The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

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Eastern New Mexico University

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REVIEW EDITORS

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CREATING PROCEDURAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN VALUE AND POLICY DEBATE: THE ISSUES-AGENDA MODEL

By
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Critics who decide the fate of intercollegiate policy debates have a number of powerful decision making models which can be used to assist them in making appropiate decisions. With the evolution of value or judgment proposition debate, it has become apparent that less rigorous and less sophisticated models are readily available to the critics and practioners of non-policy argumentation. While certain theorists argue that value argumentation theory must develop autonomously and must not be "pilfered" from policy debate, these same theorists raid the theoretical conclaves of policy debate in an effort to develop judging metaphors for the value critic.[1]

While there is an extensive literature on value and valuation, the articles which purport to offer theoretical and operational guidance to non-policy debaters and critics have footnoted but have not disseminated this literature in a format which would lend itself to realistic application in tournament practice.[2] As such, it is incumbant upon value theorists in the forensics community to draw upon the literature of axiology to develop and refine metaphors and methods for the testing and judging of values. In this paper, we will initially discuss and debunk some common myths held by value debaters. Second, we will present and further develop the issue-agenda model as one method of creating procedural distinctions between value and policy debate.

Myths

Several myths have evolved concerning the nature, form, purpose and intended functions of value debate. These myths, in turn, have had a detrimental impact on the practice of debate. Such myths stem from a misguided view of the value debate audience. Many debaters of value resolutions adhere to the myth that value debate audiences do not want to listen to evidence and that value debate audiences should use the tools and models of policy debate to judge the strength of value claims.

Many forensic educators argue that the essence of debate exists in the evidence, proof and good reasons grounded arguments presented in a public forum. From Aristotle to Patterson and Zarefsky, we find a general consensus that the discovery of evidence and proof is a major pedogical function of the debate activity.[3] Unfortunately, some value debaters have urged judges to "ignore all this evidence and [to] get down to the real issues." Such suggestions

flow from a perspective that holds that the focus of value debate should be upon delivery skills.

While delivery skills are important in any rhetorical activity, placing more importance on delivery skills than on evidence and proof is to signify and harmfully alter the purpose of academic debate. We suggest that the major purpose of any form of academic debate is to teach the skills of research and of argument discovery. Value debaters, like policy debaters, should attempt to discover as many reasons and sources in support of their position as possible. Value debaters should pay heed to Perelman's warning that true rhetoric is not concerned with the persuasion of the ignorant.[4]

Value debaters should view the value debate audience as intelligent, critical and as argumentative experts. Such expert audiences require proof for assertions and evidence for claims. Analogies, metaphors and the like are appropriate in small doses. However, we would suggest that the major purpose of any form of academic debate is to encourage discovery of evidence and proof in support of arguments to be presented to an expert audience.

Another myth held by many value debaters is the assumption that policy debate tools, metaphors, and language can be used in argument about values. Since " . . . values enter, at some stage or other, into every argument,"[5] and since values ". . . are closely intertwined with statements of fact and attitudes about policy,"[6] there is an inherent difficulty in separating value argument from policy argument.

Unfortunately, the paradigms and models of policy debate do not serve us well in value debate. We should contend that most value debate models lead to consideration of policy workability; an issue that should be irrelevant in value debate. As we note later, *issue salience* should be a major concern of value debate. Because the models of policy debate focus on workability rather than upon issue salience; and because policy debate tends to focus on policy means rather than value ends, different models and languages are needed in value debate. In particular, two of the more popular policy debate models (policy maker and hypothesis tester) do not fit value debate.

First, values (at least initially operate in the realm of the intangible; it is often difficult and undesirable to debate values with pragmatic argument. As Perelman argues

 . . . the result of appraising a thing only on the basis of its consequences is to reduce it to the level of a means which, whatever its efficacy, no longer has the prestige of that which is valued for itself. There is a world of difference between things that are valued only as a means and things that possess intrinsic value.[7]

As a result, decision criteria in value debate should differ from

those used in policy debate. For example, in policy debate a critic can vote against an affirmative case because of a lack of substantive significance,[8] or vote against the negative because the disadvantages did not outweigh the affirmative advantage. Policy debate tends to center on means and consequences of policy rather than on the ends. In value debate, the focus should be on the ends of policy or on the principles of action. Decision theory for value debate should provide criteria for judging the intrinsic worth of a value or for assessing ends "which in reality are the most valuable."[9] Obviously, the tools used to determine policy are inadequate. The policy making paradigm is flawed, because ". . . the bias of the paradigm for quantitative impacts leads debate away from a consideration of critical qualitative issues."[10] Hypothesis testing of values would place the debate in a vacuum by arbitrarily p l a c i n g presumption against the resolution. As Rowland notes, t h i s model also assumes status quo rationality.[11] This is a clear departure from Trapp's well argued position that guidelines for academic debate should be derived from argumentative situations.[12]

If we are to draw rules for academic d e b a t e from natural state argumentative s i t u a t i o n s, we should look to the literature which attempts to describe and analyze how values are debated in legislative and in public realms. By drawing upon such literature, we should be able to help value debaters and critics to draw appropriate distinctions between policy and value debate.

Issues-Agenda Models

We believe that the concept of issue-agendas, developed in the p o l i t i c a l science literature by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, presents a workable model for debating value propositions.[13] Cobb and Elder see political conflict as the result of discrepencies between systemic and institutional agendas. An agenda is an ordering of the importance of particular issues. The systemic agenda consists of the issues considered important by the general public. The institutional agenda is made up of those issues being actively considered by institutional decision-makers. Cobb and Elder identify an inevitable discrepency between these two agendas: systemic agenda items do not necessarily become institutional agenda items, and there is a time-lag between the perception of a problem at the systemic agenda level and its solution at the institutional level.

Values play an important role in this interaction between systemic and institutional agendas. Values define community interests which shape the systemic agenda; they sustain and legitimize political institutions; and often trigger decision-making in institutional channels.[14] Before discussing the specific application of issue-agendas as a model for value debate, two general justifications for this model must be presented.

First, the issue-agenda theory

gives a real-world context to value debate. While philosophers and theologians frequently debate esoteric values, such debates are of little interest to college debaters and do not fit easily into our extant debate theory.[15] Resistence to recent attempts to utilize "pure" propositions of value in CEDA debates illustrates the preference of the community to discuss values in a practical or policy context. The issue-agenda theory provides a means of reconciling the relationship of values and policies. Before an issue is actively considered by policy-makers it must be perceived as an "exigence" by both the public and the decision-makers.[16] Arguers constantly engage in value debate to persuade these audiences to perceive the seriousness of the exigence. The issue-agenda paradigm assumes that value debates presuppose policy debates, as the workability of a given proposal is only examined once the general need for action is established.

Second, the issue-agenda model justifies a more audience-centered conception of debate. Neither policy debate nor "pure" value debate emphasizes the role of the audience in decision-making. Policy debate assumes a model of the audience as legislative or other policymakers; pure value debate emphasizes the "universal" audience which is necessarily more idealized than any actual audience. The issue-agenda paradigm, on the other hand, uses the audience as the point of central focus. Cobb

and Elder's conception of agenda-building subsumes the notion that issues must be molded to the beliefs and values of audiences in order that they become part of the systemic agenda. What clearer paradigm could there be for a rhetorically-oriented view of academic debate? Citizen activism is a hallmark of the 1980's. Special interest groups; political action committees; lobbyists; and the average citizen devote considerable time and effort to convince the general public to become involved and concerned with particular issues. Sometimes, as in the case of opposition to nuclear power and other environmental issues, this activism succeeds at placing an issue on the systemic and institutional agendas. Other times activism fails. Understanding the conditions under which issues either succeed or fail at achieving agenda status, as well as the strategies necessary in this process, is critical to the educational worth of value debate.

How then does the issue-agenda model fit into academic debate? While we believe that theory often follows practice in academic debate, we also see some relevant applications of the issue-agenda model for value debate. These applications are both philosophical and pragmatic

Paradigms and models are important philosophical tools. While policy debate theory has become concerned almost to the point of obsession with the role of paradigms, the underlying importance of a paradigm ought not be under-

estimated. A paradigm provides a perspective for viewing and interpreting events. Paradigms provide scholars with a variety of tools: a language, which insures a means to share assumptions; temporal relevance of phenomena, which creates a means to interpret the significance and timeliness of events; and decision-rules, by which data can be applied, and generalizations created. Ultimately, the "fit" of a paradigm can only be determined through its usage. To guide the use of the issue-agenda paradigm, we offer some potential decision-rules that might be applied in a debate.

All decision-rules implicit in a paradigm are derived from assumptions about the nature of a resolution and the role of the audience. The resolution, under this model, serves as a statement urging the acceptance of some value or belief as a part of the systemic agenda. The audience (debate judge) performs the role of opinion-leader or gatekeeper, determining whether the issue contained in the resolution will be considered a part of the systemic agenda.

The function of opinion-leaders in social decision-making is well-known. Lazarsfeld and others detail the process by which information is disseminated and social and political issues are discussed. An opinion-leader is typically more attentive to the massmedia; more likely to be informed on social and political ideas; and able to interpersonally influence the views of others. The role of opinion-leader is probably crucial to creation and maintenance of the systemic agenda. The opinion-leader is able to respond to exigencies as they arise by perceiving their importance and the need for their resolution. The opinion-leader is able to convey this feeling to others to create the audience interest necessary for an issue to be perceived as a legitimate systemic agenda items. The opinion-leader is, however, only an analogy.[17]

There are four assumptions about decision-making behavior which are derived from the issue-agenda model. These assumptions will become the basis for our conception of the issues which must be addressed when using this approach.

First, we assume that opinion-leaders look for facts and information which conform to their value system. We posit that people seek to remain consistent in their beliefs and actions and utilize sources and types of information which conform to their existing values. It is irrational to assume that a listener, even in a debate round, acts as a "clean slate" upon which values and beliefs are written. Instead, an arguer should seek to make judgments about the potential values held by the opinion-leader and how evidence and analysis might be tailored to appeal to that value system.

Second, we may also assume that the opinion-leader will be likely to do nothing at all unless he perceives an exigence. Audience held presumptions must always be accounted for.[18] All de-

cision systems are afflicted with inertia that an advocate of change must overcome. Decision-makers will prefer the known to the unknown; the tried and true mechanism to the innovative; and will do nothing unless action is clearly required.

Third, an opinion-leader must determine whether change is within their power. Simply being aware of an exigence is not enough. Opinion-leaders must be convinced that their awareness can be translated into action. While there are certainly a number of general social issues that are actively debated in society, agenda status for issues implies that the issue is capable, at least potentially, of being resolved. Insoluable problems are usually not worth the effort required for debate.

Fourth, and finally, we may assume that when the previous three conditions are met that opinion-leaders will take action. The issue-agenda model of action is rational, assuming that once exigencies are perceived and added to the systemic agenda that political institutions will take action to mitigate the exigency in order to maintain their perceived legitimacy.[19] Debating values using this model, assume that a particular value "should" be accorded agenda status on the logical expectation that some action "would" be eventually taken. Of course, the form of the eventual action may be very different from that implied by an issue achieving agenda status. "Salience" of an issue and "workability" of an issue are two very different things, and in that difference lies the essential dividing line between propositions of value and propositions of policy. The policy-maker must be concerned with the specific workability of particular proposals while the opinion-leader o n l y considers whether the issue has sufficient salience to warrant institutional attention.

Based on these assumptions about the audience, four issues may be identified to guide the debate using the issue-agenda model. These four issues then become the means of dividing the ground between the various affirmatives and negative speeches.

1. "How are the issues and values implied in the resolution defined? Definition of terms is a key responsibility in public debate.[20] The nature of values and value-laden terms requires strict attention to their definition. "Is abortion properly defined as murder of an unborn fetus?" "Is the murder of Guatemalan citizens by the military genocide?" are both instances which illustrate the importance of definition to the process of value debate. Narrowly or broadly defining an issue may have significant ramifications as to its eventual acceptance or rejection as an argumentative communication. Issues cannot be debated until the areas of potential disagreement have been identified.

2. "What assumptions can be made about the audience and their value system?" The issue-

agenda model is audience centered. Arguments are advanced to achieve some action or change of belief by an audience. This process necessarily begins with the arguer making some assumptions about the audience and the values the audience holds. While individual values differ widely, generally held sets of values exist which may guide the arguer in the process of structuring appropriate appeals. There is considerable room for arguments as to the nature and hierarchy of existing audience values. But before an arguer can begin to persuade, he must make a tentative judgment about which values are relevant in a given situation and how those values may be effectively appealed to. These audience assumptions become criteria by which subsequent arguments about the relative importance of issues may be weighed.

3. "Is this problem serious enough to affect this audience and its relevant value hierarchies?" Significance is a familiar stock issue in any theory of debate. It is usually perceived that a problem will be considered only insofar as it is serious enough to be perceived as a problem. Merely pointing to the existence of a problem is inadequate—the arguer must take the additional step of justifying its importance. This may be done in a number of ways. Risk analysis, philosophical justification, empirical verification, among other policy-making tools, all serve as means of justifying the significance of an issue. Something must

"trigger" the consideration of an issue by an audience. For example, airline safety is rarely perceived as a part of the systemic agenda until people are killed in an air disaster. While many innocent victims have perished at the hands of drunk drivers, this issue did not receive serious issue-agenda attention prior to formation of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers), which followed the death of a particular child. In each instance, a problem had to be perceived as significant before active consideration of the problem would begin.

4. "Is this problem more worthy of audience attention than competing problems?" Exigencies and values do not exist within a vacuum .At any given time there are literally a plethora of issues that might, if defined properly, compete for agenda status. We assume that any system is limited by the amount of time and energy available to devote to resolution of potential exigencies. Problems, therefore, must be considered in light of competing issues and values. If an arguer advances a position that privacy is more important than any other constitutional right, she must be prepared to defend this statement in light of other competing rights, such as freedom of the press and equal protection of the laws. While this is a fairly straightforward example, the problem can quickly become complex when utilizing other types of value resolutions. Special care must be taken in any given instance to identify within the resolution those

areas properly considered affirmative and negative ground. This relates back to the problems implicit within the act of definition. If a problem is narrowly defined, a number of other equally, if not more salient values, may be ignored. Comparison of competing values is crucial to the issue-agenda model of debate. Not all issues can rightfully be considered part of the systemic agenda, and only rarely will an issue be considered important irrespective of its relationship to other competing values.

Speaker responsibilities may be divided along these four areas. The first affirmative should present a prima facie cast through analysis of each of these four issues. The first negative constructive would examine numbers 1 and 3 (definition and significance) the second negative constructive would discuss numbers 2 and 4 (identification of audience values and competing values.) The affirmative would be required to win all of these issues to sustain the resolution while the negative need only win one of the four, since disproving any one would be sufficient to deny the value statement of the resolution agenda status.

These speaker responsibilities are obviously not radically different from traditional conceptions of speaker duties under policy resolutions. This similarity is deliberate. Speaker duties and stock issues in policy resolutions are the result of gradual evolution since ancient times, based both on their similarity to Aristotelian views of persuasion and legal practice. While this philosophical rationale is important, the pragmatic is no less so; debate makes more sense when anchored to the familiar. Rather than trying to make value debate either a clone of debate or policy something completely different, it is much more reasonable to utilize those parts of the policy model which apply to value debate and are analogous to other theories, and prefer only limited innovations in the nuances of theory. The issue-agenda model might serve this end.

IMPLICATIONS

There are several seemingly important implications that this paper has generated concerning value argumentation. First, we have attempted to dispell the myth that value debaters needn't be concerned with the discovery of evidence. With the more accurate perception of the value debate audience as an audience requiring documented proof, we would hope to see value debaters become more concerned with inartistic proof.

Second, we have briefly developed the reasons why policy models and tools are less appropriate for value argumentation. We have suggested that there are methods which can better serve the functions of value debate.

Perhaps the most important implication of this paper is the further development of the issues-agenda paradigm or model. This model, drawn from an analysis of natural state argumentation situations, appears to be a useful

scheme for separating value debate from policy debate. The model draws some philosophically and pragmatically sound distinctions between value and policy debate. Further, the model provides four decision rules for value debaters and critics. Finally, the model spells out speaker responsibilities for value debaters.

Our hope is that this paper will prompt debaters to conduct more research on value debate; that value debaters will have a more accurate perception of their audience and that the issues-agenda paradigm will provide some rules for value debate. We look forward to the evolution of value debate as a rigorous, and rhetorically-oriented academic activity.

End Notes

1 Jan Vasilius, "Presumption, Presumption, Wherefore Art Thou Presumption," in *Perspectives on Non-Policy Argument,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1980), 40. Vasilius argues for the use of Zarefsky's hypothesis testing paradigm in value debate.

2 See for example Ronald Malton, "Debating Propositions of Value," *Journal of the American Forensic Association,* 14 (1978), footnote 22.

3 J. W. Patterson and David Zarefsky, *Contemporary Debate:* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1983).

4 Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1969).

5 Perleman and Olberchts-Tytect, p. 75

6 Matlon, "Debating Propositions of Value," p. 194.

7 Chaim Perelman, *The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument,* trans. John Petrie (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 206.

8 Paul Gaske, "Substantive vs. Statistical Significance: A Significant Issue?" paper presented at the Northwest Communications Association, April 1980.

9 Kai Nelson, "Reason and Sentiment: Skeptical Remarks About Reason and the 'Foundations of Morality'," in *Rationality Today,* ed. Theodore F. Garaets (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), 253.

10 Robin Rowland, *Judging Philosophy Booklet,* National Debate Tournament, 1980.

11 Rowland, *Judging Philosophy Booklet.*

12 Robert Trapp, "A Situationally-Guided Perspective for Propositions of Judgment," in *Perspectives on Non-Policy Argument,* pp. 17-32.

13 Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda Building* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972.

14 Michael Bartanen, "The Role of Values in Policy Controversies," Don Brownlee, editor, *CEDA Yearbook 1982* (Wingate, N.C.: Cross-Examination Debate Association, 1982, pp. 20-21.

15 The CEDA community, for example, voted for a write-in CEDA topic for the second semester of 1982-83 in preference to the proffered topics which could be considered "purer" value propositions.

16 Exigence is used here in the sense that the terms is developed by Lloyd Bitzer. See Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* I (1968), 1-14.

17 P. F. Larasfeld, B. Berelson, and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

18 Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, pp. 70-74.

19 Robert Merelman, "Learning and Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review,* 60 (1966), 553-61.

20 Bartanen, p. 21.

A SYSTEMS MODEL OF DEBATE

Thomas L. Murphy, Jr., Texas Tech University

In his judging philosophy for the 1982 National Debate Tournament, professor Glen Strickland wrote, "I prefer the policy-making paradigm embodied in the concept of systems analysis" (in Matheny, ed., np). In the same booklet, Allan Louden of Wake Forest University presented his decision rule:

When the affirmative defends a plan, they are concerned with a dynamic organism having consequences for the specified advantages, underlying value systems and decision-making process . . . I would then vote for the policy system—the process—which is the most sensible way to proceed (in Matheny, ed., np).

Since its introduction to the field of argumentation and debate in the early 1970's, the role of systems analysis in debate has been treated (and mistreated) by several scholars and critics. Despite the number of articles written, Kneupper (1976) noted, "A direct application of systems theory to intercollegiate debate providing a rationale and format has not yet been advanced" (p.11). Caught up in much of the recent dispute over the role of paradigms in debate, systems theory offers both an answer and a challenge to scholars and debaters alike.

This paper will contend that by observing the treatment of systems theory in recent literature, the role of models and paradigms in debate will become clear. This paper will examine present approaches to systems theory and present a direct application of systems theory in a workable model for debate. It will not be the goal of this discussion to justify the use of a systems model or suggest that it is the best suited for debate. As Rieke and Sillars (1975) suggested, "The best format for a case is the one best suited to the decision making group to which it is presented" (p.171).

The general role of systems theory in debate is simple—It is a perspective from which debate ensues. In other words, systems models of debate are not all the same. Further complicating this is the existence of differing views on systems theory itself:

The study of systems has not yet developed a unified and universally accepted body of theory and method. One has to appreciate the co-existence of several systems theories and the stubborn persistence of many methodological problems associated with systems analysis (Krippendorf, in Ruben and Kim, ed., 1975, p.138).

As a result, there has been a great deal of variation in the treatment of systems theory in literature.

The basic assumption underlying

systems theory is the interaction of the parts of a system. "Systems analysis, in its simplest form, is an attempt to study interacting components as a whole" (Ziegelmueller and Dause, 1976, p.39). Debaters often refer to the "present system," which Sayer (1980) says indicates interrelationships in the process.

Systems theory was one of the first "models" introduced to policy debate. Tucker (1971) began with the assertion that present theory and methodology could be used within the framework of systems theory. This assertion is consistent with the idea that although the basic components of debate remain the same, they take on new meaning under different perspectives. For example, a "conditional counterplan" is only a method in debate. In a hypothesis testing paradigm it functions as a justification argument, but in a policy making model it simply becomes a competing policy.

Tucker bases his analysis on several propositions, the most important being the interaction of the components as they affect the system. The theorist must also establish boundaries and isolate the critical variable of the system. Tucker's model consists of four steps: (1) Component selection, (2) Assessment of system objectives, (3) Recommended system inputs, and (4) Extrapolation to system outputs.

In comparing this model to traditional debate theory and practice, Tucker first divides the debate case into three stock issues: need, plan, and benefits. Tucker feels it necessary for the advocate to first identify the system: "Traditional advocacy rarely attempts to identify the components of the system its proposes to modify or uproot" (p.34). The assessment of system objectives, the second step, closely parallels the need step.

Perhaps a major difference in the use of systems theory in Tucker's model is in the area of goals:
. . . an audience is entitled to an objective assessment of the system as it is currently operating and according to the stated goals of the system designers not in terms of the advocates' statement of system goals (p.35).

Tucker concludes that, using a systems model, the debater has the responsibility to disclose the available information about the system.

Recommendation of system input, the third step, resembles the affirmative plan. The difference is that the advocate, having assessed the relationships between the components, must show how the inputs are affected by the constraints of the system. Extrapolation to outputs similarly parallels the benefits issue.

In *Public Policy Decision Making: Systems Analysis and Comparative Advantages Debate,* Brock, Chesebro, Cragan, and Klumpp presented the most comprehensive treatment of system theory, applied to comparative advantages debate. Their theoretical framework is designed to, "encompass the three steps in public