COMPARING VALUES: A REVIEW OF AXIOLOGICAL STANDARDS FOR ANALYTICAL VALUE HIERARCHIES

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For over a decade forensic educators have formulated and reformulated a theory base for the resolution of non-policy controversy. Numerous stock issues have been proposed over that time, but perhaps the most often suggested issue is the comparison of values. Matlon's watershed articles (1978, 1981) called for debaters to familiarize themselves with the interdisciplinary literature pertaining to value inquiry in order to compare values effectively. As yet, it appears that all too few debaters have followed Matlon's advice, as most non-policy debates include, at most, a superficial exposition and support of value comparison standards.

This paper attempts to facilitate increased value comparison in competitive debates in two concurrent ways. The first is to review a number of standards for the resolution of value conflict, thereby applying value theory to the debate format. The second is to provide a literature overview and brief analysis of some of the most influential writings discussing value theory. This should provide a general understanding of the literature and a bibliography facilitating focused research.

The standards included in this analysis are: social values, exigence and salience, anteriority, cost/benefit, and oughtness or normative value. These standards are not new to critics or competitors involved with the CEDA topics of the past decade, but as noted, these standards seldom receive more than superficial argumentation in debate rounds. It is hoped that the following exposition and citations will aid the teaching as well as the debating of value comparison standards.

Social Values

The social values standard proposes that non-policy argumentation be resolved by simply deducing which side in the debate is upholding previously established social values. Sillars and Ganer (1982) contend that "social values are the best starting point for evaluating public argumentation," (p. 185) and it is this author's belief that non-policy or value debate should always include a discussion of social values even if a different standard is used as the final arbiter of the round. If no values such as freedom, life, money, privacy, or law are involved, there would appear to be no need for debate.

A number of authors have attempted to identify and describe American social values. Space constraints forbid a detailed examination of American social values in this article, yet a cursory listing seems mandatory. Some of the most cogent analyses of American values can be found in the writings of anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn. The following list of traditional American values derives from a little known, posthumously published work coauthored by Clyde and Florence Kluckhohn (1964). The list includes: Achievement; individualism; the cult of the average man; rationalism; moral purpose; progress in the future; the pleasure principle; externalism; and benevolence. The Kluckhohns qualify this list by stating:

We could enlarge this list considerably. We could introduce numerous qualifications. Nevertheless the preceding can suffice as the distinctive features of the traditional American value system. These values may be changing. Some students of

27

American society think they are. Whether or not this is true, the values enumerated are still very much with us. (p. 32-34)

Because so many authors have commented on American social values, inclusion of lists other than Kluckhohns' is warranted. Sociologist Robin Williams (1970) identifies what he calls "Major Value Orientations in America." These are: Achievement and success; activity and work; moral orientation; humanitarian mores; efficiency and practicality; progress; material comfort; equality; freedom; external conformity; science and secular rationality; nationalism-patriotism; democracy, and individual personality . . . (pp. 454-498). Rieke and Sillars (1984) list what they call "American Value Systems" as: Puritan-pioneer-peasant; enlightenment; progressive; transcendental; personal success; and collectivist (pp. 118-126). Social values that appear threatened or needed in the future are specified by Rescher (1969) as:

Privacy; equality (legal, social, and economic); personal integrity (vs. depersonalization); welfare (personal and social); freedom (of choice and action); law abidingness and public order; pleasantness of the environment; social adjustment; efficiency and effectiveness in organizations; rationality (organizational and individual); education and intelligence; ability and talent. (p. 122)

These four lists are by no means all inclusive, and each debate resolution suggests different social values for consideration. Let it suffice to say that the listed social values are common subjects of debate.

Exigence and Salience

This standard derives from the situationally guided rhetoric of Lloyd Bitzer (1968), and as a debate construct, contends that the most urgently needed, or most threatened value, as publicly recognized, is the higher value in a given situation. (For a discussion of threatened or needed values, see Rescher, p. 121-127). Bartanen and Frank (1983) examine exigence and salience in argumen

tative situations in "The Issue-Agenda Model" which provided the stimulus for the ensuing exposi-tion.

A conception of exigence and salience is determined by the situation in which the values are observed. Sillars and Ganer explain:

Commonly, in public argumentation even the most critical value is adapted to the context in which it is used. In 1976, following the Nixon experience, the Carter presidential campaign could be successful with a stress on values of trustworthiness and honesty. In 1980, with Watergate memories fading and domestic economic and world conditions changing, national security and economic security seemed more important and trustworthiness less so. Carter's attempts to make trustworthiness again the issue failed. There was a national shift in values that represented not a new hierarchy but an adjustment in the value system. . . . Values that lose saliency because of a change of issue do not go away. They simply become less significant at the time. (p. 188, 190)

Subtle distinctions can be made between the term "exigence" and the term "salience." As discussed by Bitzer (1968) "exigence" is an urgent need, whereas, "salience" is the interest shown for the urgent need by an audience. This audience perception of the need is explained in a political context by W. Russell Neuman (1986) who says, "political salience focuses more specifically on people's evaluation of their own level of political interest" (p. 196). Bartanen and Frank claim that "issue salience should be a major concern of value debate" (p. 409), and they make note of the importance of exigence in arguments pertaining to values. It is the perception of exigence that gives salience to an issue, thus combining exigence and salience into a single standard permits a detailed analysis of values as they are conceived in society.

Bitzer notes that "the exigence and the complex of persons, objects, events and relations which generate rhetorical discourse are located in reality, are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience, are therefore available for scrutiny by an observer or critic

who attends to them" (p. 11). This fact based methodology of identifying exigencies was commonly used in debates on the Spring 1983 CEDA topic: Resolved, that the constitutional rights of privacy, are more important than any other constitutional right. Many teams documented the threat to privacy posed by the fact of increased technology for information gathering, storing, and transfer. They established exigence for privacy rights by vivifying the real threats to privacy existent in society. The additional salience standard takes this argument one step further and asks whether society recognizes this threat and thus accepts the claimed exigency. Neuman suggests that measurement of political salience is "fairly straightforward" simply requiring survey style polling (p. 195). Similar survey results, as well as content analyses of print media, would appear to be valid and reliable measures of issue salience in areas other than the political realm. (See William's 1970 discussion of data on choices, p. 444). These empirical methods are not the only means of demonstrating issue salience. Bartanen and Frank include risk analysis and philosophical justification as argumentation constructs that may establish salience through non-empirical means.

The exigence and salience standard offers more than a rhetorical analysis methodology; it also offers much promise as a standard for comparing values.

Anteriority

In their discussion of hierarchies, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958/1969) surmise that "anteriority, the fact of engendering or of containing, may constitute the criterion for the hierarchical structure" (p. 80). Claims such as, "our criteria absorbs, supercedes, or subsumes theirs" are common arguments in non-policy debates, and usually function as truncated expressions of the anteriority standard. While recognizing the importance of intrinsic or end values, it is important that competing means to a common end, cause related or effect related values, and broadly relevant values not be ignored because of a thoroughgoing insistence on intrinsic value. The anteriority standard encompasses these other conceptions of worth as well as intrinsic value, thus, (in true CEDA fashion) the anteriority standard supercedes intrinsic values. Additionally, the anteriority standard decreases the problem of defining different categories of value as described by Rybacki and Rybacki (1986), Williams, and Rescher. This standard downplays the lexicology of value clash, preferring instead an examination of the functional comparison of values.

A functional comparison of values involves an examination of their relationship. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain:

> We shall see that values are generally considered to be interconnected, and this very connection between them is often the basis for their subordination: for instance when the "end" value is deemed superior to that which is "means" or when the "cause" value is deemed superior to that constituting "effect." (p. 81)

For the purpose of academic debate, the anteriority standard can resolve any of the aforementioned questions of value supercession or what logicians call arguments of composition and division. Anteriority in this sense would simply involve a demonstration that an opposing debater's value or value system is but a part of the arguer's value or value system and, hence, subordinate.

Cost/Benefit

Rescher believes that "to have a value is to be able to give reasons for motivating goal-oriented behavior in terms of benefits and costs . . . " (p. 10). The rele-

vance of this standard to non-policy argument is suggested by Bud Zeuschner (1982) in "Value Benefits Analysis as an Affirmative Paradigm" in which he argues that "if we find 'value objections' as a legitimate--even <u>necessary</u> component of negative strategy, we should also accept their counterpart--value benefits--as a legitimate affirmative option" (p. 17). An analysis of cost/benefit as a standard exposes other terminology relevant to a determination of cost or benefit. In their discussion of "The Pragmatic Argument" Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain, "we call that argument <u>pragmatic</u> which permits the evaluation of an act or an event in terms of its favorable or unfavorable consequences. This argument plays such an essential part in argumentation that some have wished to see it in the sole scheme of the logic of value judgments" (p. 266). If there is a distinction between Rescher's cost/benefit analysis and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concept of pragmatic consequences it is not readily apparent. The function of these standards is similar enough to equate the two. Ulrich (1983) and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca further explain this cost/benefit (or pragmatism) standard by placing it into the utilitarian school of thought.

A survey of philosophy texts uncovers a number of definitions of utilitarianism. Perhaps the most relevant for the purpose of value debate is provided by Vincent Barry (1985) who states, "utilitarianism insists that the promotion of the best long-term interests of everyone concerned should be the moral standard" (p. 65). Barry, further delineates two forms of utilitarianism, both of which are applicable to academic debate. The first is act utilitarianism.

Act utilitarianism maintains that the right act is the one that produces the greatest ratio of good to evil for all concerned. In performing an action we must ask ourselves what the consequences or

this particular situation will be for all concerned. If the consequences produce more general good than those of any other alternative, then the action is the right one and the one we should perform. . . . In short, each situation is considered unique; each new set of circumstances calls for a fresh evaluation. (p. 66).

This issue specificity encourages advocacy pertaining to explicit issues contained within the resolution rather than overarching ideologies that may be applied to any resolution regardless of the issues contained within. Conversely, Barry explains that:

Rule utilitarianism asserts that we should not consider the consequences of a particular action but rather the consequences of the rule under which action falls. . . . Rule utilitarians, then, ask us to determine the worth of the rule under which any action falls. If obeying the rule generally produces more total good than violating it, we should obey it, regardless of the consequences in any particular situation. . . . Berkeley reasoned that if each time a person must make a moral decision, he or she must evaluate the consequences of a proposed action, then enormous difficulties would arise due to ignorance, prejudice, carelessness, lack of time, or indifference. The result would hardly be in the best interests of the general good. Rules, however, that everyone is aware of and attempts to impliment simplify such problems, thereby advancing the common good. (p. 67-68)

Resolutional questions pertaining to constitutional values, legal issues, and principles for action seek broadranging answers such as those involving rule utility.

Whether the standard is labeled cost/benefit, pragmatism, or utilitarianism the argumentative function is similar--values are compared by comparing their good or bad consequences.

Oughtness or Normative Value

"Virtually all writers have pointed to the 'ought' character of values" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 9), thus, a listing of value comparison standards that omits the oughtness standard would be incomplete. Kant's conception of the categorical imperative established a moral standard of "ought" and a field of ethics known as deontological or duty ethics (Barry, p. 54). This oughtness-as-morality standard is very important to ethical concep-

tions of value, but as an argumentation construct it leaves much to be desired. How are critics to objec-tively judge morality? Donald Walhout (1957) makes a distinction between moral "ought" statements and value "ought" statements without denying the deontological status of either. He reasons:

> "Ought" is sometimes used in a conditional way, where it is a hypothetical directive, and sometimes in a categorical way, where it is a direct command. Now the primary function of a normative judgment is to express a standard or rule, and any ought contained within it would seem to be of the first type, the hypothetical ought. . . . In effect: "If you want result A, you ought to adopt policy X; if you desire result B, you ought to follow policy Y; and so on ." In contrast with this conditional use of "ought," the categorical use exemplified by the parent's "You ought not to steal," or by the preacher's "You ought to love your neighbor," is quite different. Here there is a direct command or injunction concerning action and thought. So different are these two uses, in fact, that henceforth we shall refer to a judgment containing the hypothetical ought as a normative judgment proper, and to a judgment containing the categorical ought as a moral judgment. (p. 43)

This distinction between normative and moral judgments simplifies the task of objectifying value inquiry. Walhout's description of the hypothetical nature of normative judgments readily applies to existent argumentation theory. If we accept Walhout's claim that normative judgments involve hypothetical "ought" statements, then the hypothesis-testing paradigm constitues a relevant methodology to analyze assertions of normative value. For a discussion of hypothesis testing see David Zarefsky's (1987) "Argument as Hypothesis-Testing" in Thomas and Hart's (eds.) Advanced Debate: Readings   in   Theory, Practice and Teaching.

Political theorist, Roy Macridis (1983) writes that "Normative judgments about . . . the characteristics of political authority --its sources and limits . . . [are part of] the very 'stuff' of contemporary political ideologies" (pp. 4-5).   It is quite common for CEDA topics to propapate issues pertaining to political authority, so an application of the oughtness standard would seem pertinent if not necessary to the resolution of such issues.

Elder and Cobb (1983) forward five categories of normative premises including the "characteristics of political authority" discussed by Macridis. These normative premises are: Social obligation (how groups and individuals ought to act in a given society); conceptions of authority (who ought to rule, and how); distributive justice (how laws ought to be determined and upheld); personal virtue (what personal characteristics ought to be revered); and life values (how people ought to direct themselves toward their goals). Elder and Cobb claim that:

> These premises . . . are likely to be accepted at any point in time not as mere preferences or personal presumptions, but as enduring and self evident truths. They tend to be experienced not simply as private standards and aspirations, but as generalized expectations regarding what constitutes appropriate conduct. (p. 45)

As Rokeach observes, the "ought" nature of values has been prolifically examined by value theorists. The present exposition is but a brief overview of the literature referring to normative value as a standard. Two additional sources worthy of mention are W. H. Werkmeister, Man and His Values, and Robin William's section titled, "Institutional Variation and the Evasion of Normative Patterns".

Conclusion

Matlon (1981) encourages comparison of values through the use of "value standard(s)" (p. 497), explicitly allowing for plural means of comparison. Williams furthers this idea when he claims that multiple conceptions of value actually "gain reliability in so far as they are mutually consistent" (p. 447). From this perspective, the standards here reviewed (or other value comparison standards) may be applied concurrently

during debates, if they can be demonstrated to be consistent. The social values standard, for instance, requires simply that each side in a debate uphold at least one previously established social value. To also measure exigence and salience or cost/benefit of that value would not be logically or axiologically inconsistent. As an example, if the social value of order is being debated, possible and consistent arguments might be that order involves law which is normative; or that in times of riot or political unrest, order may be an exigent and salient need; or that order is a requisite condition to the functioning of legitimate government, and is thus anterior to government.

The standards reviewed in this article are certainly not the only possible standards for comparing values, nor are these standards perfect. The intent of this article has been to stimulate coaches and debaters to accept the strengths of axiological standards as value debate constructs, thus, a complete analysis of the weaknesses of these standards is deferred for future authors to analyze. Social values, exigence and salience, anteriority, cost/benefit, and oughtness or normative value were reviewed as standards because of their functional applicability to non-policy argumentation. Not all of these standards will apply to every topic for debate but at least one of these standards could be applied to any potential non-policy resolution. It is this author's sincere hope that debaters will incorporate standards, such as those proposed in this paper, into actual debate rounds in order to increase the amount of value clash in non-policy debates.

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