

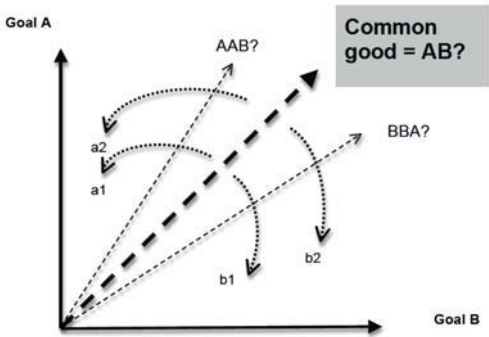
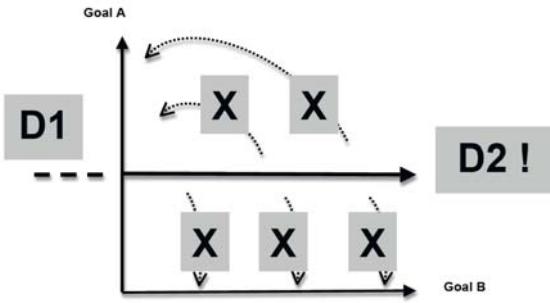
### Student handout 3.5

#### The concept of the common good: the hallmark of democracy and dictatorship

*La multitude qui ne se réduit pas à l'unité est confusion;  
l'unité qui ne dépend pas de la multitude est tyrannie.*

[Diversity that cannot be reduced to unity is confusion;  
unity that ignores diversity is tyranny.]

Blaise Pascal (1623-62)

Negotiation of the common good in pluralist democracies	Imposition of the common good under authoritarian rule and dictatorship
	
<p>In pluralist democracies, the common good is negotiated and argued for. No one knows the result beforehand (AB?). Trial and error is often involved, so decisions can, and sometimes must, be corrected. Politics is a process of collective learning through controversial debate; finally, a decision must be made.</p>	<p>D1: through divine insight or scientific analysis (e.g. Marxism–Leninism) the common good can be objectively defined. Only the ruling elite is capable of doing so (D2!). The common good justifies any means, including force, to overcome resistance and opposition (X). Critics of “D1” or “D2!” are denounced as enemies.</p>
<p>In pluralist democracies, groups promote different goals, interests and values (Goals A and B). Each group argues for its goals (a1, a2, b1, b2), trying to influence the final decision in their favour (AAB? – BBA?). Pluralism induces competition and controversy. Free media support lively debates.</p>	<p>In dictatorships, groups or individuals promoting an alternative or articulating criticism are silenced (X-symbol). The right to participation is granted only to supporters of the regime. Media are censored. The ruler decides what problems, interests or goals are admitted to the political agenda.</p>
<p>Controversy is considered as necessary and productive to achieve agreement and compromise. Decisions are open for critical review.</p>	<p>Consent is enforced and predefined by the ruler. Controversy is considered disharmonious and dangerous, as it is difficult to control.</p>