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ASSESSING COUNTER-WARRANTS: UNDERSTANDING INDUCTION IN DEBATE PRACTICE

Brian R. McGee
Southern Illinois University

Since the early 1970s NDT debaters have shifted from debating the resolution to debating examples of the resolution (Paulsen & Rhodes, 1979). Rhodes and Pfau (1985) suggest that "the long-term perspective of traditional practice seems to favor the resolutional approach, while the short-term perspective seems to favor the example approach" (p. 147). In CEDA, while there is no firm consensus on this issue, the bulk of debate critics appear to believe that the resolution as a whole should be the focus of debates (Ulrich, 1984). This general belief, however, has not stopped CEDA debaters from using examples of the resolution in attempting to prove the resolution true (Tolbert & Hunt, 1985).

In the midst of this controversy over resolutional focus lies the continuing debate over the validity of negative counter-warrants, i.e., negative instances offered to disprove affirmative instances of the resolution (Paulsen & Rhodes, 1979). Since counter-warrant theory is premised on the notion that the resolution is the focus of the debate (Keeshan & Ulrich, 1980), one would expect some level of consensus to have developed among debate theorists and critics, particularly among those who favor the resolutional approach. However, even a cursory glance at the judging philosophy booklets for the past two national CEDA tournaments indicates no such agreement. It is not surprising, then, that critics have given little consideration to a specific aspect of the use of counter-warrants: once introduced into a debate round, how should negative counter-warrants be evaluated in comparison with affirmative warrants? As Tolbert and Hunt (1985) admit, "Perhaps the most obscure aspect of counter-warrants is how a counter-warrant debate round should be judged" (p. 26).

In academic debate, arguments are often evaluated by weighing risk (often operationalized as probability of link multiplied by size of impact). Tolbert and Hunt (1985) appear to encourage the use of this approach for weighing counter-warrants when they suggest that "the debate comes down to an on balance [sic] judgment of affirmative case impacts versus the negative counter-warrants. This is the kind of decision that debate judges are accustomed to making and explaining in their critiques" (p. 27).

This traditional approach to judging the strength of arguments is inadequate when dealing with counter-warrants. Since counter-warrants, as explained by Paulsen and Rhodes (1979), are attempts to ascertain the truth of the resolution inductively, the strength of competing inductive generalization attempts must be the first concern of those trying to assess resolutional truth. This essay will argue that the inductive strength of affirmative and negative examples must be measured first. The debate team winning the most inferentially sound warrant about the truth of the resolution should win the debate round.

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This essay is not intended to settle the question of whether the case (or the plan in policy debate) or the resolution should be the focus of debate. It is sufficient to recognize that many judges both allow counter-warrants and vote on them regularly at CEDA tournaments around the country (implicitly accepting resolutional focus in the process). Indeed, it is not uncommon for affirmatives in CEDA to allow negative teams to introduce counter-warrants without a word of protest at the theoretical level. The primary purpose of this essay is to analyze how counter-warrants should be evaluated in rounds once they have been introduced and accepted as legitimate (either explicitly or by default).

Induction: A Pragmatic Reasoning Tool

In everyday life, we make countless decisions based on incomplete knowledge. Rather than avoiding decision-making, we choose to reason inductively. Nicholas Rescher (1980) explains that: "The crucial thing about induction is its movement beyond the evidence in hand—from informatively lesser data to relatively larger conclusions" (p.7). In other words, when we reason inductively, we draw inferences from particular examples ("covert involvement in Nicaragua is undesirable") to larger conclusions ("covert involvement in Central America is undesirable"). Between the grounds (data) of covert involvement in Nicaragua and the claim regarding covert involvement in Central America is a warrant which suggests that covert involvement in Nicaragua is similar to (or germane to) covert involvement in Central America (Ehninger & Brockriede, 1963; Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1984).

It is common to hear induction characterized as a weaker argument standard than deduction. An argument is deductively valid if it is impossible for the conclusion to be false, given that the premises are true. In contrast, an argument is inductively strong if it is improbable that the conclusion is false, given that the premises are true (Skyrms, 1966). At best, then, an argument from example can only provide a reason to believe that the resolution is probably true (Biggers, 1985). Rescher (1980) suggests that "an inductive inference can always be looked upon as an aspiring but failed deductive inference, an enthymeme, an argument in whose formulation some crucially necessary premiss is lacking, so that a larger conclusion is based on lesser premisses" (p.10).

One assumption that some might make is that deductive proofs, because they are regarded as being "better" than inductive reasoning by formal logicians, are preferable in debate practice. As a standard of argument evaluation, deduction is often considered superior to induction (the failed attempt at deduction, as explained above). Often, however, when dealing with deductive proofs, one must recognize that the premises from which the deduction was made were arrived at inductively. So the induction/deduction distinction sometimes made in argumentation is often artificial and even misleading.

Induction, in any event, should not be rejected because of its imperfect nature. Often we are faced with incomplete information; when this occurs, we often make the

"best" decision that we can, given the available information (Rescher, 1980). To suggest that "without absolute proof of the truth of a statement, that statement should be discounted" is foolhardy. Rather, if an inductive generalization provides a sensible, defensible explanation about the truth of some statement, it should be accepted as probably true, absent a more convincing argument to the contrary. If inductive reasoning is used, however, it is our duty to ensure that certain standards regarding the proper use of this type of argument are utilized.

Induction and Current Debate Practice

It is not uncommon for CEDA debaters to argue from example. On the Fall 1986 CEDA topic, "Resolved: that improved relations with the Soviet Union are a more important objective for the United States than increased military preparedness," it was rare to hear of affirmatives arguing that improved relations as a whole were a more important objective than was increased military preparedness as a whole. A very common approach, rather, was for affirmatives to argue that arms control, an example of improved relations, was more important than continuing the nuclear arms race, an example of increased military preparedness.

With the acceptance of the counter-warrant as a legitimate negative strategy has come an era of affirmative example versus negative example. On the same Fall 1986 CEDA topic, it was common to hear an affirmative arguing that the nuclear arms race, an example of increased military preparedness, was an unmportant objective, while a negative team in the same round argued that the Strategic Defense Initiative, a different and seemingly unrelated example of military preparedness, was an important objective. Since many debaters failed to make any substantive attempt to weigh the strengths of these different inductive generalization attempts for critics, clash was effectively destroyed, and competing debate teams too often became "ships passing in the night." In the end, critics often decided this sort of round by weighing impact size (a nuclear war this week versus Third World starvation in 20 years) and link probability (a 1% chance of nuclear war versus a 95% chance of Third World starvation) without having considered the possibility that one or both examples of the resolution might not be representative of that resolution. As a result, the theoretical premise for allowing counter-warrants in the first place was (and is) often ignored. The next two sections consider (a) how the resolution is demonstrated to be true, and (b) how specifically the resolution might be proven true through the use of examples.

The "Whole Resolution": What is it?

It is essential that we understand what constitutes proof that the resolution is true. Some negative debaters have argued that the resolutional focus favored by many critics in CEDA implies that the entire resolution must be proven completely true. These debaters argue that any negative example of the resolution would disprove the resolution and would justify a negative ballot.

This argument seems unreasonable. Initially, it would be fundamentally unfair to affirmatives. "Negative" instances of broad resolutions will almost surely exist. Legitimizing this standard would probably legitimize mandatory 3-3 or 4-4 records at all CEDA debate tournaments. "Debatability" mandates that we treat debate resolutions less like scientific hypotheses and more like statements to be proven generally true or false. Secondly, and more importantly, this absolutist approach to the resolution seems incompatible with "rules" of correct language interpretation. Suggests Bile (1987): "Most of us would consider the proposition 'birds can fly' as true even though we are aware of some that can't, because we intuitively insert the generic modifier 'most' in front of 'birds' or 'typically/generally' in front of 'fly.' This intuition is semantically 'correct'"(p. 11). Since many debate resolutions lack explicit quantification modifiers, they might often be treated as statements to be proven generally true or false. So then, when we argue from example in a debate round, we are often attempting to prove the resolution generally true or false.

Testing Inductive Strength in Debate Round

When attempting to prove the resolution generally true, inductive reasoning can be compelling. Berube (1984) posits that "a subset of the resolution can both be argumentatively representative and sufficiently large to justify broad conclusions about the resolutional statement" (p. 55). The key is the credibility of the induction (implicit in the use of smaller examples) to prove the larger example (the resolution) to be generally true. Examination of the subset from which the inference is drawn is crucial. Standards for inductive generalization have been developed for use in a CEDA debate context most notably by Biggers (1985), who builds on generalization standards originally devised by Ehninger and Brockriede (1963). Biggers suggests that examples of the resolution must be "germane to the class about which we wish to generalize (Ehninger & Brockriede, 1963)," sufficient in number to legitimize acceptance of the proposition, and must be selected in a random, non-biased manner (p. 34).

Obviously, some of these standards have a higher utility for debate practice than do others. Biggers' first standard suggesting that examples must be germane to the class generalized to, despite its obvious importance, is often ignored. If an example does not appear to be germane to the class, then arguments about that class based on the non-germane example would be properly considered inductively weak. For example, a negative counter-warrant utilizing an "advertising pamphlets" example on the Spring 1988 CEDA topic, "Resolved: that the American judicial system has overemphasized freedom of the press," might not be germane to the whole class of printed and electronic media with which freedom of the press appears to be concerned. Hence, if the pamphlets example were not germane to the class, an argument based on that example would not represent a strong induction.

Biggers' second induction standard regarding number of examples requires special attention. The notion of "number of examples" is based upon borrowed statistical

measuring techniques that have little relevance for non-statistical, sentential propositions. A more qualitative assessment regarding example size is more appropriate for consideration of the examples commonly used to prove debate propositions true. For example, on the same Spring 1988 CEDA "freedom of the press" topic, a single affirmative example of freedom of the press based on the characteristics of the electronic media generally would be far "larger" than the sum of 12 negative examples of different small-town newspapers printed in Indiana. In other words, all examples are not "created equal." Some examples are larger, therefore more probably representative, than others. A single large example would probably be more representative than would the sum of 12 much smaller examples. So the qualitatively-measured size of examples, rather than the number of examples,would appear to be the more correct inductive generalization standard when dealing with non-statistical, sentential propositions.

Biggers' third induction standard (i.e., random, non-biased selection),when debate propositions are being examined, is the least important of the three he proposes. In practice, the accusation that an affirmative or negative debate team has not chosen their example randomly would have little persuasive value (Paulsen & Rhodes, 1979). It is sufficient to recognize that those who reason inductively have a responsibility to seek out examples that are representative of the whole (Ehninger & Brockriede, 1963).

Therefore, two generalization standards may have particular relevance for academic debate. Examples should be germane to the class generalized to and sufficient in size in a qualitative sense to inspire confidence in the strength of the inductive generalization. Utilization of these two standards is discussed below.

The Application of Induction Standards

One important implication of accepting these standards for evaluating inductive generalization attempts has often escaped even the advocates of this approach: when dealing with examples of the resolution, evaluation of impact size and link probability can only come after the example has been evaluated. Even if an unrepresentative example seems to "outweigh" a more representative example (i.e., a nuclear war seems more significant in a quantitative sense than five people dying), the unrepresentative example may be discounted because it does nothing to shed light on the general truth of the resolution. The example allowing the strongest inductive generalization should be accepted, regardless of other considerations, because it offers the greatest certainty for ascertaining resolutional truth.

At least one difficulty can be found with adopting this habit of examining the inductive strength of example-based arguments before considering other argument criterion. As recognized earlier, our knowledge of specific examples is often incomplete; we do not have enough information about the example to apply all the standards outlined above. This does not mean, however, that we should not try to achieve the best possible inductive generalization (Rescher, 1980; Stove, 1986). Unlike scientists in a laboratory, debate critics are time-bound; after less than two hours they must make a

decision about whether or not the resolution is generally true (assuming a resolutional focus). At the conclusion of the round the debate critic should make decisions about inductive strength based on the evidence and analysis presented in the round. If we only know that one example is larger (with regard to the resolution) than another when weighing warrant versus another, for example, we would choose the warrant which is based on that larger example. To the best of our knowledge, that example would offer the greater possibility of allowing an accurate inference regarding resolutional truth.

The previous paragraph should not be taken to suggest that no "burden of proof" exists for those who argue from subset. Those who argue from example should be required to prove the reasonability of their inference from subset to whole (Bile, 1987). In other words they must be able to explain why the "leap" from subset to whole is a reasonable one. If more than one warrant seems plausible, however, then it is the task of the judge to determine which inductive generalization is the best supported via the arguments introduced in the debate round.

In summary, when arguing from example, it is the burden of debaters to indicate that the grounds (data) they offer give sufficient cause to believe that the generalization (the resolution) is likely to be true. Debaters must indicate that the warrant upon which the claim of generalizability depends is both sensible and defensible. This may be done utilizing the standards presented above. Once we have determined that there are strong reasons to believe that an example of the resolution allows the most probably correct generalization to the truth of the resolution, that example-based argument should be accepted irrespective of its impact size.

Discussion and Reservations

The evaluation of examples upon which arguments are based may, admittedly, be difficult in practice. Initially, it is often difficult in "real world" debate practice to judge the relative strength of different inductive generalizations. Debaters commonly fail to discuss the utility of induction as a reasoning tool and/or do not offer much analysis or evidence with respect to the representativeness of resolutional examples used in argument development. This suggested process of determining the strength of inductive generalization attempts can be particularly difficult when the examples used by both debate teams seem close to "equal," i.e., they seem at first examination to be about equally representative (or unrepresentative). When no frame of reference is made available, it may be nearly impossible to make such an in-round judgment. On the Spring 1988 CEDA "freedom of the press" topic, it would have been difficult to judge the representativeness of a "juvenile court" affirmative example versus a "domestic terrorism" negative example without any attempt by the debaters to weigh the representativeness of the examples or to consider where the burden of proof lies when arguing from a subset of the resolution. If there is no way to make such a judgment about induction attempts, it may be impossible for a judge to assess the inductive strength of competing examples, and it may be necessary for the round to be resolved at other levels. (The only

alternative would be to call for judge intervention on this matter, which seems a "cure worse than the disease.")

Criticism of the approach outlined above will doubtless come from opponents of resolutional focus. One objection often made with regard to resolutional focus is that it in reality makes consideration of examples impossible; in other words, some believe that resolutional focus makes the argument from example illegitimate. That is not true of the perspective explained above. Rather, it means that those examples more germane and holistic with respect to the resolution would be considered to allow the better inductive generalization. An example from the CEDA Spring 1988 "freedom of the press" topic mentioned above illustrates this concept. On that topic some affirmatives argued cases that only dealt with the electronic media. In our hypothetical debate, a negative might present and win a counter-warrant dealing with newspapers only, yet still lose the debate if the affirmative successfully argued that the electronic media was the most typical and representative example of the "freedom of the press." In this instance, the electronic media example might be argued to be the most representative because it deals with the largest part of the resolution, hence bringing into play the example-size criterion suggested above. When faced with two examples, it is best to assume that the the more an example meets the standards suggested above, the better the chance that the argument based on that example will be inductively strong.

Conclusion

While many members of the CEDA community agree that the resolution should be the focus of the debate round, many have not considered how proving the resolution true is operationalized in practice. This essay has argued that current argument evaluation practices in CEDA are unacceptable when debaters utilize the argument from example. Inductive strength of competing arguments from example, determined primarily by standards concerned with example germaneness and size, must be weighed before other assessments regarding those arguments are made. If one example offers the best explanation concerning the truth of the resolution, other argument criterion would become irrelevant, since other examples of the resolution, no matter how seemingly "important," would most likely not be typical of that resolution and should be discounted.

Consideration of inductive strength over more common and time-honored criterion for argument evaluation will be difficult for many debaters and debate critics. Use of these older argument criterion is counterproductive, however, if a resolutional focus is utilized. Only by examining inductive strength <u>first</u> when debaters utilize the argument from example will the truth of the resolution be effectively determined.

Notes

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THE FORENSICS CRITIC AS AN "IDEOLOGUE-CRITIC": AN ARGUMENT FOR IDEOLOGY AS A NEW PARADIGM FOR ACADEMIC DEBATE

Greg R. Miller
University of Southern California

The applicability of forensics tournament events beyond the competitive environment has been a relatively enduring concern. In an attempt to reconcile the role of method in forensics competition with the educational and societal benefits of the activity, this paper will examine Wander's (1983) ideological criticism perspective and its application to the forensics critic. Philip Wander (1983) suggests that debate is more than just informed talk about matters of importance. Rather, criticism and debate enable society to recognize good reasons and engage in right action: "What an ideological view does is to situate good and right in an historical context, the efforts of real people to create a better world" (p. 18). Wander's perspective is relevant to forensics if one assumes that forensics are a testing ground for important socio-political ideas. Rather than focusing only on methods and strategies, debate should challenge existing orders and resolve important conflicts.

Currently, academic debate does not promote the discussion of substantive issues. This paper argues that judges need to be more ideological in their evaluation of debate contests. Indeed, this paper analyzes a number of commonly used paradigms identifying potential abuses that are common within each paradigm. Finally, this paper does not suggest that current paradigms cause the abuse, but an "Ideologue-Critic" paradigm would solve debate's problems. By identifying the tenets of the "Ideologue-Critic" debate can become more ideological and therefore more educational.

In organizing the role of ideology in current communication research, this paper suggests an application of ideology to the forensics situation. Second, the paper suggests that the judge is the most influential part of debate. Because of judging rewards, certain uneducational practices are reinforced in academic debate. Finally, this paper outlines the "ideologue" paradigm suggesting its theoretical and practical tenets as well as answering possible criticisms. Indeed, I would be naive to assume that the "ideologue" paradigm would serve as a "cure all" for every problem in academic debate. Instead, the "Ideologue-Critic" paradigm is a starting point for the betterment of academic debate.

The Role of Ideology

Many divergent conceptualizations of ideology exist. For example, Black (1970) defines ideology as "the network of interconnected convictions that functions in a man [sic] epistemically and that shapes his identity by determining how he views the world" (p. 112). Additionally, Balthrop (1984) contends that ideology functions as a bridge