

The Groupoid CwF of Containers

Stefania Damato

j.w.w. Thorsten Altenkirch

University of Nottingham, UK

HoTTEST

6th November 2025

1 CwFs in Intensional Type Theory

2 A Groupoid CwF of Containers

3 A CwF of Strictified Containers

CwFs in Intensional Type Theory

What are CwFs?

A type theory is a formal system in which we can derive certain kinds of judgments.

A model constitutes a **sound semantics** for a type theory.

What are CwFs?

A type theory is a formal system in which we can derive certain kinds of judgments.

A model constitutes a **sound semantics** for a type theory.

Categories with families (CwFs) are one way to model dependent type theory.

If we write down the intrinsic syntax of dependent type theory as a quotient inductive-inductive type (QIIT), algebras of this signature correspond to CwFs.

Categories with families

A **category with families (CwF)** [Dybjer, 1996] consists of:

- ▶ A category **C** of contexts Γ, Δ, \dots and substitutions $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma, \dots$

Categories with families

A **category with families (CwF)** [Dybjer, 1996] consists of:

- ▶ A category **C** of contexts Γ, Δ, \dots and substitutions $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma, \dots$
- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of types $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma, \dots$ and type substitutions $A[\gamma] : \text{Ty } \Delta, \dots$

Categories with families

A **category with families (CwF)** [Dybjer, 1996] consists of:

- ▶ A category **C** of contexts Γ, Δ, \dots and substitutions $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma, \dots$
- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of types $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma, \dots$ and type substitutions $A[\gamma] : \text{Ty } \Delta, \dots$

- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Tm} : (\int \text{Ty})^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of terms $a : \text{Tm } (\Gamma, A), \dots$ and term substitutions $a[\gamma] : \text{Tm } (\Delta, A[\gamma]), \dots$

Categories with families

A **category with families (CwF)** [Dybjer, 1996] consists of:

- ▶ A category **C** of contexts Γ, Δ, \dots and substitutions $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma, \dots$
- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of types $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma, \dots$ and type substitutions $A[\gamma] : \text{Ty } \Delta, \dots$

- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Tm} : (\int \text{Ty})^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of terms $a : \text{Tm } (\Gamma, A), \dots$ and term substitutions $a[\gamma] : \text{Tm } (\Delta, A[\gamma]), \dots$

- ▶ A context extension operation $\Gamma.A$ for $\Gamma : |\mathbf{C}|$ and $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma$ such that

$$\Delta \rightarrow \Gamma.A \cong \sum_{\gamma : \Delta \rightarrow \Gamma} \text{Tm } (\Delta, A[\gamma]).$$

Categories with families

A **category with families (CwF)** [Dybjer, 1996] consists of:

- ▶ A category **C** of contexts Γ, Δ, \dots and substitutions $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma, \dots$

- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of types $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma, \dots$ and type substitutions $A[\gamma] : \text{Ty } \Delta, \dots$

- ▶ A presheaf

$$\text{Tm} : (\int \text{Ty})^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

of terms $a : \text{Tm } (\Gamma, A), \dots$ and term substitutions $a[\gamma] : \text{Tm } (\Delta, A[\gamma]), \dots$

- ▶ A context extension operation $\Gamma.A$ for $\Gamma : |\mathbf{C}|$ and $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma$ such that

$$\Delta \rightarrow \Gamma.A \cong \sum_{\gamma : \Delta \rightarrow \Gamma} \text{Tm } (\Delta, A[\gamma]).$$

Coherence issues in ITT

Example

In the standard model/set model,

$$\mathrm{Ty}(\Gamma : \mathrm{Set}) := \Gamma \rightarrow \mathrm{Set}.$$

Coherence issues in ITT

Example

In the standard model/set model,

$$\mathrm{Ty}(\Gamma : \mathbf{Set}) := \Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Example

In the presheaf model over a category \mathbf{C} ,

$$\mathrm{Ty}(\Gamma : \mathbf{C}^{\mathrm{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}) := \prod_{X:|\mathbf{C}|} \Gamma X \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Coherence issues in ITT

Example

In the standard model/set model,

$$\text{Ty}(\Gamma : \mathbf{Set}) := \Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

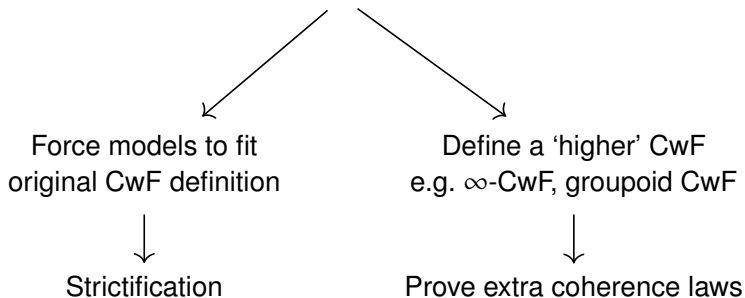
Example

In the presheaf model over a category \mathbf{C} ,

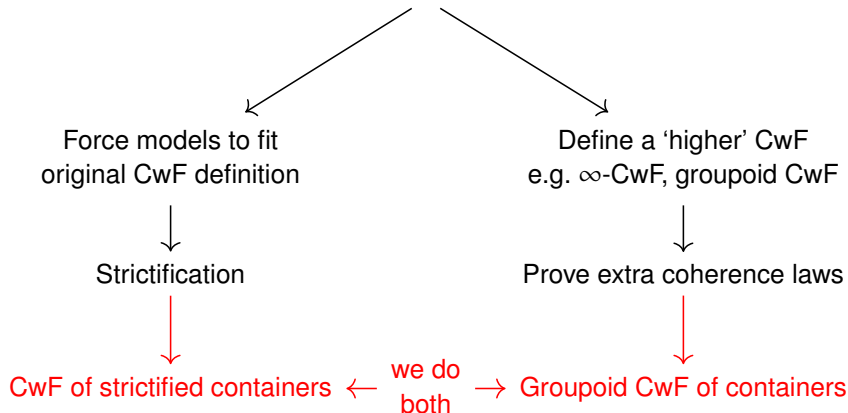
$$\text{Ty}(\Gamma : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}) := \prod_{X:|\mathbf{C}|} \Gamma X \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

When working in intensional type theory (ITT) i.e. no UIP, in both cases, $\text{Ty } \Gamma$ forms a **groupoid** not a **set**.

How do we solve this?



How do we solve this?



Related work on higher CwFs

- ▶ [Kraus, 2021]: Develops the notion of an ∞ -CwF, and discusses the ‘coherence problem’: **is the initial model/syntax of an ∞ -CwF set-truncated?**

Related work on higher CwFs

- ▶ [Kraus, 2021]: Develops the notion of an ∞ -CwF, and discusses the ‘coherence problem’: **is the initial model/syntax of an ∞ -CwF set-truncated?**
- ▶ [Uemura, 2022]: Proves that the initial ∞ -natural model is set-truncated (caveat: not in type theory).

Related work on higher CwFs

- ▶ [Kraus, 2021]: Develops the notion of an ∞ -CwF, and discusses the ‘coherence problem’: **is the initial model/syntax of an ∞ -CwF set-truncated?**
- ▶ [Uemura, 2022]: Proves that the initial ∞ -natural model is set-truncated (caveat: not in type theory).
- ▶ [Altenkirch et al., 2025] Define groupoid CwFs (a.k.a. 2-CwFs), and show that **the initial model is set-truncated.**

Related work on higher CwFs

- ▶ [Kraus, 2021]: Develops the notion of an ∞ -CwF, and discusses the ‘coherence problem’: **is the initial model/syntax of an ∞ -CwF set-truncated?**
- ▶ [Uemura, 2022]: Proves that the initial ∞ -natural model is set-truncated (caveat: not in type theory).
- ▶ [Altenkirch et al., 2025] Define groupoid CwFs (a.k.a. 2-CwFs), and show that **the initial model is set-truncated**.
- ▶ [Chen, 2025] Studies wild CwFs, where context substitutions need not form a set. (Groupoid CwFs are simple examples of 2-coherent wild CwFs.)

Related work on higher CwFs

- ▶ [Kraus, 2021]: Develops the notion of an ∞ -CwF, and discusses the ‘coherence problem’: **is the initial model/syntax of an ∞ -CwF set-truncated?**
- ▶ [Uemura, 2022]: Proves that the initial ∞ -natural model is set-truncated (caveat: not in type theory).
- ▶ [Altenkirch et al., 2025] Define groupoid CwFs (a.k.a. 2-CwFs), and show that **the initial model is set-truncated**
- ▶ [Chen, 2025] Studies wild CwFs, where context substitutions need not form a set. (Groupoid CwFs are simple examples of 2-coherent wild CwFs.)

We focus on groupoid CwFs.

Groupoid CwFs (GCwFs)

In a groupoid CwF (GCwF),

$$\mathrm{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\mathrm{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Gpd}$$

is now a pseudofunctor from a 1-category \mathbf{C}^{op} to the bicategory \mathbf{Gpd} (see [Ahrens et al., 2019]).

Groupoid CwFs (GCwFs)

In a groupoid CwF (GCwF),

$$\mathsf{Ty} : \mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Gpd}$$

is now a pseudofunctor from a 1-category \mathbf{C}^{op} to the bicategory \mathbf{Gpd} (see [Ahrens et al., 2019]).

Additional coherence laws on types need to be checked.

The left diagram illustrates the coherence of the composition of types. It shows a central node $A[\sigma][\delta][\gamma]$ with arrows pointing to $A[\sigma][\delta \circ \gamma]$ (labeled $[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$) and $A[\sigma \circ \delta][\gamma]$ (labeled $\mathsf{ap}_{-[\circ]}[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$). From $A[\sigma][\delta \circ \gamma]$, an arrow labeled $[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$ points to $A[\sigma \circ (\delta \circ \gamma)]$. From $A[\sigma \circ \delta][\gamma]$, an arrow labeled $[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$ points to $A[(\sigma \circ \delta) \circ \gamma]$. A double arrow labeled $\mathsf{ap}_{A[-]} \mathsf{assoc}_{\mathbf{C}}^{-1}$ connects $A[\sigma \circ (\delta \circ \gamma)]$ and $A[(\sigma \circ \delta) \circ \gamma]$.

The right diagram illustrates the coherence of the identity type. It shows a central node $A[\mathsf{id}_r][\gamma]$ with arrows pointing to $A[\mathsf{id}_r \circ \gamma]$ (labeled $[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$) and $A[\gamma]$ (labeled $\mathsf{ap}_{-[\gamma]}[\mathsf{id}] \mathsf{Ty}$). A double arrow labeled $\mathsf{ap}_{A[-]} \mathsf{id}_{\mathbf{C}}$ connects $A[\mathsf{id}_r \circ \gamma]$ and $A[\gamma]$. Below this, another set of nodes shows $A[\gamma][\mathsf{id}_r]$ with arrows pointing to $A[\gamma \circ \mathsf{id}_r]$ (labeled $[\circ] \mathsf{Ty}$) and $A[\gamma]$ (labeled $[\mathsf{id}] \mathsf{Ty}$). A double arrow labeled $\mathsf{ap}_{A[-]} \mathsf{id}_{\mathbf{C}}$ connects $A[\gamma \circ \mathsf{id}_r]$ and $A[\gamma]$.

A Groupoid CwF of Containers

Containers (a.k.a. polynomial functors)

Definition

A **(set)-container** is a pair $S : \mathbf{Set}, P : S \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ written $S \triangleleft P$.
Every container has a functor representation

$$\llbracket S \triangleleft P \rrbracket : \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Containers (a.k.a. polynomial functors)

Definition

A **(set)-container** is a pair $S : \mathbf{Set}, P : S \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ written $S \triangleleft P$.
Every container has a functor representation

$$\llbracket S \triangleleft P \rrbracket : \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Definition

A **generalised container** over a category \mathbf{C} is a pair $S : \mathbf{Set}, P : S \rightarrow |\mathbf{C}|$, written $S \triangleleft^G P$. Every generalised container has a functor representation

$$\llbracket S \triangleleft^G P \rrbracket^G : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Containers (a.k.a. polynomial functors)

Definition

A **(set)-container** is a pair $S : \mathbf{Set}, P : S \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ written $S \triangleleft P$.
Every container has a functor representation

$$\llbracket S \triangleleft P \rrbracket : \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

Definition

A **generalised container** over a category \mathbf{C} is a pair $S : \mathbf{Set}, P : S \rightarrow |\mathbf{C}|$, written $S \triangleleft^G P$. Every generalised container has a functor representation

$$\llbracket S \triangleleft^G P \rrbracket^G : \mathbf{C} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}.$$

We are interested in a container model of type theory for reasons to do with semantics of inductive types.

The container model (as outlined in [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021])

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of set-containers $S_\Gamma: \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft P_\Gamma: S_\Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ and their morphisms. Set-containers have functors

$$[[S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma]]: \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

The container model (as outlined in [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021])

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of set-containers $S_\Gamma: \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft P_\Gamma: S_\Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ and their morphisms. Set-containers have functors

$$\llbracket S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma \rrbracket: \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

- ▶ Types in context $\Gamma = S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma$ are generalised containers over $\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, $S_A: \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft^G P_A: S_A \rightarrow \int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, having functors

$$\llbracket S_A \triangleleft^G P_A \rrbracket^G: (\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

The container model (as outlined in [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021])

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of set-containers $S_\Gamma: \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft P_\Gamma: S_\Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ and their morphisms. Set-containers have functors

$$\llbracket S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma \rrbracket: \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

- ▶ Types in context $\Gamma = S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma$ are generalised containers over $\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, $S_A: \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft^G P_A: S_A \rightarrow \int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, having functors

$$\llbracket S_A \triangleleft^G P_A \rrbracket^G: (\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

- ▶ Terms of type A in context Γ are dependent natural transformations from $\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$ to $\llbracket A \rrbracket^G$:

$$\int_{X: \mathbf{Set}} (\gamma: \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket X) \rightarrow \llbracket A \rrbracket^G(X, \gamma)$$

The container model (as outlined in [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021])

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of set-containers $S_\Gamma : \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft P_\Gamma : S_\Gamma \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$ and their morphisms. Set-containers have functors

$$\llbracket S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma \rrbracket : \mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

- ▶ Types in context $\Gamma = S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma$ are generalised containers over $\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, $S_A : \mathbf{Set} \triangleleft^G P_A : S_A \rightarrow \int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$, having functors

$$\llbracket S_A \triangleleft^G P_A \rrbracket^G : (\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$$

- ▶ Terms of type A in context Γ are dependent natural transformations from $\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$ to $\llbracket A \rrbracket^G$:

$$\int_{X:\mathbf{Set}} (\gamma : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket X) \rightarrow \llbracket A \rrbracket^G(X, \gamma)$$

- ▶ Context extension is given by $\Gamma.A = S_A \triangleleft P_A^X$

Presheaf model vs. Container model

Presheaf model

Container model

Contexts

$\mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

$\mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

Presheaf model vs. Container model

Presheaf model

Container model

Contexts

$\mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

$\mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

Substitutions

natural transformations

container morphisms

Presheaf model vs. Container model

Presheaf model

Container model

Contexts

$\mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

$\mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

Substitutions

natural transformations

container morphisms

Types

$(\int \Gamma)^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

$(\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$

Presheaf model vs. Container model

	Presheaf model	Container model
Contexts	$\mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$	$\mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$
Substitutions	natural transformations	container morphisms
Types	$(\int \Gamma)^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$	$(\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$
Terms	$\int_{X: \mathbf{C} } (\gamma : \Gamma X) \rightarrow A(X, \gamma)$	$\int_{X:\mathbf{Set}} (\gamma : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket X) \rightarrow \llbracket A \rrbracket^G(X, \gamma)$

Presheaf model vs. Container model

	Presheaf model	Container model
Contexts	$\mathbf{C}^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$	$\mathbf{Set} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$
Substitutions	natural transformations	container morphisms
Types	$(\int \Gamma)^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$	$(\int \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket) \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$
Terms	$\int_{X: \mathbf{C} } (\gamma : \Gamma X) \rightarrow A(X, \gamma)$	$\int_{X:\mathbf{Set}} (\gamma : \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket X) \rightarrow \llbracket A \rrbracket^G(X, \gamma)$
Context extension	$\Gamma.A X =$ $\sum_{\rho:\Gamma X} (A(X, \rho))$	$\llbracket \Gamma.A \rrbracket X =$ $\sum_{\rho:\llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket X} (\llbracket A \rrbracket^G(X, \rho))$

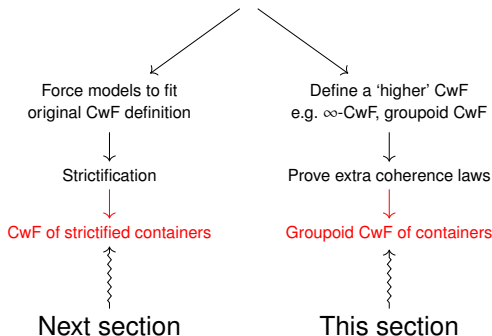
The container model — coherence issues

The container model of [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021] suffers from the same coherence issues as the set and presheaf models: $\text{Ty } \Gamma$ is a groupoid, not a set.

The container model — coherence issues

The container model of [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021] suffers from the same coherence issues as the set and presheaf models: $\text{Ty } \Gamma$ is a groupoid, not a set.

Recall ...



The container model — contexts & types

Contexts If Γ is a context, then $\Gamma = S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma$ is a **set-container**.

A substitution $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma$ is a container morphism:

$$\gamma_s: S_\Delta \rightarrow S_\Gamma$$

$$\gamma_p: \prod_{s_\Delta: S_\Delta} P_\Gamma(\gamma_s s_\Delta) \rightarrow P_\Delta s_\Delta$$

The container model — contexts & types

Contexts If Γ is a context, then $\Gamma = S_\Gamma \triangleleft P_\Gamma$ is a **set-container**.

A substitution $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma$ is a container morphism:

$$\gamma_s: S_\Delta \rightarrow S_\Gamma$$

$$\gamma_p: \prod_{s_\Delta: S_\Delta} P_\Gamma(\gamma_s s_\Delta) \rightarrow P_\Delta s_\Delta$$

Types If $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma$, then $A = S_A \triangleleft^G P_A$ is a **generalised container**, with $S_A : \text{Set}$, $P_A : S_A \rightarrow |\mathcal{J}[\![\Gamma]\!]|$, where we can break apart P_A into 3 components.

$$S_A : \text{Set}$$

$$P_A^X : S_A \rightarrow \text{Set}$$

$$P_A^S : S_A \rightarrow S_\Gamma$$

$$P_A^f : \prod_{s: S_A} P_\Gamma(P_A^S s) \rightarrow P_A^X s$$

The container model — type substitution

If $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma$ is a container morphism, then:

$$\gamma_s : S_\Delta \rightarrow S_\Gamma$$

$$\gamma_p : \prod_{s_\Delta : S_\Delta} P_\Gamma (\gamma_s s_\Delta) \rightarrow P_\Delta s_\Delta$$

If $A : \text{Ty } \Gamma$, then:

$$S_A : \text{Set}$$

$$P_A^X : S_A \rightarrow \text{Set}$$

$$P_A^s : S_A \rightarrow S_\Gamma$$

$$P_A^f : \prod_{s : S_A} P_\Gamma (P_A^s s) \rightarrow P_A^X s$$

Given a container morphism $\Delta \xrightarrow{\gamma} \Gamma$, we (roughly) define $A[\gamma]$ as:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 S_{A[\gamma]} & \xrightarrow{s_A} & S_A \\
 \downarrow s_\Delta & \lrcorner & \downarrow P_A^s \\
 S_\Delta & \xrightarrow{\gamma_s} & S_\Gamma
 \end{array}
 \triangleleft^G
 \begin{array}{ccc}
 P_\Gamma (\gamma_s s_\Delta) & \xrightarrow{(P_A^f s_A)} & P_A^X s_A \\
 \downarrow \gamma_p s_\Delta & & \downarrow \text{inr} \\
 P_\Delta s_\Delta & \xrightarrow{\text{inl}} & P_{A[\gamma]}^X S_{A[\gamma]}
 \end{array}$$

A trick for pullback in type theory

$$\begin{array}{c} A \\ \downarrow f \\ B \end{array}$$

can be written as

$$\begin{array}{l} F: B \rightarrow \mathcal{U} \\ Fb = \sum_{a:A} f a \equiv b. \end{array}$$

A trick for pullback in type theory

$$\begin{array}{c} A \\ \downarrow f \\ B \end{array}$$

can be written as

$$\begin{array}{l} F: B \rightarrow \mathcal{U} \\ Fb = \sum_{a:A} f a \equiv b. \end{array}$$

Then

$$\begin{array}{ccc} PB & \longrightarrow & A \\ \downarrow & \lrcorner & \downarrow f \\ C & \xrightarrow{g} & B \end{array}$$

can be written as

$$\begin{array}{l} H: C \rightarrow \mathcal{U} \\ Hc = F(gc) \\ = \sum_{a:A} f a \equiv gc. \end{array}$$

A trick for pullback in type theory

$$\begin{array}{c} A \\ \downarrow f \\ B \end{array}$$

can be written as

$$\begin{array}{l} F: B \rightarrow \mathcal{U} \\ Fb = \sum_{a:A} f a \equiv b. \end{array}$$

Then

$$\begin{array}{ccc} PB & \longrightarrow & A \\ \downarrow & \lrcorner & \downarrow f \\ C & \xrightarrow{g} & B \end{array}$$

can be written as

$$\begin{array}{l} H: C \rightarrow \mathcal{U} \\ Hc = F(gc) \\ = \sum_{a:A} f a \equiv gc. \end{array}$$

So we represent pullbacks as families.

We don't have a trick for pushouts

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & \xrightarrow{g} & Y \\ f \downarrow & \ulcorner & \downarrow \\ Z & \longrightarrow & PO \end{array}$$

is written as $\|\text{Pushout } f \, g\|_0$, where

$$\text{inl}: Z \rightarrow \text{Pushout } f \, g$$

$$\text{inr}: Y \rightarrow \text{Pushout } f \, g$$

$$\text{push}: \prod_{x:X} \text{inl}(f \, x) \equiv \text{inr}(g \, x)$$

and

$$|-|_0: A \rightarrow \|A\|_0$$

$$\text{squash}_0: \prod_{x,y:\|A\|_0} \prod_{p,q:x \equiv y} p \equiv q.$$

The container model — coherences

Triangulators (the identity coherence laws)

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[id_\Gamma][\gamma] & \\
 \swarrow [\circ] Ty & & \searrow ap_{-[\gamma]}[id] Ty \\
 A[id_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} id_{lc}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[\gamma][id_\Gamma] & \\
 \swarrow [\circ] Ty & & \searrow [id] Ty \\
 A[\gamma \circ id_\Gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} id_{rc}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where

$$[id] Ty: A[id] \equiv A$$

$$[\circ] Ty: A[\theta][\delta] \equiv A[\theta \circ \delta].$$

The container model — coherences

Triangulators (the identity coherence laws)

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[id_\Gamma][\gamma] & \\
 [\circ] Ty \swarrow & & \searrow ap_{-[\gamma]}[id] Ty \\
 A[id_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} id_{lc}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}
 \qquad
 \begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[\gamma][id_\Gamma] & \\
 [\circ] Ty \swarrow & & \searrow [id] Ty \\
 A[\gamma \circ id_\Gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} id_{rc}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where

$$[id] Ty : A[id] \equiv A$$

$$[\circ] Ty : A[\theta][\delta] \equiv A[\theta \circ \delta].$$

I will talk about the left coherence law.

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

To prove:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[id_\Gamma][\gamma] & \\
 \swarrow [\circ] Ty & & \searrow ap_{-}[\gamma][id] Ty \\
 A[id_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} id_{\mathbf{C}}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

To prove:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & A[id_\Gamma][\gamma] & \\
 \swarrow [\circ] Ty & & \searrow ap_{-[\gamma]}[id] Ty \\
 A[id_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} idl_c} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$



Proof sketch: Thanks to Axel's help!

We write the above as a square of generalised containers

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[id_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{A[-]} idl_c} & A[\gamma] \\
 [\circ] Ty \Uparrow & & \Uparrow refl \\
 A[id_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xrightarrow{ap_{-[\gamma]}[id] Ty} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma \circ \gamma] & \xrightarrow{\text{ap}_{A[-]} \text{id}_c} & A[\gamma] \\
 [\circ] \text{Ty} \Uparrow & & \Uparrow \text{refl} \\
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xrightarrow{\text{ap}_{-[\gamma]}[\text{id}] \text{Ty}} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

which we can rewrite as

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[\gamma] & \xrightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}}} & A[\gamma] \\
 \text{uaGenCon } (\dots [\circ] \text{Ty-eq}) \Uparrow & & \Uparrow \text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}} \\
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xrightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } (\dots [\text{id}] \text{Ty-eq})} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where $\text{uaGenCon} : A \simeq_{\text{GenCon}} B \rightarrow A \equiv B$.

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}}} & A[\gamma] \\
 \text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\circ] \text{ Ty-eq}) \Uparrow & & \Uparrow \text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}} \\
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\text{id}] \text{ Ty-eq})} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where $\text{uaGenCon} : A \simeq_{\text{GenCon}} B \rightarrow A \equiv B$.

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}}} & A[\gamma] \\
 \text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\circ] \text{Ty-eq}) \Uparrow & & \Uparrow \text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq \text{GenCon}} \\
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\text{id}] \text{Ty-eq})} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where $\text{uaGenCon} : A \simeq_{\text{GenCon}} B \rightarrow A \equiv B$.

We show that this square commutes by giving equalities for each of the generalised container components.

Left identity coherence law, in Cubical Agda

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 A[\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq\text{GenCon}}} & A[\gamma] \\
 \text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\circ] \text{Ty-eq}) \Uparrow \uparrow & & \Uparrow \uparrow \text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq\text{GenCon}} \\
 A[\text{id}_\Gamma][\gamma] & \xRightarrow{\text{uaGenCon } (\dots[\text{id}] \text{Ty-eq})} & A[\gamma]
 \end{array}$$

where $\text{uaGenCon} : A \simeq_{\text{GenCon}} B \rightarrow A \equiv B$.

We show that this square commutes by giving equalities for each of the generalised container components.

Finally, to get the original square, we massage our equalities to match those we need via some lemmas.

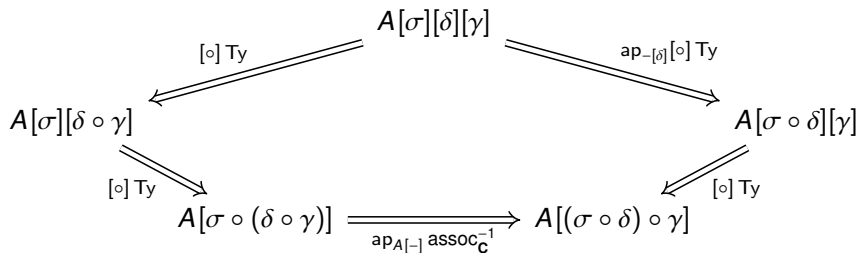
E.g. one lemma is $\text{uaGenCon } \text{id}_{\simeq\text{GenCon}} \equiv \text{refl}$. □

Progress so far

- ▶ Formalised left and right identity coherence laws in Cubical Agda i.e. the **triangulators**

Progress so far

- Formalised left and right identity coherence laws in Cubical Agda i.e. the **triangulators**
- To do: associativity coherence law i.e. the **pentagonator**

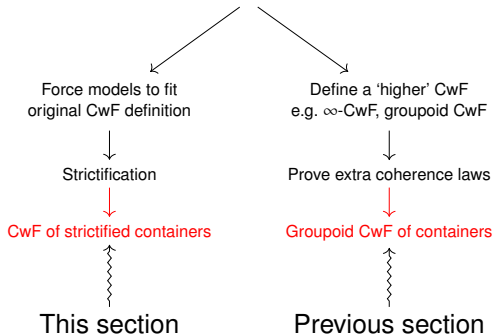


A CwF of Strictified Containers

Another way to solve the coherence issues

This section illustrates another way to deal with the coherence issues in the model given by [Altenkirch and Kaposi, 2021].

Recall ...



The strictified container model

We use an inductive-recursive universe $U : \mathbf{Set}, \mathbf{El} : U \rightarrow \mathbf{Set}$.

The strictified container model

We use an inductive-recursive universe $U : \text{Set}, \text{El} : U \rightarrow \text{Set}$.

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of **codes** for set-containers and codes for their morphisms:

$$\hat{\Gamma} = \hat{S}_{\Gamma} : U \triangleleft \hat{P}_{\Gamma} : \text{El } \hat{S}_{\Gamma} \rightarrow U$$

such that $\Gamma = S_{\Gamma} \triangleleft P_{\Gamma} = \text{El } \hat{S}_{\Gamma} \triangleleft (\text{El} \circ \hat{P}_{\Gamma})$.

The strictified container model

We use an inductive-recursive universe $U : \text{Set}, \text{El} : U \rightarrow \text{Set}$.

- ▶ The category of contexts and substitutions is the category of **codes** for set-containers and codes for their morphisms:

$$\hat{\Gamma} = \hat{S}_{\Gamma} : U \triangleleft \hat{P}_{\Gamma} : \text{El } \hat{S}_{\Gamma} \rightarrow U$$

such that $\Gamma = S_{\Gamma} \triangleleft P_{\Gamma} = \text{El } \hat{S}_{\Gamma} \triangleleft (\text{El} \circ \hat{P}_{\Gamma})$.

- ▶ Types in context $\hat{\Gamma} = \hat{S}_{\Gamma} \triangleleft \hat{P}_{\Gamma}$ are codes for generalised containers over $\int \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket$ for some context $\hat{\Delta}$, together with a substitution into $\hat{\Delta}$ — **we delay substitution**.

$$\hat{A} = (\hat{\Delta} : |\mathbf{Con}|,$$

$$\hat{\Gamma} \xrightarrow{\delta} \hat{\Delta},$$

$$\hat{S}_B : U \triangleleft \hat{P}_B : \text{El } \hat{S}_B \rightarrow |\int \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket|^U)$$

Idea: \hat{A} represents $\hat{B}[\delta]$.

The strictified container model

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{A} &= (\hat{\Delta} : |\mathbf{Con}|, \\ &\quad \hat{\Gamma} \xrightarrow{\delta} \hat{\Delta}, \\ &\quad \hat{S}_B \triangleleft \hat{P}_B)\end{aligned}$$

The strictified container model

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{A} &= (\hat{\Delta} : |\mathbf{Con}|, \\ &\quad \hat{\Gamma} \xrightarrow{\delta} \hat{\Delta}, \\ &\quad \hat{S}_B \triangleleft \hat{P}_B)\end{aligned}$$

- Type substitution for $\gamma: \hat{\Theta} \rightarrow \hat{\Gamma}$, $\hat{A}[\gamma]$ can now be defined as

$$\hat{A}[\gamma] := (\hat{\Theta}, \hat{\Theta} \xrightarrow{\delta \circ \gamma} \hat{\Delta}, \hat{S}_B \triangleleft \hat{P}_B).$$

The strictified container model

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{A} &= (\hat{\Delta} : |\mathbf{Con}|, \\ &\quad \hat{\Gamma} \xrightarrow{\delta} \hat{\Delta}, \\ &\quad \hat{S}_B \triangleleft \hat{P}_B)\end{aligned}$$

- Type substitution for $\gamma: \hat{\Theta} \rightarrow \hat{\Gamma}$, $\hat{A}[\gamma]$ can now be defined as

$$\hat{A}[\gamma] := (\hat{\Theta}, \hat{\Theta} \xrightarrow{\delta \circ \gamma} \hat{\Delta}, \hat{S}_B \triangleleft \hat{P}_B).$$

The collection of types is a set, since every component of a type \hat{A} is of type \mathbf{U} instead of \mathbf{Set} . This fits the original CwF definition.

In conclusion

- ▶ In a setting without UIP (like in HoTT), CwFs raise coherence issues
- ▶ 2 ways to solve this: by defining ‘higher’ CwFs, or by strictifying
- ▶ We focus on a specific example: the container model
- ▶ 1st approach is ongoing work: proving higher coherence laws for the container GCwF, formalised in `Cubical Agda`
- ▶ 2nd approach involves using an inductive-recursive universe and delaying type substitution

In conclusion

- ▶ In a setting without UIP (like in HoTT), CwFs raise coherence issues
- ▶ 2 ways to solve this: by defining ‘higher’ CwFs, or by strictifying
- ▶ We focus on a specific example: the container model
- ▶ 1st approach is ongoing work: proving higher coherence laws for the container GCwF, formalised in `Cubical Agda`
- ▶ 2nd approach involves using an inductive-recursive universe and delaying type substitution

Thank you!

References I



Ahrens, B., Frumin, D., Maggesi, M., and van der Weide, N. (2019).

Bicategories in Univalent Foundations.

In Geuvers, H., editor, *FSCD 2019*, volume 131 of *LIPICs*, pages 5:1–5:17, Dagstuhl, Germany. Schloss Dagstuhl – Leibniz-Zentrum für Informatik.



Altenkirch, T. and Kaposi, A. (2021).

A container model of type theory.

In *TYPES 2021*.



Altenkirch, T., Kaposi, A., and Xie, S. (2025).

The groupoid-syntax of type theory is a set.



Cartmell, J. (1986).

Generalised algebraic theories and contextual categories.

Annals of Pure and Applied Logic, 32:209–243.

References II



Chen, J. (2025).

2-coherent internal models of homotopical type theory.



Dybjer, P. (1996).

Internal type theory.

In Berardi, S. and Coppo, M., editors, *Types for Proofs and Programs*, pages 120–134, Berlin, Heidelberg. Springer Berlin Heidelberg.



Jacobs, B. (1993).

Comprehension categories and the semantics of type dependency.

Theoretical Computer Science, 107(2):169–207.

References III



Kraus, N. (2021).

Internal ∞ -categorical models of dependent type theory :
Towards 2lft eating hott.

LICS 2021, pages 1–14.



Uemura, T. (2022).

Normalization and coherence for ∞ -type theories.