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REPLACEABLE NETS AND IMPROPER COLLINEATIONS
V. HAVEL

Abstract: In this Note there is answered the question what is the mutual connection between the following properties of a given net: (i) to be replaceable (in the sense of T.G. Ostrom) and (ii) to admit an improper collineation onto itself (in the sense of V.D. Belousov).

Key words: Net, affine plane, proper and improper collineation, replaceable net, Ostrom net.

Classification: Primary 51A10, 51A99

Secondary 20N99

§ 1. Fundamental notions. Under an incidence structure (more precisely, regular incidence structure) we understand a couple $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$, where \mathcal{P} is a set and \mathcal{L} is a non-void set of some at least two-element subsets of the set \mathcal{P} , satisfying (i) for all $a, b \in \mathcal{P}$, $a \neq b$, there exists at most one $c \in \mathcal{L}$ such that $a, b \in c$. As a consequence of (i), the incidence structure $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ satisfies also (ii) for all $a, b \in \mathcal{L}$, $a \neq b$, there exists at most one $c \in \mathcal{P}$ such that $c \in a, b$.

Some denotations: Let $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ be an incidence structure. Elements of \mathcal{P} , respectively of \mathcal{L} will be called points, respectively lines. Non-disjoint distinct lines a, b have just one point in common; this point will be called point of

intersection and will be denoted by $a \cap b$.

Two distinct points a, b lying on the same line are said to be joined and the line containing a and b will be denoted by $a \cup b$.

We say an incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ is embedded into an incidence structure $\mathcal{I}' = (\mathcal{P}', \mathcal{L}')$ if \mathcal{P} is a subset of \mathcal{P}' and every line of \mathcal{I} is a subset of a line of \mathcal{I}' ; sometimes we shall use only a shorter formulation " \mathcal{P} is embedded into \mathcal{I}' " .

Now we will formulate some further conditions which may be satisfied in an incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$; (iii) any two distinct points of \mathcal{I} are joined.

(Join condition)

(iv'), resp. (iv). For every line a of \mathcal{I} $\{x \in \mathcal{L} \mid x = a \vee x \cap a = \emptyset\}$ is a partition of a subset (depending on a) of \mathcal{P} , respectively a partition of \mathcal{P} .

(Weak, respectively strong parallelity condition)

If an incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ satisfies the weak parallelity condition then $\parallel = \{(a, b) \in \mathcal{L} \times \mathcal{L} \mid a = b \vee a \cap b = \emptyset\}$ is an equivalence relation on \mathcal{L} called parallelity relation or briefly: parallelity.

If an incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ satisfies the weak parallelity condition then

$$\#(\mathcal{L}/\parallel) = \#\{x \in \mathcal{L} \mid x = a \vee x \cap a = \emptyset \mid a \in \mathcal{L}\}$$

will be called the degree of \mathcal{I} .

An incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ satisfying the strong parallelity condition and having degree ≥ 3 is called a net.

In a net $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ it holds $\#a = \#b$ for all $a, b \in \mathcal{L}$ and this cardinal number is called the order of the net.

A net satisfying the join condition is called an affine plane. Let $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$, $\mathcal{I}' = (\mathcal{P}', \mathcal{L}')$ be incidence structures and σ a mapping of \mathcal{P} into \mathcal{P}' , we shall denote this mapping $\sigma: \mathcal{P} \rightarrow \mathcal{P}'$ also by $\sigma: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}'$. We say σ is join preserving if for any two distinct joined points a, b of \mathcal{I} with distinct images $\sigma(a) \neq \sigma(b)$ it follows that $\sigma(a), \sigma(b)$ are joined in \mathcal{I}' .

If σ is bijective and both σ, σ^{-1} are join preserving then σ will be called a collineation. A collineation σ will be said to be proper if for every $a \in \mathcal{L}$ it follows $\{\sigma(x) \mid x \in a\} \in \mathcal{L}'$; otherwise σ is called improper. A collineation $\sigma: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}'$ is called an autocollineation of \mathcal{I} . Another denotation for a proper collineation, respectively for a proper autocollineation is isomorphism, respectively automorphism. If there exists an isomorphism $\sigma: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}'$ then \mathcal{I} and \mathcal{I}' are said to be isomorphic.

A net $\mathcal{N} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ is said to be replaceable if $id_{\mathcal{P}}$ (the identity mapping of \mathcal{P}) is an improper collineation of \mathcal{N} onto some net $\mathcal{N}' = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}')$ with $\mathcal{L}' \neq \mathcal{L}$; \mathcal{N}' is then a replacing net of \mathcal{N} .

§ 2. Replaceable nets versus nets admitting improper autocollineations

Proposition 1. a) If there exists an improper collineation of a net $\mathcal{N} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ then \mathcal{N} is replaceable.

b) If there exists an improper collineation of an incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ onto an incidence structure $\mathcal{I}' = (\mathcal{P}', \mathcal{L}')$ then $id_{\mathcal{P}}$ is an improper collineation of \mathcal{I} on a

convenient incidence structure $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$ with $\mathcal{L}^* \neq \mathcal{L}$.

Proof. b) Let there exist an improper collineation $\alpha: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}'$. We put $\mathcal{L}^* = \{\{\alpha^{-1}(x) \mid x \in \alpha\} \mid \alpha \in \mathcal{L}'\}$ and get $\mathcal{I}^* = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$, an incidence structure which is isomorphic to \mathcal{I}' . As it is seen, $\mathcal{L}^* \neq \mathcal{L}$ and $id_{\mathcal{P}}: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}^*$ is an improper collineation.

a) Let there exist an improper collineation $\alpha: \mathcal{N} \rightarrow \mathcal{N}'$. We put again $\mathcal{L}^* = \{\{\alpha^{-1}(x) \mid x \in \alpha\} \mid \alpha \in \mathcal{L}'\}$ and obtain a net $\mathcal{N}^* = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$ isomorphic with \mathcal{N}' . Here $\mathcal{L}^* \neq \mathcal{L}$ and $id_{\mathcal{P}}: \mathcal{N} \rightarrow \mathcal{N}^*$ is an improper collineation so that \mathcal{N} is replaceable. \square

Proposition 2. a) A net admits an improper autocollineation if and only if it admits an isomorphic replacing net.

b) An incidence structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ admits an improper autocollineation if and only if $id_{\mathcal{P}}$ is an improper collineation of \mathcal{I} onto some incidence structure $\mathcal{I}^* = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$ isomorphic to \mathcal{I} .

Proof. a) By proposition 1 b), if the structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ admits an improper autocollineation α then $id_{\mathcal{P}}$ is an improper collineation of \mathcal{I} onto a convenient incidence structure $\mathcal{I}^* = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$ where \mathcal{L}^* is different from \mathcal{L} and $\alpha: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}^*$ is an isomorphism. Conversely, if $id_{\mathcal{P}}$ is an improper collineation of a given structure $\mathcal{I} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ onto some structure $\mathcal{I}^* = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}^*)$ isomorphic to \mathcal{I} then there is an isomorphism $\alpha: \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathcal{I}^*$ and this α is at the same time an improper autocollineation of \mathcal{I} .

b) The argumentation from point a) can be carried over onto point b) analogously as it was made in the proof of proposition 1. \square

Example. Investigate the net $\mathcal{N} = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\}$,
 $\{a_1, a_2, a_3, b_1, b_2, b_3, c_1, c_2, c_3\}$ from Fig. 1. The mapping
 $1 \mapsto 4 \mapsto 8 \mapsto 2 \mapsto 6 \mapsto 9 \mapsto 1, 3 \mapsto 3, 5 \mapsto 5, 7 \mapsto 7$
 is an improper autocollineation of \mathcal{N} . Further, the net $\mathcal{N}' =$
 $= \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\}, a'_1, a'_2, a'_3, b'_1, b'_2, b'_3, c'_1, c'_2, c'_3\}$ from Fig.
 2 is a replacing net of \mathcal{N} and is isomorphic to \mathcal{N} .

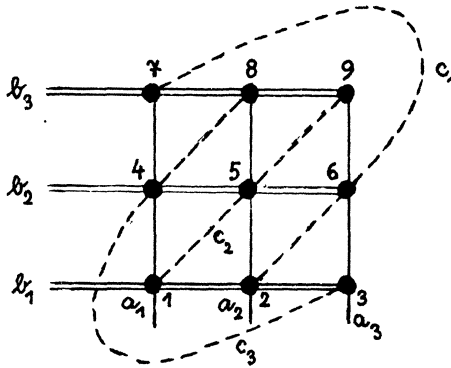


Fig. 1

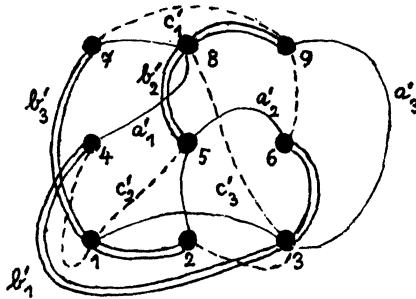


Fig. 2

A net will be called Ostrom net of degree k and of dimension 2 if it is isomorphic with the net $F_{(k-1)} = (F^k; \{(x_1, x_2, \mu x_1 + v_1, \mu x_1 + v_1, x_2, \mu x_2 + v_2) | x_1, x_2 \in F\} \cup \{(a_1, y_1, a_2, y_2) | y_1, y_2 \in F\} | a_1, a_2 \in F\}$

Theorem 1 (J. Klouda). A net of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$ admits an improper autocollineation if and only if it is Ostrom net of degree k and of dimension 2. An isomorphic replacing net for $F_{(k-1)}$ ($F = GF(k-1)$) is the net

$$F_{[k-1]} = (F^4, \{ \{ (x_1, \mu x_1 + v_1, x_2, \mu x_2 + v_2) \mid x_1, x_2 \in F \} \mid \mu, v_1, v_2 \in F \} \cup \{ \{ (a_1, y_1, a_2, y_2) \mid y_1, y_2 \in F \} \mid a_1, a_2 \in F \}$$

with isomorphism $\alpha: F_{(k+1)} \rightarrow F_{[k-1]}, (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) \mapsto (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4)$.

The set of all improper autocollineations of $F_{(k-1)}$ is $\{ \lambda \circ \alpha \mid \lambda \in \text{Aut } F_{(k-1)} \}$ where $\text{Aut } F_{(k-1)}$ is the set of all automorphisms of $F_{(k-1)}$ (determined f.e. in [1], Theorem 4 and in [6]).

Proof: cf. [5].

§ 3. Some properties of replaceable nets of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$

Proposition 3. Let $\mathcal{N} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ be a replaceable net of degree k and of order m having a replacing net $\mathcal{N}^* = (\mathcal{P}^*, \mathcal{L}^*)$ of degree k^* and of order m^* . Then $k^* = k$, $m^* = m$, $m \leq (k-1)^2$ and every line of \mathcal{N}^* is an incidence structure which is embedded into \mathcal{N} and satisfies the join condition and weak parallelity condition. Moreover, every line of \mathcal{N}^* is an affine plane (of order $k-1$) embedded into \mathcal{N} if and only if $m = (k-1)^2$.

Proof. From $\# \mathcal{P} = m^2 = m^{*2}$ it follows $m = m^*$. The number of all joined (non-ordered) couples of distinct points of \mathcal{N} respectively of \mathcal{N}^* is $\frac{1}{2} m^2 k (m-1)$ respectively $\frac{1}{2} m^{*2} k^* (m^*-1)$ so that $k = k^*$. As \mathcal{N}^* is a replacing net for \mathcal{N} there exists a line $a^* \in \mathcal{L}^* \setminus \mathcal{L}$. First we shall show

that $\#(a' \cap a) \leq k-1$ for all $a \in \mathcal{L}$: Suppose $\#(a' \cap a) \geq k$ for some $a \in \mathcal{L}$ and take a point $A \in a' \setminus a$ (which exists because of $\#a = \#a'$, $a \neq a'$). Now we construct the joining lines of A with each of mentioned k points (these joining lines exist since any two distinct points of a line of \mathcal{R}' must be joined in \mathcal{R}). So we get (in \mathcal{R}) at least k lines through A intersecting with a , a contradiction. - Now take a point $B \in a'$.

For every line $b \in \mathcal{L}$ through B we have $\#(a' \cap b) \leq k-1$ and every point of $a' \setminus \{B\}$ lies on exactly one such a line. Consequently $m = \#a' \leq k(k-2) + 1 = (k-1)^2$. 1) Every line $l' \in \mathcal{L}'$ determines the set $\mathcal{L}_{l'} = \{a \cap l' \mid a \in \mathcal{L}, \#(a \cap l) \geq 2\}$. This set $\mathcal{L}_{l'}$ is non-void: Actually, $\#l' \geq 2$ and any two distinct points of l' must be joined in \mathcal{R} as \mathcal{R}' is a replacing net for \mathcal{R} . It follows that $(l', \mathcal{L}_{l'})$ is an incidence structure which is embedded into \mathcal{R} and satisfies the join condition and weak parallelity condition. -

Moreover, a line $a' \in \mathcal{L}' \setminus \mathcal{L}$ is an affine plane (of order $k-1$) embedded into \mathcal{R} if and only if for every $A' \in a'$ there are precisely k lines from ${}^{\circ}\mathcal{L}_{a'}$ going through A' and any such line intersects a' in just $k-1$ points. This occurs if and only if $\#a' = k(k-2) + 1 = (k-1)^2$. Further we will show that for $m = (k-1)^2$ every line $l' \in \mathcal{L}'$ is an affine plane of order $(k-1)^2$ embedded into \mathcal{R} : Assume on the contrary that there is a line $c \in \mathcal{L} \cap \mathcal{L}'$. We take a line $a' \in \mathcal{L}' \setminus \mathcal{L}$ (the existence of which was stated above). Then $a' \cap c = \emptyset$ as in case $a' \cap c \neq \emptyset$ it would follow $\#(a' \cap c) = k-1$ and this is impossible while the lines a' , $c \in \mathcal{L}'$ are not parallel in

1) $k, m < k_0$

\mathcal{N}^0 and as such they have only one point common. Now choose a line $d \in \mathcal{L}$ which goes through a point $D \in \alpha^0$ and is not parallel to c . Then $c \cap d, D$ must be contained in some line $d' \in \mathcal{L}^0$. By the above argumentation used on $c \in \mathcal{L}$, $d' \in \mathcal{L}^0$ we obtain $\#(c \cap d') = k - 1$.

On the other side c and d' are not parallel lines in \mathcal{N}^0 and have a one-point intersection. Thus we have obtained a contradiction. \square

Proposition 4. Let $\mathcal{N} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ be a replaceable net of degree k and of order $(k - 1)^2$ with a replacing net $\mathcal{N}^0 = (\mathcal{P}^0, \mathcal{L}^0)$. Then the following conditions are valid: a) For any disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ there exists $c \in \mathcal{L}$ such that $\alpha \cap c, \beta \cap c \neq \emptyset$ (such $c \in \mathcal{L}$ will be called a cross-line of α, β). All cross-lines of given disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ are parallel and every line of \mathcal{N} parallel with such a cross-line is either a cross-line too or is disjoint with both α, β . b) For any two disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ and for every $c \in \mathcal{L}$ with $c \cap \alpha, c \cap \beta \neq \emptyset$ it follows $\alpha \cap \beta \in c$.

Proof. a) Let α, β be disjoint lines of \mathcal{N}^0 . Then all prolongations of lines of the affine plane α (i.e., these lines of \mathcal{N} which contain some line of α) contain altogether $k(k-1)(k-1)(k-2) = (k-1)^4 - (k-1)^2$ points outside α so that these points exhaust $\mathcal{P} \setminus \alpha$. Thus at least one of prolongations must be a cross-line of α, β . If a, b are two non-parallel cross-lines of given disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ then $a \cap b \in \alpha \cap \beta$, a contradiction. Thus two distinct cross-lines of given disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ are always parallel.

Let there be given disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^0$ and a point $A \in \alpha$.

Choose an arbitrary $\gamma \in \mathcal{L} \setminus \{\alpha\}$ going through A . Then β, γ are non-parallel lines of \mathcal{N} and the points $A, \beta \cap \gamma$ are joined in \mathcal{N} (as they are joined in \mathcal{N}^*). Thus every point $A \in \alpha$ is contained in a cross-line of α, β . Similarly, every point $B \in \beta$ is contained in a cross-line of α, β . We can result: For any given disjoint $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^*$ there exist cross-lines of them. These cross-lines belong to the same parallelity class of \mathcal{N} and such lines of this parallelity class which are not cross-lines of α, β are disjoint with both α, β .

b) Let $\alpha, \beta \in \mathcal{L}^*$ be not parallel in \mathcal{N}^* and let $c \in \mathcal{L}$ not contain the point $\alpha \cap \beta$. Thus through $\alpha \cap \beta$ there go just $k-1$ lines of the affine plane α and just $k-1$ lines of the affine plane β . The prolongations of these lines are not parallel with c . Since $\#(\alpha \cap \beta) = 1$ there are just $2(k-1)$ of such prolongations. As $2(k-1) > k$ ($\Leftrightarrow k > 2$) we have a contradiction to the assumption that k is the degree of \mathcal{N} (and that consequently through $\alpha \cap \beta$ there go just k lines of \mathcal{N}).

Theorem 2. A net of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$ is replaceable if and only if it is Ostrom net of degree k and of dimension 2. Thus a net of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$ is replaceable if and only if it admits an improper autocollineation.

Proof. If a net is Ostrom net of degree k and of dimension 2 then it is replaceable, by proposition 1 and by theorem 1. -

If a net of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$ is replaceable then proposition 4 permits to apply the argumentation from the proofs of theorems 2,1 and 2,3 from [5] so that by theo-

rem 2,4 from [5] the given net must be Ostrom net of degree k and of dimension 2. \square

Proposition 5 (cf. [2], proposition 7.2 on p. 22²⁾). Let $\mathcal{N} = (\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L})$ be a net of degree k and of order $(k-1)^2$. Then \mathcal{N} is replaceable if and only if the following condition is valid: Any two distinct joined points of \mathcal{N} are contained in just one affine plane of order $k-1$ embedded into \mathcal{N} .

Proof. The part b) is obvious because every line of a replacing net \mathcal{N}' of \mathcal{N} is an affine plane of order $k-1$ embedded into \mathcal{N} and any two different points which are joined (simultaneously in \mathcal{N} and in \mathcal{N}') determine just one line in \mathcal{N} containing both these points and just one line in \mathcal{N}' containing both these points.

We go over to part a). Denote by \mathcal{L}' the set of all affine planes of order $k-1$ embedded into \mathcal{N} . We shall show that $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}')$ is an incidence structure satisfying the strong parallelity conditions: Obviously any two non-joined points cannot be contained in the same $l' \in \mathcal{L}'$ whereas any two distinct joined points are contained in just one $l' \in \mathcal{L}'$ by assumption. Thus $(\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{L}')$ is an incidence structure.

Now investigate a point a and an affine plane $\beta \in \mathcal{L}'$ not through a . We assert that there exists just one affine plane $\alpha \in \mathcal{L}'$ going through a and being disjoint to β . Again (as in the proof of proposition 4 a)) we shall show that through any point outside $\beta \in \mathcal{L}'$ there goes a line of \mathcal{N}

 2) The reasoning from [2] (p. 22, i.e. the only reference onto theorem 2 from T.G.Ostrom's "Net with critical deficiency", Pac.J.Math. 14(1964),1381-1387 and onto theorem 6 from T.G.Ostrom's "Semi-translation planes", Trans.Amer.Math.Soc. 111 (1964),1-18) seems to be unsatisfactory.

having a non-void intersection with β : Indeed, the total number of points lying on prolongations of lines of the plane β is $k(k-1)(k-1)(k-2)$. As this number is equal to $(k-1)^4 - (k-1)^2$, we obtain in this way all points of $\mathcal{P} \setminus \beta$.

Let us return to a couple formed by a point a and an affine plane $\beta \in \mathcal{L}^*$ not containing a and choose a line $l \in \mathcal{L}$, going through a and having a non-void intersection with β . We know that $\#(l \cap \beta) = k-1$. Every couple of distinct points a, x with $x \in l \cap \beta$ is obtained in some $\alpha_x \in \mathcal{L}^*$ and the total number of such α_x is $k-1$. Thus through a it goes still the remaining affine plane $\alpha \in \mathcal{L}^*$. We assert that $\alpha \cap \beta = \emptyset$: Indeed, if on the contrary, $\alpha \cap \beta \neq \emptyset$, then there exists just one common point c of α, β so that $a = l \cap (\alpha \cup c)$ and consequently $a \in \beta$, a contradiction. \square

R e f e r e n c e s

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