

# Finite Groups All of Whose Second Maximal Subgroups Are $PSC^*$ -Groups

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**Abstract** This paper discusses the influence of minimal subgroups on the structure of finite groups and gives the structures of finite groups all of whose second maximal subgroups are  $PSC^*$ -groups.

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## 1. Introduction

All groups considered in this paper will be finite. For a group  $G$ , a subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is said to be conjugate permutable if  $HH^x = H^xH$  for any  $x \in G$ . This concept was introduced by Foguel in [10]. The conjugate permutable subgroups have many interesting properties. For example, for a finite group any conjugate permutable subgroup is subnormal<sup>[10, Corollary 1.1]</sup>.

It is natural to introduce the dual concept of conjugate permutable subgroups, we have:

**Definition 1.1** Let  $G$  be a group. A subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is said to be self-conjugate-permutable if  $HH^x = H^xH$  implies  $H^x = H$ , where  $x \in G$ .

Obviously, a subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is normal if and only if  $H$  is conjugate-permutable and self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . It is easy to see that for a finite group  $G$ , all of whose maximal subgroups and Hall subgroups are self-conjugate-permutable.

A group is called a  $PN$ -group if its minimal subgroups are normal. The  $PN$ -groups were generalized by many authors<sup>[1,4,7]</sup>. In this paper, the generalization on  $PN$ -groups is continued. For convenience, we give the following definition.

**Definition 1.2** Let  $G$  be a group.  $G$  is called a  $PSC^*$ -group if every cyclic subgroup of  $G$  of order 2 or 4 is self-conjugate-permutable.

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We notice that a maximal subgroup  $A_4$  of  $A_5$  has no subgroups of order 6. Thus there is a subgroup of order 2 which is not self-conjugate-permutable in  $A_4$ . So neither  $A_5$  nor  $A_4$  is a  $PSC^*$ -group. But all second maximal subgroups of  $A_5$  are  $PSC^*$ -groups. It should be an interesting problem to find out all finite groups all of whose second maximal subgroups are  $PSC^*$ -groups.

The notation and terminology used in this paper are standard, as in [5] and [6].

## 2. Preliminaries

In this section we give some basic properties of our definition and collect some results that are needed in this paper.

**Lemma 2.1**<sup>[3]</sup> *Let  $G$  be a group. Suppose that  $H$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ ,  $K \leq G$  and  $N$  a normal subgroup of  $G$ . We have:*

- (1) *If  $H \leq K$ , then  $H$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $K$ ;*
- (2) *Let  $N \leq K$ . Then  $K/N$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G/N$  if and only if  $K$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ ;*
- (3) *If  $(|K|, |N|) = 1$  and  $K$  is a  $p$ -subgroup of  $G$ , then  $K$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$  if and only if  $KN$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ .*

**Lemma 2.2**<sup>[3]</sup> (1) *A subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is normal if and only if  $H$  is subnormal and self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ .*

(2) *A subgroup  $H$  of  $G$  is normal if and only if  $H$  is conjugate-permutable and self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ .*

**Lemma 2.3**<sup>[3]</sup> *Let  $G$  be a group. Suppose that  $G = AB$ ,  $A \leq G$ ,  $B \leq G$ . If  $H$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $B$  and  $H$  is normalized by  $A$ , then  $H$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ .*

**Lemma 2.4**<sup>[6]</sup> *Let  $G$  be a minimal non-nilpotent group (A non-nilpotent group all of whose proper subgroups are nilpotent). Then:*

- (1)  *$G = [G_p]G_q$  and  $G_q$  is a cyclic group;*
- (2)  *$G_p/\Phi(G_p)$  is a minimal normal subgroup of  $G/\Phi(G_p)$ ;*
- (3)  *$G_p$  has exponent  $p$  if  $p > 2$  and exponent at most 4 if  $p = 2$ ;*
- (4)  *$G_p$  is an elementary abelian group if  $G_p$  is an abelian group;  $Z(G_p) = \Phi(G_p) = G'_p$  if  $G_p$  is not an abelian group;*
- (5)  *$C_{G_p}(G_q) = G'_p$ .*

**Lemma 2.5**<sup>[2, Theorem B]</sup> *Let  $G$  be a nonsolvable group. Suppose that solvable subgroups of  $G$  are either 2-nilpotent or minimal non-nilpotent, then  $G$  is one of the following groups:*

- (1)  *$PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime;*
- (2)  *$PSL(2, q)$ , where  $q$  is an odd prime with  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ ;*
- (3)  *$SL(2, q)$ , where  $q$  is an odd prime with  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .*

**Proof** The Lemma is a special example in [3]. Its proof does not depend on the classification of finite simple groups.  $\square$

**Lemma 2.6** *Let  $G$  be a group and  $P \in \text{Syl}_p(G)$ , where  $p \in \pi(G)$ . If  $H \trianglelefteq P$  and  $H^g \trianglelefteq P$ , then  $H$  and  $H^g$  are conjugate in  $N_G(P)$ .*

**Proof** Since  $H^g \trianglelefteq P$ , we have  $H \trianglelefteq P^{g^{-1}}$ . Also, as  $H \trianglelefteq P$ , it follows that  $\langle P, P^{g^{-1}} \rangle \leq N_G(H)$ . We notice that  $P$  and  $P^{g^{-1}}$  are Sylow  $p$ -subgroups of  $N_G(H)$ . By Sylow's theorem, there exists  $n \in N_G(H)$  such that  $P^n = P^{g^{-1}}$  and hence  $ng \in N_G(P)$ . Moreover,  $H^{ng} = H^g$ , so  $H$  and  $H^g$  are conjugate in  $N_G(P)$ .  $\square$

**Lemma 2.7** *Let  $G$  be a non-nilpotent dihedral group of order  $2n$  or  $4n$ , where  $n$  is odd. Then  $G$  is a PSC\*-group.*

**Proof** If  $|G| = 2n$ ,  $n$  is odd, then  $G = [C_n]C_2$ . Assume that  $C_2C_2^x = C_2^xC_2$  for  $x \in G$ . Since  $C_2$  is a Sylow 2-subgroup, we have  $C_2 = C_2^x$  and  $C_2$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . Hence  $G$  is a PSC\*-group.

If  $|G| = 4n$ ,  $n$  is odd. Let  $K$  be a subgroup of  $G$  of order 2. Assume that  $KK^x = K^xK$  for  $x \in G$ . Then there exists a Sylow 2-subgroup  $S$  of  $G$  such that  $KK^x = K^xK \leq S$ . By Lemma 2.6,  $K$  and  $K^x$  are conjugate in  $N_G(S)$ . Since  $G$  is non-nilpotent, it follows that  $N_G(S) < G$  and  $K = K^x$ . Thus  $K$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . Moreover, the subgroups of  $G$  of order 4 are Sylow subgroups of  $G$  and hence are self-conjugate-permutable. Thus  $G$  is also a PSC\*-group.  $\square$

### 3. The main results and proofs

**Theorem 3.1** *Let  $G$  be a PSC\*-group. Then  $G$  is 2-nilpotent.*

**Proof** Let  $x \in G$  and  $x^4 = 1$ . Then there exists  $P \in \text{Syl}_2(G)$  such that  $\langle x \rangle \leq P \leq N_G(P)$ . By Lemma 2.1 (1),  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $N_G(P)$ . On the other hand,  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq P \trianglelefteq N_G(P)$ , by Lemma 2.2,  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq N_G(P)$ . Now applying [5, IX. 6.7] gives that  $G$  is 2-nilpotent. This completes the proof.  $\square$

**Corollary 3.2** *Let  $G$  be a group. Suppose every cyclic subgroup of second maximal subgroups of  $G$  of order 2 or 4 is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ , then  $G$  is 2-nilpotent.*

**Proof** Let  $x \in G$  and  $x^4 = 1$ . If  $\langle x \rangle = G_2$ , then  $G$  is 2-nilpotent. If  $\langle x \rangle < G_2$ , then  $\langle x \rangle$  is contained in some second maximal subgroup of  $G$ . By hypotheses,  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . By arbitrariness of  $\langle x \rangle$ , we have that  $G$  is a PSC\*-group. Theorem 3.1 implies that  $G$  is 2-nilpotent.  $\square$

**Theorem 3.3** *For a group  $G$ , if every maximal subgroup of  $G$  is a PSC\*-group, then one of the following results holds:*

- (i)  $G$  is 2-nilpotent;
- (ii)  $G = [G_2]G_p$  is a minimal non-nilpotent group, where  $G_2$  is an elementary abelian 2-group

and  $G_p$  is a cyclic group;

(iii)  $G = [Q_8]Z_{3^n}$  is a minimal non-nilpotent group, where  $Q_8$  is a quaternion of order 8,  $Z_{3^n}$  is a cyclic 3-group.

**Proof** Assume that  $G$  is not 2-nilpotent. By Theorem 3.1 and hypotheses, every proper subgroup of  $G$  is 2-nilpotent. Therefore  $G$  is a minimal non-nilpotent group and  $G = [G_2]G_p$  by Lemma 2.4.

(1) If  $G_2$  is abelian, then Lemma 2.4 implies that (ii) holds.

(2) If  $G_2$  is not abelian, then Lemma 2.4 implies that  $\exp(G_2) \leq 4$ . Let  $x \in G_2$ . Then  $x^4 = 1$ . Since  $G_2 < G$ , we have  $G_2$  is contained in some maximal subgroup of  $G$ . By hypotheses and Lemma 2.1,  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G_2$ . Moreover,  $G_2$  is a 2-group, so  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G_2$ . By Lemma 2.2,  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G_2$ . Arbitrariness of  $\langle x \rangle$  implies that all subgroups of  $G_2$  are normal. So  $G_2$  is a Hamilton group. By [6, III, 7.12],  $G_2 = Q_8 \times A$ , where  $Q_8$  is a quaternion of order 8,  $A$  is an elementary abelian 2-group or 1. By Lemma 2.4,  $A \leq Z(G_2) = G'_2 \leq Q_8$ , so  $A \leq Q_8 \cap A = 1$ . Therefore  $G = [Q_8]Z_p$ . We notice  $\text{Aut}(Q_8) \cong S_4$  and  $G_p$  acts on  $Q_8$  by conjugate, it follows that  $24 \mid |G|$ . Moreover,  $p$  is odd, it follows that  $p = 3^n$ . Thus  $G_p$  is a cyclic 3-group. This proves (iii).  $\square$

**Theorem 3.4** Let  $G$  be a group. If all cyclic subgroups of the third maximal subgroup of  $G$  of order 2 or 4 are self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ , then one of the following results holds:

(i)  $G$  is 2-nilpotent;

(ii)  $G = A_4$ ;

(iii)  $G = [Q_8]Z_3$  is a minimal non-nilpotent group, where  $Q_8$  is a quaternion of order 8,  $Z_3$  is a cyclic group of order 3.

**Proof** If all cyclic subgroups of  $G$  of order 2 or 4 are self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ , then Theorem 3.1 implies that  $G$  is 2-nilpotent. This proves (i).

Assume that  $G$  is non-2-nilpotent. By Corollary 3.2, all maximal subgroups of  $G$  are 2-nilpotent. So  $G$  is a minimal non-2-nilpotent group and  $G = [G_2]G_p$  by Lemma 2.4.

**Case 1** If  $G_2$  is abelian, then Lemma 2.4 implies that  $G_2$  is an elementary abelian 2-group. Let  $|G_2| = 2^n$ . If  $n > 2$ . Let  $x \in G$  and  $o(x) = 2$ . Then  $\langle x \rangle$  is contained in some third maximal subgroup of  $G$ , by hypotheses,  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . Moreover,  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G_2 \trianglelefteq G$ , by Lemma 2.2, we have  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G$ . Also, as  $G_2$  is a minimal normal subgroup of  $G$  by Lemma 2.4, we have  $G_2 = \langle x \rangle$ , this is a contradiction. Hence  $G_2$  is an elementary abelian group of order 4. Since  $|\text{Aut}(G_2)| = (2+1)2(2-1)^2 = 6$ , we have  $p = 3$ , which implies  $G \cong A_4$ . This proves (ii).

**Case 2** If  $G_2$  is not abelian. We claim: all subgroups of  $G_2$  are normal in  $G_2$ . If not, there is  $x \in G$  and  $x^4 = 1$  such that  $\langle x \rangle < N_{G_2}(\langle x \rangle) < G_2 < G$ . So  $\langle x \rangle$  is contained in some third maximal subgroup of  $G$ . By hypotheses,  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ , Lemma 2.1 implies that  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G_2$  and  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G_2$  by Lemma 2.2. This is a contradiction. So the claim holds. By proof of Theorem 3.3 (iii), we obtain that  $G = [Q_8]Z_{3^n}$ ,

where  $Q_8$  is a quaternion of order 8,  $Z_{3^n}$  is a cyclic 3-group. If  $n > 1$ . Let  $x \in G$ ,  $x^4 = 1$ . Then  $\langle x \rangle < Q_8 < Q_8 \langle Z_3 \rangle < G$ . So  $\langle x \rangle$  is contained in some third maximal subgroup of  $G$ . By hypotheses,  $\langle x \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $G$ . On the other hand,  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq Q_8 \trianglelefteq G$ , Lemma 2.2 implies that  $\langle x \rangle \trianglelefteq G$ . So  $\langle x \rangle \Phi(Q_8) / \Phi(Q_8) = \langle x \rangle / \Phi(Q_8) \trianglelefteq G / \Phi(Q_8)$ . By Lemma 2.4,  $Q_8 / \Phi(Q_8)$  is minimal normal in  $G / \Phi(Q_8)$ , so we have  $Q_8 = \langle x \rangle$ . This is a contradiction. Thus  $n = 1$  and this proves (iii).  $\square$

**Theorem 3.5** *Let  $G$  be a non-abelian simple group and all of whose second maximal subgroups are PSC\*-groups. Then  $G$  is one of the following groups:*

- (i)  $PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime;
- (ii)  $PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ ;
- (iii)  $PSL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime,  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

**Proof** Let  $M$  be a maximal subgroup of  $G$ . Then all maximal subgroups of  $M$  are PSC\*-groups by hypotheses. It follows from Theorem 3.3 that  $M$  is solvable. Hence all proper subgroups of  $G$  are solvable. Applying Thompson's theorem, it follows that  $G$  is isomorphic to one of the following five kinds of simple groups:

- (1)  $PSL(3, 3)$ ;
- (2)  $PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $f$  is a prime;
- (3)  $PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$  and  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ ;
- (4)  $PSL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime;
- (5) The Suzuki group  $Sz(2^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime.

We claim:

- (a)  $G \not\cong PSL(3, 3)$ ;

If  $G \cong PSL(3, 3)$ . Let  $x \in Z(G_2)$  and  $o(x) = 2$ . By [9, Lemma 5.1],  $C_G(\langle x \rangle) \cong GL(2, 3)$ . Since  $SL(2, 3)$  is a proper subgroup of  $GL(2, 3)$ , by hypotheses,  $SL(2, 3)$  is a PSC\*-group. So a cyclic subgroup  $\langle y \rangle$  of  $SL(2, 3)$  of order 4 is self-conjugate-permutable in  $SL(2, 3)$ . On the other hand, every cyclic subgroup of  $SL(2, 3)$  of order 4 is subnormal in  $SL(2, 3)$ . Applying Lemma 2.2,  $\langle y \rangle \trianglelefteq SL(2, 3)$ . But  $SL(2, 3)$  has no normal subgroups of order 4. This is a contradiction.

- (b) (b-1)  $G \not\cong PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is not a prime.

In fact, if  $G \cong PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is not a prime, then  $G$  possesses a Frobenius group  $N$  and a normalizer of Sylow 2-subgroup and  $N = [G_2]C$  is also a minimal nonabelian group, where  $G_2$  is an elementary abelian group and  $C$  is a cyclic group of order  $(2^f - 1)$ . Since  $(2^f - 1)$  is not a prime, it follows that  $\langle c \rangle G_2 < N$ , where  $\langle c \rangle < C$ . So  $\langle c \rangle G_2$  is contained in some second maximal subgroup, by hypotheses,  $\langle c \rangle G_2$  is a PSC\*-group. Let  $\langle y \rangle$  be a subgroup of  $G_2$  of order 2. Then  $\langle y \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $\langle c \rangle G_2$ . On the other hand,  $\langle y \rangle \triangleleft \triangleleft \langle c \rangle G_2$ , by Lemma 2.2,  $\langle y \rangle \trianglelefteq \langle c \rangle G_2$ . Therefore  $\langle y \rangle \langle c \rangle = \langle y \rangle \times \langle c \rangle$  and  $\langle c \rangle \leq C_N(\langle y \rangle)$ . By [8, p38, Theorem 7.6],  $C_N(\langle y \rangle) \leq G_2$  and  $\langle c \rangle \leq G_2$ . This is a contradiction. Thus  $G \not\cong PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is not a prime.

- (b-2)  $G \cong PSL(2, 2^f)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime.

By [6, II, 8.27],  $PSL(2, 2^f)$  has only three kinds of maximal subgroups, where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime:

- 1<sup>o</sup> minimal nonabelian groups of order  $2^f(2^f - 1)$ ;
- 2<sup>o</sup> dihedral groups of order  $2(2^f - 1)$ ;
- 3<sup>o</sup> dihedral groups of order  $2(2^f + 1)$ .

For minimal non-abelian groups of order  $2^f(2^f - 1)$ , whose maximal subgroups are abelian groups. So they are  $PSC^*$ -groups.

Remark dihedral groups of order  $2(2^f - 1)$  and  $2(2^f + 1)$ , whose Sylow 2-subgroups are of order 2. By Lemma 2.7, their maximal subgroups are  $PSC^*$ -groups. This proves (i).

(c) (c-1)  $G \not\cong PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \not\equiv 3$  and  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact, suppose that  $G \cong PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ . By [6, II, 8.27],  $A_4 < PSL(2, p)$ . Since  $A_4$  has no subgroups of order 6, we have  $A_4$  isn't a  $PSC^*$ -group. By hypotheses,  $A_4$  is a maximal subgroup of  $PSL(2, p)$ . We claim: Sylow 2-subgroups of  $PSL(2, p)$  are subgroups of order 4. If not, since  $K_4 \trianglelefteq A_4 < PSL(2, p)$ , we have  $A_4 < N_G(K_4)$ . It follows from maximality of  $A_4$  that  $N_G(K_4) = G$  and so  $K_4 \trianglelefteq PSL(2, p)$ , a contradiction. Thus the claim holds and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

(c-2)  $G \cong PSL(2, p)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

By [6, II, 8.27],  $G$  has only three kinds of maximal subgroups:

- 1<sup>o</sup> dihedral groups of order  $p + 1$  or  $p - 1$ ;
- 2<sup>o</sup>  $A_4$ ;

3<sup>o</sup> Frobenius group  $N$  and a normalizer of Sylow 2-group and  $N = [P]C$  is also a minimal nonabelian group, where  $P$  is an elementary abelian group and  $C$  is a cyclic group of order  $(p - 1)/2$ .

By Lemma 2.7, all maximal subgroups of 1<sup>o</sup> are  $PSC^*$ -groups. Clearly, all maximal subgroups of  $A_4$  are  $PSC^*$ -groups. All maximal subgroups of 3<sup>o</sup> are abelian. So they satisfy the hypotheses. This proves (ii).

(d) (d-1)  $G \not\cong PSL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime and  $3^f \not\equiv 3$  and  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact, it follows from the proof of (c-1) that  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

(d-2)  $G \cong PSL(2, 3^f)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $f$  is an odd prime,  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

The proof of (d-2) is similar to that of (c-2). This proves (iii).

(e)  $G \not\cong Sz(2^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime.

In fact, if  $G \cong Sz(2^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime. By [8, p41, Theorem 8.2],  $G$  possesses a Frobenius group  $N$  and  $N = [P]C$ , where  $P$  is a non-abelian kernel of order  $4^f$  and  $C$  is a cyclic complement of order  $2^f - 1$ . Therefore  $Z(P)C < N < G$ . By hypotheses,  $Z(P)C$  is a  $PSC^*$ -group. Let  $\langle y \rangle$  be a subgroup of  $Z(P)$  of order 2. So  $\langle y \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $Z(P)C$ . On the other hand,  $\langle y \rangle \trianglelefteq Z(P) \trianglelefteq Z(P)C$ . By Lemma 2.2,  $\langle y \rangle \trianglelefteq Z(P)C$ . So  $\langle y \rangle C = \langle y \rangle \times C$  and  $C \leq C_N(\langle y \rangle)$ . By [8, p38, Theorem 7.6],  $C_N(\langle y \rangle) \leq P$  and  $C \leq P$ . This is a contradiction.  $\square$

**Theorem 3.6** Let  $G$  be a finite group all of whose second maximal subgroups are PSC\*-groups. Then  $G$  is either a solvable group or one of the following groups:

- (i)  $PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime;
- (ii)  $PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ ;
- (iii)  $PSL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime,  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .
- (iv)  $SL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ ;
- (v)  $SL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an odd prime,  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

**Proof** Suppose that  $G$  is a nonsolvable group. Let  $M$  be a maximal subgroup of  $G$ . Then all maximal subgroups of  $M$  are PSC\*-groups by hypotheses. It follows from Theorem 3.3 that  $M$  is either 2-nilpotent or minimal non-2-nilpotent. Hence all proper subgroups of  $G$  are either 2-nilpotent or minimal non-2-nilpotent. Applying Lemma 2.5,  $G$  is isomorphic to one of the following three kinds of groups:

- (1)  $PSL(2, 2^f)$ , where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime;
- (2)  $PSL(2, q)$ , where  $q$  is an odd prime with  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ ;
- (3)  $SL(2, q)$ , where  $q$  is an odd prime with  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

We claim:

- (i)  $G \cong PSL(2, 2^f)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $2^f - 1$  is a prime.

In fact, the proof of (i) is similar to that of (b-2) of Theorem 3.5. We can obtain all second maximal subgroups of  $PSL(2, 2^f)$  are PSC\*-groups. This proves (i).

- (ii) (ii-1)  $G \not\cong PSL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact, suppose that  $G \cong PSL(2, q)$ , where  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ . Let  $q = p^f$ , where  $p$  is a prime.

Let  $p > 3$ . If  $f > 1$ , then  $PSL(2, p^f)$  contains a nonsolvable proper subgroup  $PSL(2, p)$ . Moreover, all proper subgroups of  $G$  are solvable, this is a contradiction. Thus  $f = 1$ .

If  $p^2 - 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ . By [6, II, 8.27],  $PSL(2, p)$  contains a nonsolvable subgroup  $A_5$ . This is also a contradiction. So  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ .

- (ii-2)  $G \cong PSL(2, p)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

The proof of (ii-2) is similar to that of (c-2) of Theorem 3.5. So all second maximal subgroups of  $PSL(2, 2^f)$  are PSC\*-groups. This proves (ii).

- (iii) (iii-1)  $G \not\cong PSL(2, 3^f)$ , where  $f$  is an even or a composite and  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact, suppose that  $G \cong PSL(2, q)$ , where  $q > 3$  and  $q \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ . Let  $q = p^f$ , where  $p$  is a prime.

Let  $p = 3$ . Since  $PSL(2, 9)$  contains a nonsolvable proper subgroup  $A_5$ ,  $f$  cannot be an even. So  $f$  is an odd number.

If  $f$  is an odd composite, let  $f = mn$ , where  $m$  is a prime with  $m < f$ . By [6, II, 8.27], we know  $PSL(2, p^f)$  contains a nonsolvable proper subgroup  $PSL(2, p^m)$ , which is a contradiction. Thus  $f$  is an odd prime.

(iii-2)  $G \cong PSL(2, 3^f)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $f$  is an odd prime,  $3^f \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

The proof of (iii-2) is similar to that of (d-2) of Theorem 3.5. This proves (iii).

(iv) (iv-1)  $G \not\cong SL(2, p)$ , where  $p$  is a prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact,  $SL(2, p)$  has only a subgroup of order 2, let it be  $\langle u \rangle$  and  $Z = \langle u \rangle$ . If  $G \cong SL(2, p)$ , then  $G/Z \cong PSL(2, p)$ . Similarly to the proof of (ii-1) of (ii), we obtain  $p^2 - 1 \not\equiv 0 \pmod{5}$ .

(iv-2)  $G \cong SL(2, p)$  satisfies the hypotheses, where  $p$  is an odd prime with  $p > 3$ ,  $p^2 - 1 \equiv 0 \pmod{5}$  and  $p \equiv 3$  or  $5 \pmod{8}$ .

In fact, if  $G \cong SL(2, p)$ , then  $G/Z \cong PSL(2, p)$ . Since the subgroup  $\langle u \rangle$  of  $SL(2, p)$  of order 2 is unique,  $\langle u \rangle \trianglelefteq SL(2, p)$  and  $\langle u \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable. Moreover, Sylow 2-groups of  $SL(2, p)$  are isomorphic to  $Q_8$ . Let  $\langle v \rangle$  be an arbitrary cyclic subgroup of  $SL(2, p)$  of order 4. Then  $Z < \langle v \rangle$ . Let  $V$  be a second maximal subgroup of  $SL(2, p)$  and contain  $\langle v \rangle$ . Therefore  $\langle v \rangle/Z$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $V/Z$ . Hence  $\langle v \rangle$  is self-conjugate-permutable in  $V$  by Lemma 2.1(2). It follows that all second maximal subgroups of  $SL(2, p)$  are  $PSC^*$ -groups. This proves (iv).

(v) Similarly to the proof of (iii) and (iv), we can obtain (v). □

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