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THE RICHNESS AND QUALITY OF NORMATIVE PUBLIC ARGUMENTATION

ONE METHOD, TWO CASE STUDIES

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PUBLIC ARGUMENTATION:
ONE METHOD, TWO CASE STUDIES**

Centro Einaudi • Laboratorio di Politica Comparata e Filosofia Pubblica
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The **Comparative Politics and Public Philosophy Lab (LPF)** at Centro Einaudi is directed by Maurizio Ferrera and funded by Compagnia di San Paolo. It includes the **Welfare Laboratory (WeL)** and the **Bioethics Lab (La.B)**. LPF analyses the transformation of the political sphere in contemporary democracies with a focus on the relationships between policy choices and the value frameworks within which such choices are, or ought to be, carried out. The reference here is to the “reasonable pluralism” singled out by John Rawls as an essential feature of political liberalism.

The underlying idea is that implementing forms of “civilized” politics is desirable as well as feasible. And, as far as the Italian political system is concerned, it is also urgently needed, since the system appears to be poorly prepared to deal with the challenges emerging in many policy areas: from welfare state reform to the governance of immigration, from the selection criteria in education and in public administration to the regulation of ethically sensitive issues.

In order to achieve this end, LPF adopts both a descriptive-explanatory approach and a normative one, aiming at a fruitful and meaningful combination of the two perspectives. Wishing to foster an informed public debate, it promotes theoretical research, empirical case studies, policy analyses and policy proposals.

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KEYWORDS

argumentation, normative arguments, values, fallacies

ABSTRACT

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ARGUMENTATION:
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In everyday conversations as well as in public speeches delivered by media, normative arguments, expressing ideas about what “should” or “should not” be done, thought or said, are frequent. Normative arguments support policy proposals, defend values, affirm identities. How rich and “good” is a normative argument is actually a very relevant question in contemporary democracies, where validity claims are to be supported by arguments and not by force or violence. Also, it can be generally assumed that the more and the better a normative argument is argued for, the stronger will be its persuasive power.

Based on these assumptions and building on Stephen Toulmin’s model for the analysis of arguments, this work proposed a theoretical and empirical analysis of normative arguments with the purpose to further develop a methodology for the evaluation of their quality and richness.

Two empirical case studies are presented. The first is dedicated to public speeches on the topic of the 2008 economic crisis; the second includes political speeches concerning Islamic Terrorism. Moreover, President Obama’s speech in acceptance for the Nobel Prize for Peace (2009) is analysed in order to test the theoretical distinction between value-using arguments and value-establishing arguments as well as its usefulness to better understand the role of values within normative argumentation.

THE RICHNESS AND QUALITY OF NORMATIVE PUBLIC ARGUMENTATION: ONE METHOD, TWO CASE STUDIES

FIAMMETTA CORRADI

1. INTRODUCTION

“We must invade Iraq”, “Syria deserves punishment”, “the national debt ceiling has to be increased”, “economic growth is the absolute priority” or “peace sometimes requires military action” are examples of *normative claims*. The most interesting normative claims, however, are those which theoretically demand higher degrees of *argumentation*, being their advocated binding character not automatically self-evident and usually bearing relevant public consequences.

This work builds on the assumption that both the *richness* and the *quality* of the *arguments* sustaining such claims deserve systematic inquiry. Consequently, it aims at providing a relatively innovative analysis of public argumentation, despite being grounded in Stephen Toulmin’s seminal work *The Uses of Argument* (Toulmin 1958). In particular, the main objective is to present and test a method to assess the quality of the arguments supporting publicly stated normative claims, with special attention to their logical validity and to the richness of the information sustaining them.

The structure of the runs as follows. First (§ 2), the relevance of normative claims in public debate is underscored followed by discussion about the reasons for attempting an evaluation of public arguments. Then comes the illustration of both the method and the relevant analytical dimensions (§ 3; 3.1.; 3.2.), with a critical focus on the advantages and drawbacks of the methodology. The two empirical case studies are then presented (§ 4): the first about public arguments meant to restore trust during the economic crisis begun in 2007 (§ 4.1.), the second about arguments for or against the war on Islamic terrorism (§ 4.2.). The case studies present applications of the adopted method; also, they serve as empirical basis for a further inquiry into normative claims, especially on the role of values. Finally, a new line of research is proposed (§ 5), analysing normative claims at a deeper level, “under the loupe”, in order to distinguish between “value-using arguments” (§ 5.1.) and “value-establishing arguments” (§ 5.2.). A tentative analysis of the normative arguments used by the US President Barack Obama in the famous speech he delivered in acceptance of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2009 follows. In the conclusions (§ 6), the

reader will find a short critical discussion about the limits and virtues of the proposed analyses as well as some suggestions for future research.

2. BACKGROUND, DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

Normative claims, which are often normative *in meaning* even when they have the linguistic form of positive/“is” claims, are not only theoretically disputable, but also empirically much challenged and debated. Most of the time, public discussions rise around them, sometimes before political decisions are taken, sometimes afterwards, to revise them, to speed up or impede the implementation process. Interesting normative claims can be withdrawn, for instance, from the discussions preceding and following the decision to change the national currency, to subscribe binding international agreements about environmental care, or to reform some features of the welfare state system. Customary public discussions about “what should be done” (courses of actions that have to be pursued) clearly show that at times disagreement is merely procedural or technical; other times it questions the soundness of the positive/factual statements used as premises; still other times dissent pertains to the explicit or implicit axiological statements (about values or system of values) warranting the choice of a certain collective course of action (or rule to be applied) among the practicable/possible ones.

But why should we be interested in testing how much public claims – and especially normative claims – are argued for in public contexts? Why should we worry about the quality of arguments, as we certainly should about their truth value (a problem this paper cannot deal with)?¹ The reasons are grounded in the crucial role public argumentation has – and should have² – in democratic regimes. Adopting the perspective of the audience (whatever it is contingently, the public sphere at large, political parties, international allies...), it might become clearer that public argumentation is sometimes able to show the reasoning sustaining political decisions, either fostering a reasoned consensus or dissent (eventually allowing the quest for better courses of action). When claims are publicly argued, the audience can cast doubts on the rationality of a political evaluation or decision if the argumentation sustaining it reveals itself unsound (factually ungrounded) or logically incorrect; rationality might be questioned each time public speeches entail contradictions, being coherence a necessary requisite of rationality (Corradi 2007). On the contrary, assertive normative claims – claims uttered without grounds on behalf of a pretended “evidence” (or authority) – are potentially dangerous,

¹ The problem of truth in politics has been dealt with by many modern and contemporary thinkers (W. James, M. Weber, L. Strauss, H. Arendt, J. Habermas, J. Rawls, D. Davidson, H. Putnam, R. Rorty, B. Williams, D. Lewis). Detailed presentations of these author’s views can be found in a recent book edited by Antonella Besussi (2013).

² I am aware that this is a normative statement, but to declare it explicitly in advance is coherent with the ethics of scientific work. Moreover, I argue for the connection between democracy and the practice of public argumentation, following Max Weber (1917; 1922, 472-3; it. 1958, 337-8) when he claimed that it is among the tasks of social sciences to show the meaning-connections (*Bedeutungsgewebe*) within value-systems (their internal coherence and the factual consequences of their practical realizations).

in so far as they deprive the audience of means of judgement and critical stances to evaluate their coherence and rationality.

To share an *expectation of rationality* in political decisions, however, does not equal embracing an enchanted view of politics or of political argumentation: everybody knows that at times values, new rules and laws or collective courses of actions are actually imposed by force or power, and not by virtue of the cogency of the better argument; it can be acknowledged that lies and *ad hoc* rhetorical strategies are sometimes used in public speeches on purpose, to conceal particularistic interests; moreover, it can easily be conceded that not every issue actually deserves to be questioned in the public or political sphere. Nevertheless, public argumentation normally provides the contingent audience with elements of critical control, to test the cogency and to verify the soundness of what is claimed.

For what has been stated above, public critical watchfulness should be particularly sensitive to normative arguments. Since many of the research topics dealt with by LPF concern public policies and collective decisions, it might be useful to work together on a new method for studying and eventually improving our knowledge (and practice) of normative public argumentation.

It should also be underscored that worries about the quality of normative argumentation are meaningful if one believes – as I do – that normative statements *can* be argued for (or against) in rational terms.³ This view has on its background an old and notwithstanding on-going sociological, political and philosophical debate. Within the sociological tradition, Raymond Boudon (1999; 2003) has revitalized the distinction first drawn by Max Weber between instrumental rationality (*Zweck-rationalität*) and axiological rationality (*Wert-rationalität*), suggesting that they share the features of “cognitive rationality”. As a consequence, he has pointed out the possibility for the axiological rationality to be grounded in “good reasons”, like the coherence of values-constellations and the realism of empirical consequentialism.⁴ The notion of “strong” or “good” reasons, controversial and ambiguous as it might be (Di Nuoscio 2002; Sciolla 2005), directs our attention towards the *strength* of a system of arguments⁵ and at the same time “opens a new path to

³ This view is truly problematic when it comes to values and evaluative statements: tastes, instead, can be ruled out from normative arguments (following the Latin motto: *De gustibus disputandum non est*).

⁴ These are actually the two main “logics” deemed to have a place and sometimes overlap in normative argumentation: *adequateness* or *appropriateness* (looking at the coherence of ought-statement with other ought-statements) and *consequentialism* (looking at the consequences of ought-statements on facts or values). T. Risse (2000) discusses at length the origin of consequentialism and adequateness, within, respectively, rational choice theory and sociological institutionalism. Risse, following Habermas, proposes a third logic, the logic of arguing, or as he also calls it, “the logic of truth seeking”: this kind of logic works both in theoretical discourses (where assumptions about the world and about cause-and-effect- relationships are at stake) and in practical discourses (“whether norms of appropriate behaviour can be justified and which norms apply under given circumstances”, cf. Risse 2000, 7).

⁵ R. Boudon (2000, 63) writes: “The rationality of the lay person is closer to the one evoked by the philosophers of science than to the one of neoclassical economics. What one has to maximize and optimize here is not anymore the difference between costs and benefits, but the strength of a system

overcome the irrationality of value explanation within much of classical sociological theory and the restricted rationality of *homo oeconomicus*” (Sciolla 2005, 245). Within the realm of philosophy, the debate about normative claims entails and entangles at least two main issues,⁶ which can only be briefly mentioned here. One question is whether or not ought-statements (evaluative statements) can be directly derived from “is-statements” (descriptive statements). In this regard, David Hume held that to believe it, is to commit what has been called the “naturalistic fallacy”, because no set of descriptive statements can entail an evaluative statement without the addition of at least one evaluative premise. Many philosophers – among them was John Searle (1964)⁷ – argued theoretically against the so called “Hume’s Guillotine”, the metaphor which illustrates the removal of the head (the factual basis) from ethical arguments. In my opinion, Stephen Toulmin has proposed a convincing practical argument against Hume, showing the common structure of every kind of argumentation (see below). Another question is whether there are some irreducibly normative properties, or instead evaluative statements (like “X is good”) can be reduced to descriptive statements. Hillary Putnam has intended to put an end to this debate with his book *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy* (2002), in which he argues for the usefulness of a distinction between factual claims and value judgements, but radically against the pernicious identification of the realm of axiological statements with subjectivity and irrationality.

So, if one shares an expectation of rationality in public argumentation and agrees that normative claims and values cannot (and should not) be simply used as “flags” or as self-evident truths within public discourses, then a method is worth finding, improving and applying to test the richness and quality of public factual and normative arguments. This work provides some analytical and methodological tools probably worth improving and applying within the LPF specific fields of empirical research.

of reasons” Author’s translation. More on the disputed notion of “good reasons” can be found in Boudon (2003).

⁶ A third relevant issue concerns the relationship between ought-statements and can-statements, the intrinsic practicability of normative utterances, and their alleged truth-validity (Streumer 2003). This issue is not of direct relevance here. For my purposes it will suffice to remind Grice’s pragmatic solution, according to which “ought” *conversationally* implicates “can”. The conversational implication means simply that if a speaker claims that a person ought to do something, a listener will normally suppose that the speaker thinks that this person can do it. From this point of view, the “can” implication is not logical, but pragmatic.

⁷ Searle (1964) presented the act of promising as a counterexample to the thesis that “ought” cannot be derived from “is”. His argument builds on a distinction between “brute” facts (like the falling of leaves) and “institutional” facts (like promising, marriage) which instead presuppose systems of constitutive rules: according to Searle, it is one such institutionalized form of obligation, like the one entailed in promising, which actually permits to derive an “ought” from “is”. He also provides other examples: “‘one ought not to tell lies’ can be taken as saying that to make an assertion necessarily involves undertaking an obligation to speak truthfully. Another constitutive rule. ‘One ought to pay one’s debts’ can be construed as saying that to recognize something as a debt is necessarily to recognize an obligation to pay it” (Searle 1964, 57).

3. ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS AND METHOD

By “normative public argumentation” I refer to arguments for (or against) normative claims with a public content, uttered by politicians or other institutional personalities in public contexts⁸ – in Parliament or in other situations accessible to the media (therefore reaching the public sphere). In my definition, normative claims are statements (mainly but not exclusively *ought*-statements, as I’ll say later) whose content is not proscribed (forbidden) or prescribed as mandatory by existing laws, but is nonetheless advocated as “due” or “preferable for everybody” by the speaker, or needs to be in case of challenge. Normative claims so defined might regard both values and rules (Rositi 1986; re-printed in Rositi 2013): they inhabit the space of political (and ethical) freedom at once circumscribed and left open by juridical constraints, where the choice of *collective ends* is at stake as well as the choice of the means (or rules) to achieve them; a realm where sheer possibility is governed by a specific obligation, what Windelband called the necessity of the *Sollen* (“the ought that can be different from what it is”).⁹ To argue for a normative claim, consequently, means to show how comes the *binding force of its content*, why the ought it entails with regard to its content should be accepted by the audience as “due” or “preferable” for everybody.

The methodology I present builds on the basic layout of an argument proposed by Stephen Toulmin in the third essay of his book *The Uses of Argument*, published in 1958. He regarded it as field-invariant and apt to split *every kind of argumentation*: so his model is amendable to be applied to both factual and normative arguments. When Toulmin presented his model for the analysis of arguments, in fact, one of his aims was to show that argumentation in juridical, moral, political, aesthetic fields is customarily made of “substantial” arguments, namely, arguments where the claims or conclusions add something to the premises and in doing so enjoy various degrees of certainty.¹⁰ In all these fields, according to Toulmin, the analogy with the legal process (*more juridico*) fits better than the analogy with the geometrical way of reasoning (*more geometrico*): in everyday argumentation are relatively hard to find the “analytical” arguments studied by logicians, where instead the conclusions explicit what the premises logically imply (deductively entail) and are therefore necessary (like in the time-honoured syllogism:

⁸ “Public” has therefore here a twofold meaning: on the one hand, it is synonym for political, in referring to issues of public concern and with public consequences; on the other hand, it refers to the communicative context of utterance and reception (by different kinds of audiences).

⁹ The term “norm” was born within the context of the German neo-criticism (the School of Baden), where, following Kant, a rational foundation was alleged to the necessity of the *Sollen*. Normativists hold that a rational foundation of norms could only lie in a more fundamental norm (Turner 2007).

¹⁰ This insight is not new. The first to propose it was Aristotle, who argued that in rhetorical arguments, where the syllogisms assume a specific shape (*entimema*), a special role is played by the “*eikos*”. The most fortunate translation of the Greek term is “verisimilar/plausible/credible”, but S. Gastaldi (1973) has convincingly argued that the best translation is “probable”, which underlines the logical modality of the premises in terms of “what happens most of the times”, opposed to “what always happens” (necessity).

Socrates is a man, all man are mortal, so Socrates is mortal).¹¹ The Toulmin's layout reveals precious when the quantity and some aspects of the quality of arguments are at stake. After a brief presentation of the layout (§ 3.1.), the steps for applying the Toulmin's model to public speech transcripts are described, together with comments about the methodological advantages it provides (§ 3.2.).

3.1. The Toulmin's model

The Toulmin's argument layout consists of six parts or elements, each characterized by a specific position and function. For the sake of clarity, it may be useful to present them in two groups, with the aid of an example.

Claim (C), Data (D), and Warrant (W) are the indispensable elements of an argument: a claim stated without data and without warrant is typically assertive, that is, stated without explicit grounds. Claims are statements that the arguer wants to assert or defend from eventual challenge.¹² Data are factual statements with the logical or chronological property of being antecedent to the claim; warrants, instead, are "rules, principles, inference-licences...general, hypothetical statements, which can act as bridges" (Toulmin 1958, 98) authorizing the passage from the data to the claim.¹³ In Toulmin's own example, the fact (datum) that Harry was born in Bermuda sustains the claim "Harry is a British subject" *together* with the warrant "A man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject". So *both* data and warrants are *grounds* for a claim (the difference between the two being "similar to the distinction drawn in the law-courts between questions of fact and questions of law", Toulmin 1958, 100). The warrant, even when not stated explicitly, has the *function of authorizing* the passage from data to conclusion: but in order for the argument to be a good one, the warrant has to be *reliable* (more on this crucial point later). The three other elements of the layout are christened by Toulmin "Backing" (B), "Qualifier" (Q) and "Rebuttal" (R). According to the author, backings are "other assurances, without which the warrants themselves would posses neither authority nor currency" (Toulmin 1958, 103). The backing is again a *de facto* statement,¹⁴ with the alleged role to "cover the warrant's back" in case of challenge: it offers a field-dependent¹⁵ factual ground for the warrants itself. Qualifiers are adverbs like

¹¹ Moreover, Toulmin seems to suggest that analytical syllogisms can be re-considered as special cases within his argument layout. This view is widely shared by Toulmin's scholars who admit that warrants are inference rules, albeit not necessarily deductively valid. For instance, see Freeman (2005).

¹² Toulmin does not consider different kinds of claims, but claim-classifications can be useful and should at least distinguish between descriptive statements and normative statements.

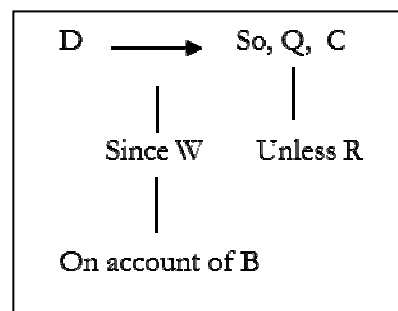
¹³ James F. Klupp has noted that Toulmin offers at least seven strategies for defining the notion of "warrant". The most problematic seems to Klupp the one referring to the "hypothetical" nature of statements involved, because reducing them to the basic conditional statement if D, then C "trivializes the *function* of warrants" (2006, 106).

¹⁴ Bart Verheij (2006) underscores that "formally, the relation between backing and warrant is the same as the relation between datum and claim". He nonetheless recalls that "according to Toulmin, the occurrence of backing *presupposes* the occurrence of data (and claim)" because "there are arguments containing data but without explicit backing, while there are no arguments containing backing but lacking data" (Bart Verheij 2006, 192-193).

¹⁵ While some authors regard the field-dependency of backings as something obscure (e.g. Freeman 2005, 333), I think Bart Verheij is right when he states: "Among Toulmin's examples of

“presumably”, “probably”, “necessarily” expressing verbally the degree of certainty of a claim: they indicate the strength conferred by the warrant to the claim. Finally, rebuttals indicate circumstances in which the “general authority of the warrant would have to be set aside” (Toulmin 1958, 101), previewing and mentioning exceptional conditions liable of defeating or rebutting the warranted conclusion. In the example, where the claim was “Harry is a British subject” (and the datum the fact that he was born in Bermuda) reference to the statute of Bermuda about citizenship (or the British Nationality Acts) is the backing for the warrant (“a man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject”); the qualifier “presumably” weakens the strength of the claim, since there are possible rebuttals (e.g. “unless Harry has become a naturalized American”). The relationships among these six elements can be illustrated by a simple graphic representation.¹⁶

Figure 1. The layout to split arguments



Source: Author's elaboration from S. Toulmin (1958, 94-145).

3.2. *Applying the model*

The application of the Toulmin's model to public speech transcripts, although not a fast and automatic one, helps the analyser pinning down the text into single arguments, starting from the identification of distinct claims (which become the units of analysis). Thanks to the model, claims are easily recognizable, on behalf of their role of conclusions; at the same time, claim-isolation discourages arbitrary summaries of arguments. Once single claims are identified, and their sustaining elements recognized on the basis of their functions within arguments, possible classifications of claims can come into play, depending of the research question. In the two empirical studies presented

backings are statutes and act of Parliament, statistical reports, appeals to results of experiments and references to taxonomical systems. All can provide the backing that warrant the arguments as they are *acceptable* in particular fields" (Bart Verheij 2006, 193).

¹⁶ Toulmin adds interestingly: "reading along the arrow from right to left or from left to right we can normally say both 'C, because D' and 'D, so C'. But it may sometimes happen that some more general conclusion than C may be warranted, given D (...). Where this is the case, our 'so' and 'because' are no longer reversible" (Toulmin 1958, 107).

below, a simple fourfold classification was adopted: a distinction was drawn among *factual claims* (claims about facts or relationships between facts in the world), *normative claims* (claims about states of the world meant to be due or desirable for everybody and worth accomplishing), *claims about states of the self* (expressing the speaker's emotions and feelings) and *claims concerning the speech itself*.¹⁷

When arguments are reconstructed according to the layout, and the claims classified, the problem of testing the *quantity* of arguments can be faced: the clear anatomy of the model allows *counting* the number of data and warrants stated in support of each claim or claim category (as well as the number of backings, rebuttals and qualifiers). Different questions about the richness of argumentation can then be raised and answered. On the basis of numbers, for instance, one can tell how many claims in a speech are assertive (stated without data and without warrants) and how many claims are instead argued; as far as the argued ones are concerned, to what degree they are (more, if stated with data and warrant; less, if only with one of them). Who is interested in testing the degree of conclusiveness of arguments might have a look at the number of backings; the number of rebuttals, instead, carries clues about the degree of dialogical openness (being rebuttals exceptions to the claim, but also anticipations of possible objections).

Within certain limits,¹⁸ one can move beyond explicit statements, looking for implicit warrants: at this stage, the analyser can further distinguish between evident implicit warrants, namely, warrants clearly implied by data *and* claim, and dubious ones (where the term “dubious” of course refers to the analyser's difficulty in finding out the implied warrant). “Dubious” implicit warrants are interesting to the extent that they foster an additional classifying operation with regard to the warrants. If one is interested in classifying the kinds of inference-rules used by speakers in passing from data to conclusions (Rositi 1982; Freeman 2005; Kock 2006),¹⁹ dubious warrants may enlarge the set of possible rules far beyond necessary deductive inferences (which are typically self-evident), bringing to light practical syllogisms and Weberian “experience-rules or

¹⁷ These two types, although numerically limited, were added to the two main ones (factual and normative claims), in order to test the degree of self-reflexivity displayed by the speaker (about himself and his discourse).

¹⁸ Claims need to be explicit statements. Looking for implicit claims exposes the analysis to the risk of arbitrary argument reconstruction. Sometimes data can be implicit: in some cases and contexts, the speaker does not mention logically or chronologically antecedent data, supposing the audience already knows them.

¹⁹ Franco Rositi (1982) proposed a typology of possible conceptual or logical connections between statements, through 1) motivational chains, 2) causal explanations, 3) narrative explanations, 4) functional or causal abductions, 5) deductions (Franco Rositi 1982, 61-65). More recently, James B. Freeman (2005) suggested a fourfold classification of warrants into *a priori*, empirical, institutional and evaluative. His classification is epistemic: it reflects four different “intuition modalities”, in which we learn and apply rules with regard to, respectively, necessary statements, descriptions, interpretations and evaluations. With special reference to normative claims, Christian Kock (2006), interestingly drives our attention back to the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, where he re-discovers “an inventory of warrants available for practical reasoning” (Christian Kock 2006, 255), accordingly to which actions should be undertaken (or values embraced) – and ultimately justified – for one or more of the following: 1) just; 2) lawful; 3) expedient; 4) honourable; 5) pleasant; 6) easy of accomplishment. In my opinion, what Kock actually brings back to our attention is not an inventory of warrants for practical reasoning, but a catalogue of *meta-criteria* to evaluate the force or cogency of normative claims.

maxims”. The evaluation of explicit and implicit warrants raises the problematic issue of warrant reliability and leads to *qualitative* questions about the cogency or goodness of an argument.²⁰ In the two case studies presented below, this issue was faced by aid of the notion of argumentative fallacy, namely, a reasoning that appears sound, when it actually is not (lacking logical validity, being circular, or irrelevant and so forth). To recognize fallacious warrants, the catalogue of fallacies recently proposed and discussed by Franca D’Agostini (2010) was used as a precious guide.

Whoever wishes to replicate the analysis according to the presented methodology will discover how time-consuming it is to split a speech in claims and in the other analytical elements identifies through the Toulmin’s model. This is certainly a drawback of the method. Nevertheless, one might also realize that, once the single claims are identified, very few doubts can rise about the identification of data and explicit warrant (the implicit ones, instead, might be more dubious). For this very reason, I am hopeful that the methodology could be adopted, improved and perfected by other empirical researchers, even with different scientific interests and motivations.

4. TWO CASE STUDIES

For exemplifying purposes with regard to the explained method, I present two empirical studies, whose findings have already been published (Corradi 2012; Corradi, in Rositi 2013, 49-100). Those outcomes are not simply summarised here, but revisited with a special focus on normative claims. The first case study is dedicated to four public speeches having as a topic the economic crisis started in 2007: it provides examples of argumentative efforts to rebuild political and economic trust in investors and citizens, in order to avoid or contain the negative consequences that distrust produces over finance and economy. The second case study displays the analyses of ten public speeches delivered by political leaders of different nationalities around the topic “Islamic terrorism”: it provides examples of argumentative efforts to *justify* military intervention within the framework of the “Global War on Terror”.

Criteria to select the speeches to be analysed among the ones integrally recorded on the internet have been: the relevance to the specific topic, the abundance of normative claims, values and policy proposals, the public situation in which they have been delivered. All the selected speeches for the two case studies were delivered in solemn public situations, in Parliament or in other relevant public/political contexts, where the

²⁰ According to Trudy Govier (2010, 87) an argument is “cogent” when it satisfies the so called “ARG” conditions: when it has acceptable premises (“there is good reason to accept the premises – even if in some cases they are not known to be true – and there is no good evidence indicating that the premises are false”); when its premises are relevant to the conclusion; when the premises considered together (here data and warrants) “give sufficient reason to make it rational to accept the conclusion”. A good argument could be defined as a cogent argument 1) which contains at least one datum or at least one explicit warrant; 2) with no logical fallacies. A good speech, moreover, should not entail contradictions among its composing claims.

greater argumentative efforts are reasonably to be expected by the speakers (for more information on the selected speeches, see the full list p. 31).

Analyses were undertaken with the main purpose of testing the richness and quality of each speech, applying the Toulmin's model. In both cases, the limited number of analysed speeches (four and ten respectively) does not allow, so far, generalizations of descriptive outcomes (on this point see also § 6).²¹ It is however my hope that a shared interest for the method and its further application to a wider range of topics and a greater number of cases will provide us with sounder findings, liable to greater degrees of generalization.

4.1. *Arguments for restoring economic trust*

After the collapse of Lehman Brothers, in 2008, fear and economic distrust spread among institutional investors as well as among citizens all over the world, threatening to deepen a financial and economic crisis which was at that time at its very beginning. In Italy, a collapse in institutional and political trust with no equals in Europe suddenly merged with a rapid worsening of the main economic sentiment indicators (Corradi 2012, 124). To avoid panic and all the dramatic consequences that distrust can produce over economy and society, some public speeches were delivered by Silvio Berlusconi (by that time Premier), Giulio Tremonti (his Minister of Economic Affairs), Giorgio Napolitano (President of the Republic) and Mario Draghi (at that time in his office of Governor of Banca d'Italia) with the aim to rebuild and restore the eroded trust.

Four of these speeches, among the ones integrally recorded by the media,²² were selected for their relevance to the topic of inquiry, the abundance of arguments meant to restore economic trust and the solemnity of the situation in which they were delivered: Berlusconi gave his speech in a press conference immediately after the Council of Ministers decided to adopt a special anti-crisis measures package (29/06/2009); Napolitano's speech was the traditional End of the Year discourse on TV (31/12/2008); Tremonti and Draghi's speeches took place at the Chamber of Deputies (3/10/2008 and 17/03/2009). The analysis of these speeches was undertaken within a theoretical framework in which the public speaker wears the role of *trustee* and the contingent audience embodies the role of *trustor*. Adopting the perspective of the audience, and keeping constantly in mind that "since trust is risky, the question of when it is *warranted* is of particular importance" (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy), two main argumentative logics were discovered and the richness and quality of these speeches tested, finding interesting differences.

²¹ Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the units of analyses were the claims, and not the speeches. So, in case one is interested in drawing inferential conclusions, samples of at least more than 30 (logically independent) claims have to be built.

²² The four speeches were selected among those delivered publicly in 2008 and 2009 and recorded integrally in the on-line archives of some Italian newspapers (Corriere della Sera, Repubblica, Sole24Ore) and by the Chamber of Deputies archive.

Figures first reveal that Berlusconi and Napolitano preferred to appeal to the *emotional* dimensions of trust, calling for optimism, hope, and courage; Tremonti and Draghi chose instead to work on its *cognitive* components, providing information and comments on the state and development of the national crisis (for instance, reassuring about the stability of the Italian banking system). In addition, while Berlusconi (and to some extent also Tremonti) tried to deny the existence of the economic crisis and/or its depth (Berlusconi depicted it as “merely psychological”, since “the worst has already happened and is behind us”), Napolitano and Draghi openly admitted the seriousness of the situation, describing it even with dramatic tones. Napolitano and Draghi also joined in recalling the necessity to speak publicly the “language of truth” with citizens, and both advocated the chance to turn the crisis into an opportunity to overcome systemic problems pre-existent to the crisis (unemployment, the national debt, and the economic under-development of South-Italy). Apart from these content-related differences, other interesting ones emerged applying the Toulmin’s layout. Table 1 shows some of the analysis findings with regard to the argumentative richness and quality of each speech. Although the speeches had various lengths and a different number of claims, percentage values can be confronted.

Table 1. Elements of richness and quality of four speeches about the economic crisis

	<i>Berlusconi</i>	<i>Napolitano</i>	<i>Tremonti</i>	<i>Draghi</i>
<i>N. of Claims</i>	26	28	61	67
<i>% factual claims</i>	69,3	17,9	85,3	74,6
<i>% normative claims</i>	23	64,2	8,2	25,4
<i>% claims over states of the self</i>	7,7	17,9	6,5	0
<i>N. of Data</i>	21	26	44	137
<i>% claims with at least one datum</i>	34,6	67,8	45,9	77,6
<i>% claims with at least one explicit warrant</i>	26,9	35,7	31,1	62,6
<i>% argued claims (with at least one datum or one explicit warrant)</i>	42,3	89,2	60,6	95,5
<i>% claims without implicit “dubious” warrants</i>	65,3	96,4	96,7	100
<i>% backings over n. of claims</i>	11,5	3,5	3,2	7,4
<i>% qualifiers over n. of claims</i>	3,8	3,5	16,3	26,8
<i>% rebuttals over n. of claims</i>	3,8	17,8	18	16,4
<i>% claims without fallacies</i>	46,1	100	96,7	100
<i>% claims without contradictions</i>	96,1	100	96,7	100

Source: Author’s elaboration from Corradi (2012, 127 and 131)

From a descriptive point of view, Napolitano’s speech is the one with the highest percentage of normative claims and claims about the self (these latest ones expressing

participation to the citizens' fears and worries), and with the lowest percentage of factual claims; the reverse holds true for Tremonti's speech, where instead factual claims are largely prevalent. Factual claims are also dominant in Draghi's discourse, which interestingly contains no statement about the self.

As to the richness of arguments, Draghi's speech has the highest percentage of argued claims (95,5), followed by Napolitano (89,2), and by Tremonti (60,6), while Berlusconi has the lowest (42,3). Draghi and Napolitano's speeches also score higher with regard to the percentage of claims with at least one explicit warrant: this means that they make the greater efforts to explain the rules authorizing the passage from data to claims. Their speeches are also completely free from fallacies and from contradictions: qualitatively, their argumentative performances are excellent.

More than half of Berlusconi's claims are instead fallacious (although not every fallacy has the same degree of seriousness).²³ The percentage of claims without implicit "dubious" warrants is also the lowest, which uncovers that Berlusconi often appeals to experience rules and other forms of practical generalizations whose logical validity is uncertain or clumsy.²⁴ The absolute number of data (which is totally impressive in Draghi's discourse, 137), is high in Berlusconi's (21), compared to the absolute number of claims (26): however, the low percentage of claims with at least one datum (34,6), reveals that Berlusconi presents more than one datum for some claims, leaving data implicit for other claims (a clue that he considered them self-evident). As to qualifiers, Tremonti and Draghi use them in an extensive way, but Draghi prefers adverbs like "presumably", "possibly", which attenuate the degree of claim assertiveness and of prevision certainty; Tremonti, instead, favours adverbs like "necessarily", "absolutely", adding strength to claims but also conferring them a categorical flavour. Tremonti's discourse, which is rich in metaphors, contains a fallacy of relevance²⁵ and also a contradiction.²⁶ Further comments on these outcomes can be found in Corradi (2012).

²³ Serious are certainly the fallacies of logical circularity. For example, Berlusconi argues the normative claim "we must increase consumption" simply stating "because people have *no reasons* at all to cut consumption".

²⁴ For instance, the speech contains a very awkward implicit warrant, according to which only the social groups that did not reduce their consumption levels would be rational, having grasped the sheer physiological nature of the crisis. According to this warrant, only the entrepreneurs, who have not reduced their consumption levels and styles, would be rational. Irrational, on the contrary, would be other social groups, like the 16 millions pensioners, "who have *no reasons* to think that their retirement fund will decrease this year or next year", but notwithstanding have reduced their consumption; or the employees in the public sector "who have no fears of being fired", and nonetheless have cut their expenses.

²⁵ The fallacy of relevance pertains to the claim: "The institution of a European fund to intervene over the equity of banks would be far-sighting". While the first, metaphorical warrant ("because two plus two equals five") is relevant, meaning that it is not only a matter of quantity of money, but also a matter of political message, the second explicit warrant ("as Roosevelt said, if your neighbour's house is on fire, it is your own interest to lend him the fire-extinguisher") is not pertinent, sustaining the necessity to act generally in favour of banks and not supporting the specific claim about intervening over the equity.

²⁶ The contradiction is between two claims: on the one side, Tremonti states that the Italian Banking System has been preserved from the negative effects that have afflicted other national banking systems on behalf of a very peculiar feature (the fact that "English is little practiced", meaning that the Italian Banking System has slender international reach); on the other side, he claims that "Italy

4.2. *Justifying the war on Islamic terrorism*

Since 11th September 2001, the “global war on Islamic terrorism” has entered national and international political agendas and public speeches of western political leaders several times, emerging anew in many different situations: in the decisions to invade Iraq (2003), and Afghanistan (2011), when Islamic terroristic attacks hit Madrid (2004) and London (2005), to mention only a few. America and European countries joined in condemning Islamic terrorism as “evil”; they also agreed on the necessity to act against it, despite important divergences of opinions as to the justifying reasons and the practical modalities of intervention. Justifying the war on Islamic terrorism is the common topic of ten public speeches delivered by political leaders of different nationalities – Berlusconi, Blair, Bush, Cameron, Merkel, Prodi, Rice, Obama, Sarkozy and Zapatero – between 2001 and 2011 (see the list at p. 31 for further information).²⁷ These speeches were analysed one by one applying the Toulmin’s model, to test their richness and quality. Table 2 shows the results for each speech (for comments and more detailed analyses see Corradi, in Rositi, 2013, 49-100).

Outcomes were aggregated by the variable “left/right” political position to check whether substantial differences were there between left and right speakers in the sample, both with regard to argumentative logics and to the richness and quality of argumentation.

As for the content, findings show that the considered right political representatives (Berlusconi, Bush, Cameron, Merkel, Rice, Sarkozy) justify action against terrorism mostly, but not exclusively, on the basis of its *indispensability/utility*, appealing to self-defence arguments, pre-emption theories and deterrence. Left political representatives in the sample (Blair, Prodi, Obama and Zapatero), instead, privilege arguments to show the *inevitability* of action against terrorism, appealing to universal human rights and international laws. This distinction, however, is certainly not a hard and fast one as Michel Walzer rightly previewed,²⁸ and some left speeches (for instance Obama and Blair’s discourses), as well as some right one (Merkel and Sarkozy’s) actually contain and entangle both kinds of justificatory logics.

With reference to the richness of argumentation, the following table (3) displays aggregated outcomes by political position of the speaker (right or left).

is not an anomaly”(while the cited property would instead characterize Italy as an anomaly in the international landscape).

²⁷ The reader may find the complete analysis of each speech on a dedicated website: <http://economia.unipv.it/argpol/>.

²⁸ The distinction between “indispensability” and “inevitability” was first drawn by Michel Walzer (1977), who claimed that when it comes to war justifications, the notion of “necessity” often dangerously mingles these two ideas.

Table 2. Elements of richness and quality of ten speeches about Islamic Terrorism

	<i>Berl.</i>	<i>Blair</i>	<i>Bush</i>	<i>Cam</i>	<i>Merk</i>	<i>Oba</i>	<i>Prod</i>	<i>Rice</i>	<i>Sarko</i>	<i>Zap</i>
<i>N. Claims</i>	32	95	45	59	59	81	57	69	82	67
<i>% factual</i>	56,3	68,4	68,9	47,4	40,7	50,6	43,9	82,6	56,0	59,7
<i>% normative</i>	37,5	18,9	22,2	44,1	39,0	33,3	43,9	13,0	24,4	17,9
<i>% about the speech</i>	-	-	-	5,1	6,8	3,7	5,2	9,0	3,7	4,5
<i>% about the self</i>	6,2	12,7	8,9	3,4	13,5	12,4	7,0	4,4	15,9	17,9
<i>% with at least one datum</i>	56,2	50,5	62,2	44,1	44,1	56,8	33,3	42,0	43,9	62,7
<i>% with at least one explicit warrant</i>	18,7	27,4	13,3	16,9	20,3	24,7	29,8	26,1	17,1	16,4
<i>% with no implicit dubious warrants</i>	87,5	95,8	91,1	98,3	89,8	95,1	100,0	98,6	96,3	97,0
<i>% C. with no fallacies</i>	46,9	91,6	77,8	94,9	84,7	84	100,0	88,4	93,9	98,5

Source: Author's elaboration from Corradi (2013, 74)

While right and left discourses considered in the sample are extremely similar as to the quotas of different kinds of claim (being the left ones only slightly richer in claims about the self), important differences emerge with respect to the richness and quality of argumentation. The four left representatives' discourses are richer in claims with at least one datum (51,7) and in claims with at least one explicit warrant (24,7) than the six right ones (47,1 and 19,1, respectively); their quotas of claims without "dubious" implicit warrants (96,7) and without fallacies (91,3) are also higher than the respective ones in right speeches (94,5 and 84,4). The percentage of un-argued/assertive claims (of every kinds) is lower for the left (32,7) than for the right (40,5) and the percentage of much argued claims – with at least one datum and one warrant – is again higher for the left (44,7) than for the right (37,3). These clues together suggest that, within the sample, left political speeches to justify intervention against terrorism are *more and better argued* than the right ones.

Table 3. Elements of richness and quality of right and left speeches

	<i>RIGHT</i>	<i>LEFT</i>
<i>N. claims</i>	346	300
<i>% factual claims</i>	58,9	57,0
<i>% normative claims</i>	28,9	27,3
<i>% claims about the speech</i>	2,9	3,0
<i>% claims about the self</i>	9,3	12,7
<i>% claims with at least one datum</i>	47,1	51,7
<i>% claims with at least one explicit warrant</i>	19,1	24,7
<i>% claims without implicit “dubious” warrants</i>	94,5	96,7
<i>% assertive claims (no d. and no w.)</i>	40,5	32,7
<i>% argued claims (at least 1 d. or 1 w.)</i>	22,3	22,7
<i>% much argued claims (at least 1d and 1w)</i>	37,3	44,7
<i>% claims without fallacies</i>	84,4	91,3

Source: Author’s elaboration from Corradi (2013, 80-81)

Table 4. The richness and quality of factual and normative claims

		<i>RIGHT</i>	<i>LEFT</i>
<i>Factual claims</i>	<i>% assertive claims</i>	39,7	29,8
	<i>% claims with at least one datum or one warrant</i>	19,6	24
	<i>% claims with one datum and one warrant</i>	40,7	46,2
		100	100
	<i>% claims without fallacies</i>	83,3	89,5
	<i>% claims with light fallacies</i>	4,4	5,8
	<i>% claims with heavy/serious fallacies</i>	12,3	4,7
		100	100
<i>Normative claims</i>	<i>% assertive claims</i>	36	30,5
	<i>% claims with at least one datum or one warrant</i>	28	30,5
	<i>% claims with one datum and one warrant</i>	36	39
		100	100
	<i>% claims without fallacies</i>	83,0	95,1
	<i>% claims with light fallacies</i>	6,0	3,7
	<i>% claims with heavy/serious fallacies</i>	11,0	1,2
		100	100

Source: Author’s elaboration from Corradi (2013, 81-82)

Moreover, the comparison between the argumentative richness of factual and normative claims (aggregated by the left/right variable) – table 4 – shows that the quota of factual assertive claims is lower in the sample for the left (29,8) than for the right (39,7), as well as the quota of normative assertive claims (30,5% vs 36%). Interestingly, differences between right and left speeches in the sample sensibly increase when it comes to fallacies, *especially with regard to normative claims*: 95,1 % of left normative claims are free of fallacies, against 83% of right normative claims; only 1,2% of left normative arguments contain serious fallacies (of relevance or of a logical kind) against 11% of right normative arguments. So, within the sample, the left way of reasoning has proved to be less fallacious than the right one, especially with regard to normative claims.

5. NORMATIVE CLAIMS UNDER THE LOUPE

Among the various interesting issues raised by the practical analysis of normative claims through the Toulmin's model (e.g. the role of qualifiers in strengthening or weakening the pretended force of normative conclusions, the warrant-rebuttal relationship, when rebuttals are previewed exceptions to the rules), I have chosen to focus on the role of values, being also interested in uncovering the positions occupied by values within the Toulmin's scheme.²⁹

To begin following this new research line empirically, I selected one of the previously analysed speeches, the discourse Barack Obama delivered in September 2009 in Oslo, when he was awarded the Nobel Price for Peace (see the full text in Annex). This speech is rich in explicitly argued normative claims, and it is also interesting from a content point of view, since it intertwines arguments for the indispensability of war against Islamic terrorism and arguments for its inevitability, within a context where the American President was expected to speak in favour of peace. Before presenting the results of this analysis (§ 5.2.), which is entirely new in aim and outcome, I explain how values will be empirically recognized and why this research path shall be promising if systematically followed (§ 5.1.).

5.1. *The role of values*

To begin with, values need to be empirically recognized in a way that can be repeated by other researchers. This requires something like an operative definition of “value”, able to rule out the analyser's subjective opinion about what is to be accounted as valuable. Franco Rositi (2008; re-printed in 2013), advocating for the usefulness of a clear distinction between aims and values (which was first drawn by Max Weber), has suggested that not every evaluative statements uttered by a speaker is necessarily a value, but only the axiological statements (explicitly or implicitly) claimed to hold and be binding *for everybody* (being statements without this universalistic extension, instead,

²⁹ As I explained in the introduction, normative claims encompass both axiological and deontological statements, both statements about values (or systems of values) and claims about rules. For a discussion of the types and dimensions of normative systems, see Rositi (1986; 2013).

personal or private aims).³⁰ According to Rositi, values are one *species* of the *genus* “ends” (the other being aims); discourses are the places where this kind of “general ideas”³¹ might become empirically visible and analysable, and the distinctions between aims and values more clear. So values will be empirically recognized as statements about desirable states of the world worth being accomplished, laden with universalistic extension (more examples will be provided in the following analysis).

Next, I will try to distinguish between *warrant-using* arguments and *warrant-establishing* arguments, once again following an interesting Toulmin’s insight.³² The core idea behind this distinction is that values, in the Toulmin’s model, can either stand for claims or for warrants: they can be axiological statements *to be proved* (argued for) or axiological statements *serving as proof* to a claim (as rules, de-jure statements connecting data to conclusion, see § 3.). This twofold theoretical possibility does not rule out the case that values are asserted without any kind of argumentation; nor, it is to exclude the case that value-establishing arguments make use of other (explicit or implicit) values. Of course, in a speech one same value can be trumpeted in a claim, then used as warrant in another claim, and eventually argued for later (this is clearly the case for the value “peace” in Obama’s discourse, as I will show).

To maintain the analytical distinction between value-using and value-establishing arguments can be useful for different reasons. First, the analysis of value-using arguments encourages the analyst to discover implicit warrants, “whose acceptability is being taken for granted”. In this way, the analysis can bring to light *implicit values*, functioning as argumentative rules. Second, it fosters a more systematic research of the argumentative strategies used to establish new values or to re-establishment old ones. Finally, it might help understanding the role of a peculiar kind of normative statements – *definitions* – which can be either simply used or established anew (as the Obama’s discourse will illustrate).

³⁰ So, for instance, “freedom” shall be taken as a value when a subject claims (also implicitly) that “everybody should defend freedom”, since such claim entails a normative statement whose extension is universalistic (“defending freedom” is meant to hold and be binding for everybody); on the contrary, “freedom” shall be interpreted as an aim when it is fixed as end in particularistic terms, and the eventual normative bearing is limited to the single individual (defending freedom holds only for the speaking subject).

³¹ More on this notion of “general ideas” can be found in Rositi (2013, ed., 5-47), who brings back to our attention Tocqueville’s worries about the spread of “too general ideas” in democratic societies.

³² Quoting Toulmin: “Suppose we contrast what may be called ‘warrant-using’ arguments with ‘warrant-establishing’ arguments. The first class will include, among others, all those in which a single datum is relied on to establish a conclusion by appeal to some warrant *whose acceptability is being taken for granted* (...). Warrant-establishing arguments will be, by contrast, such arguments as one might find in a scientific paper, in which the acceptability of the a novel warrant is made clear by applying it successively in a number of cases in which both data and conclusion have been independently verify. In this type of argument *the warrant*, not the conclusion, *is novel*, and so on trial. Professor Gilbert Ryle has compared the steps involved in these two types of argument with, respectively, the taking of a journey along a railway already built and the building of a fresh railway” (Toulmin 1958, 120, italics are mine).

5.2. *An analysis of the role of values in one speech*

Obama's discourse in acceptance for the Nobel Prize for Peace deals with both the relationship between war and peace and with the efforts to "replace one with the other". The President's main point is that the "new threats" represented by the use of modern technology by terroristic groups, allowing "a few small men with outsized rage to murder innocents on a horrific scale", "will require us to think in new ways about the notions of *just war* and the imperatives of a *just peace*". The speech (see Annex) has a very clear articulation. After some preliminary claims about the self, concerning the sentiments alleged to the prize receipt ("deep gratitude" and "great humility"), the core of the speech is double-fold: in the first part, Obama speaks about war and the use of violence, to show that war is sometimes necessary and in some cases also morally justified (for self-defence and humanitarian reasons); in the second part, he speaks about peace, reasoning around "the nature of the peace we seek" and the steps deemed necessary to achieve it. Normative claims, as a consequence, mainly concentrate in the second part.

The analysis I have undertaken shows that in this speech values are trumpeted and used as "flags" (stated in an assertive way without arguments) in a very limited number of cases. Actually only "the ideals of liberty, self-determination, equality and the rule of law" are just named as past conquests of which to be proud of ("We are the heirs of the fortitude and foresight of generations past, and it is a legacy for which my own country is rightfully proud"). This is the solely evident passage of the speech in which values are asserted in claims without argumentation. For the rest, values are used as rules to pass from data to conclusion (in value-using arguments), but mainly and foremost as conclusions to be proved (in value-establishing-arguments). These evidences, taken together, suggest that President Obama, in this speech, makes great argumentative efforts to argue for values and the alleged normative claims.

For the sake of clarity, I now proceed showing some examples of value-using and value-establishing arguments, ordering them by growing degrees of complexity.

5.2.1. *Value-using arguments*

In value-using arguments, according to the definition above, the warrant is an axiological statement, it is a value used as a rule to connect data and claim. The warrant can either be stated explicitly or implied (but in this second case it must be easily deducible for the analyst, otherwise the analysis would leave excessive margins to arbitrary interpretations). In both cases, the use of values in the function of warrants typically assumes the acceptability of the value itself as taken for granted, or at least as momentarily acceptable to draw the inference connecting data and conclusion: in value-using arguments the value is used as an already established and tested bridge to reach a conclusion, whose content is different from the value itself (the value can be amendable to argumentation in a successive stage).

A first example of value-using argument is to be found in the first part of the speech, the one dedicated to war and the use of violence. *Realism* is the explicit value that warrants Obama demonstration that war is sometimes necessary. The value of realism is explicit not because Obama declares that he personally “faces the world as it is” (which would be the expression of a personal attitude), but because he claims that “to say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism – it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of men and the limits of reason” (implying that everybody should take history into account and acknowledging human imperfections). The claim that war is sometimes necessary, axiologically warranted by realism, is also supported by historical data: “A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler’s armies”; “it was not simply international institutions – not just treaties and declarations – that brought stability to a post-World War II. (...) the United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms”. The commitment to realism is also restated in even stronger, factual terms: “for make no mistake: evil does exist in the world”.

A more complex example of value-using argument comes up close to the end of the speech, when Obama attempts to demonstrate that “no holy war can ever be a just war”. His argument runs as follows. First, he mentions as data examples of holy wars, stressing the unlimited cruelties and the murder of innocents already undertaken in the name of God³³ and explaining that “if you truly believe that you can carrying out divine will, then there is no need for restraint – no need to spare the pregnant mother, or the medic, or even a person of one’s faith”). Considering the definition of “just war” that Obama himself presents at the beginning of the speech,³⁴ having among its conditions the spare of civilians and innocent people, the claim would already be argued for by means of the quoted data and the alleged explicit warrant. But Obama brings his demonstration a step forward, showing also the self-contradictory idea of a “Holy war”. So he states a second explicit warrant: “Such a warped view of religion is not just incompatible with the concept of peace, but *the purpose of faith*”, adding also the backing – “for the one rule that lies at the heart of every major religion is that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us”. This second argument – which on behalf of the backing is meant to be conclusive (and actually is) – *uses the value of faith* and a *normative definition* to make explicit what the purpose of faith is supposed to be.

³³ “Religion is used to justify the murder of innocents by those who have distorted and defiled the great religion of Islam, and who attacked America from Afghanistan. These extremists are not the first to kill in the name of God; the cruelties of the crusades are amply recorded”.

³⁴ The President recalls the definition of “just war” that emerged in modern times to regulate the destructive power of war. According to this definition “war is justified only when it meets certain preconditions: if it is waged as last resort or in self defence; if the force used is proportional and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence”. Obama *uses* the definition of “just war” to support two different claims: that these conditions were seldom respected in history (“And while it is hard to conceive a cause more just than the defeat of the Third Reich and the Axis powers, World War II was a conflict in which the total number of civilians who died exceeded the number of soldier who perished”) and that the new threats represented by Terrorism and their supporting failed states impose a revision of these conditions.

In both the cited examples, the values – realism and religious faith (so defined) – are contained in the explicit warrants and they are taken for granted as reliable, acceptable rules, authorizing the passage from data to claim (the claims stating something different than the value itself: respectively, that war is sometimes necessary and that there can be no holy war). Other interesting (and more complex) examples of value-using arguments will be provided in the next paragraph, since value-establishing arguments often use values as warrants.

5.2.2. *Value-establishing arguments*

Value-establishing arguments are arguments where *the claim* has a normative meaning and its axiological or deontological – “preferable” or “due” – content is argued for *explicitly*. A step by step analysis of value-establishing arguments can show some argumentative strategies adopted to argue for values.

To begin with, I take a claim from Obama’s discourse that is factual in its linguistic form, but normative in meaning: “when force is necessary, we have a moral and strategic interest in binding ourselves to certain rules of conduct”. The claim that everybody should respect rules of conduct in war requires the establishment of the value “rule obedience”; Obama establishes it distinguishing the strategic interest from the moral interest and arguing for them separately (which hints at his analytical style of reasoning). The *strategic interest* is first warranted explicitly by the rule of experience “adhering to standards strengthens those who do and isolates and weakens those who don’t”. This warrant looks at the *consequences* of respecting the rules (using the self-evident implicit axiological statement that to be strong in the international arena is preferable for every nation). Then Obama adds a counter-factual explicit warrant: “for when we don’t, our action can appear arbitrary, and undercut the legitimacy of future intervention – no matter how justified” (the rebuttal “no matter how justified” is meant to exclude standing points to the warrant, so reinforcing the due/obligating character of rule obedience). The strategic interest, this time, is proved looking at the *consequences* of *not* respecting common standards, within an unstated axiological framework, where two different statements can analytically be distinguished 1) arbitrary action risks to undercut legitimacy of intervention and 2) international acknowledgement of legitimacy is preferable for everybody. The *moral interest*, instead, is significantly restated with special reference to America in the normative claim: “and even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides no rules, I believe that the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war”. This claim – which is also linguistically put in the form of a moral due, using the modal verb “must” – has three data meant to prove America’s commitment to rule respect and the avoidance of brutal cruelty (“That is why I prohibited torture. That is why I ordered the prison of Guantanamo closed. And that is why I have reaffirmed America’s commitment to abide by the Geneva Conventions). The claim is also supported by two explicit warrants and one backing. The first explicit warrant – “that is what *makes us different* from those whom we fight” – and the alleged backing (“That is a source of our strength”) both root in the implicit value of American national *identity*, first stressing the difference between America and the enemy with regard

to rule obedience and the deliberate avoidance of brutal cruelty. This first argument, plain as it might seem, actually hides an implicit axiological assumption (deemed to be self evident, not being stated): it implies that following the rules and not being cruel is good, while violating them and being cruel is bad. Deductively, it could eventually lead to demonstrate American *moral superiority* over the enemy, whom is not casually described in moral terms as “vicious” (a conclusion which of course Obama carefully refrains from drawing!). The second explicit warrant – “We lose ourselves when we compromise *the very ideals* that we fight to defend” – hints once again at the American people identity (or maybe more generally to every people), but this time with a counterfactual reasoning showing the risks bestowed by the compromise of fundamental ideals upon a people moral *integrity*. Both these arguments clearly display an argumentative strategy based on *adequateness* or *coherence* between action and the “very ideals” constituting a people identity [It is worth knowing that the video of the speech records a long applause at the end of this argument]. In passing, I just note that this is not the only place of the speech where Obama clearly distinguishes between a moral and a strategic interest. He does so once again when he states that war is morally justified (in addition to self-defence) for humanitarian reasons (“I believe that force can be justified on humanitarian grounds, as it was in the Balkans”).³⁵ This claim is supported by two explicit warrants: “Inaction tears at our conscience” (which is a moral rule) and “can lead to more costly intervention later” (which is a strategic consideration of the consequences of inaction). So once again the logic of adequateness and the logic of consequentialism come into play when an axiological statement has to be established (in this case, a moral justification for war).

A more complex example of value-establishing argument pops up at the very beginning of the speech, when Obama enters a discussion about the controversy that the decision of the Nobel Prize committee has generated, openly admitting that the opponents’ rebuttals to his awarding of the Prize are worth considering and to some extent also sound.³⁶ His initial factual claims (“we are not mere prisoners of fate”) and (“our actions

³⁵ In another passage of the speech, where Obama claims that international rules “must mean something”, that “sanctions must exact a real price” and that “intransigence must be met with increased pressure”, other examples of legitimate actions for humanitarian grounds are cited: “when there is genocide in Darfur; systematic rape in Congo; or repression in Burma – there must be consequences”.

³⁶ Quoting Obama: “In part, this is because I’m at the beginning, and not at the end, of my labours on the world stage. Compared to some of the giants of history who have received this prize – Schweitzer and King; Marshall and Mandela – my accomplishments are slight. And then there are the men and women around the world who have been jailed and beaten in the pursuit of justice; those who toil in humanitarian organizations to relieve suffering; the unrecognized millions whose quiet acts of courage and compassion inspire even the most hardened of cynics. I cannot argue with those who find these men and women – some known, some obscure to all but those they help – to be far more deserving of this honor than I. But perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the Commander-in-Chief of a nation in the midst of two wars. One of this wars is winding down. The other is a conflict that America did not seek; one in which we are joined by forty three other countries – including Norway – in an effort to defend ourselves and all nations from further attacks”.

matter”), despite factual counter-evidences (“all the cruelty and hardship of our world”), are clearly meant to establish two implicit (but very clearly deducible) values: the *refuse of fatalism* and the *praise of action*. These values are first established by means of an explicit warrant: (our actions) “can bend history in the direction of *justice*”. Here Obama is using the whole argument and the value of justice, which is momentarily taken for granted and not argued for, to support his claim (in somehow an elliptical manner) that the Nobel Prize “is an award that speaks to our highest *aspirations*”. Nonetheless, the final remarks closing the speech, similar in tone and normative meaning – “We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for *justice*. We can admit the intractability of depravation, and still strive for *dignity*. We can understand that there will be the war, and still strive for *peace*”³⁷ – restate the refuse of fatalism and the praise of action, once again, against factual counter-evidences (that a realistic position should acknowledge). These claims, that are normative in meaning, even though not in their linguistic form, apparently trumpet the values of justice, dignity and peace as catchwords and flags: but all of them have been argued for in the course of the speech (“justice” in its connection with the notions of war and peace; “dignity” through a range of historical examples and “peace” in the definition of a just peace, see below).

By the end of the speech comes the argumentative establishment of another value, coherent with the refuse of fatalism and the praise of action: *faith in human progress*. This value, first addressed to metaphorically as “the North star that guides us on our journey”,³⁸ and *signified* by the quote of President Kennedy’s words about peace,³⁹ is then explicitly established by a moral counter-factual argument: “for if we lose that faith – if we dismiss it as silly or naïve; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace – then we lose what is best in our humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass”. This is actually a consequentialistic argument of a special kind, showing the consequences of the dismiss of one value – faith in human progress – over other values (humanity, moral direction, hope and once again the refuse to accept the status quo as inevitable). Faith in human progress is then restated (together with the refuse of fatalism) and further supported by citing Martin Luther King’s words against despair: “I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguity of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the ‘isness’ of man’s present nature makes him

It is noteworthy that the fact that other nation joined America against Afghanistan does not support the claim that “America did not seek that war”. The reference to Norway – the nation conferring the Nobel Prize – can be regarded as a context-alleged fallacy of the kind of “*tu quoque*”.

³⁷ The restatement of the same values at the beginning and at the end of the speech confers a clear rhetorical circular structure to the whole discourse.

³⁸ In the quoted sentence, the faith in human progress is made equal to the love men like Gandhi and King preached.

³⁹ Obama quotes Kennedy: “Let us focus on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden devolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions”. This quote, that is used as warrant to sustain the claim “so part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths – that war is war is sometimes necessary, and war is at some level an expression of human feeling” apparently contains a fallacy *ad auctoritatem* (if Kennedy said so, it is certainly right). However, this is not the case, because Obama is fast to question this same quotation asking “What might this evolution look like? What might these practical steps be?”. The cited claim is clearly a call for the tolerance of ambivalence. On this point see Annarita Calabrò (in Rositi 2013, 101-139).

morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal ‘oughtness’ that forever confronts him”. This quotation – used as warrant of the normative claim “we do not have to think that human nature is perfect for us to still believe that the human condition can be perfected” – clearly hints at the *coherence* between realism, the refuse of fatalism and faith in human progress (being the self-evident implicit warrant that only that which is not perfect yet, can eventually be made perfect, provided one believes it).

A part from the logics of consequentialism and adequateness/coherence (that can be complementary, as it has been shown), Obama’s discourse displays a third type of argumentative strategy to establish (and argue for) values: *normative definition*. The long Obama’s discussion about the value “peace” is exemplary in this regard, since the President defines it anew in normative terms in his attempt to illustrate the “kind of peace that we seek”. By analogy with the definition of “just war” (mentioned and used in the first part of the speech to show its inadequacy to catch the novelty of the threats represented by terrorist attacks, see note 34), Obama endeavours to indicate the *necessary conditions* for a “just peace”. First he states that: “Peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict”. In this way the absence of conflict is presented only as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for peace. Immediately after he claims: “Only a just peace based upon the inherent rights and dignity of every individual can truly be lasting. It was this insight that drove the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. In the wake of devastation, they recognized that if human rights are not protected, peace is a hollow promise”. This argument establishes the respect of human rights as a necessary condition for a *lasting* peace, which nonetheless, once again, is not deemed as sufficient. Consequently, Obama adds: “a just peace includes not only civil and political rights, it must encompass security and opportunity”; for (and here comes the explicit warrant, which is almost tautological) “true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want”. The statement that peace must entail security and opportunity is further argued for using data (“It is undoubtedly true that development rarely takes root without security; it is also true that security does not exist where human beings do not have access to enough food, or clean water, or the medicine they need to survive. It does not exist where children cannot aspire to a decent education or a job that supports a family”) and an explicit warrant (“the absence of hope can rot a society from within”). All these conditions are necessary, but nonetheless not enough for a “just”, “true” and “lasting” peace. Something more is requested: “the continued expansion of our moral imagination; an insistence that there is something irreducible that we all share”. According to Obama, peace requires us to “understand that we all basically want the same things: that we all hope for the chance to live out lives with some measure of happiness and fulfilment for ourselves and our families”. The “continued expansion of our moral imagination” is the key “to let us reach for the world that ought to be – that spark of the divine that still stirs within each of our souls”. To conclude, Obama’s normative argumentation for the value “peace” finally develops through a complex set of factual, value-using and value-establishing arguments, where human rights, laws respect, dignity, freedom, security, economic development, hope, happiness and love stand together, reciprocally supporting each other, in a coherent axiological constellation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The empirical conclusions of a working paper can hardly be more than provisional and self-critical. Mine are mainly meant to stress the theoretical drawbacks and advantages of the analyses I have undertaken to test the richness and quality of normative public argumentation; in addition, I sketch a few research lines that would be probably worth following in the future.

The present work is just the beginning of an enterprise whose goals and expected outcomes still need much work to be reached. It was originally inspired by the desire to gain a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the quality of public argumentation: an objective requiring a solid and sound methodology. This working paper, focusing mainly on the construction of a new method, represents only the first step in this direction.

The most evident empirical limit of the present work is obviously the small number of analysed speeches. So, for instance, one of its outcomes – the seemingly better argumentative performance of speakers belonging to the left side of the political spectrum – certainly needs to be verified or falsified through a wider and more systematic inquiry: to this purpose, both the number of speakers, and the number of speeches by each speaker, have to be increased in the future. Then again, the first case study about restoring political and economic trust, with only four analysed speeches, had merely an exemplary and explanatory character. Such small samples, of course, dramatically limit the degree of generalization one should aim to.

This limit, as already said, is connected with the main drawback of the method: it is extremely time consuming in the practical application. Its practice, however, can hardly be demanded to the complete automatization of one of the already existing software, requiring in any case the recognition of the claims by a skilled researcher, and the sophisticated and controversial operation of warrants inference (actually the most time-consuming operation). Overtly, it takes even a longer time “to dig”, passage by passage, into the argumentative role of values, in a systematic search for value-using and value-establishing arguments.

Nevertheless, I regard the proposal of such methodology as preparatory to a good “discourse analysis”, in so far as it compels the researcher to be extremely analytical in the first place, and only – much later on in the inquiry – to engage in semantic operations and interpretative efforts. Too many empirical studies in the field and in its pertaining literature, so far, already indulge in sophisticated, but not replicable, interpretative performances. The method I propose is instead replicable and its outcomes are amenable of control.

Moreover, the possibility to *count* the elements of a clear defined model studied to split an argument in its fundamental parts is crucial to bridge the distance usually separating qualitative discourse analysis from more standardized methods of quantitative analysis

(like the ones content analysis software already allow). It is a bridge almost completely to be built, and I would not exclude the possibility that the provided method could find an implementation in a brand new software, one joining quantitative and a qualitative analyses of arguments. This is one of the projects I am actually working at.

As to the anchoring of the distinction between value-using and value-establishing arguments in the Toulmin's model, it is purposely meant to invite the researcher to focus on the warrants, which are, in my opinion, the most challenging element in the model. Much is still to do in this regard, both at the theoretical and empirical level: for example, we still have to come up with an operative classification of warrants and with a quicker and sounder way to make the implicit ones explicit.

These are just some of the tasks young researchers, especially within the LPF, could usefully undertake in the future. The ambitious, but manageable, final goal should be by now clear: to make people aware that they should expect arguments – and hopefully sound and reach arguments – each time a normative claim with collective bearings is uttered in public; to provide the public opinion with more accurate critical tools to better understand and better evaluate normative arguments in the political and economic spheres.

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LIST OF SPEECHES

Full text (translated in Italian) and related analyses available on a dedicated website:
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First case study

- S. Berlusconi, 26/06/2009, *Press conference after the Council of Ministers decided to adopt a special anti-crisis measures package*.
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- G. Napolitano, 31/12/2008, *Traditional End of Year Discourse to the Nation*.
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Second case study

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ANNEX

President Obama's speech at the Oslo City Hall, Oslo, Norway, December the 10th 2009, in acceptance of the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, citizens of America, and citizens of the world: I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility. It is an award that speaks to our highest aspirations -- that for all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter, and can bend history in the direction of justice. And yet I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the considerable controversy that your generous decision has generated. (Laughter.) In part, this is because I am at the beginning, and not the end, of my labors on the world stage. Compared to some of the giants of history who've received this prize -- Schweitzer and King; Marshall and Mandela -- my accomplishments are slight. And then there are the men and women around the world who have been jailed and beaten in the pursuit of justice; those who toil in humanitarian organizations to relieve suffering; the unrecognized millions whose quiet acts of courage and compassion inspire even the most hardened cynics. I cannot argue with those who find these men and women -- some known, some obscure to all but those they help -- to be far more deserving of this honor than I. But perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the Commander-in-Chief of the military of a nation in the midst of two wars. One of these wars is winding down. The other is a conflict that America did not seek; one in which we are joined by 42 other countries -- including Norway -- in an effort to defend ourselves and all nations from further attacks. Still, we are at war, and I'm responsible for the deployment of thousands of young Americans to battle in a distant land. Some will kill, and some will be killed. And so I come here with an acute sense of the costs of armed conflict -- filled with difficult questions about the relationship between war and peace, and our effort to replace one with the other. Now these questions are not new. War, in one form or another, appeared with the first man. At the dawn of history, its morality was not questioned; it was simply a fact, like drought or disease -- the manner in which tribes and then civilizations sought power and settled their differences.

And over time, as codes of law sought to control violence within groups, so did philosophers and clerics and statesmen seek to regulate the destructive power of war. The concept of a “just war” emerged, suggesting that war is justified only when certain conditions were met: if it is waged as a last resort or in self-defense; if the force used is proportional; and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence. Of course, we know that for most of history, this concept of “just war” was rarely observed. The capacity of human beings to think up new ways to kill one another proved inexhaustible, as did our capacity to exempt from mercy those who look different or pray to a different God. Wars between armies gave way to wars between nations -- total wars in which the distinction between combatant and civilian became blurred. In the span of 30 years, such carnage would twice engulf this continent. And while it's hard to conceive of a cause more just than the defeat of the Third Reich and the Axis powers, World War II was a conflict in which the total number of civilians who died exceeded the number of soldiers who perished. In the wake of such destruction, and with the advent of the nuclear age, it became clear to victor and vanquished alike that the world needed institutions to prevent another world war. And so, a quarter century after the United States Senate rejected the League of Nations -- an idea for which Woodrow Wilson received this prize -- America led the world in constructing an architecture to keep the peace: a Marshall Plan and a United Nations, mechanisms to govern the waging of war, treaties to protect human rights, prevent genocide, restrict the most dangerous weapons. In many ways, these efforts succeeded. Yes, terrible wars have

been fought, and atrocities committed. But there has been no Third World War. The Cold War ended with jubilant crowds dismantling a wall. Commerce has stitched much of the world together. Billions have been lifted from poverty. The ideals of liberty and self-determination, equality and the rule of law have haltingly advanced. We are the heirs of the fortitude and foresight of generations past, and it is a legacy for which my own country is rightfully proud. And yet, a decade into a new century, this old architecture is buckling under the weight of new threats. The world may no longer shudder at the prospect of war between two nuclear superpowers, but proliferation may increase the risk of catastrophe. Terrorism has long been a tactic, but modern technology allows a few small men with outsized rage to murder innocents on a horrific scale. Moreover, wars between nations have increasingly given way to wars within nations. The resurgence of ethnic or sectarian conflicts; the growth of secessionist movements, insurgencies, and failed states -- all these things have increasingly trapped civilians in unending chaos. In today's wars, many more civilians are killed than soldiers; the seeds of future conflict are sown, economies are wrecked, civil societies torn asunder, refugees amassed, children scarred. I do not bring with me today a definitive solution to the problems of war. What I do know is that meeting these challenges will require the same vision, hard work, and persistence of those men and women who acted so boldly decades ago. And it will require us to think in new ways about the notions of just war and the imperatives of a just peace. We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth: We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There will be times when nations -- acting individually or in concert -- will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified. I make this statement mindful of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in this same ceremony years ago: "Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones." As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence. I know there's nothing weak -- nothing passive -- nothing naïve -- in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King. But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism -- it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason. I raise this point, I begin with this point because in many countries there is a deep ambivalence about military action today, no matter what the cause. And at times, this is joined by a reflexive suspicion of America, the world's sole military superpower. But the world must remember that it was not simply international institutions -- not just treaties and declarations -- that brought stability to a post-World War II world. Whatever mistakes we have made, the plain fact is this: The United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms. The service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform has promoted peace and prosperity from Germany to Korea, and enabled democracy to take hold in places like the Balkans. We have borne this burden not because we seek to impose our will. We have done so out of enlightened self-interest -- because we seek a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if others' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and prosperity. So yes, the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace. And yet this truth must coexist with another -- that no matter how justified, war promises human tragedy. The soldier's courage and sacrifice is full of glory, expressing devotion to country, to cause, to comrades in arms. But war itself is never glorious, and we must never trumpet it as such. So part of our challenge is reconciling these two seemingly irreconcilable truths -- that war is sometimes necessary, and war at some level is an expression of human folly. Concretely, we must direct our effort to the task that President Kennedy called for long ago. "Let us focus," he said, "on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions." A gradual evolution of human institutions. What might this evolution look like? What might these practical steps be? To begin with, I believe that all nations -- strong and weak alike -- must adhere to standards that govern the use of force. I -- like any head of state -- reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend my nation. Nevertheless, I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't. The world rallied around

America after the 9/11 attacks, and continues to support our efforts in Afghanistan, because of the horror of those senseless attacks and the recognized principle of self-defense. Likewise, the world recognized the need to confront Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait -- a consensus that sent a clear message to all about the cost of aggression. Furthermore, America -- in fact, no nation -- can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we refuse to follow them ourselves. For when we don't, our actions appear arbitrary and undercut the legitimacy of future interventions, no matter how justified. And this becomes particularly important when the purpose of military action extends beyond self-defense or the defense of one nation against an aggressor. More and more, we all confront difficult questions about how to prevent the slaughter of civilians by their own government, or to stop a civil war whose violence and suffering can engulf an entire region. I believe that force can be justified on humanitarian grounds, as it was in the Balkans, or in other places that have been scarred by war. Inaction tears at our conscience and can lead to more costly intervention later. That's why all responsible nations must embrace the role that militaries with a clear mandate can play to keep the peace. America's commitment to global security will never waver. But in a world in which threats are more diffuse, and missions more complex, America cannot act alone. America alone cannot secure the peace. This is true in Afghanistan. This is true in failed states like Somalia, where terrorism and piracy is joined by famine and human suffering. And sadly, it will continue to be true in unstable regions for years to come. The leaders and soldiers of NATO countries, and other friends and allies, demonstrate this truth through the capacity and courage they've shown in Afghanistan. But in many countries, there is a disconnect between the efforts of those who serve and the ambivalence of the broader public. I understand why war is not popular, but I also know this: The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it. Peace requires responsibility. Peace entails sacrifice. That's why NATO continues to be indispensable. That's why we must strengthen U.N. and regional peacekeeping, and not leave the task to a few countries. That's why we honor those who return home from peacekeeping and training abroad to Oslo and Rome; to Ottawa and Sydney; to Dhaka and Kigali -- we honor them not as makers of war, but of wagers -- but as wagers of peace. Let me make one final point about the use of force. Even as we make difficult decisions about going to war, we must also think clearly about how we fight it. The Nobel Committee recognized this truth in awarding its first prize for peace to Henry Dunant -- the founder of the Red Cross, and a driving force behind the Geneva Conventions. Where force is necessary, we have a moral and strategic interest in binding ourselves to certain rules of conduct. And even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides by no rules, I believe the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war. That is what makes us different from those whom we fight. That is a source of our strength. That is why I prohibited torture. That is why I ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed. And that is why I have reaffirmed America's commitment to abide by the Geneva Conventions. We lose ourselves when we compromise the very ideals that we fight to defend. (Applause.) And we honor -- we honor those ideals by upholding them not when it's easy, but when it is hard. I have spoken at some length to the question that must weigh on our minds and our hearts as we choose to wage war. But let me now turn to our effort to avoid such tragic choices, and speak of three ways that we can build a just and lasting peace. First, in dealing with those nations that break rules and laws, I believe that we must develop alternatives to violence that are tough enough to actually change behavior -- for if we want a lasting peace, then the words of the international community must mean something. Those regimes that break the rules must be held accountable. Sanctions must exact a real price. Intransigence must be met with increased pressure -- and such pressure exists only when the world stands together as one. One urgent example is the effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and to seek a world without them. In the middle of the last century, nations agreed to be bound by a treaty whose bargain is clear: All will have access to peaceful nuclear power; those without nuclear weapons will forsake them; and those with nuclear weapons will work towards disarmament. I am committed to upholding this treaty. It is a centerpiece of my foreign policy. And I'm working with President Medvedev to reduce America and Russia's nuclear stockpiles. But it is also incumbent upon all of us to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the system. Those who claim to respect international law cannot avert their eyes when those laws are flouted. Those who care for their own security cannot ignore the danger of an arms race in the Middle East or East Asia. Those who seek peace cannot stand idly by as nations arm themselves for nuclear war. The same principle

applies to those who violate international laws by brutalizing their own people. When there is genocide in Darfur, systematic rape in Congo, repression in Burma -- there must be consequences. Yes, there will be engagement; yes, there will be diplomacy -- but there must be consequences when those things fail. And the closer we stand together, the less likely we will be faced with the choice between armed intervention and complicity in oppression. This brings me to a second point -- the nature of the peace that we seek. For peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict. Only a just peace based on the inherent rights and dignity of every individual can truly be lasting. It was this insight that drove drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. In the wake of devastation, they recognized that if human rights are not protected, peace is a hollow promise. And yet too often, these words are ignored. For some countries, the failure to uphold human rights is excused by the false suggestion that these are somehow Western principles, foreign to local cultures or stages of a nation's development. And within America, there has long been a tension between those who describe themselves as realists or idealists -- a tension that suggests a stark choice between the narrow pursuit of interests or an endless campaign to impose our values around the world. I reject these choices. I believe that peace is unstable where citizens are denied the right to speak freely or worship as they please; choose their own leaders or assemble without fear. Pent-up grievances fester, and the suppression of tribal and religious identity can lead to violence. We also know that the opposite is true. Only when Europe became free did it finally find peace. America has never fought a war against a democracy, and our closest friends are governments that protect the rights of their citizens. No matter how callously defined, neither America's interests -- nor the world's -- are served by the denial of human aspirations. So even as we respect the unique culture and traditions of different countries, America will always be a voice for those aspirations that are universal. We will bear witness to the quiet dignity of reformers like Aung Sang Suu Kyi; to the bravery of Zimbabweans who cast their ballots in the face of beatings; to the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran. It is telling that the leaders of these governments fear the aspirations of their own people more than the power of any other nation. And it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear that these movements -- these movements of hope and history -- they have us on their side. Let me also say this: The promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone. At times, it must be coupled with painstaking diplomacy. I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation. But I also know that sanctions without outreach -- condemnation without discussion -- can carry forward only a crippling status quo. No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door. In light of the Cultural Revolution's horrors, Nixon's meeting with Mao appeared inexcusable -- and yet it surely helped set China on a path where millions of its citizens have been lifted from poverty and connected to open societies. Pope John Paul's engagement with Poland created space not just for the Catholic Church, but for labor leaders like Lech Walesa. Ronald Reagan's efforts on arms control and embrace of perestroika not only improved relations with the Soviet Union, but empowered dissidents throughout Eastern Europe. There's no simple formula here. But we must try as best we can to balance isolation and engagement, pressure and incentives, so that human rights and dignity are advanced over time. Third, a just peace includes not only civil and political rights -- it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want. It is undoubtedly true that development rarely takes root without security; it is also true that security does not exist where human beings do not have access to enough food, or clean water, or the medicine and shelter they need to survive. It does not exist where children can't aspire to a decent education or a job that supports a family. The absence of hope can rot a society from within. And that's why helping farmers feed their own people -- or nations educate their children and care for the sick -- is not mere charity. It's also why the world must come together to confront climate change. There is little scientific dispute that if we do nothing, we will face more drought, more famine, more mass displacement -- all of which will fuel more conflict for decades. For this reason, it is not merely scientists and environmental activists who call for swift and forceful action -- it's military leaders in my own country and others who understand our common security hangs in the balance. Agreements among nations. Strong institutions. Support for human rights. Investments in development. All these are vital ingredients in bringing about the evolution that President Kennedy spoke about. And yet, I do not believe that we will have the will, the

determination, the staying power, to complete this work without something more -- and that's the continued expansion of our moral imagination; an insistence that there's something irreducible that we all share. As the world grows smaller, you might think it would be easier for human beings to recognize how similar we are; to understand that we're all basically seeking the same things; that we all hope for the chance to live out our lives with some measure of happiness and fulfillment for ourselves and our families. And yet somehow, given the dizzying pace of globalization, the cultural leveling of modernity, it perhaps comes as no surprise that people fear the loss of what they cherish in their particular identities -- their race, their tribe, and perhaps most powerfully their religion. In some places, this fear has led to conflict. At times, it even feels like we're moving backwards. We see it in the Middle East, as the conflict between Arabs and Jews seems to harden. We see it in nations that are torn asunder by tribal lines. And most dangerously, we see it in the way that religion is used to justify the murder of innocents by those who have distorted and defiled the great religion of Islam, and who attacked my country from Afghanistan. These extremists are not the first to kill in the name of God; the cruelties of the Crusades are amply recorded. But they remind us that no Holy War can ever be a just war. For if you truly believe that you are carrying out divine will, then there is no need for restraint -- no need to spare the pregnant mother, or the medic, or the Red Cross worker, or even a person of one's own faith. Such a warped view of religion is not just incompatible with the concept of peace, but I believe it's incompatible with the very purpose of faith -- for the one rule that lies at the heart of every major religion is that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Adhering to this law of love has always been the core struggle of human nature. For we are fallible. We make mistakes, and fall victim to the temptations of pride, and power, and sometimes evil. Even those of us with the best of intentions will at times fail to right the wrongs before us. But we do not have to think that human nature is perfect for us to still believe that the human condition can be perfected. We do not have to live in an idealized world to still reach for those ideals that will make it a better place. The non-violence practiced by men like Gandhi and King may not have been practical or possible in every circumstance, but the love that they preached -- their fundamental faith in human progress -- that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey. For if we lose that faith -- if we dismiss it as silly or naïve; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace -- then we lose what's best about humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass. Like generations have before us, we must reject that future. As Dr. King said at this occasion so many years ago, "I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'isness' of man's present condition makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him." Let us reach for the world that ought to be -- that spark of the divine that still stirs within each of our souls. (Applause.) Somewhere today, in the here and now, in the world as it is, a soldier sees he's outgunned, but stands firm to keep the peace. Somewhere today, in this world, a young protestor awaits the brutality of her government, but has the courage to march on. Somewhere today, a mother facing punishing poverty still takes the time to teach her child, scrapes together what few coins she has to send that child to school -- because she believes that a cruel world still has a place for that child's dreams. Let us live by their example. We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for justice. We can admit the intractability of depravation, and still strive for dignity. Clear-eyed, we can understand that there will be war, and still strive for peace. We can do that -- for that is the story of human progress; that's the hope of all the world; and at this moment of challenge, that must be our work here on Earth. Thank you very much. (Applause.)