

- 3.13 (i) If  $H$  is a proper subgroup of a finite group  $G$ , then  $G$  is not the union of all the conjugates of  $H$ .
- (ii) If  $G$  is a finite group with conjugacy classes  $C_1, \dots, C_m$  and if  $g_i \in C_i$ , then  $G = \langle g_1, \dots, g_m \rangle$

*Proof.* (i) We consider the stabilizer of  $H$  regarding the conjugate action of  $G$  on the whole set of subgroups of  $G$ .

$$N(H) = \{g \in G \mid gHg^{-1} = H\} \quad (1)$$

Clearly, as  $H \subset N(H)$ ,  $|H| \leq |N(H)|$ .

And clearly  $[G : N(H)] = \frac{|G|}{|N(H)|}$  is the number of conjugates of  $H$  in  $G$ .

Consider the number of elements in the union of all the conjugates of  $H$ .

$$\left| \bigcup_{g \in G} gHg^{-1} \right| \leq 1 + (|H| - 1) [G : N(H)] \quad (2)$$

The first term 1 on the right-hand side is the identity element of  $G$ , as the conjugate of the identity element is the identity element itself. The other part of the right-hand side is from counting the conjugate of all the other elements of  $H$  in  $G$ , which two conjugates may give the same element in  $G$ .

$$\left| \bigcup_{g \in G} gHg^{-1} \right| \leq 1 + (|H| - 1) [G : N(H)] \quad (3)$$

$$= 1 + (|H| - 1) \frac{|G|}{|N(H)|} \quad (4)$$

$$\leq 1 + (|H| - 1) \frac{|G|}{|H|} \quad (5)$$

$$= 1 + |G| - \frac{|G|}{|H|} \quad (6)$$

$$< |G| \quad (7)$$

The final strict inequality is because  $H$  is a proper subgroup of  $G$ , and indicates that  $G$  is not the union of all the conjugates of  $H$ .

- (ii) Let  $H = \langle g_1, \dots, g_m \rangle$ .

If  $H = \{1\}$ , then  $G$  has only one conjugacy class, and the conclusion is trivial.

If  $H = G$ , then we prove the conclusion.

Otherwise,  $H$  is a proper subgroup of  $G$ .

We assert that  $\bigcup_{g \in G} gHg^{-1} = G$ , as for any  $g \in G$ , there is a  $k$ , and  $h \in G$ , such that  $g = hg_k h^{-1}$ , and  $h \in H$ .

However, this contradicts the conclusion of part i.

□