FINITE GROUPS WITH A SPECIAL 2-GENERATOR PROPERTY

TUVAL S. FOGUEL
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This paper deals with finite groups. J. L. Brenner and James Wiegold defined a finite group $G$ as lying in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ if $G$ is nonabelian and for every $1 \neq x \in G$, either $x$ is an involution and $G = \langle x, y \rangle$ for some $y \in G$ or $x$ is not an involution and there is an involution $z \in G$ with $G = \langle x, z \rangle$. In this paper we expand the work of J. L. Brenner and James Wiegold, and that of Martin J. Evans in the investigation of which finite groups lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$.

1. Introduction.

Definition 1.1. An element $x$ in a group is called a mate of an element $y \in G$ if $G = \langle x, y \rangle$.

Definition 1.2. We say that a finite group $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ if $G$ is nonabelian and for every $1 \neq x \in G$, either $x$ is an involution and $x$ has a mate $y \in G$ or $x$ is not an involution and $x$ has an involution $z \in G$ as a mate (see [3]).

Brenner and Wiegold [3] proved that $PSL(2, q)$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ except when $q = 9$, and that $PSL(n, q)$ does not lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ for $n \geq 3$ unless $n = 3$ and $q = 2$, or 4.

Evans [6] proved that if $G = Sz(2^{2n+1})$ is a Suzuki group, then $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$; moreover if $G$ is a simple Chevalley group over a finite field $K$ of odd characteristic and $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, then $G \cong PSL(2, K)$.

Using the fact that each of the groups $S_p(2n, K)$, $P\Omega^+_2n(K)$, and $P\Omega^-_2n(K)$ act irreducibly on $V = K^{2n}$, and $PSU_m(K)$ acts irreducibly on $V = K^m$, we find an element $x$ of order greater than 2 that acts trivially on a "large enough" subspace, so that two conjugates of $x$ can not act irreducibly on $V$, if dimension of $V$ is large. We get in [7] that over a field $K$ of characteristic 2, $P\Omega^-_2n(K)$, for $n \geq 4$ or $|K| > 2$, and $PSU_m(K)$ for $n > 3$, $S_p(2n, K)$ for $n \geq 3$, and $P\Omega^+_2n(K)$ for $n \geq 5$, or $|K| > 2$, do not lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$. Similarly we show in [7] that $\Sigma_n$ for $n \geq 5$ and $A_n$ for $n > 5$ do not lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$. 

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In this paper we classify all those solvable groups that lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, and we show that a finite non-simple non-solvable group lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ if it is isomorphic to the semi-direct product of $N$ and $\langle x \rangle$ where $x$ is an involution and $N$ is a simple nonabelian group. Many simple groups are excluded from being candidates for the $N$ above. We also continue in the investigation of which simple groups lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$.

2. A Preliminary look at $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$.

This section deals with general facts about groups which lie in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$. We state Lemmas 2.1-2.6 but since they are obvious we omit the proofs.

**Lemma 2.1.** If $G$ is a group and $G = \langle x, y \rangle$ where $y$ is an involution and $x \neq 1$, then $H = \langle x, x^y \rangle$ is a normal subgroup of $G$.

**Lemma 2.2.** If $G$ is a nonabelian simple group and $G < M < \text{Aut}(G)$, and $M = \langle x, y \rangle$ where $1 \neq x \in G$, $y \in M$ and is an involution, then $G = \langle x, x^y \rangle$.

**Corollary 2.3.** If $G$ is simple and $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, then every conjugacy class of $G$ other than the classes of elements of order 1 or 2 contains a pair of conjugate elements which generate $G$.

**Lemma 2.4.** If $x$ and $y$ are conjugate in $G$ and $y$ has a mate, then $x$ has a mate.

**Lemma 2.5.** If $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, then $Z(G) = 1$.

**Lemma 2.6.** If $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$ and $N$ is a nontrivial normal subgroup of $G$, then $G^* = G/N$ is cyclic.

**Definition 2.7.** A finite nonabelian group is called a $\Gamma$-group if $G = NP$, where $N$ is an elementary abelian normal 2-subgroup, and $P$ is a cyclic group of prime order acting irreducibly on $N$.

The last condition says that no proper subgroup of $N$ is $P$-invariant. Since $C_N(P)$ is $P$-invariant, $C_N(P) = 1$ or $C_N(P) = N$. Since $G$ is nonabelian $C_N(P) = 1$.

**Remark 2.8.** If $G$ is a $\Gamma$-group, then $p = |P|$ is an odd prime.

**Remark 2.9.** Given an odd prime $p$, there is a $\Gamma$-group $G$ of order divisible by $p$. It is the subgroup of $\text{Aff}(1, 2^n)$, where $n$ is the unique positive integer such that $n|(p-1)$, and $p|(2^n-1)$ but $p$ does not divide $2^m-1$ for $0 < m < n$.

**Lemma 2.10.** A $\Gamma$-group $G = NP$ ($N$ and $P$ as in Definition 2.7) has the following properties:
1) $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$.
2) $N$ is the commutator subgroup of $G$.

Proof. Let $y \in G - \{1\}$ and $P = \langle x \rangle$.

If $y \in N - \{1\}$, then $\langle y \rangle^{(x)}$ is a non-trivial $P$-invariant subgroup of $N$ and $\langle y \rangle^{(x)} = N$. Therefore, $G = \langle x, y \rangle$. If $y \in G - N$, then $y$ is $N$-conjugate to a power of $x$, so that any $\langle y \rangle$-invariant subgroup of $N$ is also $P$-invariant. Thus, $G = \langle y, n \rangle$ for any $n \in N - \{1\}$, and $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$. Since $P$ is an abelian group, $G' \leq N$ and $G' = N$ because $G'$ is $P$-invariant and nontrivial. □

Notation. If $y \in G$, then $O(y)$ is the order of $y$.

Theorem 2.11. If $G$ lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, then $G$ has a proper normal subgroup of odd index if and only if it is a $\Gamma$-group.

Proof. By Lemma 2.10 any $\Gamma$-group lies in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$, and has a proper normal subgroup of odd index.

Assume that $G$ has a proper normal subgroup $K$ of odd index. Since $|G/K|$ is odd and $|G|$ is even, $K$ is nontrivial; therefore, Lemma 2.6 gives that $G/K$ is cyclic. Let $M^*$ be a subgroup of $G/K$ of odd prime index $p$. If $M \leq G$ such that $M/K = M^*$, then $M$ is normal in $G$ and $|G/M| = p$ is an odd prime.

If $x$ is an involution in $G$, then $x$ is in $M$ because $O(xM) = 1$. If $y$ is an element of $M - \{1\}$ with $O(y) \neq 2$, then $y$ has a mate $t$ of order 2. Thus, $t$ is in $M$. But $G = \langle y, t \rangle$ gives that $G = M$, a contradiction. Therefore, $|M| = 2^n$ and $M$ is an elementary abelian 2-group. Since, $|G/K|$ is odd and $K \leq M, M = K$.

Let $x$ be an element of order $p$ in $G$, and set $P = \langle x \rangle$. Then $G$ is the semidirect product of $M$ by $P$, because $M \cap P = \{1\}$ and $G = MP$. If $z \in G - M$, then $O(zM) \neq 1$ and so $O(zM) = p$. Thus, $p | O(z)$ so we see that $O(z) = 2^k p$ for some $k$. If $t = z^p$, then $t \in M \cap C_G(z)$; therefore $t$ is in $Z(G)$ and by Lemma 2.5, $t = 1$. Therefore, $O(z) = p$.

Let $N$ be a minimal $P$-invariant subgroup of $M$, and $d$ an element of $N - \{1\}$. Now, $d$ has a mate $y$. Since $G = \langle d, y \rangle$, $y$ is not an element of $M$. By the preceding paragraph $O(y) = p$. Hence, $\langle y \rangle$ is $M$-conjugate to $P$, by Sylow's Theorem. Thus, $\langle y \rangle^m = P$ for some $m \in M$, and because $M$ is abelian $d^m = d$. It follows that

$$G = \langle d, y \rangle = \langle d^m, y^m \rangle = \langle d, P \rangle = \langle N, P \rangle \text{ (because } d \in N).$$

Hence, $G = NP$ and $|G| = |N| \cdot |P|$. This implies that $N = M$. Therefore $P$ acts irreducible on $M$ and $G$ is a $\Gamma$-group. □
Theorem 2.12. If \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma_{1}^{(2)} \) and \( G \neq G' \), then either
1) \( G \) is a \( \Gamma \)-group,
or
2) \( G \) is isomorphic to a semi-direct product of \( G' \) by \( \langle y \rangle \), where \( y \) is an involution. If, in this case, \( G' \) is abelian, then \( G \) is isomorphic to \( D_{2p} \), where \( p \) is an odd prime.

Proof. If \( G^* = G/G' \), then \( G^* \) is cyclic by Lemma 2.6.

If \( G^* \) is not a 2-group, then there exists a normal subgroup \( N \) of \( G \) with \( G' \leq N < G \) and \( |G/N| \) is odd. Since \( |G/N| > 1 \) is odd, \( G \) is a \( \Gamma \)-group and \( G' = N \), by Lemma 2.10.

If \( G^* \) is a 2-group, note that \( G \) is not a 2-group, for \( Z(G) = 1 \). Therefore there exists an \( x \in G' \) of odd prime order \( p \). The element \( x \) has a mate \( y \) of order 2. Since \( G = \langle x, y \rangle \), \( G^* = \langle xG', yG' \rangle = \langle yG' \rangle \); therefore \( |G^*| = 2 \), \( G' \cap \langle y \rangle = 1 \), and \( G \) is isomorphic to a semi-direct product of \( G' \) and \( \langle y \rangle \).

If \( G' \) is abelian, then \( z^y = z \) for any \( z \in G' \) if and only if \( z = 1 \), because \( Z(G) = 1 \). Hence, \( y \) acts fixed point free on \( G' \) and, since \( y \) is an involution, \( G' \) is of odd order and for all \( z \in G' \) \( z^y = z^{-1} \). Since \( G = \langle x, y \rangle \), \( G' = \langle x \rangle \) and \( |G'| = p \). Therefore \( G \cong D_{2p} \), for \( |G| = 2p \) and \( G = \langle x, y \rangle \), where \( x^p = y^2 = 1 \), and \( x^y = x^{-1} \).

Lemma 2.13. Let \( G \) lie in \( \Gamma_{1}^{(2)} \). If \( G \) is isomorphic to a semi-direct product of \( N \) by \( \langle x \rangle \), where \( x \) is an involution, then \( x \) acts on \( N \) as an outer automorphism of \( N \).

Proof. Assume \( x \) acts on \( N \) as conjugation by an element \( y \in N \), then \( xy^{-1} \) acts trivially on \( N \). Therefore, \( 1 \neq xy^{-1} \) is in the center of \( G \), contradicting Lemma 2.5.

Definition 2.14. A group is a proper semi-direct product of \( N \) by \( P \) if \( G \) is a semi-direct product of \( N \) by \( P \) and \( NC_G(N) \neq G \).

Note. The situation in Lemma 2.13 gives us an example of a proper semi-direct product, since \( NC_G(N) = N \neq G \).

In [6] Evans shows that if a simple Chevalley group over a field of odd characteristic lies in \( \Gamma_{1}^{(2)} \), then it is isomorphic to \( PSL(2, K) \). Below we will present a generalization of this result.

Definition 2.15. 1) \( \Delta \) denotes a root system of a Lie algebra.
2) \( \Delta^+ \) denotes the set of positive roots in \( \Delta \).
3) \( \Delta^- \) denotes the set of negative roots in \( \Delta \).
4) $\Pi$ denotes the fundamental system of roots of $\Delta$.
5) $x_r(k)$ denotes the generator $\exp(\lambda d e_r)$ of a Chevalley group.
6) $X_s = \langle x_s(k) \mid k \in K \rangle$.
7) $U = \langle x_r(k) \mid r \in \Delta^+, k \in K \rangle$.

Recall that each root $r \in \Delta$ can be written as $r = \sum k_\alpha \alpha (\alpha \in \Pi)$ with integral coefficients $k_\alpha$ all nonnegative or all nonpositive [10, 10.1].

**Definition 2.16.** The height of $r \in \Delta$ (relative to $\Pi$) is $h_t(r) = \sum k_\alpha$.

From the Steinberg decomposition of automorphisms of a finite simple Chevalley group $M$ [4, Theorem 12.5.1], we get that if $\tau \in \text{Aut}(M)$, then $\tau = idgf$, where $i$ is an inner automorphism, $d$ is a diagonal automorphism, $g$ is a graph automorphism, and $f$ a field automorphism. From the Bruhat decomposition [4, Chapter 8] we get that if $i \in \text{inn}(M) \cong M$ since $M$ is a simple group, then $i = u_1 h_1 n u_2 h_2$, where $u_1, u_2 \in U, h_1, h_2 \in H$ and $n_t \in N$. $H$ and $N$ denote the diagonal and monomial subgroups of $M$ respectively.

So by combining the above remarks we get that every $\tau \in \text{Aut}(M)$ can be written as

$$\tau = u_1 h_1 n u_2 h_2 d g f.$$  

**Theorem 2.17.** Let $M$ be a non-nilpotent subgroup of a finite simple Chevalley group $G$ over a finite field $K$, and $M = \langle X_s, X_s^y \rangle$, where $y \in \text{Aut}(G)$ and $s$ is a root of greatest height in $\Delta^+$, then there is a homomorphism from $\text{SL}(2, K)$ onto $M$.

**Proof.** Let $g$ be a graph automorphism, then since $g(r) \in \Delta^+$ for all $r \in \Delta^+$, $g|_U$ and $g|_{Z(U)}$ are automorphisms.

Since $y \in \text{Aut}(M)$, it follows from the remarks above that

$$y = u_1 h_1 n_t u_2 h_2 d g f.$$  

Let $s' = g^{-1}(s)$, then by the choice of $s$ we get that $X_s$ and $X_{s'}$ are central in $U$ [4, Theorem 5.3.3], and that $H$ [4, page 100], all diagonal automorphisms, and all field automorphisms normalize $X_s$ and $X_{s'}$. So we get that

$$M = \langle X_s, (X_s)^{u_1 h_1 n_t u_2 h_2 d g f} \rangle = \langle X_s, (X_s)^{n_t u_2 h_2 d g f} \rangle \cong$$

$$= \langle (X_s)^{f^{-1} g^{-1} d^{-1} h_2^{-1} u_2^{-1}}, (X_s)^{n_t} \rangle = \langle X_{s'}, (X_s)^{n_t} \rangle.$$
Let \( w_t \) denote the image of \( n_t \) in the Weyl group under the natural homomorphism from \( N \) to \( N/H \cong W \). Since \( X^{n_t} = X_{w_t(s)} \), \( M \cong \langle X_{s'}, X_{w_t(s)} \rangle \).

For all \( r, s \in \Delta \) which are linearly independent there exists a \( w \in W \) such that \( w(r), w(s) \in \Delta^+ \). Therefore \( \langle X_r, X_s \rangle \) is isomorphic to a subgroup of \( U \) which is nilpotent. Since \( M \) is not nilpotent, we get that \( w_t(s) = -s' \). So we see that \( M \cong \langle X_{s'}, X_{-s'} \rangle \) and by [4, Theorem 6.3.1] there is a homomorphism from \( SL(2, K) \) onto \( M \).

\[ \square \]

**Theorem 2.18.** Let \( M \) be a finite simple Chevalley group over a finite field \( K \) of odd characteristic \( p \), and \( M \leq G \leq Aut(M) \). If \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma_1^{(2)} \), then \( M \cong PSL(2, K) \).

**Proof.** Since \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma_1^{(2)} \) and \( O(x_s(1)) = p \neq 2 \) where \( s \) is a root of greatest height in \( \Delta^+ \), \( x_s(1) \) has a mate \( y \) of order 2. By Lemma 2.2 \( M = \langle x_s(1), x_s(1)y \rangle \), therefore \( M = \langle X_s, X_s^y \rangle \). So by Lemma 2.16 we see that there is a homomorphism from \( SL(2, K) \) onto \( M \), and since \( M \) is simple \( M \cong PSL(2, K) \).

\[ \square \]

**3. Non-Simple Groups that lie in \( \Gamma_1^{(2)} \).**

An easy consequence of Lemma 2.6 and Theorem 2.12 is:

**Corollary 3.1.** A solvable group \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma_1^{(2)} \) if and only if \( G \cong D_{2p} \), where \( p \) is an odd prime, or \( G \) is a \( \Gamma \)-group.

**Theorem 3.2.** If \( G \) is a n. n-solvable group lying in \( \Gamma_1^{(2)} \), then either \( G \) is a nonabelian simple group or \( G \) is isomorphic to a proper semi-direct product of \( N \) by \( \langle x \rangle \), where \( x \) is an involution and \( N \) is a simple group.

**Proof.** Let \( M \) be a maximal normal subgroup of \( G \) and let \( G^* = G/M \).

**Case 1:** If \( M = \{1\} \), then \( G \) is simple.

**Case 2:** If \( M \neq \{1\} \), then \( G^* \) is cyclic, by Lemma 2.6, and \( G' \neq G \). Since, any \( \Gamma \)-group is solvable, by Theorem 2.12 and Lemma 2.13, \( G \) is isomorphic to a proper semi-direct product of \( G' \) by \( \langle x \rangle \), where \( x \) is an involution.

If \( \{1\} \neq N < G' \) and \( N \) is normal in \( G \), then \( G/N \) is cyclic, by Lemma 2.6. But \( G/N \) is a nonabelian group; a contradiction. Therefore \( G' \) is a nonabelian characteristic simple group (since \( G \) is not a solvable group); that is, \( G' \cong K_1 \times \ldots \times K_n \) where \( K_i \cong K_j \) are nonabelian simple groups. For \( k \in K_1 \), a nontrivial element of odd order, let \( y \) be its mate of order 2. By Lemma 2.1, \( H = \langle k, k^y \rangle \) is a nontrivial normal subgroup of \( G \), and \( H \leq G' \), thus \( H = G' \). Since, \( K_1 \) is a normal subgroup of \( G' \) and \( G'/K_1 = \langle k^yk_1 \rangle \cong K_2 \times \ldots \times K_n \) is abelian, we have, \( n = 1 \), and so \( G' = K - 1 \) is a simple group. Thus by Lemma 2.13 \( G \) is isomorphic to the proper semi-direct product of \( G' \), a simple nonabelian group, by \( \langle x \rangle \) where \( x \) is an involution.

\[ \square \]

In this section we look more at the structure of non-simple non-solvable groups which lie in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

**Theorem 4.1.** If \( G \) is isomorphic to the semi-direct product of \( A_n \) and \( \langle x \rangle \) where \( x \) is an involution and \( n > 5 \), then \( G \) does not lie in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

**Proof.** Suppose that \( n \neq 6 \), then by [11] \( \text{Aut}(A_n) = \Sigma_n \). Assume that \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \), then by Theorem 3.2 \( G \cong \Sigma_n \). It is easy to see that in \( \Sigma_n \) (\( n > 4 \)) the 3-cycles do not have an involution as a mate, so \( G \) does not lie in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

**Note.** Note that there are two nonisomorphism classes of proper semi-direct products of \( A_6 \) and \( Z_2 \): one is \( \Sigma_6 \) which does not lie in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \), while the other involves the exceptional automorphism of \( A_6 \).

**Theorem 4.2.** If \( G \) is isomorphic to the semi-direct product of \( A_6 \) and \( \langle x \rangle \) where \( x \) is an exceptional automorphism of \( A_6 \) of order 2, then \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

**Proof.** Let \( \theta \) send the following transpositions in \( \Sigma_6 \) to products of three 2-cycles:

\[
(12) \rightarrow (23)(15)(46) \\
(23) \rightarrow (12)(34)(56) \\
(34) \rightarrow (23)(16)(45) \\
(45) \rightarrow (34)(15)(26) \\
(56) \rightarrow (23)(14)(56). 
\]

Since the five 2-cycles above generate \( \Sigma_6 \) and \( \theta \) acts on them as a homomorphism, and the five products of three 2-cycles above also generate \( \Sigma_6 \), \( \theta \) is an automorphism of \( \Sigma_6 \). Since \( \theta \) does not preserve the cycle structure \( \theta \) is an exceptional automorphism of \( \Sigma_6 \) and \( A_6 \). It is easy to see that \( \theta^2 = 1 \).

Let \( G = \langle A_6, \theta \rangle \) we will show that \( G \) lies in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \). Set \( a = (123) = (23)(12) \), \( b = a^\theta = (136)(254) \) (multiply left to right). Let \( H = \langle a, b \rangle \leq \langle a, \theta \rangle = \langle b, \theta \rangle \), \( ab = (15426) \), and \( ab^{-1} = (1452)(36) \in H \), so \( |H| \) is divisible by 9, 5, and 4. Thus \( H = A_6 \), and \( G = \langle a, \theta \rangle = \langle b, \theta \rangle \). Thus, elements of order 3 in \( A_6 \) have mates of order 2 in \( G \).

One can check that \( (12345) \in C_G(\theta) \). There are in \( A_6 \) two maximal subgroups that contain \( (12345) \), \( M \) the stabilizer of 6, and \( N \) a transitive \( A_5 \). All elements of order 3 in \( M \) are 3-cycles, while \( N \) contains no 3-cycles. \( \theta \) maps \( M \) into \( N \), and since, \( M = \langle (12345), (12)(34) \rangle \),

\[
N = \langle (12345), (12)^\theta(34)^\theta \rangle = \langle (12345), (14)(56) \rangle.
\]
Since \((34)(56)(14)(56) = (143)\), \((34)(56) \not\in N\), and clearly \((34)(56) \not\in M\). Thus we see that

\[\langle (12345), (34)(56) \rangle = A_6,\]

and since \((12345) \in C_G(\theta), G = \langle (12345)^i, (34)(56) \rangle\) for \(i = 1\) and 2. Note that \((12345)\theta\) and \((12345)^2\theta\) are not conjugate in \(G\). Thus, elements of order 2 in \(A_6\) have mates in \(G\).

Set \(A = ab = (15426)\), and \(B = ba = (25436)\), the \(\theta\) sends \(A \leftrightarrow b\). Set \(H = \langle A, B \rangle \leq \langle A, \theta \rangle\), then \((AB^3)^2 = [(16)(2435)]^2 = (23)(45) \in H\). Since 
\((12345)^{(12536)} = (15426) = A\) and \((34)(56)^{(12536)} = (23)(45)\), thus, \(\langle A, \theta \rangle \geq \langle A, (23)(45) \rangle = A_6\). So, \(\langle (15426)^i, \theta \rangle = G\) for \(i = 1\) and 2. Therefore, elements of order 5 in \(A_6\) have mates of order 2 in \(G\).

By similar reasoning \(AB^3 = (16)(2435)\) has \(\theta\) as a mate. Thus, elements of order 4 in \(A_6\) have mates or order 2 in \(G\). So all elements in \(A_6\) have mates as required.

Since \(\theta\) sends \(ba^{-1} \leftrightarrow ab^{-1}\), \(\theta\) inverts \(ab^{-1} = (1452)(36)\). The element \((24)(36)\) also inverts \(ab^{-1} = (1452)(36)\). So, \(\eta = (24)(36) \in C_G(ab^{-1})\). \(\eta^2 = (24)(36)^{(12)(45)} = (1254)(36) = (ab^{-1})^{-1}\), since \(\theta(24)(36)\theta = (12)(45)\). It follows that \(\eta\) has order 8 and \(\langle \eta, \theta \rangle \cong D_8\). Since \(|\langle \eta, \theta \rangle| = 16\), this group is a Sylow 2-subgroup of \(G\), and all involutions outside \(A_6\) are conjugate to \(\theta\). Let \(x \in G - A_6\), note that \(x^2 \in A_6\). If the order of \(x^2\) is odd, then \(x\) is conjugate to \(\theta\), or \((12345)^i\) for \(i = 1\) or 2 (since no elements of order 3 in \(A_6\) commute with \(\theta\)). If \(x^2\) has even order, then \(x\) is contained in a Sylow 2-subgroup of \(G\). Since \(x \not\in A_6\), \(x\) is conjugate to \(\eta\) or to \(\eta^3\). We have seen that \(\eta^2 = (1254)(36)\), so \(\eta^2(12)(34) = (25364) = (65432)^2\). Since \((65432)^{(16)(25)(34)} = (12345)\) and \((12)(34)^{(16)(25)(34)} = (34)(56)\), we get \(\langle \eta^i, (12)(34) \rangle = G\) for \(i = 1\) or 3. \(\square\)

**Proposition 4.3.** Let \(M\) be a finite simple Chevalley group over a finite field \(K\) of characteristic \(p\), and let \(G\) be isomorphic to the semi-direct product of \(M\) and \(\langle x \rangle\) where \(x\) is an involution. If \(G\) lies in \(\Gamma_1^{(2)}\), then \(M \cong PSL(2, K)\).

**Proof.** This is a direct consequence of Theorem 2.18. \(\square\)

**Note.** Note that since \(A_5 \cong PSL(2, 5)\), it is not true that for every \(M = PSL(2, K)\) where \(K\) is a finite field of odd characteristic \(p\), there exists a proper semi-direct product \(G\) of \(M\) and \(\langle x \rangle\) where \(x\) is an involution such that \(G\) lies in \(\Gamma_1^{(2)}\).

In [7, Chapter 8] we eliminate many more simple groups from the possibilities for \(N\) in Theorem 3.2.
5. \(E_8\) Case.

The Lie algebra \(L\) over a field \(K\) has a Cartan decomposition [4, Ch.7]
\[ L = H \oplus \sum_{r \in \Delta} L_r, \]
where \(H\) is generated by \(h_r\) for \(r \in \Pi\), and \(L_r\) is a one-
dimension vector space generated by an element \(e_r\) for \(r \in \Delta\). For a simple
Lie algebra \(L\) over \(K\), Chevalley defined a group \(L(K)\) which is simple except
for a few exceptional cases. \(L(K)\) is uniquely determined by its action on
\[ \{h_q, e_r\}_{r \in \Delta, q \in \Pi}. \]

The elements of \(\Pi\) will be denoted by \(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_1\). The method of this
section gives us some insight into the action of \(L(K)\) on \(L\) and proves that
\(L(K)\) does not lie in \(\Gamma_1^{(2)}\) when \(\Delta = E_8\). In this section we are using the
standard notation for roots in \(E_8\).

**Definition 5.1.** Let \(f\) be a function from \(\Pi \cup \Pi^-\) to the integers defined by
\[ f(\alpha_i) = f(-\alpha_i) = i - 1. \]

**Definition 5.2.** \(\Psi = \{\tau \in \Delta | (\tau, \alpha_1) = 0\}\), where \((, )\) is as in [10, page 39].

**Lemma 5.3.** If \(\Delta = E_8\), and \(\tau \in \Psi\), then \(x_{\alpha_1} e_\tau = e_\tau\), and \(x_{-\alpha_1} e_\tau = e_\tau\) (where \(x_\tau = x_\tau(1)\)).

**Proof.** Since all roots in \(E_8\) have the same length, this implies that if \(\tau \in \Psi\),
\(\tau \neq -\alpha_1\) and \(\tau - \alpha_1\) and \(\tau + \alpha_1 \notin \Delta\). Thus by the formula on [4, page 61]
we see that \(x_{\pm \alpha_1} e_\tau = e_\tau\). \(\square\)

Let \(L = H \oplus \sum_{t \in \Delta} L_t\) be the Cartan decomposition of \(L\) [4, Ch.3]. \(L\) can
be written as \(L = \sum_{t \in \Pi} H_t \oplus \sum_{t \in \Delta} L_t\) where \(H_t = \langle \alpha_t \rangle\), and \(L_t = \langle e_t \rangle\). For
\(\Delta = E_8\), let \(T = H_{\alpha_1} \oplus H_{\alpha_2} \oplus H_{\alpha_3} \oplus \sum_{t \in \Delta - \Psi} L_t\) and,
\[ L' = \sum_{t \in \Pi - \{\alpha_2, \alpha_3\}} H_t \oplus \sum_{t \in \Psi} L_t. \]

**Note.** Note that \(L = L' \oplus T\), and \(x_{\alpha_1}\) and \(x_{-\alpha_1}\) act trivally on \(L'\).

**Lemma 5.4.** Given \(L\), \(L'\) and \(T\) as before, then there exists no subset \(0 \neq S \leq L' \cap H\) invariant under the action of \(E_8(K)\) where \(K\) is a finite field of
characteristic 2.

**Proof.** Assume that such an \(S\) exists, then let \(x \in S - \{0\}\). We can write \(x\)
as \(x = a_1 h_{\tau_1} + \ldots + a_n h_{\tau_n}\) where each \(a_i \neq 0\), each \(\tau_i \in \Pi\), and \(f(\tau_1) < \ldots < f(\tau_n)\).

Note that in all cases, \(f(\tau_1) > 2\) by the way we constructed \(L'\). Thus
we can choose a root \(t \in \Pi\) with \(f(t) = f(\tau_1) - 1\) such that \(\langle t, \tau_1 \rangle = \ldots = \langle t, \tau_n \rangle = 2\).
2(t, \tau_1)/(t, t) \equiv 1 \pmod{2}, and \langle t, \tau_i \rangle = 0 for i = 2, \ldots, n. So we get that 
x_t h_{\tau_1} = h_{\tau_1} + e_\tau, and \ x_t h_{\tau_i} = h_{\tau_i} for i = 2, \ldots, n. Therefore \ x_t x \not\in S, contradicting that S is L(K)-invariant. Therefore there exists no subset 
0 \neq S \leq L' \cap H invariant under the action of L(K).

Lemma 5.5. There is no invariant subspace of \ L' under the action of E_8(K) where K is a finite field of characteristic 2.

Proof. In view of Lemma 5.4 it will be sufficient to prove that any E_8(K)-invariant nonzero subspace S of L' is a subspace of H.

Assume that S is not a subspace of H, then we can write any element 
v \in S - H as v = a_{s_1} e_{s_1} + a_{s_2} e_{s_2} + \ldots + h, where h \in H, and s_i \in \Psi.

Since all the roots in E_8 have the same length, then by [10, 10.4 Lemma C] all the roots are conjugate under W, the Weyl group of E_8. Thus there exists an element w \in W, with w(s_1) = \alpha_1. Note that since w is an automorphism 
w(s_i) \neq \alpha_1 for i > 1, and that w = w_{r_1} \ldots w_{r_t} (here w_{r_i} is the reflection in the 
hyperplane orthogonal to the root r_i). Let N be the monomial subgroup of E_8(K), and n_r as in [4, Proposition 6.4.2]. By [4, Theorem 7.2.2] there is a homomorphism from N onto W under which n_r \to w_r for all r \in \Delta. n_r acts invariantly on H, and n_r e_s = \pm e_{w_r(s)}. Since we are in characteristic 2, 
n_r e_s = e_{w_r(s)}. Let n = n_{r_1} \ldots n_{r_t} \in N, then n \to w by the homomorphism 
N \to W. So ne_{s_1} = e_{w(s_1)} = e_{\alpha_1}, and nh \in H. Hence nv contains a term 
e_{\alpha_1}, contradicting that v \in S. Thus S is a subspace of H.

Theorem 5.6. If G = E_8(K) where K is a finite field of characteristic 2, then G does not lie in \Gamma_1^{(2)}.

Proof. Using the description of roots in the system E_8 in terms of orthogonal vectors given in [2, page 268] we get that the number of positive roots in \Psi is 

\[ 1 + 6 + 6 + \binom{6}{2} + \binom{6}{2} + \binom{6}{3} = 63. \]

So we get that cod (L') = 117. Both \ x_{\alpha_1} and \ x_{-\alpha_1} act trivially on L'; therefore \ x_{\alpha_1} x_{-\alpha_1} also acts trivially on L'. Assume that G lies in \Gamma_1^{(2)}, then since \ O (x_{\alpha_1} x_{-\alpha_1}) \neq 1 or 2, \ x_{\alpha_1} x_{-\alpha_1} has a mate of order 2. Let S = L' \cap (L')^y; since G = \langle x_{\alpha_1} x_{-\alpha_1}, y \rangle, we see that G acts invariantly on S. Since 

\[ \text{cod}(S) \leq 2 \text{cod} (L') = 234 < 248, \]

S \neq 0 contradicting Lemma 5.5.
6. Twisted Groups in odd Characteristic.

Lemma 6.1. If $q$ is odd and $G = ^2A_l(q^2)$ for $l \geq 2$, or $^2D_l(q^2)$ for $l \geq 4$, or $^2E_6(q^2)$, then $|G| > |SL_2(q^2)|$. Also $|^3D_4(q^2)| > |SL_2(q^3)|$ for $q$ odd.

Proof. For $q = p^n$ where $p$ is an odd prime we get:

1) $|SL_2(q^2)| = q^2(q^4-1) < (1/3)q^3(q^2-1)(q^3+1) \leq |^2A_l(q^2)|$, $l \geq 2$.
2) $|SL_2(q^2)| = q^2(q^4-1) < (1/4)q^{12}(q^4-1) < |^2D_l(q^2)|$, $l \geq 4$.
3) $|SL_2(q^2)| = q^2(q^4-1) < (1/3)q^{36}(q^5+1) < |^2E_6(q^2)|$.
4) $|SL_2(q^3)| = q^3(q^6-1) < q^{12}(q^6-1) < |^3D_4(q^3)|$.

Consider a Chevalley group $G^* = L(K)$ and $\rho$ a non-trivial symmetry of the Dynkin diagram for $L$. Recall that if $K$ has a certain order depending on $L$, then we can choose an automorphism $\sigma$ (a product of a field automorphism and a graph automorphism determined by $\rho$) of $G^*$ such that the twisted group $G = ^iL(K)$ is a subgroup of $G^*$ stabilized by $\sigma$, and $U^1$ is the subgroup of $U$ centralized by $\sigma$ (recall that $U^1 \leq G$). We will call $G^*$ the corresponding Chevalley group of $G$. Note that $\sigma(x_r(t)) = x_r'(\gamma_r t')$, where $\gamma_r = \pm 1$ and $t' = f(t)$, $f$ a certain field isomorphism, and $r'$ arises from the symmetry of the Dynkin diagram [4, 12.2]. Since all the roots in the system associated with the groups of Lemma 6.1 have same length, the above action is an isometry [4, Prop. 12.2.2], and there exists a unique root of maximal length $s$ [10, 10.4 Lemma A], and thus $s' = s$ (note that this is not the case for $^2G_2(3^{2m+1})$ [4, 12.4]).

Lemma 6.2. If $G$ is a simple twisted group, and $G^*$ is the corresponding Chevalley group of $G$, then $\text{Aut}(G) \leq \text{Aut}(G^*)$.

Proof. From [8, page 303 and 5, Table 5] $\text{Aut}(G)$ is a product of an inner, a diagonal, and a field automorphism. $\square$

Theorem 6.3. If $q = p^n$ where $p$ is an odd prime and $G$ is a simple group of type $^2A_l(q^2)$, $l \geq 2$, or $^2D_l(q^2)$, $l \geq 4$, or $^2E_6(q^2)$, or $^3D_4(q^3)$, then $G$ does not appear as a composition factor of any group in $\Gamma_1^{(2)}$.

Proof. Let $K = GF(q^2)$ if $G = ^2A_l(q^2), l \geq 2$, or $^2D_l(q^2), l \geq 4$, or $^2E_6(q^2)$, and $K = GF(q^3)$ if $G = ^3D_4(q^3)$. Let $s$ be the root of maximal height. If $\gamma_s = 1$, let $x = x_s(1)$. If $\gamma_s = -1$ (this can happen in the case that
\( K = GF(q^2) \), then the automorphism \( f \) associated with the group has order 2 and there exists an element \( t \in K - \{0\} \) such that \( t' = -t \). So, let \( x = x_s(t) \). In each case \( \sigma(x) = x \) and \( x \in Z(U) \cap U^1 \) [4, Def. 13.4.2] so \( x \in Z(U^1) \) and \( O(x) = p \).

If \( G \) appears as a composition factor of any group in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \), then \( x \) has a mate \( y \in \text{Aut}(G) \leq \text{Aut}(G^*) \) of order 2, and \( G = \langle x, x^y \rangle \leq \langle X_s, (X_s)^y \rangle = M \) (note that \( M \) is a subgroup of \( G^* \), not of \( G \)) from Lemma 2.2. Since \( M \) is a nonnilpotent subgroup of \( G^* \) by Lemma 2.17, there is a homomorphism from \( SL(2, K) \) onto \( M \), but by Lemma 6.1 \( |G| > |M| \), a contradiction. \( \Box \)

7. Centralizers and \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

In this section we will use the result that if two subgroups have order greater that the square root of the order of the group, then they have a nontrivial intersection [9, Sec. 2.5], to investigate whether some groups lie in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

Lemma 7.1. If \( G \) is a finite simple group with an element of order not 1 or 2 that has a centralizer of order larger \( (|G|)^{1/2} \), then \( G \) does not appear as a composition factor of any group in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

Proof. Assume that \( G \) appears as a composition factor of a group \( H \) in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \). Then, by previous results, \( G \) is a normal subgroup of \( H \) with index at most two. Let \( x \in G \) such that \( O(x) \neq 1 \) or 2 and \( |C_G(x)| > (|G|)^{1/2} \). Since \( H \) lies in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \), \( x \) has a mate \( y \in H \) of order 2. By Lemma 2.2 \( G = \langle x, x^y \rangle \), and since \( |C_G(x^y)| = |C_G(x)| \) from the above we get that \( Z(G) \neq 1 \), contradicting the simplicity of \( G \). \( \Box \)

Theorem 7.2. The groups \( J_2, \text{Suz}, \text{Co}_1, \text{Ly}, F_{i22}, F_{i23}, F_{i24}, D_4(2), \) and \( ^2D_4(2) \) do not appear as a composition factor of any group in \( \Gamma^{(2)}_1 \).

Proof. From [5] we see that each of the above groups has an element of order 3 with a centralizer of order greater than the square root of the order of the group. \( \Box \)

References


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**The University of the West Indies**

**Mona, Kingston 7**

**Jamaica**

E-MAIL ADDRESS: foguel@uwimona.edu.jm
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