DEBATING HASTY GENERALIZATION

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Rowland's belief that since CEDA is not as intensive as other forms of debate, it may not be well suited to stringent testing of either policies or values or to the the development of argumentation theory is pedantic and chauvinistic. Rowland is wrong. Argumentation theory is not the sole province of NDT debating and its membership.

CEDA is only in its adolescent phase and little has been written about its practices. Whether this is due to a failure on the part of the CEDA community to write or on the part of the publishing outlets to publish material on non-policy debating has yet to be determined. With the advent of Lincoln-Douglas debating on the high school and most recently on the college level, non-policy debating has begun to offer much theoretical hindsight for competitive non-policy debaters. Whatever the situation CEDA or non-policy debating has been more responsible for the development of hasty generalization and counterwarrant theory than NDT or policy debate.

Hasty generalization has become a voguish issue for the first negative constructive in non-policy debating. Panicking from a lack of evidence on a particular case, the frantic negative debater searches for some way to convince the critic that the affirmative interpretation of the resolution is somehow unfair and should be rejected.

As affirmative debaters continue to turn to examples to prove non-policy resolutions true, the use of hasty generalization as a voting issue has become more prevalent. The affirmative has chosen to debate examples of the resolution for many reasons: it gives the affirmative a competitive edge by restricting discussion to an area which the affirmative is particularly competent, it reduces evidence abuse by discouraging the citation of non-referent evidence, and it reduces uncertainty since examples give meaning to and draw meaning from regulations which are specific in application an intent.

Rowland claims that values and policies are so closely related that rational debate about one cannot take place without a consideration of another. Political and legal systems express the intentions as well as the structure of the status quo. Policy grows out of philosophical systems and as representative entities of greater ideational systems, they are germane to any discussion of values. For some, philosophical systems may even be considered as pre-policy systems which when examined will indicate the direction policymaking will take when confronted by significant social issues in the future. Consequently, to best examine the primacy of a philosophical system,

we tend to look at the policies which are extant and compare them to new policies which would grow out of an alternative political value system. The balancing process thereby provides the debaters with an understanding of the true meanings and implications of shifts within a particular socio-political value infrastructure.

This approach, at least within the CEDA community has become known as example analysis. While Rowland claims that in CEDA the entire resolution is debated, and that CEDA topics have implied a broad set of policies all of which must be defended for the affirmative to win, he ignores the process of logical analysis which entails proving resolutions true by representative examples. It is clear that the full set of the resolution is merely a large example of sorts. We may tend to accept the generic approach to a resolution as more palatable since we presume that debating the full set of the resolution is more representative than arguing a subset. This reasoning is fallacious since a subset of the resolution can both be argumentatively representative and sufficiently large to justify broad conclusions about the resolutional statement.

In response to unrepresentative and small examples introduced as atypical plans in the NDT community, the counterwarrant as a disadvantage to more typical examples of the resolution surfaced. Fueled by the belief that debate is an inductive process and drawing conclusions from some general resolutional statement must adhere to the vigors of fundamental logic, Paulsen and Rhodes introduced the hasty generalization as a mechanism to justify the use of the counterwarrant.

According to the original theses of Carney and Sheer there are at least two instances when the fallacy of a hasty generalization can be committed.

1. When an example chosen by the affirmative is not representative of the class from which it is drawn, and

2. When an example chosen is an inappropriately small subset of the class.

The analysis they offer in their text is next to none and directs the logic student to presume that hasty generalization is a fallacy from which there is no defense. But, of course, such a steadfast rule regarding such a subjective fallacy is naive. Without clear standards against which to measure representativeness and size, the logician examines the class from which the subset is drawn and in the process of comparing the example or subset to the

class or set from which it is drawn, the fallacy of hasty generalization is tested.

The purpose of this paper is not to justify nor to deny the legitimacy of the counterwarrant as an argument force. Instead, the purpose is to examine the fallacy of hasty generalization in order to offer argumentation students standards by which they may determine whether an example of the resolution may be hasty or not. In addition, the entire issue of the weight that should be awarded the concept of hasty generalization as an issue in determining the legitimacy of a warrant for a resolution will be examined. Finally, certain practical approaches to debating hasty generalization and evaluating debates in which they are introduced are examined.

To determine whether an affirmative example of the resolution is hasty the following standards should be applied: is the affirmative example representative and is the affirmative example sufficiently large?

To establish representativeness the affirmative must be able to demonstrate that the example shares fundamental characteristics of the resolution from which it is drawn. In other words, the affirmative subset is reasonably similar to the resolutional set. These counter-examples or counterwarrants must also share the same or better characteristics of the resolution and also must prove the resolution probably not true.

To determine whether an affirmative example is sufficiently large, the affirmative should impose a simple formula which evaluates the number of actors affected times the gravity of harm. Size is a relative issue. While sample size in statistical sciences is discernible through a simple F test which specifies minimal sample size necessary for significance in an experimental design, in rhetoric it is not as easy. Therefore, size analysis can be argued in terms of: 1. quantity of actors involved and affected; 2. degree of involvement and effect for some class of actors; and 3. significance of the phenomenon under discussion versus actors. Like a scale and similar to risk analysis, large number of actors with minimal issue significance may balance against a small number of actors with maximal significance.

The cry of hasty generalization is not enough. The debate does not stop for a subjective edict from the critic; the debate merely occurs on two levels: 1. testing of the examples as representative and size/significant as a resolutional justification, and 2. testing of the issues as a justification to believe the resolution probably true.

Hasty generalization is not a voting issue per se unless the negative frames the debate within a hypothesis testing paradigm. Zarefsky's hypothesis testing paradigm would reject an affirmative warrant regardless of extrinsic reasonableness when the example fails to be a reasonable subset of the resolution. As such, hasty generalization may become an a priori issue. In non-policy debating the a priori hasty generalization debate issue has become renamed subtopicality. And similar to policy debating, the negative argues the affirmative example as a jurisdictional issue and as such deserves primacy. The obvious affirmative response is to defend a non-hypothesis testing paradigm which forces the negative to introduce and defend counterwarrants.

Hypothesis testing has been addressed in debate literature with great frequency and Zarefsky's 1976 paper should serve as the non-policy debaters primary guide. Non-policy debaters have been able to argue convincingly that debate is not hypothesis testing. The resolution cannot be tested within the arbitrary time limits imposed on the activity. Debate is merely the demonstration of relative truth or probable truth of a resolutional statement.

Debate is at best hypothesis building. It involves procedures whereby educated guesses are systematically excluded from a pool of reasonable guesses. Testing takes place subsequent to the debate hypothesis building process.

Debate as a rhetorical activity deals with subjective fact finding. The determination of relative truth is based on authoritative yet opinionated statements rather than formal objective replicatable research findings.

In order to demonstrate that the affirmative example is hasty and any subsequent generalization is unjustified, the negative introduces the counterwarrant — an example of the resolutional set which proves the direction of the resolutional statement either inaccurate or undesirable or both.

The standards for a good counterwarrant must include the following:

1. Use of the affirmative definitions or redefinition of the resolution using better definition standards.

2. Presentation of representative and sufficiently large counter examples of the resolution.

3. Proof that the affirmative example to indicate the resolution probably true is deficient and the negative counterwarrants are superior.

Negative counterwarrants may equally suffer from the fallacy of hasty generalization if the counterwarrant examples are unrepresentative or insufficiently large to justify generalization. The affirmative can also argue that a single negative counterwarrant example results in poor generalization.

Critics decide jurisdictional issues first. If hasty generalization is an a priori issue, this means that a critic evaluates the criteria issue setting up hasty generalization first and then tests the affirmative and negative examples against the criteria.

Certain members of the non-policy debating community feel that debates off-resolutional issues are somewhat illegitimate. However, the reverse is more true. Debating non-resolutional issues increases the educational function of competitive debate as a field of academic study in speech communication.

Arguing hasty generalization in non-policy debate will serve: 1. To improve issue selection and generally improve the learning experience based on topical analysis of a resolutional statement; 2. To decrease evidence crammed non-analytical debates and concentrate the debate on the inductive process itself; and 3. To decrease hasty generalization as an issue. The more it is argued, the more the issue of hasty generalization will develop standards and debaters will attempt to preempt hasty generalization debates by choosing better examples to prove the resolution probably true.

As a critic of argument, hasty generalization debates can be resolved as follows:

1. Has the negative issued either or both standards of representativeness and sample size as grounds for the claim of hasty generalization? Has the negative identified some fundamental characteristic(s) of the resolution which the affirmative has not met? AND/OR has the negative identified some superior actor to gravity size/significance relationship which the affirmative has not met?

2. Has the negative issued an appropriate paradigm? The hypothesis testing paradigm may allow debates to be decided on hasty generalization alone. However, an alternate paradigm which in any way requires a balancing process requires the negative present better examples — counterwarrants — which prove the resolution probably not true.

3. Do the negative counterwarrants better prove the resolution probably not true than the affirmative examples prove the resolution probably true?

As CEDA and non-policy debating become more popular, we can expect a natural increase in programs which debate to win. As such, tactics which may include the introduction of crafty examples to prove the resolutional statement true will abound. In response, the negative has the option of hasty generalization and the counterwarrant.

However, the role of the critic is to evaluate the performance of the debaters in each round, not to interject subjective judgments into the debates. If debaters insist on arguing hasty generalization and counterwarrants, they are obligated to present "good" arguments. This paper may serve to offer debaters and critics in the CEDA community with some basic guidelines.

FURTHER READINGS

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