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## representation ring vs burnside ring

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Let  $G$  be a finite group and let  $k$  be any field. If  $X$  is a  $G$ -set, then we may consider the vector space  $V_k(X)$  over  $k$  which has  $X$  as a basis. In this manner  $V_k(X)$  becomes a representation of  $G$  via action induced from  $X$  and linearly extended to  $V_k(X)$ . It can be shown that  $V_k(X)$  only depends on the isomorphism class of  $X$ , so we have a well-defined mapping:

$$[X] \mapsto [V_k(X)]$$

which can be easily extended to the function

$$\beta : \Omega(G) \rightarrow R_k(G);$$

$$\beta([X]) = [V_k(X)]$$

where on the left side we have the Burnside ring and on the right side the representation ring. It can be shown, that  $\beta$  is actually a ring homomorphism, but in most cases it neither injective nor surjective. But the following theorem due to Segal gives us some properties of  $\beta$ :

**Theorem (Segal).** Let  $\beta : \Omega(G) \rightarrow R_{\mathbb{Q}}(G)$  be defined as above with rationals as the underlying field. If  $G$  is a  $p$ -group for some prime number  $p$ , then  $\beta$  is surjective. Furthermore  $\beta$  is an isomorphism if and only if  $G$  is cyclic.