.86 (see also Question 7.2 in [5]).

Problem 1. Let $\sigma = \{\sigma_i \mid i \in I\}$ be a partition of the set \mathbb{P} of all primes and let G be a finite group having a Hall σ_i -subgroup for each $i \in I$. Let H be a subgroup in G such that $H \cap S_i$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in H for each $i \in I$ and every Hall σ_i -subgroup S_i in G . Is it true that H is a σ -subnormal subgroup in G ?

It was Skiba who proposed in [7] the concept of σ -subnormal subgroup which develops the idea of a subnormal subgroup from [6]. This concept bases on the following definitions:

Let \mathbb{P} be the set of primes, $\pi \subseteq \mathbb{P}$, and $\pi' = \mathbb{P} \setminus \pi$. If n is a natural then $\pi(n)$ is the set of all primes dividing n ; in particular, $\pi(G) = \pi(|G|)$ is the set of all primes dividing the order $|G|$ of G . In what follows, σ is always a partition of \mathbb{P} into pairwise disjoint subsets σ_i ($i \in I$), i.e., $\mathbb{P} = \bigcup_{i \in I} \sigma_i$ and $\sigma_i \cap \sigma_j = \emptyset$ for all $i \neq j$. Following [8], we say that a group G is σ -primary if G is a σ_i -subgroup for some $i \in I$.

A subgroup H in a group G is called σ -subnormal if there exists a chain of subgroups

$$H = H_0 \subseteq H_1 \subseteq \dots \subseteq H_n = G$$

such that for each $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ either the subgroup H_{i-1} is normal in H_i or the subgroup $H_i/\text{Core}_{H_i}(H_{i-1})$ is σ -primary. Clearly, a subgroup H is subnormal in G if and only if it is σ -subnormal in G for the *minimal* partition $\sigma = \{\{2\}, \{3\}, \{5\}, \dots\}$.

Problem 2 below is more general as compared with Problem 1. This is connected with existence of the subgroups having several classes of conjugate Hall subgroups.

Following [8], we say that a system $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ of σ -primary Hall subgroups in a group G is a *complete Hall set of type σ* of G provided that

- (1) $(|S_i|, |S_j|) = 1$ for all $i \neq j \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$;
- (2) $\pi(G) = \pi(S_1) \cup \pi(S_2) \cup \dots \cup \pi(S_k)$.

If $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ is a complete Hall set of type σ of G ; then, obviously, $\Sigma^g = \{S_1^g, S_2^g, \dots, S_k^g\}$ is also a complete Hall set of type σ in G for every $g \in G$. A group G is called σ -complete if G possesses

S. F. Kamornikov was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus (Grant GR 20191056).

Original article submitted August 3, 2019; revised September 9, 2019; accepted October 18, 2019.

at least one Hall set of type σ (clearly, for some partitions σ , there exist groups for which the set of all complete Hall sets of type σ is empty).

We say that a complete Hall set Σ of type σ in a group G is *reduced* to a subgroup H of G if $H \cap S_i$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in H for each $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$ (it is possible that $H \cap S_i = 1$ for some $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$).

Problem 2. *Let σ be a partition of the set \mathbb{P} of all primes and let $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ be a complete Hall set of type σ in a finite group G . Let H be a subgroup in G such that Σ^g is reduced to H for every $g \in G$. Is it true that H is a σ -subnormal subgroup in G ?*

While Problem 1 requires that each complete Hall set Σ of type σ in G be reduced to a subgroup H in G , Problem 2 deals only with complete Hall sets Σ^g ($g \in G$) for some given complete Hall set Σ in G . Therefore, the affirmative solution of Problem 2 leads to the solution to Problem 1.

In this article, Problems 1 and 2 are solved for a partition $\sigma = \{\{p\}, \{p\}'\}$, where p is a prime. Our main goal is to prove the following theorem:

Theorem 1.1. *Let p be a prime, $\sigma = \{\{p\}, \{p\}'\}$, and let Σ be a complete Hall set of type σ in a finite group G . If H is a subgroup in G such that Σ^g is reduced to H for every $g \in G$ then H is σ -subnormal in G .*

The key to proving Theorem 1.1 is given by Lemma 2.4 establishing the structure of a minimal counterexample for every partition σ , together with Kazarin's Theorem (see [9]) which describes simple nonabelian groups containing a Hall p' -subgroup.

2. Definitions and Preliminary Results

The present work deals only with finite groups and uses the definitions and notations of [10]. As regards the terminology of the theory of σ -subnormal subgroups, the reader is referred to [7, 8].

We use the following notations:

If π is a set of primes then $\text{Hall}_\pi(G)$ is the set of all Hall π -subgroups in a group G .

If $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ is a complete Hall set of type σ in G and N is a normal subgroup in G then $\Sigma N/N = \{S_1 N/N, S_2 N/N, \dots, S_k N/N\}$.

If n is a natural then $\sigma(n) = \{\sigma_i \cap \pi(n) \mid i \in I, \sigma_i \cap \pi(n) \neq \emptyset\}$.

$\sigma(G) = \sigma(|G|)$.

The basic properties of σ -subgroups are given as some lemmas whose proofs are straightforward.

Lemma 2.1. *Let H and N be subgroups in G , where N is normal in G . Then*

- (1) *if H σ -subnormal in G then the subgroup HN/N is σ -subnormal in G/N ;*
- (2) *if $N \subseteq H$ then H is σ -subnormal in G if and only if H/N is σ -subnormal in G/N .*

Lemma 2.2. *Let H and K be subgroups in G , where H is σ -subnormal in G . Then*

- (1) *if $K \subseteq H$ and K is σ -subnormal in H then K is σ -subnormal in G ;*
- (2) *$K \cap H$ is σ -subnormal in K ;*
- (3) *if $H \subseteq K$ then H is σ -subnormal in K .*

Following [8], we say that a group G is σ -nilpotent (or σ -decomposable) if G is the direct product of some σ -primary groups; i.e., G is representable as a direct product of its Hall σ_i -subgroups for some $i \in I$.

A straightforward check shows that the class \mathfrak{N}_σ of all σ -nilpotent groups is a hereditary Fitting formation. This implies in particular that every group G contains some least normal subgroup the quotient group by which is σ -nilpotent. This subgroup is denoted by $G^{\mathfrak{N}_\sigma}$ and called the σ -nilpotent residual (or the \mathfrak{N}_σ -residual) of G .

Lemma 2.3. *A subgroup H is σ -subnormal in G if one of the following is fulfilled:*

- (1) *G is σ -nilpotent;*
- (2) *$G^{\mathfrak{N}_\sigma} \subseteq H$;*
- (3) *$|\sigma(G)| = 1$.*

Suppose that H is a subgroup in a σ -complete group G , while $\sigma(G) = \{\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_k\}$, and $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ is a complete Hall set of type σ in G . We say that a pair (G, H) is a *counterexample to Problem 2* if for every $g \in G$ the complete Hall set Σ^g is reduced to H but the subgroup H is not σ -subnormal in G . If, moreover, the pair (G, H) is such that the sum $|G| + |H|$ is minimal; then we refer to the counterexample (G, H) as a *minimal counterexample to Problem 2*.

Lemma 2.4. *Let $\sigma = \{\sigma_i \mid i \in I\}$ be a partition of the set \mathbb{P} of all primes. If (G, H) is a minimal counterexample to Problem 2 then G and H are simple nonabelian groups.*

PROOF. Let N be a minimal normal subgroup in G and let $\Sigma = \{S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k\}$ be a complete Hall set of type σ in G . By Lemma 2.3, $k = |\sigma(G)| \geq 2$. By hypothesis, $H \cap S_i^g$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in H for all $g \in G$ and $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$. Since $N \trianglelefteq G$, we infer that $N \cap S_i^g \trianglelefteq S_i^g$ and $N \cap S_i^g$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in N . It is easy to conclude from this that $S_i^g \cap HN$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in HN . Now, since $S_i^g N/N \cap HN/N = (S_i^g \cap HN)N/N$; therefore, $S_i^g N/N \cap HN/N$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in HN/N . Thus, the complete Hall set $\Sigma^g N/N$ of type σ in G/N is reduced to HN/N for every $g \in G$. Hence, by the minimality of the counterexample, HN/N is σ -subnormal in G/N . But then HN is a σ -subnormal subgroup in G by Lemma 2.1. Therefore, N is not in H ; in particular, $\text{Core}_G(H) = 1$. Clearly, $H \cap S_i^x$ is a Hall σ_i -subgroup in H for all $x \in HN$, and $\{HN \cap S_1^x, HN \cap S_2^x, \dots, HN \cap S_k^x\}$ is a complete Hall set of type σ in HN which is reduced to H . If $|HN| < |G|$; then the subgroup H is σ -subnormal in HN by the minimality of the counterexample. Then H is a σ -subnormal subgroup in G by Lemma 2.2, which contradicts the assumption.

Thus, we assume in what follows that $G = HN$.

Suppose first that N is an elementary abelian p -subgroup for some $p \in \pi(G)$. Then the index $|G : H|$ is a power of p . This and $k \geq 2$ imply that there exists $\sigma_i \in \sigma$ for which $\sigma_i \cap \pi(G) \in \sigma(G)$ and $p \notin \sigma_i$. Then H includes each Hall σ_i -subgroup S_i^g for every $g \in G$ and also $S_i^g \neq 1$. Hence, $\langle S_i^g \mid g \in G \rangle \subseteq H$. Since $1 \neq \langle S_i^g \mid g \in G \rangle \trianglelefteq G$; therefore, $\text{Core}_G(H) \neq 1$. This is impossible.

Consequently, N is a direct product of isomorphic simple nonabelian groups. Put $K = H \cap N$. Obviously, $K \trianglelefteq H$. Therefore, the complete Hall set Σ^g of type σ in G is reduced to K for every $g \in G$. Thus, (G, K) satisfies the hypothesis of the lemma. If $K = H$ then $G = N$ is a simple nonabelian group. Hence, $K \neq H$. By the minimality of the counterexample, K is σ -subnormal in G . But then, by Lemma 2.2, K is σ -subnormal in N . Hence, there exists a chain of subgroups

$$K = K_0 \subseteq K_1 \subseteq \dots \subseteq K_{n-1} \subseteq K_n = N$$

such that, for each $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$, either K_{i-1} is normal in K_i or $K_i / \text{Core}_{K_i}(K_{i-1})$ is σ -primary.

Suppose that $K \neq 1$ and consider the three possible cases:

CASE 1. Let N be a simple nonabelian group. Then K_{n-1} is not normal in N . Thus, $N / \text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) = N/1 = N$ is a σ_i -group for some $i \in \{1, \dots, k\}$. Since $G = HN$ and $k \geq 2$; it follows that H contains all Hall σ_j -subgroups S_j^g ($j \neq i$) for all $g \in G$. Consequently $\text{Core}_G(H) \neq 1$, which is impossible.

CASE 2. Let $N = N_1 \times N_2$, where N_1 and N_2 are isomorphic simple groups. If K_{n-1} is not normal in N then $N / \text{Core}_N(K_{n-1})$ is a σ_i -group for some $i = 1, 2, \dots, k$. Clearly, either $\text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) = 1$ or $\text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) \in \{N_1, N_2\}$. If $\text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) = 1$ then $N / \text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) = N$ is a σ_i -group. If $\text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) \in \{N_1, N_2\}$; then, due to the isomorphism $N / \text{Core}_N(K_{n-1}) \simeq N_1$, the subgroup N_1 is a σ_i -group, which implies that N is a σ_i -group too. Next, as in the case when N is a simple nonabelian group, we get a contradiction to $\text{Core}_G(H) \neq 1$.

If K_{n-1} is normal in N then $K_{n-1} \in \{N_1, N_2\}$, i.e., K_{n-1} is a simple nonabelian group. If $K \subset K_{n-1}$; then, as in Case 1, we get a contradiction. Consequently, $K_{n-1} = K$. Then $K = H \cap N \trianglelefteq N$ and $K = H \cap N \trianglelefteq H$. Therefore, $K \trianglelefteq \langle N, H \rangle = HN = G$. Since $K \subseteq H$, this yields $\text{Core}_G(H) \neq 1$. We get a contradiction once again.

CASE 3. Suppose that $N = N_1 \times N_2 \times \dots \times N_t$, where $t \geq 3$ and N_1, N_2, \dots, N_t are isomorphic simple groups. Inducting on t , as in Cases 1 and 2, we conclude that either N is a σ -primary group or $\text{Core}_G(H) \neq 1$. This contradicts the above.

Thus, $K = H \cap N = 1$, and so $G = N \rtimes H$ is the semidirect product of N and H . If $S_i \in \Sigma$ then $S_i = \tilde{N} \rtimes \tilde{H}$, where $\tilde{N} \in \text{Hall}_{\sigma_i}(N)$ and $\tilde{H} \in \text{Hall}_{\sigma_i}(H)$. Consider the group $N \rtimes \tilde{H}$ which includes S_i . By hypothesis, $H \cap S_i^x$ are Hall σ_i -subgroups in H for all $x \in N\tilde{H}$. Hence, $S_i^x \cap H \subseteq N\tilde{H} \cap H = (N \cap H)\tilde{H} = \tilde{H}$. Consequently, $S_i^x \cap H = \tilde{H}$, whence we infer that $\tilde{H} \subseteq S_i^x$ for all $x \in N\tilde{H}$. Hence, $\tilde{H} \subseteq O_{\sigma_i}(N\tilde{H})$. If $O_{\sigma_i}(N) \neq 1$ then N is a σ_i -group. As shown above, this is impossible. Thus, $O_{\sigma_i}(N) = 1$, and the Hall σ_i -subgroup \tilde{H} in H centralizes N . Since this holds for each $i \in \{1, \dots, k\}$; therefore, $G = N \times H$ and $H \trianglelefteq G$, which is impossible. Thus, G is a simple nonabelian group.

Show that H is simple. Suppose that H contains a proper normal subgroup $L \neq 1$. Obviously, (G, L) satisfies the hypothesis of the lemma. Since $|G| + |L| < |G| + |H|$, the subgroup L is σ -subnormal in G . This means that there exists some chain of subgroups

$$L = L_0 \subseteq L_1 \subseteq \dots \subseteq L_{n-1} \subseteq L_n = G$$

such that, for each $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$, either L_{i-1} is normal in L_i or $L_i / \text{Core}_{L_i}(L_{i-1})$ is σ -primary. This and the simplicity of G imply that G is a σ_i -group for some $i \in \{1, \dots, k\}$. Since $k \geq 2$, this is impossible. Consequently, H is a simple nonabelian group. The lemma is proved.

REMARK. As follows from [3], the structure of a minimal counterexample to the Kegel–Wielandt conjecture is the same as in Lemma 2.4, i.e., G and H are simple nonabelian groups.

The simplicity of G of the minimal counterexample to Problem 2 implies

Lemma 2.5. *Let (G, H) be a minimal counterexample to Problem 2 and let $\sigma(G) = \{\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_k\}$. Then $\pi(H) \not\subseteq \sigma_i$ for each $i \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$.*

Additional information about the structure of a minimal counterexample to Problem 2 is given by the following proposition, which is of interest in its own right. Note only that if H is a subgroup of G and p is a prime; then, by [12], the notation $H \leq_p G$ means that H is p -subnormal in G , i.e., for every Sylow p -subgroup P in G , the intersection $P \cap H$ is a Sylow p -subgroup in H .

Proposition 2.6. *For every partition σ , any group G in a minimal counterexample (G, H) to Problem 2 cannot be an alternating group.*

PROOF. Suppose that $G \simeq A_n$, $n \geq 5$. Since H is a simple nonabelian group, $n \geq 6$. By [11], G is σ -complete for a nonminimal partition σ if and only if either $n = p$ is a prime or $n = 8$.

Let $n = 8$. Then G has a Hall $\{2, 3\}$ -subgroup and is σ -complete only for those nonminimal partitions σ for which $\sigma(G) = \{\{2, 3\}, \{5\}, \{7\}\}$. Since H is a simple nonabelian group, $\pi(H)$ contains at least one of the numbers 5 or 7. Let $5 \in \pi(H)$. Then $H \leq_5 G$ and, by [12, Theorem 1.4], $n = s \cdot 5^a > 5$, where $1 \leq s < 5$. Since $n = 8$, this is impossible. It is demonstrated similarly that the case of $7 \in \pi(H)$ is impossible either.

Let $n = 7$. Then G is σ -complete only for those nonminimal partitions σ for which $\sigma(G) = \{\{2, 3\}, \{5\}, \{7\}\}$ or $\sigma(G) = \{\{2, 3, 5\}, \{7\}\}$. The first case is excluded like for $n = 8$. In the second case, in view of Lemma 2.5, we have $7 \in \pi(H)$ and $H \leq_7 G$. Then, by Theorem 1.4 from [12], $7 = s \cdot 5^a > 7$, where $1 \leq s < 7$, which is impossible.

If $n = p \geq 11$ then G is σ -complete only for those nonminimal partitions σ for which $\sigma(G) = \{\pi((p-1)!), \{p\}\}$. Obviously, $p \in \pi(H)$ and $H \leq_p G$. By [12, Theorem 1.4], $p = s \cdot p^a > p$, where $1 \leq s < p$, which is impossible. The proposition is proved.

We will also need the following number-theoretic result from [13] establishing that if a and b are naturals such that $a \geq 2$, $b \geq 3$, and $(a, b) \neq (2, 6)$ then there is a prime r that divides $a^b - 1$ but does not divide $a^l - 1$ for all $l = 1, 2, \dots, b-1$. Such r is called *primitive* with respect to the pair (a, b) .

3. Proof of Theorem 1.1

Let (G, H) be a minimal counterexample. Then, by Lemma 2.4, G and H are simple nonabelian groups. Since G is σ -complete, G has a Hall p' -subgroup M . By [9, Theorem 7], one of the following cases is possible:

- (a) $G = A_p$ and $M \simeq A_{p-1}$;
- (b) $G = PSL_n(q)$, where $q = r^m$, $m \geq 1$, r is a prime, and M is a parabolic subgroup in G ; moreover, $|G : M| = (q^n - 1)/(q - 1) = p^k$ and n is a prime;
- (c) $G = PSL_2(11)$, $p = 11$, and $M \simeq A_5$;
- (d) $G = M_{11}$, $p = 11$, and $M \simeq M_{10}$;
- (e) $G = M_{23}$, $p = 23$, and $M \simeq M_{22}$.

By Proposition 2.6, the alternating group A_p cannot be a counterexample to Problem 2.

Consider case (b). Suppose first that $n \geq 3$. If $(q, n) \neq (2, 6)$ then there is a prime t primitive with respect to (q, n) . By Fermat's Theorem, $t \geq n + 1$, and so $t \geq 5$. Since M is a parabolic subgroup, $(|M|, t) = 1$. Lemma 2.5 implies that $H \leq_t G$. This case is excluded by [12, Theorem 1.4]. Thus, $(q, n) = (2, 6)$ and $G = SL_6(2)$. Since 6 is not a prime, the group $G = SL_6(2)$ does not satisfy condition (b).

Thus, $G = PSL_2(q)$, where $q + 1 = p^k$. By [13, Lemma 1.2], only the following cases are possible.

Suppose first that $r = 2$. Then $2^m + 1 = p^k$. The two cases are possible:

(1) $k = 1$ and p is a Fermat prime, where m is a power of 2. Then $G = PSL_2(2^2) \simeq A_5$ for $m = 2$. This case was considered above. For $m = 2^2 = 4$, we obtain $p = 17$. By Lemma 2.5, $H \leq_t G$ where $t \geq 17$. This case is impossible since it is excluded by [12, Theorem 1.4].

(2) $m = 3$, $p = 3$, $k = 2$, and $G = PSL_2(9)$. Since $9 + 1 = 10$ is not a prime power, this case is impossible too.

Thus, r is an odd prime and $r^m + 1 = 2^k$. In this case $m = 1$ and $r = 2^k - 1$ is a Mersenne prime. Since $G = PSL_2(r)$, we have $H \simeq A_5$ (if such a subgroup exists). Since $\sigma = \{\sigma_1, \sigma_2\}$, where $\sigma_2 = \{2\}$, the group A_5 contains a subgroup of order 15, which is impossible.

The analysis of cases (c), (d), and (e) shows that they are impossible in view of Lemma 2.5 and [12, Theorem 1.4]. The theorem is proved.

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