

Exploring Argumentative Contexts

Argumentation in Context (AIC)

This new book series highlights the variety of argumentative practices that have become established in modern society by focusing on the study of context-dependent characteristics of argumentative discourse that vary according to the demands of the more or less institutionalized communicative activity type in which the discourse takes place. Examples of such activity types are parliamentary debates and political interviews, medical consultations and health brochures, legal annotations and judicial sentences, editorials and advertorials in newspapers, and scholarly reviews and essays.

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Volume 4

Exploring Argumentative Contexts

Edited by Frans H. van Eemeren and Bart Garssen

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Introduction

Frans H. van Eemeren & Bart Garssen

Argumentation is always situated: it always occurs in context. It is therefore important to notice that there is a growing interest in examining argumentation explicitly in context. This growth manifests itself in the numerous presentations at argumentation conferences and submissions to argumentation journals concentrating on argumentation in context, but also in the increasing number of master's theses and doctoral dissertations which are devoted to argumentation in (a particular kind of) context. Fortunately, this development is supported by recent developments in the theorizing about argumentation which have provided a more solid basis for the study of argumentation in context.

In the book series *Argumentation in Context* we have so far published four volumes. We opened with *Examining argumentation in context*, a collection of papers edited by Frans H. van Eemeren (2009) in which the study of argumentation in context is approached from the pragma-dialectical perspective of strategic manoeuvring or from a related perspective. The second volume was a monograph by van Eemeren (2010), *Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse*, which explains the theoretical background of the pragma-dialectical approach to strategic manoeuvring and its connection with the study of argumentation in context. The third volume, *Argumentation in dispute mediation*, consists of a monograph written by Sara Greco Morasso (2011) in which she examines, as the title promises, argumentation in the specific context of mediation.

With the launch of the new *Journal of Argumentation in Context*, starting in 2012, we thought that it would be good to set the stage by publishing a collection of papers in which argumentation in various kinds of specific contexts is studied from a variety of theoretical backgrounds. This volume, titled *Exploring argumentative contexts*, contains essays by an international group of argumentation scholars in which (I) the political context, (II) the historical context, (III) the legal context, (IV) the academic context, (V) the medical context, (VI) the media context, and (VII) the financial context are highlighted. The diversity of the contexts that are covered reflects the broad variety of the study of argumentation in context. By including in each section contributions from different perspectives the variety of the theoretical approaches to the study of argumentation in context is illustrated. The combination of the varieties in contexts

and approaches gives a good picture of the scope of the argumentation research that is currently carried out with regard to argumentation in context.¹

We introduce the seven sections of this volume by giving a brief characterization of each of the chapters that are included. In these characterizations we indicate to which domain or type of communicative activity type the paper relates and what kind of question it aims to answer. When relevant, we also mention the method of analysis that is used by the authors. Also we try to indicate what kind of contribution the various chapters make to the enhancement of the existing state of knowledge and insight in the study of argumentation. We have corresponded with the authors of the chapters about these issues to avoid wrong characterizations of their contributions.

Section I, which is devoted to the political context, starts with ‘The reasonableness of confrontational strategic maneuvering in political interviews,’ a chapter written by Corina Andone in which she evaluates a politician’s responses to an interviewer’s accusation that his current standpoint is inconsistent with an earlier expressed standpoint on the same issue. Chapter 2, ‘Values as premises in practical arguments,’ co-authored by Isabela and Norman Fairclough, discusses conceptions of justice in the public St. Paul’s debate over bankers’ bonuses and the comments on the website of *The Guardian* which reported this event. Frans H. van Eemeren and Bart Garssen explore in Chapter 3, ‘Exploiting the room for strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse,’ how audience demand is dealt with in strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse in the European Parliament. In Chapter 4, ‘Strategic communication,’ Patricia Riley and Thomas A. Hollihan investigate how governments – the American government in the case they are dealing with – frame arguments in the media. Robert T. Craig closes the section about the political context in Chapter 5, ‘Arguments about “rhetoric” in the 2008 US presidential election campaign,’ with an analysis of arguments about Barack Obama’s rhetoric in this campaign.

All five papers included in this section concentrate on argumentative discourse in the political domain. Using as research material political interviews broadcast by the BBC, Andone focuses in her pragma-dialectical contribution on the communicative activity type of a political interview to find out on which conditions a politician’s retraction of a standpoint and the subsequent reformulation of this standpoint in response to an accusation of inconsistency is a reasonable reasonable strategic maneuver. Using methods from (critical) discourse analysis, Fairclough and Fairclough examine political debate to answer the question how values enter as premises in practical arguments and to determine in this way what is specific about argumentation in the political field. Van Eemeren and Garssen concentrate in their pragma-dialectical con-

1. In all cases we have maintained the original spelling (British or American) of the contributions.

tribution on plenary debates in the European Parliament because they are interested in the institutional preconditions for strategic manoeuvring in this context. Riley and Hollihan's investigation of political media arguments is a case study aimed at making clear how new developments in media systems and globalization create new challenges for governments in managing domestic and international audiences when developing their foreign policy goals and objectives. Craig's qualitative content analysis of the meta-discourse about campaign speeches centers round the questions what significant issues and lines of argument appear in public debate concerning the legitimacy of rhetoric and how the findings relate with theoretical debates on the legitimacy of rhetoric.

Before dealing with the soundness conditions applying to a politician's strategic manoeuvring in retracting a standpoint after having been accused of an inconsistency, Andone clarifies what confrontational strategic manoeuvring involves. The evaluation criteria she formulates make it possible to judge whether in a political interview there is in specific cases a balance between a dialectical interest in resolving the difference of opinion at issue and the politician's rhetorical interest in doing so effectively. The chapter by Fairclough and Fairclough provides more insight in the place of values and other 'desire-independent' reasons (such as duties, commitments and obligations) in practical arguments. The essay is a contribution to the wider philosophical discussion of 'internalism' versus 'externalism' in practical reasoning, which Searle restated as a distinction between 'desire-dependent' and 'desire-independent' reasons for action. Van Eemeren and Garssen prepare the ground for the analysis of strategic manoeuvring affected by specific institutional preconditions in a plenary debate in the European Parliament. Their contribution introduces a series of theoretical distinctions which are necessary to carry out such an analysis. Riley and Hollihan point out that government actors must think strategically and creatively about how different stakeholders will understand, evaluate, and respond to diplomatic arguments. Focusing on the case of the US-Israel relations, they make clear that the media are an instrument for foreign policy-making. Craig's analysis leads to the conclusion that arguments about Obama's rhetoric in the 2008 campaign clustered around three broad issues having to do with the relation of rhetoric and reality, grounds for judging a speaker's sincerity or authenticity, and the danger to democracy posed by a cult of celebrity. Because these issues engage classic lines of argument between rhetorical and critical traditions of thought concerning the legitimacy of rhetoric, Craig can show the continuing relevance of these theoretical traditions.

Section II contains two essays dealing with the historical context. In both essays the notion of 'analogy' plays a crucial part. In Chapter 6, 'Making history by analogy', Angela G. Ray examines by means of historical and rhetorical analysis the public lecture in which in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War the African American civil rights advocate Frederick Douglass remembers William the Silent, the leader of the Dutch Revolt. Douglass analogizes the history of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century

to recent U.S. history, suggesting explanations for political decisions and military strategies. Starting from the observation that the textual dimension of historical argumentation has been examined only tangentially, Davide Mazzi conducts in Chapter 7, 'Analogy in history,' a corpus-based study of authentic research articles of professional historians which is aimed at providing insight into the linguistic construction of argumentation in historical texts by choosing argument by analogy as a case in point.

Scholars who study U.S. public discourse tend to disparage the historical analogy, arguing that it promotes misinterpretations that often lead to pernicious consequences. Ray investigates the productive potential of historical analogy: can it promote, rather than suppress, thoughtful reflection on the past and the present? She examines versions of the nineteenth-century speech by Douglass, published books of the period used as sources for the speech, and newspaper commentary about the delivery of the speech. In addition, she relies on primary and secondary historical sources to help explain the cultural context. Conceptually, her contribution deals with the troublesome, but powerful characteristics of analogies. Historically, it deals with the recurrent problems of interpreting Douglass's complicated retrospective understanding of Abraham Lincoln. Mazzi's qualitative as well as quantitative study is based on the so-called HEM-History corpus, an English monolingual corpus comprised of 306 research articles in history taken from the 1999 and 2000 editions of ten specialised journals. On the basis of an empirical study of linguistic markers of argument by analogy, he carries out an examination of the discursive operations performed by professional historians when they decide to use analogy as a rhetorical tool.

Ray's case study demonstrates that analogies can function not only to make sense of something unfamiliar by comparing it to the familiar, but can also invoke a relatively unfamiliar history in order to revise understanding of what is purportedly well known. The case suggests the possibility that a complex analogy that emphasizes difference as well as likeness may have greater potential for revising the understanding of the person generating the analogy than for public audiences whom this person may seek to influence. Ray's study is the first essay to pay close attention to Douglass's "William the Silent" lecture and to trace Douglass's interpretations of his own time via his reading about sixteenth-century Dutch history. Mazzi's findings suggest that the discursive construction of argument by analogy is a clue to understanding some crucial argumentative sequences and organising principles of historical discourse. Data show that the formulation of analogy tends to disclose the dialogic interplay of voices in a historical research article. They also make clear that analogy markers often lie at the basis of the two related steps of argumentation and explanation. In addition, an interesting relation is proven to exist between the use of argument by analogy and the complex network of writer-reader interaction.

Section III, dealing with the legal context, consists of four chapters. In Chapter 8, 'A rhetorical approach to legal reasoning,' Maurizio Manzin discusses critically the

development of the argumentative account in Italian jurisprudence after the Second World War, more specifically after the ‘argumentative turn’ at the end of the 1960s. He also introduces the specific approach based on insights developed by Cavalla of the Italian Research Centre on Legal Methodology CERMEG. In Chapter 9, ‘Strategic manoeuvring in the case of the “Unworthy spouse,”’ Eveline T. Feteris describes how the Dutch Supreme Court operates in cassation strategically to steer the outcome in a specific direction. In Chapter 10, ‘Everyday argument strategies in Appellate Court argument about same-sex marriage,’ Karen Tracy answers with the help of discourse analysis and key-word-in-context content analysis of video and transcripts of oral argument in California’s Supreme Court for two cases about same-sex marriage the question what kinds of argument strategies expert legal arguers use in appellate argument. In Chapter 11, ‘Student speech in public schools,’ Dale A. Herbeck presents a case study explaining how district and appellate courts in the United States used definitional argument to subvert a famous Supreme Court decision extending free speech rights to public school students.

Manzin’s chapter focuses on the development of argumentation studies in Italy and their complex relations with rhetoric and science. CERMEG’s rhetorically oriented research paradigm is for the most part based on classical studies. Manzin’s essay contributes to a better understanding of the historical development of legal argumentation in the Italian context. Feteris’s case study shows that the Supreme Court manoeuvres consistently in the various counterparts of the four stages of a critical discussion, so that according to the pragma-dialectical criteria its efforts can be characterized as a real discussion strategy. Tracy’s paper deals with the problem of how the technical argument sphere draws on and uses ordinary talk practices to accomplish its aims. In her contribution she identifies discourse strategies at work in an important argument sphere and shows the interplay between everyday argument practices and technical legal argument. Herbeck explores in his essay two problems: the important role that definitions play in legal arguments and the way in which American courts balance student speech rights against educational objectives. His contribution fills the need for case studies on definitional argument. Herbeck makes clear that by making two simple definition moves, district and appellate courts were able to completely undermine the original decision. The changes in the definition of disruption he observes suggest a new role for American public schools. Whereas the original definition assumed that schools should be a forum open to a broad range of ideas (including some controversial ones), the new definition defers to school officials and allows them to repress student speech by asserting it might lead to disruptive behaviour.

Section IV contains two contributions on argumentation in an academic context. In Chapter 12 ‘Expert authority and *ad verecundiam* arguments,’ Gábor Kutrovácz explores the problems readers of Internet blog discussions about scientific issues encounter when evaluating argumentation by authority. Gerd Fritz and Thomas

Gloning discuss in 'Critique and controversy in digital scientific communication' the opportunities for scientific controversy provided in new digital formats like blogs, mailing lists and open peer review journals. They also examine the ways in which these opportunities are actually used and the problems encountered in using these formats. Their chapter aims to show characteristic structures, opportunities and problems of polemical digital interactions. Fritz and Gloning's contribution lies at the cross-roads of two lines of research, historical pragmatics of controversies and research in digital science communication. Their analyses are based on detailed case studies of controversies conducted in digital formats in the disciplines of biology, meteorology and linguistics. In these case studies they use methods of linguistic pragmatics, especially dialogue analysis and text linguistics. Kutrovátz focuses on digital science communication. His main aim is to compare current approaches to authority argumentation with each other. Kutrovátz contrasts these theoretical approaches with empirical considerations concerning appeals to authority based on Internet blog discussions of a specific scientific case (the H1N1 virus).

Section VI consists of four chapters on argumentation in a medical context: medical advertising, the US public debate on health care reform and doctor-patient encounters. In Chapter 14, 'Drug advertising and clinical practice,' G. Thomas Goodnight and Kara Gilbert make the case for a critical inquiry into the biopolitics of pharmaceutical advertising, which offers resources to advance competent, clinical communicative practices. In Chapter 15, 'Argumentative insights for the analysis of direct-to-consumer advertising,' Dima Mohammed and Peter J. Schulz try to incorporate argumentative considerations in the analysis of direct-to-consumer drug advertising. In his contribution 'The battle for health care reform and the liberal public sphere,' which is Chapter 16, Robert C. Rowland describes the course of the debate over health care reform in the US and assesses the performance of each of the actors. In Chapter 17, 'Contextual constraints on argumentation,' Sarah Bigi shows how the institutional context can affect argumentation by focusing on the activity type of medical consultations.

Goodnight and Gilbert concentrate on pharmaceutical advertisements related to mental health issues. The empirical material used by Mohammed and Schulz consists of direct-to-consumer drug advertorials. Rowland relies in the first place on textual (case and rhetorical) analysis of messages in the US health care debate, media coverage, commentary, and a close analysis of public opinion data. Bigi's empirical material consists of video-recordings of doctor-patient consultations.

Goodnight and Gilbert point to the problem of expanding direct-to-consumer advertising. This problem creates the need to establish a means to weigh the costs and benefits of strategies in relation to particular treatment regimes and to modify clinical training in order to respond effectively. Critical analysis of advertising campaigns through the evaluation of argument should prepare health professionals to

better engage in deliberative consultation of practice. According to Rowland, liberal democracy is based on the idea that through free and open debate the people not only can choose policies for their societies but that such a debate will also pick wise policies. The question he wonders about is whether the public sphere achieves the second goal. Mohammed and Schulz discuss how content analysis of direct to consumer ads can be informed by insights from argumentation theory. Based on their research they propose a coding scheme for content analysis in which argumentative aspects of the message in a direct-to-consumer advertisement – for example, the argumentation structure – is captured. This is useful because it allows analysts to make more accurate claims about the role which different types of appeals play in direct-to-consumer advertising.

Rowland indicates that over time rational argument is still both a powerful persuasive force and a good means of choosing public policy. Bigi develops the issue of how context-specific variables affect argumentation in institutional contexts: how does the persuasiveness of argument schemes vary depending on specific contextual constraints? Her paper shows that by increasing the number of consultations included in the analysis it would be possible to draw up a ‘topics’ for the medical context, i.e. a description of the most effective argument schemes considering the contextual variables of the activity type of the consultation.

The two contributions devoted to the media context included in Part VI are about advertising and editorial argumentation. In Chapter 18, ‘The effects of hedges and pledges in advertisements for high and low reputation brands,’ Jos Hornikx examines the influence of hedges and pledges on the effectiveness of such advertisements of Darrin Hicks and Justin Eckstein study in Chapter 19, ‘Higher-order strategic maneuvering by shifting standards of reasonableness in cold-war editorial argumentation,’ different conceptions of political reasonableness.

Hornikx studies argumentation in advertisements by way of empirical experimentation while Hicks and Eckstein rely on a content analysis, in this case, of New York Times editorials. According to Hornikx, claims in advertising may include a qualifier or hedge which indicates the degree of probability that the claim is true (e.g. “likely”, “possibly”). A pledge has the same function but signals complete certainty of the claim, such as through ‘absolutely’ or ‘undoubtedly’. One explanation for earlier experimental findings that hedges and pledges are equally persuasive may be that there was no context. This leads to two problems: (1) the studies had a low ecological validity, (2) it is unknown whether the brand affects people’s appreciation of hedges and pledges. Both problems were addressed in the two studies. Hicks and Epstein’s central question is how political actors strategically maneuver by redefining the content and demands of reasonableness to privilege their own views and to condemn the conduct of their interlocutors. Specifically, they examine how shifting standards of reasonableness constitutes a form of higher-order strategic maneuvering. Their contribution leads to a better understanding of the nature and demands of political

reasonableness and the way in which editorial argumentation is used to influence important political events.

In Part VII two papers are included about argumentation in a financial context. In Chapter 20, 'The diversifying of contextual constraints and argumentative strategies in friendly and hostile takeover bids,' Rudi Palmieri investigates how the argumentative situation affects arguers. Gergana Zlatkova discusses in Chapter 21, 'Reported argumentation in economic-financial news,' the argumentative function of reported speech in economic-financial newspaper articles. Both contributions concentrate in a different way on the domain of financial communication. Palmieri examines argumentation in friendly and in hostile takeovers. He analyzes various types of texts published by companies involved in a takeover bid, such as press releases, formal offer documents, circulars sent to shareholders. Zlatkova reconstructs argumentation occurring in economic and financial news items. This is why Zlatkova's work is also partly situated in the domain of media discourse. She uses a corpus consisting of the April 2006 issues of three prominent Italian newspapers.

Palmieri is interested in finding out how the argumentative situation emerging in a takeover bid affects the corporate directors' argumentative strategies. He first specifies contextual constraints at the confrontation stage (initial situation). Next he makes clear that, from an argumentative viewpoint, friendly and hostile can be viewed as two kindred activity types starting from different initial situations. Palmieri analyses the different argumentative strategies adopted by corporate directors in the two types of offer by relying on two cases, one friendly and one hostile. The central issue in Zlatkova's chapter is the argumentative function of reported speech, with a particular focus on the journalist's stance towards the reported statements. Zlatkova deals with the question whether these texts can be reconstructed argumentatively. The frequent use of reported speech makes the attribution of the role of protagonist to the journalist difficult. Zlatkova demonstrates that an integrated approach to reported speech, combining linguistic and argumentation theoretical insights, makes clear what the relations are between linguistic characteristics of reported speech and its argumentative functions. Moreover, her study shows that the investigation of the journalist's stance towards the reported statements provides a sufficient basis for deciding whether or not he can be assumed to take on the role of protagonist.

PART I

Political context

The reasonableness of confrontational strategic maneuvering in political interviews

Corina Andone

The goal of this paper is to evaluate a politician's responses to an interviewer's accusation that his current standpoint is inconsistent with an earlier expressed standpoint on the same issue. The author focuses on the case in which the politician responds to such criticism by retracting the earlier expressed standpoint and subsequently reformulating it. Taking a pragma-dialectical perspective on argumentation, the author assesses whether the politician's sequence of moves contributes to a reasonable resolution of the difference of opinion that is at stake in a political interview. To this end, the author formulates a set of soundness conditions that should be fulfilled if a politician is to reasonably retract a standpoint that is afterwards reformulated. The author applies the soundness conditions to a number of concrete cases taken from BBC political interviews to judge whether the responses are reasonable or not.

1. Introduction¹

A political interview is a specimen of a predominantly argumentative activity type in the political domain, the institutional point of which is to preserve a democratic political culture. To realize this point, the interviewer acts as the representative of the electorate and the mass media. His aim is not simply to obtain and impart information to the public on matters of general interest, but more importantly, to ask the politician to account for his words and actions. The politician is a political representative who not only gives information, but also clarifies and justifies his views by providing the expected account of his words and actions.²

1. This paper is an extended version of an earlier article published in the Proceedings of the Seventh International Society for the Study of Argumentation (Andone 2011).

2. Viewing a political interview as a predominantly argumentative activity type in which an accountability procedure is carried out differs from the view of other scholars. Political

In an attempt at carrying out the accountability procedure that lies at the core of a political interview, interviewers commonly make accusations of inconsistency. Such charges are an excellent means of urging the politicians to justify their allegedly inconsistent views before the listening, reading or television-watching audience, who constitutes their primary addressee. In order to preserve a positive image in the eyes of the public, the politicians more often than not try to answer in a way that makes them no longer look inconsistent. For example, in the cases in which the interviewer's criticism correctly points at inconsistent standpoints, the politicians usually retract an earlier position and compensate for giving up the initial standpoint by reformulating it so as to continue the discussion by arguing for the adequacy of his words or actions.

From a pragma-dialectical perspective on argumentation (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2000, 2002, 2003; van Eemeren 2010), it can be said that the politicians' answers are instances of strategic maneuvering by means of which the politicians are striving to balance the dialectical interest related to resolving a difference of opinion with the simultaneous rhetorical interest in doing so in their own favor. However, the pursued balance between satisfying the dialectical goal and at the same time the rhetorical goal, is not in all cases obtained. Sometimes, the desire to be rhetorically effective may override the concern to remain dialectically reasonable. In such cases, the politician's strategic maneuvering can be said to derail as it transgresses the bounds of reasonableness and becomes fallacious.

The goal of this paper is to evaluate a politician's strategic maneuvering by establishing under which conditions his retraction of one of the inconsistent standpoints and the subsequent reformulation of this standpoint can be considered dialectically sound.³ To enable an evaluation of a politician's strategic maneuvering with this type

interviews have been the subject of research from different viewpoints varying from conversation analysis and media studies to socio-pragmatics and social psychology. In these approaches, political interviews are seen as being aimed at making known public policies, informing the public on matters of general interest or simply familiarizing the public with the politician.

3. Retracting a standpoint is not by definition dialectically unsound. The move is a dialectical requirement for the protagonist of a standpoint to deal with an inconsistency pointed out by the antagonist (Hamblin 1970; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992a), which can be perfectly reasonable. I am not concerned with the cases described by Krabbe (2001:142) as "wanton and irregular retractions" with "detrimental effects on an ordered and efficient course of dialogue." Such behavior makes it impossible to resolve a difference of opinion, because the antagonist cannot continue a discussion with a protagonist that constantly changes his commitments. This is true of most communicative activity types varying from those that are formally institutionalized, such as court proceedings, to those that are not formally institutionalized, such as a chat.

of move, I will formulate relevant soundness conditions. In a pragma-dialectical vein, I will do so by combining dialectical insights with pragmatic insights. Dialectically, the strategic maneuvering can be considered part of a critical testing procedure to resolve a difference of opinion on the merits. Pragmatically, the strategic maneuvering at issue can be viewed as an illocutionary act that comes in response to the illocutionary act of accusation of inconsistency.

The critical testing procedure is constituted by the rules for critical discussion.⁴ In the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentative discourse, a move that violates one of the discussion rules is considered fallacious. However, to decide when a rule for critical discussion has been violated, criteria are necessary for judging whether the norms stipulated in the rules for critical discussion have been violated. It is precisely these criteria which my set of soundness conditions will provide for assessing the reasonableness of a politician's strategic maneuvering.

2. The reasonableness of strategic maneuvering

In the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, the arguers' moves are always seen as part of a critical discussion in which the participants try to resolve a difference of opinion on the merits. In such a discussion, the protagonist of a standpoint aims at convincing an antagonist of the acceptability of his position by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint.⁵ Taking this view of argumentation into account makes it possible to study the politicians' responses in a political interview as part of an argumentative discourse in which standpoints are defended and refuted so that they are tested for their

4. As an evaluative tool, the ideal model of a critical discussion serves as a template against which argumentative moves can be assessed as reasonable or unreasonable. In the model, the exchange of speech acts is regulated by a critical discussion procedure specifying the rules in accordance with which the resolution of the difference of opinion could be achieved on the merits. The rules for critical discussion constitute for each stage the norms of reasonableness authorizing the performance of certain types of speech acts. For the discussion to proceed reasonably, fifteen rules have been formulated that need to be followed for a difference of opinion to be resolved on the merits (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 135–157). In addition to the fifteen rules for critical discussion, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 190–196) formulated a set of ten rules known as “the code of conduct for reasonable discussants.” The ten rules express requirements for reasonableness in a less technical language than the fifteen rules. They constitute a list of prohibitions of moves in an argumentative discourse that hinder or obstruct the resolution process.

5. For a detailed view of argumentation from a pragma-dialectical perspective, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004).

acceptability. This means that a politician's responses to an accusation of inconsistency are part of an argumentative exchange in which the politician attempts to convince the interviewer and the audience at home that his standpoint is acceptable. In the context of the institutional expectations inherent in a political interview, the politician's responses can be seen as refutations of the interviewer's criticism.⁶

A critical discussion comprises various stages that are to be distinguished in the resolution process, in each of which a particular aim is pursued. Thus, in the confrontation stage of a critical discussion, the aim is to make clear the difference of opinion that is at stake: clarity must be achieved as to which standpoints are disputed and the kind of criticism that the protagonist has to overcome. In the opening stage, the purpose is to establish the shared material and procedural starting points in accordance with which the tenability of the standpoint will be put to the test. The aim of the argumentation stage is to systematically test the arguments advanced in support of the standpoint. Finally, in the concluding stage, the outcome of the discussion is established: if the standpoint has been defended conclusively, the antagonist withdraws his doubt; if that is not the case, the protagonist retracts his standpoint. In either case, the difference of opinion can be said to have been resolved.

Because an accusation of inconsistency by the interviewer in a political interview is a criticism in response to a standpoint of the politician that is being interviewed, it constitutes an instantiation of the moves of casting and advancing an opposite standpoint. In terms of a critical discussion, such moves are reconstructed as occurring in the confrontation stage of a critical discussion. The politician's responses to such criticism can be analyzed as playing a role in the definition of the difference of opinion. As confrontational strategic maneuvers,⁷ the politicians' moves at issue are attempts at defining the difference of opinion clearly, while at the same time doing so in such a way that the reformulated standpoint can be easily defended later.

Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2009: 14) formulated three general soundness conditions for strategic maneuvering. Each discussion stage, however, has its specific strategic maneuvers which need to be evaluated differently depending on the outcome pursued at the stage concerned. It is therefore first necessary to establish the soundness

6. Andone (2010) provides a characterization of political interviews as argumentative activity types. She describes how the interviewer and the politician define the difference of opinion, which starting points they adopt, the argumentative means and criticisms they advance and the possible outcome of the discussion. All of these aspects shape the way in which accusatory questions in which charges of inconsistency are made and responses to them are provided.

7. Van Eemeren (2010:46) distinguishes four broad categories of strategic maneuvering in close connection with the four stages of a critical discussion: confrontational strategic maneuvering, maneuvering that can be reconstructed as part of the opening stage, argumentational strategic maneuvering and concluding strategic maneuvering.

conditions in accordance with which *confrontational strategic maneuvering* to which the politician's maneuvering concerned belongs can be evaluated.

The first condition every strategic maneuver should meet requires that every move must be chosen in such a way that “it *enables an analytically relevant continuation* at the juncture concerned in the dialectical route that is taken and can lead to one of the outcomes of the discussion stage concerned” (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2009: 14, my italics). Taking this condition into account, confrontational strategic maneuvering should further the achievement of any of the possible outcomes of the confrontation stage: creating a non-mixed difference of opinion, creating a mixed difference of opinion or ending the discussion. Although these outcomes are not all favorable to an arguer, a participant who maneuvers strategically should allow for any of them to be reached and should not prevent the other participant from taking a dialectical route that may lead to a different outcome than the favored one.⁸ For example, the outcome favored by an antagonist who advances an accusation of inconsistency in the confrontation stage is to bring the process of defining the difference of opinion to an end. This outcome can be achieved by making the protagonist retract his standpoint in response to the accusation. In order for an accusation of inconsistency to be a sound move, however, it should leave open the protagonist's option to maintain his standpoint. Maintaining a standpoint could lead to a non-mixed or a mixed difference of opinion, outcomes which are both unfavorable to an antagonist who is making an accusation of inconsistency (Mohammed 2009).

The second condition for sound strategic maneuvering specifies that each move “*needs to respond to the preceding move* in the dialectical route that is taken” (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2009: 14, my italics). This condition requires that an arguer should ensure that his move is relevant to the move of the other party in the discussion. For instance, in the confrontation stage, a request for clarification should be responded to by means of a usage declarative that provides the expected clarification (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984).

The third soundness condition formulated by van Eemeren and Houtlosser requires every strategic maneuver be “*formulated* in such a way that it can be

8. The idea that strategic maneuvering should allow for both favorable and unfavorable outcomes to come about is already prescribed in the definition of strategic maneuvering. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2009) make clear that every move is by definition an attempt to steer the discussion towards a favorable outcome without overruling the commitment to having a reasonable exchange. Having a reasonable exchange of moves involves, among other things, that the parties should not prevent each other from freely expressing (reasonable) moves that might be unfavorable to the other party, such as criticisms. Inspired by this view, Mohammed (2009) discusses what she terms the freedom requirement for accusations of inconsistency to refer to the freedom of the antagonist to take preferred as well as non-preferred dialectical routes.

interpreted as enabling a relevant continuation and being responsive to the preceding move” (2009: 14, my italics). Starting from this condition, every confrontational move should be performed so clearly that the other party understands that it is relevant to the previous move as well as that it aims to obtain a particular interactional effect. This condition is meant to eliminate any hindrance to achieving one of the possible outcomes of the discussion caused by the use of unclear language. For example, an accusation of inconsistency needs to be performed so clearly that the accused understands that the accuser attributes to him two inconsistent commitments and demands him to retract one of them (Mohammed 2009).

Every confrontational strategic maneuver should meet these soundness conditions, but in order to decide in each particular case when the move put forward has derailed, specific criteria need to be applied. For example, every form of criticism in the confrontation stage needs to meet the three general soundness conditions in order not to hinder the critical testing procedure. However, a criticism of inconsistency needs to be evaluated by taking into account the following: (a) whether the accuser is justified in attributing the two inconsistent commitments (the second soundness condition), (b) whether the move is clear enough for the accused to understand what he should do in response to such a charge (the third soundness condition), and (c) whether the move precludes the accused from accepting or not accepting the accusation (the first soundness condition) (Mohammed 2009).

The evaluation of a politician's strategic maneuvering by means of retracting a standpoint and advancing a modified standpoint should take into account that this maneuvering is an attempt at responding to a charge of inconsistency by which the accused tries to continue the discussion in which he is engaged. As will become clear from the next section, the politician's maneuvering should be such that the interviewer can raise new criticism if he wants to (3.1), the politician's moves should resolve the inconsistency with which the protagonist is charged (3.2), and they should be formulated as clearly as required for a proper understanding (3.3).

3. Soundness conditions for responding to an accusation of inconsistency

The analysis of various British interviews in which politicians are accused of being inconsistent revealed that the politicians often have no other choice but to accept the charge as being correct, but try to turn the discussion in their favor by reformulating the original standpoint (Andone 2010: 57–89).⁹ In the political domain, the politician

9. Andone (2010) has analyzed the politicians' responses to an accusation of inconsistency made by a BBC interviewer. She has determined their strategic function by bringing to light various patterns of strategic maneuvering.

is institutionally obliged to avoid simply conceding that he was wrong. Reformulating his standpoint is an effective way to live up to the institutional expectations, while accepting that there is an inconsistency which cannot be maintained.

By reformulating his standpoint, the politician makes an attempt at defining the difference of opinion in a way that could lead to the interviewer retracting his doubt concerning the politician's standpoint and ideally preventing him from making a similar accusation again. The politician's rhetorical pursuit of a favorable definition of the difference of opinion has to be balanced by a dialectical pursuit of maintaining reasonableness. In order to judge whether this balance is indeed realized, I will formulate soundness conditions for the strategic maneuvering concerned.

3.1 Soundness condition of openness

The first soundness condition for confrontational strategic maneuvering stipulates that favorable as well as unfavorable outcomes resulting from defining the difference of opinion may both be reached after the move has been made. In the case of the politician's responses to a criticism of inconsistency this means that his maneuvering should leave open two options for the interviewer: (a) accepting the politician's strategic maneuvering by retracting his criticism and no longer advancing new criticism, and (b) not accepting the politician's strategic maneuvering by upholding the current criticism and/or advancing new criticism.¹⁰ In order for the two options to be left open, the following condition of openness needs to be fulfilled (Andone 2010: 96):

- (a) Confrontational strategic maneuvering that involves retracting a standpoint and reformulating it in response to an accusation of inconsistency should leave open all the other party's available options to continue the current discussion, including the option of advancing a new accusation of inconsistency.

Condition (a) provides a criterion for judging whether the norm for critical discussion specified in the *Freedom Rule* has been violated. According to this rule, "discussants may not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or from calling standpoints into discussion" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 190). The condition of openness is not fulfilled in the case in which the antagonist's freedom to advance moves that realize illocutionary acts consisting of the illocutionary negation of the commissive *accepting* is obstructed. Just as the protagonist has the right to replace his original standpoint by advancing a modified standpoint, the antagonist

10. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984:102) explain that casting doubt can be defined as the refusal to accept, i.e. as the illocutionary negation of acceptance, and hence as non-acceptance. Upholding doubt is the repetition of the illocutionary negation of acceptance, i.e. non-acceptance.

should also enjoy the right to advance new criticism against the same protagonist. The freedom of advancing new criticism includes advancing another accusation of inconsistency.

The violation of the condition of openness by a protagonist who maneuvers strategically by retracting a standpoint in response to an accusation of inconsistency and advancing a modified standpoint blocks the revision and flux of opinions, because the antagonist is prevented from exercising his rights in the discussion. This blocking may obstruct the process of resolving a difference of opinion in several ways. Two prominent cases of possible violations of the condition of openness are putting pressure on the antagonist by threatening him with sanctions and by attacking him personally. A protagonist who resorts to threats violates the antagonist's freedom by means of an *argumentum ad baculum* aimed at eliminating the antagonist from the discussion. A protagonist launching a personal attack becomes guilty of an *ad hominem* fallacy aimed at silencing the opponent.

In the activity type of a political interview, it seems sensible to assume that politicians will often find subtle ways of violating the condition of openness. This assumption stems from the institutional characteristic that politicians try to give an account of their words or actions while striving at the same time to create a positive image of themselves for the audience at home. The politicians' aspirations to appear as political representatives whose words and actions are up to standard motivate them to design their strategic maneuvering in such a way that the interviewer is prevented from advancing and maintaining impending criticism. Since obviously, by virtue of his role, the interviewer has to criticize the politicians so that they answer for their words and actions, the politicians can as a rule only hope to soften the harshness with which they are questioned.

The politician's attempt at minimizing the critique with which he is confronted in a political interview can sometimes go as far as trying to preclude the interviewer from continuing to pursue a critical line of inquiry. Using very subtle means of attacking the interviewer, the politician tries to prevent his interlocutor from putting forward criticism, especially such fierce criticism as an accusation of inconsistency. Such is the case in a discussion that took place on the BBC on December 9, 2007 between Jon Sopel and Alan Duncan, at the time Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. Sopel charges Duncan with being inconsistent on the ground that in this interview he favors the use of nuclear energy, whereas in a previous interview he has taken a negative stance on the use of nuclear energy. The exchange is reproduced below as transcribed on the BBC website:

Jon Sopel:

And on nuclear, the government says that obviously has to be part of the mix. Are you on that page as well.

Alan Duncan:

Our policy is absolutely clear and it's again, very similar, we want approval for sites and designs. We want a proper carbon price, we want honesty about costs, with no subsidy. Get on with the decision to do something with the waste, again, David Cameron said that this week, and I think the government has been a bit slow on working out what to do with nuclear waste. So then people can invest and I think probably they will.

Jon Sopel:

You were rather more skeptical the last time I spoke to you when you were on this programme – we can just have a listen to what you said last time.

'we think that the nuclear power sector, should be there as a last resort in many respects. We want to explore every conceivable method of generating electricity before we go to nuclear'

Alan Duncan:

so fluent.

Jon Sopel:

Yes. But you were completely different, you were very skeptical there. It has to be the last option, now you're saying, we're on the same page as the government and yes, let's get on with it.

Alan Duncan:

I think what's important with nuclear is to explain the policy. I think it's unhelpful to get hooked on two words and I think the policy as it has always been is exactly as I've just explained.

In the activity type of a political interview, Sopel's accusation criticizes the Conservatives in an attempt at obtaining from Duncan an account that justifies the change of position. To make his accusation acceptable, Sopel argues for it by quoting Duncan's earlier statement indicating lack of support for the use of nuclear energy. Reconstructed from a pragma-dialectical perspective, Sopel's argumentation is the following:

- (1) (The Conservatives' views with regard to the use of nuclear energy are not adequate)
- ((1).1) (The Conservatives' views with regard to the use of nuclear energy are inconsistent)
- ((1).1).1 Duncan said in a previous interview that the Conservatives do not support the use of nuclear energy, whereas now they support the use of nuclear energy

In response to the charge of inconsistency, Duncan retracts the standpoint he advanced originally, as all other options are closed off. He cannot retract the current standpoint, because it would expose him to another inconsistency. The leader of his

party has announced earlier the same week that the Conservatives favor the use of nuclear energy; therefore Duncan cannot hold the opposite. Although retracting his earlier words, for which he was supposed to have good arguments, is perhaps not the most advantageous choice he could make, retracting the current standpoint could expose a problem with the consistency within the party to which Duncan belongs. Internal party inconsistency could have far more negative consequences for his public image.

In order to avoid losing the discussion by simply retracting the original standpoint, Duncan does more than just accepting that there is an inconsistency. Duncan reformulates the original standpoint in terms of a claim that the original standpoint concerned a different aspect than the current standpoint pertains to. The original standpoint, Duncan seems to suggest, concerned the practice of using nuclear energy, which was problematic, and therefore the Conservatives did not support it. The current standpoint concerns the policy of using nuclear energy, with which, apparently, there is nothing wrong and which therefore can be supported. By arguing in this way, Duncan makes it look as if there is no inconsistency between the two standpoints. Duncan's argumentation can be represented as follows:

- (1) (The Conservatives' views with regard to the use of nuclear energy are adequate)
- ((1).1) (The Conservatives' views with regard to the use of nuclear energy are not inconsistent)
- ((1).1).1 The Conservatives have never opposed the policy of using nuclear energy, but the practice of using nuclear energy

Although Duncan's response to the accusation of inconsistency is potentially effective in this context, his maneuvering transgresses the bounds of reasonableness. The way in which his strategic maneuvering is formulated is an attempt at precluding Soper from maintaining his criticism. Duncan's remark that *it's unhelpful to get hooked on two words* is an indirect attack on Soper conveying: (a) that it is of no use to discuss the issue of being inconsistent (*it's unhelpful*), and (b) that Soper is obsessed with minor aspects (*it's unhelpful to get hooked on two words* contains the presupposition that Soper "got hooked on two words").¹¹

11. Duncan's maneuvering is moreover an attempt at shifting the focus of the discussion from his inconsistency to Soper's obsession with his words. Duncan's attack on Soper is thus combined with an attempt to evade the burden of proof. In a political interview, it is the politician who should justify his words and actions if challenged. In this context, Soper's accusation of inconsistency is a challenge for justification, which Duncan tries to evade by putting the burden on Soper to justify his obsessive concern for the use of words. The unreasonableness of Duncan's maneuvering is the result of this combination.

By means of this double attack, Duncan tries to put an end to the discussion about the Conservatives' view on the use of nuclear energy. In the first place, his attempt could prevent Soper from maintaining his criticism because it highlights that his constant questioning on the matter is simply unhelpful: according to Duncan, the Conservatives' position at the moment is obviously related to the policy, which is a different matter than the previous position which had to do with the practice of using nuclear energy. Further discussion on this, Duncan seems to suggest, is not useful because things are clear now. Presenting Soper's questioning as unhelpful can prevent him from going on with his line of inquiry. Because the interview is directed at an audience, which judges the performance of the politician as well as that of the interviewer, if Soper were to continue in the same way, it would look as if he was nitpicking. This is obviously an image which Soper would rather avoid in a political interview. Had the same remark been used in a conversation between friends, the other party would have had more freedom to continue the discussion by maintaining criticism. There would be no concern for an audience that could prevent him from persisting in criticizing his interlocutor. In this context, this possibility is precluded.

The second part of Duncan's attack is equally harsh as the first part in which he highlights the uselessness of the discussion. He points out that Soper is obsessed with Duncan's words about nuclear energy, which after all, are just "two words." Apart from the strong negative qualification that Soper is hooked, the reference to "two words" is an endeavor to present the disagreement at issue as just a matter of verbal disagreement. Duncan wants to suggest that Soper is overprecise about his use of words with regard to the use of nuclear energy. In fact, Soper remarks that Duncan's statements in another interview indicate a change of position with regard to the use of nuclear energy, which needs to be clarified and justified. Soper's criticism, fully pertinent in a political interview, is presented by Duncan as concentrating on a matter that is irrelevant. He seems to leave the impression that instead of discussing matters of interest and importance for the public, Soper concentrates in the exchange on a minor issue of language use.

3.2 Soundness condition of relevance

The second soundness condition for confrontational strategic maneuvering requires that a move be responsive to the move that precedes it. This means that the politician's strategic maneuvering should be a relevant reaction to the expression of criticism advanced by the interviewer in his accusation of inconsistency.¹² Whether a move

12. Relevance is understood from an evaluative perspective. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst have defined relevance in the following way: "an element of discourse is relevant to another element of discourse if an interactional relation can be envisaged between these elements that is functional in the light of a certain objective" (1992b: 141). Starting from this definition, they

can be considered relevant depends on the goals with which this move is put forward. Since every move constitutes an illocutionary act, it is by definition put forward with a communicative and an interactional goal. The communicative goal concerns obtaining understanding of the illocutionary act and the interactional goal concerns obtaining acceptance of the illocutionary act (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984). As a reaction to an accusation of inconsistency, the maneuvering at hand is considered relevant when it puts into effect the communicative and the interactional goals associated with an accusation of inconsistency. More precisely, it is relevant when (a) it shows understanding of the accusation of inconsistency, and (b) it indicates acceptance of the accusation of inconsistency.

Understanding the accusation means knowing the propositional content and the communicative goal of the accusation of inconsistency. Acceptance implies, among other things, that the protagonist understood the accusation and takes the accusation to be correctly performed. In other words, the politician who accepts an accusation of inconsistency must assume that the interviewer believes that the politician will accept that he has been inconsistent, that the politician will acknowledge that his inconsistency is an obstruction to the exchange and that the politician will take on the obligation to respond to the charge of inconsistency. Moreover, the politician must assume that the interviewer believes that there has been an inconsistency, that the presence of the inconsistency is an obstruction to the exchange and that a response should be provided. It should be the case that the politician shares or is ready to share the interviewer's intentions and preferences. This means that he agrees that there has been an inconsistency, that the inconsistency is an obstruction to the discussion and that a response that answers the charge is necessary.¹³

distinguish three perspectives from which an element of discourse can be considered relevant or irrelevant: an interpretative perspective, an analytic perspective and an evaluative perspective. In an interpretative perspective, language users themselves consider something relevant or irrelevant. In an analytic perspective, the analyst considers an element of discourse relevant or irrelevant depending on the goal for which he analyses a text. In an evaluative perspective, it is judged whether an element of discourse is relevant or irrelevant in light of the norms that the evaluator applies.

13. The preparatory and the sincerity conditions of an accusation of inconsistency, which together constitute correctness conditions, provide the clues to understand what it means to accept the charge. Andone (2010:20) formulated the preparatory conditions as follows: (a) the speaker believes that the addressee who is inconsistent will accept that an inconsistency is indeed at issue; (b) the speaker believes that the addressee will acknowledge that the presence of an inconsistency obstructs the argumentative exchange he and his interlocutor are engaged in; and (c) the speaker believes that the addressee will take on the obligation to provide a response that answers the charge of inconsistency. The sincerity conditions of an accusation of inconsistency are: (a) the speaker believes that the addressee is inconsistent; (b) the speaker

This view of what constitutes a relevant response implies that the politician who in his response accepts the accusation of inconsistency implicitly agrees that the inconsistency should be resolved so that the discussion is no longer obstructed. His strategic maneuvering should at least convey that a commitment to the current standpoint cannot be held simultaneously with a commitment to another standpoint on the same issue. Unless the maneuvering resolves the inconsistency, it cannot be a relevant response to the accusation to which it reacts.

That the politician's response should resolve the inconsistency of which he is accused does not make it possible to judge fully the evaluative relevance of the maneuvering. It is specific of the move of retraction, as van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) show, that it involves the illocutionary negation of an earlier illocutionary act. That is to say, a protagonist who retracts a standpoint makes it understood that he is no longer committed to the propositional content of the earlier standpoint. For the maneuvering that involves retracting a standpoint and reformulating it to be relevant, it needs to count both as a relevant reaction of acceptance of the accusation of inconsistency and as a relevant reaction of non-acceptance of a previous standpoint (i.e. the retraction should concern the standpoint advanced earlier which is no longer found acceptable). In order for the strategic maneuvering to be evaluatively relevant in these two senses, the following condition of relevance needs to be fulfilled (Andone 2010: 105):

(b) In confrontational strategic maneuvering that involves retracting a standpoint and reformulating it in response to an accusation of inconsistency, the protagonist should give up one of the inconsistent standpoints altogether, thus resolving the inconsistency.¹⁴

The maneuvering at issue violates this soundness condition when the politician gives the impression of retracting the original standpoint, but in fact maintains an interpretation of it that is exploited afterwards to defend a standpoint that is easier to justify. This way of maneuvering prevents the original standpoint from being called into question, because the other party is led to believe that the politician is no longer committed to it. The fallacious maneuvering may be a violation of the Freedom (mentioned in 3.1), and it can also be a violation of the *Obligation-to-defend Rule*, because the protagonist may abusively exploit that he is (supposedly) no longer committed to the original standpoint by refusing to defend the original standpoint if challenged to do so.

believes that the presence of an inconsistency constitutes an obstruction to the exchange he and his interlocutor are engaged in; and (c) the speaker wants the addressee to respond in such a way that he answers the charge.

14. In this formulation of the condition of relevance, it is assumed that the two standpoints are not *prima facie* inconsistent.

The Obligation-to-defend Rule stipulates that “discussants who advance a standpoint may not refuse to defend this standpoint when requested to do so” (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 191).

The discussion about the introduction of biometric identity cards, which took place on November 12, 2006 between Jon Sopel and William Hague, is a good illustration of a violation of the condition of relevance.¹⁵ The former Conservative party leader is accused of holding inconsistent positions with regard to the introduction of biometric identity cards, because less than two years before the Conservatives supported this issue, whereas they no longer favor it at the time of the interview. In his response, Hague acknowledges that the Conservatives have indeed been inconsistent, but he argues subsequently that the original standpoint (indicating a supportive attitude) concerned the principle of introducing biometric identity cards, whereas the current standpoint (indicating a non-supportive attitude) concerns the practice of introducing biometric identity cards. By responding like this, Hague justifies his words, as he is institutionally obliged to do, and can give the impression that the inconsistency has been repaired. The exchange between Sopel and Hague in which the charge of inconsistency is made is reproduced below:

Jon Sopel:

And Labor say the big thing that you could do to help would be to support identity cards. It's fair to say that this is an issue that your party has rather flip flopped on isn't it.

William Hague:

Well it's... I think it's become clearer over time where we should stand on this, let's put it that way, because we've got the government adopting an identity card scheme, but one that is so bureaucratic and involves a vast data base and this is the government of serial catastrophes when it comes to data bases as we all know, costing now, according to the London School of Economics, up to twenty billion pounds and we said that if some of that money was spent instead on an effective border police and strengthened surveillance of terrorist suspects, and strengthening special branch and things like that, we'd actually get a lot further... (interjection)...having identity cards.

Jon Sopel:

Isn't that a detail of the legislation. I mean you supported identity cards back in December 2004, less than two years ago.

15. For an analysis of this fragment in terms of strategic maneuvering, see Andone (2010:70–77).

William Hague:

We supported, I and Michael Howard supported the principle of those. Subject to how the details were worked out. The details are not impressive and the grasp of detail and the ability to control the costs of the current government is so terrible, that it's not a scheme that we can support.

Despite accepting that a commitment to the current standpoint cannot be held simultaneously with a commitment to an earlier standpoint on the same issue because the standpoints are inconsistent, Hague retracts only 'part' of the original proposition of the standpoint he advanced earlier (concerning the principle of introducing biometric identity cards). In itself, there is nothing wrong with this maneuvering. After all, making a dissociation, which involves retracting an interpretation while maintaining another, is not by definition fallacious. On the contrary, as van Rees (2009) shows, it can be an excellent way of making a clarification. What derails in Hague's maneuvering is that he makes it seem as if Sopel can no longer call the original standpoint into question. Hague claims that the original standpoint concerned the principle of introducing biometric identity cards. However, the original standpoint, as can be inferred from the accusation of inconsistency, concerned the unitary concept of support for the introduction of biometric identity cards. Otherwise, there would not have been an accusation of inconsistency, or the inconsistency could have been easily denied because it is unjustified. This maneuvering of maintaining a certain interpretation of the standpoint and retracting only one interpretation of the original standpoint is a way of immunizing against further criticism the original standpoint that the Conservatives support the introduction of biometric identity cards. In this case, it can be said that the aiming for rhetorical advantages overrides the concern for reasonableness.

3.3 Soundness condition of clarity

The third soundness condition for confrontational strategic maneuvering requires that a move be formulated in such a way that the antagonist can interpret it as a relevant response to the previous move and that all possible continuations of the discussion (leading to the creation of a non-mixed discussion, the creation of a mixed discussion, or the end of the discussion) are allowed. The first two soundness conditions for strategic maneuvering by means of retracting a standpoint and advancing a reformulated standpoint (3.1 and 3.2) stipulate that (a) the antagonist should not be prevented from maintaining his criticism or advancing new criticism, and (b) the inconsistency should be resolved. If the antagonist does not accept the politician's maneuvering, he should be allowed to maintain his criticism or advance new criticism if he finds this necessary. He may express his non-acceptance of the protagonist's maneuvering by denying

that it answers the charge of inconsistency, as required by the essential condition of an accusation of inconsistency.¹⁶

In order for the first two soundness conditions to be fulfilled, the strategic maneuver should be adequately formulated. That means that the protagonist should be so clear that the antagonist understands what his options are for continuing the discussion and that the protagonist's response resolves the inconsistency as required by the accusation of inconsistency. Otherwise, the antagonist may not understand that the protagonist's maneuvering is an attempt at eliminating the inconsistency. The strategic maneuvering concerned should fulfill the following soundness *condition of clarity* (Andone 2010: 109):

- (c) The moves in confrontational strategic maneuvering that involve retracting a standpoint and reformulating it in response to an accusation of inconsistency should be formulated as clearly as required for a proper understanding.

Failure to fulfill soundness condition (c) constitutes a violation of the *Language Use Rule* of a critical discussion. This rule requires that "discussants may not use formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 195).¹⁷ A formulation that is not clear enough for the purpose of the communicative exchange may amount to the fallacy of misuse of unclarity.¹⁸ An example of fallacious maneuvering that violates the soundness condition of clarity is an obscure wording that gives the false impression of resolving the inconsistency.

In order to show how the soundness condition of clarity can be applied, I will evaluate Yvette Cooper's maneuvering in the discussion with Sopel on July 15, 2007 on the issue of housing in Britain. As Housing Minister, Cooper said at the beginning of the interview that local councils are free to take decisions about housing, whereas later in the same interview she said that local councils are not in fact free to do so. The fragment is reproduced below:

16. The essential condition of an accusation of inconsistency stipulates that "an accusation of inconsistency counts as raising a charge against an addressee for having committed himself to both p and $\neg p$ (or informal equivalents thereof) in an attempt to challenge the addressee to provide a response that answers the charge" (Andone 2010: 18).

17. The *Language Use Rule* does not impose an obligation on the protagonist to formulate his move explicitly, since it is often perfectly possible for the antagonist, using sentence meaning and contextual information, to recognize what is intended with the move even if it is implicit.

18. A closely related fallacy amounts to the misuse of ambiguity, as in those cases in which the speaker is lexically ambiguous in such a way that the other party does not understand what to make of his words.

Jon Sopel:

You keep stressing that it's up to local councils, local councils to decide what is the best thing to do. What do you do with the local council who say, well frankly, we don't think we want to build that much.

Yvette Cooper:

Well we do have a serious problem with Conservative local councils in particular across the south east region in particular, but not just there, who are opposing increases in housing...the south east Regional Assembly indeed has been arguing for cuts in the level of house building over the next few years, which I just think it's bonkers, given the needs we have. But I think it's, you know, it's not on really for councils to simply turn their backs and say, well we don't want any new houses round here, build them somewhere else. Build them in another community, build them in another town.

Every town, every city, every community has first time buyers who can't get on the ladder, has sons and daughters who are still stuck living at home with their mum and dad because they just can't afford anywhere to live, that is not fair and every community needs to recognize its responsibility to do something about that.

Jon Sopel:

But you just said at the start, it's up to councils to decide. Councils could decide they don't want to build extra houses, then what are you going to do about it.

Yvette Cooper:

No, we're clear that the way that the regional planning process works and the way that local councils have to wait together, they will all have to accept their responsibility to deliver more homes. Where they have the flexibilities around where within their community the homes should be built, you know, what the best location is, whether they've got good brown fields available and what kinds of homes.

You know, they may need more family homes in their area to look at those sorts of issues as well. What they can't do is turn their backs on their responsibility to deliver more homes and interestingly, we had forty towns and cities came forward over the last twelve months to say, well we want to increase the level of homes in our area.

Sopel concentrates in his question on Cooper's remark that local councils can decide on the location of houses built within their community and on the kind of houses they will build. According to Sopel, this view is seemingly inconsistent with the view Cooper advanced at the beginning of the interview according to which local councils have the freedom to make decisions, including the decision whether to build or not. In response to this charge of inconsistency, Cooper retracts what she said in the beginning, reformulates that in terms of responsibilities and clarifies how these responsibilities are divided. More concretely, Cooper clears herself from an apparent

inconsistency by retracting her standpoint advanced in the beginning of the interview that local councils have the freedom to decide what the best location is. Following this retraction, she emphasizes that whether to build or not is not a matter of decision for the local councils. Finally, she outlines what kinds of decisions local councils can take, namely decisions with regard to the location of houses and the kinds of houses that are to be built. The full reconstruction of Cooper's argumentation can be represented as follows (Andone 2010: 82):

- (1) (My view with regard to the decisional power of the local councils concerning the construction of new houses is adequate)
- ((1).1) (My view with regard to the decisional power of the local councils is not inconsistent, nor does it amount to taking away too much decisional power from the local councils)
- ((1).1).1a Local councils do have decisional power, but not power whether to build or not
- ((1).1).1b (There is good reason for the local councils not to have the power to decide whether to build or not)
- ((1).1).1b).1 There is a great need for housing
- ((1).1).1b).1.1 There are a lot of first time buyers who do not have a house

Cooper's strategic maneuvering is a good example of how the soundness condition of clarity is fulfilled. Her response is clear enough for the purpose of the exchange in which she and Sopel are involved. In virtue of her role in a political interview, she clarifies her view with regard to the matter on which she is interviewed and subsequently justifies it to give the account expected of her. The clarification is sufficiently precise for Sopel, the audience at home and the local councils to understand how responsibilities are divided and where the flexibilities lie. In this way, Sopel is not in any way prevented from continuing the discussion asking for more clarification or justification if he wants to.

4. Conclusion

The pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation views fallacies as breaches of the rules for critical discussion constituting the dialectical procedure aiming at resolving a difference of opinion on the merits. By taking into account that every argumentative move is an attempt at arguing reasonably and at the same time effectively, a violation of the rules for critical discussion is said to be committed with a view to obtaining rhetorical success. From this perspective, fallacies are cases of derailed strategic maneuvering. Identifying whether a derailment of strategic maneuvering has occurred requires workable criteria that make it possible to decide whether a norm specified in the rules for critical discussion has been violated or not.

In this paper, a politician's strategic maneuvering involving the retraction of a standpoint and reformulating it in response to an accusation of inconsistency has been evaluated by applying criteria that relate to the norms of critical discussion. These criteria have been derived from a set of soundness conditions that make it possible to assess the reasonableness of the maneuvering at hand.

The first soundness condition (condition of openness) ensures that the politician whose standpoint is declared inconsistent with another standpoint he advanced previously and who responds by retracting a standpoint and reformulating it, leaves open all dialectically possible continuations of the discussion. The violation of this condition gives rise to fallacies in which the antagonist is attacked with the aim of excluding him from the discussion. The second soundness condition (condition of relevance) requires that the politician resolve the inconsistency with which he is charged by retracting one of the criticized standpoints altogether. This condition is not fulfilled when the protagonist maintains some interpretation of the original standpoint that is exploited afterwards to defend a standpoint that is easier to justify. Doing so conveys the false impression that the original standpoint is given up so that the antagonist no longer raises criticism about this standpoint. The condition of relevance is also violated when the protagonist abusively exploits that he is supposedly no longer committed to the original standpoint by refusing to defend it if challenged to do so. The third soundness condition (condition of clarity) requires a formulation of the strategic maneuvering concerned that is as clear as necessary for a proper understanding. The violation of this condition takes place when the lack of clarity is exploited in such a way that the other party does not understand what his options are for continuing the discussion and to cover for the inconsistency not being resolved.

In order to illustrate how the three soundness conditions can be applied in cases in which an inconsistency is pointed out between standpoints causing the protagonist to retract one of the standpoints and to reformulate it, I have given an evaluative account of the responses of three politicians. Basically, the cases of derailed strategic maneuvering that I have identified (3.1 and 3.2) provide proof that fallacies are rhetorically motivated abuses of the dialectical norms for reasonable argumentation. In the context of a political interview, they are designed to be potentially persuasive for the interviewer and especially for the audience at home which is the ultimate judge of a politician's maneuvering. In the activity type of a political interview, a politician is not solely interested in giving the account expected of him, but also wants to appear competent and trustworthy on his views and actions. To avoid being perceived otherwise, a politician strives to be confronted with as little harsh criticism as possible. To achieve this purpose, he will often find subtle ways of preventing the interviewer from advancing and maintaining criticism and he will avoid formulating his maneuvering as clearly as required for a proper understanding. Therefore, the derailment of his strategic maneuvering may easily pass unnoticed. A careful reconstruction of the

politician's moves that duly takes into account the verbal and institutional context in which the moves are advanced has provided useful indications that the norms for critical discussion have been violated.

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