CRITIQUE ARGUMENTS AS POLICY ANALYSIS:
POLICY DEBATE BEYOND THE RATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE
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Policy is not choking debate. An inflexible, narrowly defined vision of policy threatens debate (Shanahan A8).

While critique arguments were once rare in academic debates, today they are part of nearly every debater's experience. Contemporary debates frequently grapple with arguments that indict or advance values, systems of knowledge, and language choices. It is difficult to know whether this growing popularity is due to advances in critique theory, a growing dissatisfaction with traditional models of policy debate, or the competitive success of critiques in debate. What is apparent in debate literature and discussion is that a substantial amount of controversy still exists about the saliency of critiques to academic policy debate. Some policy debate advocates claim there is no place for critiques in the comparison of policy options, while advocates of critiques often consider such arguments broader than a policy perspective, arguing that critics should consider critiques before resolving policy questions. Whether one subscribes to Roger Solt's view that "the *kritik* is on balance bad for debate" (*Anti-Kritik* ii) or William Shanahan's view that "*kritiks* allow debate access to another of its fundamental assumptions" (A5), it is clear that at least for the near future critiques will play a major role in the practice of academic policy debate.

At this point, the controversy over critique argumentation is at an impasse. Both sides of this controversy marginalize critique arguments by positioning them outside of policy deliberation. The predominate notion among both supporters and opponents of critiques is that they are argued as a sidebar to the policy debate. While I am sympathetic to, and often agree with, the philosophical potential envisioned by those who endorse critique arguments, their reasoning often fails to address the questions raised by those who doubt the role of critiques in policy debate. We cannot transcend these differences without repositioning the relationship between critique arguments and policy deliberation. This essay contends that meaningful policy evaluation often includes arguments similar to those labeled "critiques" in academic debate. Specifically, it argues that critique arguments, rather than serving as *a*

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priori or tangential issues, are relevant dimensions of policy analysis and should be treated as substantive issues in policy debate.

The idea that the issues raised by critique arguments are relevant to the substance of policy disputes is consistent with arguments made by innovative policy analysts and policy scholars. Many policy theorists argue for including in the policy discussion process arguments that mirror certain forms of critique argumentation. This position may seem unusual, given that some debate theorists tend to believe that policy analysis excludes critique arguments (Jinks A14; Shors and Mancuso A15; Solt, *Anti-Kritik* xxiii; Solt, "Demystifying" A9). However, a considerable body of policy studies literature clearly supports the inclusion of critiques based upon competing value orientations and critiques based upon the communicative aspects of the policy process.

The Status of Critique Arguments in Academic Debate

In contemporary academic debate, critique arguments encompass a wide range of philosophical issues. Shanahan originally focused on the German existential philosopher Martin Heidegger's call to explore how we think about being in the world. This continental pedigree gave rise to the commonly used German spelling, *kritik*. Shanahan contends that traditional policy debate "functions on a foundation of unquestioned assumptions" (A4). He calls for debaters to advance arguments that can uncover and investigate these assumptions. Shanahan holds that the focus ought not be on the results of such a questioning, but rather that the process of thinking and questioning itself is to be valued (A4). Since Shanahan, debaters have expanded critiques from their existential origins to include a broad diversity of philosophical and political perspectives. Recent critiques have been based on Riane Eisler's feminist anthropology, Herbert Marcuse's theory of repressive desublimation, Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, and Ayn Rand's objectivism.

A second origin of critique argumentation is Kenneth Broda-Bahm's theory of the language-linked value objection, or "language critique." Broda-Bahm indicts academic debate for operating under the assumption that language is transparent and purely referential. He uses Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of language games to argue that words and their use have effects, and that critics should consider objections to certain language choices when adjudicating debates. As originally conceived, the language-linked value objection focused "more directly on the actual language practices of an opponent" (Bahm 69). Broda-Bahm gives language critiques primacy as voting issues because they make

claims to immediate and tangible impacts that "uniquely happen as a direct result of our advocacy" (Bahm 76). More recently, theorists and debaters have fashioned critiques involving such diverse arguments as evidence challenges, morality arguments, and objections to particular styles of delivery (Berube, "Kritiks").

For the purposes of this essay, critiques conveniently may be divided into three argument forms: value critiques, epistemology critiques, and language critiques. This classification system is relatively common in critique literature. David Berube refers to ideational (value), thinking (epistemology), and language critiques ("Criticizing" 68). Solt separates critiques into practical philosophical critiques (value), pure philosophical critiques (epistemology), and language critiques (*Anti-Kritik* ii-vii). While these classification schemes are neither universal nor comprehensive, they are functional for discussing the relationship between critique argumentation and policy deliberation.

Value critiques establish or indict value systems or advance ethical or moral claims. These take the shape of deontological critiques, decision rules, value hierarchies, ethics violations, and moral obligations. When an affirmative claims a moral obligation to implement their policy, they are advancing value arguments in an attempt to justify their policy position. Likewise, these arguments are frequently advanced by negatives contending that an affirmative's proposed policy is discriminatory (i.e., racist, patriarchal, heterosexist, etc.) or morally unacceptable as a course of action (such as the pacifist's opposition to committing violent acts). Value critiques were the stock and trade of "value" debate, usually referred to as criteria and value objections arguments (Zarefsky 15).

Epistemology critiques establish or indict means of creating or finding truths. These include arguments such as Paul Feyerabend's critique of scientific method and Murray Edelman's theory of enemy construction. Epistemology critiques predominantly question the reliability of particular methods of making predictive and descriptive claims inherent in a particular policy advocacy. Every policy case advances causal and predictive claims. These claims are each the result of a particular way of coming to or creating knowledge, such as laboratory study, romantic introspection, field research, or humanist investigation. Epistemology critiques indict a method of coming to or creating knowledge, thus undercutting the claims derived through that method. The best of these critiques will also advance an alternative knowledge system that produces results contrary to the claims advanced in the opponent's positions.

Language critiques can be differentiated from value and epistemology critiques in two respects. First, they focus upon communicative or interpretive aspects of either particular word choices or the broader advocacy of debaters. Language critiques indict what an advocate communicates, intentionally or otherwise, and what others who endorse that advocacy might communicate. Debaters have called these arguments language-linked value objections, language objections, language critiques, advocacy critiques, advocacy-linked disadvantages, and a host of other names. Second, the most controversial element that differentiates these arguments from other objections to policy advocacy is the claim that their implications supersede the impacts of particular policy actions. Advocates of language critiques often claim fiat to be illusory, that language creates reality, or that advocacy has "real-world" or "in-round" effects upon critics, debaters, and others. For example, a language critique might argue that an opponent has employed sexist language, such as using "mankind" as an androgynous term. The team advancing the critique may argue that a critic who fails to reject the sexist language likewise advocates using sexist language, and consequently perpetuates and reinforces sexism in the culture. Conversely, the policy issues debated are only fictions or imaginations used to simulate a policy decision in the debate. In actuality, when the critic votes, no policy is enacted. Yet, the critique proponents argue, the effects of the language are real and immediate. Thus, the debaters ask the critic to ignore the illusory or imagined impacts of the proposed policies and decide the debate based upon the real and immediate impacts of language.

Some critiques, such as Critical Race Theory, cross these categories. Since Critical Race Theory indicts the American legal system for being racist, which makes its predictive and descriptive claims inaccurate, it combines a value critique and an epistemological critique. Similarly, debaters sometimes combine value arguments with language critiques to create a dual set of impacts for their positions. With the sexism example previously discussed, the critiquing team may add an argument that says that individuals have a moral obligation to reject sexism when they encounter it. Thus, in addition to the language critique of the use of the term "mankind," the critiquing team would also advance a value critique, holding that there is an obligation to reject sexism. The distinctions between value, epistemology, and language critiques are not always clean, and may leave out some critique arguments. Critique argumentation is in a constant state of mutation as debaters find new ways to think about particular issues. The classification scheme used here should be considered functional only for the purposes of this discussion.

One of the primary criticisms leveled against all such critiques is that they fail to address policy questions (Jinks A14; Shors and Mancuso A15; Solt, *Anti-Kritik* xiii; Solt, "Demystifying" A9). Most debate theorists who oppose critique arguments advance a rationalist paradigm of policy evaluation. In their minds, a strict cost-benefit analysis, particularly a quantitative analysis based on the preservation of human life, is the only means by which an advocate can justify or dejustify a policy. In his criticism of scientific models of public policy, Robert Formaini, the former vice president for public policy at the Cato Institute, explains the rationalist policy paradigm:

> According to the policy rationalist, if the risks are "acceptable" and the "benefits" are greater than "costs," what person can argue that the proposed policy ought not be done, and on what inductive basis? It will not work to say that the proposed policy is "wrong," "immoral," "unjust," and a "waste of time and effort." These arguments are "unscientific" and "value-laden" with the citizen's personal, irrational prejudices. (69)

In policy debate, the rationalist perspective marginalizes critiques by mistakenly representing a particular approach to policy evaluation as the essential means of policy deliberation, implying that one theoretical perspective is both appropriate for all policy questions and preferable to all other means of policy comparison.

Marouf Hasian and Edward Panetta argue that "both the promise and the peril of the critique come from its use as a method of questioning some of the assumptions behind 'policy' debate itself" (47). They continue, "the use of 'the critique' in policy debate means a virtual abandonment of many of the cherished assumptions of policy decision making" (53). If by policy debate and policy decision making, Hasian and Panetta are referring only to the conventional practices of academic debate, they would be correct. However, their criticism is not that critiques simply challenge academic policy debate as we commonly practice it, but rather that critiques are "politically irrelevant and counterproductive" (54). This conclusion is arrived at by giving primacy to rationalist policy models, including claims such as that "debating is an inherently rationalistic activity" (54).

Faith in rationalism as the core element of policy debate leads Derek Jinks to posit that if critiques have any theoretical legitimacy, "they should take the form of disadvantages, counterplans, solvency arguments, etc." (A14). Jinks argues that resolutions imply the context for academic debates, and since contemporary resolutions are interpreted as policy questions, they should be addressed from a policy perspective (A12). While this line of

reasoning may bear some merit, Jinks begs the question of whether the rationalist model is the only possible policy perspective. Jinks relies on a rationalist cost-benefit analysis model for decision making. He argues that policy decisions cannot be made without comparing unique costs and benefits of proposed courses of action (A14). Jinks likewise contends that policy debate should begin from a set of shared assumptions about the values at stake, which should simply be taken as true (A13).

Matthew Shors and Steve Mancuso propose an extreme division between critiques and policy discourse. Shors and Mancuso make the same error as Jinks by generalizing from rationalist policy models to all policy deliberation. They claim that critiques are "utterly irrelevant" and that critiques ask us to believe that "it is pointless to discuss policies" (A16). Shors and Mancuso would have us believe that critiques "ignore policy issues altogether" (A16). It is because critiques do not argue unique commensurable costs or benefits that they contend that critiques carry "little, if any, weight in policy comparison" (A16). Only by failing to recognize the broad diversity of policy perspectives can Shors and Mancuso come to conclude that "the Critique is wholly incompatible with, and non-germane to, policy debate" (A17).

Perhaps the most vehement opponent of critiques has been Solt. Solt makes many of the same assumptions about policy analysis as do Jinks, Shors, and Mancuso. Solt so strongly believes that critiques challenge the assumption that "what we are essentially engaged in is a policy debate" that he recommends the first response to critiques be to reestablish the policy framework ("Demystifying" A9). For Solt, "the *kritik* is a non-policy argument" (*Anti-Kritik* ii). He sees debate as a policy forum, and critiques are considered not to be "germane to the subject at hand" (*Anti-Kritik* xxii). Solt argues that "at root, the kritik misunderstands the nature of the policy calculus" (*Anti-Kritik* xxiii). Solt's rationalist assumptions are apparent in arguments encouraging us to "take an *a priori* ethical and political framework for granted" ("Demystifying" A11). Similarly, he ignores a whole body of interpretive and communicative policy analysis literature when he claims that "ideas are more important than the rhetoric with which they are expressed" ("Demystifying" A11). Here, Solt is attempting to refute language critiques by retreating to a separation of policies and the words that express, present, and form those policies. For Solt, the policy has a pure form outside of language, and it is that form that is to be evaluated, rather than any of the words that might malign it. Such a position is distant from much of both contemporary communication studies and policy studies literature.

The arguments against critiques advanced by the policy debate rationalists are suspect because they are grounded in the traditions of academic debate rather than contemporary theories of policy studies. Consequently, they dismiss questions they can not force-fit into policy rationalism as neither worthwhile nor relevant to policy discussions. As two policy analysts wrote of the hegemony of the rationalist paradigm, "When all you have is a hammer the whole world looks like a nail" (House and Shull 163-164).

Berube attacks critiques from a perspective not overtly founded on policy rationalism, holding that critiques are fundamentally pre-fiat arguments and that they disregard post-fiat substantive claims ("Criticizing" 68-72). Nonetheless, he bases his arguments upon similar assumptions about the relationship between critiques and policy debate. Here, "fiat" is a stand-in for "policy focus," in that fiat represents an enacted policy. To claim that critiques disregard issues that arise after fiat is to claim that they disregard questions raised by enacting policies.

Berube's argument is also predicated upon the assumption that academic debate should extend no further than "intentional, intended, naïve, objective, and rogate" meanings ("Criticizing" 77). This means that debaters and critics should not question any of the assumptions or presuppositions of texts or advocacies, uncritically accepting the premises inherent in propositions. In the context of policy analysis, Berube's standards require that policy advocates and analysts not ask of each other: "But what are your assumptions? Are they valid, or consistent, or morally acceptable?" This position is extraordinarily dangerous. Wayne Booth argues that we must consider precisely those questions texts attempt to foreclose:

> Each literary work implicates within itself a set of norms about what questions are appropriate. Hemingway, to choose a favorite example of the new feminist critics, does not demand of us that we ask of his works, "Is it good for men or women to accept uncritically my machismo bravado?" Indeed, he seems to work quite hard to prevent our asking such a question. But surely, the feminist critics say, and I think they are right, surely *any* teacher who teaches *A Farewell to Arms* without inviting, somewhere along the line, a critical consideration of Hemingway's heroes as human ideals, and of his portraits of women as reflecting a peculiarly maimed creative vision, and of his vision of the good life as a singularly immature one—surely any such teacher is doing only half the job. (301)

Similarly, we might say that any policy debater who does not seek a critical consideration of the questions that a policy proposal tries to foreclose is only doing half the job of a policy analyst.

Additionally, Berube assumes that we have pure and direct knowledge of the meanings of a text. However, in order to understand the meanings of a text we must interpret that text. When advocates speak, we inevitably interpret what they say. Meanings are found in the act of interpretation, and those meanings differ, at least slightly, between interpretations. There is virtually no text in a debate that can inspire one universally agreed upon interpretation. As listeners and readers, we can never find ourselves at a point where the intentional, naïve, and rogate meanings of a text are objectively transparent to us. Determining what questions a text invites requires interpreting the text, and these interpretations will vary, producing contrary readings of what questions may be asked of that text. There is no way to reconcile interpretations objectively. In order to evaluate competing interpretations, one would have to engage in precisely the critical textual analysis Berube attempts to foreclose. Since every interaction with a text is interpretive, Berube's objective standard for encountering a text never can be met.

While opponents of critiques might be expected to position critiques outside of policy discussion, some advocates of critique arguments in debate have done the same. Many critique proponents advance either the position that we should not consider ourselves policy analysts (Berube, "Kritiks" 21), or that critiques supersede policy questions (Bahm 76; Broda-Bahm and Murphy 21). These arguments unwittingly lend assistance to opponents of critiques by disconnecting critique arguments from policy discourse. Stepping outside the policy focus is not inviting to those who hold resolutely to a policy perspective, rationalist or otherwise. Rather, it makes it all the more difficult to recognize the unique role critique arguments can play in the enhancement of policy analysis and policy debate.

Broda-Bahm probably has done more to popularize language critiques than any other theorist, but he clearly positions these arguments outside of policy deliberation. Broda-Bahm and Thomas Murphy define a critique as "any argument which does not provide an answer to the resolutional question" (21). In this context, they refer to "the resolutional question" not merely as the resolution itself, but as the affirmative case which advocates it (31 n3). They make the same assumption often used as a premise against critiques, that we can and should separate policies from the language that advances them. Broda-Bahm separates policy and language by arguing that critiques do not answer substantive advocacy,

but rather focus "more directly on the actual language practices of an opponent" (Bahm 69). This is reinforced with attempts to give primacy to the "more immediate and more tangible" effects of language by claiming policy proposals to be fictions of debate rounds (Bahm 76).

While positioning critiques outside of policy discourse is a common error amongst critique advocates, Shanahan is an exception. Much of Shanahan's essay is esoteric and philosophical, but he does recognize at least a potential for critiques to be a part of policy analysis. Making use of literature about development assistance, Shanahan considers "the possibility that the *kritik* is policy debate" (A8). Shanahan was nearest the mark when he claimed that "the *kritik* supplements, not supplants current debate practice" (A4). However, critique proponents have either ignored or simply reiterated these claims, and opponents of critique argumentation scoff at Shanahan's conception of policy analysis. Most likely, this is because Shanahan's theory is so deeply embedded in Heidegger's philosophy that it is difficult to read a policy focus beneath the existential vocabulary. This may also be because neither proponents nor opponents of critique argumentation have considered the policy studies literature that reinforces the need for critiques in policy discussions. If one truly takes a policy perspective toward debate, one inevitably finds that critique argumentation is a necessary element of policy evaluation.

The impasse hence arises because opponents of critiques hold that the purpose of debate is to discuss policies exclusively, and assume that policy rationalism is the only mechanism debaters can use to do so. Many proponents of critiques maintain the impasse by arguing that critiques somehow supersede or exist outside of policy argumentation. The marginalization performed by both sides of this controversy disconnects critique argumentation from politics, policy deliberation, and real world debates. To move past the impasse and integrate critique argumentation and policy deliberation, we must reposition critiques within the spectrum of policy analysis.

Transcending Rationalism

Policy studies literature is a useful aide to those seeking to understand the relationship between policy, values, and communication. The applicability of policy literature to academic debate depends, to some extent, upon the purposes and goals of debate. One of the primary goals of debate is to foster better thinkers, better decision-makers, and responsible citizens. That contemporary debate focuses upon questions of public policy reinforces the position that debate politicizes participants by informing and shaping political

consciousness. As citizens and consumers, we are all, at least indirectly, policy makers. Oddly enough, in an attack upon the theoretical legitimacy of critiques Solt argues exactly this point:

> It is through the process of making the judgments that our moral and political worldviews are developed. The judgments we come to at the end of debate rounds may only be provisional, based on the evidence and arguments in that round, but over time the sum of our provisional judgments is what ultimately constitutes our moral and political belief system. Policy debates are important. As citizens in a democracy, we have individually small but collectively large inputs into the policies our government chooses. And even if our own input into the policy process is small, we live (as Bob Dylan says) "in a political world," and to keep our bearings in that world, we need to make some informed judgments about what we believe. ("Demystifying" A9-10)

While contemporary academic debate is largely engaged in training students to think about and advocate policy options, this is also the domain of policy studies. Debaters do the work of policy analysts in their day-to-day debating. They research issues, construct and analyze problems, and propose and oppose courses of action. Policy studies theorists use political philosophy and other disciplines to generate constructive and critical thought about policy choices and advocacy, and policy analysts often perform in adversarial or debate formats where they advocate for particular interests or issues.

In a widely used policy analysis text, David Weimer and Aidan Vining isolate three roles that policy analysts play when they approach a policy question: the objective technician, the client's advocate, and the issue advocate (17-18). Objective technicians position themselves as unbiased arbiters of the public good, advocating policy options based purely on objective analysis. However, since personal histories and cultural locations influence them, it is impossible to consider any analyst truly objective. Client's advocates construct policy analyses and advocate policy options that benefit their clients. Issue advocates construct policy analyses and advocate policy options to advance their particular issues or causes. Most policy analysts reject the role of the objective technician, claiming to be client or issue advocates who, much like lawyers, construct arguments for particular points of view (Durning and Osuna 649; Majone 21). Academic debaters can be likened to issue advocates, making arguments for their side of a policy issue.

Policy studies literature is not alien to academic debate. Don Brownlee and Mark Crossman used policy studies literature as the grounding for their discussion of the use of cost-benefit analysis in academic debate. Some policy theorists have even initiated an argumentative turn in policy studies, citing argumentation and debate literature in their attempts to apply argumentation theory to policy studies (Dunn; MacRae). While classical academic debate has limited policy argumentation to a rationalist perspective, a broader perspective on policy deliberation invites the incorporation of critiques.

Critiques and Policy Criteria

One form of critique is the advocacy of value positions. These arguments may critique the results produced by a policy option or they may focus upon an evaluation of a policy option as an act, independent of the results. Either way, these arguments introduce into the deliberations another way to compare claims to value advanced by competing policy advocates. In many ways, these arguments attempt to establish value hierarchies similar to the criteria arguments that were common in the Cross Examination Debate Association during the 1980s. Often referred to as "value" or "non-policy" debate, many of these debates fundamentally dealt with policy issues. The primary difference was that debaters advanced explicit value models to justify their policy positions. While still about public policy, these debates embraced a multiple theory perspective on the possible benefits that could justify or indict a policy. These debates not only engaged in descriptive and predictive arguments about policies, they investigated what values policies should seek to realize and the means acceptable to accomplish those ends. Today, policy debate has jettisoned the explicit discussion of values and morality in favor of a rationalist policy perspective.

Policy narratives both rely upon and reinforce basic value assumptions about human beings and the world that we construct. If we fail to take value assumptions and implications into account, we cannot consider that we have a meaningful analysis of a policy question. Connie Bullis and James Kennedy note that policy analysts too often ignore values because of rational models of policy evaluation (543). The primacy of the rational model of policy evaluation similarly undercuts academic debate's ability to consider policy options. Garry Brewer, a policy scholar at Yale, and Peter deLeon, a policy analyst for the RAND Corporation, note that theories and models for social description and policy choice involve making value judgments (135-137).

The long term implications of any policy option are perhaps best reflected by the value systems that support them and the options they reflect and reinforce (Bullis and Kennedy 543). When one implements a policy, one also implements a value system. While the implementation and technical aspects of the policy may shift through agency and interpretation, the fundamental core value assumptions of the policy may be more enduring and have broader implications. The intrinsic connection between values and policies were not ignored by early non-policy debate theorists. For instance, David Zarefsky's notes the importance of criteria for the evaluation of quasi-policy propositions (9-10) and Jan Vasilius comments that "values precede policy formation, influence policy implementation and assess policy results" (35).

Policy debate that fails to incorporate value discussions may be deceptive and misleading. A belief in the ability of humans to produce an analysis of human interaction not laden with values can only be a grave self-deception. Value-free policy analysis is neither possible nor useful. This is in part because both policy analysts and policy makers inextricably inhabit "a world structured by values" (Vickers 95). Thus, as one sets forth to clarify and evaluate options, one inevitably ends up clarifying and ordering values. This is especially true in policy debate, where the entire argument rests fundamentally on some conception of what is the public good.

Thus, it is inevitable in debates over policy options that we engage in the construction of value systems and moral premises. The real question is whether we should do such *a priori*, behind a veil of objectivity, or as a part of the subject of the debate itself. The latter alternative is far preferable. No strict ethical rule or community standard can replace debate about value choices. Nor can the policy rationalist perspective account for value choices. The policy rationalist relies upon methods such as cost-benefit analysis to strive for scientific objectivity and authority in policy evaluation. Brownlee and Crossman note that cost-benefit analysis is unable to incorporate value conflicts into policy deliberations because cost-benefit analysis relies upon objective commensurable measurements that are often not possible with values (4-6). Rationalist policy analysts "either omit certain values or force them into inappropriate comparisons" (Brownlee and Crossman 6).

It would be a grave mistake to push normative value considerations out of the debate round and behind some mystical curtain. As one senior policy analyst put it, "Simply, values are too central to the various stages of the policy process to permit them to be covertly inserted, neglected, or left to some hidden marginalist hand 'muddling through'"

(deLeon 39). We can reasonably expect to find our way through such issues only if we continually open them to discussion and include them in policy deliberations. We should consider that public policies and policy debates are about things that are happening. Debate is not fiction. The evidence and advocacies of our authors do not mystically originate in a vacuum, nor do they come from some entity creating game pieces for our amusement. It is essential that as policy advocates and analysts we not lose sight of these normative roots.

Critiques and Interpretive Analysis

Not all critique arguments focus on value hierarchies. There is a general trend toward critiques focused on values implicit in the arguments advocates construct or the ways they are expressed. Similar movements in policy studies to incorporate interpretive theories and theories of communicative action have begun to overturn the presumption that a policy communicates only its own implementation. Interpretive perspectives on policy offer unique advantages in repairing our policy deliberation model, as well as the pedagogical benefits of deeper understanding of both specific policies and the policy process. It is important that we not think of policies in purely rational modes, but realize what we say through them to others and ourselves. Policy discourse and policies themselves can have profound communicative implications from the beginning to the end of the policy cycle. Since public policy is by definition interactive (that is, it must occur between people), policies have no option but to exist predominantly as communicative events. As a society "we live in and are confined to a communicated and communicable world" (Vickers 25), and we can not separate our policy options from the communicative acts they represent and the communications by which we represent them. The existence of the resolution itself and an affirmative team's operationalization of that resolution are profoundly communicative.

Policy scholar James Rogers argues that policy advocacy can alter belief systems, provide new paradigms, have an agenda setting effect, affect how policy issues are problematized, and change the way solutions are viewed and evaluated (22-27). Policy discourse begins, as do most affirmative cases, with an explication of the problems with existing policies. However, practical problems must be constructed, interpreted, and made sense of in the complex contexts at hand (Forester, "No Planning" 60). Hence, debaters as policy evaluators and advocates begin by problematizing the status quo. This act simultaneously creates some identities and roles while negating others. It communicates not only a what, but also a who, a why, and much more. The first impact of any affirmative

case is to mark and modify the social and political world. Policy discourse communicates values and interpretations about a policy, its subjects, the objects it acts upon, and the world in which advocates seek to implement it. These communications shape the way that agents implement or carry out those policies (Bullis and Kennedy 543). Cornell professor of city and regional planning John Forester argues that public policies "alter the 'communicative infrastructure' of institutions that mediate between structural processes of social learning and the practical, situated claims-making process of social interaction" (*Critical Theory* 146).

Thus, as policy analysts and policy makers, debaters and critics must explore methodologies that can account for the communicative impact of policy discourse. Initially we may find such an approach in an interpretive perspective on policy. An interpretive approach to policy analysis focuses on the meanings of policies, on the values, feelings, and/or beliefs that they express, and on the processes by which those meanings are communicated to and interpreted by various audiences (Yanow 8-9). From this view, debaters may look to policy discourse as a rhetorical artifact subject to critical rhetorical analysis or similar analyses.

We can not neatly separate policies from the language and advocacy that brings about their implementation. Policies communicate both through action and through the arguments which advocate action. In light of the nationalist and racist rhetoric of extreme anti-immigration politicians, we should not be surprised to hear of border patrol officers abusing non-white people at the U. S. borders. Or, consider what the United States communicated through the Tuskegee experiments. Over 20 years after the conclusion of the Tuskegee study, what it communicated and continues to communicate about the attitudes of governments and medical institutions toward blacks is still having profound impacts. AIDS education program developers have found that the Tuskegee experiment left a legacy which leads many blacks, especially in the rural south, to believe, "that HIV . . . was deliberately created to kill black people, that AZT . . . was a plot to poison them, that condom distribution was part of a government plan to reduce the number of black births and that needle exchange programs were designed to foment drug use in minority communities" (Stryker E4).

Arguably, some policies may intend no more than their implementation. However, that does not free such policies from responsibility for far more than they intend. While methods for considering these interpretive and communicative aspects of a policy are

beyond the rationalist perspective, any evaluation of policy options must consider these communicative perspectives. To limit these interpretations to the intentional and the naïve is to limit policy discourse and policy analysis, destroying our ability to consider the communicative effects and influences of policy advocacy. In her analysis of the published reports of the Tuskegee study, Martha Solomon notes that one reason the Tuskegee experiment continued for as long as it did was that the rhetorical conventions of the scientific community obscured and encouraged neglect of crucial human concerns (243-244). Her focus necessarily extends far beyond the intentional, naïve, rogate meanings of the Tuskegee texts. While recognizing these language choices were not intentional attempts to deceive or manipulate, Solomon accounts for their occurrence and impact upon the policy process. Attempts at similar analysis of proposed policies might act as a check against policy actions such as the Tuskegee study.

Ignorance of these aspects of policy analysis may persuade debaters that policies that meet rational cost-benefit criteria are always the most effective and preferential policy options, regardless of how they characterize individuals or communicate roles and obligations. Similarly, it will leave debaters unable to account for the often enduring and dramatic effects of the communicative aspects of policies and policy advocacy.

Implications of Critiques as Policy Analysis

These two views of critique arguments -- critiques as policy criteria and critiques as interpretive policy analysis -- expand our conceptions of policy debate by demonstrating the roles of critiques in policy discourse. Some may find the implications of these views uncomfortable. Policy analysis critiques should not replace all other theories of critique argumentation or methods of policy analysis. Rather, this theory expands the ways that we can think about and discuss policies. Any debater, theorist, coach, or critic who advocates a policy focus has little theoretical basis from which to exclude critique argumentation from their decision making process. The further one entrenches oneself in the policy literature the more necessary critiques become.

Time is always at a premium in debate rounds, and debaters may already feel they are dealing with too many issues. However, we should remember that there was a time when debates moved, in general, much slower and included a justification of decision criteria in the affirmative case in addition to the requisite policy evaluation. Constrained by time, some debates will focus more on policy instrumentalities, some more on competing values,

and some more on communicative implications. This is simply a reflection of the fact that the art of policy analysis "lies in realizing when inadequate data or social values other than efficiency make the narrow benefit-cost approach inappropriate" (Weimer and Vining 311). Critiques enhance our current model of policy discourse and can improve our ability to perform policy evaluation and advocacy.

A caveat here must be that viewing critiques as a dimension of policy analysis does not seem to provide a model from which we may comfortably evaluate arguments that critique the policy focus. Arguments that question the project of policy making may be ill-suited to the perspective of critiques as policy analysis. We should not indict or reject critiques that we can not frame as policy analysis. Rather, these positions simply must ground their relationship to policy advocacy in something other than the models outlined here. However, the vast majority of critiques do not break with the assumption that we are debating about what we should do. Whether one critiques patriarchy, statism, legal objectivism, modernism, essentialist ontology, democracy, capitalism, or a host of other subjects, these arguments most often attempt to shape our actions -- our personal, social, and political policies.

Repositioning critiques within the realm of policy analysis provides an opportunity to overturn some common assumptions about critiques found in claims made by both proponents and opponents of critique argumentation. Perhaps most disturbing to some is that incorporating critiques into policy analysis revokes their status as *a priori* issues. However, we should resist so privileging any argument form. Placing critiques before all other arguments generates a structure that stultifies and stagnates the critical investigation of issues. Instead, we should place specific arguments in contingent hierarchies for the purpose of evaluation in a particular debate. Critiques are additional methodologies for discussing our shared world and shared action -- the realm of policy debate. Hence, the implications of a particular critique for a particular decision should be grounded in the particular arguments advanced in that particular debate.

Accepting critiques as a part of policy analysis may help us to redefine the relationship between debate and politics. Even the most radically esoteric critique arguments may be deeply political, and positioning critiques as policy analysis asks us to think of ourselves as policy analysts and policy makers. This very proposition politicizes debate and revives the reality of the debate forum. Thinking of debate and critiques as policy advocacy, policy

analysis, and policy making explodes the distinction between debate and the "real world" by erasing the fictionality of debate rounds.

Once debaters and critics recognize themselves as real citizen/policy makers rather than imagined governmental bodies, they will find it more difficult to exclude values, ethics, and morals from their decisions. Critique opponents may argue this personalizes the politics of debate, making decisions more arbitrary or dependent upon a critic's subjective value system. We might more accurately say that it *uncovers* politics. If the policy theorists and analysts discussed here are correct, then the rationalist model is no less political or personal; rationalism merely denies and masks its political and personal biases. In attempting to maintain the rationalist position, a body of value hierarchies and epistemological assumptions are enforced as given truths. Toppling the hegemony of the rationalist paradigm has the pleasant side effect of unmasking the non-rational and emotional bases for decisions made under the guise of the rationalist model.

Debaters and critics will need to struggle with how these issues can be adjudicated in a debate round. Considering critiques as substantive issues removes the easy hierarchy of issues that gave critique arguments their trump status, and will require that critics and debaters develop more sophisticated practices of comparison and evaluation. Non-policy theorists such as Zarefsky may provide some guidance, but much work will have to be done in the debate rounds. For value critiques, debaters might advance both a criteria for the adjudication of the issues at hand, and a value hierarchy that helps to place the competing values in the debate in relation to one another.

Language and advocacy arguments might be advanced as substantive issues in a debate when a team argues that the critic, as a citizen/policy maker, should not specifically endorse the other team's advocacy. This could be as philosophical as a moral obligation to not engage in or endorse particular communicative behaviors, or as instrumental as a discussion of the implications of advocacy for policy implementation and interpretation. Executive and judicial bodies often interpret policies based upon the advocacy that advanced them. This is especially apparent in judicial attempts to interpret international treaties (Bederman 972-976; Koh 343).

Solt may have provided grounds for language and advocacy arguments as substantive issues within the policy frame: "If language is so abused that the integrity of the debate process has been undermined, then it probably should be a voting issue" ("Demystifying" A10). If a citizen/policy maker feels that the language choices have impeded effective

consideration of the issues, they may opt simply to reject the proposal of the offending party. Solt's argument against critiques is that such abuses are uncommon in debate. This is not a criticism of the theoretical legitimacy of language critiques, but rather questions the common practice of relying upon tenuous links between arguments.

Ethics violations or critiques that are equivalent to "calling fouls" in the debate "game" could also be reconsidered as substantive reasons why a citizen should not endorse a particular advocacy. Ethics violations question the reliability and character of the debaters, as well as all of their argumentation. Politically these are powerful arguments. In debate, we often remove them from the realm of debatable propositions in favor of having critics or tournament administrators adjudicate them independently. In politics they are openly discussed and debated and result in political ramifications for propositions, policies, and advocates long before any judicial body mandates criminal or civil penalty. If one can adequately convince a citizen/policy maker that an advocate of a proposition is lying, it is unlikely that the citizen/policy maker will entertain many of the arguments of that advocate.

Of course, reconsidering critiques as policy analysis is not an unassailable proposition, and it may be subject to criticism for its focus on academic policy literature. The theorists discussed here include policy analysts and advocates from the RAND Corporation and the Cato Institute, and a variety of policy analysis educators and scholars. Their work does not comprise the entirety of perspectives on policy analysis, and there are many in the policy field who take issue with their positions. However, Dan Durning and Will Osuna do provide a quantitative analysis of the perspectives of working policy analysts. They conclude not only that most policy analysts are not objective technicians, but also that the majority of policy analysts recognize that no policy problem has a single right solution. Additionally, the majority of analysts do not believe that a single unified theory of policy analysis can explain or solve all policy situations (649).

It could also be claimed that the model of critiques as policy analysis is unrealistic in terms of what a policy analyst must do, which is to convince a client to follow their advice. While the rational policy model may manifest hegemony in academic debate, such is not always the case in policy analysis. Consider some advice from Weimer and Vining: "Sometimes doing good simply requires analysts to advise their clients to forgo some current popularity or success to achieve some important value. You are doing exceptionally well when you can convince your client to accept such advice" (408).

Just as Weimer and Vining seek to ensure that the training of policy analysts considers perspectives other than policy rationalism, so must we as debate educators and critics ask ourselves if limiting academic debate to a rationalist perspective pays too high a price in the values it sacrifices and messages it sends. If policy debate is to train better citizens and political activists, then we must consider the inclusion of value arguments critical to this education. Political deliberation rarely relies solely upon instrumental rationality. Even given the tendency of some policy analysts to take a predominantly instrumental perspective, the inclusion of normative value claims is prerequisite to a meaningful and compelling justification or dejustification of a policy. Policy rationalism fails for the same reason Brownlee and Crossman specifically indicted cost-benefit analysis: "In the attempt to replace consent with reason, [it] typically omits vital steps in the debate over values" (1). Arguments focused upon value systems are a much-needed corrective to the weaknesses of the rationalist policy paradigm (Anderson 31).

In academic debate, it is critical that the training and experience of the students, coaches, and critics include the consideration and evaluation of competing value claims. Value conflicts are increasingly central to politics in the United States. Brownlee and Crossman note that conflicts between constituencies over regulatory or redistributive policies are usually centered around "the absence of a common set of value priorities" (1). If debaters, after spending hundreds of hours in the activity, are left with the impression that decision making only entails considerations of instrumentalities within the bounds of formal rules or ethical guides, academic debate will be responsible for proliferating amoral and value ignorant policy advocates, and citizens who are ill-equipped to cope with the value-laden issues of contemporary politics.

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