

ABSTRACT

„Normativity of moral intuitions in social intuitionist model”

Starting point of this paper are results of research made by moral psychologists in recent two decades concerning making moral judgments, especially these delivered by social intuitionists. They claim that most of our moral judgments are rather effects of our intuitions than reasoning. However, moral intuitions are not understood here, like e.g. in ethical intuitionism, as some a priori truths, which can be discovered by mysterious sense called intuition. Contemporary cognitive psychology tells us that moral intuitions are just sort of „judgments, solutions, and ideas that pop into consciousness without our being aware of the mental processes that led to them” (J. Haidt, „The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment”, 2001). What is more, there are good reasons to think that some (or even most) of them are heuristics, i.e. „mental short-cuts or rules of thumb that generally work well in common circumstances but also lead to systematic errors in unusual situations” (W. Sinnott-Armstrong and colleagues, „Moral intuitions”, 2010).

One of the most important problems with such account is a question if social intuitionist model is only descriptive or maybe also normative, i.e. moral intuitions give us appropriate reason for action. On the one hand, if intuitions are so often basis for our moral judgments, if it is hard to change or abandon them, if they are bedrocks of disagreement in our discussions, they seem to have great normative strength, not only for common people but also for philosophers. For instance, Thomas Nagel once wrote „I believe one should trust problems over solutions, intuition over arguments”. On the other hand, if social intuitionist theory says that our moral judgments are grounded in moral intuitions, it is only descriptive claim. Statement that we should act according to them would meet the „is/ought problem”. We cannot justify our moral obligations according to the facts about making moral judgments.

In this paper, I will use R. M. Hare's theory of two levels of moral thinking to defend thesis that moral intuitions are normative to some extent, in specific way. They are normative in a sense that if we want to have an effective method for making moral judgments, it is sometimes rational, to follow them. R. M. Hare claims that there are two levels of moral thinking, intuitive and critical. On the first one, there are *prima facie* rules, which are used in common cases from everyday life and are acquired in the process of upbringing and education. Or, I believe, can be the results of our unconscious mental processes. When intuitions conflict, we need to use critical thinking from the “higher” level of moral thinking to reconcile them. But they are still the best guides in given circumstances, “fast and frugal”. That is why, we have reason to believe they are to some extent

normative.