ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Climate Scientist Stephen Schneider Versus The Sceptics: A Case Study Of Argumentation In Deep Disagreement

Abstract: Can deep disagreement be managed by argument? This case study examines the 2010 exchange between prominent climate scientist/climate communicator Stephen Schneider and an Australian television audience of self-described climate "sceptics." An analysis of the moves made by audience members, the moderator, and Schneider himself shows that Schneider consistently reframed the interaction emphasize trust, refusing to respond in kind to attacks on his credibility. He exerted firm control on the issues. And at several points, he exercised his authority as a scientist in refusing to engage points that were outside the scientific consensus. Although some of Schneider's moves might traditionally have been classified as fallacies, in this context they served as strategies for managing interactional challenges, and making an exchange of arguments possible.

Keywords: argument, argumentation, disagreement, normative pragmatics, authority, climate communication

1. *Introduction*

Arguments get made when people disagree (Goodwin, 2001; Govier, 1987; Jackson & Jacobs, 1980). But disagreeable interactions aren't necessarily ideal environments for good reasons to flourish. Some argumentation theories try to side-step this difficulty by supposing that arguers' surface disagreements rest on a deeper basis of cooperation. But even if we adopt this idealizing starting point for theory – and certainly if we do not (Goodwin, 2007) – we still have to inquire "how arguers make do under imperfect circumstances" (Jacobs & Jackson, 2006, pp. 123-124), that is, under the circumstances they are actually in. Thus lack of cooperation, fallacious moves and other symptoms of deep disagreement are not just problems for theorists to deal with; arguers in practice have to confront and

manage them. "Argumentation is a self-regulating activity" (Jacobs, 2000, p. 274); it is primarily up to the arguers themselves to construct an interaction where they can use good reasons to get something done.

This case study carries forward the normative pragmatic approach to argumentation by untangling the management strategies adopted by a most skilled arguer in a most disagreeable situation. In 2010 eminent climate scientist Stephen Schneider appeared on Australian television to talk with an audience of climate "sceptics." Schneider's long career as a science communicator had started in 1971, when as the juniormost member of a modelling team whose results had attracted the attention of the press, he was volunteered to be their spokesperson. Schneider found he enjoyed the work, and was good at it, so for the next forty years he placed himself on the leading edge of both climate science – founder and editor of the journal *Climatic Change*, lead author in the IPCC process – and climate science communication. A highly reflective communication practitioner, his working paper on "Mediarology" documents his commitment to thinking through the "oxymorons" or "double ethical binds" confronting scientists who lived up to their obligation of public outreach (Schneider, n.d.). And the very title of his memoir, *Science as a Contact Sport* (2009) documents his willingness to engage broadly with diverse public audiences on the issues he devoted his life to.

It was likely Schneider's general willingness to talk with his fiercest opponents that lead him in to respond positively to an invitation to go on the Australian news/talk show *Insight* to engage with 52 self-described doubters. Australia, one of the early leaders in policy action against climate change was at that time entering a period of backlash, which eventually resulted in the repeal of many important measures. Although outright doubts about the reality of anthropogenic global warming were low (Leviston, Price, Malkin, & McCrea, 2014), the tone of the debate had grown increasingly harsh.

The *Sceptics*, as the episode was called, is thus a promising context in which to study good practices for managing deep disagreement. In the following pages, I first outline specific challenges Schneider faced, before turning to what we can observe of his toolkit for managing these challenges. Quotations are from the show's own transcript (*Insight*, 2010), corrected from the video.

2. *The challenges*

In undertaking to engage with "the sceptics," Schneider was facing several challenges. The first, overarching challenge was whether interaction was possible at all – or at least, whether a reason-giving, argumentative interaction was possible. Schneider himself characterized the wider public discussion of climate issues with a fight metaphor, as a "constant set of *combat.*" The press moderator similarly framed the present interaction in warlike terms, introducing segments by inviting the television audience to watch Schneider "*take on* a room full of climate change sceptics" and "to *win* them over." This framing hardly provided optimism on the ability of good reasons to find traction in the situation.

In addition to the general problem of deep disagreement, Schneider faced two related, specific challenges when interacting with "sceptics." First was the challenge of distrust. Australians have been characterized as having a "not exceptionally high" level of trust in scientists generally (Leviston et al., 2014). Not surprisingly, there is evidence (from surveys in the US, at least) that people who are doubtful or dismissive of the existence of climate change are particularly distrustful, especially of climate scientists (Leiserowitz, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, & Hmielowski, 2012). In meeting with The Sceptics, Schneider repeatedly encountered indications that his interlocutors not only doubted his climate science, but also doubted him, personally. One criticized him for allegedly spinning his science, characterizing him as "exaggerating;" another said he was giving "prevaricative" answers; and Janet—one of his leading opponents on the program – accused him of "alarmism" and "scaremongering." During the interaction, Schneider's perceived bias was twice traced back to its roots in self-interest, either financial:

The only reason you're getting grant money is because climate change, the planet is warming, it's the only reason you're getting grant money. If we didn't have this hysteria there would be no grants, there would be no money – no people making money at all.

or political:

What I find suspicious is that I have not heard, and I watch a lot of media, one of these moderately minded scientists come out and hose down the Doomsday scenarios being pedalled by environmentalists and our politicians. I'm not speaking of you yourself, sir, but your industry, your lobbying, the lobby of which you are a part... I think a scientist in your position could speak up against bias

language even in areas where it actually contributes to your industry.... I would like to hear people in your business admit some doubt.

This second passage occurred relatively late in the event, after Schneider (as we will see below) had built up some trust with his audience, and the interlocutor here tries to exempt Schneider from the criticism he is levelling. But his utterance reveals that he takes climate scientists to be a "business," "industry" or "lobby" group, roughly on par with the fossil fuel industry or environmental advocacy organizations: a typical political actor, using "bias language" to advance self-interest. Obviously, it will be difficult for Schneider to get his interlocutors to take his arguments seriously if they believe he is just a political shill; Schneider must therefore do something to mitigate the distrust in order for the interaction to proceed.

A second specific challenge Schneider faces arises from the fact that climate science is complex, but the time for making arguments is always limited. Those who would cast doubt on mainstream science can take advantage of this fact by adopting a strategy known as the "Gish Gallop," or what American debaters term "spread." Using this strategy, interlocutors raise such a large number of arguments – generally weak or baseless arguments – that their opponents are unable to respond to them all within the time constraints, thus creating an appearance that they cannot respond. Intentionally or not, several of Schneider's interlocutors bombarded him with diverse considerations in a small space of time. For example, early in the interchange one interlocutor – Janet – raised three distinct points over a short set of three turns:

[Janet] The hypothesis that we are currently faced with is that carbon dioxide is the driver of climate change and throughout history we have proven evidence that temperature has been much colder with higher degrees of CO2 in the atmosphere than what we have today and vice versa...

The evidence says that we did have warming, yes, we have [not] been in a long-term warming trend the last 15 years, we haven't had no statistical warming and so I think that's a problem with this hypothesis. I believe that the hypothesis has been shown to be false....

I think we've got a fundamental problem in that we are wanting to change our entire economic structure based on the hypothesis that CO2 is the driver of

climate.

The first concerns how scientists have attributed the current warming to the rise in CO2 ("attribution"); the second concerns the existence of current warming at all ("detection"); the third concerns the correct policy response to climate change. Although the program is long given the television medium (with 45 minutes devoted to talk), and the moderator allows Schneider extended turns, Schneider could legitimately find it difficult to respond fully to even one of these points, much less all three. After all, it took the IPCC 5th Assessment Report 1552 pages to summarize the physical science relevant to points 1 and 2.

3. *Schneider's strategic toolkit*
Having reviewed the challenges Schneider faces, I now turn to examine his responses. What strategies does he have for opening a space for argumentative interaction, managing deep disagreement, distrust, and issue spread? I start with Schneider's responses the two more specific challenges, before taking up the general problem of transacting disagreement between scientists and citizens.

3.1 *Aggressive presumption of good faith*
Throughout the event, Schneider refuses to accept his interlocutors' negative characterizations of his motives. But he equally refuses to reply to them in kind. In this way, Schneider verbally enacts an attitude of trust in his interlocutors, treating them as worthy conversation partners.

Consider first Schneider's management of the open expressions of distrust towards him. When accused of exaggeration, Schneider responds by simply denying the charge and re-explaining the evidence for his figures. When accused of contradicting what he had said in another context, he blames the problem on his "American English" and admits that "if" he said what the interlocutor said he said, "he misspoke" – although it was almost certainly the case that it was the interlocutor who misunderstood. When accused of bias due to membership in the climate science "industry," he either ignores the accusation (helped by the moderator, who shifted immediately to another member of the audience), or explains that the group of climate scientists are quite diverse, including some members who admittedly do "overstate," but many (including himself) who do not.

Schneider is furthermore careful to avoid saying that his interlocutors are

speaking with the kind of "bias" or "exaggeration" they charge him with. Schneider of course is aware of the generally accepted fact that special interests have put substantial amounts of money behind messaging that manufactures doubt of climate science (e.g., Ceccarelli, 2011; Oreskes & Conway, 2010). And it is also clear that Schneider thinks some of his interlocutors have been misled by these messages. But in discussing the misinformation, he distances his present conversation partners from the advocacy. For example,

There are groups which have spent a lot of time – people have made assertions...

Here Schneider starts by a reference to the "groups" doing the distorting, but immediately corrects this already impersonal designation to remove the suggestion of active misleading (it's just making "assertions") and of organization (it's just "people"). Even when pressed, he maintains a distinction between the intentional misleading performed by advocacy groups in the public sphere and the specific utterances of his present interlocutors. Schneider starts his second interchange with Janet, one of his most hostile opponents, by saying:

I'm concerned that you're kind of repeating a mantra from what you've heard from discredited information.... When people try to say that [the "discredited information"] they either do not understand climate science or they polemicizing, because it is an absolutely every single model.

Here we see Schneider reporting not his interlocutor's assertion of faulty reasoning (hedged as "kind of"), but his own "concerns" about it; and he gives his interlocutor an out, allowing that she may just "not understand," not that she is necessarily "polemicizing."

Finally, Schneider responds to distrust by actively expressing trust, specifically denying that people like his interlocutors are moved by anything less than the public good. "I don't know [any] coal miner or any auto worker making a big car who does it to screw up the climate," he explains at one point, "but they may be screwing up the climate."

In sum, Schneider appears to be systematically avoiding any hint that his interlocutors may be guilty of bad argumentative conduct – and specifically, of precisely the bad argumentative conduct some of them accuse him of. There is no "crying foul" against his interlocutor's questionable moves (Innocenti, 2011). Instead, Schneider is implicitly following Sally Jackson's (2008) advice to

scientists in particular: to refrain from questioning others' motives, to avoid opening a meta-debate over possible "politicization" of scientific findings, and instead to stick to critiquing the reasoning itself. Although (as we will see below) Schneider does set limits around what is worth debating, in his utterances he consistently frames his interlocutors as worthy conversation partners.

3.2 *Issue management*
As pointed out above, Schneider's interlocutors (intentionally or not) several times present him with multiple potential issues, threatening to make his replies appear inadequate. Issues are not simply given by the occasion, however; they are the outcome of the discursive work done by all participants in an exchange (Goodwin, 2002). What does Schneider do to manage the complexity he faces?

Throughout the event, Schneider displays some skill at being explicit about the set of issues he is addressing. At a minimum, he often begins his turns with "first of all," priming his auditors to expect additional arguments after the first is finished. He even occasionally manages to mark his later points, with "with regard to" or "the question is" – something that is difficult to do on the fly. Schneider also frequently begins by identifying the specific issue he will address. In an elaboration of his first strategy of aggressive trust, he tends to accomplish this by praising his interlocutor's framing of the "question" as "good," "very good," or even "excellent." At one point he even goes out of his way to explain why the question is a good one – because it aligns with the questions climate scientists themselves have raised:

Yeah, a good question [raising doubts about the integrity of some measurements] and so does the scientific community.... So that very good question that you asked is exactly the same question that climate scientists have been asking themselves for 30 to 40 years.

When faced with a definite "Gish Gallop," Schneider is especially careful to be explicit about the issues in play. Here is Schneider in his first interchange with Janet, the interlocutor whose three issues were quoted above, at the end of taking up her second point:

That's [her first point, attribution] a tougher question which I will be happy, in fact must address which many of you brought that up in your opening comments. [Moderator] We'll get on to that in a moment. Does that answer your question,

Janet?
[Janet raises her first point again.]
[Schneider] Yeah, that's a different question.
[Janet, overlapping] That isn't…
[Schneider] That's what we call detection—[correcting that to] attribution. I promise you I'll talk about that. Right now we're only talking about, is the climate changing? [i.e., detection]

Here we see Schneider doing extensive metadiscursive work to differentiate the potential issues, to identify which he has already replied to, and to promise to reply to the remaining. The moderator never gave him a chance to return to the missing point, but his explicitness here makes clear to the listening audience that it is the constraints of the medium, not his own inability, that prevents a full response to the issues.

Finally, in one extreme case Schneider twice breaks in to secure his opportunity to register a reply. At the end of the second interchange with Janet, Schneider first interrupts the moderator, asking, "can I just quickly answer that?" and then interrupts Janet with "can I please finish?" Despite the politeness devices (asking for permission, minimizing the interruption as "quick," using "please"), Schneider here shows he is willing to disrupt the interchange in order to get his points heard.

Schneider's marking of points is helpful for ensuring that his audience follows his reasoning. But clarity is not the only strategic purpose of his heavy use of metadiscourse. While responding as fully as the medium permits to the points he thinks most important, Schneider's argumentative roadmaps prevent his audience from inferring that he has no answers to the others.

3.3 *Exercise of authority*
As we have seen above, Schneider does a lot to establish his interlocutors as worthy conversation partners – even when they are giving them grief – and also gives strong endorsements to the "questions" they are raising. At the same time, however, he is clear about one thing: there are points that are simply not debatable.
In his first interchange with Janet, Schneider leads off with:

Yeah, okay, that's wrong, sorry – that's not what the evidence says. First of all…

Notice that Schneider mitigates the rejection of Janet's reasoning by shifting from the possible "you're wrong" to the impersonal "that's wrong," and by adding hedges in advance and an apology afterwards. Also, although he does not argue against Janet's point, he does go on to provide an explanation of the science on the topic. Stronger is his response to another interlocutor:

I'm sorry to say that's not true. Please read the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report...

Here we see the same impersonality and apologizing, but coupled with a possibly condescending instruction to the interlocutor to go and read up on the topic – a method for resolving the difference of opinion that doesn't take up precious time in the interaction. Finally, in an exchange with a recalcitrant interlocutor Schneider first offers an out – "perhaps you haven't understood the answer" – before finally concluding:

[Schneider] Oh, then you're totally wrong.
[Interlocutor] I'm saying [repeats point]
[Schneider] I think you need to study this problem.
[Interlocutor] I've studied it—
[Schneider] Obviously not well. Let me give you an example.
[Moderator] Okay, one at a time. Let Stephen respond.
[Schneider] [Gives example.] ... That is completely well established, it's been established for a long time and if you don't accept that you really need to study science. You're just wrong.

Here Schneider's reply is personal – "you're totally wrong" – and the dismissal he gives his interlocutor – to go and "study science" – direct.

It is interesting to note that in all three instances, Schneider is refusing to engage when his interlocutor attempts to play a "scientist" role (e.g., when he is identified as a "Dr.") or to use the language of science (e.g., "hypothesis"). While Schneider finds it praiseworthy for lay interlocutors to raise "questions" – especially when their questions coincide with scientists' own – lay interlocutors aren't worth talking with when they cross over into the terrain of science and maintain positions that he, the scientist, finds unsupportable. In these cases Schneider exercises his authority as a scientist, declares that his interlocutors are "wrong," and directs them to engage in further study (i.e., to become scientists)

before he will engage with them. Shutting down debate is of course commonly accounted as a fallacious move in argumentative interactions. In Schneider's interaction with "the sceptics," it appears to play a vital role in keeping the controversy contained.

4. *Conclusion*

Few raised their hands towards the end of the program, when the moderator inquired whether Schneider had changed any minds. But perhaps changing minds – resolution of the disagreement – was not the point of the interaction (Goodwin, 1999)

Instead, towards the end of the event Schneider and many of his interlocutors find themselves converging with regard to what one in the audience calls "the rhetoric of this" – that is, the way the controversy is discursively transacted outside the present interaction. Schneider echoes an interlocutor's criticism of some of his fellow scientists, who "overstate" the facts about climate change. Another interlocutor picks up with approval Schneider's critique of the media's "sound byte journalism," which she agrees adds to "the problem." When one interlocutor criticizes the "argy-bargy sort of thing" which makes it impossible for laypersons to find credible answers, Schneider approves and goes on to warn against any speaker who claims to be a "truth teller" – on either side of the debate. And most notably, Schneider and two of "the sceptics" exchange stories of receiving threats and ostracism because of their statements on climate issues. Schneider sums up that discussion:

I decry the destruction in civility that's been happening around this issue…because if people can't maintain a civil dialogue how are you going to run a civil democracy?… There's no place for that in civil society because scientists also need to be engaged by helping people understand risk. And when you're in this constant set of combat then how do we have any chance of talking to each other in a civil way? Which is why I agreed to do this program.

To which his interlocutor replies:

I was just about to say the thank you for actually engaging in dialogue sensibly and not— basically not demonising anyone who dares to raise a doubt.

It's become typical advice to offer climate scientists: do not debate with "the sceptics" who doubt your science; stop arguing, and use more effective

communication techniques instead (e.g., Lamberts, 2014). The fact that Stephen Schneider was able to argue with an audience of "the sceptics" for an hour flies in the face of this advice. It took effort to make the interaction happen; as I have shown, Schneider had to use great care in projecting an active trust in his interlocutors, in managing the issues, and, at some points, in closing down debate. But the investment was worth it. As a small enactment of "civil dialogue," this event provided a demonstration to the participants and the wider audience that something like a worthwhile argumentative interaction is possible, even among those who deeply disagree.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – The Matrix For The 21st Century Russian Education

Abstract: The paper deals with the problem of argumentation literacy in the field of modern Russian education. We carry out the analysis of argumentation that university students put forward while writing argumentative essays as a part of their final English test. The analysis concerns papers written by students at different exam levels: B2, C1. The command of English at these levels differs a lot

and the analysis is aimed at revealing connection between students' language ability and their argumentative ability.

1. *Introduction*

This paper addresses the study of relations between students' argumentative ability and their foreign language ability and in particular, that part of relations that has to do with the skill to produce arguments in a foreign language (English in our research) and the level of the English language competence. The study makes use of the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentative discourse that unites normative and descriptive approaches to the argumentation. We start with some background information concerning the changes in educational approach to foreign language teaching that are being carried out in the field of Russian language education. Then we present the results of students' essays analysis and finally make some conclusions.

2. *Educational shift towards competences*

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what skills language learners have to acquire in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop to be able to act effectively. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency that allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

The Council of Europe is concerned to improve the quality of communication among Europeans of different language and cultural backgrounds. This is because better communication leads to freer mobility and more direct contact, which in turn leads to better understanding and closer co-operation.

The main document produced by the Council of Europe is the CEFR, the chief goal of which can be formulated as the following: "The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe" (CEFR, 2001, p. 1). Recently created Language Testing Centre of Saint Petersburg State University has developed its own tests that are currently going through the process of being linked to the CEFR. That

means that a group of international experts are analyzing the above-mentioned tests developed by the university experts in terms of their compliance with the CEFR requirements.

According to the CEFR language use embracing language learning comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and particular language competences with the special emphasis on communicative competence. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities. The production and receiving verbal messages in various situations imply both the diversity of themes covering specific topical domains and communicative relations between interlocutors. Activating strategies relevant to functional approach seems most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished in general education (CEFR, 2001, p. 9)

Thus, we can say that modern educationalists regard forming competences as one of the main goals of foreign language teaching. Competences are regarded as a sum of knowledge, skills, abilities behavioral rituals that allow a person to perform actions. In our study we are interested mainly in communicative language competence that comprises several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. If we look at the definitions of the above competences given in the CEFR, we will get the following:

Linguistic competences include lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as system.

Sociolinguistic competences refer to the sociocultural conditions of language use.

Pragmatic competences are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges.

All these competences are necessary for encouraging learners to organize argumentative speech in a foreign language in both learning situations and natural communicative situations. Argumentative foreign language competences are concerned with argumentative ability of the person and comprise the ability to present a viewpoint in a foreign language drawing on linguistic devices, to put forward arguments for or against a particular standpoint, to sequence arguments

in a logical way and to present arguments organizing them in argumentative structures.

We think that these competences should be included in pragmatic competences as an important component in the course of foreign language teaching.

3. *Argumentation literacy*

The problem of argumentation literacy in the field of Russian education has become urgent with the introduction of the United State Exam in Russian comprehensive secondary school. School students are encouraged to use some of argumentation schemes in foreign language writing and speaking. However, the level of present Russian school foreign language interaction concerns more explanation of the speaker's standpoint rather than argumentation. The level of higher education requires a more sophisticated approach to argumentation education incorporating different levels of language proficiency and knowledge in special professional fields. With State Saint Petersburg University's joining the Bologna process aimed at the creation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) the urgency of argumentation literacy has become even higher.

As far as Russia is concerned we can say that practical argumentation education was mostly developed in business schools and foreign languages in most cases came as a subsidiary instrument used for verbal socializing. Moreover, the model of the adult world reflected in the language is connected with certain stereotypes, which should be taken into account and are presently covered by the culture-studies as speech habits and rituals in quickly changing present-day communication. The concept of the stereotype can be seen as a phenomenon that covers social aspect of communication practice and a rhetorical one. In the first case the recurrence of social situations is important which can be used in educational case settings, whereas the rhetorical aspect provides the genre of argumentative dialogue. Both aspects are relevant for argumentation literacy.

Second and foreign language teaching is often based on the assumption that learners have already acquired a knowledge of the world sufficient for the purpose participating in argumentative dialogue. This is, however, not always the case and we think that is definitely not the case when we are talking about argumentative ability of the learner of a foreign language. It is really difficult to put your message across to other people in a foreign language and far more difficult to convince them.

The learner may well argue in his/her mother tongue and we tend to extrapolate his/her ability into a foreign language. Understanding the stereotypes and the fact that people communicate and listen differently is a part of argumentation and language teaching.

As J. Harmer noted 'language teaching…reflects the times it takes in. Language is about communication…Teaching and learning are very human activities; they are social just as much as they are linguistic' (Harmer, 2011, p. 9).

3.1 *CEFR criteria*

The aim of the present study is to carry out the analysis of argumentation that university students put forward while writing argumentative essays that are an obligatory part of their final test in English. First we discuss basic criteria for two levels (B2 and C1) and then cover the comparative argumentation analysis connected with their language skills.

New requirements for English as a foreign language have recently been adopted for university students. According to these requirements all university graduates should possess B2 in English. Those students who entered university with B2 should sit English exam at C1 level. Thus, university graduates may be either B2 or C1 students. We conducted a comparative analysis of essays written by students at different exam levels: B2 and C1 according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). The required performance of English at these levels differs a lot and we believe that the argumentation competence may also differ. CEFR criteria at the target levels B2 and C1 are the following:

B2 students can write an essay or report, which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. Examples: Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources. Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

C1 students can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she

wants to say. Examples: Can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

3.2 *B2 students' argumentative ability*

Argumentation scheme for the analysis is taken from the pragma-dialectical approach. In pragma-dialectical approach (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs, 1993) natural argumentative discourse models were described through normative models, which allow incorporating normative models of dialogue and different types of communicative activity in some particular situational settings.

The analysis shows that students presenting their essays at B2 level demonstrate the following argumentative abilities and competences. They can indicate standpoints and produce mainly utilitarian arguments. They employ the limited range of language to express standpoints. The examples of the expressions are the following:

1. In my opinion, I personally think, I agree, I consider, I'm inclined to believe, I believe, I think, I feel, as far as I am concerned, my personal opinion is, from my point of view.

The most common way to indicate standpoint at this level is to indicate it explicitly by using personal pronouns and explicit linguistic markers as can be seen from given examples.

The analysis also reveals that at this level of language competence students use two main types of arguments: 1. personal, utilitarian, beneficial; students appeal to positive concepts of "goodness"; 2. arguments to popular opinion. Let us look at the example of utilitarian argumentation. The standpoint that is defended is expressed explicitly with the clear linguistic marker. The argumentation can be reconstructed as subordinately compound:

2. Standpoint: In my opinion, it is very useful for young people to move to another city to study
Argument 1: Studying far away from home gives students not only an academic knowledge but also a great life experience.
Sub-argument 1: These skills make young people more successful, self-confident and clever. Sub-argument 2: It makes students to become independent from their parents.

There is one argument that is backed up by two sub-arguments. All the arguments that are put forward to defend the standpoint are mainly utilitarian and beneficial and closely connected with the personal life experience of the arguer. A special type concerns causal relations.

Given examples show that the arguer cannot alienate himself/herself from his/her owns self. It is revealed in the concepts to which he/she appeals: life experience, independence, success, self-confidence. We can consider some more examples of personal utilitarian arguments:

3. Standpoint: Some people think that participating in a reality show can be a valiable life experience (we retain original grammar and spelling)
Argument: I agree with this statement, as this kind of experience may be very useful.

4. Standpoint: The Internet is very useful thing.
Arguments: 1. it can help us to find information, 2. it connects people around the world, we can chat how much we want.

5. Standpoint: In my opinion, people should communicate face to face.
Arguments: 1. a human will feel himself better if he communicates really not with Internet. 2. Live communication will help us to understand other people, their problems, interests. 2.1. By this way you can find friends easier and faster. 3. Walking with friends is also good for mind.

All these examples of utilitarian argumentation reveal that at B2 level students (in the majority of cases) cannot alienate themselves from their personal experience and put forward arguments that are closely linked with their knowledge of the world. Thus, they act as naïve arguers and draw heavily from their knowledge of the world that was formed mainly by their environment (school, family, friends etc.).

3.3 *C1 students' argumentative ability*
The argumentation scheme used by C1 level students is a little bit different. The analysis shows a definite ability of students to alienate themselves from their personal experience and produce more abstract and impersonal arguments. These types of arguments are presented in a more orderly way and they are more explicit. The created argumentative scheme reflects standpoints are becoming more varied and the point of view is expressed more eloquently. Although the

functional register of verbal stereotypes is still egocentric as in utilitarian argumentation, the indicators reflecting introductory level of argumentation show the confidence of the speaker : I cannot deny, I would like to say, that's why I am sure etc.

C1 level students more often introduce their standpoints without explicit verbal indicators, which is not the case with B2 students. The latter prefer to express their standpoints explicitly or present a certain proposition as a generally accepted idea such as 'some people think'. According to F. Eemeren, P.Houtlosser and F.Henkemans "When a proposition is presented as generally accepted or irrefutable... this implicates that the other party cannot escape from accepting that proposition as a shared starting point" (Eemeren, Houtlosser & Henkemans, 2007, p. 105). B2 students act as 'naïve' arguers and make use of the tools they would have used arguing in their mother tongue, for it seems safer to stick to generally accepted ideas.

Students presenting their essays at C1 level also often use compound sentences to introduce standpoints. Here are some examples of different ways to present a standpoint:

6. Nowadays globalization not only affects world economy and culture but also changes people's everyday experiences.

7. To my mind globalization would not change the world for the better.

C1 level students when using utilitarian argumentation connect arguments with usefulness for the community and society in general rather than with their personal experience... Thus at this level utilitarian argumentation becomes more impersonal. This can be illustrated with the following examples:

8. One more argument for globalization is that it benefits everyone, not only big corporations but also people in developing countries, as it provides them with job places.

9. It (globalization) offers new opportunities for travel, work and education and of course for communication.

In terms of argumentation schemes students at C1 level demonstrate the ability to use regressive presentation (which is not the case at B2 level students who prefer

the progressive presentation). The arguer puts forward arguments and then expresses his/her opinion.

10. Companies tend to become more productive and competitive thereby raising the quality of goods, services and the standards of living, that's why I am sure that term globalization is definitely about progress.

One more argument type of C1 level students' argumentation is connected with the binary oppositions. Unlike the schemes reflecting specific relations between a premise and standpoint opposites are patterns that can be abstracted from any particular content. A binary opposition deals with the aspect of categorization.

Modern global world is full of opposites that could be defined through diverse categories – good opposes bad, big opposes small, right opposes left, night opposes day, old opposes young, and globalists oppose anti-globalists. These oppositions create society's beliefs and misconceptions of what is good and what is bad, or what is ethical and non-ethical, and from a young age we subconsciously conform to these without even knowing it , and even as adults we continue creating these oppositions in our minds when processing fact evaluation of facts. A binary opposition is a pair of opposites that powerfully form and organize human thought and culture. Binary opposition is so deeply rooted in thinking patterns that we cannot even escape it. The concept of binary opposition is in use almost always whether we realize it or not (Goudkova & Tretyakova, 2010, p. 657).

C1 level students use binary oppositions to present their arguments thus directing the vector of argumentation to the positive concepts when defending a standpoint and to the negative concepts when putting arguments against a standpoint. Here are arguments that students put forward arguing for and against globalization. Arguments for:

11. When the nations have "one world, one vision", the same political and economic interests, it helps them to live in peace – appellation to the concept of "peace".

12. Globalisation encourages better standards for the environment – appellation to the concept of "environment protection".

13. Globalisation gives us many communication advances such as e-mail, mobile

phones, social networks, skype – appellation to the concept of "easy and better communication".

Arguments against:

14. Globalisation results in destruction of cultural diversity – appellation to the concept of "destruction".

Counter-argumentation refers to negative concepts, e.g.:

15. The great number of employees from developing countries creates such a competition that multinational companies could easily exploit the workers setting unfairly low wages.

The negative concepts to which the arguer appeals are the concept of exploitation and the concept of injustice.

Thus, we can specify the following features of C1 level in argumentation: a regressive presentation of argumentation, alienation from personal experience in utilitarian argumentation scheme, a greater number of verbal expressions reflecting introductory level of argumentation and the use of opposites as a specific pattern.

4. *Conclusion*
In conclusion it may be stated the matrix for the argumentative analysis of foreign-language essay writing can be effectively carried out with the help of pragma-dialectics. Critical argumentation is a practical skill that needs to be taught, from the very beginning, through the use of real or realistic examples of arguments of the kind that the user encounters in everyday life (Walton, 2006, p. xi)

The analysis of B2 and C1 students' essays shows that Russian students writing in English may know the basics of argumentation but they cannot use it properly, as they are not proficient enough in the L2 language. They start using arguments when they become more skilled in the language and the results show that that is achieved at C1 level. At all these levels of language competence the type of argumentation in a foreign language is connected with the concept of stereotyping as a multi-dimensional activity that creates a communication frame of critical discussion and a range of indicators for presenting arguments.

Results obtained show that students act as naïve arguers in Russian environment because of the lack of basics of argumentation theoretical technique. They produce their arguments on intuition, which tells more about the speaker/ writer than about effective arguments.

Argumentation competences should be incorporated into the university curriculum to provide students with basic concepts and practices. Argumentation appears to correlate with innate properties of the student's mind. The more advanced in the language (English) students become the more independently from their personal experience and more impersonal their arguments are. Thus, the higher language competence the more abstract arguments become. We can conclude that there is strong correlation between language competence and argumentative competence.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Missiles As Messages: Appeals To Force In President Obama's Strategic Maneuverability On The Use Of Chemical Weapons In Syria

Abstract: In the aftermath of the Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons, President Obama proposed a military response that would send "a message" via missiles. This paper explores the way that such a message blurs the line between force and persuasion in diplomatic argument, complicating the normative assumptions of argumentation theory and underwriting the conditions of possibility for Obama's strategic maneuverability in the context of diplomatic argument.

Keywords: Diplomatic Context, Ad Baculum, Violence, Power, Presidential rhetoric.

Between August 21 and September 10, 2013 President Obama provided a rationale for military strikes in response to Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons in the suburbs of Damascus. This period was punctuated by a White House assessment that the Syrian Government was responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Ghota, and two speeches by President Obama on the use of military force. The first speech came on August 31, and requested Congressional authorization to use military force against the Assad regime. The second came on September 10 amidst indications that Congress might not authorize the use of force against Syria. The second speech, however, called for Congress to postpone the vote in order for a joint U.S.-Russian diplomatic effort to "push" Assad to give up his chemical weapons. Our concern is primarily with the communicative dimensions of this "shift" between military action and diplomatic negotiations. To that end, it is useful to recall a series of events which led up to these moments.

The Syrian uprising against Bashar al-Assad began in March of 2011 was among a series of protests against authoritarian regimes in North Africa and Southwest

Asia. By April of that year Assad had committed himself to a military response to the uprising. In August, President Obama claimed that Assad had lost his legitimacy to rule and called for him to step down. The U.S. imposed deep sanctions on the Assad regime going so far as to close its embassy in Syria (Harding, Mahmood, & Weaver, 2012). By early 2012, Assad's forces had shelled opposition forces in the city of Homs, and the protests of March 2011had transfigured into an armed rebellion. As the situation escalated, President Obama rejected directly arming the rebellion but also warned the Assad regime that the use of chemical weapons would be a tragic mistake. By August of 2012 President Obama had drawn a "red line" on the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, noting that any violation of the so called "red line" would change U.S. policy regarding military intervention in Syria.

When Obama was asked by Chuck Todd whether or not he envisioned "using [the] US military, if simply for nothing else, the safe keeping of the chemical weapons, and if you're confident that the chemical weapons are safe?" Obama responded by saying that the use of chemical weapons would change his calculations about military engagement.

I have, at this point, not ordered military engagement in the situation. But the point that you made about chemical and biological weapons is critical. That's an issue that doesn't just concern Syria; it concerns our close allies in the region, including Israel. It concerns us. We cannot have a situation where chemical or biological weapons are falling into the hands of the wrong people. We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is when we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation (The White House, 2012).

A year later the United Nation's (2013) special report on the use of chemical weapons in Syria found "clear and convincing evidence" that chemical weapons had been used in the Ghota suburb of Damascus. The final UN report did not claim who was responsible for the use of these weapons, instead concluding that "chemical weapons have been used in the ongoing conflict between the parties." The Obama administration, however, was clear in its assessment that Bashar al-Assad's government had authorized the use of chemical weapons. On August 30, 2013 the White house (2013, 1) claimed "with high confidence that the Syrian government carried out a chemical weapons attack in the Damascus suburbs on

August 21, 2013." One might have expected, then, at least given the "red line," that a U.S. military response was imminent.

Obama delivered a statement setting out the case for military action – during which he asked Congress for the authorization to use force against the Assad Regime – just one day after the White House released its accusation that Assad had used chemical weapons. He quickly reiterated the findings of the government assessment from the day before (The White House, 2013, 2): "the Syrian government was responsible for the attack on its own people." He described Assad's use of chemical weapons as "an assault on human dignity ... a danger to our national security. It risks making a mockery of the global prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. It endangers our friends and our partners along Syria's borders ... It could lead to escalating use of chemical weapons, or their proliferation to terrorist groups who would do our people harm." Thus, he continued, "this menace must be confronted." The President then informed his audience that he had "decided that the Unites States should take military action against Syrian regime targets." Importantly, he noted that the "capacity to execute the mission is not time-sensitive," but that he was prepared to give the order.

Indeed, this was not too far from the case. Obama had initiated plans for a military strike over a 48 hour period during Labor Day weekend (August 31-September 1, 2013). Reports indicated that this strike may have had as many as 43 targets (Klein & Sotas, 2013; Luce, 2013). It would seem, at least on these grounds, that a strike *was* immanent (potentially displaying the "credibility" of U.S. deterrent power to the "international community"). We also know, thanks to the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2008), that this course of action is relatively commonplace in the history of American presidential rhetoric. Indeed, "presidential rhetoric has always sought to justify military action and to evoke congressional and public approval, such justification now appears less frequently in speeches seeking congressional authorization for future actions and more frequently in speeches seeking congressional ratification of actions already undertaken" (p. 219).

Obama, however, followed the call for military action with the claim that since U.S. power is rooted "in our example as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people," and that he intended to seek authorization for the use of force from "the American people's representatives in Congress." Obama then

turned to providing a rationale for why Congress should authorize the use of military action. The impetus to "send the right message" took the form of a rhetorical question. "Here's my question for every member of Congress and every member of the global community: what message will we send if a dictator can gas hundreds of children to death in plain sight and pay no price? What's the purpose of the international system that we've built if a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons … is not enforced?" He concluded the speech by "asking Congress to send a message to the world that we are ready to move forward together as one nation." The message must therefore be that the United States will enforce the international prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, and that it will do so using its military prowess. We must, as Obama put it "follow through on the things we say, the accords we sign, the values that define us."

This strike was, of course, never executed, and thus Obama's appeal to Congress was not retroactive *per se.* On the one hand, the lack of actual military action makes it difficult to claim that Congress could retroactively authorize it. On the other hand, the Obama administration had planned and prepared the strike, while Obama claimed that he had the authority as Commander-in-Chief to execute a strike without Congressional approval. The reason to appeal to Congress was simply to imbue the strike with "our example as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The argument in favor of a jurisdictional shift was thus a tropological deployment of the locus of the irreparable: the implicit claim was that the strikes *were all but inevitable,* while the strikes only carried the weight of American democracy if they were approved by Congress. Military action effectively became a *figure of speech* in which Obama maneuvered strategically. In one fell swoop this message, ostensibly delivered not just to Assad, but to the entirety of the international community, changed the subject of the argument from the desirability of military action to the desirability of an extant set of international norms, while simultaneously reframing the former in terms of the latter by way of a simple metaphor: let the strikes deliver a message; if they deliver *only* death, then Americans are no different than Assad; if they deliver *only* death, the international community is no different than Assad.

At the same time, the move was tactically relevant. The jurisdictional shift from Obama to Congress had real implications for the timeframe in which the strike could be executed. This tactical effect was made much more important during Obama's speech on September 10, 2013, during which he called for Congress to

postpone action in order for the U.S. and Russia to pursue "diplomatic" arrangements with the Syrian government (The White House, 2013, 3). First, however, Obama reiterated his claim that Assad's use of chemical weapons violated U.S. national security interests and that "the United States should respond to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons through a targeted military strike." Again, he noted that such a course of action was within his authority as Commander-in-Chief, but defended his decision to "take this debate to Congress." He even noted the way such a course of action departs from the previous decade that had "put more and more war-making power in the hands of the President, and more and more burdens on the shoulders of our troops, while sidelining the people's representatives from the critical decisions about when we use force." Obama's next move, however, was yet another jurisdictional shift, this time back in favor of action undertaken by the executive. Specifically, he referred to the opening of a new diplomatic path that resulted from the efforts of Russia "to join the international community in pushing Assad to give up his chemical weapons." In so doing, the Assad regime had verified that it had chemical weapons and would be willing to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. Obama then asked "the leaders of Congress to postpone a vote to authorize the use of force while we pursue this diplomatic path." This second jurisdictional shift (this time from Congress back to Obama) removed the impetus for Congress to act in order to create more room for executive branch diplomacy to work.

Of particular importance is that Obama declared that this new diplomatic path was possible, in part, thanks to what might be termed a "credible threat of US military action." Moreover, he "ordered our military to maintain their current posture to keep pressure on Assad, and to be in a position to respond if diplomacy fails." It is worth noticing the communicative dimensions of the US military action: it returns in this institutional configuration as a threat to enforce the success of the diplomatic path. This response is once again presented as a message: in responding to Hawkish claims that the US should militarily remove Assad from power Obama argued that "even a limited strike will send a message to Assad that no other nation can deliver. I don't think we should remove another dictator with force – we learned from Iraq that doing so make us responsible for all that comes next. But a targeted strike can make Assad, or any other dictator, think twice before using chemical weapons." A targeted strike is an appropriate message to deter future uses of chemical weapons whether by Assad or another actor. Absent this message the U.S. would abdicate its role in enforcing

international agreements, which in turn would obstruct the efficacy of a diplomatic resolution.

It is the repetition of this prospect of "sending a message" which strikes us as peculiar. Obama's isolation of chemical weapons as a "red line" in his calculation to use military force, all wiggle room aside, was an argument ad baculum: it was an appeal to force or violence; it was a threat. If it's true that Obama's reference to the "red line" can be included in this category of argument, then the assumption that he ostensibly intends for Assad to have is that crossing the "red line" will result in military strikes. By extension, both Assad and any number of other national or military leaders should have been deterred from using chemical weapons. At first glance, it appears that the problem (at least the problem for Obama, given his claim that Assad has, in fact, crossed the "red line") is one of efficacy. Surely Assad would have been deterred had the threat been more credible, or so the argument goes. Moreover, since we have claimed that this "threat appeal" was as much for the "international community" as it was for Assad, one would have expected a prompt military strike against Syria. The "success" of diplomatic negotiations, however, muddles any discussion about efficacy insofar as threats appear to have been central to the diplomatic discourse. Certainly it might be the case that Obama's "red line" was ineffective at stopping the violation of international norms regarding the use of chemical weapons, but it also seems to be the case that threats were integral to the diplomatic efforts undertaken in the name of those very norms.

It is not as if ad baculum arguments are a novel concept in the study of diplomatic argumentation, nor is it the case that they have gone untreated by scholars of argumentation. Douglas Walton provides a useful summary of this literature (2000). In the "logic textbooks" (as Walton calls them), argument ad baculum is frequently classified as a type of fallacy on one of two grounds: argument ad baculum is irrelevant to the discussion; or argument ad baculum is not technically an argument, since it cannot establish the truth or falsity of a given proposition. One makes a threat in order to *forego* argument, rather than to advance it. In the diplomatic context, however, ad baculum arguments are more or less routine. Diplomatic argument is often described as a pragmatic exercise rather than a purely logical one. Diplomatic arguments have little to do with truth or falsity, and as a result little to do with argumentation logic. Carney and Scheer (1964), for example, make exactly this point: appeals to force are not fallacious because they

do not intend for two parties to agree on the truth of a proposition. Assad may not have had to believe that the use of chemical weapons was *unjust* in order to believe that a shooting war with the United States was *unacceptable.*

Scholarship about ad baculum argument, however, has not been limited to thinking it as either fallacious or fundamentally non-argumentative. Woods and Walton (1976), for example, find a certain kind of prudential argumentation in threat appeals. This thinking relies on understanding the physical violence that is implied by a threat appeal as itself external to the argumentation at hand. For Woods and Walton, the violence to which a threat refers has nothing to do with the discussion in which that reference is meaningful. The violence to which a threat refers is thus a potential consequence of the discussion much like any other consequence will require a listener to make a prudential inference. The fallacious element of ad baculum, at least in this account, is not in the inference, but rather in the broader dialogic context in which it is invoked. This is why Walton eventually concludes that argumentation scholars require a "dual" analysis that is capable of understanding prudential inferences alongside contextual-dialectical analysis. The analysis of ad baculum argument as fallacious or non-fallacious is thus premised on a shift in dialogue; from a discussion where threat appeals are "out of place" to one where they are "acceptable."

The difference between a fallacious threat appeal and a non-fallacious threat appeal, then, is a matter of context: threats are a part of the normal evolution of international negotiations, therefore arguments ad baculum are (contextually) not fallacious. In any case, the evaluation of the threat appeal seems dependent on a reading of Obama's *intent.* This process, however, is not without pitfalls. Since political discourse is neither pure negotiation nor pure persuasion, "the best we can do," as Walton puts it, "is to ask what type of dialogue the participants were originally supposed to be engaged in." This problem, as David Zarefsky (2014, pp. 88-90) has rightly pointed out, stems primarily from fact that there are no clear time limits and no clear terminus to political argument. How then are we to understand the distinction upon which the application of these analytic tools (logic and dialectic) are based? How are we to understand the nature of the "contextual shift" from one type of argumentative discourse to another?

It seems to us that a useful point of departure might be that these disparate bodies of literature, at least as Walton treats them, essentially reach a similar conclusion: an appeal to force effectively *suspends* argument (or at the very least

argument of a specific kind) insofar as it does not allow argument to test the validity of a given proposition so that a consensus may be reached. At first glance, Obama's discourse is well explained by Walton's analytical tools. He seeks to introduce violence as *integral* to argumentative reasoning. In particular, Obama's argument seems to be that "the international community" (which is here led or even constituted by the United States) will react with violence against Assad if a particular set of actions are taken. The prudential inference is that it's unwise for the Assad government (or any other government) to use chemical weapons. There is also a contextual shift at work here. Certainly the original reference to a "red line" was not an offhand remark. It responded to a hypothetical action undertaken by the Assad government. This, in turn, means that Obama's initial threat was situated in the context of a pre-existing set of propositions which required a prudential inference on the part of the Assad government. There was a decision to be made about the use of chemical weapons, and Obama's initial threat added to the circumstances under which a prudential inference could inform that decision.

We were not, of course, privy to the contents of that decision-making process. One would be hard pressed, however, to claim that such a process was a part of a diplomatic dialogue. Obama was not bargaining with Assad when he claimed that the use of chemical weapons would cross this "red line." Rather, he seems to be doing many of the things that we call strategic maneuvering, while at the same time he makes a claim which may very well be accurate: he is able to make many useful arguments *as a result of* the continued threat of U.S. military power. The threat appeal *did,* if we are to take Obama at his word, have the effect of *creating* a diplomatic dialogue. In other words, the threat appeal would constitute a fallacy (at least using Walton's model) since it constituted a contextual shift in the nature of the discussion. It is at this point that several epistemological barriers, namely the lack of clear time limits and a terminus of discussion, rear their ugly heads. Specifically, the difficulty becomes separating these "transitions" in dialogue from each other sufficiently to recognize clear "contexts." The *tendency* of the discussion indicates that the diplomatic dimensions of Obama's negotiation are *instantiated* by their fallacious origins, since they continue a line of thought which is only possible qua fallacy. Obama's diplomacy becomes a "trans-fallacious" moment constituting a diplomatic context.

We can gather from this "trans-fallaciousness" why the "suspension" of argumentation must be our point of departure: argument is not (or arguments of a

specific kind are not) suspended by threats in the sense that they are ended as such. This is because the discourses in which threats are "fallacious" are themselves normative performances. Argumentative discourses where threat appeals seem "out of place" still produce norms by way of persuasion. Further, and regardless of the effect of a threat on "actual persuasion," the expectation of an argumentative discourse is that one *performs* as if the conclusion that is reached is true. But this is true of argumentation sans threat appeal as well. The exposition of the truth or falsity of a given proposition qua argument is a practical exercise that has real implications for one's being-in-the-world. The performance of persuasion, particularly over time, can thus be understood as the material organization of the cultural practice of argument. What we mean, then, when we say that argument ad baculum functions by suspending argument (or certain types of arguments) is that threats can be considered as a part of the material history of power relations in a given society. They submerge or subordinate potential or evolving lines of argumentation such that those lines of argumentation become external to the norms of discussion. In a diplomatic context what the threat appeal materializes is the third order conditions of strategic maneuverability which "pertain ... to the power or authority relations between the participants" (van Eemeren, Houstlosser &Snoeck Henkemans 2008, p.478). The trans-fallacious character of a "missile message" is built into the very diplomatic context that defines the power relationship between state actors.

It may well be insufficient, then, to analyze the role of threat appeal in argumentation at the level of fallacy. If it is an international norm (or rather a set of norms) which allow diplomatic argument to even take place as we know it, then the move is not to use violence to silence a debate about whether or not Syria should adhere to the international norm against the use of chemical weapons, but instead to claim that military power is both the condition of and is justified by that norm. It is critical, at this juncture, to recall Obama's rhetorical question to Congress: what is the point of the international prohibition on the use of chemical weapons if it cannot (or will not) be enforced? This claim ties together violence and the norm itself. The symbolic value of a congressionally approved military action, however, is that it binds a set of disparate actors together as the international community in a way that allows for a "democratic" discourse. There is no debate about the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons unless violence and the threat of violence are the metaphors through which the international norm against the use of chemical weapons grants a certain coherency to the

international community. Such a phenomenon should not be taken lightly, since it bears upon an established notion of the relationship between violence and reasoned argumentation: it is not as if the violence/persuasion relationship only works in one direction, nor is it the case that the line between persuasion and coercion is clear. As a result, we must be able to think the ways that communication is able to mobilize violence (or at the very least the potential for violence) as a precondition for argumentative discourse. Put differently, there is nothing reasonable about diplomatic argument unless we presuppose violence as a precondition of reasonability.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Disruptive Definition As A Method Of Deterritorialization In Modern Argumentative Contexts

Abstract: This paper proposes the concept of disruptive definitions as a tool to territorialize, deterritorialize, and reterritorialize argumentative space. Upon exploring definitional scholarship, I investigate the argumentative strategies of herders along the Mongolian/Chinese border. Then, I ask how cross-border protest movements have used disruptive definitions to deterritorialize and

reterritorialize government definitions of citizenship. Finally, I juxtapose these protests to Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology to investigate the complex terrain of political struggle in our hyper-globalized, internetworked society.

1. *Introduction*
In this paper, I propose the concept of disrupting definitions as a tool to *territorialize, deterritorialize*, and *reterritorialize* argumentative space. Specifically, I examine arguments made by herders along the Mongolian/Chinese border where argumentative space is territorialized by governments that define identity by residency. Communities have resisted this territorialization through cross-border protest movements using what I call disruptive definitions, those that define identity by culture, religion, history, or access to open space to *deterritorialize* and *reterritorialize* argumentative space. To better understand the effect of these new argumentative spaces, I juxtapose this analysis to Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of *nomadology* to explore the process of culture and identity meaning making among modern herding communities. From this study, I argue that deterritorialization-by-definition may produce radically expanded argumentative definitions that can be used as tools to investigate the complex terrain of political struggle in our hyper-globalized, internetworked society.

2. *Disruptive definitions*
Questions of definitional certainty in argumentative contexts have been widely discussed within a variety of contexts. Scholars such as Edward Schiappa (1993) and David Zarefsky (2009) have examined the use of persuasive definitions and the dramatic implications of those definitions in regard to strategic maneuvering. These works have illuminated the use of definitions to plead a cause and to differentiate between the "is" and "ought" of deliberation. Such studies have been applied theoretically by contest round debaters, using topicality challenges to investigate the argumentative relevance of claims (Spring, 2010). Pragmatically, these studies have been used by Kenneth Broda-Bahm (1999) to understand environmental security and land development. In each instance, definitional scholarship has been used to mark argumentative and tangible spaces – territories – that create authoritative terminologies that bind deliberations by inclusion and exclusion.

The resulting *territorialization*-by-definition allows argumentation scholars to produce coherent analysis, yet makes it difficult to understand those communities, spaces, and arguments that transcend demarcated territory. In this paper, I utilize the figure of the "nomad" as one such metaphor that moves between demarcated spaces, between both the "is" and "is not" of *territorialized* definitions. Yet, to approach the figure of the "nomad" requires a disturbance in the process of definition, resulting in the creation of "disruptive definitions," those definitions that open space for multiple possible understandings, embodiments and entailments. This approach is required as nation-states have sought to define mobile citizens using terms such as "nomad" in an attempt to settle and control communities.

This trend towards nationalist definition is seen in western literature that typically refers to Mongolian herding communities as nomads, pastoral nomads, or pastoralists. Relying on the metaphor of "nomad" tends to suggest that community members wander through the fixed gridlines of nation-state geography as "random atoms," acting in a backward, uncivilized manner (Lafitte, 2011). This misunderstanding of Mongolian herders misses the complex, often hierarchical structures of their communities and networks of exchange. The label "nomad" also tends to reinforce a dualism that ossifies divisions between the nomadic and settled communities, between the civilized and the barbarian, between the knowable and unknown, and between right and wrong. Disturbing this state expectation and definition of "nomad" expands the possibilities of identity meaning making by communities such as Mongolians on the Chinese/Mongolian border.

Disruptive definitions, particularly those seen in Mongolian communities, have much in common with the process of *deterritorialization* proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guarttari (1983) in *Anti-Oedipus.* Here, *deterritorialization* is used to describe processes of de-contextualizing sets of relationships, creating origami-like folds in the paper of meaning, finding new points of meeting and departure – distant actualizations – that previously eluded perception.

Many deliberations are premised on territorialization, the process of definition that uses a key word to mark territory and understand contexts that inform argumentative possibilities and deliberative analysis. These demarcations function to limit deliberation, but also limit the connections that deliberators can draw between multiple views and theories. The process of argumentative

territorialization-by-definition excludes many perspectives, including the nomadic that rejects such boundaries. A process of deterritorialization recontextualizes and resists these argumentative territories and boundaries. In this moment, connections and positions that had previously been considered beyond the scope of a deliberation, labeled as "is not" and "ought not," again become possible. The new connections uncovered by deterritorialization may lead to reterritorialization, the marking of territory in new ways where the argumentative definition is radically expanded or rearticulated. Or, the definition may remain permanently deterritorialized, resulting in an expectation of multiple competing understandings in deliberation.

3. *Nomadology*
My own work, through an understanding of disrupting definitions of the figure of the "nomad," aims to integrate our understanding of modern struggles within the broader dialogue about *nomadology* as a mode of critical inquiry. The figure of "nomad" requires special attention to the competing definitions used by self-identified communities, ethnographic studies, development projects, nationalistic movements, and philosophical theories. In this essay, I examine Mongolian communities along the Mongolian/Chinese border where revolutions, cartography, and climatic change have drawn divisions between traditional Mongolian herding communities. The Chinese and Mongolian governments anticipate that citizens, even those choosing to live as herders will choose to identify as citizens of modern nation-states. As a result, conflict frequently occurs when herder communities choose to identify via extra-state networks such as traditional grazing patterns or family structures. A plethora of publications, protests, and productions point to a more nuanced understanding of cross-border connections. Applying the term of disruptive definitions to this milieu reveals previously misunderstood connections between definition and disruptive definition, between territorialization and deterritorialization.

Juxtaposition of disruptive definitions to Deleuze and Guattari's theory of nomadology further enhances our understanding of cultural and identity meaning making among modern herding communities. In this essay, through an examination of cross-border protests, I ask if the pressures created by the need to contest definitions and present counter-definitions have created quilting points that have deterritorialized or reterritorialized the figure of "nomad," in ways that awaken new understandings of both specific definitions of "nomad" and the

argumentative study of definitional deliberation.

For example, the Mongolian government is currently territorializing herding lands. Articulated as a linear progression, this process is prefaced by the concept of empty land, terra nullis, which government officials use to justify new development projects. This is a strategy that could be articulated as territorialization (government parcels land and defines it as *terra nullis*), deterritorialization (herders articulate land use in response to terra nullis by using a frame of movement-as-*otor*), and reterritorialization (herders produce new assemblages to participate in public forums while maintaining herding traditions). Argumentative clash emerges in this process as mining companies are attracted to the "open spaces" of the Eurasian Steppe where strip-mining is used to quickly extract vast reserves of coal, copper, uranium, and rare-earth minerals. Many interventions into mining protests within China and Mongolia seeking to reach peaceful resolution have failed because they have assumed that herders are only vying for monetary reparations for lost land. I argue that these studies are incomplete because they have not accounted for the process of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization from which modern clashes emerge. Were these efforts to engage in the study of disruptive definitions proposed by this paper, they would be able to access the richer history and entanglements between herder communities and herding lands. While such an understanding might assist mining corporations in better averting protests, it is more likely to encourage analysts and negotiators to produce protections and policies inline with herder communities' needs.

4. *Land disputes*
Exploring Mongolian land disputes through Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual triptych of *territorialization, deterritorialization*, and *reterritorialization*, can encourage better understand both how this land came to be known as empty and why protests are occurring. The concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization help us to understand the ways in which this land can be understood as neither empty nor full, but instead a "rhizomatic mechanic assemblage." In doing so, we begin thinking about the Mongolian steppe as a mechanic assemblage incorporates the complex body of interpretations, connections, and dimensions that can be joined together in multiplicitious ways to create new understandings of the Mongolian steppe. These new connections create a realm of multiplicities that herders can use to resist the attempts of

states and governments to "over code" herder identity or privilege a singular, government authored, definition of what it is to be a herder.

Mongolian communities' have long dealt with competing definitions of what is means to be a herder or a nomad. These definitions have been used by invaders, colonizers, nationalists, and development programs to justify boundaries, education, and readings of history. As such, these definitions are ideal locations for an analysis of disrupting definitions. Scholars have produced a number of nuanced terms and hierarchies with which to describe herders. For example, anthropologists classify, Mongolians as pastoral-nomads because they move in biannual migrations with herds of domesticated animals. In Marxist terms, Mongolians are landless peasants, and for Social Darwinists they exist at the lowest level of human development. A territorialized definition of the Mongolian nomad would require that one of these definitions were chosen as the primary mode of analysis, and all other definitions understood as competing definitions. However, a deterritorialized definition might take a broader scope of possibility; Mongolian communities could simultaneously and selectively embody the definitions of anthropologists, Marxists, Social Darwinists, and governments, while also maintaining their own definitions of community and movement.

The need for such deterritorialization of definition was seen in 2005 when President N. Enkhbayar stated; "It is not my desire to destroy the original Mongolian identity but in order to survive, we have to stop being nomads" (as cited in Diener, 2011). Similarly, across the border in Inner Mongolia, the Chinese Government released a whitepaper indicating that by 2015 there will be no more nomads in China (Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, 2012). At the same time, Mongolians were producing disrupting definitions, deterritorializations, of the terms "herder" and "nomad" to explain their complex interactions with modernity. Here, state territorialization, and community deterritorialization produce definitional clash that I argue illuminates the need for disruptive definitions.

Pastoral-nomadic communities, along with other types of nomads, hunter-gathers, and travelers from whom Deleuze and Guattari pull to create their metaphor of nomadology, present a special problem to definitional scholarship. These communities resist and therefore do not have figureheads such as presidents and community leaders. They may on occasion appoint a speaker, or a speaker may appoint herself to speak for her community, but the power of that appointment is

short term and intangible. As such, the artifacts, speeches, protests, and discussions that I analyze are but single entry points to understand the assemblage of multiplicities in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. What these deliberations do for my analysis is provide quilting points that bind together herders, the nation-state, and international organizations. Analysis of these quilting points indicates the emergence of new forms of protest and identity. For example, Mongolian mining protests articulate neither traditional herding culture nor the government definitions of land and citizenship. Instead, these mining protests articulate the emerging shifts and developments amongst herding communities in late modern capitalism.

5. *Protest rhetoric*

In China, the Cultural Revolution resulted in the arrest and persecution of at least 100,000 Mongolians who resisted collectivization and the cultural politics of the Chinese Communist Party. This history has been used as a reference point for divisions between Mongolian herders, farmers, and urbanites, and between Han and Mongolian citizens of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese government attempted to smooth over these poor relations by establishing university and government position quotas for Mongolians, allowing exemption from the national birth control policies, and sponsoring specific ethnic events. These exemptions did not work as intended, and conflicts such as the 1981-1982 protests by Mongolian students over "filling up Inner Mongolia" with Han Chinese continued (Jankowiak, 1988). More recently, conflict erupted as 650,000 herders were evicted from traditional pasturelands (Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, 2011a). These evictions, which the government calls "environmentally-driven resettlement," are coupled with plans for state-sponsored education, public health, and housing services. However, such policies still restrict movement of herding communities under the auspices of saving land and limiting the effects of climate change (Tan, 2011).

For example, in Inner Mongolia, China, in May 2011 a herder named Mergen set up a roadblock protest to prohibit the transportation of coal across his grazing lands. In assessing this protest, it is important to remember that transportation infrastructure in this part of Inner Mongolia is minimal. Mergen was blocking the pathway frequently taken by mining companies, taken so frequently that tire tracks had cut through the low grasses that feed herds of cattle. This is not a paved road, and the space alongside the road is identical to the road except it is

not cut by tire tracks. Mergen was run over by a Han Chinese truck driver who drove through the roadblock of herders and horses. Mergen's head was crushed beneath the truck's tires and his body dragged across the steppe. Mergen's death was only one of many deaths-by-traffic accidents that occurred during the spring and summer of 2011. What made his death different, however, was the immediate recording and distribution of images of Mergen's death and crushed skull accompanied by the Han-Chinese truck driver's statement "my truck is fully insured, and the life of a smelly Mongolian herder costs me no more than 40,000 Yuan (approx. 8,000 USD)" (Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, 2011c). Although the driver was eventually tried and executed for his part in Mergen's death, it was only after weeks of protest that he was tried for his crime. In press statements prior to his execution, the truck driver continually emphasized that his victim was both a Mongolian and a herder. To the driver, this ethnic and lifestyle classification legitimized his dehumanizing rhetoric.

A wide variety of protests emerged from Mergen's death, including the Song *Dedicated to Mergen, Hero of the Grasslands,* which was both published and banned on May 29, 2011. This song calls forth a broad audience of Mongolians, from those living in the steppe with herds to those in apartment buildings who only speak Mandarin. In this song, the author identifies as Mongolian, focusing on bloodlines rather than the government's use of bounded land and special ethnic characteristics such as language. The implications of this identify is to explode the definition of "Mongolian" and link with communities living as, and identifying as, herders.

I am a Mongol even if I sing my rap in Chinese
No matter what you say I am a Mongol
Mongol blood flows in my veins
The vast Mongolian steppe is my homeland.
(Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, 2011b)

The Song *Dedicated to Mergen, Hero of the Grasslands* exemplifies reterritorialization in a realm of multiplicities where the song's author has provided a connection between two completely different multiplicities. This connection forms a parallel evolution – or deterritorialization and reterritorialization – so that the protesters deterritorialize the Chinese definition of Mongolian identity by making keeping applicable portions of the government definition and mixing in their own interpretations. This process demonstrates the

way that Deleuze and Guattari think of connections that produce multiplicities, which then connect together to create rhizomatic assemblages.

In the time since Mergen's death, herders along the Chinese/Mongolian border have continued to protest state infrastructure projects that they see as threats to their identity. The Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center outlines five deaths that have occurred since 2010, along with large-scale protest, and imprisonment of protest leaders and Internet activists. (Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, 2013a, 2013b, 2014). Yet, these clashes are not endemic to only Inner Mongolia, similar clashes are occurring in Tibet ("Hundreds of Tibetans," 2014) and Xingjian ("Mongolian Herders," 2014). Additionally, outside of China, Maasai (Kanduli, 2013), Bedouin ("Arrests At," 2013), Native American (Strasser, 2013), and Aboriginal communities ("Traditional Landowners," 2014) are engaging and disrupting state definitions of identity in land-rights conflicts.

6. *Conclusion*
Deleuze and Guattari identify rhizomatic assemblages as "lines of flight," pathways that we can follow to escape the hierarchical modes of control and the emphasis on a center and periphery that characterize modern governments. While Deleuze and Guattari suggest that nomadology is a useful line of flight for settled communities, my work asks if nomadology is also useful to understand the lines of flight utilized by herders to escape repressive government regimes.

The possibility found in modern Mongolian protests, articulated by disruptive definitions, is the emergence of arguments that embody new possibilities, frames, and connections. The results of such disturbed definitions, and the deterritorialization that they produce, are difficult to predict before they have come to fruition. However, those definitions that have emerged, such as the definition articulated earlier in the *Song for Mergen*, point to the ability to better analyze complex arguments, for deliberations to incorporate multiple competing and at time contradictory positions in a manner that engenders new connections and understandings.

Skeptics might argue that this study has merely proposed a correction, evolution, or better understanding of what it means to be a Mongolian, herder, or nomad. My argument is that the use of static definitions misses the very being of herder communities, and as such will always fail to inform discussions and policies

pertaining to these communities. Yet my argument, that a definition should be in flux, risks producing both messy deliberation and analysis – how can we study a song writer who identifies as both Mongolian and Chinese, speaks in a language that he opposes, heralds a herding lifestyle while writing from an apartment block? We might call him hypocritical or accuse him of speaking for others – but in doing so we miss, or worse silence, critical aspects of his identity. What is required is a definition that can embody both of these opposing polarities – that resists the desire for definitional certainty that is dependent on polarities. By using disrupting definitions as a tool to territorialize, deterritorialize, and reterritorialize argumentative space we might be able to move towards better policy making, better argument analysis, and better deliberative practices.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Testing The Relationship Between Argument And Culture

Abstract: This paper proposes a framework for testing the relationship between argument and culture. The framework is based on the ideas that: 1) the minimal requirement for what constitutes argument across different cultures is the idea of argument as "linkage", and 2) that arguments can be conceptualized in terms of the context of messages. A short exploratory analysis of a data set is used to illustrate the framework.

Keywords: argument, contexts, culture, Edward Hall, linkages

1. *Introduction*

The relationship between argument and culture has not been a common topic of consideration in the field of argumentation. The traditional view was that argument was a universal process that fundamentally operated the same everywhere. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the relationship between argument processes and culture, which has been manifest in an increasing use of "culture" in theoretical treatments of argumentation (e.g. Johnson, 2000), consideration of argument in non-Western traditions (Jensen, 1992; Combs, 2004), and studies of argumentation practices in various societies (Hornikx & Hoeken, 2007; Hazen & Inoue, 1991). However, even with this increased attention, what is missing in the literature is a systematic attempt to

relate argument to culture.

We will contend that the study of argument across cultures reveals the limitations of existing definitions, the need for a more fundamental definition of argument that is part of the process of communication and that is linked to the phenomenological way argument is used among people. Therefore, we will explore the outline of such a framework by
1. defining argument as it can be applied across cultures,
2. relate argument to Hall's theory of "contexting" (1977), and
3. examine the framework in terms of examples of cross-cultural argument.

2. *Definitions of argument and cross-cultural considerations*
To be able to outline the relationship between argument and culture, it is necessary to have a definition of argument that will work across cultures. Such a definition is necessary to insure that we are talking about the same phenomenon in different cultures.

Most definitions of argument have their origin in the Western tradition, and are closely associated with the following terms: logic, rationality, and reasoning. While a number of figures were involved with the development of argument in the West (Plato, Hermogoras, the author of the *Ad Herennium*, Cicero, and Quintilian), Aristotle is the pivotal figure in our thinking about the nature of argument. Aristotle's ideas about argument are based on his observations of Athenian society. As such, they are complex and not totally systematic. On one hand, a number of his works deal with what has become known as formal or analytic argument with an emphasis on deduction and the syllogism designed to lead to certain knowledge. On the other hand, some of his works deal with the more informal or substantive processes of argument with an emphasis on the general acceptance of opinions (dialectic) or the convincing of an audience about a view (rhetorical) (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 1996; Wolf, 2010).

These viewpoints have proved problematic for the cross-cultural study of argument. First, forms of argument in the West and in other cultures may not appear to be comparable. Some of the forms of argument considered to be "valid" in western cultures may not be found or accepted in other cultures. Thus, Morrison (1972), in discussing Japan, asserted that there is a "virtual lack of any logical system resembling Aristotelian logic, experimental logic, or any other

kind" (p. 90). His conclusion is based on a comparison of scholarly topics in Japan with those in the West, making it appear that comparable uses of argument do not appear across cultures. In addition, other forms of argument may be found in non-western cultures that do not seem to be the same as in Western cultures. Finally, cultures may have different norms about what are acceptable forms of argument. They may look with great displeasure on disagreement expressed in public situations. Thus, we are faced with a situation where our traditional ways of viewing argument do not seem to fit what we are finding in other cultures.

Second, the conditions under which our understanding of argument and logic developed in the West, and particularly in Athenian Greece and Republican Rome, were not typical at that point in time around the world and not been typical throughout most of human history. Athens was a city state (as opposed to larger entity like a kingdom or empire), and was quasi-democratic (as opposed to authoritarian as were most other states). These characteristics led Aristotle to focus his observations on the public use of argument to persuade others in democratic deliberations. Different political systems and assumptions about the role of the public and public discourse existed in other societies, which did not privilege certain elements of the argumentative process that were valued in some of the Western traditions. In an authoritarian society, public discourse and the attempt to persuade through argument is limited by the power structure and the assumptions of those in authority. When called upon to make arguments, people in these societies operated under tight constraints and faced dire consequences for the arguments that they made.

Third, as Aristotle and other thinkers have been interpreted and used over the course Western thought, there has been an over-emphasis on the proper forms or validity of arguments. While Aristotle discusses how argument works in everyday life, this emphasis has often been overlooked in Western thinking. He specifies that there is a rhetorical form of both induction (the example) and deduction (the enthymeme), where the key is that something is not explicitly stated in the message and the audience participates in the process a set of statements with the conclusion unstated or one example that serves to lead to a generalization. Such forms of argument could approximate the way people argue in everyday communication. One solution to this problem would be to simply default to the conclusion that argument varies across cultures and its forms are relative to the nature of a particular culture, however, such an approach would be premature.

First, the comparison of western conceptual forms of argument with the description of eastern forms of actual argument is not a parallel type of analysis. The appropriate comparison would be the description of actual argument behavior in both the west and the east. Second, the frequency of use of a particular form of argument is not an indicator of whether a particular form exists in a culture or is capable of existing in the discourse of a culture. And third, if we see argument as completely under the direction of culture, then it overlooks a major force for cultural change and does not correspond to the actual analysis of historical events. Instead, a more fruitful approach may be to explore whether our definitions of argument are limiting what we see in other cultures. What are the bare essentials of argument? This question can be answered from the perspective of both function and form.

The result of these emphases in Western thought is a need for a view of argument that
a. would fit any culture,
b. would fit societies ranging from to democratic to authoritarian,
c. would fit historical examples as well as the present, and d) would deal with informal as well as formal views of argument.

3. *The need for a cross-cultural definition of argument*
We are interested in describing what arguments look like in other cultures. This necessitates going behind the labels and ways of talking about argument in one culture, and looking for what is in common in the process across cultures. Thus, we need a definition of argument that is minimalistic, i.e. would use the most basic or foundational aspect of argument to define the process.

My desire to think about arguments in a more fundamental sense grew out of my experiences attempting to explain argument within different cultures such as Japan, the Soviet Union (Russia) and later China. These experiences led me to believe that our conceptions of argument and logic while useful and worthwhile did not automatically encompass the concept at its most fundamental level; particularly as it applies to different cultures and different time periods.

This position can be explained in terms of an incident in my first intercultural experience. As part of the NCA's Committee on International Discussion and Debate program, I found myself in Japan with two American students for a six week tour involving debate. At one stop, I was asked to give a lecture on what is

logic to an audience of about 600 students and faculty. My immediate inclination was to fall back on my training in Western argumentation theory and discuss things as deduction and induction. However, since I knew that the members of this audience were less likely to be familiar with that tradition, I started to wonder whether there was some more fundamental way to explain argument to these people.

My concern was not meant to deny the importance of any of the highly elaborate and established systems of logic that have been developed in the West or even in such societies as India and China. Instead, I was asking a simple question about what is the most fundamental idea underlying the concept of argument, i.e. what constitutes the most minimal definition of argument? We know that in a culture such as Japan or China, there are long histories of intellectual inquiry, but that the concept of argument as set forth in Western societies is not present in the same forms. This does not mean that argument is not present or even thought about in those cultures, but it does mean that our way of thinking about argument may not be the most fundamental way of understanding the process. These concerns have led me to wonder whether our present conceptions of argument are the most basic ways of representing the fundamental nature of the argumentation process.

A consideration of this question can start with an article written by Corbett (1986), where he explored the question of how argumentation strategies have changed from ancient to modern times in the West. His thesis is that changes have occurred in the strategies of argumentation particularly as they relate to "kinds and combinations of attendant factors," however, there is a single archetypal pattern that spans this period of time. The archetypal pattern, as he sees it is one in which a person makes an assertion and if it is not self-evident or cogent enough to compel conviction, then they present evidence or arguments to support the assertion. If we look at this pattern, he starts with an assertion that becomes linked indirectly to things that are self-evident such as cultural assumptions, or that compel acceptance by their implied elements or that directly present evidence to support the assertion.

Further analysis of the various treatments of argument and attendant concepts reveal a similar theme of linkage emerging from the thickets of difference and convolutedness. For example, in many discussions of formal logic and forms of valid reasoning, the word "inference" keeps reappearing. Kneale & Kneale (1962)

in their monumental discussion of *The Development of Logic*, in their first sentence say that "logic is concerned with the principles of valid inference" and that such forms imply the seeking of "proof" (p. 1), which involves premises and arguments from them to some conclusion. The idea of drawing inferences from premises involves drawing "links" between ideas in a fashion that are judged as valid.

Standard treatments of argument in the mid-twentieth century, have similar suggestions. For example, Ehninger (1974) defines an argument as "a single capsule or unit of proof" that can be "grouped together into organized patterns" (p. 1). A similar traditional definition of an argument is that of a claim and reasons for it (Toulmin, Rieke & Janik, 1979), which also reveals the idea of linkage.

In the last half of the twentieth century, another view of argument became prominent, which viewed it as a disagreement between people. O'Keefe's (1977) combined the two views by distinguishing between argument1 where argument is viewed as a kind of utterance that one makes and argument2 where argument is viewed as a kind of interaction or process. Argument*1* exemplifies most of the traditional ways of thinking about argument, while argument*2* takes the colloquial idea of disagreement and situates it within the accepted canon of what constitutes argument. Should we be concerned with whether arguments are seen as the products of interaction or seen as a process of interaction? Should we see argument as tied implicitly to the concepts of validity and "good" arguments versus "bad" arguments?

4. *A cross-culture view of argument*

In general, there is no conceptual problem with the accepted definitions, however, when approaching argument from a comparative and intercultural perspective, it is useful to think of it in a minimalistic sense. It is important to view argument in terms of the activities that perform the argument function in different cultures so as to not get caught up in disagreement about whether argument exists in particular cultures based on whether a particular label is used. This pragmatic approach is based on viewing phenomena as argument when they function as argument whether they are defined as argument in a particular society or not.

4.1 *The form of argument*

As discussed above, the question of "what is argument" in cross-cultural setting seems to be related to the idea of linking, i.e. it connects ideas and pieces of information so as to provide coherency and support between them. This perspective is broad enough to include the various definitions of argument and therefore is more parsimonious but more importantly, it starts to get at what argument is doing *phenomenologically* in different cultures. It describes the process that people actually use to justify their views and positions in communicative exchanges. The resulting linking process may be a generally accepted one such as going from a series of examples to a generalization or it may be a less familiar form where one goes from a period of silence to an implication about a person's character. As a result, it is easier to see the argument function in any culture when it is viewed as linkages between things. When argument is defined in narrower ways such as in traditional Aristotelian forms of argument1, it may be seen as absent in cultures such as Japan (Morrison 1972) and when defined as argument2 it may be seen as inconsistent with the emphasis on harmony in Confucian cultures (Becker 1986). Therefore:

1. The form of argument should be thought of as involving the linking of any two ideas, concepts or feelings.

A major part of the proposed perspective on argument is the distinction between the form of argument and the function of argument. The aspects of form and function are often conflated in discussions of argument. For example when we talk about argument as a "kind of utterance" or a "kind of interaction" we seem to be suggesting something about the form of an argument and when we talk about induction and deduction, we are definitely referring to form. However, when we talk about reasoned decision-making, we could be talking about either form (the steps of the process) or function (the outcome of the process). Most of the discussions about argument in different cultures seem to focus on the form aspects of argument and conclude that argument is absent in a culture, if the form is absent (e.g. deduction or debate). However, when we shift to looking at function, we find a fundamental human outcome that takes a number of forms. We could leave the analysis at this point, and accept the idea that any form that fulfills the function is argument and while accepting the common function, explore the different forms. However, there is a further step to consider, whether the forms have anything in common?

4.2 *The function of argument*

Arguments should be defined in terms of the activities that fulfill a function not their labels. So, it does not matter if we call argument "logos," "wen," "logic," or even "argument". As a result, the task for argument theory is to explain the functioning of argument in different cultures, i.e. the process of convincing others of the best course of action whether it be in the democratic forms of decision-making or before an absolute monarch with the power of life and death, and the resulting forms it can take in different situations. The task for the study of culture is to outline the dynamic process that explains how meaning and conviction are generated in a culture. This means moving beyond the idea that culture dictates the nature of meaning and argument to a more nuanced idea that sees argument as sometimes influenced by cultures, sometimes reinforcing culture and sometimes changing or generating culture. The result is that in linking ideas, argument functions to make one idea related to another idea and in so doing increases the plausibility and believability of the original idea. Therefore:

2. The Argumentative Function is the linking of ideas so that they support each other and in doing so, making sense to people and influence others

It should be noted that this perspective is broader than it may initially appear. First, the use of phrases such as "justify" or "reasons" should not be taken to imply a degree of conscious intention as sometimes happens in Western theory. Instead, it implies a function that a person may or may not be aware of but that they still find makes sense. In addition, it should not be assumed that everything is explicitly stated in a verbal fashion. Indirectness, implication, and silence can all function as part of the argument process as can the verbal, nonverbal and situational. The result is a view of argument where ideas are linked in both conscious and unconscious fashions using a plethora of means going beyond the explicitly verbal with results that may be consciously intended or not.

If we look at the function of argument, its primary function has always been to convince someone of the truth, rightness or correctness of a claim. Argument does this by linking the claim to other things, which may, in the Toulmin sense, be called grounds, warrants, backing etc. or in non-western cultures, something else. Thus, functionally, arguments exist in cultures whenever someone presents two things (a claim and a reason?) as linked in an effort to convince someone else. What is accepted as the claim and what is accepted as support may vary from culture to culture, and what links are accepted as valid may also vary, however, at a bare minimum, ideas are linked together to function as a means of convincing

someone else.

So, why have we not been able to see the argumentative function as operating in all cultures? There are at least five reasons. First, cultures vary in the degree to which they expect messages to be explicit or implicit. The problem here is that people from cultures that expect to see explicit arguments may not see the implicitness of arguments in other cultures. They may not be able to understand the claim or any of the kinds of support that are present because they expressed in an indirect fashion or even not verbally expressed at all.

Second, understood knowledge is often an important part of arguments, but much of that knowledge is cultural. Aristotle recognized this in his discussions of the enthymeme and the example as the rhetorical forms of deduction and induction. The problem is being able to see the presence, and understand the meaning of, such knowledge in cultures in which we are not immersed.

Third, cultures vary in the degree to which they depend on the verbal and the nonverbal to communicate. If the nonverbal is used to provide information in a message situation, someone from outside the culture may not be aware of its presence or meaning. Fourth, the norms for what is acceptable argument and for the presence of disagreement vary from culture to culture. Where public disagreement is frowned on, there is a tendency to use non-explicit forms of argument, which will probably not be apparent to an outsider.

Finally, the rhetorical exigencies of a culture and period of time often vary and constrain the types of argument used. In strongly authoritarian societies, the use of implicit and safe forms of argument are essential for survival. This does not mean that people are not capable of using explicit argument, just that it is not expedient. Thus, we can see that a major part of the problem of difference in argument forms across cultures is the inability to see how argument functions because of outsider status and the concomitant tendency to assume that argument ought to look like that with which we are familiar.

4.3 *The importance of argument description cross-culturally*
Describing arguments across cultures tells us what kind of arguments (linkages of ideas) people use and think make sense. The comparative perspective is primarily interested in argument from a descriptive point of view where we look at what is functioning as argument in any culture. It is not to be denied that a normative

element can be overlaid on this definition by those who choose to do so, i.e. they can look for the pattern of idea linkages that they think are valid or lead to good decisions or that a society thinks are valid and may lead to good decisions. However, a descriptive approach to argument as a function can be seen as prior to the normative in that only when we can describe what people are doing argumentatively, can we make judgments about it. When a normative definition is privileged, it can result in situations where argument is equated with forms of democracy, free expression or types of decision-making. The result is that such forms of argument may not be present in a culture due to its political traditions even though the process of argument is still functioning in other ways. It is useful then to look at the phenomenon of argument as it functions in different cultures and then talk about what characteristic patterns of links are doing and what values they incorporate.

3. The cross-cultural study of argument or the argumentative function needs to describe how arguments are used in a culture before evaluating their validity

5. *Argument & contextuality*
The theory developed by Edward Hall, over a long career, provides a way of looking at the relationship between communication and culture that is compatible with the proposal developed in the previous section. He is famous for his aphorism: "Communication is culture and culture is communication," however, the exact nature of the relationship is embodied in his idea of "contexting". Contexting is based on the following question: What information do people pay attention to when communicating with each other? Hall assumes that people are presented with more information than they can pay attention to and as a result they have to choose what kinds of information to encode and to pay attention to. The patterns used for encoding and decoding are what he defines as "contexting."

For Hall, contexting is a process that occurs at both the level of the culture and the level of messages, even though his basic definition of contexting is in terms of messages. Cultural contextuality can probably be best thought of as a set of norms that condition the perceptual tendency about where to look for information and how to encode it in messages. On the other hand, message contextuality ought to be thought of as a set of message features that provide or direct people to certain places for information.

For Hall, messages can fall along a continuum between low context messages on

one end and high context messages on the other end. Low context messages are those where "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (i.e. spoken or written communication). High context messages are where "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person." The external or physical context of the message involves things such as the situation, the setting, the status of people involved, and the activity, while the internal context includes things such as past experiences, common cultural information, common cultural assumptions, the structure of the brain and nervous system, e.g. Gestalt rules of perception).

In most cases, messages are a mixture of explicit information and contextual information, which affects the appearance of arguments across cultures. Of course, this idea is closely related to Aristotle's ideas of the enthymeme and the example. It can also be seen in the following discussion of the difference between formal systems of reasoning and everyday systems of reasoning by Johnson-Laird and Wason (1977) within the context of cognitive science. They argue that "The distinction between conscious deductions and everyday inference is probably a reflection of a more general contrast that can be drawn between explicit and implicit inferences" (p. 5). And of course, inferences involve the moving from one idea to another in a fashion so that they are linked.

People do not operate exclusively out of a low context or high context perspective. Individuals may move back and forth on the message continuum depending on the situation. For example, Americans, when talking with close friends where there is a high degree of homogeneity or familiarity among the communicators, are more likely to use messages toward the high context end of the continuum. But when talking with people they do not know or when communicating in formal settings like the legal system, they are more likely to explicitly spell out their arguments in low context messages.

The kind of process that Hall discusses in his ideas about the contextuality of messages is very similar to that proposed for thinking about arguments across cultures. The information in a message, whether explicitly expressed or not, provides the elements that can serve as an argument. Furthermore, in Hall's conception, presumably the information that is expressed in the various parts of a message is seen as linked by the participants in the interaction. Thus, if all or part of the message functions as an argument that may or may not be explicitly expressed, then arguments may be contextualized in the culture and may function

in any possible combination of explicit and implicit elements.

6. *A cross-cultural exploration of the theory*

To demonstrate how this theory might work, we will examine some data from a 2008 study by Hazen, Inoue, Fourcade and Maruta. The study compared the responses of 42 American students from a private southeastern university with 46 Japanese students from a public university in the southern part of Japan. We will look at a subset of the data to explore the relationship between arguments as linkages and contextual characteristics of print advertisements. Eight print ads from the United States and Japan were selected on the basis of a pilot study to represent both high and low context messages that would be interchangeable between the two cultures (Fourcade & Hazen, 2006).

The question will be what relationships exist between measures of linkage such as "making sense" and "cohesiveness" with a measure of "logicality" and with measures of contextuality such as "clearness," "implicitness," informativeness," "completeness," and "obviousness. Japan has usually been assumed to be a culture that makes greater use of high context arguments than the United States, which is seen as more likely to use low context arguments.

A ranking was made of the overall degree to which the participants saw each of the messages as making sense on a seven-point scale (1=makes sense). Two of the advertisements seemed to make sense to both the American and the Japanese samples, Fritolay chips (2.18) and Dell Printer (2.80), and one advertisement did not seem to make sense, Vodaphone cellphone (4.69) especially for the Japanese. There were also two advertisements that fell in the middle of sense continuum: Kanebo cold medicine (3.71) and HP speakers (3.71). Using these three references points, we will make some observations about the relationship between argument linkages and contextuality. In the original framing of these advertisements, FritoLay, Dell, and Kanebo were seen as on the low contextuality side, while Vodaphone and HP were seen as on the high contextuality side.

For Japanese sample, a couple of interesting relationships are present. In terms of logic, there is a significant negative correlation between making sense and logicality for both ends of the continuum (the high sense ads and the low sense ads), i.e. the more sense the ad made, the less logical it was seen as. Since logic is not a traditional concept in Japanese thought, it may be that this term does not fit into their thinking about arguments. In addition, the more sense that ads were

seen as making, the more obvious they were seen as. Which is interesting because the relationship between sense making and certainty was seen as negative, i.e. the more sense an ad made, the less certain it was.

On the other hand, the American sample, generally did not see a relationship between making sense and logicality. In the one case where they did, for the Vodaphone ad, it was a significant positive relationship, i.e. the advertisement was not seen as making a lot of sense and it was not seen as logical. For all of the advertisements, the relationship between making sense and two contextuality characteristics, obviousness & clearness, were seen as consistently positive and significant, i.e. as the ads made more sense, they were seen as being more obvious and clear.

The preceding analysis of this data suggests that the framework of argument links (making sense) and contextuality characteristics can provide interesting insights into the way argument works and the differences between cultures.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – The Linked-Convergent Distinction

Abstract: The linked-convergent distinction introduced by Stephen Thomas in 1977 is primarily a distinction between ways in which two or more reasons can directly support a claim, and only derivatively a distinction between types of structures, arguments, reasoning, reasons, or premisses. As with the deductive-inductive distinction, there may be no fact of the matter as to whether a given multi-premiss argument is linked or convergent.

1. *Introduction*

Once upon a time introductory logic textbooks did not mention the linked-convergent distinction. See for example Cohen and Nagel (1934), Black (1946), and Copi (1978). Stephen Thomas was the first one to draw it, in 1977.**[i]** Thomas took the term 'convergent' from Monroe Beardsley's earlier textbook, from which come also the terms 'divergent argument' and 'serial argument' (Beardsley, 1950, p. 19). A contrast concept was already implicit in Beardsley's recognition that a reason that "converges" along with one or more other reasons on a conclusion might itself consist internally of more than one coordinate premiss. Thomas refined Beardsley's concept of convergence, made the contrast concept explicit, coined the term 'linked' for it, and supplemented Beardsley's convention for diagramming convergent reasons with a convention for diagramming the linkage among the coordinate premisses of a multi-premiss reason. Independently of Thomas's innovation, Michael Scriven (1976, p. 42) introduced a similar distinction, with a different diagramming convention, but used the term 'balance of considerations' to describe an argument with a convergent support structure. Johnson and Blair (1977, p. 177) and Hitchcock (1983, pp. 49-52) appropriate Scriven's way of making the distinction.

The distinction appears with Thomas's labels and diagramming conventions as a topic in many introductory textbooks. See for example Freeman (1993, pp. 86-106), Ennis (1996, p. 39), LeBlanc (1998, pp. 32-36), Fisher (2001, pp. 32-38), Bailin and Battersby (2010, pp. 42-44), Govier (2010, pp. 37-39), Vaughn and MacDonald (2010, pp. 95-96), and Groarke and Tindale (2013, 115-119). Many of these textbooks explain the distinction in one short section, with exercises on applying it, but neither mention nor use the distinction elsewhere – a sign that its inclusion has become a piece of scholasticism.

The distinction is intuitively clear. Where more than one premiss is offered in direct support of a conclusion, the premisses sometimes work together to support it and are in this sense linked, whereas at other times distinct subsets of them offer independently relevant reasons that "converge" on the conclusion. A paradigm case of linked support would be a deductively valid two-premiss argument where neither premiss by itself entails the conclusion, such as the

argument:

(1) *There is no life on Mars, because its atmosphere is in a stable equilibrium, which would not be the case if there were life on that planet.*

A paradigm case of convergent support would be an appeal to disparate considerations or criteria in support of the attribution of some supervenient status to their common subject, such as the following argument:

(2) *There should be no capital punishment. The death penalty violates human rights codes that forbid cruel and unusual punishment, cannot be reversed or compensated for if it is discovered that a person was innocent of the crime for which they were executed, is no less effective as a deterrent than the likely alternative of a long prison term, and is not needed to prevent a person convicted of a capital crime from repeating that crime.*

Despite this intuitive clarity, it has turned out to be difficult to spell out theoretically when premisses are linked and when they "converge". This difficulty has given rise to several scholarly treatments of the distinction, among which Walton (1996) and Freeman (2011) stand out for making it a major focus of their books on argument structure.

In this paper I wish to make one main point: that the distinction is primarily a distinction among types of support, not among arguments, premisses, reasons or structures. Only derivatively can we apply the distinction to arguments, premisses, reasons and structures. This point seems to me to be obvious once one is made aware of it, but it seems not to have been made in the literature. It implies that the search is futile for a criterion of linkage in terms of the consequences for the strength of support of finding a premiss questionable or false (e.g. no support upon falsification, diminished type of support upon elimination, etc.). Nevertheless, I shall argue, the distinction is useful.

2. *Convergence: not multiplicity of arguments*

Initially we should be clear that the linked-convergent distinction is not a distinction between a single multi-premiss argument and multiple independent arguments. There is nothing particularly problematic about the concept of distinct arguments for a single conclusion. We have clear examples of such "piling on" of arguments, as in Aristotle's 21 arguments in his *Metaphysics* against Plato's theory of forms (Aristotle, 1984 [4th century BCE], 988a1-8 and 990a34-993a10),

Thomas Aquinas's five ways of proving the existence of God (Aquinas, 1913 [1269], I, Q. 2, Art. 3), and the 367 different ways of proving the Pythagorean theorem (http://www.wikihow.com/Prove-the-Pythagorean-Theorem; accessed 2014 05 24). The appropriate response to such texts is to treat each argument by itself: identifying, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating it as if no other argument for the conclusion were in the offing.

There is however some controversy over how to combine the results of such evaluations. Pollock (1995, pp. 101-102) doubts that there is accrual of independent reasons, and assumes that the degree of justification for a conclusion supported by separate undefeated arguments is simply the maximum of the strengths of those arguments. He argues that cases adduced as evidence of accrual of independent reasons, such as the greater reliability of testimony when given independently by two witnesses than when given by just one of them, are in fact cases where the separate pieces of information function as premises of a single argument. Selinger (2014) on the other hand takes a new argument to reduce the uncertainty left by any preceding arguments for the same conclusion, provided that the premisses of the new argument are independent of the premisses of its predecessors. On the basis of this intuition, he provides a formula for calculating the degree of acceptability conferred on a conclusion by a set of such independent arguments. The inputs to this formula are provided by a valuation function which assigns to each premiss and each inference (but not to the conclusion) degrees of acceptability ranging from 0 for complete unacceptability via ½ for being neither acceptable nor unacceptable to 1 for complete acceptability. Let $v(\alpha ij)$ be the degree of acceptability of a premiss αij of an argument j with conclusion α, and $w(\alpha|\alpha 1j, ..., \alpha nj)$ be the degree of conditional acceptability in this argument of its conclusion α given total acceptability of its premisses $\alpha 1j, ..., \alpha nj$. If the premisses of this argument are independent and the product of their degrees of acceptability is greater than ½ (meaning that the conjunction of the premisses is more acceptable than not), then the degree of acceptability $vj(\alpha)$ conferred on the conclusion α by the argument is the product $v(\alpha 1j)' ...' v(\alpha nj)$ $w(\alpha j|\alpha 1j,..., \alpha nj)$. (This formula can be adjusted to accommodate cases where the premisses of an argument are not independent of one another.) The degree of acceptability conferred on α by m such arguments (m > 1) with independent premisses is given by the formula $v1(\alpha) \oplus ... \oplus vm(\alpha)$, where $x \oplus y = 2x + 2y - 2xy - 1$. Selinger's formula appears to give intuitively acceptable results. For example, according to the formula two independent proofs that each confer

separately a total acceptability of 1 on a theorem confer together the same acceptability of 1, whereas two independent arguments that each confer an acceptability of *3/4* on a claim together confer an acceptability of *7/8* and a new independent argument that confers an acceptability on a claim only slightly greater than ½ raises the acceptability of this claim by a very small amount. Thus the conflict between Pollock's rejection of accrual of independent reasons and Selinger's acceptance of this sort of accrual comes down to a conflict of intuitions. It is an open question whether there is any compelling argument that would resolve the conflict.

There is also an interpretive difficulty in determining whether an additional supporting reason introduced by a bridging term like 'besides' or 'moreover' or 'further' is a new argument or merely an independently relevant part of a single argument. This difficulty is best resolved by applying a moderate principle of charity, according to which an ambiguous text or discourse is to be disambiguated in the way that makes it more plausible. The difference between independently relevant reasons in a single argument and multiple arguments for the same conclusion implies, as Freeman (2011, pp. 108-113) has pointed out, that the pragma-dialectical distinction between coordinatively compound argumentation and multiple argumentation is not the same as the linked-convergent distinction. Multiple argumentation involves distinct speech act complexes, in each of which one or more arguments are advanced in an attempt to justify a point of view – as it happens, the same one in each case. Coordinatively compound argumentation involves a single complex of speech acts in which more than one premiss is used in direct support of a point of view. From the pragma-dialectical perspective, the linked-convergent distinction is a distinction within the class of coordinatively compound argumentation. Snoeck Henkemans (1992, pp. 96-99), for example, recognizes two types of coordinatively compound argumentation, cumulative and complementary, which stand to each other roughly (but not exactly) as convergent arguments stand to linked arguments.

Beardsley and Thomas may have contributed to confusion between multiple arguments for a single conclusion and multiple independently relevant reasons in a single argument. Indeed, they may themselves have conflated these two concepts. They diagram convergent reasoning with a separate arrow from each independently relevant reason to the conclusion, thus giving the visual impression

that there are distinct inferences to be evaluated but no need for a comprehensive assessment of how well the reasons taken together support the conclusion. Further, Beardsley refers to convergent reasoning as involving "independent reasons"– a phrase that could easily be read to cover independent arguments as well as independently relevant reasons in a single argument. Further, since Beardsley gives only two examples of convergent structures (one an argument from sign [1950, p. 18] and the other an [intuitively linked] argument for an evaluation [p. 21]) and makes nothing of the concept in his approach to evaluating arguments, it is hard to flesh out his ambiguous definition of a convergent argument as one in which "several independent reasons support the same conclusion" (p. 19). Beardsley in fact made less and less use of the concept of convergence in subsequent editions of his textbook; in the second (1956) edition it is merely mentioned at the beginning of a check-up quiz, and it is missing from the third (1966) and fourth (1975) editions. It seems then that users of the first edition did not find its concept of convergence particularly useful. For his part, Thomas (1977, p. 39) conflates independently relevant reasons in a single argument with distinct arguments sharing a conclusion by counting as convergent reasoning not only independent reasons for some action but also separate alleged proofs of a single claim, such as different arguments for the existence of God.**[ii]**

3. *The primary sphere of the distinction*
To get a sense of the primary field of application of the linked-convergent distinction, we need to go beyond the intuitive distinction between premises that work together and premiss-sets that constitute independently relevant reasons. We need to look at how the distinction is used, and in particular how the concept of convergent reasoning is applied. For this purpose, our most extensive and therefore best sources are the treatment of practical decision-making in the various editions of *Thomas's textbook* (1977, 1981, 1986, 1997) and the treatment of conductive reasoning in the various editions of *Trudy Govier's textbook* (Govier, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2010).

In the last edition of his textbook (Thomas, 1997), which presumably incorporates his most developed thinking on the topic, Thomas devotes 57 pages (385-441) to practical decision-making. He recommends a five-component approach to important personal decision-making situations:

1. Identify mutually exclusive options.
2. For each option, articulate whatever possible reasons pro and con one can

think of.

3. Evaluate separately the acceptability and relevance of each such reason.

4. Consider reasons bearing on the acceptability or relevance of each reason (and reasons bearing on the acceptability or relevance of those reasons, and so on).

5. Pick the option that is best supported by its undefeated pro reasons and least opposed by its undefeated con reasons.

Diagramming these components is helpful, and perhaps even essential, for keeping track of one's reasoning. In diagramming the reasoning concerning each option, Thomas uses separate arrows for each reason–solid if it is a pro reason, dashed if it is a con reason (including a reason against the acceptability or relevance of another reason). He illustrates his recommended procedure with reference to two decision-making situations, described initially in the words of the decision-maker: a choice of living accommodation (pp. 395-404) and a choice of whether to move cities in order to get a better job in one's company (pp. 414-430).

We find a similar approach in Trudy Govier's treatment of what she calls "conductive arguments" (Govier, 2010, p. 353), which she characterizes as "arguments in which premises are put forward as separately and non-conclusively relevant to support a conclusion, against which negatively relevant considerations may also be acknowledged" (2011, p. 262) and whose structure she describes as "always convergent" (2010, p. 352). Like Thomas, she proposes that one evaluate such arguments by considering for each premiss separately not only whether it is rationally acceptable but also whether it is relevant, positively or negatively, to the conclusion. After having done so, one should judge the strength of support given by each positively relevant rationally acceptable reason separately and by these reasons cumulatively, the strength of opposition given by each negatively relevant rationally acceptable counter-consideration separately and by these counter-considerations cumulatively, and the size of the difference between the cumulative support and the cumulative opposition (Govier, 1999, p. 170; 2010, pp. 365-366). Govier illustrates this complex procedure with reference to an invented argument for legalizing voluntary euthanasia (Govier, 2010, pp. 360-363).

Thomas and Govier have developed more extensively than any other authors a procedure for evaluating convergent reasoning and argument. Although their procedures differ and are illustrated by application to different types of arguments, they have an important commonality: separate judgment of the

relevance to some conclusion of each of a number of diverse considerations, criteria, or signs. The point of distinguishing independently relevant, or putatively relevant, reasons pro and con in a convergent structure is thus to isolate them for separate consideration. If a given reason turns out to be unacceptable, questionable or irrelevant, it is still possible to estimate the strength of support that the remaining acceptable and relevant reasons give to the conclusion. The partitioning into distinct reasons is a necessary preliminary to this evaluative approach, but would generally not be helpful for evaluating other types of arguments.

The appropriate criterion for convergence, then, is the independent relevance to a conclusion of distinct sub-sets of an argument's premisses. Relevance in this sense is an ontic property, that of counting in context for or against the conclusion drawn. It is not a mental property of the person putting forward the argument, such as the arguer's intention or belief. Nor is it a property of the argumentative text, such as a claim or textual indication that the supporting reasons are being put forward as independently relevant. Convergence is thus primarily a feature of the way in which multiple coordinate premisses of a piece of reasoning or argument in fact work to support the conclusion. They do so convergently when and only when distinct sub-sets of the premisses adduce distinct considerations or criteria or signs that are in fact relevant, positively or negatively, to the conclusion drawn.

Although convergence is primarily a property of the support that multiple coordinate premisses provide to a conclusion, one can apply the concept derivatively to reasoning, arguments, premisses, reasons and argument structures. Reasoning and argument are convergent when they have multiple coordinate premisses that can be partitioned into distinct sub-sets that it is plausible to interpret as put forward as independently relevant to the conclusion. In that case, the reasoning or argument can be said to have a convergent structure. The reasons constituted by such distinct sub-sets should then be treated as being put forward as convergent, i.e. as independently relevant to the conclusion, even if on evaluation not all of them turn out to be both rationally acceptable and relevant. If any such reason consists of a single premiss, then one can take that premiss to be put forward as convergent; otherwise, the concept of convergence should not be applied to the individual premisses.

Since convergence is primarily a way that a claim can be supported, there is

judgment involved in deciding to treat a piece of reasoning or argument by the procedure appropriate to a convergent support structure. In cases where the reasons into which one partitions multiple coordinate premisses are not all rationally acceptable and relevant, the decision to partition may rest on syntactical considerations (e.g. a number of premisses attributing various characteristics to a common subject to which the conclusion attributes some further characteristic), semantic considerations (e.g. the status of the conclusion as a policy decision and the corresponding status of the distinct premiss-sets as diverse consequences or rules or deontic principles, or the status of the conclusion as a diagnosis and the corresponding status of the distinct premiss-sets as diverse signs or symptoms), textual considerations (e.g. the introduction of a subsequent premiss-set by the word 'besides'), and perhaps other sorts of considerations. Decisions to partition premisses based on such considerations are not correct or incorrect, but only more or less reasonable. Thus there may be no fact of the matter about whether a particular piece of reasoning or argument with multiple coordinate premisses is convergent, since the case for partitioning the premisses may be about as strong as the case against partitioning them. In this respect, the situation is exactly like that of deciding whether a piece of reasoning or argument is deductive, i.e. appropriately evaluated by the standard of deductive validity. The claim of the present paper that convergence is primarily a way in which a claim can be supported rather than primarily a type of argument is exactly parallel to my claim long ago that deduction is primarily a type of validity rather than a type of argument (Hitchcock, 1979).

What about the concept of linkage? If we take linkage to be the complement of convergence, we can define it as support by multiple coordinate premisses in some way other than by distinct considerations or criteria or signs that are separately relevant, positively or negatively, to the conclusion drawn. As with convergence, we can derivatively define linked reasoning, arguments, premisses, and argument structures as those that it is appropriate to treat for evaluative purposes as linked. Judgment will be involved in making the decision about appropriateness.

This conception of linkage is purely negative. It implies nothing about the effect on the strength of support of finding that a premiss of an argument with linked support is questionable or unacceptable. And *a fortiori* it implies nothing about this effect in the case of an argument or reasoning that one decides, appropriately

or not, to treat as linked for evaluative purposes. Thus, if we accept this conception of linkage, we should regard as exercises in futility the many attempts in the literature to find a criterion for linkage in the consequences of "suspending" a premiss or finding it false: diminished support upon falsification (Thomas, 1977, p. 38), no support upon falsification (Copi, 1982, p. 21), insufficient support upon elimination (Snoeck Henkemans, 1992), type reduction upon elimination (Vorobej, 1994), and so forth. In any case, there is a useless spinning of wheels in applying any such test if the point of classifying an argument as linked is to facilitate evaluation, since one has to do the evaluation first in order to classify the argument in a way that indicates how one is to do the evaluation. Better just to do the evaluation and forget about the classification.

It might be doubted that suspension or falsification of a premiss in an argument with linked support for the conclusion can have no effect at all on the strength of support that it gives to that conclusion. A simple example of such an argument is one that has a redundant premiss whose suspension or falsification does not affect the status of the other premisses–for example, the argument:

(3) *If there were life on Mars, its atmosphere would be in an unstable equilibrium; the atmosphere on Mars is not in an unstable equilibrium; Mars is an asteroid; therefore, there is no life on Mars.*

The third premiss is known to be false, but this fact does not affect the strength of support given by the argument, which is in fact conclusive, given that the first and second premisses are both known to be true.

How then should we evaluate an argument that we decide to treat as if its support were linked? A straightforward way is to judge first the status of each premiss separately, in terms for example of whether it is acceptable, questionable or unacceptable. Then determine how strongly the premisses with their attributed statuses collectively support the conclusion and whether in context that degree of support is enough. It is important in such an exercise not to treat a premiss found to be questionable as if it had never been part of the argument, since its questionable status might affect the strength of support differently than its omission would have. Consider for example the following argument:

(4) *Since everyone would agree on reflection that public knowledge that physicians may deceive their patients about their medical status would have*

worse consequences than public knowledge that physicians may not so deceive their patients, then physicians should not engage in such deception, for violations of the moral rule against deception are not justified under such conditions (cf. Gert, 2005).

If one finds the major premiss questionable, then one should take the argument to provide at best weak support for the conclusion, whereas one might reasonably take a variant of the argument without the major premiss to provide moderate support for the conclusion.

4. *Conclusion*

The linked-convergent distinction introduced by Stephen Thomas (1977) is not the same as the distinction between a single argument for a claim and multiple arguments for a claim. It is a distinction to be applied within the class of single arguments for a claim, specifically to such arguments with more than one premiss. It is primarily a distinction between ways in which two or more premisses in such an argument can directly support a claim. Support is convergent if the premisses can be partitioned into independently relevant reasons that each consist of rationally acceptable premisses. Support is linked if the premisses cannot be partitioned into independently relevant reasons that each consist of rationally acceptable premisses. One can classify arguments, reasoning, premisses, or structures as linked or convergent only in a secondary or derivative sense, where what is involved is a judgment call on what type of support the argument, reasoning or component is attempting to provide. Hence, as with the deductive-inductive distinction, there may be no fact of the matter as to whether a given multi-premiss argument is linked or convergent.

The value of the distinction lies in the consequences of treating an argument component as having convergent structure. Such a decision introduces into the evaluation of the premisses a consideration of the independent relevance of each premiss-set that is partitioned as a reason – a step that makes no sense if one is treating it as having linked structure. We should not automatically assume, however, that we can refute an argument component that we are treating as having linked structure by refuting just one of its premisses. We need to check and see.

NOTES
i. He claims (1986, p. 457) to have introduced it in the 1973 edition of his

Practical Reasoning in Natural Language, but I have been unable to find a copy of this textbook published before 1977, despite the claim (Thomas, 1977, p. ii) of copyright in 1973, 1974 and 1975.

ii. This example disappears from the fourth (1997) edition of his textbook. A third type of example, in which a claim is supported both by evidence and by testimony, occurs only in the first two editions (1977, 1981) of his textbook

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