



ARGUPOLIS PhD Program Argumentation in context

FROM DIFFERENCE OF OPINION TO CONFLICT Marcelo Dascal

Abstract

Diversity or uniformity, difference or similarity, divergence or convergence, dissent or assent, disagreement or agreement – which of these two opposed families of phenomena is or should be predominant in human life? Whatever the answer, it is clear that both are integral components of life, presumably of equal weight in shaping it and in making it possible. From this perspective, it is certainly unjustified to overlook any of them. Nor should we *a priori* consider one of them as purely or mainly ‘negative’, while expressing our preference for the other conceptually, socially, aesthetically, and even linguistically.

In this module, we shall reconsider the widely spread tendency to adopt this attitude. An attempt will be made to identify the ‘positive’ value of the presumed ‘negative’ family. We will pay special attention to such members of the family as ‘objection’, ‘opposition’, ‘dissent’, ‘disagreement’, and the like. This will lead to the recognition of the grounds for the importance and value of the contribution of controversy (here taken as a general term designating the whole family) to human interaction and, with it, to human progress. Needless to say that, from this perspective, the significance of argumentation, a central piece of the controversialist toolbox, will also be highlighted.

The module will focus on a comparative study of the various modalities of polemic exchanges, from the expression of mere differences of opinion to their role in violent conflicts. In parallel, we will undertake a comparative examination of some of the theories that have developed recently, as a result of the growing awareness of the importance of the phenomena in question in our lives.

Syllabus

Mon 15	14:00-15:45	The family’s resemblance
	16:15-18:00	A typology for a few cousins
Tue 16	09:00-12:00	Discussing the typology
	14:00-15:30	Dialectics and pragmatics
	16:00-17:30	Student’s presentations
Wed 17	09:00-12:00	Interpretation, dichotomy, and conflict
	13:30-15:30	Types of rationality and types of debate