

A general definition of dependent type theories

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Logic Colloquium 2017, impromptu Type Theory session
adapted from Stockholm Logic Seminar, 15 Feb 2017

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Motivation

Some meta-theorems

T_{Π} : dependent type theory with just Π -types.

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Theorem (Hofmann, rephrased by Lumsdaine–Warren)

\mathcal{C} a comprehension category with pseudo-stable Π -type structure. Then the CwA \mathcal{C}_ carries strictly stable Π -type structure.*

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T_{ETT} : dependent type theory with Π -, Σ -, unit, and extensional Id-types.

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Then the $\mathcal{C} \text{wA } \mathcal{C}_*$ carries strictly stable Π -, Σ -, etc. structure.*

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$\mathsf{T}_{\mathsf{HoTT}}$: dependent type theory with Π -, Σ -, unit, Id-, W-types, finite sums, homotopy-coequalisers, and an ω -hierarchy of univalent universes closed under these.

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Then the $\mathbf{C}_w \mathbf{A} \mathbf{C}_*$ carries strictly stable Π -, Σ -, etc. structure.*

General project

Hope to **generalise** all of these (and other theorems/constructions) — to allow statements like:

Dream

For any dependent type theory \mathbb{T} , the syntax of \mathbb{T} presents the initial contextual category with \mathbb{T} -structure.

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Dream

For any dependent type theory T , the syntax of T presents the initial contextual category with T -structure.

- ▶ Avoid handwaving “straightforward” extensions from toy systems to much larger cases
- ▶ Give single formalisation that provides results/constructions off-the-shelf for your new extension of type theory
- ▶ Articulate precise assumptions required in results/constructions, e.g. “For any extension of ITT axiomatisable without further judgemental equality rules ...”

Hard part: not the proofs, but the **definition** of general type theories.

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Why isn't the logical framework a satisfactory solution? Or pure type systems, or other existing setups?

0. For many purposes, they are totally satisfactory! But not all:
 1. Don't give exactly the type theories/structures we expected
 2. Justification depends in part on Hofmann's conservativity theorem—one of the results we want to generalise!
 3. Still quite non-trivial to carve out generality/conditions for the theorems above.
 4. Unclear how to give account of *weak* structure with LF (e.g. pseudo-stable, strictly stable).

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- ▶ (...categorical analysis, ad hoc coherence constructions...) Natural mathematical settings/examples: toposes, Quillen model categories, ...

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Hope all levels should be generalised! – eventually.

Focus for today: **where syntax and semantics meet.**

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Today's special

We propose a **general definition of syntactic dependent type theories**, which:

- ▶ includes the specific example type theories above
- ▶ suffices for the example theorems/constructions above
- ▶ is reasonably natural
- ▶ is as conventional as possible, in specific cases

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Expected semantic counterpart: a corresponding class of **essentially algebraic extensions of contextual categories**.

(A closely related definition has been given independently by Isaev.)

Syntax

General outline

In practice, a type theory is specified by:

- ▶ **signature** for raw syntax (symbols, arities with binding);
- ▶ **rules** for the typing judgements

Signature: definitions already established (Aczel, Belo; Ahrens, Matthes, Uustalu); quite clean, straightforward.

Interesting part: what are **rules**?

Rules vs. closure condition

Key distinction: rules vs. closure conditions.

Rule as you
write it down:

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash \Gamma \text{ cxt} \\ \Gamma \vdash A \text{ type} \\ \Gamma, x:A \vdash B \text{ type} \end{array}}{\Gamma \vdash \Pi_{x:A} B \text{ type}}$$

Interpretation of rule as **closure condition** on
judgement relations:

Given any

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \text{raw context } \Gamma, \quad \text{s.t. } \vdash \Gamma \text{ cxt is derivable,} \\ \text{raw type } A, \quad \text{s.t. } \Gamma \vdash A \text{ type is derivable,} \\ \text{raw type } B, \quad \text{s.t. } \Gamma, x:A \vdash B \text{ type is derivable,} \end{array}}{\text{then } \Gamma \vdash \Pi_{x:A} B \text{ type is derivable.}}$$

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Common explanation: the formal thing is the closure condition; “rule” is just informal notation.

We take the “rule” more seriously: a **syntactic object** we recognise and typecheck; specification of a type theory is a family of rules.

Any rule **gives rise to** a closure condition, used to define the typing judgements.

Well-typedness of rules

Can't have arbitrary expressions in rules: must **type-check** suitably.

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash \Gamma \text{ cxt} \quad \Gamma \vdash A \text{ type} \\ \Gamma, x:A \vdash B \text{ type} \\ \Gamma, x:A \vdash b : B \end{array}}{\Gamma \vdash \lambda x:A. b : \Pi_{x:A} B}$$

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Note: to type-check conclusion of Π -ABSTR, need to use Π -FORM.

So: put well-ordering on rules. Type-check later rules over earlier ones.

Ambient contexts

Intend all rules to hold over **arbitrary contexts**. (E.g. “necessitation” rule not covered.)

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Omitting ambient context in writing rules—not just abuse of notation!

Metavariables

Closure conditions involve **metavariables**. What represents these in syntax of rules?

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \vdash A \text{ type} \quad x:A \vdash B \text{ type} \\ \vdash f : \Pi_{x:A} B \quad \vdash a : A \end{array}}{\vdash \text{app}_{x:A.B} (f, a) : B[a/x]}$$

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Approach 1: specific syntactic entity.

- ▶ then also need explicit substitution, and rules for that;
- ▶ essentially duplicating machinery of variable-handling, substitution...

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Definition, stage 1

Ready now for full definition, in several stages.

Definitions

- ▶ A **(binding) arity**: a finite set (“arguments”), each marked with a syntactic class (type/term) and a finite set (“bound variables”).¹
- ▶ A **(binding) signature**: a set (“symbols”), each with a syntactic class and an arity.

¹Or use natural numbers instead of finite sets... Treatment of variables suppressed today.

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Definitions

- ▶ **raw syntax** over a signature
- ▶ **substitution** on raw syntax
- ▶ translation of raw syntax along signature morphisms
- ▶ basic properties of all these

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Definition, stage 2

Definition

A **raw rule** of arity a , over signature Σ :

- ▶ premises: well-ordered collection of raw judgements
- ▶ conclusion: single raw judgement
- ▶ all over $\Sigma + a$: extension of Σ with symbols for arguments of a
- ▶ each argument of a introduced by a unique premise

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Definitions

- ▶ **instantiation** of an arity over a signature and a raw context
- ▶ given instantiation of a over Σ : **translation** of raw syntax over $\Sigma + a$ to over Σ (using substitution!)
- ▶ implementation of raw rule as **closure condition**: for every instantiation of its arity, if translations of premises hold, so does translation of conclusion
- ▶ **derivability** over a collection of raw rules

Definition, stage 3

Definition

Raw rule is **well-typed** relative to a collection T of raw rules if:

- ▶ presuppositions of each premise are derivable over T plus earlier premises
- ▶ presuppositions of conclusion are derivable over T

(Subtlety: not really over T , but over its translation from Σ to $\Sigma + a$.)

²i.e. constructively well-founded partial order

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Definition

A **fully verbose type theory**:

- ▶ signature;
- ▶ well-ordered² collection of raw rules,
- ▶ each raw rule well-typed over earlier raw rules of collection
- ▶ each symbol introduced by a unique rule of correct arity;
- ▶ each symbol also has suitable congruence rule.

²i.e. constructively well-founded partial order

Main definition, version 1

Definition

An (economically specified) type theory:

- ▶ signature;
- ▶ well-ordered collection of raw rules,
- ▶ each raw rule well-typed over
 - ▶ standard structural core,
 - ▶ earlier raw rules of collection,
 - ▶ associated congruence rules for all type/term rules;
- ▶ 1-1 correspondence: each symbol of signature introduced by a unique type/term rule

Reflections on version 1

Success: have “cut the knot” of dependency between rules, signatures, typing, etc.

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Issue: make substantial use of **equality reasoning**, inconvenient in formalisation:

- ▶ Morphisms of signatures, for translating between base and extended syntaxes
- ▶ “Each argument introduced by a unique premise” within each rule
- ▶ “Each symbol introduced by a unique rule” in overall type theory

Refined approach: cut the knot differently to avoid equality reasoning.

Main definition, version 2

Back up a bit; remove redundant information from raw rules.

Definition

A **prepped rule** of arity a , over Σ , with conclusion form j :

- ▶ an arity a' , enumerating the equality premises;
- ▶ a well-founded relation on $a + a'$ (the collection of all premises);
- ▶ for each premise: a raw judgement **boundary**, over Σ extended by symbols for earlier type/term premises;
- ▶ (heads of type/term premises then taken as the corresponding symbols of $\Sigma + a$, applied to their binding variables);
- ▶ for conclusion: a raw judgement **boundary** of form j , over $\Sigma + a$;
- ▶ (once rule included in a TT: conclusion head taken as a corresponding symbol of the signature, applied to the generic arguments of a)

A prepped rule is **well-typed** if the resulting raw rule is.

Main definition, version 2

Definition

A **type theory**:

- ▶ a family \mathcal{R} of arities, labelled with judgement forms (indexing the rules);
- ▶ a well-founded relation on \mathcal{R} ;
- ▶ for each $r : \mathcal{R}$ with arity a and judgement form j :
 - ▶ a prepped rule of arity a , with conclusion form j ,
 - ▶ over the signature $\Sigma_{<r}$: symbols given by the earlier type/term rules of \mathcal{R} ,
 - ▶ well-typed over
 - ▶ standard structural core,
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No use of equality reasoning!

Arguably maybe further from practice than first version.

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- ▶ Work in progress: correspondence between these semantic and syntactic definitions
- ▶ Future work: prove motivating meta-theorems in generality
- ▶ Further work: generalise the judgement forms considered
- ▶ Further work: connect general definitions to other points on syntax–semantics spectrum: more usable syntaxes, more natural semantics