



The "Straw man fallacy"

Description

A **straw man** is a common form of argument and is an informal **fallacy** based on giving the impression of refuting an opponent's argument, while actually refuting an argument that was not presented by that opponent. One who engages in this **fallacy** is said to be "attacking a **straw man**."

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Further References

Emeren, F. H. Van, Amsterdam, F. V., & Walton, D.. (1996). The straw man fallacy. Logic and Argumentation

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139600187

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"In this paper, an analysis is given of the straw man fallacy as a misrepresentation of someone's commitments in order to refute that person's argument. with this analysis a distinction can be made between straw man and other closely related fallacies such as ad hominem, secundum quid and ad verecundiam. when alleged cases of the straw man fallacy are evaluated, the speaker's commitment should be conceived normatively in relation to the type of conversation the speaker was supposed to be engaged in."

Talisse, R., & Aikin, S. F.. (2006). Two forms of the Straw Man. Argumentation

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s10503-006-9017-8

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"The authors identify and offer an analysis of a new form of the straw man fallacy, and then explore the implications of the prevalence of this fallacy for contemporary political discourse."

Lewiński, M.. (2011). Towards a Critique-Friendly Approach to the Straw Man Fallacy Evaluation. Argumentation

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1007/s10503-011-9227-6

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"In this article i address the following question: when are reformulations in argumentative criticisms reasonable and when do they become fallacious straw men? following ideas developed in the integrated version of pragma-dialectics, i approach argumentation as an element of agonistic exchanges permeated by arguers' strategic manoeuvring aimed at effectively defeating the opponent with reasonable means. i propose two basic context-sensitive criteria for deciding on the reasonableness of reformulations: precision of the rules for interpretation (precise vs. loose) and general expectation of cooperativeness (critical vs. constructive). on the basis of analysis of examples taken from online political discussions, i argue that in some contexts, especially those that are critical and loose, what might easily be classified as a straw man following conventional treatment should be taken as a harsh, yet reasonable, strategic argumentative criticism."

Lewiński, M., & Oswald, S.. (2013). When and how do we deal with straw men? A normative and cognitive pragmatic account. Journal of Pragmatics

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2013.05.001

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"We propose to treat informal fallacies in a comprehensive pragmatic account which investigates both their invalidity and misleading – sometimes deceptive – character. we do so by drawing on the integrated pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (van eemeren, 2010) and on cognitive pragmatics (sperber and wilson, 1995). as a case in point, we present a contextually and cognitively grounded account of the straw man fallacy by addressing two interrelated questions: (1) when can we justifiably say that the straw man occurred? and (2) how can we explain its remaining covert, its persuasiveness and its deceptiveness?in the normative pragma-dialectical sense, fallacies are unreasonable strategic manoeuvres aimed at persuading, i.e., violations of the rules of a reasonable critical discussion that may have rhetorical allure. determining when straw men occur is a matter of drawing the line between representation and misrepresentation in argumentation, and this can be investigated by taking into account the contextual specificities of activity types. this will answer

question (1).from a cognitive pragmatic perspective, fallacies can moreover be viewed as an arguer's attempt at contextually constraining addressees' interpretations; their deceptive 'success' characteristically requires information about the fallacious nature of the argument to be absent. we formulate our answer to question (2) in terms of such a constraint on information-processing mechanisms at play in the meaning derivation procedure. © 2013 elsevier b.v."

Ika, L. A.. (2018). Beneficial or Detrimental Ignorance: The Straw Man Fallacy of Flyvbjerg's Test of Hirschman's Hiding Hand. World Development

Plain numerical DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.10.016

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"In a recent paper in this journal, 'the fallacy of beneficial ignorance: a test of hirschman's hiding hand', professor bent flyvbjerg claims that there is no such thing as beneficial ignorance and that ignorance is detrimental to project success. moreover, he argues that if hirschman's principle of the hiding hand were correct, then benefit overruns would exceed cost overruns. thus, with a statistical test, he demonstrates that the hiding hand is in fact less common than its 'evil twin', the planning fallacy. in this rejoinder, the author shows that flyvbjerg's test is built on a straw man fallacy and that he fails to refute the hiding hand. contrary to flyvbjerg—who focuses on the narrow costs and benefits—this paper provides evidence that while the hiding hand is found among projects that are project management failures but project successes, the planning fallacy fits with projects that are both project management and project failures. on that basis, the author analyzes a sample of 161 world bank-funded projects of different types and finds that the hiding hand prevails. while future research should ascertain this finding, the author then points out the methodological limitations of flyvbjerg's test. indeed, it is ironic that the hiding hand, a principle crafted against the very idea of cost–benefit analysis, is refuted on that very basis. even worse, flyvbjerg, in his cost–benefit analysis, ignores the full life-cycle project costs and benefits, the unintended project effects, the difficulties, and problem-solving abilities so dear to hirschman, and, thus, treats the management of projects as a kind of 'black box'. finally, the author submits that hirschman was a behavioral project theorist, and argues that it is more important to shed light on the circumstances where the hiding hand works than to question whether the principle of the hiding hand is right."

Macagno, F., & Damele, G.. (2013). The dialogical force of implicit premises: Presumptions in enthymemes. Informal Logic

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"The implicit dimension of enthymemes is investigated from a pragmatic perspective to show why a premise can be left unexpressed, and how it can be used strategically. the relationship between the implicit act of taking for granted and the pattern of presumptive reasoning is shown to be the cornerstone of kairos and the fallacy of straw man. by taking a proposition for granted, the speaker shifts the burden of proving its unacceptability onto the hearer. the resemblance (likeness) of the tacit

premise with what is commonly acceptable or has been actually stated can be used as a rhetorical strategy”

Category

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2. Logic & Reasoning
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