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# Handbook of Argumentation Theory



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# Handbook of Argumentation Theory

With 78 Figures and 1 Table

 Springer Reference

BDD-B442-1 © 2014 Springer

Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.0 (2026-04-11 05:29:05 UTC)

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ISBN 978-90-481-9472-8      ISBN 978-90-481-9473-5 (eBook)  
ISBN 978-90-481-9474-2 (print and electronic bundle)  
DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-9473-5  
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014939853

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Printed on acid-free paper

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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 Kruijer. 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

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.

Chapter 4: Lilian Bermejo-Luque (University of Granada) and Vincenzo Lo Cascio (University of Amsterdam)

Chapter 9: Thierry Herman (University of Neuchâtel and University of Lausanne) and Alaric Kohler (University of Neuchâtel and HEP-BEJUNE)

Chapter 11: Jacky Visser (University of Amsterdam), Charlotte Vlek (University of Groningen), and Sjoerd Timmer (Utrecht University)

Section 12.2: Isabela Fairclough (University of Central Lancashire), Norman Fairclough (University of Lancaster), and Constanza Ihnen Jory (University of Chile)

Section 12.3: Ademar Ferreira (University of São Paulo) and Gábor Á. Zemplén (Budapest University of Technology and Economics)

Section 12.4: Daniel O’Keefe (Northwestern University)

Section 12.5: Steve Oswald (University of Neuchâtel)

Section 12.6: Jes E. Kjeldsen (University of Bergen, Norway), Mika Hietanen (University of Uppsala), Juho Ritola (University of Turku), and Miika Marttunen (University of Jyväskylä)

Section 12.8: Henrike Jansen (Leiden University)

Section 12.9: Michel Dufour (Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris), Raphaël Micheli (University of Lausanne), and Michel Meyer (Free University, Brussels)

Section 12.10: Sara Rubinelli (University of Lucerne and Swiss Paraplegic Research)

Section 12.11: Katarzyna Budzynska (Polish Academy of Sciences), Marcin Koszowy (University of Bialystok), Igor Ž. Žagar (Educational Research Institute, Ljubljana and University of Primorska, Koper), Donka Alexandrova (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski), Anca Gâță (Dunărea de Jos University of Galați), Gabrijela Kišiček (University of Zagreb), László I. Komlósi (University of Pécs), Gábor Zemplén (Budapest University of Technology and Economics), and Ana Dimiškovska (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje)

Section 12.12: Lilit Brutian (Yerevan State University), Vadim Golubev (St. Petersburg State University), Kira Goudkova (St. Petersburg State University), Lev Vasilyev (Kaluga State University), Anatolij Migunov (St. Petersburg State University), and Elena Lisanyuk (St. Petersburg State University)

Section 12.13: Cristián Santibáñez Yáñez (Universidad Diego Portales Santiago de Chile), Constanza Ihnen Jory (University of Chile), Fernando Leal (University of Guadalajara), and María Cristina Martínez (University of Valle)

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Section 12.15: Galia Yanoshevsky (Bar-Ilan University)

Section 12.16: Dima Mohammed (New University of Lisbon) and Abdul Gabbar Al Sharafi (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman)

Section 12.17: Takeshi Suzuki (Meiji University, Tokyo)

Section 12.18: Minghui Xiong (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou) and Yun Xie (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou)

31 August 2013

Frans H. van Eemeren



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## Acknowledgments

The following members of the editorial board of the *Handbook of Argumentation Theory* have assisted the authors in a fundamental way in guarding the quality of the volume:

- J. Anthony Blair, University of Windsor, Ontario: Chapters 1 and 7  
Marianne Doury, CNRS, Paris: Chapter 9  
Jeanne D. Fahnestock, University of Maryland: Chapter 5  
Maurice Finocchiaro, University of Nevada at Las Vegas: Chapters 3 and 6  
James Freeman, City University of New York: Chapter 4  
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Agnès van Rees, University of Amsterdam: Chapters 3 and 10  
Andrea Rocci, University of Lugano: Chapter 9  
Guillermo Simari, Universidad Nacional del Sur, Bahía Blanca, Argentina:  
Chapter 11  
Christopher Tindale, University of Windsor, Ontario: Chapter 5  
David Zarefsky, Northwestern University: Chapters 1, 4, and 8  
Gábor Á. Zemplén, Budapest University of Technology and Economics:  
Chapter 12



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# Contents

|           |  |            |
|-----------|--|------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Argumentation Theory</b> .....                                    | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Classical Backgrounds</b> .....                                   | <b>51</b>  |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Postclassical Backgrounds</b> .....                               | <b>141</b> |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Toulmin's Model of Argumentation</b> .....                        | <b>203</b> |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>The New Rhetoric</b> .....  | <b>257</b> |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Formal Dialectical Approaches</b> .....                           | <b>301</b> |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Informal Logic</b> .....  | <b>373</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Communication Studies and Rhetoric</b> .....                      | <b>425</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Linguistic Approaches</b> .....                                   | <b>479</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>The Pragma-Dialectical Theory of Argumentation</b> .....          | <b>517</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Argumentation and Artificial Intelligence</b> .....               | <b>615</b> |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Research in Related Disciplines and Non-Anglophone Areas</b> .... | <b>677</b> |

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|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Classified Bibliography</b> .....   | 831 |
| <b>Alphabetical Bibliography</b> ..... | 857 |
| <b>Index of Names</b> .....            | 963 |
| <b>Index</b> .....                     | 979 |