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# Searching for Common Ground on Hamas Through Logical Argument Mapping

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**ABSTRACT:** Robert Fogelin (1985) formulated the thesis “that deep disagreements cannot be resolved through the use of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing.” The possibility of arguing presupposes “a shared background of beliefs and preferences,” and if such a background is not given, there is no way of “rational” dispute resolution. By contrast to this pessimistic view, I will propose a method that has been developed to overcome difficulties as described by Fogelin.

**KEYWORDS:** Boundary judgments, C.W. Churchman, deep disagreements, framing, Hamas, Logical Argument Mapping (LAM), Middle East conflict, Peirce, pragmatism, sensemaking.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

More than twenty years ago, Robert Fogelin proposed a distinction between “normal” argumentative exchange and “deep disagreements” (Fogelin, 1985). “Normal” is the process of arguing, or giving reasons, when we can explain something to somebody else “within a context of *broadly* shared beliefs and preferences” (p. 3). If I ask Fogelin why he takes a certain route and he responds, “I want to pick up the fish last,” there is no need for further reasons. Within our “shared background of beliefs and preferences” (p. 5) it is absolutely clear that we prefer fresh fish over stinking fish. A normal argument is possible, says Fogelin, if

the parties to the conversation share a great many beliefs and (if this is different) a great many preferences. ... An important feature of these shared beliefs and preferences is that they lie in the background, unmentioned. They guide the discussion, but they are not the subject of it. (Except occasionally: “you don’t want rotten fish, do you?”) They provide the framework or the structure within which *reasons can be marshaled*, where marshaling reasons is typically a matter of citing facts in a way that their significance becomes clear. This is a high level enterprise, one that rests upon the thick sedimentary layer of the unchallenged. (p. 3; his emphasis).

The possibility of normal argumentative exchange as based on a shared background of beliefs and preferences implies—for Fogelin—the *impossibility* of such an exchange in cases of “deep disagreement.” Although the “language of argument may persist” in such a case, the argument itself “becomes pointless since it makes an appeal to something that does not exist: a shared background of beliefs and preferences” (p. 5). When we are

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facing disputes over the morality of abortion, or affirmative action quota, we know that even people with the best intentions and the ability to listen will not change their mind by any appeal to reasons or facts. What Fogelin calls “deep disagreements” are those cases that are generated by conflicts between fundamental “framework propositions” (p. 5). Although a rational approach would try “to surface these background propositions and then discuss them directly,” experience shows that the main problem is that “we do not simply find isolated propositions” as the source of deep disagreements, “but instead a whole system of mutually supporting propositions (and paradigms, models, styles of acting and thinking) that constitute, if I may use the phrase, a form of life” (pp. 5-6). Since any argument must refer to a shared framework of background assumptions, “deep disagreements cannot be resolved through the use of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing” (p. 5). Although not every disagreement is deep, and although even “with deep disagreements, people can argue well or badly,” so that teaching argumentation still makes sense, in the end, Fogelin concludes, “we should tell the truth: there are disagreements, sometimes on important issues, which by their nature, are not subject to rational resolution” (p. 7).

At this point, however, I guess I am in deep disagreement with Fogelin. Of course, everybody knows what it means to have one of these futile controversies with people who we try to avoid anyway. There is indeed enough evidence that not every conflict can be resolved by “good” arguments. But does this necessarily imply that we should keep our brains away from those issues? Is it really a defensible approach “to fall back on persuasion,” as Fogelin suggests (p. 7), when things get unpleasant? It is not only that it seems to be a waste of time to study and to teach informal logic if the only reasonable application is to explain to my buddy the relationship between fish and travelling the suburbs; more important is the fact that people do not only fall back on persuasion when they find themselves in deep disagreements—they also kill each other. Deep disagreements do not only have a cognitive basis—incompatible systems of beliefs and preferences—they are often also based on real needs and interests, and that means: they tend to escalate.

Given the fact that some deep disagreements lead to violent clashes over decades, we should try harder to make our specific competencies as argumentation theorists relevant for the real problems we are facing day after day. Simply closing our eyes, or looking elsewhere, should be regarded as academic cynicism if we *can* do better.

From my point of view, I see two fundamental problems with Fogelin’s considerations. The first one concerns his starting point, the distinction between “normal” argumentative exchange and “deep disagreements.” As presented, this distinction is basically an *ontological* distinction—disagreements are distinguishable “by their nature,” as he says (p. 7); Fogelin presupposes that ‘there are’ these two forms of human interaction and communication, and that it is possible to distinguish them by analyzing stakeholders’ underlying systems of beliefs and preferences. However, as we know at least since Kant, it would be naïve to assume that we can formulate an ontology without an epistemological reflection: How can it be *possible* to decide whether two belief systems are compatible or not? Already our everyday experience shows that there is virtually no situation imaginable in which there is not at least *some* common ground. There is no language on Earth that is absolutely beyond translatability, and even in the most violent conflicts people can refer at least to *some* common experiences. Instead of

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assuming an *a priori* distinction between compatible and incompatible belief systems: Why do we not simply try to figure out, first of all, *how deep* disagreements really are in concrete cases? The process of argumentation itself—simply *doing* it—sometimes reveals possible ways out of conflicts.

The second problem is more hidden in Fogelin's approach. There seems to be the expectation that a well formulated argumentation could *per se* provide a "rational resolution" of disagreements (p. 7). Although he is criticizing works in informal logic that "give the impression that they possess the resources to resolve" deep disagreements (p. 6), he seems to share with these works the assumption that the point of informal logic is indeed to "possess" resources that can be used to resolve something. I am not sure whether Fogelin actually would defend the position that tools provided by argumentation theory and informal logic can be applied 'objectively'—that is, based on standards whose meaning does not depend on its respective interpretation in a certain situation; but if he does so, I would respond with the thesis that although there are obviously standards of what a good argument is, and how it should be developed, there are no standards—besides the formal standards of logical validity—that could not be interpreted differently, but still reasonably. As I argued elsewhere (Hoffmann, 2005b), there are no non-relative criteria for argument evaluation, and that would imply that there is no development of an argument that could avoid any subjective, social, or conceptual influence. How we develop and evaluate an argument depends exactly on the same systems of beliefs, preferences, values, and attitudes whose significance Fogelin demonstrated so convincingly (cf. Feldman, 1994).

Based on both these problems—the ontological assumption of a clear-cut distinction between deep and not deep disagreements and the assumed objectivity of "rational" argumentation—I am inclined to follow a more *pragmatic* approach to the problem of deep disagreements. By "pragmatic" I do not only refer to Charles S. Peirce's idea—as formulated in his "pragmatic maxim" (Peirce, CP 5.9; 5.438) and in his semiotics (CP 2.228; 5.473; 5.475)—that there is no meaning without interpretation, but also to what he developed under the heading of "diagrammatic reasoning": that there is no development of knowledge without *doing* something (CP 4.233; Hoffmann, 2004, 2005a, submitted). The method of argumentation that I will propose in this paper—Logical Argument Mapping (cf. Hoffmann, 2005c, 2007)—does not attempt to resolve a well-defined set of disagreements in a mechanical way; its basic pragmatic idea is rather to *stimulate thinking processes*, and to *challenge* people involved in disputes to change their mind. There is of course no guarantee that this will work in concrete situations; but this pragmatic approach provides at least something that *can* be offered even in cases that seem to be hopeless. Logical Argument Mapping (LAM) intends to move things forward. It is designed to figure out, first of all, whether there is any common ground among parties to a conflict, and to challenge people to reflect critically on *their own* thinking, not that of their opponents.

To demonstrate what I mean by trying to resolve disagreements by means of Logical Argument Mapping, I will reconstruct in this paper two conflicting arguments on Hamas, the Palestinian organization that won the election on January 25 in 2006, and that is listed by the United States to this date as a terrorist group. One of these arguments has been published by an Israeli General, the other by a London based Palestinian scholar. Obviously, it was not hard to find what Fogelin called "deep disagreements."

Nevertheless, by translating both texts into the language of LAM some interesting new horizons become visible.

Before that, however, I have to elaborate some more general epistemological considerations that are important to understand the rationale behind LAM. These considerations can be linked to Fogelin's "systems of beliefs and preferences," but they differentiate those more precisely.

## 2. BOUNDARY JUDGMENTS, FRAMING, AND SENSEMAKING

The basic epistemological assumption I am starting from is that all our understanding of something is co-determined by our cognitive abilities. As I said earlier, there is no ontology without an epistemology. Whatever exists, our access to it is constrained and conditioned by conceptual frameworks, theories, beliefs, values, attitudes, models, images, and narratives that are mainly part of our cultural and social heritage (Hanson, 1972 <1958>). There may be something like Heidegger's immediate "being-in-the-world" (*Dasein*), but in the very moment we try to cope with the problems of this world, or when we are referring to this world in social interaction and communication, or when we only think about it, we are dependent on what can be described in a most general way as the representational means—which are at the same time epistemological, or cognitive means (cf. Hoffmann & Roth, 2007)—that are available to us in this very situation.

If there is indeed a fundamental "gap between what exists and the languages, both natural and artificial, for talking and reasoning about what exists"—a gap whose bridging John Sowa (2001) describes as the central problem of ontology—and if everything can principally be represented in an infinite number of different ways, then the central problem of epistemology is to answer the question what an *adequate representation* is. Since the world we are trying to represent seems to be more or less in flux, and since it is full of complexity, interdependencies, and without clear boundaries and structure, any representation is inevitably a reduction and simplification.

Fogelin's discussion of a "whole system of mutually supporting propositions (and paradigms, models, styles of acting and thinking) that constitute ... a form of life" (pp. 5-6) provides a nice description of how those reductions and simplifications work. But these holistic life forms are not only relevant for people in disagreements; rather, they form the framework of conditions on which *any* knowledge, and any understanding whatsoever, depends. The point is only that usually there is not much of a need to reflect on this fact. As Habermas pointed out, mutual understanding is possible only within a jointly shared "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*). For him, our lifeworld is a set of culturally given, unquestioned, and only implicitly known background assumptions, social practices, and individual skills (Habermas, 1984, 1987 <1981>, vol. I, pp. 335-338, vol. II, pp. 124-142). We can say a person's "lifeworld" is the complete set of experiences—in thinking and acting—that is available for this person at a certain time. However, since we are normally living with others in more or less shared lifeworlds, the lifeworld dependency of understanding remains mostly invisible and unquestioned. Only in conflicts—and this is a point on which Logical Argument Mapping focuses—a reflection on those hidden conditions of understanding might be necessary and useful.

In order to understand more precisely how all these conditions of understanding influence our thinking and acting in cases of disagreement, I would like to distinguish

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three different, but closely connected, mechanisms: “boundary setting,” “framing,” and “sensemaking.” “Boundary setting” becomes visible in what C. West Churchman (1979) called “boundary judgments.” A discussion of this concept played recently a significant role in so-called “critical systems thinking” in management and organization theory (Flood, 1999; Ulrich, 2001, 2003). “Framing” is a well-known concept in conflict research and communication theory, and “sensemaking” is a term I would use to describe the cognitive side of both “boundary judgments” and “framing.”

Let’s start with “boundary setting.” Robert Louis Flood describes Churchman’s ideas as follows:

Churchman recognized in his critical systemic thinking that the human mind is not able to know the whole. ... Yet the human mind, for Churchman, may appreciate the essential quality of the whole. For Churchman, appreciation of this essential quality begins ... when first you see the world through the eyes of another. The systems approach, he says, then goes on to discover that every worldview is terribly restricted. Consequently, with Churchman, a rather different kind of question about practice surfaces. ... That is, *who is to judge that any one bounded appreciation is most relevant or acceptable?* Each judgment is based on a rationality of its own that chooses where a boundary is to be drawn, which issues and dilemmas thus get on the agenda, and who will benefit from this. For each choice it is necessary to ask, What are the consequences to be expected insofar as we can evaluate them and, on reflection, how do we feel about that? As Churchman points out, each judgment of this sort is of an ethical nature since it cannot escape the choice of who is to be the client—the beneficiary—and thus which issues and dilemmas will be central to debate and future action. In this way, the spirit of C. West Churchman becomes our moral conscience. A key principle of systemic thinking, according to Churchman, is to remain *ethically alert*. Boundary judgments facilitate a debate in which we are sensitized to ethical issues and dilemmas. (Flood, 1999, pp. 252-253)

A boundary judgment is a choice that determines who is to be in the bounded action area and will benefit and who is to be out and will not benefit. For this reason, Churchman (1979), in his book *The Systems Approach and Its Enemies*, stressed the importance of critique. Critique helps us to become more aware of the boundaries within which we live and operate. Critique in everyday situations involves listening to and responding to the viewpoints of one’s worst enemies in reason. Enemies, Churchman points out, are, in a sense and quite ironically, our best friends—it is they who are most likely to help their intellectual adversaries to see the partiality and irrationality of their favored boundary judgment and possible consequences relating to this. (Flood, 1999, p. 255)

Setting boundaries is at the same time a necessity in the face of overwhelming complexity, and a dangerous limitation for our thinking and acting. Boundary judgments define what is *within* our horizon of awareness and what is outside. As Werner Ulrich puts it:

No argument can be completely rational in the sense of justifying all the assumptions on which it depends as well as all the consequences it may have. What ought to count as knowledge, that is, as relevant circumstances, ‘facts’ and ‘evidence’ that should be considered? And what counts as relevant concerns, that is, value judgments concerning purposes, measures of success and other criteria of evaluation (‘norms’)? *Whose* facts and *whose* concerns should they represent? Ultimately, there is no single right way to decide such questions. Yet at some point argumentation has to end and practical action has to begin. *Boundary judgments* define the boundaries of argumentation. (Ulrich, 2001, p. 91)

While Churchman emphasized the necessity to have an “enemy” to overcome the unavoidable limitations of boundary judgments, Ulrich seems to assume that what he

calls “boundary critique” can be done by everyone and should accompany all our efforts. According to Ulrich, boundary critique

- analyzes how any claim about facts or values is conditioned by boundary judgments
- shows how facts and values change when boundary judgments are modified
- assumes that observations, evaluations, and boundary judgments form an interdependent system of selectivity
- analyzes the practical implications of selectivity: how it may affect all the parties concerned (Ulrich, 2003, p. 333-334)

However, in so far as boundary judgments are implicit and based on unconscious processes, it seems to be inevitable that any attempt to “critique” boundary judgments is itself determined by the same mechanisms it analyzes. There is no way to look at systems of selectivity from the outside.

While the concept of boundary judgments allows us to reflect on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion—regarding issues, facts, values, norms, concerns, involved people, etc.—the concept of “framing” provides a means to reflect on the fact that everything that is *within* the boundaries of our awareness can itself be interpreted by completely different reference systems. Gregory Bateson (1972 <1955>) introduced the example of two monkeys he observed in the zoo biting each other. Although this biting was similar to what can be observed in real fights, it was obvious to him that what was happening was only play. He concluded that even animals are able to engage in what he called “meta-communication.” They exchange signs that allow them to distinguish whether a biting has to be framed as play or as serious fight (179).

Similarly, Sanda Kaufman, Michael Elliott, and Deborah Shmueli showed by contrasting a statement by civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and another one by president Lyndon B. Johnson how a riot can be framed completely differently: “A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard” said King, while Johnson claimed: “[Rioters] are lawbreakers, destroyers of constitutional rights and liberties and ultimately destroyers of a free America” (Kaufman et al., 2003). While in these examples the framing process is explicit and obvious, we can imagine situations that are harder to interpret; for example when the play of children suddenly turns into fight. However, in both cases it is absolutely clear that we can *observe* framing processes only if people who frame something produce certain signs that indicate how they interpret this issue, and how they want *others* to interpret this issue. Based on this consideration, I would define “framing” as follows.

**Definition of “framing”:**

Framing is the process of producing signs in a way that the entirety of those signs indicate a reference systems that determines the way the framer interprets something (data, things, other signs and the signs used, people, events, actions, developments, etc.).

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This definition builds on a similar definition proposed by Barbara Gray:

Framing refers to the process of constructing and representing our interpretations of the world around us. We construct frames by sorting and categorizing our experience—weighing new information against our previous interpretations. (Gray, 2003, p. 12; cf. Kaufman et al., 2003: “*framing* refers to the creation of frames”).

What I am trying to emphasize in contrast to Gray’s definition is that identifying and analyzing framing processes from an observer’s point of view depends heavily on hypotheses and guesses. We can neither *see* the “interpretations” nor the “frames” Gray talks about; the only thing we can see is what *we interpret as signs* for a certain way of “sorting and categorizing” experiences. The “entirety” of signs I am referring to is, of course, always *relative* to our capacities—and time—to observe those signs. And while the function of the “reference system” in my definition should be clear—the term replaces what others call “frames”—those systems can only be *indicated* by the signs we observe.

Kaufman et al. (2003) emphasize that “framing” can either be an unconscious process or “a deliberative, analytic, or strategic process.” The latter is important for conflict management. Thus, Gray (2006) argues for framing as a “mediation technique. ... The mediator’s role is to help frame the conflict and its potential resolution in a way that all parties perceive to be fair” (cf. Drake & Donohue, 1996, p. 314; Dewulf et al., 2005, p. 3).

While my definition of “framing” stresses the *expressive* side of what happens in communication and interaction, there is of course also an underlying *cognitive* side. To distinguish both more precisely, I would use the term “sensemaking” that can be defined as follows:

### **Definition of “sensemaking” and further involved concepts:**

Sensemaking is the process of interpreting data in a way that they fit into a belief-value-attitude system. “Data” can be externally observable signs, people, things, events, etc., but also ideas or thoughts. A “belief-value-attitude system” is a network of beliefs, values, and attitudes that is consistent from its bearer’s point of view. A “belief” is defined here as that cognitive state we are in whenever we take something to be the case or regard it as true, implicitly or explicitly; thus, a belief is representable in the form of a factual or conditional statement. “Values” are defined as behavior guiding beliefs that are based on principles, needs, interests, or preferences. “Attitudes” are emotions someone feels with regard to certain data. The “fit” of data into a belief-value-attitude system can be achieved in three different ways: (a) by constraining the data (neglecting what is incomprehensible, or what does not fit); (b) by changing the system; or (c) by a mixture of (a) and (b).

My emphasis of the fact that sensemaking might include to “neglect” certain data indicates that this cognitive process is not only basic for framing processes, but also for boundary setting as discussed above. How we include and exclude certain issues, facts, values, norms, concerns, involved people, and so on, can be explained by reference to two elements of this definition of sensemaking: first, that whatever we observe or



communicate always gets to be interpreted by means of a certain belief-value-attitude system and, second, that the process of interpreting and integrating data is driven by efforts to keep the whole thing consistent—or at least to avoid obvious contradictions.

### 3. THE PROBLEM

Based on these epistemological considerations we can now refine the problem that Fogelin described under the heading of “deep disagreements.” So far, I argued for the following points:

- Not only positions to controversial issues like abortion are embedded in people’s belief-value-attitude systems, but any perception or interpretation of something is the result of sensemaking, that is of a process of integrating data into a given belief-value-attitude system.
- The inevitable limitations of any given belief-value-attitude system determine, on the one hand, how people *set boundaries* between those issues, facts, values, persons, etc., they care about and those beyond their horizon of awareness; and they determine, on the other hand, how they *frame* the issues they care about.
- Since we can never know a priori whether the belief-value-attitudes systems of different people can form a “shared” background, there is need for a pragmatic approach that replaces attempts to *describe* and to *analyze* situations of disagreement by thinking about *methods* of how people in disagreement can figure out for themselves whether there is any common ground they can build on.

The last of these points is the central motivation behind the development of Logical Argument Mapping as a *tool* for conflict management (Hoffmann, 2005c). Before I show how it is supposed to work, let me emphasize what I consider, based on these considerations, to be the central *problem* of disagreements and conflicts. The problem is: If I am right concerning the principal limitations of perceiving and interpreting something, then we have to realize that the same is true also for our own perceptions and interpretations. That means, however, there can never be a ‘neutral,’ or unbiased, observer’s point of view. Even if we are not personally involved in the conflicts we are analyzing, whatever we are doing is constrained, at some point, in exactly the same way by limitations of boundary setting, framing, and sensemaking as the processes we are analyzing.

### 4. LOGICAL ARGUMENT MAPPING (LAM)

The basic idea of Logical Argument Mapping (LAM) is to provide a tool to *visualize*, in a step-by-step process, those elements of belief-value-attitude systems that determine boundary setting, framing, and sensemaking with regard to a certain issue. Through representing what we think about an issue by means of argument maps, we are challenged to reflect on the limitations of our belief-value-attitude systems. The goal is that people, motivated by those reflection, develop those systems and change their mind. Not only our enemies may be our best friends, as Churchman said (Flood, 1999, p. 255), but any representation of our thinking can be such a ‘good friend’ since it forces us to reflect on

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the boundaries of our thinking and how we frame things. More specific, LAM is supposed to fulfill the following heuristic and social functions:

Heuristic functions:

- visualizing belief-value-attitude systems as far as they are relevant for boundary setting, framing, and sensemaking in a certain situation, or with regard to a certain issue
- clarifying vague thinking and implicit assumptions
- stimulating creativity, the discovery of alternative perspectives, and experimenting with representations
- visualizing implications and problems of our assumptions and possible contradictions among them
- challenging critical thinking and self-reflexivity

Social functions:

- coordinating different problem representations with its boundary judgments and framing processes
- stimulating negotiation of meanings and argumentation
- connecting expertise
- promoting mutual understanding by visualizing implicit assumptions, framing processes, and boundary constraints

The method itself is hardly new. It uses logically valid argument forms that are well-known for millennia, and it builds on the terminology and representational means that have been developed by Stephen Toulmin (2003 <1958>) and other more application-oriented approaches to logic (cf. Luckhardt & Bechtel, 1994). Another point of reference are recent reflections on, and developments of, Computer-Supported Argument Visualization (CSAV; cf. Kirschner et al., 2003). New is only the combination of these approaches with philosophical considerations that focus, on the one hand, on the heuristic power of working with representations—as developed by Peirce with regard to his concept of “diagrammatic reasoning” (Hoffmann, submitted)—and, on the other hand, on the Russian psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky’s idea of “semiotic mediation.” For Vygotsky, the main function of signs is to regulate both social interaction and our own thinking (Seeger, 2005).

The general idea of Logical Argument Mapping is simple: to challenge people to provide reasons for their claims. Since this has to be done by means of a graphical representation system—either on a piece of paper or on a computer screen, but according to certain rules and conventions—people get involved in a very concrete activity. Instead of talking always along the same, stereotyped lines they are forced, first of all, to slow down. And they are forced to be explicit: to *explicate* what they think.

As my distinction between heuristic and social functions indicates, LAM can be used for different purposes in a variety of contexts. The heuristic potential comes already to light when we analyze for ourselves a text by means of LAM (links to some examples on the web can be found in Hoffmann, 2007). This way we can easily see how an author draws the boundaries around a certain issue or problem, and we can identify—at least partially—the reference system that determines how she frames her point. Even more

important is the fact that we can control the consistency and completeness of argumentations when everything that an author takes into account—and, additionally, what she or he assumes implicitly—becomes visible on a map. LAM does not only allow us to represent all the elements that are within the boundaries of someone’s awareness, but also all *relations* among those elements.

All this becomes even more important when LAM is used in social settings, because the participants of collaborative Logical Argument Mapping can challenge each other to reveal how they set boundaries and frame an issue. This opens up possibilities of critique, self-reflectivity, and a development of those belief-value-attitude systems that form the roots of disagreements. LAM is designed as a tool to facilitate collaboration and communication. The goal is not to produce an ‘objective’ representation of a controversial issue, or the problem in question, but to initiate a debate and a collaborative problem solving process.

The crucial point that is supposed to make all this happen is that LAM does not stop with providing reasons for a claim. We all know that any argument of the form “A, therefore B” can be turned into a *logical* argument—that is, a deductively valid argument—simply by adding the conditional statement “If A, then B” as a further premise. This way, we get the famous *modus ponens* form of arguments:

If A, then B  
A  
Therefore, B

Fogelin (1985) argued emphatically against this kind of deductive reconstruction because “it yields,” as he says, “skeptical consequences”:

The demand that in an acceptable argument the conclusion must be entailed by exceptionless premises yields the consequence that virtually all of those everyday arguments which seem perfectly adequate are, in fact, no good. In the short run, students find this discovery of almost universal irrationality arresting. Debunking has its charm. The long run effect is less salutary. If students become convinced that they can always find something wrong with any (non-trivial) argument presented to them, then the distinction between good arguments and bad arguments is subverted, and the whole enterprise of arguing seems to lose its point. (Fogelin, 1985, p. 2)

Fogelin is right: the validity of the *modus ponens* depends on the “exceptionless” truth of the conditional statement “If A, then B.” This point has been stressed in particular by Toulmin (2003 <1958>) when he talked about the “warrants” in his famous model of argumentation. The conditional statement in the *modus ponens* argument fulfills the function of a “warrant” in Toulmin’s sense since it “authorizes” the step from the reason A to the claim B; “warrants” are “general, hypothetical statements, which can act as bridges” (p. 91). While the reason in an argument “expresses a piece of information *from* which we are drawing a conclusion,” a warrant is a “universal premiss” that

expresses, not a piece of information at all, but a guarantee *in accordance with* which we can safely take the step from our datum to our conclusion. Such a guarantee, for all its backing, will be neither factual nor categorical but rather hypothetical and permissive. (Toulmin, 2003 <1958>, p. 106)

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Fogelin's fear, however, that skepticism, relativism and irrationality would prevail when students suddenly realize that those warrants are often hard to defend—based on their immanent universality—is only threatening for an approach that is primarily concerned with *objective* criteria to distinguish 'good' and 'bad' arguments. I don't think that the "point" of the "whole enterprise of arguing" is to make this distinction, as Fogelin claims. For the *practice* of argumentation—where the point is not the evaluation of argument quality from a kind of 'God's-eyes' perspective, but the *development* of arguments—the vice becomes a virtue. Students—and anyone who argues—have to realize that the absolute power they often assume for their reasons does not come for free. It depends on assumptions of universality that must be made *explicit* to become an object of critical reflection, and to motivate a continuation of the process of argumentation.

Based on the fact that argumentation is primarily a *social* endeavour (Goldman, 1999, p. 131), and a process of *learning*, we should simply forget the idea of being right or wrong, and we should focus instead on argumentation as an ongoing process of refining arguments within a setting of mutual critique. If a universal statement like "If A, then B" cannot be defended as universally true, then it might be better either to introduce one of Toulmin's "qualifiers" such as "probably" and "presumably" (p. 93), or to look for better reasons, or to change the argument altogether. But before we can do this, we have to make *explicit* what we assume—at least implicitly—to be a "guarantee" for taking something as a "reason" for something else.

The crucial point of Logical Argument Mapping is the demand that any argument that plays a central role within an argumentation—and any argument whose validity someone doubts—has to be transformed into a *logical* argument by introducing a warrant that justifies taking a certain statement *as a reason* for a certain claim. Whether the argument becomes in this way a *modus ponens* argument, a *modus tollens*, an *alternative* or *disjunctive syllogism*, or whatever logically valid argument form, the essential point is to make the argument as strong as possible, and that means: to transform it into a logical argument.

Usually, this can be done more or less mechanically, as in our *modus ponens* argument above. If someone argues "It's raining, therefore the crops on the field will get wet," we can transform the whole argument into a logically valid form by adding the premise "If it is raining, then the crops on the field will get wet." While this operation is absolutely trivial from a logical point of view, it has a very important practical implication. People who are challenged to complete their arguments in this way will suddenly see that the validity—and relevance—of their arguments always depends on two very different things: on the one hand, on the presupposed truth of the "pieces of information" they provide as reasons and, on the other, on the presupposed truth of a universal statement like "If A, then B." Let's take somebody who says "I have every right to destroy the infrastructure of your country since you started the aggressions." In Logical Argument Mapping, this person would not only be challenged to defend the claim that the opponent started the aggressions, but also to state explicitly the general rule: "If somebody starts aggressions, the defender has every right to destroy this country's infrastructure." The point here is not so much that such a universal statement might be false; the point is that adding it to an argument map visualizes necessarily a part of the arguer's belief-value-attitude system. For the fact that this person provides just *this*

reason is either absolutely arbitrary, or it is based on an *implicit* assumption like the one formulated above in form of a general rule.

The distinction between formulating reasons for a claim and formulating a general rule that justifies the relation between reason and claim is decisive in Logical Argument Mapping. While the claims and the reasons someone proposes during a process of argumentation show how this person draws the *boundaries* around the issue in question, visualizing the warrants that justify the relations between those reasons and claims reveals inevitably parts of those belief-value-attitude systems that underlie the involved processes of boundary setting, framing, and sensemaking. Visualizing those assumptions that may be only implicitly and unconsciously given is the first step to get access to them. And getting access to those patterns of thinking and feeling is a precondition to reflect on them, to criticize, and to defend them in an ongoing process of argumentation.

## 5. AN EXAMPLE: TWO ARGUMENTS ON THE PALESTINIAN HAMAS

Whether Logical Argument Mapping can indeed be a method to overcome the problems of “deep disagreements” described by Fogelin can only be tested in empirical studies. However, to demonstrate at least the principal ideas of LAM, and operations that *could* be performed by means of this tool, it should be sufficient in the context of this paper to propose a *fictional* process of Logical Argument Mapping. While I developed elsewhere an example that was constructed on the basis of a lot of singular pieces of information that came to light through various accounts of the failed Camp David negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians in 2000 (Hoffmann, 2005c), I am focusing here on two arguments that are available already in a well-articulated form; they are published in two scientific journals. Instead of using LAM as a tool in a real debate on a controversial issue, I will imagine a fictional argument mapping session in which, in a first step, each of the two participants develops his argument independently from possible objections of his opponent; in my fiction of this first step, I am using the two arguments as they are published, but shortened to what I consider their essential ideas. In a second fictional step the opponents would try to define the boundaries of their respective approaches by mapping the ideas, issues, and information they referred to in the first step in circumscribed areas of a shared map; this way it becomes possible to identify overlapping and separated areas of their argumentations. My fiction concludes with a third step in which the opponents criticize the other’s argument map, respectively. For that, I will propose only a few considerations that are based on my own understanding of the reconstructed positions. This way, I hope to illuminate some of the limitations of both authors’ bounding and framing of the contentious issue in question. In a concrete case, the process of finding a possible agreement would be based on further steps of defending objections, refining positions, and—hopefully—changing basic assumptions and claims.

The broader horizon of both articles is, roughly, the question how the international community should deal with Hamas. I do not have any intention to decide who is right and who is wrong in this controversy, and I am not interested to reflect any further considerations that should be discussed to decide this question, or to get a more appropriate picture of the problem—although it should be clear, based on my argument above, that I cannot exclude being biased myself either. The selection of both articles is more or less arbitrary; I found them by searching the most recent publications on Hamas

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(March 2007) that are listed in the “Web of Science” database that provides web access to three ISI databases: Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts & Humanities Search. Based on the selection criteria of these databases and the journals they cover, the scientific quality of both articles shouldn’t be a concern.

As I said earlier, Hamas won the Palestinian elections on January 25, 2006. Shortly after that, in the March-April issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Michael Herzog published an article titled “Can Hamas be tamed?” (Herzog, 2006). A short biographical info at the end of the article describes the author as

a Brigadier General in the Israel Defense Forces and a Visiting Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He was formerly the senior military aide to Israel’s Minister of Defense and the head of strategic planning for the IDF. (Herzog, 2006)

The second article I am going to discuss has been published by Khaled Hroub a few months later in the summer 2006 issue of *Journal of Palestine Studies* under the heading “A ‘new Hamas’ through its new documents” (Hroub, 2006). As a short note says, Khaled Hroub, “a leading expert on Hamas, is the author of *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (IPS, 2000) and *Hamas: A Beginner’s Guide* (forthcoming from Pluto Press, 2006)” (Hroub, 2006, p. 6).

A step-by-step description of how arguments are to be developed by means of Logical Argument Mapping is available on the web (Hoffmann, 2007). This description includes a presentation of LAM’s notation; possible argument forms; a list of evaluation criteria that describe the minimal requirements of a logically valid, consistent, and complete (as far as possible) argumentation; and a list of links to examples on the web. In the limited space available here, I can only present some possible outcomes of the procedure. It should be sufficient to note that I treat each of the articles as one “argumentation” that is formed by one (Hroub) or more (Herzog) central “argument(s)” and additional considerations. These additions do either support parts of the argument(s), or they discuss possible objections to those parts.

An “argument” within such an “argumentation” is easily identifiable. First, it includes at least three elements—linked by arrows combined by the word “therefore”—that are mapped in different text boxes: a *claim*, i.e. the conclusion of the argument; at least one *reason* for this claim; and what Toulmin (2003 <1958>) called a “*warrant*,” that is a statement whose function is to *justify* the relation between reason and claim and which, therefore, includes in itself a combination of reason and claim (in my *modus ponens* example mentioned in the last section, “*B*” would be the claim, “*A*” the reason, and “If *A*, then *B*” the warrant). The second characteristic of an “argument” is that the necessary warrant is written in an oval-shaped text box while all the other elements of an argumentation are written in rectangles. The reason for highlighting the warrant in this way is its special character. As a universal, law-like statement, it can be refuted by one counterexample. A general rule like “If *A*, then *B*,” for instance, is obviously false when we can name one case in which both “*A*” and the negation of “*B*” are true. Thus, the general rule “If it is raining, then the crops on the field will get wet” is refuted if you can show only one example where it rained, but the crops remained dry. The fact that warrants are so sensitive to objections is exactly what I need to induce changes in people’s thinking processes. You have to realize that the validity of the arguments you

are so convinced of after years and years of repeating them often depends on assumptions that are—looking at them in the bright light of an argument map—hard to defend.

I am treating here each of the articles as one “argumentation”; that means, they are reconstructed in one “map,” respectively. (All maps are created by means of *Cmap*, a freely available “knowledge modeling kit” that has been developed by the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, IHMC, a not-for-profit research institute of the Florida University System: <http://cmap.ihmc.us/>). However, since these maps need a lot of space, I can present in this paper only the central parts of them; much of the information the authors are providing to support their main points, and their discussions of objections, are printed here independently as quotes, not as parts of the maps. The complete maps are available via a link in Hoffmann (2007), or directly through the following link: [http://cmapspublic2.ihmc.us/servlet/SBReadResourceServlet?rid=1175354427380\\_673614899\\_4820&partName=htmltext](http://cmapspublic2.ihmc.us/servlet/SBReadResourceServlet?rid=1175354427380_673614899_4820&partName=htmltext).

Let me start with what I would reconstruct as the central argument of Herzog (2006; Figure 1).

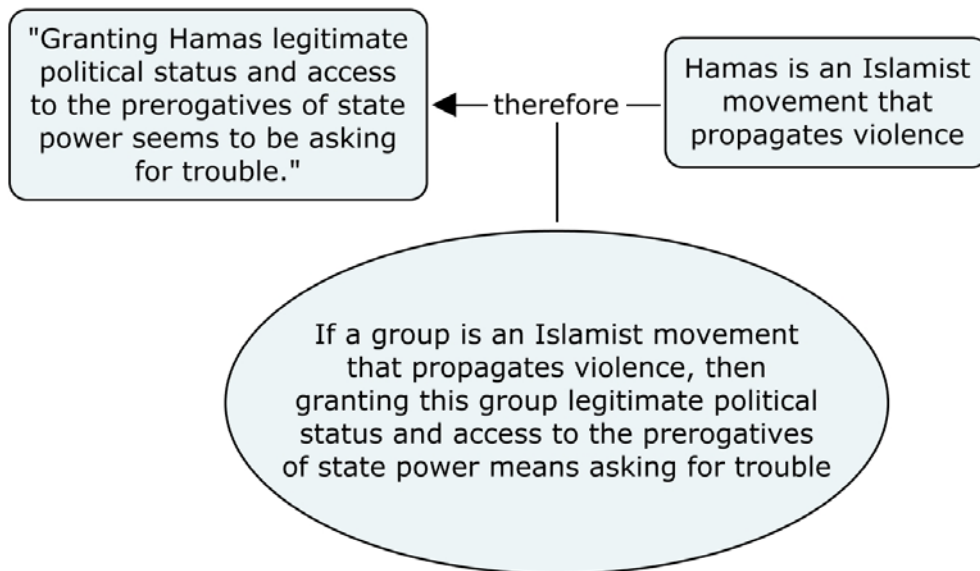


Figure 1: The central argument of Herzog (2006); all maps are created with IHMC *Cmap* tools: <http://cmap.ihmc.us/>)

As support for his “reason” (right corner), Herzog adds two points: Hamas’

ideology was set forth in its 1988 covenant, which remains operative to this day. The covenant defines Palestinian nationalism and the conflict with Israel in religious terms: the land of Palestine “from the river to the sea” is considered an Islamic waqf, an “endowment,” and so no Muslim has the right to cede any part of it. The covenant explicitly calls for the obliteration of the state of Israel through the power of the sword and portrays the Jews as the source of all evil in the world. Freemasons, Rotarians, and members of organizations similar to theirs are denounced as Zionist agents, and they too are threatened with obliteration. The covenant stipulates that peace between Muslims, Christians, and Jews should only be permitted “under the wing of Islam.”

the group fields a private army, embraces violence as a political tool, regularly orchestrates terrorist attacks, and is dedicated to the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamist state ruling the territory of Israel and the PA (=Palestinian Autonomy). [The group’s “operational”

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wing] oversees hundreds of militants devoted to armed struggle against Israel and is in the process of building a backup militia of several thousand. It has been responsible for countless acts of terror—from abductions and murders to suicide bombings and rocket attacks—which have killed hundreds of Israelis, most of them civilians.

Herzog assumes that what I reconstruct in Figure 1 as his “warrant” might be attacked. At least, he formulates a consideration that can be interpreted as a possible objection against this warrant, and then he refutes this objections. This way, that is by defending his argument against possible objections, he makes it stronger (Figure 2; note the overlap of both figures: in the complete map, the objection of Figure 2 is linked to the warrant in Figure 1).

The “comparative analysis” he mentions in the rebuttal of his objection (left corner at the bottom of Figure 2) forms the main part of his article. Herzog focuses especially on analogies that

can be found in the modern history of the Muslim Middle East, with its assortment of relatively young independent states—nations where there is no democratic tradition or culture and where the governments have been challenged by Islamist movements advocating for the imposition of sharia while brandishing swords.

The main points can be summarized as follows:

- “In Turkey, the Islamists have been co-opted successfully,” but this success is based on “a secular public culture for more than eight decades and democratic institutions for more than five.” Additionally, state and military “has set clear limits on political behavior.”
- “Jordan presents a model of successful Islamist co-optation (although less so of democracy),” but this is based on political integration of Islamists over six decades and the fact that their political wing occupies only “an average of a third of the seats in parliament.”
- In Egypt political integration of Islamist moderates was possible only after they separated from radicals, based on decades of “repression and political exclusion.”
- Lebanon’s Hezbollah “maintains the most powerful militia in the country, with control of a virtually autonomous area in southern Lebanon and a global terrorist reach that has often served Iranian purposes. ... Joining the government did not prevent Hezbollah from undertaking a serious cross-border attack on Israel in late November 2005, nor has its ideological platform or political demeanor shown signs of moderation.”

For Herzog, his “comparative analysis” leads to what he calls “the most important lesson.”

THE MOST important lesson to be drawn from these cases is that co-optation through political participation is not a given, but rather depends on the existence of certain conditions in the local political context. No Islamist movement has renounced violence or moderated its ideology of its own volition; when one has done so at all, it has been for lack of a better alternative. It appears that at least three factors need to be present for co-optation to occur: the existence of a strong, healthy, and relatively free political system into which the Islamists can be absorbed; a balance of power tilted against the Islamists that forces them to play by moderate rules; and sufficient time for co-optation to take effect. (Herzog, 2006)



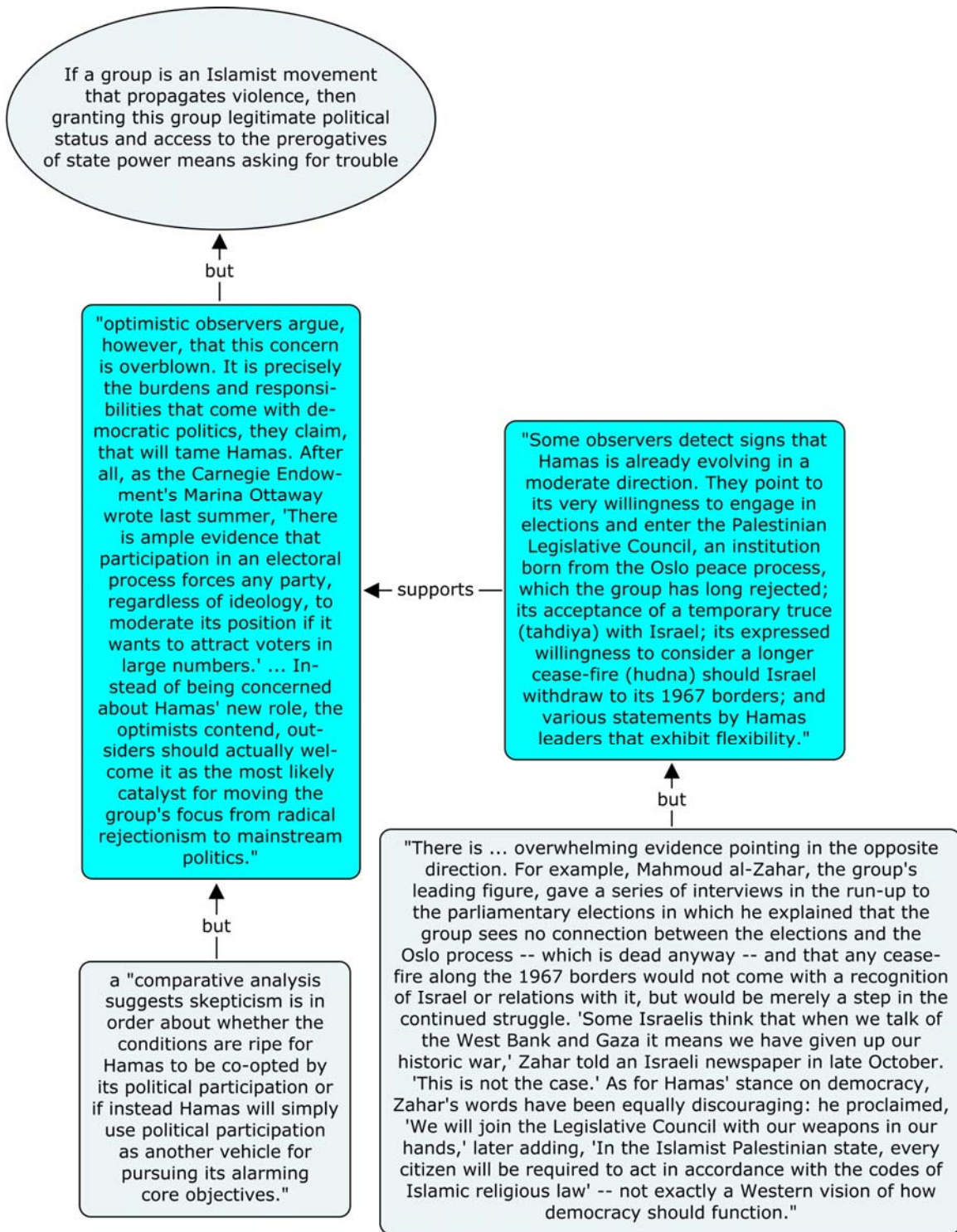


Figure 2: Herzog (2006) formulates a possible objection against the warrant (in turquoise), supports this objection by further information, and then rejects both the objection and the significance of the supporting data by further considerations and information.

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Since the first two sentences of this “lesson” are presented in the form of universal statements, they can be interpreted as warrants, or as *one* warrant. Looking at what seems to be Herzog’s main goal—to provide an argument for what is quoted in the middle text box at the bottom of the following Figure 3—I would reconstruct the structure of conclusions he draws from this “most important lesson” as described in Figure 3.

Based on this reconstruction, Herzog’s final position is formulated in the claim at the bottom of the map. The international community should develop pressure to generate the conditions under which, according to Herzog, “ Hamas may liberalize.”

After this reconstruction of the argumentation that Michael Herzog (2006) developed in “Can Hamas Be Tamed?,” let us have a look now at “A ‘New Hamas’ Through its New Documents” by Khaled Hroub (2006). Figure 4 presents the center of his argument, although the largest part of his article discusses the “new documents” that are mentioned in his “reason” (right corner at the top of Figure 4).

Hroub analyzes three “new” Hamas documents and observes a development of Hamas’ position even among these documents that were published between fall 2005 and March 2006. While the first one still contains some problematic issues, both the later ones seem to fully support Hroub’s main point since he discusses possible problems only with regard to the first document. This discussion can again be “mapped” (Figure 5).

The second document Hroub analyzes is the “draft National Unity Government program” as it has been proposed “to other Palestinian factions in March 2006 by a victorious Hamas as a basis for a coalition cabinet” (Hroub, 2006, p. 7). Without going into all the details that Hroub elaborates, his main points can be summarized as follows:

- articles 9 and 10 “attempt to provide assurances that the Hamas-led government will function within the international conventions and agreements on Palestine” (p. 17). These articles “represent a major shift on Hamas’s part, showing an obvious attempt to maintain a delicate balance between appeasing international observers and Hamas’s own constituency” (p. 17).
- “the program contains vestiges of the traditional policy of ‘stages’ whereby a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is seen as the first phase to liberate the entire land of Palestine” (p. 17).
- “taken as a whole, the thrust of these articles—and the entire document—hovers around the concept of the two-state solution without a hint of the ‘liberation of the entire land of Palestine’ or ‘the destruction of Israel’ found in the charter [of 1988].”
- hints that “show at least implicit recognition of the legitimacy of international law and mechanisms” (p.17).
- “As was the case with the electoral platform, ‘reform’ constitutes a major theme in the proposed national unity document” (p.18; he lists examples)
- “The national unity platform contains almost no religious references, and those that do exist seem primarily linked to support for the national cause” (p.19).

The third document is the “cabinet platform delivered by Prime Minister–elect Ismail Haniyeh on 27 March 2006 in a speech before the newly elected parliament. What makes the platform especially interesting is that it represents Hamas alone, having been drafted after the collapse of the national unity negotiations when there was no longer any need to make concessions to the factions” (p.19). Again, Hroub’s central points can be summarized as follows:

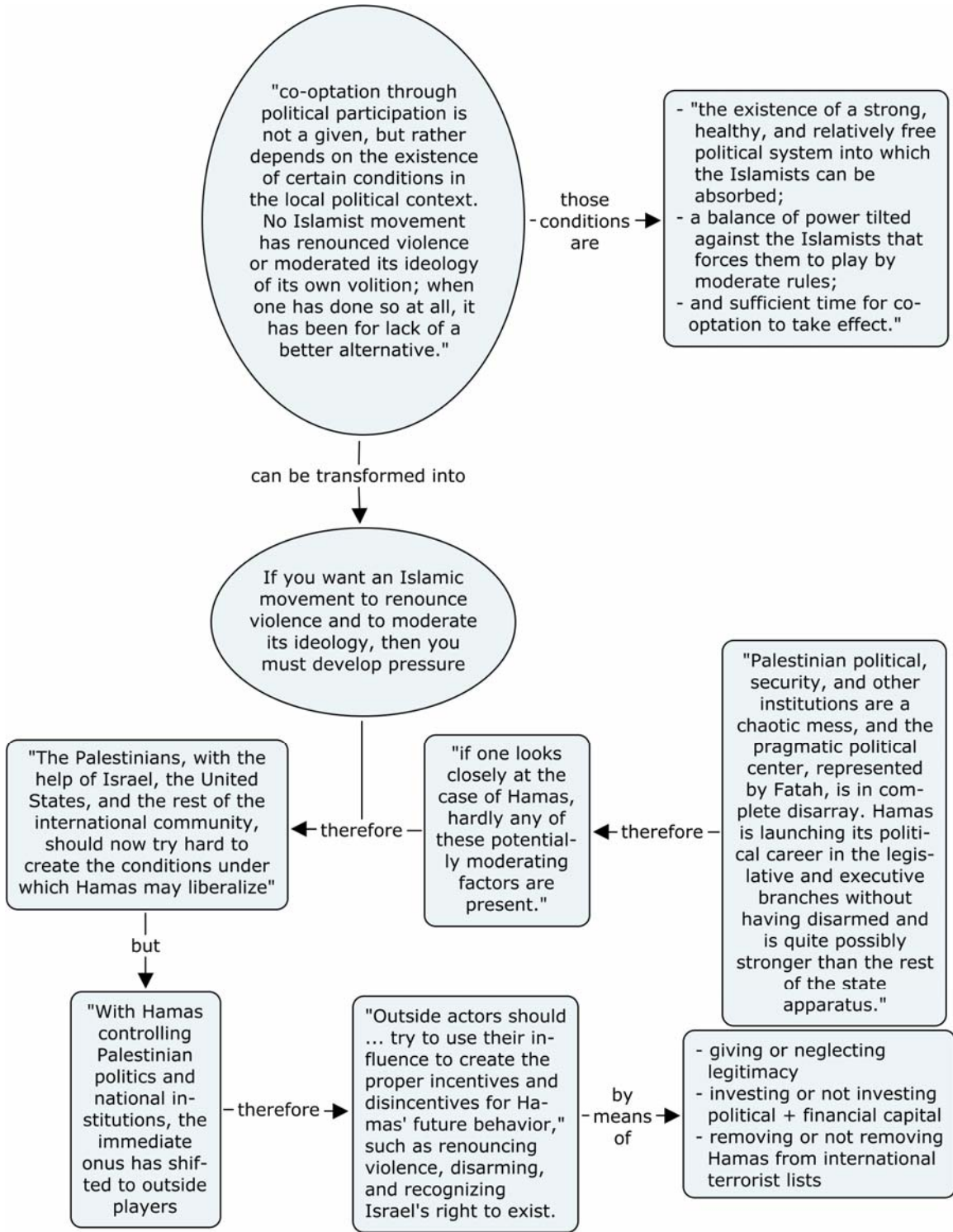
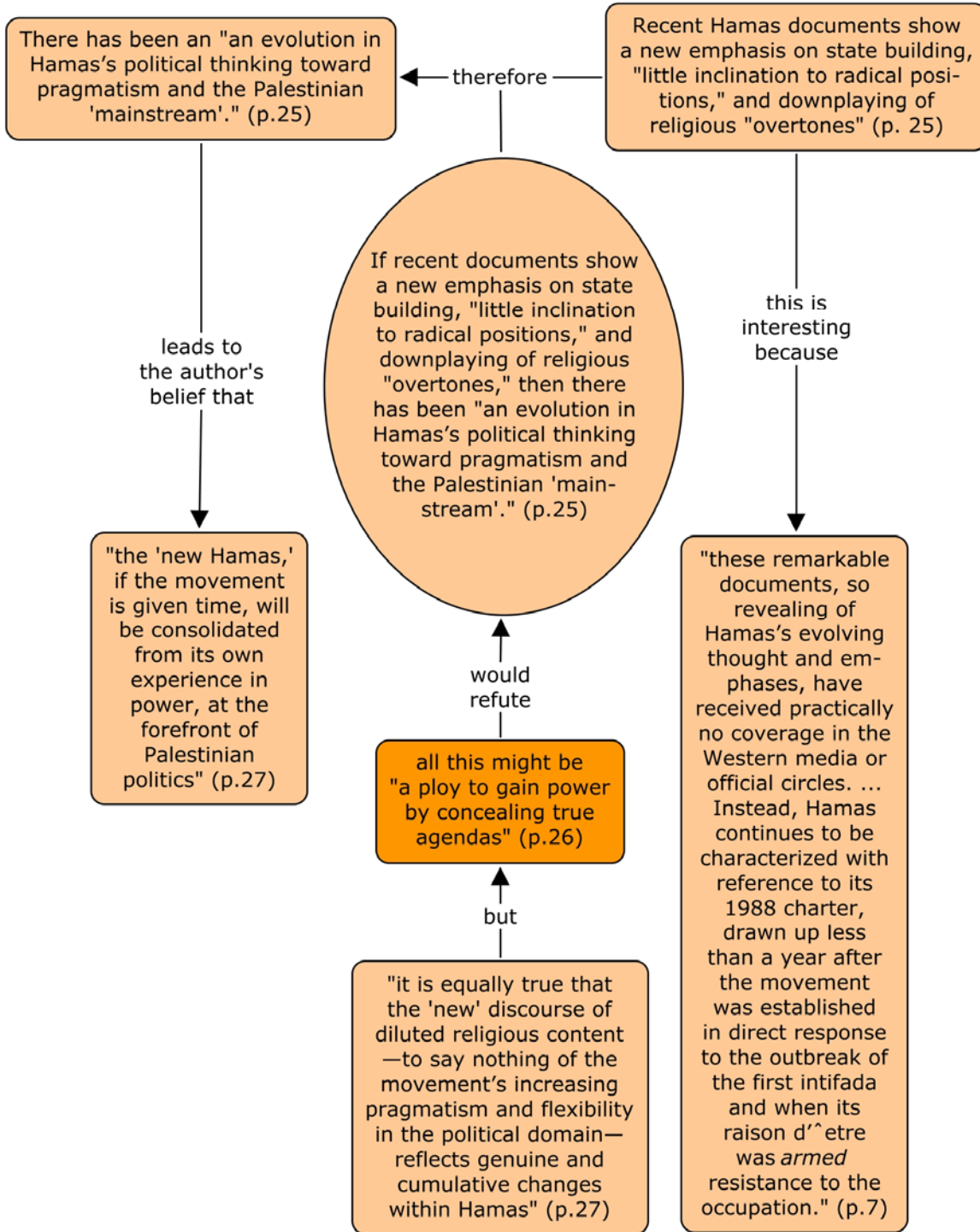


Figure 3: Herzog's refinement and extension of his central argument (cf. Figure 1). The warrant at the top (oval box) is what he calls "the most important lesson" that he draws from his detailed "comparative analysis" that is mentioned in Figure 2.

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*Figure 4: The argument of Hroub (2006), including an implication of his conclusion that would be relevant for the question how Hamas should be treated by the international community (the lower left side box). Also, there is one possible objection against the warrant that he refutes by a further consideration*

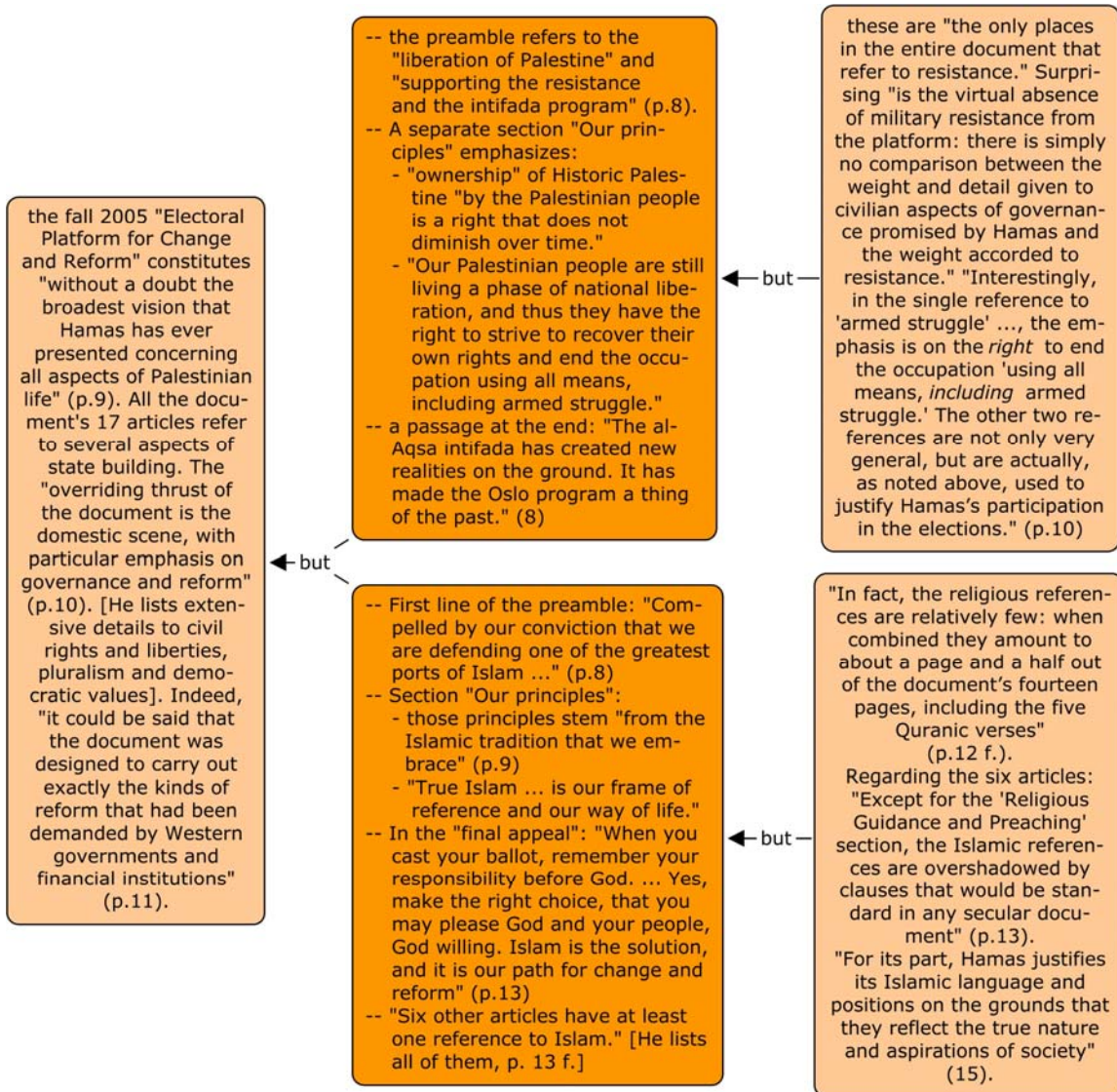


Figure 5: Hroub's discussion of references to violence and Islam in Hamas' 2005 "Electoral Platform for Change and Reform." In the complete map, this part of his argumentation supports the "reason" in Figure 4 (top right corner)

- The document seeks "to address diverse audiences and to convey various messages, not always easy to reconcile. It sought to reassure the wider Palestinian public that their interests were the supreme preoccupation of the government and to convey to Fatah and the other electoral losers its desire to work together. It sought to signal to Israel its nonbelligerency and expectation of smooth interaction in 'necessary contacts in all mundane affairs,' even while emphasizing Palestinian suffering from Israeli policies and the Palestinians' legitimate right to resist the occupation. It sought to overcome or temper the alarm in the West caused by its victory, emphasizing its commitment to responsible governance and to agendas long promoted by the international community. It sought to portray

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- itself to the neighboring skeptical Arab regimes, which feared the ramifications of a Hamas victory on their domestic affairs, as a responsible, trustworthy, and moderate government. At the same time, it had to live up to its promises and the expectations of its own constituency, and to reassure other Islamist movements and exponents of political Islam in the Middle East and beyond that the Hamas in power would be the same as the Hamas they had always known.” (p. 19 f.)
- Haniyeh emphasizes: “ ‘We are committed to settling our differences in political positions and policies through dialogue, cooperation, and continuous coordination between the presidency and the other national institutions’ .” (p. 20)
  - “Despite the refusal to formally recognize the PLO-Israel agreements or international resolutions on Palestine, the concept of the two-state solution is everywhere between the lines in Haniyeh’s speech, including in his insistence ‘on the Palestinian geographical unity and the need to link the two halves (West Bank and Gaza) of the homeland politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Parallel to this, we also emphasize the importance of linking the Palestinian people at home and in the diaspora.’ The reference to the West Bank and Gaza as the ‘two halves,’ with no reference to the ‘rest of the homeland’ in between (i.e., Israel proper) is highly significant” (p. 22).
  - “As in the case of the electoral platform and the national unity program already discussed, there is not the slightest hint of an intention to destroy Israel. Indeed, the speech could be said to represent an advance over the other two in this regard in that there is no reference to either ‘armed struggle’ (as in the preamble of the electoral platform) or ‘the current phase’ (as in article 5 of the national unity platform)” (p. 22).
  - “the core of Haniyeh’s speech was his government’s program” (p. 23, with examples).
  - “emphasizing good governance, matters of social justice, various aspects of economic and administrative reform, the rule of law, and the judiciary” (p. 23).
  - additionally, “the notion of citizenship was developed. ... ‘The government also undertakes to protect the rights of every citizen and to firmly establish the principle of citizenship without any discrimination on the basis of creed, belief or religion, or political affiliation’ .” (p. 23)
  - new emphasis on economical questions in terms of “free-market thinking” (p. 24).

### 6. BOUNDARY SETTING AND COMMON GROUND

After this reconstruction of the arguments by Herzog and Hroub, we can compare now how both authors draw the boundaries around the problem in question. For that it is sufficient to put together the ideas they are referring to without reflecting their relations and connections. Based on the information and considerations the authors provide to support their reasons, and based on the considerations they derive from these reasons, we can collect all the items that are within the boundaries of their own, individual attention, respectively (Figure 6).

In a fictitious dialogue whose goal was to overcome the disagreements between the authors, a visualization like Figure 6 could be used to challenge each of them to defend his own boundary setting, and to confront him with the perspective of the other. It

is important to make the mutual mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion visible. This way, it becomes obvious that, on the one hand, Herzog has to react to the new documents of Hroub's analysis and, on the other, that Hroub has to react to the facts regarding Hamas' activities which Herzog lists. It is neither sufficient to refer exclusively to the charter of 1988 and recent violence, nor exclusively to the signs of hope that become visible in the most recent documents.

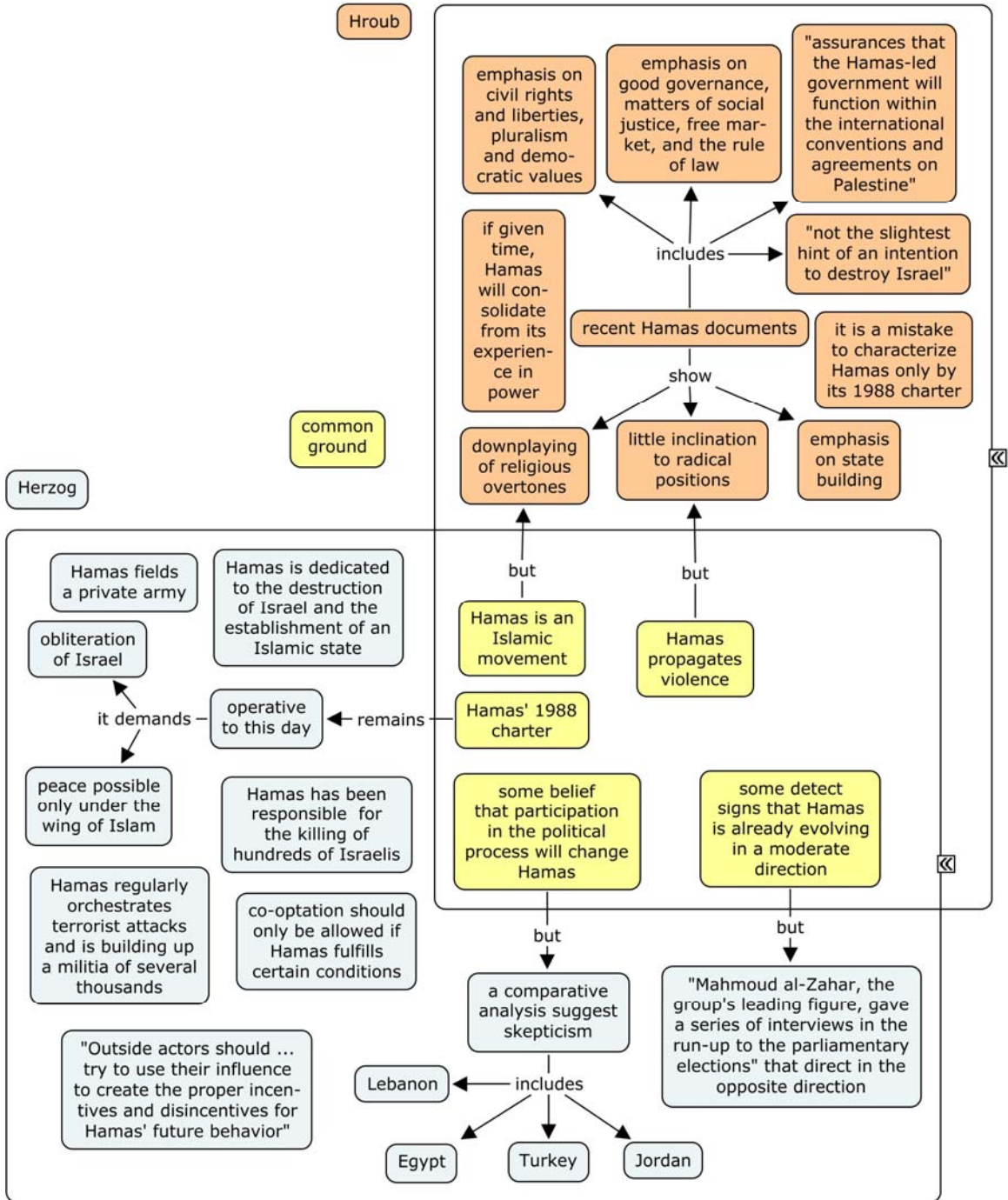


Figure 6: How Herzog and Hroub draw the boundaries around the Hamas issue, in reduced form

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What becomes additionally visible in Figure 6 is something like a “common ground” on which further communication between Herzog and Hroub could be based. These are the issues both authors mention in their argumentation. However, it is important to note that each of them would *frame* these issues in a radical different way. For both is clear that Hamas is an Islamic Party, but does this mean that Hamas is “dedicated” to establish an Islamic state on what is now Israel (Herzog), or must this fact be counterbalanced by the “progressive de-emphasis on Islam” (p. 26) that Hroub tries to demonstrate? Both refer to Hamas’ 1988 charter, or covenant, but does this document remain “operative to this day” (Herzog), or must it be seen in the historical context in which it has been produced (Hroub)? And so on.

A debate, however, on how these “shared” issues *should* be framed will probably not change much. Rather, it seems to be more likely that the processes of boundary setting and framing would simply be repeated with regard to each issue the parties focus on. Since any point of a controversial issue can be framed and bounded by means of different belief-value-attitude systems in different ways, parties to a conflict could move around forever without changing anything within their systems of beliefs, values, and attitudes.

### 7. REVEALING THE BASICS

At this point, however, Logical Argument Mapping has to offer something different. In the maps that represent the main arguments of Herzog (Figure 1 and 3) and Hroub (Figure 4), it is easy to see that the validity of these arguments depends on two different things: first, on the truth of the *reasons* provided and, second, on the truth of the *warrant* whose function is to justify the relation between reason and claim. That means, each of the authors is challenged either to *convince* his opponent of the truth of both these central elements of his argument, or to *change* the whole argument.

With regard to the reasons both provide, each of the authors could easily criticize his opponent by saying that his focus is too narrow. Each of them excludes exactly those data that are within the boundaries of his opponent, but not his own (see Figure 6). But while a discussion about what has to be included as significant and what can be excluded might lead to just those boundary and framing fights that can endlessly be continued without any result, defending the warrants leads directly to the heart of an argument.

Hroub, for example, realizes for himself that his central warrant could easily be rejected. According to my reconstruction in Figure 4 (oval text box), this warrant says:

If recent documents show a new emphasis on state building, “little inclination to radical positions,” and downplaying of religious “overtones,” then there has been “an evolution in Hamas’s political thinking toward pragmatism and the Palestinian ‘mainstream’.” (Hroub, 2006, p. 25)

Reflecting on the adequacy of this warrant, he refers to skeptics who would argue against it by “suspecting a ploy” by Hamas “to gain power by concealing true agendas” (p.26). He admits that this might be possible:

But it is equally true that the ‘new’ discourse of diluted religious content—to say nothing of the movement’s increasing pragmatism and flexibility in the political domain—reflects genuine and cumulative changes within Hamas. (p. 27)



However, Herzog could argue at this point that Hroub's rebuttal of the skeptics' objection does not provide any new information beyond what Hroub already presented to support his main reason. The supporting documents themselves, however, can in no way exclude the possibility that their authors tried to hide their "true" intentions. At the end, Hroub would have to admit that he cannot completely exclude this possibility. And that means, his warrant is not really strong enough to justify his conclusion.

An analysis of Herzog's warrants, on the other side, reveals similar problems. First of all, using historic "lessons" to justify an universal statement like "No Islamist movement has renounced violence or moderated its ideology of its own volition" (oval text box on the top of Figure 3) is an inductive inference. Induction, however, is not a valid argument form. Even if the conclusion might be highly probable, there is always the possibility that something different happens. Hroub might also criticize at this point that the claim that Islamic movements change only based on pressure sounds hardly convincing. There may be many alternative explanations for those developments of Islamic movements which Herzog discusses in his article. Also, while Herzog highlights for example with regard to Egypt that "Decades of repression and political exclusion eventually split the [Muslim Brotherhood] into two branches," with the "moderates" moving "toward the mainstream" and renouncing the "use of violence in 1971," while the "radicals found their way into Egyptian Islamic Jihad and ultimately al Qaeda," it might well be argued that the radicalization of the one branch is caused by exactly the same "repression" that caused supposedly the pacification of the other. And against the warrant that I derived in Figure 3 from Herzog's "most important lesson," that only pressure motivates "an Islamic movement to renounce violence and to moderate its ideology," Hroub might well argue: Why pressing a development that is already under its way?

At the end, the opponents could realize that the whole debate sounds a bit like the debate whether the chicken or the egg was first. Do we need a changed Hamas before we grant "legitimate political status," or do we need to grant this status before Hamas can change?

## 8. CONCLUSION

Against Fogelin's pessimistic assumption that we have to live with the fact that there are "deep disagreements" which cannot be subject to rational resolution, I developed in this paper a pragmatic approach by proposing a *tool*—Logical Argument Mapping (LAM)—that can be used to deal with any kind of disagreement and conflict as long as opponents are both ready to talk to each other and seriously interested to overcoming their difficulties in a peaceful way. LAM is based on the idea that the cognitive mechanisms that hinder mutual understanding must be visualized in order to change them. Challenging the parties to a conflict not only to provide reasons for their claims, but also to justify the assumption that those reasons are strong enough to support their claims, reveals how they define the boundaries around the issue in question, how they frame what is relevant for them, and how they make sense of any information and event, with which they are confronted.

Logical Argument Mapping is a visualization tool whose main function is to stimulate self-reflexivity and self-criticism. We have to *see* why we are thinking the way we are thinking in order to change—at least sometimes—the basic assumptions that form,

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mostly implicitly and unconsciously, those systems of beliefs, values, and attitudes that are responsible for how we bound and frame the things we are facing.

[link to commentary](#)

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