Type theory in Lean - 7

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Mathlib's axioms

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It adds three axioms to Lean's type theory:

- Propositional extensionality.
- Quotient types.
- The axiom of choice.

Propositional extensionality

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In particular if P is provable, meaning we can construct $(p : P)$, then $P = \mathrm{True}$. Indeed, any proposition implies True (since we can prove True for free), and if we have $(p : P)$ then $\mathrm{True} \to P$. Similarly, if $\neg P$ holds, then $P = \mathrm{False}$.

Thinking about proposition as “sets” that are empty when false and singletons when provable, then propositional extensionality says that if we have functions

$$P \to Q \text{ and } Q \to P$$

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then $P = Q$.

This is reasonable since the existence of the two functions (that is the existence of the two implications) forces P and Q to be both empty or both singletons.

Quotient types

In set theory, if $\sim$ is an equivalence relation on a set X, one can explicitly build the quotient set $X/\sim$ using equivalence classes:

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where $\mathcal{P}(X)$ is the power set of X.

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How to build $X/\sim$ in type theory?

We only have two ways of building types:

- Dependent functions.
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Lean's type theory adds a new axiom (a function in this case) that allows to build the quotient type.

```
axiom Quot :
  {X : Sort u} → (X → X → Prop) → Sort u
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In particular, Quot allows to build a new type $\mathrm{Quot}\ R$ given any relation $R \colon X \to X \to \mathrm{Prop}$ (we don't even need to assume that R is an equivalence relation).

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We also need the canonical map $X \to \mathrm{Quot}\ R$:

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axiom Quot.mk :
  {X : Sort u} → (R : X → X → Prop) → X →
    Quot R
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At this point this is just any function, we don't know anything about it.

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axiom Quot.ind :
    ∀ {X : Sort u} {R : X → X → Prop}
    {P : Quot R → Prop},
    (∀ a, P (Quot.mk R a)) →
    ∀ q, P q
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It implies that $\mathrm{Quot.mk}$ is surjective in the usual sense.

We also need to lift functions that are constant along the equivalence classes.

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axiom Quot.lift :
  {X : Sort u} → {R : X → X → Prop} →
  {Y : Sort u} → (f : X → Y) →
  (∀ a b, R a b → f a = f b) →
  Quot R → Y
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  Quot R → Y
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Note that, as for inductive types, we can now build terms of type $\mathrm{Quot}\ R$ (using $\mathrm{Quot.mk}$) and define functions (including proving propositions) out of $\mathrm{Quot}\ R$.

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These functions are left undefined. In practice we are assuming their existence, but we are not assuming any special property. This existence is not a very strong assumption, for example $\mathrm{Quot}\ R$ *could be* X, $\mathrm{Quot.mk}$ *the identity and* $\mathrm{Quot.lift}\ f\ H = f$. *In this case* $\mathrm{Quot.ind}$ *and the computation rule above trivially hold.*

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axiom Quot.sound :
  ∀ {X : Type u} {R : X → X → Prop} {a b : X},
    R a b → Quot.mk R a = Quot.mk R b
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It does not follow from the previous axioms (try to prove it!).

Remark

- *If* $\mathrm{Quot}\ R = X$ *then* $\mathrm{Quot.sound}$ *does not hold. It is a genuine new axiom.*
- *Note that we didn't assume R to be an equivalence relation, but this is the situation where the axioms are most useful.*

Functional extensionality

Using quotient types we can now *prove* the following.

Theorem (Functional extensionality)

Let $(A : \mathrm{Sort}\ u)$ *and* $(B : \mathrm{Sort}\ v)$. *Given two functions* $(f\ g : A \to B)$ *such that*

$$\forall (a : A),\ f\ a = g\ a$$

we have $f = g$.

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we have $f = g$.

In particular, any theorem that uses functional extensionality will depend on $\mathrm{Quot.sound}$.

To prove it, let's define a relation on $A \to B$ via

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It is very easy to show that it is an equivalence relation, but we will not need it.

We now call X the quotient type, so

$$X = \mathrm{Quot}\ R$$

is the type of functions $A \to B$ up to being pointwise equal.

If $(a : A)$ and $R\ f\ g$, then (by the very definition of R!) we have $f\ a = g\ a$, so the evaluation at a

$$\begin{aligned}(A \to B) &\to B \\ f &\mapsto f\ a\end{aligned}$$

lifts (mathematically we usually say "descends") to a function

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This can be done for all $(a : A)$, obtaining via lambda abstraction a function $A \to B$.

Putting everything together, we obtain a function

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Here we are simply saying that, since the value at any $(a : A)$ is constant on each equivalence class (by definition!) we can evaluate elements of X, and lambda abstraction allows to build a function $A \to B$ given $(x : X)$.

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The computation rule says that

$$F\ (\mathrm{Quot.mk}\ R\ f) \equiv \mathrm{fun}\ a \mapsto f\ a \equiv f$$

for all $(f : A \to B)$.

We can now finish the proof. Let $(f\ g : A \to B)$ be such that $\forall (a : A),\ f\ a = g\ a$, i.e. such that $R\ f\ g$.

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In particular, since definitional equality implies propositional equality and the latter is transitive, we have $f = g$ as wanted.

There is a (very) subtle point here. The equality $F\ (\mathrm{Quot.mk}\ R\ f) = f$ holds because definitional equality implies propositional equality and it is a consequence of the computation rule

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When proving $F\ (\mathrm{Quot.mk}\ R\ f) = f$ using (1), unravelling all the definitions we end up with

$$\mathrm{fun}\ a \mapsto \mathrm{Quot.lift}\ (\mathrm{fun}\ f \mapsto f\ a)\ \_\ (\mathrm{Quot.mk}\ R\ f) = f$$

Here the underscore _ is just the proof that the function $\mathrm{fun}\ f \mapsto f\ a$ is constant on any equivalence class.

Since f is (definitionally) equal to $\mathrm{fun}\ a \mapsto f\ a$ we can prove

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Now, if $(a : A)$ is given, the computation rule says exactly that

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But this is not enough to prove (2), since (3) says exactly that the LHS and the RHS of (2) have *the same value*, and we are precisely proving that this implies that the two functions are equal.

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Since the computation rule is a definitional equality, this problem does not appear and we can finish the proof.

Remark

An important observation is the following. Suppose that $(f\ g : A \to B)$ *are such that*

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Then we have

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so $f \equiv g$*. The point is that the* $\equiv$ *in the middle holds since* $f\ a \equiv g\ a$ *and so we can replace the former by the latter for free.*

Sets

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We can now prove *extensionality for sets*. If $(S\ T : \mathrm{Set}\ A)$, then

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We already proved one implication, and the other is a direct application of functional extensionality and propositional extensionality.

The axiom of choice

Remember the definition of $\mathrm{Nonempty}\ A$

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inductive Nonempty (A : Sort u) : Prop
| intro (val : A) : Nonempty A
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It is an inductive *proposition* with only one constructor: if $(a : A)$, then

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It is an inductive *proposition* with only one constructor: if $(a : A)$, then

$$(\langle a \rangle : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ A)$$

It is easy to prove that

$$\mathrm{Nonempty}\ A \iff \exists (a : A), \mathrm{True}$$

We explained that $\mathrm{Nonempty}\ A$ does not contain data, and that it is impossible to build a function

$$\mathrm{default} : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ A \to A$$

such that

$$\mathrm{default}\ \langle a \rangle = a$$

for all $(a : A)$.

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The axiom of choice is the following function

```
axiom choice {A : Sort u} : Nonempty A → A
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It is important to understand that if, say, $(h : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ \mathbb{N})$ (something easy to prove), the natural number $(\mathrm{choice}\ h : \mathbb{N})$ is *well defined and fixed once and for all*.

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It is important to understand that if, say, $(h : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ \mathbb{N})$ (something easy to prove), the natural number $(\mathrm{choice}\ h : \mathbb{N})$ is *well defined and fixed once and for all*. It is always the same, in all proofs where we use the axiom of choice. Of course it is impossible to say anything about it (except that it is a natural number), but for Lean is perfectly well defined. Moreover, it does not depend on h, since any other proof of $\mathrm{Nonempty}\ \mathbb{N}$ is definitionally equal to h by proof irrelevance.

We have that choice magically produces an element of A given the assumption $\text{Nonempty } A$. For Lean it is a well defined function (even if it has no definition).

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In practice we have fixed (once and for all) a term $(a : A)$ for all A such that $\text{Nonempty } A$.

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Theorem (Diaconescu)

Let $(P : \mathrm{Prop})$*. Using functional extensionality (hence quotient types and propositional extensionality) and the axiom of (global) choice, we have*

$$P \vee \neg P$$

We will prove Diaconescu's theorem later, but let's first of all see some consequences.

Theorem

Let $(P : \mathrm{Prop})$*. Then* $P = \mathrm{True} \vee P = \mathrm{False}$*.*

Proof.

Using that $P \vee \neg P$ holds we have to consider two cases. In both we will use propositional extensionality.

- If P holds then it is easy to prove that $P \iff \mathrm{True}$ (since both hold), so $P = \mathrm{True}$.
- If $\neg P$ holds, we prove that $P \iff \mathrm{False}$, hence $P = \mathrm{False}$.

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$\square$

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For all $(P : \mathrm{Prop})$ *we have*

$$\neg\neg P \to P$$

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- Suppose that $\neg P$ holds, so that $P \Rightarrow \mathrm{False}$. To prove P it is enough to prove False (using $\mathrm{False.rec}$). Since we are supposing $\neg\neg P$ we can prove $\neg P$ and we are done.

$\square$

Corollary

Let $(P\ Q : \mathrm{Prop})$*. If both* $P \to Q$ *and* $\neg P \to Q$ *hold then* Q *holds.*

Proof.

It is an immediate consequence that $P \vee \neg P$ holds.

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To reason by contradiction (i.e. to use $\neg\neg P \to P$ to prove P) we can use the `by_contra'` tactic. Indeed, `by_contra' h` will create (and simplify) an assumption $(h : \neg P)$, where P is the current goal, and replace the goal with False.

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$$U := \mathrm{fun}\ x \mapsto (x = \mathrm{True}) \vee P$$
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Lemma

If we have $(p : P)$ (i.e. if P holds), then

$$U = V.$$

Proof.

Suppose P holds. By extensionality, to prove $U = V$ we can prove that $(x \in U) = (x \in V)$ for all x.

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$$U\ x \iff V\ x$$

Let $(x : \mathrm{Prop})$ and let's prove the two implications.

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- Let $(h : U\ x)$ be fixed (we will not use it). By definition, $V\ x$ is the proposition $(x = \mathrm{False}) \vee P$. This holds because we supposed that P holds.
- Similarly, supposing $(h : V\ x)$, we can prove $U\ x$, that is $(x = \mathrm{True}) \vee P$, since P holds.

$\square$

Let's go back to the proof of excluded middle. By reflexivity of $=$, we have

$$U\ \mathrm{True}\text{ and }V\ \mathrm{False}$$

In particular,

$$\mathrm{True}\in U\text{ and }\mathrm{False}\in V$$

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Using the axiom of choice, we obtain propositions

$$u := \mathrm{choice\ exU} \text{ and } v := \mathrm{choice\ exV}$$

such that

$$u \in U \text{ and } v \in V$$

Lemma

Suppose P holds. Then, for all $(hU : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ U)$ and for all $(hV : \mathrm{Nonempty}\ V)$ we have

$$\mathrm{choice}\ hU = \mathrm{choice}\ hV$$

Proof.

If P holds then, by the previous lemma, we have $U = V$. It follows that hU and hV are two proofs of the same proposition, and in particular $hU \equiv hV$. The lemma is now immediate since choice is a well defined function.

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Remark

- *The fact that* choice *always gives the same term is crucial.*
- *To use the eliminator for $=$ (in particular to find the motive), we need to state the theorem using "for all hU and for all hV". We cannot prove $u = v$ without generalizing them.*

We can now finish the proof. To prove $P \vee \neg P$, since $u \in U$ and $v \in V$, and U and V are defined by disjunction, we have four cases to consider.

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Lemma

We have $u \neq v$.

Proof.

If $u = v$ we have that $\mathrm{True} = \mathrm{False}$ (since we are in the case $u = \mathrm{True}$ and $v = \mathrm{False}$). So, to prove False we can prove True, that always holds. $\square$

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The only problem with this proof is that we treated U and V, that are sets, as types. This is solved as follows. Given $(S : \mathrm{Set}\ A)$ we can form the type $\uparrow S$ whose terms are pairs $\langle a, h \rangle$ where $(a : A)$ and $(h : a \in S)$ (technically it is defined as an inductive type).

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$$(x.1 : A) \text{ and } (x.2 : x.1 \in S)$$

Replacing U and V with $\uparrow U$ and $\uparrow V$ makes the proof perfectly formal.