

TOWARD A HOLISTIC MODEL OF PRESUMPTION FOR NON-POLICY DEBATE

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Debates using non-policy topics have grown increasingly popular and have become the most widely practiced form of debate. The development of theories to guide non-policy debate, however, has not kept pace with the growth of the activity. As a result, constructing and testing usable theories is an important task for the non-policy debate community.

One area in particular need of theoretical clarification is the role of presumption. There is general agreement that presumption is important in non-policy debate. It can influence how debates are conducted (Scott and Wynn, 1981; Podgurski, 1983), how they are decided (Matlon, 1981; Thomas and Fryar, 1981; Matlon, 1988), and how we teach our students (Young and Gaske, 1984). However, despite extensive discussion, conflicting views of presumption have evolved. First is the view that presumption is stipulated or assigned prior to the debate (Trapp, 1980; Vasilius, 1980; Scott and Wynn, 1981; Warnik, 1981; Podgurski, 1983; Young and Gaske, 1984; Brydon, 1986). Second is the view that presumption is a psychological advantage that emerges during the interaction (Matlon, 1981; Thomas and Fryar, 1981; Zeuschner and Hill, 1981). Because presumption is important, the present confusion over its role in non-policy debate recently led Matlon to conclude it "essential that the concept be clarified" (1988, p.8).

We have been unable to reconcile the stipulated and psychological views because research to date has been flawed in two important respects. First, we have assumed that it is necessary to choose between the stipulated and psychological views. Thus, we discuss them as though they need be mutually exclusive "types" of presumption. Second, we have failed to identify functional differences between the stipulated and psychological views. Not only have we failed to identify the range of possible functions each can perform, we have assumed the stipulated and psychological "types" are functionally equivalent. As a result, we have come to accept a narrow view of presumption which assumes it to be both unidimensional and unifunctional.

Presumption, I believe, is not characterized exclusively by either the stipulated or psychological view. Although I will return to this point later, my assumption is that they are neither mutually exclusive "types" of presumption, nor functionally equivalent. Rather, presumption is a multidimensional concept that embodies both a stipulated and psychological dimension. Each dimension performs a unique function which necessitates that they be considered collectively in order to fully understand the role of presumption in non-policy debate. My position will be

developed by: (1) explaining the current stipulated and psychological viewpoints; (2) explicating a holistic model which incorporates both dimensions; and (3) justifying the model.

THE CURRENT VIEWS

Stipulated presumption is based largely on Whately's (1830) early treatment of presumption as a rule-based concept. Accordingly, presumption is imposed prior to the debate and remains fixed during the interaction. Stipulated presumption functions to apportion argumentative ground, establish the burden of proof, and serve as a tie breaking mechanism.

The use of different analogs in non-policy debate produces conflicting views of where presumption should be stipulated to reside. For example, according to the legal analog presumption is stipulated for debate as it is in a court of law. Thus, presumption is stipulated in favor of the "accused" and is frequently explained by the phrase "innocent until proven guilty." According to the scientific analog the debate resolution should be treated as a hypothesis in a scientific experiment. Presumption, therefore, is stipulated against the resolution (hypothesis) being tested. This analog is used by a number of theorists to explain the locus of presumption (Trapp, 1980; Vasilius, 1980; Scott and Wynn, 1981; Podgurski, 1983). The legislative analog is also used to fix the locus of presumption. According to this analog the debate is viewed as a policy making exercise. Presumption is assigned to the status quo or the existing order so that risk assumed to be inherent in change can be avoided. Young and Gaske (1984) use this analog to stipulate presumption by focusing their analysis on the policy implications of values. Finally, the argumentative analog is used to stipulate the locus of presumption. According to this analog, presumption is stipulated against the proponent of the resolution and in favor of the opponent of the resolution (Cronkhite, 1966). This analog is frequently explained by the familiar maxim, "he who asserts must prove." Both Warnik (1981) and Brydon (1986) subscribe to the argumentative analog to stipulate the locus of presumption.

The psychological dimension is based largely on Sproule's (1976) reinterpretation of Whately. Sproule points out that over the sixteen years Whately's theory evolved, he came to believe that presumption could be characterized as a psychological advantage. Unlike stipulated presumption, the locus of psychological presumption is not rule-based, but is determined by the "deferences" an auditor to a dispute chooses to grant. Like stipulated presumption, psychological presumption functions to apportion argumentative ground and establish a corresponding burden of proof. Some also argue that it can be used to break ties (Matlon, 1981; Zeuschner and Hill, 1981).

There are conflicting views about the proper locus for psychological presumption. For example, Zeuschner and Hill (1981) argue that the values of

society best represent the appropriate locus for psychological presumption because the focus of debate is on "values and their use in society." (p. 22). Malton (1981) considers societal values to be important, but also acknowledges the importance of the values of both the judge and the debaters. Thomas and Fryar (1981), on the other hand, reject the notion that popular opinion or societal values should be used to determine psychological presumption. Instead they reach the general conclusion that the judge assigns presumption after the debaters "create arguments, invoke sources of evidence, and make other appeals to which the judge can give deference" (p. 523).

HOLISTIC MODEL OF PRESUMPTION

The holistic model I am proposing (Figure 1) contains both a stipulated and a psychological dimension. In this section I will define each component of the model and explain how the model functions.

The stipulated dimension is an imposed convention through which the argumentative ground in a debate is initially assigned. It is based on the argumentative analog explained by Cronkhite (1966) and subsequently advocated by Warnik (1981) and Brydon (1986). According to Cronkhite, the party who initiates a dispute automatically surrenders presumption to the position he/she attacks and assumes the burden of proof for the position he/she advocates.

Based on this analog, four important qualities of the stipulated dimension can be specified. First, the stipulated dimension is assigned prior to the debate. The advocate supporting the resolution always forfeits presumption to the advocate opposing the resolution. Hence, since the affirmative supports the resolution and the negative opposes the resolution, stipulated presumption will always reside with the negative. Second, the stipulated dimension implies no evaluation of either the concept(s) being debated or of the debaters. It does not assume goodness, accuracy, or worth. Rather, as Ehringer and Brockriede explain, "The term only describes a situation that exists and points out the prevailing order of things by declaring that one of the disputants stand at a particular place within that order" (1968, p. 39). Third, since the negative will always be accorded stipulated presumption, the corresponding burden of proof of the resolution is placed on the affirmative. The affirmative's burden is to provide proof sufficient to overcome the presumption stipulated to the position they attack. Fourth, in the event of a tie, the ultimate decision in a debate will be awarded to the negative team since a tie can only exist when the affirmative does not meet the burden of proof to overcome stipulated presumption.

Unlike the stipulated dimension, the psychological dimension does not provide a rule-based delineation of argumentative ground prior to a dispute. Nor does it establish an inviolable tie-breaking mechanism. Rather, the argumentative ground and the corresponding burden of proof emerge during the interaction.

Psychological presumption is based on two factors. First, screens must be legitimized. A screen is composed of a standard with which the auditor compares the advocate's argument. Standards may be derived from external factors such as the value structures of society, the advocates, or the auditor, or popular opinion about a condition or issue (Zeuschner and Hill, 1981; Matlon, 1981). They may also be derived from internal factors such as a preference for arguments, argument forms, or evidence invoked by the advocated (Thomas and Fryar, 1981). Screens may become legitimized either because advocates make argument for them which the auditor grants, or by a priori judgment of the auditor.

Second, each screen must be valued. Value is a measure of the importance attached to a screen. The value of a screen may be determined either through a comparative judgment that the standard embodied in the screen is "more important," "better," or "more beneficial" than an implied or stated alternative standard, or it may be based upon a fixed judgment of the intrinsic nature of the

standard. Screen values may be assigned either because advocates make arguments for them which the auditor grants, or by a priori judgment of the auditor. Thus, an advocate may argue that "quantitative standards are a better measure of significance," or an auditor may believe that prevailing opinion is intrinsically important." The screen with the greatest value would be the primary locus of psychological presumption, while all lesser valued screens would be proportionately less important.

As arguments pass through screens they are weighted. The ultimate weight given to any argument is a product of two factors: (1) how closely it conforms to the standard embodied in the screen, and (2) the value of the screen. Thus, an argument which directly approximates the highest valued screen would be weighted much more heavily than an argument which somewhat approximates a much lesser valued screen. Arguments impact upon the decision made in a debate proportional to the weight they are assigned, with highest weighted arguments influencing the decision most heavily.

Five important qualities of the psychological dimension can be specified. First, psychological presumption is not constant. Unlike stipulated presumption, it is not assignable on the basis of the resolution, but becomes operative only within the context of the screens used. Second, composition of the psychological dimension is auditor dependent. Psychological presumption is a unique product of the interaction between advocates and auditors. Ultimately, however, screens are legitimized and valued because the auditor accepts them a priori, or because the auditor accepts an advocate's argument about them. Third, the psychological dimension can be multi-phasic. Singular or multiple screens may be legitimized during an interaction. It is also possible that no screens may be legitimized. Fourth, screens may have different values. Since the value assigned to any screen is determined by the auditor, no predetermined value can be specified for all screens across all debates. Even within the same debate, screens may have different values resembling a hierarchy accepted by the auditor. Fifth, the advantage of psychological presumption may be accorded to either the affirmative or negative. Screens may be legitimized and valued in such a way that either affirmative or negative arguments may be weighted more heavily.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE MODEL

The holistic model I have proposed is justified for four reasons. First, the assumption of the model, that presumption is a multidimensional concept, is well grounded. The primary theoretical works on presumption to date are those of Whately (1830) and Sproule (1976). It is clear that Whately addressed both the stipulated and psychological dimensions in his treatment of presumption and that Sproule considers both to be applicable and important in debate:

Whatelian presumption, which presents psychological principles in tandem with legal ones, is an especially appropriate framework for the analysis of those situations in which objective assignments of presumption and burden of proof compete against subjective audience predispositions such as in law or contest debate (1976, p. 128).

Conversely, the argument that presumption is a unidimensional concept has little grounding. In the beginning of this paper, I stated that research into the role of presumption in non-policy debate erroneously assumed it necessary to make a choice between the stipulated and psychological views. It is now appropriate to elaborate.

Those that argue that presumption should be viewed exclusively as either stipulated or psychological ignore or misinterpret both Whately (1830) and Sproule (1976). For example, those who support the stipulated view argue that Whately treated presumption predominately as a rule-based concept, but ignore the fact that over the sixteen years Whately's theory evolved, he came to view the psychological dimension as an equally crucial element in a dispute (Sproule, 1976). Similarly, those who support the psychological view tend to ignore all together the rule-based context that gave rise to Whately's treatment of presumption. Furthermore, they erroneously assume Sproule intends to argue exclusively for the psychological interpretation (Brydon, 1986).

Second, the holistic model better addresses criticism applicable to either unidimensional model. Many of the major criticisms offered against the stipulated and psychological dimension do not justify exclusion of either. In fact, they are only legitimate if presumption is viewed unidimensionally; they become irrelevant when a multidimensional view is employed. For example, critics of the stipulated dimension argue that it ignores both societal values (Zeuschner and Hill, 1981), and those values opposed to the resolution (Matlon, 1981). These criticisms assume that the stipulated dimension is the proper domain for consideration of those values. If they are more properly considered in the psychological dimension, as I contend they are, the criticism does not justify exclusion of the stipulated dimension, it simply calls for inclusion of the psychological dimension.

Similarly, the psychological dimension is criticized because it does not provide a tie-breaking mechanism (Brydon, 1986). While no one can deny the importance of having a tie-breaking mechanism in debate, the criticism assumes that the function of the psychological dimension is to break ties. If the stipulated dimension performs that function, the criticism does not justify exclusion of the psychological dimension, it simply justifies inclusion of the stipulated dimension.

Other criticisms assume an inappropriate conceptualization of either the stipulated and psychological dimensions. These criticisms neither apply to the dimensions as they are conceptualized in the holistic model, nor do they argue against the multidimensional view. For example, some have challenged the analog used to explain the stipulated dimension. Zeuschner and Hill argue against the

legislative analog, Thomas and Fryar (1981) argue against the legal analog, and Matlon (1981) argues against the legislative, scientific, and legal analogs. Each critic uses indictment of the analog as reason to reject the stipulated dimension entirely. Of course, accepting the argument that a particular analog is flawed does not justify rejection of the stipulated dimension, it only justifies the search for a better analog.

The argumentative analog used in the holistic model provides superior grounding for the stipulated dimension. This is true because it is based on what happens in argumentation, not what happens in a process one might argue is similar to argumentation. As Cronkhite explains, the locus of stipulated presumption (and the corresponding burden of proof) "is not artificially assigned; it arises from a consideration of the available alternatives. If he (the advocate) does not support the theses, it will go unsupported. If it is unsupported, the occupant of any other position is hardly obligated to respond with refutation" (1966, p. 274). Thus, with the argumentative analog there is no need to assume functional similarity between a debate and a court of law, scientific experiment, or legislative body in order to understand the stipulated dimension.

Similarly, it is argued that psychological presumption distorts the debate process because the debaters will not know all of the values of the judge prior to the debate (Scott and Wynn, 1981; Podgurski, 1983). While it is probably impossible for the debaters to know completely all of the values of any judge, this criticism does not justify excluding what is known. Neither does it justify aborting efforts to find out more about the judge. In short, this criticism calls for increased audience analysis, not rejection of the psychological dimension. More importantly, however, this criticism assumes that the values of the judge are the sole, or even primary base for psychological presumption. According to the holistic model, psychological presumption is defined more broadly, with the values of the judge being but one of several possible bases.

Podgurski (1983) and Ulrich (1983) further claim that the psychological dimension makes debate subjective. Although the subjectivity challenge is significant, there is no convincing evidence which suggests that including the psychological dimension will result in increased subjectivity. To the contrary, individual perspectives are an inherent part of debate because debate is a human communicative interaction. As such, we can expect that the participants are prone toward evaluating and interpreting in ways they can understand and justify. As Balthrop explains, "Inevitably, despite the best attempts to exclude such factors, the set of experiences and beliefs each participant holds has fundamental importance for the ways reality is perceived, interpreted and constructed" (1983, p.4). The experiences and beliefs of the participants become operative when the debaters argue for legitimizing a screen, the judge legitimizes a screen, the debaters argue for particular screen values or argument weights, or the judge establishes screen values or argument weights.

The subjectivity criticism also assumes psychological presumption is arbitrarily imposed by the judge. Certainly this is not the case. The conceptualization of psychological presumption included in the holistic model diffuses this criticism by indicating that the debaters can work actively to argue for the particular screens, values, and weights of psychological presumption; they need not be necessarily be imposed by the judge without consideration of the debaters' input. We have no other option but to rely on the integrity of our judges as trained educators to give a fair and open hearing to our debaters' arguments.

To avoid misinterpretation, I am not arguing that subjectivity is desirable. Rather, it seems important to reconcile the inevitable tendencies of humans to make evaluations through the screen(s) comprising the psychological dimension with the need to ensure accountability for the decision making process employed in debate. In essence, I agree with Zeuschner and Hill (1981) that we will be better off trying to understand when and how the psychological dimension of presumption affects decision making than to pretend it does not exist. The holistic model can help us do that.

Third, the holistic model best represents the interrelationship between the stipulated and psychological dimensions. The stipulated and psychological dimensions function as an integral unit with each dimension adding to the other. For example, the stipulated dimension provides the structural element of a debate through apportionment of argumentative ground and assignment of the burden of proof. The psychological dimension, on the other hand, provides the evaluative element of a debate by legitimizing and valuing screens that are used to assign weights to arguments make during the interaction.

The interrelationship between these roles is important. As the structural component, the stipulated dimension establishes both the boundary and framework in which the psychological dimension evolves and operates. That is to say, without the stipulated dimension there would be no reason for the psychological dimension to function, nor any boundary within which is could even emerge. Conversely, it is through the psychological dimension that the stipulated dimension attains its meaning. For example, the apportionment of argumentative ground, or assignment of the burden of proof have relevance only in the context of the debate. The salient factors of that context are the screens and values which influence how arguments are evaluated and what weights they are assigned. Thus, while the stipulated dimension might exist without the psychological dimension, evaluation of any arguments derived from it would be impossible.

Fourth, the holistic model best represents the unique functions performed by the stipulated and psychological dimensions. Although the dimensions function in interrelated ways, each also contributes uniquely to the nature of the debate process. For example, the stipulated dimension helps ensure equity.

The format under which we currently conduct our debates grants numerous advantages to the affirmative team including first and last speeches, the right to initially define terms and select the focus of discussion, and the element of surprise. These procedural conventions are predicated upon the assumption that presumption is initially stipulated in favor of the negative team (Young and Gaske, 1983; Brydon, 1986). If the negative were not given the advantage of the stipulated dimension, the first affirmative speaker would be required to do little more than acknowledge affirmative presumption, define the terms of the debate and then insist that the negative meet the burden of proof against the proposition as it was defined by the affirmative. Certainly, this would constitute an unreasonable burden and, under most circumstances, be an insurmountable task weighing the debate process far too heavily in favor of the affirmative. Such an imbalance compromises two important objectives of the debate process: it decreases our ability to ensure rigor in the examination of argument (Brydon, 1986), and compromises educational accountability (Andersen, 1974; Hill, 1987).

The stipulated dimension regulates these advantages by fixing itself opposite them and by assigning the burden of proof to the affirmative. Since the psychological dimension is not necessarily assigned opposite the procedural advantages it cannot be assumed to offset them. Thus, the stipulated dimension uniquely contributes to the debate process.

The stipulated dimension also uniquely provides an ultimate decision rule for debate: tie decisions are awarded to the negative. The general importance to the debate process of clear decision rules is well established (Patterson and Zarefsky, 1983; Benoit, Wilson, and Follert, 1986). Since it is possible that no clear victor might emerge at the conclusion of a debate, the tie breaking tool is a decision rule "the judge must be given" (Matlon, 1981, p. 498).

The psychological dimension uniquely contributes to the debate process by establishing a context for audience analysis. It provides debaters with a general notion of both the internal and external bases that may be used to establish psychological presumption. The non-policy debate community appears to have accepted the importance of audience analysis as a basic principle (Howe, 1981; Swanson, 1981, Tomlinson; 1981; Miller and McVay, 1984; Hill, 1987). The psychological dimension underscores the importance of audience analysis thereby potentially broadening its practice. Furthermore, the psychological dimension provides a specific framework for incorporating the results of audience analysis into productive argumentation since debaters could begin "using presumption in connection with specific arguments" (Sproule, 1976, p. 128). The stipulated dimension provides no such framework since, in isolation, it does not imply any sort of evaluative judgment to which the results of an audience analysis may be adapted.

SUMMARY

There has been considerable disagreement about the role of presumption in non-policy debate. In this paper I have proposed a model which reconciles the two polar views. The holistic model contains both a stipulated and psychological dimension, thus offering a more complete accounting of the role of presumption in debate than previously available. However, the issue of presumption is not fully resolved. To the contrary, much needs to be done to further explore and detail the legitimate bases of the psychological dimension, the ways in which competing claims for the psychological dimension can be resolved, and the conditions under which the stipulated and psychological dimensions may be counterbalancing forces. This essay provides the framework from which these issues may be addressed and further development of a coherent theory of presumption in non-policy debate may proceed.

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CONTEXT EXPLORATION: PARADIGMATIC VARIANCE BEYOND CURRENT USES OF CRITERIA

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CEDA was founded with the spirit of experiment; that spirit should be rejuvenated.
-Michael Bartanen, *CEDA Yearbook 1987*

Introduction

Considerable discussion has revolved around the establishment of rules for CEDA debate. Coaches and debaters complain about the lack of consistent standards by which to judge debate rounds. Many have attempted to locate resolutional stock issues (Patterson and Zarefsky 1983, Bartanen 1987, Herbeck and Wong 1986, Warnick 1981) but do not claim that CEDA must adhere to one type of resolution. Some have written that "there is reason to believe that traditional stock issues are relevant to value debate" (Brownlee 1982)—others have attempted to create a set of stock issues for all non-policy debate (Matlon 1981), maintaining that that is what CEDA is. Our position is that while all of them may be correct and each contributes to the advancement of debate, CEDA theorists need to focus more on the process of stock issues development rather than developing steadfast stock issues. The current lack of standardized, stock issues allows CEDA advocates an unimaginable opportunity for exploration into new arenas of controversy during the round. By encouraging debaters (implicitly or explicitly) to examine the rationale behind their arena of argumentation and why their terminology is appropriate for that particular discussion, we, as coaches and critics, will be enhancing the educational value of the activity. The following paper examines the value of paradigmatic flexibility by explaining the context rationale, identifying advantages and addressing some of the major criticisms.

The Context Rationale

The importance of establishing stock issues was noted by Bartanen: "The identification of relevant stock issues plays an important role in the debate round.