# Semiotics of Politics

## Dialogicality of Parliamentary Talk

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**Abstract**

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Parliamentary talk, despite its central place in politics, has not been the focus of many qualitative studies. The present study investigates how parliamentary talk emerges in a dialogue between different arguments in the parliament. At the same time, this is a study of politics, of how human interaction gives birth to laws that regulate life in two contemporary democracies, Slovakia and Poland. It provides a close-reading of two political debates: on the state language in Slovakia and on gender parity in Poland.

This study draws on hermeneutic and semiotic thinkers such as Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman to elaborate a dialogical understanding of language that can provide the basis for a method of textual analysis. The dialogical understanding of language emphasises that text and talk must be studied in the context of an interaction. The unit of analysis is a pair of utterances, a question and an answer. Until an utterance has been interpreted, it carries only the potential of meaning; its meaning is materialised by the responses it receives.

The study further argues that conversation analysis and its tools can usefully be applied to the study of political debate. The method provides for the analysis of the dynamics between micro-scale interaction in the parliament and the macro-scale dynamics of culture. These dynamics assume two different forms that Lotman termed as "translation" and "explosion".

The study shows that parliamentary debate is characterised by a constantly evolving topic of discussion, namely that the meaning of the bill at the start of the debate and at the end of the debate are really two different bills. This is not because the content of the bill has undergone changes, but because in the course of the debate, the bill has generated new cultural connections. Casting a vote in support of the bill does not approve just the bill itself but a whole set of interconnected political, social and cultural values—what Lotman approached as the semiosphere. This study suggests Lotman's cultural semiotics can provide for "imperfect hermeneutics" that is sensitive to the dynamic and contested nature of tradition in politics whilst acknowledging the inevitability of culture in mediating political talk.

*Keywords*: language, dialogicality, parliamentary talk, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Yuri Lotman, Poland, Slovakia

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*To Joanna and Sofia*

# Contents

# Acknowledgements

# Transcription Symbols

This thesis includes simple transcription symbols commonly used in conversation analysis. The aim of the symbols is to indicate the pauses, parallelism and intonation of actually occurring talk. Courier font-face is used in transcriptions because it has equal character length and thereby it becomes possible to mark exactly when, e.g. parallel talk begins.

| | |
|---|---|
| `(.)` | A dot in parenthesis indicates a short pause. |
| `(3)` | A number in parenthesis indicates the duration of the pause in seconds. |
| `[` | Left square brackets indicate the point at which current speaker's talks is overlapped by another participant's speech. |
| `Smith` | Underlining indicate stressed word in speech. |
| `(h)` | Letter "h" in parenthesis indicates audible breath. |
| `:` | A colon indicates prolonged duration of the sound. |
| `=` | Equals sign in the end of line and in the beginning of the following line indicates no audible gap between the lines. |

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CA | Conversation Analysis (used in quotations only) |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CNN | An American TV-channel |
| EP | The European Parliament |
| FCNM | Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities |
| KDH | Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (Christian Democratic Movement) |
| LiD | Lewica i Demokraci (Left and Democrats) |
| ĽS-HZDS | Ľudová strana – Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) |
| MN | Mniejszość Niemiecka (German Minority) |
| MR | Members Resources (used in quotations only) |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PiS | Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice) |
| PJN | Polska Jest Najważniejsza (Poland Comes First) |
| PO | Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Forum) |
| PSL | Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People's Party) |
| SDKÚ-DS | Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Demokratická strana (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party) |
| SMER-SD | SMER – sociálna demokracia (Direction – Social Democracy) |
| SMK | Strana maďarskej koalície – Magyar Koalíció Pártja (Party of the Hungarian Coalition) |
| SNS | Slovenská národná strana (Slovak National Party) |

# Chapter 1: Introduction

> The word, directed toward its object, enter a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse... Mikhail Bakhtin

> The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment... cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. Mikhail Bakhtin

> The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of *any* discourse. Mikhail Bakhtin

This is a study of political talk as it emerges in a dialogue between different arguments in Slovakian and Polish parliaments. At the same time, this is a study of politics, of how human interaction gives birth to laws that regulate life in two contemporary European states. Slovakia and Poland could be labelled "young" or "new" democracies, and even if the concrete themes on which I focus bear some affinity to themes of "transition"—adoption of a state language law enforcing the idea of a national political community and a gender parity bill largely inspired by (West) European values—I want to underline from the very start that what we will observe as taking place in the Slovakian and Polish parliaments cannot be thought of as a peculiarity of post-communist politics; it is politics in two contemporary parliamentary democracies.

Tadeusz Woźniak, deputy of the Law and Justice party, took part in the debate on the gender parity bill in Poland on February 18th, 2010. In his first contribution to the debate, he claims that the bill is unconstitutional and unfair, but he introduces his objections in a rather unparliamentary manner:

> Mr Marshall! Honourable Sejm! Respected ladies on the parliamentary benches, in the audience and in whole Poland, I speak as a man, who often kisses ladies (*Movements in the Plenary*) on their hand, who gives ladies flowers, who kneeled when proposing to his wife. I show great respect for the ladies, but I have to confess that

> like Ms deputy Grabicka, at a certain moment I felt as if finding
> myself in the film "Seksmisja", and therefore, in relation to political
> correctness I desire with all firmness to declare that Copernicus was
> a woman. (Woźniak, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

We might think that Woźniak's introduction reflects a peculiar post-Soviet parliamentary culture that will fade away as Polish democracy matures a bit more. Perhaps he was just uninformed about the nature of parliamentary debate or perhaps he honestly entertains strong male chauvinist views, or perhaps, he just made a mistake. At the same time, this fragment tells us that something meaningful is happening, because the audience reacts strongly enough for the stenographers to mark it down. Given the place of the reaction, in the middle of the sentence, it appears that the public knows what he is going to say, but also that Woźniak seems to know what the audience expects him to stay; hence the ironic conclusion that Copernicus must have been a woman. It all seems that Woźniak and the audience are engaged in well-rehearsed tautological exchange of words. However, at the same time, he faithfully materialises, in this banal example, the structure of dialogic communication as it is postulated by Bakhtin: "every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (Bakhtin 1981, 280).

Even though only a few political scientists would deny the importance of the parliament, the concrete talk in parliament has been largely neglected in political science. Bächtiger (2014) distinguishes three main analytical approaches to parliamentary talk: the rational choice or the partisan, the deliberative and the discursive.

Rational choice approaches view parliamentary talk as rationally calculated partisan rhetoric (ibid., 146-149). Such rhetoric—understood as "empty talk" by the rational choice approaches—has little formative influence in politics; rather, its purpose is that of "election talk", being aimed at maintaining contact with the electorate or positioning oneself in public politics. Its only chance of having real effect is through scandalous revelations and negative information that may attract voters. The conclusion is that "legislative speech can generally have no persuasive effect on policy-making" (ibid., 147). This analytic approach plays down the importance of concrete talk in politics.

The deliberative reading of parliamentary talk emphasises its potential to generate more knowledge on a given issue and hence arrive at better policies (ibid., 149-158). Early studies of deliberation, like Besette's (1994), focused on concrete parliamentary talk, but successive research has been far more preoccupied with the normative tone of deliberation. Deliberation is often suggested as a good way to approach moral conflicts in society (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 1) and it comes with a

clear normative claim: "If a deliberative system works well, it filters out and discards the worst ideas... [and] adopts, and applies the best ideas. If the deliberative system works badly, it distorts facts, portrays ideas in forms that their originators would disown..." (Mansbridge 1999, 211). Two important trends in research on deliberation include the consistent expansion of deliberation from the parliament to other state institutions, administration, civil society (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 40-41), and even to everyday talk where a "snort of derision" becomes "a political act" (Mansbridge 1999, 214). At the core of this research is the argument that the standards against which deliberation can be judged are the same in public assemblies as in private talk (ibid., 213). However, this research has stayed at the normative and theoretical level, without really studying actually occurring talk—in or outside of parliament.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in testing the normative criteria that previous research has produced. In practice, this has meant the employment of statistical methods that measure the quality of deliberation. This is already quite far from the earlier notion of deliberation as being as much about the process as about outcome and resembles the rational choice of aggregating, not interests, but abstract attributes, procedural markers of "deliberation".

Indicative of this is Steiner et al. *Deliberative Politics in Action* (2004) that "is about deliberation in parliamentary institutions" (Steiner et al., 2004, 1), but at no point discusses any concrete extract of talk from a parliament. Instead, it relies on a Discourse Quality Index that "measures the quality of deliberation" (ibid., 1) coded along a number of different variables such as level of justification used in argumentation or respect towards counterarguments (ibid., 170-179). They hold the view that the "political process should be based on a 'talk-centric' style of decision making rather than on a 'voting-centric' style". In politics, the authors argue, "outcomes should be determined by reason rather than numbers" (ibid., 26). Despite the emphasis on concrete talk, the analysis relies on coded variables, and the richness and complexity of living language becomes reduced to binary logic. This makes sense only if we share a very specific understanding of talk and reason, one that can be reduced to indexed form and content. At the same time, deliberation is claimed to change people's mind through reason rather than force indicating that the concrete situation of talk, or exchange of arguments, cannot be excluded from the overall process of deliberation.

The last group Bächtiger calls discursive approaches (2014, 159-161). By this he means studies that focus on *language* or *talk* in parliament, its regulation, conventions and routines (ibid., 159). Bächtiger's examples include for instance Bayley ed. (2004), Ilie ed. (2010) and van Dijk (2004), but could also have included Chilton and Schäffner (eds.) (2002), Chilton

(2004) and Hausendorf and Bora (eds.) (2006). Most studies are in fact of a linguistic nature, and it has been difficult to pinpoint their exact relevance to political science (Bächtiger 2014, 161). However, isolated attempts to build bridge between linguistics and political science are present in a recently published book edited by Ilie *European Parliaments under Scrutiny* (2010). One good example in this volume is Cezar Ornatowski's study of talk in the Polish parliament, which he argues is a form of politics and embedded in a broader cultural and political context (2010, 223).

I would add to Bächtiger's classification yet a fourth group comprising conceptual historical studies of parliamentarianism and parliamentary talk who approach parliamentary talk as a performance that brings together the rhetorical and the political aspects of parliamentary talk in the moment of talk (Kurunmäki 2003; Soininen and Turkka eds. 2008; Palonen 2012; Palonen, Rosales and Turkka eds. 2014). In this research, emphasis has, especially in recent years, been on the rhetorical tactics of talk (e.g. Palonen 2008). These studies have emphasised the contradictory nature of parliamentary talk. On the one hand it represents the pinnacle of representative democracy and is the incarnation of the power vested in the people. It is the official medium of representation: in the parliament, new policies are formulated and passed and if politics in the parliament fail, violence is likely to ensue. Furthermore, parliamentary rules and regulations give equal access to talk, and the agenda ascertain that agreed topics are thoroughly discussed. On the other hand, there are well-founded doubts about whether parliamentary talk  can actually affect real politics, as political deals are brokered outside the Plenum. This leaves parliamentary talk up in the air, so to speak. Parliamentary talk as a pure rhetorical performance bereft of real power is difficult to combine with the image of the parliament as the supreme representative unit of a state. It could even be argued that parliamentary rhetoric just serves to aggravate the differences between the government and opposition making rational brokering of deals and reliance on expertise difficult or impossible.

Conceptual historical studies of parliamentary talk, however, proceed precisely from the assumption that the nature of parliamentary talk is as it is because it is politics; and politics, even parliamentary politics, are about conflict (Palonen 2008, 103). Palonen advocates the view that strict boundaries between rhetoric, politics and expertise break down and "politicking", the performance of politics in the present moment (Palonen 2003, 171), takes over.[1] From the point of view of conceptual his-

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1.    Palonen distinguishes four aspects of politics: *policy* refers to regulation, *politicking* to performance of politics, *polity* to the (metaphorical) space within which politics happens, and *politicisation* to the process by which something opened up as belonging to politics (2003, 171). These all have also a temporal dimension: policy and politicisation are future oriented whilst politicking and polity take place in the present (ibid., 175ff).

tory, this "politicking" is the object of study. Palonen compares politicking to Aristotle's *praxis*, which "has its aim in itself" (ibid., 177) and to Hannah Arendt's metaphor of politics as performing art that is judged by its virtuosity in the present rather than by any attributed external aims. Conceptualising parliamentary talk as politicking, as performance, as doing politics, enables the analysis to dig into the contradiction between highly sophisticated regulation, competing expertise knowledge, and parliamentary politics that often willy-nilly engender new legislation.

This study scrutinises how talk in parliament emerges out of the dialogue between different arguments, that is, how dialogicality conditions political talk. In this way, I understand the parliamentary debate as a whole as the object of study.[2] The debate as a whole is composed of individual speeches that appear in certain sequence. The whole debate composed of sequentially ordered parts is best characterised as a text (see below).

In this study, I draw selectively from deliberative, discursive and conceptual historical studies. Deliberation implies that political talk takes place in a society and interacts with that society. In this way it aims to see talk at the intersection between micro and macro levels. The insight of discursive approaches stems from the fact that they compel a close reading of material, nurturing the appreciation of ambiguity in language. This combination allows the analysis to attune to the aesthetic nature of language in politics (Ankersmit 1996; Saward 2010), which is a necessary companion of any talk. Finally, from conceptual history I borrow the idea of parliamentary talk as a mode of politics. By "mode of politics", I mean parliamentary talk *as such*; not *qua* causal explanation of policies, not *qua* reflection of the positions of political parties, not *qua* its correspondence to a formal ideal of deliberation. Parliamentary talk is too often taken as a proxy of something else, and in the case it fails to indicate that something else—as in the case of sufficient degree of deliberation—it is dismissed as an unworthy object of study. The study of talk as such in politics does include in itself the kernel of *doing* politics. Hannah Arendt observed that "speech and action... are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men" and "with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world" (Arendt 1998, 176). Aristotle, too, argued that man is political precisely because he has the capacity of speech through which man is

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2.    In contrast, Palonen limits politicking to individual speech acts and argues that "politics-as-activity is never to be judged by its "results" alone, even if we count its unanticipated consequences." (2003, 177). The dialogical approach to language developed here does not consider speech acts to exist in isolation from each other and therefore the object of analysis cannot be the individual act of politicking, but must include also its results. This will be elaborated in Chapters 2 to 5.

able to distinguish "what is beneficial or harmful, and hence also what is just or unjust" (Aristotle 1998, 1253a14-15). Further, Aristotle argues that "it is community in these [what is beneficial or harmful... –JT] that makes a household and a city-state" (ibid., 1253a17-18). Parliamentary talk is both *talk* and *politics* at the same time: it establishes through law "community" in what is deemed beneficial and just.

Studying parliamentary *talk* requires a method that is suitable to actually occurring talk. Within political science, Hannah Pitkin's seminal study on representation (1967) has informed many later studies on actually occurring language. Similarly Jürgen Habermas' communicative ethics (1979; 1984) have laid the ground for later studies on deliberation. Both Pitkin and Habermas draw on the linguistic turn (Rorty 1997 [1967]) and especially on the theory of speech acts developed by John Austin (1962). The linguistic turn has also given rise to more methodologically focused attempts to comprehend concrete talk and overcome the problems of positivism in social sciences. For instance, Stephen Toulmin's work on empirical logic questions the reasonableness of formal logic, Quentin Skinner's use of the speech act in the study of history has introduced the dimension of context and time, and Norman Fairclough's development of critical discourse analysis has enabled the studies of ideological influence on language and of how language serves the ideological construction of social reality. These three lines of inquiry into language and politics are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

In this study, I intend to continue this pursuit of critical methods of social and political inquiry. In this pursuit, I rely on the continental thought on language and culture, as well as, conversation analysis as a concrete method of approaching linguistic interaction. Thinkers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Mikhail Bakhtin and Yuri Lotman shift the locus of meaning from the speaking subject (and his[3] intentions) to the relationship between the speaking and interpreting subjects. Much of the methods used to study actually occurring talk focus on finding out meanings in utterances. If meaning, however, is to be found in the relationship between speaking and interpreting subjects, we need methods to study interaction. Conversation analysis has a vocabulary that makes it possible to study the ways in which interlocutors react to each other, that is, how a statement always already is an answer to the preceding speaker and a question to the following speaker. These ideas are developed in Chapters 3 to 5. In spite of the systematic endeavours done during the linguistic turn, political sci-

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3.    In Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 7 I will use "he" to refer to unspecified third person singular pronoun; in Chapters 2, 4, 6 and 8 I will use "she". In translations from Polish and Slovak that use expressions that avoid specifying the gender of the third person I use expressions s/he or his/her.

ence still needs a better method of linguistic dialogue in order to understand the interaction between language and politics.

The overarching aim of this study, therefore, is to respond to the conditions provided by the nature of parliamentary talk as it is transcribed in the official records and elaborate an alternative approach to studying them. Methodologically the purpose is to expand on the techniques of text analysis applicable to political debate and in particular parliamentary debate.

As I will show in my reading of the material from parliamentary debates in Slovakia and Poland, parliamentary talk manifests a micro-dynamic of its own that should be taken into account methodologically. At the same time, parliamentary debate represents a direct function of the macro-dynamics of politics in general, which has to be accounted for as well. My task, therefore, is to find the connections between the micro and macro levels in the practice of text analysis in a manner that does justice to the temporality of culture. By temporality of culture I mean the traces of the past in the present culture that enable individually differentiated relations to culture. In the case of this study, this mainly manifests itself in the manner in which individual deputies use the past, and order and re-order its traces in order to engage in the debate.

In my analysis, I will pursue the questions of whether and how history gets involved in and woven into the parliamentary debate, and how the debate itself begins to interact with this history. Below, I will use the terms history, past, and tradition almost interchangeably emphasising the hermeneutical view according to which the past has to be made present in the present moment and turning away from the view of objective historical laws or vulgar ideas of historical determinism. I do not, however, endorse total relativism , i.e. the idea that just any interpretation of history is possible; my detailed analyses of the Slovakian and Polish debates show the limitations of such relativism.

This leads to the second and subsidiary aim, which is to disclose the political in the parliamentary talk. By political, I mean the mode of action in politics. My focus on parliamentary talk forces me to conceptualise politics quite narrowly as the activity that takes place in the parliament. This does not mean that politics is limited to the parliament (or state), nor that parliamentary talk is the only activity that falls under politicking (see p. 20). Parliamentary talk—institutionally—aims at introducing new laws, that is at creating new events in the polity. It is, therefore, inherently connected with the perception of time and needs to address the continuous flow of time and assert itself against the challenges that are generated by time. This means that parliamentary talk as politics is about change: introducing, delaying, hurrying, or preventing change. The political in parliamentary talk as politics refers to the way in which new events are created, to the political solution that the parliamentary debate produces. In prac-

tice, as we shall see, the political in parliamentary talk is the way in which a speech can act as a question and receive an answer from the following speech. In other words, the political discloses itself in the discrepancy, distance, between the speeches, which nevertheless (politically) come to function as a question and answer to each other. By the term political in talk, I am not referring to the political use of language (Muntigl 2002, 47) but to the situation as it unfolds.

In both Slovakia and Poland, the rules of parliamentary talk establish the manner in which new bills are introduced, debated and subjected to vote. These rules reflect the division of the parliament into supporters and opponents of the bill. The rules also privilege the opinions of parties over those of individual deputies by granting them more time and greater opportunity to talk. The organisation of the parliamentary talk thereby reflects the nature of politics as conflictual and the parliament as being capable of delivering a political solution to that conflict. Such a "political" solution reflects the prevalent political situation and whilst it may be rational and the "best" solution there will always remain a possibility that this solution will be contested by competing political ideas. The political in the parliamentary talk emerges, therefore, out of the interaction between the question and answer sequence that regulates the flow of the debate.

Even though many concrete decisions may be brokered outside the parliament, the plenum still functions as an important medium for political talk, and the primary medium for political talk open to public scrutiny, and it does allegedly represent the citizens. Parliamentary talk is the prime example of talk in contemporary politics and therefore it can reveal something new about talk in politics in a more general sense, be it in or outside the parliament.

The third aim, which is empirical, follows from the methodological steps taken above. The aim is to give a better understanding of two manifestly *political* debates, and to show how the institution of parliamentary democracy, and a contemporary bill put forward under its aegis, interacts with history, takes advantage of selective history, twists it, but ultimately loses itself in it. Much of this may sound like common knowledge: we are familiar with different studies on "collective memory" (Halbwachs) or "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm), which both underline the importance of the present (political conflict) in determining what is made out of the past and the degree to which tradition can be "invented" at will. The idea that the past to a significant extent provides us with a sense of meaning and community is also well-known in the field of political science (e.g. Taylor 1994). What we can add by studying parliamentary debate are the detailed mechanisms by which the past gets woven into the present-day political debate. I suggest that there is a third way to approach the past in the present, which stems from German hermeneutic

tradition (Gadamer), Russian linguistic theory (Bakhtin), and Russian cultural theory (Lotman) that each emphasises the tradition's role as a mediator *between* the past and the present. How this mediation precisely occurs in politics as epitomised by parliamentary debate is here the subject of the empirical chapters. That is, my aim in the empirical chapters is to disclose the dynamics of tradition in two different instances of politics.

The debates are chosen on considerations based on Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gadamer argues that understanding can only happen against tradition. He focuses primarily on literary interpretation and therefore the presence of the literary canon never became a problem for him. However, political debates are different from literature especially in that different political stances appear as different interpretative communities that possess different traditions whilst still facing a need to arrive at a conclusive, if temporary, resolution in the form of a law (Warnke 1999, 151-152). In politics, and especially in "newer" democracies like Slovakia and Poland,[4] it is worth focusing on two ideal types of relation between text and tradition. The debate about the Slovakian state language law has a long history of its own and the amendment in question is one in a series of many amendments to language legislation in Slovakia. There is, in other words, a clear tradition to which the debate belongs. This does not mean, however, that the Slovaks would share judgements of this tradition, but rather that the ideas around the state language law have been circulated in society even before the debate in 2009.

In contrast, the debate on gender parity in Poland in 2010 is more of a novelty. It is true that there is a strong feminist tradition in Poland, but the gender parity bill is in fact the first clearly feminist initiative that has made it to the second reading in the parliament. It has also raised unprecedented public attention something the other bills have failed to do. The bill emerged from outside the party agendas and was submitted to the parliament by a citizens' committee. The political parties did not have a clear opinion on the bill when the debate started, and the main government party was divided on the issue. There appears to be no obvious tradition to this bill and therefore it provides an interesting counter example to the Slovakian debate.

The differential relationship between the texts and traditions gives rise to different hermeneutical challenges. Gadamer's primary focus on liter-

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4.    Even if I here refer to Poland and Slovakia as "newer democracies", novel political issues should in no way be understood to be limited to countries in transition. The nature of politics is such that new, unexpected, issues pop up always and everywhere; they are, perhaps, more frequent in countries after large systemic transformations, but also the way in which post-1989 politics in Poland and Slovakia have been commonly discussed as a process of modernisation highlights the issue of certain political questions appearing as novel and other as dated.

ary classics of the western canon avoided the problem of interpreting something in its novelty, and therefore he could draw from the tradition that the distance of time between the text and the interpreter had generated. Dynamics of political debate do not always allow for a similar distance in time, and therefore the hermeneutic task of interpreting something *in its novelty* deserves a special focus.

The second crucial difference between the debates are the parliamentary rules that regulate talk. For Gadamer, interpretation assumes the form of a dialogue, the sequential progression from a question to an answer. In the Slovakian parliament, the regulations allow for a fairly open and unstructured debate, which provides many natural "slots" for spontaneous interaction. In the Polish parliament, in contrast, the rules provide for a clearly structured debate with little room for spontaneous interaction.

In sum, I have thought of the cases along these two lines: their relation to history and their concrete organisation of parliamentary talk.

## Need for a Method

A number of issues coalesce in the first aim of this study—to develop a method that fits the nature of parliamentary debate as dynamic interaction between the deputies as well as between that micro-level of interaction and the macro-level of culture. The first concerns the material, the second concerns the relationship between talk and politics, and the third the role of interpretation. At the end of this section, I will present concrete questions to show how I aim to address the aims I have set for this study.

The excerpt of Woźniak's speech comes from the parliamentary record or transcription. The primary purpose of parliamentary records is to keep a record of the supreme legislative body. Parliamentary records are peculiar in this respect. On the one hand, they present "a verbatim record of each session" as the Slovak parliamentary regulations declare (Art 41, paragraph 2, Rules of Procedure) or a "full record of the meeting" as in Poland (Art 176, paragraph 1, Regulamin Sejmu). On the other hand, they are both edited and verified, and in Poland they become "the only official record of the events" (Art 176, paragraph 1, Regulamin Sejmu). In Slovakia, "the verified Minutes of the Session shall be the authentic record of the session" (Art 41, paragraph 3, Rules of Procedure). The very formulations of "only" or "shall be" suggest that what is meant by "authentic" refers to the political purpose of the records—that of maintaining a political record of the events taking place in the parliament. This further suggests that what is at stake is not really a record of everything that has happened, but a record of the political reality of the parliamentary session. Both Slovak and Polish parliaments allow deputies to correct the

speeches (in Slovakia within 24 hours and in Poland within 5 hours of the closing of the meeting) and the stenographers also claim to edit the transcripts to improve grammar and stylistic clarity. The declaration that these records are authentic and official suggests that the stenographers write down what constitutes the political reality of the parliamentary talk.

This type of material is at the same time a depiction of events and the very reality it claims to depict. To take parliamentary transcripts as representations is therefore to miss out on half of the story. As in the case of any action, the way in which something is depicted also carries meaning and brings form and content together. Parliamentary records as material for an inquiry necessitate an appreciation of the *way* in which the talk in parliament flows from one speech to the next one. Only by doing this can we appreciate parliamentary talk as political action.

Parliamentary records, therefore, indiscriminately document what takes place in the parliamentary debate and therefore they mandate a method of close reading that with similar openness attunes to the nature of the material and rather than converting its findings into statements enables the material to reveal, to paraphrase Gadamer, the truth contained therein. Such material necessitates a method that is able to account for the interaction that ensues from the debate, and which is contained in the parliamentary records as the only "official", "verbatim" and "authentic" account of the events. Later, I will discuss why such material is best described as a "text" that does not represent but is (what it claims to represent).

The second issue concerns what is "talk" (or "debate") and by extension what is understood by "parliamentary talk" (or "parliamentary debate")? I will first clarify the contours of "talking" in politics and then briefly address what I understand by "politics", and then what implications these raise to the investigation of such talk.

As Woźniak's speech already discloses, the reality of parliamentary talk is not individual speeches delivered in total obliviousness of other people being present. On the contrary, it seems that parliamentary talk, like any talk, is directed to someone and takes place in mutually affecting interaction. The empirical chapters will provide ample evidence of this.

Parliamentary records do not record ideas or discourses. They record talk as it occurs in a confined medium. By talk, I mean understandable sound produced by human beings. In distinction to conversation, argument, dialogue or debate, talk does not come with qualifying adjectives: it does not stipulate a telos for interaction nor its mode. The material must reveal whether parliamentary talk is argumentative or rational. (I will, therefore, provide empirical evidence of its interactive nature.)

In this study, I proceed from the premise that parliamentary talk, *as such*, is an instance of the political in its ability to create political events

as the talk progresses (Palonen 2003; 2012, 32ff; Ihalainen and Palonen 2009). Indeed, in its development in a concrete situation of parliamentary debate, talk progresses according to certain regularities: questions invite responses, provocations reactions and so on. Different genres of talk show different regularities. A quarrel can be recognised from the way it produces animosity just as a chit-chat produces (superficial) friendliness. Such modes are regular enough to be recognised by the participants and acted upon accordingly. Parliamentary talk constitutes a special variety of talk. First of all, it is strictly regulated by the parliamentary code. Second, in contrast to ordinary talk, which has an almost unlimited ability to digress parliamentary talk is regulated for the purpose of concentrating it on a certain topic. Third, from an institutional perspective parliamentary talk is regulated for the purpose of ensuring equal representation for different voices. Finally, parliamentary talk—and parliament—aims at delivering a political solution to conflict. Formally the solution is achieved through a vote, but before the voting takes place, the debate itself has provided the opportunity to change the content of the bill, influence the opinions of the deputies, and raise public awareness about the issue. In this sense, parliamentary talk has a productive force of its own: it is more complex than, and even antithetical, to idea of direct democracy, according to which a decision is taken by translating the voters' opinion into a number of votes. Parliamentary debate is capable of effecting qualitative changes both in the bill and in the polis.

In sum, parliamentary debate seeks to produce a political solution to conflicts by acknowledging that conflict is in principle inherent in society and even maintaining it in the debate between different parliamentary groups. Parliamentary talk and its connection to the possibility of passing a bill in the final voting subjugates parliamentary politics to contingency where decisions *are* made. Since the parliament is *the* representative organ in contemporary democracies, what happens in parliamentary talk becomes a truly political issue.

At this stage, I propose a working definition of political talk as it is used in parliamentary debate based on i) its origin in conflict, ii) its ability to maintain the conflict between opposing arguments by containing it in talk, iii) its ability to yield a political solution in a conflict between mutually opposed positions, and iv) its principles of regulation.

As the working definition above shows, I abstain from offering a normative definition of parliamentary talk. The empirical material of my research, collected from parliamentary transcriptions representing the "official" and "authentic" record of the parliamentary debate that document the process of actual debate in its every detail, as well as my specific approach to this material based on the principles of close reading, makes necessary a non-normative definition of parliamentary talk.

Moreover, my working definition does not limit political talk to official representative institutions. The main difference between parliamentary talk and political talk in general is to be found in their respective principles of regulation. In other words, any political talk as it is practiced in today's society—in occupy Wall St., on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev, in local deliberations—share the same four principles. Obviously, the degree of regulation varies.

By "politics", and "talk in politics" in the context of parliamentary debate I refer to talk that is geared toward legislative work. It produces policies that provide a political solution to a societal conflict. Parliamentary debate as it embodies the conflict between different opinions must make decisions that are political rather than "administrative", "rational" or "absolute", i.e. these decisions always benefit one side of the conflict over the other, and the possibility that their justness and legitimacy is questions is always there. When talking about decision-making I do not mean that politics is limited to in certain institutions that serve that purpose nor to the persons involved, or to the conditions under which certain decisions are made. Therefore it is not enough to approach talk in politics in terms of "Who Gets What, When, How" as the title of Harold Lasswell's book of 1936 suggests. Power to induce desirable effects as well as personal traits and values can play a role in how debates evolve. Nor can decision-making be reduced to the outcome of impersonal third-face of power or direct reflection of a more fundamental economic base as some Marxist analysts would suggest. I want to emphasise that by politics as decision-making I mean politics as meaningful human action, which is in this case inscribed in parliamentary records (and consequently available for *ex post facto* scrutiny in all its complexity and plurality). In this sense, politics as decision-making here refers to the parliamentary debate as such, not to the individual making up his mind.

There are two levels of "politics" in decision-making as described above: the individuals taking part in the debate, i.e. the way they engage in politics (and rhetoric), and the debate as such of which a historical ("authentic" and "official") record is preserved. By "talking politics" I refer to talk that aims at striking a preferential decision, of taking sides, and refuting opposing claims. Political talk is also distinct from "economic" or "administrative" talk in the sense that it is aware of and exhibits its conflictual nature and does not pretend otherwise. As we will see below, and in more detail in the empirical studies, the debate on the Slovak state language law and on gender parity in Poland are primary examples of politics, as concerning the identity and the prevailing public order of the polis. At the same time, they are quintessentially contemporary political battles in Europe, which each in their respective way debate the polis' belonging to its own past and contemporary (European) systems of values.

The third issue concerns the methodological challenge that the above specifications give rise to. Although political talk is surely a rhetorical performance, its real course cannot be studied as a self-authored management of the situation through language. Such a view would limit talk to individual intention, leaving aside the concrete instance of talk in which at least two different speeches meet each other. Such a view, further, presupposes that the deputies are fully conscious of (all aspects of) their actions and *control* their effects. The move from the intentions of the actors to the actual, observed unfolding of the debate grounds the dialogic approaches to language that I will discuss in this book.[5]

Most existing text analytical methods focus either on the (ideal) content of talk or the individual intentions that inform the talk and attempt to answer questions like "What is the argument here?" or "Why did he say that?" or "Who really is this politician?" I suggest different types of questions like "What happens in the political debate?", or "How did we get here?", or "What does this utterance mean to the participants, just now, right here, in this debate?" probing the interaction between utterances and relationship between the individual utterance and the whole debate.

This requires a method of interpretation that does not only attempt to elucidate the utterance *in its context* but assess *its relation to* the context and to *evolving* contexts. Interpretation is not alien to political science (e.g. Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (eds.) 2006; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2012, 46-47), but it is most often understood as an epistemological problem of overcoming the distance between the researcher and his material (e.g. Winch 1964, 307). This is a real problem, but it suppresses a more acute issue around interpretation, which is that, especially in the case of talk, our material is itself interpretations: the interlocutors engage in constant interpretation of each others' utterances and respond accordingly. This indeterminacy should be taken into account by the method.[6] Within continental thought on language we find two important contributions towards this end. First, Gadamer, drawing from phenomenology, has re-

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5.   Terms "dialogic", "dialogism", "dialogical" and "dialogicality" can be confusing. I use the adjective "dialogic" to refer to Bakhtin's theory of language and "dialogism" as the respective noun. Adjective "dialogical" and noun "dialogicality" refer primarily to empirical concretisations of Bakhtin's theory and its developments, but can also occur in connection to other thinkers.

6.   Giddens' discussed this point but drew slightly different conclusions. In *The Constitution of Society* (1984), he argues that since human beings engage in interpretative work—and one fundamental concern of social science is actors' self-understanding—the categories produced by social scientists can feed back to society and affect the self-understandings the "objects" produce. He calls this "double hermeneutic" (1984, 16). For him, the actors' possibility to engage in interpretation means that social sciences should be cautions of their results and impact on society. The conclusion I draw, however, is that the methods of text analysis should appreciate the existing indeterminacy rather than attempting to clear it away. My aim is to develop this insight in the field of textual analysis.

placed the production of meaning from the speaking person, or from the book, to the act of interpretation, and Roland Barthes has radicalised the notion of text as an intertextual and semiotic field that must be demonstrated through interpretation. Most radical, however, was Russian thinker and literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, who saw the principle of dialogism in the very essence of language. Following Bakhtin, Russian cultural semiotician Yuri Lotman in his turn elaborates the implications of dialogicality at the level of culture. Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman are discussed in Chapter 4.

In other words, we need a hermeneutics that does not aim at revealing (stable) meanings, but focuses on the *process* of interpretation. It is Gadamer who brought about the shift in focus within hermeneutics from epistemological to ontological questions and made it clear that any text—in order to be meaningful at all—must first be interpreted. The process of interpretation transforms graphemes inked on paper into a text; graphemes that are not interpreted cannot be considered texts in this view. Gadamer emphasised the ontological character of hermeneutics, because he saw the being of the text in the truth it could reveal. But he also makes a universal claim about hermeneutics, namely that all encounters with the world are linguistic in nature. The text analysis methods referred to above are cognisant of epistemological interpretation, but they seem to be much less aware of or serious about the ontological and universal dimension of hermeneutics that affects the data.

The epistemological direction of hermeneutics aims at ascertaining the validity of interpretation by reducing perceptible ambiguity. One common solution to limit the ambiguity is to turn to the context of the text. For instance, Skinner argues that it is possible to assess the intention of a speech act once we obtain knowledge of how people normally talked at a given time. Against this "standard", the intention of a specific utterance can be assessed. Fairclough, similarly, argues that the prevalent relations of power can sort out ambiguities of meaning. In both cases, an external context is evoked to fix the meaning of the text. Against these practices of trying to fix meanings, I suggest something very simple here: the same problems that a researcher struggles when interpreting material are faced constantly by any actor in his engagement with the social world. When raising the question of what is taking place, we must therefore take into account this indeterminacy and ambiguity *of* the actions themselves. Focus on the individual actor alone, his illocutions or "dominant" discourses elude the traces of the experienced uncertainty and will render the material far more determinate than it is in reality.

This distinction can be seen more broadly in different hermeneutic theories. On the one hand, the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and its contemporary representatives, Emilio Betti, E. D. Hirsch, and

within political science, for instance, Mark Bevir (1999) distinguishes between the subjective meaning-conferring act and the interpretation of objectively existing fact. They hold that it is possible and meaningful for hermeneutics to identify objective criteria for distinguishing between right and wrong interpretations and they find the objective criteria for doing so in the intentions the speaker confers on his utterance. In the same manner, they are able to distinguish between the "original" meaning conferred by the intention and the subsequent interpreter's subjectively felt significance of the text. This reasoning pays the necessary lip service to the existence of multiple interpretations, but considers it imperative that hermeneutics re-establish the original meaning intended by the author.

Gadamer, in contrast, argues that it is not only impossible to re-establish the author's intentions, but also that this is not the task of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics should explicate the universal conditions under which interpretation happens. For Gadamer, the *truth* of the text resides only in the act of interpretation, which is always interpretation *as* something, thus annulling the distinction between (original) meaning and subsequent subjective significance. Interpretation *as* something essentially collapses these into one *truth* of the text, which is temporally sanctioned.

The tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey with its quest for valid and testable knowledge can deliver to most inquiries directed to parliamentary talk: what is said?, why is it said?, what is the intention behind the said? The reason I have decided to follow Gadamer instead—and still think of a methodological study—is that Gadamer's universal hermeneutics takes the interpretation present in our data seriously. By acknowledging the universality of hermeneutics as opposed to its relevance for epistemology we can appreciate the ongoing uncertainty that is inscribed in language in the parliamentary talk. This enables a new array of questions that concern the debate as a whole and the interaction between the individual speech and the debate as a whole. The recognition of inherent uncertainty that penetrates parliamentary debate, not only for us, but to those engaged in it, is necessary before hermeneutics can pursue questions like what happened there and then?, and how and why did it happened as it did?

Gadamer further argued that any understanding must take place against tradition, against our prior knowledge of the political, social and cultural context. In the case of a political debate the nature of any tradition more often than not appears to be one of the main targets of contest and interpretation itself. Translating Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics to politics, one is therefore faced with the question of what traditions and how those traditions enable understanding in politics.Understanding for Gadamer is always understanding as something and it includes the aspect

of application, i.e. understanding in order to be true understanding must be applied in the present (Bernstein 1983, 38).[7]

I treat political debate as institutionally regulated talk in which utterances occur in a certain sequence. Talk is spoken language but it is no more immediately present to listeners than a written language is to a reader: both spoken and written language is subject to interpretation. Parliamentary talk as a process is composed of sequences of utterances that each convey an interpretation of the previous utterance (*as* something) and lay the grounds for the coming utterance. This is the core of my approach to parliamentary talk as materialisation of the social, cultural and political conditions of politics. The claim that parliamentary talk is about the utterance-interpretation interaction is seminal for the argument developed in this study for it means that talk cannot be just an exchange of ideas (or propositions) and their logical relations to each other because these "ideas"—whatever they are—cannot precede the moment of interpretation. Why this is so, is the topic of Chapter 4.

The concrete methodological question this book tackles is how such talk, parliamentary debate, that proceeds from an utterance through interpretation to another utterance, can be studied? There are three methodological problems on the way. The first is to take seriously interaction between participants. The second follows once we have accepted the centrality of interaction and it concerns the shift from understanding as a passive reception to understanding as an active contribution to talk and how that can be studied. The third problem concerns the linkages this micro-level of talk establishes with the macro-level of politics, society and culture.

The three challenges of studying talk—treating understanding as active and constitutive activity, accounting for the interaction between interlocutors, and relating the analysis of micro-scale dynamics with macro level of politics, society and culture—coincide with the three central elements of this book. Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics underpins this inquiry, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of language sheds light upon the effects of interaction on conversation, and Yuri Lotman's cultural semiotics provides a way to approach the micro-macro connections that enter the life of the debate and the text. This theoretical framework is then translated into a systematic method for conversation analysis, which focuses on interaction as the unit of analysis.

My second and subsidiary aim in this study is to disclose the political in the parliamentary talk. Above I approached the political in terms of the conflict and discrepancy between the question and answer that is em-

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7.   In earlier traditions of hermeneutics, understanding referred to the cognitive deciphering of text, interpretation to its explication and application to a practical situation.

bedded in the organisation of parliamentary debate between the government and the opposition. In my concrete analysis of the debates, I will focus on the details of interaction between speeches in the parliament. As I have argued above, and as I will show in the empirical studies, individual speeches do interact and they form a sequential chain in which the former grounds the latter and the latter responds to the former. In this context, I will more specifically uncover the ways in which this sequentiality is produced in the practice of parliamentary talk and the effects distance between question and answer, between the former and the latter interlocution, has on the course of the debate.

My third aim is more directly concerned with the empirical findings, and focuses on the ways in which history is used in the debate. I will address this aim by posing two questions. It has already been argued that understanding takes place against certain tradition. I ask in what ways parliamentary talk here understood as a text relates to and accumulates tradition. This question proceeds from the conviction that—as Gadamer puts it—texts reveal themselves in interpretation. Therefore the legitimate starting point is not the individual and his tradition, not even the individual's claim that a certain text belong to this or that tradition, but the tradition or traditions to which the text *reveals* its belonging in the course of the debate.

The second question concerns the effects such accumulated history has on the text itself and on the debate. Political debate, we will soon see, is much about contesting different traditions and therefore the ways in which the text reveals its belonging to different traditions is crucial to understanding the politics that goes on in the debate. I therefore inquire into the effects of the interaction of different traditions in the course of the debate. Different traditions do not only present different values and hierarchies, they also present different temporal structures of the past. My interest in tradition and its connection to the methodological quest for bringing the micro-dynamics of talk and the macro-dynamics of culture together includes the broader issue of how the past's presence in the present relates to and affects different temporal structurations of Slovakia's and Poland's history as they are discussed in the respective parliaments.

If condensed into one sentence, the argument that I attempt to defend is: Text analysis should begin with the acceptance of the empirical reality of inherent polysemy of any talk and follow the life and growth of this polysemy in the text, instead of attempting to filter it away in order to arrive at one, correct, definite interpretation. Analysis that follows the increasing polyphony of texts can and does capture the dynamics that characterise politics.

# Text as the Object of Study

I have above introduced the continental perspective on interpretation. This has certain implications to what we understand by the concept text to which I will now turn. In this view, as well as in Russian linguistic and cultural theory, text is a semiotic composition.

Above, I have implied that parliamentary talk could be treated as a text. I have sought inspiration to the study of interpretation from literary theory. Good literature presents a fragment of life to the reader. Because of its close depiction of everyday events and actions, as well as its natural depiction of the characters, the realist novel enables the reader to identify with the world and characters within in. Dostoyevsky's realist novels inspired Bakhtin's studies on dialogicality of language. Interpretation in literary theory concerns the relationship between the reader and the description of life contained in the novel.

There are some striking similarities between the novel and the parliamentary records in this respect. In both cases, the present situation of action makes it possible to understand what happened in the past and what is possible for the future. This locates the main tension to the process(es) of *becoming* (Bakhtin 1981, 5). (The course of the parliamentary debate is unknown and always contains a moment of surprise and deferral.) Both are *polyphonic* meaning that they are composed of different but co-existing languages by which Bakhtin means discernible ways of talking varying from territorial dialects to professional jargon (ibid. 11-12). (It is easy to distinguish supporters of different ideologies as *agents* because of their way of argumentation and choice of words, rather than as *tokens* of those ideologies.) Thirdly, both the novel and parliamentary debate are best described as *heteroglossic* texts in which the wholeness of the text (the novel, the debate) is brought about by the differences and conflicts contained within it (ibid. 292). (In the concrete instance of a parliamentary debate, this is manifest in the fact that the debate rarely if ever pursue a single path, but it is more likely torn between different aims pursued by different participants; in the fact that the deputies are forced to take into account each other and react; and, lastly, in the fact that the words available to the deputies are "loaded" and care must be taken to minimise any unwanted interpretations.) Parliamentary debate, just like the novel, is a product of intersecting voices, and the way in which different arguments follow each other, ground and respond to one another, makes it clear that interpretation cannot be merely an epistemological problem of extracting the truth but must be an ontological condition of meaningful being.

Social science since Schütz and especially since the publication of Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* (1967) has been highly aware of the ubiquity of interpretation, particularly in everyday life, but the common methods of text analysis have rather confidently re-

duced social construction of reality to the production of certain talk as if "subjective experience" (ibid., 34) equals speaking only. Likewise, the flow of the parliamentary debate is the outcome of the interaction between speaking and interpreting, between an utterance and a response.

Literary scholarship and semiotics have highlighted the productive role of interpretation. Roland Barthes' essay "Death of the Author" (1967) attacks the branch of literary criticism that seeks certainty by turning to the author of the text as an authoritative source that can impose a limit on the text, "furnish it with a final signified, to close writing" (Barthes 1977, 147). The death of the author simultaneously marks the birth of the reader as an active participant in the process of literary creation. In his essay "From Work to Text", Barthes introduces the concept of Text as a field that exists only through its constant demonstration. The Text is an intertextual artefact that acquires its being only if engaged with (ibid., 157). A Work, in contrast, is the literary opus confined by its covers and stored on the bookshelf.

These two ideas, that interpretation is a productive of meanings and that the unit of analysis is not the book, but the way in which the reader engages with the intertextual field of the Text translates into the reality of interactive talk. Talk is an interplay of connected utterances, questions followed by answers, arguments followed by refutations and so on. Anyone who has tried to transcribe real conversation is taken aback by the provisionality of the utterances: how can such faltering talk even be understood? But the talk still seems to flow on without problems. This is the role of active productive understanding of the interlocutor. The words of a spoken utterance do not emerge to us as an unambiguous work composed by the speaker, but as a text that has to be actively reconstructed and contextualised. This reconstruction is possible because every turn introduces new aspects of the text. Utterances detached from the sequential context are like Barthes' "Works", stuck on the bookshelf unable to indicate how the reader engages with them or how they engage with other literary works; utterances in their sequence are like the "Text" disclosing the action they stimulate. Seen from this perspective, the task of analysing talk as "Text" is not the conventional one of eliciting its meaning bound by the capital letter and the final dot of the sentence, but rather to elaborate and celebrate its growing polyphony as the talk develops through subsequent interpretations.

In the social sciences as well, human action has been called a text and analysed as such. This is true of theorists as varied as Paul Ricoeur (1981 [1971]) as Yuri Lotman among other members of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics. During the 1970s and 1980s, Lotman—together with his colleagues—shifted his focus from literary and poetic language to the study of everyday behaviour in Russian history. These studies are collec-

ted for instance in the English volumes of *The Semiotics of Russian Culture* (1984) and *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History* (1985). In these studies, social behaviour is perceived as a product of interaction between the individual conduct and its social interpretation, and of "the complex interweaving of the regular and the accidental" (Lotman 1984, 72). In one case study, Lotman focuses on the everyday *behaviour* of the Decembrists,[8] which he considers to be "distinct... from anything known to earlier times" (ibid., 75). It is this distinct "behaviour" *in* its relation to prevalent social norms and conditions that materialises in Lotman's study as a text of the Decembrist everyday behaviour. In the similar fashion, contemporary parliamentary debate that begins with the introduction of a bill and proceeds sequentially from one argument to another *produces* a (historical) record that can be studied as a text in which each individual interlocution functions in relation to the preceding utterance(s) and grounds the coming utterance(s) as Decembrist behaviour elicits its social meaning from its relation to other possible courses of action.

In a parliamentary debate, speeches function independently of their authors' intentions. They are subject to interpretation and reaction that may be informed but is not sanctioned by the political, social or cultural context in which the text first emerged, and the speeches, even if they are addressed to someone, cannot be understood *solely* in this relation.

Action thought in terms of a text must first be interpreted. It is obvious that actions are informed by authorial intention, but this intention comes to appear less important when we realise that the meaning of social action such as parliamentary speech resides in its reception rather than in its articulation. The perception of the parliamentary debate as a text enables the analysis to focus on relationships between the individual speeches as well as their relationship to the debate as a whole. If interpretation is truly productive of meaning, the analysis of parliamentary debate cannot rely on what is said and argued, but must focus on how something is responded to for it is in the response that we can see the *application* of previous understanding. These ideas are developed further in Chapter 4 where I will discuss Gadamer's hermeneutics in more detail.

I have termed this *semiotics of politics* because the processes of interpretation and debate, I shall argue, do not proceed from the individual actors alone, but primarily from the constantly expanding text of the debate, i.e. from the way in which individual utterances produced in the de-

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8.    Decembrists refers to the people who took part or supported the 1825 uprising in Russia against the Tsar Nicholas I. The uprising was led by a group of army officers and it promoted liberal ideas. Many intellectuals took part in the clandestine Decembrist societies before and after the uprising and Decembrist continued their organised activities in exile in Siberia.

bate come to the debate, occupy their sequential position and how they are reacted to by coming utterances. Therefore the focus is on the semiotics of the text, the linguistic (or semiotic) potential invested in the text that enables the parliamentary debate to take its shape.

## Structure of the Book and the Empirical Studies

This book has the primary aim of developing a new method for textual interpretation, which is suitable for the study of political talk. Chapter 2 sets the stage for this methodological approach. I will first discuss three different text analysis methods—empirical logic and the analysis of arguments, the use of speech acts in the analysis of texts, and critical discourse analysis—apply them on the material from the Slovakian parliamentary debate, and indicate how they run into self-inflicted problems that derive from empirically impossible assumptions and demands grounded in their monologic understanding of language. These can be summed up under three headings. First, meaning is to be found in the utterance; second the task of interpretation is to find out exactly what this meaning is; and third it is possible and necessary to define the external context in which a certain utterance appears and use this external context to sort out any ambiguity in the utterance. These three points will be discussed through Chapters 3 to 5.

Chapter 3 discusses the problems associated with the conviction that there is an objective, external context to talk and, secondly, that this context can in fact be meaningfully identified. I will suggest that such a "container view" of context should be replaced by a text-immanent approach to context. Chapter 4 comprises the theoretical core of the book and it introduces three "dialogicalities", those of understanding (Gadamer), language (Bakhtin) and culture (Lotman). This chapter provides the theoretical ground for the empirical method that is developed in Chapter 5, which focuses on the possibilities of analysing talk as interaction rather than exchange of utterances. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 should be seen as closely tied together, as the method of conversation analysis acquires a wholly new dimension in the light of the theory. Mainstream conversation analysis focuses on conversation as a social action that is composed of different "doings". It is customary for conversation analysts to discuss aspects like "doing questions" or "doing denials" (see Stokoe and Edwards 2007), in other words, inquiring into the "ethnomethods" of the participants. The focus on the observed action *done* in conversation has neglected the question of meaning or meaning generation that takes place in conversation. The theoretical context that I suggest expands the possibilities of conversation analysis to reach beyond the ethnomethods

of the participants and enables us to study if not what meaning is then meaning generation as it happens in conversation.

Chapters 6 and 7 are empirical and as comprehensive as possible given the consideration for space. Both chapters open with a description of the parliamentary rules of talk and then proceed via a short summary of the debate to scrutinise the way the talk proceeds from one speech to another. In doing so, I pay special attention to the sequential structuring of turns and instances of repair and code-switching. Sequential structuring of talk, repair and code-switching are conversational ethnomethods that produce conversational continuity, the flow from a question to an answer. The conclusions at the end the case studies address the connections that exist between micro-level talk and macro-level of culture and relate the findings to other related research.

These chapters serve a very specific purpose in the context of this book. They do not aim at explanation as such (why the law was passed by the parliament?), but at providing deeper understanding of the debates and politics that surround the debate—politics of nationalism and minority accommodation and politics of gender respectively. At the same time, they demonstrate the potential of the method developed here and therefore have a somewhat particular structure. In order to demonstrate the method and in order to remain open, I have abstained from discussing previous research on the relevant political issues in the beginning of the chapters. Instead, I discuss relevant previous research once it is proven relevant to the observations elicited by the analysis of the parliamentary debate. This means that the analysis is joined by excursions into research literature. This is so because conversation analysis aims at letting the material reveal itself with as little theoretical intervention as possible.

The case studies are inspired by Bent Flyvbjerg's book Rationality and Power (1998). This work was received with mixed feelings by the reviewers (e.g. Bengtsson 1999, Forester 2001), but there appeared to be unanimity that the empirical case study reveals the difficulty (if not impossibility) of distinguishing between objective principles like rationality and the practical disclosure of rationalisation—the dressing of the exercise of power under the veil of rationality. Flyvbjerg's study reveals this distortion in the transition from rationality to rationalisation and compels one to read it not as a case of something else, not as referring to something else, but as a specimen of rationality and power itself. A close study can be worthwhile in itself without being a case of some general class.

Moreover, Flyvbjerg shows how a case study of a process can be constructed on the basis of the text rather than the individual actors. In my reading of Flyvbjerg, the main "actor" is the Aalborg Plan, and the individuals who come to influence the Plan do so only through what I discuss below as the Bakhtinian dialogue, not as instrumental actors. In

Flyvbjerg's study, the text of the Aalborg Plan ties together the actors into a single narrative, or tragedy of the Aalborg Plan as described by Bengtsson (1999, 204).

Flyvbjerg's case study generates what Sheldon Wolin termed political wisdom (Wolin 1969, 1070). Political wisdom is a form of knowledge that

> is mindful of logic, but more so of the incoherence and contradictoriness of experience... Political life does not yield its significance to terse hypotheses, but is elusive and hence meaningful statements about it often have to be allusive and intimative. Context becomes supremely important, for actions and events occur in no other setting. (Wolin 1969, 1070)

This is also my purpose in analysing my two debates: to contextualise and capture the incoherence and contradictoriness of the experience that permeates political talk.

Thus, I do not see the empirical studies as cases of language politics or gender politics, but rather they are specimens, demonstrations of political debate as such, segments of the political reality of the moment in two countries that is in no way confined to the boundaries of the Plenum or even to political parties (cf. Alasuutari 1995, 48, 63). Parliamentary talk materialises the social, cultural and political conditions in which politics take place, and the parliamentary transcripts present a slice of political and cultural reality, transcribed, archived, public, and stored in electronic databases that should be studied far more than has been done so far—and above all, studied for the purpose of gaining understanding of the political conditions of the moment.

The last chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn from the theoretical and methodological discussions. In this discussion, I will also introduce the concept "imperfect hermeneutics" and assess its usefulness in the study of political language.


## Contributions

Much of this work revolves around methodological issues, and yet I have been silent about what I understand by method. By methodology, I understand the meta-discussion of how methods, understood as concrete tools, are connected to theory. Methodology answers questions such as what is the interview material good for; a method answers questions such as how to make an interview. Methodologically I will argue that interaction and participants' self-understanding is essential to the study of political talk. As for methods, I will apply some aspects of conversation analysis.

An important source of inspiration for my study has been Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1989 [1960]), which explicitly contrasts truth and method. His argument is that truth does not disclose itself to mechanical procedure. I, however, understand "method" as referring to some systematic procedures that can help maintain a distance between the analysis and the material without preventing true discovery. Conversation analysis as a method, on the one hand, has aimed at producing positivist, cumulative knowledge, and metaphors such as "machinery" has been used to describe its approach to talk. On the other hand, it is deeply embedded in the individual context attempting only to explain what happens in it, and not to construct any general models of conversation. Conversation analysis also has its own theory of interaction, according to which interaction is something fundamental to human beings and human society, perhaps downplaying other factors such as brute force. As a method, I treat conversation analysis as a companion to hermeneutics and conceive it as a kind of heuristics that enables a systematic but far from sterile approach to social interaction. Furthermore, its terminology enables to maintain a distance to the material. Above all, I do not treat conversation analysis as a method that *produces* or *ascertains* the truth; it is rather a way to structure the hermeneutic circle.

This book's primary contribution concerns our understanding of parliamentary debate, which, to quote Wolin, does not "yield its significance to terse hypotheses". Parliamentary debate as it emerges in the close readings of two contemporary debates indicates first its inevitable, but differentiated, connection to history. But there is more than just a mere connection: it also becomes clear that parliamentary debate is in fact more *about* than *reflecting* this connection. The direct consequence is that parliamentary debates, even if nominally concerned with, for instance, a policy on state language, are in fact debates about the relevance and implications of state language to a number of unforeseen other aspects of political reality. In other words, a vote approving a state language policy in Slovakia, one does not only approve a draft law, but a whole political world view. Similarly, parliamentary speeches cannot be conceived of in terms of propositional content only, but are always relational and subject to interpretation necessitating an analysis that focuses on the pair utterance-interpretation rather than on the utterance only.

This leads to the second main contribution, which concerns language and methods to analyse it. Language has become important to political studies, and much theoretical discussion is carried out on the subject, but these insights have not translated into useful methods. I see here three interrelated aspects. The distinction between monologic and dialogic understanding of language developed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provides a new way to engage in critical reflection over *any* text analytical endeavour

and develops text analytical methods in general in a more inclusive direction. The notion of text as the object of analysis, on the one hand, provides both a critique of too narrow focuses on language that study individual concepts, sentence or utterances and, on the other, draws attention to the *inherent* "intertextuality", or better, dialogicality of language as such. Last, the concrete application of conversation analysis in the study of meaning generation renders the method more interesting to political science and radically expands the applicability of conversation analysis as a study of talk in interaction by including the macro-level dimension.

This contribution can be of great interest in the field of conversation analysis, which is often perceived as a counter-position to discourse analysis. The way this book applies conversation analysis remains open to discourses and their effects on conversation, but it denies their determining or hegemonic tenets. Conversation analysis has long been seen as an approach or just a method without stronger theoretical underpinnings. In recent years different theories of language have been connected to conversation analysis. Linell (2005) perceives his work on dialogisism as parallel to developments in conversation analysis; Holt has formed some connections between conversation analysis and Bakhtin's theory of language (2003), and Etelämäki et al. (2009) develop connections between cognitive theories of language and conversation analysis. My take builds on Bakhtin, but supplements Bakhtin by placing strong emphasis on hermeneutics and also cultural semiotics, which together make it possible to reconsider the micro-macro connections that reify in talk-in-interaction.

The theoretical discussion on Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman contributes to a new way of thinking about hermeneutics. Habermas criticised Gadamer's hermeneutics for being uncritical towards the oppressive aspects of tradition; Paul Ricoeur developed from the dialogue between Gadamer and Habermas a notion of critical hermeneutics. With the help of Bakhtin and Lotman, Gadamer's hermeneutical circle can also be developed into what I have termed "imperfect hermeneutics"—hermeneutics marked by discontinuity of the tradition that mediates the text to the interpreter.

The usefulness of any method is testified only by the insights it generates. This book includes two detailed studies of parliamentary debate, one from Slovakia and another from Poland. My study of interaction in the parliament over these cases show how the dynamics of the debate takes over, or "hijacks", the parliamentarians conducting the debate. The metaphors of hijack and conduct capture the shift in focus: from the competent actor who produces parliamentary speeches the focus shifts to the debate as the actor who takes over the dynamics, and lets the parliamentarians "conduct" or "direct" the talk without remaining in control of the

composition. The way in which this happens bears curious resemblance both to the way in which tradition comes to mediate between the text and its interpreter and to the formal manner in which a parliamentary debate is organised. The studies thus reveal two different dynamics of debate, which have not been discussed before. In terms of the "substance" of the debate, we gain insights into the ways in which politics, society and culture interfere with the development of the topic of the debate, and instead of witnessing one "object" of talk, we witness constantly evolving objects of talk. The dynamics between different objects of talk, the ways in which the transition from one object to another took place indicate the relations these concepts occupy in the respective fields on politics; it shows the relationship between integration and assimilation in the Slovakian language politics as well as between gender and political agency in the Polish electoral politics. The other dynamics concerns the linkages between the formal organisation of talk and its effects upon the evolution of the debate.

Lastly, this thesis contributes to qualitative analyses of political debates, especially in the field of gender politics in Poland and language politics in Slovakia, by providing detailed analyses of two recent parliamentary debates. In relation to a broader field of research on parliamentary talk, this thesis provides a new emphasis on the internal dynamics of the debate as well as ways how to approach it systematically.

Arnold Schoenberg once argued that "Der Mittelweg ist der einzige Weg, der nicht nach Rom führt".[9] This is most likely just his witticism against the more common phrase according to which all roads lead to Rome, but I think it contains a kernel of deeper thought. Cumulative view on science—often for good reasons—make scholars prefer to improve existing theories rather than try something new. Youthful declarations about the nature of things are rarely welcome in scholarship. My argument, however, is that the methods of text analysis in political science need a radical shift in perspective, away from the preoccupation with the production of speech and towards its interpretation. After this shift has been internalised, rapprochement can be pursued again, for there clearly is room for that too.

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9.  The middle road is the only road that does not lead to Rome.

# Chapter 2: Linguistic Turn and Beyond in Politics

The challenge of text analysis in political science is closely connected with the prevailing understanding of language, and underlying that, what politics is or should be. This chapter will critically review three seminal methods of text analysis and show how their understanding of language largely is based on what in linguistics is known as monologism, or a monologic understanding of language. I will show this in relation to the hermeneutic task that each method faces. The hermeneutic task can be summarised as the need to account for the ways in which the actors' as well as the researcher's prior knowledge interacts with the object of interpretation.

In Chapter 1, I outlined four different sets of questions addressed to parliamentary talk, those informed by rational choice, deliberative theory, discursive-linguistic studies and finally conceptual history. I will now turn to a discussion of the concrete qualitative text analytical *methods* that have been applied within and across the different approaches to parliamentary talk. I have chosen to discuss three methods in particular. Each method has its understanding of what parliamentary talk is.

Discursive-linguistic studies approach parliamentary talk primarily as a *linguistic (discursive) material* from which either linguistic or socio-linguistic findings can be elicited. Good examples include Bayley (ed.) *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Parliamentary Discourse* (2004). Illustrative of this type of research is Ilie's article on insults and unparliamentary practices in the British and Swedish parliaments (2004, 45-86), which concludes that unparliamentary practices are "instances of institutionally ritualised confrontational interaction" (ibid., 81). In recent years linguistically oriented studies have begun to make closer connections between linguistic practices and the political perspectives on parliamentary talk. This is especially the case in Ilie (ed.) *European Parliaments under Scrutiny* (2010). The overall aim, however, is to contribute to linguistic research and therefore I have not included an example from this group in my discussion below.

The second methodological approach seeks inspiration to the study of parliamentary debate as a *case of something else* from the meaning and content of the utterances. For instance Vedung's (1982) and Toulmin's (2003 [1958]) approaches seek to elicit the (rational) argument or idea from the ut-

terances. Such rational reconstruction of the "idea" or "content" has a central place in text analysis in political science and consequently I will discuss Toulmin's example in more detail below. Toulmin himself did not address parliamentary talk specifically, but his approach has inspired many concrete methods of argument analysis and it is for this reason that his model and underlying understanding of language will be discussed below in more detail.

Further, van Dijk (2004), Wodak (2009), Fairclough (2000) Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) seek to reveal the discourses behind the talk. Discourse is also of central concern in contemporary political research and I have chosen to discuss Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and the view on language that lays the foundation for it.

In Toulmin's and Fairclough's case, talk is treated as a case of some idea or social phenomenon, whose study or emancipatory exposition is the real aim of the text analytical methods. Parliamentary talk is interesting only in its capacity to refer to something else.

The third group includes more politically oriented studies, which treat the parliamentary debate itself as a legitimate research object. Conceptual history, in particular, has focused on parliamentary talk. Examples include Quentin Skinner's focus on speech acts (2002), Kurunmäki's combination of Koselleck and Skinner (2003) and Palonen's focus on rhetoric (2012). In contrast to the cases mentioned above, they treat parliamentary talk itself as *politics*, as a fragment of historical change, and Palonen goes as far as to claim that talk, its rhetoric, is a case of parliamentarism as such. These all share the view that politics is "produced" in talk and hence the speech act is central to all of them. I have chosen to discuss Quentin Skinner's analytical framework below and the conceptualisation of language that informs it.

In this chapter, I will first discuss empirical logic and argument analysis, using Stephen Toulmin's work as an example. I will then discuss speech acts referring to Skinner's work. Thirdly I will look at critical discourse analysis and refer to Fairclough's work in the field. Toulmin, Skinner and Fairclough have each made a significant contribution to the linguistic turn: Toulmin by substituting empirical for formal logic, Skinner by introducing the speech act and Fairclough by introducing discourse and relations of power into the linguistically constituted social world. They also exhibit refined textual methods of analysis and are nuanced in their approaches. They, or their work, have been used in the study of parliamentary talk (e.g. Boréus and Bergström 2012, 106ff; Kurunmäki 2003; Fairclough 2000). Perhaps even more important is that they have laid much of the philosophical ground for the analysis of language in political science. Toulmin's anatomy of argument lays the ground not only for Habermas' work on communicative action (Habermas 1984, 24ff), but Fairclough's later work as well (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 85ff.). Skinner's use of speech acts, and the appreciation of the distinction between *what* is said and *why* that is said and their compound importance to

the study of the history of political thought is testified by Skinner's own oeuvre. The speech act theory has also informed Habermas' theory of communicative action as well as the Copenhagen School's focus on securitisation in international relations. Finally, Fairclough's studies on discourse inspire contemporary research on discrimination (Boréus 2006, 408; 2010), national identity (Wodak et al. 2009) and policy studies (Fischer and Gottweis 2012). All these scholars—Toulmin, Skinner and Fairclough and people inspired by them—study language in the situation of communication, and therefore I consider their work a useful starting point, and contrast, for my current inquiry into parliamentary talk. They also provide detailed techniques for textual analysis. For this reason, for instance Laclau's and Mouffe's discourse theory and narrative analysis are not included. Both, I believe, have great potential, but lack detailed tools to deal with texts, and could therefore benefit from the methodological discussion and method developed here.

Despite the criticism below, I consider empirical logic, speech acts and discourse fruitful in certain respects, but inadequate for the analysis of political talk as it unfolds in the parliament. In spite of their heterogeneity, I argue that their similarities and convergences are greater than differences. They share three fundamentals of language and talk. First, they see the act of producing utterances as more important than their reception. Second, they conceive communication as transfer of information and therefore the task of interpretation (or hermeneutics) is to elicit the correct information (out of the polyphony of the text) from the utterance. And third, they postulate a context that is outside and independent of the moment of utterance but which is nevertheless essential for understanding its meaning, and which, if properly construed, will yield the right interpretation. This stands in stark contrast to Gadamer who argues that interpretation is always understanding *differently* and Lotman who explicitly focuses on interpretation as a way of generating new meanings (see Chapter 4).

In the discussion, I will show how they, in varying degrees, i) emphasise the production of talk at the expense of interpretation, ii) approach interpretation as aiming at fixing a singular meaning of the utterance, and iii) seek confirmation for their interpretations from the external context. These are all symptoms of a monologic understanding of language. As I will introduce the distinction between monologic and dialogic understanding of language, I will also engage in a short discussion with Habermas' communicative action that summarises the arguments I develop vis-à-vis Toulmin, Skinner and Fairclough but also provides an example of how a sophisticated theory of dialogue can nonetheless be grounded in a monologic understanding of language.

The distinction between monologic and dialogic understandings of language is not categorical. Bakhtin, from whose work the distinction stems, understood language as comprising two conflicting *forces,* and a contemporary linguist, Per Linell, sees the distinction as pointing out two different as-

pects of language, of which the monologic has acquired the pride of place in linguistics and the dialogical has been largely excluded until very recently (1998, 2005, 2009). I think this a productive way of thinking about it; and my short discussion of Habermas indicates that it appears to be his preference to choose the monologic over the dialogical alternative.

## Stephen Toulmin's Field-Dependent Logic

Stephen Toulmin's *Uses of Argument* (2003 [1958]) is an argument against formal logic and especially deductive inference as expressed in analytical syllogism *if P, then P*. It has been read, however, as a book on rhetoric, something which Toulmin came to recognise and accept by the time of the second edition in 2003 (Toulmin 2003, viii). These things are not necessarily contradictory, which, with the benefit of hindsight, is evident in his characterisation of the purpose of *Uses of Argument*: to *apply* logic to actually occurring arguments (ibid., 3). This concrete aim sets Toulmin apart from the quests for universal logical reason prevalent in formal logic, locating him instead within a field of informal or empirical logic. His main contribution has been in ethics, which to him is closely associated with reasoning on moral questions. My discussion will, however, focus on his theory of argumentation as this bears direct relevance to text analysis in political science.

Toulmin's interest in empirical logic as opposed to syllogism leads to his rejection of the strict distinction between the content and form of argument and makes arguments field-dependent, i.e. dependent on the context (ibid., 22-25). For him, the *force* of the argument ("cannot" always means the negation of the possibility) is always the same, but the *criteria* or *ground* for its justification depends on the field of argument (ibid., 33-34). Therefore, arguments in politics and in physics should be studied differently (ibid.). For example, the argument "you cannot smoke in the non-smoking compartment" is justified on the grounds of smoking regulations within the given premises, whilst the argument "you cannot lift a ton steel bar single handed" is justified on the grounds of a person's physiological and physical capacity. Similarly, for something to be possible it "must have what it takes... *in that context*" (ibid., 34, italics in original). The field-dependency of criteria and the universality of the force render the Toulmin model potentially useful for the study of actually occurring arguments in politics.

The Toulmin model of argument provides an "anatomy" of actually occurring arguments specifying the individual "organs" that make up an argument. This metaphorical language enhances the image of the model as capturing real, living arguments. He describes the anatomy of an argument as a process leading from data to the claim. The transition is enabled by a warrant backed up by a backing; and the claim can be qualified by qualifiers and

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Data   —   so   —   (Qualifier)   —   Claim
            |            |
          since      (Rebuttal)
            |
         Warrant
            |
         Backing
```
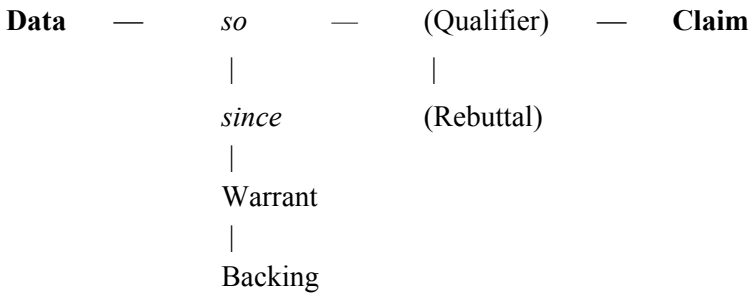
Picture 1: The Toulmin model. Adapted from Toulmin (2003, 97).

possible rebuttals. Picture 1 schematically presents the Toulmin model.

However, in actual argumentation, neither warrants nor backings are visibly available at all times, and the task of the analysis is to reconstruct them—field specifically. The example Toulmin uses, however, is fictional. The data is "Harry was born in Bermuda" which leads to the claim that "Harry is a British subject". The argument is based on the non-stated warrant that a person born in Bermuda is a British subject (ibid., 92ff).

For our purposes, most interesting part of the Toulmin model is the recognition of field-dependency of both the warrant and the backing. The question of what justifies the warrant opens up the anatomy of argument in a way that makes it unfeasible to conceive it as a self-enclosed unit. For instance, in the case of Harry, the warrant that Harry by law is a British national can be backed up by the universality of legal principles that are extended to include the British colonies. However, in the argument that "A Saudi-Arabian is a Muslim" the warrant concerns the state's close connection to the Muslim faith, and the backing for this is a statistical probability rather than a legal statute. The warrants and their backings have to be assessed against their specific fields (ibid., 96). So, the warrant should be understood as a field-specific function enabling the transition from the data to the claim and the backing as a field-dependent statement of facts (ibid., 98).

One should now ask whether field-dependency is a property of the external context (i.e. social situation) in which the argument occurs or argument-immanent quality. Toulmin appears to prefer the external context:

> ...if an argument is to be both *sound* and *strong* it must serve the proper purpose of the relevant human enterprise. The status and force of *judicial* arguments, for instance, can be understood fully only if we put them back into their practical contexts, and ask what purposes they serve in the actual conduct of our legal institutions. [--] The same is true in other fields. (Toulmin et al. 1984, 114)

This naturally leads to the difficult question of first assessing what is the

"proper purpose" of the context—of which the material at hand cannot tell much.[10] Even if Toulmin tries to remain within the argument and study *its* logic, he recognises the inevitable aspect of interpretation to which his method and material cannot provide answers.

*Argument in Political Debate*

Let us try the Toulmin model on the Slovakian state language debate, which will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 5. An amendment to the state language law was debated by the Slovakian parliament in April and June 2009. Language law issues have a certain political sensitivity in Slovakia, where about 10 percent of the population speak Hungarian. At the time of the debate, the Slovak language was the state language and had priority over all other languages in Slovakia. Slovakia recognises eleven minority languages, but only the Hungarians are sufficiently numerous to pose a serious threat to the monolinguality of the public sphere—and the only minority to be seriously affected by restrictions in this field. The language law issue in Slovakia is often seen as a battle between the Hungarian minority and the Slovak majority.

The amendment that was debated was one in a series of changes introduced after the original act on the state language was passed in 1995. The amendment was included in the government programme. The Minister of Culture, Marek Maďarič first presented the amendment to the parliament on April 15th, 2009. He argued that the current state of affairs was untenable and that the 1995 law after all the changes introduced to it was "a mere formal declaration on protecting the state language". Instead, he holds, it should be "truly applied in social practice". He argued that the Slovak language as the state language needs to be supported by a law that allows for "the primacy of the state language in practice", but the current legislation, according to Maďarič, "does not enable the Ministry of Culture in a sufficient manner to fill the task entrusted [upon the Ministry] of nurturing the state language." (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99).

Agnes Biró, a representative of the Hungarian Coalition Party, makes the following response to Maďarič:

> [I]t is said that it is not our language that is like us. But that we are like our language is... Our law on the state language clearly states that the Slovak language has precedence over other languages used in the territory of the state, at the same time giving rise [to the fact] that the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak Republic. [--] The state still does not understand that its task is not to hand out human

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10.   This criticism is further developed by Habermas to ground his claim of the universal as opposed to field-dependent validity claims (Habermas 1984, 31-42).

rights. Its task is to guarantee human rights. (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103-111)

In her conclusion, Biró suggests that the amendment to the language law be revoked. Her total opposition to the amendment is the source and cause of anger and criticism she faced, and was reflected in the responses she received. One of the these came from Emil Vestenický:

> The state, whose name is Slovak Republic, you, its positive aspects do not want to see but criticism of which gives great pleasure. Professional pleasure. But who is here qualified to tell what is the real interest, not only the declared, of a citizen of the Slovak Republic? Who? Do you, as a representative of the parliament and an international organisation, want this Slovak Republic to be sovereign and defend its citizens or is it in your interest to cultivate problems and attempt to create conditions for its demise. And what do you reply? (Vestenický 15 Apr 2009, 35, 119)

Let us apply the Toulmin model to these three speeches. We can discern at least one argument in the excerpt from Minister Maďarič's speech. The claim that the language law should be "truly applied in social practice" builds on the data that the current state of legislation is deficient and the state language law only a formal declaration. The warrant, the transition from the data to the claim, is an unspoken conviction that laws should be enforced in praxis. The backing for this can be found in Maďarič's statement that the Ministry of Culture, under the current legislation, cannot function sufficiently well to implement the law in practice, and in the statement that the state language law should provide for the primacy of the state language in praxis. The fundamental problem of this anatomy of Maďarič's argument is that it in no way lends support to the context of the argument: Maďarič is introducing new legislation, but neither the claim nor the data indicates a need for a new legislation. Given this "institutional" context, it seems that the real claim is that the state language law should provide for the primacy of the state language in praxis. This could legitimate the introduction of new legislation. Unfortunately, now we miss all the data and warrants. Perhaps Maďarič really did not have any arguments for the amendment (which might not be so far fetched a conclusion, but which is certainly not one warranted by the Toulmin model).

In Biró's speech, we can detect two claims, but they need some reconstruction. The first claim stems from the data that language has influence on human psyche and identity, and this leads to the second claim, which derives from the data that the state language law provides the Slovaks with the status of state-forming subject and then we should infer the claim that this in one way or another is unacceptable in Slovakia. The warrant is that the state should guarantee human rights rather than hand out rights. Phrased in anoth-

er way, Biró's warrant is that human rights are something that each individual possesses—and given the first claim, we can infer that she is referring to the right to speak one's mother tongue—and the task of the state is to guarantee these human rights rather than getting involved in handing out new "rights".

One of the principles of the Toulmin model is that warrants and backings are field-dependent but that the claims should have universal force. However, Biró's argument can have two different fields. Toulmin argued that the context should be that of the institutions in which the argument occurs. In the institution of the parliamentary debate, Biró *opposes* the government draft law. This also concurs with her final call to revoke the whole debate, but if so in that case which are her data, warrant and backing?[11] She does not provide any data, warrants or backings as to why the Slovaks should not have their state language. In another context, still set in the parliament, she might be delivering a philosophical argument in favour of multicultural minority policies. This would make sense of the philosophical beginning that "we are like our language"; and it would also make sense as a tacit recognition of the government's wish to legislate in the field of language policy. Against this opening directed to the government, Biró then presents her argument that in Slovakia the Hungarian minority should also enjoy the status of a state-forming subject. Given the whole content of the speech (see footnote above) this seems the most plausible anatomy of her argument. If this is the case, we face the problem of accounting for her very political claim that the debate on the bill should be discontinued.

Let us turn to Vestenický's response to Biró. Out of the parliamentary context and Vestenický's direct address to Biró ("you") we know that this is a response to Biró's argument. It is far more difficult to observe this in the content of the speech. Given the institutional context, Vestenický's speech could be seen as an attempt to question the arguments made by Biró. The main claim, therefore, is the that Biró is not capable of truly representing the Slovak Republic or its citizens. The data is that Biró only criticises Slovakia. The warrant is unspoken, but it can be inferred to be that true representatives of the country do not criticise the country, rather they stress its positive sides and fight for its sovereignty. The backing, the facts supporting the warrant, are not given either, but can be inferred from the ideas of national sovereignty and principles of state treason. The claim that Biró is not capable of representing the true interests of Slovaks cannot be based on legal reasoning, for Biró is a democratically elected deputy. It is more moral in character.

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11.  The whole speech Biro delivered is long, adding up to 12 pages in the parliamentary transcripts. It is therefore impossible to include *all* here. However, the central point made by Biró, is that language law that promotes the Slovak language and limits the use of Hungarian language politically excludes the Hungarian minority and should not be adopted.

Based on these "anatomies" we can conclude that this state language debate is characterised by the tension between a minority calling for multiculturalism and a nationalist majority that is suspicious of the Hungarian minority and attempts to limit its participation in politics. This conclusion can be supported further by the preamble of the state language law, which hails the symbolic, cultural and political importance of the Slovak language. This is, in fact, perhaps the most common view about Slovak politics elaborated in, for instance, Carpenter (1997) and Nedelsky (2003; 2009).

*What Is Left Out by the Toulmin Model?*
The aim of the Toulmin model is to elucidate the argumentation. This is illustrated with the exemplary argument "Harry was born in Bermuda. Harry is a British subject." Although this argument could have occurred in a real debate, it appears highly purified in comparison to those occurring during the actual parliamentary debate.[12] One obstacle to the aim of clarity is the field-dependency of the arguments: it is ultimately impossible to decide univocally what field should be taken as the background. If we follow Toulmin and prefer the institutional context of argumentation, Biró's abovequoted speech lacks clear warrants and backings, which, however, become discernible if we interpret her as making a philosophical argument. However, the field of philosophical argumentation, in its turn, makes it impossible to understand her final statement that the debate should be discontinued. In other words, we face the problem of precisely determining the field against which the warrants and backings should be understood.

The second problem we encounter in the Toulmin model is that although it acknowledges that arguments are directed to possible interlocutors, the model does not give interaction any constitutive role. The extracts above already indicate that Biró's interpretation of the bill is different from Maďarič's. This sounds like stating an axiom, but we should seriously raise the question of how Biró's argument affects, for instance, what arguments Maďarič can put forward later on in the debate. Indeed, in the beginning of the second reading of the bill, in June 2009, Maďarič explains that the law aims at "securing to all citizens of the Slovak Republic that in the public sphere they have access to all information they need in their state language" as if echoing Biró's call for the state to guarantee rights rather than "hand out" them. In the model this could be seen either as a warrant or a backing. It is a warrant if the data shows that not all Slovaks receive all the information they need in the state language, but it is a backing if the warrant con-

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12. Indeed, also Göran Bergström and Kristina Boréus, who exemplify the Toulmin model with a short extract of Swedish parliamentary debate from the 1930s have to conclude that the restructuring of the argument *as it was presented in the parliament* was not particularly easy and required many choices based on analysts interpretation (2012, 112).

cerns the democratic legitimacy of the draft law. In fact, both cases find support in the actual debate.

Toulmin acknowledges that the dynamics of an argument proceeds by questioning and providing backings, or reasons for the original argument. Toulmin et al. describe the argument as a "building" "whose reliability depends upon its being "supported" by sufficiently solid and secure "foundation"." (Toulmin et al. 1984, 9). But at one point, one must raise the critical question of how the claim remains the same when the backings change. The argument that a new state language law is needed in order to secure its applicability in practice and ensure the Ministry of Culture sufficient means to oversee this, is quite different from an argument that a new state language law is needed to in order to make certain that all citizens receive all the information they need in the public sphere in their state language.

What I am suggesting is that not all "warrants" or "backings" are available to the speakers from the start of the debate. Maďarič's initial warrant was more concerned with the legal norm that laws should be applied in practice than with providing citizens with certain rights, and his initial backing was concerned with the Ministry of Culture's inadequate possibilities to secure the primacy of the Slovak language in the public sphere rather than with the rights-guaranteeing nature of the bill. Maďarič's argument in the first reading differs from that of the second reading: at the start of the debate a new law was needed to ensure its applicability in practice and enable the Ministry of Culture to supervise it in practice. In contrast to this exclusive preoccupation with the state, the warrants and backings in the second reading are grounded in the individual citizen rather than in the state organs. The question one needs to raise now is whether we can treat Maďarič two different positions as two different arguments or just a result of him providing more and more compelling backing to his original argument. And by extension, can we feasibly elucidate Maďarič's two different positions without taking into consideration Biró's criticism that the Slovak state distributes rights rather than guarantees individuals their rights. By fixing the meaning, the force, of the claim, Toulmin precludes the possibility that the debate, the process of providing more and better warrants and backings, could also change the whole claim.

*The Toulmin Model and Language*

What type of understanding of language informs the Toulmin model? He treats argumentation as a transfer of information. The fact that certain claims are field-dependent presupposes that the interlocutors must possess *prior* knowledge of the forms of warrants and backings used in certain contexts. Even if he focuses on the usage of language, this usage is analysed against prior linguistic competence, which in its turn presupposes the linguistic structure. One illustrative example is Toulmin's insistence on the universal force of the word. Toulmin's starting point is that within the concept of

"meaning" one should in fact distinguish between force and criteria (2003, 33). Criteria when the word "possibility" can be used may change from context to context, but the force of "possibility" remains always the same. In other words Toulmin just acknowledges that "possibility" is used with stricter criteria in medical research than in electoral studies, but its "force", what the semantic definition of "possibility" promises remains intact. In practice, this leads to the conviction that statements alone form sufficient units of analysis. Detaching the external context from the sentence leads, however, to the practical problem of ascertaining to what field a certain argument belongs—and making sure that, for instance in a debate, all participants share the same field. As Bruno Latour has observed, in practice it is difficult and misleading to distinguish the field of science and politics (Latour 1993, 49-90). Likewise in our example above, Biró argument draws simultaneously from political and philosophical fields. This is the case of any complex text as opposed to a single utterance.

## Quentin Skinner and Illocutionary Force

I will now consider speech acts in text and talk as the object of interpretation. I will approach speech acts with the help of Quentin Skinner's work. Skinner is often acknowledged as the founder of the Cambridge School of conceptual history (Kurunmäki 2012, 184; Palonen 1997; 2002; Skinner 2002, 180). He is also a central figure in arguing for the usefulness of speech acts as a methodological approach to the interpretation of historical texts and talk. He draws from John L. Austin's speech act theory. Perhaps his main contribution to the study of history has been his way of contextualising historical texts that enables one to see things "their way" (Skinner 2002, 3). Here, historical texts are seen as *actions*, interventions into the prevalent condition. Skinner argues that "if we wish to understand any serious utterance, we need to grasp something over and above the sense and reference of the terms used to express it" (ibid., 103-104). Historical texts are not, therefore, true or false, but consist, rather, of certain acts or performatives. We should understand Skinner's purpose—to "produce as much understanding as possible"—in this context (1988, 256).

In an early article entitled "Meaning and Understanding",[13] Skinner argues against two prevalent traditions of historical research: the history of ideas[14] and "contextualism". The history of ideas refers to the idea that there

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13.  The article was originally published in 1969. I have here primarily used the revised version included in the collection of articles concerning method (2002).
14.  In the article published in 1969, Skinner refers to "textualism" instead of "history of ideas".

are "universal ideas" and that they can be discovered in historical texts (2002, 57). The study of such ideas is possible on the basis of canonical texts that discuss central problems in western philosophy. For Skinner, the history of ideas rests on three "mythologies" of doctrine, coherence, and prolepsis.

The mythology of doctrine holds that there are "universal ideas" to which each text worth studying must take a stance. The mythology of doctrine further suggests that it is possible "to trace the morphology of some given doctrine through all the provinces of history in which it appears" (ibid., 62). Skinner contends that such a morphology is possible only by abstracting from different authors and it cannot tell what a given text by a given author in reality means. The hunt for such morphologies gives rise to two types of "historical absurdity" (ibid. 60). First, individual authors are perceived as forerunners of ideas that were discovered much later and unjustly accused of fallacies that did not exist at the time of writing. Second, the postulation of independent units of ideas presupposes the prior existence of a certain doctrine. This means that history is seen as a process of this doctrine's unfolding (ibid., 62). This leaves little room for human action in history.

The mythology of coherence holds that each text must exhibit the disciplinary doctrines—and if it fails to do so explicitly, the task of the historian is to reconstruct coherent doctrines from fragments in the text (ibid., 68-70). This gives rise to studies that assess the past on criteria derived from the present, passing judgement on how well certain historical figures or texts either anticipated or failed to live up to particular contemporary ideas (ibid., 63). In the worst case, selected historical fragments are reconstructed so as to anticipate ideas that were clearly formulated only centuries later (ibid., 67). This leads to anachronistic interpretations of historical texts and events.

The mythology of prolepsis derives from practices of research that the mythologies described above have inspired. Prolepsis (lit. anticipation) means that a historical text is understood as being an intentional contribution (or a failure to make such a contribution) to an idea that became manifestly formulated only much later (ibid., 73). Mythology of prolepsis leads to the conflation of the author's and interpreter's intentions regarding the text and its influence upon or legacy of other texts (ibid., 74-75). In sum, the history of ideas espouses the independent existence of ideas. Historical texts exhibit their unfolding in time, and the task of the historian is to make their course explicit—at the expense of material and historical accuracy.

Contextualism, the other point of contention for Skinner, refers to the idea that a text is just a reflection of extra-linguistic social relations, an assumption sometimes made in classical Marxist history (1969, 39ff). The extra-linguistic context could, therefore, be used to explain the meaning of the text. In this sense, contextualism implies that what the history of ideas championed as textualism may not exist at all (ibid., 42). Against contextualism,

Skinner argues that human agency suffices to prove that the external context cannot explain historical texts, even if knowledge of this context can be helpful (ibid., 43-44).

Skinner suggests—in polemic both against the history of ideas and contextualism—that the author's intention *in* writing the text must be accounted for, because every text is an act of intervention into a prevalent debate (2002, 115). I will now elaborate the linguistic basis of this approach to textual interpretation. There are three stages in the process of interpretation. The first concerns the elucidation of the semantic meaning of the text. The second elucidates its linguistic context—that is, other texts on the same subject. The third finds out how the semantic meaning and the context can be linked together through author's intentions: "My suggestion is that if we succeed in identifying this context with sufficient accuracy, we can eventually hope to read off what the speaker or writer in whom we are interested was doing in saying what he or she said." (1988, 275). These stages will be discussed below.

*Historical texts as speech acts*
Utterances and concepts serve to make statements. As statements they embody two different aspects: the (semantic) meaning of the utterance and the (pragmatic) intention that the speaker tries to convey with this semantic body. Following Austin, we can call the first the locution and the second the illocutionary act. Skinner develops Austin's thesis on illocutionary acts and argues for a distinction between the illocutionary act and force. The former is a successful performance of an action in speaking, for instance, by saying "I warn you it is cold outside". The latter is the speaker's intention, as invested in the utterance: "To perform that particular act [warning –JT], we must not only issue a particular utterance with the form and force of a warning. We must at the same time mean or intend the utterance as a warning" (Skinner 1988, 261).

The sentence "It is cold outside!" can be an act of warning, It can also be one of criticism—all depending on the speaker's intention. The semantic meaning of the sentence is obvious. But if we want to understand "something over and above the sense and reference", the illocutionary force becomes crucial. "It is cold outside" *means* two different things depending on whether its illocutionary force is that of a warning or a criticism. Skinner focuses on the illocutionary force because the speaker can invest the utterance with a given illocutionary force that is also public enough for others to understand it. Whether the person thus warned changes her course of action is altogether other and unrelated question (ibid., 264).

More complex texts can harbour illocutionary forces that extend far beyond the intentions of the actor (ibid., 272). As an example we can take a text that was meant, perhaps, to be ironic, but fails to be so. This means that the

illocutionary force, although intentionally invested in the utterance, in fact belongs to the meaning and context of the utterance (ibid., 266).

The illocutionary act, by contrast, is determined by speaker's intentions. The point of drawing these distinctions is to recognise the independence of the semantic meaning of the locution, the pragmatic force that can be inferred from the utterance, and the autonomy of the author in the sense that her intentions may not be "correctly" reflected in the form and force of the utterance, and still accept the fact that the utterance has a certain force. In sum, the illocutionary force, while being a result of intentional action, is a property or resource of publicly shared language. Like any action, it can have unintended consequences, but they should not be understood primarily by their effects, but by their content.[15]

The advantage of treating historical texts as speech acts is that their analysis becomes that of action. This enables us to focus on the question of what the authors were *doing* when they wrote or spoke, rather than attempting to assess how true or false their texts were. Consequently, Skinner argues that the illocutionary force is a distinguishable dimension of language that reveals itself if we consider all utterances as acts of communication which occur either "as acts of a conventionally recognisable character or... in the form of recognisable interventions" (ibid., 274). He argues that as acts of communication, utterances become understandable only if we can understand why they were made. Following from this, he further argues that "any act of communication always constitutes the taking up of some determinate position in relation to some pre-existing conversation or argument" and therefore "if we wish to understand what has been said, we shall have to be able to identify what exact position has been taken up" (ibid., 274-275). This is what Skinner means by saying that to understand an utterance we must see what the person is doing in saying something in a particular context.

As an example, Skinner discusses Machiavelli's statement that "mercenary armies always undermine liberty" (ibid., 275). The (semantic) meaning of the statement is clear, but what Machiavelli meant by saying so depends on the context. "Suppose we find that the sentiment expressed by the utterance was frequently expressed in the political literature of the time. Then we are already justified in saying that Machiavelli is repeating, upholding or agreeing with an accepted attitude or viewpoint" (ibid.)—or even endorsing an accepted truth. On the other hand, if he is saying something that no longer is generally accepted, his action is one of "restating, reaffirming or revealing his

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15. Skinner in his "Reply to My Critics" contends that he is after what the author has "meant" (276-277) and adds that he focuses on it only because this is important. At the same time, however, he argues "I remain unrepentant in my belief that, if we are interested in recovering the historical identity of texts, we are bound to interest ourselves in what their authors meant." (1988, 273).

audience to the truth" that once was general knowledge. Further, if there is no evidence of Machiavelli's phrase occurring in earlier documents, then his action should be characterised as denying or revising generally held beliefs. As Skinner himself argues, depending on the context Machiavelli's statement can vary from praise and celebration to ridicule and scorn (ibid., 276).

The difference between Austin and Skinner becomes crucial here. For Austin, speech acts are defined by their conventionality: "We must notice that the illocutionary act is a conventional act: an act done as confirming to a convention" (Austin 1962, 105). The very conventionality of the context enabled Austin to distinguish the *force* that the act carried. This becomes significantly more difficult for Skinner, who (following Strawson, Searle, Schiffer and others) has generalised speech acts to concern any statements, not only those that explicitly commit a performative act in a conventional context (Skinner 1988, 262).

This explains why the context of the utterance acquires such heightened importance in Skinner's methodology. What a writer has meant depends on the intentions invested in the text, but what force the utterance acquires depends on the context. By intention, Skinner refers to "facts as [to] whether the writer was joking or serious or ironic or in general what speech-act he was performing" (ibid., 73). Intentions, in turn, depend on beliefs and motives, and the coherence that beliefs and motives can produce between different utterances from the same person (ibid., 278). By motives, Skinner refers to "what prompted those particular speech-acts" (ibid.). In other words, the *intentions* are invested in the illocutionary force (present) in the text; the *motives* are subjectively held. They precede the text, and knowledge thereof can help us decipher the intentions in the text. The hermeneutic task Skinner sets for himself concerns the identification of the illocutionary force—the intention—that the speaker has vested in the utterance: "an understanding of the illocutionary act being performed by an agent in issuing a given utterance will be equivalent to an understanding of that agent's primary *intentions* in issuing that particular utterance" (ibid., 74, italics in original).

To phrase it differently, the intentions are, so to speak, "properties" of the utterance. They are informed by the motives and beliefs of the speaker. They are not, however, connected with or conditioned by the "afterlife" of the text, the effects it has engendered (which Austin termed the perlocutionary effect). The knowledge of the intention of Machiavelli in writing that "mercenary armies always undermine liberty" is "actually *equivalent* to... what he writes" (ibid., 76, italics in original), for it is only through his intentions that we can find out what he was doing—affirming, criticising, or ridiculing—in thus writing. In sum, "whatever the writer is *doing in* writing what he writes must be relevant to interpretation, and thus... *amongst* the interpreter's task must be the recovery of the writer's intentions *in* writing what he writes." (ibid.).

However, as we saw above, the intention vested in the illocutionary force depends on the linguistic context of the time. All texts are responses to questions. In order to assess the possible intention the author could have had we must "delineate the full range of communications that could have been conventionally performed on the given occasion by the issuing of the given utterance" (2002, 87). The point is that whilst motives provide general reasons for behaviour, intentions are only concerned with the immediate speech act and are best characterised as drawing a distinction between "joking" and "ridiculing", "informing" and "warning". Intentions are, therefore, explicitly "public" and Skinner's endeavour in a sense "behaviourist" (1988, 279). The contrast between the prevalent conventions of talk and the specificities of the text under study can reveal the intention embedded in the illocutionary force of the text. The task of mapping the linguistic conventions involved, however, requires "extremely wide-ranging as well as extremely detailed historical research" (ibid., 275).

*Rhetoric as Politics*
In Skinner's later works, one witnesses a rhetorical turn, which attempts to reinvigorate rhetoric as a form of (political) thinking distinct from philosophers' (and logicians') quest for eternal truths (Palonen 1996, 143; 1997, 65; 2012, 64ff). Skinner's focus shifts from historical texts to the use of evaluative concepts or normative vocabularies in politics (Skinner 2002, 175). Instead of trying to discover what a certain text meant, he now takes texts and concepts as "tools and weapons of ideological debate" (ibid., 177), and his primary focus is on their changes (ibid., 178).

Concepts in Skinner's view provide their users with different perspectives on the world and thus enable users to take different stances towards the world.

> The shifting conceptualisations to which this process gives rise constitute the very stuff of ideological debate [--] There are no moral or cognitive judgements which are not mediated by our concepts, and it seems to me that even our most apparently abstract concepts are historical through and through. (ibid., 176-177)

It is clear that there can be no lasting stability in the meaning of concepts and that the study of concepts can only be the study of their different uses. Each concept embodies an evaluation. Skinner, in taking this rhetorical turn, is particularly interested in the possibility of using evaluative terms for (re)describing concepts (ibid., 179). Rhetoric redescription is one concrete way of how concepts changes.

Conceptual change has three dimensions: i) the criteria for applying the concept change; ii) whether (agreed) criteria are present; and iii) changes in the range of speech acts that can be done with the concept (ibid., 162). I ar-

gue that the way Skinner discusses conceptual change reveals the limits of his earlier distinction between motive and intention and the problems connected with the exclusion of perlocution. Conceptual change, he argues, emerges "when an action or state of affairs is described by means of an evaluative terms that would not normally be used in the given circumstances" (ibid., 182). This is an observable, perhaps "behavioural" fact. However, "the aim is to persuade an audience that, in spite of appearances, the term can properly be applied—in virtue of its ordinary meaning—to the case in hand." (ibid., 182) And this persuasion also has a definite perlocutionary effect: "the effect of successfully persuading someone to accept such a judgement will be to prompt them to view the behaviour in question in a new moral light" (ibid.). The undeniable fact of history is that the effects of utterances are beyond the control of the speaker and to talk about persuasion requires confirmation from the persuaded.

This short characterisation of conceptual change implies three significant revisions to his earlier programme. First we may note that a certain conventionality of the illocutionary force has been reintroduced. The situating conceptual change in a political battle and the revitalisation of Renaissance rhetoric implies that political talk assumes the form of speaking for or against (see Palonen 2012, 69). Second, the distinction between *in doing* and *to do* has become blurred. In other words, the explicit focus on the intended illocutionary force that accompanies the text has clearly acquired the additional dimension of perlocution—that of the effects. Third, the clear distinction between motive and intention seems to collapse. This is visible both in the acknowledgement of the perlocutionary effects of utterances, as well as in the vocabulary Skinner uses in his own research. He, for instance, unhesitatingly refers to "anxieties expressed by seventeenth century philosophers" (2002b, 266). These are certainly less "behavioural" and more a warning or a joke. Characteristic of the rhetorical turn is that the illocutionary *act* now stands almost as a self-sufficient focus of analysis—hence also the emphasis on rhetoric.

According to classical rhetoric, normative words have a degree of neighbourliness that exists even between the most oppositional terms. Hence, "whenever such terms are employed, their application will always reflect a wish to impose a particular moral vision on the workings of the social world." (Skinner 2002, 182.). Rhetorical redescription appears already in Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*. The purpose of redescription is to shed a different moral light upon the same events by choosing new vocabulary, attaching new causes to events and so on. Its power seems to be limitless. Skinner quotes Aristotle: "slander can pass for frankness, recklessness for courage, extravagance for copiousness" (ibid., 183).

Rhetorical redescription may even change the action. "What we are really claiming is that the *res*—the actual behaviour—possesses a different moral character from that which our dialectical opponents may have assigned to

it." (ibid., 184). Again, this is a conspicuous shift from the illocutionary force to illocutionary act and perlocutionary effect.

Both current political debates as well as classical texts benefit from thinking of rhetoric as a form of political action. Authors like Machiavelli and Nietzsche employ paradiastolic redescription (substituting virtuous term for defamatory) in their writings. But the same goes for any political talk:

> The more we succeed in persuading people that a given evaluative term applies in circumstances in which they may never have thought of applying it, the more broadly and inclusively we shall persuade them to employ the given term in the appraisal of social and political life. The change that will eventually result is that the underlying concept will acquire a new prominence and a new salience in the moral arguments of the society concerned. (ibid., 186)

Skinner anchors the dispute over the meaning of the word or concept in the circumstances of its possible usage. In his earlier writings, where the semantic meaning of the text was furnished with a certain illocutionary force in order to effect the desired intervention rhetorical redescription appears to have only the pragmatic meaning conveyed by the illocutionary act. This echoes Austin's original concept of speech acts but it lacks the well-defined conventional context that for Austin defined the illocutionary act. We can reasonably doubt if it suffices to situate political talk in the context *pro et contra* rhetoric, as Skinner does, to provide illocution with the same conventionality as in Austin's cases of, for instance, marrying or baptising has. This becomes even more problematic when we realise that Skinner increasingly counts the effects of the illocution as a part of their interpretation.

To sum up Skinner's work on speech acts, it appears that we find two slightly different tendencies in the method of historical study. His earlier writings focus more on the meaning of classical texts in political theory. They are more receptive to the limits imposed by the linguistic context—something to which Skinner had to be very alert because he had generalised context-bound speech acts to concern all language. Here Skinner also notes that the illocutionary force—so essential for understanding the meaning of the utterance—in reality often comes in the plural and that it is only one side of the hermeneutic task. The other, and much more overwhelming half, is the reconstruction of the context against which the illocutionary forces can emerge. His later writings on rhetoric appear to emphasise the almost unlimited power of the illocution to attribute new normative aspects to concepts. Although context is still important, it seems to have lost its power to set limits for the illocutionary force. In the following, I will apply this understanding of speech acts to the analysis of fragments of the Slovak state language law that we already tackled with the Toulmin model above.

*Illocution in the Slovakian State Language Law Debate*

The important contribution of Skinner's conceptual history is its focus on the political text as an illocutionary force: We are not only concerned with meaning; we are concerned, rather, with political action. I start with a speech by the Hungarian Coalition Party representative Agnes Biró:

> [I]t is said that it is not our language that is like us. But that we are like our language is... Our law on the state language clearly states that the Slovak language has precedence over other languages used in the territory of the state, at the same time giving rise [to the fact] that the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak Republic. [--] The state still does not understand that its task is not to hand out human rights. Its task is to guarantee human rights. (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103-111)

The focus on the use of evaluative terminology and the attempt to delineate the possible vocabulary and understand the specific intention of a given speech act, form the cornerstones of Skinner's approach. The very opening of Biró's speech contrasts two arguments: "our language is not like us" and "we are like our language". This juxtaposition can be interpreted as establishing an evaluative hierarchy between collective identity and language, as well as giving precedence to language over identity. In other words, Biró argues that language gives rise to the collectivity.

We can recall the preamble of the Slovak language law, which states that "the Slovak language is the most important attribute of the Slovak nation's specificity...". Biró's speech can be understood as a special intervention into this statement on the Slovak language. This understanding of her intention can be justified if we consider the continuation of the speech where she explicitly contrasts her stance to that expressed in the preamble. Furthermore, she does not deny the presupposition that language indeed determines the nation. Rather, she argues against the circumstances in which this supposed capacity is rewarded solely to the Slovak language in the Slovak Republic. Consequently, her criticism of the precedence given the Slovak language over other languages also questions the subsequent legal inscription, which states that the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject in Slovakia. This, again, must be interpreted as an action against the exclusion of the Hungarian minority that seeks representation of its specific identity at the state level.

One of the responses she received came from Emil Vestenický:

> The state, whose name is Slovak Republic, you, its positive aspects do not want to see but criticism of which gives great pleasure. Professional pleasure. But who is here qualified to tell what is the real interest, not only the declared, of a citizen of the Slovak Republic? Who? Do you, as a representative of the parliament and an international organisation, want this Slovak Republic to be sovereign and defend its citizens or is it in

your interest to cultivate problems and attempt to create conditions for
its demise. And what do you reply? (Vestenický 15 Apr 2009, 35, 119)

Vestenický's response confirms that Biró's illocutionary interventions into
the identity of the Slovak Republic were understood as she intended. His re-
sponse, or illocutionary intervention, asks who Biró is to determine the iden-
tity of Slovakia. He attempts to probe Biró's own identity by asking whether
she as member of the parliament and some international organisation could
think of intervening and labouring for the demise of Slovakia.

*What Do the Speech Acts Miss?*
In this short exchange of opinions, we receive immediate confirmation of the
importance of attending to the illocutionary force of the utterance. Biró, for
instance, clearly did not intend to reaffirm the preamble's statement that lan-
guage forms the nation. Rather, she questions the circumstances by which
such privilege is given to the Slovak language only. Vestenický's otherwise
eruptive speech also achieves a certain coherence when targeting the differ-
ent points of criticism Biró raised.

Could one pursue the same mode of analysis throughout the whole de-
bate? The key shortcoming with speech acts is that whilst they recognise the
importance of the linguistic context in which they occur they categorically
exclude the perlocution as *formative* of the very speech act itself. One could
argue that Skinner implicitly recognises this by pointing out that there are
multiple illocutionary forces in a given text, but what he really means by this
is that complex texts are able to accommodate more than just one meaning.
That is, at one point Biró seems to be affirming and at another point cri-
ticising. It is still the speaker who establishes what is meant even if she does
so by applying the available resources of language to dress up her speech act
with conventional illocutionary force that is enough for the speech act to be
recognised as a warning, as ridicule or as affirmation.

Skinner argues that when rhetorical suggestions "are widely taken up, a
whole society may eventually come to alter its attitude towards some funda-
mental value or practice and alter its normative vocabulary accordingly"
(Skinner 2002, 181). This implies that neither the illocutionary force nor the
illocutionary act is enough by itself. The perlocutionary effect—what the
speech act has accomplished in the addressee(s)—needs to be accounted for
as well. This is an aspect Skinner dismisses as irrelevant on two accounts.
First, he argues that the speaker's perlocutionary intentions—what feelings
or effects she aims to evoke in the addressee—do not form a question separ-
ate from the illocution:

"the question of whether a work was intended by its author, say, to in-
duce a feeling of sadness in the reader does seem to be capable of being

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settled (if at all) only by considering the work itself and such clues about its intended effects as my be contained within it" (ibid., 99).

Second, insisting on a distinction between *in doing* and *to do*, Skinner separates the text from the continuum of time.[16] It stands separated from the statements that precede and follow it. However, as the above quote explicates, he does count on the *effects* of rhetoric upon addressees, not only on the intentions of the addresser.

This point becomes clearer when Skinner discusses innovating ideologists. He positions himself as follows:

> Here I need only reiterate that, whereas an illocution is defined as an act performed *in* saying something, a perlocution is described as an effect, and hence as an act performed as a consequence of saying something. The key contention (to which I shall return) is that it is possible to perform certain acts simply *in* speaking or writing in a certain way. (ibid., 149.)

The acts that can be performed "simply in speaking" are of course the familiar "warning" or "ridiculing". However, it remains fundamentally unclear whether these are sufficient for if we are to think of concepts as "tools and weapons" (ibid., 177) that bring about conceptual changes. It seems to me that in order to characterise the context as an ideological battle and the moves made as aiming at persuasion (ibid., 182), the action is better described as *doing* something rather than as *in doing* something. That is to say that, the illocutionary force and the individual speech act appear insufficient objects for the study of political talk—even in Skinner's terms. Recall that for (early) Skinner, all illocutionary acts are recognised by their author's intentions but the illocutionary force—the key to the interpretation of historical texts—belongs to the meaning and context of its occurrence, and can therefore be unintended by the author. This suggests that the reception of these speech acts is relevant for their interpretation. It could be accounted for by carefully studying the range of possible utterances and the general linguistic milieu of the time.

However, Skinner's discussion of innovating ideologues suggest something different. He argues that innovating ideologists aspire to achieve two different things, one perlocutionary and the other illocutionary in nature (ibid., 149). The perlocutionary effects include "inciting", "persuading" or "convincing" the audience of a certain novel point. How effective this perlocutionary effect is, is a "matter of historical investigation". The illocutionary effects—an act performed *in* saying something—include "evincing, ex-

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16. Indeed, Skinner often points out that against "history of ideas", he considers there to be only the history of different uses of arguments (e.g. 2002, 86).

pressing or soliciting approval or disapproval of the actions". In contrast to the perlocutionary effects of persuasion, these are linguistic matters "of seeing how the terms in question are applied" (ibid.). The distinction between perlocutionary and illocutionary effects concerns their mode of existence. Perlocutionary effects appear to refer to feelings and illocutionary effects to linguistic practices. However, both obviously include people other than the speaker. Continuing his elucidation of illocutionary effects, Skinner argues that evaluative-descriptive terms have "overwhelming ideological significance" (ibid.). This position grants a certain autonomy to language in which individually committed linguistic acts using a certain vocabulary carry "overwhelming ideological significance" but it says nothing about the relationship between the speakers and the vocabulary they use. A degree of perlocutionary relationship, however, is understood to be there, as "whole society may eventually come alter its *attitude* towards some fundamental value or practice" (ibid., my italics).

The question now becomes whether the speakers or language effect these changes in each other. Skinner's term "innovating ideologist" points at the former. Given this premise, it appears in the end, to be ultimately an untenable position to treat these innovating ideologists in isolation from each other, accounting only for their individually considered and formulated illocutionary forces and effects, as revealed in the language. It seems, rather, that this kind of reduction of action to linguistics runs counter to the very reason Skinner adopted Austin's theory in the first place: namely to start conceptualising historical texts as human interventions.

I suggest that a power similar to that given to the speaker to insert her illocutions with a certain force (even if this force ultimately derives from the context) should be given to the recipient of the illocution to interpret it according to her own intentions and within the available resources in language. If the "richness of our language" enables most utterances to "carry some element of unintended illocutionary force" similar unintended interpretative capacity should also be acknowledged. This in turn makes it necessary to give an account of interaction as well as one of intentions if the goal is to "produce as much understanding as possible" of a political debate.

Why Skinner has focused on the illocution rather than on the perlocution can be explained by his concern for politics as *action* rather than as results. He does not want to chart the history of winners only. He also seeks to account for the actions of those who eventually lost the "battle" (Palonen 1996, 145). Although I think this is a truly fruitful approach to textual analysis, I also want to highlight its shortcomings in the concrete instance of parliamentary talk. Political talk that is characterised by one speech act reacting to the other, *pro et contra*, cannot adopt the individual speech act as the object of analysis—even if this speech act is understood as an intentional intervention into a debate. It is not in the capacity of the speech act—however well adjus-

ted to the context—to be its own authority; this task is conferred to the response that belongs to another speaker altogether.

A good example of the limits of Skinner's approach is visible in the Slovakian debate. If we follow the debate to the very end, we realise that the intentions of the authors remain the same: Biró, for instance, votes against the language law act, while the supporters of the law are as convinced as ever that the law will help the Slovak Republic bolster its identity. The opponents and supporters are just as convinced of the illegitimacy or legitimacy of giving precedence to Slovak in the law at the end of the debate as in its beginning. Above, when I discussed Toulmin's argument analysis, I referred to Minister Maďarič's speech from the second reading of the bill. He argued that the law is supposed to help "all the citizens of the Slovak Republic to have access to all the information they need in their state language". Taking up the word "citizen" and emphasising that the heart of the question is "their state language", Maďarič abandoned his earlier concern for the legal competence and capacity of the Ministry of Culture to protect the Slovak language. This could be interpreted as a rhetorical change in the evaluative vocabulary employed. Would this also change the context of Biró's illocutionary intervention against the privileged position of the Slovak language? Not really, since Biró bases her argument on the importance of language for collective identity, an identity that is denied all those who consider a language other than Slovak to be their mother tongue. Nevertheless, Maďarič's change in vocabulary opens up a new division in the lexicon used: the division between the citizen and the state.

Maďarič cannot be taken as introducing this division intentionally, for he argues that the law aims at "securing to all citizens of the Slovak Republic that in the public sphere they [have] access to all information they need in their state language". This statement does not provide for differential treatment of different inhabitants of Slovakia. Rather, it indicates the aim of assimilating of minorities into the state language. The distinction, however, alters Biró's position rather drastically. Before the distinction between the citizen and the Slovak state was made, Biró could champion the rights of all oppressed. After this distinction, her treatment of the Hungarian minority as a group becomes to mean that she also prefers one minority over all other minorities—something that her fellow interlocutors were quick to exploit as we shall see in Chapter 6.

Despite the lack of intention in introducing the distinction between the state and the citizen—and despite the lack of any such intention in Biró's speech—the debate ends with a special document called the Principles, which concern the application of the state language law. The Principles recognise explicitly the fundamental contradiction of interests between those citizens of the Slovak Republic that belong to a minority, and those of the Slovak state (Zásady 2009). This turn in the debate can only be attributed to the "perlocutionary"—understood here as the contextual take on the new

vocabulary introduced—but unintended force of the debate. What I am suggesting is that even if we could take into account the changing linguistic context of talk and thereby note the new division in the vocabulary used in the debate, the process would be hazardous given the focus on the illocutionary force *as intended* by the speaker. The introduction of the split between the state and the citizen is not reducible to individual speech acts but stems from the dynamics of the interactive, or, if you wish, *pro et contra*, talk.

This point is made first and foremost to illuminate the shortcomings inherent in focusing on individually held illocution at the expense of the possible effects and/or further interpretations of that utterance. This does not mean that individual speeches could not be studied as Skinner does, but it does point out the problems of making generalisations from individual speeches and their illocutions that concern other people and their attitudes. In the case of a political debate, the argument is that we should pay attention to the debate's interactive dynamics.

*Speech Acts and Language*
What kind of understanding of language underlies speech acts? The explicit references both to Austin and Wittgenstein place Skinner in the tradition of certain interaction within linguistic studies. Interaction such as that in Wittgenstein's language games is also the foundation of dialogism as Linell understands it (Linell 1998, 49). However, the same cannot be said about speech acts (Linell 1998, 208; 2005, 94-95), especially when perceived as a general property of language as Skinner does following Searle (Skinner 2002, 106). This enables Skinner to transcend the limited number of contexts that Austin considered in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Searle understood that speech acts are performed by independent speakers even if they are considered to be a part of a social and linguistic context (Linell 2005, 95).[17] Above, we saw that Skinner excludes the possibility of interactive construction of meaning. Illustrative of this is the argument that the author is able to formulate illocutionary speech acts with intentions, which also concern the way in which they are to be interpreted. This not only presupposes the existence of a certain shared code for the illocutionary speech acts, but also such a high degree of command of the code that the author is able to think—successfully—on behalf of the audience.

Secondly, Skinner argues it is possible (and necessary) to account for all the possible illocutionary actions conceivable for the author in a given context. Based on this universe of possible illocutionary forces, it is possible to

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17. Another significant difference between Austin and Searle is that the latter, like Skinner, sees the intention instrumental in making the speech what it is. For Austin "*our word is our bond*" (1962, 10; italics in original) and for instance a promise without intentions to keep it is still a promise, but "given *in bad faith*" (1962, 11).

define the precise intention behind the chosen instance. These two arguments point to the idea that the language is a determinable system that appears to possess conspicuous autonomy for the authors carrying out speech acts. This explains how Skinner is able to argue that rhetorical changes in the use of concepts correlate to wide-scale changes also in the conception of how society employs them (Skinner 2002, 181).

The fixed nature of language as a system is not altogether compatible with the emphasis on individual illocutionary acts as the object of study and source of conceptual change. By refuting the idea of the power of the text in his early writings, Skinner has come to view language almost completely as intentional illocutionary action.

Although illocution always requires its context, Skinner proceeds from the conviction that the author is able to decipher this context and amend her intervention so that it carries out the illocution as intended. Consequently, his conception of language is at odds with any type of linguistic multifunctionality. As seen above, Maďarič's intention in introducing the word citizen to the debate on language law was limited to his unequivocal support for the language law. However, given the logics of the *text of the debate as a whole*, not just the text of Maďarič's utterance, it opened up new possibilities—unintended by Maďarič himself.

This understanding of speech acts and how to use them in historical studies has been appraised by other scholars inspired by Skinner. Ihalainen's comparative study of the concept "democracy" and its variants and related concepts in parliamentary talk in Sweden and England is just one example (Ihalainen 2010, esp. 15-25; 67ff.).

## Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is both a method and an approach or mode of social research. It stems from a manifestly political position. It aims to reveal the underlying relations of power that structure discourse, and which discourses, if engaged in unconsciously, reproduce. Discourses in this respect are socially constituted and they constitute the social (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000, 448). I will discuss the approach Norman Fairclough has developed, which is perhaps theoretically the most elaborated version of critical discourse analysis. He has also attempted a close synthesis between CDA and social analysis (ibid.) and could therefore serve best my own project.

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis is openly political. It depends on the understanding that class relations are the most fundamental way of organising society (Fairclough 2001, 26). In accordance with its "objectively" biased position, CDA also espouses manifestly political goals, namely political and social emancipation (2003, 203). This combination of politics and

research may sound suspicious, but CDA proceeds from the assumption that there is no objective science and it is better to be open about one's political commitments and emphasise transparency than pretend to be objective and reproduce social inequalities (or pretend that they do not exist) (2001, 4). There are also commentators that praise the fresh air CDA brings into the academy (Bucholtz 2001, 167).

*Discourse and Society*
One of the central features of critical discourse analysis is a contradiction. On the one hand, CDA claims that discourse (or language as social practice) is determined by social structures. On the other hand, the very same discourses are understood to contribute to social change (Fairclough 2001, 14). Obviously, at one point the determinist relationship between social relations and language must break down, if discourse is to contribute to social change. I shall attempt to explore this breaking-point below, and show how Fairclough's understanding of discourse privileges predefined relations of power in describing, interpreting and explaining discourse.

Fairclough's approach to "discourse" has undergone a change from his more text-centred approach (as in *Language and Power* [1989] 2001) or *Discourse and Social Change* (1992). In his later writings (e.g. *New Labour, New Language*, 2000), he tends towards a more social scientific approach, in which the analysis of discourse is accompanied by a broader social analysis. In co-authored *Discourse and Late Modernity* (1999) Fairclough grounds the previously more methodological CDA in a broader theoretical framework.

In introducing the term discourse, Fairclough first contrasts it to Saussure's notion of *parole*, the individual use of language. In contrast to *parole*, discourse takes that "language use is socially determined" (Fairclough 2001, 17). His second step is to argue that Saussure's *la langue* is an artificial construction and suggests it was most likely inspired by the linguistic standardisation that was near its completion at the time when Saussure was lecturing on general linguistics. For Fairclough, no language is simply an abstract system. All language is always language use determined by social structures. Social structures are brought about by force. Hence linguistic conventions are outcomes of force (ibid., 18). This conceptualisation allows him to distance himself from the Saussurean distinction between *la langue* and *parole,* and he is able to assert that discourse refers to "language as a form of social practice" (ibid., 18). Below, I will discuss briefly three aspects of language as a form of social practice.

Discourse as a text refers to the idea that any linguistic action is also social action. For instance, the very definition of political terminology is part of politics (ibid., 19). Discourse as discursive practice views discourse as a product that can be circulated and consumed in society. Both the production and consummation of discourses involve individually held "member's re-

sources" (MR)—a cognitive term that refers to the individual's prior knowledge including language, values, beliefs, assumptions and so on. Consummation, Fairclough's word and substitute for agent's interpretation, is "an active process of matching features of the utterance at various levels with representations you have stored in your long term memory" (ibid., 8-9). Discourse as social practice views discourses as affected by social relations of power. Member's resources that mediate between the individual and the social are cognitive insofar as individuals have them in their heads

> but they are social in the sense that they have social origins—they are socially generated, and their nature is dependent on the social relations and struggles out of which they were generated—as well as being socially transmitted and, in our society, unequally distributed (ibid., 20).

The power of the discourse lies in the fact that

> people internalise what is socially produced and made available to them, and use this internalised MR to engage in their social practice, including discourse... [giving] the forces which shape societies a vitally important foothold in the individual psyche (ibid.).

This internal and embedded nexus between language and society allows Fairclough to adopt a socially "determinist" view on language and yet maintain that the discourse thus "deterministically" produced can possibly change society.

The spread of a discourse (its enactment in new contexts and inculcation in new subjects) is not automatic and depends on individual cases. "Even powerful discourses such as the new discourses of management," he writes, "may meet levels of resistance which result in them being neither enacted nor inculcated to any degree" (Fairclough 2003, 209). Yet, it is the relations of social power that primarily account for discursive changes. The conservative or creative "reproduction" is connected to the social distribution of power, and "if there is a shift in power relations through social struggle, one can expect transformation of orders of discourse. Conversely, if power relations remain relatively stable, this may give a conservative quality to reproduction." (Fairclough 2001, 33). It appears that discourse contributes to social change if coupled with change in social relations of power.

*Power and Interpretation*
The hermeneutic task Fairclough faces is that individuals have the capacity to interpret texts differently but it is impossible to study each individual interpretation in turn. His proposition is that individual interpretations are deeply entangled with societal processes and need to take recourse in collectively held discourses. These, in turn, are conditioned by societal structures. He ar-

gues, for instance, that it is possible to identify "some basic structural charac-
teristics and tendencies of British society", that "similar features are evident
in comparable capitalist societies", and that "characteristics of discourse in
modern Britain appear to be determined by these features" (ibid., 26).

Fairclough understands power as an oppressive force intertwined with
ideology (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, 24; Fairclough 2001, 26). Those
who have power, he argues, have "two ways... [to] exercise it and keep it:
through coercing other to go along with them, with the ultimate sanctions of
physical violence or death; or through winning others' consent to... their pos-
session and exercise of power" (Fairclough 2001, 27-28).

The conception of power in terms of coercing consent is directly trans-
lated into textual aspects. Fairclough distinguishes between power *in* dis-
course and power *behind* discourse (ibid., 36ff). Power in discourse is char-
acteristic of "unequal encounters" where the discourse (genre) gives the
more powerful party the opportunity and means of controlling the linguistic
interaction (ibid., 38). Power in discourse may take open and manifest forms,
as in the encounter between the police and the victim (or the guilty) or in
more subtle forms like intercultural encounters. It may also manifest itself
through constructing ideal subject positions, as in for instance, presupposi-
tions about the ideal role of a woman in family.

The power behind discourse means that "the whole social order of dis-
course is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power" (ibid.,
46). Power behind discourse brings in ideology as an organising force of lan-
guage. Fairclough locates the power behind discourse in the capacity of cer-
tain actors to make use of certain discourses, a power upheld by, for in-
stance, codes of conduct or government programmes that legislate policy
priorities. Individuals have unequal access to and possibilities of using dis-
courses of power (2001, 52). For example, a priest has access to (ceremoni-
al) language that a normal parish member does not possess. Access to dis-
course goes hand in hand with one's social position. This gives critical
discourse analysis legitimacy in its calling to discover the truth that is dis-
guised by ideology and power and tied into different discourses and social
practices that maintain unequal relations of power.

In a co-authored article "Critical Realism and Semiosis", Fairclough ap-
proaches the process of interpretation through the notion of "semiosis".[18] This
refers to the individual process of making sense of a text through her "mem-
ber's resources"—that is, individually internalised aspects of socially shared
discourses. The process of semiosis draws on social relations and socially

18.   In this article, the word semiosis replaces discursive orders and we learn that semiotic or-
ders correspond to "social structuring of semiotic variation" including genres, discourses and
styles (Fairclough et al. 2002, 8). His use of "semiosis" should not be identified with my use
of "semiotics" although certain similarities are obvious.

shared discourses and consequently can be studied through semiotic systems and texts as well as through non-semiotic relations (Fairclough et al. 2002, 4-5). In the end, semiosis is a dialectical relationship between actors, language, text, social relations, and practical contexts (ibid., 5). This externalises the individual process of interpretation to the study of socially available means for the process of semiosis. The outcomes of this process are termed "reasons", which function as triggers of further social action. "Reasons", the authors argue,

> are diffuse and hard to identify unambiguously... It would be better to think of them as emergent elements in more extensive networks of concepts, beliefs, symbols, and texts... they presuppose language, intentionality, particular concepts and prior understandings and interests, intertextuality, conventions of inference and evidence... (ibid., 2002, 4)

Research should focus on "how actual semiotic effects are generated" through "complexities of the real mechanism that, according to semantic content and overall context, produce effects that tend to escape the attention of lay persons and non-specialist social scientists alike" (ibid., 7). The process of making sense of texts becomes entangled with and inseparable from social relations of power.

The role of interpretation remains ambiguous. Fairclough acknowledges its importance and attributes to it a degree of independence from social relations. However, he also treats it as a mirror image of text production. It is therefore easy for him to claim that the social relations of power determine the discourses circulating in society. Interpretation and semiosis are valued for their capacity to explain why certain discourses trigger social behaviour, something which can, in turn, be studied at the level of discourse production. This externalises the problem of interpretation from the available material to the social relations of power, the analysis which, depends, in the end, on the researcher's choice.

*Critical Discourse Analysis and the Slovak State Language Law*
In the following, I will analyse one excerpt from the language law debate discussed above. I will follow Fairclough's guidelines as presented in *Language and Power*. CDA consists of three stages, description, interpretation and explanation. I will emphasise textual description and only sketch interpretation and explanation below.

Let us start with the official translation of the preamble of the 2009 law, which was already included in the original 1995 law on the state language.

> [T]he Slovak language is the most important feature of distinctiveness of the Slovak nation, the most esteemed value of its cultural heritage and an articulation of sovereignty of the Slovak Republic...

This is a text that depicts an institutional discourse.[19] It is a legal text. Its obvious discourse types very evidently include political and legal texts. As a law, it carries a certain societal prestige. All need not agree with it, but it can be assumed to carry certain social power over other discourses.

Fairclough's model for description is based on coupling texts' linguistic features with their structural-societal effects. All texts can be broken down to their vocabulary and grammar.[20] Each has three dimensions of analysis: contents, relations, and subjects (Fairclough 2001, 93ff). Texts' linguistic features can be divided into three features, each corresponding to different structural-societal effects. Experimental features[21] tell us about knowledge and belief structures in society. Relational features[22] correlate to social relations and expressive features[23] to social identities.

Contents refer to the explicitly manifested semantic content of the text. From the analysis of the content, we can see how the text is ideologically connected to different representations of the world and how it discloses collectively held knowledge and social beliefs (ibid., 94).

Let us look first the manifest content and vocabulary of the text. It strikes one that as a legal fragment, the text includes many imprecise and symbolic words like "the Slovak nation", "cultural heritage", and "expression of sovereignty". It could be argued that these may be ideologically contested words. One could further argue that over-wording like this in a legal context, shows "preoccupation with some aspect of reality" and "it is a focus of ideological struggle" (ibid., 96). There is also an interesting parallelism being built in the text: the Slovak language is at the same time an identifier of the Slovak nation, the most esteemed aspect of its cultural heritage and an expression of the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic. The Slovak language, then, links the nation, its cultural heritage, and the Slovak state. According to Fairclough's model, this conception of the role and power of the Slovak language reflects the knowledge and belief systems prevalent in Slovakia (presupposing that this discourse is not contested in a social struggle).

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19. This excerpt comes from the official translation of the law. Although caution should be used in interpreting it, it serves our purposes here sufficiently.

20. The third aspect would be textual structures that I have left out for the sake of brevity.

21. *Experimental features of vocabulary* refer to, e.g. the classification schemes, ideologically contested words, aspects of over-wording and potential meaning relations between words. The *experimental value of grammar* is revealed in the depictions of processes and participation of agency, in nominalisation as well as in the active and passive voice.

22. *Relational features* of words can be seen in euphemistic expressions or markedly formal or informal words given the context. The *relational features of grammar* are revealed in, e.g. in modes (declarative, imperative...) as well as in the use of pronouns.

23. *Expressive features* of vocabulary point at the evaluative character of words used. The *expressive features in grammar* can be found e.g. in expressive modality, which, put simply, refers to degree of certainty of the claim.

If we turn to the grammatical contents, we realise it is not clear from the text *who* makes this declaration, but as a legal text it has, at least, the force of law. It can be attributed to a certain institution and especially to those individuals who command this institution. This legislation was passed during Vladimír Mečiar's government, and its aides can be seen as the people holding the power to articulate this type of facts about the Slovak language. The text includes grammatical features that disguise the agency. For instance, "expression of sovereignty" is a nominalisation. The absence of agency here can be interpreted as implying a widely shared understanding.

We can now turn to the relations and subjects of vocabulary and grammar. These tell us about the relationship between the text and different representations of the world, and about the role of actors in the depiction corresponding to the social relations and identities involved in producing the text. If we look at the text's relational and expressive features, we notice that the Slovak language acquires explicitly positive attributes. Social relations and identities that are supportive of the "cause" of the Slovak language can therefore be assumed to have high prestige in Slovak society.

The Slovak language acquires a metonymical role of connecting the nation, culture and the state. This metonymical relationship can also be interpreted as a proof of spread of this discourse on the Slovak language.

Looking at the grammatical relations, we realise that the sentence is declarative: it declares certain facts about the Slovak language. We realise that the Slovak language is "the *most* important feature", "the most precious value", and "an expression" implying that it is in fact not the only attribute, value, or expression. One is left wondering what the other attributes, values and expressions are. Expressions that could seem to "undermine" the singular hegemonic interpretation of the text can be interpreted as stemming from the realities of any plural society. On the other hand, these words can also be a sign of the contested nature of the Slovak language law and its position in society.

This excerpt does not include a clear subject. Given its programmatic nature, however, wordings like "expression of sovereignty" or the emphasis on superlatives imply that the status of the Slovak language is in a way or another being questioned. We might therefore postulate that such texts imply that there are friends and enemies of the Slovak language.

The critical description of the textual features already indicate many linkages between the textual expression and the discourse. The next step in the analysis is to interpret these connections.

*Interpretation and Explanation*
Some hints at possible interpretations of the excerpt were already given above. Interpretation is the process through which the text acquires meaning and coherence and is situated in a broader context of social relations. Interpretation involves the interpreter's "member's resources", the cognitive capit-

al or background knowledge that the person possesses. The model Fairclough constructs for interpretation derives from the cognitive argument that certain internalised cognitive patters such as schema, frame and script guide human action. His approach rests on the cognitive argument that textual features are reflections of those patterns and, consequently, that textual features translate into human action.

The first stage of interpretation is the surface of the utterance, i.e. the deciphering of the semantic content of the text. This requires knowledge of the natural language in which the text is written. The second level involves the attribution of meaning to the text. Certain meanings need to be attributed to, for instance, the notions of "sovereignty" and "cultural heritage" (given that there is a substantial Hungarian language minority in Slovakia, the notion of "cultural heritage" may be especially contested). The third level of interpretation builds connections between different parts of the text. In our example this is a technically simple task: we have to figure out the metonymical position of the Slovak language as representing three very different elements. Real interpretation, however, requires that one deciphers how such a metonymy would look in the social world, that is, how it reflects the relations of power prevalent in Slovak society. The fourth level of interpretation concerns the relationship between the text and certain mental schemata, frames and scripts.[24] Here, the interpreter needs to realise that the text is a political and legal text and draws upon the attributes of such texts (or genres).

The fifth and sixth level of interpretation concern the contextualisation of the text. The prevalent social order "determines" (Fairclough 2001, 122) the institutional setting, which in turn "determines" (ibid.) the situational setting. Here, the relevant contexts include the political situation in Slovakia in 1995 when the preamble was first written, the problems facing a new state, the problems of transition as well as more immediate problems stemming from political struggles. These aspects help us contextualise the text as an example of a political programme in a nationalising state facing opposition from a national minority. The law can be seen as a plea for a more nationalist orientation in politics and support for nationalist parties. We can point out the people involved in this action (using extra-textual resources) and find other studies elaborating the relations between different political actors in 1995. This gives us an idea about the subjects involved in drafting and discussing the law. However, as the law was amended in 2009, we need to build a connection between political and social situations in 1995 and 2009. It is evident that the textual material available to us is not sufficient for this. This

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24. Mental schema refers to cognitively held representation of a particular type of active; frame refers to the cognitive representation of "whatever can figure as a topic, or 'subject matter', or 'referent' within an activity" (2001, 132); and script refers to the subjects and their relations in a given type of activity (schema).

shortcoming of CDA is recognised in Fairclough's writings and he explicitly calls for interdisciplinary approaches to solve these problems.

What CDA, however, has made possible is the focus on the relations of power between the politically dominant supporters of the Slovak language and its hypothesised, subordinated opponents.

*What Does CDA Miss?*

The use of CDA has revealed interesting aspects of the Slovak state language law debate that argument analysis could not detect. Most notably, we realise that the discourse on the state language law may be directed against a competing discourse in Slovak society. However, there are two shortcomings connected with this analysis. First, there is no evidence that the discourse is *interpreted* in the same way as it is produced. Certainly the limited material used above is partly to blame, but the problem of establishing what in fact is interpreted as distinguished from what is produced has been a source of much of criticism targeted against CDA (Widdowson 1995; 1996; Schegloff 1997). Here, I have not really been able to give the same interpretation as a social participant would or could. Rather, I have reconstructed the process of the discourse's production. For Fairclough, these are mirror images of the same cognitive process (2001, 118). Furthermore, the only extra textual hint we receive from the text itself is the year 1995, which helps us contextualise the text historically. However, we do not know which aspects of "transition" are important. We do not know whether the context for this text should be, for instance, a nationalising state (Brubaker 1996), or an internal party struggle as Deegan-Krause interprets (2004).

Second, the presupposition that all discourses are reflections of social power relations and that each discourse is an exercise of social power makes it necessary for the analyst to construct her analysis in fairly "juxtapositional" terms. The power relations that guide critical discourse analysis lead to a reading of texts as instances of power. The preamble to the law quoted above *becomes* a site for the manifestation of certain power relations, and therefore leads away from power-neutral readings.[25]

A power-neutral reading, for instance, would focus on the "neutral" facts that the Slovak language is, indeed, the most applicable (if not the sole) attribute of the distinctiveness of the Slovak nation, the only value of its cultural heritage as well as the only expression of the sovereignty of the Slovak

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25.  Given that Fairclough assumes the existence of predefined power relations in any human interaction it is no wonder that relations of subjugation are also found in e.g. teacher-pupil (2001, 57-58), professor-student (2001, 37-39), and the police-victim (2001, 81-82) relations. Illustrative of this is that feedback at school from the teacher is "evaluative comments" (2001, 113) and not, for instance, positive feedback (the word used for this evaluative comment in the example Faircough discusses was "good").

Republic. Such a reading would lead to questions about the historical contingencies that have given rise to this situation. In terms of the distinctiveness of the nation, one would need to understand how the Slovaks and Czechs construct their separate identities. With regard to the cultural heritage, one would ask why the language and not, for instance, literature or some other aspect of cultural tradition is considered paramount. And as of sovereignty, one would want to investigate the peculiarities of the notion of sovereignty that allows it to be marked by the *language* as opposed to, say, the constitution. But these questions do not emerge as outcomes of relations of power and are therefore left outside CDA's purview. Moreover, empirical research has shown that conventional relations of power, such as that between interviewer-interviewee, are not predictable and can easily be overhauled during discussion (e.g. Berg 2001a, 131).

The use of CDA leads to an understanding that, for instance, the superlatives in the law have constructed the potential opposition as something that downplays the importance of the Slovak language. This does not need to be a misleading picture, but it has implications to our attempts to describe, interpret, and above all explain. Let is return to the excerpt from Agnes Biró's speech again:

> [I]t is said that it is not our language that is like us. But that we are like our language is... Our law on the state language clearly states that the Slovak language has precedence over other languages used in the territory of the state, at the same time giving rise [to the fact] that the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak Republic. [--] The state still does not understand that its task is not to hand out human rights. Its task is to guarantee human rights. (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103-111)

Given the power relations behind discourses, this text coming from the opposition and which questions the law on several points, is to be interpreted accordingly. For instance, Biró's point that the law postulates that Slovaks are the only state-forming subject must be interpreted as hostility to the idea of Slovaks being a state-forming subject in Slovakia. This necessarily polarises the relations between the government and the opposition. It precludes analyses that would see the debate, although carried out in rather antithetical terms, as leading to an outcome unforeseen by either participant. Fairclough's notion of social struggle as a battle between two self-conscious political positions does not allow for the emergence of something unexpected. However, as we now know, the debate ended with special Principles (Zásady 2009) that stipulated a clear distinction between all citizens and the state. This cannot be reduced to the conscious positions of either the law's supporters or opponents. It seems that the social struggle, the fate of the parliamentary debate, and the bill each have a degree of autonomy. This makes

it problematic to attribute all changes in the bill and debate to corresponding changes in the relations of power between the parties.

*Critical Discourse Analysis and Language*
The central thesis of CDA is that extra-textual relations of power can explain the text. Fairclough argues that, "the way in which a society organises its economic production, and the nature of the relationships established in production between social classes, are fundamental structural features which determine others" (Fairclough 2001, 26). This position allows him to generalise that similar relations of production in two countries have similar effects on prevalent discourses. For CDA, the ultimate source of interpretation is not really the text, but the dominant social relations of power which the text reflects.[26] Certainty in textual interpretation can be achieved with the help of the social context in which the text occurs.

CDA also privileges speech over interpretation. Fairclough discusses interpretation as the mirror process of production. As such, it is constrained by "internalised social structures, norms and conventions" as well as by the context of interpretation "which determines what elements of members' resources are drawn upon" (1992, 80). The main analytical effort of CDA lies in the connection between discursive practices and social practices, that is, in the way in which social conditions determine possible interpretations. Because of this, the distinction between the production and the interpretation of discourse fades away. The latter becomes a mirror of the former, which justifies an explicit focus on speech production at the expense of its interpretation.

Finally, Fairclough's treatment of intertextuality—the ambiguity in language—reveals how discourse analysis aims at the reduction of meaning. He, in my opinion, rightly, notes that intertextuality implies that each text has been furnished with certain history, which means that any texts builds upon previous texts (ibid., 102). But immediately after, he puts this polyphony of intertextuality at the service of a hegemonic discourse:

> The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones. But this productivity is not in practice available to people as a limitless space for textual innovation and play: it is socially limited and constrained, and conditional upon relations of power. The theory of intertextuality cannot itself account for these social limitations, so it needs to be combined with a theory of power relations and they shape (and are shaped by) social structures and

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26. Critical discourse analysis as a theory of society argues for the dialectical relationship between social forces and the discourse, but critical discourse analysis as a textual analysis seeks explanation for the text from the social relations of power.

practices. The combination of hegemony theory...with intertextuality is particularly fruitful. (Fairclough 1992, 102-103)

Change in discourse, consequently, is possible only if there exists a social struggle that alters the fundamental structures of society, that is, those of the relations of production. Fairclough does not, however, treat actors as mere puppets of discourse. He acknowledges the possibility of resistance. This is, nevertheless, an acknowledgement of social facts: resistance and non-compliance do, indeed, happen, but it remains unclear how resistance can be grasped by critical discourse analysis other than as the explication of another discourse (itself as hegemonic as the one which is resisted). No wonder that critical discourse analysis is mainly geared to the analysis and exposure of the hegemonic discourses such as new capitalism or globalisation. One example of this type of work that includes work on parliamentary talk is Fairclough's *New Labour, New Language?* (2000).


## Monologism and Dialogism

I will now draw theoretical conclusions from the three investigations into methods of textual analysis. Argument analysis, speech acts, and critical discourse analysis all, albeit in different ways, i) privilege the production of the text at the expense of its interpretation, ii) conceive of communication as a transfer of information and, therefore, see the process of textual analysis as a process that reduces text's polysemy into (preferably) one coherent meaning, and iii) evoke an external context to "finalise" or "fix" the meaning of ambiguous texts. These features are characteristic of a monologic understanding of language (Linell 1998; 2005; 2009).

Among the basic assumptions of monologism is the idea that human cognition is an independent phenomenon of information processing that takes place in the human mind and brain. Communication, in turn, is a process of transferring and exchanging information stemming from individual cognition. Communication employs language. Language functions as a code enabling the transfer of information. Therefore, language as a structure ontologically precedes its use by individuals (Linell 1998, 17-26; 32-33). In monologism, the meaning of an utterance is understood as the intention of the speaker, and "language provides the expressions for, or representations of, a message, or content, already conceived" (Linell 1998, 26-27). The point Linell makes is that context-specific aspects of language use and, for instance, meanings can be reduced to the underlying structure of language. Consequently, each linguistic expression has only one semantic representation, which is activated whenever the linguistic expression is used. The context can only add a few extra meanings to this fixed semantic content.

This view is perfectly compatible with common claims that language is creative. Creation, here, occurs at the level of the linguistic expressions that are used. Nonetheless, the link between the expression and its semantic content remains firm. In other words, monologism is grounded on the conviction that each word (signifier)—also in practice—denotes a given object (signified). It is these two "monologic" sources of authority of meaning in communication that give this view its label "monologism": that is the individual intention and the unitary linguistic structure that both precede the act of communication (Linell 2009, 35).

Monologism holds, further, that cognition precedes communication. Ideas are transmitted in communication and language functions as a medium for representing thought. Whilst this allows deliberation in the sense of a convergence of opinions (with an expressed idea), it denies communication any constitutive role in *generating* new meanings.

One obvious application of monologism in methods of text analysis is the preoccupation with individual speech acts as objects of analysis. Communication as the transmission of information should aim at an exact transfer of meaning between the sender and the recipient. This is achieved by postulating that language is a sufficiently stable framework of rules and words with their referents in the world. Language as a code is neutral and under the full command of the speaker. Inability to live up to this promise in reality are often perceived as the fault of the individual or as problems caused by the context. Consequently, context is seen as a kind of container of communication that provides the utterances with a surplus of meaning that can, potentially, prevent the transmission of the real intentions of the speaker. Above all, the uniqueness of the context should be minimised in communication.

All these aspects are central to thinking about language in political science. They can be illustrated briefly with an example of concept formation, which often has a normative imperative to generate clear and precise concepts. John Gerring argues that concept formation connects between the phenomenal world, the subject matter of social science, and the linguistic shape of social science. Clear and precise concepts enable us to know what we are talking about (Gerring 2001, 35). Good concepts "present...[the] phenomenal world as accurately as possible" (ibid., 37). Conceptual definitions should make most of the eight criteria of coherence, operationalisation, validity, field utility, resonance, contextual range, parsimony and analytical/empirical utility (ibid., 40). Gerring's understanding of concepts and the need for good definitions relies on the understanding of language as possessing all the necessary properties for stable definitions of some referred to worldly phenomena. A good definition of concepts makes it possible to use them to communicate information.

Gerring's account is useful because it is sophisticated enough to note the difficulties connected with concept formation. Indeed, Gerring refers to

concept formation as a process of *adjustment* (ibid., 60). Increased resonance improves the concept's contextual range but decreases, for instance, its coherence, operationalisation and validity. However, these are trade-offs only if one approaches language as a type of monologism that requires precise definitions *prior to* the moment of interaction in order to facilitate the transfer of information.

The ultimate challenges that monologism poses to text analysis are twofold. First, there is the impossible task of ascertaining the individual's intention as the authority that could fix the meaning of the utterance; second, the practical problems that stem from the forceful postulation of a unitary linguistic structure superimposed upon actual communication. Monologism is further troubled by an understanding of context, which it posits as something external to communication and something within which communication takes place. This postulate requires the delineation of context *prior to* any communication if one is to assess its effects upon communication.

This view of context would require those attempting text analysis to step outside the primary material of text, and with the help of other methods define a context for their research. Anyone who has attempted critical discourse analysis knows how it changes with the context. This shifts the questions of reliability from the analysis of the material to the secondary tasks of defining the context. Both problems, however, can easily be solved if we approach language from the perspective of dialogism.

Dialogism is the counter-part of monologism. Just as the term monologism does not mean that only one person speaks, dialogism does not mean a focus on two people conversing. Dialogism is an alternative understanding of language. Bakhtin, who first formulated the distinction between monologism and dialogism, understands them as forces in language. He names these centripetal and centrifugal respectively. Monologism for Bakhtin is always posited (*zadan*), not a given existing fact (*dan*) of language (1981, 270). Similarly, Linell describes monologism as a written language *bias*. He means that linguistics and the study of language have been grounded upon the idea of language as a standardised structure (2005, 31).

The notion of language as a structure is a powerful one. It has been central in transforming the study of language into an (exact) science. A quick look at the terminology of linguistics reveals, however, that this "scientification" has been achieved at the expense of empirical observation. Phonetics, the science of sounds, studies phonemes which are the abstracted sounds distinguished by the objective criteria of their production. Phonemes are normative, ideal-type sounds, and they do not exist in real speech. Real speech, instead, is characterised by prosody, which refers to two different aspects of sound. The contextual intonation of sounds is called prosody, but the same term is also used to refer to the difference between the ideal and the actual sound. Similarly, monologic grammar focuses on normative *rules* of lan-

guage, whilst actual speech is characterised by *functions* of language. Functions are contextual rather than objective. Finally, in lexis, monologic linguistics has focused on semantics, dictionary definitions, truth conditions, and referential meanings. In actual speech, however, most obvious meanings are bound by the context and by the concrete use of language.

Faced with these examples, one might concede that the study of *spoken* language requires some adjustment from the side of monologic linguistics, but surely *written* language is best researched with tools provided by normative grammar, semantics and referential meanings. This argument misses the point. Monologic and dialogic perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. The real problem of monologism is connected with its two sources of authority over meaning: the linguistic structure and the speaker. In order to critique monologism and understand dialogism, one should start with hermeneutics that emphasises the act and context of interpretation. From this perspective, dialogism appears to reflect better the actual nature of language; monologism is more useful to the (positivist) scientific aims of linguistics (Linell 1998, 266ff.).

Linell outlines four sources of contemporary dialogical approach to language. From phenomenology, dialogism borrows the idea of the individual perception of phenomena as a process of obtaining knowledge both of the phenomena and of the self in the form of experience. In social sciences, the pioneering work on social constructivism, Berger's and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967), takes Alfred Schütz's phenomenological sociology as its starting point. Here I will discuss Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics as an example of phenomenology in language. The second source derives from pragmaticism[27] as developed by Charles S. Peirce and William James. They observed a gradual evolution of meaning in the process of thinking and dialogue between an interpreter and the chain of signs. The third source comes from psychological theory of interactionism and concerns the role of the other in the constitution of the self. Lastly, dialogism draws inspiration from ways in which social psychological theories of culture link broader cultural constructions to the processes of interaction. Such theories were elaborated in various ways in the Soviet and East European context by, for instance, Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, and his colleagues Valentin Vološinov and Pavel Medvedev.[28]

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27.  Pragmaticism refers to the pragmatic philosophy championed by Peirce. According to Peirce, it should not be confused with pragmatism, which refers to (selfish) resort to pragmatic means to pursue one's own ends. Contemporary usage does not make such a distinction.

28.  There are many other who have realised the constitutive role of the other for the self. For instance Martin Buber published his *I and Though* in 1923 and Georg Herbert Mead *Mind, Self, and Society* in 1934, but the connections between I and the Other *in language* developed furthest in the Soviet context where the emphasis is less on mutual recognition or consensus than on the intrusion of the Other in the self.

Dialogism can be summarised as comprising five central arguments. First, the idea that cognition and communication always stem from a certain perspective. Second, that the meanings of cognition, or of communication, are generated through interaction, i.e. they do not exist prior to communication. Third, any communicative action is interdependent of prior acts and anticipated future acts. Fourth, communicative acts encompass certain immediate situatedness, but also elements of a broader cultural milieu. Fifth, language is the medium within which communication takes place (Linell 1998, 48). Each point in its own way calls into question Saussure's foundational distinction between the social structure as embodied in *la langue* and the subjective *parole*. My contention is that if one is to go beyond the monologic perspective, it is not enough to the focus on *parole*. One has to reach beyond the distinction between language and speech.

Every theory of language, especially if understood more broadly, includes an implicit theory of subjectivity and, by extension, intersubjectivity. Above, I discussed how methods of text analysis concretely translate monologism into practice. I will now discuss the implications of monologism and dialogism for conceptions of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity.

The claim that intention can be the authority of the meaning of a text implies that the utterance is delivered by a self-conscious person who *knows* and *masters* what she has uttered. Similarly, an utterance that conveys completed meanings through the medium of language positions the speaking subject outside the scope of language and subjects the language to the command of the speaking individual.

The question of the relationship of the speaking person to language has two important facets that need reviewing here. The first concerns the *powers* granted to the individual speech (act) and the second the different conceptualisations of intersubjectivity.

The *powers* granted to the individual speech (act) can be set in the broader context of the debate between Gadamer and Habermas in 1967. To sum up succinctly, Gadamer holds that the individual is always already *in* language and that it is language that speaks through the individual. It is therefore preposterous to think of the individual as commanding language according to her will. Rather, it is only by submitting herself to language and tradition that any genuine understanding (between her and other people) can occur. Habermas, however, accuses Gadamer of acceding to the totalisation of language. He argues that this unwarranted view of language eludes the (ideological) power vested in linguistically transmitted tradition. Habermas argues further that it is possible for the individual subject to rationally reflect upon linguistic structures, and therefore establish (at least strive towards) an ideal speech situation in which rationality reigns over tradition.[29] Gadamer, in turn, holds that there is no privileged position from which to view tradition. The speaking subject is always already engaged in linguistically transmitted traditions.

Gadamer's response may appear insufficient, a mere restatement of his earlier position. At the risk of oversimplification, one could summarise the two positions as follows. For Habermas, language appears to be a tool with which the individual can contribute to interaction by making meaningful and valid statements, which can, in turn, be engaged with critically. For Gadamer, the speaker's text appears as an aesthetic truth that carries its own power, which is independent of the speaker. These differences also have implications for the subsequent reception of speech. Gadamer's postulation that all understanding is always understanding differently denies the possibility of Habermasian communicative action that draws from the normative validity claims embedded in every statement (see Habermas 1979; 1990, 57-58).

These differences give rise to two different approaches to the the condition of intersubjectivity. For Habermas, intersubjectivity has a latent instrumental aspect. It ascertains the validity claims and thus works towards shared understandings. For Gadamer, intersubjectivity appears more as an ontological condition within which interpretation can happen. Tradition as "prejudice" itself is intersubjectivity, which enables the act of interpretation to function as a fusion of horizons (more on this in Chapter 4). The essential difference is that Habermas' notion of intersubjectivity requires active (and constructive) participation by the Other. Gadamer's intersubjectivity, by contrast, pertains more to the condition of being. This problematises the common view of intersubjectivity as (achieved) shared "information". This distinction acquires heightened relevance when one considers aesthetics and its role in language.

These different understandings of intersubjectivity can be contextualised in terms of representation. Below, I touch on Habermas' theory of argumentation and the role of aesthetics in it, but I do not discuss his theory of art (works), which he saw as a part of societal modernisation. Frank Ankersmit distinguishes between mimetic and aesthetic representation. Mimetic repres-

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29. Habermas' position is delicate to say the least. On the one hand, he opposes Heideggerian phenomenology and structuralism that do "away with the legacy of the philosophy of consciousness in a particularly relentless way" and substitutes language—"as an epochal destining of Being, as the frenzy of signifiers, or as a shoving match between discourses"—for self-consciousness (Habermas 1992, 207). Against the philosophy of self-consciousness, phenomenology, structuralism, and post-structuralism Habermas proposes the terminology of "intersubjective structure" and communicative action that that can generate intersubjective consensus on truth grounded on (universal) rationality found in linguistic practices rather than on discourses. This leads Habermas to criticise literary Theory for doing away with any distinctions between the genres of literature, science and everyday interaction and treating them all as subspecies of literature. Against this background, he builds his theory of communicative action on—arguably universal—rationality found in everyday interaction. Rationality he understood as "a disposition of speaking and acting subjects that is expressed in modes of behaviour for which there are good reasons or grounds. This means that rational expressions admit of objective evaluation" (Habermas 1984, 22).

entation refers to the capacity of the representative to "mime" the represented—based on sameness in terms of identity, place of residence etc. Aesthetic representation, in contrast, refers to the capacity and need of the representatives to bridge the gap between the represented and the representatives. In the process, Ankersmit argues, the representatives also aesthetically produce the constitution of the represented (Ankersmit 1996, 21-56). Habermas, unlike other critical theorists, is not known for his aesthetic theory and Ankersmit, in fact, suggests, that Habermas is closer to the mimetic conception of representation (ibid., 29). Nevertheless, we need to ask how communicative action relates to the aesthetic conception of representation and what kind of intersubjectivity is proposed in consequence.

We can take as our starting point Woźniak's speech (the one that opened the first Chapter). For Habermas, communicative competence means that speakers are able to distinguish between objective, social and subjective worlds and corresponding forms of validity claims—empirical truth, normative validity or rightness, and truthfulness respectively. Communicative competence requires the speaker and the listener to be able to distinguish between these three different worlds and their respective rationalities of validation. In Woźniak's speech, however, all three validity claims are conflated. His argument that parity is unconstitutional builds simultaneously on a truth claim about the Polish constitution, that is, its interpretation (rightness), but also on his personal conviction that that bill should be rejected. We could speculate on why Woźniak begins his speech by explaining how he as a man respects women. This introduction can only be interpreted as contributing to the personal truthfulness of Woźniak's speech. In this way, it is aesthetic rather than objective or normative. The same applies to the allegory with state socialism evoked by the film *Seksmisja*.

In fact, Woźniak's speech is more typical than atypical of actual political talk. Most talk in politics is aesthetic and stems from the aesthetic explication of the speaker's inner conviction. Ironically, it appears that when it comes to concrete application of Habermas' communicative rationality, the aspect that best matches up with actual political talk, the aesthetic, is the least developed and in fact largely excluded from the realm of intersubjective validity claims (Duvenage 2003, 59, 97ff). This means that intersubjectivity, with its constitutive nature of social reality, is excluded when it comes to the aesthetic validity of truthfulness. The sole authority of meaning of aesthetic statements appears to be the speaking subject.

Let us, however, imagine a situation in which it would be possible to distinguish between empirical, normative and aesthetic claims. Let us see what kind of intersubjectivity Habermas's communicative action would then entail. Habermas argues that in everyday communication, the three different worlds of validity claims all interact. He criticises post-structuralist literary critics like Derrida for their aestheticisation of language, which has lead

them to argue that *rhetoric* takes over the *logic* of everyday communication. He holds that the logic that underlies everyday communication makes it possible to curtail rhetoric polysemy. He understands that the regularities that guide everyday communication enable, or even empower, interlocutors to achieve mutual understanding put forward by validity claims invested in illocutions. The interactive rapprochement *in* the validity claim constitutes social reality. Habermas' argument thus comes close to what I have presented above as dialogism. There is, however, an essential difference, which is that of the distinction between the dialogic understanding of language and the dialogue in the monologic understanding of language. The difference is that for Habermas, the validity claim is expressed in the illocution, in the individual speech act that has to be comprehended logically, i.e. based on some mutually shared principle (his universal pragmatics). Only mutual comprehension can make possible the logical judgement of the validity claim, and thus establish grounds for rational discourse *on* the validity claim. Aesthetic language championed by Derrida eschews the internal logic that would enable mutual understanding.

I do not advocate complete aestheticisation of language; nor do I deny the existence of any internal logic in everyday communication. (Such logic is, in fact, the object of study of conversation analysis.) The dialogic understanding of language questions the possibility of the illocution to function as a validity claim, as a completed statement that can express the empirical truth, the normative right, and the internal truthfulness of the speaker. In his criticism of Derrida, Habermas accords the interlocutor the constitutive force in relation to the validity claim, but this constitutive force entails *prior* understanding of the illocution. Dialogic understanding of language holds that the constitutive force of the interlocutor is not to understand the stated validities, but to *generate them in the act of interpretation*. This is the difference between the dialogic understanding of language and a dialogue (in the monologic understanding of language).

Bakhtin observed that dialogic and monologic understandings of language are best characterised as competing *forces* in language: without the monologic premise that an illocution can convey meaning, there would be little point in communication, but this "transmission" should not be presupposed or posited in real communication. If it happens, it is an achievement, but it is not a position upon which one can ground empirical analysis. Theoretically Habermas and Bakhtin, in certain respects, come close to each other. Perhaps the difference between them is best characterised as a *bias* in their respective thinking. When Habermas faces ambiguity, he—in the name of the general good and universal emancipation—tends towards a consensus between actors, which involuntarily silences the individual voices. When Bakhtin faces ambiguity, he—in the name of the ethical principle of difference—tends towards difference, in order to salvage the individual unique-

ness of the speaking subject. For him, individual life is never commensurate with external culture. This perspective will be developed in Chapter 4.

The practical problem inherent in Habermas' account of everyday communication is its foundation on hypothetical examples of language (Habermas 1998, Chapters 2 and 7) that are rather remote from naturally occurring communication. One of the findings of the parliamentary debates in Chapters 6 and 7 is that the topic of debate appears, in fact, to evolve by each turn. It is therefore difficult to argue that natural communication would witness rational judgements of validity claims. Rather, the debate is characterised by a constantly moving target of aesthetic rhetoric.[30] Actual communication cannot be reduced to the interaction of the I-Thou relationship. Nor can it be reduced to a superimposition of an overarching rational (or hegemonic) discourse. It must be understood as taking place between the I-Thou interaction *and* the emerging discourse. Like a theory of montage that holds that from the clash of two images emerges a third, non-reducible image, the dialogic understanding of language holds that actually occurring conversation generates new meanings rather than reduces polyphony. Indeed, empirical studies on understanding (Kauppinen 2013) show how understanding is *demonstrated* by producing what Sacks called "second stories" (Sacks 1992, 252-254) that *analogously* apply the structure of the text in order to demonstrate that it is understood. In other words, understanding in practice is not revealed by stating "I have understood", but by applying the story to a new story, that is, by generating something *new* out of it. The connection between these two texts is to be found in the aesthetics of the text, in the ways it is structured and how its structure and content are interwoven.

In sum, the main difference between monologic and dialogic understand-

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30.   There are not many empirical applications of Habermas' theory in the analysis of actual communication. One illustrative example is John Forester's (2003) short application of Habermas' communicative action to a study of city planners' meeting. Forester is able to show how the planners through irony and joke construct mutual understanding between themselves, but the analysis is silent on the empirical facts that each woman's illocution is responded to with an irony or denial as well as contextual knowledge that is not readily available from the material such as the assistant director's exclamation "Oh yeah; that's a minor detail." (ibid., 51). This may be "patently false, as everyone knows" (ibid.), but its effects that are not perhaps invested in the intended illocutionary force of the assistant director upon the addressee (woman) is the fact that she does not engage in the dialogue anymore in the extract. It is true that the dialogue Forester is analysing can be read as a congenial construction of mutual understanding, but there are all the elements of silencing, ridiculing, avoiding responsibility especially visible along the division of the directer and assistance director on the one hand and the rest of the staff on the other. Forester's analysis is guided more by his prior conviction of the promise of the communicative action that (must) lead to mutual understanding than the empirical conversation that, indeed as Derrida observed, is polysemous and there is little indication that this polysemy is cleared away by the logic of communication, on the contrary, this logic precisely gives rise to and articulates the silencing of the women, the juxtaposition between the directors and the rest of the staff.

ings of language can be perceived in the former's claim that meaning is invested in individual speech acts, and that communication works towards mutual understanding understood as the continuous reduction of polysemy. Therefore, for instance, context is perceived as something *a priori* to interaction. In the process of analysis, the "distorting" effects of the context are supposed to be cleared away. Dialogic understanding of language, by contrast, holds that an individual illocution is not a sufficient unit of textual analysis, for communication generates new, non-reducible meanings. Further, from the dialogic perspective, context is a product of interaction rather than an independent "container" of it. Textual analysis from a dialogic perspective aims, therefore, at elucidating the processes of meaning generation, of increasing polyphony, and of understanding the resulting evolution of the context. The dialogic understanding of language acknowledges the co-presence of multiple and mutually exclusive contexts and focuses on the non-reducible effects of the clash between such contexts. This process is best approached as the aesthetics rather than as the logics of communication.

## Towards Dialogic Language

This chapter has discussed a three-fold problem in methods of text analysis. The first part of the problem concerns the focus on production of speech at the expense of its reception. This is grounded in the understanding of communication as the transfer of information, which, in turn, gives rise to the idea of that the overall purpose of interpretation is to reduce inherent polysemy to, ideally, one stable meaning. This, finally, forms the basis for the third part of the problem, that is, evoking an external, *a priori* context that would enable to fix *the* meaning of the text.

I have also suggested that these problems are all symptoms of a monologic understanding of language. The distinction between monologic and dialogic understanding of language derives from Bakhtin's studies of language and especially of literary works, which are complex, long texts. Bakhtin discusses monologism and dialogism as *forces in* language. Linell has observed that linguistics has predominantly tended towards monologic concept of language and that this has introduced a clear bias in linguistic research. As forces or as a bias, they are not mutually exclusive positions, but reveal different emphases in the study of language.

None of the samples of text analysis discussed above fall clearly into an exclusively monologic understanding of language. For that one needs to turn to, for instance, content analysis as practiced by Vedung (1982). However, the central themes of monological understanding of language obviously inform the methods discussed above and they give rise of a number of practical problems in text analysis.

The monologic understanding of language conceives of communication as the transfer of (existing) meaning derived from the prior individual conceptualisations of the speaker. One aspect of communication is, therefore, the constitution of the message. The Toulmin model has been discussed as a constituting a highly developed and sophisticated way of studying the constitution of arguments based on empirical logic. However, as it turns out, the examples Toulmin used are not "natural". They are hypothetical, simple, and purged of meanings that do not bear directly on the argument. These omissions render the model difficult to apply to real, "messy" parliamentary debate. In addition, such an anatomy of argument limits itself to the study of one argument and has limited potential to focus on the interaction between arguments, which better characterises real debate. Finally, the field-dependency of the force of the argument, in practice means that the appearance of two contexts also gives rise to two different meanings rather than to a shift in focus from *the meaning* to the processes of *meaning making* (Linell 2005, 131).

Skinner's focus on the speech act and rhetoric as aspects of production of speech draw from Austin's and Searle's speech act theory. This has proved to be extremely useful for the study of historical texts, for these can be conceived as long "speech acts" in a historical debate. In the case of a parliamentary debate, however, its neglect of the effect of the illocution, the perlocution, limits its applicability in a dynamically evolving debate. This is primarily so because the fundamental unit of analysis remains the illocution itself, which is conditioned by the intentions of the speaking subject. This leaves out the dynamics inherent in the parliamentary debate itself.

The two approaches discussed above focus on Saussurean *parole*. This "parole" is taken to be a self-contained unit that can be broken down in order to reveal its anatomy. When linguistic signs are approached as self-standing units, it becomes difficult to steer the analysis towards the interlinkages that the signs have developed in concrete interaction. The problems that emerged in the above examples question the feasibility of focusing on individual arguments or utterances as sufficient and meaningful units of analysis.

The third and perhaps the most classical way of treating language as a monologue is to focus on its structure. Language as structure has been the focus of extensive literary and social scientific research. Early, static ideas of structure have largely been abandoned for a more dialogical understanding of structure. CDA has contributed much here, especially as a *theory of society*. However, as *the practice of text analysis,* many features of monologism still prevail in critical discourse analysis. The practice of critical discourse analysis reduces language as a structure to a reflection of social relations of power. Discourse, as analysed by Fairclough, is so tightly bound to social relations of power that its independent existence is negated. Hence the problem of the prior analysis of the prevalent relations of power influencing, to a large extent, the textual analysis. Indeed, much of empirical critical dis-

course analysis focuses on the explication of the hegemonic discourses. In this case, the connection between the contemporary social relations of power and their discursive or textual expressions is more obvious. However, it proved difficult to use critical discourse analysis in the analysis of the inter-action—or clash—of discourses, for the only way it can account for their meeting is by turning to social analysis of power relations. And this, finally, is a problem for text analysts who then have to step outside their "comfort zone" and primary material and search for sources that may be only indir-ectly related to their textual material.

The following three chapters will develop the principle of dialogism that, I argue, can answer the needs analysts face when studying political talk such as takes place in the parliament. In Chapter 3, I will continue to scrutinise how talk can be conceptualised as social action, and how talk produces its own context. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of hermeneutics and the dialogicality of language. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will translate my theoretical apparatus into four methodological points that provide systematicity to the task of interpreting parliamentary talk.

# Chapter 3: Talk and Immanent Context

The previous chapter ended by describing a set of problems for the study of parliamentary talk that are caused by the monologic understanding of language. In sum, they are that production is more important than reception; that interpretation should aim at ascertaining what was said implying that any polysemy contained in the utterance should be reduced by interpretation; and that this can be done by evoking an external context in which the production of speech occurred. In Chapters 3 to 5, I will present an alternative way of approaching the interpretation in parliamentary talk. My alternative is informed by Gadamer's hermeneutics, Bakhtin's dialogicality of language, and Lotman's cultural semiotics.

Since the dialogic understanding of language and hermeneutics takes a different stance to language and text than that informed by a monologic understanding of language, I will also reformulate the "three problems" of monologism. We no longer think of speech as the most important part of communication. Therefore, we focus on the *interaction* between speaking and interpreting subjects. Consequently, interpretation cannot only be about eliciting already existing information. It is as much about *generating* that information. Finally, context in this situation cannot be thought of as preceding communication but it becomes an *outcome* of communication.

This necessitates new ways of addressing the shortcomings of the monologic understanding of language. I will start by looking at talk and how it generates its own context (Chapter 3). I will then move on to interpretation as active and productive of meaning (Chapter 4). Finally, I will look at how we can study concrete interaction where an utterance always exists as an *answer* to the preceding speech and as a *question* posed to the subsequent speech.

This chapter will show how context can be thought of as text-immanent, that is, something constructed actively as the talk evolves. It will draw on conversation analysis as a suitable way to approach actually occurring talk. It will also show how the constitutive moment of language can be captured precisely in this construction of the context. Chapter 4 will be the theoretical core of this work. It will discuss the hermeneutics and dialogicality of language, and the consequent shift of meaning generation from production to interpretation, as well as what implications this have for methods of textual analysis. I will draw on the works of German hermeneutician Hans-Georg Gadamer and Russian literary and cultural theorists Mikhail Bakhtin and

Yuri Lotman. Chapter 5 will indicate how this theoretical apparatus can in fact be put into practice. It will provide an explication of some basic tools of conversation analysis in a context of Bakhtinian/Lotmanian understanding of language.

## Context and Linguistics

I treat parliamentary talk as a sub-type of talk in general. In order to proceed from the simple to the more complex, I will start with ordinary talk and go on to institutional talk, and discuss the issue of context in both cases.

The methods of text analysis discussed in Chapter 2 adopt different perspectives on the role played by context in textual interpretation. First, in the Toulmin model the warrants but especially the backings are tied to their contexts. Knowing the context is a prerequisite for understanding the argument. The only cue Toulmin offers analysts seeking to determine this context is the field-dependency of argumentation. Thus, for instance, in arguments related to medicine, a medical context should be postulated. This is, however, an artificial possibility in politics, which is characterised by simultaneous attention to many different "fields": here medical arguments are also political. Skinner was more open as of the proper context. He argued that a linguistic mapping of what was possible to say must accompany attempts to assess the illocutionary force of the text. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis offers a broad understanding of context, which includes the socio-economic and political contexts, both of which give rise to and are constructed through discourse. In other words, there is an interactive relationship between the external context and the text and some aspects of the external context are also physically present in the text.

In linguistics, a distinction is often made between the linguistic (or verbal) context, and the external or social context. Ferdinand de Saussure's seminal distinction between *la langue* and *parole* separated the linguistic structure (*la langue*) from the actual, individual, instantiation of that structure (*parole*). Saussure urged linguists to focus on and explicate the objectively existing structure thus providing linguistics with (natural) scientific goal and precision (Saussure 1983, 25). This goal was readily adopted by other social sciences in the form of structuralism (see Seung 1982, 3-20). In this form it excluded the study of actual talk. The distinction between objectively existing linguistic structure composed of differences (*la langue*) and the individual instantiation of speech or writing existing in time and place (*parole*) gives rise to three different questions with regard to context.

For linguistics, the linguistic system long proved to be a sufficient context of analysis *because* at quest was the explication of the structure rather than the concrete observed instance. Early structuralists such as Lévi-

Strauss applied Saussure's linguistic theory to the study of society. He charted a structure of meaningful signs, based on the model of the so-called "phonological revolution" that postulates a system of differences that can account for all the phonemes of a given language (Culler 1976, 93-94). Structuralism presupposes the existence of a closed structure composed of synchronous system of binary distinctions, which determined all meaning. Some forms of content analysis in political science proceed on the assumption that the actual social and political context is rather an impediment to understanding than something important. Such reasoning informs, for instance Evert Vedung's (1982) content analysis; it also plays a role in Toulmin's argument analysis. In both, the meaning of the word does not depend on the context of its use (in Toulmin's case, what is *reasonable* is contextual, but not its meaning).

If, however, one agrees that the external context matters, one needs to tackle Saussure's distinction between *la langue* and *parole*—the relationship between the objective, abstract, and socially shared on the one hand, and the idiosyncratic expression on the other. One central problem of Saussure's linguistic system is that it could not account for the speaking subject in terms of internal differences in the system. The speaking subject is denoted by pronouns such as "I" or "you". These acquire their meaning not within the linguistic system, but in the concrete situation of those speaking. The same observation extends to deictics like "here" and "there". It became obvious that the concrete context of language usage had to be incorporated into linguistic analysis.

Within linguistics, the unit of analysis expanded from the individual word to the whole sentence. This allowed the inclusion of more broader co-text (the words preceding and following the word analysed). In related disciplines like sociolinguistics, the social situation of interaction became part of the analysis. However, as more and more context came under consideration, the object of analysis changed from language to talk or interaction. John Gumperz and Jenny Cook-Gumperz argue that

> We customarily take gender, ethnicity, and class as given parameters and boundaries within which we create our own social identities. The study of language as interactional discourse demonstrates that these parameters are not constants that can be taken for granted but are communicatively produced. Therefore to understand issues of identity and how they affect and are affected by social, political, and ethnic divisions we need to gain insights into the communicative processes by which they arise. (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982, 1)

The second question one faces, therefore, concerns the nature of the external context. Is it linguistic or social or both? Skinner's approach to this was to argue that one makes sense of external social reality primarily through texts.

For him, the linguistic context of the utterance is primary. Fairclough, by contrast, put more emphasis on the interaction between the linguistic and the social context showing how discourse both produces and is produced by the social context. Fairclough's position is close to the mainstream sociolinguistic understanding that argues that the text is a certain reflection of social reality (or that at least there is mutual dependency between the type of text and the type of social situation) (e.g. Blom and Gumperz 1972, for more discussion see van Dijk 2009, vii).

These developments required new terminology, able to address the linkages between symbolic and material-social conditions. One new term was discourse, used in linguistics to refer to language and its context.[31] However, as Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz make clear, at question is a *process*; this is also evident etymologically, referring to the act of speaking rather to the act of utterance. In text analysis, this is often taken to mean that the context is a kind of container within which interaction can occur (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 82-83), and within which the goal of interpretation as reduction of polysemy can be achieved. This type of context includes aspects like "geographical, historical or political 'situation', 'environment' or 'background,'" (van Dijk 2009, 2) of "identities and roles, place, time, institution, political actions and political knowledge" (van Dijk 2008, 3). This may sound self-evident, but it raises the question of how we should approach identities, time or place?

The mainstream view within political science shows an obvious preference for the external context as a set of variables. For instance, Tilly and Goodin in *Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (2006) snappily state "In response to each big question of political science, we reply 'It depends'. Valid answers depend on the context in which the political processes under study occur." (Tilly and Goodin 2006, 6). Similarly Yanow and Schwartz-Shea argue that

> the possibility of the multiplicity of meanings is one of the things that makes connections to context critical for both the conduct of interpretative research and its design: the reasons things take *these* particular forms and not other has to do with their specific contexts of time and place. (2012, 46, italics in original).

However, the prevalent practice of interpretivist (inductive) research, which likens context to Geertzian "thick description" (ibid., 48-49), means that context is presumed to be something external and prior to interaction. This in turn generates the *prior* need to define what the context is *in order to* understand the material. However, to the extent that politics is understood as a

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31.  Another understanding of discourse is manifest especially in Laclau's and Mouffe's discourse theory that understands discourse as the condition for meaning.

*process*, the postulation of a *prior* context for the process implies severely limited interaction between that context and action.

Obviously, the context should be seen as a part of the process. It develops together with the process. This is the promise the concept discourse grants, but it has failed to fulfil its promise when it comes to text analysis in political science. The interesting question concerning context is not what are the aspects that should be included in it, but how to ascertain what is not in the textual material itself, is nevertheless relevant for its understanding.

In the following, I will elucidate the complexities of context through some examples of everyday talk. I will discuss how conversation analysis has handled context. Finally, I will look at what the context could be in the case of institutionalised talk such as parliamentary debate. Here, I will discuss in detail van Dijk's cognitive-discursive take on context. He emphasises the subjective perception of the context but he seems to miss the necessary focus on process pointed out already by Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz. I will contrast van Dijk's approach with a view that emphasises the process of interaction and shows how this process could account for the context.


## Conversation Analysis and Social Action

What is currently termed conversation analysis is to a large extent associated with the work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Sacks and Schegloff were students of Erving Goffman in the 1960s, and had close contacts with Harold Garfinkel. From Goffman, Sacks and Schegloff took the idea that conversation is a fundamental social domain that can be studied as an institution in its own right. From Garfinkel they borrowed the postulate that conversation is produced and recognised as such because of certain recognisable practices and procedures employed in it (Heritage 2008, 302-303). Such practices and procedures are the "ethnomethods" of conversation, which all participants must use in order to engage in conversation. As Sacks and Schegloff put it, "if the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodologically produced by members of the society for one another..." (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, 290). Conversation is systematically produced in a certain way, it is meaningful to the interlocutors and it is always oriented to the surrounding social milieu. Conversation as talk-in-interaction is the prime example of social action.

Conversation analysis builds upon two theoretical points. First, conversation is taken to be structured by practices and procedures towards which the participants orient normatively (Heritage 2008, 303). These practices and procedures belong to the structure of conversation. They are independent of the participants' individual characteristics, including their motivation, psychological state and sociological characteristics such as class or gender. On

the contrary, individual motivation, psychological mood, class and gender are produced with the help of these practices and procedures. In other words, the very institution of conversation exhibits a certain immanent organisation that is the object of conversation analysis. This immanent organisation of conversation informs the flow of conversation, or the sequence of utterances. To state that certain practices and procedures *inform* the flow of conversation and that such practices and procedures are normatively oriented to implies that they do not *determine* the flow of conversation, but that their absence or "un-normative" use must be accounted for (ibid., 304). However, conversation analysis does not stop at the declaration of an existence of a norm. It also inquires how this norm is used by the participants in conversation: the discovery that certain norms exist is not considered a sufficient research finding in itself. This theoretical position has allowed the accumulation of empirical data from single case studies.

The second theoretical starting point is a distinction between "ordinary conversation" and "non-ordinary conversation" or "institutional talk". Schegloff formulates it as follows:

> ...in many respects, the fundamental or primordial scene of social is that of direct interaction between members of a social species, typically ones who are physically co-present. For humans, talking in interaction appears to be a distinctive form of this primary constituent of social life, and ordinary conversation is very likely the basic form of organisation for talk-in-interaction. (Schegloff 1995, 187)

Since ordinary talk appears to be the primordial mode of human interaction, institutional talk is understood a derivative. The early work on conversation built upon this distinction (first formulated in 1974). There were both theoretical and practical reasons for this. Schegloff's theoretical position, expressed in 1995, strongly reflects the earlier conviction that there is something primordial in ordinary communication and that it serves as the "bedrock" to other forms of conversation. Later research on institutional talk, especially from the 1990s onwards, has shown that talk within an institutional setting does indeed appear more constrained and goal-oriented than "ordinary talk" (Heritage 2008, 305). For practical reasons, Schegloff argued for the primacy of ordinary talk in order to draw attention to the need to carry out "basic research" on conversation before applying conversation analysis to more specific, often pathologic or institutional examples. This was both in accord with the agenda of conversation analysis as a social theory of everyday human interaction, and a methodological point implying that it was impossible to identify what might be, for instance, pathological in a conversation if one did not know a lot about ordinary form of conversation (see Schegloff 2003a, 46).

The beginnings of conversation analysis as a sociological method lie in Harvey Sacks' investigations into telephone conversations at the Suicide Prevention Centre in Los Angeles in the 1960s. The Centre, for reasons of reporting and accountability, was interested in catching the names of the persons who phoned them. Not all callers, however, were willing to give their names. The Centre worked out a tactic: if the workers of the Centre introduced themselves by the name, the caller would likely do the same. Sacks (1992, 3) became interested in a recurring pattern in these introductions:

```
1 A. This is Mr. Smith, may I help you
2 B. I can't hear you
3 A. This is Mr Smith
4 B. Smith
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By saying "this is Mr. Smith, may I help you" speaker A attempts to construct a slot for the following speaker in which the expected answer would be something like: Hello, this is Mr. Brown. The first speaker has a certain privilege to open the conversation and structure it so that the following speaker is expected to give his name.[32] However, as Sacks realised, many callers still managed to conceal their names. Instead of taking B's first utterance at face value, that is, as implying hearing problems, Sacks concluded that B had found a method of avoiding giving his name after A introduced himself. Moreover, by claiming that he could not hear what A was saying, B avoids openly refusing to give his name.

This simple introduction to the basics of conversation analysis is used in most textbooks. In more technical terms, B has replaced the slot in conversation where he was expected to give his name with a repair, "I can't hear you". His request that A clarify his previous statement moved the conversation over and beyond the slot where B's name should have—given the structure of the conversation—been provided.

Four principal points of conversation analysis are apparent in this example: utterances never stand on their own, conversation structures social reality, the analysis relies on actual material, and the conversation at hand is the object of study, not a general class of something else.

First, utterances never stand on their own. B's utterance "I can't hear you" cannot be understood as a question by its semantic content, grammar and lexis; yet it is reacted to as if it were a question. Although Sacks refers to such statements as "*doing not hearing*" this is not the same as Austinian

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32. Empirical evidence, moreover, shows that asking one's name directly can easily be responded negatively because a direct question can be answered by another question opening up multiple ways of continuing conversation without providing requested information (Sacks 1992, 4-5).

speech acts of *doing things with words*, because B's doing "not hearing" takes place in a certain *sequence of utterances*. For Austin, speech acts are initiated by individual people and they are fully comprehensible in themselves given that their pragmatic context is right. In contrast, conversation analytical "doing not hearing" is a social action that is situated in a sequence of previous and future (expected) utterances. Conversation analysis emphasises the situational logic of conversation. This is evident in the following example, which comes from a conversation in my own family:

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1 C. Robisz kawę
2 D. Też piję


1 C. Are you making coffee
2 D. I'll have some too (lit. I also drink)
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Here, question "Are you making coffee" becomes not really a factual question, but a suggestion for D to make coffee. It becomes a suggestion because of D's response implies that the question was taken up as a suggestion that was, in its turn, declined by turning the situation around and implying that C should do the coffee. This example reveals two aspects of the sequentiality of conversation. The first is that the interlocutors anticipate each other's reactions and formulate their turns accordingly. It is obvious that D anticipates that C hopes that the coffee-making would fall upon D. Instead of responding C's question, D responds to what he anticipates that C is anticipating. To decipher this context of anticipation, one must take seriously the seemingly irrational response "I'll have some too", a response that in terms of pure content can in no way be understood to respond the question C posed.

The second aspect the example reveals is that the illocution alone does not amount to social action and that there is no guarantee in real life that illocutions are interpreted as intended. Conversation analysis insists that individual utterance alone is socially meaningless and therefore one should study collaboratively produced social action through utterance*s* and their interpretation*s*. Utterance as an action (i.e. its illocution, if it is to have any social relevance) must be thus embedded in the turn-taking system of conversation *as well as* the sequential organisation of conversation.

A second example of the same can be found in the following extract (Drew and Heritage 1992, 33):

```
1 E. He's enjoying that [isn't he.
2 F.                     [Yes, he certainly is
3 G. He's not hungry 'cuz (h)he's ju(h)st (h)had 'iz
      bo:ttle.
```

In the dialogue, E is a health advisor visiting a family with a newborn baby, F is the father and G is the mother. The health advisor's comment was triggered by her observation that the baby was eagerly sucking or chewing something. Whilst the father's response indicates that the health advisor's comment was a purely conversational statement that "the baby is enjoying that" the mother's response reveals quite another meaning potential in the statement. Her response "He's not hungry..." answers a potential accusation that the baby is sucking so eagerly because he is hungry. The perception of an accusation in the health advisor's speech may be built on the mother's assumption about the purpose of the health advisor's visit. This indicates, in turn, her broader understanding of the relationship between the state, the mother, and the father. Whether this conversation evolves on the basis that the first statement was indeed just a comment or observation rather than an accusation depends on the following turn, and not on the content of already uttered statements. The social action the health advisor did with her words "He's enjoying that, isn't he" is certainly not complete with her words only (illocution), and not even with the following turn(s) (observed perlocution), but it seems to require at least yet another turn.

Sequentiality cannot be reduced to fixed pairs, even if it is often approached as a form of pairing or coupling of utterances. Rather, sequentiality is the nature of social action and of text. Much interaction assumes the mode of paired sequentiality: question–answer–new question. Some assume a tripartite structure: question–answer–feedback. But some may continue with clarifying questions over many turns. Sequential construction of talk implies that social action is not over and done with when the utterance comes to an end, but it always requires a response, an interpretation.

Sequentiality has some serious implications to the idea of causality. The health advisor's utterance "He's enjoying that, isn't he?" *in its capacity* as an accusation does not precede the mother's response; we know that because the response it triggered from the father is quite different. Her illocution "He's enjoying that, isn't he?" acquires its nature as a conversational remark *only after* the father has responded to it in that way; and similarly, it becomes an accusation *only after* the mother reacts to it as one. Responding to something takes place on two different fronts: the response actualises the previous utterance and lays the ground for the following utterances. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. We will return to this "retro-active" construction of utterances when it comes to the context of talk, because context can be seen as something that *follows* the utterance rather than *precedes* it (and therefore could not be used to explain it).

Early conversation analysis takes the *sequence* to be the sufficient context of talk: through sequential organisation of talk, the context emerges as the extra-textual. This can be illustrated with the example of the health advisor's visit. By deferring the finalisation of the context, we see how two different

external contexts are evoked by the father and mother each indicating different understanding of macro-level involvement in the concrete interaction.

A second fundamental tenet of conversation analysis is that conversation structures social order. This is to say that conversation is rule-guided, not rule-governed (Silverman 1998, 35). For Sacks and the early conversation analysts, social order appeared to be a by-product of conversation: social norms provided certain expectations that were either realised or refuted through conversation. In Sacks' investigations into the opening of telephone conversations, he concludes that if the first person introduces himself with a name, the caller *tends to* do the same (Sacks 1992, 4-5). The point Sacks makes is that there is a substantial difference with regard to the flow of the conversation between providing a *slot for one's name* and *directly asking for one's name*.[33] The study of conversation was designed to expose those norms that structure everyday conversation. Much of verbal interaction is conceived of as pairs, such as question–answer, invitation–response, greetings and so on. In contrast to many other approaches to language that understand communication to be a process of transfer of pre-established and fixed chunks of meaning (or cognitive statuses, ideas, or political ideologies), the focus of conversation analysis is on the productive side of linguistic interaction and how conversation itself is structured—relatively independently of its (semantic) content. Each utterance, then, should be analysed as a social action in an interactional setting that carries in its organisation its relationship to the previous utterance, and lays ground for the following utterance.

However, as discussed above, the study of social action in conversation analysis focuses on the interpretation of the speech act as such, not merely the implementation of the act. In this respect, the following speaker's interpretation of the previous turn acquires the central role. In classical sociological theory, norms are understood to causally produce action. Norms stem from the shared cognitive recognition of the situation. The shared cognitive recognition of the social situation and the existence of shared norms enable co-ordinated action. The norms can therefore be evoked as the explanation of the action. Conversation analysts approach the norms quite differently: following Garfinkel, they argue that norms are applied reflexively by the participants *in situ* to create the social situations that are being talked into being (Heritage 1996, 113; 236ff). The interpretation of action becomes crucial in "determining" its meaning. As an example of this, C's question "Are you making coffee?" contains multiple possible interpretations of which one

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33. One could think of an intuitive example of an encounter with a stranger at work. If the stranger introduces himself by name, it feels right and correct to reveal one's name; if the stranger gives both name and title, we feel entitled to follow the example. However, if the stranger addresses us with a question: "What is your name and title?" we can well feel justified to reply: "Why is that any of your business?"

becomes "reified" by D's response "I'll have some too". Only D's application of his interpretation of C's question is able to fix C's utterance, and this only temporarily. In more technical terms, this example shows that both language's functional level *and its semantic, or content, level,* its turn design, is interactively situated and constructed (see Drew 1992; Drew 2013).

The basic inquiry of conversation analysis focuses on just *how* social order is produced through conversation. In the example of phone conversation above, evidence shows that giving one's name results in the second person giving his name too; if this is not done, something called a "repair" is initiated. The repair returns the conversation to the previous utterance by requesting further clarification and simultaneously moves the conversation structure over the slot where the second speaker could (be expected to) provide her name. There are two aspects to this. First, the inquiry concerns the existence of such norms. Still, more importantly, it shows how such norms are "reified" through conversation. The initial, rigorous focus on what people concretely *do* in conversation has provided the scientific basis of conversation analysis. It has also served to distinguish it from those other social scientific methods that Sacks criticised for approaching the subject matter with ready-made categories rather than letting those categories emerge from the material. Sacks' focus on *action* at the expense of meaning also served to avoid the methodological fallacy of letting something static, such as "culture", explain action. Although he did not deny the importance of "culture", he wanted to know just *how* that culture worked in producing social order. For Sacks, there is a difference between accepting and studying categories used in conversation, and studying *how those categories are used in conversation* (Sacks 1992, 27; Silverman 1998, 50).

Later, I will argue that if meaning cannot be taken to be a static property of a singular utterance, but is seen as jointly created, then the generation of meaning in a political debate can fruitfully be studied through the methods of conversation analysis. This will allow the analysis to avoid the pitfall of static arguments about the properties of culture that are, nevertheless, drawn into the meaning generation processes. As will become clear, there is a difference between studying meaning generation and subjecting a (fixed) meaning to an analysis.

Sacks, in his *Lectures on Conversation,* often refers to the object of inquiry as machinery used by the speakers. As Sacks puts it,

> The kind of phenomena we are dealing with are always transcriptions of actual occurrences, in their actual sequence. And I take it our business is to try to construct the machinery that would produce these occurrences. That is, we find and name some objects, and find and name some rules for using those objects. (Sacks 1992, 113)

This metaphor of machinery should not be taken to imply a determinist view on conversation (Silverman 1998, 65-66), for Sacks' inquiry concerns how this machinery is used in conversation. The metaphor of machinery is nevertheless useful in understanding the aims of the early practitioners of conversation analysis: the explication of the structure that provides orderliness in the social situation of conversation. The postulate that the machinery is the focus of conversation analysis enabled cumulative scientific and systematic inquiry into the social order that is produced through conversation (ibid., 67).

The third fundamental aspect of conversation analysis is its reliance on actual empirical material rather than theoretically designed examples. Conversation analysis proceeds from the assumption that it is impossible to decide, prior to the analysis of the material, what is relevant and what is not. For instance, the example of phone conversation given above shows how important it is to focus precisely on B's first utterance ("I can't hear you") even though it appears to be irrelevant to the semantic content of the discussion. Psathas puts this point rather forcefully:

> No assumptions are made regarding the participants' motivations, intentions, or purposes; nor about their ideas, thoughts, or understandings; nor their moods, emotions, or feelings; except insofar as these can demonstrably be shown to be matters that participants themselves are noticing, attending to, or orienting to in the course of their interaction. (1996, 47)

Material drawn from actually occurring conversation maintain the complexity and imperfection of real talk that for instance Habermas' pragmatics or Toulmin's empirical rationality cannot reach through fabricated, as-if-natural, examples of talk. Conversation analysis remains sensitive to this unfinalisability and complexity in the material, and focuses on the ways the participants deal with it.

A fourth, and related point, is that the very occurrence of B's not hearing is important in *this* conversation: one must grasp its role in the flow of the conversation to make sense of the conversation. Whether similar "not hearing" takes place regularly may be of interest and importance in formulating inductive generalisations about the underlying structure of conversation, but it is irrelevant to *this* conversation. Conversation analysis treats its material as a specimen of reality, not as an account or reflection of reality. Psathas points out

> [the fact that] this particular social action occurred is evidence that the machinery for its production is culturally available, involves members' competencies, and is therefore possibly (and probably) reproducible. Its recurrence, however, is not proof of the adequacy of an analysis, because the analytic task is to provide a wholly adequate analysis of just how *this* instance is organised. (1996, 50, italics in original)

In contrast to the view that takes material as an account of reality and in which norms, rules and behavioural maxims function as explanans of action conversation analysis takes the material as a specimen of reality in which those norms, rules and behavioural maxims are constituent elements of action (Heritage 1996, 114).

Conversation analysis draws together two seemingly contradictory properties of language. On the one hand, it is attentive to particular details, individual occurrences of linguistic phenomena, but on the other hand, it aims at finding regularities and orderliness of language in the structures of conversation. If the first tenet may be considered suspicious by some branches of social science methodology, the second has proved to be more acceptable to social scientists. In this respect, conversation analysis translates individual speech into instances of structured social action. It has done so at the expense of the content and meaning of speech.

The argument I develop here is that the focus on the "machinery" has unnecessarily diverted attention from the analysis of the content of the conversation. Interpretation as a social action includes the management of the content of the message, its position in the sequential organisation of talk as well as in conversation's turn-taking system. Drew (1992) and Berg (2001a, 2001b) are good illustrations that conversation analysis can capture the dialogical relations between the structure of conversation and the content of the turns.

Conversation analysis of ordinary talk treats the *sequence* as the sufficient context of the utterance. By focusing on the *process* of talk, the sequence construes the context as the conversation progresses. The extent to which, say, the identities of the speakers are relevant to the utterances can, in fact, be deciphered from the conversation, not by focusing on singular utterance, but on the way in which utterances respond to each other in sequence. The context of talk becomes accessible through the mode of talk, which is immanent to the material.

I will now turn to discuss institutional talk that is clearly situated within certain physical boundaries and assess how well the above view on context can serve it.

## Institutional Talk and Context

Early conversation analysis focused exclusively on what Sacks and Schegloff termed ordinary talk. For Schegloff, this was the primordial mode of human interaction and deserved attention as the ground for any other type of interaction. Research on institutional talk builds upon the findings of ordinary talk. Ground-breaking work in institutional talk is *Talk at Work* (1992) edited by Paul Drew and John Heritage.

One might think of the study of institutional talk is grounded in a recognition of the importance of the external context of talk. This is true to some extent. However, institutional talk is a specific conversation analytic view to the context of talk and therefore very different from the common "container" view of context. In short, institutional talk is a certain *mode* of talk through which an institution as a way of interacting is talked into being. All talk in an institution is not, therefore, institutional talk. Research on institutional talk has in some cases broadened the spectrum of conversation analysis. Paul Drew's studies of cross-examination focus not the institutional "management of turn-taking itself, but the interactional management of activities *in* the turns" (Drew 1992, 517, my italics). Similarly, Berg has shown how the adjacency pair question–answer includes not only the formal aspects of doing questioning and doing answering or avoiding giving the answer, but also establishing presuppositions, common agreements, establishing facts and so on (Berg 2001a; also Kangasharju 2002, Nikko 2009). These studies have inspired my way of applying conversation analysis to the evolution of meaning in parliamentary debate.

It is important to realise that institutional talk was introduced to conversation analysis as something subsidiary to and derivative of ordinary talk. Institutional talk is an amended form of ordinary talk (see Drew and Heritage 1992, 21-25). Institutional talk shows certain goal-orientation that serves the institution in question. Medical consultation, for instance, strives to find our patient's illness and heal it; cross-examination at court strives to establish the facts concerning the crime; a job interview strives to assess the applicant's worth to the employer. Not all participants are always co-operative to this aim: in cross-examination the way the facts become established often serve one party at the expense of the other.

Moreover, whilst it is quite normal that the patient visiting the doctor might wonder about many things and not explain with medical accuracy his symptoms, the doctor's behaviour is to a certain extent constrained by expectations and rarely do we hear the doctor go about on his private life beyond anecdotal comments; and if he does, the situation strikes us as odd. The institution sets constraints to talk. The division between ordinary and institutional talk is not altogether definite. Talk whose aim is to engender, create and recreate "institutionality" is institutional talk, but all talk that occurs within an institution need not to be "institutional talk".

Institutional setting may also constrain patterns of inference. Social workers, although allowed to show empathy, are hardly expected to be emotionally overwhelmed by their clients' problems. Doctors are expected to react professionally and not be embarrassed by their patients. And one hopes that politicians conversing in parliament would behave honourably towards each other. In ordinary conversation, empathy is expected, and an excess of empathy does not affect one's position or identity as an interlocutor; but it

might do so in an institutional context. Embarrassment is a natural marker of one's social identity and serves to point out the borders of comfortable social interaction, but it should not impede the professional execution of work. Honourable behaviour in parliament may help maintain a certain respect towards parliamentarianism as a mode of political organisation of society, whilst complete disrespect between members impedes this function. The parliament has, however, the further function of furnishing a stage for debate between different positions and thereby provide a political solution to a conflict.

The strict order of turn-allocation is the most distinctively institutional character of parliamentary talk. In our case, we must ask what effects this turn-taking may have on the interpretation, and on history's role in this interpretation. We must further ask how this turn-taking might affect the "accumulation" of history of the texts being debated. Traditionally, conversation analysis has been concerned with the production of social action and with the institutional setting of the production of that institution. Our concern is slightly different: to what extent the structural constraints on conversation imposed by the institutionally defined procedures of turn-taking *affect* the flow of the debate?

This question can be divided into further questions. First, does the turn-taking system allow or prevent certain participants from taking part in conversation? Does the turn-taking system privilege certain participants over others? The answer to both questions is that the turn-taking system in the parliament most probably *enables* equal participation and *does not prevent* anyone from being heard.

More interestingly, however, we must ask if the turn-taking system affects how participants' utterances (i.e. speeches) are structured. This is an empirical question, for which, as yet, we have no ready answer. Like Paul Drew in his studies on cross-examinations, my concern lies *not* in the parliamentary turn-taking system, but on the effects of this turn-taking upon the activities *within* the turns, that is, the ways in which the structuring of the debate also affects the content of the debate.

In the introduction, I defined parliamentary talk as a mode that emerges from the recognition of a political conflict; that institutionalises and therefore maintains the (juxtapositional) conflict between arguments; that is regulated; and is expected to yield a political solution to conflict. Different political theories emphasise different aspects of this. Deliberative democracy might see the goal parliamentary talk in the deliberation of different arguments out of which the best argument survives as the winner. Liberal representative democracy may see the goal of the parliament as channelling different views held in society (through parties?) into the political process. For them, the goal is to find the most representative view, not necessarily the best view in a rational sense. Further differences can be perceived in concep-

tualisation of the parliament as representing the "nation" or "national interests", or as enabling individual politicians to pursue their ideas, the popularity of which are tested in elections.

Given these (incompatible) differences, it is better not to draw hasty conclusions as to the institutional purpose of the parliament. Instead, I take parliamentary talk as institutional talk to mean the recognition and maintenance of conflict between political opinions and to provide a political solution to this conflict. These two points include the four central characteristics of parliamentarism without adopting any normative ideas as to what the parliamentary talk should be like. This approach also allows for different institutionalisations of parliamentary talk in different cases and at different times.

Current research suggests that institutionality at the level of the utterance can be found at five different levels: the levels of lexical choice, turn-design, sequence organisation, overall structural organisation, and social epistemology and relations (Drew and Heritage 1992, 29-53).

At the lexical level, simple examples of produced institutionality would include, for instance, the use of the pronoun "we" instead of "I". In parliament, some members speak as individuals, but others speak as representatives of parties, segments of society, or for a certain city, region, or the entire nation. Some may also act as representatives of certain ideologies.

At the level of turn-design, institutionally oriented turn is meant accomplish some function of the institution. In parliament, voting comes at the end of the debate. Most turns are designed to show support either "for" or "against", and to convince other members of the parliament to choose one alternative over the other. In the material from the Polish and Slovak parliaments, most speeches are clearly designed support or criticise the bill under discussion. Other speeches may attempt to comment on the current debate, thus elevating the focus to "meta-level" talk concerning the talk itself. And thirdly, there are speeches that simply seek to provide facts. Meta-level commentaries and "facts", however, appear in the context of debate. Therefore, the institutional rules of debate easily *politicise* them so that they indicate support for or opposition to the bill.

At the level of sequence organisation, institutional goals may be pursued by introducing the institution's agenda into the conversation through, for instance, leading questions. In parliamentary comments, we see numerous occasions when the institutionality of the situation is brought about by the participants noting what the "proper" topic of debate is. In ordinary conversation, a change of topic is quite normal and is inherent in the nature of the game. The fact that parliamentary debate is organised by successive turns gives the impression of debate, despite the fact that some speeches are written beforehand and addressed, not primarily to other parliamentarians, but to a broader audience. Parliamentary talk in fact exhibits close interaction between different speakers who—because of the context—*end up* conducting a dialogue of

questions and answers. As this may seem a radical view to some readers accustomed to viewing parliamentary talk as a set of unconnected speeches from the podium, I will indicate in both empirical studies how the deputies concretely orient to previous arguments, address their speeches to concrete audiences, and set the ground for future speakers.

At the level of the overall structural organisation of talk, institutionality may carry out its role through, for instance, predefined agendas. In parliament, the preallocation of speeches means that sequentiality is not always chronological. I mean that a speech may directly target not the speech immediately preceding it, but one held some time ago. (This happens in ordinary talk, too.) The ways in which interaction in the parliament is organised varies. In the Slovakian parliament, after each planned speech other members of parliament are allowed to voice their immediate reactions; in the Polish parliament, questions are postponed until all the scheduled speeches have been made. In other words, we have two levels of sequentiality. The first level is composed of the speeches that directly react to another speech—no matter what the chronological position of that speech would have been. The second level of sequentiality is to be found in the chronological order of the speeches despite the fact that they may not be intended to respond or pose questions to a given speech.[34]

At the level of social epistemology and social relations, institutionality is most apparent in the asymmetric relations between the interlocutors. In contrast to the supposition that ordinary talk takes place between equals, institutional talk by definition takes place between unequals. This is evident in instances like doctor-patient interaction. However, Linell and Luckmann (1991) point out that even ordinary conversation is likewise characterised by asymmetry: one person is talking, the other listening, one possesses information, the other is finding it out, some are active in formulating new topics and thus influencing the agenda, while others follow of those changes (Drew and Heritage 1992, 48).

In the parliamentary context, asymmetry clearly exists between the government and the opposition. In the Slovakian case, the government proposes

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34. One could raise an argument that two unrelated utterances should not influence each other or the way we interpret them. However, montage-theory (e.g. Eisenstein, Kuleshov) has shown that more important than the content of images is their sequence. A famous, yet hard to verify, Kuleshov Effect grounds the Soviet montage theory. Kuleshov Effect is psychological experiment carried out by Lev Kuleshov and allegedly Vsevolod Pudovkin sometime around 1918 and it consists of a montage of filmed clips of a face of an actor, of a plate of soup, of a girl in a coffin and a woman on a divan—individually taken mundane to the contemporaries and unable to arouse any emotions. Depending on the sequence of depiction, the audience interprets the actor's facial expressions differently although the film-clip is always the same. Although the scientific quality of the original experiment may be questions, the Kuleshov Effect has become central element of cinema industry. (Russell, 2005.)

an amendment to an existing law and some segments of the opposition are against it. In the Polish case, the new law proposition emerges from outside the political parties and we are witnessing moments when different speakers formulate their stance towards the citizens' initiative on gender parity. Rather than assuming that the government parties, because of their majority, have an advantage when it comes to controlling the flow of the debate, I leave this aspect to the material to decide. This also enables one to see parliamentary talk as a policy-forming process, not simply as talk meant to approve or reject bills. The power asymmetries inside the parliament are not similar to those between the doctor and the patient in which the former possesses expertise knowledge and the latter seeks expertise knowledge. The very political nature of asymmetry contributes to the polarisation of positions. This polarisation could also be seen as a way of "doing power" in the parliamentary debate (see Hutchby 1996, 484). If we take conversation to be social action that creates new social situations, those conversational turns that manage to complete the speech act are powerful in (re)creating the social situation. Their "success", however, depends on the turn-taking process of the debate. It could even be stated that, ultimately, the debate itself holds the political power vested in the debate.

The division between ordinary and institutional talk is neither clear nor definite. In the case of the parliament, the imperative to stick to the agenda and ordered turn-allocation is, perhaps, the feature most distinctively at odds with the practices of ordinary talk. Most problematic in the distinction between ordinary and institutional talk is the assumption that ordinary talk is free of (institutional) constraints. Garfinkel's study of Agnes (1967, 116-185) shows that social identities are, in fact, produced through controlled speech. To some, the production of such controlled speech, in Agnes' case, feminine speech, comes more "naturally" than to others. However, this difference does not pertain to the artificial nature of the institution of social sex and gender, but rather to the degree of internalisation, that is, socialisation, of such practices of speech: what comes naturally to one is a matter of practice. It is difficult to argue that, say, feminine identity as produced by a certain type of speech, should be treated as institutional talk, even if it has a certain particular goal, namely, the impression of femininity. In the case of parliamentary debate, it suffices to note that talk, whether institutional or ordinary, exhibits an internal structuredness that can be studied through looking at the concrete exchange of utterances. The institution talked into being cannot be taken to provide explanations for how the talk develops without empirically indicating that participants in fact orient to the framework of the institution. The distinction conversation analysis makes between ordinary and institutional talk should be seen in the context of social organisation. Therefore, a clear distinction between institutional and ordinary talk is impossible since every sphere of society is organised. The very same properties

apply to ordinary and institutional talk. It seems more fecund to think of institutionality as adding (institutionally sanctioned) possibilities of organising talk. This makes institutional talk semiotically[35] more complicated (i.e. it has recourse to multiple ways of organising talk) and multifaceted than ordinary talk.

The way conversation analysis understands parliamentary debate as "institutional talk" is somewhat different from common "bucket contextualisations". It is also different from some linguistic analyses that want to reach to the bottom of the individual utterance with the help of interviews and speaker's biographic data. It is also different from the political science studies that draw on party-discipline and power analyses to account for emphases or omissions in talk. Such details can help researcher understand what *the speaker* wanted to say (as remembered in the present), but not what the parliamentary debate as a *text* can tell us.

Conversation analysis' view of context as a *mode* of talk provides a fruitful way to think beyond the relationship between *la langue* and *parole*. Conversation analysis enables one to see how the context as a mode of talk emerges out of the sequentially ordered interaction. As a mode, the context becomes an attribute of the text itself. Hence, the construction and evolution of the context can be traced through the exchange of utterances in conversation.

Recall the example of the health advisor: the different responses her comment elicited indicate different power structures. The father did not act on the basis of any clearly asymmetrical power relation, but the mother's response indicated her recognition of and reaction to asymmetrical power. What, then, might be the objective "container context" of this conversation? Is it not more appropriate to understand the context as something that is created through and evolves with talk? Let us take, as an example, the health advisor's comment and the gender roles and social norms according to which women are responsible for bringing up children. In the container view, we would need to assume their existence *a priori* and then confirm our assumptions by our analysis of the material. If we understand the context as a *mode* of talk, however, we find textual evidence of how gender roles and norms are brought into conversation in order to structure it—and we also have evidence of how the roles and norms have been internalised, becoming part of normal interaction.

Deferring the context to talk enables the material to guide the process of contextualisation and reveal how, for instance, different contextualisations

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35. By "semiotically" I refer to the organisation of the text—text being any meaningful composition of sings. Semiotic here is to underline the social, political and cultural potential that the text carries for different interpretations. For instance, because of the "artificial" structure of parliamentary talk, two different chronologies emerge.

clash and give rise to new, unexpected contexts. This will be elaborated in the following discussion of context and institutional talk in conversation analysis. I will first expand on conversation analysis' take on context, and then engage with van Dijk's criticism of this approach.

Much of the criticism of conversation analysis' account, or neglect, of the context, is, arguably, due to both misunderstandings and the lack of proper definitions of terminology. The very term "context" is not easily defined, nor are its functions easily described (van Dijk 2004, 340). In fact, studies that focus on language have long since discarded the notion that context should be understood as a set of objectively existing variables (van Dijk 2008, 15; 2009, vii). We can start thinking about context with van Dijk's general observation that "we use the notion of "context" whenever, we want to indicate that some phenomena, event, action or discourse needs to be seen or studied in relationship to its environment, that is, its "surrounding" conditions and consequences" (van Dijk 2008, 4). He himself questions this view and suggests that "context" should be understood as a mental representation of "the relevant properties of the (social, interactional or communicative) *situation*" (ibid. 24, italics in original) in which action or text appears. If we adopt van Dijk's terminology, then much of what political science understands as "context", becomes "situation" for van Dijk.

Whether we use the term context or situation, the acute question is where we should locate these "relevant properties" in an interaction? Conversation analysis' approach to context privileges actually occurring social interaction, i.e. talk, and holds that the *internal* structure of talk (the sequence of utterances) forms both the necessary and sufficient context of talk. For example, the interaction between the health advisor and the father referred to above cannot be interpreted meaningfully only in terms of asymmetrical power relations; but power relations prove to be much more fruitful for the relations between the health advisor and the mother. In this example, only the mother recognises the health advisor's institution as an embodiment of power—perhaps raising the question of the relationship between motherhood (and gender) and the state.

Attributes of the social become relevant only if they are spoken into being and if the participants of the conversation orient themselves to them. Conversation analysis emphasises that properties external-to-conversation may become relevant only if they are brought under the aegis of the conversational structure and participants indicate their orientation to them through their interactive talk; the mere existence of social identities such as gender, race or age, or of any discourse, cannot be relevant (Drew and Heritage 1992, 20).[36]

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36. Also Harold Garfinkel's study of Agnes (1967) shows how sexual status is learnt and produced through interactive settings.

From this perspective, discourses that are not oriented to, intentions that have failed and/or ideologies that speakers hold dear are deemed irrelevant to the debate *if they are not talked into being and oriented to in that conversation*. As Drew and Heritage put it:

> Given the abandonment of the "bucket" concept of context in favour of a more dynamic "context renewing" one, CA researchers cannot take "context" for granted nor may they treat it as determined in advance and independent of the participants' own activities. Instead, "context" and identity have to be treated as inherently locally produced, incrementally developed and, by extension, as transformable at any moment. (Drew and Heritage 1992, 21).

Conversation analysis proposes to account for the context of the debate *as it occurs and emerges* from the debate. Schegloff (1987) applies two criteria: first, the context must be manifestly relevant; and, second, the participants must manifestly orient towards those categories of the context. In other words, it is not enough to invoke the categories of race and gender if the participants do not themselves orient their action towards race and gender. As Schegloff puts it:

> the set of ways of describing any setting is indefinitely expandable. Consequently the correctness of any particular characterisation is by itself not adequate warrant for its use; some kind of "relevance rule" or "relevancing procedure" must be given to warrant a particular characterisation (1987, 218).

Any context, therefore, must carry manifest relevance to the actors. This is the radical claim conversation analysis makes: if the context does not affect the procedure of conversation, its relevance to the participants cannot be assumed or imposed. Context is more a property of the interlocutors' approach towards each other than a set of social, political and cultural variables that exist independently of the actors.

Anyone who has seriously tried to delineate the relevant context of a given social action knows the indefinite line of questions of "Is this also relevant, too?" In normal social action such questions are put aside. We act *as if* we knew what the context is. Sometimes, however, it happens that our interlocutors have another context in mind. The "bucket" concept of context cannot deal with the uncertainty that we find in real social action. For this reason, conversation analysis focuses on the creation of the social context in that very conversation that is taking place (ibid. 1991, 46-51). If there are multiple ways of understanding a given context, it becomes methodologically unsound for the researcher to choose just one of the descriptions provided and decide that it is the most apt description (ibid. 1991, 50; 1997, 165-166).

The "bucket" idea of context also precludes an analysis of the interlocutors as possibly having mutually distinctive contexts, something that can be essential to understanding the conversation (ibid. 1991, 53), as well as the asymmetry of social relations of power (cf. for instance, intersectionality).

Let me further clarify the shortcomings of the "bucket" context, which can be overcome with conversation analysis' "process" or "mode" context with a recent example from Crimea (March 2014). In the events preceding Crimea's *de facto* annexation by the Russian Federation, "little green men" or "polite green men" (as they were called in the Ukrainian press) appeared on the peninsula. The euphemism, or, more precisely catachresis, of "little green men" was intended as a hit at the Russian government, which officially denied the deployment of Russian soldiers outside its Crimean military bases.

Now, what is the external context that "counts" in the unfolding of the events on Crimea? The very tragedy of the use of the term "little green men" was that it gave a name to unidentified forces that in practice secured Crimea's annexation to Russia *without* giving rise to a contextualisation of a military occupation. Instead, the term supported the context of spontaneous self-defence action. If we assume that the *real* external context was that of the presence Russian special forces—a fact later confirmed by Moscow—and of military intervention, we miss the dynamics of the actual situation as well as the staged contextualisation of the events as popular and spontaneous uprisings. "Peaceful military annexation"—itself an oxymoron—was possible because the events unfolded in the ambiguity between "military intervention" and "spontaneous uprising"—perfect terrain for "little green men" to act.

Further, the "bucket" context makes it difficult to relate to the empirical fact that the external context can change drastically between the beginning and the end of the event. The Crimean events began, perhaps, as domestic, spontaneous self-defence actions but they ended in an annexation that is said to mark a definite shift in international order. There are many "variables" that can be evoked as the context: the ethnic composition of Crimea, its history, its geopolitical position etc.; but it is the weight they obtained *as the crisis developed* that is central to making sense of that "context". Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the whole event was the social engineering that propagated the existence of a popular uprising before anything of the kind actually existed, but which then effectively managed to generate one whilst silencing alternative voices. The Crimean events and changes in popular perception appear volatile, and so, necessarily, was the "context" in which they occurred.

The third problem with the "bucket" concept is that it imposes a particular frame of reference upon the analysis, which presupposes a strong stance to the events. In the Crimean case, each different term—"annexation", "historical unification", "military occupation" and "spontaneous uprising"—launch

the ensuing analysis on very different trajectories. Western framing of the Crimean conflict as a breach of international law makes it difficult to analyse the genuine celebration of this annexation by many Russian speakers in Crimea. Again, a more processual view of the context would direct attention to the way how, after a few weeks, large number of Crimean residents voted for the annexation. (The fact that the referendum was held at gunpoint and organised under very suspicious circumstance is part of the reason for the results, but it is equally important to inquire into the "engineering" of the opinions of the residents.) Further, the contextualisation of the crisis as one of international order and state sovereignty limits the diplomatic options to two alternatives: either the acceptance or the rejection of the annexation. This hinders the emergence of new ways of thinking about territorial organisation.

There are two methodological imperatives in conversation analysis. The first is that actors should not be treated as "cultural dopes" unconscious of the factors that affect their behaviour. The second is that the analysis should take seriously the categorisations provided by the participants themselves. Even if, for instance, the researcher forbears to make assumptions about the relevance of power and gender, these may still emerge as relevant contexts for conversation analysis (as the case of health advisor's visit shows). The imperatives only mean that theoretical imperialism, the "hegemony of the intellectuals", should be minimised if (and as) it comes at the expense of detailed empirical scrutiny of interaction is contained (Schegloff 1997, 167).[37]

How does the approach to context as a "mode" or "process" work in practice? I will discuss this question by analysing van Dijk's criticism of conversation analysis. For him, conversation analysis runs into trouble because it cannot relate the conversation and its structures to society (2007, 283). Although his theory of context is in fact almost the same as that which emerges from conversation analysis, his criticism is grounded upon different understanding of language. The methodological implications this difference engenders are worth examining in detail.

Van Dijk argues that

> properties of context—such as gender or power—may be quite relevant
> for talk even if such an influence is not explicitly expressed, but infer-
> able by other means. For instance, a contribution at talk by woman may
> often be interpreted differently by recipients whether or not the speaker

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37. Recent feminist scholarship has suggested that a rigid interpretation of Schegloff's insistence of observable orientation to cultural artefacts such as gender may produce analysis that relies of abstract individualism which—as we will later see—contradicts with the aims of conversation analysis itself (McElhinny 2003, 33-36). McElhinny, for instance, argues that instead of simply asking "when" gender is oriented to, one could as well entertain question "how" gender is oriented to showing more sensitivity to its potential influence.

explicitly signals gender, and whether or not the recipient actually sign-
als such specific interpretation in later talk. (van Dijk 2007, 283)

Most curious is van Dijk's conviction that gender "may be quite relevant"
even if neither the speaker nor the listener is perceivably affected by it. Such
an argument makes sense only if research is focused on objects, not subjects.
This reminds us of discourse analysis, which sees society as composed of
objectively existing discourses that influence people's actions through their
mere existence. This, in turn, means that it is not always possible (or even
necessary) to observe the influence of discourses such as power or gender as
its effects are already "known", so to speak. Conversation analysis does not
categorically deny the influence of discourses, but it nevertheless insists that
the subjects and their actions must bear some relevance to the categories
used in their analysis. If discourses or social identities have any social relev-
ance in the given debate, their influence should be perceivable in the devel-
opment of the debate (Hakulinen 2001, 379-380) and they need not be
presupposed.[38]

Van Dijk's criticism is directed at the insistence that external context
must be made manifestly relevant through action. But he does not seem to
distinguish between two types of action in conversation: speaking and under-
standing. He argues that "contextual influence may become obvious in many
ways other than in explicit expressions in subsequent turns of conversation"
(2007, 283). The problem is that he seems to take into account only what is
explicitly expressed and forgets that these very expressions are also inter-
pretations of the previous utterances. The failure to realise the dialogic
nature of language (something that was argued at length with regard to Fair-
clough in Chapter 2) leads to partial understanding of constitutive role of
conversation in society: society is conversed into being and this is not
achieved by analytical speech acts only but interpretations that respond to
these utterances. The different interpretation of an utterance by woman—if
any—is manifested in the conversation if we consider the following utter-
ances not only as monologic expressions, but as embodying in themselves
the interpretation of previous utterances. Interestingly, van Dijk is aware of

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38.  One recent development in conversation analysis concerns Harvey Sacks' early project
on membership categorisation devices, which focuses more specifically on the use and effect
of certain categorisation (Hakulinen 2001, Silverman 1998). However, it is the interlocutors
who produce these categories during the conversation. An example of such a category could a
response to a question "Where do you come from?" which can be replied by a range of geo-
graphic categories invoking different degrees of intimacy or distance between the people (see
Silverman 1998, 74-97). Membership categorisation devices had been an under-researched
field in conversation analysis namely because after Sacks' death in 1975, Emanuel Schegloff
became the driving force in conversation analysis and his work has systematically down-
played their importance (Silverman 1998, 128-130).

this point, but being reliant on a monologic understanding of language, he has to separate the processes of speaking and interpretation:

> There is no direct causal or conditional relationship between social characteristics (gender, class, age, roles, group membership etc.) of participants and the way they talk or write. Rather, it is the way participants as speakers (writers) and recipients subjectively understand, interpret, construct or represent these social characteristics of social situations that influences their production or understanding of their talk or text. (van Dijk 2007, 288-289, italics removed)

From this he draws the conclusion that "contexts are by definition subjective—even if they of course also have social and intersubjective properties..." (ibid., 289). The logical follow up is the introduction of mental models, "the mental representation of an event or situation in episodic memory" (ibid., 290) as the loci of contexts. The monologic understanding of language necessitates the relocation of language as an intersubjective and social phenomenon to the mental representations of individuals—who then in turn make their utterances and interpretations from their subjective point of view. In contrast, by theorising language as dialogic, one is able to rely on textual material as the social situation that is being talked into being whilst still allowing for individual liberty and innovation to be expressed in the way language is used socially. In the monologic understanding of language, the introduction of an individual mental model is a necessary intermediate stage between individual liberty and social regulation.

Van Dijk further argues that:

> ...when language users participate in a conversation they dynamically construct a mental model of the ongoing conversation and its relevant social situation. It is in this way, and only in this way, that they are able to participate in such an event, understand what is going on, engage in action, and execute their actions as part of a sequence and in interaction with other participants... without a mental model of the current situation, speakers would not be aware of themselves or other participants in the first place. (ibid., 290)

Illustrative of his individualistic model is the following characterisation:

> [U]nderstanding what people say in conversation involves the construction of a *semantic* mental model of what the conversation is *about*... And the participation in a conversation requires the construction of relevant aspects of the communicative event in a *pragmatic* model of the ongoing communicative event itself. This is... the context. (ibid.)

Van Dijk distinguishes between certain knowledge people bring into the conversation and the context of that conversation (ibid., 295). For him, a distinction should be made between the different social representations, cultural background information and mental models that contribute to the semantic sense making process during the conversation and the more "tangible" context (situation) in which the conversation occurs. Here an example of the former could be an interpretation of Slovakian history and the context is the very structure the parliamentary procedures impose on the parliamentary debate. I find van Dijk's attention to *both* background information and structural context *as contributing* to the debate useful. However, it remains difficult to ascertain the individually entertained mental models of the context, and van Dijk's location of the background knowledge solely in individual mental models implies that language functions as a neutral means of transferring information. This point was already touched upon in Chapter 2 and will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter. Here it suffices to draw attention to the nature of conversation as a text that includes in itself—in the gaps between questions and answers—cues to the ways in which utterances have been contextualised.

His criticism of conversation analysis culminates in his, in my opinion gross misconception that "contrary to standard CA theory... *conduct does not directly depend on previous actions, but on the ways these are being interpreted by participants*, that is on the mental models participants ongoingly construct and update." (ibid., 296). For him, the individual intention must be the source of explainable action whilst for conversation analysis the individual intention that is not observable in the data carries no relevance (ibid., 298; Schegloff 2003a, 39). Van Dijk thinks that resorting to the conversation structure as the sole explanation of action marks a return to behaviourism. Schegloff's point, however, is to show that the cognitive view lacks a sufficiently developed notion of the social:

> So an approach to work that starts from the individual as the real—whether the individual person, or action, or utterance, or sentence—which treats that individual entity as designed for integrity as a freestanding object with its context as an extrinsic environment, can hardly avoid being characterised by atomism, atemporality, ahistoricism, and asociality. (Schegloff 2003a, 39)

Schegloff is not writing off the cognition of the individual *in toto*, but he points out that the individual cognition is enmeshed in social interaction "within which cognition is to be understood not necessarily by reference to the individual cut off from a world around, but by reference to an individual engendered and constituted by the world around in the first instance" (Schegloff 2003a, 39). To be sure, Schegloff is not the first to note the lack of at-

tention for the social and the intersubjective in cognitive linguistics (Etelä-mäki et al., 2009, 164).

In the case of van Dijk, it remains unclear to what extent semantic models are socially shared and to what extent the linguistic meanings (i.e. semantic mental model) can be purely individually fantasised for the social situation to evolve.

The empirical reality of the conversation of which van Dijk's mental models are supposed to make sense is an interactive situation. It does not seem plausible that just any mental model can suffice for the conversation to continue—or at least some explanatory account must be given if second speaker's interpretation does not at all match the first speaker's expectations.

I think van Dijk is absolutely right that individuals have to process cognitively the situation they face, he is also right in acknowledging that contexts are not objectively given, but produced by individual minds. But this does not need to lead to the conclusion that the individual cognition should be the primary focus of inquiry. Even Lakoff and Johnson have argued that cognitive models are biologically, but also culturally, sanctioned (1999, 60ff). Why, then, to insist that the individual cognition ("cognitive objects" in one's mind) is important and that contexts are subjective definitions of the situation (van Dijk 2009, 5)? His definition of context derives from the distinction between the linguistic context, or co-text, and the external social context (ibid., 2). The failure to think of the individual cognition as drawing from the interactive situation leads to linguistic monologism in which language use appears as a subject-centric process.

Van Dijk is in agreement with on one point: context is something that enables interlocutors to connect with each other. The difference that can be achieved by thinking of language dialogically is that the gaps between participants' utterances and interpretations, questions and answers, reveal the differentially construed contexts involved in conversation: the discrepancy between the health advisor's statement "He's enjoying that, isn't he" and the mother's response "He's not hungry 'cuz (h)he's ju(h)st (h)had 'iz bo:ttle." *brings to the fore* the interpretation the mother had of the health worker's statement. But this requires that the unit of analysis is not the individual speech act, but the relation between the question and answer. There is a difference in looking at two speech acts following each other individually and inquiring into the relationship between them. Only by replacing the individual speaking subject as the sole source of talk with a conception of interaction, the fact that the mother is *responding to* a previous statement can we appreciate the way in which she talks the context of asymmetrical power relations into being through her very own words. We cannot get here by asking what the intentions of the health worker were (it is not her statement that "He's enjoying that, isn't he" that produces asymmetrical power relations), nor those of the mother, for only the collision of the two utterances, the pre-

cise way in which they collide, produces the asymmetrical power relations in this conversation. The mother's actualisation of the health worker's statement made it an accusation; before this actualisation it was a conversational remark as the father's response materialised it (and before that it was only a potentiality waiting to be actualised by an interpretation). As we have seen, the mother's response creates the social situation of countering an accusation, not the utterance "He is enjoying that, isn't he". Above all, to access this "mental model", we do not need to resort to any external material: all what we need is in the conversation.

My argument here is that parliamentary debate is better understood as an evolving social action than a process of uncovering of a political idea, realised or unrealised intentions of the individual parliamentarians, or a presence of a superimposed discourse. I am asking what *comes out* of the conversation in the parliament rather than what the individual participants wanted to say, but perhaps were unable to say for some external reasons. The dialogic understanding of language enables to overcome the distinction between the external social context (that is supposed to exist "outside" the text, or independently of the text in the participants' cognitions) and the context "within" the text, i.e. what van Dijk has termed as co-text. Even though "context" is a cognitive creation, it becomes part of the social context through turn-taking in conversations.

Van Dijk argues that focusing on the conversation only leads to "under-analysis" of the material (2009, ix). In his explication of his own theory (2007, 300ff; 2009, 213ff), he relies on the reconstruction of the participants' identities as being key to the mental concept of the context. His example is the House of Commons debate on war in Iraq. He shows how Tony Blair, then the British Prime Minister, constructs differential oppositions, such as pro-War and anti-War blocks, but van Dijk also argues that Blair's resort to emotional argumentation like "I believe passionately that we must hold firm..." (Blair, cited in van Dijk 2009, 215) "is hardly Prime Minister style." (ibid.). Instead, "with such an expression he emphasises personal emotions and commitments, especially also as leader of those in the UK who favour intervention in Iraq." (ibid.). I agree with van Dijk that this way of analysing talk enables the analysts to see how "speakers *use* such identities as resource" (ibid., 218, italics in original) and this usage is dynamic, and contextually and textually controlled activity. This type of analysis can contribute to the understanding of how parliamentary debate invokes multiple identities purposefully, but this conversation analysis could do just as well. His analysis, however, stopping at the level of intentional invocation of identities cannot assess the social dynamics of how such identities become contested by interlocutors. Instead, it leads him into generalisation, such as, for example, that Blair in supporting the British troops must also be "a proud nationalist" (ibid., 216). The monologic understanding of language, which forms the

basis of his mental maps becomes explicit if we contrast this conclusion of Blair as a "proud nationalist" with his earlier analysis of the dynamics of the debate in which the pro-War position was viewed *in relation* to anti-War position; Blair as "a proud nationalist", however, stands on its own as an objective, non-relational statement of Blair's essence—beyond any interactive dynamics. Consequently, he argues that identities precede any interaction, they are like Saussure's *la langue*, which is only "instantiated" or "applied", as Saussure's *parole*, in social interaction (ibid., 219). Van Dijk's reasoning rests on the argument that for Tony Blair to "construct" himself as a proud nationalist, there must be a preceding code of "being a nationalist" that is recognised by others. The problem, though, is that he never asks whether the interlocutors perceived Blair as a "proud nationalist" after he claimed to support the British troops. In van Dijk's analysis, we never learn whether Blair's identity as a proud nationalist is a self-professed normative ideal or a descriptive feature of experience—personal and socially shared.

Van Dijk's analysis is interesting if we inquire into what Tony Blair was possibly thinking when he spoke to the House of Commons, but much less important if we are interested in the evolution of the debate and in how certain contexts inserted into the earlier speeches come to affect later speeches. The problem with his method is that he still seeks the socially relevant semantic meaning of the utterance in the utterance and its speaker and *not in the interaction with the following speakers*. Focusing on the response of the following speaker as an interpretation of the previous statement allows the analysis of the mediated interpretation of context *as it actually occurs* in the conversation, not as individual speakers have intended it to be. In this way, the text or the turn, precedes its context. Conversation analysis is a way of working analytically with the interlocutors' attempts to create the context for their interaction and the actual emergence of the context from the clash between the expectations that the interlocutors bring into the debate. Perhaps the best way to characterise these differences is that whilst van Dijk reduces the analysis of social phenomena to (the sum of) individual cognition(s), conversation analysis understands social action as being something more than the sum of its individual components.


## Context and Culture

It has been argued that the context of talk cannot precede the moment of interaction (of utterances). However, I have also implied, and will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, that interpretation is not possible in a cultural vacuum. One must have a certain tradition against which to interpret. Conversation analysis' focus on action—doing not-understanding or doing-invitations, etc.—has made it possible to avoid the open confrontation

with the issue of cultural background that comes into play in interaction. More recent developments and extensions of conversation analysis tend to distinguish between context as discussed above and tacit or background knowledge without which "there is no access to the understanding of this emerging context" (Dupret and Ferrié 2008, 963; also de Kok 2008). Dupret and Ferrié base their argument on the observation that Schegloff's understanding of context places context "in a self-containing vacuum and implicitly makes it dependent on unacknowledged background understanding" (Dupret and Ferrié 2008, 963). Their criticism becomes more understandable if we bear in mind that for Schegloff and Sacks (e.g. 1973) the basic question of conversation analysis is "Why that now?" As Schegloff discusses in an interview in 2003, his and Sacks' attention was truly on the social situation that is being talked into being: "the issue is how best to get at what is going on in interaction and how it comes to be going on, and do so in an empirically grounded way" (Schegloff 2003b, 166). However, coupled with the general aim of arriving at universal rules that structure conversation there may well be the risk of abstracting the conversation from its broader social and cultural background.

Is this so? Schegloff argues that conversation does talk the social situation into being. It does so by deploying certain cultural conventions through turn-taking. This means that the formal, sequential, structure of conversation is not independent of the broader cultural background. The question of the context can be reformulated as follows: in what ways does the sequential organisation of conversation draw in and deploy broader cultural knowledge and how—as researchers—can we trace this process? One suggestion is already given: by strictly taking seriously everything that is uttered and closely following the conversation. The second suggestion is more concerned with the questions conversation analysis has asked: traditionally it has focused on the social action of conversation as *doing* something, e.g. *doing* invitations. Conversation analysts have not been concerned with the invitation as a textual material with a certain meaning. This may have directed more attention to the procedural understanding of action rather than on the meaning of the action, for it is easier to mark the concrete beginning and end of a certain social action than the meaning of this action, which encompasses its historicity and intertextuality. Further research within conversation analysis has emphasised the importance of being more inclusive with respect to cultural matters and even Schegloff has recognised that always

> an adequate account for some specifiable feature of the interaction cannot be fashioned from the details of the talk and other conduct of the participants as the vehicle by which *they* display the relevance of social-structural context for the character of the talk, but rather that this must

be otherwise invoked by the analyst, who furthermore has developed defensible arguments for doing so. (Schegloff 1991, 66)

De Kok also points out that drawing upon cultural context does not necessarily lead to treating actors as cultural dopes. According to de Kok there is a difference in "collecting contextual information and transforming this into explanatory variables or determinants of members' conduct" on the one hand, and familiarising oneself with the cultural background information "in order to be sufficiently attuned to and recognise the relevant context *as oriented-to by interactants*" (de Kok 2008, 890).

De Kok shows in her analysis how the cultural context is drawn into the conversation through explicit references in the conversation. Statements like "according to our way of living" or "in our local understanding" explicitly draw researchers' attention to the tacit cultural background knowledge that is utilised, or claimed to be utilised, by the participants (ibid., 897). According to Schegloff, to say "local understanding" is not enough. The researcher would also need empirical material to show that the participants orient towards such "ways of living" or "local understandings" and thus bring the issue of background knowledge back to the structure of the conversation. Although Schegloff makes a strong argument for the claim that those identities and contexts that are not brought into the conversation and oriented to should have no role in the analysis, the role of the background knowledge in conversation analysis remains somewhat ambiguous and problematic. Especially in the case of private ordinary talk, people may have developed their own conventional expressions that can provide the conversation with meanings not accessible to an outside observer.

I think, however, that the specific genre of parliamentary talk—even in another culture—is more accessible to the outside observer than ordinary private talk in one's own culture. Speeches in the parliament belong to the public sphere and are addressed to (potentially) multiple audiences, both inside and outside the parliament. When the addressee is not known, it is more common to use language that can be easily understood. In the absence of a specified addressee, it is hard to predict what inferences may be made from the speech and therefore hints and discursive expression serve their purpose only if they are stated clearly. Parliamentary speech as a genre calls for a certain formality, again directing the way of speaking towards conventional modes of expression. In my material, references to other discourses and historical facts are common, but they are also clearly stated making it clear what background knowledge should be collected. Moreover, conceiving the parliamentary debate as an interaction enables the analysts to see how the participants themselves have reacted to those historical references or discursive points and thus brought, for instance, certain identities to contextualise the conversation (for an example see Hakulinen 2001, 379, 385-391). In oth-

er words, even if the analyst is physically far away from the conversation he still shares the "machinery" that produces orderliness.

So far it has been argued that "context" is something that emerges out of interaction. It does not precede interaction and therefore it cannot be used to provide causal explanations of interaction. In addition, we can distinguish "context" from background knowledge. I have argued that in the case of parliamentary talk, background knowledge is often indicated clearly by the speakers. Whereas "context" can be deferred back to the evolution of the debate, the elaboration of background knowledge may be necessary in order to account for all the turns the debate takes. But even here the debate *as a text* provides us with clues. The discrepancy between the question and answer is nevertheless embedded in the flow of the conversation and subsequent turns provide increasing evidence of the background that has been drawn into the debate. By rejecting the notion of conversation as an exchange of information, we are able to approach it as an exchange of different attempts at contextualisation, and see how their collisions provide the debate its structure as a *text*. In the example above, the health advisor's remark and the mother's rebuttal of a supposed accusation provide a concise example of the approaching conversation as an exchange of different contextualisations.

In sum, I propose to distinguish between context and background and defer context back to the conversation as something that emerges out of the interaction. This does mean that I reject the idea of external context as such. I only argue that the conversation alone can show what aspects of the external are relevant by bringing them into the structure of the conversation. Background, on the other hand, is something that the interaction makes use of. I argue that especially in the case of parliamentary debate, such background is clearly indicated by the participants, for instance by direct references, and the subsequent turns also provide extra cues for the background knowledge. In conversation, there are therefore at least three different contexts at play, those which are brought in by the individual turns and that which is generated out of their interaction. Below, we will see how these different contextualisations and their interaction yield into different temporalisations of talk that exist in parallel.

The following chapter will discuss three forms of dialogicality—of understanding, language and culture, which can answer for the role of language and culture in talk-in-interaction.

# Chapter 4: Dialogicality of Political Talk

In Chapter 2, I argued that prominent methods of text analysis in political science recognise the hermeneutic task of interpretation, but do not quite know how to handle it. These methods approach interpretation primarily as the relationship between the material and the researcher and suggest that self-reflection could help. By doing so, they postulate interpretation as resulting from the distance between the researcher and her material and simultaneously assume that the social actors they observe do not in any serious way need to interpret each other. This is in line with the epistemological understanding of interpretation, which perceives it as a process of reducing the polysemy of the texts and establish their true and preferably singular meaning. I also argued that this understanding of the task of interpretation is grounded in what I called the monologic understanding of language. This view on language is prevalent in the social sciences and still enjoys prominence even in linguistics; it has perhaps been questioned most in literary and cultural studies. In Chapter 2, I further identified three problems brought about by the monologic understanding of language and its application as a means of understanding the social world. In Chapter 3, I looked at how communication generates its own context and suggested to replace the bucket context with a process view to context, which sees contexts as emerging out of interaction.

In this chapter, I will discuss interpretation as active and productive force in the generation of meaning. In other words, I will argue for a shift in focus from utterance to interpretation as the proper site for studying meaning.

I will start with Gadamer's hermeneutics, which forms the backbone of my approach. Gadamer is best known from his contribution to philosophy of interpretation, which has inspired many literary and philosophical studies, but also ethnographic inquiries. His work is central to my position and it lays the ground for my focus on interpretation and tradition in the study of texts. Literary scholarship has, for a long time, laboured the field of literary interpretation and reception and I find their insights highly relevant also in the case of political texts and contexts. However, although I share the basic position of Gadamer, in the discussion below, I will delineate two issues that render his hermeneutics wanting in the analysis of political talk. These are his views on tradition and conversation. I will then discuss Bakhtin's dialogicism as an alternative grounding for conversation analysis and finally Lot-

man's cultural semiotics as an alternative mode of tradition. Bakhtin's and Lotman's works are better suited for the analysis of political talk. Put succinctly, the argument runs as follows: by reading Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman together and against each other I try to develop an hermeneutic approach that is grounded in a dialogic understanding of language and, which is applicable to the situation of political talk emerging in the present time.

In my criticism of Gadamer, my concern is different from critical hermeneutics as developed by Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas. Their primary worry was Gadamer's rehabilitation of tradition, which allowed ideologies persist in a way that denied, or seriously limited, the possibility of reflexivity, especially rational reflexivity in hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1981, 63-100; Habermas 1988, 143-170). I am interested in the ways in which ideologies, in the form of different intentional world-views, come to affect interpretation. Hence, my questions are not normative but empirical: what are the impact and limits of ideologies in political talk? I am interested in the empirical situation in which interlocutors engage in interpretation from different political, cultural, and social points of view. I will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter and also in the final, concluding chapter. The second problem concerning Gadamer is the issue of method in hermeneutics. Gadamer was openly hostile to method. Understanding the risk, I still try to read Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman as grounding a possibility for a systematic reading of the material. In this way, I too can maintain a distance to "method" as a series of executable tasks that will ultimately generate the truth. But I do hold it possible to talk about the fusion of horizons and a systematic approach to texts. This will be the topic of Chapter 5.

As a short introduction to hermeneutical approaches, I raise three common points about Gadamer, Bakhtin, and Lotman. They all recognise the independent existence of language. This means two things. First, language cannot be reduced to an instrument for making references, and second the way in which language expresses something carries meaning. They all perceive understanding as an active, productive enterprise of the interpreter: interpretations are actively laboured and products of our intentional activity. Hermeneutics does not and cannot aim at going back to the "original" meaning of the text. Rather, it aims at the truth of the text in this time, as the text allows it to emerge. Thomas Seifrid in this context even uses the theological term reincarnation: reincarnation rather than logos does justice to the way language exists (Seifrid 2005, 165). The third common point is a logical conclusion from the above two remarks: any inquiry into the intentions of the author of the text is both purposeless and infeasible. It is useless, because it misunderstands the nature of language, and it is infeasible because the intentions cannot be discovered. Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman all inquire into the *relationship* between experience and language and in that sense they are followers of Heidegger rather than Dilthey or Schleiermacher.

# Dialogicality of Understanding

Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900–2002) ontological hermeneutics concerns the ways in which the interpreter's prior knowledge—her immersion in tradition—interacts with the text in the process of interpretation. Interpretation for Gadamer, is historically situated, productive, it is described as a fusion of horizons and it takes place in language. I will discuss Gadamer's understanding of understanding in the following four steps.

The first is the historically sensitive notion of understanding:

> Every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interests the age and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his original audience. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always co-determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history. (Gadamer 1989, 296)

Gadamer argues not only that interpretation occurs in a certain moment conditioned by history, but also that the history that has passed since the text was written is essential in producing the correct understanding. The external context, in other words, is not a hindrance, but part of the very essence of understanding. This productive aspect of interpretation has sometimes been taken to imply that Gadamer's hermeneutics slides towards relativism in interpretation (e.g. Hircsh 1965;[39] for an overview of the dispute, see Palmer 1969, 46-65; Seung 1982, 198ff.). It is, however, obvious that the historical sensitivity Gadamer refers to does not alter the fact that it is the *text* that "speaks to the interpreter", not vice versa. This also becomes obvious when we consider Gadamer's analogy of play. Understanding is like playing a game. And a game can be a game only if the player does not confront it as an object, but "loses himself in play" (Gadamer 1989, 102). The player needs to let the game take over the players. By analogy, the same goes for the interpretation of texts: it is only by giving oneself up to the text that the text can be experienced and practical knowledge conveyed by the text understood. Gadamer discusses understanding as an experience. The experience of a work of art is his example. The artefact must be *experienced* in its material complexity rather than subjected to judgement. The starting point in art is always the artefact itself. However, since understanding is a relationship and what is at stake is the "real meaning of the text as it speaks to the interpreter", Gadamer asks what kind of experience the text can induce that does not

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39. Hirsch later revised his opinions and finds some agreement with Gadamer (Hirsch 1984).

become subjective but discloses the real meaning embedded in the text. So experiencing art means to establish a relationship the artefact that enables the artefact to disclose its meaning. As Gadamer writes in his essay "The Relevance of the Beautiful", "the experience of the beautiful, and particularly the beautiful in art, is the invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things, wherever it may be found" (1986, 32). It is in this sense we should understand his claim that experiencing a work of art amounts to *Erfahrung*, "the invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things". However, he continues that "in the experience of art we see a genuine experience (Erfahrung) induced by the work, which does not leave him who has it unchanged" (1989, 100). This last addition, "which does not leave him who has it unchanged" connects *Erfahrung* with the individual experience in time and acknowledges that *Erfahrung* is nevertheless a temporal event that has not exhausted the meaning of the work of art. The same holds for a game: in order to play one must lose oneself in the play, but the way the game is played is never the same. Its immediate experience is different each time. In this respect, understanding carries resemblance to *Erlebnisse*, to intuitive or immediate experience of an object unfolding before us. Hermeneutics should aim at developing the immediate experience (*Erlebnisse*) towards the true experience (*Erfahrung*).

The argument that I will develop below is that Gadamer does not give sufficient consideration to the non-finite experience of the process of unfolding of truth, and especially in the context of political debate the unfolding of the debate acquires a dynamic that often denies the possibility of attaining any *Erfahrung* within the realm of politics.

The second step of understanding is its productive nature:

> *Understanding* is not a resigned ideal of human experience adopted in the old age of the spirit, as with Dilthey; nor is it, as with Husserl, a last methodological ideal of philosophy in contrast to the naiveté of unreflecting life; it is, on the contrary, the *original form of the realisation of Dasein*, which is being-in-the-world. Before any differentiation of understanding into the various directions of pragmatic or theoretical interest, understanding is Dasein's mode of being, insofar as it is potentiality-for-being and "possibility". (Gadamer 1989, 250)

Gadamer's question is, therefore, not how to understand something, but a recognition of understanding as a universal condition of being human and of what happens to us when we understand something. This being-in-the-world acquires the mode of a hermeneutical circle that reflects the interplay between the text, its history, the position of the interpreter, and his belonging to a certain tradition. Gadamer uses the analogy of play to describe what he means by hermeneutical experience. Put succinctly, the analogy indicates that understanding is like playing a game. One can play only if one does not

confront the play as an object, but "loses himself in play" (ibid., 102) and lets the game (text) dominate and modify the players (interpreter) (ibid., 100). Playing a game is a mode of being rather than a means of encountering an object: someone who does not play seriously spoils the game.[40] True understanding, *Erfahrung* brings together the cultural tradition of the text, its past contexts, and the situation of the current interpretation. It makes the subject who experiences transcend the isolated individual *Erlebnisse*. The play analogy, that all playing is "being played" and the characterisation of true understanding as *Erfahrung* point out that the true subject of hermeneutic experience is not the individual, but the game, the interaction in which players take part and above all to which they submit themselves in order to be played.

> The "subject" of the experience of art, that which remains and endures, is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it but the work itself. This is the point at which the mode of being of play becomes significant. For play has its own essence, independent of the consciousness of those who play. (Gadamer 1989, 102)

To fully appreciate the play analogy, I wish to quote Gadamer on the essence of a work of art: "for *all encounter with the language of art is an encounter with an unfinished event and is itself part of this event*" (ibid., 99, italics in original). The conclusion that the "subject" of experience is the text, not the person springs from the observation that a work of art in itself is an unfinished event and will remain such. The work of art "materialises" only in the act of interpretation and this interpretation is like playing a game, of losing oneself in play, of being played by the game. This point Gadamer makes is reflected in my adoption of the text of the parliamentary debate as my object of study, as it is in the text that interpretations are realised.

The third step concerns understanding as a fusion of horizons. By a horizon Gadamer means "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (ibid., 301). As we know, horizon is something that evolves as we move and this means that horizon is neither final nor fixed. The central point of Gadamer—and also of his critics like Habermas and Ricoeur—has been the rehabilitation of individual prejudice as the condition for true understanding. By acknowledging that we are always already embedded in tradition, Gadamer shows that this embeddedness

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40.    In German, the word for a play in the theatre and a play as a game is the same *das Spiel*. In English, a distinction can be made, but one should nevertheless think of the theatrical play as self-contained, having internal rules, and presenting itself as a world of its own to the viewers: "The play is as hermetically sealed and self-sufficient as any game, but *as* play it presents itself as *event* to the viewer." (Palmer 1969, 173). A viewer that does not take the play seriously, spoils it in the same way as a non-serious actor.

is the condition for understanding, not an obstacle. However, he does so through a detour that has significant implications.

The detour consists in first distinguishing between true and false prejudices. Gadamer argues that since hermeneutics is about understanding the truth of texts—and he was mainly concerned with literary classics, a point worth keeping in mind—the interpreter can exploit the temporal distance between her horizon in time and the horizon of the text. The temporal distance thus acquires the role of criticism in his hermeneutics:

> Often temporal distance can solve question of critique in hermeneutics, namely how to distinguish the true prejudices, by which we *understand*, from the *false* ones, by which we *misunderstand*. (Gadamer 1989, 298)

Hermeneutics for Gadamer is not just about understanding the text, but also about establishing the true prejudices that enable understanding. We are now connecting back to the argument that the subject of hermeneutics is not the person who interprets but whole process of a work being interpreted. In other words, understanding for Gadamer carries a double function: to make sense of the text and to scrutinise one's own relationship to the past, and separate the true prejudices that enable understanding and continuity with the tradition from the false ones that lead to misunderstanding. This is essential in order to make sense of his contention that "it is not really we ourselves who understand; it is always a past that allows us to say 'I have understood'." (Gadamer 1976, 58).

A closer consideration of the fusion of horizons reveals that it is not, however, an even fusion of horizons. True understanding as *Erfahrung* that "does not leave him who has it unchanged" (Gadamer 1989, 100) accords more force and legitimacy to the text than to the interpreter and his context. If the fusion of horizons begins with the collision of the prejudices of the interpreter and the horizon of tradition, and true experience can only be achieved by changing one's prejudices, one can conclude with Paul Ricoeur that for Gadamer the true terrain of hermeneutics are tradition and history and not the text itself (Ricoeur 1981, 68). Axel Honneth has made the same observation by pointing out that the only authentic I-Thou relationship in Gadamer requires openness to tradition, and any reflection on tradition, not least a rational one, can only lead to distortion of the truth of the text (Honnet 2003). Indeed, Gadamer stipulates that "[t]he fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power" (Gadamer 1989, 270).

The open attitude and historical distance towards tradition help "distinguish the true prejudices, by which we *understand*, from the *false* ones, by which we *misunderstand*" (ibid., 298-299; italics in original). Gadamer argues that the historical distance is also the critical moment in his hermeneut-

ics against the power of tradition. The historical distance makes it possible, so Gadamer argues, to distinguish between understanding and misunderstanding. The attitude that is required to *understand* consists in "the fundamental suspension of our own prejudices" (ibid., 299) and assumes the structure of a question; and it is tradition that can answer our questions. This characterisation yields a canonised picture of the continuity of tradition and Roberto Bernasconi observes that Gadamer's "traceable continuity" of tradition is only conceivable by exclusion of any excess of Being (Lammi 1991, 503).

On the other hand, *Erfahrung*, which compels us to revise our prejudices in the light of the text, is a form of immanent criticism rather than something imposed on the text from a external position. The core of the dispute here is the nature of experience and knowledge. Gadamer with his discussion on *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnisse* calls into question the scientific position that true knowledge is invariant and can be experienced over and over again in the same way. In political science, this is referred to as reliability of the research, which often translates into the degree the research can be repeated and the same results can be achieved. This understanding places knowledge outside time, making it inadequate for the human sciences because experience takes place in time. Georgia Warnke illustrates this with the example of World War I, showing to what extent the meaning of, or truth, of World War I as the Great War has been altered by the breakout of World War II (Warnke 1987, 27).

The tension between what comes to us from tradition (effective historical consciousness) and the question of how we can make a distinction between true and false prejudices leads Gadamer to turn to language as the medium through which truth reveals itself. This is the fourth step of his hermeneutics I will discuss.

> Not only is the world world only insofar as it comes into language, but language, too, has its real being only in the fact that the world is presented in it. Thus, that language is originarily human means at the same time that man's being-in-the-world is primordially linguistic. We will have to investigate the relation between language and world in order to attain the horizon adequate to the fact that hermeneutic experience is verbal in nature. (Gadamer 1989, 443)

Here Gadamer adopts another analogue to describe the linguistic nature of hermeneutic experience, namely that of a dialogue: "the dialectic of question and answer... makes understanding appear to be a reciprocal relationship of the same kind as conversation" (Gadamer 1989, 370), and further that "the linguisticality of understanding is the *concretion of historically effected consciousness*." (ibid., 391). Interpretation begins with the text presenting itself

as Thou and ensues by the interpreter responding to this call as an I addressing the Thou who has already spoken. The fact that understanding that emerges from discussion means that the hermeneutic circle cannot be conditioned by requirements of logic, but those of conversation in which the question, the openness of the I towards the Thou, is primary (Gadamer 1980, 5).

The fact that the text presents the interpreter with a question further means that understanding cannot be conceptualised as a method of (mechanical) appropriation of the object. Indeed, as many observers point out, the main advantage that Gadamer's hermeneutics offer to social sciences is that it helps us think beyond the instrumentalist distinction of subject and object (Bernstein 1983; Hekman 1986, 49). At the same time, the primacy of the question marks the acknowledgement of the interpreter's intentionality rendering all interpretations intentional, *as* something, *as* applicable to our present context, and *as* something mediated by language. And finally, the primacy of the question also means that in order to understand the text that presents itself as a question, we need to understand its being in the world, and this entails the rejection of any possibility of distinguishing between the form and the content.

By calling hermeneutic experience, that is understanding, *Erfahrung* Gadamer acknowledges two things. First is the fact that all understanding is conditioned by the interpreter's prejudices of tradition. The second is that understanding is not about the text, but about reconsidering one's prejudices in the light of the text that inevitably emanates from the same tradition as one's own. This tradition, for Gadamer, is nothing less than what is preserved of the past, and literary texts in particular are primary source of the past, primary access to history. It is obvious that Gadamer's hermeneutic experience cannot be forced upon the interpreter. It requires willingness to submit and open oneself to the Thou. That this is not always the case was palpably demonstrated in the encounter between Gadamer and Derrida in 1981. This is not to say that Gadamerian interpretation requires community or empathy; it requires self-reflexivity and self-criticism and the continuity of tradition. The text as a Thou introduces the potentiality of rupture to the harmony of the I and her prejudices, making it possible for the I to engage critically with her own relation to tradition. Often distance in time between the I and the Thou is needed for this.

If we want to develop a method for studying interpretation in the present moment, Gadamer's hermeneutic theory has two main shortcomings that need to be addressed. On the one hand, as already the Gadamer—Derrida encounter showed, good will does not always surface, but the conversation nevertheless continues. The flow of a political debate is perhaps better described as "ensuing" misunderstandings than understandings in the sense that the text is rarely allowed to speak in its own right. On the other hand, if we reject the postulate of a continuous tradition, what may easily be termed

misunderstanding could appear as genuine *Erfahrung* in a different continuity of tradition. Neither criticism renders Gadamer's observation on interpretation invalid, but they indicate that it needs to be adjusted in order to apply to the realities of politics. The point I want to make is that Gadamer's work on understanding is grounded upon the literary tradition and perhaps more continuity can be perceived among classical works of literature than in politics. Gadamer eloquently stated that "tradition is a genuine partner in dialogue, and we belong to it, as does the I with a Thou [where] the Thou is not an object but is in relationship with us" (Gadamer 1989, 352). I find Gadamer's argument that tradition is in relationship with us indispensable, but in politics, and especially in a political debate, tradition, the past, appears also to be a matter of political dispute rather than something grounding understanding. The empirical studies below will show that political talk primarily attempts to forge a traceable continuity of tradition through exclusions of uncomfortable political positions, which nevertheless may continue to exert their influence over the debate. One needs to take this into account when reflecting on hermeneutics in politics. I will do so by applying Bakhtin and Lotman to the above discussion on understanding.

## Dialogicality of Language

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) was a Russian philosopher and literary critic whose works have inspired also linguistics. He was a central figure of the Bakhtin circle, which included Valentin Vološinov, Pavel Medvedev and Bakhtin himself.[41] I will work out Bakhtin's view on interpretation as it comes to expression in his theory on intersubjectivity, which I will discuss in connection with his theory of dialogicality of language.

Bakhtin's early works—published in English in *Towards the Philosophy of the Act* (1993 [1919–1921] and *Art and Answerability* (1990 [1919–1924])—were more philosophical in nature than his later, literary works. His legacy to German philosophy, especially to the Marburg Neokantians and what later became known in Husserl's philosophy as the "life-world" is most explicit here.[42] Bakhtin's early works establish a transition from ethics to aesthetics, and claim that interpersonal interaction can be studied as aesthetics.

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41. It remains uncertain whether Valentin Vološinov was a pseudonym of Bakhtin or an autonomous scholar. I will not engage in this debate here and simply refer to texts published under Vološinov's name as his. Whatever is the case, it is obvious that Bakhtin and Vološinov co-operated and together with Pavel Medvedev are best referred to as the Bakhtin Circle (see Brandist 2002a).

42. Phenomenology arrived in Russia in Gustav Shpet's works. Shpet spent a year 1912–1913 studying with Husserl at Göttingen and in 1914 he published *Appearance and Sense* that introduces Husserl and phenomenology in Russian (Bourgeot 2012, 3-4).

The problem Bakhtin sets for himself is to think of the uniqueness of human action: action as a lived experience is quite another thing than action that has been theorised. Action as a part of human life is self-determined, but its theorisation deprives it of this immediacy and attributes to it more generic values (Ponzio 2003, 245). These two different domains can be called life and culture respectively. They are united by the human action of creation: humans live life, but their creative activity produces culture, objectively existing artefacts. Similarly, the human experience of cultural artefacts takes place only in life. In his early essay "Art and Answerability", Bakhtin is concerned with what this—let me term it hermeneutic already now—relationship should be like.

> The three domains of human culture—science, art, and life—gain unity only in the individual person who integrates them into his own unity. This union, however, may become mechanical, external... And what is the result? Art is too self-confident, audaciously self-confident, and too high-flown, for it is in no way bound to answer for life. (Bakhtin 1990, 1)

Bakhtin's request that art must answer life refers to the need of "inner interpenetration" art can generate in individual's life, but for this to happen also the individual needs to be "answerable": "But what guarantees the inner connection of the constituent elements of a person?" Bakhtin asks and continues, "Only the unity of answerability. I have to answer with my own life for what I have experienced and understood would not remain ineffectual in my life." (Bakhtin 1990, 1).

The hermeneutic problem Bakhtin describes is much like Gadamer's, but there is a twist, for Bakhtin does not call for answerability from the interpreter only, but also from the artefact: "The poet must remember that it is his poetry which bears the guilt for the vulgar prose of life" (ibid., 2). In Bakhtin's later writings, this moral mutual answerability acquires a more aesthetic characterisation. Unlike Gadamer whose primary concern is to let the text take over, Bakhtin is alert to the "vulgarity" of texts and the impact thereof. The dialogue that Gadamer described is one of increasing approximation of the truth, but Bakhtin's dialogue develops along two different forces as we shall see below, above all, Bakhtin's understanding acknowledges, even emphasises, the simultaneous polyphony of any social act, which is caused by the medium of the dialogue, namely language. If asked to pinpoint the main difference between Bakhtin and Gadamer we could argue that it is precisely this, and perhaps only this, difference in the simultaneity. Gadamer's work acknowledges the temporality of understanding as well as its intentionality, but it nevertheless holds on to the idea that at any given moment the truth of the text can emerge against the past, enabling the interpreter to declare: "I

have understood" (Gadamer 1976, 58). I think that this possibility is funda-mentally absent in Bakhtin. In a late essay "Problem of Speech Genres", written in the 1950s, Bakhtin states that

> To see and comprehend the author of a work means to see and compre-hend another, alien consciousness and its world, that is another subject ("Du"). With *explanation* there is only one consciousness, one subject; with *comprehension* there are two consciousnesses and two subjects. (Bakhtin 1986, 111)

Assessed in this way, the difference between Gadamer and Bakhtin concerns the different roles they ascribe to dialogue and tradition. For Gadamer, they serve as the bridge *uniting* the text, the interpreter, and the community, but for Bakhtin dialogue is a necessity, which recognises that the text, the inter-preter, and the community never fully subsume each other. In emphasising the socially determined differences, Bakhtin also draws attention to how var-iation in people's experiences makes tradition socially fragmented, per-meated by social differences. Bakhtin argues that

> All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language... Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. (Bakhtin 1986, 60)

Bakhtin's colleague, Valentin Vološinov was even more insistent on the im-pervious character of different speech genres:

> It is not experience that organises expression, but the other way around—*expression organises experience*. Expression is what first gives experience its form and specificity of direction... expression-utter-ance is determined by the actual conditions of the given utterance—above all, by its *immediate social situation* [--] *The immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine—and determ-ine from within, so to speak—the structure of an utterance.* (Vološinov 1973, 85-86, italics in original)

As in Bakhtin's dialogue, the utterance in Vološinov's view is born out of the need for interaction between people, but in a manner that is informed by the social conditions. The social situation in which one finds himself determ-ines the utterance. As an example, Vološinov discusses an expression of hunger, arguing that a peasant's experience of hunger is "completely differ-ent" from that of "a member of an objectively and materially aligned and united collective (a regiment of soldiers; workers in the association within the walls of a factory..." (Vološinov 1973, 89). It is not that a peasant and a

soldier are physiologically different, but their respective social organisation *orients* the expressions of hunger differently, in other words, hunger is uttered differently and thus constitutes different experiences.[43]

Hunger is an extreme example of a speech genre, but at least the argument becomes clear: different social conditions correspond to different types of talk and therefore tradition, even the literary canon, reveals itself differently among different social groups. The ensuing multiplicity, or polyphony, of voices is the condition of any dialogue, but by the same token, dialogue cannot bring forth a shared experience, not only because this is impossible, but also because it is unethical to deny the different and unique individual experience of life.

We can now better understand Bakhtin's transition from ethics to aesthetics. The point is that ethical action must respect the individuality, autonomy and incommensurability of the other by not subsuming the other under a single logic of explanation (or sharing through appropriation of the other's pain), but by answering the other in a responsible way. The focus shifts from the object or aim of the (ethical) act to the act itself—and therefore aesthetic questions of composition of the act are appropriate, rather then ethical questions of the right and wrong.[44]

Perhaps this ethical underpinning gave Bakhtin his sensitivity to the word as always (already) addressing someone. In "Discourse in the Novel" (1931) he argues

> every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. (Bakhtin 1981, 280)

However, the "answerability" and "anticipation" of the word also means that a constant tension inhabits language, because an utterance—however we want to utter it—"cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates", because it is not in the capacity of the individual to command language, but language is in charge of communication. Given the fact that language for Bakhtin is socially accentuated, that speech genres are tied to different social milieus (or classes), and that words always anticipate the other Bakhtin concludes that

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43.  Critical discourse analysis as discussed in Chapter 2 draws heavily from these observations of Vološinov and Bakhtin, but, my argument was, they ignore the dialogical condition in which they appear in Bakhtin and Vološinov.

44.  Here we also see how Bakhtin's dialogicality of language can include Skinner's concern for the *action* in utterance.

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as a heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (Bakhtin 1981, 293-294)

Language as the heteroglot opinion yields to two different trajectories. On the one hand, it can be seen to emphasise the self-reflexive potential that results from the recognition of social polyphony, of the fact that the way in which we address others affects their being in life (e.g. Gardiner 1992, 96) (compare the responsibility of the vulgar poet above) and consequently dialogism emerges as a call for mutual respect and culture of democracy expressed through language (Hirschkop 1999, viii). On the other hand, it also means that whatever we manage to utter, is not quite what we intended it to be. I believe that it is the latter point that more readily shows in Bakhtin's discussion of the dialogicality language—not the mutual respect for polyphonous community, but the drastic realisation that my words have (always) already been hijacked by someone else who is imposing her social conditions upon the words.

Bakhtin perceives Gadamer's "linguisticality" of understanding—the concretion of historically effected consciousness (Gadamer 1989, 391), the fact that any understanding is directed by our intentions as much as by our being in the history and that it is language that enables history to affect us—as a dialogue but accents it differently from Gadamer. It appears that for Bakhtin, the dialogue that Gadamer conceived in terms of the hermeneutic circle, first could not form a connection to tradition. Furthermore, the dialogue is torn apart by different participating voices. Whilst for Gadamer, the truth of the text can emerge from the hermeneutic circle, for Bakhtin the truth of "hunger" is inevitably socially conditioned and irredeemably differently experienced. The task of understanding is not to reconcile these differences but to appreciate their differentiated presence. This yields a conflictual image of community: the task of the speaker is to appropriate the word, "populate it with his own intention, his own accent" and adapt the word to "his own semantic and expressive intention". In other words, make the word his own. By the same token, however, the word distances from its culturally shared meaning which can ensure communication.

Bakhtin understood society as penetrated by two different forces ruling

communication, centripetal and centrifugal. Centripetal forces attempt to consolidate *both* the linguistic and ideological world:

> We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. (Bakhtin 1981, 271)

Bakhtin argues that centripetal forces are a fact of language, but as *forces* in language, not as description of reality; centripetal forces are not limited to linguistic codification, but encompass social, political and ideological centralisation.

Centrifugal forces describe the opposite force, that of the individual utterance attempting to accent the word in a way that fits the individual experience of life. Consequently, "every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear" and "the authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogised heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance" (ibid., 272).

Bakhtinian dialogue—Gadamer's linguisticality of understanding—is characterised as the clash of centrifugal and centripetal forces. What happens in such a dialogue is that words acquire many voices (that are addressed to different directions and anticipate different answers):

> Someone else's words introduced into our own speech inevitably assume a new (our own) interpretation and become subject to our evaluation of them; that is, they become double-voiced... The transmission of someone else's statement in the form of a question already leads to a clash of two intentions within a single discourse: for in so doing we not only ask a question, but make someone else's statement problematic. (Bakhtin 1984, 195)

Concrete examples from Dostoyevsky illustrate what Bakhtin meant by double-voiced words. In Dostoyevsky's first novel *Poor Folk* (1844–1845), Makar Devushkin, one of the main characters narrates:

> I live in the kitchen, or rather, to be more accurate, there is a room near the kitchen (and our kitchen, I ought to tell you, is clean, light and very nice), a little room, a modest corner... or rather the kitchen is a big room of three windows so I have a partition running along the inside wall, so that it makes as it were another room, and extra lodging... (*Poor Folk*, letter of April 8, cited in Bakhtin 1984, 205-206)

Makar Devushkin's letter is addressed to his distant relative but a close friend, Varvara Dobroselova, whose living conditions are as dismal as those described by Devushkin. Devushkin's narration can only be described as constant hedging and backward reflection: "I live in the kitchen, or rather, to be more accurate, there is a room near kitchen..." by which he tries to avoid giving the impression of complaining. These corrections and clarifications anticipate Dobroselova's interpretation of the letter. Initially the word "kitchen" appears as a neutral description: "I live in the kitchen", but as soon as Devushkin has put this into writing, the word "kitchen" begins to bother him, and the long description of his lodging ends with a dubious reaffirmation: "So don't you imagine, my darling, there is anything else about it, any mysterious significance in it; 'here he is living in the kitchen!'" (*Poor Folk*, letter of April 8, cited in Bakhtin 1984, 206). The voice of the Other enters Devushkin's narration with the first hedging ("or rather..." ) and does not release its grip. Eventually, he is left only with the option of asking the Other to stop ("So don't you imagine, my darling..."). To ask what "kitchen" means, or *is*, to Devushkin can only yield the answer that Devushkin cannot determine what the word "kitchen" means of signifies—even to him. Devushkin engages in a dialogue taking three different directions: Devushkin to himself, Devushkin to the Other, and the Other to Devushkin (Bakhtin 1984, 204-209; 217). Even in this monologue (in its literal sense), Bakhtin has shown the inherently dialogic character of language, the conflict between centripetal and centrifugal forces, the fact that any word, here kitchen, "is not the object as given, but as *intended*." (Brandist 2002b, 528).

For Bakhtin, dialogicality—here, the presence of centripetal and centrifugal forces and the unavoidable anticipation of the other's words—belongs to the nature of language. We should, therefore, reconsider Gadamers "linguisticality of understanding" in the light of the dialogicality of language as outlined by Bakhtin. Both Bakhtin and Gadamer share the view that language situates itself between the speakers, rather than being in their possession. This means that language becomes an autonomous actor in talk. This allowed Gadamer to conclude that "language is Being that can be understood", that it is language that speaks (Gadamer 2006, 90-91), and that it is the "past that allows us to say, 'I have understood'." (Gadamer 1976, 58). But the same fact leads Bakhtin to argue that the "accent" that any semantic content acquires in its context renders any two utterances dialogic. Two judgements, like "Life is good" and "Life is good" uttered in sequence have identical semantic content (here centripetal forces), but given their sequential positioning, the fact that one follows the other, renders their accents different (here centrifugal forces). The dialogic context in which they occur is responsible for the inevitable double-voicedness of the latter utterance, and rather than meaning simply "life is good", the original judgement now becomes under

attack for its sincerity, authenticity, but also its insight may become heightened and affirmed.

So far we have argued that language is situated in between human beings and that whilst it enables both the connection to past as a necessary precondition for any understanding (Gadamer), it does so in a socially conditioned way (Vološinov) and that speakers accentuate their words in a way that marks their individual distance (centrifugal forces) from the shared tradition (centripetal forces) (Bakhtin). Bakhtin's dialogicism of language pays closer attention to the speech situation and draws attention not only to how language transmits tradition, but also to how utterances include in themselves the social position from which they emanate and how they, in their sequential appearance, dialogise—not only that tradition—but the very interaction of talking itself. This point will be elaborated in Chapter 5 where I will discuss conversation analysis as a method. It is now time to ask what the implications of a non-unitary tradition are for the hermeneutic circle; and to answer this question, we turn to Yuri Lotman's cultural semiotics.

## Dialogicality of Culture

Judging from secondary sources, Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman (1922–1993) was a truly multifaceted scholar: he has been labelled a structuralist (Avtonomova 2009), post-structuralist (Selg and Ventsel 2008), post-post-structuralist (Mandelker 1995), and finally a neo-Kantian (Restivo 1999). Most often he is known as a founder of the Tartu-Moscow School of Cultural Semiotics. He was professor both of Russian literature and Semiotics at the University of Tartu. His double chair reflects the Tartu-Moscow school, which began with the study of literature but soon turned to consider the semiotics of culture as a whole.[45]

Semiotics refers to the study of signs. We already noted that Gadamer understood words as structuring and enabling the world to reveal itself, and Bakhtin showed how the materiality of language affects communication. In both cases, the autonomous existence of the word is recognised. This same principle is the core of any semiotic study that focuses on the ways in which signs interact. Some structural semiotic approaches assign a minimal role to the human being in the operation of signs, but Lotman, like Gadamer and Bakhtin, focuses on the *relationship* between the human being, the message, and the context of interpretation. Lotman approaches this triangle as commu-

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45. Introductory works on Lotman's oeuvre in English include Shukman (1977), Andrews (2003), Semenenko (2012); Andreas Schönle (2006) has edited a collection of articles that show different applications of Lotman's work. Lotman has also compiled and edited himself a collection of articles for the English language readers in *Universe of the Mind* (1990).

nication (Lotman 1977, 7). Any system that aims to establish communication between individuals he terms "language". Examples of "languages" are therefore all natural languages (English, Swedish), artificial systems such as mathematics or logic. Art, literature, customs, rituals etc. that organise meaningful human behaviour are also considered as languages. Language is characterised by a set of rules for combining its elements (ibid. 8). These languages enable us to structure entropy and perceive it as information.

In their studies on Russian culture and everyday behaviour, the Tartu-Moscow scholars noted that literature not only is meaningful, but as an artistic intentional composition (culture) it begins to organise the life of its interpreters as well:

> The primacy of life in relation to literature is the primacy of raw, chaotic material. Defined and structured by a literary model, this material is given a new idealised existence in the minds of members of the society. (Gasparov 1985, 18)

In these studies, Lotman describes the rules for everyday life, but also how the ways in which these rules are broken acquire rules of their own:

> [I]n real life there is no such thing as group behaviour. Just as language norms are realised and simultaneously violated in thousands of idiolects, so group behaviour is the sum total of the realisation and violation of behavioural norms within the individual systems of innumerable group members. But "incorrect" behaviour that violates the behavioural norms of a given social group is by no means accidental..." (Lotman 1985, 96)

For Lotman, any generalisation like "romantic behaviour"—the historical period he was mainly concerned with—exists only in abstraction from social reality. The task of the semiotics of everyday behaviour is to view individual action not as a realisation of a (political) programme of action, but as "the continual exercise of choice, the actualisation of one strategy from a wide selection of possibilities" (ibid., 97). In these studies, Lotman treats social behaviour as a text. Already in *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, he had argued that in the case of art, "the work in its entirety is a sign, 'a word'" (1977, 270) thus elevating the Bakhtian concern for the dialogicality of words to the level of compositional wholes, that is, texts, thereby drawing a parallel between social behaviour and text.

Lotman developed his cultural semiotics on the model of communication. Roman Jakobson's model was an instrumental starting point for him (Andrews 2003, 23). His approach to communication was developed over a long period of time from the 1970s onwards. A seminal text in this respect is the 1984 article "On the Semiosphere" (Lotman 2005). This article was publ-

ished in a special issue of *Sign Systems Studies*—the publication series of the Tartu University Department of Semiotics—entitled "Structure of Dialogue as the Working Principle of the Semiotic Mechanism". In this article, Lotman positions himself in relation to, on the one hand, the Saussurean structuralism, and on the other, the Peircean semiotics. He argues that both schools approach semiosis analytically, by discussing more complex systems of semiosis on the basis of elementary units, as well as by focusing on the singular act of communication as the instance of semiosis. As opposed to such isolated and individual units, Lotman presents the concept of semiosphere as a continuum "filled with multi-variant semiotic models situated at a range of hierarchical levels" (Lotman 2005, 206), which is necessary for any semiotic system to function.[46] In other words, Lotman is suggesting that, for instance, literature as a semiotic system, cannot be analysed only in relation to itself. It must be immersed in this semiosphere in order for us to grasp its real functioning—for instance, literature's function in organising everyday behaviour. He insists that any artefact (culture) analysed in separation from life, reveals only a partial understanding of what the artwork does. Because of the relationality of semiotics, any individual language needs the (whole of) cultural context to function. Semiosphere is both the totality of texts and languages, but also the precondition for their semiotic (meaningful) function:

> The semiotic universe may be regarded as the totality of individual texts and isolated languages as they relate to each other. In this case, all structures will look as if they are constructed out of individual bricks. However, it is more useful to establish a contrasting view: all semiotic space may be regarded as a unified mechanism (if not organism). In this case, primacy does not lie in one or another, but in the "greater system," namely semiosphere. The semiosphere is that same semiotic space, outside of which semiosis itself cannot exist. (Lotman 2005, 208)

This has serious implications to our understanding of communication. The traditional view of communication is that some text is coded (i.e. code precedes text) and is then transmitted (dialogue). Lotman reverses this model, claiming that the semiosphere (cf. with Gadamer's tradition) precedes any real communication (cf. Gadamer's dialogue) that generates the text (Gadamer's interpretation) and finally also the language through which the text is made sense of in the context of interaction (Gadamer's application) (Lotman 1990, 143). According to Lotman, the possibility, or rather the necessity, of communicating in Lotman results from the asymmetric information

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46. Edna Andrews is critical of Lotman's reading of Peirce and contests his claim that for Peirce the focal point of Peirce's semiotics is the sign. Instead, she argues that Peirce took semiosis, the process, as the central point of his semiotics (Andrews 2003, 23).

people possess. The concrete situation of communication directs the text that is communication and the interpretation creates, or better, adjusts, available languages to make sense of the text. Only by keeping this in mind can we understand the malleability of real culture on an ad hoc basis.

In contrast to classical communication models like Jakobson's, which focus on the transmission of messages, Lotman postulates that text and communication have three functions that attribute differential weight to language and text respectively (Lotman 1990, 12-18). The first function is obvious: communication transmits messages. Here, the language and text are kept separate and the focus is on the meaning conveyed by the language. Examples of such texts can be found in artificial systems of communication, like the red traffic light that can appear in different places (at junction, in the middle of the road), in different combinations with other lights (red, amber, green, or just red and green) and in different shapes (red circle, red human figure). Irrespective of all that, its meaning continues to be "stop".

The second function, generation of new messages, compliments the first one. New messages in Lotman's vernacular, refer to meanings that cannot be reduced to the original message via backward coding. This can be illustrated with a short example. The Finnish third person singular pronoun *hän* is not gender specific, it denotes women as well as men. In recent years in Sweden, the traditional pronoun pair *han* (he) and *hon* (she) has been complimented by gender-neutral *hen*. The rendition of the Finnish *hän* as the Swedish *hen* is, of course, semantically most appropriate, but the backward translation of *hen* into *hän* would be wrong, for *hen,* given its novelty and complementary nature to *han* and *hon*, cannot be captured by the politically neutral *hän*. So, by translating the Finnish *hän* as the Swedish *hen*, we have created a new message. In this case, we have turned a politically neutral pronoun into politically charged one. And any reverse translation could not depoliticise it; it would rather amount to an even stronger political statement denouncing gender-neutrality in language because of the *history of the language used in this example* to convey the meaning.

This example reveals the problem Lotman is concerned with. Every message, because it is at the same time a part of culture (i.e. a material existence) and individual life (interpreter's subjective being), always embodies multiple languages that structure it. In the above example, the primarily grammatically organised *hän* becomes reorganised politically as well when translated into Swedish. (To avoid the political structuring of *hän* in a Swedish translation, a more conventional, although semantically deficient, translation should be given, perhaps by deciding on either the masculine *han* or feminine *hon* if the context so allows.) By extrapolation, the choice of the pronoun in Swedish is not only a grammatical but also a political question. For Lotman, the distinction between on the one hand artificial language, such as logic or mathematics, and on the other, natural language or any cultural language,

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like art, is that only in artificial language the separation between form and content is possible. In real communication, messages are always organised simultaneously by multiple different languages, such as grammatical and political as in the above example. By extension, the minimal unit of semiotic analysis cannot be the individual sign. It must be the entire semiotic system in which they are immersed (Lotman 2005, 206).

The third function of communication is mnemonic. Texts condense cultural memory by revealing the connections different languages have forged in the past. Lotman explains that

> The sum of the contexts in which a given text acquires interpretation and which are in a way incorporated in it may be termed the text's memory. [--] Nowadays *Hamlet* is not just a play by Shakespeare, but it is also the memory of all its interpretations, and what is more, it is also the memory of all those historical events which occurred outside the text but which Shakespeare's text can evoke associations. (Lotman 1990, 18-19)

Conceptual history such as Skinner's asks the interpreter to "see things their way" (Skinner 2002, 3), that is, it attempts to bring together the perspectives of the historical text and the contemporary interpreter. Gadamer argued that this is impossible and also would lead to a loss of the practical value of the text, which must be applicable in the context of interpretation. Lotman argues that it eradicates history, for the memory of the text is nothing but history that can be revealed in the differential interpretations, i.e. differential languages that have been applied to make sense of the text (Lotman 1990, 271). Only the memory of the differences in the text can reveal the "here and now" of both the text and the current situation's relation to the text. Cultural heritage stored in the text is for Lotman an active element in the process of cultural regeneration, i.e. creation of new texts. The fact that communication contributes to the generation of new messages also enables history in a more general sense.

All three functions of text—communicative, generative, and mnemonic—require the presence of the Other. Gadamer recognises the other as tradition, Bakhtin as the anticipation of the word, and Lotman as dialogue. By dialogue, I here mean the concrete interplay between different ways of interpreting the text, i.e. different languages that can be used to make sense of the text. The concept of semiosphere, the primacy of the dialogic space, dialogises interpretation so that it can only take place in distinction from something else (from here follows Lotman's dictum that the minimum of two languages are always required in semiosis) (M. Lotman 2002, 38).

Let us recall the way Bakhtin characterised the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language. Similar conceptualisations of forces are present in Lot-

man's dialogue with the other, which assumes the form of difference, or distance. Lotman argues that understanding is always an act of translation, of expressing something in another way: "translation is a primary mechanism of consciousness. To express something in another language is a way of understanding it" (Lotman 1990, 127).

Translation as a way of understanding something is also the mode that communication can acquire. Communication, as was pointed out above, does not limit itself to the transfer of messages; it also generates new messages:

> [S]ince in the majority of cases the different languages of the semiosphere are semiotically asymmetrical, i.e. they do not have mutual semantic correspondences, then the whole semiosphere can be regarded as a generator of information. (Lotman 1990, 127)

Communication is characterised by the tension between the need to transmit and the need to generate new information:

> Lingual communication reveals itself to us as the tense intersection between adequate and inadequate lingual acts. Most of all, non-comprehension (conversation in languages which are not fully identical) reveals itself to be just as valuable a meaning-making mechanism as comprehension. The exclusive victory of either of these poles lies in the destruction of information created in the area of mutual tension. (Lotman 2009, 6)

Placed in the context of semiosphere, the commensurability of languages are characterised by the centripetal forces of the semiosphereric centre and the distance of languages, or their incommensurability, by the centrifugal forces of the periphery of the semiosphere. To think about the semiosphere as a concrete space with measurable distances is to misunderstand the semiotic distance between the centre and periphery. In fact, the whole semiosphere is

> transected by boundaries of different levels, boundaries of different languages and even of texts, and the internal space of each of these sub-semiospheres has its own semiotic 'I' which is realised as the relationship of any language, group of texts, separate text to a metastructural space which describes them, always bearing in mind that languages and texts are hierarchically disposed on different levels. (Lotman 1990, 138)

How the semiosphere reveals itself depends on the viewers' position (ibid.). The function of any boundary is to filter, adapt, and control the inclusion of the external to the internal. The centre is characterised by normative wholeness and rigid structures, and it appears to possess logical concreteness; at the periphery, more heterogeneity exists. And naturally, some elements are always excluded and remain incomprehensible, like entropic noise (ibid., 140).

Any act of communication requires the presence of the other. Communication takes the form of translation, which is always (already) immersed in the semiosphere, characterised by the mutually conflicting forces of the centre and the periphery. Translation is a way of filtering and modifying the external into the internal. Lotman argues that

> [t]ext and readership... seek mutual understanding. They 'adapt' to each other. A text behaves like a partner in dialogue: it re-orders itself... in the image of the readership... We should not, however, forget that not only understanding but also misunderstanding is a necessary and useful condition in communication. A text that is absolutely comprehensible is at the same time a text that is absolutely useless. (Lotman 1990, 80)

For Lotman, the act of translating is much more than an individual making sense of a text. Translation also reorganises the semiosphere. Peeter Torop, the current heir to Lotman's chair of semiotics at Tartu, observes that

> translation activity is thus not only the mediation of natural languages and texts, but involves also creation of description languages and, with the help of this metalingual activity, organisation of the relations between the own and the alien culture. (Torop 2008a, 255)

Communication for Lotman is not supposed to bring the partners together, but rather to intensify the distinctions (Lotman 1990, 81), because new meanings can emerge only through the differences that translation produces. In contrast to Gadamer, whose main domain of hermeneutics, as Ricoeur argued, is the past tradition, Lotman's view on understanding is oriented to the future. The connection between communication and metacommunication in the event of translation, Torop referred to above, indicates the complexity of the phenomena Lotmas is concerned with. Translation as a form of communication shares and generates information. In addition to viewing communication as taking place between two different speaking subjects, Lotman also brought attention to concurrent metacommunication, or autocommunication that takes place over time. The function of autocommunication is to organise the semiosphere: "that which on one level of culture manifests itself as a process of communication and a dialogue between addresser and addressee can be seen on a deeper level as the autocommunication of culture and a dialogue of the culture with itself" (Torop 2008b, 394).[47]

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47. It is of interest that for instance Michael Urban (1994 and 2006) and Marek Steedman (2006) have used Lotman's idea of autocommunication to the study of the organisation of political parties in Russia and the U.S respectively.

In Lotman's translation, the moral imperative to remain open towards tradition that characterises Gadamer is absent. Translation creates a contingent and unique event of understanding that binds together the trajectories of the past and the future, but is clearly oriented to the future. Understanding is not limited to the individual (life), but it partakes in culture through human's creative activity. In other words, Lotman is interested in the ways in which life and culture interact and contribute to each other, which is how the individual act of understanding is conditioned by the broader culture (or tradition), but also how it *affects* that culture. This could be phrased yet another way: the text expresses the creative power (*energeia*) and language is the product (*ergon*) (Huttunen 2009, 39-40).

In his most recent books, *Culture and Explosion* (2009 [1993]) and *Unpredictable Mechanisms of Culture* (*Nepredskazujemye mehanizmy kul'tury*, 2010, still unavailable in English),[48] Lotman begins to develop the distinction between predictable (translation) and unpredictable (explosion) mechanisms in culture. In *Culture and Explosion*, he makes a connection between explosion and certain political events like the emerging conflict in Yugoslavia and the fall of Soviet communism (2009, 60, 171). Explosion, however, does not refer to "blast", but to a sudden break or breach with the past. The Russian word for explosion is *vzryv* derived from the verb *zvrat'*, to tear apart. In this respect, the title of the later book, *Unpredictable Mechanisms of Culture* is a better characterisation of the phenomenon than explosion. But from another point of view, explosion is an apt characterisation: the break with the past is possible only through a change in the conceptualisations of history, that is, through another way of organising the semiosphere. Explosion reveals so much new information that its translation into the internal languages becomes impossible; therefore the dynamics of translation and gradual adjustment of the internal space are reversed and the most active adjustment occurs not in relation to the text, but in relation to the internal semiosphere. It is for this reason that most often explosion as a cultural mechanism is coupled with large scale social and political changes. Under "normal conditions" the mechanism of translation is sufficient to filter information; and too controversial information can be kept outside semiosis (i.e. meaning attribution) as mere noise. Political and social upheavals, however, can create situations in which controversial information prevails and asserts its existence. The fall of the communist regimes was obviously one such event, which challenged the predictable ways of understanding messages.

I propose, however, a slightly different reading of Lotman's explosion. I argue that translation and explosion could be seen as two different poles of a

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48.  I have used here still unpublished Polish translation *Nieprzewidywalne mechanizmy kultury*. The text is translated and introduced by Bogusław Żyłko.

continuum relating culture to life. At one end, the mechanisms of translation are adequate to cope with emerging new information and at the other end, that of explosion, translation becomes insufficient and we face what Lotman discusses as "a sharp increase in the informativity of the entire system" (2009, 14). The sudden increase in information enables unpredictable turns, I argue, both in culture and in individual understanding. I base this reading of Lotman on two recurring themes in his discussion of explosion in *Culture and Explosion*: explosion as subjective experience unmediated by language and explosion as a definite break with the past or the beginning of something new. It is the latter interpretation that commentators mostly have discussed (Huttunen 2009, Huttunen 2012; Semenenko 2012, 67ff; Żyłko 2009, 216-217). I emphasise this isomorphic connection between the individual's relation to text (understanding, or rather impossibility of understanding in the case of an explosion) and text's relation to semiosphere (cultural change) because it draws attention to the relationship between hermeneutics at the level of the individual and to the overall cultural change, which in this study concerns the unfolding of the parliamentary debate. Also, Avtonomova has argued that Lotman's explosion should not be seen separately from the processes of translation, and that the differences between the two above all consists of differences in the dynamics of perception (2009, 40), and Amy Mandelker has further argued that Lotman's explosion could be read as a theory of ethics (2006). Thus, translation and explosion both address the same issue of structuring culture.

I start with the explosion as a subjective experience, which is not conceptualised by language. In chapter "The dream—a semiotic window" in *Culture and Explosion*, the dream represents a sphere where the experience of thought and behaviour cannot be separated (Lotman 2009, 142). This stands in contrast to the state of awareness where the reception of information and reaction are kept apart by time. The signs in dream were "signs in their pure form" (ibid., 143), like the Gospel of John describes: "in the beginning was the word" (ibid., italics removed). Lotman continues:

> The word preceded its meaning, i.e., man knew that this *was a word*; that it *had a meaning*, but he did not know what that meaning was. He, as it were, spoke in a language incomprehensible to himself. (ibid., 143)

Mythology has perceived the dream as communication, but such that begs interpretation: Dream is polylingual space, and "the translation of the dream into the languages of human communication is accompanied by a decrease in the level of uncertainty and by an increase in the level of communicability" (ibid., 145). The trade-off between high information content but limited communicability and high communicability but limited information is characteristic of the difference between explosion and translation as modes of

cultural change: "the dream... is individual and it is not possible to penetrate the dream of another. Consequently the dream is, fundamentally, a 'language for one person'." (ibid., 146) and any memorisation or transformation amounts to "little more than an approximation of its essence" (ibid.).

Another example of explosion as an unmediated experience appears in the chapter "The world of proper names". A proper name denotes a concrete object, a thing-in-the-world, like Chekhov, or Raskolnikov; common names denote classes of objects, like *an* author, *a* literary character. Common names are based on general attributes at the expense of the unique. The recognition of the simultaneity of the proper name (I) and the common name (I-as-a-representative-of-a-group) is the precondition for individuality. The proper and the common name create the "tension between the individual and the general which is fundamental to human consciousness" (ibid., 31). Lotman, together with Uspensky, discussed the proper name already in the article "Myth—name—culture" (1977 [1973]). In this article they link naming as a semiotic action of denotation to the cultural function of myth "as a phenomenon of consciousness" (Lotman and Uspenskij 1977, 234). Their emic quest to study the function of the myth (Pärli and Rudakovskaja 2002, 584), shows that proper names like myths denote things directly disabling text's generative function. This explains their durability: their semiosis takes the form of naming—and changing the name would also change the essence of the thing: "the very act of naming is identical to the act of cognition" (Lotman and Uspenskij 1977, 242).[49] The proper name, therefore, stands outside the realm of semiosis (ibid., 236).

However, as we have seen many times above, for Lotman the individual cannot exist without the other, and consequently

> [n]either the world of proper names nor the world of common nouns, taken separately, can encapsulate genuine reality. Reality is given to us in dialogic form and in this, once again, we se the need for art. (Lotman 2009, 136)

Artistic text, for Lotman, can reveal the tension between the objective narrative of the common name and individuality of the characters. Whilst the third person narrative is predictable and governed by conventions, the individual characters represent choice and volition. Semiotically, the proper name and the dream concur in their unmediated appearance to the person who experiences them. They denote their objects directly, and for precisely that reason they cannot be translated and communicated to other people. The proper

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49. In a recent development of Tartu-Moscow school, Selg and Ventsel (2008) have compared Ernesto Laclau's logics of difference and equivalence and Tartu-Moscow school's work on naming as an alternative theory to Laclau's hegemony.

name is itself a paradox for it stands on its own, defined through its singularity and non-connectedness to other signs, but its existence is only possible in relation to what it is not.

A similar theme, playing out between the third person, the structured narrative and first person incommunicable experience is retold in another form in "The fool and the madman"—again emphasising the importance of individual experience that cannot be recounted in the third person verse but which still carries fundamental consequences for the world of common noun, i.e. language. The unpredictable behaviour of a madman is destructive to established patterns of conduct, and precisely because of his madness, the madman enjoys extended freedom of action (Lotman 2009, 38-39). There is a very interesting detail in Lotman's characterisation of the behaviour of the madman. He describes how madmen were deployed in military situations, as their unpredictable conduct was thought to "dislodge the enemy from its usual position" (ibid., 40). It is this dislodging effect of unpredictable behaviour that grants the mad her extended freedom. I want to draw attention to this observation because it shows the importance that dislocation of structures has in Lotman's thinking of freedom and individuality. The role the madman plays is essentially one of choice or chance not reducible to predictable rules. He argues that many of a system's collisions with the extra-systemic (like the madman) "are significantly random in character and it is practically impossible to define them" (ibid., 65). Cultural development, then, appears as a result of internal development and random encounters with external influences. "Sufficiently frequently the collision produced a third, fundamentally new, phenomenon which is not an obvious, logically predictable, consequence of either of the colliding systems." (ibid.). This also draws attention to the mechanism through which such collisions are mediated, namely translation.

The story of the madman connects the two different ways of discussing the explosion. The explosion as a definite break with the past implies a certain structural fracture as a prerequisite it. Above, the madman could be understood as an intermediate case between the explosion and the translation: personal experience unmediated by social norms caused disorientation among the addressees. By "break" I mean "the space which lies beyond the limits of the norm" (ibid., 78). A classical means of introducing a fracture into a structure is the "text within the text", "a fragment of text which is detached from its natural semantic network and mechanically introduced into a different semantic space" (ibid., 69). The text within the text creates a boundary inside the original text and compels the text to be interpreted from multiple angles.

Another means of introducing structural fractures is placing different tropes that invert the norms. In "Inverse image", Lotman explores different structuralist means of inverting the norms. These are, for instance, the inver-

ted subject or constant testing of the boundaries of the established pattern. I wrote "structuralist" because these can be reduced to the internal dynamics of the system and do not necessitate an external intrusion. Rather, they are means to shake the system from inside. As Lotman characterises Ivan the Terrible

> his behaviour was not translated into a sequential, internally justified policy but it did present itself in the form of a number of unpredictable explosions. 'Unpredictability' in this case should be understood as the absence of internal political logic. (Lotman 2009, 85).

However, because of the conceptualisation of semiosphere as a space, the moment of a lack of internal logic may be interpreted as an unpredictable movement into another structure.

> Exit beyond the boundaries of a structure may be realised as an unpredictable movement into another structure. In this case that which from a different point of view may be considered as systemic and predictable and within the limits of this structure is actualised as the unpredictable consequence of explosion. (Lotman 2009, 85)

This shows the potential of meta-descriptions that Lotman's semiosphere allows. In his discussion on the salon of Zinaida Volkonskaya, he alludes on a number occasions to Volkonskaya's political role. A common theme in those allusions is that politics is depicted discussed through other areas of life such as culture. Independence in artistic taste becomes political during Volkonskaya's time (ibid., 101-102). Lotman's conclusion that "indifference to politics was transformed into a political position" makes sense only if there was an established code of political behaviour.

In phenomenological terms, an explosion could be characterised as the initial perception of the text without the possibility of attributing a certain meaning to it. This holds especially if we think of the explosion as an individual experience that precedes the meaning-conferring act. Gadamer did not think that understanding happens immediately; rather, an open mind towards the tradition and a dialogue with the text, in which the text reveals its meaning to the interpreter, is required. Something similar is present in Lotman's discussion of the explosion: the feeling of being unable to make sense in the face of the explosion, that the explosion evolves and, paraphrasing Gadamer, takes over the interpreter, if not quite sharing its meaning, but rather summoning its presence upon the interpreter. Most tangibly this can be felt in Lotman's discussion of the madmen in war.

However, whereas Gadamer seems to assume that the understanding and the application of the meaning of the text seems to follow on somewhat automatically once prejudices have been encountered, Lotman connects the ex-

plosion with the aspect of communication. From *Culture and Explosion* we learn that

> The world of common nouns gravitates towards processes of gradual development, which are inextricably linked to the mutual changeability of its elements. The space of proper names is the space of explosion. (Lotman 2009, 136)

Huttunen (2012, 170-171) discusses the explosion in terms of artistic autogenesis that should be understood as being like the autogenesis of Christ. John 1:1 reads

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

The autogenetic Christ, the word (logos in Greek) was "in the beginning", He was the light of men shining in the darkness, but "the darkness did not comprehend it". To take this non-comprehension seriously means that there is something in the essence of this Logos that could not be understood from the darkness. This is different from saying that Christ was understood in different ways; surely He was not ignored, to say the least. In due course, a whole discipline, theology, evolved to interpret God in His non-comprehensibility. The point is similar when Gadamer argues that art is a mimesis of the real world. When discussing the Last Supper and Christ's words that "This is my body and this is my blood" Gadamer agrees with Luther's interpretation that the wine and the bread do not signify the body and blood, but "are the flesh and blood of Christ".[50] Gadamer continues

> I am simply making use of this problem of dogma to claim that, if we really want to think about the experience of art, we can, indeed must, think along these lines: the work of art does not simply refer to something, because what it refers to is actually there. We could say that the work of art signifies an increase in being. (Gadamer 1986, 35).

In both cases, the material text, that is, the encounter with something that undeniably carries meaning, but which cannot be deciphered by the means of

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50. In contrast to Catholic Eucharist where the bread and wine in a miracle convert into the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation), Lutheran consubstantiation implies that the bread and wine co-exist in essence both as bread and wine and as Christ's body and blood.

description available, forces the interpreter to face the text as such, contemplate the meaning of the text. The text "is actually there". In Gadamer, the understanding of the text does not leave the person untouched and in Lotman, according to Huttunen's discussion, explosion is followed by semiospheric processes of criticism, analysis, adaptation, imitation to enable eventual translation of the incomprehensible text into the languages of semiosphere, to include it in the "canon" of culture (2012a, 178). The difference is that in Gadamer's case, the text is able to share its meaning whilst in Lotman's case semiospheric processes are required to alter the semiosphere as well as the meaning of the text; yet, the interpreter might still hold and maintain a glimpse of the "increase in being", the glimpse of the explosion inside—for further criticisms, analysis, imitation and translations into communicable (impoverished?) texts.

## Understanding, Explosion and Translation Reconsidered

I have here discussed the explosion and the translation as two phases of the overall process of "making sense" of a text in the conditions of dialogicality of language and culture. Following Gadamer, I take "understanding" to imply an experience that changes the person who experiences. The same idea is present in Lotman's theory, but it is developed on a cultural level and in relation to culture's autocommunication in the process of translation, that is, the creation of new meta-languages that (re)organise the semiosphere. Whilst Gadamer's understanding implies a possibility of uncovering the truth of the text as such, Lotman distinguishes two processes of understanding. The first is the encounter with the text in question. I have discussed this here in terms of an explosion. This encounter is unmediated by available cultural languages and cannot be made sense of, "domesticated" and incorporated into one's "own" culture. Explosions can, however, eventually give rise to new descriptions and thereby by altering one's "own" culture they can become part of it. This process can also be called translation.

Translation, however, is not only the aftermath of an explosion, but the "primary mechanism of consciousness" (Lotman 1990, 127) and it occurs continually. In translation, tradition, the Gadamerian prejudices or the Lotmanian semiosphere, plays its (de)formative role. Translation is a linguistic process and cannot evade the linguistic and semiospheric constraints. The interaction between culture (linguistic and semiospheric constraints) and the self is captured well by the following observation:

> We are immersed in the space of language. Even in the most basic abstract conditions, we cannot extract ourselves from this space, which simply envelops us, and yet it is a space of which we are also a part and

which, simultaneously, is part of us. And as a result of this, our relationship with language is far from ideal: we need to exert a tremendous effort to push ourselves beyond the limits of language and it is precisely to language that we ascribe our lies, deviations from norm, and the majority of our defects and perversions. (Lotman 2009, 114)

This brings us to the connection between the act of communication and collective memory. Lotman writes that history is the memory of a culture. In contrast to the metaphor of memory as a library full of books, Lotman argues that "memory is more like a generator, reproducing the past again; it is the ability, given certain impulses, to switch on the process of generating a conceptualised reality which the mind transfers into the past. This capacity is part of the general process of thinking and is inseparable from it." (Lotman 1990, 272). Translation and dialogicality do not only concern the actual context which is being observed, but involve the cultural history that is being drawn into the translation and as Torop emphasised translation as activity involves the creation of description and aims at organising the relations between one's own and alien cultures. As much as an individual and intimate operation, translation is also a mode of cultural evolution.

Gadamer's view of tradition is quite different: "[I]f every language is a view of the world, it is so not primarily because it is a particular type of language... but because of what is said or handed down in this language" (Gadamer 1989, 392; 441). He understands the effective history of a text to consists of its meaning(s) but leaves out consideration of the language structure through which those meanings are preserved. The picture that emerges from his position is one of independently existing meanings that require contextual application. Lotman, by contrast, does not ignore the importance of linguistic structure, the "particular type of language" at the expense of "what is said or handed down in this language". The interplay between form and content (the how and the what), and the mutual constraints they exert upon each other, enable the trajectories of understanding to reach both towards tradition and the future of anticipation. This means that understanding is an event, not existence. As an event, understanding is conditioned both by the collective, objective tradition, and by the anticipation of subjective life.

To push or force the differences between Gadamer and Lotman, I am tempted to conclude that it is to be found in the different understanding of dialogue that leads Gadamer—in his attempt to retrieve the truth—to look to tradition for clarification, and Lotman—in his attempt to account for new information—to both tradition and future that together create the event of understanding. Lotman's appropriation of Bakhtin's dialogic theory of language leads him to develop a different kind of hermeneutics as Gadamer. I will discuss Lotman's, as I label it, imperfect hermeneutics in Chapter 8.

In this chapter, we have developed the dialogic understanding of language

as the "counter-pair" of monologism that was discussed in Chapter 2. I have discussed dialogicality on three different levels, those of understanding, language and culture. Although Gadamer's hermeneutics lays the foundations for this, the contributions of Bakhtin and Lotman concretise "dialogism" and extend it beyond Gadamer's examples of literary classics. Crucially, everyday and political interaction depicts dynamics, which are quite different to those that Gadamer described as being between the text and the interpreter and require new ways of conceptualising the role of the past not only as the condition for understanding, as Gadamer submits but also as the source for new meanings for the present and the future.

Bakhtin's and Lotman's focus on the generative and future-oriented aspect of interpretation suits the political debate better. A political debate cannot presuppose a continuity of tradition (and rather sees the tradition as a realm of contest). Lotman's cultural semiotics conceptualises understanding as life and its relation to the social (culture) in two different ways, as the translation and the explosion. These are also two different modes of the semiotic relations that connect the micro-level interaction to the macro-level of society. They are simultaneously two different ways how the micro interaction generates the macro context.

The following chapter will discuss the micro-level interaction in more detail and develop a systematic way of reading political debates based on the the categories of conversation analysis first discussed in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 5: Analysing Observed Talk

## Dialogicality and Understanding

The dialogic understanding of language developed in Chapters 2 through 4 is narrower than that provided by Linell. His is concerned with dialogical elements, not with dialogic wholeness. I work from the point of view of a dialogic understanding of (the whole of) language. I am therefore closer to Bakhtin and Lotman than to Linell, when it comes to the possible theoretical basis of conversation analysis. For this reason, I seek support from Bakthin and Lotman for my linguistic method rather than from, for instance, Linell. Although I draw heavily on linguistics, I raise questions that concern politics. Therefore, I find Bakhtin and Lotman more useful than scholars from more linguistically oriented dialogic studies.

This affects my methodology. Dialogism directs attention away from the utterance (substance) to the interaction *between* utterances (relation). Although this appears mundane in any study of talk—we all address our words to someone—the primacy of the speaking subject and his utterance remains central to the methods of text analysis commonly used in political science. This was the topic of Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I discussed how context is more an outcome of communication than something that precedes it. In Chapter 4, I looked at interpretation as generating meaning. In this chapter, I will use my theoretical discussion to develop a method that allows us to focus on the relationship between speaking and interpreting. I will give a detailed explication of the implications of focusing on the "relation" rather than the "substance". First, however, I will briefly contrast the ideal types of communication as conceptualised by the monological and dialogical understandings of language in order to recapitulate the problem I originally began with.

Monologism defines communication as the transfer of information, a transfer meant to achieve a mutual understanding of the matter (which need not, however, involve agreement). Linell observes that:

> If two parties, the sender/speaker and the recipient/listener, are to attain this goal [mutual understanding –JT], they must interpret (others' and their own) actions and utterances in precisely the same way. This is not possible, unless the speaker has a specific and precise intention with his or her message (the utterance is intended univocally), the words (and

other parts of) language have stable meanings (i.e., language is a code), and the speaker uses words in a correct (sincere, truthful, appropriate) way. In addition, the listener must subjugate him- or herself to the speaker in order to retrieve and reconstruct the speaker's intention accurately. And the listener must of course know the same language as the speaker. (Linell 2009, 39)

The authority over the meaning of the utterance rests, in this view, within the speaker and the code. In different ways, argument analysis, conceptual history, rhetoric and critical discourse analysis all reduce communication to the speaker and the code used. Any shortcomings in deciphering what the sender intends are due to the recipient's specific deficiencies (mental capacity, poor language skills etc.) or to situational difficulties (the conditions of listening are suboptimal, the available time is limited, or the context is imprecise, etc.).

Dialogism, by contrast, understands communication as situational activity. Situated understanding, rather than perfect reproduction of the sender's message is required. Many of us are familiar with the feeling that what our interlocutor has uttered is a bit unclear, but the meaning is then clarified by the utterances that follow. This is situational understanding: sufficient to allow the conversation to move on. Depending on the purpose of conversation, of course, there are variations in the definitions of sufficient. In listening to doctor's orders, sufficient understanding is a very precise understanding; in the case of a parliamentary debate, what qualifies as situationally sufficient includes, for instance, the distance between politically antagonistic positions. Totally irrelevant talk is not situationally sufficient. Also the parliamentary rules of debate stipulate this.

The common observation that our interlocutor's utterance acquires clarity via subsequent turns can mean two things. According to monologism, it means that the initial expression was poorly formed and the context a little strange. But, if approached from the dialogic point of view, it can mean that the subsequent turns *reformed* whatever was initially said. Thus, what eventually emerges to the listener as a clear and sound position was not necessarily there in the beginning.

What does it mean to have situational understanding of a previous utterance? The previous utterance is treated as containing a potential of various meanings, some of which are actualised by the response. The response, that is, the utterance of the second turn, has, first, the function indicating how the previous utterance can be interpreted, and second, it constitutes a situationally applicable response. In this way, it is not the speaker who has control over the meaning of his words, but the recipient—within some limits. This is not a "deficiency" of communication. The gap filled by the recipient's interpretation of the previous utterance indicates the moment when cultural, social, political contexts *enter into* to the conversation.

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It can even be argued that the impossibility of the monologic paradigm of communication means that all communication constitutes culturally, socially and politically embedded activity. And perhaps more to the point: to look for the cultural, social or political in talk, one should not look into the substance of utterance, but into the distance, the *relation*, between the utterances. An utterance without an interpretation is no more than a potential of social action; to make it into social action, it must be interpreted. (By social action I here refer to an action that the participants understand as meaningful in their particular situation.) In contrast to monologism's emphasis on sender and code as the authorities of meaning, dialogism grants the recipient a central co-authoring role that transforms the meaning potential of an utterance into a meaningful social action.

The dialogic understanding of language redirects our focus away from singular utterances (statements about the world) to the reception (or interpretation) of the statement. The interpretation of the statement, which occurs during a conversation, is not necessarily concerned with the objective content of the message (the message may well be misunderstood). Nor is it necessarily conditioned by the intention of the speaker (the hearer might not understand it). Finally, it is not necessarily determined by external relations of power, for the hearer may resist those forces. All this means that it is less important to identifying something external to language as a means of understanding or explaining the meaning of the text. It is more useful to study carefully how the interlocutors interact in conversation. In other words, the focus ought to be on the situation of interaction in the debate, the self-understandings the participants make of the debate, and on the "ethnomethods", the tools the participants employ to understand the debate. This shifts the standard preoccupation of interpretation from the analyst-object relationship to the interpretations that the debate's participants make themselves. Talk as an empirical phenomenon builds upon conjectures rather than propositional content. This should be reflected in the method of analysis.

This, however, raises new challenges. As soon as we begin asking how the interlocutors themselves understand each other, we need to know something of their cultural background. This was the challenge that Skinner faced when he argued that in order to avoid anachronistic interpretations we (analysts) must try to "see things their way" (Skinner 2002, 3). The difference introduced with dialogism is that "seeing things their way" does not mean understanding the subjective interpretation of one actor, but observing a joint product of observable conversation.

In fact, conversation is nothing more than a negotiation of how the interlocutors "see things the way of their interlocutors do"—and (possibly) contest that way of seeing. If we are uncertain how our interlocutors understand things, we must presume that the same is true of all other conversations. The

task of "seeing things their way" cannot be a quest for a perfect understanding, but for a situated understanding.

As argued above, this situated understanding involves broader cultural, social and political context necessary to make situational mutual understanding possible. In other words, the interlocutors face the Gadamerian hermeneutic condition of fusing the horizons of their own perspective and the perspective of their interlocutor—not perfectly as monologism prescribes, but in a situationally feasible way. Any interaction between two interlocutors, therefore, includes in its situational context, in its interactive dynamics, the mediation of the text's relation to its tradition. For Gadamer, there is a certain continuity of tradition that transcends both the text and its interpreter. It enables the horizons of the text and the interpreter to fuse. However, as was discussed in Chapter 4, Gadamer understands this tradition primarily as literary high culture.

This turn "inwards", the quest to understand the "self-understandings" of the participants, evokes the question of how conversation analysis (or the dialogic understanding of language) can account for the effects of social structures, ideologies, or the unconscious. I will briefly try to show, with the help of Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*, that these worries are unfounded. Jameson approaches literature as bearing social relevance and meaning. He argues that the political approach—as opposed to others, such as the structural, psychological, stylistic etc.—is the "absolute horizon of all reading and interpretation" (Jameson 1981, 1). Literature, from Jameson's point of view, should be understood as taking a stance to political development of history. He defines this as the history of changing modes of economic production:

> [O]nly Marxism offers a philosophically coherent and ideologically compelling resolution to the dilemma of historicism... Only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential *mystery* of the cultural past, which, like Tiresias drinking the blood, is momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak, and to deliver its long-forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it... These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective... struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity; only if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single vast unfinished plot... (Jameson 1981, 3-4)

In a virtual echo of Gadamer, Jameson places the felt urgency of the text—what Gadamer would term the truth of the text—in relation to the universal struggle for Freedom from Necessity. Central to Jameson is that the text exerts its presence in a certain way within given structural possibilities known to us from Marxist philosophy. Literature is political because it assumes the task of addressing the universal (from a Marxist point of view) contradiction

between the exploited and exploiting classes, and points the way to Freedom and away from Necessity.

However, this relationship is not conditioned by the content, or meaning, of the text alone. It also includes the question of how the text works. As Jameson puts it:

> ideology is not something which informs or invests symbolic production; rather the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right... (Jameson 1981, 64).

The literary text, or in our case, the parliamentary debate, is not the product of the political unconscious (ideology). It is *itself* this ideology. Jameson's example of romance, as an illustration of Marxist literary aesthetics (ibid., 90-91) should be interpreted as a *response to* prevailing political conditions. He calls this the political *unconscious* because the aim of the analysis is to lay bare the ideology *present in* the text, in the material. In the preceding chapter, I discussed how Bakhtin (and Vološinov) understood the word as already social and ideological. In interpretation, it is a mistake to approach the ideological as something that precedes the text. Rather, the ideological is brought about by the text.

Jameson distinguishes between asking "what does it mean" and "how does it work" (Jameson 1981, 6-7). This distinction does not mean that he overlooks the meaning, but that he perceives the "unconscious"—the ideology—not as meaning but as productive. What are the effects, Jameson asks, that the text (can) produces. His aim is not to produce the Marxist genesis of the text, but to show how the text produces Marxist aesthetics. The "unconscious" therefore has no causative role for the text. Rather, how the unconscious works, is realised in the act of interpretation.

To treat parliamentary debate as a text focuses the analysis to *how* it happens, that is, how certain turns and their interpretations *produce* the content of the debate (or, if you wish, the ideology). Understanding this "structure" of parliamentary debate cannot be detached from the "meanings" that are debated. As will be shown in detail in the empirical chapters, the structure has a function of its own in the evolution of the "meanings" of the debate.

Conversation analysis, by turning "inwards", by treating the exchange of turns as the object of analysis, does not mean that the analysts neglects ideology or external social structures. It only means that ideologies and social structures are not deployed *a priori*, so to speak, in order to provide causal explanations of the debate. Rather, they are understood as present *in the text* of the parliamentary debate. They can emerge in light as the *result of* the interpretation. In other words, even the structures or the unconscious can be accessed—if needed—through the text itself.

# Conversation Analysis as a Method

Conversation analysis as a method has not been widely used in political science. It has not, however, been totally absent. Wagenaar hints at the usefulness of this approach to language, but does not develop the argument (2011, 187-188). Several conversation analysts focus on the use of language in politics, but these studies ask questions that concern linguistics, not politics. Conversation analysis, for instance, has been used in the study of interviews of politicians (Bull 1994, Berg 2001a, 2001b, Nuolijärvi and Tiittula 2000, Clayman and Heritage 2002; Hutchby 2006; Chilton 2004[51]). Here, the primary concern was to elicit the formal structure acquired by the interview situation, the strategic use of language in an interview situation, and how the institution of an interviewer asking the politician questions was managed. Needless to say, there are multiple ways of answering or evading questions that might be compromising. Likewise, there are many ways of asking a question that fall outside ordinary question syntax. Further, these studies show that questions have more functions that just eliciting an answer. We should bear this multifunctionality of institutional talk in mind in any empirical analysis. From these studies we learn that institutional rules can help as well as hinder deputies' own agendas.

There are two studies that are interesting for my purposes. The first is that of Hausendorf and Bora (eds.) *Analysing Citizenship Talk* (2006). This work employs conversation analysis in studying how citizenship functions *in practice* in public deliberation (2006a., 2-4). The authors develop the concept of communicated citizenship (ibid., 4). This refers to the empirical communication citizens engage in with the state (authorities). The authors study this empirical everyday communication as citizens' participation in the policy process (2006b, 85). They reconstruct the social positions that emerge from the structures of the communication (ibid., 87). Such reconstruction brackets the "essentialist" identities of the participants, and focuses on communication as both production and explication of social identities: "what counts is the way in which speaker X socially constructs his/her being this or that in the course of communication" (ibid., 87). Social positions thus do not precede the communication, but result from it. This led Hausendorf and Bora to put forward three methodological maxims: i) the reconstruction of social constructions, ii) focus on audible forms and iii) analysis of the sequential order (ibid., 88). Unfortunately, the empirical illustration they provide does not take into ac-

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51. Chilton (2004) in fact includes also a chapter on parliamentary question hour exemplified by Westminster's Prime Minister's Question Time. His aim, however, is to build a typology of different institutionalised turn-taking mechanisms how questions are put forward in the House of Commons thereby contributing primarily to the machinery of institutionalised talk in the House of Commons.

count sequence as something constitutive of the attempt of reconstruction of social constructions, only as something that invites it.

My second source of inspiration is Kirill Postoutenko's study of totalitarian communication. He is interested in the structure of argumentation in Hitler's, Stalin's and Roosevelt's crisis speeches (Postoutenko 2010a, 2010b). In a follow-up study (Postoutenko 2011), Postoutenko focuses on the impact of asymmetrical concepts upon communication in these speeches. This makes possible both the study of the linkage between the speaker and the utterance, and the historicity of concepts in the construction of totalitarian communication. Postoutenko seeks to indicate how the systemic level of totalitarian communication is constructed at the micro-level of communication.

Both Hausendorf and Bora and Postoutenko use conversation analysis to show how the micro-level of communication can be connected to systemic level properties of citizenship (Hausendorf and Bora) or totalitarianism (Postoutenko). Both argue that systemic-level properties are produced at the micro-level. In this way, both approaches extend the basic premises of conversation analysis beyond its more common focus on the explication of the structure of the conversation at hand only. Similarly, my aim is to show how micro-level conversation in parliament interacts with the macro-level of cultural, social and political context. In this respect, my application of conversation analysis draws on Gadamer, Bakhtin, and Lotman. At the same time, I aim to contribute to conversation analysis by showing how it can be used to study the questions of meaning and its evolution in a political debate.

Despite the shift in focus, this application of conversation analysis remains faithful to the ethno-methodological core, insofar as the material is treated as *specimen* of reality rather than *about* or reflecting reality (Alasuutari 1995, 63; ten Have 2004, 8). As a specimen of political reality, the parliamentary debates cannot "lie", even if they are not representative of the broader context. In Chapters 6 and 7, I will combine conversation analysis with Lotman's cultural semiotic research and focus on the intertwined nature of the part and the whole.

Some of the methodological issues related to conversation analysis, such as the relationship between context and talk and the role of background knowledge, have been addressed above. I will now discuss four aspects of conversation analysis as a method that I will use when going through the parliamentary debates.

The first two, turn-taking and sequencing, show the dialogicality of language in practice and the joint negotiation of individual utterances. The remaining two, repair and code-switching, are tools for studying contextualisation of the debate as indicated by the participants of the debate. Each tool will be introduced using classical examples of ordinary conversation, taken from existing literature.

As argued above, the focus of conversation analysis is the pair of utter-

ance and response. I take the distance or discrepancy between the utterance and response, or the question and answer as Gadamer would put it, as the site where the cultural, social and political enter the debate. This bridges the inevitable gap left by the centrifugal forces of language in any interaction.

*Turn-taking*

Turn-taking is the underlying principle of any conversation. It refers to the fact that things are done in turns. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson argue:

> Turn-taking is used for the ordering of moves in games, for allocating political office, for regulating traffic at intersections, for serving customers at business establishments, and for talking in interviews, meetings, debates, ceremonies, conversations etc... (1974, 696)

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson claim that turn-taking in conversation deserves to be studied in its own right, and not only as a reflection of e.g. social stratification. In conversation, turn-taking captures the organisation and operation of the procedures through which the conversation moves from one speaker to another speaker: how does one's turn come to such an end that the next person knows to start his turn? The claim they put forward is that, by and large, turn-taking is a phenomenon immanent to the structure of the conversation. It is not, thus, dependant on the social context in which the conversation takes place. Social features are *included* in the way turns are constructed (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 699).[52] In other words, conversation analysis claims that the organisation of turn-taking in conversation is also the primary way of producing "turn-taking" in society in general. This means that social hierarchies are brought about by turn-taking rather than the other way around.[53] Turn-taking is context-sensitive and tied to the

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52. This point may sound very radical at first, but if we consider empirical conversations between clearly asymmetrical interlocutors, it is not very common that the speaker with higher social status would interrupt the other speaker; social status can affect issues such as who initiates communication, who declares is finished, but these are essentially features also of the turns of talk. As it is commonplace to say, the conversation came to an end rather than the conversation was finished, which would rather imply that a third party finished the conversation.

53. This ontological argument might be somewhat of an extreme position. We could also make only an epistemological claim: there is no other way of studying social hierarchies than through language and therefore the turn-taking system established through conversation (i.e. language) is the best way of approaching such societal issues like hierarchy. However, there are also situations that give evidence of the more radical ontological position. Consider for instance the events that led to the fall of Ceausescu in Romania: despite all the military and police power and the physical barriers that kept Ceausescu separate from the people at then the Palace Square (now Revolution Square) on Dec 21, 1989. It was the failure of the masses to respond to Ceausescu's speech as expected that led him first try to calm them by raising his hands, then promising pay increases, then finally taking a refuge inside the building. The images of the crowd booing and whistling reached the country through the television broadcast

concrete material under investigation:

> Depiction of an organisation for turn-taking should fit the facts of vari-
> ability by virtue of a design allowing it to be context-sensitive; but it
> should be cast in a manner that, requiring no reference to any particular
> context, still captures the most important general properties of conversa-
> tion. (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 700)

Certain conversations exhibit more of this external organisation of turn-tak-
ing. One example is parliamentary debate, where turns are allocated and the
duration of speech may be restricted. However, this external framework does
not cancel out the observation that conversations tend to be structured ac-
cording to turns—and as the studies below will show, even if speech is inter-
rupted by the spokesperson of the parliament, the interrupted utterance may
continue in another turn.

   Taken seriously, turn-taking implies that any political debate is conditional
upon the debating parties' interaction; the participants jointly produce the de-
bate. This argument, although it sounds banal, has two serious implications.
First, political debate cannot be reduced to different political positions held
either individually or by political parties. Consequently, the common "units"
of analysis, individual utterances, cannot be seen as the debate's primary
components. Bakhtin's theory of language helps us understand the dynamics
of turn-taking, which go beyond the allocation of turns. For him, any speech
encompasses two conflictual forces of language, the centrifugal and centri-
petal forces. The centrifugal forces denote the personal appropriation of lan-
guage, which serve one's intentional purposes (life). The centripetal forces
denote the socially shared relevance (culture) of the utterance.[54] Bakhtin per-
ceived centrifugal and centripetal forces as conflicting. The unitary language
of centripetal forces "is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence
posited [*zadan*]—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to
the realities of heteroglossia" (Bakhtin 1981, 270) of centrifugal forces.

   Conversation is thus a battle between the subjective and the cultural ac-
centuations of words. The interpretation that follows an utterance is the mo-
ment where the personal information vested in the utterance (life) is fused

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before it was interrupted. On the very same day, mass demonstrations broke out in several cit-
ies and on the following day Ceausescu was arrested by the police. He was executed three
days later. It was the failed turn-taking between Ceausescu and the crowd that constructed
new hierarchy between the dictator and the people. A more theoretical exposure of the same
can be seen in Vaclav Havel's essay *Power of the Powerless* (1978) and the events of Velvet
Revolution in 1989.

54.  "Life" and "culture" here refer to Russian phenomenological tradition of marking a dis-
tinction between my subjective point of view (intentional object) and the putative object in the
real world (see Brandist 2002a, 36-37).

with the socially relevant culture. Political debate, therefore, should not be seen (merely) as a reflection of social and political factors external to the debate. It is, rather, something produced "on the spot", in the interactive moment of the debate itself. The turn-taking mechanism is the primary way in which the context is construed through inclusions and exclusions of socially relevant texts.[55]

The second implication is that each turn, a speech in the parliament, can be engaged at two different fronts. The first is the speech's semantic content. The second includes the ways in which the semantic content can be interpreted. If language, as Bakhtin argues, includes two conflictual forces, the individual appropriation of language *cannot* be understood as such. It needs to be interpreted, or translated into cultural languages. Only thus can it achieve a sufficient degree of mutual understanding, or as explained above "situational understanding". Obviously, several ways of interpreting the same utterance can all be situationally valid. Therefore political debate cannot be reduced to a battle of different arguments and propositions. Political debate is a battle of different ways of interpreting utterances, that is, of different cultural codes.

The turn-taking model is composed of two elements: the turn-construction element and the turn-distribution unit. The turn-construction element roughly corresponds to the utterance made during the turn. There is no way of providing a strict definition of what the turn construction element (also turn construction unit) is, since this is up to the participants to the conversation. Consider the following example from Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, 50):

```
1 R. Why don't you come and see me some [times
2 B.                                     [I would
```

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55.   Underlying this position we can see a different view of language. Most commonly language is taken to be a certain representation of something (reality, discourse), and communication as transmission of information or imposition of certain (ideological, political) positions upon the interlocutors. In contrast to that view, conversation analysis focuses on language and debate *as* social action emphasising the situatedness of language. To emphasise the situatedness or social context is nothing new: Wittgenstein and Austin already argued so. The fundamental difference, though, is that both worked with hypothetical examples of pieces of language, not empirical use of language and as discussed above, and Austin focused solely on the illocution, i.e. the sender's perspective of language. In conversation analysis, it is only the interpretation of certain utterance that gives it its *contextual* meaning. In other words, even if Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy and Austin's speech acts set an important precedence to conversation analysis, their view on utterance (or usage of language) is considered deficient because it does not include social situatedness produces by turn-taking. Given the hermeneutic and cultural semiotic take on interpretation discussed above, the importance of perceiving talk as situated becomes even more crucial. The processes of interpretation draw on cultural resources that *do* recognise the worth of values making political debate hardly anything akin to the Habermasian (1998) ideal of procedural deliberation of independently standing arguments.

```
3      like to
4 R. I would like you to
```

Here, we realise that B starts answering the invitation before it has been completed (square brackets mark the beginning of overlapping speech). In this way, B projects a certain ending to R's turn (here, the somewhat vague "some" rather than a specific date and time). In other words, B does not wait for R to finish the sentence. Rather, B acts upon the prediction that the initiated "some" will lead to an unspecified "sometimes" rather than to some more concrete time such as "some Sunday" or "some morning".

The turn-distribution element involves the sequential structure of invitation-response. By providing a turn-construction that is recognisable as an invitation, the sequential organisation of talk calls forth a response to that invitation. Further, we also know that what is culturally known to be the preferred response (here, acceptance) is delivered immediately after (or even overlapping with) the invitation. Dispreferred response, by contrast, are often preceded by a silent gap, certain moves of hesitation that precede a justification for rejection. In the case of the preferred response, no justification or specification are given.

Another example shows how turn-taking operates as a mechanism that *includes* utterances by making them relevant. 295). The example comes from Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008, 43):

```
1 A: Can I have a bottle of Mitch
2 B: Are you over twenty-one?
3 A: No.
4 B: No.
```

A's question "Can I have a bottle of Mitch" does not trigger the requested action. Instead, it triggers a second-order question "Are you over twenty-one?". It is only after the bartender has received a response to this question that he can begin to deal with the first question. This example shows that no single utterance is a valid unit of social action. Utterances must be made relevant to be engaged with. This affects the selection of material: it is the turn-taking system that includes and excludes utterances from the debate. Utterances that have been ignored by turn-taking do not affect the conversation at hand.

This example also reveals how the conversation draws on cultural background knowledge. First, the customer does not protest when his request for a bottle of Mitch is not realised, but, instead, elicits the—semantically illogical—question of whether he is over 21. This clearly indicates that both participants are aware of the law that requires that alcohol be not sold to people under 21 years of age. It is crucial to realise that although the conver-

sation itself does not include all that information, the turn-taking indicates that both participants orient themselves to this knowledge.

There is one further aspect of turn-taking that may prove useful in analysing parliamentary talk. The basic rules of turn-taking explain that i) the current speaker has the right to choose the second speaker, ii) if no such selection is made, then any subsequent speaker can select him of herself, and finally, iii) if no such selection is made, the current speaker may continue (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 704). This means that in the case of interruptions in parliamentary speech, the interrupter interprets the place of the interruption as marking the end of an utterance. It should therefore be considered as comprising for the interrupter a complete and meaningful utterance. (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, 54.) Since this is an interruption, we know that the first speaker feels that he has not finished the utterance.[56] This observation might help elucidate different interpretations of expectations of others' utterances.

Methodologically, turn-taking provides the ground to the analysis of different translations (Lotman) that the text of the law proposal generates. It enables us to study these translations not as static approximations of perfection, or as complete and total understanding and explication of the law proposition, but as a socially and politically embedded process of constructing the context of the law proposition.

*Sequencing*
Sequencing is closely connected to turn-taking. It could best be characterised as a closer, detailed look at certain established patterns that occur during turn-taking. The principle of sequencing is based on the observation that certain types of utterances tend to appear in pairs: a question is followed by an answer (or refusal to answer), an invitation is met with an acceptance or rejection, greetings with return-greetings. These are called adjacency pairs, because the second part typically follows immediately after the first part. Crucially, however, the first and second parts are produced by different speakers. (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, 295). The following example comes from Ruusuvuori (2001, 1094):[57]

```
1 D:    And what's the situation like
2 P:    Well that throat is troubling me. it's been
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56. I use the word utterance here deliberatively in a broad sense. It can be conceived that a whole speech delivered in the parliament is just one utterance. From a more linguistic point of view, however, it can be composed of multiple utterances that build upon each other. There can be multiple transition-relevant places in each turn.

57. I have cleared away some marks of intonation and shorter pauses from the example in order to make to more readable to all who are not familiar with the full conversation analysis transcription.

```
3        almost two months since I was here and
4        that it wa- was sore then and,
5        [pause]
6        antibiotics (.) and [pause] the pain did
7        go away but my voice has not yet come back
8        [pause]
9        I mean [
10 D:           [What kind of work do you have now
```

In the example D is a doctor and P is a patient. The patient produces an answer to doctor's initial question "And what's the situation like". The doctor's assessment of P's account is accepted by the follow-up question concerning the patient's work situation. Although such institutional interaction is usually dominated by the doctor asking and the patient answering questions, the patient's interrupted line "I mean" and the preceding pause indicates that the patient stopped in order for the turn to change.

As no such turn-change happened, the patient began to clarify his or her account. We also realise that the patient paused for a longer time after finishing the initial description of the symptoms (line 5), then again after mentioning that s/he took antibiotics (line 6). In neither case, however, did the doctor accept the turn. This forced the patient to continue until the account was situationally sufficient for the following question.

As we see, the doctor does not formally acknowledge or assess the account the patient produced. The alternation between question and answer itself is sufficient to indicate to the participants that the following turn has been understood and "accepted". Adjacency pairs work in constructing shared understanding on the spot. Hutchby and Wooffitt argue that "participants... can use the adjacency pair mechanism to display to one another, and hence to the analysts also, their ongoing understanding and sense-making of one another's talk" (2008, 45).

The point of the first and second part is not really that they follow each other so closely or how often the first part is met with a certain type of second part. Rather, the point is that adjacency pairs furnish participants with normative guides. As we saw, the patient, after each pause, altered the account's focus (first a general description of what is the issue, then that antibiotics had been prescribed, and then that the issue is his or lack of voice) in order to find an answer that the doctor would accept. Similarly, if a greeting is *not* met with a return greeting, the person who delivered the first part may make inferences from the not-greeting-him-back. A new social situation in which a certain tension has been established between two people, may have just been created. The normative character of adjacency pairs means that in the context of delivering the first part, the second part—whatever it may be—becomes relevant (ibid., 45). It is, of course, a matter of further research to establish precisely what kind of relevance the second part has acquired.

For instance, a greeting may ignored due to personal conflict, but also because the person greeted may not have heard the greeting. Both reasons can be relevant to the first person.[58] Adjacency pairs, through the turn-construction, establish certain expectations towards the second pair. As mentioned above, it is a normal expectation that an invitation is accepted rather than rejected, but this is not only a social convention: it is the linguistic format of an invitation. Consider the following example (ibid., 47):

```
1 A. Yuh comin down early?
2 B. Well, I got a lot of things to do before gettin
3    cleared up tomorrow. I don't know. I w- probably
4    won't be too early.
```

It is the question "Yuh comin down early?" that establishes the preferred response as being the affirmative "yes". A might as well have asked "You're not coming down early, are you" (ibid., 47). Sequentiality is a property of conversation and of language, not of individual psychology. This is not to argue that individual mood is irrelevant here. Rather, there is linguistic material, which reveals the construction of such preferences through conversation and that these linguistic conventions are normatively oriented to by the interlocutors.

Bakhtin describes dialogue as "agitated and tension filled environment of alien words" where the uttered word "merges with some, recoils from other" (1981, 276). As in conversation analysis' sequentiality, so also Bakhtin's word is not independent of other words or of its own history and destined future: "The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment... cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue." (ibid.) The condition of talk-in-interaction is one where we do not possess our own words, but have to take them from "other people's mouths" (ibid., 293). If sequentiality in conversation analysis refers to the joint production of talk-in-interaction, its Bakhtinisation notes the conflict inherent in this "joint venture". Bakhtin has shown that "all words are populated by intentions" (Bakhtin 1981, 293) that lay the ground for the successive utterances in a way that is beyond the control of subsequent speaker.

This suits the political realities. There, questions are not only meant to elicit answers, but can also function as accusations, "weapons in the party battle" (Chilton 2004, 92). From Bakhtin's point of view, sequentiality indicates the violent limits of self-expression the speaker faces in any conversation. And precisely because of these limits, the utterance is always ad-

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58. For instance, assuring oneself that the other person did not hear the greeting, makes sense of the first person wants to entertain feelings that everything is fine between them.

dressed to someone and includes in itself the traces of the previous utterances.

*Repair*
Repair refers to two issues. The first and most obvious repair is that which requests a clarification of a part of the previous statement. One such example could be following (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, 61):

```
1 A.   Hey (.) the first ti:me they stopped me from
       selling cigarettes was this morning
2      (1.0)
3 B.   From selling cigarettes?
4 A.   Or buying cigarettes.
```

Repairs in which the interlocutor initiates a request for clarification of the previous statement are called other-initiated repairs. Similar repairs may also be self-initiated or third-person initiated. It also happens that someone else repairs the utterance on the first speaker's behalf (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, 60). From the point of view of conversation analysis, however, the more interesting type of repair is that which is used to introduce changes in the sequential order of talk. It can, for instance, be used to skip a turn. Consider our earlier example:

```
1 A.   this is Mr. Smith, may I help you
2 B.   I can't hear you
3 A.   This is Mr Smith
4 B.   Smith
```

In this example, B's repair initiation "I can't hear you" effectively moves the conversation over the slot in which B is expected to respond the greeting by providing her name (see page 99 above).

Yet another important aspect of repair emerges from the following example (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008, 64):

```
1 A:   Loes, do you have a calendar
2 B:   Yeah ((reaches for her desk calendar))
3 A:   Do you have one that hangs o the wall?
4 B:   Oh you want one.
5 A:   Yeah
```

In this example A's question is ambiguous. Loes (B) misinterprets it. The self-initiated repair "Do you have one that hangs on the wall?" works to establish a clearer meaning for the first utterance. B consequently realises her initial misunderstanding of the fact that A is requesting a calendar for her-

self. Here, repair works to ensure that utterances are unambiguous but also to construct the shared context of the conversation.

Paul Chilton in his study of questions in the British House of Commons observes that repair may not only bring the conversation back to the shared ground, but also serves to "correct" speeches that begin to slide away from the rule regulated path. Repairs, for him, carry the function of normative regulation of social action (Chilton 2004, 95).

On a deeper level, we can argue that repair can signify two oppositional purposes. On the one hand, as we have seen, repair can aim at building a mutual ground between speakers. However, especially in political talk between different parties, repair acquires the function of Vološinov's "reported speech". Vološinov defined reported speech as "an utterance belonging to *someone else*, an utterance that was originally totally independent, complete in its construction, and lying outside the given context" (Vološinov 1973, 116), but which is brought into a new context. So reported speech is *some one else's* speech which is introduced into my own talk. This reveals the relationship between that alien talk and my own talk. Repair, then, reveals the active engagement of the participants in each other's utterances and the way in which their re-appropriation can either build mutual ground for shared understanding or mutual distance through "repairing" what the previous person "in fact" had said.

The analysis of the parliamentary talk will show that the first type of repair is common between members who share the political goal of either supporting or opposing the bill. The latter type of "repair" is more common in utterances that are directed to antagonistic arguments and aims to reformulate them so as to match with one's own intentions. Repair addresses the changes, corrections or alterations in the content of talk.

*Code-Switching*

Code-switching is the fourth element of language relevant to my study. Earlier, code-switching referred to the change of language among bi-lingual (or multi-lingual) speakers (e.g. Auer 1984, Gumperz 1961 and especially Blom and Gumperz 1972). The classical sociolinguistic model approaches code-switching from the perspective that each language is attached to and reflects a certain social stratification (Gumperz 1958, 224) and social situations (e.g. Gumperz 1961, 30).

Gumperz's model of code-switching came to be known as the semantic model. This model postulates that each language, or code, carries a certain semantic potential that can be invoked by switching codes in desired places in speech. He makes a distinction between situational and metaphorical switching. Situational switching occurs when participants adjust their language (code) to the social situation; or conversely, the changing of code brings about a new social situation. The example Blom and Gumperz give

comes from their study of a Norwegian classroom, where standard Norwegian (Bokmål) is used to deliver introductions and textbook materials but the local dialect (Ranamål) is used to generate class room discussion. The change in codes thus marks the change in social situation. (1972, 424.)

Metaphorical switching refers to a change in codes without introducing the new social situation. In such a case, the new code carries a certain semantic potential such as an allusion to a shared past situation or memory that help demarcate the boundary between 'we' and 'they' (1972, 425).

Peter Auer criticises this semantic model for relying on extra-contextual assumptions about the semantic meaning (potential) carried by each language, while ignoring the actual situation of its use. It assumes, thus that the invocation of a certain code always has the same semantic meaning potential for each user (Auer 1984, 88). Auer argues, instead, that code-switching has a *functional* interactive purpose that can be described through its sequential positioning in conversation (ibid., 93ff).

Later studies have left the rigid juxtaposition between code-switching on the one hand and the use of just one code behind. Auer (1998) develops a continuum of language alternation ranging from code-switching (CS) through language mixing (LM) to fused lects (FL). Code-switching refers to the juxtaposition of two languages, interpreted as locally meaningful by the participants each time it occurs. Language mixing refers to a similar juxtaposition of languages, but it is meaningful only if recurrent and fused lects refer to the language use where stabilised mixed codes are employed. (Auer 1998, 1.) Auer's distinction is helpful in dividing different aspects of code-switching in different disciplines: the switching between language mixing and fused lects belongs to grammar (and especially to the study of grammaticalisation) whilst the transitions from code-switching to language mixing can belong to conversational strategies (this approach is adopted here) or, for instance, language acquisition studies.

Hanna Lappalainen has developed Auer's approach further in her studies on code-switching between colloquial and standard language in Finland (Lappalainen 2001; 2004; 2009). She draws attention to the conversational function of code-switching, which is to mark a contrast or distance between texts (Lappalainen 2001, 173). In this, she abandons the view that code-switching occurs only between fixed codes that correspond to certain (fixed) linguistic variety. Consequently her approach brings together the semantic aspect of code-switching and its contextual function in conversation (see also Nilep 2006, 2).

A similar development can be detected in Gumperz's later study. Here, he discusses code-switching in terms of the universal functions it can have in conversation (Gumperz 1982, 75ff). These functions include quotation marking, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification and personalisation vs. objectivisation. They can be summed up as signals

that "generate... the presuppositions in terms of which the content of what is said is decoded" (Gumperz 1982, 98). Code-switching and participants' orientation to it provide information that goes beyond the referential content of the word or text.

Research on code-switching has significantly broadened Gumperz's original position that certain codes always carry a certain social value. Code-switching as recontextualisation implies that the distance that can be created within a text by the application of different codes provides cues for interlocutors on how the text should be interpreted. Such a distance, Lappalainen shows, can also be brought about by borrowing identifiable vocabulary from a different context (in her material, often, religiously marked vocabulary) (Lappalainen 2001, 173).

This observation led Lappalainen to broaden the perspective of code-switching to that of *borrowing* (ibid., 177). By borrowing, she refers to words that are expected to belong to someone else, to another context, or that are otherwise "alien" in to the utterance made. Code-switching for her is an indexical interactional phenomenon indicating the contextualisation of text in its interactive context (see also Kalliokoski 1995).

One example of this is found in the attempts to map certain sociolects, such as "gayspeak", that function as a reservoir of linguistic markers or styles including wide pitch range, feminisation of names or person deixis (anthroponyms) as well as a particular vocabulary (Cameron and Kulick 2003, 89-91). Such "codes" can work as long as the participants recognise their cultural relevance (Lappalainen 2004, 312).

A concise example of code-switching comes from a medical interaction:

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D: A na toksynę przeciwko tężcowi kiedy pan ostatnio
   dostał? Szczepionkę przeciwko tężcowi?

D: And when did you have tetanus toxoid last time?
   Anti-tetanus jab?
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In the example, the doctor is asking a patient in the hospital emergency ward when the patient last received an anti-tetanus vaccine. The doctor does so in medical jargon (tetanus toxoid) that does not even specify that he is referring to a vaccine. The doctor, however, immediately switches to a more colloquial (anti-tetanus jab), deemed more understandable to the patient. In this way, code-switching from specialist talk to lay talk helps to ground *in situ* mutual understanding.

Following Lappalainen's broader understanding of code-switching, I will focus especially on marked and unmarked words and their uses in the parliamentary talk. I understand the distinction between marked and unmarked to be that the marked term (e.g. she) carries *more* specific or additional inform-

ation than the unmarked (e.g. he). In sociolinguistic studies, the unmarked signifies the expected norm and the marked the deviation from the norm (Woolard 2004, 79-81).

On a deeper level, code-switching can also indicate the speaker's relation to the text and the interaction. As Bakhtin understands speech genres, these also function as this type of cueing. He argues that "language, or functional, styles are nothing other than generic styles for certain spheres of human activity and communication [--] Utterances and their types, that is, speech genres, are the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language" (Bakhtin 1986, 64-65).

Speech genres mark the heteroglossia of language, which refers to the ineradicable presence of others' words and contexts in one's own words. In the context of the novel, Bakhtin argued that heteroglossia introduces double-voiced discourse that simultaneously serves both the speaking character's intentions and those of the novel's author (Bakhtin 1981, 324). In concrete talk-in-interaction, code-switching introduces the asymmetry between different contexts and their connotations. This can mean a leap from professional language ("tetanus toxoid") to lay expression ("anti-tetanus jab"), but also evoke negative connotations of political correctness (as in the example, quoted in Chapter 1 above of Woźniak's speech)—or national belonging, as we will see in Chapter 5.

In sum, whilst repair concerns alternations, reaccentuations in the *content* of talk, code-switching is attuned to *the way in which* the content is phrased and thereby accentuated.

*Conversation analysis and Cultural Semiotics*
Conversation analysis as a method allows one to study the way in which the participants of a conversation engage with each others' turns. At the centre of this analysis is the relationship between the turns, not the turn itself. Most work within conversation analysis has been content to elaborate on the "machinery" that the participants employ. However, a growing number of studies have also pointed out that this "machinery" is not just "*doing* invitations" or *doing* some other actions. The content of the turn is affected by the interaction.

Given this observation, conversation analysis appears to share basic principles with Gadamer's interpretation: that is, the argument that all understanding is understanding *as* something, and that all texts are answers *to* something and questions *for* future texts. However, conversation, especially political debate, takes place between texts whose traditions can be fundamentally different (Warnke 1999). Therefore, I have complimented Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics with Bakhtin's dialogicality of language and Lotman's dialogicality of culture. Bakhtin and Lotman add the aspect of the contested content of turns and how interpretation—the way in which a

turn becomes an answer and a question in the sequence of talk—needs to employ the cultural context *in itself*, that is, construct a "mode" for itself. As was discussed above, conversation analysis understands context as a mode of talk inscribed in the turns. The distance between the question and the answer must be filled by the cultural context. Following Lotman, this can be done in two different ways: translation or explosion. These have different implications for the overall development of the parliamentary debate as a text.

## Material and Validity

My material consists of the official parliamentary transcripts of two political debates from the first reading of the bill to the final vote. In both the Slovakian and Polish, there have been three readings of the bill.[59] In Slovakia, the debate extended over five days (the first reading from April 15th to 16th and the second reading from June 25th to 26th June; the final voting took place on June 30th, 2009). In Poland, the first reading took place on February 18th, the second on November 24th and the final voting on December 3rd, 2010. The material will be presented in more detail for the respective cases in the following two chapters.

Above, I argued that the turn-taking system lays the ground for conversation as a social action. However, there is no way of determining which speeches are (to be) included in the debate; only the unfolding of the debate itself reveals this. Any speech, or segments of speech, acquires relevance to the debate only by being interpreted by and responded/reacted to by other speeches. This means that parliamentary speeches that are clearly isolated from the ongoing debate can be disregarded. The inclusion or exclusion of utterances into the debate is determined by the debate itself. Certain utterances that may seem unacknowledged in the immediate aftermath of their emergence may later be included through recognisable references to them. Similarly, many speeches make direct (intertextual) references to historical events, personalities and/or parliamentary committee reports. I understand these as constituting "background knowledge" of potential relevance to certain interpretations. However, their direct influence on the course of the debate must be proven by the turn-taking system of conversation.

Conversation also makes less direct references to background knowledge. Such "hints" were discussed as contextualisation cues under code-switching. Similarly, certain notable absences should be analysed carefully. They may

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59. It should be noted that although reports e.g. from different parliamentary committees are not mentioned here as primary material, their contents are referred to in the speeches and they are included in the material in this way, not as committee reports but as refereed or quoted material by the interlocutors.

indicate omissions that are culturally relevant. Here, certain cultural, social and political texts possibly outside the debate at hand have influenced interpretation. In these situations, it is important to ask not only "when" something is oriented to, but also "how", as McElhinny suggested (McElhinny 2003; also Chapter 3). McElhinny's point is that focusing only on clear orientations in talk may leave certain "hidden" aspects of structural power unnoticed, such as those concerning minorities or women. This is an important point. It should not, however, lead one to assume that gender is always, by default, important. In my analysis, I will regularly ask how minority status or gender is marked and oriented to, but I do not assume their relevance for all points of debate. I will also ask what background knowledge is invoked, and discuss it.

Because the role of the researcher is rather limited in conversation analysis, and the researcher must rely rigorously on empirical material, it could be argued that studies are generally reliable (see Peräkylä 2004, 285). By reliability, I refer not to the exact reproducibility of the research—hardly possible in the case of interpretation—but to the *systematic* use of the method. The material, the parliamentary records, will be the same no matter who wants to study them (Silverman 1993, 147-148). One might, of course, raise doubts as of the quality of the parliamentary records as material for conversation analysis. Standard conversation analysis operates with very detailed transcripts. In comparison, parliamentary transcripts miss much information. This need not be a grave problem, however. The questions I ask are such that the lack of extra-textual aspects of speech (like prosody, pauses) included in transcripts used in conversation analysis will have minor impact.[60]

Interpretative reading does not aim for the objective, fixed truths of the text. Conversation analysis, nevertheless, provides systematic procedures for reading. It directs attention to aspects of talk-in-interaction that otherwise would need to be entrusted to the hermeneutic circle that, as Gadamer put it, relies on the good will of the interpreter to let the text play (with) the reader.

This is the context for assessing the validity of my method. The standard questions conversation analysis has asked pertain to a delineated social interaction, one that has a clearly marked beginning and end points, such as a telephone call. The questions I attempt to answer, however, pertain only partly to the "machinery" of parliamentary debate. I am inquiring into the evolution of the debate, which by necessity is connected also to the available "machinery", or the "ethnomethods" of the participants.

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60. A commonplace question in conversation analysis research would concern, for instance, the timing of turn change. In this respect, minor pauses in speech, still hearable to the participants, are crucial. However, if we inquire in to the ways in which history becomes involved in a political debate we may quite safely proceed at the level of evolving meaning, i.e. semantic content of the speech.

I am also inquiring into the way in which tradition, or history, can be employed or, sometimes, deployed in the debate. My question about the accumulation of history in parliamentary debate directs the attention to the distance between the question and the answer and how this distance can reveal the cultural conditions of the debate. I take these cultural conditions to be a slice of the politics of that debate.

It is always difficult to establish a starting and ending point for a political debate. On a closer look, however, the attempt strikes us as absurd. From Lotman's point of view, something abrupt (like an explosion) may well be a expression of a text of an alien culture and therefore it has "its" tradition "somewhere else". The debates I will analyse have different relations to their respective traditions. In Slovakia, the long continuity of the language debate extends back centuries. In Polish politics, the debate on *gender* parity bill is somewhat a novelty. To ask where these debates "begin" or "end" misses the hermeneutical point that such debates are themselves answers and questions in the continuum of history. As slices of political reality, however, they are valid objects of study of that reality at any given point.

I have chosen to limit my study to the parliamentary debates because they provide concrete phases in the debates that also have political relevance. Furthermore, the very institution of parliament (and the practice of parliamentarism as a genre of debate) is central to contemporary politics. As I have argued above, language is not a neutral tool of transferring information.[61] It is political through and through. It becomes the responsibility and prerogative of the researcher to mark and make visible the points of beginning and end of the analysis.

The aim of my analysis is not to explain why a certain voting result appeared. The debates are equally interesting slices of political reality *irrespective* of the results of the final voting. The voting only adds a political solution to the conflict—and can indicate that something essential evades the eye of the hasty analyst. This seems to be the case here: the approval the gender parity bill in Poland was somewhat unexpected. It forces us to re-examine our prejudices concerning Polish politics as dominated by male chauvinist and Catholic discourses, or, at least lead us to question the extent of such dominance. In Slovakia, the voting outcome was predictable. However,

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61.  For instance, within cognitive linguistics (here Lakoff and Johnsson serve as the key example), metaphors are understood as not only as ways of making sense but also as ways of reasoning about things (Lakoff and Johnsson 1999), Critical Discourse Analysis perceives the asymmetry of power embedded in language as the very foundation of its inquiry and recently also within deliberative democracy the normative ideal proposed and supported by Habermas has been questioned precisely because "Language is not the name for an already existing reality nor the expression of a fully formulated idea. Language cannot be completely determined because it is constantly being reconstituted by social conditions and erased by custom and practice" (Kohn, 2002, 410).

the following political solution, the drafting of the Principles of interpretation of the law, indicate that perhaps there is more to the debate than is apparent for those relying on nationalism to explain the outcome.

In order to study how the debate engages with the tradition, the parliamentary transcripts are a valid source. First, they depict how individual actors interact in the debate. Second, they record how the debate as a whole unfolds. Sometimes (even often) the claim that the parliamentary transcripts could be used to study politics elicits amusement and criticism. People have told me that I am missing the whole reality of politics. Politics, I am told, takes place outside the parliament in exclusive restaurants or clubs, or if in the parliament, then at least *not* in the Plenum, but in back corridors and committees.

My answer is that studying actions in restaurants, corridors and committees can be useful to those seeking to explain the voting result, but they cannot provide material for the study of the debate itself, which takes place in the public. Of course, the deputies may come to the Plenum and deliver their speech, but vote according to a deal brokered elsewhere. This, however, does not render the parliament records invalid as material for tracing the course of the debate. The records faithfully reproduce such discrepancies that occurred while the deputies talked of one thing but did something very different.

I would also like to remind readers that much of politics still relies on talk and representation. One purpose of deliberation is to generate the best outcomes. Equally important is the fact that public talk prepares the ground for future political action. To the extent that parliaments carry any function whatsoever as public arenas of debate, that talk has to *justify* and *give reasons for* its course. This may not explain the outcome, but it does show the cultural conditions under which certain turns can work as answers to certain questions. This is my topic.

I use the insights of conversation analysis as a systematic way of reading parliamentary transcripts that is compatible with the dialogic understanding of language. I aim to see whether this way of reading political debates can shed light on questions and use of history in political debate. Based on the works of Gadamer, Bakhtin, and Lotman, I have developed a theory of dialogic understanding of language that forms an essential addition to conversation analysis. The combination provides me with a systematic procedure that can put into practice the insights—so far, largely theoretical, philosophical and, at worst, anecdotal—of the above-mentioned theorists.

This chapter has shown how the dialogic understanding of language translates into a systematic approach to textual material. It has shown that i) utterances alone cannot suffice as units of text analysis; ii) interpretation is a necessary element of any utterance if it is to become socially meaningful; iii) turn-taking serves as a mechanism for including and excluding material, iv) sequence is a normative structure of interactive turns that shows how the

own and the alien words (to paraphrase Bakhtin) collide; v) repair, in addition to being a tool for grounding common, situated understanding, also functions as a tool for "repairing", i.e. reaccentuating what previous speakers have argued and thus provides the "common grounding" with a fundamentally political and contested character; and vi) code-switching, in addition to being a tool for providing contextualisation cues, also indicates the socially bounded nature of speech.

# Chapter 6: Debating Language

The next two chapters will put into practice the methodological discussion of the preceding chapters using two cases of parliamentary talk. The first is the Slovakian state language law debate in 2009. This debate is a part of a longer process of a series of legal acts and political debates on the status of the Slovak language. It is also linked to a historically significant "Slovak question" that concerns the relationship of Slovakia as a state and Slovaks as a nation to the neighbouring countries and the international context. This debate has a clear historical past and is firmly connected to other major political questions in Slovakia. Political parties and politicians are familiar with the issue and have clearly formulated stances, which are often, in turn, well known to the public.

The second case is the Polish debate on the gender parity bill in 2010. This debate is fairly novel in its kind in Poland. It was a result of a civil society initiative. No political party had expressed a clearly defined opinion on it when the debate begun and parties were split over the issue. Also the public opinion was volatile. In other words, this debate is something new and even "alien" to the Polish political context. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

The first axis of comparison concerns the debates relation to history as discussed briefly above. The second axis of comparison addresses the institutional organisation of talk in the two parliaments. In Slovakia, the procedures of parliamentary talk permit an unpredictable order of speeches, allowing much spontaneous interaction between the deputies. In Poland, the rules of parliamentary debate prescribe the order of speeches precisely. Exceptions to the rule are rare.

These two differences—the presence or absence of clearly connected history or tradition in the debate and the open versus closed organisation of talk—provide the main points of comparison. The comparison will serve to illustrate the method of analysis, not to provide provide "case-study" induced generalisations.

## Language and the State

To set a fixed starting point for the debate on the state language law is somewhat arbitrary business, for the question of the relationship between the lan-

guage, the people, and some form of political representation has been topical in Slovakia at least since late 18th century. To be sure, during the 18th century the primary concern was not the legal regulation of the language but the question of its codification (Brock 1976, 4-7).

It was primarily the Catholic clergy that began to include elements of the Slovak vernacular in written language. Their centre was the Jesuit University in Trenčin, in what is today western Slovakia. The first attempt to codify this language was done by a Catholic priest, Father Bernolák (1762–1813). His codification drew strongly from the western dialects of Slovak-speakers. It did not become the literary language for all Slovak speakers partly because it was too close to Czech, and partly because it was too distant from the central and eastern Slovak dialects (ibid., 13).

The second attempt at codification was carried out by the Protestant priest Ľudovít Štúr (1815–1856) during the 1840s. Štúr's codification is remarkable on two accounts. It was politically significant, because Štúr belonged to the Protestant minority in Slovakia that had traditionally maintained close ties with the Czechs. Before Štúr, most Protestants had hoped that Slovaks would merge with Czechs, whilst most Catholic nobles had seen their future in the Kingdom of Hungary and the politically defined *natio hungarica*. Štúr's codification of the Slovak language encouraged a new form of national and political community that was distinct from both that of the Czechs and from the *natio hungarica*.

The second remarkable point in Štúr's codification is that it marks the beginnings of an ethnically defined community. For many Protestants, religion was the primary mode of affiliation. Ethnic distinctions between Czechs, Slovaks and Slavs were never very clear or crucial. Among the Catholics, perhaps, the idea that the Slovak-speaking people of Hungary form a distinct community was more established (ibid., 16). The close connection between the Slovak and Czech languages—and the internal diversity of the Slovak language itself—helped strengthen the appeal of pan-Slavism among Slovak Protestant intellectuals. Both Ján Kollár (1793–1852) and Pavel Josef Šafarík (1795–1861) understood all Slavs as having a common interlingua. This was, supposedly, the foundation of pan-Slavonic unity. Although Kollár argued for an eventual unification of all Slavonic tribes, including the Russian, Polish, Illyrian and Czechoslovak, he was a pragmatist to the extent that the starting point for Slovaks had to be the realisation of the Czechoslovak union. This union was to be different from the concept of *natio hungarica*. The latter was based on community of the nobles; Kollár's nation was composed of the speakers of the same language (*natio*) rather than by the political-territorial *patria*. (ibid., 22).

Štúr's Slovak literary language must be understood as a response to Kollár's and Šafarík's attempt to forge a Czechoslovak nation that at the present was expressed by two closely related dialects, the Czech and Slovak.

This was, in due course, to merge into a common Czechoslovak language. Whilst the Catholics had been arguing for the parity of the *natio Slovaca*—here, referring to the parity of Slovak speaking and other nobility—within the *natio hungarica*, Kollár and Šafařík argued for parity between the Czechs and Slovaks. Bernolák had claimed Slovak distinctiveness from the Czechs, but, within scope of the political *natio hungarica*. Kollár and Šafařík claimed a cultural and linguistic union between Czechs and Slovaks, although preserving some distinctiveness between the Slovak and the Czech, but rejecting the political *natio hungarica*.

The position of Štúr and his fellow Protestants combines these two into a claim for Slovak national and linguistic distinctiveness vis-a-vis the Czechs and for political separation from the *natio hungarica* (ibid., 35-38).

Similar questions recurred in the debate on the Slovak language in later years. In 1920, the Czechoslovak constitution named Slovak one variant of the Czechoslovak language.[62] Official policy in the interwar Republic as well as during Socialist Czechoslovakia was to support both languages equally, although in practice Czech was used predominantly in state administration and in international contexts. As one observer put it:

> [The] interwar Czechoslovakia was a Czech state writ large, with all non-Czechs subordinated to a Czech political culture (that this was open, democratic and pluralistic is beside the point). The ideology of Czechoslovakianism had the aim of integrating the Slovaks into a Czech perspective. (Schöpflin 2000, 212-213)

The 9th of May Constitution of 1948 that established the socialist Czechoslovakia did not recognise any official language and no distinct political agenda for the Slovak language surfaced. However, in the aftermath of the Prague Spring of 1968, Czechoslovakia became a federation and Slovak became the administrative language in the Slovakian half of the state.

In 1990, Slovak was declared the official language (úradný jazyk) in the Slovak half of the federation (Zákon 428/1990). In 1995, it became the state language of the Slovak Republic, an independent state since 1993.

Today, Czech and Slovak are recognised as distinct languages, but most Slovaks understand Czech without problems; many Czechs, on the other hand, seem to have forgotten many Slovak expressions. Public media in Slovakia is in Slovak, but much of world literature is only translated in Czech. Most Slovak bookshops, in fact, do not classify Czech books as "foreign language" books.

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62. Article 4 of An Act Dated 29 of February 1920 in Pursuance of Article 129 of the Constitutional Charter Establishing the Principles of Language Rights within the Czechoslovak Republic.

The 1995 law on the state language aroused much international attention and criticism. To some extent, it symbolised the nationalism of Vladimír Mečiar's government. The first amendment to the law was made only two years after its promulgation, and since the fall of Mečiar's government in 1998 the state language law has been gradually amended to show more tolerance to Slovakia's minority languages. The state language law legislation and debates in the 1990s and in 2000s have concerned both the symbolic status, the administrative role, and the relationship between the Slovak state language and the minority languages, especially Hungarian. In literature, language is seen as one central element of Slovak nation building and nationalism. These perspectives have also captured the attention of academic scholarship (e.g. Brock 1976; Goldman 1999; Auer 2004; Fisher 2006; Nedelsky 2009).

This chapter will focus on the 2009 parliamentary debate on the amendment of the state language law, so as to illuminate the analytical method outlined in previous chapters. I hope my short summary of the history of the Slovak "language question" has made it clear that this question has been waged on two fronts: against the Hungarian political state (and later assimilation attempts), and against the idea of the unitary Czechoslovak language. I will now outline the institutional rules of parliamentary debate, and then introduce the 2009 amendment as a legal text in more detail. Third, I will introduce the main lines of argument and discourses in the parliament. This, I hope provides some background to the debate but also makes the differences between CDA and conversational analysis more concrete. I will then turn to a detailed analysis of the evolution the debate in the parliament and in the end discuss the debate with reference to Lotman's category of translation. Finally, I will conclude with two observations on how the institutional organisation of talk affects the *content* of the talk. Here, I will look at the overall open system of turn-taking which characterises the talk in the National Council and then the political role of the "factual remark"—that is, the possibility of raising *ad hoc* questions during the parliamentary debate.

## Slovakian Legislative and the Routines of the National Council

The Slovak Republic is a unicameral semi-presidential parliamentary state. Slovakia's parliament is called the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Národná rada Slovenskej republiky), which is "the sole constitutional and legislative body of the Slovak Republic" (Art 71, Constitution of SR). There are 150 deputies (poslanec) elected for a period of four years, to represent the citizens and "execute their mandate personally according to their conscience and conviction"; they are, supposedly, "not bound by orders" (Art 73 § 2, Constitution of SR). I base the following description of the legislative as-

sembly and the flow of the parliamentary debate primarily on two documents, the Slovak Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the National Council.

The National Council holds a permanent meeting[63] (zasadá stale) that lasts the whole electoral term unless terminated by a separate resolution (Art 82, Constitution of SR). The Speaker of the National Council (Predseda NR) convenes the meetings (schôdze) of the National Council. The meetings of the National Council are generally open to public and media, but it is possible declare them closed, in whole or in part (Art 18 Rules of Procedure). If the National Council or its speaker requests it, a member of the public or a foreign representative may also address the National Council. The Speaker sets the schedule and agenda for each meeting. In the beginning of each meeting, the National Council discusses the agenda. Deputies' spoken proposals to add, change, or remove items from the agenda are subjected to a vote (Art 24 Rules of Procedure).

A minimum simple majority of members of parliament (76 of 150), must be present at each meeting of the National Council if the meeting is to be valid. This quorum is controlled daily, and meetings with fewer than 76 members are cancelled (Art 23 § 5 Rules of Procedure).

New laws can be proposed by a parliamentary committee, a deputy, or the government (Art 87 Constitution of SR; Art 67 Rules of Procedure). A draft law is submitted to the Speaker of the National Council in writing. It must include the exact legal text for proposed the law and a justification (dôvodová správa) for the law that includes an evaluation of the current social, economic and legal background as well as reasons as to its necessity. It must further elucidate how the law would be implemented, its economic and financial implications, and assess its compatibility with the Constitution, other existing laws, international treaties and EU legislation. The justification, as the declaration of intention of the law, is used by the courts in interpreting the law.

The president may suggest changes to laws approved by the National Council, but the National Council can overrule the president and promulgate the law without the president's signature.

The draft law is to be delivered to all deputies at least 15 days before the meeting in which it will be debated (Art 72 Rules of Procedure). Other relevant material must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance (Art 25 Rules of Procedure).

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63.  The Slovak Constitution (Ústava Slovenskej republiky) is translated into English and it is available from the website of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. An English translation of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council of the Slovak Republic can also be found from the parliament's website, but its terminology is slightly different than in the English translation of the Slovak Constitution. Whenever there are differences in the translation, I have followed the English translation of the Constitution that translates, e.g. "schôdze" as "meeting", not as "session" or "návrh zákona" as "draft law" not as "bill" as the Rules of Procedures does.

There seems to be two principles that guide the organisation of talk in the National Council. First, talk is organised so as to effectively contribute to the institutional transition of the bill, through the National Council, to final voting. For instance, even before the debate begins, the parliamentary committees in which the law is to be debated (in the beginning of the second reading) are established and the lead committee (Gestorský výbor) that will draft the summary of the committee work for the second reading is appointed. In the case of the state language law, the draft law was sent to a total of seven different parliamentary committees. The Speaker of the National Council decided that the committee for Culture and Media was to be the lead committee by the Decision (rozhodnutie) of the Speaker of the National Council on March 26th, 2009.[64] The Committee for Culture and Media elected Magdaléna Vášáryová as its Rapporteur (spravodajca). In the case of a draft law put forward by the government, the responsible minister acts as the Sponsor of the law (navrhovateľ). All draft laws, if they proceeded to the second reading, will be sent to the Constitutional and Legal Affairs committee (Art 74 §1 Rules of Procedure).

The second organising principle is the order in which deputies take the floor. This is as open as possible, which allows direct interaction between deputies. The debate on a new draft law is opened by the Sponsor of the draft law, who is followed by Rapporteur. After the Sponsor and the Rapporteur have spoken, the members of the parliament can join the debate. The Speaker adds their names to his list of speakers after the agenda of the National Council has been approved but before the beginning of the debate on that draft law (Art 27 § 2-3 Rules of Procedure). However, those deputies (if any), who speak on behalf of a parliamentary caucus, are placed in the head of the queue (Art 27 § 4 Rules of Procedure).

After all speakers on the list have spoken, other deputies may request the floor. The Speaker of the National Council presides over the list and the speaking order, normally on a first-come first-served basis. During the actual debate, the Rapporteur and the Sponsor as well as the Speaker, Deputy-Speakers, the President of the Slovak Republic or any member of the government can request the floor at will (Art 28 § 1 Rules of Procedure). Furthermore, after each speech the other deputies may react to the content of the previous speech (Art 33 Rules of Procedure). In Slovak, this reaction is called "faktická poznámka", which translates as "factual comment". This factual comment cannot be used to react to another factual comment, nor can a factual comment include a motion to change the draft law under the debate. Each deputy can deliver only one factual comment to the same speech, and

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64.  1019 rozhodnutie predsedu Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky z 26 marca (číslo 652/2009).

may speak for no more than two minutes. After all factual comments have been voiced, the member to whom they were directed can reply—also in a form of a factual comment no longer than two minutes. Factual comments are very common in the debate on state language law.

The Speaker always announces the next two speakers. Those deputies who miss their turn can have another turn at the end of the debate. When the debate is closed, both the Rapporteur and the Sponsor may address the parliament.

There are no established limits for the speeches delivered during the debate. It is possible to set a limit, but it may not be less than ten minutes for individual members of parliament or twenty minutes when they are speaking on behalf of a parliamentary caucus (Art 30 Rules of Procedure). It is also possible to limit the duration of the whole debate (Art 29a Rules of Procedure). Neither type of limit was used during the debate on the state language law.

## Talk in the National Council

The Slovakian constitution or the Rules of Procedure of the National Council do not prescribe in detail the genres of talk during the debate. Some genres are, however, dictated by the content of the speech. By "genre" I refer to the formal characteristics of talk prescribed by its institutional setting.[65] For instance, the Sponsor has to introduce, explain and justify the draft law; the Rapporteur has to check that all legal procedures were followed during the initiation of the draft law and that all necessary aspects of the draft legal text, including its justification, are present. The Rapporteur may not, while exercising this auditing function, comment the draft law or any amendments proposed, but consider only their legality from the procedural point of view (Art 83 § 2 Rules of Procedure). Further, the use of the factual comment was defined as referring to the previous speech only.

In the first reading in the National Council "the draft law, especially its essentials, shall be discussed in a general debate, in which no amendments shall be moved" (Art 73 § 2 Rules of Procedure). Deputies' propositions may concern merely the debate's future. The purpose of the first reading is to pass a resolution that will a) either refer the draft law back to the sponsor

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65. This is only one way of understanding genre. A broader definition of genre is discussed for instance by Frow in *Genre. The New Critical Idiom* (2005). Similarly, in the writings of the Bakhtin Circle, especially in those by Vološinov (1973, 83-98) we encounter a view that genre denotes socio-economically and ideologically saturated talk—and since all talk is always connected to socio-economic and ideological structures, genres are socioeconomic and ideological through and through. However, for the purposes of distinguishing between different possibilities of talk provided by the parliamentary regulations I find the narrower and more linguistic definition of genre more useful.

for further elaboration and clarification, b) discontinue the debate on the draft law, or c) refer the draft law to the second reading. If the National Council adopts no resolution after the first reading, this is interpreted as the termination of the debate on the draft law. The draft law on the state language proceeded to the second reading in the voting on April 16th, 2009. The institutional purpose of the first reading is, it appears, to move the draft law to the next stage of the legislative process. We will see that, by and large, the government maintains control over the draft law text during both the earlier and later stages of the legislative process.

If the draft law proceeds to the second reading, the National Council discusses the resolution of the Speaker of the National Council concerning the parliamentary committees, which are to discuss the draft law. Again, no resolution is taken, the resolution of the Speaker will prevail.

The second reading of the draft law begins in the parliamentary committees to which it was referred. As was the case in the plenary meeting in the first reading, the Sponsor of the draft law or his representative, are to introduce the draft law to the committee members. The committees are to "consider" (rokovať) the draft law (Art 75 §1 Rules of Procedure) and submit the result of their consideration to the National Council. In the guidelines for new deputies, the debate in the parliamentary committees is described as the "most important part of the legislative process" (*Ako pracuje parlament*, 2012, 94), but in reality the committees are to either approve or reject the draft law. Any amendments must appear in exact legal form (Art 78 Rules of Procedure). This excludes any debate on the intention or purpose of the law from committee work. (This was the task of the first reading, during which, however, no changes were allowed.) Should multiple committees consider the draft law, the lead committee drafts a summary of all recommendations (spoločná správa výborov). This may sound challenging, but the committee recommendations in practice include the single word of information on whether the committee "approves" or "rejects" the draft law as well as grammatical corrections to draft law's legal text.

Clearly, the main function of the talk in the committee is to arrive at a "yes" or "no" on approving the bill. The fact that any amendments to the text must be expressed in exact legal formulation also limits them to the minimum. Consequently, if the lead committee recommends that the draft law be sent back to the sponsor for further elaboration, the debate will be postponed or discontinued altogether. The National Council is then to vote on these in the beginning of the parliamentary debate during the second reading (Art 82 § 1 Rules of Procedure), which means that the committee recommendation is subject to parliamentary majority. Taking into consideration how the recommendation of the lead committee is presented in the National Council, its function is effectively to provide direction to the next stage of the legislative process. Any consideration of the content of the draft law is excluded by the

genre of this turn. The guidelines for the new deputies clearly explain that the function of the Rapporteur, who reports the work of the committees to the National Council, is to inform "of the results of the debates in the committees and account for the proposition[66] of the lead committee" (*Ako pracuje parlament* 2012, 99). So the lead committee has the institutional duty of merging all the committee resolutions into a single coherent resolution (Art 79 Rules of Procedure).

The plenary debate of the second reading can begin after the resolution on the draft law by the lead committee has been delivered to all deputies and to the Sponsor. Amendments the lead committee included in its resolution are not open for discussion, only subject to vote at the end of the second reading. However, deputies may, also, suggest amendments to the bill during the second reading, but they must be supported by at least 15 deputies. These are subject to vote in the end of the debate.

The third reading is to focus only on the parts of the draft law that have been changed by amendments approved during the second reading. Further discussion is only to point out technical and linguistic mistakes (Art 85 Rules of Procedure).

In sum, the institutional organisation of talk in the Slovakian National Council allows but also emphasises relatively volatile general debate. Most of the debate concerning the content and the values of the draft law take place in the plenary meeting where political opinions are voiced. The Sponsor's supervision, especially in the case of draft laws coming from the government, is elaborate. The Sponsor is responsible for implementing any changes to the draft law and has the right to sit on the committee meetings. The power of the committees is limited by their institutional function, which is focused on the simple approval or rejection of the draft law and on the production of exact legal formulations to amend the text. The committee work is not designed to discuss the purpose of the draft law, or engage in political debate on it—these functions are carried out in the plenary debate and by the Sponsor of the draft law. The committee reports are formed as follow: the committee expresses its approval of the bill with a single word, and makes a few, mainly legal-technical suggestions for altering the text. Out of seven committees to which the draft law was sent only one engages in critical evaluation of the content of the draft law. All other committees only pointed out technical mistakes concerning, e.g. the proper name of a state institution. In the available genre of reporting the committee work to the National Council, the final recommendation from the lead committee for Cul-

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66.   The guidelines *Ako pracuje parlament* uses here the term "návrh" that translates as proposition. However, the legal term for the outcome of the committee work is "uznesenie" which translates as resolution. The pragmatic meaning of both terms are here, however, concurrent.

ture and Media could only present a summary of legislative changes to the existing draft law. This disallowed debate on the purpose of the draft law from an expert perspective.

The draft law in the Slovakian legislative process is subjected to extensive and rather free political debate, but expert opinions are limited effectively to the office of the Sponsor, the places where the preparatory work is carried out (here the Ministry of Culture), and to the simple legal-technical corrections the parliamentary committees can bring up in their resolutions.

## The Draft for a New State Language Law

The government proposition for a new law, meant to change the law number 270/1995 on the state language of the Slovak Republic, acquired the number 982. It was given to the Speaker of the National Council on 11th March, 2009. By the Speaker's decision on 26th March, the parliamentary committee for Culture and Media was appointed the lead committee (gestorský výbor) and was thus to find the Rapporteur for the draft law. The first reading of the draft law took place on 15th and 16th April, 2009 and the second reading on 25th and 26th June. The final voting was on 30th June 2009. The speed at which the draft law passed into law is remarkable.

A number of different legal documents will appear in the analysis. I will briefly attempt to explain their relationships. First, the state language law act that applies today dates back to 1995 and has the number 270/1995. This law has been amended many times; the analysis here focuses on an extensive amendment that was introduced in 2009.

This amendment—itself a legal text—went through two different stages. The first was as the draft law that was debated in the parliament. I refer to this draft legal text as "government proposition 982". Once "government proposition 982" was passed by the parliament, acquiring the force of the law, it became law 318/2009. However, this legal text contains only the changes introduced to the 270/1995 law as amended by the previous amendment from year 2007. The law 318/2009 can, thus, only be read against the 270/1995 law as amended in 2007. When all the amendments introduced by the law 318/2009 were typed into a readable law and added to the Collection of Laws (Zbierka zákonov) it acquired yet another number, the law 357/2009, which can be read as a self-standing legal act. Therefore, whenever I refer to the state language law *after* the 2009 amendment, I refer not to the 318/2009 amending text, but to the act 357/2009 *which in essence* should be understood as an amended version of 270/1995.[67] To make matters even

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67. There are differences between the government proposition 982 and the passed law 318/2009, but they are marginal and mainly technical in nature. This also testifies to the cent-

more confusing, in March 2011 the amendment of the law 357/2009 decided to refer back to the law 270/1995 and the whole act 357/2009—the result of the debate this chapter focuses on—was revoked. Let this stand as one, perhaps even typical, characteristic of the long Slovakian debate on the state language!

In addition to the legal text of 357/2009, I consider the Justification (Dôvodová správa) that accompanied the government proposition 982 (and the act 318/2009). The law 270/1995, however, has a Justification of its own dating back to 1995, which I also use in my analysis. The purpose of the Justification is to explain the basic reasoning and intention behind the law, and, for instance, the courts use it in interpreting the law. In the case of the law 357/2009, it is unclear which Justification should have priority. It seems that both Justifications should be considered, but the Justification of the original law 270/1995 could have precedence. In addition to the Justifications, a special Principles of interpretation (Zásady)[68] were passed a few months after the 357/2009 law came to force. These Principles are supposed to clarify the legal text of the 357/2009 act, but just like the Justification, they have no legal force. Despite their legally non-binding status, both the Justifications and the Principles convey much of the political situation in which the amendment 318/2009 was debated and therefore are important documents for the analysis.

The government proposition 982 is a part of a longer debate on the status of the Slovak language in Slovakia. As was hinted above, the relationship between the Czech and Slovak languages has been a historical cornerstone in this debate. Another cornerstone especially in the debates during the 1990s and 2000s is the relationship between the state language (Slovak) and the minority languages. In a summary fashion, one could characterise the debate since 1990 so that the acts of 1990 on official language, of 1995 on the state language and the 2009 amendment have strengthened the exclusivity of the Slovak language in administration, state offices, and the public sphere respectively. All other amendments have introduced reversing changes: in 1997 in regard to written appeals, in 1999 in regard to the minority languages in public schools and financial sanctions for breaking the law, in 2007 as well as in 2011 with regard to names of places and the use of minority languages.

I will start with the intentions expressed in the 1995 Justification and contrast them with those expressed in 2009. The purpose of the Justification

rality of the government in the legislative process and the role of the parliamentary committees as agreeing or disagreeing with the government's proposition.

68.   Zásady vlády Slovenskej republiky k zákonu Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky č. 270/1995 Z. z. o štátnom jazyku Slovenskej republiky v znení neskorších predpisov. These Principles were approved by the Slovak government resolution on 16 December 2009. As a government resolution (uznesenie 933/2009), they are not legally binding.

that accompanies the law is to explain the intention of the law-maker. There are two clear purposes expressed for the 1995 state language law. As a contextual note, Slovakia became an independent state in 1993 in a pact between political elites of Slovakia and Czech lands. Slovakian independence, according to many opinion polls, did not enjoy much support among the masses, who often preferred some form of extended autonomy and greater political recognition within Czechoslovakian federation. The 1995 law, appeared during strong political campaigns to legitimate the national Slovakian Republic. The 1995 Justification reads:

> Uzákonením spisovnej slovenčiny sa dosiahlo slovenské národné zjednotenie. Národné sebauvedomenie postupne preklenulo rozdiely vierovyznaní , umožňujúc nielen toleranciu, ale aj slovenskú národnú integritu. [--] (Dôvodová správa 1995)

> The codification of written Slovak led to the unification of the Slovak nation[69]. National self-consciousness gradually bridged the religious differences enabling not only tolerance but also the Slovak national integration. [--] (Dôvodová správa 1995)

The 1995 Justification recognises explicitly the role of language in the legacy of the nation. Given the broader political context, the references to the national origins of the state are understandable. The issue of religious tolerance addresses a long lasting rivalry between the Catholic and Protestant groups in Slovakia and their differential views as of the best form of Slovaks' political existence. The reference to integration, by contrast, addresses the issue of ethnic diversity in Slovakia. Altogether well over 10 percent of the population in the 1990s belonged to different minorities, the Hungarians being the biggest.

The second intention in the 1995 state language law concerns the connection between the language and the nation:

> Jazykový zákon je prirodzenou súčasťou vyspelých právnych systémov. Slovenský jazyk je národným jazykom Slovákov ako jediného štátotvorného subjektu Slovenskej republiky. Z postavenia štátotvorného subjektu vyplýva aj úloha slovenského jazyka ako jazyka zjednocujúceho všetkých obcanov Slovenskej republiky. Týmto zákonom sa vytvoria záruky na existenciu jednotného prostriedku dorozumievania medzi obcanmi Slovenskej republiky; zabezpecí sa tak základný

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69.   In the Slovak language it is possible to make a distinction between "národ" and "národnosť"—or in adjectival form "národný" and "národnostný". I will come back to the historical and contemporary differences between these terms further below. Whenever the term "národ" is used in Slovak, I translate it as "nation" or "national" whilst the term "národnosť" is translated as "nationality" and it can refer both to a noun and an adjective.

predpoklad fungovania všetkých stránok jej spolocenského, politického a hospodárskeho života pri rešpektovaní medzinárodných zmlúv. (Dôvodová správa, 1995)

Language law is a natural part of developed legal systems. The Slovak language is the national language of the Slovaks who are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak republic. From the position of being the state-forming subject follows also the task of the Slovak language as unifying all citizens of the Slovak republic. With this law, guarantees are created for the existence of a unified means for understanding among citizens of the Slovak republic; to ensure the fundamental conditions for the functioning of all spheres of its societal, political, and economic life with respect to international treaties. (Dôvodová správa, 1995)

The Slovak language as the language of the state-forming subject serves, here, as the means of integration for all citizens. In a multilingual and multi-ethnic state, this creates a political, cultural and social hierarchy between different groups in society; but this is described as something natural, something that "follows" from the position of the Slovaks as the state-forming subject. The intentions that can be inferred from the 1995 Justification point clearly to the need to provide national legitimacy to the new state and establish the character of Slovakia as the nation state of Slovaks at the expense of the other ethnic groups.

We can contrast the 1995 Justification with the one accompanying the 2009 amendment. There are two obvious reasons for the amendment. The first appears right in the beginning of the Justification:

Medzi základné povinnosti štátu patrí aj úprava jazykových pomerov na jeho vlastnom území. Prostredníctvom štátneho jazyka sa štát usiluje udržiavať a prehlbovať politickú a sociálnu integrovanosť všetkých svojich občanov a zabezpečovať efektívny výkon štátnej správy a jednotný informačný tok. Štátny jazyk je prostriedkom vnútornej stability štátu v zmysle spoločenskom, kultúrnom a aj politickom. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

Among the fundamental obligations of the state belongs also the regulation of the linguistic situation on its own territory. Through the means of the state language the state seeks to maintain and deepen the political and social integration of all the citizens and ensure effective state administration and uniform flow of information. The state language is a means to internal stability in social, cultural and even political sense. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

The state language law postulates a close connection between the state capacity to create social cohesion in a heterogeneous society and thus promote

"internal stability". The end of the quote, which defines state language as a means of internal stability in social, cultural and political senses, could easily be connected with the question of the minority rights. The Hungarian minority in Slovakia is often represented as striving for territorial autonomy. Therefore, in Slovakia, discourse on cultural rights are easily seen as precedents to territorial rights (Nedelsky 2009, 197-198). The first purpose for the law is to help the state maintain political order in general. This we can contrast to the 1995 declarative statement that Slovakia is a state for the Slovaks.

The second purpose is more contextual:

> Po dvanásťročných skúsenostiach s uplatňovaním zákona o štátnom jazyku v praxi sa ukázala potreba pripraviť novelu zákona, ktorá by zabezpečila vyššiu účinnosť a vykonateľnosť tohto zákona a tým prispela k zlepšeniu starostlivosti o štátny jazyk a k upevneniu postavenia slovenského jazyka ako štátneho jazyka v Slovenskej republike. Novelizáciu zákona si vyžiadala predovšetkým nevyhovujúca situácia v používaní slovenského jazyka vo verejnom styku. Súčasná jazyková prax jasne signalizuje, že zákon o štátnom jazyku sa v potrebnej miere neuplatňuje. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

> After twelve years of experience with applying the law on the state language in practice it became necessary to prepare an amendment of the law that would ensure greater effectiveness of this law and with this contribute to improving the care of the state language and to strengthening the position of the Slovak language as the state language in the Slovak Republic. The amendment of the law is required above all because of the poor situation of using the Slovak language in public contact. The contemporary practice of language clearly indicates that law on the state language is not applied to a in sufficient extent. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

This more contextual purpose relates to majority-minority relations in Slovakia. The Hungarian-speaking minority which comprises about 9 percent of the total population is territorially concentrated in the southern parts of the country. In these areas, the dominant language is often Hungarian. The 2009 Justification addresses these two separate aspects, the first of which is the general extent to which Slovak is known and used among the Hungarian minority and the second the extent to which Slovak is used by the Hungarian minority in its dealings with the state.

The historical change from the declaration of a nation state to a pragmatic realisation that this declaration does not hold in practice characterises the Justification of 2009. The historical references to religious tolerance are also absent in 2009, indicating that in terms of the history of the "Slovak Question", the religious issue is no longer so topical. In its place, we find more explicit concern with problems of internal integration and how to ascertain—

also in practice—the aspirations of the monolingual Slovak state and society, as expressed in the law. This shift from making declarations to working with a "malfunctioning" law and society appears in other places too. For instance, the historical narratives about the Slovak nation and its road to becoming a nation state are absent in the 2009 justification. It refers simply to the Slovak constitution:

> Na území Slovenskej republiky je podľa článku 6 ods. 1 Ústavy Slovenskej republiky štátnym jazykom slovenský jazyk. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)[70]

> On the territory of the Slovak republic according to the Article 6, Point 1 of the constitution of the Slovak republic the state language is the Slovak language. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

However, the idea of the primacy of the state-forming nation is not absent. Interestingly, it is not the Slovak nation that is state-forming as in 1995, but the Slovak language, which both represents the nation and provides the state with integrity. The 2009 justification explains the state language law as a means of social integration promoted by the state:

> Záujmom štátu v oblasti jazykovej politiky je rešpektovať národnoreprezentatívnu a štátnointegratívnu funkciu slovenského jazyka ako prostriedku verejného styku a zároveň prehlbovať pozitívny vzťah občanov slovenskej národnosti aj príslušníkov národnostných menšín k slovenskému jazyku. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

> The interest of the state in the sphere of language politics is to respect the nation-representative and state-integrative function of the Slovak language as the means of public contact and to deepen the positive relations of citizens of the Slovak nationality as well as members of nationality minorities towards the Slovak language. (Dôvodová správa, 2009)

It is as if the recognition of the failure to create a nation-state based on the declarations on the 1995 Justification have become reformulated as failures of the state language policy: the function of the state language policy is to generate social cohesion, and integrate the minorities into the Slovak language.

The changes in the Justifications show how the focal point of the nation in 1995 has changed to the state language and communication. The dualist role of the state language—signifying the nation and allowing universal

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70.  Article 6, §1 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in full reads: "The state language on the territory of the Slovak Republic is the Slovak language."

communication—is highlighted in the preamble to the law. This preamble has been preserved in all versions of the 270/1995 act. It reads:

> The National Council of the Slovak Republic, be it resolved the fact that the Slovak language is the most important feature of distinctiveness of the Slovak nation, the most esteemed value of its cultural heritage and an articulation of sovereignty of the Slovak Republic, as well as a universal means of understanding for its citizens, providing them with freedom and of equality of dignity and rights on the territory of the Slovak Republic, has passed a resolution on the following law...[71]

The preamble reveals the complexity that surrounds the idea of the state language of being both an emblem of (nationalist) state and means of (civic) integration.

I will now turn to the question of how the above changes are reflected in the government proposition 982. The most important changes introduced in the 2009 amendment can be grouped under six headings: i) the priority given to the state language, ii) the introduction of the natural person as the subject of the law, iii) the active protection of the state language under the guidance of the Ministry of Culture, iv) the use of the state language in official contact (úradný styk), v) the use of the state language in public contact (verejný styk), and, finally vi) the introduction of fines. As a consequence of these changes and of imprecise wording, the law also renders the relationship between the state language and minority languages unclear.

In Article 1, the 2009 amendment changed paragraph 4 that regulates the relationship between the state language law and the laws on minority languages from the formulation:

> This act does not regulate the use of minority languages. The use of these language is regulated by separate laws.

to

> Unless this act provides otherwise, the use of the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups is governed by separate regulations.[72]

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71. This is the current official translation available from the Ministry of Culture's website, http://www.culture.gov.sk/vdoc/462/an-act-of-parliament-on-the-state-language-of-the-slovak-republic--1ab.html (accessed Nov 1, 2014). Note that the English translations of 1995 and 2009 preambles are different although the Slovak text remains the same.

72. An unofficial English translation of the state language law after the 2009 amendment can be found from Martin Votruba's website: www.pitt.edu/~votruba/sstopics/lawsonlanguagein-slovakia.html (accessed Aug 9, 2013). Translations from other versions of the state language law are mine.

This minor change reverses the balance between the state language law and the laws regulating minority languages. It gives precedence to what is legislated on the state language ("Unless *this act* provides otherwise..."). For minorities, then, what *this act* provides becomes tantamount to their ability and permission to use minority languages. The priority of the state language over other languages has been stated explicitly in the Art 1, paragraph 2. It reads "The state language shall have priority over other languages used in the territory of the Slovak Republic". This paragraph has remained unchanged since 1995, but with the current amendment of paragraph 4, the minority language laws are assigned secondary position vis-à-vis the state language.

A new paragraph was added to article 1, which determines the scope of application of the state language law and introduced the private individual as the one subject of the law. Article 1, paragraph 5, reads:

> This act shall apply to state authorities, territorial self-government authorities, other bodies of public administration, legal persons, self-employed natural persons and private individuals to the extent and under the conditions set forth herein.[73]

This paragraph places the state institutions, public bodies and the individual citizen to equal positions as subjects of the law. In contrast to, for instance, the Swedish language law (also dating from 2009) that legislates on the "principal language" (*huvudspråk*) (SFS 2009:600), or the Finnish language law on "national languages" (*kansalliskielet*) (423/2003), the Slovak language law extends the same obligations to public bodies and to private individuals. The Swedish and Finnish laws legislate on the *rights* of the individuals and the *obligations* of the public bodies.

Both changes made to the article 1 of the Slovak state language law were overruled in 2011, and the wording that was in effect in 2007 was reinstated (Zákon 24/2007; Zákon 35/2011).

The second article of the state language law legislates on the active protection of the state language. The changes made to this article oblige the state authorities "to access actively to the control of observance of assessment of this act" (Art 2, para 1). Further, the Ministry of Culture alone is made responsible for the codification of the state language (Art 2, para 3).

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73.  In fact, the term "private individual" is not the best legal expression: "self-employed natural persons" refers to people in their economic activity whilst "private individual" refers just individual citizens. It is unclear in the law whether "self-employed natural persons" are in fact "legal persons" entitled by their economic engagements or whether they be treated as "natural persons" even when they are carrying out their economic activities. In the former case, self-employed natural person is in fact a "legal person". However, the reference of the private individual is unambiguously just a "natural person".

This change excludes the scientific community from the codification of the Slovak language, making it the sole territory of the Ministry of Culture. Both amendments were revoked by 2011 changes to the law (Zákon 35/2011).

The third article introduces the obligation to use the state language in official contact (úradný stýk). Article 3, paragraph 1 legislates that:

> The state authorities, territorial self-government authorities, other bodies of public administration, the legal persons established by such public authorities and the legal persons established by the operation of law shall use the state language in their official communication; this provision shall be without prejudice to the use of the languages of national minorities in official communication pursuant to a separate regulation and the use of other languages in official international communication in accordance with the established international practice.

And the paragraph 2 reads:

> The employees and civil servants of the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1, as well as those employed in the transport, postal and telecommunication services, members of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter "armed forces"), armed security corps, other armed corps and fire brigades, must have a command of and use the state language in official communication.

These two additions oblige the state authorities to use the state language in official contact. In other words, the state authorities outside the areas where the minority language law applies are not allowed to use any language other than the state language. The provision concerning the minority languages lifts this obligation to use the state language but only in areas falling under the minority language legislation.

The last addition to the article 3 reads:

> In official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1, a natural or legal person shall use the state language, unless this Act, separate regulation or an international treaty promulgated by the law provides otherwise. Any person whose mother tongue is a language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language may use their mother tongue in official communication with the authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1. The authorities and legal persons referred to in paragraph 1 shall be obliged to accept any document executed in a language that meets the criterion of basic comprehensibility in relation to the state language, insofar as such document has been issued or authenticated by the competent authorities of the Czech Republic. (Art 3, para 5.)

Altogether these three additions to the state language law provide a universal obligation to use the state language in official communication outside the areas where the special minority language law applies; and in those minority areas, the law gives the right to use minority languages, but it does not oblige the state authorities to do so. In practice, all this means that two Hungarian-speaking police officers patrolling in Bratislava are not allowed to speak Hungarian together because Bratislava does not belong to the minority language areas. The fifth paragraph also obliges individual citizens outside the minority areas to use the state language when addressing any public authority.[74] One paradoxical outcome of these promulgations is that even a foreigner is obliged to use the state language in public contact, for instance in the post office—and the post clerk is not allowed to respond in any other language than the state language! The Principles recognise this problem and attempt to clarify it.

The last change introduced in paragraph 5 concerns the official recognition of the Czech language as "meeting the criterion of basic comprehensibility". This is an interesting addition that in part returns to the relationship between the Slovak and Czech languages to state-socialist and interwar times, when both languages were official, recognised "variants" of a fictitious Czechoslovak language. This marks a change from thinking that Czech language threatens the distinctiveness of Slovak, as many nationalist had argued earlier. In stead, it places the main point of contention between the Slovak majority and the internal minorities.

The 2009 amendment introduced a new Article 3a that stipulated that all geographical names, names of cities, towns and villages and their parts must be in the state language. This was changed on July 1, 2011 (Zákon 204/2011).

Article 3 was amended by the February 2011 law, but no significant changes took place. Most crucially, the requirement that a state employee must "know" the state language was taken away and only the requirement that state employees "use" state language in official communication remains. Also, provisions for differential communication in the case of foreigners was introduced more clearly.

The 5th article introduces the use of the state language in public contact (verejný styk) in addition to official contact (úradný styk) as sanctioned in article 3. The basic principle is that all public communication, be it via the

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74. The Act on the use of languages of national minorities (184/1999) applies only to individuals who live in areas where the minority members exceed 20 percent of the total population. According to this act, individuals have the right to address the state authorities in their minority language, but the state authorities have no obligation to understand that nor use the minority language. They, however, have the right to understand and use minority languages—something that is denied of them by the state language law outside the minority areas. Moreover, even in the minority areas, the state authorities have to use the state language in internal communication as the 184/1999 act on minority languages applies only to individuals.

radio, press, television, public announcements, cultural events, etc., is to be in the state language (Art 5, paragraph 1). The extent of "public contact" is perhaps best captured by looking at the exceptions to the rule that were granted. They include, for instance, television programmes in foreign language—which nevertheless must be subtitled or dubbed into the state language; cultural and information programmes of the Slovak radio directed to foreign countries, i.e., broadcast primarily abroad; foreign language tuition programmes; and live events that are followed by immediate interpretation in the state language and musical works in their original language. In addition, national minorities are allowed to use state channels of information under separate legislation. The definition of "public contact" that can be inferred from the article covers all communication that is visible to the public, for instance "notices intended to inform the public disclosed through a municipal address system or similar technical means" (Art 5, para 3). Similarly, "memorials, monuments and memorial plaques" are "public contact" and must be in the state language, and

> if they contain the text in other languages, the text in another language shall be presented after the text in the state language and shall, in terms of their content, be identical with the state language text. The text in another language shall be presented in the same or smaller font than the state language text. (Art 5, para 7)

In order to make sure that the state language law also applies in memorials, "the sculptor shall be obliged to request a binding opinion from the Ministry of Culture on compliance with this Act of the inscription on a memorial, monument or a memorial plaque." (Art 5, para 7).

Articles 6 and 7 legislate the use of the state language in the police, military, and courts. Article 8 legislates the use of the state language "in other areas of public contact" and includes for instance product documentation, economy and health care. Communication in health care should take place in the state language. However, if the patient speaks a minority language, she has also the right to use that language. Notably, none of the health care personnel have an obligation to speak any other than the state language. All medical documentation must be in the state language. In the 2011 amendment, the "right" of persons belonging to national minorities to use their language in health care was changed to concern all persons who do not speak the state language. Again, before this amendment was passed, the implication was that all foreigners were obliged to speak Slovak with their doctors. The 35/2011 act pragmatically legislates that "with patients or customers whose mother tongue is another than the state language communication can take place in language that the patient or client can understand" (Art 8, paragraph 4, 270/1995 as amended by 35/2011).

Finally, for non-compliance with the law, Article 9a legislates fines ranging from 100 to 5000 Euros that can be levelled against both legal and natural persons. This was changed by the February 2011 amendment, and now there is no mention of natural persons being fined. Further, the fines were reduced to the range of 50 to 2500 Euros (Article 9a, paragraph 1 270/1995 as amended by 35/2011). The fines for breaching the state language law were first introduced in the original act in 1995, but they were revoked by the 184/1999 amendment.[75]

As a whole, the amendments the 318/2009 law introduced concerned the consolidation of the control of the Ministry of Culture in the sphere of the state language. Many of these powers were revoked only two years later. The 318/2009 law also introduced particular instances of official and public contact in which state language should be used. These paragraphs remained vague, testifying to the difficulty inherent in establishing those instances where the state language is an obligation rather than a right.

A certain logic emerges from this short analysis of the law and its Justifications. One central and consistent aim is to provide conditions, both political and social, in which all interaction with the state takes place in Slovak, and according to which no Slovak-speaker is required to know any foreign language, or even be exposed to a foreign language. Consequently, any presence of foreign-language information in the public sphere had to be kept to the minimum and be always accompanied by translations. Exceptions to this principle originally included the areas where the minority speakers exceed 20 percent of the total population. In these areas, the presence of the minority language in public is allowed, but again the state is in no way obliged to support it; moreover, it has to be accompanied by a translation into the state language.

I will now turn to the main characters of the debate and the arguments they voiced during the readings. The key participants in the debate were the Minister of Culture from SMER party Marek Maďarič, a deputy of the Hungarian Coalition party Ágnes Biró, and a deputy of the Slovak National Party Rafael Rafaj, as well as Dušan Jarjabek, Ján Senko and Jana Vaľová. They were the most active participants during the debate both when it came to delivering speeches and to making factual remarks.

Marek Maďarič is originally a dramaturge and a screenwriter, with a short career in the Slovak television before entering the National Council. However, he started his political career already in 1988 by joining the Slovak Communist Party. In 2000, he joined his current party, SMER, and became its vice-chair in 2006. Between 2006 and 2010, and again after 2012, he served as the Minister of Culture.

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75. The fines were legislated in 1995 but took effect 1st January 1997. From 1997 to 1999, the fines varied from 50 000 to 500 000 Slovak Crowns, approximately from 1100 to 11 000 Euros.

Ágnes Bíró was a representative of the Hungarian coalition party. A paediatrician by training, Bíró was an active deputy, especially in questions concerning the rights of the Hungarian minority. There are very little signs of other public engagements outside her term in the parliament from 2006 to 2010.

Rafael Rafaj is a deputy of the Slovak National Party (SNS). He studied journalism and wrote for *Slovenský národ* (new monthly of the Slovak National Party), *Zmena* (a monthly that existed from 1999 to 2004) and *Národná obroda* (an irregular newspaper). He joined SNS in 1990 and served as its press secretary from 1995 to 2001. Since 2003, he has been the spokesperson (hovorca) of the party. He became a deputy in 2006 and was re-elected in 2010, but like all other SNS representatives he lost his seat in 2012 early elections.

Dušan Jarjabek is a professional baritone and singing teacher. He has been working in music since the late 1970s and until the early 2000s, when he became involved in politics and was elected to the National Council as a HZDS representative. In 2005 he changed to Smer.

Ján Senko defended a doctoral thesis from the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. From the early 1980s until mid 2000s he held various scientific and director positions within regional educational institutions in Zvolen and Banská Bystrica in Central Slovakia. In 2006 he became a deputy of Smer in the National Council.

Jána Valová holds a doctoral degree in social work. She started in local politics in eastern Slovakia in 2000 and in 2005 she entered the Prešov regional council. In 2006 she was elected to the National Council on Smer's electoral list. She is an ethnic Ruthene and active in representing Ruthene issues in local politics in the town of Humenné on the Slovakian Ukrainian border. Her belonging to one of the official nationality minorities in Slovakia, coupled to her unquestionable support for the state language law was a great asset for the Minister of Culture during the debate, as she could refer to her own minority status in her defences of the draft law.

To summarise, the two sides of the debate appear clear: the Hungarian minority party provided vocal opposition to the state language law amendment and the government parties supported it. Not many deputies outside the Hungarian minority party, indeed, spoke against the draft law, even if they eventually voted against it. Let us first see what the arguments for the draft law were like.

Rafael Rafaj lends strong support for the draft law. He argues that the core of the law is in the first two paragraphs—if understood correctly. In his version, which does not follow the legal text, the first paragraph reads that "as is justifiable, the state language is the Slovak language" and the second as "the state language has primacy over all other languages used on the territory of the Slovak Republic" (Rafaj 25 June 2009, 39, 29). These prin-

ciples, Rafaj argues, are basic to any developed democracy and as such comparable to physical law: to claim an alternative position between the state language and all other languages would be the same as if "someone comes from the smaller Moon and says that he will not be subordinated to Earth's gravity because he has own laws in this solar system" (Rafaj 25 June 2009, 39, 30). The predominance of the state in creating community and its language is therefore comparable to physical laws. Although these examples of Rafaj's words come from the second reading, his position has remained consistent during the debate emphasising the unquestionable right of the Slovak language and nation to prevail in the state.

Minister Maďarič's arguments build a connection between this primacy of the national community and state policies. His arguments for the law in the very beginning of the debate are couched in the detached legalistic genre. He states that a new law is needed in order to enable the Ministry of Culture to carry out its task in securing that the state language becomes a "functioning legal norm that is applied in social practice" (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99). The Slovak language, Maďarič continues, is an official language of the European Union and its role in the Slovak Republic is sanctioned by the constitution. However, the legislation in force does not give sufficient provisions to the Ministry of Culture to oversee the implementation of the state language law. An important means to help the Ministry in this task is the financial sanctions that the amendment introduces (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 100). Increasing the competence of the Ministry of Culture would therefore contribute to a better implementation of the state language law, a law that signals the ethnic understanding of nation and its promotion and enshrinement through the state.

However, there are also arguments that emphasise the integrative function of the law. Deputy Vaľová states that in a multilingual state "there must be a state language that everyone knows and everyone knows how to use it" (Vaľová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115). As we remember, Vaľova herself belongs to the Ruthene minority, so this call for shared language might have sounded trustworthy. Such a language is, further, beneficial to the development of democracy and enables "active participation of society's life" and equality between citizens (Nachtmanová 25 June 2009, 39 ,20). In these arguments that emphasise the civic nature of the state language it is clear, however, that the state language sets the norms of integration. Vaľová, for instance, points out that it would be discrimination to demand that the majority learn the minority language (Vaľová 15 Apr 2009 35, 114) and Deputy Jarjabek argues that:

> Jazykový zákon je právna norma, ktorej účelom je deklarovať, že na území Slovenskej republiky platí spoločenská dohoda, podľa ktorej základným a všeobecne dorozumievacím jazykom občanov tohto štátu

je jazyk majoritného, teda slovenského obyvateľstva a že jazyky národnostných menšín, ktoré si, samozrejme, vážime a ctíme, majú svoje miesto v spoločenskej komunikácii tých skupín populácie, ktoré tieto jazyky spájajú. Majú funkciu pomocného, teda nedominantného komunikačného systému. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 128-129)

The language law is a legal norm whose aim is to declare that on the territory of the Slovak Republic a social agreement applies according to which the basic and universal language of mutual understanding of the citizens of this state is the language of the majority, that is of Slovak citizens,[76] and the languages of nationality minorities, which we naturally appreciate and honour, have their place in the social communication of these groups of people who speak those languages. Their function is auxiliary, hence of the nondominant communicative system. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 128-129)

Here the circle of the civic integrative and the nationalist arguments comes to a close: the legal norm which Jarjabek evokes is nothing other than what Rafaj expresses appealing to Charlemagne, the King of Franks: the Slovak language is "primus inter pares", the first among equals (Rafaj, 26 June 2009, 39, 26). There are many who bring forth the communicative role of the state language that contributes to or even generates equality (Vaľová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115; Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 16-17; Senko 16 Apr 2009, 35, 22).

These arguments depict the law as a natural expression of the primacy of the Slovak language in Slovakia that can provide integration and equality to all. The contrast they make between the state language and the minority languages serves to highlight the exclusivity of the minority languages and the universal and civic role of the state language.

However, there are also another type of argumentation used to support the draft law, which emphasises the need to support the state language. Rafaj, for instance, acknowledges that the Slovak language requires protection in the contemporary situation (e.g. Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 28), and minister Maďarič acknowledges, in addition to the integrative function, the historical reasons that necessitate the protection of the state language (Maďarič 16 June 2009, 35, 40). Jarjabek likewise is somewhere in between recognising the importance of the communicative role and the practical need to protect the Slovak language both in society and internationally (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 128-130).

These positions compare to the shift in focus from the historical arguments of the nation to the more pragmatic, contemporary focus on how to make the state language law applicable in practice. The main weight in the

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76. Jarjabek refers here to Slovaks as a cultural, not political community.

2009 debate is clearly on the integrative function of the state language law. This is also reflected in the unanimous support for the sanctions designed to help to enforce the law. One deputy put it that laws without sanctions are "ridiculous imitations" of law (Tóthová 25 June 2009, 39, 45), and Jarjabek labels them "toothless" (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 134).

On the side of the opponents especially Biró criticises the law for privileging one language over all other languages. She follows the interpretation that language is connected with identity and argues that for this reason the Hungarian minority deserves symbolic recognition of its linguistic and cultural identity in the Slovak Republic. Consequently, the Slovak language can be used in official contact (úradny stýk), but it should not be elevated to the symbolic status of a state language as this limits the rights of those people who speak other than the state language. The state language makes the ethnic "Slovaks the only state creating subject of the Slovak republic" (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 107). From this argument she proceeds to point out that the primacy of one language at the state level limits the factual possibilities of using minority languages. The main difference between Biró's and the supporters' argumentation is that Biró seeks to extend the ethnic principle to include also the national(ity) minorities. In essence, she questions that the Slovaks are the sole state-forming subject and wishes to present the Hungarian minority as a state-forming subject alongside the Slovak majority. She does not, however, reject the principle that language and nation are mutually constitutive and require political representation.

One observation that can be made at this stage concerns the dominant position of the discourse on the ethnically defined community. Both supporters and opponents appear to ground their arguments on the preconception of some existing, ethnically defined unit that has—or has not—the right to claim political representation. The tensions such a discourse creates in society are reflected in other discursive constellations that characterise the relations between the majority and minority, as these are discursively produced in the debate. Let us turn now to how things are expressed in the debate.

Both the prevalence of the idea of an ethnically defined community and the antagonism between the majority and minority are evident in the way arguments are made. First, Biró's ability to truly represent the right interests of the Slovakian citizens is questioned (Vestenický 15 Apr 2009, 35, 119). Her use of Slovak is praised for its correctness and fluency (Tóthová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115), which reinforces her foreignness in the context. The antagonism goes deeper than just the language question. Pavol Minárik, who opposes the bill, nevertheless was confident in dividing citizens between "us, the Slovaks" and "you, the Hungarians" (Minárik 16 Apr 2009, 35, 10). Dušan Čaplovič emphasises the responsibilities and duties, not only rights, "of the others" (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009 35, 16). Even Biró uses "us" to denote the Hungarian minority: "none of us is... against the state language or

the Slovak language. We are also for understanding and tolerance. But we want that also you would understand and tolerate us" (Biró 25 June 2009, 39, 48). This mutual distance did not diminish as the debate progressed. One observes, rather, the waning of a certain careful choosing of words that mitigated divisions in the beginning of the debate. The second reading shows a clear increase in antagonism and growing distance between the poles. During the second reading, for instance, minister Maďarič accuses Biró's of making demagoguery speeches (Maďarič 25 June 2009, 39, 26). A moment later, Bárdos accuses Maďarič of "not telling the truth" and of being "misleading" (Bárdos 25 June 2009, 39, 26). Rafaj, in his turn, accuses Biró for being "the conductor of false voice" in the debate (Rafaj 25 June 2009, 39, 29), and Biró in her turn wants to "strongly reject the lies and misinterpretations about [her] words" (Biró 26 June 2009, 39, 45). Finally, Bárdos summarises one speech as "contain[ing] only untruths and disinformation" (Bárdos 26 June 2009, 39, 50).

Second, the high social power carried by the state language law can also be seen in the way it is presented as "natural" and "obvious", that is, needing no justification. For instance, Minister Maďarič argues that according to the Constitution the Slovak language is the state language. For him, this suffices as an argument for amending the existing law on the state language (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 5). For Rafaj, having and protecting a state language are among the natural rights of any nation (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 32).

The supporters of the law also cite (questionable) examples in support of the Slovak state language law. They, for instance, repeatedly cite other language laws in other European countries. For instance, Rafaj uses the Swedish language law that was passed in summer of 2009 as an example. It is true that the Swedish language law names Swedish as the principal language (*huvudspråk*) in Sweden, but it also stipulates the state's obligation to protect minority languages and to ensure that minority representatives can develop their mother tongues.

Another frequent and twisted point of reference for many of those talking for the state language law is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It is used both to back up the Slovak language as the state language (even if this is clearly not covered by the Charter) and to show that the state language law does not infringe on the Charter (which, however, is not the purpose of the Charter). The Charter is supposed to provide active measures for the protection of minority languages. It is not a collection of negative rights of peoples speaking minority languages. The use of this type of false evidence shows that the supporters of the law do not need rational argumentation. The dominant discursive constructions prevent such questions, or render them ineffective.

Third, the government representatives do not always use the opportunity offered to reply to factual remarks raised against their speeches. This reflects

their position in the debate: they can state their opinions, but do not need to respond or defend these against accusations.

The voting results were predictable. There were 136 deputies present out of 150. One deputy who was present abstained from voting. Table 1 shows that deputies from the government coalition (Smer-SD[77] and SNS[78]) as well as ĽS-HZDS[79] all voted for the proposition. The opposition deputies were for the most part against the proposition: the Hungarian minority party SMS[80] unanimously opposed it, and the other opposition parties opposition parties SDKÚ-DS[81] and KDH[82] voted empty or against the draft law. Independent deputies were also, in the main, opposed to the draft law.

|  | Smer | SNS | ĽS-HZDS | SDKU-DS | SMK | KDH | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| For | 47 | 17 | 14 | - | - | - | 1 | 79 |
| Against | - | - | - | 7 | 15 | 3 | 5 | 30 |
| Empty | - | - | - | 16 | - | 6 | 4 | 26 |
| No vote | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Absent | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | - | 1 | 4 | 14 |

Table 1. Voting results of the government proposition 982 on June 30, 2009.

At this stage of analysis, I propose to draw some conclusions concerning the social base—the extra-textual base—of the debate. Both the law and the debate reveal an ethnic-nationalist discourse. This is present in the law text as well as the different arguments voiced in the parliament. Social relations of power can be seen in the ways in which different arguments are made, the government parties being able to distort evidence for their own advantage,

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77. SMER-SD declares social democratic political ideas and in the European Parliament sit together with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats. Many in Slovakia, however, treat SMER-SD as a populist party.

78. SNS is a nationalist right-wing party. In the European Parliament they belong to Europe of Freedom and Democracy.

79. ĽS-HZDS is the party of former Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar and it declares national conservative political ideas. In European Parliament they belong to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

80. SMK is a coalition of three parties representing the interests of the Hungarian minority, Christian democracy and liberal conservatism. In the European Parliament they belong to the European People's Party.

81. SDKÚ-DS is a liberal conservative and Christian democratic party. In the European Parliament they sit together with European People's Party.

82. KDH is a Christian democratic and social conservative party and they belong to the European People's Party in the European Parliament.

and in their not needing to account for their statements in the parliament. Discourse analysis—as well as any attempt to delineate prevalent ideas in the law text and the debate—shows that the concept of nationalism is the main paradigm in the debate. The presence of nationalism is, so to speak, overdetermined by the material, by the clear construction of "we" and "them", by the clear subjugation of "them" to "us", by nationalist rhetoric, policies, and historiographies, and finally, by the asymmetry of composition of the National Council.

The law makes a strong claim that the Slovak language represents the state-forming nation. Therefore, it should be the universal means of communication. Nationalism, with some qualifiers, also appears to be the dominant paradigm in approaching the language "question", which is taken to be one instance of Slovak nationalism. For instance, Nedelsky argued that the prior existence of an ethnic understanding of nation in Slovakia—the political-cultural roots of such an idea (Nedelsky 2009, 12)—causally explains the rise of political institutions, especially the language law (ibid., 205). Hence, the idea that the "ethnic nation (rather than the citizenry) should be the exclusive source of state sovereignty" (ibid., 17). Nedelsky's position is that the political implementation of nationalist policies in Slovakia is inherent in the politico-cultural idea of ethnic nationhood. Nationalism is much more than an instrument used to camouflage shady economic deals. Many other commentators were more willing to emphasise the situational factors of nationalism in Slovakia at the expense of the deep-rooted cultural factors (e.g. Harris 2002, 20). Somewhere in between Nedelsky's historical and Harris' situational view of nationalism is Deegan-Krause's argument that Slovakia's political elite mobilised many different types of nationalism into a nationalist political programme (Deegan-Krause 2004). A similar perspective can be found in Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová (2008), who argue that since 2006, Slovak politics has been dominated by parties that use populist and nationalist arguments. Strážay (2009), too, argues that nationalism has proved a useful mobilising tool for political parties. In this literature, the Hungarian minority often appears as a central situational factor behind nationalism.

Recent Slovak scholarship has been critical towards the way nationalism has been used to explain or seek to understand Slovak politics. These studies adopt a constructivist perspective drawing heavily on Brubaker (1996; 2004). Their purpose is to uncover the processes of constructing nationalism in Slovakia. One could mention here Andrej Findor's study on nationalist depictions in school books (2011), Adam Hudek's study of different constructions of nationhood in Slovakia (2009), and Laszlo Vörös' critique of the use of the concept "nation" in Slovak historiography (2010). These studies have abandoned an ontological understanding of nationalism. They explicitly focus on its different uses. However, even when understood as something dynamic, the very concept of nationalism directs attention to majority-

minority relations and the processes by which certain segments of society are included and others excluded. This logic legitimates the collapse of conflicting arguments like the promotion of the state language and the integration through universal means of communication into one category, that of the conflict over rights between the majority and minority.

Nedelsky's analysis of the 1995 language law is a good example of this type of logic. She identified four lines of argumentation used to support the state language law in 1995. The first was the ethnic principle. This held that since the Slovak language is an expression of state sovereignty, it should have precedence over other languages. The second concerned alleged Hungarian irredentism, something that would, it was argued, aggravate with increasing linguistic diversity. The third concerned the benefits of a unified language that would enable easy communication between all segments of society. The fourth concerned the potential of the Slovak language, as a neutral marker of all citizens of Slovakia, to provide (national) integrity (Nedelsky 2009, 207-208). She notes a tension between the first and last pair of arguments. The first two stem from an ethnic understanding of nationhood; the last two from a more civic understanding of community. She argues that "there is a tension between these two visions, with the first undercutting the second's attractiveness or acceptability to minorities." (Nedelsky 2009, 208). Thus, the two different dynamics in the debate can be placed on the single continuum of minority versus majority.

Another example worth mentioning is Zsuzsa Csergo's *Talk of the Nation* (2007), a book that explores the language questions in Slovakia and Romania in relation to democratisation of the two countries. Her starting point is that in Central and East Europe, the idea of popular sovereignty deriving from the people was readily re-interpreted as implying the national sovereignty of the nation (Csergo 2007, 24). Both Romania and Slovakia have a substantial Hungarian minority. This makes it interesting to compare the two in terms of how democracy can "resolve conflicts over cultural difference" (ibid., 2). Cultural difference understood in terms of language (ibid., 5) leads the analysis to focus on majority and minority articulations in favour of their respective language rights and, consequently, over the territory (ibid., 25). After these moves, it proves to be difficult to step outside the majority-minority dynamics: Csergo concludes that "ultimately, the language debates explored in this study revolved around the question of who has the right to the institutions that guarantee cultural reproduction on nationally defined territories." (Csergo 2007, 191).

Nedelsky's perception of the main dynamics being created in the relation between the majority and the minority allows her to avoid focusing on the debate *as such,* that is, as a specimen of Slovak politics rather than on the debate as a case of majority-minority conflict. The superimposition of the nationalist paradigm of majority-minority conflict upon the debate precludes

considering the possibility that oppositional arguments to have a constitutive impact on each other. In other words, thinking of arguments—discourses, ideas, speech acts—as representing a certain content misses the dialogic aspect of language, that of the function they acquire by dint of their sequential position. Meanwhile, Csergo's preoccupation with minority rights as a measure of democracy leads her to overlook the dynamics that takes place within the majority community. This becomes evident in her discussion of differences within the majority community. These are all assessed solely in regard to their degree of inclusion or exclusion of the minority language (e.g. 2007, 135-145).

Nationalism as a paradigm of studying Slovak politics, I argue, is limited in its fixation on the ontological conflict between the majority and minority. This fixation reduces all aspects of politics to either-or positions. It would be more productive to see how majority-minority dynamics reproduce themselves in politics, and how this reproduction simultaneously acquires dynamics of its own. Because of this, the dynamics provide outcomes that cannot be reduced to the "original" juxtaposition between the majority and minority or their respective discursive constructions.

I have argued that nationalism proves to be problematic when used as an overall framework for the analysis of the Slovak state language debate primarily because it seems to ignore the interactive dimension of group dynamics. In addition, there are three concrete points in the 2009 amendment that make nationalism as a framework of explanation problematic. The first is that the amendment explicitly recognises the Czech language as comparable to the state language. Given the history of the Slovak (state) language debate, this marks an important change. The Czech language is not seen as the primary "other" against which the identity of the Slovak language was created. On the other hand, this may also mark the fact that most "nationalist" tensions now take place vis-à-vis Hungary and Hungarian speakers rather than in relation to the Czech Republic and the Czechs.

The second problematic aspect is that the law does not mean an outright denial of other languages; rather it attempts to impose the parallelism of the state language and any other language. There are still Hungarian language schools at primary and secondary level and Hungarian is also used at the Selye János University in Komárno.

The third problem concerns the integrative aspects the state language law. One could argue that its integrative measures are only a part of a political game to appear tolerant, perhaps in response to the criticism from the OSCE.[83] In concrete terms, the 2009 Justification declares that the state lan-

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83. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek received a Slovak delegation on July 21st, 2009 and a Hungarian delegation on the following day. On 22nd July, the High Commissioner published his opinion on the law. Although detailed in critical, the

guage law is a part of the state's general cultural politics meant to develop the Slovak language as a "spiritual element of national heritage" (Dôvodová správa 2009). The Principles of interpretation that were drafted after the law was passed by the National Council and after OSCE had voiced its doubts argues that the Slovak constitution is the main framework for interpretation the language law. The Principles emphasise that "the legitimate purpose of all the provisions of the State Language Act is solely to protect and support the state language in official communication and to protect the right of citizens of the Slovak Republic using the state language to receive and provide information in the state language without restriction" (Zásady 2009). The Principles further name all legislation pertaining to the use of minority languages as a *lex specialis* that takes precedence over the more general State Language Act.

The Principles was the government's response to international criticism of the vagueness of the law. It provided some clarifications, for instance it *names* all the public authorities the that Act refers to as "public contact" (verejný styk). However, the Principles is not legally binding. It thus creates only more confusion. Wardyn and Fiala conclude that the intention behind the law—even after the composition of the Principles—is the persecution of minority language speakers (2009, 158). All this seems clear if seen from the perspective of nationalism. However, even at the semantic level the differences between the Justification and the Act, on the one hand, and the Principles on the other are big enough to raise the question whether the Act is really about majority aggression against a minority, or about in-group and out-group dynamics.

The Justification and the Act focus on the relationship between the state, or rather, just the Ministry of Culture, and the Slovak language. The Principles has brought the individual citizen with rights into this relationship, and the needs of the individual form the main objective of the Principles. This brings in the tension between the state and a community delineated by language, versus the state and the individual political subject. In other words, the Justification and the Act address the political community but the Prin-

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opinion concludes with the statement that "As to the specific content of the amendments, most of these are in compliance with international standards and appear to be compatible with the commitments undertaken by Slovakia at the time of the ratification of the FCNM, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2001 and with the domestic constitutional framework." This statement, detached from its surrounding contexts, becomes very popular among Slovakian government parties. The main points what the High Commissioner addressed concerned the relationship between the State Language Act and its practical consequences to the actual use of minority language in Slovakia, the vagueness of terminology used in the Act and the lack of transparency and conflicting paragraphs. (OSCE Opinion 2009, 10, available at http://www.pitt.edu/~votruba/sstopics/slovaklawsonlanguage/ OSCE_on_Slovak_Law_on_Langauge_2009.pdf (sic!), accessed 5 Oct, 2013). The Principles, especially, attempts to bring conceptual clarity to the law.

ciples concerns the political individual. This developing, or emerging, relationship between the state and the individual is not captured within the framework of nationalism, where the focus is on the dynamics between the majority and minority.

The following analysis will reveal how conflicting arguments, those emphasising the primacy of the state language and those claiming its universality, in practice collide in the parliamentary debate and what outcomes this clash may have. As will appear, neither the ideas nor the discourses behind the arguments "reveal themselves" or steer the debate. Rather, attention must be paid to how utterances enter into a dialogic relation with one another. This way of studying the debate will reveal hitherto hidden dynamics.

## Debating Language

*First Reading, Monday, April 15th, 2009.*
Minister Marek Maďarič as the Sponsor of the government proposition introduces the draft law to the National Council. He highlights certain points mentioned also in the justification. The first is the need to make sure that the state language law is observed in social practice:

> Vážené dámy poslankyne, vážení páni poslanci, ministerstvo kultúry pristúpilo k novele zákona o štátnom jazyku najmä preto, aby zákon, ktorý tu máme od roku 1995, nebol len formálnou deklaráciou o ochrane štátneho jazyka, ale aby bol tým, čím má byť, to znamená fungujúcou právnou normou, ktorá sa reálne uplatňuje v spoločenskej praxi. [--] (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99)

> Respected lady representatives, respected Mr representatives, the Ministry of Culture embarked on a new law on the state language above all so that the law which we have from year 1995, was not just a formal declaration protecting the state language but does what it is supposed to, that is to be a functioning legal norm which truly applies in social practice. [--] (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99)

He then draws attention to the Ministry's incapacity to act in the field of language law. He connects this to the law regulating the use of minority languages:

> Slovenský jazyk ako jeden z úradných jazykov Európskej únie má v Slovenskej republike postavenie štátneho jazyka a ako taký si vyžaduje účinnú právnu ochranu. Vieme, že zákon o štátnom jazyku v súčasnom znení neumožňuje ministerstvu kultúry v dostatočnej miere plniť štátom zverenú úlohu na úseku starostlivosti o štátny jazyk. [--] Z tohto dôvodu dôležitým bodom novelizácie zákona o štátnom jazyku bolo znovuza-

vedenie sankčných opatrení, ktoré sa zo zákona o štátnom jazyku vypustili po prijatí zákona č. 184/1999 Z. z. o používaní jazykov národnostných menšín. [--] (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99-100)

The Slovak language as one of the official (úradný) languages of the European Union has in Slovakia the position of the state language and as such requires effective legal protection. We know that the law on the state language in its current wording does not enable the Ministry of Culture in a sufficient manner to fill the task entrusted [it] of nurturing the state language. [--]. For this reason an important point in updating the law on the state language was the reintroduction of sanctions that were eliminated after the acceptance of the law No. 184/1999 concerning the use of language of nationality minorities. (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99-100)

The third point he makes introduces the main novelty of the new law, the *de facto* recognition of the Czech language:

Upravilo sa používanie českého jazyka v úradnom styku, ktoré doteraz v podstate nijaká právna norma neumožňovala v takom rozsahu, ako sa navrhuje v predloženej novele. [--] (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 100)

The law amends the use of the Czech language in the official contact (v úradnom styku), which has until now not been enabled by any legal provision to the extent that the current update does. [--] (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 100)

The speaker's last point reconnects the law to the capacity of the state to act in the field of language policy:

Dámy a páni, zákon o štátnom jazyku v znení predloženej novely môže prispieť k účinnejšiemu výkonu štátneho dohľadu nad uplatňovaním zákona, pričom súčasne utvára priestor aj na uplatnenie iných jazykov vrátane menšinových v súlade s požiadavkami spoločenskej praxe. Ďakujem. (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 101)

Ladies and gentlemen, the law on the state language in the new wording can contribute to a more effective implementation of the task of the state of supervising the law whilst at the same time also preparing the ground for the use of other languages including the minority [languages] in accordance with the requirements of social practice. Thank you. (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 101)

Maďarič places heavy emphasis on the task of the Ministry of Culture in the field of language, citing its inadequate means to act in this field and the conflicting roles of the state language and minority languages. He argues that

Ministry's lack of means for efficient supervision has resulted in "conscious ignorance" of the state language law (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 100). The digression from this trend is the recognition of the Czech language. This marks a change in perception: the Czech language is not seen as as the primary challenger to the identity of the Slovak language. Finally, one should note that Maďarič bases his arguments for the amendment on the contemporary social and political situation rather than from history.

The second speaker is the Rapporteur Magdaléna Vášáryová. Her role in this context is to check the procedural legality of the proposed draft law, which she approves. Only one person has signed up for the public debate: Ágnes Biró from the Hungarian minority party. More people announces their willingness to talk during Biró's speech. There is no limit to the duration of planned speeches and consequently Biró takes the opportunity to speak. Her entry into the debate is very different from Maďarič's. She addresses the language law from a more philosophical point of view:

> Vážený pán predsedajúci, vážený pán minister, milí kolegovia, kolegyne, hovorí sa, že nie náš jazyk je taký ako my. Ale my sme takí ako náš jazyk. Jazyk je vzácnou duchovnou hodnotou kultúrneho dedičstva, ktorý sa cibril po stáročia, v ňom sa nachádza všetko to, čo formuje každého z nás ako človeka, to, čím sme. Naše myšlienky do-stávajú konkrétnu podobu prostredníctvom jazyka, v maďarskom ja-zyku, alebo u nás sa hovorí aj to, že jazykom sa zrodil a v jazyku, vo svojom jazyku žije každý národ.
>
> Preto je dôležité, aby si človek ctil a vážil svoj materinský jazyk, a ak si ho ctí, je schopný podobnou úctou pristupovať k jazyku iných národov. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103)

> Respected Mr Spokesperson, respected Mr Minister, dear colleagues (m.), colleagues (f.), it is said that it is not our language that is like us. But that we are like our language is. Language is precious spiritual value of cultural heritage refined over ages, in it one finds all that which forms each one of us as a human being, that which we are. Our thoughts acquire concrete form through the means of language, in the Hungarian language, or as we say too, that one is born with a language and in their language lives each nation.
>
> For this reason it is important that a person honours and cherishes one's mother tongue and as one honours it, one is capable of approach-ing the languages of other nations in a similar way. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103)

Having acknowledged the importance of language to the individual and nation, she scrutinises how the government proposal extends the reach of the state language:

Logika celého článku 6 napovedá, že pod štátnym jazykom by sme mali rozumieť všeobecný prostriedok komunikácie v úradnom styku, teda ten jazyk, ktorý sa obyčajne nazýva jazyk úradný. [--] Zákon o štátnom jazyku totiž rozširuje pôsobnosť pojmu štátny jazyk na de facto všetky oblasti verejného styku. Dokonca novým odsekom 5 § 1 rozširuje pôsobnosť zákona okrem štátnych orgánov a orgánov územnej samosprávy aj na, a citujem, „iné orgány verejnej správy, právnické osoby, fyzické osoby—podnikateľov a čo je nové, fyzické osoby v rozsahu a za podmienok ustanovených týmto zákonom". Potiaľ citát z novely. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 104-105)

The logic of the whole article 6 suggests that the state language should be understood as a universal means of communication in official contacts [v úradnom styku], so this language would normally be called an official language. [--] The law on the state language actually broadens the authority of the concept of the state language *de facto* to all areas of public contact [verejný styk]. Even the new Article 5 point 1 extends the authority of the law from the state organs and organs of local administration also to, I quote, "other organs of domestic affairs, legal persons, natural persons—to entrepreneurs and what is new, natural persons to the extent legislated in this law". End of quote from the amendment. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 104-105)

Like Maďarič, Biró draws the connection between the state language and the minority languages:

Keď si to porovnáme s obmedzením, ktoré platí v používaní menšinových jazykov na Slovensku, vidíme zjavný nepomer. Slovenská republika sa hlási k tomu, že národnostné práva ako ľudské práva sú práva individuálne a ako také sú neodcudziteľné, nedeliteľné a neodňateľné. [--]
   Pričom opakujem, východisková axióma ľudsko-právnej politiky Slovenskej republiky je téza, že ľudské práva vrátane práv národnostných sú právami individuálnymi.[--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 105-106)

When we compare this with the limitations that concern the use of minority languages in Slovakia, we see a clear imbalance. The Slovak Republic recognises that *nationality* rights as human rights are individual rights and as such are unalienable, indivisible and inalienable. [--]
   So I repeat, the initial axiom of human-rights politics of the Slovak Republic is the thesis that human rights including the rights of *nationalities* are individual rights. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 105-106)

Much of Biró's talk in fact concerns the asymmetrical relationship between the state language and other languages:

Náš zákon o štátnom jazyku výslovne stanovuje, že slovenský jazyk má prednosť pred ostatnými jazykmi používanými na území štátu, pričom to zdôvodňuje tým, že Slováci sú jediným štátotvorným subjektom Slovenskej republiky. [--]

Štátne orgány si považujú za povinnosť informovať verejnosť v angličtine, pozri webové stránky. Chcete si zakúpiť lístok v automate na stanici? Môžete to urobiť. V španielčine, v taliančine, ruštine. Chcete si vybrať peniaze z automatu? Môžete to urobiť vo francúzštine. No nie v maďarčine či inom jazyku domovskej menšiny. Turisti sú zrejme pre tento štát dôležitejší ako vlastní občania. Štát si dokonca vyhradzuje právo nepoužívať jazyky 15 % svojich, zdôrazňujem, svojich občanov, ale svojim 15 % občanov stanovuje povinnosť hovoriť v štátnom jazyku. Nie štát je tu pre občanov, ale občania pre štát. Slovenský zákonodarca sa správa k slovenskému jazyku, ako keby bol menšinový jazyk, ktorý je ešte navyše aj v ohrození. [--] Naozaj si slovenská politická elita tak málo dôveruje, že si v 21. storočí potrebuje chrániť svoj jazyk podľa vzoru Charty menšinových jazykov? [--] Štát stale nechápe, že jeho úlohou nie je ľudské práva dávať či rozdávať. Jeho úlohou je ľudské práva garantovať. Verte mi, ako bývalá štátna tajomníčka ministerstva kultúry i ako občianka Slovenskej republiky si ctím a vážim slovenský jazyk, ctím a vážim slovenskú kultúru. Rovnaký vzťah k týmto základným hodnotám slovenského národa majú aj moji kolegovia a drvivá väčšina Maďarov žijúcich na Slovensku. Naozaj nemajú žiadny problém s tým, ak si slovenský národ chce chrániť svoj jazyk a pestovať a rozvíjať svoju kultúru. Želajú si však, aby štát rovnako rešpektoval aj ich jazyk a ich kultúru a aby ich rešpektoval aj ako ľudské bytosti. (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 107-111)

Our law on the state language clearly state that the Slovak language has precedence over other languages used on the territory of the state, at the same time giving rise [to the fact] that the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak Republic. (p.107) [--]

State organs are obliged to inform the public in English, see the web-sites. If you want to buy a ticket from the machine at the station? You can do that. In Spanish, in Italian, in Russian. Do you want to withdraw money? You can do that in French. But not in Hungarian or any other language of local minorities. Tourists are clearly more important to this state than its own citizens. The state even reserves that right not to use the languages of 15 % of its, I emphasise, of its citizens, but for its 15 % of citizens it lays down the obligation to speak the state language. Not the state is here for the citizens, but the citizens are for the state. Slovak legislators act towards the Slovak language as if it was a minority lan-guage that is even in danger. (p.110) [--] Really does the Slovak politic-al elite have so little confidence that in the 21st century it needs to safe-guard its language under the example of the Charter for minority languages? (p. 111) [--] The state still does not understand that its task

is not to hand out human rights. Its task is to guarantee human rights. Believe me, as a previous secretary of the Ministry of Culture and as a citizen of the Slovak Republic, I honour and appreciate the Slovak language. My colleagues have a similar relation to those fundamental values of the Slovak *nation* as do the overwhelming majority of Hungarians living in Slovakia. Really [they] have no problem with that the Slovak *nation* wants to safeguard its language and cultivate and develop its culture. [They] wish, however, that the state would in equal manner also respect their language and their culture as they do and also their human existence. [--] (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 107-111)

Whilst Maďarič's speech began and ended with the concern that the state be granted the capacity to act in the field of language, Biró's speech begins and ends with a call for mutual respect between the Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority. To some extent, these points broadly summarise their differences. Maďarič's opening is legalistic and focused on the contemporary situation. Biró, in contrast, makes numerous turns in her speech that reveal how her speech is impregnated with historical references that extend far beyond the debate on the state language law. One is the incongruence in the use of terms nation (národ) and nationality (národnosť). They are italicised in the above quote. In the beginning of her speech Biró argues that language lives in the nation (národ). Similarly, in the end as she puts it that language is an important value of the Slovak nation, and that she understands that the Slovak nation wants to safeguard it. In these cases, the nation refers both to the body of people and to a political state. In the middle of her speech when she addresses the rights of the people belonging to minorities she uses the term nationality (národnosť). The referent of nationality includes the people, but not their political representation. In the end of her speech when she refers to the Hungarians again and argues that they as a community respect Slovakia she abstains from using either term, nation or nationality. This usage places the term nationality in the legalistic context, but also in the context of individual rights. As Biró puts it: "the Slovak Republic recognises that nationality rights as human rights are individual rights" (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 106).

The main opposition in her speech occurs between the preferential treatment of the state-forming subject, the Slovaks, and the minorities, those "nationalities" (národnosť). At least for Biró, there appears to be a hierarchy of rights: the state-forming subject, the Slovak nation (národ), enjoys qualitatively different rights than do those with individually sanctioned rights, the human rights, of nationalities. The difference between nation and nationality as Biró uses the terms emerges in the type of rights respective groups can have. The nation is entitled to a state and collective rights, whilst the nationalities are entitled to individual human rights.[84]

The difference between individually held minority (nationalities) rights and collectively espoused national rights that Biró makes helps us understand

many of the other juxtapositions she brings up. One example is the comparison between the official (úradný) and state (štátny). Biró distinguishes between the state organs in which the language should be called official (úradný) and the territory of the state and argues that the language should be called official as it pertains to the state. If we recall Maďarič's reasoning in the beginning of the debate, he had argued that the Slovak language, as one of the official (úradný) languages of the European Union was entitled to be the state (štátný) language in Slovakia. In Maďarič's case, the translation of an official (úradný) EU language into a state (štátný) language in Slovakia is possible because Slovakia comprises a territorially bound nation state. Biró's argument that the language law—as it refers to the state institutions—ought to be "official" (úradný) rather than "state" (štátný). This marks her criticism of the coupling of the territorially marked state, and the nation. The reason is obvious: the state language marks the exclusivity of a certain nation (národ) to the state. The official (úradný) does not have similar power to exclude other nationalities, such as the Hungarians. The state (štátný) rather than the official (úradný) demarcates what belongs to the constituent elements of the state.

Understanding this reasoning can also clarify the seeming contradiction in Biró's argument, when she argues that the citizens exist for the state and that the task of the state is not to hand out human rights but to guarantee them. These are responses to Maďarič's argument that state powers in the field of language legislation should be increased. In essence, Biró is attempting to decouple the Slovak state and the Slovak language. I do not, however, think that Biró abandons the paradigm that the state should collectively recognise languages. She criticises the fact that minority rights are seen as "individual human rights". She seems to be advocating a multicultural conception of the state and nation that would recognise the Hungarian minority as an equal partner with the Slovak majority in the Slovak Republic.

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84. The distinction the Slovak language allows between "národ" (nation) and "národnosť" (nationality) is common to Slavonic languages. Grammatically the ending -osť only refers to an abstraction of the more concrete stem, here the concrete "nation" and its abstraction "nationality". For instance, in Polish, "naród" and "narodowość" refer to nation and nationhood respectively; the national museum in Polish is derived from "naród" but one's ethnic identity is best described as "narodowość". In Czech, národnost has two meanings, the abstraction of "národ", but also the indication that "národnost" is akin to a nation but not fully formed as one. The difference between the neighbouring languages and the Slovak usage is in the explicit connection to the political state of "národ" and the explicit non-connection to the political state, or rather denial of such a connection, of "národnosť". The reason for this can be found in the Hungarian language and minority politics during the 19th century. In the Habsburg Monarchy and later in the Hungarian Kingdom until the latter half of 19th century the political nation, *natio hungarica* was not connected with one's ethnicity (Vörös 2010, 128-130). It was possible to be a loyal member of the Hungarian nation ("nemzet", "národ") and cherish one's ethnic Slovak nationality ("nemzetiség", "národnosť"). This distinction worked well as long as the administrative language of the Habsburg Monarchy remained Latin until 1844, but it became much more difficult with the spread of Hungarian in the state administration.

This understanding also clarifies the beginning of her speech where she contemplated that "it is not our language that is like us. But that we are like our language is." (Bíró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103). This acknowledges what Maďarič had argued earlier that the state has to protect the language. However as a response to his speech, Bíró's expression acquires a force of an argument against the exclusivity of the Slovak language, as intended in the draft law.

Despite their differences, Bíró finishes her speech with the hope that it will open a discussion that addresses what she has said:

> Ak budete na moje vystúpenie reagovať, sústreďte sa na jeho vecnú stránku a neuchyľujte sa k ideologickej či urážlivej argumentácii. Ja dôverujem vo vašu galantnosť a kultúrnosť. Ďakujem vám za pozornosť. (Potlesk.) (Bíró, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103-111)

> As you will be reacting to my speech concentrate on its factual side and do not resort to ideological or insulting argumentation. I trust in you gallantry and culturedness. Thank you for your attention. (Applause.) (Bíró, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103-111)

To ask for gallantry and culturedness from the respondents indicates that Bíró acknowledges, talks-into-being, the politically controversial position she has presented. She does not expect her argument to stand on its own, but she addresses it to a certain audience and presents it as an answer to the past speeches (Maďarič's speech and the law proposition) and as a question to be addressed in future speeches. In other words, Bíró perceives her own speech as in a relationship with the past and future speeches. This is not all. She also indicates that she aims to change this contextualisation by appeals to gallantry and culturedness. We could further infer that her wording that she "trusts" in the gallantry and culturedness of the audience indicates how weak she perceives her own appeal to be. There is clear evidence that the speakers in the parliament, even when reading prewritten speeches, understand them as forming a dialogue. The speakers orient themselves to each other's speeches as if in a dialogue. We gain further evidence of this when we start looking at the responses Bíró's speech receives.

According to the rules of parliamentary debate, the other deputies may raise a factual remark (faktická poznámka) after each scheduled speech. Altogether ten did. The genre of the factual remark is to address the previous speech and pose a factual question or make an observation. All but one of the speakers started by orienting themselves to Bíró's request for gallantry, culturedness and scientific content. In doing so, they not only oriented to Bíró's speech, but also to factual remarks made before them. This may sound like a minor detail, but such openings indicate to whom the members of the parliament are speaking and what is the sequential context of their

talk. The sequential context is not only, as dictated by the genre of factual remark, the previous speech (here Biró's) but also the preceding factual remarks. Let us view an example.

Deputy Jana Vaľová raised the first factual remark:

> Ďakujem veľmi pekne. Vážená kolegyňa, vy ste snáď možno boli galantná, ale určite ideologická. [--]
>    A budem vecná. [--] (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114)

> Thank you so much. Respected colleague (f.), you may perhaps have been gallant, but certainly also ideological. [--]
>    And I shall be concrete. [--] (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114)

And Rafael Rafaj after Vaľová continues:

> Ďakujem, ja budem pokračovať v trende. Takisto budem galantný, pretože pokúsim sa byť v dvoch minútach vecný. [--] (Rafaj, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

> Thank you, I shall continue with the trend. I shall also be gallant as much as I try to be factual in two minutes. (Rafaj, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

Two observations are in order here. First, at the structural level of language, Rafaj's "I shall also be" ("Takisto budem") indicates that he is referring *both* to Biró and Vaľová, but that he is building his utterance on the grounds of Vaľová's speech. In this way, he acts upon the understanding that Vaľová's response to Biró has altered the sequence of talk so that in order to respond to Biró, he must take into account what Vaľová has already said. All this we can see from the sequential structuring in talk. Parliamentary talk, like ordinary talk, is composed of turn-taking in which one turn grounds the second that grounds the third... In order to reach back to the first turn, one has to follow the chain backwards, for the first turn no longer exists independently of its interpretation, as presented in the subsequent turns.

The second observation is that Biró provided the subsequent speakers with two categories of content: factual or concrete, and ideological. She also provided them with two modes of talk, gallant or cultured, and ideological or insulting. These categories are used to restructure the content of Biró's talk as ideological, which in turn is contrasted with the factual supposedly presented in their own remark.

Vaľová's speech first defines what she finds ideological in Biró's speech:

> …vy ste snáď možno boli galantná, ale určite ideologická. Zákon o štátnom jazyku myslím, že nie je namieraný voči nikomu a určite nie

proti menšinám a myslím si, že garantuje ľudské práva nielen
menšinám, ale aj väčšine slovenských občanov, ktorí hovoria po
slovensky. (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114)

…you may perhaps have been gallant, but certainly also ideological.
The law on the state language, I think is not directed against anyone,
and really not against the minorities and I think it guarantees human
rights not only to the minorities but also the majority of Slovak citizens
who speak Slovak. (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35/114)

After which Vaľova's factual content follows:

A budem vecná. Spomenuli ste trikrát vo svojom prejave sociálny život,
sociálne služby a nemocnice. [--] Myslíte si, že by to nebolo diskrimin-
ačné voči tým ľuďom, ktorí by si mali hľadať prácu, voči tým, ktorí
vedia iba slovenský jazyk? Pretože myslím si, že to nie je povinnosť,
ale je to vážna vec, aby občan Slovenskej republiky ovládal slovenčinu
a mal by ju vedieť ovládať. (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114)

And I shall be concrete. You mentioned three times in your talk social
life, social services and hospitals. [--] Do you think it is not discrimina-
tion of those people who are looking for a job, against those who can
only speak Slovak. Therefore I think that it is not an obligation, but it is
important, that a citizen of the Slovak republic speak Slovak and should
know the language. (Vaľová, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114)

Vaľová interprets Biró's speech as presenting an ideological interpretation of
the state language law, that is, presenting it as directed against minorities.
Vaľová argues that the state language law, in fact, guarantees human rights
not only to minorities but to the Slovak-speaking majority, as well. Her
statement implies that the majority's human rights are infringed by the cur-
rent legal situation. In opposition to Biró's plea that the personnel in social
services in minority areas be able to speak minority languages, Vaľová sug-
gests that any knowledge of minority language discriminates against the
monolingual Slovak majority. She emphasises that the state language law
does not oblige people to speak Slovak, but reflects the social importance of
speaking Slovak.

The content of Vaľová's speech is no more "concrete" or "factual" than
Biró's; it can claim concreteness thanks to it being an answer to Biró's re-
quest (that asked for concreteness). The focus on sequentiality allows us to
see the dynamics of debate that makes responses dependent on the preceding
questions and therefore drawing on the categories presented earlier.

Rafael Rafaj's factual remark follows a similar structure starting with ex-
plicating what is "ideological" in Biró's speech:

...pretože pokúsim sa byť v dvoch minútach vecný.

    Pani poslankyňa, nemali ste pravdu, keď ste hovorili, že vo Francúzsku reagujú iba na módny trend zavádzania anglických názvov, pretože Francúzska akadémia bola založená už v roku 1635 kardinálom Richelieu a bola založená s cieľom dohliadať na čistotu francúzskeho jazyka... Hovorme teda o jazykovej politike. [--] (Rafaj 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

... as I try to be factual in two minutes.

    Ms deputy, you were wrong when you said that in France they react only to a fashionable trend of introducing English words because the Academy of France was founded already in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu and it was founded with the aim to oversee the purity of the French language... In this case we talk about language policy. [--] (Rafaj 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

This is followed by a promise of a more elaborate and factual explanation of why multiculturalism, referring, here, to the use of the Hungarian language, is to be held in contempt.

Ja sa to pokúsim, samozrejme, bližšie a hlbšie rozviesť vo svojom vystúpení, ktorým sa chystám presvedčiť vás, že multikulturaliz-mus, o ktorom hovorite, je ako multivitamínový džús. Máte tam strašne veľa ovocia, ale neviete, aké pijete. (Rafaj 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

I shall try, naturally, in more detail and depth develop in my coming speech with which I try to convince you that multiculturalism that you talk about is like a multivitamin juice. You have there awfully many fruits but do not know what you drink. (Rafaj 15 Apr 2009, 35, 115)

Rafaj sees Biró's pleading that the state language law should be seen in the context of the 21st century as ideological. How did Biró come to argue that? She took a sequence of steps. She first reviewed a number of contemporary language laws—those of the Baltic states, Slovenia, France, and Finland. She argued that none of the above laws addresses situations that are comparable to those of Slovakia. In the Baltic states, the unsettled relations between the Russian and the titular nation might justify a more restricted law; in Slovenia, Italian and Hungarian minorities are recognised as state-forming subjects; and in France, the language law is intended mainly to safeguard French against anglicisms (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 105-106). The only comparable case Biró finds is the historical example of the Hungarian language law of 1898. This is the only time that Biró is interrupted during her speech and the Spokesperson of the parliament had to call order. This indicates how controversial her comparison is. Like Vaľová above, so does Rafaj avoid en-

gaging with the concrete points Biró makes. It is enough for him to indicate that these points are "ideological". The factual advanced by Rafaj acquires its "factuality" against the ideological. In Rafaj's speech, it concerns the fact that France has been exercising a conscious language policy since Cardinal Richelieu (who established the Academy of France). The French language policy is not bound by the contemporary situation, but it is result of a long historical process and therefore inseparable from the historical precedents in the field of (the French) language.

The third factual remark is delivered by Katarína Tóthová. She does not use the terms "ideological" and "factual", for they are already clearly established and her speech immediately defines these facets of Biró's speech:

> [--] Ale navyše ste prezentovali aj apeláciu na kresťanstvo.
> Pani poslankyňa, čo je na tom nekresťanské, že štátny jazyk je prejavom suverenity štátu, lebo túto súvislosť ste dali vo vystúpení za sebou. Myslíte si, že štát má existovať bez štátneho jazyka? Ja si myslím, že nie. Máme na to v Európe a vo svete veľa dôkazov, že štátny jazyk je právom zakotvený. (Tóthová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

> [--] But you also made an appeal to Christianity.
> Ms deputy, what is not Christian in that the state language is an expression of state sovereignty because this relationship you gave in your previous speech. Do you think that a state should exist without a state language? I think not. We have in Europe and in the world a lot of evidence that state language is legally anchored in law. (Tóthová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

Biró, in fact, had referred to Christianity in her speech. She argued that no law is needed for those with Christian good will to understand. However, she continued, such good will cannot be sanctioned by a law that prescribes the medium of understanding as the Slovak language only. The "ideological" in Biró, according to Tóthová, is her presumption that the Slovak majority or the state would somehow benefit from the state language law at the expense of the Hungarian minority. Again, Tóthová does not address this point, but only indicates that this is ideological, and contrasts it with the factual: "We have in Europe and in the world a lot of evidence that state language is anchored in law". She further presents her evidence and uses it to show what is "wrong" with Biró's "ideological" interpretation:

> Ďalej. Čo je na tom zlé, že na území Slovenska je štátotvorný slovenský národ. Veď aj maďarský národ je štátotvorný, ale na území Maďarskej republiky. Čiže to má svoju logiku a má to svoju, aj keď chcete určitú reciprocitu. (Tóthová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

Further. What is wrong in that on the territory of Slovakia, the Slovak nation is state-forming. After all, the Hungarian nation is state-forming, but on the territory of the Hungarian Republic. So it has its own logic, even if you want, a certain reciprocity. (Tóthová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

It is the sequential position of Tóthová's speech, its response to Biró's categories of ideological and factual, that enables her opinion "I think not" to acquire the authority of factual evidence.

We have seen how sequentiality enables the speakers to refer to the previous speakers and build their utterances on the basis of the properties of previous utterances. No utterance in this debate stands on its own. What kind of evidence, for instance, does Tóthová provide? Her opinion becomes evidence only in contrast to what Biró has said: by building a juxtaposition between Biró's talk and her own, Tóthová's argument is also structured along the categories of ideological and factual; Biró's is ideological and therefore Tóthová's is factual.

The speakers, have, however, done much more than just indicated each in turn how Biró's understanding of the law is "ideological". They have also introduced new contextualisations of the law. Vaľová introduced the context of discrimination: "Do you think it is not discrimination of those people who are looking for a job, against those who only speak Slovak?" (Vaľová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114). Rafaj introduced the context of language policy—the reasonable limits of state direction of the linguistic development of a territory. Tóthová introduced the context of nation-state. Each context occupies the category of "factual" as opposed to Biró's "ideological". These contexts, further, build upon each other. Vaľová's concern for the majority provides a ground for Rafaj's argument for the reasonability of the language policy when one takes into account the historical development of the Slovak language. These, in turn, provide a ground for Tóthová's presentation of the nation-state as something natural, desirable and inevitable. Tóthová, by approaching the language law as an element of the nation-state, can circumvent the social reality of linguistic multiplicity in Slovakia.

The fourth factual remark conveys two separate points both of which are crucial in the development of the debate. Dušan Jarjabek points out how the state language law contributes to individual safety:

[--] Ja sa dotknem len jednej veci. Kritizujete, že zdravotnícke dokumenty musia byť v štátnom jazyku. Ale keby nebolo tohto ustanovenia, ohrozujete zdravie tých, ktorí nebudú mať patričné dokumenty v slovenčine už len preto, že keď zmenia napríklad nemocnicu, ktorá je na južnom Slovensku, povedzme nemocnicu v Banskej Bystrici, v tej Banskej Bystrici, kto to bude prekladať, ako sa

dozvie lekár, aký je vlastne stav pacienta, keď tieto materiály nebudú v slovenčine? (Jarjabek 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

[--] I will touch upon only one concrete point. You criticise [the proposal] that health care documentation must be in the state language. But if this regulation were not there, you would threaten the safety of those [patients] who do not have appropriate documentation in Slovak only because if they change, for instance, hospitals, from one in the southern Slovakia, to say, to a hospital in Banska Bystrica, and in Banska Bystrica, who will translate and how will the doctor know what is the status of the patient if this information is not in Slovak. (Jarjabek 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

The second point concerns Biró's ability to speak Slovak:

No a celkom na záver jedna malá poznámka. Hovoríte veľmi pekne po slovensky. Skutočne veľmi pekne po slovensky a myslím si, že keby každý tak hovoril po slovensky a rozumel po slovensky ako vy, o žiadnom možno takomto zákone by sme nemuseli rokovať. Ďakujem za pozornosť. (Jarjabek 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

And in the end one small remark. You speak very beautiful Slovak. Indeed very beautiful Slovak, and I think that if all would speak such beautiful Slovak and understand Slovak as you do, there would be no need to debate this kind of law. Thank you for your attention. (Jarjabek 15 Apr 2009, 35, 116)

These contextualisations rest upon what has gone before. For instance, Rafaj's language policy may sound discriminatory, but at a closer look, as Jarjabek points out, it in fact serves to protect the weakest in Slovakia. In this way, a language policy that enables, even ascertains, universal communicability becomes as a service to all the citizens.

The second point Jarjabek makes tacitly questions the competence of the Hungarian minority to command the state language. In this context, his point disputes the extent to which the Hungarians are willing and capable of contributing to the general well-being of society.

Let us pause here, for the successive contextualisations of the state language law have led the debate quite far from its initiation by Minister Maďarič. Maďarič, as we recall, emphasised the need of the Ministry of Culture to nurture the state language, the capacity of the Ministry to do so, and the need to turn the law into observed social practice. From this exclusive state-centredness, the factual remarks—having appropriated Biró's categories of "ideological" and "factual"—have introduced a chain of successive factual contexts that have led to the view of the state language as a deliberate policy for securing the flow of information in society.

The following factual remark addresses more concretely Biró's "ideological" category. What is Biró indeed suggesting in her criticism of state language, asks Juraj Horváth:

> [--] A mám ešte jednu otázku. Pozorne som počúval váš prejav, kde ste veľmi explicitne hodnotili novelu, používali argumenty. Mám pocit, že niekde tak implicitne v tom vašom prejave zaznievalo miestami niečo, čo by som mohol nazvať návrhom alebo želaním, ktoré vyjadrujete, aby sa zaviedli pravidlá a podmienky pre rovnaké používanie slovenčiny a jazykov národnostných menšín na Slovensku, ktorých je tu viac.
>
> A moja otázka smeruje k tomu, či som dobre rozumel, že či navrhujete, či môžem tomu vášmu prejavu tak rozumieť, že navrhujete, aby sa uzákonili rovnaké podmienky a pravidlá pre slovenčinu a všetky ostatné jazyky národnostných menšín žijúcich na Slovensku? Alebo navrhujete bilingvizmus, teda len slovenčinu a maďarčinu, aby mali rovnaké postavenie s úpravou rovnakých pravidiel používania. Toto je niečo, čomu som celkom presne nerozumel, a teda poprosím vás, aby ste to spresnili. Ďakujem. (Horváth 15 Apr 2009, 35, 117)

> [--] I still have one question. I listened to your speech very carefully, as you explicitly evaluated the amendment, used arguments. I have a feeling that somewhere, implicitly in your speech, something echoes in places as something that could be called a proposal or a wish you express that there should be equal rules and conditions for the use of Slovak and languages of nationality minorities in Slovakia, which are many here.[85]
>
> And my question is directed to know, whether I understood correctly, that you propose, or we can understand your speech as proposing, to enact equal conditions and rules for Slovak and all other nationality minority languages living in Slovakia? Or do you propose bilingualism, that is only Slovak and Hungarian should have equal status and the same rights of usage. This is something that I did not fully understand and therefore I ask you to specify it. Thank you. (Horváth 15 Apr 2009, 35, 117)

For Horváth, Biró's criticism of the state language law already implies an alternative conception of language policy, namely that of giving equal rights to both Slovak and Hungarian languages. Horváth uses the contrast between a bilingual language policy and one that would treat all minority languages equally to challenge the fairness of a bilingual language policy that would leave out all other minorities.

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85. There are 12 recognised minority languages in Slovakia defined according to the ethnic community. They are the languages of the Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, German, Hungarian, Jewish, Moravian, Polish, Romani, Russian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities.

Ján Senko, in his turn, builds upon the acknowledgement of the linguistic multiplicity:

> Ďakujem. Pani poslankyňa, nikomu nechceme a ani nemienime ubližovať. Snažíme sa len racionálne uvažovať. Tiež si myslím, že stačí len dobrá vôľa. Keby tá dobrá vôľa bola, tak by asi zákon nebol potrebný. Na Slovensku žije väčšie množstvo národností. Je tu asi potrebná istá regulácia, ale regulácia v prospech ľudí. (Senko 15 Apr 2009, 35, 117)

> Thank you. Ms deputy, we do not want to, nor we intend to, hurt anyone. Let us only think rationally. I also think that a good will would suffice. If this good will existed, then perhaps this law would not be needed. In Slovakia there are many nationalities. Perhaps here certain regulation is needed, but regulation for the benefit of the people. (Senko 15 Apr 2009, 35, 117)

We realise how the factual comments are working out the distinction between the many different minority languages and the universal state language. The factual remarks have brought forth the view that those who oppose the state language law and argue for the rights of minorities in fact use the existence of other minorities as a pretext to promote only the Hungarian minority interests. This serves as a basis for the "neutral" and "factual" observation that "certain regulation is needed". Further, as Jarjabek argued in relation to hospitals, regulations are meant to ensure mutual understanding between all groups of society and thereby guarantee individual rights:

> Vo vašej argumentácii zaznievalo, že to nie je potrebné. Táto regulácia je v prospech garancie ľudských práv. To neznamená, že niekto z nás si neváži to, čo ste vy tu hovorili, kultúru niekoho iného. Kultúru, jazyk niektorého iného národa. Ja si myslím, že slovenský národ je dostatočne tolerantný a tolerantne sa aj k ostatným národnostiam, aj národom správa.
>     Používanie štátneho jazyka spoločne s jazykom národnostných menšín si myslím, že pomáha napĺňať jeden zo základných cieľov Charty o porozumení a vzájomnom zbližovaní medzi jazykovými skupinami žijúcimi v danej oblasti. (Senko 15 Apr 2009, 35, 118)

> In your argument, you voiced that this [regulation] is not needed. This regulation is beneficial for guaranteeing human rights. This does not mean that some of us do not consider what you have said here about cultures of other nations. I think that the Slovak nation is sufficiently tolerant and tolerant towards other nationalities also in national issues.
>     The use of the state language together with languages of nationality minorities, I think, helps in fulfilling one of the basic aims of the

Charter on understanding and rapprochement between linguistic groups living on a given territory. (Senko 15 Apr 2009, 35, 118)

Subsequent factual remarks made by Ľudomír Petrák and Anton Bobrík share Jarjabek's desire to secure a universal means of communication. Petrák argues that:

> Ale ak sa chceme dorozumieť na tomto našom spoločnom území, na ktorom žijeme, ak sa chceme pochopiť, tak sa musíme najskôr porozumieť. (Petrák 15 Apr 2009, 35, 120)

> But if we want to communicate on this common territory of ours where we live, if we want to get on, we first have to understand each other. (Petrák 15 Apr 2009, 35, 120)

And Bobrík continues to build upon both Biró's and Petrák's speeches:

> Tak ako to tu povedal kolega Petrák, jednoznačne tu nejde o obranu slovenského národa a jeho jazyka, ale tu ide o štátny jazyk, ktorý má byť univerzálny dorozumievací prostriedok medzi ľuďmi žijúcimi na Slovensku. A to je podstata. Myslím si, že v tomto je vaše pochybenie. A preto jazykový zákon vidím aj po vašom vystúpení, že je veľmi potrebný. Ďakujem. (Bobrík 15 Apr 2009, 35, 120-121)

> As colleague Petrák said, clearly this is not about defending the Slovak nation and its language, but about the state language that is to be a universal means of mutual understanding between people living in Slovakia. That is its essence. I think this is your mistake. And therefore a language law I understand even after your speech, is much needed. Thank you. (Bobrík 15 Apr 2009, 35, 120-121)

Bobrík, again, employs Biró's categories of "ideological" and "factual" to make his point that to see the law as concerning mutual understanding is the "factual" in the law. This does not, however, mean that the context of mutual understanding is the *only* correct way of seeing the state language law. The successive contexts introduced by the factual remarks are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually constitutive. Because of the non-discrimination of the majority (Vaľová), the need for long-durée planning in the field of language policy (Rafaj), the state-forming function of the Slovak nation in Slovakia (Tóthová), we arrive at Jarjabek, who sees only the state language as providing security for individuals. And why only in the state language? Horváth's remark that there are many linguistic minorities necessitates to single out *one* means of communication and thus legitimates a regulation of the state language (Senko). Petrák and Bobrík then pull the strings together by showing that the state language is "not about defending the Slovak nation

and its language, but about the state language that is to be a universal means of mutual understanding between people living in Slovakia" (Bobrík 15 Apr 2009, 35, 120).

The responses Biró received are all united in their interpretation of her speech as asking for some sort of collective representation for the Hungarian minority—and they can be summarised through Tóthová's and Horváth's observations that the Slovak nation is state-forming in Slovakia whilst the Hungarian nation is state-forming in Hungary (Tóthová) and that there are many minorities in addition to the Hungarian minority (Horváth).

These responding factual remarks do not merely provide a successive chain of contexts concerning the interpretation of the state language; they do so in an increasingly depoliticised manner. For Vaľová, speaker of the first factual remark, it was obvious that this law is to serve the majority community at the expense of the minorities. For Rafaj, similarly, state language is about politics, about steering the future development of the community that inhabits the territory of Slovakia. Tóthová places this in a broader context still, indicating that even if the Hungarians cannot be state-forming in Slovakia, they are nevertheless, state-forming in Hungary. From these openly political positions Jarjabek starts to depoliticise the state language. He does so by seeing it as an individual concern: the state language law is to serve the hospitalised, making their treatment safe. Horváth, in turn, elaborates the consequences of possible multilingualism in the context of *de facto* multilingual Slovakia—is Biró asking for a special treatment just for the Hungarian or for all minorities?—which politicises Biró's position. And Senko, Petrák and Bobrík finalise the depoliticisation of the law by defining it as concerning a universal means of communication—that is, with nothing to do with state capacity, cultural heritage, the promotion of the titular nation; its only purpose is to advance mutual understanding, in the interest of the individual citizen. This depoliticisation, naturally, does not erase the politics that has, in fact, underlain the state language all the way. But it does carve out a way of talking about it in a depoliticised manner that treats everyone absolutely in the same way and addresses no specific interests or values—only human needs.

However, the apparent depoliticisation, and the way it was achieved, carries serious implications to what remains truly political. The state language achieves a double bind, first by elevating the Slovak language as the state language, a language which delineates the proper community of the state, and, secondly by extending the state language's realm to include individual rights. On the one hand, there are those who belong to the community of the state language. On the other hand there are those who can *acquire* membership in the community by acquiring and using the state language language. However, we have seen that even Biró, whose command of Slovak is praised, does not qualify as a representative of "true" interests of the Slov-

aks. The context of political belonging has not been addressed openly so far, but the last factual remark, made by Biró's party colleague József Berényi, shows that this has been the underlying context of the debate:

> Ďakujem za slovo, pán predsedajúci. To, že prečo je tento zákon potrebný, povedala aj pani poslankyňa, ale povedali ste aj vy, ktorí ste sa vyjadrili v rozprave. Veď tu odzneli slová, že a keby každý rozprával tak pekne po slovensky ako ona, tak možno, že ten zákon by bol nepotrebný. Tým pádom je vlastne explicitne povedané, prečo je ten zákon potrebný. Len sa mýlite, kolegovia, pani poslankyňa bola v tejto veci pravdivá, že lojalita sa nerovná znalostiam slovenského jazyka. Človek, ktorý ovláda krásne slovenčinu, môže byť veľmi zákerným občanom istého štátu, a človek, ktorý neovláda možno až tak pekne slovenčinu, môže byť maximálne lojálnym občanom, takže si nemýľte lojalitu so znalosťami slovenského jazyka. Priamo to niekedy až tak veľmi nesúvisí. (Berényi 15 Apr 2009, 35, 121)

> Thank you for the word, Mr Spokesperson. Why this law is needed was mentioned also by Ms deputy [Biró], but also all of you who talk in the debate. Here words were used that mentioned that if all spoke as beautiful Slovak as she does, then this law would be unnecessary. This case actually explicitly says why this law is needed. Only that you are mistaken, colleagues, Ms deputy was right in this matter, that loyalty does not depend on the knowledge of the language. A person who speaks beautiful Slovak can be very treacherous citizen of the same state, and a person who does not know so much or such beautiful Slovak can be extremely loyal citizen, so do not confuse loyalty with the knowledge of the Slovak language. Clearly, they are not dependent on each other. (Berényi 15 Apr 2009, 35, 121)

The analysis shows that the state language debate brings together different conceptions of political inclusion. On the one hand, minister Maďarič, who espoused the idea that the state alone, or, just the Ministry of Culture, defines the political community exclusively on the basis of a state language for which the Ministry is responsible.

Biró, in contrast, calls for a political community that is composed of linguistically defined communities, including at least the Slovaks and the Hungarians. Her main criticism against Maďarič's conception has been the exclusivity of his definition of the (state-forming) nation that excludes the Hungarians.

From the clash of these two conceptions emerged a notion that individual rights should serve as the basis of the inclusion of nationalities, guaranteeing them access to politics whilst excluding them from the role of state-creation. In other words, the depoliticisation of the original political community delineated by the state language produces individually defined rights. This is an

ominous echo of Biró's early remark that the state still does not understand that its duty is to guarantee, not to hand out, rights. What this distinction involves exactly remains unclear at this stage of the debate. It shall be the focus of the analysis below.

After Berényi, Biró had two minutes to answer all the factual remarks. Here it suffices to mark that the time allocated was insufficient for her to sufficiently answer the remarks. Hers was the last speech on the first day of the debate on the state language law.

*First Reading, Tuesday, April 16th, 2009.*
According to the parliamentary regulations, members of parliament can sign up for speeches directly to the Speaker of the Parliament during the debate. It is with these speeches that the debate continued on the following day.

The second day of the first reading begins with Minister Maďarič speech. He directs his remarks mainly to Biró:

> Myslím si, dovolím si to povedať, že falošnosť vystúpenia pani poslankyne bola podčiarknutá tým, že kým Národná rada rokuje, rokovala včera, rokuje dnes o novelizácii zákona o štátnom jazyku, jej vystúpenie sa prevažne dotýkalo používania menšinových jazykov. (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 4)

> I think I am allowed to say that the falsity of the speech by the deputy (f.) was underlined by [the fact] that when the National Council debates, debated yesterday, debates today, on the amendment to the law on the state language, her speech mainly touched the use of minority languages. (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 4)

Maďarič's opening words, "I think I am allowed to say that the falsity..." not only initiates a response to Biró, but also constitutes a repair of Biró's speech.

The most common way of thinking what a repair accomplishes in conversation is that it builds a common ground after uncertainties have hindered the flow of the conversation. However, in a political context, repair can also be used to refute or replace posited common ground and appropriate and redefine the content of the speech of the previous turn. Here, Maďarič appropriates Biró's speech by indicating that it is false because Biró misunderstands the whole context of the debate. Maďarič repairs this by pointing out that "when the National Council debates, debated yesterday, debates today, on the amendment to the law on the state language, her [Biró] speech mainly touched the use of minority languages" (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 4).

This reveals the importance of the current conversational context in political debate. Biró's arguments on minority language, Maďarič argues, are logically irrelevant in the current debate on the amendment of the state lan-

guage. In contrast to his stance on the previous day, Maďarič now asserts that there is no link between the minority and state languages. The day before, he had argued that it was the minority language law that rendered the existing state language law toothless.

If approached solely in terms of political ideas and logic, Maďarič's position appears inconsistent—just as Biró's position seems irrelevant. However, when understood in the context of sequential talk, the separation of the state language from other languages in Slovakia is a logical outcome of the turns by previous speakers. In the factual remarks addressed to Biró, the state language gradually became an apolitical issue: it now ensured the apolitical good of mutual communication. Its general openness seems thus to make it apolitical. However, its political implications are obvious as soon as we ask why this universal communication was to take place in the Slovak language *only*.

The depoliticisation of the state language was achieved, first, by uncoupling the state language from the minority languages. It was then furthered by separating the community of speakers from individuals. To accomplish this, Tóthová's turn was instrumental. She pointed out that the state language law follows the common European logic of thinking in terms of nation-states, that is, that all nations have their states and that the state for the Hungarian minority is the Republic of Hungary. The second seminal turn was provided by Jarjabek. He argued that the state language law addresses issues of communication *between* the citizens and the state, not the capacity of the state and the Ministry of Culture to mould the political community from above.

Here we can observe how two concepts of nation appear together. Tóthová is influenced by a political conviction that the state and nation should concur. This establishes a hierarchy between the titular *nation* and minority *individuals*. Jarjabek proposes that individual ethnic differences can be accommodated through (linguistic) assimilation. Tóthová addresses political belonging; this is in contrast to Jarjabek, who discusses individual rights, with special reference to social benefits. Although such ethnic and civic conceptions of the political community are logically incompatible, the practical history of their usage and the translations of the Hungarian "nemzetiség" render their illogical conflation easily acceptable and usable in public argumentation. This example shows, further, how the conflation can function so as bring both definitions of the nation simultaneously to bear in the Slovakian debate on the state language. Maďarič's new approach, as expressed in the opening lines of second day of debate, thus builds upon ground established by the factual remarks of the day before.

Maďarič does, however, engage with some concrete points raised by Biró. He first addresses the accusation that the state language law would suffocate language as a living organism:

Kriticky ste poukázali aj na snahu konzervovať jazyk, ale to ste zrejme nečítali alebo zámerne ste vynechali § 11, ktorý jasne hovorí o tom, že sa nevylučuje používanie inojazyčných nových pojmov, termínov, ako aj používanie nespisovných jazykových prostriedkov. Inak povedané, zákon o štátnom jazyku pripúšťa používanie výrazov zo všetkých vrstiev jazyka aj slangových, aj nových, preberaných z cudzích jazykov. V tomto zmysle ale nielen vy šírite určité mýty a fámy o novele zákona o štátnom jazyku a diskusia sa vedie zavádzajúcim spôsobom, že ľudia budú trestaní za pravopisné chyby, čo je nezmysel. Pretože zákon nepripúšťa postihovanie individuálnych jazykových, rečových prejavov a v zákone sa prihliada len na kodifikovanú podobu, to znamená, takisto, že sa striktne nevyžaduje.

Takisto nie je cieľom novely zákona o štátnom jazyku strážiť čistotu jazyka v turistickom zmysle slova. Nikto nie je taký naivný, aby si myslel, že jazyk nie je živý a dynamický systém. Na to netreba byť jazykovedcom. Ale je naozaj zbytočná akákoľvek starostlivosť o štátny jazyk? Alebo aj o menšinový? Je to tak? (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 5)

You also critically pointed out the efforts to conserve the language, but obviously you have not read or purposely missed Art 11[86] that clearly states that it [the law] does not ban the use of foreign new concepts, terms as well as non-written linguistic means. In other words, the law on the state language allows the use of terms from all spheres of language, also slang, also new, [expressions] derived from foreign languages. In this sense, not only do you spread myths and rumours on the amendment of the state language law and the discussion is misled to [imply] that people will be penalised for spelling mistakes, which is nonsense. Because the law does not allow for the penalisation of individual linguistic, dialectical, expressions and the law only takes into account the codified form, which also means that [the fines] cannot be applied strictly.

Similarly, the aim of the amendment of the state language is not to guard the purity of the language in a touristic sense of the word. No one is so naive as to think that language is not a living and dynamic system. It is not necessary to be a linguist to know that. But is it really unneces-

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86. Article 11 reads the same in the proposed and final form. The translation is provided by Martin Votruba's translation of the final law: (1) For the purposes of §3 to §8, the term "state language" means the Slovak language in its standardised form pursuant to §2(3); this shall be without prejudice to the use of new technical concepts and terms or naming of new realities in another language, the appropriate equivalent of which has not been established and codified, as well as the use of non-standardised language expressions if used for a functional reason, particularly in artistic works and journalistic features.
(2) The costs of bringing the informational boards signs (inscriptions) and other texts in line with this Act shall be borne by the relevant authorities, other legal persons and natural persons. These adjustments shall be made within one year of the effective date thereof.

sary to have any kind of protection of the state language? Or of a minority language? Is it so? (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 5)

In the context of the previous day's debate, Maďarič's response is interesting. This response means nothing less than a clear concession that the Ministry of Culture cannot and is not in charge of the development of the state language. The Ministry cannot, in fact, exercise full control over the state language; nor can it expect all people to speak codified Slovak. However, the inability to control the language does not preclude the possibility of some sort of language policy—as Rafael Rafaj has already suggested. Maďarič continues to retreat from the statements he delivered the day before:

> Takže novela zákona o štátnom jazyku nie je žiadna štúrovská agenda, žiadne konzervovanie jazyka. Cieľ je iný, prirodzený a pragmatický. Štátny jazyk má integrovať všetkých občanov. Preto má vo verejnom styku zásadnú úlohu jednotného dorozumievacieho prostriedku. Preto štát okrem iného utvára v školskom systéme také podmienky, aby sa každý občan Slovenskej republiky naučil používať slovenský jazyk slovom aj písmom. Možno aj to by sme mali zrušiť, možno aj to je obmedzovanie slobody. (Potlesk v sále.) (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 5-6)

> Similarly, the amendment of the state language law is no Štúrite[87] agenda, nothing about conserving the language. The aim is different, natural and pragmatic. The state language is to integrate all citizens. Therefore, in the public domain [verejný styk], it has the fundamental task of being a unified means for mutual understanding. Therefore the state, especially, aims to create in the school system such conditions that every citizens of the Slovak Republic shall learn to use the Slovak language in speech and writing. Perhaps we should get rid off even this, perhaps even this restricts freedom. (Applause.) (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 5-6)

The reference to "similarly" in the beginning of this speech connects the coming speech to the previous correction, but also opens up the context so that Maďarič can engage in a broader recontextualisation of the draft law. Now, the claim that the language law entails any Štúrite agenda is denied. Instead, the law is placed explicitly in the contemporary time; it stems from contemporary needs. Thereby, Maďarič has made a remarkable retreat from his earlier position, and from the position of the Justification of the state language law. He now argues the purpose of the new law is pragmatic and

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87. Refers to Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856), who was the leader of the Slovak national revival and the first to provide the basis for the modern codification of the Slovak language.

integrative; its goal is to provide "a unified means for mutual understanding".

At the same time, the role of the state in demanding the use of state language from its citizens has acquired a new function, which is to provide the citizens with means of learning the state language in schools. If we look back to Maďarič's introductory speech, we find that the state language law was supposed to be a "functioning legal norm which applies in reality and social practice"; it was to be enforced through fines, not encouraged through education. Similarly, the previous day's speech proposed that the Ministry of Culture create legal conditions that would enable it to carry out the task "entrusted" to it, that is, to nurture the state language. The notion that citizens are somehow instrumental in this "nurturing" was totally absent.

In both cases, Maďarič's position has changed from prioritising the state language as the subject of the law to the conception of the state language as something that serves the citizens. Of course, politicians regularly revise their opinions. Above, however, we saw that this does not mean simply replacing one statement with another. Politicians employ the previous arguments, made by themselves *and* others, to ground the new arguments. We can trace the beginning of the shift from the state to the individual we see in Maďarič's speech to Jarjabek's speech, which referred to possibility of the state language to ensure the rights of the hospitalised. This individual citizen in later speeches became the subject of universal communication—carried out in the state language.

In fact, we can see this interpretation emerging already in Biró's critique of the state that "hands out human rights" rather than guarantees them (Biro 15 Apr 2009, 35, 112). The difference between handing out rights and guaranteeing them is, of course, linked to the extent to which the individual subject is perceived as autonomous and independent of the state. This is reflected in Maďarič's understanding of the state language not as a right of an autonomous subject, but as an obligation of the citizen. It is a "right" that is handed out by the state, and the implementation of this is enforced by sanctions:

> Iba jeho znalosť dokáže odstrániť bariéry medzi občanmi Slovenskej republiky, nech sú akejkoľvek národnosti. Preto štát zákonom reguluje používanie štátneho jazyka vo verejnom styku, podčiarkujem, vo verejnom styku. (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 6)

> Only knowing it [state language] can remove the barriers between citizens of the Slovak Republic, whatever nationality they have. Therefore the state by law regulate the use of the state language in the public contact, I underline, in the public contact. (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 6)

Maďarič's opening speech during the first day of the first reading had fo-

cussed exclusively to the relationship between the state and the state language. By the beginning of the second day, the individual citizen had been inserted into this relationship. The difference between these two positions might appear insignificant—can one really conceive of a state language without the people who speak it? The law explicitly even levies sanctions on those individuals who do not!

However, the difference lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the conceptualisation of the tripartite relationship between the state, the language and the individuals. We realised in the beginning of the debate that the law was concerned about distinguishing the Slovaks as a state-forming nation, granting them precedence over other groups in society. Biró, too, hinted at the differences between the concepts of nation (*národ*) and nationality *(národnosť)*. The nation has the right to political representation, whilst nationality is nothing more than a cultural attribute whose bearers are entitled to individual rights, but not to political group rights.

The progress of the debate reveals conscious attempts to forge an understanding of nationality (not nation) as something ontologically apolitical, to deny the possibility of a political nationality. Cultural distinctiveness, by this argument, is no different from national cultural distinctiveness *apart from* its access to the state. If it gains access to the state, it rises to the level of a state-forming community and has the right to make collective political claims. Tóthová was explicit: the Hungarian nation is state creating in Hungary; the Slovak nation in Slovakia. Nationalities (*národnosť*) are not part of this game. Maďarič is more indirect: Biró's accusations are "ideological", insofar as she confuses the categories of state language and minority languages. This confusion leads her to misunderstand the purpose of the state language. As an apolitical means of communication, only the state language can eradicate the cultural divisions in society ("Only knowing it [state language] can remove the barriers between citizens of the Slovak Republic, whatever nationality they have."). This, finally, legitimises the state's leading role in the field of language.

In order to explicate this argument further, I will return to the Slovak appropriation of the terms "nation" and "nationality" from the Hungarian terms "nemzet" and "nemzetiség".

As was discussed above in a footnote, as long as Latin was the state's administrative language, it was easy to distinguish between belonging to the politically defined *natio Hungarica*[88] and cherishing one's ethnic distinctive-

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88. In the Hungarian language, the noun and adjective "Hungary" and "Hungarian" are rendered by the word "magyar"; the term *natio Hungarica* sounds in ethnic terms equally "alien" to a Hungarian than to a Slovak. In Slovak, the non-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary is referred to as "Uhorsko" and the nation-state Hungary as "Maďarsko" maintaining the distinction between political and ethnic communities.

ness. However, as Hungarian took over as administrative language, the distinction between political allegiance and ethnic affiliation became subject to scrutiny. Prominent liberal thinkers such as József Eötvös and Ferenc Deak in late 19th century, and István Tisza in early 20th century, used the term "nemzetiség" to denote the "Slovakness" of the Slovaks. This term was opposed to "nemzet", which implied convergence of ethnic and political allegiances (*ius sanguinis*). This was not possible for the Slovaks who lived under the Hungarian rule. The distinction, however, enabled the liberals to express their belief that one's political allegiance is not conditional upon one's ethnic belonging, in accordance with the political and multinational concept of *natio Hungarica*.

More nationally-oriented politicians, meanwhile, strove to unite the terms "nemzet" and "nemzetiség". They argued that political and ethnic loyalties must coincide in the political context. Consequently, they created new terms to designate a cultural, that is apolitical, community: the folk ("nép") or even race ("faj") (Vörös 2010, 132). These new terms reflected the awareness that "nemzetiség", nationality, is in reality only a short distance from the "nemzet", nation, and one day might claim distinctive political representation of its own. In Maďarič's argumentation, we can see how he translates cultural assimilation to political loyalty; and we can recall how Berényi in the last factual remark to Biró criticised the state language law for implying the same: that cultural similarity coincide with political loyalty.[89]

Whereas Maďarič's introduction perceives an unmediated relationship between the state and the language, after the first day of the debate he has come to acknowledge that the citizen stands in between the state and the language. This citizen, however, does not claim a right to the state language; he is obliged to use it. This is the background against which we can understand Biró's next response to Maďarič:

> Ďakujem pekne, že pán minister vedie so mnou dialóg. Ja som veľmi krátko chcela v mojom príhovore za nás všetkých povedať, že sa cítime občanmi Slovenskej republiky a súčasne sa cítime aj ľudskými bytosťami a dožadujeme sa svojich ľudských práv. Ja si myslím, že tento zákon nebude chrániť suverenitu Slovenskej republiky. Aj tie štáty, ktoré nemajú štátne alebo úradné jazyky, sú suverénne, viď Českú republiku. Ja som hovorila proti filozofii tohto zákona, súčasného, a aj novely. Ja si myslím, že nepatrí do 21. storočia preto, lebo slovenský jazyk nie je ohrozený. Skúsila som aj rozviesť prečo. Týmto zákonom, pán minister, zavádzate exkluzivitu alebo potvrdzujete naďalej exkluzivitu jedného jazyka, keď uznáte, že aj my sme občanmi tejto

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89.  For a discussion on the distinction between ethnicity and nationalism as being the group's access to the state in Central and Eastern Europe, see Zdisław Mach (1993).

republiky a chceme byť lojálnymi občanmi tejto republiky. (Biró, 16 Apr 2009, 35, 7)

Thank you very much Mr Minister for engaging me in a dialogue. I wanted very briefly in my speech to tell us all that we are citizens of the Slovak Republic and at the same time we are human beings and claim our human rights. I think this law will not protect the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic. Also those states that do not have state or official languages are sovereign, as the Czech Republic. I spoke against the philosophy of the law, current as well as the amendment. I think it does not belong to the 21st century because the Slovak language is not threatened. I tried to elaborate why. This law, Mr Minister, introduces the exclusivity or ensures the continuity of the exclusivity of one language whilst you recognise that also we are citizens of this republic and we want to be loyal citizens of this republic. (Biró, 16 Apr 2009, 35, 7)

The genre of Biró's speech is that of a factual remark used to react to a speech or answer factual remarks addressed to the speaker. She has departed the officially sanctioned genre by, instead, clarifying her own speech of the day before. This speech does, however, much more. It takes the relationship between the state and the individual that Maďarič described as mutual understanding through the state language, and adds the idea that an exclusively Slovak-language public sphere discriminates against individual human rights of the minorities—their right to their language. The civic inclusion of the Hungarian minority into the "sphere" of the state language suggested by Maďarič is thus interpreted as a scam, an attempt to force the Hungarian minority to assimilate. Instead, Biró suggests that there is no necessary connection between loyalty of the citizens and the language they speak. But what Biró really means by "loyalty" remains ambiguous. It acquires form only in the course of the subsequent interpretations.

   Deputy Vaľová notes in her factual remark to Maďarič that Biró (sic!) uses the Hungarian minority, falsely, as the representative of all minorities:

Pán minister, ja vám plne rozumiem. [--] Ja by som len chcela pripomenúť, že ak tu pani kolegyňa hovorí o menšinách, tak by mala zastávať ako poslankyňa všetky menšiny, nie iba maďarské. (Vaľová 16 Apr 2009, 35, 8)

Mr Minister, I fully understand you, [--] I would just like to recall that as Ms colleague here speaks about minorities, she should act as representative of all minorities not only the Hungarian. (Vaľová 16 Apr 2009, 35, 8)

Vaľová's turn is, formally, a factual remark affirming Maďarič's position. She expands on it, however, to engage in a dialogue with her political op-

ponent Biró. Vaľová refers to Biró in the third person singular ("I would just like to recall that as Ms colleague..."), indicating that whilst the form of her speech is addressing Minister Maďarič, who was the previous speaker, the content of her speech addresses Biró. This form of factual remarks allows it to function as a repair that affirms common ground; the content, however, is used to repair Biró's speech by appropriating it on behalf of the state language law. The shift Vaľová makes from addressing Maďarič to Biró becomes even clearer if we consider the pronoun she opens with "Mr Minister, I fully understand you". By the end of her speech she refers to Maďarič not as you, but in third person singular ("...so what Minister is here attempting to present...").

What is the content of the remark that Vaľová directs at Biró? She requests (ironically) that Biró cater to not just one minority but to all the minorities. To what extent this is the point Vaľová wanted to make is impossible to ascertain. We know, though, her earlier factual remark concluded that minority languages and their use should not provide opportunities for discrimination against the majority (Vaľová 15 Apr 2009, 35, 114) or against any other minority (Vaľová 16 Apr 2009, 35, 8). Given the context, it seems plausible that the ironic remark that Biró should not pretend to defend all minorities when in fact defending only the Hungarian minority is just that, an ironic remark meant to add a little punch.

But the logic of the debate orders things differently. The fact that there are many minorities, altogether twelve officially recognised, makes it, first, unfeasible to demand that the state operate in all twelve minority languages. Second, it makes it problematic to argue that one minority language should be treated differently. This leads to the convincing argument that the state language law is a means of uniting all twelve nationalities in a neutral way.

The following speakers readily pick up this view. Dušan Čaplovič connects it with rights and responsibilities:

Áno, hovoril som o právach národnostných menšín, ale znovu som zaklincoval jednu podstatnú vec a to je vec, ktorá je dôležitá. Keď hovoríme na jednej strane o právach, treba hovoriť aj o povinnostiach alebo o zodpovednosti. A zástupca, významný predstaviteľ Rady Európy pán Hammemberg mi dal za pravdu vo svojom vystúpení a, samozrejme, aj neskôr, keď bol v Bratislave, znovu zopakoval, že musíme začať hovoriť nielen o právach, ale musíme hovoriť aj o povinnostiach a zodpovednosti tých druhých. [--] Ide o zákon, ktorý sa doťahuje tak, aby v skutočnosti príslušníci národnostných menšín boli rovnoprávni občania Slovenskej republiky [--]

Preto si myslím, že naozaj, hľadajme to, čo nás spája a hľadajme to, že táto cesta, ktorú volí ministerstvo kultúry je aj v prospech občanov maďarskej národnostnej menšiny a v prospech občanov všetkých národnostných menšín, aby sa v podstate v našej Slovenskej republike, spoločnej Slovenskej republike cítili ako doma, aby mohli komunikovať

tak vo svojom menšinovom jazyku, ale aby sa dohovorili aj vo svojom, aby sa dohovorili aj v oficiálnom, či tzv. štátnom, ak sa budeme o tom baviť, čo je štátne a čo nie je štátne... (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 16-18)

Yes, I spoke about rights of nationality minorities, and touched upon one fundamental thing which is important. When we, on the one hand, talk about rights, we also have to talk about duties and responsibilities. A representative, an important representative of the European Council Mr Hammemberg (sic!) gives me the right in his own speech, and of course, later when he was in Bratislava, he reiterated that we have to start to talk not only about rights but also about the duties and responsibilities of the others. [--] This is about a law that in effect enables members of nationality minorities to become citizens with equal rights in the Slovak Republic. [--]

Therefore, I think that rather than the contrary, we shall seek that which unites us, let us seek so that the path chosen by the Ministry of Culture is also to the benefit of the citizens of the Hungarian nationality minority and to the benefit of citizens of all nationality minorities so that the ground of our Slovak Republic, the common Slovak Republic feels like a home, so that they may communicate both in their minority language as well as in the official, or so-called state language if we are to play what is state and what is not state... (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 16-18)

Just like a real conversation, the parliamentary debate does not progress with geometric precision in one direction only. Vaľová's and Čaplovič's turns, although arguing, in terms of content, for the inclusive idea of the state language law, also engage in othering the Hungarian minority. Čaplovič feels no hesitation in labelling label the Hungarian minority as "others" in contrast to the Slovak majority. This reflects the general perception in Slovakia, shared both by the minority and majority representatives, that the Hungarian minority forms a somewhat separate entity within the state.

Čaplovič also switches codes later in his speech when he calls Biró Biróvá. This Slovakisation of Biró's Hungarian name underlines the othering of Biró as non-Slovak. Feminine Slovak names end with -ová; but Hungarian Biró does not have this ending. By switching the code from a foreign to Slovak name, Čaplovič efficiently marks the social alienness of Biró. This code-switching works, in fact, both ways. By highlighting the oddness[90] of the Slovakised "Biróová", Čaplovič manages to question her true belonging

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90. The oddness results from the Slovak rules of stress. In Slovak, a long vowel is marked with an accent, for instance, in the case of the feminine name ending -ová the first "o" is pronounced short whilst the "á" is pronounced long. In the case of Biróová, the double "o" is long (already the last ó is long) as well as the final "á". Long and short vowels in Slovak must follow each other; having two long vowels in consecutive syllables sounds foreign.

to Slovak society, but also indicates that the way to become a part of the society is through linguistic assimilation. The exact context of Čaplovič's use of Biróová does not shed much more light on this. I want to draw attention to it, in order to show how the development of arguments for the inclusive interpretation of the law has not undermined the perception of the alienness of the Hungarians.

In the following speeches, Vaľová, Čaplovič and Senko all emphasise that privileging the Hungarian minority over the other minorities would be unfair. Therefore, justice demands the integration all minorities in the state language. Such inclusion, as shown above, does not mean the elimination of animosity between the majority and minority. As Senko puts it:

> Dôležité je vyžadovanie povinného používania štátneho jazyka vo verejnom styku. Je to odôvodnené, ako som už povedal, jeho osobitným postavením ako spoločného dorozumievacieho prostriedku. Túto jeho funkciu uznáva aj Európsky súd pre ľudské práva, uznáva ho ako jednu zo základných ústavných hodnôt. Aj z tohto dôvodu ochrana štátneho jazyka určite zakladá štátu povinnosť zabezpečiť, zdôrazňujem, zabezpečiť svojim občanom právo na dorozumenie sa v štátnom jazyku v súkromnej alebo vo verejnej správe o to viac, ak im toto právo zaručuje aj ústava. (Senko 16 Apr 2009, 35, 23-24)

> It is important to require the mandatory use of the state language in public contact. This is justified, as I have already said, by its special status as a common means of mutual understanding. This function is also recognised by the European Court of Human Rights, it recognises it as a fundamental constitutional value. Also from this point of view the protection of the state language places the obligation on the state to ensure, I emphasise, to ensure that its citizens have the right to understand [what is presented] in the state language in private or in public matters, and even more so when this is guaranteed by the Constitution. (Senko 16 Apr 2009, 35, 23-24)

This sums up the state of the debate. There are no concessions made to the minority, there is no recognition of the minority language at the state level, but the relationship between the state, the language, and the political community is now understood as including the individual citizen that the state ought to serve.

Hitherto, I have used concrete sequential analysis, with an explicit focus on concrete adjacency pairs where the first pair has called forth a certain type of response. I will now move on to look at the debate from a little distance.

Given the ending of the first reading, it is no surprise, that Minister Maďarič begins the second reading of the draft law with a reference to the individual citizens:

Zmyslom, podstatou, cieľom zákona o štátnom jazyku je zabezpečiť všetkým občanom Slovenskej republiky, aby vo verejnej sfére mali dostupné všetky informácie, ktoré potrebujú vo svojom štátnom jazyku. Z toho vyplýva aj to, že Slováci nebudú nútení na území Slovenska vo verejnom styku ovládať jazyk žiadnej národnostnej menšiny. (Maďarič 25 June 2009, 39, 1-2)

The idea, the basis, the aim of the law on the state language is to ascertain that all the citizens of the Slovak Republic, in the public sphere would have all information that they need available in their state language. From this follows also that Slovaks are not forced in the territory of Slovakia in the public sphere to speak languages of any nationality minority. (Maďarič 25 June 2009, 39, 1-2)

And this is also the main content of his final statement:

Dámy a páni, chcel by som povedať, tento návrh zákona, táto novela nie je ani o útočení proti nikomu a ničomu. Nie je ani o ustupovaní voči ničomu, ako to niekedy v kuloároch možno zaznieva. Nie je ani o tom, aby sa občania maďarskej národnosti učili po slovensky. Ako to tiež tu zaznelo viackrát v apeloch. Ak sa nechcú, je to ich chyba. A takisto sa to týka aj iných národnostných menšín.
    Ale je táto novela alebo aj celý zákon o štátnom jazyku aj o tom, aby všetci občania Slovenskej republiky mali vo verejnej sfére dostupné informácie, ktoré potrebujú vo svojom štátnom jazyku, na území Slovenskej republiky je týmto štátnym jazykom slovenský jazyk. (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 51)

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say that this law, this amendment is no attack against anyone or anything. Nor is it a law of no use as sometimes has been voiced in lobbies. It is also not about that the citizens of the Hungarian nationality would study Slovak. As it was also mentioned many times. If they do not want to, it is their fault. And the same goes with other nationality minorities.
    But this amendment, or the whole law on the state language, is about that all the citizens of the Slovak Republic would have in the public sphere all information, they need, available in their state language, which on the territory of Slovakia is the Slovak language. (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 51)

The semantic meanings of the turns in the debate have clearly come to emphasise the integration of different segments of society, but there is little evidence that this semantic shift would be paralleled at any other level of the social: the social and political perception of the Hungarians as the other has not changed. This shows that the textual development of the debate enjoys

certain autonomy from the political and social realities. However, the se-
quential context of talk that has been applied here as the main analytical tool
allows for the analysis of talk in its own environment that *brings in* the so-
cial and the political, *uses* them for the purposes of the talk, but that is
neither conditioned by them nor necessarily extending itself over them.
However, it also seems that *talk*, despite its separation from the social and
political, has had an impact on them: at the very least, it has *fractured* the
narrative of the perfect union between the state and its language Maďarič re-
ferred to as the main aim of the law in his opening speech. Parliamentary
talk has fractured this narrative to the extent that the individual political sub-
ject, with rights and obligation, stands now in between the state and its
language.

What does this conclusion tell us about the debate on the state language
law? Or about Slovak politics in more general? The question of rights in
Central and Eastern Europe and especially in Slovakia is often approached
through the prism of minorities and minority accommodation (Csergo and
Deegan-Krause 2011). Csergo and Deegan-Krause identify two types of re-
sponses. The liberals argue that minorities are best protected through indi-
vidual civic rights that do not create political groups that share ethnic and
territorial allegiances and therefore could attempt secession. The theorists of
multiculturalism in contrast argue that democracies should enable and sup-
port the cultural reproduction of minority groups. Csergo and Deegan-
Krause find out that in practice group rights have been the preferred practice
in much of Central and East European countries and that this has not aggrav-
ated ethnic tensions (ibid., 86). In the case of Slovakia, they find out that na-
tionalist majority parties such as SNS and HZDS argue for ethnically de-
fined state making the Slovak ethnicity the state-forming nation. The
minority parties seek to extent the same state-forming role to the Hungarian
minority. This position is countered by the majority parties by reference to
individual rights bereft of any collective context (ibid., 95-96). Any recon-
ciliation to this state of affairs appears to take the form of the extension of
collective rights to the national minorities. That is, there is no shift from the
paradigm of group rights towards individual rights:

> National-pluralist parties in Slovakia and Romania achieved majority–
> minority co-operation not by 'de-ethnicisation' of politics, as liberal-in-
> dividualist theory would expect but by the consistent adoption of
> policies that attended to the needs of both majority and minority cultural
> groups and included minority parties in political decision-making even
> when technically they did not need to do so. (Csergo and Deegan-
> Krause 2011, 98)

The above analysis of the parliamentary debate on the state language law

partly confirms Csergo's and Deegan-Krause's thesis: indeed, the preference of group rights in politics prevail also in this debate and individual rights were evoked only to counter the claims of the minority party for group rights. However, it adds to this picture the way in which individual rights were introduced to the debate. They did not emerged on their own as an independent or autonomous idea. They emerged out of the collision of the collective-rights arguments advanced by both the majority and minority representatives. This reveals two important aspects. First, it questions the possibility of drawing an analytical line between collective and individual rights in the Slovakian debate on the state language. The debate shows that there are no two different types of thinking about majority–minority regulation, but individual rights emerge only from the clash between claims for *both* collective majority and minority rights. Second, it shows that the way in which the idea of individual rights enter the debate—as the result of the clash between different arguments for collective rights—also means that they have acquired a function in the debate that cannot be reduced only to the "original intention" of discrediting the claims for minority rights. If we follow Csergo's and Deegan-Krause's analysis, we find it difficult to understand how individual rights *qua* discrediting argument in fact acquire such a central role in the interpretation of the state language law. They do so, because they are brought into being through the debate and acquire a function within that debate. This debate, I have shown above, has acquired a certain autonomy of its own and therefore the argument for the individual rights has obtained a life of its own in the debate. Individual rights, in other words, have become an integral part of the *text* on group rights in Slovakia.[91]

The second observation concerns the implications this has for majority–minority relations in Slovakia. Erika Harris, for instance, has argued that the majority–minority relations are epitomic to the broader democratic developments in Slovakia (Harris 2002, 97). This can also be observed in the debate when representatives of the Hungarian minority bring up the issue of loyalty towards the state. Berényi, for instance, argues that mere fluency in language is no guarantee of political loyalty (Berényi 15 June 2009, 35, 121). Biró emphasises that she, like the other Hungarians, are citizens of Slovakia and "want to be loyal citizens of this republic" (Biró, 16 Apr 2009, 35, 7). Similarly, Halecký perceives the law as providing "the rules of the game at the level of society" (Halecký 16 Apr 2009, 35, 14), and Čaplovič connects the law with the *duties* of the citizens—in opposition to the *rights* of minorities

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91. One could argue that the international regime of minority regulation emphasising individual rights could have an influence here, but this position could not explain why they figured so dominantly already during the debate. To be sure, if one is after causal explanations the international factor should not be undervalued, but it hardly helps us understand the way individual rights emerged in the debate.

as emphasised, for instance, by Biró (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 16). Political loyalty is here connected with the issue of law enforcement (e.g. Abrhan 16 Apr 2009, 35, 15) and civic education (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 16; Nachtmannová 25 June 2009, 39, 20) and ). The debate on the state language appears to define not only what the state language is about, but also the nature of the political subject as such.

One exchange that illustrates these points took place in the beginning of the second reading on June 25th, 2009. Biró points out a number of clauses in the new amendment that contradict the regulations of international treaties on minorities. These include, for instance, Article 5, paragraph 7 that concerns the use of state language in memorial plates. Biró argues:

> Problematický a konfliktný pre život menšín bude aj nový ods. 7 § 5 zákona, ktorý [--] preindikuje aj ústavou zakázanú cenzúru, a to v prípade schvaľovania nápisov ministerstvom kultúry na pamätníkoch, pomníkoch, pamätných tabuliach. (Biró 25 June 2009, 39, 11)

> Problematic for and troublesome to the life of minorities is also the Article 5, paragraph 7 that [--] indicates legally sanctioned censorship, in this case the required approval of inscriptions on monuments, statutes and memorial plates from the Ministry of Culture. (Biró 25 June 2009, 39, 11)

Underlying Biró's argument is a conviction that groups, including minorities, have the right to recreate their own culture without the intervention of external forces. The response she receives counters this argument by appealing to individual rights. However, the way in which the individual rights are invoked indicates the conviction that the state should be able (and allowed) to define its subject. Jarjabek's factual remark argues this:

> Prečo používate tie silné výrazy—cenzúra, štátna cenzúra [--] Prečo tie silné výrazy? Naozaj, keď niekto chce rozumieť a druhý mu to chce umožniť, vy to nazývate cenzúrou. (Jarjabek, 25 June 2009, 39, 21)

> Why do you use such strong words—censorship, state censorship [--] Why those strong words? Indeed, if one wants to understand and the other wants to make this possible, you call it censorship. (Jarjabek, 25 June 2009, 39, 21)

Jarjabek questions Biró's strong, and politically charged use of the terms state censorship. He then repairs Biró's argument by indicating that it can be interpreted in terms of individual rights, such as making understanding possible. However, this possibility of understanding refers to the policy that everything *must* be written in Slovak. Such "mutual understanding" is seen,

then, not as emerging in exchanges between (autonomous) individual citizens, nor from the subject matter itself. It is to be bestowed upon citizens by the state, through the state language. The following factual remark, submitted by Podmanický, continues along the same line:

> Vy, pani poslankyňa, úmyselne bránite tomu, aby slovenský jazyk bol dorozumievací prostriedok na území Slovenskej republiky. (Podmanický, 25 June 2009, 39, 2009)

> You, Ms deputy, intentionally prevent that the Slovak language would be the means of mutual understanding on the territory of the Slovak republic. (Podmanický, 25 June 2009, 39, 2009)

These exchanges show that not only language policy or majority–minority relations are at stake; the issue is the nature of the political subject, either one brought into existence by the state language or one that itself comes into existence through the unification of the citizens in their shared language.

These are two different understandings of group rights. The first, advanced both by minority and majority, envisions the language as the primary "political subject". Recall how Biró in her first speech declares "we are like our language is" (Biró, 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103). In practice, this means that the political subject is an imagined collective entity legitimating the state. This is why the issue of who is the state-forming entity in Slovakia is so crucial.

The second understanding of group rights proceeds from the notion that citizens come together under a common, perhaps a civic, denominator, which in this case is their language. This conceptualisation includes the individual, but his political being is recognised only through the collectively shared element that entitles her political belonging and therefore this type of political belonging is not a natural right, but a civic achievement. In the Slovakian case it seems to require the command and use of the Slovak language.

The discussion on rights in Slovakia oscillates between these two ways of interpreting rights. Group rights in Slovakia do not mean only collective recognition of the majority or minority but *they mean simultaneously claims to the state*. We can now connect back to one of the initial distinctions Biró drew between the official and the state languages: the state encompasses the symbolic realm that belongs to the state-forming nation whereas the official language only refers to the pragmatic operation of the state. But this is not all, for the reverse also applies. Group rights define the political subject in Slovakia leaving the individual political subject in a vacuum. It is not the individual who engages in political activity that can make claims to the state, but rather the state defines its subject through group rights targeted to a group defined by the state, not by the group itself. Illustrative of this is

Čaplovič's reasoning that both the minorities and majority have to make efforts so that "no one would live in any part of Slovakia as in a foreign state" (Čaplovič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 2009). This, Čaplovič suggest, could "unite" the majority and minorities in Slovakia.


## State Language Law and the Public Contact

I will now turn to look at the parts of the debate that attempt to make sense of obscure distinction between the equally obscure terms "official contact" (úradný styk) and "public contact" (verejný styk). I will use the terms "official contact" and "public contact" as translations from the Slovak. The point of this translation is that it hopefully conveys best the puzzlement that these terms evoke among the Slovaks: the lack of any definition of attribute as to what this "contact" should refer is not given in the law. The purpose of the analysis here is to see whether we can find any clarity to the issue by looking at the debate.

As we can recall, the initial intention of the draft law was to address the capacity of the state to act in the field of language policy. The draft law did not even identify the individual citizen in the relationship the law establishes between the state language and the state. The individual appeared only as the object of fines, meant to enforce compliance.

However, as the debate progressed, the individual citizen began to acquire an increasingly important role in mediating the relationship between the state and the state language. The emergence of the individual produces some unexpected complications with regard to the definition of "official" and "public" contact.

According to the draft law, the state language law applies to state institutions, local authorities, other public authorities (iné orgány verejnej správy), legal persons, natural persons in business and natural persons to the extent legislated in the law (982/2009, Art 2). The final law 357/2009, reads that "natural and legal persons in the official contact (úradny styk)... [are to] use the state language" (357/2009, Art 3 para 5).

However, the obligation to use the state language is not limited to those involved in official contacts (úradný styk). Article 5 of the law 357/2009 stipulates that the state language is to be used, also, "in a number of areas of public contact", such as mass media, cultural happenings and public monuments. Other articles legislate on the use of the state language in schools, health care, the police, armed forced, fire brigade and so on. The fact that the law requires the use of state language in all contacts with the state officials raises some knotty problems, some of which were addressed in the debate. For instance, would it be legal to speak a non-state language in the waiting room of the tax office, or whilst visiting the doctor?

This confusion is brought about by the unsystematic use of the terms "úradný" (official) and "verejný" (public), exacerbated, in turn, by the fact that the law legislates on "state" language, which is different from an official (úradný) language. There is a wide consensus that a state language has superior prestige and scope to an official (úradný) language. Therefore, "public contact" (verejný styk) implies a scope wider than that of state offices.

The question on the boundaries between official and public communication enters the debate through the law's proposal concerning fines. Biró cites deputy Abrhan, who had argued that fines would only increase state bureaucracy. Biró goes further. She argues that such fines would limit the freedom of conscience for "natural and also entrepreneurial persons [would] have to write everything first in the state language" (Biró 16 Apr 2009, 35, 14). In this context it is important to remember that for Biro—as for the draft law—the language defines who one is.

Biró receives two types of responses. The first underlines the integrative function of the state language; the second the need to protect the Slovak language.

Ján Senko's answer belongs to the first category. He reminds Biró that the state language law "fulfils the function of a universal means of communication" (Senko 16 Apr 2009, 35, 23). This argument is meant to annul Biró's claim that the Hungarian language should be given special status in Slovakia. But it is also connected to the point that if the state language is the universal means of communication, then the citizens must be guaranteed their right to receive all information in that language. And here, the ordinary citizen claiming her right to receive information in the state language becomes relevant to the definition of the official and public contact. As Halecký puts it:

A čo je podstatné, je to, že pre bežných ľudí v úradnom alebo aj v inom styku neprináša žiadne zhoršenie postavenia, to znamená, že neprináša žiadne zhoršenie pri používaní jazykov národnostných menšín, či už na úradoch alebo v nemocniciach, alebo v domovoch dôchodcov. [--] Avšak na druhej strane nie je možné nevyžadovať, aby na úradoch, v štátnych inštitúciách sa slovenský jazyk ako úradný, oficiálny prednostne nepoužíval. Je to aj určitý spôsob výchovy, ale aj integrácie jednotlivých obyvateľov. (Halecký 16 Apr 2009, 35, 26)

And what is fundamental is that, for ordinary people in official or in another contacts, [this law] does not bring about any deterioration, this means no deterioration in the case of using nationality minority languages be it in the office or hospitals or nurseries. [--] On the other hand, it is not acceptable that in the offices, in state institutions, the Slovak language as the official (úradný), officially preferred, is not

used. This is about manners but also about integrating individual citizens. (Halecký 16 Apr 2009, 35, 26)

Increasingly, the concrete spatial definition of official or public communication is losing ground to understanding that these terms as applying to the relationship between the state and the political community. This becomes clearer when we consider the discrepancy between the question that addresses the boundaries of the official and public contacts, as enforced by fines, and the response, which defines the purpose of the state language as the universalist one of both integrating citizens, and providing them with information. Clearly, "official" and "public" are understood, here, more in metaphorical than in spatial terms.

A final example of the former understanding comes from Maďarič. He talks about the importance of a shared "public contact", which everyone can understand. To ignore the importance of such mutual understanding, he argues, is to imply that the representatives of the Hungarian Coalition Party want to "take away the right from the citizens of the Slovak Republic to understand what is stated in writing" (Maďarič 16 Apr 2009, 35, 42). It appears that the terms "official contact" and "public contact" define the extent to which the state language can, in practice, be applied to more than the physical place where the language is used.

The second type of response draws more explicitly on the stated need to protect the state language. Rafael Rafaj's speech describes the polemical way in which the Hungarian minority has talked about the protection of their rights but neglected the practical need to protect the state language:

> Potrebujeme chrániť alebo chceme chrániť občana, prírodu, kultúrne, duchovné dedičstvo, čiže chceme chrániť isté hodnoty, aj jazyk. Štátny jazyk je takouto hodnotou všetkých rozumných, lojálnych ľudí, ktorí žijú v našom štáte. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 29)

> We have to protect or we want to protect the citizens, nature, culture, spiritual heritage, that is we want to protect essential values, also language. The state language is this kind of value for all understanding, loyal, people, who live in our state. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 29)

Or as Kramplová puts it:

> Po druhé, pani poslankyňa, vy si myslíte, že občania Slovenskej republiky slovenskej národnosti, ktorí žijú na zmiešanom území Slovenskej zvrchovanej republiky, nemajú právo rozprávať vlastným jazykom na úradoch...? (Kramplová 25 June 2009, 39, 53)

Second, Ms deputy, do you think that the citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to the Slovak nationality, who live in the mixed territories of the Slovakian sovereign Republic do not have the right to speak their own language in the offices...? (Kramplová 25 June 2009, 39, 53)

These responses do not distinguish between "official" and "public" communication, but neither do they conceptualise any sphere of communication beyond that of "public contact". They seem to rely on the understanding that the state language enjoys some sort of transcendental existence that requires its protection, no matter what the circumstances. Rafaj equates this transcendental existence with essential values. Kramplová links it to the universal and unlimited right of the Slovak-speaking citizen within the "Slovakian sovereign Republic" to speak their own language.

The Hungarian minority deputies were eager to find out more precisely what the distinction between "official" and "public" implied. Simon Zsolt asked for a definition directly, but never received a response. Later Berényi reformulates Zsolt's question in a form of hypothetical example:

...keď sa stretnú dvaja Maďari v Bratislave na obvodnom úrade napríklad a budú hovoriť po maďarsky, úradník a klient. Môžu byť pokutovaní, alebo nemôžu byť pokutovaní podľa tohto návrhu zákona? (Berényi 25 June 2009, 39, 47)

...when two Hungarian meet in Bratislava for instance in a district office and they speak Hungarian, officer and client. Can they be penalised or can they not be penalised according to this draft law? (Berényi 25 June 2009, 39, 47)

Berényi's question elicits two answers, one from Vaľová in a factual remark and, much later, in a speech by Minister Maďarič himself, which will be analysed later. Vaľová compares Berényi's question to the Biblical story of the Tower of Babylon: "God then punished them and gave them each different language and then the tower fell down [--] we need one language so that we can all understand..." (Vaľová 25 June 2009, 39, 48). Earlier, Vaľová cited the Ruthene minority (to which she belongs) as an example of the good relations between the Ruthenes and the Slovaks. The image of the Tower of Babylon introduces the issue of state integrity in the context of multiple languages. This engages the next speakers at different levels. Deputy Sarközy—a doctor herself—again raises the question of whether the doctor and the patient are allowed to speak Hungarian together. Deputy Tóthová's responding factual remark gives the expected answer but also illustrates the general progression of the debate:

Pani poslankyňa, ten váš príklad s lekárom bol veľmi, veľmi nešťastný, pretože podľa vašej logiky by potom lekár mal vedieť po maďarsky, áno? Ale prečo len? Potom musí vedieť po nemecky, rusínsky, poľsky, rómsky, poprípade ešte aj inú národnosť. Ja si myslím, že logika je taká, všetci občania Slovenskej republiky by mali vedieť po slovensky. (Tóthová 25 June 2009, 39, 54)

Ms deputy, that your example with a doctor was very unlucky, because according to your logic that doctor then would need to know Hungarian, right? But why only [Hungarian]? [One] should know German, Ruthene, Polish, Romani and possibly also another nationality.[92] I think that the logic is such that all citizens of the Slovak Republic should know Slovak. (Tóthová 25 June 2009, 39, 54)

This response, however, does not address the search for the definition of "public contact". It interprets the question as concerning the right to use the Hungarian language. Tóthová in her response once again rejects the idea that one minority language be given a special status at the expense of all other minority language. Instead, she argues that for pragmatic reasons only the state language can claim the capacity of providing the universal means of communication the state language against the equal recognition of all minority languages.

The question of public (and official) "contacts" is conceptualised as concerning a sphere of communication where the majority is not discriminated. Jarjabek argues that:

Jazykový zákon je právna norma, ktorej účelom je deklarovať, že na území Slovenskej republiky platí spoločenská dohoda, podľa ktorej základným a všeobecne dorozumievacím jazykom občanov tohto štátu je jazyk majoritného, teda slovenského obyvateľstva a že jazyky národnostných menšín, ktoré si, samozrejme, vážime a ctíme, majú svoje miesto v spoločenskej komunikácii tých skupín populácie, ktoré tieto jazyky spájajú. Majú funkciu pomocného, teda nedominantného komunikačného systému. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 129)

Language law is a legal norm, whose aim is to declare that on the territory of the Slovak Republic there applies a social agreement according to which the basic universal language for communication between citizens of this state is the language of the majority, that is the Slovak[93] citizens, and the languages of nationality minorities, which we naturally

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92. Here Tóthová uses the names of languages of nationalities and the minority nationality community interchangeably.

93. Jarjabek here refers to Slovaks as a cultural community.

respect and honour, have their place in social communication of the groups of people who are connected by these languages. They have a helping function, that is of non-dominant communicative system. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 129)

Biró, in a factual remark responding to Jarjabek, explains that she supports multilingualism, but expects it to be mutual, at least in the areas where the Hungarian minority lives. Jarjabek answer by repairing what the object of discrimination really is:

No a, pani poslankyňa Biró, vy hovoríte, či existuje nejaká diskriminácia. Ja hovorím, že áno, existuje. A ruku na srdce, pani poslankyňa, o koľko menej kultúrnych programov sa každý rok robí, menej a menej v slovenčine na juhu Slovenska? Ruku na srdce. Ja som tie programy robil, nie jeden. Desiatky. Dnes ich je ako šafranu. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 134)

And well, Ms deputy Biró, you say that some discrimination exists. I say that yes, there is. And hand on the heart, Ms deputy, how many fewer cultural programmes are made each year, fewer and fewer in Slovak in southern Slovakia? Hand on the heart. I made those programmes, and not only one. Dozens. Today they are as scarce as saffron. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 134)

The theme of discrimination becomes more concrete in the following turns. Deputy Nagy voices that the language policy should be more attentive to daily issues of communication. One of his examples of good practice is the television discussion show "Na tanieri" where the participants debate in Hungarian, but the programme has Slovak subtitles. Jarjabek engages with "Na tanieri":

No a ja sa vrátim k relácii Na tanieri, aby sme sa teda rozumeli a vy to určite viete tak isto ako ja. [--] Ja netvrdím, že tá relácia nie je titulkovaná. Samozrejme, že je titulkovaná, preboha živého, však je v Slovenskej televízii ako verejnoprávnej inštitúcii. Hej? Takže to je samozrejmé, že je titulkovaná. Ja jej rozumiem, keď sa na ňu pozerám ako divák. Ale ja sa jej nemôžem zúčastniť ako jeden z respondentov, ktorí v tej relácii chcú debatovať o tých nesmierne niekedy zaujímavých témach, ktoré táto relácia prináša, ale veď to sa nedá s tlmočníkom. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 135)

I shall come back to the programme "Na tanieri", so that we would then understand and you know it certainly as well as I do. [--] I do not claim that the programme is not subtitled. Of course it is subtitled, by the living god it is subtitled. I understand it, when I watch it as a spectator. But I cannot take part in it as one of the respondents who in that programme

wants to debate these sometimes extremely interesting themes that the programme sends, and you know it does not work with a translator. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 135)

The ease at which the debate concerning potnetially something as concrete as the definitions of "official contact" and "public contact" turns to the issue of which group is discriminated, and, where indicates just how central the question of the language is for both the state and the political community. The "public contact" that is seen as a possible arena for possible discrimination has become understood increasingly in terms of the possibilities of action in Slovak language only. Discrimination appears in everything and everywhere where knowing only Slovak does not suffice, including participation in non-state language television programmes.

We can jump to the last day of the debate and the last speech of Minister Maďarič. Here, he finally replies to Berenyi's question concerning fines and the delineation of the public sphere:

> ... či budú pokutovaní na úrade, ak sa bude úradník s občanom rozprávať jazykom národnostnej menšiny. (Reakcia spravodajkyne.) Iste, pokiaľ to nie je 20 %, lebo, samozrejme, v tých príslušných miestach podľa osobitného predpisu je to možné, jasné. Nuž, ak sa budú rozprávať tieto dve osoby a nebude tam tretia osoba, pre ktorú sú tiež tie informácie dôležité, osoba, ktorá ten jazyk neovláda, tak žiadna pokuta udelená, samozrejme, nebude. (Reakcia spravodajkyne.) (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 53-54)

> ... whether they [two Hungarian speakers -JT] will be fined if in an office, when an officer speaks with the citizen in a language of nationality minority (Rapporteur's reaction). Certainly, if it is not 20% because, naturally, in the regions under special legislation it is possible, clearly. Well, as those two people will talk and there is no third person who needs that information, a person who does not speak that language, no fines will, naturally be imposed. (Rapporteur's reaction) (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 53-54)

The reason why no fines are imposed is not that the law is not broken, but because there is no information available on this breach. The limit of "public contact" (verejný styk) appears to coincide with the limits of the capacity of the state to compel the use of the state language. This is hardly a legal norm that is applicable in social practice, as Maďarič demanded in the beginning of the debate. The response he provides reflects more the situation that, as he defined it, required the amendment, that is, a situation in which the "law on the state language in its current wording does not enable the Ministry of Culture in a sufficient manner to fill the task entrusted [upon the Ministry of Culture] of nurturing the state language." (Maďarič 15 Apr 2009, 35, 99).

The centrality of the state's capacity to assert itself in the "rationale" of the state language law is also evident in another exchange between Berényi and Maďarič. Berényi asks:

> ...keď Csemadok zorganizuje slávnostné podujatie, tak kultúrny program na tomto podujatí musí byť taktiež aj v slovenčine uvedený, alebo nemusí byť v slovenčine uvedený? A ak nebude v slovenčine uvedený, tak budú môcť byť pokutovaní, alebo nie, organizátori tohto podujatia? (Berényi 25 June 2009, 39, 47)

> ...if Csemadok [a Hungarian cultural organisation in Slovakia –JT] organises festival events, then the cultural programme for that event must be published in Slovak, too, or it does not need to published in Slovak. And if it is not published in Slovak, is it possible or not that the organisers of that event will be punished? (Berényi 25 June 2009, 39, 47)

Maďarič's response a day later goes:

> A nakoniec ste sa ma pýtali na to, že či bude hroziť pokuta, ak napríklad pri kultúrnom programe Csemadoku nebude sprievodné uvádzanie aj v slovenskom jazyku. Ja si vám dovolím odpovedať niekoľkými protiotázkami. [--] Takže ak to bude verejné podujatie, môžem, pán poslanec, prísť aj ja na toto podujatie? Myslím si, že áno, a myslím si, že môžu prísť aj príslušníci iných národnostných menšín, aj Rusíni, aj Nemci, aj Poliaci, aj iní, však? A je dobré asi, ak na maďarskú kultúru, na podujatie Csemadoku prídu aj príslušníci iných národnostných menšín alebo Slováci. Nakoniec, vždy to hovorím aj vy to tiež hovoríte, menšiny sú naším obohatením, sme multikultúrna spoločnosť, takže je to aj v našom spoločnom záujme, aby to nebolo len pre príslušníkov maďarskej národnostnej menšiny. (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 53-54)

> In the end you asked me whether the fines can be applied, for instance, to a cultural programme of Csemadok if it is not published in the Slovak language too. I shall reply to you with some counter questions. [--] So it will be a public event and I, too, can, Mr deputy, come to that meeting? I think that yes, and I think that members of other nationality minorities can come, as well, also Ruthenes, Germans, Poles and others, right? And it is good for the Hungarian culture, when members of other nationality minorities or Slovaks come to the events of Csemadok. In the end I always say and you too say that minorities are our enrichment, we are a multicultural society so that it is also in the common interest that it is not just for the members of the Hungarian nationality minority. (Maďarič 26 June 2009, 39, 53-54)

As there is no response to Maďarič's lasts speech, we cannot really apply conversation analysis, that is, the logic of sequentiality of talk that reifies the

meaning surplus of every utterance, to make sense of Maďarič's response. We can, however, infer Maďarič's interpretation of Berényi's argument. Berényi's question targets the possibilities of creating niches of cultural activity that are not penetrated by the state language. Maďarič sees this as something negative: nationality minorities are not supposed to have mono-lingual events, for that creates a sphere where the state language cannot be applied. As the nationality minorities are, as they argue, to enrich the state, they also have to expose themselves to the state, fully and all the time.

The state language law is an attempt towards integration of the state but at the same time it embodies the realisation of that it is impossible to achieve integration by imposing a national culture upon all the citizens. This in-built realisation of the necessary failure of the state language law as a tool of integration is evident in the law's obvious inability to decide whether integration should be achieved through handing out equal rights, or by force (fines).

## State Language Law as Translation and Explosion

It is obvious that the majority that supports the state language law dominates the debate. The majority sets the agenda, decide when to engage in dialogue and when there is no need to respond. The majority also decides what is the truth, for instance, concerning the Swedish language law. I wish to quote one more example that reveals how asymmetric the debaters' power relations are, and to just what extent the supporters of the law can dictate their opinions as truths. Rafael Rafaj during the second day of the debate argues:

> Takže, ak Francúzi cítia potrebu založiť si dokonca vlastnú medzinárodnú televíznu sieť na úrovni CNN, pretože chcú šíriť frankofónnosť, nuž, prečo by Slovensko, ktorého kultúra sa začala, myslím, písomná kultúra sa začala zo zvláštneho dôvodu až štvrtým evanjeliom zo štyroch synoptikov, Evanjeliom svätého Jána—„Na počiatku bolo slovo. A to slovo bolo u Boha a Boh bolo slovo." Čiže vierozvestci, ktorí prišli na Slovensko, nepreložili prvého synoptika, ale až štvrtého, svätého Jána, pretože sa potrebovali alebo cítili potrebu prihovoriť sa Slovákom práve tým, čo je im najbližšie—slovo. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 33)

> So if the French feel the need to establish even their own international television network comparable to CNN because they want to spread francophonie, well, why would not Slovakia, whose culture began, I think, written culture began on its own with the justification of the fourth Gospel of the four Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of St. John—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. So the apostles who came to Slovakia did not translate the

first Synoptic gospel, but the fourth one, of St. John, because they needed, or they felt the need to talk with Slovaks about what is closest—the word.[94] (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 33)

Pavol Minárik notes an error in Rafaj's speech:

> Len malé upresnenie. Synoptické evanjeliá sú len tri. Zhodou okolností podľa Marka, Matúša a Lukáša len, a práve to Jánovo medzi nimi nie je. Inak synoptický je prehľadne zostavený, zhrnutý, názorný podľa Krátkeho slovníka slovenského jazyka a práve preto sú tam len tie tri. (Minárik 16 Apr 2009, 35, 37)

> Only a small correction. There are only three Synoptic Gospels. Coincidentally, only those according to Mark, Matthew and Luke and that is John is not among them. Synoptic is clearly defined, summarised by the Short Dictionary of the Slovak Language and therefore there are only those three. (Minárik 16 Apr 2009, 35, 37)

Rafaj responds:

> Nesúhlasím s pánom Minárikom, podľa mňa sú synoptici štyria veľmi jasne vydelení. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 38)

> I do not agree with Mr Minárik, according to me the Synoptics are very clearly divided into four. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 38)

The way Rafaj attempts to use specialist terminology, such as Synoptic Gospels, as well as the way in which he connects the beginnings of the Slovak language with the Biblical story, convey elements of a certain cultural eclecticism and nationalism. However, it is more interesting that Rafaj completely neglects Minárik's factual comment that there are only three Synoptic Gospels. True, Minárik's speech is ironic. He ridicules Rafaj's misuse of the concept, which might have irritated him. The exchange, however, shows how little Rafaj in fact needs to care about facts, and how liberally he can construct his narratives on the Slovak language and its (pre)history.

This example is illustrative of a broader trend in which the opponents of the law go into details in their argumentation, provide concrete evidence for their points and respond meticulously to questions whilst the supporters of the draft law paint broad historical narratives, falsify facts and use highly selective examples in their argumentation—and still manage to produce a nar-

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94. The word game Rafaj engages here plays out the fact that the name of Slovakia or Slovak in Slovak comes from the Slavic word "slovo", which means the word.

rative that neatly holds together. There is an obvious power asymmetry between these positions.

This power asymmetry goes a long way in explaining why the draft law on the state language was passed by the parliament. Overtly nationalist arguments voiced on both sides of the debate can help us understand its nationalist content. But neither can clarify why, in the government document that is supposed to guide the interpretation of the law, the political individual was given the centre-stage. Critical discourse analysis might seek answers in a change in social relations of power, but none can really be perceived here. The most plausible external explanation would emphasise the international pressure to underline individual rights. However, the concept of the individual political subject had already surfaced during the debate, before the international interventions.

I seek to understand this surfacing of the political individual through Lotman's notion of translation. What is Minárik in fact doing when he responds to Rafaj? By pointing out the little error that there are only three Synoptic Gospels and not four, he not only questions Rafaj's competence in interpreting the Bible. He also *translates*, that is, he provides a new interpretation of what Rafaj has meant by arguing that the Slovak culture is based on the word—and even on the Divine Word. In essence, Minárik, a politician who is labelled the "conservative politician" later in the debate and who is known for his strong religious views, provides an interpretation of the Slovak culture and language that are *not* divine in any respect.

Why is this obvious? To answer this, we should first ask what allows Rafaj to claim that Slovak language and culture began with the Synoptic Gospels? Scarcely anything beyond that they are sacred and precede the modern state. This claim, however, could be made on the basis of the Gospel of John. The argument about the Synoptics is logically redundant here. But the *translation*, the reinterpretation that Minárik offers to Rafaj, is again in its turn *translated as*, interpreted as, a questioning of the sacredness of the Slovak language and culture. Therefore, Rafaj's response cannot be anything less than a total denial: "I do not agree with Mr Minárik, according to me the Synoptics are very clearly divided into four."[95]

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95. One could think of an alternative explanation that draws from individual urge to maintain a certain social image, for instance, of not erring. However, given the context of parliamentary debate which is institutionally organised as oppositional encounter and the fact that Rafaj self-consciously has engaged in controversial claims already earlier in the debate I think it would be a gross simplification to see his reaction as motivated by psychological factors rather than semiotic. By "semiotic" I mean here that he is responding to a semiotic "argument", that is a meaningful argument rather than a "psychological" argument directed against what he has said. Further, the "semiotic" here only implies that Minárik's factual remark carries relevance not only in regard to Rafaj's personality, but in regard to Rafaj's contribution to the debate as a whole.

The Lotmanian translation does not only show an attempt to make sense of something, whether in a genuine or twisted manner. Translation is a process of negotiating the relationship between the text and the language. Therefore, any translation is as much communication back to the original text as to oneself, in order to confirm one's own languages of interpretation. That is, translation always feeds back to the codes of cultural or semiospheric self-description, those metalanguages of culture, or semiosphere, as Lotman terms it. This helps understand why Rafaj so crudely and forcefully rejects Minárik's repair, for Minárik—in Rafaj's interpretation—aims at nothing less than to question the sacredness of the Slovak language and culture.

Translation cannot be reduced to the finding or establishing of a shared language (or shared tradition) between the interlocutors. This is the main difference between Gadamer's hermeneutics and what I have termed Lotman's "imperfect hermeneutics". Translation concerns the semiosphere's possibilities to and limits of self-description. For instance, in the above example, Rafaj was unable to translate the possibility of the non-sacredness of the Slovak language and culture into his own languages; such a text turned out to be incompatible with the meta-description of Rafaj's semiosphere.

We have no more material on the exchange between Rafaj and Minárik, so we do not find out how decisive and durable Rafaj's denial is; in this context, embedded in the sequence of factual remarks and as a response to a factual remark and the perceivable power asymmetry, it sufficed to block Minárik's interpretation.

The kernel of the exchange between Rafaj and Minárik does not take place at the level of content only. At every turn, the code of interpretation is debated, as well. To make sense of a political debate like this, one must be sensitive to the dual interaction of the content and code, or as Lotman would put it, text and language, as well as the way the two are connected, here translation. Text, language, and their mediation through translation, however, imply that all this must be embedded in the cultural context, the semiosphere. The semiotic space, the semiosphere, functions as the ultimate object of our analysis. However, at the same time it is the precondition of our analysis.

Gadamer makes a similar observation when he discusses the relationship between the hermeneutic circle and tradition: any interpretation of a text (literary work) is conditioned by a prior understanding of the tradition from which it emanates; and tradition becomes comprehensible only through the individual works. This is the hermeneutic circle. Gadamer's hermeneutic circle approaches *die Sache,* where the text and the tradition "meet".

By contrast, Lotman's imperfect hermeneutics indicates infinite expansion, or generation of meaning(s). Political debate is characterised by antagonistic dynamics that often provide better opportunities for new meanings than truth, as conditioned by the past, to emerge. Political debate is more forward looking. It is concerned with the ways in which the past can be trans-

lated into the future. The conditions for this translation are set on the one hand by the semiosphere, and on the other by the structure of the talk. These are the elements I have here analysed through conversation analysis, with particular focus on the sequential order of talk, the dynamics of repair and code-switching. These are also ways of building connections between texts and available cultural languages for their future translation.

The crux of my analysis of Slovakian parliament's debate on the state language is to think *always* about what is said in relation to how it is responded to. In this way, the first utterance carries only meaning potential, or a surplus of meaning, The response "reifies", "recognises and responds", or "actualises" only some of this potential. As Lotman argued

> it has been established that a minimally functioning semiotic structure consists of not one artificially isolated language[96] or text in that language, but of a parallel pair of mutually untranslatable languages which are, however, connected by a 'pulley', which is translation." (Lotman 1990, 2)

The unit of analysis, accordingly, is this translation, not the individual utterances.

However, we can also think of translation in the context of the broader semiosphere. In this context, translation is less concern with the mediation of a text by two different languages; it is more an issue of the semiospheric, or systemic, if you wish, process of "domesticating" potentially threatening text into the canon of the culture. Lotman's thinking on translation as a system-level process is inspired by Bakhtin's distinction between centrifugal and centripetal forces in language. Translation that brings both the language of "making sense" of the concrete text, and the metalanguage of cultural self-description into negotiation, contributes to system-level metadescription. Lotman referred to this as centre–periphery dynamics.

Let us now discuss the system-level of centre–periphery dynamics in more detail. We can start with the translations between concepts of nation (národ) and nationality (národnosť). There is obvious inconsistency as to their uses. For the start, the supporters of the draft law use the terms nation (národ) and nationality (národnosť) consistently so that "nation" (národ) refers to Slovaks in Slovakia and other titular nations in their own countries, as the Hungarian nation (maďarski národ) in the Republic of Hungary. Hungarian and all other minorities in Slovakia, meanwhile, are denoted with the term nationality (národnosť).

However, the way in which the Hungarian minority representatives—the main opponents of the draft law—use these terms indicates some contest

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96. Here Lotman refers to Saussure's attempt to isolate *la langue* as the object of linguistic.

over their meaning. Biró's first speech refers to nations: "one is born with a language and in their language lives each nation [národ]" (Biro 15 Apr 2009, 35, 103). This acknowledges the Slovaks' urge to promote their ow language, but questions whether it is possible to degrade other languages and groups as non-nations in Slovakia. When it comes to more concrete talk about rights, Biró refers to the rights of nationalities (národnosť) and accuses the state of understanding them only as individual rights (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 106). This leads to the situation that "the Slovaks are the only state-forming subject of the Slovak Republic" (Biró 15 Apr 2009, 35, 107). The implication is that individual and group rights are different in their relation to politics in Slovakia.

With the shift of the debate from the competence of the Ministry of Culture and the community delineated by language, the Hungarian minority representatives need to address the "linguistic rights of nationality minorities" (Berényi 16 Apr 2009, 35, 20) that deny minority members the possibility to become political constituents of the state (Biró 16 Apr 2009, 35, 7). For Biró, the fact that linguistic minority rights are treated as individual rights implies that inclusion through *these rights* does not amount to inclusion into the state. Rather, these citizens are left as second-order citizens without access to a state-forming role.

There are two different ways of interpreting what political inclusion means. These two different languages—to use Lotman's terms—are reflected in the contested uses of the terms nation (národ and národnosť). Inclusion through group rights into the constitution of the state on the one hand, and inclusion through individual rights in the realm of redistribution (remember Jarjabek's example of patients in the health care), on the other.

We can place these two types of inclusion in the system-level perspective of centre–periphery dynamics. The shift from the use of collective terms to the emphasis on individual rights not only implies translation of the idea of political inclusion. It also contributes to the self-description of the culture that enables the *political* exclusion of the minorities whilst maintaining that the principle means of civic inclusion is through individual rights. Biró's and Berényi's claim to attain linguistic rights for nationality minorities (that is, groups of people coming together for ethnic and cultural rather than for political reasons, as in the case of a nation) are responded to by speeches raising the issue of the duties of minority members and reminding parliament that there are many minorities. Both make it difficult to privilege the Hungarian minority, which, in turn, indicates different understanding of political inclusion.

This shift to individual rights and duties defuses the minorities' collective claims to the Slovak state, not by denying the possibility of such a claim, but by highlighting the different understanding of political inclusion at play. In the beginning of the debate, one notes the prevalence of the Schmittian no-

tion of politics as the capacity to decide between the friend and enemy. However, in order to counter the Hungarians' claim to this type of political inclusion, the notion of the citizen emerges, now linked to a mode of inclusion that is *acquired* upon successful exercise of the duty of assimilation into the state language.

This could be seen as a triumph of some sort of civic conception of inclusion. However, one should realise that this kind of "Schmittian" political inclusion is bestowed upon the Slovaks in their capacity of constituting the state-forming nation. Civic inclusion based on the individual exercise of rights is limited to individual rights. It excludes political group rights. *Therefore*, it is limited to politics as the realm of redistribution. It does not apply to politics as establishing the order or character of the state (see Tralau 2010).

There are two different conceptions of what is politics at play in this debate on the state language. Politics as the recognition of a national group (národ) is limited to Slovaks, while politics as the right to redistribution of the state benefits is extended to *individuals* of different nationalities (národnosť).

In other words, the translation of a nationality (národnosť) claiming political inclusion is co-opted by centripetal languages, which expand on the meaning of political (inclusion) to include the idea of civic inclusion through individual rights and access to redistribution of goods. Politics as redistribution of goods is a language that enables the centre's (exclusive) metadescription of Slovaks as the only state-forming political collective to coincide with the possibility of inclusion of minorities (národnosť) by extending to them the political obligation to use the state language. This, in turn, reaffirms the primary position of the Slovaks as the state-forming community presiding over the public order in the state. The obligation to use the state language mediates between the two different realms of inclusion and makes it possible for a citizen to change form inclusion in individual (economic) rights to inclusion in political group rights through the body of the state-forming nation that speaks Slovak.

One aspect of the debate hitherto not addressed points out the deeply political—in the Schmittian sense—core of the state language debate. This is the use of the concept of territory. It is striking how the interlocutors persistently underline that the law applies within the "territory of the Slovak Republic". A good example of this trend is Kramplová's answer to Biró:

> Myslíte si, že je normálne, keď napríklad Slovákovi na vlastnom území štátu nestačí slovenčina na to, aby sa mohol dorozumieť v určitých regiónoch a aby si mohol prečítať určité texty... (Kramplová 25 June 2009, 39, 19)

> Do you think that it is normal when, for instance, for Slovaks in their own state territory, the Slovak language is not sufficient to understand

[get by –JT] in certain regions or to read certain texts... (Kramplová 25 June 2009, 39, 19)

Elsewhere, Kramplová refers to the "Slovakian sovereign Republic" (Kramplová 25 June 2009, 39, 53). These are responses to Biró's and her colleagues' accusations that the state language law legislates on behalf of the Slovak language *at the expense* of minority languages. The transition from discussing the relationship between the majority and minority language, first to a discussion of the relative loyalty of citizens and finally to the rights of the Slovaks *in their state territory*, is best understood as a translation induced by the sequentiality of parliamentary debate. It reveals the growing relevance of the state language to the *political* definition of the state. The problems posed to the conflation of the state and the language by the emergence of the individual political subject have been assimilated into the state language.

The debate has managed to unite two seemingly contradictory trajectories. On the one hand, the emphasis on the tangibility of sovereignty in the increasingly frequent references to the territorial boundaries of both the state language and political action mark increasing attempts to delineate the political community, "one's own form of existence" as Schmitt put it (1996, 27). The emphasis on territorial sovereignty connects to the perceived threat posed by the presence of the Hungarian language in the "public contact" to the sovereignty of the Slovak nation. Slovak sovereignty is conceived, accordingly, primarily through the presence of *language*. Language is central to the claims on state sovereignty because other elements upon which national unity could be founded are too porous, weak and internally divided: ethnicity, cultural heritage, historical belonging to the territory etc (see also p. 73 ff.). On the other hand, Slovakia's ethnic and linguistic pluralism and the problems this causes to the conceptualisation of state sovereignty in terms of the state language law are recognised in the references it makes to the need to assimilate the Hungarian speakers, or at least compel them to master the Slovak language. This assimilation enables the Slovaks to maintain primacy within their territory whilst recognising the social reality of cultural pluralism and providing a political solution to it.

In a similar fashion, we have seen that the individual political subject first emerged from the collision of two antagonistic claims to group rights and was then developed to denote the universal citizen bereft of identity, which, n turn, was linked to the exclusive rights of the Slovaks to reign, in their state language, on the territory of the "Slovakian sovereign Republic". This development of the conception of individual rights speaks to the debate's two different understandings of politics. The first focuses on the idea of politics as the redistribution of resources; the second on the Schmittian notion of politics as deciding between the friend and the enemy, that is, establishing the public order in the community.

This notion of politics emphasises who it is that has the primary right of making decisions on behalf of the others. This is the right that the Slovakian government wants to reserve to the Slovakian nation (národ), and keep out of reach of the minorities (národnosti). To reserve this right to the state-forming nation does not mean that the minorities are the enemies. It does mean, however, that the state-forming nation has the political capacity to autonomously make decisions concerning the prevalent political order, that is, take the decision concerning the friends and enemies of the national (národ) community (Schmitt 1996, 27). But this right is essentially different from the right to an equal share in the redistribution of goods. The right to an equal share can be extended to the minorities.

The debate on the state language cannot be reduced to the victory of either one of these modes of understanding of politics, nor to the ultimate separation between them. The debate is waged *between* these understandings of the state language and Slovak politics.

Let me discuss one more example of translation in political debate.

> Rafaj:
> To je naša historická pamät, minimálne od roku 1728, ked Ján Baltazár Magin vydal nie sám od seba, ale ako reakciu na pána Michala Bencíka svoju slávnu Apológiu, ciže obranu slovenciny, obranu Slovákov, obranu autochtónnosti a dnes tento výraz by sme mohli nazvat synonymom štátotvorného elementu alebo štátotvorného národa. Ergo, preto aj hovoríme o štátnom jazyku, pretože po prvé máme suverénny štát, máme vlastnú tradíciu práve v názvosloví, ktorým je používanie prívlastku štátny. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 28)

> This is our historical memory, minimally from year 1728 when Ján Baltazár Magin published, not on his own initiative, but as a reaction to Michal Bencík, his famous Apology, in other words, a defence of the Slovak language, defence of Slovaks, defence of autochthonousness and today this expression we can name a synonym to the state-forming element or state-forming nation. Ergo, we also speak about a state language, because first we have a sovereign state, our own traditions, the right to nomenclature appropriate to the state. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 28)

> Biró:
> Ja sa chcem pána Rafaja opýtať, či si uvedomuje, že sme v 21. storočí a či uznáva, že Slovenská republika je suverénna a svojbytná. [--] Ci sú tieto opatrenia naozaj ochranou a zveladovaním slovenského štátneho jazyka a ci uznávate to, že slovenský jazyk, ktorý, ja chcem povedat, že si ctím, je živý organizmus, ktorý sa dennodenne obohacuje, ci tento jazyk treba chránit v nejakej zakonzervovanej forme alebo takýmto zákonom? (Biró 16 Apr 2009, 35, 36)

I want to ask Mr Rafaj whether he realises that we are in the 21st century and whether he considers that Slovak Republic is sovereign and distinct. [--] Are these measures intended for the protection and cultivation of the Slovak state language and do you consider that the Slovak language, which, I want to say, I honour, is a living organism that grows richer from day to day, that such a language requires defence in the form of conservation or in the form of this law? (Biró 16 Apr 2009, 35, 36)

Rafaj:
Pani Biró by som odkázal výrok Marka Aurélia, že: Čo je dobré pre roj, je dobré aj pre včelu. Ja pevne verím, že pochopíte, čo som tým chcel povedať. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 38)

Ms Biró, I would send you the statement of Marcus Aurelius: what is good for the swarm is good for the bee. I am certain, that you will understand what I wanted to say by this. (Rafaj 16 Apr 2009, 35, 38)[97]

This exchange of different conceptualisation of the Slovak language shows how the historical context of linguistic repression and subsequent fight for the existence of the language is challenged as representing an anachronistic view, out of sync with the contemporary world. Biró does not question the historical account, but she places this account into a new context, introducing a new code for its interpretation. Biró, in other words, offers a new language—now in the Lotmanian sense of the word as a code and its history, or sign system and its history—for interpreting Rafaj's argument about the historical development of the Slovak language *as well as* posing the possibility for a counter-narrative of the Slovak language as being like any other modern, 21st century, titular, liberal, living and practiced language. Rafaj's final response introduces yet another language for interpretation, not only of the Slovak language, but of the language Biró employed, that is, the language of the contemporariness, of a liberal living organism. Biró's language is responded to with a language that emphasises the eternal truths of Antiquity and the unquestionable worth of the Slovak language for the political community of Slovakia. This is translation, the introduction of new but related language for interpreting not only the text, but the previous ways of interpreting the text, as well. The need to protect the Slovak language is thus not only necessary in the name of redressing historical injustices or the practical need to implement or exercise the Slovak language in its political dimension, but also because no community can eschew the need of catering for itself—

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97. The quote in reality reads "That which is not good for the swarm, neither is it good for the bee." Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations, book VI.*

always. Biró's "defence" and "conservation" of the Slovak language become subsumed under the new category of caring for the best of the community. Translation thus *adds* new meanings in a cumulative way.

In the above examples, translation has mediated the relations between two asymmetric and binary oppositions. Rafaj and Minárik debated the sacredness of the Slovak language; Kramplová and her interlocutors addressed the issue of rights and their relation to territory; and finally Rafaj and Biró discussed the relationship between the state language's contemporariness, history or eternity. To think of these oppositions as forming two distinct clusters such as the majority and minority positions is misleading. For instance, Rafaj's sacralisation of the Slovak language preserves it as a property of Slavs only, but it is difficult to see how this could lead to assimilation. Rather, this as well as the dialogue between Rafaj and Biró reminds one more of Schmitt's thesis that the sovereign is not bound by or derived from higher principles (Schmitt 2005, 9ff); that the Slovak language is beyond any debate; and that all (political) debate derives from and depends on the prior acknowledgement of the Slovak language.

It is this kind of language that the law on state language legislates and which is represented by the state and the people. (The fact that the politicians, however, debate a law that was to establish the "sovereignty" of the language and make the language the basis of the state sovereignty reveals how weak the position of the Slovak language really is in Slovak politics.)

Likewise, Kramplová's emphasis on territorial sovereignty calls into question her own argument that it was necessary to bolster the right of Slovaks to use their own language. The problem is that these arguments do not constitute (independent) positions as such. They are *relations* and make sense only in their relational context. The discrepancy between the question and the answer discloses the languages that the participants bring into the debate to generate situational understandings. By focusing on this gap, my analysis can account for the evolution of the debate as well as the ongoing construction of the broader context of the debate. Finally, we can get a better understanding of the semiosphere within which the debate takes place and begin to *understand* Slovak politics on the state language.

Kramplová's desire that knowing only Slovak in Slovakia should be sufficient, the claim that the citizens must have the right to use their state language, and Rafaj's attempts to ground the Slovak language in divine origins or in Antiquity address the traumas of Slovak history. In Slovakia, these are collectively referred to as the "Slovak question"[98] as, for instance, in the

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98. There is no "original" historical Slovak question, but the term has been used to denote the agenda of creating or acquiring some political autonomy to Slovakia. Perhaps the best known "Slovak question" in history concerns the creation of the Czechoslovak state when Slovak separation from Hungary was justified by the national unity of Czechs and Slovak that

book *Slovenská otázka dnes* [Slovak Question Today] of 2007, or, as Rudolf Chmel formulates it "Slovak complex" (*Slovenský komplex*, 2010), or perhaps still better "Fragments on Slovakia, as in František Novosád's *Útržky o Slovensku* of 2010. These works do not narrate events. They attempt to reveal an absence, the fragmentary nature of what can be perceived to be, the quest to comprehend that which inevitably eludes the observer. A glimpse of the themes is also provided by an English collection of contemporary essays, *Scepticism and Hope* (ed. Pynsent 1999), written by Slovak intellectuals. The trauma is that the strong conviction with which Slovak is declared to be the state language is undermined by the very need to justify this declaration to begin with.

This is the situation in which the argument that Slovak—the state language—does not suffice to get by in Slovakia can become a credible political argument. Language is only one part of this trauma, but it occupies the centre of the feeling of being almost indistinguishably similar but distinctively inferior. After all, the Slovak language is almost the same as the Czech, but its difference to Czech is best marked by what can be seen as deficiencies: it has only a meagre literary history, simple grammar, fewer words. The more the distinctiveness of the Slovak language is trumpeted the more evident its scantiness becomes. Jarjabek caught this well:

> Na Slovensku sa dokonca môžete stretnúť s postojom oficiálnej inštitúcie, že isté knihy jednoducho netreba prekladať do slovenského jazyka, pretože už vyšli v češtine. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 129-130)

> In Slovakia, it is possible to encounter as an opinion of a public institution that certain books simply do not need to be translated into Slovak as they have already been published in Czech. (Jarjabek 25 June 2009, 39, 129-130)

This feeling of inferiority, together with its practical outcomes, creates a vicious circle of insufficiency. As Jarjabek's example shows, the Slovak question is not an outcome of conscious utterances. Rather, it results from a multiplicity of texts pointing at the same direction: the inferiority of Slovakia. In wanting something different than their neighbours, whether Czechs of Hungarians, the Slovaks have repeatedly found themselves in the position of being not only different but inferior. Václav Havel, in his first public address after the collapse of the communist regime decries the low status of the land of Czechoslovakia, referring to its polluted rivers and contaminated nature. Further, "entire branches of industry are producing goods which are of no in-

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was needed in order to create big enough a national community to balance the large German minority in Sudetenlands—then part of the new Czechoslovakian state.

terest to anyone, while we are lacking the things we need" (Havel 1991, 390). To illustrate this state of decay, he provides an anecdote from a domestic flight he had recently taken:

> Allow me a little personal observation: when I flew recently to Bratislava, I found time during various discussions to look out of the plane window. I saw the industrial complex of Slovnaft chemical factory and the giant Petržalka housing estates right behind it. The view was enough for me to understand that for decades our statesmen and political leaders did not look or did not want to look out of the windows of the airplanes. (Havel 1991, 390-391)

Petržalka may not be appealing those of classical aesthetics, but it houses around 150 000 people, about 30 percent of Bratislava's total population; the Slovnaft oil refinery is the successor of Apollo refinery corporation established in Bratislava in 1895. The factory was bombed during the Second World War; Slovnaft was built near the old refinery, by the riverbank, just outside the city centre in 1949. Today, it operates the biggest network of petrol stations in Slovakia and employs about 3700 persons.

The "facts" Havel states are less important, here, however, than the relationship that he establishes. This relationship is relevant to the "Slovak question". Slovak history furnishes many examples of a similar, problematic, relationship. In 1968, for instance, Czechs called for increased liberties and Slovaks for autonomy resulting in the perceptions that Slovaks are willing to sacrifice freedom for communist nationalism. In 1939, the clerical-fascist Slovak state acquired formal independence, but was *de facto* puppet state of Nazi-Germany. In 1918, the Slovaks asked for recognition of their distinctiveness only to realise that the common new Czechoslovak nation required unity, not unification in diversity, in order to outnumber the Germans who remained on the Czech lands. The Wilsonian politics of nation-state formation made it possible to establish Slovakia as a separate political unit from the Kingdom of Hungary but simultaneously required it to relinquish its newly acquired distinctiveness to the Czechoslovak national idea—just so that the Czechs would outnumber their German minority.

As these examples make clear, the Slovak question is not a question about the Slovakian national identity; it concerns the country's, its people' and its languages' relation to each other and to their surrounding neighbours.

The "Slovak question" is like a Lotmanian language that generates new texts; but it is also a text itself—the state language law being one of its latest incarnations. Its effects can be seen in the cumulative nature of translation in the parliamentary debate. The individual political subject, after first accidentally entering the debate, soon becomes co-opted by yielding to two different meanings: first the individual as a universal political subject of redis-

tribution and, second, the individual as a member of the Slovak state-forming community. To conceive of this two-fold development as translation allows us to see the mutual relationship between the universal subject and the national subject. This relationship, further, feeds back into the languages, which show how the debate on state language is interpreted by the deputies.

This has allowed two outcomes in the Slovakian case. First, it reveals two different languages of politics: the liberal emphasising politics as redistribution, and Schmittian emphasising politics as establishing an order within the political community by assuming the right and responsibility for distinguishing between friend and enemy. Schmitt sees this decision as political and contextual. It concerns the concrete political judgement necessary to fight the enemy in order to "preserve one's own form of existence" (Schmitt 1996 27).[99]

Second, it interprets individual rights as something that have emerged—not on their own but *in relation to* group rights. Individual rights therefore occupy a certain function. They distinguishing the political community of the nation (národ) from the culturally defined community of nationality (národnosť). The latter's entry into the politics of deciding on order is blocked. Nevertheless, the culturally defined community of nationality can be included through the exercise of rights in the redistributive realm of the state. In other words, individual rights answer for the inclusion of the nationalities into the redistributive realm of the state, but not to the constitution of the state, that is, the right to determine the state's boundaries, both physical and mental, and thus decide on the prevailing political order.

The distinction between the politicised nation and allegedly non-political nationality, and their respective political and redistributive rights, can also help us understand the repeated claims that there is no connection between the laws concerning the state language that legislate on the nation and politics, and the laws concerning minority languages that legislate on the nationalities and redistribution. Laws governing the state language and the minority languages simply refer to different order of the state and politics. This makes the emphasis on the individual as the central category of interpretation in the Principles fully compatible with the perceived privileging of the state-forming nation.

Translation (as opposed to explosion which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter) anticipates predictable cultural change. To what extent are the changes in the state language law debate predictable? The obvious answer is that it was very predictable that the draft law would be approved by the parliament, but this explanation does not need translation; it

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99.   Meier draws attention to how Schmittengages in a dialogue with his critics in editions of *The Concept of the Political* (Meier 1995, 18-24).

suffices to know something about the power asymmetry in the parliament. By applying the concept of translation as contributing to predictable cultural changes, we can reveal the processes by which the potentially truly destabilising arguments of individual rights, in the course of the debate were defused. They were "interwoven" and integrated, into the narrative of the state-forming nation's need to maintain its right to create the basis of the constitution of the political state; the individual rights held by minority members were relegated to the regime of redistribution thus providing minority representatives *qua* individuals a mode of civic integration. This solution maintains the political primacy of the state-forming nation, but recognises the social reality of multiculturalism in Slovakia.

The result of the debate, the Act on the State Language and the Principles of its interpretation, does not necessitate any revision of the basic understanding of Slovakian politics on the part of the governing parties. All alterity produced during the debate was incorporated into the mainstream narrative. This alterity, namely the concept of individual rights, carries real implications for the implementation of the state language law, but it does not bring about any reassessment of what Slovakian politics is all about.[100]

## Conclusions

In my conclusions on the debate on the state language law in Slovakia, I will concentrate on the structural side of the organisation of the parliamentary talk and what we can learn from this. I leave the assessment of the method used here to the final conclusions in Chapter 8.

Slovakian parliamentary debate is fairly loosely organised. No time limits are applied. Turn-taking is organised in four stages, first by signing up, then, by raising a factual remark, then by signing up to speak during the debate. Finally a number of people, such as the Sponsor of the draft law, all ministers, the Rapporteur, the Spokespersons of the parliament, the President... can intervene whenever they wish. The impact of this loose, undecided organisation of turn-taking deserves analysis.

The second, and closely related point I wish to take up concerns the different genres of speech and their mutual interrelations. During the first and

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100. Lotman's study of the everyday life of the Russian nobility in the 18th century indicates similar observation: the foreign habits of Western Europe were brought into the everyday life of the nobility through dual procedure. First, the concrete habits were mastered in minute detail. Second, their performance in everyday life was done in such a way that it was obvious that at question is performance (of something foreign). These two procedures enabled the inclusion of Western habits as being Western and foreign, but turning them into a performance enabled the preservation of the Russianness as the ground for this "europeanisation" of Russian nobility as Lotman termed it (Lotman 1985, 69-70).

second readings, thirty speeches "moved" the debate onwards—this includes the opening and closing statements of the minister (four) and rapporteur's reports (two). There were 113 factual remarks that reacted to a previous speech. The function of the factual remark should be investigated. Much of the "looseness" of the organisation of talk is caused by factual remarks that develop their own themes.

Structurally, the genres of speech can be divided into two main categories: the ones that move the debate "forward" and the ones that comment on previous speeches. Picture 2 gives a graphic presentation of the structure of the debate on the state language law. Speeches that moved the debate forward are placed in a diagonal position; those that were pre-announced are in bold and those announced during the debate are in regular typeface. All factual remarks are in horizontal columns above the speech they formally refer to.

Three observations from the illustration call for immediate attention. First, only a few speeches were announced *before* the debate formally began—one in the first reading and four in the second reading. The second point is the great number of factual remarks. These observations imply that the deputies do not start the debate with formulated positions that they want to declare. Rather, they engage in the debate spontaneously. Third, the possibility of the government ministers, the Spokesperson of the parliament etc... to intervene in the established order of speeches was used only twice (underlined cases in the illustration). The first such intervention on April 16th by Čaplovič, is in fact not really an intervention, as he used the slot meant to reply to factual remarks to deliver a new speech instead. Thereby he obtained the advantage of not being bound by the two-minute time limit. The second intervention by Minister Maďarič on June 25th is a more clear-cut case of an actor taking advantage of his position of power. In this intervention, Maďarič reacts to Biró's speech, and such as Čaplovič, is able to escape the two-minute limit imposed on factual remark. He does not, however, say anything new, but only restates that the agenda concerns the state language law and thus no discussion of minority rights should take place. In effect, the loose organisation of turn-taking has not led to a situation, in which the government representatives (those who mainly have the right to intervene) would have taken over the debate.

The conclusion we can draw seems that this loose organisation has been more conducive to spontaneous debate, to a situation in which deputies decide to speak during the debate—and therefore their speeches are more like responding to what has been said rather than expressions of their (political) ideas as such. Or at least, they present their ideas in relation to what they have heard during the debate. Given the fact that most political parties declined the possibility to express their party opinion in the beginning of each reading, the individual deputies preferred to get involved in the debate through factual remarks, or declared their willingness to speak only as the
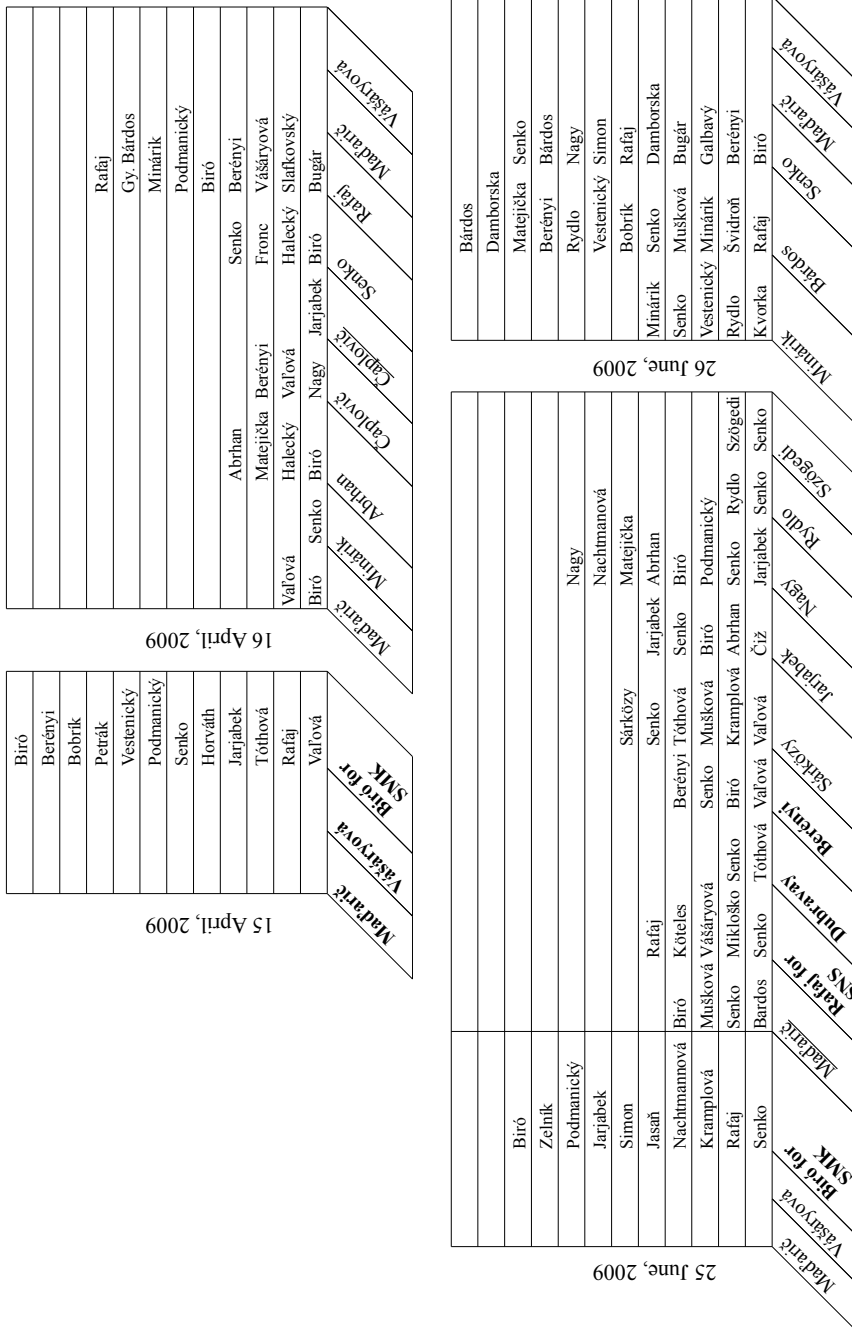
Picture 2: The Structure of the Slovakian debate on the state language law.

debate was already going, raises the question of whether political opinions or statements feasibly function on their own or whether their relevance is felt most urgently only *in relation to* another opinion, as a response to something. These observations show how important the concrete but also contingent situation of talk—its sequential organisation—is for the overall course of the parliamentary debate.

The second point I wanted to discuss in these conclusions concerns the function of the factual remark. According to the parliamentary rules, a factual remark is a spontaneous reaction to a previous speech and it cannot be directed at another factual remark. It is delivered directly from the deputy's seat and it is limited to two-minutes. After this time, the power of the microphone is switched off. In practice, the content of the factual remark does not need to address the previous speech very closely and many deputies openly acknowledge that they are reacting both to what the speaker said and points raised by previous factual remarks. During the first day of the debate it was in factual remarks that different interpretations of the purpose of the state language law developed. We may recall that Vaľová's point was that ethnic Slovaks should not be discriminated against by being required to know minority languages, Rafaj turned this into a conscious language policy designed to affect society, Tóthová raised the distinction between state-forming nation and minorities, and finally Jarjabek put forward the idea that the state language law serves as a neutral means of communication between citizens. Consecutive factual remarks elaborated this idea. On the following day, even Minister Maďarič embarked on the debate from this position: that the state language law guarantees all Slovak citizens all the information they need in their state language. Similarly, on the following day, it was Vaľová's factual remark that in an ironic tone rebuked Biró, saying that she could not claim to talk on behalf of all minorities because she promoted only the interests of the Hungarian minority. This attack provided the debate with a new conceptualisation, which put the Hungarian minority on par with all other minorities. This is not obvious in Slovakia, where the common perception is that the Hungarian minority is different. And as the early part of the debate showed, this understanding is also oriented to by both Hungarian and Slovak participants in the debate. In fact, during the first reading, both of the debate's crucial turns were brought up in a factual remark, by that spontaneous reaction to a speech delivered without preparation, from the deputy's seat, and limited in time to two minutes.

Even if the genre of the factual remark is defined as a reaction, they prove to be extremely productive in giving new conceptualisations that come to ground future turns of the debate—they are, in fact, far more productive in this respect than the prepared plenary speeches. They are productive, because they are direct, addressed, translations of the previous speech. Their content often assumes the form of a strong political position for or against

the speech. This produces a clear distance between the original speech and the reaction that embodies a new meaning of the original statement. A new meaning is generated through the introduction of new cultural languages for the interpretation of the original speech. New cultural languages, brought into the debate through factual remarks, provide the interlocutors with new possibilities, new contextualisations, for the whole debate, thus affecting potential future turns but also providing alternative interpretations of past turns. For instance, the differences in reasoning between Maďarič's initial argument for the state language law—that of the Ministry of Culture's competence in the field of language—and the argument that the law provides all citizens with a universal means of communication are clearly different—and this reasoning is reflected in the Principles drafted for the interpretation of the state language law. Both arguments, the Ministry of Culture's competence and the universal means of communication, can easily be fitted under the common denominator of nationalism, but this misses the subtle changes that took place in justifying these different interpretations. And as the Principles indicate, such reasonings have real effects.

The structural organisation of the talk in the Slovakian parliament, which enables a rather free exchange of speeches, and the popularity of the factual remark as the preferred speech genre, raise some questions concerning the idea of a political debate. The first is the tendency to think of political debates as battles between different ideas or arguments. The detailed analysis of the debate on the state language law indicates that in reality, at least in this case, political positions seem to follow rather than precede the actual debate. It is also worth remembering given the saliency of the debate, its long historical background, that initially only one deputy signed up to talk, but many other followed as the debate took off.

Second, if political positions are more the outcomes of interaction rather than preconditions for it, it becomes problematic to focus on the content of individual speeches as units of analysis. In fact, the content of a political speech, as we have seen here, becomes sensible only as a relation to preceding and anticipated future speeches; it does not really reveal "itself" on its own.

This leads to the third point concerning the structure of parliamentary debate, namely that political arguments or ideas acquire dynamics of their own and cannot be studied as reflections of any preceding reality or of political parties. Undoubtedly, the debate has witnessed many concepts or ideas. We can start with the idea of state competence, which was central to Minister Maďarič's contribution in the beginning of the debate. But just how useful is this idea of state competence in terms of the debate? Maďarič abandoned it already on the following day. The ideas that are more durable, those concerning the different interpretations of rights or different conceptions of the political in fact remain unspoken. It was possible to discover these only by focus-

ing on the "gaps" occurring between different turns of the debate. Lotman calls this translation: the possibilities of uttering the previous message in a new language always alters the original meaning. The regularities in these alterations reveal two different conceptions of the political that, so to speak, feed themselves into the translations. Again, we need the analytical unit of a pair of arguments to discover this; isolated statements cannot convey it.

These observations question the usefulness many concepts such as argument (its structure), speech act, or discourse (as in critical discourse analysis), as analytical tools in the study of political debate, as they fail to take the sequential context of talk sufficiently into account. Below, I will briefly address the concept of discourse.

Discourse as something that binds together the textual expression and social relations of power (Fairclough 1992) is obviously visible in the Slovakian debate on the state language. However, as we saw in the debate, there are clear changes in the textual relations, which can, in turn, affect the interpretation of the law, but it is difficult to realise any opening or shift in the social relations of power existing between the majority and the minority. One reason is, as was argued above, that the textual changes in fact concern state–individual relations rather than the majority–minority relations. But from this it does not follow that the social relations of power between the state and the individual would be affected, because the debate on the state language law has not been coupled to a social change leading to greater individual political recognition. In the debate, rather, it seems that there is much more autonomy between the discourse-as-text and the discourse-as-social practice than Fairclough's theory allows. It was the sequential organisation of talk, seemingly unimportant remarks, perhaps even mere linguistic puns, which nevertheless made sense in the context of talk, and to a large extent account for the turns that we witness in the course of the debate. In the Slovakian case, it seems to make more sense to think of the debate as *fracturing* the discourse rather than it inflicting discursive and social change. Such a fracture could anticipate a broader social change, but any conclusions towards that would be premature in the light of the analysis. The fracture, however, indicates the importance of focusing on the textual dynamics *independently* of their relation to the social relations of power that nevertheless accompany them.

To some extent, CDA recognises the independence of language from social relations of power. Fairclough in his study on the New Labour argues that their key concept, the Third Way, "does not come ready-formed, nor is it forged once-and-for-all" (2000, 4). This logically shifts the focus to how the Third Way, as "creation in language", is constructed (ibid., 9). Fairclough's point is to expose the language used by the New Labour as well as New Labour's attempts to mask their deeds under misleading words (ibid., 15). However, the focus remains solely on language as an element for *produ-*

*cing* social reality; it does not acknowledge that language is dialogic in nature, that arguments acquire their content and force in relation to other arguments just as an answer becomes answer *in response to* a question.

The concept of discourse would benefit from according more force to interpretation, the reception side of language use. For the purpose of emancipatory social criticism championed by critical discourse analysis (ibid., 16) it may be sufficient to focus on the production and disclose its nature. However, for the purposes of understanding the evolution of the parliamentary debate, a more interactive analytical apparatus is needed. Critical Discourse Analysis could benefit from less stringent coupling between textual, discursive and social domains, and from allowing each of these more autonomy. Especially in the case of talk, the dynamics of interlocution can easily take over those of the discursive or social relations. The sequential organisation talk produces a contingent "field" within which texts can be interpreted independently of their discursive or social positions; interpretation takes place also against the background of the sequential ("micro") context of talk. In the Slovakian debate of the state language, translations that did not reflect declared positions in the debate became dominant *because* they could provide an answer to the question posed by a *sequentially* preceding statement.

# Chapter 7: Making Gender Political

The previous chapter discussed a political debate that has a long history and a central place in Slovakia's politics. This chapter will discuss a gender parity bill in Poland. This differs in two respects from the Slovakian state language law. The issue of gender parity is novel, and gender questions have generally occupied only a marginal place in Polish politics. The cases are also different in terms of their institutional organisation: the rules governing the Slovakian parliamentary talk provide for free and unpredictable turn-taking whereas the Polish rules are stricter and set a more predictable turn-taking for the whole debate.

In the summer of 2009, the first Women's Congress (Kongres Kobiet) was held in Poland. It marked a new beginning in the women's movement in Poland by pooling together fragmented and scattered women's organisations and individual women behind a broad agenda. Rather than presenting an elaborate and extensive list of demands, Women's Congress focused their demands (originally 135) on two issues: parity in the electoral lists and the appointment of a gender equality ombudsman.[101] The issue of equality between women and men was crystallised into the demand for gender parity on electoral lists, and later in the summer of 2009, a social movement emerged advancing the issue. The draft legislation advanced by the social movement supported the demand that the number of women on the electoral lists should be the same or greater than that of the men, meaning that there must be a minimum of 50 percent women candidates on the electoral lists (Druk 2713, 2010). The social movement gained unexpected momentum, and in a course of less than half a year it succeeded in collecting over 150 000 signatures to support the bill, which consequently was placed on the parliamentary agenda.[102] Its first reading in the Sejm, the Polish Parliament,

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101. The ombudsman (Rzecznik) in Poland is clearly separated from the state administration and judiciary and it is allowed to act on its own initiative to raise new issues in addition to addressing administrative wrong-doings that have been referred to it by citizens. Ombudsman in Poland is subject to parliamentary overseeing.

102. According to the Polish Constitution Art 118 § 2, 100 000 signatures of Polish citizens eligible to vote in parliamentary elections are required to place a citizen initiated project for a bill on the parliamentary agenda. How such citizens' initiative should be carried out is regulated in detail by the law on Citizens Legal Initiative (Ustawa o wykonywaniu inicjatywy

took place on February 18th, 2010, after which it underwent committee work and on November 24th, 2010, the second reading of the bill took place, and on December 3rd that year the Sejm, as the first parliament in Central Europe passed legislation sanctioning gender quotas for electoral lists. The Senate approved the law on January 5th, 2011. The law prescribes 35 percent quotas for both men and women on the electoral lists to Sejm, European Parliament, and municipal elections (Ustawa 5 January 2011). Failure to fulfil the quota requirement leads to the rejection of the electoral list.[103]

The draft bill for gender parity is the first clearly feminist initiative that the Polish parliament has passed. The idea for the bill was born outside of the party politics, and both the governing parties (PO and PSL) and the opposition (PiS, LiD, PJN and MN) were internally divided over the issue.[104] Previous feminists initiatives concerning for instance abortion or women's and men's equal rights (1996–1997[105], 1999[106] and 2003[107]) have been

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ustawodawczej przez obywateli, 24 June 1999).

103. Małgorzata Fuszara (2010) discusses this movement also in her article Citizenship, Representation and Gender, in *Polish Sociological Review*. Her material is interviews with members of the Polish parliament on gender quotas.

104. PO (Platforma Obywatelska, Civic Platform) is the biggest party in the Sejm with 209 seats. Ideologically it pools together Christian democratic, centrist, conservative and liberal ideas. In the EP, it belongs to the European People's Party.
PSL (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, Polish People's Party) is the coalition partner of PO with 31 seats. It proclaims centrist, agrarian and Christian democratic political ideas. In the EP, it also belongs to the European People's Party.
PiS (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Law and Justice) is the biggest opposition party with 166 seats. It declares Christian democratic, national-Catholic and conservative political ideas. In the EP, PiS belongs to European Conservatives and Reformists.
LiD (Lewica i Demokraci, Left and Democrats) is the second largest opposition party and has 53 seats in the Sejm. It declares social democratic and social liberal ideas and in the EP it belongs to the Party of European Socialists.
PJN (Polska Jest Najważniejsza, Poland Comes First) is a splinter group from PiS that was formed in late 2010. It has 15 members in the Sejm. It declares Christian democratic, conservative and liberal political ideas.
MN (Mniejszość Niemiecka, German Minority) is exempted from the 5-percent threshold as it represents an ethnic minority. The German minority in Poland lives in Opole Voivodeship in Silesia.

105. Druk 2217 on equal status between women and men was initiated by members of parliament and it was discussed in the Sejm on 18.6.1997. The speeches were limited only to presentations of opinion of different parliamentary clubs (klub) and circles (koło). As a result of the first reading, the initiative was sent further to parliamentary Committee on Justice and Human Rights (Komisja Sprawiedliwości i Praw Człowieka) as well as to the Committee on Legal Affairs (Komisja Ustawodawcza). The initiative was never discussed in either committee and the matter is not legally finished to date.

106. Druk 569 on equal status between women and men was likewise initiated by members of parliament and its first reading took place in the Sejm on 5th March 1999 and its was rejected.

107. Druk 1313 on equal status was initiated by the Senate and its first reading in the Sejm took place on 13th June 2003. As a result, it was sent to the parliamentary committee on Justice and Human Rights as well as the Committee on Legal Affairs. The Committees on

blocked, and Poland has also negotiated an exception to the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which guarantees, for instance, equality for men and women within the family.[108]

The passing of the bill in its amended form was unexpected for many reasons. First, it emerged outside of the conventional policy source—the government and political parties and was therefore not connected with established political agenda of the government, nor of any parliamentary party. Second, its nature is at odds with the general trend for developing, or better refusal to develop, policies in the field of women's rights or equality legislation. Third, it seems to have been generally acknowledged that the opposition to the bill was far greater than the support—especially among the parliamentarians. Evidence for this can be seen in the way the bill was presented to the parliament of which more shortly.

Korolczuk (2013) and Hryciuk and Korolczuk (2013) argue that women-specific legislation faces a double challenge in Poland. It must first enter the political agenda, and then win a majority support. In the case of the gender parity bill, the first challenge was formally solved by the constitutional guarantee that a citizens' initiative supported by more than 100 000 signatures must be placed on the parliamentary agenda. According to the Sejm rules, however, the Marshall of the Sejm can still decide when, and therefore also in practice also whether, the bill will be debated. The gender parity bill raised much interest and was debated promptly in the Sejm.

Secondly, women-friendly policies still need to acquire the majority's support in the parliament. There is wide agreement that Polish politics is divided into two deeply antagonistic blocks that and co-operation between them is difficult, if not impossible. Agnieszka Graff describes the blocks as liberal and religious (Graff 2007, 151), Zdzisław Krasnodębski as pragmatic-cynical and patriotic-conservative—or simply left-liberals and right-traditionalists (Krasnodębski 2005, 40). Despite the labels, the conclusion is that they stand too far apart to allow for any dialogue: "There can be no real dialogue between a liberal discourse, which emphasises freedom and human rights, and a religious discourse, the bottom line of which is the 'will of God', 'absolute truth' and 'natural law'." (Graff 2007, 151). Studies on politicians', both men and women, opinions about the quota reveal that they do not enjoy much support, even though discrimination against women is

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Justice and Human Rights as well as on Legal Affairs suggested the rejection of the Bill on 15th April 2004. The Sejm in the second reading of the bill, however, rejected the suggestions of the Committees and returned it in an amended form back to them for a second reviewing. Now Druk 1313 had become Druk 3954 and it was discussed in the Sejm on 16 June 2005 backed by the approval of both parliamentary committees. The Sejm decided to have the third reading i.e. vote on the bill on the following day. The Sejm rejected the Druk 3954.

108. See Holc (2004) and Nowakowska (2000) for a discussion on citizen's rights in the case of abortion.

acknowledged (Fuszara 2010, 377). Indeed, there appears to be more support for gender parity among the electorate than among the politicians (ibid. 378).

Under these circumstances—lack of interest and support from the political elite and a deeply antagonistic political system—the debate on the gender quota appears to be highly intriguing example of the *political* in Poland. It is also interesting because the outcome of the debate was, against all odds, somewhat of a victory for women's rights. As a hint of the complexity of the situation, one might note that most speeches during the first reading were critical of the bill, but when the parliament was asked to vote for sending the bill to the second reading there were no opposing voices. The bill and the surrounding circumstances, in a sense, seem to haunt the deputies to the extent that they could not stop debating it.

This chapter will provide a detailed account of the parliamentary debate on the bill. I will argue that this will enable us to understand the relationship between the bill and the political and cultural context that eventually led to its approval. I will not look at the social forces or balances of power between different parliamentary groups in this process. Nor will I attempt to assess the political or social significance of the bill. I will, instead, bring forth the structure of the parliamentary debate as this structure emerged during the debate, and look at the changes in conceptual relations that eventually guaranteed support for the bill in the Sejm. The focus is exclusively on the debate and its structure for I think there is much to be learnt. I have already hinted that the outcome was unpredictable. In order to capture the nature of the debate, it appears that we must acquire insights into the *concrete* parliamentary talk. Only thus can we account for the discrepancy between the hegemonic patriarchal discourses and the dynamics of the debate. By focusing on the talk-in-interaction in the Sejm, this chapter aims at shedding light upon the conceptual development that accompanied the gender parity debate and its possible contributions to the evolution of the debate.

One should keep in mind that as a citizens' initiative, the bill entered the parliament independently of party positions, and even though there were attempts to incorporate the bill into party struggles and some party discipline was applied, it was not obeyed in all cases. In essence, the fate of the bill to a large extent rested on the outcome of the parliamentary debate itself, which is by no means predetermined. However, the aim is not to provide a causal argument why the bill was accepted, but to look at the conceptual development that accompanied the bill in the parliamentary debate.

# Polish Legislative and the Sejm Routines

As was discussed in Chapter 4, I understand parliamentary debate as a form of institutional talk. Institutional talk by the deputies in the parliament, and more specifically the readings of the bill orient to the institutional function of the parliament, to the institutional conventions that provide guidelines for talk and to the institutional identity of the parliament. Much of the institutional character of parliamentary talk is based on Chapter 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997)[109], the Resolution on the Regulations of the Sejm (1992) (Uchwała Regulamin Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), and the Resolution on the Ethical Principles of the Members of the Parliament (1998) (Uchwała Zasady Etyki Poselskiej).

Institutionally, the Polish legislative is divided into the Lower House, the Sejm (Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej) and the Upper House, the Senate (Senat Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej). Sometimes both houses are referred to only as the Sejm, and when they sit together, they are known as the National Assembly (Zgromadzenie Narodowe).[110] Whenever I use the word "Sejm", I refer to the Lower House only.

The legislative power is exercised by the Sejm and the Senate (Art 10 § 2, Art 95 § 1 Constitution of RP). The Sejm has 460 members of parliament, or deputies, and the Senate 100 senators. The Sejm is the organ where new bills are debated, and parliamentary committees under Sejm are the organs for working out the details of the proposed bills. The Senate's role in the legislative process is to pass judgment on the proposed bill. It can accept it, suggest changes, or reject it. However, the Sejm can overrule the Senate's decision by absolute majority, that is, 231 or more votes. The procedures for laws amending the Constitution are somewhat different, and the Senate's powers are then greater. Both Houses are elected for four years and the terms of office begin with the first sitting of the Sejm. Elections to the Sejm and Senate are called by the President. Candidates cannot run both to the Sejm and the Senate.

The first sitting of the Sejm is called by the President. The Sejm elects from among its members a Marshall and a number of Vice-Marshalls, who preside over the debates. The Sejm also appoints standing parliamentary committees and if needed special parliamentary committees. The gender parity bill was discussed in a special committee, appointed to oversee a large project consolidating electoral legislation.

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109. There is an official English translation of The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which I use here. There are no official or established English translations of Regulations of the Sejm or Ethical Principles of the Members of the Parliament and therefore all translations from the documents are mine.

110. National assembly is called only during the taking of an oath of the new president, taking an indictment against the president or cancelling the powers of the president due to health reasons.

The right to initiate bills belong to the deputies, the Senate, the President, the Council of Ministers or a group of citizens of more than 100 000. The Sejm considers a bill in three readings. During the first two readings, deputies, the Council of Ministers and the representative of the group of citizens that has initiated a bill can introduce changes; the Senate may introduce changes only after the Sejm has passed the bill on its third reading. The Sejm passes bills on a simple majority basis in the presence of at least half of the 460 deputies.

One significant difference between the Polish parliament and those of many European countries is the fact the deputies' presence in the parliamentary sittings is strictly controlled in each sitting. Acceptable reasons for absence are illness, approved travel, special duties in the parliamentary committees, approved vacation and possible other *force majeure* reasons (Art 7 § 8 Regulamin Sejmu). This means that the vast majority of the deputies in fact are present at the plenary meetings.

The Marshall of the Sejm sets the dates of parliamentary sittings and the daily agenda. The Marshall is to consult the Convent of Seniors of the Sejm[111] in this process, and all clubs,[112] circles or groups that have minimum 15 deputies can introduce changes to the agenda in writing a day in advance (Art 173 Regulamin Sejmu).

Any bill must be handed in to the Marshall of the Sejm in writing and include justification of the necessity and the aim of the bill, a description of the current legal status, indicate the difference the bill would make legally, point out predictable social, economic, financial and legal consequences of the bill, point out the financial resources required for realising the purpose of the bill, propose a preliminary legal text for the bill, and the guarantee that the approval of the proposed bill is not against the EU law and does not belong to the exclusive competences of the EU legislation, and give related relevant information (Art 34, Regulamin Sejmu). The bill is presented to the Sejm by the representative of its initiators (wnioskodawca). The first reading can take place in the Sejm or, in special circumstances, in a parliamentary committee. The first reading consists of the presentation of the bill by its initiators, an

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111. The Convent of Seniors of the Sejm (Konwent Seniorów) represents the whole Sejm in matters of establishing the daily operation of the Sejm. It consists of the Marshall and all Vice-Marshalls, spokespersons of all Parliamentary Clubs and Circles if their membership is at least 15.

112. Parliamentary Club (Klub Sejmowy or Klub Poselski) is formed by deputies that share their political sympathies. There must be at least 15 deputies for the group to be called a Club. In practice, all political parties that have been elected to the parliament attempt to form Clubs. Parliamentary Circle (Koło Sejmowe or Koło Poselskie) is a similar organisation with the minimum three members. A deputy can belong to only one Club or Circle. Clubs and Circles receive financial aid to carry out their work (Art 18 Ustawa o Wykonywaniu Mandatu Posła i Senatora).

open debate about the general principles of the bill and questions by the deputies and answers by the initiator. The first reading ends either with the bill being sent to a parliamentary committee(s) for further work or with a rejection by the majority of the parliament (Art 39 Regulamin Sejmu).

The parliamentary committees are responsible for presenting their opinion and suggest possible amendments to the bill; they may also call a subcommittee to carry out this work for them, as was the case with the gender parity bill (Art 40-41 Regulamin Sejmu). The representative of the initiators of the bill is required to sit in the parliamentary committees that work on the bill. The committees present their statement on the bill to the parliament at the beginning of the second reading (Art 43-44 Regulamin Sejmu). Thereafter the debate continues with deputies' speeches on the bill and the presentation of amendments that have been handed in to the Marshall. If corrections have been suggested during the second reading, the bill will return to the committees for further discussion. The bill can also be rejected during the second reading. The third reading consists of the presentation of the amendments approved by the committee(s) and the final vote on the bill; no debate on the bill is allowed at this stage (Art 49 Regulamin Sejmu).

The Marshall of the Sejm allocates the turns of speeches. The secretary of the Sejm takes down the speeches, which are delivered in the order dictated by the Marshall (Art 179 Regulamin Sejmu). During the debate, deputies' speeches are limited to 10 minutes, and speeches on behalf of the parliamentary club to 20 minutes; other time limits are generally established by the Marshall in consultation with the Sejm. Individual deputies can only deliver two speeches on the same topic in addition to those delivered on behalf of a parliamentary club or circle (Art 180 Regulamin Sejmu). The limit of two speeches does not, however, apply to the right to raise questions. If approved by the Marshall, questions can be raised at any time during the speeches (Art 182 Regulamin Sejmu). The time limit for questions is set by the Marshall and it applies equally to all. Speeches exempt from the above regulations may also be allowed by the Marshall, but they shall not last more than two minutes (Art 184 Regulamin Sejmu).

Despite the strict regulations, the practice of the Sejm is rather relaxed and, for instance, time limits are regularly exceeded—at least in the case of the gender parity debate on February 18th and November 24th, 2010.

Three principal laws sanction the work of the deputies. The Constitution, 1997, The Law on the Mandate of the Deputies and Senators (Ustawa o Wykonywaniu Mandatu Posła i Senatora), 1996, and The Ethical Principles of the Members of the Parliament (Zasady Etyki Poselskiej), 1998, rule that the deputies must act in the interest of the nation as a whole and not be bound by any instructions from the electorate (Art 104 § 1, Constitution of the Republic of Poland) and that they should behave according to their position as deputies of the Republic of Poland. Above all, they must not further their

own interests (bezinteresowność), they should promote openness and accountability to the public (jawność), attentiveness to the work, meaning that deputies should be guided by their meritocratic competence (rzetelność), they should care for the good image of the Sejm by avoiding disgraceful behaviour (zasada dbałości o dobre imię Sejmu), and they should carry responsibility for their actions and make themselves available for questioning and control (odpowiedzialność) (Art 1-8 Zasady Etyki). The main duty of the deputies is to take part in the sittings of the Sejm and voice their opinions on issues on the agenda (Art 13-15 Ustawa o Wykonywaniu Mandatu Posła i Senatora).

## Talk in the Sejm

The Regulations of the Sejm establish four types of talk that deserve a closer look. First, the bill is presented to the Sejm in the first reading by a representative of its initiators. This speech serves the function of explaining what the bill is all about and to place it in the context of the current legal framework as well as explain and justify the changes the bill would bring about. During the second reading, the representative of the parliamentary committee(s) that has discussed the bill will present it. the function of this speech is to acquaint the deputies with changes made to the bill and with the opinion of the committee. The genre of these speeches is clearly of expertise type on the matter.

The second type of speech concerns the opinions of the parliamentary groups, and indicate whether the groups support or oppose the bill. During the first reading, the groups also have to voice whether the bill should be sent to parliamentary committees for further work or whether it should be rejected straightaway. During the second reading, the opinions of the parliamentary groups are more directly linked to the approval or disapproval of the bill as proposed by the committee(s). This genre of speech reflect the political positions in the Sejm.

The third type of speech concerns the individual opinions of the deputies. Individual deputies' opinions serve the function of elaborating the institutionally sanctioned positions provided by the representative of the initiators of the bill in the first reading and the representative of the committee in the second reading and the opinions of the parliamentary groups. These speeches provide non-mainstream opinions but also raise issues that affect the way in which the bill is talked about.

The fourth type of speech are the questions by the deputies. Their official function is to require answers to concrete questions of the bill and thus clarify the bill. However, judging from the evidence of the Polish debate, they most often serve to question or provide indirect and partial interpretations of the bill, and presentations of the opinions of initiators and committees.

Despite the fact that only the last type of talk shows clear dialogic function, the actual practice in the Polish Sejm shows high levels of sensitivity towards other speeches and the relational positioning of even expert opinions. Evidence of this comes out in the analysis of the actual material.

## Talk in the Committee

The bill was also debated in the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Law (Komisja Nadzwyczajna do Rozpatrzenia Niektórych Ustaw z Zakresu Prawa Wyborczego). As this is a special committee whose primary task is the consolidation of the electoral law there are no fixed regulations for how it should operate. However, there are some general principles, which apply to all parliamentary committees. The committee is headed by the spokesperson, who establishes the committee's agenda, sets the dates for sittings, set the daily agenda, oversees the planning of the sittings, ensures that all members receive materials in time and appoints the person (sprawozdawca), who reports the committee's opinion to the Sejm in the beginning of the second reading of the bill (Art 150 Regulamin Sejmu). The main function of the committee is to consider (rozpatrywać) the cases referred to it and pass its opinion and resolution on the matter back to the Sejm (Art 151 Regulamin Sejmu).

One special aspect of the committees of the Sejm is their relative openness. Art 154 Regulamin Sejmu states that all deputies have the right to take part in any committee sitting—even in the closed ones—and they have the right to speak, but have no voting right. Furthermore, in the committees that discuss new bills, any member of the public, who has some professional interests, e.g. a lobbyist, can participate. These members of the public have the right to speak in the committee, but not to vote. They can, however, be expelled after two warnings, if for example they bring up issues that are beside the point (Art 154-155 Regulamin Sejmu). Naturally, the spokesperson can declare the committee sitting closed and limit the persons taking part in the meeting. In the case of the gender parity bill, members of the public were present in the committees and made use of their right to speak.

In contrast to the institutional function of talk in the Sejm, the talk in the Committee should serve the goal of considering appointed cases and formulating a resolution in each case. If necessary, the committees vote on the content of the resolution. In the Sejm, the function of talk was to bring to expression different opinions on the discussed topic.

The functions of the different types of parliamentary or committee talk outlined here rely on the descriptions provided by the Polish Sejm. I understand them as potentially relevant to the ongoing evolution of the turns taken by different speakers in the course of the debate (see Chapter 5); I do not

pass judgement on how well the speeches serve the functions described, nor do I classify them according to these functions. The reason why they, nevertheless, are relevant is that as institutional descriptions, they set certain parameters for the turn-taking structure of the debate, for the ways in which one turn can function as answer to a preceding turn and set the question for the following turn. They are institutional features of the parliamentary talk, talk that stems from the recognition of conflict, institutionalises, regulates and maintains that conflict, and provides a political solution to it.

## The Citizens' Initiative and the Debate in Short

The citizens' initiative to change the electoral law is not the first attempt at introducing quotas in Polish electoral politics. Previous, failed, attempts were made in 1997 when the bill on equal status between men and women was sent to committees, but never discussed there. In 2001, deputy Olga Krzyżanowska suggested a quota of 30 percent on electoral lists, but her initiative was rejected already in the first reading. In 2009, an electoral quota for women received the full attention of the Sejm.

Below I will provide a quick summary of the main arguments presented in the debate. The purpose of this summary is two-fold. The first aim is simply to give the reader a little overview of the issues and themes that emerged in the debate and of how they interrelate. I will also introduce some of the regular participants of the debate. The second aim is more strategic and concerns the trade-off of between applying conversation analysis and emphasising dynamics and the analysis of ideas or positions in the debate. This short summary introduces some key ideas or discourses, and key positions assumed by the interlocutors.[113] The following, longer analysis, approaches these ideas and positions in their practice, and study how they develop in the course of the parliamentary debate.

The analysis is based on the bill itself, all recorded speeches delivered in the Sejm during the first and second reading of the bill, the recorded speeches from the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Law and the expert opinions requested by the committee. The transcripts of the speeches, both from the Sejm and from the Committee, are available from the server of the Sejm.

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113. Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska (2012) has applied critical discourse analysis to the Internet discussions on the gender parity bill. Her findings partly concur with this little summary derived from the parliamentary debate. Her findings conclude that both camps drew from many different ideologies, such as idealism, collectivism, liberalism and progressivism among the supporters and post-feminism, paternalism, matriarchalism, American individualism and conservatism among the opponents (2012, 86). My summary perhaps collapses some of the different ideologies to the liberalism-republicanism distinction.

There were 154 "official" turns during the first reading of the bill and 18 turns during the second; the third reading consists of voting only. The numbers do not include turns resulting from unofficial comments made by the audience. However, in the analysis of the material such remarks are included. If we count the number of "whole" speeches irrespective of them being interrupted and excluding the interventions of the Marshall of the Sejm, we have 59 "speeches" in the first reading and 11 in the second. In the five Committee meetings that considered the bill, there were 166 turns. Since the nature of the Committee meeting is open discussion, it does not make sense to give numbers for "whole" speeches. The Committee meetings took place between April 8th and November 9th, 2010. The Committee established a special subcommittee to consider the bill further. No records of the subcommittee meetings are available, however.

The bill on gender parity put forward by the citizens' committee was given the number 2713 in the Sejm (Druk 2713). It was submitted, together with more than 150 000 signatures, to the Marshall of the Sejm on January 22nd, 2010 by the representative of the citizens' committee "Czas na kobiety" (Time for Women). The content of the bill is very simple and adds only two paragraphs to the existing acts on elections to the Sejm and the Senate (Ustawa 21 April 2001), municipalities (gmina), counties (powiat), and Voivodeships (województwo) (Ustawa 16 July 1998) and the European Parliament (Ustawa 23 January 2004). The first addition reads:

> Liczba kobiet na liście okręgowej nie może być mniejsza niż liczba mężczyzn.

> The number of women on the electoral list cannot be smaller than the number of men. (Druk 2713, 2010)

The second addition authorises the National Electoral Commission (Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza) to control whether the submitted list complies with the gender requirement and to reject lists that do not comply. The legal part of the bill was introduced by a short preamble that made a reference to the Polish Constitution article 33. The Article 33 of the Constitution in full reads:

> 1. Men and women shall have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life in the Republic of Poland.

> 2. Men and women shall have equal rights, in particular, regarding education, employment and promotion, and shall have the right to equal compensation for work of similar value, to social security, to hold offices, and to receive public honours and decorations.

The preamble to the gender parity bill argues that this bill serves to "realise and develop (in a rather limited field) the provisions of the article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland" (Druk 2713).

The bill was accompanied with an explanatory text, a justification for the bill. The justification concentrated on two potentially controversial issues in the bill. The first was the clause that parity on electoral lists should be understood literally as 50 percent share of the places. In the Polish context, the word "parity" (parytet) refers to parity in the sense of equal share between two parties, but in practice the word is used to denote any type of quota, even one that sanctions only a 35 percent share. Therefore it was possible to raise doubts whether "parity" should in practice mean "50 percent". Of course the formulation that specified only women's number—no smaller than that of men—was instrumental in fuelling arguments that this law is not about equality but about feminism, and has nothing to do with equality. The justification accompanying the bill presents some counterarguments to these allegations. It, for instance, points out that since there are more women than men in Poland and consequently legislation that no less than half of the candidates should be women is appropriate. It is further noted in the justification that women's position has been traditionally subjugated to that of men and that women carry out the majority of domestic tasks making their participation in the public life difficult for practical reasons. Women's absence from public life is a waste of important resources and therefore women's more active participation is desirable. Despite the formal guarantee of equality in the letter of law, equality between women and men is far from being a social reality.

The second controversial issue concerned the preamble and the reference to the Polish Constitution. The justification of the bill denies that the bill contradicts the Polish Constitution and describes it as affirmative action on behalf of women. The bill is aimed at increasing the number of women on the electoral lists, the number of which continues to be "definitely too small in relation to the size of the women electorate" (Druk 2713). It was further brought up that the bill does not contradict EU legislation—on the contrary, many such examples can be found among other EU member states. Finally, it notes that the implementation of the bill would entail no financial obligations.

Different speakers in the Sejm took different stances to the bill. Let us first look at what positions the supporters of the bill take. The first speaker is the representative of the citizens' committee Czas na kobiety Małgorzata Fuszara—both a public figure in feminist movement and a professor of sociology at Warsaw University. She holds a doctorate in Law. She has been instrumental in the Polish feminist movement and has introduced gender studies in higher education. Her special focus is on the different forms women's exclusion can take. As the representative of the citizens' committee behind

the bill, Fuszara has the honour of presenting the bill to the Sejm. In her speech, Fuszara presents the bill as something that emerges from the society and has strong support among the electorate.

A somewhat different stance is taken by a deputy of the Left party, Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka. She speaks on behalf of the Left and welcomes all women initiators of the project, all (women) participants of the Women's Congress and continuously underlines the feminist origins of the bill. Jaruga-Nowacka began her public career in opposition to the Communist regime by working with human rights issues, especially the rigths of women. She joined the Polish Women's League (Lega Kobiet Polskich), which is a historical women's organisation in Poland, founded in 1913. During the Communist rule, the League was an active officially recognised organisation boasting a membership of more than 600 000. Jaruga-Nowacka entered formal politics in 1993. She has been recognised as a dedicated feminist throughout her public career. On April 10th, 2010, she dies in the plane crash in Smolensk together with 96 Polish politicians, state-, military- and Church officials.

Fuszara and Jaruga-Nowacka are central figures in the defence of the bill, but they disagree as to whether the bill is universal or feminine in "nature" or at least in "origin".

In her presentation of the bill, Fuszara argues that it addresses the political problem of women's underrepresentation. She refers to her own research on women's access to the public sphere and also cites findings showing that women's presence in public life is disproportionly low, and that Poland is an outlier in comparison to other European countries. She argues that individual political parties could have been more active in including women. Nothing has happened in this respect, and therefore a legal resolution is needed. As for political justifications, Fuszara brings up first the issue of justice, which requires equal access to politics, which is why the continuous underrepresentation of women calls for change. Second, Fuszara points out that women and men have different experiences and interests, and therefore women's interests are better represented by women—and according to Fuszara, this is also the public opinion in Poland. And third, women's greater presence in the electoral lists gives the electorate a greater variety of candidates to choose from. These points, backed up by regular comparisons with Western European examples, form the core of the support for the gender parity bill. During the debate, these points take more concrete forms and, for instance, "women's interests" are exemplified by better public services for childcare.

Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka largely refers to the same principles as Fuszara. She does, however, emphasise the importance of the political will to begin to change women's continuous underrepresentation. Whereas Fuszara's tone is academic and her arguments are based on facts, Jaruga-Nowacka makes a

strong appeal for explicitly women's views being a form of justification for the bill.

The third central figure on the supporters' side is Ewa Kierzkowska. In distinction to Fuszara and Jaruga-Nowacka who both have higher education background, Kierzkowska has never attended the university. She entered politics at the age of 18 in 1982, in the United People's Party, one of the officially recognised coalition parties of the Communist regime. She was the Wice-Marshall of the Sejm from 2009 to 2011 and then secretary of the Prime Minister's Chancellery. Kierzkowska supports the bill on the grounds that the factual equality between women and men is far from achieved and especially so in politics. In this sense, the bill on gender parity attempts to improve democracy. Gender parity is not an ideal solution, but it is the best solution available, she argues paraphrasing Churchill. She perceives the bill as a necessary, but not desirable, intervention of the state. She puts forward a picture of antagonism between men and women, accusing men for paying only a lip service to women's concerns and backing up other men when confronted by women.

These three speeches by visible speakers capture the central arguments that emerged in support of the bill during the debate: Fuszara appealed to justice and the social reality of exclusion, Jaruga-Nowacka to the need to engage in political action in order to change the situation, and Kierzkowska to a practical matter that the parity is the best available means for countering the inter-male solidarity that blocks women's advance in politics. There were not that many arguments delivered in support of the bill during the first reading, but perhaps more interestingly, these were delivered primarily in prescheduled speeches. The questions raised to Fuszara (all questions are addressed to the presenter of the bill) represent a broad variety of critical opinions of the bill. We turn to these critical opinions now.

The arguments in opposition to the bill are varied. As was anticipated already in the justification for the bill, the reference to the Constitution gave rise to many comments as did the formulation that no less than 50 percent of the candidates on the list should be women.

First, there are voices pointing out that the letter of the Constitution already guarantees equality. This argument clashes directly with the justification, which claims that social practices retain inequality despite the legal guarantees. Among the speakers, a vast majority voiced the opinion that the constitutional guarantee of equality suffices, and those who claimed that the letter of law is not followed in praxis were a minority. To emphasise that the constitutional guarantee of equality suffices is also coupled with the argument that gender is unimportant in politics and only serves to divide society. In this dispute, the opponents of the bill referred to article 32 rather than article 33 of the Polish Constitution. Article 32 reads as follows:

1. All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities.

2. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life for any reason whatsoever.

Article 32 is based on negative understanding of rights legislating to prevent state intervention, whilst article 33 is based on a more positive understanding of rights referring to the competencies of action of individuals (see above page 287). Despite the different interpretations of the law, and of just which article should apply here, the consensus seems largely to be that practical reasons hinder women's participation in politics and that those practical issues—like childcare—should be tackled but that the legal and political gender neutrality should be preserved. Above all, politics should be about competence and merits, not gender, the argument goes. The Plenipotentiary to equal treatment (of women and men) Elżbieta Radziszewska, for instance, voiced in the Sejm that better nurseries and preschools would enable those women who want to run for public office to do so, but would not infringe on constitutional guarantees of equal treatment which she believes the proposed bill does. Radziszewska, a cardiologist and deputy of PO, took part in the committee work on the bill, repeatedly opined that any form of state intervention into the individuals' freedom to run for office infringes on the constitutional guarantee of equal treatment and that the parity bill opens the door to further demands for parity from other social groups such as homosexuals.

The second, broadly supported argument inquires into the concrete, guaranteed outcome of the gender parity, implying that mere inclusion on the electoral lists is not worth the hassle. This argument is directly connected to the argument that women would benefit more from concrete measures to increase nursery and preschool places. These concrete measures are contrasted to the—provisional—promise that parity on the electoral list would bring about improvements in women's position in society. In this context, many deputies bring up another pragmatic problem with women's representation, namely the difficulty or even impossibility of finding enough willing and competent candidates.

The third group of arguments point out that the gender parity bill would lead to women being elected only because of the bill, not because of their competence. The logic of this argument is that women are not interested in politics, and if they were, they would be elected just like men. In most speeches this leads to arguments that the natural evolution of society is preferable to administrative-legal measures to increase women's participation in politics.

The last category of arguments appeals to traditional gender roles and suggests that most women prefer to stay at home and are better off that way. Among these arguments, one could make a further distinction between those claiming that women lack the competences required in politics and those emphasising women's natural disposition to bring up children. The former argument connects with the patriarchal gender contract that ascribes men to the public and women to the private sphere (see LaFont 2001, 207ff) and the latter with the well-known Matka Polka (Polish mother) myth about women's true self-realisation through motherhood, through service to the nation as a transmitter of national culture. This myth draws from the Polish experience of the Partitions, and highlights the importance of culture as a means of national survival. It also draws on the teachings of the Catholic Church, which promote clearly defined gender roles and self-sacrifice inspired by the image of the Virgin Mary (see Janion 1996 96-99, Zielińska 2010, 96ff; Imbierowicz 2012, 140ff). But one should realise that such views, though present, made up a clear minority in the 2009 debate.

Overall, there seems to be a consensus that there are too few women in politics; the disagreement is about the way in which women should be included. The bill suggests legally sanctioned affirmative action, but the majority of the deputies appear to prefer a natural evolution of society, which in due course would lead to women's increased presence in politics as well as social policies targeted at easing women's domestic work, especially where childcare is concerned.

The change from 50 percent parity to a 35 percent quota for both sexes evolved from a suggestion from Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, and its details were worked out during the committee meetings in summer of 2010. In addition, some minor aspects concerning re-elections were changed, but the main spirit of the bill remained otherwise unchanged. The 35 percent quota might alleviate some of the practical fears of finding enough women candidates, but it does not address the basic opposition between a social practice of inequality and Constitutional guarantees of equality, nor does the change address the argument that the bill does not guarantee anything concrete to women—it does not place them in the parliament, it does not guarantee changes in social policies, it does not guarantee better childcare provisions. It is difficult to see how this amendment—or even the whole bill—could be clarified by outlining the above-mentioned "arguments". The opinions delivered took a clear stance for or against, and conciliating voices were few.

I will now turn to the concrete debate on the bill. I will first concentrate on the beginning of the debate as it, on a closer look, reveals the dynamics that we continue to observe later in the debate. I will also show how the parliamentary talk assumes the mode of interaction, despite the fact that all the speeches were written in advance and were designed to express the formal positions of the respective parties.

# Equal Chances or Equal Representation

Above, the content of the bill, its preamble and its justification were discussed. The analysis will pick up the justification for the bill, as it is the formal starting point—together with the bill itself—of the parliamentary debate. The bill and the preamble serve as the first "turns" in the parliamentary debate and provide the textual context other parties prepares to respond to. I will then jump to Małgorzata Fuszara's introductory speech describing the bill and its justification.

The justification points out that the bill aims at realising the Article 33 of the Polish constitution:

> Proponowaną ustawę potraktować należy jako akt realizujący i rozwijający (na dosyć ograniczonym polu) postanowienia art.33 Konstytucji RP. W żadnym razie nie jest to akt z Konstytucją sprzeczny. Jeśli przyjąć, że oznacza on podjęcie wobec kobiet tzw.akcji afirmatywnej, to jest ona dopuszczona przez naszą ustawę zasadniczą. (Druk 2713)

> Proposed law (ustawa) should be treated as a legal act that realises and develops (in a quite limited field) the principles of article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. In no case is it an act that contradicts the Constitution. If understood as adopting a position of an affirmative action towards women, this is in accord with our fundamental law [i.e. the Constitution –JT]. (Druk 2713)

The justification identifies a problem that the proposed bill is supposed to solve. It justifies the bill in terms of changing politics for the better. In other words, it does not aim to legislate what is social or political reality, it aims at changing them. The same future orientation is present in Fuszara's introductory speech in the Sejm:

> W imieniu Kongresu Kobiet mam zaszczyt przedstawić propozycję zmian w prawie wyborczym, które polegają na wyrównaniu szans kobiet i mężczyzn w wyborach. [--] Dlaczego proponujemy takie rozwiązanie prawne? Wynika to przede wszystkim z faktu, że w Polsce, jak zresztą w wielu innych krajach, nadal za równością praw nie idzie równość szans. (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 108)

> In the name of Women's Congress, I have the honour of presenting to electoral law an amendment, which aims at equalling chances between women and men in elections. [--] Why do we propose a legal solution? It results above all from the fact that in Poland as in many other countries, the equality before the law still does not go hand in hand with equality of chances. (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 108)

In both extracts, the bill is talked about as a solution to an existing problem. However, the following speaker, deputy Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, who presents the opinion of government party PO, sees the bill differently.

> Celem ustawy jest zwiększenie liczby kobiet w polityce. Autorzy projektu zakładają, że 50-procentowy parytet na listach wyborczych automatycznie zapewni osiągnięcie tego celu. Zastanówmy się jednak, czym się wyraża uczestnictwo w polityce. Jeżeli dokładnie wsłuchać się w argumentację wnioskodawców, jasne się staje, że kiedy mówimy „uczestnictwo w polityce", to myślimy „władza", a to znaczy, że podstawowe wskaźniki obecności kobiet w polityce to są mandaty... (Kozłowska-Rajewicz,18 Feb 2010, 61, 112)

> The aim of the law is to increase the number of women in politics. The authors of the law project presuppose that 50-percent parity on the electoral lists automatically guarantees the achievement of this aim. Let us consider, however, what it means to take part in politics. If we listen carefully to the presenters, it becomes apparent that when we say "to take part in politics" we think of "power" and that means that the basic indicator of women's presence in politics are parliamentary seats... (Kozłowska-Rajewicz,18 Feb 2010, 61, 112)

Despite the fact that her speech is prepared and delivers the opinion of the governing party, Kozłowska-Rajewicz links her speech to the preceding speech ("If we listen carefully...") and suggests a repair of the previous speech: taking part in politics is not about having equal chances to do so, but factually acquiring equal number of seats. Similarly to deputy Kozłowska-Rajewicz[114], deputy Beata Szydło is more concerned with the concrete presence of women in the parliament than the chances of making political activity meaningful to women:

> Pytanie podstawowe, które trzeba w tym momencie postawić, jest natury metodologicznej, a nie ideologicznej, czyli mówiąc po prostu,

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114. Deputy Kozłowska-Rajewicz's position is more balanced than this quote lets us understand. Towards the end of her speech, she argues that given the present situation of women in politics, the law proposition suggests a certain beginning towards equalising chances:

[Parytety] nie powinny być rozpatrywane jako specjalny przywilej dla kobiet, tylko jako forma nacisku na partie polityczne, które mają bardzo duże możliwości, jeżeli chodzi o włączanie kobiet do polityki, ale muszą tego chcieć. (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 113)

[Parity] should not been looked upon as special provisions for women, but like sort of force for the political parties which have very great possibilities, if we consider the inclusion of women in politics, but they must want to do so. (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 113) Her position is perhaps best characterised as certain pragmatism in advancing women's position in society, but this pragmatism fairs poorly in the Polish political climate penetrated by strong antagonistic positions.

jak to[115] osiągnąć. Parytety są instrumentem, który w założeniu wnioskodawczyń może do tego do prowadzić, pytanie, czy skutecznym. (Szydło, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 114)

The fundamental question that needs to be posed at this moment is methodological by its nature, not ideological, and this means, in other words, how to achieve it [see note 115]. Parity is an instrument that in the opinion of the presenter can lead to it, the question is, how effective it is. (Szydło, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 114)

The difference between talking about equal chances and delivering equality in the Polish discussion becomes clear in deputy Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka's speech, which responds to numerous questions and problems deputy Szydło has referred to in the previous turn:

Proszę państwa, oczywiście można mnożyć trudności, można stawiać pytania, czy parytet jest możliwy dzisiaj w polskim Sejmie. [...] Pytania, trudności—tak jak pani pełnomocniczka mówiła, mydlenie oczu, mnożenie strachów—można mnożyć, ale to nie jest dzisiaj podstawowy wybór, Wysoka Izbo, przed którym stoimy. Dzisiaj musimy sobie odpowiedzieć na pytanie, czy chcemy, żeby Polska była w pełni demokratycznym krajem... (Oklaski). (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 115)

Honourable members, of course it is possible to multiply the difficulties, present the questions whether gender quotas are feasible in today's Polish Sejm […] Questions, problems—just as the plenipotentiary[116] [Szydło –JT] did[117], prettification, creation of fear—can be multiplied, but that is not today's basic question, High Room [Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen –JT], which we face. Today we have to answer

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115. Refers to the increase of women's presence in politics:

Bezsporny wydaje się fakt, że zwiększenie udziału kobiet w życiu politycznym jest ze wszech miar pożądane. (Szydło, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 114)

It seems to be an unquestionable fact that the increasing of women's presence in politics is in all ways desirable.

116. Although the word "pełnomocnik" (plenipotentiary) refers primarily to a person who an authority to act in certain policy areas, like plenipotentiary to equal treatment whom we shall meet shortly. In colloquial use, however, "pełnomocnik" can be used to refer to a person who represents something, and here Jaruga-Nowacka uses this term to refer to Beata Szydło who represents the opinion of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość in this debate. Deputy Szydło spoke just before Jaruga-Nowacka.

117. From the broader context of Jaruga-Nowacka's speech it is clear that her use of "mydlenie oczu, mnożenie strachów" (prettification, creation of fear) function as accusations and therefore the verb "mówiła" (said) has to be translated as "did" to convey the accusation.

ourselves whether we want Poland to be a fully democratic country…
(Applause) (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 115)

The argument about the importance of equal chances forms the cornerstone for the supporters of the bill. The responses of the opponents, however, question the relevance of mere "chances". Here it would be worth dwelling on the word "chances" (szansa, sg. szanse, pl.) a little more. The direct translation into English is often "chance", but in Polish the word can be used as a synonym for likelihood (prawdobodobienstwo), the possibility of success in something. Common usages would include the chance (szansa) of advancement at work or chance to win a prize, or good chances of getting healthy after an illness. "Chances" in Polish always include the moment of unpredictability and lack of strict regulation, and the word "szansa" cannot be used in the context of automatic progression or determinate course of action (NSJP, 2002).

The phrase "równe szanse" and its derivatives are used by various foundations and agencies that aim at improving the quality of life for disadvantaged groups such as the disabled or the young. In colloquial parlance, "równe szanse" is also used to denote principles of equal opportunity. However, the legal term for equal opportunities in Polish is "równe traktowanie" (equal treatment) in the case of employment, and "równe warunki" (equal conditions) in the case of (economic) competition, and strictly in legal context "równouprawnienie" (equal legality). In distinction to equal treatment and equal conditions, equal chances in Polish place more emphasis on the autonomy of the acting subject, whilst equal treatment is focused on a passive object and equal conditions—"something upon which something else is dependent"[118]—focuses on external attributes such as material conditions or legislation. The term "równouprawnienie" refers strictly to bringing about equality before the (letter of the) law. "Równe szanse" has the broadest meaning and alone in emphasising the autonomy of the subject.

The opponents of the bill are careful to point out that the bill does not guarantee women any concrete gain. The change of interpretation of the bill that occurs over the first (Fuszara) and second (Kozłowska-Rajewicz) turns of the debate establishes the distinction between equal chances as supporting women's engagement in political life irrespective of the tangible aims or goals of this activity and the concrete parliamentary seat as the symbol of equality in politics. From the point of view of conversation analysis, this indicates that it is possible, in the Polish context, to interpret equal chances meaningfully as equal access to power. This is what Kozłowska-Rajewicz achieves by turning

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118. The definition of "warunek" in Polish reads as "to, od czego coś jest uzależnione" and one example of usage could be "He has all the conditions (warunki) to happiness." (NSJP, 2002).

Fuszara's equal chances into equal political power. She did so perhaps for political reasons, but more interesting here is that this, possibly a political move, a translation as Lotman would describe it, introduces a new trajectory to the debate on the bill. It introduces the trajectory that inquires into the constitution of meaningful political participation and asks whether "equal chances" constitute meaningful political participation or do we need "equal power" in order to talk about meaningful political participation.

The third and fourth turns of the debate,[119] between Szydło and Jaruga-Nowacka, bring to the fore the distinction between practical feasibility and political will. This distinction is one of efficiency and politics, between methods and ideologies, as Szydło formulated it. Jaruga-Nowacka responds to these juxtapositions by turning to the question of political will making Szydło's methodological concerns matters of political will. This response introduces the question of the extent to which the law can be used to change reality if there is sufficient political will to see Poland as a "fully democratic country" (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 115)

After four turns, two trajectories of the debate have been opened. I will start by following the first trajectory, concerning the distinction between equal chances and equal factual representation and then show how this is connected with the second trajectory, concerning the roles of the law and politics in relation to society.

## Equal Chances in Law and Practice

Fuszara in her opening statement makes a clear case for the importance of equalising chances between women and men. We can even count the number of times she refers to chances—she does so twelve times. She also contrasts the bill of equal chances to the prevailing social practice of inequality: "Why do we propose a legal solution? It results above all from the fact that in Poland as in many other countries, the equality before the law still does not go hand in hand with equality of chances." (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 108). The broadness of the Polish word "szansa" captures the gulf between the equality of the (mere) letter of the law and that of social practices. Let us now look at some responses to Fuszara's use of the term "chances". Deputy Jan Filip Libicki talking on behalf of a parliamentary circle "Polska Plus":

> Pierwszy argument to wątpliwości konstytucyjne, o których mówiła pani poseł Kozłowska-Rajewicz. [--] I tu nasuwa się pytanie, czy nie mamy tak naprawdę do czynienia z pewnym ograniczeniem jednak

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119. Here by "turn" I refer to the order of "whole" speeches. The actual debate has been interrupted by the Vice-Marshall of the Sejm as well as some comments from the audience.

poważnego prawa obywatelskiego do zrzeszania się... Działamy na rzecz integracji społecznej. Tymczasem tego typu projektami wkraczamy na drogę pewnego dezintegrowania społecznego, że oto społeczeństwo nie jest postrzegane jako całość, tylko jako pewne kontyngenty czy klany poszczególnych grup społecznych lub zawodowych. (Libicki, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 119)

The first argument concerns the doubt about the constitution, of which Ms deputy [m.] Kosłowska-Rajewicz spoke. [--] And this begs the question whether we are not dealing with a certain limitation of a serious citizens' right to association... We act here for the integration of society. In the case of this type of projects we cut to the road of certain social disintegration, that this society is not treated as a unity, but as a contingent or as clans of particular social or professional groups. (Libicki, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 119)

Libicki here voices concerns that any regulation of the electoral list infringes on the democratic right to free assembly by introducing a requirement that women should be included. His concern is, therefore, the legal guarantee of formal democracy, not its practice. We can further point out that Libicki refers to the female deputy Kosłowska-Rajewicz with the unmarked masculine form "poseł", although a gender specific alternative (posłanka) is available and used in the debate. However, as unmarked form, this does not need to mean more than that Libicki follows the established patterns of talk. However, in *this* context it does imply a certain insensitivity to the distinction between male and female deputies. This insensitivity in one sense grounds his view on politics as directed to the common good that does not recognise divisions, including those of gender, in society.

In the first direct question to Fuszara, Anna Sobecka shifts the perspective to the "quota candidate":

Panie Marszałku! Pani Profesor! Mam pytanie, czy wnioskodawcy biorą pod uwagę fakt, że administracyjne narzucenie liczby kobiet na listach jest de facto deprecjonowaniem roli kobiety w społeczeństwie, gdyż wskazuje to, że bez umocowania prawnego kobiety nie są w stanie w większej liczbie wywalczyć sobie prawa do reprezentacji politycznej. (Sobecka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121)

Mr Marshall! Ms Professor! I have a question about whether the presenters take into consideration the fact that the administrative enforcement of the number of women on the lists is *de facto* devaluing the role of women in society as it indicates that without legal empowerment women to a greater degree are not capable of fighting for their political representation. (Sobecka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121)

The arguments highlighting of the bill's problematic legal relationship to the constitutional guarantee of equality, on the one hand, and the adverse consequence of affirmative action, on the other, crystallise shortly after these speeches were given. Deputy Krystyna Grabicka refers to the Constitution:

> Panie Marszałku! Pani Minister! Pani Professor! Czy wnioskodawcy nie dostrzegają, że ten projekt ustawy wprowadza przymus, nakaz, obowiązek umieszczania kobiet na listach wyborczych w określonej liczbie, gdy tymczasem art. 33 konstytucji daje wyłącznie uprawnienie. (Grabicka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121)

> Mr Marshall! Ms Minister! Ms Professor! Do the presenters not recognise that this legal project introduces a compulsion, an order, an obligation of placing women on the electoral list in certain numbers whilst at the present the Article 33 of the Constitution only provides the legal right [to do so –JT]. (Grabicka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121)

And deputy Anna Paluch refers to the individual candidates:

> Czy nie sądzicie państwo, że powody, dla których osoba, kobieta lub mężczyzna, znajdzie się na listach wyborczych do Sejmu, Senatu, do rad gmin, rad powiatów, sejmików województw czy chociażby do Parlamentu Europejskiego, powinny stanowić kompetencje, wiedza, zaangożowanie życie społeczne, diałalność w organizacjach pozarządowych... (Paluch, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121-122)

> Do you not think that the reasons why a person, woman or man, appears on the electoral lists to the Sejm, Senate, municipal, county councils, to sejms of voivodships or even to the European Parliament should be competence, knowledge, engagement in social life, activity in non-governmental organisations... (Paluch, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121-122)

The arguments referring to the formal interpretation of democracy (Libicki and Grabicka) and the negative consequences of parity for women candidates (Sobecka and Paluch) are *responses* to Fuszara's juxtaposition of the letter of the law, on the one hand, and social practice, on the other hand. She suggests to counter these social forces by legislating on "equal chances". Essentially these arguments indicate that equality guaranteed in the constitution is to be understood in these speeches as negative freedom, that is, freedom from state interference, and that consequently the individual's chances in society ought to depend on the individual's capabilities only. Democracy is a matter of competent pursuance of the common good by elected individuals.[120] At the same time these voices are not ignorant of the consequences the organisation of society has for the individual. As Anna Paluch's speech continues:

Czy nie uważacie państwo, że najistotniejszą barierę dla kobiet pragnących uczestniczyć w życiu publicznym stanowi brak żłobków i przedszkoli, mała liczba przyjaznych dla kobiet form zatrudnienia, takich jak chociażby telepraca... (Paluch, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

Do you not realise that the most significant barrier to women who long for participation in public life is caused by the lack of nurseries and preschools, the small number of women friendly forms of employment, such as for instance telecommuting work... (Paluch, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

Paluch is sensitive to the fact that there are women who "long for participation in public life", and that there are those who apparently do not share these longings. Earlier speakers have already pointed out that "according to research, the majority of women want to realise themselves as wives and mothers and only at the second place comes the combination of motherhood and personal realisation in the public sphere" (Sobecka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121). Similarly, Artur Górski, quoting an open letter[121] opposing the parity argues "our equal rights in the political, social and economic life mean equally the right to take part in and right to withdraw our presence from different social and professional roles." (Górski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122). Górski crystallises the point:

"Równo" nie powinno oznaczać przymusowej aktywności. (Górski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

"Equally" should not mean compulsory activity. (Górski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

At this moment, Fuszara's "equal chances" had developed into "compulsory action", as Górski put it. Górski's move is clearly political, and his use of the term "równo" is also a reference to state-socialist practices of forced equality, of which more shortly. Legal intervention in the name of equal chances has in this debate acquired a clearly proactive description. The bill on equal chances exercises state power against the individual freedom and compels women to run for office.

   Górski furthermore contrast "equally" with a meritocratic organisation of work. The concept of equality has acquired increasingly negative connotations and become identified with something forced. In a speech given some

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120. The contrast between competence and identity appears to be significant as the debate evolves and I will discuss it in more detail below.

121. This letter was written by prominent women workers of the Warsaw University and Polish Academy of Science.

time before that of Górski, deputy Grabicka ridiculed the "so called principle of parity" (Grabicka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121) by asking whether the bill is not "a new form of sexmission[122], this time conducted by the Committee of Citizens' Initiative for Law" This historical allusion is soon to be developed by Tadeusz Woźniak:

> Panie Marszałku! Wysoki Sejmie! Czcigodne panie w ławach poselskich, na galerii i w całej Polsce, mówię jako mężczyzna, który często całuje panie (*Poruszenie na sali*) po dłoniach, który wręcza paniom kwiaty, który przyklęknął, prosząc swoją żonę, aby zechciała nią zostać. Darzę panie ogromnym szacunkiem, ale muszę przyznać, że tak jak pani posłanka Grabicka w pewnym momencie poczułem, jakbym znalazł się planie "Seksmisji", więc ze względu na poprawność polityczną pragnę z całą stanowczością stwierdzić, że Kopernik była kobietą. (Woźniak, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

> Mr Marshall! Honourable Sejm! Respected ladies on the parliamentary benches, in the audience and in whole Poland, I speak as a man, who often kisses ladies (*Movements in the Plenary*) on their hand, who gives ladies flowers, who kneeled when proposing to his wife. I show great respect for the ladies, but I have to confess that, like Ms deputy Grabicka, at a certain moment I felt as if finding myself in the film "Seksmisja", and therefore, in relation to political correctness I desire with all firmness to declare that Copernicus was a woman. (Woźniak, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122)

The fact that Grabicka's allusion to the communist-era cult film "Seksmisja" (Sexmission) (1983) is picked up so soon indicates the cultural relevance of the connection. The film, directed by Juliusz Machulski and staring actors like Jerzy Stuhr, depicts a totalitarian dystopia of an underground society where there are only women; all men are extinct as a result of a nuclear war. Two men accidentally end up in the women's world and begin to reintroduce ideas of natural gender roles and eventually bring the whole system down. In one scene, the ruling women's council declares that Copernicus in fact was a woman. Woźniak's speech is also exemplary of parliamentary debate, which on the institutional side can be seen to aim delivering opinions for or against the bill, but which in practice furnish the debate with surplus meanings. For instance, his reference to the old Polish etiquette of kissing women's hands evokes the continuity of the pre-communist Poland in the present, but is met with mixed feelings, judging from the reactions of the other deputies in the

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122. Refers to a Polish film from 1983. The fact that the stenographers write this reference in small letters ("seksmisji") points out its currency in everyday interaction in Poland. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Plenary. In addition to the historical aspect, Woźniak's comment creates the contrast between "natural" or "aristocratic" respect for women and the artificial, state-socialist, forced equality. Gender parity is not only "fake", a mere expression of political correctness, inefficient, socialist and anti-meritocratic, but also alien to the historical trajectory of Poland.

The connections between forced equality and state socialism acquire momentum in the debate. Szymon Stanisław Giżyński compares the Women's Congress to the "representatives of the working class [who] were drinking cognac" (Giżyński 18 Feb 2010, 61, 131), and continues: "Is it not sad that parity in reality means a threat to, and profanation of, womanhood, as they introduce a formal-legalistic legalisation of procedures to treat sex as an instrument of political career"? (Giżyński 18 Feb 2010, 61, 131).[123] Giżynski refers here to the state-socialist ideal of desexualised women who can perform as the men—whether that is driving a tractor or fixing a car.[124]

The above speeches have given Fuszara's "equal chances", first a proactive legal accent that is understood to compel political participation rather than making political participation possible. They have then introduced the idea that equality as a political goal draws from the state-socialist heritage of Poland and that it fundamentally undermines what it is to be a real woman. Lastly, Giżinski manages to lead the debate over to the question of whether sex or gender[125] should be used as a tool in politics at all.

Similarly, deputy Pięta questions the relevance of sex in politics:

> Wszelkie akcje afirmacyjne to nonsensy: punkty za pochodzenie robotniczo-chłopskie w PRL,... nie wydaje mi się, aby płeć mogła być tutaj kryterium. (Pięta, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 138)

> All forms of affirmative action are pure nonsense: points for working class and agricultural background in the People's Republic of Poland... I

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123. In Polish: Czyż nie jest nieszczęśliwie, iż parytety oznaczają de facto zagrożenie i profanację kobiecości, wprowadzając formalnoprawne legalizacje proceduru traktowania płci jako instrumentu w karierze politycznej?

124. In fact, state-socialist practices to women were more varied than just desexualising womanhood, and it changed also over time from the early phase of creating gender equality by bringing women into the labour force in order to boost reconstruction and economic growth to the more traditional role prescription of women as the source of renewal of the labour force. The target of emancipation, however, was solely women, and attempts to include men in domestic work were absent, nor were women included in politics in high numbers (see LaFont, 2001, 204-205).

125. There is no term for "gender" in Polish and therefore the word "płeć" (pl. płci) is used when referring to biological as well as cultural aspects of sex. Sometimes also the English word "gender" is used to denote the non-biological aspect of sex. However, the primary definition of "płeć" refers to biological sex and therefore unless the speakers make it clear that they understand "płeć" as also pertaining to culturally produced differences I have translated it as "sex".

do not see that sex could be a criterion here. (Pięta, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 138)

Giżinski's and Pięta's speeches respond to the bill on gender parity by referring to the state-socialist heritage in terms of the ideal state-socialist depiction of women as comparable to men. However, the state-socialist connection serves yet another purpose, by contrasting the gender parity bill and democracy in more general terms. Zbigniew Dolata argues:

Demokracja parytetowa jest tak odległa od demokracji bezprzymiotnikowej, jak demokracja socjalistyczna. (Dolata 18 Feb 2010, 61, 134)

Democracy of parity is as far from pure democracy (lit. democracy without adjectives) as is socialist democracy. (Dolata 18 Feb 2010, 61, 134)

And deputy Biernat associates equality with inefficiency and lack of dynamism:

Hasło "po równo" funkcjonowało już w poprzednim ustroju i na szczęście doprowadziło do jego upadku, bo po równo nie znaczy dobrze i tak naprawdę nie dynamizuje rozwoju. (Biernat, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 134)

Slogan "equally" was functional already in the previous system and luckily brought it to its end, because equally does not mean good and in fact it does not provide dynamics for development. (Biernat, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 134)

Let us pause here briefly to consider the form of Pięta's, Dolata's and Biernat's addresses. They each provide repairs to the postulated grounds on which the gender parity bill rests, i.e. they appropriate the previous arguments and rephrase them in a new context: Pięta refers directly to Fuszara's statement that the bill can be seen as a form of affirmative action and repairs that affirmative action is nonsensical, state-socialist and in no way applicable to sex.[126] Dolata repairs the claims that the bill could improve democracy, for, he argues, "democracy of parity" is just another form of "socialist democracy"—both qualifications that can only distort the ideal of "democracy without adjectives". Biernat, finally, repairs the claims that the slogan

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126. As was discussed in the previous footnote, in Polish, "gender" translates best as "płeć kulturowa", cultural sex; Pięta using the expression "płeć" not only argues against the bill, but also indicates that the notion of cultural sex is not relevant in political debate—hence the use of the concept "sex" to refer to both biological and societal distinctions between sexes and genders.

"equally" is known from the past system, led to its demise and therefore cannot be used to "improve" anything. These repairs add to the idea of the gender parity bill as promoting equal chances the dimensions of what is a good and functioning democracy. They point out that "equality" between the sexes has no relevance to democracy, that it cannot be democratic (for it is state-socialist), and that "equality" is not efficient because it does not take into consideration individual competences, which are the source of development.

Fuszara's original formulation of equal chances, with its emphasis on the possibilities for engaging in equal terms in public life have engendered interpretations that to an increasing degree depict legal regulation as compelling individuals, that is, infringing on their liberties, as socially and economically inefficient, as debasing for the individual and as anti-meritocratic. By following the trace of equal rights in legislation and in practice, the debate has worked its way consistently towards the state-socialist past and its cultural legacy that informs the interpretations of some of those opposing the bill.

Literature on gender quotas has also pointed out that the state-socialist past is one reason for the relative absence of quotas in Central Europe (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, 34). Other research has identified the communist policies of gender equality as underlying much of the post-1989 difficulties in advancing policies supporting women's rights (Molyneux 1995, 638; Watson 1993b).[127] In both cases, the resistance to quotas is understood to stem from the reminiscence of the quotas to communist policies. Precisely how this connection works has not been explained. Below, I will explore this connection in the Polish debate on gender quotas in more detail. First, however, a short overview of gender equality in state-socialist Poland is due.

*The State-Socialist Connection of Gender and Equality*
The literature on gender quotas gives the state-socialist history as one of the reasons for their relative absence in Central and Eastern Europe. Gender quotas are reminiscent of the state-socialist "forced emancipation" of women (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005, 34). Forced emancipation, in this literature, refers to the state-socialist policies that were aimed at integrating women into the productive work force (LaFont 2001, 204ff.), but only figuratively in politics (Einhorn 2006, 50; Watson 1993b, 72). As these policies concerned only women's work in the public sphere, they left the existing sexual contract unchanged ascribing women a double identity: employment in the pub-

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127. Yet third track of research emphasises the effects of market economics in developing civil society into a new male dominated sphere. However, Watson (1993b) for instance, appears uncertain whether it is the market reforms or men's fear of women that has been instrumental in turning the civil society into men's new means of keeping the women in the private sphere.

lic sphere and domestic work, especially care work, in the private sphere (Einhorn 1993, 40). Men were ascribed only one public identity, that of labour. However, the private sphere became the primary locus of moral antipolitics[128] as well as a safe-haven from the state-controlled public sphere. This mix meant two things for women. First, women had an officially sanctioned double role as workers in the public sphere and mothers in the private sphere. The second is the ambiguous meaning of the private sphere, which was both the site of moral and liberating activity outside the reach of the state and the site of domestic work.

After the collapse of state-socialist regimes in 1989, women's presence in the public sphere was diminished and they were increasingly confined to the private sphere because of, among other things, severe cuts in public provisions for childcare. For instance, the number of pre-schools went from 27000 in 1990 to 8200 in 2000. The percentage of women on the job market was 15 percentage points below that of men (in 2008), and occupational gender differences grew, making education and healthcare largely low-paying women's sectors (Kozek 2009, 40-42). Post-state-socialist politics also witnessed a strengthening nationalist discourse that depicted women as mothers of the nation and transmitters of national culture. This nationalist discourse has its origins partly in the anti-politics' resistance to state socialism, which had emphasised the importance of the nation in the struggle against the regime. However, in Poland myths about motherhood can be traced back at least to national romanticism and the Partitions of Poland (Janion 1996). In Poland, the Catholic Church has also been active in both in anti-politics and the subsequent rise of nationalist discourse.

The combined history of anti-politics, the Catholic Church, nationalist discourse and economic transition have forged a division between the public and the private spheres in Poland that differs from that in Western Europe or North America. Western feminist criticism has traditionally embarked from the position that the family and the private sphere are the primary loci of women's subjugation (Pateman 1988) and consequently the public sphere has been perceived as the venue for emancipation (Einhorn 1993, 41-44, 60). In state-socialist and post-state-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, the feminist slogan "the personal is political", the idea of bringing problems of the private sphere to the public and calling for state response resonates badly with the lived experiences of women who experience emancipation also in the

128. The term "antipolitics" originates from Hungarian dissident Georgy Konrad's essay of the same name. The idea of antipolitics is to step beyond the political dichotomies like capitalism versus communism that structured political discourse under state socialism. Antipolitics aims at establishing a new political order, "permanently open democracy" as Konrad had it that empowers the autonomous individual subject (Ost, 1990, 14-16). One of the central claims Solidarity-movement made was that "We'll have nothing to do with politics. Politics is your business, not ours" (cited in Ost 1990; 1).

possibility of opting out of public regulation and staying at home (Einhorn 1993, 64). Consequently, in Poland women's return to the private sphere—concrete or in discourse—cannot be interpreted solely as a reification of nationalist, religious or patriarchal politics. Women's return to the private sphere and self-realisation as mothers can be political in its moral, i.e., anti-political dimension. To reduce this to the effects of patriarchal arguments and pressure to make women want to realise themselves as mothers is telling only one side of the story.

On the other hand, it is also true that women's withdrawal from the public sphere took place in parallel with the increasing power of the national parliament as a true locus of power, and the "public" has successfully reclaimed its position as the medium for (the only) legitimate political representation.[129] LaFont puts it that "women were guaranteed representation when representation was little more than a formality, and now that the political arena is being empowered, they are being poorly represented" (LaFont 2001, 209).

As a sum, the private sphere in Poland cannot be seen only in opposition to the public and the political. For the historical reasons outlined above, the private sphere and the possibility of staying in the private sphere without having to enter the public sphere can be themselves political in the sense of expressing a conscious stance, or "statement" to society and politics. This statement, however, had to be based on a collectively shared moral conviction (Krzemiński, 2013, 348).

This ambivalence as of the nature of the public–private distinction in Poland renders some arguments in the debate polyphonic. For instance, Grabicka refers to the bill as issuing "a compulsion, an order, an obligation" for women (Grabicka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 121), Górski argues that "equally should not mean compulsory activity" (Górski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 122), and Giżyński perceives the bill as leading to a profanation of womanhood (Giżyński, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 131). I am not suggesting that, for instance, Giżyński's "profanation" is bereft of any patriarchal oppression clinging to imaginaries of "profane" and, supposedly "consecrated" womanhood. I am suggesting, instead, that "profanation" is highly polyphonic here. By polyphonic I mean, not that it has many meanings—that would be polysemic—but that the word "profanation" itself embodies at least two different cultural understandings of gender relations, one informed by the state-socialist past when the private sphere was the moral and autonomous sanctuary from the profane, crude and filthy public sphere fully penetrated by the state control; and that "profanation" also embodies the patriarchal discourse that ap-

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129. In this context it is commonplace to point out that much of the moral value attached to home has been overtaken by the developing civil society, a third sphere in addition to the official, political public sphere, and the private domestic sphere (see Watson 1993a, Einhorn 1993, 65).

points woman to the private sphere of care and man to the public sphere of power.

The following section will scrutinise more closely how the speakers, during the debate, orient themselves to gender (or sex), and show how different interpretations of gender relations play out in the debate.

## Talking Femininity as a Political Identity into Being

One of the concrete results of the first reading was that the parties almost unanimously directed the proposition to the parliamentary committee for detailed scrutiny and formulation into a law proposition that could be discussed in the second reading.[130] It may be claimed that a consensus had emerged on the recognition that too few women are present in politics; disagreement remained as of the reasons for this and about the means to tackle it.

The analysis began by following the development of the first trajectory of the debate that concerned the juxtaposition between the conceptualisations of parity as aiming at equal chances and as aiming at equal factual representation and share in power. This trajectory quickly developed into a discussion of the gender parity bill as being proactive, and even forcing women into public engagement. Comparisons were drawn to the lack of dynamism and disregard of individuals' meritocratic competence that had characterised the state-socialist politics of equality. Here, especially, but also at other points of the debate, many responded to Fuszara's talk of equal chances by pointing out the debasing effects the quotas have on the perception of women's competence. This was coupled with arguments to the effect that the introduction of gendered political subjects is unnatural, political and against democracy. The analysis will now turn to look at these points in the debate more closely.

There are reasons to ask what kind of identities are appropriate in politics according to these arguments. We find ambivalence also among the supporters of the law proposition. Fuszara underlined the fact that the project was not only authored by women. In her closing statement, Fuszara stumbles on the subject behind the project:

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130. All opinions of the parliamentary clubs representing political parties were in favour of sending the bill to a committee. Parliamentary circle "Polska Plus" was against. The formal decision is taken by the Presidium of the Sejm consisting of the Marshall and all Vice-Marshalls of the Sejm and as a advisor the Head of the Chancellery of the Sejm. However, this decision was subjected to common opinion of the deputies at the end of the first reading and there were no voices opposing the suggestion.

> Reprezentuję komitet, który mówi o takim projekcie, pod którym zebrałyśmy czy zebraliśmy 150 tys. podpisów. (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 141)

> I represent a committee that talks about a project for which we gathered (f.) or gathered (m.) 150 thousand signatures. (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 141)

A little later in her speech, when she repeats this sentence, she only uses the masculine form (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 143). It is remarkable that Fuszara repairs her speech, changing from the marked feminine (zebrałyśmy) to the unmarked masculine (zebraliśmy), which includes both feminine and masculine subjects and functions as the default form in Polish. Given Fuszara's repair, it seems that she hesitates to talk about the bill as something feminist or only concerning women; and nevertheless, it is obvious that the bill places the feminine gender identity as a social construction in a position of political significance whilst denying other identities similar consideration.

Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka, on the other hand, emphasises the feminine character of the law proposition in her speech during the first reading:

> Chciałabym przede wszystkim w imieniu klubu Lewica powitać inicjatorki tej wspaniałej inicjatywy parytetowej, uczestniczki Kongresu Kobiet (Oklaski), chciałbym powitać kobiety, który of lat pracują w organizacjach pozarządowych. (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 115)

> I would above all like to welcome in the name of the Left the initiators (f.) of this wonderful initiative on parity, participants (f.) od Kongres Kobiet (Applause), I would like to welcome women, who for years have been working in non-governmental organisations. (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 115)

These differences should make it clear that there is no one feminist way of thinking in Poland and that, on the one hand, we have feminist arguments that aim at representing feminism as providing for the common good and, on the other hand, arguments like Jaruga-Nowacka's, which unabashedly declare their allegiance to the feminist cause.

In the second committee meeting on 29th April 2010 an exchange on this issue between the permanent external expert of the committee, Jarosław Flis, and Małgorzata Fuszara took place:

> Flis: Jak same autorki uzasadnienia wskazują… (Flis 29 Apr 2010, NOW, 21, 5)

Flis: As the authors (f.) of the justification show… (Flis 29 Apr 2010, NOW, 21, 5)

Fuszara: Po pierwsze, odniosę się do ekspertyzy pana doktora Flisa. Wspominał pan o autorkach tego projektu, tymczasem nad tą nowelizacją pracowali razem autorzy i autorki. W pewnym momencie pan tak powiedział. Oczywiście jest to stereotypowe myślenie, że jest to project wyłącznie kobiecy. W związku z tym chciałbym państwa zapewnić, że tak nie jest. (Fuszara 29 Apr 2010, NOW, 21, 6)

Fuszara: First, I will relate to the expert opinion of Mr Dr. Flis. He reminded [us] on the authors (f.) of this project, but on this amendment worked together male and female authors. At a certain point you said like this. Of course it is a stereotypic thinking that this is a project only of women. In this relation I would like to reassure everyone that this is not so. (Fuszara 29 Apr 2010, NOW, 21, 6)

What makes this exchange particularly interesting is the fact that at a meeting on 8th July 2010 Flis stumbles on this mistake again, but repairs himself:

Jeżeli same autorki projektu w uzasadnieniu… Przepraszam, miałem na myśli autorów projektu. Zwrócono mi uwagę, żebym mówiąc o tej stronie posługiwał się rodzajem męskim. (Flis 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 5)

If the authors (f.) of this project themselves in the justification… I apologise, I had in mind authors (f. + m.) of the project. I have been reminded that when talking on this side I should be using the masculine form. (Flis 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 5)

His positioning "on this side" serves to contrast him as a male and as an opponent of the project at the same time. However, the fact that he himself picked up the question of gender by using a marked position first and conceded to the opinion that this project is not only feminine reveals that the primary opposition here is not between men and women. Rather, he frames it as a question of public relations and competence, which does not take any gender into consideration: "Naturally the candidate's social position is in some way related to sex, but this [sex/gender –JT] is clearly not the deciding criterion" (Flis 29 Apr 2010, NOW, 21, 5). Acknowledging the gender, but recontextualising the question in terms of public relations and competence serves two purposes in Flis's account. The first is to indicate that he does not mind the bill being driven by both women and men. It is important to ask why this concession has been made so easily—in the form of a self-initiated repair. And the reason is that for him this distinction is not important at all, for the real issue lies somewhere else, namely in the candidate's competence.

By acknowledging that both men and women can pursue such a bill, he manages to make a distinction between gender and competence as two independent variables, except that the gender variable is not a "deciding criterion". The second purpose is to point out that politics is and ought to be about competences, and therefore gender should not, here or elsewhere in politics, be the "deciding criterion". The latter point has been noted by many feminist researchers of Polish politics (e.g. Graff, 2008 69-109), but I think the first claim deserves closer attention.

It is not only Flis who thinks that politics is and should be about competence, not gender. Małgorzata Fuszara in her introduction raises the issue:

> Wykształcenie i kompetencje powinny być głównymi kryteriami oceny kandydatki lub kandydata na radnego, posła i senatora. Właśnie te cechy zdecydowanie przemawiają na korzyść kobiet. Niewykorzystanie ich potencjału dla wspólnego dobra i dla rządzenia w kraju uważamy za stratę dla całego społeczeństwa. (Fuszara 18 Feb 2010, 61, 110)

> Education and competence should be the main criteria for appraising candidates (f.) or candidates (m.) for council, deputy or Senator. Precisely these aspects definitely talk on behalf of women. Leaving their potential unused for the common good and for the administration of the country we consider a loss for the whole society. (Fuszara 18 Feb 2010, 61, 110)

Fuszara's point is that women have the competence, the education, but that a lack of access to politics prevents this competence from being used.

Jan Kulas refers to his own party, PO, as a good example of promoting women. He, however, in other parts of his speech raises concern about whether women in general are interested in politics at all. But what we see in the extract below is an example of how he turns the issue of women's (descriptive) representation into a substantive representation to be carried out by competent people:

> Ten problem należy rozważyć, bo niewątpliwie trzeba zwiększyć udział kobiet w życiu publicznym, [--] Dotychczas nie było innych źródeł, nie było innych recept. Ale są wyjątki. Klub Parlamentarny PO, proszę popatrzyć, kilkadziesiąt starannie wykształconych kobiet, kompetentnych, a przy tym sympatycznych. I to bez parytetów, pani pełnomocnik. Jest to możliwe. [--] I, co jest być może najważniejsze, jak sprawić abyśmy wybierali coraz lepszych i mądrzejszych ludzi? Bo docelowo o dobroć i mądrość przecież powinno chodzić nam wszystkim najbardziej. (Kulas 18 Feb 2010, 61, 129)

> This project deserves attention, because without doubt women's presence in public life has to be increased [--]. Until now there were no oth-

er ideas, no other recipes. But there are exceptions. Parliamentary Club PO, please take a look, a couple of dozen carefully educated women, competent and even congenial. And all this without parities, Ms plenipotentiary.[131] It is possible. [--] And what is perhaps most important, how to make sure that we would elect even better and wiser people? For in the end it is goodness and wisdom that should concern us all the most. (Kulas 18 Feb 2010, 61, 129)

By emphasising the competence—and congeniality—of the women deputies of his own party Kulas contributes to the ongoing criticism that parities put forward incompetent women. And what is most important in the end is not who is represented but that the representatives are wise and competent. Kulas' remark that the women deputies are "even congenial" only confirms what many feminist critics have known all along, that women in politics are in practice assessed not by their competence but by their looks and characters.

Izabela Jaruga-Nowacga, who has shown strong feminist sympathies, raises a question what all this talk about competences really means:

> Cały czas mówimy o tym, że nie płeć jest ważna, a kompetecje, kwalifikacje. [--] Czym są w gruncie rzeczy kompetecje polityczne? (Jaruga-Nowacka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 136)

> All the time we talk that gender is not important, but competence, qualifications. [--] What are the grounds and the essence for such political competence? (Jaruga-Nowacka 18 Feb 2010, 61, 136)

Jarugua-Nowacka's question serves the function of delegitimising the talk on competences—and as Fuszara's response confirms, she also thinks that the only ground for political competence is education:

> Nie rozumiem też odwoływania się do obawy o kompetencje, że nagle niekompetentne kobiety znajdą się na listach wyborczych. Mówiłam o tym w swoim wystąpieniu i jeszcze raz chcę to bardzo wyraźnie podkreślić: jedyna mierzalna—jest to też odpowiedź na pytanie o kompetencje polityczne—kompetencja w przypadku polityka to jego wykształcenie. (Fuszara 18 Feb 2010, 61, 143)

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131. It is uncertain to whom Kulas refers to by "plenipotentiary" here. As was discussed above, the term can be used to refer to anyone who has the authority to talk on behalf of someone. On the other hand, the Plenipotentiary to Equal Treatment Elżbieta Radziszewska functions as the government representative in this debate, but it was well-known that she is a sturdy opponent of quotas so Kulas' comment "all this without parities Ms Plenipotentiary" cannot be directed to her. Most likely, Kulas is addressing Małgorzata Fuszara who presented the bill and supports the parity.

I also do not understand the references to the fears of competence that suddenly incompetent women will appear on the electoral lists. I spoke about this in my presentation and once again I want very clearly to underline: the only measurable—and this is also the answer to the question on political competence—competence in the case of a politician is education. (Fuszara 18 Feb 2010, 61, 143)

The problem with the questions and answers on competence is that they clearly do not lead the debate any further. Jaruga-Nowacka and Fuszara perceive the opposition in terms of hidden patriarchal discrimination of women—something that deputy Kulas' speech exemplifies. However, this understanding rests on prior acknowledgement of gender being politically significant and a site of a power struggle. The opposition to the parity bill discusses the issue in terms of republican civic competence as the only legitimate ground for politics and therefore any recognition of gender as significant is beyond the core of the debate.

As the plenipotentiary Radziszewska sums up the issue:

Bo przecież—i o tym dzisiaj też mówiono—nawet w ramach tej polityki my wszyscy chcemy, żeby przedstawiciele, którzy zasiadają w Sejmie, byli po prostu dobrymi ustawodawcami, czy to kobiety, czy mężczyźni, by umieli wypełniać to zadanie w Sejmie, do jakiego przyszli, czy w Senacie, a płeć, niezależnie od tego, czy to mężczyźni, czy kobiety, nie jest żadną gwarancją ani mądrości, ani kompetencji, ani skuteczności w działaniu. Ważne jest to, żebyśmy mieli po prostu posłanki i posłów mądrych. (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

Because—and on this we have spoken today—even in the case of this bill we all wish that representatives who sit in the Sejm would be above all good law makers, whether women or men, that they would fulfil this task in the Sejm, for which they came in, or the same in the Senate, and gender, irrespective of whether man or women, is no guarantee of wisdom, competence or effectiveness in this work. Important is that we should have above all wise deputies (f.) and deputies (m.). (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

Let us return to expert Flis's case. Concretely his expertise consists of pointing out the differences between open and closed electoral lists and the impact of the electoral system (open preferential vote) in Poland upon the idea of gender parity. In such a system, Flis opines, it is always the competence as perceived by the voters that count and any legal fixing of lists is futile. Since the voters have to choose their candidate from among the candidates of the open list (as it is not possible to vote just for the list), Flis argues that no fixed number of women candidates cannot bring about the desired results,

as the voters will still prefer to elect the male candidates, because these enjoy greater visibility and have a reputation in politics.[132] In other words, Flis argues that legally sanctioned technical solutions cannot work in Poland, partly because of the electoral system but also because the social perception is that women are not as politically competent as men. He considers the parity a mechanism that *effects* a change in the gender balance in the Sejm; he does not interpret the bill as a way of giving women an equal chance to run for the office. He compares the electoral process to the World Championships in football and concludes that

> Jest jednak faktem, że w finale tych mistrzostw jeszcze nigdy nie wystąpiła drużyna z Azji lub Afryki. Sposobem na to, żeby któregoś dnia drużyna z Afryki lub Azji wystąpiła w finale tych mistrzostw nie jest zwiększenie drużyn z Azji lub Afryki wśród wszystkich uczestników mistrzostw świata. Chodzi o to, że wcześniejsze etapy selekcji i tak usuną te drużyny, jeżeli nie będą grały na poziomie Brazylii, Argentyny, Niemiec, czy też Włoch. [--] Mówię to oczywiście z pełnym szacunkiem dla szlachetności koncepcji polegającej na zachęcaniu kobiet do udziału w życiu publicznym. Po prostu wydaje się, że ten nacisk jest przyłożony w złym miejscu. (Flis 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 5)

> It is, however, a fact that in the finals of these championships there never was a team from Asia or Africa. The way to that one day a team from Africa or Asia would be present in the final is not to increase the number of teams from Asia or Africa among all the participants. The reason is that earlier stages of selection will disqualify these groups anyway if they are not able to play at the level of Brazil, Argentina, Germany or Italy. [--] I say this with all due respect to the benevolence of the idea that concerns the encouragement of women to take part in public life. Simply it just seems that the effort is placed here in the wrong place. (Flis 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 5)

Flis bases his argument that legal measures cannot change social reality, on his perception, of the realities of the Polish electoral system. He does, however, point out that such a bill would encourage parties to extend their lists with candidates that in practice never stand a chance of winning seats and therefore the bill is injurious to the idea that voters should choose between good candidates.

Many were not as subtle as Flis in their opposition to the bill, because it aims to change political and social reality. The public was present at the

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132. This is of course Flis' expertise opinion on the matter. For a more nuanced opinion, see Kunevich (2012).

committee meetings. One active participant from outside the Sejm was Monika Michaliszyn, a lecturer of Baltic languages at the Warsaw University and the initiator of the anti-parity movement "Nie chcemy parytetów" (We do not want parities). During the committee talk, Michaliszyn argued that the whole debate on quotas is detached from the reality of women in Poland, it is a leftist and feminist political programme that does not realise that quotas degrade women and that most women in fact do not even want to enter politics. In her opinion, the first task should be to ascertain that women would have time from their domestic duties for public engagement. Later she adds that

> Ja jestem niejako organicznie przeciwko parytetom, ponieważ nie uważam, że kobiety są mniej inteligentne, czy też mniej przebojowe, żeby nie mogły sobie poradzić w życiu politycznym. [--] Pan poseł mówił o demokracji. Wypowiem się tutaj nie, jako kobieta, ale jako obywatel... parlament nie jest odbiciem różnych grup społecznych tylko jest odbiciem poglądów politycznych. Każda kobieta ma swoje poglądy polityczne w pierwszej kolejności, jeżeli mówimy o życiu politycznym, a dopiero później jest kobietą. (Michaliszyn, 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 12)

> I am somewhat organically against the parity, because I do not think that women are less intelligent or less successful, so that they could not get by in the political life. [--] Mr deputy talked about democracy. I shall speak here not as a woman but as a citizen... the parliament is not a reflection of different groups in society, but a reflection of different political ideas. Every woman has her political ideas in the first place, if we talk about political life, and only afterwards she is a woman. (Michaliszyn, 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 12)

Most revealing are the responses that Flis's and Michaliszyn's positions receive. First, Agnieszka Grzybek, a representative of the Women's Congress, points out that public opinion polls indicate that women's underrepresentation is critically noted by a yearly growing number of citizens, and deputy Marek Borowski continues by pointing out that quotas as a form of affirmative action is meant to speed up the process of women's inclusion and are not supposed to become permanent. Both counter-arguments are informed by emancipatory rationality as opposed to instrumental reasoning espoused by the opponents of quotas. At the same time, all the quoted arguments against the quotas emphasise the distinction between the gendered and non-gendered subject of politics (woman vs. citizen) and the marked category (gendered) is contrasted to the unmarked category (citizen, men) of competence and intelligence. The supporters of the quota seem unable to address this issue and to give answer to why precisely gender is important in politics.

I wish to quote two more examples that shed light on two different ways of reasoning about quotas. Two expert opinions were given on the amended quota proposition (35 percent for both sexes) in the autumn of 2010. The first concludes that Article 32 of the Polish Constitutions guarantees "equality before the law and in the law"[133] (Skotnicki 2010, 2). Skotnicki distinguishes between social and political rights and argues that in the case of political rights, understood as individual rights, every Pole, irrespective of sex, has equal rights to run for public office. Consequently, any legal change to this position engenders an unacceptable inequality. Concretely, Skotnicki points out that the parity would not take into account meritocratic accomplishments in the selection of candidates. Interestingly, in Skotnicki's interpretation of the quotas, gender constitutes an element whose presence in politics is qualitatively different from meritocratic accomplishments, which appears to be neutral. In other words, Skotnicki's logic is that a more merited person is always better able to represent, even the "less merited". Being a woman, however, stands in no relation to being able to (better) represent other women. Quotas in a similar way limit the citizens' possibilities to freely choose candidates because they sanction the content of the electoral list.

The other legal opinion, that of Wieruszewski and Sękowska-Kozłowska (2010), applies a different reasoning. Their main thesis is that any legal change in Poland should take into account the international treaties that Poland has signed, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which aims at both formal and factual equality. From their point of view, equality in politics is a matter of regulation. Wieruszewski and Sękowska-Kozłowska, as well as Fuszara and other supporters of the bill, face the problem of bringing in gender as a relevant category, not in assessing inequality, but in *combating* it. In other words, they have to argue for the political importance of the particular (marked, that is, feminine) identity. The recognition of particular identities runs contrary to the Polish liberal understanding of democracy, built on the idea of universal interests, that merited deputies are capable of pursuing. I will now turn to the second reading of the bill, to determine how the gap between the particular and the universal was bridged.[134]

The second reading took place in the Sejm 24th November 2010. The bill now states that the number of women candidates cannot be smaller than 35

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133. Above the differences between the articles 32 and 33 were discussed. Article 32 concerns a more negative guarantee of freedom whilst article 33 frames equality in more positive terms.

134. Renata Hryciuk Elżbieta Korolczuk have argued that success of many women's social movements reflects their ability to frame their claims as concerning civic rights rather than social or economic rights (Hryciuk and Korolczuk, 2013). The findings of the analysis of the second reading provide somewhat contradictory evidence to Hryciuk's and Korolczuk's argument.

percent of all the candidates, and that the number of men candidates cannot be smaller than 35 percent of all candidates, and that these principles shall be applied to all proportional elections that is the elections to the Sejm, to Voivodeships, county and municipal councils, and to the European Parliament. Halina Rozpondek's presentation of the committee work opens the discussion. She describes the committee work as "emotional" and as focused on legal-technical aspects. She also gives an account of the amendments brought forward by the deputies during the committee work. Rozpondek reveals that no consensus was reached about whether the bill breaches the Polish Constitution, but she concludes that "all Clubs that took part in the discussion support the given report, giving a chance to increase women's participation on the electoral lists and, as a consequence, in politics." (Rozpondek 24 Nov 2010, 78, 98). Rozpondek refers to "chances" in her speech, but now the focus is not on chances as something concerning women's individual action, but chances of the political system accommodating women better. Rozpondek continues:

> W 1995 r. Ojciec Świety Jan Paweł II w orędziu na Światowy Dzień Pokoju uznał: wzrost obecności kobiet w życiu społecznym, ekonomicznym, politycznym na szczeblu lokalnym, krajowym i międzynarodowym za proces dobroczynny. Myślę, że o tym dzisiaj już nie musimy się przekonywać, a powinniśmy się zastanowić, jak te aktywność pobudzać, motywować kobiety, zachęcać je do szerszego udziału w polityce. Taką propozycją jest procesowany dziś projekt ustawy. (Rozpondek 24 Nov 2010, 78, 97)

> In 1995, the Holy Father John Paul the II in his oration for the World Day of Peace stated: the increase in women's presence in public life, in economic, in local political, in national political and international [life] is a good process. I think that today we do not need to be convinced of this anymore, and we should decide how to awaken such activity, motivate women, encourage them to wider engagement in politics. Such a proposition is presented by today's bill. (Rozpondek 24 Nov 2010, 78, 97)

Linking the aim of women's increased presence in public life to the Catholic Church might appear as an important discursive move. However, it should be kept in mind that the consensus on this issue had already been reached during the first reading, at which the Catholic Church figured only negatively in this respect. Much more important is the way in which Rozpondek finishes the paragraph: the proposition is meant to activate women, motivate and encourage them to wider political engagement. Equality with respect to chances is, in Rozpondek's case, presented as something that the existing political system can accomplish in order to accommodate women. This

places the reason for women's absence in politics outside the political system and in the social realm, and in women, themselves.[135]

Kozłowska-Rajewicz follows Rozpondek:

> Projekt w poprawionej przez komisje wersji nie wprowadza rewolucji, ale proponuje mechanizm, który pozwoli na stopniowe włączanie kobiet do polityki. Szczegóły oczywiście musi rozstrzygnąć każda z partii politycznych. Platforma Obywatelska organizuje szkolenia, konferencje dla swoich członkiń i sympatyczek. (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 99)

> The project, in the version amended by the committee, does not bring about a revolution, but proposes a mechanism that allows for a gradual inclusion of women in politics. Details of this must, naturally, each party resolve themselves. Civic Platform organises training, conferences for its members (f.) and sympathisers (f.). (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 99)

As she puts it, this law is a mechanism that is directed, perhaps above all, to the political parties, but in the capacity of the parties being able to help women, not in the parties' capacity to change their own habits. Clearly, it is the female members and sympathisers of PO that require training and conferences, not the male members of PO, or PO as a party. She continues:

> Sposobów na włączanie kobiet do polityki jest bardzo dużo i wierzę, że wszystkie partie polityczne znajdą działania, które będą skuteczne. (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 99)

> The means to include women in politics are very many and I believe that all political parties find their a way, which will be effective. (Kozłowska-Rajewicz, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 99)

We can contrast Kozłowszka-Rajewicz's view here to that Fuszara presented in the beginning of the debate. Fuszara presented the bill as something meant to guarantee equal chances to women. Kozłowska-Rajewicz's presentation has turned the subject of the law around: now it is the political party that engages in action to help and encourage the women bereft of sufficient political competence, not the women who are systematically blocked by the glass-ceiling maintained by the parties.

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135. Hryciuk and Korolczuk argue that the dominant narrative of transition as a success provides issues framed as civic rights better chances of surviving in politics than issues that are framed as social rights implying that the transition since 1989 has also produced losers in addition to the public figures of winners.

Rozpondek claims that the committee worked unanimously to achieve the current amended bill, but the first speaker of PiS contradicts this:

> Wiele słów dzisiaj padało z tej mównicy o aktywności. Myślę, że trzeba zadać sobie fundamentalne pytanie: Czy aktywność kobiet można wymóc w ustawie, czy chodzi tu o stan ducha, zasady funkcjonowania i pewną kulturę? Dokonajmy krótkiej analizy, czy zapis 35% zagwarantuje kobietom chociażby 35-procentowy udział w parlamencie.
> (Głos z sali: Nie.)
> Niestety nie. [--] Apeluję do wszystkich niezależnie od płci: szanujmy sie nawzajem, szanujmy płcie, szanujmy kobiety i mezczyzn. Wybierajmy z list tych, którzy sa najlepsi, niezależnie od tego, czy to kobiety, czy mężczyźni, wierzący, czy niewierzący, czy mają taki czy inny kolor skóry, bo zawsze tego typu ustawy segregujace moga spowodować (*Dzwonek*)... (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

> Many words were spoken today on activity. I think we have to raise the fundamental question: Can women's activity be forced by law or is it about the state of the soul, principles of how the whole culture functions? Let us carry out a quick analysis, does the stipulation of 35 % guarantee women that 35 % presence in the parliament.
> [Voices from the benches: No.]
> Unfortunately not…
> [--] I appeal to all irrespective of sex: let us respect each other, let us respect sex [płeć], let us respect women and men. Let us elect from the lists those who are the best, independently of whether they are women or men, believers or non-believers, or of what colour their skin is because this type of bills can lead to acts of segregation (Bell rings)… (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

As may be expected, Dera finishes his speech in the negative:

> Nasz klub nie bedzie popierał sztucznych zapisów...
> (Poseł Marek Borowski: Ale nie będzie też przeciw?)
> (Poseł Mirosława Nykiel: Nie będzie przeciw? )
> ...które tak naprawdę niczego kobietom nie gwarantują. Dziękuję bardzo. (Oklaski)
> (Poseł Halina Rozpondek: Na posiedzeniu komisji klub był za.)
> (Dera 24 Nov 2010, 78, 102)

> Our club shall not support artificial bills…
> (Deputy Marek Borowski: But it shall not be against?
> (Deputy Mirosława Nykiel: Will not be against?
> …that in reality guarantee nothing to women. Thank you (Applause)
> (Deputy Halina Rozpondek: In the committee the Club was for)
> (Dera 24 Nov 2010, 78, 102)

The reactions from deputies Borowski and Nykiel indicate that the deal brokered in the committee has been fragile from the beginning and there is hope that PiS will abstain from voting; Rozpondek's reaction in contrast concerns her own earlier declaration of there being consensus in the committee, which has now been proven to be false.

Ewa Kierzkowska in her speech still voiced support for the original 50 percent parity, but conceded to the existing proposition. She, however, engages with previous speaker's accusations that the bill guarantees nothing:

> Czy ten projekt, czy ta ustawa...
> *(Na galerii obecne są kobiety z komitetu inicjatywy ustawodawczej wraz z reprezentującą go panią prof. Małgorzatą Fuszarą)*
> Dzień dobry, pani profesor, pozdrawiamy. Pan poseł z PiS-u chciał udowodnić, że ten projekt niczego nie gwarantuje. (Kierzkowska, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 103)

> Whether this project or bill…
> *(In audience benches appear women from the committee that initiated the bill as well as its representative Ms Prof. Małgorzata Fuszara)*
> Good day Ms Professor, we welcome you. Mr deputy from PiS wanted to show that this project guarantees nothing. (Kierzkowska, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 103)

In order to recontextualise her speech, the beginning of which Małgorzata Fuszara did not hear, Kierzkowska refers to a previous speech by deputy Dera from PiS who had questioned the factual potential of the proposition to change women's representation in the parliament. In this way, her ambiguous "Whether this project or bill…" receives a context in opposition to the position delivered by PiS. What was it that Dera was opposing? He makes two related points. The first concerns the artificial nature of a legal solution to the social problem of women's underrepresentation, which, secondly, guarantees no factual representation:

> …chodzi o przekonanie wewnetrzne, stan ducha, a nie litere prawa. Te zapisy są tak naprawdę zapisami sztucznymi, które niczego kobietom nie gwarantują, są pustym zapisem ustawowym. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

> …it concerns internal conviction, the state of the soul and not the word of the law. Those words are in reality artificial words that guarantee nothing to women, they are the empty words of the law. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

These joined arguments give rise to his third point: that more attention

should be paid to social conditions that could enable women freely to choose activities of their liking:

> Powinniśmy natomiast stwarzać warunki ustawowe, żeby kobieta, która chce być aktywna, mogła zostawić dziecko w żłobku czy w przedszkolu, żeby miała gwarancję tego, iż jej aktywność społeczna nie będzie odbywać się kosztem życia rodzinnego, kosztem wychowywania dzieci. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

> We should instead create legal conditions so that a woman who wants to be active could leave the child in kindergarten or preschool, so that she could have a guarantee that her social activity would not take place at the expense of the family life, at the expense of bringing up the children. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

This then leads to justification he refers to:

> Wiele kobiet, z którymi rozmawiałem, mówiło: panie pośle, nie chcę działać dlatego, że są jakieś parytety, chciałabym pokazać, że lepiej od mężczyzn potrafię to zrobić. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

> Many women with whom I have talked, tell me: Mr deputy, I do not want to act because there is some parity, I would like to show that I can do it better than men. (Dera, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 101)

Dera brings together arguments from the first reading of the bill: that law cannot be used to change social reality, that law does not work for the advantage of women, that it is primarily social reasons that prevent women from entering politics, and therefore the proper solution is in social policy and lastly that parity degrades[136] women. Ewa Kierzkowska, in her response to Dera, returns to the question of what counts as a significant political action in democracy:

> Pan poseł z PiS-u chciał udowodnić, że ten projekt niczego nie gwarantuje. Gwarantuje. Może nie równy dostęp do procedur wyborczych, ale gwarantuje nam ten 35-procentowy udział na listach wyborczych. (Kierzkowska, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 103)

> Mr deputy from PiS wanted to show, that this project guarantees nothing. It guarantees. Perhaps not equal access to the electoral procedures,

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136. In Polish usage the word "parytet", parity, is used to cover also quotas even when they do not address 50 percent equality. There is a Polish word for quotas (kwota), but it is rarely used.

but it guarantees us that 35-percent share on the electoral lists. (Kierzkowska, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 103)

She reintroduces Fuszara's idea that equal chances to action in themselves are significant in politics; what are the concrete outcomes of that action should not be taken as the sole criterion for political action. Kierzkowska receives two kinds of responses. The first develops the old opposition between equal chances and achieved aims, as deputy Stanke from PiS voices:

> Moje pytanie dotyczy samego sensu stanowienia prawa w tym względzie. Czy nasze wysiłki nie powinny skoncentrować się raczej na aktywizacji kobiet i meżczyzn, poparciu nowych inicjatyw służących budowie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, a nie stanowieniu sztucznych procentowych parytetów? (Stanke, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 105)

> My question concerns the very point of legislating on this issue. Should our efforts not concentrate rather on activating women and men, on support of new initiatives that serve to build civil society, and not on creating artificial parities of percentage? (Stanke, 24 Nov 2010, 78, 105)

On the other hand, the supporters of the 35 percent quotas argue that the current proposition works for changing the mentality of society:

> To jest danie szansy, aby kobiety aktywnie włączyły się w życie polityczne. Chodzi o to, aby uwierzyły, że jeżeli będą na liście wyborczej, to mają szansę na pracę publiczną. (Rozpondek 24 Nov 2010, 78, 107)

> This is about giving chances so that women would actively join the political life. It is about the fact that they would believe (f.) that if they are on the electoral lists they have chances for public work. (Rozpondek 24 Nov 2010, 78, 107)

The difference between Rozpondek's "chances" and Fuszara's "chances" in the very beginning of the debate is that Fuszara did not presuppose that women were inactive, she argued that there is a class ceiling that blocks already active women from getting ahead; Rozpondek's chances are supposed to engender activity among—presumably passive—women. This point can be further substantiated by looking at how she defended the law proposition in the beginning of the second reading as well as by pointing out how her colleague Kozłowska-Rajewicz announces that PO "organises trainings, conferences for its members (f.) and sympathisers (f.)" (Kozłowska-Rajewicz 24 Nov 2010, 78, 99). In the beginning of the debate on parity, the problem addressed was structural, stemming from the democratic organisation of society and politics, but by the end of the debate it has become a problem of inactive women that need extra help to get involved. And this is an argument that appears

to be shared by both the opponents and supporters of the 35 percent quota. As a resolute opponent of any kind of quota Jerzy Stefaniuk explains:

> Chodzi o to, żebyśmy sobie czegoś czasem nie skomplikowali. Natomiast powiem z ręką na sercu, ze wolałbym w następnej kadencji nie startować, tylko żeby startowała moja żona. Ale kto ją namówi? (*Oklaski*) (Stefaniuk 24 Nov 2010, 78, 107)

> The issue here is that we should not make matters more complicated. But I swear with my hand on my heart that I would prefer that for the next elections I would not run, but my wife would run instead. But who would convince her? (Applause) (Stefaniuk 24 Nov 2010, 78, 107)

This new consensus, that at the heart of the problem is in fact women's passivity, also grounds PO deputy Katarzyna Matusik-Lipiec's attitude to the bill. In the beginning she was still opposed to quotas:

> Dlaczego reprezentowałam takie stanowisko? Wynikało ono z tego, że moja obecność w polityce, moja obecność w Sejmie, w tej Izbie, jest wynikiem mojej ciężkiej pracy i determinacji, a nie tego, że został ustalony pewien parytet. Być może jest tak, że są kobiety, które chcą brać udział w życiu publicznym, chcą być aktywne, a nie mają tak dużej determinacji, jak ja czy moje koleżanki z klubu. (Matusik-Lipiec, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

> Why did I represent such a position? It resulted from this, that my presence in the Sejm, in this Room, is a result of my hard work and determination, and not because a certain parity was legislated. It may well be that there are women who want to take part in public life, want to be active, but do not have as great determination as I have or my colleagues (f.) from the club. (Matusik-Lipiec, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

However, on December 3rd, 2010, Matusik-Lipiec voted for the quotas whilst a number of other deputies from PO voted against. The way Rozpondek and Kozłowska-Rajewicz explain it, the bill will encourage parties to engage women, to train them, to school them in order for them to enter politics. The conceptualisation of the woman candidate, who in Fuszara's original example faces a glass-ceiling has been turned around by emphasising that the political parties—that very glass-ceiling—should engage in changing women, so they can overcome that glass-ceiling, rather than changing itself. In other words, a subtle consensus emerges that the particular identity of being a woman, who cannot access to universal politics, is in fact slightly deficient and a little too passive to survive in politics. At the same time, the consensus holds that women, nevertheless, can be "trained" and enlightened in order to increase their political competence. Ironically those who argued that parity degrades wo-

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men did get it right—only that this demeaning was established well before the parity, or quotas, had been introduced in practice in Poland.

What we have seen in this debate is a constant evolution of the way the parity bill has been interpreted around different oppositional positions. No juxtaposition appears dominant, no juxtaposition hijacks other juxtapositions. The final juxtaposition of passive women and presumably active women was not present in the debate in the beginning. Instead, the debate began by articulating ideas of what is politically significant action, but it ended up with concluding that women—perhaps only excluding Matusik-Lipiec and her determined colleagues from her party—are passive, and a bill is necessary to encourage political parties to start provide women with extra training, or even schooling (the word "szkolenie" derives from "szkoła", which refers to school) and conferences to help them enter into politics.

This development of the conceptualisation of gender in politics has provided us some insights into Polish politics. First, we can observe how the structural problems of democracy have been reconceptualised as individual problems of women. Second, we have observed that meritocratic competence does not, and should not, recognise any gender differences and that merits translate directly into political relevance whereas gender does not and should not. Third, we have observed how male dominance in Polish politics is maintained not by trumpeting its masculinity as something desirable in politics, but by purging politics of gender, by declaring politics a realm of universal interests and ideas only. That such universal interests and ideas disproportionally benefit men is no secret.

The first trajectory of the debate that we have so far followed also reveals one way in which the state-socialist past became part of the debate by providing a certain context for interpreting gender roles. The state-socialist policy of forced emancipation, which required women's work in the public sphere has rendered the distinction between the public and private blurred and provided conditions under which women's retreat to the private sphere can be seen as a conscious, even political, action in itself, not merely the result of a patriarchal cleansing of women from the public sphere and power. State-socialist forced emancipation thus provided the debate with a code to interpret the private sphere as not being in a hierarchical opposition to the public sphere and a site of women's oppression, but rather, a site of freedom from state regulation—and therefore, a site of individual autonomy. The state-socialist past, however, has also provided other codes for the debate. One concerns more concretely the effects of forced emancipation, which tried to equalise men and women, and which, in the current debate, has been taken as an example of women's profanation. A second code derived from the state-socialist past places an equation mark between equality and inefficiency and contrasts them with dynamism and traditional gender roles. The third concerns the (temporal) opposition between the parity and state-socialist past and

contemporary democracy. The third concerns the opposition between parity and state-socialism on the one hand and contemporary democracy on the other.


## The Letter of Law and Good Democracy

The second trajectory that opens from the first four speeches of the first reading concerns the role of law and the relationship between law, politics and democracy. Much of the relevant aspects of this trajectory have already been covered by the discussion above. Also, this trajectory is based on different interpretation of equal chances. I will repeat some key arguments concerning the trajectory of equal chances versus equal factual representation before showing how the speakers connects this trajectory to the question about the role of law and of politics in a democracy.

Fuszara's presentation of the law proposition emphasises the importance of bringing about equal chances for men and women in politics. But what happens to "chances" later on in the discussion? Kozłowska-Rajewicz acknowledges the importance of talking about chances, as the proposition on parity reflects early stages of improving women's position in politics, but she sees it only in instrumental terms, i.e. as leading to some tangible result and deputy Beata Szydło questions the difference between "chance" and "equality before the law" (Szydło, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 114). Deputy Ewa Kierzkowska in contrast, stresses the importance of "equal access to this kind of activism" (Kierzkowska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 117), deputy Zdzisława Janowska argues that a larger number of women will increase women's chances "to force" their way through (Janowska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 120). These examples come from the prescheduled speeches in which clubs and circles present their opinion on the proposition. When the actual discussion, questions and answers begin, the situation takes yet another turn away from the original idea of equal chances. One last example of "equal chances" comes from Grażyna Ciemniak:

> Powiem najpierw tak: ani kobieta, ani mężczyzna sami nie trafią do parlamentu, muszą przede wszystkim być wybrani przez wyborców, ale naszym obowiązkiem, tworzących prawo, jest stworzyć taką szansę. (Ciemniak, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 124)

> I say this first: neither a woman nor a man ends up in the parliament, they have to be above all elected by the voters, but our duty in making laws is to create such a chance. (Ciemniak, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 124)

As we have seen above, the idea of equal chances guaranteeing equal possibilities of action without taking a stance whether this action would (always)

lead to the desired results developed into a debate on the real obstacle to women's access to politics. There is a widespread consensus that women's other engagements such as domestic work, is a practical obstacle to their access to politics. This trajectory then developed to consider the possibility that a particular identity is relevant in politics. The other trajectory continues a slightly different chain of arguments and focuses on the possibilities of changing society. Wojciech Kossakowski puts it as follows:

> Szanowni państwo, w moim przekonaniu sam parytet nie zwiększy kobiecych szans w politce. Nie trzeba zmieniać prawodawstwa, tylko pracować nad mentalnością społeczną. (Kossakowski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

> Respected deputies, in my conviction the mere parity will not increase women's chances in politics. There is no need to change the legal status, but only to work on the mentality of society. (Kossakowski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

Elżbieta Radziszewska in her capacity of the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment (government representative in this issue) continues:

> Dlaczego jest tak, że część kobiet, która nawet chce się zaangożować, uważa, że jej sznase nie są równe? Ważne jest, żebyśmy sobie udzielili odpowiedzi na pytanie, jak uwolnić kobiety, zapewnić, żeby miały czas na taką aktywość, jaką sobie wybiorą, niekoniecznie polityczną, każdą formę aktywności poza własnym domem. (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

> Why it is so that some women, who even want to engage, feel that their chances are not equal? It is important that we establish an answer to the question how to free women, ensure that they have time for the type of activity they themselves choose, not necessarily political, but any form of activity outside the home. (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

Radziszewska's response to Fuszara's equal chances erases the whole notion of invisible structural impediments and locates the responsibility of women's underrepresentation to their conscious choice not to enter politics and to deficiencies in the public childcare. As was discussed above, the state-socialist policies of emancipation concerned primarily women's inclusion into the public sphere and therefore women's choice to stay at home cannot be reduced only to the effects of a patriarchal discourse advocating certain gender roles. Fuszara is at pains to explain that the bill aims at equalling chances as something significant in itself, not at directly providing solutions to women's underrepresentation in the parliament or other representative bodies:

Ponieważ naszym celem—jeszcze raz mówię—jest równość, wyrówny-
wanie w ogóle wszelkimi metodami szans kobiet i mężczyzn w dzie-
dzinie polityki... (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 143)

Because our aim—once again I say this—is equality, equalising in gen-
eral with all means the chances of women and men in the field of polit-
ics... (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 143)

Fuszara is not arguing that women must enter into politics, she is merely
saying that women's chances to do so should be improved by the bill. The
difference between these opinions crystallises in the interpretation of the
political significance of being active. From a pro-parity point of view, indi-
vidual political activity as such is significant. Consequently, equal chances
are needed to prevent that politics does not become a field of discrimination
(which it is at present). In the opponents' point of view, it is the social situ-
ation that prevents women from taking up politics. If the social situation
were changed, women would enter into politics on equal terms with men.
The argument the bill on parity advances does not concern women's under-
representation only, but above all it concerns the principles upon which the
current democratic system is built. The supporters of the law proposition see
it as improving democracy:

Kwoty oraz inne strategie wyrównywania szans kobiet i mężczyzn w
wyborach są uważane za umacniające demokrację, gdyż oddają w ręce
wyborców decyzję dotyczą reprezentowania ich przez kobietę czy
mężczyznę. (Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 110)

Quotas or other strategies to equal the chances of women and men in
elections are seen as strengthening democracy as they give the elector-
ate the decision to choose to be represented by women as well as men.
(Fuszara, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 110)

...demokracja bez kobiet to pół demokracji. (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18 Feb
2010, 61, 115)

...democracy without women is half democracy. (Jaruga-Nowacka, 18
Feb 2010, 61, 115)

Wprowadzenie systemu parytetów lub kwot wyborczych jest
udoskonaleniem demokracji... (Kierzkowska 18 Feb 2010, 61, 117)

The introduction of electoral parity or quotas is perfecting democracy...
(Kierzkowska 18 Feb 2010, 61, 117)

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In the responses to Fuszara's aim to legislate for more equality and the arguments cited above that quotas improve democracy yet another opposition emerges between politics and the bill. Illustrative of this is deputy Zbysław Owczarski:

> Ten projekt ustawy ma przede wszystkim charakter polityczny. Myślę, że dużo istotniejsze dla większości kobiet będzie zwiększenie liczby żłobków, przedszkoli... (Owczarski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 125)

> This legal project has above all a political character. I think that a lot more important for the majority of women is to increase the number of nurseries, preschools... (Owczarski, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 125)

Owczarski's response is interesting in that it accuses the bill of being political. In this sequential context, as a response, it succeeds in making the argument that *politics* is something that should be kept away from democracy. The new distinction between politics and democracy is developed in the subsequent comment from Katarzyna Matusik-Lipiec:

> Czy chodzi o zwiększenie liczby kobiet obecnych w polityce, czy o to, żeby zwiększyć słupki statystyk? (Matusik-Lipiec 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

> Is this about increasing the number of women present in politics, or about how to increase the statistical charts [of women –JT]? (Matusik-Lipiec 18 Feb 2010, 61, 126)

It appears that legal interventions to society are "political" and contradict the unpronounced purpose of the Sejm (which is the primary legislative organ of the state). "Political" interventions also are against the interests of the majority. Matusik-Lipiec's comments were followed by speakers who questioned the likelihood of the bill bringing about equal or better factual presence of women in politics. The main concern in these speeches is that perhaps the parity, the legal sanction regulating the electoral lists, is not useful towards this end. However, deputy Magdalena Gąsior-Marek introduces a new dimension to the consensus that more women should be in politics:

> Wybieram lekarza, nie patrząc na to, czy jest kobietą, czy mężczyzną. Ma być dobrym fachowcem i dobrze leczyć. Nie jest ważne, jakiej płci jest polityk. Chodzi o to, aby był skuteczny. (Gąsior-Marek 18 Feb 2010, 61, 129)

I choose a doctor not by whether one is woman or man. One has to be professional and heal well. It is not important of what sex the politician is. It is about the efficiency. (Gąsior-Marek 18 Feb 2010, 61, 129)

Gąsior-Marek turns the debate away from gender and replaces the categories of "woman" and "man" with that of professionalism. Deputy Teresa Wargocka elevates this to concern equality and rights:

...norma konstytucyjna mówi o równości bez względu na płeć, a państwo twoczycie normę równości ze względy na płeć. (Wargocka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 131)

...the constitutional norm talks about equality irrespective of the sex, and you are creating a norm of equality respective of the sex. (Wargocka, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 131)

The legal status, the constitutional norm, is built upon equality irrespective of sex, irrespective of individual, private identity. The bill, as Wargocka understands, attempts to legislate individual difference into the public realm, where, however, private differences should be recognised.

Public equality irrespective of differences, or the Republican civic identity, is further seen to lay the foundations for good democracy as deputy Monika Wielichowska puts it:

Gdyby parytet coś zagwarantował. Tylko co? Równość? Przecież jesteśmy i będziemy równe, mamy to zagwarantowane w konstytucji. Gdyby parytet coś zmienił. Tylko co? Doprowadzi do sztucznego podziału, a przecież demokracja nie może być sztuczna. (Wielichowska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 133)

Only if parity would something guarantee. But what? Equality? But we are and will be equal, we have it guaranteed by the constitutions. Only if parity would something change. But what? It leads to artificial division and it is clear that democracy cannot be artificial. (Wielichowska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 133)

Wielichowska opposes the bill on the grounds of the already existing constitutional guarantee of equality. As we saw earlier, the Polish Constitution guarantees equality in two different ways. Article 32 guarantees equal negative freedoms whilst article 33 guarantees equal positive freedoms. However, both principles can be understood as concerned with a universal political subject. Democracy as understood in opposition to politics (as deputy Owczarski did), as concerned with professionalism in representation (deputy

Gąsior-Marek), as treating all individuals without taking into consideration particular identities (deputy Wargocka) lays the ground for Wielichowska's argument that parity creates an artificial division in society which is incompatible with democracy because "it is clear that democracy cannot be artificial". Wielichowska here draws from many intertextual references. A few were brought up by previous speakers, but the juxtaposition between democracy and artificiality serves to strengthen the connotations of the gender parity bill being a state-socialist leftover, as was discussed above. Finally deputy Zbigniew Dolata summarises the argument:

> Uważam, że wprowadzenie parytetów jest szkodliwe dla demokracji [--] jest to tak oczywiste, że nie wymaga udowodnienia... (Dolata 18 Feb 2010, 61, 133-134)

> I think that the introduction of parity is harmful to democracy [--] this is so obvious that it requires no justifications... (Dolata 18 Feb 2010, 61, 133-134)

The argument that democracy cannot be artificial and regulated, and that democracy understood in terms of guaranteeing (only) negative freedoms is so obvious as to require no justification, calls for analysis. The first trajectory at this stage of the debate developed the connections between state socialism and the parity bill; this trajectory follows the arguments discussing the futility of the legal regulation of democracy. The Plenipotentiary to Equal Treatment, Elżbieta Radziszewska puts it:

> Dla każdego prawnika jasnym jest, że nawet uchwalenie najlepszego aktu prawnego nie prowadzi do zmian w sferze rzeczywistości. (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

> For every lawyer it is blatantly clear that even the passing of the best legal act does not bring about changes in the sphere of reality. (Radziszewska, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 139)

Radziszewska's argument is interesting as it categorically denies the possibility of politics, understood as the source of new laws, interfering with the development of society. In Wielichowska's response, however, we realise that the conflict is not between politics and society, but between politics and democracy. However, for Wielichowska, democracy represents something natural as opposed to something political and artificial. Democracy for Wielichowska appears as something that spontaneously emerges from the community of legally equal citizens. Any distinction or separate identity introduced to disturb the equilibrium of the legal equality would break the harmony and consequently harm democracy, because "democracy cannot be

artificial". A similar longing for "naturalness" in public life is present in Radziszewska's argument that the law cannot be used to change reality. This can be seen as a negative reaction to state-socialist practices of social engineering through law. Law and politics are anathema to individual freedom and democracy.

This trajectory on the role of law and politics in democracy has developed through the contrast of identity and competence to the contrast between the universal and a particular political subject to the final juxtaposition between "natural" democracy that need not and cannot be regulated by law and "artificial" regulated democracy. "Natural" democracy stands as the outcome of the natural evolution of a society, which is founded on a unison between people's mindset and the political state of affairs. Again, the objective of the opposition to the gender parity bill was not to oppose women's greater presence in politics. Rather, the opposition was directed against the attempts to legally interfere in the current social situation.

This trajectory has also sought to legitimise its arguments through references to the state-socialist legacy, but while in the case of the first trajectory, the state-socialist legacy served as a negative example of promoting individual particular identities, in the case of the second trajectory, the past served as a negative example of the state's interference into the affairs of society. This point was informed by a particular understanding of the political subject that has its origins in the dissidents' antipolitics during state-socialism, which informs much of the current understanding of liberalism in Poland.[137]

Zdzisław Krasnodębski argues that the principles of Polish liberalism are founded on the premises that democracy is only a venue for interest representation, detached from any realisation of values or conceptions of the good (2005, 46). One person in Poland who has been instrumental in promoting such a conception of liberalism is Adam Michnik (Krasnodębski 2005; Matynia 2009), but the interpretations what it means that democracy is detached from any conception of the good vary. Michnik himself argues that "We have always announced that our politics will be carried out without violence, without hatred, without revenge" (Michnik 1998, 152) for he conceived

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137. This argument is different from Jerzy Szacki's argument that liberalism, or protoliberalism as he calls it, in Poland—and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe—developed as a negation of the state-socialist practices, especially in the current liberalism's zeal of private economy (Szacki 1995, 10-11; 73ff). Szacki's argument is that protoliberalism is partially unconscious result of the appraisal of the criticism of communism. As he puts it, "it was was impossible to take a firm stance against communism without at the same time reaffirming at least part of the 'liberal canon'." (Szacki 1995, 73). My argument is that the conscious appropriation of the practices of antipolitics have (consciously) informed the understanding of the gender parity bill as infringing individual liberties in attempting to regulate the being of the subject in a democratic society. In other words, I argue that the dissidents' antipolitics provides a *code* for the interpretation that gender parity bill infringes individual liberties. This is different from arguing that antipolitics provides the *content* for such interpretations.

ideologies as instigating violence, hatred and revenge, whether the ideology be communist, nationalist or religious. Krasnodębski gives a slightly different picture. For him the Polish understanding of liberalism can be traced back to the initial years of transition, and was informed by a strong distrust of the citizen within the political elite, which feared that if let loose, the masses will turn to support religious and national fanaticism (2005, 51). This led to the rise of neoliberalism and procedural democracy, which privilege the individual's liberty over the common good (Krasnodębski 2005,56).[138] One characteristic of the anti-political intellectuals in Poland, and elsewhere in state-socialist countries was their attempts to maintain the balance of making moral claims whilst being receptive of the need of dialogue and compromise (Matynia 2009, 55). The trouble of Polish liberalism was how to institutionalise such a position according to democratic principles that recognised pluralism. Arguably, it had been easier to claim both dialogue and morality for antipolitics when it was operating in opposition to something. It was not nearly as easy after 1989.

One example of the possibilities of antipolitics is the Polish noun for subjectivity, podmiotowość. As Matynia points out, podmiotow-ość is an abstract noun constructed from an adjective (podmiotowy, subjective) and it therefore connotes the act of being a self-conscious subject rather than objectively definable noun "subject" (see also Matynia 2009, 57). In the case of antipolitics, it sufficed to be a self-conscious subject to take a political action.[139] This was also the position the Polish Pope John Paul II advocated during his visits to Poland under state socialism (Krzemiński 2013, 347-348). This understanding of moral and political ways of being in society was easily translated into procedural understanding of liberalism after 1989, but it suffered from the lack of a collective interpretation of history against which this antipolitical being could be claimed. In essence, the supporters of the procedural liberalism institutionalised in Poland have argued for neutrality in moral questions and above all neutrality with regard to the state-socialist past, and against lustration and revenge. This principle saw its first form of institutionalisation in the Round Table negotiations that brokered an agreement on power division between the communist party and the opposition in spring 1989. It is this neutrality, the conscious unwillingness to state facts about politics, that leads Krasnodębski label Polish liberalism "pragmatic-cynical".

Much of the arguments opposing the gender parity bill are in fact following a similar, pragmatic-cynical translation of Michnik's and other dissidents' antipolitical principles and the procedural understanding of democracy and rights. It was discussed above how the state-socialist past has affected the

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138. For a leftist criticism of outcomes of procedural democracy see Sierakowski (2004).
139. See Vaclav Havel's essay Power of the Powerless for further elaboration of this aspect.

perception of quotas as reminiscent of the forced emancipation policies that compel women to take up work in the public sphere. This, perhaps, to some extent, explains the opponents' inability or unwillingness to see that parity on the electoral list cannot force anyone to be active.

Another aspect of the state-socialist past that can be seen to contribute to the negative image of the quotas is the category of political agency. Dissidents' antipolitics during the state-socialist years rested upon the importance of asserting one's own free consciousness as the primary method of political engagement. This principle has been translated into an interpretation of what neutrality means in politics and is in this debate utilised as a framework of thought that preserves democracy for the universal subject and substantive interest representation. Consequently, the primary criterion of the representative is competence not identity. Such neutrality, Michnik argues, is essential in combating the national or religious fanaticism of the masses (1998, 320-327), but as we have seen, it can also be used to combat women's equal chances, for any legal regulation of public affairs is seen as a political statement on behalf of one group and at the expense of another group. (In fact, it is primarily Krasnodębski's "patriotic-conservative" politicians that employ "pragmatic-cynical" logic in the debate.) Politics and law belong to the category of political concepts that are used for engineering society; democracy and freedom belong to the categories of political concepts that guarantee the individual his (or her) negative rights. Laws can, however, be used to create nurseries and pre-schools, as examples of social rights, but they should not be used to affect how citizens behave in the realm of political rights.

Throughout the analysis, we have focused on how a consecutive turn contributes to the content of the preceding turn. Now we may ask, has this debate contributed to Polish politics in any way? It is too early to talk about definite contributions, but it has certainly opened a new trajectory in Polish politics, that of individual (gender and sexual) identity. Even if competence has no gender, the current bill sanctions, prescribes in law, that 70 percent of the candidates on the electoral lists are there because of their gender—and the remaining 30 percent are there irrespective of their gender. By dropping the 50 parity to a 35 % quota, the candidates' gender emerged as an identity that concerns only some candidates, not all. Gender in Poland is not, as in France, an integral element of the universal political subject (Scott 2004; Raevaara 2005), but a particular identity that accompanies the representative in the task of substantive representation.


## Gender as Translation and Explosion

Agnieszka Graff wrote in 2001 that "in Polish political debate there is almost no understanding for democracy of parity." (Graff 2011, 64). In the

preface to the second edition (2011), Graff comments that "this book was supposed to deactualise... Poland was supposed to civilise, modernise and then pad itself a nest in the united, liberal and equal Europe" (Graff, 2011, 5). The second edition of the book gives testimony to the fact that this has not been the case.

Many other scholars who have focused on women's presence in politics or women's rights have arrived at similar conclusions. The post-1989 Polish state has become a state of and for the masculine universal subject. Shana Penn has shown how women who organised the underground Solidarność after the imposition of the Martial Law (most male members were then imprisoned or interned) were never publicly recognised as contributing to the resistance against state socialism (Penn 1994, 63-64),[140] Peggy Watson has shown how, parallel to the increasing power of the parliament, the number of among the deputies decreased (Watson 1993b; also Fuszara 2009; 2010), Barbara Einhorn's book *Cinderella Goes to Market* (1993) shows how the institutional agreement reached in the Round Table negotiations in the spring of 1989 excluded women and ignored their interests. Alexandra Gerber shows how the discourse of national romanticism effectively impedes the realisation of the letter of law that guarantees equality between women and men in Poland (Gerber 2010). And Fuszara shows that women are absent from high-ranking public positions both in politics and in the financial sector and administration (Fuszara 2009). This picture could further be applied to media (Graff 2008) and studies of national identity and culture (Janion 1996; Matynia 1994, 369ff).

These studies do not only offer documentation for women's absence from politics and account for the mechanisms that produce and maintain their exclusion. They also construct anew the dichotomy that Graff described as liberal versus religious and Krasnodębski as pragmatic-cynical versus patriotic-conservative. One essential feature of these oppositions is that women are denied the possibility of acquiring a political subject position. Graff argues that

> In a patriarchal culture real women cannot exist in the collective understanding as subjects of action; instead, in the collective understanding appears an idealised womanhood: Mary, God's Mother... Black Madonna (of Częstochowa –JT)" (Graff 2011, 38).

As a result, Graff concludes:

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140. In 1980, a wall writing appeared in the Gdynia Shipyard. It read "Women, do not disturb us, we fight for Poland" (Kobiety, nie przeszkadzajcie nam, my walczymy o Polskę) (cited in Graff 2011, 36).

> "Woman" is not one of two categories that to an equal degree can be located under the concept "person" or "citizen"—it is a distinct category which has connotations of private sphere, family, motherhood physiology and sexuality. (Graff 2011, 52).

Her conclusion is that "there can be no real dialogue between a liberal discourse which emphasises freedom and human rights, and a religious discourse, the bottom line of which is the 'will of God', 'absolute truth' and 'natural law' (Graff 2007, 151). On the other side, the defenders of a more traditional society argue that Polish liberalism, including positions like Graff's, "do not ask what integrates, what could bring together radically pluralistic society" (Krasnodębski 2005, 52). The conclusions that both draw indicate that these discursive positions are mutually exclusive and incapable of any dialogue.

There are few attempts to think beyond this dichotomy. For instance Korolczuk (2013) and Hryciuk and Korolczuk (2013), question Graff's conclusion that woman or mother cannot be political. Their studies on the Alimony Fund protests show how motherhood as an identity was used to rally for political change—even if it does not always bring about desired results. Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska (2012) by contrast, in her study on media reportage on the gender parity debate, shows how neither side exhibits a monolith discourse. Rather, each discourse is composed of numerous smaller discourses. Accordingly, she questions the presumption of a clash between two neatly defined and fixed discourses, the dominant patriarchal and the challenging feminist, which surfaces in the descriptions by Graff and Krasnodębski. However, her analysis stops at deconstructing the assumption of the homogenous patriarchal and feminist discourses. My argument emphasises the importance of the manner in which the gender parity bill has been debated through changing, evolving oppositions. I will now return to Lotman's concepts of translation and explosion as two ways of making sense of the world (Chapter 4)—or two different ways of understanding and engaging in dialogue.

Lotman's notions of translation and explosion provide new ways of thinking about the gender parity debate analytically. Translation refers to understanding as expressing something in another language where language refers to a cultural "code" and its history through which something is organised or structured as encompassing meaning. Translation makes use of available cultural languages to interpret and generate texts. Translation also feeds back to those languages and generates gradual and predictable evolution of culture. The explosion was described as referring to the puzzlement one encounters when facing a text whose meaning cannot be comprehended. It is crucial to keep in mind, with respect to explosion, that one perceives a text—as op-

posed to "noise"—and a text is always potentially meaningful. However, the meaning of the text in the context where it appears, is experienced as incomprehensible.

Huttunen discussed Lotman's explosion as a catachrestic text, which appears in a wrong context. I find this a productive way of thinking about the gender parity bill too. Catachresis does not refer to text-as-nonsense, but to a text whose meaning resides in the impossibility of its comprehension (see p. 152 above). One example of such a text would be the Christian dogma of the Trinity: any attempt to subject it to the logic of the world (let alone any formal logic) misses the point of the Trinity. Such an attempt shows even graver misunderstanding of the Trinity than treating it as something incomprehensible. The fact that the Trinity cannot be understood, does not leave the people unengaged: for almost two millennia theologians have studied the problem of the Trinity and there is little evidence that they will complete their quest for its true meaning anytime soon. The puzzle, the Trinity, has been a never-ending source of inspiration for further engagement. This is a part of the explosion. Explosion is a text that disrupts the normal way of doing business and constantly brings to mind its enigma. Explosion calls forth a response rather than a definite answer. These responses are the semiosphere's mechanism for pacifying, not resolving, the explosion. Instrumental in these processes are the creation of cultural languages that enable the description of the text that brought about the explosion. In the case of translation, it is primarily the text that undergoes evolution in this respect; in the case of an explosion, it is primarily the semiosphere that adapts to the demands presented by the text.

What I want to discuss now is the fact that, hermeneutically, the puzzlement, the incomprehensibility, of the gender parity bill on the Polish political scene of 2009, and during the parliamentary debate in 2010, is central to the unfolding of the debate. And therefore the debate as such is best understood as an explosion, rather than a clash of two (or more) discourses or as a result of slow institutional development of feminism, or as a result of the change of government of other political forces. To understand what has happened in the debate, how the debate has unfolded, I argue, one needs to analyse how the gender parity bill has asserted itself and how the surrounding contexts have been modified to give a comprehensible meaning to the text. This does not mean that one has to agree with the text; it means that one must be able to attribute a meaning to the text with which one can live.

The first aspect of the explosion is that it appears at the scene, making its presence felt and requesting reaction. The catachrestic perception of the bill, the fact that it brought the state-socialist practice of affirmative action into the context of Polish free democracy, sets it apart from the previous feminist initiatives. Now, at stake is not only the gender question, but more importantly the fact that the opponents perceived the bill as disputing the functioning of Poland's democratic foundation. As the feminist historiography indic-

ates, women and women's questions have largely been eradicated from the political agenda; the gender parity bill uncannily brings the women's questions back into politics, in the form of a state-socialist attack on democracy. Such an issue just cannot be ignored, passed on as noise, but it compels an answer, an engagement. Let us take one concrete example of how the bill is perceived as affirmative action, but placed in the state-socialist context. Stanisław Pięta argues that "all forms of affirmative action are nonsense: points for working class and agricultural background in People's Republic of Poland... I do not see that gender could be a criterion here" (Pięta 18 Feb 2010, 61, 138). Affirmative action strives towards equality, which brings to mind the state-socialist equality, which "brought it [the system] to its end, because equally does not mean good and in fact it does not provide dynamics for development" as deputy Biernat had it (Biernat, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 134). There is nothing state-socialist in the bill, but it is the inability to comprehend affirmative action as democratic that places the bill in the context of state-socialism.

The second aspect of the explosion concerns the processes of interpretation it generated. Perhaps the clearest indications of attempts to "rework" the semiosphere in order to make sense of the bill can be seen in Jan Lipicki's response to the bill:

> Czy, jeśli wprowadzimy parytet płci, nie pojawią się kolejne grupy, które zażądają parytetu? Mamy w Polsce gdzieś około 10% osób niepełnosprawnych. Czy w przypadku przyjęcia tej ustawy nie będzie tak, że również osoby niepełnosprawne zażądają 10% parytetu na listach wyborczych? (Libicki, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 118)

> If we put forward the parity of genders, will not other groups start demanding parity as well? We have in Poland about 10% disabled people. In the case of accepting this parity, would it not happen so that also the disabled will want parity on the electoral lists? (Libicki, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 118)

This is certainly a rhetorical statement, *argumentum ad absurdum*, but from a hermeneutic point of view, it is also an attempt to fuse the horizons of the text of the parity and that of a society of consisting in (republican) political subjects without any group affiliations. Libicki, speaking as a representative of the Parliamentary circle Polska Plus, advances three arguments against the parity. First, there are no guarantees that it would be limited to electoral lists. It could spread to other areas of public administration, judiciary etc. Second, there are no guarantees that parity would be limited to women. It could well spread to other groups, such as disabled. Third, he argues that it is practically impossible to find enough competent women to run for office. In addition, he makes two separate points. The first concerns the individual freedom to organise politically unhindered by regulative legislation, and second, politic-

al work should be concerned with the common good, something that unites people; the bill on parity has the diametrically opposite aim, that of drawing a division between men and women. All these points, hermeneutically, help Lipicki contextualise the bill by amending the semiosphere, not by amending the text. All his points are geared towards future social consequences of the bill, towards an imaginary future society. In this case, methodologically, the question one should raise is not whether he misconstrues the intention of the bill, but the *contribution* this new contextualisation can provide for the future of the debate.[141]

Another example of explosion as the inability of translation may be noted in the distinction between action and results on the one hand and the universal subject and universal democracy on the other. One fundamental problem with the bill, which many deputies brought up, is its empty promise to concretely effect a change, on the one hand, and its undemocratic nature on the other. The bill on gender parity promises political action, but it does not promise improvements to women's objective position in society; at the same time, it appears to advocate positive freedoms as opposed to liberal ideals of negative freedoms. State-socialist regimes, of course, were champions of positive freedoms at the expense of negative freedoms. One reason for the hermeneutic inability to translate between Fuszara's equal chances as perfecting democracy and the opponents' dislike of legal regulation and their appraisal of the universal political subject, is the respective roles played by politics and economics vis-à-vis society. The gender parity bill explicitly suggests that politics should be involved in and regulate the affairs of society. The bill also suggests that democracy is the means of applying politics to society. This is incomprehensible to many opponents who present very different conceptual ideas as of the relation between democracy, society and politics. The opponents respond by presenting an idea of democracy that serves to guarantee that economic means (like building of nurseries) are the only democratic way to engineer society and maintain individual negative freedom. The purpose of democracy is to replace politics with economics as a means of organising society (see also Szacki 1995;

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141. Libicki is not very original in his rhetoric: similar argument is already documented by Anne Phillips in *Engendering Democracy* (1991, 65). The difference between Libicki's concrete argument presented in the Polish parliament and any such *argumentum ad absurdum* is that Libicki's passed without a challenging response. Anne Phillips raises a counter argument by pointing out that political movements and the social situation contingently mandate which identities deserve equal descriptive representation—in the British context she suggested class, race, gender and possibly the Muslim faith; in the Polish case, Libicki's point remained unchallenged and rather served to support the primacy of substantive representation at the expense of descriptive, identity-based, representation. The fact that social structures and indicating which identities deserve equal representation did not surface in the Polish case is important.

Šrubař 2000).[142] The supporters of the gender parity seem to argue for extending the realm of the political, in particular, to include the private sphere, whilst the opponents' answer to this argument is that economics should be brought into politics, not vice versa. Politics as regulation of electoral lists appears to be a fundamentally catachrestic proposition in the context in which democracy is primarily understood as the withdrawal of politics and law from the private and public spheres and replacing them with economics.

There are, however, also elements of translation in the debate. Perhaps the best examples are from the very beginning of the debate when Kozłowska-Rajewicz translated Fuszara's "equal chances" as "equal power" and "equal number of parliamentary seats". If we approach this exchange as a dialogue of monologues, Kozłowska-Rajewicz clearly misunderstands Fuszara's point or denies its legitimacy and imposes her definition over Fuszara's. However, looking at this exchange from a hermeneutic perspective, Kozłowska-Rajewicz's interpretation first reveals important tenets of the semiosphere in which she interprets the bill, but also communicates the idea that affirmative action as-already-accomplished-promotion (an action in present perfect tense—an action completed in the past but having effects in the present), not as a present or future tenses that require actualisation and whose very point is the process of actualisation, not the end result. This is the difference between politics as action and politics as achieved results. This translation modifies the text of the gender parity bill by introducing the idea that what is significant in politics are actualised accomplishments, that the political significance of the bill should be assessed by its present perfect effects, not by its present or future possibilities. The second good example comes from deputy Beata Szydło's question about how effective the proposed bill will be for bringing about women's greater participation in politics. Szydło questions the possibility of a law changing society and politics, and also suggests that the law should not be used for this purpose. As we saw, this evolved into one of the main themes of the debate.

Lotmanian translation concerns the possibilities of engaging the text into a dialogue and amending the text by applying the available cultural language—or codes with certain histories—in the process of interpreting the text. In the case of Kozłowska-Rajewicz's translation of equal chances into equal power, she made use of cultural languages that privilege outcomes over opportunities. One obvious difference between them is that outcomes

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142. Jerzy Szacki has argued that liberalism has been understood in Poland especially as concerning economic liberalism (1995). Ilja Šrubař (2000) argued also that economics has occupied much of the conceptual ground that western political science would reserve to politics. He develops his argument on the commonalities Marxism and Hayekian economic liberalism that became the dominant understanding of liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

can be controlled whilst opportunities are uncertain and give greater freedom to the subject. Another connection is more historical and draws from the state-socialist experience that guaranteed extensive social rights but limited political rights. Kozłowska-Rajewicz's interpretation does not place much political value on women's political rights as such, but thinks that it would be preferable to improve them through social rights. However, every translation is also productive in the sense that it feeds back into the cultural languages themselves. As Torop summed up Lotman's concept of translation

> ...is thus not only the mediation of natural languages and texts, but involves also creation of description languages and, with the help of this metalingual activity, organisation of the relations between the own and the alien culture. (Torop 2008a, 255)

Even in the case of translation, although the main emphasis is on the changes in the text, any translation also engages in "metalingual activity" that introduced incremental changes to the constitution of the semiosphere. The debate, in other words, did not concern only the bill on gender parity, but it engaged itself in many other political issues, such as the politics of political subject or the role of law in a democratic polity.

There are cases of both explosion and translation being at work in the debate. However, if we take whole debate as a unit of analysis, it appears more like an explosion than translation. The bill itself is a catachrestic text and the final outcome even more so in the light of the debate. The interpretations of the bill on gender parity evolved through differently conceived juxtapositions, starting with the contrast between equal chances and factual outcomes, developing to consider the possibilities of changing society through legal sanctions rather than through natural evolution. This juxtaposition later received a historical dimension, coupling legal measures with state-socialist engineering and natural evolution with liberal democracy. Finally, the issue was perceived as pertaining to differences between representing segmented identities in opposition working for the common good of society. The oppositions accumulated and added meaning to previous juxtaposition and it became increasingly unclear what the bill was hoped to bring about in the end. It is obvious that the bill's claim to increase women's presence in politics in the beginning of the debate is not comparable to its claim to do so at the end of the debate. At the end of the debate, women's presence in politics was coupled with an agglomeration of ideas constituting equality as state-socialist, as a sign of inefficiency, as a breach in the community, as an artificial legal construction, as an opposite to democracy, but also as an affirmative action to encourage passive women to engage in politics, and as a programme for encouraging political parties to engage in training activities for their women members and sympathisers. In the beginning of the debate, to

increase women's presence in politics implied mainly that something, perhaps a glass ceiling, prevents their access to politics. The outcome of the debate, however, is a legal act that sanctions that 70 percent of the candidates on an electoral list must be there partly because of their gender and that the remaining 30 percent can run for the office irrespective of their gender. The fact that this was justified primarily by pointing at women's passivity as the reason for their absence in politics renders the bill incomprehensible both to its initial supporters and opponents.

Like the Lotmanian explosion, the bill appears as a catachrestic text, its content and the debate that brought it about cannot be reduced to any conscious position in the debate, nor to any established cultural text in Polish politics. It pools together contradictory tendencies, such as the patriarchal gender hierarchy and the liberal idea of state intervention to guarantee gender equality. The attempts to make sense of the bill required more changes in the semiosphere—in the constellation of the available cultural languages—than in the text itself. The bill itself survived remarkably unchanged throughout the debate: the most significant change being the reduction of the 50 percent parity to a 35 percent quota for both sexes. But what is this difference of 15 percent between the original bill and passed law? It is certainly a concession or a bargain achieved in the committee, but what does it mean? It means that there is no equality between men and women on the electoral lists, it means that for 70 percent of the candidates their gender is politically acknowledged whilst for the remaining 30 percent their gender is not politically acknowledged. It further means that the patriarchal discourse has its grip over the debate and that social relations of power have not really changed during the debate—this would be the condition for any discursive change—and that the illocution of the parity bill is significantly watered down. But the remaining 35 percent mean that the political foundation of the post-1989 Polish politics, the belief in the individual, universal political subject, natural evolution of democracy and society and in formal equality between the sexes have all been *fractured* at their core. Fractures do not mean *de facto* change—the present perfect effect that many debaters demanded from the bill—but they signal a promise of a more unpredictable future. The last important characteristic of an explosion is that it accelerates cultural change. Above it was noted that it has already introduced gender as a politically significant identity.

From the initial bill, it was not clear whether it aimed at accomplishing benefits for women in the present perfect tense or whether it aimed at increasing women's political activity in the present tense, leaving aside the question of the accomplished effect of this activity. However, the debate soon developed to consider precisely the effects of the bill—in present perfect tense. Much feminist scholarship on quotas has pointed out that eventually differences in descriptive representation translate into differences in sub-

stantive representation (Masbridge 1999). In the Polish context, Agnieszka Graff argues that:

> When we bring a significant group of women into politics, inevitably new patterns of womanhood emerge... This is not about making democracy woman-like, on the contrary, this is about preventing gender from having such a significant role in politics. (Graff 2011, 69).

Graff argues that woman appears as something stigmatised in Polish politics—and in order to eradicate this stigma, which prevents women from entering and acquiring positions in public life, more women have to be made visible. Eventually, Graff holds, this will lead to the perception of the woman politician who is representing an idea and not gender:

> As I am writing this text, in France the first local elections are taking place that follow the rule of parity. On the electoral lists there are the same number of candidates of both sexes, but in the television commentaries one does not talk about men and women, but about the right and the left. (Graff 2011, 69)

It is of course too early to conclude how women deputies are perceived in Polish quota-democracy, whether their substantive representation is perceived as that of pure ideas, or whether those ideas are still coloured by their gender. Some trends, however, can be noted. The first is that against high hopes women's share in the Sejm did not increase as expected. It rose from 20 to 24 percent. The second is that the practice of excluding women from politics has not changed either. This is testified by the resent rebuttal of EU directive that would sanction a 40 percent target for women's presence in corporation boards (EU Commission 2012/0299). The Sejm rejected the directive on the grounds that it conflicts with the principle of subsidiarity, as for the aims intended in the directive, no EU-level action is required the Sejm argued (Druk 1003), and seemingly no domestic action will supersede the absence of the directive. So, there appears to be little evidence of substantial changes in the perception of women's questions.

A change can, however, be perceived elsewhere. A new political party Palikot's Movement (Ruch Palikota), named after its leader Janusz Palikot campaigned for diversity and brought into the Sejm the world's third transsexual deputy as well as Poland's first openly gay deputy. Palikot's Movement received just over 10 percent of the vote in the 2011 elections. It is not a party with an economic or a clearly defined political agenda; its agenda is about representing those who are living on the margins of society: "We are a new left that appeals to atheist, gays, transsexuals and those excluded by capitalism" its transsexual deputy Anna Grodzka says (FT Jan 17, 2012). It is too early to argue that gender or sexual identities have become mainstream

in Polish politics, but there is clearly an opening for politics that plays out gender and sexual orientation as something politically relevant, perhaps even as the substance of politics.

To what extent the gender parity debate as an explosion changes Polish politics remains to be seen. On the other hand, much feminist theory—as well as Graff—would argue that bringing in gender serves only to make gender ultimately irrelevant. In this respect, the bill may well turn out to be an explosion not only in Polish politics, but also in the feminist theory of representation. Even if the bill is now accepted and gender has become a legally prescribed element of Polish politics, this debate let alone the issue is hardly finished.

## Conclusions

The analysis presented here builds upon the question of what kind of contribution a speech makes *in relation to* the preceding turn. The analysis has not merely asked: what does a deputy say or perform (speech act), or what does a deputy mean by saying so (intention), or what discourses does the deputy explicate, but it has asked what kind of structural openings the speech makes available in the context of the debate. Asking such a question makes it possible to analyse both the deputy's autonomous action, while still placing it in the materiality of the structure of the debate. By emphasising the materiality of the structure of the debate I want to underline two aspects. The first is that the debate and its structure serve as the common ground for all the speakers. It provides them with the Gadamerian "shared tradition" or Lotmanian semiotic space, that is, the semiosphere that makes communication possible in the first place. The second is that the structure of the debate is independent of any individual speaker. This in turn means that the semiosphere in which the talk takes place consists of different possible meanings (texts with their histories) and languages (codes with their histories), which provide differentiated possibilities of understanding. Understanding, as Gadamer and Lotman argue, is not an individual cognitive phenomenon, but it is cultural and always embedded in a certain tradition. Gadamer refers to understanding as a fusion of horizons and Lotman put it that "to express something in another language is a way of understanding it" (Lotman 1990, 127). Both conceptions emphasise the productive nature of understanding. Much text analysis treats interpretation or understanding as processes that limit or shrink meanings to preferably one more durable meaning. I have argued the opposite, namely that understanding and interpretation *add* meanings, increase the complexity of the object. Therefore, I have found it essential to approach the parliamentary debate as a *text*, for only the text can maintain the wholeness of the coming together of mutually paradoxical political arguments.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the debate is that it cannot be reduced to any "original positions" of deputies and the power relations in between. The debate evolved through a number of different contrasts that each left their imprint on the bill. The initial bill on 50-percent parity made references to principles of justice, women's systematic exclusion from the public sphere, and to the public opinion. Very early on, however, the bill acquired an explicitly feminist character: as Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka put it, it was the fruit of women's initiation and work. The following speakers contributed to the semantic package of the bill by introducing questions concerning the purpose of the bill, which aimed for equal chances, not at equal factual power. This in turn developed into different issues concerning the nature of a meaningful political action, the possibility and desirability of the law to regulate and change social reality. The bill also acquired a historical dimension by being compared with different affirmative action policies of state socialism, as with policies to force women to take up wage-labour in the public sphere under state-socialism. Given this accumulation of meaning, the decision to support or oppose the bill were fundamentally two different things in the beginning and at the end of the debate. The case shows that the bill is no single issue, and nor is it fixed; it evolves in a manner that is not controlled by any one party. The case also shows that the bill in itself contributes to the way in which we can organise society and politics, thus providing new ways of cultural meta-description. Voting for to the bill at the end of the debate is simultaneously a show of approval of a heavy cultural package, unforeseen in the beginning of the debate and whose future importance remains fundamentally unpredictable.

Similarly, consequences of the bill can hardly be limited to the number of women that enter, or do not enter, the parliament in the following elections. The consequences of the bill are partly conditional upon the *debate on* the bill and one such consequence was the introduction of gender identity as something politically relevant. In the Polish language, as there is no word for "gender", the word "sex" is used to cover both. As we saw in the debate, the jump from one's gender to one's sexual identity was readily performed by some deputies. There is no homonymic quality between sexual orientation and biological sex in Polish, the former is "orientacja seksualna" and the latter "płeć", but the public debate on the importance of sex (płeć) in politics seem to have triggered also the issue of sexual orientation. This is just one indication of how the gender parity bill, as an *explosion*, triggers off cultural processes elsewhere in the semiosphere. Transsexual Anna Grodzka and homosexual Robert Biedroń turned their biological sex and sexual orientation respectively into political issues. This does not mean that they had no other political agenda, but that they *could* talk about about sex, gender, and sexual orientation as *political* issues—and make it to the Sejm. It is, of course, impossible to establish a close causal relationship between the gender parity de-

bate and Grodzka's or Biedroń's access to the Sejm. What I, however, want to argue is that the gender parity bill opened up a wider possibility for politics based on individual identity, with such an individual identity being grounds for substantive representation. In other words, the gender parity debate initiated the cultural process that undermines the antithetical conceptual connection between descriptive and substantive representation—at least in the case of gender and sexual identities in Poland.

The second conclusion I want to draw concerns the formal structure of parliamentary talk in Poland and its effects upon the content of the gender parity debate. In other words, what are the effects of the sequence of the turns of the debate on the content (outcome) of the debate?

The overall sequence of the parliamentary debate as defined in Regulamin Sejmu, consists of the presentation of the bill followed by opinions, question and the presenter's answers (first reading); the presentation of the committee resolution followed by opinions, individual speeches, and questions followed by the answer (second reading). As we saw in the previous chapter, in Slovakia, after each scheduled speech, that is after each opinion delivered by a party or by an individual deputy, it is possible to raise a factual remark to which the speaker against whom the factual remark was raised may respond. In contrast to the Slovak case, the Polish regulations of parliamentary debate favour rather independent existence of statements in the debate; it is only at the end of the debate that the presenter of the bill can engage in a dialogue with other deputies. One may raise questions to what another deputy has said only to make corrections, but even here, all comments should be directed to the bill as such, thus strengthening the autonomous existence of the text of the bill. As the debate, nevertheless, acquires a sequential form of a dialogue, it becomes a dialogue of rather distant positions. One practical outcome of this—also partially resulting from the nature of the parliament, which imposes the political division between different opinions—was the way in which the bill as a whole was conceived through evolving oppositions. Such an organisation of debate can well be conducive to an explosion as a way of understanding, for there are limited possibilities for working out detailed aspects of the text during the debate. The more distinct the text and the semiosphere are, the more difficult it is to find available cultural languages for making sense of the text and the more likely it becomes that the text induces an explosion (or it passes on as noise). The Slovakian parliamentary regulations, by contrast, enable the debate to develop more freely and engage with seemingly insignificant aspects of the bill, thus giving rise to incremental amendments to the text and translation as the dominating mode of understanding. In other words, the concrete way in which the talk in parliament is organised have implications also to the semantic content of the debate.

This argument should not be confused with Habermasian deliberation. The organisation of talk that I referred to above works independently of the

interlocutors' interactive competences and validity claims. This structure of talk, furthermore, does not expect or prefer arguments that are rational.

The last aspect I wish to raise here concerns the use of marked and un-marked terms in Polish politics and scholarship on the gender issues in Po-land. Much feminist scholarship in Poland proceeds from the account that the marked category "woman" is marked in a way that makes its existence in politics difficult if not impossible. As Graff argued above, "woman" does not belong to the category of "person" or "citizen" but to the private sphere, the family, motherhood, physiology and sexuality (Graff 2011, 52). We re-call from the committee discussions that Michaliszyn avoids the identifica-tion of woman when she addressed the committee: "I shall speak here not as a woman, but as a citizen" (Michaliszyn, 8 Jul 2010, NOW, 25, 12). The political problem of such markedness is that whatever a woman politician says becomes perceived through her feminine gender; and when something is not feminine, the argument goes that she behaves like man (Graff 2011, 52-54). The problem is that for the woman the transition from the marked to the unmarked category is always effectuated with a commentary, which in effect denies women access to what the unmarked stands for: existing without notice, being the default. Just recall how deputy Kulas called his fel-low female deputies "carefully educated women, competent and even con-genial" (Kulas 18 Feb 2010, 61, 129).

The idea that the private sphere is an object of decisions made in the pub-lic sphere derives from the western feminist classics. However, the concep-tion of the private sphere that developed during state socialism is much broader than the liberal conception. Perhaps most importantly, the private sphere included many economic and social activities, and served as the site of antipolitics. Often the most exciting "public" and "political" events took place in the private sphere. Antipolitics under state socialism was aimed at creating a parallel society where the moral individual could take over the tasks of the state and pursue general interests, as opposed to the particular in-terests pursued by the state apparatus. Adam Michnik in a letter from prison to General Kiszczak in December 1983, wrote that "For me, General, prison is not such painful punishment. On that December night it was not I who was condemned but freedom; it is not I who am being held prisoner today but Poland" (Michnik 1985, 68). It is this kind of subjugation of the self to the collective good that informs also the Polish conservatives' call for the universal citizenship and that causes the perception of particular interests as antithetical to the interests of the, now democratic and free, Polish state. The argument against gender parity has never been that women lack reason; the argument has been that particular identities should not exist in politics, espe-cially in the politics of a democratic and free Poland.

The feminist historiography, however, sees that women are confined to the private sphere because men have taken over power. This has led to prob-

lematic translations of the Anglo-American observation that gender categories, marked and unmarked terms, organise society unequally. Differences between the English and Polish languages are quite significant in this respect. In English, it is primarily the personal pronoun that exhibits gender and the use of the gendered form acquires a pronounced significance. In the Polish language almost every word, nouns, adjectives, even verbs in the past tenses, reveal their gender rendering the relative importance of the gendered terms hardly comparable to the English case. Let us take one example. Graff translates into English the statement by the Polish Episcopate statement on Poland's accession to the European Union:

> The essential calling of the Church is to bring salvation. Its wish is that EU enlargement should go hand in hand with a deepening awareness that what lies at the centre of all our efforts towards integration is Man, and his inalienable dignity, bestowed upon him in the act of creation. (Graff 2007, 151)

Translated in this way, the Church truly appears to confirm all the worst accusations one can think of. However, let us look at the Polish original.

> Kościół, zgodnie ze swoim istotnym powołaniem niesienia zbawienia (por. GS n. 42), pragnie aby poszerzenie Unii szło w parze z pogłębieniem świadomości, że *w centrum wszystkich wysiłków, zmierzających do zjednoczenia, powinien być człowiek i jego niezbywalna godność otrzymana w akcie stworzenia...* (Episkopat, March 21st, 2002)

The cursive of the Polish text, literally, reads "that in the centre of all efforts of unification should be the human being and its inalienable dignity bestowed in the act of creation." The word "człowiek" in Polish refers to human being, but in grammar it is masculine and therefore the possessive pronoun has to take the form of a masculine. Whereas in English, "Man" can be replaced by a gender neutral term like "human being" or "person", this is impossible in Polish—not for cultural reasons, but for grammatical reasons. Similarly, whereas Graff is able fit two masculine pronouns, possessive and objective respectively in her translation, there is only one in the Polish original; the objectival "him" is avoided by using perfective participle, which is commonly used to form the passive voice. The passive voice is used when the subject of the sentence is unknown! This is certainly not the message Graff's translation conveys. If the Episcopate wanted to emphasise that they address only the men, the text could have been written also in Polish as Graff translated: w centrum wszystkich wysiłków, zmierzających do zjednoczenia, powinien być *człowiek* i *jego* niezbywalna godność, którą *on otrzymał* w akcie stworzenia... Paraphrasing Graff who argued that a signi-

ficant presence of women in politics would make gender irrelevant (2011, 69), I want to argue that a significant share of all words having a feminine ending makes marked-unmarked distinction contingent rather than automatic: not every feminine or masculine ending transmit their grammatical salience to social and political spheres.

The real issue with the use of marked and unmarked categories is that they superimpose a certain understanding of power that comes to affect understanding. Feminist historiography in Poland has appropriated the Western liberal conception that gender differences can be overcome by elevating women's position in society to the level of men. The shortcoming of this strategy is that it does not change the underlying relationship between the particular and the universal, it only transfers one particular to the level of the universal leaving all other particulars to the inferior "particular" category. Moreover, by depicting the transition from the particular to the universal as modernisation, one establishes a hierarchical relationship between them. One concrete indication of this has been captured in the end of the gender parity debate, when it was agreed that women's passivity can justify affirmative action in order to activate, motivate and encourage them to wider engagement in politics, as Halina Rozpondek put it in her closing statement of the debate (see page 316).

Luce Irigaray has suggested that instead of aspiring to pair the female with the male subject at the universal level feminism should proceed from an essentialist division of the subject into two, the female and the male that are inherently different (Irigaray 2000, 129). This approach might find resonance in Poland where the collapse of sexes is seen not only as something unnatural by a large segment of the people but also as reminiscent of state-socialist policies of forced emancipation. In the current debate, the gender quotas were perceived as aiming at advancing women in politics. This encompasses two arguments. The first would emphasise equal descriptive representation for reasons of justice; the other would argue that increased visibility of women would undermine the stigma the feminine gender has in politics and enable equal substantive representation. The underlying assumption of Polish feminist historiography has been to emphasise the patriarchy and to some extent misogyny women experience in Poland. I do not intend to deny these observations, and I think there is enough evidence to back them up. I only want to point out that the opposition to the gender parity was justified on the principles of universality; and this line of thought perceived the gender parity as promoting a particularist identity. The ground where these two ideas met in the debate established a hierarchy between the universal masculine political subject and the emerging, feeble, feminine political subject that requires encouragement and motivation to elevate itself to the level of the universal political subject. This can certainly be seen as the first step towards turning better descriptive representation into factual,

equal, substantive representation, but the hierarchy between the genders is somewhat problematic.

I think there are two conflated issues here that must be seen in relation to each other. The first concerns the conflict between the self- and other-descriptions. For the sake of simplicity, I use here the vocabulary of conservatives and feminists, even though we have seen that neither block is homogenous and that they constantly engage in interaction and redefinition of their standpoints. The conservative tradition in Poland, according to its self-description, approximates the republican ideals of civic participation that transcends individual identities. However, this tradition in Poland is strongly associated with the anti-communist movement that also wishes to see the traditional gender roles acquire public recognition. This has led the feminists to observe, rather correctly, that in practice the conservatives' position leads to the exclusion of women from the public sphere, but they have, I argue, wrongly depicted this as the ultimate aim of the conservatives. At the same time, the feminist historiography has depicted the gender relations in Poland as patriarchal or even misogynistic. In their self-description, the feminists put forward a particular identity in the name of better representation and justice, but in the civic republican ethos of the conservatives, the particular identity is nothing other than an attempt to undermine the civic community by introducing individual good at the expense of the common good. As the gender parity debate unfolded from these two distinct relations, the one between the particular and the universal interest, as the conservatives saw it, and the other between the women and men, as the feminist saw it, the "fusion of horizons" emerged in the understanding that women's particularity will eventually transcend parochial (feminine) interests and raise to the level of universal representation of ideas. Therefore, Polish democracy could tolerate affirmative action, not as a promotion of disadvantageous social groups, as under communism, but as encouragement to women on their way to modernity and republican democratic life.

However, as we saw, neither pole of the debate can be seen only in a preconceived conception of the fixed other. If the identity of either group in fact emerges only in and as a result of the conversation, then the terms to which one has to adhere in conversation become crucial. This is precisely the basis for Irigaray's argument, that women's legal recognition provides them with a public identity to adhere to when engaging in conversation with, and in, the public, political, sphere. Perhaps the intuitive realisation of the importance of the law in instituting women with a public identity stands at the core of the fierce opposition to using legal means to increase women's presence in politics. It is not that the law could not be circumvented in practice, but it is the fear that the legal intrusion into the democratic public sphere would in fact challenge the fantasy of the harmonious but distinct coexistence of the private, the social and the public spheres and call into ques-

tion just how perfect negation of state socialism the current democratic Polish republic in fact is.

Based on this case study, one possible future line of research seems to be the role and conception of law in defining Polish democracy and citizen-state relations.

# Chapter 8: Towards Imperfect Hermeneutics

The previous chapters have laid out the outlines of a method for interpreting parliamentary debate. This method is based on conversation analysis. Theoretically I have moved beyond the Anglo-American developments in the linguistic turn and sought inspiration from continental thought on language, especially from German hermeneutics (Gadamer) and Russian thought on dialogicality of language (Bakhtin) and culture (Lotman). This has enabled me to focus on interpretation and materiality of language and their effects upon talk as well as to draw from conversation analysis as a systematic way of approaching interpretation as it occurs in real parliamentary talk.

The method developed has paid special attention to two features of parliamentary talk that most existing methods to a large extent leave aside. The first concerns the dialogic nature of parliamentary debate. In practice this means that an individual utterance is not a sufficient object of study if we want to understand what a parliamentary or political *debate* is and how it develops. By extrapolation this also means that the focus on "production" of speech is not sufficient. Instead, parliamentary debate occurs in the *interaction* between "speaking" and "understanding", in the *interplay* between one speech and another speech. The case studies have shown that even if many speeches are prepared in advance, they come into interaction with each other in the parliament. This is due to the dialogic nature of language as well as the context of institutionally regulated parliamentary talk.

The second feature the method has tried to capture concerns precisely this institutionally regulated nature of parliamentary talk. The case studies show how the way of regulating parliamentary talk influences the way the debate unfolds, that is, the way in which arguments develop in the parliament.

My focus has been strongly empirical discarding normative presumptions that have informed many existing studies both on dialogue and interpretation as well as parliamentary debate as such. Chapters 6 and 7 included detailed case studies of two contemporary parliamentary debates. In Chapter 6, I discussed the Slovakian bill on the state language in 2009, which captures a seminal theme of contemporary Slovak politics, that of language and state identity, but also provides good insights to the majority-minority relations in Slovak politics. In Chapter 7, I discussed a citizen initiative to introduce gender parity on electoral lists in Poland. This was debated in the Polish parliament in 2010. The debate touches on contemporary issues of gendered

power structures in Poland and that of identity in politics. The cases reveal different temporal organisations of how the past leads to the present and what future promises this continuity enables. The cases were selected primarily on their manifestly different relation to the past. The Slovakian debate partakes a series of debates on the relationship between the state, language and the political community whilst the Polish debate is largely unprecedented, perhaps more so because of its reach and penetration of the institutional establishment of Polish politics than its content, although even here, despite the long tradition of feminism in Poland, the way the citizen initiative was formulated reveals its unprecedented novelty. My material has been the parliamentary stenographs.

I will first summarise the main arguments pursued in the thesis. I will then discuss the method critically and in the last section I will address the implications this study has on interpretation and hermeneutics as an approach to politics.

# Dialogicality of Politics

*Dialogicality of Politics as Text*
The first seminal argument was to conceptualise parliamentary debate as a *text* rather than as a succession of different arguments, an explication of some ideas or discourse(s), rhetoric and rhetorical strategies, or as an explication or case of certain meta-linguistic criteria of rationality or deliberation such as the Discourse Quality Index. As a *text*, paraphrasing Umberto Eco, we can conclude that parliamentary debate forms an "open work": individual speeches delivered in the parliament have shown great openness to different realisations by fellow deputies. From a normative point of view, most are simply gross misunderstandings. From an empirical point of view, however, they are instrumental in moving the debate to new directions.

The concept of text was introduced with the help of two essays by Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (1967) and "From Work to Text" (1971). For Barthes, "Text" in distinction to "Work" highlights the active and living nature of literary inscription that is generated anew at each reading. He used the capital T to highlight his usage of the term; I have opted to spell it normally. A text—as active—must be demonstrated in the reading and therefore it demands active participation from its reader rather than passive reception. This characterisation suits well the parliamentary debate that shows the deputies' active engagement with each other's speeches. The concept of text transfers the main dynamics from the speaker (the author) to interpretation and response (reading). Much of political science analysis of language has focused on explicating how something is said, what metaphors

are used and what pejorative words are included in the talk; few raise the question to what effect all that is said. What does the metaphor, or certain pejorative phrase accomplish among the interlocutors? My approach emphasises the importance of looking at the utterance always in relation to the response it has enabled. I say "enabled", because I want to underline the autonomy of the response and the necessity of the response striking a relationship with the question. The real nature of language exists in the relationship between the text and its interpretation. This is my central argument I have drawn on Gadamer, Bakhtin and Lotman.

This conceptualisation of the text was developed in Chapter 4 with the help of Lotman's cultural semiotics. Lotman distinguishes three different functions of the text: to convey information, to generate information and to store information. The case studies have shown that although parliamentary talk aims at spreading information, the real dynamics of talk revolve around the new meanings it gives rise to and the connections that can be made with the past, that is Lotman's second (meaning generative) and third (mnemonic) function of the text. Parliamentary debate as a text always involves the relationship between speaking and interpreting and responding. This further implies that the interpretation is intentional and directed to some future course therefore laying aside questions such as whether the interpretation is correct or wrong, and instead evokes the question whether the interpretation can deliver a response in this context. This is the reason why I have followed Barthes and Lotman rather than Paul Ricoeur in defining the text. For Ricoeur, who advocated perhaps a stronger homology between text and social action (1981 [1971]), the text is, however, first produced and it then departs its author and acquires a life of its own; for Barthes and Lotman, the text emerges out of its reception, emphasising the role of the subjective interpreter, but immediately places this interpreting individual in a dialogue with the surrounding texts thus drawing attention to the social and cultural limits of interpretation.

The concept a text is able to capture the paradoxical wholeness that can be felt to be present in a parliamentary debate. Perhaps the most pressing finding of both case studies is that the final outcome appears as an utter failure, a total mishap, if judged against the individual arguments brought forth in the debate. Lotman wittily observed that by slicing up a calf one gets many beefsteaks, but it does not work the other way around (2005, 208). Similarly, the parliamentary debate possesses a certain wholeness that it has acquired during the debate. This wholeness is contradictory and paradoxical. It is the result of a long process of meaning generation and it exerts influence far beyond its own cultural boundaries establishing order in other parts of culture and politics, which Lotman called the semiosphere.

As it is difficult to transcend this cultural process and adopt a view of a total outsider—to some extent I have attempted to do so in the end of both

empirical studies and assess the debates in terms of translation and explosion—it is crucial to treat the material of the debate, that is language, not as a reference to something, but as material being itself. Language very concretely, even physically, makes certain actions possible and other impossible:[143] language as providing the means to order things exerts enormous power in parliamentary talk. The unexpected thing about this power is, however, that it does not yield to the command of the deputies or the government, but it resides in the way the talk is internal organised.

*From Utterance to Interpretation*

The second central argument concerns the role of interpretation in political science. I have divided this issue into two aspects. Commonly interpretation is located between the researcher and the object of analysis. This approach, although important itself, often silences the fact that *social action* itself is impregnated by interpretation. In analysing distant cultures or past epochs one may feel that the material appears obscure only because of the distance between the researcher and the object. However, Gadamer has drawn attention to the ontological condition of interpretation. He holds that our way of being in the world is through interpretation. I have taken this claim seriously and approach the deputies' actions in the parliamentary debate as interpretations of different ways of being in the world (see also Warnke 1999). This shifts the concern from saying to understanding. This was the topic of Chapter 4.

In line with the first approach to interpretation, much of interpretivist political science is preoccupied with elucidating what a certain person really meant by saying something. Prominent examples could include Quentin Skinner (see Chapter 2) or Mark Bevir. Both locate the true meaning of the utterance in the (contextualised) intentions of the speaker. Gadamer, whom I follow in locating meaning in the act of interpretation rather than in the act of speaking, faced this criticism in the 1960s in a debate with E. D. Hirsch. The debate is illustrative of the broader problematic and I will address it briefly.

Hirsch's (1965) original criticism of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960) concerned Gadamer's postulation that the author's intentions are irrelevant to the truth of the text. Gadamer argues that practically it is impossible to retrieve them and hermeneutically they are unnecessary as meaning emerges

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143. Boris Groys, for instance, has shown how the Soviet power in the height of Stalinism was in fact primarily based on language. Stalin in *Marxism and Linguistics* argues that "language... is connected with man's productive activity directly, and not only man's productive activity, but with all his other activities in all spheres of work, from production to the base and from the base to the superstructure" (Stalin, cited in Groys 2009, 58). Language in dialectical materialism is, therefore, beyond the base and the superstructure.

out of interpretation (our way of being the world), not from speaking. Hirsch, in contrast, argues that Gadamer discards method all too readily. A less lofty approach to language than Gadamer's would help to realise that linguistic conventions effectively limit the possible meanings of individual words to the extent that "a single linguistic sign can represent an identical meaning for two persons because its possible meanings have been limited by convention" (Hirsch 1965, 505). Hirsch invokes "genre" as a linguistic convention that makes correct interpretation of the author's intentions possible—and necessary for the whole enterprise of literary criticism to survive; such relativism of interpretation as Gadamer's theory seems to espouse would entail the demise of any serious (literary) criticism. By the 1980s, Hirsch had come to renounce his earlier views and he concedes that speaker's intentions may not be limited to the immediate utterance, but concern still unknown events as well: "Even ordinary face-to-face conversations include meaning-intentions that are partly future-oriented and inexplicit" (1984, 206), and thus not known in the moment of initial utterance. Instead, Hirsch acknowledges the limitations of equating meaning with intentions, but he elevates the argument to another level arguing that even if the rediscovery of the intentions is epistemologically impossible, it is politically appropriate: "All interpretations originate in politics, which is to say, in values" (1982, 235). It is therefore a political choice to choose between the attempt to reconstruct the individual utterance as "intended" by its speaker or "objectively" as it came out of the social context in which it landed. This position bears certain similarity to Skinner's argument that the illocution should be the proper focus of analysis: as illocution, the intended but not (yet) materialised outcome, it captures the individual (political) action as such without the post-hoc distorting effects such as defame, discursive silencing or public ignorance.

I believe this is a powerful argument against the Gadamerian position that privileges interpretation over intentions, but it also serves different purposes. Skinner developed his method in order to interpret historical texts as political arguments; Gadamer's hermeneutics is no method, but a philosophy that shows that people engage with the world in interpretation, which is conditioned by the prejudices we all have—and must have in order to understand at all. Furthermore, Gadamer focuses on historical texts and he does not ask what is their meaning, but what truth can they tell us today. Therefore, any understanding is always understanding *as* something and understanding differently depending on the situation reinforcing the paradoxical union between the past and the present (fusion of horizons) without subsuming one to the other.

Both case studies have revealed the power of interpretation for the development of the parliamentary debate. Interpretation is not primarily a cognitive phenomenon restricted to the individual mind; it is how new meanings enter the debate and the debate acquires consecutive layers of history, ex-

panding complexity and how it connects with other texts in the semiosphere. Interpretation is highly productive even in a tangible sense: it does not reduce meaning, it multiplies it.

*From External Context to Internal Mode*

Perhaps the most radical departure from established ways of carrying out political research on parliamentary talk is how conversation analysis structures the close reading of the parliamentary transcripts. This has major implications to our understanding of context. Context is often understood as the external objective conditions in which something takes place. In situated language, speakers make contextual references. Therefore, knowing or mapping of the context can help us clarify obscurities in language. Following Schegloff, I have named this the "container" or "bucket" view on context (see Chapters 3 and 5). Conversation analysis provides a radical alternative to the "bucket" view of context, because it emphasises the way in which the context emerges out of the structure of conversation. I have applied this view and termed it as a context-as-mode-of-talk perspective.

Conversation analysis as a method provides a technical vocabulary—here turn-taking as the underlying principle, and sequence, repair and code-switching as concrete points of focus—that enables a third person view on the first person meaning generation that goes on in the material. This has the advantage of avoiding theoretically charged language in the analysis. This allows the emic categories (those present in the material and used by the participants) to emerge from the material itself and assume the forms the participants attribute to them. A serious appreciation of the emic categories employed in the debate itself is necessary in order to avoid the imposition of conclusions produced by the prior adaption of teoretically informed categories. At the same time, the technical vocabulary of conversation analysis provides access to means of interaction shared by the object of analysis and the researcher. Thus, the emic can be transcended, enabling the researcher to extract theoretical insight from the analysis of subjective understandings present in the debate.

In this work, I have applied conversation analysis in order to make three claims. Let me deal with these in turn (and meet some of the arguments that can be posed against them).

My first claim is the validity of privileging of participants' emic categories over the theorists' etic categories. It could be argued that basing the analysis primarily on emic categories leads to under-analysis, providing at best idiosyncratic "insights" into single phenomena. Peter Winch, for instance, has advocated the idea that social analysis should start with the emic categories but that they should be incorporated into a "second order" analysis informed by theory. Similarly, critical discourse analysis can be seen to aspire to unite the linguistic study of discourse with the objective relations of

power established—prior to the analysis—by other branches of social research. I do not see a contradiction here between these positions and conversation analysis. My response is to highlight the interactive nature of parliamentary talk (or any social action) that must be seen as an indeterminate unfolding process between different actors. It is a process that does not appear finalised to those who are engaged in it. Therefore, one must be careful not to categorise that which is not yet there.

An analysis influenced by an understanding of political context might have postulated starkly asymmetrical relation relations of power between, for instance, the Hungarian minority party and the Slovak government, and interpreted the rest of the debate on the state language law accordingly. Such an analysis could have referred to prior political, historical, etc. research for support. However, this type of contextualisation would not have served to elucidate how the debate moves from treating politics as a matter of (ethnic) groups' rights, to treating them as concerning individual political subjects. This emerges *out of the debate*. This finding contradicts those scholars who maintain that in Slovak politics the individual political subject is an independent but peripheral idea.

By deferring the imposition of pre-conceived categories (of context) on the debate, conversation analysis allows the researcher to focus on the dynamics between living actors and their undetermined talk. Yet, we avoid pure interpretation: the technical vocabulary enables the researcher to remain in a certain distance from the material whilst maintaining sensitivity to the subtleties of real talk. We also avoid the pitfalls of critical discourse analysis. The latter can, indeed, shed light on the prevalent forces in society (and language), but it is less useful for the analysis of an undetermined process.

My second claim concerns context and time. Throughout the thesis, I have discussed context-as-mode in implicit connection with temporality. Conversation analysis' central categories—sequence, repair and code-switching—are used in my work to understand the temporal ordering of parliamentary debate as a developing text that grows by each turn.

In order to discuss this and highlight the broader reasons for and implications of this move I will once again return to linguistic structuralism.

Structuralism was revolutionary to the study of language because it replaced the diachronic evolution of language with the synchronic and therefore objective structure of language as the object of linguistics. Structuralism was able to deliver (natural) scientific precision in its descriptions of, for instance, phonemes, but it fundamentally failed to consider time. When structuralist analysis faced the question of time, it tended to produce sequences of structural accounts (T1, T2, T3 and so on), but it was unable to account for the reasons how and why T1 developed into T2. This was so because the synchronous structure, the system composed of differences, in itself was suf-

ficient to account for all perceivable variation within the synchronous differences of the system.

The first attempts to overcome this problem with time can be found in the writings of Russian formalists, especially Viktor Shklovsky and Juri Tynjanov. The former argued first that literature can be understood as a sum of literary "devices", that induce "perceptibility" instead of "automatised" consummation of literary texts (Erlich 1981, 252). "Perceptibility", or "artistic effect" can here be understood as literary tricks, like estrangement, that in some way raise the alertness of the reader beyond the mere (literary) meaning of the sentences. Once one device becomes "worn out" or "automitised" in its reception and fails to produce the desired awakening effect, new devices emerge in its place. Shklovsky was then able to claim literary history as being the history of different devices used to generate "artistic effects".

Tynjanov developed the idea of literary device arguing that they form a system in which the whole is more than the sum of the individual devices, pointing out the relationship not of individual devices to past, but of the whole of devices in a work (ibid., 257-259). The radical claim of the formalist was that the reasons for literary evolution are to be found *within* literature itself rather than, for instance, society or politics (one should remember that the formalist made their studies in Russia in the 1910s and early 1920s—decades marked by unprecedented social and political changes!). Literature as a system of different devices that produce the artistic effect in the reader transcended the vulgar interpretation of a structure as a totally self-containing system by including the reader, although only implicitly, in it. In other words, the system exists in relation to some spectator, who stands outside the system itself and therefore also outside the temporal structure inscribed in the system.

This relationship between a system and an outside spectator becomes an important aspect of thinking about time and accumulation of history. Linguistics before Saussure was primarily preoccupied with the diachronic changes in language attributed primarily to non-linguistic reasons, which were hard to verify. Saussure, by distinguishing between language as an abstract system (*la langue*) and speech (*parole*), provided scientific precision in the study of the abstract system, but excluded the speaking subject and thereby any link between language and time. Linguistics after Saussure has resolutely attempted to reintroduce time into the study of language by focusing on the relationships the system acquires with the extra-systemic. For Shkolvsky, the extra-systemic is the reader, for Benveniste the concrete people deictically indicated by language (1973 [1958]), for Derrida the "différance" (Derrida 1982, 7-9), and for Mouffe the "constitutive outside" (2000, 12). These are all different attempts to include, among other things, the aspect of time in the system of language. Bakhtin and Lotman approach the "linguistic system" from the perspective of *communication* and attribute

the idea of time to communication where the self and the other, the own and the alien, meet. Time as a function of interaction is also manifest in Kristeva's view on language as linearly organised and in her idea that at each step on the temporal axis (syntagmatic axis) a selection of words (paradigmatic axis) set further limitations for the future. This idea can be concretised easily: as we speak, the first word we choose to utter executes a pre-selection of the words that can follow *given the grammatical rules of language*. For instance, Woźniak's beginning "I speak as a man" places him in a situation in which he has to continue with an explication of what kind of man he is; otherwise his speech would make little sense. If he had chosen to begin by "I speak as a representative", he would have had different options and possibly he would not have tumbled into the description of the stereotypical patriarchal man, whose respect for "ladies" is best characterised by a bouquet.

The formalists aimed at discovering the general machinery for producing literature that would also account for the general laws of its reception (Steiner 1984, 65). The mechanical understanding of literature draws the first parallel between the study of literary history as a succession of devices of the literary machinery and conversation analysis viewing talk as something *produced*. Traditional literary scholarship—much like mainstream interpretivist political science today—is preoccupied with what the text, or the politician, is conveying; the formalist, instead, argued that the "what" is really an attribute of *how* it is produced. In order to answer the "what", literature, just like political science, has traditionally turned to factors outside the text, the author's psyche, prevalent ideologies, the external context and so on. With the formalists, as with conversation analysis, the "what" and the "how" do not appear separable. The advantage of the "how" over the "what" is that it is all internal to the work itself: first in the sequential organisation of the utterance and second in the sequential organisation of talk.

Bakhtin, however, gives a twist to the machinery of conversation analysis. He argues that the other, the alien, is present in the *words* we use through the practices of their previous usages implying that speakers have a capacity of memory. The words we use, Bakhtin claims, are taken from other people's mouths not from the dictionary, and we use them in the anticipation of the listener. Conversation analysis inquires into the machinery of talk that produces orderliness at the micro-level of social interaction, thus establishing the mode of turn-taking, that is, the manner in which one action leads to another action, among the interlocutors. Bakhtin complicates the picture, leaving it open whether the words and their practices are limited to the present context of interaction or whether they contain traces of practices from other systems and therefore from other temporalities. We will return to this in our discussion on Lotman's contribution to the analysis of parliamentary talk.

I will, for a moment, leave the Russian formalists and Bakhtin and turn to the second track, connected but different, which touches on the different

genres of history-writing, especially the genres of chronicle and narrative. The chronicle names events, but does not attribute any causes or effects to them. There is no obvious beginning or end to the list of events nor criteria for their inclusion or exclusion from the chronicle. The narrative, in contrast, is the linguistic "companion" that tells how and possibly why something came about and what effects it had in the process positing the beginning and end points. Already here it is apparent that it is impossible to ascertain something like "beginning" and "end" points of events.[144] Historian Hayden White accordingly argues that a work of history is "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing* them" (1973, 2, italics in original). Two points of the above quote require a further note. White contends that i) history is a narrative, a verbal structure, whose ii) mimicry, or models, provide a tangible description of the events. The word "icon" in the quote refers to the characteristics of a word that it shares with the object it represents. In this sense history is nothing other than literature.

History as a sequence of events is a product of literary narratives. The claim I have advanced throughout the thesis is that the talk-in-interaction, or communication that takes place in language is sequentially structured. It is sequentially structured first in the sense that *this* word precedes *this one,* establishing a temporal distance between them. It is also sequentially structured in the sense that a question precedes the answer, or that in language we inscribe our observations and opinions of how, for instance, a political intervention to bring out gender equality by a decree smells like communism, which Poland left behind more than 20 years ago. This account of history suggests that the experience of time is isomorphic to that of language. Lotman argues that

> A speech utterance inevitably organises material in temporal and causal
> coordinates since these are inherent to the structure of language... [I]n
> the higher levels of syntagmatic organisation what we notice are the
> principles of narrative organisation. Narration presupposes that the text
> is coherent. [--] The semantic coherence of narrative segments is what
> forms plot, and plot is as much the law of a narrative text as syntagmat-
> ic ordering is the law for correct speech. But if a narrative about reality
> requires a plot (or plots) this in no way means that plots are immanent
> to reality. Events of real life which occupy a particular space-time con-

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144. The sceptic is referred to almost any Wikipedia article of a recent political conflict and asked to compare the time-lines different language versions provide. Illustrative of great differences in setting the beginning and end points can be found for instance in articles relating to the Russian–Georgian war in 2008.

tinuum, are drawn out into a linear plot by a narrative text. (Lotman 1990, 222-223)

The empirical studies show two important aspects of the evolution of talk. First, the narrative of the bill "grows" at each turn: it grows from the initial formulations, adding new layers of historical contexts and new focuses on future concerns. It is clear that the debate as a text is more complex and nuanced in the end of the parliamentary debate than in its beginning. We observe, therefore, changes in its content and duration.

The second point is that most of the parliamentary debate did not in fact revolve around the "what" of the bill, but rather the "how": the different ways in which the bill relates to history, that is, how it is included in a narrative accounting for how the past has led to the present and what future trajectories it enables. In other words, in addition to growing in length and complexity, the debate as a narrative produces new ways of interpreting related political phenomena (also conceived as texts) of the present, past and the future, each created anew at each turn of the debate.

The two debates I have examined show how the deputies provide different historical narratives, which place and structure the discussed bill in their narratives. From the above discussion, we know that narratives not only establish *what* happened (selection of events), but also that the way the narrative orders the events (how) is important to what meanings the events can get. Narratives, therefore, open up for a dual question: one concerned with the temporality described in the narrative and second with the (political) temporality of the narrative itself.

This connects us back to Shklovsky, who conceived the "what" (storyline) as raw material for the "how" (plot): in (historical) narratives, the counted events are secondary to the position they are assigned in relation to each other. This is very evident also in the parliamentary debate, which appears as a political contest over the narratives (the hows) of the bill (the what). A simple example from the Polish case can illustrate this: the narrative that places affirmative action in the communist past first establishes that these are really similar phenomena, but secondly, the act of ordering temporally the bill into the past as opposed to the present limits the possibilities of discussing the democratic (which belongs to the present in this narrative) potential of the gender parity bill (located now in the past instead of the present). This narrative, naturally, does not prevent alternative accounts from emerging, but it does force them to relate to its temporal ordering according to which affirmative actions belong to the communist past and not to the democratic present.

So far we have established that the external context is secondary to the internal composition of the text. We may still raise the question whether this is enough to discard the external context fully from the analysis. In Chapter 3, I

have argued at length how the internal composition in fact includes in itself the external context. I will summarise here the argument that the mode of talk—broadly understood—indicates the contexts in which the discussants place their talk. The example I used in Chapter 3 concerned the health advisor's visit to a family with a newly born baby. The health advisors utterance "He's enjoying that isn't he" is first responded to by father's "Yes, he certainly is" and then by mother's "He's not hungry 'cuz he's just had hiz bottle." The health advisor's comment is met with two fundamentally different responses, each, in turn, ascribing it different context and meaning, ranging from a conversational remark to an accusation. This short extract of observed talk reveals how the past is formed from and by the present. It would be misleading to assign this exchange an "objective" context beyond the trivial fact that the health advisor is visiting a family with a new born baby: clearly the context that *matters* is produced by the mode of each turn's response. An utterance before a response is only a potential waiting to be reacted upon, and as we saw above, it can be responded to from different contexts. Perhaps most intriguing in this example is precisely the fact that the father and mother produce two different interpretations of the health worker's utterance, revealing their different experience of societal structures concerning parenthood and gender roles.

I have argued that to the extent that an external context can be significant, it can be captured by positing it as a developing mode of talk. This has the advantage over a static and objectively defined "bucket" context that it allows one to focus not only on the parameters of the context (how precisely to "measure" or objectively describe the political context of feminism in Poland, or even that of the citizen initiative for a gender parity? The very fact that it was a citizen initiative denies descriptions of excessive subjugation and oppression of feminism or women in the Polish public discourse and yet something like this nevertheless makes itself felt in the debate. And could such ambivalence of context ever fruitfully allow for a single description of *the* political context of the gender parity bill?), but also on how the developing talk assumes different relations to its social, political and cultural surrounding.

*Between Micro- and Macro-level*
I will now turn my focus from the discussion above, around the concept "narrative" and instead turn to Lotman's categories "text" and "language" (sign system and its history). Lotman's interests in texts focuses primarily on their meaning generative and mnemonic functions, so in one sense these are in themselves already "narratives" that present a progression of events. However, Lotman emphasises that texts, before they become really meaningful, must also partake in broader cultural constructions. The way in which they do this is called "language".

The empirical studies included here show that the most contested aspect in the parliament was not necessarily the content of the bill itself, but the context and chronology in which it was embedded, implying that there are multiple temporalities in operation in the parliamentary debate. This was most clearly indicated in the rift over whether the Slovak language at present represents the achievements of a long struggle for its survival both within and without the state necessitating legislative support, or whether it is a living organism in its own right. Evocation of Slovak history as a struggle for survival and parallels drawn between the history of the state and the language indicate the powerfulness of this cultural "language" that informs, first, how the events are to be chosen (paradigmatic axis) and, second, how they should be connected to each other (syntagmatic axis). I have now reversed the order of paradigmatic and syntagmatic as they were discussed above in order to show that cultural languages are not restricted to strict grammatical rules, but enable more variety and creativity, leading to the inevitable co-existence of multiple temporalities in the debate. In other words, the selection of one word over another (paradigmatic axis) both limits the linguistic progression of the sentence (syntagmatic axis of linguistic grammar), and opens the potential for logically new connections between different events (paradigmatic axis enabled by cultural languages).

Multiple temporalities are at play in the Polish example too: the bill on gender parity suggest that certain techniques such as affirmative action or quotas could be used to modernise and democratise Poland, that they are not merely relics of the past, backward, and antidemocratic communist system as they were talked-into-being during the course of the debate. In other words, the concept "affirmative action" was placed in different chronologies in the debate. One chronology understood it as a concept of contemporary, progressive Europe whilst the other chronology placed it in the continuum of the communist past. It is important to realise that *neither* chronology is in any way "correct" or necessarily "dominant"; these chronologies matter *because they make the words, texts, collide* in the parliamentary debate.

Finally, out of this collision of chronologies informed by different languages, new languages for accounting for the past and present also emerge. In Slovakia, the individual political actor emerged out of the collision of chronologically "dissynchronous" arguments concerning the nature of the Slovak language—a companion of the state slowly securing its independent existence or an independent living organism used by the people—to mediate between them, and providing both chronologies with a new point of reference. This reference point does not represent consensually produced truth as Habermas envisions, nor is it an outcome of hegemonic discourse imposing its rules. It is a product of the materiality of the parliamentary debate itself and its rational origins, therefore, lay *within* the debate only. Similarly, in Poland the notion of a deficient woman citizen, who needs some extra sup-

port in the form of an affirmative action can in no way be considered a rational outcome of the arguments, or of a hegemonic discourse, but it is a logical product of the parliamentary debate, and its emergence can only be explained by placing it back in the context of colliding chronologies concerning the gender parity bill.

The remaining question we have to address, and here Lotman comes handy, is how the past and the future play out in the present context of talk. Conversation analysis provides the tools for studying this, but it lacks the broader cultural context to reveal the relevance of different modes of interaction between the past, future and the present. Lotman argues that the systemic level of cultural evolution is isomorphic to micro-level encounters. Therefore the categories of translation and explosion refer as much to mechanisms of individual cognition as to macro-scale cultural processes.

Translation for Lotman is a predictable and logically consistent, but asymmetric to the extent that a reverse translation is not possible. Translation modifies the "alien" text in such a way that it becomes distinct from the original, but so that no new cultural languages are needed for its interpretation. To be sure, cultural languages also undergo gradual change in translation.

Explosion, by contrast, signals unpredictable change and it involves the creation of new cultural languages for the interpretation of alien text(s). The difference between translation and explosion is, therefore, that explosion generates new languages for making sense of cultural phenomena that *extend* far beyond the alien text that initially invoked them; this property of explosion gives it its unpredictable character.

The most common example of an explosion is artistic creation. The very fact that Lotman referred to artistic creation sets his theory in stark contradistinction to Shklovsky's colleague Osip Brik, who declared that "If there were no Pushkin, *Evgenij Onegin* would have been written anyway" (cited in Steiner 1984, 65). No, for Lotman, artistic creation and explosion are unpredictable and any attempt to render them "predictable" misses their essential nature. The uneasiness that the Polish bill on gender parity aroused in the deputies is a tangible proof of the eschatological nature of an explosion: deputy Libicki in vain tries to restrain the debate on the bill—perhaps all too well feeling where it might lead: "We are initiating a public debate and I think that it is good that this happens... However, if we are starting such a debate, we should, at least in general sense, also know what is the end of the debate" (Libicki, 18 Feb 2010, 61, 118). Although unpredictable changes later yield to predictable processes and in due course new meta-languages evolve to account for the explosion, it is important to realise that for the contemporaries the explosion appears unpredictable, threatening and incomprehensible. This has relevance to the course of the debate. In the Polish case, the bill—quite literally—exploded the established narrative of Polish democracy as successive negations of the communist past and corresponding tri-

umphs of negative rights of the individual, which have slowly relocated politics from the state to economics. Instead, it introduced the idea of individual (gender) identity as relevant to politics, in addition and in opposition to other interests. Explosion, therefore, entails the change in the identity of the system; translation gradually alters the identity of the system.

We can continue to use the health advisor's visit as a stepping stone to the remaining discussion. There is something peculiar in the way the mother first denies that the baby is hungry and then adds that she just ate. Following Bakhtin, we can understand that she anticipates the health advisor's words in countering any possible accusation that the baby would be hungry. Dialogicality of language for Bakhtin meant that language is "contaminated" by other people's usages of words and that the past practices connected with words cannot be erased. As Bakhtin put it, we do not get our words out of dictionary, but from "other people's mouths" (1981, 294). In terms of time and history, dialogicality means that the traces of history and the potential for the future are already present in the language of the present. Julia Kristeva much later introduced Bakhtin's idea in the West as intertextuality (1980 [1966], 68). This has commonly been understood as simple spatial referencing to other texts, but Kristeva's and Bakhtin's real point is that other texts represent as much other texts as other *temporalities*, other chronologies of events, that is, texts as intertextual constructions pool together the own and alien both spatially and temporally. The contribution Bakhtin and Lotman do to structuralism is to conceptualise the linkages between the system and its outside as *communication*; communication between individuals and texts. Conversation analysis, in turn, provides the vocabulary to study this communication.

To conceive of arguments as logical self-enclosed constructions does justice neither to the argument nor to the individual who makes it. Argument, and any other kind of speech, is always already dialogic. I have here followed Gadamer and argued that we are better off conceiving of arguments as parts of the other's life-view, of another semiosphere as Lotman would put it. In politics, understanding them is not really about getting the truth out of them, but of finding a way to relate to, respond to and react to them. As we have seen, this is primarily a political or aesthetic activity, not logical or ethical.

## Methods of Interpretation and Analysis

The method developed here directs attention to the internal dynamics of linguistic interaction as a meaningful but also as a structured activity. Both meaning and structure provide the debate with resources the analysis should attune to. Yet, like any method this has its drawbacks and limitations, which

I will now discuss in relation to the other methods of text analysis discussed in Chapter 2.

I have argued above that conversation analysis provides a technical vocabulary for the analysis of observed talk. On a closer look, however, one can question just how neutral and technical its vocabulary is. Conversation analysis claims that only those attributes of talk that the participants explicitly orient themselves to are relevant to explain the occurring social action, and conversation analysis' technical machinery was developed to find out precisely whether and how the participants orient themselves to each others' utterances.

Now, it is necessary to acknowledge that what conversation analysis claims to be purely technical vocabulary—sequence, repair, code-switching etc.—is in fact theoretically informed. This becomes apparent already in Schegloff's primary assumption, that *order* rather than *chaos* characterises the social world.

The reinterpretation of sequence, repair and code-switching from the point of view of the Bakhtin Circle in Chapter 5 shows that it is possible to think of, for instance, repair not only as returning to the common ground, as an acknowledgement of other's right to his words, but also as an intervention into, as an appropriation of, that supposedly "common" ground and turning it into something else, something alien. Similarly, code-switching can be seen as a tool for the speaker to indicate the proper context of interpretation, but it can also be seen as Bakhtin's speech genre that impregnates talk, something that cannot be shrugged off at will.

Such a "Bakhtinian" reading of the technical terminology of conversation analysis reveals its intuitive potential, but also the fact that the way in which the analysis perceives conversation affects the performance of the technical tools. The realisation that our "technical vocabulary" is also theoretical—also ideological?—undermines conversation analysis' claim that it can just let the material speak freely, and forces us to reconsider the relationship between the first person meaning-generation and the third-person observer. For the cynical reader this can amount to a rejection of the whole method, to the conclusion that conversation analysis is no different, no better, than any other text analytical methods—even if the material consists of parliamentary talk.

Against this criticism I hold that dialogicality of language sets limits to the feasibility of any analysis that is unable to take into account the positive force of interpretation. In order to appreciate the positive, productive force of interpretation, a method that is sensitive to the mode of interaction—i.e. not to interaction as transfer of information (the what), but the how—is necessary. By introducing Bakhtin and Lotman to conversation analysis, I have attempted to clear away some of the explicit focus on the *machinery* of talk and thus raise the question of meaning generation. Together with this inception of the hermeneutic twist, however, conversation analysis has sacrificed

its exclusive focus on observed action and raised the hermeneutic side of the question "why this now?" I hold that by placing this, now hermeneutic consideration, "why this now" into the dialogic contingency of talk, conversation analysis' technical vocabulary can still deliver much of the answer we need. The underlying assumption, however, is that the participants themselves think that the conversation makes sense—and that if it does not, they will indicate this.

I am therefore inquiring into the present self-understandings of the interlocutors. This sets my aim apart from some text analyses, which aim to access the social structures as objective entities through language (especially critical discourse analysis) or participants intentions as existing outside the interactive dynamics of talk. Gadamer argues that temporal distance helps to understand. Such temporal distance is often absent in political debate and my aim in the first instance has been to render clear the temporally conditioned understandings the participants experience as the debate goes on and to reconstruct the anatomy of the debate with the help of this data. Only thereafter, have I tried to access the macro-level description of the debate.

Yet, despite my attempt to provide the interlocutors all the freedom necessary to produce their categories, which I then use in my analysis, I have rather violently imposed a narrative structure on the whole debate by setting the beginning and end points of the debate on the basis of the parliamentary transcripts. This is a prerogative the material grants me, but it should be acknowledged that the participants have dwelled in the debate much before the debate in the parliament began. However, the material is rather felicitous in this respect. The very nature of the parliamentary debate implies that the participants are expected to engage in a public debate, without entertaining many assumptions about each other's prior knowledge. Therefore the material yields to a certain coherence that would be absent from many ordinary situations of interaction, which rely on much tacit knowledge. I believe the hermeneutic "side" of conversation analysis suits explicitly public material better than private conversation or interaction.

The sequential ordering of talk evolves through gaps between the turns. I have taken these gaps as indications of the ways in which the concrete talk weaves itself into the broader cultural context, Lotman's semiosphere. The technical vocabulary of conversation analysis, which helps us to study the turn formation, therefore, also opens up the way to a fully hermeneutic question of the truth of the debate—of what the debate as a whole can disclose to us. In this way, the narrative I have imposed in the shape of a beginning and end does not seem to so detrimental. It is, after all, the *gaps* in the talk that indicate the connections with the semiosphere.

What are the implications for other methods then? I have discussed three eminent approaches to text analysis: empirical logic, speech acts and rhetoric and critical discourse analysis. I have found empirical logic as developed by

Toulmin least useful in the course of this research. Despite his explicit focus on *empirical* logic, the level of abstraction of his examples and the way of procedure leave his method sterile in the face of the complexity of real social interaction. Most important, his approach remains insensitive to dynamics of verbal interaction. His empirical logic fares better if our aim is to break down and study arguments, but this has little relevance to social action as such.

Speech acts and critical discourse analysis have proven to be more resistant and have revealed new aspects at almost every turn of my own analysis. Skinner's adoption of speech act theory and his concern for illocution as the site of individual political action is indispensable for political reasons. During my research, I realised that Skinner forces us to juxtapose the truth and individual action as incompatible, and he asks us to take a political stance in favour of one of them. I have opted for the "truth" (in quotation marks) and at times I have felt I have done injustice to the individual deputies, perhaps most so in the case of Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz and Halina Rozpondek during the second reading of the bill on gender parity in Poland. Both deputies approached the bill pragmatically whilst the general mode of talk was very ideological. This discrepancy did violence to their individual positions as these easily became ideologised as a result of the sequential organisation of talk. This resonates with some criticism levelled against Gadamer. Marie Fleming for instance, questions the fairness of postulating a unified tradition against which all understanding can take place (Fleming 2003). In the case of the Polish parliamentary debate, the tradition of the *debate* itself was waged primarily between emotional and ideological positions, but there were—contrary to Graff's speculation—arguments that truly attempted to evade the strict bloc dynamics and approach the bill pragmatically in its contemporary existence. Perhaps this difference explains why I feel that the method has not been fair to Kozłowska-Rajewicz and Rozpondek. The truth that Gadamer seeks is insensitive to the different ways of belonging to tradition, and perhaps here the different ways of belonging to the political tradition in Poland proves Fleming's point. I will return to Fleming shortly below.

Similarly, discourse analysis as developed by Fairclough has proved its endurance. Discourse as a social fact, I have come to understand, is indispensable to textual analysis in the social sciences, but it should not be seen in static terms. Much of the *practice* of critical discourse analysis asserts its importance as scientific inquiry through the weight of the hegemonic discourse it sets out to uncover. This strategy can work against positivist allegations that discourse is "just language" and therefore irrelevant for real (political) science, but it has a shortcoming: critical discourse analysis of the hegemony silences the contested nature of any hegemony (given the fact that hegemonies as truly total discourses hardly exist). Much of the terminology that critical discourse analysis uses, like that derived from critical language

awareness or systemic functional linguistics, *could* deliver for a more dynamic study of language. As I see it, it is crucial to defer the social relations of power that, for instance, Fairclough invokes in interpretation[145] all to soon. Discourse analysis that dares to explicate and cherish the ambiguity present in the textual material could achieve more nuanced results. Therefore critical discourse analysis would do well to incorporate interpretation as productive activity into its framework. Theoretically the possibility for this is prepared for the triadic description of the discursive practice consisting of production, distribution and consumption of texts (Fairclough 1992, 78), but their reduction to a reflection of social conditions in practice denies the individual subject any possibility to act independently or in contradiction to the social relations of power sanctioning her social position. Especially Faircough's tendency to discuss production and consumption as reverse processes indicates that social conditions establish the shared context for all participants. This becomes problematic if we, for instance, consider the different temporalisations that the same historical events can acquire in different narratives.

Both empirical studies reveal that there are indeed ways of interpretation that are dominant, but also that socially marginal arguments were able to *fracture* them. I use the word fracture with the intention that the breach they introduced did not extent to the level of the social relations of power, and the effects at the discursive level were best thought of as pertaining to *this* debate only. In other words, in this debate the discourse has been fractured. Without sensitivity to such fractures, discourse analysis may fail to capture the dynamics that exist in spite of the discursive grip palpably visible to the critical eye.

Lastly, each method against which I have constructed mine, understands the scientific process of interpretation as a process that reduces the ambiguity of the texts. I consider this to be a fundamental mistake *if* our aim is to access the social process taking place in language and communication. Participants of the parliamentary debate *operate* within a certain ambiguity. This ambiguity, in fact, enables communication as meaning generating activity. The real course of parliamentary debate as observed here is best characterised as continuous meaning generation, of increasing polyphony.

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145. By "interpretation" I refer to the phase in critical discourse analysis in which the connections between other discourses are established. Interpretation is followed by "explanation" that relies on the explication of social relations of power.

# Towards Imperfect Hermeneutics

The above discussion of the connections between the micro and macro levels connects with the following discussion on interpretation in politics. Throughout the thesis, I have acknowledged Gadamer's insight that interpretation and understanding is always understanding *as* something, that is, involves the aspect of change induced by time. However, at the same time, I have been wary of the amount of good-will on which Gadamer's hermeneutics rests. His focus was on literary culture and here it may be argued that plenty of good-will is available. Politics, however, is quite a different matter. I have also implied that perhaps in politics, the real problem of hermeneutical interpretation, getting at the truth of the matter, is not really the scarcity of good-will, but the absence of tradition in Gadamer's sense of the word, as well as the dialogical nature of language. Tradition for Gadamer enabled the fusion of horizons between those of the text (past) and the interpreter (present), mediated by language.

I have adopted a different approach to interpretation in politics arguing that we should understand interpretation as taking place in the connections the micro-level dialogic interaction (here parliamentary debate) forms with the macro-level of culture. I have adopted Barthes' and Lotman's use of text to address this multilateral semiotic field that is generated by the bill, the debate on the bill, and the broader cultural contexts evoked by the debate.

Below I will discuss a slightly different, slightly more "political" way of addressing this relationship as "imperfect hermeneutics". The epithet "imperfect" requires clarification, especially as it implies that Gadamer's hermeneutics would be "perfect". The quick conclusion could easily be that this characterisation misses the point, as Gadamer never held that interpretation can be finite, but this is not my point in contrasting perfect and imperfect hermeneutics—moreover, understanding interpretation as arriving at the final meaning of the text would be an utterly monologic conception, something we have rejected already in Chapter 2. So, imperfect hermeneutics does not address the meaning, but the process of interpretation; the very idea of "fusion" of horizons and the question of why this should be understood as "imperfect" process.

It is also necessary to point out the difference between imperfect and critical hermeneutics. Critical hermeneutics, championed by Habermas and Ricoeur in particular (sometimes also called the hermeneutics of suspicion) attempts to deliver better interpretations of the text by taking into account and revising the non-observable ideological effects of tradition. Critical hermeneutics is a form of critique of ideology (Roberge 2011, 6) and although my approach is closely connected with "ideologies" and the eventual explication of macro-level cultural languages, I do not aim to liberate or emancipate the text from the tradition, just to understanding the semiotics of their interaction.

Above I argued that imperfect hermeneutics refers to the process of interpretation. But can the process be too far removed from the meaning? For Gadamer, interpretation is first about experience, and only second about meaning:

> The very idea of a definite interpretation seems to be intrinsically contradictory. Interpretation is always on the way. If, then, the word *interpretation* points to the finitude of human being and the finitude of human knowing, then the experience of interpretation implies something that was not implied by the earlier self-understanding when hermeneutics was coordinated with special fields and applied as a technique for overcoming difficulties in troublesome texts. (Gadamer 1981, 105)

By emphasising interpretation as an experience Gadamer drew attention to hermeneutics as a way of being in the world: we inhabit the world in interpretation, which takes place in dialogue. However, as was argued in Chapter 4, this does not lead Gadamer to consider all interpretations equally valid; in other words, there are true and less true experiences of meaning. One central criterion for true experience is that it reveals the coherence of the text in its relation to tradition, but also that the prejudices used must be fruitful in regard to the text. Indeed, for Gadamer, the temporal distance between the literary work and the interpreter can solve the question of critique (Gadamer 1989, 298).

For instance Georgia Warnke has adopted these Gadamerian principles in her hermeneutic study of American public debates on surrogate mothers, abortion, affirmative action, and pornography (Warnke 1999). She argues, that viewing these debates in terms of moral principles is unproductive, for at quest are different interpretations as ways of being in the debate. Therefore, if different stances are acknowledged as products of different interpretive communities, their inherent finiteness also follows, carving out room for mutual co-existence between different opinions (ibid., 22). I think Warnke's adoption of Gadamer rightly reveals that, for instance, the abortion debate does not concern only abortion or the principle of sanctity of life *per se*. The debate is about a way of life and the implications that abortion has to this whole way of life, and therefore, in the political debate, "it is not clear that we can anticipate a single complete or exhaustive description of the situation to which everyone can agree" (ibid., 146).

However, this realisation in politics in no way paves the way to the consensus that political convictions are finite interpretations and therefore other "legitimate differences" may exist and help expand one's own interpretation (cf. Warnke 1999, 157). The debates I have studied in this book show no abating of conflict nor recognition that one's position is finite; rather, they indicate just how different and alien the other's position can be—an argument that Warnke discusses in her later article (2011, 101). Warnke argues

that the purpose of dialogue in Gadamer's hermeneutics is to acknowledge the alterity of the text, which nevertheless bears relevance to us today. This observation was discussed from a slightly different angle in Chapter 4.

Understanding, for Gadamer, carries the double function of making sense of the literary work but also to scrutinise one's own relationship to the past, and to separate true prejudices that enable understanding and continuity with tradition from the false ones that lead to misunderstanding. For Gadamer, the understanding subject is not really the individual, but the past (1976, 58), and the manner in which the past plays itself out in language. Gadamer argues that "not only is the world world only insofar as it comes to language, but language, too, has its real being only in the fact that the world is presented in it" (1989, 443). The experience of understanding is therefore linguistic and it assumes the form of a dialogue: "the dialectic of question and answer... makes understanding appear to be a reciprocal relationship of the same kind as conversation" (1989, 370).

It is important to remember that by referring to the linguisticality of experience, Gadamer distances himself from the view that language through propositions could describe experiences: it is rather the reverse, that words are not adequate for describing experiences. I discussed this in Chapter 4 using his example of the mystery of the Lutheran Eucharist (see p. 152)—something that cannot be represented by words. A true understanding of the Eucharist, as Gadamer thought it, can hardly be achieved by subjecting it to scientific method: understanding the Holy Sacrament supposes a prior appreciation of religious mysticism. Marie Fleming has argued that Gadamer stops here, putting an end to a potential dialogue that would continue to pursue the path that Eucharist should be subjected to non-religious inquiry—or by extrapolation that any text could also be understood not *only* through recourse to its tradition (Fleming 2003, 115). Gadamer's postulation that true understanding reveals itself in the completeness of the text vis-à-vis the tradition excludes the possible existence of incomplete or contradictory meanings as "true" (ibid. 117). In Chapter 4, I have argued that the specific nature of politics makes the assumption of completeness of meaning as well as the continuity of tradition especially problematic.

We can develop this theme further. I have discussed the Slovakian state language law debate using Lotman's concept of translation, which implies that there is some perceivable continuity in the debate; and in one sense, the emergence of the political individual, which needs universal means of communication that mediates between the languages of the state language law and the opposition calling for multicultural recognition, is laid out very early on in the debate. This "conclusion" is accommodated within the broader cultural language that depicts Slovak history as a struggle for survival against wide-spread indifference of other states and international organisations.

The same cannot be said about the Polish case, where the conclusion of the debate suggests that since women are deficient in some respect, an affirmative action becomes compatible with democracy. Above all, the contradiction between the "deficient woman" on the one hand and the recognition of "gendered identity" cannot be accommodated under one single cultural language (perhaps outright public misogyny could achieve this, but I believe that suggesting something like this would be going too far). Instead, we are left in a political limbo, unaware of to what directions individual gender identity in Polish politics will take. Against Gadamer, I maintain that a "true understanding" of Polish gender politics in the case of the gender parity bill does not yield to completeness, coherence, or continuity with tradition; it yields to an explosion that has to be accepted as the truth.

One could argue, in defence of Gadamer's hermeneutics, that I have here only substituted what he calls temporal distance for cultural distance. Temporal distance, according Gadamer, helps us understand because increased otherness of the work can better provoke our prejudices and help us assess them critically. This is what Warnke had in mind in her 1999 study *Legitimate Differences*, but as she later realised, she must have been too optimistic. Fleming, on the other hand, locates her criticism of Gadamer precisely here: she argues that for Gadamer the other in dialogue is in fact just an instrument for the self-scrutiny (2003, 121) that eventually yields to true understanding, that is fusion of horizons where neither the self nor the other survives. For Fleming, the instrumentalisation of the other indicates that in the true hermeneutical experience there is only one horizon and this clearly limits the applicability of Gadamer's hermeneutics in the contemporary situation, marked by struggles to acknowledge the different ways of belonging: "In Gadamer's hermeneutics, acknowledging the 'otherness of the other' can only amount to the 'fundamental suspension' of her claim to truth." (ibid., 124). In Chapter 4, I discussed Bakhtin's dialogic theory of language, which highlights the fact that language as such is penetrated by alien words that cannot be "fused" into our own words, but retain their alterity, calling forth a responsible answer instead of *die Sache*.

In contrast to Fleming's philosophical-political criticism, I wish to pursue the idea that Gadamer's orientation towards the past also affects his conception of understanding. The real reason for Warnke's disappointment, I believe, is not lack of good will, although this certainly plays a part, but rather the semiotic dynamics of dialogue and their capacity to generate *new* texts. In other words, the substance of the text, *die Sache*, is also subject to change as the debate flows. Gadamer was never a theorist of the avant-garde, and his writings show little concern for the radical, the progressive. Bakhtin and Lotman, in contrast, are heavily influenced by the avant-garde and discuss it

thoroughly. Avant-garde[146] claims its position through its breach with the tradition—and the attempt to enforce a certain belonging to tradition amounts to violence similar to that of subjecting the Eucharist to scientific method: both enterprises are possible but will certainly not provide true understanding of the phenomena. The basic premise of Gadamer's hermeneutics is to use the work of art to interrogate our prejudices about the past and eventually "fuse" the work of art into our presence in tradition. Although artefacts once considered avant-garde eventually become subject to automatised reception and they loose their subversive nature (we are no longer troubled by Duchamp's "ready-mades" as a form of art), the fact remains that their true being *qua* avant-garde is always directed to an unpredictable future beyond tradition and beyond experience. The only true experience in this case must be "misunderstanding"; it cannot be completeness and coherence of meaning and continuity.

Lotman's distinction between three functions of the text enables us to view history first as having some shared content (transmission of information), second and more fundamentally, as dynamic and developing (generation of new meanings), and third most crucially as *created* in and from the present (mnemonic). We can therefore call into question Gadamer's distinction between true experience sanctioned by tradition as *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnisse* as the subjective lived, that is, completed, experience that serves as a stepping stone towards *Erfahrung*, which now signifies also the overcoming of our prejudices in the light of the tradition, that is, our experience of "true prejudices" as they are brought into light by the horizon of the past. The fact that Lotman's discussion of translation and explosion both as "cognitive" and semiospheric modes of understanding highlights the intimate connections individual understanding shares with the present moment and its need to have recourse to *others'* texts in order to understand at all. Understanding is, therefore, possible only in the presence of other texts, but it is not limited to the possibilities enabled by them: whereas translation requires a certain degree of compatibility, that is, a suitable language of description, explosion forcefully puts forward a new text that discloses itself in the *need* to create a language for its eventual translation. Another way of

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146. I use the term "avant-garde" to refer to a conscious aim to act on the forefront of emancipation from the tradition thereby including both political and artistic "vanguard". This definition includes the historical avant-garde of the 1910s and 20s, but does not limit itself to it. It may well be questioned if any avant-garde can survive in postmodern apolitical conditions. We may credibly question how subversive contemporary art manages to be, but I want to contend that especially Central and Eastern Europe has experienced and continues to experience the power subversion in the form of art and politics. Aleš Erjavec's (ed.) *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition* (2003) as well as Timothy Brown's and Lorena Anton's (eds.) *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday. Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present* (2011) lend support to this claim.

putting this is that translation provides new meanings whilst explosion presents itself as a question demanding an answer. Both processes, translation and explosion, occur through communication. To grasp them, however, one needs to approach language as something dialogic and forward looking rather than something locked in the possibilities of ascertaining the maximum transference of information.

The discontinuity of the linear information growth or spread also means that accumulation of history, as I formulated my research question, is not a linear progress but something that happens at each turn of the debate but in varying degrees. The short unprepared factual remarks delivered from the parliamentary bench, limited to two minutes in the Slovak parliament, have revealed their productivity in providing the state language bill with new contexts far beyond the capacity of more official, prepared longer speeches delivered from the podium. This should draw our attention to the *instance* in politics, which is made possible through the *texts of the other*. Lotman's semiosphere as a concept enables us to think of contemporary alien texts as other temporalisations, other histories, and it shows that what we consider *our history* is made possible only by alien histories of the other. Without this asymmetry, communication would lose its positive generative functions (new meanings) and time would become detached from individual memory. Semiosphere further implies that in communication the recognition of the alien text of the other *as* an alternative temporalisation means that we have access to the past through the distance we experience in the presence of the other, that is, in and through conversation.

Conversation, however, requires a certain degree of mutual communicability, it requires the sequence of question and answer to be sensible in the *sequential* context of talk. This may sound as if I am approaching Habermas' communicative action, but this is not the case. The point of sequential sensibility is not subject to the internal rationality of talk nor the content of single utterances, but to the cultural languages that can be drawn into the conversation. The sequential structure, however, provides the contingent context *in addition to* the cultural context against which communication can claim its meaning. In other words, the case studies suggest that the sequential structure of the debate forms an *alternative* temporality that is the property of the debate alone, and that communicability therefore acquires, in addition to broader cultural context, also a context of contingency against which the radical or the avant-garde can assert its meaning and thus be heard. In the empirical studies, this was most clearly seen in the fractures both dominant positions encountered during the debates.

The conclusion that follows is that talk as such should be allowed to prevail against any attempts of subjugating it to instrumental rationality and attempts to control and curtail its unforeseen course of development. The case studies have shown that even if the manner in which the debate is regulated

affects its content, it is ultimately a contingent situation and therefore it is futile to presume to engineer certain outcomes through certain types of parliamentary regulation. First, such attempts are bound to fail, and second, they merely provide yet another language for the dynamics of talk to mobilise and deploy for its own purposes, which are unforeseen by its participants.

Political debate, similarly, shows great capacity to destroy its continuity and bring forth the paradox inherent in any political claim. The breach and the discrepancy between the question and answer in politics carries a certain subversive potential. In one sense both bills studied here are failures. In the Slovakian case, the fact that the debate produced the political individual between the state and the community sanctioned by language fails both the nationalist paradigm of the state and community being tightly knit together, but also the multicultural paradigm advanced by the Hungarian minority party that perceives the realm of politics in terms of ethnically or culturally delineated groups.

In Poland, the 35 percent quota signifies equal failure of both sides of the debate. It waters down any aspirations to equality between the sexes, as 35 percent is only a meagre compromise, far removed from parity. But perhaps more ironically, the result miserably fails the opponents of the law, who argued that gender identities are not, and should not become, political: by introducing the quota of 35 percent of both men and women they managed to crystallise the view that 70 percent of the candidates are on the lists because of their gender and only 30 percent irrespective of their gender. In fact, the parity would have institutionalised a "natural" gender division and perhaps halted gender as a political identity from becoming politicised. Perhaps, to the greatest dismay of the opponents of the bill, the associations forged between gender and sexual identity during the debate took force during the following parliamentary elections, which saw the election of one homosexual and one transsexual deputy—both openly striving for the rights of sexual minorities though not limiting their politics to that purpose only.

On the one hand, politics—as the empirical studies have shown—revolves very much around the past using it to form the arguments of the present. On the other hand, the orientation of political debate towards the future liberates it from the past enabling the truly political condition of making a decision, establishing an answer to the question, which both twists the question and the context in which it was presented and assumes responsibility for the new state of the affairs.

The task of imperfect hermeneutics is to capture the generation of the new, the re-organisation of the past *for* and *from* the present and the subversion of the continuity of the past in this process whilst at the same time being subordinated to sequentiality of talk, which *requires* continuity with the past, as well as to *dialogicality* of language, which denies us the right to the words

we use, subjecting them to past uses of the other. From the paradox of the inability of understanding that nevertheless requires understanding ensues the political significance of *misunderstandings* as signalling the impossibility of establishing one's belonging to a shared tradition. Hermeneutics in politics cannot avoid taking seriously—and appreciate—misunderstandings for they are responsible for the future.

Emancipation from this perspective does not reside in better content of talk, or in better regulations of the talk, but in the subversive power of talk to produce new meanings, some of which are more predictable than others, but each in their own way providing a political solution to a societal conflict.

*Stockholm 31 October, 2014*

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