

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO NEGATIVE SPEAKER DUTIES IN CEDA DEBATE

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Raymond Zeuschner wrote in the 1982 CEDA Yearbook, "that CEDA theory at best is an awkward collection of traditional ideas about debate being grafted upon a value orientation" (p. 16). The truth of the statement can be seen in any CEDA debate where the participants are grappling with inherency, presumption, workability, topicality or solvency. The confusion that is often seen in CEDA debate is the direct result of a lack of CEDA theory. While, Vasilius (1980) wrote that debaters should create new paradigms to advance their own argumentative needs, this does not solve the problem. Very often when new paradigms are created, judges reject them due to the lack of theoretical background or the violation of traditional debate standards. Due to the lack of CEDA theory and the frequent rejection of new paradigms, CEDA debate has become a confusing and stifling activity. The purpose of this essay is to help provide a theoretical background and demonstrate why reliance on traditional standards of debate is often unwarranted and unhealthy for CEDA. Since the complete development of CEDA theory is beyond the scope of this article, the authors will focus on one confusing and often rejected negative strategy — the Negative "Switch".

The Negative Switch is a strategic tactic in which the First Negative speaker advances an alternative value hierarchy (generic responses to the resolution as a whole often called off-case or value objections) and the Second Negative speaker advances case-side arguments (responses to the specific Affirmative approach to the resolution). This strategy is often rejected by judges, coaches, and participants for five reasons: 1) it violates traditional speaker responsibilities; 2) it places a particularly heavy burden on First Affirmative Rebuttal; 3) it confuses the debate; 4) it is unethical; and 5) it reduces clash. The authors of this essay will address each of these issues and demonstrate why we believe the switch is not only a legitimate strategy but is also a strategy that may advance value debate.

The Switch Violates Tradition

In order to answer the first criticism of the switch, one must determine, "what are the traditional speaker responsibilities?" Wayne Thompson noted in Modern Argumentation and Debate (1971, p. 93) that in traditional debate as the debate progresses each speaker must make many adjustments but the customary

speaker duties include:

First Affirmative Constructive	Introduction and reason that a change is needed
First Negative Constructive	Point-by-point refutation of Affirmative case
Second Affirmative Constructive	Point-by-point reestablishment of the Affirmative case and the presentation of the Affirmative plan
Second Negative Constructive	Attack of the affirmative plan

As Thompson has indicated, traditional speaker responsibilities gave First Affirmative the burden of presenting the case, First Negative attacked the case, Second Affirmative presented the plan, and Second Negative attacked the plan. However, as traditional debate theory evolved, First Affirmative earned the responsibility of presenting both case and plan but the negative speakers retained their original responsibilities — First Negative the case and Second Negative the plan.

Many of us may have forgotten that when we began debating or coaching that plans were not presented until Second Affirmative. Second Negatives attacked plan, simply because plans were not presented until Second Affirmative. It is difficult to attack what you have not heard. The traditional duties of Negative speakers are a result of practical considerations found in debate history only. Plans are not found in Second Affirmative speeches any longer. Indeed, they are not found at all in CEDA.

While the traditional speaker responsibilities may be appropriate for traditional debate (which no one practices) should CEDA maintain the same speaker duties, when the Affirmative never presents a plan? Warnick (1981) argues yes that, "first speakers ought to deal with prima facie questions, and that second speakers should deal with alternative hierarchies" (p. 119).

We believe that this arbitrary distinction of the negative team's speaker responsibilities is unwarranted and this reliance on traditional debate theory is ill-founded. Other theorists agree, as Brownlee noted that "without an affirmative proposal to attack, the negative case/plan division of duties is inappropriate" (1982, p. 291). He continued with the idea that a negative strategy would be for one speaker to respond to the case and the other to detail the undesirable features of the object of evaluation. One aspect of this strategy could be a comparison of values in either the first or the second negative speech. By arguing that the case/plan division is inappropriate,

Brownlee agrees with the inadequacy of traditional speaker duties and that the switch is not really illegitimate.

Verch and Logue continue in the 1982 CEDA Yearbook that both teams should be required to state clearly their value positions in first constructives (p. 28). If we are to take Verch and Logue at face value, then they are arguing in favor of the switch. For the negative value position is only possible through the presentation of alternative value hierarchies.

We believe that the Negative should be allowed to argue either case or off-case in either speech and the limiting of Negative strategy (First Negative Constructive case and Second Negative Constructive off-case) is illogical and unfounded. Traditional speaker roles for the Negative should not be binding as this gives the Affirmative an unfair advantage.

The Affirmative advantage is accrued in two distinct ways. By speaking first the Affirmative has an advantage already; they are able to set the tone and direction of the debate. By speaking last the Affirmative is able to draw the final conclusions. The second advantage given to the Affirmative occurs when the Negative is prevented from presenting an alternative hierarchy for the first 33 minutes. When the First Negative is limited to arguing only case attacks and Second Affirmative is able to reestablish and extend the Affirmative position, the Affirmative is given complete control to argue their value hierarchy in 3 of the 4 major speeches, thus the first 33 minutes (8,3,8,3,8,3) of the debate. The Affirmative is able to explicitly state their own value position and demonstrate its importance; however, the Negative is not allowed to develop any alternative value hierarchy until Second Negative. This necessarily limits value clash and greatly hinders the Negative.

Kelley (1981) indicated that value considerations are crucial in deciding a debate. Kelley noted that the majority of coaches responding to the 1980 Reno Tournament Survey agreed with the statement, "the values a team defends in CEDA debate must be made quite explicit by the team before it is likely I would vote for them" (p. 12). By adhering to traditional speaker roles value clash is postponed until well over half of the debate has already taken place. It is obvious that if judges require explicit value debate and a negative team is not allowed to present their value positions early in the debate (First Negative Constructive) they are at a definite disadvantage.

If CEDA debate is to be a clash of values and the adherence to traditional speaker duties violates the foundation of CEDA, then why uphold the tradition?

Based on this analysis we believe the Negative Switch is justified and should be considered a legitimate strategy since it allows for full value consideration.

Since the Affirmative is required to justify the entire resolution and the Negative to attack its essence, the switch allows a negative team to juxtapose the Affirmative value hierarchy with the Negative value hierarchy and demonstrate the Negative's superiority. The switch allows Second Affirmative considerably more time than First Affirmative Rebuttal to deal with the crucial issue of values. To relegate value considerations to only Second Negative and rebuttals is detrimental to CEDA debate. The switch, however, allows values to dominate the debate rather than the often narrowly defined Affirmative position. By not allowing the switch, CEDA debate is justifying the Affirmative's right to narrowly define and support a small portion of the resolution, one of the problems found in traditional debate that spawned CEDA.

Clearly, traditional speaker responsibilities should not be maintained if the result compromises the activity. We believe that they do and should not be used to discard a legitimate Negative strategy. Tradition might be an adequate reason to require first negatives to deal only with case attacks if we were practicing traditional debate. Until we hear a plan in Second Affirmative, we will suggest that tradition is inadequate justification. Indeed, we might suggest that value debate would be strengthened by value positions in first negative.

First Affirmative Rebuttal Burdens

The second major argument against the switch is that it places an extremely heavy burden on the First Affirmative rebuttal. The argument is that when a negative team delays attacking the Affirmative case until Second Negative, the First Affirmative rebuttal is forced to cover all the new attacks against case and then must refute the First Negative rebuttal extensions of off-case. How is this significantly different from First Affirmative Rebuttal having to deal with all new off-case positions presented by Second Negative and First Negative Rebuttal extensions of case-side? The answer is obvious, no real difference. First Affirmative Rebuttal still has only four minutes to cover 12 minutes of argumentation. The burden is not heavier it is just different. We suggest that the complaint here is based on lack of preparation.

If an Affirmative team wants to avoid the crunch supposedly caused in First Affirmative Rebuttal by the switch, then the switch can work to their advantage. Second Affirmative is twice as long as First Affirmative rebuttal; yet, First Affirmative Rebuttal usually deals with all of off-case in 2 1/2 minutes. A perfect strategy would be for the Second Affirmative to deal with all of off-case in four minutes, nearly twice as much time as First Affirmative rebuttal can allocate. The remainder of Second Affirmative could then be used to pre-empt negative case-side attacks and extend the Affirmative case.

This approach by the Affirmative not only elevates value considerations beyond that possible in First Affirmative Rebuttal but it also forces Second Negative to deal with arguments that were not presented in First Affirmative. The Affirmative team can claim all of the ground from First Affirmative and have four additional minutes to expand it. Due to the extension of the Affirmative case, Second Negative is forced to reconsider the arguments that (s)he has been preparing since First Affirmative. Any case attack advantage for Second Negative (based on more preparation time) is gone and the supposed advantage of the switch has turned affirmative. Therefore, the argument that a heavier burden is placed on First Affirmative Rebuttal due to the switch is illogical because the Affirmative can exploit this strategy and shift the burden to Second Negative and not First Affirmative Rebuttal.

Viewed in this way, one would wonder why an Affirmative would not cheer when a negative team switched. It is possible to suggest that it is merely because they are not prepared. Coaches may not have proposed this strategy to their teams or debaters may only be ready to answer certain arguments. Many second affirmatives may not be familiar with off-case responses. Lack of preparation by the affirmative seems a poor reason to limit negative approaches.

Confusion in Debate

The third argument cited against the switch is that it confuses the debate, we disagree. If a negative team employing the switch would announce its strategy to the judge and the Affirmative team, then no confusion would take place. However, if a team tries to disguise the switch then confusion is possible.

Throughout the last CEDA year (1983-84), very few teams openly employed the switch but many teams disguised it. The negative would disguise the switch in First Negative by advancing case-side presses and then developing underviews

which were alternative value hierarchies. The Second Negative would, then, advance additional value positions. This type of negative strategy is confusing. With an outright switch the Affirmative would realize that it must deal with the alternative hierarchies but with a disguised switch the Affirmative is placed in a dilemma. If the Second Affirmative dealt with the case presses, the value objections would not be adequately covered. If the Second Affirmative dropped the presses and went for the value objections, the negative would often drop the value objections presented in First Negative and develop the dropped presses into full-scale arguments. We believe this is confusing. The appropriate affirmative approach is the one we have already mentioned, division of time between case and off-case arguments.

In traditional debate, counter-plans, minor repairs, and alternative justification cases often cause confusion in a debate round but there is no move in policy debate to ban counter-plans or prohibit alternative justification cases. Neither should there be a move in CEDA to prohibit a legitimate negative strategy — the switch.

If confusion does take place in a debate round it is not the strategy's fault but the debater's. We should not eliminate a legitimate argumentative strategy just because the debaters using it cause confusion. If debate is to be an educational experience, where one learns to deal with complicated issues; then why discard complicated strategies? If we want to avoid the possibility of confusion, then why not forget about evidence, theoretical perspectives, logical paradigms and have the debaters focus on emotional appeals rather than logical argumentation. We believe that the switch is a legitimate strategy which promotes a logical paradigm and extends a theoretical background that is desperately needed in CEDA debate.

Ethics

The fourth argument we have heard against the switch is that it is unethical. This position is difficult to respond to since its advocates, both debaters and judges, rarely explain the claim. A charge of ethical violation would seem to indicate some type of underhanded behavior designed to take unfair advantage of the other team. If the switch is announced, if the attacks are relevant to the resolution, then where is the violation or unfair advantage? If a team is properly prepared to argue, the advantage will actually flow affirmative. There are not rules in debate about speaker responsibilities so it is hard to see the warrant for an unethical claim.

We have often wondered if such an argument isn't offered as an attempt to avoid the responsibility of responding to negative argumentation by teams that are not prepared to deal with the switch. If this is the case the ethical charge would have to be reversed in direction.

Reduced Clash in a Switch Round

The final argument that we have heard against the switch is that it reduces clash. This argument seems to be based on the assumption that the debate is supposed to revolve around the issues set forth in first affirmative constructive. Therefore, clash in the round should center around these issues.

This assumption might be correct if the first affirmative defended the entire resolution or established a comprehensive value hierarchy. Sadly this is not usually the situation. Affirmative teams often defend very narrow parts of the resolution (RDNA, EBS, CIA or troop movements as examples from the Spring 1984 topic). Restricting argumentation in the first negative speech to clash on these very narrow areas: 1) justifies the narrow case approach, 2) allows the affirmative to control the debate in a very restricted area where they have an unreasonable advantage, and 3) guarantees that affirmative will run narrow cases because the negative is forced to debate them and is allowed no strategy with which to respond. The end result will be very narrow single example cases, which we are experiencing now.

If an affirmative team offers a broad defense of the resolution, a comprehensive value hierarchy, then first negative value objections will clash. Indeed, it seems to us that this is exactly the type of clash we are seeking, not clash on narrow affirmative justifications but clash on larger conceptual issues.

The switch would seem to be the best strategy if we wish to encourage conceptual clash. It is a strategy that allows a negative team to point out that the affirmative is not representative of the resolution as a whole. It allows demonstration that, on balance, the resolution is a poor statement of values.

Conclusion

Several overall comments seem in order at this point. We would hope that this discussion has at least prompted consideration of the switch as a legitimate approach to negative speaker responsibilities. We suggest that it is often the best approach for CEDA debate. We hope that it will spur

affirmative teams to create cogent theory arguments about its use. Perhaps judges will not reject it so routinely.

In summary, we agree with Michael Bartanen that, "If we confine value debates to fitting into boxes supplied by policy debates we do not offer students an alternative but a frustrating and confusing experience" (p. 24).

The switch is an alternative that can promote the cause and creativity of CEDA debate. It should not be discarded due to its violation of traditional rules or for its possibility of causing confusion. The switch actually promotes value considerations and forces the clash of value hierarchies into the limelight of the debate.

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