Presumptions in argumentation

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CHAPTER 6

Bringing It All Together: Presumption Models, and Conceptual Consequences

Writing long books is a laborious and impoverishing act of foolishness… A better procedure is to pretend that those books already exist and to offer a summary.

—Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths*

Bringing It All Together: Presumption Models, and Conceptual Consequences

Abstract: In this chapter, I summarise the results of previous chapters. On the one hand, we use practical presumptions when we must make decisions under time constraints, but lack epistemic grounds that would favour any particular course of action. On the other hand, we use cognitive presumptions when we accept the most epistemically plausible proposition at face value. First, I construct and present functional models of practical and cognitive presumptions in terms of their (1) basic characterisations, (2) logical functions, (3) pragmatic functions (justifications), (4) deontic functions, (5) dialogical functions, (6) conditions of defeat, and (7) conceptions of strength. Second, I discuss conceptual consequences arising from relevant differences between practical and cognitive presumptions. Insofar as 'presumption' as an "umbrella" term is concerned, I argue in favour of the so-called 'moderate pluralism.'

Keywords: cognitive presumptions, functions, models, pluralism, practical presumptions.

In everyday life, we must often make decisions under time constraints, but without available evidence that would favour any particular course of action. If chances of rain are uncertain when we are about to leave our apartment, should we bring an umbrella? If a person whose presence will ruin our evening may attend a party, should we go? Practical presumptions promote precaution: in conditions of uncertainty, when it is time to decide, we should avoid greater harm unless greater harm is proven unlikely.[175] Simply put, since the inconvenience of bringing an umbrella is less harmful than getting soaked (and potentially becoming ill), we should bring an umbrella unless we know that it won't rain. Thus, in the context of uncertainty and under time pressure, proceeding on "Presumably, it will rain" is a reasonable practical policy.

While *practical* presumptions are common in practical deliberation, *cognitive* presumptions are unavoidable in theoretical reasoning. Whenever we accept the most plausible proposition at face value, we concede a cognitive presumption. In normal circumstances, we accept propositions like "Presumably, the cat is in the tree" based on

175 There are many formulations of the 'precautionary principle,' but theorists agree that "[c]entral to all precautionary approaches is the notion of uncertainty" (Allhoff 2014, p. 119). The notion of epistemic uncertainty, however, is ambiguous. On the one hand, *p* may be uncertain because *p*'s probability is not sufficiently precise ("The chance of rain is 30-60%"). On the other hand, *p* may be uncertain because *p*'s probability is entirely unknown ("The chance of rain has not been estimated") (see Allhoff 2014, p. 110). In this dissertation, I regarded *p* as an epistemically uncertain proposition if the reasonable agent cannot tell—for whatever reason—whether *p* is true or false (given *p*'s justification and a contextually appropriate standard of proof). On this account, *p* can be uncertain even if its probability is known and exact: if we know that the probability of rain is exactly 50%, it still appears reasonable to regard "It will rain" as an uncertain proposition. To my mind, this broader notion of uncertainty does not conflict with how precautionary principles are supposed to operate.

visual observation, "Presumably, the Earth is round" based on scientific evidence, and "Presumably, this street leads to the city centre" based on the testimony of passers-by, unless we obtain proof that these propositions are false/unjustified. In a nutshell, trusting reliable sources at the cost of acquiring some false/unjustified beliefs is less harmful than repeatedly suspending judgment in order to avoid false beliefs. Radical scepticism comes at a high price in everyday cognition, so sticking with cognitive presumptions seems like a reasonable epistemic policy.

How do argumentation theorists model presumptions? What are their dialogical functions? What does their justification look like? Which dialogical patterns do they create? Do they shift the burden of proof? How are they defeated? What determines their strength? In this dissertation, I sought to reconstruct, evaluate, and improve the answers that traditional, judicially inspired accounts of presumption offer in response to these questions. I build upon these theories, and develop an approach with its own characteristic features.

Section 1 and Section 2 summarise the dissertation's dialectical results by systematically presenting the models of practical and cognitive presumptions. Section 3 comments on the linguistic and conceptual issues resulting from the dissertation's typological conclusions, regarding the many differences between practical and cognitive presumptions.

1 Practical Presumption (PP)

1.1 Basic Characterisation of PP

Practical presumptions are propositions with a modifier (qualifier) 'presumably.' "Presumably, *p*" indicates that some proposition *p* is acceptable unless proven otherwise. In a persuasion dialogue, "Presumably, *p*" would entail that the proponent is not obliged to defend her commitment *p* (in the concluding stage), whereas the opponent must give sufficient argument against *p*'s acceptability (before the concluding stage).

In a practical case, "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" expresses an action-oriented commitment: a proposition one proceeds on due to some non-epistemic reason (such as safety, health, protection of rights, etc.). So, despite its epistemic defeasibility, a practical presumption represents a non-epistemic commitment.

The dissertation did not explore the ontological properties of presumptions. Instead, it sought to develop a functional account, and, as far as an ontological description is concerned, treated presumption as a qualified proposition (see Ullmann-Margalit 1983; Hansen 2003; Rescher 2006; Walton 2014; Godden 2017, 2019).[176] Still, we might

176 Arguably, many presumptions' functional properties—e.g., how they influence deliberation or inquiry; how they affect the burden of proof, etc.—can be discussed independently of whether we describe a presumption as a proposition, a belief, a commitment, a qualifier, a relation, a process, or a speech act. On the one hand, such descriptions influence how we speak about presumptions, and, on the other hand, they are relevant for a more fundamental, ontological, inquiry of the nature of presumptions. However, neither linguistic nor ontological features were this dissertation's primary concern.

distinguish between four general aspects of a practical presumptive status, conveyed by the modifier 'presumably$_{(p)}$:' a procedural, a justificatory, a modal, and a deontic aspect.

ASPECTS OF "PRESUMABLY$_{(p)}$"	**PRACTICAL PRESUMPTION** (the Umbrella case)
Procedural aspect	*Primarily a procedural status* Primarily, "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" expresses the agent's commitment to proceed on *p*: in circumstances of uncertainty and pressure, Anne should act as if it will rain, regardless of whether she believes that "It will rain" is true. Most typically, "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" does not express the agent's doxastic commitment (belief).
Justificatory aspect	*Non-epistemic status* Since proceeding on *p* primarily promotes non-epistemic goals, "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" conveys a non-epistemic status: Anne accepts "It will rain" and brings an umbrella because she prefers to remain dry and healthy. However, "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" may have limited epistemic justification, as well.
Modal aspect	*Defeasible status* "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" conveys *p*'s defeasible status: Anne's practical presumption "It will rain" is accepted until proven otherwise.
Deontic aspect	*Dialogically privileged status* "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" indicates that *p* is a dialectically privileged commitment: while the opponent Jim must sufficiently justify his rejection of "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain," Anne has lighter burden of proof (or doesn't carry the burden at all).

Table 1: Practical presumption: four aspects of the 'presumably$_{(p)}$' modifier (the Umbrella case)

1.2 The Logical Function of PP

In logical terms, practical presumptions are portrayed as conclusions of presumptive reasoning. Although scholars sometimes equate presumptions and presumptive rules, this research treated them as conclusions inferred from basic facts. Below, I provide a diagram of the core structure of presumptive practical reasoning by using the Umbrella case.

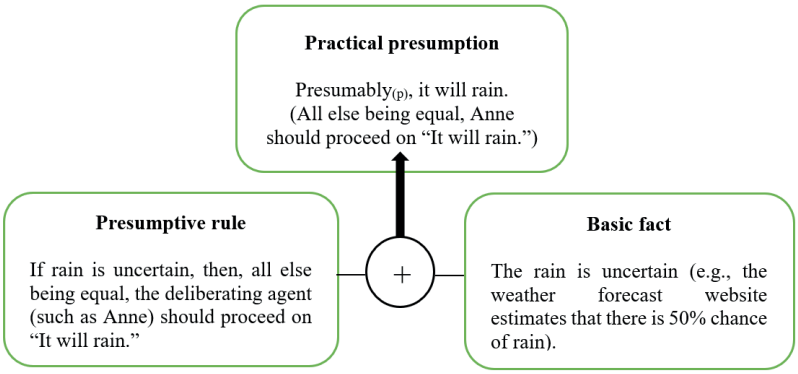

Diagram 1: Presumptive practical reasoning: the core structure (the Umbrella case)

Whether presumption is modelled as a conclusion or a rule of reasoning is not essential for developing a theory of presumption. Regardless of what position the theorist upholds, she will face an identical set of theoretical questions. In either case, she will need to explore the rule's structure, its justification, and the consequence of its application (the conclusion "Presumably, *p*"). Hence, I agree with Walton that picking between a 'conclusion-based' and a 'rule-based' model of presumption depends, for the most part, on the "choice of which language to adopt" (2014, p. 115).

1.3 Justification and the Pragmatic Function of PP

Practical presumptions are closely related to the argument from ignorance. For instance, the legal presumption of innocence is reducible to the argument from ignorance, since its basic fact corresponds to an *ad ignorantiam*'s ignorance premise. That is, the ignorance premise "The prosecutor failed to prove that 'The accused is guilty'" implies that, ultimately, "The accused is guilty" remains uncertain, and, as a result, the accused must be presumed innocent and set free. In the Umbrella case, however, the basic fact (associated with uncertainty) entails the ignorance premise: "There is 50% chance of rain" implies that "It is not proven that it will not rain."[177] The latter ignorance premise, by means of *ad ignorantiam*, supports "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain" and bringing an umbrella.

Our next question is: What justifies a presumptive rule? Why should Anne bring an umbrella if rain is uncertain? Basically, her endorsement of a presumption is motivated by a significant chance of making a mistake. If Anne brings an umbrella, there is a 50% chance of needlessly carrying it around. If she does not bring an umbrella, there is a 50% chance of getting soaked and risking illness. When mistakes are likely and time for

177 In the Umbrella case, we can understand "There is 50% chance of rain" and "Rain is uncertain" as the following conjunction: "It is not proven that it will rain, *and* it is not proven that it will not rain."

deliberation is limited, avoiding costlier errors is a recommended policy. Anne estimates that getting soaked is potentially costlier than needlessly carrying an umbrella because she values health more than convenience. Consequently, she decides to err on the side of safety and follow the presumptive rule "If rain is uncertain, then, all else being equal, proceed on 'It will rain'."

On this view, the so-called *pragmatic function* of practical presumption helps to avoid greater harm in the context of deliberation pressure and genuine (plausibilistic) uncertainty. Below, I provide a diagram of the complete structure of presumptive practical reasoning by using the Umbrella case.

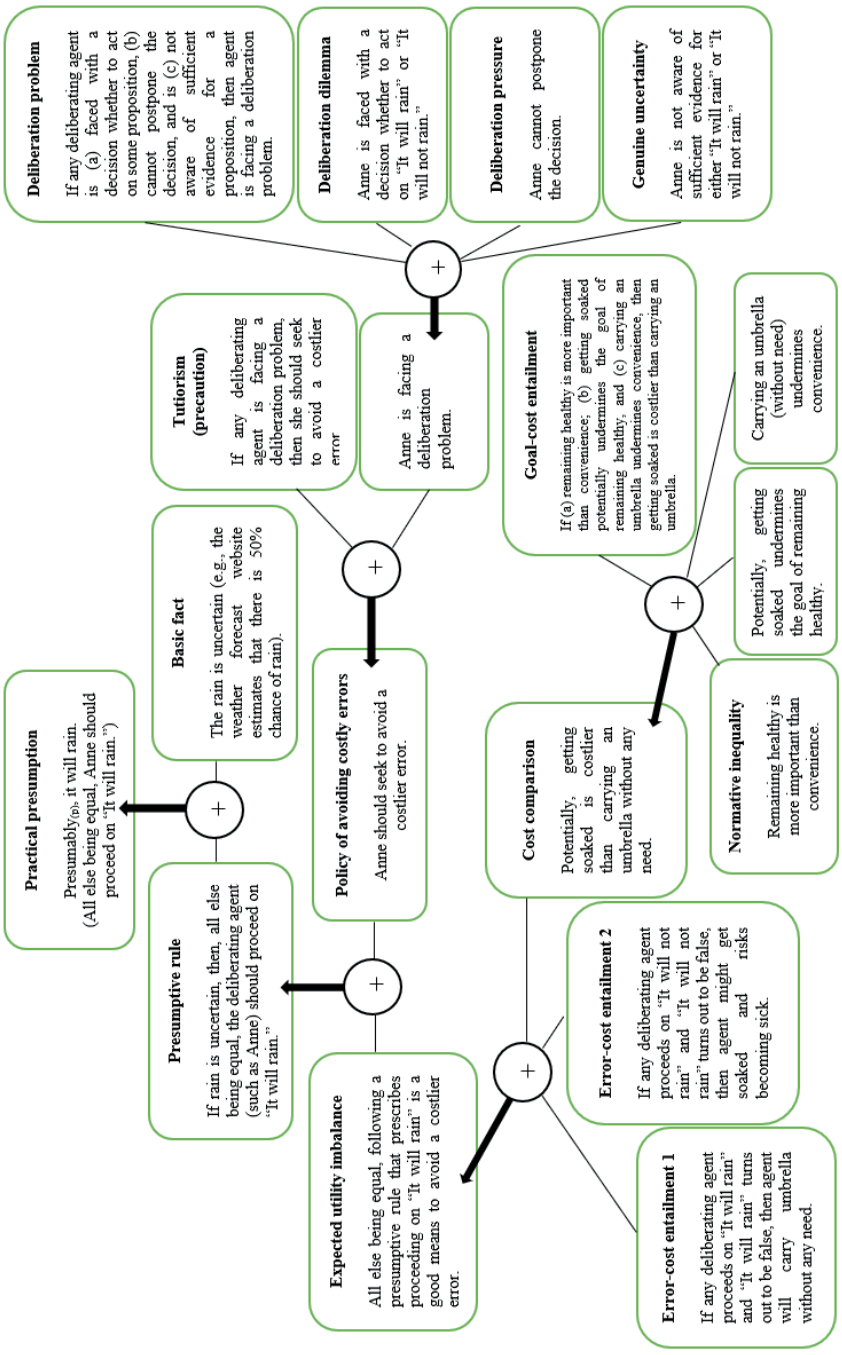

Diagram 2: Presumptive practical reasoning: the complete structure (the Umbrella case)

1.4 Patterns of Interaction and the Deontic Function of PP

How does a practical presumption influence argumentative interaction? Is the presumption's opponent (immediately) obliged to defend his rejection, and is the presumption's proponent exempted from taking up the burden of proof?

In principle, a practical presumption imposes the *burden of reasoning* on its opponent: after rejecting "Presumably$_{(p)}$, p" at t_2, he must either explain or argue for his view at t_3. Since explaining does not aim at persuasion, the opponent can present any reason underlying his view. For instance, Jim may elucidate his denial of "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain" by saying: "The tea leaves tell me that it will not rain." Although this explanation is unacceptable to Anne and thereby dialectically inadequate, explanations should not, in principle, be banned by dialectical rules. However, due to uncertainty and time constraints, Jim is strongly advised to undertake the *burden of proof* and provide arguments consisting of adequate, relevant, and strong reasons (such as "According to the weather forecast, the certainty of rain is only 25%). Persuasive arguments do not waste precious time and may actually affect uncertainty. I illustrate the opponent's permitted, yet suboptimal response with a curved line in the profile below.[178]

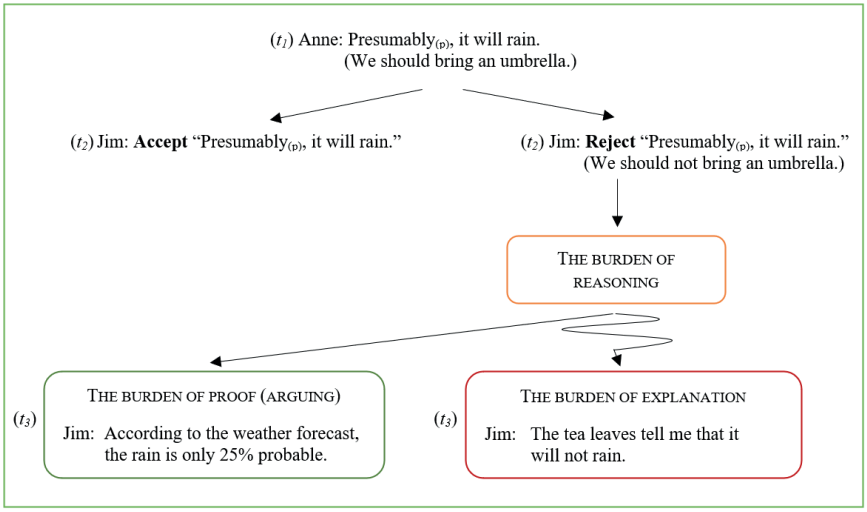

Figure 1: Practical presumption: a profile of a dialogue (the opponent Jim / the Umbrella case)

178 In the following schemes and diagrams, the colour green (e.g., green box) indicates a permitted move that is entirely legitimate—usually optimal—in the dialogical conditions at hand. Likewise, the colour orange (e.g., orange box) signals a permitted move that, although suboptimal, is quite reasonable in the conditions at hand. Finally, the colour red (e.g., red box) indicates a contribution that, although permitted in principle, is typically unconstructive or is even destructive, in particular dialogical circumstances.

By deciding to argue at t_3, Jim assumes the *burden of production*: in order to avoid unsupported claims and do what is necessary to win the debate, Jim must produce an adequate and relevant argument. Although offering a convincing argument is optimal, Jim is also permitted, at t_3 and at the beginning of the argumentation stage, to provide some minor argument to get things going (e.g., "We should not bring an umbrella because, according to the weather forecast, the rain is only 45% likely").

However, Jim also assumes the *burden of persuasion*. This burden is allocated in the opening stage, influences the interaction in the argumentation stage, and is evaluated in the concluding stage. First, the burden of persuasion specifies the standard of proof that Jim's arguments must meet in order to successfully justify "We should not bring an umbrella". For instance, Jim may be required to prove that rain is less than 40% likely. Second, the burden of persuasion implies that the party who carries it loses the discussion if her arguments do not meet the specified standard. So, if Jim is able to show that rain is only 41% likely, parties should still bring an umbrella. Due to precaution, in the concluding stage, any remaining uncertainty counts in Anne's favour.

Thus, the proponent of a practical presumption is exempted from the burden of persuasion, but does she take up the burden of production? First, this depends on the transparency of a presumption's justification. Suppose parties agree that, when rain is uncertain, precaution represents a reasonable policy, and suppose they both notice that the sky is cloudy. In such circumstances, Anne does not seem obliged to present the obvious justification for "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain." Second, her burden of production also depends on the strength of counterevidence. For instance, if Jim offers a persuasive counterargument at t_3—such as, "According to the weather forecast, the rain is only 25% certain"—intuitively, Anne must support her global presumption at t_4. Accordingly, practical presumption entails a *binary asymmetry* when its justification is transparent and the opponent's argument is weak. Otherwise, it involves a so-called *degree asymmetry*: although both parties must support their views, the presumption's opponent must meet the higher standard of proof in the concluding stage.

In the profile below (Figure 2), I illustrate the interaction pattern where the presumption's proponent takes up the burden of production.

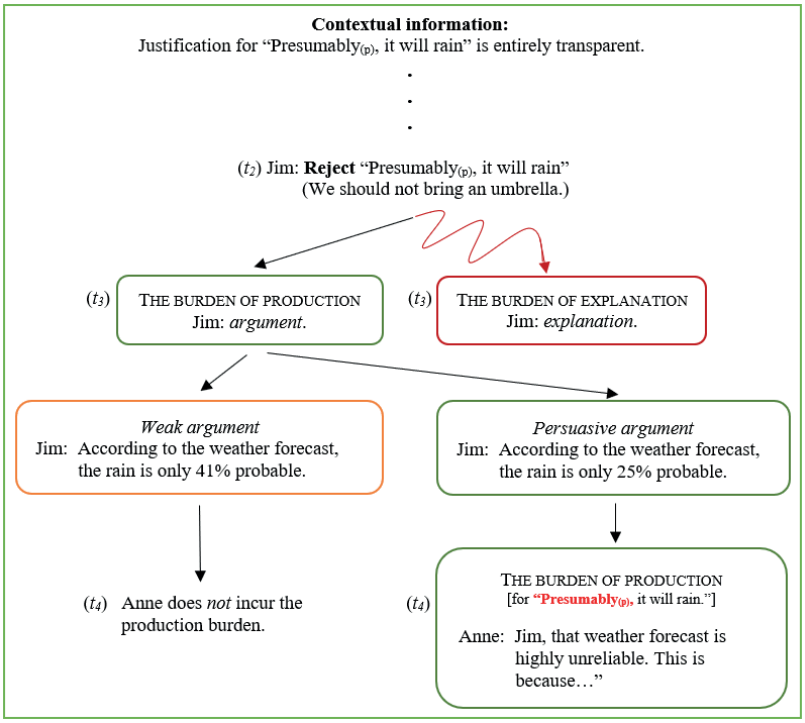

Figure 2: Practical presumption: a profile of a dialogue (the proponent Anne / the Umbrella case)

Bearing this in mind, we can formulate the so-called *deontic function* of practical presumption as follows:

Production of arguments (argumentation stage)

a) The proponent advancing "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" does not shoulder the burden of production.
   - o *If* reasons for "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" are entirely transparent.
   - o *If* reasons for "Reject: 'Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*'" are minor/weak.

b) The opponent rejecting "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" is obliged to provide either an explanation or an argument, but is strongly advised to provide an argument and discharge the burden of production.

Evaluation of arguments (concluding stage)

a) The proponent advancing "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" does not shoulder the burden of persuasion.

b) The opponent rejecting "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" shoulders the burden of persuasion.

Although practical presumptions might entail other asymmetries in taking up burdens, the asymmetries concerning evidence accessibility or commitment strictness are more typically associated with cognitive presumptions.

1.5 Dialogical Functions of PP

If practical presumptions asymmetrically allocate the burden of persuasion, how does this benefit the dialectical procedure? I distinguish between two dialogical functions of presumptions.

First, since practical presumptions are employed in deliberative dialogues, they help in deciding on the course of action (and not, e.g., in acquiring knowledge or justified belief). I label this obvious dialogical role the *ultimate contextual function* of practical presumption.

Second, since practical presumptions asymmetrically allocate the burden of persuasion, they enable dialogical progress in circumstances of pressure and uncertainty. Suppose that Anne and Jim have exhausted all evidential resources during the argumentation stage and now must proceed to the concluding stage—there is simply no more time to deliberate. If rain remains uncertain, their deliberation will become stuck. In such circumstances, practical presumptions break the deadlock. Since Jim shoulders the burden of persuasion (deontic function), the difference of opinion is resolved in Anne's favour. Importantly, practical presumptions promote non-arbitrary decision-making: Anne and Jim should proceed on "It will rain" and bring an umbrella because, by doing so, they avoid more significant harm (pragmatic function). I label this paradigmatic role of enabling dialogical progress the (special) *dialogical function* of practical presumption.

1.6 Conditions of PP's Defeat

If a practical presumption stands until proven otherwise, how can the opponent discharge the burden of proof? How can Jim defeat "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain?"

There are three lines of attack. First, the opponent may attack "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" by arguing that non-*p*, i.e., *rebutting p*. Second, he might challenge one of the premises of presumptive practical reasoning (see Diagram 2) and thereby engage in *premise tenability criticism* (e.g., overriding). Finally, the opponent may argue that in presumptive practical reasoning, some acceptable premise *q* does not warrant some conclusion *r*, thereby focusing on the *connection criticism* (e.g., undermining, undercutting). However, this dissertation explored a related question that has mostly escaped the attention of argumentation scholars. Instead of analysing *what* types of evidence defeat practical presumptions, it investigated *when*, and in what circumstances, a particular type of connection criticism—the so-called undercutting defeater—cancels a practical presumption.

In Pollock's (1987) classic account, the undercutter *u* is the piece of evidence that renders the evidential connection between premise *q* and conclusion *r* unreliable, despite

being consistent with both *q* and *r*. For instance, Jim's undercutter "The weather forecast website is playing an April Fool's joke on the citizenry" (*u*) challenges the connection between "The weather forecast website estimates that there is 50% chance of rain" (*q*) and "There is 50% chance of rain" (*r*), despite being consistent with both propositions. Typically, an (undefeated) undercutting defeater commits an epistemic agent to adopt a sceptical stance and suspend her belief that the conclusion is true.

The dissertation showed that *u*'s potential to defeat "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" depends on *p*'s prior likelihood. Suppose that the chance of rain is 50% on a regular day of the season in some geographical area. Under these circumstances, an April's Fool joke makes the weather forecast unreliable, but does not defeat "Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain." The essential components of presumptive practical reasoning (evidential uncertainty and deliberative pressure) remain unchanged, and parties should still bring an umbrella on precautionary grounds. Table 2 summarizes how an undercutting defeater affects a practical presumption, given different prior likelihoods.[179]

179 In a typical case, *p*'s presumptive status is defeated when proceeding on *p* becomes unreasonable because some component of presumptive reasoning is challenged. But what happens if *p* ("It will rain") becomes epistemically justified? In such a case, the essential premise of presumptive practical reasoning (indicating the genuine uncertainty of "It will rain") becomes untenable, so, strictly speaking, the (local) presumptive status of "It will rain" must be defeated. However, proceeding on "It will rain" remains reasonable once we know that rain is likely. So, even if the presumption's justificatory aspect is challenged, its procedural aspect may remain intact: we should still act on "It will rain" and bring an umbrella. For these reasons, I believe that the practical presumptive status is 'emptied.' Once the deliberative agent chooses the right action on epistemic grounds, the practical presumptive status does not contribute to deliberation in any substantial way. Although it may still recommend the right action, it seems redundant both from a theoretical and a practical standpoint.

Presumptive practical reasoning (Anne in/before t_1)	The weather forecast website estimates that there is 50% chance of rain (q) / *Therefore*, there is 50% chance of rain (r) / *Therefore*, we should proceed on "It will rain" [*Presumably*$_{(p)}$, it will rain (p)]	The weather forecast website estimates that there is 50% chance of rain (q) / *Therefore*, there is 50% chance of rain (r) / *Therefore*, we should proceed on "It will rain" [*Presumably*$_{(p)}$, it will rain (p)]	The weather forecast website estimates that there is 50% chance of rain (q) / *Therefore*, there is 50% chance of rain (r) / *Therefore*, we should proceed on "It will rain" [*Presumably*$_{(p)}$, it will rain (p)]
+ **Undercutting defeater** (Jim in t_3)	The weather forecast website is playing an April Fool's joke (u)	The weather forecast website is playing an April Fool's joke (u)	The weather forecast website is playing an April Fool's joke (u)
Preliminary outcome:	Agents should still proceed on "It will rain:" p's presumptive status is undefeated.	Agents should still proceed on "It will rain:" p's presumptive status is undefeated.	Agents should still proceed on "It will rain:" p's presumptive status is undefeated.
+ **Prior likelihood of "It will rain"** (known in t_4)	65%	50%	35%
Updated outcome	"It will rain" is an epistemic expectation: there is 65% chance of rain.	"It will rain" is not an epistemic expectation: there is still 50% chance of rain.	"It will rain" is not an epistemic expectation: there is only 35% chance of rain.
Presumptive status of "It will rain" (in t_4)	*Emptied*	*Undefeated*	*Defeated* (locally)

Table 2: Practical presumption: undercutting defeater and prior likelihoods (the Umbrella case)

1.7 The Strength of PP

What determines the strength of a practical presumption? Despite many contextual, justificatory, and deontic factors, scholars typically relate a presumption's strength to the weight of the opponent's burden: the more demanding the opponent's standard of proof, the stronger the presumption (Ullmann-Margalit 1983, p. 152; Rescher, 2006, p. 18; Godden & Walton, 2007, pp. 337-338). In addition to the demandingness of the opponent's standard of proof, this dissertation identified several other factors influencing the weight of rebuttal.

First, the strength of "Presumably$_{(p)}$, p" may vary depending on the time available to prove non-p. The opponent's burden is heavier if he must prove non-p within minutes rather than weeks. Second, the strength of "Presumably$_{(p)}$, p" depends on the accessibility of evidence for non-p. Undoubtedly, the opponent's job is more demanding if he cannot easily access evidence for non-p.[180] Third, a presumption's strength depends on the public transparency of evidence for non-p. If the evidence for non-p is novel and thereby

180 For instance, because the evidence is confidential, belongs to the distant future or past, is technical in nature, or because getting to it requires morally problematic action.

completely unknown to the proponent (and the general public), the opponent may carry a very weighty presentational burden. Despite having strong justification, he might need to present every piece of evidence for non-*p* and elaborate on it in a detailed fashion.

Fourth, the strength of "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" varies depending on the number of genuine attacking options the opponent has at his disposal. For instance, if the proponent infers "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*" from the ignorance premise "It is not proven that non-*p*," then the tenability criticism of the ignorance premise ("It is untenable that 'It is not proven that non-*p*'") seems identical to proving that non-*p*, i.e., rebutting the conclusion "Presumably$_{(p)}$, *p*." Therefore, in this particular case, the opponent has one genuine attacking option instead of two. All these considerations may affect the opponent's burden and, consequently, the strength of the presumption.

2 Cognitive Presumptions (CP)

2.1 Basic Characterisation of CP

Cognitive presumptions are statements with a modifier 'presumably,' where "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" indicates *p*'s tentative acceptability. But although, for instance, "Andy's cat is in the tree" (because I see it there) is defeasible, it is the most plausible truth candidate in normal circumstances (Reacher 2006). Thus, the proponent should not be obliged to defend "Andy's cat is in the tree" in an everyday persuasion dialogue unless the opponent provides good enough argument against it.

Unlike practical presumption, "Andy's cat is in the tree" is an epistemically justified doxastic commitment that promotes the agent's epistemic goals (acquiring empirical knowledge) for it results from a cognitive process aimed at generating true/justified beliefs. Accordingly, a typical cognitive presumption should not be (primarily) understood as an action-oriented commitment, although a cognitive agent should proceed on "Presumably$_{(c)}$, Andy's cat is in the tree" in the sense of inferring further conclusions (e.g., "Andy's cat is not in the bedroom"). In the table below, I describe four aspects of the modifier "presumably$_{(c)}$." "Presumably$_{(c)}$" and "presumably$_{(p)}$" differ in several respects (compare with Table 1).

ASPECTS OF "PRESUMABLY$_{(c)}$"	COGNITIVE PRESUMPTION (the Cat case)
Procedural aspect	*Typically, a doxastic status* Typically, "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" expresses the agent's doxastic commitment. When Andy sees a cat in a tree, he is naturally inclined to believe "Andy's cat is in a tree." Although it is reasonable to proceed as if the cat is in a tree, the procedural aspect of "presumably$_{(c)}$" seems entirely dependent on epistemic considerations.
Justificatory aspect	*Epistemic status* Typically, accepting *p* is based on solid evidence and promotes epistemic goals (acquiring true beliefs, avoiding false beliefs), so "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" conveys an epistemic status. Andy accepts "Andy's cat is in a tree" because trusting perception is a profitable (reliable) epistemic policy.
Modal aspect	*Defeasible status* "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" conveys *p*'s defeasible status: "Andy's cat is in a tree" is accepted until proven otherwise.
Deontic aspect	*Dialogically privileged status* "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" indicates that *p* is a dialectically privileged commitment: while Jane must support her rejection of "Presumably$_{(c)}$, Andy's cat is in a tree," typically, Andy is not immediately and as strictly obliged to justify his presumption.

Table 3: Cognitive presumption: four aspects of the modifier 'presumably$_{(c)}$'

2.2 The Logical Function of CP

Like practical presumptions, cognitive presumptions are conclusions of presumptive reasoning. Below, I provide a diagram of the core structure of presumptive cognitive reasoning by using the Cat case.

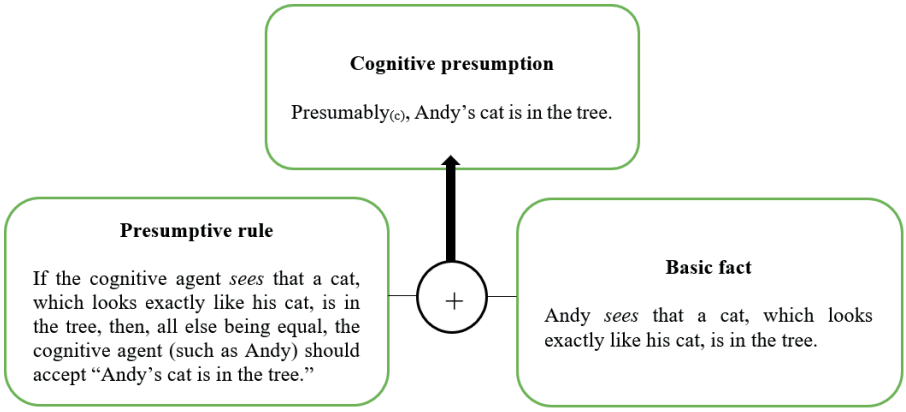

Diagram 3: Presumptive cognitive reasoning: the core structure (the Cat case)

2.3 Justification and the Pragmatic Function of CP

Unlike practical presumptions, cognitive presumptions are typically not conclusions of arguments from ignorance. Andy infers "Andy's cat is in the tree" in the absence of a rebutting defeater, but does not derive the conclusion *directly from* the absence of a rebutting defeater (i.e., from the basic fact "It is not proven that Andy's cat is not in the tree.")

The next question is: What justifies a presumptive rule? Why should Andy trust his perception and accept "Andy's cat is in the tree?" In this dissertation, I reconstructed an economic, cost-benefit justification of presumptive rules in line with Rescher's account. According to Rescher, when Andy faces a radical sceptic who rejects perception due to its fallibility, he can suspend judgment on all perception-based propositions. In so doing, Andy avoids the risk of adopting false perception-based beliefs. By contrast, he might trust visual perception as long as epistemic defeaters are insufficient or unknown. In so doing, Andy accepts the risk of acquiring false beliefs but also creates conditions for acquiring true perception-based beliefs. Faced with this choice, a reasonable cognitive agent should follow the policy of avoiding greater harm: since the first, sceptical solution is exceptionally costly, Andy should choose the second, more profitable solution.[181]

Practical and cognitive presumptions have different pragmatic justifications. First, deliberating and cognitive agents face distinct dilemmas since Anne, unlike Andy, cannot act on suspended judgment (taking one half of an umbrella is not a reasonable option). Second, agents are under different kinds of pressure: in the Umbrella case, pressure is

181 Despite its pragmatic flavour, Rescher's justification of cognitive rules, for the most part, comes down to the reliability of epistemic sources. In normal circumstances, cognitive agents should trust standard epistemic sources (perception, memory, testimony, expert opinion, etc.) because these usually generate true beliefs. In other words, if visual perception mostly generated false beliefs, then trusting visual perception would hardly be profitable from the standpoint of cognitive economy.

created by external time constraints (Anne is pressured by a deadline); in the Cat case, pressure is created by internal cognitive constraints (perception is an unavoidable source of factual knowledge). Third, agents deal with distinct kinds of uncertainty; Andy's cognitive presumption, unlike Anne's practical presumption, is uncertain only in the sense of being defeasible, but is, otherwise, epistemically plausible. Finally, Anne and Andy rely on dissimilar considerations when comparing the costs of their actions. Whereas Anne seeks to assign unequal relevance to goals of unequal importance (health *vs*. convenience), Andy seeks to give equal relevance to goals of equal importance (acquiring true beliefs *vs*. avoiding false beliefs).

As a result, practical and cognitive presumptions have different pragmatic functions. The *pragmatic function* of cognitive presumptions is to avoid greater harm in the face of cognitive pressure and academic (non-genuine) uncertainty. Below, I provide a diagram of the complete structure of presumptive cognitive reasoning by using the Cat case (Diagram 4).

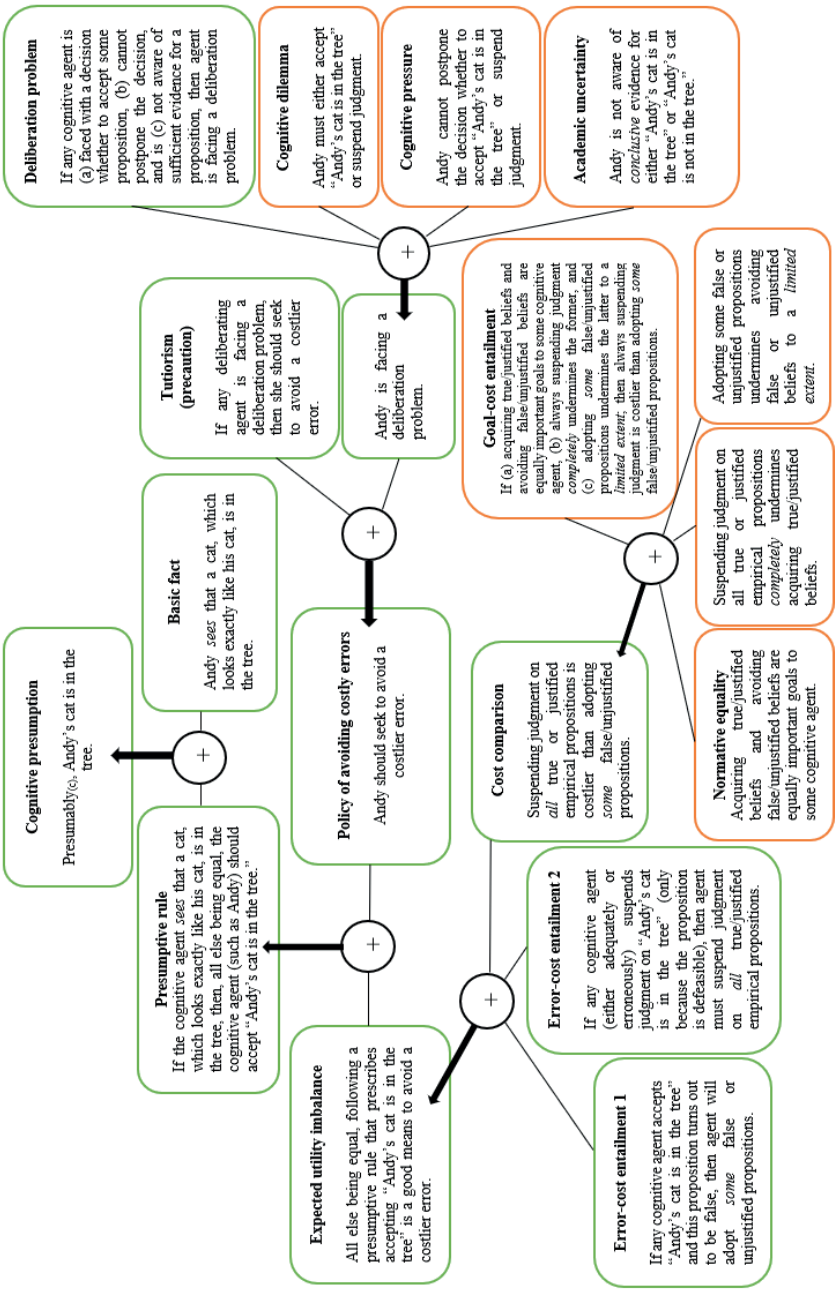

Diagram 4: Presumptive cognitive reasoning: the complete structure (the Cat case)

2.4 Patterns of Interaction and the Deontic Function of CP

How does a cognitive presumption influence argumentative interaction? Is the opponent immediately obliged to defend his rejection? Is the presumption's proponent exempted from taking up the burden of proof?

Cognitive presumptions impose the *burden of reasoning* on the opponent: after rejecting "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" at t_2, the opponent must either explain or argumentatively defend his view at t_3. Accordingly, flat-Earther Steve may explain his denial of Diane's standpoint "Presumably$_{(c)}$, the Earth is globe-shaped" by saying: "Our government fabricated the evidence that the Earth is globe-shaped." Although Steve's explanation is dialectically inadequate (Diane does not accept it), it is still a constructive contribution under the circumstances. For instance, after realising that, on Steve's view, a conspiracy theory suffices to dismiss her presumption, Diane may construct a similar conspiracy theory to (adequately) challenge Steve's standpoint: "The Flat Earth movement had the best media coverage on the day when our government passed the controversial law on public health. Don't you find this suspicious? Our government could have fabricated the Flat Earth theory just to distract the public from the important stuff."

To be sure, using one conspiracy theory to reject the conclusion of another, equally bizarre conspiracy theory is not a hallmark of epistemic rationality. But in the context of persuasion dialogue, Diane's hands are tied. Once Steve rejects "Presumably$_{(c)}$, the Earth is globe-shaped," she does not have many epistemically plausible reasons available (such as scientific evidence) that would persuade a flat-Earther. Moreover, since flat-Earthers refuse well-known evidence, Diane can do nothing but guess what reasons might convince Steve. In such circumstances, Steve's explanation gives Diane a fighting chance: it reveals what considerations she needs to attack and how to develop a dialectically adequate (but not epistemically ideal) strategy. In the profile below, I illustrate Steve's burden of reasoning.

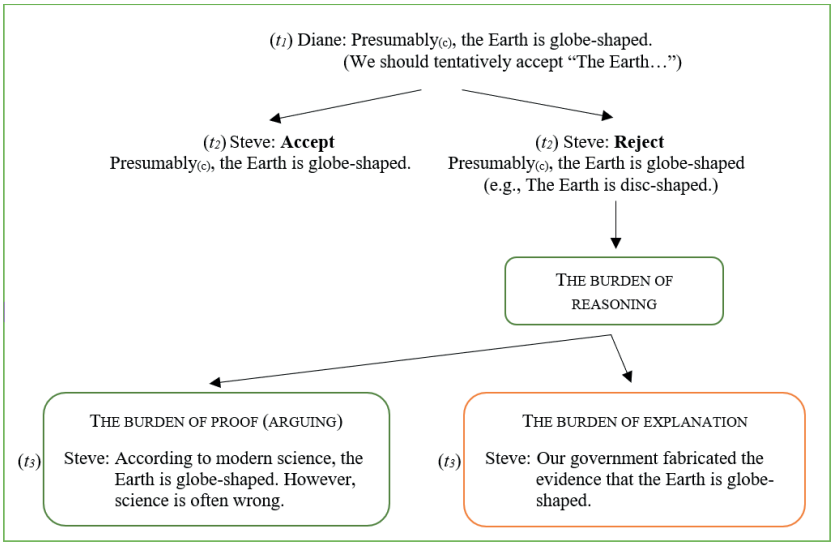

Figure 3: Cognitive presumption: a profile of a dialogue (the opponent Steve / the Flat Earth example)

If Steve decides to argue at t_3, he must produce a relevant (and adequate) reason, thereby taking up the *burden of production*. By satisfying this burden, Steve does what is necessary to 'stay in the game' and prevail in the discussion at some later point. Importantly, at t_3, he is allowed to offer some minor argument, to get things going (e.g., "According to modern science, the Earth is globe-shaped, but science is often wrong").

Ultimately, however, Steve carries the *burden of successful defence*. Just like the burden of persuasion in the practical case, the burden of successful defence is allocated in the opening stage, influences the interaction in the argumentation stage, and is evaluated in the concluding stage. It entails that Steve must have sufficient argument to win the discussion in the concluding stage. Crucially, unlike the burden of persuasion, the burden of successful defence does not entail that those who shoulder it lose debates if, ultimately, their arguments are insufficient. Suppose that Steve's arguments for "The Earth is disc-shaped" are as strong as Diane's arguments for "The Earth is globe-shaped" in the concluding stage. If the goal of the dialogue is to accept a more convincing view, the uncertainty should not count in Diane's favour. Instead, from a dialectical standpoint, parties should call it a draw and suspend judgment.

If there is no clear winner, it remains an open question whether extra-dialectical considerations—like the objective truth that "The Earth is globe-shaped," its God's eye justification, its acceptance among Steve's epistemic peers, the importance of intellectual humility, etc.—should still commit Steve to accept Diane's viewpoint.

Next, whether the presumption's proponent takes up the burden of proof depends on the transparency of her justification. If Diane and Steve have previously accepted "Presumably, the Earth is globe-shaped" based on scientific evidence, and Steve retracts his commitment at t_2, then Diane is not obliged to provide the apparent justification at t_3. Of course, if Steve were to present a strong argument against "Presumably, the Earth is globe-shaped," then Diane would be imposed with the burden of production. Technically, however, her probative obligation would not concern cognitive presumption. From a purely dialectical perspective, given Steve's strong argument at t_3, "The Earth is globe-shaped" would not be the most plausible proposition at t_4.

Hence, if the justification is transparent and the opponent's argument is weak, the proponent is not obliged to defend "Presumably$_{(c)}$, p" and cognitive presumption entails *binary asymmetry*. However, the proponent becomes obliged to defend p, which no longer has the status of a presumption, by virtue of a strong argument offered by the opponent at t_3. This is yet another difference between practical and cognitive presumptions. In the profile below, I illustrate the interaction pattern where the presumption's proponent is imposed with the burden of production.

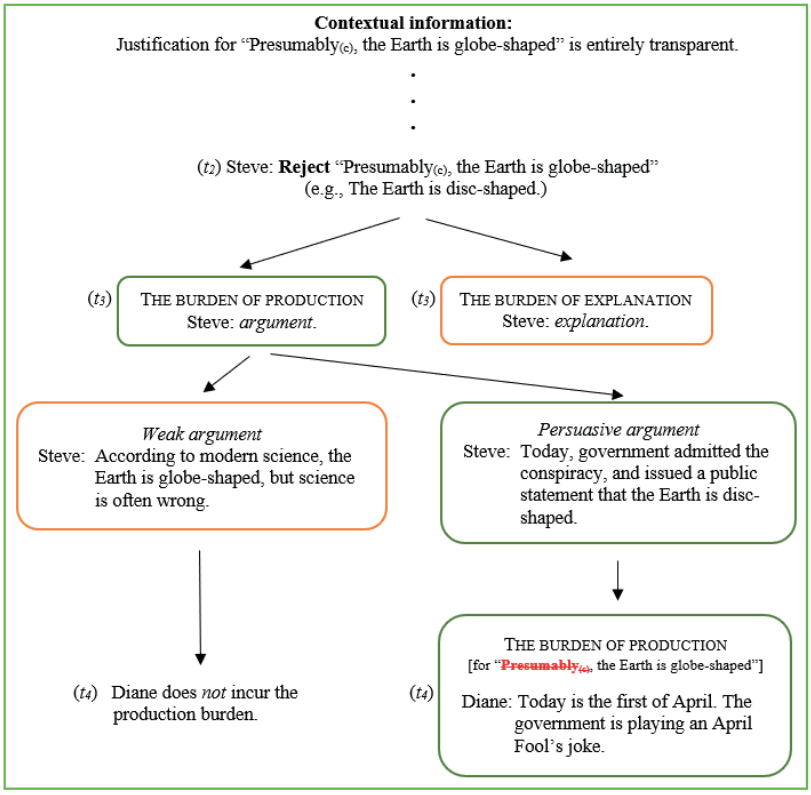

Figure 4: Cognitive presumption: a profile of a dialogue (the proponent Diane / the Flat Earth example)

As a result, we can formulate the so-called *deontic function* of cognitive presumption as follows:

Production of arguments (in the argumentation stage)

a) The proponent does not shoulder the burden of production for "Presumably, *p*."

   o *If* reasons for "Presumably, *p*" are entirely transparent.

b) The opponent rejecting "Presumably, *p*" is obliged to provide either an explanation or an argument. Initially, at t_3, both moves are (equally) constructive.

Evaluation of arguments (in the concluding stage)

a) The proponent does not shoulder the burden of successful defence for "Presumably, *p*" (as long as *p* is the most plausible proposition, and its justification is entirely transparent.)

b) The opponent rejecting "Presumably, *p*" shoulders the burden of successful defence.

Cognitive presumptions are also associated with *degree asymmetries* concerning evidence accessibility and commitment strictness. Since the evidence for cognitive presumptions (e.g., "The Earth is globe-shaped," "The cat is in the tree," or "Smoking is unhealthy") is usually easily accessible, the proponent carries a lighter burden than the presumption's opponent. It is a well-known fact that, nowadays, it is easier to find and present good reasons for "The Earth is globe-shaped" than for "The Earth is disc-shaped." In addition, due to the typical accessibility of justifications for presumptions, the proponent may not be obliged to present these justifications. Unlike the presumption's opponent, the proponent may have a less strict commitment and be *recommended* (instead of *obliged*) to give reasons.

2.5 Dialogical Functions of CP

How do cognitive presumptions benefit the dialectical procedure? I distinguish several dialogical functions of cognitive presumptions.

First, since cognitive presumptions are generated by reliable epistemic sources and are usually employed in epistemic dialogue (inquiry), they contribute to acquiring empirical knowledge and justified belief. I label this prominent dialogical role as cognitive presumption's *ultimate contextual function*.[182]

Second, since most cognitive presumptions are uncontroversial and well-known ("The Earth is globe-shaped," "Smoking is unhealthy," "Cereal is not soup," etc.), they usually represent dialogical starting points. Dialogical parties must share common premises (identified in the opening stage) to engage in reasonable persuasion, so cognitive presumptions constitute foundations of argumentative dialogue and allow the discussion to take off.

182 Obviously, cognitive presumptions can also contribute to non-epistemic dialogues. For instance, if Anne knows that "It will rain" represents the most plausible proposition, she will take an umbrella due to a cognitive presumption (and not due to a practical one).

Third, even if *p* is not a shared premise in a dialogue, its presumptive status may contribute to a fruitful discussion. Since the justification of some widely-shared proposition *p* is usually transparent, presumption saves time by exempting the proponent from the burden of proof—the proponent is not obliged to 'cover known ground.' Additionally, by requesting reasons from an eccentric opponent, the presumption's deontic function helps the proponent to become familiar with the unorthodox view and gives her a chance to develop a dialectically adequate attack strategy.

Fourth, if *p* is not a shared premise and is challenged by an eccentric opponent, its presumptive status may prevent dialectical regress. Namely, after Diane puts forward "The Earth is globe-shaped," Steve may try to win the discussion by requesting justification for every new reason introduced by Diane. By imposing the burden on Steve, the presumptive status of "The Earth is globe-shaped" sets limitations to this annoying strategy. The roles of furnishing starting points, enhancing the discussion's effectiveness, and preventing dialectical regress, I label the '*dialogical functions*' of cognitive presumption.

Moreover, cognitive presumptions may have a *pre-dialogical function* because they specify conditions under which their advocates should consider having a debate, to begin with. Namely, why would Diane discuss the Earth's shape at all? Since "The Earth is disc-shaped" is highly implausible, she cannot honestly expect that exploring the flat-Earth hypothesis will improve her epistemic position. From an epistemic standpoint, exploring this hypothesis seems like a waste of time. Nevertheless, Steve may motivate Diane to consider his controversial standpoint by immediately supporting the flat-Earth hypothesis. By giving reasons, Steve shows Diane that he is a serious interlocutor and that discussing the flat-Earth theory may not be a waste of time. This provides another explanation for why the opponent takes up the burden of reasoning. In the debate, Steve must present reasons to persuade Diane to *accept* his view. But before the debate, he must provide reasons to motivate Diane to *consider discussing* his position in the first place (for similar points, see Kauffeld 1998; Aijaz et al 2013).

2.6 Conditions of CP's Defeat

If cognitive presumptions stand until proven otherwise, how can the opponent discharge the burden of proof? In the Cat case, how can Jane defeat "Presumably$_{(c)}$, Andy's cat is in the tree?" Just like in the case of practical presumption, the opponent may *rebut* cognitive presumption *p*, engage in various kinds of *premise tenability criticism*, or focus on some *connection criticism* (undermining, undercutting, etc.).

However, this dissertation explored the circumstances in which a particular type of connection criticism—the undercutting defeater—cancels a cognitive presumption. Suppose that Jane says: "The neighbour has a cat that looks exactly like Andy's" (*u*). Her evidence undercuts the connection between the basic fact "Andy sees that a cat, which looks exactly like his cat, is in the tree" (*q*) and the conclusion "Andy's cat is in the tree" (*p*). However, *u*'s potential to defeat "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" depends on *p*'s prior likelihood.

First, if Andy and Jane attribute equal likelihoods to "Andy's cat is in the tree" and "Andy's cat is not in the tree," and Jane introduces the aforementioned undercutter, Andy's conclusion is not the most plausible proposition anymore: its presumptive status is defeated. Second, if the prior likelihood of "Andy's cat is in the tree" is sufficiently higher than the prior likelihood of "Andy's cat is not in the tree," Andy's conclusion remains the most plausible, and its presumptive status is not defeated. Third, if the prior likelihood of "Andy's cat is in the tree" is sufficiently lower than the prior likelihood of "Andy's cat is not in the tree," Jane successfully undercuts the conclusion's presumptive status. Only in the third scenario do cognitive presumptions "react" to undercutting defeaters in the same way practical presumptions do. Table 4 summarises the relation between cognitive presumptions, undercutters, and prior likelihoods.

Presumptive cognitive reasoning (Andy in/before t_1)	Andy sees that a cat, which looks exactly like his cat, is in the tree (q) *Therefore*, Andy's cat is in the tree [Presumably$_{(c)}$, p]	Andy sees that a cat, which looks exactly like his cat, is in the tree (q) *Therefore*, Andy's cat is in the tree [Presumably$_{(c)}$, p]	Andy sees that a cat, which looks exactly like his cat, is in the tree (q) *Therefore*, Andy's cat is in the tree [Presumably$_{(c)}$, p]
+ **Undercutting defeater** (Jane in t_3)	The neighbour has a cat that looks exactly like Andy's (u)	The neighbour has a cat that looks exactly like Andy's (u)	The neighbour has a cat that looks exactly like Andy's (u)
Preliminary outcome:	Agents should suspend judgment: p's presumptive status is defeated.	Agents should suspend judgment: p's presumptive status is defeated.	Agents should suspend judgment: p's presumptive status is defeated.
+ **Prior likelihood of "Andy's cat is in the tree"** (known in t_4)	65%	50%	35%
Updated outcome	Andy's cat is in the tree is still the most plausible proposition.	Andy's cat is in the tree is *not* the most plausible proposition: suspension of judgment is called for.	Andy's cat is in the tree is *not* the most plausible proposition: accepting the contrary claim is called for.
Presumptive status of "Andy's cat is in the tree" (in t_4)	*Undefeated*	*Defeated*	*Defeated*

Table 4: Cognitive presumption: undercutting defeater and prior likelihoods (the Cat case)

2.7 The Strength of CP

From a purely epistemic standpoint, the strength of "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" depends on *p*'s justification and is correlated to *p*'s plausibility. However, in a dialectical setting, various factors influencing the opponent's burden affect a presumption's strength.

First, the strength of "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" depends on the time available to prove non-*p*. Second, it depends on the accessibility of evidence for non-*p.* Third, it is influenced by the public transparency of evidence for non-*p*. Fourth, the strength of "Presumably$_{(c)}$, *p*" varies depending on how many genuine attacking options the opponent has at his disposal. Nevertheless, this dissertation showed that the strength of cognitive presumption, unlike the strength of practical presumption, is not entirely correlated to the weight of rebuttal. Sometimes, the fact that cognitive presumption *p* became weaker (less plausible) does not entail that the opponent's burden of proving non-*p* became less demanding.

3 What Should the Concept of Presumption Amount to?

So, practical and cognitive presumptions differ in many respects. To make the differences salient, let's compare their features in Table 5.

	PRACTICAL PRESUMPTION [Presumably$_{(p)}$, it will rain]	**COGNITIVE PRESUMPTION** [Presumably$_{(c)}$, Andy's cat is in a tree]
Modifier	"Presumably$_{(p)}$, p" conveys the procedural and non-epistemic status of p.	"Presumably$_{(c)}$, p" (primarily) conveys the doxastic and epistemic status of p.
Logical function	Conclusion of presumptive [practical] reasoning.	Conclusion of presumptive [cognitive] reasoning.
Pragmatic function	Avoiding greater [non-epistemic] harm in the circumstances of [deliberation] pressure and [genuine] uncertainty.	Avoiding greater [epistemic] harm in the circumstances of [cognitive] pressure and [academic / non-genuine] uncertainty.
Deontic function	• The opponent incurs the burden of reasoning [preferably the burden of production] in the argumentation stage. • The opponent carries the burden of persuasion (evaluated in the concluding stage).	• The opponent incurs the burden of reasoning [either the burden of production or the burden of explanation] in the argumentation stage. • The opponent carries the burden of successful defence (evaluated in the concluding stage).
Ultimate contextual function	Choosing the right action.	Acquiring empirical knowledge.
Dialogical functions	Facilitating dialogical progress (by enabling the resolution in the concluding stage).	• Facilitating dialogical progress (by furnishing starting points in the opening stage). • Preventing dialectical regress. • Enhancing dialogue's effectiveness.
Defeating conditions	Rarely cancelled by an undercutting defeater.	Typically cancelled by an undercutting defeater.
Strength	Correlated to the weight of the opponent's burden of proof (rebuttal).	Correlated to presumption's plausibility.

Table 5: Practical and cognitive presumptions: summary and comparison

What do these differences imply? On standard accounts, do practical and cognitive presumptions still share common features? Is identifying shared features theoretically helpful? And does the commitment associated with cognitive presumption, given all these differences, fit the label of 'presumption?'

As explained in introductory chapter, the word 'presumption' can have several meanings in everyday and legal contexts. Let's focus on the following ones:

1. A presumption denotes having "a strong reason for believing something to be so" (*Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*).
2. A presumption is an "act of believing that something is true without having any proof" (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*).
3. A presumption is a "conclusion derived from a particular set of facts based on law, rather than probable reasoning" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*).

Standard theoretical accounts of presumption perpetuate the ambiguity associated with everyday and legal meanings.[183] While the characterisation of cognitive presumption corresponds with the first meaning, the characterisation of practical presumption, for the most part, corresponds with the second and third meaning. Since the theoretical concept of presumption is fragmented, much like its everyday and legal counterparts, standard accounts fail to (semantically) improve their central notion.

Inheriting some of this pre-existing ambiguity in philosophy and argumentation theory is unfortunate, but whether it is truly problematic depends on the theorist's ambition. If the argumentation theorist seeks to develop a logical and dialogical model of presumption, the conceptual incoherency is harmless. Namely, after recognising an expression's ambiguity, the theorist should acknowledge it and treat practical and cognitive presumption separately. Moreover, for a philosopher who conceptually analyses and explores laymen's intuitions about common expressions, the incoherency of presumptions is commonplace. After all, many linguistic expressions have multiple meanings (e.g., knowledge that *vs*. knowledge how; intuition as a mere hunch *vs*. intuition as an obvious, true proposition, etc.), but homonymy is harmless as long as we can identify the intended meaning in the context at hand. The philosopher, then, should analyse some notion's specific meaning (What is 'knowledge that?', What is 'practical presumption?', etc.) and hope for coherency within this limited scope.

3.1 The Limitations of Normative and Functional Conceptions of Presumption

However, instead of building on pre-existing conceptual and linguistic intuitions, an ambitious theorist may seek to develop a theoretically optimal language in which distinct expressions denote distinct phenomena. In carrying out this disambiguation the theorist might first decide to pin the term (concept of) 'presumption' onto only one relevant kind of proposition or commitment. Second, she might choose to abandon the word (concept of) 'presumption' altogether.

Inspired by Ullmann-Margalit (1983), Godden (2019) defends the first solution and argues that 'presumably' should denote only practical presumptions. In his view, when understood as a purely procedural, action-oriented qualifier, 'presumably' expresses a unique commitment—associated with a particular case of instrumental reasoning —that cannot be represented by other qualifiers. By contrast, if associated with cognitive presumptions, 'presumably' indicates a provisional epistemic commitment that can be expressed by other qualifiers, such as 'plausibly' or 'defeasibly.' Similarly, the legal scholars advocating the "normative conception" of presumption maintain that "the term 'presumption of fact' should be discarded as useless and confusing"[184] (Wigmore, as cited

183 For a detailed analysis of presumption's ambiguity in the legal discourse, see Gama (2017, pp. 562-569).

184 In many relevant respects, the legal concept of 'presumption of fact' corresponds with our concept of 'cognitive presumption.'

in Gama 2017, p. 565). Instead, we should set the word 'presumption' aside for inferences supported by legal rules.

The more extreme solution is to completely abandon the expression 'presumption,' since, on the one hand, it creates confusion and, on the other, does not contribute to resolving theoretical problems. According to Gama, Ronald Allen—the leading proponent of the "functional conception" of presumption in legal scholarship—argues that "the word 'presumption' could be completely eliminated," since "the term 'presumption' is applied without adding any significance to the solution of the problem" (Gama 2017, p. 567). Allen (1980, 2014) believes that legal scholars should resolve evidential problems associated with incompatible meanings of 'presumption' and stop looking for essential features that unify all presumptions. In argumentation theory, Lewiński (2017) makes a similar point. He argues that "the study of presumption always collapses into the study of other, likely more fundamental, concepts" (p. 610) because of presumption's "epiphenomenal character" (p. 596). So, while presumption—both as a term and as a concept—generates some problems, it is unclear whether presumption provides any solutions.

To my mind, both responses to the incoherency of presumptions are too extreme. Allen is right that scholars should not get too distracted by linguistic and conceptual issues, but 'presumption' is not an empty and useless label. As Godden (2017, 2019) observes, the practical version of 'presumably' indicates a special commitment and appears irreducible to other qualifiers. Since 'presumably' is a singular expression that, in the special case of instrumental reasoning, explains the unique (procedural) nature of an agent's commitment, it seems reasonable to preserve it in theoretical language. Practical presumption remains a genuine challenge for any reductionist about presumptions.

However, Godden's thesis that the cognitive version of 'presumably' is redundant, since it can be reduced to 'plausibly' or 'defeasibly,' appears somewhat premature. Recall that cognitive presumptions are not just plausible propositions but *the most* plausible propositions (Rescher 2006). In dialogue, cognitive presumption is not just a defeasible starting point, but the most plausible defeasible starting point. This singular epistemic status justifies whatever function cognitive presumption is supposed to perform. For instance, cognitive presumption *p* would neither shift the burden of proof nor terminate dialectical regress if *p* were accompanied by equally plausible but contradictory proposition *q*. Thus, since the epistemic modifier 'presumably' is more specific than qualifiers 'plausibly' and 'defeasibly,' it might be reasonable to keep it in theoretical language. The theorist may avoid the potential confusion of using the same expression to denote distinct kinds of commitments most explicitly, e.g., by distinguishing 'presumably$_{(p)}$' from 'presumably$_{(c)}$.'

3.2 Towards a Pluralistic Conception of Presumption

When the meaning of 'presumption' is clear in a given context, discussing whether to prefer 'presumption' over some other word seems quite inconsequential. But when the conceptual (rather than the linguistic) aspect of the debate is concerned, I believe that standard accounts should adopt a "pluralistic conception" of presumption:

> [T]he proponents of this conception [in the legal scholarship] argue that the appropriate way to analyze the concept of presumption is through the examination of the paradigmatic types of presumption used in legal language. As a result of this operation, there would be not a single concept of presumption, but a variety of concepts of presumptions. Thus, the question "What is a presumption?" does not admit a single response in this conception, but as many as suggested by the specific instances in which the word "presumption" is applied. (Gama 2017, p. 566)

Although the concepts differ and Rescher is careless in portraying cognitive presumption as "the epistemic analogue of 'innocent until proven guilty'" (2006, p. 23), there may still be hope for identifying general features common to all presumptions. The theorist might consider at least four shared features:

1. Practical and cognitive presumptions are *actionable commitments*, since deliberating/the cognitive agent is recommended—on either epistemic or non-epistemic grounds—to proceed as if the presumption were true. It is debatable whether assumptions (stipulations) or hypotheses are actionable in a comparable sense.
2. Presumptions can be reconstructed as *conclusions* of reasoning, unlike, for instance, assumptions.
3. On a pragmatic interpretation, presumptions are always associated with *uncertainty, pressure,* and *harm reduction*. This is not always true for assertions, assumptions, and hypotheses.
4. Finally, when challenged, both types of presumptions *impose the burden of reasoning on the opponent*. Assertions, assumptions, and hypotheses entail different distributions of dialectical obligations.

As a result, I believe that standard accounts should formulate the concept of presumption in terms of a moderate pluralism. They should treat practical and cognitive presumptions as different concepts as long as they investigate the applications of presumption in the dialogical contexts: the two types of presumption represent different kinds of modifiers, with distinct pragmatic, deontic, and dialogical functions, dissimilar defeating conditions, and different conceptions of strength. Nevertheless, practical and cognitive presumptions become more similar and may even merit a joint treatment once we compare them to other pragmatic phenomena.

4 Conclusion

Practical and cognitive presumptions entail distinct contextual, pragmatic, dialogical, and deontic functions; different defeating conditions; and distinct conceptions of 'strength.' Thus, one should analyse them separately as long as one investigates applications in dialogical contexts. However, the concept of 'presumption'—taken in the wide sense—may still serve some theoretical purpose since practical and cognitive presumptions look quite similar to each other when compared to other propositional attitudes (such as assertions, assumptions, or hypotheses). Accordingly, I advocate a 'moderate pluralism' about presumptions.