Getting an issue on the table: A pragma-dialectical study of presentational choices in confrontational strategic maneuvering in Dutch parliamentary debate
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5. PRESENTING POLARIZED STANDPOINTS IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, two presentational tactics were introduced that a politician can use to polarize the debate in order to initiate a discussion about a specific issue. In this chapter, I will show how these two tactics are used in actual parliamentary practice. The first tactic I have characterized as *ascribing a standpoint to the political opponent*, and the second tactic as *making it difficult for the political opponent to agree*. The cases to be analyzed are, again, contributions of Wilders to various parliamentary debates. I will look at specific attempts made by Wilders in these debates to polarize standpoints in order to initiate a discussion between his party and the political opponent on the issue of the dangers of Islamisation. Although there are specific particularities in Wilders’s way of employing these tactics, these tactics are in principle used by all politicians in a parliamentary debate, since all politicians attempt to promote their party by claiming that its policies and actions concerning a specific issue are more effective than those of their political opponents.

In my analyses the following questions will be answered: (1) why can the argumentative piece of discourse concerned be seen as an example of polarizing and (2) how do the presentational choices that are made contribute to realizing the

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140 The cases stem from the debates introduced in section 4.1.
aims of a polarizing maneuver as described in section 3.4? In addition to these two key questions I will provide considerations for the evaluation of the argumentative discourse concerned. These considerations help to answer the question whether the various pieces of discourse can be evaluated as reasonable ways of polarizing. In the first two sections (5.2 and 5.3), excerpts are presented that illustrate the first tactic in which the politician introduces a standpoint while ascribing in the same move the opposite standpoint to the political opponent. For each of the excerpts, I will analyze how Wilders’s choice of specific presentational devices is instrumental in realizing a polarizing maneuver by means of this tactic. In sections 5.4 and 5.5, excerpts are presented that illustrate the second polarizing tactic. In each of these sections, an excerpt is analyzed in which Wilders uses various presentational devices to present his standpoint in such a way that it is difficult for the opponent to agree with him. In section 5.6, I will present some observations with respect to Wilders’s choice of presentational devices and explain to what extent such a choice is typical for polarizing maneuvers of politicians in general.

5.2 Ascribing a standpoint to the political opponent: the crumbs of my bread case

The first case in which Wilders polarizes the debate by ascribing the opposite standpoint to his opponent concerns a remark he made in the General Debate of 2009. He then interrupted the leader of the Christian Democrats in the Second Chamber, van Geel, who just had addressed in his speech the issue of limiting the number of foreign brides. Earlier that day, the research institute of the Christian Democrats had published a report in which a proposal was made on how to limit the number of foreign brides. This proposal was immediately picked up by the media, including Teletext, because nobody had expected the Christian Democrats to put forward measures that help to control Muslim immigration (the issue of Muslim immigration had more or less been appropriated by Wilders’s Party for Freedom in its fight against Islamisation). By publishing the report, the Christian Democrats gave the impression that they, to some extent, agreed with Wilders’s Party for Freedom on the subject of immigration control and that the difference of opinion between them on whether or not the Islamisation of the Netherlands should be stopped was no longer that sharp. Wilders attempts to show that the two parties still disagree on the matter by responding as follows:
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[5.1] Wilders: “When I was having breakfast this morning and I saw on Teletext that ‘Christian Democrats want to limit marriage immigration’ I thought: today, is going to be a beautiful day. Now that I hear the proposal of Chairman van Geel, I just see a few crumbs of my bread lying on the floor, but that is about it.”

(Proceedings Second Chamber 2009/2010, 2, 2-100)

Why is the excerpt an example of polarization?
Before discussing how Wilders maneuvers strategically with the choice of presentational devices, I will first explain why the excerpt is an example of polarization in accordance with the tactic of ascribing a standpoint to the opponent. In the excerpt, Wilders formulates his standpoint with regard to Muslim immigration in relation to the standpoint on foreign brides expressed earlier by the Christian Democrats. He claims that their proposal is disappointing because it contains only a few of the things he had wished for: he sees just a few crumbs of his bread lying on the floor (+/r). The interpretation that “my bread” refers to the standpoint that Muslim immigration should be stopped can be derived from the generally known fact that stopping Islamisation is Wilders’s priority issue.

In the remainder of his response to van Geel, Wilders criticizes the proposal of the Christian Democrats because it will stop only a few immigrants from coming to the Netherlands. According to Wilders, the proposal is therefore not a way “to make up for the general pardon of 25,000 illegal asylum seekers”. The excerpt is an attempt to show that the Christian Democrats’ standpoint should not be understood as being in agreement with Wilders’s standpoint on stopping Islamisation: in fact the parties disagree. Wilders says that limiting the number of foreign brides may appear to be in line with his party’s view that the Islamisation of the Netherlands should be stopped (agreement), but unfortunately the standpoint of the Christian Democrats cannot be understood in this way (which means that Wilders, rightly or wrongly, ascribes the opposite standpoint to his opponent).

How does Wilders maneuver strategically with presentational devices to polarize the standpoints?
The presentational devices used by Wilders to formulate +/r can be analyzed as means to realize the aims of a polarizing maneuver described in section 3.4 while at the same time giving the impression (rightly or wrongly) of adhering to the rules for critical discussion. This means that the formulation of standpoint +/r can be analyzed as an attempt (1) to show that there is prima facie reason to believe that the parties agree...
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on +/r (which would mean that there seems to be a situation of agreement), and
(2) to show, in an institutionally justified manner, that the opponent actually holds the
opposite standpoint -/r (which would mean that the difference of opinion between the
politician and the political opponent is actually a mixed difference of opinion). I will
now analyze how Wilders attempts to realize these two aims by the formulation of
his standpoint +/r.

(1) Wilders’s polarizing interruption of van Geel’s speech is intended to make
clear that the parties still disagree on the issue of stopping Islamisation. However,
suggesting that the parties still disagree is informative (and thus relevant) only if
there is reason to think that the difference of opinion between the parties no longer
exists. Such a reason could be that the political opponent has explicitly said that
there is no difference of opinion between the two parties on the issue concerned.
However, in this fragment this is not the case. The Christian Democrats have never
explicitly said that their proposal should be understood as a way to stop Islamisation;
hence, it is only Wilders who is concluding that the Christian Democrats’ proposal
to limit marriage immigration is a reaction of agreement with his party’s standpoint
on stopping Islamisation. Wilders raises this suggestion of agreement by formulating
his response in a specific way.

Wilders chooses to introduce his standpoint on Muslim immigration
(represented by “my bread”) by saying that when he read the Christian Democrats’
proposal “he thought that today was going to be a beautiful day”. This introduction
can be rephrased as “When I read your proposal, I thought we agreed that Muslim
immigration should be stopped”. “A beautiful day” can here be read as a day of
agreement, because a politician’s day is generally made by gaining more support for
his party’s standpoint. The phrase is thus metaphorically used to underscore how
happy he would have been if the parties had agreed. When it is a politician’s aim to
polarize the discussion, the advantage of introducing a standpoint with a phrase that
can be understood as “I thought we agreed” is twofold. First, the phrase indicates
that the Christian Democrats made their proposal as a reaction of (partial) consent to
Wilders’s standpoint on Muslim immigration. If the electorate indeed understands
the proposal as a reaction to Wilders’s standpoint, they have reason to believe that
the parties no longer disagree on the issue. Second, the phrase immediately indicates
that the Christian Democrats are wrong in thinking that the parties agree: because
it is formulated in the past tense, it actually says “I thought we agreed, but now I
see that this is not the case”. Hence, with the introduction of a beautiful day Wilders
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makes immediately clear that although there is prima facie reason to believe that the parties now agree on the issue of Muslim immigration, this is in fact not the case.

(2) In the excerpt, there are actually two propositions at stake: the Christian Democrats are in favor of limiting the number of foreign brides and the Party for Freedom is in favor of stopping Islamisation. The difference of opinion is, therefore, multiple. In the analysis, I will explain that Wilders is trying to give the impression that the discussion is in fact mixed by reformulating the standpoint of the Christian Democrats as “some crumbs of my bread”. I shall explain more precisely how the choice of words is of help in this endeavor.

In terms of presentational devices, Wilders’s reformulation of van Geel’s standpoint can be identified as involving an antithesis and a metaphor. The reformulation is metaphorical because Wilders suggests an analogy between a standpoint and bread, more specifically between van Geel’s standpoint and a few breadcrumbs lying on the floor.141 To introduce the metaphor, and to attract the listener’s attention to it, Wilders first creates a suitable everyday setting, a breakfast situation (“When I was having breakfast this morning …”).142 The analogy he then creates is that the measures proposed by the Christian Democrats to limit the number of foreign brides relate to the measures to stop Islamisation as a few crumbs of bread relate to a loaf of bread. Since Wilders is not talking about just any bread, but about “my bread”, the metaphor creates an antithesis between Wilders’s standpoint and van Geel’s standpoint: the metaphor contrasts the two standpoints as a whole that is complete (a loaf of bread) compared to something that is far from whole and, hence, actually nothing (a few breadcrumbs).143 Especially the fact that the crumbs are

141 I take Wilders’s utterance to be metaphorical because it complies with the following basic characteristics of a metaphor as a “condensed analogy”: “an element from one particular sphere [bread] is brought together with an element of another sphere [the proposal of van Geel to limit marriage immigration] in order to elicit, or generate, some understanding of the second element” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 399-405, see also Wilson 1990: 108).
142 As indicated by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, a bold metaphor needs suitable precautions to be accepted (1969: 401). The breakfast introduction can be viewed as such a precaution for introducing the bread metaphor. The utterance as a whole can be labelled as a form of enargia, which is a generic name for a group of figures aiming at vivid, lively description (Den Boon 2001).
143 The utterance of Wilders is not an antithesis in a strict sense. As Fahnestock explains, the original figure requires at least parallel phrasing, which brings the opposed terms in similar positions (as in “You have everything to win, nothing to loose”) (1999: 49). Some rhetoricians (as, for example, the author of the Rhetorica ad Alexandrum), dissociate antithetical thought
lying on the floor (and not, for example, on the table) depicts van Geel’s standpoint as ‘nothing’: it makes it seem as if there is nothing left anymore of Wilders’s proposal that is of any use to stop Muslim immigration. The antithesis thus consists in a combination of the opposing concepts all and nothing and whole and parts of the whole. Especially the contrast between all and nothing portrays the two standpoints (stopping Muslim immigration and limiting the amount of Muslim brides) as mutually exclusive (and the difference of opinion as mixed). If the measures to limit marriage immigration will have no effect at all on stopping Islamisation, the Christian Democrats’ proposal cannot be seen as compatible with Wilders’s drastic point of view on Muslim immigration. Wilders thus ascribes a negative position to the Christian Democrats concerning the issue of stopping Muslim immigration.

Wilders presents his interpretation that the exchange with van Geel has to be understood as a mixed difference of opinion as plausible by presenting it as the only possible interpretation. He is doing this, firstly, by creating the impression that he is a sincere politician telling the truth. Before giving his interpretation of the relationship between his position and that of van Geel, Wilders claims that he wished it were true that his party and the Christian Democrats agreed on the issue of Islamisation by saying that it would have made his day “a beautiful day”. This way of formulating implies that the disagreement with the Christian Democrats is not something Wilders has made up, but the actual state of affairs: if solving the disagreement is what would make Wilders’s day beautiful, there seems to be no reason for him to conclude falsely that the parties still disagree. Wilders strengthens the impression that he is right in drawing this conclusion by avoiding formulations that might emphasize that he is just giving his opinion. He could, for example, also have said: “I get the impression that there are just a few crumbs of my bread lying on the floor”. By avoiding to formulate explicitly to what extent he is committed to the assertion that there are only a few crumbs of his bread lying on the floor, Wilders implies that he knows that he is right.\footnote{For a more detailed explanation of this way of presenting an assertion, see section 3.2.2 (my reference to Hooper 1975) and section 4.6 (my reference to van Leeuwen 2009 and Verhagen 2005).}

\footnote{from antithetical phrasing, the former being an antithesis that occurs without parallel phrasing (Fahnestock 1999: 53, 55). Following this distinction, Wilders’s utterance (which opposes bread and crumbs in a contrast without parallel phrasing) can be identified as an antithesis of thought.}
Does the strategic maneuvering derail?
In this section, I examine whether, using the tactic of ascribing a standpoint to a political opponent in this particular case violates any of the pragma-dialectical rules. As I will explain, both the standpoint rule and the freedom rule seem to be at stake.

The standpoint rule stipulates that a party’s attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has been advanced by the other party. The rule thus determines that the standpoint ascribed to the opponent can only be the starting point of a further discussion if it is a standpoint that it is genuinely held by the other party. At first sight, the crumbs-of-my-bread metaphor does not really seem to change the content of van Geel’s proposal. Because the metaphor refers to Wilders’s bigger plan to stop Islamisation, Wilders seems right in his observation that he and van Geel hold different opinions. Wilders sees limiting marriage immigration as a way to stop Islamisation of the Netherlands, while the Christian Democrats only want to put a hold on the arrival of prospectless marriage immigrants – or, as one of the CDA-ministers once said, on marriage immigration that “is not based on love.”\textsuperscript{145} The antithesis between \textit{the whole} and \textit{parts of the whole} thus seems to be in accordance with the actual situation.

The antithesis between \textit{all} and \textit{nothing}, however, does not seem to agree with the standpoints genuinely held by both parties. The proposal to limit marriage immigration and Wilders’s idea of stopping Islamisation are not contradictory, because the proposal will have a certain amount of effect on the number of Muslims coming to the Netherlands. Hence, based on their proposal, Wilders cannot claim that the Christian Democrats do nothing about the problem of Muslim immigration. To describe the standpoints nevertheless as \textit{all} and \textit{nothing} creates a false antithesis and Wilders’s reformulation of van Geel’s standpoint could, therefore, be judged as violating the standpoint rule. The advantage of using the metaphor is that it implies (instead of asserts) that the Christian Democrats and the Party for Freedom hold opposite opinions on the issue of stopping Muslim immigration. In the debate van Geel responded by saying that the proposal cannot be understood as doing nothing. Wilders then used the opportunity to explain the metaphor in its meaning of \textit{the whole} versus \textit{parts of the whole}. He said: “It [the proposal to limit marriage immigration] is a small step forward […], but actually it is nothing”. With this

\textsuperscript{145} Minister Hirsch Ballin in \textit{de Volkskrant} (25 November 2008).
phrase he argues that the use of the bread metaphor was meant to say that the proposal is *not enough* to stop Muslim immigration.

In order to make it plausible that the political opponent holds the ascribed opposite standpoint, a politician might be inclined to use offensive language. The opponent will most probably not agree with a standpoint that insults him or his electorate. When the offense is addressed to the political opponent, it could be a personal attack that violates the freedom rule. In that case the insult is not aimed at testing the acceptability of the standpoint on the merits but at eliminating the political opponent as a serious discussion party. In the excerpt, Wilders attempts to create the impression of disagreement by describing the Christian Democrats’ proposal as not a solution at all (just a few crumbs of his bread). This description draws the listener’s attention to the weakness and ineffectiveness of the proposal and, hence, to the inability of the Christian Democrats to solve the immigration problems the country is faced with. Rephrasing the political opponent’s standpoint in this way is not very respectful, but cannot be said to be a personal attack that eliminates the opponent as a serious discussion partner. Wilders here attacks the proposal and not the person and the impression of incompetence is ‘just’ a side-effect of this attack. Hence, the metaphor gives Wilders an opportunity to portray the Christian Democrats as less competent representatives of the people than Wilders’s Party for Freedom, without explicitly saying so.

146 A bit further on in the speech, Wilders continues his attack on the Christian Democrats by *downplaying* their standpoint on limiting the number of foreign brides even further. He then reformulates their proposal by means of the figure of *meiosis* (a figure of speech that involves intentionally understating the case). He says: “the [naturalization] test should become a little stricter and a kind of diploma should be introduced” (my italics, YT).

147 As indicated by Ilie, parliamentarians often mitigate their offensive language use by qualifying the opponents’ acts or statements as completely inadequate instead of calling the opponent an incompetent politician (Ilie calls this the “attribution transfer strategy”) (2004: 59). The advantage of such strategies of indirect insult is that they contribute to polarizing the debate (“fuelling inter-group conflict”) while being relevant to the subject discussed in a parliamentary debate (“they bear a relation to the politician’s policies and actions”) (Ilie 2004: 61).
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5.3 Ascribing a standpoint to the political opponent: the *Henk and Ingrid* case

The second case study (which I introduced in chapter 2) stems from the General Debate of 2008. The excerpt is part of Wilders’s speech in the first round of turns to speak in which he explains that Holland now consists of two Hollands, ‘a Holland’ of Prime Minister Balkenende with his multicultural ideals, and ‘a Holland’ of Wilders’s Party for Freedom, consisting of the people who pay the price for these ideals. This approach – dividing Holland into two – shows that the whole speech is actually polarizing: Wilders attempts to distance himself as much as possible from the political establishment in order to create an outsider position for his party. The excerpt that I will analyze comes from a part of the speech in which Wilders attempts to show that the leftist part of the political establishment, in particular the Labor Party (PvdA), disregards a particular aspect of the danger of Islamisation, namely the influence it has on the wealth of the common people.148

[5.2] Wilders: “Chairwoman. We could have been swimming in money and instead of doing so we follow the leftist’s dream to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands. The more voting cattle for the leftist church, the better. […] But Chairwoman, who is paying the bill, who is paying that 100 billion? Those are the people who built up Holland, those are the people who work hard, the people who save up properly, who pay their taxes as they should, the common Dutchman who is not getting things for free: Henk and Ingrid are paying for Mohammed and Fatima.”

*Proceedings Second Chamber 2008/2009, 2, 2-79*

*Why is the excerpt an example of polarization?*

The excerpt is an example of polarization in accordance with the tactic of ascribing a standpoint to the political opponent. Wilders makes it seem as if the parties still strongly disagree on the issue of Muslim immigration. He does so by explicitly putting forward his standpoint in opposition to the standpoint he ascribes to his... 

148 With “leftist church” Wilders refers to the Labor Party (PvdA) because this was at the time the only leftist party that was part of the Government (the other two parties were the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Union of Christian parties (ChristenUnie). In this Government, the members concerned with immigration (the Minister of Housing and Integration, Mrs. Vogelaar and the State Secretary of Justice, Mrs. Albayrak,) were both members of the Labor Party.
opponent. In the excerpt, Wilders implicit claim is that the Muslim immigration should be stopped. The argument to support this claim is that Muslim immigration is a leftist ideal that costs “us” too much money (+/r). The leftist ideal he ascribes to his opponent is “the dream to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands”. Even though the Labor Party had not (yet) addressed the issue in this debate, Wilders claims in effect that it should be clear that this party is not doing anything about the problems of Muslim immigration. The three arguments put forward to support his claim that Muslim immigration should be stopped sharpen this disagreement. These arguments are: Muslim immigration costs “us” too much money (argument 1); The Labor Party needs Muslim immigrants as voters (argument 2); Muslim immigration takes money away from hardworking non-Islamic Dutchmen (argument 3). Since it is obvious that these arguments are themselves potential points of disagreement, they can be considered sub-standpoints which, just as the main standpoint, serve to polarize the discussion on Muslim immigration.149

How does Wilders maneuver strategically with presentational devices to polarize the standpoints?

The presentational devices used by Wilders to convey a standpoint +/-r (and the supporting arguments) can be analyzed as means to realize the aims of a polarizing maneuver described in section 3.4 while at the same time giving the impression (rightly or wrongly) of adhering to the rules for critical discussion. This means that the formulation of standpoint +/-r (and the supporting arguments) can be analyzed as an attempt (1) to show that there is prima facie reason to believe that the parties agree on +/-r (which would mean that there seems to be a situation of agreement), and (2) to show, in an institutionally justified manner, that the opponent actually holds the opposite standpoint -/r (which would mean that the difference of opinion between the politician and the political opponent is actually a mixed difference of opinion). I will now explain how Wilders attempts to realize these two aims by the formulation of his standpoint +/-r and the supporting arguments.

149 In my analysis, I consider these arguments as part of the confrontation stage, because they can be reconstructed as (sub-)standpoints in the discussion with the political opponent. Only such an analysis makes it possible to explain how the choice of presentational devices can contribute to steering the discussion towards a mixed difference of opinion. In case the analyst wants to explain how these devices affect the relation between the standpoint and the arguments a different approach is needed. In that case, the arguments should be analyzed as part of the argumentation stage.
(1) Just as in the previous case study, Wilders’s polarizing utterance seems to be motivated by the fear that the electorate might have gotten the impression that there is not that much difference anymore between the Party for Freedom and the Labor Party concerning their standpoints on problems related to Muslim immigration. In this case, however, there is no direct reason for this fear other than the fact that the Government is executing an integration policy. This policy is not explicitly mentioned though: Wilders does not refer to any specific measure that might have led the electorate to think that the Labor Party approaches the Party for Freedom on this issue. But if he does not mention such a reason, how does he then manage to give the impression that the parties do not just disagree, but that they still disagree (that is: despite the measures taken by the Government that might suggest otherwise)?

That there is reason to believe that the parties agree can be derived from the content of the arguments (or sub-standpoints) put forward in support of the claim that Muslim immigration should be stopped (and not so much from the choice of presentational means). These arguments seem intended to refute the possible idea that measures proposed by the Labor Party to deal with Muslim related problems are a real solution to the Islamisation of the Netherlands. The sub-standpoint that Muslim immigration costs too much money implies that the Governments’ integration policy – consisting of, for instance, Dutch language lessons and assimilation courses – offers in fact not a solution. People might consider this policy a solution because it deals with some of the trouble caused by Muslims. However, as Wilders claims, in the end Muslim immigration simply costs money that could be spent differently if the immigration is stopped. The sub-standpoint that the Labor Party needs the immigrants as voting cattle then suggests that whatever the Labor Party proposes with respect to Muslim related problems the party is not going to solve the Islamisation issue. Wilders implies that even when the Labor Party proposes measures that deal with the problems caused by Muslim immigration, in the end the party will never stop Islamisation because the party needs the Muslims for party members to be elected in Parliament.

150 One of the Governments’ measures that could be viewed by the electorate as a solution to Muslim-related problems is the improvement of forty problematic neighborhoods. These neighborhoods (or: “vogelaarwijken”) were also the subject of discussion in the case study discussed in section 4.3 (the Mohammed B case).

151 The presentation of the sub-standpoints is mainly effective in realizing the second polarizing aim, which is to show that the parties actually have opposite opinions (explained under (2) in this section).
(2) Wilders formulates his standpoint to stop Muslim immigration (+r) (and the supporting arguments) in relation to a standpoint he ascribes to the Labor Party. By formulating his opponent’s main standpoint as “the leftist’s dream to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands” he claims that the opponent holds a standpoint -/r. This means that the parties have a mixed difference of opinion on the issue of Muslim immigration. I shall explain more precisely how Wilders’s choice of words is of help to present the difference of opinion as mixed.

The sub-standpoint that Muslim immigration is a leftist ideal that is costing “us” too much money is formulated by using several presentational devices that emphasize that the difference of opinion is in fact huge. By means of two hyperbolic expressions Wilders creates a comparison between something desirable, namely being very rich, and something undesirable, which is living together with half a billion Muslims in a small country such as Holland. “Swimming in money” is a clichéd metaphor used to exaggerate the costs of Muslim immigration; “to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands” is an exaggerated way of expressing that the Labor Party is not dealing with Muslim immigration. Especially the choice of the active verb used to formulate the proposition of the Labor Party’s alleged standpoint is to be viewed as an effect-seeking exaggeration. Wilders claims that the Labor Party is intentionally promoting Muslim immigration, since it is getting the Islamic people here (as potential voting cattle). The opposition between the standpoints of the two parties becomes more prominent by Wilders’s standpoint to stop Islamisation being contrasted with an active Islamisation-policy: Wilders tries to stop what the Labor Party actively attempts to realize.

What is striking about the exaggerations is that they are so obviously untrue: it would never be possible to get more than half a billion Muslims to the Netherlands and stopping the immigrants from coming to the Netherlands does not yield enough money to make everybody extremely rich. Since these formulations are in fact ridiculous exaggerations, they merely suggest that the Labor Party’s point of view on stopping Islamisation is very different from Wilders’s point of view. They are used to draw attention to the propositional distance between the parties’ standpoints rather than to their actual standpoints and to convince the electorate that the Labor Party’s standpoint is indefensible because it is not to the electorate’s benefit.

The intended effect of the formulation of the second sub-standpoint (“The more voting cattle for the Leftist church, the better”) can be explained in a similar way. The use of “Leftist church” for the Labor Party and “voting cattle” for part of their electorate are exaggerated phrases that suggest that the Labor Party’s standpoint on
Muslim immigration is indefensible because it is both irresponsible and insincere. I will explain why that is the case. Wilders obviously exaggerates when he claims that self-interest would be the only reason for a party to support immigration – as if humanitarian reasons would play no role at all. Nevertheless, the word “voting cattle” creates the impression that humanitarian reasons are not the only reason (or the main reason) why the party supports Muslim immigration, which makes the Labor Party insincere. Describing the party as part of the Leftist church suggests that it is also irresponsible: this phrase creates the impression that the party’s views are based on ideology instead of reality. The advantage of using all these suggestive phrases for Wilders is that it becomes difficult to hold him accountable for what he has claimed and to accuse him of insulting language because literally his claims are obviously not true, which makes it hard to justify the claim that Wilders is wrongly portraying his opponent as a non-serious discussion party.\textsuperscript{152}

The sub-standpoint that it is the common Dutchman who is paying for the Muslim immigration is also formulated in a way that makes clear that the parties actually disagree. In the first part of the sub-standpoint the formulation amplifies the common Dutchman’s decency when it comes to money. By means of a \textit{five-fold repetition} Wilders attracts the listener’s attention to this decency: he says that these people have built up Holland, work hard, save up properly, pay their taxes as they should, and do not get things for free. The argumentative function of this repetition can best be explained by taking the repetition together with the concluding sentence that “Henk and Ingrid are paying for Mohammed and Fatima”. The way in which this last sentence is formulated can be identified as the figure of \textit{metonymy} because the names, which are prototypical for the group (Henk and Ingrid for the non-Muslims and Mohammed and Fatima for the Muslims), are used to refer to the group as a whole. The effect of this way of phrasing is that a particular aspect of the group is emphasized: the rather ordinary names emphasize in case of the non-Muslims that they are truly Dutch people, in case of the Muslims that they are truly not Dutch.\textsuperscript{153} Together with the five-fold repetition, the double metonymy thus creates

\textsuperscript{152} Plug explains (by referring to Fraser, 1980) the advantage of these mitigating strategies as “self-serving”: the speaker mitigates the offense to prevent undesirable consequences for himself (such as accusations from the Chair or other politicians), without preventing any undesirable effect the insult might have on the opponent (2007: 271).

\textsuperscript{153} In this case, the metonymic relation is of a symbolic nature. Henk and Ingrid symbolize the hard working non-Islamic Dutch people and Mohammed and Fatima symbolize the Muslims who profit from these people. By referring to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Snoeck Henkemans
an *antithesis*: it generalizes the non-Muslims (Henk and Ingrid) as a group of decent hard working Dutch people and the Muslims (Mohammed and Fatima) as people who profit from these hard working Dutch people. Dividing the electorate into two separate groups that exclude each other helps Wilders to polarize the debate. It makes it possible to claim that it is the Party for Freedom and not the Labor Party that truly has the interests of the common hard working Dutchman at heart.

It should be noted that together with the figure of metonymy the repetition is of help to mitigate the offensive generalization that all Muslims are just profiteers. By using the figure of metonymy Wilders avoids literally putting forward that the non-Muslims are paying for all Muslimimmigrants, and by emphasizing that the hard working people are such decent people (they “save up *properly*” and “pay their taxes *as they should*” (my italics, YT)), he avoids to say literally that the Muslims are not such decent people. Furthermore, contrasting Henk and Ingrid with Mohammed and Fatima is a remarkable and original way of formulating, and such a way of phrasing also mitigates the insult. Whether it concerns the electorate, the political opponent or the Chair, when the listener’s attention is focused mainly on the presentational aspect, he might take the insulting character of the generalization less seriously.

A last observation concerning the presentational choices in the formulation of this sub-standpoint is the choice of the question-answer format. This way of formulating helps Wilders to make it seem that he is right in claiming that the parties are actually having a mixed difference of opinion. He first puts forward an informative question (who is paying the immigration bill?) and then provides the information as if it is the only possible answer to this question (it is Henk and

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154 In Fahnestock and Tonnard 2011(103-116) we explain that Wilders’s contribution as a whole can be identified as the figure of an *epicheireme* (as it is used in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*).

155 In this speech, Wilders used for the first time “Henk and Ingrid” to refer to his electorate. During the election campaign of 2010, in which Wilders mentioned Henk and Ingrid time and again, he said in a newspaper interview that the names refer to “the people who do not get things for free” and “who have to pay for a failing Government that ignores them”. As noticed by the interviewer, Wilders no longer claimed that Henk and Ingrid (or: Henk and Anja as the interviewer called them) are the people who have to pay for the immigration costs of Mohammed and Fatima (or: Achmed and Fatima) (*De Telegraaf*, 23 April 2010).
Ingrid). As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca indicate: “A question presupposes an object to which it relates and suggests that there is agreement on the existence of this object. To answer a question is to confirm this implicit agreement” (1969: 159). By answering his question himself, Wilders thus makes it seem as if it is generally agreed upon that the hard working non-Islamic Dutch people are paying the immigration bill. The advantage of presenting the answer (that it is Henk and Ingrid who are paying the immigration bill) as a fact is that it also makes the implicit claims seem true. The answer functions as a premise for the implicit claim that a party cannot at the same time represent both Muslims and non-Muslims: If it is a fact that the non-Muslims pay for the Muslims, it seems also true that the Labor Party – which indeed represents the Muslims – cannot also represent the non-Muslims.

Does the strategic maneuvering derail?
The analysis has made clear how Wilders maneuvers strategically to polarize the debate by using the tactic of ascribing a standpoint to the Labor Party. In this section, I will show that, due to Wilders’s maneuvering, the standpoint rule and the freedom rule are at violated.

In the excerpt, Wilders ascribes several positions to the Labor Party: the party wants to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands because it needs the Muslims as voting cattle and considers it not to be a problem that the non-Muslims are paying for the Muslims. To determine whether in any of these cases the standpoint rule is violated, it has to become clear whether the Labor Party genuinely holds these standpoints — otherwise the discussion would continue with ‘the wrong’ definition of the difference of opinion to start with. With regard to the first claim, that the party wants to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands because it needs the Muslims as voting cattle, there are no indications that the Labor Party indeed holds this point of view. Even when taking into account that this is an exaggerated statement that should not be taken too seriously, there is still a claim left that the Labor Party supports Muslim immigration out of self-preservation (it needs the Muslims as their future voters). This claim about voting cattle is followed immediately by the question of who pays the immigration bill, and the answer that it is the common hard-working Dutchman who pays. This line of reasoning implies that this common Dutchman is made to pay lots of money for the Muslim immigration just to keep the Labor Party in Parliament. Since Wilders takes this line of reasoning to which the opponent cannot be held committed as a starting position in the further discussion, it can be said that the utterance is a violation of the standpoint rule.
A standpoint implicitly ascribed to the Labor Party is that they find it no problem that the non-Muslims are paying for the Muslims. This can be deduced from the claims that the Labor Party needs Muslims as their voters (which implies that the party stands up for the Muslims) and that the non-Muslims are paying for the Muslims. It suggests that the party cannot have the interests of both sections of the population at heart. The problem with the implicitly ascribed standpoint is that the antithesis on which it is based (hardworking Dutch people versus Muslims who profit from these people) should be viewed as unwarranted. The antithesis does not represent a fact but just an opinion, which means that there seems to be only very weak (if any) support for the claim that the Labor Party does not represent the non-Muslims (and thus finds it no problem that they pay for the Muslim immigration bill). It is, however, difficult to prove that Wilders really imputes this fictitious standpoint (that the Labor Party finds it no problem that the non-Muslims are paying for the Muslims) to the Labor Party (and thus violates the standpoint rule), since he is not explicitly saying that it is because the common Dutch people have to pay the costs of Muslim immigration that the party does not represent both Muslims and non-Muslims.

In his pursuit of disagreement, Wilders uses several offensive remarks to portray his opponent as an incompetent representative. Although an insult is not necessarily an unreasonable personal attack, in this case at least one of the insults should be viewed as a violation of the freedom rule. The remark that the Labor Party wants to get half the Islamic world to the Netherlands because it needs them as voting cattle is an indirect personal attack (or *circumstantial argumentum ad hominem*) meant to eliminate the party as a serious discussion partner. By questioning the Labor Party’s motives for supporting Muslim immigration (their support is based on self-interest), Wilders claims in effect that the party will never change its mind about this issue regardless of the quality of the arguments that he may put forward.

### 5.4 Making it difficult for the political opponent to agree: the Moroccan scum cases

A second tactic a politician can use to polarize the parties’ standpoints concerning a specific issue is to make it difficult for the political opponent to agree. In this section two cases will be analyzed in which Wilders uses this tactic to initiate a discussion on how to deal with violent young Moroccans. These cases are discussed
together because in both more or less the same presentational choices are used (of which “scum” is the most salient choice). For both cases, I will explain the strategic function that these presentational choices can have in a polarizing maneuver.

**Moroccan scum case I**
In the first case study, which stems from the General Debate of 2008, Wilders interrupts the speech of the leader of the Socialist Party, Kant. In her speech Kant made a proposal for improving the public sector (education, safety and public health) that focused on city districts. She explained that her party is in favor of small-scale schools, local policemen and district health care centers. Wilders interrupts her explanation by saying that the people in these districts are above all bothered by crime caused by young Moroccans. He then asks her whether the present proposal for improving the public sector means that the Party for Freedom and the Socialist Party now agree on how to deal with this crime problem.

[5.3] Wilders: “Are you, in contrast to previous years, now in favor of more severe punishments for the scum that makes those neighborhoods unsafe? Is there a new wind blowing or do we continue on the old, wrong track?” 156
(Proceedings Second Chamber 2008/2009, 2, 2-79)

**Why is the excerpt an example of polarizing?**
The excerpt is an example of polarization in accordance with the tactic of making it difficult for the opponent to agree. Wilders presents his standpoint that violent young Moroccans deserve severe punishments (+/r) in such a way that he forces his opponent, Kant, to explicitly say that she disagrees with him on this issue (-/r). The proposal of the Socialist Party to focus on the districts in solving the problems ordinary people are faced with might give the impression that this party is also going to solve the problems these people experience with the increasing amount of Muslim immigrants. At the time of the debate, the problem of Moroccan youngsters causing trouble was a hot issue due to some incidents in Gouda. On the emergency debate addressed to this issue, a newspaper wrote “Parliament in overdrive about Moroccan...”

156 The word “scum” (in Dutch: “tuig”) used by Wilders refers to young Moroccans. A bit earlier in the debate he talked about crime committed by “little Moroccan boys of two crates high”. A day later (in the same General Debate) he said: “Community Centers? Cameras? The whole Government and the Prime Minister evade the cause of this misery. The cause of this misery is that Moroccan scum that has to be put out of the country.”
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youngsters”, indicating that the parties rivaled one another in taking drastic action to deal with these youngsters (NRC Handelsblad, 26 September 2008).

To find out whether or not the Party for Freedom and the Socialists hold the same standpoint, Wilders asks Kant whether her party now agrees with his party on the issue of violent young Moroccans. This question, however, is formulated in such a way that it is almost impossible for Kant to agree with Wilders. If she agreed, she would, for example, admit that her party has changed its mind, which is in most cases not a good thing for a politician to admit. Kant therefore responds by saying that she disagrees, which makes it appear that Wilders succeeded in polarizing the debate on violent young Moroccans. She says: “I have to disappoint you, but maybe I will reassure a lot of other people: the Socialist Party did not change its course.” She goes on to imply, though, that Wilders’s polarizing attempt was not completely successful by emphasizing that, although the party did not change its course, there is no daylight between what Wilders suggests and what the party believes: “scum that causes trouble has to be picked up”.

Moroccan Scum case II

The second Moroccan Scum case stems from the debate on Islamic Activism held on 6 September 2007. Although the debate was planned to discuss a report of the Scientific board for Government Policy (WRR), it was also used to make Wilders defend his proposal, made in a newspaper interview a few days before the debate, to ban the Koran. In the excerpt, Wilders responds to a member of the Labor Party, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who attacks Wilders by asking him “what would be the use of such a tough measure”. Wilders answers by saying that “it [banning the Koran] helps a thousand times more than all small subsidy measures of the Labor Party” and then continues by saying:

[5.4] Wilders: “I say to you, Mr. Dijsselbloem, it is not a coincidence that all those Moroccan youngsters, scum – that is just what it is; you agree, don’t you –, who keep ruining the country, beat up homosexuals. Although they are not doing this with a Koran in their hands, they are part of a culture in which it is tolerated and in which it is taught.”

(Proceedings Second Chamber 2006/2007, 93, 5260-5319)
Why is the excerpt an example of polarizing?
The second Moroccan scum case is, just like the first case, an example of polarizing in accordance with the tactic of making it difficult for the opponent to agree. This time, Wilders puts forward his standpoint on violent young Moroccans in relation to another Islam-related issue on which the parties are likely to disagree (the banning of the Koran). In this way he tries to elicit also a reaction of disagreement on the issue of violent young Moroccans. Wilders does this by suggesting that Dijsselbloem agrees with his standpoint +/r that the young Moroccans are scum and that the Koran is partly to blame for this (since it teaches the young Moroccans to beat up homosexuals). It might seem that with this response Wilders tries to elicit a reaction of agreement (and not disagreement, as I claimed earlier) on the issue of banning the Koran: if Dijsselbloem does what Wilders suggests, i.e. agreeing that the young Moroccans are scum that ruins the country, the Labor Party also has to accept that there is reason to ban the Koran.

However, Wilders has formulated this starting point for accepting the standpoint of banning the Koran in such a way that it cannot be his intention that Dijsselbloem agrees. Being a member of the Labor Party he will not be inclined to agree that young Moroccans are “scum who keep ruining the country”, certainly not if agreeing would create the impression that his party would also be inclined to accept banning the Koran as a possible solution (which is something the Labor Party will strongly object to). In this case, Dijsselbloem responded indeed by saying that he disagreed. He said that banning the Koran is not going to solve the problem of the violent young Moroccans (-/r). Wilders then used this reaction of disagreement to emphasize that his Party for Freedom and the Labor Party also disagree on how to handle violent young Moroccans. He said that the Labor Party “prefers to sit on its chair doing nothing” while his party tries to solve the problem.

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157 Wilders’s claim that the Koran causes Moroccan youngsters to beat up homosexuals is an argument to support the standpoint that the Koran should be banned. In this discussion it can also be analyzed as a sub-standpoint because Dijsselbloem disagrees with Wilders on the justificatory force of the argument. Dijsselbloem is of the opinion that the problem of violent young Moroccans is not going to be solved by banning the Koran.
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Moroccan scum cases I and II:
How does Wilders maneuver strategically with presentational devices to polarize the standpoints?

Both attempts to polarize the parties’ standpoints can be reconstructed as putting forward a positive standpoint (+/r) on the issue of violent young Moroccans. In both excerpts, the presentational devices used by Wilders to formulate +/r can be analyzed as means to realize the aims of a polarizing maneuver described in section 3.4 while at the same time giving the impression (rightly or wrongly) of adhering to the rules for critical discussion. This means that the standpoint +/r can be analyzed as an attempt (1) to show that there is prima facie reason to believe that the parties agree on +/r (which would mean that there seems to be a situation of agreement), and (2) to make, in an institutionally acceptable manner, the opponent take the opposite standpoint -/r (which would mean that the politician and the political opponent have a mixed difference of opinion). I will now explain how Wilders attempts to accomplish these two aims in the formulation of his standpoint +/r for each of the two Moroccan scum cases.

(1) Wilders’s polarizing responses to Kant and Dijsselbloem seem to spring from a fear that the parties may seem to agree on the issue of how to deal with violent young Moroccans. This fear stems from the fact that this issue is often used by other political parties to minimize the differences between their own party and the Party for Freedom. The following contributions (stemming from the same debates as the two Moroccan scum examples) show how other parties use the issue of violent young Moroccans for this purpose. In response to Wilders’s standpoint that violent young Moroccans should be punished hard, Prime Minister Balkenende said “We should condemn what is wrong and reject what is not allowed” and “Moroccan youngsters who behave as scum is something that is being loathed by the whole Parliament”. The Minister of Housing and Integration, Mrs. Vogelaar said: “We should be tough on Antillean and Moroccan loitering teens that exceed the limit”. However, in both Moroccan scum cases Wilders’s opponents did not explicitly say that they agree with him on the issue concerned: the Socialists’ proposals to improve the safety in specific city districts did not include any specific measures concerning crime committed by youngsters; the discussion with Dijsselbloem was about a different Islam-related issue, namely the banning of the Koran. The question is therefore how Wilders managed to show that there is reason to believe that the parties agree on the issue concerned.
In the discussion with Kant, Wilders formulates his standpoint that he is in favor of more severe punishments for “that scum” by means of a question to Kant (“Are you now [...] in favor of...”). In the formulation of his question he indicates that he has reason to believe that the Socialist Party indeed agrees. He claims that in “previous years” the party had a different opinion, but that “now” and “in contrast to” these previous years their opinion seems to have changed. The addition of this adverb and this adjunct (or parenthetical) indicates that Wilders’s question can be interpreted as a request to confirm or deny whether his impression that the parties are in agreement is correct.

In the second case – the discussion with Dijselbloem – Wilders uses, again, a parenthetical to indicate that there is reason to believe that the parties agree. The parenthetical is used to bring forward the question of whether the parties agree (“that is just what it is: you agree, don’t you”). However, in this case the question is a statement rather than a request for information. Because the question is preceded by a factual claim (that is just what it is), the question has to be interpreted as a rhetorical question: Wilders presents his question as if the only possible answer is “yes”. In the discussion with Dijselbloem, Wilders thus explicitly claims that the parties agree on the standpoint that violent young Moroccans are “scum who keep ruining the country”. Holding this standpoint presumes that the parties might also agree that firm measures, such as banning the Koran, are appropriate.

Wilders formulates his standpoint that we should be tough on violent young Moroccans (+r) in such a way that the opponent is forced to explicitly say that he does not agree (-/r). In both examples, Wilders exploits the question-answer format of a parliamentary debate. He formulates his question in such a way that the opponent has only two options for responding (agreeing or disagreeing), while agreeing is ‘unacceptable’ because it damages the opponent’s image as a representative of the people. I shall explain more precisely how the formulation of Wilders’s standpoint is instrumental in forcing the opponent to disagree.

In both excerpts, the word “scum” is used to describe a specific part of the Muslim electorate. In the discussion with Kant, Wilders uses just the word “scum”; in the discussion with Dijselbloem he first refers to the subject of his standpoint as “Moroccan youngsters” and then describes them by means of a complement as “scum who keep ruining the country”. Wilders could have used the more neutral description “violent young Moroccans”. However, with the word “scum” he is able to also express his feelings of dislike and disgust for these youngsters, which will
appeal to voters who are troubled by these youngsters. The complement put forward in the discussion with Dijselbloem emphasizes these negative feelings: that these Moroccan boys are “ruining the country” (my italics, YT) is a rather overstated phrase to describe the problems they cause.

In order not to offend their own electorate, both Dijselbloem and Kant will be very reluctant to use the word “scum” in this context. Using this word would mean that they condemned not just the Moroccan boys’ behavior as bad, but also the boys themselves. Probably even more problematic for his opponents is that Wilders uses the word solely to refer to Moroccan youngsters. This makes it seem that other violent youngsters are a different case, which should be dealt with differently.\textsuperscript{158}

From their responses it appears that the opponents avoid using this word: by using descriptions such as “troublemakers” or “youngsters that beat up homosexuals” they refrain from making a distinction between Moroccan and other violent youngsters.

Since the word scum is a politically loaded\textsuperscript{159} and, therefore, unparliamentary word, which could be taken as offensive, there is a possibility that the use of this word might be a reason for the opponent or the Chair to intervene. However, it can still be said that Wilders attempts to present his standpoint as institutionally acceptable. He knows that in Parliament there is little chance of being reprimanded for using the word “scum”. In fact, he generally seems to use a strategy of trial and error to discover what is taken as offensive in Parliament and what is not. If the Chair allows him to use a particular word a first time, he can decide to use that word more often. “Scum” appears to be such a word: in the Islamic Activism Debate held in 2007 (the discussion with Dijselbloem) he used the word only once, while in the General Debate of 2008 (the discussion with Kant) he expressed his dislike of violent young Moroccans by using the word “scum” at least 16 times. When using the word that one time in the Islamic Activism debate, he introduced it rather carefully. The phrase “you agree, don’t you” makes it seem that not only Dijselbloem, but actually all MPs, have to agree with Wilders that those Moroccan youngsters are in fact scum.

\textsuperscript{158} Ilie (2004) explains the use of this kind of abusive language as an attempt “to undermine the other party’s conceptual categories [in this case, the categories of violent and non-violent youngsters], while strengthening the stability of one’s own party’s conceptual categories [in this case, the categories of Muslims and non-Muslims]” (2004: 50).

\textsuperscript{159} With “politically loaded” I mean that the word “scum” is charged with a negative meaning because it is not in line with the Dutch Parliamentary tradition of being focussed on verifiable data (see section 1.1).
In the discussion with Kant, there is a second reason why agreement is harmful to the Socialist Party. The option to agree with Wilders is formulated in such a way that it suggests a change of mind of the Socialist Party. Several presentational choices are instrumental in drawing the listener’s attention to this change of mind. In his first question to Kant, Wilders interrupts the running sentence with an adjunct that explicitly states that the party was earlier not in favor of more severe punishments (“in contrast to previous years”). Since the adjunct is not necessary to ask Kant for her opinion on the issue of violent young Moroccans (“Are you in favor of more severe punishments” would have been enough), it seems to have been added just for emphasizing the change of mind. In the second question, Wilders produces the same effect by means of a (double) clichéd metaphor: he refers to the standpoint of being in favor of stronger punishments as “a new wind” and to the Socialist Party’s previous standpoint as “the old (wrong) track”. The metaphor of “a new wind” (my italics, YT) already implies that the Socialist Party has changed its mind. By placing it in contrast to “the old track” (my italics, YT) Wilders creates an antithesis that emphasizes the change even more. Furthermore, the metaphor of “a new wind” (my italics, YT) implies that the Socialist Party might be trimming its sail every time a new wind blows by, and that it is, therefore, not a consistent and trustworthy party.

These negative qualifications, however, do not constitute really serious accusations in a political context, which means that the utterances will most probably be judged as institutionally acceptable. Moreover, the insults are not explicitly expressed but only inferable from the questions as they are formulated. Ilie describes the formulation of insults as questions as a mitigating strategy often used in Parliament (2004: 58): by avoiding to say that the Socialist Party is inconsistent and thus untrustworthy, Wilders indirectly declines responsibility for making an insulting statement. As a consequence, there is no real reason for the opponent or the Chair to explicitly judge Wilders’s contribution as an insulting and therefore institutionally unacceptable contribution. Yet, the formulations help Wilders to damage the image of the Members of the Socialist Party as competent representatives of the people.

In both excerpts, Wilders tries to force his opponent into opposition by formulating his insinuating question in such a way that the option to evade it is made almost impossible. In the discussion with Kant, Wilders explicitly asks her to make a choice. The antithesis makes it seem as if this choice consists of only two options – “the new wind” or “the old wrong track” – and Kant has to make clear which of these two options it is going to be. In the discussion with Dijselbloem, Wilders uses a different presentational device to force Dijselbloem to express his disagreement.
As explained earlier, the parenthetical introduction of the question “that is what it is: you agree, don’t you” has to be interpreted as a rhetorical question because it is presented as if the only possible answer is “yes” (Moroccan youngsters are scum that keeps on ruining the country). Since Wilders simply assumes agreement about this standpoint, the only way to clear up this misunderstanding is to explicitly say that the Labor Party has a different view.\textsuperscript{160} The Labor Party will be inclined to do this because, due to Wilders contribution, their electorate could have gotten the impression that the party might also agree with Wilders that the Koran is partly to blame for the violent behavior of young Moroccans. Dijselbloem indeed responded by saying that he disagreed with Wilders. As I mentioned earlier, he said that banning the Koran is not going to solve the problem of violent young Moroccans.

\textit{Moroccan scum cases I and II: Does the strategic maneuvering derail?}

The analysis has made clear how Wilders maneuvers strategically to polarize the debate in Parliament by making it difficult for the political opponent to agree with him. In this section, I will show that in these cases the strategic maneuvering aimed at damaging the opponent does not involve a fallacious personal attack (a violation of the freedom rule) but a violation of the starting point rule or standpoint rule.

The analysis of both excerpts has shown that Wilders insulting language cannot be considered a way to eliminate the political opponent as a serious discussion partner. It is true that in the discussion with Kant, the Socialist Party is portrayed as inconsistent and untrustworthy, but these accusations are only implied and presented as a possible answer, not as a fact. This does not mean, though, that no discussion rules have been violated. In both excerpts Wilders seems to have committed a violation of the standpoint rule because he imputes a fictitious standpoint to his opponent. In the first case study, he says that in previous years the Socialist Party was not in favor of stronger punishments for violent young Moroccans, a standpoint he later refers to as “the old wrong track”. The question is whether the Socialist Party

\textsuperscript{160} Ilie (2003), who examined parentheticals as rhetorical strategies in parliamentary debate, makes a distinction between rational, ethical and emotional appeals in parentheticals. According to this classification, Wilders’s use of the parenthetical “that is what it is: you agree, don’t you” is an emotional appeal in the form of an attribution frame. That is the case because the parenthetical is used “to shorten the distance between speaker and MP by foregrounding shared values” (2003: 259). Here, the shared value is that Moroccan youngsters are scum. However, as I explained, Wilders has formulated this value in such a way that the opponent will probably object to the assumption that it is a shared value.
genuinely held this standpoint in previous years and whether it can be used as a starting point in the current discussion. According to Kant, it cannot. She says that there is no daylight between what the Socialists think and what Wilders suggests. If she is right, it would mean that Wilder’s question is in fact a loaded question, violating the standpoint rule (or starting point rule), because it wrongly presupposes that there is something like an old wrong track. However, in order to determine whether Wilder’s contribution is really fallacious, more information is needed than can be derived from the debate from which the excerpt is taken. For an accurate evaluation it has to be clear what the Socialist Party has claimed with regard to the issue of violent young Moroccans in other debates and what Wilders precisely means by stronger punishments.

In the second excerpt, Wilder’s use of the rhetorical question (“you agree, don’t you”) suggests that Dijsselbloem agrees with him that the violent young Moroccans are scum that is ruining the country. Dijsselbloem, however, can be expected not to agree with such a loaded and hyperbolic description that might be considered offensive by a large part of his electorate. Therefore, it can be said that Wilders wrongly assumes that the parties agree. This does not mean that Wilders also violates a discussion rule, in this case the starting point or standpoint rule. Wrongly assuming that the parties agree would only be a violation if Wilders used the presumed agreement as a common starting point in the further discussion or as the position on which the opponent can be attacked. However, neither of these two situations is in fact the case. The use of “you agree, don’t you” in combination with “that is what it is” only expresses that, according to Wilders, Dijsselbloem should agree with him. However, it is still a question. This means that the formulation leaves Dijsselbloem the opportunity to say that he has a different opinion.

161 In pragma-dialectics a question entailing a presupposition is considered fallacious if it violates a discussion rule. In case the question imputes a fictitious standpoint to the opponent on which he can be easily attacked it violates the standpoint rule. In case the speaker uses the presupposition as a premise for his argumentation (fallacy of many questions) the starting point rule is violated (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 102-103, 126, 152).

162 A second reason why Wilders’s question seems to be fallacious is that it creates a false dilemma. Wilders presents his question as if “the new wind” and the “old wrong track” are the only standpoints possible in the issue of violent young Moroccans, while it is in fact possible to come up with a whole range of other standpoints concerning possible solutions. However, in itself putting forward a false dilemma is not fallacious. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst indicate that as long as the false dilemma is not forced upon the opponent by using it as a means to put forward an argumentum ad ignorantiam, no rule for critical discussion is violated (1992: 190-191).
5.5 Making it difficult for the political opponent to agree: the head rag tax case

The last case study stems from the General Debate of 2009. In this debate Wilders’s speech in the first round of turns to speak, was almost completely devoted to the topic of stopping the Islamisation of the Netherlands. Even in cases where he attacked the Government on another policy than immigration, the criticism was always that the Government rather spends money on immigration than on, for example, safety, education or public health. The excerpt chosen stems from a part of the speech in which Wilders proposes to stop Islamisation by introducing a permit for wearing headscarves (a “head rag tax”, in Dutch: “kopvoddentaks”). Before making the proposal, he provides a reason why it would be necessary to introduce such a tax. This reason is that Islam is ‘polluting’ our streets – or as he started this part of the speech: “A better environment starts with yourself”.

Wilders [5.5]: “A lot of Dutch people are annoyed by the pollution of the public space by the Islam. In other words: our streets start to look in some places more and more like a scene in Mecca and Teheran: headscarves, ‘burr beards’, burkas and men in strange long white dresses.”

(Proceedings Second Chamber 2009/2010, 2, 2-100)

Why is the excerpt an example of polarizing?
The excerpt is an example of polarization in accordance with the tactic of making it difficult for the opponent to agree. Wilders forces his opponents (in this case almost the entire Parliament) to explicitly say that they disagree as he supports his standpoint about the head rag tax introduced later in the speech with the argument that Islam pollutes our streets. The proposal and the argument are formulated in such a provocative way that even the parties willing to deal with Islamisation seem to have no other option than to disagree with Wilders (which means that the argument can be considered a sub-standpoint since it is obviously a potential point of disagreement).

Apart from the Liberal Party and the Party for the Animals, all parties interrupted Wilders’s speech in order to respond to his proposal of introducing a head rag tax.

163 The phrase is a well-known Dutch campaign slogan, introduced in the early nineties to create support for extensive environment measures.
These responses were all reactions of disagreement (-/r), except for that of the Labor Party which tried to change the subject to the economic crisis. Some politicians reacted by saying that the proposal was unrealistic (“How can you decide whether a headscarf is Islamic?”), some emphasized that it was not effective for stopping Islamisation (“What if they are all going to pay the 1000 Euros?”), and a last group disapproved of the proposal because it was offensive (“Your proposal is a succession of insults towards a specific community”).

**How does Wilders maneuver strategically with presentational devices to polarize the parties’ standpoints?**

The presentational devices used by Wilders to formulate +/r (and the supporting argument) can be analyzed as means to realize the aims of a polarizing maneuver described in section 3.4 while at the same time giving the impression (rightly or wrongly) of adhering to the rules for critical discussion. This means that the standpoint +/r can be analyzed as an attempt (1) to show that there is prima facie reason to believe that the parties agree on +/r (which would mean that there seems to be a situation of agreement), and (2) to make, in an institutionally acceptable manner, the opponent take the opposite standpoint -/r (which would mean that the politician and the political opponent have a mixed difference of opinion). I will now explain how Wilders attempts to accomplish these two aims by the formulation of his standpoint +/r.

(1) Wilders’s contribution to the debate seems to spring from the possibility that his electorate is not certain anymore that only Wilders’s party has a solution of how to deal with Islam-related problems. His contribution seems to be meant to emphasize that indeed it is still only his party that is prepared to take firm measures concerning these problems. However, Wilders’s contribution is not a direct response to an MP who proposed to handle Muslim immigration. His contribution is part of a speech, carefully prepared in the weeks prior to the General Debate, in which no direct reference is made to a specific measure of the Labor Party concerning Muslim immigration. The question, therefore, is how in his speech Wilders creates the impression that there is reason to believe that the Labor Party might agree on how to deal with Muslim immigration.

In the excerpt taken from his speech, there are no explicit indications that the parties might agree on the issue of stopping Islamisation: this time Wilders does not, as he did in previous cases, introduce his standpoint with a formulation such as “I
thought we agreed” or “I wished we agreed”. The only way in which it is indicated that there might be reason to assume that the parties agree (or have come closer to each other) on the issue of Muslim immigration is his obviously abusive standpoint (that people should pay taxes for wearing an Islamic headscarf) formulated by obviously abusive words (“pollution” combined with “head rag tax”). According to Ilie, insults are basically intended to focus attention on (or distract attention from) a particular topic by an extremely powerful verbalization of the standpoint concerning this topic. Such a powerful verbalization could indicate the politician’s aim to “restore the political balance in his own favor” with regard to the issue he wants to focus attention on (2004: 79). The issue Wilders wants to focus attention on is Muslim immigration. By formulating his challenging views regarding this issue by an extremely powerful verbalization he shows that, according to him, the political balance needs to be restored: in this case from a balance in which the parties agree – or almost agree –, to a balance involving opposite standpoints.

Due to the powerful and insulting verbalization of his standpoint, the audience may also recognize Wilders’s proposal as outstripping once more his own previously proposed measures to stop Islamisation. Each time Wilders proposes a new measure this measure seems to be more drastic (and according to his opponents, more far-fetched and unrealistic – or as one of them wrote “right-wing absurdist”).

Making such extreme proposals creates the impression that the attention drawing effect of the previous proposal has worn off. The attention drawing effect may disappear when the public no longer considers the proposal a remarkable point of view, either because the party has mentioned the proposal too often, or because, in the meantime, other parties proposed similar measures. It is for the latter reason that an extreme proposal such as introducing a “head rag tax” gives away that there is reason to assume that the Party for Freedom and the Labor Party have come closer to each other on the issue of Muslim immigration. The new proposal in its extreme formulation of introducing a tax for wearing Islamic headscarves seems necessary.

164 The following quotes from different newspapers illustrate that the proposals of the Party for Freedom appear to be firmer or more remarkable every time: “Wilders’s tone is getting more radical each time, he now even argues for a banning of the Koran” (NRC Handelsblad, 9 August 2007); “That Geert Wilders strikes out hard is no news, but that it can always be harder transpired during this General Debate” (Algemeen Dagblad, 19 September 2008); “Wilders shocked Lower House with proposal for head rag tax”, “The tax is a new stone in Wilders’s construction of anti-Islamic rhetoric” (NRC Handelsblad, 17 September 2009).

165 An example of a standpoint of Wilders other parties have more or less adopted is his proposal for dealing with violent young Moroccans (see section 5.4).
to, once more, attract the public’s attention to the Party for Freedom’s *distinctive* measures for stopping Islamisation.

(2) Wilders formulates his standpoint (and the supporting argument) that we should introduce a tax on Islamic headscarves (+/r) in such an abusive way that the opponent is forced to explicitly say that he does not agree (-/r). I shall explain more precisely how the formulation of Wilders’s standpoint is instrumental in forcing the opponent to disagree.

Most striking in the formulation of the proposal are the words “head rag tax” and “pollution”. Both ways of expressing make the already abusive proposal even more provocative. Wilders could have chosen to describe the proposal in more neutral terms. He could have said something like “because our street views are looking less and less Western, I propose to introduce a tax for Islamic headscarves”. The choice for “head rag tax” over “a tax for Islamic headscarves” can be explained in a similar way as the choice for the word “scum” in the previous case study. “Head rag” is, just like “scum”, a word that expresses feelings of dislike and disgust for Muslims (since a rag is an old cloth, at the most used for cleaning).\(^{166}\) The choice to describe the Islamisation of the public space as “pollution” is even more remarkable. “Pollution” is not such an obvious term for the Islamisation of the public space as “scum” is for violent young Moroccans. The word expresses not just feelings of dislike towards Muslims, it also implies that their Islamic appearance has to disappear: filth is something that has to be cleaned away.\(^{167}\)

What his opponents will also consider problematic is that Wilders uses the word “pollution” to refer to the outward appearances of by exclusion the Islam (which makes his proposal also discriminating). Other religions are, as Wilders explains, “a different case” which should be dealt with differently. The reason for introducing the tax (the ‘de-westernizing’ of our street views) is also formulated by means of negative words. The traditional wear of Islamic men is described as feminine (“long white dresses”) and un-Western (“strange”), their hair style by “burr beards”, a made

\(^{166}\) In Dutch it is not just *rag* (Dutch: *vod*) that has a negative connotation when used to refer to a headscarf, but also the word used for head, which is *kop*. In Dutch there are two words for head: *kop* and *hoofd*. As the Dutch say, “animals have a *kop*, humans have a *hoofd*” (cf. the use of *paw* and *leg* in English).

\(^{167}\) This interpretation is even more strongly emphasized when, a bit later in the speech, Wilders relates the head rag tax to a dog owner who needs to pay a dog-licence fee. As he claims “then too the polluter pays”.

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up word (also in Dutch: “haardbaarden”) that suggests an uncouth appearance (and in Dutch even hatred: “haatbaarden”). Even if the political opponents were in favor of stopping Islamisation, they would not consider a discriminating tax to be an appropriate measure or ‘pollution’ to be an appropriate reason to propose measures.\textsuperscript{168}

A last thing to be noted in the formulation of the excerpt is the frightening scenario sketched in its second part (“our streets look in some places more and more like a scene in Mecca and Teheran”). In this part it is emphasized that, although outward appearances of Islam may seem harmless, they are the beginning of a complete loss of our Western identity. The choice to refer to specific places (not by coincidence two of the best known (religious) capitals in fundamentalist Islamic countries) can be explained as providing \textit{illustrations} of fundamentalist Islamic countries or places in general. In this case the effect of the (twofold) illustration is that the danger of Islam becomes more realistic. As Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain, the use of an illustration wins the listener’s attention because “it strikes the imagination forcibly”; the enumeration of using not one but two illustrations increases presence (1969: 236, 357). The effect of striking the listener’s imagination is especially important in combination with the polarizing aim of the contribution: in case a political opponent disagrees with the proposal of a head rag tax (or the claim that Islamic headscarves pollute our street view), Wilders is able to give the electorate the impression that holding this opinion means that the opponent is not aware of the creeping danger of Islam. The opponent then does not see that taking over our streets is the beginning of a complete loss of our Western identity as we shall become equal to Teheran and Mecca.

Although the utterance is clearly offensive, and even discriminating against Muslims, it can be said that Wilders attempts to present his standpoint as institutionally acceptable. He starts his offensive claim that Islam pollutes the public space by saying that it is the opinion of “a lot of Dutch people”. With this introduction he emphasizes that the standpoint is not just his own opinion but the opinion of his electorate. As explained in section 3.4.1, presenting the offensive opinion as acceptable by putting forward the people as co-protagonist of the standpoint is a

\textsuperscript{168} On 9 August 2007, \textit{NRC Handelsblad} wrote: “With a bit more political willingness to compromise, it would not be unthinkable that Wilders would gain more support in Parliament. Especially the Liberal Party often rejects a proposal of Wilders by adding that he rightly points at the excrescences of immigration and Islam, but that his way of doing politics makes cooperation impossible.”
way to legitimize this opinion: making Wilders take back this opinion could be interpreted as silencing a particular part of the electorate. And if Wilders were to be accused of using offensive language, he would at least have given the impression that he listens to the people and dares to speak out for them.

Other presentational choices can also be explained as attempts to present the insulting standpoint as institutionally acceptable. One choice that is made is the use of the remarkable word “burr beards”. Because of its unknown meaning, choosing this word could be seen as mitigating the insult. In Parliament, the word is to be defined as a *neologism* that, in combination with the other negatively loaded words (“pollution”, “strange long white dresses”) and the resemblance (in Dutch) of the word with “hate beards”, adds to the negative description of Muslim men. On the internet, the word is described as a euphemism for hate beards (or as someone said: “a domesticated version of hate beards”), a word used by extremists from the right to refer to Muslim fanatics. Thus “burr beards” refers to Muslim men in a negative way, but it is not as loaded as “hate beards”.

Another choice that could be seen as mitigating the insult is “head rag tax”. Because both the proposal and the way it is described are rather ridiculous, the listener might be inclined to take the proposal not too seriously. He might think it is just an attention drawing proposal to emphasize the difference between the Party for Freedom and the other political parties. As explained in section 4.3, the advantage of using a witty formulation is that “humor often legitimizes and exonerates an insult” (Lockyer and Pickering 2005: 12).

**Does the strategic maneuvering derail?**

Wilders’s strategic maneuvering to polarize the debate on the issue of stopping Islamisation can be considered both offensive and discriminating, yet it does not violate any of the discussion rules. From all examples discussed in this chapter this

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169 Kuitenbrouwer too explains the use of “burr beards” instead of “hate beards” as a way to present the standpoint as institutionally acceptable. He says that using this particular word can be viewed as an attempt to avoid a possible reprimand by the Chair (2010: 96).

170 Pechtold (Liberal Democrats) accused Wilders of pretending to act in a cabaret festival in which he has to make the people laugh. However, neither Pechtold, nor any other MP, really took the proposal as something laughable. Even some of his voters called it a strategic blunder because it damaged his image as a serious discussion partner. After the General Debate, the election polls even showed a loss of two seats for Wilders’s party. As one of his voters wrote on the internet, the head rag tax was to blame for this: “It is a too far-fetched proposal to be taken seriously, because practical objections, legal problems and social aversion make the proposal unfeasible.”
excerpt is the most provocative because of its insulting language towards Muslims. However, making an insult is in itself not a fallacy. Wilders’s contribution does not offend the opponent, but a specific part of the electorate. The insults are thus not meant to eliminate the political opponent as a serious discussion party and therefore do not violate the freedom rule (it is not an ad hominem argument). The freedom rule even stipulates that no restrictions apply to the content of the standpoint. This means that, according to this rule, Wilders has the right to put forward the standpoint as it is. The question, however, remains whether Wilders is also allowed to put forward this standpoint in the context of Parliament, where some restrictions apply to the content of the standpoint. The answer to this question depends completely on the Chair’s interpretation of the parliamentary convention that politicians are not allowed to use offending language. In this case, Chairwoman Verbeet decided that Wilders could continue the discussion.

5.6 Observations concerning the use of presentational devices in polarization

Every politician who tries to polarize the parties’ standpoints in a parliamentary debate can use the tactics discussed and illustrated in this chapter. However, the particularities of a politician’s language use influence in practice the way in which a specific tactic is employed and may make a tactic more suitable for use by a specific type of politician than by others. In this section, I will present, by comparing my analyses with the observations made by other analysts of Wilders’s language use, some observations with respect to Wilders’s choice of presentational devices and explain to what extent these choices can be considered typical for polarizing maneuvers by politicians in general.

The first polarizing tactic, illustrated in sections 5.2 and 5.3, was to ascribe the opposite standpoint to the political opponent. As explained in the analyses,

171 There is one way though in which the contribution could be explained as a personal attack violating the freedom rule. The proposal for a head rag tax could be seen as an insult to the Parliament (or even the Parliamentary system), because by asking Parliament to take into consideration a non-serious proposal, Wilders is not taking his opponents seriously. He claimed, however, that introducing a head rag tax should be taken seriously: “It is a very serious and well thought-out proposal.”

172 See section 2.2 for a detailed description of this parliamentary rule.
when using this tactic the challenge is to make clear, just by formulating one’s own standpoint, that there is reason to believe that the parties may agree but that the opponent actually holds the opposite standpoint. Wilders’s language use does not seem to be more suitable for this tactic than the language use of other politicians. Characteristic of this tactic is that the politician presents his standpoint in relation to the opposite standpoint which is then he assumes held by the opponent. A specific presentational device that is of help in articulating the two opposite standpoints is the figure of antithesis. As explained in case study 5.2 (the crumbs of my bread case) and case study 5.3 (the Henk and Ingrid case), this figure can be used to create a dilemma that makes it appear as if there are only two options to choose from: agree or disagree. Using the figure of antithesis does not seem to be a feature typical of Wilders’s way of arguing, though. Janssen and Mulder have shown that there are other politicians who use this figure just as often as Wilders (2009: 345).

In both cases (5.2 and 5.3), Wilders combines the antithesis with figurative language (the metaphor of “crumbs of my bread” and the metonymy of “Henk and Ingrid”). This might give the impression that Wilders frequently uses such creative constructions. However, there is no decisive evidence for such a claim. Kuitenbrouwer argues that “Wilders is fond of metaphors and that his texts are full of it” (2010: 48); Mulder, however, found no indications that Wilders is using more metaphors than other politicians. She claims that it is the other way around: in her corpus, both Pechtold (Liberal Democrats) and Halsema (Green Party) used far more creative metaphors than Wilders (2009: 73). Yet, the creative metaphor of Henk and Ingrid can be viewed as typically Wilders. The metonymical use of language is for Wilders a way to translate his message into something concrete (in this case, the perpetrators and the victims of Islamisation become characters of flesh and blood). As indicated in section 4.6, van Leeuwen considers the use of concrete examples, which help to present his message as clearly as possible, characteristic of Wilders’s language use.

Next to figurative language use and antitheses, I also mentioned the use of exaggerations (“getting half the Islamic world to the Netherlands”) as a device that can be used to ascribe the opposite standpoint to the opponent (case study 5.2). The use of this device seems to be typical for Wilders. According to Kuitenbrouwer

\[173\] Mulder makes a distinction between creative and clichéd metaphors. With regard to clichéd metaphors, she found no significant differences between the politicians Pechtold, Halsema and Wilders (Mulder 2009: 67-72).
“exaggerating is Wilders’s second nature” – he points at Wilders’s frequent use of adjectives, superlatives and hyperboles (2010: 41-44). Van Leeuwen explains that Wilders’s use of adverbials and adjectives, which “can be found on the extremes of a semantic scale”, is (just like his frequent use of examples) a way to present his message as clearly as possible (2009: 8, 10). A second function of the exaggerations is that they help Wilders portray the opposite opinion as disastrous (see also section 4.6 on the ‘frame of disaster’): In case study 5.3, the exaggerated phrase of “half the Islamic world” makes it seem as if, due to the number that is coming to the Netherlands, the problem of Muslim immigration is rather frightening.

The second polarizing tactic, illustrated in section 5.4 and 5.5, is to make it difficult for the political opponent to agree. As described in the analyses, when using this tactic the challenge is to formulate one’s standpoint in such a way that the opponent has no other option than to explicitly say that he disagrees although there is reason to believe that the parties are in agreement on the standpoint. I do not claim that this polarizing tactic is only used by Wilders, but his tendency to use insulting language is particularly helpful for applying this tactic. In section 4.6, I indicated that Janssen mentions personal attacks as a feature of Wilders’s way of arguing (2009: 57-59; Janssen and Mulder 2009: 345). She makes a distinction between two variants of abusive language: a politician attacking a whole group (for example, the Parliament), or just one person (which could be the direct opponent, but also another parliamentarian). She claims not only that Wilders uses more personal attacks than Pechtold and Halsema, but also that he does not restrict his personal attacks to his opponent (which is what other parliamentarians do when they use insulting language). This observation is supported by the two case studies 5.4 and 5.5, because both excerpts are especially abusive towards Muslims.

The fact that Wilders uses more abusive language than other parliamentarians corresponds with the different debating styles often ascribed to Wilders on the one hand and the rest of Parliament on the other hand. As van den Bos and Duursma write, “The Netherlands lack a real debating culture. It is a taboo to discuss far-reaching or controversial proposals, because seriously discussing them would imply a willingness to make concessions.” Wilders, as they claim, introduces controversial proposals to reinforce his electorate’s opinion and win the support of floating voters (NRC Handelsblad, 29 September 2007). Hilhorst explains Wilders’s abusive language use as a way to address the electorate by taking sides: other politicians use their language to make policy, but Wilders “understands that politics is about
making a distinction between friends and enemies" (de Volkskrant, 2 November 2010). According to Ilie (2004: 82-84), Parliaments with a real debating culture, such as the UK, “exhibit a stronger political polarization, whereby the adversarial relations between opposite political camps are constantly and intensively reinforced”. As a consequence, in these Parliaments politicians do not refrain from personal attacks and it is accepted to adopt a playful tone and outsmart one’s opponents.

The difference in debating style could explain why other politicians than Wilders do not seem to polarize the debate by making it difficult for the opponent to agree. They may polarize the discussion by claiming that there is a difference of opinion where there seems to be none (which is the first polarizing tactic), but they are not inclined to force the opponent to explicitly distance himself from a specific opinion (which is the second polarizing tactic). For example, the leader of the Party for the Animals, Thieme, cannot easily be caught using the second polarizing tactic. A possible example can be found in a debate on ‘the memorandum on animal welfare’ held on 4 February 2008. In this debate, Thieme and her colleague Ouwehand used all their speaking time to propose over 40 motions on animal welfare, including, for example, a ban on selling fish bowls.

Formulating their disapproval of animal suffering in this way was rather provocative at the time. Other political parties, even though they were willing to support motions for amending the memorandum, interrupted the enumeration of motions to make clear that they had doubts about the seriousness of some of the proposals and rejected the party’s working procedure. This example can be compared with case study 5.5 (the head rag tax case), because here the standpoint of the Party for the Animals is also rather ridiculous and can, therefore, be seen as challenging other parties to explicitly say that they disagree. However, most of Thieme’s polarizing attempts can be reconstructed as instances of the first polarizing tactic. The following excerpt, stemming from Thieme’s speech in the General Debate of 2008, illustrates how she uses the tactic of ascribing a standpoint to the political opponent to show that parties still disagree.

Thieme: “It is good that the Government appears to allocate money for the improvement of animal welfare, but it is too soon to start cheering because there is a catch. On closer inspection, the amounts mentioned under the heading of animal welfare seem to be a veiled investment and development subsidy for the bio-industry.”

(Proceedings Second Chamber 2008/2009, 2, 2-79)
In the first part of her contribution, Thieme indicates that there is reason to believe that her party considers the measures that are taken by the Government to improve animal welfare sufficient to meet their standards. However, there is a catch. By claiming that the money is not going to be spent well, she makes clear that only her party is really keen on animal welfare, while others (in this case the Labor Party and the Christian Democrats) only pretend to take the issue seriously.