Playing Justification in Parliamentary Debates.
A Case Study on the Italian Parliament

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Workshop 3
Law in Action and Context: Historical and Contemporary Practices
in the Mediterranean Area

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1. Introduction

This paper concerns the empirical study of a parliamentary debate that occurred at the Italian Parliament, in its two Houses, the *Camera dei deputati* (Chamber of Deputies) and the *Senato* (Senate). It aims at understanding the interactive processes and strategies that lead to the creation of a normative legal text – i.e., a text which contains normative propositions, as well as statements of intent, definitions, references to other legal documents etc. – as the process comes along within an institutional context endowed with its own specific set of constraints and rules. The debate we examine concerns the decision of joining and supporting the US-lead military coalition in the war against Iraq in 2003, a debate which took place under the Berlusconi government during winter–spring 2003. In particular, we examine the *séance* which took place in the Camera on Wednesday afternoon, February 19th, 2003.

The paper focuses on the production of argumentative justifications for the expression of political options and motions, as well as for the taking of political decisions during the parliamentary debate. The decisions that are reached during the debate are eventually going to be translated, through voting systems which may vary from country to country and according to the type of decision, into legally binding texts.

First of all, one should be warned that in the continental European political tradition, parliamentary debates are rather different from the Anglo-American debating style. Whereas the latter is much more theatrical and conflictual, as it is centred around an oral solo exposition[1] shortly followed by oppositions, according to a rigid timing, the former generally flows slower and the allotment of speaking turns is more relaxed. In contemporary American usage, in particular, parliamentary debate amounts to every kind of public debate in front of an audience aimed at advancing motions, discussing and opposing them. Such debates are commonly practices as competitive tournaments in schools and other public settings as they are less technical than other forms of debate (Branham and Meany 1998). Despite their obvious diversity, all these different forms of parliamentary debating share both a common performative dimension and the mobilization of discursive resources, which is what we are interested to explore here.

In the context of a parliamentary debate, disagreement over the interpretation of facts, declarations of one's association to given stances and motions, and the undertaking of decisions is manifested and performed within an institution which structures social interaction

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[1] Even today the British House of Commons allows no written speeches from its members, though verbatim quotations of records can, and are indeed, are strategically deployed (see Antaki and Leudar 2001).

in order to prevent any resort to violence. From this perspective, a Parliament can be seen as a structured context for regulated disagreement, as well as an arena for the negotiation of diverging *prises de position* – stances of associations and dissociations – through an array of means which include all kind of attempts at persuading the others. In other words, what matters in this context are not mere contingent preferences, associations, and *prises de position* of this or that political man, but rather the argumentative justifications provided for those preferences, associations, and *prises de position*.

2. Political field, institutional context, justifications, pertinences and topoi

The most general theoretical framework we adopt to look at this context is the concept of *political field* (Bourdieu 2000). The political field is a domain of discourse and activity structured in such a way that people within the field, while being accountable to people outside the field (voters, public opinion, etc.), and while taking decisions that influence various social arenas *outside* the field, are responsive, in the first place, to other people *inside* the field: to put it a little bit bluntly, politicians talk to each other[2]. Facts of the world, such as climate, economy and sports, are all, for one reason or another, relevant within the political field, but first they have to be imported into the field by making reference to categories, lexicon, properties and states of things that are codified and relevant within the field itself[3].

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[2] "[D]ire qu'il y a un champ politique, c'est rappeler que les gens qui s'y trouvent peuvent dire ou faire des choses qui sont déterminées non pas par la relation directe avec les votants mais avec les autres membres du champ. Il dit ce qu'il dit – par exemple une prise de position à propos de la sécurité ou à propos de la délinquence… – non pas pour répondre aux attentes de la population en général ou même de la categorie qui lui a donné sa voix, qui l'a désigné comme mandataire, mais par référence à ce que d'autres dans le champ disent ou ne disent pas, font ou ne font pas, pour se différencier ou au contraire s'approprier des positions propres à menacer l'apparence de la représentativité qu'il peut avoir" (Bourdieu 2000: 57).

[3] Consider for instance how Berlusconi referes to the Global protests against Iraq war, the series of huge pacifist demonstrations that took place on February 15, 2003 and involved more than 10 million people in over 600 cities worldwide (see appendix for transcription notation):

{World public opinion is (.) worried and has (.) clearly and legitimately expressed (.) this demonstration (.5) this– (.) concern in the (.) demonstrations that took place last saturday in Italy and in many important European capitals and in the world (.5) I had (.) already noted in my last speech in this Hall (.) that I never put in doubt the good faith or the (.) ideal inspiration of the peace movement (.5) But (.) as everybody knows (.) worry (.) is not enough to solve problems (.3) and demonstrations (.) are likewise not enough (.) even though they are important demonstrations.}

L'opinione pubblica mon<u>dia</u>le è (.) preoccupata ed ha (.) chiaramente e legittimamente es<u>pre</u>sso (.) questa sua manifestazione (.5) <u>questa sua</u>– (.5) preoccupazione nelle (.) manifestazioni che si sono svolte in Italia in molte importanti capitali d'Europa e nel mondo sabato scorso (.5) Av<u>e</u>vo (.) già rilevato nel mio ultimo intervento in quest'aula (.) che non ho mai messo in dubbio la buona fede o l'ispirazione (.) <u>i</u>deale del movimento per la pace (.5) Ma come tutti <u>sanno</u> (.) la (.) >preoccupa<zione (.) non basta a risolvere i pro<u>ble</u>mi (.3) e non <u>bastano</u> (.) >neppure le manifestazioni< (.3) <u>anche</u> se sono (.) manifestazioni importanti.

(AP, 43: 4'10"–4'54")

The anti-war demonstrations are clearly a relevant event, potentially even a harmful event for Berlusconi, as they proved the impopularity of his position. But the event has to be imported into the field before it can make sense. In this passage, Berlusconi chooses to import it and frame it in a certain way, before other actors may refer to it through other types of framing which may put the government's position in difficulty. It is thus both an

External facts need to be 'transcribed' into the terms that are proper to the field itself before being made available to legitimate use.

A parliamentary session is a phenomenon which is specifically located within the macro context of the political field. Thus, it inherits the logic and the degree of semi-autonomy from other social fields which is peculiar of the events taking place inside the political field. In order to understand what is going on in detail during a parliamentary session, one must not only take into account the general characteristics of the institution under scrutiny, but also observe the series of strategic interactions that are deployed inside the field, and, more specifically, inside the parliamentary *institutional context*, as a situated activity. The Parliament is a political institution, and categorization, classification and symbolization play a crucial role in the life of institutions (Douglas 1986) as well as in their concrete organization (Bowker and Star 1999). Institutional talk is characterized by an orientation of the actors towards the goal and tasks associated with the institution; by the occurrence of specific constraints to what is perceived as an allowable contribution by an actor; and by the presence of inferential frameworks and procedures (Drew and Heritage eds. 1992: 22). The occurrence of talk inside institutions is thus interestingly located in between the routine character of institutionalized action and the immediate features of interactional dynamics (Mäkitalo and Säljö 2002).

To analyse these forms of interaction, we make reference to a series of conceptual tools. The first is Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006/1991, 1999; cf. also Corcuff 1998) analysis of *justification* as a social activity. For these authors, a justification basically aims at overcoming disagreement among the parties by pointing to a "shared superior principle". A strong social pressure exists to produce justifications: "[t]he one who criticizes other persons must produce justifications in order to support their criticisms just as the person who is the target of these criticisms must justify his or her actions in order to defend his or her cause" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999: 360). Following Wagner (1999: 346), what characterizes Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of jutification is a combination of "an observation of situated actions, where situations are always in need of interpretation (as indeed in interactionism), with the analysis of the registers of justification and evaluation, which are mobilized in the situation but transcend it, and the study of the elaboration of devices (*dispositifs*), both material and cognitive, that are meant to stabilize situations and can potentially create widely extended and relatively durable social phenomena (this being the usual domain of macrosociology)". The existence of an *imperative to justify* is particularly evident in parliamentary debates. Rarely if ever is the act of expressing an option or a motion sufficient in itself. Providing reasons and arguments to back up the *prise de position* is an essential part of the game.

In order to describe the types of discoursive moves that are put in place by the speakers during parliamentary debates, we refer, in the second place, to Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca's (1958) classification of *tópoi*, which was originally elaborated as part of Perelman's project of a 'new rhetoric' modeled upon argumentative underpinnings (see, inter alia, Brighenti 2004). For Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca, rhetoric is an argumentative field which spans between a lower threshold, arbitrariness, and an upper threshold, logical cogency. None of the two thresholds belong to the rhetorical field, which consequently includes all the varieties of the probable, the reasonable, and the persuasive. A *tópos* can be described as a practically oriented discoursive device. It is a scheme to produce an argument of some type. A *tópos*

anticipatory move and a move that reveals how an external event can be imported into the political field of the parliamentary debate.

receives its strength from being located within a reservoir of shared common sense knowledge. It is effective because and insofar as it is grounded on some accepted way of reasoning. Yet, what is accepted, shared and common can be quite up for crabs in a debating context. Consequently, the topic reservoir always constitutes, at most, a fuzzy ensemble, whose boundaries can be traced only ex post facto, according to the degree of effectiveness that they are capable of exhibiting in the course of the interaction itself.

Third, we make reference to Ferrié and Dupret's (2004) and, more extensively, to Dupret's (2006) definition of *pertinences* as praxeological domains of meaning against which a discourse is measured or called to be measured[4]. Dupret (2006: 177) defines for instance the juridical pertinence as "l'operation de qualification consistant à faire correspondre une instance factuelle à une définition juridique formelle"; more comprehensively, Ferrié and Dupret (2004: 276) define a pertinence as "l'orientation vers un cadre de référence dans lequel l'usage des principes, des règles ou des procédures spécifiques va de soi pour les protagonistes et où son absence est ressentie comme incongrue". As we will see more in details, the dimension of the *aller de soi*, or of *ça va sans dire* – the given-for-granted – that is inherent to a pertinence is a crucial dimension in the production of argumentative justifications.

Disputes exist, we may say, in the tension between the two dimensions of the implicit and the explicit. Every dispute generates a demand for defining or clarifying the grounds upon which one's association with a cause, or one's preference for an option or a motion, are expressed. Boltanski and Thévenot claim that, sooner or later in a dispute, a question is raised which "manifests a shift from a simple association to a judgment aiming at generality; the answer will lead to the formulation of the principle that justifies the associations being made, and it will make it possible to specify the nature of the test that will allow the parties to reach agreement about the adequacy of these associations to the particular things to which they apply" (ibid. 2006/1991: 33). On the other hand, disputes are never exhaustive, because human resourses are limited. In a structured context such as the one we are considering, limitations to the possibility of formulating the principles that lead to a certain association are due, for instance, to time constraints and attention availability. Pertinences are employed in order to mobilize implicit resources.

We have hinted that one basic justificatory device is constituted by the *montée en généralité*, i.e. by the attempt to present an option or association as the least particular and contingent as possible. But, in fact, there is no single unifying principle of generality. Rather, there exists a plurality of such principles, as they vary according to the domain of activity at stake. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006/1991), for instance, identify six different types of criteria of worth attribution (*grandeurs*). They correspond to different domains the authors call, respectively, inspired world, domestic world, world of fame, civic world, market world and industrial world. In this paper, we accept the idea of a plurality of frames for worths attribution, while not following rigidly Boltanski and Thévenot's classification.

Inside each reference frame, the *montée en généralité* implies the resort to higher levels of generality and to more encompassing categories. In theory, such move could be indefinitely pursued in the quest for an ever higher principle of agreement. In practice, however, as we have suggested, things work differently: the level of generality is in most cases only *implicitly*

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[4] Interestingly, the word 'pertinence' has been used in semiotics by Argentinian linguist Luis Prieto (1964) to indicate a feature of the spoken word that is made relevant in a specific interactional situation.

negotiated. In other terms, between the said and the unsaid of an argument or jutification there is a visibility game (Brighenti 2007b). Justification is thus a very contingent and situated game, ruled by the interplay of background rhetorical reservoirs with the endogenous properties of the interactional situation. In the case of the specific institutional setting we are considering, the political Parliament, we claim that justification can be imagined as a *part* which is played by political men *qua* live actors. Hence, the title of our paper 'playing justification'.

3. Data: drafted and live

This section of the paper deals with the empirical analysis of the parliamentary debate at stake. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate *séances* are of course public (actually, they are so almost by definition) although they are open to external visitors only by appointment and to a number of credited journalists. Proceedings and transcripts are made available via the Official Gazette and, more recently, via the internet.

On February 19th, 2003, an intense session took place at the Italian Parliament. The session at the Camera was chaired by President Pier Ferdinando Casini in the first part of the day, and by Vice-president Alfredo Biondi from mid-afternoon, while the session at the Senato was wholly chaired by President Marcello Pera. The hot topics of the day included: the hypothesis of joining the US government in its forthcoming attack against Iraq; the position of the UNO in the crisis management; the position of the EU and the EU resolution voted in February 2003; voting declarations about the motions and emendments presented by various parliamentary groupings[5]; general assessment and declarations about the whole enterprise and the state of international relations[6].

The data we analyzed include the visual and audio recordings of the session, as well as the official proceeding record where all the debates of the Camera and the Senato are transcribed. This official transcript, known as the "stenographic", is analogous for instance to the "Hansard" of the British Parliament (Antaki and Leudar 2001: 469) and the "Journal des Débats" of the Québec National Assembly (Cooren and Taylor 1999: 69). What the transcript offers is of course a very much idealized version of what was really uttered. Fortunately, we have been able to cross-check it with the audio recording of the session to obtain a CA-based transciption (for notation method, see appendix). On the other hand, the audio recording also had its limitations, as off-voices were not audible and the names of the speakers not always declared (yet recorded on the transcript).

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[5] On that day, there were three main motions to be voted: one by the centre-rightwing coalition of government, the *Casa delle libertà*, one by the centre-leftwing coalition of opposition composed by *Ulivo* and *Margherita*, and one by the leftist grouping of *Rifondazione comunista* and the *Green Party*.

[6] The war began on March 20th and was declared won by George W. Bush on May 1st, after just one month. Italy joined the US-led coalition on April 15th, 2003. The military supply amounted to slightly more than 3000 soldiers and was sent to South Iraq on June 7, 2003 under the mission name "Antica Babilonia". In March 2004, despite severe contrasts in the Parliament, the mission was re-financed and the Italian military presence prolonged. In May 2006, the newly elected Prime Minister Romano Prodi declared that the Italian military participation would be withdrawn, The actual withdrawing was completed on December 2, 2006 (see Ministero della difesa 2006).

A first important caveat while studying this material is that the majority of the speeches given during the parliamentary sessions were arguably written texts, drafted by politicians themselves or by their ghostwriters. Most texts are read, with only minor improvisations. However, the use of drafts does not change the fact that they must be played *live*. A politician's solo is a performance – more specifically, a social performance (Turner 1985) – which is inherently contextualized and locally meaningful: it must be recognized through a specific turn-taking procedure; it needs to be delivered within the allotted time, with a deputed person (Mr President of the Chamber of Deputies) enforcing the timing; it takes place between other speeches, e.g. just after some adversarial one and just before some allied one; it may be interrupted or contested; it may happen to be delivered just as some important news is been announced which dramatically reshapes the scenery; and so on. Therefore by 'improvisation' we do not mean simply the extemporaneous invention of an argument, but the whole praxeological nature (Dupret 2006) of talk occurring inside an institutional context.

An example of improvisation is provided for instance by Berlusconi in the following passage:

Pict.1. 9'35"–. Berlusconi reading   Pict.2. 9'58"–. Berlusconi improvising

{The tools may change (.) even in the hypothesis of a second and more detailed resolution (.5) but the request of the international community is (.) and must be only (.) one (.5) the immediate, total and unconditional cooperation of the Iraqi (.) regime under threat of serious (.) consequences– this morning (.) at the Senate (.) I spent some time to talk about the fact that this coopearation on the part of the Iraq does not exist at all […] All this (.) must (.) absolutely (.) change (.) Otherwise there will never be the certainty that–of the real existence that supposedly exists (.) of (.) arms (.) that (.) could be hidden in every part of the country that (.) I recalled this morning (.) is wider than France=it would be like looking for the classis (.) needle (.) in a haystack}

Gli strumenti possono cam<u>bia</u>re (.) anche nell'ipotesi (.) di una seconda e più dettagliata risoluzione (.5) ma la richiesta della comunità internazionale <u>è</u> (.) e deve essere una (.) sola (.5) l'imme<u>dia</u>ta, to<u>tale</u> e senza (.) condi<u>zio</u>ni cooperazione del regime: (.) iracheno sotto pena di serie (.) conseguenze– questa mattina (.) al S<u>ena</u>to (.) mi sono (.) soffer<u>mato</u>: sul fatto che questa cooperazione da parte dell'Iraq non esista <u>pro</u>prio […] Questo (.) deve (.) assolutamente (.) cam<u>bia</u>re (.) perché altrimenti non ci potrà mai <u>e</u>ssere la sh-certezza che– dell'esistenza <u>reale</u> ↓che si suppone esista (.) dav↑<u>ve</u>ro (.)di (.) armi (.) che (.) >potrebbero essere nas<<u>co</u>sti in qualunque parte di un paese che (.) >ho ricordato questa mattina:< (.) è più <u>gra</u>nde della Francia=sarebbe >come andare a cercare< il classico (.) <u>ago</u> (.) nel pagliaio.

(AP, 44: 9'35"–10'05"; 11'44"–12'06")

The passage shows the occurrence of an improvisation which is not particularly brilliant, as the speaker, after leaving the written speech (9'58"–), ends up muddling himself into a complication in his own argument (11'44"–), namely the impossibility of demonstrating, without the cooperation of Iraq, the demonstrated presence of weapons of mass destruction. Interestingly, the improvised part begins with a verbal shift to the first person in the modality of a narration ("this morning at the Senate…"), which marks a difference from the third person which was being used up to that point. Besides, the improvised part is more densely populated by linguistic uncertainties and mistakes, as well as by more variable speaking rhythm and volume[7]. However, it is not always the case that improvised parts are of lower

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[7] It is interesting to note that the linguistically poor quality of this improvised part is subsequently recognized by Marco Minniti, a deputy of the centre-leftwing coalition, who tactically quotes it to discredit the Prime

quality than the parts that are simply read. On the contrary, looking at the audio-video recording cleary shows that some deputies' improvisations were quite impressing and effective, having much more room for talk expressive accents and body language (gestures), even though the transcript may not do justice to the quality of the live immediate impact of improvised speech[8].

4. Turns and speeches

In the institutional context we are considering, turn taking is officially allotted by the President of the House, following a subscription procedure, for an established time span. This makes the debate clearly different from ordinary conversation, where turn management relies mostly or wholly on implicit norms. However, even such heavy structural constraints do not prevent the occurrence of conflicts over speaking turns, especially in the form of constestation, disputing or interruptions. Malign interruptions are concentrated especially at the beginning of the turn, where the right to speak is temporarily weaker. Here is a case where the speaker, the centre-leftwing Margherita politician Francesco Rutelli, is recurrently interrrupted by the deputies of the other political coalition while attempting to begin his speech.

> {FRANCESCO RUTELLI. I thank you Mr President (3) this debate is taking place while we face (.) one of the most dramatic divisions (.) between Europe (.) and the United States (2)
>
> [((Noises: Comments from the Northern League deputies))
>
> [ONE MP FROM THE MARGHERITA PARTY. Silence!
>
> [RUTELLI. We live it with difficulty =   [↑ ((Voices))
>
> ALESSANDRO CÈ. =Fuck you   [You made such a noise   [before!

Minister's opening declarations as lacking respect towards the parliamentary institution (see pertinence B1 below):

> Thanks eh– Mr President (1) I think (.) sincerely that (.) the Prime Minister (.) he's not here but (.) I beg honourable Fini (.) to refer to him (.5) would have been better if (.) he had reread the speech that (.) had previously given at the Senat– (2) >Probably he would have faced< also >in a way< (.) the boring of repetition (.) but would have avoided (.) to talk improvising (1) And when (.) >the=Prime Minister< improvises he lets himself go (.5) lets himself go >as it happened today once again lacking respect< (.) to the opposition=and=I think to the whole Parliament too (2) The respect that (.) the Prime Minister asks for himself (.) but never gives to the others.

> Grazie eh– Presidente (1) penso (.) sinceramente che (.) il Presidente del Consiglio (.) non c'è ma (.) prego l'onorevole Fini (.) di riferire (.5) avrebbe fatto meglio a (.) rileggere l'intervento che (.) aveva precedentemente svolto al Senat– (2) >Probabilmente avrebbe affrontato< anche >in un certo senso< (.) la noia della ripetizione (.) e tuttavia avrebbe evitato (.) di parlare a braccio (1) E quando (.) >il=Presidente del Consiglio< parla a braccio si lascia andare (.5) si lascia andare >come è avvenuto oggi ancora una volta mancando di rispetto< (.) all'opposizione=e=io penso anche all'intero Parlament– (2) Quel rispetto che (.) il Presidente del Consiglio chiede (.) ma che non riesce mai a dare agli altr–.

> (AP, 63: 1h45'18"– 1h46'16")

[8] It is the case especially of Mancuso's, Pecoraro Scanio's, and Bertinotti's speeches.

PRESIDENTE. [Honourable[9] colleagues what is happening= Honourable Cè ((rings the bell)) Honourable Cè I call you back to order what is the problem?

ALESSANDRO CÈ. I want to speak=

PRESIDENTE. =No no no now >I can't let you speak<=Come ask the Presidency I'm– seeing (.) tumults– I don– I don't understand what's going on!=I hear screams that are (.) rude.

ALESSANDRO CÈ. When we speak   [the others disturb

PRESIDENTE.   [No no no no no no no (.)

[((Voices))

[no I'm sorry honourable Cè (.) honourable Cè (.) ↑ honourable Cè (.) honourable Cè::: (.)

honourable Cè (.) when you spoke the President has recalled for two times (.) the centre-leftwing deputees to attention with the bell ((rings the bell softly)).

ALESSANDRO CÈ. You can recall us, not they!=

PRESIDENTE. =That's fine (.) But now I mean– good manners have the pride over the rest=Honourable Rutelli I beg you pardon (.) if you can– continue.

FRANCESCO RUTELLI. (1) Thank you Mr President

[((Voices from the Northern League deputies))

[(.5) ↑this debate is taking place

PRESIDENTE. (1) Honourable colleagues now cut it we cannot continue the polemics!

[((Voices))

[(4) Honourable colleagues now you too stop (.) Otherwise it seems as if– as if it is deliberate=It is useless to continue the polemics! (1) Honourable Rutelli I beg you pardon again– (2)

(AP, 87: 3h38'41"– 3h40'20")}

FRANCESCO RUTELLI. La ringrazio Presidente (3) questo dibattito si svolge mentre registriamo (.) una delle più drammatiche divisioni (.) tra Europa (.) e Stati Uniti (2)

[((Rumori: Commenti dei deputati del gruppo della Lega nord Padania))

[DEPUTATO DELLA MARGHERITA. Silenzio!

[La viviamo con sofferenza=   [((Vociare in crescendo))

ALESSANDRO CÈ. =Vaffanculo   [Avete fatto un casino   [prima!

PRESIDENTE.   [Onorevoli colleghi che cosa sta capitando=Onorevole Cè ((suona la campanella)) onorevole Cè la richiamo all'ordine qual è il problema?

ALESSANDRO CÈ. Chiedo di parlare=

PRESIDENTE. =No no no adesso non >le posso dare a parola<=Venite a dirlo alla Presidenza sto se–vedendo (.) dei tumulti– Non– Non capisco cosa sta succedendo!=Sento delle urla che sono (.) incivili.

ALESSANDRO CÈ. Quando parliamo noi   [gli altri disturbano

PRESIDENTE.   [No no no no no no no (.)

[((Vociare))

[no scusi onorevole Cè (.) onorevole Cè (.) ↑onorevole Cè (.) onorevole Cè::: (.)

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[9] Italian deputies are routinely addressed and address each other as "honourable", a title which in the Anglo-American world indicates eminence or distinction and is especially reserved to judges and certain high officials.

onorevole Cè (.) quando lei ha parlato il Presidente ha richiamato per <u>due</u> volte (.) i deputati del centrosinistra all'attenzione con lo scampanellio ((suona la campanella leggermente)).

ALESSANDRO CÈ. Lei ci può richiamare non loro!=

PRESIDENTE. =Va bene(.) Adesso però insomma– la civiltà fa premio su tutto il <u>re</u>sto=Onorevole Rutelli le chiedo scusa (.) se può– continua↓re.

FRANCESCO RUTELLI. (1) Grazie Presidente

[((Vociare dei deputati del gruppo della Lega nord Padania))

[(.5) ↑questo dibattito si svolge

PRESIDENTE. (1) <u>Onorevoli colleghi basta però non è che continuiamo la polemica!</u>

[((Vociare indistinto))

[(4) <u>Onorevoli colleghi basta anche voi</u> (.) Se no poi sembra ch– che si faccia=a=posta=<u>È inutile</u> <u>che continuiamo la polemica!</u> (1) Ono>revole< Rutelli le chiedo scusa di <u>nuovo</u> ripr– (2)

(AP, 87: 3h38'41"– 3h40'20")

This is quite a troubled beginning of the speaking turn. Three main actors are involved: the speaker who has been designated to speak, his detractors, and the President. The latter is the one who is speaking more extensively and more loudly in the attempt to re-establish the order. The interesting point is that, even in this lower end of the political struggle, which is the struggle for voice, the President, who is the established and directly uncontested authority for speaking turns management, feels the need to recall explicitly the fairness rules designating himself in the third person ("when you spoke, the President has recalled for two times the centre-leftwing deputees to attention with the bell"). The contest goes on for other three minutes (until 3h43'16") until the President explicitly states his own rationale: "I am here to guarantee the right of everybody to speak freely". This is, we may say, the bottom line of justification, which consists in evoking the strongest shared premise, i.e. a state of fact, as The President is by definition the guarantee of equal treatment of all. Later on, the President of the Camera repeats the point by stating that in a Parliament "there must be someone who enforces the rules" and refers to the fact that he "ha[s] the clock", i.e. that he is the one who keeps the timings of the speeches (AP, 91). This is not an unicum, as a dispute on turn-taking happens again during Piero Fassino's speech (AP, 96–99).

Even when turns are not so fiercely struggled upon, the expression of *prises de position* can be a particularly tense situation. As we have just seen, it often fosters immediate hostile reactions and comments that make the speaker feel under attack – an attack manifested first of all against his ownership of the turn. The subjective experience of the speaker is vividly described for instance by Malcolm X, when he recalls the intensity of turn-taking moments at the outset of his debates: "Standing up there, the faces looking up at me, the things in my head coming out of my mouth, while my brain searched for the next best thing to follow what I was saying, and if I could sway them to my side by handling it right, then I had won the debate – once my feet got wet, I was gone on debating" (Malcolm X 1965: 184). Working possibly as an anticipated response to attacks, one typical structure in the organization of the solo is the climax: the rhythm, volume, and passion of the deliver get increasingly intense along the way. The speaker gains confidence while delivering her/his own speech and, so to speak, 'gets caught' by her/his own argument. This crescendo structure is typically shown by Vittorio Sgarbi's speech. The beginning of the speech is hesitant. There is a remarkable delay in the taking of the turn. Later on, however, it will become apparent that this initial hesitancy was somehow calculated, strategically deployed to gain a pause from the applauses following the

former speech, to set up the stage and to ease in taking off the colorful scarf Sgarbi is wearing (Pitc. 3). Yet, the speaker also feels the need to justify his delay when the President asks him to speak for the second time:

{   [((applauses))   [((applauses))
PRESIDENT.   [I declare (1)   [the joint discussion on the communications of the Government (2) and on the general options towards the motions open (.) I announce that the resolution (.) Elio Vito and others sis fiftyone has been submitted (.5) the first– (1) the first subscribed for speaking (.) is (.) deputy (.) Vittorio Sgarbi.

(5) ((the president rings the bell)) ((background noises)) (16)

PRESIDENT. Honourable Sgarbi come on!

SGARBI. I was waitin↓

PRESIDENT. You could=

SGARBI. =Honourable (1) Honourable >President of the< House (.) honourable colleauges (1) honourable President of the Ministry (1) amongst the persons (.5) that have underlined (.5) his vacillating conduct (.5) and a contradiction between today's positions (.5) and >those of a few weeks< ago there is myself.

(AP, 46: 18'30"–19'44")}

                        [((applausi))   [((applausi))
PRESIDENTE.   [Dichiaro aperta (1)   [la discussione congiunta sulle comunicazioni del Governo (2) e sulle linee generali delle mozioni (.) avverto che è stata presentata la risoluzione (.) Elio Vito ed altri sei cinquantuno (.5) il prim– (1) il primo iscritto a parlare (.) è (.) l'onorevole (.) Vittorio Sgarbi.

(5) ((il presidente suona la campanella)) ((rumori di fondo)) (16)

PRESIDENTE. Onorevole Sgarbi coraggio

SGARBI. Aspetta↓vo

PRESIDENTE. Poteva:::=

SGARBI. =Onorevole (1) Onorevole >Presidente della< Camera (.) onorevoli colleghi (1) onorevole Presidente del Consiglio (1) tra le persone (.5) che hanno indicato (.5) un suo andamento altalenante (.5) e una contraddizione fra le posizioni di oggi (.5) e >quelle di qualche settimana< fa ci sono anch'io.

(AP, 46: 18'30"–19'44")

Pict.4 19'20"–25'32" Diagram of Sgarbi's speech

Pict.3 18'50"–19'20"
Sgarbi before speaking

At the beginning, Sgarbi's speech is quite formal, the intonation is refined, and pauses in between utterances are long (part A). But, as he goes on speaking, his voice becomes louder and louder, the pauses become shorter, while he resorts to a harsh intonation and to everyday

vocabulary, until he reaches a visible peak (part B). From that point onward, the *forte* goes on with some internal modulations and some slight flexions until the end: the speaker is now fully capable of getting the audience's attention and can use it to address the most substantively consistent part of his claims (part C). Finally, the speech is followed by a short burst of applauses (part D).

5. Pertinences, orientations, and topoi in playing justification

Besides the material aspects of talk we have examined so far, we are also interested in describing the interplay of talk with discourse during the performative delivery of a speech in the institutional context. Live, performative delivery of a speech is staged on a wider background of argumentative reservoirs which, as a matter of strategy or tactics, can be mobilized by the speaker. Different types of discursive framings can be selectively activated in the form of pertinences during delivery. Ethnomethodologists have suggested that framing is a process through which people can display their understanding of the world while organizing their visible, ostensible activities (Garfinkel 1967). From this point of view, framings are fundamental for actors to show and address to each other the justifications for their respective position-takings.

A pertinence works as a framing, or topicalization, of what is being said. It inherently creates a discursive territorialization of the speaker/audience relationship (see Brighenti 2007a). Consequently, a pertinence activation sets a field of relevance where the talk is settled, or is invited to settle, and upon which the audience is invited to interpret it and judge it. In the political debate we are considering, the topics include foreign politics and international relations; international law and international institutions (UNO, EU, etc.); military alliances (US, NATO, etc.); nation-state law (in particular, constitutional law, criminal law, courts, customs, etc.); democratic civil society (in particular, the issue of participation and representation); and, finally, the wider horizon of contemporary world order.

Here follows a list of the main types of pertinence that have been activated during the deputees' speeches, with examples of their occurrence. Examples could be easily multiplied, as there is no shortage of them in the data, but we have chosen only the ones we deemed the most representative for each category.

Type of pertinence	Sub-types	Example
A. Legal	A1. International law, institutions, and alliances	{We the people of the world have decided (.) a civil way (.) adequate to respect for coexistence (.5) We have bounded ideally and politically and we have constrained ourselves voluntarily (.) and we must reaffirm internation binds and demand that others, too, do so.}
		Abbiamo deciso tutti i popoli della terra (.) una linea civile (.) una forma adeguata al rispetto della conviven↓za (.5) Ci siamo legati e collegati idealmente e politicamente ci siamo vincolati volontariamente (.) e dobbiamo confermare gli impegni internazionali pretendendo che lo facciano anche gli altri.

		(Costa. AP, 54: 1h00'18"– 1h00'37")
	A2. Constitutional principles	{But this decision is illegitimate (.5) because article eleven of the Constitution (.) in <inequivocable> terms repudiates the war.}
		Ma questa=decisione è illegittima (.5) perché l'articolo undici della Costituzione (.) in termini <inequivocabili> ripudia la guerra.
		(Bertinotti. AP, 82: 3h17'01"– 3h17'10")
	A3. Domestic Law and Courts	{A world where each country can be the cop, the public prosecutor, the judge and the enforcer of its own judgements (.) is an insecure world.}
		Un mondo nel quale ogni paese può divenire poliziotto pubblico ministero giudice ed esecutore delle proprie sentenze (.) è un mondo più insicuro (1)
		(Pistelli. AP 48, 27'41"– 27'50")
B. Political-democratic	B1. Representation, institutions	{But we have (.3) towards (.3) the citizens (.3) that gather together (.) and that think (.3) an obligation to reassure them (.3) that the Parliament is not divided (.5) that it is in contrast neither against itself (.) nor against the nation (.) when it calls (.) for subordination (.) to the rules of international law. }
		Abbiamo però (.3) verso:n (.3) i cittadini (.3) che si radunano (.) e che riflettono (.3) un dovere di conforto (.3) di sapere che il Parlamento non è diviso (.5) non è in contrasto con se stesso (.) né con la nazione (.) quando auspica (.) la sudditanza (.) la subbordinazione (.) alle regole del diritto internazionale.
		(Mancuso. AP 50, 40'23"– 40'54")
	B2. Participation, people	{It worths going back to saturday (.) saturday at eleven three hours after the official beginning of the demonstrations (.3) and Rome was already full of a human crowd that was becoming (.) and endless demonstration that eventually became >two, three, four, five, ten, a thousand< (.3) Before a fact like this, not only an Italian on (.) that speaks of the two millions in London that speaks of the hundred millions in the world (.5) the first thing that politics should do and I mean all politics (.) is an exercise to understand (.5) Before such a huge event (.) so extraordinary and upsetting (.5) the almost hygenic imperative of politics (.3) should be to try to understand.}
		Allora val la pena di ritornare a sabato (.) a sabato alle undici di mattina a tre ore (.3) dall'inizio ufficiale delle manifestazioni (.3) e Roma era già gremita da una fiumana di persone che prendeva le vie (.) di un interminabile corteo che poi è diventato >due, tre, quattro, cinque, dieci, mille< (.3) Di fronte ad un fatto come questo che non è solo italiano (.) che parla dei due milioni a Londra che parla dei cento milionieh (.) nel mondo (.5) la prima cosa che la politica dovrebbe fare dico tutta la politica (.) è l'esercizio di capire (.5) Di fronte aun– a un evento così enorme (.) così straordinario così sconvol↑gente (.5) l'imperativo quasi di igiene della po↑litica (.3) dovrebbe essere quello di capire.
		(Bertinotti. AP 80, 3h08'15"– 3h09'07")
C. Religious		{The Pope strongly wants the peace we all do (.5) And as every true– he's in love with peace (.) as true lover of the the paece he knows that it is necessary to do all that is possible for man to get peace (.3) But he also knows that to act according to human

measure and capability is not enough (.3) Peace descends from justice (.) and consequence of charity as he says ↑peace follows from change and from action committed to everybody's freedom (.5)}

Il Papa vuole fortissimamente la pace noi tutti la vogliamo (.5) E come ogni ve– è innamorato della pace (.) come vero innamorato della pace sa che occorre fare tutto quello che è nella possibilità dell'uomo perché avvenga la pa↓ce (.3) Ma sa anche che non bisogna limitarsi a operare secondo la misura e la possibilità umana (.3) La pace è frutto della giustizia (.) ed effetto della carità come egli dice ↑la pace consegue al cambiamento e=all'azione tenace della ˜libertà di ogniuno di noi (.5)

(Lupi. AP, 56: 1h10'38"–)

D. Historic

{[(((applauses))
[Which is the reason why (.)

it is unacceptable a demonstration where (.) Bush=is >paralleded to< Hitler and=the Prime Minister is seen as the Mussolini of that same (.) parallel (.3) This is unacceptable!}

[((applausi))
[Che è la ragione (.)

per la quale non è accettabile un corteo in cui (.) Bush=è >paragonato a< Hitler e=il Presidente del Consiglio è visto come il Mussolini di quella stessa (.) similitudine (.3) Non è accettabile!

(Sgarbi. AP, 46–47: 22'10"–22'26")

E. Securitarian

{Of ocurse (.3) the public opinion (.) >guess who wouldn't be< is worried (.5) is worried because (.) the small openings for (.) paece are closing down and those of war were opening up (.) until a few days ago (.5) But we should not forget (.) >dear honourable Minniti< and dear honourable Mussi (.) that (.) along with that civil (.) mass that (.) was protesting not only in Italy but in the world (.) and we are sorry (.) were not carrying Saddam Hussein (.) and Fidel Castro Osama bin Laden caricatures (.) but only George Bush's (.) as if he were the evil (.3) along with that mass that was protesting in the streets there are so many millions of citizens in the world today (.) and Chicago demontrates this who are worried for their safety (.3) worried for the safety of the ri community (.) worried after > september=eleven< about a terrorism (.) capable to move coward and criminal attacks against the international community and that (.) that is the peaceful mass we look at (.) to which we obey (.) together with the mass that (.) rightly correctly showed itself in the world (.) in the streets.}

Certo (.3) l'opinione pubblica (.) >e vorrei vedere chi non lo è=è< preoccupata (.5) è preoccupata perché (.) gli::: spiragli (.) della (.) pace si chiudono e quelli della guerra si aprivano (.) fino a pochi giorni fa (.5) Però non dobremmo dimenticare (.) >cari onorevoli Minniti< e caro onorevole ↑Mussi (.) che assieme a quella massa (.3) civile (.) che (.) manifestava non soltanto in Italia ma nel mondo (.) e che di questo ci rammarichiamo (.) non esponeva i ritratti di Saddam Hussein (.) di Fidel Castro di Osama bin Laden (.) ma soltanto il ritratto di George ↑Bush (.) quasi fosse il genio del ↑male (.3) assieme a quella massa che manifestava nelle strade ci sono tantissimi milioni di cittadini oggi nel mondo (.) e Chicago lo dimostra preoccupati per la loro– incolumità (.3) preoccupati per l'incolumità delle loro comunità (.) preoccupati dopo >l'undici=settembre< di un terrorismo (.) capace di sferrare attacchi vigliacchi e criminali contro la comunità internazionale=e quella (.) è quella massa pacifica alla quale noi guardiamo (.) e alla quale noi obbediamo (.) assieme alla massa che (.) giustamente correttamente civilmente si è fatta vedere nel mondo (.) nelle strade.

(Strano. AP 65–66: 1h57'54"–1h59'15")

As Dupret (2006) has argued, a pertinence is activated whenever an event, state of things or fact of the world is framed by making reference to a discursive or conceptual domain in which rules, values and procedures are given and undisputed. In other words, a pertinence

brings an event into a field endowed with its own logic, rules and values, which are assumed to be essentially shared and uncontested among the actors. This uncontested nature of rules and values is due to the fact that their ultimate ground remains invisible. A pertinence is thus a way of looking at worldly events from a given perspective. Inside a given institutional context, the occurence of some pertinence may be expected or even required in specific situations. In a parliamentary *séance*, for instace, the constitutional principles pertinence (A2) is one of these mandatory cases. Consequently, Prime Minister Berlusconi cannot but face this pertinence, especially because the entailed normative ground at stake is at odds with the policy his government is pursuing.

> {Article eleven of the Constitution states (.) that Italy re–(.)pudiate war (.) as an instrument to offend other peoples' liberty (.5) It is exactly in the name of the liberty of peoples (.) and its active defence from the menaces of terrorism e and mass desctruction weapons (.) that our Government (.) with the backup of the Parliament (.) will continue along a responsable (.) and active line (.) towards the goal of disinnescare le minacce alla sicurezza e alla ↑pace (.) unendo il suo impegno a quello di tutti gli uomini e di tutti i paesi (.) che hanno a cuore (.) la libertà.}
>
> L'articolo undici della Costituzione afferma (.) che l'Italia ri–(.)pudia la guerra (.) come strumento di offesa alla libertà di altri popoli (.5) È proprio in nome della libertà dei popoli (.) e della sua difesa at<u>ti</u>va dalle minacce del terrorismo e delle armi di distruzione di massa (.) che il <u>nos</u>tro Governo (.) con il sostegno del Parlamento (.) intende <u>pe</u>rseverare nella sua ligna <u>res</u>ponsabile (.) ed at↑tiva (.) nel suo obiettivo to unload menaces to security and peace (.) by joining the effort of all men and countries (.) that care for (.)liberty.
>
> (AP, 46: 17'30"–18'09")

What Berlusconi does here is an astute selective quoting of the Constitutional article, whose first sentence literally reads: '§11. Italy repudiates war as an instrument offending the liberty of the peoples and as a means for settling international disputes'. By lingering on the first part of the sentence only, the speaker has the possibility of dropping the second part of the sentence on 'international disputes' – which would be quite appropriately activated by the international politics events of those days – to link up instead to his subsequent argument on liberty. He thus obtains a quasi-logic argument that runs: 'because we are acting in the name of "the liberty of other peoples", we are also complying with article 11'.

The examples considered so far illustrate how pertinences are activated to produce justifications for position-takings. At the outset of their study on justification, Boltanski and Thévenot (2006/1991) have raised, in this respect, a number of crucial research questions: how and against what ground is a justification considered to be proved? How is it possible to use things as evidences for a justification? How is it possible to stop the quest for justification and how is it possible to restart it? The case we have just considered shows that a pertinence actually provides a ground for justification, but a rather loose ground. In fact, while retaining its inner justificatory structure, a pertinence can, in the end, accomondate different options and position-takings, according to various compatibility-maximizing strategies.

Consequently, we must account for the different ways in which a pertinence is activated or called for. Compatibility-maximizing strategies are made possible by the fact that the same substantive issues and topics can be faced from different standpoints. These standpoints are stances that orient the discourse towards, for instance, strategical or tactical reasons, towards symbols or reality, or a combination thereof. We may distinguish at least three types of stance orientation: principle-oriented, consequence-oriented and qualification-oriented. A *principle-oriented* stance consists in making reference to values which lead action and from which action follows. Such values are peace, democracy (which includes popular legitimation), rule

of law (which includes legitimacy, fairness, procedural correctness, etc.), religion, and so on. Instead, a *consequence-oriented* stance consists in making reference to the concrete consequences of undertaken action. Consequences concern the effective achieving of the aim set forth in advance, the stabilizing or destabilizing the international system, the capacity to foster security (or insecurity) against terrorism, the ability to enhance (or reduce) the credibility of an institution, democratic representativeness, peoples' freedom from oppression, violence, cooperation with allies, enjoyment of favorable outcomes, and so on. Consequence-oriented stance share resemblances with what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958: §III.ii) call 'arguments based on the structure of reality'. Finally, a *qualification-oriented* stance is a reflexive stance, as it consists in making reference to the conditions of possibility for an effective pertinence activation, or to definitions, clarifications and clauses that are attached to a certain pertinence activation, due to what is presented as the actual, real meaning of the words.

Orientation	Appeal to	Example
To principles	Legitimacy, Legality, Democracy, Fair procedure, Substantive justice	{A movement (.3) as it has been <said here> without understanding exactly what is going on (.5) that does not struggle only abstractly for peace (.) but which <struggles to remove the causes of war> (.5) that is to overcome (.) the great inequalities and injustices in the world that are at the origin of so many wars.}
		Un movimento (.3) come è stato <qui detto> senza capire esattamente quello che sta succedendo (.5) che non si batte solo astrattamente per la pasce (.) ma si <batte per rimuovere le cause della guerra> (.5) cioè=per superare (.) le grandi diseguaglianze e ingiustizie nel mondo che sono all'origine di tante guerre.
		(Mussi. AP, 60: 1h30'37"– 1h31'01")
To consequences	Incongruence with principles, Heterogensis of the ends, Realism, Effectiveness, Responsibility, Security	{We face what (.) a great thinker of Western classic philosophy (.) calls the heterogenesis of the ends (.3) that is a measure that is taken to have more security (.) and instead turns into the contrary (.5) we get less security and the perspective of a world more and more (.) obscured by tomorrow's shadows opens up.}
		Ci troveremo di fronte a quella (.) che un grande maestro del pensiero classico occidentale (.) chiama l'eterogenesi dei fi↓ni (.3) e cioè di=un'iniziativa che viene fatta per ottenere più sicurezza (.) e=invece si rovescia nel suo opposto (.5) si ottiene meno sicurezza e si apre la prospettiva di un mondo sempre più (.) oscurato nelle ombre del do↓mani.
		(Minniti. AP 64–65: 1h52'46"– 1h53'08")

To qualifications	'Actual meaning' of the word, Clarifications, Conditions of possibility, Clauses, Pertinence activation	{We are for a peace (.) that rest on solid bases, not on latent will of re-arming and conquest (.) We are for a peace (.) which we can rest upon in the long (.) long term and as the eurpean leaders have said for this peace we cannot wait forever (.3)}
		Siamo per una pace (.) che poggia su basi solide e non su mai os– ss– supite volontà di riarmo e di conquista (.) Siamo per una pace (.) con cui possiamo contare a lungo (.) a lungo termine e come hanno sostenuto i leader europei per questa pace non possiamo aspettare a tempo indefinito (.3)
		(Rizzi. AP 57: 1h12'27"– 1h17'51")

Between activated pertinences and background rhetorical reservoirs made of topoi a two-way interplay occurs. On the one hand, topoi retain a sort of standard, uncontextual effectiveness; on the other hand, when a pertinence is activated, each topos needs to be mobilized and applied to the specific context of the pertinence, issue or topic that is being discussed in the specific circumstances of the speech at the time of its occurrence. That is why pertinences and topoi are, so to speak, the *cards* that are played by a speaker during her or his playing turn in that game known as 'debate'.

Topoi work according to a trumping mechanism, but they are not mere common place skecthes. Rather, they provide subjacent argumentative structures which are *quasi-logic*, in the sense that they are not logically binding (they may include paralogisms, or flawed syllogisms), but based on likeliness, shared expectancies or persuasion capabilities. Just like syllogisms, topoi link together some given items to produce some other new items. Their peculiarity is that they do so in a way which is not objective, as the positions and dispositions of the speaker and the audience are integral part of the linkage. Among the many topoi identified by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958: §II.i.21-24), three groups are particularly useful to our analysis of parliamentary debate: the topoi of quantity, the topoi of quality and the topoi of order.

The *topoi of quantity* (QN) are based on schemes such as 'the more contains the less', and 'the whole worths more than the part'. All arguments that associate reason to common sense, as well as as those that claim the superiority of what is admitted by the largest number (such as a majority-based view of democracy) are based on topoi of quantity. The classic spirit, insofar as it is centred on tradition, rests on topoi of quantity. *Topoi of quality* (QL), by contrast, contest the superiority of quantity. They are based on the valorization of what is rare, unique and original and give pride of place to certain qualities that are seen as intrisically superior, even though not majoritarian. Principle-oriented stances are often substantiated by topoi of quality. The romantic spirit, insofar as it is centred on the cult of the genius, rests on topoi of quality. Finally, *topoi of order* (OR) claim the superiority of an element over the other on the basis of the reciprocal order of the two. They introduce a temporal-logical dynamics into topoi of quantity and of quality. Topoi of order can be used to claim the priority of the cause over the consequence, of the preceding over the subsequent. But they can also be used to justify the means in view of the ends, and the unachieved aim over the already achieved.

Rather than regarding these types as strictly distinct from one another, we acknowledge that the different types can be understood as analytical features of concrete topoi. Subesquently, here is a list of topoi that we have found in our corpus of data:

Type		Topos structure	
QN	Universality, communality		Particularity, individuality
QN	Majority		Minority
QN	Union, agreement		Division, disagreement
QN	Normalcy, custom		Exceptionality, anomaly
QN	Reciprocity		Asymmetry, unilaterialism
QN/QL	Equilibrium, order, stability		Disequilibrum, disorder, instability
QN/OR	Long-term		Short-term
OR	Founded, factual		Unfounded, hypothetical
OR	Historically tested	trumps over	Historically unknown
OR	Coerence		Contradiction
QL	Accountability, responsibility		Arbitrariness, irresponsibility
QL	Independence		Subordination
QL/QN	Moderation		Extremism
QL	Clarity, univocality		Obscurity, ambiguity
QL	Truthfulness		Deceit
QL	Commitment		Opportunism

Interestingly, topoi are effective even when logical clarifications about the qualifications and conditions of use (what we have called 'qualification-oriented stances') are lacking. It is the case, for instance, of the call for 'responsibility'. Notably, responsibility is a preminent topical resource which seem to runs transversally to the different political parties and coalitions. Indeed, the 'accountability-responsibility trumps over arbitrariness-irresponsibility' topos is a shared and argumentatively effective one, even despite the fact that no criteria for distinguishing what is responsible from what is irresponsible are ever discussed. Here follows a selection of excerpts of speeches where the responsibility topos is used. Party and coalition affiliations of each deputy are also noted:

> {But if you really want to represent the Country, the Government must work relentlessly for a strong and united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities} Ma, se volete cercare di rappresentare il paese, il Governo lavori senza timidezze per un'Europa che ritrovi unità e forza e che sappia assumersi le proprie responsabilità. (Pistelli. Margherita Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 49)

> {On our shoulder, as the Prime Minister has underlined, rests another major responsibility, even greater than the choice for or against the war. Today, with our vote, we decide whether whether Italy and Europe shoul retain their unitary, important role in the construction of the common good of the world} Sulle nostre spalle, come ha sottolineato nel suo intervento il Presidente del Consiglio, sta un'altra grande responsabilità, se possibile ancora più grande della scelta per o contro la guerra e più impegnativa per le previsioni del futuro del nostro pianeta. Noi, oggi, con il nostro voto decidiamo se l'Italia, se l'Italia nell'Europa e se l'Europa stessa debbano continuare ad avere un ruolo unitario, autorevole, di progresso nella costruzione del bene comune nel mondo. (Lupi. Forza Italia Party, Centre-rightwing coalition. AP, 55-56)

> {In short, this is the moment of responsibility, of clarity and of unity of all those who commit themselves to peace} Questo, in sostanza, è il momento della responsabilità, della chiarezza e dell'unità di tutti coloro che scommettono sulla pace (Mussi. Democratici di Sinistra Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 62)

{Until one week ago the situation was worrying: the world, and Europe itself, was divided into hawks and doves, war-lovers and pacifists. That was not acceptable before such a comlex problem as the Iraqi crisis. Fortunately, today rationality and sense of responsibility are prevailing} Fino ad una settimana fa il quadro era molto più preoccupante: il mondo e, ancor peggio, l'Europa parevano divisi tra falchi e colombe, guerrafondai e pacifisti. Tutto questo non era accettabile di fronte ad un grave problema quale la crisi irachena. Oggi sembrano, finalmente, prevalere la razionalità ed il senso di responsabilità (Collè. Linguistic Minorities Group. AP, 73)

{We are against the Iraqi regime and want the weapons of mass destruction eliminated. But we are also for pursuing every way to this end while avoiding war. We believe this is the difficult task of politics and it rests on our responsibility to take the necessary decisions at this stage} Siamo contro il regime iracheno e vogliamo che siano distrutte le armi di distruzione di massa detenute dall'Iraq. Ma siamo anche per perseguire ogni azione che ci porti a questi risultati senza pensare alla guerra come a un'utile scorciatoia, come a una soluzione comoda e scontata. Questo riteniamo sia il compito, anche difficile, molto difficile, della politica e dunque appartiene alle nostre responsabilità contribuire ad assumere le decisioni necessarie in questa fase. (Ostillio. Udeur Party, Centre-rightwing coalition. AP, 75)

{It is thus right that the Ulivo motion condemns the political and diplomatic way in which this irresponsible Government has run the crisis} Quindi, è giusto che la mozione dell'Ulivo condanni la conduzione politica e diplomatica della crisi da parte di questo Governo irresponsabile (Pecoraro Scanio. Verdi Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 76-77)

{We call for an act of national dignity and, at the same time, of democratic awareness, an act of responsible independence} Chiediamo un atto di dignità nazionale e, nello stesso tempo, di consapevolezza democratica, un atto di responsabile indipendenza (Cossutta. Comunisti italiani Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 80)

{Without a real assumption of responsibility, the UNO is doomed to a marginal role that certainly we do not wish} Senza una reale e forte assunzione di responsabilità, l'ONU è destinata ad un ruolo di marginalità che certamente noi non auspichiamo. (Cè. Lega Nord Party, Centre-rightwing coalition. AP, 83)

{The Country can easily see that those who claimed for responsible peace measures and for European unity are now dividing the Italian Parliament} Non mancherà occasione di sottolineare al paese che coloro che volevano fatti di pace responsabili e unità europea preferiscono oggi dividere il Parlamento italiano. (Volontè. UDC Party, Centre-rightwing coalition. AP, 86)

{Our motion, Mr Prime Minister, is clear and convincing. It is a unitary motion by the Ulivo, it is a meaningful and responsible conclusion for the Ulivo coalition capable of becoming a governing coalition} La nostra mozione, signor Presidente, è chiara e convincente. È una mozione unitaria dell'Ulivo, è un approdo di grande significato e responsabilità per un Ulivo forza di Governo. (Rutelli. Margherita Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 90)

{Those millions of women and men have addressed you, Mr Prime Minister, asking to you, who have the responsibility to govern, to do all that is possible to avoid the war} Quei milioni di donne e di uomini si sono rivolti anche a lei, signor Presidente del Consiglio, manifestando a lei, che ha la responsabilità – come altri uomini – del governo di questo pianeta, la richiesta di fare di tutto affinché non si precipiti in una nuova avventura bellica. (Fassino. Democratici di Sinistra Party, Centre-leftwing coalition. AP, 95)

{Our country has kept a responible line, a coerent line, aimed at keeping the Iraqi crisis within the United Nations} Il nostro paese ha seguito una linea responsabile, una linea coerente, volta soprattutto a mantenere la crisi irachena nel quadro delle Nazioni Unite (Bondi. Forza Italia Party, Centre-rightwing coalition. AP, 99-100)

Both pertinences and topoi are based on and located upon visibility thresholds (Brighenti 2007b) which separate the normal (the invisible, the taken for granted) from the abnormal or the anomalous (the visible, the noticed). In other words, once a pertinence or a topos has been activated, an implicit reservoir is mobilized which remains largely invisible in itself. Consequently, an implicit struggle over the identification of the referents of 'normalcy' and 'normal situation' is integral part of the debate itself. The norm was first described by

Foucault (1973) as a type of power that is not simply externally regulative, but, crucially, internally constitutive of subjects. Whereas the legal rule works visibly and often brutally, Foucault argued, the norm works invisibly and 'softly'. We suggest that is appealing in using the visibility feature to study parliamentary debates is that it shows that normalcy and abnormality are neither mere factual objects, nor are they just – as, on the other hand, ethnomethodology correctly reminds us – simply generic cooperative accomplishments. It is the normative deployment of normalcy and anomaly by speakers as discoursive resources that must be described, taken into account and explained.

The analysis of 'playing justification' we have carried on so far has revealed that justification is an *assemblage*, a compound communicational device which corresponds – cogently, or *vice versa* very loosely – to declared political ideologies. There is no a-priori limit to the number of cards that can be played to lend support to a certain *prise de position*. But, since the complete ensemble of cards is contradictory, the speaker must be careful before playing too many cards at once. For instance, the speech by Northern League deputy Cesare Rizzi exhibits a number of shifts from one pertinence to another one, from one orientation to another one, from one topos to another one, which ends up in an unstable and at time almost inchoerent aggregation. Below, we provide just a reconstructive scheme of his speech:

Move n.	Activated Pertinence	Topos	Orientation	Argumentative Scheme of the Speech
1	Political-democratic (B1)		to Principles (legitimacy)	'Saddam Hussein is a dictator, Iraqi institutions are not really representative'
2	Constitutional principles (A2)		to Principles (substantive justice)	'Our party, part of the governing coalition, is truly for peace'
3		Coerence trumps over Incoerence topos		'Our adversaries of the opposition parties are incoerent, because when they were governing the country, they joined the war against Serbia'
4	International law, institutions, and alliances (A1)			'Iraq is violating UNO resolutions'
5		Truthfulness trumps over Deceit	to Consequences (realism)	'One cannot deceive public opinion about the real nature of Iraqi regime and its aim. We must realist and face the menace'
6		Commitment trumps over Opportunism		'Our adversaries opportunistically ride popular pacifist feelings'
7	International law, institutions, and alliances (A1)	Majority trumps over Minority		'The majority of European countries are orienting themselves towards a tough line against Iraq'
8	International law, institutions,		to Consequences (effectiveness)	'It is time to threat Iraq in order to have it truly collaborative to international institutions'

	and alliances (A1)			
9	International law, institutions, and alliances (A1)	Commitment trumps over Opportunism	to Principles (fair procedure)	'One cannot invoke Europe only when it adopts decisions favorable to one's position'
10	Constitution al principles (A2)		to qualifications (definitional limitation)	'We are for peace, but for a type of peace that is solid and where Iraq follows the rules'

6. Conclusions

In this paper we have examined the modes and usages of justification in political debates. Our case-study material was the Italian Parliament debate, re the 2003 Iraqi war. In particular we have focused on the *séance* which took place at the Chamber of Deputies on February 19th, 2003. To do so, we have referred to the concepts of political field (Bourdieu 2000), justification (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006/1991), pertinence (Dupret 2006) and topos (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958). Institutional talk is a situated activity and it becomes meaningful only in the light of the specific constraints (e.g. the allotment of speaking turns) and surrounding (previous and forthcoming) events. Far from being mere infrastructure, the material aspect of talk is part of the justificatory process itself.

In the course of the paper, we have claimed that the production of justification and justificatory arguments in a debate exists in the tension between the the implicit and the explicit, or, in other words, according to a logic of visibility. On the one hand, debating fosters the demand to produce justifications, and their alleged resort to principles, but, on the other hand, it is also grounded in the activation of pertinences and topoi which limit the need and the call for explicit justifications. From the point of view of the single speaker, pertinences and topoi are like cards that can be played during the debate according to strategical, tactical or ideological aims. The choice of the cards to be played at one's turn strongly depend on the state of the debate itself, as well as on a strategical decision about the normative deployment of normalcy/anomaly as discoursive resources.

Because it appears at both the praxeological and the discoursive level, we have finally suggested to treat justification as a transversal phenomenon to the domains of performative action (speech delivery) and discourse (argumentative structures), or, in other words, to regard it as a composite, multi-layer object which spans from the material aspects of talk to the argumentative construction and activation of pertinences, orientations and quasi-logical, topical resources.

Appendix

Adopted transcription notation

(.t)	Pause timed in seconds (.tenths of second)
↑ ↓	Pitch rise / fall
[[	Overlappings
–	Cut-off
:	Stretch
~	Trembling
=	No discernible pause between words or turns
<u>Underlined</u>	Louder talk - Emphasis
>< <>	Faster /slower
{}	English translation (with simplified notation)
(())	Notes

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