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School of Arts, Design  
and Architecture

# Argumentation and the tacit dimension in participative planning

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# Challenges of participative planning

## Knowledge and belief

## Argumentation

## Rhetoric

## Power

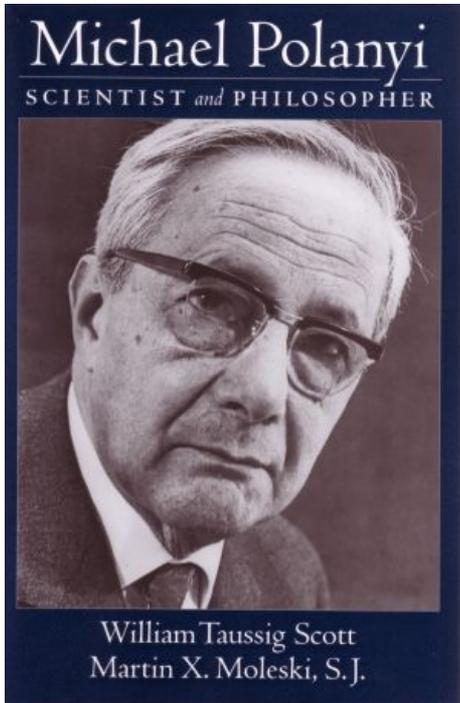
# The key problem of participation

- In order to create an inclusionary process, planning should allow all kinds of languages, ways of expression, emotions...
- Sorting out relevant information is necessary for it to have any effect
- But this sorting out would already be a form of exclusion (rejecting objections as nimbyism, as unjustified, as emotional, as irrelevant, as too detailed, etc.)
- As a result, information from "laymen" is bundled together as "opinions", in contrast to the knowledge and arguments of the experts, the "knowers" or the "serious speakers".
- Why should either planners or stakeholders bother?

# The key problem of knowledge

- Knowledge is classically defined as justified true belief (+ fourth, so-called Gettier condition)
- In order to be accepted as knowledge (that could give a backing to planning), it has to be justified
- But justification is based on an established way of justifying truth-claims, crowding out alternative ways of knowing
- Since justification is mostly verbal, numeric (or sometimes visual), it excludes much of the tacit dimension of knowledge.

# Tacit dimension of knowledge



- *The scientist-philosopher Michael Polanyi introduced in 1958 his concept of the personal or tacit dimension of knowledge*
- *Nonaka ja Takeuchi popularized the concept in 1995, misrepresenting the original meaning*
- *According to Polanyi all knowledge (including scientific knowledge) has a tacit dimension, which cannot be translated into words or calculations (unlike in N&T:s SECI-model)*
- *The tacit dimension is necessary for evaluation, judgment and creative production*

# Argumentation



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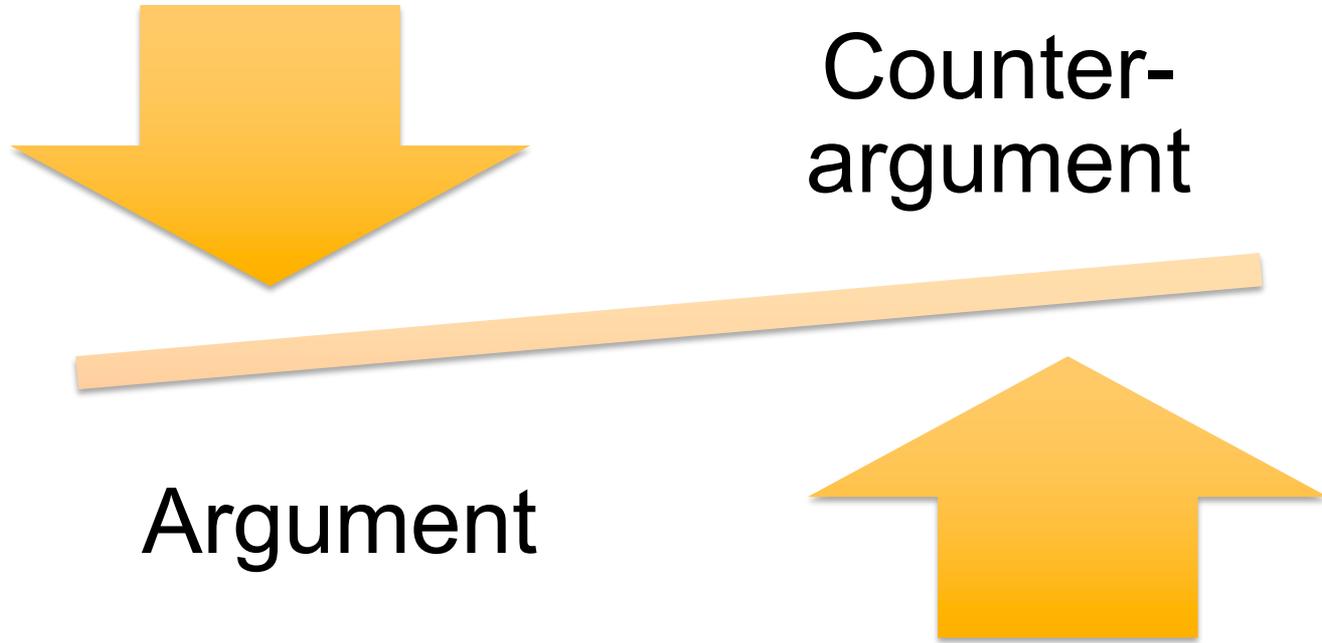
# Argument in text



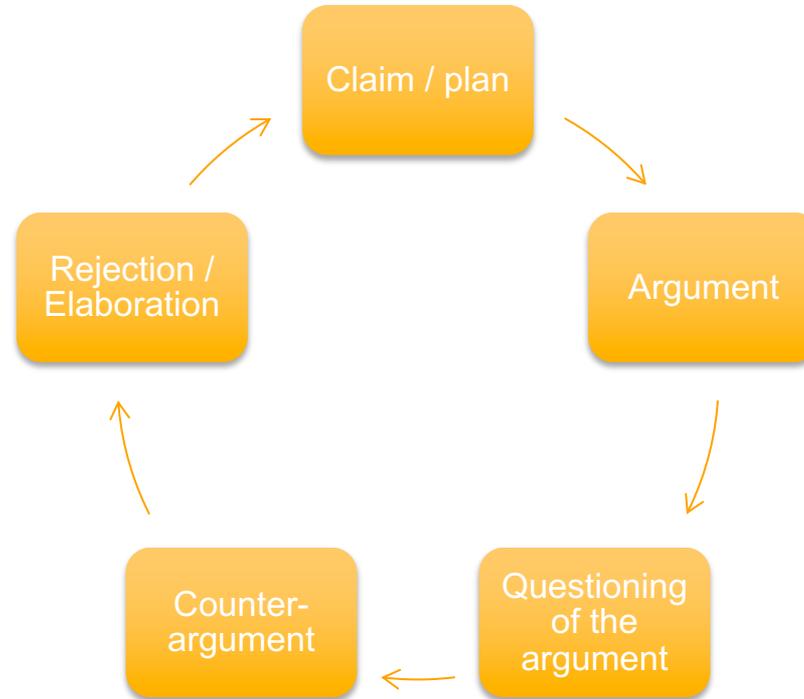
Argument  
/ proof

Claim /  
conclusion

# Argument in critical debate



# The (virtuous) cycle of critical debate

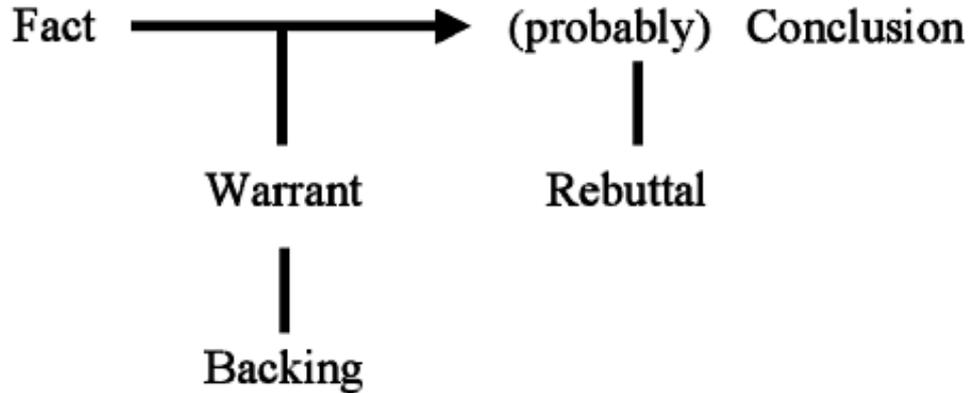


# Three groups of argumentation theories

- **Rhetorical** argumentation theories. Perelman and Tyteca (1969) would fall into this category, although they also discuss argumentation of an ideal kind, addressed to ‘the ideal audience’.
- **Consensus** theories, where the participants conform to certain rules of rational discussion in order to reach a consensus where the ‘best argument wins’. (The Pragma-Dialectics by van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004)
- **Epistemological** theories of argumentation. This is closest to scholarly argumentation and debate. (Lumer 2005)

# Informal logic

Reasoning with arguments that are not formally valid but justified in the circumstances / for the relevant audience



Stephen Toulmin: The Uses of Argument (1958)

# “Rules” of argumentation

(from pragma-dialectics)

- The one who **makes** a knowledge-claim is also the one who should **defend** it by giving an argument for it.
- Everyone is entitled to **present** an argument and **question** it.
- One should use a **shared language** (within the community).
- Counter-arguments should always be directed at the **argument itself**, not at the **person** expressing it.
- Knowledge-claims and arguments should be **read carefully** and in detail, to avoid **misrepresentation**.
- Adequate evidence is relative to the **discipline** – but the criteria of the discipline can also be questioned.

# Fallacies, breaking the rules

## Straw man

- *misrepresenting the claim or argument and attacking this “straw man”.*

## Argumentum ad hominem

- *questioning the argument by reference to the qualities of the person.*

## Argumentum ad verecundiam

- *defending the claim by referring to the authority or fame of the person presenting or defending it.*

## Argumentum ad baculum

- *threatening the opponent.*

## Argumentum ad populum

- *basing the argument on popular belief*

# Fallacies

## Tu quoque

- *“you too”*: questioning the argument based on the actions and history of the presenter

## Plurium interrogatorium

- *Hiding an assumption inside a question (“Have you stopped beating your wife”)*

## Argumentum ad consequentiam

- *defending the claim by referring to the consequences of its rejection*

## Petitio principii / circular reasoning

- *assuming what should be demonstrated*

## Red herring / irrelevance

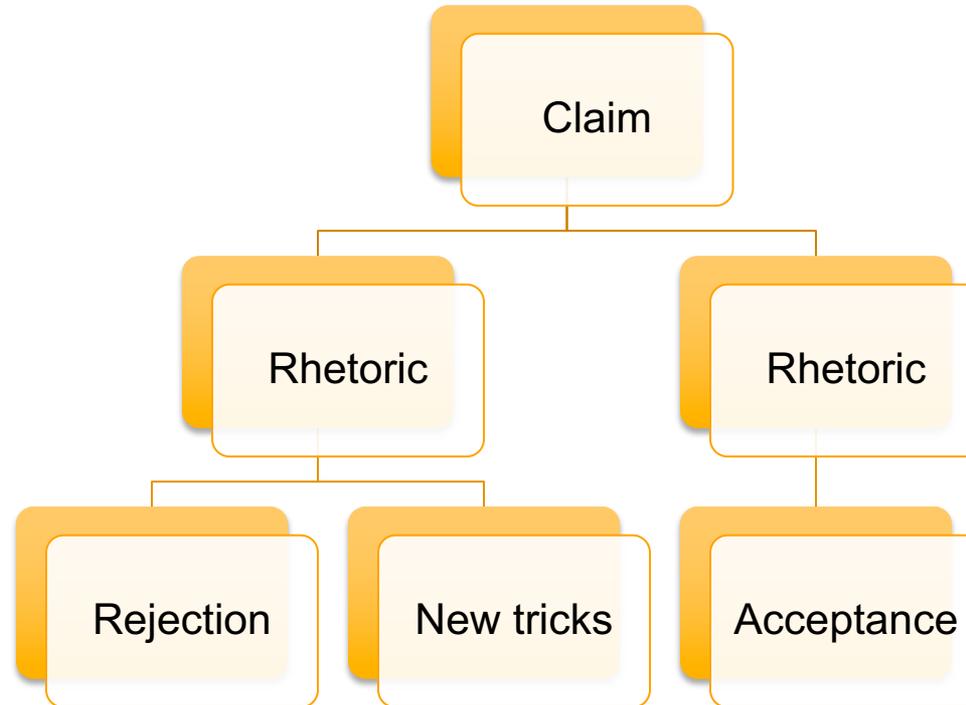
- *Using a valid argument that is irrelevant to the point addressed by the opponent*

# Rhetoric

# The logic of persuasion



# The (persistant) logic of rhetoric



# Aristotle's trichotomy

## Ethos

- make the audience trust you and respect you

## Pathos

- take into account the audience, its knowledge, its beliefs, its feelings, even its superstitions (i.e. construct the audience to the best of your knowledge)

## Logos

- give reasons for your claims that fit your audience (examples, quantitative and qualitative assessment, quasi-logical arguments, analogies, metaphors).

# New Rhetoric

“We are going to apply the term *persuasive* to argumentation that only claims validity for a particular audience, and the term *convincing* to argumentation that presumes to gain the adherence of every rational being...Its highest point is reached when there is agreement of *the universal audience*.”

Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958): *La Nouvelle Rhétorique: Traité de l'Argumentation*.

# Power

# Discourses

**Discourses are meaningful linguistic (and/or visual) entities that are larger than sentences**

## **Discourse formation**

- Unlike language that allows an infinite set of possible well-formed sentences and texts, discourse formations are characterized by rarity: not everything can be said, and not everyone can say it (Foucault).

# How to do things with words

**Language is not only used for descriptive purposes, but it is a tool for making things**

- Performing certain activities according to social norms (promising, wedding, committing to agreements, deciding, apologizing etc.)
- Creating (or hiding) subjects, objects and relationships
- Creating identities, differences and dichotomies
- Creating (and maintaining) relations of power
- Crowding out alternative ways of speaking/presenting reality
- Demystifying and criticizing dominant discourses (Critical analysis)

# Argumentation and discourse analyses together

## Argumentation analysis and discourse analysis can be used as complementary methods

- Argumentation analysis can assess the normative validity of arguments and debates.
- Discourse analysis can be used to decipher the cultural meanings, conceptual frameworks, subject positions, and power relations from the text.
- Critical discourse analysis (CDA) tries to reveal asymmetric power relations (with often social and political objectives to counter them)

# Real-life example: urban renewal

- **Planner:** “New parking places will also be built in the shopping centre.”
- **Resident 1:** “But people will then use more cars. It is against sustainable development to give them incentives.”
- **Planner:** “Well, these places were already in the original plan [from the sixties], we are only implementing it. But, of course, if most of the residents agree with you, we may consider it again.”
- **Resident 2:** “I don’t agree.”

# If it had been an argument

- **Planner:** “New parking places will also be built in the shopping centre.”
- **Resident 1:** “But people will then use more cars. It is against sustainable development to give them incentives.”
- **Planner:** “The shopping center is rather small, and if it is difficult to reach it by car, the cars will probably drive to the bigger supermarket nearby. This could weaken the competitiveness of the shopping center, which would not be sustainable from the ecological, economic or social points of view.” [a so-called wicked problem, Rittel & Webber 1973]

# Rhetorical and discourse analysis

- **“Well, these places were already in the original plan [from the sixties], we are only implementing it.”**
  - *Red herring (this has nothing to do with sustainability)*
  - *Hasty conclusion: from the fact that the places were in the 60’s plan it does not follow that they should be in the 2000’s plan.*
- **“But, of course, if most of the residents agree with you, we may consider it again”**
  - *Argumentum ad hominem: referring to the presenter of the argument instead of the argument.*
  - *Irrelevance: the number of proponents does not determine the validity of arguments.*
  - *Subject positions: the resident as one of the many with opinions (layman), the planner as the expert using his judgment (gatekeeper)*

# What was actually happening?

**Even though the debate did not make any sense (or was fallacious) as argumentation, it can be analysed with CDA:**

- Although the resident presented an argument, the planner did not respond to it but created a dichotomy of subject positions: expert versus laymen.
- Only experts can use arguments, laymen only have opinions, and their strength is based on their numbers, not the validity of their arguments (asymmetric power relationship)
- The planner is in a gate-keeper's position in the planning process, deciding what kind of knowledge is taken into account

# Real-life example: Munkkivuori



TURUNVÄYLÄ-VIHDINTIE eli MUNKKINIEMI-MUNKKIVUORI-PITÄJÄNMÄKI  
Mittakaava 1/5000 KSV Yleissuunnitteluosasto/Rauramo/Suomi 10.10.2014

- ”Munkkiniemi, Munkkivuori, Niemenmäki and Pitäjänmäki **form** a more integrated neighbourhood. The district **is** dense urban fabric, **surrounded by** high quality green and recreational areas...The new urban blocks **are also bordering** the outer fringe of Ulvilantie, **extending** as far as the Tali sports park”.

# Resident's response



TURUNVÄYLÄ-VIHDINTIE eli MUNKKINIEMI-MUNKKIVUORI-PITÄJÄNMÄKI  
Mittakaava 1/5000 KSV Yleissuunnitteluosasto/Rauma/Suomi 10.10.2014

**Resident** “It is an important **sports- and recreational place** for the residents of the area. It is a **well-maintained forest with recreational routes**, and it is not possible to compensate it with a golf course [North-West of the area that is not zoned for development in the plan]. In addition, the forest is a **core area of the flying squirrel** (mapped in 2014), so it also has natural value. The **illustration** in the City Plan documentation **cannot as such be realized**, since it is forbidden to destroy or weaken the areas where the flying squirrel is nesting or resting.”

# Planner's response

- “Thank you for your comments, it is great to notice that the development of our glorious city **interests large groups of people**. The central **objective** of the zoning plan is to **enable detailed planning and construction** of the areas that have been taken up, but the **road from the zoning plan to ready-to-move homes is long**. The zoning **is usually changing** in this or that direction in the subsequent planning and decision-making phases, these illustrations are made for the purpose of dimensioning for the general master plan. The solutions shown in the [facebook-page] are based on the Vision 2050 report that **has been approved by the City Planning Committee**, the draft is on the agenda of the Committee the second time today.”

# Discourse analysis

**“Thank you for your comments, it is great to notice that the development of our glorious city interests large groups of people.”**

- Subject position: one of many in a group of laymen

**“The central objective of the zoning plan is to enable detailed planning and construction of the areas that have been taken up, but the road from the zoning plan to ready to move homes is long.”**

- No relevance to the arguments
- Subject position: ignorant resident (that needs to be taught)

# Discourse analysis

**“The zoning is usually changing in this or that direction in the subsequent planning and decision-making phases, these illustrations are made for the purpose of dimensioning for the general master plan.”**

- No relevance to the arguments
- Subject position: ignorant resident (who misunderstood)

**“The solutions...are based on the Vision 2050 report that has been approved by the City Planning Committee”**

- No relevance to the arguments
- Argumentum ad verecundiam: the Committee has the power.

**Argumentation -> convincing**  
**Rhetoric -> persuasion**  
**Knowledge -> justified true belief + ?**  
**Tacit dimension of knowledge**  
**Communication and Power**



# Against naive participative planning

- Participation can be developed into critical debate instead of just information or education (to optimize rational decision making), but this will meet resistance from traditional experts -> **communication strategy** (but whose strategy?)
- We need to get rid of the expert-layman dichotomy and take into account different knowledges, but this will meet resistance from traditional experts -> **knowledge strategy** (but whose strategy?)
- Interdisciplinarity and participation is necessary, but each profession resists the inclusion of new professions and citizens. Experts, politicians and investors are dependent on each other—and the rule of law—not the consent of citizens -> **empowerment?**

# Thank You!



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