Handbook of Argumentation Theory

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Frans H. van Eemeren
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With 78 Figures and 1 Table

Springer Reference

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Preface

When Springer Academic invited me in 2008 to write a handbook of argumentation theory, I realized two things immediately – first, that the time was indeed ripe for publishing a new overview of the state of the art in argumentation theory, and second, that it would be wise to carry out this project with a small group of competent authors who could easily work together. Both considerations were based on my experience with these kinds of projects.

As far as I am concerned, the history of the present project starts in the early 1970s, when I set off writing the first handbook of argumentation theory with Rob Grootendorst and Tjark Kruiger. The resulting overview of the state of the art, published in 1978 in Dutch as *Argumentatietheorie*, was already in 1981 followed by a second, considerably enlarged edition. English translations of this handbook were published in 1984 and 1987 by two different publishers. To do justice to the rapid developments in the field, in the early 1990s I thought it necessary to prepare a new, updated overview. I invited a group of internationally prominent argumentation scholars to join me. The study we coauthored, *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory*, was published in 1996.

During the past two decades, argumentation theory has further matured as a discipline and the number of publications devoted to argumentation has grown considerably. Neoclassical theoretical approaches to argumentation, such as the Toulmin model and the New Rhetoric, have inspired new developments. In addition, prominent approaches of a more recent date, such as Informal Logic and Pragma-Dialectics, have expanded in various ways. Meanwhile, Formal Dialectic and other formal approaches have also been pursued further. Promising connections between argumentation theory and artificial intelligence have been established. Moreover, important new approaches have come into being, sometimes inspired by disciplines distinct from, but related to, argumentation theory. Another striking and noteworthy development is that the theoretical interest in argumentation has now spread worldwide.

It is clear that, 20 years after the completion of the manuscript for the previous overview, it is high time for a grand update. To make this happen, I have invited five Dutch colleagues to coauthor the new *Handbook of Argumentation Theory* with me: Bart Garssen, Erik C. W. Krabbe, A. Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, Bart Verheij, and Jean H. M. Wagemans. All of them are active argumentation scholars with the required kind of expertise. They have experience with carrying out joint writing

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projects, with other authors as well as with each other. As we all live in The Netherlands, we could easily meet whenever it was needed. It was decided from the start that the authors would be together responsible for the entire text of the handbook. Although there was, of course, a certain division of labor, this shared authorship was from the beginning reflected in the working process. The first drafts of some chapters were written by two or more authors, and in all cases several other members of the team contributed to the revision of the texts.

In the *Handbook of Argumentation Theory*, we have tried to do justice to the broadness of the field and the existing variety in the theoretical approaches that are pursued. Hence, it goes without saying that for all topics we were dealing with, we needed profound and serious feedback from several specialists in the field. For that purpose, a board of editors was formed, consisting of scholars who are leading experts in the topics discussed and the theoretical approaches described. As we had hoped and expected, the members of the board have commented critically and precisely on earlier versions of all chapters of the handbook. The argumentation scholars who served as members of the board are mentioned in the Acknowledgment section, together with their affiliations and the chapters they reviewed. Without their invaluable assistance, the overview presented in this volume could certainly not have been given. On behalf of all authors, I want to emphasize that we are most grateful for their constructive comments and criticisms.

Another kind of indispensable help has come from prominent argumentation scholars in non-Anglophone countries and from scholars from disciplines related to argumentation theory. They provided us with the material we needed in order to be able to describe the developments in the field. In addition, they also contributed greatly in improving these descriptions. Their assistance made it possible to add the last chapter to the handbook, in which the disciplinary and geographical broadening of argumentation theory is at issue. For this reason, their names and the sections they advised about are mentioned explicitly below – accompanied by an expression of our sincerest thanks to all of them.

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