ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Powerful Arguments: Logical Argument Mapping

1. Introduction
We all know that deductively valid arguments form only a very small subset of all possible arguments. If we would try to provide a complete overview of all forms of arguments people are using in all areas of life, it would hardly be a good idea to focus only on the few well-known argument schemes of propositional and categorical logic. However, the goal of representing all possible argument forms in a complete system of argument representation is not all what argumentation theory is about. Another legitimate part of argumentation theory is to develop argument representation systems for specific purposes. This has been done, for example, by Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969 <1958>) for arguments whose primary purpose is to persuade somebody; by the pragma-dialectical approach for arguments whose primary function is reaching consensus (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004); and by the epistemological approach to argumentation for arguments whose "standard function" is to justify knowledge and truth claims (Lumer 2005a, 2005b; Goldman 1999).

In contrast to these approaches to argumentation, I am interested in argument visualization systems whose primary purpose is to stimulate reflection and to confront people with the limits of their own understanding; that is, to stimulate critical reflection on one's own assumptions, especially those that usually remain hidden. I would like to discuss argument visualization systems that focus on reflection under the heading of "reflective argumentation." This comes close to the way Tim van Gelder defines "deliberation": an activity, performed collectively or individually, that is "aimed at determining one's own attitude" (van Gelder 2003, p. 98; see also van Gelder 2007). The central idea of reflective argumentation can be captured by a nice quote by Andre Maurois that Paul Kirschner, Simon Buckingham Shum, and Chad Carr used as a motto for their seminal book *Visualizing Argumentation: Software Tools for Collaborative and Educational Sense-making*: "The difficult part in an argument is not to defend

one's opinion but rather to know it" (Kirschner, Buckingham Shum, & Carr 2003, p. vii).

Wesley Salmon wrote already 50 years ago that the deductive argument "is designed to make explicit the content of the premises" (Salmon 1963, p. 15). Exactly this is the reason why I consider deductively valid argument forms as being crucial for reflective argumentation. Based on the fact that we know how deductive arguments like *modus ponens* or disjunctive syllogism must be constructed, we can take any claim we want to argue for and construct the premises so that they fit into the logical scheme we think is most adequate. This way, we can study those assumptions that would be necessary to guarantee the truth of a conclusion, and we can experiment with alternative formulations of our conclusion and our reasons to improve our argument. Since the chosen argument scheme itself should not be controversial based on its deductive form, we can concentrate our efforts on the question which argument scheme is most appropriate, and how to formulate the content of premises and conclusions. Thus, we are encouraged to focus on what is most important for any argument: the conclusion, the reasons, and the connection between reasons and conclusion.

For the purpose of this paper I call arguments that support reflection along these lines "powerful arguments." More precisely, I define powerful arguments as arguments that leave only one choice for a potential opponent: either to accept the conclusion or to defeat one of its premises. In the first part of this contribution, I will present an argument for the thesis that so defined powerful arguments are possible when we do not only provide reasons as premises of an argument, but also what I call an "enabler." An "enabler" is that premise in an argument that guarantees that the reason provided in this argument is sufficient to justify the claim or conclusion. In the second part I am providing an argument for the theses that powerful arguments promote mutual understanding and self-reflexivity.

I will present both these arguments by means of Logical Argument Mapping (LAM), a method for the visualization of arguments that I developed over the past years. Compared to other argument visualization tools (see Scheuer, Loll, Pinkwart, & McLaren 2010 for an overview), LAM is unique in requiring that every main argument and every argument that might be controversial in an argumentation has to be constructed by means of a deductively valid argument scheme (see http://lam.spp.gatech.edu/, and for a planned web-based and

interactive software version http://agora.gatech.edu/). Since a deductively valid argument is only complete if it includes a conclusion, one or more reasons, and an "enabler" that guarantees that this reason (or these reasons) – if true – are sufficient to determine the truth of the conclusion, LAM promotes the construction of powerful arguments.

In the third part, finally, I will demonstrate with an example how LAM can facilitate a better understanding of others and of our own reasoning. My example is an article by Thomas Nagel in which he argued that we don't have a moral obligation to respond to the "gruesome facts of inequality in the world economy."

2. How are powerful arguments possible?
My argument for the thesis that powerful arguments are possible when we do not only provide reasons, but also an enabler that guarantees that these reasons are sufficient to determine the conclusion, is represented in
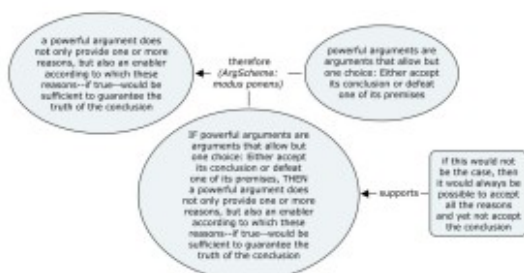

Figure 1

In Logical Argument Mapping, statements in oval text boxes represent universal statements. "Universal statement" is defined as a proposition that can be falsified by one counterexample. In this sense, laws, rules, and all statements that include "ought," "should," or other forms indicating normativity, are universal statements. Any other proposition is treated as a particular statement, including statements about possibilities. The distinction between universal and particular statements is important only with regard to the consequences of different forms of objections: If a premise is defeated, then the conclusion and every chain of arguments that depends on this premise is defeated as well; but if a premise is only questioned or criticized, then the conclusion and everything depending on it is only questioned, but not defeated. While universal statements can easily be defeated by a counterexample to the rule, law, or norm that is represented in form of a universal statement, it depends on an agreement among deliberators

whether a counterargument against a particular statement is sufficient to defeat it, even though it is always sufficient to question it and to shift, thus, the burden of proof.

These considerations show that Logical Argument Mapping realizes – at least in a limited sense – what has been described in the literature as defeasible reasoning (Pollock 2008; Prakken & Vreeswijk 2001; Walton 2006). It is a limited form of defeasible reasoning because not the deductive argument *schemes* are defeasible, but only reasons and enablers. Although this contradicts the widely shared assumption that only non-deductive reasoning is defeasible (as claimed, for example, by Pollock 1995, p. 40 and p. 85, and Prakken 2010, p. 169), I cannot see any reason not to consider LAM as defeasible reasoning. According to the familiar semantics of defeasible, anything is "defeasible" as long as it "can be defeated." Any deductive argument can be defeated by defeating one of its premises.

It is important for the reflective power of Logical Argument Mapping that it does not make sense to attack the conclusion of a deductive argument without attacking at least one of the premises, that is, either one of the reasons or the enabler. Since in a deductively valid argument the conclusion is necessarily true if all the premises are true, the attention of a potential opponent – and the attention of the constructor of an argument who is concerned with the possibility of opponents – is naturally directed to the premises.

It is of course possible to construct an independent argument with a conclusion that contradicts the conclusion of a given argument. But such an alternative argument – Pollock would call it a "rebutting defeater" (Pollock, 1995, p. 40) – is in itself not sufficient to defeat the original argument. Since such an alternative argument might be based on reasons and inference rules that the proponent of the original does not accept, the case of conflicting arguments only indicates that proponent and opponent "frame" the problem in question differently; that is, they construct arguments that are based on conflicting belief systems. (See Hoffmann, forthcoming, for an example, reconstructed by means of LAM, of how a Palestinian and an Israeli scholar provide conflicting arguments on how to deal with Hamas after its victory in the 2006 elections.) In Logical Argument Mapping, an argument or argumentation (i.e., network of connected arguments) can only be defeated by taking its assumptions seriously, not by providing something else.

3. Why powerful arguments promote mutual understanding and self-reflexivity

My argument for the thesis that powerful arguments, as long as they are defined as proposed in the introduction, promote mutual understanding and self-reflexivity is, to be precise, an argumentation. That is, the two reasons that are provided in Figure 2 are themselves justified by the arguments represented in Figure 3 and Figure 4.
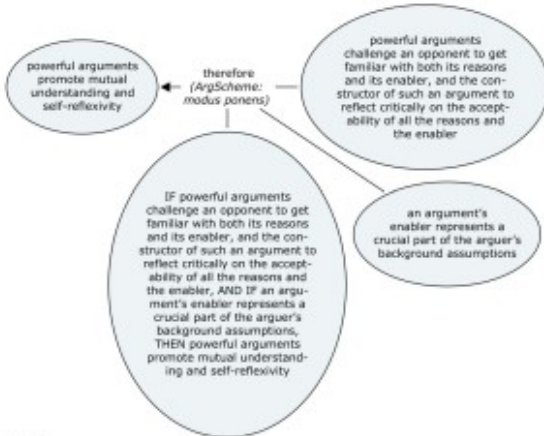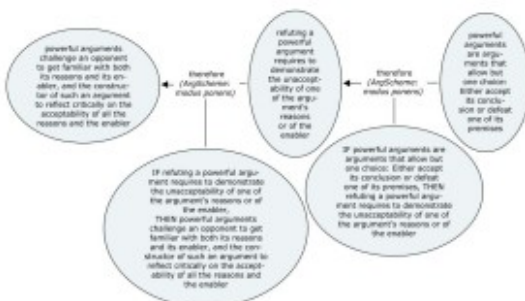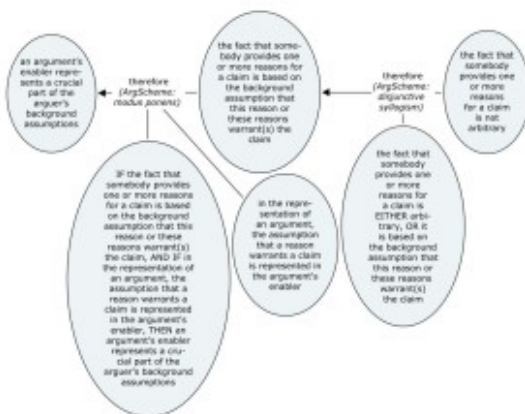

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

4. An example: Thomas Nagel's argument against "global justice"

In order to provide a more complex example of how Logical Argument Mapping can be used to support the process of understanding someone's position, and of our own reasoning about this position, I want to present in Figure 5 a reconstruction of what I think is the core argument of Thomas Nagel's article "The Problem of Global Justice" (Nagel, 2005). This reconstruction was motivated by the fact that my graduate students found it extremely hard to understand the argument. In my own efforts to identify the structure of Nagel's argumentation, I went through several revisions of my original LAM map. Each of these revisions led to different objections to his argumentation. The revisions were mainly motivated by attempts to simplify the structure of the argumentation, and to refute my own objections against Nagel's argument. This way, the experience of revising the argument time and again proves to me the potential of Logical Argument Mapping both to deepen an understanding of the given material and to stimulate self-reflection. I have to say that I found Nagel's argumentation to be very strong at the end, although I started off with the assumption that his final conclusion is simply unacceptable.

Figure 5 represents only one chain of Nagel's core argument, and it includes only one objection (in yellow) which "questions" the enabler of the main argument on the left side of the map. The complete core argument consists, I think, of two independent chains of arguments (see http://tinyurl.com/23vweqm).
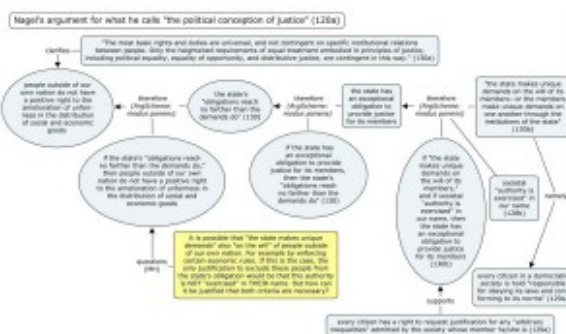

Figure 5

As can be seen in the online version of the complete core argument, I am inclined to think that the second chain can be defeated. (The online map shows only the defeaters without marking the defeated parts, that is without marking the whole

chain of statements that depends on the defeated premises). However, the chain that is represented in Figure 5 still stands, although "questioned" in its final part.

Nagel's article is 34 pages long. A complete reconstruction of the entire article in a LAM map is published at http://tinyurl.com/22o9q9q. This map consists of about a hundred textboxes.

5. Conclusion

I tried to show in this paper – by means of both an argumentation and an example – that focusing on deductive arguments makes sense when the goal is to stimulate reflection on one's own reasoning. The notion of "reflective argumentation" can be used to describe this special function of engaging in arguments. The advantage of using deductive arguments for this purpose is that a reconstruction of an argument in logical form can show us how its premises would need to look like *if* the goal were to guarantee the truth of the conclusion. The point is to get the content of the premises right. This can rather easily be achieved by using the well-known deductive argument schemes as a normative standard of argument construction. This standard determines how the premises must be formulated when we want to argue for a certain claim.

Visualizing arguments and argumentations in deductively valid form stimulates reflection because it challenges the arguer to break down his or her reasoning into argumentative steps as long as it takes to produce a chain of reasons and enablers that are all acceptable for the arguer without further justification. Based on the arguments provided in this paper, I consider Logical Argument Mapping (LAM) to be a powerful form of argument visualization.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Argumentation Schemes In Proverbs

1. Proverbs and argumentation
It is widely known and accepted that proverbs can fulfil argumentative functions in communication. Mostly, the argumentative force of proverbs is ascribed to their authority as pieces of popular folk wisdom. In terms of argumentation theory that would mean that proverbs are arguments from authority themselves which derive their persuasiveness from their broad acceptance among speakers.

In view of this interpretation, proverbial argumentation has often been criticized alongside a growing general scepticism against authorities and tradition especially since the 70ties of the last century. Proverbial argumentation seemed to have lost most of its persuasiveness, since arguments whose credibility is based only on tradition and their publicity among the folk were systematically doubted and questioned.

Nevertheless, proverbs are still common language devices among speakers – not only in ironic or playful language use. And although the argumentative function of proverbs was initially described as only one among several other pragmatic functions, Kindt (2002) has shown that even those seemingly non-argumentative functions contain implicit argumentation initiated by the use of the proverb. One of his examples is the complex speech act of consolation which includes mostly a relativization of the event that is complained about. The relativization itself is often justified by a reason, e. g. the mentioning of the proverb *Every beginning is difficult* relativizes the importance of the event by describing it as an inevitable but time-limited handicap.

The question is then, if there is more to the argumentative attractiveness of proverbs than their identity as arguments from authority.

An important point from the linguist point of view is that proverbs are usually phrased as universal propositions or can easily be reformulated as such (e. g. *All's well that ends well*; *Haste makes waste* → All things done in haste are bound to waste). This means that proverbs usually can be used to express an inference rule from A to B (A → B). What is really interesting here, is to take a look at the substantial nature of this rule. Under many aspects proverbial inference rules and argumentation schemes, which are an issue at the centre of argumentation theory, are similar to each other. Already some attempts have been made (e. g. Goodwin & Wenzel 1981, Wirrer 2007) to show parallels between often described argumentation schemes, such as the argument from sign, and proverbs that more or less represent these schemes in terms of everyday language.

2. Proverbs and presumptive argumentation

Before looking at these concrete parallels between individual proverbs and argumentation schemes, it is worthwhile to specify the general nature of proverbial inference rules by comparing them to a certain kind of argumentation, namely presumptive argumentation as described by Godden & Walton (2007) and Ullmann-Margalit (1983 & 2000).

Presumptive argumentation differs from deductive argumentation since presumptively drawn inferences do not necessarily lead to right conclusions in the way deductive logic does. Instead presumptive argumentation schemes convey only plausible links from A to B, which allows to infer conclusions on a presumptive basis. These tentative inferences can be subject to refutation for example if new information becomes available that makes the original inference obsolete. Their validity is thus context dependent. Inferences on the basis of presumptive argumentation schemes have to be carefully questioned to evaluate their applicability in specific contexts.

Nevertheless, they are a very important part of everyday argumentation, especially since they entitle discussants to continue arguing even if not all relevant information is available but circumstances demand prompt decisions on the basis of what is currently known. Argumentation that aims at making a decision about how to act in a given real life situation is called practical argumentation and it is often associated with the dialogue type of deliberation. That is where presumptive inference rules account for a great part of the arguments put forward. Presumptive inferences are thus practical, context-dependent and refutable.

Now, what about proverbs? Proverbs also represent specific inference rules that function as short-cuts for speakers to cope with already known recurrent problem situations in everyday life. These situations typically call for a decision on how to act further. In this regard they function as evaluations and (indirect) directives according to the problem situation. For example *A cobbler should stick to his last* is linked with an abstract problem situation where an individual is given the chance to gain authority or to assume some kind of higher position. The proverb clearly gives the advice to keep up the status quo instead of risking overextending oneself.

Their practical orientation towards decision making, their context-dependency as well as their status as non-deductive inference rules show important similarities between the status of proverbial reasoning and presumptive argumentation schemes.

3. Proverbs as representations of presumptive argumentation schemes
And in fact, as was already mentioned, many proverbs can be analysed as linguistic representations of already known presumptive argumentation schemes, even though they are mostly less generally formulated and often relate to specific contexts. In 1981, Goodwin & Wenzel have already shown that for many argumentation schemes English proverbs can be found whose inference rules coincide with more abstract argumentation schemes.

For my own study I took a slightly different approach: Instead of taking known argumentation schemes as a starting point to look for matching proverbs, I began with collecting a corpus of German proverbs to see what different groups of inference rules they established. One important thought here was that maybe some proverbs constituted abstract argumentation schemes that are not yet discussed in argumentation theory. Moreover, I analysed not only the isolated proverbs but their usage in concrete contexts by compiling a second corpus of German newspaper articles with mentions of all the proverbs.

One benefit of this second corpus is that, because of some proverbs being semantically underdetermined, the true character of their inference rules can only be detected by analysing their usage in specific contexts.
In addition to that, it is interesting to note that if proverbs actually systematically represent everyday schemes of argumentation this could explain a lot about their continuing popularity among speakers even though their persuasiveness on the basis of mere genre authority may have dwindled. Also, it could show why

proverbs have some argumentative force, even if their literal meaning is clearly not acceptable as a general rule, e. g. *All good things come in threes*. Because if they are not used as literal rules for inference but as loose references to an underlying argumentation scheme, their benefit for the argumentation could lie in that reference and the applicability of that scheme in the given context.

And finally, from a linguistic perspective, the parallel between argumentation schemes and proverbs could add to a better understanding of the different pragmatic functions proverbs can fulfil in communication. My idea here is that maybe the fact that a specific argumentation scheme is represented in a proverb has an influence on the possible pragmatic functions this proverb can fulfil.

In this paper I would like to concentrate on the following questions: Do proverbs systematically represent presumptive argumentation schemes? And if so, can proverbs even be seen as a resource for the formulation of new argumentation schemes? These are some of my results.

4. Some Results

The analysis of 348 German proverbs resulted in the identification of 23 represented argumentation schemes. Five different ways of representation can be distinguished: 1) Clearly assignable proverbs, 2) proverbs that can be assigned to different schemes according to the context they are used in, 3) metaphorical double-representation, 4) proverbs that represent lesser-known or new argumentation schemes and 5) proverbs that warn against fallacies. Aside from newly formulated schemes I used the collections of argumentation schemes by Walton (1996) and Walton, Reed & Macagno (2008) as a starting point for my observations. Since my corpus consists of German proverbs I translated some of them for the following examples if equivalent English versions cannot be found.

Among the clearly assignable proverbs representations could be found of e. g. the argument from sign, causal argumentation (especially the argument from consequences), the ad minore argument and the argument from commitment.

The German proverb *Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen (Who says A, must say B, too)* is a good example for a proverbial representation of the argument from commitment, whose linking premise is formulated by Walton, Reed & Macagno as follows: „Generally, when an arguer is committed to A, it can be inferred that he is also committed to B." (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, p. 335).

An example for a representation of the argument from sign is *Too much laughter discovers folly*. The original argumentation scheme for the argument from sign by

Walton, Reed & Macagno (2008, p. 329) is:

(1) *Specific Premise*: A (a finding) is true in this situation.

General Premise: B is generally indicated as true when its sign, A, is true.

Conclusion: B is true in this situation.

The reconstruction of the proverb as a representation of this argumentation scheme could look like this:

(2) *Specific Premise:* Person x laughs too much.

General Premise: It is generally a sign of folly when people laugh too much.

Conclusion: X commits folly in this situation.

Proverbs that could be assigned to different argumentation schemes either at the same time or depending on the context were e. g. *All good things come in threes,* which can be used as a quasi-inductive argument or in the sense of a means-to-end argument, which is also called a practical inference. For example, if an athlete, asked about his chances to win an upcoming contest, answers: "I have already won two times. I'm optimistic. *All good things come in threes.*", the proverb adds to a quasi-inductive argument which uses the outcome of two previous events as a basis for a prediction about the future. Other possible usages can be found in other contexts.

Metaphorical proverbs often represent two schemes: One on the metaphorical level and one on the meaning level: A German example here is *Wie man in den Wald hineinruft, so schallt es auch heraus* (*As you call into the woods is how it sounds back*). On the metaphorical level a causal argument is represented, and even a strong one as it refers to the laws of physics. But what is rather meant here, is an argument from reciprocity, which has as a general premise a rule like *If A treats B in a specific way, A will have to expect similar treatment from B*. The point here may be that the persuasiveness of the metaphorically represented argument from cause adds to the acceptability of the presumptive argumentation scheme of reciprocity.

Also, some schemes could be identified that aren't yet discussed in argumentation theory or have not been given much notice recently, but which nevertheless may be important for everyday argumentation since more than one proverb makes use of this abstract inference rule. An example here is one which I called the argument from a given opportunity, whose general premise I identified as *If A is given an opportunity x, A should make use of x*. Representations of this rule can be found in proverbs such as *Make hay while the sun shines*, *Never put off until*

tomorrow what you can do today or *One must celebrate when one has the chance*.

An example of an argument scheme which scholars have already described but which recently did not receive much attention is the aforementioned argument from reciprocity. A lot of proverbs can be represented by this scheme such as *What goes around comes around*, *Tit for tat*, *One good deserves another* and the German *How you call into the woods is how it sounds back*.

And last but not least there are proverbs that either warn against common fallacies or which can be used to derive counter arguments. *One swallow doesn't make a summer* or *All that glitters is not gold* warn against the fallacy of hasty generalization while *People in glasshouses should not throw stones* can be interpreted as a warning against the fallacy of inconsistent commitment. If the fallacy has already been committed they can also be used as counter arguments.

5. Conclusions

As a consequence of my findings, I think that some proverbs can indeed be said to systematically represent abstract argumentation schemes. They even seem to constitute some kind of folk logic, as Goodwin & Wenzel already suggested. Many proverbs thus can be interpreted as linguistically fixed and contextually adapted versions of argumentation schemes often used in everyday argumentation.

Also, proverbs indeed prove to be an interesting resource for the identification of new argumentation schemes.

And finally, the analysis of my second corpus gives some promising hints that there is a parallel between scheme representation and pragmatic functions of proverbs in contexts. For example, proverbs that represent means-to-end argumentation are mostly used either as commendations or as retrospective explanations.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – On The Concept "Argumentum Ad Baculum"
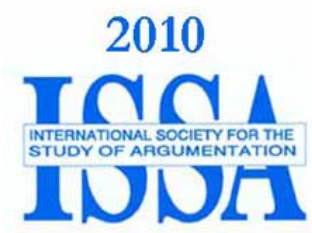
1. Introduction
The aim of this paper is to question the value of the concept of the so-called *"argumentum ad baculum"* (appeal *'to the stick'*). This aim is distinct from the purpose of many earlier works that focused on analyzing whether appeals to threat are or are not fallacious and under which circumstances they might be justified (e.g. Wreen 1989, Levi 1999, Kimball 2006, Walton & Macagno 2007). Instead, this paper investigates whether there is a consistent phenomenon at all that can be called *"ad baculum"*.**[i]**

Of course, it must be recognized that any term (such as *"ad baculum"*) that is established and widely used in argumentation theory and rhetoric has a presumption of usefulness. It is therefore the burden of those who doubt the usefulness of the concept to show that it does significantly more harm than good

for the discipline.**[ii]** Nevertheless, there are circumstances under which this burden of proof can indeed be satisfied. If a term obscures rather than explains the essential qualities of the phenomenon or phenomena it describes, then a discipline may be well advised in changing or abandoning it. One instance in which this might be the case is terms that unite concepts by addressing accidental rather than essential qualities. In the worst case these kinds of terms will unite phenomena under themselves that have very little in common with each other and only share one accidental quality.

To illustrate this point in an extreme case: I might observe that all of my friends by the name of Markus are very thin, nearly anorexic. I might even confirm this observation by looking for more Markuses and finding that most of them are also rather skinny. And I might even be statistically right in my belief that the average Markus is slimmer than the average citizen (due to, for example, the popularity of that name in a certain cohort or social group that is also prone to skinniness or anorexia). Still, I would be ill advised to talk of a "Markus figure" when describing the physique of somebody or analyzing the relationship between "Markusness" and skinniness because the group in question is united only by an accidental quality.

2. Terminology test
In order to analyze whether the term "ad baculum" is of the above kind, one must test it for two qualities:
a) do the phenomena commonly united under the name "ad baculum" share one common essential quality, and
b) could all significant instances of "ad baculum" also be described by other categories that might be more relevant?

The first of these tests can be performed by substituting the proposed essential quality (the occurrence of a warning, threat or other appeals to fear or reference of a potential undesirable outcome – to use the widest possible meaning of "ad baculum") by another quality. If the phenomenon under scrutiny (i.e. the argument or fallacy) maintains most of its observed relevant aspects, then it is very likely that its 'stickness' is not essential and should therefore be avoided as a defining quality of the phenomenon.

The second test can inform us whether any separate term for the phenomena that are commonly referred to as "ad baculum" is needed at all. If "ad baculum" is

indeed a term united only by accidental qualities and all phenomena to which it refers can be aptly and better described by other concepts, then one might be well advised to discontinue its use in contemporary argumentation theory.

3. Ad Baculum as Fear Appeals

In order to gain a better understanding of the way the term "ad baculum" is commonly used let us first turn to one of the most famous and perhaps oldest instances of a fear appeal in western rhetoric, the Melian dialogue by Thucydides. This dialogue is a semi-ficticious exchange by two parties (the Melians and the Athenians) during the course of the Peloponnesian war. Thucydides includes it in his history of the Peloponnesian war and gives us the background under which it supposedly occurred (Thucydides 1921, 155-177 / V,84-V,115): The Athenians had just landed with a large military force on the island of Melos and demanded the Melians to accept Athenian rule or else be attacked. The Melians ask the Athenians to discuss the matter with the leaders of Melos. The subsequent discussion contains a number of famous fear appeals that might be labeled instances of "ad baculum". Three exemplary ones shall be singled out and paraphrased here:

Melian dialogue 1 (Athenians to Melians): *If you do not accept our rule, we will forcefully subdue you.*

Melian dialogue 2 (Melians to Athenians): *If you attack us, Sparta will come to our help and defeat you or revenge us.*

Melian dialogue 3 (Athenians to Melians): *If we do not subdue you, our current subjects will revolt against Athenian rule.*

According to Thucydides the two parties did not find a solution to their difference of opinion, the Melians insisting on their independence and the Athenians on their will to subdue Melos. Soon after, an Athenian military expedition attacked and conquered Melos, killed all Melian men, and sold the women and children into slavery.

Needless to say, there is something evidently revolting about this blatant use of violence. However, this aspect should not obscure the analysis of the dialogue. The three selected fear appeals above illustrate the scope of argumentative moves that can be covered by the term "ad baculum". An appeal "to the stick" can be a *warning* (i.e. the potential negative consequence alluded to has not been created

by the protagonist: e.g. MD2 & MD3) or a *threat* (i.e. the potential negative consequence alluded to has been created by the protagonist: e.g. MD1). It can refer to negative consequences independent of whether they *will actually happen* (e.g. MD1) or *not* (e.g. MD2). And the potential negative consequence can be a threat to either the *protagonist* (e.g. MD3) or (probably more commonly) to the *antagonist* (e.g. MD1 & MD2). These aspects show only part of the scope of what can be referred to as "ad baculum" and are by no means exhaustive. They do however serve as a useful reminder to the variety of different argumentative moves that feature some kind of fear appeal.

4. Extent Treatments of Fear Appeals
Of the three fear appeals above the first one (MD1) is probably the most evident instance of "ad baculum". It would be treated as fallacious or otherwise problematic by most communication disciplines. The reasons for the negative judgment of this argumentative move are quite different however. This is not the place for an exhaustive comparison of the treatment of "ad baculum" of all disciplines and schools in question. For our purposes, it will be sufficient to illustrate that the very same phenomenon ("ad baculum" in MD1) can be categorized quite differently.

Formal Logic: Copi and Cohen treat the "ad baculum" only briefly. They consider its fallaciousness to be so evident as to make any further discussion of it superfluous: "The appeal to force is the abandonment of reason." (Copi & Cohen 2002, 148). Their main objection to fear appeals (as well as to related "ad" fallacies such as "ad hominem", "ad populum" and "ad misericordiam") seems to be the lack of a relevant argument scheme under which they can be subsumed. That this criticism does not hold true for all kinds of fear appeals will be shown below.

Informal Logic: There are a variety of different approaches to the "ad baculum" in informal logic. These offer different reasons for its fallaciousness and some distinguish between fallacious and non fallacious uses of fear appeals. Perhaps one of the most interesting explanations is offered by Douglas Walton. He treats some instances of "ad baculum" (presumably including MD1) as improper dialectical shifts from persuasive dialogue types into negotiation or bargaining (comp. Walton 2000, 180ff, Walton & Macagno 2007, 72ff.). In this approach the fear appeal itself is constructed as being less problematic than then pretense of engaging in one dialogue type although using the techniques of another type.

Pragma-dialectics: Van Eemeren and Grootendorst treat instances of "ad baculum" as a violation of rule 1 of the set of rules for a critical discussion (Eemeren & Grotendorst 1992, p. 212): "Parties must not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or casting doubt on standpoints" (Van Eemeren & Grotendorst 1992, p. 208). According to this approach instances of "ad baculum" are fallacious because they hinder the solution of a difference of opinion by breaking the rules for a critical discussion. Discussion partners that are interested in an optimal resolution process must therefore avoid resorting to or permitting open threats to the other party.

Rhetoric: Due to the large variety of different approaches referred to as rhetoric it is impossible to chose any one representative rhetorical treatment of "ad baculum". Rhetoric understood as *ars persuadendi* or "the art of influencing the Will" (Whately 1963, p. 175) might not be a very good choice for the analysis of fallacies in the first place, because it lacks much of the normative elements of the approaches mentioned above. In its most radical version, rhetorical theory might well endorse any communicative act that leads to persuasive success. But even under these circumstances some argumentative moves might still be considered problematic. If (as is the case in the "ad baculum" in MD1) a potential persuasive effect is very limited in its reach, in other words it is not stable and not replicable, then it might be considered defective. From a rhetoric perspective, MD1 could be considered deficient because its persuasiveness depends on the maintenance of an immediate and credible threat, a quality that makes this form of persuasion very expensive and at the same time less stable than conventional argumentation that does not depend on altering external states.**[iii]**

5. A Taxonomy of Ad Baculum
What is interesting about the approaches above is that, for most of them, the threat itself is not the main problem but rather a symptom of an underlying issue: (i) a problematic shift in dialogue types; (ii) an obstacle to the free participation of a critical discussant or (iii) an instable form of persuasion, that can be triggered similarly by a number of non-threat related moves. The variety of underlying issues is an indicator for the heterogeneous character of the phenomena referred to as "ad baculum". Of course the three problems mentioned above are far from constituting a complete list of underlying issues that can be found in instances of "ad baculum". To start with they do not take into consideration the full breadth of different kinds of "ad baculum".

In order to understand what kind of issues can be underneath the various instances of "ad baculum", a brief taxonomy of the most important aspects of fear appeals will be helpful. As indicated above, a fear appeal might take the form of a *threat* (negative consequence created by persuader) or a *warning* (negative consequence not created by persuader). Furthermore the threat can be *credible* (the persuader is planning to bring about the negative consequence in case the addressee responds in the wrong way) or *empty*.**[iv]**

The aforementioned division between fear appeals addressed to the protagonist and those addressed to the antagonist is of little significance for the analysis of underlying issues. One further division that should be taken into account, however, is the *type of persuasive goal* that is being pursued by the protagonist of the fear appeal. It is of central importance insofar as it captures a number of the more absurd examples used in certain (more hostile) treatments of fear appeals in the literature. The persuasive goal is of two basic types: either a change of belief in the antagonist or the performance of an action.

Taken together the three divisions create the basic taxonomy of fear appeals below (Figure 1):

Elements of a taxonomy of fear appeals:

	Negative consequence not created by persuader (warning)	Negative consequence created for the purpose of persuasion (credible threat)	Appearance of negative consequence created for the purpose of persuasion (empty threat)
Goal of persuasion: *belief*	1a	1b	1c
Goal of persuasion: *action*	2a	2b	2c

Figure 1

6. Consequences of the Taxonomy of Ad Baculum
This brief taxonomy enables us to give a more complete analysis of the underlying issues in different kinds of appeals 'to the stick'. If it can be shown that all types of "ad baculum" are either valid arguments following a standard argument scheme or are fallacious due to reasons that are independent of the threat itself, then we can assume that we do not need "ad baculum" as a separate concept to describe any instances of fear appeal. While this would make the concept of "ad baculum" superfluous, showing as much would not yet be sufficient to claim that the use of the concept would actually be harmful. This claim requires additional reasons to be considered in a later step.

Depending on the theoretical starting point and perspective, any one type of fear appeal above might be fallacious or deficient for more than one reason. That reason is independent of the accidental quality of a threat or a fear appeal if it can be easily fulfilled or triggered by non-threat related aspects. Also the fact that a type can generally be subsumed under a valid argument scheme does not of course mean that any instance of that type would be a strong argument. It would rather mean that it can be tested by means of the critical questions associated to that scheme.

The following types of fear appeals are covered by threat independent fallacies or standard argument schemes:

1) *Reverse naturalistic fallacy* (types 1a / 1b / 1c): Types 1a, 1b and 1c are forms of reasoning from the desirability of a proposition onto the plausibility of a proposition. As such, they are the mirror image to the better-known "is-ought" problems ("It exists in nature therefore it is good") and are just as fallacious. Any change in the quality of the proposition within an argument leaves that argument worthless. This type of fallacy or argumentative deficit is entirely independent of threats and can be reproduced in any argument scheme with a variety of propositional quality changes. Most of the resulting forms of reasoning are however so blatantly fallacious that they are not at all likely to fool any intelligent addressee. Woods' example of an "ad baculum" of this type is "If you do not fully and sincerely believe proposition p is true then I will insult your sister" (Woods 1998, 496). It is easy to imagine very similar fallacies without the use of threats such as "If you do fully and sincerely believe proposition p is true then I will buy you a car," or "Professor Woods says that it would be nice if proposition p were true, therefore you should believe that proposition p is true." Instances of 1a, 2a and 3a would therefore (i.e. because they are reverse naturalistic fallacies) be fallacious independent of whether they include references 'to the stick' or not.

2) *Truth claim negotiations* (types 1b / 1c): In addition to being reverse naturalistic fallacies, types 1b and 1c have another significant argumentative deficit. In introducing potential negative consequences into the discourse that are created purely for the purpose of persuasion, the protagonist leaves the discourse type of pure argumentation and enters the type of negotiation or bargaining. Negotiation or bargaining are, however, inadequate discourse types when it comes to truth claims. Once again this deficit or fallacy is quite independent of the involvement of threats. There is no relevant structural difference between "If

you do not believe proposition x then I will hit you" ("ad baculum") and other forms of negotiation, such as "If you believe in proposition x then I will believe in proposition y."**[v]**

3) *Empty threats* (types 1c / 2c): Types 1c and 2c are appeals to threats that are unlikely to materialize even if the addressee of the threat does not act in accordance with the persuader's interests. Put another way, these empty threats are blatant lies that try to create a wrong appearance for the purpose of persuasion. As such they are once again essentially independent of the threat itself. Most conversational standards or normative systems include a rule or regulation that bans putting forwards standpoints or arguments that the protagonist believes to be false or for which he lacks sufficient evidence (e.g. Grice's Quality Maxim, Grice 1975, 46). Any blatant lie, whether it refers to an empty threat, an empty promise, or any other faulty statement would be a breach of those rules.

4) *Freedom of speech violations* (types 2b / 2c): Some instances of types 2b and 2c can be attempts to stop an antagonist in a discussion from advancing standpoints or casting doubt on standpoints of the opponent. In that case, they violate rule 1 of the critical discussion, and according to the pragma-dialectical theory would hinder the effective solution of a difference of opinion. While threats can certainly lead to a violation of the pragma-dialectical freedom rule, they are by no means the only (and probably not even the most important) form of a rule 1 violation. Many forms of diminishing the freedom of speech of the opponent are easy to imagine that do not involve any form of fear appeal. A hearty laughter at any word of the opponent would be just one example of this kind of fallacy that is independent of any appeal 'to the stick'.

5) *Instable persuasion / dialectical shifts* (types 2b / 2c): Seen from a rhetorical perspective, many instances of types 2b and 2c will also be deficient forms of persuasion. As noticed above, argumentative moves which force the protagonist to alter external states for the purpose of persuasion are generally less stable and considerable more expensive than pure argumentation. While not necessarily constituting a fallacy, this fact makes any avoidable shift from pure argumentation to negotiation and bargaining undesirable. A similar concern can be expressed from an informal logical perspective about inappropriate dialectical shifts away from a critical discussion to a negotiation (Walton 1992, 141ff.). In both cases the underlying problem (the inappropriate shift) is independent of the

presence of a threat or warning and can be caused by a variety of other factors as well.

6) *Causal argumentation* (effect to cause, type 2a): The only remaining type of fear appeal that is not covered by one or more threat independent kinds of fallacy**[vi]** is type 2a. The obvious reason for this is the fact that although this kind of reasoning does indeed include an appeal "to the stick," it follows a perfectly valid argument scheme. Depending on the taxonomy of argument schemes one wants to employ, type 2a might be called an argument from consequences (Walton 1995, 218ff., Walton 2000, 132ff.), argument from prudence (Woods 1998, 496) or simply a type of weak causal argument (in this case an argument from effect to cause, Herrmann et al. 2010, 58ff.).**[vii]** The questions which of those (very similar) argument schemes best represents fear appeals does not need to be settled for the purpose of this paper because the testing procedure would be similar for all of them. In order to test whether any particular fear appeal of type 2a is a strong or weak argument one only needs to employ the set of critical questions for that scheme (as well as potentially additional critical questions that are scheme independent). Those critical questions (e.g. Kienpointner 1996, 156f., Walton 1996b, 75ff., Walton 2000, 137ff., Herrmann et al. 2010, 58ff.) are a sufficient testing tool for any given argument scheme and do not need any "ad baculum" specific supplement.

7. Conclusions
The analysis of the taxonomy of fear appeals above indicates a few important conclusions: First, all instances of appeals 'to the stick,' be they fallacious or non-fallacious ones, can be covered and analyzed by categories that are entirely threat- or warning independent. Second, not only is the category of "ad baculum" superfluous, but it might be positively obscuring the analysis of a given fallacious move because it offers too simple an answer to questions about the underlying reasons for the fallaciousness of the move at hand. Third, refraining from labeling a certain argumentative move "ad baculum" facilitates the distinction between fallacious and non-fallacious fear appeals because the latter are not already stigmatized by a negatively laden term.

It is this last point that also answers the remaining question: Even if it might be the case that all phenomena that are commonly united under the label "ad baculum" can be sufficiently (and perhaps even more precisely) covered by other categories, does that mean that the use of the term "argumentum ad baculum" in

contemporary argumentation theory is positively harmful? Yes. Inasmuch as the term unites phenomena by only accidental qualities, it obscures the analysis of potential underlying problems in different types of fear appeals and most importantly produces a 'guilt by association' type prejudice against proper uses of fear appeals one might be well advised to avoid using this term for the purposes of contemporary argumentation analysis or at least supplement any use of the term with a more detailed description of the specific type referred to and the theoretical perspective used.**[viii]**

This conclusion, which suggests the abandonment of the term "argumentum ad baculum" as an umbrella term for very different kinds of fear appeal only extends to this particular fallacy. The method of dividing a particular fallacy (in this case the "ad baculum") into its underlying types and analyzing each type independently, might well be useful for criticizing other "ad" fallacies as well.**[ix]** The result of these analyses would probably be different for different fallacies.

NOTES

[i] This paper assumes a basic familiarity with the idea of a fear appeal or "argumentum ad baculum", literally translated as appeal "to the stick". For a historical introduction to the concept see, among others, Hamblin (2004) p. 135ff., Woods (1998) p. 494ff., Walton (2000) p. 31ff., van Eemeren (2001) p. 135ff. and van Eemeren et al. (2009) p. 2ff.

[ii] It must, of course, also be acknowledged that terminology in argumentation theory and rhetoric does not always have to follow the same standards of rigidity as do similar concepts in some hard natural or mathematical sciences.

[iii] In other words it constitutes a shift away from pure argumentation into negotiation. For the purposes of this paper „argumentation" is used in the sense of „mean of enforcing the will against resistance by changing the state of information in a reasonable way"; „negotiation" is used as „mean of enforcing the will against resistance by exchanging costs and benefits".

[iv] Technically speaking the same division holds true for warnings, but for reasons given below, this division is practically irrelevant because the plausibility of the manifestation of negative effect is one of the components of the critical testing of the argument scheme that is used for a warning.

[v] This is not to be confused with a negotiation of the type of "If you refrain from challenging proposition x in this discussion then I will refrain from challenging proposition y." which, despite sounding rather similar and producing comparable

practical results, aims at a particular action rather than a belief of the discussants.

[vi] The list above should be more than sufficient for the purpose of the main claim, namely that all types are covered by at least one fear appeal independent underlying deficient. This should be no means suggest the completeness of the list of reasons however. A number of further reasons for the fallaciousness of certain types of fear appeals have been suggested of which Woods concept of a "veiled intimidation ad baculum" is probably one of the most prominent (Woods 1998, 497).

[vii] Strictly speaking all of the types above can be reconstructed as moves resembling a causal argument from effect to cause. The general structure of all types would be: "Action / belief C will lead to consequence E. E is undesirable. Therefore C is undesirable." The first part "Action / belief C" would in that case form the y-axis and the second part "will lead to" would form the x-axis of our taxonomy. Since the critical testing of all types other than 2a would however very quickly reveal grave deficits it seems more useful for the purpose of this paper to treat as separate types straight away.

[viii] This conclusion does not mean to suggest that certain types of threat appeals cannot be fruitfully analyzed or researched. It merely suggests that in order to be consistent one must limit oneself the one of the types (e.g. a freedom rule violation, compare van Eemeren et al. 2009, 85ff.) rather than consider the heterogeneous field of so-called "ad baculum" moves.

ix A similar approach is being employed in the distinction between the three kinds of "ad hominem" (abusive, circumstantial and tu quoque). Without this distinction the term "ad hominem" would also be too heterogeneous to be useful for contemporary argumentation theory.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Variations of Standpoint Explicitness In Advertising: An Experimental Study On Probability Markers
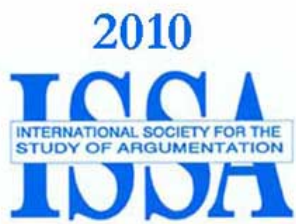
1. Introduction

Empirical research has demonstrated that variation in standpoint explicitness matters. In several research reports, explicit articulations of a standpoint or conclusion have been compared to more implicit articulations. Meta-analyses of such reports (Cruz, 1998; O'Keefe, 1997, 2002) have shown that messages with explicitly stated standpoints are more persuasive than messages without such standpoints. Such effects were not found for advertising messages, for which the conclusion – buy this product – seems relatively straightforward, regardless of the articulation of the conclusion (Cruz, 1998).

There are different ways in which explicit conclusions may be articulated, one of which is the use of probability markers. Advertising research has compared hedges (which mark a standpoint as moderately probable) and pledges (which mark a standpoint as very probable). In this study, it was investigated whether the reputation of the brand affects the persuasiveness of hedges and pledges. Based on a study conducted by Goldberg and Hartwick (1990), it was expected that hedges would be more persuasive for low-reputation brands, whereas pledges would be more persuasive for high-reputation brands. This expectation was put to a test in an experiment.

2. Standpoint explicitness

The pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation views argumentation as reasonable discourse aimed at resolving a difference of opinion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, 2004). In order to discuss reasonably, a set of rules for critical discussion is proposed. One of the rules holds that parties should express

themselves clearly, unambigiously and explicitly, because this allows for critical scrutiny. This means, for instance, that the proponent has to explicitly put his or her standpoint on the table. Although normatively reasonable, standpoint explicitness may seem to threaten the persuasive effectiveness of the proponent. As O'Keefe (1997, p. 2) summarizes, greater explicitness "invites closer scrutiny, counterargument, objection, rejection". A number of studies have empirically investigated whether greater standpoint explicitness is associated with less persuasive effectiveness. These studies have been summarized in statistical meta-analyses (Cruz, 1998; O'Keefe, 1997, 2002). O'Keefe divided these studies into two categories: studies on conclusion omission (messages with or without a conclusion) and studies on conclusion specificity (the conclusion is explicit, but may be general or specific). In O'Keefe (2002), which contains more studies than O'Keefe (1997), the meta-analysis involving 35 comparisons demonstrated that more explicit articulation of standpoints was found to be more persuasive than less explicit articulation. This result was found for both the conclusion omission studies and for the conclusion specificity studies. In another meta-analysis with a different set of studies, Cruz (1998) reached the same conclusion. In sum, this means that the normative consideration of standpoint explicitness is in line with empirical results (cf. O'Keefe, 2007).

A meta-analysis summarizes findings from primary research. Some primary research reports may have findings that deviate from the general conclusion. This is the case for two advertising studies mentioned in Cruz (1988): Kardes (1988) and Sawyer and Howard (1991). As O'Keefe (1997, 2002) notes, Kardes (1988) is not a study on standpoint explicitness, but on specificity of supporting arguments. Contrary to the general findings on standpoint explicitness, the advertising study reported in Sawyer and Howard (1991) showed that the implicit standpoint was more persuasive than the explicit standpoint. Cruz (1998) gives two explanations for this result. In the first place, the advertising text was shorter than the texts in the average other study. In longer texts, explicit standpoints are needed to comprehend the proponent's standpoint, whereas this is less likely the case for shorter texts. In the second place, the genre of advertising may play a role: "one conclusion is readily understood in all advertisements: Buy the product" (Cruz, 1998, p. 222). As a result, for advertising texts it seems that standpoint explicitness does not matter.

3. Probability markers

The purpose of an advertisement is to positively affect people's attitude towards the product, attitude towards the brand, purchase intention and – ultimately – actual purchase. The message that an ad conveys is generally related to the benefits of the product or service: product X has benefit Y, leads to Y, gives you Y (cf. Darley & Smith, 1993). This is a descriptive standpoint or claim that can be true to some degree. An example is given in (1).

(1) Our nasal spray helps you breathe freely.

This uniformity in advertising message structure does not mean, however, that advertisers do not vary in the way they put forward claims. In one particular field of study, the interest has been on the effectiveness of probability markers that can be used in claims. A probability marker signals the degree to which a claim is true (Berney-Reddish & Areni, 2005, 2006). A pledge, such as 'absolutely' or 'undoubtedly', signals complete certainty of the claim, such an in example (2). A hedge, such as 'likely' and 'possibly', signals that the claim is not necessarily true, such as in example (3).

(2) Our nasal spray always helps you breathe freely.

(3) Our nasal spray in most cases helps you breathe freely.

A few studies have compared the relative persuasiveness of hedges and pledges in advertising claims. Berney-Reddish and Areni (2005, 2006) compared the two probability markers in four texts for different products, and showed that hedges and pledges were equally persuasive. A similar finding was reported in Hornikx, Pieper and Schellens (2008), who had participants rate eight different cosmetics claims with these markers.

Two characteristics of these experiments offer suggestions for future research. A first characteristic is that the experiments used multiple message designs with simple, abstract claims. The use of a multiple message design improves internal validity, but disadvantages ecological validity. It is an empirical question as to how persuasive hedges and pledges are in a more realistic advertising setting. This leads to the following research question:
Research question: Is there a persuasive difference between hedges and pledges in advertising claims in a realistic advertisement?

A second characteristic of the experiments – a consequence of the first

characteristic – is that the proponent of the standpoint (the brand) was not identified. There are reasons to believe that the brand affects how people are persuaded by advertising claims. Goldberg and Hartwick (1990) reasoned that the effectiveness of the claim that brands put forward partially depends on their reputation. Brands with a high reputation are in a better position to express a strong claim than brands with a lower reputation. With an experiment for the brand Miro, Goldberg and Hartwick (1990) indeed demonstrated that extreme claims (e.g. 'Miro came first against the world's top 100 products in its category') were more persuasive than less extreme claims (e.g., 'Miro came twentieth against the world's top 100 products in its category') when the brand was introduced as a high-reputation brand, and that less extreme claims were more persuasive than extreme claims when the brand was introduced as a low-reputation brand. This relationship may also apply to hedges and pledges, as a claim with a pledge may be considered as a more extreme claim, and a claim with a hedge as a less extreme claim. Based on the study of Goldberg and Hartwick (1990), the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis: A hedge is more persuasive than a pledge in an ad for a low-reputation brand and a pledge is more persuasive than a hedge in an ad for a high-reputation brand

4. Method

An experiment was set up to answer the research questions and to test the hypothesis. Dutch participants were given a description of a company profile, an advertisements for nasal spray of that compay, and a questionnaire that contained the relevant dependent measures.

4.1 Material

Participants were told that an American company, Sinus Relief, was considering the introduction of their nasal spray on the Dutch market. Before participants were invited to read a potential advertisement, they were given background information about that company. Participants received a fictitious, but realistic company profile from the *Wall Street Journal* in which the company Sinus Relief was described. This procedure to manipulate brand reputation was borrowed from Goldberg and Hartwick (1990).

In one version of the article, Sinus Relief was presented as a high-reputation brand, and in another version, the company was presented as a low-reputation

brand. The two versions each contained 190 words distributed over three paragraphs, but differed with respect to the company's characteristics, such as number of years in business (more than 60 years vs. 10 years), sales volume (86 million vs. 3 million), market share (48% vs. 4%), and number of employees (2100 vs. 78).

This manipulation was checked in a pretest among 50 Dutch participants, of whom 60% was female, and of whom 68% had followed higher education. The participants were on average 30.84 (SD = 12.05) years old (range 20-62). Participants responded on 5-point semantic differentials (very bad – very good) to three statements: "The reputation of Sinus Relief among employees is", "The reputation of Sinus Relief among customers is", and "The reputation of Sinus Relief among investors is" (α = .87). In the high-reputation text, which was read by half of the participants, the reputation of Sinus Relief was perceived as higher (M = 4.25, SD = 0.38) than in the low-reputation text (M = 2.39, SD = 0.73); F (1, 48) = 128.95, p < .001, h^2 = .73.

Next to the company profile, the material consisted of two versions of an advertisement for a nasal spray from Sinus Relief. One version contained hedges, the other pledges. A number of markers were pretested among other participants (16 Dutch students): 'always' (9.19) and 'absolutely' (8.69) scored highest on a 10-point probability scale and were used as pledges, whereas 'in most cases' (6.00) and 'usually' (5.25) scored much lower and were used as hedges. Note that scores below the midpoint of the scale mean that a marker indicate improbability rather than probability, which would have made such a marker inappropriate to function as a hedge. In order to emphasize the use of markers, not one but two markers were used in text (4); 'always' and 'absolutely' as pledges, and 'in most cases' and 'usually' as hedges:

(4) "Got a cold? We know how annoying that is. Our nasal spray brings relief. It will [always / in most cases] help you breathe freely. Sinus Relief: [absolutely / usually] the best choice for your nose".

The two ads each contained a picture of a woman, a brand logo, the product, and a text.

4.2 Participants
A total of 137 Dutch people participated in the study, of whom 51.8% was male,

and of whom 69.3% had followed higher education. None of these people had participated in either of the two pretests. The participants were 33.51 years old on average (SD = 13.47), with ages from 18 to 67. The four groups of participants (see 'Design') did not differ in mean age (F (3, 132) < 1), or levels of education (c^2 (15) = 16.50, p = .35), but differed in gender distribution (c^2 (3) = 9.55, p < .05). This difference in gender distribution does not seem to have affected the results, because there was no main effect of gender on the dependent measures (F (4, 132) < 1).

4.3 Design

The experiment had a 2 (high vs. low reputation) x 2 (pledges vs. hedges) between-subjects design.

4.4 Instrumentation

The persuasiveness of the ads was measured on the basis of attitude towards the product, attitude towards the brand, and purchase intention. Attitude towards the ad was measured separately from persuasiveness (cf. Hornikx & O'Keefe, 2009).

Attitude towards the product was measured using four 5-point semantic differentials: good – bad, low – high quality, inattractive – attractive, and effective – ineffective (α = .78). Attitude towards the brand was measured using four 5-point semantic differentials: positive – negative, unreliable – reliable, good – bad, and expert – inexpert (α = .83). Purchase intention was measured with 5-point Likert scales that followed three statements: "I would like to receive more information about this nasal spray", "I consider buying this nasal spray", and "I would definitely buy this nasal spray if I needed nasal spray" (α = .76). Attitude towards the ad was measured using four 5-point semantic differentials: beautiful – ugly, not interesting – interesting, pleasurable – not pleasurable, inattractive – attractive (α = .84). In addition, the reputation manipulation was checked with the same statements that were used in the pretest (α = .86). The questionnaire ended with questions about participants' age, gender, nationality, and highest education.

4.5 Procedure

Dutch people were invited individually to fill in the questionnaire at different locations in a Dutch city (e.g., railway station, shopping centre, university). People were not rewarded for their participation, which took about 7 to 10

minutes. After the questionnaires had been collected, the real research purpose was revealed, and participants were thanked for their cooperation. There were no disturbances during the experiment.

4.6 Statistical tests

The research question and the hypothesis were evaluated through a 2 (reputation) x 2 (marker) analysis of variance, where reputation and marker were both between-subjects factors.

5. Results

Before addressing the research question and the hypothesis, it was first checked whether the reputation manipulation was successful. As in the pretest, the brand reputation was perceived as higher in the high-reputation conditions (M = 3.92, SD = 0.58) than in the low-reputation conditions (M = 2.37, SD = 0.69); F (1, 134) = 200.97, $p < .001$, h^2 = .60. Furthermore, there was a main effect of reputation on persuasiveness (F (3, 130) = 12.28, $p < .001$, h^2 = .22). For the high-reputation version, the attitude towards the product (F (1, 132) = 21.73, $p < .001$, h^2 = .14), the attitude towards the brand (F (1, 132) = 34.40, $p < .001$, h^2 = .21), and the purchase intention (F (1, 132) = 13.61, $p < .001$, h^2 = .09) were higher than for the low-reputation version. Such a main effect did not occur for the attitude towards the ad: participants' liking of the ad was not affected by the reputation of the brand (F (1, 132) < 1).

The research question about the persuasive difference between hedges and pledges was answered on the basis of the main effect of marker. There was no main effect of marker on persuasion (F (3, 130) < 1) or on attitude towards the ad (F (1, 132) < 1). It was expected that a hedge would be more persuasive than a pledge in an ad for a low-reputation brand and that a pledge would be more persuasive than a hedge in an ad for a high-reputation brand, but the relevant interaction effect between reputation and marker did not occur, neither for persuasion (F (3, 130) < 1), nor for attitude towards the ad (F (1, 132) < 1). Table 1 gives the descriptive statistics for the dependent measures in the four conditions.

Table 1. Persuasiveness and attitude towards the ad in function of brand reputation and marker

	n	attitude towards the product		attitude towards the brand		purchase intention		attitude towards the ad	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
high reputation									
pledge	35	3.35	0.50	3.54	0.68	2.93	1.01	2.84	0.89
hedge	32	3.25	0.63	3.46	0.62	2.90	1.09	2.88	0.82
low reputation									
hedge	35	2.84	0.56	2.92	0.60	2.27	0.86	2.70	0.86
pledge	34	2.81	0.67	2.80	0.63	2.34	0.87	2.74	0.86

Table 1. Persuasiveness and attitude towards the ad in function of brand reputation and marker

6. Conclusion and discussion

The present study investigated the persuasiveness of hedges and pledges in a realistic product advertisement for a fictituous brand that was presented as having a high or low reputation. The level of reputation was expected to interact with the type of marker. That is, high-reputation brands may benefit more from pledges than from hedges, whereas low-reputation brands may benefit more from hedges than from pledges. The results did not support the hypothesis: there was no interaction effect between reputation (high or low) and marker (hedge or pledge). This occurrence of a non-significant interaction effect cannot be attributed to the manipulation of reputation. In the first place, the manipulation proved to be successful: the high-reputation brand was perceived to have a higher reputation than the low-reputation brand. In the second place, the reputation manipulation affected participants' response to the subsequently presented ad: ads were found to be more persuasive when they followed the high-reputation journal article than when they followed the low-reputation journal article.

Whereas earlier studies used abstract claims without any context, the present study used a more realistic setting with a fictitious ad, containing text and images, designed for a specific brand. In this context too, hedges and pledges were found to be equally persuasive, corroborating findings reported in Berney-Reddish and Areni (2005, 2006), and Hornikx et al. (2008). Suggestions for future research follow from characteristics of this study. Although having a higher ecological validity, the present study suffers from a low level of generalizability of the results as it involved only one ad. More experimental studies with ads for other products and brands should be conducted before conclusions about a possible relationship between markers and brand reputation can be drawn. Furthermore, it would be wise to also include conditions without markers, so that the persuasiveness of hedges and pledges can be assessed: are claims with

markers more or less persuasive than claims without any marker?

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Iconicity In Visual And Verbal Argumentation
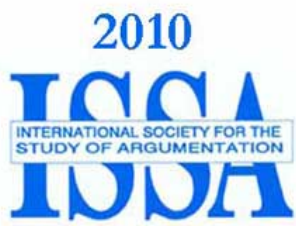
1. Functional equivalency

Imagine a drawing of a boat that clearly resembles the Titanic, but its bow has the shape of Bill Clinton's face. The bow has just hit an iceberg. The iceberg is now sinking. It is not difficult to imagine this drawing as a cartoon. Does this cartoon represent argumentation?

Answering this question requires an argumentative reconstruction. Just as it requires an argumentative reconstruction to determine whether the verbal text *"If Clinton were the Titanic, the iceberg would sink"* represents argumentation. It was actually this verbal text that circulated in Washington during February 1998 (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, 221). I do not know whether the cartoon has ever been drawn and published.

The reconstruction processes that are required to determine whether either the cartoon or the joke represent argumentation develop in parallel**[i]**. Generally speaking both texts are just a sharp and funny way to express the opinion that Bill Clinton survives incidents that cost others – even those who are held to be unassailable – their position. In a specific context however it may be plausible to reconstruct a move in an argumentative discussion on the basis of this expressed

opinion. In that case the texts can be said to represent this move**[ii]**. The expression fills a slot in a reconstructed discussion structure.

Suppose that shortly after January 17, 1998 – the moment that the world heard about the Lewinski affair – a Washington in-crowd democrat makes the joke to his or her colleagues or publishes the cartoon on the bulletin board. Given that context one can propose that by performing the communicative act this person takes up a role in a discussion, even though almost all elements of the discussion structure stay implicit. These elements can stay implicit because the context sufficiently indicates the discussion structure.

The following is a possible reconstruction. The person who makes the joke or publishes the cartoon projects a protagonist of a standpoint: *Bill Clinton is going to lose his position*, based on the argument that *Bill Clinton is involved in the Lewinski scandal*. A formulation of a minimally implied argument can be: *If Clinton gets involved in a scandal as the Lewinski scandal, then that will cost him his position*. Because more specific information is lacking one may assume that this implied argument rests on the more general argument: *Anyone who gets involved in a scandal such as the Lewinski scandal loses his or her position*. The person who makes the joke or publishes the cartoon fulfils the role of the antagonist. The antagonist questions the relevance of this more general argument, therefore questions the tenability of the minimally implied argument and therefore questions the standpoint. One may even say that he takes a standpoint himself, making the discussion a mixed discussion. The alternative that he expresses suggests a largely implicit but clear argumentation: *Bill Clinton will not lose his position, because it is Bill Clinton who is involved in the Lewinski scandal. If it is Bill Clinton who is involved in the Lewinski scandal, this will not cost him his position*, because *Bill Clinton survives incidents that cost others – even those who were hold unassailable – their position* = the joke or the cartoon *(Figure 1)* **[iii]**.
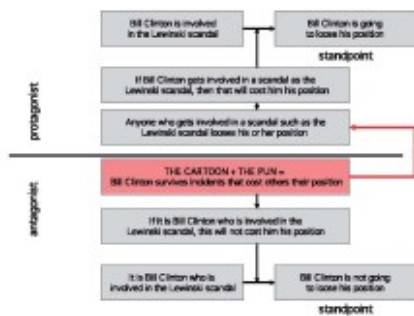
Figure 1, light = implicit, dark = explicit

Figure 1

We can conclude from this example that an image can be interpreted as the expression of an element of a complex speech act argumentation**[iv]**. From the realm of verbal argumentation it is clear that complex argumentative episodes can be represented with minimal textual means and that in many cases no explicit argumentative indication is added**[v]**. So we should not be surprised that an image can express information that leads to the reconstruction of a rather complex episode in an argumentative discussion. Images may not be suitable to express either general principles or illocutionary functions**[vi]**. However, to represent one or more moves in an argumentative discussion does not require that the warrant is explicitly expressed, nor that information is explicitly marked as a standpoint or as an argument. This obviously limits the argumentative use of purely non verbal images to specific contexts from which its argumentative function can be understood. Contexts are not always that informative. That is why we usually see non verbal images combined with verbal texts. Often the image presents information that functions as a set of data or as a backing, while the warrant or the standpoint are verbally expressed.

So when we compare a visual text (here the cartoon) with a functionally equivalent verbal text (here the pun), both texts call upon a similar body of knowledge in the reconstruction of the represented argumentation. This notion of (functional) *equivalency* is not a well defined theoretical concept. I use it to indicate a heuristic method to compare visual text fragments with verbal counterparts that express an equivalent position in the argumentative reconstruction**[vii]**. The idea is that maximizing the relevant similarities makes significant differences visible.

2. Iconicity in visual texts
In the next example we touch upon such a theoretically interesting difference.

This difference concerns the division of labor between the narrator and the interpreter. Prototypically the narrator in a visual text presents a narrative in its iconic, mimetic value, while the narrator in a verbal text already embeds the narrative in a context of experiences (indexical values: if you observe A, this indicates B) and cultural habits (symbolic values: A is normal, understandable or good, B is marked, strange, not preferred, and so on)**[viii]**. This difference in what the (abstract) narrator is doing is reflected in a difference of the work to be done by the interpreter.

In an almost entirely non verbal advertisement clip we see a somewhat elder boxer, thickset but well-trained. He is initially knocked down by an aggressive looking, tattooed, skinhead opponent. While the referee is counting him out we see the boxer in flash-backs: as a nice little child, as a hard training adolescent, as the groom, as a family man, loved by his wife, his child, his coach, loved by a large crowd of friends. Then we see him, roused by his coach, muster up his courage and get up just in time to carry on the fight. A slogan appears: "Nu se termină acum. Acum începe" (Romanian for "It does not end now. Now it starts"). Finally we see the logo and name of the CEC Bank, with the words: Banca nostră.

picture 1, stills from first 20 shots

Still One

picture 2, stills from the last 20 shots

Still Two

I first present an argumentative interpretation of the visual text that is obvious to at least one Romanian reader**[ix]**.
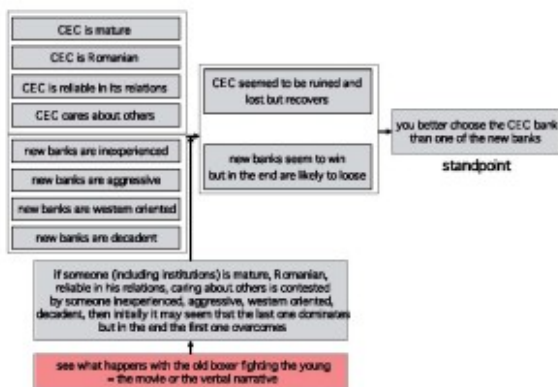

Figure 2

Figure 2

The implicit standpoint is (based on the ratio of this advertisement): *You better choose the CEC bank than one of the new banks*. The metaphor – as soon as recognized at the end of the movie – foregrounds a series of characteristics from both boxers and their story that can be meaningfully projected on CEC bank and competing financial institutions. From the boxers: *CEC is mature, CEC is Romanian, CEC is reliable in his relations, CEC cares about others. The new coming banks are inexperienced, aggressive, western oriented and decadent.* From the story is projected: *CEC seemed to be ruined and lost but recovers. The new banks seem to win but in the end are likely to loose.* An argumentative relation based on causality**[x]** is suggested between the first and the second projection. The implied argument is: *if someone (including institutions) is mature,*

Romanian, reliable in his relations, caring about others is contested by someone inexperienced, aggressive, western oriented and decadent, then initially it may seem that the last one dominates, but in the end the first one overcomes. This implied argument is backed by the pictorial part of the clip.

This argumentative reconstruction is complicated and one can surely argue about the details. However, the way the metaphor is transformed into an argument based on analogy is familiar**[xi]**. In the reconstruction a set of relevant correspondences between the boxing match and the competition between banks is identified and successively reconstructed as an orderly set of propositions.

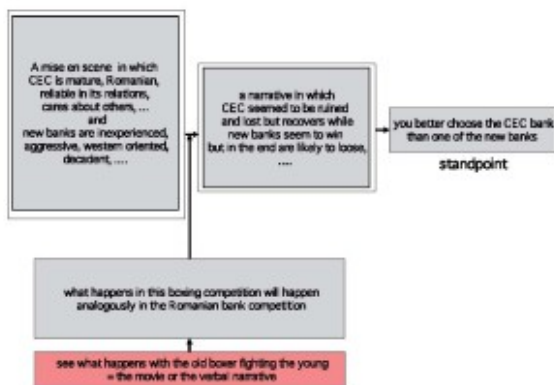We can however also reconstruct an argumentation as in figure 3.

Figure 3

Figure 3

In this reconstruction the visual text has not been interpreted as an orderly set of propositions. The text is placed in an argument structure in its mimetic quality. In Peircean terminology this means that its iconic value is dominant. What is shown is (as yet) is dominant over what the discourse voice or the interpreter attaches to it on the basis of his or her experiences (index in Peirce's terminology) and is dominant over the cultural values that the discourse voice or interpreter attach to it (symbol in Peirce's terminology, diegesis in a narrative terminology). One may say that the work to transform its information into an orderly set of proposition still has to be done.

In both reconstructions the expressed information is perceived as a narrative**[xii]** that functions argumentatively as a backing. But it seems evident that the second reconstruction in figure 3 stays much closer to the iconic visual text than the first

reconstruction in figure 2. However, when we try to construct a functionally equivalent verbal version of the visual text, we experience that it is difficult or at least feels rather artificial to construct a similar iconic verbal narrative, while the construction of a version with more attributive and evaluative propositions that is closer to the reconstruction in figure 2 appears as much more natural. We repeat the initial verbal description, now marking attributive and evaluative elements:

We see a somewhat elder boxer, thickset *but* well-trained. He is initially knocked down by an aggressive looking, tattooed, skinhead opponent. While the referee is counting him out we see the boxer in flash-backs: as a nice little child, as a hard training adolescent, as the groom, as a family man, loved by his wife, his child, his coach, loved by a large crowd of friends. Then we see him, roused *by* his coach, muster up his courage and get up just in time to carry on the fight.

This difference between the visual and the verbal mode is not coincidental. In a prototypical visual text the spectator needs to select the relevant information out of a sequence of shots to construct a coherent story from the text. It is also the spectator who forms hypotheses about explanations, who attributes motives and who evaluates. In a prototypical verbal text the narrator selects, explains, attributes and evaluates explicitly. This means however that the reader who wants to construct a more elaborated mental image of the story has to fill in the mise en scene. The reader has to imagine what the dynamics of a contrast 'thickset – aggressive' look like, what brings the narrator to a qualification family man, how the supportive friends actually behave and how they look, and so on.

In the verbal text many interpretations and evaluations are cut-and-dried presented already by the narrator. The narrator informs the reader that these people are friends and that what they do is supportive. In the visual text the spectator has to form these interpretative attributions and evaluations himself. The visual text is relatively more iconic, the verbal text is relatively more 'symbolic', embedded already in a conventional system of values and interpretations.**[xiii]**

This is a relative distinction. Visual texts have a powerful narrator too, in the cinematographic choices, in the editing, in the construction of the mise-en-scene, in the dynamics of the music. This narrator guides the selection of what is relevant for the story and can strongly suggest attributions and evaluations**[xiv]**. But in the visual text far less descriptive elaboration and far more attribution and
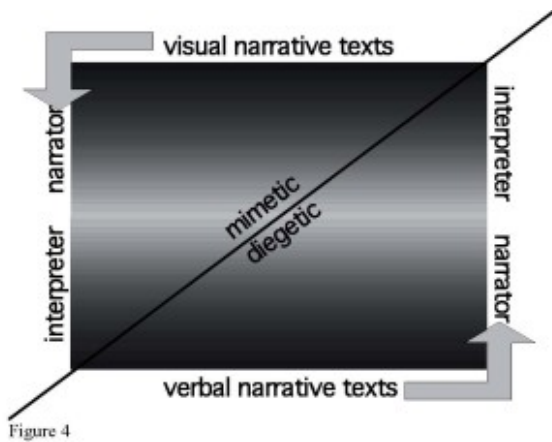
evaluation is left to the spectator.

In a schema:

Figure 4

3. Iconicity in verbal texts
When the verbal mode is taken as the unique mode to express argumentation, it is plausible to associate argumentation with a rather directly expressed propositionality, because prototypically the narrator of a verbal text confronts the reader with an ordered set of logically connected propositions. The visual mode is then somewhat 'inferior', because now the spectator has to interpret the text as such a set of propositions. The interpreter has to transform an iconic reconstruction (figure 3) into a propositional reconstruction (figure 2), an unwished complication in the reconstruction process.

However if the verbal as well as the visual mode are both taken seriously as ways to express argumentation, we can bring up the following question: if a verbal text expresses a structure close to the propositional analysis (as in figure 2), does that not imply that now the interpreter needs to reconstruct its iconic values (as in figure 3)? If that is the case then there is at least on this aspect no reason to see the visual mode as a derivative. So the question is: is the narrative in its iconic value relevant for an argumentative reconstruction, or is it just an intermediate step? The answer seems to be that at least in some arguments the reconstruction of the text in its iconic value is far from just an intermediate step as the next example illustrates.

A short movie that was made by the defending counsel shows the suspect, a habitual offender, a year after the start of his trial **[xv]**. We see him as a member

of a Christian community. The movie shows his life in the community and shows him explaining his motives and intentions.

Clearly the movie is meant to fill the 'data – slot' in an argument that supports a standpoint that a specific sanction should be imposed on this accused, namely a sanction that supports his will to improve. However, as in the CEC example, it is the interpreter who has to distil a set of ordered propositions from the movie: the relevant facts, leading to the relevant evaluations and attributions of motives. In other words when we stay close to the text a reconstruction of the narrative in its iconic value is adequate and this reconstruction needs to be transformed into a propositional one by the interpreter.

But now look at this almost literally translated part from a Dutch judicial decision. This is a verbal text in which the judge presents a set of ordered propositions. It seems functionally equivalent to the movie; it also presents information that is meant to support the standpoint that a specific sanction is appropriate.

Accused has terrorized his family for a large number of years. He has used disproportionate violence as an instrument to maintain authority in the family. Among other things he has repeatedly assaulted family members – regardless of their age – by beating them, also with a belt, and kicking them. He also has bitten his wife during a scrimmage which resulted in a bite wound. During a fight he has kicked his son, hit him and gave him a hard butt of the head. […] Furthermore, the accused has hit his daughter once with a tool on her fingers while her fingers rested on the table. On another occasion he has twisted her wrist and thereupon hit it with a hammer. This broke her wrist. […] Finally the accused has threatened his family repeatedly with arson. To enforce his threats he stored jerrycans with petrol in the basement. During such a threat he sometimes locked the door. Never his wife and children knew whether he was going to put his threats into effect. Because of this he has caused his family terrifying moments for a long period. […] Considering the above the court deems a […] detention of the following length appropriate**[xvi].**

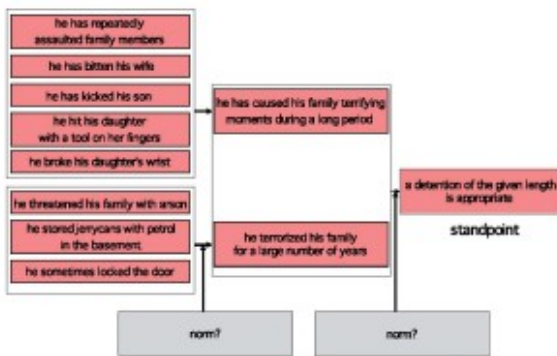Interpreted as a set of related propositions we may reconstruct an argumentation as in figure 4.

Figure 5

The position of the first and the one but last utterance is significant. Evidently there is not an a priori established norm that guides the inference from the facts to these utterances. That may be surprising in a carefully written formal decision. It is however less surprising if we search for and discover the iconicity of this text, which is a narrative schema. In that case we can reconstruct the text as in figure 6.
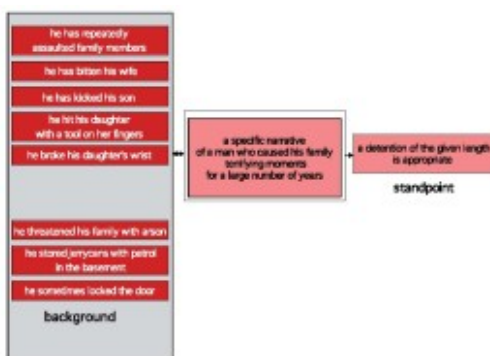

Figure 6, darkest color indicates foregrounded elements that imply a background, to inferred

Figure 6

In this reconstruction we read the expressed descriptions as a plot, a foreground that evokes a background story filling in a large number of years with a continuous process of terror and suppression. The interpreter has to fill in this background. That does not mean that he has to make up all kind of other, not formally proven incidents. It means that he has to 'read' the propositions as a story that covers and characterizes a series of years.

This example illustrates that both stages in the argumentative reconstruction need to be recognized as relevant stages. From a formal legal point of view the

list of propositions is relevant: each of them needs to follow from the presented evidence. This implies that a movie as presented by Jaap Bakker has to be transformed into a set of propositions as soon as formal legal proof of elements of it is required. However the iconic narrative expressed in Jaap Bakker's visual text and implied in the background in this judge's verbal text is relevant too. It is clear that the utterances in the text of the judge are meant to represent a story that is much more than only the 'foregrounded' events. That implies that the utterances are not only a set of propositions, related to the standpoint by an implicit argument that has a form "If proposition 1 to N, then it is reasonable to hold standpoint S". The utterances are at the same moment a plot that should evoke a story that relates to the standpoint by an implicit argument that has a form "On the basis of this story it is reasonable to hold standpoint S".

NOTES

[i] In line with the pragma-dialectical approach I understand argumentation as a complex illocutionary act that can be reconstructed as a move in a critical discussion. I use the terms (mixed) discussion, protagonist, antagonist, standpoint, argument, implicit argument in accordance with Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, although the concept of a propositional content in their definition of the illocutionary act may turn out to require reconsideration.

[ii] Throughout this paper I intend to distinguish carefully between *to represent* and *to express*. We can argue that expressed elements in a context lead to a representation that is more than what is expressed.

[iii] Evidently the joke as well as the cartoon is able to convey a much richer meaning. That is the brilliance of them. The specific use of the Titanic for example can bring into mind the self-confidence, tending to arrogance, of the engineers and constructors, which can be projected on Clinton, and so on. This regards the visual as well as the verbal.

[iv] Whether a (solely) visual text can represent (or express?) argumentation leads to a sometimes heated debate. In the reference list I sum up some of the contributions. Often the question seems to be whether a visual text *is* an argument. Blair formulates: "That any of these paintings might have been an argument in other circumstances does not make it an argument as it stands" (1996, 28), strongly referring to intentions of the historical creator of the visual text, in casu Picasso. Such a position seems inadequate to me. (a) A verbal or visual text can be called upon by another than the historical author. (b) A function as an argument is first of all a matter of an (if one wants externalized and

socialized) interpretation. Of course this may lead to a debate similar to that in narrative theories. Are there any textual features that characterize a text *inherently* as a narrative text? Ryan for example (2004, 9v) tries to make a distinction between being a narrative and possessing narrativity. To require that a text has to bear inherently in its form the argumentative function before calling it an argument seems in the verbal as well as in the visual domain an untenable position to me. (c) The term argument can refer to a 'complete' argumentative move in a discussion (neglecting the fact here that often it is not so easy to determine when a move is complete) or to an element from which (maybe in connection with other expressed elements) one can reconstruct such a complete move. This possibility seems to be neglected by some of advocates as well as the opponents.

[v] In Van den Hoven 2007 an argumentative analysis of two full newspaper articles shows that in more than 50% of all relations there is no explicit indication.

[vi] This claim is contested in Groarke (2002, 2007) as well as in Chryslee c.s. (1996), but strongly supported in Johnson 2003.

[vii] This method seems important to cleanse the debate whether and how visual texts that represent argumentation differ from verbal texts. To search for functional equivalence become even more important now that advocates as well as the opponents show such a strong preference for complicated visuals (cartoons, metaphorical texts in complicated advertisements, and so on). These require complicated analyses as in my first two examples. This suggests that visual texts – if they represent argumentation at all – do this in a very complicated way, so different from Socrates mortality that follows from his being human. If one constructs a verbal equivalent text, the analyses required by the verbal texts turn out to be just as complicated.

[viii] See for this interpretation of Peircean semiotics Van den Hoven 2009, and more specific Van den Hoven 2010.

[ix] Camelia-Mihaela Cmeciu presented me the outline of the interpretation that I use as the basis for the argumentative reconstruction (Cmeciu & Van den Hoven 2009).

[x] Causality is used here in a broad meaning, covering relations that run form cause to effect as well as from effect (as a symptom) to cause, and in the socio-physical domain as well as in the pragma-epistemic domain.

[xi] Whether the warrant should be formulated in a generalized form as I did here can be debated. But that regards the theoretical debate whether the argument on

analogy requires this kind of generalization.

[xii] From a cognitive perspective we define a narrative text as a discourse (the plot) that invites the interpreter to construct a in some sense coherent series of events in their temporal sequence (a story).

[xiii] I prefer to use a terminology that refers to Peircean semiotics. There are two reasons. The first one is that the pair mimetic/diegetic strongly suggests an opposition, which is untenable. A more important reason is that Peircean semiotics can model the process in which a sign develops from its iconic value through its indexical value (the empirically motivated experiences) to its symbolic value (the habits attached). Compare Van den Hoven 2010. The idea that for example moving pictures are purely mimetic and lack a narrator is untenable. Bordwell & Thompson (2004) offer an elaborated neo-formalist analysis of these elements of a film narrator.

[xiv] Also compare the first of "five elements for developing a claim from a moving picture" that Alcolea-Banegas (2009) distinguishes.

[xv] Made by Jaap Bakker: see http://www.jaapbakker.com/

[xvi] An almost literal translation from LJN: AD5930, Rechtbank 's-Gravenhage 09/900408-01, November 16 2001.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Evaluating Pragmatic Argumentation: A Pragma-Dialectical Perspective

1. Introduction

Pragmatic argumentation – also referred to as 'instrumental argumentation,' 'means-end argumentation,' 'argumentation from consequences'– is generally defined as argumentation that seeks to support a recommendation

(not) to carry out an action by highlighting its (un)desirable consequences (see, e.g., Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Schellens 1987; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992; Walton, Reed & Macagno, 2008). Pragmatic arguments are fairly common in everyday discourse and particularly in discussions over public policy. Cases can be identified in the print media on a regular basis. For example, by the end of June 2010, the U.K.'s Chancellor George Osborne was defending the Lib-Con budget as a means to "boost confidence in the economy" ("Budget: Osborne Defends 'Decisive' Plan on Tax and Cuts", 2010); Israel's defence minister, Edhud Barak, was attacking the timing of plans to demolish 22 Palestinians homes in East Jerusalem as being "prejudicial to hopes for continuing peace talks" ("Ehud Barak Attacks Timing of Plans to Demolish 22 Palestinian Homes", 2010); and major oil companies were attacking the US government's ban on deepwater drilling as a policy that was "destroying an entire ecosystem of businesses" and "resulting in tens of thousands of job losses" ("US Gulf Oil Drilling Ban Is Destroying 'Ecosystem of Businesses'", 2010).

In this paper I propose an instrument to evaluate pragmatic argumentation. My theoretical framework is the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation. Instruments to analyse and evaluate pragmatic arguments have already been proposed in pragma-dialectics. These instruments consist of an argument scheme and a set of critical questions. The argument scheme represents the inference rule underlying the argumentation and the critical questions point to the conditions a pragmatic argument should fulfil for that inference rule to be correctly applied. I consider these proposals extremely useful – as it happens, the evaluative instrument I set out in the following sections relies heavily on the existing instruments. This said, there is significant room for improvement and that's why this paper seemed necessary. Specifically, I am inclined to formulate the argument scheme somewhat differently and to reorganise, reformulate, and complement the list of critical questions. When designing the critical questions I have drawn occasionally on the work of Clarke (1985), Schellens (1987), and Walton (2007) who have also studied pragmatic argumentation from a dialectical perspective. Even though Clarke and Walton deal with 'practical inferences' and 'practical reasoning' respectively, from the definitions they propose, it is clear that these labels refer fundamentally to the same argumentative phenomenon defined above as 'pragmatic argumentation.'

Due to the limited scope of this paper, I will not start, as is customary, with a

review of the pragma-dialectical literature on the pragmatic argument scheme and critical questions, but restrict myself instead to the presentation and justification of a reformulated version of the aforementioned instruments.**[i]**

2. The evaluation of argumentation in pragma-dialectics
Before putting forward my proposal, I shall make explicit my theoretical starting points. In pragma-dialectics the evaluation of argumentation (with an unexpressed premise) proceeds in two stages (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, pp.144-151). The first stage is to examine whether the parties agree that the material premise of the argumentation is part of the shared material starting points of the discussion.**[ii]** The procedure by which the parties determine this is referred to as the *inter-subjective identification procedure (IIP).* If this procedure yields a negative outcome the argument used by the protagonist is then deemed 'fallacious' and the evaluation of the argument comes to an end. If the result is positive, the analyst must turn to the next evaluative stage to determine if the parties agree that the argument scheme used is a shared procedural starting point. If the protagonist has made used of an argument scheme that is not part of their agreements the argumentation is fallacious. This is the second point at which the evaluation may come to an end. In contrast, the evaluation must continue if the parties agree that the scheme is a shared procedural starting point. The reason for this is that, by agreeing on the legitimacy of the scheme, the protagonist is conferred the right to employ a specific type of inference rule to transfer the acceptability of the material premise to the conclusion. However, since this inference rule can be instantiated in infinite ways and not all of these substitution instances will actually transfer the acceptability to the conclusion, the analyst must examine, also, whether the parties agree that the argument scheme has been applied correctly. The procedure by which the parties determine if the argument scheme is appropriate and has been correctly applied is referred to as the *inter-subjective testing procedure (ITP).*

Critical questions are the dialectical method used by the parties to take a decision concerning the correctness of the application of the scheme (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p.149). More specifically, critical questions are questions by means of which the antagonist asks the protagonist if there are circumstances in the world – that is, the world as depicted by the material starting points of the discussion – that could hinder the transference of acceptability from the material premise advanced to the conclusion. (Note that this 'world' can expand during the

discussion, since the list of material starting points can be enlarged throughout the discussion.) If the protagonist wants to maintain his argumentation, he should give as an answer an argument showing that circumstances in the world that could count as 'obstacles' are not in place.**[iii]** These obstacles may fall under two categories: those relating to presuppositions of the standpoint and those linked to the connection premise of the argumentation. I shall give examples for each category in section 3.2.2.

3. Proposals for the evaluation of pragmatic argumentation
3.1. Argument scheme

Having explained the procedures involved in the pragma-dialectical evaluation of arguments, I turn to the characterisation of the pragmatic argument scheme I use as my point of departure:

Standpoint:	Action X should (not) be carried out	
Because:	Action X leads to (un)desirable consequence Y	(MATERIAL PREMISE)
And:	If action X leads to (un)desirable consequence Y, then action X should (not) be carried out	(CONNECTION PREMISE)

Argument schemes specify the type of propositions involved in a type of argumentation and their functions. As detailed in the scheme, the *standpoint* of pragmatic argumentation is prescriptive. This prescription can aim at creation of either a positive obligation or a negative one (i.e., a prohibition). The *material premise* of the argument is complex: it can be separated into two propositions, one *causal,* 'Action X leads to consequence Y,' and another *evaluative,* 'Consequence Y is (un)desirable.' As regards the *connection premise*, 'If action X leads to (un)desirable consequence Y, then action X should (not) be carried out,' it is important to realise that it does not commit the arguer to the statement that the conclusion necessarily follows from the material premise but, rather, that the conclusion *can* follow, in principle, from this premise. It is an inference licence subject to conditions expressed by the critical questions.

3.2 The evaluation procedures

The procedures introduced below are pertinent only to the evaluation of positive variants of pragmatic argumentation, where the recommendation to carry out an action is grounded by mentioning its *desirable* consequences.

3.2.1 The inter-subjective identification procedure

Given that the material premise of pragmatic argumentation involves two propositions, one evaluative and another causal, both need to be checked for their acceptability. The acceptability of the evaluative proposition is checked in turns (1) to (4) of the dialectical profile represented in Fig.1 and the acceptability of the causal premise in turns (5) to (8). Nevertheless, it is also possible for the parties to check the acceptability of the causal proposition first.**[iv]**
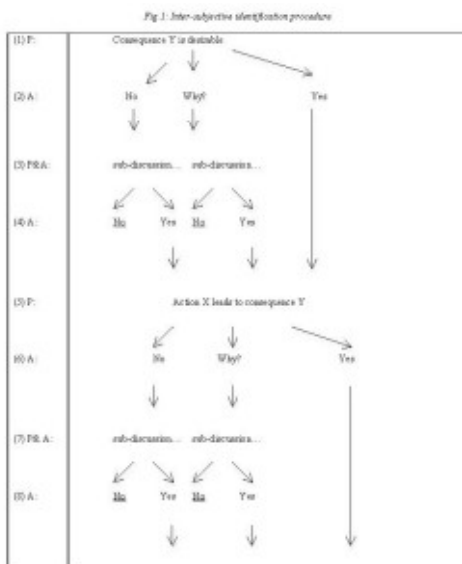

Figure 1

To cut a long story short, I have not represented in the profile each and every option available to the parties at this point of the discussion. The main point I seek to illustrate by means of this profile is that the parties have two opportunities to agree on the acceptability of the evaluative and the causal propositions. For example, the antagonist may immediately concede that the evaluative proposition is part of the material starting points of the discussion. This option is represented in turn (2) by the answer 'Yes'. It is also dialectically possible for the antagonist to claim that the proposition is not part of their common ground. In that event, the antagonist has two options. One alternative is to simply raise doubts concerning the acceptability of the proposition and

subsequently request argumentation from the protagonist to justify its acceptability. This is represented in turn (2) by the question 'Why?' A second alterative for the antagonist is to assume an opposite standpoint towards the proposition. This option is represented in the same turn by the answer 'No'. In both cases, the parties may decide to enter into a sub-discussion to determine the acceptability of the evaluative proposition. If these sub-discussions reach the concluding stage, they will end with either a 'yes' or 'no' answer by the antagonist. If the answer is affirmative, as represented in turn (4), the proposition is acceptable in the second instance.**[v]** Exactly the same procedure applies to the examination of the causal proposition.**[vi]**

3.2.2. The inter-subjective testing procedure

As explained earlier, the ITP is applied only if the IIP has yielded a positive outcome. Turns (1) and (2) of the profile represented in Fig.2 summarise the first step of the ITP, where the parties check if the pragmatic argument scheme is an acceptable means of defence. The interaction between the parties at this point can become much more complex, but I will stay with this abridged version because my main interest lies on the critical questions. Recall that the point of applying critical questions is to examine whether there are obstacles in the transference of acceptability from the material premise of the argument to the conclusion. This means that the acceptability of the material premise and, thereby, the acceptability of the causal and evaluative propositions, is presupposed by these questions.
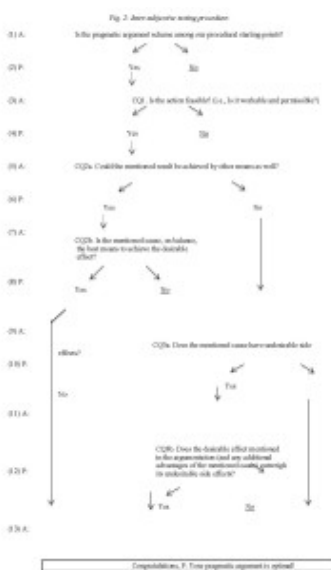

Figure 2

The first critical question relates to a presupposition of the prescriptive standpoint. This presupposition is expressed by the familiar principle 'ought implies can' (see, e.g., Kant 1970, A807/B835, A548/B576). In essence, the principle states that the feasibility of an action is a necessary (but not a sufficient) condition to establish an obligation to perform that action. It is also possible to find the inverse version of this principle, which states that the *unfeasibility* of an action is a *sufficient* (but not necessary) *condition* to cancel the obligation to perform that action (see Albert 1985, p.98). Hence, a pragmatic argument will fail to provide support to its standpoint if the action recommended *cannot* be carried out. Clarke (1985), Schellens (1987) and Walton (2007) include a critical question inquiring if the recommended action is feasible in their accounts.

An action can be 'unfeasible' because it is *'unworkable'* or *'non-permissible.'* Schellens (1987) acknowledges these two senses of feasibility when he introduces two questions relating to the contextual limitations for carrying out an action: 'Is action X practical?' and 'Is action X allowable?' By the term 'unworkable action' I mean an action that is incompatible with factual limitations, and by a 'non-permissible action' one that is incompatible with institutional or moral principles, norms, or rules. For example, the policy of rising education spending could be 'unworkable' if there is a budget deficit. Similarly, the development of nuclear power as a method of energy production could be unworkable if there is no capacity to forge single-piece reactor pressure vessels, which are necessary in most reactor designs. In contrast, the measures of an immigration bill could be unfeasible, in the sense of 'non-permissible,' if they were incompatible, for example, with the European Convention of Human Rights. Note that an important corollary of including the notion of permissibility under the concept of feasibility is that a pragmatic argument can be defeated by a rule or principle. The latter, however, only insofar as the principle or rule is part of the shared starting points of the discussion and if the parties agree, also, that such principle or rule should take precedence over the desirable consequences brought about by the action.**[vii]**

As illustrated in the profile, when the protagonist is faced with a critical question concerning feasibility, he has two options. One is to acknowledge that the action is unfeasible and retract his argumentation. This is represented by the answer 'No' in the profile. The second alternative is to maintain his argumentation and provide further argumentation. This choice is represented by the answer 'Yes'.

His argumentation may show that the action *is feasible* or, alternatively, that the action *will become feasible* if some changes are introduced in the status quo – changes which, in turn, he should prove viable.**[viii]**

Necessary-means question
Once the parties have agreed that the action is feasible they should turn to critical question (2a), 'Could the mentioned result be achieved by other means as well?' Note that the question does not ask whether the action will indeed lead to the mentioned effect. The question presupposes a positive answer to the latter and inquires, instead, whether the action is a necessary cause. To prove that the mentioned cause is necessary the protagonist needs to show that unless the action is performed the desirable state of affairs will not take place.

How can the protagonist prove the cause 'necessary'? It seems there are two ways of establishing this claim. One is to show that some presumed alternative means X' does not actually lead to desirable effect Y. Another way would be to indicate that alternative action X' cannot be carried out. Any of these responses would allow the protagonist to maintain, for the time being, his argument and standpoint. This move is represented by the answer 'No' in the profile.**[ix]** As a case in point, consider the argument: 'The UN Security Council should send Iran a package of positive incentives (e.g. selling Iran light water nuclear technology, civilian aircraft, etc.) to encourage the halt of its uranium enrichment program.' Suppose that the antagonist puts forward an objection of this sort: 'However, the same effect could be achieved if the UN, instead of sending positive incentives to Iran, decided to apply economical sanctions to Iran, such as requesting Iran's most important trading partners (e.g. China, Japan and India) to cut back on their imports of Iranian crude oil. In response to this objection, the protagonist could attack the causal relation of the antagonist's argumentation. He could claim, for example, that economical sanctions by the UN Security Council would prove futile given Iran's growing expansion of economic and political ties with countries such as Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Kuwait and Malaysia. Alternatively, he could point out that the UN cannot impose economical sanctions on Iran because, for instance, two important council members, China and Russia, disapprove of such measure.

Best-means question
Next, consider a situation where the answer to critical question (2a) is 'Yes', that is, if the action proposed is *not* a necessary cause. On the surface, it appears that

if action X is not necessary because there is another means X' to achieve exactly the same effect Y, there is *no obligation* to carry out action X. From this it seems to follow that a positive answer to this question would, if not defeat, at least weaken the pragmatic argument of the standpoint.

On closer inspection, however, it is possible to identify cases where pragmatic argumentation can be reasonable even if it mentions an action that is not a necessary cause. As an illustration, consider the following pragmatic argument: 'In order to mitigate greenhouse gas emission we should invest in building more concentrated solar energy plants (CSP).' If an arguer, in his role as antagonist were to ask 'Are there other ways, besides building CSP, to mitigate greenhouse emissions?,' the answer (in our world) would be an emphatic 'Yes' – it is clear that there are alternative ways. One of them has been at the centre of much talk on global warming: the development of nuclear power as a method of energy production. The crucial difference with the example about Iran and its enrichment uranium program is that, in the CSP case, nuclear power *does* emit relatively low amounts of carbon dioxide, leading therefore to the desired effect of mitigating greenhouse emissions. Moreover, it is feasible in several countries since the technology is readily available. In other words, the alternative means is indeed a 'means' to the desired effect and it is feasible. Building CSP is therefore not really necessary to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. However, should one conclude from this that the argument is a bad argument? Not necessarily. The protagonist can maintain his argumentation so long as he shows that this action is the *best* among other alternative means to achieve the desired effect. In this specific example, he could argue that, on balance, that is, considering the advantages and disadvantages of building CSP, on the one hand, and of developing nuclear power, on the other, the former is a better alternative than the latter. He could point out, for instance, that the problem of radioactive waste is still unsolved and that there are high risks related to the production of nuclear energy. For the reasons adduced above, an affirmative answer does not necessarily undermine the argumentation, but rather leads to another critical question, represented in turn (7): ''*Is the mentioned cause, on balance, the best means to achieve the desirable effect?*'**[x]**

In his study, Clarke (1985) distinguishes a "basic" and "option" pattern of practical inferences. The basic pattern entertains a single action as a means of what is wanted. In the option pattern, the agent must choose between a number

of alternative means rather than decide on a single action (p. 22). In a similar vein, Walton (2007) formulates two schemes for practical reasoning, one referring to a 'single action' and another that accounts for 'a situation with alternative means' (p. 202). In this way, Clarke and Walton acknowledge that the action recommended by a pragmatic argument can be intended sometimes as the one to be preferred among several options rather than as the only means available to achieve some desirable end. Both authors, however, seem to treat the requirements that the action proposed should be a *necessary cause* and that this should be the *best means* as perfectly compatible. In fact, Clarke argues that all positive variants of practical inferences should mention a necessary cause (1985, pp. 22-23) and Walton proposes a 'necessary condition scheme' for a situation with 'alterative means' (2007, p. 204). I disagree with them in this last respect. These requirements are mutually exclusive: an action that is claimed to be the best among alternative means to achieve some desirable effect cannot be claimed to be, at the same time, a necessary means to achieve that effect. In addition, it seems that in evaluating pragmatic arguments, the analyst should start by asking whether the cause is a necessary cause and, only if the answer is negative, ask if the cause is the best means to realise the desired effect.

Certainly, in determining whether an action is the best means to achieve or avoid some state of affairs the parties will have to deal not only with issues concerning causality but also desirability. In particular, they will have to weigh up the *costs* and the *additional advantages* of the proposed action and the alternatives means.

Side-effect questions
Let us assume now that the parties have agreed that the mentioned cause is a necessary cause, as indicated in turn (6). The next question that needs to be considered is question (3a), namely, whether there are any cost effects to the proposed action. If the parties agree that there are *no* cost-effects, then the protagonist has successfully defended his standpoint.

The above does not mean, however, that a 'Yes' answer will automatically defeat the protagonist's argumentation. His argumentation still has a chance of success. Take the events that took place in Greece some months ago. Prime Minister Papandreou proposed a series of austerity measures to address the country's financial crisis. In defending the government's case, the PM argued that the measures were necessary to borrow money from the international market and that this was in turn necessary for the country to avoid bankruptcy. Suppose, for

the sake of the argument, that the only means of borrowing money from the international market was to implement the hefty cuts and reforms included in the government's proposal. Faced with the question 'Does the mentioned cause have undesirable side-effects?' the PM would have answered most certainly 'yes': in fact, he admitted that the planned changes were "painful" and referred to them in terms of "sacrifices" required to put the country's finances in order ("PM Sets Scene for 'Painful' Measures", 2010). Does this make the Greek government's argument for the approval of the measures a weak argument? Not necessarily: Not if the benefits resulting from those measures – borrowing the money and thereby remedying Greece's fiscal situation – outweigh the costs brought about by those measures.**[xi]** This possibility is accounted for by critical question 3b, 'Does the desirable effect mentioned in the argumentation (and any additional advantages of the mentioned cause) outweigh its undesirable side effects?'**[xii]**

4. Conclusions

In the preceding sections I have outlined an instrument to evaluate pragmatic arguments from a pragma-dialectical perspective. This instrument consists of a dialectical procedure to establish the acceptability of the argumentation (the IIP) and another one to examine its justificatory function (the ITP).

Concerning the first of these procedure, I have stressed that both causal and evaluative propositions involved in the material premise ought to be checked for their acceptability. This point is worth emphasising since the evaluative proposition of pragmatic argumentation is often left implicit in practice.

As regards the justificatory function of pragmatic argumentation I have provided a rationale for each critical question. Furthermore, I have situated these questions in a dialectical profile to make clear that certain critical questions have priority over others – that is to say, that there are certain questions whose inappropriate response makes the subsequent questions in the list unnecessary. For example, if the action proposed is unfeasible the reaming questions become irrelevant. The profile also shows that sometimes there is more than one *reasonable type of response* to a critical question. Thus, according to the procedure outlined, a pragmatic argument is reasonable if (1) the proposed cause is the best means among several options to achieve some desired effect, (2) if it is a necessary means with no cost effects, or (3) if it is a necessary means with cost effects, but the desirable effects outweigh the former.**[xiii]**

NOTES

[i] Pragmatic argumentation is described in van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Kruiger 1983; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, p. 97, 162; Garssen 1997, p.21; van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 2002, pp.101-102. The argument scheme is outlined in Feteris 2002, p.355 and also, with some modifications, in van Eemeren, Houtlosser & Snoeck Henkemans 2007, p.170. The critical questions for pragmatic argumentation are listed in Garssen 1997, p.21 (available only in Dutch). An English translation of these questions can be found in van Eemeren, Houtlosser & Snoeck Henkemans 2007, p.170.

[ii] This description of the evaluative process is premised on an immanent view of dialectics. According to this perspective, the analyst should examine the acceptability of the argumentation solely in consideration of the material starting points of the discussants (see Hamblin 1970). Nevertheless, it is also possible to conceive the evaluative process from a non-immanent perspective and assign the analyst a more active role in the evaluation. In the latter case, if the analyst considers that the material premise of the argumentation is unacceptable when both parties have recognised it as a shred material starting point, the analyst may start a discussion with the parties concerning the acceptability of that proposition. In this discussion, the analyst not only questions the acceptability of the argumentation but also assumes the opposite point of view than the parties. Being protagonist of his own standpoint, he should put forward argumentation to justify his position.

The description also assumes that there are two real parties to the discussion. The same alternatives – and immanent versus a non-immanent view of dialectics – apply even if the antagonist is only 'projected' by the protagonist. In both cases the analyst should try to 'reconstruct' the projected antagonist. In the first case, the analyst will judge the acceptability of the argumentation in view of the presumably shared starting points by protagonist and antagonist; in the second case, he will take a more active role in the evaluation, making explicit his disagreement concerning the acceptability of the argumentation.

[iii] In the ideal model of a critical discussion, where every argumentative move is made explicitly, the parties expressly agree on the critical questions at the opening stage. This agreement is reached more or less simultaneously to the agreement that a certain type of argument scheme will count in the present discussion as an acceptable means of defence. By contrast, discussants rarely agree explicitly in practice on the critical questions relevant to a type of argument scheme. This puts the burden on argumentation theorists to propose critical

questions for conventionalised types of argument schemes such as the pragmatic argument scheme. In designing these questions, they look for the kind of evidence that could count against a specific type of argumentation starting from the assumption that the material premise is acceptable.

[iv] From an evaluative perspective, the acceptability of the causal proposition is just as significant as that of the evaluative proposition. For this reason, the order followed by the parties when checking the acceptability of the material premise in the IIP is irrelevant. This is not to say, however, that the order is irrelevant from the point of view of the production of a pragmatic argument: means cannot be defined without having established the goal to be achieved first.

[v] It is worth noting that the desirability of an effect is always a matter of degree. We judge the desirability of a state of affairs not only against some shared standard but also in relation to the desirability of other possible state of affairs. For example, we might consider that diminishing the rate of unemployment by 2% is desirable but diminishing it by 4% is even more desirable. Judging the 2% against the 4%, the 2% is less desirable, but at the same time, it is not undesirable when judged against a 0% reduction. Because desirability is a matter of degree, the 'Yes' and 'No' answers in the dialectical profile should not be understood in absolute but rather relative terms. I fact, the antagonist may dispute the desirability of Y not only by assuming the opposite standpoint 'Y is undesirable', but also by assuming two related standpoints of the form 'Y is less desirable than Z' and 'We should pursue Z instead'. Proving the acceptability of the second standpoint is necessary because Z might be more desirable than Y but Z might be nonetheless unattainable under the current circumstances. If that is the case, then the acceptability of the evaluative premise 'Y is desirable' has not been attacked successfully. I am grateful to one of my commentators for drawing my attention to this point.

[vi] The causal proposition can be justified in several ways. It can be grounded, for instance, by an argument from authority (e.g., '*According to a recent research in the U.S.*, wide availability of firearms results in more violence and homicides'). It can be justified as well by an argument from analogy (e.g., 'Policies reducing access to firearms in the UK have resulted in less homicides and violence. We should apply the *same* policy in U.S.'). Also, the causal proposition can be supported by a symptomatic argument, where the specific causal relation in the causal premise of a pragmatic argument is justified by referring to a causal generalisation (e.g., The conflict between Israel and Palestine ought to be solved by peaceful means. I don't believe in the concept of a 'just war'.)

[vii] In this way, the procedure leaves up to the parties the decision to follow a teleological or a deontological conception of 'reasonable actions', when there is a clash between desirable consequences and moral principles.

[viii] Once the protagonist has advanced argumentation to meet a critical question, the antagonist may regard this argumentation unconvincing. In that event, the parties may decide to go into a sub-discussion. To keep the profile simple, I have not represented these sub-discussions. It is important to bear in mind, though, that this is a dialectical – and, therefore, reasonable – possibility.

[ix] This critical question does not ask from the protagonist to refute the existence or the feasibility of ANY possible alternative means. Dialectically speaking, the protagonist has the obligation to show that the action cannot be achieved by other means only if the antagonist has proposed alternative means to achieve the desirable effect. If the antagonist does not come up with any alternative means, then the action can be considered – for the time being, that is, within the present critical discussion – necessary.

The burden of proof of the protagonist in this respect becomes clearer when his argumentation is judged within the context of an activity type. As an illustration, consider the context of parliamentary debates, where pragmatic arguments are quite common. In this activity type the measures of a bill will be 'necessary' for the achievement of some desirable aim if (for the time being) the opposition has not come up with alternative measures, or if the measures proposed by the opposition do not really lead to the desired effect or are unfeasible. Moreover, because parliamentary debates are discussions not only among MPs but also – and, probably, mainly – between MPs and the public, the protagonist of a pragmatic argument should also take into consideration the alternatives being debated in the broader public sphere (i.e. in the media).

[x] Walton (2007) acknowledges that we do not always need to argue from necessary causes in practical reasoning. In his view, it is sometimes perfectly reasonable to argue from sufficient cause.

He illustrates this with the following example: 'My goal is to kill this mosquito. Swatting the mosquito is a sufficient means of killing the mosquito. Therefore, I should swat the mosquito.' I certainly concur with Walton that this argument seems perfectly reasonable, even though swatting the mosquito is not a necessary condition for killing it (there are many other more creative ways of doing this). However, I don't think one can conclude from this that it is permissible to argue from sufficient causes in pragmatic argumentation. The cause is not necessary because there are other available means of killing the mosquito. That being the

case, one should still ask in principle if swatting it is the best means on balance. Of course, in this case, the side effects and additional advantages of each of the means available are probably almost equivalent (or, to some, irrelevant), so that in the end, it does not really make so much of a difference which of the means is chosen.

[xi] It is interesting to observe how politicians strategically defend their policies in terms of 'necessary' or 'unavoidable' means when in fact there are other options available – options which could eventually lead to more advantages and less disadvantages than the policy recommended. This point is nicely made, in my opinion, by David Milliband (UK shadow foreign secretary) in his commentary 'These cuts are not necessary: they are simply a political choice', published in response to the 2010 budget introduced by the Lib-Con government. See, *The Observer*, 27.06.10, p. 19.

[xii] This critical question covers a situation in which both parties agree that X leads to Y and that Y is desirable, but they also agree that there is another desirable outcome Z that is both more desirable than Y and incompatible with Y. In such a situation, the answer to the critical question 'Does the desirable effect mentioned in the argumentation (Y) outweigh its undesirable side effects?' should be 'No'. The response should be negative because: (1) X indirectly precludes – by furthering outcome Y – the achievement of Z and (2), since Z is more desirable than Y, the negative effect of precluding the attainment of Z outweighs the benefit of achieving Y. I am grateful to one of my commentators for drawing my attention to this case.

[xiii] I presented a similar paper earlier and I received a critical comment concerning the different reasonable paths outlined in the profile along the following lines: Suppose the claim at issue is 'X should be carried out', and that in one context – let us call it context 1 – X is a necessary cause, with 3 cost effects. Suppose further that the protagonist convinces the antagonist that achieving the desirable effect is so significant that it outweighs those 2 cost effects. In this context, the claim would be justified: X should be carried out. Now imagine some context 2, where not only X but also X' is a means to achieve the desired effect. Moreover, X has 3 significant cost-effects and X' has 2. In this case, the conclusion is not that X should be carried out, but rather that X should not be carried out and that Y' should be carried out instead. How is it possible that the same procedure leads to inconsistent results?

My answer to this objection is as follows: It is true that the parties may reach different conclusions concerning the reasonableness of carrying out an action X

according to this procedure. But it is important to keep in mind that the profile does not portray one critical discussion. For each of these options – necessary means versus best means option – the material starting points are different, which means that each option is part of a different critical discussion. In critical discussion 1, there are not other available means and in critical discussion 2 there are available means. So in the second case, X is judged relatively to other options, while in the first case the action is judged only in relation to its claimed advantage(s) and possible disadvantages.

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