

I heard you the first time: debate in cacophonous surroundings

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Overview

- Background
- Modeling approach
- Rudimentary basic solution
- Open issues & further development

Analysis of argument process

- ① In general, most work on formal argumentation has been concerned with representing the progression and logical form of argument, e.g. Dung's abstract frameworks and semantics of these via subsets of argument or labelling formalism.
- ② In “real” debate, however, there are techniques which may be applied, having no regard for logic or “correctness”.
- ③ While such techniques may indicate inherent weakness in the case being made, on occasion the mere act of using such suffices to force concession of points.

Non-logical argument tactics

Examples

- “stonewalling”, e.g. as examined in Gabbay & Woods (2001)
- prevarication & delaying strategies, e.g. Dunne (2003),
- “malicious” argumentation, e.g. Kuipers & Denzinger (2010)
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SHOUTING!!!

Raising volume of debate points

Group discussions

Individual **X** makes a point *A*.

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Especially with “weak” moderators (eg Parliamentary discussions)

Models of debate with noise

Assume we have n participants - $\mathcal{X} = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$

An argument promoted by x_i may be opposed by that advanced by x_j .

Let \mathcal{A} denote the set of all such opposition: $\mathcal{A} \subset \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{X}$.

The “attack” $\langle x_j, x_i \rangle$ has a *volubility* of $\nu(\langle x_j, x_i \rangle) \in \mathbb{R}^+$.

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We focus on Q1 in this talk, discussing the second question briefly later.

Debate evolution

At any given point the structure $\mathcal{D} = (\langle \mathcal{X}, \mathcal{A} \rangle, \nu)$ will be fixed. As discussion develops, however, $\nu(\langle x_i, x_j \rangle)$ may vary in intensity. This leads to the main structure of interest being the sequence

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As the sequence progresses we assume \mathcal{X} remains fixed, but

- 1 $\mathcal{A}_k \subseteq \mathcal{A}_{k-1}$: “new” attacks do **not** appear.
- 2 $\nu_k : \mathcal{A}_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^+ \cup \{0\}$.
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Q1 concerns deciding if ν_k is such that M ought to intervene.

Initial solution & assumptions

The champion of x_i pushes it with an overall **stridency**, S_i .

An attack $\langle x_i, x_j \rangle$ is promoted with **volubility**, $\nu(\langle x_i, x_j \rangle)$.

The extent to which x_i “disrupts” x_j is F_{ji} and is $\nu(\langle x_i, x_j \rangle)$.

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Instability

The debate, \mathcal{D} , is in an **unstable** state should the total interference that any agent, i , has to contend with exceed the maximum level, μ_i , it is prepared to tolerate.

Recognising unstable debates

Suppose that,

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Then acceptable levels of noise for every agent requires,

$$\forall 1 \leq i \leq n \quad \left(\frac{S_i}{\sum_{j \neq i} F_{ij} \times S_j} \right) \leq \mu_i \quad (1)$$

Matrix Interpretation

Consider now the $n \times n$ matrices, \mathbf{F} of force and \mathbf{C} of constraint given as,

$$\mathbf{F}_{ij} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i = j \\ F_{ij} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad ; \quad \mathbf{C}_{ij} = \begin{cases} \mu_i & \text{if } i = j \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

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Then (writing \mathbf{B} for $\mathbf{C} \times \mathbf{F}$) \mathcal{D} satisfies (1) if, component-wise,

$$\mathbf{B} \times \underline{\mathbf{S}} \geq \underline{\mathbf{S}} \quad (2)$$

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What does “well-behaved” mean?

That \mathbf{B} has an eigenvalue λ with associated eigenvector, \underline{z} satisfying,

- a. $\lambda \geq 1$.
- b. \underline{z} is positive, ie $z_i > 0$ for each $1 \leq i \leq n$.

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Question A: a sufficient condition for a system to be well-behaved

If $\langle \mathcal{X}, \mathcal{A} \rangle$ is **strongly-connected** then $\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C} \times \mathbf{F}$ has a unique maximum eigenvalue $\lambda > 0$ with associated positive eigenvector \underline{z} .

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Hence \mathbf{B} is well-behaved in the sense above if $\lambda \geq 1$.

Question B: Stridency & Volubility

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Consequences: new form of **F**

$$S_i = \sum_{\langle x_i, x_j \rangle \in \mathcal{A}} \nu(\langle x_i, x_j \rangle) = \sum_{j \neq i} F_{ji}$$

What happens with revised form of \mathbf{F} ?

Recall the transpose of \mathbf{F} is the $n \times n$ matrix, \mathbf{F}^T with $\mathbf{F}_{ij}^T = \mathbf{F}_{ji}$.
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For stridency as total volubility

\mathcal{D} is stable wrt $\underline{\mu}$ if

There is an eigenvalue λ of $\mathbf{C} \times \mathbf{F}$ with $\lambda \geq 1$.

AND

$\mathbf{F}^T \times \mathbf{1}$ is an eigenvector of λ .

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One at a time or collectively?

What if the resulting graph form ceases to be strongly-connected?

Is expulsion temporary? What conditions allow “readmission”?

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Is expulsion temporary? What conditions allow “readmission”?

Other choices for relating stridency and volubility?

Summary & Open Issues

The models and analysis are *very preliminary* and there are a number of issues of interest which we, very briefly, summarise.

Suppose $(\mathcal{D}, \underline{\mu})$ is unstable, what actions can M take?

- a. Adjust $\underline{\mu}$? Could be seen as “weakness” on M ’s part (changing tolerance rather than dealing with stridency).
- b. Expel “over-loud” agents? How to choose these?

One at a time or collectively?

What if the resulting graph form ceases to be strongly-connected?

Is expulsion temporary? What conditions allow “readmission”?

Other choices for relating stridency and volubility?

Strong-connectivity is **one** sufficient condition for analysis. Others?