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Reply to my Commentator - Kraus

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University of Tübingen

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Reply to my Commentator

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1. INTRODUCTION

I highly appreciate Professor Amossy's very pertinent comments. The points she addresses are exactly those points I felt uneasy about myself when writing the paper. Hence I basically grant her all her suggestions.

2. UBIQUITY OF CULTURE

Amossy is right in pointing out that any argumentation is a cultural process. If one adopts a definition of culture as broad as the one I have, there is indeed a risk that in the end every argument will be found culture sensitive. Counter-examples will be called for. Arguments such as "John should be at home, since there is light in his apartment" or "You will get wet, since it is raining outside" may perhaps qualify as culture-independent. Audience is certainly pivotal, yet I still wonder if it is not possible to define cultural sensitivity independently of particular applications (just as a password will be case sensitive, whether or not typed correctly; if not, it will fail; knowing about its sensitivity will send a warning to the user).

In discussion, it was asked if one should not differentiate between culture and ideology (George W. Bush's ideology not being representative of American culture). This may be true, but, if political ideas are to be incorporated, drawing the borderline will be difficult. After all, since various cultural subgroups may exist within major communities, it might still be maintained that Bush's ideas are, say, part of right-wing religious American Republican 'culture.'

3. PREMISES AND ARGUMENT PATTERNS

Amossy wonders whether I have not focused too much on premises and underrated the possibility of culture-dependent argument patterns (such as authority arguments). I had indeed deliberated such an approach, but, apart from the fact that argument patterns might also be formulated as premises or warrants ("Whatever is stated by a person of high expertise can be taken as correct"), I was in the end doubtful if there really were any argument patterns exclusively characteristic of e.g. totalitarian regimes or primitive

societies; Rather, in such communities particular relative strength is attributed to certain argument types that may be all but irrelevant elsewhere (cf. the Mount Uluru argument).

4. POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND DEEP DISAGREEMENT

Political correctness must not be allowed to stifle argumentation. All argumentation starts from dissent, but needs common ground to advance. In cases of radical cultural difference, there is no such common ground. In such cases of deep disagreement on the argumentative side only polemical dispute (yet no argumentation) will be possible. Amossy rightly refers to Angenot. Yet respect of radical cultural diversity is also a positive value political correctness compels us to observe. If this is so, we must live with deep disagreements (see Fogelin 1985, Feldman 2005). Yet if no cultural community must be offended either, this creates an impasse.

[Link to commentary](#)

[Link to paper](#)

REFERENCES

- Feldman, R. (2005). Deep disagreement, rational resolutions, and critical thinking. *Informal Logic* 25, 13-23.
Fogelin, R. (1985). The logic of deep disagreements. *Informal Logic* 7, 1-8.