

TITLE

Non-monotonic logics and modes of argumentation: the case of conditional obligation

ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, argumentation theorists have been increasingly interested in the study of formal logic, and the logical interest in argumentation has also increased. Among the numerous factors that have contributed to this, one might mention the emergence of so-called non-monotonic logics in the late 1980s. Such logics aim to capture a notion of necessity that is contextual, hence providing a more flexible tool for the analysis of argumentative practices. Current research programs in this area tend to fall into three main groups: those focusing on specific argumentative schemes, those dealing with the interface between semantics and pragmatics, and those developing a general theory of how arguments interact.

This dissertation is an attempt to discuss some aspects of these programs. It is also an attempt to appreciate the extent to which deontic logic can be relevant to the study of argumentation. I focus here on the preference-based semantics for conditional obligation as initiated by Hansson and Lewis. The basic idea is to replace the Kripke-type relation of accessibility by a preference relation. I also focus on the notion of remedial interchange that was first introduced by Goffman in the literature on conversational interaction. My emphasis is not on new formal results, but rather on introducing a way of thinking about contrary-to-duty (reparational) obligation that is slightly different from more familiar ones. Close examination reveals that revision has an important role to play, just as aspects of time.

KEY-WORDS

Non-monotonic logic, argumentation, deontic logic, preference-based semantics, conversational interaction, remedial interchange, conditional obligation, contrary-to-duty obligation, temporal logic.

LABORATORY

Centre d'Epistémologie et d'Ergologie Comparative CEPERC - UMR 6059 CNRS
29 av Robert Schumann, 13621 Aix-en-Provence, France