## Subnormality and ascendancy in groups

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## Introduction

Recently subnormality in groups was investigated by Wielandt [7], Peng [4, 5], McCaughan and McDougall [3], and subnormality and ascendancy in groups were investigated by Hartley and Peng [1]. On the other hand, subideality and ascendancy in Lie algebras were examined by Kawamoto [2] and the author [6].

In this paper, following the paper [6] we shall introduce two notions of weak subnormality and weak ascendancy for subgroups, study their properties, and investigate several criteria for subnormality and ascendancy of subgroups.

Let H be a subgroup of a group G. We shall show that when either (a) G is hyperabelian, (b) G has an ascending abelian series and H is finite, or (c) G is finite-by-hyperabelian and H is finite, H is ascendant in G if and only if H is weakly ascendant in G (Theorems 3 and 7). Similar results for subnormality will be shown in Theorems 3 and 6. We shall also give characterizations of weak subnormality and  $\omega$ -step weak ascendancy (Theorem 4), and show that every finite, weakly ascendant subgroup of a group is at most of  $\omega$ -step (Theorem 5).

1.

Let G be a group. If x, y are elements of G, then  $[x, y] = x^{-1}y^{-1}xy$  and we write  $[x, _0y] = x$ ,  $[x, _{n+1}y] = [[x, _ny], y]$  for an integer  $n \ge 0$ . If X, Y are non-empty subsets of G, [X, Y] is the set of all [x, y] with  $x \in X$  and  $y \in Y$  and we write  $[X, _0Y] = X$ ,  $[X, _{n+1}Y] = [[X, _nY], Y]$ .

We write  $H \le G$  if H is a subgroup of G and  $H \multimap G$  if H is a normal subgroup of G. For any ordinal  $\lambda$ , a subgroup H of G is a  $\lambda$ -step ascendant subgroup of G, denoted by  $H \multimap^{\lambda} G$ , if there is a series  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \le \lambda}$  of subgroups of G such that

- (a)  $S_0 = H$  and  $S_{\lambda} = G$ ,
- (b)  $S_{\alpha} \triangleleft S_{\alpha+1}$  for any ordinal  $\alpha < \lambda$ ,
- (c)  $S_{\beta} = \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} S_{\alpha}$  for any limit ordinal  $\beta \le \lambda$ .

H is an ascendant subgroup of G if  $H \triangleleft^{\lambda} G$  for some ordinal  $\lambda$ . When  $\lambda < \omega$ , H is a subnormal subgroup of G, denoted by H sn G.

We say a subgroup H of G to be a  $\lambda$ -step weakly ascendant subgroup of G, if there is an ascending series  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  of subsets of G satisfying the above conditions (a), (c) and the following condition:

(b') If  $\alpha$  is any ordinal  $<\lambda$ , then  $u^{-1}Hu\subseteq S_{\alpha}$  for any  $u\in S_{\alpha+1}$ .

We then write  $H \leq {}^{\lambda}G$ . We simply call such a series  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  a weakly ascending series from H to G. We call H a weakly ascendant subgroup of G if  $H \leq {}^{\lambda}G$  for some ordinal  $\lambda$ . We then write H wasc G. When  $\lambda < \omega$ , we call H a weakly subnormal subgroup of G and write H wsn G.

As usual,  $\mathfrak{F}$ ,  $\mathfrak{G}$ ,  $\mathfrak{A}$ ,  $\mathfrak{A}$  and  $\acute{\mathbf{E}}(\lhd)\mathfrak{A}$  are the classes of finite, finitely generated, abelian, solvable and hyperabelian groups respectively, and Min is the class of groups satisfying the minimal condition for subgroups.  $\acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}\mathfrak{A}$  is the class of groups G having an ascending abelian series  $(G_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  of subgroups, and  $\acute{\mathbf{E}}\mathfrak{A} = \bigcup_{\lambda} \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}\mathfrak{A}$ .  $G \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}(\lhd)\mathfrak{A}$  means that there is an ascending abelian series of normal subgroups of G.  $(\mathbf{E}\mathfrak{A}, \acute{\mathbf{E}}\mathfrak{A})$  and  $\acute{\mathbf{E}}(\lhd)\mathfrak{A}$  are also denoted by  $\mathbf{P}\mathfrak{A}$ ,  $\acute{\mathbf{P}}\mathfrak{A}$  and  $\acute{\mathbf{P}}_{n}\mathfrak{A}$  respectively.)

For K,  $L \le G$ , we denote  $K \in \acute{\mathbb{E}}_{\lambda}(L)\mathfrak{A}$  if there is an ascending abelian series  $(K_{\alpha})_{\alpha \le \lambda}$  of L-invariant subgroups of G, and denote  $\acute{\mathbb{E}}(L)\mathfrak{A} = \bigcup_{\lambda} \acute{\mathbb{E}}_{\lambda}(L)\mathfrak{A}$ .

2.

We first show the following two lemmas which will be used in the subsequent sections.

Lemma 1. Let G be a group and let  $H \leq {}^{\lambda}G$ . Then there exists a weakly ascending series  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  from H to G such that for any ordinal  $\alpha \leq \lambda$ 

$$HS_{\alpha}H = S_{\alpha}$$
 and  $S_{\alpha}^{-1} = S_{\alpha}$ .

**PROOF.** Let  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha<\lambda}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G. Put

$$M_{\alpha} = H(S_{\alpha} \cap S_{\alpha}^{-1})H.$$

Then  $M_0 = H$  and  $M_{\lambda} = G$ . Let  $\alpha$  be any ordinal  $< \lambda$ . Any element u of  $M_{\alpha+1}$  is expressed as

$$u = axb$$
 with  $a, b \in H$  and  $x \in S_{\alpha+1} \cap S_{\alpha+1}^{-1}$ .

Hence

$$u^{-1}Hu = (axb)^{-1}H(axb)$$
  
=  $b^{-1}(x^{-1}a^{-1}Hax)b$ .

Since  $x^{-1}a^{-1}Hax \subseteq S_{\alpha} \cap S_{\alpha}^{-1}$ , it follows that

$$u^{-1}Hu \subseteq H(S_{\alpha} \cap S_{\alpha}^{-1})H = M_{\alpha}.$$

For any limit ordinal  $\beta \leq \lambda$ ,

$$M_{\beta} = H(S_{\beta} \cap S_{\beta}^{-1})H$$

$$= H(\bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} (S_{\alpha} \cap S_{\alpha}^{-1}))H$$

$$= \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} H(S_{\alpha} \cap S_{\alpha}^{-1})H$$

$$= \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} M_{\alpha}.$$

Therefore  $(M_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  is a weakly ascending series from H to G satisfying the conditions.

LEMMA 2. Let G be a group.

- (a) If  $H \leq {}^{\lambda}G$  and  $K \leq G$ , then  $H \cap K \leq {}^{\lambda}K$ .
- (b) Let f be a homomorphism of G onto a group  $\overline{G}$ . If  $H \leq {}^{\lambda}G$ , then  $f(H) \leq {}^{\lambda}\overline{G}$ . If  $\overline{H} \leq {}^{\lambda}\overline{G}$ , then  $f^{-1}(\overline{H}) \leq {}^{\lambda}G$ .

PROOF. Assume that  $H \leq^{\lambda} G$  and let  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G. Then  $(S_{\alpha} \cap K)_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  is a weakly ascending series from  $H \cap K$  to K and  $H \cap K \leq^{\lambda} K$ .  $(f(S_{\alpha}))_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  is also a weakly ascending series from f(H) to  $\overline{G}$  and  $f(H) \leq^{\lambda} \overline{G}$ .

Assume that  $\overline{H} \leq {}^{\lambda}\overline{G}$  and let  $(\overline{S}_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be a weakly ascending series from  $\overline{H}$  to  $\overline{G}$ . Then  $(f^{-1}(\overline{S}_{\alpha}))_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  is a weakly ascending series from  $f^{-1}(\overline{H})$  to G and  $f^{-1}(\overline{H}) \leq {}^{\lambda}G$ .

3.

We begin this section with

LEMMA 3. Let G be a group such that G=HK with  $H \leq G$ ,  $K \triangleleft G$  and  $K \in \mathfrak{A}$ . If  $H \leq^{\lambda} G$ , then  $H \triangleleft^{\lambda} G$ .

PROOF. Let  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G. By Lemma 1 we may assume that  $HS_{\alpha}H = S_{\alpha}$  and  $S_{\alpha}^{-1} = S_{\alpha}$  for any ordinal  $\alpha \leq \lambda$ . Then

$$S_{\alpha} = S_{\alpha} \cap (KH) = (S_{\alpha} \cap K)H.$$

Let  $\alpha$  be any ordinal  $< \lambda$ . Let u, v be any elements of  $S_{\alpha+1}$ ,  $S_{\alpha}$  respectively. Then

$$u = xa$$
 with  $x \in S_{\alpha+1} \cap K$  and  $a \in H$ ,  $v = yb$  with  $y \in S_{\alpha} \cap K$  and  $b \in H$ .

By using the fact that  $K \in \mathfrak{A}$ , we have

$$u^{-1}vu = (xa)^{-1}(yb)(xa)$$

$$= a^{-1}y(x^{-1}bx)a$$
$$\in HS_{\alpha}^{2}H = S_{\alpha}^{2}.$$

It follows that for any  $u \in S_{\alpha+1}$ 

$$u^{-1}S_{\alpha}^{n}u\subseteq S_{\alpha}^{2n}\qquad (n\geq 0).$$

We put  $H_{\alpha} = \langle S_{\alpha} \rangle$  for any ordinal  $\alpha \leq \lambda$ . Then  $H_0 = H$ ,  $H_{\lambda} = G$  and  $H_{\alpha} \triangleleft H_{\alpha+1}$  for any ordinal  $\alpha < \lambda$ . For any limit ordinal  $\beta \leq \lambda$ , we have  $H_{\beta} = \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} H_{\alpha}$ . In fact, any  $u \in H_{\beta}$  is expressed as

$$u = x_1 x_2 \cdots x_n$$
 with  $x_i \in S_B$ .

Then  $x_i \in S_{\alpha_i}$  for some ordinal  $\alpha_i < \beta$ . Take  $\alpha = \max(\alpha_1, ..., \alpha_n)$ . Then each  $x_i$  belongs to  $S_{\alpha}$  and therefore  $u \in H_{\alpha}$ . Thus  $H \triangleleft^{\lambda} G$ .

THEOREM 1. Let G be a group such that G = HK with  $H \le G$  and  $K \triangleleft G$ .

- (a) Let  $K \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}(H)\mathfrak{A}$ . If  $H \leq {}^{\mu}G$ , then  $H \triangleleft {}^{\mu\lambda}G$ .
- (b) Let  $K \in \mathfrak{A}^n$ . If  $H \leq^{\mu} G$ , then  $H <^{\mu n} G$ .

**PROOF.** (a) Let  $(K_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be an ascending abelian series of *H*-invariant subgroups of *K*. Then for any ordinal  $\alpha \leq \lambda$ 

$$K_{\alpha} \triangleleft HK_{\alpha} \leq G$$
.

Assume that  $H \leq {}^{\mu}G$ . For each ordinal  $\alpha < \lambda$ , put

$$\overline{H} = HK_{\alpha}/K_{\alpha}$$
 and  $\overline{K}_{\alpha+1} = K_{\alpha+1}/K_{\alpha}$ .

Then  $\overline{K}_{\alpha+1} \triangleleft \overline{H} \overline{K}_{\alpha+1}$  and  $\overline{K}_{\alpha+1} \in \mathfrak{A}$ . Since  $H \leq^{\mu} H K_{\alpha+1}$  by Lemma 2(a), we have  $\overline{H} \leq^{\mu} \overline{H} \overline{K}_{\alpha+1}$  by Lemma 2(b). Hence by making use of Lemma 3 we see that

$$\overline{H} \triangleleft^{\mu} \overline{H} \overline{K}_{\sigma+1}$$
.

If follows that

$$HK_{\bullet} \triangleleft^{\mu} HK_{\bullet + 1}$$

For any limit ordinal  $\beta \leq \lambda$ 

$$HK_{\beta} = H(\bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} K_{\alpha}) = \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} HK_{\alpha}.$$

Thus we conclude that  $H \triangleleft^{\mu\lambda} G$ .

(b) Put  $K_i = K^{(n-i)}$  for  $0 \le i \le n$ . Then  $(K_i)_{i \le n}$  is an ascending series of *H*-invariant subgroups of *K*. Therefore the assertion in (b) follows from (a).

For elements x, y of a group G,  $x^y = y^{-1}xy$  and for  $H \le G$ ,  $\langle x^H \rangle = \langle x^a | a \in H \rangle$ . With this notation we show the following

Lemma 4. Let  $G \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}\mathfrak{A}$  and let  $H \leq G$ . If  $\langle x^H \rangle \in \mathfrak{G}$  for any  $x \in G$ , then  $G \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}(H)\mathfrak{A}$ .

**PROOF.** Let  $(G_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be an ascending abelian series of G. Let  $M_{\alpha}$  be the subgroup generated by all H-invariant subgroups of  $G_{\alpha}$ . Then  $M_{\alpha}$  is the largest H-invariant subgroup of  $G_{\alpha}$ . Obviously  $M_0 = 1$  and  $M_{\lambda} = G$ . For any ordinal  $\alpha < \lambda$ ,

$$[M_{\alpha+1}, M_{\alpha+1}] \subseteq [G_{\alpha+1}, G_{\alpha+1}] \subseteq G_{\alpha}.$$

Hence  $\langle [M_{\alpha+1}, M_{\alpha+1}] \rangle$  is an H-invariant subgroup of  $G_{\alpha}$  and therefore

$$[M_{\alpha+1}, M_{\alpha+1}] \subseteq M_{\alpha}$$

It follows that  $M_{\alpha} \triangleleft M_{\alpha+1}$  and  $M_{\alpha+1}/M_{\alpha} \in \mathfrak{A}$ .

Let  $\beta$  be any limit ordinal  $\leq \lambda$ . For any  $x \in M_{\beta}$ ,

$$\langle x^H \rangle \leq M_{\beta} \leq G_{\beta}$$
.

It follows that  $\langle x^H \rangle \leq G_{\alpha}$  for some  $\alpha < \beta$ . Since  $\langle x^H \rangle$  is H-invariant,

$$x \in \langle x^H \rangle \leq M_{\sigma}$$
.

Hence  $M_{\beta} = \bigcup_{\alpha < \beta} M_{\alpha}$ . Thus  $G \in \dot{E}_{\lambda}(H)\mathfrak{A}$ .

Theorem 2. Let  $G \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}\mathfrak{A}$ , let  $H \leq G$  and assume that  $\langle x^H \rangle \in \mathfrak{G}$  for any  $x \in G$ . If  $H \leq^{\mu} G$ , then  $H \triangleleft^{\mu \lambda} G$ .

**PROOF.** By Lemma 4,  $G \in \acute{\mathbf{E}}_{\lambda}(H)\mathfrak{A}$ . Hence the assertion follows from Theorem 1.

As consequences of Theorems 1 and 2 we have the following

THEOREM 3. (a) Let  $G \in E(\triangleleft) \mathfrak{A}$ . If H wasc G, then H asc G.

- (b) Let  $G \in \mathfrak{M}$ , let  $H \leq G$  and  $H \in \mathfrak{F}$ . If H wasc G, then H asc G.
- (c) Let  $G \in \mathbb{B}\mathfrak{A}$ . If H wsn G, then H sn G.

**PROOF.** (a) and (c) follow from Theorem 1 where we take K = G. If  $H \in \mathcal{F}$ , we have  $\langle x^H \rangle \in G$  for any  $x \in G$ . Hence (b) follows from Theorem 2.

4.

In this section we shall mainly investigate some properties of weakly ascendant subgroups of step  $\leq \omega$ .

THEOREM 4. Let G be a group and let  $H \le G$ . Let  $0 \le n < \omega$ . Then (a)  $H \le {}^nG$  if and only if  $[G, {}_nH] \subseteq H$ .

(b)  $H \le {}^{\omega}G$  if and only if for any  $x \in G$  there exists an integer  $n = n(x) \ge 0$  such that  $[x, H] \subseteq H$ .

PROOF. (a) Assume that  $H \le {}^nG$  and let  $(S_i)_{i \le n}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G such that  $HS_iH = S_i$  for  $0 \le i \le n$ . Then by induction we have

$$[G, {}_{i}H] \subseteq S_{n-i} \qquad (0 \le i \le n).$$

Taking i = n, we have  $[G, {}_{n}H] \subseteq H$ .

Conversely, assume that the condition is satisfied and put

$$S_i = H\{x \in G | [x, {}_iH] \subseteq H\}H \qquad (0 \le i \le n).$$

Then  $S_0 = H$  and  $S_n = G$ . For any i < n, every element of  $S_{i+1}$  is expressed as u = axb where

$$[x, {}_{i+1}H] \subseteq H$$
 and  $a, b \in H$ .

For any  $h \in H$ ,

$$u^{-1}hu = (axb)^{-1}h(axb)$$
  
=  $b^{-1}[x, a^{-1}h^{-1}a]a^{-1}hab \in S_i$ .

Hence  $H \leq {}^{n}G$ .

(b) Assume that  $H \le {}^{\omega}G$  and let  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \le \omega}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G such that  $HS_{\alpha}H = S_{\alpha}$  for  $0 \le \alpha \le \omega$ . Let  $x \in G$ . Then there exists an integer  $n \ge 0$  such that  $x \in S_n$ . By induction we have

$$[x, {}_{i}H] \subseteq S_{n-i} \qquad (0 \le i \le n).$$

Taking i = n, we have  $[x, H] \subseteq H$ .

Conversely, assume that the condition is satisfied and put

$$S_i = H\{x \in G | [x, H] \subseteq H\}H \qquad (0 \le i \le n),$$

$$S_{\omega}=G.$$

Then  $S_0 = H$ . If i < n, we have

$$u^{-1}Hu \subseteq S_i$$
 for any  $u \in S_{i+1}$ ,

as in the proof of (a). Furthermore

$$\bigcup_{i<\omega} S_i = H(\bigcup_{i<\omega} \{x \in G | [x, {}_iH] \subseteq H\})H$$
$$= HGH = G = S_{\omega}.$$

Therefore  $H \leq {}^{\omega}G$ .

COROLLARY. (a) Let  $G \in \mathcal{F}$ . If H wsn G, then H sn G.

(b) Let  $G \in Min$ . If H wsn G, then H sn G. If  $H \le {}^{\omega}G$ , then H asc G.

PROOF. (a) follows from Theorem 4(a) and Theorem 3 in [7]. (b) follows from Theorem 4 and Theorem A in [1].

LEMMA 5. Let G be a group, let H wasc G and let  $H = \langle U \rangle$  with U a finite set. Then for any  $x \in G$  there exists an integer  $n = n(x) \ge 0$  such that  $[x, u] \subseteq H$ .

PROOF. Let  $(S_{\alpha})_{\alpha \leq \lambda}$  be a weakly ascending series from H to G such that  $HS_{\alpha}H = S_{\alpha}$  for  $0 \leq \alpha \leq \lambda$ . For each integer  $n \geq 0$ , let  $\mu_n$  be the least ordinal such that

$$[x, {}_nU] \subseteq S_{u_n}.$$

Then  $\mu_n$  is not a limit ordinal. Since  $[S_{\alpha+1}, U] \subseteq S_{\alpha}$  for any ordinal  $\alpha < \lambda$ ,  $\mu_{n+1} < \mu_n$  unless  $\mu_n = 0$ . Since the ordinals  $\leq \lambda$  are well-ordered,  $\mu_n = 0$  for some n. Hence  $[x, H] \subseteq H$ .

COROLLARY. Let G be a group and let x be an element of G such that  $\langle x \rangle$  wasc G. Then x is a left Engel element of G.

**PROOF.** For any  $y \in G$ ,  $[y, {}_{n}x] \in \langle x \rangle$  for some n by Lemma 5. It follows that  $[y, {}_{n+1}x] = 1$ .

Theorem 5. Let G be a group. Then every finite, weakly ascendant subgroup of G is at most of  $\omega$ -step.

PROOF. The statement follows from Theorem 4(b) and Lemma 5.

5.

Let  $\mathfrak{X}$  (resp.  $\mathfrak{Y}$ ) be an  $\{E, Q\}$ -closed class of groups G such that H wsn G implies H sn G (resp. H wasc G implies H asc G), and let  $\mathfrak{X}'$  (resp.  $\mathfrak{Y}'$ ) be a class of groups G such that  $H \in \mathfrak{X}$  and H wsn G imply H sn G (resp.  $H \in \mathfrak{Y}$ ) and H wasc G imply H asc G). Using these notations, we show the following

LEMMA 6. Let G be a group and let  $H \leq G$ .

- (a) Assume that  $G \in \mathfrak{XX}'$  and  $H \in \mathfrak{X}$ . If H wsn G, then H sn G.
- (b) Assume that  $G \in \mathfrak{YY}'$  and  $H \in \mathfrak{Y}$ . If H wasc G, then H asc G.

**PROOF.** We shall only give the proof of (b), since the other is similar to this. Take a normal subgroup K of G such that  $K \in \mathfrak{Y}$  and  $G/K \in \mathfrak{Y}'$ . If H wasc G, then by Lemma 2

H wasc HK and (HK)/K wasc G/K.

Since 1) is E-closed and

$$(HK)/K \cong H/(H \cap K) \in \mathbb{Q} = \mathfrak{Y},$$

we have  $HK \in \mathfrak{Y}$ . It follows that H asc HK. Since  $G/K \in \mathfrak{Y}'$  and  $(HK)/K \in \mathfrak{Y}$ , (HK)/K asc G/K and therefore HK asc G. Thus we have H asc G.

THEOREM 6. Let G be a group and let  $H \le G$ . Assume that one of the following conditions is satisfied:

- (a)  $G \in \mathfrak{F}(\mathbf{E}\mathfrak{A}) \cup \mathfrak{F} \text{ Min and } H \in \mathfrak{F}.$
- (b)  $G \in (\mathbb{B}\mathfrak{A})\mathfrak{F} \cup (\mathbb{B}\mathfrak{A})$  Min and  $H \in \mathbb{B}\mathfrak{A}$ .
- (c)  $G \in Min \mathcal{F} \cup Min (\mathbb{E}\mathfrak{A})$  and  $H \in Min$ .

If H wsn G, then H sn G.

PROOF. It is easy to see that Min is {E, Q}-closed. Hence the statement follows from Theorem 3 (c), Corollary to Theorem 4 and Lemma 6.

THEOREM 7. Let G be a group and let  $H \leq G$ . Assume that

$$G \in \mathfrak{F}(\acute{\mathbf{E}}\mathfrak{A})$$
 and  $H \in \mathfrak{F}$ .

If H wasc G, then H asc G.

PROOF. The statement follows from Theorem 3 (a) and (b), Corollary to Theorem 4 and Lemma 6.

6.

A weakly ascendant subgroup of a group is not an ascendant subgroup in general (T. Ikeda).

The statements of Theorem 1 and Lemma 6 hold for Lie algebras. The statements and proofs are obtained replacing the terms in groups by the corresponding terms in Lie algebras. The result corresponding to Theorem 1 generalizes Theorem 1 in [6].

## References

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