

# STRATEGIC MANEUVERING WITH LEGITIMIZING ARGUMENTS IN THE POLITICAL FIELD: AN ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT TRAIAN BĂSESCU'S SUSPENSION SPEECH

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**Abstract:** *This paper draws on argumentation theory (pragma-dialectics) and on a sociological theory of the political field in order to analyze a political speech. In the spirit of recent research in pragma-dialectics, I suggest that strategic maneuvering in the political field is to some extent constrained by the logic of the political field, both in the sense that this logic places constraints on the dialectical preconditions for strategic maneuvering, and that it constrains the rhetorical opportunities available to arguers. I claim that the former type of constraints have to do primarily with the need for closure through decision making and action, as well as with a particular way of ending debates in the political field, through democratic voting procedures that override disagreement. The latter type of constraints arise from the need to mobilize majorities in the battle for political power, to construct rather than represent consensus. I illustrate the way in which these properties of the political field influence strategic maneuvering with legitimizing arguments by analyzing President Traian Băsescu's suspension speech (April 2007).*

**Key words:** *argumentation, legitimation, political field, pragma-dialectics, strategic maneuvering*

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