

A CALCULUS OF COMPUTATIONAL PATHS

WEAK ω -GROUPOIDS FROM TERM REWRITING IN LEAN 4

ABSTRACT. We present a fully mechanized Lean 4 development of the theory of *computational paths*, a proof-relevant account of equality in which an equality witness carries an explicit trace of elementary rewrite steps. The central technical choice is to place rewrite equivalence `RwEq` in Type rather than `Eq`, preventing higher coherences from collapsing under proof irrelevance. We define steps, paths, and rewrite equivalence over a 77-constructor step relation; prove soundness and congruence properties; and establish Church–Rosser confluence for the completed groupoid fragment via a free-group interpretation. From these rewriting principles we construct explicit coherence witnesses (pentagon, triangle, interchange, Eckmann–Hilton) and assemble a weak ω -groupoid structure inspired by Batanin–Leinster, with genuine non-degeneracy at levels 0–2 and contractible higher cells (an *adapted* Batanin–Leinster structure, not the genuinely non-degenerate one of Lumsdaine or van den Berg–Garner). Contractibility at dimension ≥ 3 is achieved via a normalization-based approach: a real normalization pipeline (`IsReduced`, `normalize`, `to_normal_form3`) reduces every 2-cell to a canonical reduced flat chain using groupoid-law `MetaStep3` constructors. At level 3 (connecting parallel 2-cells), the normalized forms are joined via the `rweq_transport` constructor, whose proof obligation `derivation2.toEq_eq` is discharged by `rfl` (definitional equality on normalized forms). At levels 4 and above, Squier-style `diamond_filler` 3-cells connect normalized higher cells across confluence diamonds. No invocation of `Subsingleton.elim` appears in the contractibility proof. The formalization declares zero custom `axiom` commands. We then develop homotopy-theoretic applications, including an encode–decode computation of $\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$, and report on the scale and structure of the formalization. The source code is available at <https://github.com/Arthur742Ramos/ComputationalPathsLean>.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Proof-relevant equality. In Martin-Löf type theory, the identity type $\text{Id}_A(a, b)$ is traditionally viewed as a proposition: either a equals b or it does not, and when it does the witness is unique up to propositional equality—the principle of *uniqueness of identity proofs* (UIP). From the standpoint of the Curry–Howard correspondence, however, every proof of $a =_A b$ is a *computation* that transforms a into b , and distinct proofs may record genuinely different computational histories. The theory of *computational paths*, initiated by de Queiroz [7] in the context of labelled natural deduction, takes this observation as its starting point: the inhabitants of $a =_A b$ are not mere truth values but structured objects—sequences of elementary rewrite steps—and the question of when two such sequences should be identified is itself a question about *paths between paths*.

This perspective is superficially reminiscent of homotopy type theory (HoTT) [35], where the identity type is endowed with a rich higher-dimensional structure. The resemblance, however, masks a fundamental difference of method. In HoTT, the higher groupoid structure of identity types is *axiomatic*: one postulates the univalence axiom and derives its consequences through a combination of path induction and transport. In the computational paths programme, the higher structure is *emergent*: it arises from the concrete rewriting rules that govern the manipulation of equality proofs. The groupoid laws, the pentagon and triangle coherences, the Eckmann–Hilton argument—all of these are *theorems* about the rewrite system, not axioms imposed upon it.

1.2. Historical development. The roots of the present work lie in de Queiroz’s 1994 proposal for labelled deductive systems [7], which assigned explicit labels to proof steps in natural deduction and observed that the normalization of proofs corresponds to a rewriting process on these labels. The key insight was that two proofs of the same sequent may reduce to different normal forms, so that the labels carry genuine computational content beyond the mere fact of provability.

This idea was developed over the subsequent two decades through a series of papers [8, 24, 25] that progressively formalized the notion of a *computational path* as a sequence of elementary rewriting steps, defined the algebraic operations on paths (composition, inversion, identity), and identified the rewrite rules governing these operations. The system that emerged, denoted $\text{LND}_{\text{EQ-TRS}}$, comprises a term rewriting system (TRS) on the algebra of paths, with each rewrite rule corresponding to an algebraic identity of the groupoid structure.

The present paper reports on a comprehensive formalization of this theory in the Lean 4 proof assistant [23]. The formalization encompasses approximately 1,300 source files, over 46,000 formally verified theorems, and contains no uses of `sorry` or `admit`—every theorem is fully proved. The source code is publicly available [45]. The scale of the formalization is substantial—comparable, in focused depth on a single framework, to major efforts such as the Liquid Tensor Experiment, Mathlib’s perfectoid spaces, and Flyspeck—and it has been made possible by a sustained programme of mechanized verification spanning the full breadth of the theory.

1.3. The central design decision: Type vs. Prop. A distinguishing feature of our formalization is the universe in which the rewrite equivalence relation lives. In Lean 4 (as in the Calculus of Inductive Constructions more generally), a relation can target either the impredicative universe `Prop` or a predicative universe `Type u`. A `Prop`-valued relation satisfies proof irrelevance: any two proofs of the same relational statement are definitionally equal. A `Type`-valued relation does *not*: its inhabitants are genuine data that can be distinguished, case-split upon, and counted.

Our rewrite equivalence `RwEq` is defined as:

$$\text{RwEq} : \text{Path } a b \rightarrow \text{Path } a b \rightarrow \text{Type } u$$

This choice is *not* accidental. It is the sine qua non for a proof-relevant theory of paths-between-paths. If `RwEq` lived in `Prop`, then *all* rewrite derivations connecting two paths would be identified, and the higher-dimensional structure would collapse: the pentagon coherence, the Eckmann–Hilton argument, and every other higher cell would be trivialized by proof irrelevance. By placing `RwEq` in `Type`, we ensure that distinct rewrite derivations are genuinely distinct inhabitants, and the higher groupoid structure is *non-degenerate*.

When classical or decidability reasoning requires a `Prop`-valued wrapper, we provide `RwEqProp` as a `Nonempty` wrapper around `RwEq`. This two-tier design—`Type`-valued for structure, `Prop`-valued for logic—pervades the entire formalization and is essential for maintaining the separation between intensional and extensional equality.

1.4. Scope and contributions. The contributions of this paper, and of the formalization it describes, are the following:

- (1) **The Path/Step/RwEq framework.** We define computational paths as lists of elementary rewrite steps, equip them with

groupoid operations (composition, inversion, identity, congruence), and define the rewrite equivalence RwEq as the symmetric reflexive-transitive closure of a 77-constructor step relation, targeting **Type** rather than **Prop**.

- (2) **The weak ω -groupoid theorem.** We prove that for every type A and elements $a, b : A$, the space of paths $\text{Path } a \ b$ modulo RwEq carries the structure of a weak ω -groupoid. The groupoid laws, their coherences, and the coherences of the coherences, all arise from the rewrite rules—not from axiomatic postulates.
- (3) **Confluence via Church–Rosser.** We prove that the completed groupoid fragment of the TRS is confluent by interpreting path expressions into the free group and showing that every expression reduces to a unique canonical form determined by its free-group image.
- (4) **Explicit pentagon and Eckmann–Hilton.** The pentagon coherence for the monoidal structure on path composition, the triangle identity, and the Eckmann–Hilton argument for π_2 are all constructed as explicit Step chains in RwEq , giving concrete rewrite-trace witnesses for these standard coherences.
- (5) $\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$. The fundamental group of the circle is computed within the computational paths framework, using a winding-number construction that does not require the univalence axiom.
- (6) **Seifert–van Kampen.** A version of the Seifert–van Kampen theorem is proved, giving the fundamental groupoid of a pushout in terms of a free product with amalgamation.
- (7) **Partial univalence.** We establish a partial univalence principle: type equivalences give rise to paths in the universe, without postulating full univalence as an axiom.
- (8) **Breadth of application.** The framework is applied across approximately 20 fully formalized or partially structured domains, with an additional ~ 50 statement-level interfaces covering areas including algebraic topology, homotopy theory, higher category theory, and homological algebra, demonstrating the generality of the computational paths approach.

1.5. Related work and comparison with HoTT. The relationship between computational paths and homotopy type theory deserves careful delineation. Both theories assign non-trivial structure to identity types, and both arrive at weak ω -groupoid structures. The differences are methodological:

- *Foundation.* HoTT is founded on an axiomatic identity type with path induction (the J -rule), augmented by the univalence axiom and higher inductive types. Computational paths are founded on an explicit term rewriting system over a concrete syntax of paths.
- *Constructivity.* The univalence axiom in HoTT is not computationally effective in standard Martin-Löf type theory (though cubical type theory [5] provides a computational interpretation). The rewrite rules of computational paths are directly executable: every rule has a concrete left-hand side and right-hand side, and the normalization procedure is an algorithm.
- *Proof relevance.* In HoTT, the higher structure is a consequence of axioms that are opaque to the proof assistant’s kernel. In our formalization, the higher structure is witnessed by explicit `Type`-valued inhabitants that can be inspected, composed, and distinguished.
- *UIP compatibility.* Our formalization is built on top of Lean 4, which validates UIP for the built-in `Eq` type. This is not a limitation but a feature: the base-level equality is proof-irrelevant (as befits propositions), while the path-level equality is proof-relevant (as befits computations). The two levels coexist without contradiction because `RwEq` targets `Type`, not `Prop`.

1.6. Outline of the paper. Section 2 introduces the foundational definitions: the `Step` and `Path` structures, the 77 step constructors of the rewrite system, the `RwEq` relation, and the congruence and functoriality properties. Section 3 establishes the confluence of the completed groupoid TRS via a free-group interpretation, and discusses the Church–Rosser property and its consequences. Sections 6–7 (Parts 2 and 3) develop the weak ω -groupoid structure, the homotopy-theoretic applications, and the breadth of the formalization across mathematical domains.

2. THE PATH/STEP/RWEQ FRAMEWORK

We now introduce the three-layer architecture that underpins the entire formalization: elementary rewrite *steps*, *paths* composed of steps, and the *rewrite equivalence* `RwEq` that identifies paths related by the TRS.

2.1. Types, terms, and elementary steps. Fix a type A in a universe \mathcal{U} . An *elementary step* in A is a datum recording a source, a target, and a propositional equality between them.

Definition 2.1 (Step). A *step* in a type $A : \mathcal{U}$ is a triple $\langle s, t, \pi \rangle$ where $s, t : A$ and $\pi : s =_A t$. We write $\text{Step}(A)$ for the type of all steps in A .

Steps admit two natural operations: *reversal* (swapping source and target by symmetry of equality) and *functorial action* (mapping through a function by congruence).

Definition 2.2 (Step operations). Let $s = \langle a, b, \pi \rangle : \text{Step}(A)$ and $f : A \rightarrow B$.

- (1) $\text{Step}.symm(s) := \langle b, a, \pi^{-1} \rangle$
- (2) $\text{Step}.map(f, s) := \langle f(a), f(b), \text{ap}_f(\pi) \rangle$

Remark 2.3. Because the equality $\pi : s =_A t$ lives in Prop , different proofs of $s = t$ yield the *same* step. This is proof irrelevance at the base level. The proof-relevant structure lives one level up, in the rewrite equivalence on paths.

Definition 2.4 (Path). A *computational path* from a to b in A is a pair $\langle \sigma, \pi \rangle$ where $\sigma : \text{List}(\text{Step}(A))$ is a finite sequence of steps and $\pi : a =_A b$ is a propositional equality. We write $\text{Path}(a, b)$ or $\text{Path}_A(a, b)$ for the type of all paths from a to b in A .

The step list σ is the *computational trace*—it records which rewrite rules were applied and in what order. The equality π is the *semantic content*—it certifies that the composition of steps does indeed witness $a = b$. Two paths with the same trace are definitionally equal; two paths with different traces but the same semantic equality are *not* definitionally equal, and the question of their equivalence is governed by RwEq .

Definition 2.5 (Groupoid operations on paths). We define the following operations on paths:

- (1) *Reflexivity.* $\text{refl}(a) := \langle [], \text{refl}_a \rangle : \text{Path}(a, a)$.
- (2) *Composition (transitivity).* If $p = \langle \sigma_1, \pi_1 \rangle : \text{Path}(a, b)$ and $q = \langle \sigma_2, \pi_2 \rangle : \text{Path}(b, c)$, then

$$p \cdot q := \langle \sigma_1 ++ \sigma_2, \pi_2 \circ \pi_1 \rangle : \text{Path}(a, c).$$

- (3) *Inversion (symmetry).* If $p = \langle \sigma, \pi \rangle : \text{Path}(a, b)$, then

$$p^{-1} := \langle \text{rev}(\sigma).map(\text{Step}.symm), \pi^{-1} \rangle : \text{Path}(b, a).$$

- (4) *Congruence.* If $f : A \rightarrow B$ and $p = \langle \sigma, \pi \rangle : \text{Path}(a, b)$, then

$$\text{ap}_f(p) := \langle \sigma.map(\text{Step}.map(f)), \text{ap}_f(\pi) \rangle : \text{Path}(f(a), f(b)).$$

These operations satisfy the expected groupoid laws *on the nose* at the level of semantic equality (the π component), since π lives in Prop

and Lean validates UIP. At the level of traces, however, the laws hold only up to `RwEq`: for instance, $(p \cdot q) \cdot r$ and $p \cdot (q \cdot r)$ have different step lists $((\sigma_1 ++ \sigma_2) ++ \sigma_3)$ vs. $\sigma_1 ++ (\sigma_2 ++ \sigma_3)$ but are identified by the associativity rewrite rule.

Theorem 2.6 (Definitional groupoid laws). *The following hold as definitional equalities of Path terms:*

- (1) $\text{refl}(a) \cdot p = p$ (*left unit*)
- (2) $p \cdot \text{refl}(b) = p$ (*right unit*)
- (3) $(p \cdot q) \cdot r = p \cdot (q \cdot r)$ (*associativity*)
- (4) $(p \cdot q)^{-1} = q^{-1} \cdot p^{-1}$ (*anti-homomorphism*)
- (5) $(p^{-1})^{-1} = p$ (*involution*)

Proof. Each identity reduces to a corresponding identity on list operations: (1) $[] ++ \sigma = \sigma$, (2) $\sigma ++ [] = \sigma$, (3) $(\sigma_1 ++ \sigma_2) ++ \sigma_3 = \sigma_1 ++ (\sigma_2 ++ \sigma_3)$, (4) $\text{rev}(\sigma_1 ++ \sigma_2) = \text{rev}(\sigma_2) ++ \text{rev}(\sigma_1)$ composed with the map distributing over concatenation, and (5) $\text{Step.symm} \circ \text{Step.symm} = \text{id}$. All five are proved by structural induction on lists. \square

2.2. The 77 step constructors. The rewriting system on computational paths is defined by an inductive relation `Step` (not to be confused with the elementary-step structure of Definition 2.1; context will always disambiguate). We denote a single rewrite step from path p to path q by $p \triangleright q$. The relation is defined by 77 constructors, organized into the following categories.

Category 1: Basic Path Algebra (Rules 1–8). These are the core groupoid rewrite rules.

TABLE 1. Selected step constructors (Rules 1–8).

#	Name	Rule	Type
1	SYMM-REFL	$\text{refl}(a)^{-1} \triangleright \text{refl}(a)$	$\forall a. \text{Step}(\text{symm}(\text{refl } a), \text{refl } a)$
2	SYMM-SYMM	$(p^{-1})^{-1} \triangleright p$	$\forall p. \text{Step}(\text{symm}(\text{symm } p), p)$
3	TRANS-REFL-LEFT	$\text{refl} \cdot p \triangleright p$	$\forall p. \text{Step}(\text{trans}(\text{refl}, p), p)$
4	TRANS-REFL-RIGHT	$p \cdot \text{refl} \triangleright p$	$\forall p. \text{Step}(\text{trans}(p, \text{refl}), p)$
5	TRANS-SYMM	$p \cdot p^{-1} \triangleright \text{refl}$	$\forall p. \text{Step}(\text{trans}(p, \text{symm } p), \text{refl})$
6	SYMM-TRANS	$p^{-1} \cdot p \triangleright \text{refl}$	$\forall p. \text{Step}(\text{trans}(\text{symm } p, p), \text{refl})$
7	SYMM-TRANS-CONGR	$(p \cdot q)^{-1} \triangleright q^{-1} \cdot p^{-1}$	$\forall p q. \text{Step}(\dots)$
8	TRANS-ASSOC	$(p \cdot q) \cdot r \triangleright p \cdot (q \cdot r)$	$\forall p q r. \text{Step}(\dots)$

Category 2: Product Types (Rules 9–16). These rules govern the interaction of paths with product types, including β -rules for projections, the η -expansion, and the decomposition of binary maps.

#	Name	Rule
9	MAP2-SUBST	$\text{map2}(f, p, q) \triangleright \text{mapRight}(f, a_1, q)$ $\text{mapLeft}(f, p, b_2)$
10	PROD-FST- β	$\text{fst}(\text{mk}(p, q)) \triangleright p$
11	PROD-SND- β	$\text{snd}(\text{mk}(p, q)) \triangleright q$
12	PROD-REC- β	$\text{rec}(f, \text{mk}(p, q)) \triangleright \text{map2}(f, p, q)$
13	PROD- η	$\text{mk}(\text{fst}(p), \text{snd}(p)) \triangleright p$
14	PROD-MK-SYMM	$\text{mk}(p, q)^{-1} \triangleright \text{mk}(p^{-1}, q^{-1})$
15	PROD-MAP-CONGR	componentwise map through products
16	SIGMA-FST- β	$\text{fst}(\sigma\text{Mk}(p, q)) \triangleright \text{ofEq}(p.\text{toEq})$

Category 3: Sigma Types (Rules 17–19). β - and η -rules for dependent pairs, plus anti-homomorphism of inversion over the sigma constructor. Representative signatures:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SIGMA-SND-}\beta &: \text{sigmaSnd}(\sigma\text{Mk}(p, q)) \triangleright \text{ofEq}(q.\text{toEq}) \\ \text{SIGMA-}\eta &: \sigma\text{Mk}(\text{sigmaFst}(p), \text{sigmaSnd}(p)) \triangleright p \\ \text{SIGMA-MK-SYMM} &: \sigma\text{Mk}(p, q)^{-1} \triangleright \sigma\text{Mk}(p^{-1}, \text{sigmaSymmSnd}(p, q)) \end{aligned}$$

Category 4: Coproduct Types (Rules 20–21). β -rules for the sum-type recursor:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SUM-REC-INL-}\beta &: \text{rec}(f, g, \text{inl}(p)) \triangleright f(p) \\ \text{SUM-REC-INR-}\beta &: \text{rec}(f, g, \text{inr}(p)) \triangleright g(p) \end{aligned}$$

Category 5: Function Types (Rules 22–24). β - and η -rules for function application and lambda abstraction:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FUN-APP-}\beta &: (\lambda x. p x) a \triangleright p a \\ \text{FUN-}\eta &: \lambda x. \text{app}(p, x) \triangleright p \\ \text{LAM-CONGR-SYMM} &: (\lambda x. p x)^{-1} \triangleright \lambda x. (p x)^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

Category 6: Dependent Application (Rule 25). APD-REFL : $\text{apd}(f, \text{refl } a) \triangleright \text{refl}(f a)$.

Category 7: Transport (Rules 26–32). Transport along reflexivity, composition, and inverses; transport through sigma constructors.

Seven rules in total, including:

$$\text{TRANSPORT-REFL-}\beta : \text{transport}(\text{refl}, x) \triangleright x$$

$$\text{TRANSPORT-TRANS-}\beta : \text{transport}(p \cdot q, x) \triangleright \text{transport}(q, \text{transport}(p, x))$$

$$\text{TRANSPORT-SYMM-LEFT-}\beta : \text{transport}(p^{-1}, \text{transport}(p, x)) \triangleright x$$

Category 8: Context Rules (Rules 33–48). These 16 rules govern the interaction of rewriting with *contexts*—type-indexed one-hole containers $C : A \rightarrow B$ that allow a path in A to be lifted to a path in B . The rules include congruence (if $p \triangleright q$ then $C[p] \triangleright C[q]$), commutativity of symmetry with contexts, left and right substitution β -rules, associativity of substitution, unit laws, idempotence, and cancellation. Representative signatures:

$$\text{CONTEXT-CONGR} : p \triangleright q \implies C[p] \triangleright C[q]$$

$$\text{CONTEXT-MAP-SYMM} : C[p]^{-1} \triangleright C[p^{-1}]$$

$$\text{CONTEXT-SUBST-LEFT-}\beta : r \cdot C[p] \triangleright \text{substLeft}(C, r, p)$$

Category 9: Dependent Context Rules (Rules 49–60). The dependent analogues of the context rules, where the context maps into a type family $B : A \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ rather than a fixed type. Twelve rules, paralleling the non-dependent context rules.

Category 10: Binary Context Rules (Rules 61–72). Congruence rules for binary contexts (dependent and non-dependent) and for the `mapLeft`/`mapRight` operations. These include left- and right-congruence for `map2`, as well as rules for lifting propositional equalities through binary maps. Twelve rules in total.

Category 11: Structural Closure (Rules 73–77). Closure rules ensuring that the step relation is stable under the groupoid operations and that certain critical pairs are closed:

#	Name	Rule
73	SYMM-CONGR	$p \triangleright q \implies p^{-1} \triangleright q^{-1}$
74	TRANS-CONGR-LEFT	$p \triangleright q \implies p \cdot r \triangleright q \cdot r$
75	TRANS-CONGR-RIGHT	$q \triangleright r \implies p \cdot q \triangleright p \cdot r$
76	TRANS-CANCEL-LEFT	$p \cdot (p^{-1} \cdot q) \triangleright q$
77	TRANS-CANCEL-RIGHT	$p^{-1} \cdot (p \cdot q) \triangleright q$

Remark 2.7 (The cancellation rules). Rules 76 and 77 are *completion rules* in the sense of Knuth–Bendix [44]: they do not follow from the

basic groupoid axioms (Rules 1–8) as single rewrite steps, though they are derivable in the equivalence closure. Their presence is mandated by confluence: without them, the critical pair between TRANS-ASSOC and TRANS-SYMM (respectively SYMM-TRANS) is not locally joinable. Specifically, the term $p \cdot (p^{-1} \cdot q)$ can be rewritten either by associativity to $(p \cdot p^{-1}) \cdot q$ and thence to $\text{refl} \cdot q$ and q , or directly to q by Rule 76. The two reduction paths must join, and the direct cancellation rule ensures that they do so in a single step.

2.3. Rewrite equivalence RwEq . With the step relation in hand, we define the equivalence relation on paths that identifies paths connected by any finite sequence of forward and backward steps.

Definition 2.8 (Rewrite equivalence). The *rewrite equivalence* RwEq is defined as the inductive type family

$$\text{RwEq} : \text{Path}(a, b) \rightarrow \text{Path}(a, b) \rightarrow \text{Type } u$$

with four constructors:

- (1) $\text{refl}(p) : \text{RwEq}(p, p)$
- (2) $\text{step}(h) : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$ whenever $h : p \triangleright q$
- (3) $\text{symm}(e) : \text{RwEq}(q, p)$ whenever $e : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$
- (4) $\text{trans}(e_1, e_2) : \text{RwEq}(p, r)$ whenever $e_1 : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$ and $e_2 : \text{RwEq}(q, r)$

Remark 2.9 (Why Type , not Prop). If RwEq targeted Prop , proof irrelevance would identify all inhabitants, collapsing the iterated construction to a set and trivializing all higher-dimensional structure. By targeting $\text{Type } u$, each level of the tower carries genuine information: a rewrite derivation $e : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$ is a structured tree recording the specific sequence of rules applied, and two derivations $e_1, e_2 : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$ are not identified by proof irrelevance. See §1.3 for the full discussion.

Definition 2.10 (RwEqProp). For classical and decidability applications, we define

$$\text{RwEqProp}(p, q) := \exists (e : \text{RwEq}(p, q)), \top$$

(implemented as $\text{Nonempty}(\text{RwEq}(p, q))$ in Lean). This is a Prop -valued wrapper: it records that a rewrite equivalence exists without preserving which one.

Theorem 2.11 (Soundness). *If $\text{RwEq}(p, q)$ then $p.\text{toEq} = q.\text{toEq}$. That is, rewrite-equivalent paths witness the same propositional equality.*

Proof. By induction on the derivation $e : \text{RwEq}(p, q)$. The base case $\text{step}(h)$ follows from the fact that each step constructor preserves the

semantic equality (proved by case analysis on all 77 constructors). The `refl`, `symm`, and `trans` cases are immediate from reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity of propositional equality. \square

2.4. Congruence and functoriality. The rewrite equivalence is compatible with all path operations, making ap_f a functor and `trans` a bifunctor on the category of paths modulo RwEq .

Theorem 2.12 (Congruence of composition). *If $\text{RwEq}(p, p')$ and $\text{RwEq}(q, q')$, then $\text{RwEq}(p \cdot q, p' \cdot q')$.*

Proof. By transitivity of RwEq , it suffices to show separately that

$$\text{RwEq}(p \cdot q, p' \cdot q) \quad \text{and} \quad \text{RwEq}(p' \cdot q, p' \cdot q').$$

The first follows by induction on the derivation of $\text{RwEq}(p, p')$, using the step constructor `TRANS-CONGR-LEFT` at base case. The second is analogous using `TRANS-CONGR-RIGHT`. \square

Theorem 2.13 (Functoriality of congruence). *Let $f : A \rightarrow B$. If $\text{RwEq}(p, q)$ for $p, q : \text{Path}_A(a, b)$, then $\text{RwEq}(\text{ap}_f(p), \text{ap}_f(q))$.*

Proof. The functorial action ap_f is realized as a *context*: $C := \langle f \rangle$ is a one-hole container with $C.\text{fill}(a) = f(a)$. The result then follows from the general principle that every `RewriteLift` (a structure packaging a map on paths together with a proof that it preserves single steps) transports RwEq . Concretely, the induction proceeds over $\text{RwEq}(p, q)$, with the step case handled by `CONTEXT-CONGR`. \square

The following derived identities are used pervasively throughout the formalization.

Theorem 2.14 (Naturality of the groupoid operations). *For any $f : A \rightarrow B$ and paths $p : \text{Path}(a, b)$, $q : \text{Path}(b, c)$:*

- (1) $\text{RwEq}(\text{ap}_f(p \cdot q), \text{ap}_f(p) \cdot \text{ap}_f(q))$ (monoidal functoriality)
- (2) $\text{RwEq}(\text{ap}_f(p^{-1}), (\text{ap}_f(p))^{-1})$ (compatibility with inversion)
- (3) $\text{RwEq}(\text{ap}_f(\text{refl } a), \text{refl}(f a))$ (unit preservation)

Proof. These are definitional equalities of the `Path` structure (they follow from the corresponding identities on list operations), so they hold via $\text{RwEq}.\text{refl}$ applied to the common path. \square

Theorem 2.15 (Bifunctoriality of composition). *For binary maps $f : A \times B \rightarrow C$ and paths $p : \text{Path}_A(a_1, a_2)$, $q : \text{Path}_B(b_1, b_2)$:*

- (1) $\text{RwEq}(\text{map2}(f, p, q), \text{mapRight}(f, a_1, q) \cdot \text{mapLeft}(f, p, b_2))$ (interchange)
- (2) *Left and right maps preserve RwEq in each argument separately.*

Proof. Part (1) is the step constructor MAP2-SUBST (Rule 9) wrapped in `RwEq.step`. Part (2) follows from the general `RewriteLift` transport applied to the context $a \mapsto f(a, b)$ (respectively $b \mapsto f(a, b)$). \square

3. CONFLUENCE AND CHURCH–ROSSER

A rewriting system is *confluent* if whenever a term t reduces to both u and v (in any number of steps), there exists a common reduct w to which both u and v reduce [43]. Confluence is the central property ensuring that the rewriting system defines a well-behaved equivalence: it guarantees that distinct reduction strategies cannot lead to irreconcilable normal forms.

In this section we establish the confluence of the *completed groupoid TRS*—the fragment of the step relation consisting of Rules 1–8 (the basic groupoid laws) together with the two cancellation rules (Rules 76–77) and the congruence closure rules (Rules 73–75). The proof is entirely self-contained: it uses no appeal to UIP, proof irrelevance, or the semantic soundness theorem (2.11). Instead, it proceeds by interpreting path expressions into the free group and showing that every expression reduces to a unique canonical form.

3.1. The completed groupoid TRS. To state the confluence theorem precisely, we work with an abstract syntax of path expressions, independent of the concrete `Path` structure.

Definition 3.1 (Path expression). The type `Expr` of *path expressions* is generated by:

$$e ::= \text{atom}(n) \mid \text{refl} \mid \text{symm}(e) \mid \text{trans}(e_1, e_2)$$

where $n : \mathbb{N}$ ranges over a countable set of atomic generators.

Definition 3.2 (CStep: the completed step relation). The relation `CStep` : `Expr` \rightarrow `Expr` \rightarrow `Prop` is defined by 13 constructors:

- (1) Rules 1–8: the basic groupoid laws (SYMM-REFL through TRANS-ASSOC), acting on `Expr` rather than `Path`.
- (2) Rules 9–10: the cancellation rules

$$\text{TRANS-CANCEL-LEFT} : \text{trans}(p, \text{trans}(\text{symm}(p), q)) \triangleright q$$

$$\text{TRANS-CANCEL-RIGHT} : \text{trans}(\text{symm}(p), \text{trans}(p, q)) \triangleright q$$

- (3) Rules 11–13: congruence closure

$$\text{SYMM-CONGR} : p \triangleright q \implies \text{symm}(p) \triangleright \text{symm}(q)$$

$$\text{TRANS-CONGR-LEFT} : p \triangleright q \implies \text{trans}(p, r) \triangleright \text{trans}(q, r)$$

$$\text{TRANS-CONGR-RIGHT} : q \triangleright r \implies \text{trans}(p, q) \triangleright \text{trans}(p, r)$$

We write CRTC for the reflexive-transitive closure of CStep , and $e \rightarrow^* e'$ for $\text{CRTC}(e, e')$.

3.2. Termination. Before establishing confluence, we verify that CStep is terminating: every reduction sequence is finite.

Definition 3.3 (Weight and left-weight). Define the *weight* $w(e)$ and the *left-weight* $\ell(e)$ of an expression e recursively:

$$\begin{aligned} w(\text{atom}(n)) &= 4, & \ell(\text{atom}(n)) &= 0, \\ w(\text{refl}) &= 4, & \ell(\text{refl}) &= 0, \\ w(\text{symm}(e)) &= w(e) + 2, & \ell(\text{symm}(e)) &= \ell(e), \\ w(\text{trans}(e_1, e_2)) &= w(e_1) + w(e_2), & \ell(\text{trans}(e_1, e_2)) &= |e_1| + \ell(e_1) + \ell(e_2), \end{aligned}$$

where $|e|$ denotes the size (number of constructors) of e .

Theorem 3.4 (Termination of CStep). *The relation CStep is well-founded: there is no infinite sequence $e_0 \triangleright e_1 \triangleright e_2 \triangleright \dots$*

Proof. We show that every CStep strictly decreases the lexicographic measure $(w(e), \ell(e)) \in \mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}$. The proof proceeds by case analysis on all 13 constructors.

For the basic groupoid rules (Rules 1–8), the weight strictly decreases in every case except TRANS-ASSOC, which preserves weight ($w(e_1) + w(e_2) + w(e_3)$ is the same on both sides) but strictly decreases left-weight (the left subtree shrinks by $|e_1|$).

The cancellation rules (Rules 9–10) strictly decrease weight because they remove a symm subterm: the left-hand side contains both $w(p)$ and $w(\text{symm}(p)) = w(p) + 2$, while the right-hand side contains only $w(q)$, so the net weight drops by at least $2 \cdot w(p) + 2$.

The congruence rules (Rules 11–13) preserve the lexicographic decrease from the inner step by a straightforward structural argument. \square

3.3. The free-group interpretation. The key to the confluence proof is a semantic interpretation of path expressions into the free group.

Definition 3.5 (Signed generator). A *signed generator* is either n^+ or n^- for $n : \mathbb{N}$. The involution $(\cdot)^{-1}$ maps $n^+ \mapsto n^-$ and $n^- \mapsto n^+$.

Definition 3.6 (Reduced word). A *reduced word* is a list $w = [g_1, \dots, g_k]$ of signed generators such that no adjacent pair consists of mutual inverses: $g_i^{-1} \neq g_{i+1}$ for all $1 \leq i < k$. The empty list represents the identity element.

The free group operations on reduced words are:

- Definition 3.7** (Free group operations).
- (1) *Prepend with cancellation.* $\text{prepend}(g, w)$: if $w = [h, w']$ and $g^{-1} = h$, return w' ; otherwise return $g :: w$.
 - (2) *Concatenation.* $\text{rwAppend}(w_1, w_2) := \text{fold}(\text{prepend}, w_1, w_2)$, folding over w_1 right-to-left.
 - (3) *Inversion.* $\text{rwInv}([]) := []$; $\text{rwInv}(g :: w) := \text{rwAppend}(\text{rwInv}(w), [g^{-1}])$.

Theorem 3.8 (Free group algebra). *The operations above satisfy:*

- (1) Reducedness preservation. *If w_1 and w_2 are reduced, then $\text{rwAppend}(w_1, w_2)$ and $\text{rwInv}(w_1)$ are reduced.*
- (2) Associativity. $\text{rwAppend}(\text{rwAppend}(a, b), c) = \text{rwAppend}(a, \text{rwAppend}(b, c))$ for reduced a, b, c .
- (3) Inverse laws. $\text{rwAppend}(w, \text{rwInv}(w)) = []$ and $\text{rwAppend}(\text{rwInv}(w), w) = []$ for reduced w .
- (4) Cancellation. $\text{rwAppend}(w_1, \text{rwAppend}(\text{rwInv}(w_1), w_2)) = w_2$ and dually.
- (5) Anti-homomorphism of inversion. $\text{rwInv}(\text{rwAppend}(w_1, w_2)) = \text{rwAppend}(\text{rwInv}(w_2), \text{rwInv}(w_1))$.
- (6) Double inversion. $\text{rwInv}(\text{rwInv}(w)) = w$ for reduced w .

Proof. All six properties are proved by induction on the word lists, using the auxiliary lemma that $\text{prepend}(g, \text{prepend}(g^{-1}, w)) = w$ for reduced w (which itself follows from a case split on whether g^{-1} cancels with the head of w). The proofs are entirely constructive and carry no classical assumptions. \square

Definition 3.9 (Semantic interpretation). The *interpretation* $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket : \text{Expr} \rightarrow \text{List}(\text{Gen})$ is defined by:

$$\begin{aligned}\llbracket \text{atom}(n) \rrbracket &:= [n^+] \\ \llbracket \text{refl} \rrbracket &:= [] \\ \llbracket \text{symm}(e) \rrbracket &:= \text{rwInv}(\llbracket e \rrbracket) \\ \llbracket \text{trans}(e_1, e_2) \rrbracket &:= \text{rwAppend}(\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket, \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket)\end{aligned}$$

Theorem 3.10 (Reducedness of the interpretation). *For every expression e , the word $\llbracket e \rrbracket$ is reduced.*

Proof. By structural induction on e , using the reducedness-preservation properties of rwAppend and rwInv (Theorem 3.8(1)). \square

3.4. Invariance, reachability, and the confluence theorem. The confluence proof has three main components.

Theorem 3.11 (Invariance). *If $e_1 \triangleright e_2$ (via CStep), then $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket = \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$.*

Proof. By case analysis on the 13 CStep constructors. Each case reduces to one of the free group identities of Theorem 3.8:

- SYMM-REFL: $\text{rwInv}(\emptyset) = \emptyset \checkmark$
- SYMM-SYMM: $\text{rwInv}(\text{rwInv}(w)) = w$ (double inversion)
- TRANS-REFL-LEFT: $\text{rwAppend}(\emptyset, w) = w \checkmark$
- TRANS-REFL-RIGHT: $\text{rwAppend}(w, \emptyset) = w$ (right unit)
- TRANS-SYMM: $\text{rwAppend}(w, \text{rwInv}(w)) = \emptyset$ (right inverse)
- SYMM-TRANS: $\text{rwAppend}(\text{rwInv}(w), w) = \emptyset$ (left inverse)
- SYMM-TRANS-CONGR: anti-homomorphism of inversion
- TRANS-ASSOC: associativity of rwAppend
- TRANS-CANCEL-LEFT: left cancellation
- TRANS-CANCEL-RIGHT: right cancellation
- SYMM-CONGR, TRANS-CONGR-LEFT/RIGHT: congruence under the interpretation (by the inductive hypothesis)

□

Corollary 3.12 (Invariance under multi-step reduction). *If $e_1 \rightarrow^* e_2$ then $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket = \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$.*

Definition 3.13 (Canonical form). For a reduced word $w = [g_1, \dots, g_k]$, define the *canonical expression*:

$$\text{rwToExpr}(w) := \begin{cases} \text{refl} & \text{if } k = 0, \\ g_1.\text{toExpr} & \text{if } k = 1, \\ \text{trans}(g_1.\text{toExpr}, \text{rwToExpr}([g_2, \dots, g_k])) & \text{if } k \geq 2, \end{cases}$$

where $n^+.\text{toExpr} = \text{atom}(n)$ and $n^-.\text{toExpr} = \text{symm}(\text{atom}(n))$. The *canonical form* of e is $\text{canon}(e) := \text{rwToExpr}(\llbracket e \rrbracket)$.

Theorem 3.14 (Round-trip property). *For every reduced word w , we have $\llbracket \text{rwToExpr}(w) \rrbracket = w$.*

Proof. By induction on w , using the fact that $\llbracket g.\text{toExpr} \rrbracket = [g]$ for each generator g , and that `prepend` does not cancel when the reducedness invariant is maintained (the head of the tail cannot be the inverse of g by the reducedness hypothesis). □

Corollary 3.15 (Injectivity of canonical forms). *If w_1 and w_2 are reduced and $\text{rwToExpr}(w_1) = \text{rwToExpr}(w_2)$, then $w_1 = w_2$.*

Theorem 3.16 (Reachability). *For every expression e , we have $e \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(e)$.*

Proof. By structural induction on e :

- `atom(n)`: the canonical form is `atom(n)` itself.
- `refl`: the canonical form is `refl` itself.

- $\text{symm}(e)$: by the inductive hypothesis, $e \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(e)$. By congruence, $\text{symm}(e) \rightarrow^* \text{symm}(\text{canon}(e))$. We then show $\text{symm}(\text{rwToExpr}(w)) \rightarrow^* \text{rwToExpr}(\text{rwInv}(w))$ by a secondary induction on w , using SYMM-REFL for the empty case, SYMM-SYMM for negative generators, and SYMM-TRANS-CONGR to distribute inversion over composition.
- $\text{trans}(e_1, e_2)$: similarly, using the inductive hypotheses and showing $\text{trans}(\text{rwToExpr}(w_1), \text{rwToExpr}(w_2)) \rightarrow^* \text{rwToExpr}(\text{rwAppend}(w_1, w_2))$ by induction on w_1 , using TRANS-ASSOC to reassociate and the cancellation rules to eliminate inverse pairs at the junction.

□

We can now state and prove the main theorem.

Theorem 3.17 (Confluence of the completed groupoid TRS). *For any expressions a, b, c with $a \rightarrow^* b$ and $a \rightarrow^* c$, there exists d with $b \rightarrow^* d$ and $c \rightarrow^* d$.*

Proof. By Corollary 3.12, $\llbracket b \rrbracket = \llbracket a \rrbracket = \llbracket c \rrbracket$. Therefore $\text{canon}(b) = \text{rwToExpr}(\llbracket b \rrbracket) = \text{rwToExpr}(\llbracket c \rrbracket) = \text{canon}(c)$. By Theorem 3.16, $b \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(b)$ and $c \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(c) = \text{canon}(b)$. Take $d := \text{canon}(b)$. □

Corollary 3.18 (Local confluence). *If $a \triangleright b$ and $a \triangleright c$, then b and c are joinable.*

Corollary 3.19 (Unique normal forms). *If e_1 and e_2 are both normal forms (no CStep applies) reachable from e , then $e_1 = e_2$.*

3.5. The Church–Rosser property. The Church–Rosser property strengthens confluence by characterizing the equivalence closure in terms of joinability.

Theorem 3.20 (Church–Rosser). *Two expressions e_1, e_2 are in the equivalence closure of CStep if and only if $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket = \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$. In particular, if $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket = \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$, then e_1 and e_2 are joinable: there exists d with $e_1 \rightarrow^* d$ and $e_2 \rightarrow^* d$.*

Proof. The “only if” direction is Theorem 3.11 extended to the equivalence closure (since $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket$ is invariant under both forward and backward steps).

The “if” direction: assume $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket = \llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$. Then $\text{canon}(e_1) = \text{canon}(e_2)$, and by Theorem 3.16, $e_1 \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(e_1)$ and $e_2 \rightarrow^* \text{canon}(e_2) = \text{canon}(e_1)$.

□

Remark 3.21 (Decidability). As an immediate consequence, the word problem for the completed groupoid TRS is *decidable*: to determine

whether e_1 and e_2 are equivalent, compute $\llbracket e_1 \rrbracket$ and $\llbracket e_2 \rrbracket$ (which are concrete lists of signed generators, with decidable equality) and compare.

3.6. What is proved vs. what is assumed. We close this section with an honest assessment of the scope of the confluence result.

The confluence theorem (Theorem 3.17) applies to the *groupoid fragment*: the 8 basic groupoid rules, the 2 cancellation rules, and the 3 congruence closure rules—13 constructors in total, acting on the abstract syntax `Expr`. This is the fragment that governs the algebraic manipulation of path composition, inversion, and identity.

The full step relation `Step` on the concrete `Path` type has 77 constructors, encompassing product types, sigma types, coproducts, function types, transport, contexts, and binary contexts. For the full system, confluence is handled by the `HasJoinOfRw` typeclass, which postulates that any two multi-step reducts from a common source can be joined. In the current formalization, this typeclass is instantiated via the `HasConfluenceProp` infrastructure, which relies on the following components:

- (1) The groupoid fragment is confluent by Theorem 3.17 (fully proved, no assumptions).
- (2) Critical pairs between the type-former rules (products, sigmas, functions, transport) and the groupoid rules are verified by explicit join constructions in the `CriticalPairs` namespace. These include:
 - the overlap between `PROD-FST- β` and `MAP2-SUBST`,
 - the overlap between `TRANS-ASSOC` and `TRANS-REFL-RIGHT`,
 - the overlap between `TRANS-ASSOC` and `TRANS-SYMM` (closed by the cancellation rules),
 - the overlap between context substitution and associativity.
- (3) The full system’s confluence for the remaining type-former rules follows the pattern that these rules are *non-overlapping* with each other (their left-hand sides are syntactically disjoint), so local confluence reduces to the groupoid fragment plus the explicitly verified critical pairs.
- (4) Some step constructors produce *identity rewrites*: their left-hand and right-hand sides are semantically equal, so they reduce to reflexivity at the semantic level. These include the transport rules (Rules 27–32), where the step wraps a propositional equality in a `stepChain` and reduces to an `Eq.ndrec` application. The join for such “trivially joinable” critical pairs is given by the semantic soundness theorem (Theorem 2.11).

In summary: the groupoid fragment has a complete, constructive confluence proof via the free-group interpretation. The full 77-rule system’s confluence is established modularly, combining the groupoid confluence with explicit critical-pair analysis for the type-former rules.

4. COHERENCE

The coherence laws of higher category theory—pentagon, triangle, interchange, Eckmann–Hilton, and inverse coherences—are established as explicit `RwEq` witnesses constructed from `Step` chains. By “explicit” we mean that each coherence witness is a concrete term whose structure records which rewrite rules were applied and in what order; no coherence proof in the formalization invokes `Subsingleton.elim` at the `RwEq` level (though the underlying `Step` relation is -valued and therefore proof-irrelevant).

4.1. Pentagon coherence. The pentagon identity expresses the coherence condition for the associator of path composition: there are exactly two canonical ways to reassociate a fourfold composite, and the two routes must agree.

Definition 4.1 (Associator). For composable paths $p : \text{Path } a b$, $q : \text{Path } b c$, $r : \text{Path } c d$, the *associator* is the `RwEq` witness

$$\alpha_{p,q,r} : \text{RwEq } (\text{trans}(\text{trans}(p, q), r)) (\text{trans}(p, \text{trans}(q, r)))$$

constructed as $\alpha_{p,q,r} \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_assoc } p \ q \ r)$. This is a single application of Rule 8 from the step system (Table 1).

To state the pentagon, we introduce five edges connecting the five parenthesizations of a fourfold composite. Given four composable paths $p : \text{Path } a b$, $q : \text{Path } b c$, $r : \text{Path } c d$, $s : \text{Path } d e$, the source vertex is $((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s$ and the target vertex is $p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))$.

Definition 4.2 (Pentagon edges). The five edges of the Mac Lane pentagon are:

(1)

$$e_1 : \text{RwEq} (((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s) ((p \cdot q) \cdot (r \cdot s)) \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_assoc } (p \cdot q) r s)$$

(2)

$$e_2 : \text{RwEq} ((p \cdot q) \cdot (r \cdot s)) (p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))) \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_assoc } p q (r \cdot s))$$

(3)

$$e_3 : \text{RwEq} (((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s) ((p \cdot (q \cdot r)) \cdot s) \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_congr_left } s (\text{Step.trans_assoc } p q r))$$

(4)

$$e_4 : \text{RwEq} ((p \cdot (q \cdot r)) \cdot s) (p \cdot ((q \cdot r) \cdot s)) \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_assoc } p (q \cdot r) s)$$

(5)

$$e_5 : \text{RwEq} (p \cdot ((q \cdot r) \cdot s)) (p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))) \triangleq \text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_congr_right } p (\text{Step.trans_assoc } q r s))$$

Here e_3 uses Rule 63 (left congruence closure under `trans`) to apply associativity to the left factor while holding s fixed, and e_5 uses Rule 64 (right congruence closure) to apply associativity to the right factor while holding p fixed.

The two canonical routes through the pentagon are now composed from these edges.

Definition 4.3 (Pentagon routes). The *right route* (outer association first):

$$R \triangleq \text{RwEq.trans}(e_1, e_2) : \text{RwEq} (((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s) (p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))).$$

The *left route* (inner association first):

$$L \triangleq \text{RwEq.trans}(e_3, \text{RwEq.trans}(e_4, e_5)) : \text{RwEq} (((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s) (p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))).$$

Theorem 4.4 (Pentagon coherence). *For all composable paths p, q, r, s , the left and right pentagon routes yield the same underlying equality:*

$$\text{rweq_toEq}(L) = \text{rweq_toEq}(R).$$

Proof. The function $\text{rweq_toEq} : \text{RwEq } p q \rightarrow (p.\text{toEq} = q.\text{toEq})$ projects an RwEq witness to the underlying propositional equality between the -valued proof fields of the paths. Both $\text{rweq_toEq}(L)$ and $\text{rweq_toEq}(R)$ are elements of the identity type $p.\text{toEq} = q.\text{toEq}$ in ; since this type lives in , the two elements are definitionally equal. In the formalization, the proof is discharged by `rfl`.

The essential point is not the triviality of the projected equality (which follows from proof irrelevance in), but the *existence* of both L and R as distinct, explicitly constructed RwEq witnesses in Type u . The

route R consists of two **Step** applications (Rules 8, 8), while the route L consists of three **Step** applications (Rules 63+8, 8, 64+8). These are genuinely different inhabitants of $\text{RwEq}(((p \cdot q) \cdot r) \cdot s)$ ($p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot s))$), and `Subsingleton.elim` cannot identify them because `RwEq` is `Type`-valued. The pentagon coherence theorem asserts that although the routes differ as derivations, they agree on the underlying semantic content. \square

Remark 4.5 (Explicit construction vs. proof-irrelevant triviality). In a system where `RwEq` were -valued, the pentagon would be trivially true: any two inhabitants of a proposition are equal. The `Type`-valued design forces us to construct both routes as explicit **Step** chains before comparing them. The mathematical content of these constructions is standard (they follow the same pattern as in any groupoid-enriched setting); the novelty lies in their realization as concrete rewrite traces within the TRS.

The pentagon extends to fivefold composites by standard arguments.

Theorem 4.6 (Mac Lane fivefold coherence). *For composable paths p, q, r, s, t , every parenthesization of the fivefold composite $p \cdot q \cdot r \cdot s \cdot t$ is connected to the fully right-associated form $p \cdot (q \cdot (r \cdot (s \cdot t)))$ by a canonical `RwEq` witness, and all such routes induce the same underlying equality. More precisely, for any two `RwEq` witnesses $h_1, h_2 : \text{RwEq } \pi_1 \pi_2$ connecting parenthesizations π_1 and π_2 and built from composites of associator edges (1)–(5), we have $\text{rweq_toEq}(h_1) = \text{rweq_toEq}(h_2)$.*

Proof. By Mac Lane’s coherence theorem for monoidal categories, it suffices to verify the pentagon and triangle identities. The pentagon is Theorem 4.4; the triangle is Theorem 4.13 below. Every diagram built from canonical associator and unit edges commutes at the `toEq` level because all such projected equalities inhabit . \square

4.2. Interchange and Eckmann–Hilton. Two-dimensional cells—habitants of $\text{RwEq } p \ q$ for parallel paths $p, q : \text{Path } a \ b$ —admit two composition operations. *Vertical composition* concatenates `RwEq` witnesses: given $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p \ q$ and $\beta : \text{RwEq } q \ r$, the composite $\alpha \cdot \beta \triangleq \text{RwEq.trans}(\alpha, \beta)$ has type `RwEq p r`. *Horizontal composition* is defined via whiskering.

Definition 4.7 (Whiskering). Given $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p \ p'$ and a fixed path $q : \text{Path } b \ c$:

- *Right whiskering:* $\alpha \triangleright q \triangleq \text{rweq_trans_congr_left } q \ \alpha : \text{RwEq } (\text{trans } p \ q) \ (\text{trans } p' \ q)$, defined by induction on α , lifting each **Step** s to `Step.trans_congr_left` $q \ s$ (Rule 63).

- *Left whiskering:* $p \triangleleft \beta \triangleq \text{rweq_trans_congr_right } p \beta : \text{RwEq}(\text{trans } p q) (\text{trans } p q')$, defined by induction on β , lifting each Step s to Step.trans.congr.right $p s$ (Rule 64).

Definition 4.8 (Horizontal composition). Given $\alpha : \text{RwEq}(p p')$ and $\beta : \text{RwEq}(q q')$, the *horizontal composite* (Godement product) is:

$$\alpha \star \beta \triangleq (\alpha \triangleright q) \cdot (p' \triangleleft \beta) : \text{RwEq}(\text{trans } p q) (\text{trans } p' q').$$

An alternative definition $\alpha \beta \triangleq (p \triangleleft \beta) \cdot (\alpha \triangleright q')$ right-whiskers α after left-whiskering β . Both produce the same underlying equality: $\text{rweq_toEq}(\alpha \star \beta) = \text{rweq_toEq}(\alpha \beta)$.

Theorem 4.9 (Interchange law). *For a 2×2 grid of composable 2-cells*

$\alpha_1 : \text{RwEq}(p_1 p_2)$, $\alpha_2 : \text{RwEq}(p_2 p_3)$, $\beta_1 : \text{RwEq}(q_1 q_2)$, $\beta_2 : \text{RwEq}(q_2 q_3)$, *the horizontal-then-vertical and vertical-then-horizontal composites agree:*

$$(\alpha_1 \cdot \alpha_2) \star (\beta_1 \cdot \beta_2) =_{\text{toEq}} (\alpha_1 \star \beta_1) \cdot (\alpha_2 \star \beta_2).$$

Proof. Both composites are RwEq witnesses between $\text{trans } p_1 q_1$ and $\text{trans } p_3 q_3$. Their toEq projections coincide by rfI , as both land in . \square

We now turn to the Eckmann–Hilton argument, which uses interchange to prove commutativity of 2-cell loops.

Definition 4.10 (Double loop space). For $a : A$, define $\Omega^2(A, a) \triangleq \text{Path}(\text{refl } a)(\text{refl } a)$, the type of paths from $\text{refl } a$ to itself in the path space $\text{Path } a$. Elements of $\Omega^2(A, a)$ are “2-cell loops”: self-paths of the identity path.

The vertical and horizontal compositions can both be defined on $\Omega^2(A, a)$. Vertical composition is simply path concatenation in the space $\text{Path } a$. Horizontal composition is defined via the binary map $\text{map2(trans)} \alpha \beta$, decomposed by Rule 9 (map2_subst) into a whiskering composite.

Theorem 4.11 (Eckmann–Hilton commutativity). *For all $\alpha, \beta : \Omega^2(A, a)$, the vertical composite $\alpha \cdot \beta$ equals $\beta \cdot \alpha$ after projection through toEq . The proof proceeds in three explicit steps:*

- (1) **Vertical to horizontal.** The “vertical composite” $v(\alpha, \beta) \triangleq \text{map2(trans)} \alpha \beta$ is related to the “horizontal composite” $h(\alpha, \beta) \triangleq (\text{refl} \triangleleft \beta) \cdot (\alpha \triangleright \text{refl})$ by a single Step application:

$$\text{Step.map2_subst(trans)} \alpha \beta : \text{Step}(v(\alpha, \beta))(h(\alpha, \beta)).$$

This is Rule 9 of the step system, which decomposes a binary map into a composite of unary maps (whiskerings).

- (2) **Symmetry of whiskering.** In $h(\alpha, \beta)$, the factor $\text{refl} \triangleleft \beta$ reduces to β (by Rule 3, left unit) and $\alpha \triangleright \text{refl}$ reduces to α (by Rule 4, right unit). Similarly, $h(\beta, \alpha)$ reduces to $\beta \cdot \alpha$. At the boundary $\text{refl } a$, left and right whiskering by refl are interchangeable: the order of α and β in the horizontal composite can be swapped because both factors compose with refl .
- (3) **Horizontal to vertical.** Applying the unit laws in reverse converts $h(\beta, \alpha)$ back to $v(\beta, \alpha) = \text{map2(trans)} \beta \alpha$.

The composite route

$$v(\alpha, \beta) \xrightarrow{\text{map2_subst}} h(\alpha, \beta) \xrightarrow{\text{unit laws}} h(\beta, \alpha) \xrightarrow{\text{map2_subst}^{-1}} v(\beta, \alpha)$$

yields an RwEq witness from $v(\alpha, \beta)$ to $v(\beta, \alpha)$, which projects to $v(\alpha, \beta).\text{toEq} = v(\beta, \alpha).\text{toEq}$.

Proof. The first step is the RwEq witness $\text{RwEq.step(Step.map2_subst(trans))} \alpha \beta$. The unit law reductions produce further Step applications (Rules 3 and 4). The interchange at the refl -boundary swaps the whiskering order. Composing these RwEq witnesses via RwEq.trans yields the desired chain. At the toEq level, both sides of the chain are propositional equalities in Path , so they coincide by refl . \square

Remark 4.12 (Anti-involution, not symmetric braiding). Eckmann–Hilton commutativity applies only to Ω^2 -loops: 2-cells whose source and target are both $\text{refl } a$. It does not extend to a braiding on arbitrary 1-cells. The correct structure on 1-cells is that symm induces an *anti-involution* on the path monoid:

$$\text{symm(trans } p \ q) \xrightleftharpoons{\text{Step}} \text{trans(symm } q, \text{ symm } p).$$

This is Rule 7 (symm_trans_congr), a *contravariance* law reversing the order of factors. An anti-involution satisfies $(xy)^{-1} = y^{-1}x^{-1}$ and $(x^{-1})^{-1} = x$, which are the laws of a $*$ -algebra or dagger category, not a braided monoidal category. In particular, the path groupoid on a non-simply-connected type is non-abelian at dimension 1, and the anti-involution does not equip it with a symmetric braiding.

4.3. Triangle coherence. The triangle identity relates the associator to the unit laws.

Theorem 4.13 (Triangle coherence). *For composable $p : \text{Path } a b$ and $q : \text{Path } b c$, the two canonical routes from $(p \cdot \text{refl}_b) \cdot q$ to $p \cdot q$ yield the*

same underlying equality. Explicitly, defining:

$$T_1 \triangleq \text{RwEq.trans} \left(\underbrace{\alpha_{p, \text{refl}_b, q}}_{\text{Rule 8}}, \underbrace{p \triangleright (\lambda_q)}_{\text{Rules 64+3}} \right) : \text{RwEq} ((p \cdot \text{refl}_b) \cdot q) (p \cdot q),$$

$$T_2 \triangleq \underbrace{(\rho_p) \triangleright q}_{\text{Rules 63+4}} : \text{RwEq} ((p \cdot \text{refl}_b) \cdot q) (p \cdot q),$$

where $\lambda_q : \text{RwEq} (\text{trans refl}_b q) q$ is the left unit (Rule 3) and $\rho_p : \text{RwEq} (\text{trans } p \text{ refl}_b) p$ is the right unit (Rule 4), we have $\text{rweq_toEq}(T_1) = \text{rweq_toEq}(T_2)$.

Proof. Route T_1 applies associativity (Rule 8) to obtain $p \cdot (\text{refl}_b \cdot q)$, then applies the left unit law (Rule 3) inside the right factor via congruence (Rule 64). Route T_2 applies the right unit law (Rule 4) to the left factor via congruence (Rule 63), reducing $(p \cdot \text{refl}_b)$ to p . Both are RwEq witnesses whose toEq projections coincide by rfl . \square

4.4. Inverse coherences. The interaction of symm with trans and refl is governed by several coherence laws, each constructed as an explicit Step chain.

Theorem 4.14 (Double inverse). *For every $p : \text{Path } a b$:*

$$\text{RwEq} (\text{symm}(\text{symm}(p))) p,$$

constructed as $\text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.symm_symm } p)$ (Rule 2).

Theorem 4.15 (Inverse of composition). *For composable $p : \text{Path } a b$ and $q : \text{Path } b c$:*

$$\text{RwEq} (\text{symm}(\text{trans } p q)) (\text{trans}(\text{symm } q, \text{ symm } p)),$$

constructed as $\text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.symm_trans_congr } p q)$ (Rule 7). This is the contravariance law: inversion reverses the order of composition.

Theorem 4.16 (Left cancellation). *For every $p : \text{Path } a b$:*

$$\text{RwEq} (\text{trans}(\text{symm } p, p)) (\text{refl } b),$$

constructed as $\text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.symm_trans } p)$ (Rule 6).

Theorem 4.17 (Right cancellation). *For every $p : \text{Path } a b$:*

$$\text{RwEq} (\text{trans}(p, \text{ symm } p)) (\text{refl } a),$$

constructed as $\text{RwEq.step}(\text{Step.trans_symm } p)$ (Rule 5).

Theorem 4.18 (Inverse coherence). *For every $p : \text{Path } a b$, the two cancellation routes from $(p \cdot p^{-1}) \cdot p$ to p agree after projection:*

$$\begin{aligned} R_1 &\triangleq \alpha_{p, p^{-1}, p} \cdot (p \triangleleft \text{inv_left}(p)) \cdot \rho_p, \\ R_2 &\triangleq (\text{inv_right}(p) \triangleright p) \cdot \lambda_p, \end{aligned}$$

satisfy $\text{rweq_toEq}(R_1) = \text{rweq_toEq}(R_2)$.

Proof. Route R_1 first associates to $p \cdot (p^{-1} \cdot p)$, applies left cancellation in the right factor, then removes the resulting unit on the right. Route R_2 applies right cancellation in the left factor, then removes the unit on the left. Both are explicit **RwEq** composites using Rules 5, 6, 8, 3, 4, 63, and 64. The projected equalities coincide by **rfl**. \square

Theorem 4.19 (Contravariance coherence). *For composable p, q, r , the two decompositions of $(p \cdot (q \cdot r))^{-1}$ into $(r^{-1} \cdot q^{-1}) \cdot p^{-1}$ —one applying Rule 7 to the outer composite first, the other to the inner composite first—yield the same projected equality.*

Proof. Both routes are composites of Rules 7 (contravariance) and 63/64 (congruence closure). Their **toEq** projections coincide by **rfl**. \square

4.5. Naturality. Each groupoid operation induces a natural transformation between path spaces, and the naturality squares commute.

Proposition 4.20 (Naturality of the left unitor). *For every $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p q$ where $p, q : \text{Path } a b$, the following square commutes at the level:*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{trans}(\text{refl}_a, p) & \xrightarrow{\text{refl}_a \triangleleft \alpha} & \text{trans}(\text{refl}_a, q) \\ \downarrow \lambda_p & & \downarrow \lambda_q \\ p & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & q \end{array}$$

That is, $\langle \lambda_p \cdot \alpha \rangle = \langle (\text{refl}_a \triangleleft \alpha) \cdot \lambda_q \rangle$ as elements of .

Proof. Both composites are **RwEq** witnesses with the same source and target. Their (i.e., $\text{Nonempty}(\text{RwEq} \cdot \cdot)$) values are equal by **Subsingleton.elim** on . \square

Proposition 4.21 (Naturality of the right unitor). *Analogously, for $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p q$:*

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{trans}(p, \text{refl}_b) & \xrightarrow{\alpha \triangleright \text{refl}_b} & \text{trans}(q, \text{refl}_b) \\ \downarrow \rho_p & & \downarrow \rho_q \\ p & \xrightarrow{\alpha} & q \end{array}$$

commutes at the level.

Proposition 4.22 (Naturality of the associator). *For 2-cells $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p \ p'$, $\beta : \text{RwEq } q \ q'$, $\gamma : \text{RwEq } r \ r'$, the associator is natural in all three variables: the evident cube of RwEq witnesses commutes at the level.*

Proposition 4.23 (Contravariance of symm). *The operation symm is contravariantly functorial with respect to trans : given $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p \ p'$, the induced $\text{RwEq}(\text{symm } p)(\text{symm } p')$ respects composition in the sense that $\text{symm}(\alpha \cdot \beta) = (\text{symm } \beta) \cdot (\text{symm } \alpha)$ at the level.*

Proposition 4.24 (Functionality of congrArg). *For any function $f : A \rightarrow B$:*

- (1) *$\text{congrArg } f$ preserves trans : $\text{congrArg } f(\text{trans } p \ q) = \text{trans}(\text{congrArg } f \ p, \text{congrArg } f \ q)$ up to RwEq .*
- (2) *$\text{congrArg } f$ preserves symm : $\text{congrArg } f(\text{symm } p) = \text{symm}(\text{congrArg } f \ p)$ up to RwEq .*
- (3) *$\text{congrArg } f$ preserves refl : $\text{congrArg } f(\text{refl } a) = \text{refl}(f \ a)$ up to RwEq .*

That is, $\text{congrArg } f$ is a groupoid functor from the path groupoid of A to the path groupoid of B .

5. TWO-CATEGORICAL STRUCTURE

5.1. The 2-category of types and paths. The coherence data of §4 endows the universe of types with a 2-categorical structure. We describe two instances: a *strict* 2-category of types and functions, and a *weak* 2-category (bicategory) of types and computational paths.

Definition 5.1 (Strict 2-category of types and functions). The strict 2-category $\mathcal{C}_{\text{strict}}$ has:

- **0-cells**: types $A : \text{Type } u$.
- **1-cells**: functions $f : A \rightarrow B$.
- **2-cells**: $\text{PLift}(f = g) : \text{Type } 0$, the propositional equality of functions lifted from Type to Type .

Composition of 1-cells is function composition $g \circ f$; it is strictly associative and unital. Vertical composition of 2-cells is transitivity of $\langle \alpha \rangle \cdot \langle \beta \rangle = \langle \alpha \cdot \text{trans } \beta \rangle$. Horizontal composition (Godement product) is: $\langle \alpha \rangle \star \langle \beta \rangle = \langle \alpha \triangleright \beta \triangleright \text{refl} \rangle$, where $\alpha \triangleright \beta$ denotes the congruence $g \circ f = g' \circ f'$ derived from $f = f'$ and $g = g'$.

Theorem 5.2 (Strict 2-category instance). *The data of Definition 5.1 satisfies the axioms of a strict 2-category:*

- (1) *Strict associativity and unit laws for 1-cells (definitional in Lean 4).*
- (2) *Associativity and unit laws for vertical 2-cell composition.*
- (3) *Functionality of horizontal composition: identity 2-cells compose horizontally to identity 2-cells.*

(4) *The interchange law* $(\alpha_1 \cdot \alpha_2) \star (\beta_1 \cdot \beta_2) = (\alpha_1 \star \beta_1) \cdot (\alpha_2 \star \beta_2)$.

Proof. All four axiom classes are discharged by the observation that $\text{PLift}(f = g)$ is a subsingleton: any two 2-cells between the same 1-cells are equal. In the formalization, this is the function `plift_eq_subsingleton`, and each axiom reduces to `rfl` after case-splitting on `PLift`. \square

Theorem 5.3 (Godement interchange). *In $\mathcal{C}_{\text{strict}}$, the two orders of composing a 2×2 grid of 2-cells yield the same result:*

$$(\alpha_1 \cdot \alpha_2) \star (\beta_1 \cdot \beta_2) = (\alpha_1 \star \beta_1) \cdot (\alpha_2 \star \beta_2).$$

Proof. Both sides are elements of $\text{PLift}(g' \circ f' = g'' \circ f'')$, which is a subsingleton. \square

Definition 5.4 (Weak 2-category of types and paths). The weak 2-category (bicategory) $\mathcal{C}_{\text{path}}$ has:

- **0-cells:** types $A : \text{Type } u$.
- **1-cells:** computational paths $p : \text{Path } a b$.
- **2-cells:** $\text{RwEq } p q : \text{Type } u$.

Horizontal composition is `trans`; vertical composition is `RwEq.trans`. The associator and unitors are the `RwEq` witnesses of §4: $\alpha_{p,q,r}$, λ_p , ρ_p . The pentagon and triangle identities (Theorems 4.4 and 4.13) verify that $\mathcal{C}_{\text{path}}$ satisfies the bicategory axioms at the `toEq` level.

Proposition 5.5 (Whiskering naturality). *For 2-cells $\alpha : \text{RwEq } p p'$ and $\beta : \text{RwEq } q q'$, the two whiskering orders satisfy the naturality square:*

$$(p \triangleleft \beta) \cdot (\alpha \triangleright q') = (\alpha \triangleright q) \cdot (p' \triangleleft \beta).$$

This is the statement that $\alpha \star \beta = \alpha \beta$ at the level (cf. Definition 4.8).

5.2. Enrichment and internal hom. The path space `Path a b` with its `RwEq`-equivalence classes serves as the hom-object of an enriched category.

Definition 5.6 (Path-enriched hom). For a fixed type A , the *path hom-space* between $a, b : A$ is the quotient $\text{PathRwQuot } A a b \triangleq \text{Quot}()$, where $p q \triangleq \text{Nonempty}(\text{RwEq } p q) :.$ Composition `trans` and inversion `symm` descend to the quotient because `RwEq` is a congruence for both operations (Proposition 2.12).

Proposition 5.7 (Groupoid enrichment). *The quotient hom-spaces $\text{PathRwQuot } A a b$ form the hom-sets of a groupoid $\Pi_1^{\text{cp}}(A)$ —the computational-path fundamental groupoid. Composition is strictly associative and unital on the quotient; every morphism has a strict inverse. This is the 1-truncation of the full ω -groupoid structure developed in §6.*

Remark 5.8 (Connection to ∞ -categories). Before taking the quotient, the untruncated path space carries a richer structure. The tower A , Path , RwEq , Derivation_3 , ... (Definition 6.1 below) is the computational-path analogue of the Kan complex or quasi-category presenting the ∞ -groupoid of a type. The enrichment perspective says that the hom-objects are themselves $(\infty, 0)$ -categories (i.e., ∞ -groupoids), making the resulting structure an $(\infty, 1)$ -category with all morphisms invertible—in other words, an ∞ -groupoid. This connection is made precise by the weak ω -groupoid theorem of the next section.

6. THE WEAK ω -GROUPOID THEOREM

6.1. The cell tower. We define the globular set of cells at each dimension, following the pattern of Lumsdaine [15] and van den Berg–Garner [36] but using the computational-path rewriting system in place of the identity type eliminator.

Definition 6.1 (Cell tower). Let $A : \text{Type } u$. The *cell tower* is a sequence of types indexed by dimension:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cell}_0 &\triangleq A \\ \text{Cell}_1(a, b) &\triangleq \text{Path } a b \quad \text{for } a, b : A \\ \text{Cell}_2(p, q) &\triangleq \text{Derivation}_2 p q \quad \text{for } p, q : \text{Path } a b \\ \text{Cell}_3(d_1, d_2) &\triangleq \text{Derivation}_3 d_1 d_2 \quad \text{for } d_1, d_2 : \text{Derivation}_2 p q \\ \text{Cell}_4(m_1, m_2) &\triangleq \text{Derivation}_4 m_1 m_2 \quad \text{for } m_1, m_2 : \text{Derivation}_3 d_1 d_2 \\ \text{Cell}_{n+4}(c_1, c_2) &\triangleq \text{DerivationHigh } n c_1 c_2 \end{aligned}$$

Each Cell_n depends on a pair of parallel $(n-1)$ -cells, giving the data a *globular* shape: the source and target maps $s, t : \text{Cell}_n \rightarrow \text{Cell}_{n-1}$ satisfy $s \circ s = s \circ t$ and $t \circ s = t \circ t$.

Definition 6.2 (Derivation₂). The type $\text{Derivation}_2 p q$ is a $\text{Type } u$ -valued type of 2-cells between parallel paths. Its constructors mirror those of RwEq but carry the full derivation trace:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Derivation}_2.\text{refl}(p) &: \text{Derivation}_2 p p \\ \text{Derivation}_2.\text{step}(s) &: \text{Step } p q \rightarrow \text{Derivation}_2 p q \\ \text{Derivation}_2.\text{inv}(d) &: \text{Derivation}_2 p q \rightarrow \text{Derivation}_2 q p \\ \text{Derivation}_2.\text{vcomp}(d_1, d_2) &: \text{Derivation}_2 p q \rightarrow \text{Derivation}_2 q r \rightarrow \text{Derivation}_2 p r \end{aligned}$$

The function $\text{Derivation}_2.\text{toRwEq}$ projects a derivation to the underlying RwEq witness by forgetting the trace structure.

Definition 6.3 (MetaStep₃ and Derivation₃). The type $\text{MetaStep}_3\ d_1\ d_2$ captures the elementary *meta-steps* between derivations: groupoid law rewrites at dimension 2 applied to derivation structure. Its constructors include:

- `vcomp_assoc` (associativity of vertical composition),
- `vcomp_refl_left`, `vcomp_refl_right` (unit laws),
- `vcomp_inv_left`, `vcomp_inv_right` (inverse laws),
- `inv_inv` (double inverse),
- `inv_vcomp` (contravariance of inverse over composition),
- `step_eq` (two single-step derivations with the same endpoints are connected),
- `interchange` (the interchange law for horizontal composition of derivations),
- `pentagon`, `triangle` (higher coherences),
- `rweq_transport` (two derivations whose `RwEq` projections have equal `rweq_toEq` images are connected).

The type Derivation_3 is the reflexive-transitive-symmetric closure of MetaStep_3 , with constructors `refl`, `step`, `inv`, `vcomp`, and whiskering operators `whiskerLeft3`, `whiskerRight3`.

The cell tower carries groupoid operations at each level: composition, identity, and inverse at level n yield $(n+1)$ -cell coherence witnesses.

Proposition 6.4 (Groupoid operations at each level). *At each level $n \geq 1$, the cell tower carries:*

- **Identity:** $\text{id}_n(c) : \text{Cell}_n(c, c)$.
- **Composition:** $\text{comp}_n(c_1, c_2) : \text{Cell}_n(a, b) \rightarrow \text{Cell}_n(b, c) \rightarrow \text{Cell}_n(a, c)$.
- **Inverse:** $\text{inv}_n(c) : \text{Cell}_n(a, b) \rightarrow \text{Cell}_n(b, a)$.
- **Coherence witnesses** at level $n + 1$: $(n+1)$ -cells witnessing associativity, unit laws, and inverse laws for the level- n operations.

At level 1, these are Step constructors (Rules 3–8). At level 2, these are MetaStep_3 constructors. At level $n \geq 3$, these are analogous meta-step constructors at the appropriate dimension.

6.2. Batanin–Leinster conditions. A *weak ω -groupoid* in the sense of Batanin [3] and Leinster [13] is a globular set equipped with composition operations at each dimension, subject to coherence conditions encoded by a contractible globular operad. The key conditions, adapted to our setting, are:

- (BL1) **Globular structure.** The cell tower forms a globular set: source and target maps satisfy $s \circ s = s \circ t$ and $t \circ s = t \circ t$.
Status: verified by the typing discipline of Cell_n .

- (BL2) **Composition.** At each dimension n , there is a composition operation on n -cells with matching $(n-1)$ -boundaries. *Status:* verified at all levels via `trans` (level 1), `vcomp` (level 2), `Derivation3.vcomp` (level 3), and analogous constructors at higher levels.
- (BL3) **Identities.** At each dimension n , there is an identity n -cell on each $(n-1)$ -cell. *Status:* verified via `refl` (level 1), `Derivation2.refl` (level 2), `Derivation3.refl` (level 3), etc.
- (BL4) **Inverses.** At each dimension n , every n -cell has a weak inverse. *Status:* verified via `symm` (level 1), `Derivation2.inv` (level 2), `Derivation3.inv` (level 3), etc.
- (BL5) **Coherence at dimension 2.** The pentagon and triangle identities hold for the composition at dimension 1. *Status:* verified by Theorems 4.4 and 4.13, with explicit `Derivation3` witnesses `pentagonCoherence` and `triangleCoherence`.
- (BL6) **Interchange.** Horizontal and vertical composition of 2-cells satisfy the interchange law. *Status:* verified by Theorem 4.9 and the `MetaStep3.interchange` constructor.
- (BL7) **Contractibility at dimension ≥ 3 .** For $n \geq 3$, the space of n -cells between any two parallel $(n-1)$ -cells is inhabited: any two parallel cells at dimension ≥ 2 can be connected by a cell one dimension higher. *Status:* verified by Theorem 6.5 below.

Conditions (BL1)–(BL6) constitute the “algebraic” part of the weak ω -groupoid structure. Condition (BL7) is the “contractibility” part, which in Batanin’s framework is encoded by the contractibility of the globular operad governing the higher coherences. It is this condition that makes the structure “weak” rather than strict: the higher coherences are not identities but merely inhabitants, and contractibility ensures that the space of such inhabitants is connected.

6.3. Contractibility from confluence. The central theorem of the paper: Church–Rosser confluence of the step rewriting system implies contractibility of the cell tower at dimension ≥ 3 .

Theorem 6.5 (Contractibility at dimension ≥ 3).

- (1) **Level 3.** For any parallel 2-cells $d_1, d_2 : \text{Derivation}_2 p q$, there exists a 3-cell $m : \text{Derivation}_3 d_1 d_2$.
- (2) **Level 4.** For any parallel 3-cells $m_1, m_2 : \text{Derivation}_3 d_1 d_2$, there exists a 4-cell $n : \text{Derivation}_4 m_1 m_2$.
- (3) **Level ≥ 5 .** For any $n \geq 5$ and parallel $(n-1)$ -cells c_1, c_2 , there exists an n -cell connecting them.

Proof. We give the argument at level 3 in detail; the higher levels follow by the same pattern.

Step 1: Normalization via groupoid laws. Every 2-cell $d : \text{Derivation}_2 p q$ is connected to a *canonical representative* $\text{normalize}(d)$ by a 3-cell $\text{to_normal_form}_3(d) : \text{Derivation}_3 d (\text{normalize}(d))$. The normalization is a real two-phase pipeline implemented in the `Normalizer` module:

- (1) **Flatten:** convert the Derivation_2 tree into a right-associated `FlatChain` of signed steps.
- (2) **Reduce:** cancel adjacent inverse pairs to produce an `IsReduced` chain (the normal form).

Each rewriting step is witnessed by a Derivation_3 cell built from the groupoid-law constructors of `MetaStep`_3:

- `vcomp_refl_left`, `vcomp_refl_right` (absorb identity cells)
- `vcomp_assoc` (re-associate compositions)
- `inv_inv` (cancel double inverses)
- `inv_vcomp` (distribute inverses over composition)
- `vcomp_inv_left`, `vcomp_inv_right` (cancel inverse pairs)
- `whisker_inv_3` (inversion under whiskering)
- `vcomp_congr_{3,left}`, `vcomp_congr_{3,right}` (congruence for vertical composition)

The normalization step itself uses no custom axioms. `Step` is -valued, so its proof irrelevance is inherited from Lean’s kernel. The construction is structural: it normalizes the free-groupoid word represented by d into right-associated, reduced form.

Step 2: Connecting canonical forms. Given two derivations $d_1, d_2 : \text{Derivation}_2 p q$, the canonical forms $\text{normalize}(d_1)$ and $\text{normalize}(d_2)$ are connected by:

`connect_normalized : Derivation_3 (normalize(d1)) (normalize(d2))`

This connector uses two additional `MetaStep`_3 constructors:

- `step_eq(s1, s2)`: identifies any two steps $s_1, s_2 : \text{Step } p q$ between the same endpoints. Since `Step` is proof-irrelevant (Prop-valued in the formalization), this reflects that the “reason” for a rewrite step is immaterial—only the endpoints matter.
- `diamond_filler(s1, s2, j1, j2)`: the Squier filler for confluence diamonds. Given diverging steps $s_1 : p \rightarrow q$ and $s_2 : p \rightarrow r$ that rejoin via $j_1 : q \rightarrow m$ and $j_2 : r \rightarrow m$, this provides a 3-cell witnessing commutativity of the diamond.

The `diamond_filler` is *not* a blanket axiom connecting arbitrary derivations; it only connects the specific pairs of paths arising from actual confluence diamonds in the step rewriting system. This is the key

insight of Squier’s theorem [32]: when the monoid (here, groupoid) presentation has finitely many critical pairs, the homotopy type of the derivation space is determined by finitely many diamond fillers.

Step 3: Composing the connections. The contractibility witness is the composite:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{contractibility}_3(d_1, d_2) &\triangleq \text{Derivation}_3.\text{vcomp}(\text{to_normal_form}_3(d_1), \\ &\quad \text{Derivation}_3.\text{vcomp}(\text{connect_normalized}(\text{normalize}(d_1), \text{normalize}(d_2)), \\ &\quad \text{Derivation}_3.\text{inv}(\text{to_normal_form}_3(d_2))) \end{aligned}$$

This explicitly factors through canonical forms: d_1 is connected to its normal form, the normal forms are connected, and we return to d_2 via the inverse bridge.

Levels 4 and above. At level 4, parallel 3-cells $m_1, m_2 : \text{Derivation}_3 d_1 d_2$ are connected by a 4-cell via `MetaStep4.diamond.filler`. At level $n \geq 5$, the constructor `DerivationHigh.step(MetaStepHigh.diamond.filler)` provides the required cell. The pattern is uniform: at each level, contractibility is obtained by normalizing to canonical form and filling confluence diamonds. \square

Remark 6.6 (Non-collapse at level 2). Contractibility does *not* hold at level 2. Two parallel paths $p, q : \text{Path } a b$ with different step lists may have no `RwEq` witness connecting them. For instance, the two generators of the fundamental group of the circle are distinct paths with no rewrite derivation between them. If level 2 were contractible, the fundamental groupoid would be trivial—contradicting the non-trivial homotopy theory that the framework is designed to capture. The cell tower is therefore genuinely *2-truncated*: it carries non-trivial information at levels 0, 1, and 2, and becomes contractible from level 3 onward.

Remark 6.7 (The Squier program: `step_eq`, `diamond.filler`, and proof irrelevance). The contractibility theorem realizes the *Squier program* for computational paths. Squier’s theorem [32] states that a finitely presented monoid has decidable word problem if and only if its derivation complex is finite-dimensional. The analogous result for groupoid presentations says that when a presentation is *complete* (confluent and terminating), the 2-dimensional derivation space is contractible, with the contraction witnessed by explicit fillers for confluence diamonds.

In our setting:

- The *step rewriting system* (the `Step` relation) is the presentation of the free groupoid on computational paths.

- The *diamond fillers* (`MetaStep3.diamond.filler`) correspond to the 3-cells filling each critical pair.
- The *groupoid-law constructors* of `MetaStep3` (associativity, unit laws, inverse laws) provide the structural normalization steps.

Key achievement: `Subsingleton.elim-free structured contractibility`. The contractibility proof operates at two levels:

Level 3 (`contractibility3, connecting parallel 2-cells`):

- (1) **Groupoid-law rewrites:** `vcomp_refl_left`, `vcomp_refl_right`, `vcomp_assoc`, `inv_inv`, `vcomp_inv_left`, `vcomp_inv_right`, `inv_vcomp`, `whisker_inv3`, `vcomp_congr3,left`, `vcomp_congr3,right`.
- (2) **Step coherence** (`step_eq`): identifies any two steps between the same endpoints, reflecting proof-irrelevance of the `Step` relation itself.
- (3) **Definitional transport** (`rweq_transport`): connects normalized forms whose `toEq` projections agree. The proof obligation `derivation2_toEq_eq` is discharged by `rfl` (definitional equality in Lean's kernel), *not* by `Subsingleton.elim`.

Levels 4+ (`contractibility4, contractibilityHigh`):

- (1) **Normalization:** higher cells are normalized via `normalize3`, `normalize4`.
- (2) **Squier-style diamond fillers** (`diamond.filler`): connect normalized higher cells across confluence diamonds.

This achieves contractibility at dimension ≥ 3 as a *structured consequence* of normalization and the groupoid laws. The `step_eq` constructor relies on `Step` being -valued (hence proof-irrelevant), and the `rweq_transport` constructor's proof obligation reduces to `rfl` because all `Derivation2` inhabitants between the same endpoints project to the same witness definitionally. No invocation of `Subsingleton.elim` appears in the contractibility proof. The formalization validates this claim: the `contractibility3` function builds explicit 3-cells from the constructors above, with `diamond.filler` used only where genuine confluence diamonds occur.

The constrained diamond.filler. Unlike the blanket `rweq_transport`, the `diamond.filler` constructor is *constrained*: it requires explicit diverging steps $s_1 : \text{Step } p \ q$, $s_2 : \text{Step } p \ r$ together with explicit joining chains $j_1 : \text{StepStar } q \ m$, $j_2 : \text{StepStar } r \ m$, and it only connects the two derivations that arise from a genuine confluence diamond:

$$\text{vcomp}(\text{step } s_1, \text{derivation_2_of_stepstar } j_1) \longleftrightarrow \text{vcomp}(\text{step } s_2, \text{derivation_2_of_stepstar } j_2)$$

Each of the 33 critical pairs of the completed groupoid TRS generates exactly one such diamond-filler 3-cell. This directly implements Squier’s finite derivation type (FDT) criterion.

Summary. The resulting structure is a *weak 2-groupoid with contractible higher cells*: genuinely non-degenerate at levels 0–2 (where the TRS provides real structure), and contractible from level 3 onward. Unlike the Lumsdaine and van den Berg–Garner constructions [15, 36], which produce genuinely non-degenerate structure at all levels in intensional MLTT, our construction is necessarily different: we build *on top of* a UIP foundation, and the higher-dimensional collapse is achieved via groupoid-law normalization (`IsReduced`, `normalize`, `to_normal_form3`), the `rweq_transport` constructor at level 3 whose proof obligation is definitional (`rfl`), and Squier-style `diamond_filler` cells at levels 4 and above. No use of `Subsingleton.elim` is required.

Remark 6.8 (Comparison with Lumsdaine and van den Berg–Garner). Lumsdaine [15] and van den Berg–Garner [36] proved that the identity types of intensional Martin-Löf type theory form a weak ω -groupoid. Their construction uses the J -eliminator (path induction) to define composition, inverses, and coherences at each dimension, with contractibility following from the elimination principle itself. Crucially, their ω -groupoid is genuinely non-degenerate at all levels, because intensional MLTT does not validate UIP.

Our construction differs in three key respects:

- (1) **Foundation.** We work in an *extensional* setting (Lean 4, which validates UIP on λ) rather than an intensional one.
- (2) **Groupoid operations.** The groupoid operations at dimension 1 are defined by explicit rewrite rules (`Step` constructors), not by path induction.
- (3) **Contractibility mechanism.** Higher-dimensional contractibility is derived via a real normalization pipeline (`IsReduced`, `normalize`, `to_normal_form3`), the `rweq_transport` constructor for connecting normalized 2-cells, and Squier-style `diamond_filler` constructors at levels 4+. At level 3, the proof obligation for `rweq_transport` is discharged by `rfl` (definitional equality on normalized forms). The 3-cells are built from `step_eq`, `rweq_transport`, and the groupoid-law `MetaStep3` constructors (including `whisker_inv3`, `vcomp_congr3, left`, `vcomp_congr3, right`), with no appeal to `Subsingleton.elim`.

The result is that our ω -groupoid carries *less* information at dimensions ≥ 3 than the Lumsdaine/vdBG construction: it is a weak 2-groupoid with contractible higher cells, not a genuinely non-degenerate

ω -groupoid. The trade-off is that it can be constructed inside a mainstream proof assistant with UIP, whereas the Lumsdaine/vdBG construction requires an intensional type theory.

6.4. The main theorem. We assemble the components into the main result.

Definition 6.9 (Batanin–Leinster data). The *Batanin–Leinster data* for a type $A : \text{Type } u$ is the record:

```
contract3 : ∀ d1 d2 : Derivation2 p q, Derivation3 d1 d2
contract4 : ∀ m1 m2 : Derivation3 d1 d2, Derivation4 m1 m2
pentagon : ∀ f g h k, Derivation3 (pentagonLeft f g h k) (pentagonRight f g h k)
triangle : ∀ f g, Derivation3 (triangleLeft f g) (triangleRight f g)
interchange : ∀ α β, Derivation3 (hcomp α β) (Derivation2.vcomp (whiskerLeft f β) (whiskerRight c))
```

Theorem 6.10 (The globular set of computational paths forms a weak ω -groupoid). *For any type $A : \text{Type } u$, the cell tower*

$$(A, \text{Path}, \text{Derivation}_2, \text{Derivation}_3, \text{Derivation}_4, \dots)$$

carries the structure of a weak ω -groupoid in an adapted Batanin–Leinster sense: it satisfies conditions (BL1)–(BL7), with the caveat that levels ≥ 3 are contractible (via the normalization pipeline and diamond.filler) rather than genuinely non-degenerate.

Proof. The Batanin–Leinster data for A is assembled as follows.

- **Composition, identity, inverse** at level 1: trans, refl, symm, constructed from operations on the underlying equality proofs (Definition 4.1 and Theorem 2.6).
- **Coherence witnesses** at level 2 (the associator, unitors, and inverse witnesses): single Step applications (Step.trans_assoc, Step.trans_refl_left, Step.trans_refl_right, Step.symm_trans, Step.trans_symm), lifted to Derivation₂ via Derivation₂.step.
- **Coherence witnesses** at level 3 (pentagon, triangle, interchange): MetaStep₃ constructors (pentagon, triangle, interchange), lifted to Derivation₃ via Derivation₃.step.
- **Groupoid laws** at level 2 (associativity, unit, inverse laws for vertical composition): MetaStep₃ constructors (vcomp_assoc, vcomp_refl_left, vcomp_refl_right, vcomp_inv_left, vcomp_inv_right, inv_inv, inv_vcomp).
- **Contractibility** at level ≥ 3 : at level 3, the normalization pipeline (normalize, to_normal_form₃) reduces each 2-cell to canonical form, and connect_normalized bridges canonical forms using step_eq, diamond.filler, and rweq_transport rfl (where derivation₂.toEq_eq

is definitional); `MetaStep4.diamond.filler` at level 4, `MetaStepHigh.diamond.filler` at level ≥ 5 .

Each field of the `OmegaGroupoidExplicit` structure (Definition 6.9) is filled with an explicit constructor. The function `mkOmegaGroupoidExplicit A` packages these into a single record, and `bataninLeinsterData A` extracts the data needed for the Batanin–Leinster conditions. No field invokes `Subsingleton.elim`, `sorry`, or `admit`. \square

Theorem 6.11 (Truncation). *The quotient `PathRwQuot A a b` \triangleq `Quot()` is the 1-truncated hom-space of the ω -groupoid: composition, units, and inverses descend to the quotient via Proposition 2.12, yielding a strict groupoid $\Pi_1^{\text{cp}}(A)$.*

Proof. The relation is a congruence for `trans`, `symm`, and `refl` by the congruence lemmas of §2.3. The quotient operations are defined by `Quot.lift` and `Quot.liftOn2`; the associativity, unit, and inverse laws become strict equalities on the quotient because the `RwEq` witnesses witnessing them are absorbed into the equivalence classes. \square

Remark 6.12 (Comparison with HoTT). In HoTT, the ω -groupoid structure is *intrinsic* (the identity type and J -eliminator provide all operations), whereas in our framework it is *extrinsic*—built as an explicit algebraic structure on top of a proof-irrelevant kernel. See Remark 6.8 for a detailed comparison with Lumsdaine and van den Berg–Garner.

7. HOMOTOPY-THEORETIC APPLICATIONS

The preceding sections developed the algebraic machinery of computational paths: the `Path/Step/RwEq` framework, confluence, coherence, the strict 2-category instance, and the weak ω -groupoid theorem. We now turn to the homotopy-theoretic applications that this machinery enables. The central result of this section is the computation of the fundamental group $\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$ via an encode–decode argument carried out entirely within the computational-path framework.

7.1. The fundamental group of the circle.

7.1.1. *The circle as a higher inductive type.* In Homotopy Type Theory, the circle S^1 is presented as a *higher inductive type* with one point constructor and one path constructor:

Definition 7.1 (Circle S^1). The circle is the higher inductive type generated by:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{base} &: S^1, \\ \text{loop} &: \text{Path base base}. \end{aligned}$$

The elimination principle states: for any type family $P : S^1 \rightarrow \text{Type}$, given $b : P(\text{base})$ and $\ell : \text{Path} (\text{transport } P \text{ loop } b) b$, there exists $f : \prod_{x:S^1} P(x)$ with $f(\text{base}) \equiv b$ and $\text{ap}_f(\text{loop}) = \ell$.

In our formalization, S^1 is represented as an inductive type equipped with path data. The path `loop` is not merely a propositional equality `base = base` (which would be trivially `refl` by), but a computational path `loop : Path base base` whose step list is a non-empty sequence of elementary rewrites. This is the key point: the step list records that `loop` traverses a non-trivial circuit, even though its underlying propositional equality is `refl`.

Remark 7.2 (Why `loop ≠ refl` as paths). In Lean’s kernel, `base = base` has a unique proof (by). But the computational paths `loop` and `refl(base)` differ in their step lists. Two paths $p, q : \text{Path} a b$ are identified only when `RwEq p q`, and there is no `RwEq` witness between `loop` and `refl(base)`—the `loop` atom is irreducible under the 77-rule TRS. This is the mechanism by which computational paths recover proof relevance inside a proof-irrelevant kernel.

7.1.2. The winding number function.

Definition 7.3 (Winding number). Define the *code* family $\text{code} : S^1 \rightarrow \text{Type}$ by circle elimination:

$$\text{code}(\text{base}) \triangleq \mathbb{Z}, \quad \text{ap}_{\text{code}}(\text{loop}) = \text{succPath},$$

where `succPath : Path ZZ` is the computational path corresponding to the successor equivalence $n \mapsto n + 1$.

The *winding number* function is:

$$\text{wind} : \text{Path base base} \longrightarrow \mathbb{Z}, \quad \text{wind}(p) \triangleq \text{transport code } p 0.$$

Proposition 7.4 (Winding number is a homomorphism). *For all $p, q : \text{Path base base}$:*

- (1) $\text{wind}(\text{refl}) = 0$,
- (2) $\text{wind}(\text{loop}) = 1$,
- (3) $\text{wind}(\text{symm}(\text{loop})) = -1$,
- (4) $\text{wind}(\text{trans } p q) = \text{wind}(p) + \text{wind}(q)$.

Proof. Property (1) follows from the transport computation rule `transport code refl 0 = 0`. Property (2) follows from the path-over data: `transport code loop 0 = succ(0) = 1`. Property (3) uses the transport-symmetry step (Rule 31 of the TRS): `transport P (symm p) = (transport P p)-1`, yielding `pred(0) = -1`. Property (4) follows from the transport-composition step (Rule 30): `transport P (trans p q) = transport P q ∘ transport P p`. \square

7.1.3. *The encode–decode proof.* The computation of $\pi_1(S^1)$ proceeds by an encode–decode argument. The *encoding* direction is the winding number; the *decoding* direction constructs a loop from an integer.

Definition 7.5 (Decode function). Define $\text{decode} : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \text{Path base base}$ by:

$$\text{decode}(n) \triangleq \begin{cases} \text{loop}^n & \text{if } n \geq 0, \\ (\text{symm}(\text{loop}))^{|n|} & \text{if } n < 0, \end{cases}$$

where loop^n denotes the n -fold composition $\text{trans}(\text{loop}, \text{trans}(\text{loop}, \dots))$ and $\text{loop}^0 = \text{refl}(\text{base})$.

Lemma 7.6 (Encode–decode round-trip: $\text{wind} \circ \text{decode} = \text{id}$). *For all $n : \mathbb{Z}$, $\text{wind}(\text{decode}(n)) = n$.*

Proof. By induction on n . For $n = 0$: $\text{wind}(\text{refl}) = 0$ by Proposition 7.4(1). For $n + 1$: $\text{wind}(\text{trans}(\text{loop}, \text{decode}(n))) = \text{wind}(\text{loop}) + \text{wind}(\text{decode}(n)) = 1 + n = n + 1$ by the homomorphism property and the inductive hypothesis. The case $n - 1$ is analogous using $\text{symm}(\text{loop})$. \square

Lemma 7.7 (Decode–encode round-trip: $\text{decode} \circ \text{wind} =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{id}$). *For all $p : \text{Path base base}$,*

$$\text{RwEq}(\text{decode}(\text{wind}(p))) p.$$

Proof. This is the deeper direction. We proceed by induction on the step list of p .

Base case. If $p = \text{refl}(\text{base})$, then $\text{wind}(p) = 0$ and $\text{decode}(0) = \text{refl}(\text{base})$, so $\text{RwEq}.\text{refl}$ suffices.

Step case: loop. If $p = \text{trans}(\text{loop}, p')$, then $\text{wind}(p) = 1 + \text{wind}(p')$, and $\text{decode}(1 + \text{wind}(p')) = \text{trans}(\text{loop}, \text{decode}(\text{wind}(p')))$. By the inductive hypothesis, $\text{RwEq}(\text{decode}(\text{wind}(p'))) p'$, and by Proposition 2.12 (bifunctionality of composition), $\text{RwEq}(\text{trans}(\text{loop}, \text{decode}(\text{wind}(p')))) (\text{trans}(\text{loop}, p'))$. The result follows since $\text{trans}(\text{loop}, p') = p$ by hypothesis.

Step case: symm(loop). Analogous.

General step. For an arbitrary step s in the step list of p , the transport computation rules (Rules 29–35) reduce transport code s to an integer operation, and decode reconstructs the corresponding loop sequence. The RwEq witness is assembled from `Step.transport_refl_beta`, `Step.transport_comp`, and congruence rules. \square

Theorem 7.8 ($\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$). *The winding number and decode functions induce mutually inverse maps on the quotient:*

$$\pi_1(S^1, \text{base}) := \text{PathRwQuot } S^1 \text{ base base} \cong \mathbb{Z}.$$

Proof. The quotient PathRwQuot identifies paths up to RwEq (Theorem 6.11). Define:

$$\begin{aligned}\overline{\text{wind}} : \text{PathRwQuot } S^1 \text{ base base} &\rightarrow \mathbb{Z}, \quad [p] \mapsto \text{wind}(p), \\ \overline{\text{decode}} : \mathbb{Z} &\rightarrow \text{PathRwQuot } S^1 \text{ base base}, \quad n \mapsto [\text{decode}(n)].\end{aligned}$$

Well-definedness of $\overline{\text{wind}}$. If $\text{RwEq } p \ q$, then p and q have the same underlying propositional equality (by rweq_toEq), so $\text{wind}(p) = \text{wind}(q)$ because wind factors through transport, which depends only on the underlying equality. The function descends to the quotient.

Section. $\text{wind} \circ \overline{\text{decode}} = \text{id}_{\mathbb{Z}}$ by Lemma 7.6.

Retraction. $\overline{\text{decode}} \circ \overline{\text{wind}} = \text{id}_{\pi_1}$: for any $[p]$, $\overline{\text{decode}}(\overline{\text{wind}}(p)) = [\text{decode}(\text{wind}(p))] = [p]$ by Lemma 7.7, since $\text{RwEq}(\text{decode}(\text{wind}(p))) \ p$ implies equality in the quotient.

Group homomorphism. $\overline{\text{wind}}$ preserves the group operation by Proposition 7.4(4), and $\overline{\text{decode}}$ preserves addition by construction: $\text{decode}(m+n) =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{trans}(\text{decode}(m), \text{decode}(n))$. \square

Remark 7.9 (Comparison with the HoTT proof). The standard HoTT proof of $\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$ (as in [35], Chapter 8, or Licata–Shulman) relies on the univalence axiom to establish that transport along loop in the code fibration acts as the successor function. The argument proceeds by constructing a universal cover of S^1 as a type family $S^1 \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$, using univalence to identify the fiber \mathbb{Z} with itself via the successor equivalence.

Our proof differs in three respects. First, we do not invoke univalence: the transport computation is carried out by the explicit step rules of the TRS (Rules 29–35), which compute transport along composite paths by structural recursion. Second, the decode–encode round-trip (Lemma 7.7) is established as an RwEq witness rather than a propositional identity, providing a more refined invariant. Third, the fundamental group is defined as the quotient PathRwQuot rather than as the 0-truncation $\|\Omega(S^1)\|_0$: the former is a set by construction (Theorem 6.11), while the latter requires a separate truncation argument.

The trade-off is that our proof requires the completed TRS and confluence theorem, whereas the HoTT proof requires univalence. Both yield the same mathematical content; the difference is in the foundational infrastructure.

7.2. Higher inductive types.

7.2.1. *The circle.* The formal treatment of the circle in Definition 7.1 extends to arbitrary circle elimination:

Proposition 7.10 (Non-dependent circle elimination). *For any type B , given $b : B$ and $\ell : \text{Path } b\ b$, there exists a unique (up to RwEq) function $f : S^1 \rightarrow B$ with $f(\text{base}) \equiv b$ and $\text{RwEq}(\text{ap}_f(\text{loop})) \ell$.*

7.2.2. Suspension.

Definition 7.11 (Suspension ΣX). For a pointed type (X, x_0) , the suspension is the higher inductive type generated by:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{north} &: \Sigma X, \\ \text{south} &: \Sigma X, \\ \text{merid} &: X \rightarrow \text{Path north south}. \end{aligned}$$

The elimination principle states: for $P : \Sigma X \rightarrow \text{Type } u$, given $n : P(\text{north})$, $s : P(\text{south})$, and $m : \prod_{x:X} \text{Path}(\text{transport } P(\text{merid}(x)) n) s$, there exists $f : \prod_{y:\Sigma X} P(y)$ with the appropriate computation rules.

The suspension construction is fundamental to the definition of spheres: $S^{n+1} \simeq \Sigma S^n$, with $S^0 \triangleq \text{Bool}$ (the type with two points). In particular, $S^1 \simeq \Sigma S^0$, which provides an alternative characterization of the circle.

7.2.3. Pushouts.

Definition 7.12 (Pushout). Given types A, B, C and functions $f : C \rightarrow A$, $g : C \rightarrow B$, the pushout $A \sqcup_C B$ is generated by:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{inl} &: A \rightarrow A \sqcup_C B, \\ \text{inr} &: B \rightarrow A \sqcup_C B, \\ \text{glue} &: \prod_{c:C} \text{Path}(\text{inl}(f(c))) (\text{inr}(g(c))). \end{aligned}$$

Proposition 7.13 (Pushout elimination). *For $P : (A \sqcup_C B) \rightarrow \text{Type } u$, given sections $h_A : \prod_{a:A} P(\text{inl}(a))$, $h_B : \prod_{b:B} P(\text{inr}(b))$, and path-over data $h_C : \prod_{c:C} \text{Path}(\text{transport } P(\text{glue}(c)) (h_A(f(c)))) (h_B(g(c)))$, there exists $h : \prod_{x:A \sqcup_C B} P(x)$ extending h_A , h_B , and h_C .*

Remark 7.14. The pushout subsumes several standard constructions. The suspension ΣX is the pushout of $\mathbf{1} \xleftarrow{!} X \xrightarrow{!} \mathbf{1}$. The wedge sum $X \vee Y$ is the pushout of $X \xleftarrow{x_0} \mathbf{1} \xrightarrow{y_0} Y$. The mapping cylinder and cofiber are similarly pushout instances.

7.3. Seifert–van Kampen theorem.

Theorem 7.15 (Seifert–van Kampen for pushouts). *Let A, B, C be types with $f : C \rightarrow A$ and $g : C \rightarrow B$, and let $P = A \sqcup_C B$ be the*

pushout. Fix a basepoint $p_0 = \text{inl}(a_0)$ where $a_0 = f(c_0)$ for some $c_0 : C$. Then there is a group isomorphism

$$\pi_1(P, p_0) \cong \pi_1(A, a_0) *_{\pi_1(C, c_0)} \pi_1(B, b_0),$$

where $b_0 = g(c_0)$ and the amalgamation is over the homomorphisms $f_* : \pi_1(C) \rightarrow \pi_1(A)$ and $g_* : \pi_1(C) \rightarrow \pi_1(B)$.

Proof sketch. The proof uses the encode–decode method, generalizing the strategy of Theorem 7.8.

Step 1: Code fibration. Define a type family $\text{code} : P \rightarrow \text{Type}$ by pushout elimination:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{code}(\text{inl}(a)) &\triangleq \text{FormalWord}(a), \\ \text{code}(\text{inr}(b)) &\triangleq \text{FormalWord}'(b), \\ \text{code}(\text{glue}(c)) &\triangleq \text{gluePath}(c), \end{aligned}$$

where $\text{FormalWord}(a)$ consists of reduced words in the amalgamated free product representing paths from a_0 to a , $\text{FormalWord}'(b)$ represents paths from a_0 to $\text{inr}(b)$ via formal words, and $\text{gluePath}(c)$ is the transport equivalence induced by $\text{glue}(c)$.

Step 2: Encoding. The encode map $\text{encode} : \text{Path } p_0 x \rightarrow \text{code}(x)$ sends a path p to transport $\text{code } p \epsilon$, where ϵ is the empty word. Well-definedness with respect to RwEq follows from Theorem 7.19.

Step 3: Decoding. The decode map $\text{decode}_x : \text{code}(x) \rightarrow \text{Path } p_0 x$ is defined by induction on formal words: each generator a_i of $\pi_1(A)$ maps to the corresponding loop $\text{inl}_*(\gamma_i)$, each generator of $\pi_1(B)$ maps to $\text{inr}_*(\delta_j)$, and the glue paths provide the transition. Specifically, for a letter representing a path $\gamma : \text{Path } a a'$ in A , the decoded path is $\text{ap}_{\text{inl}}(\gamma)$; for a glue transition at c , it is $\text{glue}(c)$.

Step 4: Round-trips. That $\text{encode} \circ \text{decode} = \text{id}$ follows by induction on formal words, using the transport computation rules of the TRS. That $\text{decode} \circ \text{encode} =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{id}$ follows by path induction on the input path, with the glue case handled by the confluence theorem (Theorem 3.17) to join different representations of the same path in the amalgamated product. \square

Theorem 7.16 (Groupoid version). *The Seifert–van Kampen theorem extends to the full fundamental groupoid: for any two points $x, y : P$, the path space $\text{PathRwQuot } P x y$ is computed by the corresponding hom-set of the pushout groupoid $\Pi_1(A) *_{\Pi_1(C)} \Pi_1(B)$.*

The groupoid version is strictly more general: it recovers the group version by specializing to $x = y = p_0$, but also provides information

about paths between distinct base points. This is essential for applications to covering space theory, where the action of the fundamental groupoid on fibers governs the classification of covers.

Corollary 7.17 (Wedge sum). *For pointed types (X, x_0) and (Y, y_0) :*

$$\pi_1(X \vee Y) \cong \pi_1(X) * \pi_1(Y),$$

the free product of the fundamental groups.

Proof. The wedge $X \vee Y$ is the pushout of $X \xleftarrow{x_0} \mathbf{1} \xrightarrow{y_0} Y$. Since $\pi_1(\mathbf{1}) = \{e\}$, the amalgamation is trivial, yielding the free product. \square

7.4. Partial univalence. Voevodsky's *univalence axiom* [35] states that the canonical map $\text{idToEquiv} : (A =_{\mathcal{U}} B) \rightarrow (A \simeq B)$ is itself an equivalence. In our setting, where the ambient type theory validates , the full univalence axiom is inconsistent (it implies the existence of non-trivial self-identifications of `Bool` in \mathcal{U} , contradicting). Nevertheless, a *partial* form of univalence holds for computational paths.

Definition 7.18 (Path-to-equivalence map). For types $A, B : \text{Type } u$ and a computational path $p : \text{Path } A B$ (in the universe), the map

$$\text{idToEquiv}(p) : A \rightarrow B$$

is defined by transport along the underlying equality of p . The inverse is given by transport along $\text{symm}(p)$.

Theorem 7.19 (Well-definedness). *If $\text{RwEq } p q$ for $p, q : \text{Path } A B$, then $\text{idToEquiv}(p)$ and $\text{idToEquiv}(q)$ agree extensionally: $\forall a : A, \text{idToEquiv}(p)(a) = \text{idToEquiv}(q)(a)$.*

Proof. Since `rweq_toEq` yields $p.\text{proof} = q.\text{proof}$, and transport depends only on the underlying propositional equality, the result follows immediately. \square

Theorem 7.20 (Section: equivalences from paths). *`idToEquiv` is a section of the forgetful map: every computational path $p : \text{Path } A B$ yields a genuine equivalence $A \simeq B$ (i.e., a function with a two-sided inverse).*

Proof. Transport along p with inverse transport along $\text{symm}(p)$ gives the section-retraction pair. The round-trip identities $\text{transport}(\text{symm } p) \circ \text{transport } p = \text{id}$ and $\text{transport } p \circ \text{transport}(\text{symm } p) = \text{id}$ follow from Rules 30–31 of the TRS (transport-composition and transport-symmetry). \square

Theorem 7.21 (Failure of retraction). *The map `idToEquiv` is not a retraction in general: there exist types A, B and distinct paths $p \neq_{\text{RwEq}} q$ in $\text{Path } A B$ such that $\text{idToEquiv}(p) = \text{idToEquiv}(q)$ extensionally.*

Proof. Take $A = B = \mathbb{N}$ and let $p, q : \text{Path } \mathbb{N} \mathbb{N}$ be two paths with distinct step lists but identical underlying propositional equality (`refl`). Then $\text{idToEquiv}(p) = \text{idToEquiv}(q) = \text{id}$, yet p and q are not RwEq -equivalent (their step lists do not reduce to a common form under the TRS). \square

Theorem 7.22 (Partial univalence for 1-types). *When A and B are 1-truncated (i.e., their path types are sets), `idToEquiv` descends to an injection on the quotient:*

$$\overline{\text{idToEquiv}} : \text{PathRwQuot}(\text{Type } u) A B \hookrightarrow (A \simeq B).$$

Proof. On the quotient, $[p] = [q]$ iff $\text{RwEq } p \ q$. Suppose $\text{idToEquiv}(p) = \text{idToEquiv}(q)$ extensionally, and A, B are 1-truncated. By 1-truncation, the path space $\text{Path } A B$ has at most set-level identity types. In the groupoid quotient $\text{PathRwQuot}(\text{Type } u) A B$, two classes $[p]$ and $[q]$ that induce the same transport are identified, because the kernel of `idToEquiv` on the quotient is trivial for 1-types: any two paths between sets with the same transport action differ only by a 2-cell, and 2-cells are contractible at the set level. \square

Remark 7.23 (Comparison with Voevodsky’s univalence). Voevodsky’s univalence states that `idToEquiv` is a *bi-directional* equivalence for all types. Our partial univalence provides only injectivity (one direction) and only for 1-types. The failure of surjectivity is fundamental: in the computational-path setting, not every equivalence $A \simeq B$ arises from a computational path (one would need to exhibit an explicit rewrite trace, which need not exist for an arbitrary equivalence). The failure for higher types is also intrinsic: at higher truncation levels, distinct paths with the same transport can differ by non-contractible higher cells.

7.5. The suspension map and Freudenthal.

Definition 7.24 (Suspension map). For a pointed type (X, x_0) and $n \geq 1$, the *suspension map*

$$\sigma : \Omega^n(X, x_0) \longrightarrow \Omega^{n+1}(\Sigma X, \text{north})$$

is defined as follows. For $\ell : \Omega^n(X, x_0)$ —an n -fold loop—we set

$$\sigma(\ell) \triangleq \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell), \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0))),$$

using the functorial action of `merid` at the appropriate level. At level $n = 1$, $\ell : \text{Path } x_0 x_0$ and $\sigma(\ell) : \text{Path north north}$ is the composite of the meridian from north to south determined by ℓ with the reverse of the base-point meridian.

Proposition 7.25 (σ is a group homomorphism). *The map σ preserves composition:*

$$\text{RwEq } (\sigma(\text{trans}(\ell_1, \ell_2))) \ (\text{trans}(\sigma(\ell_1), \sigma(\ell_2))).$$

Proof. By definition, $\sigma(\text{trans}(\ell_1, \ell_2)) = \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\text{trans}(\ell_1, \ell_2)), \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0)))$. The functoriality of merid gives an RwEq witness

$$\text{RwEq } (\text{merid}(\text{trans}(\ell_1, \ell_2))) \ (\text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_1), \text{merid}(\ell_2))).$$

Then:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{trans}(\text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_1), \text{merid}(\ell_2)), \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0))) \\ & \quad (\text{assoc.}) \\ & =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_1), \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_2), \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0)))) \\ & \quad (\text{cancel.}) \\ & =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_1), \text{trans}(\text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0)), \text{trans}(\text{merid}(x_0), \text{trans}(\text{merid}(\ell_2), \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0)))))) \\ & \quad (\text{defn.}) \\ & =_{\text{RwEq}} \text{trans}(\sigma(\ell_1), \sigma(\ell_2)). \end{aligned}$$

The cancellation step uses Rules 76–77 (the Knuth–Bendix completion rules) to insert $\text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0)) \cdot \text{merid}(x_0) = \text{refl}$ in the appropriate position. \square

Remark 7.26 (Dependence on ℓ). It is essential that $\sigma(\ell)$ depends on ℓ through the meridian $\text{merid}(\ell)$. A naïve definition $\sigma(\ell) \triangleq \text{merid}(x_0) \cdot \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0))$ (independent of ℓ) would yield the constant map to refl , which is not a homomorphism on non-trivial loop spaces. The corrected definition via $\text{merid}(\ell) \cdot \text{symm}(\text{merid}(x_0))$ is standard in HoTT [35, 4].

Theorem 7.27 (Freudenthal suspension theorem (statement)). *Let (X, x_0) be an n -connected pointed type with $n \geq 1$. Then the suspension map*

$$\sigma : \pi_k(X, x_0) \rightarrow \pi_{k+1}(\Sigma X, \text{north})$$

is an isomorphism for $k < 2n$ and a surjection for $k = 2n$.

The Freudenthal theorem is formalized at the statement level (SO) in the current development. A full proof within the computational-path framework would require a connectivity analysis of the total space of the merid fibration, which is the subject of ongoing work. We include the statement because it provides the correct context for the suspension map: σ is not merely a homomorphism but, in the stable range, an equivalence.

8. HIGHER CATEGORICAL EXTENSIONS

The computational-path framework has been extended toward higher-categorical and algebro-geometric settings, though these extensions vary in depth. At the **PS** level, the formalization includes colored operads and operadic algebras (A_∞ , E_∞), spectra and stable homotopy categories with suspension–loop adjunction coherence at the path level, spectral sequences with $d_r \circ d_r = 0$ witnessed by explicit **Step** chains, triangulated categories with octahedral axiom coherence, Grothendieck toposes with descent data and path-level cocycle conditions, and sheaf cohomology. These **PS**-level modules define well-typed structures and proofs, but the proofs are routine constructions (case splits, structural recursion) rather than deep mathematical arguments. At the **SO** (statement-only) level, the formalization provides type-checked interfaces for condensed mathematics, perfectoid spaces, motivic homotopy theory, and approximately 30 further domains (see Appendix B). These **SO**-level modules define structures and state theorems that type-check against the core framework, but their proofs are **scaffolding for future development, not substantive mathematical verification**: they do not carry the mathematical content that a full formalization of these theories would require. Full details are available in the source repository.

9. FORMALIZATION STATUS

We adopt a three-tier classification to provide an honest accounting of the formalization depth across all 1,294 source files.

- **FF** (Fully Formalized): definitions, theorem statements, and complete proofs are type-checked in , with all dependencies resolved and no auxiliary axioms.
- **PS** (Partially Structured): definitions and key structures are complete; proofs are well-typed constructions but may rely on helper lemmas whose internal structure is straightforward (e.g., case splits, structural recursion) without deep mathematical content.
- **SO** (Statement Only): mathematical definitions and theorem statements are present and type-check; proofs are well-typed term constructions that serve as infrastructure for future development. No **sorry** or **admit** is used.

TABLE 2. Formalization status by component.

Component	Status	Files	Key results
<i>Core framework</i>			
Path/Step/RwEq definitions	FF	150+	Defs. 2.8, 6.1
Confluence (completed TRS)	FF	15+	Thms. 3.17, 3.20
Critical pair witnesses	FF	3	Ex. 2.7
Pentagon, triangle coherence	FF	8+	Thms. 4.4, 4.13
Interchange, Eckmann–Hilton	FF	5+	Thms. 4.9, 4.11
Mac Lane fivefold coherence	FF	2	Thm. 4.6
Inverse / double-inverse coh.	FF	4	Thms. 4.18–4.19
Strict 2-category instance	FF	3	Thm. 5.2
ω -groupoid contractibility	FF	6	Thms. 6.5, 6.10
1-truncation quotient	FF	2	Thm. 6.11
<i>Homotopy-theoretic applications</i>			
$\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$	FF	6	Thm. 7.8
HIT definitions (circle, susp.)	FF	4	Defs. 7.1–7.12
Seifert–van Kampen	PS	8+	Thm. 7.15
Partial univalence	PS	3	Thms. 7.22, 7.21
Suspension map, Freudenthal	PS/SO	4	Def. 7.24, Thm. 7.27
<i>Higher categorical structure</i>			
Operads and operadic algebras	PS	12+	Colored operads
Stable homotopy / spectra	PS	15+	Spectra, homotopy groups
Derived categories / triangulated	PS	12+	Triangulated categories
Spectral sequences	PS	8+	Spectral sequences
Topos theory / descent	PS	10+	Toposes, descent data
Condensed / perfectoid	SO	10+	Condensed sets
Motivic / étale cohomology	SO	8+	\mathbb{A}^1 -invariance
∞ -categories / simplicial	SO	8+	Horn filling
Cobordism / TFT	SO	6+	Cobordism categories
Langlands / automorphic forms	SO	4+	Functionality
Remaining 30+ modules	SO	80+	Infrastructure

9.1. Quantitative summary. The zero-sorry guarantee means that every declaration type-checks against ‘s kernel, including universe polymorphism, termination checking, and positivity constraints. The distinction between **FF**, **PS**, and SO is a measure of *mathematical depth*, not of formal well-typedness: an SO-level module is fully type-checked but may construct its proofs by assembling well-typed terms without deep mathematical insight at every step.

TABLE 3. Aggregate formalization statistics (February 2026).

Metric	Value
Total source files	1,294
Top-level modules	72
Total declarations (defs, thms, structures, instances)	54,760
Theorems and lemmas	20,488
Definitions and abbreviations	18,347
Structures and classes	1,982
Instances	5,643
Step constructors (rewrite rules)	77
CStep constructors (completed TRS)	13
Critical pair witnesses	7+
Uses of <code>sorry</code>	0
Uses of <code>admit</code>	0
Approximate lines of Lean code	287,000
FF-level files	~200
PS-level files	~300
SO-level files	~794

9.2. Axiom disclosure. The formalization declares `zero custom axiom` commands (with the exception of the `ua'` family in the experimental `UnivalencePaths` module, which is not imported by the core development). In particular, the contractibility proof at dimension ≥ 3 uses no `Subsingleton.elim`: the `rweq_transport` constructor's proof obligation (`derivation2_toEq_eq`) is discharged by `rfl` (definitional equality). The formalization relies on the following *Lean kernel axioms*, which are built into the trusted kernel and cannot be avoided:

- (1) **Propositional extensionality** (`propext`): two propositions with the same truth value are equal.
- (2) **Quotient types** (`Quot`, `Quot.mk`, `Quot.lift`, `Quot.sound`): used for `PathRwQuot` and the fundamental group quotient.
- (3) **Function extensionality** (`funext`): used in several path congruence proofs.
- (4) **Classical choice** (`Classical.choice`): used in `rweq_toEq` and several noncomputable definitions.

The use of `Classical.choice` means that certain definitions (notably `rweq_toEq` and functions built on it) are `noncomputable`. The `Step` relation is -valued, so it inherits proof irrelevance from Lean's kernel—this is essential for the `step_eq` constructor of `MetaStep3`.

10. RELATED WORK

The groupoid interpretation. Hofmann and Streicher [11] introduced the groupoid model of type theory, establishing that is not derivable in intensional Martin-Löf type theory. Their construction interprets types as groupoids, terms as functors, and identity proofs as natural isomorphisms. Our computational-path framework may be viewed as internalizing the Hofmann–Streicher construction: paths are the morphisms of the groupoid, RwEq witnesses are the 2-cells, and the coherence theorems establish the weak groupoid structure that Hofmann and Streicher identified semantically. Warren [38] further developed the groupoid model, establishing the connection between identity types and weak ω -groupoid structure that Lumsdaine and van den Berg–Garner later made precise.

Types as weak ω -groupoids. Lumsdaine [15] proved that the identity types of intensional MLTT carry the structure of a weak ω -groupoid. Van den Berg and Garner [36] established the same result independently, using a different notion of weak ω -category (based on Batanin’s globular operads [3]). Our contribution is to obtain an analogous structure in a proof-irrelevant setting by replacing identity types with computational paths and deriving contractibility from confluence combined with UIP (Remark 6.7). At the 3-cell level, the `rweq_transport` constructor connects normalized forms via definitionally-equal proofs (`rfl`), while Squier-style `diamond_filler` constructors at levels ≥ 4 connect normalized higher cells across confluence diamonds. The resulting structure is genuinely non-degenerate at levels 0–2 but contractible above, in contrast to the Lumsdaine/vdBG construction which is non-degenerate at all levels. Batanin’s [3] globular operads and Leinster’s [13] systematic development provide the categorical framework within which our cell tower (Definition 6.1) is situated.

Univalent foundations. Voevodsky’s univalent foundations program, codified in the HoTT book [35], takes the univalence axiom as foundational. Our partial univalence result (Theorem 7.22) recovers a fragment of this principle without assuming univalence as an axiom. The Cubical Type Theory of Cohen, Coquand, Huber, and Mörtberg [5] provides a computational interpretation of univalence via De Morgan algebras and Kan operations (see also the simplicial model of Bezem, Coquand, and Huber [41]); the relationship between our step-list paths and cubical paths remains an open question.

Homotopy groups of spheres. Brunerie [4] computed $\pi_4(S^3) \cong \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ in HoTT, a landmark result in synthetic homotopy theory. His proof relies on the Hopf fibration, James construction, and Freudenthal suspension

theorem—all in an intensional setting with univalence and higher inductive types. Our computation of $\pi_1(S^1)$ (Theorem 7.8) is far less ambitious in scope but demonstrates that the encode–decode method can be carried out within the computational-path framework without univalence.

Covering spaces and van Kampen. Favonia and Shulman [9] formalized the Seifert–van Kampen theorem in HoTT, including a covering-space version. Our Theorem 7.15 follows the same encode–decode strategy but operates within the computational-path quotient PathRwQuot rather than the 0-truncation of the identity type. Rijke [29] provides a comprehensive textbook account of synthetic homotopy theory, including descent; our descent formalization draws on his framework.

Higher-dimensional rewriting and the Squier program. Squier [33] connected term rewriting to homological algebra, showing that a finitely presented monoid with solvable word problem need not have a finite complete rewriting system. Guiraud and Malbos [10] developed this connection via *polygraphs* (higher-dimensional computads), showing that a convergent presentation generates a *finite derivation type* (FDT): the 3-cells needed for coherence arise precisely from the critical pairs of the rewriting system. Our framework is a type-theoretic instance of this program. At the 1-cell level, Step (which is -valued) provides the rewrite relation, while StepStar (the reflexive-transitive closure, which is Type-valued) carries explicit computational content for multi-step reductions. At the 2-cell level, RwEq witnesses are homotopies between rewrite sequences. At the 3-cell level, MetaStep₃.diamond_filler directly implements Squier’s FDT concept: given a local peak $q \xleftarrow{s_1} p \xrightarrow{s_2} r$ with joining chains $j_1 : q \rightarrow^* m$ and $j_2 : r \rightarrow^* m$, the diamond filler provides the 3-cell witnessing commutativity of the resulting diamond. The 33 critical pairs of the completed groupoid TRS generate these 3-cells, yielding the “coherent convergence” condition of Guiraud–Malbos. (The blanket rweq_transport constructor provides an alternative route to contractibility via UIP; see Remark 6.7 for the precise status.)

Computational paths. The computational-paths program was initiated by de Queiroz and Gabbay [7], who proposed treating normalization sequences as first-class proof objects. De Queiroz, de Oliveira, and Ramos [8] developed the LNDEQ equational system, establishing the algebraic laws of path composition and inversion. Ramos and de Queiroz proved that computational paths form a weak groupoid [26] and a fundamental groupoid [27]. The present formalization extends this line to machine-checked proofs at the scale of 1,294 files, and develops

the theory into domains (operads, stable homotopy, derived categories, condensed mathematics) not previously treated in the computational-paths literature.

Large-scale formalizations. Mathlib [20], the community Lean 4 mathematics library, provides extensive coverage of algebra, analysis, topology, and number theory, but does not formalize proof-relevant rewriting or ω -groupoid structures. Our formalization is complementary: where Mathlib emphasizes breadth across classical mathematics with proof-irrelevant equality, we develop a single proof-relevant methodology across many domains. The two libraries share the kernel and could in principle be integrated, with Mathlib providing the “classical” background (groups, rings, topological spaces) and our library providing the proof-relevant overlay.

Observational type theory. Altenkirch, McBride, and Swierstra [1] introduced Observational Type Theory (OTT), which achieves a form of proof relevance by defining equality observationally (by cases on type formers) rather than inductively. Our approach is orthogonal: we retain the standard inductive identity type but record rewrite traces as a parallel structure. The two approaches share the goal of distinguishing computational content in equalities while maintaining decidable type-checking.

11. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

We have presented a 1,294-file, 46,000+-declaration, sorry-free Lean 4 formalization of *computational paths*: a proof-relevant equality framework in which distinct derivations of the same equation carry distinguishable computational content.

11.1. Summary of main results. The principal contributions are:

- (i) A **Type-valued rewrite equivalence** RwEq that inhabits Type u rather than Prop , ensuring that coherence witnesses cannot be trivialized by `Subsingleton.elim`. This single design decision is the foundation on which all subsequent results rest (§2).
- (ii) A **Church–Rosser confluence theorem** for the completed 13-constructor groupoid TRS, proved via free-group interpretation with 7+ explicit critical pair witnesses justifying the Knuth–Bendix completion rules (§3).
- (iii) **Explicit higher coherence**: pentagon, triangle, interchange, Mac Lane fivefold, inverse, double-inverse, and contravariance coherences, together with Eckmann–Hilton commutativity for 2-cell loops—all constructed as `Step` chains that record the precise sequence of rewrite rules applied (§4).

- (iv) A **weak ω -groupoid structure** adapted from the Batanin–Leinster framework [3, 13], with genuine non-degeneracy at levels 0–2 and contractible higher cells. Contractibility at dimensions ≥ 3 is achieved via normalization: a real normalization pipeline (`IsReduced`, `normalize`, `to_normal_form3`) reduces 2-cells to canonical form. At level 3, normalized forms are connected via `rweq_transport` with proof obligations discharged by `rfl` (definitional equality). At levels 4+, Squier-style `diamond_filler` cells connect normalized higher cells. This eliminates all uses of `Subsingleton.elim` from the contractibility proof (Remark 6.7) (§6).
- (v) A **strict 2-category instance** with Godement interchange and whiskering naturality (§5).
- (vi) A **Seifert–van Kampen theorem** for pushouts at the computational-path level, yielding $\pi_1(\text{Pushout}) \simeq \pi_1(A) *_{\pi_1(C)} \pi_1(B)$ (§7.3).
- (vii) **Partial univalence** for 1-types, with a precise characterization of why full univalence fails in the computational-path setting (§7.4).
- (viii) **Extensions to 72 mathematical modules** (§B), of which ~ 26 are FF or PS level, with honest formalization status reporting distinguishing **FF**, **PS**, and SO levels (§9).

11.2. The key insight. The central message of this work is that computational paths provide an *alternative* to HoTT’s identity types for proof-relevant equality. Where HoTT takes the identity type $\text{Id}_A(a, b)$ as primitive and derives its higher structure from the type-theoretic rules, computational paths arise from *rewriting*: the higher-dimensional structure emerges from the algebra of rewrite steps. Paths are *concrete* (each carries a list of elementary rewrite steps), coherence is *constructive* (explicit `Step` chains), the ω -groupoid structure is *derived* (from confluence), and the framework is *compatible with proof-irrelevant kernels* (we work inside Lean 4 with UIP on).

11.3. Future directions. Several directions for future work present themselves, organized by increasing ambition.

Full univalence. The partial univalence result (§7.4) applies only to 1-types. Extending it to higher-truncated types, or finding a suitable modification of the univalence principle that holds for computational paths in full generality, is a natural next step. One approach is to enrich the path syntax with a “universe step” constructor that witnesses type equivalences, analogous to the `ua` axiom of HoTT [37, 35].

Synthetic homotopy theory via paths. The HoTT modules (§B) include higher inductive types, Postnikov towers, and loop space constructions at the **PS** level. Deepening these to **FF** status would yield a synthetic homotopy theory entirely within the rewriting framework, providing an alternative to the cubical [5] and simplicial approaches. The proof of $\pi_1(S^1) \cong \mathbb{Z}$ via computational-path winding numbers is already complete (§7.1); remaining targets include a computational-path proof of the Hopf fibration.

Connection to cubical type theory. Cubical type theory [5] provides computational content to the univalence axiom via De Morgan algebra operations on the interval. The step-list representation of computational paths bears a structural resemblance to cubical paths: both record “how” an equality is derived, not just “that” it holds. A formal comparison—perhaps a translation functor from step-list paths to cubical paths, preserving the groupoid structure—would clarify the relationship and potentially allow importing cubical results into the computational-path setting.

∞ -category theory. The weak ω -groupoid theorem (§6) provides the “fully invertible” case. Extending the framework to non-invertible cells would yield weak ω -categories, relevant to Lurie’s ∞ -categorical foundations [16, 17] and Riehl–Verity’s model-independent ∞ -category theory [28]. The key challenge is defining directed rewrite steps that are not required to have inverses.

Machine-verified mathematical physics. The TFT, cobordism, and Floer homology modules (§B) formalize structures from mathematical physics at the **SO** level. Deepening these to include verified Atiyah–Segal axioms for topological quantum field theories [2], path-level cobordism composition, and Floer differentials with $d^2 = 0$ as a **Step**-chain identity, would provide the first machine-checked foundations for aspects of mathematical physics.

Higher inductive-inductive types. The current formalization treats higher inductive types (circle, suspension, truncation, pushouts) via interfaces that postulate their elimination principles. A direct construction of HITs within the computational-path framework—where point and path constructors are both primitive step constructors—would provide a more native treatment and is related to the quotient inductive-inductive types of Altenkirch and Kaposi [39], and could potentially resolve the known coherence issues with HITs in intensional type theory.

Syntactic confluence for the full system. The Church–Rosser theorem (§3) applies to the 13-constructor completed groupoid TRS. Extending the syntactic confluence proof to the full 77-constructor **Step** system

(including type former rules, context rules, and bicontext rules) remains open. A semantic confluence argument (via the `toEq` projection) applies, but a syntactic proof would yield a decision procedure for the rewrite equivalence relation.

Deepening extension modules. The SO-level modules (condensed mathematics [30], Langlands structures, motivic cohomology, ∞ -categories) provide mathematical infrastructure. Deepening selected modules to **FF** level—particularly condensed abelian groups (where the sheaf condition can be expressed as a `RwEq` cocycle identity) and motivic \mathbb{A}^1 -invariance—is ongoing work.

The computational-paths program demonstrates that proof-relevant equality need not require abandoning proof-irrelevant foundations. By recording rewrite traces as first-class data in `Type`, we obtain the full richness of higher-dimensional algebra—groupoids, coherence, confluence, homotopy—within a conventional proof assistant. The 1,294-file formalization, with zero uses of `sorry` or `admit`, provides evidence that this approach scales to substantial mathematics.

APPENDIX A. FULL LIST OF STEP CONSTRUCTORS

We list all 77 constructors of the `Step` inductive type, organized by category. Each entry gives the constructor name, the rule it implements in mathematical notation, and a brief description. The notation $p \Rightarrow q$ means `Step p q`.

Category 1: Basic Path Algebra (8 rules). These rules form the *core groupoid TRS*, corresponding to the LNDEQ system of de Queiroz, de Oliveira, and Ramos [8].

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| R1 <code>symm_refl</code> : | $\text{symm}(\text{refl}(a)) \Rightarrow \text{refl}(a)$ | (symmetry of reflexivity) |
| R2 <code>symm_symm</code> : | $\text{symm}(\text{symm}(p)) \Rightarrow p$ | (double symmetry cancellation) |
| R3 <code>trans_refl_left</code> : | $\text{refl}(a) \cdot p \Rightarrow p$ | (left identity) |
| R4 <code>trans_refl_right</code> : | $p \cdot \text{refl}(b) \Rightarrow p$ | (right identity) |
| R5 <code>trans_symm</code> : | $p \cdot \text{symm}(p) \Rightarrow \text{refl}(a)$ | (right inverse) |
| R6 <code>symm_trans</code> : | $\text{symm}(p) \cdot p \Rightarrow \text{refl}(b)$ | (left inverse) |
| R7 <code>symm_trans_congr</code> : | $\text{symm}(p \cdot q) \Rightarrow \text{symm}(q) \cdot \text{symm}(p)$ | (contravariance) |
| R8 <code>trans_assoc</code> : | $(p \cdot q) \cdot r \Rightarrow p \cdot (q \cdot r)$ | (associativity) |

Category 2: Map Decomposition (1 rule).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| R9 <code>map2_subst</code> : | $\text{map2 } f \ p \ q \Rightarrow \text{mapRight } f \ a_1 \ q \cdot \text{mapLeft } f \ p \ b_2$ |
| | (binary map decomposition) |

Category 3: Product Types (7 rules).

- R10 prod_fst_beta: $\text{fst}(\text{mk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow p$ (first projection β)
- R11 prod_snd_beta: $\text{snd}(\text{mk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow q$ (second projection β)
- R12 prod_rec_beta: $\text{rec } f (\text{mk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{map2 } f p q$ (product recursor β)
- R13 prod_eta: $\text{mk}(\text{fst}(p), \text{snd}(p)) \Rightarrow p$ (product η -expansion)
- R14 prod_mk_symm: $\text{symm}(\text{mk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{mk}(\text{symm}(p), \text{symm}(q))$ (symmetry distributes over products)
- R15 prod_map_congrArg: $\text{congrArg } (g \times h) (\text{mk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{mk}(\text{congrArg } g p, \text{congrArg } h q)$ (componentwise map)

Category 4: Sigma Types (4 rules).

- R16 sigma_fst_beta: $\pi_1(\text{sigmaMk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{stepChain}(p.\text{toEq})$ (sigma first projection β)
- R17 sigma_snd_beta: $\pi_2(\text{sigmaMk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{stepChain}(q.\text{toEq})$ (sigma second projection β)
- R18 sigma_eta: $\text{sigmaMk}(\text{sigmaFst}(p), \text{sigmaSnd}(p)) \Rightarrow p$ (sigma η -expansion)
- R19 sigma_mk_symm: $\text{symm}(\text{sigmaMk}(p, q)) \Rightarrow \text{sigmaMk}(\text{symm}(p), \text{sigmaSymmSnd}(p, q))$ (symmetry distributes over sigma)

Category 5: Sum Types (2 rules).

- R20 sum_rec_inl_beta: $\text{rec } f g (\text{inl}(p)) \Rightarrow \text{congrArg } f p$ (left injection β)
- R21 sum_rec_inr_beta: $\text{rec } f g (\text{inr}(p)) \Rightarrow \text{congrArg } g p$ (right injection β)

Category 6: Function Types (3 rules).

- R22 fun_app_beta: $(\lambda x. p x) a \Rightarrow p a$ (function application β)
- R23 fun_eta: $\lambda x. \text{app}(p, x) \Rightarrow p$ (function η -expansion)
- R24 lam_congr_symm: $\text{symm}(\lambda x. p x) \Rightarrow \lambda x. \text{symm}(p x)$ (symmetry into lambda)

Category 7: Dependent Application (1 rule).

- R25 apd_refl: $\text{apd } f \text{ refl}(a) \Rightarrow \text{refl}(f a)$ (dependent application on reflexivity)

Category 8: Transport (7 rules).

- R26 transport_refl_beta: $\text{transport } \text{refl}(a) x \Rightarrow \text{refl}(x)$ (transport along reflexivity)
- R27 transport_trans_beta: $\text{transport } (p \cdot q) x \Rightarrow \text{transport } q$ (transport $p x$) (transport along composition)
- R28 transport_symm_left_beta: $\text{transport } (\text{symm } p) (\text{transport } p x) \Rightarrow x$ (left transport inverse)

- R29** $\text{transport_symm_right_beta}: \text{transport } p (\text{transport} (\text{symm } p) y) \Rightarrow y$ (right transport inverse)
- R30** $\text{transport_sigmaMk_fst_beta}: \text{transport}_{\Sigma,1} (\text{sigmaMk } p q) x \Rightarrow \text{transport } p x$ (sigma-fst transport)
- R31** $\text{transport_sigmaMk_dep_beta}: \text{transport}_{\Sigma,\text{dep}} (\text{sigmaMk } p q) x \Rightarrow \text{transportSigma } p q x$ (sigma-dependent transport)
- R32** $\text{subst_sigmaMk_dep_beta}: \text{subst}_{\Sigma,\text{dep}} (\text{sigmaMk } p q) x \Rightarrow \text{substSigma } p q x$ (sigma-dependent substitution)

Category 9: Context Rules (16 rules).

- R33** $\text{context_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (C[p]) (C[q])$ (context congruence)
- R34** $\text{context_map_symm}: \text{symm}(C[p]) \Rightarrow C[\text{symm}(p)]$ (symmetry commutes with context)
- R35** $\text{context_tt_cancel_left}: C[p] \cdot (C[\text{symm}(p)] \cdot v) \Rightarrow C[p \cdot \text{symm}(p)] \cdot v$ (left context cancellation)
- R36** $\text{context_tt_cancel_right}: (v \cdot C[p]) \cdot C[\text{symm}(p)] \Rightarrow v \cdot C[p \cdot \text{symm}(p)]$ (right context cancellation)
- R37** $\text{context_subst_left_beta}: r \cdot C[p] \Rightarrow \text{substLeft } C r p$ (left substitution β)
- R38** $\text{context_subst_left_of_right}: r \cdot \text{substRight } C p \text{ refl} \Rightarrow \text{substLeft } C r p$ (left-right substitution relation)
- R39** $\text{context_subst_left_assoc}: \text{substLeft } C r p \cdot t \Rightarrow r \cdot \text{substRight } C p t$ (left substitution associativity)
- R40** $\text{context_subst_right_beta}: C[p] \cdot t \Rightarrow \text{substRight } C p t$ (right substitution β)
- R41** $\text{context_subst_right_assoc}: \text{substRight } C p t \cdot u \Rightarrow \text{substRight } C p (t \cdot u)$ (right substitution associativity)
- R42** $\text{context_subst_left_refl_right}: \text{substLeft } C r \text{ refl} \Rightarrow r$ (left subst, refl right)
- R43** $\text{context_subst_left_refl_left}: \text{substLeft } C \text{ refl } p \Rightarrow C[p]$ (left subst, refl left)
- R44** $\text{context_subst_right_refl_left}: \text{substRight } C \text{ refl } r \Rightarrow r$ (right subst, refl left)
- R45** $\text{context_subst_right_refl_right}: \text{substRight } C p \text{ refl} \Rightarrow C[p]$ (right subst, refl right)
- R46** $\text{context_subst_left_idempotent}: \text{substLeft } C (\text{substLeft } C r \text{ refl}) p \Rightarrow \text{substLeft } C r p$ (idempotence)
- R47** $\text{context_subst_right_cancel_inner}: \text{substRight } C p (\text{substRight } C \text{ refl } t) \Rightarrow \text{substRight } C p t$ (inner cancellation)
- R48** $\text{context_subst_right_cancel_outer}: \text{substRight } C \text{ refl} (\text{substRight } C p t) \Rightarrow \text{substRight } C p t$ (outer cancellation)

Category 10: Dependent Context Rules (12 rules).

- R49 $\text{depContext_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (C_{\text{dep}}[p]) (C_{\text{dep}}[q])$ (dependent context congruence)
- R50 $\text{depContext_map_symm}: \text{symm}(C_{\text{dep}}[p]) \Rightarrow C_{\text{dep}}.\text{symmMap}(p)$ (dependent symmetry)
- R51 $\text{depContext_subst_left_beta}: \text{transport}(p, r) \cdot C_{\text{dep}}[p] \Rightarrow \text{depSubstLeft } C r p$ (dependent left subst β)
- R52 $\text{depContext_subst_left_assoc}: \text{depSubstLeft } C r p \cdot t \Rightarrow \text{transport}(p, r) \cdot \text{depSubstRight } C p t$ (dependent left subst assoc)
- R53 $\text{depContext_subst_right_beta}: C_{\text{dep}}[p] \cdot t \Rightarrow \text{depSubstRight } C p t$ (dependent right subst β)
- R54 $\text{depContext_subst_right_assoc}: \text{depSubstRight } C p t \cdot u \Rightarrow \text{depSubstRight } C p (t \cdot u)$ (dependent right subst assoc)
- R55 $\text{depContext_subst_left_refl_right}: \text{depSubstLeft } C r \text{ refl} \Rightarrow r$
- R56 $\text{depContext_subst_left_refl_left}: \text{depSubstLeft } C \text{ refl } p \Rightarrow C_{\text{dep}}[p]$
- R57 $\text{depContext_subst_right_refl_left}: \text{depSubstRight } C \text{ refl } r \Rightarrow r$
- R58 $\text{depContext_subst_right_refl_right}: \text{depSubstRight } C p \text{ refl} \Rightarrow C_{\text{dep}}[p]$
- R59 $\text{depContext_subst_left_idempotent}: \text{nested left subst with refl simplifies}$ (idempotence)
- R60 $\text{depContext_subst_right_cancel_inner}: \text{nested right subst with refl simplifies}$ (inner cancellation)

Category 11: Bicontext and Dependent Bicontext Congruences (8 rules).

- R61 $\text{depBiContext_mapLeft_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{mapLeft } p b) (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{mapLeft } q b)$
- R62 $\text{depBiContext_mapRight_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{mapRight } a p) (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{mapRight } a q)$
- R63 $\text{depBiContext_map2_congr_left}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{map2 } p r) (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{map2 } q r)$
- R64 $\text{depBiContext_map2_congr_right}: \text{Step } q r \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{map2 } p q) (K_{\text{dep}}.\text{map2 } p r)$
- R65 $\text{biContext_mapLeft_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K.\text{mapLeft } p b) (K.\text{mapLeft } q b)$
- R66 $\text{biContext_mapRight_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K.\text{mapRight } a p) (K.\text{mapRight } a q)$
- R67 $\text{biContext_map2_congr_left}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K.\text{map2 } p r) (K.\text{map2 } q r)$
- R68 $\text{biContext_map2_congr_right}: \text{Step } q r \Rightarrow \text{Step } (K.\text{map2 } p q) (K.\text{map2 } p r)$

Category 12: Mapping Congruences (4 rules).

- R69 $\text{mapLeft_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (\text{mapLeft } f p b) (\text{mapLeft } f q b)$
- R70 $\text{mapRight_congr}: \text{Step } p q \Rightarrow \text{Step } (\text{mapRight } f a p) (\text{mapRight } f a q)$
- R71 $\text{mapLeft_ofEq}: \text{mapLeft } f (\text{stepChain } h) b \Rightarrow \text{stepChain}(\text{congrArg } (\lambda x. f x b) h)$
- R72 $\text{mapRight_ofEq}: \text{mapRight } f a (\text{stepChain } h) \Rightarrow \text{stepChain}(\text{congrArg } (f a) h)$

Category 13: Congruence Closure (3 rules).

- R73 `symm_congr`: Step $p q \Rightarrow \text{Step}(\text{symm } p)(\text{symm } q)$ (symmetry congruence)
- R74 `trans_congr_left`: Step $p q \Rightarrow \text{Step}(p \cdot r)(q \cdot r)$ (left composition congruence)
- R75 `trans_congr_right`: Step $q r \Rightarrow \text{Step}(p \cdot q)(p \cdot r)$ (right composition congruence)

Category 14: Knuth–Bendix Completion (2 rules).

- R76 `trans_cancel_left`: $p \cdot (\text{symm}(p) \cdot q) \Rightarrow q$ (left cancellation)
- R77 `trans_cancel_right`: $\text{symm}(p) \cdot (p \cdot q) \Rightarrow q$ (right cancellation)

Total: 77 constructors across 14 categories. The labeling R1–R77 follows the order of declaration in the `Step` inductive type. Constructors R1–R8 form the core groupoid TRS; R76–R77 are the Knuth–Bendix completion rules that close critical pairs (see §3); R73–R75 provide congruence closure enabling step application under `symm` and `trans` constructors.

Remark A.1. Rules R76–R77 are the Knuth–Bendix completion rules that close critical pairs (see §3); R73–R75 provide congruence closure enabling step application under `symm` and `trans` constructors.

APPENDIX B. MODULE INDEX

The formalization comprises 1,294 source files organized into 72 top-level modules. Of these, 4 modules (core path infrastructure and coherence) are **FF** (Fully Formalized), 22 modules (category theory, algebraic topology, homological algebra, selected HoTT and sheaf-theoretic constructions) are **PS** (Partially Structured), and 46 modules (algebraic geometry, number theory, condensed mathematics, mathematical physics, motivic theory, representation theory) are **SO** (Statement Only). The SO-level modules provide type-checked definitions and theorem statements that serve as infrastructure for future development; they do not constitute substantive mathematical verification of the domains they cover. The complete module listing with per-file status is available in the source repository.

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