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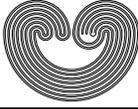
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ABSTRACT. Tree-likeness of generalized continua is defined by means of inverse limits of locally finite trees with proper bonding maps. The main theorem of this paper shows that the Freudenthal compactification preserves and reflects tree-likeness. Some consequences of interest are given.

1. INTRODUCTION

Classical continuum theory is a powerful branch of topology concerning compact spaces. However, the class of non-compact spaces is far from being irrelevant and it seems natural to explore a generalized continuum theory for locally compact spaces.

The proper category provides a very convenient framework for this task. Recall that a continuous map $f : X \rightarrow Y$ is said to be *proper* if for any compact subset $K \subset Y$, $f^{-1}(K)$ is compact in X . In particular, classes of spaces and maps of interest in continuum theory are extended to the proper category.

This paper is focused on the well-known class of tree-like spaces, usually described as inverse limits of sequences of compact trees. Compactness and connectedness of tree-like spaces readily follow from this description. Unfortunately, connectedness does not need to be preserved by inverse limits of non-compact spaces, and this requires connectedness in the definition of a tree-like space in the proper category; that is, a generalized

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