

## **Moral intuitions and the reliability challenge**

Intuition-based justification of moral beliefs is common in ordinary reasoning and philosophy. However, the reliability of moral intuitions has been questioned by empirical data showing that moral intuitions are influenced by epistemically defective processes, like irrelevant framing effects (Rehren and Sinnott-Armstrong 2021).

In my talk, I aim to elaborate and discuss a promising strategy in response to the reliability challenge to moral intuitions. In short, the argument is based on three steps: first, moral intuitions come with different levels of strength. Second, the abovementioned empirical evidence shows the unreliability of a weak and unstable type of moral intuition concerning complex moral scenarios (e.g., sacrificial dilemmas). Third, moral reasoners tend to justify beliefs on the basis of strong intuitions (e.g., intuitions about the wrongness of rape), not subject to change under realistic circumstances. Therefore, the argument concludes, moral intuitions of the relevant sort are not vulnerable to irrelevant factors.

According to my reconstruction, this argument makes two main empirical assumptions: first, that moral reasoners accept moral intuitions proportionally to their level of strength (confidence); second, that intuitive confidence is epistemically reliable. While some evidence studying intuitions stability (Zamzow and Nichols 2009, Wright 2013) supports the first claim, the evidence for the second hypothesis does not justify great optimism, according to my review. In particular, it seems that reasoners tend to be overconfident about their intuitions because they rely on misleading “metaheuristics”, such as fluency and familiarity, which can produce an illusion of skillfulness (Kahneman 2011). Moreover, “metaignorance” seems to go hand in hand with ignorance in a large variety of tasks (Dunning 2011). Therefore, as long as intuitionists don’t offer a convincing explanation of why metacognition should be reliable despite counterevidence, they remain exposed to criticisms.

## REFERENCES

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