

Necessary v. Sufficient Conditions



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The Infanticide Argument

Fact (1):
Abortion deprives
the fetus of life.

Abortion is
legitimate.

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*Intermediate
conclusion:* Infants do
not have the right to life.

*Intermediate
conclusion:* Fetuses do
not have the right to life.

The moral status of an infant is
equivalent to that of a fetus *in the sense that both*
lack the right to life.

Assumption (2): A human (adult, fetus, infant) is harmed by being deprived of life *only if* it is capable of making aims about its future life.

Fact (2): An infant cannot make any aims about its future life

Intermediate conclusion: An infant who is deprived of life is not harmed.

Assumption (1): A human (adult, fetus, infant) has the right to X *only if* being deprived of X causes harm to the human.

Intermediate conclusion: Infants do not have the right to life.

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Example of a Bad Graphical Argument Reconstruction

Assumption (1): A human (adult, fetus, infant) has the right to X *only if* being deprived of X causes harm to the human.

Assumption (2): A human (adult, fetus, infant) is harmed by being deprived of life *only if* it is capable of making aims about one's future life.

Fact: An infant cannot make any any aims about future life

The moral status of an infant is **equivalent** to that of a fetus *in the sense that both lack the right to life.*

Why Is the Previous Graphical Argument Reconstruction Bad?

- ❖ The conclusion of the argument talks about both fetuses and infants, but the premises in the reconstruction are only about infants.
- ❖ Many steps in the reasoning are not made explicit, so the reconstruction isn't any clearer than the written argument.

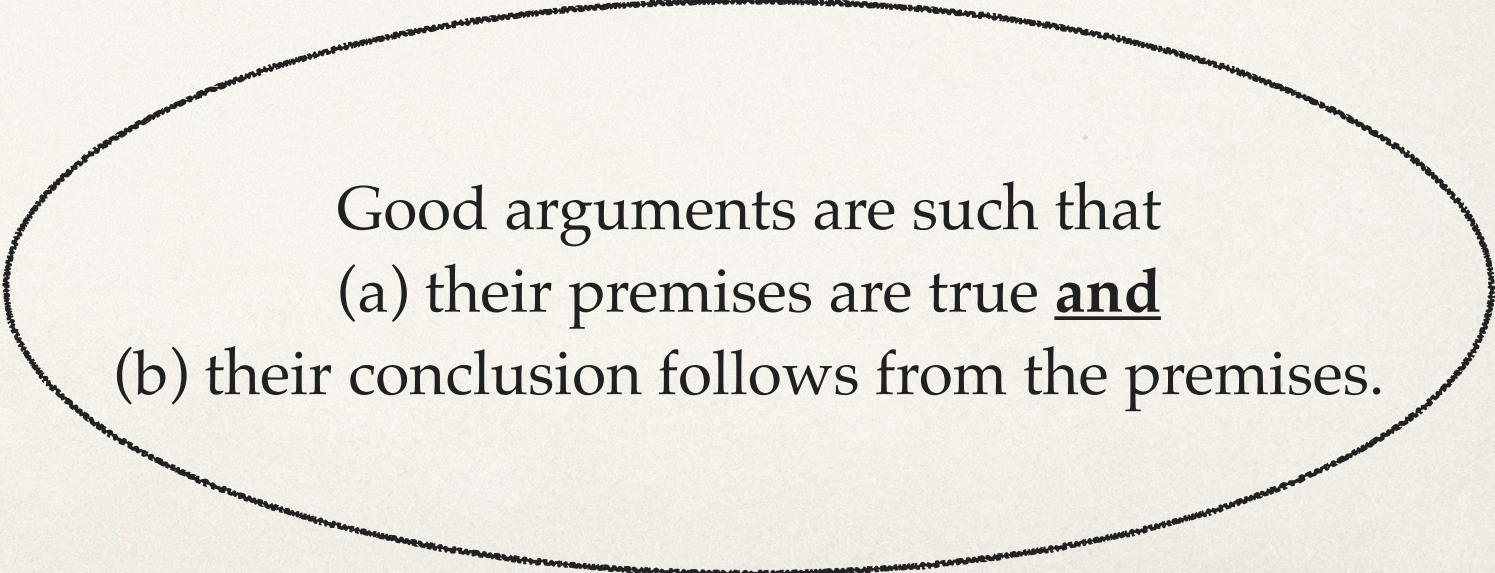
Many Graphical Reconstructions of the Argument Are Possible...

But graphical reconstructions should at least *make the argument clearer* than the actual written argument

Key Points in the Infanticide Argument

- Infants and fetuses are equivalent in the sense that they both lack the right to life
 - Fetuses have no right to life insofar as abortion is permitted and justified
 - Infants have no right to life either. Why?
 - The right to X has to do with being harmed while being deprived of X
 - Infants are not harmed when they are deprived of life. Why?
 - One is harmed in being deprived of one's life *only if* one can make aims about one's future life
 - Infants cannot make aims about their future life

You Now Decide Whether the Infanticide Argument Is Good or Bad



Good arguments are such that
(a) their premises are true and
(b) their conclusion follows from the premises.

Does the Conclusion Follow from the Premises in the Infanticide Argument?

Yes!

The conclusion follows **deductively** from the premises because it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false. *Check that every step in the argument and verify that.*

An Important Distinction

Necessary condition

Sufficient condition

Necessary or Sufficient Condition?

A human has the right to X *only if* being deprived of X causes harm to the human.

A human has the right to X *if* being deprived of X causes harm to the human.

“being deprived of X caused harm to the human” is a *necessary condition* for “a human has the right right to X”

“being deprived of X caused harm to the human” is a *sufficient condition* for “a human has the right right to X”

(1) What's the Difference?

The baby grows *only if* it eats

“eating food” is a *necessary condition* for “the baby grows”.

But eating food need **not be sufficient** for the baby to grow. The baby might need other things (e.g. healthy environment, protection) in order to grow.

(2) What's the Difference?

The floor gets wet *if* it rains.

“it rains” is a *sufficient condition* for “the floor gets wet”.

But the rain need **not be necessary** for the floor to get wet. The floor could get wet in other ways, for example, by pouring water on it.