APPLICATION OF THE ISSUES-AGENDA PARADIGM TO SPEAKER DUTIES AND STOCK ISSUES IN VALUE DEBATES

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The familiar belief that "form influences content" is particularly accurate when describing value debate rounds. Academic debates on value propositions are frequently criticized for being indistinct from academic policy debates. The issues that are debated and the ways in which speaker responsibilities are allocated rely heavily on traditional models created for policy rounds. While writers have offered alternative paradigms for value debates in an effort to differentiate value debate from policy debate no readily accepted group of stock issues has emerged to fit the unique requirements of the value debate round. I will discuss the role of stock issues in the debate round, present a set of stock issues appropriate for use with the issue-agenda model of value debate, and offer an application of these issues to a set of speaker duties for value debates.

The Role of Stock Issues in Value Debate

"Speaker duties" refers to the debater's responsibility to argue about particular issues in the debate round. Traditional policy debate theory teaches that the affirmative must provide a prima facie case and the negative assumes the corresponding responsibility to dispute the resolution by directly refuting the affirmative position, defending the status quo, or providing an alternative position to both the affirmative and the status quo. The same traditional perspective counsels debaters to seek refuge in analyzing the "stock issues" to determine the requirements for a prima facie case. A stock issues perspective is easily understood in policy debate rounds to include analysis of "significance," "inherency," and "solvency" as the elements of a prima facie case. Other writers include "absence of disadvantages" and "topicality" as stock issues.

There is little consensus among value debate theoreticians as to relevant stock issues, and limited attention is given in value debate rounds to discovering or arguing about them (Church, 1986). The identification of relevant stock issues plays an important role in the debate round. Arguers must identify the issues they disagree about in order to facilitate meaningful debate. It would be unproductive for an arguer to come prepared to debate the reasons why drug testing violates privacy only to find the opposing arguer wishing to debate the value of improved relations with the Soviet Union. Stock issues provide the means by which arguers can know what they need to do to win the argument or persuade the listener. Several approaches to identifying relevant stock issues have been advanced in recent years. The approach introduced by Ronald Matlon (1978) has particular significance for value debates.

Matlon recommends that participants in value debates identify both the "definitive" and "designative" issues. The definitive issue identifies criteria for defining and measuring a value in a general sense, and then the designative issue calls for applying that criteria to the circumstances causing the controversy. Building on Matlon's division of definitive and designative issues, Bartanen and

Frank (1983) identify four questions, derived from use of the issues-agenda model of public policy-making, that arguers must address to determine ground (issues or positions belonging to one arguer as opposed to another) in a value debate:

1. How are the issues and values implied in the resolution defined?
2. What assumptions can be made about the audiences and their value system?
3. Is the problem serious enough to affect this audience and its relevant value hierarchies?
4. Is this problem more worthy of audience attention than competing problems? (Bartanen & Frank, 10-13)

While all paradigms create their own unique set of stock issues the issues-agenda paradigm provides an opportunity to illustrate how speaker duties might be recast in value debates to more effectively isolate discussion of value-related ideas.

Stock Issues In the Issues-Agenda Paradigm

The issues-agenda paradigm views value debate as similar to the process occurring in public policy arenas. 'Exigencies' (problems capable of being modified through discourse) achieve 'agenda-status,' meaning that the issue is perceived to be important enough to require relevant decision-makers to take action (Cobb & Elder, 1972). Since any number of different issues might be simultaneously worthy of agenda status it is up to arguers, through the process of value argument, to justify the salience of an issue to the decision maker (Bartanen, 1982). Only when a systematic (social) agenda item demands decision maker attention will the item be granted institutional (formal, policy-making) status. A value debate, therefore, is a clash between arguers who disagree about issue salience. An affirmative arguing that improved relations with the Soviet Union is an important objective is attempting to convince decision makers to perceive that the value of avoiding nuclear confrontation should take decision-making priority over the concern for budget deficits, public works construction or other institutional agenda items, assuming that decision makers must follow a hierarchy in allocating time and effort to problem solving at any point in time.

Using the issues-agenda paradigm, the four questions listed above can be translated into stock issues for analysis and argument in the debate round. The stock issues are DEFINITION of TERMS, IDENTIFICATION OF THE AUDIENCE-CENTERED CRITERIA, DETERMINATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXIGENCE, and COMPARISON OF THE GERMANE VALUES WITH POTENTIAL COUNTER VALUES.

1. Definition of Terms. We exist in a relativist world where the kinds of 'things' that we argue about are not subject to precise definition and unanimous agreement. The definition of key terms in any controversy is crucial to determining where there is common ground. Common ground is necessary to isolate precisely what issues the arguers are disagreeing about (Brockriede, 1975). The definition of terms is relatively less important in policy debates where the affirmative can rightfully rely on "operational" definitions embodied in their plan, and there is less confusion about the definition of the policy implication being discussed.

Lacking an obvious means for operationally defining terms, formal definition of key terms is an important responsibility in the value debate not only for the sake of clarity but for achieving an important strategic advantage. The side controlling the scope of the definitions frequently has a far better chance to control the direction and outcome of the debate. For example, defining "improved relations with the Soviet Union" to

broadly include grain sales, cultural exchanges and the like would obviously give the affirmative a strong advantage since presumably there would be more possibilities for outweighing potential negative advantages to increased military preparedness. Controlling the scope of defined terms also has a theoretical importance in helping to determine the number of diverse publics and arguers who perceive it to be in their interest to raise an issue to systemic-agenda status.

Narrowly defined controversies (controversies which seem to only affect the interests of a few) attract less interest than broadly defined controversies (ones which seem to affect everyone). A key variable in influencing achievement of agenda status for an issue is whether there are sufficient numbers of people pushing for that end. Institutional decision makers can ignore important issues because they believe that only a few people are concerned about the issue. Arguers must carefully define the issues in their controversy so as to insure that the correct "number" of people perceive the issue important enough to join the battle (Schattschneider, 1960; Bartanen, 1982). It is extremely rare for an issue to move from systemic to institutional agenda status strictly on its merits. Decision-makers have too many competing issues to be concerned about. Arguments concerning terminal or universal values (e.g., the "value of peace") are rarely considered outside of their temporal relevance to a particular situation (Rokeach, 1973). Temporal relevance of an issue is created through the way that the concept is defined and described.

This struggle for control of definitions is illustrated by the early stages of the Iran Arms Sales controversy. President Reagan contended that the arms transfers were not a "swap" for American hostages, since the Iranian government did not have direct control over the hostage groups. His definition of hostage swap could be seen as "giving arms DIRECTLY TO THE GROUP HOLDING THE HOSTAGE, in exchange for the hostages' release." Reagan critics, on the other hand, defined a swap differently. They suggested that a swap occurred when "IT WAS PERCEIVED BY THE GROUP HOLDING THE HOSTAGES, that arms were exchanged for the release of the prisoners." Both Reagan and his opponents felt a need to control the definition of 'swap' to influence the American public who had previously shown a clear opposition to negotiation with terrorists. Defining terms must be the initial responsibility of arguers in a value debate. Once terms have been defined, the arguer must then determine relevant criteria for applying particular values to the exigence inspiring the argument.

2. <u>Identification of Audience-Centered Criteria</u>. People do not debate values in a vacuum. We create hierarchies for values and differentiate values in general contexts from the application of values in specific contexts (Rokeach). In a debate round, criteria arguments function as the warrant,[1] linking the data (information about the exigence causing the dispute) with the claim (how the affirmative applies particular value statements in support of their argument to grant agenda-status to a particular issue). The criteria provide the measuring device by which the applied values can be assessed and understood in the controversy. In most instances, criteria ought to be derived from analysis of the predilections of particular audiences rather than being derived only from the application of universal principles. While any number of different criteria are available to measure the application of values in any given con-

text, particular attention must be paid to the preferences of the audience that ultimately decides whether an issue deserves agenda status (Weiss, 1985).

Adaptation of an argument to an audience is, of course, one of the oldest and best accepted Aristotelian rhetorical principles. Unfortunately, debaters frequently resort to using "vague criteria or circular, self-fulfilling decision rules" (Cole, Boggs & Twohy, 1986). Rather than considering the interests and predispositions of the particular audience in the debate round (i.e., the judge), debaters locate their criteria in universal measures (such as vague concepts like 'democracy') that utilize the universal audience rather than the particular audience (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). While arguments directed at universal audiences are appropriate in some settings, such as philosophical disputes, and universal criteria are certainly appropriate in some arguments, too little attention is paid in debate rounds to developing criteria which are linked to the interests of the particular audience listening to the debate. Debate judges frequently complain that debaters fail to consider the judge's interests and preferences in structuring their arguments.

Failing to adapt arguments to the debate judge is poor preparation for arguing in the 'real-world,' where arguers must pay close attention to the kinds of criteria their audiences use in making decisions. Advertisers attempt to determine what criteria consumers use to decide which soap to buy. Pollsters attempt to determine the kinds of characteristics voters use to decide which candidate to support. These are merely two of a myriad of examples of the principle of audience adaptation at work in practical arguing contexts.

Traditional debate practice, on the other hand, assumes that the debate judge must not show any predilections regarding the issues being debated, pretending to be "tabula rasa." There is a mistaken assumption that there is a relationship between "having a previous idea or knowledge on an issue" and being "biased in a debate round." The debate process requires judges who are merely unbiased toward the debaters and who have an open mind about the issues. Ignoring the judges' existing predispositions about subjects isolates the listeners and undermines the communicative function of the debate. Other than the legal context, there are few situations in which an arguer would construct arguments without making a real attempt to determine audience preferences and then shape arguments to take advantage of or overcome those preferences.

Adapting arguments to the judge need not be a hopelessly difficult task. The structure of most debate tournaments gives the debater insight into the general characteristics of their judges as it is generally likely that most of the judges will be debate coaches or familiar critics. Tournaments using "non-traditional" judges could provide information about the judges to the contestants prior to the tournament. During the tournament the debaters could be encouraged to ask the judge about their views on the topic and the debate process. While this interaction would be a break from the tradition of debate where judges do not interact with the debaters during the round, such a change seems justified by the opportunity for encouraging the kind of judge adaptation that so many feel is missing in debate rounds.

The choice of criteria becomes not only a function of researching the debate topic but of researching the audience. This approach might encourage debaters to use more specific criteria if they have reason to believe that specific

criteria are expected by their listeners. The current style of debate encourages debaters to pick vague criteria that are argued without reference to the listener despite the fact that the only function of criteria is to provide the listener with a means of evaluating the issues presented in the debate.

Once the criteria have been established those criteria must be applied to the exigence inspiring the argument and evaluation made as to whether the problem is important enough to justify agenda-status.

3. Determination of the significance of the exigence. Time constraints and other factors prevent decision-makers from considering every issue competing for agenda-status. Choices must be made. Differentiating issues on the basis of their perceived significance becomes the way that decision-makers choose between competing priorities.

While cost benefit analysis is often used to discriminate between issues in policy-making situations, it is not the only or necessarily the most appropriate means for comparing issues vying for institutional agenda status. While appropriate in many contexts, it is becoming increasingly apparent to many critics that over-reliance on strictly economic decision-making factors is far from an ideal way to solve all problems. Cost-benefit analysis presumes that there is enough information available to correctly weigh alternatives, an idea that may not be true in actual practice as decision-makers rarely make rational decisions by weighing all the evidence available to them even when they can obtain that evidence.[2]

Value debates could frequently use appropriate qualitative significance measures other than cost-benefit analysis. Arguers often make "illogical" judgments about the importance of an issue. The Iran-Contra Hearings illustrate the substitution of qualitative for quantitative measures for evaluating the importance of an issue. Oliver North, for example, justified his actions on the basis of a "greater good" which outweighed strict adherence to the law. North and others testified that President Reagan's concern with the safety of the hostages overcame his reluctance to deal with the hostile nation of Iran. Milton Rokeach differentiates "terminal" from "instrumental" values. This distinction might be a very useful means of arguing about the significance of particular values. An arguer might justify a value on the basis of its categorization as an important terminal value or a significant method of attaining a terminal value regardless of whether it met the rigorous test of positive cost benefit analysis. Higher education, for example, is probably not defensible on cost-benefit grounds as college graduates do not make significantly higher salaries than non-college graduates to the degree necessary to offset the cost of their education. Defending the importance of the value of education requires arguers to utilize qualitative measures such as the role of education in creating a "well-rounded" individual.

Determining the method of assessing the significance of an issue to be emphasized ought to be a function of both the debaters' audience analysis and the nature of the proposition. As noted earlier, Cole et al. indict debaters for frequently relying on instrumental values in developing and presenting their criteria arguments. This can make debates difficult to follow if concrete examples are not provided to illustrate the criterion. Greater use of more specific instrumental values could be appealing to judges who prefer debates where a few issues are analyzed in depth

rather than many vague issues analyzed superficially.

Values must be compared to and weighed against other values and this comparison becomes the fourth and final stock issue in a value debate round.

4. Comparison of Germane Values with Potential Counter-Values. This issue provides the negative with the opportunity to analyze whether there are competing values outside the resolution (and possibly outside the status quo) that are more important and more deserving of agenda-status than the germane values presented by the affirmative. The presentation of counter-value arguments requires the judge to compare the implication of accepting the germane value to other potential competing values.

Arguers must constantly confront the fact that taken by itself any value could be perceived as important. Unfortunately, the value is only considered by audiences who simultaneously consider other competing issues. Institutional (formal decision-making) and social (general public) agendas are in a constant state of flux as competing values are superseded by other values perceived to be more salient, not unlike the childhood game "king of the mountain." This is another situation where cost-benefit analysis is a tempting but not unique method of comparing values. Audiences do not always make 'logical' decisions about what issues are important. More often, it is the power of persuasion that causes an audience to perceive an issue as salient. Sometimes the public ignores highly significant issues (e.g. safety in the work place) while devoting attention (and consequently agenda recognition) to much more 'visible' if less-significant issues (e.g., violence in professional sports). Frequently very deserving issues fail to achieve agenda status because the arguers are unable to demonstrate that their issue is deserving enough to replace another issue on the institutional or social agendas, even though the issue may be significant enough to warrant agenda status. This frequently becomes the basis for criticizing the media. According to critics, the media attends to issues which their agenda-setters believe the public wants to learn about rather than issues about which the public actually ought to be concerned.

In arguing this fourth issue the arguers must be prepared to discuss issues beyond the scope of the resolution. The resolution must be compared to other competing priorities. Sometimes an appropriate competing priority is specified in the resolution itself (such as the resolution comparing improved Soviet-American relations with military preparedness). Other resolutions lend themselves easily to the comparison of competing value systems (such as the recent resolution regarding drug testing which often compared the value of privacy to that of safety).

This comparison of values does not necessarily limit the arguer to the substantive issues contained in the resolution. There is no reason why an arguer cannot compare the value of improved Soviet-American relations with the value of improving American health care if it can be shown that they are mutually exclusive. President Reagan frequently uses this type of value comparison when he urges Congress to pass a balanced budget and yet give large budget increases to the military. This, in effect, compares Soviet-American relations with the American health care system.

The issues-agenda model provides four stock issues for analysis and argument. The arguers must settle upon definitions of the concepts involved in the dispute,

develop criteria to apply germane values, determine the significance of the exigence, and compare the exigence and germane values to other competing problems on social and institutional agendas.

Speaker Duties in the Issues-Agenda Model

Developing appropriate stock issues is only part of the task of creating more effective value debates. Speaker responsibilities in the debate must also be adjusted to reflect the kinds of issues that are being debated. Unlike policy debate, where speaker duties are closely related to the legal and political paradigms, value debates do not easily fit the traditional divisions of labor. This is especially true for the negative. It is traditional in policy debate for the first negative to attack the case and the second negative to attack the plan. The most common strategy is a 'shot-gun' approach where the negative makes a number of superficial attacks on the affirmative case and waits for the affirmative to expose a weakness by failing to adequately cover all the negative attacks. This strategy almost presumes that all issues are equal in importance until proven otherwise.

This is essentially the strategy most frequently employed in value debates. The first negative deals with the affirmative case by advancing several positions about each issue without any particular emphasis, especially regarding arguments about the definitions. Lacking a plan, the second negative either falls back on the ill-defined strategy of presenting 'value objections,' even though their precise role in a debate is unclear or simply extends case-side arguments presented by the first negative. Transcripts of the 1987 Final Round of the National CEDA Tournament and a demonstration debate in a recent textbook illustrate this strategy (See Boaz & Brey; Church & Willbanks). Figure 1 illustrates the division of speaker duties using the stock issues of the issues-agenda model and following the traditional division of labor inspired by the model of policy debate.

The issues-agenda model implies that the division of speaker duties becomes a strategic choice made by the debaters based on their analysis of both the issues and the arguing situation. The negative, in particular, has some flexibility about their strategy choice. They may choose to employ the traditional or "reactive" strategy where the first negative attacks the "case" and the second negative issues "off-case" arguments. Or, they may choose a "proactive" strategy where they may choose to vary either the order or the emphasis of their attacks on the affirmative issues.

The reactive strategy is more conservative and based on the view of the negative as a "defense attorney" for the status quo or other values indicted through the resolution. The proactive approach assumes that the negative is an independent player in the process of determining agendas and is free to choose which issues and in which order the issues will be dealt. The proactive approach operates on the assumption that presumption and the burden of proof are arguable responsibilities rather than arbitrarily assigned, a position consistent with the nature of value controversies.

Figure 1 illustrates the division of labor when the negative follows the reactive strategy. Figure 2 illustrates the division of labor when the negative follows a proactive strategy. Use of the issues-agenda stock issues would affect all the individual speeches to varying degrees.

FIGURE 1 Coverage of Issues-Agenda issues using a "Reactive Strategy"

Issue	1AC	1NC	2AC	2NC	1NR	1AR	2NR	2AR
Definitions	yes	yes	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Criteria	yes	yes	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Significance	yes	yes	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Counter-values	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	yes

A 'yes' indicates that the speaker would deal with that issue; a 'no' indicating that the speaker would not deal with that issue; and a 'poss' indicating that the speaker would possibly deal with the issue.

FIGURE 2 Coverage of Issues-Agenda issues using a "Proactive Strategy"

Issue	1AC	1NC	2AC	2NC	1NR	1AR	2NR	2AR
Definitions	yes	poss	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Criteria	yes	poss	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Significance	yes	poss	yes	poss	poss	yes	yes	yes
Counter-values	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes

A 'yes' indicates that the speaker would deal with that issue; a 'no' indicating that the speaker would not deal with that issue; and a 'poss' indicating that the speaker would possibly deal with the issue.

The FIRST AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE presents a 'prima facie' case defending the resolution and in doing so defines terms, presents the affirmative criteria, and defends the significance of the problem area. The speaker is not required to defend the affirmative value against other counter-values.

The FIRST NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE begins the 'division of labor' by attacking one or more of the four stock issues. Using the traditional 'reactive' approach the speaker either challenges the affirmative definitions or presents counter definitions. The speaker either challenges the affirmative criteria or presents counter-criteria (as long as the counter-criteria are consistent with potential counter-value arguments presented in the second negative constructive). Finally, the speaker attempts to refute the affirmative significance position.

Using a proactive strategy the negative might choose to concentrate their complete attack on a single issue, or perhaps present a counter-value argument in the first negative speech and attack one or more of the remaining issues in the second negative speech. For example, the negative might wish to argue the single issue that the counter-value of privacy outweighs the affirmative case value of increased productivity resulting from drug testing. They might issue this position in the first negative speech and defend it throughout the debate.

How would the negative decide on whether to adapt a proactive or reactive strategy? The answer lies in the analysis both of the situation and the content of their arguments. A team may decide that a particular judge prefers one approach to the other. A team may also decide that its strongest argument might be a counter-value argument that will be introduced early in the debate. The effect of

the proactive approach should be to shift the focus of the debate from affirmative to negative issues and might be used when the negative feels particularly well prepared on some of the issues while weak on others.

Of course, the proactive strategy is not new. It is reminiscent of the traditional negative strategy where the negative was permitted to win a debate by defeating a single stock issue rather than having to win a preponderance of the issues in the debate round. Having to win a preponderance of the issues is one of the principle reasons for the spread. Since the debater had to assume that the judge was tabula rasa and since the negative had to do more to win the debate than simply find a single issue to defeat, they were forced to expand the number of issues in the round to present the illusion of winning the preponderance of those issues if the affirmative, through sheer lack of time, was unable to "cover." The logic and "sanity" of a return to the earlier practice of encouraging the negative to attack fewer issues and rewarding them for doing so is evident. No practice alienates more friends of the debate activity more than that of rapid fire delivery.

The SECOND AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE would attempt to rebuild the affirmative case in response to the lines of attack of the first negative. The SECOND NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE would analyze the remaining stock issues and then extend one or more of the issues previously dealt with by the first negative. Following the reactive approach, the speaker would present one or more counter-value arguments and then 'pick-up' either the definition, criteria, or significance arguments, leaving the other two for the first negative rebuttal. Following the proactive approach the speaker obviously argues whichever issue had not been discussed and then picks up one of the remaining issues or continues with the analysis of the single issue upon which the negative stakes the debate.

The FIRST NEGATIVE REBUTTAL extends whichever two stock issues the previous speaker did not argue. The FIRST AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL covers all issues in the debate with particular emphasis on second negative constructive issues, in the traditional fashion. The SECOND NEGATIVE REBUTTAL and SECOND AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL both survey the entire debate.

Decision-Rules

This approach would provide a flexible format for debates encouraging the debaters to focus on the important issues while allowing strategic creativity. It would hopefully encourage debaters to make determinations about the judges' preferences for particular strategies and issues. This format does not offer any 'new' debating strategies: 'picking up' arguments, presenting counter-value arguments in first negative, etc., are not unheard of strategies.

The role of the judge would also be affected. The critic would need to become a more active participant in the debate by giving the debaters insight into her preferences about the issues as well as preferences about debate style. The judge may choose to accomplish this by giving an oral judging philosophy or tournaments might make more wide-spread use of written judging philosophies.

Summary

If CEDA debates are going to carve out a unique place in academic debate, then debaters must begin to focus on issues that are appropriate for value analysis, rather than simply borrowing issues from

policy debate. This requires not only new issues, but a fresh look at the structure of the debate round. Debates have been traditionally constrained by the speaker duties taught in policy-oriented textbooks, by time limits which promote equal time for speakers at the expense of in-depth analysis, and an unwillingness of debaters and debate judges to change. CEDA was founded with the spirit of experiment; that spirit should be rejuvenated.

Footnotes

[1] Data, warrant and claim are all used in the sense of their application in the Toulmin Model.

[2] There are a number of different critiques of why more information does not cause decisions in writing on information science.

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