

Derailment of Strategic Manoeuvring in The Tanzanian Prime Minister's Question Time

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Abstract

This article examines the derailment of strategic manoeuvring in the Tanzanian Prime Minister's Question Time henceforth TPMQT from the pragma-dialectical perspective of argumentation. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of selected Hansard from the Tanzanian parliament, the study analyses the types of fallacies manifesting the derailment of strategic manoeuvring during the henceforth PMQT. The study reveals that there were instances where Members of the parliament henceforth MPs tried to manoeuvre strategically by evasion and topical selection; all of which resulted from the failure to observe the relevance rule of critical discussion. Another fallacy is Argumentum ad baculum, which is committed when MPs failed to observe the freedom rule. Furthermore, Argumentum ad hominem, which resulted from personal attack and the failure to observe freedom rule of critical discussion. The findings further reveal that, due to a conflicting nature of the parliament and the real situation of competition in a multiparty political discourse, politicians tend to neglect their commitment to the ideal critical discussion due to their assiduity to win the other party over to their side. Their aspiration has made their reasonable exchange of argumentative moves to be overruled by the desire to achieve rhetorical effectiveness hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring. By situating the analysis within the broader framework of argumentative discourse, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction among argumentation, rhetoric, and governance in African parliamentary systems, using Tanzania as a context. Moreover, the study underscores the role of language as a tool of power, persuasion and negotiation in fostering deliberative democratic practices in Tanzania.

Keywords: Strategic manoeuvring, fallacy, derailment of Strategic Manoeuvring, pragma-dialectics, Prime Minister's Question Time, Tanzanian parliament

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I. Introduction

In each stage of a critical discussion, there are critical objectives which both parties want to achieve. Each of these critical objectives has its complementary 'rhetorical' aim (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2003:4). In each discussion stage, the parties can attempt to achieve such complementary rhetorical aims to realize their own persuasive intents and may thus arrive at making a move that optimally furthers their own case over dialectical reasonableness, hence a derailment of strategic manoeuvring. Derailments of strategic maneuvering are taken as arguments in which topical potential, audience demand, and presentational devices are selected not because they clarify focus, increase presence of the ideas, or achieve stylistic elegance but because arguers take advantage of circumstances of an audience in the real argumentative move (Zarefsky, 2014: 132). It is considered a derailment of strategic manoeuvring when a particular fallacy has been committed (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2003). Fallacy is an argumentative strategy in which the rhetorical effect overrules the dialectical objective (Msagalla, 2020). "All derailments of strategic manoeuvring are fallacious and all fallacies can be regarded as derailments of strategic manoeuvring" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2002:142). It is very common that fallacious moves in a critical discussion easily go unnoticed. Deviations from the rules of critical discussion are often at the same time persuasive as well as hard to detect because the parties involved are usually very keen on maintaining the pretence of reasonableness and portraying themselves as living up to critical standards (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2003:2).

This study examines some fallacious moves during the Tanzanian Prime Minister's Question Time henceforth TPMQT whereby both parties of the Prime Minister's Question Time henceforth PMQT try to be

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persuasive while flouting the rules of critical discussion, leading to the derailment of strategic manoeuvring. Parliamentary discourse often exhibits a tension between the ideals of rational argumentation and the pragmatic demands of political persuasion. Within the pragma-dialectical framework, this tension is captured in the concept of strategic manoeuvring, where speakers attempt to reconcile reasonableness with effectiveness (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2002). In such contexts, fallacious reasoning can emerge not merely as a logical flaw but as a rhetorical resource strategically deployed to achieve political and persuasive goals. Fallacies are therefore conceived as argumentative moves excluded by the rules of a particular dialectical system or as moves that violate the rules of the procedural model for conducting a critical discussion (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2003:2). This study analyses derailments of strategic manoeuvring in terms of fallacies which show how members of the parliament (MPs) utilise topical potential, audience demand, and presentational devices in a way that takes advantage of circumstances of an audience in the Tanzanian PMQT.

1.1 Rules for critical discussion and Fallacies as Derailment of Strategic Manoeuvring

Pragma-dialecticians view argumentation as reasonable discourse aimed at resolving the differences of opinion on the merits (Eemeren et al., 2009). In order to discuss reasonably during a critical discussion, a set of rules were introduced. According to van Eemeren & Houtlosser (2015), the pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion suggests a set of ten rules for critical discussion that direct the resolution process at every level and explicitly state the discourse requirements that arguers must adhere to, that is, the dialectical standards of reasonableness. Based on this idea, breaching any of these guidelines is fallacious since it makes it more difficult to settle a disagreement on the merits (van Eemeren et al., 2014).

These rules can be violated in different ways at any stage of a critical discussion. In pragma-dialectics, any move that violates these rules at any point is considered fallacious, as it obstructs the resolution of a disagreement on the merits. Therefore, in this theory, a fallacy is characterised as “a discussion move that breaks, in a specific manner, a rule for critical discussion pertinent to a particular discussion stage” (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2015:169).

The term fallacy is therefore used in a systematic manner in relation to the rules for critical discussion. Both the antagonist and the protagonist may break *the freedom rule (1)* in a number of ways during the encounter stage. A party may restrict which points of view can be put forth or questioned; for example, a party may refuse an opponent the opportunity to promote or criticize a certain point of view (van Eemeren, 2015:169). The first kind violations entail the declaration of some points of view as inviolable or the actual exclusion of certain points of view from discourse. The *obligation-to-defend rule (2)* can be violated in the opening stage by the protagonist by evading or shifting the burden of proof (van Eemeren, 2015:170). By presenting the viewpoint as self-evident and offering a personal guarantee of its correctness (a variant of *argumentum ad verecundiam*) or by immunizing the viewpoint against criticism, the protagonist in the first case tries to convey the idea that there is no point in challenging the viewpoint and no need to defend it. *The standpoint rule (3)* can be breached at any stage by either the protagonist or the antagonist (van Eemeren, 2015:170). In a discourse, for instance political debates or speeches involving a mixed difference of opinion, this can occur when one party falsely attributes a standpoint to the other or misrepresents their actual position (straw man). The first violation happens when someone forcefully asserts the opposite view as their own or invents an imaginary opponent. The second occurs when statements are taken out of context through oversimplification (disregarding nuances or qualifications) or exaggeration (making a claim absolute or overly general). *The relevance rule (4)* can be violated in the argumentation stage by the protagonist in two ways: by putting forward argumentation that does not refer to the standpoint advanced in the confrontation stage (irrelevant argumentation or *ignoratio elenchi*); second, by defending a standpoint using non-argumentative means of persuasion (van Eemeren, 2015:170). *The unexpressed premise rule (5)* can be violated in the argumentation stage by the protagonist denying an unexpressed premise, and the antagonist can violate it by distorting an unexpressed premise (van Eemeren, 2015:170). When the protagonist's falsely presenting something as a common starting point or when the antagonist's denying a premise representing a common starting point during a critical discussion, then *the starting point rule (6)* is violated. The protagonist evades the burden of proof by falsely presenting something as a common starting point, enveloping a proposition in a presupposition of a question (many questions), concealing a premise in an unexpressed premise, and advancing argumentation that amounts to the same thing as the standpoint. By denying a premise representing a common starting point, the antagonist denies the protagonist the opportunity to defend his or her standpoint *ex concessis* (van Eemeren, 2015:171). *The validity rule (7)* can be violated during argumentation stage in a critical discussion when the protagonist commits logical errors. Common violations include confusing necessary and sufficient conditions in "If ..., then ..." arguments (affirming the consequent, denying the antecedent) and misattributing properties between a whole and its parts (fallacies of division and composition) (van Eemeren 2015:171). Another rule which can also be violated at the argumentation stage is *the argument scheme rule (8)*, which is violated by the protagonist by relying on an inappropriate argument scheme or using an appropriate argument scheme incorrectly (van Eemeren, 2015:171). *The concluding rule (9)*, which occurs at the concluding stage in a critical discussion,

can be violated when the protagonist assumes a standpoint is true just because it was successfully defended or when the antagonist claims something is false simply because it wasn't proven true (or vice versa). And the last rule is *the language use rule (10)* which can be violated in all stages. This rule is violated by taking undue advantage of unclearness (fallacy of unclearness resulting from the structuring of the text eg: vagueness, indefiniteness etc.) or ambiguity (fallacy of ambiguity, equivocation, amphiboly) by either the protagonist or antagonist (van Eemeren, 2015:172). These rules safeguard the integrity of argumentation by promoting clarity, relevance, logical consistency, and mutual respect. Ultimately, a well-conducted critical discussion not only enhances the quality of debate but also fosters a deeper understanding of the issues at hand, contributing to a more informed and intellectually engaged discourse.

Fallacies refer to the violations of a code of conduct for rational discussants whose aim is the resolution of a dispute (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984: 182). The category of fallacies includes much more than just logical errors of an argumentative move, that is to say, an argumentative move is considered a fallacy if it constitutes an obstacle to resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (van Eemeren, 2018). It is obvious that when politicians engage themselves in a critical discussion such as parliamentary debates, each participant aim at winning the argument hence most of the time focus on effectiveness rather than balancing both effectiveness and reasonableness. If, however, arguers allow their commitment to having a reasonable exchange to be overruled by their eagerness for achieving effectiveness, their strategic maneuvering get "derailed" (van Eemeren, 2018:198). Therefore, all derailments of strategic maneuvering are fallacies in the sense that they violate one or more of the rules for critical discussion and all fallacies can be viewed as derailments of strategic maneuvering. Therefore, this study examines the ways in which the failure of the observance of critical discussion rules in the Tanzanian PMQT results into fallacious moves hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring.

1.2 Prime Minister's Question Time: An Argumentative Activity Type

The accountability of any government is achieved through various parliamentary activities such as questioning, debates, speeches, and parliamentary committees of inquiry (Barlin, 1981). Whilst other parliamentary activities have different aspects, "question time is an opportunity for some direct and spontaneous accountability of the executive government to parliament" (Kelly and Harris 2001). The controversial performance of the government is, in fact, a preconditioned topic for the initial disagreement that gives rise to the argumentative activity type of questions to the prime minister (Mohamed, 2009). This act has been acknowledged since the 18th century in the UK as an important activity type of parliamentary discourse (Chilton, 2004:92). Since then, questions in the parliament, both in the UK and elsewhere, have been regarded as weapons in the party battle, whereas members of the Parliament henceforth MPs from the opposition seem to defend a standpoint such as, *unlike the ruling party, we can provide good leadership*, and MPs from the ruling party and the Prime Minister henceforth PM seem to defend a standpoint such as, *unlike the opposition, our party can provide good leadership* (Mohamed, 2009:73-74). Thus, the questions to the PM are used to obtain information or to press for action (Chilton, 2004:92). The session of questions to the PM is rightly considered one of the very sensitive and important parliamentary activities because it is a platform where parliamentarians pose questions to the PM on various sensitive matters, which normally encompass confrontational exchanges of views. As a concrete institutionalised argumentative activity type, the PMQT "is an argumentative activity type which starts from a difference of opinion concerning the performance of the government and aims at holding the government to account through continuous argumentative discussions of its plans, policies and actions" (Mohammed, 2008:380). This is one of the characteristics of the British parliament and constitution introduced in 1961 (Chilton, 2004:92).

From the British parliament, the United Republic of Tanzania adopted the approach of questions to the Prime Minister in its parliament in 2008, during the 11th meeting of the 9th Bunge (Mwananchi, 25th January 2018). This forced some changes to be made to the rules of the parliament, changes which are reflected particularly in rule 44 (1) and in the sixth addition to the standing orders of the Tanzanian parliament, which states that: "The PM may be asked questions by any member of parliament that will comply with the conditions regarding questions of the parliament as well as the guidelines laid down by the sixth addition to these regulations"³. Since then, the session of questions to the PM has been taking place at every parliamentary meeting. The session aims to open a room for parliamentarians to seek answers to their queries from the government. MPs are allowed to ask policy questions concerning different matters to the PM according to the way it is specified in the standing orders of the

³ 44 (1) Waziri Mkuu anaweza kuulizwa maswali na Mbunge yeyote ambayo yatazingatia masharti kuhusu maswali ya Bunge pamoja na Mwongozo uliowekwa na Nyongeza ya Sita ya Kanuni hizi. [The Prime Minister shall be subject to question by any honourable member, provided that such questions are dully framed in accordance with the rules governing parliamentary questions and in strict conformity with the provisions stipulated under the sixth schedule to these standing orders] Standing orders of the parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania (2005) as amended in 2023.

parliament. Thus, this study examines how MPs failed to observe discussion rules, hence fell on derailment of strategic manoeuvring which resulted in fallacious argumentative moves.

1.3 Strategic Manoeuvring: An Extended Pragma-dialectical Theory

In all stages of a critical discussion, the aims of maintaining reasonableness and achieving effectiveness are two sides of the same coin (Van Eemeren, 2010:40). Arguers' intention in the particular communicative activity type is to achieve rhetorical effectiveness and dialectical reasonableness of their communicative exchanges in every move that is made. In order to do justice to the argumentative predicament of combining effectiveness with reasonableness, Peter Houtlosser and Frans van Eemeren introduced the concept of "strategic manoeuvring" (van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2007). This refers to the continual efforts made in all moves that are carried out in argumentative discourse to keep the balance between reasonableness and effectiveness (Van Eemeren, 2010:40). Strategic manoeuvring comprises three aspects, namely the choice made from the available "topical potential," the choice of how to adapt the argumentative moves made in the strategic manoeuvring to meet "audience demand," and the exploitation of "presentational devices," which involves a choice as to how the argumentative moves are to be presented in the way that is strategically best (Van Eemeren, 2010:93 - 94). These aspects can be presented as shown in Figure 1 below.

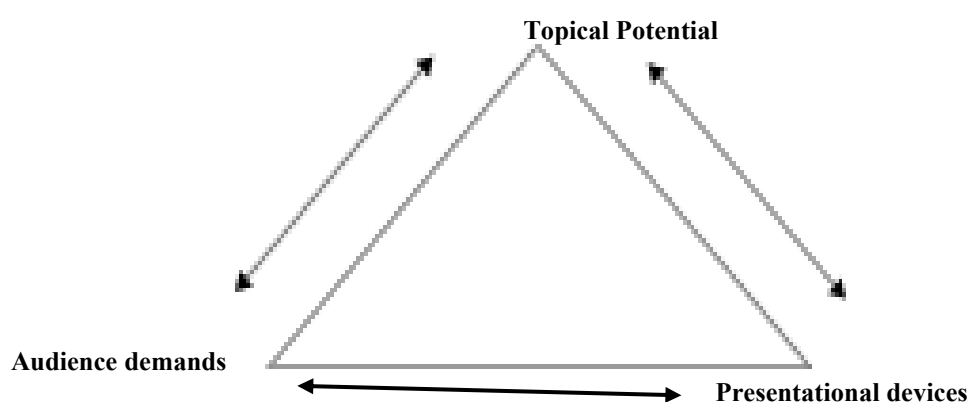


Figure 1.1: The Strategic Manoeuvring Triangle (Eemeren, 2010:95)

The topical potential has to do with the viewpoint, angle, or perspective from which the arguer selects the argumentative move or moves he makes in strategic manoeuvring (Van Eemeren, 2010:96). Adaptation to audience demand has to do with tuning the argumentative moves that are made to audience demand or for securing communion. The presentational devices refer to the linguistic efforts made by the arguers in a special way or style to make their argumentative moves suit them well and go along with their audiences' preferences (Van Eemeren, 2010:108).

II. Methodology

The study analysed data which were collected through Hansards from the website of the Tanzanian parliament (www.parliament.go.tz/hansards-list). Attention was given to the parts of the debates which manifest derailment of strategic manoeuvring by the Prime Minister and members of the opposition. Since the data for this study are pragmatic and dialectic, a critical discussion model was used to analyse selected data under a pragma-dialectical reconstruction of argumentative discourse by considering the four stages of critical discussion, which are *confrontation*, *opening*, *argumentation*, and *concluding stages*. The pragma-dialectical rules for critical discussion were also considered to check the possibility of derailment of strategic manoeuvring in various stages of the resolution process. We checked if the MPs failed to observe the pragma-dialectical rules and how the infringement led to the derailment of strategic manoeuvring. The analysis of the data was done under the guidance of the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (Van Eemeren et al., 2014) based on the reconstruction process. The study followed four analytical operations of a pragma-dialectical reconstruction, which are *deletion*, *addition*, *permutation*, and *substitution*. In *addition*, which functions as a process of completion, the focus was on only those parts of the selected debates that manifest derailment of strategic manoeuvring by the Prime Minister and members of the parliament from opposition side. Applying the operation of *deletion*, all parts of the debates that did not constitute the resolution process were left out of consideration. These parts include, but not limited to, unnecessary repetitions and interruptions from other MPs. In *permutation* the order of the elements in the PMQT was rearranged to make the elements suit the resolution process. This includes, but not limited to, putting argumentative elements in their relevant discussion stage. Applying the operation of *substitution*, the study ensured that all selected elements are relevant for the resolution process in order to avoid ambiguous or vague

constructions. Since the study observed the four operations of the reconstructive process of pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, the analysed argumentative discourse in this study may slightly (or even considerably) differ from the selected sessions of the PMQT as they appear in the website of the parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania (www.parliament.go.tz/hansards-list). For instance, in some extracts, sentence arrangement differs from that found in the original Hansard transcript.

III. Results and Discussion

This section analyses and discusses the derailment of strategic manoeuvring as observed from three selected sessions of questions to the Prime Minister in the Tanzanian parliament. The analysis and discussion are categorised in five sections, which reveal how MPs fail to observe critical discussion rules hence fell on fallacious argumentative moves. Data from the TPMQT indicate that both the protagonist and the antagonist committed fallacies in their struggle to manoeuvre strategically, hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring as explained below.

3.1 Evasion

Politicians have the tendency to avoid commitments by strategically using ambiguous or indirect language to respond to questions or requests in a manner that not only minimizes accountability but also deflects potential criticisms. Arguers manoeuvre strategically with evasion especially when a party responds to a question asked or request made by another party in a critical discussion. This paper has observed that the PM committed the fallacy of evasion when he was trying to balance dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness. The following extract is an exchange between the opposition MP and the PM, when they discussing the ban on opposition political parties in Tanzania from conducting political activities outside the parliament. In this extract, the opposition MP claims that the government banned opposition parties from conducting public rallies while the PM rejects the claim and argues that political parties are allowed to conduct public rallies but under what was considered as a self-imposed law.

Extract 1

(a) **Freeman A. Mbowe:** [1] Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu ni miaka minne sasa tangu Serikali yenu imeweka zuio kwa vyama vya siasa kufanya wajibu wake kwa mujibu wa Katiba na Sheria za Nchi. [2] Na tunachozungumza leo Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu ni siku 262 zimebaki kufika tarehe 24, 25 Oktoba siku ambayo nchi yetu itafanya uchaguzi wa Rais, Wabunge na Madiwani. [3] Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu kwa busara zako binafsi na ni Serikali ambayo wewe ni kiongozi mwandamizi, mnafikiri ni lini mtaruhusu vyama vya siasa vifanye wajibu wake wa uenezi kujiandaa kwa uchaguzi Mkuu? (Hansard transcripts, 06 February 2020)

[1] ... *Honourable Prime Minister, it has been four years since the government banned political parties' activities as the constitution dictates.* [2] *As we speak Prime Minister, 262 days have remained to reach 25th October the election day for president, members of parliament and civic leaders.* [3] *When do you think to uplift the ban to allow political parties campaign for the national election?*

(b) **Prime Minister:** [1] Vyama vya siasa havijazuiwa kufanya shughuli zake ila tumeweka utaratibu muhimu unaowezesha vyama kufanya shughuli zake za kisiasa kama ambavyo tumetoa. [2] Kumekuwa na uhuru pia kwa wale wanasiasa wote ambao waliomba ridhaa kwenye maeneo yao. [3] Kama vile madiwani, wabunge wanaendelea kufanya shughuli zao za siasa kwenye maeneo yao kama ambavyo wao wanapaswa kufanya shughuli hizo. (Hansard transcripts, 06 February 2020)

[1] *Political parties have not been barred from carrying out their activities but we have put in place vital procedures that enable political parties to carry out their activities as we have provided.* [2] *There has also been freedom for all politicians who sought approval in their respective constituencies.* [3] *Just like councillors, MPs continue to carry out their political activities in their constituencies as the way they are supposed to.*

In Extract 1 (a), the opposition MP expresses a standpoint that the government has banned opposition political parties to conduct political activities for four years. To support his standpoint, the MP asks when the ban will be lifted to allow the opposition to conduct campaigns for the then forthcoming election. From the protagonist's argument, the topical focus is on whether and when the government will lift the ban on opposition political parties so that they can start campaigning for the general election. In part (b) of the extract, the PM argues against Mr Mbowe's argument by first renaming the mentioned situation (banning) as a vital procedural act of regulating political activities and instead of responding to the question which required him to explain whether and when the ban will be lifted. He instead redirects the focus of the question to councillors and MPs carrying out their political activities. The MP's question was clear; he wanted to know when the government would allow politicians from opposition to conduct political activities as part of the campaign for the general election. The

Prime Minister in his argument did not explicitly respond to that question but rather redirected the focus to something else, which sounded to be similar but not the answer of the question. Rhetorically, the Prime Minister maintains plausibility and decorum. However, the exchange between the PM and the opposition MP demonstrates politeness as the PM strategically shifts attention away from the central issue which is the permission for opposition parties to conduct political activities outside the parliament. But politeness is not the intended goal as the ban of political activities outside the parliament was a very sensitive issue between 2016 and 2020 in Tanzania which needed to be resolved for the sake of human rights preservation and not to be sugar-coated with soft words which do not provide any solution to the claim. The PM's response appears cooperative on the surface, yet he avoids direct accountability by providing generalized political statements instead of a precise answer which suits the question and the one which fulfils the democratic expectation of transparency during parliamentary proceedings. The question was strategically reframed through the answer which touched political activities but not giving the answer to the original question. Politeness was observed and narrative details were provided to preserve the PM's ethos as a cooperative leader while protecting the government from direct scrutiny. Therefore, the question of whether and when the ban will be lifted remained unresolved with a move from the antagonist which violated the relevance rule of a critical discussion which resulted to the failure of dialectical reasonableness. The PM's argument did not relate to the original standpoint from the MP, which undermined the resolution-oriented nature of a critical discussion, hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring.

3.2 Topical Selection

The selection of a topic of discussion in parliamentary debates is one among important features which characterise the institutionality of parliamentary discourse. As an institutionalised argumentative discourse, Parliaments usually have strict institutional rules on what should be discussed in parliamentary debates, and members of parliament (MPs) are required to abide to those rules (standing orders). That means, the relevance of the topic in some aspects depends on the adherence of these institutional rules. At the level of topic selection in strategic manoeuvring arguers have a range of possible angles from which to choose their topics. Strategic manoeuvring requires that the topics selected stand relevant to the matter at issue. However, some politicians take for granted the freedom they have in topical selection and choose irrelevant topics hence fallacious argumentation. MPs are not expected to initiate a discussion on an issue that is not relevant to the topic on the table, and will most likely be sanctioned by the Speaker (or chair) of the house for doing so (Msagalla & Visser, 2021). In the Tanzanian parliament, questions to the Prime Minister are guided by the standing order in chapter four, section 38(1) – 39(15) as made under article 89 (1) of the Constitution of the United republic of Tanzania chapter two of the revised edition of the Tanzanian laws, of 2005 amendment of the January 2016. The kind of the acceptable questions to the PM are further explained in the sixth addendum, scheduled guidelines on the questions to the Prime Minister under rule ⁴38(6). Although MPs are aware of the rules limiting the selection of the topic of discussion in parliamentary questions to the Prime Minister, they sometimes attempt to strategically introduce a topic or sub-topic which are not policy based as stated in the standing order 38(6) which are therefore regarded as irrelevant. In such cases the rhetorical aim overrides dialectical aim and strategic manoeuvring derail. This study observed derailment of strategic manoeuvring through topic selection in the Tanzanian Prime Minister's question time. According to critical discussion rules, the MP failed to observe relevance rule. The extract below is part of the exchange between the opposition MP and the PM which was interfered by the deputy speaker.

Extract 2

- (a) **Freeman A. Mbowe:** [1] ni miezi mitatu kamili tangu Mheshimiwa Godbless Lema, Mbunge wa Arusha akamatwe nje ya geti la Bunge na kupelekwa kizuizini kushtakiwa kwa kesi inayoitwa ya uchochezi ambayo ina dhamana, lakini miezi mitatu leo hajaweza kupata dhamana. [2] Wakati huo huo tuna Mbunge mwingine wa Kilombero, Mheshimiwa Lijualikali ambaye anumikia kifungo cha miezi sita katika Gereza la Ukonga kule Dar es Salaam na kazi ngumu; wakati huo huo, tuna zaidi ya Madiwani sita wa Chama cha CHADEMA ambao wamefungwa kwa makosa yenye misingi ya kisiasa; tuna viongozi kama Mwenyekiti wa Chama wa Mkoa wa Lindi aliyefungwa miezi nane kwa kufanya kazi yake ya kisiasa. [3] Tuna viongozi wa ngazi mbalimbali zaidi ya 215 aidha wamefungwa ama wanaendelea na mashtaka mbalimbali katika maeneo mbalimbali ya nchi. (Hansard transcripts, 02 February 2017)

[1] *It has been a full three months since the Honourable Godbless Lema, the member of parliament for Arusha, was arrested outside the parliament gates and taken into custody to face a charge of incitement,*

⁴ Maswali yatakayoulizwa kwa Waziri Mkuu wakati wa Kipindi cha Maswali kwa Waziri Mkuu yatakuwa ni yale yanayohusu Sera za Serikali au jambo lolote lenye manufaa na maslahi kwa jamii na Taifa lililo chini ya madaraka na mamlaka ya kazi ya Waziri Mkuu. [questions to be addressed to the Prime Minister during the session of questions to the Prime Minister shall be confined to matters relating to government policies or to any issue of public interest which falls within the powers, authority and official responsibilities of the Prime Minister]

which is bailable, yet three months on he has still been unable to secure bail. [2] Meanwhile, we have another member of parliament for Kilombero, the Honourable Lijualikali, who is serving a six-month sentence in Ukonga prison in Dar es Salaam with hard labour, at the same time, we have more than six CHADEMA councillors who have been imprisoned for politically motivated offences; we have leaders like the Lindi regional party chairman who was imprisoned for eight months for doing his political work. [3] We have over 215 leaders at various levels who have either been imprisoned or are facing various charges in different parts of the country.]

- (b) Deputy Speaker:** [1] Mheshimiwa Mbowe, katika maelezo yako marefu, yameingia huko maswali ya kiseri na maswali ya kisheria. [2] Maswali yanayohusu Mheshimiwa Godbless Lema, Mheshimiwa Lijualikali na Madiwani sita uliosema wamefungwa, yale ni maswali ya kisheria. [3] Maswali uliyouliza ya jumla kuhusu leo kuwa siku ya Haki Duniani ambayo ni Siku ya Sheria Duniani, hayo Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu anaweza kuyajibu. [4] Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu, kwa ajili ya maswali ya kiseri na siyo ya watu mahsusi aliowataja ambayo yanahusu sheria. (Hansard transcripts, 02 February 2017)
- [1] *Honourable Mbowe, in your lengthy explanation, you have included policy and legal questions. [2] Questions in regard to honourable Godbless Lema, honourable Lijualikali and six councillors detained, those are legal questions. [3] The general questions about today's international Human Rights Day which is a legal day internationally, the Prime Minister can respond.]*

In the extract 2 (a), the opposition MP presented a series of cases involving the arrest, detention and imprisonment of members of opposition (CHADEMA) including Mr Godbless Lema, Mr Peter Lijualikali, several councillors and other party leaders. With the presentation of the series of cases, the protagonist shows that the government is unfairly and politically persecuting opposition (CHADEMA) through arrests, detentions and imprisonment. The protagonist managed to select topics which influences persuasive forces of his argument. The argument involves narration which is told with emotive language which appealed to the government's ethos. The angle from which the arguer selected his topic defines the government as persecutor and opposition as a victim of the political persecution. Strategically, the antagonist succeeded in terms of topical potential. The arguer strategically manoeuvred through topical potential in a way that sounded that the argument potentially blended legal matters (arrests, detentions and imprisonments) with broader policy implication (good governance, democracy etc.). But his topics can be regarded as irrelevant because the selection of topics did not observe the standing orders of the Tanzanian parliament. Although the critical discussion does not recognise a third party as participant of the discussion, but in this section an intervention from the deputy speaker of the Tanzanian parliament is presented in the extract 2 (b) to show how she rejected Mbowe's question because it was regarded as a legal question and not policy question as the standing orders of the Tanzanian parliament direct. Mr Mbowe failed to observe the standing orders of the Tanzanian parliament when selecting his topics because the specific cited cases are likely to be already adjudicated, before the court or under police investigations which, according to standing orders of the Tanzanian parliament, were irrelevant questions for the session of questions to the PM in the Tanzanian parliament. Pragma-dialectically, since the topics were irrelevant, then strategic manoeuvring derailed. A derailment occurred at topical selection level due to the failure to the relevance rule of critical discussion. The topical selection undermined the procedural norms of the Tanzanian parliamentary questions which made the protagonist to achieve rhetorical effectiveness while losing dialectical reasonableness, which resulted in fallacious argumentation, hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring.

The discussion reflects a broader political situation in Tanzania between 2016 and 2020, a period marked by rising tension between the government and opposition parties. In 2017, Tanzania experienced increased reports of opposition harassment, restrictions on public political gatherings and frequent arrests of opposition figures, contributing to what observers described as a deteriorating civic space and rising political tension affecting peace and democratic freedoms (Nyamsenda, 2018). Hon. Mbowe uses a cumulative narrative strategy, in which he lists multiple cases of opposition MPs alongside other CHADEMA leaders suggesting a pattern of politically motivated arrests. Hon. Mbowe's argument sounds strong but it would be even stronger if he could support it with detailed legal evidence for each case to show its seriousness and urgency so that the government could attend it as per its urgency and gravity. However, the PM's response reflects an institutional interpretation consistent with separation of powers, but it also risks deflecting from a broader concern about governance. This is due to the fact that the government explaining how the system is supposed to work does not solve the underlying problem. Instead, the problem must be addressed and given its appropriate attention.

3.3 The Argumentum Ad Baculum

In the struggle to achieve strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse such as in a parliament, a party may put pressure on the other party either physically or emotionally. The *ad baculum* moves are kind of moves in which one party threatens the other party by putting it under pressure hinting at negative consequences for

the other party if that party does not give in (van Eemeren, 2014:1399). This study observed that members of the parliament committed *ad baculum* during the Tanzanian Prime Minister's question time. In the extract below, Hon. Mbowe committed *ad baculum* while asking a supplementary question which was in form of response to the PM's response on his question regarding when will opposition parties would be allowed to conduct their political activities and the independence of INEC as the nation was approaching the general election of 2020.

Extract 3

Freeman A. Mbowe: [1] Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu haya ni majibu mepesi ambayo kuna siku mtakuja kujuta katika nchi hii kwa majibu haya mepesi. (Hansard transcripts, 06 February 2020)
[[1] ...Honourable Prime Minister, these are very light answers that may make you regret one day in this country.]

In the Extract 3, the opposition MP manoeuvred strategically by intimidating the PM. He relies on the prospect of unpleasant consequences rather than a rational argument. He tries to manage the debate towards a critical evaluation of the PM's responses by describing them as "*very light answers*". Earlier in this discussion, Mr Mbowe asked questions regarding freedom of speech for politicians as they were not allowed to practice politics outside the parliament by that time and a question regarding free and fair election claiming that the Tanzanian electoral committee was not practically free. Hon. Mbowe was not satisfied with the answers he got from PM regarding the matters he asked about. He framed a standpoint that "the Prime Minister's answers are insufficient". With his move, Mr Mbowe strategically challenged the government's accountability with an evaluative statement showing how inadequate the government's responses are. Mr Mbowe used emotive language as a presentational device to put emotional pressure on the government's side. He threatened the government by comparing the weight or sensitivity of the matters he presented through his questions with the answers given by government. Derailment was observed at the presentational level because the MP claimed the government's answers are insufficient without providing evidences of how the answers are insufficient. Instead, he threatened the government that they will one day regret it. The deviation from justifying that the answers are very light to a projection of a future negative consequences which resulted in *argumentum ad baculum*. The opposition MP did not adhere to the freedom rule which obliged the parties to remain free to advance and defend standpoint without intimidation. The strategic manoeuvring derailed because the arguer achieved rhetorical effectiveness while undermining the dialectical reasonableness of the critical discussion hence fallacious argumentation.

The MP's argument reflects the broader political climate in Tanzania between 2016 and 2020, a period which was characterized by lessening democratic space and heightened state control under the then president of Tanzania, Dr. John Pombe Magufuli. Although Hon. Mbowe attempted to hold the government accountable by critically challenging the PM's responses, his use of threats and emotionally charged language weakened the intended message. For the nature of the then executive, that statement would not bring any impact on Tanzanian politics as far as the struggle for democracy is concerned. It was too light compared to the really political situation. However, from Hon. Mbowe's statement, it suggests that restrictive political environment may have influenced the opposition politicians to adopt confrontational argumentative strategies in order to attract public attention and challenge the government. As the result, the derailment demonstrates how political tension within parliamentary discourse can demoralize rational critical discussion and results to fallacious argumentation.

3.4 Argumentum Ad Hominem

This is the kind of fallacy which results from personal attacks. In this fallacy the focus shifts from disproving the claim to attacking the individual who made the assertion (van Eemeren, Garssen and Meuffels (2012:347). This form of argumentation undermines the truth or acceptability of the statement by targeting the person instead. The infringing of the opponent's personal liberty by denying him the right to advance a standpoint may also be accomplished by discrediting his expertise, impartiality, integrity or credibility. There are three types of *argumentum ad hominem* that can be utilized in various argumentative contexts. However, this study reveals one type of *argumentum ad hominem* as committed by MPs during the Tanzanian PMQT, which is *tu quo que*.

3.4.1 The Tu Quoque Fallacy

Tu quoque occurs when a speaker responds to criticism by accusing the opponent of the similar fault hence shifting the focus from the issue raised to the opponent's own behaviour or background. In this kind of personal attack, one party, for instance, claim that the proposition concerned is a good point of departure for the discussion and invite the antagonist to accept it as a mutual starting point however, the antagonist is free to accept or reject the proposition (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2003). This study observed that members of the parliament infringed the freedom rule of critical discussion. Although the protagonist introduced material starting point that "*The president intends to do away with all opposition parties by 2020*" but the antagonist rejected it. That means the parties had same procedural starting points but different material starting points. The extract below presents

an exchange between the PM and the opposition MP, where the MP asks a supplementary question regarding the intention of the president to suppress opposition in Tanzania and other things connected to that claim, including banning public political rallies although it received a rejection from the MP:

Extract 4

(a) Freeman A. Mbowe: [1] Rais alitoa kauli ya kwamba anakusudia kuhakikisha by 2020 hakuna upinzani. [2] Mheshimiwa waziri mkuu umekiri katika majibu yako hapa kwamba nchi yetu inaendeshwa kwa sheria na Katiba, rais huyu ameonekana mtu wa kuvunja Katiba mara kwa mara ikiwemo kupiga marufuku mikutano ya vyama vya siasa, jambo ambalo ni haki ya vyama vya siasa Kikatiba. [3] Mheshimiwa Waziri Mkuu, je, haya yanayoendelea katika awamu ya tano ambacho ni kinyume na utamaduni na mazoea yetu kama Taifa, ni sera au utekelezaji wa sera hiyo ya kuua upinzani; na ni sera chini ya Serikali yako na Mheshimiwa Magufuli? (Hansard transcripts, 02 February 2017)

[The president announced his intent to do away with all opposition parties by 2020. Honourable Prime Minister you have acknowledged in your responses that our country is governed by laws and the Constitution, this president has been repeatedly observed to flout the Constitution including banning political parties which is the constitutional right of the political parties. Honourable Prime Minister, what is happening in the fifth phase of the government which is contrary to our culture and practices as a nation is a policy or implementation of a policy intends to destroy the opposition and that it is the policy under your government and honourable Magufuli?]

(b) Prime Minister: [1] kwanza nataka nikanushe kwamba Mheshimiwa Rais hajawahi kutangaza kuvifuta vyama vya upinzani. [2] Nchi hii inaongozwa kwa sheria, kanuni na taratibu. (Hansard transcripts, 02 February 2017)

[[1] first, I would like to deny that the Honourable President has ever announced the dissolution of opposition parties. [2] This country is governed by laws, rules and regulations]

In the extract 4 (a) above, Mr Mbowe, initiated the negotiation process by proposing to consider a specific proposition that the president intends to suppress all opposition parties by 2020. He highlighted several instances referring to mistreatment of opposition politicians and officials (as explained in 3.5.1 above), things which relate to that proposition, for example, Hon. Godbless Lema, MP from CHADEMA is in custody for a bailable charge but he was denied a bail, Hon. Lijualikali MP from CHADEMA was in jail, six CHADEMA councillors are imprisoned for political based offences, Lindi regional CHADEMA party chair is imprisoned for eight months for carrying out political duties etc (as stated in the Hansard transcripts, 02 February 2017) to secure a basis for defending his standpoint. with his argument, Hon. Mbowe unveils that the government lacks consistency. The PM protects the president by saying that the president is a person who obeys the constitution while he was observed going against and act more imperial as the result the legislative and the judicial pillars lost their values and statuses. In the extract 6 (b) the Prime Minister rejected Mr Mbowe's proposition by denying what the protagonist suggested. By saying [1] "*I would like to deny that the Honourable President has ever announced the suppression of opposition parties*", the Prime Minister explicitly rejects the proposition, hence lack of the common ground for a critical discussion. The Prime Minister has rejected the proposed material starting point without further explanation or justification for his rejection and rather explained that Tanzania is governed by laws, rules and regulations, something which marks inconsistency. This can be assumed that the nation is governed by laws but the president is not observing laws. The MP then focused on the government inconsistency and not the merit of the legal claim itself. The exchange between the MP and the PM above reveals that the angle from which the topic was selected was well utilized. There were strong and appropriate adaptation to audience demand and that the presentational choices were persuasive but the exchange was not dialectical reasonable. Lack of common ground made the discussion to end without arriving at the conclusion where they could achieve the resolution of the differences of opinion. Therefore, strategic maneuvering was derailed.

IV. Conclusion

The strategic manoeuvring that takes place in argumentative discourse to maintain the balance between dialectical and rhetorical objectives may sometimes lead to inconsistencies and derailment as the result of the failure to observe critical discussion rules. It has been observed that the MPs advance arguments that seem to be valid but in fact they are not pragma-dialectically valid due to the failure to balance dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness. All fallacious moves analysed and discussed in this chapter seem to be rhetorically effective but dialectically unreasonable. The study has revealed that, despite the efforts made by both the opposition members of the parliament and the Prime Minister during the session of questions to the PM to balance dialectical reasonableness and rhetorical effectiveness, a range of fallacies are committed. The fallacies revealed in this paper are; evasion and topical selection which resulted from the violation of the relevance rule. *Argumentum*

ad baculum was also observed where the MPs failed to observe freedom rule and resulted in fallacious argumentation. Another fallacy is the *argumentum ad hominem*, which was the result of personal attack and appeared in a form of tu quoque fallacy. The *argumentum ad hominem* was committed due to the failure to observe the freedom rule of critical discussion. Generally, the findings in this study demonstrate that, due to a conflicting nature of the parliament and the real situation of competition in a multiparty political discourse, politicians tend to neglect their commitment to the ideal critical discussion due to their assiduity to win the other party over to their side. Their aspiration has made their reasonable exchange of argumentative moves to be overruled by the desire to achieve rhetorical effectiveness, hence derailment of strategic manoeuvring.

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