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SOME CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPLEXITIES OF MORAL ARGUMENTATION

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ABSTRACT: Deciding the best course of action on a day-to-day basis may require us to think about moral issues. Therefore, how we present and publicize our decisions and actions is important; and for this we may use arguments. Thus, the present research on moral arguments is delimited, bringing some of its characteristics and complexities. We performed the research through a bibliographical review focusing on the theory of argumentation, with a qualitative and analytical methodological approach. We aim to show what are the requirements to present moral arguments, also exemplifying how we can do this. For that, the hypothesis is that the use of argumentative schemes and critical questions can be useful. Although arguments have particularities that make them difficult to evaluate, the resources presented can enable us to standardize arguments and test them beyond models of eloquence or rhetoric.

KEYWORDS: Argumentation Theory. Moral Argumentation. Moral Reasoning. Argument Schemes.

RESUMO: Decidir o melhor curso de ação no dia-a-dia pode exigir que pensemos em questões morais. Portanto, como apresentamos e divulgamos nossas decisões e ações é importante; e para isso podemos usar argumentos. Assim, a presente pesquisa sobre argumentos morais é delimitada, trazendo algumas de suas características e complexidades. Realizamos a pesquisa através de uma revisão bibliográfica com foco na teoria da argumentação, com abordagem metodológica qualitativa e analítica. Nosso objetivo é mostrar quais são os requisitos para apresentar argumentos morais, também exemplificando como podemos fazer isso. Para tanto, a hipótese é que o uso de esquemas argumentativos e questões críticas pode ser útil. Embora os argumentos tenham particularidades que os tornam difíceis de avaliar, os recursos apresentados podem nos capacitar a padronizar argumentos e testá-los além de modelos de eloquência ou retórica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Teoria da Argumentação. Argumentação Moral. Raciocínio Moral. Esquemas Argumentativos.

Introduction

Here we will consider arguments as a series of statements, declarations or propositions that connected may sustain a conclusion. And the activity of argumentation we can comprehend as of exposing reasons to believe in some proposition, and those reasons may be in favor of or against something. Our focus here will be on arguments from practical reasons, which are reasons for acting (ALVAREZ, 2018, p. 3293). It's an argument concerned with questions of whether we should or shouldn't do something. Here we will also follow Berteau's (2017, p. 68) understanding: Practical reasons are public considerations that must be impersonal and constructed rationally. These reasons are shared standards, binding to all individuals that assess the argument.

The Scottish legal philosopher Neil MacCormick (1993), proposes a distinction between institutional argumentation and pure practical argumentation, in which he bases the latter on "substantive" reasons on how to act (whether deontological or consequential). Substantive argumentation is the one present in our daily lives, we use it to define our social, moral, and political issues. Thus, we can see moral argumentation as a substantive argumentation. A moral argument is an argument whose conclusion states that something is good or bad, or what is right or wrong and therefore should or should not be done. Such claims are normative, about the way things should be (MORROW, 2017, p. 17).

It is necessary that moral judgments be presented in the form of arguments for publicity's sake. Even though people who live in a determined society may share moral views, publicizing our understandings is important for the testing of our arguments before they are accepted. For such, we need critical reasoning; and the evaluation of arguments allows us to put moral questions into perspective. When treating moral issues, every person should be considered equal and treated in the measure of their real equality, exercising care about the relevant moral differences. Also, being important to consider:

We would think it outrageous for a moral rule to say something like "Everyone must refrain from stealing food in grocery stores—except for Mr. X, who may steal all he wants." Imagine that there is no morally relevant reason for making this exception to food stealing; Mr. X is exempted merely because, say, he is a celebrity known for outrageous behavior. We not only would object to this rule, we might

even begin to wonder if it was a genuine moral rule at all since it lacks impartiality. (VAUGHN, 2015, p. 8)

It is common for individuals to find themselves in a position where it is needed to carry out a moral judgment or test moral principles and rules. That can be what they take for themselves as the proper thing, or to define what is necessary to settle a situation involving other people. Therefore, the moral decision-making process matters. Moral arguments are fundamental to clarify and make public what we consider right and wrong, good and bad; and reflecting on such questions allows us to have clear judgments beyond one's subjectivity. Reflection on morals allows us to decide about what we regard moral or not, and arguments can be useful for such purpose.

In moral matters, there is hardly an authority imposing an official resolution, for example, as do judges and legislators - that is if we treat morality secularly. And, in general, there are also no written rules that are always applied as it is with Law and its body of legislation. It is for this "lack of authority" that every moral decision must be justified on solid grounds; thus, the use of good arguments becomes essential. Using arguments allows us to determine what is good and bad, and usually, terms or moral words are used to qualify actions or characteristics, employing adjectives.

Moral issues have several peculiarities and difficulties in treatment such as what Walton (2009, p. 13) considers the use of emotional language. Our impression of moral situations sometimes is linked to feelings and emotions, which can often aid in the perception of a state of affairs; but they may not be a reliable guide for our actions all the time.

For this and other controversies we understood here that standardizing these arguments through arguments schemes can help to better visualize if they are presenting good reasons or only rhetoric and eloquence - but more on that later. What we must highlight is that a moral action must be well-founded in reasons to be justified. Throughout the next sections, we will analytically display some characteristics and complexities of moral argumentation. These reflections are the results of a bibliographical research and review of the specialized literature on argumentation theory.

Some characteristics of moral arguments

An important characteristic we can attribute to reasoning and moral argumentation is as a form of critical reasoning applied to ethics. Critical reasoning is a form of careful evaluation of statements, used to ascertain if a statement should be accepted, or even verify its truthfulness. We apply critical reasoning in the most diverse contexts for decision making and reasoning. Moral argumentation makes use of this critical reasoning.

The primary point of critical reasoning is that we should not accept an affirmation or statement without having a good reason (FORESMAN; FOSSL; WATSON, 2016, p. 33). Acceptance of a statement is subject to the force of its reasons and so can vary. We may only accept an argument when there are good reasons that support it, even in the ethical and moral fields.

It is relevant to notice: we do not find most arguments in a standardized form as it will be shown here later. Argumentation happens in everyday conditions, in texts, reports, letters, etc. Therefore, assessing arguments in ordinary situations may be complex. The challenge is aggravated by a common practice: leaving implicit premises. Sometimes a conclusion does not stem from its explicit premises; accordingly, it would be necessary to add another premise for the argument to be accepted.

Another significant feature to remark is that non-moral statements differ from moral ones since they do not glimpse whether something is right or wrong, but the veracity of some fact - and also arguments about facts are theoretical and not practical. Another point is that not all situations with adjectives are moral situations. To illustrate, a statement such as “This is a good library,” even though uses a common adjective in moral language, can’t be characterized as a moral statement. The use of such words may even describe situations or states that touch morality without the statement itself being moral. The statement “many people believe that the death penalty is wrong” may be a clearer example of this.

What makes a moral argument distinguishable is that its conclusion is always a moral affirmation. A moral statement or affirmation states whether an action or someone is good or bad, right or wrong, prohibited or allowed. An example of a moral affirmation would be to say “the death penalty is wrong,” which we can use as a premise or appear as a conclusion in an argument.

A moral argument has the same structure as other types of arguments, having premises and a conclusion - which will be a moral judgment or statement. As for the premises, one of them must have some kind of moral statement, whether it be a rule or

principle - and we may even consider such principles the most important part of the argument (KIRSNER; MANDELL, 2013, p. 591). The other premise needs to be a non-moral statement, factual information about some action or state of affairs.

We can develop the argument that will be used from different reasonings, be it deductive, inductive or abductive, etc. It can also vary in its structure, as arguments with more or fewer premises; and still, there are arguments with implicit or explicit premises, as mentioned before.

When the argument refers to moral affirmations or statements, anyone who comes to say something is right or wrong, moral or immoral, is proposing a moral statement. Besides, there are factual propositions that may be statistical, legal, psychological, among others. We often use them to support moral claims. The following example may help you visualize a moral argument:

1. Shooting a firearm at someone to defend yourself from an assault is morally permissible.
2. John shot a person who was assaulting him as an act of self-defense.
3. Therefore, the firing of John with a firearm against the person is morally permissible.

We may note that the first premise is a moral statement giving a rule or principle about an act, providing a moral content. The second premise had no moral content, only brought statements about the characteristics of an action. The conclusion that the act is morally permissible is a moral judgment on a specific action in relation to a rule or general principle previously delimited. So, the conclusion only reports if that specific action falls within the moral content established in the first premise. It would not be possible to reach a moral conclusion if one premise had no moral statement.

A non-moral premise is necessary for typical moral arguments for the conclusion of a moral argument must relate to a specific action or class of actions. In this way, the conclusion can only be about a certain action if the non-moral premise is present and can direct it, so the non-moral premise is also essential to make the connection between premise and conclusion.

We can present moral arguments in a standard format, and with that, we can test them in a more proper way. The demonstration will take place from a pattern called argumentative scheme which clarifies the semantic principle, promoting the logical

structure. This allows us to see how the premises and conclusion are connected. But also, the schemes help us visualize the argument and assess its strength by being accompanied by critical questions.

We can define argument schemes as a representation of an argument, which “[...] are forms of argument (structures of inference) that enable one to identify and evaluate common types of argumentation in everyday discourse” (WALTON; REED; MACAGNO, 2008, p. 11). Such arguments develop from the semantic relations between the concepts or propositions involved, combined with a reasoning method. Consider the following scheme:

1. Action X has feature P.
 2. Actions with feature P are morally good/bad.
- Therefore,
3. Action X should/should not be done.

This scheme is a development made from other schemes proposed by Feldman (2014, p. 386), Rainbolt and Dwyer (2011, p. 351). It is not the only way to represent moral arguments about actions but we can consider it a basic form and similar to proposals of other authors. We call simple moral arguments the ones that conclude if we should act because of a specific moral feature.

We can standardize such simple moral arguments in different ways, but they will have in themselves: 1. premises dealing with the characteristic of actions; 2) premises bringing a moral assessment of an action. Any argument about actions can be used in this pattern, although few arguments in practice do so. Here is an example of how we could present an argument following the scheme:

1. Driving under the influence of alcohol is dangerous.
 2. Actions that are dangerous are morally bad.
- Therefore,
3. Driving under the influence of alcohol should not be done.

We should also note that these schemes are defeasible. Critical questions are important because they may serve this purpose, helping us to evaluate an argument, raising points about the argument that require further explanation, which can defeat it if

not answered (sometimes temporarily until the answer is given). We could exemplify with the following questions for the scheme about simple moral arguments:

- a) Does the action really have that feature?
- b) Is that feature relevant to the action and/or context?
- c) Is it the only relevant feature of the action?
- d) Why is it considered morally good/bad?

A general rule is that critical questions provide criteria for the acceptability of argument schemes (WALTON; GODDEN, 2005, p. 477). However, the questions above are an exemplification, they don't exhaust the possibilities of what might be needed for the argument to be accepted. The schemes have weight in their conclusions based on reasons that always can be defeated in the light of new information or evidence. Therefore, such schemes will never be absolute or final but closed in some contexts in relation to the information available. Yet, answering such questions is essential.

There are still other possibilities for schemes of moral arguments that should be mentioned, such as the following example:

1. If action A is done it will produce/result X
 2. X is a morally good/bad consequence
- Therefore,
3. Action A should/should not be done.

The present scheme is developed from the works of Walton, Reed and Macagno (2008, p.101) and also Rainbolt and Dwyer (2011, p. 353). The above scheme is a version of the action scheme that focuses on the consequences and can be called consequentialist. The term "X" is the consequence, which is variable and will depend on whether the action is taken. When following this scheme, actions with bad consequences are not desirable and should be avoided – some could consider this statement as an implied premise that should be in the argument. We could exemplify like this:

1. If gun control is softened it will result in more deaths.

2. More deaths is a morally bad consequence.

Therefore,

3. Softening gun control should not be done.

Once again, we could use critical questions to test the argument. Here could be a few examples of those questions:

- a) Will the action really produce that result?
- b) Is that result relevant to the action/context? Is it directly tied to the action?
- c) Are the consequences really morally important? Why are they valued in such a manner?
- d) Are the consequences factual or mere previsions of possibilities?

Consequentialist arguments should list what moral consequences are significant, who is morally important in relation to the consequences, and whether the proposed consequences are really important; and yet if the consequences are factual or mere probabilities. A consequentialist moral argument depends on its suitable response and adequacy to such questions.

Carrying on the analysis of the characteristics of moral arguments, we should note that not every moral argument will be simple or consequentialist. Thus, it is necessary to reflect on arguments that will weigh the consequences and possible damages and benefits of actions and its characteristics.

Reflecting on such harms and benefits makes one ponder the general value of a particular action, and much of practical arguments go through such reflection, which may even be held as an evaluation of pros and cons; and this makes the argument complex. The use of a general value can be considered more common in complex arguments and can be expressed in a principle to be used as a premise in arguments. Consider the following example of an overall value principle (“OVP”) given by Feldman:

“**OVP1**: Person (or group) S should do action A if and only if the overall value of the harms and benefits of action A is greater than the overall value of the harms and benefits of any alternative to A that is available to S.” (FELDMAN, 2014, p. 391, bold by the author)

In general, the principle means that something must be done when the benefits outweigh the harms or damage done. And not be done when the damages outweigh the benefits. This principle could be used as a premise in a moral argument. Feldman is also able to demonstrate with clarity how it can be applied:

1. Sterling's only alternatives are to do his research using mice (R) and not to do his research at all (N). (EP)
2. The benefit of R is that he might find a cure for a serious disease and the harm is that there will be 10,000–20,000 mice-weeks of diarrheal discomfort annually. (EP)
3. The harm of N is that 100,000 children will continue to die annually from the disease. (EP)
4. The overall value of the harms and benefits of R outweighs the overall value of the harms and benefits of N. (EP)
5. (OVP1) (IP?)
6. Sterling should do R. (1)–(5) (FELDMAN, 2014, p. 392)

The acronyms "EP" and "IP" represent, respectively, an explicit premise and implicit premise, "OVP1" is the premise of general value discussed above. At this point, we just want to highlight a suggestion on how we can apply a premise of overall value on an argument and not a complete argument scheme. There may be several other possibilities on how to construct a premise like this. But, once again, the aim here is just to exemplify the characteristics and possibilities of argumentation found in the literature.

On Feldman's example, the options set forth formed a moral conflict, as possibilities collide and bring damages and benefits that must be evaluated. Regardless of the decision made, there will be some measure of pain and discomfort in the situation. Given the facts available, the choice that seems to bring the least harm and greater benefits is the research, and so it has the best overall value.

Compacting with continued research in this case does not imply that we should do all animal researches. It is possible to conceive of cases where the damage to animals overcomes the gains or benefits to people. Hence, prudence is suggested in the development of complex moral arguments and attention to the particularities of the context in which the argument is embedded.

Evaluating the general value through arguments involves procedures like of the of other arguments already presented. It is possible to standardize such arguments making their assessment more accessible. And we must be attentive to the premise that brings the principle of what is being valued since the principle itself can be the source of

greater disagreements. But in the same way, we must pay attention to the consequences to see if they are well-disposed and in a reasonable pattern; they shall not be mere speculations or appeal to scenarios that serve as rhetoric.

Another point we must observe is that we use moral arguments in deliberative contexts, so we must remember that:

In deliberation, an agent has to confront a situation where there are, or seem to be different possible courses of action, and there is a need to select one of them, as the right or best thing to do. An agent is an autonomous entity (a) that has goals, (b) can get the information on its particular circum-stances, (c) that can carry out actions that may affect those circumstances, and (d) that can perceive the effects of its own actions, and modify its subsequent actions accordingly (WALTON, 2009, p.29)

The premises which give a reason and justify the conclusion are open to questioning, they are not absolute or dogmatic. It's our job to question them once we face an argument before us. Thus, even listing a controversial moral premise may require justification of its choice in the argument, creating a chain of arguments. This means that there is a need for internal and external justification of arguments. Internal considerations are to clarify the validity of the argument and external to ensure the acceptability of the premises.

However, the moral premise is not always the one that can be questioned. Non-moral premises are also open to questioning. For example, the statement: "the death penalty actually reduces crime". Such a statement could appear in an argument as a factual premise and should also be evaluated when one is analyzing an argument. In this way, factual premises in arguments - not just moral arguments - must also be based on good reasons. Simple beliefs or statements do not serve as factual premises. They must be based on other substantive reasons.

In short, moral argumentation is about some moral issue, aiming to justify or solve a moral question, and it is necessary to check the adequacy of the premises that give reasons, so we can guarantee the conclusion. Thus, from a point of view of practical reason, it allows to see good reasons to do or not to do an action. Defining whether actions are morally permissible or whether the consequences are acceptable are examples of issues that moral argumentation addresses.

Outside of the standardized structure of arguments, the presentation of an argument can be aided by explaining and broadening the premises, bringing as much

evidence as available to show clearly that the conclusion is adequate and based on good reasons. Showing that there may be objections or caveats to the evidence and statements can be beneficial as it indicates caution in the construction of arguments. To take into account alternative views and potential objections and then overcoming them establishes that the argument was constructed responsibly and carries within itself the best reasons for believing the conclusion. These reasons are the essential point of any argument, which applies also to moral arguments.

What is complex about moral arguments?

The first complexity cited in the earlier section is the fact that many premises in moral situations are left implied. There may be several motives that lead to a premise to be implied, such as the fact that the author of the argument regards it as obvious. However, it is important to emphasize that it is not ideal that the premises remain implicit since there is no way to be sure of everything that is being taken for granted in an argument. Leaving an implicit premise may compromise the entire evaluation. And yet, premises that are not left clear can often be a point of disagreement or of the greatest moral controversies.

The evaluation of arguments should always try to make explicit all the possible and necessary premises for the conclusion. The premises must be plausible, and when the author of the argument does not make it clear, and the argument must be reconstructed, we must try to give as much clarity as possible to the premise in relation to the intention of the author of the argument. Distorting an implicit premise is simple and easy to execute and therefore care must be taken for not altering its original intent.

As Vaughn (2015, p. 53) points out, it becomes simpler to identify an implicit premise in a moral argument if we treated it as a deductive argument. Viewing it deductively helps to find implicit assumptions and test their adequacy. Once you know that the argument is valid, you can discuss the certainty of the premises. This discussion is important since the adequateness of an argument also depends on the actuality of its premises.

One way to test the adequacy of the statements is to use counterexamples. For instance, if we make a generalization about a prohibited act, we could think of a situation in which the action is allowed. “Killing is wrong” has its counterexample with the possibility of self-defense, and therefore such a statement is not entirely true and

thus is affected, even needing reformulation. To adapt arguments for their counterexamples makes them better arguments. And also, better moral judgments because they deal with a wider range of actions and consequences.

The assessment of the premises allows then not only to check the argument but often theories and moral principles that embed the premises. Yet, if our purpose was to test an argument, it is not always necessary to go as far as reevaluating a whole moral theory.

But, it is essential to note that the evaluation of moral premises can regress into much broader moral principles and theories. So, the connection of premises with theories and principles can often be much deeper than initially expected. And so, it is relevant that moral beliefs that ground arguments are as consistent as possible.

Another important complexity raised above is the possibility of disagreements on moral issues. These disagreements in a practical context may make it impossible to take a decision or action, reaching a stalemate. The complexity of moral matters makes them often considered relative and opinion-based, and even though moral arguments are often treated scornfully, they are unavoidable. And because they are inevitable, one must try to treat them with the greatest care and rationality.

However, it should be noted that there is much agreement on some moral principles in society, and people even agree with some basic principles such as justice, dignity, and well-being. A great complexity that moral arguments find is that they are not always as clear and direct as one would like, so the choice of principles should, whenever possible, be based on the most self-evident principles, those who need little proof or many explanations (KIRSZNER MANDELL, 2013, p. 592).

However, when “[...] weighing these principles differently or seeing the situation in a different light, they arrive at opposing moral conclusions” (SINNOTT-ARMSTRONG, FOGELIN, 2014). There is still the question of the scope of what they judge morally. For example, even if it is agreed that death is something undesirable, it is possible to disagree on questions of which deaths count as negative and under what circumstances, depending on moral conceptions. And it is also necessary to speak in the circumstances of each case involving a moral issue and its particularities.

To some extent, we visualize moral relativity, in the sense of different societies and even people within the same society diverge on what is good and bad, right and wrong. But this does not mean the non-existence of morality as a whole. The agreement on some moral rules or principles may serve as a starting point for the attainment of

some consensus that will come to govern our judgment, and sequentially, our practical substantial argumentation.

It is also important to keep in mind the distinction that we should not confuse moral statements with practices or attitudes that prevail in a given time. Social practices and acceptance should not govern morality, since they may be liable to unreasonable inclinations and prejudices.

Another complexity is that moral issues have practical implications in people's daily lives, and so we can see ourselves in a position where we are forced to decide about the most appropriate moral development. The same does not necessarily apply to decide factual claims. For example, a parent who receives a call about the inappropriate behavior of the child in school usually would not spend much effort in determining if the action occurred, but whether to punish the child and what punishment apply.

The question becomes even more complex when there is a conflict of values. For example, if the child of the above example had exchanged punches with other colleagues to defend a friend who was bullied. In this way, the father would find himself in conflict over if to punish his son. He may have performed an inappropriate behavior, but on the other hand, he presented a possibly good reason to act.

The critical thing is that considerations can conflict. It is possible to conceive that when there is this confrontation between such antagonistic principles, a deep or fundamental disagreement is reached, in which both possibilities are rationally justifiable, and thus there is a standstill, which may not even be solved by arguments (WALTON, 2009, p.88).

In general, arguments guide us so that the judgments made on moral questions are plausible and rational. These arguments should confront well-defined problems to answer them with what is what we consider moral or not. In making such judgments, to some extent, we use moral standards that are arranged in rules or principles, which are essential to moral argumentation. It is also important to emphasize that moral principles are complex and further need to be tested in the light of evidence and may differ with other considerations.

Reflecting on moral principles, while essential, is not an argument, and it is the step of moral reasoning, in which some moral theory is created or revised. Moral theories offer rules and standards for guidance. These theories focus not on specific actions, but on characteristics that make actions valuable in different ways. Thus, both

theories of values and theories of obligations fall within what we refer here as moral theories.

Testing the adequacy of a premise may need evaluating a whole moral theory or series of principles connected to it. But theories tend not to be exact, and it is not always possible to derive simple principles to be used in arguments without long explanations accompanying them. Likewise, for being theories, it is not always possible to identify the precise scope of what they require in practice, which can generate debates.

Sometimes principles conflict, and can be difficult to justify by themselves, and thus moral theories can serve as a resource to aid in the justification of the choices used. Deliberating on moral issues brings the complex task of questioning principles that we take for ourselves. Consistently we can nurture strong feelings about things we consider moral and good. Thus, moral questions and conflict resolution can often be subject to the preferences and subjectivisms of the people arguing. Even if we speak of rational criteria that must be applied in argumentation we should also observe that:

We offer moral reasons, such as that one must keep a promise, as if they were both basic and rationally compelling; and we talk as if certain moral principles are common knowledge: children are often said to have known that lying is wrong and to have had no excuse for it. We often treat moral considerations as normatively decisive quite apart from the support of self-interest or even the overall well-being of those affected, as where we keep a promise to repay a wealthy creditor even though we think more good would be done were the money given to charity. At other times, as where we try to explain to children why they should not lie or break promises, we may cite facts about the well-being of us all or considerations concerning the aversiveness of being manipulated by lies (AUDI, 2006, p. 148)

But the normative and authoritative status attributed to moral affirmations does not take into account that people may disregard information and propositions that clash against our preferences; or even only consider what we believe. Such a process would hardly be public in some argument. But it can be a real difficulty that brings the need for high critical reasoning in the assessment of the argument, to figure whether the statements are taking into account all relevant evidence available to reach a well-founded conclusion.

An argument that has an incorrect premise or conclusion will not be a good argument. Such argumentative failure is common and even serves for convincing purposes. Some of these bad arguments are known as fallacies and have an extensive literature on how to be identified and evaluated. For our purposes here, it is only

important to keep in mind that the free appeal to emotions in moral argumentation as a substitute for rational premises must count as a fallacy. Using emotions like fear, anger, hatred, among others rather than good reasons is not the purpose of moral argumentation.

Emotions are effective in the daily context to secure quick decisions in uncertain conditions. Reasoning and emotions are both necessary for moral judgements, they are not necessarily divided (MAY; KUMAR, 2018 p. 152). Yet, emotions can contribute for irrationalities - even if not intended. It is common for argumentation theories to assume, from an ideal point of view, that those who are arguing must submit themselves to rational criteria, and it is not denied that this is also important.

However, it is notable we make “[...] erroneous inferences for reasons that go well beyond the employment of fallacious arguments. Rather, inferential mistakes arise from a host of psychological error tendencies (biases)”. (CORREIA, 2012, pp. 224-225, apud THAGARD, 2011, p. 153).

The main position to acknowledge here is that although some arguments may seem correct and properly developed, they may have been constructed under a dubious and even biased perspective. Such a claim contests that an argument based on rules of rationality suffices to prevent irrationalities in argumentation.

Much of the specialized literature on arguments is concerned with imposing rational and argumentative rules to avoid intentional biases, but, it is also necessary to point out that unintended biases can occur in argumentation in general, and in moral argumentation. Thus, biases affect our perspective on lots of issues linked to form an opinion. This process occurs in our reasoning; it can happen even without we noticing it. This means that this biased reasoning can affect the construction of an argument without people being able to tell.

For example, having strong political beliefs on one side may cause us a desire for our belief to be correct, affecting our judgment capacity, focusing only on issues that confirm what we believe. This could lessen the importance of objections against our understandings. It may be possible to say that the reasoning process itself that forms arguments is fallacious since subjects may have moral, political, and social commitments that stand in the way of the standards of rationality expected of an arguer. However, we can still be responsible for what we decide, act and argue, even if we are not aware of the potential bias (WASHINGTON; KELLY, 2016, p. 32)

The acceptance and imposition of logical rules may not be enough to ensure the expected rationality of arguments against such realistic and cognitivist challenges. Even a person who has agreed to conform to the rational rules may be liable to prejudices, without even being aware. We can consider this process as motivated reasoning that presents itself as a great challenge to argumentative theories. Therefore, we should share Correia's propositions for a need of reflection on methods to guarantee the rationality of the argumentative practice.

There are already theoretical proposals in the specialized literature that try to offer adequate answers to the raised complexity, as for example questions of argumentative ethics, ethical standards that must be followed to support the rationality; yet the challenges of motivated reasoning are still open and with solutions underdeveloped.

However, even though there may be several complexities to moral arguments (some of them may even have not been mentioned here), this does not mean that moral argumentation can't be analyzed. Moral arguments are not mere opinions, we can put them in standards of argumentation through schemes and analyze them. This makes it possible to separate good arguments from bad arguments.

Final considerations

In short, moral arguments face two main sources of complexity: as arguments and addressing moral questions. Much of the complexity of moral arguments is in relation to moral disagreements and confusion over implied or incomplete moral statements. Although it is possible to some extent that morality is relative, only using such a statement as a rebuttal does not pass up a sufficient response to a moral argument.

Complexities aside, what can be expected from argumentation theories is that they impose standards that make the construction and evaluation of arguments adequate and believable. The same applies to moral argumentation. There is a need for good reasons, even to refute the morality of another person in an argument or to publicize our chosen course of action.

Evaluating the adequacy of a moral argument in relation to the evidence is essential. The evaluation needs to go through the maximum available evidence that supports what the premise aims to affirm. Most moral arguments will not follow the

models of argumentative schemes previously showed, but this does not mean they are not relevant. After all, they can be useful in testing and reformulating various arguments.

The complexities encountered still demand to be further addressed, moral issues are practical and often we find ourselves in situations that force us to take a stand. So, we must think about how to address such difficulties. Ethical and moral issues are part of everyday life and are inescapable and therefore making the best judgment of them is necessary. Using moral arguments as tools to clarify such issues allows us to make a better judgment, clearing what is being valued and by what standards.

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