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A New Typology for Arguments from Authority

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Abstract: The argument from expert opinion counts as a sub-type of the argument from authority, because argument tokens ground their claims in a source of authority. The literature on argument schemes already acknowledges *epistemic* and *deontic* authority arguments as grounding in knowledge and power, respectively. Some scholars also treat *dignity* as a third source of authority. This paper offers a yet more fine-grained typology of authority arguments. Insights gleaned from Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, and Locke suggest that *attractiveness* and *majority* (but not dignity) serve as additional sources of authority. Crossing these four sources with the speech act types *assertive* and *directive* yields eight authority-argument types, and as many sub-schemes.

Keywords: argument scheme; attractiveness; authority argument; dignity; majority

1. Introduction

In both professional and every-day contexts, experts are an important testimonial source for belief formation and decision-making. Although an expert's reliability can easily be doubted (Mizrahi, 2013; 2018), instances of the argument-scheme from expert opinion today are frequent. In public policy, for instance, as "a multitude of scientific-technical issues has captured public attention [...], it has become commonplace that [governmental or non-governmental] adversarial parties [...] engage scientific experts to present evidence which supports their respective views" (Weingart, 1999, p. 156). An example is the recent controversy on measures to "flatten" the COVID-19 pandemic. Short of becoming an expert oneself, indeed, using the argument-scheme from expert opinion in reasoned discourse is regularly alternativeless (Baronett, 2008, 304; Copi & Cohen, 1998, p. 165; Copi, Cohen et al., 2007, p. 51).

Argumentation scholars treat the argument-scheme from expert opinion as a sub-type of the argument-scheme from authority. Contemporary typologies distinguish between an *epistemic* and a *deontic* authority, the former grounding in knowledge, the latter in power (Koszowy & Walton, 2019; Walton & Koszowy, 2017; Wagemans, 2011). To our best knowledge, only Goodwin (1998) has identified a person's *dignity* as a third authority source, that is neither reducible to an epistemic nor a deontic source. We give reasons against dignity as a third source below.

We begin by introducing the mainstream typologies (Section 2), observing that these ignore important insights gleaned from Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, and Locke (Section 3). Besides *epistemic* and *deontic* sources of authority, we propose *attractiveness* and *majority* as

additional sources, resulting in four basic types of authorities. Using the speech act types *assertive* and *directive*, our typology of authorities thus identifies eight sub-schemes of authority-argument (Section 4). Our conclusions are in Section 5.

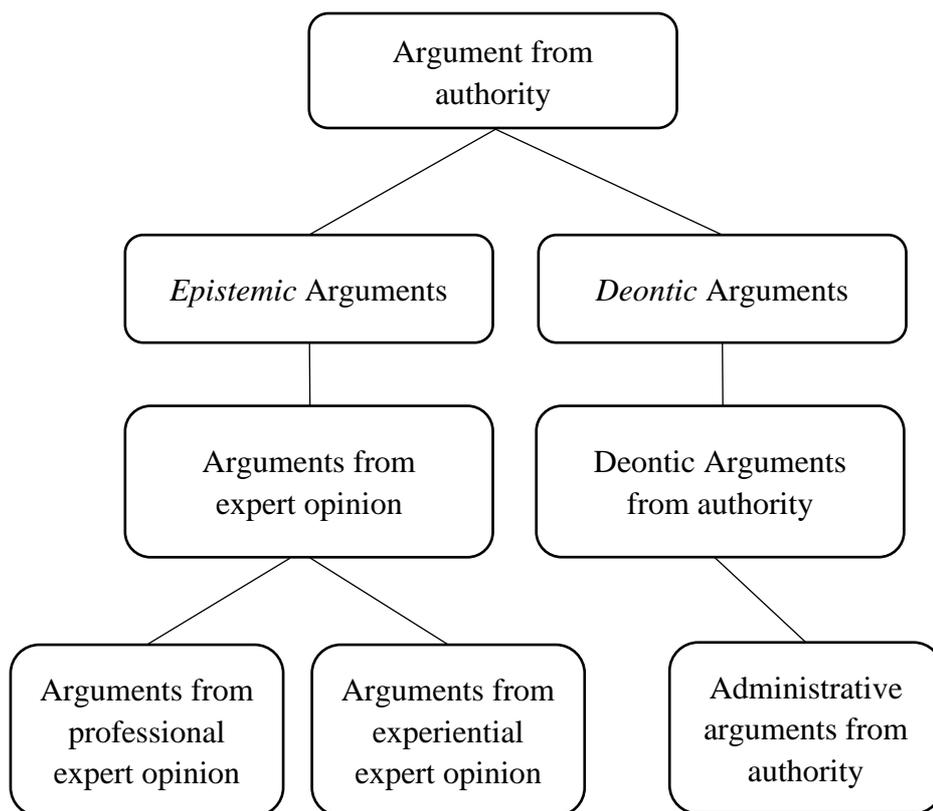
2. Authorities and arguments typologies

2.1 The epistemic vs. deontic-distinction

The perhaps best-known typology of authority arguments today rests on the *epistemic vs. deontic*-distinction (Walton & Koszowy, 2017). Walton (1997) had initially distinguished only *administrative* from *epistemic* authority. More recently, he and his co-authors acknowledge administrative authority simply as a second-level category of deontic authority, such that “deontic powers may have diverse sources, not only administrative sources, but also social sources (such as dignity)” (Walton & Koszowy, 2017, p. 10) (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1

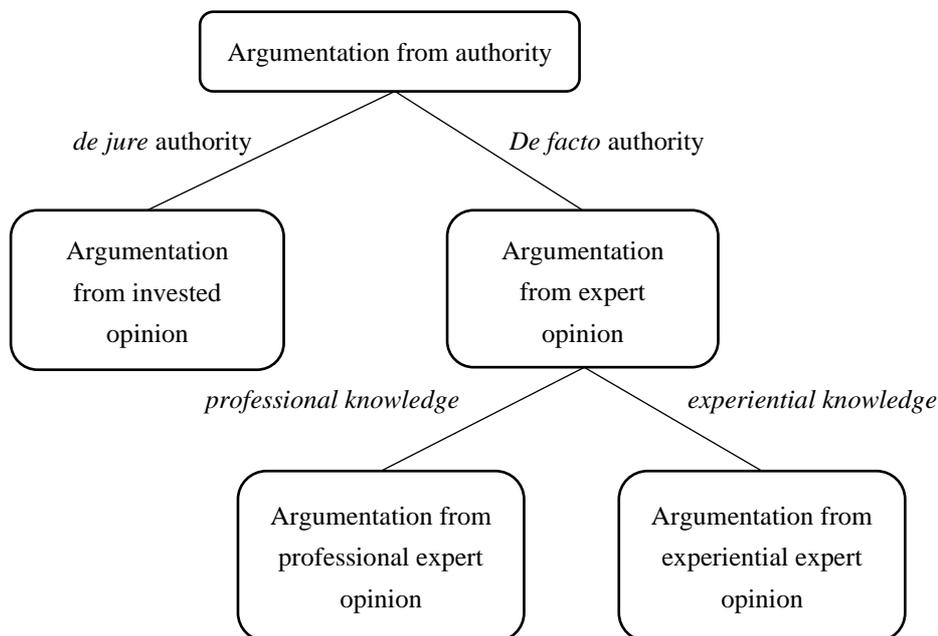
Walton & Koszowys’ (2017, p. 493; *italics added*) typology of authority arguments based on the epistemic vs. deontic distinction



In agreement with the epistemic vs. deontic-distinction, Wagemans (2011, 332f.) similarly distinguishes argumentation *from invested opinion* (deontic) and argumentation *from expert opinion* (epistemic) (Fig. 2).

Figure 2

Wagemans's (2011, 333) typology of authority arguments



Walton & Koszowy (2017) list an array of binary terms—such as Bocheński's (1974) epistemic *vs.* deontic, Wilson's (1983) cognitive *vs.* administrative, or De George's (1985) epistemic *vs.* executive—that all “refer to the difference between authority based on knowledge (‘cognitive,’ ‘epistemic’) and that based on directives (‘administrative’, ‘executive’, ‘deontic’)” (Walton & Koszowy, 2017, p. 484). In this sense, the epistemic *vs.* deontic-distinction is basic today.

2.2 The argument from epistemic authority

Among the argument schemes that invoke an authority, scholars have paid by far most attention to the expert-opinion scheme. The probably best-known version of this scheme is from Walton, Reed & Macagno (2008, p. 310):

Argument scheme from expert opinion

Major Premise: Source *E* is an expert in subject domain *S* containing proposition *A*.

Minor Premise: *E* asserts that proposition *A* is true (false).

Conclusion: *A* is true (false).

Walton & Reed (2003) discern an additional scheme-version. It includes the *warrant premise*: “*If* source *E* is an expert in subject domain *S* containing proposition *A*, and *E* asserts that proposition *A* (in domain *S*) is true (false), *then A* may plausibly be taken to be true (false)” (p. 201; *italics added*). This conditional premise connects the major and minor premises formally, thus making argument's conclusion deducible from its premises.

To evaluate a given scheme-saturating instance, Walton, Reed & Macagno (2008, p. 310);

notation adopted; italics added) propose the following critical questions (CQs):

- CQ-1 *Expertise Question*: How credible is *E* as an expert source?
- CQ-2 *Field Question*: Is *E* an expert in the field *F* that *A* is in?¹
- CQ-3 *Opinion Question*: What did *E* assert that implies *A*?
- CQ-4 *Trustworthiness Question*: Is *E* personally reliable as a source?
- CQ-5 *Consistency Question*: Is *A* consistent with what other experts assert?
- CQ-6 *Backup Evidence Question*: Is *E*'s assertion based on evidence?

Wagemans (2011) observes, “not all [CQs] are suitable for evaluating the quality of the argumentation at issue in a clear and unambiguous way” (p. 334). For instance, CQ-4 to CQ-6 clearly relate to the warrant premise, whereas the referents of CQ-1 and CQ-2 are unclear. Moreover, CQ-3 relates to the major and the minor premise at once. Further, CQ-1 and CQ-3 are not “closed and binary in nature,” so that “it remains unclear when exactly the answer is satisfactory.” And, CQ-6 pertains not explicitly “to the quality of the evidence, but [pertains overtly] only to its existence.”

For these reasons Wagemans offers a revised scheme, using the Pragma-dialectical convention that ‘1’ abbreviates the standpoint, ‘1.1’ abbreviates the supporting reason(s) for 1 (analogously, ‘1.1.1a/b’ abbreviates the reasons for 1.1), and ‘1.1’ abbreviates the justificatory force of 1.1 with respect to 1.

- 1 [The opinion] *O* is true or acceptable.
 - 1.1 *O* is asserted by expert *E*.
 - 1.1.1a *E* is an expert in the relevant field *F*.
 - 1.1.1b Source *S* proves that *O* is asserted by *E*.
 - 1.1' Accepting that *O* is asserted by *E* renders acceptable that *O* is true or acceptable.
 - 1.1'.1a *E* is personally reliable.
 - 1.1'.1b *E* is able to provide further evidence for *O*.
 - 1.1'.1c *O* is consistent with what other (types of) experts on *F* assert.

(Wagemans, 2011, p. 337; *notation adapted; italics added*)

Wagemans also suggests answers to some of CQ-1 to CQ-6. The answers reference both “the propositional content and the justificatory force of the statement ‘*O* is asserted by *E*’” (p. 338; *notation adapted*).² His answers thus *point to* a maximally explicit and exhaustive CQ-list. Of course, this is distinct from *having* such a list.

¹ The term ‘field’ (Toulmin, 1958) lacks a precise definition. It approximately refers to an academic or professional discipline or domain.

² Wagemans goes beyond viewing a CQ as “always pertain[ing narrowly] to the justificatory force of the explicit argument” (Wagemans, 2011, 334f.; see van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; 2004). When Pragma-dialecticians evaluate an expert opinion argument, they normally need only a *single* CQ: “Is being asserted by expert *E* indeed an indication of being true or acceptable?” (Wagemans 2011, 335; *notation adapted*). (This CQ is an interrogative version of the justificatory force-statement in 1.1'.) To answer this CQ, however, the pragma-dialectical theory offers “no specification of the [particular] arguments the arguer may provide in anticipation of doubt or criticisms” (p. 335). Indeed, avoiding this specification is consistent with the theory’s consensual stance: only discourse participants *themselves* establish appropriate answers to this CQ.

2.3 The argument from deontic authority

The scheme for the argument from deontic authority closely mirrors the scheme for the argument from epistemic authority:

Deontic schema

Premise 1: δ is an administrative authority in institution Ω .

Premise 2: According to δ , I should do (or I should not) α .

Conclusion: Therefore I should (or I should not) do α .

(Koszowy & Walton, 2019, p. 303)

The epistemic and the deontic scheme both feature two premises, capturing what the authority's status is and what the authority does. The major premise (Premise-1) thus specifies the *source of authority* appealed to; the minor premise (Premise-2) specifies the *type of speech act* the authority performs (assertive or directive). In both schemes, moreover, the conclusion affirms the assertive or directive stated in the minor premise. (We return to these argument constituents in Section 4.)

To facilitate a preliminary evaluation of arguments from deontic authority, Koszowy & Walton (2019) present a basic list of four CQs (p. 305):

CQ-1: Do I [the addressee] come under the authority of institution Ω ?

CQ-2: Does what [the authority] δ says apply to my present circumstances C ?

CQ-3: Has what δ says been interpreted correctly?

CQ-4: Is δ genuinely in a position of authority?

Adding CQ-5 allows them to ensure that the focal argument is one from deontic rather than epistemic authority (p. 307):

CQ-5: Is δ a deontic rather than an epistemic authority?

They further add CQ-6, which “calls for a clarification that can be helpful for answering CQ-5” (also see Koszowy & Araszkievicz, 2014, p. 292):

CQ-6: Does someone claimed to be an authority utter assertives or directives?

To treat the tension arising when distinct deontic authorities perform incompatible directives, Koszowy & Walton (2019, p. 308) add CQ-7:

CQ-7: Is a given deontic authority in conflict with some other deontic authority?

For such conflict cases, finally, they add CQ-8:

CQ8: Are there—in particular circumstances in which the conflict between two or more deontic authorities occurs—any criteria, rules, norms, or procedures that would allow us to accept the opinion of one authority and disregard the opinion of another?

Koszowy and Walton treat CQ1-8 as “an *open* list which may be further enriched by other considerations” (*ibid.*; *italics added*) that analysts find relevant in a given case. Although CQ-1 to CQ-8 already provide rich evaluative guidelines, these guidelines lack structure: a clear distinction between CQs and sub-CQs is missing. For instance, CQ8 should be a sub-CQ to CQ-7; and CQ-1 to-CQ-5 should be sub-CQs to a main-CQ addressing the correctness of Premise 1, a CQ absent from their list. Moreover, several of Koszowy and Walton’s CQs are theory-laden. For instance, if CQ-6 shall help to answer CQ-5, then one must determine the authority-type by way of determining the speech act-type. This presupposes that one can exercise deontic authority *only* via directive speech acts, and epistemic authority *only* via assertive ones. More seriously, CQ-5 seeks to verify that δ enjoys recognition as a deontic authority. The deontic type, however, is construed as distinct only from the epistemic type. This presupposes that there are but two authority types.

Below, we give reasons to doubt these presuppositions. Let us first turn to general principles for distinguishing authority types *cleanly*, i.e., without category overlap.

3. Types of Authority

3.1 Goodwin’s three principles

For the intuitive distinction between epistemic and deontic authority, Goodwin (1998) discusses an *activity-based*, a *capacity-based*, and a *response-based* principle.

The activity-based principle cites “features conspicuous in [the authorities’] exercise” (p. 268). An epistemic authority forwards *statements* and looks for an addressee, or auditor, to *assent* to these statements’ contents, or at least assign weight to them (p. 268), whereas a deontic authority forwards *directives* and looks for the auditor to *do* something (p. 268f.). Goodwin rightly observes that the activity-based principle fails to separate the two authority-types cleanly, because having epistemic authority hardly keeps from issuing directives. If a dance master tells a disciple to “twist your arm this way,” for instance, then although the master expresses a command (as a deontic authority), “intuitively this mastery is a form of expertise” (p. 269), thus invoking the master’s epistemic authority. Goodwin’s own example therefore shows that the activity-based principle fails to be general.

The capacity-based principle refers to “the capacity from which [types of authorities] arise” (p. 270). Epistemic authority arises from “superior knowledge...in a particular field,” whereas deontic authority “arises when one has a right or power due to one’s role in some social unit” (p. 270). Goodwin finds this principle insufficient to separate authority types cleanly, arguing, “the knowledgeable person exercises authority only by virtue of her *social* role as an expert.” This makes “socially recognized knowledge ... a necessary condition for the authority of expertise” (p. 270; *italics added*). Thus, *having* epistemic authority is derivative to being recognized as such, which is counterintuitive. Goodwin therefore rejects also this principle.³

She instead endorses the response-based principle as sufficient for distinguishing

³ Goodwin rightly remarks that the second principle also fails to be exhaustive, because it assumes that authority types are binary. However, a Christian religious believer, for instance, may see Christ’s *full* authority as deriving from neither knowledge nor power. Thus, some third authority source seems needed (Goodwin, 1998, p. 271).

authority types cleanly. Inspired by Austin (1957), who suggests that “[t]o examine excuses is to examine cases where there has been some abnormality or failure” (p. 5f.), the response-based principle distinguishes authority types “by the reaction that a *failure* to follow it [the type] ordinarily evokes” (p. 273 *italics added*). This principle, she argues, yields three authority types based on: the power-to-command (*deontic*), expertise (*epistemic*), and dignity, respectively. Consequently, one should assume that “where there is some abnormality or failure,” this evokes a reaction to acts that respectively are *disobedient*, *imprudent*, or *impudent*.

3.2 Does this tri-partition convince?

The capacity-based principle, which Goodwin rejects, we find rather useful. Because it types (or typifies) the amalgam that authority is according to the authority’s *rightful* source, i.e., that which *should* ground a specific authority type.⁴ To appreciate this idea more fully we can turn to Goodwin’s own counter-example, allegedly showing that the capacity-based principle is insufficient to separate authority types cleanly:

[W]hen a person acting in her role as a doctor tells her patient “take two of these [pills],” the patient had better take two; but when the same person tells a co-worker he’s looking terrible and should take some time off, the colleague may then consider taking some time off, or he may not—[yet] there seems [to be no contextually meaningful interpretation for] “had better” here. ...It seems therefore *that the knowledgeable person exercises authority only by virtue of her social role as an expert*—a hasty generalization I believe will prove well-founded when the analysis of authority is complete. If the authority of expertise does arise thus, from the expert’s role, then it is, under the proposed classification scheme, indistinguishable from the authority of command. (Goodwin, 1998, p. 270; *italics added*)

Goodwin’s example shows that a gap in social status can affect exercising authority. Her conclusion (set in italics) is nevertheless too strong. In this very example, after all, the *virtue* of exercising authority grounds *properly* in ‘take a day off’ expressing a true/correct/adequate directive, whether socially recognized as such, or not. Epistemic and deontic authority-types may thus affect each other. Yet each type should nevertheless ground in its own rightful source.

Goodwin’s response-based principle, moreover, seems no less problematic (to us) than the activity-based principle. Especially questionable is that the response-based principle would yield a clean separation of authority types *because* “the responses to failure to follow each [authority-type] are differentiable” (p. 273). A differentiation is rather problematic, and another of Goodwin’s own examples shows this. She writes: “...the student history paper which is not typed as required is disobedient, the student history paper contradicting the

⁴ This is an analytical distinction. In real contexts, one can command more than one authority-type. A parent holding insider-knowledge, for instance, may ask his children not to buy a given stock, thus exercises deontic and epistemic authority simultaneously. Beyond the hybrid case, Goodwin (1998, p. 268) also recognizes “borderline cases.”

instructor on a date, imprudent” (p. 273). (This mentions two of the three failed responses to authority). However, a student who fails to submit a typed paper acts disobediently *and* imprudently, insofar as failure would lead to a relatively lower grade. It follows that also the third principle is not general.

In order to motivate the capacity-based, let us turn to historical scholarship on the sources of authority.

3.3 Locke’s argument from authority

According to Walton & Koszowy (2015, 3), a brief passage by John Locke (1975 [1690])—where he coins ‘*argumentum ad verecundiam*’—is what “[a]ny discussion of arguments from authority must take as [its] starting point ...”

The first [sort of argument] is, to allege the Opinions of Men, whose Parts, Learning, Eminency, Power, or some other cause has gained a name, and settled their Reputation in the common esteem with some kind of Authority. When Men are established in any kind of Dignity, it is thought a breach of Modesty for others to derogate any way from it, and question the Authority of Men, who are in possession of it. This is apt to be censured, as carrying with it too much of Pride, when a Man does not readily yield to the Determination of approved Authors, which is wont to be received with respect and submission by others: and 'tis looked upon as insolence, for a Man to set up, and adhere to his own Opinion, against the current Stream of Antiquity; or to put it in the balance against that of some learned Doctor, or otherwise approved Writer. Whoever backs his Tenets with such Authorities, thinks he ought thereby to carry the Cause, and is ready to style it Impudence in any one, who shall stand out against them. This, I think, may be called *Argumentum ad Verecundiam*. (Locke, 1975, 4.17.19; p. 686)⁵

Goodwin interprets Locke as indicating a third authority-type, “reducible neither to [deontic] command nor [epistemic] expertise” (Goodwin, 1998, p. 275). For “[t]o speak against dignity is not primarily disobedient or imprudent,” but rather shows “disrespect, and ought to be a matter for shame.” To Koszowy & Walton (2019, p. 289), by contrast, Locke’s quote yields “insight into the mechanism of the *argumentum ad verecundiam* by linking it to the notions of dignity and respect.” Rather than indicate a third authority type, they take it, Locke illustrates how dignity (itself an audience-ascribed property) functions as a social mechanism of commanding authority.⁶ Agents thus possess dignity derivatively, in virtue of holding epistemic or deontic status. Rather than be constitutive of authority, dignity would *mediate* how an authority type plays out socially. This mediating role suffices to explain why Koszowy & Waltons’ (2019) main distinction between epistemic and deontic authority types remains binary.

⁵ In P. H. Nidditch’s 1975 edition, ‘4.17.19; 686’ refers to Locke (1690), book 4, chapter 17, section 19, page 686.

⁶ Interpreted as an audience-ascribed property functioning as a social mechanism, dignity can also explain why “[f]or most of us, it is not easy to question the opinion of an expert. It tends to verge on the impolite and thus needs to be done in a diplomatic way” (Walton, 2006, p. 87).

3.4 Interpreting Locke

The following argues that Locke does *not* present dignity as a third authority-type. Locke nevertheless recognizes authority from eminency, or *attractiveness*, as a third authority type. Moreover, a tripartite distinction into epistemic, deontic, and attractive authority types would *avoid* the modern bias reflected in treating Locke's quote as an adequate starting point for authority arguments generally. Recognizing this third type—and soon a fourth type, too—makes this starting point more consistent with earlier scholarship that Locke himself could have known.

What Koszowy & Walton (2019) identify as eminency, power, and learning, Locke simply describes as *being obtainable from men's* “parts, learning, eminency, power, or some other cause.” To appreciate what Locke implies rather than states here, we can turn to Aristotle, Cicero, and Boethius on the sources of authority.

The eleventh topic of the Aristotelian *Rhetoric* begins thus:

Another [topic] is found upon some decision already pronounced, whether on the same subject or on one like it or contrary to it. Such a proof is most effective if everyone has always decided thus; but if not everyone, then at any rate most people; or if all, or most, wise or good men have thus decided, or the actual judges of the present question, or those whose authority they accept, or anyone whose decision they cannot contradict because he has complete control over them, or those whom it is not seemly to contradict, as the gods, or one's father, or one's teachers.” (*Rhetoric* II. 23, 1398b19–25)

The various sources of “judgements from authority” listed here reappear in Goodwin's (1998) interpretation, who however renders this passage more liberally:

The *topos* [of authority] itself is a mixed bag, containing: a judgment by everyone, or at least by the majority—what we now term the *argumentum ad populum*; a judgment by the judges themselves, or by people they approve; a judgment by those whose judgment cannot be opposed, such as those with legal authority to make it—what I have called the authority of command; a judgment by the wise, or the good—the authority, perhaps, of expertise. At the end of the list, one final form: a judgment by those ‘whose judgment cannot honorably [*kalon*] be opposed, as for example, a father's or a teacher's.’ (Goodwin, 1998, 275)

As per how Goodwin places the semicolon, she identifies *five* types of judgements as constituting an argument from authority: a judgment (i) by everyone or the majority, (ii) by the judges themselves, or by those whom the judges approve, (iii) by those whose judgments one cannot oppose (e.g., those with legal authority), (iv) by the wise or the good, or finally (v) by those whose judgments one cannot honorably oppose. Contrary to the Aristotelian quote, Goodwin thus holds that an *argumentum ad populum* is not an argument from authority. This

agrees with Walton et al. (2008, 310f.), who treat both argument schemes separately.

We instead count Goodwin's first type (a judgement shared by a total/partial majority) as a distinct authority type. Further, we combine her types (ii) and (iii), as both involve a deontic authority. Yet we refrain from conflating the wise and the good, rather treating wisdom as an authority source distinct from goodness. In aligning with Koszowy and Walton (2019), we also reject Goodwin's type (v) (judgments one cannot honorably oppose) as a distinct authority type, because all authority types entail that those who possess them enjoy some dignity (see Section 3.3).

3.5 Cicero

Support for this interpretation we find in Cicero's *Topica* (Hubbell, 1949), who, in 44 BC, uses the Aristotelian terms to elaborate on the social mechanism of authority arguments, and distinguishes *intrinsic* from *extrinsic* topics. The former "are inherent in the very nature of the subject which is under discussion, [while the latter] are brought in from without," and so "depend principally on authority" (Cicero, *Topica*, p. 8, p. 24).⁷ Intrinsic topics correspond to what scholars today call *direct* arguments, extrinsic ones to *indirect* arguments based on an authority's testimony. On these, Cicero states:

For our present purpose we define testimony as everything that is brought in from some external circumstance in order to win conviction. [But] it is not every sort of person who is worth consideration as a witness. To win conviction, authority is sought; but authority is given by one's nature or by circumstances. Authority from one's nature or character depends largely on virtue; in circumstances there are many things which lend authority, such as talent, wealth, age, good luck, skill, experience, necessity, and even at times a concurrence of fortuitous events. For it is common belief that the talented, the wealthy, and those whose character has been tested by a long life, are worthy of credence. This may not be correct, but the opinion of the common people can hardly be changed, and both those who make judicial decisions and those who pass moral judgements steer their course by that. As I was saying, those who excel in these things seem to excel in virtue.

But as for the rest of the qualities that I just now enumerated, although they have in them no kind of virtue, yet they sometimes *strengthen* conviction, if a person is shown to possess skill or experience; for knowledge has great influence in convincing, and people generally put faith in those who are experienced.

The link between testimony and this passage's central notion *conviction produced through virtue* Cicero illustrates as follows:

The testimony which produces conviction through virtue is of two kinds; one sort gets its efficacy *by nature*, the other acquires it *by hard work*. That is to say,

⁷ In Hubbell's (1949) English translation of the *Topica*, numbers in brackets refer to the pagination of Cicero's Latin original.

the surpassing virtue of the gods is the result of their nature, but the virtue of men is the result of hard work. The testimony of the gods is covered thoroughly enough by the following: first, utterances, for oracles get their name from the fact that they contain an utterance (*oratio*) of the gods; secondly, things in which are embodied certain works of the gods.

In the case of a man, it is the [audience's] opinion of his virtue which is most important. For opinion regards as virtuous not only those who really are virtuous, but also those who seem to be. And so when people see men endowed with genius, industry and learning, and those whose life has been consistent and of approved goodness, like Cato, Laelius, Scipio and many more, they regard them as the kind of men they would like to be. (Cicero, *Topica*, pp. 76-78)

Besides identifying god-like and human sources of authority, Cicero conveys that audiences ascribe authority based on the “common belief that the talented, the wealthy, and those whose character has been tested by a long life, are worthy of credence” (*ibid.*, 73). The reason is plain: audiences view the bearers of authority “as the kind of men they [themselves] would like to be” (p. 78). Cicero thus recognizes that authorities enjoy a *natural attractiveness* to audiences.

3.6 Boethius

In Boethius's *De topicis differentiis* (Stump, 1978) from 523 or earlier,⁸ one finds a fourth authority type, namely a *proportional majority*:

The Topic comprised of judgment is of this sort. For example, if we say that things are as they are judged to be either by all people or most people, and also either by the wise or those deeply learned in any one of the arts. For example, the heaven is revolvable, since those who are wise and very learned astronomers have judged it to be so. The question has to do with accident. The maximal proposition: what seems true to everyone or the many or the wise should not be gainsaid. The [name of this] Topic [is]: *from judgment*. (Boethius, *De topicis differentiis*, 1190C; *his italics*)

If a proportional majority counts as an authority type, then we can interpret Locke's focal statement—regarding the act of ‘alleg[ing] the Opinions of Men, whose *Parts, Learning, Eminency, Power, or some other cause* has gained a [person's or group's] name authority—as stating *four* reasons to consider someone an authority. We interpret ‘parts’ as referring to the authority enjoyed as a *group majority* (vs. minority), ‘learning’ refers to *epistemic* authority, ‘eminency’ to authority by *attractiveness*, and ‘power’ refers to *deontic* authority. Locke's four reasons thus name four authority sources.

The value of this (re-)interpretation lies in obtaining a new typology of authorities, one that is far more fine-grained than the epistemic vs. deontic-distinction.

⁸ The publication date of *De topicis differentiis* is controversial. Stump (1978, p. 15) estimates it to fall before approximately 523 A.D.

4. Authority types and argument schemes

4.1 Forms, sources, and modes of authority

Our proposed typology distinguishes forms, sources and modes of authority (Fig. 3). Regarding the forms of authority, we distinguish an *epistemic*, *deontic*, *attractive*, and *majority* form. The first three forms apply equally to groups and individuals. Trivially, only a group can command the majority form, given at least one smaller group.

Regarding the sources of authority, the epistemic type grounds in *knowledge* or *expertise*, the deontic authority type grounds in *power*, and the *attractive* type grounds in (human or godly) traits an audience values. By contrast, the majority form grounds only in a larger proportion. This proportional majority may, but it *need not* ground an additional authority type. In the 2016 American presidential elections, for instance, Hillary Clinton won the majority of popular votes but failed to obtain the presidency, as the electorate college-rules rendered her specific majority insufficient to ground deontic authority. Her authority-*qua*-proportion thus failed to confer deontic authority.

Finally, the authority mode refers to whether one commands authority individually or collectively. A scholarly group sharing a theoretical approach, for instance, lets group members command epistemic authority collectively. To clarify the distinction between group mode and majority form, the mode *refers* to the authority's quantitative constitution, whereas the form *explains* why the authority is valid.

Figure 3

Types, sources, and modes of authority

| Forms <i>Which form does the authority take?</i> | Sources <i>What grounds the authority?</i> | | Modes <i>How is the authority commanded?</i> | |
|--|--|----------|--|------------|
| epistemic | knowledge/expertise | | individually | as a group |
| deontic | power | | | |
| attractive | human | talent | | |
| | | wealth | | |
| | | fortune | | |
| | | skill | | |
| | | wisdom | | |
| | | identity | | |
| | experience/age | | | |
| | godly | nature | | |
| majority | the prevailing proportion | | as a group | |

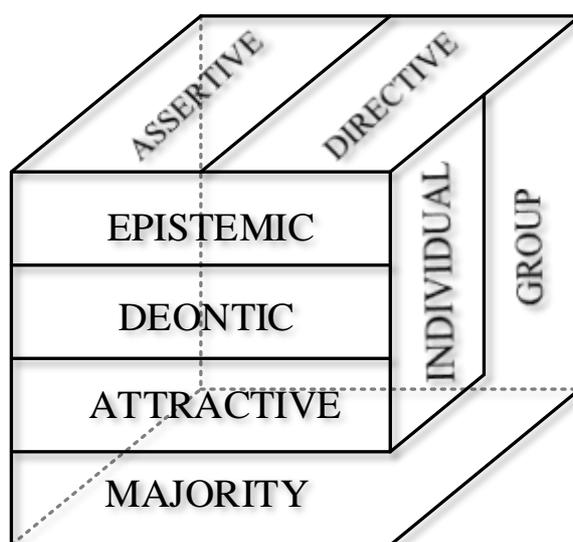
These distinctions in place, we now apply them to identify corresponding argument schemes.

4.2 Argument-schemes

Given four authority types and two relevant speech acts (assertive and directive), the argument from authority-scheme has eight sub-schemes. Additionally counting both modes of authority would yield fourteen schemes ($6 \times 2 + 2 \times 1$). But one needs only two speech act-types, and all authority types except the majority-type come in two modes that apply equally to individuals and collectives. We can therefore make do with eight schemes, here represented as a cube (Fig. 4).

Figure 4

The authority argument sub-schemes as a cube



We list these eight sub-schemes as one premise-versions (1.1) for a standpoint (1).

Type 1 (epistemic-assertive): The epistemic authority A_E asserts P

1. P is correct/acceptable/true.

1.1 A_E asserts P .

Type 2 (epistemic-directive)⁹: A_E directs H to do C

1 H should do C .

1.1 A_E directs C at H .

Type 3 (deontic-assertive): The deontic authority A_D asserts proposition P

1. P is correct.

1.1 A_D asserts P .

⁹ Rather than command an action, an epistemic authority may offer a recommendation. This we can analyze as an *assertive*. A recommendation, however, remains a “sublime” directive, if you will, as its normal purpose is to bring its own content about.

Type 4 (deontic-directive): The deontic authority A_D directs hearer H to do C

1. H should do C .

1.1 A_D directs C at H .

Type 5 (attractive-assertive): The attractive authority A_A asserts P

1 P is correct.

1.1 A_A asserts P .

Type 6 (attractive-directive): A_A directs H to do C

1 H should do C .

1.1 A_A directs H to do C .

Type 7 (majority-assertive): A group authority A_M asserts P

1. P is correct.

1.1 A_M asserts P .

Type 8 (majority-directive): A_M directs H to do C

1 H should do C .

1.1 A_M directs C to do H .

Identifying various sources of authority, as we did, may suggest further sub-sub-schemes, for example for *talented*, *wealthy*, *fortunate* authorities, etc., insofar as talent, wealth, fortune, etc. are reasons why audiences are attracted. Yet this would go beyond the scope of our paper.

5. Conclusion

Inspired by Locke, Aristotle, Cicero, and Boethius, we proposed a new typology that discerns four *sources* of authority (epistemic, deontic, attractive, authority-*qua*-majority) and two *speech act types* (assertive, directive). This yields eight sub-schemes for the argument from authority. We intend to address the evaluation of arguments saturating these schemes in future research that applies the meta-level CQs from Yu & Zenker (2020).

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