The Polyphony of Politics: Finding Voices in French Political Discourse

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Abstract

This paper has been written with the dual aim of demonstrating the need for a systematic inclusion of contextual elements in the analysis of discourse, as well as the advantages of basing such an analysis on a theory of linguistic polyphony. By highlighting the danger of permitting models of context to rely on the social representations of the analyst, the paper calls for and proposes a set of methodic-theoretic principles to serve as a possible basis for future models for contextual reconstruction. These principles are then applied to the analysis of an op-ed by the French Socialist Party figure Laurent Fabius, written with the explicit purpose of obtaining a majority opposed to the European constitutional treaty in the referendum of May 2005. The theoretical tool of the analysis is the Scandinavian Theory of Linguistic Polyphony (the ScaPoLine), which serves to identify the presence of different points of view in one single utterance. The linguistic phenomena under analysis are primarily reported speech and concessive argumentative constructions. Demonstrating how Fabius relates his own points of view to those of others, the analysis aims to give insight into the manner in which he discursively constructs the political debate on the European Constitution.

Keywords: political, discourse, analysis, context, polyphony

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate the need for the analytical interface between text and society to consist of a comprehensive and systematic account of intertextual and interdiscursive elements of a given text, as well as its politico-cultural context. In other words, in order to make sense of the implicit and ambivalent statements of a political text, one must take into account the previous statements and texts of the political actor in question, statements and texts of other political actors, as well as the general political and cultural framework within which these actors operate. Needless to say, this is a formidable task, meaning that a model for contextual reconstruction needs to be developed. This paper does not purport to present such a model, but rather to contribute to its development and to highlight the difficulties with which one is faced when trying to bridge the gap between text and society.

Apart from an initial methodical-theoretical discussion, this will be done through an analysis of the polyphonic characteristics of an op-ed article, intitled 'Pourquoi il faut dire non à la Constitution européenne', written by Laurent Fabius, who is a prominent member of the French Socialist Party. The op-ed, in which Fabius argues against French ratification of the European Constitution, was published in the newspaper *Libération* on 18 April 2005. The term *polyphony* is to be understood here as the linguistic construction of different points of view in one and the same utterance. My main methodical-theoretical tool will be the ScaPoLine, the Scandinavian Theory of Linguistic

Polyphony (Nølke et al. 2004). We can assume that political discourse is particularly polyphonic in nature, an assumption which is justifiable by reference to the fact that this discourse normally relates to alternative points of view, both those of opponents as well as those belonging to an often diversified public audience. In addition, according to a polyphonic perspective, any speaking subject is in a position to discursively create different images of her- or himself, permitting 'internal discussions' to manifest themselves in the text. This enables the ScaPoLine to demonstrate the level of nuance in argumentative structures. The purpose here is not, however, to produce an exhaustive linguistic analysis, but rather to employ polyphony as a tool for discourse analysis. Therefore the ScaPoLine will appear in a simplified form serving the needs of the task at hand, which is to unveil the presence of and relations between the 'voices' that are to be found in a political text.

What, then, does the interaction of voices in Fabius' text tell us about his perspective regarding the political environment within which he is operating? How does he relate to his political peers and to the electorate in the context of a referendum on the European Constitution? In trying to find an answer to these questions, I will start by a more detailed presentation of the ScaPoLine (section 2), before addressing the theoretical-methodological question of how to incorporate context in discourse analysis (section 3). Finally, in section 4, I will proceed to the analysis of Mr Fabius' op-ed article, taking into account these initial considerations.

2. ScaPoLine – the Scandinavian theory of linguistic polyphony

The theory builds upon Oswald Ducrot's studies showing that some linguistic features of a text signal voices, or points of view (pov), that cannot be attributed to the locutor himself (1984).[1] Let us exemplify this by considering the following statement extracted from a speech by Jean-Marie Le Pen on 1 May 2005:

> Europe is *not* a nation.[2]

This sentence contains two points of view, because it is implicit that somebody thinks Europe is or will become a nation. Thus negations can be said to create two pov: one that is refuted by the locutor and one with which the locutor identifies (Ducrot 1984: 210-220).

There are many other words and expressions serving as polyphonic markers, e.g. connectives (*but, therefore, etc.)* which combine different arguments (some of them implicit) logically to form explanations and justifications. These arguments represent different pov, that to a realm of socially shared beliefs (doxa), that are judged irrelevant by the locutor, or that contradict a pov for which the locutor is responsible. Other cases of polyphony can be found in the use of epistemic expressions, such as *maybe,* as well as in reported speech. The latter category is the most evidently polyphonic, since it constitutes the locutor's explicit use of other voices in his or her own text.

The ScaPoLine takes Ducrot's ideas one step further, by looking at how the polyphony manifests itself pragmatically, in the use of language. The point of departure is the semantic structure of the polyphonic expressions, called the *p-structure.* This structure offers linguistic instructions concerning the interpretation of an expression, independently of its context. Going back to Le Pen's negation, we find the following p-structure:

pov 1: Europe is a Nation.

pov 2: pov1 is unjustified.

According to the semantic instructions of the p-structure, the locutor adheres to pov 2. However, the p-structure indicates nothing with regards to who might be responsible for pov 1 (Nølke et al. 2004: 29). This is information that might be disclosed elsewhere in the text (co-text) or through relevant extra-textual information (context). It is through this process of interpretation that the *polyphonic configuration* is formed, finalizing the identification of pov that are not the responsibility of the locutor (ibid.: 29-30). More precisely, the configuration consists of the following elements:

- the locutor, who is responsible for the utterance

- the points of view

- the discursive beings – sources of pov

- the relations between the pov and the discursive beings – ranging from complete responsibility to insecurity and disagreement

Going back to Le Pen's sentence, a preliminary polyphonic configuration could be described as follows[3]: Le Pen is the locutor in this instance, and therefore bears responsibility for pov2. X is responsible for pov1. The task of the discourse analyst will be to identify X.

Thus, in order to understand to whom the different points of view are attributed, it is necessary to include extra-textual information. The reason is that more often than not, the identities of those held responsible for points of view, the discursive beings, are not disclosed explicitly, nor identifiable through a purely linguistic analysis. This brings us back to our opening remarks, namely the problem of methodologically including contextual information in discourse analysis. Therefore, a polyphonic point of departure should have the advantage of highlighting this important issue, by constantly forcing us to go beyond the text and the field of linguistics in order to saturate the polyphonic analysis.

3. Finding a relevant context

As we have already pointed out, the source of pov 1 in Le Pen's statement is absent because there is nothing in the semantic instructions of the negation indicating its identity. But by introducing the context in the analysis, we go beyond the realm of the purely linguistic to find the source of pov 1. The question is how to establish such a pertinent context. First and foremost, there is the need to make use of historical and political perspectives. Then – and this is perhaps what constitutes the greatest methodological challenge – this information has to be selected and categorized according to a certain set

of criteria. Otherwise the information collected will be either too arbitrarily extracted or too vast to handle analytically.

The critical discourse analyst Teun van Dijk has developed a comprehensive model in order to bridge the gap 'between society and discourse', claiming that the notion of 'social cognition' can be the only meaningful interface between the two. In other words, van Dijk aims to connect the unique discursive incidents of politics with the socially shared beliefs that define political groups and institutions (van Dijk 2002: 203).

Van Dijk's point of departure is *mental event models*, organizing human experiences. They consist of new information, self awareness, fragments of previous experiences (old models), as well as socially shared and conveyed information (ibid.: 209-210). Furthermore, these event models can be categorized either as knowledge – based on truth criteria (true vs. untrue) – or as opinions, which are based on value criteria (good vs. bad). Both knowledge and opinions are organized by ideologies, a socio-cognitive construct founded on categories that define the self-awareness of a group: *Who are we, what do we do, what are our goals, etc.* A racist ideology will for example accentuate the importance of skin complexion when framing the social structure (ibid.: 220-223).

However, because of time constraints only certain elements of a speaker's event model will be expressed. The elements to be expressed, as well as the manner of speaking, are chosen by a *mental context model.* In a political speech, the context model may consist of information regarding the audience and its expectations, the speaker's position in politics, speeches or statements preceding the speech, the norms of the institutional situation in which she or he is speaking, etc.

> It is the subjective information stored in these models that ultimately controls how speakers and writers adapt their text and talk to the current situation, and how speech acts and conversational acts may be (more or less) appropriate in such a situation. (van Dijk 2002: 214)

This implies that the context model gives instructions as to which discursive choices would bring about the most politically profitable reception. Thus, in an analysis of a parliamentary speech held in 1988 by the British conservative MP Sir John Stokes, van Dijk notes that a favorable comment on the British people is a result of the politician's context model, not the event model. As an arch conservative, Stokes probably does not hold the majority of the people in very high regard (ibid.: 231).

Van Dijk is careful to point out that much work remains in determining how context models interact with event models to form 'online text production and understanding' (2004: 35). However, a more fundamental methodological question remains. On what basis would one decide whether a statement is the result of a context model or an event model? Van Dijk makes the judgment by reference to party membership, interpreting in this case Stoke's positive characterization of the British people as intellectually dishonest because of the MP's conservatism. However true this interpretation may be, van Dijk's results seem to depend as much on the analyst's own political views as on the material studied. Had van Dijk been a rightist analyst, this method would

have given him the liberty to represent Labour discourse in the same debate as being based on communist ideology disguised through a sufficiently developed context model. Thus, if discourse analysis were to build upon such a methodology, it would run the risk of simply constituting a parallel to the political debate itself.

Furthermore, basing the analysis on cognition may give too much credit to the politicians, who are often backed by an entire team of advisers. What comes through as context dependent speech may thus depend as much on the prowess of the advisers as on the mental models of the political actors themselves. Considering these analytical limitations, I propose that in analyzing political discourse, it can be fruitful to distinguish the *political person* as a being from the *political persona*, which is created discursively. Relating to the rhetorical notion of *ethos*, the political persona is built, maintained, changed (and polished) through words, actions and circumstances. In other words, the persona is a front, a puppet that is manipulated by the very person that embodies it, and – to a varying extent – by the entourage of advisers.[4] This distinction is in no way meant to relieve politicians of their obligation to truthfulness and integrity. It still permits us to judge them on the basis of their actions and speech, by demonstrating bigotry, contradictions and untruthfulness. Separating the person from the political persona simply constitutes an admission on our part that there is no way of ascertaining the sincerity of the political actors by reference to isolated instances of speech. It must also be added that such a conceptual distinction does not mean that we as analysts will no longer be susceptible to resort to our own biased views in reconstructing context. It merely constitutes a methodological ideal and a reminder of what we can legitimately claim about the locutor behind the text.

It is difficult, then, to see how social cognition could be a sustainable analytical tool, given the fact that one does not have access to the mental processes that are at the origin of concrete instances of discourse. Therefore, in the case of linguistic polyphony, the different voices present may never be unequivocally determined. But the aim is to formulate well founded hypotheses regarding their identity, by analytically incorporating the co-text, as well as three pertinent aspects of politics that are at the origin of political text production: previous texts, socio-discursive beliefs – or traces of socially shared beliefs to be found in instances of discourse (see Charaudeau 2005: 150-157) –, as well as the position a given persona occupies in the political system (including his or her institutional role and the relationship with the public, other actors and interest groups). This can, as mentioned, benefit from a systematic use of fields such as history and political science, as well as of other discourse analytical studies.

This four-fold approach to co-text and context can easily be related to the four levels of context proposed by the discourse-historical approach, a branch of Critical Discourse Analysis (Weiss and Wodak 2003: 22):

1. The immediate, language or text internal co-text

2. The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses

3. The extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation' (middle-range theories)

4. The broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to

I have already pointed to the importance of the first level, the co-text (section 2), for the polyphonic analysis. However, I have chosen to separate the co-text from the extra-textual elements (levels 2-4) in accordance with the ScaPoLine, as well as with the opposition between text and discourse as defined by Widdowson (2004). According to his view, the text is merely a residual trace of discourse, which can be defined as the communicative event encompassing factors such as participants, time, location, pretext etc. Thus the text represents a purely semantic level of meaning, while discourse is at the level of pragmatic meaning (ibid.).

Regarding the other levels of context, they correspond directly with our four-fold approach. However, it is important to note that we need to adopt the perspective of the political persona when considering the 'context of situation' and the 'broader sociopolitical and historical contexts', because this is the perspective from which the discourse emanated in the first place. In other words, the context can only be relevantly understood by the intermediary of the persona's representation of the reality of which he or she is speaking. However, this is not a matter of designating oneself as the judge of the locutor's mentally constructed representations, but simply of applying existing knowledge about systems of thought and political structures.

Furthermore, it must be stressed that the levels need to be integrated because they necessarily interact. For example, an intertextual element of the text (2nd level) must be understood within the framework of the sociopolitical and historical contexts (4th level) – again from the perspective of the public persona behind the text. The reason is that elements of previous texts will be recontextualized by the locutor – consciously or subconsciously – in accordance with the belief system to which he or she adheres. In other words, simply identifying intertextuality is insufficient, because finding its significance is contingent on the identification of the meaning it has for the persona that expressed it. The individual representation of reality thus informs all levels of context.

What this means is that giving an extensive account of French history and the country's political development is of no aid if, in an analysis of the discourse of Laurent Fabius, one does not attempt to see this history from the perspective of his political persona. The implication of this stance is an essentially relativistic approach to context. However, this relativism is only methodological, and does not aim to lend credibility to the views of the analyzed discourse. On the contrary, it seeks to give credibility to the analysis, meaning that any critical conclusion will have more weight than would otherwise be the case.

4. *Analyzing discourse through polyphony*

In the following polyphonic analysis of Fabius' op-ed article, I will consider primarily the use of reported speech and the concessive connective *mais* (*but*), in relation to adjacent negations that may be relevant for the identification of the voices that are mobilized through the use of these polyphonic markers. Through the use of *but*, a locutor can appear nuanced while still reaching an unequivocal polemical conclusion. This is also a point made by Peter Muntigl, though not in a polyphonic perspective (2002: 71-72). I will also consider the use of pronouns such as *I*, *we*, *you*, *they*, *us*, *them*, as well as the possessive articles *my*, *our*, *your* and *their*. In addition, the pronoun *on* (*one*) is interesting, in that it is often used with a fuzzy reference, ranging from a general meaning to the second person plural. These pronouns and articles are not polyphonic markers in and of themselves, but they do mark a discursive categorization and delimitation of different groups and individuals that may be given the floor in the polyphonic play triggered by the linguistic phenomena I have set out to analyze (see also Fløttum and Stenvoll in press).

4.1 Laurent Fabius: 'Pourquoi il faut dire non à la Constitution européenne'

During the constitutional debate in 2005 Laurent Fabius, deputy leader of the Socialist Party and former Prime Minister, crafted his political persona on his position as the leading leftist figure opposed to the treaty. This opposition permitted him to present himself as the defender of socialist values against a party leadership that he viewed as being inclined to give in to a process of liberalization that would be triggered by the ratification of the treaty. But Mr Fabius was not opposed to the very idea of a European Constitution. On the contrary, he welcomed such a project (saying so explicitly in the text), but had strong reservations about the draft which had been submitted to a referendum. This position forced him to fight for an electoral rejection of the draft without undermining the legitimacy of future attempts to develop a European Constitution.

Making his case in the left-leaning newspaper *Libération* on April 18th, Mr Fabius had to walk this tightrope while appealing to presumably leftist readers sensitive to issues such as job protection, welfare and social services in an increasingly deregulated economical and financial environment. In the text he does so by presenting extracts from different articles in the Constitution, commenting on them one by one, thereby creating an explicitly dialogical structure where he enters into a debate with the constitutional text. In other words Fabius' text can be said to be permeated by the polyphony of the locutor's own voice and that of those who wrote and edited the constitutional text. He directs his criticism primarily against what he considers to be an institutionalization of the EU's inertia, leading to a halt in integration as well as a lack of capacity regarding questions of social and foreign policy. He also laments the apparent primacy that is given to liberalist concerns on economic issues and the fact that NATO, not the European defense force, is to remain the vanguard on security issues. Depriving the EU of the opportunity to develop a strong foreign policy and a capable military, Fabius warns, risks

perpetuating the hegemony the USA – a warning that reflects the strong anti-American sentiment in French public opinion.

Presenting the Constitution in its original wording gives Laurent Fabius the advantage of appearing intellectually honest, by letting the readers scrutinize his interpretation of the treaty. However, only a selected number of articles appear in his text and those that do have up to several omissions. Such omissions risk altering the argumentative structure of a text, in this case permitting Mr Fabius to adapt them to his own argumentative needs.[5] In the analysis we will only be able to look closer at a limited number of the paragraphs in the text, the reason being that a linguistic perspective takes incremental steps compared to the material under analysis.

Fabius starts by considering the mention of Europe's religious heritage in the preamble of the Constitution, as well as the fact that it also guarantees the freedom of religious expression, including within the educational system. Presenting himself as a defender of *la laïcité* (the secularized French state) Fabius states that this 'could expose France to appeals to the Court of Justice of the European Communities concerning the law on religious signs in schools'[6].

Polyphonically, the passage on the constitutional preamble activates several voices in a complex choir. Firstly, the authors and editors of the constitutional text are not attributed unequivocal points of view. The mention of religion is explained by Fabius as 'an attempt to compromise between the secular and clerical camps'[7]. This is an indication of the heterogeneity he attributes to the source of the treaty. The threat against secularism, as seen by Fabius, lies therefore not in the treaty itself, but rather in the potential interpretations that may serve those that do have clear and unequivocal points of view in favor of desecularizing French society. According to Fabius these may be found even at the top of the European and French political establishment.

In this regard, he makes a reference to statements made by the Italian politician Rocco Buttiglione, who was nominated to the position of Vice-President of the European Commission, as well as Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security in 2004.

(1)
[...] Mr Buttiglione pronounces *the declarations which one knows* at the side of Mr Barroso.[8]

Fabius' inclusion of Buttiglione's statements is polyphonic in that, as in reported speech, it refers to these statements. However, the actual propositional content remains implicit, making this a case of *narrativized discourse* (Maingueneau 2003: 119). Therefore the other's point of view has to be found in the context, whereas the source is explicit in the text. The polyphonic structure consists only of the source. In other words, Fabius makes no mention of what Mr Buttiglione actually said, but when considering the context, it is reasonable to assume that he refers to the Italian's largely debated conservative views on homosexuality and women, views which are in accordance with Mr Buttiglione's strong catholic faith – but several claim in contradiction with the EU's articles of tolerance – and which would ultimately lead to the retraction of his candidacy. Furthermore, Fabius ties Mr

Buttiglione to José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the Commission, who included him in his original line-up of commissioners. In this way, through guilt by association, Fabius questions the ideals of the highest executive official of the European Union.

Then there is the mention of the UMP (Union for a Popular Movement)[9] leader and Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy's purportedly anti-secular policies:

(2)
[...] Mr Sarkozy proposes a modification of the 1905 law on the separation of church and state.[10]

This example is clearly polyphonic in that it explicitly refers to the point of view of a defined source. It is different from reported speech, though only syntactically. Semantically, the source (Mr Sarkozy) is explicitly attributed the normative point of view that there is the need to modify the law of 1905.[11]

Fabius' first line of argument is thus made by pointing to a portion of the preamble that he considers to be a threat to one of the pillars of the French state, managing in addition to tie a top EU official as well as one of the leading figures of the UMP to it. Through the reference to this purported anti-secularism of Mr Sarkozy, Fabius not only warns against the possible legal and political repercussions of the treaty, but also implicitly portrays the right as a bad custodian of the Republic and the anti-constitutionalist left that he represents as its true defender. Finally, he claims that all the defenders of *la laïcité* are concerned by the verbal challenges on secularism by political actors such as Buttiglione and Sarkozy. By doing this he purports to speak on their behalf, ultimately integrating their voice with his and thereby reinforcing his own points of view.

Fabius then proceeds to Article I-3, on the objectives of the Union. He notes that are juxtaposed many different goals which have little in common and which may turn out to be 'antagonistic in their application'[12], such as free and fair competition and sustainable development. In trying to ascertain which goals will be given the highest priority, Fabius goes to the third part of the constitutional text, where expressions such as *social market economy* and *full employment* appear much less frequently than *competition* and *market*. The conclusion is therefore as follows:

(3)
In order to '*attract*' the social-democratic voter *one* concedes social objectives, *but* when it comes to concrete policies the liberalism is written in stone.[13]

This extract contains two polyphonic markers. The first are the quotation marks surrounding the word *attract*, indicating that the locutor distances himself from the use of this word. The second is the contrastive connective *but*, which is preceded by a concessive argument (*p*) and followed by a counter-argument (*q*) which the locutor identifies with:

p but q

There are implicit conclusions that follow from these arguments. The four points of view mobilized through the use of *but* can be written as follows:

pov1 (*p*): In order to attract the social-democratic voter one concedes social objectives.

pov2: pov1 is an argument in favor of the conclusion *r*.

pov3 (*q*): When it comes to concrete policies the liberalism is written in stone.

pov4: pov3 is an argument in favor of the conclusion *non-r*.

The context, a debate on whether or not to ratify the European Constitution, lends plausibility to the interpretation that *r* corresponds to the conclusion 'The treaty is beneficial for the social-democratic agenda', while non-r would be 'The treaty is *not* beneficial for the social-democratic agenda'. This interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that Fabius' text appears in a leftist newspaper, meaning that he would gain from appealing to leftist values when drawing his – in this case implicit – conclusion. The two conclusions of pov2 and pov4 are mutually exclusive, which means that the locutor cannot be said to adhere to *p* (pov1) or its implicit conclusion *r* (pov2) in this particular instance. However, the locutor may agree with them under different circumstances (see also Fløttum and Stenvoll in press, Nølke et al. 2004: 94). This purely circumstantial exclusion of pov1 and pov2 permits the locutor to construct different images of himself – at other moments in time – that may actually partake in the responsibility for these points of view. In this example, Mr Fabius would most likely have read about the stated goals of the European Union before noticing that the general focus is largely on competition and the market economy, the reason being that this focus appears in the treaty after the general outline of the goals. This means that an earlier image of Fabius himself – preceding the moment of writing – may be included in the source of pov1 and pov2. By consequence, this may constitute an example of internal polyphony. Other voices joining in could be the pro-constitutional faction of the Socialist Party and the voters on the left that may have the same initial impression as him, an impression he now strives to correct.

This brings us back to the word *attract* between quotation marks. As noted earlier, Fabius signals a lack of adherence to the use of the word that he himself is employing, but there may be another discursive being to whom he ascribes the use of this word. The wording of *p* and, more specifically, the choice of *attract* indicate a certain distrust towards the intentions of those that wrote the Constitution: The mention of social-democratic values would seemingly not reflect the convictions of the authors, but rather their knowledge that they would need the support of the European left in trying to ratify the treaty. However, this distrust is not incommensurable with the attitude that the treaty might still be beneficial to the social-democratic agenda. Therefore it can be reasonably suggested that the choice of the word *attract* is the responsibility of that earlier image of Fabius which adhered to pov1 and pov2 of the concessive construction. In light of the information that finally leads Fabius to conclude that the treaty is almost solely focused on economic liberalism, a word such as *attract* would seem too weak, not properly reflecting his idea that this constitutes political deceit. Hence the quotation marks.

Finally, *on*, a pronoun with an often fuzzy reference, is used to refer to the authors of the constitutional text, which strengthens the hypothesis that

Fabius finds its source to be heterogeneous to the point that any specific reference to it becomes difficult. However, despite the heterogeneity of this source, it is in this case attributed the unequivocal goal of strengthening economical liberalism to the detriment of social policies and sustainable development.

After criticizing what he considers to be too many and extensive restrictions on the powers of European Parliament, Fabius goes on to comment Article I – 25, on the new definitions of what constitutes a qualified majority in the European Council. He takes notice of the fact that the required 55% (or in some cases 72%) of Council members constituting such a majority must also represent 65% of the total population of the Union. Based on this, he goes on to say that:

> (4)
> The influence of a state in the Council will depend more directly than before on its demographic weight. This rule simplifies things and it will not be necessary to revise it at each and every enlargement, *but* it is necessary to keep in mind that:
> - Because of this criterion, were Turkey to enter the Union, it would be the most influential country on the Council.
> - The Intergovernmental Conference has increased the threshold for qualified majorities compared to *that which had been suggested by the Convention.* This will make it more difficult for majorities to emerge.
> - The project insufficiently extends the areas that are to be decided by qualified majority and not by a unanimous vote. This is a big handicap. When it comes to the social and fiscal issues, unanimity remains the rule. *The Socialist Party had explicitly wished for the opposite.* At 25 countries, soon to be 30, this is a serious risk of powerlessness and competition from below.
> - These dispositions will not take effect until 1st November 2009. This is a further argument in favor of renegotiation.

In this concessive construction the first point of view, leading to the conclusion *r,* can be formulated as follows:

> pov1: the new rules for qualified majority would be simpler and more flexible to further expansion of the Union.

This pov might be attributed to the proponents of the treaty, as well as the inattentive voter who has not thought through the further implications of such an arrangement. The rest of the passage constitutes a complex example of polyphony, in that *but* is followed by several points of view – clearly marked in Fabius' text – that converge towards the conclusion *non-r*.

The example is interesting, because it in many ways represents a condensation of a number of the locutor's reservations regarding the Constitution and the expansion of the European Union. The first counter-argument concerns Turkey, to whose membership in the EU Fabius is opposed. By introducing the question of Turkish membership in his discussion on the treaty, Fabius conflates the two issues, a move that can be understood within the context of the constitutional opposition's strategy of portraying a 'yes' vote as a 'yes' to Turkey. This was an effective strategy that resonated heavily with French voters concerned with issues such as immigration, Islam and national identity (de Boisgrollier 2005). However, whereas far right personas such as Jean-

Marie Le Pen made virtually no distinction between the two (ibid.), Fabius makes a more indirect connection, his point being that although the treaty is not about Turkish membership, it prepares the ground for Turkish dominance once the country does become a member.

The two following counter-arguments concern the question of the Councils effectiveness as a decision-making body under the new arrangement of qualified majorities. Firstly, by comparing the threshold of the finalized treaty to that which had been proposed by the European Convention – whose voice is introduced as an authority on what would constitute a proper proportion (though without Fabius giving any specifics on what that proportion might actually be) –, Fabius accuses the Intergovernmental Conference of undermining the possibility of obtaining majorities. Secondly, regarding the more specific areas of social and fiscal policies, he claims that unanimity remains the rule, a rule that will effectively disrupt any possibility of promoting a social-democratic agenda in the context of the European Union. The importance of this matter is underlined by the presence of the Socialist Party's voice, which had expressed its wish for qualified majority decisions on these issues. The fact that this counter-argument is based on social-democratic values is an indication that the inattentive voter sharing responsibility for pov1 leans to the left and is therefore a priori susceptible to be convinced by such arguments.

The last counter-argument, pointing to the long delay of the new arrangement, is stated as a 'further argument in favor of renegotiation'. This leads us to conclude that in this case *non-r* is explicitly touched upon at the very end of the complex concessive construction: 'Renegotiation is necessary'. Fabius' point is thus that while the new rules for qualified majorities have the advantage of simplifying things and accommodating changes, there are dangers. These rules will permit Turkey as a future member to gain too much power, and they will cause political inertia and allow the blocking of social and fiscal policies. Lastly, they will not go into effect until the end of 2009. All this leads to the conclusion that renegotiation is needed.

Commenting on the allotted powers of the European Central Bank (the ECB) – the independent regulation of monetary policy in order to stabilize prices – Fabius states that these powers were already agreed upon in the Maastricht treaty of 1992. He goes on to say:

> (5)
> More than ten years later the Euro exists and now the Constitution proposes to constitutionalize a monetary orthodoxy *which many officials hold to be stupid.*[14]

The polyphony is explicit in that Fabius refers to the point of view of others, though interestingly enough he chooses not to identify these 'officials' to whom he ascribes the responsibility. The continuation gives us a clue as to why they would deem the 'monetary orthodoxy' to be 'stupid'. Fabius goes on to portray the US Federal Reserve as a more pragmatic and supple institution in that it also aims at stimulating economic activity and employment, in addition to controlling inflation. In other words, he is in favor of a more hands-on approach in regulating the economy through the means of monetary

policy, using the voice of 'many officials' to back up his reasoning. What follows is a precision of his criticism:

(6)
While the Euro from now on is worth more than 1.30 dollars, which increases outsourcing, hurts exportation, and with that growth and employment, the ECB does *not* want to react.[15]

The use of the negation creates a voice according to whom the ECB does want to react to these problems. Note that the use of the verb *want* indicates that the ECB is not incapable of doing what Fabius and 'many officials' propose, but merely unwilling to do so.

pov1: the ECB wants to react to increased outsourcing and diminishing exportations.

pov2: pov1 is unjustified.

As early as 1999, the President of the ECB rejected the same line of criticism[16], which indicates that the voice responsible for pov1 is the ECB.

Fabius goes on to note that:

(7)
Certain proponents of the 'yes' vote are also aware of this danger. *They demand the development of the BCE's status, as well as the introduction of criteria of employment and growth to guide its interventions, but after the vote on the Constitution. However*, it is *not* by saying 'yes' to a text which *cannot* be revised (see article IV – 445) that these advances will be obtained.[17]

In this case we have a concessive construction (signaled by *but*) directly linked to another (signaled by *however* (*or*), which is a connective with semantic instructions similar to those of *but*). The first is saturated by the voice of 'certain proponents of the 'yes' vote', which constitute the discursive being responsible for the construction. Thus we get the following points of view:

pov1(p): There is a need for the development of the BCE's status, as well as the introduction of criteria of employment and growth to guide its interventions.

pov2: pov1 is an argument in favor of the conclusion r.

pov3(q): The reforms should be introduced after the vote on the Constitution.

pov4: pov3 is an argument in favor of the conclusion *non-r*.

'Certain proponents of the 'yes' vote' can be said to agree with pov1, which is the responsibility of both Laurent Fabius and the 'many officials' who consider current ECB policy to be 'stupid'. They do not, however, agree with the conclusion r (pov2), that 'it is necessary to introduce reform now'. Instead, they introduce the argument of pov3, through which they reach the conclusion *non-r* (pov4), that 'it is *not* necessary to introduce reform now'. Fabius does not refer to any reasons that 'certain proponents of the 'yes' vote' may have for

wanting a ratification of the Constitution before any reforms of the ECB, and therefore cannot be said to give them the benefit of having legitimate motives for preferring to proceed in this manner. This makes these proponents appear irresponsible; they simply want to get on with European integration without having thought through the ramifications.

These ramifications are what constitute the core of the second concessive construction to which the first is linked. The constructions are linked in that the argument *q* in the construction *p but q* serves as the argument *p* in the construction *p however q*. *q* is in this case polyphonic in itself: 'it is *not* by saying 'yes' to a text which *cannot* be revised (see article IV − 445) that these advances will be obtained'. However, the first of these two negations can be said to constitute a purely rhetorical move in that it is not polemical: No one can dispute the logic of the statement that one cannot change the provisions of a constitution which is not revisable. The effect is that this statement presents itself as a self-evident truth, portraying 'certain proponents of the 'yes' vote' as contradicting themselves, while forcing the reader into agreement unless he or she challenges the very premise on which the statement is built. The premise in this case is based on a negation which *is* polemical (the prefix *ir-* of the word *irrévisable* is what creates the negation), and which signals the presence of a point of view other than that of the locutor:

pov5: The constitutional text can be revised.

pov6: pov5 is unjustified.

pov6 is then argued for with a reference to the Constitutional text itself. The voice that bears responsibility for pov5 is doubtlessly that of the proponents of the treaty in general (it would be difficult to promote a constitution while admitting to it not being amendable), the most distinguishable of whom in this case are those among them who disagree with ECB policy. With this we get the following p-structure for *p however q*:

pov7(*p*): pov3 (the reforms should be introduced after the vote on the Constitution) is justified.

pov8: pov 7 is an argument in favor of the conclusion *r*.

pov9(*q*): pov 6 (the constitutional text cannot be revised) is justified.

Pov10: pov9 is an argument in favor of the conclusion *non-r*.

As already established, pov3, and by implication pov7, is the responsibility of those among the proponents of the treaty that share Fabius' view with regards to monetary policy. They reach the conclusion *r*, that 'the ratification of the constitutional treaty will permit the necessary reforms of the ECB'. Fabius, on the other hand, has responsibility for pov6 (and by implication pov9), through which he reaches the opposite conclusion: 'The ratification of the constitutional treaty will not permit the necessary reforms of the ECB'.

What Fabius does in this passage, then, is first to portray the ECB's monetary policies as 'stupid' by reference to the point of view of 'many officials', before pointing to a schism within the 'yes' camp, between those that want the ECB to function as it has up to this point, and those that want to revise it. But Fabius deems any revision to be impossible, referring to a specific article of the constitutional text. This means that what the Constitution means for

financial policy could not be reliably explained by 'certain proponents of the 'yes' vote', because their statements are contradictory. All this serves both to discredit the 'yes' camp on the grounds of their lacking responsibility and coherence, as well as to reach the unequivocal conclusion that only a vote against the Constitution would be a responsible move on the part of the voters.

In this analysis I have argued that Fabius tries to appeal to social-democratic voters, by evoking values such as social policy and the danger of a liberal bias within the French and European political establishment. However, Fabius also attempts to go past a purely partisan mobilization, through the elicitation of pragmatic arguments such as political efficiency, as well as of French Republican values such as democratic participation and *la laïcité*. In the analyzed segments this leads to a polyphonic choir consisting of more or less defined proponents of the Constitution – among them top EU officials, Nicolas Sarkozy and his party and the pro-constitutional left. In addition, this being a highly argumentative text, written with the explicit intention of convincing through reasoning, there is the voice of undecided or uninformed voters, both on the left and in general. Interestingly, a number of these discursive beings seem to appear and partially converge at the very end of Fabius' text.

> (8)
> *Our* motto has thus far been: '*And now, the social Europe.*' I am not in favor of changing it into: '*And now, the liberal Europe.*'[18] I do *not* see[19] the socialists, the left and more widely the French people approve, at the side of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, a text which is so contestable.[20]

Firstly, the possessive article *our* serves as a mobilization of the voice behind 'And now, the social Europe', belonging to the socialists. However, as many of Fabius' partisans have joined the herd of the Constitution's proponents, he implicitly states that their adhesion is tantamount to an acclamation of the EU as a liberal project. The pro-constitutional left can therefore be said to constitute the voice behind 'And now, the liberal Europe'. Then, with the last sentence Fabius discursively rearranges the implicated discursive beings so as to portray the left and the French people as finally having been convinced of the inadvisability of following the lead of Chirac and Sarkozy, joining henceforth in the rejection of the present treaty as a both rightist and futile project. The implicit voice triggered by the negation claims that the left and the French people will approve the Constitution, a claim that Fabius refutes on the basis of his own enumeration of the treaty's faults that all converge on one conclusion: The treaty must be rejected.

But the voices that are not present in the text can also be significant in their absence. The far right party Front National does not appear in the polyphonic choir, which can be explained by the fact that its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and Laurent Fabius share the view that the present treaty must be rejected, while basing this position on mutually exclusive points of view. Whereas Fabius wishes for a constitution marked by further European integration within a social-democratic frame, Le Pen rejects such a project all together on the basis that it constitutes a threat to the nation. The implication of this – combined with the fact that Le Pen is regarded as a completely unacceptable

figure by voters and politicians on the left – is that any reference by Fabius to the Front National's position regarding the treaty would serve to undermine his own conclusion in the eyes of his leftist readers.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have addressed the difficult but central question of incorporating context in the analysis of political discourse. Pointing to the problems related to applying social cognition, I have argued for an approach that takes into account the analyst's lack of insight into the singular cognitive processes that are at the origin of text production. The first step of this approach is to distinguish the person from the discursively created political persona. The context will then have to be reconstructed from the perspective of the latter, by taking into account intertextual and interdiscursive elements, the persona's position in the political system, and lastly socially shared discursive beliefs – the elements of which come to expression in instances of discourse.

Furthermore, the application of the ScaPoLine to Laurent Fabius' text has demonstrated its value as an instrument of analysis in that it permits the identification of a multitude of voices. It also allows us to demonstrate the manner in which these voices relate to each other, revealing in this case a complex choir of both diverging and converging voices. In the analyzed parts of Mr Fabius' text I have looked closely at primarily reported speech and concessive constructions, which give the impression that the locutor's position is nuanced. Thereby he does ascribe some legitimacy to the views of opponents and undecided voters, the latter being susceptible to conviction through Fabius' use of counter-arguments. However, the pro-constitutional points of view do mostly not appear to be founded on any rational basis – and if they do, it is a basis of economic liberalism. This serves either to give the proponents of the treaty an air of shortsightedness, which undermines their credibility – or make them appear to have a liberalist agenda, which serves as a warning to the leftist readers of *Libération.* Furthermore, the use of the concessive *but* is particularly useful to Fabius because it gives him – as a constitutionalist opposed to the present draft – the benefit of refuting the treaty, while appearing to have a constructive attitude with regards to the project itself. In other words, he strives to undermine the treaty, while conceding to points of view that are favorable to it. To Fabius, these points of view are not relevant at the present time, but may become so under different circumstances, namely those of a possible future referendum on a European Constitution.

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[1] The term *locutor* will from now on be used to designate the persona behind a statement under analysis, whether in writing or in speech. This is to avoid conceptual confusion brought about by the use of terms such as *writer, author* or *speaker,* which have different semantic content.

[2] L'Europe *n'*est *pas* une Nation.

[3] A linguistically precise formalization would be to include the source, the judgment and the propositional content of the points of view: pov 1: [X] (TRUE (Europe is a Nation)); pov 2: [Le Pen] (UNJUSTIFIED (pov1)).

[4] This is by no means a novelty, since *persona* is an established term in the language of politics.

[5] Without submitting to analysis the possible argumentative alterations caused by Fabius' rearrangement of the constitutional text, we cannot claim that Laurent Fabius does take advantage of this possibility.

[6] [...] pourrait exposer la France à des recours devant le Cour de justice des communautés européennes concernant la loi sur les signes religieux à l'école.

[7] une tentative de compromis entre les camps laïc et clérical.

[8] [...] M. Buttiglione prononce les déclarations que l'on sait aux côtés de M. Barroso [...]

[9] Union pour un mouvement populaire.

[10] [...] M. Sarkozy propose la modification de la loi de 1905 sur la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat [...]

[11] In 2004 Sarkozy published a book entitled *la République, la Religion, l'Espérence*, in which he indicated a wish to modify the strict separation between church and state. He subsequently detailed his position in the 1 November issue of the weekly *l'Express* (see references).

[12] antagonistes dans leur mise en œuvre.

[13] Pour attirer l'électeur social-démocrate, on lui concède des objectifs sociaux, mais quand il s'agit des politiques concrètes, le libéralisme est gravé dans le marbre.

[14] Plus de dix ans après, l'euro existe et voilà que la Constitution propose de constitutionnaliser une orthodoxie monétaire que de nombreux responsables jugent stupide.

[15] [...] alors que l'euro vaut désormais plus de 1,30 dollar, accentuant les délocalisations, pénalisant nos exportations, donc la croissance et l'emploi, la BCE ne veut pas réagir.

[16] Speech by the President of the European Central Bank, Dr. Willem F. Duisenberg at the joint congress of the Federations, EUROFINAS and LEASEUROPE, on 11 October 1999 in Paris (http://www.ecb.int/press/key/date/1999/html/sp991011.en.html).

[17] Certains partisans du « oui » sont également conscients du danger. Ils demandent une évolution du statut de la BCE et l'introduction des critères de l'emploi et de la croissance pour guider ses interventions, mais après la vote de la Constitution. Or, ce n'est pas en disant d'abord « oui » à un texte irrévisable (voir article IV-445) que l'on obtiendra ensuite cette avancée.

[18] It can be argued that the first *not* in the segment is polemical, given the fact that Fabius was widely criticized by the left for his perceived liberalist policies during his tenure as Minister of the Economy from 2000 to 2002. However, having throughout the text established himself as the defender of socialist values against a party leadership that has abandoned them, the negation rather serves to set him apart from the others and to implicitly state that they wish for a 'liberal Europe'. This *not* can therefore be said to be more descriptive than polemical.

[19] *I do not see* is an epistemic expression through which the locutor forfeits some of the responsibility for what he himself is stating. For this reason it can be regarded as a polyphonic marker, though one which is not an object of analysis in the present paper.

[20] Notre mot d'ordre a été jusqu'ici: « Et maintenant l'Europe sociale. » Je ne suis pas d'accord pour le transformer en un : « Et maintenant l'Europe libérale. » Je ne sens pas les socialistes, la gauche et plus largement le peuple français, approuver aux côtés de Jacques Chirac et de Nicolas Sarkozy un texte aussi contestable.

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