

# The Type Theory of Lean

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# Lean

- ▶ An open source interactive theorem prover developed primarily by Leonardo de Moura (Microsoft Research)
- ▶ Focus on software verification and formalized mathematics
- ▶ Based on **Dependent Type Theory**
  - ▶ Classical, non-HoTT
  - ▶ Similar to CIC, the axiom system used by Coq
- ▶ Lean 3 includes a powerful metaprogramming infrastructure for Lean in Lean
- ▶ The mathlib library for Lean 3 provides a broad range of pure mathematics and tools for (meta)programming

## Axioms of Lean

# Untyped Lambda Calculus

$$e ::= x \mid e \ e \mid \lambda x. e$$
$$\frac{e_1 \rightsquigarrow e'_1}{e_1 \ e_2 \rightsquigarrow e'_1 \ e_2} \quad \frac{e_2 \rightsquigarrow e'_2}{e_1 \ e_2 \rightsquigarrow e_1 \ e'_2} \quad \frac{}{(\lambda x. e') \ e \rightsquigarrow e'[e/x]}$$

- ▶ Originally developed by Alonzo Church as a simple model of computation (equivalent to Turing Machines)
- ▶ Primitive notion of bound variables and substitution
- ▶ Nondeterministic “reduction” operation on terms simulates execution
- ▶ Reduction is confluent (Church-Rosser theorem): If  $e \rightsquigarrow^* e_1$  and  $e \rightsquigarrow^* e_2$ , then there exists  $e'$  such that  $e_1, e_2 \rightsquigarrow^* e'$

# Simple Type Theory

$$\tau ::= \iota \mid \tau \rightarrow \tau$$

$$e ::= x \mid e \ e \mid \lambda x : \tau. e$$

$$\frac{(x : \tau) \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 : \alpha \rightarrow \beta \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \ e_2 : \beta}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash e : \beta}{\Gamma \vdash (\lambda x : \alpha. e) : \alpha \rightarrow \beta}$$

- ▶ Also developed by Alonzo Church as a type system over the untyped lambda calculus
- ▶ All terms normalize in this calculus (strong normalization)

# Dependent Type Theory

$$\tau ::= \iota \mid \tau \rightarrow \tau$$

$$e ::= x \mid e \ e \mid \lambda x : \tau. e$$

$$\frac{(x : \tau) \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 : \alpha \rightarrow \beta \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \ e_2 : \beta}$$

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# Dependent Type Theory

$$\tau ::= \iota \mid \forall x : \tau. \tau$$

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# Dependent Type Theory

$$\tau ::= \iota \mid \forall x : \tau. \tau \mid \textcolor{red}{U}$$

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$$\frac{}{\overline{\Gamma \vdash \iota : U}} \quad \frac{\textcolor{red}{\Gamma \vdash \alpha : U} \quad \textcolor{red}{\Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta : U}}{\textcolor{red}{\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta : U}} \quad \frac{}{\overline{\Gamma \vdash U : U}}$$



# Dependent Type Theory

$$e ::= x \mid e \ e \mid \lambda x : e. e \mid \iota \mid \forall x : e. e \mid U$$

$$\frac{(x : \tau) \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 : \forall x : \alpha. \beta \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \ e_2 : \beta[e_2/x]}$$

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# Dependent Type Theory

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$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash \alpha : U \quad \Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta : U}{\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta : U} \qquad \frac{}{\Gamma \vdash U : U}$$

## Two Problems

$$\overline{\Gamma \vdash U : U}$$

- ▶ Girard's paradox: This rule causes an inconsistency (all types become nonempty, i.e. all propositions are provable)
- ▶ Solution: hierarchies of universes

$$\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash U_n : U_{n+1}} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash \alpha : U_m \quad \Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta : U_n}{\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta : U_{\max(m,n)}}$$

# Impredicativity

- ▶ Curry-Howard correspondence: Propositions act like types, whose terms are the proofs ( $\rightarrow$  and  $\forall$  act like the logical operators  $\rightarrow$  and  $\forall$ )
- ▶ We identify the lowest universe  $\mathbb{P} := U_0$  as the universe of propositions
- ▶ We want things like “all natural numbers are even or odd” to be propositions, but the  $\forall$  rule doesn't give us this

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash \mathbb{N} : U_1 \quad \Gamma, n : \mathbb{N} \vdash \text{even } n \vee \text{odd } n : U_0}{\Gamma \vdash \forall n : \mathbb{N}. \text{even } n \vee \text{odd } n : U_1}$$

- ▶ Solution: fix the rule so that if the second argument is in  $U_0$  then so is the forall

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash \alpha : U_m \quad \Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta : U_n}{\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta : U_{\text{imax}(m,n)}} \quad \text{imax}(m,n) = \begin{cases} 0 & n = 0 \\ \max(m,n) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

# Dependent Type Theory

$$e ::= x \mid e \ e \mid \lambda x : e. e \mid \forall x : e. e \mid U_n$$

$$\frac{(x : \tau) \in \Gamma}{\Gamma \vdash x : \tau} \qquad \frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 : \forall x : \alpha. \beta \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \ e_2 : \beta[e_2/x]}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash e : \beta}{\Gamma \vdash (\lambda x : \alpha. e) : \forall x : \alpha. \beta}$$

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## Two Problems

- ▶ The types  $(\lambda\alpha : U_1. \alpha) \tau$  and  $\tau$  are not the same, even though  $(\lambda\alpha : U_1. \alpha) \tau \rightsquigarrow \tau$
- ▶ Solution: Convertibility (a.k.a. definitional equality)

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha \quad \Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \beta}{\Gamma \vdash e : \beta}$$

## Two Problems

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$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha \quad \Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \beta}{\Gamma \vdash e : \beta}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e \equiv e}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e \equiv e'}{\Gamma \vdash e' \equiv e}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \equiv e_2 \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 \equiv e_3}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \equiv e_3}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e_1 \equiv e'_1 \quad \Gamma \vdash e_2 \equiv e'_2}{\Gamma \vdash e_1 e_2 \equiv e'_1 e'_2}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \alpha' \quad \Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta \equiv \beta'}{\Gamma \vdash \lambda x : \alpha. \beta \equiv \lambda x : \alpha'. \beta'}$$
$$\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta \equiv \forall x : \alpha'. \beta'$$

$$\frac{}{\Gamma \vdash (\lambda x : \alpha. e') e \equiv e'[e/x]}$$

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \beta}{\Gamma \vdash \lambda x : \alpha. e x \equiv e}$$

# Inductive Types

- We want a general framework for defining new inductive types like  $\mathbb{N}$

$$K ::= 0 \mid (c : e) + K$$

$$e ::= \cdots \mid \mu x : e. K \mid c_{\mu x : e. K} \mid \text{rec}_{\mu x : e. K}$$

$$\mathbb{N} := \mu T : U_1. (\text{zero} : T) + (\text{succ} : T \rightarrow T)$$

$$\exists x : \alpha. p \ x := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. (\text{intro} : \forall x : \alpha. p \ x \rightarrow T)$$

$$p \wedge q := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. (\text{intro} : p \rightarrow q \rightarrow T)$$

$$p \vee q := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. (\text{inl} : p \rightarrow T) + (\text{inr} : q \rightarrow T)$$

$$\perp := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. 0$$

$$\top := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. (\text{trivial} : T)$$



# Inductive Types

- ▶ Each inductive type comes with a **constructor** for each case, and a **recursor** that allows us to prove theorems by induction and construct functions by recursion

$$\mathbb{N} := \mu T : U_1. (\text{zero} : T) + (\text{succ} : T \rightarrow T)$$

$$\text{zero} : \mathbb{N}$$

$$\text{succ} : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$$

$$\text{rec}_{\mathbb{N}} : \forall (C : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow U_i). C \text{ zero} \rightarrow$$

$$(\forall n : \mathbb{N}. C n \rightarrow C (\text{succ } n)) \rightarrow \forall n : \mathbb{N}. C n$$

$$\text{rec}_{\mathbb{N}} C z s \text{ zero} \equiv z$$

$$\text{rec}_{\mathbb{N}} C z s (\text{succ } n) \equiv s n (\text{rec}_{\mathbb{N}} C z s n)$$

# Inductive Types

- ▶ For an inductive declaration to be admissible, it must be strictly positive (no  $T$  appears left of left of an arrow)
  - ▶ Ex: this type violates Cantor's theorem

$$\text{bad} := \mu T : U_1. (\text{intro} : (T \rightarrow 2) \rightarrow T)$$

- ▶ Inductive families are also allowed:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{eq}_\alpha &:= \lambda x : \alpha. \mu T : \alpha \rightarrow \mathbb{P}. (\text{refl} : T\ x) \\ \text{refl}_x &: \text{eq}_\alpha\ x\ x \\ \text{rec}_{\text{eq}\ x} &: \forall (C : \alpha \rightarrow U_i). C\ x \rightarrow \forall y : \alpha. \text{eq}_\alpha\ x\ y \rightarrow C\ y \end{aligned}$$

# Proof Irrelevance and its consequences

- ▶ We want to treat all proofs of a proposition as “the same”

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash p : \mathbb{P} \quad \Gamma \vdash h : p \quad \Gamma \vdash h' : p}{\Gamma \vdash h \equiv h'}$$

- ▶ This means that an equality has at most one proof (anti-HoTT)
- ▶ To prevent inconsistency, some inductive types cannot eliminate to a large universe

$\exists x : \alpha. p \ x := \mu T : \mathbb{P}. (\text{intro} : \forall x : \alpha. p \ x \rightarrow T)$

$\text{intro} : \forall x : \alpha. (p \ x \rightarrow \exists y : \alpha. p \ y)$

$\text{rec}_{\exists} : \forall C : U_0. (\forall x : \alpha. p \ x \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (\exists x : \alpha. p \ x) \rightarrow C$

- ▶ Some inductive types in  $\mathbb{P}$  eliminate to other universes, if they have “at most one inhabitant by definition”, this is called **subsingleton elimination**

## Actual axioms

- ▶ Propositional extensionality

$$\text{propext} : \forall p, q : \mathbb{P}. (p \leftrightarrow q) \rightarrow p = q$$

- ▶ Quotient types

$$\text{quot} : \forall \alpha : U_n. (\alpha \rightarrow \alpha \rightarrow \mathbb{P}) \rightarrow U_n$$

$$\text{mk}_{\alpha,r} : \alpha \rightarrow \alpha/r$$

$$\text{lift}_{\alpha,r} : \forall \beta. \forall f : \alpha \rightarrow \beta. (\forall x y. r x y \rightarrow f x = f y) \rightarrow \alpha/r \rightarrow \beta$$

$$\text{sound}_{\alpha,r} : \forall x y. r x y \rightarrow \text{mk } x = \text{mk } y$$

$$\text{lift } \beta f H (\text{mk } x) \equiv f x$$

- ▶ The axiom of choice

$$\text{nonempty } \alpha := \mu T : U_0. (\text{intro} : \alpha)$$

$$\text{choice} : \forall \alpha : U_n. \text{nonempty } \alpha \rightarrow \alpha$$

## Properties of the type system

# Undecidability

- ▶ The type judgment is “almost” decidable, but not quite
- ▶ The problem is an interaction of subsingleton elimination and proof irrelevance

$$\text{acc}_{<} := \mu T : \alpha \rightarrow \mathbb{P}. (\text{intro} : \forall x. (\forall y. y < x \rightarrow T y) \rightarrow T x)$$

- ▶  $\text{acc } x$  expresses that  $x$  is “accessible” via the  $<$  relation
  - ▶ If everything  $<$ -less than  $x$  is accessible, then  $x$  is accessible
  - ▶ If everything is  $<$ -accessible then  $<$  is a well founded relation
  - ▶  $\text{acc}$  is a subsingleton eliminator that lives in  $\mathbb{P}$ !
- ▶ We can define an inverse to  $\text{intro}$ , such that  $\text{intro } x (\text{inv}_x a) \equiv a$ , because  $a : \text{acc } x$  is a proposition

$$\text{inv}_x : \text{acc } x \rightarrow \forall y. y < \text{acc } x \rightarrow \text{acc } y$$

# Undecidability

- ▶ Let  $P$  be a decidable proposition such that  $\forall n. P\ n$  is not decidable
  - ▶ for example,  $P\ n :=$  Turing machine  $M$  runs for at least  $n$  steps
- ▶ Suppose  $h_0 : \text{acc}_{>}\ 0$ , that is,  $0 : \mathbb{N}$  is accessible via the  $>$  relation. (This is provably false.)
- ▶ We can define a function  $f : \forall x : \mathbb{N}. \text{acc}_{>}\ x \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$  by recursion on  $\text{acc}_{>}$  such that

$$f\ n\ h \equiv \text{if } P\ n \text{ then } f\ (n + 1)\ (\text{inv}_n\ h\ (n + 1)\ (p\ n)) \text{ else } 0$$

where  $p\ n : n + 1 > n$

- ▶ Then  $h_0 : \text{acc}_{>}\ 0 \vdash f\ 0\ h_0 \equiv 0$  is provable iff  $\forall n. P\ n$  is true

# Algorithmic typing judgment

- ▶ Lean resolves this by underapproximating the  $\equiv$  and  $\vdash$  judgments
- ▶ If we introduce  $\Gamma \vdash e \Leftrightarrow e'$  and  $\Gamma \Vdash e : \alpha$  judgments for “the thing Lean does”, then  $\Gamma \Vdash e : \alpha$  implies  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  and  $\Gamma \vdash e \Leftrightarrow e'$  implies  $\Gamma \vdash e \equiv e'$ , so Lean is an **underapproximation** of the “true” typing judgment
- ▶  $\Gamma \vdash e \Leftrightarrow e'$  is not transitive, and  $\Gamma \Vdash e : \alpha$  does not satisfy subject reduction
- ▶ In practice, this issue is extremely rare and it can be circumvented by inserting identity functions to help Lean find the transitivity path



# Modeling Lean in ZFC

# DTT in ZFC

- ▶ There is an “obvious” model of DTT in ZFC, where we treat types as sets and elements as elements of the sets
- ▶ The interpretation function  $\llbracket \Gamma \vdash e \rrbracket_\gamma$  (or just  $\llbracket e \rrbracket$ ) translates  $e$  into a set when  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  is well typed and  $\gamma \in \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$  provides a values for the context
- ▶ Because of proof irrelevance and the axiom of choice (which implies LEM), we must have  $\llbracket \mathbb{P} \rrbracket := \{\emptyset, \{\bullet\}\}$
- ▶ For all higher universes, we interpret functions as functions, i.e.  $f \in \llbracket \forall x : \alpha. \beta \rrbracket$  if  $f$  is a function with domain  $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket$  such that  $f(x) \in \llbracket \beta \rrbracket_x$  for all  $x \in \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket$
- ▶ With this translation, because of inductive types the universes must be very large (Grothendieck universes). We let  $\llbracket U_{n+1} \rrbracket = V_{\kappa_n}$  where  $\kappa_n$  is the  $n$ -th inaccessible cardinal (if it exists)

# Lean is consistent

## Theorem (Soundness)

1. If  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha : \mathbb{P}$ , then  $\llbracket \Gamma \vdash \alpha \rrbracket_\gamma \subseteq \{\bullet\}$
2. If  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  and  $\text{lvl}(\Gamma \vdash \alpha) = 0$ , then  $\llbracket \Gamma \vdash e \rrbracket_\gamma = \bullet$ .
3. If  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$ , then there exists  $k \in \mathbb{N}$  such that if there are  $k$  inaccessible cardinals, then  $\llbracket \Gamma \vdash e \rrbracket_\gamma \in \llbracket \Gamma \vdash \alpha \rrbracket_\gamma$  for all  $\gamma \in \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$ .
4. If  $\Gamma \vdash e \equiv e'$ , then there exists  $k \in \mathbb{N}$  such that if there are  $k$  inaccessible cardinals, then  $\llbracket \Gamma \vdash e \rrbracket_\gamma = \llbracket \Gamma \vdash e' \rrbracket_\gamma$  for all  $\gamma \in \llbracket \Gamma \rrbracket$ .

- ▶ As a consequence, Lean is consistent (there is no derivation of  $\perp$ ), if ZFC with  $\omega$  inaccessibles is consistent.
- ▶ More precisely, Lean is equiconsistent with  $\text{ZFC} + \{\text{there are } n \text{ inaccessibles} \mid n < \omega\}$ , because Lean models  $\text{ZFC} + n$  inaccessibles for all  $n < \omega$

Unique typing

# Unique typing

- ▶ We used the function  $\text{lvl}(\Gamma \vdash \alpha)$  in the soundness theorem. This is defined as  $\text{lvl}(\Gamma \vdash \alpha) = n$  iff  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha : U_n$ , and it is well defined on types because of unique typing and definitional inversion:

## Theorem (Unique typing)

*If  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  and  $\Gamma \vdash e : \beta$ , then  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \beta$ .*

## Theorem (Definitional inversion)

- ▶ *If  $\Gamma \vdash U_m \equiv U_n$ , then  $m = n$ .*
- ▶ *If  $\Gamma \vdash \forall x : \alpha. \beta \equiv \forall x : \alpha'. \beta'$ , then  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \alpha'$  and  $\Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash \beta \equiv \beta'$ .*
- ▶ *If  $\Gamma \vdash U_n \not\equiv \forall x : \alpha. \beta$ .*

# Unique typing

## Theorem (Unique typing)

*If  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  and  $\Gamma \vdash e : \beta$ , then  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \beta$ .*

- ▶ Note that this works even in inconsistent contexts!  
Considering the undecidability results, this is more than we might expect
- ▶ False in Coq because of universe cumulativity (possibly there is an analogous statement?)

# Unique typing

- ▶ We prove this by induction on the number of **alternations** between the  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  and  $\Gamma \vdash e \equiv e'$  judgments
- ▶ The induction hypothesis asserts that definitional inversion holds of  $\vdash_n$  provability

## Definition

- ▶ Let  $\Gamma \vdash_0 \alpha \equiv \beta$  iff  $\alpha = \beta$
- ▶ Let  $\Gamma \vdash_{n+1} \alpha \equiv \beta$  iff there is a proof of  $\Gamma \vdash \alpha \equiv \beta$  using only  $\Gamma \vdash_n e : \alpha$  typing judgments.
- ▶ Let  $\Gamma \vdash_n e : \alpha$  iff there is a proof of  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$  using the modified conversion rule

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash_n e : \alpha \quad \Gamma \vdash_m \alpha \equiv \beta \quad m \leq n}{\Gamma \vdash_n e : \beta}$$

# The Church Rosser theorem

## Theorem (for the $\lambda$ -calculus)

*If  $e \rightsquigarrow^* e_1$  and  $e \rightsquigarrow^* e_2$ , then there exists  $e'$  such that  $e_1, e_2 \rightsquigarrow^* e'$ .*

- ▶ The Church Rosser theorem is false primarily because of proof irrelevance: there are lots of ways to prove a theorem, and they are all  $\equiv$  by proof irrelevance
- ▶ Lean's reduction relation also gets stuck when  $\eta$  reduction interferes with the computation rule for inductives, for example:

$$\lambda h : a = a. \text{rec}_{\text{eq } a} C e a h \rightsquigarrow_{\eta} \text{rec}_{\text{eq } a} C e a$$

$$\lambda h : a = a. \text{rec}_{\text{eq } a} C e a h \rightsquigarrow_{\iota} \lambda h : a = a. e$$



# The Church Rosser theorem

## Theorem (for Lean)

*If  $\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha$ , and  $\Gamma \vdash e \rightsquigarrow_{\kappa}^* e_1, e_2$ , then there exists  $e'_1, e'_2$  such that  $\Gamma \vdash e_i \rightsquigarrow_{\kappa}^* e'_i$  and  $\Gamma \vdash e'_1 \equiv_p e'_2$ .*

- ▶ The statement uses two new relations, the  $\kappa$  reduction  $\rightsquigarrow_{\kappa}$  and proof equivalence  $\equiv_p$ .
- ▶  $\rightsquigarrow_{\kappa}$  is a more aggressive version of Lean's reduction relation that unfolds subsingleton eliminators even on variables
- ▶  $\equiv_p$  is “equality except at proof arguments” with  $\eta$  conversion.

$$\frac{\Gamma \vdash e : \alpha}{\Gamma \vdash e \equiv_p e} \quad \frac{\Gamma, x : \alpha \vdash e \equiv_p e' \quad x}{\Gamma \vdash \lambda x : \alpha. e \equiv_p e'} \quad \frac{\Gamma \vdash p : \mathbb{P} \quad \Gamma \vdash h, h' : p}{\Gamma \vdash h \equiv_p h'} \quad \dots$$

# The Church Rosser theorem

- ▶ The  $\rightsquigarrow_{\kappa}$  reduction will reduce  $\text{rec}_{\text{acc}} C f x h$  (where  $h : \text{acc}_{<} x$ ) to

$$f x (\text{inv}_x h) (\lambda y h'. \text{rec}_{\text{acc}} C f y (\text{inv}_x h y h'))$$

so it is not strongly or weakly normalizing

- ▶ So it is similar to the untyped lambda reduction in that by allowing infinite reduction we open the possibility of bringing divergent reductions back together (within  $\equiv_p$ )
- ▶ The proof of Church-Rosser as stated uses the Tait–Martin-Löf method (using a parallel reduction relation  $\gg_{\kappa}$  and its almost deterministic analogue  $\ggg_{\kappa}$ )

## Future work

- ▶ More model theory of Lean (prove unprovability of  $f == g \rightarrow x == y \rightarrow f\ x == g\ y$ , prove that equality of types is only disprovable when the types have different cardinalities)
- ▶ Figure out how the VM evaluation model relates to the Lean reduction relation, define the type erasure map and show that VM evaluation of a well typed term gets the right answer
  - ▶ Solid theory for VM overrides?
- ▶ Prove strong normalization
- ▶ Formalize the present results in Lean

Thank you!

<https://github.com/digama0/lean-type-theory>