INDEX OF THE EXPONENTIAL MAP OF A CENTER-FREE COMPLEX SIMPLE LIE GROUP

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(Received August 12, 1977)

0. Introduction

Let \mathfrak{G} be a connected Lie group with Lie algebra G. In general, the exponential map $\exp: G \to \mathfrak{G}$ is not surjective. As in Goto [4], for an element $g \in \mathfrak{G}$, we shall define the index (of the exponential map) ind (g) to be the smallest positive integer q such that $g^q \in \exp G$, if it exists, otherwise, $\operatorname{ind}(g) = \infty$. The index ind (\mathfrak{G}) of the Lie group \mathfrak{G} is defined to be the least common multiple of all ind (g) $(g \in \mathfrak{G})$.

In Lai [6], the author proved the following theorem:

Theorem. Let \mathfrak{G} be a connected (real or complex) semisimple Lie group with finite center. Then ind (\mathfrak{G}) is finite.

More generally, M. Goto proved the following theorem:

Theorem (Goto [3]). Let K be an algebraically closed field (of characteristic 0 or prime), and let \mathfrak{G} be an algebraic group over K. Then there exists a natural number q such that for any $g \in \mathfrak{G}$, we can find a connected abelian subgroup of \mathfrak{G} containing g^q .

In case K=C, this implies that ind (\mathfrak{G}) is finite for any algebraic group \mathfrak{G} over the field of complex numbers.

Theorem (Goto [4]). Let \mathfrak{G} be a semi-algebraic group over \mathbf{R} (the field of real numbers). Then $\operatorname{ind}(\mathfrak{G})$ is finite.

In Lai [6], the author also computed ind (\mathfrak{G}) for some connected complex simple Lie groups \mathfrak{G} . In the case where \mathfrak{G} has trivial center, which most interests us in the present paper, the results in [6] can be summarized as follows. Note that \mathfrak{G} can be identified with the adjoint group Ad(G) of (all inner automorphisms of) its Lie algebra G.

¹⁾ Partially supported by the National Science Council, Republic of China.

(1) G is of type A_{n-1} . Then exp: $G \to Ad(G)$ is surjective. Because: $Ad(G) \cong Ad(sl(n, C)) \cong SL(n, C)$ /center $\cong GL(n, C)$ /center $\cong PGL(n, C)$; and in the following commutative diagram, π (the canonical projection) and Exp (the exponential map of matrices) are surjective.

$$gl(n, C) \xrightarrow{\text{Exp}} GL(n, C)$$

$$\downarrow d\pi \qquad \qquad \downarrow \pi$$

$$sl(n, C) \xrightarrow{\text{exp}} PGL(n, C)$$

- (2) When G is of type B, C, or D. We first considered the corresponding classical groups (the symplectic group Sp(n, C) and the special orthogonal group SO(n, C)), and proved that the square of any element in each case lies inside the image of the exponential map. Then, in each case, we found some element in Ad(G) of index exactly equal to 2.
- (3) G is of type G_2 . We proved that ind $(g) \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ for any $g \in Ad(G)$, and constructed elements of index equal to 2 and 3 respectively.
- (4) G is of type F_4 . We used a computer to compute all the determinants of the coefficient matrices of any four (linearly independent) positive roots (expressed in terms of simple root system) and we found that ind $(g) \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. Again, we constructed elements of index 3 and 4 respectively.
- (5) When G is of type E, we couldn't find a workable method to find ind (Ad(G)). We only gave some lower bounds.

For details, see [6].

Let $m_1\alpha_1 + \cdots + m_l\alpha_l$ be the highest root of G with respect to a fixed Cartan subalgebra H expressed in terms of a simple root system $\{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_l\}$. Then $I(G) = \{1, m_1, \dots, m_l\}$ is a set of positive integers depending only on the type of G; for example, $I(A_l) = \{1\}$, $I(B_l) = I(C_l) = I(D_l) = \{1, 2\}$, $I(G_2) = \{1, 2, 3\}$, $I(F_4) = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. The above results suggest that $\operatorname{ind}(Ad(G))$ may have some relationship to I(G). The main purpose of this paper is to prove the following theorem.

Theorem. Let G be a complex simple Lie algebra, Ad(G) the adjoint group of G and $m_1\alpha_1+\cdots+m_l\alpha_l$ the highest root expressed in terms of a simple root system $\{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_l\}$. Then $\{\operatorname{ind}(g); g \in Ad(G)\}$ equals $I(G) = \{1, m_1, \dots, m_l\}$.

To prove the theorem, we use a method from Borel-Siebenthal's [1] classification of maximal subalgebras of maximal rank in a compact simple Lie algebra.

The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor M. Goto for his help and many useful suggestions. I would also like to thank Prof. A. Borel who pointed out some mistakes in my earlier argument.

1. Review and notation

Let G be a complex semisimple Lie algebra with a (fixed) Cartan subalgebra H. Let Δ be the root system of G with respect to H, $\Pi = \{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_l\}$ a fundamental root system of Δ , and $-\alpha_0 = m_1\alpha_1 + \dots + m_l\alpha_l$ the highest root.

Let B be the Killing form on G. Then for each $\alpha \in \Delta$, we can find $h_{\alpha} \in H$ with $B(h, h_{\alpha}) = \alpha(h)$ for all $h \in H$, and $e_{\alpha} \in G$ such that

$$\begin{split} G &= H + \sum_{\alpha \in \Delta} \mathbf{C} e_{\alpha} , \\ [h, e_{\alpha}] &= \alpha(h) e_{\alpha}, \ [e_{\alpha}, e_{\beta}] = N_{\alpha,\beta} e_{\alpha+\beta} & \text{if } \alpha + \beta \neq 0 \text{ is in } \Delta , \\ [e_{\alpha}, e_{-\alpha}] &= -h_{\alpha}, \ [e_{\alpha}, e_{\beta}] = 0 & \text{if } 0 \neq \alpha + \beta \notin \Delta . \end{split}$$

Let $H_0 \subset H$ be the real vector space spanned by $h_{\alpha}(\alpha \in \Delta)$, then $\beta|_{H_0}$ is real for any $\beta \in \Delta$. Since $\Pi = \{\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_l\}$ is linearly independent, we can choose $h_1, \dots, h_l \in H_0$ such that $\alpha_i(h_j) = \delta_{ij}$ $1 \le i$, $j \le l$. The lattice $\Omega = \mathbb{Z} 2\pi i h_1 + \dots + \mathbb{Z} 2\pi i h_l \subset i H_0$ ($i = \sqrt{-1}$) is the kernel of $\exp|_H : H \to Ad(G)$. For simplicity, we identify Δ with a subset of iH_0 by the map $\alpha \mapsto \frac{1}{2\pi i} h_{\alpha}$, and introduce an

inner product in iH_0 by $(h, h') = \frac{-1}{(2\pi)^2} B(h, h')$. Then $(\alpha, h) = \alpha(h)/2\pi i$ for $\alpha \in \Delta$, $h \in iH_0$.

Let $Ad(\Delta)$ denote the Weyl group of Δ . Any element S of $Ad(\Delta)$, regarded as a linear transformation on iH_0 can be extended to an inner automorphism of the Lie algebra G. Let $T(\Omega)$ be the group of translations of the euclidean space iH_0 induced by elements in Ω . Then, if G is simple, the group $Ad(\Delta) \cdot T(\Omega)$ acts transitively on the set of all cells, see Goto-Grosshans [5] Chapter 5. We summarize as follows:

Let G be a complex simple Lie algebra and C_0 the fundamental cell: $C_0 = \{h \in iH_0; (\alpha_1, h) > 0, \dots, (\alpha_l, h) > 0 \text{ and } (-\alpha_0, h) < 1\}$. Let \overline{C}_0 denote the closure of C_0 . Then for any h in iH_0 , we can find $U \in Ad(\Delta) \cdot T(\Omega)$ such that $h \in U\overline{C}_0$.

In sections 2 and 3 below, we consider ind (g) for $g \in Ad(G)$ where G is a complex simple Lie algebra.

2. Upper bound for ind(g)

Theorem. For any $g \in Ad(G)$, ind $(g) \le m_i$ for some $i=1, \dots, l$.

Any element g in Ad(G) has a decomposition $g=g_0 \cdot \exp N$ into semisimple part g_0 and unipotent part $\exp N$ such that $g_0 \cdot \exp N = \exp N \cdot g_0$. Let $G(1, Ad g_0)$ denote the 1-eigenspace of $Ad g_0$ in G. Then $G(1, Ad g_0)$ is a subalgebra of G and $N \in G(1, Ad g_0)$.

By Gantmacher [2], g_0 is conjugate to some element in $\exp H$. Hence, to prove our theorem, it suffices to consider elements g whose semisimple part lies in $\exp H$, i.e. $g = \exp h_0 \cdot \exp N$, $h_0 \in H$, such that $N \in G(1, Ad \exp h_0)$. Let

 $\Delta(h_0) = \{\alpha \in \Delta; Ad \exp h_0 \cdot e_\alpha = e_\alpha\} = \{\alpha \in \Delta; \alpha(h_0) \in 2\pi i \mathbb{Z}\}.$ Then $G(1, Ad \exp h_0) = H + \sum_{\alpha \in \Delta(h_0)} Ce_\alpha$, and $\Delta(h_0)$ satisfies (i) $-\alpha \in \Delta(h_0)$ whenever $\alpha \in \Delta(h_0)$, and (ii) if $\alpha, \beta \in \Delta(h_0)$ and $\alpha + \beta \in \Delta$, then $\alpha + \beta \in \Delta(h_0)$. Hence $\Delta(h_0)$ is a subsystem of Δ , and we can choose a simple root system $\Pi(h_0) = \{\beta_1, \dots, \beta_r\}$ of $\Delta(h_0)$.

Lemma 1. To find an upper bound for ind (g) $(g \in Ad(G))$, it suffices to consider elements with semisimple part $\exp h_0$, where $h_0 \in iH_0$ and $\Pi(h_0)$ has cardinality $l=\operatorname{rank} G$.

Proof. Assume that $h_0 = x_1h_1 + \cdots + x_lh_l$ for some complex numbers x_i . For each $j=1, \dots, r$, since (exp $ad\ h_0-1$) $e_{\beta_j}=0$, we have $\beta_j(h_0)=2\pi ik_j$ for some $k_j \in \mathbb{Z}$. If k_j are all zero, then for any $N \in G(1, Ad \exp h_0)$ we have $[h_0, N]=0$, and $\exp h_0 \cdot \exp N = \exp(h_0 + N)$, i.e. $\operatorname{ind}(\exp h_0 \cdot \exp N) = 1$. So we assume some $k_j \neq 0$, hereafter.

Since $\exp h_0 = \exp(h_0 + \Omega)$, if we can find a positive integer d and integers n_1, \dots, n_l such that for $h = dh_0 + \sum_{j=1}^l 2\pi i n_j h_j$, [h, dN] = 0, then the index of $\exp h_0 \cdot \exp N$ divides d. For this, it suffices to choose d and n_j with $\alpha(h) = 0$ for all $\alpha \in \Delta(h_0)$, or equivalently for all $\alpha \in \Pi(h_0) = \{\beta_1, \dots, \beta_r\}$. Therefore, the problem reduces to finding d so that $\beta_i(\sum_{j=1}^l n_j h_j) = -dk_i$ has integral solutions n_1, \dots, n_l .

Choose $\beta_{r+1}, \dots, \beta_l \in \Delta$ so that $\{\beta_1, \dots, \beta_l\}$ is a maximal linearly independent subset of Δ . We write $\beta_i = \sum_{j=1}^l p_{i,j} \alpha_j$ where $p_{i,j}$ are integers. Consider the following system of linear equations:

$$p_{i1}n_1 + \dots + p_{il}n_l = -k_i$$
 $i = 1, \dots, r;$
 $p_{i1}n_1 + \dots + p_{il}n_l = 0$ $i = r+1, \dots, l.$

Since (p_{ij}) is a nonsingular integral matrix and k_i are integers, this has a (nontrivial) rational solution, say r_1, \dots, r_l .

Let $h_0'=2\pi i(r_1h_1+\cdots+r_lh_l)\in iH_0$, then $\beta_1,\cdots,\beta_l\in\Delta(h_0')$. Suppose we can find a positive integer d' and integers n_1',\cdots,n_l' such that $\beta(d'h_0'+\sum_{j=1}^l 2\pi in_j'h_j)=0$ for all $\beta\in\Delta(h_0')$, then $(n_1,\cdots,n_l)=(n_1',\cdots,n_l')$ is the solution for the following system of linear equations:

$$\begin{split} \sum_{j=1}^{l} p_{ij} n_j &= -d' k_i \qquad i = 1, \dots, r; \\ \sum_{j=1}^{l} p_{ij} n_j &= 0 \qquad \qquad i = r+1, \dots, l. \end{split}$$

Thus we have $n_j \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $\beta_i(\sum_{j=1}^l 2\pi i n_j h_j) = -2\pi i d' k_i$ $(i=1,\dots,r)$. Hence for $h=d'h_0+\sum_{j=1}^l 2\pi i n_j h_j$, we have $\beta_i(h)=0$ $(i=1,\dots,r)$ and so $\beta(h)=0$ for all $\beta \in \Delta(h_0)$.

We have proved that $\operatorname{ind}(\exp h_0 \cdot \exp N) \leq \operatorname{ind}(\exp h_0' \cdot \exp N)$. Therefore, we may replace h_0 by h_0' which satisfies Lemma 1 by our construction. ||

Given an $n \times n$ nonsingular integral matrix A, the Smith canonical form of A is a diagonal matrix $D = \operatorname{diag}(d_1, \dots, d_n)$ such that there are $Q_1, Q_2 \in GL(n, \mathbb{Z})$ with $A = Q_1DQ_2$ and $d_i \mid d_{i+1}$ (the positive integers d_i are called the elementary divisors of A). We shall denote the biggest one, d_n , by d(A).

Given $h_0 \in iH_0$ as in Lemma 1, the coefficient matrix $P = (p_{ij})$ of $\Pi(h_0)$ expressed in terms of a simple root system is a nonsingular $l \times l$ matrix. From the proof of Lemma 1, we see that $\operatorname{ind}(\exp h_0 \cdot \exp N) \leq d(P)$, so our problem is to find d(P).

Now let S be in the Weyl group $Ad(\Delta)$. Then S can be extended to an automorphism of the Lie algebra G, which can be extended to an inner automorphism σ of the Lie group Ad(G). Clearly $\operatorname{ind}(g)=\operatorname{ind}(\sigma g)$ for any automorphism σ of Ad(G). Therefore, to find an upper bound for $\operatorname{ind}(g)$ ($g \in Ad(G)$), we may replace g (whose semisimple part is $\exp h_0$) by an element whose semisimple part is $\exp Sh_0$ ($S \in Ad(\Delta)$).

On the other hand, $\exp h_0 = \exp(h_0 + \Omega)$, so we may replace h_0 by $T(\Omega)h_0$. Combining these and the proposition we stated at end of section 1, we get

Lemma 2. Let $-\alpha_0 = m_1\alpha_1 + \cdots + m_l\alpha_l$ be the highest root. To find an upper bound for ind(g) $(g \in Ad(G))$, it suffices to consider elements whose semisimple part has the form $\exp h$ $(h \in iH_0)$ with $(\alpha_1, h) \ge 0, \cdots, (\alpha_l, h) \ge 0$ and $(-\alpha_0, h) \le 1$.

Let $\tilde{\Pi} = \{\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_l\}$, be the extended simple root system. To simplify our problem further, we need some discussions in the Borel-Siebenthal theory. The following two lemmas are known. For the sake of completeness, we include a proof here.

Lemma 3. Let $h \in \overline{C}_0$ be an element satisfying Lemma 1, then $\Pi' = \widetilde{\Pi} \cap \Delta(h)$ is a simple root system of $\Delta(h)$ with respect to a suitable ordering.

Proof. Given any positive root $\beta = b_1 \alpha_1 + \cdots + b_l \alpha_l$, it suffices to prove that β can be written as a linear combination of roots in Π' with integral coefficients, all non-negative or all non-positive.

(a) $-\alpha_0 \notin \Delta(h)$, i.e. $(-\alpha_0, h) \notin \mathbb{Z}$.

Since $0 \le (-\alpha_0, h) \le 1$, so $0 < (-\alpha_0, h) < 1$. Then the inequality $0 \le b_1(\alpha_1, h) + \dots + b_l(\alpha_l, h) = (\beta, h) \le (-\alpha_0, h) < 1$ implies that $(\beta, h) = 0$ because $(\beta, h) \in \mathbb{Z}$. Hence $b_j(\alpha_j, h) = 0$ for all j; i.e. $(\alpha_j, h) = 0$ or $\alpha_j \in \Delta(h)$ whenever $b_j \ne 0$. Therefore β is a linear combination of $\alpha_j \in \Delta(h)$ with nonnegative coefficients.

(b) $-\alpha_0 \in \Delta(h)$, so $(-\alpha_0, h) = 0$ or 1.

If $(-\alpha_0, h)=0$, then $(\alpha_1, h)=\cdots=(\alpha_l, h)=0$ and h=0, which is the trivial case we have excluded (Lemma 1). Hence $(-\alpha_0, h)=1$, so $(\beta, h)=0$ or 1.

If $(\beta, h)=0$, the same argument as in (a) gives what we want.

If $(\beta, h)=1$, then $(-\alpha_0, h)=1$ and

$$0 = (-\alpha_0 - \beta, h) = (m_1 - b_1)(\alpha_1, h) + \cdots + (m_l - b_l)(\alpha_l, h).$$

Since $m_j \ge b_j$, $(\alpha_j, h) \ge 0$, we have $\alpha_j \in \Delta(h)$ whenever $m_j - b_j \ne 0$. Hence $\beta = -\alpha_0 - (m_1 - b_1)\alpha_1 - \cdots - (m_l - b_l)\alpha_l$ is a linear combination of roots in Π' with non-positive integral coefficients. \parallel

Therefore, $\Pi(h) = \tilde{\Pi} \cap \Delta(h)$ is a simple root system of $\Delta(h)$. By Lemma 1, we consider elements $h \in iH_0$ such that $\Pi(h)$ has cardinality l. If $\Pi(h) = \Pi$, then $\Delta(h) = \Delta$ and $h \in \Omega$, and in this case, $\exp h \cdot \exp N = \exp N$.

Lemma 4. If $\Pi(h) \neq \Pi$ has cardinality l, then $h=2\pi i h_j/m_j$ for some j such that $m_i > 1$.

Proof. Since $\Pi(h) = \Delta(h) \cap \tilde{\Pi}$, we have $\Pi(h) = \tilde{\Pi} - \{\alpha_j\}$ for some j > 0. Therefore $0 < (\alpha_j, h) < 1$ and $(-\alpha_0, h) = 1$ because $(-\alpha_0, h) \ge m_j(\alpha_j, h)$. For i > 0, $i \ne j$, we have $(\alpha_i, h) = 0$ or 1 and the inequality

$$m_i(\alpha_i, h) < m_i(\alpha_i, h) + m_j(\alpha_j, h) \le (-\alpha_0, h) = 1$$

implies that $(\alpha_i, h)=0$ and $m_j(\alpha_j, h)=(-\alpha_0, h)=1$. So $h=2\pi i h_j/m_j$. || In the case $m_i=1$, we have $\Pi(2\pi i h_j/m_i)=\Pi$.

Conclusion. Let G be a complex simple Lie algebra. To find an upper bound for $\{\operatorname{ind}(g); g \in Ad(G)\}$, it suffices to consider elements $g \in Ad(G)$ whose semisimple part has the form $\exp 2\pi i h_j / m_j$ for some j, i.e. $g = \exp 2\pi i h_j / m_j \cdot \exp N$. Clearly, $g^m = \exp m_j N$ for such g. We have proved:

Theorem. For any $g \in Ad(G)$, there exists i such that $g^{m_i} \in \exp G$. In other words, $\operatorname{ind}(g) \leq \max \{m_i; 1 \leq i \leq l\}$ for all $g \in Ad(G)$. This is the same as saying that $\operatorname{ind}(g) \in \{1, m_1, \dots, m_l\}$.

3. Existence of elements with index m_i (in case $m_i > 1$)

In [6], we have shown the existence of such elements in some cases. Here we shall give a unified short proof by using results in Steinberg [7].

We define an element x in a semisimple Lie algebra G to be regular if the centralizer $z_G(x) = \{y \in G; [x, y] = 0\}$ of x (in G) has minimal dimension. By a Borel subalgebra, we mean a maximal solvable subalgebra of G. If H is a Cartan subalgebra of G with root system Δ and $U = \sum_{\alpha>0} Ce_{\alpha}$, then B = H + U is a Borel subalgebra. Theorem 1 and its corollary in Steinberg [7] (pp. 110–112) have obviously the following Lie algebra analogues.

Theorem. Let G be a semisimple Lie algebra with a Cartan subalgebra H, and B=H+U a Borel subalgebra containing H. Let x be a nilpotent element in G. Then the following conditions are equivalent:

(a) x is regular.

- (b) x belongs to a unique Borel subalgebra.
- (c) x belongs to finitely many Borel subalgebras.
- (d) If $U = \sum_{\alpha > 0} Ce_{\alpha}$ and $x = \sum_{\alpha > 0} c_{\alpha}e_{\alpha}(c_{\alpha} \in C)$, then $c_{\alpha} \neq 0$ for any simple root α .

Corollary. If $x \in U$ is regular, then $z_G(x) \subset U$. In particular, $z_G(x)$ consists of nilpotent elements.

Retaining the notation above, consider $h_0=2\pi i h_j/m_j$. Then $\Pi=\tilde{\Pi}-\{\alpha_j\}$ is a simple root system in $\Delta(h_0)$ and $G(1,Ad\exp h_0)=H+\sum_{\sigma\in\Delta(h_0)}Ce_{\sigma}$. Let $N=\sum_{i=0,\dots,l:\ i\neq j}e_{\sigma_i}$. Applying the above theorem, we see that N is a regular element in the semisimple subalgebra $G(1,Ad\exp h_0)$, so the above corollary implies that any element of $G(1,Ad\exp h_0)$ which commutes with N must be nilpotent.

Let $g = \exp h_0 \cdot \exp N$. If $g = \exp x$ for some $x \in G$, then x has a decomposition $x = x_0 + N$, where x_0 is semisimple and $[x_0, N] = 0$. Clearly $x \in G(1, Ad g) = G(1, Ad \exp h_0)$. Since $N \in G(1, Ad \exp h_0)$, we have $x_0 \in G(1, Ad \exp h_0)$. But $[x_0, N] = 0$, so the above argument implies that x_0 is nilpotent. Thus $x_0 = 0$ because x_0 is also semisimple. This implies that $\exp h_0 = \exp x_0 = 1$ which is absurd $(m_i > 1)$. Therefore $g \notin \exp G$.

Next, let \mathfrak{G}_1 be the connected subgroup of $\mathfrak{G}=Ad$ G corresponding to the subalgebra $G_1=G(1,Ad\ g)$. Clearly, $g\in\mathfrak{G}_1$ because $\exp\ h_0$, $\exp\ N\in\exp\ G_1\subset\mathfrak{G}_1$. If $g^p=\exp\ x$ for some x in G, then x lies in G_1 because $g^p\in\mathfrak{G}_1$. (We have $G_1=\{x\in G;\exp\ x\in\mathfrak{G}_1\}$). But N is a regular nilpotent element in G_1 , it cannot commute with any nonzero semisimple element in G_1 . The same argument as above implies that the semisimple part of g^p must be 1, i.e., $\exp\ ph_0=1$ or $ph_0\in\Omega$. This cannot happen if $p< m_i$.

Therefore ind
$$(g)=m_i$$
.

Q.E.D.

The results in sections 2 and 3 give the following:

Theorem. Let G be a complex simple Lie algebra and $-\alpha_0 = m_1\alpha_1 + \cdots + m_1\alpha_1$ the highest root expressed in terms of a simple root system. Then

$${\text{ind}(g); g \in Ad(G)} = {1, m_1, \dots, m_l},$$

which is the set of all positive integers $\leq \max \{m_i; 1 \leq i \leq l\}$.

Corollary. ind (Ad(G)) is the least common multiple of $\{m_1, \dots, m_l\}$. We can list our result in the table:

Type of G	\boldsymbol{A}	\boldsymbol{B}	\boldsymbol{C}	D	G_{2}	F_4	$E_{\scriptscriptstyle 6}$	E_7	E_{8}
$\max \{ \operatorname{ind}(g) \}$	1	2	2	2	3	4	3	4	6
$\operatorname{ind}(Ad(G))$	1	2	2	2	6	12	6	12	60

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