

# **JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC DEBATE ASSOCIATION**



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**International Public Debate Association**

**National Championship Tournament and Convention**

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Competitors and Colleagues,

On behalf of the IPDA Executive Committee, I would like to welcome each of you to the 2011 IPDA National Championship Tournament and Convention. Nationals is a time to engage scholars from our activity through the paper/panel presentations, to interact with alumni who help us maintain a connection to the history of our organization, and to participate in top notch competition to better develop our advocacy skills. We hope that the tradition and collegial spirit of our organization's annual gathering will touch each of you, and that when the banquet ends on Sunday you will leave with fond and lasting memories of your time at this event.

I would like to thank Stephen Jeffcoat, our host here at Stephen F. Austin State University, and the SFA Debate Team for the work that they have done to make our national tournament and convention a success. Additionally, I would like to thank the administrators, faculty, staff and students of SFA for their assistance and support for this tournament and convention.

I also would like to thank each of you. IPDA would not be the dynamic and growing organization that it is without your involvement. I thank you for the examples of ethical argumentation that you provide, for your efforts to share the benefits of this activity with new generations of students, and for your commitment to the ideals of this organization. Always feel free to call this organization as well as this tournament and convention home.

Finally, the IPDA Executive Committee and Governing Board are here to serve you. Whether it is over the course of this weekend, this summer or during a future season, if you have any concerns or ideas for ways that we can improve this experience for future competitors, please feel free to pass your message along to anyone in the organization's leadership. We value any input that you may have.

Sincerely,

Bob Alexander  
President, IPDA

**The Journal of the International  
Public Debate Association  
2011**

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## The Review Process for the IPDA Journal

Volume five of the *Journal of the International Public Debate Association* continues the tradition within our debate community to explore, research, and communicate concepts germane to our field of study and practice. We are pleased that this refereed process brought submissions through to publication. A thank you goes out to the professionals who reviewed the submissions: Adam Key, Jorji Jarzabek, Camille Williams, and especially Web Drake for his detailed and extensive reviews of the submissions that commented on form and substance.

We wish to encourage a rolling submission process that encourages submission as soon as possible in an on-going process. We will accept submissions when you are ready and have the peer review process begin. We would hope to have feedback to the authors and revisions made by March 1, 2012. So please begin thinking and planning for next volume. We could encourage collaboration of IPDA scholars with other scholars. Perhaps a political science, communication, media, psychology, sociology or other faculty as well as members outside of the academic community would be interested in exploring issues along with IPDA scholars. We all will benefit from research and thoughtful exploration into what makes IPDA unique and what drives it.

The *Journal of the International Debate Association* Manuscript Review Form asks reviewers to provide constructive and descriptive comments that serve as a basis for consideration, revision, and/or future submission. They are asked to explain all comments clearly and ratings should be supported with specific reasons that will assist the editor in making final determination. The areas to critique are as follows: The target audience for this manuscript is clearly persons interested in International Public Debate concepts and practices. Content represents important and timely topics or issues in International Public Debate. The manuscript represents a significant contribution to the professional debate literature. The manuscript has practical applications. The manuscript uses correct terminology, the content is well organized, and the thesis is logically developed. Any table and figures are self-explanatory and readily understood. Review comments might address rationale/significance, program or practice, and appropriateness of discussion and interpretation.

Recommendations then identify that the submission is to be accepted without further revisions, accept with minor revisions as indicated, resubmit for consideration with major revisions as indicated, do not publish due to significant limitations, and submit to other journal for review.

With all of this said, I am pleased to work with the IPDA community and serve as editor of the *Journal of the International Debate Association*.

Robert C. Steinmiller, Ph.D., Professor of Communication, Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas

## **Choice Theory, Elaboration Likelihood, and Counterplans as Arguments: A Framework for Evaluating Theory in IPDA Debate.**

**Chris Harper - Arkansas State University**

### **Abstract**

*This article argues for the social scientific principles of choice theory and the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion as foundational criteria for the inclusion of theoretical arguments into the context of IPDA debating. Furthermore, this article attempts to illustrate these criteria by advocating an "Argument" framework of rhetorical counterplan theory in the unique space of IPDA debate rounds.*

### **Introduction**

"It is hoped that this discussion accurately represents the development of theory, not as a static presentation, but as an evolving conversation (Broda-Bahm, 1999)". These words were penned by Dr. Ken Broda-Bahm approximately ten years ago in an article attempting to ground the use of negative fiat in intercollegiate policy debate. It is interesting that these words were written around the time that the International Public Debate Association was beginning to take traction and shape. Ten years later, IPDA is a thriving intercollegiate debate division involved in the evolving conversation that Broda-Bahm spoke of in the aforementioned article. Recent issues of the IPDA journal have produced two well written and thought provoking articles that attempt to situate the role of counterplan debate theory in the context of IPDA debating. These recent articles referenced many of the same arguments and concerns expressed by previous authors involved in the rhetorical discussion in regard to issues of counterplans and fiat (Broda-Bahm, 1999).

In some ways, this essay is a response to the articles written by Hodge & Puckett (2009) and Puckett (2010). In other ways, this essay is a voice that seeks to become part of the ever evolving discussion of rhetorical theory and its use and function in the context of intercollegiate debating organizations. Specifically, this essay will make three points regarding the function and framework of debate theory. First, we can gain valuable insights from choice theory that should drive our decisions as a debating community in regard to the theoretical underpinnings and application of theory in IPDA debating. Second, this essay will provide a definitive view of counterplans viewed as arguments. Finally, this essay will clearly explain why counterplans viewed as

arguments will answer important questions raised by both choice theory and recent questions raised by Puckett (2010).

It is important to note that this discussion specifically intends to discuss the role of counterplan debate theory in the context of the International Public Debate Association. Due to the historical pre-existence of intercollegiate debate divisions such as NDT or CEDA debate organizations, the majority of literature written in regard to the theoretical use of counterplans has been written with those specific contexts in mind. Clearly, each debate organization or division has certain characterizations that can be identified that distinguish those divisions as unique formats of debate. Also, it seems reasonable to assume that at times those unique characteristics of a debate division will influence both practice and pedagogy. More relevant to this discussion, it is possible, even likely that the unique vision and framework of IPDA debate should be a driving force when discussing the role of debate theory within its given space. .

#### **IPDA: The Context:**

To understand this, let's begin by taking a look at some of the unique features of IPDA debating. It seems obvious that one of the major claims and benefits of IPDA debate is that of inclusion. This inclusion involves both debate judges and debaters. IPDA debate is one of (if not the only) intercollegiate debate division in the United States that not only allows untrained judges, but embraces untrained judges (Cirlin, 2007). The use of these untrained "lay judges" is designed to force competitors to adapt their unique rhetorical skills to different audiences as needed. This inclusion and often reliance on untrained judges is one important feature that separates IPDA debating apart from its NPDA, CEDA, and NDT counterparts (Lowery, M. (2010).

Another claim made in regard to IPDA is that it is more accessible to unexperienced or "classroom" debaters. In other words, a well educated college (or high school) student could walk out of the classroom and into an IPDA tournament and compete with some level of competence and confidence. This is possible because IPDA debate has focused on real world application and a focus on substantive issues instead of creating a platform that depends upon complex theoretical principles and debate terminology (Eldred, 2009). It would be virtually impossible for a well educated college



(or high school) student to walk into a national level CEDA/NDT debate tournament with no previous training and repeat back the arguments made by their competitors because of the rapid delivery and strong emphasis on debate terminology/jargon. These three factors, untrained judges, accessibility to untrained students, and a focus on real world practicality are three of the most defining and appealing features of IPDA debate.

### **Choice Theory, Elaboration Likelihood Model, and IPDA Debating: Pickers and Choosers**

In his book *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*, Barry Schwartz discusses the complex dynamic of human decision making. Early on in this work, Schwartz lays out five basic assumptions that become the outline for his book. This article will argue that three of those assumptions should be incorporated into the framework by which IPDA coaches, debaters, and theorists should view the use of debate theory in the IPDA debating association. Those three premises are:

We would be better off if we embraced a certain voluntary constraint on our freedom of choice, instead of rebelling against them.

We would be better off seeking what was “good enough” instead of seeking the best choices.

We would be better off if we paid less attention to what others around us were doing.

A deeper understanding of these three principles can help to undergird a justification for clear and defined criteria regarding the use and discussion of debate theory as it relates to IPDA debating.

First, why will we be better off if we embrace a certain voluntary constraint on our freedom of choice? While America is a country seemingly built upon the freedom of choice and the motto “more is always better” seems to accurately define the private logic of our nation, research has shown that we suffer from an overload of choices and options to pick from. A recent set of studies, entitled “When Choice is Demotivating”, identified the phenomenon that an overload of choices or complexities actually decreases the quality of decisions made (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Schwartz (2004) explains the phenomenon when he states “A large array of options may discourage consumers, because it forces an increase in the effort that goes into making a decision (pg. 20)”. In other words, the larger the array

of options to pick from, the more difficult and complex the decisions between those options become.

In fact, this overload of options and complexities to choose between has important ramifications that we should examine. According to Schwartz, they turn us from choosers into pickers. Schwartz defines a chooser as “someone who thinks actively about the possibilities before making a decision. A chooser reflects on what’s important to him or her in life. What’s important about the particular decision, and what the short-and long-range consequences of the decision may be (Schwartz, 2004, pg. 75)”. In contrast, a picker according to Schwartz, is someone “With a world of choices rushing by like a music video, all a picker can do is grab this or that and hope for the best (Schwartz, 2004, pg 75)”. Put simply, the greater the amount of choices or complexity an individual is asked to pick from, the more likely they will move from a picker to a chooser.

I believe similar frameworks for the evaluation of arguments or persuasive acts was laid out by Petty and Cacioppo (1980) when they developed the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion. This theory posits that there are two major routes of persuasion. First, the central route which is typified by a well thought out logical exploration of the facts and substantive arguments given for a specific proposition. Second, peripheral route that involves situations where the receiver evaluates messages based on a much less cognitive approach. This peripheral route is characterized by a decision calculus that focuses on issues such as source credibility, style of delivery, emotional appeals, and attractiveness of the sender.

The clear distinction between these two types of message evaluation lies in the ability and/or amount of elaboration involved by the receiver/evaluator of the message. Specifically, two major factors play a role in an individual’s often unconscious decision to use either the central or peripheral route of decision calculus. The factor that plays a role in this calculus is that of motivation. The greater an individual’s motivation to make a positive decision, the greater the likelihood that they will use the more logically well thought out central route of evaluation. The second major deciding factor, of which route to use as an evaluator, is that of the availability of cognitive resources. In this context, cognitive resources would include an individual’s educational level, knowledge of the specific topic, and experience with the given topic. So the lower on the scale an individual falls in terms cognitive resources the more likely they will

default to the more emotional, and at times shallow, peripheral route of argument/persuasion evaluation.

It seems to follow logically that individuals who use the central route of decision calculus are more akin to Schwartz concept of choosers, whereas the individuals who default to the peripheral route of argument calculation would fall more closely into the picker quadrant of Schwartz theory. So to make that clear and simple, if a person uses a central route of decision making, they can be called a chooser, and if they use a peripheral route of decision making, they become a picker by definition.

### **Counterplans as Arguments**

Now let us turn our attention to counterplan theory as it relates to debating in the IPDA. A simple precursor glance at the literature regarding counterplan theory quickly tells the reader several things. First, at times the arguments for certain types of counterplan justifications can be complex. These discussions often include terms such as fiat, counterfactual fiat, permutation theory, plan inclusive, plan exclusive, intrinsic permutations, opportunity cost, counterplans as tests of affirmative advocacy, ground, fairness, net beneficiality, agency counterplans, advocated perms, conditional counterplans, non conditional counterplans etc...

The second thing that becomes quickly apparent is that some of the greatest debate minds in the history of our collective event do not agree with one another when it comes to issues dealing with counterplan theory.

Remember that the majority of the discussions of the above mentioned terms regarding debate theory were voiced out of concerns from collegiate level policy debate divisions, most specifically the CEDA and NDT divisions. While I believe, for reasons that I will mention later, those discussions were valuable in the contexts in which they began, I believe that the IPDA as an organization is a unique space and should hence take a different theoretical approach.

To that end, I would like to advocate that counterplans in the context of IPDA debating should be viewed simply as arguments. No need for fancy names, in depth theoretical explanations, or fast paced philosophical discussion in the midst of a round attempting to justify this or that theory of a given counter plan.

In support of this I would like to advocate that all debate theory should begin with the two initial burdens given to the affirmative and negative

debaters. The affirmative debater begins with the burden of proof and the negative debater begins with the burden of rejoinder. The burden of proof is the expectation the affirmative debater will provide, a case that on face proves the resolution to be true. The burden of rejoinder deals with the expectation that the negative debater will make arguments aimed at attempting to convince the adjudicator that the affirmative debater has not proved the resolution to be true. So basically, the affirmative debater has to prove that the resolution is true, and the negative debater has to prove that the affirmative debater has not met his/her burden. Note, this does not mean that the negative debater has to prove that the resolution is not true, simply that the affirmative debater has not done his/her job.

In the context of policy debate resolutions, affirmative teams generally run parametric cases with some description of harms, plan, and advantages. These plans are set out in the first affirmative speeches and hence construct the focus for the rest of the debate round. At this point the negative debater is responsible to make arguments as to why the judge would reject the affirmative plan advocacy. To this, negative debaters often make case arguments, solvency arguments, critical arguments (deep solvency take outs), and at times employ the use of counterplans as a strategic choice.

For an in depth treatment of the history of counterplan theory and its role in debating, see Hodge and Puckett (2009). While this article doesn't propose a new version of counterplan theory, it does hope to provide a fresh perspective on an historic theory. This article advocates that instead of viewing counterplans as tests or opportunity costs, debaters and judges should simply view counterplans as arguments. In other words, a counterplan is simply an argument deployed by a negative debater in an attempt to fulfill their burden of rejoinder.

It is important to note that a counterplan has to fulfill one of two important logical conclusions, if it is to successfully attack an affirmative plan. In classic debate terminology these two ideas are simply understood as competition standards. For a counterplan to be an effective argument in a debate round, it must ask the judge to favor itself over the plan action advocated by the affirmative debater. To the extent that the counterplan legitimately asks the judge to reject the affirmative plan, the counterplan is said to compete with the affirmative advocacy. Principles of basic logic and historical debate theory clearly lay out two scenarios by which a negative counterplan "competes" with an affirmative advocacy. First, a counterplan competes with

an affirmative plan if it is net beneficial. Second, the counterplan competes with the affirmative plan if it is mutually exclusive of the affirmative plan action. It is important to point out that a negative counterplan must meet only one of the two above standards of competition (net beneficial, mutually exclusive).

First, let us look at the concept of net beneficial. Many debaters and coaches have misunderstood the concept of net beneficial to mean that the counterplan must simply have more benefits than the affirmative plan. Imagine a debate in which the affirmative topically argues that the USFG should guarantee post conviction DNA evidence to be used in all death penalty based court appeals. For the sake of debate, imagine that the affirmative clearly captures the advantage of creating a more fair playing field for all individuals that appeal their death sentences. Now imagine that the negative counterplan is to feed all of the starving kids in the world. Next, the negative argues that the judge should side with them, because they access more benefits than the affirmative team, hence justifying a negative ballot. Any marginal debater will quickly point out that the negative counterplan (while a great idea) never really competes with the affirmative action of ensuring DNA evidence during appeals. In fact, most affirmative will argue that the judge could vote to do both the plan and the counterplan at the end of the round. Then, according to the basic debate responsibilities, the affirmative debater would argue that they have won the round because they accomplished the burden of proof. In other words, while the negative debater may have proved that we should feed starving children, nothing about that argument functions to reject the idea that the USFG should guarantee DNA testing for all death penalty appeals. To this extent, if a negative team claimed that their plan was net beneficial because they solved for more than the affirmative, they would be demonstrating a misunderstanding of true net beneficiality.

For a counterplan to be net beneficial, it must demonstrate that the counterplan is a more beneficial option than the plan alone, and/or the plan plus the counterplan (permutation). In other words the negative team must argue that there is an offensive reason that the counterplan is preferable to either the plan alone or the plan and the counterplan passed simultaneous. To the extent that the negative debater successfully makes this argument, the counterplan is said to compete with the affirmative advocacy, because it asks the judge to pick between the plan and the counterplan by

demonstrating that the two shouldn't coexist. This is usually done by arguing that there is some type of disadvantage that links to the plan avoided by the counterplan. In fact, the disadvantage tacked on to the affirmative plan is often called the net benefit of the counterplan. The second competition standard a negative debater can appeal to is that of mutually exclusivity. In this instance the negative debater must convince the judge that the plan and the counterplan cannot coexist in the same world. It seems clear if there is a world in which the plan and counterplan cannot coexist, the judge is forced to pick between the two. Hence, the counterplan competes with the affirmative plan. Imagine a round where the affirmative plan is to send 10,000 troops into Afghanistan and the negative counterplan is to remove all troops from Afghanistan. It seems clear that the judge can't vote to both send 10,000 troops and remove all troops at the same time. To the extent the plan and counterplan actions are mutually exclusive (can't be done at the same time), the judge is forced to pick between the two competing options.

To the extent that the counterplan asks/forces the judge to pick between itself and the affirmative plan, the counterplan becomes a competitive argument in the round functioning to fulfill the burden of rejoinder. It doesn't matter if the counterplan is an opportunity cost, test, conditional, unconditional, etc. It simply functions as an argument designed to prove that the affirmative has not proved the resolution true.

### **Counterplans Viewed As Arguments: Answering Puckett, Choice Theory +ELM**

#### ***Answering Puckett:***

Puckett (2010) brought up two interesting questions regarding counterplan theory in academic debate. First, the counterplan's inability to access the resolution by the decision maker, and second the fact that giving the negative debater the power of fiat unfairly skewed ground in favor of the negative debater.

In my estimation, viewing a counterplan as an argument clearly answers both of these questions. Puckett frames the first question by stating "the decision-maker can only access if the resolution is true or not; whether the counterplan is better and should be enacted is outside the scope of the decision-maker. The decision maker, by way of the ballot can only vote to NOT do the plan. They can never vote to do the counterplan (2010, pg. 21)". This issue was also asked some ten years ago by Michael Korcock (1999) when he was originally developing his theory of counterplans as opportunity costs, a view that was hotly debated both then and now (Katsulas. J.P. 1999; Lane, G. 1999; Perkins, D. 1999). I think viewing the counterplan as a competing argument

answers this first objection clearly. I agree that the judge is not voting to do the counterplan, but to “NOT do the plan”. According to the counterplan as argument paradigm, a judge would vote against an affirmative team, because the judge deemed that the counterplan upheld the negative burden of rejoinder, hence proving that the affirmative plan did not meet the burden of proof.

The second major objection brought up by Puckett was that “the question is ‘whether the action of the resolution should be taken;’ the question is NOT ‘whether alternative action should be taken (2010, pg. 21)”. According to Puckett, the negative team could never meet this burden, because negative fiat does not exist. Puckett goes on to state that “all negative votes lack access to any action (except inaction) (2010, pg. 22)”. While this is simply a semantic twist, and in one sense I certainly agree with Puckett, this view of counterplans over complexualizes the position for no reason. If one views the competing counterplan simply as an argument in the round, the judge could vote for the negative counterplan simply because it provided a competitive argument that proved that the affirmative team did not uphold their burden of proof. In other words, a vote for the counterplan isn’t a vote for action or non action, it would be a vote for rejoinder.

### ***Choice Theory and ELM:***

Finally, lets return to the beginning of this paper and discuss how viewing counterplans as arguments would most effectively meet the basic assumptions of choice theory. The three basic ideas advocated by choice theory according to Schwartz were:

We would be better off if we embraced a certain voluntary constraints on our freedom of choice, instead of rebelling against them.

We would be better off seeking what was “good enough” instead of seeking the best choices.

We would be better off if we paid less attention to what others around us were doing.

I believe each of these guidelines can give us sound advice when deciding what type of theoretical frameworks to use in the context of parliamentary debate. This can be demonstrated by a quick discussion as to how these relate to the use of theory in IPDA debating.

The first principle asks us to constrain our range of choices and to decrease our complexity. Remember, this position argued that the greater number of choices available and the more complex those choices, the more

complex those choices, the more likely the evaluator is to become a picker instead of a chooser. If there is one thing that I think we can agree on in the community, it is that the majority of us want the judges/critics in our rounds to be choosers instead of pickers. We want our critics to evaluate the depth and substance of our arguments instead of defaulting to peripheral based selection criteria deployed by those judges who, because of a lack of motivation and/or cognitive ability, choose to not make evaluations from a central route of decision making. To the extent that we intentionally and knowingly endorse overly complex theoretical models of argument, we as a community will create a system that makes the role of effective judging infinitely more difficult. I believe that the IPDA community would be benefited by seeking out the most simplistic (yet logical) model of theoretical underpinning in relations to its use of debate theory in debate rounds. Using less complex models of theoretical meta-debate will allow the debaters more time and opportunity to focus on the more important real world and substantive issues of case debate.

Since many IPDA judges are not well schooled in historic debate theory and often have no experience evaluating the philosophical components of complex debate terminology, I believe it would be beneficial to adopt the most simplistic version of theoretical framework possible. In relationship to counterplan debating, I believe that framework would be to explain a counterplan as simply another competitive argument within the round that asks the critic to reject the affirmative team. It seems that there is no need to explain the intricate details of opportunity cost so eloquently articulated by its pundits (Hodge & Puckett, 1999). There is no substantive need to appeal to complex economic theory in an attempt to justify negative fiat in relationship to decision maker voting paradigms.

I can imagine the blank eyes of the “first time critic”, as two experienced debaters begin to pontificate about the rejection of the negative counterplan, because they have abused the basic reciprocal nature of fiat etc.....Given the fact that the judges tend to have little experience with this type of theoretical material, this type of complexity runs the risk of turning an otherwise good judge into a picker rather than a chooser, simply due to the complexity of the argument. Why take that risk when you can simply explain that your counterplan functions just like any other negative position in the round? It is an argument.

The second principle of choice theory deals with the idea that we should be seeking choices that are “good enough” instead of the best options. One quick



look at the 1999 edition of the Journal of Contemporary Argumentation and Debate will show several brilliant theorists in search of the best way to run counterplans in debate rounds. I believe that the IPDA debate community should reject the temptation to enter in to this overly complex discussion and simply adopt a view of counterplans as competing arguments. Clearly this view is sound both logically and theoretically. To that end, clearly counterplans viewed as arguments is a framework that will suffice within the given time limits, judging parameters, and mission of the IPDA as an organization.

The final principle laid out by Schwartz in relation to choice theory argues that we would be better off if we didn't compare ourselves to what everyone else around us is doing. I think this is sound advice that the IPDA community has been taking for a while. While I believe that there is a place to have in depth theoretical discussions regarding debate frameworks, I don't believe that those discussions should be taking place in IPDA debate rounds. It seems antithetical to the genetic make-up and vision of the activity. These types of discussions seem to exclude individuals who have not been schooled in debate theory and terminologies. Due to the fact that IPDA has untrained judges, smaller time limits, and self imposed limits on rapid delivery methods, IPDA debate rounds do not serve as good grounds for in depth theoretical argumentation. In contrast, I believe IPDA debate rounds would be truer to spirit and better served by having in depth discussions of substantive policy issues relating to germane ideas connected to the actual resolution area.

**Conclusion:**

In a world where high complexity and infinite choices have been valued, recent research has proven that this increased arena of choice has not come without its costs. IPDA is a debate community like no other in the United States. It has largely stayed true to its mission of creating a debate format that is accessible to individuals of all backgrounds, while providing a high level of training for real world situations. This article has argued to use choice theory as a foundational framework for evaluating the use of theory arguments in the context of the IPDA debate community. It also advocated the use of counterplans as arguments as the best way to implement counterplan theory into the IPDA debating context. Clearly, this view of counterplans can assist the IPDA in maintaining the integrity of the event by creating space for more substantive argumentation and less procedural focus. Hopefully, this article will be part of a larger discussion relating to the ever advancing principles and use of rhetorical strategies in the context of the IPDA community.

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## Kritiks and Their Implications in IPDA

Christine Courteau - Master's Candidate Stephen F. Austin State University

### Abstract

*Kritiks are a form of argumentation that first found their way into debate in the early 1990s. They ask the judge to look at assumptions made by the opposition and the harms those assumptions have on the round and on society at large. While they have been controversial in almost all debate formats, this is especially true in the International Public Debate Association (IPDA). This paper looks at three main arguments against using kritiks in IPDA and shows how they are based on fallacious arguments. Then, it shows that these false arguments are not only repeated in formal IPDA publications, but also create a culture that fears kritiks and discourages their use for no real reason.*

### Introduction

Academic debate is broken down into two sides, one affirming the resolution (the affirmative) and one negating the resolution (the negative). Within the context of their round, both sides are required to hold up a specific burden. The affirmative has the burden of proving the resolution true, and the negative has the burden to clash with the affirmative. The negative, therefore, is not necessarily charged with proving the resolution false, but merely clashing against the affirmative's advocacy (Edwards, 2008, p. 99; Prager, 2002, Chapter 14, p. 3).

As debate has evolved, both sides have developed increasingly creative measures to advocate their position and fulfill their respective burdens. One of these revolutionary ideas that has risen is known as meta-argumentation, or meta-analysis. These terms are used to mean debating about debate. They are usually presented as arguments of topicality or kritiks. Both of these styles of argumentation are found primarily in policy debate. Topicality has been an important part of policy debate for quite some time, and is one of the five stock issues (Edwards, 2008, p. 73).

However, kritiks are relatively new on the scene, having been used for the first time in 1991 (Bennett, 1996, p. 1). A kritik is another type of argument also found primarily in policy debate. Bennett describes a kritik as "a form of attack that attempts to redirect the focus of debate to whether or not to reject ideas which support or uphold undesirable ideology, language, institutions or world views" (p. 1). Essentially, the kritik asks the judge to reject the opposition's argument because it is founded on some unsavory principle.

There are almost limitless types of kritiks found functioning in policy debate. Bennett breaks them into three overarching categories: thinking, rhetoric/language, and values.

Thinking kritiks looks at presuppositions and assumptions about rules, frameworks, structures, and systems of thought. Language kritiks examine use of rhetoric that is sexist, bigoted, or dangerous. Value kritiks challenge the premises or expose contradictions at either external or internal ethical levels. (p. 1)

Prager (2002) breaks these down into specific kritiks, and outlines thirty different categories of kritiks, admitting it is only a partial list. Some of the kritiks he lists are capitalism, feminism, international relations, patriarchy, security, and statism. These popular kritiks are named by the problem area they are used to point out in an opposition's argument. Thus, a feminism kritik would be one that points out that the opposing team's argument is based on some principle that is intrinsically harmful to women, etc.

Kritiks are used to point out a major flaw or assumption in an argument. One example would be to explain "You operate within paradigm X. Paradigm X is bad. Therefore, your plan is bad." This works when a debater proposes a plan that operates under paradigm X. Paradigm X could be any of the above-listed kritiks that Prager mentioned, or a myriad of essentially limitless others. For example, communism: one debater would argue that the opposition's plan works within the realms of communism, which is bad for certain reasons that the debater would supply. The debater would then ask the judge to reject the opposition's plan based on this flaw.

A kritik is a more advanced tool in a debater's box. It requires a debater to take a step back from the issue and look at the assumptions made before the argument was even created. It also requires that a debater convince a judge to do the same - to step back from the issue and look at the larger picture.

### **Kritiks in the International Public Debate Association**

The International Public Debate Association (IPDA) was founded in 1997 as a breakaway group from traditional formats of debate. It sought to provide a forum for more extemporaneous and public style debate than the academic debate forums of the time offered (IPDA Mission & Philosophy, n.d.). Almost 15 years later, IPDA holds to the notion that debate should be a public activity that supports education and real-world applicable debate and speaking formats (IPDA Constitution).

The founders believed that debate in other formats became overly technical because judges were recycled. By this, they meant that a debater went through his or her four years in college, learning from senior debaters (who had also gone through their four years) and coaches. He or she was judged by graduate students, former debaters and coaches. Thus, everyone had the same mentality when it came to debate.

To prevent the new format of debate from having this same problem, and to continue to encourage the extemporaneous speaking style, it was proposed that tournament directors use lay, or non-professional, judges to adjudicate IPDA debate rounds. The IPDA Constitution (2010) requires that any IPDA judge have a ninth grade education and be of “average intelligence.” Tournament directors are also encouraged to train judges as little as possible, presumably to prevent any biasing of judges.

Aside from eligibility, there are only a handful of rules to IPDA. One of the few is that the affirmative has the right to define, but must do so fairly (IPDA Constitution, 2010). Another rule specifically states that the reading of evidence verbatim is not allowed. Debaters are allowed to paraphrase and memorize information, but not read it exactly. Aside from these, there are very few formal rules limiting a debater’s ability to define and debate the round as he or she sees fit.

However, some debaters argue that there are implicit rules and regulations that prevent debaters from using certain forms of argumentation. Ducote and Puckett (2009) suggest in their article “Meta-Debate: A necessity for any debate style” that IPDA uses “tacit understandings and pressure” (p. 65) to discourage the use of meta arguments in debate rounds. They say that IPDA members encourage the idea that meta-arguments should not be used, cannot be used, and are not understood when they are used.

The following will analyze the rhetoric of the arguments against running meta-arguments, specifically kritiks, in IPDA rounds. This will be broken down into three main arguments used against the specific meta-argument format kritiks: (1) Kritiks require running standards, which are not allowed in IPDA; (2) kritiks do not fit into the “real world” style of IPDA and won’t be understood by lay judges; and (3) kritiks are a unique argumentation format that are too different from other types of argumentation to be applied to IPDA. Following the analysis of these arguments, evidence of the repetition of these arguments and the implications of continued discouragement of kritiks will be analyzed.

### **Standards don’t apply.**

The first argument is based around the idea that to run a kritik, a debater must also run the standards that apply to that kritik. This means that within each step of the kritik, the debater will explain an issue of the affirmative’s case then explain it with historical and status quo evidence. It also means that at the end of the kritik shell, the debater will give a decision rule, or explain to the judge why the kritik is a voting issue.

The crucial part of explaining these standards is backing them up with evidence. The argument about standards relies on this fact coupled with the IPDA rule that prohibits the verbatim reading of evidence. Proponents of this argument say with these factors mixed, it is impossible to run a “true” kritik.

Bennett (1996) said there are three requirements to present a kritik well. The first is that it should be presented as early as possible in the debate. The second is that it must be, and show how it is, relevant to the debate. The third, and final, is that it has to be understandable.

Prager (2002) said there are five characteristics of a successful kritik. First, it questions assumptions made in the round. Second, it is presented as an absolute argument (it cannot be weighed and required either a yes or a no from the judge). Third, it is not required to be unique. Fourth, it does not have to present an alternative, so it is non-comparative. Fifth and finally, it is a *priori* (meaning it should be judged before all other issues).

Neither of these models requires that a kritik be backed with standards or evidence to be successful. Instead of standards and evidence being a requirement of a successful kritik, it is more likely that they are just traditional kritik structures in policy debate. For example, there is no requirement in the IPDA constitution that a competitor present a weighing mechanism during the round, but it is something that is usually standard in an affirmative argument (IPDA Constitution).

It is also important to remember that IPDA does use topics that require the presentation of evidence, just not in the traditional policy debate format. IPDA debaters use current events and examples that are common knowledge to prove points within round. This style of presenting information could also be used to back a kritik.

Looking at Bennett's model, general knowledge information could be used to fulfill all three requirements. The first, presenting the argument early, has nothing to do with using evidence. The second, showing the relevance to the debate, can be explained through analogies, popular current events, and historical examples. The third, understandability, has nothing to do with the presentation of evidence. Thus, under Bennett's model, a kritik could successfully be run in IPDA without reading evidence and standards.

Prager's five step model appears to have the same results as Bennett's. The first characteristic, questioning the assumptions in the round, has little to nothing to do with using evidence and mostly relies on critical analysis. The second, presentation as an absolute, also has nothing to do with evidence or standards. Neither do uniqueness or being non-comparative. The fifth, *a priori*, is the only one that could require standards. However, explaining to the adjudicator *a priori* in round is not outlawed in the IPDA Constitution, and therefore could still be done.

Thus, looking through the requirements to run a successful kritik, it can be seen that standards and evidence are not reason enough to prevent a kritik from being run in an IPDA round. The argument that running a kritik also requires running standards and evidence does not hold up when analyzed.

### **This is the real world**

However, in analysis of the requirements for a kritik, a new issue and

another common argument arises. This is the argument that kritiks do not fit into the “real world” style of IPDA and won’t be understood by lay judges. For example, Prager’s fifth requirement of running a successful kritik is that the debater explains to the judge the importance of the kritik as a priori.

While it is true that a kritik is an advanced style of argumentation, there is no reason it cannot be used in an IPDA round. IPDA debaters do not limit themselves to running only basic arguments against their opponents. It is not uncommon to hear about fiat, links and brinks, disadvantages, counter plans, and a myriad of other more advanced argument structures.

Bennett (1996) explains that in competition, kritiks have been largely unsuccessful because they can be difficult to explain properly. However, this does not make them unusable. He argues that as long as debaters do not sacrifice clarity in order to mask the issue they are running, kritiks can be understandable and used in round. In fact, Bennett outlines five conditions that should be met before a kritik should be run, one of which is that “the attack should be understandable both in intent and structure” (p. 3).

Essentially, Bennett is arguing along the same lines as the IPDA founders. He is pointing out that an argument must be understood to be run effectively. Therefore, for example, a kritik of statism could easily be run and explained to the lay judge in an IPDA round. This could be done by explaining the significance of state’s rights in both the writings of the founding fathers and the Constitution. So, an action by the federal government that encroaches on state’s rights would become eligible for a statism kritik. As easily as this can be explained in a few lines of text, it can be explained to a lay judge.

The second branch of this argument is that kritiks are too technical and would not fit into a real world argument. However, this seems to be largely untrue. In fact, Bennett argues that often times, debates become too focused on things that will never happen and that kritiks can serve to tie the argument back to the real world. An affirmative advocating a plan that could or would never happen in the real world is just wasting everyone’s time. By running a kritik on this plan, the negative helps remind the judge that there are more important issues that should be focused on (which can still be explained within the scope of the resolution).

On a more practical level, though, opponents of using kritiks in IPDA argue that in an everyday argument, someone will not reject their opponent’s argument based on the language they use. However, again, this researcher would argue that this is largely untrue. Michael Calvin McGee (1999) posits that society divides ourselves into ideographs that we identify with, like Republicans and Democrats. These simple words are used to define large, complex ideas. However, they also divide into subgroups that focus on differences. Essentially, McGee’s theory could be used to point out that in society, people will immediately begin to differentiate from one another based on their membership in one of these groups (p. 427-432).

Jesse Delia's (2008) theory of constructivism also lends understanding to this phenomenon. Constructivism is the idea that as individuals grow, they group experiences into lump sum categories, like short and tall. These words are meant to encompass a variety of meanings. Essentially, as a person begins to build their reality, they attach meaning to words that are based on their personal experience (p. 123).

A third theory, social judgment, attempts to predict how someone will judge a message that contradicts with their own beliefs and how this judgment will affect their own beliefs. This theory predicts that if the person hearing a message contradictory to their own beliefs (like listening to a speech on pro-life when the listener is pro-choice) the listener will likely experience the "boomerang effect" which means that they will shut down to the message and listening to it will actually strengthen their own original beliefs (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, 71-73).

What this means in terms of the applicability of kritiks in the real world is that it is not uncommon for someone to reject another's argument simply because they use a certain word. These words carry a rich history that is different to each individual, but can have severe consequences in a conversation. It is neither unheard of nor uncommon for someone to reject another's argument simply based on word choice. Therefore, in a debate round, a debater asking a judge to reject an argument based on word use should not be that uncommon either.

An example of this would be if, during the constructive speech, the affirmative referred to women as being less capable of comprehending math than men. The negative would then be put into the realm of running a feminism kritik. The negative would explain to the judge that the affirmative's language is harmful to women, explain the history of the subjugation of women and then express how using language like this in round is not only harmful to the debaters in the round, but women in greater society. If this argument had been made in "real life," or the world outside the debate round, many would say that the person on the receiving end of the "women can't be good at math" argument would be justified in rejecting the rest of the argument based on the ground that the arguer was bigoted against women. Bennett (1996) argues that the kritik is an important tool for debate because it "reminds [debate] participants of the need to examine and consider the implications of values, language and thought processes" (p. 2).

In short, while there are many arguments that kritiks are not real-world applicable and cannot be explained to a lay judge, with proper breakdown and clarification, there is no reason a kritik cannot be successfully used in the lay atmosphere of IPDA.

### **Too Different to Work**

The third main argument against using kritiks in IPDA is that kritiks are a unique argumentation format that are too different from other types of argumentation to be applied to IPDA. This is based on the idea that kritiks are a



relatively new argument structure, and came about in a radically different format than any other type of argument before them.

However, Shanahan (1993) argues that “the kritik is *not* that new way of debating...” (p. A-4). Shanahan is not alone. Several articles reference the application of kritiks either as very similar or even identical to a disadvantage (Prager, 2002, p. 1; Edwards, 2008, p. 113 & 144; Bennett, 1996). This doesn’t seem like too radical of a notion since kritiks and disadvantages all fall into the category of critiquing some particular aspect of the affirmative case.

For example, Edwards points out the importance of outlining the link in disadvantage structure. While he is against the use of kritiks, he later argues that one of the most important ways to break a kritik is to break the link. He is inadvertently pointing out that both the kritik and the disadvantage must both link to a specific fault of the affirmative somewhere in their case. While Edwards believes that they should link to particular actions within the plan (a disadvantage to that action), the kritik can link to any aspect of the plan, including the language used. When explaining what a kritik is, Prager (2002) even goes as far as to explain the kritik through the framework of a disadvantage. “I admit, the analogy between a kritik and disadvantage is not a perfect one – but there are enough similarities to give the new student some idea of what kritik argumentation is like” (p. 3). Bennett (1996) also argues that “a sound kritik can easily become a disadvantage...” (p. 5).

Disadvantages are typically thought of as a basic form of negative argument construction. As such, there is no open contestation of the use of disadvantages in IPDA. And while kritiks are not the same as disadvantages, there are similar in structure and style. Therefore, looking at a kritik as a branch of disadvantages, the argument that kritiks are too different seems to fall away.

However, as previously stated, kritiks are not disadvantages, and so they may be too different to work in IPDA. So, this researcher posits that another type of analysis be used. Kritiks fall into the umbrella head of meta-arguments. Another type of argument that often gets lumped into this is the issue of Topicality. Topicality asks the judge to take a step back from the debate and look at whether or not the affirmative team is operating within the scope of the resolution. For example, does the resolution posit that bananas are better than oranges, but the affirmative is talking about puppies and kittens?

Similar to the kritik, topicality functions a priori, meaning that it must be evaluated before any other arguments in the round can be addressed. It functions as a type of argument that goes outside the scope of the traditional argument/clash style and becomes something else all-together. It is very similar in function and application as the kritik.

While topicality has been, at times, a controversial argument style, it is also one of the five stock issues of debate. The IPDA constitution even encourages a negative calling topicality if the affirmative has abused his or her right to

define the round. “Affirmative’s are allowed to define resolutions; however, Affirmative interpretations and definitions must leave Negatives fair ground for the debate. If an Affirmative’s case is too lopsided and/or tautological (used to define itself as winning by definition), this opens the door for the Negative to provide an alternate set of definitions” (IPDA Constitution).

So, looking through this lens, a kritik should also be a valid form of argumentation in IPDA. It is similar in structure and format to a Topicality argument, which the IPDA Constitution clearly supports in cases where the affirmative has abused their constructive speech. However, once again, some will argue that kritiks and topicality are too different for this to apply.

Keeping this in mind, perhaps there is another argument structure that is, in some respects, very similar to that of the kritik—the counterplan. Edwards (2008) argues that a *process* counterplan “proposes to do the affirmative plan through a different procedure from the one specified in the plan” (p. 123). This can be directly applied to the structure of a solid kritik.

Take the previous example of the statism kritik. If the affirmative team supports the federal government taking a certain action, and the negative team runs a statism kritik explaining how the affirmative language abuses the powers of the federal government and takes away the rights of the states, the negative could easily then apply a counterplan that does the affirmative plan, but through a state agency. In this respect, some kritiks and counterplans seem to go hand in hand. While counterplans are not as widely accepted in IPDA, they are still considered a viable style of argumentation.

Thus, when considering the argument that kritiks are too different to be applied to IPDA, this researcher must disagree. Kritiks borrow structure formats from other styles of argumentation, namely the disadvantage, the topicality call, and the counterplan, that are all used and accepted styles in IPDA. Therefore, how can kritiks be so drastically different that they do not belong in IPDA? The answer is that they aren’t.

### **Anti-Kritik Bias in IPDA Formal Publications**

As Ducote and Puckett (2009) point out, there has been a bias against meta-arguments and meta-debate within the IPDA community. As an organization, IPDA tends to shy away from any style of argumentation that is overly-technical. Eldridge (2008), in a brief summary of IPDA, argues that IPDA was born when “debaters began to get fed up with very technical and rapid-fire debate” (p. 7). As a relatively new form of argumentation, the kritik is often view as highly technical (as can also be seen in the three above arguments against using kritiks in IPDA).

Looking at the formal publication put out by IPDA annually, the Journal of the International Public Debate Association, each issue since the journal began publication has included this theme of either fearing or avoiding either technical debate or kritiks themselves (Cirlin, 2007, p. 12; Eldridge, 2008, p. 7; Duerringer, 2008, p.16; Ducote & Puckett, 2009, p.65-69; Key, 2010, p.10-11).

While kritiks have been a highly contested argument structure since they first appeared in the early 1990s, IPDA publications seem to have a specific fear of using them and their supposedly highly technical delivery style.

From personal research and conversations, this researcher believes that many of these complaints arise from simple lack of understanding of the kritik and its use. As previously quoted, Bennett reminds debaters that a kritik must be understandable and explainable to be used correctly. Thus, if debaters can find a way to take technical jargon and explain it to the lay judge, there is no reason to avoid complex argument structures.

Drake (2008) seems to encourage IPDA debaters to stop shying away from the technical on the basis of not knowing how to break it down. He argues that “We should call logical fallacies by name. Sure, we may have to explain them, but so what? It will only take a moment...It is okay for us to construct a syllogism, to use an enthymeme, and to call out a logical fallacy” (p. 4). Drake seems to be encouraging IPDA debaters to break out of the mold that lay judges will not understand technical arguments as long as the debater does a good job explaining it, echoing the comments by Bennett.

However, Drake seems to be only one voice in a sea of dissent against the place of both kritiks and technical arguments in IPDA. Until IPDA debaters learn to break down complex forms of debate, they will be forever doomed to repeat simple argumentation styles that leave both the judges and debaters lacking complex debate understanding.

### **Conclusion**

While kritiks themselves are a highly contested argument structure, their use seems to be especially discouraged in the International Public Debate Association debate format. Of all the arguments against using kritiks in IPDA, three main arguments arise, (1) Kritiks require running standards, which are not allowed in IPDA; (2) kritiks do not fit into the “real world” style of IPDA and won’t be understood by lay judges; and (3) kritiks are a unique argumentation format that are too different from other types of argumentation to be applied to IPDA.

However, upon careful analysis of each of these arguments, a pattern of fallacies becomes apparent, as does a fear of the technical and a documented bias against running kritiks in IPDA. Many of these arguments only hold water in the realms of rumors, lack of understanding, and, at times, simple laziness.

This researcher believes that kritiks could have very successful application in IPDA as long as debaters remember to make their arguments logical and to thoroughly explain them to the adjudicator. By avoiding certain types of arguments based solely on their complexity, IPDA becomes a debate format that remains stagnant instead of growing and evolving. Careful research and application could lead IPDA to become a format of debate that embraces meta-arguments, complex logic and rhetoric, and even the dreaded kritik.

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IPDA: Where have we been, where do we want to go, and how do we get there?

**Editorial by Anthony McMullen - University of Central Arkansas**

*“You must be the change you want to see in the world.” --- Mahatma Gandhi*

I feel compelled to begin by recalling the event that prompted this editorial. At a tournament last November, one of my debaters was faced with what appeared to be a violation of the IPDA rules. I declined to watch the quarterfinal round, but I received a text message from Mark Lowery (who coaches the University of Central Arkansas team with me), stating that he wanted to protest the round. The opposing debater, taking the negative position, pulled notes from an old round out of his briefcase in the middle of the round and proceeded to use them. To me, this violated the spirit of IDPA, which prohibits the use of anything not prepared during the thirty minutes preceding the round. Those who watched the round agreed that the opposing debater never intended to violate any rules and that his actions were the result of inexperience, but his actions were unacceptable.

My debater won the round, which eliminated the need to file a formal protest, but I recognized that something needed to be done. I immediately began drafting a proposal to clarify the rule regarding pre-prepared evidence to reflect the spirit of the rule. I forwarded the proposal to Mark, who forwarded it to the members of the Governing Board and later to the Executive Council. I thought that I had provided a simple answer to the problem. Instead, I had opened a can of worms. The debate continues as I type these words. I hope there will be a resolution before they are published.

These events led me to think about a bigger issue: What is the International Public Debate Association, and what is it destined to become? This organization is different from what it was when I attended my first tournament in 2000, and I think everyone that debated back then would agree that what I have described would be a violation of the rules. I was surprised to discover that some within IPDA today see nothing wrong with what this debater did. While there are aspects of “old school IPDA” that I miss, I am not going to proclaim that IPDA was better back then. But this editorial gives me the chance to reminisce about the past and discuss what it will take for IPDA to become great in the future.

My first competitive debate was at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. I received an award for third speaker in the novice division and reached the quarterfinals in the tournament. I lost as the affirmative on the resolution

“Everyone cheats.” In addition to losing on a 3-0 decision, I let out a swear word in the middle of the round. The judges did not mind the “s-bomb,” but I clearly lost on the merits. I competed as a student from my senior year in college through my third year in law school. I thought that the 2004 National Championship would be my last tournament, but I kept in touch with the University of Arkansas debate team and found myself competing during the 2004-05 season. In the spring of 2007, I began teaching business law part time at the University of Central Arkansas. That semester, Dr. Stephen Smith encouraged many of the University of Arkansas alumni debaters to attend the 2007 National Championship. Several of us took him up on the offer and found ourselves competing against old friends and old foes. I mentioned to several people that I was teaching at UCA, and they encouraged me to start a team there. I did not know this at the time, but I was part of what would become a perfect storm. I was willing to coach the team on a volunteer basis, and there were people at UCA who wanted to restart debate. In fall 2007, the UCA debate team began again after a fifteen-year absence, and I have acted as co-coach on a volunteer basis since that time.

When I started debating, wireless internet was not available at most colleges and universities. A few teams brought evidence boxes, but most debaters relied on the collective genius of their teammates. At the University of Arkansas, we made sure that there was at least one expert on just about any conceivable subject (I was the legal expert). We relied more on logic and rhetorical analysis more than facts and figures. Today, few debaters attempt to go into the round without internet research on even the most rudimentary topics. Sadly, this is the result of “source presses,” or debaters insisting that any fact not backed up by a source cannot be relied upon (even when that fact is known by any liberally educated person). A comment from Adam Key bears repeating: “[I]f the internet will not be available, programs have been known to protest loudly. One exasperated coach was even heard exclaiming that his debaters didn’t know how to debate without the internet.”<sup>1</sup>

Another major difference, also pointed out by Key, is an increase in the willingness to challenge definitions and weighing mechanisms. He and I share the same experience:

In the IPDA I remembered, abuse was the dirtiest of words. It was saved only for those people dastardly enough to redefine a resolution in such a way that if you interviewed a thousand people and asked them what a particular resolution meant, not a single one would come close to how the affirmative took it. It was a shameful thing to be called abusive. You feared your coach, your teammates, and the rest of the circuit would hear about it. Contrast that with the modern day, where the negative cries abuse on a regular basis. It’s no longer a big deal. Instead, it is simply taken as part of the game. Abuse is often cried, not for the intended purpose of calling foul on a debate travesty, but because the Negative simply would have

preferred if the Affirmative had taken a resolution differently. Abuse no longer means the take on the resolution is illegitimate, just that the Negative doesn't like it.<sup>2</sup>

When I started debating, the negative was expected to run with whatever the affirmative threw at him or her. I recall one debate where I forgot this maxim. I took the negative position on the resolution "There should not be a mandatory school attendance law." My opponent focused on the word "a" and took the position that there should not be a *single* school attendance law. He advocated that every state should have its own law. True, this interpretation was completely outside what most reasonable people would believe it to be. But rather than run with what was still a reasonable, albeit twisted, interpretation of the resolution, I cried foul and refused to shake my opponent's hand at the end of the round. While several of my opponent's teammates concurred with my level of disdain toward the interpretation of the resolution, the judges called me out on my lack of decorum during the round. It is one of my few regrets as an IPDA debater.

Today, definition challenges have become an abused part of IPDA. I have judged too many rounds where a negative debater's challenge was based on no other claim than that the affirmative's definitions did not come from a dictionary, and I have to resist rolling my eyes every time I hear that baseless argument. To make matters worse, some debaters expect their opponent to disclose their definitions, even on unambiguous resolutions. If these changes become the rule of the day, then it will unduly tilt the balance in equities between affirmative and negative debaters in IPDA. Again, however, I recognize that others may disagree.

I could continue writing about the difference between IPDA in 2000 versus IPDA in 2011, but that is not the point of this editorial. Like other debate organizations, IPDA has governing bodies that are tasked with steering it into the right direction, whatever direction that might be at any given time. Our self-perpetuating Executive Committee is designed to protect IPDA from devolving into forms of debate that we attempt to distinguish ourselves from. The use of lay judges requires IPDA debaters to prefer real-world rhetoric and language over debate jargon and technicalities. But neither IPDA's governing bodies nor the use of lay judges can check every excess that we attempt to avoid.

I've referenced Key's 2009 editorial because he identified some of the differences between IPDA ten years ago and today's IPDA. He also quotes Steve Goode, a former champion and friend to IPDA, "Debate is both fun and educational. When it stops being either of those things, we should stop doing it." But Key did not provide any solutions. Perhaps he did not do so because he recognized that any solution would be complicated and would warrant its own journal piece. Sadly, I am not going to offer any solutions, either.

I have in my mind what IPDA should be, and I am confident that anyone reading this piece has his or her own thoughts on what it should be as well. We, as an organization, should continue to discuss and debate the direction IPDA should take. We should lobby the Governing Board and the Executive Committee to effectuate changes that we wish to be made to the organization. And all participants (including and especially students) should be encouraged to go to these governing bodies with any idea that they believe would improve our activity.

I will, however, offer what I believe will be the deciding factor in determining what IPDA will become. In 2009, Nicholas Ducote and Shane Puckett encouraged the use of meta-debate in IPDA.<sup>4</sup> They made an excellent point regarding the role of the debate round as an agent of change: "One of the only ways, and arguably the most dominant way, that students have access to a forum for change in the system is in-rounds."<sup>5</sup> In other words, IPDA debaters themselves will dictate the direction of IPDA, and they should do so while in competition.

Debaters must be self-policing. By this, I do not mean filing protests every time a debater believes that he or she has been wronged (though that may have to be part of the process for the most egregious violations). Rather, coaches and debaters must conduct themselves in a matter consistent with the goals and ideals (actual and desired) of the International Public Debate Association. Debaters must be brave enough not only to stick to these ideals when faced with those attempting to change IDPA for the worse, but also to articulate their reasons to the judge when so faced. If this means introducing an IPDA kritik into the round, as Ducote and Puckett suggest, then so be it. But at the end of the day, debaters must be willing to practice what they preach, even in the face of others who would have them go in another direction.

Needless to say, I am not the first to advocate change by way of in-round conduct. For example, in arguing for the need for passion in IPDA speeches, Web Drake wrote:

[W]e have to institutionalize it. It won't happen by hoping it will. We have to make it clear to our judges—if this rhetor doesn't command your attention, don't give it to her. If his speech doesn't move you, don't vote for him. If they don't move you to fear, to empathy, to laughter, to tears—they aren't worthy of your ballot! It has to be a criteria on the ballot and a point of emphasis in the judges' meetings. If we are to train the next crop of great speakers, then we must train them to grab the audience by the throat and not let go. And then, we must reward them for doing so!<sup>6</sup>

In this effort to be self-policing, IPDA debaters must endeavor to be ethical debaters. Sadly, some do not care about being ethical if it means another win. Jeffery Hobbs and Piengpen Na Pattalung stated



the obvious: “Unfortunately, unethical behavior can lead to unfair advantages. As Ulrich points out, ‘If unethical choices did not often result in a competitive edge for the individuals that violated the code, there would be no need for articulating these violations[.]’”<sup>7</sup> Hobbs and Pattalung offered their own suggestions for improving IPDA, but for the purposes of this editorial, I will only adopt one: “debaters should choose to be ethical on their own.”<sup>8</sup>

They quote from others who push for ethical advocacy in competitive debate:

We hope that you will aspire to achieve higher ethical standards. Such aspirations are particularly timely in light of the unethical behaviors exhibited by some public officials, athletes, and business people. The forensic activity exists, in part, to foster the best and most ethical rhetorical behavior. We hope you will do your best to enhance the integrity of the forensic activity by actively promoting and exhibiting ethical debate practices.<sup>9</sup>

Set high standards for yourself as an arguer and treat others with respect and dignity, and we believe that the people who interact with you will be more likely to treat you in the same way. In the process, the argumentative marketplace will become a more civilized and valuable place for the free exchange of ideas, and for the pursuit of policies and programs that will improve all our lives.<sup>10</sup>

(D)ecide to be honest and ethical in your attempts to secure the ballot. Be fair and be honest. If you are not sure about a fact, don’t use it. If you are in rebuttals, don’t bring up new arguments. Never lie. To paraphrase the golden rule, make the kind of arguments you want others to present to you when you are faced with an important decision. If you were buying a car, would you want the salesperson to make up “facts” about the car’s safety, reliability, and gas mileage?<sup>11</sup>

If ethics leave debate, support for the activity will decline. Unethical advocacy may result in the short-term gain, but it has the long-term effect of setting IPDA back as a whole. Thus, any effort to shape this organization must include a focus on ethical debating. It is up to coaches to teach ethical debating and up to judges to punish unethical debaters. But debaters themselves are primarily responsible for promoting ethical behavior, and they must identify and address unethical advocacy whenever possible.

Debaters must be examples to their fellow debaters. They must be willing to do so even in the face of those who would steer IPDA in directions it was not meant to go. They must continue to practice and improve upon their craft and show, both inside and outside of rounds, that their ways are superior. And they must be ethical in the matter in which they choose to make this change. The governing bodies of this great organization will continue to shape this organization, but the primary role of determining what IPDA will be in the

future lies with its practitioners. There will always be emails exchanged and discussions between rounds, but debaters will always be the agents for defining this organization.

I often long for the IPDA that was when I first began competitive debate. I daresay that Keith and Leah Peterson, two of my former coaches and friends to IPDA, would be surprised to see what it has become. But as I have repeated ad nauseum in this editorial, I will not say that today's IPDA is better or worse than yesterday's. I certainly have my opinion, of which others may reasonably disagree. I do know that it is up to each and every debater within this great organization to determine what IPDA debate is and should be. I ask all debaters not to take this responsibility lightly.

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1. Adam Key, *Editorial: Debate should be two things*, 3 J. of the International Public Debate Association 3, 6 (April 2009).
  2. *Id.* at 3.
  3. *Id.*
  4. Nicholas Ducote & Shane Puckett, *Meta-Debate: A Necessity for any Debate Style*, 3 J. of the International Public Debate Association 65 (April 2009).
  5. *Id.* at 66.
  6. Web Drake, *Editorial: A Call to Statesmanship*, 2 J. of the International Public Debate Association 3, 5 (March 2008).
  7. Jeffery Hobbs & Piengpen Na Pattalung, *Ethics in Public Debate*, 2 J. of the International Public Debate Association 20, 22 (March 2008).
  8. *Id.*
  9. *Id.* at 22—23 (quoting Michael D. Bartanen & David A. Frank, *Debating Values* 198 (1991)).
  10. *Id.* at 23 (quoting Thomas A. Hollihan & Kevin T. Baaske, *Arguments and Arguing* 11—12 (1994)).
  11. *Id.* (quoting Jeffrey Dale Hobbs, *Developing the Negative Case*, *Public Debate: A Guidebook to IPDA* 29, 30 (2006)).

**Season and National Championship Tournament  
Award Winners**

**Presidents Cup 1st Professional Division at the National Championship Tournament**

1997-1998	Joe Hoelscher	St. Mary's University
1998-1999	Keith Peterson	University of Texas - Tyler
1999-2000	Chris Banks	Central Missouri State University
	Jeremy Garrett	Central Missouri State University
2000-2001	Elizabeth Cook	Stephen F. Austin State University
2001-2002	Jonathan Huber	Ouachita Baptist University
2002-2003	Rachel Leal	Stephen F. Austin State University
2003-2004	Trey Gibson	Louisiana Tech University
2004-2005	Keith Milstead	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2005-2006	Steve Goode	Stephen F. Austin State University
2006-2007	Keith Milstead	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2007-2008	Evelyn Breithaupt	Louisiana Tech University
	Henry Shuler	Louisiana Tech University
2008-2009	Kris Lucas	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2009-2010	Adam Key	Sam Houston State University

**1st Place Varsity Division at the National Championship Tournament**

2001-2002	Josh Garrett	Central Missouri State University
2002-2003	A.J. Edwards	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2003-2004	Beth Carr	Louisiana College
2004-2005	Noah Conklin	University of Texas - Tyler
	Ryan Palmquist	University of Texas - Tyler
2005-2006	Kris Lucas	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Dan Eldridge	Stephen F. Austin State University
2007-2008	Nick Ducote	Louisiana Tech University
2008-2009	J.J. Thompson	Har-Ber High School
2009-2010	Jeremy Coffman	Sam Houston State University

**1st Place Novice Division at the National Championship Tournament**

1998-1999	Phil Creason	Central Missouri State University
1999-2000	Wayne Bell	Arkansas State University
2000-2001	Sean Griesheimer	Central Missouri State University
2001-2002	Shawn Collette	Louisiana Tech University
2002-2003	Sheldon Clark	Louisiana Tech University
2003-2004	Adam Ward	University of Arkansas
2004-2005	Jason Jones	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2005-2006	Sam Bailey	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2006-2007	Edwin Estrada	Tulsa Community College
2007-2008	Kady Mitchel	University of Louisiana at Monroe
2008-2009	Stephanie Baer	Louisiana College
2009-2010	Trey Miller	East Texas Baptist University

**1st Place Community College at the National Championship Tournament**

2008-2009	Tulsa Community College
2009-2010	Tulsa Community College

**Protagoras Cup – 1st Place Team at the National Championship Tournament**

1997-1998	St. Mary's University
1998-1999	University of Texas - Tyler
1999-2000	Central Missouri State University
2000-2001	Arkansas Union Society
2001-2002	University of Arkansas
2002-2003	Louisiana State University - Shreveport
2003-2004	Louisiana Tech University
2004-2005	University of Arkansas
2005-2006	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Louisiana Tech University
2007-2008	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2008-2009	Louisiana State University - Shreveport
2009-2010	Union University

**1st Place Speaker National Tournament Professional Division**

1997-1998	Keith Peterson	University of Texas - Tyler
1998-1999	Trey Gibson	University of Arkansas - Monticello
1999-2000	Stuart Jones	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2000-2001	Bill Horton	Arkansas Union Society
2001-2002	Jamie Wells	St. Mary's University
2002-2003	Rachel Leal	Stephen F. Austin State University
2003-2004	Alan Cirlin	Slick Talkers Toastmasters
2004-2005	Trey Gibson	Louisiana Tech University
2005-2006	Trey Gibson	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Anthony McMullen	University of Arkansas
2007-2008	Joel Brown	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2008-2009	Steve Goode	Stephen F. Austin State University
2009-2010	Scot Loyd	Louisiana College

**1st Place Speaker National Tournament Varsity Division**

2002-2003	A.J. Edwards	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2003-2004	Chris Duerringer	Stephen F. Austin State University
2004-2005	Levy Leatherman	Louisiana Tech University
2005-2006	Keith Courville	Louisiana College
2006-2007	Chris Halley	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2007-2008	David Brown	University of Texas - Tyler
2008-2009	Kris Lee	Louisiana College
2009-2010	Clermon Acklin	University of Central Arkansas

**1st Place Speaker National Tournament Novice Division**

1998-1999	Amanda Chesshir	University of Texas - Tyler
1999-2000	Wayne Bell	Arkansas State University
2000-2001	Shannon Sistrunk	Louisiana Tech University
2001-2002	Shawn Chollette	Louisiana Tech University
2002-2003	Melissa Harris	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2003-2004	Adam Ward	University of Arkansas
2004-2005	Monet Weatherspoon	Xavier University of Louisiana
2005-2006	Jason Smith	Ouachita Baptist University
2006-2007	Leigh Masling	Louisiana Tech University
2007-2008	Josh Smith	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2008-2009	Jordan Hughey	Union University
2009-2010	Garrett Cooper	Har-Ber High School

**Daniel Webster Award - Professional Individual Season Long Award**

1997-1998	Craig McGee	University of Texas - Tyler
1998-1999	Keith Peterson	University of Texas - Tyler
1999-2000	Matt Talcott	St. Mary's University
2000-2001	Sean Williams	Central Missouri State University
2001-2002	Jamie Wells	St. Mary's University
2002-2003	Mike Cruz	St. Mary's University
2003-2004	A.J. Edwards	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2004-2005	Keith Milstead	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2005-2006	Trey Gibson	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Keith Milstead	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2007-2008	Keith Milstead	LSU-Shreveport /U. Ark.-Monticello
2008-2009	Robbie Reeves	Tulane University
2009-2010	Mark Lowery	University of Central Arkansas
2010-2011	Adam Key	Sam Houston State University

**Winston Churchill Award - Professional Program Season Long Award**

1997-1998	University of Texas - Tyler
1998-1999	University of Texas - Tyler
1999-2000	St. Mary's University
2000-2001	Central Missouri State University
2001-2002	Stephen F. Austin State University
2002-2003	Stephen F. Austin State University
2003-2004	University of Arkansas
2004-2005	University of Arkansas
2005-2006	Stephen F. Austin State University
2006-2007	Louisiana Tech University
2007-2008	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2008-2009	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2009-2010	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2010-2011	Louisiana State University-Shreveport

**Edmund Burke Award - Varsity Individual Season Long Award**

2001-2002	Chris Joffrion	Louisiana College
2002-2003	Mike Cruz	St. Mary's University
2003-2004	Steve Goode	Stephen F. Austin State University
2004-2005	Max Croes	Stephen F. Austin State University
2005-2006	Evelyn Breithaupt	Louisiana College
2006-2007	Chris Halley	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2007-2008	Sean Dodd	University of Texas - Tyler
2008-2009	Lauren Raynor	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2009-2010	Clayton Goss	Sam Houston State University
2010-2011	Clayton Goss	Sam Houston State University

**Mahatma Gandhi Award - Varsity Program Season Long Award**

2001-2002	Stephen F. Austin State University
2002-2003	Stephen F. Austin State University
2003-2004	Stephen F. Austin State University
2004-2005	Stephen F. Austin State University
2005-2006	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2007-2008	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2008-2009	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2009-2010	Union University
2010-2011	Union University

**Susan B. Anthony Award - Novice Individual Season Long Award**

1997-1998	Kevin Piwowarski	Texas Public Debate
1998-1999	Jeremy Garrett	Central Missouri State University
1999-2000	Sean Lutmer	St. Mary's University
2000-2001	Andrew Quirl	Arkansas Union Society
2001-2002	Chris Duerringer	Stephen F. Austin State University
2002-2003	Jennifer Crawley	Ouachita Baptist University
2003-2004	Zach Smith	Ouachita Baptist University
2004-2005	Jessica Gartman	Ouachita Baptist University
2005-2006	Henry Shuler	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Colt Roan	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2007-2008	Adam Smith	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2008-2009	David Tubbs	Louisiana State University-Alexandria
2009-2010	Kylie McDonald	Union University
2010-2011	Devin Moncada	Louisiana College

**Team Debate—Program Season Sweepstakes**

2010-2011	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
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**Team Debate—Team Season Long Award**

2010-2011	Cox/Mazur	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
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**Martin Luther King Award - Novice Program Season Long Award**

1997-1998	Texas Public Debate
1998-1999	St. Mary's University
1999-2000	St. Mary's University
2000-2001	Arkansas Union Society
2001-2002	Ouachita Baptist University
2002-2003	Ouachita Baptist University
2003-2004	Ouachita Baptist University
2004-2005	University of Arkansas
2005-2006	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	University of Arkansas-Monticello
2007-2008	University of Louisiana at Monroe
2008-2009	Union University
2009-2010	Union University
2010-2011	Union University

**1st Place Two Year College Season Sweepstakes**

2010-2011	Mr. Hood Community College
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**1st Place Scholastic Season Sweepstakes**

2010-2011	Union University
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**Founders Award - All Divisions Program Season Long Award**

2002-2003	Stephen F. Austin State University
2003-2004	Louisiana Tech University
2004-2005	University of Arkansas
2005-2006	Louisiana Tech University
2006-2007	Louisiana Tech University
2007-2008	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2008-2009	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2009-2010	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2010-2011	Louisiana State University-Shreveport

**Bennett Strange Coach of the Year Award**

2005-2006	Stephen Jeffcoat	Stephen F. Austin State University
2006-2007	Jorji Jarzabek	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2007-2008	Scott Kuttenkuler	University of Arkansas - Monticello
2008-2009	Trey Gibson	Louisiana State University-Shreveport
2009-2010	Web Drake	Union University

**National Tournament and Convention Host**

1997-1998	University of Texas - Tyler	Tyler, TX
1998-1999	Louisiana State University-Shreveport	Shreveport, LA
1999-2000	Central Missouri State University	Warrensburg, MO
2000-2001	Arkansas State University	Jonesboro, AR
2001-2002	University of Arkansas - Fayetteville	Fayetteville, AR
2002-2003	Louisiana Tech University	Ruston, LA
2003-2004	Stephen F. Austin State University	Nacogdoches, TX
2004-2005	University of Arkansas - Monticello	Monticello, AR
2005-2006	University of Louisiana - Monroe	Monroe, LA
2006-2007	Louisiana State University-Shreveport	Shreveport, LA
2007-2008	Lee College	Baytown, TX
2008-2009	Bossier Parish Community College	Bossier City, LA
2009-2010	University of Central Arkansas	Conway, AR
2010-2011	Stephen F. Austin State University	Nacogdoches, TX

