Chapter 2
Norms, Values, Argumentation, and the Limits of Rationality

Pierre Livet
University of Provence, France

ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the relations between emotions, values and norms and argumentative debates, which makes possible to take into account the contextuality of the debates. The paper suggests that constraints and demands are mixed and that there are requirements on their articulation. Different demands and constraints make a contextual exogenous background. Before analysing attempts (mainly logical ones) to specify these dialectics between constraints and demands in social and public debates, this paper first gives a sketchy picture of the relation between values, norms and social emotions. The result of the analyses (of the debates) is that we need to take into account some dead-ends of the interaction, the ones related to unsatisfied demands, because in order to enforce norms, we need to take into account the frustration of other values.

In order to take into account the social and emotional context of a debate, we have to look beyond the end of the debate, and to extend the reflection about unaccomplished proposals, in parallel with the execution of the decided project. This requires taking as constraints some attachments to other values (some demands).

INTRODUCTION

According to Habermas (1981), argumentative rationality goes beyond the limits of deductive and instrumental rationality. The closure of the deductive rationality is replaced by the openness of the principle of universalization. The requirement that a democratic debate has to be open to any people that it concerns is not simply a rule of procedure. Universalization is not a constraint but a demand. By contrast, deductive closure is a kind of constraint: if you want to select the propositions

that are related to logical operations and if your demand is that your logical system is complete, you need to satisfy the closure constraint. A constraint (which can be conditional to a demand) has to be entirely satisfied while we can only hope to satisfy the requirements of a demand inasmuch as possible.

Conversational rationality has to be confronted to the human reality of the debates, in which the constraints of the human psychology and the social demands are mixed. We have not only to take into account all the interests, motivations and demands of the concerned persons, as well as the arguments, counter-arguments, counter-counter-arguments and the ways for deciding which argument is the winner. We have also to take care of the emotions raised by the debate, the intensity of the will to defend some value to which a person identifies her quest, the need to show how attached she is to this value – a way of showing both that this value is deeply entrenched and that other people have to recognise her as a real supporter of this value, the desire of being socially recognised in the debate, the resentment against people that are better debaters that her and seem (unjustly in her opinion) to dominate the debate while their values are not so high than yours, and so on and so forth.

In Habermas' vocabulary, emotions belong to the domain of expressive rationality, values to the domain of conversational rationality, interests to the domain of instrumental rationality, and manoeuvre for being socially recognised to strategic rationality (related to instrumental one). This division makes difficult to analyse the impact of emotions as constraints on the argumentation, since "constraints" are supposed to pertain to the domain of instrumentality, as interests are. It is difficult to say whether the expression of values – in social recognition- is a strategic manoeuvre or a way of showing that one is sensible to the conversational rationality. One can suppose that concrete situations mix the different dimensions of rationality, but their division does not make one able to say by which ways, neither which

requirements ways of mixing dimensions of rationality are submitted to. Habermas assumes that conversational rationality integrates the others as it is the dominant one, but this kind of hierarchical integration is idealistic and simply stipulated, not analysed in the details of its operations.

In what follows we suggest that constraints and demands are themselves mixed and that there are requirements on their articulation. One could say that there are constraints and demands on the relations between constraints and demands. The advantage of such a perspective is that, as we consider directly the relations between constraints and demands, we have no difficulty to extend the results of our examination in one dimension of rationality in order to analyse the articulations between the different dimensions of rationality. Some of the constraints of one dimension are also constraints on the realization of the requirements of demands of another dimension and conversely the demands of this other dimension can impose some constraints on the demands of the first dimension or on another one. For example, strategic aims can impose constraints on the authenticity related to the expressive domain, and ethical values can impose constraints on the choice of means of the instrumental and strategic rationality. In our real life, not only constraints in a domain can impose demands onto another domain but also demands in one dimension become constraints for another one, constraints for the accomplishment of the combination of the demands of the two domains. Each domain has not only its own constraints and demands, but also its constraints on the demands of another domain and is submitted to the constraints related to the demands of other domains. These mutual constraints and demands make very difficult and even impossible to fully satisfy the demands of one particular dimension. Not only these mutual constraints are mutual limits for each dimension of rationality but also the mutuality of these constraints can be considered as a limit of rationality taken globally.

8 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/norms-values-argumentation-limits-rationality/77177

Related Content

Organizational Intranets: Cultivating Information Technology For the People By the People
Rens Scheepersand Jeremy Rose (2001). *Managing Internet and Intranet Technologies in Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities (pp. 1-20).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/organizational-intranets-cultivating-information-technology/25884

Attributes of Communication Quality in Business Process Outsourcing Relationships: Perspectives from India-Based Insourcing Managers
Arjan J. Knol, Egon Berghoutand Albert Boonstra (2011). *International Journal of IT/Business Alignment and Governance (pp. 35-55).*
www.irma-international.org/article/attributes-communication-quality-business-process/54733

Diminishing the Gap Between IT Governance Maturity Theory and Practice: Renewing the Approach
Daniël Smitsand Jos van Hillegersberg (2019). *International Journal of IT/Business Alignment and Governance (pp. 1-21).*
www.irma-international.org/article/diminishing-the-gap-between-it-governance-maturity-theory-and-practice/233153

Challenging the Challenges of E-Government: The Ethiopian Context
Ali Hussien Yimer (2021). *International Journal of Digital Strategy, Governance, and Business Transformation (pp. 1-12).*
www.irma-international.org/article/challenging-the-challenges-of-e-government/286772

Auditing Agile Release Management: Balancing Speed and Control
Nikitha Agnew, Manish Guptaand Raj Sharman (2023). *Modernizing Enterprise IT Audit Governance and Management Practices (pp. 25-67).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/auditing-agile-release-management/333177