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# REDUCTION THEOREMS FOR CHARACTERISTIC FUNCTORS ON FINITE $p$ -GROUPS AND APPLICATIONS TO $p$ -NILPOTENCE CRITERIA

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## Abstract

We formalize various properties of characteristic functors on  $p$ -groups, and discuss relationships between them. Applications to the Thompson subgroup and certain of its analogues are then given.

## 1. Introduction

In a now classical paper ([8]), John Thompson introduced, for  $p$  a prime number and  $S$  a  $p$ -group, the subgroup  $J_R(S)$  (there denoted by  $J(S)$ ) generated by the abelian subgroups of  $S$  of maximal rank:

$$(1.1) \quad J_R(S) \equiv_{\text{def.}} \left\langle A \in ab(S) \mid m(A) = \max_{B \in ab(S)} m(B) \right\rangle,$$

where  $ab(S)$  denotes the set of all abelian subgroups of  $S$ , and, for  $C$  an abelian group,  $m(C)$  denotes the minimal cardinality of a generating system of  $C$ .

Later on, in [2], Glauberman modified that definition to:

$$(1.2) \quad J(S) \equiv_{\text{def.}} \left\langle A \in ab(S) \mid |A| = \max_{B \in ab(S)} |B| \right\rangle.$$

Thompson had formulated a  $p$ -nilpotence criterion using  $J_R$ ; this work was later built upon by Glauberman ([2]) with his  $ZJ$ -theorem, and by Thompson himself ([9]). For the prime  $p = 2$ , it is often more convenient to work with the subgroup  $J_e(S)$ , defined using *elementary* abelian subgroups instead of abelian ones:

$$(1.3) \quad J_e(S) \equiv_{\text{def.}} \left\langle A \in ab_e(S) \mid |A| = \max_{B \in ab_e(S)} |B| \right\rangle$$

where  $ab_e(S)$  denotes the set of *elementary* abelian subgroups of  $S$ .

The functors  $J_e$ ,  $J_R$  and  $J$  are *excellently abelian generated characteristic  $p$ -functors* in the sense of §3 below. In §4, we shall establish various reduction results concerning such objects; most notably, in certain cases, the normality of  $W(S)$  in  $G$  (for  $S \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$  and  $W$  a characteristic  $p$ -functor) can be inferred from the (apparently much weaker) property of *control of  $p$ -nilpotence* by  $W$  (see Theorem 4.1 (2)). In the fifth paragraph, we shall specialize our results to the prime  $p = 2$  and the functors  $J_e$  and  $\hat{J}$  (for the definition of the last one of which see [3]), and shall henceforth refine, in a very particular case, Thompson's factorization theorem ([9], Theorem 1 (c)), thus recovering the results of [6].

In the course of the proof some reduction lemmas of independent interest, concerning normality of  $p$ -subgroups and control of  $p$ -nilpotence, will be established.

Our notations are standard: for  $G$  a (finite) group and  $p$  a prime number,  $O_p(G)$  will denote the largest normal  $p$ -subgroup of  $G$ ,  $O_{p'}(G)$  the largest normal subgroup of  $G$  with order prime to  $p$ , and  $Z(G)$  the center of  $G$ . We set  $o(G) = |G|$ ,  $r_e(G) = m(G)$  if  $G$  is an elementary abelian  $p$ -group for some prime  $p$ , and  $r_e(G) = 0$  else; for  $(x, y) \in G^2$ :

$$y^x := x^{-1}yx,$$

and, for  $A \subseteq G$  and  $x \in G$ :

$$A^x := \{y^x \mid y \in A\}.$$

As usual, by a slight abuse of language,  $G$  will be said to have  $p$ -length one if  $G = O_{p', p, p'}(G)$ . By a *class* of groups, we shall mean a family of groups containing every subgroup and every homomorphic image of each of its elements.  $\mathcal{A}b$  will denote the class of finite abelian groups,  $\text{Solv}$  the class of finite solvable groups, and, for  $p$  a prime,  $\mathcal{A}b_p$  the class of finite abelian  $p$ -groups. For  $H$  a finite group,  $\mathcal{C}'(H)$  will denote the class of finite groups, no section of which is isomorphic to  $H$ . For  $p$  a prime and  $n \in \mathbf{N}$ ,  $\mathcal{C}_p^n$  will denote the class of finite groups, one (i.e. all) of whose Sylow  $p$ -subgroups has (resp. have) nilpotency class at most  $n$ . As usual,  $p$  still denoting a prime number, a finite group  $G$  will be termed  *$p$ -closed* if it has a normal Sylow  $p$ -subgroup (equivalently, a unique Sylow  $p$ -subgroup), i.e. if  $G/O_p(G)$  is a  $p'$ -group, and  $G$  will be termed  *$p$ -constrained* if, setting  $\bar{G} = G/O_{p'}(G)$ , one has  $C_{\bar{G}}(O_p(\bar{G})) \subseteq O_p(\bar{G})$ . A solvable group  $G$  is  $p$ -constrained for all primes  $p$ .

By  $ab(G)$  we shall denote the set of abelian subgroups of a group  $G$ . Finally,  $\Sigma_n$  will denote the symmetric group of degree  $n$ .

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**2. A preliminary lemma**

The following result was first stated by Hayashi ([5], Lemma 3.9, p.101), though with an incomplete proof; our own attempt at a proof ([6], Lemme) was not conclusive either (the sentence “ $Q$ , agissant sans point fixe sur le 2-groupe abélien élémentaire  $X$ , est donc cyclique” is ambiguous, as in order to thus establish the cyclicity of  $Q$ , we need to know that *each nonidentity element of  $Q$*  acts on  $X$  without fixed point, which is not obvious). Here, we shall take the opportunity to clarify the matter once and for all; during the course of the proof, we shall feel free to use some ideas from [5] and [6].

**Lemma 2.1.** *Let  $G$  be a (solvable)  $\{2, 3\}$ -group; then the following statements are equivalent:*

- (1)  $G$  is  $\Sigma_4$ -free, and:
- (2)  $G = O_{3,2,3}(G)$ .

REMARK 2.2. According to Burnside’s  $p^a q^b$ -theorem, the solvability hypothesis is redundant.

Proof. The implication (2)  $\Rightarrow$  (1) is obvious, as the condition  $G = O_{3,2,3}(G)$  is inherited by all sections of  $G$ , and  $\Sigma_4 \neq O_{3,2,3}(\Sigma_4)$ .

Let  $G$  denote a minimal counterexample to the statement that (1)  $\Rightarrow$  (2); it is clear that  $O_3(G) = 1$ , that  $G$  possesses a unique minimal non-trivial normal subgroup  $X$ , that  $X$  is a 2-group, and that  $N_0 = O_{2,3}(G) \subset G$  is the unique maximal normal subgroup of  $G$ . It follows (as  $O_3(G/N_0) = 1$ ) that  $G/N_0$  has order 2; therefore one has  $O^3(G) \not\subseteq N_0$ , whence  $G = O^3(G)$ , thus

$$O^3\left(\frac{G}{X}\right) = \frac{O^3(G)X}{X} = \frac{G}{X}.$$

But, by the minimality of  $G$ , one may write

$$O_{3,2,3}\left(\frac{G}{X}\right) = \frac{G}{X},$$

whence

$$\frac{G}{X} = O_{3,2}\left(\frac{G}{X}\right).$$

Take now  $Q \in Syl_3(G)$ ; we have just established that  $QX \triangleleft G$ , and the Frattini argument yields:

$$G = XN_G(Q).$$

Let  $L =_{\text{def.}} N_G(Q)$ ; then  $L \neq G$  and  $G = LX$ . Let us assume  $L \subseteq H \subset G$ ; then

$$\begin{aligned} H &= H \cap G \\ &= H \cap LX \\ &= L(H \cap X); \end{aligned}$$

but  $H \cap X \triangleleft \langle H, X \rangle = G$ , whence  $H \cap X = 1$  or  $H \cap X = X$ . In the second case,  $H = LX = G$ , a contradiction; therefore  $H \cap X = 1$ , and  $H = L(H \cap X) = L$ :  $L$  is a maximal subgroup of  $G$ . Taking now  $H = L$  in the above argument yields:

$$L \cap X = 1.$$

Let  $C = C_L(X)$ ; then  $C \triangleleft LX = G$ , and  $X \not\subseteq C$  (else one would have  $G = LX = L$ , a contradiction), therefore  $C = 1$ . As  $X \triangleleft G$ ,  $X \subseteq O_2(G)$ , whence  $X \triangleleft O_2(G)$  and  $Y = X \cap Z(O_2(G)) \neq 1$ ; but  $Y \triangleleft G$ , therefore  $Y = X$ , i.e.  $X \subseteq Z(O_2(G))$ . It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} O_2(G) &\subseteq C_G(X) \\ &= C_G(X) \cap XL \\ &= XC_L(X) \\ &= X. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $X = O_2(G)$ . Let us set  $\bar{G} = G/X$ ; then  $O_2(\bar{G}) = O_2(G)/X = 1$ , and (as  $\bar{G}$  is solvable)

$$(*) \quad C_{\bar{G}}(O_3(\bar{G})) \subseteq O_3(\bar{G}).$$

Let now  $\bar{t} = tX$  denote an element of order 2 in  $\bar{G} = G/X$ ; according to (\*),  $\bar{t}$  does not centralize  $O_3(\bar{G})$ , therefore some  $\bar{y} \in O_3(\bar{G})$  is not centralized by  $\bar{t}$ , thus  $\bar{z} =_{\text{def.}} [\bar{t}, \bar{y}] \neq 1$ ,  $\bar{z} \in O_3(\bar{G})$ , and

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{z}^{\bar{t}} &= \bar{t}^{-1} \bar{z} \bar{t} \\ &= \bar{t}^{-1} \bar{t}^{-1} \bar{y}^{-1} \bar{t} \bar{y} \bar{t} \\ &= \bar{y}^{-1} \bar{t} \bar{y} \bar{t} \\ &= (\bar{t}^{-1} \bar{y}^{-1} \bar{t} \bar{y})^{-1} \\ &= \bar{z}^{-1}. \end{aligned}$$

Let  $\omega(\bar{z}) = 3^m$  ( $m \geq 1$ ), and  $\bar{v} =_{\text{def.}} \bar{z}^{3^{m-1}}$ ; then  $\omega(\bar{v}) = 3$  and  $\bar{v}^{\bar{t}} = \bar{v}^{-1}$ , whence  $\langle \bar{t}, \bar{v} \rangle \simeq \Sigma_3$ . Set now  $V = X \langle t, t^v \rangle$ ; then  $V/X = \langle \bar{t}, \bar{v} \rangle \simeq \Sigma_3$ , and  $O_3(V) \subseteq C_G(O_2(V)) \subseteq C_G(X) \subseteq X$ , whence  $O_3(V) = 1$ . If  $V \neq G$ , then (by induction)  $V = O_{3,2,3}(V)$ , whence  $V = O_{2,3}(V)$ ,  $t \in O_2(V)$ ,  $\langle t, t^v \rangle \subseteq O_2(V)$ ,  $V$  is a 2-group, and hence

also is  $\bar{V}$ , a contradiction. Therefore  $V = G$  and  $L \simeq G/X = \bar{V} \simeq \Sigma_3$ . It follows that  $G = LX = L \times X$ ,  $X$  (as a minimal normal subgroup of  $G$ ) being a nontrivial irreducible  $\mathbf{F}_2 L \simeq \mathbf{F}_2 \Sigma_3$ -module. But then  $X$  has to be isomorphic to the canonical module  $\mathbf{F}_2^2$  for  $\Sigma_3 \simeq SL_2(\mathbf{F}_2)$ , and one obtains  $G \simeq \Sigma_3 \times \mathbf{F}_2^2 \simeq \Sigma_4$ , a contradiction.  $\square$

**3. Characteristic  $p$ -functors: generalities**

For  $p$  a prime number,  $\mathcal{G}_p$  will denote the category of finite  $p$ -groups (morphisms in  $\mathcal{G}_p$  being the group isomorphisms in the usual sense).

DEFINITION 3.1 ([2], p.1116). By a characteristic  $p$ -functor we shall mean a functor  $K: \mathcal{G}_p \rightarrow \mathcal{G}_p$  such that, for each  $P \in \mathcal{G}_p$ ,  $K(P) \subseteq P$  and  $K(P) \neq 1$  if  $P \neq 1$ .

Clearly, whenever  $K_1$  and  $K_2$  are characteristic  $p$ -functors,  $K_1 \circ K_2$  (simply denoted by  $K_1 K_2$ ), defined by:

$$(K_1 \circ K_2)(P) \equiv_{\text{def.}} K_1(K_2(P))$$

is one. Examples of characteristic  $p$ -functors include  $J_R, J, \hat{J}, J_e, Z$ , and  $\Omega_n$  ( $n \in \mathbf{N}$ ), the last one defined by:

$$\Omega_n(P) \equiv_{\text{def.}} \langle x \in P \mid x^{p^n} = 1 \rangle.$$

A general class of characteristic  $p$ -functors is obtained via:

DEFINITION 3.2. Let  $\varphi$  denote a mapping from  $\mathcal{A}b_p$  to  $\mathbf{N} = \{0, 1, \dots\}$ , invariant under isomorphisms, and such that

$$A \neq 1 \implies \varphi(A) \geq 1;$$

then, for  $P$  a  $p$ -group, let

$$K_\varphi(P) \equiv_{\text{def.}} \left\langle A \text{ abelian subgroup of } P \mid \varphi(A) = \max_{B \subseteq A; B \text{ abelian}} \varphi(B) \right\rangle.$$

It is easily seen that  $K_\varphi$  is a characteristic  $p$ -functor; such characteristic  $p$ -functors will be termed *excellently abelian generated*. Clearly,  $J, J_R$  and  $J_e$  are such; in fact,  $J = K_o, J_R = K_m$  and  $J_e = K_{r_e}$ .

DEFINITION 3.3. The characteristic  $p$ -functor  $W$  is termed excellent if, whenever  $G$  is a finite group,  $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ ,  $x \in G$ , and  $W(P) \subseteq Q \subseteq P^x$ , then  $W(P) = W(Q) = W(P^x) (= W(P)^x)$ . In particular,  $W(P)$  is weakly closed in  $P$ , and characteristic in any  $p$ -subgroup of  $G$  that contains it.

**Lemma 3.4.** *Any excellently abelian generated characteristic  $p$ -functor is excellent.*

Proof. For  $S$  a  $p$ -group, let

$$r_\varphi(S) =_{\text{def.}} \max_{A \in ab(S)} \varphi(A).$$

Let us assume that  $K_\varphi(P) \subseteq Q \subseteq P^x$ , and let  $A_0 \in ab(P)$  such that

$$\varphi(A_0) = \max_{A \in ab(P)} \varphi(A) = r_\varphi(P).$$

Obviously,

$$\begin{aligned} r_\varphi(Q) &\leq r_\varphi(P^x) \\ &= \max_{A \in ab(P^x)} \varphi(A) \\ &= \max_{C \in ab(P)} \varphi(C^x) \\ &= \max_{C \in ab(P)} \varphi(C) \quad (\text{as } \varphi \text{ is invariant under isomorphisms}) \\ &= r_\varphi(P) \\ &= \varphi(A_0) \\ &\leq r_\varphi(Q) \quad (\text{as } A_0 \subseteq K_\varphi(P) \subseteq Q). \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $r_\varphi(P) = r_\varphi(Q)$ , whence

$$\begin{aligned} K_\varphi(Q) &= \langle A \in ab(Q) \mid \varphi(A) = r_\varphi(Q) \rangle \\ &= \langle A \in ab(Q) \mid \varphi(A) = r_\varphi(P) \rangle \\ &= \langle A \in ab(P) \mid \varphi(A) = r_\varphi(P) \rangle \\ &= K_\varphi(P) \end{aligned}$$

(because  $A \in ab(P)$  and  $\varphi(A) = r_\varphi(P)$  yield  $A \subseteq K_\varphi(P) \subseteq Q$ ).

Incidentally we have shown that  $r_\varphi(Q) = r_\varphi(P^x)$ , whence  $K_\varphi(Q) \subseteq K_\varphi(P^x)$  and  $K_\varphi(P) = K_\varphi(Q) \subseteq K_\varphi(P^x) = (K_\varphi(P))^x$ , and equality all along follows.  $\square$

#### 4. A reduction theorem

Let  $p$ ,  $W$  and  $\mathcal{C}$  denote respectively a prime number, a characteristic  $p$ -functor, and a class of groups; the following properties of the triple  $(W, \mathcal{C}, p)$  will be considered ( $S$  denoting a Sylow  $p$ -subgroup of the group  $G$ ):

(P1) For each  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , one has

$$G = N_G(W(S))O_{p'}(G).$$

(P2) For each  $p$ -solvable  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , one has

$$G = N_G(W(S))O_{p'}(G).$$

(P3) For each solvable  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , one has

$$G = N_G(W(S))O_{p'}(G).$$

(P4) For each solvable  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , all of whose Sylow  $q$ -subgroups for all primes  $q \neq p$  are abelian, one has

$$G = N_G(W(S))O_{p'}(G).$$

(P5)  $W$  controls  $p$ -length 1 in  $\mathcal{C}$ , i.e. for each  $p$ -solvable  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , if  $N_G(W(S))$  has  $p$ -length one then  $G$  has  $p$ -length one.

(P6)  $W$  controls  $p$ -nilpotence in  $\mathcal{C}$ , i.e. for each  $G \in \mathcal{C}$ , if  $N_G(W(S))$  is  $p$ -nilpotent then  $G$  is  $p$ -nilpotent.

Stellmacher's result ([7]) asserts the existence of a (non-explicit) characteristic 2-functor  $W$  such that (P1) (and hence (P2)–(P6)) hold for  $(W, \mathcal{C}'(\Sigma_4), 2)$ , where, according to the notations described above,  $\mathcal{C}'(\Sigma_4)$  denotes the class of  $\Sigma_4$ -free groups. In fact, Stellmacher establishes (P1) for  $(W, \mathcal{D}, 2)$ , where  $\mathcal{D}$  denotes the class of  $\Sigma_4$ -free groups all of whose non-abelian simple sections are isomorphic either to a Suzuki group or to  $PSL_2(3^m)$  for some odd integer  $m$ ; but a theorem of Glauberman ([3]), the proof of which can be much simplified using Stellmacher's result, yields that in fact  $\mathcal{D} = \mathcal{C}'(\Sigma_4)$ .

**Theorem 4.1.** (1) *One has (P1)  $\Rightarrow$  (P2)  $\Rightarrow$  (P3)  $\Rightarrow$  (P4)  $\Rightarrow$  (P6), and (P3)  $\Rightarrow$  (P5)  $\Rightarrow$  (P6).*

(2) *If  $p = 2$ ,  $W(S) \subseteq \Omega_1(S)$  for all  $S$ , and either*

(i)  *$\mathcal{C} \subseteq \mathcal{C}_{2,2}$  (the class of 2-groups with nilpotency class at most 2) and  $W$  is excellent,*

*or*

(ii)  *$W$  is excellently abelian generated,*

*then (P6)  $\Rightarrow$  (P2), and hence properties (P2)–(P6) are equivalent.*

**Proof.** (1) The implications (P1)  $\Rightarrow$  (P2)  $\Rightarrow$  (P3)  $\Rightarrow$  (P4) are trivial.

In order to establish that (P3)  $\Rightarrow$  (P5), let us assume (P3), let  $G$  denote a counter-example to (P5) with minimal order. We shall use arguments similar to Bauman's in

[1], pp.388–389. If  $O_{p'}(G) \neq 1$ , let  $\bar{G} =_{\text{def.}} G/O_{p'}(G)$ ; then one has:

$$\begin{aligned} N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S})) &= N_{\bar{G}}\left(\frac{W(S)O_{p'}(G)}{O_{p'}(G)}\right) \\ &= \frac{N_G(W(S))O_{p'}(G)}{O_{p'}(G)} \quad (\text{by the Frattini argument}) \\ &\simeq \frac{N_G(W(S))}{N_G(W(S)) \cap O_{p'}(G)}. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S}))$  has  $p$ -length one, whence, by induction (as  $\bar{G} \in \mathcal{C}$  and  $\bar{G}$  is  $p$ -solvable),  $\bar{G}$  has  $p$ -length one, hence so has  $G$ , a contradiction. Thus  $O_{p'}(G) = 1$ , whence (as  $G$  is  $p$ -solvable)  $C_G(O_p(G)) \subseteq O_p(G)$ ; in particular,  $O_p(G) \neq \{1\}$ . Let now  $\bar{G} = G/O_p(G)$ , and let  $\bar{H} = N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S}))$ ; if  $H = G$ , then  $W(\bar{S}) \triangleleft \bar{G}$ , thus  $W(\bar{S}) \subseteq O_p(\bar{G}) = 1$ ,  $W(\bar{S}) = 1$ ,  $\bar{S} = 1$ ,  $S = O_p(G)$ ,  $W(S) = W(O_p(G)) \triangleleft G$ , and  $G = N_G(W(S))$  has  $p$ -length one, a contradiction. Therefore  $H \subset G$ ; as  $N_H(W(S)) \subseteq N_G(W(S))$  has  $p$ -length one, so has  $H$  by induction, hence so has  $\bar{H}$ , hence so has  $\bar{G}$ , again by induction ( $\bar{G}$  and  $H$  both belonging to  $\mathcal{C}$ ). Let  $\bar{K} = O_{p'}(\bar{G})$ ; it appears that  $\bar{S}\bar{K} \triangleleft \bar{G}$ , hence  $SK \triangleleft G$ ; if  $SK \neq G$ , one finds by induction that  $SK$  has  $p$ -length 1; but  $SK \triangleleft G$ , whence  $O_{p'}(SK) \triangleleft G$  and  $O_{p'}(SK) \subseteq O_{p'}(G) = 1$ . Therefore  $S \triangleleft SK$ , whence  $S = O_p(SK) \triangleleft G$ , and again  $W(S) \triangleleft G$  and  $G = N_G(W(S))$ , a contradiction. Therefore  $G = SK$ , and  $\bar{G} = \bar{S}\bar{K}$ .

For  $q \in \pi(\bar{K})$ , let  $\bar{Q}$  denote a Sylow  $q$ -subgroup of  $\bar{K}$ ; the total number of Sylow  $q$ -subgroups of  $\bar{K}$  is  $|\bar{K} : N_{\bar{K}}(\bar{Q})| \not\equiv 0[p]$ , therefore one of them,  $\bar{K}_q$ , is  $\bar{S}$ -invariant. If, for each  $q \in \pi(\bar{K})$ , one has  $SK_q \neq G$ , then, by induction,  $SK_q$  has  $p$ -length one; but  $O_{p'}(SK_q) \subseteq C_G(O_p(SK_q)) \subseteq C_G(O_p(G)) \subseteq O_p(G)$ , thus  $O_{p'}(SK_q) = 1$  and  $S \triangleleft SK_q$ , thus  $K_q \subseteq N_G(S)$ , hence

$$\bar{K} = \langle \bar{K}_q \mid q \in \pi(\bar{K}) \rangle \subseteq \overline{N_G(S)}$$

and  $S \triangleleft SK = G$ , a contradiction. Thus for some prime  $q$  one has  $G = SK_q$ , and it appears that  $G$  is solvable (in fact, a solvable  $\{p, q\}$ -group for some prime  $q$ ). But now (P3) yields that  $G = N_G(W(S))$ , whence  $G$  has  $p$ -length one, a contradiction (in this proof, due to the hypotheses on  $\mathcal{C}$ , all the groups that appear *belong to*  $\mathcal{C}$ ; such will be the case in all subsequent similar reasonings).

Assuming (P4), let  $G$  denote a counterexample to (P6), with minimal order; then Thompson's arguments ([8], pp.43–44) yield that  $O_{p'}(G) = 1$ ,  $O_p(G) \neq 1$  and  $G$  is a  $\{p, q\}$ -group with (elementary) abelian Sylow subgroups for some prime  $q \neq p$ . But then (P4) yields that  $G = N_G(W(S))$ , whence  $G$  is  $p$ -nilpotent, a contradiction. Therefore (P4)  $\Rightarrow$  (P6) is established.

In order to establish that (P5)  $\Rightarrow$  (P6), the same argument works; here, we only need Thompson's reduction up to an earlier point, *viz.*  $O_{p'}(G) = 1$  and  $G$   $p$ -solvable.

(2) Let us assume all the conditions in (2), and let  $G$  denote a minimum counterexample to (P6)  $\Rightarrow$  (P2); it is clear, as usual, that  $O_2(G) = 1$ , and then (by the same

reasoning as in (1)) that  $O_2(H) = 1$  for any subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  containing  $S$ , and therefore that  $M := N_G(W(S))$  is the unique maximal subgroup of  $G$  containing  $S$ . Let  $\bar{G} = G/O_2(G)$ ; then  $\bar{G}$  is 2-solvable, and  $\bar{M}$  is the unique maximal subgroup of  $\bar{G}$  containing  $\bar{S}$ . By induction, one has

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{G} &= N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S}))O_2(\bar{G}) \\ &= N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S}))(\bar{S}O_2(\bar{G})); \end{aligned}$$

the two factors on the right-hand side of this equality contain  $\bar{S}$ , whence at least one is not contained in  $\bar{M}$ , i.e. either  $N_{\bar{G}}(W(\bar{S})) = \bar{G}$  or  $\bar{G} = \bar{S}O_2(\bar{G})$ . The first possibility leads to a contradiction as in the proof that (P3)  $\Rightarrow$  (P5); therefore  $\bar{G} = \bar{S}O_2(\bar{G})$ , i.e.  $G$  has 2-length one.

As  $\bar{S}$  is contained into a unique maximal subgroup of  $\bar{G}$  ( $\bar{M}$ ),  $O_2(\bar{G})$  possesses a unique maximal  $\bar{S}$ -invariant proper subgroup:  $O_2(\bar{G}) \cap \bar{M}$ . It follows, firstly, that  $O_2(\bar{G})$  is a  $q$ -group for some prime  $q \neq 2$ :  $O_2(\bar{G}) = \bar{Q}$  ( $Q \in \text{Syl}_q(G)$ ), and therefore that  $G = SQ$  is a solvable  $\{2, q\}$ -group, and secondly that  $\bar{S}$  acts irreducibly on  $\bar{Q}/\Phi(\bar{Q})$ ; in particular,  $Z(\bar{S})$  is cyclic.

Let  $N \equiv_{\text{def.}} \langle W(S)^G \rangle \triangleleft G$ ; then  $O_2(N) = 1$ , and  $S \cap N \in \text{Syl}_2(N)$ . If  $N < G$ , the minimality of  $G$  yields:

$$\begin{aligned} N &= N_N(W(S \cap N))O_2(N) \\ &= N_N(W(S \cap N)). \end{aligned}$$

But  $W(S) \subseteq S \cap N \subseteq S$ , whence  $W(S) = W(S \cap N)$ , as  $W$  is excellent (in case (i) by assumption, and in case (ii) by Lemma 3.4). The Frattini argument now yields that:

$$\begin{aligned} G &= NN_G(S \cap N) \\ &\subseteq NN_G(W(S \cap N)) \\ &\subseteq N_G(W(S \cap N)) \\ &\subseteq G, \end{aligned}$$

whence  $G = N_G(W(S \cap N)) = N_G(W(S))$  is 2-nilpotent, a contradiction. Therefore  $N = G$ , i.e.  $G = \langle W(S)^G \rangle$ ; thence

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{G} &= \overline{\langle W(S)^G \rangle} \\ &= \overline{\langle W(S)^{\bar{S}\bar{Q}} \rangle} \\ &= \overline{\langle W(S)^{\bar{Q}} \rangle} \\ &\subseteq \overline{W(S)\bar{Q}} \quad (\text{as } \bar{Q} \triangleleft \bar{G}), \end{aligned}$$

and  $\bar{S} = \bar{S} \cap \overline{W(S)\bar{Q}} = \overline{W(S)(\bar{S} \cap \bar{Q})} = \overline{W(S)}$ , i.e.  $S = W(S)O_2(G)$ .

In case (ii), let  $W = K_\varphi$ ; then  $W(S) \not\subseteq O_2(G)$  (else one would have  $S = W(S)O_2(G) = O_2(G) \triangleleft G$ ), whence there is an abelian subgroup  $A$  of  $S$  with  $\varphi(A) = r_\varphi(P)$  and  $A \not\subseteq O_2(G)$ . Let  $N = \langle A^G \rangle \triangleleft G$ ; if  $N \neq G$ , then, by induction, it follows as above that  $W(S \cap N) \triangleleft N$  whence  $W(S \cap N) \subseteq O_2(N) \subseteq O_2(G)$ . But

$$\varphi(A) \leq r_\varphi(S \cap N) \leq r_\varphi(S) = \varphi(A)$$

whence  $\varphi(A) = r_\varphi(S \cap N)$  and  $A \subseteq K_\varphi(S \cap N) = W(S \cap N) \subseteq O_2(N) \subseteq O_2(G)$ , a contradiction. Therefore  $G = \langle A^G \rangle$ , whence

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{G} &= \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{G}} \rangle \\ &= \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{S}\bar{Q}} \rangle \\ &= \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{S}} \rangle \bar{Q} \quad (\text{as } \bar{Q} \triangleleft \bar{G}); \end{aligned}$$

therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{S} &= \bar{S} \cap \bar{G} \\ &= \bar{S} \cap \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{S}} \rangle \bar{Q} \\ &= \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{S}} \rangle (\bar{S} \cap \bar{Q}) \\ &= \langle \bar{A}^{\bar{S}} \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

By a well-known property of  $p$ -groups, it follows that  $\bar{S} = \bar{A}$ ; in particular,  $\bar{S}$  is abelian.

In case (i),  $\mathcal{C} \subseteq \mathcal{C}_{2,2}$ , i.e.  $cl(S) \leq 2$ , whence

$$\begin{aligned} [S, S] &\subseteq Z(S) \\ &\subseteq C_G(O_2(G)) \\ &\subseteq O_2(G) \end{aligned}$$

(by the solvability of  $G$  and the Hall-Higman lemma), whence, again,  $\bar{S}$  is abelian. Therefore,  $\bar{S}$  is abelian in both cases, (i) and (ii). Now, from the fact that  $Z(\bar{S})$  is cyclic, follows that  $\bar{S}$  itself is. But  $\bar{S} = \overline{W(S)} \subseteq \overline{\Omega_1(S)} \subseteq \Omega_1(\bar{S})$  (by the hypothesis); therefore  $\bar{S}$  has order 2.

Now, as  $\bar{S}$  acts irreducibly on the  $\mathbf{F}_q$ -module  $M = \bar{Q}/\Phi(\bar{Q})$ , the nontrivial element  $\bar{i}$  of  $\bar{S}$  either centralizes each element of  $M$ , or inverts each element of  $M$ ; now, irreducibility forces  $|M| = q$ , i.e.  $\bar{Q}/\Phi(\bar{Q}) = M$  is cyclic; but then so are  $\bar{Q}$ , and  $Q \simeq \bar{Q}$ .

Let now  $\bar{H} = \bar{S}\Phi(\bar{Q})$ ; then  $H < G$  (in fact,  $|G : H| = q$ ), and  $S \subseteq H$ . Therefore  $H$  is contained in  $M = N_G(W(S))$ , whence

$$\begin{aligned} [\bar{S}, \Phi(\bar{Q})] &= [\overline{W(S)}, \Phi(\bar{Q})] \\ &\subseteq [\overline{W(S)}, \bar{H}] \cap \Phi(\bar{Q}) \\ &\subseteq [\overline{W(S)}, \bar{M}] \cap \Phi(\bar{Q}) \\ &\subseteq \overline{W(S)} \cap \Phi(\bar{Q}) \\ &= 1, \end{aligned}$$

i.e.  $\bar{S}$  centralizes  $\Phi(\bar{Q})$ . If  $|\bar{Q}| \geq q^2$ , then  $\Omega_1(\bar{Q}) \subseteq \Phi(\bar{Q})$ , whence  $\bar{S}$  centralizes  $\Omega_1(\bar{Q})$ , and therefore  $\bar{S}$  centralizes  $\bar{Q}$ , a contradiction. Thus  $|\bar{Q}| = q$ , and  $\bar{G} = \bar{S}\bar{Q}$  is dihedral of order  $2q$ ; it follows that  $\bar{S}$  is a maximal subgroup of  $\bar{G}$ , i.e.  $S$  is a maximal subgroup of  $G$ . Therefore  $S = M = N_G(W(S))$ , and  $N_G(W(S))$  is 2-nilpotent; but now (P6) yields that  $G$  itself is 2-nilpotent, a contradiction.  $\square$

**5. Of  $J_e$  and  $\hat{J}$**

By a well-known variation ([4], Proposition 4.162, p.253) on Thompson’s factorization ([9], Theorem 1 (c)), any solvable  $\Sigma_3$ -free finite group  $G$  with Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$  satisfies:

$$(5.1) \quad G = N_G(J_e(S))C_G(Z(S))O_{2'}(G).$$

In [3] Glauberman introduced a new characteristic functor  $\hat{J}$  having the property that, for each 2-group  $S$ , one has:

$$(5.2) \quad J_e(S) \subseteq \hat{J}(S) \subseteq S.$$

For this functor he was able to prove ([3], Theorem 7.4, p.48) that, for each 2-constrained  $\Sigma_4$ -free finite group  $G$  and each  $S \in \text{Syl}_2(G)$ , one had:

$$(5.3) \quad G = N_G(\hat{J}(S))C_G(Z(S))O_{2'}(G).$$

By (5.2) one finds  $J_e(S) = J_e(\hat{J}(S)) \text{ char } \hat{J}(S)$  whence

$$N_G(\hat{J}(S)) \subseteq N_G(J_e(S));$$

(5.3) is therefore stronger than (5.1).

In the particular case that  $S$  has nilpotence class at most two, we can state

**Theorem 5.1.** *Let  $G$  be a 2-constrained,  $\Sigma_4$ -free finite group with Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$  of nilpotence class at most two; then one has:*

$$G = N_G(\hat{J}(S))O_{2'}(G).$$

By the above remark follows

**Corollary 5.2.** *In the situation of the theorem,*

$$G = N_G(J_e(S))O_{2'}(G).$$

Thus one can assert

**Corollary 5.3.** *Let  $G$  be a finite solvable  $\Sigma_4$ -free group with Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$  of class at most two; then:*

$$G = N_G(J_e(S))O_{2'}(G).$$

*In other words,  $(J_e, C'(\Sigma_4) \cap \text{Solv}, 2)$  satisfies (P1), and hence (P2)–(P6).*

This Corollary was first proved by the author in [6].

Proof of Theorem 5.1. Let  $G$  be a counterexample of minimal order.

(1)  $O_{2'}(G) = 1$ . If not,  $\bar{G} = G/O_{2'}(G)$  is of smaller order than  $G$  and satisfies the hypothesis, whence

$$\bar{G} = N_{\bar{G}}(\hat{J}(\bar{S}))O_{2'}(\bar{G}) = N_{\bar{G}}(\hat{J}(\bar{S})).$$

But the canonical map  $S \rightarrow SO_{2'}(G)/O_{2'}(G) = \bar{S}$  is an isomorphism, whence  $\hat{J}(\bar{S}) = \hat{J}(S)O_{2'}(G)/O_{2'}(G)$  and

$$N_{\bar{G}}(\hat{J}(\bar{S})) = \frac{N_G(\hat{J}(S)O_{2'}(G))}{O_{2'}(G)} = \frac{N_G(\hat{J}(S))O_{2'}(G)}{O_{2'}(G)},$$

by the Frattini argument. Thus we get  $G = N_G(\hat{J}(S))O_{2'}(G)$ , a contradiction.

(2)  $C_G(O_2(G)) \subseteq O_2(G)$ . Obvious, because  $G$  is 2-constrained and  $O_{2'}(G) = 1$ .

(3)  $M = N_G(\hat{J}(S))$  is the unique maximal subgroup of  $G$  that contains  $S$ . By hypothesis  $M \subset G$ . Let  $H$  be a proper subgroup of  $G$  containing  $S$ ; one has  $O_2(G) \subseteq S \subseteq H$ , whence (as in the proof of Theorem 4.1 (1))

$$O_2(G) \subseteq O_2(H)$$

and:

$$\begin{aligned} C_H(O_2(H)) &= H \cap C_G(O_2(H)) \\ &\subseteq H \cap C_G(O_2(G)) \\ &\subseteq H \cap O_2(G) \quad (\text{by (2)}) \\ &\subseteq O_2(H). \end{aligned}$$

Therefore  $O_{2'}(H) = 1$  and  $H$  is 2-constrained with Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$ ; the minimality of  $G$  now yields:

$$\begin{aligned} H &= N_H(\hat{J}(S))O_{2'}(H) = N_H(\hat{J}(S)) \\ &\subseteq N_G(\hat{J}(S)) = M. \end{aligned}$$

Thus  $M$  is a proper subgroup of  $G$  that contains any proper subgroup of  $G$  containing  $S$ ; the result follows.

(4)  $Z(S) \subseteq Z(G)$ . By (5.3) one has

$$G = N_G(\hat{J}(S))C_G(Z(S))O_{2'}(G) = MC_G(Z(S));$$

thus  $S \subseteq C_G(Z(S)) \not\subseteq M$ , whence  $C_G(Z(S)) = G$  by (3).

(5)  $G$  centralizes  $O_2(G)/Z(G)$ . Let  $C = C_G(O_2(G)/Z(G)) \triangleleft G$ ; then

$$[S, O_2(G)] \subseteq [S, S] \subseteq Z(S) \subseteq Z(G)$$

(by (4) and the hypothesis on  $S$ ). It follows that  $S \subseteq C$ , whence

$$G = CN_G(S),$$

again by the Frattini argument. If  $C$  were different from  $G$ , one would have  $C \subseteq M$  (because of (3)) and

$$G = CN_G(S) \subseteq MN_G(S) \subseteq M.M = M,$$

a contradiction. Thus  $C = G$ .

(6) **The End.** By (5) one has  $[G, O_2(G)] \subseteq Z(G)$ , i.e.

$$[G, O_2(G), G] = [O_2(G), G, G] = 1.$$

Philip Hall's three subgroups lemma now yields

$$[G, G, O_2(G)] = 1,$$

that is:

$$G' \subseteq C_G(O_2(G)),$$

whence  $G' \subseteq O_2(G)$  by (2). Therefore  $H = G/O_2(G)$  is an abelian group with  $O_2(H) = 1$ , i.e. an abelian  $2'$ -group; it appears that  $S = O_2(G) \triangleleft G$ , whence  $\hat{J}(S) \triangleleft G$ , thus  $G = M$  and again a contradiction ensues. This concludes the proof.  $\square$

REMARK 5.4. It seems difficult to generalize directly Corollary 5.2, and even Corollary 5.3, as the counter-examples to the  $ZJ$ -theorem for  $p = 2$  given by Glauberman in the last paragraph of [2] show. Such a counterexample  $G$  is solvable, with Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$  of nilpotence class 3 (this is not difficult to see), and  $S$  possesses a unique abelian subgroup of maximal order  $A$ , that is elementary abelian. Therefore  $J_e(S)$ ,  $J_R(S)$ ,  $J(S)$  and  $ZJ(S)$  all coincide with  $A$ , and neither is normal in  $G$ .

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