Debating the European Union: dynamics of argumentation in political debates

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Debating the European Union – Dynamics of Argumentation in Political Debates

Doctoral Thesis

By

Mirko A. Demasi
Abstract

This thesis is a discursive investigation of contested political discourse. Using Discursive Psychology, I analyse broadcast political debates on the European Union to explore how politicians advocate and defend their political positions in an argumentative context of justification and criticism.

Past research in social psychology and cognate disciplines has investigated ‘ideology’ from a multitude of views. Following a move away from mainstream approaches I demonstrate how some qualitative approaches treat it as a ‘live’ matter in broadcast political debates. For my data I have chosen the controversial political battleground that is the European Union and what it means for Britain. The contribution of Discursive Psychology comes in highlighting the contested, rhetorical, nature of ‘ideology’. In this thesis I draw upon Discursive Psychology to explore how this contestation unfolds as situated practice in multi-party conversations about the EU. Politicians will argue in favour or against the EU, often on the grounds of what the implication is for Britain. In this thesis I argue that Discursive Psychology is best equipped to allow us to study this as an activity; an observable, and contextual, social action.

The analytical chapters focus on three interrelated aspects of political argumentation: the construction and use of factual claims (including demonstrations of ‘knowledge statuses’) and counterclaims, the role of overlapping talk, and the function of laughter and derision. The first analytical chapter seeks to elucidate some of the ways in which ‘facts’ and situated knowledge displays of them are oriented to as an argumentative matter and how they can be challenged. The second analytic chapter illustrates the role played by overlapping talk and challenges in managing the argument at hand. The last analytic chapter focuses on the accomplishment of derision in broadcast political debates, particularly on how derision can be used as form of counterclaim.

Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates the usefulness of Discursive Psychology in understanding the discursive dynamics of mobilisation, contestation, and defence of contrasting viewpoints in the service of political argumentation. Discursive Psychology can help social psychologists get a much deeper appreciation of the situated, and discursively dynamic, nature of political argumentation and conflict in talk.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 2
Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................ 3
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................ 4
1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 7
  1.1 Overview of the Chapters ....................................................................................... 8
2. Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 13
  2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 13
  2.2 Individual Differences, Cognition, and Ideology .................................................... 15
    Neurocognitive Differences ...................................................................................... 16
    Self-Report Questionnaires ..................................................................................... 19
    Cognition and Ideology in Political Psychology ....................................................... 21
    Cognition and Ideology – Comments .................................................................... 22
  2.3 Discourse and Ideology ......................................................................................... 26
    Critical Discourse Analysis .................................................................................. 27
    Non-CDA Discourse Studies ................................................................................ 29
    Political Science, Rhetoric and Argumentation .................................................. 31
    Discourse and Ideology – Comments ................................................................ 33
  2.4 Discursive Psychology and Ideology ..................................................................... 36
    Discursive Psychology and Ideology as a Lived Action ...................................... 41
  2.5 Conclusion – What is Missing? ............................................................................ 42
3. Methodology, Process and Data .................................................................................. 47
  3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 47
  3.2 Methodology .......................................................................................................... 47
    Epistemological and Ontological Positioning ....................................................... 48
    Current Approach .................................................................................................. 50
    Theoretical Challenges ......................................................................................... 56
  3.3 Data Collection ....................................................................................................... 61
  3.4 List of Debates and Background .......................................................................... 64
4. Doing Disagreement – Facts, Knowledge and Rhetorical Action in Politicians’ Talk ...... 67
  4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 67
  4.2 Analysis – Contesting ............................................................................................ 72
    What is Relevant? .................................................................................................. 80
Facts Matter .................................................................................................................. 85
Hypotheticals ................................................................................................................ 93
4.3 Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 103
5. Debate Talk – Overlapping Talk, Challenges and Escalation .................................. 106
  5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 106
  5.2 Analysis ................................................................................................................ 110
    Overlapping Talk and Epistemic Domains ......................................................... 111
    Challenges ........................................................................................................... 114
    Overlapping Talk and Positioning ................................................................... 117
    Overlapping Talk and Institutional Roles ......................................................... 119
    Overlapping Talk and Laughter ....................................................................... 125
    Overlapping Talk and Escalation .................................................................... 131
  5.3 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 136
6. Humour or Derision? The Rhetorical Work of Laughter ........................................ 138
  6.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 138
  6.2 Analysis ................................................................................................................ 141
    Irony and Derision in Extended Laughter Sequences .................................... 142
    Intercalated Laughter ....................................................................................... 149
    Ambiguous Cases .............................................................................................. 156
    Snorts .................................................................................................................. 157
    Sharp Laughter ................................................................................................... 163
  6.3 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 166
7. Discussion .................................................................................................................. 168
  7.1 Research Questions ............................................................................................ 169
  7.2 Limitations, Questions for Future Research .................................................. 174
  7.3 Implications ......................................................................................................... 176
8. References .................................................................................................................. 178
9. Appendix I – Transcription Symbols ........................................................................ 196
“The most effective insinuation is the one that gives facts that are valueless in themselves, yet cannot be denied because they are true.” – Umberto Eco
1. Introduction

How do people express their opinions? How do we argue with someone who is trying to challenge us? These are questions that are linked with contemporary democracies – indeed, it is a characteristic of today’s democracy that people should have views and attitudes on a wide range of ideological matters (Billig, 1991). One of the most apparent arenas where these become visible, and highly contested, is broadcast political debates. Arguably, these debates can be considered democracy itself in action. These debates are widespread in contemporary media, and seeing politicians arguing for or against a particular matter at hand is a staple in broadcast political programmes.

This thesis is an exploration into opposing ideological positions in political debates; in other words, contested political discourse. In psychology, there is a tendency to view ideology as a theoretical notion or a cognitive feature that resides in the inner sanctum of an individual’s mind. There is a vast history of research and other academic works into ideology, but what about how it lives in the social world, how it is intertwined in the mundane features of talk? Past research has shown how ideology can be a live matter and a point of concern for the people involved in any given context (e.g. Billig, 1991; Billig et al., 1988; Tileagă, 2007). This leads one to ask, how do these contestations take place? My work builds on this by looking specifically at how these arguments, for and against in a context where one is (expectedly) being challenged by someone else, unfold. Specifically, I look at debates on the relationship between Britain and the European Union. My research will advocate an argumentative and rhetorical approach as proposed by Billig (1991; 1996); Billig et al., (1988), etc. and Discursive Psychology (DP), and will attempt to provide a new angle for doing so, by incorporating a focus on demonstrations and orientations to knowledge, as inspired by Conversation Analytic (CA) research on epistemics (e.g. Heritage, 2013), and its argumentative role. In this thesis, I take political talk to be ideology rather than a signifier of ideology. Broadcast political debates provide an ideal context to begin investigating contested political discourse. I draw upon Discursive Psychology (DP) to explore arguing for and against the European Union as situated practice. It is a social psychological approach that contrasts with cognitive approaches in particular (Edwards & Potter, 1992), but also with other approaches, such as linguistics and political science.

In recent years, the European Union has been at the forefront of a number of political issues throughout Europe – the relationship between the EU and the member nations, border
control, the ‘immigration crisis’ of 2015, and so forth. This is a vast political battleground with virtually every European country having political parties in favour and against the EU: The Finns party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) to name a few. It is fairly safe to say that the political and ideological conflict regarding the EU is one that even the most politically disengaged are aware of. The country in which this controversy has been most highly apparent is Great Britain, signalled by the rise in popularity of vehemently anti-EU political parties such as UKIP, as well as critics within the major political parties. The topic of Britain leaving the EU has become so prominent that it is sometimes dubbed as ‘Brexit’ in the media. Therefore, the topic of EU should provide a fertile ground for the study of contested political discourse. What is meant by ‘the dynamics of political argumentation’ in this thesis, is when one party or speaker is advocating and arguing in favour of a particular position, pro- or anti-EU in this case, while there is another party or speaker present to challenge this and promote an opposing position. Edelman (1977) argues that political language is about ‘facts and values’, consequently this thesis aims to explore the following: how political argumentation manifests in broadcast political debates, and a focus on facts and values can help us analyse it.

1.1 Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and premise for this thesis. Chapter 2 engages with different conceptualisations of ‘ideology’ in cognate fields. The importance of ideology is understood to be very widespread, on account of how many different academic fields focus on it – cognitive studies, psychology, political science, philosophy, and linguistics, to name a few. I begin with a review of some key mainstream psychological studies into ideology, specifically studies that work within a cognitivist theoretical framework. I then turn to research in discourse studies. These studies attempt to take the social role of ideology into account, in a way that cognitive approaches tend not to. Discourse studies also mark a shift of focus from quantitative to qualitative methods. Ideology is viewed as situated practice rather than part of an individual’s inner mental workings. These studies tend to take discourse as a manifestation of a wider ideological pattern. While they very appropriately demonstrate the workings of ideology as a discursive action, they do not always orient to ideology as a contested matter. The difficulty is that ideology in discourse is still mapped onto models and theoretical frameworks of language. That is, these are top-down approaches
that start with a problem which, in a manner, ‘imposes’ the interpretation on to the data. Ideology is understood as an invisible force, a theoretical framework perhaps, which drives discourse. How this works out in practice is, for example, that one begins with the idea that a particular group’s discourse is racist and will go on to explore their talk, rather than explore racist features in the talk. Argumentative approaches, however, treat ideology as not something that drives discourse but, rather, is something that lives in and is an inherent part of discourse. Using examples in DP, I discuss how argumentative approaches treat ideological matters as practical and observable everyday matters to the speakers. This kind of conceptualisation of ideology serves one to understand its contested nature. Having developed such an approach, DP allows us to look at how contested political discourse functions. The ways in which discursive moves are designed to perform certain actions (Potter, 1996), how speakers orient to the issue of stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992), and so forth. Finally, to conclude Chapter 2 I talk about the gap in the research. Up to this point, I make a case for why a shift from a quantitative to qualitative method, both a conceptual and a methodological shift, can be fruitful for studying ideology, as it manifests and is alive in talk. This point will be extended to the study of contested political discourse. The new addition of my work, taking its cue from Edelman’s (1977) point, is the focus on the nature of political speech being concerned with ‘facts and values’. This led to the generation of analytical focus that looks at the rhetorical nature of knowledge and knowledge claims. I explain this approach in Chapter 3. To conclude the chapter, I propose two research questions that orient around how contested political discourse unfolds, and how a focus on ‘facts and values’ sheds light on how ideologies are contested in talk.

Chapter 3 describes the epistemological and ontological positioning of this thesis. In this chapter I outline the importance and continuous relevance of DP’s epistemological and ontological shift for researching ideology, and what this means for the study of contested political discourse. The main implication for this thesis is how language is conceptualised. It is not, for example, viewed as a grammatical or logical abstract system against which linguistic practices are measured or as something that drives language. Instead, linguistic practices – that is, talk and discourse – are viewed as constitutive as practices (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). My position follows that of Discursive Psychology (DP), both in its wider epistemological and ontological positioning but also as a methodology as a whole. This chapter offers a rationale concerning the choice of my particular approach. The conclusion of the methodology section considers the matter of taking an analytical cue from epistemics –
that is, the claims, orientations and responses to ‘knowledge’ in talk (Heritage, 2013) – and focuses on the rhetorical nature of displays and orientations to ‘knowledge’ in talk. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to covering the process of data collection, criteria and catalogue of debates that are used in the analytical chapters.

Chapter 4 is the first analytic chapter. It aims to set the scene for contested political discourse and the role of ‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ in them. To begin with, academic literature relevant to the context of broadcast political debates – what might constitute ‘institutional talk’ – are covered, and what might, in interactional terms, constitute a challenging of someone’s utterance. Relevant literature from epistemics is discussed, and why they apply here. It is important to understand that, to some degree, the rhetorical nature of how ‘facts’, ‘knowledge’ and so forth are produced, is to do with the situated nature of broadcast political debates. Broadcast talk has some restrictions, meaning that politicians have to use specific ways of talking in order to communicate their ‘ideological’ standpoints, while at the same time challenging opposing positions. This chapter is focused on how this is achieved by way of making claims and counterclaims. The chapter is organised around three types of counterclaims: challenging the relevance of what has been said, bringing in other types of ‘knowledge’ to suggest a context in which the original claim is not so forceful, and, finally, suggesting a hypothetical scenario to challenge an opponent. After demonstrating various ways of signalling and managing disagreements, to conclude the chapter I note that factual descriptions in the context of broadcast political debates are designed to do rhetorical work.

Chapter 5 covers how debates can escalate from a debate to an argument, and in particular how the role of overlap and displays of ‘knowing’ are related. The chapter reviews the nature of overlapping talk, noting that much of the current research highlights that it is rarely a problematic feature in interaction. The aim is not to challenge this. Therefore, in broadcast political debates, more has to be at play than merely an overlap. For example, refusals to cede the floor can lead to moments of escalation. However, these do not occur neutrally and the argumentative dimension of contestable facts has a role to play here. Overall, the first analytical section discusses the nature of overlapping talk, and how the focus on what ‘facts’ are challenged, alongside previous research into overlaps, can show the complex rhetorical function that they carry. For example, one crucial element is that ‘epistemic domains’ are contested in broadcast political debates. The second section of this chapter focuses on the role of laughter and overlapping talk. For instance, laughter can be used to disrupt a
politician’s turn at talk while simultaneously informing the audience of the laughers opposing stance by treating the original claim as laughable. The third section concerns itself with the relevance of institutional roles regarding overlap. The main aim here was to analyse how overlapping talk by the moderators of the debates was not treated as problematic in the same way as overlapping talk by the debaters. The fourth section considers sequences that lead to escalation, the positioning of overlapping talk and its rhetorical relevance. The chapter demonstrates how confrontation can be conceived as joint action. Just as the smooth flow requires co-operative action between the speakers, so does escalation; it is a joint action.

Chapter 6 focuses on the accomplishment of derision in broadcast political debates, and how derision can be a form of counterclaim. The chapter explores the rhetorical function of what might be called derisive laughter in broadcast political debates, and what kinds of displays of knowledge it can perform. The analysis focuses on three types of derisive actions accomplished through the use of laughter: extended laughter sequences, intercalated laughter, and ambiguous cases. In all of these cases the analysis demonstrates that laughter, often from a highly upgraded position, would usually modulate the act of taking a ‘more knowledgeable’ position and, simultaneously, ‘demotes’ the object of the laughter to something that does not merit being taken seriously.

The thesis concludes with Chapter 7, where the findings are discussed in the context of the research questions. It is argued that epistemics, aside from being a well-established analytical tool for analysing everyday talk, can also be used as analytical inspiration to look at contested topics in political discourse. This shows that the ‘knowledge work’ in broadcast political debates has a highly argumentative function. The chapter also focuses on limitations, questions for future work and implications of this thesis. One issue is that, while the analysis acknowledges that political discourse is about ‘facts and values’, the analysis seems to focus more on the former. This links to some questions for future work as well, which could be to expand the analytical approach to make it more rounded. Finally, regarding the implications of my thesis, a number of matters are discussed. For one, this thesis demonstrates the subjective ways ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ are used, though does not question the objectivity of the facts themselves. If one argues that ‘ideology’ is very much a live matter in interaction, as DP does, then we can build on this to observe and analyse the contested nature of broadcast political debates. Ultimately, with the possibility of
demonstrating the situated and ‘live’ nature of disagreement, one can look at the social context where these are a ‘live’ issue, and perhaps begin to trace the ways ‘facts and values’ are used to advocate the ‘ideological’ positions of pro- and anti-EU discourse.
2. Literature Review
2.1 Introduction

There is a multitude of ways that various political positions – adopted, defended, advocated, and so forth – can be studied. This chapter will focus on one arena in particular that is studied to understand political differences. ‘Ideology’ is a phenomenon that is widely studied in the discipline of psychology and many others. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘ideology’ is taken to be a position either in favour or against the European Union, as argued by the politicians in the data. This chapter also serves to make a wider point about methodologies in psychology. First, the more common, mainstream methods utilised in psychology and some of their strong and weak points are addressed. Following from this, the chapter will focus on more qualitative approaches, and what their strengths can contribute towards our understanding of ‘ideology’.

The *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics* defines ideology as “any comprehensive and mutually consistent set of ideas by which a social group makes sense of the world” (McLean & McMillan, 2003, p.256). The dictionary further elaborates that the purpose of ideology is to provide an explanation, or an interpretation, of the state of things and where they should head – the latter resulting in the production of an ‘ideal’ state of things to be that requires striving for. This definition provides a good starting point to begin to study ideology, but it is not enough. For one, works such as Michael Billig’s *Ideology and Social Psychology* (1982) argue that ideology is not, by necessity, comprehensive or consistent, because of internal and theoretical contradictions. He further elaborates that the ideological argument often contains the seeds of its own counterargument (Billig, 1991). This, in turn, implies that it is dilemmatic in nature (Billig et al., 1988). If this is the case, then how is one to study ideology? As stated in the previous chapter, I advocate an approach within Discursive Psychology (DP) that is inspired by aspects of Conversation Analysis (CA), especially epistemics, to explore the argumentative aspect of ‘knowledge’ in talk. DP and CA, as methods of research, are discussed in Chapter 3.

Returning to the concepts of ideology, suffice to say for the time being that definitions of ideologies are context-dependent. Ideologies develop within the framework of their time and place\(^1\). In other words, any definition of ideology is ideologically defined. This is often

\(^1\)See Billig (1982) for examples of how theories of ideology have evolved and developed in various historical and social settings.
referred to as ‘Mannheim’s Paradox’ (Freeden, 2003). Karl Mannheim, in Ideology and Utopia, suggests that “every point of view is particular to a social situation” (1936, p.75) and, thus, advocates a historical approach to the study of ideology. He advocates a historical – that is, contextually aware – approach to the study of ideology to advocate a move away from a completely psychologised approach. The analyst is to also look beyond the mind of the individual for ideology. Billig (1991; 1996) and discursive psychologists in general, echo a parallel point; one must analyse the function of discourse in its argumentative context. The shift is away from mental models and towards social actions. The narrative of this chapter reflects this shift.

The range of multidisciplinary literature on ideology – in political science (e.g. Stanley, 2008), psychology (e.g. Jost & Amadio, 2012), sociology (e.g. Mannheim, 1936), and philosophy (e.g. Laclau, 1997) to name but a few – stands tribute to the importance of ideologies in trying to make sense of the social world. The fact that these works and disciplines possess their own understanding of, and approach to, ideology as relatively definitive or ‘correct’ goes on to demonstrate the exact opposite, namely, that the existence of so many definitions of ideology show the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. There is a great deal of research into ideology which works with very different notions – ranging from cognitive (e.g. Loza, 2011; Loza et al., 2011; van Dijk, 2006a) and physiological (e.g. Dhont et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2011), to discursive (e.g. Bhatia, 2006; Buckler, 2007), linguistic (Phelps et al., 2012), rhetorical (e.g. Finlayson, 2004; 2007; 2012), conceptual (e.g. Heinisch, 2003), and mundane, situated, and argumentative (e.g. Billig, 1991; Billig et al., 1988; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Of course, these notions are closely tied to the questions that each discipline and approach tries to deal with, as well as the kinds of methods that have been developed within the field to deal with such questions. It must be noted, however, that although these definitions may contrast in some core aspects, this is not to say that they are completely or irreconcilably distinct. For example, while there are discursive approaches that focus on practices, these do not necessarily reject the cognitive aspect of ideologies, nor does this mean that all discursive approaches take an uncritical stance on ideology. Particularly in political psychology, it can be difficult to make a distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive approaches (Condor, Tileagă & Billig, 2012). For this thesis, the focus of ideology in research will be largely political in nature.

See, for example, Gerring (1997) and Jost (2006) for reviews that give attention to the similarities of ideologies.
This literature review focuses on how ideology is researched in various fields. The next three sections briefly outline how ideology is treated conceptually: as a cognitive feature (2.2), in discourse studies and political sciences (2.3), and, finally, as argumentation in the tradition of DP (2.4). This choice of organisation for these sections is to reflect the fact that the conceptualisation of ideology is rarely divided by academic discipline – notions of ideology in political science and in psychology can overlap, for example – and to reflect a paradigm shift when it comes to methods of studying ideology. Finally, in section 2.5, I summarise this chapter, discuss the gap in the research, and present the research questions this thesis seeks to address.

The organisation of this chapter should not be viewed as a definitive categorisation of how ideology is studied, nor as an exhaustive review of the topic. Rather, it reflects a pragmatic choice to illustrate the variety of approaches to ideology in (social) psychology and cognate fields. As such, other approaches – such as Marxist theories (e.g. Marx & Engels, 1970), its applications and critiques (e.g. Jost & Banaji, 1994; Augoustinos, 1999), the work of Adorno (Adorno et al., 1950; Cook, 2001), Žižek (1989), and so forth – are not discussed explicitly, although they certainly are present in the field of ideology studies. Also, the choice of studies themselves discussed below is also a pragmatic one. That is, they have been selected as exemplary illustrations of studies in respective fields. For example, the studies selected when discussing a cognitive approach are used as a practical example of some of the strengths and weaknesses of cognitive approaches, but one must keep in mind that there is a plethora of ideology-as-cognition studies that have not been covered here in detail.3

2.2 Individual Differences, Cognition, and Ideology

One of the most dominant conceptions of ideology, particularly in psychology, is to view it as an internal cognitive feature of an individual (Edwards & Potter, 1992). This conception is often accompanied by a positivist empirical approach to the object of study. Consequently, in ideology studies, ideological features – such as sensitivity to threat and its link to political orientation (e.g. Jost et al., 2007), the impact of genetics or environment on political orientation (e.g. Funk et al., 2013), and so forth – tend to be separated into controllable variables, and their relevance and validity is determined by using quantitative techniques of

3For example, Smith et al. (2011), Federico et al. (2011) and Ksiazkiewicz, Ludeke and Krueger (2016).
analysis. For example, Dhont et al. (2012) investigated different event-related brain potentials between anarchists and political moderates, and Loza (2011) and Loza et al. (2011) focused on the prevalence of Middle Eastern extremist ideology on various religious and cultural backgrounds. These will be discussed in turn. These studies are prototypical examples of how ideology is quantified into categories and analysed statistically, as is relatively common to mainstream psychology. As such, they contain many core elements of the theoretical underpinnings of cognitivist and qualitative approaches; in particular, the transformation of ideological phenomena into numerical categories that can be subjected to various statistical analyses, which allow one to make judgements regarding hypotheses.

Section 2.2 of this chapter is divided into four sections. First, I discuss materialist approaches, namely, approaches that focus on some physical aspect of an individual, such as genetics or brain functions, to explore ideology. Next, I cover self-report questionnaires and how approaches rooted in political psychology look into ideology. This section concludes with a commentary on these methods and some of the issues they may face.

**Neurocognitive Differences**

Many cognate studies work with the notion that one can trace roots of ideology to the physique of the individual – particularly the brain or one’s genetic makeup. It is linked to positivism in that it allows one to make the conclusion that what is observable, and ultimately confirmable, via the senses is a crucial part of generating knowledge, or science: “Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge” (Bryman, 2004, p.11). From this perspective, the researcher is looking for physical signs of ideology within an individual.

For example, one strand of work in political psychology is concerned with what Jost (2009) has called ‘neurocognitive differences’ (p.136) in ideology⁵, working with the notion that some political positions, such as those of Left and Right, are, to an extent, “antinomies of human nature” (p.139). Drawing on the studies of Amodio et al. (2007) and Oxley et al. (2008), Jost (2009) argues that there are physiological differences between political liberals and moderates. His conclusion that “ideological differences are more than skin deep” (p.137)

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⁵For this thesis, ‘positivist empiricism’ and ‘quantitative approaches’ will be used interchangeably.
is based on how liberal or conservative participants react to patterned responses to certain stimuli (Amodio et al., 2007) or physiological reactions – such as increased rate of blinking – to threatening visual images (Oxley et al., 2008). Jost and Amodio (2012) continue along these lines (see ‘Cognition and Ideology in Political Psychology’ below for more detail). In looking for physiological markers of ideology, such an approach is liable to ignore the very context in which people as people, rather than ‘ideological beings’, express, hear, advocate, defend and generally respond to ideology.

Dhont et al. (2012) used electroencephalography (EEG) to measure the differences between the brains of an ‘anarchist’ and a ‘political moderate’, looking for differences in event-related potentials (ERPs). The choice of EEG was done as a way of getting around the issue of the subjectivity of Likert scales: “We argue that when moderates and extremists provide an equally extreme rating on a Likert scale for a specific political attitude, they may not necessarily share a similar representation of this particular attitude” (p.297). That is, their aim was to eliminate the subjectivity of a particular approach by looking to “objective measures which are less susceptible to shifts in meaning across contexts or respondents” (p.297). These differences were measured by obtaining a measure from the participants’ ERPs, when presented with various words (stimuli) on screen that they were asked to evaluate. The presentation of political stimuli was mixed with non-political stimuli. It was these findings that were compared between the political groups. The study ultimately confirmed the existence of different ERP patterns, between the ‘extremist’ anarchists and the ‘moderates’, although these differences were, by the authors’ admission, modest. They were able to note different ERPs by theorising from the start that anarchists are more emotionally invested in their views and with more intensity than the political moderates. This study has a number of issues that a quantitative approach does not always address. I will return to this in the final section of 2.2.

One of the problems with the quantitative stimulus-response approach taken in these studies is that it is far removed from the social everyday context in which ideologies are expressed.

\(^5\)It must be noted to Jost’s (2009) credit that, in his review, the neurological focus is part of a much wider argument.

\(^6\)Jost (2009) notes that not all ideology can be whittled down to “Left” or “Right”, or “Liberal” and “Conservative” positions as they would be referred to in the context of US politics. He uses the distinction for practical purposes rather than take the position that all ideology can be categorised to two camps.
Exploring neurocognitive differences carries the implication that there is an observable link between stimulus-response and ideology. By relying on statistical techniques, social phenomena are reduced to numerical variables that can be manipulated and analysed probabilistically. While a worthwhile approach in its own right, in the case of social phenomena, such as ideology, it tends not to give enough credit to the notion that “our beliefs and our attitudes do not merely occur in our heads, but they too belong to wider social contexts of controversy” (Billig, 1991, p.43).

What we can see above are a few examples of what constitutes a materialist approach. Although Dhont et al. (2012) do not explicitly claim to draw on a cognitivist approach, there is still an implicit underpinning in their work that ideology is to be found within the mind and brain of the individual. Jost (2009) is more concerned with the cognitive aspects of ideology, and looks to physiological phenomena as evidence for the existence of individual differences between people. Although these two examples differ in this respect, the theoretical importance of cognition in ideology is nonetheless a feature of both. Ideology resides firmly in the neurocognitive makeup of an individual’s mind. The difficulty with these approaches is the belief that matching physical brain activity with theoretical notions of ideology or social observable behaviour is unproblematic.

Their conclusions are drawn from strictly physical phenomena. Such approaches rely more on measurable phenomena where observations and statistical analyses are done as a means to reduce any subjective aspects of the study, which are generally treated as confounding variables. This is done with an aim to generate ‘objective’ knowledge that matches reality as closely as possible. However, I argue that this is not so straightforward. While such a method may work well with natural sciences, it is not necessarily equally applicable for social sciences or the social world in general. Such approaches would struggle to explain how ideology is manifest, live and oriented to in the social world in the way people experience it. For example, in the case of Dhont et al. (2012), one can see that within a strictly positivist empirical approach there can be ideological forces at play (see below). Similarly, the proof for a neurocognitive source of ideology, as discussed by Jost (2009), is at risk of increasing the interpretative gap (see below).
Self-Report Questionnaires

Loza (2011) and Loza et al. (2011) look at what the authors call ‘Middle-Eastern extremist ideology’ and its prevalence across various locations in the world. These studies are based on previous work by Loza (2007a; 2007b, as cited in Loza, 2011), where a link between cognitive elements, among other explanations, and extremist ideology are established along with a measure for the extremist ideology – the Belief Diversity Scale (BDS). The cognitive element in Loza (2011) and Loza et al. (2011) is not explicitly defined but clearly associated as a type of belief, attitude, and so forth. Loza et al. (2011) give a great deal of focus to the psychological explanations of terrorism and terrorist ideology. These explanations are used in the development of the BDS.

Loza (2011) focuses more explicitly on Middle-Eastern extremist ideology in Canada, whereas Loza et al. (2011) make a wider cultural comparison (Australia, Canada, Egypt and South Africa). Both studies used the BDS as a measure of the prevalence of extremist Islamic ideology. It has seven subscales: negative attitude towards Israel, political views, attitudes towards women, attitudes towards Western culture, religiosity and commitment to religion, acceptance of violence and, finally, a subscale to assess to what extent the participants were honest or understood the questions. The participants were at first split into four main categories: Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Atheist. In order to reduce potential research bias, participants filled in the questionnaires when the researchers were not present, and did not hand the information over to the researchers directly.

Both studies revealed that Muslims tended to score high in extremist ideology when compared to Christians (moderate scores) and Atheists (low scores), with Jewish participants left out due to a small sample. Based on the results, 96% of Muslims in the work of Loza et al. (2011) fell into the ‘high’ category of extremist ideology and their results were much more concentrated in the higher category7 when compared to Christian or Atheist categories. For Loza (2011) the corresponding results were 100%. Additionally, the ‘high’ ranking of Muslims within the BDS takes place across Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Consequently, the results are interpreted to suggest that extremist ideology is becoming a part of Muslim culture. Their first claim to objectivity was the statistically robust nature of both the questionnaire design and the findings it produced. However, it is important to point out that a high score from Muslims in a measure that explicitly focuses on Middle-Eastern

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7The authors are quick to point out that a ‘high’ categorisation is not the same as condoning violence.
extremist ideology is hardly surprising, as the study focuses on what one might consider controversial aspects associated with Islam. That is to say, the questions on BDS focus almost exclusively on topics that may be considered controversial from an Islamic, rather than a Christian or Atheist, perspective.

In order for self-report measures to be considered scientifically valid, objective measures, they require a number of axiomatic positions to work from. In the case of Loza (2011) and Loza et al. (2011), it is that the participants are honest, or that the seventh subscale of BDS can highlight any issues, that there is little or no risk of social desirability\textsuperscript{8}, and that language is a transparent medium for studying internal cognitive states. There is notable academic literature that takes issue with this latter assumption (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Tileagă, 2013). The problem of social desirability may be mitigated up to a point in self-report questionnaires, as opposed to interviews for example, but one ought not to consider the problem altogether non-existent. Although measures have been taken to deal with social desirability in both interviews and self-report questionnaires, their influence on the findings still persist (van den Mortel, 2008), so the potential distortion of findings in self-report questionnaires remains a methodological issue for the researcher. For example, Dhont et al. (2012) discuss some issues with the use of scales as justification for their use of EEG, and note that the problem is that these measures are, up to a point, subjective – what may count as ‘extremely aggressive’ can vary between genders, political leanings, and so forth.

Although Dhont and colleagues were predominantly interested in charting neurocognitive differences, self-report questionnaires were nevertheless used to distinguish between different types of ideological orientation: moderation or extremism. By asking participants to rate four groups of words (categorised as political or non-political stimulus) on a scale from -3 to +3, the authors determined the political stand of the participants. Interestingly, they found the differences in the frequency of selecting a stimulus to be “modest” (ibid., p.298) between ‘moderates’ and ‘anarchists’. Interestingly, the difference between what counts as ‘extremism’ and what counts as ‘moderation’ is, in practice, quite blurry, even from a quantitative point of view. In fact, less than ten percent of the responses were selected more frequently by one group over the other. Although a questionnaire approach such as this may highlight that certain differences may not be as clearly identifiable as initially hoped, these

\textsuperscript{8}A distortion of data that is caused by respondents’ attempts to construct an account that conforms to a socially acceptable model of belief or behaviour” (Bryman, 2004, p.544).
differences are still, for all intents and purposes, treated as distinct. Using such an approach will enable a researcher to numerically draw a boundary by methodological necessity to create two distinct categories. This is a form of “ontological gerrymandering” (e.g. Potter, 1996), in that boundaries of categories are drawn to enable a certain kind of process, a clear categorisation of ‘extremist’ and ‘moderate’ for a subsequent EEG scan in this case, to continue.

The point to take here is that although not all studies explicitly use questionnaires as their adopted methodology, they can still play a crucial part in the process of empirical research. Without determining how to categorise a participant as either an ‘extremist’ or a ‘moderate’, Dhont et al. (2012) would not have been able to proceed with their study. This not only highlights the importance of questionnaires in ideology studies, but, especially, that of language too. So, questionnaires can play a crucial role in studies into ideology even if they do not play a central methodological role. Whether implicitly or explicitly, with self-report questionnaires comes the assumption, as stated earlier, that language is a window into the mind of an individual, rather than a place of social action where ideologies ‘live’. This increases the interpretative gap, which is discussed in the section ‘Cognition and Ideology – Comments’ below.

Cognition and Ideology in Political Psychology
In cognitive integrative complexity, Tetlock (1983) focuses on politicians’ language and the types of arguments they make in terms of differentiating or integrating information⁹. Briefly put, a more ‘cognitively differentiated’ politician recognises a wider range of implications from various effects. For example, Tetlock found that liberal and moderate politicians had more complex statements when compared to conservatives. Tetlock notes that a simpler rhetorical style does not necessarily reflect a simple cognitive style (Tileagă, 2013). While this approach begins to take language seriously, it does so from a strictly cognitivist, apolitical and individualist approach, neglecting the argumentative context of the political statements it analyses – where ‘complexity’ is not determined by rhetorical style but by cognitive processes instead (Tileagă, 2013). Tileagă also makes another telling point, which applies to cognitive issues in a wider sense too: “There is a slight recognition that it is
language that allows us to have, express and reproduce ideologies, but language is only treated as a ‘transparent’ vehicle for expressing attitudes and cognitive states.” (2013, p.151).

Another significant approach to studying ideology in political psychology is the concept of ‘motivated social cognition’ as developed by Jost and Amodio (2012). In their influential review, they argue that individuals with a high need to manage uncertainty and threat are likely to be appealed by or vote for politically conservative positions, the converse applying for liberals. Treating political ideology as ‘motivated social cognition’\(^\text{10}\), they argue that one advantage of looking to physiological responses for sources of political ideology is that physical reactions “minimise or circumvent self-presentational issues” (p.59). The idea is that one can study ‘unfettered’ ideology that is free from the immediate demands of the situation. This shares some of the issues that Tileagă (2013) echoes on the work of Tetlock (1983). Both approaches have the tendency of not focusing on the argumentative aspects of ideology, or the social context in which these ideologies are made manifest. These kinds of methodological and theoretical positions are not without issues; as I argue in this chapter, they omit looking at the context where ideologies ‘live’.

Cognition and Ideology – Comments

This section has reviewed some examples of prototypical research approaches in cognate studies within psychology; research that is theoretically underpinned by cognitivism and a concern with individual differences. They illustrate the key assumptions and shortcomings of a cognitive approach. The examples here are not a comprehensive representation of the wide range of theoretical focuses that rely on cognitivism, nor are they meant to be. Rather, they were selected because they are exemplary representatives of a certain trend in researching ideology in social and political psychology\(^\text{11}\).

A major issue with such empirical approaches concerned with cognition and individual differences is that they tend to, at most, take the social context of ideology and ideological

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\(^9\)See Tileagă (2013) for a more detailed review of Tetlock’s cognitive integrative complexity and the works it has inspired.

\(^{10}\)See Jost et al. (2003a; b; 2007) and Federico et al. (2011) for more detail.

\(^{11}\)Because of this, some approaches have not been discussed here, such as genetic transmission (e.g. Kandler, Bleidorn and Riemann, 2012) or methods of persuasive communication (e.g. Cacioppo & Petty, 1984). More importantly, although not every study mentioned may be explicitly cognitivist in its approach, they still
expression into account only nominally. They treat the social context – especially language – as a transparent medium into the internal cognitions of an individual (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Tileagă, 2013). Quantitative approaches treat ideology as a physical and/or cognitive phenomenon with behavioural and social implications, rather than as a behavioural or social matter in itself. They are at pains to establish a relationship, for example, between brain potentials with how ideology manifests itself in real life, or identify discrete neurocognitive, ideological, individual differences. Furthermore, these studies have a tendency not to focus on the controversial and contested aspect of ideology (e.g. Billig, 1991). Ideologies are studied under strictly controlled settings and clearly demarcated variables, not in the messy arguments and acts of everyday life which these studies often seek to shed light on. By removing the aspect of controversy in regard to ideology, these studies present it as something that resides primarily in the mind of an individual.

Dhont et al. (2012) exemplify some issues faced with cognitive and individual differences approaches, and how a qualitative approach might prove a fitting alternative to studying ideology. If the understanding and application of the concept of ideology can change over time, as argued by Billig (1982), then this is more likely to place ideology in the socio-historic realm rather than inner representations measurable by EEG, self-report measures, or the like. Considering that being an ‘anarchist’ or a ‘moderate’ is a socio-political statement, and many interpretations of ideology give it a strong political hue (e.g. Billig, 1982; Gerring, 1997; McLean & McMillan, 2003), then at this point it might be more convincing to consider them as constructs dealt with in the social realm, rather than a product of brain activity. Instead, the social and functional aspect of those labels as political categories is papered over and replaced with objective measures of brain activity and individual differences. An anarchist, the ‘extremist’, is viewed to be cognitively different, on account of a study that examines their views in a context highly removed from everyday life. A similar critique can be extended to the other works mentioned earlier; whether one is looking for ideology via questionnaires (Loza, 2011; Loza et al., 2011), neurocognitive differences (Jost, 2009) or as motivated social cognition (Jost & Amodio, 2012), the issue of ideology removed from the context in which it manifests remains.

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consider the cognitive element a part of what makes up an ideology – a credit they do not always extend to the use of language or the contextual elements of ideology.
These quantitative approaches are increasing the ‘interpretative gap’ (Edwards, 2012). Roughly speaking, it represents the space between the object of study and the eventual conclusion that is made on it. The gap “can be very large indeed when moving between an object domain, its operational definition, its measurement and reduction to numbers, the statistical processing of those numbers, and back to claimed relevancies with regard to the object domain” (Edwards, 2012, p.428). Of course, this is part of the process of positivist empiricism as a form of reducing bias and maintaining objectivity and, as such, is not problematic from such a perspective. The idea is to create a scientific knowledge that is distinct from lay knowledge (Bryman, 2004). However, what happens within this increased gap – between the phenomenon and what is ultimately said about it – is something that gets lost in cognitive and individual differences approaches. By de-contextualising social phenomena, particularly language and the social context (of controversy), one is exploring it in a setting in which it would not necessarily occur. Arguably, such an approach does not necessarily account that “the first duty of a science is to construct methods and descriptions appropriate to the object of study” (Edwards, 2012, p.433). The challenge of ecological validity has still to be met by researchers working with positivist frameworks that underpin quantitative methodologies.

A consequence of this is that often, cognitivist and individual differences approaches take on rather long-winded, complex, and often ingenious approaches to exploring ideology. By not giving much theoretical attention to the social context, much of it is omitted by reducing the object of study into strictly categorised variables. This is not to claim that cognitivist approaches as a whole do not recognise or explore the social context of ideologies. Rather, if they are acknowledged in theory, the individualist focus will often lead the adopted methodology to focus on individual traits at the expense of the social context, or treat the study of the social context in situ as somehow problematic or impractical. While the contribution of cognitive psychology has been highly influential, we must also note that our understanding of political communication needs to move beyond it in order to continue developing (Kinder, 2003). One can attribute this to a general decline in psychological research focusing on behaviour, favouring instead studies that focus on ‘inner processes’ even if they do not necessarily match this to a particular type of behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2007).
As mentioned, the cognate studies, by methodological necessity, require the isolation of independent and dependent variables in an attempt to establish causality. This, on the other hand, also means that the research design excludes elements of social phenomena that are of no interest to the researcher (Potter, 1996). This exclusion, in turn, means that such an approach is liable to not account for the fact that language is not a uniform, unchanging entity, resulting in many aspects of everyday language, such as repair, or context of utterances, being overlooked (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Ultimately, language is treated as a transparent medium into the inner mental workings and ideologies of an individual (Tileagă, 2013) rather than as something contested, dilemmatic, paradoxical and jointly produced (Billig, 1991; Billig, et al., 1988). My approach, Discursive Psychology, contrasts with the approach of Jost (2009) and many others discussed here. Moreover, Billig suggests that the ideology (of nationhood) is “near the surface of contemporary life” (1995, p.93) – in contrast to Jost’s assertion that ideology is more than ‘skin deep’ (2009, p.137). This indicates that one may not necessarily need to look for ‘deep’, cognitive, underlying causes to ideology; a methodological issue faced by those studying ideology from a cognitive or neurocognitive approach.

In psychological research, a positivist empirical approach often results in removing the phenomena from its original context. However, one must note that this is the norm in such approaches. While this kind of isolation may not necessarily be problematic in fields such as biology, chemistry or other subfields of psychology, this is not the case when exploring the social world where we can, in many cases, see Mannheim’s Paradox in action. Way (2005) suggests that this pursuit of objective knowledge is not so straightforward in social sciences. We can extend this point to social psychology, and, more specifically, to the study of ideology. A positivist empirical approach may struggle in not taking the reflexive element of social life, as well as its contextual elements, into account. Dhont et al. (2012) is a fitting example of this. Consequently, from such an approach, one is also tasked with re-contextualising one’s findings in their social context, rather than letting the social context come forth in and of itself: the ‘interpretative gap’ is increased.

An alternative option to a quantitative methodology and its epistemological position will be explored in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter. As a final note, it must be

12If objective knowledge was, indeed, attainable via positivist empiricism, then it should be a method capable of creating infallible scientific knowledge (Sayer, 2000), which would render notions such as ‘replicability’ and ‘falsifiability’ redundant.
mentioned that while the theoretical and methodological approach taken in this thesis provides a critical stance on cognitivist approaches, it does not seek to claim that the field has nothing to offer. Rather, as Billig suggested, a critical approach does not “argue that the assumptions of the cognitive approach are unreasonable as such, but that they only express the one side of the many-sidedness of human nature” (1996, p.153).

2.3 Discourse and Ideology

Discourse approaches are contrasted with approaches described in the previous section. The examples discussed here and in later sections consider ideology from a different perspective. It is not an internal feature of the human brain, cognitive or physiological; instead, the operation of ideology is to be explored in the use of language. It is important to mention, however, that not all discourse approaches do away with the notion of cognition, and, indeed, some of them still advocate a cognitive aspect to ideology.

Following the trend from the previous section, the aim here is to present some ways in which ideology can be explored using a discursive approach. It is not intended as a comprehensive review. However, there is one particular element that the following approaches have in common with each other, and in contrast to that of the preceding examples. The following examples are generally constructivist\(^\text{13}\) in their approach. This needs a brief explanation before moving on. One of the core features of constructionism is its challenge to empirical positivism in the form of changing the focus from ‘behaviour’ to ‘action’, where the former is a reference to “mechanical” behaviour, whereas the latter is imbued with a (cultural) meaning (Edwards, 1997)\(^\text{14}\). The focus on discursive actions is not to remove the focus on behaviour altogether, but to view both as tools for offering accounts of social actions (ibid.). These actions, in turn, have a crucial role in the building up of meaning: “The worlds in which we all live are not just there, not just natural objective phenomena, but are constructed by a whole range of different social arrangements and practices” (Potter, 1996, p.12). To use ideology as an example; a quantitative approach may treat it as a relatively objective feature, whereas a constructivist approach to ideology might treat it as something that gives, and is given, meaning in its social context. The former may look for ideology within the mind of an

\(^{13}\)The terms ‘constructivist’ and ‘constructionist’ are interchangeable, and will be treated as such in this thesis.  
\(^{14}\)Edwards (1997) uses the example of what distinguishes a blink and a wink, where the latter is a ‘meaningful’ action to be understood as such.
individual – and as singular phenomena – as something that has meaning on its own. The latter, on the other hand, might look into ideology as an action and, importantly, as a process in social semantics\textsuperscript{15}.

First, there is a brief introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA needs to be mentioned separately, due to it being a particularly political form of discourse analysis that, among other things, is prominent and directs significant attention on ideology. After briefly talking about its theory, I look at Bhatia (2006) as an example of how CDA can be done. Next, I move to look at non-CDA discourse studies, using the work of Steinberg and Bar-On (2002). To conclude the section, I discuss a particular type of discourse study developed in political sciences – Rhetorical Political Analysis (RPA).

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA is a widely known and well-established field in discourse studies. The approach is widely constructivist in nature and concerns itself with the linguistic aspect of social and cultural processes (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The overall aim of CDA is to “draw out and describe the practices and conventions in and behind texts that reveal political and ideological investment” (ibid., p.4). Much of it focuses on notions such as ideology (e.g. van Dijk, 2006a) or power (e.g. van Dijk, 2006b; Wodak, 2012) in relation to social injustice (e.g. Fairclough, 2010). That is, CDA focuses on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 1993, p.1). This does not mean that there is no focus on the cognitive aspect of ideology. On the contrary, CDA certainly can incorporate a cognitivist element by adopting a notion of a system of ideas:

“…whatever ideologies are, they are primarily some kind of ‘ideas’, that is, ‘belief systems’… a theory of ideology needs a cognitive component that is able to properly account for the notions of ‘belief’ and ‘belief system’…” (van Dijk, 2006a, p.3)

The overall aim of CDA is to intervene for “dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.259). This is important to note about

\textsuperscript{15}See Edwards (1997) and Potter (1996) for a more detailed discussion on the role of constructionism in social sciences and psychology.
CDA, that the analysis is done from a relatively predefined moral position, as it has implications on how the analysis is carried out. There are ‘elites’ who perpetrate social injustices, and the primary task of CDA is to make resistance to this possible (Fairclough, 2010). This has its implications as to how ideology is treated in CDA. Fairclough (2010) maintains that ideology is still a valid analytical tool, despite a radical change in society which has led to ‘ideology’ being questioned as a valid notion16; and it is precisely its role in the enactment of power that, according to CDA, keeps ideology alive today. Finally, it needs to be pointed out that while much of CDA shares the theoretical framework described above, it is better considered as an umbrella term for a wider set of approaches and methodologies (Wodak, 2009; Machin & Myers, 2012). With this in mind, I now turn to an example of a CDA study.

Bhatia’s (2006) work analyses joint speeches given by the heads of state of USA and China, George W. Bush and Jiang Zemin, between 2001 and 2003. The choice of method is explained by claiming that “CDA proved to be a useful tool in the analysis of the political press conferences, because it allowed for the realisation of the interdependency of language and ideology” (p.200). The work focuses mostly on three themes drawn from the press conferences: positivity, influence, and power and evasion. Bhatia demonstrates the level of sophistication that goes into political press conferences, especially when there are two politicians who are perceived to have dividing differences. An intriguing point discussed by Bhatia is that ideologies can be downplayed and promoted simultaneously, with both speakers doing this at times. In the case of this study, these ideologies are the single-party communist system of Zemin and the multi-party democratic system of Bush: “The crux of their contrasting ideologies lies in the political system they represent” (p.175). She suggests in the analysis that ideologies may at times take second place to practical demands (such as friendly dialogue in a press conference), but this by no means excludes its involvement in any way – it still needs to be attended to by the speakers. For example, one can contrast the type of talk within the theme of ‘positivity’ (e.g. “China and United States have more rather than less shared interests, and more rather than less common responsibility for world peace. The importance of the relationship has increased rather than decreased.”) with that of influence (e.g. “I’m confident that so long as the two sides keep a firm hold of the common interests of the two countries, properly handle bilateral ties, especially the question of

16In other fields, too, there are arguments in favour of studying ideology. See Billig (1991), Billig et al. (1988) and Jost (2006) for examples.
Taiwan, in accordance with the three Sino-US joint communiqués, the relations between China and the United States will continuously move forward.") to see that there is a dual concern with appearing to have common interests, while also attending to ideological differences. From the theoretical standpoint adopted in my thesis, the observation of Bhatia is a particularly apt example of ideological dilemmas, as it demonstrates two conflicting forces in action – the recognised (and allegedly opposing) ideologies of both speakers, and the pragmatic concern of creating an image of co-operation. However, these dilemmas in the work of Bhatia are not analysed in their more immediate and local argumentative context (as is the case in Billig et al., 1988). How and what these statements respond to have been left out of the analysis.

There are two further issues worth noting that Bhatia’s work does not address. First, much of the finer details from the interactions are left out of the analysis by focusing on what is said more than on how it is said. Because of this, the analysis relies on isolated statements that are not always explained in context, and we have no insight into how the utterances are situated in the wider interactive context. Second, the work relies on the notion that the discourses and persons of George W. Bush and Jiang Zemin are ideological opposites. For Bhatia, analysing ideological conflict takes the form of analysing the tropes of a ‘Capitalist American’ versus a ‘Communist Chinese’ discourse. That is, the subjective nature of ideology is not given a great deal of attention. From the analytical perspective I adopt in my thesis, one could avoid this problem of trying to determine the nature of ideology, as it would be something made manifest in the talk rather than something that pre-exists it in some manner.

Non-CDA Discourse Studies

Here, I discuss an example of a discourse study that is neither CDA, nor does it fit the approach I use in my thesis (see Chapter 3). The discussion of the example below serves two purposes. The first is to demonstrate how studies from a non-CDA approach can be done, and the second is to show how a grounded theory approach might contribute to a discourse based study.
Steinberg and Bar-On (2002) looked at group dynamics when two ideologically opposing groups met each other. Their study draws on grounded theory. The ‘ideological opposites’ of the study were Jewish and Palestinian Israeli students, who attended group session workshops as part of an undergraduate course at an Israeli university. These group sessions were recorded, and transcriptions used for analysis. Although these groups do not consist of elite political speakers, the element of ideological conflict in communication is present, and the politically controversial theme remains. The study looked at how group discourse between ideological opposites evolves over time and, by analysing the group sessions, came to develop an analytical framework of discourse evolution:

1. Ethnocentric Talk – Argumentative talk, groups do not acknowledge each other.
2. Attack – Hostile or otherwise accusatory language.
3. Opening a Window – A conciliatory attempt by one group.
4. Recognition of Differences.
5. Intellectual Discussion – Non-hostile argumentation, groups listen to each other.
6. Dialogic Moment – Groups treat each other as equals and engage in open dialogue.

The authors emphasise that the question of whether these steps are sequential or not is open to debate, but they have put them in this order purely for practical purposes, calling for further research. What is of interest within the theoretical framework here is not only the six points proposed by them, but their use of grounded theory to develop the framework. By using grounded theory, the authors take a step in the direction of putting the actions of their participants in a primary position. That is, they explore the discourse of their participants as they are, rather than analyse them with an *a priori* theory in the way that, for example, a CDA or a cognitive psychology study might.

This research is interesting in that it shows some of the developmental processes that take place over time when two ideologically opposed groups are in contact with each other. The authors differ in their approach from CDA, in that the assumption of power imbalance is not present nor is it the focus of their analysis. However, what they do have in common with a CDA approach, as well as the quantitative approaches described earlier, is the accompanied presence of cognitivism: “The study is based on the assumption that change in the quality of discourse is a sign of a cognitive and affective change in the way one perceives the ‘other’,

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17The authors seem to be treating the notions of ‘discourse’ and ‘group processes’ as synonymous in the context of their project.
the ‘self’ and ‘truth’” (p. 199). This demonstrates the difficulty in a clear theoretical separation between cognitive and non-cognitive approaches (Condor, Tileagă & Billig, 2012) that was mentioned earlier in this chapter. It also shows that the authors are, up to a point, treating discourse as a pathway to cognition. Edwards and Potter argue that this is problematic due to a discrepancy between the concerns of a cognitive approach and that of everyday talk: “The epistemologies of our everyday discourse are organised around adequacy and usefulness rather than validity and correctness” (1992, p.16). Tileagă (2013) similarly warns that the relationship between political language and cognition is too complex to simply treat language as a transparent window into (political) thought.

**Political Science, Rhetoric and Argumentation**

In this section, I will talk about what political sciences can contribute towards our knowledge of ideology. Specifically, I will focus on discourse and rhetorical approaches in political science. Going back some decades, the work of Murray Edelman (1977; 1988) recognises the importance of political language and its performative, and as such argumentative, role. The importance of political talk, then, is not new. Within political science, Alan Finlayson has developed Rhetorical Political Analysis (RPA) (2004; 2007; 2012; Finlayson & Martin, 2008), which I discuss briefly. It is not claimed to be the only approach within political science to focus on political talk, but is one that is developed particularly to deal with the argumentative role of political talk.

Taking the cue from the ‘rhetorical turn’ in other areas of social sciences, Alan Finlayson (2004) advocates a similar approach in political sciences – one ought to look at political discourse in its political context. Taking a critical stand on CDA, he suggests that one of the issues with it is that it focuses on the hidden agendas of political agents, and one of the consequences of this focus is that the argumentative context may be lost in CDA (Finlayson, 2004). Regarding Discursive Psychology, he states that RPA does not need to focus on areas such as social identities: “In politics the ‘construction of the object in discourse’ can be taken for granted” (p.539). Instead, Finlayson emphasises the importance of the political context, institutions and processes. To analyse political rhetoric, RPA

> “presumes that arguments are formulated and enacted on the basis of prior institutionalised systems of meaning that exert pressure on actors, yet it also
draws attention to political action as a distinct kind of creative, intellectual and pragmatic activity” (Finlayson, 2007, p.560).

What this means is that a political speech is institutional in the sense that it has been prepared beforehand by many various authors – this makes the speech a reflection of a political process – while also being tailored for the occasion in which the speech takes place: “The political speech is a snapshot of ideology in action” (Finlayson & Martin, 2008, p.449).

A rhetorical turn to political science is not only proposed by Finlayson as a critique of CDA; his argumentative approach builds upon and enriches other theories in political sciences – such as the political theories of ideology developed by Michael Freeden and Ernesto Laclau (Finlayson, 2012). With RPA, there is an important theoretical departure from literature discussed in previous sections, in that political rhetoric is now to be understood as (political) action. The analysis is not rooted in pre-existing theory; rather it is the rhetorical organisation of political argument in action that is the analytical focus. Unlike in CDA, the person at the receiving end of the argument is now ‘theoretically empowered’ as an agent capable of questioning and providing a counterargument. As such, the person is not simply subjected to argumentative deception by political elites, nor does this person have their ideology determined by their internal neurocognitive structures (e.g. Amodio et al., 2007).

To be sure, the analytical approach of RPA has a lot to offer. In the analysis of Tony Blair’s final speech at the Labour conference before resigning as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Finlayson and Martin (2008) demonstrate how the rhetorical organisation of the speech works against the backdrop of wider political events at the time. Not only does Blair’s impending resignation enable a certain type of speech, he uses this strategically to recast the question of his resignation to that of how his past leadership style will influence the future. However, if the focus is on overtly political processes, RPA may not give attention to the features of the interaction that the speakers themselves are orienting to. Since these, too, take place in a political context, they are arguably just as analytically relevant in the interaction. For example, in their case study of Blair’s speech, Finlayson and Martin focus largely on the political and rhetorical organisation of the speech. Yet, the analysis does not seem to focus on the rhetorical construction of social identity. It would seem that if

18The authors use the term ‘strategy’. This makes sense from the perspective of political science, which also concerns itself with questions beyond the immediate context of Blair’s speech, but from a social psychological approach it makes more sense to talk of discursive organisation.
political speeches, according to RPA, draw from wider political processes for that particular occasion, then so would the construction of one’s identity. Not only must Blair make his argument, he must also construct himself as the person who can make such arguments. He must construct himself as a ‘reasonable’ politician, with the country’s destiny at heart. It is not enough to presume that social identities pre-exist contexts of talk. By attending to what the speaker(s) orient to, on top of the political context that RPA already acknowledges, such ‘identity’ work would not be analytically lost.

Discourse and Ideology – Comments
In a seminal paper, Nesbitt-Larking and Kinnvall (2012) review the trends of political psychology in Europe and North America, noting a long-term trend of ‘binary/dualist’ thinking. Their analysis of trends shows that this duality takes place at epistemological, ideological and methodological level, and they argue against the limitations imposed by this kind of thinking. For example, if we look at the earlier studies mentioned (Bhatia, 2006; Dhont et al., 2012; Steinberg & Bar-On, 2002), we can already raise a few questions regarding this kind of dualist restriction. What exactly constitutes a political opposite, and how can we begin to define it? If we assume politics to be quintessentially ideological, then perhaps capitalism and communism may be classified as opposites. Do they fit the traditional ideological divisions in political psychology? Nesbitt-Larking and Kinnvall (2012), in their critical assessment of the state of political psychology, note how there is a division in conceptualisations of ideology between Europe and North America, and go on to argue that “ideological assumptions have been lacking in specificity and nuance” (p.51). A parallel critique has been made in the past; Billig (1982) has been critical of the extent of individualism in late capitalism and of the idea that an ideology is completely coherent. So a straightforward conceptualisation of ideology is not uncriticised. If we attempt to go beyond ideology, then the non-ideological moderate forms an opposite with the anarchist, but by that extension, also the capitalist and the communist. If we take a geo-political view of ideology, then it may explain why there is an ideological separation between Jewish and Palestinian peoples. However, this conceptualisation in turn would conflict with the others mentioned. One can also be critical of how pronounced these differences are in practice: both of the capitalist and communist politicians in Bhatia’s (2006) work are world leaders and wield
considerable political influence across the globe, meaning that their roles may not be that different in practice.

It is clear, then, that ideology is too complex for this kind of binary or theoretical thinking, and a more contextual approach may be better suited. Indeed, the studies discussed above are representative of a wider trend in studies into ideology, in that they do not necessarily treat ideological division as a contested, controversial and situated matter. Ideology is theoretical, cognitive, practical, and so forth. That is, ideology drives the discourse – it is a top-down process. Consequently, the ideological division is not treated as contextual or problematic and remains beyond the analytical focus.

For example, in the case of CDA, the focus on ideology power and oppression does not necessarily take into account that “while certain discourses may be hegemonic, they do not remain uncontested” (Nesbitt-Larking & Kinnvall, 2012, p.46). One would benefit from a focus on how ideological contrasts work on a particular occasion, rather than aim for a comprehensive conceptualisation of this phenomenon. Conventionally, CDA tends to start with a problem, racism for example, and amasses data to illustrate how the phenomenon (“racism”) is socially and discursively accomplished. When one starts with a “problem”, one works from a position where the “problem”, in some manner, ‘pre-exists’ social discourses or ways of talking about it. The analyst works with their own conception of what counts as ‘real’ or ‘correct’ as opposed to treating descriptions as having a pragmatic function (Potter, 1996). In the first instance, this creates a theoretical gap between an ideology and the discourse in which it is expressed. The interpretative gap (Edwards, 2012) is thus increased. This becomes an issue if one works from a position that discourse is ideology (e.g. Billig, 2002), because it would leave the analyst to determine what is ideology from outside the context in which it is expressed. Second, such an analysis does not always account for how an issue becomes a point of contestation and alive in the interaction. This is not to say that an issue such as racism does not exist in discourse, or that it does not exist in other forms, but a CDA approach still carries with it the top-down approach rather than orient to the issues as ongoing matters of concern for the speakers. Jones (2007) goes so far as to argue that there is no such thing as CDA, and instead advocates an approach where one views language

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19CDA “tends to a cognitive and strategic analysis, heavily dependent on notions of what speakers intend and on the information-processing difficulties generated by some constructions” (Potter, 1996, p.227). Such a theoretical position implicitly places ideologies, cognitions, and the like outside the domain of discourse and/or talk.
“as a form of conscious conduct on the part of particular individuals, of real personalities, conduct which consists in their actual creation of communicative means and interpretations in the course of their engaging with others in particular circumstances” (p.367).

In turn, RPA can be seen as a theoretical middle ground between determinants of political rhetoric and/or ideology – institutions versus individuals. In contrast to the literature discussed so far, it certainly stands apart from cognitivist and (some) discursive approaches. However, while RPA undoubtedly brings the argumentative context to the forefront, it also excludes certain discursive phenomena. Instead, it brings political institutions into analytical considerations. This, it is argued, runs the risk of increasing the interpretative gap (Edwards, 2012) between the phenomena under scrutiny and the analytical outcome. Another potential issue in RPA is that, at least in some instances, it seems to focus largely on political speeches made by one person at a time. While it can be very revealing of the political argument made, it has not looked at cases where the rhetorical trajectory of speech may be disrupted by another speaker who, in communicative and political terms, is a peer. In other words, the question is, that while RPA can look into rhetorical strategies from a political perspective, can it do so from a socio-communicative perspective? In this, one must note the similarity between RPA and CDA, in that they appear to focus on the discourse and talk from one side of the argument only and that they start with a “problem”. They do not necessarily look at an opposing speaker to see the ideological and interactional dilemmas – it would suffice to concentrate on the internal struggles of their speeches.

In considering the influence of political institutions (in RPA) as an inherent part of political rhetoric, it runs the risk of facing similar issues as with CDA discussed above. By emphasising political over socio-communicative aspects, RPA is, much like CDA, starting with an already defined “agenda” or “problem”. In contrast, Edwards and Potter (1992) argue that one should start with practices in order to avoid conflating language with an individualist cognitivist view, which views matters such as actions, ideologies, and so forth as firmly residing in the individual. An alternative focus on practices and actions would allow one to observe how notions such as memory, attribution, and indeed ideology, are alive in the observable social world. These notions, and many other ones, are all present in

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20Discursive Psychology, in a sense, is a move in this direction although the matter of ‘conscious’ conduct is not unproblematic, but this is beyond the scope of the current discussion.
discourse because the social world in which they manifest is oriented to action: “Understanding language is not, in the first instance, a matter of understanding sentences but of understanding actions – utterances – which are constructively interpreted in relation to their contexts” (Heritage, 1984a, p.139).

The discursive approaches discussed above – CDA and RPA – seem to not focus on the dilemmatic or contested nature of the ideology. They do not appear to appreciate that “dialogue requires negation” (Billig, 1996, p.28). Thus, they run the risk of implicitly fostering an image of an unimpeded ideology that gives little attention to the contradictions or dilemmas that ideologies face. When Billig talks about the “diminishing role of consistency in contemporary society, at least as regards the traditional topics of ideology” (1982, p.166), he is highlighting that ideologies, as theories, have rarely been coherent enough to not have internal contradictions. This is even less so when we consider ‘lived’ rather than ‘intellectual’ ideology (Billig et al., 1988) – where the former represents social beliefs, practices, and so forth, and the latter is “formalised philosophy” (ibid., p.28). For example, contemporary capitalism contains elements of both individualism and collectivism. He also suggests that this need not be an issue for the analyst. The following section reviews studies, which take Billig’s (1982; 1991; Billig et al., 1988) idea of ideology and work from there.

2.4 Discursive Psychology and Ideology
Discursive Psychology (DP), particularly in its early days, has been heavily influenced by the argumentative/rhetorical approach in social psychology developed by Billig (1987; 1996) amongst others, and was born out of a move away from what, at the time of its earliest stages, was considered mainstream psychology (Billig, 2012a). DP is an approach dedicated to the respecification of psychological notions into observable notions used in language. For example, identity is not treated as an inner mental function but, instead, is something people work up in interaction to perform very specific actions (e.g. Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). Importantly, social action, in talk, is to be analysed in the same way that the speakers orient to them – as situated actions (Edwards & Potter, 1992). In this section, I discuss some DP

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21See Chapter 3 for a more comprehensive account of DP.

The work of Michael Billig (e.g. 1991; 1992; 1995; Billig et al., 1988) looks into ideology in its everyday contexts, and how it can be a controversial matter when ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988) and contestations (Billig, 1989) are live issues in interaction. I will discuss one example of Billig’s work here: *Talking of the Royal Family* (1992). Using interviews, Billig explores the opinions of various families regarding the British royal family, and how they are expressed in talk amongst family members in their homes. Throughout the book, he explores various features of everyday talk, how ideologies live through common sense, how when people talk about one issue they simultaneously talk about others (double-declaiming) and how the common-places\(^{22}\) used in talking about ideological matters is kaleidoscopic. For example, Billig notes that “when speakers say something, they are often doing several different things at once” (p.40). Put simply, a short utterance can have multiple argumentative functions. For instance, when talking about the royal family and how they ought to be moral figureheads to the non-royals, the people are also talking about themselves, and defining their self as one in need of such a moral figurehead. Crucially, this highlights that argumentative talk attends to more than one matter at any given time. Arguing for one position can, and often does, at the same time argue against its counterpart (Billig, 1996). In describing the royal family, the speaker is emphasising their own non-royal nature: “In the desire for the part, and not the whole, of the royal life, there is double-declaiming: the desirability of being an ordinary person is affirmed” (Billig, 1992, p.132). Another notion that Billig introduces is that common sense is ‘kaleidoscopic’, insofar that “one moment a belief acts as a justification, and the next moment it finds itself being justified by the very bit of common-sense which it has just been justifying” (p.48). This highlights how argumentation need not follow formal, rhetorical and logical rules in order to function in an everyday context. As Billig argued, “these claims are permitting the case for superiority to be expressed, even as it is denied” (p.50). This takes us back to Billig’s (1982) earlier critique of ideology theories. In *Talking of the Royal Family*, we have empirical support for how ideology lives in the social world and how it is not necessarily straightforward, logical, theoretically coherent, or systematic.

\(^{22}\)Here Billig refers to an argument that is based on ‘common sense’. They are types of argumentations that are, at least partly, based on statements or positions that are generally accepted (see Billig, 1996).
Wetherell and Potter’s *Mapping the Language of Racism* (1992) is another classic discursive psychological attempt to engage with ideology as a critique of traditional mainstream, social psychological, and sociological studies of racism. Their aim is twofold: the first part of the book deals with theories of ideology and how discourse analysis can be used to analyse racist discourse; the second part of the book deals with various aspects of racist discourse by the white majority (Pākehā) of New Zealand when talking about the Māori people. Much of their work follows on from that of Billig (1992). Analysing various aspects of talk, Wetherell and Potter discuss how, for example, social categories, when treated as independent variables rather than descriptive categories designed to do a particular action, are not as straightforward as psychology had tended to treat them. Another important point of discussion in their work is on racism studies that focus on the individual for answers – in other words, studies that look for psychological explanations for racism. Wetherell and Potter note that

“political ideologies or political values are not static or constant in meaning… equality, compulsion, injustice, rights, freedom – the central values – carry different connotations depending on the argumentative context” (1992, p.198).

They focus on discursive practices, where we can see how contemporary racism is enacted in an everyday setting by working from a theoretical position that “discourse is actively constitutive of both social and psychological processes” (p.59). Thus, their work represents a move away from traditional approaches of racism; questioning, among other points, the assumption that psychological processes reside within an individual or that racist discourse needs to be analysed in terms of how ‘truthful’ such claims are. Instead, Wetherell and Potter argue that “attention should turn from the veracity of racist claims to the processes whereby these claims become communicated as ‘fact’ and empowered as ‘truth’” (p.59).

Augoustinos et al. (1999) focus on instances of racist talk directed at the Aboriginal people by Australian university students. In many ways, their work builds on the findings of Wetherell and Potter (1992) and others that focus on contemporary racist talk. Using interview data, Augoustinos and colleagues identified four types of discourse: historical
narrative of Australia and its colonialisit past, neo-liberal discourse as an explanation of the disadvantages experienced by the Aboriginal people, defensiveness that downplays and/or denies racism, and, finally, nationalist discourse emphasising the concept of everyone, Aboriginal people included, identifying as ‘Australians’. For example, interview participants used neo-liberal discourse as a way of framing the issues the Aboriginal people face as a question of individual behaviour. That is, any discrimination the Aboriginal people faced was seen as related to things such as public drunkenness by Aboriginal people which, in turn, led to negative stereotyping of them. Such discourse serves to frame the Aboriginal people as active agents in the discrimination and negative stereotypes they face, rather than account for social or historical factors: “‘Problems’ are described not in terms of identifying putative social or historical causes, but in terms of locating cause in individual’s destructive choices” (p.363). In another example, denying “old-fashioned” racism was used as a way to not discuss more contemporary forms of racist talk. “Racism is thus construed as being predominantly defined as an issue of colour rather than economic and social disadvantage…the very issues that are central to symbolic racism are not perceived to be racist at all” (p.368). This point is crucial, as the authors demonstrated that in denials of overt racism more subtle forms of racism can be observed from the data. They show that prejudice talk can be “delicate, flexibly managed, and locally contingent” (p.371).

Tileagă (2007) looks at ideologies of moral exclusion of minority ethnic groups in Romania, and particularly how the Roma minority are talked about by Romanians living in Transylvania. In order to do so, he respecifics the traditional psychological notions of depersonalisation, delegitimisation and dehumanisation from psychological processes, either in one’s inner mind or as a group process, into discursive practices: “People are shown to flexibly work up, formulate the nature of actions, events, theirs and other people’s accountability through ways of talking that depersonalise, delegitimise and dehumanise” (p.722). Crucial to his analysis is the focus on descriptions and the kind of work they do, rather than explanations. In his analysis, Tileagă demonstrates how notions such as ‘space’ are used to place the Roma minority beyond the bounds of conventional morality. Descriptions of the actions of the Roma are framed so that it is outside of what constitutes

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23The authors cite van Dijk’s (1992) work as an example that demonstrates what contemporary racist talk can feature.
typical behaviour. It is their out-of-place behaviour that accounts for the so-called moral indignation and reprimand; what might otherwise be called prejudiced talk. One example discusses an unconventional use of flats that have been provided for the Roma people. Here, ‘space’ is used in such a way that it “not only invokes normative standards of behaviour, but also carries implications for the moral profile of the kind of people that would do such a thing” (p.729). Importantly, there is an absence of openly prejudiced or bigoted language. This is not entirely unexpected, considering the taboo against openly prejudiced language (e.g. Billig, 1978; 2012b; Billig et al., 1988). However, as Tileagă states, “one does not need to assign extreme stereotypical attributes to the Romanies… One can simply make reference to their extremely aloof behaviour, to their out-of-placeness and morally reprehensible character” (2007, p.729) to enact what Tileagă called extreme prejudiced talk. That is, he demonstrates that one can use fairly conventional everyday language and descriptions to do what in psychology is known as depersonalisation, delegitimisation and dehumanisation.

A particular strength of DP is that it need not focus only on interaction; it is also a functional method of analysis, when examining ideologies, for text. Byford (2006) is a case in point. He focuses on denials of anti-Semitism by the Serbian Orthodox Church. The church as an institution faces a particular task in combating allegations of anti-Semitism, as it has not, from a theological or doctrinal standpoint, renounced the anti-Semitic aspect of Christianity in the same manner as Catholic and Protestant churches did after 1945. The analysis focuses on two texts: a public statement by the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and another by a Christian right-wing organisation in Serbia. Notably, in the texts one can observe similar rhetorical devices as might present in talk – the use of extreme case formulations (see Pomerantz, 1986) or building consensus (see Potter, 1996) for instance. Other than outright denials of racism, other ways to deny anti-Semitism include the questioning of those making such implications – “the denial of anti-Semitism in Serbian Orthodox culture is routinely accompanied by the questioning of the morality of critics and the veracity of their claims” (Byford, 2006, p.172) – or invoking a specific national-historical image of Serbs as tolerant people who do not discriminate against Jews. The image of extremism and its undesirability is invoked to challenge the existence of anti-Semitism within the Serbian church, but it tends to be criticised alongside those who make allegations of anti-Semitism in the first instance. Being an institution that wields considerable influence in Serbia, the way the church frames
the discourse around denials of anti-Semitism has clear implications. Denying the legitimacy of Serbian far-right groups and their rhetoric, challenging the ‘liberal’ sources that suggest the presence of prejudice, and denying any prejudice on behalf of the church, but not making any doctrinal rejection of anti-Semitism, has a seemingly paradoxical, but significant, consequence; namely, that “the Church’s role in the perpetuation of the themes and tropes of literal denial is instrumental in the preservation and legitimisation of anti-Semitism in Serbian society” (p.179). Byford’s study demonstrates how an influential institution, the Serbian Orthodox Church in this instance, can influence how a particular contended topic is talked about. Setting the terms of a topic in such a manner can make questioning matters beyond its bounds particularly difficult. In Byford’s (2006) case, suggesting the presence of anti-Semitism can lead to the dismissal of the critics as “‘Serbophobes’, ‘Euro-wimps’, or members of the ‘spiteful circle’” (p.180).

Discursive Psychology and Ideology as a Lived Action

Mannheim’s Paradox is a notion that seems to fit rather well with DP’s argumentative approach, in that it encourages a context-aware approach to ideology and shows that the importance of context for ideology is recognised in fields outside of DP too. That said, DP takes Mannheim’s Paradox a step further. Billig suggests that ideological expression, too, is to be viewed in context because, regarding ideology, form and content should not be viewed or treated as separable: “The speaker’s utterances have content as well as context” (1991, p.20). Similarly, Tileagă notes that a “distinction between form and content does not map easily onto the complex visual and verbal rhetoric of contemporary politics” (2013, p.148). The implication of this is that if ideology is viewed as inherently linked to talk, which is the case in the current approach, it should be viewed in situ in order to be studied in vivo, because “ideology is above all discursive” (Billig, 2002, p.184).

The works of Billig (1992), Wetherell and Potter (1992), Augoustinos, et al. (1999), Tileagă (2007) and Byford (2006), provide a very competent analytical approach that gives a comprehensive account of ideology and how it manifests in the social life of people. It is no longer treated as an abstracted individual cognition, nor as a theoretical type of discourse. Rather, it is an observable everyday matter that people deal with on a regular basis. Ideology here is more than a theoretical notion to be mapped onto coded behaviour – it is an observable social action. This is arguably one of the most important contributions of
discursive approaches in general. Crucially, ideology is treated as a matter of controversy and people take various positions within it. It is not something simple or coherent, as many cognitivist approaches describe it. Instead, the studies discussed above demonstrate how attitudinal expressions are far from a simple matter – they are situated practices oriented to the context in which they are expressed.

The nature of speech requires one to rely on a pre-existing system, language, but one has at the same time the possibility of creating a unique argument – this is the paradox of language (Barthes & Howard, 1979). Even so, “language is not exhausted by the message engendered in it” (ibid., p.5). This point can be made about argumentation and ideology. The dialogic nature of ideology is important to emphasise, because with it comes the notion that ideology is also a highly contested matter. If “dialogic creativity is a mundane, even banal, factor of the human condition” (Billig, 1998, p.204) and ideology is a rhetorically, dialogically, contested matter, then we can extend this argument to say that ideology can be a part of the human condition. This allows us to look for ideology in the mundane features of talk.

What DP allows the researcher to do is to view ideological practices as they manifest in the social world. DP – in not looking for answers in the cognitive structures, genetic make-up, and so forth – looks at social phenomena as it is in the social world. It does so much more closely than a materialist position that uses positivist empiricism, would, by not having to reduce the social phenomena into variables to be scrutinised via statistical analyses: the interpretive gap is more reduced in DP.

2.5 Conclusion – What is Missing?

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how various methodological approaches work with different conceptualisations of ideology and what they may or may not contribute towards our understanding of it. First, I discussed quantitative approaches, particularly those working from a cognitivist perspective, and how they investigate ideology. For example, the use of questionnaires, despite some methodological drawbacks, allows one to get an idea of the wider ideological trends. While they certainly contribute towards our knowledge of neuro-cognitive differences between people, a cognitive approach also presents us with a somewhat

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24“…For the most part, cognitive psychological methods (using experiments, vignettes, questionnaires and so on) act as a systematic machinery for wiping out the practical, indexical, reflexive features of discourse” (Potter & Edwards, 2003, p.95).
one-sided picture of ideology (Billig, 1996). These approaches tend not to view the role, function and flexibility of ideology in language. Discourse approaches, on the other hand, do focus on this. They take a more constructionist, action-oriented approach and have a tendency to view language as a social action. However, although such approaches do look at language as an action, they do not always orient to the argumentative aspect of ideology in language, nor do they necessarily account for ideological conflict taking place in language. Ideology can still be viewed as something that drives discourse rather than something that is a live matter within it. While such a theoretical notion need not be considered erroneous per se, it does turn the analytic focus away from how ideological matters may be live contested issues in the talk itself.

Some argumentative approaches, including DP, have attempted to take this into account. These works very aptly demonstrate how ideology is a live contested matter in talk and discourse, and how ideology, as it lives in social interaction, is not a straightforward matter. For example, someone’s superior at work needs to manage the dilemmatic matter of issuing orders without sounding like one is issuing orders (Billig et al., 1988). If one views ideology as a theoretical, cognitive or a structural system, then one will struggle to explain the dilemmatic and contradictory aspects of ideology and how ideological matters are talked about in actual interactions. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter point out, in talking about theories of prejudice, that

“the most integrated form of prejudice talk appears, of course, within the texts of social psychology. The ‘lived ideology’ is, as usual, much more fragmented, piecemeal and contradictory, caught up as it is in the kaleidoscope of common sense” (1992, p.201).

We can make a similar case regarding ideological matters in general. As stated at the start of the chapter, ideologies are not always coherent systems (Billig, 1982), nor are they talked about in a logically coherent manner (e.g. Billig, 1992). If one is to take the position that “ideology is above all discursive, instantiated within discursive actions” (Billig, 2002, p.184), then one can begin to look at how it manifests in the social world without needing to view contradictory elements as problematic. Just as “discourse does not so much represent inner psychological states; it brings them into being” (Simons, 2014, p.25), so does discourse bring ideology into being. That is, discourse does not signal or point to an ideology, but discourse is ideology alive in the social world. This constitutes a link between these ideology
studies and the study of contested political discourse. In looking at how ideologies are studied, we can see how to analytically approach the study of broadcast political debates. As stated earlier, understanding ideology this way highlights that can be a highly contested matter. This links ‘ideology’ with contested political discourse, such as broadcast political debates, where one can observe how these contestations unfold.

So, where is the gap in the research? The studies, and the approaches they reflect, give a very wide perspective on ideology and its different aspects. However, what they do not necessarily take into account, or orient to, is that ideological and political debate is a social practice that deals with the construction of “facts” and “values”:

“Political and ideological debate consists very largely of efforts to win acceptance of a particular categorisation of an issue in the face of competing efforts in behalf of a different one; but because participants are likely to see it as a dispute either about facts or about individual values, the linguistic (that is, social) basis of perceptions is usually unrecognised. The authoritative status of the source of a categorisation makes his or her definition of the issue more readily acceptable for an ambivalent public called upon to react to an ambiguous situation” (Edelman, 1977, p.25).

The point made by Edelman is crucial in understanding the nature of political debates, particularly in the context of data discussed in this thesis. Edelman’s quote also highlights that in political debates, highly argumentative in nature, ‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ can play an important role. Previous studies into ideology in discursive approaches have provided a great deal of insight into how it manifests in the social world. That said, the tendency of some of them to not to orient to the fact that ideology is argumentative and that political discourse is often about facts and values, means that there is a gap in our knowledge of contested political discourse, especially in what might be called “institutional” settings. This is not to say that political discourse is only about facts and values, but in political debates, especially regarding the types of debates in this thesis, they play a very particular and fundamental role.

The current approach proposes to go yet another step further, by focusing not only on the context and expression of contested political positions, but also by giving attention to the
more minute interactional detail in the tradition of CA to observe what happens in the detail of these interactions. In particular, attention is given to the epistemic dimension of interaction, which “focuses on the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns at talk and sequences of interaction” (Heritage, 2013, p.370). I argue that a focus on how speakers (political actors) orient to and produce ‘knowledge’, ‘facts’ and ‘reality’ in talk, and how these do rhetorical work, is a profitable way forward in sketching a DP approach to analysing contemporary political discourse and, specifically, debate.

My work aims to contribute towards our knowledge of how contested political discourse operates in situ, and to do so in the spirit of DP, by proposing a so-called “epistemic-rhetorical” focus. It must be noted that there is a great deal of DP work focusing on factuality and how it is built up. Edwards and Potter (1992) and Potter (1996) are two prime examples. They focus on the importance of factual descriptions and demonstrate in detail how such work is designed to perform specific types of actions. However, these works do not look at ‘knowledge’ as necessarily related to contested talk. Nor do they in any way make such an approach impossible. On the contrary, it is works such as those of Edwards and Potter (1992) and Potter (1996) that form the most substantive parts of the analytical foundations of this thesis. There is another gap that this study seeks to fill. There is not a great deal of work that investigates the interactional context – that of multi-party interactions in a political context – that look at contested political discourse. This is a budding area of study, to which this thesis aims to contribute. Likewise, this thesis contributes to our understanding of how politicians debate the relationship between Britain and the European Union.

My analytical approach is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, but a few points of clarification are needed here. In contemporary political debates, politicians often deploy “facts” to bolster their argument, which also serves to present themselves as competent politicians (e.g. Chapter 4). They do so from a position of having “authority” to speak about certain matters, which is subtly managed in interaction. This highlights the importance of the notion of “epistemic domain” (cf. Heritage, 2013) in political debates. The main aim of my analysis is to help the reader look at the topic of the EU as a live, contested issue in the wider argumentative work of the interaction, as well as in the minute detail of talk, by highlighting, particularly, orientations to ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’, and how these are interrelated with the rhetorical organisation of talk. Indeed, there is little reason to treat facts, from the standpoint
of DP, as neutral descriptions of the world (e.g. Potter, 1996). As I argued, there is already an established literature on how descriptions of “states of affairs” are built in and for the context in which they are expressed – they are not neutral but rather designed to do particular actions. My aim is to add to this by emphasising the role of ‘knowledge work’ in contested political discourse, in ideological conflict in talk. Just as “political language is political reality” (Edelman, 1988, p.104), so ideological talk is ideological ‘reality’; it need not be looked for in cognitive models inside an individual’s mind or in sociological structures, because we have it at hand in the contested nature of broadcast political debates.

This thesis aims to deal with the following research questions. First, how does contested political discourse manifest in broadcast political debates? If political discourse, as Edelman intimated, is indeed about “facts” and “values”, then focus on ‘knowledge work’ should provide a fitting analytical approach that can help us understand broadcast political debates. Second, can a focus on how knowledge claims and rights are asserted, contested and defended, shed light on how to analyse broadcast political debates? The analytical chapters describe and analyse some of the common practices that take place in broadcast political debates. The analysis presented in this thesis should then lead us back to Edelman’s (1977) assertion that political talk is about “facts” and “values”, but with (additional) empirical support.
3. Methodology, Process and Data

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the conceptualisation of ideology; how it has been used in both qualitative and quantitative research, and how some avenues to exploring ideology have been left under-explored. In this chapter, I will elaborate how my thesis means to fill this gap in the literature. To begin with, I will explain briefly the wider epistemological and ontological position of my work before moving on to explain the specific approach I use. The subsequent section is dedicated to my approach, and how it adds a novel perspective to the study of political discourse. My approach is rooted in Discursive Psychology (DP), underpinned by insights from Rhetorical Psychology (RP) and Conversation Analysis (CA). I also talk about some theoretical issues and why my chosen method of analysis is DP. I then move on to explain the process of data collection, and provide a summary of my data – background information, speakers, codes for referring to the data in the text, and so forth.

3.2 Methodology

So far in my thesis, a trajectory has been set in the literature review; from the more mainstream approaches to studying ideology from a cognitivist perspective to a more discursive approach, which, in turn, has been interlinked with a rhetorical focus. Parallel to this move, another trajectory has developed: that of a move from a realist position towards a relativist, and constructionist, one. The approach taken in my thesis stems from a critical approach towards aspects of realism by way of adopting a constructivist position. Before explaining my current approach, it is necessary to briefly cover the wider epistemological and ontological positioning of my work. It is essential to be clear on this point, as it relates to how contested political discourse ought to be analysed.
Epistemological and Ontological Positioning

Broadly speaking, my approach is social constructivist in nature, as used in DP. The overview here is, by necessity, brief. Social constructionism is, broadly speaking, relativist in nature (Edwards, 1997) and constitutes a shift away from trying to determine what is or is not real as the starting point of analysis (Potter, 1996; see also Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Where this comes to particular relevance regarding social sciences is when we begin to look at notions such as morals, ideologies, facts, science, knowledge, and reality, to name a few. Do these notions have an ‘objective reality’ – cognitive, structural, and so on – about them that can be measured in a traditional positivist empirical manner, or are they perhaps “cultural categories, elements of discourse, invented, used and defended within social practices” (Edwards, 1997, p.52)? The type of social constructionism I have adopted will argue for the latter. It takes an anti-essentialist and anti-realist stance and seeks to respecify these notions not as static or reflective of some sort of underpinning social or psychological reality (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). This is because a realist approach is not likely to take into account the action that a particular description may do (Potter, 1996). That is, a realist approach is liable to treat these notions as objective reality that exists in some manner beyond their use, and our task is to find out what these “bare essences” are in order to understand the phenomena studied. One can notice when looking at the nature of the studies covered in section 2.2 that often this realism is linked to a type of materialism. That is, there is an underlying physical or structural essence from which social world comes to being – and understanding these will explain away the social context of behaviour. Relativism, on the other hand, does not seek to dispute the existence of matters such as ‘furniture’ or ‘death’ per se, instead the focus is on how notions such as these are used towards particular ends and their use in the social world (Edwards et al., 1995) – the focus is to move away from an underlying reality that would override any contextual meaning. To take the example of talk, a realist approach might treat language as a window into inner psychological notions such as attitudes. In contrast, a relativist approach, particularly in this thesis, will treat language as something that is designed as a form of social activity (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996).

Potter, in speaking of discourse analysis, states that there is “an analytic commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices” (1997, p.146). This focus is the

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25The use of relativism in social sciences is not without a critique. See Edwards et al. (1995) for a summary of critiques of relativism and the authors’ defence of it.
contribution of constructionism to discourse analysis and, consequently, DP. Constructionism in DP is twofold: people use descriptions to construct ‘realities’ and these ‘realities’ are in turn constructive of types of descriptions (Potter, 1998). For example, denouncing biologically-based racism can be used as a way of not accounting for a more symbolic, cultural, form of racism (Augoustinos et al., 1999). The description of biological racism as deplorable is based on common modes of arguing against it, while framing it in such a way can leave out a critique of symbolic racism: in affirming biological racism as unacceptable, the symbolic racism is not condemned. From the perspective of constructionism, a notion such as an attitude is no longer conceptualised as a structured cognitive network or as an inner mental state in general. Instead, it becomes an argumentative stance in a matter of controversy (Billig, 1998), dilemmatic (Billig et al., 1988) and something that is present in talk rather than somehow outside it (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). If ideology is discursive, as Billig (2002) argues, then one must be ready to study ideological talk, something a constructivist approach is particularly well suited for, by looking into contested political talk. Such an approach opens us to explore how attitudes manifest in interaction, in all its complexity and, crucially, in its most natural setting.

Although my work advocates a constructionist approach, this is not to say that the quantitative approach cannot contribute to our knowledge of the social world. The argument is not that these inner mental states, such as attitudes, do not exist, but that when expressed through talk they are more closely associated in performing some kind of action that attends to the immediate social context, rather than express an individual’s cognitive makeup. However, in order to understand how the European Union is a live issue in a debate, one must look at how it is treated as a relevant matter to the people who are debating. Lived ideology is a matter of public social life, full of contradictions, perhaps, but it is precisely this that allows them to ‘live’ in the first place (Billig et al., 1988). Furthermore, ‘ideology’ is not to be analysed as something that exists beyond or outside of talk (Billig, 2002). Instead, it is to be analysed if and when it becomes a relevant issue to the debaters at hand (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). A similar argument can be made about contested political discourse. This means that rather than focus on what formal positions various political actors advocate or ‘possess’, one must look to how the debaters in the interaction orient and respond, as relevant matters of controversy. One may well struggle to explain a clash of political positions over the EU in debates if one does not recognise the importance of how facts, versions of states of affairs, and so forth, are worked up in interaction, in a specific
social context. Potter states that “psychological matters are not merely described, but also, often, displayed” (2010a, p.663). One can extend this point to the politicians’ “beliefs” and appeals to the electorate. A constructivist approach, in the style of DP, can yield fruitful findings into areas such as opinions on the royal family (Billig, 1992), political categories in language (Tileagă, 2010), denials of anti-Semitism (Byford, 2006), and racist language (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Augoustinos et al., 1999; Goodman & Johnson, 2013), to name just a few.

Current Approach

The current project proposes a DP approach, and is informed and supported by aspects of RP and CA. There are some theoretical differences, but overall these methods are compatible, as the historical development of DP indicates (Potter, 2010a). In speaking of RP and CA, I wish to emphasise their specific contributions to my analytical focus.

Discursive Psychology “is the application of ideas from discourse analysis to central topics in social psychology” (Potter & Edwards, 2001, p.103). Developing as a critical response to cognitive psychology, DP seeks to understand how these psychological topics in talk (such as “attitudes” or “memory”, for instance) are oriented to, reproduced and responded to by participants in the talk: “The focus is on action, not cognition” (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p.154). Whereas mainstream psychology might look to outer behaviour as signals of inner thought, or ignore behaviour altogether and focus on inner processes (Baumeister et al., 2007), DP reverses this and looks to thought as an observable social process (Billig, 1998), possibly inspired by ways of talking (e.g. Billig, 1996; Billig, 1999a). That is, DP challenges the notion that social actions can be explained solely by looking into inner mental states of individuals (Potter, 2010a), and offers a respecification of these notions. Therefore, if one wishes to understand how people orient to and treat psychological attributes such as memory or identity, then one is to look at how it is attended to and treated in talk. For example, Billig et al. (1988) demonstrated how attitude is not a fixed entity but is dilemmatic, and varies

\[26\]For example, CA may be, theoretically speaking, reluctant to go beyond talk unlike some forms of DP. However, this is a point of intense debate (Schegloff, 1997; Wetherell, 1998; Schegloff, 1998; Billig, 1999b; Schegloff, 1999a; Billig, 1999c; Schegloff, 1999b) among and between scholars of DP and CA.

\[27\]This practice of respecification can also be observed in subsequent DP works, for example by Tileagă (2007).
based on the context in which it is expressed. This emphasises the importance of understanding the talk in terms of how the people speaking orient to it. Rather than focus on the psychological meanings of words (e.g. Pennebaker et al., 2007; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010), the analyst is to look for features such as managing stake and interest (Potter, 1996), identities (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998), what is avoided in talk (Billig, 1999a), and so forth. As stated in Chapter 2 and here, ideology can be considered as a live matter in discourse. This is possible, because for DP

“discourse is the vital medium for action. It is the medium through which versions of the world are constructed and produced as pressing or ignorable. For social scientists the study of discourse becomes a powerful way of studying mind, social processes, organisations, events, as they live in human affairs” (Potter, 2003, p.791).

Because DP treats language as a form of social action, it is constructivist in its approach (Tileagă, 2013), and can be contrasted with the positivist empirical approaches discussed in the first part of Chapter 2. A DP approach enables the analyst to look at how speakers use their talk to do social actions, to use descriptions with a specific, tailored, social agenda and how other speakers can either resist or support these using the same methods (Edwards, 2005a) – the analysis should make clear how this can be done. While being part of a critical turn against cognitive psychology, it also provides a challenge to a linguistic approach to discourse: “Constructing the research topic as discourse marks a move from considering language as an abstract system of terms to considering talk and texts as parts of social practices” (Potter, 2003, p.785).

Edwards and Potter (1992) present a Discursive Action Model (DAM) with three main areas, as a conceptual starting point of what DP is:

- **Action** – Talk and text do things rather than provide a window inside someone’s cognitions.
- **Fact and Interest** – There is a concern to present these actions as factual and to challenge alternatives.
• Accountability – There is an orientation to the accountability of reports and their reporting.

So, when looking at contested political discourse, one must recognise the importance of such an approach: “In order to understand and analyse fully and faithfully the nature of contemporary political language, one needs to move from cognitive and information-processing theories and models towards a more linguistic, rhetorical and discursive perspective” (Tileagă, 2013, p.164). Indeed, DP has been a fruitful analytical approach to political topics (e.g. Augoustinos et al., 1999; Billig, 1990; 1991; 2001 Tileagă, 2008; 2009; 2010; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Byford, 2006). In order to carry out such research, DP tends to work with recordings of talk and uses detailed transcriptions of talk, though not exclusively, made with Jeffersonian notation (e.g. Jefferson, 1984a). This links to another important point, in that DP is to work with naturalistic data as opposed to working with hypothetical, experimental, or rigidly structured interview settings (Potter, 2010a; 2010b; 2012).

One of the main contributions of RP is the suggestion that thinking is intrinsically dialogic (Billig, 1998) and argumentative in nature: “The structure of the way we argue reveals the structure of our thoughts” (Billig, 1996, p.141). Rather than being an internal, cognitive force within the mind, thinking, or deliberation, takes the form of a rhetorical argument that is itself placed within a wider social controversy (Billig, 1991). Furthermore, thinking is not only rhetorical in nature, it is also ideological (ibid.). This places ideology at the core of human thought and, more importantly, action.

Building on this, we can argue that if ideology is dilemmatic in nature (Billig et al., 1988), then it also thus with contested political discourse. If ideology contains internal inconsistencies and struggles (Billig, 1982), and thought is ideological in nature, then this will have implications for how one goes about analysing contested political discourse; namely, that one can rely on features of everyday discourse in its messy contradictions (Billig, 1992), to argue for a given political position. Billig argues there are two sides to every story: “Thinking is frequently characterised by the presence of opposing themes” (Billig et al., 1988, p.143). Similarly, ideological argument relies on common sense (e.g. Billig, 1992), and from this perspective, justification and argumentation can at times be
‘kaleidoscopic’: “One moment a belief acts as a justification, and the next moment it finds itself being justified by the very bit of common-sense which it has just been justifying” (Billig, 1992, p.48). However, it is precisely this complexity and at times unclear nature of ideology and rhetoric that enables the argument to be brought forward: “The flexibility permitted by the generality of rules and norms is just what is required for talk to perform its rhetorical, interactional, accountability-oriented business” (Edwards, 1997, p.18). ‘Kaleidoscopic’ argumentation is to be considered an interactional resource for a speaker, rather than a methodological problem for the social scientist, and the analysis should reflect this. For example, nationalism may be largely banal, or mundane, in its expression, but it provides a backdrop from which it can be maintained as an ideology (Billig, 1995). Here, the apparent inconsistency between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ displays of nationalism become rhetorical strategies, not methodological problems to solve. An important implication of this approach is that talk need not be constrained by or understood in terms of formal logic, cognitive structures, and so forth, when it can instead be understood in a rhetorical sense. As language is oriented to action (Heritage, 1984a), it is rendered understandable as an action, rather than an expression of logic, cognitive structure and so forth.

A rhetorical approach is particularly useful for this thesis as it emphasises the contested, argumentative dimension of my data. DP recognises that social actions are heavily contextual, and with a rhetorical focus one is not only able to look at what these actions are, but to also understand them in a wider political context in which politicians are not merely disagreeing. Rather, they are, explicitly and implicitly, advocating their ‘ideological’ and political stances while, simultaneously, challenging that of their opponents.

The aim of CA is closely aligned, yet distinct, from DP (Potter, 2010a). Like DP, it focuses on social action, and seeks to align the analysis with the orientations of the speakers. A key feature to understanding the social organisation of communication is to look at their sequential order: “Insofar as we are talking about natural interaction, sequences are the most natural sorts of objects to be studying” (Sacks, 1987, p.54). That is, the sequential order of talk is what gives a certain utterance its meaning and use – it is crucial in creating context and seeing how speakers interpret preceding talk (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Moreover, social action in interaction is designed to be recognisable (Sacks, Jefferson & Schegloff, 1992).
Schriffin (1990) summarises CA around six principles. First, analysis must be empirical. Language analysed must not come from hypothetical examples. The analysis ought to explain the interaction sequentially as well as contextually – in other words, why does one particular feature in talk invite a particular response? Second, focusing solely on the linguistic aspects of talk means that one cannot get an understanding of the coherence of the data. Third, there are multiple resources for coherence that, jointly, contextualise each other. This is what Heritage (1984a) refers to as the ‘doubly contextual’ nature of interaction – namely, that social action is both shaped by context and shapes the subsequent context of action. This reflects the dual constructionism of DP. Fourth, conversation as a social action consists of these joint achievements. Fifth, meaning and action are interpreted sequentially in their immediate local context (i.e. first turn is given meaning by second, second by third, and so forth). Sixth, how something is said is constrained by various speaker concerns – such as intention, wider social context, or typical utterances for specific social actions (however, see footnote 27).

Although initially interested in mundane talk, CA has expanded beyond this to incorporate various specific areas of talk. For example, there is work on institutional talk (e.g. Drew & Heritage, 1992) and news interviews (e.g. Clayman & Heritage, 2002), as well as political context (e.g. Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; Schegloff, 1988/1989; Romaniuk, 2009; 2013). It must also be noted that, at least in the case of Schegloff (1988/1989), the analytical focus is on what the interaction at hand (the Bush-Rather debate in 1988) has in common with other occasions of interactions.

As such, CA does not necessarily focus directly on political aspects, but instead approaches “politics” via its interactional aspects28. More importantly, in looking at what the genre of political debate has in common with other types of interaction, an important analytical focus in itself, it does not look at what is being argued for and against – preferring instead to focus on the sequential and immediate context of social action. The rhetorical element, and thus the aspect of contested politics, is not expanded on. This, Billig (1991) argues, is one of the difficulties in CA – the focus is directed more toward the form rather than the content. This is not to say that CA has not contributed to understanding political discourse. Tileagă emphasises that CA can contribute to “understanding the turn-by-turn organisation of

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28To be clear, CA does not shy away from political data. On the contrary, there is an established literature on political interactions by CA. For example, Schegloff (1988/1989), Clayman (1992), Romaniuk (2009; 2013) and Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2011).
political discourse” (2013, p.153). Consequently, political discourse is not beyond the analytical sphere of CA. If we return to the example of Schegloff (1988/1989), we can see its contribution towards understanding political discourse. The focus on the aspects of mundane talk not only tells us that contested talk in a political context features mundane talk, but that mundane talk can be used in contested moments and, thus, in argumentation.

In my analysis, I draw from one aspect of CA in particular – that of epistemics. Epistemics has been developed by Heritage and colleagues (Heritage, 2013; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Stivers, 2005, etc.), and concerns itself with how knowledge is mobilised, oriented and responded to in talk. In particular, work on epistemics so far has demonstrated how people in interactions manage their identities via the mobilisation of different knowledge claims. Furthermore, knowledge claims mobilised in talk are not only informative of a speaker’s epistemic status (what they are entitled to know) but also of their epistemic stance (the extent to which the speakers position themselves as knowing more than the other speaker(s)). The work on epistemics so far has demonstrated in great detail how orientations to and displays of knowledge manifest in interaction, and how ordinary talk is live with such issues. It is expected that knowledge claims are at least an equally, if not more, live issue in political debates. By focusing on the ‘knowledge work’ in political debates, it is the aim of this thesis to demonstrate how politically charged conflict in talk can be studied, not only in a wider political context of controversy, but also in the granular details of actual social interactions. I hope to demonstrate that processes of contested political discourse can be observed and analysed by looking at the everyday, mundane, conversational features in political debates.

According to Potter (2010a), DP is divided into three main strands. First, there is the early work focusing on interpretative repertoires, largely influenced by RP, which uses interview or group discussion data. This strand has been “effective in tackling ideological questions that more mainstream social psychology has rarely been able to address directly” (p.660). Second is the shift toward topics such as those described in DAM above and “the move to working with naturalistic materials – everyday conversations, political interviews, newspaper reports” (p.660). This second strand largely deals with the similar political questions as the early, RP influenced, DP. The third, and final, strand is the move toward CA and using it to highlight issues that DP explores. Here, there is a preference for mundane
conversations, although not exclusively. This thesis can be considered in part to cover all three strands of DP. Of particular interest to my thesis is the contribution of epistemics (e.g. Heritage, 2013) and institutional talk (e.g. Drew & Heritage, 1992) from CA, but the attempt is to deal with issues of ideology as presented by Billig in his works (e.g. 1991), the earlier parts of DP in general, and contemporary political debates. The CA-influenced strand of DP brings with it the insights from epistemics that will enable the analyst to look at how knowledge is used for argumentation. My thesis, then, uses aspects from all three strands of DP as described by Potter (2010a). It is my aim to demonstrate that an approach where DP focuses on argumentation and the role of ‘knowledge work’ in it, is a feasible analytical tool for understanding ‘ideology’ in action and as a live matter in the social life of political debates. It should highlight that the deployment of ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ can and is used in ideological argumentation, rather than being “simply objective”.

Theoretical Challenges

The proposed DP framework puts forth some theoretical issues that need to be addressed. This is a discussion on why the current approach suggests a focus on ‘ideology’ in the style of DP over other alternatives such as ‘power’ as it is understood in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which, it might be argued, could look at something very similar. As mentioned earlier, CDA has a tendency to start with the moral position of the analyst – that is to say, with a problem – rather than let the issues arise from the data. This also links itself with the well-known debate as to how far the analyst should go beyond the text (see also footnote 26). It is argued that by using DP, one can consider issues like ‘ideological’ controversy and contestation as they manifest in the social world, rather than trying to impose a notion of ‘power’ onto discourse. ‘Ideology’ is chosen over ‘power’ in the first instance, because there is a well-established literature in DP where it is treated as an observable social action. This, in turn, allows the analyst to look at how contested political discourse takes place. As Wetherell and Potter point out, a “shift from ideology to ideological practice” (1992, p.68) is needed. DP, then, will let the analyst observe ideology as a lived action rather than consider it as some form of elite power play; one need not take the analysis beyond the words of the speakers. Regarding contested political discourse, this shifts the analytical focus from looking at cognitive models or some types of ‘power plays’, and instead allows one to look at how this contestation takes place in practice. The analyst is
not taking a top-down approach, and is able to focus on what the speakers are orienting to. In looking at ‘ideology’ rather than ‘power’, one can look at the argumentative context.

One might well ask, why use my proposed approach rather than CDA? The choice of using DP is closely related to the notion of the interpretative gap (Edwards, 2012), and the so-called distance between the object of analysis and the analysis itself. Another point is the axioms that CDA brings with it; some works rely on cognitivist notions (e.g. van Dijk, 1993; 2006a) and the issues with this and others have been covered earlier in Chapter 2. More importantly, the core tenet of CDA is on the relationship between power and discourse (Fairclough, 2010) – how social inequality is created or maintained by it. The overall aim of my thesis is not to look at the creation of social inequality through interaction. Rather, it is about how elite politicians compete for the argumentative higher ground – how political peers construct and contest ideological positions in talk. One might claim that one can indeed use CDA to analyse this, but I argue that by using an argumentative approach, regarding multi-party political interactions, one can get more in-depth analysis contested positions in political discourse.

Two further issues with CDA need noting. First, such an approach does not necessarily orient to the human capacity for counterargument and, rather, treats the individual as a passive receiver of ideology. It does not seem to recognise that ideology can be both thinking and unthinking (Billig, 1991), nor does it seem to take into account the rhetorical ability to negate (Billig, 1996), and therefore to challenge power. This is at odds with an argumentative approach, in that it views the individual as someone capable of forming their own counterarguments (ibid.). Seeing ‘power’ as ever-present removes, or at least reduces, the possibility of a more even-footed argumentation. In contrast, DP would look at ‘power’ as something that is oriented to, rather than something that “precedes” the interaction. For other issues with CDA, see section 2.3. Thus, in CDA, individuals are treated as receivers or recipients of ideology, while an argumentative approach recognises that “the selection of premises can itself be a matter of dispute” (Billig, 1996, p.132) and that “while certain discourses may be hegemonic, they do not remain uncontested” (Nesbitt-Larking & Kinnvall, 2012, p.46). DP, on the other hand, looks at what the speakers orient to, rather than seeking to analyse political talk as something that directs the interaction ‘from the outside’.
Second, in CDA, ‘ideology’ is treated as a tool for the creation of power (Fairclough, 2010). This excludes the rhetorical and dilemmatic nature of ideology. As Finlayson (2004) notes, CDA runs the risk of not focusing on the argumentative context. Treating ideology as a tool for power has another consequence. When predefined as such, the analyst brings into the work their own ontological conceptions in the form of treating ‘ideology’ as a theoretical notion, rather than looking to the speakers’ orientations to ‘ideology’ related matters – ideology is not a point of contention but, rather, a tool for oppression. Instead, what is said is translated to the analytical language of hidden agendas and enactments of power, rather than treating ideology as a matter that is alive in a debate.

This may not in itself be an issue. However, when addressing the topic of ideological conflict in talk and contested political discourse, I will explain why this may be problematic. This is the issue of context, and it is not limited to CDA. There is some debate within CA and DP as to how far context should be brought into analysis (footnote 26). I will not go into the specifics of the debate, but will briefly mention the role of context regarding my analytical approach. At heart, my thesis is about analysing how politicians argue for ‘ideologies’, in the context where they clash and live. The primary aim is to analyse it as a lived action (see section 2.5) – as contested political discourse. ‘Ideology’ is not to be understood as a theoretical notion but rather as a matter of concern to the debaters in my data, in line with the principles of DP. As I mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2, and echoed at the end of it, ‘ideology’ must be looked at in situ in order to be analysed in vivo. In practical terms, this means focusing on the concerns of the debaters as they unfold, yet at the same time one must give analytical attention to the implicit argumentative work to be done. This is due to the nature of my data. Political debates do not have the flow and structure of a political speech, such as a party address, nor are they easily categorised as mundane talk. While there is some room for features of mundane talk in debates, there are also institutional restrictions to what can be said. The implication of this is that some of the argumentative work that takes place in these debates goes beyond the face value of the interaction. While Billig et al. talk about texts, a similar point can be made about talk: “To understand the ideological significance of the texts, it is necessary to go beyond the texts themselves. The argumentative context can be all important for examining ideological counter-themes” (1988, p.38). Focusing on the argumentative context is not a departure from the data, or from the concerns of those debating, in analytical terms, but it focuses on the implicit elements of political argumentation. For example, to bolster one’s own ‘epistemic domain’ in a political
debate does more than just establish who-knows-more. As the subsequent analysis aims to demonstrate, more is at stake than just establishing which politician is more knowledgeable on the topic of debate. In presenting oneself as a politician who is more knowledgeable about the European Union, they are doing identity work; that of a competent politician. This, in a democratic society, is debatably a part of an appeal to voters and can thus, for better or worse, have very real political consequences. However, one point needs be elaborated here. While speaking of ‘going beyond the text’, the aim is not to have the analytical position of, for example, CDA, which is to start with a “problem”. To focus on the argumentative context is not necessarily the same as treating the context as driven by a specific ideology. The analytical focus still remains in the domain of the talk itself rather than looking at wider ideological patterns (in whichever theoretical framing), which undoubtedly would be a valid enterprise, in which the debate would take place. These implicit argumentative elements are very much oriented to, even if they are not spelled out. This means one must adopt an appropriate analytical approach to the data, and my approach of the rhetorical nature of ‘knowledge work’ aims to do precisely that.

DP lets ideology and the topic of controversy manifest in talk on its own terms. By treating it as a rhetorical feature, ‘ideology’ becomes a live matter in talk. Wetherell and Potter (1992) argue in favour of moving away from ideology to ideological practice in talk. If one focuses on practices, one is able to follow the way the arguments are developed and their implications, instead of having to decide in advance what does or does not count as ideology (ibid.). The analyst can look at what Billig (1992) calls the ‘kaleidoscope of common sense’ – the oscillation between what is justified and the justification itself. The example Billig (ibid.) uses is where the participants in his data justify the ‘special’ nature of Britain due to the monarchy, and subsequently justify the monarchy as the reason Britain is special. By viewing ‘ideology’ as both mundane and dilemmatic (Billig et al., 1988) as it manifests in talk, one need not look for hidden agendas or power structures. As such, an argumentative approach to ideology is a more ground-up analytical approach, when compared to CDA in particular. An analytical approach that comes with a theoretical structure that ‘precedes the data’ will tend to interpret the data in its own terms. To reiterate the point made in Chapter 2; “the first duty of a science is to construct methods and descriptions appropriate to the object of study” (Edwards, 2012, p.433). This is also why I have chosen to discuss ‘ideology’ within quotation marks: namely, that ‘ideology’ is to be studied as a live issue to the debaters. It is something that will become a rhetorical issue to be resolved in a debate rather
than, for example, a theory about cognition or a system of political thought that dictates interaction. In this sense, ‘ideology’ is to be understood as a ground-up notion rather than a top-down process. In treating ‘ideology’ as a live matter, it highlights its argumentative aspects. If ‘ideologies’ are about arguing for and against certain positions, about contesting, then one can look to broadcast political debates as arenas of contested discourse.

As stated earlier, political discourse is, generally, thought to be discourse about “facts” and “values” (Edelman, 1977). Describing a ‘state of affairs’, how ‘things are’, and what is ‘at stake,’ entails the use of factual language and the constructing of different versions of events and social actors. Politicians’ descriptions carry an explicit or implicit value judgment about what is ‘right’, what is ‘appropriate’, and what ‘should be done’. This factual language, descriptions of states of affairs, in turn, will carry with it argumentative and epistemic implications – the very stuff that DP concerns itself with. Coming from a relativist and constructivist perspective, my analysis does not concern itself with whether these facts and values brought up in talk are, in some philosophical or objective sense, ‘real’ or ‘true’ (Potter, 1996; Potter & Hepburn, 2008; Potter, 2010a). Instead I will focus on the argumentative function of ‘facts’ in the context of knowledge claims and the building up, and management of, epistemic authority and stance, among other things. The analysis proposed in this thesis shows how rhetorical and epistemic aspects are intrinsically linked in political debates, and how ‘knowledge work’ can be indicative of how political positions are advocated and defended.

DP and CA are very closely aligned (Potter, 2010a), with DP focusing more on what one might call “psychological life” (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p.153). This way, one can look at the finer detail of talk using the methods of CA, and combine it with the argumentative approach, to get a comprehensive picture of contested positions in debates – especially in political debates where various and contrasting versions of truth are put forth by the debating politicians.

To conclude, the analytical approach advocated here is, as stated, Discursive Psychology supported by insights from Rhetorical Psychology and Conversation Analysis – a form of epistemic-rhetoric analytical focus. The aim is to bring together these in the context of broadcast political debates, where there are at least two ideologically opposed speakers who
are expected to advocate and defend their views while being challenged on them. This can enable the analyst to observe contested political discourse as something that takes place in a wider argumentative context, while also being able to concentrate on the minute details of talk. As such, I aim to shed some light on the question of how a political speaker is to voice disagreement with an ideological opposite. The suggestion is not that this is the only way to analyse broadcast political debates. It is my hope, however, that this analytical approach, at the very least, helps point in the direction of fruitful future work.

3.3 Data Collection

In collecting data for this thesis, the aim has been to follow the principles of DP. In Discursive Psychology, there is a tendency to focus on naturalistic data. Potter speaks of naturalistic, rather than natural, data because “issues of reactivity, selectivity, and interpretation are omnipresent in social research” (2010a, p.667). On one hand, my data, being televised programmes, does not have an issue in terms of being naturalistic, insofar as the debates took place regardless of my research. In this sense, they represent typical political debates in a Western European democracy, and as such, my data is an accurate representation of these interactions. On the other hand, the choice of extracts in my data has been necessarily selective, in order to represent the phenomena that I focus on. This is because the analytical focus is on how disagreement is managed, rather than on trying to determine what does or does not count as disagreement. Furthermore, one needs to bear in mind that instances of disagreement are relatively common and expected in political debates.

The aim of my thesis is to explore contested political discourse, so the focal point of the transcriptions is on episodes where, in layman’s terms, disagreements appear prominent. I have decided to focus on broadcast political debates, where elite politicians of various parties and ideological stances argue for their pro- or anti-EU positions. As such, no claims about trends of political debates in general are made, nor do all cases of disagreements in ‘political’ disagreements pan out in the same manner. Instead, this thesis aims to explicate how instances of disagreement and the clash of opposing political ‘ideologies’ are managed. The aim is to demonstrate ways in which disagreement is managed in broadcast political debates rather than provide a detailed overview of, for example, how frequently certain types of interactional phenomena surface in the data. Focusing on cases where disagreements are
prominent enables the analyst to look at the *contested* element of political discourse, to see how a politician will advocate and defend their views in the presence of those who stand for an opposing position. Specific to my data, this takes the form of politicians arguing for and against the European Union and its relationship with Britain.

There are some practical issues to consider, such as the need to assess if edited clips from private YouTube users are accurate enough representations of the typical broadcast political debate. Clips such as montages made by private users were left out, whereas uninterrupted recordings that displayed prominent cases of disagreement did get included in the data collection, even if the clips were five minutes or less. Because the data, although being recorded online, is from formal television programmes, one does not necessarily have the same ethnomethodological issues of originality to consider, as is the case for Reynolds (2013; 2015), where the data needs to be representative of a ‘natural’ disagreement that is not in any sense occasioned for the research itself. As stated, these broadcast debates would take place regardless of my research.

For ease of data capture, I opted to record the broadcast political debates online. This is particularly feasible because most contemporary televised programmes are made available online. This increases the accessibility to the data to such an extent it makes sense to take advantage of it. Furthermore, in terms of obtaining access to political debates, this approach was much more feasible than trying to arrange interviews with politicians – who in most instances would either refuse to participate or be too busy. Recording broadcast political debates rather than, to give an example, carrying out interviews, also allows the analyst to sidestep the methodological issue of ‘natural’ versus ‘contrived’ data (see Speer, 2002). The debates were recorded from websites such as YouTube and LBC Radio’s website. All of the debates were recorded using a paid version of liteCam©, a screen capture software that can be used to record videos online. The recording of debates took place from the start of my thesis, circa April 2012, up to the end of September 2014. They were obtained either by searching specific programmes from broadcast websites (such as C:F-1 and C:F-2 – see below), or from YouTube using search words such as “EU” and “debate”, focusing on programmes that are either British or where Britain features as a topic. I have excluded all instances where the debates were not in English – exploring similarities or differences based on languages is a project for another time. All extracts have been transcribed using the

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29Obtained from www.litecam.net
Jeffersonian system (e.g. Jefferson, 1984a); see Appendix I for a full list of transcription symbols used. All have been transcribed by me, except for one extract from C:F-1, and I selected each section to be transcribed. The extracts were chosen to reflect where moments of disagreement by politicians were particularly prominent. It needs be noted that these recordings were taken before Britain’s potential exit from the EU became a prominent issue in the media. As such, most Eurosceptic arguments have been voiced by Nigel Farage or another representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). For sake of clarity, Farage does not constitute part of the criteria for selecting these debates, but he has been such a prominent figure in debates related to the EU, that he is featured in most cases of the debates I have recorded.

In general, there is only one notable ethical issue to address. For reasons of privacy, the URL from where the video was recorded is provided only when they have been published by an organisation, such as the BBC, and not when they have been published by individual users. It is not sufficient for privacy protection to not mention the username and provide the URL, as their profiles are accessible from the link. Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011) discuss the ethical dimension of online research. While specifically focusing on ethnography, they note that research based on public websites is unlikely to cause ethical issues when quoting users. Although the data in itself is public material, I have decided to respect the privacy of the individual YouTube users and not release the URLs of the debates they have published. While the Code of Ethics and Conduct by the British Psychological Society (2009) notes that consent is not required for public observations, these users have not published the video clips with the intent that they be used for academic research. For this reason, I have attempted to use the direct links provided by the institutions, but in some cases this has not always been possible. As for using the programmes themselves, they are all from publicly available materials and from public programmes, and therefore it is taken as read that I do not need to ask for consent from the people in the programmes.

One final point needs to be reiterated regarding videos recorded from private users: I have only used clips where they have shown from the programme only, and where, to the best of my knowledge, there is no editing of the video\textsuperscript{30}. Videos such as montages or others that have heavily edited the original programme have been omitted. Most editing that has taken

\textsuperscript{30}Many of the YouTube users do explicitly support or oppose a particular politician/party in the comments sections but these are outside the scope of my analysis and, as such, they bear no relevance on choosing whether or not to record a particular video clip. These comments have been omitted from the analysis.
place in my recordings is when an individual has uploaded only a section of a debate, for example a four minute extract from a debate that takes an hour. However, I have judged the ones included to be sufficiently ‘natural’ edits that do not hinder my analysis. Some of the video clips contain occasional comments that pop up in the style of speech bubbles and express the opinions of the private user who uploaded the video. For analytical purposes, these have been ignored (see footnote 30).

The debate codes follow an X:Y format, where the colon separates the initials of various debaters of each side. So, for example, F:JW means a debate between Farage and Jørgensen and Watson, where the former debates against the latter two.

3.4 List of Debates and Background

In recent years, the relationship between Britain and the European Union has become an increasingly heated and contested topic. As the topic has slowly moved towards the centre of the British political agenda, so the amount of media coverage on it has increased. Particularly, political talk shows have given it more attention. Below is a list of the topics that have been selected for this thesis, along with some background information on them.

- The first Farage-Clegg debate on the EU (C:F-1) took place on the 26th of March 2014, prior to the 2014 European parliament elections. Data was recorded from the LBC Radio website (http://www.lbc.co.uk/watch-lbc-leaders-debate-live---26th-march-87667) after the debate had taken place, and lasts approximately an hour. In this debate, the first of a series of two, Nigel Farage of UKIP and Nick Clegg of the Liberal Democrats, debate the role of Britain regarding the European Union, and whether UK should leave the EU. The first debate was hosted by LBC Radio and was also available to watch live on their website. The host of the debate and in the role of moderator was Nick Ferrari. The debate took place in front of a live audience, where they would ask questions to the two debaters. The questions were divided equally between pro- and anti-EU sides of the debate.

- The second Farage-Clegg debate on the EU (C:F-2) took place on the 2nd of April 2014, as a sequel of sorts to F:C-1. Approximately one hour in length, the format is identical to F:C-1 other than the host was David Dimbleby and the programme was
aired by BBC Two rather than LBC Radio. Data was recorded from YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd9rsmD4HiM).

- The debate between Nigel Farage and Gay Mitchell of the Fine Gael party (F:M-1) is broadcast on an Irish channel – RTÉ One – identifiable from a logo at the corner of the screen during the debate. According to the original poster, the debate took place in November 2012, but the name of the programme is unspecified. In this debate, the relationship between Britain and the rest of the European Union is discussed in relation to potential political consequences to Ireland. The focus is particularly on the actions of the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, on opting out of a fiscal programme aimed at dealing with the European debt crisis of the late 2000s and early 2010s. This extract is from a private user on YouTube, and is approximately 14:30 in length.

- The debate on UK’s EU rebate (F:JW) was recorded from a private YouTube user. Lasting just under 13:00 it is presented by Shirin Wheeler, and the guests are Members of European Parliament, Nigel Farage (leader of UKIP MEPs), Dan Jørgensen (leader of Danish Social Democrat MEPs) and Graham Watson (British Liberal Democrat MEP). Notably, this debate shares the same studio and an almost identical set up as the F:M debate, but the logo at the beginning of the debate identifies it as an episode of The Record Europe31, whereas in F:M there is a different moderator and no identifiable programme name.

- The extract where Nigel Farage is challenged on his claims about social housing and immigration policy is from an episode of Question Time (F:QT) from 26th of April 2012. Here, Simon Hughes and an unnamed audience member, who presents himself as someone with a thorough knowledge of the social housing system, challenge Farage on the assertion that a migrant can obtain a National Insurance card within a fortnight of arriving to the UK and, subsequently, can claim for social housing. The video is from a private user, so only some of the panellists are identified. The people speaking in this clip are Nigel Farage, Simon Hughes (Liberal Democrat), David Dimbleby (moderator) and an unnamed audience member. The clip is approximately 4:30 in length.

- The episode of Newsnight on whether UK should leave the EU was aired on the 12th of December 2012 (SCB:FMH). The premise of the debate is that eight years on,

31 The programme is now replaced by Daily Politics, presented by Andrew Neil.
Britain has left the EU, and the two sides will argue whether this has been for good or not. Presented by Jeremy Paxman, the pro-EU speakers are Sir Andrew Cahn (Business for New Europe), Sir Martin Sorrell (CEO, WPP Marketing & Communications), and Katinka Barysch (Centre for European Reform), whereas the anti-EU speakers are Nigel Farage (UKIP), Terry Smith (CEO, Tullett Prebon trading company), and Helle Hagenau (No To The EU, Norway). Throughout the debate, other additional visitors join the debate: Sir David Tang (pro-EU), Irvine Welsh (on screen from Edinburgh – stance on EU unclear), Stuart Miller (anti-EU), Boris Johnson (separate interview incorporated into the programme – stance on EU unclear), and Noëlle Lenoir (on screen from Paris – stance on EU unclear). The episode is approximately 52:30 in length and posted by a private user.

- The first episode from the Andrew Marr show on BBC One is from the 6th of January 2013, with the extract being approximately 23:40 in length. The extract is from an interview with the British Prime Minister David Cameron (M:C), where the topic focuses loosely around Britain and the European Union. Clip uploaded by a private user via YouTube.

- The second extract used is from the Andrew Marr show from the 4th of May 2014. This is an extract lasting approximately 14:00 which features first an interview with Nigel Farage and then a joint discussion with Ed Miliband (the then head of the Labour party) (F:M-2). The extract was uploaded by a private user on YouTube.
4. Doing Disagreement – Facts, Knowledge and Rhetorical Action in Politicians’ Talk

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this analytical chapter is on the rhetorical function of claims and counterclaims. In this chapter, I focus on a version of what is, conventionally, called ‘confrontational’ (e.g. Hutchby, 1996) or ‘adversarial’ discourse (e.g. Bull and Wells, 2012). I am particularly interested in the discursive organisation of (political) ‘claims’ and ‘counterclaims’. That is, the range and variety of rhetorical challenges that politicians belonging to different political or ‘ideological’ camps set for each other, and the nature of the argumentative context in which these play out. The focus is on the use and orientation to ‘facts’ and demonstrations of ‘knowledge’, and the type of argumentative work they do. In my analysis of politicians’ talk, I contend that one can successfully marry insights from work on rhetorical aspects of argumentation and ideology (e.g. Billig, 1991; 1996; Billig et al., 1988) and more recent work on ‘epistemics’ (e.g. Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006; Heritage, 2013). Although rhetorical aspects of argumentative discourse are paramount to understanding the organisation of what might be called ‘confrontational’ political discourse, rhetorical analysis in and of itself is arguably not enough. As Billig has argued, “the meaning of discourse used in an argumentative context must be examined in terms of the contest between criticism and justification” (1996, p.121), and this is a key dimension of analysing argumentative political discourse. However, one also needs a dimension that takes into account the epistemic work that is being accomplished in talk, on account of political talk often being characterised by facts and values (Edelman, 1977). By epistemic work I mean a range of phenomena that have something to do with knowledge claims one makes and how entitled they treat themselves to (a certain type of) knowledge (Heritage, 2013).

In the context of analysing debates on the European Union, the issue of how ‘knowledge’ is mobilised for different rhetorical purposes (including criticism and justification) takes special relevance. The common assumption in work on adversarial discourse is that politicians challenge each other on substantive issues (see for instance, work on PMQs), yet the focus is more on face-saving strategies (Bull & Fetzer, 2010), institutional constraints (Robles, 2011) or oppositional moves (Hutchby, 1996), than on how politicians index and manage epistemic authority (how much they know, how they know it, and so forth), and how, by way of mobilising ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’, they jostle for argumentative positions...
of dominance. ‘Fact’ and ‘knowledge’ based claims and counterclaims derive their function as such from the specific argumentative context in which they are embedded.

Now, how is a debater in a televised debate to go about this? Institutional talk is usually characterised by a specific aim (Drew & Heritage, 1992), and in the case of televised debates, it is to have two, or more, opposing sides talk about an issue. However, one must note that these debates are not only institutional talk – they are also broadcast talk. Hutchby (2006) elaborates on what other features are relevant in broadcast talk, namely that there can be a mixture of institutional and everyday talk. This is in part possible because certain types of broadcast talk, such as news interviews, find themselves in the unclear region between being unscripted but also having some institutional constraints (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). The argument here is that in broadcast political debates the same principle applies. Yet, at the same time, these debates occur within the constraints of a specific aim – that is, the topic of the debate – of the interaction, thus maintaining at least some level of institutional context. There is an orientation to, or perhaps within, a notion of civility. Although “the performance of appropriate facework is a key political skill” (Bull, 2012, p.80), one should not overlook the importance of argumentative work. It is patterns of argumentative action that this chapter will focus on, and I aim to demonstrate a range of different ways these can be done.

Another crucial element is that broadcast talk is directed to and orients to an overhearing audience (Hutchby, 2006). It is this overhearing audience that the speakers can be seen to appeal to. In my thesis, I work with the notion that the debaters are not primarily trying to ‘persuade’ each other of the veracity of their views. Rather, debaters operate in a multi-axial communicative environment, which includes different types of audiences, party constituencies, and so forth. Because these debates orient to the audience but are unscripted, “each party’s capacity to realise his or her agenda is thoroughly contingent on the conduct of the other party” (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p.6). This is part of a wider political pattern of orienting to the audience: “Political facts that disturb people and produce conflict are often reconstructed so that they conform to general beliefs about what should be happening” (Edelman, 1977, p.37).

In sum, to have a televised debate implies that there is a controversy at hand. Yet, controversy over political matters cannot be simply taken for granted or understood as a rhetorical play against a background of avoiding, minimising, and mitigating threats to face.
One should also be able to show how controversy is actually pursued and mobilised, and how ‘facts’, ‘ideas’, ‘values’ and so forth are produced as controversial. What we commonly refer to as politicians’ ‘agendas’, or possibly their ‘ideologies’, are perhaps no more nor less than orientations to the various sources of political knowledge, and to how knowledge about the political world ought to be harvested, collected, and what values ought to underpin its appraisal.

Whenever politicians articulate their opinions and agendas on social issues, they are doing more than merely putting forward their views, or spelling out their ready-made ‘prejudices’. Politicians’ agendas are perhaps never set in advance, “nor established from one perspective only” (Hutchby, 1996, p. 41). In argumentative talk, things like who is setting the agenda, what is the agenda, what is at stake, and so forth are not decidable in abstract, but rather are an analytic matter, and a matter of participants’ orientations. Debaters must give meaning to their words, their descriptions of ‘state of affairs’ in a local, situated, communicative context (see Clayman & Heritage’s quote above). In order to do this, the debaters not only must establish that what they say is true, but that they possess relevant knowledge of the topic at hand and are entitled to make such assertions. This is where the contribution of epistemics from Conversation Analysis (CA) becomes relevant.

Managing one’s epistemic authority, in short, displaying what one knows and how entitled they treat themselves to this knowledge (Heritage, 2013), is a key dimension in political discourse. Regarding ‘knowledge work’ in talk, one can talk of epistemic domains, which can be understood as areas of knowledge that one may be treated, by the speaker themselves or others, as entitled to possess; for example, a person having privileged access to their own experience or thoughts (e.g. Raymond & Heritage, 2006), or a specialist of a certain field, say a neurologist, having privileged access and rights to assess the ‘states of affairs’ related to that particular field and their role in it. It is important to note that these domains are highly context-dependent (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), and this allows us as analysts to observe how things such as knowledge or descriptions of ‘states of affairs’ are mobilised in talk.

Epistemics has been developed from ordinary everyday talk, but it is also relevant to other types of talk. For example, in epistemics “first position assessments establish a representational field in which second assessments will be found to position themselves in some fashion” (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p.16), which is a notion that need not be restricted to mundane talk. Usually, first position assessments carry an implicit claim of
epistemic primacy, which needs to be attended to in order to increase affiliative action at the
cost of disaffiliative (Heritage, 1984a). However, the extent to which this applies to political
debates, by nature confrontational, is questionable. As such, some of the trends of epistemic
work in ordinary conversations demonstrated by Heritage and Raymond (2005) may differ.
One such observation is that downgraded first assessments, which appear relatively common
in ordinary talk (Raymond & Heritage, 2006), seem not as apparent in political debates. This
is not to say that they are absent; they are, however, strategically placed. Because
Conversation Analytical work has shown epistemics to be a live matter in interaction, it is
argued that looking at ‘knowledge work’ in argumentative talk, and as an argumentative
practice, can be particularly fruitful.

Epistemic domains are particularly contested in broadcast political debates, where the
opposing sides are arguably trying to draw a different conclusion from the same domain – in
the case of my data, it is the relationship between the European Union and Britain. While in
“many domains of knowledge, the epistemic status of the interactants is an easily accessed,
unquestionably presupposed, established, real and enduring state of affairs” (Heritage, 2013,
p.377), it is not so in political debates – as both sides arguing for their stance on the EU will
attempt to claim ‘the EU’ as a knowledge domain \(^{32}\) exclusive to themselves. ‘Knowledge
work’ in talk is bound up with managing one’s identity in talk: “The management of rights
to knowledge and, relatedly, rights to describe or evaluate states of affairs can be a resource
for invoking identity” (Raymond & Heritage, 2006, p.680). In this sense, managing one’s
‘domain of knowledge’ is more than just making a claim or a counterclaim – it suggests that
something is at stake, and in this manner constitutes one of the core features of contested
political discourse. A person debating for or against the European Union must be able to
manage their interest and stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) in a way that
demonstrates the strength of their argument by establishing the factuality, and
reasonableness, of what they are saying. This orientation to interest and stake in conjunction
with ‘knowledge work’ serves to portray the argument as reasonable and objective, insofar
that anyone would come to the same conclusion \(^{33}\), instead of appearing to have an “axe to
grind” (Potter, 1996, p.124). From this perspective, a debater’s argument, the ‘knowledge
work’ carried out, and their identity as competent politicians in the interaction, are
interlinked. It is not enough for a speaker to say that a particular state of affairs exists. The

\(^{32}\)For this thesis, ‘knowledge domain’ and ‘epistemic domain’ are treated as interchangeable.

70
speaker must also, through the detail of their talk, rhetorically demonstrate why it is this particular state of affairs rather than any other: “The very use of one phrase rather than another will, then, indicate the seed, if not the flower, of an argumentative position” (Billig, 1996, p.237). One way for a debater to do this is to present themselves as a person entitled to make a certain type of assessment of the particular state of affairs they wish to advocate. The ‘validity’ of their assessment is usually the contested issue.

One of the most common forms of political argument is that of a claim followed by what might be described as a counterclaim, where there is some kind of argument over the essence of the matter (Billig, 1996), and/or resistance to conforming to the terms and implications of the initial claim. The types of claims under analysis are the ones that orient to knowledge or truth; what one might call ‘factual’ or knowledge claims rather than other types (e.g. emotional claims). In this context, what is more than often contested is what the politician knows, their competence in relation to this knowledge, and whether they have enough of a basis for their argument. Therefore, the analyst will do well to focus on both the argument and the identity work done, as well as on how the assertion of epistemic domains help politicians challenge each other in argumentative talk.

The aim of the analytical section is to demonstrate a range of ways disagreement is done. We begin by looking at what politicians treat as contestable, before moving on to demonstrating three ways in which ‘factual’ claims are contested. While the analysis is organised by types of counterclaims, claims are given the same analytical attention. This is because it is the treatment of a prior turn, or claim, as contestable that marks the interaction as one of disagreement (Hutchby, 1996), itself indicative of the contextual nature of disagreement. For example, for Robles (2011), the contextual nature of disagreement is how it is done in the House of Lords in Britain. In this thesis, the context where disagreement takes place is broadcast political debates where Britain and the EU feature as topics.

33In this sense, political, and perhaps ‘ideological’, argumentation is permeated with an orientation to intersubjectivity rather than multisubjectivity (see Billig, 1989).
4.2 Analysis – Contesting

As mentioned above, it is the response that can mark an interaction as arguable (Hutchby, 1996). It is the recipient’s reaction that marks the previous statement as contested. What I mean by ‘contested’ is when other speakers will, in some way, challenge the previous speaker’s statement. The subsequent analysis will make this clearer, either in an interactional (e.g. Hutchby, 1996) or argumentative (e.g. Billig, 1996) sense. This action of contesting is based on the argumentative context and ‘knowledge work’ – to concede ‘facts’ or a given epistemic domain at particular points in a debate could well be rhetorically damaging. Hence the need for a politician in a debate to provide counterclaims to their opponents. This section will look into the types of ‘factual’ claims that are treated as arguable. This first analytical section focuses on what politicians can contest and various ways this can be done. The three subsequent sections focus specifically on different ways ‘factual’ claims in particular are contested.

In this analysis, political discourse is taken to be about facts and values (Edelman, 1977), and that there is something at stake: descriptions about states of affairs, particularly facts, carry an argumentative force. The ‘knowledge work’ in such debates can be bidirectional. One can use statements of facts, such as numbers, to claim the epistemic domain that carries the identity of a competent politician, or one can use their uncontested epistemic domain – for example, their experiences, role as party leader, nationality – to advance an argument in the face of their opponent’s anti-logos34. This is not to say that these initially uncontested epistemic domains remain so as the debates advance. They are equally as susceptible to being challenged as any other relevant topic in these debates. The general trend in my data is that once a politician will produce something that is taken as ‘fact’ or in some manner ‘real’ by the other debaters, it is no longer contested. Claims of dishonesty seem to be such a rare case that they have been, for the most part, omitted from the analysis. The types of things that a politician will challenge their opponent on will often be something arguable and contested, such as the case of Extract 4.1 below, where a rhetorical counter and positioning the challenger as more knowledgeable, might take less work and make the work of argumentation more straightforward. Other cases, discussed after this section, focus on ways ‘factual’ claims are challenged and how this does the work of disagreeing.

34Logos is, briefly put, an argument that is put forth that can be, to follow the Protagorean maxim that there are two sides to every argument, countered by an anti-logos, which is itself susceptible to an anti-logos of its own (Billig, 1996).
The way this pans out when looking at ‘knowledge work’ is relevant. Extract 4.1 is from *F:M-I*. What is noticeable in this extract is that despite its length, the challenge of ‘facts’ is not present. Rather, what happens is that the responding debater will pick up on an arguable aspect of the preceding talk. For example, in lines 40-64, Nigel Farage interrupts Gay Mitchell by challenging that Ireland is sovereign.

Extract 4.1

PRE: .hh Gay Mitchell what does it mean for Ireland if one of our key allies in Europe is actually (.5) not sitting at the top table anymore

MIT: .hh look we have to make choices we=we would prefer if Britain was there. .h but we’ve other allies in Europe now=there was a time when our democracy was ↓“run by Britain”↑ (.2) .h they set our interest rate they set the value of our currency and we got twenty four hours’ notice .h ↓we gained; sovereignty by joining the European Union ↓the secretary general of the European Commissioner’s Irish we’ve a commissioner on the same basis as Brit’n an’ France .h we’ve administered to the same uh table as (. ) a-as as the large countries .hh so (. )↓we have gained; sovereignty in the European Union ↓we’re not on the same; position as Britain in this matter. .hh in relation to David Cameron David Cameron has played a beautiful game politically within Britain .hh he has taken on the UK: Independence Party >although did not< r(h)eal(h) ise it yet by stealing their sceptic clothes .h ↓and he has he has↓ given a clout (. ) to the >to the to the< liberals who are very pro Europe:an .h ↓in fact↓ if he were to disso:live parliament tomorrow he might well get a majority; but that would do ↓nothing; for ↓Brit’n↓ it would only do something for the Conservative party .hh and I think=ah what has happened is this .h the reason he is the position he is in now is (. ) before the last general election he pulled out of the EPP-ED group .h to get some <Euroseptic> credentials for the election ↓he to get over that little hump ↓(.2) ↓that left him↓ outside the door when Merkel a-and Sarkozy and others including our own Taoiseach were inside making decisions before (. ) eh they went to the meeting as to what sort of position they would take on the centre right. (.4) a- and now he has put himself further outside the door (.2) by (.4) allowing twenty six countries to go ahead without Brit’n=that ↓does not↓ suit Britain’s interests or Europe’s interests .h and um (. ) in the longer term it’s not going to be good for either Britain or Ireland but we have choices to make and <our future is with Europe> (. ) ah=they the-the fact that there’s a European central bank suits us better than the British Chancellor of the Exchequer setting

MIT: the ↓[value of our currency. ]↓

FAR: ↓.hh >hang on Gay< we=we] really can’t go down this line and I CA’nnot allow you .h to say that I(h)reland has gained sovereignty (.2) ↑PhLE:ase;↓

MIT: ”yeah”
FAR: you broke away from us (.2) you had a few brief decades of
independence .h and ↑running your own affairs Having your own
parliament that was sovereign .h making your own decisions; you
are now a province of a European super state you are a small
country you are powerless (. ) because the Franco German pact
runs this thing .h and ↑to think↑ that the Irish budget was
actually seen and debated in the Bundestag before it came to
the Dáil shows what you’ve been reduced to and if you argue (.)
that a few Irishmen have taken highly paid jobs in Brussels
that somehow that gives your country power it’s nonsense you’ve
been reduced to nothing .h and ↑we’ve seen↑ (.2) we’ve seen in
Greece (. ) and in Italy that these bully boys in Brussels are
prepared to get rid of democratically elected governments and
to replace them with their henchmen=

MIT: [well let’s let’s (. ) (l−let’s)]
FAR: =[[so ↑so whether↓ (. ) y− y−y-you ] can you can make an
argument
MIT: °yeah°
FAR: >that economically it may be in your interest and we can
debate that< .h but in terms of democracy you lose
every[thing ]
MIT: [let’s] just be clear about uh this (. ) the day the day
of Britain running Ireland is over the day ↑of anybody else
running Ireland< is over .hh=
FAR: [[↑↑you ← → around from here.]
MIT: =[[there are eight there are eight] hundred [thousand.]]
FAR: [[↑↑you’re ] round
from here.
MIT: there are ei[ght hundred]=
PRE: [[[unclear]]]
MIT: =thousand people of Irish birth living in Britain. (.2) when
we joined the European Union (.5) >which was ↑not that long
ago;< (. ) we had five year waiting lists for telephones .h we
had ah−our biggest export was people. (. ) the only decent road
in the country was a dual carriageway from Dublin to Naas. (.2)
ah our country has changed dramatically we have a financial
services centre ↑yes↓ (.2) which ↑now challenges↓ Britain (.)
ah eh it may well be the location for some of the business
that’s in eh London >if you don’t eh handle the game properly<
we’ve a pharmaceutical centre we’ve an IT centre that (. ) that
exports more (. ) eh software for computer purposes to the rest
of Europe than does the United States. that has given us
economic sovereignty a really different country we=

FAR: [[([[clears throat))]]
MIT: =[[are no ] longer the country that exports cheap
food to feed Britain it is a different country that we have we
are Happier with our country we do not need >anybody to tell us
how to run< our country and we ↑have a real say↓ here the−the
fact t[hat u− uh ]
FAR: °↑you don’t ↑°
MIT: the fact that the: that the: treaties are agreed (. ) that we
are bound by the treaties that the la:arger member states are
bound by those treaties and we can take those treaties (. ) to
the European court (. ) is something that has been really
beneficial to us what’s not beneficial to us (. ) is
<intergovernmentalism>
Mitchell’s preceding turn (lines 4-38) is a relatively lengthy one, and contains detailed descriptions of David Cameron’s actions regarding other EU member states. Farage also seems to altogether ignore Mitchell’s “incursion” into his epistemic domain (that of being the ‘knowledgeable’ person on what UKIP stands for and its aims) by way of a joke (lines 16-19) about Cameron unwittingly acting in accordance with UKIP’s interests. These are left uncontested, and instead, Farage’s response focuses on a more abstract concept – Ireland’s sovereignty. Talk of Ireland’s sovereignty is something that proves more arguable than Cameron’s political action and less risky to challenge than the joke, which, if taken legitimately, may well undermine Farage’s anti-logos. The shift of the topic of controversy from ‘facts’ to ‘values’ serves to rhetorically undermine the relevance of the descriptive detail of Mitchell’s preceding turn. Similarly, Mitchell responds (lines 65-67) to Farage’s challenge, again orienting to the matter of sovereignty rather than challenging Farage’s factual claims, such as the Irish budget being debated in the German parliament (lines 49-51).

The ‘knowledge work’ with Farage’s challenge and Mitchell’s counter needs to be noted. The argument made earlier is that epistemic domains in political debates are not as easily accessible as in ordinary conversations, but some of the features of this ease-of-access remain. There is some observable orientation to Mitchell having some primacy over Irish political matters. This is observable in Farage’s challenge, where he speaks of challenging what Mitchell says about Ireland, and Mitchell’s counter, which offers a direct assessment over Irish matters without downgrading (see Heritage & Raymond, 2005). However, what gives Mitchell the primacy here is context (Raymond & Heritage, 2006). In this case, it is his identity as an Irish politician versus that of Farage as a British, or perhaps non-Irish, politician. There are two main factors that indicate that Mitchell’s ‘Irishness’ is recognised and oriented to. Firstly, the programme is aired on RTÉ One, an Irish television channel, and Mitchell is the only Irish guest speaker. Secondly, and more importantly, there is a trend of addressing between the debates that orients to Mitchell’s ‘Irishness’ and, by implication, Farage’s ‘Britishness’; namely, that Farage in the debate will address the ‘Irish side’ of the debate using ‘you’ – for example, when he speaks of what Ireland can or cannot do politically – whereas Mitchell will speak in terms of ‘we’ – for example, the changes that “we” need to do to recover economically – when speaking of Irish topics. In this way, Farage and Mitchell jointly build up different epistemic domains for themselves and each other. Mitchell is relatively unchallenged on ‘being Irish’ and equally, Farage does ‘being British’
without it being too problematic. However, also note how the use of ‘you’ by Farage, while conceding primacy of ‘being Irish’ to Mitchell, also highlights the loss of democracy as a problem specific to Mitchell and his pro-EU stance. Later on, in the section ‘Facts Matter’, I will discuss an extract where the question of primacy regarding nationality is not so clear.

Other ways that politicians’ claims can be treated as contestable is by way of signposting the disagreement. There are several types of responses to claims. In some cases, the immediate interactional response is laughter (e.g. lines 13, 15, 17, 21 from C:F-1), and these are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. What I mean with an immediate response is that there is some form of indication in the interaction that signals disagreement, but it is not a counterclaim in the sense that a politician will explicitly state a contrasting position. In other cases there may be a challenge; some brief and in overlap (Extract 4.1, line 94) and some question the relevance (Extract 4.2), whereas others may either reject the claim outright (Extract 4.3) or provide some form of information that is not directly related to the claim, yet serves the rhetorical purpose of challenging a claim (Extract 4.4). These are only a few examples (in bold) to demonstrate various ways disagreement is done:

Extract 4.2 – From F:M-1

1 FAR: I bet you if the people of Ireland have a decision to make
2 they’ll be rather more Eurosceptic than the Irish political
3 cl[ass]
4 MIT: [o- ] can I can I say the same thing about Scotland they’ve a
5 referendum in Scotland at the (mornin) they might be an awful
6 lot more sceptic about the English domination than you think eh
7 you’re yo[u’re (( )) ]
8 MIT: [I couldn’t care] less;
9 X: ((snorts))
10 MIT: our tax ra[te ]
11 FAR: [wha]t’s that got do with it
12 MIT: our t[ax rate]
13 FAR: [we’re ] talking about the EU he[re ] ((grinning))
14 MIT: [our] corporation tax
15 rate <is not up> for discussion (.).
FAR: now I don’t think this is the policy of social cleansing I think it’s the reality of a of a borough facing up to a problem and saying look rents are a damn sight cheaper here in Stoke-on-Trent than they are in London so that’s what they’re doing but we have to ask ourselves why is this happening? One reason of course is that real estate in London is rising it rose seven point three per cent last year. There is lots of foreign money coming in and buying property in London quite a lot of it Greek money incidentally fleeing the Eurozone.

AUD: *huhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhuhu*

FAR: [but] (.)

FAR: we have a shortage

X: [(cough)]

FAR: yes, there are ex number of empty properties in London but we have a shortage of social housing but the real story here and the one that nobody on this panel I’m sure would want to discuss or talk about is the extent to which over the last few years, because of an open door immigration policy. so much of our just listen (.5) y’know you can jump to your prejudices but just think about this (.8) in the BOROUGH well if you wanna listen <I mean y’know> Question Time is about debate (.8) in Haringey and Ealing over fifty per cent of social housing is now has now gone (.5) to people who don’t even have British passports they’re foreign migrants and in fact ALL YOU HAVE TO DO now IF YOU COME FROM EASTERN EUROPE all you have to do: (.5) is to get a national insurance number which you can get easily within a fortnight and then you qualify automatically for social housing

HUG: [that’s not true that’s not true] Nigel

FAR: I talk tonight to a major landlord in London in central London and he said (.2) probably between fifty to seventy per cent of all new social housing requests are going to foreign born migrants. and we need to ask ourselves a question who’s the social security system for (.) IS IT for families that’ve been that for generations have paid money into the system or is it here for the whole of eastern Europe and that is a big debate that we need to have in this country.

HUG: [(so) you mustn’t=]
54  HUG: =[[misre- e- you mustn’t represent the (tradition-)]]
55  UNN: [[what you’ve said is completely untrue ]]
56  DIM: ok now [wait a minute] [( ) ]
57  HUG: [it is completely N- Nigel [it is] completely wrong to say
58  FAR: yes
59  HUG: =that somebody can come here and with- in two weeks can be
60  accepted by local authority in London that has never happened
61  to my knowledge []
62  FAR: [the rules change- the rules] changed last year
63  Simon as y’know if you come on day one and say you
64  FAR: intend [to settle here you qualify]
65  HUG: [N- Nigel Nigel ]
66  DIM: alright
67  HUG: like Dian[e we]
68  FAR: [that’s the law]
69  HUG: do huge amounts of housing case work and I know how difficult
70  it is to get people particularly single people and couples
71  <into any local authority [housing]>]
72  DIM: [alright ] Simon
73  FAR: yeah
74  HUG: they [do not] get (their) ()
75  DIM: [u- um-]
76  FAR: we’ll look at it () ]
77  HUG: []
78  DIM: [(you-) Simon and Nigel just stop a moment would you you
79  sir ((gestures to audience member))

Extract 4.4 – From SCB:FMH

1  PAX: =how much do you suffer from being outside the European Union.
2  HAG: uh I don’t think we suffer at ↑all↓ to be honest
3  BAR: you can’t compare that you’re an (all dependent) economy: um
4  which Britain is twelve times bigger than than Norway is .hh
5  and you have masses amount of oil this is=eh- it is the same
6  as Switzerland this is the fallacy of the people here
7  HAG: [[]
8  BAR: [[].h ↑you look Switzerland you look at Norway↓ (.) comf[y places]
9  stable rich if we outside the European Union we’re gonna be
10  exactly the same that’s ↑clearly not the case↓ they’re niche
11  players.
12  FAR: they’ve al[so got ] ↑fish
13  HAG: [↑no but↓]
14  FAR: they’ve also got fish in Norway and we’ve given away:
15  SOR: =hm[ah hah]
16  FAR: [an] industry[that] on its OWN
17  SOR: =we got the fi[sh back ( ) ]
18  FAR: [would be worth] th[ree ]
19  BAR: []
20  BAR: the [(three) to-] how much [is]
21  BAR: [three ]
22  BAR: [[British industr[y you see ] the British
23  FAR: [[<billion pounds a year.>]]
24  FAR: =.hh of what [is]
25  X: [a-]a-°a-°
The main work that these immediate responses do is to inform the audience and other debaters of the challenger’s stand. They provide an alternate hearing of what has been said, and as such, constitute a form of heckling (McIlvenny, 1996). They also serve to undermine the other speaker’s claim. Sometimes this is the only way for the challenger to respond, and in other cases, they will provide some kind of a response.

Extract 4.3 provides one of the few cases in my data where a ‘factual’ statement is directly challenged and treated as untrue. According to Farage, ‘all’ it takes to get social housing is to obtain a National Insurance card within two weeks of coming to the UK, and it is the word ‘all’ that is being resisted here, insofar as that word implies that there are no other factors involved in qualifying for social housing. However, in that extract the provision of some form of evidential (talking to a landlord) is treated, albeit only momentarily, as satisfactory enough as corroboration (Potter, 1996) to let Farage finish his claim. This can be done in other cases too (see analysis of Extract 4.6). The resistance is done not only by directly contrasting the nature of that ‘fact’ as legitimate, but also by way of responses that are not ‘downgraded’. Nor do they recognise the typical ranked access to knowledge (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), and Farage, despite his use of evidentials, is not oriented to as having primary access to the ‘truth’ of the matter of National Insurance cards. All of this, together, serves to treat Farage’s claim as highly contestable, and the challenge to its veracity does the important rhetorical work of trying to frame it as beyond the boundaries of the topic.
The aim of this section has been to briefly demonstrate a range of claims that can be disagreed with. The rest of the analysis will focus on three conventional ways in which politicians challenge their counterparts in broadcast political debates: challenging the relevance of what has been claimed, providing new facts as a counterclaim, and producing a hypothetical alternative to the claim. Note that these are classed as rhetorical counterclaims to the claims, and may not always, in interactional terms, be an immediate response. These serve the larger function of treating the (counter)claim as contestable. Heritage points out that

“when a speaker indicates that there is an imbalance of information between speaker and hearer, this indication is sufficient to motivate and warrant a sequence of interaction that will be closed when the imbalance is acknowledged as equalised for all practical purposes” (2012, p.32).

When considering the context of broadcast political debates, and indeed contested political discourse, this suggests that ‘imbalances of information’ can be used to warrant not so much sequences of interaction as sequences of disagreement. This is because the acknowledgment Heritage speaks of is unlikely to be found when some sort of ‘political contestation’ takes place. Such acknowledgment would imply that the ‘last word’ has been found and the argument is over. However, it is precisely this search for the last (factual) word that will keep the disagreement, and the conflict, alive (Billig, 1996).

What is Relevant?

This section focuses on the ways in which politicians do disagreement by way of challenging the relevance of what the other speakers claim. That is, the rhetorical act of challenging the argumentative essence of what has been said: arguments can often become arguments about what is the essence or, in other words, what is the most appropriate type of discourse for a particular matter (Billig, 1996). To challenge the essence of the argument, or arguing that the premise is not where it should be, is to argue that the matter is not talked about in a way that it should be, and carries its own rhetorical function. Namely, it can become a battle over descriptive terms, and the very choice of these, as stated earlier, is indicative of an argumentative stance as well as doing argumentative work. Moreover, in institutional
settings there is a further tool for the debaters – the appeal to the norms of institutional interaction (Hutchby, 2006).

This can be done in a number of ways. In Extract 4.2, Nigel Farage challenges the validity of what is being said by Gay Mitchell, and claims to not have a stake in the matter by way of stake confession. Because people can treat each other as parties with various interests – personal, institutional or otherwise – in any given matter (Edwards & Potter, 1992), being the first to mention one’s own interest in a matter where it is particularly salient, can be rhetorically powerful, because it portrays the speaker as honest, objective and as someone capable of standing outside their own interest (Potter, 1996). Farage invokes his interest regarding the referendum on Scottish independence, which pushes for a strong primacy for Farage as he is speaking of his own inclinations, to indicate that challenging him on the matter of Scottish independence is a futile one. It also does the further job of suggesting that Mitchell’s preceding turn was beyond the bounds of the current debate: “what’s that got to do with it... we’re talking about the EU here” (Extract 4.2, lines 11,13). As such, Farage portrays himself as one who is aware of the etiquette and norms of a debate, while simultaneously implying that Mitchell lacks this competence. Notably, he does this return to the topic with a visible grin, as if to rely on the humorous approach to enable him to put out the implication (Billig, 2001), considering that such action is generally a part of the moderator’s institutional responsibilities, and to highlight Mitchell’s misstep further by way of mockery (Billig, 2005).

Extract 4.2 can be seen as an example of shutting down a claim before it can be finished – although in this particular instance, there is strong indication in the subsequent unfolding of the interaction that Mitchell was not going to pursue the matter any further. Extract 4.5 on the other hand, demonstrates how the challenge over essence after a claim can be used to undermine a claim.

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35The reference to ‘John’ is from an audience member who had previously asked: “You talk about economic recovery and jobs. Our borders are wide open to hundreds of thousands of Eastern Europeans coming and taking low paid work. Now it’s a brilliant thing that the tax threshold has been risen to £10,500 for people in low paid work.” The presenter rephrases this as “where is the benefit?”
CLE: I understand I understand John as I say this is a- this is an
issue which u:m creates great anxiety (.2) ah people are are
unsettled by the whole. immigration<=I understand that u:m but
we h:ave to have this debate on the basis of facts and ↑what
you’ve just heard; from Nigel Farage is <simply not true> ↑I’ve
got here;
CLE: a leaflet fr[om
FAR: >what is the- what is the ( ).<]
CLE: Nigel Fara- >can I] can I just< can
I just finish the point. ↑this is a leaflet that;
FAR: =yeah.
CLE: =that Nigel Farage’s party distributed in the recent Eastleigh
by-election >you may remember it< .h it says here that twenty
nine million Romanians and Bulgarians .h may come to thIs
country ↑there aren’t even↑ twenty nine million Romanians and
Bulgaria Bulgarians living in Romania and
CLE: Bulg[aria .h {it is >simply} not true<
FAR:     [a::h    {           ah
AUD:              {xxxXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
FAR: °ah.°
AUD: XXXXXXXXApril XXXXXXXXXXXXxxxx x x x x x x x
CLE: ↑so (.4) so you know let’s let’s have this↓} debate John but
let’s have it based on fact let me give you one more fact ↑one
out of seven↑ of every company new company created in this
country ↑there aren’t even↑ twenty nine million Romanians and
unscrupulous employers who
FAR: for=instance don’t pay the minimum wage that’s why (.) ↑this;
government has quadrupled the penalties we’re gonna impose upon
unscrupulous employers let’s bear down on the loopholes let’s
make sure people do play by the rules but let’s not scare
peopleby [by ]
FAR: [( ]
CLE: claiming things that are not true which would ↑have the
CLE: consequen[ce↑ ]
FAR     [(alright)]
CLE: of making us poorer and putting more people out of work
FAR: [[yeah you didn’t]}
CLE: [[t h a t Nigel Farage           
FAR: you try to do trickery with the twenty nine million saying
there aren’t twenty nine you know why cos ↑two million have
left ↑already↑
AUD: {((laughter)
FAR: {.h ↑um they’ve gone
AUD: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxxx x x x x x x x x x x x}
FAR: and they’ve gone to Italy and to ↑Spain↓}
AUD: x x
FAR: =Nick you didn’t answer the basic question

82
(2)

FAR: .h I’m not claiming twenty nine million people (.) have the right to come to Britain.
CLE: =”yes you d[d°]
FAR: [I’m claiming four hundred and eighty five million people have the <total unconditional> right to come to this country if they want to and I think
CLE: [[let’s look (at) the facts it says ( ) ]
FAR: [[you’re quite right( ) ;you’re quite right:] you’re qu- ↑the fact is;
CLE: =you let me have [a ]
FAR: [if] we’re members of the European Union we have the complete free flow of people ↑are you denying that;
CLE: eh yes it is not un[qualified
FAR: [↑you-you are denying that↑] it is it is] not the t-case that anyone can m[ove] to this country
CLE: and simply claim benefits simply u-
CLE: [[live here ]
FAR: [[↑didn’t me]ntion [benefits]
CLE: [let me ] let me
CLE: [[let me l- let me]
FAR: [[I didn’t= y- y- ] you keep doing be[ nefits]
CLE: [no ]
CLE: let m[e ]
FAR: [we’re] talking about the free movement of people and
FAR: the [ability]
FER: [could I]
FER: could I just [make ( ) could I ( )]
FER: [in John’s industry ]
FER: [[mister Farage ]
FAR: [[to get a ↑jo: b;]
X: [[ ( ) ]

In lines 1-21, Nick Clegg has suggested that UKIP, Farage’s political party, is stating false facts by way of mistakenly reporting population figures in their leaflets. After the audience responds with applause, in lines 22-38 Clegg goes on to argue for the positive influence of immigration, further implying that the anti-immigration side of the debate is not being truthful: “let’s not scare people by claiming things that are not true which would ↑have the consequence↓ of making us poorer and putting more people out of work that surely cannot be right.”. It is at this point that Farage begins to repeatedly challenge Clegg on not having answered the question or straying off topic (lines 39, 41, 43, 53, 77, 80). Rather than pick on a particular aspect of Clegg’s talk as contestable (see section above), Farage instead challenges Clegg by way of denying that Clegg’s claim is within the bounds of the topic at hand. The ‘knowledge work’ ranges from the use of negative interrogatives (Heritage, 2002), which strongly indexes and projects agreement to the overhearing audience (“yeah you
didn’t answer the question did you”) to unmitigated assessments (the absence of evidentials – Heritage & Raymond, 2005) and extreme case formulations that orient to a potentially disagreeing audience as well (“I didn’t= you keep doing benefits” – Pomerantz, 1986). As a social action, claiming what has been said is off point, does the rhetorical work of challenging the entirety of the claim without honing in on any particular aspect of it. By way of claiming that Clegg’s claim is off point, a larger stretch of talk is rhetorically undermined, and, again as above, Farage portrays himself as knowledgeable of both the topic of the debate and how the debate should be conducted.

Finally, one rather unusual example is discussed. This is to contrast practices of politicians orienting to other disagreeing politicians, and politicians orienting to a potentially disagreeing audience. In my data, politicians will rarely challenge an audience member or disagree with them explicitly. Most of my data conforms to this line, but there is a notable exception in F: QT. Returning to Extract 4.3, in lines 21-24 Farage twice interrupts his own point to respond to the audience stirring. The first time he invokes the audience’s interest (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) by way of speaking of their prejudice before a similar claim about him can be made; this places any potential response in context to having to respond to Farage’s first accusation (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Raymond, 2005). There are two other notable ways in which Farage makes a strong case for the prejudice of others, and by implication the absence of his own, on a topic that is oriented to as controversial (“but the real story here and the one that nobody on this panel I’m sure would want to discuss or talk about is”, Extract 4.3, lines 17-19). One is the use of “just” in line 21 to suggest that listening (in silence) is the easiest and most common sense response the audience should be doing, despite the controversial nature of what is being claimed (Goodman & Burke, 2010). This is followed by a lengthy silence to indicate that the topic is over (Schegloff, 2007). However, Farage resorts to this method twice (lines 22 and 24) before it effectively allows him to continue his talk. The second is the claim of prejudice in the first place; it is a strong orientation to the fact that appearing prejudiced is undesirable (Billig, 1978; 2012b; Billig et al., 1988). This claim goes against the general trend of avoiding accusations of prejudice (Goodman, 2014), but here it does the rhetorical work of putting the implication out there before the accusation can be made against Farage. In this sense, to make the claim of interest first, even if it is hinting at the audience being prejudiced, would undermine subsequent claims to Farage’s interest, and, indeed, the subsequent protest we see in Extract 4.3 orients to the factuality of Farage’s statement, rather
than his likelihood of making such a claim in the first place. This claim of prejudice is
demonstrative of both offensive and defensive rhetoric (Potter, 1996). Because Farage is
making a controversial claim, which also suggests that the heart of the matter lies elsewhere
(i.e. immigration), it requires a degree of delicate work.

All of these point toward an arguably unexpected action from the audience, insofar as it
suggests straying from the institutional norms of the debate. Farage frames the issue in such
a manner that if there is any unreasonableness it lies with the audience (“↑just listen↓ (.5)
y’know you can jump to your prejudices but just ↑think about this↓”, Extract 4.3, lines 21-22); this demonstrates an orientation to the contestability and controversial nature of what he
is about to say. When this does not work, he quickly interrupts his attempt to continue to
appeal to the ‘default’ format of the debate precisely as debate (“(.8) in the BOROUGH] well
↑if you wanna listen <I mean y’know> Question Time is about de↓bate (.8)”, Extract 4.3,
lines 22-24) to further highlight the ‘wrongness’ of interrupting him. This is similar to
Farage’s reaction to Mitchell’s claim, in Extract 4.2, in that he invokes the nature of the
debate to silence his opposition; only here, the light-hearted delivery is missing. The
avoidance of mocking the audience is telling, it shows an orientation toward a notion of
civility (e.g. Bull, 2012), as such mockery in all likelihood would constitute a highly
negative strategy.

**Facts Matter**

The focus of this section is on how politicians will produce versions of state-of-affairs by
drawing upon ‘facts’ or factual information, and how these ‘facts’ are what is being
contested. As pointed out above, when a politician will describe something in a factual
manner, it is rarely treated as contestable. One strategy for the opponent, then, is to focus
on the more contestable aspects. One example is from F:M-1 where both of the speakers
respond to issues that are more abstract – for example, what something means for democracy
or the order of priorities – rather than the factually described states of affairs regarding
Britain, Ireland and the EU. However, the debates would not be debates if some of the ‘facts’
would not be challenged in some ways. The crucial difference is context. The facts that do
become contested, or otherwise rhetorically undermined, are often ones that can have a

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36While this seems to be the general trend in my data collection, no claims beyond it are made at this stage.
strong argumentative impact. If, then, some facts are not treated as contestable but they cannot be left to be heard without the presence of a challenging voice, how can a politician provide a counterclaim against these? Three different ways are considered here.

One is to produce another ‘fact’ (factual version of events, people, state-of-affairs, etc.) that in some manner undermines the previous one, mostly by way of challenging its relevance to the claim made. Consider the following example, from *F:JW*, where Graham Watson has been given the floor by the moderator:

**Extract 4.6 – From *F:JW***

1. WHE: ah saying you know you’ve given you’ve sold it
2. WHE: [(down the river you’ve sold us down the river]
3. FAR: [(wh- the rebate is because ] the rebate was put in place for Brit’n because we are not a European country .h we are different .h our far[ming system was different]
4. X: [ (European) ( ) you ]
5. WHE: =£O:H [that’s a new one]
6. FAR: [and we are ]
7. X: [ ( ) ]
8. FAR: and=and unlike your countries
9. JØR: okay
10. FAR: unlike your countries. we’re a globa[l nation]
11. JØR: [ .hhh ]
12. FAR: we do a bigger proportion of=of our trade and our business .h with the rest of the world than <any other> European country
13. JØR: [[]((snorts))]  
14. FAR: [we always ] have and=and=and my hope is that we’ll go on doing that
15. WAT: =“Den[mark is a glo]bal nation?”
16. FAR: [so that’s why]
17. WAT: Germany is [a global nation?]
18. FAR: [no Germ ]any
19. PRE: [the Netherlands?]
20. FAR: is not a global natio[n compared (with)] compared with
21. BRIT: Britain. (. ) they’re not none of them are we have a much greater- proportion of trade across the world but=y’know this argument about what it cost British people .hh whether we talk gross or net this year our net contribution to the EU is gonno be <nine billion> pounds. and what people see (.2) .h is (.) they see in their own lives at the moment y’know the local gravedigger or sweep streete- being sAcked as a result of local government (. ) ah cUtS and ↙what they see ↘here
22. JØR: =“but Nigel”
23. FAR: =is a massive increase in the EU’s ehm parliaments i-eh-uh eighteen percent increase in the entertainment budget (.2) in this very building we’re in down[stairs]

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37Section 5.2 makes a similar point regarding overlapping talk and their positioning.
JØR: ca[n you (answer me) one ]

FAR: [there is a fleet of ca:rs]

JØR: one simple [question ]

FAR: [that you ca]n’t believe today we voted

JØR: [Nigel ]

FAR: [for ou]- for there to be a

FAR: Eur[o- pean house ]

PRE: [I’ll come to you in a minute]

FAR: of history I mean <can you not see> that ordinary tax payers

that are suffering think these institutions are arrogant and

out of tou[ch]

PRE: [O ]KAY a [ MAss]ive

JØR: [“Nigel”]

PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase

in the parli[ament budget]

JØR: [tche: y:ou ]

PRE: [[is that what you voted through]

JØR: [[let him let him get ] away with this without

answering a very simple

JØR: [[question.]

PRE: [[WHY/ONE]) I’m giving you [chance to-]

JØR: [how d- how] do I tell my

constituency that we are net payers (as) well- except m- every

Dane pays three times as much to the EU as the

Bri[sh ]

FAR: [(well) if you’re (being)]

JØR: [[ ( ) ]

FAR: [[if you’re being] a worse deal than us

JØR: we’[re (def- ) ]

FAR: [that’s a comp]arison of misery isn’t it

JØR: ah[h: ] / ((snort))

FAR: [and yo]u should be arguing that your people shouldn’t be

paying much money into this (either;

JØR: no what I am arguing is (.2) that (.2) it’s too simple a way of

putting it (.2) what you need to see is okay how much does the

the: the st-European Union and (mat-)ordinary people and Europe

FAR: very li[tle they] hate it

JØR: [!it »matters a lot;]

JØR: we make common rules [ ( ) ] (environments)

FAR: [they hate it]

JØR: we make common rul- [ (well) one of the ] reasons

FAR: [they voted against it]

JØR: some of them hate it is because

(.2)

JØR: people li[ke you ( ) some of the]

FAR: [well your country said no in] a referendum to it

JØR: listen.

FAR: twice [TWICE ( ) ]

JØR: [ ( ) ]

PRE: [le- let let let NI:-] let Da[n finish the]

JØR: [((snort)) ]

PRE: [[sentence then I’ll come to the end]

FAR: [(come on we’ve been ( ) arguing the Da]nish people they †keep

saying NO;]
JØR: you know the way you argue is one of the reasons people don’t like politician[s ]

PRE: [ok–]

JØR: in my country we try to be a bit a bit more polite but that’s different of course ]

PRE: [G-Graham Graham ( ) let’s hear from Graham]

PRE: [ok–]

JØR: where Nigel’s argument falls down is he’s said it’s terrible that the UK is paying nine billion . h every year to to net to the European Union which will be case next year. . h ↓but↑ what he doesn’t point out is that we’re paying sixty billion a year for health . h we’re paying a hundred and thirty two billion a year for social security and benefits ]

X: [(coughs)]

WAT: ↑for nine billion↓ it’s all that’s costing us we’re ↓getting a fantastic [deal↓ from the European] Union

FAR: [what are we () about ]

WAT: we’re getting the solidarity of being part () of an association of twenty seven nations ]

FAR: [hehehehehheh]

WAT: =we’re getting the diplomatic clout that it gives us we’re getting the clout that it gives us in trade talks such as our

FAR: =zero

WAT: =free trade [agreement with with eh ]

FAR: =>zero we don- w- we don’t exist]<

WAT: India for example?

FAR: =>we don’t exist<

WAT: we are getting all of the benefits

WAT: of all of the EU[ropean ] policies

FAR: [I’m sorry]

WAT: which [( ) money in the ( ) cons]tituency every ye[ar]

FAR: [Graham outside of the EU ] [out]side of the EU we could negotiate our own trade deal

FAR: with [India ]

MIT: [(I-In-)]

FAR: as part of the EU we’re banned from

FAR: doin[g so and you talk about influence?]

WAT: [outside of the E:U: ]

WAT: we would be like Norway [we would ha]ve to pay more

FAR: [it’s n- ]

WAT: money to trade [( )]

PRE: [( )]

FAR: [( )] the

FAR: Norwegians [are rather richer than we are aren’t they]

WAT: [ ( ) (European Union countries) ( ) ]

PRE: okay

WAT: =and we [( )]

X: [( )]

WAT: [()]

FAR: [and they keep] their own fish

PRE: [okay ]

WAT: [[we ha]ve to pay ;more money to] trade

WAT: with the ( )

FAR: [I’d love to be (in) Norway [for this]

PRE: [Alright ] well as (usua-) we always get back down to fundamentals
Here, Watson quotes Nigel Farage’s figure of £9 billion but changes the context in which it was originally expressed (Extract 4.6, lines 28-33). Quoting the opponent is a particularly useful way to establish something as void of interest or unchallengeable by the opposition (Antaki & Leudar, 2001). Watson’s counterclaim not only treats Farage’s ‘fact’ as not contestable, but also relies on its factuality to make it look less problematic when compared to the £60 billion for health services and £32 billion for social security and benefits. While the numerical facts go unchallenged, rhetorically there is a competition between particularisation and categorisation (Billig, 1996). Farage attempts to make the £9 billion stand apart and therefore suggest that it is problematic, while Watson puts it into the same category as other necessary governmental costs. Therefore, the implication of Watson’s counterclaim is that to oppose the cost of being in the EU is to also oppose other basic services provided by the government. While Farage does not challenge the ‘facts’, he does resist Watson’s proposed benefits of the EU – and marks a rhetorical shift of focus from uncontested ‘facts’ to the argumentatively contestable meanings. In this way, the battle for primacy over the epistemic domain of EU remains a live, and unresolved, issue in the debate, as both speakers attempt to present themselves as more knowledgeable of it for rhetorical ends.

Extract 4.5, discussed earlier in conjunction with undermining an argument’s essence, contains an example where a speaker will provide a new fact to undermine another one attributed to them by others. Nigel Farage, by way of a UKIP manifesto, has been quoted as claiming that 29 million Romanians and Bulgarians can, because of the EU, come to live in Britain, when the combined population of the two countries is less than that (lines 10-17). To begin with, Farage shows resistance by demonstrating his awareness of what is going on by saying “ah” three times (Extract 4.5, lines 18, 20). This way, he is showing a new awareness of what is being claimed by Clegg (Heritage, 1984b). Also, by the tone, he demonstrates an “awareness” of Clegg’s aim and interest in the matter, and in this manner, portrays Clegg as the one with a vested interest in the matter (Potter, 1996). Later, in lines 55-60, Farage goes on to ‘correct’ what has been attributed to him, by stating that his actual position is that 485 million people38 can move to Britain. Stating a much larger number serves to emphasise the

38Presumably a reference to the population within the European Union, although this is not made clear and the official figure at the time of the debate, 2014, was over 500 million (Eurostat, 2015). Whether this is a mistake
seriousness of Farage’s logos to the average British citizen: “I’m not claiming twenty nine
million people (.) have the right to come to Britain... I’m claiming four hundred and eighty
five million people have the <total unconditional> right to come to this country if they want
to” (Extract 4.5, lines 55-56, 58-60). The ‘fact’ that is oriented to here is not number of
people per se, but, what UKIP, and Farage by proxy, are claiming. This new number also
sidesteps the problematic nature of the 29-million-as-wrong attributed to him, and thus
serves also as a face-saving strategy. The 485 million is a hypothetical, provided for
argumentative purposes. The use of hypotheticals is discussed in the next section, but first I
will provide two examples of what happens when there is resistance to a debater trying to
introduce a new ‘fact’ to the debate.

Debaters do not always manage to produce a new ‘fact’ into the debate without resistance
from other speakers. In the extract below, the ‘fact’ that Britain is not a European country
but is a global nation instead, is not treated as factual. In order to do this I will revisit the first
part of Extract 4.6, which was used in the section ‘What is Relevant?’ above.

Excerpt from Extract 4.6:

1 PRE: ah saying you know you’ve given you’ve sold it=
2 PRE: =[[down the river you’ve sold us down the river]
3 FAR: [[wh- the rebate is because ] the rebate was
4 .h we are different .h our far[ming system was different]
5 X: [ (European) ( ) you ]
6 PRE: =£O:H [£that’s a new one]
7 FAR: [and we are ]
8 X: [ ( ) ]
9 FAR: and=and unlike your countries ((addresses Jørgensen))
10 JØR: okay
11 FAR: unlike your countries. we’re a glob[al nation]
12 JØR: [ .hhh ]
13 (2)
14 FAR: we do a bigger proportion of=of our trade and our business .h
15 with the rest of the world than <any other> European country
16 JØR: [(((scoffs)))]
17 FAR: [[we always ] have and=and=and my hope is that we’ll go on
18 doing that
19 WAT: =”Den[mark is a glo]bal nation?”
20 FAR: [so that’s why]
21 WAT: Germany is [ a global nation?]
22 FAR: [no Germ ]any
23 FAR: is not a global natio[n compared (with)] compared with
24 PRE: [the Netherlands?]

or a deliberate application of a specific number to rhetorical ends, as a display of intimate knowledge, is not
clear.
Here, Farage is resisted on two claims: that Britain is not a European country, and that it is a global nation whereas other European countries are not. The first statement of ‘fact’ is resisted, uncharacteristically, by the moderator\(^ {39} \). This is done by the use of ‘oh’ to signify a change of her mental state (Heritage, 1984b), adopting a less serious tone to downgrade the seriousness of the claim, and voicing the claim as unexpected. The last point indexes the notion that such a claim is potentially beyond the bounds of the debate (see section above). The second claim, that other nations are not global, is resisted by Watson and the moderator with both of them listing countries as examples. It is crucial that Watson is the one offering the resistance, although Farage’s claim is clearly addressed to Jørgensen. This is because any reply by Jørgensen would index an ‘exposure’ of his interest (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). Watson, on the other hand, can offer the resistance as someone who the comment was not addressed to and, especially, as another British person. Having another British person respond to Farage’s claim resists the notion that his view is a British one, and as such, challenges Farage on having exclusive rights to the epistemic domain related to Britain or ‘Britishness’. Notably, Farage orients to this by interrupting his conversational trajectory to respond to Watson. He has to offer some form of proof for his claim – proportion of trade across the globe – before his claim is accepted.

Another way to challenge the introduction of a new ‘fact’ is by way of mockery. To show this, I revisit Extract 4.4 from earlier, when it was used as an example of a counterclaim.

\(^ {39} \)Moderators are, generally speaking, expected to follow an image of neutrality. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, under section ‘Overlapping Talk and Institutional Roles’.
Here, Farage tries to talk about the British fishing industry, and one of the other speakers, Martin Sorrell, responds by laughter and also by producing another directly contrasting statement of fact, “we got the fish back” (Extract 4.4, line 17), effectively trying to close off Farage’s claim. This extract will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, when analysing the ‘mockery’ in more detail. Suffice to say for now that the use of laughter serves to treat
the claim as laughable and, by implication, untrue, as the production of a contrasting fact emphasises: “An argument for an issue of controversy is also an argument against counter-views” (Billig, 1996, p.2).

Hypotheticals

The previous section focused on how debaters in broadcast political debates produce new information by way of facts, to provide a new context to the previously stated fact by their opponent. Another way to produce a new piece of information is by way of hypotheticals. That is, a politician, in their counterclaim, will state something that could happen rather than something that is a stated fact. There is some Conversation Analytic research into if/then formulations, where these are treated by other speakers as part of the same ‘unit’ even in extended turns (Lerner, 1991, Mazeland, 2007, and Kitzinger, 2008 as cited by Moore, 2013). That is, an ‘if’ formulation will project a (presumably) relevant ‘then’ segment to follow it. I suggest that this can have a rhetorical dimension too, in that it can be used for logos and anti-logos. For example, a politician in a debate can use an ‘if’ to project that what they are saying is not the whole part of their claim without the ‘then’. This can be particularly useful when there is a fight for the floor and the debater is interrupted.

In argumentation, there need not be only the use of these words. In using a hypothetical, this kind of paired structure is implicit. In producing a hypothetical scenario, the onus is on the debater to also explain the meaning of the hypothetical to the interaction at hand. Hypothetical scenarios can be a particularly effective rhetorical device in another sense too, as they allow a politician to put out an argument without having to offer accountability for its factuality at the same time. Furthermore, this device allows the politician to continue to battle to present themselves as more ‘knowledgeable’ in the face of having to counter a seemingly uncontested statement of ‘fact’. First, a few examples where the ‘if/then’ hypothetical are more closely worded in this manner are discussed. After this, I focus on an example of ‘could’ being countered with a ‘would’, in which the other speaker provides the ‘then’ part, and in that sense challenges the hypothetical scenario by elaborating the image. Finally, an example of where it is not stated explicitly, but speaks of an alternate course of past events, is used as a hypothetical to argumentative ends.
Extract 4.7 is from the first of the Nick Clegg – Nigel Farage debates (C:F-1) in the first half of 2014. At this particular point, the topic of the talk is about the laws related to tourism set by the EU. Before going further, a note must be made about the Clegg-Farage debates: the audience in these debates have been selected based on their position in the EU debate, ensuring that there is an even split between those who might support Clegg or Farage. As such, audience participation and support by applause occurs in reaction to both speakers.

Extract 4.7

CLE: I chuckle no: w >but it< wasn’t funny then. .hhh They got
caught up in the Greek (.) legal system.=They ended up (. ) <in
Greek jail. > (. ) .hh They had n:o id>ea what was being< told
them, They had No >idea what w- charg< es were being< brought
against them, .hh They had <no legal assistance.> .hhh The
European Union has now pa: ssed new rules, new laws., hh
which means that if Any of you ((gestures to audience) ) (0.6)
go on holiday,=Elsewhere in the European Un:i on° and you find
yourself on the ^wrong side of the law, .hhh you’ll get help
with interpreta]tion, .hh you’ll get legal help, >you’ll get
as<(istance,=   
FER: [All: right.
FAR: [(H)Ehhh   [#hehh   [#heh [#hahhh
CLE: =[<]Guess what<] UKIP [did. They [voted [against=
FAR: [#hehh   [#heh
CLE: =[All of those ]measures,
FAR: [[(I di- you-)]] [h e h.=.h h h ]
CLE: =[< A No t]her ex[ample> of the] European Un:i on
FAR: ______ [Yeah,
CLE: <Keeping u[s ]safe ]and pro[Tec]tng ou:rs [rights.>
FAR: ___ [Ah(h)yeah hah] [heh] [hehehahhh=
FAR: =But if you get [arres]ted in Span:i:n
FER: [Nigel-
AUD: [xxxxxxxxxxxxx=
FAR: =[If you- if you get arrested in Span:i:n, Ni:ck,
AUD: xxxxxx=
FAR: =You get arrested in Span:i:n, (0.2) >for something you< h< aven’t
do:ne; (0.2) you may be left, (. ) up to eighteen ^months in
prison, (. ) without even facing a charge. .h We have a system
of common law in this country, .hh We’ve had it for eight
hundred yela]rs,
CLE: [Why; did you [vote (against)]
FAR: [It is based ]
CLE: Wh[y did you vote against] measures [to help (British)]
FAR: [(It is bas:ed,> ] [it is based, ]
CLE: tourists.
FAR: =It is based on the presumption .h of innocence before guilt,
.hh It is bas:ed on habeas corpus, .hh and c[ommon] law,:=
CLE: Why [did]
FAR: [And We:]
CLE: Why [did UKIP vote] against (. ) ([Th- this. ]) ((shakes head))
FAR: [Must defend,] [We must defend] (0.2) the
principles (. ) of liberty, (. )
FAR>freedome an’ jus[tice< << this >]
X: [(Did you xxx xx xxx- (Did you] xx xx
X: [(xx]}
FAR: [<<c o u n [try.>]
CLE: [You shou- you should [defend]
FAR: [( )
CLE: }>You should de fend<, (0.2) We [should all: defend]=
FAR: [M i s t e r Clegg] =I- (. )
Mis[ter Clegg,
CLE: [The right[s of British [citizens. ] [Why did=
FAR: [I’m not I- [have not)]
FER: [Kay Mister [Clegg,
CLE: =[you not [do it.
FER: [Mister Clegg
FAR: [<I have not v[oted,>
FAR: [Mister Clegg >I am moderating this
debate< thank you[;,
FAR: [I have n[o t v o t e d ]
FAR: [Would you like to]< respond to a
question that was [put ] twice [by “Mister Clegg”
FAR: [?”Yeaa”] [I’ve been in >the European
Parliament< now FIFteen years. They’re getting a bit <cheesed
off> at me over there I’ve gotta tell you. .hhh And I:]
AUD: [heh (h)ahah(h)ah[ah
FAR: =I have not voted, (0.2) In fi ffteen years,
(0.2) for one (. ) single piece of
FAR: legislation, (. ) [That has=
FER: [##All right,
FAR: =added to the power base of the >European Commission in
Brussels,< [<and I never,>
CLE: [Even when it m- <even wh[en it mea:ns,>] [I n e v e r ](. )
FAR: [I have not v[oted,>
FAR: Ev[er
CLE: [British tou[rists,
FAR: [ ]
CLE: Even [when it means British tourists,] (0.2) Who get=
FAR: [<<I n e v e r e v e r w i l l. ]
CLE: =cau:ght
CLE: up, (. ) [on the wrong side of the]law: (. ) When on=
FAR: [<I nev e r w i ]
CLE: =Holida[y, who need] (. )Translation,=
FAR: [I believe>
FAR: =They need help; they l[aw:y ers,=
FER: [All right
CLE: >They need< as[sistance,
FAR: [Nick I] believe[ve (I mean)
CLE: Why is it that UKIP dogma is so strong now, hhh You [won’t even help,] hhh
FER: [()]
CLE: British [tou:rist\s when they’re on the wrong side]
FAR: [I’ll tell you-] [let me-]
CLE: o’ the law,
FER: [( )]
CLE: [(hh)
FAR: [(I’ll ] [tell you what th-<< I’LL TELL you WHA-<<]
CLE: [O n : ho li day e l s e w h e r e ]
CLE: [(.)
CLE: [(I just]
FAR: [(I can-] [I’LL TELL WHAT THE DOGmer is, The DOGmer is=]
CLE: [((shakes head with grimace))]
CLE: [((shakes head))]
FAR: [=I believe (. ) the best people to govern Brit’ain: are the British people themsel-ves, (0.2)]
FAR: [not [the European [Union.]
CLE: [I’m talking] [about the British-
AUD: [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]
FER: [Okay.=We should-
FAR: [That’s ( )]
FER: [Let’s move on,]
AUD: [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx]
FER: [I think there’s a situation here,
AUD: xxxxx[xxxxxxxxxx xx xx x x x x
FER: [I don’t agree with Nick, Uhm, (. ) While we’re on people’s rights, Nigel Farage.=A clarification <would be useful,>
audience are in some way inclined to break the law. In terms of challenging Farage, there is some particularisation work (Billig, 1996) being done by Clegg, to make a wider point of the EU being a ‘force for good’ regarding the interests of the audience.

In a sense, in broadcast political debates the person who is argued with is not necessarily the one who is to be persuaded. This, arguably, has a consequence in the way these debates unfold. It allows a politician to be much more assertive in the debates, especially where hypothetical scenarios are concerned. For example, later on in extract 4.7, on lines 97-98, 100 and 102, Nick Clegg poses a question, or perhaps an assertion. This is directly addressed toward the UKIP/Farage ‘ideological’ side of the debate, as the use of ‘you’ indicates. Such a strong assertion about Clegg’s opponent would do little by way of ‘persuading’ them. Understandably, this may not be the aim in the first place, but such a separation between who is argued with and who is appealed to, can be understood to index certain argumentative resources that may otherwise be less frequent. It certainly adds to the ability of a debater to make certain pushes into the epistemic domain of their opponent. Here, the very nature of Clegg’s hypothetical question carries with it the implication that UKIP has some sort of “dogma” that dictates their behaviour. Of course this descriptive word carries its own implication, namely that UKIP are acting out of ‘ideological principles’ rather than in the interest of people, and not in accordance with the ‘real’ state of affairs. However, one must note the way it is weaved into the argument, as this is crucial for the argumentative work it does. It can be viewed as the ‘then’ part of the pair, where the ‘if’ is the hypothetical scenario of British people getting caught up on the wrong side of the law. Importantly, the ‘then’ part here is framed as an accusatory question (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Rather than conceding Farage as the ‘more knowledgeable’, by being an accusation the question pushes for Clegg as the ‘more knowledgeable’, as the phrasing of it presupposes the right to assert a particular state-of-affairs – one where the descriptive term attributes blame (Edwards & Potter, 1992) to UKIP.

As for making the argumentative claim against Farage, in Extract 4.7 Clegg is stating that UKIP does not support the legislation implemented by the EU in aid of tourists. The way this claim is weaved into the argument is significant. It comes after having described at length the positive work brought about by the EU, and brings about a sharp contrast: “<Guess what> UKIP did. They voted against All of those measures” (Extract 4.7, lines 14, 16). Again, this contrast serves as the ‘then’ part of the pair, where the ‘if’ is the hypothetical
situation of a British tourist abroad and on the wrong side of the law. This contrast implies an element of surprise by the use of “guess what” and, as such, frames UKIP’s action as unexpected – in the face of the positive action by the EU and, not coincidentally, common sense. The use of extreme case formulation – “all of those measures” – to bolster the argument, to imply intentionality by Farage, and to orient to a potentially disagreeing audience (Pomerantz, 1986), portrays this resistance as relatively enduring rather than a singular case. This type of use of an extreme case formulation, to indicate consistency of action, is used to build up an image of interest (Antaki, 1998) which, in turn, carries the association of intentionality. As such, both the earlier descriptive talk and the statement about what UKIP has done are rhetorically, as well as contextually, co-dependent. This sort of “exposing” of the other debater’s action takes a first position – rhetorically, “epistemically” and sequentially – leaving the other person having to orient their talk in some way to what has been said.

Indeed, Nick Clegg’s claim in the first part of Extract 4.7 is taken so far as to gain applause from the audience. Although Farage has offered some resistance in the form of laughter (Romaniuk, 2013; see also Chapter 6), something that occurs in other debaters under analysis too, the claim of Clegg is not directly challenged immediately after. The delayed challenge preceded by laughter-as-resistance highlights that, even without responding immediately, “opposition can thus call into question not only what has been said but also the general competence of someone who would produce such talk” (Goodwin, 1990, p.149). This point is of some validity, as it implies that arguing either for logos or anti-logos involves making claims about the character of the person being argued against. To argue that someone lacks competence carries the implication that their argumentative stand lacks competence too, and vice versa.

As for making stronger assessments, as mentioned, when there is no need to ‘persuade’ the person argued against, this in itself can open up a stronger response. When Clegg speaks of UKIP’s ‘dogma’, the directness of his claim allows an equally forceful response. In a sense, Farage, in lines 108, 111-112 of Extract 4.7, reclaims primacy of his (arguably) own epistemic domain by restating the dogma in terms of believing in the notion of ‘British

40In argumentative terms, in these debates there is a degree of interchangeability between a person and a particular side or organisation they may be representing. For example, to argue against a politician’s competence in one area also does implicit criticism of their ‘ideological position’ and vice versa.

41This is not to say that the other speaker cannot compete for the ‘firstness’ (see Heritage & Raymond, 2005) in their response, in turn using similar resources to challenge the other speaker.
people ruling Britain’ – precisely the main selling point of his political party which, then, would imply a positive thing for him and his supporters. This kind of stake confession (Potter, 1996), where Farage explicitly voices his interest in the matter, does the work of undermining the moral culpability of the said interest. It also ignores the hypothetical used by Clegg by orienting only to the ‘then’ part of the pair. In this way, Farage resists having to respond to the hypothetical scenario of British tourists on the wrong side of the law, which could be a rhetorically damaging notion to respond to, as UKIP voting against legislation to help tourists is treated as ‘fact’ by both debaters.

Returning to an earlier stretch of the debate, Clegg’s claim (“<Guess what> UKIP did. They voted against All of those measures”, Extract 4.7, lines 14, 16) has to some extent pushed into Farage’s epistemic domain, insofar as he has oriented to having primary access to the public actions of UKIP members, and Farage does not directly challenge it. Farage’s counterclaim begins by the use of laughter, but the verbalised rhetorical challenge comes later, starting from line 22, by way of hypotheticals: If (lines 22 & 28) someone gets arrested in Spain, then they may (line 31) be left up to (line 31) without facing a charge. It is the avoidance of extreme case formulations in this instance that allows Farage to put out a hypothetical argument. In argumentative cases, extreme case formulations can be particularly contestable (Hutchby, 1996), so opting for the opposite approach, particularly to contrast with Clegg’s logos, is designed precisely to resist undermining. In arguing for his position in this manner, without overtly challenging Clegg, Farage still manages to argue against Clegg, insofar as arguing for one position argues against its rhetorical counterpart (Billig, 1996).

Not all hypotheticals are as clearly worded as the ‘if/then’, but often they will follow along similar lines. Consider the following example, from Extract 4.6, which in this chapter has already provided us with a number of ways to challenge the ‘facts’ of a political opponent.
Here, Farage is introducing an example of something Britain could do outside the European Union: trade with India based on British interest rather than EU (lines 18-20). Note how in describing the hypothetical, British options are juxtaposed with the EU ones, creating an image of incompatibility between the two. Furthermore, Farage states what Britain could do outside the EU. The hypothetical carries with it what could be called an option to act without the necessary obligation to do so. By “claiming” this option into the hypothetical claim, it also implies that with the EU this is not so, and, in fact, Farage goes on to state precisely that in lines 22-23.

Watson, in this case, opts to challenge Farage on his terms: by the use of a hypothetical. As the contested point here is a hypothetical one, the use of a fact may not do enough rhetorical work of counterclaiming Farage’s point. In other words, if Watson would reply with something like “we are not outside the EU”, it would do little by way of challenging Farage. Instead, Watson provides a similar hypothetical, which keeps the contested issue alive. In
effect, Watson turns Farage’s formulation into an ‘if’ of an ‘if/then’ pair and provides his own ‘then’ version of events, which suggests that being outside the EU is not necessarily a desirable matter. The important difference in Watson’s resistance is that while Farage speaks of available options (“could” – line 19), he speaks of unavoidable negative consequences that come as a part of these choices (“would” – line 25).

In suggesting that outside the EU Britain could do its own negotiations, Farage is claiming more than that. It is a situated response designed to challenge Watson, but it also does the wider rhetorical work of arguing for Farage’s anti-EU stance. It is this notion that Watson is challenging as much as the situated response: “When speakers say something, they are often doing several different things at once” (Billig, 1992, p.40). The switch from ‘could’ to ‘would’ recognises this; it is designed to point out that Farage’s argument comes at a cost. In this case, it is an economical one, and it is one that can be generally used for both sides of an argument (Billig, 1992). Just as Farage is arguing for more than ‘UK outside the EU can negotiate its own trade treaties’, so is Watson arguing for more than saying that this would cost Britain more. These claims and counterclaims orient to wider questions, such as if Britain should leave or stay in the European Union and why.

One final example is discussed before moving on to the Conclusion. It is from the F:M-1 debate, where Gay Mitchell brings in a hypothetical regarding a past event.

Extract 4.8 – Had John Bruton been Taoiseach

1 FAR: [,.hh >dear dear< (.2) _absolute rubbish the Euro _damaged
2 Ireland badly by giving you falsely low interest rates for seven
3 years .h it lead to a MAssive boom in the housing sector and
4 commercial property sector .h and a bust that may take a decade
5 or more to ge[t out of]
6 MIT: [can I] just say
7 MIT: this (.) had John Bruton
8 PRE: [very very]
9 PRE: [[very briefly]
10 MIT: [(had John Brut)on been Taoiseach (.2) during that period (.4)
11 we would never have gotten into this situation we’re in these
12 were domestic decisions made
13 FAR: =the interest rates were set in Fran]kfurt Gay you=
14 MIT: [where our sovereign rate]
15 FAR: [=’ve given it all up you don’t govern yourselves anymore]
16 MIT: [↑the intre- the interest rates↓]
17 (.)
18 MIT: the interest rate
19 FAR: [set i]n Frankfurt
MIT: the interest rate gave us great opportunities and instead of putting aside some of the reserve at home we behaved like drunken sailors and our government authorised a spending. do you remember the decision of the minister? (.2) when I have money I will spend it had John Bruton been Taoiseach at that time and a different government been in office we would not have behaved and that shows that we made at home <the sovereign decisions> (.2) that we made at home (.5)

MIT: [(is what exasperated the )]

FAR: [[ah I think the sovereign decisions] were taken in Frankfurt weren’t they that’s the truth of it

This case is slightly different from the previous ones. Here, a hypothetical is used to point to the hypothetical significance of past events, to say that had John Bruton been Taoiseach then things would have been different. Throughout F:M-I, the issue of what is the source of Irish economic difficulties has been at the oriented to. According to Farage, it is because of the European Union, whereas Mitchell’s argument is that it was because of mistakes in Ireland. As with the previous extract, something more is at stake here, too, and that is the notion of Irish sovereignty. There are multiple orientations to this – historical, in relation to Britain, in relation to the EU, and so forth – but that is beyond the topic of current analysis. The point to take home is that during the exchange in Extract 4.8, Mitchell is trying to emphasise that it is not the external Euro (“the Euro damaged Ireland badly”, lines 1-2) that is damaging Ireland, but the internal Irish mistakes (“had John Bruton been Taoiseach (.2) during that period (.4) we would never have gotten into this situation”, lines 7, 10-11). In a way, it might be counterintuitive for Mitchell to claim the blame for the economic difficulties into his epistemic domain, which he does by the use of referring to the ‘Irish experience’ to contrast with Farage’s wider epistemic domain of what happens in the EU. However, when looked at in the context stated above, the claim to blame carries with it a level of agency that places Ireland as a member of the EU rather than a country subjugated by it: if John Bruton had been Taoiseach at that time, then there would not be the problems that Ireland now faces. It pushes against the notion that the EU is a threat to Irish sovereignty, and that Ireland, as a sovereign state, still has a say in its own matters. Therefore, the hypothetical does not only challenge Farage’s point but also his rights to challenge it.

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42Taoiseach: The head of Government of the Republic of Ireland.
43There is also a possibility of some criticism of other Irish parties, since John Bruton and Gay Mitchell are both affiliated with the Fine Gael party.
If this problem faced is an Irish one, then it is to claim a certain ‘knowledge primacy’ for Mitchell and implies that Farage, as someone who cannot perform ‘being Irish’ in the context of that particular debate, ought not to be speaking of the issue. This is an ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988), in that the context of the interaction invites for debate, which gives voice to pro- and anti-EU positions, but at the same time, there is work done to shut down the rhetorical opposition.

4.3 Conclusion
The aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of how politicians in broadcast political debates do disagreement. An approach that takes inspiration from the rhetorical work of Michael Billig and epistemic work of John Heritage and colleagues is advocated. Working with the notion that political discourse is about facts and values (Edelman, 1977), analysing the mobilisation of, orientation to, and responses to knowledge in talk, has a strong rhetorical function. By looking at how knowledge is treated in interaction in multi-party debates, it gives us an idea of how a politician will aim to present their views as the one that is ‘correct’ and how the others are in some way lacking.

To begin with, the analysis aims to give an idea of what kinds of things in talk can be treated as contestable. Politicians will pick a more contestable area to respond to the other speaker. One striking example is from F:M-1, where, for a relatively long stretch of interaction, the two debaters focus more on abstract matters such as intention, democracy, or what one is saying rather than whether the facts about Britain, EU or Ireland are true or not. As such, claims and counterclaims have a strategic focus.

Next, three ways of doing disagreement were analysed where the ‘fact’ claimed by a speaker is treated in some manner as true (usually by way of not challenging its veracity). These three methods of challenging orient around three questions in particular: what is relevant, which facts matter, and, finally, what is hypothetically possible? These are cases where the act of challenging a ‘fact’ has an argumentative role, and the challenge serves to undermine the other side of the debate and its advocates.

The issue of relevance focuses on how a claim is challenged by questioning its relevance. The first two cases look at how a claim can be challenged before completion and after
completion respectively. The final one takes a different form in that the appeal to relevance is done by way of invoking the institutional nature of the interaction.

The issue of which facts matter looks at how politicians can challenge ‘facts’ that are in and of themselves not contested. A common way of doing this is to provide other facts to it to create a new context in which they exist, and, as such, give a different rhetorical function to the fact. The dynamics of introducing new facts can change if a person with an arguably similar epistemic domain, in this case speakers of the same nationality challenging each other on a nation-relevant issue, puts forth the challenge. Mockery by way of humour is the final example mentioned.

Finally, hypotheticals are discussed. This is the introduction of potential scenarios based on certain actions, namely by way of using an ‘if/then’ approach. For example, politicians discuss various consequences if Britain were to leave the EU – “if we leave the EU, then we can do X”. Hypotheticals provide a feasible way of challenging a claim that would otherwise be difficult to undermine. Similarly, a politician can respond in a similar manner to the counterclaim with one of their own – “if we leave the EU, then we would have to do X”. This is particularly useful for keeping a given issue a live one in the debate. By responding with a hypothetical, the politician can imply that potential choices come at a cost. Similarly, it can be used to appeal to the audience when the claim itself may have some kind of negative moral implication toward the audience.

To conclude, this chapter demonstrates a range of ways disagreement is done. It is by no means an exhaustive collection of rhetorical work that is done in broadcast political debates. Rather, the aim is to give the reader an idea of the range of ways claims and counterclaims can be made, and how orientations to knowledge and facts play a role in contested political discourse. What this chapter has demonstrated is that not only are factual descriptions designed to do actions, as Potter (1996) demonstrates, but they are also designed to do rhetorical actions – from this perspective, they can hardly be considered neutral.

The subsequent analytical chapters focus on two aspects in particular: what happens when debaters begin to talk over each other, sometimes leading to escalation and the standard forms of disagreeing, discussed here, no longer being used, and what is the rhetorical function and the ‘knowledge work’ of humour in disagreements, considering that these debates are not framed as humorous. The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated how
‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ are not neutral in their function. Consequently, this chapter will serve as a backdrop to these chapters, and, hopefully, will begin to give us an idea of how contested political discourse unfolds and is managed.
5. Debate Talk – Overlapping Talk, Challenges and Escalation
5.1 Introduction

This section is a discussion of overlapping talk, dispute, and escalation in broadcast political debates. Political debates are set in such a way as to elicit argument. On some occasions arguments can turn into disputes and escalate. This chapter identifies and discusses some key ingredients of dispute and escalation in political debates, particularly those of overlapping talk and the type of ‘knowledge work’ it does.

Debates on the EU take place in a wider argumentative context of controversy; they are set up to make contrasting opinions, views, and ideologies salient. They typically invite participants to orient to the main issues that concern Europeans: economy, unemployment, political sovereignty, and so on. In the majority of debates analysed in this thesis, the participants belong to opposing ideological camps, and tend to take opposing positions on EU-as-controversy. It is important to note that at the start of many of the debates I analyse, they are explicitly framed as a controversy. For example, in F:M-1 the debate is introduced by using a rather confrontational speech by Daniel Hannan directed at pro-European politicians, followed by a brief introduction by the moderator. In the F:JW debate there is a brief “news section” that gives a summary of the topic at hand. It is narrated by the moderator of the debate, Shirin Wheeler, and, notably, she uses the word ‘controversy’ to describe the topic of the debate. This particular kind of introduction has relevance to the subsequent interactions. While interaction typically is oriented toward a preference for agreement (Sacks, 1987), this is not always the case here. What distinguishes these interactions from mundane conversation is that they are task oriented, giving them an institutional element (Drew & Heritage, 1992). This institutionality in talk, in turn, means that the flow of interaction also departs from the norms of mundane talk in a systematic manner (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). This does not imply that orientation to agreement is absent in these debates. Rather, there is the additional institutional goal of creating a debate – and a functioning debate necessitates a level of disagreement as well as agreement (Billig, 1996). It must be noted that, largely, there is a preference and adherence for a flowing interaction, and the moments of escalation, while frequent across the collection of debates, are not predominant in terms of time.

As stated, the current analysis focuses on two elements in interaction in particular – overlapping talk and the associated ‘knowledge work’. These are two important aspects to
consider when analysing disagreement and escalation in political debates. The analysis in this chapter considers overlap and ‘displays of knowledge’ as joint actions in overlapping talk, and culminates in analysing what we can describe as escalation. For the purposes of this chapter, escalation is the breakdown of the smooth flow of conversation by way of overlapping talk and expressed disagreement, by means of a contrasting conversational trajectory or a counterclaim, by the speakers, in relation to each other. To put it simply, escalation is the turning of a debate into a more hostile argument.

In ordinary conversation, overlap serves very specific functions. For example, slight overlaps play an important role in the organisation of turn-taking in conversations (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). However, this applies to short overlaps in ordinary conversations. Extended overlap becomes more problematic as it challenges one of the core tenets of talk: “one party talking at a time” (Schegloff, 2000, p.1). Drew (2009) makes a similar argument, noting that overlap can be very common in interaction without necessarily violating the rule of one party at a time. He observes that it is precisely in the process of observing the rule of one party at a time, by aiming to minimise both overlaps and gaps in talk, where overlap can be observed: “Overlapping talk is generated systematically by the same systems and practices for orderly turn transfer as account for ‘one at a time’” (ibid., p.72-73).

It needs noting though that the majority of the overlaps Schegloff (2000) and Drew (2009) discuss tend to be very short ones in interactional terms; extended overlaps need to be looked at with care. However, even in such cases, extended overlap does not necessarily equal interruption; in analytical terms interruption is more a moral category than a social action (Drew, 2009). Schegloff (2001) also explains that in order for an overlap to be heard as an interruption, it must accompany the additional action of complaint. The point made by Drew (2009) and Schegloff (2001) is that the term ‘interruption’ implies accountability and a breach of conversational norms in the sense that one or more of the speakers may be considered at fault, and, as such, would require elaboration. All in all, overlap, however it is labelled, is not uncommon in interaction, although it has a tendency to be resolved quickly. Extended overlap, on the other hand, will signal some sort of trouble with the interaction at hand – be it categorised interruption or not.
In broadcast political debates, overlap becomes a tool for accomplishing similar functions as described above, but in a context of political controversy they can be constituted as a type of argumentative practice. As mentioned in the previous chapter, institutional talk differs from mundane talk and has its own specific character (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, 2002). By implication, this suggests that conversational features in mundane talk can take on a different character in a specific institutional context. That is the argument made here; overlaps take on additional characteristics in political debates. This does not mean that the additional features in any way replace or supersede the pre-existing function of overlaps. On the contrary, it is precisely their mundane functions that enable features such as overlap to be used for delivering a political message. If overlap plays a role in turn-taking (Sacks et al., 1974), then it is certainly of important character in a political debate where speakers will frequently fight for the floor: “Each party’s capacity to realise his or her agenda is thoroughly contingent on the conduct of the other party” (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p.6). However, the use of overlap in a broadcast political debate is not limited to a fight for the floor. For example, sometimes the listener is content to comment over the talk of the other speaker – a form of heckling⁴⁵ (e.g. McIlvenny, 1996) that also shows orientation to the audience (Hutchby, 2006). In sum, the institutional character of political debates means that overlap becomes more than a conversational tool for managing turn-taking. In a broadcast political debate, as in ordinary conversations, the speaker will have something at stake (e.g. Potter, 1996), and, as such, overlap becomes, in rhetorical terms, a tool for a politician to advance their own point of view.

Before continuing on to the analysis, I will briefly explain ‘epistemics’ as used in Conversation Analysis and what it may contribute to the analysis or broadcast political debates. The notion of epistemics refers to claims to knowledge, or domains of knowledge, in talk. In Conversation Analysis, epistemics “focuses on the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns at talk and sequences of interaction” (Heritage, 2013, p.1). In talk, there are various domains of knowledge that are linked to various interactional identities. For example, a person may be considered to have primary epistemic rights to their personal experiences and views (e.g. Raymond & Heritage,

⁴⁴This is focusing exclusively on the conversational aspect of ‘interruption’. One can easily imagine how in argumentative terms such a label can be a forceful way to challenge another speaker.
⁴⁵See Extract 5.1 below.
Therefore, epistemic domains are linked to identities in talk: “The management of rights to knowledge and, relatedly, rights to describe or evaluate states of affairs, can be a resource for invoking identity in interaction” (Raymond & Heritage, 2006, p.4). The link between epistemic domains and identities in talk is a crucial one here. In the data analysed by Raymond and Heritage (2006), the epistemic rights, and thus conversational identities, of ‘grandmother’ are relatively straightforward. Although it is essential to note, as the authors do, that the epistemic rights in that particular case are also occasioned by the interaction at hand. That is, the identity and epistemic rights of ‘grandmother’ and the grandmother’s knowledge of her grandchildren are fairly obvious in that particular interaction.

What epistemics, then, tells us, is that displays of and orientations to ‘knowledge’ are a live matter in ordinary interaction. While this kind of ‘knowledge work’ can usually be relatively unproblematic in mundane interactions, it cannot be so in the case of the broadcast political debates analysed here. This is because the indexed identities of the speakers from the outset are set as opposing the same particular issue – the European Union – and it is this particular issue that constitutes a mutual, but opposing, ground between the speakers. As such, the respective identities of the speakers are problematized from the outset and one can expect these political debates to be filled with challenges and identity negotiations between various speakers: “The distribution of rights and responsibilities regarding what participants can accountably know, how they know it, whether they have rights to describe it, and in what terms, is directly implicated in organised practices of speaking” (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p.16). Indeed, one could say that the problematic element of these debates is precisely that two contrasting epistemic domains are construed from the same source – the EU.

Because of these challenges between the debaters, the rights to describe events are vitally linked to overlapping talk. Being the first one to offer a version of events puts the response in a position where it invariably responds to the initial statement:

“First position assessments establish a representational field in which second assessments will be found to position themselves in some fashion: through agreement, disagreement, or adjustment” (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p.16).

As such, a focus on ‘knowledge work’ alongside overlap may give a clearer understanding how a speaker in a political debate might engage in extended overlaps when it might
contradict ‘conversational etiquette’. Having a ‘knowledge primacy’, even at the risk of breaching interactional norms, may prove to be more rhetorically forceful, considering that in these debates there is always something at stake. Of course, here one must also take into account the institutional context, and, particularly, the role of the moderator in turn-taking (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). As such, it may be of use to consider the notion that at least some of the responsibilities of turn-taking are moved from the debaters to the moderator. As the subsequent data will show, the moderators’ impact is often, though not always, oriented to as neutral in allocating turns. In any case, there are occasions where the debaters will breach turn-taking norms, notably without an intervention by the moderator. This in itself suggests that at least some level of disagreement, or overlapping talk to be precise, is part of the institutional context – not only is it tolerated, but it is also expected (Greatbatch, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Not only does the multiparty interaction take the responsibility of adversarial action away from the moderator (Clayman & Heritage, 2002), but it also “provides a fertile ground for cultivating lively and dramatic conflict” (ibid., p.300).

5.2 Analysis

In the first section, there is a brief discussion of overlapping talk in its own right, which is followed by a discussion of overlap together with the ‘knowledge work’ it performs from the same pool of data. The analysis then focuses on the positioning of overlaps and seeks to explicate the argumentative function of them. Following from this, I look at the relevance of institutional roles, as not all types of overlap may be considered to play a part in contested political discourse. That is, who does the overlap matters as much as the overlap itself, and its nature, in determining what kind of action it does. After this, I will discuss the role of laughter in overlap, accompanied by a discussion on whether laughter has a place in analysing debates from the ‘knowledge work’ point of view. Here, the focus is on the role of laughter regarding overlap(s) and some of the work it does. For a more thorough analysis of laughter, derision, and their functions, see Chapter 6. To end the analysis, I talk about a single case of escalation and demonstrate how such a sequence starts and ends.

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46See section 4.1 from previous chapter for an explanation of ‘epistemic domains’.
Overlapping Talk and Epistemic Domains

The analysis here will look at the role overlap plays in argument escalation. A central point is that for a debate to be viewed as a dispute or a confrontation, it must be jointly built up by the participants (e.g. Schegloff, 1988/1989), and this will be expanded upon in the subsequent analysis by focusing on overlapping talk and its associated ‘knowledge work’. In order to have a thorough understanding of how overlaps take place, it is essential to also answer the general questions of what precedes them and how they are resolved.

Overlap can prove to be a very useful strategic tool in a political debate because “the presence of overlapping or competitive talk can warrant practises of talking that are otherwise problematic” (Schegloff, 2000, p.17), meaning that it can give a wider range of conversational resources for the speaker that might otherwise be unavailable – such as extended overlap, raising one’s voice, and so forth. The general rule for most conversation is that one person at a time does the talking (Schegloff, 2000) and mild overlapping is not necessarily intrusive, as mild overlaps at transition relevant places (TRPs) are quite usual (Sacks et al., 1974). Schegloff (2000) elaborates this further: overlaps can be resolved in various ways, such as terminating one’s turn before completion in order to let the other person finish talking or turning to ‘continuers’ (e.g. hmm). However, extended overlaps require more ‘extreme’ measures, such as change in the pace of the talk, raised pitch, or raised volume. Indeed, extended overlap can easily turn into a competition for the floor by the speakers.

Murata (1994) makes a distinction between co-operative interruption (CI) and intrusive interruption (II), which itself has three subcategories: topic-changing interruption (TCI), floor-taking interruption (FTI), and disagreement interruption (DI). Murata’s distinctions and Schegloff’s (2000) insights into overlapping talk can be used for the analysis. Drawing on Murata and Schegloff, in this chapter I will work with notions that I will call co-operative overlap (CO) and intrusive overlap (IO). Whereas co-operative overlap facilitates the smooth flow and advance of debate, intrusive overlap interrupts and disrupts the flow and advance of debate. Both types of overlap can occur at significant junctures in debate talk – when topics are initiated or terminated, when there is an attempt to claim or reclaim the conversational floor, and when there is agreement or disagreement over a certain factual aspect.

47Transition relevant places are divided into three types of practises: the speaker will in some way select a next speaker, absence of such selection will result in self-selection by another speaker, or the initial speaker will continue in the absence of another’s self-selection (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).
Of particular relevance for this chapter is to also note that the different trajectories in talk triggered by the different types of overlap are grounded in different epistemic domains (see above) from each other. A CO might have a different ‘knowledge’ character to an IO. For example, a moderator’s CO may be primarily aimed at facilitating debate or repackaging the information for the audience without necessarily challenging the argument. An IO, on the other hand, is likely to be rooted in the same, or closely related, epistemic domain, as the subsequent analysis aims to demonstrate. As suggested earlier, the link between drawing a contrasting conclusion from the same epistemic domain and overlap may be to do with obtaining a primacy over who is more ‘knowledgeable’ regarding the EU. It is not enough to say that the other speaker is wrong, but this must be done with urgency and, most notably, before the message can be completed and packaged in reasonable terms. This is in part possible because “in speaking we monitor the conversations, having a feel for their future course, as we orientate our words to the future reactions of our listeners” (Billig, 1999, p.172). There are varying degrees of IOs, and it is suggested that the intensity of the escalation is linked to the notion of a speaker trying to complete or disrupt the claim being made.

During the debates there are various orientations to overlapping talk and it is not always treated as an ‘interruption’, nor is it necessarily meant as such. For example, in the following extract, from F:M-1, which was also used in analysing claims and counterclaims (Chapter 4), Farage provides a brief overlap while Mitchell is talking. However, the brevity of the comment (Extract 5.1, line 6), the higher pitch and the softness of the tone in combination, indicate that it is not intended to be treated as a fight for the floor, but, rather, as a counterclaim to Mitchell’s point. It is this combination that gives it an air of a light, if not condescending, disagreement. This extract was also seen in Chapter 4, specifically Extract 4.1.
Extract 5.1

MIT: we are no longer the country that exports cheap food to
feed Britain it is a different country that we have we are
Happier with our country we do not need anybody to tell us
how to run our country and we have a real say here the-
the fact that u-uh

FAR: [°you don’t°]

MIT: the fact that the treaties are agreed (.) that
we are bound by the treaties that the larger member states
are bound by those treaties and we can take those treaties
(.) to the European court

This comment is interesting, because the technical delivery would indicate a CO; however,
the content of the utterance – a counterclaim to what is being said – also means that it is
intended to be heard as a disagreement. The higher pitch of Farage’s counterclaim seems to
match Mitchell’s earlier higher pitch when he claimed that “we [Ireland] have a real
say!”. A matching delivery could be used to affiliate the CO with that particular statement,
along with the position of the CO in the talk, meaning that Farage’s counterclaim is aimed
particularly at that statement. It is a somewhat unusual form of overt disagreement in that it
is addressed directly at Mitchell and not solicited by the moderator – and both of these
serve to upgrade the disagreement (Greatbatch, 1992), even when the disagreement is brief
enough to not require an intervention by the moderator. If anything, it seems that the
presence of the moderator makes disagreeing more salient for the debaters, as it is not their
responsibility to remove themselves from the disagreement (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

The comment provides a brief hitch in Mitchell’s talk (lines 5 & 7: “that u-uh the fact that
the: that the:”), which can be construed as an attempt to maintain his turn at talk (Schegloff,
2000). It is not to be considered escalation per se, or at least not as “intense” as the final
example in this chapter, because Farage does not pursue the matter further with a complaint,
and does not challenge Mitchell’s turn at talk any further. However, as noted above, the
seeds of unmitigated disagreement are here. If the intention here is not to disrupt Mitchell’s
claim, then what function does such an utterance from Farage serve? One suggestion is that
it is intended to influence the audience’s take on the story (Sacks, Jefferson & Schegloff,
1992). Akin to heckling, it “is decidedly confrontational, oppositional, disaffiliative, and
argumentative… [heckling] is an individual, public utterance usually directed at a ratified
current speaker, often in response to a particular assertion, utterance, statement or speech”
(McIlvenny, 1996, p.6). That is, Farage’s comment is directed at the overhearing audience.
But what about the ‘knowledge work’ such overlaps do? This is discussed below.
Challenges

The notion of epistemics has already been touched upon in the introduction above, as well as its link to identities in talk. Another important related aspect that needs to be elaborated is the notion of status and stance. In brief, status refers to the domains of knowledge mentioned earlier – and stance is how this access is oriented to in the sense of knowledgeable or not knowledgeable (Heritage, 2013). Returning to Extract 5.1, by making such a claim in the middle of Mitchell’s talk (line 6), Farage is also demonstrating an active monitoring of Mitchell’s talk. Such monitoring indicates that Farage is also closely following the portrayed stance of Mitchell so as to be in a position for further challenges. Farage’s comment is a type of knowledge-based intrusion in that the absence of downgrades (see Heritage & Raymond, 2005) positions his stance in a way to challenge Mitchell’s. Farage’s “°↑you don’t↓°” (Extract 5.1, line 6) thus informs the audience with equal ‘force’ of a position that challenges that of Mitchell. Additionally, the somewhat teasing light delivery of Farage’s comment serves to further downgrade Mitchell’s position.

Indeed, one could say that the problematic element of these debates is precisely that two contrasting epistemic domains are construed from the same source – the EU. This is an important element of the context of controversy that political debates are steeped in. ‘Ideologies’ in general can be highly contested and controversial matters (Billig et al., 1988), and by learning what epistemics in CA has shown us, we can see how ‘knowledge’ plays its part in the work of (political) argumentation. Because of this, the epistemic domains that are used and oriented to in talk can change frequently as the debates unfold.

The extract below is from C:F-1. Aspects of this debate have already been analysed in Chapter 4, but this particular instance is from a different point, taking place approximately thirty minutes earlier.
CLE: I understand I understand John as I say this is an issue which u:m creates great anxiety I understand that u:m but
we have to have this debate on the basis of facts and what you've just heard: from Nigel Farage is simply not true I’ve
got here: a leaflet fr
FAR: [>what is the- what is the ( ).]<
CLE: Nigel Farage >can I can I just< can I just finish the point. this is a leaflet that;
FAR: =yeah.
CLE: that Nigel Farage’s party distributed in the recent Eastleigh by-election >you may remember it< .h it says here that twenty
nine million Romanians and Bulgarians .h may come to this country ;there aren’t even; twenty nine million Romanians and
Bulgaria Bulgarians living in Romania and
CLE: Bulgaria .h {it is simply] not true<
FAR: [ah]
AUD: {xxxXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX}
FAR: °ah." °
AUD: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX x x x x x x x}
CLE: ↑so (.4) so you know let’s let’s have this↓} debate John but
let’s have it based on fact let me give you one more fact one out of seven of every company new company created in this
country are created by people who come here pay their taxes play by the rules if we pulled up the drawbridge overnight as
Nigel Farage implies our NHS would collapse overnight yes let’s make sure. that we bear down on unscrupulous employers who
for=instance don’t pay the minimum wage that’s why (. ) this↓; government has quadrupled the penalties we’re gonna impose upon
unscrupulous employers let’s bear down on the loopholes let’s make sure people do play by the rules but let’s not scare
people by [by ]
FAR: [( )]
CLE: claiming things that are not true which would have the
CLE: consequence ]
FAR: [(alright)]
CLE: of making us poorer and putting more people out of work
FAR: [[[you didn’t]]
CLE: [[t ha t su]rly cannot be right.
FAR: =you [[didn’t answer the question did you;]]
FER: [( ) Nigel Nigel Farage ]
FAR: [[[you didn’t an]swer the question
FER: [[Nigel Farage ]
FAR: you try to do trickery with the twenty nine million saying
there aren’t twenty nine you know why cos two million have
left ↑already;
AUD: {((laughter)
FAR: {.h ↑um they’ve gone

48The reference to ‘John’ is from an audience member who had previously asked: “You talk about economic recovery and jobs. Our borders are wide open to hundreds of thousands of Eastern Europeans coming and taking low paid work. Now it’s a brilliant thing that the tax threshold has been risen to £10,500 for people in low paid work.” The presenter rephrases this as “where is the benefit?”
AUD: XXXXXXXXXXXXXX x x x x x x x x x x x}

FAR: and they’ve gone to Italy and to ↑Spain↓}

AUD: x x

FAR: =Nick you didn’t answer the basic question (.2)

CLE: °yes you di[d°]

FAR:             

CLE: [[let’s look (at) the facts it says ( ) ]

FAR: [[you’re quite right( ) you’re quite right↓] you’re qu-

CLE: the fact is↓

FAR:                  

CLE: =you let me have [a ]

FAR: [if] we’re members of the European Union we

CLE: have the complete free flow of people ↑are you denying that↓

CLE: [[you-you are denying that↓]

FAR:                   

CLE: it is it is] not the t-case

FAR: [hhh]

CLE: and simply claim benefits simply u-

CLE: [live here ]

FAR: [[didn’t me]ntion [benefits]

CLE: [let me ] let me

CLE: [let me l- let me]

FAR: [[I didn’t=y- y- ] you keep doing be[nefits]

CLE: [no ]

CLE: let m[e ]

FAR: [we’re] talking about the free movement of people and

FAR: the [ability]

FER: [could I]

FER: could I just [make ( ) could I ( )]

FER: [in John’s industry ]

FER: [[mister Farage ]

FER: [[to get a ↑jo:b↓]

X: [[ ( )

The epistemic domain utilised in talk can be switched very quickly indeed. For example, in Extract 5.2, the initial domain talked about is that of Nigel Farage’s knowledge of his own person and actions (lines 54-55, 57-59), then in lines 61-62 and 64 the fact under discussion (who can enter the EU) is treated as mutual ground and, finally, a switch to Nick Clegg’s knowledge of his actions (lines 64-65). In such a change, Farage switches from defensive to offensive rhetoric (Potter, 1996) and designs the question in such a way (“If we’re members of the European Union we have the complete free flow of people. Are you denying that?” Extract 5.2, lines 64-65) as to strongly invite a polar yes/no response. Questions, particularly those that project towards a certain type of answer, can be used for presenting one’s view (Heritage, 2002; Clayman & Heritage, 2002). However, in this case, Farage is presenting a
hypothesized scenario that can be ascribed to Clegg’s ideological position. In this way Farage is able to, through the use of a question put to Clegg, project Clegg’s stance in a negative light. This question is not just an invitation to answer a question, or, in rhetorical terms, argue for a particular stand. It is also a request for a confirmation of a particular type of identity. In this case it is that of Clegg as one who is pro-EU and aware of a “complete free flow of people” into the UK in a context where the free flow of people is treated as problematic, suggesting an image of political incompetence. More importantly, it is an identity that is relatively clear. To clarify Clegg’s identity in such a way, on top of being Farage’s opponent, in such terms enables Farage to leave his own identity vague, and this in turn would give him a wider interactional repertoire to utilise – by way of the rhetorical force of vagueness (Potter, 1996). Indeed, Clegg displays an awareness of this and shows strong resistance to answer the question on Farage’s terms. There is a slightly delayed response (“eh yes”, Extract 5.2, line 66) and an immediate continuation of talk. When Farage pursues a polar response in repeating his question (Extract 5.2, line 67), Clegg ignores this altogether in his response, keeping the battle over identities alive.

This is just one example of how knowledge-based challenges in overlapping talk may work in political debates. The rest of the analysis in this chapter focuses on how these work in various contexts, such as moments of escalation, but first a note about the relevance of the positioning of overlaps.

Overlapping Talk and Positioning

The argument in this section is that the overlaps do not occur at random, nor are they always part of the turn-taking system as it works in everyday conversations. Overlaps, attempts at gaining the floor, and so forth, are part of political argumentation and they are strategically placed. Consider the first half of Extract 5.2:

Excerpt from Extract 5.2:

CLE: I understand I understand John as I say this is a- this is an issue which u:m creates great anxiety (.2) ah people are are unsettled by the whole. >immigration<=I understand that u:m but we h:ave to have this debate on the basis of facts and ↑what you’ve just heard↓ from Nigel Farage is <simply not true> ↑I’ve got here↓ a leaflet fr[om

FAR: [>what is the- what is the ()].<]
CLE: just< can I just finish the point. ↑this is a leaflet that; Nigel Fara-
FAR: =yeah.
CLE: =that Nigel Farage’s party distributed in the recent Eastleigh
by-election >you may remember it< .h it says here that twenty
nine million Romanians and Bulgarians .h may come to this
country ↑there aren’t even↑ twenty nine million Romanians and
Bulgaria Bulgarians living in Romania and
CLE: Bulgaria .h {it is >simply} not true<
FAR:     {ah}
AUD:              {xxxXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Note how on line 7 Farage begins to question Clegg on what he is saying. Farage’s challenge has two potential interpretations. He may be questioning Clegg on the relevance of his statement as the question from the audience member, which was rephrased by the moderator as “where is the benefit?” (see footnote 48). Alternatively, Farage may be orienting to the leaflet that Clegg produces during his turn (visible on the video recording but not noted on transcript) and is able to project the critique that Clegg delivers on lines 12-16. The second option is likely, not on the grounds that Farage can predict Clegg’s critique based on what Clegg is saying, but because UKIP members have been criticised on that specific leaflet prior to C:F-L taking place. We need not know with certainty why Farage challenges Clegg on line 7; the important point is the positioning. Farage delivers his challenge precisely at a point where Clegg is about to deliver something that can potentially undermine the ‘knowledge status’ of Farage in the debate, as well as deliver a potentially damaging critique of Farage and UKIP. In this particular case, Clegg gets his point out for the audience to respond.

A further point needs to be made briefly. The positioning of these overlaps can have a significant consequence in the way the interactions at hand unfold; for example, in Extract 5.6, where the claim, by Mitchell, and the challenge, by Farage, comes to a head. Unlike Extracts 5.2 and 5.7, there the overlap is persistent to the point of escalation (discussed in further detail under ‘Overlapping Talk and Escalation’ below). Farage challenges Mitchell after the latter makes the claim that the European Union has created 16 million jobs. Mitchell is challenged instantly and in a way that frames his factual talk as highly contestable to the audience. In a way, it is an attempt to shoot down Mitchell’s claim before it can be finished.

The suggestion here, and this is also echoed in the next chapter, is that there are certain types of argumentative claims that cannot be left uncontested. There are instances where these challenges do not stop the initial claim (Extract 5.2), sometimes they manage to disrupt the
initial claim (Extract 5.6), and there are also instances where a gentler form of overlap is treated as sufficient to inform the audience of the opposing speaker’s stance (Extract 5.1). Why does this happen? Why not instead wait for the opposing politician to finish their turn before challenging them? Politicians in a debate have to orient to the issue of what is at stake, and the norms of interaction in broadcast political debates are less formal than, say, in British parliamentary sessions. This means that politicians have more opportunities for interruption. Having this opportunity shows that the claim that “each party’s capacity to realise his or her agenda is thoroughly contingent on the conduct of the other party” (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p.6) has two sides. For example, in challenging Mitchell (see Extract 5.6) Farage is, in the first instance, resisting the language used by Mitchell in order to argue for his anti-EU ideological position, and at the same time is using his conduct to hinder Mitchell from doing the same for his pro-EU position. It is important to realise the role of the institutional setting in enabling politicians to challenge each other in such a manner, as in other cases they may well not be able to do so. A moderator represents “a third party who is both formally impartial and formally ‘in charge’ [and who] makes the news interview a comparatively safe environment for the expression of disagreement” (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p.321). It is the importance of one’s role in the interaction that is discussed next.

Overlapping Talk and Institutional Roles

One point of interest in terms of roles in the data is that overlap initiated by the moderators during debates is rarely treated as problematic by the political speakers, and they either orient their responses to the moderator’s comments or ignore them completely. What may be of relevance is the institutional setting of the interaction and, in particular, the role of the moderator in the debate. Hutchby (2006) discusses the role and function of a moderator in televised debates. According to him, the setting grants the moderator a certain authority to direct the debate towards a specific direction without it necessarily being treated as a challenge, but in order to do this the setting also demands an image of neutrality from the moderator (e.g. Clayman, 1992; Guillot, 2008) – something referred to as ‘neutralism’. It allows the moderator to refrain from joining in on an argument, though this is not unknown (e.g. Schegloff 1988/1989), as well as it serving as a manifestation of institutional authority – turn allocations and selective reformulations are considered to be within the power of the
moderator. More importantly, neutralism allows the moderator to talk over debaters without breaching etiquette – paving the way to framing their overlaps as COs. That said, the role of the moderator does not place the moderator above undermining, as one of the examples below will demonstrate.

In the following example, the moderator interrupts Mitchell’s talk on David Cameron’s actions in order to complete Mitchell’s utterance. Actions such as these can serve multiple functions, such as provoking debate or aligning the talk more along the perceived terms of the audience (Hutchby, 2006). This is an expansion of Extract 5.1, and this particular debate was also discussed frequently in Chapter 4.

Extract 5.3: From F:M-1

MIT: the day the day of Britain running Ireland is over the day >of anybody else running Ireland< is over .hh
FAR: [[↑↑you ( ) around from here.]]
MIT: [[there are eight there are eight] hundred [thousand.]]
FAR: [[↑↑you’re ] round
from here.
MIT: there are ei[ght hundred]
PRE: [[[unclear]]]
MIT: thousand people of Irish birth living in Britain. (.2) when we
joined the European Union (.5) >which was ↑not that long ago↓<
(,.) we had five year waiting lists for telephones .h we had ah-
our biggest export was people. (.2) the only decent road in the
country was a dual carriageway from Dublin to Naas. (.2) ah our
country has changed dramatically we have a financial services
centre ↑yes↓ (.2) which ↑now challenges↓ Britain (.2) ah eh it
may well be the loc:ation; for some of the business that’s in
eh London >if you don’t eh handle the game properly< we’ve a
pharmaceutical centre we’ve an IT centre that (.2) that exports
more (.2) eh software for computer purposes to the rest of
Europe than does the United States. that has given us economic
sovereignty a really different country we
FAR: [[[clears throat]]]
MIT: [[are no ] longer the country that exports cheap
food to feed Britain it is a different country that we have we
are Happier with our country we do not need >anybody to tell us
how to run our country and we ↑have a real say↓ here the-the
fact t[hat u- uh ]
FAR: [↑↑you don’t↓]
MIT: the fact that the: that the: treaties are agreed (.2) that we
are bound by the treaties that the la:arger member states are
bound by those treaties and we can take those treaties (.2) to
the European court (.2) is something that has been really
beneficial to us what’s not beneficial to us (.2) is
<intergovernmentalism> and this is one of the things that David
Cameron has in fact done us a disservice
MIT: [[the:]}
The moderator’s reformulation, on line 37 above, of Mitchell’s point forces the latter to adapt to the overlap, on lines 38-39. Although there is a phrase completion by the moderator and a rejection of it by Mitchell, this instance is not treated as overly intrusive, and Mitchell returns to discussing his earlier point regarding treaties. This example demonstrates that we may have an idea of overlapping talk which is not treated as an interruption, and that in some cases the role of the speakers may influence this reaction. While this overlap may function as a form of a CO in terms of technical delivery, it is also a selective reading by the interviewer on Mitchell’s preceding talk – perhaps either to encourage debate or to repackage the information to the audience (Hutchby, 2006). This is a relatively fair assumption as, at that point, Mitchell had not mentioned Germany by name at all and France only once (approximately three and a half minutes earlier in the debate). The relevance of this is in that the premise of the debate was on the actions of the French and German politicians, and the implications of this for Ireland. Note also that there is no “hearable” complaint by the moderator in his overlapping talk, and to build the overlap as a confrontation would require a joint action by both speakers (e.g. Schegloff, 1988/1989; Emmertsen, 2007). Also note how, in lines 38-39, Mitchell too, overlaps to try to regain the floor from the moderator by the repetition; a challenge the moderator does not return.

In *F:JW*, there is an interesting situation where one of the debaters, Dan Jørgensen, does, in fact, challenge the moderator. In this example the moderator, Shirin Wheeler, is not
protected from reproach by her institutional role; on the contrary, her role is used to make her accountable for Farage’s actions. After summarising Farage’s talk, the moderator begins to use this to move on in the debate. However, this is challenged by Jørgensen, who by challenging the moderator is resisting a change of topic. At this point, he has repeatedly tried to get Farage to answer the question of why the Danish should pay more per capita than the British regarding their EU membership. This is a question Farage does not respond to, and Jørgensen goes on to challenge the moderator when she tries to move the discussion on.

Extract 5.4, below, was seen earlier in Chapter 4, under the section ‘Facts Matter’.

Extract 5.4

1. WHE: ah saying you know you’ve given you’ve sold it
2. WHE: [(down the river you’ve sold us down the river]  
3. FAR: [(wh- the rebate is because )] the rebate was  
   put in place for Brit’n because we are not a European country  
   . h we are different . h our far[ming system was different]  
4. X: [ (European) ( ) you ]  
5. WHE: =£0:H [that’s a new one]  
6. FAR: [and we are ]  
7. X: [ ( ) ]  
8. FAR: and=and unlike your countries  
9. JØR: okay  
10. FAR: unlike your countries. we’re a globa[l nation]  
11. JØR: [ .hhh ]  
12. FAR: we do a bigger proportion of=of our trade and our business . h  
   with the rest of the world than <any other> European country  
13. JØR: [((snorts))]  
14. FAR: [we always ] have and=and=and my hope is that we’ll go on  
   doing that  
15. WAT: "Den[mark is a glo]bal nation?"  
16. FAR: [so that’s why]  
17. WAT: Germany is [a global nation?]  
18. FAR: [no ]  
19. PRE: [the Netherlands?]  
20. FAR: Britain. (. ) they’re not none of them are we have a much  
   greater- proportion of trade across the world but=you’d know this  
21. argument about what it cost British people .hh whether we talk  
22. gross or net this year our net contribution to the EU is gonnao  
   be <nine billion> pounds. and what people see (.2) . h is (. )  
23. they see in their own lives at the moment y’know the local  
   gravedigger or sweep streeet- being sAcknowled as a result of local  
   government (. ) ah cUt and i what they see here  
24. JØR: ="but Nigel"  
25. FAR: =is a massive increase in the EU’s ehm parliaments i-eh-uh  
   eighteen percent increase in the entertainment budget (.2) in  
   this very building we’re in down[stairs]  
26. JØR: [Nigel ]
JØR: can you (answer me) one |
FAR: [there is a fleet of cars] | 39
JØR: one simple [question ]  | 40
FAR: [that you can’t believe today we voted | 41
(.5)
JØR: [Nigel ]  | 42
FAR: [for ou-] for there to be a  | 43
FAR: Eur[o- pean house ]  | 44
PRE: [I’ll come to you in a minute]  | 45
FAR: of history I mean <can you not see> that ordinary tax payers | 46
PRE: [I’ll come to you in a minute]  | 47
JØR: that are suffering think these institutions are arrogant and | 48
PRE: [O ]KAY a [ MAss]ive | 49
JØR: [°Nigel°]  | 50
PRE: [is that what you voted through] | 51
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 52
PRE: [[[WHY/ONE]]] I’m giving you [chance to-] | 53
JØR: [how d- how] do I tell my | 54
JØR: Brit[sh ]  | 55
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 56
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 57
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 58
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 59
JØR: [(WHY/ONE)] I’m giving you [chance to-] | 60
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 61
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 62
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 63
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 64
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 65
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 66
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 67
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 68
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 69
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 70
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 71
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 72
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 73
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 74
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 75
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 76
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 77
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 78
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 79
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 80
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 81
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 82
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 83
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 84
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 85
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 86
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 87
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 88
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 89
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 90
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 91
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 92
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 93
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 94
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 95
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 96
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 97
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 98
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 99
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 100
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 101
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 102
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 103
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 104
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 105
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 106
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 107
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 108
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 109
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 110
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 111
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 112
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 113
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 114
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 115
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 116
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 117
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 118
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 119
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] | 120
JØR: [let him let him get ] away with this without | 121
PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase | 122
PRE: [°Nigel°]  | 123
JØR: [tche: y:ou ]  | 124
PRE: [[is that what you voted through] |
Initially, Jørgensen tries to address Farage (Extract 5.4, line 52), but this overlaps with the moderator’s summary of Farage’s previous talk, and moving on to ask a question from Jørgensen (Extract 5.4, lines 51, 53-4, 56). In the video clip she directs her gaze at Jørgensen, so it is assumed that she is at least partially addressing him, and he, in turn, has directed his gaze toward the moderator to respond.

Here, Jørgensen’s claim is a direct one: “you let him let him get away with this without answering a very simple question” (Extract 5.4, lines 55, 57-59). There are six things to note about this. First, the very first utterance “you” indicates that it is the moderator who is addressed and who must respond to the subsequent talk. Again, this is reinforced by Jørgensen responding to the moderator addressing him, and in response, he focuses his gaze on the moderator while he makes the claim. Also, a direct address can add force to a criticism (Clayman, 1995). Second, the claim that the moderator has “let” Farage not answer a question indexes her as a person of authority in the interaction: her institutional role (e.g. Hutchby, 2006; Guillot, 2008). This frames her as an active agent and implies that she is at least partly accountable for Farage’s actions. Third, the claim that she has “let him [Farage] get away with” not answering a question has a negative tone, implying that Farage has done something he should not have – Jørgensen is putting forth a complaint. In other words, some kind of transgression has taken place. Fourth, the downgrading of the action that was expected of Farage (“a very simple question”). The action that Jørgensen is prompting from Farage is to provide an answer to a question – a solution to a puzzle). Note how the problem is downgraded by a triple hedging; choice of the article ‘a’ over ‘the’ to portray it as mundane and possibly to resist particularisation (Billig, 1996), describing the problem as “simple” to challenge claims of complexity, and, finally, the adding of an extreme case formulation “very” to add force to the claim. Above all, by framing the question as “very simple”, it would follow by implication then that the answer would be very simple or at least readily available. In terms of the ‘knowledge work’ done here, this is relevant because the

50The Puzzle-Solution and Question-Answer devices are commonly used in political speeches to elicit a response from audience (e.g. Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; McIlvenny, 1996). Here, it is used in a similar manner to elicit a response from Farage.
nature of the question places the answer as something that is readily accessible for all – suggesting that the absence of an answer is incongruent with the apparent epistemic domains of those present in the interaction. Fifth, while this claim is directed at the moderator, it is done so with Farage being present and very much in the position to hear it. In this sense, the accusation can also be directed at Farage too. Moreover, by directing the accusation at the moderator, it allows a criticism of Farage to be heard without necessarily providing him with a convenient way to respond. Sixth, and final, is that by bringing up Farage not answering a question, Jørgensen, too, is not answering a question posed to him by the moderator in lines 53-54, 56 (Extract 5.4).

Because, seemingly, the moderator has not acted in accordance to the institutional norms (in not pressing Farage for an answer), it has resulted in Jørgensen pushing against the institutional norms and directing a complaint at the moderator. In response to the accusation by Jørgensen, the moderator reacts by raising her voice (Extract 5.4, line 60). Interestingly, this is a tactic she has used in other parts of the debate to try to allocate a turn to someone else. She does not reject the implication that she is a person of authority in the debate by stating that she is giving Jørgensen a chance – what she is giving a chance to is not clear as her counter-claim is ignored as Jørgensen brings his question back to Farage – and that chances are in her authority to give. The claim to giving Jørgensen a chance (to respond) can be viewed as an appeal to the setting of the debate as well as her institutional, neutral, role (Hutchby, 2006).

**Overlapping Talk and Laughter**

Having discussed various aspects of overlapping talk and the relevance of different contextual factors, I now turn to a very particular type of overlap: laughter. I will then use the second example of laughter to talk about escalation in the next section.

An interruption need not be by words; it can be used to negate or reject a claim. This section focuses on the function of laughter in interruption and overlapping talk; for a more detailed discussion of the function of laughter and derision see Chapter 6. One striking example of a rather persistent overlap by laughter is when Mitchell reacts to Farage’s accusation. Extract 5.5 is an overlap and a continuation of Extract 5.3.
Extract 5.5

1. FAR: [((clears throat))]  
2. MIT: we [are  no ] longer the country that exports cheap  
3. food to feed Britain it is a different country that we have we  
4. are Happier with our country we do not need >anybody to tell us  
5. how to run< our country and we ↓have a real say; here the-the  
6. fact t[hat u- uh ]  
7. FAR: [°you don’t°]  
8. MIT: the fact that the: that the: treaties are agreed (.) that we  
9. are bound by those treaties that the la:nger member states are  
10. bound by those treaties and we can take those treaties (.) to  
11. the European court (.) is something that has been really  
12. beneficial to us what’s not beneficial to us (.) is  
13. < intergovernmentalism > and this is one of the things that David  
14. Cameron has in fact done us a disservice

MIT: [[the:]]

16. PRE: [[the ] French and Germans going it [alone effectively]  
17. MIT: [↑well  well ] well  
18. no↓ what will happen now is (.) that (in disagreement) has to  
19. be reached outside of the treaties that does not suit us .h  
20. anything that’s treaty based (.) that’s overseen by the  
21. commission .h that is subject to: (.5) eh=eh the:=the rule of  
22. the court that has a:always been in our interest .hh look what  
23. happened in the FSF for example when it was outside (.2) ah of  
24. the treaties (.5) and it didn’t suit us because we were  
25. dependent on what was happening in Finland .h or a general  
26. election >in in e:h in=election coming up< in=eh in=eh France  
27. or Germany .h whatever is treaty based (.) whatever is based  
28. on=th- on=on the institutions of the union <has: suited the>  
29. interests of small states like Ireland and that’s where our  
30. future is and ↓if we have to choose↓ .hh between Britain or=e-  
31. or the union there is no choice for us our future is with  
32. Europe this

MIT: [[we’re not]] a:sking you  

34. MIT: [[market of five hundred ] million °people°]  
35. FAR: [↑we’re  not↓] a:sking you  
36. MIT: [↑we’re  not↓] a:sking you  
37. FAR: >I think (that) you’re< very good at coming out with the anti-  
38. British st[uff. and and that of course]  
39. MIT: [eh heh heh heh heh heh heh ]  
40. FAR: .H ↓EVERYONE [does that these days .hh but]  
41. MIT: [↑hh  o::h yeah=heheheheh° ]  
42. FAR: y’know we’re not a:- y’know we are not saying to you as  
43. British Eurosceptics we want to reincorporate you in the United  
44. Kingdom .hh ↑that is not↓ what we’re saying (.5) but what we  
45. are talking about whether it’s Ireland .h or >any other member  
46. state< of the EU .h is we now have a union that is  
47. fundamentally < antidemocratic > .h in the way in which it  
48. operates .h and (. ) THE ECONOMICS of it .h you know if our  
49. financial services eventually gets hit “yours gets hit too”>  
50. and that’s the point I’m making

Here, the laughter accomplishes a number of things that are worth looking into. One rather  
obvious accomplishment is that of disturbing the flow of what the other is saying (Billig,
2005), but laughter can also function as a form of resistance to what is being said: “Laughter plays a part in resisting topical development... or complaining talk” (Glenn, 2003, p.143). We have some evidence of this disruptive influence by observing how Farage raises his voice before completing his claim “H EVERYONE” (Extract 5.5, line 39), which can be constituted as a fight to regain the floor so that he can voice his claim/complaint in full51. The reason for viewing Farage’s reaction as fighting for the floor rather than emphasising an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), although a fight for the floor certainly does not negate an extreme case formulation and vice versa, comes from looking at the location of his audibly louder remark. At that point, the overlap between both debaters is relatively long in comparison to the norm, and once overlaps become more ‘extreme’, the participants may resort to various strategies for regaining the floor (Schegloff, 2000); raising their voice is usually one option. It is worth noting also that in light of the extended overlap, we can see an element of an IO, and that Farage treats it as such. What labels Mitchell’s action as an IO is, firstly, the length of the laughter itself and, secondly, that his response is laughter in the first place rather than a display of listening52 (e.g. Schegloff, 2000; Gardner, 2001). There are other significant accomplishments that laughter enables here. Firstly, laughter can be a reaction that neither affiliates nor rejects the claim; it “offers a response somewhere between outright rejection and outright co-implication in potentially problematic talk” (Glenn, 2003, p.122). Here it is suggested that the laughter is disaffiliative because it is accompanied by an ironic agreement “o::h yeah” (Extract 5.5, line 40). The irony is made so by being embedded within laughter particles, and the possibility of a serious agreement to such a criticism would be quite unusual.

Another important action that laughter-as-rejection can achieve is that it can be used to treat the preceding talk as laughable (Glenn, 2003). This second point is of particular significance, as a serious rejection by Mitchell could in fact give the claim some legitimacy. Therefore, Mitchell leaves that for later (approximately 75 seconds) in the debate and, for the time being, reacts by treating the claim as something that is beneath the seriousness of the debate. By orienting to the response as humorous, Mitchell’s reaction is, in essence, reformulating Farage’s claim as something that is not serious.

51 Note also that Farage is surrounding his claim with an ‘absurdity’ (see Antaki, 2003): “everyone” is coming out with the anti-British stuff these days.
52 For example; “hmm”, “yes” and so forth.
It should also be noted, as it is not clear from the transcripts, that while Nigel Farage is making the claim that Gay Mitchell is anti-British, he is doing so with a visible smile. That is, the seriousness of the claim is in the first place downplayed. This has a rhetorical dimension, which deserves a brief mention here. By putting his comment out as a joke, he is able to make it heard. A serious accusation that Mitchell is anti-British would not necessarily be heard in such an unproblematic fashion. Instead, the jocular tone allows the accusation to be made while at the same time not giving way to a strong reaction – all Mitchell can do is laugh and carry the light atmosphere lest he give too much legitimacy to the accusation. All things considered, the laughter, other than being a strategically convenient response, allows Mitchell to laugh over Farage. If we consider the importance of positioning of overlap, as well as the ‘knowledge work’ this kind of laughter can do (Chapter 6), laughing over Farage is a strong counter to his assertion.

There is also a more direct confrontational element to laughter. Much like in the previous example, laughter is used to both disagree and to treat the other side as laughable. However, here the ambiguous nature of laughter-as-rejection is much reduced. In the following example, towards the end of the F:M-I debate, laughter is used in a less ambiguous manner:

Extract 5.6

```
MIT: look (. ) what we’ve got to be is smart and say (.4) <Europe together> (.8) can get over this problem (. ) Europe of twenty seven can’t and if we behave like and (.2) twenty six other member states behave like that then there’s no future
MIT: for [us ]
PRE: [right] Nigel Farage ve[ry briefly]
FAR: [°look° the] Euro is a failure (.4) you’ve put together countries that are so vastly different from each other .h that it is actually destroying (.2) some of those Mediterranean countries .h it is bleeding the tax payers in the north of Europe .h and the sooner the Eurozone breaks up .h and the countries that should Never have joined league the better we’ll all be
MIT: can [I just say on the Euro]
PRE: [o- very] briefly
MIT: first of all the Euro now is the second currency of the world (.2) far ahead of Sterling and it’s- as a reserve currency .h secondly in its first ten years we created sixteen million more jobs [that av contributed]
FAR: [ hah ]
FAR: not in Ire[land fourteen per] cent unemployment
MIT: [contributed to creating]
MIT: created (. ) [contributed contributed to creating]
```
The first obvious sign of an IO is Nigel Farage’s laughter particle “hah” (Extract 5.6, line 20). His initial overlap has similar elements to Gay Mitchell’s laughter-as-rejection mentioned above. Indeed, here the overlap can be heard as an interruption because the laughter is a preface to a counterclaim, even though it does begin at what seems an appropriate TRP. Moreover, the counterclaim is a negative assessment “not in Ireland” (Extract 5.6, line 21), and, as mentioned earlier, an overlap-complaint can constitute an interruption (Schegloff, 2001). The interruption is followed by a factual counterclaim which results in an extended overlap. The overlapping talk continues over an extended period of time where both speakers follow a different conversational trajectory, and since neither speaker is showing any signs of abandoning their turn to enable one speaker to continue, this constitutes a prime case of escalation. What brings the escalation to an end is the return to a
mutual trajectory in talk, and this brings the speakers to the same, or at least much closer, epistemic domains.

What appears to be different in terms of laughter, though, is that while Mitchell, in the earlier example, treats Farage’s comment as humorous (Extract 5.5, lines 38, 40), here the treating of the other speaker’s comment as laughable seems to be at the forefront of the rebuttal (Extract 5.6, line 20). The laughter is not intended to be heard as laughter, but as critique. A further reason for considering the overlap as disparaging is that it is just a single laughter particle – giving it a characteristic of a word rather than extended or spontaneous laughter. Disparaging laughter is not the only way to challenge the opponent. Farage’s utterance serves largely to disrupt and signal strong disapproval, and constructing the laughter as unambiguously disaffiliative is used to this end. It is only his second laughter, “chahha:h” (Extract 5.6, line 27), a reaction to the repeat of the earlier claim that initiated the “hah” disapproval, that appears to share some of the characteristics of laughter discussed earlier. However, since both instances of laughter by Farage are embedded in an otherwise humourless disagreement, they can be understood as IÖs. In the earlier case of Mitchell’s laughter (Extract 5.5), the aim seems to be to signal disagreement, while in Farage’s laughter there is an additional dimension of fighting for the floor in order to insert a counterclaim (see Chapter 6).

Laughter in situations like these is not distinguishable from words in a rhetorical sense, as it carries similar functions of presenting a counter as words would: “Laughter has a rhetorical character, for it is typically used to communicate meaning to others” (Billig, 2005, p.189). As stated earlier, it can be used to disrupt talk and in this sense serves to signal disagreement. This, in conjunction with the element of social control of laughter (Drew, 1987) and a potential disciplinary function by ridiculing (Billig, 2005), constitutes a powerful reaction to claims of anti-Britishness or that the Eurozone has created jobs in Ireland.
Overlapping Talk and Escalation

At the beginning of the analysis I showed a case of a milder form of overlap by way of a CO – here I will focus on more overt cases of disagreements and, to conclude, will discuss a case of escalation. Intrusive or extended overlap can be used to escalate the debate, and, as mentioned earlier, a confrontation is a joint effort carried out by speakers (e.g. Schegloff, 1988/1989). By extension, then, we shall consider escalation also a joint action. This means that any number of potential moments of escalation can be found in debates, but their emergence is dependent on the debaters’ actions. Farage at times in F:M-1 is notably intrusive, and in acting so is blocking his opponents’ talk.

Extract 5.7

1 MIT: um (.) in the longer term it’s not going to be good for either
2 Britain or Ireland but we have choices to make and <our future
3 is with Europe (.) ah=they the-the-the fact that there’s a
4 European central bank suits us better than the British
5 Chancellor of the Exchequer setting
6 MIT: the [value of our currency. ]
7 FAR: [.hh >hang on Gay< we=we] really can’t go down this line
8 and I CANNOT allow you .h to say that I(h)reland has gained
9 sovereignty (.2) ↑PhLE:ase↓
10 MIT: °yeah°
11 FAR: you broke away from us (.2) you had a few brief decades of
12 independence .h and ↑running your own affairs Having your own
13 parliament that was sovereign .h making your own decisions↓ you
14 are now a province of a European super state you are a small
15 country you are powerless (.2) because the Franco German pact
16 runs this thing .h and ↑to think↓ that the Irish budget was
17 actually seen and debated in the Bundestag before it came to
18 the Dáil shows what you’ve been reduced to and if you argue (.)
19 that a few Irishmen have taken highly paid jobs in Brussels
20 that somehow that gives your country power it’s nonsense you’ve
21 been reduced to nothing

Here Farage interrupts Mitchell’s talk, not only by interrupting quickly and by addressing his opponent directly (Extract 5.7, line 7), but also by rejecting the implication of Mitchell’s claim (“we=we really can’t go down this line”). Note the use of “we” so that Farage aligns himself with Mitchell, as participating members of the debate, before the rejection – so that this action of rejection is given an air of joint production by both debaters – possibly as an attempt to restrict the discursive options (Bhatia, 2006) of Mitchell. In this example, Mitchell does not challenge Farage’s interruption but lets him go on with his point, and only
adds a continuer (Extract 5.7, line 10) to indicate listenership (Schegloff, 2000). An IO such as this could provide the first part to an escalation, but Mitchell does not respond to it. Escalation is avoided in two ways: firstly by Mitchell not responding or continuing his talk from the point of overlap initiation, and secondly by the indication of listening. Therefore, IOs alone are not enough to contribute to escalation – a lack of a similar uptake by the other speaker(s) maintains the relatively stable flow of talk (Schegloff, 1988/1989).

When comparing the previous extract and the ones below, it becomes even more noticeable that escalation is a collaborative event. While Mitchell in Extract 5.7 lets Farage take the floor, later on in F:M-1, however, he is not so conceding and challenges Farage’s IO more readily. Let us return to Extract 5.6 and look at another case (from Extract 5.4). Note how neither speaker cedes the floor to their opponent and the role this plays in escalation.

Extract 5.6

MIT: look (.) what we’ve got to be is smart and say (.4) <Europe
together> (.8) can get over this problem (..) Europe of twenty
seven can’t and if we behave like and (.2) twenty six other
member states behave like that then there’s no future
MIT: for [us ]
PRE: [right] Nigel Farage ve[ry briefly]
FAR: [*look* the] Euro is a failure (.4)
you’ve put together countries that are so vastly different from
each other .h that it is actually destroying (.2) some of those
Mediterranean countries .h it is bleeding the tax payers in the
north of Europe .h and the sooner the Eurozone breaks up .h and
the countries that should _Neve_r have joined league the better_
we’ll all be
MIT: can [I just say on the Euro]
PRE: [o- very] briefly
MIT: first of all the Euro now is the second currency of the world
(.-2) far ahead of Sterling and it’s- as a reserve currency .h
secondly in its first ten years we created _sixteen million_ more
jobs [that av contributed]
FAR: [ _hah_ ]
FAR: not in Ire[land fourteen per] cent unemployment
MIT: [contributed to creating]
FAR: [contributed to creating]
MIT: [twenty five per cent youth unemployment ] you
[(trot) this rubbish out don’t you]
MIT: [sixteen million] _mo_re jobs in Europe
FAR: chahh[a:h well not in I:reland ]

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53Interestingly, this may do some work in terms of ‘authority’. Jacknick (2013) discusses an example where a teacher in a class uses a continuer to give the student permission to continue talking. It could be argued that Mitchell may be doing something similar – in “giving permission” he positions himself as one in position of authority.
MIT: [than in the United States] including in Ireland. And what has happened in Ireland is because of maladministration and bad decisions we made ourselves in our own sovereign decision making we’ve cut-created problems.

FAR: [[well ask the unemployed that]]

MIT: [[[exasperated] Uh the situation that Europe has contributed to]]

FAR: [>dear ]

PRE: [[very briefly Nigel]]

MIT: [[eh=eh=eh uh i-] [in ah in ah]]

FAR: [[dear dear< (.2) absolute rubbish]]

the Euro damaged Ireland badly by giving you falsely low interest rates for seven years. It lead to a massive boom in the housing sector and commercial property sector. And a bust that may take a decade or more to get out of.

MIT: [can I] just say this (.4) that John Bruton during that period we would never have gotten into this situation we’re in these decisions made.

FAR: =the interest rates were set in Frankfurt Gay you=

MIT: =where our sovereign rate=

FAR: =’ve given it all up you don’t govern yourselves anymore] the interest rates[=

MIT: =the interest rates, (.)

( )

MIT: the interest rate[=]

FAR: =set in Frankfurt the interest rate gave us great opportunities and instead like drunken sailors and our government authorised a spending

Below is an extract from the Farage-Jørgensen-Watson debate; an excerpt from Extract 5.4. Here Farage and Jørgensen are disagreeing on the desirability of the EU. What happens in the end is that all three participants begin talking over each other, so that it is no longer possible to distinguish from the recording what is being said by whom, and the moderator is forced to intervene to restore order to the debate.

Excerpt from Extract 5.4

FAR: I mean <can you not see> that ordinary tax payers that are suffering think these institutions are arrogant and out of tou[ch]

PRE: [O KAY a MAssive]

JØR: =”Nigel”=

PRE: increase in the EU’s budget Nigel is saying a massive increase in the parli[ament budget] the parli[ament budget] JØR: =tc: y:ou ]

PRE: [[is that what you voted through]
JØR: [[let him let him get ] away with this without
answering a very simple
constituency that we are net payers (as) well except m- every
Dane pays three times as much to the EU as the
JØR: Bri[tsh ( )
FA R: [(well) if you’re (being)]
JØR: [ ]
FA R: [[if you’re being] a worse deal than us
JØR: we[’re (def- ]
FA R: [that’s a comp]arison of misery isn’t it
JØR: ah[h: ] / ((snort))
FA R: [and you] should be arguing that your people shouldn’t be
paying much money into this <either>
JØR: no what I am arguing is (.2) that (.2) it’s too simple a way of
putting it (.2) what you need to see is okay how much does the
the: the st-European Union and (mat-)ordinary people and Europe
FA R: very li[ttle] they hate it
JØR: [:it :matters a lot[:]
JØR: we make common rules [ ( ) ] (environments)
FA R: [they hate it]
JØR: we make common rul-[ (well) one of the ] reasons
FA R: [they voted against it]
JØR: some of them hate it is because
(.
JØR: people li[ke you ( ) some of the]
FA R: [well your country said no in] a referendum to it
JØR: listen.
FA R: twice [TWICE ( ) ]
JØR: [ ]
PRE: [le- let let let NI:-] let Da[n finish the]
JØR: [ ((snort)) ]
PRE: [[sentence then I’ll come to the end]
FA R: [[come on we’ve been ( ) arguing the Da]nish people they keep
saying NO:;
JØR: you know the we- the way you argue is one of the reasons
people don’t like politician[s ]
PRE: [ok-]
JØR: in my country we try to be a bit a bit more polite but that’s
different of co[urse ( )]
PRE: [G-Graham Graham ( ) let’s hear from Graham]
X:

While minor overlaps are not unusual in conversations (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 2000),
what goes on in extracts 5.6 and 5.4 resembles more heckling and arguing than standard
conversation. Similar to the example discussed by Hutchby (2006) on political confrontation,
the ‘heckler’ is, in effect, blocking the speaker from getting their point across. What, then,
constitutes the escalation in these examples is the heckling, or IOs, paired with the fact that
none of the speakers cede the floor. Moreover, in the excerpt from Extract 5.4, we see more
than just a simple fight for the floor; Dan Jørgensen is in effect orienting to Farage’s talk ("we make common rul- (well) one of the reasons some of them hate it is because", excerpt from Extract 5.4, lines 33, 35), and notably does so in the middle of his own utterance. The subsequent battle for the floor turns into a confrontation where the moderator is forced to intervene to restore order. This demonstrates another interesting point regarding overlap, that “talk by more than two at a time seems to be reduced to two (or to one) even more effectively than talk by two is reduced to one” (Schegloff, 2000, p.7), as well as how the job of retreating from escalation is left to the moderator (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Returning to Jørgensen’s orientation to Farage, a point of interest is his mid-utterance change (“rul.”). Not only is this accompanied by a change of tone, but the combination of these two can be used also to signal a change in the interaction. Up to that point, Jørgensen’s responses to Farage had been relatively ‘normal’, but here we note a change in his style. He becomes more confrontational and makes no uncertain claims about Farage (“the reason some of them hate it is because people like you” / “the way you argue is one of the reasons people don’t like politicians in my country”, excerpt from Extract 5.4, lines 33, 35, 37, 47-48, 50-51). At this point both debaters are relying on IOs and are largely talking over each other. Both are continuing their own line of talk rather than orient to each other’s talk – Farage is talking about how the Danish hate the EU and Jørgensen is voicing claims about Farage’s behaviour. In effect, here the escalation marks a shift away from facts and becomes ad hominem. These points can be extended to the case in Extract 5.6

So, here we have three particular features that seem to be associated with escalation and confrontation. First, a mid-utterance cut-off to change the direction of the talk to a more confrontational style. This sudden cut-off can also function as a signal that the parameters of the talk are about to change. Second, continuing overlap where neither speaker is aligning to what the other is saying, but instead each speaker continues his line of talk. Third, and final, a return to some form of mutual trajectory is what seems to end these sequences of escalation. In the case of the excerpt from Extract 5.4, an intervention from the moderator was required. In Extract 5.6, this did not happen although, arguably, the probability of the moderator intervening would have been high had there not been a return to a mutual trajectory of talk by Gay Mitchell (Extract 5.6, lines 28-29). A common feature throughout these sequences is the opposing factual claims – that is, the ‘facts’ are being challenged by other ‘facts’.
5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the role of overlap in broadcast political debates and the various ways in which it manifests. Overlapping talk has a range of functions, and it can constitute a type of challenge of an opposing debater. I have aimed to demonstrate in this chapter how a relatively normal conversational practice, given the appropriate context, can do argumentative work. This is not to say that there is something special about these practices. On the contrary, it points to how mundane conversational practices can play a role in argumentation. Rather than overlap being used for ideological purposes, what has been shown, and how Billig (1991) argues, is how close to everyday and mundane practices, ideology can be.

This chapter has considered a number of aspects to do with overlap. In the first place, a potential relationship between overlap, ‘knowledge work’ and argumentation was suggested. The following part demonstrates how the positioning of the overlaps has an argumentative function, giving further weight to the argumentative relationship of overlaps. The positions of these overlaps are important to note. The context and nature of broadcast political debates enables politicians to challenge each other at points where one speaker could deliver an otherwise rhetorically powerful claim. It is important to note who is doing the overlapping talk. Overlap from moderators of the debate is rarely taken as interruptive, challenging or problematic, whereas overlaps between the debaters can constitute a range of actions. As such, in the context of broadcast political debates the institutional roles of the speakers also plays a part. This is not unexpected, as the role of moderators as directing the interaction is already well documented (e.g. Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Laughter can serve as a type of stance informing (see also Chapter 6) as can other short interruptions – it allows a politician to put forth a disagreement without being too disruptive nor treat the targets of the interruptions as ‘legitimate’. When neither debating politician is willing to cede the floor to the other, we have the beginning of an escalation sequence. These are often accompanied by mismatching conversational trajectories, or to put it simply, they are not speaking about the same things. Escalations can end either with a return to the mutual trajectory, often with one speaker ceding the floor, or with the intervention of the moderator.

While Chapter 4 demonstrated some argumentative strategies employed in broadcast political debates, this chapter has focused on the argumentative aspect of some of the more
mechanical functions. Simple everyday features of talk, in this case overlapping talk, can play a part in contested political discourse. Just as almost any other conversational feature, it can be recruited to do the work of argumentation. The next chapter will focus on laughter – and hopefully demonstrate how laughter, as a ‘mechanical’ function as well as an argumentative strategy, can help us understand contested political discourse.
6. Humour or Derision? The Rhetorical Work of Laughter

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I discussed the use of an epistemic-rhetorical focus towards studying contested political discourse. Chapter 4 focused on how politicians make claims and how these claims can be contested. In Chapter 5, the analytical focus was on what happens when the contestations and claims begin to overlap and its various aspects – for example when the interaction escalates into more argument-like talk. In this chapter, I wish to turn the analytical attention to looking at instances of laughter in political debates. Laughter, as I will demonstrate, can constitute a form of challenge or counterclaim to what politicians claim in debates. However, the way laughter is utilised in political debates differs from that of the types of counterclaims discussed so far in my thesis and, thus, needs to be analysed separately. This analytical chapter focuses on a particular type of non-verbal challenge: the use of derisive laughter. Billig tells us that “a laugh can be so much more than just a laugh. In conventional terms, it is not even a laugh: it is a serious part of conversational language” (2005, p.192). The focus here is on the type of ‘knowledge’ and rhetorical work that laughter in political debates does to advance an ‘ideological’ position at the cost of challenging viewpoints. Put simply, to laugh in a political debate is to do argumentative work.

There is a notable strand of Conversation Analytic (CA) research dedicated to studying laughter (e.g. Jefferson, 1979; Glenn, 2003; Glenn & Holt, 2013). CA tends to focus on laughter as it unfolds in interaction, eschewing the term ‘humour’ and its theoretical connotations and, instead, looks to the kinds of function laughter can have in interaction. These range from focusing on the positioning of laughter (e.g. Glenn, 2003; Jefferson, 1984b; Romaniuk, 2009), who laughs first (e.g. Jefferson, 1979), laughter within words (e.g. Potter & Hepburn, 2010), and what is designed as laughable (e.g. Holt, 2011), to name a few. One of the core findings of CA is that laughter is not so much associated with humour as it is with some form of interactional work that is unfolding: “Broadly speaking, laughter shows up time and time again in two kinds of environments: celebrations and trouble” (Glenn & Holt, 2013, p.2). As occasions of celebrations would be rather unexpected in broadcast political debates, the focus in this chapter will be on the latter.

In CA there is recognition that laughter need not be associated with humour (Holt, 2011). It can do delicate interactional work; such as be a part of talking about one’s troubles
managing delicate situations in a medical setting (Haakana, 2001),
orienting to institutional identities (Jacknick, 2013), or as disaffiliative actions in resisting questions in broadcast interviews (Romaniuk, 2013). It is this kind of non-humorous laughter that I analyse in this chapter. In my data, laughter is used to manage and deliver disagreement in institutionally constrained interactions – broadcast political debates – and where the politicians are orienting their argument to the overhearing audience (Hutchby, 2006) as much as to their ‘ideological’ opponent. Laughter is a means for specific social actions. As Romaniuk (2013) points out, there is relatively little CA research into laughter in a political setting. Her work focuses on disaffiliative laughter in broadcast political interviews, and my work will continue along this line in looking at laughter in broadcast political debates and the function(s) it accomplishes in political argumentation – particularly in challenging one’s opponent. Laughter is “indexical; it is heard as referring to something” (Glenn, 2003, p.48), and Romaniuk rightly states that “an important component of recognising some of the social and communicative aspects of laughter is to consider it not exclusively as responding to humour but as marking its referent as laughable” (2009, p.19). This act of marking something as laughable is an important function when it comes to laughter in broadcast political debates, as this chapter aims to demonstrate. Much of the research in CA into laughter has provided very clear and useful accounts of the kinds of actions laughter accomplishes. However, there is a tendency to underplay the rhetorical functions of laughter (Billig, 2005). What Billig means with the rhetorical function of laughter is that “it is typically used to communicate meaning to others” (2005, p.189) and to convey argumentative meaning54 (ibid.). CA goes to great lengths to demonstrate how laughter is performative rather than expressive of an inner mental state of joy. However, CA does not always focus on the wider ‘ideological’ work that laughter and humour can do, such as its role in maintaining social order55 and norms (Billig, 2005).

Similarly, the relationship between laughter and epistemics seems to be underexplored56 at the time of writing this chapter. While the work of Romaniuk (2009; 2013) focuses on the function of laughter in political news interviews, my work aims to build on her work in two

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54See Figgou (2002, as cited in Billig 2005) on laughter’s role in challenging potential accusations of prejudice.
55In fairness to CA, it does demonstrate in great detail how laughter is part of the immediate social and interactional context, action and order. It is not designed to work at the wider scope of social order which Billig (2005) refers to.
56While the area seems under-researched, there are still some who are beginning to make links between epistemics and laughter. For example, Sert and Jacknik (2015), building on the CA literature into laughter, focus on the epistemic work of smiling in classrooms.
ways. First, I focus on laughter in a related but novel context: that of broadcast political debates, which are also multi-party interactions, whereas her work focuses on broadcast political interviews. This difference of the context of the interaction is an important one. While broadcast news interviews, such as the ones analysed by Romaniuk (2009; 2013), are characterised by rather strict question and answer style of interaction, it is not always so in broadcast political debates. As explained in Chapter 4, broadcast political debates find themselves in the middle ground between institutional talk and mundane talk. There is some level of order in the interaction but the interaction itself is less scripted. For example, politicians share the orientation to the overhearing audience (Hutchby, 2006). However the debating politicians also have more interactional freedom to challenge their opponents. This is because in broadcast political debates the moderator is not the one who does debating, and therefore there is no conflict of institutional roles; not having to balance an image of neutrality, because it is left with the moderator, while adversarial action leaves the panellists with more freedom to express disagreements (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). This means a potentially wider range of interactive phenomena in the debates in comparison to interviews. Moreover, Romaniuk’s work (see above) focuses on the so-called mechanics of laughter, but the main focus of this thesis is on contested political discourse. My analysis aims to capture precisely this – how opposing positions are advocated and undermined with the use of laughter and the kind of ‘knowledge work’ laughter does. Moreover, by analysing laughter in political debates using Discursive Psychology (DP), we can see not only what kind of mitigating work laughter does but also understand its argumentative function.

As explained in the introduction of Chapter 4, ‘knowledge work’ is crucial for politicians to put forth their argumentative position in the debate. The ‘factual’ accounts that a politician produces do argumentative work, and are used to undermine other accounts. In this sense, arguing for and arguing against a specific viewpoint are often done jointly (Billig, 1991; 1996). Much of arguing against can be done by way of challenging the ‘facts’, ‘states of affairs’, and so forth, of what a politician’s ‘ideological’ opponent is claiming. Chapter 4 focused on various ways of providing counterclaims, whereas Chapter 5, among other things, demonstrated how overlap works and is positioned at strategic points in the debates. In both of these chapters, the focus is largely on verbal responses. Here, I will focus on the argumentative and ‘knowledge’ work that laughter and derision do in broadcast political debates. In Chapter 5 I explained that overlapping talk can “warrant practices of talking that are otherwise problematic” (Schegloff, 2000, p.17). A similar suggestion is made regarding
derisive laughter, in that it permits certain social actions that may otherwise not be treated as normative. Laughter can, for example, precede potentially offensive remarks or downplay complaints that may otherwise come across as too strong (Billig, 2005; see also section ‘Sharp Laughter’ below). Potentially, laughter, then, can provide a debater with means of advancing and challenging positions in ways that may otherwise be sanctioned.

This analytical chapter focuses on the rhetorical and epistemic function of laughter and derision. The role of laughter in relation to overlapping talk has already been discussed in Chapter 5, and therefore will not be covered in detail here. To briefly recap, laughter can be used to convey stance or to disrupt the flow of the other speaker. In Chapter 5, the analytical focus was on laughter-as-a-means-to-an-end, whereas here the focus will be on the kind of social action laughter does. What I term derisive laughter is analysed in this chapter along a continuum, beginning with a focus on extended and open laughter and moving towards shorter, more muted and at times more ambiguous cases of derision.

6.2 Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the range of work laughter can do in broadcast political debates. I am particularly interested in derision as a way of challenging an opponent’s views. Moreover, my aim is to show what kind of ‘knowledge work’ laughter does in these settings. Potter and Hepburn (2010) take their analytical cue from Schegloff (2007) when they argue that one of the basic functions of laughter is to signal an understanding of what has been said57. I will use this notion as the starting point of my analysis. If to laugh is to signal understanding of what has been said, then my suggestion is that to laugh is also to do some form of ‘knowledge work’ in interaction. Moreover, laughter can be used to display one’s stance, or attitude (Edwards, 2005b). Although these two basic functions of laughter are key to the analysis of laughter in this chapter, I contend that a politician’s laughter, particularly laughter that is derisive, can be used to signal them as somehow ‘more knowledgeable’ than the target of their laughter. This chapter mainly focuses on other-initiated laughter; however, there are a few cases where a politician will laugh at something they have said and these will be briefly covered.

57A point also echoed by others (e.g. Glenn, 2010).
The analysis will be presented as a continuum of laughter – from long to short. First, cases of extended laughter are considered. Next on the continuum come instances of shorter and more varied types of laughter. Finally, cases where the classification of the phenomena as laughter is perhaps more ambiguous are covered. I argue that some of these cases, for example snorts, can be considered, for the purposes of this analytical chapter, as broadly laughter phenomena. Ultimately, my aim is to demonstrate the kind of rhetorical and ‘knowledge’ work that laughter does, and that where and when it takes place are relevant to the wider action of contesting ‘ideological’ positions.

Iрония и дерзость в длительных последовательностях смеха

The first example of extended laughter is from F:M-I, the same extract as 5.5 from the previous chapter when discussing the role of overlapping talk and laughter.

Extract 6.1

FAR: [(clears throat)]
MIT: we [are no longer] the country that exports cheap food to feed Britain it is a different country that we have we are Happier with our country we do not need anybody to tell us how to run our country and we have a real say; here the-the fact that u- uh
FAR: °°you don’t°°
MIT: the fact that the: that the: treaties are agreed (. ) that we are bound by the treaties that the larger member states are bound by those treaties and we can take those treaties (. ) to the European court (. ) is something that has been really beneficial to us what’s not beneficial to us (. ) is <intergovernmentalism> and this is one of the things that David Cameron has in fact done us a disservice
MIT: [[the:]]
PRE: [[the ] French and Germans going it [alone effectively]
MIT: [†well well † well what will happen now is (.5) that (in disagreement) has to be reached outside of the treaties that does not suit us .h anything that’s treaty based (. ) that’s overseen by the commission .h that is subject to: (.5) eh the:=the:the rule of the court that has a:always been in our interest .hh look what happened in the FSF for example when it was outside (.2) ah of the treaties (.5) and it didn’t suit us because we were dependent on what was happening in Finland .h or a general election >in in e:h in=election coming up< in=eh in=eh France or Germany .h whatever is treaty based (. ) whatever is based on=th- on=on the institutions of the union <ha:s suited the> interests of small states like Ireland and that’s where our future is and †if we have to choose† .hh between Britain or=e-
or or the union there is no choice for us our future is with Europe this

FAR: [(↑we’re not↓ aasking you]
MIT: [(market of five hundred ] million [°people°]
FAR: [↑we’re ] not↓ a:sking you

>I think (that) you’re< very good at coming out with the anti-British stuff. and and that of course]
MIT: [eh heh heh heh heh heh heh ]
FAR: .H EVERYONE [does that these days .hh but]
MIT: [ .hh o::h yeah=hehheh"heh° ]
FAR: y’know we’re not a:- y’know we are not saying to you as

British Eurosceptics we want to reincorporate you in the United
Kingdom .hh ↑that is not↓ what we’re saying (.5) but what we
are talking about whether it’s Ireland .h or >any other member
state< of the EU .h is we now have a union that is
fundamentally <antidemocratic> .h in the way in which it
operates .h and (. ) THE ECONOMICS of it .h you know if our
financial services eventually gets hit <"yours gets hit too”>
and that’s the point I’m making

In this extract we see Farage visibly smiling when asserting to Mitchell that “you’re< very good at coming out with the anti British stuff. and and that of course .H EVERYONE does that these days” (Extract 6.1, lines 36-37, 39). At lines 38 and 40 Mitchell replies with a long slow laughter from before Farage has managed to finish the claim. Farage does so with a visible smile on his face, as if to use levity as a means of getting the assessment of Mitchell’s bias out without being sanctioned for doing so. Note that Farage is at least in part enabled by his institutional role to make such assessments – as a politician expected to argue for a particular position, he is not bound by an institutional restriction to display neutrality in the same manner a moderator would be (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). In return, Mitchell laughs and keeps his response in the same light-hearted tone. This can be seen as a retrospective marking of something as laughable by the use of laughter (Romaniuk, 2009). Such stretches of laughter do not occur at random, rather they seem to occur at places where the person laughing is being in some manner criticised (Romaniuk, 2009). As such, Mitchell’s response marks a clear stance toward what Farage is saying – the implication is that Farage’s claim is laughable and the laughter serves to undermine it.

If laughter here demonstrates Mitchell’s stance – his implicit critique of Farage’s claim – then by extension it also does enough ‘knowledge work’ to demonstrate such a stance. In order to demonstrate one’s stance, the implicit message is that one knows what one is displaying their stance on. In other words, Mitchell’s laughter is telling Farage, and the viewers, that not only does he know what is said of him, but he also uses this display of knowledge to treat it as something that is laughable. Furthermore, he does so from an
epistemically upgraded stance. What I mean with ‘epistemically upgraded stance’ is presenting oneself as the one who ‘knows more’ than their opponent. Heritage and Raymond (2005) point out that the order of the actions of confirming and agreeing to someone’s utterance does demonstrative work on who ‘knows more’. In second position, in other words responding to someone, if the action of agreeing comes after the confirmation then it comes from an upgraded stance. This is because the action of confirming is delayed in order to display one’s ‘knowledge status’ first. We see similar work done by Mitchell here, although the disagreement and upgrading here is stronger than in the examples discussed by Heritage and Raymond (2005). This is because in place of confirming Farage’s assertion, Mitchell responds with extended laughter. Not only is the agreement delayed by the use of laughter (Romaniuk, 2013), but it is done in a context of things to be laughed at, which creates an ironic context to his agreement. The ironic context implies that Mitchell’s agreement is not to be taken at face value, and is further emphasised by the absence of confirmation by Mitchell. Romaniuk (2013) speaks of laughing in response to a question in broadcast interviews. Particularly, she highlights that in laughing at the interviewer’s question before it is complete, the interviewee avoids answering the question outright “since that would require her to confirm the truth of those unfavourable propositions; instead, it addresses the content of the question preface” (p.213). She further highlights that volunteered laughter in the face of a serious question is disaffiliative (ibid.). Although Mitchell is not asked a question by a moderator, nor is Farage being explicitly serious, the responsive elements of laughter remain. In Romaniuk’s analysis, the laughter acts “as an implicit commentary on the question, undercutting its legitimacy” (2013, p.205). The same can be said about Mitchell’s response. Overall, Farage has used a humorous approach as means of making a derisive assessment, by suggesting that Mitchell has an anti-British bias rather than a reasoned pro-EU position, as a means to undermining Mitchell’s pro-EU stance.

Farage’s assertion of Mitchell’s anti-Britishness shares some features with irony. While irony can be understood as meaning the opposite of what is said (Attardo, 2000), an argument can be made that Farage’s assertion is ironic. For one, “irony is essentially an inappropriate utterance which is nonetheless relevant to the context” (Attardo, 2000, p.823). Second, it is not ironic in the sense that Farage means the opposite of what he claimed, but, rather, the claim precisely delivers a critique of Mitchell, while the jocular tone of delivery

58 For example, saying “it is, yes” rather than “yes, it is” where the former, albeit in second position, is from an epistemically upgraded stance. See Heritage and Raymond (2005) for a more detailed discussion.
would imply that the comment is not intended as serious. Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2011) speak of responding to the literal element of an ironic comment as a way of bypassing its implications in a political debate. Extract 6.1 is an inverted context of sorts, where the literal utterance by Farage is the one that is critical of Mitchell and the one that Mitchell resists. While the humorous style allows such a claim to be made in an environment where a direct assessment could get sanctioned, it also provides the rhetorical means for Mitchell to counter it. Mitchell’s orientation to the ironic nature of the comment provides him with the means of countering Farage’s remark. He responds to the thin veil of humour rather than its serious aspect, thus making sure that the assertion becomes no more than just that: a brief foray away from the seriousness of a political debate. With this in mind, Mitchell was able to counter Farage’s assertion, whereas Farage manages to make such an assertion in the first place.

In the previous extract, I discussed a case of a jointly ironic case that leads to extended and overlapping laughter. The second example, below, is from C:F-1. Notably, in this case the laughter is more one-sided and derisive than in the example above. Here, Nigel Farage’s laughter can be heard to overlap Nick Clegg’s claim of the EU acting in favour of the British people and criticising UKIP. A crucial context to Clegg’s claim is that he frames it as an example of why the EU matters for policing in Britain. This in turn does the wider work of arguing in favour of the EU. This overlaps in part with Extract 4.7, when it was discussed under the section ‘Hypotheticals’ in Chapter 4.

**Extract 6.2**

CLE: I believe the police more than I believe Nigel Fara-
>let me give you one more example<
CLE: [of how important it is to a- to do you remember]
FER: [one more if you would ( ) ]
CLE: back in two thousand and one the=though there were those
plane spotters the: >ehheh< the British and Dutch plane
spotters it- ( ) u-u- I chuckle no:w >but it< wasn’t
funny then. .hhh They got caught up in the Greek ( )
legal system.=They ended up ( ) <in Greek jail.> ( ) .hh
They had no id>ea what was being< told them, They had No
>idea what w- charges were being< brought against them,

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59In their data, Nuolijärvi and Tiittula refer to a case where one speaker (A) invokes the rulers of the Roman Empire as means of treating the question of the other speaker (B) as inappropriate. However, B in turn responds with treating the invocation as a literal and, therefore, inappropriate to Finnish presidential debates. Thus B “bypasses the irony by ironising his [A] irony-implicative utterance” (Nuolijärvi & Tiittula, 2011, p.576).

60To be sure, Farage’s observably light hearted approach (because of a visible smile while making the claim) to some extent prepares for such a response from Mitchell.
They had no legal assistance. The European Union has now passed new rules, new laws, which means that if any of you (gestures to audience) on holiday, elsewhere in the European Union and you find yourself on the wrong side of the law, you’ll get help with interpretation, you’ll get legal help, you’ll get assistance, FER: [All: right.

CLE: [Guess what] UKIP did. They voted against all of those measures. FAR: [It is based on the presumption of innocence before guilt, It is based on habeas corpus, and common law.]

Of interest in this extract is Farage’s persistent laughter, which we can hear through lines 20-27. It is somewhat patchy and extended, in overlap with Clegg’s talk. Farage’s first laughter particle on line 21 would appear to be in response to Clegg’s point about EU rules done in favour of people. The subsequent laughter particles seem to orient to Clegg’s assertion “Guess what” UKIP did. They voted against all of those measures.” (Extract 6.2, lines 21, 23). These laughter particles go over Clegg’s talk and are fairly evenly paced in doing so. The patchiness of the laughter particles, in contrast with Mitchell’s laughter in Extract 6.1 for example, give the laughter an air of artificiality, especially as they become louder after Clegg begins his critique of UKIP. They seem to be done in overlap as a way of stance
display oriented towards the audience. Although it may be difficult to pinpoint what exactly the laughter orients to, as is the case in some extracts discussed by Romaniuk (2009), it is observable in the overall extract that the laughter follows and overlaps points that are, at least, potentially damaging for Farage’s ‘ideological’ stake and interest in the debate.

Looking at the type of ‘knowledge work’ done here, if we count the first laughter particle (Extract 6.2, line 20: “(H)Ehhh”), Farage is displaying himself as knowledgeable of the matter at hand and treating Clegg’s talk as something laughable. The very first laughter particle is crucial in this, as it seems to retrospectively label (Romaniuk, 2009) Clegg’s claim as laughable. As suggested earlier, the absence of confirmation or agreement in this instance, by Farage, positions him as ‘more knowledgeable’, as the act of confirming is replaced with the act of treating Clegg’s claim as laughable. Of course, it is possible that other types of work or resistance may have taken place, as it seemed the moderator was about to hand the floor over to Farage. This, however, did not occur as Clegg continues his assertion, marking it as explicitly anti-UKIP. In this immediate interactional context, Farage seems to be left with little other option other than to keep laughing or concede the floor and, crucially, the critique for Clegg.

Not only this, but such persistent patchy laughter, aside from doing subtler argumentative work, is in interactive terms highly disruptive, making it harder for Clegg to continue his point and for the audience to follow it. It shares some of the characteristics of escalation discussed in Chapter 5, in that neither speaker is willing to cede the floor, nor do their trajectories of talk directly orient to each other. However, the return to order here does not come from their trajectories matching, but from audience applause (Extract 6.2, lines 30-31, 33, 35) and the moderator interjecting (lines 29, 32) to pass the floor to Farage.

Ultimately, Farage is treating Clegg’s claim, whether it be the positive impact of the EU or the critique of UKIP’s inaction, as laughable. His laughter not only displays his stance to the audience but is also derisive of Clegg. It is not necessary to pinpoint what Farage is laughing at, its very presence is sufficient to ridicule Clegg and his claim. It is as if Farage’s laughter is seeking to ridicule and discipline (Billig, 2005) Clegg on account of his ‘erroneous’ position. Farage’s rebuttal (Extract 6.2, lines 34, 36-40, 45, 47-50), despite having some difficulty of delivery due to a fight for the floor with Clegg, suggests that Farage is giving a reason to the laughter and in this way mocks Clegg’s position: there is no need of the EU because Britain already has a common law, which, incidentally, is better than other European
countries (in this case Spain) and centuries old. By framing himself as one capable of ridiculing and correcting Clegg, Farage implicitly places himself as more knowledgeable than Clegg.

There is a case for considering the derisive laughter as a fight for the floor. In line 25 of Extract 6.2, Farage begins to talk. However, he quickly abandons the attempt and resumes laughing at Clegg. Whatever Farage tries to utter is lost in the interaction, as his second attempt at getting the floor, on line 28, begins a new challenge. This again is interrupted but by audience applause, twice, and Farage is only able to resume his counterclaim on line 36. His laughter, then, seems to provide Farage with a resource that allows him to challenge Clegg when there is no opportunity to challenge him directly with a counterclaim. While part of the difficulty in gaining the floor is to do with Clegg continuing to talk, and the audience applauding, another relevant dimension of the interaction is at play here. It is Clegg’s turn to talk, and as the allocation of turn-taking tends to be within the remit of institutional agents, such as moderators (Clayman & Heritage, 2002), it puts Farage in a position where he could get sanctioned for interfering with turns. What highlights the turn as Clegg’s, despite the moderator, Nick Ferrari, seeming to indicate on lines 4 and 19 that Clegg’s turn is coming to an end, is Ferrari not seeking to stop Clegg, and he only cedes the floor to Farage on lines 29 and 32. A direct interruption of an allocated turn to Clegg would in all likelihood result in being sanctioned by Ferrari. In the absence of being able to respond verbally, Farage still has the option of laughing at Clegg. Clegg delivers a critique of UKIP, and this critique is, in front of the audience, laughed at.

Extended laughter, then, in contexts such as the ones discussed here, provide a crucial tool for politicians arguing against each other. Regarding Extract 6.1, ironic remarks allow them to put out assertions that might otherwise be disapproved or sanctioned of in some manner. In Extract 6.2, we see a case of derisive laughter which is highly interruptive, derisive, and portrays the laugher as being the one who ‘knows more’ in order to downplay or challenge the object of laughter. Extracts 6.1 and 6.2 emphasise that the link between laughter, humour and debate is not transparent because “a laugh can be so much more than just a laugh. In conventional terms, it is not even a laugh: it is a serious part of conversational language” (Billig 2005, p.192). It does not always matter so much that the politicians put out their assertions in a non-serious manner or that the moderator interjects – this kind of needling
does not go unheard. The audience and the other debater have already heard the accusation, the “damage is done”, and the serious work of political argumentation carries on.

Intercalated Laughter

This section focuses on cases of intercalated laughter. First, I focus on two cases of laughter within words and their work in debates. Second, I focus on a case where there is laughter that is followed by what could conventionally be called teasing. As with the rest of this chapter, I focus on derision and laughter. They do the rhetorical work of challenging one’s opponent. Importantly, to mock one’s ideological opponent in a political debate is also a means of doing identity work on them. In other words, because these debates orient to an audience (Hutchby, 2006), mockery is a way of positioning the object of mockery as laughable for the audience. To mock is to imply that the opponent is not someone who is a competent politician regarding the topic of the matter; it implies disbelief on behalf of the mocker and ineptness on behalf of the target of mockery. Regarding the ‘knowledge work’ that derisive laughter performs, the implication is that the target is not in full possession of the relevant facts of the matter, which in turn is an implicit claim by the mocker for the epistemic domain relevant to the context of the mockery. This implication in itself is a strong upgrade on behalf of the mocker, as they frame themselves as one in possession of the relevant ‘facts’ about the European Union, and thus able to mock their opponent.

Potter and Hepburn (2010) write about laughter within words, calling them ‘interpolated particles of aspiration’ (IPAs). They note that two of its main functions are the management of some kind of insufficiency, where the “IPA can manage descriptive trouble of some kind and maybe head off incipient actions” (p.1546), and management of action formation in that “they can be inserted into lexical items within turns to finesse or modulate the action that is produced in some way” (p.1546). An example of modulation that they use is of a person talking about something problematic making a show of not seeking sympathy at a point where sympathy display is appropriate. How do these findings apply to broadcast political debates? From this perspective, this section is an extension of Potter and Hepburn’s (2010) work. The type of ‘trouble’ that takes place in political debates can be of a different nature. IPAs do not seek or display sympathy, rather their work is of a different nature:
Extract 6.3: From F:M-1

PRE: .hh now one result of that summit is the UK’s decision to opt
out of an EU treaty aimed at dealing with the crisis .hh that’s
drawn the ire of the French and Germans in particular .h but
what does it mean for Ireland .h I’m joined now by two MEPs
who’ve been watching the issue closely .h Fine Gael’s Gay
Mitchell and Nigel Farage of the UK Independence Party .hhh
Nigel if we can start with you first at the very least you
could give De-David Cameron credit .hh for: insuring that we’ve
something different to talk about after the summit
(.2)

FAR: oh it’s certainly a new sto:(h)ryheheh and-ah .hh=I think
Britain’s relationship with the European Union .hh will never
be the same again .hh just remember what happened here (.2) I
mean David Cameron .h has a:ways been a big supporter (.2) of
Britain being a member of the European Union .hh a:h albeit
we’re opted out of Schengen .h we’re opted out of the Euro but
he wants us to be at the heart of Europe as much as possible
(.5) .hh he: went along (.2) to that summit last week with what
he thought=.h was a very reasonable deman:d.

In Extract 6.3, Farage uses intercalated laughter within, and immediately after, the word
‘story’ (Extract 6.3, line 11). At first glance, there may be something unusual or unexpected
in Farage using a different descriptive term to the moderator – the moderator said there is
‘something different to talk about’ (line 9) but Farage refers to the same matter as a ‘story’.
What it does in the first place is resist a strong invite by the moderator, ‘at the very least’
(line 7), for acknowledging Cameron’s actions as worthy of discussion. In doing so, Farage
orients to a disaffiliation with the implied Conservative party stance. One possible
explanation for this is that Cameron’s actions can be potentially considered as anti-EU, a
topic and domain Farage and UKIP build their political agenda on, and it is an area where
Farage arguably aims to portray himself as ‘knowing more’. Thus, a direct acknowledgment
of Cameron’s actions could, in the case of this debate in particular, compromise his work to
portray himself as the expert. Farage’s resistance is also in the turn construction. He is able
to resist the strong invite by the moderator because it is his first turn to talk in the debate.
The general trend in my data is that whenever politicians have their first turn at talk in a
debate that it is longer, and interruption or fights for the floor are not sanctioned at this point
in the programmes, other debaters tend to keep quiet during first turns at talk. That said, it is
not apparent in the data that the moderator in any way reciprocates Farage’s laughter and,
thus to some degree, treats Farage’s initial response as insufficient (Romaniuk, 2013).
Indeed, Farage’s laughter does not last long and he visibly switches to a serious response as
soon as he finishes the word ‘story’.

150
Another issue might be with the case of the very choice of the word ‘story’ and what it might imply. In speaking of broadcast news interviews, Romaniuk shows “laughter to be one of the available resources for politicians, as IEs\(^61\), mobilise in negotiating the constraints of this particular setting” (2013, p.217). The case is the same in the context of Extract 6.3. ‘Story’ in this context is ironic because the topic at hand – David Cameron’s political actions – is not challenged in terms of its truthfulness, but the very word ‘story’ suggests a non-real version of events. Farage’s IPA (line 11) therefore constitutes a form of negotiation of the interactional constraints. The laughter enables the use of the word ‘story’, a push away from the moderator’s description of the matter at hand, which positions Farage as the one who ‘knows more’. In describing the events in such a manner, there is a subtle inference that Farage is someone who is capable of discerning the difference between what does and does not count as a ‘story’. The use of irony enables Farage to put out an alternative account of events, particularly in a context where he is resisting the moderator’s, rather than an opponent’s, version of events. By the use of irony, Farage is “producing a distinction between superficial appearance and an underlying reality which represents the true situation or a preferred version” (Edwards, 1997, p. 248). There is another important element to Farage’s IPA. It shows a delicate management of the situation, where Farage’s epistemic domain is pinned against that of the moderator’s institutional role. The [laughter + IPA] enables Farage to bolster his stance without being confrontational towards the moderator\(^62\). The use of the IPA downgrades the potential force of simply describing the event as a story. In this way, the IPA does action modulation (Potter & Hepburn, 2010), yet it does not cancel the sense (ibid.) of the word ‘story’, thus allowing the irony to come forth without being confrontational. It ultimately enables Farage to inform the overhearing audience that the legitimate account of the events is not the diplomatic difficulty between Britain and other EU members, but a permanent change in their diplomatic relations.

The next example, Extract 6.4, is the same as Extract 5.7 from Chapter 5, where it was used to discuss the role of overlapping talk and escalation.

\(^{61}\)IE = interviewee.

\(^{62}\)Contrast this case with Extract 5.4 in Chapter 5 (‘Overlapping Talk and Roles’), where Jørgensen directly challenges the presenter which results in a momentary disruption in the debate.
From the cases of IPAs in my collection, these are the most ambiguous. Rather than sounding like laughter, it is more like a trembling voice. However, it still seems to do some of the same work as other IPAs. In this instance, Farage interrupts Mitchell to challenge him. At the point of saying ‘Ireland’ (Extract 6.4, line 8), with a notable tremble in his voice, Farage briefly glances at the moderator, perhaps in recognition of his taking the floor in the middle of Mitchell’s turn. What it does do also is frame the gist of Mitchell’s argument as contestable, by treating it as laughable. The position of the IPAs also suggests what the laughable elements are – ‘Ireland’ and the appeal in the form of ‘please’. The IPA in Ireland highlights the contestability of Irish sovereignty, and Farage goes on to explain why in lines 11-21. Farage’s second IPA – “↑PhLE:ase↓” (line 9) – is curious. It seems that in this case the IPA seems to emphasise rather than downplay the word ‘please’. The action modulating role of IPAs has already been demonstrated; in this case it is used for emphasising. This is a type of offensive rhetoric (Potter, 1996) in that it adds force to the plea. First, in its emphasised form it reprimands Mitchell and is derisive of him, in that it suggests that he is not in possession of the (relevant) facts of the matter. Such a suggestion is highly disparaging, if not patronising, in the context of a broadcast political debate. Second, in making such a construction of Mitchell lacking relevant knowledge of the matter at hand, Farage is framing himself as ‘knowing more’. In fact, in both of the IPAs (Extract 6.4, lines
8, 9), a case can be made for Farage suggesting that Mitchell is not in possession of the relevant facts of the matter, and thus both serve to upgrade Farage as the one knowing more.

Extract 6.4 shows the first instance in F:M-1 where one speaker interrupts another – and the [IPA + glance] is a delayed gesture to the moderator as a visible display of showing awareness of breaking the norms of the institutional context of the debate. If this is the case, then it is a display of knowing what is institutionally appropriate even at a moment of breaching the norms. On the other hand, the IPA could be an orientation to the fact that Farage arguably has less right to speak of Ireland than Mitchell in this context; he is arguing about Ireland in the presence of an Irish political opponent. Considering the contextual role of who-knows-what (Raymond & Heritage, 2006), it is safe to say here that Mitchell has primary ‘rights’ to the epistemic domain of Ireland. The matter is particularly delicate because Farage goes on to argue against Irish sovereignty, which, even without taking the historical context of British rule over Ireland into account, is a highly contestable assertion which could well be treated as arguable. Indeed, the point is contested by Mitchell, but later on in the debate. At the very least, the IPA on line 8 (Extract 6.4) is a display of the recognition of the potential difficulty (Potter & Hepburn, 2010) in talking about Ireland.

These are some of the orientations of the laughter towards the delicacy of Farage’s interruption, but what about its argumentative function? On the one hand, CA literature has demonstrated how laughter in interaction does delicate work. On the other, this delicacy enables the debater to make what might otherwise be contestable assertions. Laughter, and IPAs specifically, in this sense seems to have a paradoxical function. Farage’s IPAs enable him to challenge Mitchell. He uses the laughter alongside his upshot of Mitchell’s preceding talk, thus orienting to it as controversial. The positioning of the IPAs within the words ‘Ireland’ and ‘please’ serve to emphasise the presumed absurdity of Mitchell’s claim of Irish sovereignty. While Farage’s appeal might at face value seem downgraded, it is not so. He frames the interruption as a request by the use of ‘please’, yet he does so from a highly entitled position by the use of the modal verb (Curl & Drew, 2008) ‘cannot’. This positions Farage in a higher ‘knowledge stance’, and thus as someone who is able to ‘correct’ Mitchell’s ‘mistaken’ version of events, and as someone capable of recognising the appropriate, and thus ‘real’, version of the matters.

Next, I discuss an episode of intercalated laughter that is accompanied by derisive comments – a case that can come across as teasing. Extract 6.5, below, is from the SCB:FMH debate.
Note that these take place in an argumentative context, where ‘teasing’ the opponent is more than that. It is derisive, and this derision does the work of argumentation. The extract below is also a much more explicit derision of a political opponent when compared to the previous two examples in this section. It was shown earlier in Chapter 4, as Extract 4.4, when showing some ways of challenging and putting forth a counterclaim.

Below, Sorrell treats Farage’s comment on the British fishing industry (Extract 6.5, lines 13 & 15: “they’ve also got fish they’ve also got fish in Norway…”) as laughable (Glenn, 2003). Sorrell’s response seems to have a similar structure to extracts discussed in the next section, in that a derisive laughter precedes an explanation as to why the original utterance was laughable in the first place: [laughter/derision + rebuttal]. Thus, it informs both the overhearing audience and the debaters as to why Farage’s position is treated as laughable. In this case, it is Farage whose point is not valid, as the British “got the fish back” (line 18). Contrary to the extracts discussed earlier in this section, there seems to be a more overt form of mockery here. What distinguishes mockery from treating something as ‘laughable’ is that the latter is more a CA term for explaining what is laughed at, and almost anything can be marked as laughable. Mockery, on the other hand, means that it is not just something that is laughed at, but it is directed towards someone in a derisive manner.

Extract 6.5: From SCB:FMH

1. PAX: ( ) about the Norwegian experience
2. HAG: °mmm°
3. PAX: =how much do you suffer from being outside the European Union.
4. HAG: uh I don’t think we suffer at ↑all↓ to be honest
5. BAR: you can’t compare that you’re an (all dependent) economy: um
6. which Britain is twelve times bigger than than Norway is .hh
and you have masses amount of oil this is=eh- it—is the same as
7. Switzerland this is the fallacy of the people here
8. HAG: [(shakes head)]
9. BAR: [(h ↓you look Switzerland you look at Norway↓ (. comf y places]
stable rich if we outside the European Union we’re gonna be exactly
10. the same that’s ↑clearly not the case↓ they’re niche players.
11. FAR: they’ve al[so got ] fish
12. HAG: ↑no but↓
13. FAR: they’ve also got fish in Norway and we’ve given away:
14. SOR: =hm[mh] [ah hah]
15. FAR: [an] industr[y that] on its OWN
16. SOR: =we got the fi[sh back ( ) ]
17. FAR: = [would be worth] th[ree ]
18. BAR: ↑so you see]
19. BAR: the [(three) to-] sort of-
20. FAR: [three ]
21. BAR: [[British indus-try you see ] the British
So what marks the interaction in Extract 6.5 as mocking and/or derision? For one, Sorrell does not provide any kind of ‘fact’ in reference to his counterclaim to Farage. Instead, he merely asserts that the fish are back. Furthermore, it is the exaggerated nature of saying that “the fish”, implying all of the fish, have been recovered that allows one to recognise the statement as a tease (Drew, 1987). Subsequently, in lines 33 and 34 we see more teasing. In line 33, an unspecified speaker says “no: fish sir” with an audibly mocking voice (not observable in the transcript), to which Cahn asserts that he thinks the fish swim only in British waters (line 34). In terms of recognising these as teases, they have the same exaggerated nature as Sorrell’s first retort – the first is exaggerated in tone and the other in suggesting that fish only swim in British waters. Sorrell affiliates with these derisions with laughter on line 36. These are mocking Farage’s assertion because they are ‘hearably absurd’ (Antaki, 2004). Antaki (ibid.) suggests that one important feature of making something hearably absurd is adding detail to someone else’s detail – in this case speaker X and Cahn build on Farage’s description of £3 billion worth of fish industry being “given away”, firstly by X saying “no fish sir” and secondly by Cahn saying that they only swim in British waters.

By treating Farage’s claim as laughable, his claims are treated as insufficient. The teasing implies that Farage’s assertion is so ‘wrong’ that it is not to be treated as legitimate – much in the same way Farage makes such an assertion regarding Mitchell in Extract 6.4. Farage lacks the relevant ‘facts’ of the matter at hand. The teasing and the laughter are used to present new information that questions the validity of Farage’s claim (see Chapter 4). Yet one is still faced with the question, why challenge Farage in this way here? What is it that
enables such teasing of Farage? One suggestion is to do with the context of the interaction at that point in time. The extract above is from the SCB:FMH debate, which, compared to the other debates in my data, has the most panellists. The pro- and anti-EU parties both have at least three speakers per side at any given time during the debate, often more, which means that there is more opportunity for interruption by other speakers. In fact, prior to being teased, Farage had done just that to challenge Barysch, who in turn had taken the floor at a point when it was Hagenau’s turn to talk. Sorrell, Cahn, and the unidentified speaker do their derision in the background. They do not have the floor, and, notably, their teasing is not an attempt to gain the floor. Their mocking is addressed to Farage, but not necessarily in a way that he should respond to them, and for the most part there is little indication that he does. Only towards the end, where a number of speakers talk at the same time, can we detect some response from Farage in the form of him saying “absolute rubbish”\(^{63}\) (line 40), but to whom and to what is not clear. If, then, the teasing is not directed at Farage in a manner that expects response, then the likelihood is that the teasing is for the overhearing audience to hear. It is the audience member that is to hear how Farage is mocked for his claims about the fish, how ridiculous and lacking they are. The increasingly escalating interaction (see Chapter 5) allows this teasing to continue until the moderator, Paxman, intervenes to reallocate the speaking turn to Hagenau. Once the order is restored, the teasing of Farage ceases. This kind of derision in broadcast political debates seems to work when it is in the background; the chances are that if such teasing was more overt, it could well be sanctioned by a moderator\(^{64}\).

It is paradoxical in nature. While the derision itself is direct and overt, it is carried on in the background of the interaction, not intending to take the floor.

### Ambiguous Cases

This section focuses on one specific means of accomplishing derision in interactions between politicians embracing different ‘ideological’ stances: snorts and sharp laughter. First, I discuss snorts and how they manifest and function in broadcast political debates. The second part of this section focuses on an example where sharp laughter precedes an intrusive

\(^{63}\)While not obvious in the transcript, one can see on the recording, from Farage’s posture and gaze, that this comment is addressed at his opponents.

\(^{64}\)This is the only example in my data where this happens, so it is not viable to make any wider claims at this stage. It would require further research to establish whether such ‘teasing’ is dependent on this particular type of context.
counterclaim and a moment of escalation. The notable feature of this section is that these shorter laughters seem to display more hostility and will take place at very relevant moments in the debates.

**Snorts**

A snort, according to the Oxford Dictionary of English is “an explosive sound made by the sudden forcing of breath through the nose… [to] express indignation or derision”. If we take this as a description of a social action, it is a fitting place to begin analysing such a noise. Importantly, this definition allows us to make a link between snorts and a display of derision. Furthermore, Glenn (2003), in talking about the definition of laughter, also takes from the dictionary its emphasis on the non-verbal and visual aspects of laughter: “To manifest the combination of bodily phenomena (spasmodic utterance of inarticulate sounds, facial distortion, shaking of the sides, etc.)…” (Murray, et al., 1933, p.103, as cited in Glenn, 2003). Much of this physical definition of laughter can be applied to snorts too. Snorts are not a common occurrence in my data: they occur once in the F:M-I data (Extract 6.6) and Dan Jørgensen uses it three times in F:JW (Extract 6.7). Yet all four cases seem to display a very distinct type of social action. Nor is their placement random, which warrants a closer analytical look. The first example, Extract 6.7 below, was seen earlier in Chapter 4, as Extract 4.2, where it was used as an example of challenging the relevance of a claim.

Extract 6.7

```
FAR: I bet you if the people of Ireland have a decision to make
    they’ll be rather more Eurosceptic than the Irish political
    cl[ass]
MIT:  [o- ] can I can I say the same thing about Scotland they’ve a
      referendum in Scotland at the (mornin) they might be an awful
      lot more sceptic about the English domination than you think eh
      you’re yo[u’re  ((   ))   ]
MIT:  [↑I couldn’t care] less;
X:  (snorts))
MIT:  our tax ra[te ]
FAR:  [wha]t’s that got do with it
MIT:  our t[ax rate]
FAR:  [we’re  ] talking about the EU he[re ] ((grinning))
MIT:  [our] corporation tax
rate <is not up> for discussion (.)
```
There are two separate cases here regarding laughter. First, there is a snorting sound on line 9 from an unspecified speaker in clear response to Farage’s “↑I couldn’t care less↓” (Extract 6.7, line 8). Second, there is Farage’s comment “we’re talking about the EU here” (line 13) with an obvious smile. Each is discussed in turn. On line 9, the snort seems to be providing a disparaging response to Farage’s “I couldn’t care less”. The snort is not altogether surprising, in that such an open expression of one’s indifference, especially by a politician on a public platform, is arguably unexpected. If we return to the definition of a snort described above and use it as a description of social action, then the snort orients to Farage’s claim as risible and contextually inappropriate. Thus the disparaging laughter in the form of a snort is likely to signify, amongst other things, that one has strayed beyond the norms of broadcast political debates, and from such a perspective reporting one’s indifference – in a context of debate, controversy and vested interest – is not oriented to as acceptable. The second humorous element in this extract does similar work, but not necessarily with equal force. Farage pointing out that the EU, rather than Scotland, is the topic of debate at hand with a visible grin, is to smilingly jest at Mitchell’s misstep of having, allegedly, done something that is not fitting to the situation. It is the kind of challenging of the essence already discussed in Chapter 4. Farage’s grin seemingly suggests that Mitchell is not even aware of the topic of the debate, and his [counterclaim + grin] derisively reminds Mitchell, and the audience, as to what the topic of the debate is about. His initial utterance on line 8 possibly projects his subsequent rebuttal of Mitchell.

Another point can be taken from this extract as a whole. A snorting response can be highly disparaging, but it is, in a way, also an utterance that can shut down the interaction as it is a minimal action. It is a response that does not respond. This is not to say that it will end the interaction dead in its tracks, but, instead, that it can often not be responded to. An alternate reading of a snort could be that it treats the preceding utterance as insufficient in some manner, thus resisting a response to it. In the following examples, all from Extract 6.7, of this subsection, all from F:JW and all snorts by Dan Jørgensen, we see how there is little response to them, and how providing a minimal response by way of a snort does enough interactional work to inform the other debaters and the overhearing audience of the snorting politician’s stance, without providing a lengthy response. Extract 6.7 is an edited version of

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65Compare and contrast with how cases of Romaniuk (2013) and Potter and Hepburn (2010) use laughter to signify some form of trouble or insufficiency.
Extract 5.4 from Chapter 5, where it was discussed under ‘Overlapping Talk and Institutional Roles’.

Extract 6.7

1. WHE: ah saying you know you’ve given you’ve sold it
2. WHE: [(down the river you’ve sold us down the river]
3. FAR: [(wh- the rebate is because ] the rebate was
4. put in place for Brit’n because we are not a European country
5. .h we are different .h our far[ming system was different]=
6. X: [ (European) ( ) you ]
7. WHE: =£O:H [that’s a new one]
8. FAR: [and we are ]
9. X: [ ( ) ]
10. FAR: and=and unlike your countries
11. JØR: okay
12. FAR: unlike your countries. we’re a globa[l nation]
13. JØR: [ .hhh ]
14. (.
15. FAR: we do a bigger proportion of=of our trade and our business .h
16. with the rest of the world than <any other> European country
17. JØR: [((snorts))]
18. FAR: [(we always ] have and=and my hope is that we’ll go on
19. doing that
20. WAT: =°Den[mark is a glo]bal nation?°
21. FAR: [so that’s why]
22. WAT: Germany is [a global nation?]
23. FAR: [no Germ ]any
24. FAR: is not a global natio[n compared (with)] compared with
25. PRE: [the Netherlands?]
26. FAR: Britain. (.)

((35 lines of transcript omitted))

61. JØR: [how d- how] do I tell my
62. Dane pays three times as much to the EU as the
63. FAR: [(well) if you’re (being)]
64. JØR: [ ]
65. FAR: [[if you’re being] a worse deal than us
66. JØR: we’re (def-) ]
67. FAR: [that’s a comp[arison of misery isn’t it
68. JØR: ah:h: ] / ((snort))
69. FAR: [and you]u should be arguing that your people shouldn’t be
70. paying much money into this ↑either;
71. JØR: no what I am arguing is (.2) that (.2) it’s too simple a way of
72. putting it (.2) what you need to see is okay how much does the
73. the: the st-European Union and (mat-)ordinary people and
74. Europe
75. FAR: very li[tte they] hate it
76. JØR: [↑it ↑matters a lot!]
Jørgensen, in lines 17, 70, and 91 of Extract 6.7, snorts in response to Farage’s assertions. Each is discussed in turn. The first snort, in line 17, is in response to Farage claiming that Britain is a global nation unlike Denmark, which Jørgensen represents. To be specific, it is Farage’s justification of this claim that Jørgensen responds to with a snort. The original claim is met with silence (line 14), possibly suggesting some resistance by Jørgensen. The interaction seems to indicate that Farage did not concede the floor at this point, but intends to continue his claim. It is nonetheless a notable TRP (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), where Jørgensen could have attempted to respond or take the floor. This problem is further highlighted in that Jørgensen is hearably listening to Farage (lines 11, 13, his gaze directed at Farage) up until that point. Jørgensen’s non-response on line 14 and his snort on line 17 constitute a similar action. Farage has addressed Jørgensen directly and has claimed that Britain is a global nation and Denmark is not. First, by providing no or minimal responses, Jørgensen is avoiding a direct orientation to Farage’s claims and thus avoids treating it as legitimate (see Chapter 5). At first, he does not respond to Farage at all, but when Farage provides a justification for his assertion, a persistent silence from Jørgensen would do little by way of challenging Farage. Thus, a snort provides a response that is enough to portray his stance and to do the ‘knowledge work’ of both displaying understanding, and treating Farage’s position as not only laughable but also to be ridiculed. Second, Farage and Jørgensen, not only as politicians of different parties but also as two people with different nationalities, in this debate implicitly have different epistemic domains and primacy to their respective domains. Farage’s assertion (Extract 6.7, lines 3-5, 8, 10, 12, 15-16, 18-19) is specifically rooted in the nature of Britain. The ‘knowledge’ that is talked about relates specifically to the UK – Farage’s epistemic domain and, importantly, not Jørgensen’s.
Jørgensen could not provide an “unqualified” challenge of Farage’s claims about Britain in the way that Watson and Wheeler have (see Chapter 4). The insertion of a snort in lieu of a more spelled out counterclaim is telling; Jørgensen’s derision instead of a challenge constitutes an orientation to the domain of ‘Britain’ as one that is Farage’s. In this light, a minimal derisive laughter, in argumentative terms, could well be the strongest rhetorical response that Jørgensen can offer.

On line 70, we see the second snorting response from Jørgensen. The snort is in response to Farage’s somewhat hyperbolic claim (line 65, 67, 69: “(well) if you’re (being) if you’re being in a worse deal than us that’s a comparison of misery isn’t it”). The snorting response does much of the same resisting work as mentioned above – not treating the assertion as legitimate, treating the claim as laughable, beyond the norms of the interaction and so on. Notably, this time the snort seems to be responding to the hyperbolic element of Farage’s assertion, rather than Farage’s justification of his assertion. Jørgensen responds to Farage’s justification (line 71-72: “and you should be arguing that your people shouldn’t be paying much money into this ↑either↓”) in a manner that not only does ‘epistemic work’ in the argumentation, much in the manner discussed so far, but there is also an additional element of deontic resistance (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012): “no what I am arguing is (.2) that (.2) it’s too simple a way of putting it” (line 73-74). In replying by stating what he is doing, Jørgensen resists Farage’s imperative as to what he should do. He is able to do this as he has the primary access to speak of his own intentions, and because deontic authority, much like epistemic domains, is heavily contextual (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). Also, by doing so, Jørgensen sidesteps the issue of having to address the cost of EU membership for Danish citizens. The snort, then, is the beginning of resistance work to Farage’s assertion that the EU is too expensive and a source of misery. The very descriptive term “misery” is treated as laughable, and with hostile derision, in order to do the work of pushing it away from the debate. Jørgensen’s second half of resistance (i.e. the spoken response rather than his snort) not only seeks to repel the argument made by Farage, but also what Jørgensen should do. In this sense, we see not only ideological conflict here but also that of ‘power’: “Epistemic authority is about knowing how the world ‘is’, deontic authority is about determining how the world ‘ought to be’” (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012, p.298).

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66One might expect laughter to be beyond the bounds of institutional interaction; however works such as those of Romaniuik (2009; 2013) have demonstrated it to be a fairly common resource used by politicians.

67The delivery of all three of Jørgensen’s snorts discussed in this chapter are almost identical in delivery.
The final snort comes at line 91 in *F:JW*. Between lines 77 and 93 there is a great deal of overlapping talk (see Chapter 5). Much of it is interruptive in nature where Farage is speaking simultaneously with Jørgensen. Note that it is not only overlapping talk, but, looking at the ‘knowledge work’ that takes place, it is a strong push into Jørgensen’s domain by Farage, as he speaks of the Danish people. On line 83, Jørgensen attempts to begin a claim that some people hate politics because of people like Farage. However, before he gets to finish the utterance, Farage overlaps by stating that the Danish people voted ‘no’ in a referendum. It is not clear to which referendum Farage is referring to, nor does it need to be in order to understand the action Farage’s utterance is doing. With such a claim, enough argumentative work has been done to suggest that the anger of the Danish people is related to their internal political behaviour, and not politicians such as Farage. By offering an alternate category for the cause of the Danish people – their voting ‘no’ in a referendum rather than politicians such as Farage – the accountability (Tileagă, 2010) of the Danish discontent is placed with Jørgensen who, in the interactional context of *F:JW*, represents the pro-EU ‘ideology’.

The examples of snorts above show different interactional contexts in which they can be used, and the kind of work that they do. They show how derision – what it responds to, what follows, and so forth – can be argumentative and demonstrate one’s ‘knowledge status’, and thus contributes to the management of contested political discourse in broadcast debates. Although not explicitly a claim, derision is a form of counterclaim insofar as it is designed to challenge a contestable claim. However, it is a different kind of counterclaim in that it does not provide direct challenge of the ‘facts’ or ‘knowledge’ of the opponent’s claim but, instead, demotes them to the domain of things that are laughable, therefore not serious or relevant, and paints a picture of the opponent as one not in possession of the relevant ‘facts’ or ‘knowledge’. Thus the ‘knowledge battle’ that takes place here is not by upgrading in the manner that is done in normal conversation; instead, a politician fights for epistemic primacy by downgrading their ‘ideological’ opponent.

In the examples above, snorts provided a response to something highly contestable. In this sense they have the retrospective function of laughter discussed by Romaniuk (2009), in that they act as a commentary on the preceding talk. However, Romaniuk (ibid.) also speaks of

68Judging by the preceding talk, in relation to Jørgensen’s question on lines 61-64, there is strong indication that the “they” used by Farage refers to the Danish people.
the prospective function of laughter, and the next example will explore some dimensions of this.

**Sharp Laughter**

The previous section focused on cases of snorts on their own. This section will focus on one case where a single, sharp, hostile laughter is accompanied by a more elaborate challenge of an opponent. Similar to the case of teasing (see above), only one case is discussed here, so no general claims about the nature of short, sharp laughter are made. Short, sharp laughter, although not explicitly a snort, in the case in question, displays similar work done as a snort. Additionally, some examples here, such as Extract 6.8, are also intercalated laughter and thus share some of the features of them discussed earlier in this chapter. Extract 6.8 is the first half of Extract 5.6 from the previous chapter, in the section discussing escalation.

**Extract 6.8**

1 MIT: look (. ) what we’ve got to be is smart and say (.4) <Europe together> (.8) can get over this problem (. ) Europe of twenty seven can’t and if we behave like and (. ) twenty six other member states behave like that then there’s no future
2 MIT: for [us ]
3 PRE: [right] Nigel Farage ve[ry briefly]
4 FAR: [‘look’ the] Euro is a failure (.4)
5 you’ve put together countries that are so vastly different from each other . h that it is actually destroying (.2) some of those Mediterranean countries . h it is bleeding the tax payers in the north of Europe . h and the sooner the Eurozone breaks up . h and the countries that should Never have joined league the better we’ll all be
6 MIT: can [I just say on the Euro]
7 PRE: [o- very] briefly
8 MIT: first of all the Euro now is the second currency of the world (.2) far ahead of Sterling and it’s- as a reserve currency . h secondly in its first ten years we created sixteen million more jobs [that av contrib]uted
9 FAR: [ hah ]
10 FAR: not in Ire[land fourteen per] cent unemployment
11 MIT: [contributed to creating]
12 FAR: [twenty five per cent youth unemployment ] you
13 [ (trot) this rubbish out don’t you]
14 MIT: [sixteen million mo]re jobs in Europe
15 FAR: chahh[a:h ] — well not in I:reland ]
16 MIT: [than in the United States inclu:ding in
17 Ireland . h and what has happened in Ireland is (.2) <because
This extract shares much of the same characteristics as the snort in the example discussed above. Farage’s “hah” on line 20 displays his stance both to Mitchell and the audience. It is framing himself as highly ‘knowledgeable’ in that Farage projects his response first rather than offer any confirmation or agreement. Finally, by replacing any type of confirmation or agreement with the short laughter, Farage not only treats the previous turn as laughable but also mocks it. However, the main difference is that it is audibly a laughter noise, unlike the snort examples discussed earlier; as much as a sharp exhaling noise used to signify disparagement. Another crucial difference here is that it is used to signal both Farage’s stance and his response to follow, whereas in the previous extract it was used to demonstrate one’s stance without following up with a rebuttal.

Here, the laughter works in a much more interruptive manner. As mentioned in Chapter 5, such short laughter utterances can work in the same ways as words, insofar as they carry a rhetorical function and communicate meaning (Billig, 2005). In lacking an indexed second part, it is used to bring in a highly disruptive manner of counterargument (see Chapter 5 for the analysis of the overlapping aspect of this extract). However, although it shares this characteristic of not having a clear second pair in this instance, unlike in the snort examples discussed earlier, a subsequent counterclaim is offered. The ‘hah’ here signals Farage positioning Mitchell’s talk as laughable, but also serves as a preface to his counterclaim. Farage laughs derisively at Mitchell and then explains why: the 16 million jobs created by the EU is not a valid point for an Irish politician, because in Ireland there is 14% unemployment and 25% youth unemployment. As with the third case of snorting response, there is a counterargument that is not directly responding to the claim. This is similar to the trend of ‘knowledge work’ in argumentation discussed in Chapter 4, where once a particular fact is provided, its truthfulness is not challenged; rather, a new ‘fact’ is introduced that changes the context of the previous claims (see ‘Facts Matter’ under Chapter 4). In this case, the laughter prefaces the suggestion that the EU providing more jobs is laughable, in the face of the facts that there is high unemployment in Ireland. The introduction of Irish unemployment does two things here. First, by stating these facts, Farage portrays himself as a politician who is not only competent in the matters of European politics but also that of Ireland. This pushes against any potential claims or implications that he is not in a position to offer commentary on his political opponent. Second, by stating these facts from the
epistemic domain of his ideological opposite, Farage is undermining the logos (Billig, 1996) of Mitchell. Although not directly respondent to the claim of jobs created by the EU, by providing a ‘fact’ related to Ireland, Farage is undermining Mitchell’s authority and identity as the political expert on Irish matters and, thus, undermines his argument in favour of the European Union.

On line 27 we see again laughter (“chahha:h”) and a subsequent rebuttal (“not in I:reland”) by Farage. However, this time the counterclaim is much shorter and Farage does not pursue the matter further. This could be for a number of reasons: because the counterclaim, by way of the facts of unemployment figures, has already been offered, or because a highly interruptive episode has just receded and a lengthy escalation in political debate could lead to the moderator intervening, or because it could work against the politicians’ face management (Bull & Fetzer, 2010). Perhaps the more likely explanation for the shortness of the counterclaim is that the laughter on top of the explanations discussed in relation to the first “hah” is also a display of exasperation in that Mitchell is persisting with his point despite Farage having already produced facts. It is a way to position Farage as “having tried his best” but Mitchell will not listen, and in this manner Farage presents himself as a reasonable politician.

In terms of the prospective function of laughter (Romaniuk, 2009), one can say that Farage positions his “hah” before his counterclaim in order to project the laughability of Mitchell’s claim and the reasons why. While it is unlikely that one of the prospective functions of laughter here is to invite further laughter from Mitchell or the moderator, it does, however, inform the audience that Mitchell’s claim is laughable and then provides an explanation as to why. In terms of positioning, the short laughter here precedes a counterclaim. While the other examples in this section – Extracts 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 (line 27) – have shown short laughters and snorts as stance informing and disparaging, on line 20 of Extract 6.8 it is used to precede a counterclaim. Now, one is faced with the question ‘why preface the counterclaim with the disparaging laughter particle?’ Although it can help Farage fight for the floor, such a technique is not necessary to do so. The suggestion is that laughter as counterclaim occurs at places where, to let the opposing speaker continue their argument could become rhetorically damaging. A similar argument can be made for the laughter in Extract 6.2 of this chapter. For Farage to not challenge Mitchell’s point about the EU creating jobs could lead to the ‘last word’ on the EU being a positive one, as the topic would come to a close and something
else would be talked about. This takes us back to a point made by Romaniuk (2009). She highlights that laughters take place at potentially critical moments in broadcast news interviews. A same argument can be made regarding broadcast political debates, where responding to criticism is arguably more at the forefront than in broadcast news interviews.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered the uses of derisive laughter in broadcast political debates. The epistemic-rhetorical nature of laughter sequences has been considered in a range of contexts from extended laughter to short, and more ambiguous, cases. In the first section, on extended laughter, we see how laughter is used to inform others of the laughers stance. However, such extended laughter is also disruptive in nature and serves as a continuing commentary and disruptor of the object of laughter. In the second section, I analyse cases of intercalated laughter. First examples are IPAs – that is, laughter within words – where they demonstrate some form of interactional or argumentative difficulty associated with the IPA. I also look at a case of ‘teasing’ where its very existence is heavily dependent on the context in which it takes place. Finally, I look at cases of short, sharp laughter and snorts. These are both rather ‘aggressive’ methods of laughter and are at their most derisive in nature. They are associated with strong disagreement and disparagement of the object of laughter.

A running theme in this chapter is that (derisive) laughter serves to inform the audience of the laughing person’s stance regarding their ‘ideological’ opponent or their claim. This is what standard literature in CA already tells us. Taking it a step further, by focusing on the ‘knowledge work’ of laughter, I have demonstrated that laughter has a strong argumentative role. For one, laughter is an upgrade that positions the laughers as the one who ‘knows more/better’, in that it avoids the standard conversational responses such as agreeing and confirming. Derisive laughter thus ‘demotes’ the opponent or their claim to something that is not worthy of serious debate, suggesting to the overhearing audience that the target of the derision is someone who does not have relevant ‘facts’ of the matter at hand. In this sense, it also paints the speaker who was the target of the laughter as one who is incompetent. Throughout this chapter we have seen how cases of laughter have taken place at points where the laughers is facing potential criticism (Romaniuk, 2009), and I have shown how laughter serves a strong method of resisting the said criticism.
Laughter in broadcast political debates can be highly disparaging, and this derision is done for the audience and therefore needs to be heard. One should not consider this a “bad” type of arguing, or something only those who are “wrong” do. My data shows that it is used across political ideologies, factions and speakers. If laughter is a part of everyday conversations, as Billig (2005) argues, then one should be willing to accord it a very serious part of political argumentation, too.
7. Discussion

The aim of my thesis has been to explore contested political discourse from the perspective of Discursive Psychology. To this end, I have looked at how politicians with opposing ‘ideological’ positions argue for their own views in an environment where they are challenged by politicians with opposing views, and how they, in turn, challenge these. Specifically, I have looked at how politicians argue for or against the European Union in its relation to Britain. I have aimed to place my work within the fields of social and discursive psychology. The main aim of this thesis has been to address potential issues and gaps that might be found in current approaches when it comes to the study of contested political talk. In Chapter 2, I showed how mainstream psychological studies have considered issues of ideology, and ideological differences between people, in terms of neuro-cognitive differences. Discourse studies have represented a move away from this trend, to look at ideology as a situated practice. Similarly, in political sciences, although there has lately developed a recognition of the argumentative approaches, there are still some restrictions. Namely, it is not always viewed as a social action, or ‘lived’ in the sense that it is an observable social action. Likewise, the recognition of the importance of ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ in ideological talk, particularly in the context of multi-party political interactions, has not been addressed in research so far.

In order to address the gap in the research, I used an analytical focus within Discursive Psychology (DP), giving rhetorical weight to displays and orientations to ‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ in talk, which aims to analyse contesting as it manifests in broadcast political debates (section 2.5; Chapter 3). The focus on aspects of ‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ has been inspired by the work done in Conversation Analysis (CA) on epistemics. I chose to focus on broadcast political debates that discussed the relationship between Great Britain and the European Union, because it is a widely recognised topic and a highly contested one at that, with plenty of politicians and factions arguing in favour of and against Britain remaining in the European Union. Much of the preceding research has a tendency to focus on other types of political interactions, such as political party speeches or political news interviews. As stated earlier, multi-party interactions in a political context have not been given equal attention.

The analytic chapters have demonstrated how mobilisation of ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’, as well as orientations and responses to these, perform specific argumentative work (Chapter
4). Facts are not neutral descriptions of the world; they are rhetorical constructs designed to bolster one’s position. The various types of ‘knowledge work’ identified in the analytic chapters show that the rhetorical work in argumentation goes beyond words too. Moreover, features of everyday conversations such as overlapping talk, have a role to play in political argumentation (Chapter 5). Analytic chapters have hopefully shown that contested political discourse need not be considered a “special” type of adversarial interaction. Rather, it is accomplished with the conversational tools of everyday talk with orientations to some of the conversational rules of institutional talk. One of the most interesting features of analysing the data was to consider the rhetorical function of laughter. Laughter goes further than a display of comic enjoyment. Research has already shown us that it is not always to do with expressions of joy and comic enjoyment. Laughter can have a darker side too (Billig, 2005). In broadcast political debates one can see how laughter is used to deride and censure one’s ‘ideological’ opponent and to “demote” their position into something laughable (Chapter 6).

7.1 Research Questions

Chapters 4-6 have focused on aspects of contested political discourse by way of focusing on how it pans out in practice. This follows Wetherell and Potter’s (1992) point that the focus on practices enables the analyst to look at what is in the data, rather than close off some avenues by theorising on the nature of contesting before looking at the data. The findings of the analytical chapters can be constituted as types of ‘ideological’ practices, so long as one keeps their argumentative context in mind. It is this argumentative context that needs to be given analytical attention if one wishes to explicate the ways politicians challenge each other’s claims. For example, overlapping talk, which is a commonplace practice in everyday conversations (Sacks et al., 1974), becomes an argumentative practice in broadcast political debates, where its ordinariness can be used to signal disagreement, to fight for the floor and to ensure the advancement of one’s view in the face of an opponent.

Chapter 4 focused on different types of claims and counterclaims, looking into the various ways they are manifest in broadcast political debates. The focus was on oppositional moves, or challenges, that marked political talk as argumentative (cf. Hutchby, 1996). Three types of counterclaims, or challenges, were presented here. The first type of challenge to be analysed oriented around the point of relevance: a debater would be challenged on the grounds of
relevance, where the challenger would, implicitly or explicitly, contest what was said. This served to undermine what the challenged politician had previously claimed, on the grounds that it was not applicable to the debate at hand. The second type of counterclaim was concerned with the relevance of particular facts. This differs from the first point in that here the focus was specifically on ‘facts’ that were in some form superseded by other ‘facts’ that in some way would either question the relevance of the first fact or portray it in a manner that made it less rhetorically persuasive. The final point was on hypothetical scenarios. Here, a challenge would be voiced by way of stating what could happen if a particular course of (in)action was taken. So, for example, if a politician is to present a scenario in favour of leaving the EU, the challenge would be voiced by way of talking of the potential costs of UK outside the EU.

The remarkable finding throughout the analysis, but particularly in Chapter 4, is that rarely is a politician directly challenged by their debate peer on the grounds of dishonesty or stating something untrue. Instead, the argumentative work tends to take place in a much more implicit manner. There are continuous subtle orientations to the knowledge ‘statuses and stances’ (see Heritage, 2013) that are put forth and responded to – from counterclaims and overlapping talk, to laughter and teasing. Rarely do politicians, interactionally speaking, frame themselves as ‘knowing less’ than their opponents. In multi-party political debates, the subtle ‘knowledge work’, and argumentation in general, works from implicit positions. The challenges not only question the position from which a particular stance is argued for, but the “epistemic battles”, often in the form of ‘more knowing’ positions by all debaters, also carry the implication that the person challenged is not someone in possession of the relevant facts. This paints a picture of an incompetent opponent. In line with Potter’s (1996) work, Chapter 4 has shown that facts and factual descriptions are action-oriented. That is, they are designed to do particular types of actions in a particular context rather than being simple, neutral, descriptions of an objective reality. Further to this, my work has shown that on top of the action orientation of ‘facts’ they also do argumentative work, and that both subtle and explicit ‘knowledge work’ play a very important part. That is, they play a role in contested political discourse and can be used to argue for one position while arguing against its counterpart.

Having established the battle over ‘facts’ and epistemic domains in Chapter 4, the following two chapters focused on other related ways that contesting can take place. Chapter 5
demonstrated this by showing how overlapping talk, an otherwise fairly mundane feature of everyday conversation, can become an argumentative tool in contested political discourse. The chapter showed the close relationship between overlapping talk and ‘knowledge work’. The positioning of overlapping talk in broadcast political debates is not always neutral – it is used to challenge or disrupt the ‘ideological’ opponent when the argumentative stakes are high. It, of course, depends on who speaks “over” whom – for instance, moderators speaking “over” debaters is not always considered problematic. If a moderator is not part of the arguing for or against the European Union, then their overlaps may be treated as more institutional than argumentative in nature. Laughter, too, plays a role in overlap. It can be used to disrupt the flow of one’s talk as well as resist treating the target of the laughter as legitimate. Sometimes, refusal to cede the floor can lead to escalation, and mark a move away from a debate towards a heated argument. Noticeably, this is a joint action and seems to take place at moments where it is would otherwise be too rhetorically damaging to be left uncontested. Such sequences can sometimes end on their own, as is the case in F:M-1, but due to the diminished responsibility of self-regulating disagreement, the moderators may, in some instances, need to step in (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

Chapter 5 has shown how mundane, everyday forms of talking can be used to do argumentative work. Similar work has been done in the past (e.g. Schegloff, 1988/1989) although not necessarily with an orientation towards the ‘knowledge work’ that might accompany discursive moves. That is, overlaps can be used to do argumentative work. Speakers monitor the talk of others (Billig, 1999), so it is not unreasonable to think that they will intervene, in the form of overlaps, as the interactional context of broadcast political debates may restrict other options to challenge their opponent. We have also seen that escalation is a joint action – it is not enough for one politician to pursue a more hostile or chaotic form of interaction. It takes a matching response from the other politician; both must continue a fight for the floor with misaligned trajectories of talk. This tells us that both escalation and contested talk is a two-way affair; it is not enough for one person to continue arguing if there is no response from their opponent.

Chapter 6 focuses on cases of laughter and derision. Here, I considered how derision can be accomplished via subtle and more explicit ‘knowledge’ and argumentative work in broadcast political debates. While laughter generally serves to mark something as laughable (Glenn, 2003), and this is an important and a consistent aspect of laughter in argumentation, it is not
something that does just one kind of work. The analysis focused on derision accomplished through extended, shorter, or atypical laughter sequences. All three accomplish different, yet delicate, types of challenges. Extended laughter works in sequences with irony, to both put out and to resist assertions that may otherwise be sanctioned. Shortened cases of laughter, particularly laughter within words and teasing, signal argumentative or interactional trouble. In addition, I demonstrated that there are some issues to address when challenging someone on their epistemic domain, and the use of laughter within words seems to enable the challenge in this context. In the case of teasing, we see how it is heavily reliant on the context. Somewhat paradoxically, it is a direct “attack” but is delivered in a situation where multiple people are speaking at the same time and nobody has the floor. Indeed, these kinds of teasing do not take place when the interaction is relatively orderly – they are not to be heard from someone who has the floor. Shortest forms of laughter – snorts and short, sharp laughters – are perhaps the most ‘aggressive’ in their function. They are highly derisive and are designed to be heard as such. While they do not offer a counterclaim per se, the action of rebuttal is still carried across, often with minimal commitment to engage with the claim that it attacks.

There is well-established literature, particularly in the field of CA, regarding the function of laughter, so we already know that it is more often to do with trouble or celebration (Glenn & Holt, 2013) than an expression of inner joy or entertainment that is a result of something comic. In other words, laughter is as much action-oriented as a factual description. Rather than something separate, it is very much a part of conversational language (Billig, 2005). In the context of broadcast political programmes, Romaniuk (2009; 2013) has demonstrated that laughter performs a number of functions, of which one particularly prominent feature is that it constitutes a form of resistance. My analysis built on this and took it a step further. Not only is laughter a part of resistance, but it plays a role in argumentation as well as doing ‘knowledge work’. Laughter tells the listeners that the person laughing is in some manner ‘aware’ of what is talked about (Schegloff, 2007). The implication is that laughter plays an argumentative role by way of ‘knowledge work’. To laugh is to ‘demote’ one’s ideological opponent and what they have said; it can constitute a relatively forceful and hostile action. This is not something that is in some way “bad” or “wrong”. It seems that derision is used across ideologies, factions, and so forth, meaning that it has a serious role to play in political argumentation. Therefore, we ought not to consider it as something that “taints” arguments.
What the findings throughout the analytical chapters suggest, is that displays of and orientations to ‘knowledge’ and ‘facts’ are a relevant ongoing matter of concern and work to the debaters, by way of the subtle orientations to who-knows-what, who-knows-better, and so forth. ‘Knowledge work’ can have a highly argumentative function depending on the context of the interaction. The negotiation of rights to assess states of affairs in everyday conversations (e.g. Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006) are not necessarily particularly argumentative in and of themselves; however, it certainly seems so in broadcast political debates. Because in broadcast political debates there is an ongoing concern with knowledge claims and knowledge displays about controversial “states of affairs”, we can see that they play an important role in contested political discourse. In the case of debating for or against the European Union, we see this by way of mobilisation, contestation and defence, of ‘facts’, states of affairs, whereby politicians present themselves as more knowledgeable, more informed, more attuned to the relevance of political stakes, than their opponents.

A DP-based epistemic-rhetorical analytical focus can reveal some of the ways contested political discourse manifests. It has hopefully demonstrated that, as Edelman argued, “political and ideological debate consists very largely of efforts to win acceptance of a particular categorisation of an issue in the face of competing efforts on behalf of a different one” (1977, p. 25). Analysing ‘knowledge work’ in broadcast political debates as a vehicle for doing argumentative work has a soundness about it, by way of showing that constructions of ‘facts’, ‘knowledge’, and so forth are abundant in political argumentation and play a highly rhetorical role. This should lead to a much wider appreciation of the importance of political and ideological conflicts that Edelman was calling for.
7.2 Limitations, Questions for Future Research

Much of the analytical focus of this thesis has been on the rhetorical function of displays of, and orientation to, ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ in broadcast political debates. While their rhetorical work has been, hopefully, demonstrated, my thesis seems to focus more on certain aspects of Edelman’s claim that politics is about an ideological struggle over ‘facts’ and ‘values’. The relationship between epistemics – that is, the knowledge that is mobilised in broadcast political debates – and the values that are implicit within them, have not necessarily been given equal analytical attention. The discursive accomplishment of “values” and “morality” needs to be explored further in this context. This is not to say that the epistemic-rhetorical focus is not equipped to analyse the moral dimension of broadcast political debates. Discursive Psychology already has an established literature on notions of morality in talk (e.g. Tileagă, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2010; 2012; 2013b) so we should not consider this an analytical issue. Consequently, future research, with a focus on the argumentative function of ‘knowledge work’, could also focus on the value and moral dimension of ‘ideological’ conflict in talk, contested political discourse, and on the relationship with the construction of ‘facts’. This need not be a significant change in how the analysis is to be done. The analysis could, for example, be expanded by a focus on what kind of a ‘reality’ is being portrayed by the use of facts and the moral implications such a state of affairs suggests. One could, at this stage, begin to make links with the ‘ideological’ position within a particular debate, the ‘facts’ it brings forth and how these are used to treat some notions as positive and others as problematic. One could expect the analytical focus to also look at what is taken for granted, so to speak, as ways of indicating how a particular state of affairs, or a goal, is treated as ‘natural’, giving us some idea of what is treated as morally appropriate or desirable.

There are other avenues too that require further studying. For one, my analytical focus relies on the ‘knowledge’ aspect of political talk. Other characteristics of political talk, such as emotion talk, have not been explored. While this thesis may not be particularly focused towards this, Discursive Psychology has looked at aspects of emotion talk (e.g. Edwards, 1997; 1999) and has done so in political contexts (e.g. Augoustinos, Hastie & Wright, 2011; Márquez, 2010). This is not a problematic aspect of DP as such, as this thesis never set out to explore such aspects of political talk here. That said, the relationship between knowledge-as-argumentation and emotional talk would prove an intriguing project in the future.
Perhaps one other avenue that is of particular relevance to this thesis is the focus on elite political speakers. In other words, the epistemic-rhetoric focus in DP has shown itself to be a viable analytical approach when analysing the political talk and debate by senior political figures in broadcast shows. As such, the political talk by someone who is not a professional politician has not been covered. A good exploration into this area is to look at, for example, debates between non-politicians or the types of arguments that Reynolds (2011; 2015) has analysed in a political or otherwise ideological context. These could all be used to explore the role of argumentative and ideological practices, alongside the ‘knowledge work’ done in various contexts and by different types of speakers.

It is late 2015 at the time of writing this chapter, and many European countries have reacted strongly to the number of refugees fleeing from the Middle East. This is not a political issue that is talked about as separate from the controversial topic of the EU as a whole. One country with particularly strong reactions has been Finland. Sadly, cases of unambiguous racism have become readily observable in the (social) media: a mother of two telling the interviewer that the presence of non-white men directly reduces safety in Finnish society, an anti-refugee protester wearing the Ku Klux Klan outfit, a Finnish woman’s verbal abuse and extreme and explicit dehumanisation of a person based on the colour of their skin. These are all actions abundant with ideological practices, where people do ‘knowledge work’ of various types to advocate position, while simultaneously attacking the arguments of their critics. Nor should this wave of bigotry be seen as separate from pro- and anti-EU debates, as the two seem to co-occur regularly in the media. Similarly, politicians throughout Europe have been highly vocal on the matter. There is plenty of material for analysing this ideological conflict and contested political discourse in numerous contexts, and hopefully future work will address the shortcomings of this thesis.
7.3 Implications

This thesis has begun to analyse political talk from the perspective that it is characteristically, almost intrinsically, about facts and values (Edelman, 1977). The aim has been to explicitly acknowledge the role that ‘knowledge’ displays and orientations – that is, epistemics – play in contested political discourse. The analytical chapters have demonstrated the importance of the focus on the role that ‘knowledge work’ plays in them. While the role of epistemics in everyday conversations, as well as types of institutional talk, has been well established, this thesis has demonstrated displays of and orientations to ‘facts’ and ‘knowledge’ to be a live issue in broadcast political debates. Moreover, not only are they at the forefront of multi-party political debates, but they also play an argumentative role in them.

The empirical support for treating political talk as concerned with facts and values has shown us the contestability of what might be treated as ‘fact’, or, even, ‘truth’. One need not treat political talk as only to do with facts and values in order to appreciate that facts, values, truths and so forth are used to create particular types of arguments. This thesis does not question the ‘objectivity’ of facts per se, but it does demonstrate that the way they are collated and used in talk can, in order to make arguments for or against the European Union, be subjective. This thesis builds on the already existing academic literature that suggests that the way politicians talk is not something neutral, and neither are the ‘facts’ as they are put forth. Ultimately, we need to appreciate the nuanced and occasioned work that political talk does; the ways positions are advocated and challenged, how contested political discourse unfolds, and how knowledge orientations are all used to do political work. As Tileagă suggests, one needs to be willing to treat a political notion as “fragmentary, unfinished and relative to the contexts in which it is performed” (2013, p.188), in order to provide for a more exhaustive understanding from the perspective of political psychology. It is certainly the case with political discourse too. ‘Ideology’ has in the past been demonstrated to be fragmentary, ‘dilemmatic’ even (Billig et al., 1988), and one needs to take this into account if one wishes to understand how ideology is lived in the form of contested political discourse. This thesis has marked some of the discursive and ‘knowledge/facts’ based actions that play a part in contested political discourse.

This thesis has implications to the way we study contested political discourse, and how ‘ideologies’ are lived. This should prove an encouragement to the discourse analyst, social
and political psychologist alike, that one need not look only for inner mental or grand social structures to study ideology or its contestable aspects. Indeed, psychology has seemed reluctant to acknowledge the importance of rhetoric when it comes to studies of ideology (Byford, 2014). In studying contested political discourse, this thesis is a call for the recognition of the importance of the social world, the way we talk and argue to be considered crucial components in understanding ‘lived’ ideology. In seeing how politicians advocate, contest, and argue for or against various positions, we can begin to trace some of these methods outlined to observe the relationship between contested political discourse and ‘lived’ ideology. After all, we see the clash of ideologies taking place whenever we see two politicians arguing for this or that. What we see are not cognitive battles that drive words into the mouths of people, instead what the viewer can see are the social actions and battles where the stakes are high and politically charged. As researchers, and observers of contemporary democratic politics, we do not engage with ideological thoughts; we engage with ideological practices. This thesis has hopefully shown how contested political discourse is infused, alive, and ideologically charged within aspects of mundane and political discourse, in the seemingly frenetic talk between ideologically opposed politicians who just cannot seem to find the ever elusive last word (Billig, 1996) that would prove their position as the “correct” one.
8. References


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186


192


9. Appendix I – Transcription Symbols

From Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001) and Heritage and Clayman (2011), with the last transcription symbol as my own addition:

(.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.

(.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two tenths of a second.

.hh A dot before a ‘h’ indicates speaker’s audible in-breath; the more ‘h’s, the longer the in-breath.

.hh An ‘h’ indicates an audible out-breath; the more ‘h’s, the longer the out-breath.

(() A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity, for example ((banging sound)).

- A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.

: Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.

( ) Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.

(guess) The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber’s best guess at an unclear fragment.

. A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.

, A comma indicates a continuing intonation

? A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.

Under underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
↑↓ Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.

CAPITALS With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate a section of the speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.

° ° Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.

> < ‘More than’ and ‘less than’ signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk. Words with the arrows pointing >inwards< are markedly faster, conversely those with the arrows pointing <outwards> are pronounced slower.

= The ‘equals’ sign indicates contiguous utterances.

[ ] Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.

[[ A double left-hand bracket indicates that speakers start a turn simultaneously.

£ A type of voice that indicates that the speaker is smiling while speaking.

# Indicates a rasping or creaky voice.

xxx Indicates applause from the audience.

{ } Denotes an audible response from the audience, such as stirring, which is not otherwise transcribable.