

Argument Kinds and Argument Roles in the Ontario Provincial Election, 2011

1. Purpose of the Study

During a political election campaign the candidates tell the public what measures and policies they propose to adopt and put in place if they are elected. Presumably, the candidates have reasons for their views and they thus have arguments for their positions. Candidates also engage in criticism of their opponents and their views during election campaigns and, again, these criticisms are accompanied by reasons. This leads to the presentation of still more arguments. However, since very few voters come in direct contact with the candidates during a campaign, the public depends to a great extent on the media to convey the views and criticisms of the candidates and the supporting reasons they give. Hence, the reportage of arguments made by candidates during an election campaign is extremely important for the democratic process, if it is to be a reasonable one.

There are many studies of political discourse in election campaigns. Others write on the rhetoric, the wit, the drama, the charisma, and economic matters of policy. Our project is different. It looks at political campaigning through the use of identifiable forms of argument. We scan the texts of discourse provided by newspaper reports, searching for arguments. When we find an argument we try to fit it into a structure, called an argumentation scheme, that represents a known type of argument that has previously been identified and studied in the literature on argumentation. In this project, our goal is not to evaluate the arguments by judging whether they are weak or strong. Nor is our central goal to analyze the arguments, for example, by identifying implicit premises or conclusions in them. Our goal is to identify and count the particular types of arguments in a natural language body of discourse, and then try to understand what these results indicate about political campaigns and political parties.

This kind of study is important for argumentation theory, because the study of argumentation schemes so far have been predominantly pursued in a way that is both abstract and practical. Although thousands of examples of arguments fitting schemes have been studied in the argumentation literature, and although we are starting to learn quite a bit about the structure of schemes from an abstract point of view, and even from the logical and computational point of view, there has only been one previous study that has scanned a natural language body of discourse in a systematic way to identify and count instances of argumentation schemes.

The purpose of our study is to investigate what kinds of arguments candidates for political office use during election campaigns. The recent Ontario provincial election in Canada presented an opportunity to pursue the question. We approached the problem indirectly by narrowing the scope of our study to the arguments reported by print news media, in particular, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, and *The Windsor Star*. We tried to monitor these four papers every day during the election period for news coverage of any arguments reported that could be attributed to a candidate. Arguments were collected during the official election period, September 7 to October 6, 2011, and did not include editorials (by editors) or opinion pieces (by columnists). Only arguments that could be attributed to a candidate, directly or indirectly, were included. We directed our research to the following questions: (i) Which kinds of arguments (argumentation schemes) had the greatest currency in this political elections? (ii) Is the list of argumentation schemes taken from a recent textbook

sufficient to classify all the arguments given in elections? (iii) What schemes, if any, should be added to the provided list of schemes to make it more adequate for studying elections? (iv) Is it useful to classify arguments as being used for positive, policy-critical, person-critical and defensive purposes? (v) Can political parties be usefully characterized by noting their preferred kinds of arguments and their most frequent uses of arguments? (vi) What lessons can be learned from this study to better design future studies of the same kind?

Readers not familiar with Ontario politics should have the following background information. The Liberal Party, and its leader, the premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, have been in power since they defeated the Progressive Conservatives in 2003. They were re-elected to a second majority government in 2007. The opposition party with the most seats in the Ontario legislature when the 2011 election was called was the Progressive Conservative Party (led by Tim Hudak since 2009); the other party in opposition was the New Democratic Party (led by Andrea Horwath since 2009).

2. Method of the Study

Altogether there were four distinguishable stages of the study: the planning stage, the collecting stage, the analysis stage, and the reporting stage.

The planning stage. Since the date for the Ontario provincial election had been fixed in advance as officially beginning on September 7, we began in August to make plans to study the arguments used in the upcoming election. The planning included (a) making contacts with the four newspapers to be followed during the election, (b) preparing a list of argumentation schemes to be used as a basis for classifying arguments, (c) seeking out student volunteers to help with the collecting, and (d) setting up an argument collection site with the help of the University's Information Technology Services. Five students initially volunteered to help us gather the arguments (but only four of them eventually participated). Each of the six argument collectors (four students plus the present authors) were assigned one or more of the four newspapers to follow daily throughout the election, and collect any arguments by candidates they found, and then enter the information on the collection website. (Later, after we had begun the review of the data, we decided to add a classification of the dialectical roles of arguments. Ideally, this should have been done in the planning stage.)

The collecting stage. This was from September 7 to October 6, 2011. Collectors made entries on the argument collection site whenever they had arguments to enter and time permitted. We only collected reports of arguments for the official election period.

The analysis stage. When the election was over (October 6) copies of the collected data was printed and given to each of the collectors. The collectors now became argument analysts, and each member of the team reviewed each of the data entries independently and then brought his/her judgments to meetings of the research team. We held six meetings over three weeks in each of which about 40 entries were reviewed. In many cases there was immediate agreement on how the argument should be classified and for the rest there was discussion before reaching an agreement. In particular we sought agreement on whether the *argument extracted* was a fair reading of the *argument text*; being satisfied on that point we went on to classify each entry according to the list of schemes provided (see 3.1 below). There were no outstanding cases of serious disagreement, although several arguments did occasion extended discussion.

The reporting stage. Drafts of the report were distributed to members of the argument collection team and revisions were made in response to comments and suggestions. A presentation of our results was made by the whole research team at a November meeting of the Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric (at the University of Windsor), the preliminary report was posted on the Centre's website and a short summary (600 words) was published in the *Windsor Star* (February 6, 2012).

3. Schemes and Other Categories

3.1. Classifying by argumentation schemes. Argumentation schemes are stereotypical patterns of reasoning used in everyday conversational argumentation, and in other contexts, like legal and scientific argumentation. Schemes are increasingly being recognized, applied and studied in computational domains like artificial intelligence and multi-agent systems, and are being used to improve the reasoning capabilities of artificial agents (Verheij, 2001; Gordon and Walton, 2009; Prakken, 2010). Schemes can sometimes take deductive or inductive forms of the kind studied in traditional logic, but the most interesting ones, from a point of view of informal logic with its aim of improving critical argumentation skills, are defeasible ones best evaluated by using a matching set of critical questions.

Thousands of examples of arguments fitting schemes have been studied and analyzed in the literature on schemes in argumentation theory - see for example Hastings (1963), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), Kienpointner (1992), Walton (1996), Grennan (1997), Walton, Reed and Macagno (2008) and Walton (2011). In addition to this literature, there was already a corpus of examples of common types of arguments collected in the logic textbooks that had sections on identifying, analyzing and evaluating arguments and fallacies, like argument from analogy, argument from expert opinion, and so forth. However, so far there has been only one empirical study that systematically searched through a large corpus to identify arguments that match schemes. A research project used argument mining to identify types of arguments used in cases from the European Court of Human Rights (Mochales and Moens, 2011) to search through this legal database and to try to pick out arguments seen to fit a list of schemes.

Our method in this project was to try to fit all the arguments we found into one or another of the schemes on the following list taken from Walton's *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation* (2006). We anticipated that some of the arguments we found might not well fit one of the schemes on the list, and so we added "Can't classify" as a possible classification option.

1. Argument from Position to Know; 2. Argument from Expertise; 3. Argument from Popular Opinion; 4. Argument from Commitment; 5. Argument from Appeal to Ignorance; 6. Circumstantial ad hominem argument; 7. Direct ad hominem argument; 8. Argument from Correlation to Cause; 9. Argument from Positive Consequences; 10. Argument from Negative Consequences; 11. Slippery Slope argument; 12. Argument from Analogy; 13. Argument from Sign; 14. Argument from (Verbal) Classification; 15. Can't Classify.

This list with accompanying schemes appears in the Appendix at the end of the essay. We chose this list of schemes (with some modifications) because it is fairly standard, having significant overlap with lists proposed by other authors. Moreover, most of these schemes have familiar counterparts on lists of traditional fallacies. Finally, the student volunteers we were fortunate

enough to recruit had worked with this list before, giving us another reason to use it. We anticipated that the list was not complete for our purposes and during the analysis stage of the study we found that some of the arguments that didn't fit our list could be grouped together. This led to additional argumentation schemes being proposed, and these will be identified and discussed below.

We should add, for clarification, that we do not assume that either the politicians (the argument makers) or the reporters of arguments (the newspaper reporters) have any knowledge or sense of argument kinds or schemes. These are conceptual tools that interest analysts and commentators, not usually argument makers.

3.2. The Argument Collection Form. The collection form contained the following fields:

Collector:	(e.g., Laura)
Media:	(e.g., <i>National Post</i>)
Date:	(e.g., 2011 09 23)
Name of Journalist:	(e.g., Billy Newshound)
Name of speaker:	(e.g., Tim Hudak)
Political Party:	(e.g., Progressive Conservative)
Context:	(e.g., the Liberals' promotion of green energy)
Argument text:	(e.g., examples below)
Argument in Standard form:	(e.g., examples below)
Classification:	(e.g., Argument from Negative Consequences)
Remarks:	(e.g., Could it also be seen as Practical Reasoning?)

4. Reports Cited by Source and Political Party

4.1. Number of arguments. The total numbers of entries in the data base of arguments collected during the period was 256. Of these, eight were discarded because they were entry errors or because the collected argument fell outside the time frame of the election. A further 15 were eliminated because they were duplicate reports of the same argument event. We thus had 233 reports to deal with. Their sources were as follows:

<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	111
<i>National Post</i>	2
<i>Toronto Star</i>	97
<i>The Windsor Star</i>	<u>23</u>
total =	233

This distribution is shown in Figure 1.

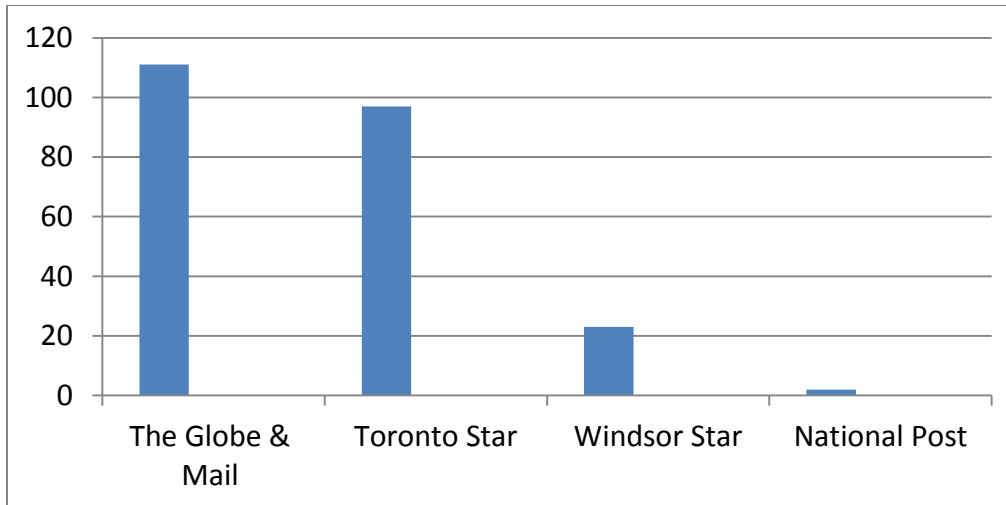


Figure 1: 233 Reports Sorted by Sources

When duplicate reports of the same argument event were eliminated, it was arbitrary whether it was a *Globe and Mail* or a *Toronto Star* report that was deleted; thus, the ratio of reports from the two papers could be slightly modified. However, some of the 233 reports contained more than one argument, and so we found that we had a total of 256 distinct argument events to study. This distribution is shown in figure 2.

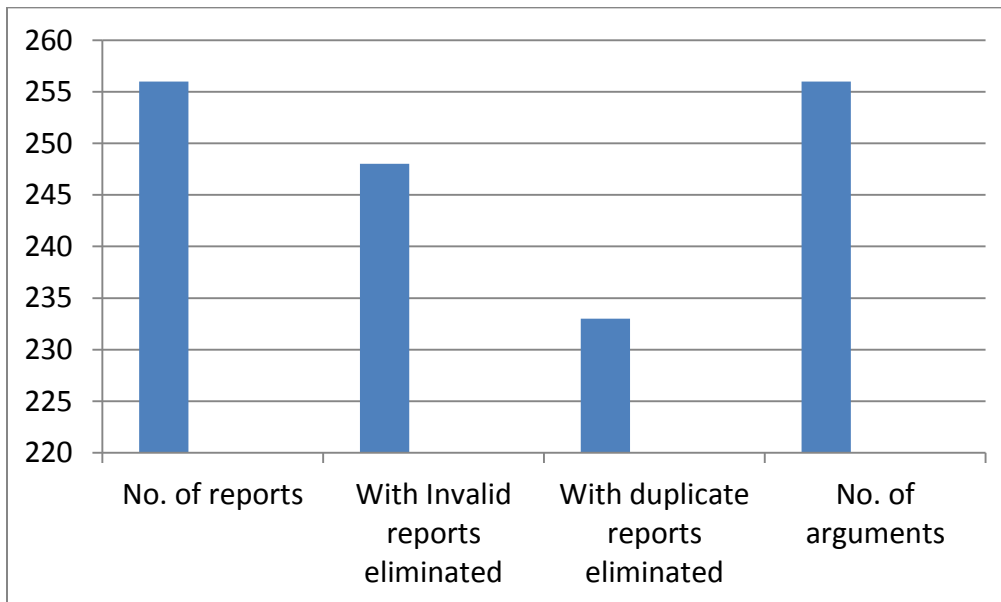


Figure 2: Number of Argument Events Studied

4.2. Collection pattern. We restricted the collection period to the duration of the official election campaign, September 7 to October 6, 2011. Dividing this time into four roughly equal periods, the number of arguments collected was distributed as follows. During the period of September 7 to September 14, 16 arguments were collected. During the period of September 15 to September 21, 70 arguments were collected. During the period of September 22 to September 28, 36

arguments were collected. During the period of September 29 to October 6, 59 arguments were collected. The total number of arguments collected during all these time periods was 256.

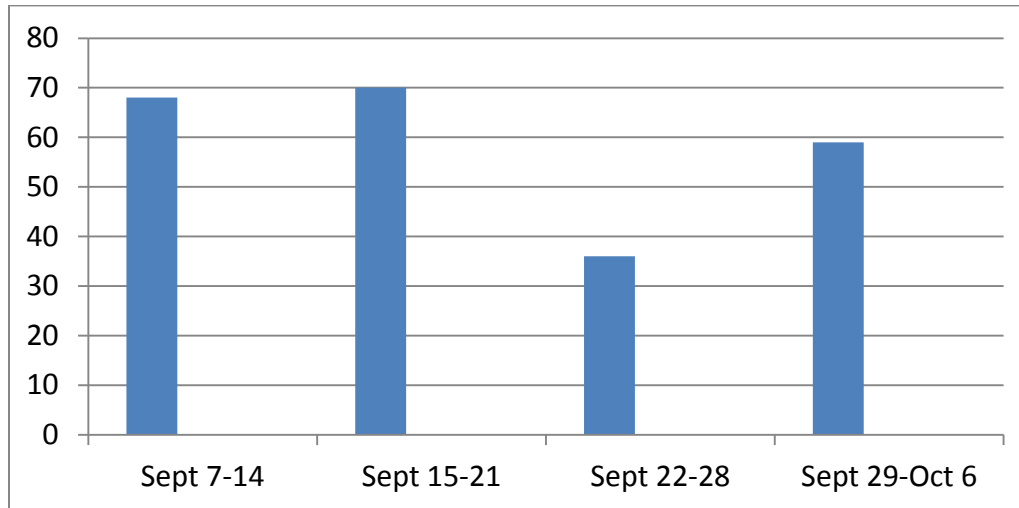


Figure 3: 233 Reports Sorted by Weeks

This shows there were significantly fewer arguments collected in the third week than in any of the other three weeks.

4.3. Each of the 256 arguments was put forward by a member of one of four political parties running candidates in the election: the Green Party, the Liberals, the New Democrats, and the Progressive Conservatives. This division is shown graphically in figure 4.

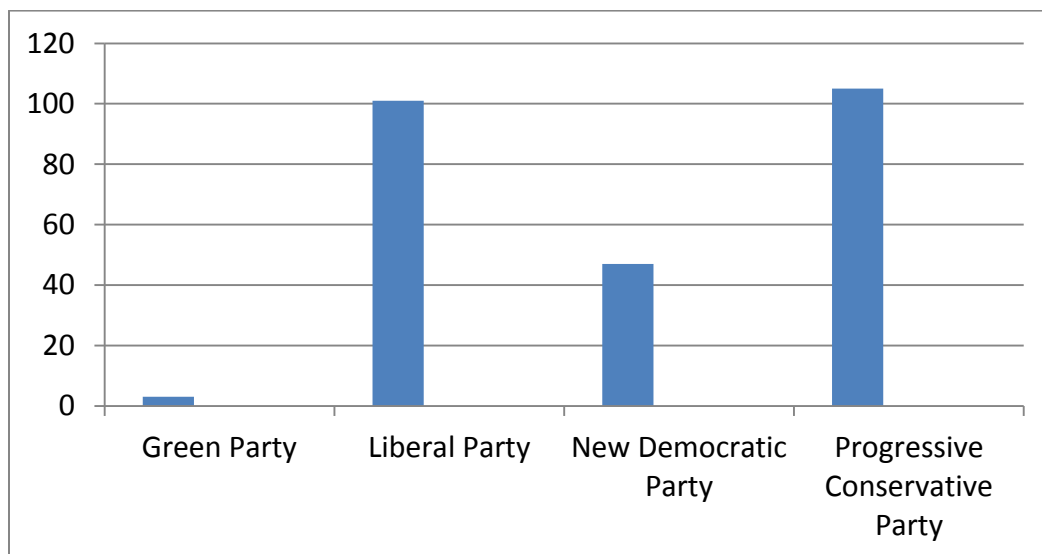


Figure 4: 256 Arguments Sorted by Political Parties

The Liberals and Conservatives were found to have about the same number of arguments reported (101 and 105). The NDP had only half as many arguments reported as the other two major parties (47). Only three arguments were found that could be attributed to the Green Party, and no arguments from any of the other parties that fielded candidates were found.

5. Arguments Collected that Fit the List

Here are some examples of arguments we found that are instances of the schemes on the list with which we began.

5.1. Horwath used an interesting argument to criticize Premier McGuinty for deciding not to participate in the special debate on Northern Ontario.

She . . . took . . . [a] swipe at Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty, who has declined to attend a Northern debate in Thunder Bay Sept. 23.

“If you apply for a job and refuse to go to the interview, who the heck would hire you?”¹

Implicit here is the analogical argument that,

[An applicant who refuses to attend a job interview is like a politician who refuses to participate in a debate]

An applicant who refuses to attend a job interview is not likely to get the job.

McGuinty has refused to participate in the election debate in Northern Ontario.

So, McGuinty will (should?) not get the voters’ support.

The analogy turns on the similarity of a job applicant’s presence and performance in a job interview with that of a political candidate’s presence and performance in a political debate.

5.2. In this next argument Tim Hudak, leader of the Progressive Conservatives, casts doubt on a commitment by the Liberals to halt construction of gas-fired power plant in a residential area of Mississauga.

“The fact that there is still work going on at that plant makes you question whether Dalton McGuinty is actually being honest here,” he said . . . “Is this just a change for the sake of an election campaign and then 11 days later work will resume? I wouldn’t put it past Dalton McGuinty – he is certainly known for making promises during a campaign and doing the opposite after the votes are counted.”²

The argument extracted is as follows:

[McGuinty has promised to cancel the construction of the power plant in Mississauga];³
McGuinty is known for making promises during a campaign and doing the opposite after the votes are counted;

So, work on the power plant may well resume after the election is over.

This argument we have classified as a direct *ad hominem*. It is the alleged duplicity of the premier that is used as a basis for casting doubt on his commitment.

¹*The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/16. “Touting job creation, Horwath unveils expanded ‘Buy Ontario’ plan.” (Reporter: Anna MehlerPaperny.)

²*The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/26. “Hudak questions Liberal commitment cancel Ontario power plant.” (Reporter: Steve Ladurantaye and Carys Mills)

³We use square brackets to indicate an implicit premise made explicit.

5.3. At the beginning of the campaign a Progressive Conservative candidate in Windsor, Todd Branch, argued that the Liberals were just buying votes with their promise to reduce tuition fees by 30 per cent.

“[I]f it is so important to the Liberals, why did they not do this one year ago, two years ago, three years ago, four years ago, instead of the day before the writ is dropped?”⁴

We interpret the argument as follows:

The Liberals have had four years in which they could have reduced tuition fees; but they didn't;

Now, the day before the campaign begins, they promise to reduce tuition fees by 30 per cent;

Therefore, the Liberals are trying to buy votes with their tuition-fee reduction.

This argument can be classified as an inference to the best explanation, or more generally, an argument from sign. The Liberals' inattention to the expense of university tuition in the past is evidence that it is not really a priority for them, and so their sudden change of heart is a sign that they are adopting the policy only to “buy votes”.

5.4. In response to NDP leader Andrea Horwath's proposal to create “an independent jobs commissioner whose function would be to protect economic opportunities in regions with high unemployment”, the Liberal leader, Premier McGuinty, made the following argument,

“ . . . the last thing a province grappling with a multibillion-dollar deficit should be doing is increasing the size of the public service by creating another level of government bureaucracy.”⁵

In standard form we have:

Creating the position of job commissioner would add to the size of the public service, making it more difficult to manage the province's huge deficit;

So, the position of job commissioner should not be created.

This is an instance of the kind, argument from Negative Consequences. The evidence for rejecting the proposal is that if it were implemented it would lead to additional costs for the taxpayers, something not desirable.

5.5. Of the arguments collected that were instances of the schemes on the original list with which we began, we have the results shown in table 1.

ARGUMENTS CLASSIFIED BY THE CATEGORIES ON THE INITIAL LIST (=256)			
	Argument kind	No collected	%
1	Negative consequences	47	29.2

⁴*The Windsor Star*, 2011/09/09. “Liberals tout tuition assistance.” (Reporter: Brian Cross)

⁵*The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/14. “Ontario needs independent jobs commissioner, Horwath says.” (Reporter: Anna MehlerPaperny and Karen Howlett.)

2	Positive Consequences	27	16.8
3	Sign	21	13.0
4	Direct ad hominem	13	8.1
5	Popular Opinion	10	6.2
6	Analogy	9	5.6
7	Commitment	9	5.6
8	Position to Know	9	5.6
9	Circumstantial Ad Hominem	8	5.0
10	Authority	4	2.5
11	Classification	3	1.9
12	Correlation to Cause	1	.6
13	Slippery Slope	0	0
14	Appeal to Ignorance	0	0
15	Can't Classify	95	37.1

Table 1: Arguments Classified

Appeals to negative consequences and to positive consequences, arguments from sign, direct *ad hominem* arguments and appeals to popular opinion, were the kinds of arguments from the initial list that occurred with the greatest frequency. Notice that we found no instances of either slippery slope arguments or appeals to ignorance.

6. Arguments Collected that Didn't Fit the List

Having found 161 arguments that were instances of the schemes on the initial list, we attempted to classify the remaining 95 arguments. We were aware that there were other kinds of recognized argument and that some of them might have instances among those we couldn't fit on our initial list. Accordingly, all argument collectors were free to suggest new argumentation schemes if an argument they found wasn't a good fit for any of the schemes they were aware of.

6.1. One kind of argument that the politicians often reverted to is that of advocating a means to reach a recognized goal. For example, Horwath criticized the Liberal government for giving big manufacturing contracts to companies outside Ontario. She went on to propose setting up a protectionist wall around Ontario by instituting a Buy Ontario policy.

After touring the Bombardier plant where transit vehicles are manufactured, the NDP leader said her Buy Ontario policy would be the rule, not the exception.

*“We will be able to put Ontario workers back to work,” she told reporters. “The rule has to be Buy Ontario.”*⁶

Although the goal of creating jobs in Ontario is unstated in this text it is implicit in the context. The argument may be standardized like this:

Creating jobs in Ontario is our goal;
A Buy Ontario policy will create jobs in Ontario;
So, a Buy Ontario policy should be adopted.

This argument is an instance of a Practical Reasoning schemes.

A’s goal is to bring about (prevent) p
Bringing about q is the way to bring about (prevent) p
So, A should bring about q .⁷

It turned out that several of the arguments found fit this scheme.

6.2. We also found instances of candidates urging conclusions on the basis of fairness. A Progressive Conservative candidate in Richmond Hill, Vic Gupta, objected to the Liberal promise to give a tax credit to those employers who would hire new Canadians in order to give them professional experience. He gave this argument:

*“The Liberals acknowledge the \$12 million would only aid between 1,000 and 1,200 people. . . . [Today’s] desperate announcement doesn’t fix what is wrong with this policy. It is, and it has always been, unequal and unfair . . .”*⁸

When we put this argument in standard form, we get,

The policy of giving a tax credit to employers to hire immigrants will only help between 1,000 and 1,200 people;
[There are many Ontarians (beside the immigrants) who would benefit from such a program];
So, the Liberal policy is unfair.

The reason for rejecting the policy is more particular than that it has negative consequences; it is that there is something morally or legally objectionable about it. Arguments like this that turn on justice claims, considerations of fairness, or infringements of people’s rights, may be considered as Arguments from Fairness, and they occur with sufficient frequency in our data to warrant being identified by a separate argumentation scheme.

6.3. There was another pattern of argument that recurred with noticeable frequency, and it had to do with priorities. In this next example we find Horwath making a criticism of the other party leaders to the effect that they are missing a more important issue.

“For much of the last week, there’s been talk about a proposal to help a small number of new Canadians compete for a shrinking pool of jobs,” she said. “We can do better than that.”

⁶Toronto Star, 2011/09/16. “NDP pledges ‘Buy Ontario’ policy.” (Reporter: Richard J. Brennan.)

⁷Based on the scheme given by Walton 2006, p. 301.

⁸Toronto Star, 2011/09/10. “Grit candidates defend immigrant tax credits.” (Reported by the Canadian Press.)

Of course, that's a cue to talk about her plan to pay companies to create new, full-time jobs "for all Ontarians."

"I think they're both wrong and I think Ontarians are pretty disappointed by the tenor of the conversation so far," she said. "While they're hurling insults at each other ... everyday Ontarians are getting lost in the shuffle."

There are much more important issues to debate. And I hope we can start debating them."⁹

We call arguments like this¹⁰ arguments from Misplaced Priorities. They involve a comparison of two or more alternatives and criticize the choice made on the basis that it has less importance or weight than an alternative course of action. Here Horwath is chastising McGuinty and Hudak for having Misplaced Priorities, spending a lot of time on an issue that affects relatively few Ontarians (and insulting each other), and not enough time on an issue that affects all Ontarians. We standardize this argument as follows:

McGuinty and Hudak are spending their time debating the policy of whether a small number of new Canadians should compete for a shrinking pool of jobs;
Another issue is that of paying companies to create jobs for all Ontarians;
The latter issue should take priority over the former;
So, McGuinty and Hudak have misplaced priorities.

Another argument that involves an allegation of misplaced priorities was made by Hudak when he criticized the Liberal government for not making public the list of known sexual predators:

"The right of security for our kids should come ahead of the right to privacy of sexual offenders, of child predators. I just want to know why Dalton McGuinty doesn't believe the same thing."¹¹

Reconstructed, in standard form, the argument will be as follows:

The right to security for our children should come ahead of the right to privacy for sex offenders;
[McGuinty puts the rights of sex offenders ahead of the rights of the children];
So, McGuinty's priorities are in the wrong order.

This argument can also be seen as an instance of the Appeal to Fairness since it turns on rights claims. But it has a special characteristic, that makes a comparative judgment, ranking the one value (right) higher than the other value (right), found in political argumentation.

6.4 The question arises about the rationale for introducing new schemes. Here we have taken two factors into account, both of them pragmatic. Generally, if there are a number of arguments which are similar but do not seem to fit the available categories well, then there is a reason to think there might be a new kind of argument to identify, and the identification is made through the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a kind of argument given in an argumentation

⁹*The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/12. "Horwath weighs in on contentious Liberal tax credit: NDP can do better." (Reporter: Anna MehlerPaperny.)

¹⁰Following a suggestion by Sam Atkin.

¹¹*The National Post*, 2011/09/14. "Allow public access to sex-offenders list, Hudak says." (Reporter: Joanne Chianello.)

scheme. So, one consideration is having significant frequency of occurrence. The other factor is subject-matter relative. When studying a field of argument, such as political discourse, it is useful to make a suitable number of distinctions that can be revelatory about the nature of the argumentation in the field. Of course, all arguments that involve values can in one way or another be classified as instances of a scheme called Appeal to Values, but this doesn't tell us anything about the kind of values in play in the discourse field. We need some kind of value discrimination reflected in the argumentation schemes. Since justice is an important value but not the only value appealed to in political discussions, it makes sense to identify the Appeal to Fairness as a separate scheme; and the Argument from Misplaced Priorities tells something about the particular values of the argument maker, and that is a reason to isolate it as a special kind of argument in politics. This desideratum of expanding our inventory of schemes by adding arguments that can individuate kinds of political values must be balanced against having a list of schemes of manageable length that people can learn and work with.

6.5. Not every passage collected containing a 'because' or a 'since' was an argument. We found examples of reasoning that were better understood as explanations rather than arguments. At first we thought we should just bypass explanations in our cataloguing of the reasoning made by the candidates, but then we decided to have explanation as a distinct category of its own. Our reason for adopting this approach was to highlight the important lessons that argument and explanation are closely connected, and that readers of our study should be made aware of having to deal with the problem of distinguishing between arguments and explanations. It is a problem in teaching informal logic that once students are taught to recognize and analyze arguments, they tend to apply this methodology indiscriminately, and often try to identify as arguments passages in discourse that are better classified under other headings, like statements or explanations. It is very easy to confuse explanations and arguments. In many instances, the text of discourse is ambiguous, and could be classified as either an explanation or an argument.

For example, suppose Jack says that he was late for work today because his alarm didn't go off. Is this an explanation or an argument? If Jack is trying to justify his being late for work to his boss, it's an argument. But he might not be meaning to put forward an argument at all, but simply trying to explain why he was late for work. This tendency to mix arguments and explanations together is perfectly understandable as well as very common, because certain commonly used and important kinds of arguments can also be treated as species of explanations. In such cases argument and explanation are inextricably combined in a common thread, for example in cases where an explanation of an observation is put forward and used as a basis for drawing a conclusion by means of reasoning.

Here is an example of an explanation we found in the reportage of the Ontario election:

Surrounded by female candidates, Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty made his pitch to those at a lunch hosted by a non-profit women's business group on Monday. He boasted that he has a record-setting 42 female candidates and brought those in the audience to the stage at the lunch, hosted by Catalyst Canada at Toronto's Fairmont Royal York.
"It's because of the leadership of women in our caucus that we've landed trade agreements with companies from around the world," said Mr. McGuinty, who added

*improved surgical wait times, drug reforms and public transit decisions have also been thanks to women.*¹²

Here McGuinty is explaining why it has happened that his government has landed trade agreements from around the world, and improved wait times in hospitals for operations, and made improvements to public transportation – he is not arguing that it is true that these things have happened; they are received as true. The role of ‘because’ in this context is to give an explanatory rather than a justificatory reason why it happened. More perspicuously we may reconstruct the above passage as follows:

Explanans: The women in our caucus have exercised leadership;

Explanandum: We have landed trade agreements with companies from around the world; we have improved hospital wait times; we have made reforms to drug laws; we have made improvements to public transit.

It is important not to confuse argument from sign with explanations. Arguments from sign – a variation on inference to the best explanation – are arguments *about* explanations; in particular, they are arguments to a conclusion that X is the best explanation of a given occurrence or state of affairs. Thus Arguments from Sign presuppose that some explanation X can be given, they are not themselves explanations of X. We found several other instances of explanations in our data, and decided to add ‘Explanation’ as a category.

7. Frequency: Argument Kinds

7.1. With these new schemes added, and the retrieval of some other previously recognized schemes that were not on the original list, we classify the remaining 95 arguments collected as shown in table 2.

ARGUMENTS COLLECTED REQUIRING THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL SCHEMES (=95)			
1	Practical Reasoning	38	40.0 %
2	Appeal to Fairness	18	18.9 %
3	Argument from Inconsistent Commitments	12	12.6 %
4	Argument from Misplaced Priorities	6	6.3 %
5	Explanation	3	3.2 %
6	Argument from Values	3	3.2 %
7	Argument from Alternatives	1	1.1 %
8	Argument from Cause to Effect	1	1.1 %

¹² *The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/26. “Women in cabinet responsible for nearly 80 per cent of budget: McGuinty” (Reporter: Carys Mills.)

9	Appeal to Sympathy	1	1.1 %
10	Can't classify	12	12.6 %
		total = 95	

Table 2: Arguments Requiring New Schemes

Here, practical reasoning and the argument from inconsistency, two well-known kinds of arguments, occur a significant number of times, and two newly identified kinds of arguments – the Appeal to Fairness, and the Argument from Misplaced Priorities - occur with sufficient frequency to warrant inclusion in the inventory of argument kinds. It is important as well to acknowledge that we were unable to find any suitable classification for 12 of the arguments. To review: Only 161 of the 256 collected arguments were instances of schemes on the initial list (62.9%). Of the remaining 95 arguments 83 were accommodated under the additional list of nine schemes (32.4% of the 256) and twelve remain unclassified (4.7% of the total number of arguments studied).

7.2. Table 3 shows the frequency with which the argument kinds occurred within the total 256 arguments. 95.3% of the arguments collected have now been classified.

	Argument kind	No collected	Per cent of total
1	Negative consequences	47	18.4
2	Practical Reasoning	38	14.8
3	Positive Consequences	27	10.6
4	Argument from Sign	21	8.2
5	Fairness	18	7.0
6	Direct ad hominem	13	5.1
7	Inconsistent	12	4.7
8	Popular Opinion	10	3.9
9	Analogy	9	3.5
10	Commitment	9	3.5
11	Position to Know	9	3.5
12	Ad Hominem Circumstantial	8	3.1
13	Misplaced Priorities	6	2.3
14	Authority	4	1.6
15	Classification	3	1.2

16	Explanation	3	1.2
17	Values	3	1.2
18	Argument from Alternatives	1	.04
19	Cause to Effect	1	.04
20	Correlation to Cause	1	.04
21	Sympathy	1	.04
22	Can't classify	12	4.7
		total = 256	

Table 3: Total Frequency of Argument Kinds

This distribution of argument kinds shows that Appeal to Negative Consequences was by far the most widely used kind of argument in the Ontario provincial election (18.4%). It is used to say that your opponent's position or policy has undesirable consequences and therefore it should be rejected. Practical Reasoning was the kind of argument that occurred with the second most frequency (14.8%); it is a kind of argument that proposes a means to reach or avoid a desired goal; e.g., creating more jobs in Ontario by keeping manufacturing jobs in the province. The argument from Positive Consequences was next (10.6%). This kind of argument is used by a candidate to say that his or her party's policy or position will be a benefit to the voters, and therefore the voters should support the candidate. Direct *ad hominem* arguments, a kind often associated with heated debate, occurred in the sixth position in terms of frequency (5.1%).

7.3. A difficulty that attends the use of argumentation schemes is that an argument may be an instance of more than one scheme. This is a feature that schemes share with logical forms, for it is also the case that an argument can be an instance of several different logical forms, some of them valid and some invalid. This means that there is always some element of judgment involved when classifying arguments according to schemes or logical forms. The present attempt to apply schemes to actual cases has led us to expand the initial list of schemes with which we began, it also prompts us to identify new schemes, and sharpen the boundaries of received schemes. It may well turn out that some instances of overlap can never be totally eliminated in a set of practically manageable schemes, but we believe that for by far the most cases, discussion among informed researchers will lead to agreement as to the best classification of an argument. That some small percentage of undecided cases will remain, is a possibility, but not one that is damaging to the overall value of analyzing political discourse by argumentation schemes.

8. Dialectical Roles

After the review of the data was begun we decided to add another classification, namely the roles that arguments were given to play. Arguers have purposes they want to achieve by the use of their arguments and thus the arguments are instrumentals to their ends. Thus, given a context like that of a democratic election, the arguments may be seen as being given roles to play in the exchanges among the candidates. Therefore, not only can arguments be classified as to their

kind (see the list of schemes above) uses of arguments can also be classified according to their *dialectical roles*. There is no determinate list of purposes arguers have in using arguments, so we felt free to develop a short list of four dialectical roles which we noticed recurring in the data.

The first dialectical role we identified is when arguments are used to introduce or support a candidate's or a party's policy, or proposed course of action. For example, the argument that <wind turbines are a good thing because "they have helped wean the province away from burning coal">¹³ was used to support the Liberal party's green-energy initiatives. When an argument is given this kind of role to play and it only incidentally, or indirectly, is a criticism of an opponent's position or argument, we say the argument has a positive (dialectical) role.

The second role identified is when arguments are used to criticize an opponent's position or argument. A member of the Liberal party, for example, made the argument that <a "Buy Ontario" policy should not be adopted since it would close off foreign investments.>¹⁴The argument was used to criticize the NDP position that there should be a "Buy Ontario" policy. When the purpose of an arguer is to be critical of an opponent's position or proposal – and they are only indirectly or incidentally making a criticism of the view-holder or argument-maker – we say that the argument used has been given a policy-critical (dialectical) role.

The third role we noticed for arguments was also a critical one. We distinguish using an argument for the purpose of criticizing an opponent's policy or argument (the policy-critical role) from using it for the purpose of criticizing an argument-maker or argument-agent, or person who holds a view or espouses a position. The leader of the Progressive Conservative party, Tim Hudak, used an argument for this kind of purpose against Dalton McGuinty, the premier of Ontario and the leader of the Liberal party, saying <he couldn't be trusted not to raise taxes if he was re-elected "given that he had promised not to raise taxes before the last two Ontario elections [and] then did so both times.">¹⁵ Here the immediate purpose is to disparage McGuinty's character more so than his or her argument, position or views. Uses of arguments such as this we classify as having a person-critical (dialectical) role.

Finally, another use of arguments was thought worthwhile recording. That use is when arguments are used to reply to misinterpretations, misrepresentations, or accusations, either against an arguer, or their views or arguments. An example of this occurred when the leader of the New Democratic Party, Angela Horwath, answered the accusation that because she said different things in northern and southern Ontario, she was inconsistent. In reply Horwath used the argument that "the various parts of the province have unique challenges" and therefore it is appropriate to say different things in different places"¹⁶ to dissipate the appearance of being inconsistent. We classify such uses of arguments as having a clarifying role, or more broadly, a defensive (dialectical) role.

William Benoit (1999) has reported on a study of nomination acceptance speeches by presidential candidates in the United States in the latter part of the twentieth century. In his

¹³*Toronto Star*, 2011/09/10. "Wind turbines churn rural vote." (Reporter: John Spears.)

¹⁴*The Globe and Mail*, 2011/09/16. "Touting job creation, Horwath unveils expanded 'Buy Ontario' plan." (Reporter: Anna MehlerPaperny.)

¹⁵*Toronto Star*, 2011/09/10. "Grit candidates defend immigration tax credit." (Reporter: Canadian Press.)

¹⁶*The Globe and Mail* 2011/09/16. "In McGuinty's footsteps, Horwath takes her pitch to Northern Ontario." (Reporter: Anna MehlerPaperny.)

study three basic functions in the speeches were recognized, which were distinguished as acclaiming, attacking and defending.

Themes that portray the sponsoring candidate or party in a favorable light are acclaims.
 Themes that portray the opposing candidate or party in an unfavorable light are attacks.
 Themes that explicitly respond to a prior attack on the candidate or party are defenses.
 (Benoit 1999, 254)

These thematic differences become the basis for identifying functional distinctions of discourse. Benoit's leading research question was, "What is the relative frequency of use of the functions of acclaiming, attacking and defending?" (Benoit 1999, 253) This research question corresponds to our research question about the relative frequency of dialectical roles given to arguments by politicians in general, and by political parties. Clearly, Benoit's study anticipates the work we have done and we recognize it as much more extensive and detailed than the one on which we are presently reporting. We note three important differences, however. (i) For us, the key to the dialectical roles is always the prior identification of an argument. Thus, we classify the dialectical roles (the uses, functions) given to arguments that have been independently isolated. Arguments do not play as an essential a part in Benoit's analyses. (ii) Benoit is working with the texts of single-author speeches given by presidential candidates on formal occasions;¹⁷ our data is second-hand through reporters and comes from a number of different speakers on various occasions during a month long election campaign. (iii) We divided the functions of arguments into four roles whereas Benoit has three (broad) functions. Our defence-of-a-thesis role would fall under what Benoit terms 'acclaiming', but other things such as self-promotion are also included in acclaiming but were not thought of by us. We have identified two kinds of criticism, policy-criticism and person criticism, and each is specified as a distinct dialectical role whereas Benoit, for the most part lumps these together. Finally, we pretty much agree on the defence/clarification category.

It is important not to mix up argument kinds, as individuated by schemes, with dialectical roles. Most of the kinds of arguments can on different occasions be put to anyone of the four purposes and thus have a positive role, a policy-critical role, a person-critical role, or a defensive role. Therefore, to say that an argument plays a defensive role is not to classify the argument by kind, but rather to say how a kind of argument is used on a particular occasion. So, argument kinds, and their purposes or roles, are not the same. It is true that it is sometimes hard to say what the role of the argument is, whether the speaker is more concerned to criticize a proposal or a proposer, for example. And it is not uncommon that an arguer has used a single argument to accomplish two dialectical purposes at once, e.g., to criticize one view and to bolster another. Much more will have to be said about the dialectical roles of arguments, and also about the four particular dialectical roles we have attempted to distinguish here. However, we think the concepts are now far enough along to be used as categories in the present study. Our classification of dialectical roles of all the arguments studied yields the following result.

¹⁷ Weaver's suggestion about arguments and political views might profitably be applied to Benoit's data.

Dialectical role	Number	Per cent of total
Position-Critical	99	38.7
Positive	81	31.6
Person-Critical	55	21.5
Defensive	21	8.2
	total = 256	

Table 4: Number and Percentage of Roles

We found that the policy-critical role for arguments – when they are used to criticize an opponent’s position or policy – was used nearly 40% of the time. The positive role for arguments is next in terms of frequency, being used just over 30% of the time to support some proposal or solution. This must be seen as good news: in general, politicians spend most of their argumentation efforts (70% of them) engaged with issues: criticizing the views and policies of opponents and backing their own proposals with arguments. Person-critical arguments occurred only about 20% of the time, or one in five times. However, if we combine the two negative modes (the position-critical and the person-critical) we find that about 60% of the argumentation was given a negative dialectical role, an observation that may be a cause of a lack of interest in politics by many people.¹⁸ Finally, the politicians found it necessary to respond by clarification or other kinds of defence only about one in ten times.

9. Profiling the Parties by Argument Kinds and Dialectical Roles

In this section we introduce the idea of an *argumentation profile*, a kind of summary and analysis of the argumentation practiced by a political party. The germ of our idea for argumentation profiles was anticipated by Richard Weaver who in his 1952 work, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (p. 55), wrote that “[a] reasoner reveals his philosophical position by the source of arguments which appears most often in his major premise because the major premise tells us how he is thinking about the world.” In other words, we can learn something about a person’s political beliefs and deep-seated attitudes by looking at the record of his or her argumentation. Three of the four kinds of arguments Weaver mentions, the arguments from genus or definition, similitude, and consequence, have counterparts on our list of argument kinds (the argument from classification, argument by analogy, and appeal to positive/negative consequences). Weaver also identifies a kind of argument he calls the argument from circumstance. He found that Edmund Burke relied most heavily on the argument from circumstance in his speeches and writings, and that Abraham Lincoln leaned for the most part on the argument from genus and definition in his.¹⁹ We will

¹⁸This is in sharp contrast to Benoit’s finding (1999, 255) that acclaiming accounted for 72%; attacking for 27%, and defending, 1%.

¹⁹Weaver maintains that Edmund Burke – remembered as a conservative – mostly used the argument from circumstance in his speeches and writings, a kind of argument more appropriate to expediency and liberal politics than to conservatism. In contrast he associates the argument from genus with Abraham Lincoln, a kind of argument usually associated with conservatism and the status quo; yet we remember Lincoln as a progressive and liberal politician. If Weaver is right in these analyses, they show that what we can learn about someone through their argumentation may surprise us.

attempt to extend Weaver's idea of profiling individuals by their argumentation behavior to profiling political parties on the basis of their argumentation behavior.

Identifying the kinds of arguments and dialectical roles that a political party favours can be factors in constructing *argumentation profiles* of them. The profiles will be a description of a political party's argumentative behavior based on (i) which kinds of arguments are used most frequently by members of a political party, and (ii) which of the dialectical roles a party uses most frequently. This information can be revealing about the parties and could be used as an additional source of information for the voters, in helping them decide for whom to vote.

Before going further with the idea of argumentation profiles we remind the reader that we are reporting on a pilot study and our purpose is to explore possibilities for further studies. Here we are content to show that making such profiles is possible and to suggest that they may be useful to political analysts and members of the electorate. The results shown below are tentative explorations of the argumentative behavior of three political parties at a time (September-October, 2011) in a certain place (Ontario) and should not be extrapolated to how the same parties might behave in other elections in Ontario or other provinces in Canada. Moreover, we shall not at this time try to interpret the descriptions of the argumentation profiles except in a very general and rudimentary way. Political theorists and behavioral psychologists will be able to read more into these patterns than we can.

9.1. Parties and Argument kinds. Consider first ordering the five preferred kinds of argument used by each of the three leading parties.

Top five kinds of arguments used by the political parties					
	1	2	3	4	5
Liberal (101)	NegConseq (23.8%)	PracRsng (15.8%)	PosConseq (8.9%)	Commitment/ Inconsistent Commitment (5.9%)	
NDP (47)	PracRsng (19.1%)	Fairness (14.9%)	PosConseq (10.6%)	Analogy / NegConseq/ Pos to Know (8.5%)	
PC (105)	NegConseq (18.1%)	PosConseq (12.4%)	PracRsng/ Sign (11.4%)		Direct ad hominem / Fairness (9.5%)

Table 5: Top Kinds of Arguments Used in the Election

Here we found a great similarity between the Liberals and the Conservatives. They both use Appeal to Negative consequences most frequently, and they put Practical Reasoning and Appeal to Positive Consequences in the second and third positions. However, the Liberals, unlike the Conservatives show a considerable preference for Practical Reasoning Arguments over Appeal to Positive Consequence Arguments; this may be an indication that they are more set in their goals and ways to achieve them than are the Conservatives. The Conservatives, in their next most-used kind of argument, show an interest in making Arguments from Sign (often cynical readings of Liberal moves during the campaign) and *ad hominem* arguments (that are critical of McGuinty, the Liberal leader) as well as Arguments from Fairness (arguments claiming that a Liberal policy is unfair or discriminatory). This indicates that the Conservatives chose arguments finding fault with the other parties, especially the Liberals (very few of the

Conservative arguments were directed toward the NDP) more so than having reasons for policies of their own.

In contrast to the Liberals and the Conservatives, the NDP prioritized Practical Reasoning arguments, Fairness arguments and Positive Consequence arguments. For the NDP, Appeals to Negative Consequences was tied for fifth place whereas it was first for the other two parties. Perhaps this shows a determination “to do politics differently”, to spend more time making positive suggestions and less time criticizing opponents. The NDP also gave higher priority to Fairness arguments than did the Conservatives and this may be an indication of the Party’s commitment to social justice. That Position to Know Arguments were included in the top five for the NDP is perhaps an indication of its grounding its views in experience rather than ideology.

9.2. Political parties and the dialectical roles of arguments. Considering the distribution of dialectical roles by parties shown in Figure 5 will add to these argumentation profiles. It is interesting that the Liberals spent as much time making arguments in the policy-critical role as in the positive role. This suggests a balance between being critical and constructive about ideas. By contrast, the Conservatives favoured the critical role almost 2:1 over the positive role, and they used the personal role just as often as the positive role. That the Liberal Party is the one in power, and that the Progressive Conservatives Party is trying to unseat them, will be at least part of the explanation of this difference. A consequence of this is that the choice of argument roles and argument kinds may be influenced by a party’s position in terms of power as much as, or more than, its basic doctrines and principles as well as its current policies. Nevertheless, in such-and-such an election, in such-and-such a place, there will be a description of the party’s argumentation behavior, given sufficient data.

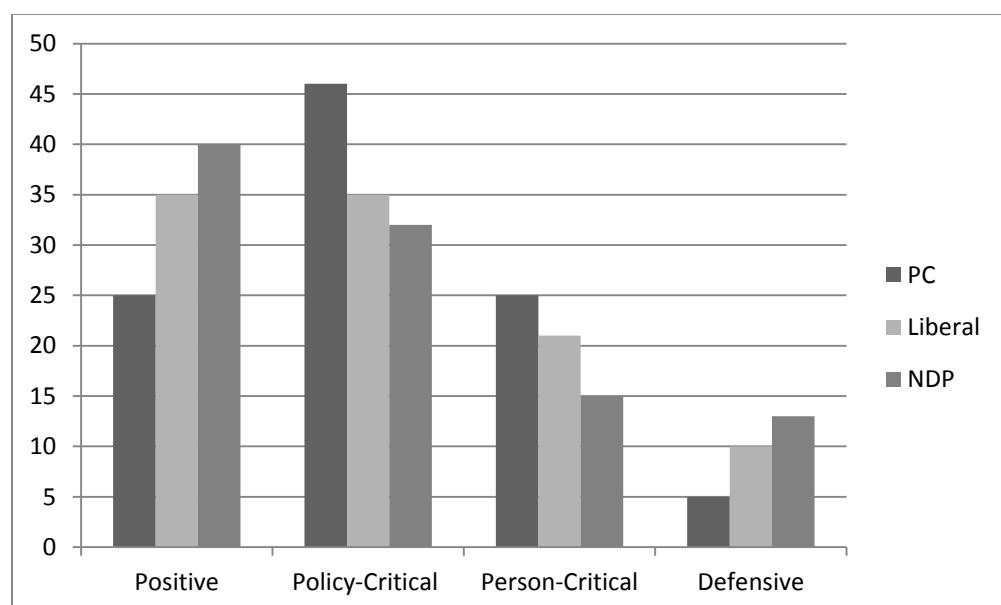


Figure 5: Distribution of Profiles for the Three Parties

When we compare the argumentation behavior of the three parties to each other we find that the NDP gave arguments a positive role about 40 per cent of the time whereas the PC party used it 25 per cent of the time. The Conservatives, on the other hand, used the policy-critical

mode the most – 45 per cent of the time – and the NDP used it the least at 35 per cent of the time. The same ordering held for the personal-critical mode with the PCs using it with a quarter of all their arguments while the NDP used it less at 15 per cent. As for the defensive use of arguments, here it was the NDP that employed this mode the most and the PCs the least (13 percent compared to five percent). In each of these categories the Liberals occupied the middle position. They used arguments to play a positive role less frequently than the NDP did but more frequently than the Conservatives. They used position-critical and person-critical arguments more often than the NDP did but not as much as PCs and, in the defensive category, they were in the middle too, finding fewer occasions to make clarifications or corrections than the other parties did. These findings are summarized in figure 5.

Since both the policy-critical role and the person-critical role are negative, if we combine them we see that the Liberals made negative argumentation about 55% of the time whereas the Conservatives did it nearly 75% of the time. This result may be due to the course struck by the Conservatives, to be very critical of the governing Liberals. The NDP shows contrasting argument behavior: it used negative argumentation less than 50% of the time, slightly less than the Liberals but significantly less than the Conservatives used it. The NDP employed the positive mode of argument most frequently, followed by the policy-critical mode and then the person-critical role. This reinforces the view that the NDP was self-consciously trying to make an effort to break away from the usual way of doing political argumentation.

9.3. Brief summary of party profiles. The Progressive Conservative party was strongly inclined to engage in negative argumentation, especially to criticize opponents on the basis of the negative consequences of their policies. Their second strength was making arguments supporting their own policies by pointing to the positive benefits these would bring about.

The Liberals also had negative argumentation as their dominant characteristic but not to the same extent as the Progressive Conservatives, and they balanced policy-positive and policy-critical uses of arguments evenly. Most of the Liberals' arguments were of the kind, appeal to the negative consequences, and these were directed at the policies of their opponents, but their next priority was to make arguments that were attempts at problem solving, advocating means to ends.

The NDP had quite a different argumentation profile. Its preferred mode of argumentation is the positive one and it uses the person-critical mode less than any of the other parties. The kinds of argument used most frequently by the NDP are those that suggest means to ends and recommend policy revisions on the basis of fairness.

10. Summary of Conclusions

The kind of argument used most frequently in the Ontario election campaign, 2011, was Appeal to Negative Consequences. Next most frequently was Practical Reasoning argumentation, followed by Appeal to Positive consequences, Argument from Sign, and Appeal to Fairness. There were 16 other kinds of arguments identified but about five per cent of the arguments still remained unclassifiable (see Table 3). It turned out that familiar lists of schemes, such as the one in Walton's *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation* are not comprehensive enough to adequately distinguish the kinds of arguments found in this election campaign. Two of the kinds (Slippery Slope and Appeal to Ignorance) had no instances at all and we found that

we had to augment the original list with nine other kinds of arguments (see Table 2). We found that two kinds of arguments, that we had not seen identified before, occurred with sufficient frequency to warrant being named and being characterized by a scheme. These were Appeal to Fairness and Argument from Misplaced Priorities.

We also found that it was useful to classify argumentations by their dialectical roles, i.e., the purposes arguments were made to serve. Identifying the dialectical roles involves an interpretive act on behalf of the analyst as to the intent of arguers. The four-fold division of positive, policy-critical, person-critical and defensive dialectical roles offers a non-technical way of classifying argumentation that is easily understood by the public, and gives a broad characterization of the argumentation being studied. Whether the idea of argumentation profiles is useful to either the public or political parties themselves, remains to be seen. If it can be shown, however, that argumentation behavior or style has an effect on voters, then political parties may well want to consider their own profile and use it as a basis for modifying their argumentation.

Our recommendations for how studies like ours can be improved and expanded are described in the next section.

11. Recommendations for Future Studies

We have been working with materials gathered for a pilot study. Our data is not as extensive as we would have liked it to be, and our analyses of the arguments collected is tentative and sometimes hypothetical, but the study serves its purpose in that it shows that this kind of research is feasible and potentially informative. Moreover, the difficulties we encountered along the way have allowed us to see how we could improve our method and delivery for a future study of this kind. The practical recommendations below are divided according to the relevant stages of the study.

For the *planning stage* it is desirable to have a longer training period for argument collectors. This could improve understanding of what the subject matter of the study is (arguments given by candidates), and hence of what should be collected. Collectors should be well trained in the categories being used (argument kinds, dialectical roles). Pre-collection training will also improve use of the argument collection web site. Finally, relations and cooperation with sources (e.g., the newspapers) should be initiated and maintained throughout.

At the *collecting stage* of the study it is recommended that the context of the argument always be specified when entering a report on the collection web site; that sufficient argument text be included containing as much of the argument identified as possible; that arguments should be collected evenly throughout the period of the study; and that arguments should be collected as evenly as possible from the different sources. If resources are available it would be desirable to expand to other media, e.g., radio, television, and political party web-sites.

Work at the *analysis stage* can be improved in a number of ways. The revised and expanded list of argumentation schemes should be used (see Table 3). The analysis should be done according to a shared list of argumentation schemes. Argument analysts who are also argument collectors should meet weekly while the arguments are still fresh in their minds, to review the data collected in the previous week. This will shorten the post-election analysis period. (Possibly, some people could participate at the analysis stage who were not involved

with collecting arguments.) Finally, the arguments that could not be classified should be isolated and efforts renewed to see whether they don't fit some existing scheme, or whether they warrant the introduction of a new scheme.

The reliability of any generalizations that could be made about argumentation behavior will depend on whether (a) the data collected is representative of the overall argumentation made by the political parties, and also on (b) the reliability of the classifications made. The first requirement can be met by extending the gathering of arguments beyond newspaper reportage to include, for example, electronic news coverage as well as the parties' web sites and other election literature. The second requirement can only be approached by having two or more sets of researchers, working independently and with clear instructions, doing the classification of the arguments and dialectical roles. One can proceed with confidence in making generalizations about arguers only if there is significant agreement among the independent researchers doing the classification. To satisfy both these desiderata a bigger and more experienced research team is needed than we have assembled hitherto. This is why we continue to remind readers that our study of the Ontario 2011 election is a pilot study, exploring methodology and making only tentative conclusions.

A number of improvements can also be made at the *reporting stage*. For the sake of public interest, reporting of the results should be as soon as possible after the election is over. To this end, possible outlets for the report (web sites, newspapers, journals) could be contacted in advance. Different kinds of reports of the findings can also be written, depending on the audiences that might be interested: the general reading public, political parties, academic scholars. The formats of the various reports can be designed in advance, thereby speeding the process.

Along with these practical recommendations there are some methodological remarks about this kind of research that may be useful. One of the general issues arising out of this study of schemes is the utility of making these distinctions. Granted that the distinctions drawn by the schemes are conceptually sustainable, are they needed by the average intelligent and informed citizen for the purpose of evaluating political argumentation? We can't realistically use a list of all the possible schemes. Even the list of (only) sixty-five schemes presented in (Walton, Reed and Macagno, 2008, chapter 9) contains many schemes that were not required in this project. The general problem for this kind of research then is to determine if there is a manageable subset of the available schemes that are particularly useful for a particular domain. For example, obviously certain schemes are common in legal argumentation, like argument from precedent, argument from analogy, practical reasoning, argument from rule, and so forth. In project on the Ontario election, certain schemes, like Argument from Consequences and Practical Reasoning, are shown to be important in the study of political argumentation in election campaigns. Therefore an extremely useful goal for this kind of research is to try to determine which subset of the schemes is the most common and important in a particular domain.

In the methodology for this kind of research there is inevitably a sequence of circular reasoning involved in the feedback process that must take place between abstract formal models of schemes and instances of schemes found in natural language domains of discourse. We want to find the most commonly used schemes in a domain, and a project like ours which attempts to find instances of arguments that are particular schemes in a corpus is the way to do that. But at the same time, such an empirical study of schemes has as one of its most valuable outcomes the identification of new schemes and the refinement of the existing ones. Despite the trickiness of

this back-and-forth process of investigation, we feel that this is precisely the kind of work that is needed. Without examining actual instances of use in real examples of argumentation “on the hoof”, normative and theoretical studies of schemes are not very useful. On the other hand, if we merely pursue the study of argumentation empirically and descriptively, without applying abstract normative models that can be defined in a precise way appropriate for logic and computational implementation, the results of our studies are merely anecdotal.

Based on the findings of this project, the next project that needs to be carried out is to study the new schemes that we found to be useful, for example argument from Misplaced Priorities. These schemes need to be more precisely defined and carefully studied as abstract formal entities, based on the examples of them found in this paper. Finally, this paper has been only a pilot study undertaken with modest resources, but it provides a good basis for a larger projects of this kind, studying argumentation in other elections, either regional or national.

APPENDIX

The following list of argumentation schemes is adapted from chapter 3 of Walton, *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation* (2006; page numbers are included) and it was the basis for the argument classifications made in our study. The adaptations include (a) modification of the list, and (b) standardization of the variables. Modifications to the list were as follows. The Argument from Popular Practice and the Argument from Inconsistent Commitment were dropped from the list. The former because we thought all such cases could be classified under appeal to popular opinion, and the latter because it seemed to overlap with the Circumstantial *ad hominem*. As a compensation, the scheme for Appeal to Ignorance found in chapter 8 of Walton’s book was added to the list. Adjustments to notation were done as follows: *A*, *B*, *C*, etc. are used for persons (argument agents) and *p*, *q*, *r*, etc. for propositions and states of affairs; when other variables were needed they were taken from other parts of the alphabet.

1) POSITION TO KNOW (85)

A is in a position to know whether *p* is true (or false)
A asserts that *p* is true
 So, *p* is true

2) APPEAL TO EXPERT OPINION (87)

A is an expert in subject domain *S*
 $p \in S$
A asserts that *p* is true
 So, *p* is plausibly true

3) FROM POPULAR OPINION (91)

p is generally accepted as true
 If *p* is generally accepted as true, then there is a presumption in favor of *p*
 So, there exists a presumption in favor of *p*

4) FROM COMMITMENT (117)

A is committed to *p* according to what *A* said or did

Generally, when someone is committed to p then they are also committed to q
 So, A is committed to q

5) APPEAL TO IGNORANCE (322)

Proposition p is not known to be true (false)

If p were true (false), p would be known to be true (false)

Therefore, p is false (true)

6) CIRCUMSTANTIAL AD HOMINEM (125)

A advocates argument X with p as its conclusion

Commitments, actions or circumstances show that A is committed to not- p

A's credibility is put in question by the above

So, the plausibility of A's argument X is decreased or destroyed

7) DIRECT AD HOMINEM ARGUMENTS (123)

A is a person of bad character

So, A's arguments should not be accepted

8) FROM CORRELATION TO CAUSE (101)

There is a positive correlation between X and Y

So, X causes Y

9) FROM POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES (106)

If A is brought about, good consequences will occur

So, A should be brought about

10) FROM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES (106)

If A is brought about, bad consequences will occur

So, A should not be brought about

11) SLIPPERY SLOPE (107)

Bringing about the first step S_1 plausibly leads to the next step, S_2 , and so forth to S_n

S_n is an undesirable outcome

So, S_1 should not be brought about

12) FROM ANALOGY (96)

Generally Case 1 is similar to Case 2

p is true in Case 1

So, p is true in Case 2

13) FROM SIGN (113)

X is true in this situation

Y is generally indicated as true when its sign X, is true.

So, Y is true in this situation

14) ARG FROM VERBAL CLASSIFICATION (129)

a has property F
 Whatever has F also has property G
 So, a has G .

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Abstract:

This paper is a report of a pilot study of how candidates argue when they are running for political office. The election studied was the provincial election in Ontario, Canada, in the fall of 2011. Having collected about 250 arguments given during the election from newspaper media, we sought answers to the following questions, among others: (i) which argumentation schemes have the greatest currency in political elections? (ii) Is a list of the best known argumentation schemes sufficient to classify the arguments given in elections? (iii) What schemes should be added to the familiar list to make it more adequate for studying elections? (iv) Is it useful to classify arguments as being used for positive, policy-critical, person-critical and defensive purposes? (v) Can political parties be usefully characterized by noting their preferred kinds of arguments and their most frequent uses of arguments? (vi) What lessons can be learned from this study to better design future studies of the same kind?

Key words:

Argumentation scheme, dialectical role, argumentation profile, practical reasoning, appeal to negative consequences.