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CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES OF NON-POLICY ARGUMENT

By Bill Hill

■ In a brief passage, Windes and Hastings distinguish between the purposes of non-policy and policy advocacy. Non-policy advocacy, they claim, is "general" advocacy which attempts to stimulate beliefs about policies, while policy advocacy is "specific" advocacy which attempts to generate formal decisions about implementing policies (1965, p. 49). Theorists since Windes and Hastings have presumed non-policy advocacy to be a separate domain of argument and have attempted to identify the ways it is conceptually distinct (Warnick, 1981; Bartanen, 1982; Cole, 1987; Tuman, 1987; Baker and Loge, 1989; Dudczak, 1988; Murphy, 1990; Wilbanks and Church, 1991).

Non-policy advocacy is thought to be conceptually distinct primarily because it encompasses different types of propositions than does policy advocacy (Mills, 1964; Ziegelmueller and Dause, 1975; Verch and Logue, 1982; Cole, 1987; Dudczak, 1988). Theorists and practitioners generally presume that non-policy advocacy occurs about propositions of "fact" and "value," while policy advocacy is concerned with "policy" propositions.[1] Propositions of "fact" and "value" have been assimilated into the non-policy domain because, unlike policy propositions, neither requires an advocate to explicitly demonstrate that a particular policy or action **should** be implemented (Dixon and Leslie, 1984).

Despite the general agreement among theorists and practitioners that non-policy advocacy focuses on propositions of "fact" and "value," our understanding of the fundamental nature of these types of propositions is incomplete. First, we have not systematically classified types of propositions of fact. A number of theorists (Ewbank and Auer, 1951; Capp and Capp, 1965; Bauer, 1966; Miller, 1966; Thompson, 1971; Freeley, 1971; Rieke and Sillars, 1987; Matlon, 1988; Bartanen and Frank, 1991) speak of propositions of fact generically, making no effort to identify any sub-classifications of this

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[1]*Not all theorists use the terminology "fact" and "value" to denote proposition types. For example, Terris (1963), Ziegelmueller and Dause (1976), and Verch and Logue (1982) identify questions of fact and value as components of the more general proposition of "judgment." Similarly, Windes and Hastings (1965) describe questions of fact and value as dimensions of the more general proposition of "belief." Freeley (1986) recognizes "value" as a distinct proposition type but conceptualizes it as including questions of fact. Despite the different terminologies that have been used to label non-policy propositions, most theorists and practitioners now speak of "fact" and "value" as the primary propositional types within the non-policy domain.*

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proposition type. Others (Baird, 1950; Mills, 1964; Wilbanks and Church, 1990; Ziegelmueller, Kay, and Dause, 1990) do identify various sub-categories or types of propositions of fact, but make little or no effort to integrate their classifications with those identified by other theorists. As a result, we have an incomplete understanding of the nature of this type of proposition, and thus of the conceptual boundary of the non-policy domain.

Second, we have not reached agreement on how propositions of value should be formulated. Virtually all theorists agree that propositions of value can identify explicit value conflicts such as, "Resolved: That privacy is more important than national security." A number of theorists also contend that propositions of value can be formulated to require value assignation to an object of focus such as, "Resolved: That censorship in a democratic society is undesirable" (Zarefsky, 1980; Brownlee, 1989). However, not all theorists agree that singular value assignations constitute properly formulated propositions of value. Some (Verch and Logue, 1983; Wilbanks and Church, 1991) argue that propositions of value must contain explicitly identified value conflicts in order to be properly formulated.

Third, we have failed to provide useful ways for practitioners to distinguish between propositions of fact and value. Most theorists simply do not explain how to distinguish between these proposition types and those who do offer practitioners little more than general definitions to distinguish between propositions of fact and propositions of value. As a result, many debaters are unable to accurately classify non-policy propositions (Dixon and Leslie, 1984; Meldrum, 1990).

Addressing these shortcomings is important in two respects. First, clarifying the conceptual boundaries of non-policy argument can facilitate more meaningful non-policy debate. Because the proposition is the focal point in any dispute, the characteristics of any debate are influenced largely by the type of proposition being contested. For example, advocates may select definitions and types of supporting material based on the type of proposition being contested. In addition, the stock issues and burdens which advocates must meet in a dispute are determined largely by the type of proposition being contested (Thompson, 1971; Terris, 1973; Brownlee, 1989; Murphy, 1990).[2]

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[2]*That proposition type influences the analytical formula for a dispute is widely accepted in our literature. For example, theorists generally recognize four major stock issues which must be met in advocacy of policy propositions. The effect of proposition type on analytical formula is equally clear in the non-policy domain. For example, advocates would have a responsibility to advance and support a value hierarchy when contesting a proposition of value, but no such requirement would be incumbent upon advocates involved in a dispute about a proposition of fact. For a more complete discussion of the importance of establishing and supporting a value hierarchy in a debate about a value proposition see Tuman, J.S. (1987). Getting to first base: prima facie arguments for propositions of value.* **The Journal of the American Forensic Association**, *24, 84-94.*

Second, clarifying the conceptual boundaries of non-policy argument can enhance pedagogy. By more clearly and completely describing the types of propositions encountered in the non-policy domain, students can develop a more complete and accurate understanding of the nature of non-policy argument. In addition, by clarifying how to distinguish between the various types of non-policy propositions, students can more readily identify the particular type of propositions with which any non-policy argument is concerned.

The purpose of this essay is to address these shortcomings. First, I will briefly review how theorists have conceptualized propositions of fact and then integrate the types of propositions of fact that have been identified into a general classification scheme. Second, I will briefly review how theorists have conceptualized propositions of value and why some theorists argue propositions of value must identify explicit value conflicts. I will then argue that because value conflict is inherent in any value assignation, propositions of value need not include explicitly stated value conflicts. Finally, I will propose a practical test based on the principle of redundancy which can be used to distinguish propositions of fact from propositions of value.

Classifying Propositions of Fact

A proposition of fact posits what is or is not the case and is generally equated with judgments such as correct/incorrect, accurate/inaccurate, or true/false. Ewbank and Auer, for example, suggest that a proposition of fact "calls for the ascertainment of certain truths or factual reports of observable phenomena" (1951, p. 65). Similarly, Capp and Capp suggest that a proposition of fact "argues the truth or falsity of a statement" (1965. p. 55), Bauer describes a question of fact as one that "asserts that something is or is not so" (1966, p. 2-3), and Matlon claims that a proposition of fact deals simply with what "is or is not" (1988, p. 9).[3]

Virtually all theorists agree that a proposition of fact asks whether something is or is not so, however they do not agree on how to categorize the propositions of fact that may emerge in non-policy advocacy. Those theorists who identify different types of propositions of fact use one of two approaches to do so. First, some use classifications that denote **issues** with which a proposition of fact can be concerned. For example, propositions of fact are thought to deal

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[3]*Zarefsky (1980) uses the label "quasi-fact" to distinguish proposition of fact from "facts" proper. According to Zarefsky, questions of fact or "quasi-facts" can be distinguished from "facts" in two ways. First, he argues that while the appropriate means for verifying a "fact" are likely to be apparent, determining the appropriate means for verifying a proposition of fact can be problematic. Second, the means used to verify facts are likely to be largely free of subjective judgment, while the application of any means used to verify propositions of fact is likely to be dependent upon individual judgment and interpretation. Thus, while there is little reason to engage in argument about "facts," propositions of fact are likely to be resolved only when contested through argument.*

with issues of existence, occurrence, classification, similarity, and cause/effect (Baird, 1950), law (Mills, 1964), description (Zigelmueller, Kay, and Dause, 1990), and traits and relationships (Wilbanks and Church, 1990).[4] Identifying the issues with which a proposition of fact is concerned is a sound way to develop primary classifications because it is based on substantive differences. That is to say, propositions would be classified according to the nature of the questions they raise and, thus, the proposition classification would denote the nature of the arguments which must be sustained for successful advocacy.

Second, some theorists use classifications that denote the **temporal boundaries** within which propositions of fact may emerge. For example, propositions of fact may focus on issues within past or historical contexts (Mills, 1964; Wilbanks and Church, 1990), within the present context (Mills, 1964) and within future or predictive contexts (Mills, 1964; Wilbanks and Church, 1990; Zigelmueller, Kay, and Dause, 1990). Although theorists identify three specific temporal contexts for propositions of fact, the issues with which a proposition of fact can be concerned are not temporarily bounded. That is to say, any type of issue that a proposition of fact can address can emerge within any temporal context. As a result, temporal context does not distinguish **between** primary classifications of propositions of fact, it helps identify distinctions **within** the primary issue classifications. Incorporating temporal distinctions, however, more thoroughly identifies the range of types of propositions of fact and, thus, more completely delineates the conceptual boundaries of the non-policy domain.

Three primary classifications for propositions of fact emerge across the issues a proposition of fact may address. First, the most basic issue a proposition of fact can address is **being**. This category merges the issues of existence and occurrence identified by Baird (1950). Propositions of **being** are typically concerned with whether or not an object of focus exists (e.g. Resolved: That the United States has a comprehensive medical care delivery system for the elderly), or whether or not an action occurred (e.g. Resolved: That the United States has neglected the needs of homeless persons in this country).

Second, propositions of fact can address issues of relationship. Propositions of relationship deal with cause (e.g. Resolved: That Third Parties increase political activism in the United States) and effect (e.g. Resolved: That eliminating all field-based short range nuclear weapons has significantly diminished the threat of nuclear war). Propositions of relationship differ from propositions of being primarily because they focus on the interactive relationship between the object of focus and a presumed outcome or effect. Baird (1950) and (Wilbanks and Church, 1991) identify relational questions such as cause/effect as issues which a proposition of fact can address.

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[4]*Wilbanks and Church use the label "inference" instead of "fact", but the two appear to be functionally equivalent.*

Third, propositions of fact can address issues of **designation.** This category merges the issues of classification and similarity (Baird, 1950), description (Zigelmueller, Kay, and Dause, 1990), and traits (Wilbanks and Church, 1990). Propositions of designation are concerned with naming or classifying an object of focus (e.g. Resolved: That the United Nations is an obsolete organization). Unlike propositions of relationship, propositions of designation do not presume an interactive relationship between the object of focus and a particular outcome or effect. Rather, propositions of designation offer a description of the object of focus. Thus, unlike propositions of being which assert that the object of focus exists or that a specified action occurred and propositions of relationship which address issues of cause and effect, propositions of designation prescribe a particular way of viewing the object of focus.

By merging the primary categories of **being, relationship, and designation** with past, present, and future temporal contexts, we can identify nine different types of propositions of fact which may arise within the non-policy domain. Identifying these different types clarifies the range of propositions of fact advocates may encounter in non-policy disputes and more completely illuminates the conceptual boundaries of the non-policy domain. The nine types of propositions of fact are illustrated in Table 1.

Category	BEING	DESIGNATION	CAUSAL
Past	The rights of minorities were abridged during the Viet Nam war	Policies of the Reagan Administration designed to deal with the domestic drug crisis were inept	Third parties have historically promoted significant student activism
Present	Middle America shoulders the brunt of the economic burden of this nation	The UN is an obsolete organization	Eliminating all short-range nuclear weapons has significantly diminished the threat of nuclear war
Future	The US will continue to lead the world in quality of health care available to its citizens	The two-party political system will become unworkable	A strong US military presence in the Middle East will be necessary to ensure world stability

Table One. Classification of Questions of Fact

Form for Propositions of Value

Theorists typically explain what a proposition of value is by describing the nature of the judgment it requires.[5] Judgments which a proposition of value may require are described in one of two ways. First, some theorists describe a proposition of value as a generic "qualitative" judgment. For example, Thompson (1971) suggests that a proposition of value "adds value judgment to the process of estimating the truth of the statement" (18), Matlon describes a proposition of value as "a qualitative judgment about a person, object, act, situation, program, institution, concept, or idea" (1978, p. 195), and Bartanen and Frank describe a proposition of value as one which "assess[es] the nature of the world" (1991, p. 42). Second, some theorists attempt to enumerate the specific judgments that may be embodied in a proposition of value. Windes and Hastings indicate that propositions of value can address issues of "goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, desirability or undesirability" (1965, p. 54), Capp and Capp note that propositions of value deal with "the worth of a proposal, asking whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, sound or unsound" (1965, p. 55), Bauer believes a proposition of value "asserts that something is good or bad, desirable or undesirable" (1966, p. 2), and Freeley notes that propositions of value can address judgments about whether the object of focus is "good, beneficial, proper, virtuous, or admirable" (1971, p. 41). These two approaches are complementary rather than mutually exclusive; when combined they describe the general nature of propositions of value and identify the range of qualitative judgments non-policy advocates may encounter.

Zarefsky (1980) identifies two forms a proposition of value may take: (1) a conflict between or among values such as "Resolved: That national security is more important than individual privacy," and (2) value assignation to an object of focus such as "Resolved: That Gone with the Wind is pure trash" (13). Virtually all theorists agree that a value proposition may designate a conflict between values, however, not all recognize value assignation to an object of focus as an appropriate form for a value proposition.[6]

Some theorists argue that a proposition of value must explicitly designate a value conflict in order to be properly framed. For

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[5]*For an excellent discussion of the historical evolution of propositions of fact and propositions of value see Walter F. Terris, "The Classification of Argumentative Propositions," in Jerry M. Anderson and Paul Dovre (Eds.), <u>Readings in Argumentation</u> (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), 129-39. He traces classification of proposition of fact to William Trufant Foster, <u>Argumentation and Debating</u>, (Boston, 1932), 13-14, and traces classification of a proposition of value to Russell H. Wagner, <u>Handbook on Argumentation</u>, (New York, 1938), 15-16.*

[6]*Brownlee (1989) adopts Zarefsky's classification scheme to discuss the nature of propositions in Stephen Wood and John Midgley (Eds.), <u>Prima Facie: A Guide to Value Debate</u>. Others provide examples of value assignation to an object of focus. See for example, Thompson "Resolved That John F. Kennedy was a good President" (1971, p. 19) and Freeley "Resolved That abortion is immoral" (1986, p. 43).*

example, Verch and Logue (1982) use Rokeach's definition of value, "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (1973, p. 5), to argue that a proposition of value should have a value conflict as its focus. Accordingly, they do not accept Zarefsky's example, "Resolved: That Gone with the Wind is pure trash," as an appropriate proposition of value because it does not explicitly identify a value conflict.[7]

Wilbanks and Church (1991) argue the point more emphatically. Like Verch and Logue, they use Rokeach's definition to argue that because values "serve as guides or criteria for conduct" (41), a conflict between or among values is the **only** appropriate form a proposition of value must take. They write.

> Humans perceive all values as preferable to their opposites. Otherwise values would not be regarded as values. As such, values cannot be judged in isolation. It would be utterly ridiculous to debate a proposition such as: Resolved, that generosity is desirable. Values cannot be debated unless they are compared with other values, or unless some valued thing is compared with another valued thing. We can only judge values within a context of specific behaviors when one value conflicts with another.(41)

Wilbanks and Church offer a number of examples of propositions of value which identify explicit value conflicts including, "Resolved, that individual rights of privacy are more important than national security," "Resolved, that commercial television is more beneficial to society than is public television," and "Resolved, that economic equity is better than economic growth" (41). Like Verch and Logue, they would not classify Zarefsky's example "Resolved: That Gone with the Wind is pure trash" as a properly framed proposition of value.[8]

It is certainly reasonable to argue that contesting propositions of value requires value comparisons. However, neither Verch and Logue nor Wilbanks and Church explain why a value conflict must be **explicitly identified** in the proposition in order for value comparisons to occur in a debate. Rather, they assume that values will be judged in isolation unless advocates are explicitly directed toward comparison. That assumption understates the inherent role of

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[7]*They offer a similar example, Resolved: That "Raiders of the Lost Ark is a great movie," in their essay. They classify propositions which require value assignation to an object of focus as propositions of judgment, not value. The classification "judgment," as used by other theorists, denotes a broad classification of non-policy questions which typically includes "fact" and "value" as subcategories.*

[8]*Rokeach would probably argue that the classification scheme fact-value-policy be relabeled "descriptive beliefs," "evaluative beliefs," and "prescriptive beliefs." See Rokeach (1973, p. 6-7).*

value comparison in making a value assignation to an object of focus, and ignores that value conflict inherently emerges in any dispute when criteria are applied to make a value assignation to an object of focus. To understand why value conflict is inherent in value assignation, we need first to distinguish between the types of objects of focus about which value assignations can be made.

There are two types of objects of focus likely to be included in propositions of value. First, the object of focus may be **directional.** This type of object of focus has an implied or readily identifiable opposite such as "generosity" (implied opposite is greed), "membership in the United Nations" (implied opposite is to discontinue membership), or opposites "mandatory drug testing" (implied opposites may be either voluntary drug testing or no drug testing). Thus, a directional object of focus offers one particular variation of the object being judged. Second, an object of focus can be **non-directional.** This type of object of focus has no clearly identifiable opposite such as "John Kennedy" (Resolved: That John Kennedy was a good President), or "Gone With the Wind" (Resolved: That Gone With the Wind is pure trash). Thus, the locus of judgment with a non-directional object of focus is on that object proper; it may not be possible to identify a competing variation of the object of focus and doing so is unnecessary to the judgment being made.

Value conflict is inherent in making a value assignation to either of these types of objects of focus because value conflict is inherent in the selection of standards to comprise the judgmental criterion. Judgments such as "good," "bad," desirable," and "undesirable" are not values, they are composite value assignations because they reflect a cumulative assessment of the perceived worth of an object of focus. Such value assignations are made by applying designated standards which comprise the criterion for judgment to the object of focus. Value conflicts are implicit within any standards of a criterion because selecting a standard for judgment constructs a preferred hierarchy. That is to say, the standards included within a criterion are presumed to be preferred to their opposites and to any other standards which might reasonably have been included within that criterion.[9] For example, one might make the value assignation that "John Kennedy was a good President" because he portrayed strength in foreign relations (standard), and compassion in domestic issues (standard). Making such a value assignation presumes that strength

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[9]*In order to be reasonably included within a criterion, a standard should be capable of producing a field-related judgment. With propositions of value, field-related standards are determined on the basis of the primary function or purpose of the object of focus. For example, if one determines that the primary purpose of covert operations is intelligence gathering, standards such as "accuracy of information obtained" or "timeliness of information obtained" might be considered field-related standards because they produce judgements directly related to intelligence gathering, the primary function or purpose of the object of focus. For a more elaborate discussion of this concept see Bill Hill, "Using Argument Fields to Construct Criteria in Non-Policy Debate," CEDA YEARBOOK, 12 (1991), 1-12.*

in foreign affairs is preferred to weakness, that compassion in domestic issues is preferred to insensitivity, and that the approach of a President in foreign and domestic issues is the most important indicator of that President's worth or value. Thus, simply by selecting the standards which comprise a criterion used to make a value assignment, an advocate shows a preference for one or more values or end states above others. As a result, value conflict is an inherent part of value assignment even if no value conflict is explicitly identified in the proposition.

Value conflict is also inherent in value assignment to a directional object of focus in three ways. First, value conflict emerges because the object of focus is judged vis-a-vis a comparison with a competing variation of the object of focus. Values come into conflict when they compete for position on a value hierarchy. Any value assignment implicitly establishes the hierarchical location for that object of focus compared with its opposite because an object of focus and its opposite cannot simultaneously enjoy the same preferred status. For example, debating the proposition, "Resolved: That generosity is desirable," invariably necessitates a comparison between generosity and "greed" (its opposite), and to determine that generosity is desirable situates that object of focus above greed in the value hierarchy.

Second, value conflict is also inherent in value assignment to a directional object of focus because value assignment implicates preferred modes of action. Rokeach argues that one's values directly influence one's behavior (1973, p. 24). Thus, to make any value assignment implicitly denotes preferences about actions.[10] For example, to judge generosity to be desirable implicitly argues that to engage in the act of being generous is also desirable. It is impossible to simultaneously engage in opposing actions. For example, one cannot simultaneously contribute 50% of their wealth to a particular charity (generosity) and elect to keep all of their accumulated wealth for their own gain (greed),[11] nor could one be both a member of the United Nations and simultaneously not a member, nor could a company simultaneously have a mandatory drug testing program and no drug testing program. Because value assignment implicates a choice between mutually exclusive actions, value conflict is inherent

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[10]*My argument is consistent with Rokeach's conception of "conduct." As Verch and Logue and Wilbanks and Church note, Rokeach does define and discuss values within the context of "end-states," and "modes of conduct." However, he construes "modes of conduct" broadly as "social behavior," which can include value assignations to a particular object of focus (e.g. Resolved: That generosity is desirable). He writes, "values are determinants of virtually all kinds of behavior that could be called social behavior–of social action, attitudes and ideology, evaluations, moral judgments and justifications of self and others, comparisons of self with others, presentations of self to others, and attempts to influence others."(24) Thus, since evaluation is a mode of conduct, it might reasonably occur within the context of value assignment.*

[11]*Advocates may have different conceptions of what values are actually in conflict. Thus, while some judge generosity desirable relative to "greed," others may judge it desirable relative to "self-fulfillment."*

in any value assignation to a directional object of focus.

Third, value conflict also emerges when standards are applied to a directional object of focus. Assuming that the standards remain constant, making a value assignation to a directional object of focus implicitly renders a competing evaluation for competing variations of the object of focus. When a value assignation is made to a directional object of focus a diametrically opposed value assignation is generated for competing variations. That it to say, making a positive value assignation to an object of focus simultaneously, albeit implicitly, renders a negative evaluation to any competing variations of that object of focus. For example, if membership in the United Nations were judged to be desirable because it enhanced US bargaining position in world affairs, non-membership in the United Nations (its opposite) could not be simultaneously judged to be desirable by that same standard. Rather, presuming that a causal connection could be demonstrated between membership and US bargaining leverage, non-membership would have to be judged as undesirable by that standard. Value conflict, thus, emerges when standards are applied to a directional object of focus even if the exact nature of the conflict is not explicitly stated in the proposition.

While the notion that propositions of value embrace value conflicts is theoretically sound, presuming that propositions of value must be framed to explicitly identify that conflict is overly restrictive and unnecessary. Value conflict is inherent in any value assignation to an object of focus and surely emerges in a debate when standards are applied to an object of focus to make a value assignation. Thus, propositions of value need not explicitly identify value conflicts in order to be legitimate and appropriate for non-policy debate.

Distinguishing Between Propositions of Fact and Value

Another major challenge facing the non-policy debate community is to transform theory into more useful pedagogical prescriptions. While some theorists (Meldrum, 1990) avoid this challenge completely, others assume that simply repeating the definition of each type of question will enable debaters to make the necessary classificatory distinctions. Illustrative of this approach are Dixon and Leslie (1984) who spend the bulk of their essay demonstrating the need for proper classification and the inability of CEDA debaters to classify non-policy propositions, yet are able to offer nothing more than general definitions to instruct debaters how to distinguish between propositions of fact and propositions of value. Such an approach incorrectly assumes that understanding the definition of an object is sufficient to enable one to identify that object. However, one could scarcely imagine that constructing a definition of a fuel injected carburetor would be sufficient to enable a student to identify that particular type of carburetor sitting on a table alongside other types. Thus, while general definitions of proposition types are necessary to fully clarify the conceptual boundary of the non-policy domain, they are insufficient to instruct students on how to accurately identify and classify the propositions they encounter in non-policy disputes.

The prospect of debaters being able to accurately classify non-policy propositions is made more tenuous by two additional factors. First, we have generally presumed that debate propositions must be phrased as a declarative sentence. Freeley, for example, notes that "In the interests of clarity, and because of the limited amount of time available, educational debate propositions are limited to a single declarative sentence" (1981, p. 31). Resolving a dispute about a declarative statement means determining whether that statement "is or is not so." Thus, when phrased as a declarative sentence, all debate propositions assume qualities we normally ascribe to propositions of fact. As a result, the form in which formal debate propositions are phrased confuses the fundamental distinction between the types of propositions one may encounter in non-policy disputes. Second, many debate propositions contain judgmental terms that have evaluative connotations, but which do not necessarily require evaluative judgments. For example, terms such as "overemphasized," and "obsolete" have evaluative connotations, but they need not require evaluative judgments; they could be used in a proposition of fact which denotes the issue of designation.

One way debaters might be better able to classify a non-policy proposition is to apply a redundancy rule.[12] If one could add the phrase "and that is good," or "and that is bad" to the proposition without being redundant with the judgmental term, that proposition could be classified as one of fact.[13] Conversely, if either of those phrases were redundant with the judgmental term in the proposition, it would be classified as a proposition of value. For example, the proposition, "Resolved that United States higher education has sacrificed quality for institutional survival," would be a proposition of fact because the phrase "and that is bad" could be added without being redundant with the judgmental term, "has sacrificed" (e.g. "United States higher education has sacrificed quality for institutional survival–and that is bad"). Thus, adding the phrase "and that is bad" adds a new judgment to the proposition. Similarly, "Resolved that continued U.S. covert involvement in Central America would be beneficial," would be classified as a value proposition since

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[12]*I have used this test in my Argumentation and Debate class to determine whether or not it helps students without formal debate experience distinguish between propositions of fact and propositions of value. Although I did not employ any formal statistical procedures to determine the degree to which students can use this test to more effectively distinguish between those proposition types, qualitative responses overwhelmingly suggest that students found this test to be both useful and useable.*

[13]*I do not intend to imply that "and that is good" and "and that is bad" are the only judgmental phrases which could be added to a proposition for this redundancy test. Others such as "and that is wrong/right," "and that is proper/improper," or "and that is desirable/undesirable" could be used depending upon the exact wording of the proposition and the nature of the judgmental term. I would like to thank the review editors of The Forensic for clarifying how the redundancy standard may be more broadly applied than I had characterized it in the original draft of this manuscript.*

the phrase "and that is good" is redundant with the judgmental term, "beneficial" (e.g. "continued U.S. covert involvement in Central America would be beneficial—and that is good"). In this instance, the phrase "and that is good" does not add a new judgment to the proposition, it simply repeats the judgment implied in the proposition's judgmental term ("good" is implied in "beneficial").

Many non-policy propositions, particularly those that explicitly identify value conflicts (e.g. "Resolved that protection of the national environment is a more important goal than the satisfaction of American energy needs"), can be readily classified without applying the redundancy test. However, the redundancy test can be useful in coping with the inherent confusion caused by framing all propositions as declarative sentences. It is also particularly useful for separating those propositions which have judgmental terms with evaluative connotations but which do not require value judgments from those propositions which have judgmental terms that do require evaluative judgments.

Conclusion

Non-policy debate has become the most widely practiced form of competitive debate. In many respects the popularity of non-policy debate has progressed more rapidly than serious consideration of the practical, theoretical, and pedagogical foundations of non-policy argument. The purpose of this essay has been to investigate the most basic question that one can ask about non-policy argument: What is it? Students, theoreticians, and teachers can effectively grapple with the non-policy argument only if they first understand its conceptual nature. Much remains to be discussed. Hopefully, however, by more completely identifying the types of propositions one may encounter in the non-policy domain, better understanding the form in which those propositions may be encountered, and by clarifying how to distinguish between those propositions, this essay provides a useful foundation others may use to elaborate more fully on the conceptual nature of non-policy argument.

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