

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

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ORDER TWO**

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ON GROUPS OF EXPONENT FOUR WITH GENERATORS OF ORDER TWO

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1. If x, y, \dots are elements of a group G , we define the *commutator* (x, y) of x and y by $(x, y) = x^{-1}y^{-1}xy$. More generally, we define *extended commutators* inductively by $(x, \dots, y, z) = ((x, \dots, y), z)$. In this paper we shall also be concerned with higher commutators of type $((a_1, \dots, a_s), (b_1, \dots, b_i), \dots, (c_1, \dots, c_r))$ which we denote by $(a_1, \dots, a_s; b_1, \dots, b_i; \dots; c_1, \dots, c_r)$. If we let G_i be the subgroup of G which is generated by all extended commutators of length i , (i.e., with i entries), then G_i is a characteristic subgroup of G , and the series $G = G_1 \supset G_2 \supset \dots$ is called the *lower central series* of G .¹

Let $G(n)$ ($n = 1, 2, \dots$) be the freest group of exponent 4 on n generators of order 2. That is, $G(n)$ is a group in which the fourth power of every element is the identity, 1, $G(n)$ is generated by n elements of order 2, and if H is any other group with these properties, then H is a homomorphic image of $G(n)$.

We prove $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$. For this purpose it may be assumed, since $G(n)$ is finite² and hence nilpotent, that $G(n)_{n+3} = 1$. Moreover, it will be enough to show $(x_1, \dots, x_{n+2}) = 1$ for all choices of x_1, \dots, x_{n+2} from among the generators of $G(n)$.

2. LEMMA 2.1. *If x, y, \dots, z are elements of order 2 in a group of exponent 4, then $(x, y)^2 = 1$, $(x, y, \dots, z)^2 = 1$, and $(x, y, x) = 1$.*

Proof. Since $(x, y) = xyxy = (xy)^2$, $(x, y)^2 = 1$. By induction, $(x, y, \dots, z)^2 = 1$, while $(y, x) = yxyx = x(x, y)x = (x, y)(x, y, x)$, so that $(x, y, x) = (y, x)^2 = 1$.

The relation $(x, y, \dots, z)^2 = 1$ will be the justification for future substitutions and will be used without specific mention.

THEOREM 2.1. $G(2)_3 = 1$.

Proof. By Lemma 2.1, if the generators of $G(2)$ are a and b , then $(a, b, a) = (b, a, a) = (a, b, b) = (b, a, b) = 1$.

3. LEMMA 3.1. *If a, b and c are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

Received October 26, 1959. Presented to the Society on September 3, 1959. This work was supported by a National Science Foundation predoctoral fellowship.

¹ For properties of commutators and the lower central series see Hall, [1], Ch. 10.

² See Sanov, [2], or Hall, [1], pp. 324-325.

- (1) $(a, b, c) \equiv (b, c, a)(c, a, b) \pmod{G_5}$
 (2) $(a, b; c, a) = (a, c; b, a) \equiv (a, c, b, a) \pmod{G_5}$
 (3) $(a, b, c, a) \equiv (b, c, a, b)(c, a, b, c) \pmod{G_5}.$

Proof. We may assume that a, b and c generate G . Now

$$abcabc = aba(a, c)b(b, c) = (a, b)(a, c)(a, c, b)(b, c).$$

Thus, modulo G_5 , $(abc)^2 = (a, b)(a, c)(b, c)(a, c, b)$. Hence

- $1 \equiv [(a, b)(a, c)(b, c)]^2 \pmod{G_5}$, so that, modulo G_5 ,
 $1 = (a, b)(a, c)(b, c)(a, b)(a, c)(b, c) = (a, b)(a, c)(a, b)(a, b; b, c)(a, c)(a, c; b, c)$,
 (4) $1 \equiv (a, b; a, c)(a, b; b, c)(a, c; b, c) \pmod{G_5}.$

But also

$$\begin{aligned} abc &= ca(a, c)b(b, c) \\ &= bc(c, b)a(a, b)(a, c)(a, c, b)(b, c) \\ &= ab(b, a)c(c, a)(c, b)(c, b, a)(a, b)(a, c)(a, c, b)(b, c), \end{aligned}$$

so that $1 = (b, a)(b, a, c)(c, a)(c, b)(c, b, a)(a, b)(a, c)(a, c, b)(b, c)$, and hence, modulo G_5 ,

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (b, a)(c, a)(c, b)(a, b)(a, c)(b, c)(b, a, c)(c, b, a)(a, c, b) \\ &= [(a, b)(a, c)(b, c)]^2(a, b, c)(b, c, a)(c, a, b). \end{aligned}$$

Thus (1) is proved. Replacing b by (a, b) in (1) gives $(a, b, c, a)(c, a; a, b) \equiv 1 \pmod{G_5}$ or (2). And (2) and (4) together give (3).

LEMMA 3.2. *If x_1, \dots, x_k and a are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then $(x_1, \dots, x_k, a) \equiv X \pmod{G_{k+2}}$, where X is a product of commutators of form (a, y_1, \dots, y_k) with y_1, \dots, y_k from among x_1, \dots, x_k .*

COROLLARY. *If $x_1, \dots, x_k, z_1, \dots, z_s$ and a are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(x_1, \dots, x_k, a, z_1, \dots, z_s) \equiv X \pmod{G_{k+s+2}}$$

where X is a product of commutators of form $(a, y_1, \dots, y_k, z_1, \dots, z_s)$ with y_1, \dots, y_k from among x_1, \dots, x_k .

Proof of Lemma 3.2. Certainly the lemma and corollary are true if $k = 1$. Assume for induction that both are true for $k = n - 1 \geq 1$.

Now by (1), modulo G_{n+2} , $(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, x_n, a) = (x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, a, x_n)(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}; a, x_n)$. But by the inductive assumption $(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, a, x_n)$ is a product of terms $(a, y_1, \dots, y_{n-1}, x_n)$, and $(x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}; a, x_n)$ is a product of terms $(a, x_n, y_1, \dots, y_{n-1})$. The lemma and its immediate corollary follow by induction.

THEOREM 3.1. $G(3)_5 = 1$.

Proof. Let a, b and c be the generators of $G(3)$. Consider any commutator $C = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$ in arguments a, b and c . We show $C = 1$. There is no loss of generality in taking $x_5 = a$. If a does not appear again in C , then by Theorem 2.1, $C = (1, x_5) = 1$. If a appears again, then by Lemma 3.2 and the assumption that $G(3)_6 = 1$, we may suppose $C = (a, x_2, x_3, x_4, a)$. By Lemma 2.1, if a appears a third time, then $C = 1$. Thus we may take $C = (a, b, c, b, a)$. Now $(a, b, c, b, a) = (b, c, a, b, a)(c, a, b, b, a) = (b, c, a, b, a)$ by (1). Replacing c by (b, c) in (3) gives $(a, b; b, c, c; a) = (b; b, c; a; b) = 1$, while replacing c by (b, c) in (2) gives $(a, b; b, c; a) = (b, c, a, b, a)$. Hence, $C = (a, b, c, b, a) = (b, c, a, b, a) = (a, b; b, c; a) = 1$, and the theorem is proved.

COROLLARY 1. *If a, b and c are elements of order 2 in a group of exponent 4, then*

- (1') $(a, b, c) = (b, c, a)(c, a, b)$
- (2') $(a, b; c, a) = (a, b, c, a)$
- (3') $(a, b, c, a) = (b, c, a, b)(c, a, b, c)$

Proof. These follow from Lemma 3.1.

COROLLARY 2. *If $x_1, \dots, x_k, y_1, \dots, y_s, z_1, \dots, z_t$ ($s \geq 2$) are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(x_1, \dots, x_k; y_1, \dots, y_s; z_1; \dots; z_t) \equiv AB \pmod{G_{k+s+t+1}}$$

where

$$A = (x_1, \dots, x_k; y_1, \dots, y_{s-1}; y_s; z_1; \dots; z_t)$$

$$B = (x_1, \dots, x_k, y_s; y_1, \dots, y_{s-1}; z_1; \dots; z_t).$$

Proof. This follows from (1').

The following corollary lists some relations for future use.

COROLLARY 3. *If a, b, c, d and f are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

- (5) $(a, b, c, d, c) \equiv (a, b, d, c, d) \pmod{G_6}$
- (6) $(b, c, a; d, f, a) \equiv 1 \pmod{G_7}$
- (7) $(a, f; b, d, c) \equiv (a, f, c; b, d)(a, f; b, d; c)$
- (8) $(b, f, d; a, c)(d, f, b; a, c) \equiv (b, d, f; a, c) \pmod{G_8}$.

Proof. By (3'), with a replaced by (a, b) and b replaced by d , $(a, b, d, c; a, b) = (d, c; a, b; d)(c; a, b; d; c) = (a, b; d, c; d)(a, b, c, d, c)$, so that, since $(a, b; d, c; d) = (a, b, d, c, d)$, (5) is true. By (2') and (3') with b replaced by (b, c) and c replaced by (d, f) , $(b, c, a; d, f, a) = (a; b, c; d, f; a) = (b, c; d, f; a; b, c)(d, f; b, c; a; d, f)$, so that (6) is true. Finally, (7) and (8) are obvious from (1').

4. LEMMA 4.1. *If a, b, c and d are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(9) \quad (a, b; c, d) \equiv (a, c; b, d)(a, d; b, c) \pmod{G_5}.$$

Proof. First, working modulo G_5 and collecting as we did in the proof of Lemma 3.1 we obtain $(abcd)^2 = T_2T_3T_4$ where

$$\begin{aligned} T_2 &= (a, b)(a, c)(b, c)(a, d)(b, d)(c, d) \\ T_3 &= (a, c, b)(a, d, c)(a, d, b)(b, d, c) \\ T_4 &= (a, d, b, c). \end{aligned}$$

Note that modulo G_5 , T_2, T_3 and T_4 commute, and $T_3^2 = T_4^2 = 1$. Hence, modulo $G_5, 1 = (abcd)^4 = T_2^2$. Collecting the (a, d) 's in T_2^2 we obtain $1 \equiv XABCY \pmod{G_5}$, where

$$\begin{aligned} X &= [(a, b)(a, c)(b, c)]^2 \\ A &= (b, c; b, d)(b, c; c, d)(b, d; c, d) \\ B &= (a, c; a, d)(a, c; c, d)(a, d; c, d) \\ C &= (a, b; a, d)(a, b; b, d)(a, d; b, d) \\ Y &= (a, b; c, d)(a, c; b, d)(a, d; b, c). \end{aligned}$$

Now modulo $G_5, X = 1$, while $A = B = C = 1$ by (2') and (3'). Hence, $1 \equiv (a, b; c, d)(a, c; b, d)(a, d; b, c) \pmod{G_5}$, which is (9).

COROLLARY 1. *If x_1, \dots, x_k and a are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then for $i = 2, \dots, k$,*

$$(x_1, a, x_2, a, \dots, x_i, \dots, x_k) \equiv (x_1, x_2, \dots, a, x_i, a, \dots, x_k) \pmod{G_{k+3}}.$$

Hence, if two of x_1, \dots, x_k, a are equal, $(x_1, a, x_2, a, \dots, x_k) \equiv 1 \pmod{G_{k+3}}$.

Proof. Let a, b, c and d be elements of order 2 in G . Then modulo G_6 ,

$$\begin{aligned} (b, a, c, a, d) &= (b, a; , c, a; d) \\ &= (b, a, d; c, a)(c, a, d; b, a) \\ &= (b, a, c; d, a)(c, a, b; d, a) \\ &= (b, c, a; d, a) \\ &= (b, c, a, d, a) . \end{aligned}$$

The first statement follows. Now the second statement is clearly true if a appears a third time, since then $(x_1, a, x_2, a, \dots, a, \dots, x_k) = (x_1, x_2, \dots, a, a, a, \dots, x_k) = 1$. If some x_i appears twice, then modulo $G_{k+3}(x_1, a, x_2, a, \dots, x_i, \dots, x_k) = (x_1, \dots, a, x_i, a, \dots, x_k) = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_i, a, x_i, \dots, x_k) = (x_1, x_i, x_2, x_i, \dots, a, \dots, x_k)$ (the second step following from (5)), and we are back to the case of three appearances of a . Thus the corollary is proved.

COROLLARY 2. *If a, b, c, d and f are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(10) \quad 1 \equiv (a, f, b; c, d)(a, f, c; b, d)(a, f, d; b, c) \pmod{G_6}$$

$$(11) \quad (a, c; d, f; b)(a, d; c, f; b) \equiv (c, d; a, f; b) \pmod{G_6} .$$

Proof. These follow from (9).

THEOREM 4.1. $G(4)_6 = 1$.

Proof. Let the generators of $G(4)$ be a, b, c and d and consider any commutator $C = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6)$ in a, b, c and d . It will be sufficient to prove $C = 1$ under the assumption that $G(4)_7 = 1$. As in the proof of Theorem 3.1, we may suppose that $C = (a, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, a)$. Moreover, if x_2, x_3, x_4 or x_5 is a , then by Theorem 2.1 or Corollary 1 of Lemma 4.1, $C = 1$. It will thus be sufficient to prove $(a, b, c, b, d, a) = 1$, $(a, b, c, d, b; a) = 1$, and $(a, c, b, d, b, a) = 1$. Now by Corollary 1 of Lemma 4.1, $(a, b, c, b, d, a) = (a, c, b, d, b, a) = 1$, while by (1'), $(a, b, c; b, d, a) = (a, c, b; b, d; a)(b, c, a; b, d; a)$, so that by (6) $(a, b, c; b, d; a) = 1$. Thus $(a, b, c, d, b, a) = (a, b, c, b, d, a)(a, b, c; b, d; a) = 1$, and the theorem is proved.

5. The main result, that $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$, has now been proved for $n = 2, 3$ and 4. In this section we derive an identity analogous to (1) and (9) for five generators. This identity enables us to prove, in § 6, that $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$ for $n \geq 5$.

LEMMA 5.1. *If a, b, c, d and f are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(12) \quad (a, b; c, d; f) \equiv (c, b; f, d; a)(f, b; a, d; c) \pmod{G_6} .$$

COROLLARY. *If $(x_1, \dots, x_k), (y_1, \dots, y_j), (z_1, \dots, z_m), a$ and b ($k, j, m \geq 1$) are elements of order 2 in a group G of exponent 4, then*

$$(13) \quad (x_1, \dots, x_k, a; y_1, \dots, y_j, b; z_1, \dots, z_m) \equiv C_1 C_2 \pmod{G_{k+j+m+3}} ,$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} C_1 &= (y_1, \dots, y_j; z_1, \dots, z_m; x_1, \dots, x_k, b; a) \\ C_2 &= (x_1, \dots, x_k; z_1, \dots, z_m; y_1, \dots, y_j, a; b) . \end{aligned}$$

Proof of Lemma 5.1. First, working modulo G_5 , we collect f 's in the expression $(abcdf)^2$ to get $(abcdf)^2 = (abcd)a(a, f)b(b, f)c(c, f)d(d, f)$. Then collecting b, c and d in that order we obtain $(abcdf)^2 = (abcd)^2 S_2 S_3 S_4$ where

$$\begin{aligned} S_2 &= (a, f)(b, f)(c, f)(d, f) \\ S_3 &= (a, f, d)(a, f, c)(a, f, b)(b, f, d)(b, f, c)(c, f, d) \\ S_4 &= (a, f, c, d)(a, f, b, d)(a, f, b, c)(b, f, c, d) . \end{aligned}$$

But as in the proof of Lemma 4.1, $(abcd)^2 \equiv T_2 T_3 T_4 \pmod{G_5}$, where

$$\begin{aligned} T_2 &= (a, b)(a, c)(a, d)(b, d)(c, d) \\ T_3 &= (a, c, b)(a, d, c)(a, d, b)(b, d, c) \\ T_4 &= (a, d, b, c) . \end{aligned}$$

Thus, modulo G_5 , $(abcdf)^2 = T_2 T_3 T_4 S_2 S_3 S_4$. But then, modulo G_6 ,

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (abcdf)^4 = T_2 T_3 T_4 S_2 S_3 T_2 T_3 T_4 S_2 S_3 \\ &= T_2 T_3 T_4 T_2 S_2 (S_2, T_2) S_3 (S_3, T_2) T_3 T_4 S_2 S_3 \\ &= (T_2 T_3 T_4)^2 S_2 (S_2, T_3) (S_2, T_2) S_3 (S_3, T_2) S_2 S_3 \\ &= S_2 (S_2, T_3) (S_2, T_2) S_3 (S_3, T_2) S_2 S_3 \\ &= S_2^2 (S_2, T_3) (S_2, T_2) S_3 (S_3, S_2) (S_3, T_2) S_3 \\ &= S_2^2 (S_2, T_3) (S_2, T_2) S_3^2 (S_3, S_2) (S_3, T_2) . \end{aligned}$$

But modulo G_6 , $S_3^2 = 1$, while S_2^2 is a product of commutators of weight 4. Thus the last relation may be rewritten as $1 \equiv A \pmod{G_6}$ where A is a product of commutators in a, b, c, d and f of weight 4 or 5; hence the factors of A commute modulo G_6 . Let A'_a be the product of all factors of A which do *not* contain a as argument, and let A_a be the product of the remaining factors of A . Then $1 \equiv A'_a A_a \pmod{G_6}$, so that, setting $a = 1$, $1 \equiv A'_a \pmod{G_6}$, and hence $1 \equiv A_a \pmod{G_6}$. Continuing this argument we finally arrive at $1 \equiv A_{abcdf} \pmod{G_6}$, where A_{abcdf} is the product of all factors of A which contain each of a, b, c, d and f . But what are

these factors? Clearly S_2^2 and (S_2, T_2) do not contain any such factors; and since each factor of S_2 and S_3 contains f , (S_3, S_2) cannot contain any such factors. We are left with (S_2, T_3) and (S_3, T_2) . The product of the desired factors of (S_2, T_3) is clearly

$$(a, f; b, d, c)(b, f; a, d, c)(c, f; a, d, b)(d, f; a, c, b) ,$$

while the product of the desired factors of (S_3, T_2) is

$$(a, f, d; b, c)(a, f, c; b, d)(a, f, b; c, d)(b, f, d; a, c)(b, f, c; a, d)(c, f, d; a, b) .$$

Hence, modulo G_6 ,

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (a, f; b, d, c)(b, f; a, d, c)(c, f; a, d, b)(d, f; a, c, b) \\ &\quad \cdot (a, f, d; b, c)(a, f, c; b, d)(a, f, b; c, d) \\ &\quad \cdot (b, f, d; a, c)(b, f, c; a, d)(c, f, d; a, b) . \end{aligned}$$

so that by (10)

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (a, f; b, d, c)(b, f; a, d, c)(c, f; a, d, b)(d, f; a, c, b) \\ &\quad \cdot (b, f, d; a, c)(b, f, c; a, d)(c, f, d; a, b) . \end{aligned}$$

Using (7) on the first four factors gives, modulo G_6 ,

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (a, f, c; b, d)(a, f; b, d; c)(b, f, c; a, d)(b, f; a, d; c) \\ &\quad \cdot (c, f, b; a, d)(c, f; a, d; b)(d, f, b; a, c)(d, f; a, c; b) \\ &\quad \cdot (b, f, d; a, c)(b, f, c; a, d)(c, f, d; a, b) \\ &= (a, f, c; b, d)(a, f; b, d; c)(b, f; a, d; c)(c, f, b; a, d)(c, f; a, d; b) \\ &\quad \cdot (d, f, b; a, c)(d, f; a, c; b)(b, f, d; a, c)(c, f, d; a, b) \\ &= (a, f, c; b, d)(a, f; b, d; c)(b, f; a, d; c)(c, f, b; a, d) \\ &\quad \cdot (c, f; a, d; b)(d, f; a, c; b)(b, d, f; a, c)(c, f, d; a, b) , \end{aligned}$$

where the last step follows from (8). Now applying (11) twice gives

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &= (a, f, c; b, d)(a, b; d, f; c)(c, f, b; a, d)(a, f; c, d; b) \\ &\quad \cdot (b, d, f; a, c)(c, f, d; a, b) , \end{aligned}$$

so that by (10)

$$1 = (a, f, c; b, d)(a, b; d, f; c)(a, f; c, d; b)(b, d, f; a, c)(c, f, a; b, d)$$

and hence by (8)

$$1 = (a, b; d, f; c)(a, f; c, d; b)(b, d, f; a, c)(a, c, f; b, d) .$$

Thus, by (7)

$$1 \equiv (a, b; d, f; c)(a, f; c, d; b)(a, c; b, d; f) \pmod{G_6} ,$$

so that interchanging a with b and c with f we get

$$1 \equiv (a, b; c, d; f)(c, b; f, d; a)(f, b; a, d; c) \pmod{G_6}$$

which is (12). Thus the lemma is proved.

The corollary follows immediately.

6. Having proved the crucial relation (12), we are now in a position to prove the main theorem.

THEOREM 6.1. *Let $G(n)$, ($n = 1, 2, \dots$) be the freest group of exponent 4 generated by n elements of order 2. Then $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$.*

Proof. The proof is by induction on n . We have the result for $n = 1, 2, 3$ and 4. Assuming the result true for n we now prove it for $n + 1$. As before, we may assume $G(n + 1)_{n+4} = 1$. Consider a commutator $C = (y_1, y_2, \dots, y_{n+3})$ in the generators x_1, \dots, x_n, a and b of $G(n + 1)$. As before, we may restrict attention to the case $C = (a, y_2, \dots, y_{n+2}, a)$. There are two possibilities to consider—*Case 1:* a appears again; *Case 2:* b appears twice. In either case we may assume that every x_i appears once, since otherwise, by the inductive assumption, $C = 1$.

Case 1. The proof in this case is by induction on the position of the middle a . Clearly $(a, y_2, a, \dots, a) = 1$. Assume that for some $i \geq 3$, $(a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-1}, a, \dots, a) = 1$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} &(a, y_2, \dots, y_i, a, y_{i+1}, \dots, y_{n+2}, a) \\ &= (a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-1}; y_i, a; y_{i+1}; \dots; y_{n+2}; a) \\ &= (a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-1}; y_i, a; a, y_{n+2}, \dots, y_{i+1}), \end{aligned}$$

where the last step follows from $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$. But by (13),

$$(a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-1}; y_i, a; a, y_{n+2}, \dots, y_{i+1}) = C_1 C_2$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} C_1 &= (a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-2}, y_i; a, y_{n+2}, \dots, y_{i+1}, a; y_{i-1}) \\ C_2 &= (a, y_2, \dots, y_{i-2}; a, y_{n+2}, \dots, y_{i+1}; y_{i-1}, a; y_i). \end{aligned}$$

Since y_i and y_{i-1} appear only once, by the assumption that $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$ we have $C_1 = C_2 = 1$. Hence, by induction, $C = 1$ if a appears three times.

Case 2. In this case also the proof is by induction, this time on the distance between the b 's. Let

$$C = (a, z_1, \dots, z_i, b, z_{i+1}, \dots, z_j, b, z_{j+1}, \dots, z_{n-1}, a),$$

where $0 \leq i < j \leq n - 1$ (that is, there might be no entries between

the a 's and the b 's). If $j - i = 1$, then clearly $C = 1$. Assume that $C = 1$ for $j - i = k \geq 1$. Then as in Case 1,

$$\begin{aligned} &(a, z_1, \dots, z_i, b, z_{i+1}, \dots, z_{i+k+1}, b, z_{i+k+2}, \dots, z_{n-1}, a) \\ &= (a, z_1, \dots, z_i, b, z_{i+1}, \dots, z_{i+k}; z_{i+k+1}, b; a, z_{n-1}, \dots, z_{i+k+2}) \\ &= C_1 C_2 \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} C_1 &= (a, \dots, b, \dots, z_{i+k-1}, z_{i+k+1}; a, z_{n-1}, \dots, z_{i+k+2}, b; z_{i+k}) = 1 \\ C_2 &= (a, \dots, b, \dots, z_{i+k-1}; a, z_{n-1}, \dots, z_{i+k+2}; z_{i+k}, b; z_{i+k+1}) = 1 \end{aligned}$$

Thus $C = 1$ for $j - i = k + 1$, so that by induction $C = 1$ if b appears twice.

Since $C = 1$ in both cases, we conclude that $G(n+1)_{n+3} = 1$, so that by induction $G(n)_{n+2} = 1$ for $n = 1, 2, \dots$.

7. The author conjectures that the class of $G(n)$ is precisely $n + 1$ for $n > 2$. As supporting evidence, he has constructed $G(n)/G(n)''$ and shown that its class is exactly n . Moreover, for $n = 3$ and $n = 4$, $G(n)''$ is fairly large, and $G(n)_{n+1} \neq 1$.

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The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is published quarterly, in March, June, September, and December. The price per volume (4 numbers) is \$12.00; single issues, \$3.50. Back numbers are available. Special price to individual faculty members of supporting institutions and to individual members of the American Mathematical Society: \$4.00 per volume; single issues, \$1.25.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 2120 Oxford Street, Berkeley 4, California.

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.), No. 6, 2-chome, Fujimi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

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