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Argumentation Theory for Explainable Artificial Intelligence - Finding Optimal Methodologies for Explaining Decision Processes

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***Abstract*—This paper's purpose is to investigate Argumentation Theory in Explainable Artificial Intelligence(XAI) and determine the optimal way to determine how an AI agent can come to a conclusion with given inputs. In this paper I will be exploring research in the field of Argumentation Theory in relation to XAI. The overall focus of this paper is to understand Argumentation Theory and to explore its applications in Artificial Intelligence to determine how to optimally explain an Artificial Intelligence's decision process. I will also be reviewing literature related to the field by way of research papers and examining their impact on the field and discussing their contents. In addition I will also discuss ongoing research in this field and examining the impact it may have on the field of XAI.**

I. Introduction

Before we delve into the uses, applications, and current research in the field of Argumentation Theory in XAI we must first understand what is XAI and what is Argumentation Theory. If you are already familiar with these fields and the basic theoretical concepts this introduction can be skipped if not I encourage you to read the Introduction to get the most out of this paper.

A. What is XAI(Explainable Artificial Intelligence) & Why Is It Important?

Explainable Artificial Intelligence is a field of study which is dedicated to understanding an AI Agents decision process and why and how it came to a conclusion[6]. Explainable AI can be used to reduce / eliminate biased, verify if a data-set or algorithm is biased in some way, and ensure an objective agent[7]. Bias in the field of Artificial Intelligence can cause a lot of real-world problems and exacerbate existing problems such as racism, sexism(both misandry and misogyny) and other forms of discrimination[8].
It is for the above reasons that this field of study is vital to the continued development and progress of Explainable Artificial Intelligence. Since the field of Artificial Intelligence is still in it's infancy we must take pre-cautions as researchers to ensure that the Artificial Intelligence we develop is as unbiased as possible to prevent harmful effects on society.

B. Acronyms Used In This Paper

- XAI - Explainable Artificial Intelligence
- AF - Argumentation Framework
- DT - Decision Trees
- ML - Machine Learning

C. What is Argumentation Theory

1) Explaining The Field of Argumentation Theory: Argumentation theory is essentially the study of what makes an argument correct. The field of Argumentation Theory can be summed up in the following questions:

- what makes this statement true?
- and what makes this statement false?

The field is nothing new in fact it dates back to Ancient Greece[11] and it has been studied extensively ever since then. The field is not only useful to Artificial Intelligence but also to Psychology and Philosophy.

2) Possible Applications of Argumentation Theory In AI: There is much to gain by understanding the field of Argumentation Theory as we could train Artificial Intelligence to say measure the degree of truth in a Politicians claim, or determine whether a Defendant or Prosecutor in a court is basing their arguments on unsound logic, or determine biased in a News article based on the language used or possibly the fallacies incurred in the article.
By training an Artificial Intelligent Agent to do this we are essentially creating a truly unbiased observer(assuming the programmers are unbiased, and the data-set used to train the model contains no bias) which will yield incredible ramifications for numerous professions(lawyers,journalists,psychologists etc) and for the way we interpret what is true and what is false.

3) Types of Arguments: There are a few different types of arguments which we will need to understand before delving further into Argumentation Theory in XAI, I will list and summarize the types of arguments below:

1) **Deduction** - The conclusion is true only if the premises are true
   Example: Married men wear rings, Bob is wearing a ring, therefore bob is married.
2) **Induction** - Arguments based on repeated observations which are observed in future instances
   Example: I have seen numerous crimes in New York, there must be a lot of crime in New York
3) **Abduction** - This argument is based on observation but is backed up with relatively few facts
   Example: My team won the game because I performed my half-time ritual.
4) **Analogy** - If two arguments are similar then what is true about one argument is true about the other, this argument works by comparing two similar things.
   Example: Like Earth, Mars is also in the Milky Way Galaxy
5) **Fallacies** These are arguments that appear legitimate but are based on unsound reasoning, there are many fallacies but for our example I will use the much loved and ubiquitous Ad-Hominem which is used to attack an opponent whether than their argument.
   Example: X has terrible hair therefore whatever he says cannot be true.

[10] Now that we are familiar with the basics of argument types and of Argumentation Theory we can now explore it's applications in the field of XAI.

II. Literature Review

In this section of the paper I will be reviewing papers which pertain to Argumentation Theory in Explainable Artificial Intelligence. This section will cover the following papers:

1) Argumentation Theory: A Very Short Introduction - Covers what Argumentation Theory is and how arguments are formulated. This is essential when discussing explainable AI as the foundations of argumentation theory are necessary to consider when explaining how an AI will deduce conclusions from premises.
2) Argumentative XAI: A Survey - This paper is concerned with creating argumentative models yielding a better explanation of how a model derives it's conclusions. The survey aims to provide an overview of XAI approaches using methods from computational argumentation. The survey also covers various models based on argumentation theory and also covers some argumentation frameworks.
3) Argumentation Theoretical Frameworks for Explainable Artificial Intelligence - Covers frameworks based around Argumentation Theory for uses in Artificial Intelligence

A. Argumentation Theory: A Very Short Introduction

This paper provides an overall introduction to the field of Argumentation Theory and mentions it's applications in Artificial Intelligence, the author suggests that Artificial Intelligence could become useful in legal reasoning and multi-agent systems[12]. The paper opens with a brief introduction to the field of Argumentation Theory & it's history, then in the second section the author describes four tasks undertaken in argumentation which are:

1) Identification
2) Analysis
3) Evaluation
4) & Invention

To program an AI agent to deduce reason it is imperative that we first understand what an argument is composed of, and what makes an argument correct. I have decided to explain each of these tasks in detail and to give examples where possible, the paper discussed did not include examples of each stage of the argument process in detail, but did include an example of an argument using the above methods.
The first task undertaken in argumentation is identification, this step involves identifying the premises of which your argument is based upon and also to derive a conclusion from the premises. For example I may identify an argument based on the below premises:

1) All men are fallible
2) Socrates is a man
3) Therefore Socrates is fallible

All men are fallible and Socrates is a man constitute the premises of this example argument, the conclusion is derived from these premises. The conclusion is dependent on the premises and the premises must be true for the conclusion to be true.
The next task of analysis entails finding implicit premises or conclusions within an argument to deem the argument to be true or false. For example you find yourself walking into an employees only area and an employee says "Sorry sir this area is for employees only" - in this case the implicit premise would be you're not an employee and the implicit premise would be you shouldn't be in this area.
The next task of evaluation is performed by reviewing the premises of the argument and looking for any form of fallacy or unsound logic, fallacies mentioned in the introduction give an example of a few types of unsound reasoning.
The final task of invention is performed by using previous knowledge of correct arguments to create new arguments which are deemed correct.[3]
The author goes onto describe various methodologies for argument attacking and refutation, argumentation schemes, types of dialog & fallacies. Despite there only being a passing mention of Artificial Intelligence in this paper it is vital to understand the theory of Argumentation before beginning to implement it into a machine.
This paper is essential for Argumentation Theory in Explainable AI as it defines what makes an argument correct,

what is a fallacy, what are the tasks required in order to compose an argument, each of these questions will not only help us program an Artificial Intelligence to logically deduce conclusions from premises but also explain how it deduced a conclusion from premises.

B. Argumentative XAI: A Survey

The paper's introduction opens with a brief explanation of what explainable artificial intelligence is and why it's important[1]. The introduction also covers the paper's main objective which is to "provide a comprehensive survey of literature in XAI viewing explanations as argumentative". Viewing XAIs explanations as argumentative is very useful to social scientists the paper goes onto say, due to the explanations then mimicking arguments in human interaction and communication.

The introduction also discusses argumentation frameworks which are used to understand how an AI has reached it's conclusion based on given input data. This survey the authors are conducting explicitly focuses on argumentative approaches and provides an emphasis on existing solutions for XAI using forms of computational arguments.

The authors close the introduction with an overview of argumentation frameworks. Argumentation Frameworks are used to determine why an AI has come to certain conclusions, they are useful as they include ways to specify arguments and determine relationships between arguments as well as providing judgements on if the argument is sound or not. The authors go onto list what they will be discussing in this paper which I will list below:

1) Overview of literature on Argumentation Frameworks
2) Prevalent forms in which Argumentation Framework's explanations are presented after being drawn from the framework
3) Roadmap of future work in Argumentation Frameworks

This ends the intro and we are introduced to the next section which will cover what argumentation frameworks are and how they are designed.

The authors provide a high level over view of argumentation frameworks in this section. The author's provide a definition of many different types of frameworks which I will cover in the list below:

- The first framework we are introduced to is Abstract Argumentation first proposed by Dung[5] This framework utilizes a pair $< A, R >$ where A is a set of arguments and R is a binary relation on our set of arguments A which will determine attack relations between the arguments. This framework is also covered in the next paper I will review entitled: Argumentation Theoretical Frameworks for Explainable Artificial Intelligence.
- The next framework discussed is Bipolar Argumentation - this framework adds the following dialectical version of support: $(R^{+} \subseteq Args * Args)$ essentially we are defining how we can deem an argument correct by determining which set it belongs to.
- Support Argumentation (SA) frameworks used to value arguments based on dialectical strength and can be equipped with generalized semantics.
- Quantitative Bipolar Argumentation(QBA) works by ascribing values to an argument and judging it's "intrinsic strength"
- Tripolar Argumentation(TA) which utilizes a neutralizing relation which pushes the arguments strength towards a neutral value.
- Generalised Argumentation - in theory this framework can use any number of dialectical relationships
- And Abstract Dialectical Frameworks(ADF) allows for generalised notions of dialectical relationships and and semantics in which the user gives the acceptance criteria.

after the overview provided by the authors of commonly used Argumentation Frameworks we then move onto the next section which will cover the types of argumentative explanations. There are two main types of AF Based Explanations being reviewed in this paper these are:

1) Intrinsic - Which are AF Based Explanations that natively use argumentation techniques
2) And post-hoc - these are AF Based Explanations are which are obtained from non-argumentative models, these types of AF Based Explanations are further broken down into complete or approximate depending on the model.

The term model used in these definitions can represent a variety of different AI models. After explaining the terms needed the authors then go on to show an example of intrinsic and post-hoc models. The main difference between these two models is that the intrinsic model greatly represents how we as humans argue, whereas the post-hoc model is more graph theory based in that it uses weighted graph to determine it's output. The main difference between the two types of post-hoc model Complete and Approximate is that approximate based post-hoc models rely on incomplete mappings between the model being explained and the Argumentation Framework.

Complete post hoc AF Based Explanations are useful for:

- Decision Making
- Planning
- Knowledge Based Systems
- Scheduling
- Logic Programming

Approximate AF Based Explanations are useful in these fields:

- Classification Based Models
- Probabilistic Based Models
- Planning Based Models

The next section Forms of AF-Based Explanations the authors discuss how arguments are structured. The authors explain that a common approach when explaining Argumentation Frameworks is to analyze dialetical relations to determine a given arguments status as either true or false. Some Argumentation Frameworks can be understood as graphs we can further break these down into sub-graphs and analyze when these sub-graphs determine when an argument is true or false. There exists a

structure known as dispute trees which were first discussed in Dung, Mancarella & Toni's paper entitled "Computing ideal sceptical argumentation" [4] and he explains them as follows: "In general, dispute trees can be seen as a way of generating a winning strategy for a proponent to win a dispute against an opponent." Essentially dispute trees are a way to determine how best to win an argument against an opponent. Dispute trees are very useful in providing accurate explanations or as the authors of the paper put it "often carry theoretical guarantees towards desirable properties of explanations".
There is also another way explain an Argumentation Framework which the authors discuss in this section this method is called dialogue and is treated like a game whereby "participants engage in structured, rule-guided, goal-oriented exchange". The one other method mentioned by the authors related to AF explain-ability is conducted by examining the change in an AF that would change the argument's acceptability status.
In the next section the authors present a "Roadmap for Argumentative XAI" this section identifies some gaps in the field, and discusses opportunities for future research. The authors also focus on the following areas in this section "the need to devote more attention to properties of AF-based explanations; computational aspects of AF-based explanations; and broadening both applications and the scope of AF-based explanations." The authors encourage readers to pay more attention to the properties of an Argumentation-Framework Based Explanations and discuss how they are often neglected in research. The authors have provided a number of sources to show they are not alone in this opinion.
The authors also discuss Computational Aspects and argue that to "To effectively support XAI solutions, AF-based explanations need to be efficiently computable." For intrinsic systems the authors suggest that "efficient systems for the relevant reasoning tasks and a good understanding of the computational complexity thereof" be utilized when explaining intrinsic systems. For post-hoc systems the authors argue that the Argumentation Frameworks should be extracted from the model prior to the Argumentation Framework based explanations. The authors end this section by saying "For all types of AF-based explanations, further consideration must be given to the extraction task, of explanations of various formats from AFs." & ". In general, however, computational issues in AF-based explanations require a more systematic investigation both in terms of underpinning reasoning tasks and explanation extraction".
The final topic the authors discuss is "Extending applications and the scope of explanations" this section covers further development into AF-Based Explanations and the uses that can be derived from said development. The authors discuss how the Machine Learning space could benefit from XAI although it some ML algorithms in a loose sense have dialectical roots. They go on to discuss Argumentation Theory could be applied to Machine Learning to stimulate further research into the field of Argumentation Theory in relation to XAI. According to the authors the analysis of dialectics is often ignored much to the detriment of the field of XAI. The authors end the section by saying that it would be of interest to determine if logic based explanations which would either be model specific or agnostic could be understood in terms of Argumentation Framework based explanations and they go on to make a case for the use of counterfactual explanations(determines the change of output by allowing for hypothetical inputs) in XAI and determining the AIs decision process.
In the final section the authors list their conclusions from their research. They mention the topics discussed in this paper mentioning Argumentation Frameworks, AF based explanations, and they end the paper by saying they hope the information will be beneficial to the AI research community.

C. Argumentation Theoretical Frameworks for Explainable Artificial Intelligence

In this paper four important argumentation theoretical frameworks are discussed and analyzed. In the introduction the authors provide an explanation of XAI as well as reasons why it is needed[2], the main reason cited being the EU Data Protection law GDPR[9] which defines appropriate data practices, rules and regulations.
The introduction then goes onto explain the three phases of explaining an Artificial Intelligence system which are:

1) explanation generation - this phase concerns understanding the AI agent and how it comes to it's conclusion.
2) explanation communication - this phase is concerned with communicating the explanation of the decision process to others.
3) & explanation reception - the final phase is concerned with how well the explanation is received and understood by the end user.

System Centred XAI is focused on the first phase, there are two main types of systems black box systems(based on deep learning, the exact internal workings are not known) and white box systems(which are generally rules based or based on decision trees, we can determine the internal workings of these systems). whereas user centered systems are focused on phases 2 and 3 and are concerned with user interaction and experience, the ultimate goal is to integrate the user into the AI's decision making process.
The first framework we are introduced to in this paper is called "Abstract Argumentation Framework" Which was defined by Dung in 1995[5]. This framework utilizes a pair $< A, R >$ where A is a set of arguments and R is a binary relation on our set of arguments A which will determine attack relations between the arguments. The arguments within the pair have no structure and are atomic(singular). This framework allows generalization and is independent of the internal structure of the arguments. By utilizing this framework the authors suggest that the argumentation model can be used across specific problems. Using this framework also allows us to formalize underpinning explanations in black-box systems.
Black box models have three types of data which can be classified as:

1) Input - What data we give the model

2) Output - The model's output
3) & Intermediate Symbols - What the model generates while learning - e.g: the outputs of various neurons

According to the authors there are many different routes we could take when explaining this system. To start with we could build a decision tree as a starting step to explain the model. The first step in this approach would be to use a classification algorithm over the input data the authors suggest an algorithm such as ID3. This algorithm will then take the input data and the output classes as a table and would extract arguments from the decision tree generated from ID3.
We could then determine how the model would make choices when classifying objects and what arguments would lead said model to determine that a particular instance of an object belonged to a certain class and how certain arguments would lead an item being classed as C_i instead of C_j as per the authors example in the paper. We can also see how arguments relate to each other and how some support or detract from others.
The next section in this paper covers dialogue theory. This relates strongly to the argumentation methods I have mentioned in the introduction of this paper as it covers how we(and of course our model) are persuaded through discussion and discourse and determine our conclusions based on premises which are determined to be true. During a dialogue our goal is to persuade another individual by means defined in the introduction(deduction / induction among other methods).
The authors discuss how argumentation dialogues can be used to query black-box models on their Intermediate Symbols(symbols generated by the model during learning). We can further delve into the "mind" of the system and determine how it came to it's conclusion by using retrograde analysis, that is thinking backwards, and analyzing the input, and intermediary symbols which led to the system classifying the input as C_i or C_j.
In the example the authors give one may ask "Why was this parole granted?" and the system may generate a response such as "there are no prior violations of parole". It is in this way we can gain a deeper understanding of the system and how it came to it's conclusion, by analyzing intermediary symbols we may create a decision tree of why certain inputs result in the model classifying them in a certain way, for example a man with multiple criminal convictions may be always denied a loan because of those convictions, we can then define a rule in a decision based tree that if the applicant has multiple convictions then the model will always deny them a loan.
In the next section the authors discuss The Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation which is designed to analyze and evaluate argumentation in communication. In the Pragma-Dialectic Theory argumentation is considered as an array of speech acts which is both complex and interlinked with the purpose of creating a critical-discussion. The idealized discussion is broken into four stages which are:

1) The confrontation stage - This stage is defined by recognising a difference in opinion which is the first step leading into the argument.
2) The opening stage - This stage involves confronting and understanding a fallacy in a persons argument or recognizing untrue premises. In the introduction to this paper I discussed various types of arguments and what defines them as well as some common fallacies.
3) The argumentation stage - This stage is concerned with convincing the other person that you are correct and they are wrong which is typically achieved by analyzing their premises and finding issues with them and using supporting arguments which back your argument.
4) & The conclusion stage - as spoken in the intro to this paper the conclusion is derived from premises of the argument which are deemed to be true.

In user-centered XAI Pragma-Dialectical Theory allows the system to communicate an explanation for it's conclusion at different stages of the argumentation process, thus increasing the end-users understanding of the AIs behaviour. By using this framework we can determine whether an AIs behaviour and explanation of it's internal workings is suited to the end-user's goals in using the AI.
After covering The Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation the authors then introduce a new argumentation framework called "Inference Anchoring Theory". This framework is used for modelling argumentation and reasoning in natural language. From this framework we can link inferential structures to dialogical processes, an example of this would be the following:

1) This cancer is classified as benign
2) why benign?
3) Because the area has not exceeded X which correlates heavily with previous instances of benign cancer

Here we see that this framework is essentially a dialogue in which the user asks a question regarding the model's classification and is given a clear explanation. In this way the framework allows the end-user to further understand the model's conclusion(Output) given it's premises(Input data).
We then move on to the final section of the paper which covers discussion and future work. The authors discuss how the previously described frameworks are extremely useful in explaining the decision making processes of the AI in both System-Centred AI and User-Centered AI Systems. The authors then go on to discuss the use of argumentation frameworks in multi-agent recommendation systems and how such frameworks would be useful in generating consensus between all agents and justifying why certain products were recommended to the end-user, this would be considered an example of a System-Centred AI. The authors also discuss the uses in user-centred AI by discussing how Argumentation Frameworks can be used to gain insights into a social media user's reasoning and beliefs, this can then be used to model an AI tailored to that particular user.
In closing the authors recommend that we build upon pre-existing argumentation frameworks discussed in the paper when designing AI to create robust and accurate methodolo-

gies for Explainable Artificial Intelligence systems.

III. Comparison of Literature Review

Name of Paper	Subject	Authors	Summary
Argumentation Theory: A Very Short Introduction	Basics Argumentation Theory	Douglas Walton	Provides a descriptive overview of the field of Argumentation Theory - not strictly related to XAI but does mention it in passing, it is important to understand the basics of the field before using it to examine an AIs decision processes.
Argumentative XAI: A Survey	Surveys the current state of the field of Argumentative XAI and innovations related to it.	Cyras & others	This paper discusses important research into the field of XAI and innovations made in the field. The paper also provides an overview of how to apply XAI methods to explain an AIs decision processes. The paper covers numerous topics such as Argumentation Frameworks and AF based explanations for decision processes.
Argumentation Theoretical Frameworks for Explainable Artificial Intelligence	Use of Theoretical Argumentation in XAI	Demollin & Others	Provides an overview of the use of theoretical Argumentation Frameworks in XAI to explain decision Processes of an AI agent. This paper also lists commonly used methods to explain an AIs decision processes, there is some overlap between this paper and Argumentative XAI: A Survey as both mention AF frameworks.

TABLE I
Literature Review Summary / Comparison Table

The above comparison table shows the paper's I have reviewed and a brief summary of them. The first paper entitled "Argumentation Theory: A Very Short Introduction" provides a brief introduction to the field of Argumentation Theory, it mentions Artificial Intelligence in passing but I have decided to include it in this paper nonetheless as it provides vital information on understanding Argumentation.
The next paper I chose to review entitled "Argumentative XAI: A Survey" was included in this literature review as it offers an overview of methodologies that are used to examine an Artificial Intelligence's decision processes as well as providing topics for future research and detailing possible methods to try when explaining an AIs decision process.
The final Paper I have chosen to review is entitled "Argumentation Theoretical Frame-works for Explainable Artificial Intelligence" this paper discusses the use of Argumentation Frameworks for XAI to provide a framework to map an AIs decision process and was included in this paper to further discuss the uses of Argumentation Frameworks. There is some overlap between this paper and "Argumentative XAI: A Survey" but it expands on many topics related to Argumentation Frameworks.

IV. Future Work

In this section I will provide a brief overview of work still left to be done in the field of Argumentation Theory for XAI. The field of Argumentation Theory in regards to it's applications in XAI is still in it's infancy(although the field of Argumentation Theory is very old and dates back to Ancient Greece[11]) and as it evolves we will see more and more improvements in both the accuracy and objectiveness in Artificial Intelligence. The use of Theoretical Frameworks as discussed in the Papers Argumentative XAI: A Survey & Argumentation Theoretical Frameworks for Explainable Artificial Intelligence Use of Theoretical Argumentation in XAI offer many new insights and research areas to explore which can lead to fruitful results in improving the understanding of a model's decision making processes.

V. Conclusion

From conducting this research I have found that their are many different ways both model agnostic and model dependent to determine and explain an Artificial Intelligence's decision process. The field of Argumentation Theory for Explainable Artificial Intelligence is both fascinating and exciting as it offers numerous ways to further understand what is going on behind the scenes in an Artificial Intelligence's decision making process. By using the many methods described in the paper's reviewed we can come to understand the conclusions the AI has come to when given certain inputs. The importance of XAI for Argumentation Theory cannot be understated as it can determine implicit biases in the AI and in our own minds. Research into this field can prevent various forms of racism, misandry, misogyny in Artificially Intelligent Agents and can also lead to more accurate Artificial Intelligence as if we can understand the Decision Process we can see more clearly how the AI came to the wrong or right conclusion when given certain premises.
In conclusion I strongly encourage others to research this field and analyze the impact it may have on our everyday lives as if it is neglected then we run the risk of creating Artificial Intelligence which mirrors or own biases and is not objective.

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