Group Identity in Public Deliberation

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Abstract: I argue that different argumentative practices require participants to categorize themselves in different modes. Accordingly, I distinguish four types of argumentation: *rational argumentation, intergroup argumentation*, *intragroup argumentation*, and, finally, *personal argumentation*. An inescapable implication of my approach to deliberation is that deliberation presupposes the self-categorization of participants in the same ingroup. Deliberation does not require, however, the group to antecede the deliberation process, and a distinctive feature of successful public deliberation is its capacity to produce social identification with the deliberative group. Thus, identity negotiation is an important part of deliberative processes.

Résumé: Je soutiens que différentes pratiques argumentatives exigent que les participants se catégorisent selon différents modes. Ainsi, je distingue quatre types d'argumentations : l'argumentation rationnelle, l'argumentation intergroupe, l'argumentation intragroupe et, enfin, l'argumentation personnelle. Une implication incontournable de mon approche de la délibération est que la délibération présuppose l'auto-catégorisation des participants dans le même endogroupe. La délibération n'exige cependant pas que le groupe précède le processus de délibération, et une caractéristique distinctive d'une délibération publique réussie est sa capacité à produire une identification sociale avec le groupe délibératif. Ainsi, la négociation identitaire est une partie importante des processus délibératifs.

Keywords: deliberation, group identity, group reasons, identity negotiation, macro-deliberation, micro-deliberation, public sphere, self-identification

> '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.

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> [‘We’ is performative; ‘we’ by its mere pronunciation creates a group; ‘we’ designates a generality of people including the speaker, and the speaker can speak for them, their bonds are so strong that the speaker can speak for all.]
> Alexis Jenni, *L’art français de la guerre*, 36. Gallimard, 2011

1. Introduction

When we deliberate, we critically examine various proposals or alternative courses of action in order to choose the best one. But one may ask: the best one for whom? If the answer is "for us," deliberation seems to presuppose that participants categorize themselves and act as members of the same group. If so, public deliberation would have no place in a scenario in which "audiences seem to disappear into socially fragmented groups," as Goodnight (1982, p. 224) puts it, and it would be difficult to maintain that, as many claim, deliberation is the prototypical form of argumentation in politics. But I will argue that deliberation does not require the group, the “we,” to precede the deliberative process, and that a distinctive feature of successful public deliberation is its capacity to produce social identification with the deliberative group. At the same time, the power to make participants categorize themselves as members of the debating group distinguishes deliberation from other forms of public argumentation. Thus, an important function of deliberation is that of shaping collective identities. This, in turn, raises other problems, because each of us possesses multiple identities, which are activated according to the needs of each social exchange so that identification with the deliberative group may inhibit identification with other contextually relevant groups. I will consider these difficulties in the final part of my article.

Throughout this paper, I will develop and support the following five tenets:

1. Those who argue in the public sphere neither act nor are perceived as private individuals. They act and are perceived as members of one or more groups.

2. One of the things that can differentiate an argumentative practice from another is how participants are expected to categorize themselves and the others in the exchange.
3. Deliberation is typically an intragroup practice while negotiation is an intergroup or interpersonal practice.
4. Participants in a deliberation are required to categorize themselves as members of the deliberative group and act for group reasons.
5. Intergroup deliberation is possible insofar as participants perceive themselves as members of the deliberative group (superordinate identification), while maintaining their contextually relevant subgroup identities (subgroup identification).

2. A preliminary definition of 'deliberation'

The interest in deliberation as an argumentative practice comes largely from the fact that, according to most theorists, deliberation is the paradigmatic form of argumentation in politics and more generally in decision making in the public sphere. The concept of 'public sphere' comes from Habermas (1989/1962) and designates the social space where citizens ask for, exchange, and examine reasons for political measures, policies, and laws that should be enforced from a wide range of political perspectives. This is in keeping with the way the label 'deliberation' is sometimes used for any type of argumentation related to decision-making in the public sphere. So, the concept of deliberation is a somewhat heterogeneous concept unless it encompasses several concepts united by a family resemblance. Therefore, I will explain first what I mean here by 'deliberation.' Here is a tentative definition:

> Deliberation is a distinctive argumentative practice in which several parties reason together about how to proceed when they are confronted by a practical problem or need to consider taking a course of action in order to decide the best available one.

In addition, we should differentiate micro-deliberative programs (democratic deliberation) and macro-deliberative programs (deliberative democracy). Micro-deliberative programs are related to bounded groups, such as juries, committees, neighborhood councils, or citizens' juries, while macro-deliberative programs involve the general public or the entire citizenry (Vega 2018, pp. 12-13, 2020, p. 183). Indeed, these two forms of public deliberation pose quite different problems for argumentation theorists, which consequently must be addressed with different tools (see Rehg 2005). Micro-deliberation is an interpersonal, dialogical, or polylogical argumentation, while macro-argumentation takes place in a multiple and heterogeneous argumentative space—in a network of diverse forums and audiences interconnected in different ways—and therefore it is not properly interpersonal. It might be that some of my observations would be more accurate for micro-deliberation than for macro-deliberation since the concept of social group comes from social psychology.

From the common basis provided by the above tentative definition, we find significant divergences on deliberation among argumentation theorists. I will review the following five distinct but related accounts of deliberation to lay the groundwork for my own proposal:

- deliberation as a basic type of dialogue (Walton and Krabbe 1995)
- deliberation as a communicative activity type (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2010; Lewiński 2010)
- deliberative balancing (Kock 2007)
- deliberation (making proposals) vs negotiation (making offers) (Ihnen Jory 2016)
- collective agency in deliberation (Vega 2018, 2020).

3. Deliberative dialogue

The concept of dialogue provides a tool for classifying 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 (e.g., to resolve a difference of opinion). A particular kind of dialogue is characterized by its intended goal, by its rules, and by the roles played by the participants.

Walton and Krabbe (1995) recognize six basic types of argumentative exchanges or dialogues: inquiry, negotiation dialogue, information-seeking dialogue, deliberation, and eristic dialogue. Later Walton (2010) added discovery dialogue as a seventh type of basic dialogue. Their classification is based on three aspects: the initial situation, the participants' purposes, and the goal of the dialogue (table 1). These are the *basic* types of dialogue; in addition, there are mixed types of dialogue that combine many stages corresponding to different basic types. As it should be obvious, most, if not all, real argumentative practices are mixed dialogues.

Table 1: Basic dialogue types

TYPE OF DIALOGUE	INITIAL SITUATION	PARTICIPANT'S PURPOSES	GOAL OF DIALOGUE
Information-Seeking	Need of 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

Walton and Krabbe define deliberation as a basic type of dialogue in which a shared commitment to a goal arises from a situation in which several agents must jointly choose from several alternatives that may either be given in advance or be built during the dialogue. Agents examine the issue, asking for, giving, and appraising reasons in order to determine the best available course of action.

In an archetypical deliberation, participants don't start from previously accepted positions and try to get others to adopt 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 alternative, their role is not to defend it but to collaborate with the other participants in examining the pros and cons of the available options to make a joint decision. The rules of a given type of deliberation may assign the defense of an option to one of the participants, but this obligation must be understood from the shared commitment to *jointly* examine all available options. Assigning the defense of a different option to each participant 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. It could be said that in a deliberation the participants act for group reasons. This is important because it implies that, to some extent, deliberators are expected to act as members of the same group as defined by a community of interest (which is not the case with negotiators).

To sum up, deliberation does not start from a conflict of opinions (persuasion dialogue) or interests (negotiation) but from the need to find a *joint* solution for a *common* problem. This feature differentiates deliberation from both persuasion and negotiation, making it more akin to inquiry, although deliberation is a form of practical argumentation and inquiry is a form of factual argumentation.[1] What is worth emphasizing here is that

[1] C.S. Peirce and John Dewey coined the concept of community of inquiry to account for the nature of knowledge formation and the process of scientific inquiry (see, for example, Bruce and Bloch 2013). The conceptual similarities between deliberative groups, as described below, and communities of inquiry merit exploration.

deliberative and inquiry dialogues are argumentative practices in which participants cooperate to find an answer to a shared problem, whereas in persuasion and negotiation dialogue, they do so to resolve a conflict or difference between them.

4. Deliberation as a communicative activity type

A related, though different, concept to that of dialogue type is that of an argumentative activity type. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser define activity types 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, a communicative activity type that is inherently or essentially argumentative is an argumentative activity type. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2010) define genres of communicative activity as a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity. Thus, presidential debates, general debates in parliament, and the Prime Minister's Question Time are activity types of the genre of communicative activity deliberation. An additional feature that occupies a prominent place in Fairclough's account of deliberation (2017, 2018), is that each activity type can be associated with some prototypical argumentative patterns (van Eemeren 2016).

Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2010) explicitly note that their conception of deliberation as a genre of communicative activity differs from that of Walton and Krabbe (2010, p. 142, fn.30). A basic difference is that Walton and Krabbe situate deliberation in the interpersonal domain, whereas van Eemeren and Houtlosser situate it in the political domain (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2010, p. 140, fn.24). This partly explains why van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2010) add a non-interactive third party besides the proponent and the opponent. This third party "determines then the

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

outcome of the deliberation—by voting or in a less conspicuous way." (*Op. cit.*, p. 147).[3]

Van Eemeren and Houtlosser split the deliberation process into two phases. Deliberation starts from a disagreement between the parties about a policy issue where their views are incompatible with one another. The proponent parties come out first to argue by defending their points of view in critical exchanges with their opponents. After the proposing parties have been heard, it is up to the *individual listener, reader, or viewer* to decide on the resolution of the differences of opinion raised in the argumentation stage (*Op. cit.*, p. 148).

To sum up, the main differences between Walton and Krabbe's (2010) deliberative dialogue and van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2010) communicative activity of deliberation are the following:

(1) Deliberative dialogue arises from a common problem; deliberative activity arises from a conflict of proposals.
(2) In deliberation dialogue, the parties strive for agreement; in the activity type of deliberation, they try to convince the majority of those who form the third party.
(3) Participants in deliberative dialogue jointly construe reasons; participants in the activity critically examine each other's reasons or do not interact.

Consequently, in the communicative activity of deliberation, proponents are required to act as members of competing groups, while those who form the third party do not engage directly in argumentation and act in a personal or individual capacity without forming a group. It seems unlikely that in a process of this nature, participants would develop an identification with the deliberative group that reduces partisanship (Batalha et al. 2019; Myers 2021). In this sense, van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2010) conception of

[3] Van Eemeren and Garssen justify the inclusion of a third party as follows: "the (assumed) presence of a third-party audience is vital for the strategic maneuvering taking place in disputation. In fact, without such an audience the institutional constraints on the strategic maneuvering will rather be those of deliberation or some other genre of communicative activity" (2015, p. 849, fn.9)

deliberation is conflictual rather than problem-solving. This brings van Eemeren and Houtlosser's conception of deliberation closer to that of Kock (2007), as we shall see in due course.

5. Deliberative balancing

Christian Kock examines political debate as a subcategory of deliberative argumentation (2007, p. 234). Deliberative argumentation, according to him, 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 the preceding accounts of deliberation. 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 commissive act, and consequently it cannot be true or false, but rather right or wrong. Hence deliberation is not about the truth of propositions, but about the rightness of actions.[4]

Kock (2007) derives from this feature the next two. Arguments about proposals are arguments about the positive and negative consequences of an action (pragmatic argumentation). As most, if not all, actions have both negative and positive consequences, there will often be good reasons or arguments in favor and against

[4] Searle (1975, pp. 354-356) says that the point of assertives is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition, while the point of commissives is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action.

one and the same proposal. If we assume, following the model of deductive logic, that a proposition is deducible from a set of propositions if and only if the truth of these propositions entails the truth of the former proposition, 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.[5]

The coexistence of good reasons in favor of and against a proposal makes weighing a core constituent of practical argumentation. Kock (2007) assumes that to evaluate a factual argument, it suffices to examine its premises and their relationship to the conclusion, while the appraisal of a practical argument requires balancing its strength with that of the other concurrent arguments. If this is so, the concept of a (logically) good factual argument would be a classificatory or qualitative one, while the concept of a (logically) good practical argument would be a topological or comparative one.[6]

It follows from the points above that balancing the strength of two practical arguments consists in balancing the pros and cons of two courses of action. 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, which constitute the warrants that deliberative argumentation relies on.

Value pluralism would not pose a great difficulty in deliberation if there were a common basis for determining, in each concrete situation, the respective weight of conflicting commitments. Value pluralism is superficial if conflicting values can be converted into a common denominator; otherwise, it is deep. As a result of the lack of a common denominator value, Kock (2007) considers that in deliberative argumentation there may be no objective or intersubjective way of determining which side trumps the other:

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[5] This shows that reasons, in general, and reasons for action, in particular, are not reducible or even explicable in terms of logical inferences.

[6] Since Hempel (1952), distinctions for knowledge have been made between qualitative or classificatory, quantitative or metric and comparative or topological concepts.

> 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).

Kock goes on to conclude that it cannot be expected, not even as a theoretical ideal, that deliberation will lead either towards consensus or that reaching consensus is the goal of deliberation. Thus, were he right and the weighing of practical arguments were always subjective, intersubjectivist views of deliberation would face a serious problem. Argumentation is the practice through which subjective preferences become intersubjective reasons through public critical scrutiny. If the weighing of practical arguments is subjective and conflicting values may not be converted into a common denominator, weighing itself falls outside the domain of deliberation, and, consequently, the core of the decision-making process. This problem disappears, or at least is mitigated, when participants act in the we-mode (or what amounts to the same thing: for group reasons), since acting in this way presupposes a commitment to a shared ethos that includes goals, values, beliefs, norms, standards, and, presumably, a ranking of values or at least some standards of comparison. (Tuomela 2007, p. 5). Hence the ethos shared by those who self-categorize as members of the same group provides a common ground for intersubjective weighing. Of course, while this makes consensus possible, it does not guarantee it.

With consensus ruled out, what could be the purpose of having advocates of different policies engage 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 reasons relating to the choice (2007, p. 238). Thus, deliberation fulfills the function of bringing to light the relevant considerations for some decision, which everyone will rank according to their personal criteria. This view of deliberation

agrees with van Eemeren and Houtlosser's (2010) account of deliberation as a communicative activity type.

For Walton and Krabbe (1995), as we have seen, deliberation is oriented towards the joint choice of the best available course of action on a matter of common interest. By contrast, Kock (2007) claims that 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 aim of the deliberation is to ensure that information is public and accessible—which is usually taken to be a regulatory condition for sound deliberation. Moreover, in Kock's (2007) model, a third party is added so that deliberation goes from being a two-role dialogue (proponent and opponent) to a three-role dialogue (proponent, opponent, and audience). These differences are probably due to the fact that Kock (2007), on one side, and Walton and Krabbe (1995), on the other side, are thinking of different species of deliberation. While Kock is probably thinking about macro-deliberation, since he is dealing with political debate as a distinctive domain in argumentation, Walton and Krabbe's deliberative dialogue is designed to account for micro-deliberation—a kind of interpersonal deliberation that takes place in small groups. Consensus conferences (see Nielsen et al. 2006) provide a nice illustration of Walton and Krabbe's (1995) deliberative dialogue.

6. Making proposals vs making offers

In politics, deliberation coexists and mixes with other argumentative genres, such as negotiation, adjudication, consultation, and mediation. The contrast with negotiation is especially illuminating for the nature of deliberation. Drawing on the work of Walton and Krabbe (1995) and using pragma dialectics as her main theoretical framework, 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 negotia-

tions—unlike deliberations—do not always involve argumentation.

There are three main differences between negotiating (i.e., making an offer) and deliberating (i.e., making a proposal) according to Ihnen Jory (2016).

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

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 addressee) would be carrying out. When a speaker makes a proposal, they are committed to the view that the action proposed will further an interest—goal, objective, preference, etc.—that is shared by both the speaker and the addressee. When a speaker makes an offer—either non-conditional or conditional—they are committed to the view that their action will comply with or further, in varying degrees, interests that are not shared by the speaker and the addressee.

The third and final difference refers to the presumed absence or existence of a conflict of interest. When a speaker presents a proposal, they presume that there is an alignment of interests with the addressee. By contrast, the speaker who makes an offer (conditional or otherwise) presupposes the existence of a conflict of interests with the addressee. 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 rather the assumption on the part of the speaker about whether the action is performed to solve a conflict of interest or to promote shared interests.

What I want to stress is that, according to Ihnen Jory (2016), deliberation differs from negotiation because it always involves *collective* action that serves a *shared interest* and therefore presupposes a *community of interests*. On this point, Ihnen Jory is on the side of Walton and Krabbe (1995) and not on the side of van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2010) and Kock (2007). However, Ihnen Jory's (2007) analysis is not fully social since she does not distinguish between the casual coincidence of interests of speaker and addressee and the coincidence due to their identification with the same ingroup. Using the terminology of the next section, Ihnen Jory (2007) does not distinguish plural agency from collective agency in deliberation.

7. Deliberation and collective agency

The preceding discussion suggests that deliberation, unlike negotiation, requires a kind of collective agency—something that Luis Vega has emphasized in many papers. Luis Vega largely agrees with Kock regarding 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). Vega characterizes deliberation as

> an argumentative interaction between agents who deal with, manage, and weigh information, options, and preferences in order to responsibly and reflexively make a decision or reach a practical resolution on a matter of common interest. The resources of public discourse are up for debate in deliberation; for example, communicable and sharable reasons beyond the personal or purely professional domains of argumentation can be appealed to (Vega 2020, p. 171, my translation).

This characterization of deliberation is broader than Walton and Krabbe's and also covers negotiation, since in any dialogue the participants share a common interest, expressed by the goal of the dialogue. In particular, all participants in a negotiation are interested in reaching a reasonable settlement that everyone can live with.

To develop a consensualist model of deliberative argumentation, Vega (2018, 2020) distinguishes three forms of argumenta-

tive agency, individual agency, plural agency, and collective agency, and he associates deliberation with collective agency, a notion based on Toumela's (2003, 2007) 'We mode.'

In *individual agency*, a commitment is assumed and cancelled by personal choice: a person is under a personal commitment if and only if they are solely responsible for the assumed commitment, and they are entitled to cancel the commitment. Thus, individual agency is an 'I mode' 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. Vega (2020, p. 185) says that in plural agency, individuals function as private persons in a group context. Finally, *collective agency* results from the confrontation of options and deliberation in a group that is acting toward a common goal or joint resolution. It involves strong commitments that no member of the group is unilaterally entitled to cancel, and it is therefore a 'We mode' of agency.

Although Vega (2020, p. 187) explains the differences between the various forms of agency in terms of commitments, I find Tuomela's (2007)description in terms of group reasons more illuminating. Since arguing can be defined as presenting to someone something as a reason for something else, the concept of group reasons seems essential for a proper understanding of collective deliberation. For Tuomela, thinking and acting in the We-mode amounts to thinking and acting for a collectively constructed group 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.). A central notion that is needed is that of a social group (2007, p. 14).

Tuomela 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" (2007, p. 16). 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 can be difficult to distinguish between plural agency and collective agency and, consequently, to grasp the need to distinguish between them, as Tuomela acknowledges:

> Suppose you and I are driving on a country road in opposite directions. We have separate private goals. We arrive from different directions at a tree trunk lying on the road and blocking our way. We realize that in order to be able to continue we must jointly remove the trunk, and we quickly do it. Your activity was helpful and indeed required for my being able to reach my goal, and conversely. We both intended in the I-mode to remove the trunk and did it. The result was joint action in the I-mode. In general, joint actions can be performed in a functional sense in the progroup I-mode. Thus trunks can get moved, bridges built, and so on in this way. In all such cases of course we-mode joint action is also possible. Often in actual life there is no recognizable overt difference but only difference in mental attitude (2007, p. 47).

However, it is doubtful that we can explain the normative appeal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to serve as a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future" (United Nations n.d.), in terms of the coincidence of private interests of individuals.

As we have seen, it is just the search for the common good that differentiates deliberation from negotiation as modalities of argumentation, in that the latter is geared towards the reconciliation of differential interests given in advance and independently from the constitution of the deliberative group. Since argumentation is a communicative interaction that requires the participation of many agents, argumentative practices may run either with a plural or with a collective agency. Negotiation seems to require plural agency insofar a conflict of interest presupposes non-shared interests, whilst deliberation rests upon the recognition of a common good, and hence presupposes some form of collective intentionality and agency.

Vega's (2918, 2020) thesis of the collective agency of deliberation can be interpreted as either 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 of public deliberation, which also includes plural deliberation (weak interpretation). Vega (*Ibid.*) 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 they may refer to them as members of the group. Thus a "general interest" may refer to an interest generalized among the participants 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" (2020, p. 190, my translation) suggests that not all groups are endowed with this capacity and favors the weak interpretation as does his wide definition of deliberation or the assertion that

> A characteristic virtue of successful public deliberation consists precisely in turning the individuals who debate about some resolution into effective members of a collective, and, moreover, in turning the individuals affected by the common problem into agents involved in its effective resolution. (Vega 2020, p. 191).

But even if we were to adopt the weak interpretation, it seems clear that Vega holds that collective deliberation is the model for public deliberation, in the double sense of "model" —in essence, as archetype and example for imitation or emulation. In this sense, collective agency lies at the core of the most valuable type of deliberation. Collective agency is therefore a condition of successful deliberation if not a condition of possibility.

Identifying different types of agencies and seeking to associate them with particular argumentative practices, Vega has made a major contribution to the study of argumentative practices in the public sphere. However, accounting for agency differences in argumentation requires more than the distinction between acting as a member of a group and acting as a private person. In a negotiation, for example, the participants may and often do interact as

members or representatives of different groups. Each of them is acting for group reasons (those of their specific group), but it would be misleading to say that they are acting in the We mode. Rather, it should be said that they only act in We mode with respect to their group mates. By contrast, the collective agency presupposed by deliberation requires that individuals identify themselves and act as members of *the same* group. Another difficulty is that during an argumentative exchange a participant may identify themself and act as a member of different groups, either successively or simultaneously. To understand argumentative processes, we need to grasp when and why participants categorize themselves in terms of a collective category or not. Fortunately, social identity theory provides the tools for developing Vega's ideas.

8. Group identity in deliberation

My proposal starts, through Luis Vega, from Kock's (2007) description of deliberation. I broadly agree with his characterization of deliberation, and therefore that reasons in conflict cannot be objectively ordered, but I still believe they can be intersubjectively ordered. Hence my question is, what conditions must obtain for an eventual consensus among the participants to be a reasonable requirement? The key is, in my view, that subjects do not choose individually (and therefore subjectively) which policy to support, as Kock (2007) assumes, but do so as members of a group. As Maurice Charland (1987) has shown, the constitution of a collective subject is one of the ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric (see below).

Those who argue in the public sphere neither act as nor are perceived as private individuals, but instead as members of a group. Studies of public deliberation have tended to ignore social identity, viewing deliberation as a process in which private persons make decisions by mutual agreement or obtain the relevant information to do so. However, it is increasingly recognized that public deliberation—and public argumentation in general—takes place at group level rather than at the personal level. Thus, as I have already mentioned, Batalha et al. (2019) and Myers (2021) argue

that the (micro)-deliberative process can generate an identification with the deliberative group, which reduces the salience of other social identities and significantly influences the outcome of that process. Likewise, I have argued (Marraud 2020) that a deliberative group (i.e., a group capable of becoming a collective agent in deliberation) is a group in the sense of social identity theory:

> 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 (Tajfel and Turner 1986, p. 15).

Hence, a deliberative group is defined not only by some shared set of objective characteristics, but also by its members' awareness of belonging to the same group and the value and emotional significance they attach to this membership.

Batalha et al. (2019), Marraud (2020) and Myers (2021) share the idea that successful public deliberation has the power to turn the individuals who debate into members of a deliberative group, creating a new social identification or activating the appropriate identification. For example, Myers points out that,

> deliberative minipublics succeed because they create a new social identification, with the deliberating group itself. As deliberators talk and work toward a common goal, they come to perceive the collection of deliberators as having "entitativity," that is, as being a coherent social group (2021, p. 2).

In (Marraud 2020), I have further suggested 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). In social psychology, 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 and Bosson 1992, p. 449). I believe this is true for interpersonal deliberation, that is, for micro-deliberation, in which the

interaction between participants is more or less symmetrical, but not for macro-deliberation, in which such symmetry is absent. To describe the shaping of identity in macro-deliberation the concept of interpellation from constitutive rhetoric may be more appropriate:

> Interpellation occurs at the very moment one enters into a rhetorical situation, that is, as soon as an individual recognizes and acknowledges being addressed. An interpellated subject participates in the discourse that addresses him. [...] In consequence, interpellation has a significance to rhetoric, for the acknowledgment of an address entails an acceptance of an imputed self-understanding which can form the basis for an appeal. (Charland 1987, p. 138).[7]

Deliberative rhetoric analyzes deliberation according to the speaker–audience schema, and thus Charland deals with the constitution of the audience, not the constitution of the deliberative group. Charland points out that the idea that the speaker addresses an audience that is already there, with their prejudices, interests, and motives, and freely evaluates the reasons given to persuade them, is problematic, and argues that "the very existence of social subjects (who would become audience members) is already a rhetorical effect" (*Op. cit*., p. 133). Identification is thus a function of argumentation that logically precedes and is presupposed by persuasion because reasons are only so for those who identify with the collective subject addressed by the speaker—setting aside individual interests and concerns or concerns derived from membership in other subordinate groups. Charland observes that to identify with the group is, among other things, to accept and act on group reasons, so that the interpellate "is constrained to follow through, to act so as to maintain the narrative's consistency" (*Op. cit*., p. 141), and their freedom to accept or reject the reasons offered is illusory.

[7] I am grateful to one of the reviewers for bringing Charland's article to my attention.

Robert Asen (2005) ranks identity formation among the important functions argumentation may play in the public sphere. As he says,

> 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).

As far as micro-deliberation is concerned, I go one step beyond: since negotiation of identity is part of the argumentative exchange itself, my thesis involves recognizing the shaping of identity as a primary function and a success condition of public micro-deliberation.

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. When, as a result of identity negotiation, identification with a group is activated, the subject thinks of themself, acts and is treated by others as a member of that group. So, the social identities assumed determine the sort of agency required by the exchange.

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 to get the others to verify and confirm their self-conceptions (self-verification); on the other hand, the other participants try to make the participant 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 her and themselves as members of a group. The very possibility of deliberation depends on the success of these maneuvers. 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 and Buhrmester 2012, p. 414).

A social group exists when individuals recognize each other as members of the same group. This mutual recognition involves a certain depersonalization, since the subject minimizes the differences within his or her group (ingroup) and magnifies the differences with the competing groups (outgroups). Depersonalization is not a loss of self, but rather a redefinition of the self in terms of group membership. When one self-categorizes as a member of a group, one perceives oneself in terms of the prototype of the group (roughly, the ethos of the group) and ceases to perceive oneself as unique and different from the rest, with one's own particular interests, and perceives oneself as a member of the group. This process is known as self-stereotyping.

9. Levels of self-categorization in argumentative practices

The required agency makes it possible to distinguish different varieties of public deliberation. According to social identity theory, self-categorization has a hierarchical structure with at least three levels of abstraction related by class inclusion (Turner et al., 1987). At the most abstract and inclusive level are categorizations based on traits that are taken to be common or proper to all human beings: person, rational being, moral agent, etc. The intermediate level is occupied by ingroup-outgroup categorizations, based on social differences and similarities between human beings that define one as a member of certain groups and not of others. Each of us belongs to many groups, more or less inclusive, and group identities may be combined and organized in different and complex ways. Finally, at the lowest level are the personal categorizations of the self, which include comparisons and differences with other ingroup members. Identity theorists then speak of a human identity, a social identity, and a personal identity, although the latter label may be misleading, and "individual identity" would be preferable.

Self-concept is multiple, as it includes different self-categorizations, and situational, as depending on the situation, individuals self-categorize themselves in one way or another. The level at which we define ourselves determines how we relate to other people, including members of the same group and other

groups. The level of self-categorization allows us to distinguish between interpersonal behavior and intergroup behavior. By interpersonal behavior, Tajfel and Turner mean

> the interaction between two or more individuals that is fully determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics, and not at all affected by various social groups or categories to which they respectively belong (Tajfel and Turner 1986, p. 277).

Tajfel and Turner's (1986) examples are relationships within a couple or between friends. At the other end of the spectrum, intergroup behavior

> consists of interactions between two or more individuals (or groups of individuals) that are fully determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories, and not at all affected by the interindividual personal relationships between the people involved (*Ibid*).

Tajfel and Turner offer as an example of intergroup relationships "the behavior at a negotiating table of members representing two parties in an intense intergroup conflict" (*Ibid*.) Tajfel and Turner are careful to caution that these are archetypes that will only exceptionally be encountered in real social situations.

Different argumentative practices require participants to categorize themselves as belonging to different modes at different times. This requirement refers to the level of the relevant categorization (human, social, or personal) and, in the case of the intermediate level of outgroup-ingroup categorizations, to the group or groups (male, teacher, philosopher, European, middle-aged, etc.) that are significant in the context of the exchange. According to the required categorization, I distinguish four types of argumentation:

(a) *Rational argumentation* requires participants to categorize themselves at the superordinate level, as rational beings or moral subjects, reducing the salience of other subordinate social identities. This is the case for philosophical argumentation, insofar as "Philosophers always

claim to be addressing such an [universal] audience […] because they think that all who understand the reasons they give will have to accept their conclusions" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969/1958, p. 31).

(b) In *intergroup argumentation*, participants do not categorize themselves as members of the same group, but of competing groups; it is thus an example of intergroup behavior. It is the type of argumentation that, taking Tajfel's example of intergroup behavior, is developed by participants at a negotiation table representing the parties in an intense intergroup conflict.

(c) Those who participate in an *intragroup argumentation* are also categorized at the intermediate ingroup-outgroup level, but they do so as members of the same group, while excluding members of outgroups from the discussion. The Rural Climate Dialogue program modeled on the Citizens' Jury process described in Myers (2021) provides an example of intragroup argumentation.

(d) Finally, *personal argumentation* is an example of interpersonal behavior, determined by the personality of the participants and their individual differences. For example, two siblings arguing about whether or not to go to the park to meet a mutual friend (I owe this example to one of the reviewers).

Two caveats about this classification. First, this is an a priori classification of ideal types, so that some of the categories may in fact be empty. Second, this is intended to be a classification of activity types. It should not be forgotten that in political argumentation, deliberation crosscuts with negotiation, adjudication, and mediation (Fairclough 2017, p. 243). An argumentative practice can be classified as rational, intergroup, intragroup, or personal if it is predominantly based on argumentative activities of the corresponding type (which I admit may be vague). I have already suggested that deliberation is typically an intragroup practice and negotiation an intergroup or interpersonal practice.

10. Levels of categorization and public spheres of argument

There is some parallelism between the levels of self-categorization required in each argumentative practice and the personal, technical, and public spheres of argument distinguished by Thomas Goodnight (1982). Goodnight illustrates his spheres of argument with arguments among friends (personal sphere), judgements of academic arguments (technical sphere), and arguments for judging political disputes (public sphere). After noticing that the criteria for deciding which events belong to which sphere are sometimes ambiguous and changeable, Goodnight explains their differences in terms of identification.

> One form is invoked when a person tries to show "consubstantiality" with another. Another form is invoked through partisans appeals — partisanship being a characteristic of the public. The third form is invoked through a person's identification with his work in a special occupation — the essential ingredient of technical argument. These alternative modes of identification make the personal, technical and public grounding of arguments possible (1982, p. 217).

Relationships between friends are the prototypical example of interpersonal behavior, and therefore it seems evident that in arguments between friends the participants self-categorize at the lowest level of abstraction.

The identification of a person with their job in a special occupation is an obvious example of a social group, so academic discussions correspond to the intermediate, ingroup-outgroup level of categorization. Participants in the discussion are expected to self-categorize and behave as academics. An academic debate takes place within the ingroup, but other argumentative practices involving academics—such as an information seeking dialogue with experts—place participants in different social groups. The same is true of negotiation when the interests of different groups are at stake, as Goodnight's (1982) allusion to partisanship suggests. In contrast, deliberation, when participants have previously categorized themselves as members of the same group, resembles aca-

demic debate. Thus, we can distinguish between non-group, intragroup, and intergroup argumentative practices.

What about the public sphere and the more abstract level of self-categorization? The public sphere of argumentation can be conceived of in two different ways. First, it can be conceived as a single, overarching forum potentially open to the participation of all rational beings, persons, or moral subjects (see Habermas 1989/1962). This model of a single, all-encompassing public sphere of argumentation privileges a superordinate, more abstract categorization, which inhibits any ingroup-outgroup categorization, and defines rationality as an attribute of that supra-ordinate identity.

Obviously, this emphasis on recategorization risks depriving individuals of valued subgroup identities. It should be recalled in this regard that optimal distinctiveness theory predicts that majority groups tend to stimulate conceptualization at an individual or subgroup level, while minority groups tend to stimulate conceptualization at the collective level.

The model of the single public sphere (or of the super-ordinate deliberative group, as we might say) has been criticized because it assumes a pre-established notion of the common good that functions as an exclusionary mechanism that restrict discursive engagement and undermines the interests of oppressed groups. I will not go into these criticisms here, instead referring those who are interested to Asen (2000).

Transposed into argumentation theory, the single public sphere resembles the universal audience of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, which "consists of the whole of mankind, or at least, of all normal, adult persons" (1969/1958, p. 30). Those who address a universal public do not do so because they expect to obtain the effective assent of all people but because they believe that those who understand their reasons will have to accept their conclusions; thus "The agreement of a universal public is, therefore, a question, not of fact, but of law" (*Op. cit.*, p. 31).

The alternative is to conceive of a multiple public sphere made up of multiple forums interconnected in various ways, as proposed by Seyla Benhabid or Charles Taylor, among others (cf. Asen 2000). The identification of the participants in these forums does

not occur then at the superordinate level, but at the ingroup-outgroup level of categorization. This raises the question of whether in the multiple public sphere model of public deliberation (as opposed to other forms of argumentation such as negotiation) can only be intragroup.

Goodnight depicts deliberation in the public sphere as a macro-deliberation, which cannot escape a certain tension. On the one hand, "the public forum inevitably limits participation to representative spokespersons," and therefore, those who argue in the public forum are expected to behave as members of different groups. On the other hand, "the interest of the public realm […] extend the stakes of argument beyond private needs and the needs of special communities to the interests of the entire community" (Goodnight 1982, pp. 219–220).

11. Prototypical features of deliberative groups

A condition of success for group deliberation is that the participants recognize each other and act in the transaction as members of the same group. Social identifications are essentially relational and comparative: they define the individual as similar to or different from, as "better" or "worse" than, members of other competing groups. The process of self-categorization as a member of a deliberative group is based on the association of positively valued characteristics with the deliberative ingroup: reasonableness, open-mindedness, mutual respect, tolerance for disagreement, etc. that constitute the prototype of the group. Mutual recognition as members of the deliberative group occurs when participants perceive themselves in terms of the group prototype, as endowed with those qualities that members of the relevant outgroups typically lack. Thus, reasonableness becomes, from the point of view of deliberative agents, an ingroup identity marker.

Myers' (2021) observations about how micro-deliberation fosters the identification of participants with the deliberative group confirm what was stated in the previous paragraph:

> This group is defined by a unique set of prototypical traits: listening respectfully, demonstrating open- mindedness, and compromising to accomplish the group's task, all traits that are very dif-

> ferent from those of a prototypical partisan. Deliberators come to self- categorize as members of this group and through the process of self- stereotyping to adopt these traits and perform these behaviors. Further, this new identification reduces the salience of other social identities, such as partisan identification, that might complicate deliberation. (2021, p. 2)

Regarding the identification of outgroups in the construction of the ingroup, Myers notes that when participants in a micro-deliberation on climate change developed an identification with the group, they did so by identifying two outgroups: "political partisans and group members who did not adopt the behavioral norms" (Myers 2021, p. 4).

Another way of putting it is that reasons in collective deliberation are group reasons—reasons constructed for the members of a group—and, as a result, they are reasons that can only be acknowledged by those who recognize themselves and are recognized by the others as members of the group. What is shared by deliberators acting as members of the same group is the principle that a feature is a reason for choosing or rejecting a course of action if and only if it benefits or harms, respectively, the group as a whole. That is, the relevant reasons in deliberation are group reasons. Naturally, members of the same group may disagree about what the expected consequences of a course of action are or about whether the positive consequences outweigh the positive ones or the other way around.

12. Is intergroup deliberation possible?

An inescapable implication of the above account of deliberation is that deliberation presupposes the self-categorization of participants in the same ingroup. This seems to preclude the possibility of intergroup deliberation. How can differences among participants be accommodated in intragroup deliberation?

Deliberation does not require, however, that the group antecedes the deliberation process, and, as I have already said, a distinctive feature of successful public deliberation is its capacity to produce social identification with the deliberative group. Therefore, we must distinguish those cases in which the deliberative

group is identified from a pre-existing common group and those in which the deliberative group is constructed during the exchange.[8] In the first case, the group is formed by exclusion of outgroups members, while in the second case, it is formed to include all the participants, at least tentatively.

Intergroup deliberation is still possible on the condition that we assume something similar to the dual identity theory. Just as models of the public sphere have shifted towards multiplicity, social identification has come to be conceived as a process of multiple categorization, according to which individuals differ in how they make sense of their multiple group memberships. Thus, individuals can consider more than one characterization at once and often combine and organize their social categories in complex and differentiated ways (Reimer et al. 2020, pp. 221-226). The dual identity model recognizes two ways of adopting a superordinate identity. Individuals who espouse a one-group identity adopt the superordinate identity and abandon the subordinate identity, while individuals who espouse a dual identity adopt the superordinate identity but also maintain the subordinate identity. Hence, the dual-identity model proposes an integrationist view of intergroup relations that allows for intergroup deliberation. Intergroup deliberation occurs when, as a result of the deliberative process, participants come to perceive themselves as members of the deliberative group (superordinate identification), while maintaining their contextually relevant subgroup identities (subgroup identification).

Of course, the potential of deliberation to create deliberative groups and new social identities without suppressing other relevant social identities depends on the procedures used to organize the argumentative exchanges. Myers suggests that, in micro-deliberative processes, facilitators should think consciously about how their procedures shape the identities of the deliberators and how they can ensure that relevant identities are not suppressed. Batalha et al. propose "to incorporate, in a mindful manner, social

[8] When the deliberative group is formed from an ingroup to which the participants already belong, it is necessary that, in the context of the exchange of reasons, each of them identifies with that particular group out of the multiple groups to which they belong. The design of a good deliberation should include mechanisms that facilitate the activation of the appropriate group identity.

identity issues in the deliberative ground rules so as to capitalize on its potential and minimize the pitfalls" (2019, p. 18).

Batalha et al. (2019) note that the results of their study show that, after deliberation, participants' preferences were positively associated with identification with the supergroup, but negatively associated with subgroup identification. It is possible, therefore, that the emergence of the deliberative group, by reducing the salience of other pre-existing social identities relevant to the issue being debated, represents a different, but equally troubling, form of coercion, as Myers suspects (2021, p. 15).

In any case, I hope to have shown that a fundamental function of argumentation in the public sphere, integrated with its general function of giving, asking for, and examining reasons, is the formation of social identities (as Asen, 2000, claims) and that the study of self-categorization processes in argumentative exchanges is a promising field of research for the argumentation theorist.

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