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## Couples' Dialogue Orientations

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# Couples' Dialogue Orientations

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**Abstract:** Walton has distinguished among several sorts of argumentative dialogues (persuasion, negotiation, information seeking, deliberation, inquiry, and eristic). This paper continues the project of measuring individuals' self-reported preferences for each dialogue type. In this study, long-term romantic couples were surveyed to examine if their dialogue preferences matched, and whether their preferences were, in turn, related to their relational satisfaction.

**Keywords:** argument frames, argumentativeness, dialogue types, interpersonal arguing, relational satisfaction, verbal aggressiveness, Walton

## 1. Introduction

Conflict and disagreement are inevitable in ongoing personal relationships, whether the relationships are romantic, familial, professional, or any other kind. Conflict can be carried out by nonverbal means—by violence, by escape, or by significant glances, for instance. More commonly though, disagreements are expressed and expanded verbally. Those verbal expressions might not include any reasoning, as when children or angry adults simply shout at each other and repeat themselves. However—and this is the domain of this paper—people do often express, exchange, and respond to reasons in the course of a conflict.

We explore the possibility that people in long-term romantic relationships undertake these reasoning activities in patterned ways. Many sorts of patterns could be discerned in interpersonal exchanges, but we concentrate on the dialogue orientations described by Walton (1998; Walton & Krabbe, 1995).

## 2. Dialogue types

Walton (1998; Walton & Krabbe, 1995) has distinguished several different argumentative dialogues that people may undertake. These are patterns of “interpersonal reasoning,” as the subtitle of Walton and Krabbe’s book expressed it. Walton (1998) defined a dialogue as “a normative framework in which there is an exchange of arguments between two speech partners reasoning together in [a] turn-taking sequence aimed at a collective goal” (p. 30). This framework was anchored by two considerations: the dialogue’s overarching goal and the type of situation that sparked the dialogue to begin with. For Walton, this provided a normative

foundation for argument analysis, because people's argumentative performance can be critiqued normatively once a goal (that is, a standard) can be assigned to the interaction. Our purposes in this paper, however, are descriptive and empirical rather than normative. For us, it is important to know the objective of an exchange because arguments conducted under the authority of different goals should be distinguishable (e.g., Dillard, 2004). This will permit more pointed investigations than are possible under the expectation that *all* arguers are mainly trying to persuade or to discover truth, to mention the two most common assumptions made throughout the argumentation literature.

Since Walton's system is well known in our community, we will simply remind readers of what his six dialogue types are. The *persuasion* dialogue involves two people who have views on some issue (or at least one of them does), and they proceed to test and defend arguments in order to convince the other person of their view. *Inquiry* dialogues lack this commitment to changing the other person's position, for in this sort of exchange the arguments are jointly weighed so that the best conclusion can be selected. The main objective here is to weigh the merits of various propositions that help arguers demonstrate the validity of claims. *Negotiation* dialogues aim for a "good deal," trying to accomplish a practical settlement for the disagreement that exists between parties, and use their arguments only in service of that objective. Negotiators, for example, might decide to meet in the middle without regard to the merits of their disagreement. In an *information seeking* dialogue, one person elicits information from the other person, who is supposed to provide it. In contrast to the other dialogues, this one is asymmetrical with regard to the arguers' behaviors and aims: here, one person seeks and the other supplies. Related to this asymmetry is the observation that this sort of dialogue is collaborative and not adversarial. In *deliberation*, parties seek agreement on the best solution in a collaborative manner, given that the disagreement between them stems from an open problem that parties are interesting in resolving. While truth and falsity are presumably relevant, the greater focus is on practical considerations of conduct, such as costs and benefits. Prudence is the regnant principle, and the aim is interpersonal cooperation rather than epistemic demonstration. The final sort of dialogue is *eristic*. Often, these are confrontations for the sake of confrontation in which arguers give in to momentary emotional impulses, without a long-term agreement or solution in mind. We may politely call them quarrels, but they are sites for bullying, domination, verbal assault, insult, anger, and the other sorts of behavior that give "arguing" a bad name in colloquial usage.

### 3. Dialogues within relationships

Cionea (2011) made an interesting proposal: that Walton's dialogues are not merely typifications of individual episodes of interpersonal arguing, but they might also characterize individuals' styles of arguing in their relationships. The centrality of arguments in relational life suggests the likelihood that dialogue matches (or divergences) may be important (e.g., K. Johnson & Roloff, 1998; Sigert & Stamp, 1994). Perhaps some couples are information-sharers and others are eristic. If this is so, then it could be true for two reasons. Perhaps people choose their life partners partly due to their argumentative compatibility in the first place. Someone who likes to pursue the truth of things might want to marry another inquirer, and someone who enjoys a good fight might want another eristic. The other main possibility is that, over the course of a long relationship, partners "train" one another with the normal sorts of reinforcement and punishment that occur in any relationship. So, even if people randomly pair themselves on dialogue preferences in the first place, they might grow together as they learn what works more

comfortably for them as a couple. This paper is the first empirical examination of these possibilities.

In Cionea's prior work, Walton's dialogues have been reconsidered in the guise of individual orientations. The idea is that some people may show preference for negotiating, others might enjoy deliberating, and so forth, and will therefore act that way whenever possible, defaulting to their preferred orientation. Cionea has developed a series of self-report scales that allow people to express their preferences and dislikes for specific dialogue orientations (Cionea & Hample, 2014; Cionea, Hample, & Fink, 2013). These scales operationalized Walton's six dialogue types as representing personal inclinations. In addition, scales for *information giving* have also been developed, to give more precise measurements of both asymmetric roles involved in the information seeking dialogue – searching for but also offering information. In the present study, we took the important step of collecting information from both partners in long-term relationships to assess relational information rather than the merely individual data as analyzed in the prior investigations.

These considerations led us to several particular research issues. First, we wanted to know if spouses match one another. Matching could imply that a husband and wife, for example, have precisely the same scores on a particular scale, or it could merely mean that partners' scores are correlated. If spouses do not differ significantly, we can pursue the strong idea of "match," exactly equivalent scores. But if we uncover sex differences, we will need to use a weaker sense of "match," and restrict ourselves to testing correlations. To this end, we ask

*RQ1: Do men and women differ on dialogue types?*

Another preliminary matter is the question of whether Walton's clear theoretical distinctions are registered by ordinary actors. Cionea and Hample (2014) reported noticeable correlations among the dialogue scores, and we investigate whether those results are replicable. In teaching this material, we have discovered that students have difficulty differentiating between persuasion and deliberation, for example. Even at the conceptual level, more than one of the dialogues is concerned with truth, and more than one has a substantial practical element. These similarities would justify, even theoretically, noticeable correlations among some of the dialogues. Should our respondents fail to distinguish among the dialogues, this will not have any implications for Walton's theory, but it might justify empirical simplifications in future studies. Therefore,

*RQ2: Can respondents register the principled differences among the dialogue orientations?*

Differences would be statistically expressed through low correlations among the dialogues, and failure to differentiate between the dialogues would result in high positive correlations. Should we again discover a pattern of positive correlations among most of the dialogues (eristic was the exception in previous research), judgment will be required: Is there synonymy among the dialogues (as perceived by ordinary actors), or are there merely close connections among them? Walton (1998) was at pains to point out that often one dialogue can shade into another, and that sequences of dialogues can also take place, perhaps even having their own meta-pattern of succession.

Next, we move into the questions that are uniquely relational. By pairing data from both partners in these relationships, we can see whether the relationship itself has anything to do with the dialogue practices partners typically use. Aggressive behavior is often answered in kind (Rancer & Avtgis, 2014), so spouses may mirror one another's views on eristic dialogue. The question is whether spouses also synchronize for the more positively regarded dialogues and whether that synchrony, if it exists, may be sensitive to the theoretical distinctions among those dialogues (e.g., do partners match deliberation to deliberation, or deliberation to anything constructive?). So, we inquire

*RQ3: Do spouses have symmetrical (positive correlations), asymmetrical (negative correlations), or no (non-significant correlations) relationships with one another's scores?*

If we discover positive correlations, we will need to consider the reasons why spouses match. As we have mentioned above, two possibilities suggest themselves: selection or accommodation. Close study of acquainting couples would be needed to give unequivocal evidence about selection, and longitudinal data would be needed to give affirmative support to the possibility of ongoing mutual adaptation. Our data set reflects established couples and is cross-sectional, but at least it affords the possibility of falsifying the second possibility. If no mutual adaptation is going on, then the length of spouses' relationship should have no effect on the spouses' matching. So, we enquire whether the matching is stronger when the relationships have been in place for longer periods.

*RQ4: Does length of relationship affect the degree to which spouses' dialogue preferences correlate?*

If we find that length of relationship matters in this regard—that is, if length of relationship moderates the dialogue-to-dialogue associations—then we will have some evidence suggesting that mutual accommodation takes place.

Finally, another area of interest is the degree to which arguing orientations affect the quality of a long-term relationship. Besides the dialogue preferences we have discussed, we also examine other common argument-relevant measures that Cionea and Hample (2015) studied in conjunction with dialogue orientations: argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and argument frames. Combined with dialogue orientations, these variables give a good collective summary of people's attitudes, beliefs, and intentions about interpersonal arguing. In addition, we notice that arguing behaviours can improve or damage a relationship, can advance it or derail it (Johnson & Roloff, 1998; Sigert & Stamp, 1994). Therefore, we collect information about couples' relational satisfaction and ask

*RQ5: Do argument orientations affect relational satisfaction?*

To explore this question thoroughly, we will examine whether each spouse's satisfaction is predicted by his or her own argument orientations, and/or by the spouse's preferences. Besides dialogue proclivities, we will include argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and the argument frames in these analyses.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Respondents and procedures

Undergraduates enrolled in the first author's advanced communication courses assisted in collecting data over a period of two semesters. Students were asked to gather information from both partners in long-term relationships (marriages but also long-term cohabitating couples). They distributed surveys to potential participants along with pre-paid postage envelopes that participants were to use to send the completed surveys back to the researcher. Students typically collected data from their families or family friends. Participant couples were instructed to agree on an identification code and write that in the survey so that their surveys could be re-matched if they were separated. They were instructed to complete all the other items individually, without consulting or sharing with their partners.

A total of 107 couples provided data. Two of these were gay couples; for them, both partners were included in the "male" statistics to be reported, but one partner was arbitrarily assigned to the category of "female" when running "spouse" analyses. More than three quarters of the couples ( $n = 84$ , 77%) were married, and the remainder were in long-term romantic relationships. Males ranged in age from 20 to 83 years, with a mean of 45.8 years ( $SD = 14.3$ ). Women were between 21 and 82 years old, with a mean of 45.2 years ( $SD = 14.1$ ). Relationships had lasted an average of 18.8 years ( $SD = 12.5$ ), with a range of 1 to 58 years.

### 4.2. Instrumentation

Both relational partners responded to all survey items. After the request for a mutually selected identification code, the questionnaire had three parts. The first part included dialogue orientations and relational satisfaction scales, and these answers were to be given while thinking about the respondent's relational partner. The second portion of the survey contained questions "that are just about you, by yourself." These included the argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and argument frames scales. The final portion of the survey asked for demographic information, reported above.

All instruments, except for demographics, used a 1-10 metric, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The dialogue orientation items were taken from Cionea's work (Cionea & Hample, 2014; Cionea, Hample, & Fink, 2013). The relational satisfaction measure consisted of seven items adapted from Hendrick (1988). Argumentativeness (Infante & Rancer, 1982) includes two ten item subscales, argument-approach and argument-avoid. This instrument measures people's inclination to present, attack, or defend controversial arguments. Verbal aggressiveness (Infante & Wigley, 1986), in contrast, represents the inclination to attack the other person's character, habits, or nature. This instrument also has two ten item subscales, verbal aggressiveness (antisocial) and verbal aggressiveness (prosocial). The argument frames instrument, developed over a series of studies (Hample & Irions, 2015; Hample, Richards, & Skubisz, 2013; Hample, Warner, & Young, 2009), yields several separate measures. Personal goals for arguing are captured by scores for utility (getting or protecting some personal benefit), arguing to display identity, arguing to express dominance, and arguing for play. The blurting, cooperation, and civility frames assess orientations to the other arguer. Finally, professional contrast measures the degree to which ordinary arguers agree with argumentation professionals on matters such as whether arguing invites violence or is an alternative to it, whether arguing is

corrosive to relationships or possibly constructive, whether arguing is emotionally explosive or rational, and similar matters. Table 1 contains descriptive information, including reliabilities (which were good), for all survey variables.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Do relationally paired men and women differ?

The first research question inquired whether men and women have similar scores on all our measures of arguing orientations. Table 1 reports the relevant results. When people indicated what sort of dialogue they preferred *while arguing with their spouse or partner*, we found several indications that men and women had different orientations. Women preferred the persuasion, negotiation, and information-giving dialogue orientations, compared to men.

Women were less argumentative than men were, expressing more avoidance and about the same level of interest in approaching arguments, as compared to men. In terms of verbal aggressiveness, women were more prosocial than men were, and had about the same level of antisocial impulse.

Argument frames revealed only two significant differences. Men were more motivated to argue in order to display identity (that is, to offer an argument that shows off some personally prized characteristic) than women. Men also showed more interest than women in arguing for play, that is, to pass the time in disagreement for the sake of entertainment.

These differences suggest that partnered men and women have different levels of adherence to several of the argument-relevant goals and understandings that we measured.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics and t-Tests between Men and Women*

	Males				Females				<i>t</i>
	<i>N</i>	Cron alpha	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Cron alpha	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Persuasion	108	.84	7.20	1.58	104	.82	7.99	1.48	-3.69****
Negotiate	108	.78	7.17	1.45	104	.82	7.57	1.48	-2.46*
InfoSeek	108	.91	7.60	1.71	104	.91	7.93	1.62	-1.44
InfoGive	108	.92	7.60	1.77	104	.93	8.18	1.54	-2.64**
Deliberate	108	.93	7.55	1.57	104	.90	7.84	1.36	-1.69
Inquiry	108	.88	7.47	1.59	104	.88	7.44	1.50	0.27
Eristic	108	.78	3.22	1.48	104	.82	3.22	1.71	-0.18
RelSatisf	107	.89	8.66	1.37	104	.90	8.64	1.53	0.29
ArgAvoid	108	.79	5.21	1.47	104	.77	5.89	1.48	-3.29****
ArgApproach	108	.86	5.18	1.52	104	.87	4.96	1.65	0.85
VAAntisocial	108	.89	3.74	1.62	102	.84	3.55	1.51	1.05
VAProsocial	108	.81	6.39	1.41	102	.77	6.72	1.26	-1.99*

Utility	108	.81	4.57	1.64	104	.83	4.81	1.72	-1.27
Dominance	107	.83	3.70	1.72	102	.88	3.47	2.00	0.98
Identity	107	.73	5.78	1.40	102	.83	5.30	1.74	2.31*
Play	107	.88	3.94	2.35	102	.90	2.98	2.08	3.71***
Blurting	107	.84	4.76	1.54	103	.85	4.91	1.60	-0.70
Cooperation	108	.81	7.30	1.51	104	.76	7.56	1.38	-1.39
Civility	108	.84	6.53	1.19	104	.79	6.49	1.16	0.17
ProfContrast	106	.80	7.06	1.40	103	.90	7.18	1.86	-0.84

*Note.* Item 8 was omitted from the Cooperation scale. The *t*-tests reported compare males and females.

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$       \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## 5.2. Associations among dialogue orientations

Our second research question inquired whether or not respondents distinguished among the different dialogue orientations. If they did so, we would see relatively small correlations among the preferences, but if they did not, we would find that dialogue preferences correlated highly enough to invite the concern that they were no more than alternately worded versions of the same things. Table 2 reports the pertinent correlations, separately for men and women.

Table 2  
*Correlations among Dialogue Orientations for Men and Women*

	Males					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Persuasion						
2 Negotiation	.54***					
3 InfoSeeking	.56***	.43***				
4 InfoGiving	.45***	.46***	.47***			
5 Deliberation	.60***	.53***	.66***	.64***		
6 Inquiry	.37***	.40***	.59***	.51***	.57***	
7 Eristic	-.12	-.28**	-.14	-.29**	-.23*	-.19
	Females					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Persuasion						
2 Negotiation	.58***					
3 InfoSeeking	.47***	.38***				
4 InfoGiving	.43***	.28**	.61***			
5 Deliberation	.52***	.52***	.69***	.71***		
6 Inquiry	.37***	.39***	.54***	.55***	.56***	
7 Eristic	.10	-.01	-.15	-.13	-.20*	-.03

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$       \*\*\*  $p < .001$



The correlational patterns for men and women were quite similar. The constructively toned dialogues (all but eristic) had statistically significant and moderate to high positive correlations among themselves. Interestingly, information seeking and information-giving had positive associations, indicating that these were interchangeable roles. If each person were typically the information seeker *or* the information provider, we would have seen negative correlations. These moderates to high levels of association among the constructive dialogues do not invalidate Walton's conceptual distinctions, but they suggest that these dialogues could potentially be reduced to a more parsimonious measure of constructive orientation (understanding that some of the unique features of each dialogue may be lost). In contrast, preference for eristic interaction was not well associated with the other dialogues, particularly for the women. Even when eristic preferences were associated with the other dialogues, the correlations were modest and negative. This suggests that the eristic dialogue, at least, was clearly distinct for our respondents, and suggestive of a negative, destructive orientation.

### 5.3. Relational partners' associations

In this subsection, we address two research questions. The first inquired whether relational partners would match on their orientations to arguing, and the next expressed interest in whether the length of partners' relationship affected any associations. Table 3 reports the pertinent results, with zero-order correlations between spouses on all measured variables. It also reports partial correlations, in which the effect of relationship length has been controlled. We arbitrarily chose the men's report of relationship length as the covariate for the partial correlations (men and women's estimates were highly associated:  $r = .99$ ). If the zero-order and partial correlations are substantially different, we will have evidence that the spouses' correspondences changed as they moved through the years together.

Table 3

*Zero-order Correlations between Partners, and Partial Correlations Controlling for Length of Relationship*

	Zero-Order Correlations	Partial Correlations
Persuasion	.02	.02
Negotiation	.27**	.27**
InfoSeeking	.03	.02
InfoGiving	.08	.09
Deliberation	.19	.20*
Inquiry	.29**	.30**
Eristic	.44***	.43***
RelSatisf	.63***	.63***
ArgAvoid	.12	.11
ArgApproach	.22*	.22*
VAAntisocial	.22*	.21*
VAProsocial	.09	.10

Utility	.32***	.30**
Dominance	.19	.19
Identity	.30**	.27**
Play	.42***	.37***
Blurting	.12	.11
Cooperation	.14	.15
Civility	.21*	.20
ProfContrast	.19	.18

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$       \*\*\*  $p < .001$

There were some correspondences between spouses. The general pattern was of positive associations, but somewhat fewer than half were statistically significant: for negotiation, inquiry, and eristic dialogues; for argument-approach and verbal aggressiveness (antisocial); for the utility, identity, and play goals; and for civility. Although relational satisfaction matched at a high level, the significantly associated arguing orientations had correlations between .20 and .45, accounting for about 5% to 20% of the variance in the measures.

When we took length of relationship into account (the column reporting the partial correlations), we found a pattern quite similar to the original one. The correlation coefficients in the two columns are remarkably similar. The correspondence between the two columns affords a confident assertion that length of relationship had no important effect on the degree to which relational partners co-oriented to interpersonal arguing.

#### 5.4. Predicting relational satisfaction from arguing orientations

Our final interest was in examining whether partners' orientations and understandings of interpersonal arguing were associated with their relational satisfaction. To address this question, we conducted multiple regressions, predicting a person's relational satisfaction from the various scores on the other instruments. We conducted four such regressions: (1) predicting men's relational satisfaction from their own argument orientations; (2) predicting men's relational satisfaction from their partner's orientations; (3) predicting women's relational satisfaction from their own arguing orientations; and (4) predicting women's relational satisfaction from their partners' orientations. In each case, we predicted satisfaction with the seven dialogue orientations, the two argumentativeness and two verbal aggressiveness dimensions, and the eight argument frames. Including this many predictors is a statistical advantage in achieving overall significance, so the adjusted  $R^2$  is the preferred measure of the regressions' predictive capabilities.

The simplest way to present the results is in the form of equations from which we have deleted the statistically non-significant predictors. We assessed the collinearity of predictors, but none required attention (i.e., collinearity was not a problem). We report the standardized regression coefficients.

First, we predicted men's relational satisfaction from their own scores on the argument measures. We obtained

$$(1) \text{ RelSat} = .27 \text{ Civility} - .29 \text{ VAProsocial}$$

Both predictors were statistically significant at  $p = .05$ . This regression produced  $R^2 = .29$  ( $p < .05$ ), with adjusted  $R^2 = .14$ . Men's relational satisfaction was associated with high estimates that interpersonal arguments are civil, but with relatively low intentions to be pleasant and polite during arguments.

When we predicted men's relational satisfaction from their partners' responses to the argument measures, we obtained

$$(2) \text{ RelSat} = .28 \text{ ProfContrast}$$

In this regression, the partner's professional contrast score was significant at  $p < .05$ . The  $R^2 = .32$  ( $p < .05$ ), and adjusted  $R^2 = .16$ . Only their partner's professional contrast score predicted men's relational satisfaction in that the more sophisticated the partner was in argumentative matters, the higher a man's satisfaction was.

Next we turned to prediction of the women's relational satisfaction. First, we tested whether their satisfaction was predictable by their own argument orientations. We found

$$(3) \text{ RelSat} = -.27 \text{ Inquiry} -.35 \text{ Dominance} + .21 \text{ Utility} + .28 \text{ ProfContrast}$$

In this regression, dominance was significant at  $p < .01$ , and the other predictors at  $p < .05$ . The overall regression produced  $R^2 = .53$  ( $p < .001$ ) and adjusted  $R^2 = .42$ . Women's relational satisfaction was highest when they pursued arguments for the sake of utility, when they had high scores on the argument sophistication measure (Professional Contrast), and when they had low interest in asserting their own dominance or having an inquiry dialogue.

Finally, we predicted women's relational satisfaction from their partners' argument scores. The regression results were

$$(4) \text{ RelSat} = -.27 \text{ Persuasion} - .33 \text{ Play} + .29 \text{ Civility} + .23 \text{ ProfContrast} -.32 \text{ VAProsocial}$$

All predictors were significant at  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .33$  ( $p < .01$ ) and adjusted  $R^2 = .18$ . Women's relational satisfaction was highest when their partners regarded arguing as civil and had high sophistication for arguing (i.e., high Professional Contrast scores), and when partners avoided persuasive dialogue, arguing for play, and being especially prosocial.

Although the predictors differed from case to case, we found that arguing orientations, either own or partner's, did affect relational satisfaction. This general effect was most marked for women, but even for men the argument measures accounted for about 15% of the variance in their relational satisfaction.

## 6. Discussion

This study pursued Cionea's (2011) idea that dialogues might typify whole interpersonal relationships. This possibility elaborates on Walton's (1998) theory that individual interactions can be characterized and critiqued in respect to what dialogue type they implement.

We found evidence in support of Cionea's suggestion, mainly in the results reported in Table 3 and in the multiple regressions. We discovered some correspondences between relational partners. They had paired preferences for negotiation, inquiry, and eristic when they argued

together, and also shared similar goal orientations (for utility, identity, and play). These associations were of modest size (see Table 3) but they are collectively clear evidence that people in long-term relationships do not pair randomly when it comes to how they understand and prefer to pursue arguments. The multiple regressions reinforced this finding, because they showed clear evidence that spouses were sensitive to how the other person approached arguments. More than 15% of men's relational satisfaction could be traced to how sophisticated their partner was about arguing (Equation 2). Women also had about the same amount of satisfaction accounted for by the partner's argument orientations, but a greater number of partner's scores contributed to this prediction (see Equation 4).

The present data did not support either the selection or accommodation explanations for dialogue orientation matching. Since we did not find partners to be randomly matched—that is, their orientations had some degree of positive association—we did generate evidence that spouses and other long-term partners had somewhat shared understandings of how interpersonal arguments work. However, we gave fairly clear evidence against the accommodation explanation in Table 3, where we reported that length of relationship did not affect the degree to which partners matched in their views about arguing.

Therefore, further research on this point should concentrate on how people choose their partners in the first place, since selection of a like-minded mate now seems the most plausible explanation of how people with matching dialogue orientations find themselves together. In pursuing this thought, however, researchers should consider the possibility that argument orientations may only be epiphenomenal consequences of more powerful selection criteria. To illustrate, suppose that people actually choose mates on the basis of their widget-production prowess, and that widget-production prowess causes certain arguing orientations. Then the selection would be caused by widgeting, not by similar arguing habits, but the associations we reported would still occur. In other words, argument measures will need to be enclosed in general models of initial attraction to generate a clear understanding of interpersonal arguing's role in the development and maintenance of long-term close relationships.

The multiple regressions also showed that a person's argument orientations were predictive of relational satisfaction. For men, 14% of relational satisfaction's variance could be traced to their own argument orientations. For women, a remarkably high result of 42% of variance in satisfaction connected to how they viewed arguing. These are quite interesting outcomes. They mean that how a person understands arguing predicts how satisfied that person is, in whatever relationship existed. Remember that only the dialogue measures were connected to the relational partner. For men none of their own dialogue preferences affected satisfaction (Equation 1), and for women only the inquiry dialogue was relevant (Equation 3). All the other significant predictors were the person's own trait-like argument predispositions. The shares of variance involved in these successful regressions may seem modest, but they are, in fact, substantial shares of a very important indicator of a relationship's character and value. Research on close interpersonal relationships needs to take more pointed notice of argumentation habits and understandings.

We also found some interesting differences between paired men and women. Even though Table 1 only reported that about half of the dialogue orientations distinguished men from women, women had higher scores on all the dialogues except inquiry. Furthermore, the first four argument frames measures indicate that women were more interested in arguing for utility than men were, and less concerned with the less material reasons for arguing, such as dominance, identity display, and entertainment. Altogether, these results suggest that perhaps women have a

greater interest in changing the practical elements of their domestic status quo, a suggestion that has been raised more pointedly in another literature (Caughlin, 2002). These speculations regarding arguments within relationships reinforce the conclusion that public and personal argument topics need to be clearly distinguished in our literature (e.g., Johnson, Hample, & Cionea, 2014).

The present study also had some other merits. Using an adult sample rather than the undergraduate samples involved in earlier studies, this investigation reaffirmed the reliability and predictive value of Cionea's dialogue scales. Even though Walton did not particularly intend the dialogues to be understood as individual preferences, this developing line of research shows that such an application has its own value.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper productively extends Cionea's (2011; Cionea & Hample, 2014; Cionea, Hample, & Fink, 2013) effort to apply Walton's (1998; Walton & Krabbe, 1995) theory of dialogues. Walton used the idea of dialogues to characterize individual argumentative interactions and prepare them for critique, whereas Cionea has proposed that interpersonal relationships can also be described according to what dialogue type the participants tend to use. The present study of more than 100 marriages and other long-term relationships gave evidence that partners do share argument orientations to some degree. This sharing did not become more marked as length of relationship increased, suggesting that noticing a prospective partner's arguing practices might be involved in the initial stages of choosing a life partner.

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