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Deliberation and Collective Identity Formation

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> «Nous» est performatif; «nous» à sa seule prononciation crée un groupe; «nous» désigne une généralité de personne comprenant celui qui parle, et celui qui parle peut parler en leur nom, leurs liens sont si forts que celui qui parle peut parler pour tous.
>
> (Alexis Jenny, *L'art français de la guerre*, p.36. Paris: Gallimard, 2011)

Abstract. Deliberation is an argumentative practice in which several parties reason in order to decide the best available course of action. I argue that deliberation, unlike negotiation, requires a collective agency, defined by shared commitments, and not merely a plural agency defined by aggregation of individual commitments. Since the "we" presupposed by this argumentative genre is built up in the course of the deliberation exchange itself, shaping collective identity is a basic function of public deliberation.

Keywords. Argumentative practice, collective agency, dialogue, identity negotiation, in-group, negotiation, proposal, public deliberation, social identity.

1. Introduction

I will be concerned here with deliberation as an argumentative, communicational practice, thus leaving aside deliberation as an exercise of private prudential reasoning (*NE*. 1140a25-27). As a communicative practice, deliberation can be either interpersonal communication, within a reduced group, whose members successively play the role of proponent and opponent and try to reach a decision, or mass communication, involving mass media, in which the debaters interact for a larger audience. I will consider both types of public deliberation.

There is consensus that deliberation is a distinctive argumentative practice in which several parties reason together on how to proceed when they are confronted by a practical problem or any need to consider taking a course of action, in order to decide the best available course of action. Deliberation is also the paradigm of argumentation in the public sphere. Distinctive features of deliberation include that it is neither about propositions nor about offers, but about proposals for action, (Kock 2007, Ihnen Jory 2016), that audience members must subjectively compare and balance pro and con arguments (Kock), that pragmatic argumentation is the prevalent argument scheme (Fairclough 2017, 2018), etc.

Relying on previous work by Luis Vega (2013, 2020), I will explore another distinctive feature of deliberation; namely, deliberation, unlike other argumentative practices as negotiation, requires a collective agency, defined by shared commitments, and not merely a plural agency defined by aggregation of individual commitments. While we can assume that plural agents are simply there, the same don't applies to collective agents. I hold that the "we" presupposed by this argumentative genre is built up in the course of the deliberation exchange itself. As a consequence, if I am right, shaping collective identity is a basic function of public deliberation.

2. Deliberations as a type of dialogue

The interest for the argumentative practice of deliberation comes largely from the fact that, according to most theorists, deliberation is the paradigmatic form of argumentation in politics, and more generally in the public sphere. The concept of public sphere comes from Habermas and designates the social space in which citizens ask for, exchange and receive reasons for political measures, policies and laws that should be enforced from a wide range of political perspectives.

The concept of dialogue provides a tool for the classification of the different argumentative practices. In contemporary dialectic a dialogue is a ruled exchange of arguments between two or more parties oriented towards the achievement of a shared goal. Therefore, a particular kind of dialogue is distinguished by its intended goal, by its rules, and by the roles played by the participants.

To go further into this preliminary definition of dialogue we have to say something about the purposes and goals of arguing. Purposes belong to the participants; goals belong to the argumentative context of dialogue. To be precise, purposes belong to the roles played by the participants, not to the individuals playing them. (A role can be defined as a socially expected behavior pattern determined by an individual's status in a particular group). The purpose of the defense attorney is to get her client acquitted; however, it may be the case that the purpose of Smith, the dishonest defense lawyer of Brown, be to get her convicted.

The proper function of arguing is to present to someone something as a reason for something else. Hence the primary purpose of the arguer is that the addressee perceives something as a reason for something else. This primary purpose may be accompanied by other secondary purposes, such as the addressee adopting a belief, an intention or an attitude as a consequence of her perceiving something as a reason for another thing.

The common goal of any exchange of reasons, that gives sense to the actions of the participants, is to critically examine an issue -i.e., or consider the merits and demerits of and judge accordingly. This general goal can be instrumental for the achievement of further particular goals, such as: clarifying an issue, solving a difference of opinion, coming to an agreement, etc. While the general goal and the primary purposes of the participants make it possible to distinguish argumentative exchanges from other forms of communicative exchanges, particular goals and secondary purposes make it possible to distinguish one type of argumentative exchange from another type of argumentative exchange. Thus argumentative exchanges are classified according to their particular goals and the participants' secondary purposes.

An argumentative exchange is a practice, and therefore a rule-governed activity. As John Rawls writes, the word "practice" is used here as "a sort of technical term meaning any form of activity specified by a system of rules which defines offices, roles, moves, penalties, defenses, and so on, and which gives the activity its structure" (1955, fn.1). This system of rules is externally justified by its capacity to promote the achievement of the rules. In an exchange there can be different stages, defined by the entitlements and obligations the rules impose to the participants.

Walton & Krabbe (1995) recognize six basic types of argumentative exchanges or dialogues: inquiry, negotiation dialogue, information-seeking dialogue, deliberation, and eristic dialogue. Later Walton has added discovery dialogue as a seventh type of basic dialogue. This classification is based on three aspects: the initial situation, the participants' purposes and the goal of the dialogue.

Table 1. Types of dialogue

TYPE OF DIALOGUE	INITIAL SITUATION	PARTICIPANT'S PURPOSES	GOAL OF DIALOGUE
Information-Seeking	Need Information	Acquire or Give Information	Exchange Information
Deliberation	Dilemma or Practical Choice	Co-ordinate Goals and Actions	Decide Best Available Course of Action
Discovery	Need to Find an explanation of Facts	Find and Defend a Suitable Hypothesis	Choose Best Hypothesis for Testing
Eristic	Personal Conflict	Verbally Hit Out at Opponent	Reveal Deeper Basis of Conflict
Inquiry	Need to Have Proof	Find and Verify Evidence	Prove (Disprove) Hypothesis
Negotiation	Conflict of Interests	Get What You Most Want	Reasonable Settlement Both Can Live With
Persuasion	Conflict of Opinions	Persuade Other Party	Resolve or Clarify Issue

These are the basic types of dialogue; in addition, there are mixed types of dialogue that combine many stages corresponding to different basic types. Furthermore other authors have described other types of basic dialogues, such as exploratory dialogue (Mercer, 2004): an exploratory dialogue starts from the need to delimit a standpoint, the purpose of the participants is the joint exploration of the scope and consequences of this standpoint, to reach an agreement on its definition and scope.

A related, though different, concept to that of dialogue type is that of activity type, which van Eemeren and Houtlosser define as:

> conventionalized practices whose conventionalization serves, through the implementation of certain genres of communicative activity the institutional needs prevailing in a certain domain of communicative activity (2010, p. 139).[2]

In turn, they define, quoting Fairclough, genres of communicative activity as socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity (Ibid.). Thus, presidential debate, general debate in parliament and Prime Minister's Question Time are activity types of the genre of communicative activity deliberation.

A general classification of activity types is based on four factors: initial situation, starting points, means of argumentation and criticism, and possible outcome. These four factors correspond to the four stages of critical discussion (confrontation, opening, argumentation and conclusion). An additional feature, that occupies a prominent place in Isabela Fairclough's account of deliberation, as we shall see, is that each activity type can be associated with some speech events on the basis of careful empirical observation of argumentative practice (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2005, p. 384).

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[2] For a detailed comparison of both concepts see Lewinski (2010).

Table 2

Some genres of communicative activity (Lewinski, 2010, p. 57).

GENRES OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITY	INITIAL SITUATION	PROCEDURAL AND MATERIAL STARTING POINTS	ARGUMENTATION MEANS AND CRITICISMS	POSSIBLE OUTCOME
Adjudication dispute	3rd party with jurisdiction to decide	Largely explicit codified rules	Explicitly established concessions; argumentation from facts and concessions interpreted in terms of conditions for the application of a legal rule	Settlement of the dispute by sustained decision 3rd party (no return to initial situation)
Deliberation	Mixed disagreement dispute; 3rd party with jurisdiction to decide	Largely implicit intersubjective rules; explicit and implicit concessions on both sides	Argumentation defending incompatible standpoints in critical exchanges	Resolution difference of opinion for (part of) 3rd party audience (or confirmed return to initial situation)
Mediation	Conflict at deadlock; 3rd party intervening without jurisdiction to decide parties conflict	Implicitly enforced regulative rules; no explicitly recognized concessions	Argumentation conveyed in would-be spontaneous conversational exchanges	Mutually accepted conclusion by mediated arrangement between conflicting parties (or provisional return to initial situation)
Negotiation	Conflict of interests; decision up to the parties	Semi-explicit constitutive rules; sets of conditional and changeable explicit concessions	Argumentation incorporated in exchanges of offers, counteroffers and other commissives	Conclusion by compromise parties as mutually accepted agreement (or return to initial situation)

To sum up, deliberation appears as a type of basic dialogue, in which the shared commitment to a goal arises from a situation in which several agents must jointly choose from several alternatives, that either may be given in advance, or may be built in the course of the dialogue. Agents examine the issue, asking for, giving and appraising reasons in order to determine which is the best available course of action. To understand what is meant here by "the best available decision" we need some details about the initial situation, the aim of the exchange and the purposes of the participants. In an archetypical deliberation, participants don't start from previously taken positions and try to make the others embrace them. When this happens, there is a conflict of opinions and the result is rather a persuasion dialogue.

Even if one of the participants may have an initial preference for some particular alternative, her role is not to defend it but to collaborate with the other participants in examining the pros and cons of the available options in order to take a joint decision. The rules of a particular type of deliberation can assign the defense of some particular option to some of the participants, but this obligation must be understood from the shared commitment of jointly examining all the available options. Assigning to each participant the defense of a different option can be an efficient way to ensure that the group examines in a fair and unbiased manner the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Therefore, in a deliberation dialogue the best policy is the best policy for us, for the deliberative group as a whole.

Thus, deliberation does not start from a conflict of opinions or interests, but from the need to find a joint solution for a common problem, and this feature differentiates deliberation from both persuasion and negotiation, making it more akin to inquiry. From the point of view of the nature of the question at stake, a distinction is usually drawn between three forms of reasoning and argumentation. When it is a matter of fact, argumentation is factual, when it is a matter of value, argumentation is valuational, and when it is a matter of choice, argumentation is practical. According to this classification, in deliberation argumentation is practical while in in inquiry argumentation is factual.

3. Deliberation, proposals and weighing values

Most contemporary treatments of deliberation have two main sources. Walton & Krabbe's (1995) model of deliberative dialogue is one of them; the other is Christian Kock's (2007) analysis of political debate.

Deliberation, according to Kock (2007) is a distinctive type of argumentation characterized by five interrelated features:

(1) It is about proposals for action, not about propositions that may have a truth value.
(2) There may be good arguments on both sides.
(3) Neither the proposal nor its rejection follows by necessity or inference.
(4) The pros and the cons generally cannot be aggregated in an objective way.
(5) Eventual consensus between the debaters is not a reasonable requirement.

The first feature defines deliberation as a form of practical argumentation, and it is already implicit in Walton & Krabbe's account of deliberation as a type of dialogue. A proposition is the semantic content of an act of assertion, and as such it can be true or false. A proposal is the semantic content of a directive or a commisive act, and consequently it cannot be true or false, but rather more or less convenient. Hence deliberation is no about what is true or false, but about what is convenient or inconvenient. These are Searle (1975, pp. 354-356) definitions of assertive, directive and commisive speech acts:

- The point or purpose of assertive speech acts is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition.
- The illocutionary point of directive speech acts in the fact that they are attempts (of varying degrees) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.
- Commissives are those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action.

Kock derives from this feature the next two. Arguments about proposals are arguments about the positive and negative consequences of an action. As most, if not all, actions have both

negative and positive consequences, there will often be good arguments in favor and against one and the same proposal. Moreover if we assume, following the model of deductive logic, that a proposition is deducible from a set of propositions if and only the truth of these propositions entails the truth of the former proposition, and then, since a proposal cannot be neither true nor false, to say that a proposal can (or cannot) be deduced from a set of propositions is plain nonsense.

The coexistence of good reasons in favor and against a proposal makes weighing a core constituent of practical argumentation. Kock assumes that in order to evaluate a factual argument it suffices to examine its premises and their relationship to the conclusion, while the appraisal of a practical argument (and most probably the appraisal of a valuational argument) requires balancing its strength with that of the other concurrent arguments. If so, (logically) good factual argument would be classificatory or qualitative concept, while (logically) good practical argument would be a topological or comparative argument.

It follows from the above that balancing the strength of two practical arguments consists in balancing the pros and cons of two courses of action. In order to determine if and to what extent a consequence of an action is an advantage or a drawback, people resort to such values as political equality, efficient organization, social justice or individual liberty, that constitute the warrants that deliberative argumentation relies on.

Value pluralism would not be a major difficulty in deliberation if these values were not incommensurable, in the sense that there are no common basis for determining, in given situations, the respective weights of the conflicting commitments. Value pluralism is superficial if the conflicting values may both be converted into a common denominator; but it is profound if the arguments relying on the conflicting values are not rankable with respect to a common denominator of value. As a result, in deliberative argumentation there may be no objective or intersubjective way to determine which side outweighs the other.

> since there is no intersubjectively compelling reasoning determining such choices (and if there were, they would not be choices), they are in fact subjective. In deliberative debate over a proposal to go to war each legislator and, ideally, each citizen, must choose individually ('subjectively') which policy to support. This is so not because 'truth' is subjective… but because the values that function as warrants in deliberation are subjective as well as incommensurable. (Kock, 2007, p. 237).

If weighing of practical arguments is subjective and argumentation is the place where subjective preferences become intersubjective reasons through public critical scrutiny, weighing and meta-argumentative weighing fall outside the domain of deliberation. Kock goes on to conclude that it cannot be expected, not even as a theoretical ideal, neither that deliberation will lead towards consensus, nor that reaching consensus is the goal of deliberation. argumentation.

But if not consensus, what could then be the purpose of proponents of different policies engaging in deliberative debate? Kock holds that the main reason why such debates are potentially meaningful is that other individuals facing such a choice may hear, consider and compare the arguments relating to the choice (*Op.cit*., p.238). This view of deliberation is in accordance to van Eeemeren and Houtlosser's account of deliberation as an activity type given. Thus, deliberation fulfills the function of bringing into light the relevant considerations for some decision, that then everyone will rank according to their personal criteria.

For Walton & Krabbe, as we have seen, the goal of deliberation is to jointly decide the best available course of action on a matter of common concern. By contrast, for Kock, the goal of deliberation is to ensure that those who have to decide individually on a matter of common interest can access all the relevant information, and in any case the same information. Hence

the goal of deliberation is to warrant information publicity and accessibility -what is usually taken to be a regulatory condition for sound deliberation. Moreover, in Kock's model a third party is added, so that deliberation, from being a two-role dialogue (proponent and opponent), becomes a three-role dialogue (proponent, opponent and audience). These differences are probably due to the fact that Kock, on one side, Walton and Krabbe, on the other side, are thinking in different species of deliberation. While Kock is probably thinking of macrodeliberation (remember that Kock deals with political debate as a distinctive domain in argumentation), Walton and Krabbe's deliberative dialogue is designed to account for microdeliberation, a kind of interpersonal deliberation that takes place in small, more or less bounded, groups.

The nature of political (macro)deliberation, Kock goes on, determines the obligations of the participants.

1. The debater's main dialectical obligation is to make motivated comparisons between contradictory arguments.
2. Often it is not appropriate to try to rebut, refute or deny arguments that contradict one's own policy. 'Appropriate' in this context means: likely to serve the purpose of the debate, insofar as the purpose of the debate is not to achieve consensus between the debaters, but rather to help the third parties in their process of choice.
3. No quantity of good arguments on one side is in itself sufficient to decide the matter. A comparison of the arguments on the two sides is called for, and if this is not offered, the third parties have still not been helped in making their own comparisons.

4. Deliberation and argument schemes

Description of deliberation as an argumentative genre by Isabela Fairclough (2017, 2018) is consistent with the description of deliberation as a type of dialogue by Walton and Krabbe. Fairclough defines deliberation as a method for critical testing of alternative proposals for action, designed to enable for rational decision-making. Like Kock, Fairclough focus is on deliberation in the political field.

> Politics is inherently connected with argumentation and deliberation because it is oriented to decision-making, but also because the political is an institutional order whose very fabric gives people reasons for acting in particular ways (Fairclough, 2017, p.243).

However, she expressly points out that in politics, deliberation coexists with negotiation, adjudication and mediation.

Fairclough's main contribution is the association of the practice of deliberation with the use of some particular argumentation schemes. Argumentation schemes are patterns of reasoning that allow for the identification and appraisal of current and stereotypical forms of argument in everyday discourse. Although most authors use "current" and "stereotypical" as if they were equivalent, these two words refer to quite different things. The first, "current," refers to the frequency with which these patterns occur in our argumentative practices, a matter for researchers in argumentative practices. The second, "stereotypical," refers to the ability of participants to recognize these patterns. Even if this ability may be fostered by the frequent occurrence of a form of argument, there is a lot of other factors contributing to the saliency of an argument scheme.

I think that the most promising way of understanding argument schemes is as kind of reasons: «An approach to the specification of meaningful kinds of reasons to construct arguments from is that of argument schemes, as they have been studied in argumentation theory» (van Eemeren et al., 2014:640). The connection of reasons to argument is that to argue is to present to somebody something as a reason for something else, usually for persuading her. Therefore, anyone who asserts *P so C* means that *P* is or expresses a reason for *C*. When this assertion is questioned, the arguer can be required to make it explicit that in virtue of which *P* is supposed to be a reason for *C*. A classification of the common answers to this kind of questions results in a classification of single arguments into argument schemes.

According to Fairclough, deliberation is characterized, among other things, by the prevalent use of two argument schemes: argument from goals and argument from consequence. Roughly argument from goals run like this:

-   agent S has goal G therefore agent S ought to do A for doing act A contributes to goal G.

And argument from positive and negative consequence run like this:

-   doing A has potential effects E, therefore proposal A is recommended for effects E are desirable
-   doing A has potential effects E, therefore A is not recommended for effects E are undesirable

Fairclough says that these argument schemes are used in different stages of the deliberative process. Deliberation typically starts with many agents having a stated goal G in a set of circumstances C and trying to jointly answer the question, "what should be done?" To do that, they propose and critically examine possible courses of action to bring about G on the basis of the knowledge available to them (Fairclough 2018, pp.299-300). Thus, each of these proposals amounts to an argument from goal. The deliberative process consists of two consecutive stages. it. The purpose of the first stage is to eliminate unreasonable proposals by examining their potential consequences, while the purpose of the second stage is to enable non-arbitrary choice of a better proposal, if several reasonable proposals have withstood criticism. Thus, Fairclough enriches the description of the argumentation stage in deliberation, specifying their argument means and criticism and distinguishing two consecutive sub-stages.

At the first stage overriding reasons are considered: when one of the proposals has some unacceptable consequence, it is ruled out. At the second stage outweighing reasons come into play: the pros and cons of the surviving proposals are weighed up and their relative merits are assessed in order to determine which proposal is preferable to other reasonable alternatives. This weighing is heavily influenced by fundamental differences of interests, purposes and values, and different ways of interpreting the situation among the debaters. Due to the dependence on subjective factors -Fairclough points out- deliberation turns almost invariably to an adversarial process. Fairclough distinguishes unreasonable and reasonable disagreement in politics. Reasonable disagreements occur when parties have equally good reasons for their proposals, that are either incomparable or differently weighted or prioritized. In fact, it could be argued that incomparability is a deeper phenomenon, not directly dependent on differences of interests and purposes, for the balance involved in this second stage of the deliberative process is complex and multidimensional, since

> Unacceptable consequences include impacts on goals which should arguably not be undermined (e.g., other agents' legitimate goals), as well as impacts on arguably non-overridable 'deontic reasons' such as rights and obligations (Searle 2010), arising from institutional facts (e.g., moral norms, laws, rules, commitments), which should act as constraints on what agents can reasonably choose to do. (Fairclough, 2017, p. 245).

The positive and negative effects of an action are of unequal importance and each of them can vary in intensity. Therefore, disagreement is possible even when we agree in the relative ordering of values.

5. Proposals and offers

Drawing on the work of Kock, Constanza Ihnen Jory (2016) intends to capture the difference between deliberation and negotiation as the two main types of dialogue on practical issues (i.e. about what to do). The fundamental difference is that while deliberative argumentation, as we have seen, is about proposals, negotiative argumentation is about offers. Besides that, Ihnen Jory rightly remarks that negotiations -unlike deliberations- not always involve argumentation.

There are three main differences between negotiating (i.e., makings an offer) and deliberating (i.e. making a proposal), according to Ihnen Jory.

First, when a speaker makes a proposal, she predicates the same collective action of both speaker and hearer. To make a non-conditional offer, it is sufficient for the speaker to predicate an action of himself and to make a conditional offer it is sufficient for her to predicate an action of herself and a different action of the hearer. Eventually in this second case both actions can be the same, and thus it would be a collective action. In short, to propose is necessarily to predicate a collective action of speaker and hearer; to make an offer is to predicate an action from the speaker which may or may not involve mutually bringing it about with the hearer.

The second difference between making an offer and proposing relates to whose interests are meant to be served by the action(s) that speaker (and hearer) would be carrying out. When a speaker makes a proposal, he is committed to the view that the action proposed will further an interest—goal, objective, preference, etc.—that is shared by both speaker and hearer. When a speaker makes an offer—non-conditional or conditional—he is committed to the view that his action will comply with or further, in varying degrees, interests that are not shared by speaker and hearer.

The third and final difference refers to the presumed absence or existence of a conflict of interest. When a speaker performs a proposal, he presumes that there is an alignment of interests with the hearer. By contrast, the speaker who makes an offer (conditional or otherwise) presupposes the existence of a conflict of interests with the listener. It is not the presence of a conflict of interest or the presence of a set of shared interests as such that defines an offer or a proposal, and thus whether the exchange is an instance of negotiation or deliberation, but whether the action is performed to solve a conflict of interest or to promote shared interests.

Further, Ihnen Jory differentiates two kinds of negotiation. In a distributive negotiation the participants assume that what is at stake is the distribution of a fixed amount of some good; by contrast, integrative negotiations take place when the participants search for a solution where both can maximize their gains simultaneously. In a distributive negotiation, the offer is made in order to solve a conflict between the interests of the participants by trying to reach a compromise somewhere between their interests. In an integrative negotiation, the offer is performed to solve a conflict between the interests of the participants by trying to fulfil the parties' convergent interests, which are neither shared nor in conflict.

What I want to stress is that, according to Ihnen Jory, deliberation differs from negotiation because it always involves *collective action* that serves a *shared interest* and presupposes a *community of interests*.

6. Deliberation and collective agency

Luis Vega agrees with Kock on the distinctive features of public deliberation, even if he does not dismiss reaching consensus as the proper goal of this argumentative practice (Vega, 2013, p. 122; 2018, p.4). Summarizing:

1) Deliberation starts from the recognition of an issue of public interest whose resolution often includes conflicts or alternatives among several possible options or concurrent parties.
2) Discussion involves proposals, not only propositions.
3) Proposals involve balances and preferences that rest on opposed heterogeneous considerations with different relative weighs, which may result in complex multimensional inferences.
4) Proposals, allegations and reasons under consideration are intended to induce the consensual achievement of results of general interest. The search of consensus expresses an orientation towards a common interest or goal, apart from or above personal or private interests of the participants.
5) The goal of the deliberation is to take decision within a specified time: when we engage in deliberation, it is neither for the pleasure of deliberating, nor to indefinitely defer a decision.

To develop a consensualist model of deliberative argumentation Vega distinguishes three forms of argumentative agency, to associate deliberation with collective agency, a notion based on Toumela's (2007) *We* mode. These are individual agency, plural agency and collective agency.

When agency is individual, a commitment is assumed and cancelled by personal choice. A person is under a personal commitment if and only if she is solely responsible for the assumed commitment, and she in entitled to cancel the commitment. That is, individual agency is a mode *I* of agency.

Plural agency is formed through the association of many individuals by coincidence of interests or points of view, or by the circumstances of the given situation. Plural agency is then formed by aggregation of individual agencies. Thus, in plural agency individuals function as a private person in a group context.

Finally, collective agency results from confrontation of options and public deliberation in a group acting towards a common goal or towards a joint resolution. It involves strong commitments that no member of the group is unilaterally entitled to cancel. So, it is a *We* mode of agency.

Since argumentation is a communicative interaction that requires the participation of many agents, argumentative practices may run either with a plural agency or with a collective agency. In fact, it is tempting to pair these two forms of agency with the two main forms of practical dialogue or argumentation activity types: negotiation and deliberation, respectively. This is so because negotiation seems to require plural agency, since interests are particular in nature, whilst deliberation, as understood by Vega, rests upon the recognition of a common good, and hence presupposes some form of collective intentionality and agency.

However Vega's thesis of the collective agency of deliberation can be interpreted either as the thesis that any exercise of public deliberation requires a collective agency (strong interpretation), or as the thesis that collective deliberation is a species of the genus public deliberation, which also includes plural deliberation (weak interpretation). In fact, Vega's characterization of public deliberation can be interpreted both ways. Vega says that public deliberation is characterized, among other things, by the recognition of an issue of *common* interest in the public domain, and by the purpose of inducing the consensual and reasonably

motivated achievement of results of *general* interest. The terms "common" and "general" may refer either to every one of the members of the group taken individually, as a species of sum, or may refer to them as members of a group. Thus a "general interest" may refer to an interest generalized among the members of the group, or to a group interest, an interest anyone has as a member of that group.

Vega's talk of "groups capable of becoming deliberative groups" (Vega, 2018, p.18) suggests that not all groups are endowed with this capacity, and favors the weak interpretation, as does the assertion that

> A characteristic virtue of public deliberation is just to turn individuals debating about some resolution into effective members of a collective, and, even more, to turn individuals affected by a common problem into agents involved in its effective resolution (*Op.cit.*, p. 26).

But even if we were to adopt a wide interpretation of public deliberation, it seems clear that Vega holds that collective deliberation is the model for public deliberation, in the double sense of "model" -i.e., archetype and example for imitation or emulation. In this sense, collective agency lies at the core of deliberation.

Henceforth, I will reserve "deliberative group" for collective deliberation, using "deliberative progroup" for plural deliberation (following Tuomela, 2007, p. 46).

7. Deliberation in the *We* mode

Therefore, participants in collective deliberation do not act as private individuals, but as members of a group, which entails a certain degree of depersonalization. As it has been stressed by John Turner in self-categorization theory, depersonalization is not a loss of self, but rather a redefinition of the self in terms of group membership. Being a member presupposes a mutually recognized commitment bond to the group ethos and a social commitment to the other group members relative to promote the group ethos. Hence thinking and acting as a group member amounts to thinking and acting for a group reason, rather than for an individual reason.

> Thinking and acting in the we-mode basically amounts to thinking and acting for a group reason, that is, to a group member's taking the group's views and commitments as his authoritative reasons for thinking and acting as the group ''requires'' or in accordance with what ''favors'' the group (namely, its goals, etc.). (Tuomela, 2007, p.14).

Since arguing has been defined presenting to someone something as a reason for something else, the concept of group reasons seems essential for a proper understanding of collective deliberation.

Tuomela (2007, p.16) defines the ethos of a group as "the set of the constitutive goals, values, beliefs, standards, norms, practices, and/or traditions that give the group motivating reasons for action". The ethos directs the group members' thoughts and actions toward what is important for the group and is generally expected to benefit it, and thus defines the common good. It is just the search of the common good what differentiates deliberation from negotiation as forms of argumentation, in that the latter is geared towards the reconciliation of private interests given in advance and independently from the constitution of the group.

It can be assumed, at least to a certain point, that individual agents, and thus plural agents formed by mere aggregation of them, are given in advance and independently of the

deliberation process, but it seems that the same does not always hold for collective agents. In such cases, where does the "we" presupposed as a condition of possibility for collective deliberation come from? The most plausible answer is that the required "we" is built up during the course of the deliberation process itself. These considerations lead to the conclusion that deliberation, and argumentation in general, is also a means of shaping collective identities. Otherwise, this hypothesis is consistent with Tuomela's talk of collectively constructed group reasons (e.g., 2007, p.3).

Robert Asen (2005) ranges identity formation among the important functions argumentation may play in the public sphere. It is obvious that argumentation, like other communicative practices, influences how participants understand themselves and the others, creating for the participants a sense of self and others.

> To recognize the identity formation function of argument is to recognize that discourse situates people in social relations. Argument takes on a performative dimension as the articulation of a viewpoint bolsters the identity conveyed in one's propositional statement (Asen, 2005, p. 132).

Although identity -or better, identification- has been given great attention in rhetoric, I would like to propose a slightly different approach here. I hold that a deliberative group (i.e., groups capable of becoming collective agents in deliberation) is a group in the sense of Tajfel & Turner (1986, p.15): "a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership in it." If this is so, a deliberative group is defined not only by some shared set of more or less objective characteristics, but rather by its members' awareness of belonging to the same group and the value and emotional significance they attach to this membership. In this sense, a deliberative group is an emotional community.

A social group exists, and deliberative groups are no exception in this regard, when individuals recognize each other as members of the same group. This mutual recognition is a cognitive process that involves a certain depersonalization, since the subject minimizes the differences within the group (in-group) and magnifies the differences with the opposite groups (out-groups). When a person categorizes himself as part of a deliberative group, he ceases to perceive himself as someone unique and different from the rest, with his own particular interests, and perceives himself as a member of the group. This process is based on the association of positively valued characteristics with the deliberative in-group (such as reasonableness), which are supposed to be a distinctive characteristic of the group, differentiating its members from those that are not, thus generating a feeling of superiority.

A further consequence of the claim that deliberative groups are groups in the sense of social identity theory is that the sense of belonging to the group, and the fear of being excluded from it, are part of the "normative cement that serves as a basis for legitimizing, authorizing and, where appropriate, sanctioning the actions of the members" (Vega, 2018, p.18). It has been often observed that there is a tendency to debate only with like-minded people (specially in on-line deliberations), and sometimes this is denounced as a perversion of public reasons. However, if I am right and deliberation is a means for shaping collective identities, this tendency is not an accident, but something inscribed in its very nature.

Reasons in collective deliberation are group reasons, reasons constructed for the members of a group defined by a common *ethos* and mutual recognition, and, as a result, that only can be acknowledged by those who recognize themselves and are recognized by the other members as members of the group. Perhaps it could be said that reasonableness thus becomes, from the point of view of deliberative agents, an in-group identity marker, instead of a marker

of the universal audience, which "consists of the whole of mankind, or at least, of all normal, adult persons", according to Perelman & Olbrecht-Tyteca (1969, p. 30). Thus, it seems that acknowledgement of collective deliberation requires abandoning the ideal of universal audience as a definitory construct of reasonableness.

Kock argues that consensus cannot be the goal of deliberative argumentation, since weighing reasons is an essential part of it and it requires arranging values into some scale. The difficulty, according to Kock, is that while we can construct scales using a variety of criteria, there is no intersubjectively compelling reasons to prioritize one of these over the other. Given that any balance of reasons in order to take a decision will be done giving the priority to some particular criterion or set of criteria, deliberation involves a subjective element beyond the control of argument. If the ethos of a deliberative group is a *hierarchical* system goals, values, beliefs, standards, norms, practices, and/or traditions that give the group motivating reasons for action, the intersubjective validity of the decision reached through deliberation is warranted into the deliberative group, and so is the possibility of consensus. Of course, this validity and the corresponding consensus are tied to the identity of the group, and therefore have no independent standing.

8. Identity negotiation

I would like to suggest further that the process by which the participants come to see themselves as members of a deliberative group, and to act in consequence, is a process of identity negotiation (Goffman, 1959; Swann, 1983). Identity negotiation refers to a broad set of processes through which people strike a balance between achieving their interaction goals and satisfying their identity-related goals, such as needs for agency, communion and psychological coherence (Swann & Bosson, 1992, p. 449). Through identity negotiation participants reach agreements regarding "who is who" in their argumentative exchange. Once these agreements are reached, participants are expected to remain faithful to the identities they have agreed to assume. The process of identity negotiation establishes what participants can expect of one another, and thus provides the interpersonal "glue" that holds relationships together. There are two competing forces in identity negotiation. On the one hand, every participant tries that the others verify and confirm her self-conceptions (*self-verification*); on the other hand, the other participants try to make her to behave in ways that confirm their expectancies (*behavioral confirmation*). If I am right, since identity is situational and negotiated, some moves in a deliberation dialogue should be properly understood as speaker's attempts to bring the others to see him and themselves as members of a group. The very possibility of deliberation depends on the success of these manoeuvres. Research indicates that when members of small groups receive self-verification from other group members, their commitment to the group increases and performance improves (Swann &Buhrmester 2012, p. 414).

In the pragmadialectical model of critical discussion, identity negotiation should be place at the opening stage. For identity negotiation to fit into the opening stage, a more comprehensive characterization of this stage is needed. According to the standard account,

> In the *opening stage* the parties decide to try to resolve the difference of opinion. They assign the roles of protagonist and antagonist (in a mixed difference, there are two protagonists and two antagonists). They also agree on the rules for the discussion and on the starting points. (van Eemeren, Grootendorst &Snoeck-Henkemans, 2002, p. 25)

Here the assigned roles are dialectical roles, regulated by the conventions of the argumentative exchange and voluntarily assumed by the participants; but when we come to identity negotiation, identity is the non-conventional result of social interactions, modeled by the expectancies and behavioral responses of the participants.

9. Conclusion

Deliberation is a type of argumentative practice in which several agents must jointly choose from several alternatives, that either may be given in advance or may be built in the course of the dialogue, the best available course of action for the group as a whole. I have argued that in archetypical deliberation participants act as group members and handle group reasons. Here "group" means a collection of individuals who share a common identification of themselves. Acting and perceiving oneself as a group member involves a certain depersonalization, since the subject ceases to perceive himself as someone unique and different from the rest, with his or her own particular interests, and perceives himself as a member of the group. A basic motivation of self-categorization is the pursuit of positive self-esteem, which is achieved through comparison between the in-group and relevant out-groups. As far as deliberation is concerned, this process is based on the association of positively valued characteristics such as reasonableness or open-mindedness with the in-group. In this way, the construction of a group identity and a collective agency, which is part of the deliberative process itself, allows to overcome in the search of consensus the subjectivity of the weighing of practical reasons that is inherent in public deliberation.

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