

Chapter 12

A Precious Gift to Politics: an Investigation into Analytical Discourse Evaluation

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Abstract

Should liberal democratic societies accept Teun Dekker's Analytical Discourse Evaluation as a gift from analytical philosophy? In this essay, the premises on which Analytical Discourse Evaluation is based are the topic under investigation. By performing Analytical Discourse Evaluation on Analytical Discourse Evaluation, some of the hidden structures behind Teun Dekker's argument in favor of the use of Analytical Discourse Evaluation are lifted out of the fog. In this contribution, both the Data side and one of the possible Warrant sides of Teun Dekker's argument are reconstructed according to Toulmin's model. Subsequently, each side of the argument is evaluated rigorously. In this manner, it is shown which premises lie at the core of Teun Dekker's argument. Ultimately, three basic Claims will sketch the position one has to agree to before one can accept this precious gift to politics.

1 Introduction

If there were a people of Gods, they would govern themselves democratically. So perfect a Government is not suited to men.¹

What would a democracy be without rhetoric? Surely, the powers of persuasion lie at the core of our democratic political practice. Politicians continuously seek to convince their audience of the value of their Claims, the validity of their arguments, or the stupidity of an opponent's oratory. On the one side, politicians benefit from the fragmented nature of their arguments, the ambiguity of their statements, and the eloquence of their

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought), ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92.

conversation. Political speech, if nothing else, is the practice of trying to seduce the people. On the other side, democratic societies are based on ideals that espouse a free, equal and rational deliberation process between all participating citizens. Political practice needs to be rid of the emotional appeal of populist charges. Democracy, as the embodiment of popular sovereignty, ideally exercises its power within the limits of rational discourse. The tension between the actuality of political practice and the ideals of democratic theory has been an inspiration for many attempts to bridge the gap that separates the two.

One such attempt is made by Teun Dekker in his book *Paying our High Public Officials: Evaluating the Political Justifications of Top Wages in the Public Sector*. By means of Analytical Discourse Evaluation, a method which aims at clarifying political discourse in liberal democratic societies, Dekker seeks to bring back rational argumentation to the core of our political practice. With the help of analytical philosophy, political discourse is to be cleansed of ambiguity and opaqueness, thereby allowing citizens to realize their lives as political animals to the utmost extent. Dekker's method is based on a firm belief in the effectiveness and quality of rational argumentation. By making use of Dekker's own methodology, Analytical Discourse Evaluation, I will try to uncover the premises on which this position is grounded. Thereby, it must become clear what ideas about politics one has to adhere to before one can make use of this method.

Using Analytical Discourse Evaluation

This section seeks to provide a brief overview of the way the method is operationalized in this current research. A short justification for the use of Analytical Discourse Evaluation to evaluate Analytical Discourse Evaluation will be provided, together with a brief assessment of the question why this method is most suitable for this purpose. Besides this, the section will also put forth a brief justification for the importance of this research.

In what way can Analytical Discourse Evaluation be used to evaluate Analytical Discourse Evaluation? Following the method outlined before in this volume, the first step would be to isolate the relevant discourse. In this case, however, the relevant discourse is solely Dekker's argument in favor of Analytical Discourse Evaluation. The context in which it is found, the field of political philosophy, provides the ground structure in which the text is rooted. Thereby, the first step is fairly straightforward; Teun Dekker's book will be the discourse under analysis.

The second step, the translation of the argument into philosophical form, might seem to be trivial, since Dekker's ideas are somehow political in nature but are stated within the context of rigorous analytical philosophy. This, however, is not the case. Although Dekker's philosophical work does present a clearer argument in favor of the use of

Analytical Discourse Evaluation than found in many political debates, it does not state its premises explicitly in syllogistic form. Therefore, since Dekker's argument in favor of the use of Analytical Discourse Evaluation itself is not couched within the ironclad rules of Toulmin's model, it is of vital importance to assess whether Dekker's ideas can live up to the standards set by the formal rules of the model. This can only be done by reconstructing the argument premise by premise, following each branch of the argument meticulously.

One might also feel the inclination to discard the fidelity and quality constraint. Since Dekker's text is a philosophical text, both constraints seem to be of little use. If analytical philosophy has the quality of having the utmost expertise in the realm of argumentation, one should always have faith in the original argument. This objection is even stronger for the quality constraint, for it is philosophy, as Dekker argues, that is able to know the rules of argumentation. However, since Dekker's argument is not presented within the rigid structure of Toulmin's model, it would be naive to expect the text to fit the model seamlessly. Even philosophical work is not always spoken in Toulmin-language. Therefore, because possible discrepancies between the original argument and Toulmin's model might exist, it remains important to keep an eye on both the fidelity and quality constraint.

Toulmin's model is very suitable for a reconstruction of the argument in favor of Analytical Discourse Evaluation. Of course, in almost all arguments, there can be recognized a Claim, Data and Warrant. This is equally the case for the other parts of the model; Verifiers, Backings, and even the modal qualifiers and the conditions for rebuttal can readily be reconstructed. Thereby, by virtue of its impartiality, the Toulmin model can be used. One might object that if the Toulmin model is flawed, an analysis of a method using the Toulmin model based on the Toulmin model must contain flaws as well. However, in this essay, the quality of the Toulmin model in evaluating argumentation will not be a topic of discussion. That being said, the reconstruction of the argument in favor of Analytical Discourse Evaluation by using its own techniques seems not to be troublesome.

Why would this re-evaluation of Analytical Discourse Evaluation be important? Two main reasons can be discerned. First of all, by evaluating Analytical Discourse Evaluation it can be assessed whether Analytical Discourse Evaluation as a method is able to make politics clearer, i.e. to provide structure to the political debates that are found within the discourse. This concern hints at the broader schism between philosophers regarding the issue whether, and in what way, analytical philosophy is able to perform a function in politics.

Second, as Analytical Discourse Evaluation proposes a view towards politics as to how it should be made as clear as possible, the more basic question why politics ought to be clear in the first place is in need of further exploration. Should politics be about rationality, argumentation and clarity? Again, this question is far more general than the

questions which Analytical Discourse Evaluation seeks to provide answers for. However, this general question is implicit in the justification and use of the method. Therefore, it is of vital importance to assess whether the argument made in favor of Analytical Discourse Evaluation, an argument in favor of a clarified political discourse, is acceptable.

One last issue remains to be discussed. Why would one use Analytical Discourse Evaluation to evaluate Analytical Discourse Evaluation, and not any other available method? Most importantly, the Toulmin model provides an excellent way to evaluate philosophical premises. Furthermore, Dekker's three step model would work well in any given context. By virtue of logical necessity, if one first tries to establish the strongest possible version of an argument, followed by a rigid evaluation of this 'ideal' version, then one is bound to find the strongest possible entry points for a critique. Therefore, the Analytical Discourse Evaluator has every tool at his disposal to tackle the issues that could come up in evaluating the method itself.

2 Reconstructing the Analytical Discourse Evaluation Argument

This chapter seeks to provide insight into the premises underlying the argument in favor of the use of Dekker's Analytical Discourse Evaluation. Dekker's manifesto will be translated into the rigid structure of Toulmin's model, and each branch of the argument will be evaluated separately. The chapter will proceed accordingly. First, in section 1, the most general Claim, Data and Warrant will be reconstructed and its concepts defined as precisely as possible. In section 2, the Data-side of the argument will be reconstructed and evaluated. Section 3 will put forth the Warrant side of the argument. This branch, the 'justification argument', will also be outlined according to Toulmin's model and evaluated.

The General Syllogism

In other words, once Analytical Discourse Evaluation has done its work, politics can resume. But perhaps not as usual. Because the debate has been refined and clarified, it will be a better debate, promising better decisions, better democracy, and more trust. The fog that hung over the political discourse has been lifted, and just like in the case of the city on Sunday morning, this allows one to see the complete picture and make a good decision about where to go next.²

2 Teun J. Dekker, *Draft – A Manifesto for Analytical Discourse Evaluation*, personal communication, 2013, 66.

Dekker's main concern, to 'lift the fog' that hangs over the political discourse in democratic societies, gives rise to two separate questions. First of all, is there a method that is able to make politics clear? Dekker's answer, in the form of the method of Analytical Discourse evaluation, is positive. Second, if there exists such a method to make politics clear, why should we use it? The main Claim of Dekker's manifesto, 'We should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation' can be found in many instances across his work. Of course, the overarching goal of a method is its use. And thereby, it is quite easily recognizable that Dekker's main aim is that people should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation in politics. The former two questions each form a premise that lead to this conclusion. The following central Data-Warrant-Claim structure is obtained:

- [Data] Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.
- [Warrant] If Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear, we should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation.
- [Claim] We should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation.

As is readily identifiable, the Data presents the sub-Claim that argues in favor of the usefulness of Analytical Discourse Evaluation as a method. In contrast, the Warrant carries within the more general thought that political discourse, as being a fragmented 'cacophony of arguments', needs a logician's total makeover by means of the rigorous tools of analytical philosophy. Therefore, the Warrant argues directly in favor of the more general Claim: 'Political discourse should be made clear', without establishing the fact that Analytical Discourse Evaluation is the only way to make politics clear.

Although the central Data-Warrant-Claim structure is easy to understand, it is in need of a definitional elaboration of the separate terms. Luckily, one of the main terms, i.e. Analytical Discourse Evaluation, has already been explained extensively in a previous part of this volume. This leaves us with another three terms to be explicated: 'political discourse', 'clear', and 'we'. The last and first term do not require a lengthy explanation. Political discourse can be simply defined as all public exchanges about political questions. This would include political debates, newspaper articles, television interviews, radio conversations, or manifestos. The term 'we' in this context stands for the members of liberal democratic societies. Dekker has explicitly devised his method by keeping an eye on the wants and needs of contemporary democratic society, and therefore it is plausible to assume that the method is meant to be used by 'us', that is: all members of a certain political culture. Of course, carrying out the analysis and evaluation of Analytical Discourse Evaluation, which, in this case, has to be seen separately from the general use

of the method within democratic policies, is done only by the experienced philosopher. However, as the benefits of Analytical Discourse Evaluation are spread out over society as a whole, the 'we' in the Warrant and Claim can be assumed to refer to all members of liberal democratic societies.

This leaves us with the last term: 'clear' or the more general term 'clarity'. The dictionary provides us many options: 'clarity' can signify something that is 'easy to perceive, understand, or interpret', something that is 'transparent or unclouded', something that is 'free of any obstructions or unwanted objects', something that is 'not touching or away from (clear of)', or something that is 'complete or full'. Discarding the two last interpretations, there remain three significations that can capture Dekker's interpretation of clarity. First of all, the political discourse that is to be made clear must become easy to perceive, understand or interpret. As Dekker explicitly argues in one of the sub arguments, by making political discourse clear it is easier for people to understand politics, thereby making it easier for citizens to participate. Second, Dekker's clarity depends heavily on an emphasis on transparency. The political discourse, an assembly of partial arguments, has to be made transparent. Analytical Discourse Evaluation seeks to uncover the 'hidden' premises of political discourse and thereby is 'lifting the fog' that hangs over our contemporary political debates. Connected to this, a greater transparency would let the democratic process run more smoothly. Thereby, clarity as transparency finds resonance at many points in Dekker's work. Finally, 'clarity', as it is used in this context, refers also to something that is free of any obstructions or unwanted objects. The obstruction to a 'better politics' is the oftentimes Orwellian style of arguing that politicians use. By deliberately keeping issues as vague as possible, politicians obstruct the democratic process, albeit it may not be done consciously. For Dekker, the unwanted objects of political discourse are the vagueness and opaqueness of political speech.

All of these three interpretations of clarity are united by their common ancestry in philosophical argumentation. Clarity, for Dekker, means philosophical clarity; a rational version of political speech obtained by using the tools of analytical philosophy. Politics should be about rational arguments which can only be properly evaluated using the ironclad rules of logic. Toulmin's model is the perfect example of how political speech can be clear; a Claim, backed up by Data and Warrant, in a repeating sequence that cannot leave the boundaries of logical necessity. Dekker's use of the term 'clarity' must therefore be qualified as the technical version of the term. It carries with it the three commonplace interpretations explained above, but always within a framework of the philosopher's viewpoint. This concludes the definitional issues found in the central syllogism; besides this, the first step in reconstructing the discourse is completed.

The Data Side of Analytical Discourse Evaluation

While philosophy is just words, words play an important role in the governing of liberal democratic states. By examining the central role of argumentation in the political process, it will become clear how improving the quality of argumentation is likely to improve the quality of politics.³

[...] Analytical Discourse Evaluation is only concerned with determining what arguments can be used in a political debate, and does not go further by determining which of the good arguments should prevail. [...] The empirical, practical and impartial aspects of Analytical Discourse Evaluation allow it to be a faithful servant of the political process.⁴

How can Analytical Discourse Evaluation drag politics out of a swamp of ambiguous language? As we have seen, it does so by pouring political discourse into an argumentative mold. Implicit in this idea is the relationship between making a political argument clear (what the method actually does), and making the political discourse clear (that which the method tries to achieve). Following Dekker's work, this relationship can be made explicit in the following sub argument resulting in the Claim 'Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear':

[Data\Data]	Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political arguments clear.
[Data\Warrant]	If Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political arguments clear, then Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.
[Data\Claim]	Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.

The Data in this three-way-structure seems to be well supported by the methodological section in Dekker's book. By using Toulmin's model it can be established that the political arguments that are put in will come out 'clear' in the specific sense in which Dekker is using the term (as described in Section I). Besides this, in his book, Dekker provides an extensive justification for the emphasis on empirical methods, the concrete practical use and the impartiality present within Analytical Discourse Evaluation. Therefore, this Data

3 Teun J. Dekker, *Paying Our High Public Officials: Evaluating the Political Justifications of Top Wages in the Public Sector* (London: Routledge, 2013), 22.

4 Dekker, *Draft*, 24.

is not in need of further reconstruction; it is readily acceptable that Analytical Discourse Evaluation can make political arguments clear. Before the Claim stated above can be put in relationship to the Data, we must have a look at the Warrant connecting the two. This Warrant is not made explicit in the text, and must be put in place by virtue of the quality constraint. Since the justification of this Warrant is not obvious, one must look at an argumentative base from which this conception rises. This is found in Dekker's view towards argumentation as being at the core of democratic politics. As made explicit in the text, this sub-sub-argument would look as follows:

[Data\Warrant\Data]	In political discourse argumentation is central to the political process.
[Data\Warrant\Warrant]	If in political discourse argumentation is central to the political process, then if Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political arguments clear, then Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.
[Data\Warrant\Claim]	If Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political arguments clear, then Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.

In this structure, the [Data\Warrant\Warrant] is acceptable. If argumentation is an essential part of politics; i.e. if it is the part that is the most important reason for constructing political discourse, then if these argumentations are made clear, then the discourse can plausibly be assumed to be made clear. More attention needs to be given to the reconstruction of [Data\Warrant\Data]. In reconstructing the [Data\Warrant\Data] a choice has to be made between a factual and normative Claim. The Claim 'in political discourse argumentation is central to the political process' could be assessed as a factual Claim by looking at evidence either from a social sciences perspective. This, however, is not the justification found in text. Hence, by referring to the fidelity constraint, a different choice could be necessary. In this case, the [Data\Warrant\Data] Claim must be viewed upon as a normative Claim. Dekker provides two justifications for this choice. On the one hand, he proposes an instrumental view towards Democracy and the value of argumentation therein. On the other hand, a theory of Civic Republicanism is invoked to support this Claim. However, albeit these two justifications provide valuable insights into the reasons for which argumentation should be an essential part in the democratic political process, they do not present an argument that can be used as a factual Backing of a factual Claim.

In this case, there exists a gap between the factual Claim 'If Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political arguments clear, then Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear' and the Claim 'In political discourse argumentation is central to the political process. However, this problem for reconstructing this premise can be solved. If there can be found evidence for a shared system of values within a population, an overlapping consensus that encapsulates a view towards argumentation as being central to the political process, then this Claim can be assessed more or less empirically and the premise can withstand both the fidelity and quality constraint. One must find out whether there is such a shared normative base within liberal democratic societies that puts rational argumentation at the core of political practice.

What would the reasonable citizen think? Unfortunately, no empirical studies have been conducted on this matter. However, one might get away with a weaker conceptual argument. If debating issues is held to be a vital part of the democratic process by a substantial part of the population (which is acceptable), and if the people are empowered by franchise and decide to vote for representatives that espouse this consensus (which is also true in many cases), then argumentation lies at the core of political practice. This leaves us with the idea that people want argumentation to be important for the political process, and thereby, because the people are in power, argumentation is central to the political process. This version of the reconstruction seems to be the only way to keep in mind the structural validity of the argument, the quality constraint and the fidelity constraint. In this way the final Verifier for the Data would look as follows:

- [Data\W\D\Data] People want argumentation to be central to the political process and have the power to decide whether argumentation is central to the political process.
- [Data\W\D\Warrant] If people want argumentation to be central to the political process and people have the power to decide whether argumentation is central to the political process, then in political discourse argumentation is central to the democratic political process.
- [Data\W\D\Claim] In political discourse argumentation is central to the political process.

This deeper layer of the argument has to be created to buttress the more general premises. Taking the fidelity constraint seriously requires that these premises stay in touch with Dekker's work. Meanwhile, the quality constraint demands that the Claim that 'argumentation is central to the political process' is backed up by premises that can be assessed without gripping onto a normative philosophical position such as:

'argumentation should be central to the political process'. Thereby, the argument as it is presented in the discourse has found its most fundamental level, for any deeper expedition into the internals of this argument would cease to be informative for the purpose of evaluating Analytical Discourse Evaluation.

3 Evaluating Analytical Discourse Evaluation

Hence, to start with the most fundamental level, what can be said about this argument? The Claim that if people want argumentation to be central to the political process, it is central to the political process seems problematic. It completely disregards any other influences on politics and implausibly assumes that everything that is desired by a majority of voters will find their way into the functioning of government. This is not always the case. Political institutions seem also to be shaped both by what the people want and a flurry of other influences, be it constitutional, economic, or media related. However, although the conceptual argument might not work, the premise argumentation is central to the political process might be saved by empirical research. The term 'central' does carry with it a normative flavor that needs to be eradicated. Nevertheless, it can plausibly be assumed that argumentation does play an important role within our liberal democratic societies.⁵ This role, however, is to be seen in a broader context than rational argument alone.

Oftentimes argumentation in political debate is based on reasonable arguments. This is not always the case. Even the most rational arguments in political discourse can always be transformed, interpreted differently or put in a wholly different context that suits a specific situation. Therefore, to say that rational arguments lie at the core of politics, even if this Claim is based on purely normative positions within democratic theory, misses out on some vital parts of political discourse that are left aside. Thus, by assuming primacy for the rational deliberation process within political discourse, one captures a very important part of politics, but not political discourse as it can be; irrational, populist, persuasive and unfair.

This puts the Claim argumentation is central to the political process in jeopardy, for it remains uncertain whether this Claim can be upheld. If this Claim is rejected, or even doubted, the next level of premises are to be doubted as well. If it can be questioned whether rational argumentation is a central part of political discourse, then the Claim that states 'making political arguments clear will make political discourse clear' must be

⁵ See for instance for an elaborate discussion, Amy Gutman and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

questioned as well. It could well have an influence, but since not all the factors of the political process are captured by rational argumentation, one cannot expect that making clear political arguments leads to a clear political discourse. Nevertheless, it could be the case that the weaker Claim ‘Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse ‘clearer’ can be sustained.

The final Claim, Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear’ can be evaluated in two ways. If one argues that Analytical Discourse Evaluation can make the arguments that are used in political discourse clear, one is probably right. However, if this implies that the political discourse will be clear structurally; this is not to be expected. Thereby, the Data-side of the argument finds itself split between the theoretical and practical case of making political discourse clear.

Therefore, the following can be concluded. In terms of structural validity, the argument as it is reconstructed can be valid, although careful thought is required about the way in which the factual Claims are backed up. In terms of the assessment of the factual Claims that are present, the argument needs the help of the social sciences, notably in assessing the place of rational argumentation within the minds of the population. If large parts of a population agree on the instrumental values of democracy and the value of active citizenship in conducting rational political action, then the position as is adhered to in the Data side of this argument can be accepted. However, one must always be aware of the broader normative framework wherein the argument is found. If one accepts that Analytical Discourse Evaluation solely seeks to provide a service to politics in terms of the value of rational argumentation, and if one thinks that this is the most important factor in pursuing political enterprises, then the position that Dekker espouses could be acceptable. If one does not agree with this fundamental idea, the argument can be rejected as being too distant from political practice.

4 Reconstructing the Justification Argument

If one understands what can and cannot be said in favor of a course of action, one will be able to offer clear and cogent arguments, and thereby justify some policy of decision. The better a policy can be justified, the more legitimacy the policy will enjoy. If legislatures and the people are presented with good reasons for

some measure, they are likely to understand and accept the measure. The greater legitimacy of policies that results will produce more trust in government.⁶

To learn more about this first branch of the Warrant side of the general argument, let us return to the central syllogism:

- [Data] Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear.
[Warrant] If Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear, we should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation.
[Claim] We should use Analytical Discourse Evaluation.

The [Warrant] of this structure can be recast in a different form to account for the more general implications that are present in Dekker's work. Implicit in the [Warrant] is the idea that if there exists a way to make political discourse clear, we should use it. This idea can be put into words more easily, solely for the purpose of clarity, in the form 'Political discourse should be made clear'. The small logical step that is taken here is of minor importance and need not be of any concern. Hence, from this point onwards, the normative Claim 'Political discourse should be made clear' is equivalent to the original [Warrant].

As is recognizable in the quote at the beginning of this section, a clearer political discourse would allow for a better justification of policies. Furthermore, according to Dekker, this process leads to an increase in legitimacy of decisions, and more trust in government. It is these two topics that will be subject of inquiry in this part of the argument, termed the 'justification argument'. Following Dekker's book, the objective of philosophical clarity in political discourse is connected to the quality of justification of a policy. This is the first step taken in the reconstruction, resulting in the following sub argument:

- [Warrant\Data] In a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better.
[Warrant\Warrant] If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then political discourse should be made clear.
[Warrant\Claim] Political discourse should be made clear.

Both [Data\Warrant] and [Warrant\Warrant] are in need of further exploration, since it is unclear how these Claims are to be supported. First the [Data\Warrant]. This premise has some intuitive plausibility: if one analyses and clarifies the arguments present in the

6 Dekker, *Public Officials*, 24.

discourse, it is easier to justify them, thereby taking for granted that this justification has to happen in logical fashion. Therefore, the next sub-argument could be reconstructed as follows:

[Warrant\Data\Data]	In a clear political discourse one is able to offer cogent arguments to justify political decisions.
[Warrant\Data\Warrant]	If in a clear political discourse one is able to offer cogent arguments to justify political decisions, then political decisions can be justified better.
[Warrant\Data\Claim]	In a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better.

The [Warrant\Data\Data] is unproblematic. The definition of clarity implies that one is able to offer cogent arguments to justify decisions if political discourse is made clear. Therefore, this premise is true by definition. The [Warrant\Data\Warrant], however, is in need of more analysis. It is not obvious what kind of 'better' is meant in this case. Is it a more effective justification, one that can convince the people and is determined by its outcome? Is it a qualitatively 'better' justification by virtue of its logical structure, as the analytic philosopher could argue? Or a combination of both: could it be a better justification in the sense that it is both more effective and of higher quality, both by virtue of its analyticity? A look at the discourse does not present a clear answer to these questions. However, one could make a case for the position that the discourse 'leans towards' the last option, i.e., a combination of the outcome and the value of cogent argumentation that justifies a political decision.

Throughout Dekker's argument an emphasis is placed on the practical workability of his method. Clear discourse is something desirable, but also something attainable. Besides this, Dekker implicitly assumes the value of logical analysis throughout the whole argument. A clear and cogent argumentation should be at the core of our political practice. In this regard, the value of a cogent argumentation that justifies a policy lies in its quality of being coherent and rational. Thus, in Dekker's terms, a justification is 'better' only when it is backed up by a valid argument. This could necessarily lead to a more effective and useful justification of a policy, just by virtue of its logical character. And, therefore, a logical justification is both more effective and qualitatively 'better' than a partial justification. This position is an acceptable Backing for this premise, although no empirical studies on the effectiveness of justifications have been conducted. Now that these premises have been elucidated, this concludes the reconstruction of [Warrant\Data].

Now it is time to have a closer look at the [Warrant\Warrant]:

[Warrant\Warrant] If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then political discourse should be made clear.

In the reconstruction of this Warrant, it is clear that one seeks to find out why a 'better' justification could be useful for democratic society. Of course, a better justification, in the general sense of the word 'better', is always preferable to a lesser justification. However, as we have seen, the word 'better' in this context refers to a specific idea that the clearer and more cogent an argument is presented, the more quality it has. Nevertheless, according to Dekker, there is another reason why a clear and cogent justification is preferable to a blurry and fragmented one. This reason is presented in the Backing of [Warrant\Warrant]:

[Warrant\Warrant\Data] If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then there will be more legitimacy for governmental decisions and subsequently more trust in the government.

[Warrant\Warrant\Warrant] If there will be more legitimacy for governmental decisions and subsequently more trust in the government, then if in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then political discourse should be made clear.

[Warrant\Warrant\Claim] If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then political discourse should be made clear.

The [Warrant\Warrant\Warrant] can be accepted without further analysis, for at this point it is acceptable to assume that a greater legitimacy of governmental decisions and more trust in the government are desirable within a democratic society. The mechanism that explains how legitimacy and trust are connected with a clear political discourse, as found in [Warrant\Warrant\Data], is more interesting for further decomposition.

In what way can legitimacy and trust be put in connection with the clarity of political discourse? The mechanism that Dekker proposes is quite simple. If citizens accept and understand a decision made by the government, there will be more legitimacy and subsequently more trust. Furthermore, if political discourse is analyzed in a way that shows how an argument can be taken apart in logical fashion, as Analytical Discourse Evaluation does, then citizens accept and understand a political decision more easily. Hence, by making political discourse clear, more legitimacy and trust is created.

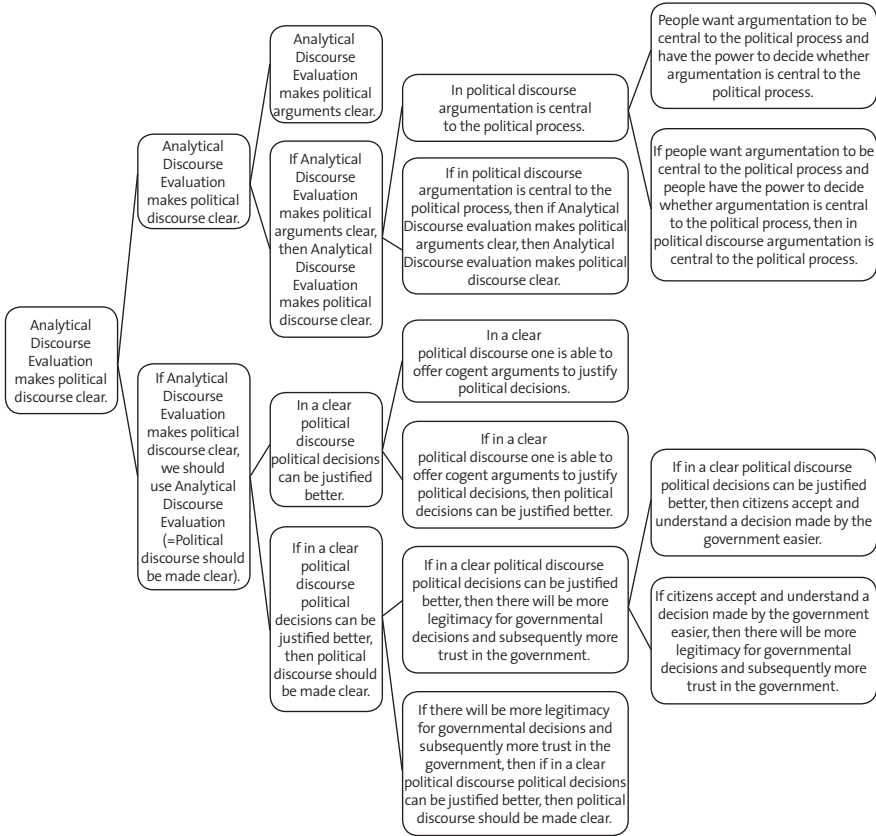
[Warrant\W\D\Data]	If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then citizens accept and understand a decision made by the government easier.
[Warrant\W\D\Warrant]	If citizens accept and understand a decision made by the government easier, then there will be more legitimacy for governmental decisions and subsequently more trust in the government.
[Warrant\W\D\Claim]	If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then there will be more legitimacy for governmental decisions and subsequently more trust in the government.

At closer inspection, however, it is wholly unclear how this mechanism would work in practice. First of all, is it necessarily the case that if arguments are laid out in clear logical fashion, citizens would be able to accept a decision easier? Furthermore, if people would accept and understand decisions more if political discourse is made clear, how would this 'automatically' lead to more legitimacy and trust? Especially this last question is pressing. In this argument, an alleged increase in legitimacy is based solely on the logical analysis proposed by Analytical Discourse Evaluation. For this to work, it must also be the case that rational argumentation is the most important way to arrive at legitimate decisions, for if this was not the case, clarifying political discourse would not necessarily lead to an increase in legitimacy. Besides this, the relationship between legitimacy and trust, as is assumed by this sub-argument, needs further elaboration.

Dekker's argument is purely conceptual; it does not provide us with evidence found in the social sciences. This has a good reason; such evidence about the relationship between clarity, legitimacy and trust seems to be hard to attain, due to the indeterminate nature of these concepts.⁷ Nevertheless, this sub argument will be accepted as a Backing for it is both faithful to the discourse and meets the qualitative standard of Analytical Discourse Evaluation. It must be noted, however, that some further research is needed that shows the specific relationships between legitimacy, trust and clarity in politics.

7 On trust, see Kenneth Newton, "Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, and Democracy," *International Political Science Review* 22 (2001): 201-214.

12.1 The Analytical Discourse Evaluation Argument



5 Evaluating the Justification Argument

The Justification Argument ultimately depends on what conception of legitimacy one adheres to. If legitimacy of decisions can only come about by rational deliberation processes, the argument finds its grounds in political theory. For instance, as Joshua Cohen describes in his article *Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy*, a deliberative democracy can be defined as a group of people whose affairs are conducted via the public deliberation

of its members.⁸ Cohen proposes an ideal deliberative procedure as a standard from which the legitimacy of governmental decisions can be assessed.⁹ This deliberative democracy constructs decisions by means of rational and free debates between equal citizens. Legitimacy is therefore intimately connected to the reasonable political conduct that can be found in democracies.¹⁰ Within this framework of deliberative democracy, Dekker's argument can be justified. As before, first the deepest level of the argument must be evaluated. Indeed, clearing the political discourse could lead to more legitimate decisions, for citizens who deliberate about matters in rational fashion would find political issues easier to accept if they are recast in a logical way. Also, within this framework of deliberative democracy, this can plausibly be said to lead to more trust in the government. However, this mechanism also depends on what kind of definition of trust one adheres to. Many different interpretations can be found, without it being recognizable what an essential characteristic of trust would look like.¹¹ Trust, in this specific case, seems to be one of the weaker versions of the term; trust is mainly depending on the expectation of freedom that citizens have to voice their opinion in the decision making processes. Therefore, legitimate decisions and more trust in the government can plausibly be said to be intimately related to a clear and coherent argumentation within political discourse.

However, one must be attentive to the fact that this position is meant as an ideal-type within political theory. An ideal deliberative procedure is purely hypothetical; it cannot exist in actual political practice.¹² Therefore, the central question becomes: can one assume that a greater legitimacy and trust in democratic societies depends on clarity, if one steps out of the hypothetical framework of equal and free deliberation processes?

The answer here, in my view, must be negative. This has two reasons. First of all, there is a conceptual discrepancy between legitimacy and trust. Where legitimacy is an ideal-type construct of political theory, trust can be measured within society. Because these concepts have a different grounding, it is difficult to put them in relation to one another if one leaves the hypothetical realm of political philosophy. Secondly, the account of deliberative democracy ignores too many factors that are important for an assessment

8 Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike (London: Routledge, 2003), 342.

9 Ibid.

10 For an overview of the debate, see Jon Elster, *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

11 See Mark E. Warren, *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

12 See also John Parkinson, "Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 51 (2003): 180-196.

of societal matters. It can be used as an ideal that can be lived up to, but if it is believed to be able to perform a role as an institutionalization of legitimacy and as a motor of trust, one is blind to alternative factors that would influence such an enterprise. For instance, there has been conducted a series of researches on the relationship between social capital and trust in governments.¹³ If trust is significantly related to a country's social capital, there must also be some kind of relationship between the clarity of political discourse and social capital. This could be problematic, for there seems to be no basis from which to conceptualize this new relationship.

These objections have consequences for the remainder of the argument. If it is impossible to use the conceptual framework of deliberative democracy in society in the case of trust and legitimacy, then the following layer of the argument is to be questioned as well. Political decisions could be justified 'better', but only with clarity as the criterion from which the quality of justification is to be judged. To put it simply, one would adhere to the belief that if a justification is logical, it is necessarily better. Whether or not this has an effect on actual politics cannot be used as a support for the argument anymore. Therefore, the argument runs the risk of losing touch with the actuality of political practice. For instance, the [Warrant\Warrant] 'If in a clear political discourse political decisions can be justified better, then political discourse should be made clear' would only be based on the value of logical justification as such. The question why a logical explanation is better than any other would remain unanswerable.

In terms of structural validity the argument can be sustained. In the case of the factual premises, the absence of empirical evidence could be worrying. Within the framework of deliberative democracy, this argument would be valid and cogent. However, if the argument tries to step outside of the idealized, hypothetical nature of political theory and reach into society by attempting to change the way in which politics is conducted, it might find itself in trouble.

13 See for instance Luke Keele, "Social Capital and the dynamics of Trust in Government," *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (2007): 241-254, accessed June 21, 2013, doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00248.x.

6 Conclusion

Should politics accept the help of Analytical Discourse Evaluation, the gift from analytical philosophy? This question, lying at the core of the inquiry undertaken here, does not have a simple answer. Instead, the question could be posed differently: What kind of normative framework must one adhere to before one can accept this gift? Before trying to put forth an answer to this last question, I will briefly summarize and evaluate the findings that have been discovered in the former chapters.

Chapter I sought to present the method of analytical discourse evaluation. One of the central issues was to find a way to apply Analytical Discourse Evaluation to its own underlying argument. Having now finished the reconstruction and evaluation of the separate branches of the argument, it can be concluded that the method can be used to take apart a single philosophical text. However, it must be noted that the relevance of the method is far greater if it is applied to political speech. Philosophical argument cannot be compared with a given political culture, which gives more relevance to Analytical Discourse Evaluation in the case of evaluating a political argument. Nevertheless, the method has served the purpose of uncovering some of the premises that justify the use of Analytical Discourse Evaluation.

The central Data-Warrant-Claim structure was constructed to capture the general gist of the argument. The most important issues concerning the central Claim were definitional ones. Clarity, the central term within this part of the argument, was defined according to the rules of analytical philosophy. In this context it is used as argumentative clarity, an assessment of the logical validity of argumentation. With this concept clarified, the step from the central structure to the three separate branches of the argument could be taken.

First, the Data side of the argument, with 'Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clear' as the central Claim, has been reconstructed step by step, until the Claim 'in political discourse, argumentation is central to the political process was reached'. This Claim has been proven to be difficult to buttress. If this premise was backed up by empirical research, it would be an acceptable argument. However, in absence of this research, the weaker conceptual Claim that was used as Backing of the argument could not be sustained. Nevertheless, the argument could be used if one adheres to the view that improving rational argumentation in politics is one of many factors that lead to a clearer political discourse. In this case, the weaker Claim 'Analytical Discourse Evaluation makes political discourse clearer' can be upheld.

The first argument that was used as a Backing for the Warrant Political discourse should be made clear, the so-called Justification Argument, has been analyzed extensively. Ultimately, the argument ran into trouble when it tried to incorporate a mechanism of

trust and legitimacy as a result of better justifications of political decisions. In the absence of empirical evidence, these premises have to be doubted. Especially the increase of 'legitimacy' has been proven to be highly complex within a framework of political discourse. Within branches of political theory, however, there have been put forth arguments about democracy that support the conceptions put forth in the Justification Argument. Therefore, it became clear that a belief in deliberative decision-making processes as being central to political practice proved to be vital for the acceptability of this argument.

From a birds-eye perspective, the same pattern can be discerned for all sub-arguments: ultimately, the acceptability of the arguments depends on a basic normative framework one has to adhere to before one can accept the premises on which Analytical Discourse Evaluation is based. This position can be represented by three normative Claims that one has to accept if one wishes to use Analytical Discourse Evaluation. First of all, the Claim 'Rational argumentation should be made central to the democratic political process' must be accepted. A firm belief in the value and use of rational argumentation to make politics better is necessary to sustain the general argument in favor of Analytical Discourse Evaluation. This can be recognized clearest in the Justification Argument. Besides this, this Claim rests on the idea that political discourse must resemble logical argumentation as closely as possible.

Second, the Claim 'If everyone would speak the language of analytical philosophy, then political problems would be solved legitimately'. This Claim represents the belief in the powers of rationality; whether one accepts this Claim depends in part on the place one gives to rational argumentation in political decision making. If this is predominant, as the first Claim addresses, then the second Claim can be accepted. Besides this, this Claim represents a basic value of deliberative democracy; only by reasonable argument between citizens political decisions can be legitimately constructed. Next to this, before one can accept this Claim, the value of the language of analytical philosophy has to be acknowledged.

Finally, one would have to accept the Claim 'An ideal Democracy is suited to men'. This Claim puts forth the belief that ideal type theories of democracy can be applied to society, and that they can serve as guidance for our political practice. The gap between analytical philosophy and political practice can be bridged by philosophical methods. These three Claims form a basis from which Analytical Discourse Evaluation can be accepted as a gift for our political discourse. If one accepts these Claims, one could defend the use of Analytical Discourse Evaluation. If one rejects one of these Claims, one rejects the gift, and Democracy remains a profession suited only to the Gods.