

ISSA Proceedings 2010 - An Exploratory Study Of Argument In The Public And Private Domains Of Differing Forms Of Societies



1. Introduction

In this paper, we focus on the functioning of argument in the public and private domains of communication in different societal forms. By doing so, we address several weaknesses in contemporary argumentation studies.

Why would such a question be of importance to the study of argumentation? First, while an extensive literature exists on argument's role in democracy and public spheres, there is no corresponding literature regarding non-democratic societies. Such a concern is of importance because, in both ancient and modern times, most societies have not been democratic. While some might contend that democratic argument is paramount, that position fails to consider the daily lives of citizens in non-democratic societies and, in turn, neglects a fuller understanding of argument in all societal forms.

Second, an examination of the recent argumentation literature reveals extensive discussions of public argument. Unfortunately, there have been few attempts to link our understanding of the two bodies of literature.

Finally, many argumentation studies involve other variables such as culture, society, economics and politics. Most studies focus on argument and one other concept and few look at the argument's relationship to communication, culture, political systems, and cognitive functioning in terms of their systematic variation between societies.

This essay has two goals. First we explore argument's structure and functions in three prototype models of the relationship between the public and private domains of communication. Second, we illustrate each model with a historical example.

2. Background Assumptions

We begin this paper by explicating several underlying assumptions. First, we use "domain" as an alternative to the more commonly used term "sphere." While

dictionary definitions of the two terms are similar, the technical use of “sphere” has been narrowed by theorists such as Habermas (2006). Our use of “domain” is meant to be broader and, in so far as the public domain is concerned, encompasses the “public sphere” as well as other “public” activities.

Second, our models involve both descriptive and normative elements. Since we know little about argument in cultures different from western societies, especially those of a non-democratic nature, the descriptive study of argument needs to be prior to the normative study of argument. Once we can describe argument in a society, we can then look at what is considered to be good argument in a society and how it relates to the normative role of argument across societies.

Third, our models are conceived of as encompassing both argument₁ and argument₂ (O’Keefe (1977). Argument₁, the domain of reason giving, linkages and conclusions is considered to be a fundamental dimension of all communicative messages (Hazen, 2007). On the other hand, argument₂, controversy about points of view, is expected to be present in all models but differ in form.

3. The Nature of the Public and the Private

How can we distinguish between a society’s private and public domains? This subject has received little attention and has no commonly accepted distinction. This can be seen in the work of Dewey, Goffman and Arendt.

Examining the literature closely, the ideas of the public and the private are used extensively in discussions but rarely defined. Dewey (1954) distinguished between the public and the private based upon the consequences of action. Actions that have consequences only for involved parties are considered private; actions that have consequences for parties beyond those initially involved are considered public.

Goffman, writing extensively about public interaction, merely hints at their conceptual differences. Combining his comments from two works (1963; 1971), it appears that public situations involve unacquainted people and non-participants where there is a “possibility of widely available communication” while private situations focus on interactants who are acquainted and fully participate in message interaction “addressed to a particular recipient” or recipients who are the only ones “meant to receive it” (1963, p. 154). When situations exist where interactants wish to engage in private communication despite the presence of others, they utilize various mechanisms to create what Goffman calls “a conventional engagement enclosure.”

Finally, Arendt (1958) presents a third position. She argues that the public realm

involves two characteristics: 1) things that “can be seen and heard by everybody” (p. 50) and 2) the world that “is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it” (p. 52). Her definition of the private stems from what the public is not, i.e. what is unseen and unheard by others and what is not common to all.

We will keep our distinctions simple. The public domain involves communicative efforts, which are, in theory, addressed to anyone, even though they may only be heard by a small number. The private domain is conceived of as communication that is limited to a particular person(s) and is not conceived of as being addressed to or heard by anyone else. This definition involves communicative elements of intent, message behavior and effects. While the definition may sound like it is intentional in nature, when we use the phrase “addressed to,” it can be either explicit or implicit in the message behavior. When we use the phrase “heard by,” it can involve either the potentiality of or actual hearing.

Finally, this distinction between domains should not be construed as absolute. We distinguish between two hypothetical states that in practice are probably, more often than not, overlapping. Furthermore, our models are not meant to be isomorphic descriptions of particular societies, but instead to portray the three most distinct ways of thinking about societies and their public and private communicative relationships.

4. Models of the Relationship of Argument to the Public and Private Domains of Society

Our three models are predicated on two questions. First, in a particular society, is there a separation between the public and private domains? Second, if yes, what separation indicators in the society’s discourse and operable criteria for differentiating between public and private domains can be seen? Theoretically, we expect to see sharp lines between the two domains. In practice, there probably will be some permeability between the two, even though there should be a preference for separation.

If no, what separations between the public and private domains exist and which is dominant? The criteria for determining one domain’s societal dominance over the other are not totally clear. We can begin with the question of how argument works in each domain’s discourse and which discourse elements surface when a conflict between the two emerges. As such, we begin by looking at what serves as argument’s underlying grounds or assumptions, its ideational scaffolding, its

forms, and normative standards for discourse evaluation.

Every society has ideas, values and ideologies that serve as the argumentative backdrop for individual domains as well as societal discourse. These elements should not be thought of as determinative of argument but instead as providing resources for contesting positions. For example, cultural values like collectivism and power distance are sometimes treated as if they determine what happens in a culture. But there is increasing evidence that they are only one of several factors that are involved when people actually engage in argument (Hazen & Shi, 2009). It may be useful to think of such values as “people’s consensual ideologies” not determinants of behavior (Matsumoto, 2006, p. 50). A culture’s values or ideologies serve as an ideational set of building blocks that people utilize for the grounding of arguments, for providing concepts to build arguments, and for establishing the normative grounds for judging arguments in contesting their interests and positions. There may also be preferred structures for argument in particular societal domains (Kennedy 2001). In analyzing these argumentative elements, we are concerned with the degree to which one domain’s argumentative structures and functions are characteristic of the overall society, i.e. to what degree do they dominate?

The following three models are hypothetical and are created to maximize the theoretical differences between societies in terms of relationships between communication’s public and private domains. While each model will be illustrated by a specific society within a historical context, the examples should not be thought of as isomorphic with a model. The pragmatic exigencies of life in any society will create exceptions. Each example is chosen because, within theoretical and practical bounds, they appear fairly closely related to a particular model. One example per model is presented with acknowledgement that more extensive research should be conducted using multiple examples.

4.1 Model One: Societies where the Public Domain Dominates

Model 1 represents a society where there is no clear separation between the two domains and the public domain dominates the private. In this situation, not only is private information and communication made known to others, it is expected to conform to the forms and logic of the public domain and be judged by its norms. Some theorists suggest that this model may be particularly related to authoritarian societies. For example, Mamali (1996) claims that in communist societies, the state’s dominance of ideology and the means of communication have

led to control of interpersonal communication. Arendt (1951) argues that totalitarianism can be distinguished from tyranny in that it limits private life as well as public life, which is crucial because there are things that “can survive only in the realm of the private” such as love (1958, p. 51). While the connection between Model 1 and authoritarianism is an intriguing idea, it will not be explored in this paper.

Stalinist Russia in the 1930s will be used to explore Model 1. This era is distinct from other Soviet eras due to its high degree of control and terror that is only now starting to be fully understood by historians with full access to that period’s archives and survivors. Several historians have suggested that parallels to this era might be found in Maoist China (Figes, 2008), Nazi Germany, and maybe even some early twentieth century European states (Kelly 2002).

The ingredients for argument construction in Soviet society came from Marxist/Leninist ideology as embodied in Party discourse, especially focused on creating the “New Soviet Person.” Marxist-Leninist ideology was important because:

The Bolsheviks were deliberately ideological. . . they deemed it necessary to possess universal ideas to act at all. . . . distinguished by their simultaneous, absolute denial of any possibility of pluralism - intransigence rooted in a worldview based on class and class struggle, whereby only the interests of the one class, the proletariat, could become universal. (Kotkin 1995, p. 151)

The Party’s certainty stemmed from its view that Marxist/Leninism was “the only ideology providing a truly scientific analysis of reality” (Heller, 1988; p. 53).

While Marxist-Leninist ideology provided the assumptional grounds for argument, it was displayed in public discourse that was enacted through a massive structure of education, propaganda and media (Inkeles 1958). Such discourse became the citizen’s most important guide to the real intentions of the Soviet leaders since “the provenance and source of the words used by the regime is significant, determining the new sense of the word and creating new associations to supplement the meaning (Heller 1988, p. xiv).

The Party’s discourse not only provided meaning for Marxist/Leninism, it also created the discursive climate for “the productive, mobilizing power of the revolutionary narrative” (Hellbeck 2000, p. 81). Historians disagree about the discourse’s degree of influence on the average citizen, but they do agree that it “made its way into everyday (*bytovye*) decisions as well as into the language of

political meetings and wall newspapers” (Kelly 2002, p. 636). The result was a situation where both dissenters and Party members were united in an “illiberal consensus” based on the use of similar discourse (Hellbeck 2000, p. 87).

Closely related to the Party’s ideology and public discourse was the effort to create “the new Soviet Man” who “was to be free of egotism and selfishness, and was to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the collective (Hoffmann 2003, p. 45). Thus, citizens faced “the demand of the Soviet party to lay open all personal relationships on the basis of forming a better, ‘new human being’” (Studer & Unfried, 2003, p 222). Such a person would “identify with the revolution . . . and thereby comprehend themselves as active participants in the drama of history’s unfolding” (p. 84) and “involve themselves in the revolutionary movement totally and unconditionally” (Hellbeck 2000, p. 74).

An analysis of Stalinist Russia’s argumentation shows that two overarching argumentative structures were present. The first argumentative structure was based on the dialectical affirmation of the public domain and rejection of the private domain. As Hellbeck states:

The very distinction between public and private . . . was fiercely rejected by the Soviet regime as a bourgeois notion. Moreover, Soviet revolutionaries waged war against the private sphere altogether, which they regarded as a source of anti-Soviet, individualist instincts. By contrast, the Soviet regime greatly valorized public speech and in particular, autobiographical speech, as an act of virtue. (2000, p. 89).

Thus, “the goals, interests, personal relationships, and development of the individual were systematically and unconditionally subordinated to the goals, interests, social relationships and unity of the collective” (Mamali, 1996; p. 225).

The argumentative equation of the public with Marxist/Leninist collective values and the private with capitalistic and anti-Soviet tendencies was present in several discourse forms. One was the public reciting of autobiographical aspects of one’s life. As Fitzpatrick states, “Soviet citizens of the 1920s and 1930s were used to telling the story of their lives in public. Numerous interactions with the state required presentation of an autobiographical narrative” (2005, p. 91). Furthermore, party members were routinely questioned publicly about their private life at party forums or in factory meetings. As Studer and Unfried indicate, “sessions of ‘self-criticism’ were often used to “bring to light a reality of ‘private life’ somehow different from the communist model” (2003, p. 213). Thus, a person

had to be prepared at all times for public discussion and judgment of their private lives.

Also, a number of discursive and behavioral practices were used to narrow and control private communication. For example, intimacy and privacy were used by the state in so far as “interpersonal conflicts could be intentionally used to obtain greater control over the individuals” (Mamali 1996, p. 223). In addition, housing served as a behavioral argument in that “despite their best efforts to maintain boundaries between private and public spaces, communal apartment neighbors [could] never in fact truly be alone” (Harris 2005, p. 603). Thus, the Soviet state used a number of means to “radically reshaped established patterns of intimacy and its product, the sense of self” (Paperno 2002, p. 597).

One of the logical extensions of the first argumentative structure was the subjugation of private thoughts to public ideology. As Hellbeck points out: “a crisis of sorts” was created when people detected a “discrepancy between their actual private thoughts and what they were expected to think as Soviet citizens” which “stemmed from the conviction that in the Soviet context one’s private and public self ideally were to form a single, integrated whole. And if this could not be achieved, private, personal concerns had to be subordinated to, or be repressed by, the public interest” (2000, p. 90). Thus, the first argumentation structure was internalized so that private deviations from the public ideology would be thought of an incomplete process of changing old patterns of thinking.

Thus, “living a ‘normal’ life and being an ‘ordinary person’ in the former Soviet Union were difficult, if not impossible tasks” (Harris 2005, p. 584) since “no other totalitarian system had such a profound impact on the private lives of its subjects” (Figes 2008, p. 121). Thus, the practical discourse and behavior of the Soviet state reinforced the dialectical subordination of the private domain to the norms and ideology of the public domain.

The second argumentative structure was based on the dialectical opposition between the new Soviet society and those who would oppose it, i.e. enemies. Marxist/Leninist ideology was based on class distinctions, which by its very nature polarized groups. This logic permeated Soviet society, particularly in the communicative relationship between the public and the private domains.

Public discourse constantly referenced class struggle and featured words such as “struggle, fight and attack” (Fitzpatrick 1999, p. 17). This militant logic was further extended by the concepts of “conspiracy” and “vigilance.” Conspirators

were thought to be hidden in society sabotaging the Party's successes. The resulting logic often took on a tautological flavor. Guesva recounts the story of the sister-in-law of Stalin's first wife, who "rationalizes the need to unmask hidden enemies everywhere because they must be responsible for wrecking: 'How else could it be that the textile factories were full of Stakhanovite overachievers, but there were still no textiles to buy in the stores?'" (2007, p. 333). Note the logical structure, which valorizes the new society and its highly motivated workers, while blaming hidden enemies for society's woes.

The logic of struggling against enemies directly affected the private world of Soviet citizens in two ways. First, surveillance was a pervasive threat for the average citizen, which could lead to a public accounting and punishment for their private words and actions. The pervasiveness of surveillance can be seen in the example of Solzhenitsyn, who during World War II, was arrested for criticizing Stalin in a letter. The result of this atmosphere was "that total surveillance and eternal search for hidden enemies . . . created an environment of unhealthy suspicion, finger-pointing, mass denunciations and back-stabbing, and virtually atomized individuals and destroyed social fabric, rarely sparing even families" (Guseva 2007, pp. 324-325).

Second, the societal practice of informing on others was highly encouraged and applauded. Soviet authorities used the story of Pavel Morosov, who was murdered after informing on his father, as a moral fable about putting the collective good above family. The significance of the story was "the fact that the legend was created and stubbornly supported for more than five decades" (Guseva 2007, p. 327). As Guseva noted: "even dinner table conversations were not always sealed from the ears of the secret police . . . [whose] diligence was met and even surpassed by that of ordinary citizens who often acted as undercover agents themselves: colleagues reported on colleagues, neighbors on neighbors, subordinates on their superiors, and family members of each other" (2007, p. 330).

The second argumentative structure was tied to several forms of punishment when someone was labeled an enemy. Members were expelled from the Party and anyone and their families were considered to be outcasts and treated as if they were "plague bearers" (Fitzpatrick 1999, p. 19). By the mid-1930s, the penalties became harsher with massive show trials and executions, which often "were organized for a broader audience" and constituted "an entertainment-cum-

agitational genre” (Fitzpatrick 1999, p.27).

Thus, it can be seen that the two argumentative structures in Stalinist Russia had the practical effect of erasing the line between the public and private domains and subjugating the private domain to the public.

4.2 Model Two: Societies where the Private Domain Dominates

Model 2, while similar to Model 1 in that the separation between the public domain and the private domain has broken down, differs in that the society and the public domain, is dominated by the private communicative domain. Over time the standards, norms and elements of the private domain’s discourse patterns came to dominate the public domain; in other words the elements of private discourse “trumped” the elements of public discourse.

Societies that fit this model are relatively rare even though many technologically advanced Western societies may be moving in this direction. The fundamental distinction of such a society is that the private domain’s discursive patterns have transcended the divide between the two domains and proven capable of dominating the public communicative domain.

The illustrative example for Model 2 is post 1974 American society. There is evidence indicating that American society in the first part of the 20th century possessed a clearer separation between public and private communication domains. However, since the end of World War II, the characteristics of American society have been evolving.

The private communicative domain’s domination of a society poses certain ironies in that the private domain is usually considered to be the realm of privacy and thus would be out of place in the public domain. Yet elements of the private domain have increasingly become a staple of the American public domain.

Our example examines a) the nature of the American private domain and b) its intrusion into the public domain in three areas: political, legal, and popular culture. This analysis establishes the assumptional grounds of argument in American society and its subsequent framing.

First, the nature of the American private domain is discussed in the work of a number of scholars. Sennett argued that one of the factors leading to the decline of secular American public culture was what he called the “ideology of intimacy.” At the root of this view are the beliefs that closeness between individuals is a moral good, as experiences of closeness and warmth with others develop an

individual's personality and "the evils of society can all be understood as evils of impersonality, alienation, and coldness." For Sennett, "the sum of these three is an ideology of intimacy: social relations of all kinds are real, believable, and authentic, the closer they approach the inner psychological concerns of each person" (1978, p. 259).

Parks, reviewing interpersonal communication research and theory, contended that "the ideology of intimacy has had a pervasive, if diffuse, effect on the study of interpersonal communication. Though it has relatively few champions, it has many adherents" (1982, p. 99). He further argued that the ideology's beliefs saw self-disclosure as related to attraction, empathy and mental health.

Philipsen's idea of an American code of dignity provides the final piece of evidence. While acknowledging the presence of the separate code of honor, Philipsen claims that the code of dignity is the dominant code and becoming more so with time. For Philipsen, the code of dignity refers to the "worth attached to individuals by virtue of their being a person" (1992, p. 113). Such an emphasis sees a person as "made up of unique feelings, ideas, and attitudes, with an intrinsic dignity without references to roles or titles" with communication serving as "a resource to make known a person's unique cognitive and affective world" (pp. 113-114).

Collectively, the three theorists provide evidence that the American private domain of communication is grounded in a series of assumptions about the individual's importance and their intimate relations with others. This, then, leaves us with the question of what is the ideological impact on the American public domain of communication?

Second, several scholars have documented the breakdown of the division between the American public and private domains. Sennett clearly believes that the private domain's ideology has intruded into the public domain, based on his view that the ideology of intimacy is the primary reason for the "fall of public man." Goodnight, bemoans the erosion of the public sphere "by the elevation of the personal" (1982, p. 223). Hill discussing the breakdown of the barrier between the public and the private, references the presence in public spaces, such as the classroom, of discussions grounded in personal experience (2001).

Philipsen provides a philosophical basis for the American movement of the private domain's norms and structures into the public domain, when he argued that in the code of dignity, "the individual person is existentially and morally prior to society" (1992, p. 118). If this is true, then conflicts emerging between the

argumentative structures of the private and public domains allow the private domain to assert itself.

The ideology and argumentative structures of the private domain has increasingly become part of the American political scene. Sabato (1991) divided American press treatment of the private actions of public figures into three phases: 1) 1941 to 1966, when the press let pass activities seen as limited to the private sphere; 2) 1966 to 1974, when the discovery of private actions would be scrutinized to determine whether legitimate public connections could be inferred; and 3) 1974 forward, where no distinction was made between the two domains with regards to personal actions.

While many bemoaned the media's new attitude toward politicians as an intrusion into politicians' privacy, it should be seen instead as an extension of the private domain's values and discourse into the public domain. Graves' discussion of former Senator Packwood's sexual misconduct points out that society has changed over the last 30 years and as Lessard wrote about former Senator Hart, his unethical behavior became an issue for public concern because of an increasing "awareness of the dignity and equality of women" (2002, p. 3). The point that Graves made can be interpreted as an important instance of the code of dignity being used as the grounds for judging politicians in the public domain.

During the twentieth century, Warren and Brandeis' (1890) article about privacy has been considered to be the basis for the development of the legal doctrine of privacy, however, the article also spoke to the press's coverage of political figure's private lives. Graves (2002) has argued that Warren and Brandeis conceded that public officials surrender at least some protection of their privacy: "They wrote that 'in varying degrees,' political figures 'have renounced the right to live their lives screened from public observation" (p. 6).

Finally, popular culture is another area of increasing evidence that the private domain's values and argumentative forms have come to be central to the public domain. The rise of talk shows and other elements of radio and television dwell continually on the culture of intimacy where the facts of private lives are continually paraded in public and a lack of separation is evident. Carbaugh's study (1993) of the old Donahue talk show and a series of broadcasts from Moscow Russia in the late 1980s is a prime example. Carbaugh crystallizes the glaring inconsistencies between topics considered acceptable for public discussion in the United States and the Soviet Union. Donahue, reflecting

practices in American popular culture, wanted to engage in discussions about various aspects of topics such as sex, utilizing elements of the “code of dignity” and its emphasis on the self. Such discussions were strongly resisted by Russian audience members as publically inappropriate. Carbaugh believes that this is exemplary of what he calls “USAmerican discourse” where: “One is (and should be) an expressive individual, who communicates openly, and expresses feelings freely.” Carbaugh thinks this discourse serves as an argumentative “taken-for-granted consensus” that underlies Donahue’s behavior (2005, p. 122). Thus, it can be seen that these assumptions about a person’s nature function as the grounds for subsequent arguments.

One final example from popular culture concerns the ambiguous status of the internet as public or private communication. Williams illustrated this in a recent article, where in commenting on adolescent’s use of the internet, he said “not only did they casually accept that the record of their lives could be Googled by anyone at any time, but they also tended to think of themselves as having an audience” (2007, p. 84). While some assume that what they put on the internet is private, many are not making such a distinction and are presenting things as they would in the private domain, which may be another example of the private domain’s dominance of public discourse.

4.3 Model 3: Societies where the Private Domain is Separate from the Public Domain

Model 3, unlike the previous two models is one where there is a clear separation between the public and private domains of communication. In other words, the domain’s discourse standards and patterns remain separate and are not used to judge the other. It is unclear how absolute the line of separation is between the two realms in the everyday world of any particular society but for purposes of theory, we assume that a strong separation exists and leave the question of permeability for later theorizing. For a society to exemplify Model 3, there must be clear evidence of different norms and discourse forms in each domain, and examples of efforts to keep the two separate.

Postwar Japanese provides our illustrative example. This example’s usage is based on a number of distinctions drawn by scholars of Japanese society. Three binary distinctions between Japanese words are used to illustrate the differences between the public and private domains of communication. A paramount distinction is represented by the words *tatemae* and *honne*. *Tatemae* is

considered to be the world of social relations and is often thought of as an individual's façade for public behavior. On the other hand, *honne* is usually regarded as a person's true feelings or inner reality, which is usually only expressed in the private domain and to intimates.

A second distinction is between the Japanese words *uchi* and *soto*. They are often distinguished as in-group and out-group but a more literal translation is inside and outside with an implication of my house or household (*ie*) and outside my house. Lebra (1976) suggests that "the term *uchi* is used colloquially to refer to one's house, family or family member, and the shop or company where one works. The essential point, however, is that the *uchi-soto* distinction is drawn not by social structure but by constantly varying situations" (1976, p. 112).

The third distinction is between the Japanese words *omote* and *ura*. There is a feeling of front or façade on one hand and bottom, rear or hidden on the other hand. As Lebra says: "*Omote* refers to "front," or what is exposed to public attention, whereas *Ura* means "back" or what is hidden from the public eye" (1976, p. 112).

In general, all three distinctions can be taken as dealing with some aspect of the public (*tatema*, *soto* & *omote*) and the private (*honne*, *uchi* & *ura*) domains. Within the literature, it is clear that the distinctions denote two distinct domains where behavior and relationship norms differ.

The norms and discourse patterns in each domain are illustrated by Lebra's use of the terms in her descriptions of Japanese society. In her early work (1976), Lebra combines the *uchi-soto* and *omote-ura* distinctions to create three types of situations and interactions in Japanese society. For our purposes, the key categorizations are the combination of *uchi* & *ura*, which she equates with intimate communication and *soto* & *omote*, which she equates with ritual communication.

In the intimate situation, Ego both perceives Alter as an insider and feels sure that his behavior toward Alter is protected from public exposure. Opposed to the intimate situation is the ritual situation, where Ego perceives Alter as an outsider and is aware that he is performing his role on a stage with Alter or a third person as audience. (p. 113)

In her later work, Lebra (2004) alters her framework slightly to include a negative side to both public and private forms of interaction, however her fundamental position remains the same. Thus, in both works, Lebra seems to be drawing a distinction between what would fit our definitions of the public and private

domains and in doing so, specifies the distinctiveness of the domains.

Two examples from Lebra exemplify Japanese attempts to keep the two domains separate. In the first example of a 1996 interview, the wife of the newly appointed Prime Minister had nothing good to say about her husband, which Lebra explains in the following fashion: "She acted according to the *seken* [surrounding world of community or public] expectation of a married couple; indeed, the Japanese audience took her words as a positive sign of her warmth toward the prime minister" (2004, p. 90). In the second example, Lebra describes what she calls the "sacred boundary between workplace and home" and states that "a man would be upset and terribly embarrassed in front of his coworkers if his wife telephoned or, worse yet, visited his workplace" (2004, p. 89).

At this juncture, it is important to discuss the argumentative character of the Japanese public and private domains. Lebra describes the public domain (*omote zone*) as involving courtesy, face work (*kizukai*), tact, honorifics, formalized greetings (*aisatsu*), set patterns of interaction (*kata*), whereas the private domain (*uchi*) involves intimacy, the use of familiar terms, and understood behaviors.

It can be seen that the kind of communicative behavior the Japanese display in the public domain clearly fits what many would call ritual behavior (in addition to Lebra; McVeigh, 1998; Barnlund, 1989). In this case, the argumentative ground is the display of proper levels and forms of politeness and tact. For example, if I use the proper forms of honorifics (i.e. exalting others and humbling self), then that demonstrates that I understand the situation and that my subsequent argumentation can be considered. Some may not see this as argument because of its formal nature and implicit messages.

Another example from Lebra demonstrates how argumentation works in such public settings. In a 1995 case, a member of the Japanese Diet was accused of breach of trust and embezzlement from two credit unions. His response was to express both "deep apology" (*fukaku owabi*) and his innocence. Lebra argues that his apology was to the public (*seken*), for "having been suspected of a wrongdoing and 'because of my unworthiness [*futoku*]' (*Asahi* 12/7/95)". For Lebra, "to refer to *futoku* in a context such as this is a common practice, allowing one to express modesty or humility and often having nothing to do with guilt or moral offense" (2004, p. 11). Thus, the proper expression of courtesy to the public served as argumentative grounding for his subsequent assertion of innocence.

The communication factors in the private domain are not necessarily that

different from what most would expect as private communication in Lebra (1976) refers to intimate communication in terms of things such as confidentiality, spontaneity, and communication of unity. Such things can serve as argumentative grounds for communication in the private domain. When a person feels that the situation is confidential (otherwise hidden from the public or outsiders) and that what is being expressed is a true reflection of their inner feelings (*honne*), then the proper argumentative ground has been established for subsequent conclusions. Adams, Murata and Orito's (2009) observations on Japanese information privacy on the internet grow out of their belief that the Japanese have always had a strong sense of information privacy (as opposed to privacy of physical spaces or personal body) based on social norms in the past and now on specific legal protections. They use the work of Lebra, Doi and others to draw boundaries between situations involving one's inner group and outer groups. Within that inner domain, the intimacy necessary for interaction is predicated on personal privacy. As a result, they argue that a number of social norms were previously used to insure that confidentiality including the "as-if tradition," "information from nowhere," and "the impossible expression" was present in the private domain, even if there were doubts (2009, p. 339). Thus, the fundamental assumption of privacy or communication addressed to specific, intimate inside group members, serves as the ground for openness to the following elements of argument in private interaction. As they argue, "personal information is revealed on the basis of trust that it will be filtered and some of it passed on to known others within a short transitive span of relationship, but then disseminated no further" (p. 339).

In sum, the case of Japan exemplifies a society where the public and the private realms are seen as separate parts of life. The standards of discourse and standards for judgment used in the public realm would not be used in the private realm and vice versa.

5. Conclusions

This exploratory study has inductively demonstrated the utility of the three models for analyzing the role of argument in relationship to the public and private domains of society. From the historical examples, it seems clear that the theoretical nature of each model is an inexact fit to the society and the closer a society gets to a particular model, the more counter-balancing forces will be exhibited. Further historical examples of each model will help to reveal the

degree to which tendencies are characteristic of the model and can be used to define the elements of each models.

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