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Rationality of argumentation aimed at multiple goals

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I critically examine the main accounts of goals in argumentative discourse, aiming to formulate an account that is suitable for the examination of public political arguments, where typically multiple legitimate goals are pursued simultaneously. Such arguments are viewed as contributions to what can be dialectically reconstructed as multiple simultaneous discussions, and are analysed as strategic manoeuvres that can under certain conditions be reasonable but may, if such conditions are violated, become fallacious.

KEYWORDS: collective goals of arguers, constitutive goal of argumentation, critical testing, external uses of argumentation, individual aims of arguers, intrinsic function of argumentation, justifying, (rational) persuasion.

1. INTRODUCTION

In examining public political arguments, the multiple goals that arguers are out to achieve are crucial. Typically, a politician speaking publically pursues several institutional goals and addresses several issues. This is sometimes the result of the multi-dimensional nature of the responsibility of a politician and other times the result of the multi-purposive nature of political institutions or even simply because public political discourse is open to individuals and groups that have different interests and needs as well different commitments and positions. So, for example, a politician from the opposition speaking in a parliamentary debate will be out to criticise the government, advocate an alternative plan, policy or action proposed by his own party, and promote the interests of his constituents. Taking the several goals pursued by a politician into account can shed significant light on the strategic discursive choices s/he makes in the course of the argument, but can also pose challenges for the assessment of the rationality of the discourse. In this paper, I critically examine the main accounts of goals in argumentative discourse, aiming to offer a proposal of a framework that is suitable for the analysis and evaluation of public political arguments, where typically multiple legitimate goals are pursued simultaneously.

The study of goals in discourse has been an interesting subject of investigation for communication scholars. Starting from the assumption that "communicative action is strategic and goal-oriented" (Tracy, 1991, p. 1), communication scholars have been busy examining the interplay between the goals

speakers have and the discourse choices they make (Clark & Delia, 1979; Craig, 1990; Jacobs et al., 1991; Tracy, 1984; Tracy & Coupland, 1990). In probably one of the most influential works, Clark and Delia, driven by their interest in the study of communicative strategies, identified three main types of goals: instrumental, interpersonal and identity (1979, pp. 199-200). They suggested that participants in every communicative situation have goals that belong to three domains: a communicator can have goals that are related to the specific obstacle or problem defining the task of the communicative situation, i.e. instrumental or task goals, as well as goals involving the establishment of maintenance of a relationship with the other, i.e. interpersonal goals, and goals related to the self-image conveyed to the other, i.e. identity goals. Dependent on the situation, the different types of goals can have variant weights and the communicator's discursive choices are best understood as an attempt to pursue them (ibid). The assumption that communicative behaviour is driven by multiple goals and that the discursive choices can be explained by appeal to these goals underlies much of the research in communication.

The study of goals in argumentative discourse was informed by the research investigating the interplay between communicators' goals and the discourse choice they make. Argumentation scholars have not been concerned only with identifying the goal(s) that participants in an argumentative exchange have, but also with the nature and status of these goals. Different approaches to argumentation have formulated different accounts. The questions about the goals and purposes of argumentation generated diverse responses. The disagreement between scholars was not limited to the question of what the goal of argumentation exactly is, but also to whether there can be only one goal or several and even if there is a goal at all. In this paper, I review and compare the main accounts offered by argumentation scholars on the goals of argumentation (sections 2 and 3), and use the findings in formulating my own proposal of a framework that is suitable for the analysis of public political arguments, where multiple goals are typically pursued (section 4).

2. PLURALISTIC ACCOUNTS OF GOALS IN ARGUMENTATIVE DISCOURSE

The most important pluralistic account of goals in argumentation, offered by modern argumentation scholars, is probably the account offered in Walton's *dialogue types* (Walton, 1992; Walton & Krabbe, 1995). Walton developed the concept of dialogue types, in order to incorporate the contextual characteristics of ordinary arguments into the evaluation of real-life argumentation. Walton's *dialogue* is defined as "an exchange of speech acts between two speech partners in turn-taking sequence aimed at a collective goal" (1992, p. 133). The goal of the argumentative interaction in a certain context defines the dialogue type and distinguishes it from other dialogue types.

Walton and Krabbe distinguish between six main dialogue types, each defined in terms of the goal of the argumentative interaction (1995, pp. 65-67). In the first type, the persuasion dialogue, the goal is to resolve conflicts of opinion by verbal means; in the second type, the negotiation dialogue, the goal is to make a deal between parties who have a conflict of interests and a need for cooperation; in the

third type, the inquiry dialogue, the goal is to increase knowledge and agreement among parties; in the fourth type, the deliberation dialogue, the goal is to reach a decision concerning a certain course of action; in the fifth type, the information-seeking dialogue, the goal is to spread knowledge and reveal positions and finally, in the sixth type, the eristic dialogue, the goal is to reach a provisional accommodation in a relationship (ibid). Walton and Krabbe present the six main dialogue types as the major contexts in which argumentation occurs, acknowledging, however, that real-life argumentation also occurs in contexts in which two or more of the main dialogue types are *mixed*. An example of a mixed dialogue type that they discuss is political debate, where five dialogue types mix: political debate is partly information-seeking, partly deliberation, partly eristic, partly negotiation, and partly persuasion (ibid).

In discussing the different goals that characterise the different contexts of argumentation, Walton and Krabbe emphasise the important difference between the collective goals that define dialogue types and the individual goals that participants pursue in the dialogues. As they explain it:

We must distinguish between the primary or main goal of a type of dialogue and the aims of participants in a dialogue of that type. Thus the primary goal of negotiation could be characterised as “making a deal”. By entering into negotiation the parties implicitly subscribe to this overall purpose. But besides, each party pursues, within the dialogue, the particular aim of getting the best out of it for oneself. It wouldn’t be negotiations if they didn’t (1995, p. 67).

The distinction between the main goal of an argumentative encounter in a certain context and the individual aims of the participants in that encounter is important to keep in mind. Walton and Krabbe argue that while both are goals that speakers have when they argue, only the former is relevant for the assessment of rationality.

Michael Gilbert offers another important pluralistic account of goals in argumentation. Gilbert’s account comes in the context of his interest in what he refers to as ‘expanding the range of argumentation theory to include the sorts of arguments people actually enter into’, and for which it is necessary to study what he has termed as “coalescent argumentation” (1996, 1997). Gilbert is interested in studying arguments that occur in complex social activities and by means of which arguers attempt to overcome disagreement and satisfy complex needs, i.e. coalescent arguments. For Gilbert, the disagreement that gives rise to arguments is not to be understood in terms of claims, statements or propositions, but rather in terms of positions, which for him are ‘matrixes of beliefs, attitudes, emotions, insights, and values connected to a claim’ (1997, p. 105). Consequently, Gilbert emphasises that, in a coalescent argument, arguers are not necessarily only aimed at getting their claims accepted. Getting one’s claim accepted, which is taken by many to be the (rhetorical) goal of argumentation, is according to him just one of the goals arguers might have.

In identifying the goals arguers have as they engage in a coalescent argument, Gilbert distinguishes between goals that are ‘broad and deep-seated determinants of behaviour’, which he refers to as motives, and goals which are

situation-specific (1997, p. 68).¹ Situation-specific goals can be either *task goals*, which are goals that form the immediate strategic object of the encounter, or *face goals*, which are goals that concern the relationship between the participants, including their need to maintain or terminate the interaction. According to Gilbert, arguers engaged in an argumentative interaction will pursue goals that belong to each of the three categories of goals. While acknowledging that, in general, task goals are the primary strategic goals in the pursuit of which one engages in argumentation to start with, Gilbert emphasises that sometimes arguers' other goals can become more important than the primary goal (2007, p. 151).

The multiple goals that Gilbert identifies are individual participant's goals rather than goals of the argumentative encounter. However, unlike Walton and Krabbe's individual goals, they are not irrelevant to the assessment of rationality. Gilbert identifies the goal of coalescent argumentation as bringing about "an agreement between two arguers based on the conjoining of their positions in as many ways as possible" (1997, p. 70). He explains that in order to bring an argument to a mutually agreeable end with both parties content with the outcome, i.e. in order to reach "a coalescent situation incorporating as much as possible of the divergent views", the number of arguers' goals satisfied must be maximised (1996, p. 224). So, in other words, for Gilbert, a good argument is an argument that contributes to bringing about an agreement based on maximally fulfilling the arguer's goals and needs as well as the goals and needs of the other arguers involved. Also, unlike Walton's dialogue types, which are defined in terms of the different external functions that argumentation fulfils in the particular context that the dialogue type models. Gilbert's coalescent argumentation is defined by one internal goal that governs the exchange of arguments in a particular setting, namely the interpersonal argumentation among familiars.

3. MONO-FUNCTIONAL ACCOUNTS OF GOALS IN ARGUMENTATION

Ralph Johnson (2000) offers one of the main mono-functional accounts of goals in argumentation. In his book, *Manifest Rationality*, he develops his own view of what argumentation is. Aware of the importance of seeing arguments as products and processes as well as practices, he sets himself to the task of developing a theory of argument that includes all of the three dimensions (2000, p. xi). In this endeavour, developing a "healthy concept of argument" is the necessary first step, he asserts.

Although he acknowledges that "Argumentation clearly serves to help us achieve many different goals, among them persuasion, justification, inquiry, belief maintenance, decision making, and so forth" (2000, p. 12), Johnson emphasises that "the practice of argumentation is best understood as an exercise in manifest rationality" (p. 1). That is to say that being an exercise in what he calls *manifest rationality* is what is distinctive of argumentation (p. 144). As he explains,

¹ Gilbert borrows the concept of motives as a concept that refers to "broad and deep-seated determinants of behaviour" from Dillard (1990, p. 72).

What is distinctive of argumentation is that it is an exercise in manifest rationality, by which I mean not only that a good argument is itself a rational product, a product of reasons, reasoning, and reasoners but that it is part of the nature of the enterprise that this product must appear to be rational as well (ibid).

Manifest rationality, the distinctive goal of argumentation, is the basis for rational persuasion, which Johnson takes to be the goal of argumentative discourse, and a goal of arguers. As he puts it,

from the pragmatic point of view, then, an argument is discourse directed toward rational persuasion. By rational persuasion, I mean that the arguer wishes to persuade the other to accept the conclusion on the basis of the reasons and considerations cited, and those alone (p. 160).

The rational persuasion is based on the manifest of rationality but not limited to it. For Johnson, the manifest of rationality is the illative tier of argumentation and rational persuasion is its dialectical tier.

Johnson sees rational persuasion as “preeminent” among the other functions of argumentation. He explains that rational persuasion is preeminent in the sense that argumentation serves the purpose of rational persuasion, “in the first instance”, and only then can it serve other purposes such as inquiry for example. As he explains it, “There are other purposes or functions that argument serves, such as to inquire into some matter or to solidify a point of view. For example, the use of argumentation for inquiry, which Johnson describes as self-persuasion, is dependent on argument as persuasion, he claims. According to him, “we first learn the practice of persuading others then we can use that practice to inquire; that is, to persuade ourselves” (p. 149). As it will be shown later in section 4, Johnson distinction between rational persuasion and other (external) functions of argumentation is very important.²

Another important mono-functional account of goals in argumentation is the account offered within the pragma-dialectical framework. In reviewing this account, it is important to capture the development from the standard version of the theory, developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 2004), to the extended version, developed by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (1999, 2003) and later elaborated in van Eemeren (2010). In the literature of the standard pragma-dialectics, four interrelated goals of argumentation can be found.

First, in the characterisation van Eemeren and Grootendorst offer of the speech act complex of argumentation, argumentation is defined as an attempt to justify an opinion (1984, Ch. 2). Second, also in the characterisation of the speech act, the goal of convincing an opponent of the acceptability of an opinion is mentioned. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst, the essential condition for the illocutionary act complex argumentation states that “advancing the constellation

² In granting rational persuasion a preeminent status among other (external) functions of argumentation, Johnson follows Hamblin, who writes: “One of the purposes of argument, whether we like it or not, is to convince, and our criteria would be less than adequate if they had nothing to say about how well an argument may meet this purpose (1970, p. 241).

of statements S_1, S_2 (..., S_n) counts as an attempt by S to *justify* O to L's satisfaction, i.e. to *convince* L of the acceptability of O" (1984, p. 43, my emphasis). The two goals of justifying the expressed opinion and of convincing the opponent of its acceptability appear also, and similarly in a strongly linked manner, in the general definition that van Eemeren and Grootendorst offer for argumentation,³ in their *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation*,

Argumentation is a verbal, social, and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint (2004, p. 1).

The third and fourth goals that are often associated with the pragma-dialectical approach are also closely related. In fact, the goals of critical testing of points of view and of (critically) resolving the difference of opinion are generally taken to be the goals that van Eemeren and Grootendorst attribute to argumentation. Indeed, the two goals appear often enough in the pragma-dialectical literature to justify this understanding. For example, in *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions*, van Eemeren and Grootendorst clearly state that they follow Wenzel (1979) in advocating a dialectical approach in which debates must be conducted for the critical testing of expressed opinions (p. 93), and that they consequently "regard argumentation as part of a critical discussion about an expressed opinion" (1984, p. 17). Also, later, in the same book, they assert that in their approach, they "assume that the argumentation is part of a discussion serving the interactional purpose of obtaining a resolution of a dispute (...) concerning an expressed opinion (...)" (p. 66). It is important to note that, as van Eemeren and Grootendorst clearly state, the goal of critically resolving a difference of opinion⁴ is attributed to argumentation when argumentation is viewed as part of a critical discussion, which is what they recommend analysts of argumentation should do. In other words, it is the ideal model of a critical discussion, which can be seen as the ideal of an argumentative exchange, rather than argumentation itself, that is aimed at the critical resolution of a difference of opinion (2004, Ch. 3).

³ Van Eemeren and Grootendorst view justifying and convincing as the two aspects of the complex speech act of argumentation (1984, p. 51). They explain that arguing and convincing are two conventionally linked but distinct speech acts. The two speech acts have different happiness conditions: while the (illocutionary) speech act of arguing is correct and happy if the listener understands that the speaker advanced pro-argumentation, i.e. is justifying an opinion, for the (perlocutionary) speech act of convincing to be happy, the listener needs to accept the claim that is being justified, i.e. being convinced (1984, pp. 49-50).

⁴ In this paper, I am assuming that the resolution of the difference of opinion, being the goal of a critical discussion, needs to be understood as a critical resolution of the difference of opinion, i.e. a resolution that is reached by means of critical testing, rather than a consensual resolution of the difference of opinion as it is often taken by critics of the pragma-dialectical approach. As van Eemeren and Houtlosser clearly put it, "in this model (of a critical discussion) argumentative discourse is conceived as aimed at resolving a difference of opinion *by putting the acceptability of the 'standpoints' at issue to the test*" (2003, p. 387, my emphasis).

As a matter of fact, it is important to keep in mind the difference between argumentation as a speech act (complex) and the ideal model of a critical discussion in which the speech act of argumentation ideally occurs. While justifying an opinion and convincing another person are the individual goals of an arguer who performs the speech act, the goal of critically testing an opinion or critically resolving a difference of opinion are collective goals that are attributed to the arguers under the assumption that they are pursuing an ideal argumentative interaction. Nevertheless, all of the goals can be considered as internal goals of argumentation. The goals of justifying and convincing are goals that characterise the act of arguing and the goal of critical resolution is the goal that represents the intrinsic function of argumentation as a type of social communicative interaction.

In the extended theory, an account for more goals is provided. First, by means of the concept of strategic manoeuvring (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999, 2003), arguers are attributed the (rhetorical) goal to persuade.⁵ Second, by means of the concept of argumentative activity types (van Eemeren, 2010; van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2005), institutional goals are attributed to arguers. Similar to Walton and Krabbe's dialogue types, the concept was introduced in the vein of accounting for the different contexts in which argumentation occurs when examining argumentative exchanges.⁶ The concept characterises the conventionalised more or less institutionalised⁷ communicative practices in which argumentation plays a central role. In view of it, arguers engaged in discussions in contexts that are more or less institutionalised are attributed goals that represent the socio-political purposes for which argumentation is used. Overall, in its extended version, the pragma-dialectical theory speaks of three types of arguers' goals: dialectical, rhetorical and institutional.⁸

⁵ The pragma-dialectical rhetorical aim of getting one's standpoint accepted, which is attributed to arguers by the concept of strategic manoeuvring, is not exactly the same as the goal to convince the other of a certain standpoint, which van Eemeren and Grootendorst had already included in the essential condition of the speech act of argumentation. While both the goal to convince and the rhetorical goal are expressed by an acceptance of the standpoint at issue, convincing is by definition dialectically reasonable and the goal to persuade is not necessarily. The rhetorical goal is sometimes referred to as the goal to persuade (e.g. van Eemeren, 2010, p. 264). But more often, it is referred to, in more general terms, as being rhetorically effective.

⁶ Argumentative activity types are "cultural artefacts [within argumentative discourse] that can be identified on the basis of careful empirical observation of argumentative practice" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2005). Unlike Walton's dialogue types, which combine normative and descriptive characteristics, activity types are consistently descriptive. See Lewiński (2010, Ch. 2) for a good critique on the normative descriptive issue in Walton's Dialogue types.

⁷ Van Eemeren and Houtlosser use the term institutional in a very broad sense, to cover not only formally established organisations but also "socially and culturally established macro-contexts (...) in which certain (formally or informally) conventionalized communicative practices have developed" (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 129).

⁸ According to van Eemeren, the three types of goals need to be taken into account when argumentative exchanges are examined. As he puts it, "in analyzing and evaluating argumentative discourse we need to take account not only of the dialectical and rhetorical aims intrinsic to strategic maneuvering but also of the institutional goals of the communicative activity types in which the argumentative discourse takes place" (2010, p. 159).

The dialectical aims are specifications of the goal of critical resolution of the difference of opinion tailored to the different stages of the resolution process. They are collective: they express what the interaction between arguers at a certain stage of the discussion should be aimed at. Unlike dialectical goals, the rhetorical goals of arguers are individual goals that capture the way each of the parties tries to steer the argumentative exchange to his or her own favour at every stage of the discussion (see examples of dialectical and rhetorical aims in van Eemeren, 2010, p. 45). Arguers' institutional goals are generally collective goals that characterise the function of the argumentative interaction as a whole rather than the individual institutional ambitions of arguers. The three types of goals can also be considered as goals of the practice of argumentation. While dialectical and rhetorical goals are intrinsic goals, in the sense that the same goals characterise the practice of argumentation in any context, institutional goals represent extrinsic context-specific functions of argumentation.

As it will become clear in the next section, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goals of argumentation is important when examining (especially when evaluating) public political arguments. But before I move to the discussion of a framework in which public political arguments are examined, I would like to briefly mention the work of two more scholars that is relevant to my goal in this paper. First, I would like to refer to the work of Lilian Bermejo-Luque (2010, 2011), who emphasises, maybe more than anyone else, the need to distinguish between the intrinsic and extrinsic values of argumentation. Bermejo-Luque follows Toulmin's idea that there is only one function that is "the primary function of arguments, and that the other uses, the other functions which arguments have for us, are in a sense secondary, and parasitic of this primary justificatory use" (1958, p. 12). But Bermejo-Luque would rather speak of values and goals rather than functions.⁹ As she explains, for her:

The idea will be, roughly, that there are goals that make of certain behaviour argumentation, and additional goals that we may pursue by arguing. Fulfilling such constitutive goals of argumentation will be arguing well. The intrinsic argumentative value of a piece of discourse will be a measure of this achievement, whereas the instrumental values that a piece of argumentation may have will be a measure of its adequacy as a means to different ends (2010, p. 464).

According to Bermejo-Luque, the constitutive goal of argumentation is justification in the sense of "showing a target-claim to be correct". As she puts it, "aiming at justifying is what makes of a certain communicative activity argumentation. And, correspondingly, good argumentation will be argumentation that actually achieves justification, and justification will be the intrinsic value of argumentation just

⁹ In fact, Bermejo-Luque makes a very strong claim about defining argumentation in terms of a function. In opposition what she called value instrumentalism, she argues that "justification is the constitutive value of argumentation just because we are assuming that arguing is trying to justify and, consequently, that 'justifying that p' is equivalent to 'arguing well for p'. But precisely because of this, this conception of argumentative value is not instrumental: the justification of our claims is not something that we might achieve or fail to achieve after arguing well; nor is something that we may achieve by other means" (2010, p. 466).

because argumentation, constitutively, is an attempt at justifying” (2010, p. 466). Despite her emphasis on the differences between her own proposal and the other approaches, Bermejo-Luque’s view of justifying as the core of what argumentation is comes out very similar to van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s view of justifying an expressed opinion as the essential condition for argumentation and even to Johnson’s view that manifest rationality is what is distinctive of argumentation.

Second, I would like to refer to the work of Steven Patterson (2010, 2011), who is also concerned with the question of what is distinctive of argumentation. However, unlike Bermejo-Luque, Patterson is not interested in what constitutes the practice but rather in the function that distinguishes it from other communicative practices. Patterson distinguishes between the *telos* of argumentation, which is the function that argumentation serves better than alternative modes of linguistic social interaction, and what he refers to as “the different effects argumentation can have”.¹⁰ He argues that underlying the different functions that scholars consider as functions of argumentation, there is the *telos* of what he calls *rational doxastic coordination*. According to him, while doxastic coordination, which is “the bringing into equilibrium or harmony of the opinions or beliefs of multiple persons, without respect to the means employed”, can be reached by argumentation as well as other types of practices (2011, p. 15), rational doxastic coordination cannot be reached but through argumentation (2011, p. 18). It is interesting that Patterson does not present rational doxastic coordination as an alternative to the different social functions proposed by argumentation scholars, but rather as a unifying function. He says:

“The idea of rational doxastic coordination is a unifying idea. It is aimed at showing how apparently disparate functions of argument are really all members of the same family by showing what it is that they all have in common; the common destination towards which they all lead by varying degrees” (2011, p. 19).

In the next section, I will draw from the different proposals discussed above,¹¹ aiming at formulating a framework that is good for examining public political arguments.

¹⁰ Patterson’s proposal can be seen as a response to Jean Goodwin (2007) who criticizes what she refers to as *function-claims* made by so many argumentation scholars. According to Goodwin, there is no one single function for argumentation. Argumentation is used for different purposes in different contexts. Therefore, one cannot derive norms from functions. It is important to mention, here, that Goodwin uses functions in the sense of (extrinsic) purposes for which argumentation is used. These are basically the goals that arguers have when they engage in argumentation, both as individuals and collectively, and they are different from the (constitutive) goal that defines the act of arguing in all the instances it is used regardless of the intentions of arguers.

¹¹ The review above does by no means cover all the work that has been done by modern argumentation scholars on goals in argumentation. Of the relevant contributions that could not be covered, mainly for consideration of space, the works of Christopher Tindale (1999) and of Robert Pinto (2010) are particularly worth mentioning.

4. A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLITICAL ARGUMENTS

From the review in the previous sections, it becomes clear that when speaking about goals in argumentation, scholars speak of goals of different natures. Before I move to the discussion of a framework for goals in public political arguments, I would like to highlight four distinctions that are relevant for this task. When speaking of goals in argumentation, it is important to distinguish, first, between the goals of arguers and the goals of argumentation itself. Even though, in many cases, these two types of goals coincide, the distinction is important, especially for the evaluation of argumentation. Second, within the goals of argumentation, it is important to distinguish between internal goals and external uses. This is also crucial for the evaluation of argumentation. A third distinction can be made, within the internal goals of argumentation, between constitutive goals of arguments and intrinsic functions of it. Despite its importance, I am not sure this distinction is relevant to the examination of public political arguments. Fourth, a distinction needs to be made, within the goals of arguers, between individual and collective goals. The distinction is especially relevant for approaches that see argumentation as an interaction between different agents.

In Table 1, below, the different goals attributed in the different frameworks discussed in the previous sections are classified in terms of the four distinctions, I have just highlighted:

Goals Approaches	Goals of arguers		Goals of argumentation		
	Individual goals	Collective goals	Internal		External uses
			Constitutive Goal	Intrinsic function	
Walton & Krabbe's dialogue types	Arguers' goals in dialogue types	Goals of dialogue types			Arguers' individual goals; Goals of dialogue types
Gilbert's coalescent argumentation	Face and task goals; Motives	Reach a coalescent situation		Reach a coalescent situation	Reach a coalescent situation
Johnson's manifest rationality	Rational persuasion; Justification; Inquiry; Belief-maintenance; Decision-making		Manifest rationality; Rational persuasion	Rational persuasion	Justification; Inquiry; Belief-maintenance; Decision-making
vEG's speech act complex of argumentation	Justify an opinion; Convince of the acceptability of the opinion		Justify an opinion;	Convince of the acceptability of an opinion	Consecutive perlocutionary consequences of the speech act of arguing
vEG's critical discussion		Critical resolution of a difference of opinion		Critical resolution of a difference of opinion	
vEH's strategic manoeuvring	Dialectical goals; Rhetorical goal				
vEH's activity types	Institutional goals	Institutional goals			Institutional goals of activity types
Bermejo-Luque	Justify a claim; Persuade		Justify a claim	Persuade	
Patterson	Arguers' individual motivations	Arguers' collective motivations		Rational doxastic coordination	

Table 1: Goals in Argumentation

Here, I would like to emphasise that the distinctions do not create mutually exclusive categories of goals. As the table clearly shows, some goals can belong to several categories. The distinctions are however important for each category of goals has a different role in the examination of argumentation.

In examining public political arguments, I am guided by considerations derived from the characteristics of the practice of argumentation in the political domain and the benefits that can be gained from adopting a certain view on goals in examining arguments. A first consideration, when deciding which view on the internal goal of argumentation to adopt, is related to the discursive interactive

nature of the public political arguments. It is important that the internal goal of argumentation adopted reflects that. All of the internal goals presented in the frameworks reviewed above do, at least to some extent, consider argument as discourse and they all also acknowledge the minimal interaction involved in arguing, namely that an argument is addressed at an other and is aimed at a reaction from this other. However, only the goals identified by Gilbert's coalescent argumentation and by van Eemeren and Grootendorst's critical discussion, do capture the kind of interaction that is involved in an argumentative exchange, an interaction that is shaped by the contributions of all the participants in it. Of the two frameworks, the critical discussion seems to be better suited for the examination of public political arguments. This is mainly because the model focuses on arguers' commitments rather than on their motives, needs and desires, as Gilbert's coalescent argumentation does. Indeed, Gilbert clearly states that coalescent argumentation is a good framework for the examination of interpersonal arguments that occur between familiars. In public political arguments, unlike in interpersonal arguments, it is important to opt for a view that is in line with the idea of accountability in politics. A framework that focuses on arguer's commitments is therefore recommended.

A second important consideration to take into account is related to the nature of goals that are typically pursued in public political arguments. These goals are external goals of argumentation that are mostly derived from the more-or-less formal institutional contexts in which the arguments occur.¹² Taking that into account, it is important that the external goals attributed to argumentation represent its context-dependent more-or-less-formal institutional uses in politics. In view of that, Walton and Krabbe's dialogue type and van Eemeren and Houtlosser's activity types provide good proposals. Van Eemeren's view that in an argumentative activity type argumentation serves purposes that are "pertinent to the *raison d'être* of the institution" (2010, p. 129) is particularly beneficial. Unlike the goals of dialogue types, the institutional goals of activity types do not replace the internal goal of an argumentative interaction, but rather complement it, by adding an external function or use for the interaction. Nevertheless, the distinction that Walton and Krabbe's make between individual and collective goals of arguers is undoubtedly relevant. The individual goals are important in shaping the argumentative exchange, and are therefore necessary to take into account when analysing argumentative exchanges. However, as it has been argued by Walton and Krabbe, it is the collective goals of arguers, or what can also be described as the goal of the argumentative interaction, what is important when assessing the rationality of argumentation.

¹² Here, I am following van Eemeren and Houtlosser and using the term institutional in a very broad sense, to cover not only formally established organisations but also "socially and culturally established macro-contexts (...) in which certain (formally or informally) conventionalized communicative practices have developed" (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 129). Furthermore, I also subscribe to Zarefsky's understanding of political argumentation as institutionalised in the sense of having recurrent patterns and characteristics that allow generalisations (2008).

However, public political arguments are typically multi-purposive. This is to a great extent a result of the multi-dimensional nature of the responsibility of politicians as well as the openness of public discourse to individuals and groups that have different interests and needs as well as different commitments and positions. This is also the case in public debates just as it is in considerably formal institutional contexts, such as the British or the European Parliament. Parliamentary debates, for example, are not only means for deliberating policies and legislations, but also means for holding the executives to account. In an earlier work (Mohammed, 2009, Forthcoming a), I have argued that this makes public political arguments a *multi-layered activity type* where arguers pursue several legitimate collective goals. Each of the layers is defined by one of the collective goals pursued. In this kind of practices, and to a great extent as a result of the different purposes, several issues get discussed in the same argumentative exchange. Typically, arguers craft their contributions to address several issues simultaneously.¹³ In earlier work, I have also proposed that the argumentative exchanges where several issues are addressed be reconstructed as several simultaneous discussions (2011, 2013, forthcoming b). The discussions, in this proposal, are dialectical analytic constructions. Two discussions are simultaneous if there is at least one argument, or one argumentative move, that plays a role in both discussions without any of the discussions being subordinate to the other. Such a reconstruction of the exchange is beneficial for it allows for capturing the strategic design of argumentative moves that are crafted to address several issues at a time.

The important question that follows from this proposal is obviously about the evaluation of the reasonableness of argumentative moves that are performed as part of such multi-purposive exchanges. As Johnson has nicely put it, a good argument is “one that fulfills its purpose” (2000, p. 181). The question here becomes which purpose do we take: the internal goal of argumentation or the external use of it? Let alone the question about which of the external uses of argumentation to take. On the one hand, I believe that, in order for the examination of argumentation to benefit the practice of public political arguments, it is important that both purposes are taken into account. On the other hand, I also think that it is necessary to keep the norms that are derived from the internal goal of argumentation separate from those derived from its external political uses. In other words, it is important that the assessment of argumentative rationality remain distinguishable from the assessment of political rationality. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser suggest that for evaluating argumentation in a particular context the analyst needs to apply general argumentative norms that are specified by contextual criteria. That means that for them, the primary norms remain argumentative. I agree with van Eemeren and Houtlosser that political considerations should not modify but just specify argumentative norms. It is however necessary to make sure that the two norms are not in conflict.

Public political arguments should be examined from a perspective in which the internal goals of argumentation are in principle instrumental for the

¹³ For examples of how arguers strategically craft their contributions to address several issues simultaneously, see Mohammed (forthcoming a, forthcoming b).

achievement of the political uses of argumentation. For that the reconstruction of the argumentative exchanges in a public political argument is important. For example, assuming that the internal goal of argumentation is to critically test points of view, and that the public political argument analysed is aimed at holding the executive to account, the standpoints attributed to arguers need to express an evaluation of the performance of the executive. From such a perspective, the assessment of argumentative rationality is also indicative of the political rationality: an argumentative move that contributes to the critical testing of a standpoint concerning the performance of the executive will also contribute to the holding of the executive to account. This reconstruction makes sure that an evaluation in terms of the argumentative norms will also be meaningful in political terms. The analyst needs to take this consideration into account in reconstructing the different layers that constitute a multi-purposive argumentative activity. In every layer, it is important to adopt a perspective from which the goal of critical testing is instrumental for the achievement of the institutional goal. As a result, the judgment of rationality of an argumentative move will be dependent on the function it is assumed to fulfil. A move that contributes to the discussion of several issues simultaneously or serves several political uses at the same time will be assessed differently dependent on the use and the issue. This multiple assessment is unavoidable given how multi-faceted public political arguments are.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have reviewed and compared major accounts of goals in argumentative discourse, aiming to formulate an account that is suitable for the analysis and evaluation of public political arguments, where typically multiple legitimate goals are pursued simultaneously. On the basis of the review, I have identified four distinctions that need to be taken into account when thinking of goals in argumentation. First, it is important to distinguish between the goals of arguers and the goals of argumentation itself. Second, within the goals of argumentation, it is important to distinguish between internal goals and external uses. Third, within the internal goals of argumentation, a distinction can be made between constitutive goals of arguments and intrinsic functions of it. Finally, within the goals of arguers, a distinction needs to be made between individual and collective goals. The goals in each of the categories distinguished play different roles in the examination of argumentation.

In formulating a proposal for a framework for examining public political arguments, I was guided by considerations derived from the characteristics of the practice of argumentation in the political domain and the benefits that can be gained by adopting a certain view on goals in examining arguments. I argued that the framework needs to capture the discursive interactive nature of the public political arguments and consider arguer's commitments rather than their beliefs, desire or motives. I proposed to consider justification as the internal goal of argumentation and critical testing as the internal goal of an argumentative interaction. The multitude of institutional goals pursued in public political arguments, which are external collective goals, need to be considered as goals that complement, rather

than replace, the internal goals of argumentation. In order to do justice to the multi-purposive nature of public political arguments, I have suggested viewing public political arguments as *multi-layered activity types*, where each layer is defined by one of the collective goals pursued. I have also proposed that the argumentative exchanges in this activity type be reconstructed as several *simultaneous discussions*. This would allow the analyst to highlight the strategic choices involved in crafting argumentative moves that address several issue at the same time. Finally, I proposed that public political arguments be examined from a perspective in which the internal goals of argumentation are in principle instrumental for the achievement of the political uses of argumentation. This, I believe is necessary for an argumentative evaluation of argumentation to benefit the practice of political arguments. I argued that it is important to take both internal purpose and external uses of arguments into account in the evaluation, but that it is equally important to keep the norms that are derived from the internal goal of argumentation separate from those derived from its external political uses. In order to achieve that, the reconstruction of the argumentative exchanges must highlight the instrumentality of the goal of critical testing to the achievement of institutional goals. The proposal will yield assessments that are meaningful, both argumentatively and politically, but which are dependent on the external political goal considered. Consequently, in multi-purposive practices such as public political arguments, this means that multiple assessments are reached.

The framework proposed, is by no means final. The proposal is rough and preliminary. It certainly requires elaboration and refinement, but I hope it offers a good starting point.

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