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## Procedural Reasonableness and Normativity of Argumentation

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## **Procedural Reasonableness and Normativity of Argumentation: Pragma-Dialectical Responses to Epistemologist Objections**

### **La razonabilidad procedimental y la normatividad de la argumentación: Una respuesta pragma-dialéctica a objeciones epistemológicas**

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**Abstract:** Pragma-dialectical argumentation theory has received criticism from epistemological argumentation theorists. While the former emphasizes argumentation as aimed at resolving differences of opinion through adequate procedures, the latter emphasizes that argumentation is aimed at reaching a justified conclusion of the argumentation. In this paper pragma-dialectics is analyzed and two objections considered. The first objection pertains to the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonable argumentation, the other to the lack of an account of normativity of argumentation in pragma-dialectics. It is argued that the objections are not convincing.

**Keywords:** Epistemology, normativity, pragma-dialectics, reasonableness.

**Resumen:** La teoría pragma-dialéctica de la argumentación ha recibido críticas de los teóricos de la epistemología de la argumentación. Mientras los primeros enfatizan que la argumentación está dirigida a resolver diferencias de opinión a través de procedimientos adecuados, los últimos enfatizan que la argumentación está dirigida a alcanzar una conclusión justificada. En este trabajo la teoría pragma-dialéctica es analizada a la luz de dos objeciones. La primera objeción se relaciona con la definición pragma-dialéctica de una argumentación razonable, y la segunda con la inexistencia de una explicación pragma-dialéctica de la normatividad argumentativa. Aquí se argue que las objeciones no son convincentes.

**Palabras clave:** Epistemología, normatividad, pragma-dialéctica, razonabilidad.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to account for and to evaluate part of the controversy between pragma-dialecticians and epistemologists. Pragma-dialecticians accentuate that the process of argumentation is essential for evaluating its reasonableness. Epistemologists instead emphasize argumentation's conduciveness to adoption of justified belief in evaluating the reasonableness of argumentation.

My hypothesis is that epistemologists beg the question when they accuse pragma-dialecticians for not providing a suitable definition of reasonable argumentation and that it is outright false to claim that the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation does not account for the normativity of argumentation.

My method is to shortly present the pragma-dialectical theory. I then review two objections to pragma-dialectics. The first objection is against the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonable argumentation. I evaluate pragma-dialecticians' response and provide an alternative defense. The second objection against pragma-dialectics concerns normativity. I find this objection to pragma-dialectics preposterous and argue that epistemic theories, especially objectivists', should be concerned about rising the issue of normativity since it speak in favor of pragma-dialectics. My own responses are not obviously in line with pragma-dialectical orthodoxy, but I only use what is already present in pragma-dialectics when stating them. So if there is any virtue in the defense of pragma-dialectics that I give, it is strength of pragma-dialectics.

## 2. Standard Pragma-Dialectics

Argumentation on the pragma-dialectical account is *dialogic* and is described as the putting forward and calling into question of standpoints in ordered turns. The participants of argumentation are the *protagonist* and the *antagonist*. The protagonist is the proponent of the standpoint put forward, and the antagonist is he or she who calls the protagonist's standpoint into question. A *standpoint* is whatever proposition the protagonist argues for and the antagonist calls into question. If the antagonist chooses to criti-

cize the standpoint the protagonist may choose to defend his standpoint by new argumentation. If the protagonist chooses not to defend his or her standpoint against some received criticism, then the protagonist is obliged to retract his or her standpoint. If the antagonist chooses not to continue to call a standpoint into question after the protagonist has defended it, then the antagonist is obliged to accept the standpoint. There are other moves of argumentation, all envisaged in and secured through the pragma-dialectical *discussion rules* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003). The discussion rules are instrumental for resolutions of differences of opinion. Differences of opinion are resolved when protagonist either withdraws defended standpoint or antagonist accepts protagonist's standpoint.

It is conjectured that, to reach a resolution of the difference of opinion participants will be aided by a set of procedural rules instrumental for reaching resolution. If the rules are instrumental in this sense they are called *problem-valid*. The *stages* of a critical discussion conducted in accordance with the pragma-dialectical procedure are four: the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage, and the concluding stage. To each stage different argument moves are connected, though some moves may be conducted at any stage. Argumentation moves are regulated by the discussion rules.

I assume that the discussion rules in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003) indeed capture the idea that they will be instrumental for the resolution of a difference of opinion. The rules prescribes that no precondition on the status of the participants apply; that there is no obligation on any participant to keep on defending or criticizing a standpoint; that they assume their respective roles as protagonist and antagonist throughout the discussion unless they agree otherwise. Further, the rules prescribe that the participants may refer to a list of shared premises or perform a sub-discussion to establish whether an attack or defense of the propositional content of argumentation is successful; that the participants may refer to agreed argument schemes and their validity to establish whether an attack or defense of the force of justification or refutation of argumentation is successful; that a conclusive defense of a standpoint presupposes a successful defense of both its proposition content and its force of justification or refutation while a conclusive attack presupposes a successful attack on either. The rules also prescribes that any participant may retract, defend, or attack

any piece of argumentation throughout the discussion that has not yet been successfully attacked or defended; that any participant may perform or request a clarification of any piece of argumentation and is obliged to abide by such a request throughout the entire discussion. Lastly, the pragma-dialectical discussion rules prescribes that participants perform the moves described in the rules in ordered turns and may no more than once perform the same move against the same discussant with the same role. Using these rules will guide participants in argumentation to reach a resolution of difference of opinion. If a standpoint has been conclusively attacked or defended and the rules have been observed, a participant is obliged to accept or retract his or her standpoint.

This is what is meant by saying that the discussion rules are instrumental for reaching resolution of differences of opinion. If participants agree that the rules are to apply the rules are conventionally valid. Pragma-dialectical ideal argumentation occurs if problem and conventional valid discussion rules apply and are not violated.

The pragma-dialectical discussion rules and the intersubjective procedural steps of argumentation they prescribe constitute the framework in which parties to argumentation try to find out whether or not a standpoint can withstand criticism. If there is a difference of opinion it has been resolved *“when the arguments advanced lead the antagonist to accept the standpoint defended, or when the protagonist retracts his standpoint as a consequence of the critical reactions of the antagonist”* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003, p. 365). The rules prescribe how to reach a point in the discussion when one of the discussants is obliged to retract his or her defense or attack of the standpoint around which the argumentation revolves. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst consider these rules *“possible to satisfy a necessary condition for the resolution of a difference of opinion ... the rules do not guarantee that differences of opinion can always be resolved in practice by means of these rules”* (2003, p. 385).

### **3. Extended Pragma-Dialectics**

Pragma-dialectical argumentation theory has been extended to cover *rhetorical argumentation* and *fallacy theory*. Rhetorical accounts of argu-

mentation concerns the persuasiveness of argumentation (but see Kock, 2009). Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2007, p. 383) say that they “*want to bridge the gap by showing that rhetorical and dialectical approaches are, in fact, complementary*” (p. 382). Fallacy theory is concerned with what render argumentation or arguments fallacious. Argumentation is the process of arguing, while arguments are propositions, premises that support a conclusion. To bridge the gap pragma-dialecticians introduce the notion of ‘strategic maneuvering,’ which “*refers to the efforts arguers make in argumentative discourse to reconcile aiming for rhetorical effectiveness with maintaining dialectical standards of reasonableness*” (p. 383).

In the standard theory we saw that participants try to fulfill dialectical objectives when developing the difference of opinion, when establishing starting points for the critical discussion, when putting forward argumentation pro and con the standpoint discussed, and when determining the outcome of the discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003, p. 366; van Eemeren, Garssen and Meuffels, 2009, p. 21). But as a matter of argumentative practice, discussants also want to “*realize these objectives to the best advantage of the position they adopted*” (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2007, p. 383). According to van Eemeren and Houtlosser each dialectical objective has a rhetorical analogue. That is, when developing their difference of opinion participants want to develop their respective positions as convincingly as possible; when establishing common starting points the discussants want to establish starting points as favorable as possible for their respective positions, and so forth for each dialectical objective.

Strategically maneuvering is balancing of rhetorical objectives against dialectical objectives. In the formulation of the standard theory, if participants’ contribute to dialectical objectives the argumentation will be ideal (cf. p. 383-384) while the rhetorical objectives take into account actual argumentative practice.

With the concept strategic maneuvering we can conceptualize rhetorical argumentation within pragma-dialectics. But it is not always an easy task to find out whether or not discussants succeed in balancing rhetorical and dialectical aims (p. 387). That strategic maneuvering is successful means that it abides by the rules for critical discussion described in the standard theory. The difficulty in evaluating the strategic maneuvering arises since not all critical discussions are bound by the same conventions.

Once strategic maneuvering has been evaluated, if the rhetorical objectives of discussants have overruled dialectical objectives, the strategic maneuvering has 'derailed.' Overriding dialectical objectives with rhetorical objectives in this way is according to van Eemeren and Houtlosser "*on a par with the wrong moves in argumentative discourse designated as fallacies*" (ibid). By evaluating strategic maneuvering, as analyzed in extended pragma-dialectics, we track derailments and fallacious argumentation (pp. 385-387).

These conceptual developments in extended pragma-dialectics allow us to make sense of how participants maneuver to make their standpoints as persuasive as possible when establishing and arguing about starting points, standpoints, and when determining the outcome of argumentation. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser say that the virtues of this extension toward rhetorical argumentation is that "*it makes it possible to take the strategic design of the discourse into consideration*" and "*allows for a more accurate and realistic treatment of the fallacies in the evaluation of argumentative discourse that explains their potential persuasiveness*" (p. 390).

On a par with derailments of strategic maneuvering, fallacies are generated by violation of discussion rules. To violate a discussion rule is equivalent with hindering the aim to resolve a difference of opinion. Van Eemeren, Garsen and Meuffels (2009) state that, "*a fallacy is a hindrance or impediment to the resolution of a disagreement*" and that "[i]n the pragma-dialectical approach, a fallacy is defined as a speech act that counts as a violation of one or more of the rules for a critical discussion" (p. 20). For example, if one participant prevents the other from advancing or criticizing a standpoint their difference of opinion will not be resolvable in an adequate fashion since the difference may not even be explicated; if one participant refuses to defend his or her standpoint the difference of opinion, though explicated, will not be argued for; and so forth for each of the discussion rules.

The point is that, for each discussion rule violated a fallacy is generated. But, as is the case with strategic maneuvering, where derailments and hence fallacious argumentation moves are not easily detected, the evaluation of whether a move in argumentation is violation of a discussion rule and hence fallacious will have to take into account what is conventionally valid in the particular argumentation.

Summarizing this section, in its original formulation the pragma-dialectical theory explains ideal dialectical argumentation. Ideally, arguers put forward and criticize standpoint in accordance with rules that are instrumental for solving differences of opinion. The extended theory accounts for practical, non-ideal, rhetorical argumentation and fallacious argumentation.

#### **4. First Epistemological Objection: Outcome-Reasonableness**

Siegel and Biro (2008) recognizes that according to pragma-dialectics argumentation is reasonable if it proceeds with problem and conventional validity. The concern of Siegel and Biro is that the outcome, i.e., the resolution of the difference of opinion, of argumentation need not be reasonable even according to pragma-dialectics. Siegel and Biro says that,

a move in a critical discussion is acceptable if it comports with the rules governing critical discussions: those rules are reasonable if they are both ‘problem-valid,’ i.e., tend to produce a resolution of the difference of opinion, and ‘conventional-valid,’ i.e., are embedded in a procedure that is acceptable to the discussants. What of the resolution itself? If the parties resolve their difference of opinion by making acceptable argumentative moves, in accordance with reasonable (i.e., problem- and conventional-valid) rules, and, in doing so, come to agree, is the new belief on the part of one of them reasonable? (p. 194)

Siegel and Biro hold that the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonableness is something we do well without in evaluating reasonableness of argumentation. They ask if outcome of argumentation will be reasonable if it is pragma-dialectically reasonable and claim that, “*van Eemeren and Grootendorst are committed to an affirmative answer to this question, independently of any consideration of the probative strength of the reasons offered*” (ibid). For their own part, Siegel and Biro do say that “*disputes resolved in accordance with the pragma-dialectical rules can result in new beliefs that are not reasonable*” (ibid), so it is not apparently their objection that the new beliefs *will not* be reasonable.

The objection to pragma-dialectics is that the belief acquired in the out-



come of argumentation may be unreasonable even though the participants have observed and agreed on the pragma-dialectical discussion rules; and that pragma-dialecticians are bound to hold that the outcome will be reasonable.

## 5. Pragma-Dialectician's Response

Argumentation theory, according to Garssen and van Laar (2010), who defends pragma-dialectics, is the general discipline in which we examine “*how to converse reasonably on the basis of whatever is deemed acceptable by the parties*” (p. 127). And the pragma-dialectical account in particular is one in which “*we consider it argumentatively acceptable for two [discussants] to commence from the idea that their dispute is to be resolved by [seemingly absurd material starting points]*” (ibid). (Originally this point is made in an example that I not mention here. The original words are: “*we consider it argumentatively acceptable for two voters to commence from the idea that their dispute is to be resolved by deciding on which candidate is the most handsome.*”) It is not the task of argumentation theory, according to Garssen and van Laar, to intervene in argumentation and regulate what material starting points are to be considered reasonable. “*Absurd as the case may be, argumentation theorists should not, a priori, rule out the possibility that [a] point of departure is correct*” (ibid).

As we saw in the second section, by *problem-validity* is meant *instrumental for reaching resolution of the difference of opinion*, and by *conventional validity* is meant *mutually accepted by participants*. And, as we saw in the objection above, according to Siegel and Biro the problem-validity of the pragma-dialectical procedure does not warrant reasonable outcome of pragma-dialectical argumentative procedure. But Garssen and van Laar now retort: the objection fails to appreciate the distinction between what is theoretically ideal with regard to reasonableness and what is pragmatically and dialectically reasonable. Garssen and van Laar reiterate the point of van Eemeren and Grootendorst: “*The norms for critical discussion are universal in the sense that they constitute the ideal of critical discussion that is applicable in all settings*” (ibid, cf. van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003, pp. 265-266). So, if the discussion rules are adopted, i.e., if the pro-

cedure is problem and conventionally valid, the outcome of argumentation that is the resolution of differences of opinion might be reached in an ideal fashion. Remember that the rules in the standard theory are necessary, not sufficient, for reaching resolution of differences of opinion. However, this does not mean that arguers have no freedom to omit certain rules or to incorporate others and to agree on shared premises. Participants are allowed sufficient freedom to proceed in ways they both agree on in pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. That is, argumentation is ideal on the condition that criticism of standpoints is promoted.

Garssen and van Laar's (2010) response to Siegel and Biro, as I understand it, is that the latter misinterprets pragma-dialectics as an *objectivist-ideal* theory of argumentation, when in fact it is a *pragma-dialectical* theory. As the defendants point out,

... the use of argumentation or logical schemes is, unlike the choice of material starting points, not a matter of mere agreement between participants, although for a resolution this agreement is a necessary condition, but a scheme has an additional requirement that it furthers critical testing. The problem validity of the discussion rules in general, and the appropriateness of the argumentation and reasoning schemes in particular, is the result of assessing them, not in view of their epistemic worth, but rather in view of the degree to which they promote criticism, something insufficiently appreciated by Biro and Siegel (2008, p. 129)

Consequently, in the sense that argumentation according to pragma-dialectics is considered reasonable on the basis that the procedure further critical testing, the pragma-dialectical discussion rules are universal requirements, universal in the sense that for any critical discussion they are necessary for the resolution to be reasonably reached.

It is also important to note that the third rule of pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003, p. 370) obliges the protagonist of a standpoint to defend a standpoint if the antagonist has used the permission to challenge the standpoint, in principle. In practice there may be reasons to postpone the discussion, the protagonist may, e.g., not have had time to prepare a defense. Likewise, the fourteenth rule (p. 383) prescribes when protagonist is obliged to retract a standpoint and when antagonist is obliged to retract calling into question of protagonist's standpoint as a

result of a conclusive defense of or attack on that standpoint. In connection with this rule van Eemeren and Grootendorst pointed out that the outcome of the discussion might lead to a new discussion. Garssen and van Laar (2010, p. 127) invoke these considerations in their response to the Siegel and Biro's objection: "*The outcome of a critical discussion is not an absolute result.*" Siegel and Biro (2010) interpret this as a concession to the effect that pragma-dialectics cannot ensure that the outcome is epistemically reasonable.

## 6. An Alternative Response to Siegel and Biro

Now I give my alternative pragma-dialectical response to Siegel and Biro. The question at issue, seen from a pragma-dialectical perspective, is: can the resolution of the difference of opinion that is the outcome of argumentation be instrumental for resolving the difference of opinion that was reached in the argumentation? We cannot give a positive answer. To say that the resolution of the difference of opinion is reasonable would be to say that the resolution of the difference of opinion is instrumental for reaching the resolution of the difference of opinion! It is equally strange to reply in the negative, since on Siegel and Biro's interpretation of pragma-dialectical reasonableness that would be equal to saying that the resolution of the difference of opinion is not instrumental for reaching the resolution of the difference of opinion. Hence there seems to be no clear answer to Siegel and Biro's question. Siegel and Biro will happily point out that pragma-dialecticians concede that the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonableness cannot guarantee reasonableness of the outcome of argumentation. How can one retain sympathy to pragma-dialectics?

Siegel and Biro will say that all argumentation is in the business of justifying an outcome-belief (2006a); hence pragma-dialectical reasonableness does not qualify as reasonableness in the epistemic sense. It is no wonder, then, that we cannot answer Siegel and Biro since they will only accept an answer that satisfies a definition of reasonableness that is presupposed in their own theory. But that definition is exactly what is at issue! There is no point arguing for a definition by presupposing it.

Siegel and Biro are after outcome-reasonableness, but we cannot inter-

pret pragma-dialectics as stating that the reasonableness of the outcome of argumentation has any preeminence over the reasonableness of the procedure. If we do interpret pragma-dialectics in this way we are not interpreting it, but rather imposing on it a sense of reasonableness that pragma-dialecticians do not embrace. When they distinguish outcome and process-reasonableness Siegel and Biro seem to require an explanation of how pragma-dialectical reasonableness can guarantee the former ignoring the fact that reasonableness is defined by pragma-dialecticians to cover the latter.

But, I repeat, pragma-dialectical reasonableness is not about evaluating exclusively the probative strength of the justification of premises and conclusion of argumentation—it is in the business of evaluating the procedure to reach the conclusion. To criticize pragma-dialectics for leaving out epistemic reasonableness in its definition of reasonableness is uninteresting, and at best it is to miss the point with pragma-dialectical reasonableness. To criticize pragma-dialectics for not providing the correct definition of reasonableness is, on the other hand, utterly question begging.

My answer to Siegel and Biro contrasts to Garssen and van Laar's in that they instead retreated to defend the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonableness. They argued that that definition is plausible because it is a wide enough to accommodate discussants' freedom to decide on how the procedure is to be carried out and from what material starting points it is to be carried out. Hence wide enough to accommodate discussants' freedom in different instances of argumentation, and narrow enough to maintain an ideal core of argumentation. Garssen and van Laar also invoked van Eemeren and Grootendorst's point that the outcome of argumentation need not be final or absolute, i.e., it might lead the discussants into a new discussion.

I have argued for an alternative response to Siegel and Biro's objection. From my response we see that the bottom line of the reviewed argument is this: should we endorse the outcome perspective from which we judge the reasonableness of the outcome of argumentation or should we endorse the participial perspective from which we judge whether or not the outcome has been reasonably reached? I find it sensible to say that the epistemic approach takes the outcome-perspective, while the opposite is true of pragma-dialectics. Above we saw that Siegel and Biro take it that Garssen and van Laar concede that pragma-dialectics cannot account for the epistemic reasonableness of the outcome. This latter point might be true, but it does

not follow that the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonable argumentation is inferior to an epistemic definition. If epistemologists insist that the pragma-dialectical definition is inferior because it does not provide an account of epistemic, outcome reasonableness, then the very question is begged. The point of departure in my response is that pragma-dialecticians ought not repeat such an unreasonable line of reasoning but point out where epistemological objections fall short of reasonableness. This I hope to have shown.

## 7. Second Epistemological Objection: Normativity

Pragma-dialectical argumentation theory has been criticized for not offering a normative account of argumentation. For instance, Siegel and Biro (2008, p. 194; cf. 2010, p. 460) says that the reasonableness of the process of argumentation is “*manifestly not the way that ‘reasonableness,’ and normativity more generally, are understood in either philosophical or every-day discourse.*” According to Siegel and Biro “*disputes resolved in accordance with pragma-dialectical rules can result in new beliefs that are not reasonable*” (op. cit.)

The objection to pragma-dialectics that it does not give a satisfactory account of the normative dimension of argumentation is preposterous. Before I explain why that is so, let's consider other objections that pragma-dialectics does not give a satisfactory account of normativity in argumentation.

Lumer (2010) suggests that pragma-dialecticians should adopt a ‘qualified’ notion of how differences of opinion are resolved. According to Lumer, it is not sufficient for reasonableness that participants accept an outcome of argumentation, but they should also share subjective justification of it. More recently, Lumer (2012, p. 52) says that the pragma-dialectical aim of argumentation, that is resolution of differences of opinion, “*is usually less worthy to be strived for than ... epistemically qualified consensus, shared justified belief, or at least acceptable belief.*” Bermejo-Luque (2010, p. 465) invoke Moore’s (1903) open-question argument, that one can always ask whether it is really a good of something that it is *instrumental* for something that is good. What she means is, of course, that it is an open question whether the good of argumentation procedure is a good of argumentation.

Why is it preposterous to argue that pragma-dialectics does not provide satisfactory account of normativity in argumentation? The answer is quite straightforward. I first give an uncontroversial definition of ‘norm’ and then explain why pragma-dialectics, beyond any reasonable doubt, is a normative account of argumentation. *Nota bene*, my argument is not based on reading of earlier pragma-dialectics. The argument is therefore not orthodox, but I think it will strike orthodoxy with delight.

It is widely held that ‘social norm’ is to be defined along the following lines. For some situation *S*, and behavior *R*, within a given population *P*: *N* is a norm in *S* for *P* if and only if *R* is believed by a majority of *P* to be the rule in *S*, that this is mutually believed in *P*, and that it is expected by a majority of *P* in *S* that a majority of members of *P* *R*s and that deviation might evoke negative reciprocation (cf. Lewis, 1969, pp. 97-100; Bicchieri, 2006, p. 11; Pettit, 2003, pp. 311-316).

It is obvious that pragma-dialectics provides a normative account of argumentation. Pragma-dialectics is about reasonable procedure of argumentation, and reasonable procedure of argumentation is defined as instrumentality to resolution of differences of opinion in a manner agreed on and accessible to participants. This is stated in rules that prescribe certain argumentative behavior. If one expects not to be interrupted when one presents a standpoint or criticism, expects that one’s opponent will respond accordingly, expects that one’s social position will not affect one’s arguments, all of which is included in the pragma-dialectical discussion rules, and if one believes that this is expected, etc., then what do we have here? In a nutshell: a normative account of argumentation!

Regarding Bermejo-Luque’s value theoretical concerns about the good of that which is instrumental to something good, we can also give a straightforward answer. There are two senses of ‘instrumental value’ (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2002a, p. 25; cf. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, 1999). In a weak sense, what is instrumental to the good is not itself good because it has no value for its own sake but only because it is an instrument. In a strong sense, what is instrumental to the good is itself good, under the condition that it is instrumental to a good, if it has a certain value for its own sake. For instance, Korsgaard’s (1983, p. 264) mink coat is instrumental for keeping its owner warm but also good for its own sake because it gives its owner status, supposing its owner values status as a good.

Now, is instrumentality to resolution of differences of opinion itself a good? It is. Remember the content of pragma-dialectical discussion rules. Among other things, participants of argumentation have a right to call standpoints into question that has not been conclusively defended and ask for clarification throughout the procedure. Furthermore, participants' social positions are not to count for or against their argumentation. The rules are also instrumental for reaching resolution of differences of opinion. Hence they are good for their own sake—supposing we value, e.g., non-oppressive argumentative procedures—and instrumental to the good—that is clear, explicit, accessible and mutually acceptable opinion. So, is the instrumentality of pragma-dialectical discussion rules a good? The answer to Bermejo-Luque is that, no doubt they are.

But have epistemologists who use this objection not a clear conception of norms and distinctions in value theory? I am sure they do, but I am afraid their conceptions of normativity and instrumentality boil down to narrowness, as does their conception of reasonableness.

Objections from normativity against pragma-dialectics, as we can see, e.g., Siegel and Biro (2008, 2010) and Lumer (2010, 2012) are objection from an epistemic conception of normativity. On that conception it is normative that argumentation is conducive to, at least, acceptable belief. However, this is *neither* the usual philosophical *nor* an every-day sense of normativity. Dissenters to pragma-dialectical normativity must present an argument accentuating that their conception of epistemic normativity has preeminence over the social normativity emphasized in pragma-dialectics.

Pragma-dialectician's should embrace arguments about normativity raised by epistemologists, because such argument can be turned to their favor. I will now show how. I presuppose it is agreed that it is a good that arguers' social positions or the loudest voice is not allowed to settle opinion or belief in outcomes of argumentation. Pragma-dialectics provide brake-blocks for precisely such results because it provides a normative account for argumentation procedure. What, in contrast, does the epistemological theory of argumentation provide in terms of normativity?

We find the answer in the above objections: truth conduciveness and intersubjective justification of belief in outcome of argumentation. Now, epistemologists should consider this scenario: Revolt has occurred in community. A few militants have occupied all sources of spreading of informa-

tion and oppress the population with threats of violence. Since the militants possess monopoly of information they are in position to draw correct conclusions about how to run society. Anyone who calls the militants' standpoint into question is silenced. Ask yourselves: which theory of argumentation is best suited to explain why argumentation in this society is not reasonable? The answer should be clear. The scenario is at odds with the normative dimension provided in the pragma-dialectical discussion rules. The normativity of epistemic theories of argumentation, reminiscent of Goldman's (2002, p. 52; cf. 2003, p. 60; cf. Biro and Siegel, 2006a, p. 94) 'monistic veritism,' that the cardinal value of argumentation is true or accurate belief to which other values are subordinate, cannot explain what has gone wrong in the described scenario. Epistemologists might say that, as the scenario is described, the militants are the only ones who are in an *epistemic* situation to run society. They will maintain that if the people desire another regime their desire is not epistemically founded. This is not true. If the people have no access to information then they have no reason to believe that the militants have justified beliefs about how to run society, which is especially problematic to objectivist epistemological theories of argumentation. According to such an objectivist theory whether an argument is good depends on the argument as such, not on the beliefs of the arguer who uses it or the beliefs of the audience (2006a, p. 97). It does not matter, then, what the people believe in my example, they are not justified to call the militants' standpoint into question according to an objectivist epistemological theory of the normativity of argumentation.

I have in this section provided some answers to objections from normativity against the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation and of the good of instrumentality to resolution of differences of opinion. While I am not sure whether my responses are in line with pragma-dialectical orthodoxy, they meet the objections without adding anything to pragma-dialectics. The response also produces a counterexample to epistemologists.

## 8. Conclusion

Epistemological objections to the pragma-dialectical definition of reasonableness of argumentation miss the point or beg the question. Objections



according to which pragma-dialectics does not provide an account of the normative dimension of argumentation are simply wrong.

Admittedly, there appears to be two notions of both reasonableness of argumentation and norms of argumentation at issue: process- and outcome reasonableness and normativity. If distinctions among definitions of these notions are not carefully taken into consideration argumentation theorists can look forward to futile dispute. I have not argued that a definition of epistemically reasonable argumentation should *not* be on the table or that epistemic normativity in argumentation is *unimportant*. I have argued that pragma-dialectics provide a useful definition of reasonableness, and an account of normativity of argumentation. I have also defended the value of argumentation procedure instrumental to resolutions of differences of opinion.

Should we evaluate argumentation from an outcome-perspective where we judge argumentation good if outcome-beliefs are epistemically justified, or from a participial perspective in which we judge argumentation good if procedurally reasonable? Nothing in this paper suggests that the disjuncts are exclusive.

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