

**Determining Argumentative Dispute Resolution Reveals
Deep Disagreement Over Harassment Issue (A Case-Study
of a Discussion in the Russian Parliament)**

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Abstract:

In 2018, three journalists accused one of the Members of the Russian Parliament of harassment at workplace. Many influential persons of the Russian elite engaged themselves in the public discussion of the conflict. We studied that high-profiled discussion using a hybrid method merging human- and logic-oriented approaches in argumentation studies. The method develops ideas of the new dialectics, the argumentation logic and the logical-cognitive approach to argumentation, on which is based the algorithm for determining of dispute resolution by aggregating formal and informal tools of analysis. We have reconstructed the discussion as two disputes about questions A and B. A: Did the MP violate the code of conduct by making statements or actions against the journalists? B: Are actions like the behavior of the MP harassment? The opinions of the discussion participants were grouped into the four points of view: A1 – the MP did not violate the code of conduct, A2 – the MP violated the code of conduct, B3 – the actions are not harassment, B4 – the actions are harassment. We mapped arguments in support or against each of them using OVA software, evaluated the arguments with the help of the critical questions, a tool proposed in the new dialectics, and determined the ultimate A + B resolution by applying of the algorithm that combines elements of gradual and labelling semantics from the argumentation logic and the classification of disputes from the dialectical approaches. The resolution was a subset of four arguments that ensured the victory of A1+B4. However, the substantial incompatibility of those arguments highlighted a deep disagreement, an unresolvable difference of opinion, between the parties about the permissibility of courtship. The deep disagreement, a bonus result yielded by the application of the hybrid method, excluded the interpretation of the determined resolution

as convincing for the parties, but pointed out a way to smooth the difference of opinions by elaborating of legal, social and moral aspects of the problem of harassment at workplace.

Keywords: argumentation logic, new dialectic, logical-cognitive approach to argumentation, computing of dispute outcomes, evaluation of arguments, critical questions.

1. Introduction

In February 2018, a scandalous conflict over harassment erupted in the State Duma of the Russian Federation – the Lower Chamber of the Russian Parliament. Three journalists, Ekaterina Kotrikadze (RTVI Channel <https://rtvi.com>), Farida Rustamova (BBC Russian <https://www.bbc.com/russian>) and Darya Zhuk (TV Rain <https://tvrain.ru>), hereinafter referred to as the Journalists, complained to the Ethics Commission of the State Duma about the indecent behavior of Leonid Slutsky, one of the deputies, hereinafter referred to as the MP. The MP denied all charges. The Ethics Commission found no “violations of the code of conduct” in the MP’s actions and pointed out signs of bias in the accusations of the Journalists [35]. Later, the MP apologized and said that he did not want to offend the Journalists and “did not cross borders” [24].

The Journalists’ complaints triggered a discussion in the media, which exposed legal, social and moral aspects of the problem of harassment. Russian legislation provides no definition of bullying or harassment at workplace, not necessarily for sexual purposes, as inadmissible forms of behavior that “should be separated from other forms of reprehensible behavior <...> and prohibited by law as harassment” [13, p. 57]. The social boundary of courtship permissibility is blurred, and its establishment is hindered by “elements of archaism, the inseparability of family and sexual relations in labor relations” [25, p. 49]. Women are morally humiliated by “obscene offers <...> in exchange for a job or other benefits, < ... > emphasizing their unequal position with men” [2, p. 8].

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the potential of a hybrid method of argumentation analysis aimed at determining dispute resolution. The method elaborates the concept of new dialectics [27] and implements an algorithm for search and selection of the dispute resolutions, based the logical-cognitive approach to argumentation [14] which employs the idea of defeasible argumentation, as developed in the argumentation logic, see [21] for an overview. The new dialectics and other dialectical conceptions of argumentation exhibit human-oriented approach in their studies of argumentation while the argumentation logic is an influential branch of logic-oriented approaches. The algorithm for determining of the dispute resolutions proposed in the vein of the logical-cognitive approach combines the advances in the human- and logic-oriented approaches for providing of an effective tool for the argumentation analysis. The algorithm includes reconstruction of argumentative discussion as a dispute of definite kind, evaluation of the arguments in it, computing the outcomes and determination of the resolution of the dispute. The human-oriented and logic-oriented approaches both view argument as a piece of reasoning consisting of premises and conclusion, but the latter pursues the normative ways of how the conclusion follows out the premises, while the former proceeds both in the normative and descriptive directions and focuses on how its premises serve as reasons one party offers to the other party in a dialogue in order to get her to agree to its conclusion. Deductive inference and formal entailment are the cornerstones of logic-oriented approaches. S. Toulmin’s model of argument is an influential sample of a human-oriented conception.

In the new dialectics, arguments are evaluated with the help of the critical questions formulated in relation to the scheme of argumentation each of the arguments instantiate, and in the argumentation logic, they are evaluated with respect to their relations to each other such as attack or

support. By merging those evaluations of the arguments, the algorithm allows defining the outcomes of the dispute and selecting the resolutions of the dispute out of them. The outcomes are the stronger arguments in the dispute, they consist of the sets of arguments which are proposed in favor of the one viewpoint that are not rejected by counterarguments supporting the opposite viewpoint. The selection of the resolutions of the dispute out of its outcomes amounts to determining the subsets of the outcomes that either belong to the position of one or another party, or make up an intersection of them, depending on the type of dispute, as proposed in the formal dialectics [4] and adopted in many dialectical approaches including the pragma-dialectics [10]. In this study, the search of the outcomes and resolutions is outlined with the help of argumentation mapping of the dispute visualized with OVA software <http://ova.arg-tech.org/>, one of the remarkable achievements of the collaboration between the human- and logic- oriented approaches, see [28] for its evolution.

The four substantial results obtained with the hybrid method manifest its efficiency and efficacy. They are a fruitful merging of human- and logic- oriented approaches to argumentation; the determining of the dispute resolution; revealing of the deep disagreement and pointing to a way of smoothing it. By the deep disagreement philosophers [29] and argumentation theorists [12] call agents' discord over issues regarded both so fundamental and uncompromisable that, whenever those issues arise in discussions, they lead to unresolvable deadlocks. The two former results are expected outcomes of creating and applying of the algorithm, but the two latter ones are unexpected happy bonuses of that, and they provide a convenient tool for handling high-profile conflicts and assessing public discussions over sensitive issues. The relevance of the bonus results of the algorithm application amounts to its ability to discover hidden controversies in the views of the parties in conflicts where the obvious fact that its parties share some views belonging to the explicit agenda of discussion conceal their opposition over some other issues, which may appear irrelevant to the agenda but constitute parties' deeply implicit standpoints employed to support their explicitly put views. Further discussion of those implicit standpoints may lead to a resolution, but may end up in a deadlock, too, which in the sensitive issues risk polarization in public opinions and endanger public support for important decisions regardless of whatever reasonable and well prepared they are. Discovering of the deep disagreement at a certain point of public conflict helps, on the one hand, to stop chancy search of a resolution before the disagreement gets radicalized, and, on the other hand, to develop the issues over which the parties agree, if needed.

2. Reconstruction of the Discussion

We reconstructed the harassment discussion as two disputes over issues A and B, which affected all the three aspects of the problem of harassment – legal, social, and moral:

- A. Did the MP violate the code of conduct by making statements or actions against the Journalists?
- B. Are statements or actions like the behavior of the MP harassment?

The opinions of the discussion participants amounted to the following four points of view:

- A1 – the MP did not violate the code of conduct,
- A2 – the MP violated the code of conduct,
- B3 – the actions are not harassment,
- B4 – the actions are harassment.

See Diagrams 1-3 for the visualization of the reconstruction.

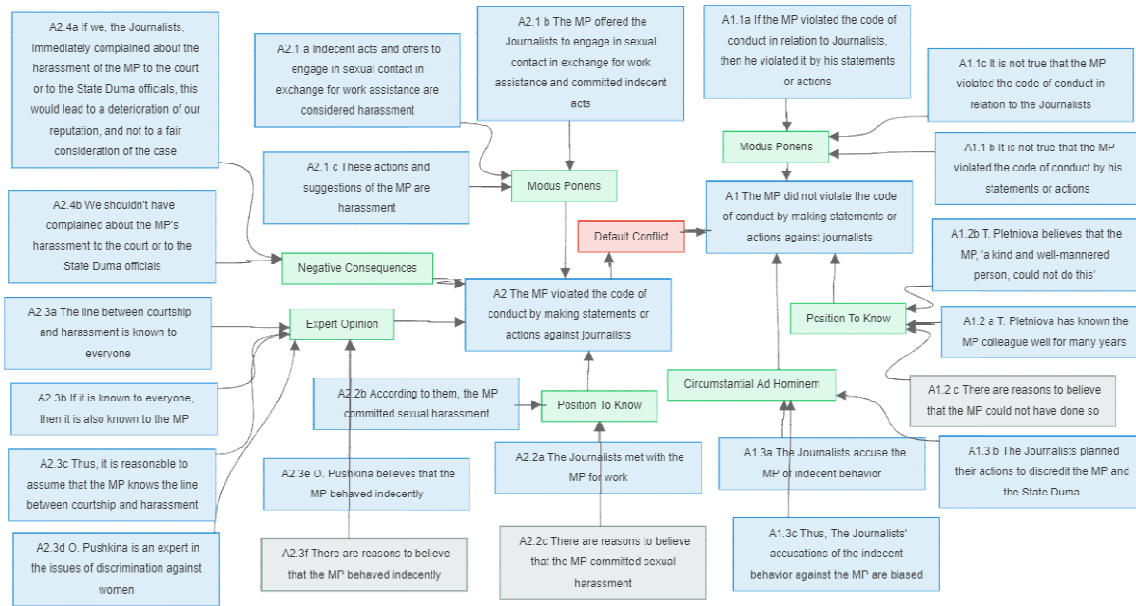


Figure 1: Diagram 1. Reconstruction of Dispute A. Did the MP violate the code of conduct by making statements or actions against the Journalists?

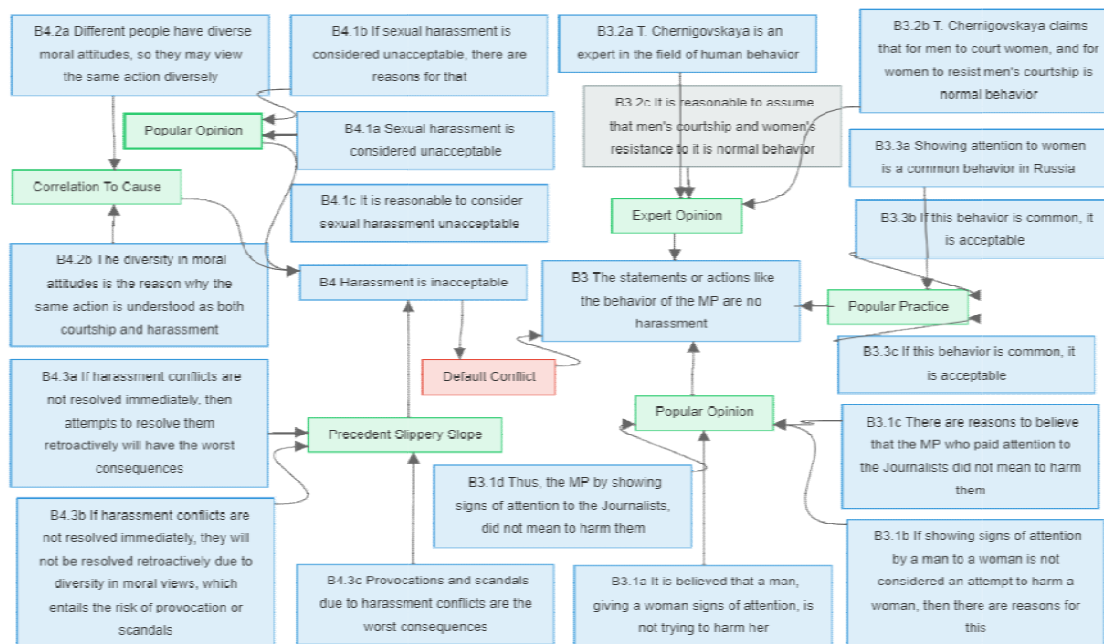


Figure 2: Diagram 2. Reconstruction of Dispute B. Are actions or statements like the behavior of the MP harassment?

There were three arguments put in favor of A1, B3 and B4, and four arguments were put forward in support of A2, see Fig.1 and Fig. 2. In dispute A, A2 prevailed and was then rejected in dispute B, for the arguments in favor of B4, aimed at rejecting B3, indirectly attacked A2 and overruled it (Fig. 3).

The ultimate resolution amounted to the subset of the four arguments that ensured the victory of A1+B4:

A1.1 The MP did not violate the code of conduct for the accusations are unproven, and
 A1.2 this is not in his nature.

B4.1 the harassment like the actions of the MP is unacceptable, and

B4.2 and 4.3 as courtships can be regarded in different ways, charges of indecent behavior must be brought immediately in order to be investigated without delays.

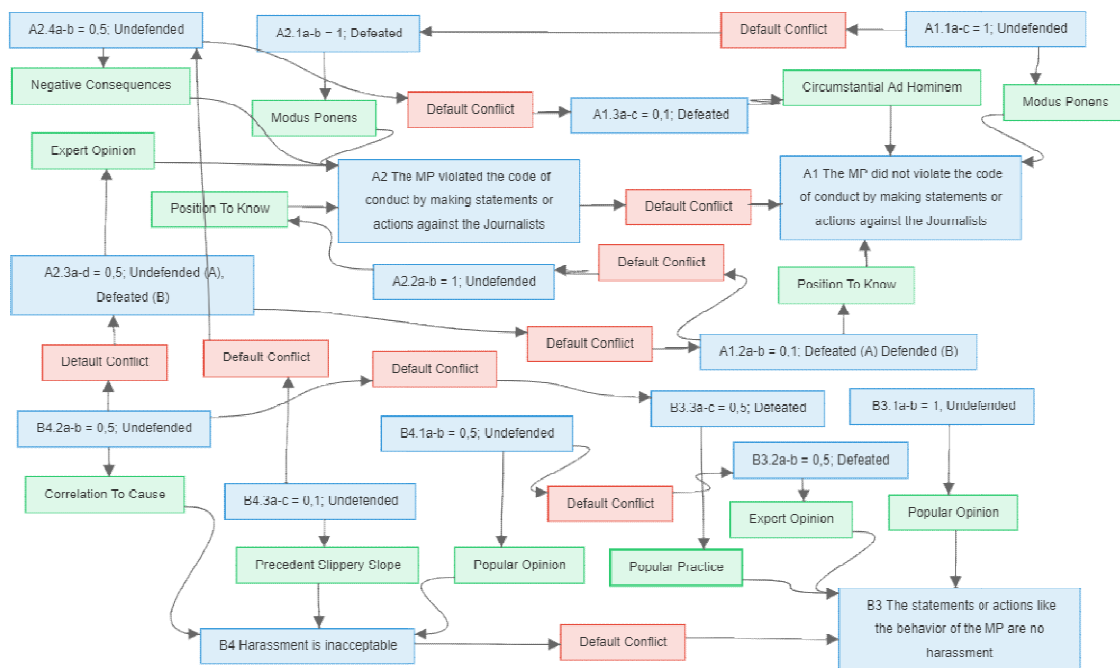


Figure 3: Diagram 3. The outcomes of Disputes A and B with the evaluation of arguments.

3. Visualization and Mapping the Disputes

Mapping the disputes and their digital visualizations are an integral part of the reconstruction of the discussion, it contributes to establishing of the content of the points of view, identifying of the arguments, including implicit ones, clarifying of their argumentation schemes, and determining of the type of dispute. It results in the argumentative maps of the disputes (Diagrams 1 and 2 on, respectively, Fig. 1 and Fig. 2), which make it possible to determine the resolution of the whole dispute by evaluating the arguments and computing of their outcomes (Diagram 3 on Fig. 3). Argumentation mapping is widely used in argumentation analysis in both human- and logic-oriented approaches, see [5], [20] for good examples. The advantage of our approach is that the mapping is done with the help of the specialized software designed to visualize aspects of

argumentation that traditional flowcharts may fail to discover or distinguish, since accurate mapping is essential for a more precise assessment of arguments in determining the resolution of a dispute. This applies to the enthymematic reasoning, characterizing the majority of the arguments in the dispute, when one or more premises or conclusions are presupposed by the author without being explicitly stated in the dialog, and to such element of arguments' structure as their demonstration, the connection of its premises to conclusions, which hardly ever gets explicit. In Diagrams 1, 2 and 3, the types of the demonstration of the arguments are marked in the green cells.

The visualization and argumentation mapping opened a perspective of examining the public discussion in its entirety and in detail in the absence of a unified text or protocol that reflected it. Due to the technical limitations of argumentation mapping by traditional flowcharts or formulaic notation, researchers normally have to deal with single arguments, excerpts from discussion transcripts, pre-prepared or abbreviated texts, any of which risk distorting the result. Visualization through OVA allowed us to reduce the impact of such technical limitations on the result and enabled to collect and map the opinions and arguments of the parties published in various media during several months of 2018, when the discussion was going on.

This made it possible to abstract from the secondary branches of the discussion, to establish the key points of view and arguments of the parties and to group the opinions of dozens of participants in the discussion around them, reducing the number of characters in our study to either the direct participants in the conflict over the harassment or the most influential people in the aftermath public discussion. In addition, the visualization made it possible to establish relations of support and criticism between the arguments of the parties, making explicit the premises or conclusions initially left implicit.

4. Evaluation of Arguments

In argumentation logic, there are several kinds of semantics designed to evaluate which of the arguments proposed in a dialogue are acceptable for a rational agent. In our algorithm, the primary evaluation of arguments employs ideas of labelling and gradual semantics. However, it executes that not on a graph which is a general way for it in the argumentation logic, as, for instance [1] remarkably does, but with the help of mapping instead. The gradual semantics qualify the strength of arguments by special functions assigning weights to arguments for determining how strong or weak an argument of definite weight has to be in relation to other arguments in order for a rational agent to agree or disagree with its conclusion, respectively [6]. The labelling semantics evaluates arguments in relation to the set of arguments withstanding counter-argumentation as belonging to it – *in*, not belonging – *out* or *undecided* [3].

Answers to the critical questions divide the set of arguments in the dispute into *strongly sustainable* ones with a conventional weight = 1, which to all critical questions give answers compatible with their premises and conclusion, *averagely* = 0.5 or *weakly sustainable* = 0.1, if the answers reject more or less than half of the critical questions, respectively. In Diagram 3 (Fig. 3), the sustainability of arguments is indicated in the premise cell that combines the premises of each argument, which in their expanded form are mapped in Diagrams 1 and 2 (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Some interim conclusions in the dispute A and B are left out in the Diagram 3, with their evaluation provided in the relevant premises' cells.

5. Computing of the Outcomes and Determining the Resolution

Computing of the outcomes and determining the resolution of the disputes A and B are based on the extension semantics of the argumentation logic. According to it, the ordering of the set of arguments of the dispute is modelled on a directed graph by means of the binary abstract attack

relation *attack* [α , β] between arguments α and β , symbolizing how criticism of argument α rejects argument β ; and how counter-argumentative attack [γ , α] rejects argument α by counterattacking it and thereby returns argument β as defended [10]. A practical application of the extension semantics to the evaluation of arguments in a meaningful dispute is proposed in [15].

Instead of a graph and formalism, we relied on the mapping and visualization of disputes, which is more convenient for a meaningful analysis of the argumentation. Along with that we preserved the terminology of attacks, counterattacks and defenses inherent in the argumentation logic. The use of mapping restricts the interpretation of the outcomes and resolutions of the dispute to that given dispute but opens up the prospect of a formalized analysis of meaningful discussions. The visualized mapping enabled us to detect a deep disagreement concealed under the inconsistency of A + B dispute resolutions, which was hardly possible to do by means of formalization on a graph.

The outcomes of the disputes are established by determining of a stronger argument in each pair of arguments attacking one another (shown by red cells in Fig.3). An argument is *defeated* (shown in Figure 3 as “defeated”) if it is attacked by an equal or more sustainable argument; *undefended* (shown in Figure 3 as “undefended”) if it is attacked by a less sustainable argument or not attacked; and *defended* (shown in Figure 3 as “defended”), if it was attacked by an argument that was counterattacked and defeated. The position of the party with the biggest number of *not defeated* arguments, i.e. *defended* or *undefended*, is considered the most convincing. In Dispute A (Fig. 1), A2 is most convincing, supported by undefended A2.2, A2.3 and A2.4, against undefended A1.1 in support of A1. In Dispute B (Fig. 2), B4 is the most convincing argument with the three undefended arguments in its support against undefended B3.1 in support of B3.

In the contemporary dialectical approaches, disputes are divided into single and multiple ones according to the number of propositions that constitute the content of the parties' points of view, and into unmixed and mixed ones, depending on the parties' intentions to defend their point of view or criticize other opinions, or do both, respectively. Dispute A is a single mixed dispute where A1 seeks to prove that A2 is unjustified. To resolve such a dispute in favor of A2, it is sufficient that there is at least one defended argument in the set of arguments in support of it, otherwise A1 prevails. Dispute B is a multiple mixed dispute, in which each party seeks to get defended its point of view and refuted the opposite. To resolve this dispute in favor of either party, it is sufficient that in its position the number of not defeated arguments exceeds the number of such arguments in the opposite position.

A uniform assessment of the validity of deductive, inductive, and plausible arguments is provided by the special algorithm for evaluating each of them using critical questions, which allows computing the outcome of the dispute with respect to the demonstrative quality of the arguments. A plausible argument is a reasoning that provides prima facie acceptable conclusion, based on the assumption that its premises are true in the absence of evidence of the contrary, and that conclusion will have to be discarded if there arrives novel evidence of the falsity of the assumption. Critical questions to plausible arguments test the assumptions in relation in their schemes of argumentation. Plausible arguments are often considered fallacies, because their acceptability is defeasible and depends on the context of the dialog, and a plausible argument that is acceptable in one dialog can be found not acceptable in another dialog. Unlike that, deductive or inductive arguments, the assessment of correctness or validity of which is indefeasible and independent of context of the dialog where they appear, because it is based on their logical form or probabilistic support their premises provide for their conclusions, respectively. Critical questions to deductive arguments check their correctness and verify the premises. No inductive arguments were found in arguments A and B.

6. Deep Disagreement

Unlike normal difference of opinions, a necessary condition for any discussion to start, deep disagreement is an abnormal difference of opinions. It points to the impotence of deductive or inductive arguments to convince amid “the assumption that earnest clear thinking can resolve fundamental issues.” The deep disagreement is the situation in a dialog when “the parties on both sides might agree on all historical and statistical matters, but still disagree. The dispute is, in fact, one concerning *moral standing*.” [12, pp. 10-11]. In the case of a normal difference of opinions, the parties share some views that form epistemic or procedural foundations for resolving it, so “341...that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn”... But when “611. two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another” parties face the deep disagreements pointing to the emptiness of the set of those hinges-like views they have to share in order to come to an agreement, and ‘then each man declares the other a fool and heretic.’ [29]. To resolve a deep disagreement there is a need for persuasion where the non-demonstrative plausible arguments play their key role. A non-empty resolution of the dispute where a deep disagreement occurs implies a compromise [16] or, otherwise, termination of the discussion as a way out [11].

In the discussion of harassment, the deep disagreement concerned the understanding of signals about unwanted attention: are those signals part of a flirting culture that implies recipients’ implicit consent to the courtship – A1 and B3, or do they express a clear rebuff that turns courtship into harassment – A2 and partly B4?

In favor of the former, Tatyana V. Chernigovskaya, professor at St. Petersburg State University and influential cognitivist, argued that men’s courtship of women is biologically justified by the need for procreation and therefore it is evolutionarily predetermined [7]. Her arguments B3.2b and B3.3a implied that there is no borderline between harassment and signs of courtship, on the existence of which insisted MPs Oksana V. Pushkina [32] and Alexey B. Veller [26] in A2.3a and B4.2 a-b who both regarded any forms of harassment intolerable.

Position B4 – harassment is inadmissible, and in order to stop it, in each case it is necessary to draw a borderline between it and signs of attention – highlighted the legal and social aspects of the problem of harassment and fell in between the polar positions of the parties of the deep disagreement A1+B3 and A2. The proponents of the drawing of the line of permissible courtship A2 and B4 came out in solidarity in support of the inadmissibility of harassment against the views of the supporters of A1, who considered harassment to be courtship. However, the supporters of B4 argued in favor of A1 in saying that it was not always possible to establish this boundary, and therefore that discussion about the harassment in the State Duma is just such a case. The deep disagreement over the issue of the borderline of courtship permissibility suggests that in further discussions which appear inevitable for many reasons, the polarization will increase. Due to the psychological phenomenon of group polarization and the cognitive confirmation bias, those who were initially supporting B4 would lean to one of the other poles [18] until after a conflict resolution procedure is established for the legal or moral aspects of sexual harassment, which would enable to eliminate the social aspect of this problem as well.

7. Evaluation of the Arguments in Tthe Discussion About Harassment

In this section, we evaluate the sustainability of the arguments proposed in the discussion using critical questions as they are formulated in [27].

Three arguments were put forward in defense of A1: a deductive argument marked as *modus ponens* A1.1 about the audio recording and the two plausible arguments *from position to know* A1.2 and an indirect argument *circumstantial ad hominem* A1.3.

A1.1 is a simple destructive dilemma:

- a) *If the MP violated the code of conduct in relation to the Journalists, then he violated it by his statements or actions.*
- b) *It is not true that the MP violated the code of conduct by his statements or actions.*
- c) *So, it is not true that the MP violated the code of conduct in relation to the Journalists.*

Premise *a* summarizes the questions the Journalists were asked by the Ethics Committee. The truth of *b* follows from the consensus of the parties that “the originality of the MP’s statements is known to everyone in our country” according to one of the members of the Ethics Committee. One of the Journalists agreed with this and added that for this reason, the Journalists tried not to pay attention to the peculiar manner of behavior of the MP [24]. “The Commission is not authorized to give expert assessments to audio recordings” [35], therefore, it was not possible to use audio recordings to confirm actions that violate the norms of behavior. The overall score of A1.1 is 1, strongly sustainable.

A1.2 was put forward by Tamara V. Pletniova, a colleague of the MP in the State Duma, who acted as an informed person – a person who, due to circumstances, happened to possess relevant information.

- a) *Tamara Pletniova has known the MP colleague well for many years.*
- b) *She believes that the MP ‘is a kind and well-mannered person, he could not do this’.*
- c) *There is a reason to accept that the MP could not have done so.*

1. Does she have reliable information that the MP could not have done this? Doubtful.

2. Is Tamara Pletniova trustworthy as a reliable source of information? No. She did not witness what was happening in the MP’s office and tried to victimize the Journalists. “These girls journalists should have behaved themselves, dressed better, ... not walked around with their bare navels [30].”

3. Did she claim that the MP could not have done this? Yes. “He treated women with warmth and never insulted them” [30].

The argument A1.3 score is 0.1 weakly sustainable, because the answers to the critical questions 1, 2 are not compatible with premises *a* and *b*.

A plausible *circumstantial ad hominem* argument A1.3 summarizes the conclusion supported by the Ethics Commission about a planned attack on the MP.

- a) *The Journalists accuse the MP of indecent behavior.*
- b) *The Journalists planned their actions to discredit the MP and the State Duma.*
- c) *The Journalists' accusations of the indecent behavior against the MP are biased.*

1. Are there any incompatible statements among the Journalists’ claims? Yes. The Commission found inconsistent the statements of the Journalists about the acts of the MP’s indecent behavior that had taken place several years ago, with the fact that they have continued to work in the State Duma and complained about those incidents much later, presumably in connection with certain political interests.

2. Did the Journalists manage to explain these incompatible statements and remove doubts about their reliability? Yes. Each of the Journalists complained about the MP independently, they could not plan their actions in advance, since they had never worked together before the filing their charges.

3. Were the Journalists subjected to personal discussion? No, they weren't.

The score of argument A1.3 is 0.1 weakly sustainable due to the incompatibility of the answers to questions 2 and 3 with premises *b* and *c*.

The correctness of A2.1 is ensured by the logical form of the syllogism:

- a) Indecent acts and offers to engage in sexual contact in exchange for work assistance are considered harassment.*
- b) The MP offered the Journalists to engage in sexual contact in exchange for work assistance and committed indecent acts.*
- c) These actions and suggestions of the MP are harassment.*

Premise *a* is based on the definition of the term “harassment” by legal theorists [13]. Premise *b* describes the Journalists' complaints about the MP's obscene suggestions in exchange for interviews and political comments the Journalists had to take according to their editorial assignments. Strongly sustainable A2.1 = 1 was attacked by A1.1 = 1 and defeated.

Argument A2.2 *from position to know* combines the testimonies of the Journalists who met with the MP and acted as informants about these events.

- a) The Journalists met with the MP for work.*
- b) According to them, the MP committed sexual harassment.*
- c) There are reasons to believe that the MP committed sexual harassment.*

1. Are the Journalists in a position to know of the MP's sexual harassment? Yes, they have met with the MP, had vertical relationships with him, and the success of their work in the State Duma depended on him to a large extent.

2. Are the Journalists trustworthy as reliable sources of information? Yes. Apart from the MP, they were the only participants in the incidents after which they privately complained about obscenities to their colleagues. One of the Journalists made an audio recording.

3. Did the Journalists claim that the MP harassed them? Yes. They described the details of his obscene suggestions and actions [8].

The score of argument A2.2 is strongly-sustainable 1, undefended, attacked by weakly-sustainable A1.2, and then – defended by the counterattack of A2.3 on A1.2, and at the end of the Dispute B – again not defended due to the attack of B4.2 on A2.3.

Argument A 2.3 *from expert opinion*, put forward by MP Oksana V. Pushkina, consists of two arguments: *a – c* refers to the common opinion expressing one of the opposing views in the deep disagreement between A2+B4 and A1+B3; *c – f* refers to the expert opinion of Pushkina herself.

- a) The line between courtship and harassment is known to everyone.*
- b) If it is known to everyone, then it is also known to the MP.*
- c) Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the MP knows the line between courtship and harassment.*
- d) Oksana Pushkina is an expert in the issues of discrimination against women.*
- e) She believes that the MP behaved indecently.*
- f) Thus, there are reasons to believe that the MP behaved indecently.*

1. What is the basis of the claim that everyone knows the line between courtship and harassment? It is based on the professional experience of Oksana Pushkina, as her public web-pages suggest.

2. Is there any reason to doubt that everyone knows the line between courtship and harassment? Yes. B3.1-3 indicates the deep disagreement on this issue.

1. How reliable is Oksana Pushkina as an expert? Very reliable. For many years she has worked with women's harassment petitions¹².

2. Is Oksana Pushkina an expert on harassment? Yes.

3. From which of her statements it follows that the MP behaved indecently? "People are held back by fear in 99% of the harassment cases. They stay muted. I < ... > realized how great the girls Journalists who decided to tell their stories were. After all, this is considered indecent in our country. And in general, this cannot happen in our society [17]."

4. Does Pushkina personally deserve trust as a source of opinion? Yes, she is a political activist experienced in overcoming discrimination against women [31].

5. Is Pushkina's statement *a* about the indecent behavior compatible with the statements of other experts? No, it is incompatible with the opinion of expert Chernigovskaya in B3.1.

6. On what evidence are Pushkina's statements based? They are based on her experience in evaluating the testimonies of victims of harassment.

The overall score of argument A2.3 is 0.5, averagely sustainable. A2.3 rejects weakly sustainable A1.2, but B4.2 rejects A2.3, returning A1.2 as defended.

A2.4 is an argument *from negative consequences* contained in the Journalists' objections to A1.3 [23].

a) If we, the Journalists, immediately complained about the harassment of the MP to the court or to the State Duma officials, this would lead to a deterioration of our reputation, and not to a fair consideration of the case.

b) We shouldn't have complained about the MP's harassment to the court or to the State Duma officials.

1. What is the basis of statement *a*? One of the Journalists consulted with experts and found out the legal and moral aspect of the problem of harassment: the lack of appropriate rule of law and the humiliating status of victims of harassment in Russian society.

2. How probable is that the negative consequences will happen? The comment of the head of the Moscow Union of journalists confirms this forecast [33].

3. Are there any positive consequences of an immediate complaint about the MP's behavior that should be taken into account? Yes. The Ethics Commission stated that the issue could have been considered without unnecessary publicity, without suspicion of the applicants' special motives, if it had been filed at a different time.

The overall score of the argument is 0.5, averagely sustainable, because it does not give a conclusion-compatible answer to question 3. A2.4 rejects A1.3, then is counterattacked by B4.3, which returns A1.3 as defended.

Three plausible arguments were put forward in defense of B3: B3.1 *from popular opinion*, B3.3 *from popular practice* and B3.2 *from expert opinion*. Let begin with B3.1.

a) It is believed that a man, giving a woman signs of attention, is not trying to harm her.

b) If showing signs of attention by a man to a woman is not considered an attempt to harm her, then there are reasons for this.

c) There are reasons to believe that the MP who paid attention to the Journalists did not mean to harm them.

d) Thus, the MP by showing signs of attention to the Journalists, did not mean to harm them.

1. What are the reasons to consider *a* as a popular opinion? Personal views of the authors of the argument, confirmed by the results of sociological surveys [34].

2. Is there any reason to doubt that statement *a* is a popular opinion? No. The fact that *a* is a popular opinion is confirmed by the positions of MPs O. Pushkina and A. Veller, who defended B4.

The overall score of B3.1 is strongly sustainable 1.

B3.2 together with B3.3. express the social aspect of deep disagreement. Consider B3.2 first.

a) T. Chernigovskaya is an expert in the field of human behavior.

b) T. Chernigovskaya claims that for men to court women, and for women to resist men's courtship, is normal behavior.

c) It is reasonable to assume that men's courting and women's resisting it is normal behavior.

1. How reliable is T. Chernigovskaya as an expert? Very reliable.

2. Is T. Chernigovskaya an expert in the field of human behavior? Yes.

3. Which Chernigovskaya's statement implies that such behavior is normal for men and women? "Everything I know about humans – anthropologically, physiologically, psychologically, linguistically, cognitively – tells me that this is [blurring the boundaries between male and female, including the rejection of "courtship"] it's a very bad road" [7].

4. What is the basis of T. Chernigovskaya's statements? They are based on her retelling and interpreting of research results.

5. Does T. Chernigovskaya personally deserve trust as a source of opinion? Not quite. In public lectures and talks, she often expresses her personal opinion and emphasizes her disagreement with other positions [24].

6. Are T. Chernigovskaya's statements compatible with the opinions of other experts? No, they are incompatible with the expert opinion of O. Pushkina in A2.3.

The overall score of B3.2 is averagely sustainable 0.5, due to the answers to critical questions 4-6 that are incompatible with *a*.

B3.3 refers to *popular practice* and summarizes the views of several MP in the public discussions.

a) Showing attention to women is a common behavior in Russia.

b) If this behavior is common, it is acceptable.

c) It is reasonable to believe that showing attention to women is acceptable behavior.

1. What is the basis of statement *a*? It is based on the personal views of the authors of the argument.

2. What are the grounds for considering the behavior described in *a* as acceptable? Unknown. We did not find any opinion polls confirming its acceptability.

The overall score of B3.3 is averagely sustainable 0.5.

In defense of B4, three plausible arguments were put forward: B4.1 *from popular opinion*, B4.2 *from correlation to cause*, and B4.3 *slippery slope* – a subspecies of the argument *to negative consequences*.

B4.1 attacks B3.2 on the social aspect of the deep disagreement:

a) Sexual harassment is considered unacceptable.

- b) *If sexual harassment is considered unacceptable, there are reasons for that.*
- c) *It is reasonable to consider sexual harassment unacceptable.*

1. What is the basis of statement *a*? It is based on the personal views and life experience of the author of the argument A. Veller: “any manifestations of sexual harassment are bad... the majority in our society shares this simple moral attitude,”[25] which is confirmed by the results of opinion polls [15].

2. Is there any reason to doubt *a*? Yes. The problem of harassment at workplace is considered important by 20% of Russians, and 63% believe that by their appearance women can "invite for" harassment, 36% support discussing harassment cases, 40% are against [34].

The overall score of B4.1 is averagely sustainable 0.5.

B4.2, the key argument supporting B4, places the B4 in between of the poles in the deep disagreement. In B4.2, the claim about the causal connection of the two phenomena is inferred out of the statement of a correlation noticed between them. B4.2 attacks B3.3 and indirectly A2.3:

- a) *Different people have diverse moral attitudes, so different people may view the same action diversely.*
- b) *The diversity in moral attitudes is the reason why the same action is understood as both courtship and harassment.*

1. Is there a correlation between the difference in people’s moral attitudes and their assessments of the actions of others? Yes, according to A. Veller.

2. Is there any reason to believe that this relationship is not a coincidence? Yes. The Journalists and many MPs recognized the manners of the MP as peculiar, but the Journalists considered his behavior in the situations under consideration as obscene, and the Ethics Commission did not.

3. Is there a third phenomenon that causes differences in the moral attitudes of people and in their assessments of the actions of others? Yes, it may be the involvement of the Journalists in the situation under consideration.

The overall score of B4.2 is averagely sustainable 0.5.

B4.3 is a *slippery slope* argument which justifies its conclusion B4 by the alleged causal chain of negative consequences that adopting of an opposite view would trigger. B4.3 reinforces B4's intermediate position in the deep disagreement:

- a) *If harassment conflicts are not resolved immediately, then attempts to resolve them retroactively will have the worst consequences.*
- b) *If harassment conflicts are not resolved immediately, they will not be resolved retroactively due to diversity in moral views, which entails the risk of provocation or scandals.*
- c) *Provocations and scandals due to harassment conflicts are the worst consequences.*

1. Which intermediate correlations in the event chain leading to *c* are explicitly specified? Four correlations are clearly identified: *c0* – a conflict with harassment is not immediately resolved; *c1* – it is impossible to resolve such a conflict retroactively; *c2* – a difference in moral views prevents such a conflict from being resolved retroactively; *c3* – provocations and scandals.

2. What intermediate correlations are missing in the chain of events *c0*, ..., *c3* for the validity of the transition from *c0* to *c3*? At least three. There are not enough reasons why it is impossible to resolve harassment conflicts retroactively, and *c2* is not a sufficient reason for this, as it suggests no

facts to justify itself. The chain contains no reference to the cases when attempts to retroactively resolve harassment conflicts failed. Neither in the immediate nor retroactive perspective B4.3 proposes definitive symptoms of actions that would indicate an action at question is or is not a harassment in social or legal terms.

3. Are there weak correlations in the chain c_0, \dots, c_3 ? Yes. These are c_1 , where there are no examples of any attempts to resolve such conflicts, successful or not; and c_2 , where differences in moral views are assumed to affect the resolution of harassment conflicts but it is unclear whether they hinder or contribute to that amid no facts of those resolution are described.

The overall score of argument B4.3 is weakly sustainable 0.1.

8. Conclusion

We analyzed the argumentation in the discussion on the socially sensitive issue of harassment using the hybrid method based on the new dialectic, the argumentation logic and the logical-cognitive approach to argumentation which merges the human-oriented stance in argumentation studies of the former with the logic-oriented stance of the latter. In this vein, the discussion was reconstructed with the help of digitally visualized dispute mapping, often employed in dialectical analysis of argumentation, instead of formalization on graphs used in the argumentation logic. The resolution of the discussion was determined by means of the algorithm specially designed in the logical-cognitive approach, which enabled us to achieve the following results. We identified the strongest conclusions in the discussion by the appraisal of the ability of the arguments proposed in support of them to both tolerate other opinions and withstand counter-argumentation and criticisms, which was a planned result of our case study, and revealed the deep disagreement about the limit of permissible courtship, which came up as a bonus result. These results demonstrate efficacy and efficiency of our hybrid method.

In the case-study, we reconstructed the discussion about harassment conflict in the State Duma between the MP and the Journalists who accused him of sexual misconduct. We divided the discussion into two Disputes A and B, the ultimate resolution of which amounted to the arguments in favor of A1+B4 that were not defeated in the Disputes. The resolution consisted in the two conclusions that the Journalists could not prove their accusations of the MP's indecent behavior which echoes the verdict of the Ethics Commission, but such actions are harassment and cannot be tolerated, which is inconsistent with both the resolution of Dispute B and the verdict. The inconsistency of the resolution A1+B4 is one of the symptoms of the deep disagreement revealed in the course of the study. It arose over the issue that initially did not belong to the agenda of the discussion, but the parties' contrary opinions about it came out as the core question of the conflict. Due to cognitive and psychological reasons, the polarization of opinions about harassment is likely to increase amid the absence of a legal definition of harassment and the blurring of the social boundary of the permissibility of courtship.

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