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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF CEDA JUDGING PHILOSOPHIES
PART I:
DEFINITIVE ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF CERTAIN TACTICS
AND ARGUMENTS

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After the First Annual National CEDA Debate Tournament at Wichita State University in April, 1986, the tournament evaluation committee reported that an overwhelming majority of those respondents surveyed favored creating a judge's philosophy statement booklet for the 1987 tournament. The result was a document containing philosophy statements from the majority of participating critics at the 1987 CEDA National Tournament. A similar booklet was prepared for the 1988 tournament, and there continues to be support for the booklet at future CEDA Nationals. The purpose of this study is to analyze and summarize the judging philosophies submitted at the 1987 and 1988 CEDA tournaments. To that end, this study isolates those comments made in the philosophy statements at the 1987 and 1988 National CEDA Tournament which accept or reject certain practices implicit in the activity. This analysis is descriptive in nature.

Previous research in this area is scarce. In 1974, Robert Cox published an article in the *Journal of the American Forensics Association* which analyzed the content of philosophy statements submitted at the 1974 National Debate Tournament. Given the numerous differences between NDT and CEDA, and the lapse in time since the Cox study, the applicability of Cox's findings are somewhat limited.

The potential implications of this type of analysis may be far reaching. CEDA has emerged as a competitive means of argumentation without a firm theoretical foundation. The unique elements introduced by the Cross Examination Debate Association include an examination of non-policy debate propositions, the need for debaters to introduce decision-making criteria into the round, the importance of inductive reasoning and debating without a plan or plan objections. It is possible that a consensus of opinions may emerge from an analysis of philosophy statements which would help refine and develop the theoretical basis for CEDA debate.

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study consists of the judging philosophy statements submitted at the 1987 and 1988 National CEDA Tournament. Although the sample is limited to those schools and judges attending the National Tournaments, the sample reasonably reflects the diverse membership of CEDA. Furthermore, because all

statements are included in this study, the analysis should reflect the unique perspectives of judges who may be on the fringe of the activity.

The initial pool of statements was reduced by eliminating those philosophies which were simply reprints of the judge's NDT judging philosophy, as well as 1988 statements which simply duplicated an individual's 1987 philosophy. The excluded NDT statements were clearly labeled as coming from the NDT judging booklet and incorporated comments pertaining to NDT-style debate. As a result, these statements rarely discussed many of the unique issues of CEDA rounds (e.g., they would discuss advanced counterplan theory, permutation theories, and NDT counterwarrant theory). Duplicative CEDA philosophy statements were excluded on the assumption that such judges had not altered their judging philosophy and consequently should not be counted twice.

The sample, the analysis and the conclusions are qualitative in nature — a foundation for additional research. No generalizations beyond the philosophy statements examined would be appropriate at this time. Future sampling techniques will require an expansion of the sampling frame and a random survey of the CEDA community.

The categories used for content analysis emerged by employing the following procedure (See Weber, 1985; Bowers, 1970). The philosophy statements were analyzed by trained coders in an attempt to locate consistent themes or categories. The emergent categories corresponded to the questions judges were asked when completing the Judge's Philosophy Form. The units of analysis for this study were the sentence or sentences that best reflects a given theme or category.

Each philosophy statement was then classified and recorded according to the categories. This first procedure produced an initial list of 24 major codes categories [topicality, counterwarrants, etc.], and 103 minor codes categories [generally accepts topicality, accepts counterwarrants with reservations].

Pilot studies on a random sample of the statements using Scott's Pi formula (Scott, 1955) determined the reliability of the major and minor codes to be .691. This reliability coefficient is defensible given the number of major and minor codes and the large data base employed. The codes and their operational definitions were then clarified and defined using standard debate textbook definitions of the arguments, strategies and tactics isolated as categories (See Ulrich, 1986).

Throughout the process, the weight, direction, or intensity given to a portion of a philosophy statement was based on the classification scheme discussed by Cox (1974). In other words, a portion of the statement was further categorized if the judge 'generally accepts', 'generally rejects', or 'accepts with reservations' a given tactic of argumentation employed by the debaters.

The data analysis reflects only those portions of a philosophy statement that include specific references to the variable under discussion. If a critic chose not to discuss his or her perception of a given element of CEDA debate then the data for that category was coded as missing. Because the statements are quoted as

representative of certain positions and not of individuals, the names of the judges have not been included (Cox, 1974).

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Paradigms. Tabula rasa was the most popular paradigm utilized for evaluating a debate round (30.2%). Examination of the philosophy statements indicate that there are two interpretations of this paradigm. The first interpretation is rather pure, implying that all issues are open to debate. For example, the argument that 'economic growth is bad', the use of Emory switches, or any other strategy or position that is argued, applied and supported in the round, is viewed as legitimate. These judges chose to listen and evaluate issues, rather than project their personal values into the round.

There is a lack of consensus among the judges that call themselves tabula rasa. This is reflected in a second interpretation of tabula rasa which is strikingly different from the first. One judge commented on this disparity in interpretations. "I hate to use that term because when I was debating so many judges told me they were tabula rasa when they really weren't." If tabula rasa implies an open agenda towards evidence, analysis, and theory then one would not expect exceptions to the paradigm. Nevertheless, for some tabula rasa judges such exceptions or qualifications do exist.

The nature of such qualifications to the tabula rasa paradigm remain vague. For example, one judge wrote "I am tabula rasa to the extent that I will allow virtually any argument to be presented. I will, however, intervene against ridiculous arguments."

The second most popular means of evaluating CEDA debate is to simply let the debaters decide the paradigm (26.6%). This paradigm differs from tabula rasa to the extent that such judges do not expressly indicate a preference for tabula rasa. These judges see their role as one of being non-interventionist, objective and issue-orientated. They are unwilling to impose their likes and dislikes on a given debate round. As a group, they hope to be fair and impartial. They choose to bring few preconceptions concerning the topic into the round, assuming the role the debaters ask them to assume; to assess arguments according to the standards and criteria offered in the debate. "The role of the debate judge in the CEDA round should be controlled by the debate teams in the specific round. I regard the choice of paradigm to be the responsibility of the debaters."

The third most popular paradigm was the critic of argumentation (23.7%). Critics of argumentation tend to intervene during the debate round in an attempt to insure the sound use and development of logic and argumentative skills on the part of the participants:

Being handed a ballot does not require one to become stupid and willing to swallow every silly argument that is dished up during the round. I am perfectly capable of voting for arguments that I despise, but I do not vote for putative bad arguments. I do not pretend that all arguments are equal; there are some that are so tactically error ridden that they can't serve as a justification for a ballot.

The skills evaluated in a debate round may include analysis, organization, construction of an argument, refutation, use of evidence and delivery. Several judges perceive their task as counter-productive if they simply base their decision upon a personal resolution of the substantive issues raised in a debate round.

An additional 7.2 percent of the philosophies analyzed were from judges who saw their role as that of an audience member. For several critics, evaluating a debate round as an audience member implies that the debate should be one that a normally intelligent audience, an audience without extensive information on the topic, could follow and from which they could leave hoping to be able to hear another debate. A good debate is one that can be judged by an intelligent layperson. Judging ought not require command of a special jargon, nor training in listening to a verbal shorthand delivered at twice the pace of normal intelligible public speech.

A small minority of judges voiced their commitment to several other paradigms. Hypothesis testing was employed by 5.8% of the judges, while several other paradigms combined to total slightly over 6 percent of the judges.

The selection and use of a decision making paradigm is clearly the most descriptive variable analyzed. The lack of any guiding consensus is quite explicit throughout the philosophy statements.

Topicality. The judging booklet requested the critics to indicate if they felt they were liberal or conservative on topicality. How a given critic operationalized these terms differed greatly. Some judges who seemingly would not vote for topicality said they were liberal; while others said they were conservative. Consequently, the content of the philosophy statements was recoded to reflect those judges who generally accepted topicality arguments, i.e. were willing to vote for it; those judges that generally rejected topicality arguments, i.e. were unwilling to vote for it; and those judges that accepted topicality with reservations, i.e. they fell somewhere in the middle.

Although the community seems divergent in its acceptance of topicality, those judges who generally accept topicality (42.6%) arguments voiced similar feelings toward the nature and implications of the argument. Generally, they assume topicality is a voting issue in CEDA debate. Furthermore, topicality is viewed as a stock issue, and as such is debatable in any round that the negative chooses to introduce it.

15.6 percent of the judges generally reject topicality issues. Their feelings are reflected in rather definitive statements. "Topicality is an issue where I am very

liberal and usually consider it a wasted argument." "Let's debate the proposition as stated and understood."

Prima facie standards. The Prima facie standards affirmative and negative teams must fulfill to win a ballot from a judge, are the next variable to be discussed. The prima facie burden which was isolated as most important among participating critics was the need for the affirmative to justify/defend the resolution (36.1%).

The burden of justifying the resolution could be fulfilled by any of three different means — again, a reflection of the lack of theoretical consensus within the community. The first means is to justify the entire resolution. This requirement implies that the affirmative must justify the entire resolution by establishing decision criteria, adequate definitions, and a case built by describing and defending the value the affirmative upholds.

A second means of justifying the resolution is to justify one example of the resolution. This should not imply that off-the-wall cases are to be condoned, but that 'example' cases are fine if the affirmative shows that the example is reasonable, typical and within the spirit of the resolution.

In other words, numerous judges explicitly reject the notion that the affirmative must uphold and defend the whole resolution. One judge commented "I believe examples are by and large the most useful and most educational way to debate any topic. Therefore, a strong presumption rests against any negative who attempts to pressure an affirmative into justifying the whole resolution."

It appears that a consensus may not be achieved, but, as long as an affirmative does not advocate a horribly narrow interpretation of the resolution (as defined by the judge) then some judges will not hold the affirmative to a rigorous whole resolutional standard. One judge explained:

I will not automatically accept negative 'whole-resolution' arguments. I expect the affirmative to embrace the broad principals of the resolution and to choose an area of unquestioned significance. Please don't attempt to win on narrowness and surprise; that's not what our educational activity is all about.

A third means of justifying the resolution requires the affirmative team to simply demonstrate that the resolution is true. A prima facie affirmative case is one which allows the judge to say 'yes' to the resolution. For some judges this implies that the affirmative must present enough justification for the resolution in the first affirmative speech so that a reasonable person would agree that the resolution is true. In other words, the focus of non-policy CEDA debate for these judges is centered on the probable or relative truth of the resolution based on the evidence and arguments presented in the round.

In addition to the prima facie burden of justifying the resolution, numerous judges feel that affirmative teams must up-hold and win their criteria (27.8%). For many judges, it is not sufficient to quickly and carelessly toss out criteria. Several

judges indicated the value of hearing criterion explicitly identified and defended, and impacts of contentions related back to the criterion. Furthermore, the criteria should establish the values and a weighing mechanism. The affirmative contentions should be consistent with, and flow from the affirmative definitions and criteria.

Several judges view the affirmative's criteria as much more than just another argument. They seem to be willing to base a decision on whether or not the affirmative wins their criteria. For example, "I will base my decision on the criteria set by the affirmative. I will accept almost any criteria unless the negative can convince me that the affirmative's criteria makes the case non-topical — which is difficult to do."

Some judges drew a rather reasonable distinction between types of, or uses for, criteria. One use is criteria-as-a-decision-rule. In other words, unless a decision rule is clearly included in the criteria, they reserve the right to evaluate the impact of arguments on their own. Criteria issues are primary issues — to be decided before anything else. Others saw criteria as a means to establish or define ones value. There must be a value that is weighed with the criteria. Consequently, in any given CEDA round, there may be several different uses and purposes for criteria arguments.

Several judges commented on how affirmatives were abusing the intent or nature of criteria arguments. "The criteria should be explicit and allow both affirmative and negative positions to be assessed. I dislike circular self-fulfilling decision rules." Many judges echoed comments similar to the following:

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I really don't like it when the affirmative maintains that 'well, we need to show X, but the negative needs to show X1, Y, and Z'. I strongly feel that the negative should be able to (and have to) choose how they want to attack an affirmative case. I HATE it when the affirmative dictates the negative's ground.

The third prima facie standard discussed was the burden placed on negative teams to defeat the affirmative's criteria or win their own (15.6). For some judges there is an explicit mandate that, for negative teams to win when they propose counter-criteria, they must convince the judge that the criteria offered by the affirmative are either practically or inherently unreasonable. Of course, counter-criteria are welcomed by many as long as the affirmative's criteria is indicted and the counter-criteria is justified in the round, or shown to be superior.

The next prima facie requirement warranting discussion is the burden placed on teams to clash with the opposition (8.2%). This burden is usually placed on the negative team and implies that they should directly clash with the affirmative case contentions, definitions and criteria. For some judges the idea of two ships passing in the night seems fruitless. "The first obligation of the negative team is to clash with the affirmative case. I would rather see negative teams attempt to refute the reasoning and evidence of the affirmative than get bogged down in canned

arguments that are unproductive."

Debate theory arguments and evidence. The next theme concerns a judge's willingness or unwillingness to accept debate theory arguments. Of the 52.8 percent who generally accept debate theory arguments, many believe that debaters help establish debate theory:

I think theory arguments are one of the healthiest things debaters can use. They generate thought on the proper form and ethics of argumentation and encourage debaters not to passively accept the theoretical 'establishment' in their circuit.

As one might expect, some judges will readily accept debate theory arguments if minimal standards are met. For example, an even division of affirmative and negative ground, and an understanding between what is theory and what is illogical or unsupported opinion seems to be expected.

16.5 percent of the judges categorically reject debate theory arguments. One critic stated "I respond quite strongly to debate theory arguments. It is the responsibility of the teams to debate the topic, not tell me how I ought to evaluate a debate round." Simply stated, some judges do not like debate theory arguments and rarely vote for them. They view the purpose of the debate as a discussion of the issues, not to debate debate.

The issue of accepting or rejecting debate theory arguments is related to accepting or rejecting debate theory evidence. Compared to the percentage of judges willing to listen to debate theory arguments, a rather low percentage (24.3 %) are willing to listen to debate theory evidence. Nevertheless, theory evidence is acceptable and preferred from argument scholars and/or active CEDA coaches. Along a similar vein, several judges found it valuable for debaters to defend their positions through the use of quotations from leading debate scholars.

Those who generally reject debate theory evidence were vivid in their commentary. "I don't buy 'this is CEDA, so you must do such and such' even if someone once said it in print." Many judges felt that a debater's analysis would be sufficient, consequently, evidence on debate theory is unnecessary. Debaters are considered fully capable of debating the issues and presenting logical arguments about theory themselves.

Other judges were concerned with the quality of such evidence. One critic indicated that "evidence on debate theory is pure speculation and is usually cut such that it is conclusionary. I am more interested in the reasons why the conclusion was reached."

One final theme concerning debate theory which emerged from the philosophies is a distaste by many judges to accept the writings of other coaches and judges. "I will put aside my own views of theory and let the debaters resolve it, but I cannot think of a good reason to substitute the opinions of other coaches for my own."

Many judges prefer that such arguments deal with the appropriateness of a given perspective to the resolution at hand, rather than with the likes and dislikes of a given scholar.

Presumption. The implications of presumption in non-policy CEDA debate have long been discussed without resolution. Because presumption is so elusive, many judges (47.4%) have simply decided to let the debaters determine where it exists. The location of presumption - either with the affirmative or with the negative - can be based on analysis supporting a claim for presumption.

Because presumption is an issue that floats in the round, the team that can best substantiate the value and meet the criteria in a specific round is the team to which presumption will be assigned.

For some, the process of assigning presumption is based on argumentation. "In CEDA debate, presumption is not affixed to one side. It can be argued in the round. I will give presumption to the team who proves popular opinion is behind the value or to the team who does the best job of debating."

Many judges (33%) are willing to accept traditional notions of presumption and assign it to the negative team, believing that presumption rests with the negative and the speaking order supports such a view.

Although assigning presumption to the negative seems straight forward, its assignment is still illusive to some judges. "Since the affirmative carries the burden of proof, the negative presumption needs to be overcome, however, I believe that the presumption is slight."

While some feel presumption lies with the negative, they may be willing to listen to presumption shift arguments. Several judges felt that presumption can shift in value debate because so many different values exist in a culture.

A few critics (11.4) simply deny the existence of presumption in CEDA debate. Their intensity towards this issue is reflected in the following statement: "I do not believe in presumption and this may be one theoretical argument that I am predisposed against. I would rather flip a coin to decide a round rather than assume that one side or the other should automatically win." Finally, one critic argued:

I see no reason in theory to assign artificial presumption to either side. I see presumption as a natural response an auditor has to a claim, a predisposition to believe or disbelieve it on its face. Presumption is not a tie-breaker. If it were a tie, I would cast my vote as a tie.

One final method of assigning presumption is to place it against the resolution or in favor of the present system (8.2).

Counter warrants and counter-intuitive arguments. Many judges commented on the legitimacy of certain types of negative arguments such as counter warrants. Critics who support the use of counter warrants (31.6%) expressed the following sentiments:

The term counter warrant has different meanings to different theorists, what I'm saying is that negative teams have a right to introduce relevant argument areas not introduced by the affirmative.

In other words, counter warrants may be understood as a negative strategy which may apply against certain kinds of affirmative cases. Furthermore, counter warrants are seen by some as a means to reward debaters who have taken the time to benefit from the wealth of research available on a topic.

Statements from those judges who dislike counter warrants (10.2) are strong and definitive. One judge stated, "generally, I do not buy generic counter warrants. The negative must show, through links how the adoption of the resolution, as defined and perhaps limited by the affirmative, will reasonably give rise to the disadvantage." Some critics simply feel that counter warrants avoid direct clash and 'muddy' the debate.

Although the difference between the percentage of judges who accept (24.9) versus judges who reject (29.3) counter intuitive arguments is rather narrow, statements between these two perspectives represents a significant gap. Those who accept counter intuitive arguments do so for various reasons:

Arguments do not necessarily have to be grounded in the real world for them to have weight with me. I believe that arbitrarily labeling arguments as counter intuitive is anti-intellectual. In fact, if you can document that the world is flat I will give credence to this position in the round. I am not of the persuasion that positions which impact in nuclear war are ludicrous. In fact, I think this simply demonstrates an ability to heighten the risk associated with a particular position.

The basis for accepting counter intuitive argumentation may find its roots in the purpose or intent of the activity. Many judges do not view debate as a 'real world' activity; rather they view debate as an artificial setting to test critical and strategic thinking, as well as communication skills. They have no problem voting on arguments such as nuclear war is good or liberty is bad. Furthermore, one judge wrote "I accept any argument — who am I to say that 'growth is bad' is counter intuitive? The California Condor certainly wouldn't agree with me!"

29.3 percent of the respondents indicated that counter intuitive arguments would be rejected at face value. Several opinions are reflected in the following sample of philosophy statements. "I reject counter intuitive cases and negative arguments, as well as 17 different nuke wars, species, beef, robotics, etc. I will only vote on these if they are dropped. I only need to hear 'these are counter intuitive' and I will drop them." This kind of judge reacts very strongly to counter intuitive arguments.

Some judges provided specific reasons why such arguments are problematic. For example, counter intuitive arguments appear to be circular reasoning, therefore,

they are not appreciated or tolerated. Such arguments often add little to the debate that would tend to affect their decision. Debaters should simply avoid shifting focus to outcomes or scenarios speculated to occur in the future, especially when negatives assume that consequences would occur because of a position taken in the round. They have great difficulty accepting an argument that the world will end in nuclear holocaust because the affirmative is advocating a rather small change in the status quo.

Speed. One of the most divisive concerns of CEDA debate is the judge's willingness to tolerate a rapid rate of delivery. The results indicate an almost 2-to-1 margin favoring judges who flatly reject speed, compared to judges who accept speed. Those judges (13.5%) who are willing to listen to a fast round seem to enjoy observing debates that are quick enough to be lively; quick enough so they do not get bored. One judge wrote:

I don't abhor speed. In fact I much prefer a fast round. I believe that the spread is a skill just like any other skill and that those who can perform it well are to be rewarded just as one would reward someone else who perfects a different skill. I believe that the ability to spread reflects an ability to think quickly and creatively and allows greater depth as well as breadth to be applied to argumentation.

Those critics who declared an unwillingness to listen to or tolerate speed (25.7%) were quite direct in their attitude towards such a strategy. If the arguments are presented in an incomprehensible manner, they are unacceptable. Rapid delivery is considered to be poor communication, and does not build the argumentation skills academic debate attempts to advance. Fast delivery defeats the purpose of persuasive communication. These judges abhor speed "not because [they] can't flow it, but it doesn't belong in CEDA." Spread and speed debate is seen as pedagogically useless and therefore should not be encouraged. Finally, one telling commentary indicated:

I don't like the spread and I strongly dislike a wheezing, gasping debate style which presents material so rapidly that arguments become a blur. Excessive speed is, in my view a deterrent to effective communication. I clearly prefer outstanding clash on fewer arguments than the blinding speed of a spread artist.

CONCLUSIONS

If one can assume that judging philosophies are an accurate reflection of the nature of the activity, then a well defined lack of consensus seems to exist concerning several key aspects of the activity.

Although it would be unreasonable to expect a prevailing paradigm to emerge from the philosophy statements, one might expect a consistent interpretation of what

it means to be tabula rasa or a critic of argumentation. That does not appear to be the case.

At its current theoretical stage of evolution, CEDA debate lacks a foundation or consensus along several argumentative and strategic lines. Of course, depending on one's point of view this may be beneficial or detrimental. Nevertheless, a student's ability to adapt to the particular likes and dislikes of a given critic remains a vital part of the activity. While the expectations demanded by audience/judge adaptation are significant, the overall lack of consensus concerning prima facie standards, debate theory arguments and evidence, presumption, counter warrants and counter intuitive arguments, and speed requires all participants to strive for a higher level of appreciation for the intellectual and argumentative assumptions of the activity.

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