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Journal of the International Public Debate Association

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Editorial:

Lay Judging.
Mark Lowery
pp. 3-4

Articles:

Questioning the Ground Beneath Our Feet: The Merits of Academic Debate
Christopher M. Duerringer
pp. 4-9

Choosing Sides: Affirmative/Negative Positions and Competitive Equity in IPDA
Adam M. Key
pp. 9-15

Let Me Root, Root, Root for the Home Team: An Analysis of Home Field Advantage in IPDA
Christine Courteau & D. Bernard Fearn
pp. 15-20

Counterplans: Used as Tests
Shane Puckett
pp. 20-23

I would like to take a few sentences to thank everyone who helped this year with the IPDA journal. Thank you for the hard work and kind suggestions. I hope this year's addition is a vast improvement from last years in both breath and depth. The peer reviewing is working well. I do grant again that this is far from flawless or perfect but with your help, it is getting better. I finally want to thank my wife, Becky and daughter Abby, for supporting all my wild forensic adventures.

Editorial:

Lay Judging

Mark Lowery

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One of the most interesting dynamics of any IPDA debate tournament is to stand around in the hallways or in the prep areas and listen to the debates of the debates – the blow-by-blow analysis of how the argumentation went back and forth during the round. Eventually the discussion will come full circle to a description of whether the judge seemed to follow the arguments and “flowed the round” or whether the judge was a “lay judge.” It is usually at this point that the debater may say, “I think I won the round but with a lay judge – who knows?”

Alan Cirlin wrote in “The Origins of the International Public Debate Association” that he felt the use of lay judges was the most critical element of curbing the “lemming-like drive toward the excesses of NDT and CEDA”. The fledgling debate association was committed to “using real world, lay judges as the fundamental audience for our tournaments.” Cirlin “felt that having relatively untrained students, faculty, and community members judging would force the competitors to adopt effective oratorical strategies.”

While I embrace the IPDA foundation of using lay judges as a sort of “beachhead” against the excesses of traditional debate formats, I also find myself embracing a more realistic sense of lay judge utilization as the University of Central Arkansas prepares each year for the annual “End of Hi-BEAR-Nation” tournament. I encourage my Basic Oral Communication students each spring to earn extra credit by attending debate rounds and even serving as judges. However, I do not throw every one of my willing students into the judging panel for a reason that some IPDA purists would probably find objectionable. As many as a third of my late afternoon, evening sections are made up of international students – many who have only been speaking English for less than a year.

Technically, IPDA rules only set forth several guidelines for lay judges – they must be at least at the 9th grade level, of reasonable intelligence and the by-laws even state that “tournament directors are encouraged to use lots and lots of class or volunteer undergraduate students as judges.” However, is there not a point where our judges can be too “lay”?

When discussions ensue about how IPDA’s use of “lay judges” is refreshingly similar to the judicial system’s use of a “jury of our peers” there are several distinctions that have to be considered: (1) a potential jury member must have a fluent understanding of the language being spoken, and (2) litigants are allowed to test and then potentially exclude jurors who might be perceived as less than neutral.

Neither one of the above standards is considered in IPDA judging pools yet we are expected to embrace the use of lay judges as a foundational principle of IPDA debate that has had little if any modification since its inception.

However, there are situations that every debater has experienced at one time or another where lay judges have barely been present intellectually during a round, spending more time texting or browsing the internet on their smartphone while being expected to

adjudicate a debate round. Perhaps the multi-tasking being done by the freshman basic oral communication student just brings their intelligence level down to right above ninth grade level and so meeting the IPDA standard, but it undermines the communicative process if it is not addressed by tournament organizers in a necessary training process. Violating another element of the communication process is the judge – whether lay or professional coach – who takes pride in remaining completely stoic throughout a debate round. Debaters are told that audience analysis is an important part of the debate delivery but when a judge steadfastly limits their feedback to the written ballot it undermines the oratorical objectives of IPDA. It may not mean anything for a judge to have a “poker face” in NDT or CEDA debate since the debaters never look up from their briefs but in IPDA granting some degree of feedback during the speeches is critical to making this endeavor as “real world” as possible.

Lastly, lay judges should be instructed to only have limited exchanges prior to debate rounds with the competitors they are judging. Though audience analysis is a critical element of the public speaking process, debaters who glean information prior to a round and use it to curry favor with the judge to win the round is the crassest abuse of the lay judge’s lack of knowledge of the process and its ethical boundaries. Just as a litigator would be admonished to not address a juror by their name, debate judges should equally be cautioned that some “friendliness” with a competitor prior to a round may overstep ethical lines.

All of this is to say to tournament organizers that training of judges – all judges but certainly lay judges – should be a significant part of preparation for a debate tournament. As a coach and a competitor I believe all coaches should enter a few tournaments just to feel the sting of what their debaters are complaining about when they find out their loss that kept them from breaking had a “Reason for Decision” that was not argued in the round or because the judge just liked the AFF debater better. Then we might have less debate format purity in embracing minimal training for judges as if it is holy writ and more recognition that the element that curbs debate excesses can also be the element that undermines if we do not constantly monitor and improve this rhetorical and oratorical product we embrace.

Questioning the Ground Beneath Our Feet: The Merits of Academic Debate

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In order to promote academic debate, coaches and authors often claim that debate is educational, is democratic, and promotes critical thinking skills. Though I spent six years in the IPDA and love the activity dearly, I am deeply skeptical of such claims. In this essay, I explain the considerable problems these claims create and draw upon critiques from postmodernism, poststructuralism, and sophistic rhetorical theory in order to provide advocacy for a radically re-contextualized understanding of the merits of academic debate in general and IPDA in particular.

How Debate Is Sold

Debate as an Educational Activity

It is repeatedly claimed that debate is, or at least should be, an educational activity. In fact, as a debater, I frequently cited the standard of education in topicality arguments. However, I find it difficult to imagine that most of us actually believe the typical debate round results in a qualitative increase in the education of those in attendance. This is particularly true in the case of the IPDA where rounds frequently revolve around such complex topics as, “RESOLVED: Snickers are better than Three Musketeers.” How much useful information can the audience possibly receive? Other rounds may center on potentially important but highly inflammatory topics like abortion, religion, and gun control. Compelling though they may be, it seems unlikely that such debaters will provide, in the space of a half-hour round, new evidence in rhetorical battles which have already been so thoroughly covered in US American popular culture. Even in rounds blessed with a relatively substantial topic, audiences are more likely to hear arguments over the strength of sources, definitional semantics, or plain old he-said/she-said disputes rather than well-reasoned thought-provoking analysis. In short, it seems hard to imagine that any given debate round is actually all that educational.

Debate as a Democratic Activity

Supporters of debate also claim that debate is an inherently democratic activity insofar as it engages multiple perspectives and provides an arena in which the public may consider important issues affecting their lives. However, these claims seem disingenuous at best.

First, if our aim is truly to represent a diversity of perspectives, the binary structure of academic debate leaves much to be desired. Debates are generally structured in terms of a yes/no or affirmative/negative binary; thus, any proposition is decided according to such terms. I dare suggest that we have gained little by allowing our understanding of every issue to be bifurcated along these lines. Derrida (1981; 1994) argues that such binary oppositions are fictions: the division they intend to convey can never be so neatly contained because of the endless play of signification. Eagleton (2008) notes, “Meaning is the spin-off of a potentially endless play of signifiers, rather than a concept tied firmly to the tail of a particular signifier” (p. 110). Though we wish to imagine the world in black and white, it endlessly spills over these boundaries: despite our best attempts to understand the human experience in terms of truth and lies or wrong and right, our language and even the stuff of our everyday existence frequently falls in the grey area between these poles. Unfortunately, our debate formats simply reduce such indeterminacy to a vote for the Negative. While this rule aids us in selecting a winner, it does us great harm if we are led to believe we have answered a question simply because we have awarded a trophy.

Additionally, to suggest that debate is democratic because it serves the public is to neglect the socioeconomic privilege that envelopes the activity. Though competitors in the IPDA may not enjoy the sort of economic freedom and privilege experienced by the very rich, they are among a select few US Americans with the time and money to spend their weekends debating instead of working. Though at least two sides may be aired in any given argument, countless others are never heard because those voices are left out of the college experience or left out of public discourse altogether. Postcolonial scholars have noted that there are groups of “sub-altern” people for whom no access to

representation is even made available (Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1996). And because debate coaches write IPDA resolutions, and coaches are almost always well-educated white-collar professionals, even the topics to be debated necessarily reflect a narrow set of class, gender, and racial interests.

Third, it may be difficult to believe that academic debate represents a democratic approach to controversy because of the way it legitimates certain forms of discourse while simultaneously silencing others. In short, certain sorts of knowledge and experience are considered credible in debate while others are categorized as un-scientific or merely opinion. Ways of knowing which fall outside the traditional rubric of scientific knowledge are disciplined and dismissed.

Debate as Constructive of Critical Thinking Skills

Perhaps most commonly, debate is said to be an activity which fosters critical thinking skills. Such claims are presumably based upon the way in which debaters are trained to support their arguments with evidence, to weigh arguments objectively, and to render decisions on the basis of such weighing mechanisms.

First, debaters often act as though the preponderance of factual evidence indicates the propriety of a decision. Students are instructed to support each claim with as much credible evidence as time allows. However, facts do not speak for themselves. Facts are interpreted and made to speak in favor of claims advanced by interlocutors.

Furthermore, facts are not equally available. Many postmodernists and poststructuralists, perhaps most notably Foucault (1965; 1972; 1977; 1978; 1980), have noted the connection between power and knowledge. This connection is both productive and restrictive:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes' it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. (Foucault, 1977, p. 194)

Facts, usually culled from scholarly research or witness testimony, are funded, created, and published by privileged actors possessed of sectional interests. Thus, the presence or dearth of evidence in favor of any particular claim ought to be taken not as a guarantee of truthfulness, but as an indication of the interests of those in power.

Furthermore, I have, in previous works (Duerringer, 2008), questioned the notion that arguments may be weighed with any semblance of objectivity. In order to quantify the value of arguments provided in a round, debaters typically appeal to some weighing mechanism. This weighing mechanism is said to aid the judge by providing a way of determining how salient each argument is. Unfortunately, weighing mechanisms themselves are freighted with semi-arbitrary value judgments which inevitably shape the debate round. Bochner (2000) writes:

Ultimately, all criteria serve a conservative and destructive function ... Criteria always have a restrictive, limiting, regressive, thwarting, halting quality to them, and they can never be completely separated from the structures of power in which they are situated. (p. 269)

Criteria establish this task of weighing arguments by filtering discourse: they exclude some speech while legitimating others. Since weighing mechanisms are never neutral, claims about our ability to make objective judgments about arguments seem questionable at best.

Additionally, it is rarely the case that victories are earned by debaters whose efforts were quantifiably better than those of their opponents. Instead, victories often seem to occur at the confluence of subjectivities: where particularly positioned interlocutors make use of specialized discursive practices to interact with particularly positioned judges, victories are awarded. In my time as a debater, practically every one I spoke with experienced moments of luck where their racial, economic, gender, or sexual identities had provided them with the social capital needed to secure the assent of a similarly identified judge. Other times, those markers of identity hamstrung the best of orators. And even in cases where judges seem capable of focusing only upon the case at hand, their own subjectivities invariably play a mediating role when assessing the relative merit of arguments offered in the round.

What's Left? Or the Merit of Academic Debate

Presuming readers have granted all, or at least some of the arguments made to this point, one may be left to ask why I love debate so much. If the average IPDA debate round is not particularly educational, and if it is not terribly democratic, and if it does not foster the sort of critical thinking skills it promises, why is it a worthwhile activity? In the remainder of this essay, I will argue that academic debate, and IPDA especially, is a worthy activity because it provides debaters with a profound understanding of the way language operates and because it seems to create tolerance and moderation in interesting ways.

Experiencing the Play of Signification

While I have already argued that IPDA rounds, in general, are not terribly educational, I do think that debaters learn a great deal about language over the course of their careers in the association. Unlike the average US American who believes that it is possible and preferable to speak clearly and to mean what one says, debaters are constantly shown the way that perfect clarity and meaning are always beyond the reach of language.

To begin, debaters learn that definitions mean everything in debate rounds and they find that words are incredibly tough to pin down. Though it sounds like an easy task, finding definitions for even the simplest of resolutions can pose a problem. According to the dictionary in my office, the word "is," for example, may be defined in eighteen different ways. Even when one settles on some accepted definition, the task of clarification has only been deferred: soon enough, the opposition may call on the debater to explain the meaning of the definition.

Additionally, debaters learn the degree to which subjectivity shapes individuals' interpretations of language. Though we strive to impress our judges with wit and insight, our comments are occasionally interpreted as callous, imprecise, or downright insulting. It is these moments, dispersed throughout one's debate career, which are most instructive in showing us that symbolic communication is always interpreted within a variety of overlapping, sometimes conflicting, cultural and individual frames. This understanding, it seems to me, is one of the best reasons to compete in academic debate. These practitioners who exert so much effort to stabilize meanings and to speak clearly are the ones who, in the end, understand Derrida when he notes:

A text [written or spoken] remains ... forever imperceptible. Its law and its rules are not, however, harbored in the inaccessibility of a secret; it is simply that they can never be booked, in the present, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception

... There is always a surprise in store for the anatomy of the physiognomy of any criticism that might think it had mastered the game, surveyed all threads at once, deluding itself, too, in wanting to look at the text without touching it. (1981, p. 63)

Debaters have first-hand experience with the play of signification. They have seen the way that certainty always slips away from us when we seek to decide the meaning of our words. They are the ones, too, who learn that each of us brings our own subjectivity along as we fool ourselves into believing that we can interpret words, that we make sense of words, without inserting ourselves into that sense-making process.

The Moderating Force of Academic Debate

The third significant benefit of academic debate can be described as the sort of moderating effect a debate career can exercise over one's beliefs. By this I mean that debate, when practiced over a significant period of time, has the effect of militating against the sort of strongly partisan attitudes frequently espoused on television infotainment programming. While it may be sensational, and thereby profitable, to caricature opposing sides of an issue, debaters are routinely confronted with situations that are likely to add nuance to their understandings of both their own beliefs and those of others.

To begin, most debaters will, at some point, be required to advocate for policies and beliefs which run contrary to their own. In order to win debate rounds, they will be compelled to craft the most persuasive arguments available in support of these policies and beliefs. This demand increases the likelihood, though it does not guarantee it, that debaters will come to consider both sides of such controversies as meritorious. Even those who are charged with advocating for policies and beliefs that they already find agreeable may find their beliefs challenged in ways that lead to tolerance. As a teacher, I find that a great number of my students believe what they believe because they were told to do so by family, friends, or clergy. But debaters often find their closely held beliefs put under scrutiny: opponents provide refutations which are unpleasant to consider and sometimes previously unknown to us. Though we may continue to believe in a particular policy or belief, debate provides us an opportunity to understand that position with more complexity.

Finally, debate militates against extremism insofar as it teaches us the near impossibility of maintaining absolutes. As a judge and later as a debater, I learned that competitors charged with defending a resolution that included the words *all* or *never* found themselves at a severe disadvantage. I came to conclude that there was an exception for practically every rule and that absolutism tended, more often than not, to be little more than lazy thinking.

The result of these experiences, as I have suggested, is an increased likelihood that debaters will think of the word less in terms of absolutes and more in localities, contexts, and contingencies. Burke suggested that while most people interpret life through a tragic frame in which protagonists must fight antagonists, we are better served by understanding their world through the comic frame. He writes, "Comedy warns against the dangers of pride, but its emphasis switches from crime to stupidity" (Burke, 1984, p. 41). In other words, a comic frame seeks to point out our shortcomings, but does so in ways that create opportunities for adjustment rather than blame:

The progress of humane enlightenment can go no further than in picturing people not as *vicious*, but as *mistaken*. When you add that people are *necessarily* mistaken, that

all people are exposed to situations in which they must act as fools, that *every* insight contains its own special kind of blindness, you complete the comic circle. (Burke, 1984, p. 41, emphasis original)

Persons employing the comic frame do not resist new thoughts and seek victory, but they deal with complications to their plans and seek to overcome obstacles in the spirit of transcendence and integration. This new understanding will not only tend to moderate against extremism, but it benefits debaters by allowing them to approach the world with an attitude that embraces complexity, seeks to transcend differences, and imagines their fellow debaters less as enemies than as counterparts in our performance.

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Choosing Sides: Affirmative/Negative Positions and Competitive Equity in IPDA

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ABSTRACT: *Fairness in competition is one of the primary goals of any intercollegiate debate organization. This study examines the competitive equity of the Affirmative and Negative positions of advocacy over the course of the Fall 2009 season of the International Public Debate Association. While no significant relationship was*

discovered between the position of advocacy and competitive success, the Negative enjoys a statistically significant advantage over the Affirmative in speaker points. Possible causes and solutions are discussed.

Fairness is a central concern of all intercollegiate debate. In every organization, rules are put in place to discourage unethical behavior, prohibit cheating, and attempt to level the playing field for all competitors. In addition to attempts to create ethical fairplay, numerous studies over the past several decades have examined the participation rates of women and ethnic minorities in various debate formats (Harper, 2009; Alexander, Ganakos, & Gibson, 2009).

Conspicuously absent from scholarship concerning competitive equity in forensic competition is the examination of the Affirmative and Negative positions of advocacy. A thorough review of available literature revealed no studies that independently examined equity between the two sides, though one did review it as a factor in a gender study (Bruschke & Johnson, 1994).

If a given side has a built-in advantage over the other, it would be increasingly problematic for an organization to provide fair competition. This is particularly relevant to the discussion of the International Public Debate Association, which according to Cirlin (2007) is “the only debate format in modern history which was intentionally developed using empirical methodologies to achieve specific pedagogical ends.” The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the Affirmative and Negative positions of advocacy and competitive equity during the Fall 2009 International Public Debate Association regular season tournaments. The study examined the effect of both positions of advocacy on competitive success and speaker point ratings.

Literature Review

There currently exist four chief intercollegiate debate associations within the United States: the National Debate Tournament (NDT), the Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA), the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA), and the International Public Debate Association (IPDA). Each organization is the central organization for a particular style of debate. CEDA, for instance, focuses on policy debate which requires heavy amounts of research and preparation of detailed governmental plans. In contrast, NPDA focuses on adaptability within a limited framework, all the while following British parliamentary procedure. Cirlin (2007) provides a more in-depth meta analysis of each organization.

Of the four, only IPDA focuses on specifically on “real-world application” (International Public Debate Association, 2009). Public debate is primarily focused on delivery style, audience adaptability, and speaker credibility. For this reason, judges at IPDA tournaments are traditionally composed primarily of lay people from the surrounding community. Rather than both speakers and judges conforming to preexisting schema for evaluating argumentation, debaters are instead required to adapt their communication style to the lay judge.

While not exclusively an intercollegiate organization, IPDA is the most recent addition to an ongoing series of competitive intercollegiate forensic organizations within the United States (Cirlin, 2007). Beginning with NDT, each organization would begin with an emphasis on communication skills, but over time would devolve as rapid-fire delivery and technical jargon replaced rhetoric and audience analysis (Freeley &

Steinberg, 2005). As this transformation reached a zenith, frustrated coaches and debaters would begin a new organization (Eldridge, 2008).

The Novice division is open to any interested competitor who has participated in less than eight competitive debate tournaments since entering high school and who has not earned a four-year baccalaureate degree. The Varsity division is open to any interested competitor who has not earned a four-year baccalaureate degree. The Professional division is open to any interested competitor, including those who possess degrees, and has no entry restrictions (International Public Debate Association, 2009). A traditional IPDA tournament includes either six or eight rounds. For each round, individual competitors are matched against a competitor from a different program or university and pre-assigned the position of the Affirmative or the Negative. The Affirmative must advocate in favor of the resolution, while the Negative's duty is to argue against it. 30 minutes before the round begins, each pair of competitors is given a list of five resolutions. Beginning with the Negative, each takes turns striking two resolutions, leaving the final resolution to be debated during the round. Following that, competitors spend the remainder of the 30 minutes using the internet, their teammates, and coaches to prepare arguments (Richey, 2007).

Each preliminary round consists of two competitors being adjudicated by a single judge. The order of speeches is as follows: 5-minute Affirmative constructive, 2-minute cross-examination by the Negative, 6-minute Negative constructive, 2-minute cross-examination by the Affirmative, 3-minute Affirmative rebuttal, 5-minute Negative rebuttal, 3-minute Affirmative rebuttal. Following the conclusion of the round, the judge chooses a winner and assigns both competitors a speaker point rating. Speaker points consist of rating from 1(very weak)-5(superior) in eight areas for a range of 8-40 total points. The eight areas include delivery, courtesy, appropriate tone, organization, logic, support, cross-examination, and refutation (Alexander, 2010).

A certain number of competitors, not exceeding more than half, will advance to elimination rounds. Advancement to rounds is determined by overall record, with ties in record broken based on the cumulative speaker point totals. For instance, if a division has 32 competitors, the 16 debaters with the best record will advance. Under normal circumstances, each competitor will be assigned the Affirmative and Negative position an equal number of times. However, as competitors generally cannot compete in a preliminary round against the same competitor more than once at the same tournament, nor debate a member of his or her own program, the distribution of sides may not always be equal. Additionally, when an odd number of competitors is entered into a particular tournament, one person each round receives a bye, thereby producing an uneven distribution of sides.

In order to better understand the relationship between the Affirmative and Negative positions of advocacy, the following research questions will be addressed:

RQ 1: Is there a difference in competitive success between Affirmative and Negative debaters?

RQ 2: Is there a difference in speaker point allocation between Affirmative and Negative debaters?

Methodology

This study is designed to investigate differences in competitive equity based on the pre-assigned Affirmative and Negative position of advocacy during the Fall 2009

regular season tournaments of the International Public Debate Association. This investigation focuses on two primary areas. First, the study examines the win/loss allocation to individuals based on their position of advocacy. Second, this study will examine the relationship between speaker point evaluation and the aforementioned categories.

The design is a quantitative non-experimental study.

Participants

The target population for this study is debaters participating in Public debate at regular season tournaments sanctioned by the International Public Debate Association during the Fall 2009 semester, from August through December, within the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi. These states were selected because the majority of IPDA sanctioned tournaments occur in these states. Of the 16 regular season tournaments scheduled for the 2009-2010 season, only 2 were scheduled outside these states. During the Fall 2009 semester, only one tournament in Southern Idaho was scheduled outside the selected states.

The tournaments that occurred during the selected time period are as follows: Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, AR, September 19-20; University of Arkansas at Monticello in Monticello, AR, October 9-11; Louisiana State University at Alexandria in Alexandria, Louisiana, October 23-25; Louisiana State University at Shreveport in Shreveport, Louisiana, November 6-8; Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, November 20-21; and Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, December 4-5.

279 individuals competed within the three divisions of IPDA during the timeframe. This study included all competitors, both students and non-students, in an effort to increase validity. Data was culled from the cumulative sheets distributed at the end of every tournament, which were made publicly available via IPDA's Google Site (Alexander, 2010).

The unit of analysis consisted of each round from the perspective of both debaters. That is, for every round, one unit was created per debater. The side(Affirmative/Negative), Result(Win/Loss), and Speaker Point Rating were included. Four rounds, eight total units, were excluded due to one debater withdrawing at a particular tournament after falling ill following his 4th round. As the speaker point rating was unavailable for that particular debater, all of his rounds from that tournament were excluded.

In total, 1,719 rounds were completed by 279 debaters, yielding a total of 3,438 units of analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all relevant research questions.

For Research Question 1, chi square analysis was performed to test for effect on competitive success. For Research Question 2, an independent t-test was employed to examine the effect on speaker points.

Results

RQ 1: Is there a difference in competitive success between Affirmative and Negative debaters?

Table 1

Crosstab

| Count | | winloss | | Total |
|--------|-------------|---------|------|-------|
| | | Win | Loss | |
| affneg | Affirmative | 835 | 884 | 1719 |
| | Negative | 884 | 835 | 1719 |
| Total | | 1719 | 1719 | 3438 |

Table 1 reports the cross-tabulation of wins and losses between Affirmative and Negative debaters. Of the 1,719 rounds, the Affirmative won 835 times (48.52%), while the Negative was successful 884 times (51.48%). A chi square test was used to determine statistical significance. No significant relationship was observed at the .05 level, $\chi^2(1, N = 1179) = 0.62, p = .43$.

RQ 2: Is there a difference in speaker point allocation between Affirmative and Negative debaters.

Table 2

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| speaks | Equal variances assumed | .706 | .401 | -2.422 | 3436 | .015 | -.40547 | .16741 | -.73370 | -.07724 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.422 | 3433.594 | .015 | -.40547 | .16741 | -.73370 | -.07724 |

Table 2 reports the computation of an independent sample t-test of Affirmative and Negative speaker points. Affirmative debaters had a standard deviation of 4.84, while Negative debaters had a standard deviation of 4.97. A significant relationship was shown between the speaker points of Affirmative ($M=31.77$) and Negative ($M=32.17$) debaters, $t(3436) = -2.422, p = .015$.

Discussion

While no significant effect is recognized between the debater's position of advocacy and his or her competitive success, a significant relationship is demonstrated in regards to speaker point ratings. The Negative has, on average, a .4 point advantage over the Affirmative. Over the course of a tournament, the advantage increases to 1.2 for six round tournaments and 1.6 for 8 round tournaments. While this may, on face, seem insignificant, it has potential for a very noticeable effect during tournaments. First, seed order between competitors with the same record is determined by speaker point rating. Seed order determines which bracket a competitor is in and who the competitor will face during elimination rounds. Additionally, speakers points can easily make the difference between advancing and not advancing to elimination rounds. Many times, the last seed advancing and the first seed to not advance are separated by less than one point.

One possible explanation for the disparity in speaker points between sides is the Affirmative's first rebuttal, a three minute speech immediately following the Negative's six minute constructive. In half the time it took the negative to attack the Affirmative's

case and possibly launch an offense, the Affirmative must rebuild his own case while attacking the Negative's.

This lack of time to rebut a speech twice as long will often cause debaters to speak at a rapid pace, called 'spreading,' in order to not drop any points (Dudash, 1998). This is problematic as speed of speech has a significant inverse relationship with listener comprehension (Foulke & Sticht, YEAR).

As IPDA is a format designed to emulate the 'real world' as much as possible (Cirlin, 2007), spreading is seemingly antithetical. Horn (1994) found that the primary reason debate coaches were leaving CEDA was the intense speed. Several quotes from coaches participating in the CEDA exodus speak very poignantly to the issue. "The actual educational advantages of 'speed debate' are, in my opinion, negligible. Only a highly specialized, incestuous industry could ever reward the skills taught in CEDA debate, and I speak with a clear understanding of politics and law as career fields" (pp. 1-2). "The fast-paced delivery is detrimental to students. They need to practice good speech delivery that will be accepted in real life situations" (p. 2).

Furthermore, the need for the Affirmative to spread affects the applicability of IPDA rounds to the traditional classroom environment. IPDA "competitions are intended to provide a forum in which classroom principles directly apply and where classroom students can be entered without undue embarrassment or ego-shock" (International Public Debate Association, 2009, p. 1).

"The fast-paced delivery is detrimental to students. They need to practice good speech delivery that will be accepted in real life situations" (p. 2).

"Until delivery/communication practice in rounds reflects the sort of theory we teach in speech classes, there will be serious dissatisfaction with intercollegiate debate. The problem has been chronic" (p. 2)

"I do not know of any coach in any form of debate that would allow or encourage students to speak rapidly in their speech classes. Why then do many coaches insist on it in debate rounds?" (p. 3).

Possible solutions to this problem include either adding preparation time to be used during speeches or to increase the 1st Affirmative rebuttal from 3 minutes to 4 minutes, while decreasing the 2nd Affirmative rebuttal from 3 minutes to 2 minutes. Future research should examine the effects of both options on competitive equity.

This study had three primary limitations. First, while it did encompass the entire sample save for the 4 rounds that were necessarily excluded, it only examined rounds occurring during one semester. Future studies should examine rounds over a larger timespan to see if the findings still hold true. Second, the study only examined the total speaker point number, rather than also individually coding each of the eight areas from which the total speaker point rating was drawn. This occurred since the cumulative sheets are public record both posted on the world wide web for anyone to see and given to every coach following the tournament, while only the coaches see their competitors' individual ballot breakdown. Finally, the study only examined preliminary rounds. This occurred to ensure the validity of the sample, as elimination rounds have a panel of judges and do not award speaker points.

In addition to addressing the above limitations, future research should endeavor to combine multiple factors including participant sex, sex of the opponent, sex of the judge,

and the like. This will enable the International Public Debate Association to gain a better grasp of the competition that occurs at regular tournament

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Let Me Root, Root, Root for the Home Team: An Analysis of Home Field Advantage in IPDA

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Abstract

Several years ago, a paper was presented at the International Public Debate Association (IPDA) National Tournament hosted by The University of Arkansas at Monticello that proposed that teams who competed in their own tournaments had an

advantage over non host school teams. In an attempt to recreate this study, we looked at preliminary rounds for tournaments in the last two years. Results indicated that most teams who competed at their own tournaments did better at their tournament than they did at other tournaments they competed in that year that they did not host.

The International Public Debate Association (IPDA) is relatively new on the scene in the debate community. However, this does not mean IPDA is not a quickly growing format that is pulling in new people and programs every year. There are more tournaments and those tournaments are seeing ever-increasing numbers. With the increased participation in IPDA, it is becoming a formidable debate format.

Tournaments are held by a host school whose team may or may not compete in that tournament at the tournament director's discretion. Often teams chose not to have their debaters compete in order to help run the tournament and/or round out judging obligations. The field of debaters is broken down into three divisions: novice, for those with fewer than eight tournaments of experience, varsity, for anyone who has yet to receive a four-year degree, and professional, open to anyone, especially those who have already earned a degree. Tournaments begin with preliminary rounds of competition. Depending on the tournament, there may be six, seven, or eight preliminary rounds. From here, the top debaters in each division, not more than half of the competitive field, advance into bracket-style out rounds (IPDA, 2009).

Debaters receive points for season-long awards based on how well they do at tournaments. They are awarded one point for every win in preliminary rounds, one point for breaking into out rounds, and two points for every win in out rounds. Each debater's top six tournaments count toward their cumulative season-long points and awards are given to the top ten debaters in each division at the national tournament each year. Thus, it can be seen here how important every win becomes to a debater competing for a season-long award (IPDA, 2009).

Alexander and Gibson (2005) presented a paper stating that teams competing in their own tournaments had an advantage over other competitors that was apparent through this research. The authors termed the phenomenon "home-field advantage". Teams were struck by this information and vowed not to compete in their own tournaments during the following tournament season (2005-2006 season). The paper was presented at the national tournament in Monticello, Arkansas, thus the paper became an unofficial statement was known as the Monticello Pledge and was instituted by a number of tournaments including the Hot-N Spicy at Louisiana Tech (LATech, 2006).

In the four years following the Monticello Pledge, teams are once again competing in their own tournaments. We were interested to see if there is still a home-field advantage for competitors competing in their own tournaments, or if through the years, this phenomenon has ended in IPDA.

Review of Literature

In an attempt to find relevant literature, a search of multiple academic databases and many of the college debate organizations was done with no results being found discussing home-field advantage; which shows the importance of this research. Articles having to do with home-field advantage and its effect on performance can have application within IPDA debate such gaining a greater understanding of tournament dynamics. Irving and Goldstein (1990) define home-field advantage as "sports teams

playing in their home arena or on their home field win significantly more often is well documented.” They also found that in some sports this advantage is increased due to lack of games, such as in football.

Home field advantage also applies to the debate season since there are so few tournaments, so every point counts. Nevill and Holder (1999) did a meta-analysis of other research discussing home-field advantage and found that four factors are thought to be responsible for this increased win average. They said one of the most important was crowd size because it has a significant effect on the home team. They provide to reasons for this. First, the home team wants to perform better and does perform better in front of a crowd of their supports, which would occur for debaters debating in their home tournament.

Second, the crowd can also influence the officials, and as Nevill and Holder (1999) state ”it only takes two or three crucial decisions to go against the away team or in favor of the home team to give the side playing at home the ‘edge’.“ This edge would not occur in IPDA debate because there are rules that do not allow for judges from a school to judge their own competitors. There is also evidence that lack of travel can also improve performance (Worthen & Wade, 1999). Lack of travel would be true for debaters who can travel as much as eight hours to get to a tournament. The research leads us to ask how does the home-field advantage affect preliminary wins for IPDA debaters who compete in a tournament when their school is the host.

Methodology

We wanted to keep the research as sterile as possible, so we chose to look at preliminary rounds only. We also wanted the data to be cohesive and an even comparison, so we chose to look at only tournaments that had six preliminary rounds. This kept the averaging processes we used from creating a biased number system. However, we had limited access to accumulation sheets to compile this data, so we looked only at tournaments from the years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. This gave us 18 tournaments to consider.

To crunch down the numbers to create a system of comparison, we averaged a team’s win percentage for each tournament. We did this by looking at each individual debater on a team and calculating their win/loss percentage. We used only tournaments with six preliminary rounds (six is a standard number). For example, if a debater went 1-5 in prelims, this means that he/she won 1 out of 6 rounds or 16 percent of prelim rounds. 0-6 was given 0 percent, 2-4 33 percent, 3-3 50 percent, 4-2 66 percent, 5-1 83 percent and 6-0 100 percent.

After figuring out each debaters win percentage, we found the average win percentage for each team. We did this by adding every debater’s win percentage then dividing the total by the number of debaters competing in the tournament. This gave us the team’s win percentage.

We chose to follow teams because we think it gives us a better view of IPDA as a whole. Aside from following every single individual debater, there was not a lot of reason we could see for following individuals. Following every debater for two years would have been extremely time consuming, and we do not feel it would have given us a broad picture of how a team does when competing in their own tournament.

We do not want this article to seem accusatory towards certain teams. We only wish this to be a study of IPDA and whether or not teams competing in their own

tournament have an advantage. It is for this reason in the results section we will not be listing teams by their names, rather by arbitrarily assigned numbers.

Results

Looking at the 18 tournaments for which we had compiled data, we removed tournaments where debaters either did not compete in their own tournaments, or the tournaments that had more than six preliminary rounds.

This left us with 12 tournaments. Of these 12, three teams either did worse at their own tournament or did average with the rest of their season. The other nine did better than they did at other tournaments.

For team 1 (T1), their tournament tied their lowest preliminary win average of that year. Their tournament averages were 41.5, 43, 41.5, 49.6 and 53. 41.5 was their own tournament.

T2 did better at their tournament than they did at any other tournament for both years we looked at. Their tournament averages were 27.33, 50, 43, 28.75. 33.50 was their own tournament- 7 points higher than their next highest tournament over two years and 22.67 points higher than their next highest tournament for that year.

T3 did better at their tournament than any other tournament for the two years. Their tournament averages were 49.5, 49.8, 69.6, 54, 42.71, 59.29, 44.17, and 47.63. Their own tournament average was 69.6, 10 points higher than their next highest tournament and 20 points higher than their average tournament for that year.

T4 did better at their tournament for both years. Their tournament averages were 44, 60.75, 41.5, 62.67, 49.73, 41.36, 53.07, 56.68, 63.86, 59.9, 74.6 and 58.53. Their tournaments were 60.75 and 74.6. 74.6 was 10.7 better than their next highest tournament and 16.2 points higher than their tournament win average for that year. 60.75 was 6 points higher than their next highest that year and 14.44 higher than their tournament win average that year.

T5 did better at one of their tournaments one year, tied with their highest tournament the next year and did average at their second tournament that year. Their tournament averages were 66.17, 55.75, 28.36, 58.67, 51.25, 50.88, 56.4, 58, 49.75, 46.2, and 49.6. Their first tournament was 66.17 which was 11 points higher than their next highest tournament for that year. Their second and third tournaments were 58 and 49.75. 58 is tied with their next highest tournament, but still 10 points higher than their average tournament percentage for that year. Their last tournament was 49.75 and was in line with their other tournaments that year.

T6 did better at one tournament and worse at another. Their averages were 57.18, 49.5, 53.92, 48.18, 39.09, 42.27, 40.62, and 53.75. Their tournaments were 49.5 and 53.75. 49.5 was 8 points lower than their next lowest tournament for that year. However, 53.75 was the same as their next highest tournament and 9 points higher than their average tournament percentage for that year.

We did not have as many tournament results for T7, but felt that we should include T7 for the sake of not misleading the data. Their tournaments were 38.67 and 40. 40 was their own tournament.

Discussion

Significance & Implications to IPDA

We are going to exclude T7 from the discussion of significance because we do not feel that we had enough data to say that the two points they were higher at their own

tournament is enough to justify either way. That being said, we would like to look at the six other teams.

In the 12 tournaments we looked at, we are excluding one (T7), leaving 11 tournaments. Of these 11, there were eight instances of teams doing better at their own tournament. We would like to break these into two categories- teams that did five or less points better and teams that did six or more points better.

Seven tournaments showed teams who did more than six points better at their own tournament than they did at another other tournament that year. When looking at only six preliminary round tournaments, this means that each win is worth about 16 points. Teams who do more than six points higher are looking at an extra win for half or more of their team. For example, a team who brought 16 competitors would have eight go 4-2 instead of 3-3.

Of these tournaments, five did more than ten points better. This means that roughly their entire team did about one win better at their own tournament that they did at any other-- an entire team of individuals who gained an extra win at their own tournament. When looking at tournaments where the difference in breaking is one or two speaker points, an extra win can make a huge difference.

Because season-long awards consist of a debaters highest six tournaments, teams who compete in their own tournament would have an advantage in season-long awards. Getting an extra win than a debater would normally get at a tournament gives them more opportunity to break or even have a better preliminary score if they do not break. We think home field advantage is something IPDA should look at seriously. *Limitations and Future Research*

We feel a more extensive study would have been better but there was a lack of available an archived accumulations. We believe that if IPDA wants to become a more academic organization we should start making accumulations from past years available. This opens the door for a lot of research to be done about IPDA without requiring that someone have been on the circuit for years and years. It would also allow for more complete research to be done.

We do not know the limits of web and online archiving space, but we do not think it would be very limiting on space to keep the old archives or even add a supplemental page designated only to archived accumulations, similar to the archives of old nationals records on the IPDA website.

With that being said, we would like to continue this study. We think looking at preliminary rounds is a very repeatable process and allows us to periodically reexamine our style of debate and make improvements.

We think we would like to evaluate nationals and see if teams who did better at their own tournaments had more season-long wins. While we do not have a hypothesis on this, we think it would something interesting to study either way.

Conclusion

In summation, we believe that teams who compete in their own tournament have a clear advantage over other teams who compete at that tournament. We think this is something we should keep in mind when we host tournaments. We are not here to demonize anyone for their participation, rather just remind them of the implications. From the data we have gathered, we have seen up to a 22 average point difference when a team competes in their own tournament versus their other tournaments for that year. We

also found that 8 out of 11 tournaments had teams who did better at their own tournament than they did at others, which is more than 2/3 of the time. Home field advantage is a significant and prevalent issue that teams should keep in mind in upcoming seasons.

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Counterplans: Used as tests

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ABSTRACT:

This article attempts a new view of counterplans. We will begin by examining how counterplans, for the most part, are viewed in current academic competitive debate and why. Then the article will re-examine burdens and the assumptions of burdens. This article will finally explore other possibilities of negative's abilities to access the idea of counterplans due to negative's inability to access fiat.

Traditionally in competitive academic debate, counterpanes are used as negative's ability to offer alternatives to the affirmative's case and access solvency of the status quo's harms. Roger Solt summarized this concept of counterplans best when he wrote, "a counterplan is a negative plan... which is offered to the judge as an alternative possessing coequal status with plan.(p. 127)" Solt assumes through this definition that negative has the same abilities as the affirmative.

Traditional Counterplan Theory

Counterplan theory sees this alternative construction of existence as a necessity to prove an opportunity cost of doing plan. Micheal Korkok (1999) explains that opportunity costs are, "...the value of a choice is the difference between its worth and the worth of the best alternative that must be forgone. The worth of the best alternative that must be forgone is call a choice's *opportunity cost*. (p. 61)" Basically, if the affirmative's plan is enacted, there might be possible alternative actions that will disappear. If this alternative action is better than plan, then counterplan should be adopted and affirmative's plan should not be adopted.

To understand Solt's view of counterplans having "coequal status" to plans, one must understand why the affirmative has the abilities that they possess. The fundamental burden that the affirmative has is a burden of proof of truth of the resolution. Most times, the affirmative will do this by measures of hypothesis testing or parametersizing. Both can assess a policy-maker framework. Using this framework, this burden requires the affirmative to advocate the need for change in "a system." In order to prove this claim/resolution, the affirmative's plan must be proven beneficial. To give the affirmative the ability to prove that an action needs to be taken, the affirmative is given access to "fiat." Caitlin Hodge (2009) examines the idea of fiat when she writes "Fiat is the ability to assume that, for the debate, a plan will pass and assess its benefits and implications rather than the probability of its implementation.(p. 70)" This analysis examines that the affirmative is given special privileges in the debate round to prove what "should be" by fiat, without a burden of proving what "will be." Solt's argument is that the negative should be given the same privilege to give equal access to the round.

Problems with Traditional Concepts of Counterplan

There are two basic problems with viewing counterplan in this manner: counterplan's inability to access the resolution by the decision maker and the access to negative fiat actually gives the negative unfair ground which mixes burdens. By examining both rationales, counterplans as advocacies are problematic tools for debate.

The easiest way to see that negative does not have this special fiat ability is by examining the decision making ability within the round. The decision-maker's burden within a debate round is to vote whether the affirmative's arguments accessed truth within the resolution. When the affirmative frames the round in a policy-maker paradigm, they use this framework to advocate: "if my policy is a good idea, then the resolution is true." Explained above, the affirmative is given the special ability to fiat within this framework. The negative's burden of "rejoinder" in this framework is to explain that "affirmative's action is not beneficial."

By viewing traditional concepts of counterplan, one would say that proving an opportunity cost by counterplan is negative's way of meeting this burden. However, this is flawed. The decision-maker can negatively vote for the negative's plan by way of the ballot. 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 plan; they can never vote to do counterplan. Therefore; counterplan in this framework should be viewed as a distinct disadvantage, not as another advocacy within the round. Within the policy-maker framework, the use of a counterplan is the utilization of negative's ability to clash; negative's ability to examine why the action of the affirmative should not be taken. However, since negative does not have the burden of proof, negative can never access the action to be taken by the decision-maker.

Within a policy debate round, the question is "whether the action of the resolution should be taken;" the question is NOT "whether alternative action should be taken." Because this second question can never be accessed by the judge, negative fiat does not exist. The vote of the decision-maker on the ballot, within a policy maker paradigm, simply says that the action or inaction of the affirmative plan is a good idea. If the decision-maker votes (in anyway) for the negative team, the resolution does not access truth and no change is made in the system. The negative vote by the decision-maker

means that the resolution is false. Therefore, all negative vote lack access to any action (except inaction).

A second problem, with the traditional roles of counterplan, gives the negative too much ground. Examined above, the affirmative is given special access to fiat due to the affirmative's burden of proof. However, negative is also given the special privileges of presumption due to the negative's burden of rejoinder. Presumption is the concept that advocates that unless there is a proven need for the system to change, the system will remain the same. Tuman (1992) explains the access to this concept:

These theoretical presumption approaches can be analyzed into two main categories: stipulated/artificial and natural/psychological presumption. Stipulated presumption is simply an artificial rule of the game that is stipulated, negotiated, agreed to, or imposed, that governs which side prevails in the absence of overwhelming proof to the contrary. Natural or psychological presumption looks instead at how things are, or are perceived to be, in the state of nature, or in society today. This natural approach embraces the adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" and favors the least change from the *status quo*, presuming that there must be something favoring it, since it currently exists.

We can commonly see this concept in our legal system with the mindset "innocent until proven guilty." In a policy-maker framework, the negative is given this special ground to offset the affirmative's abilities. The concept of presumption can be easily seen in this scenario: The affirmative and negative enter the room. A policy-maker paradigm is established by the resolution. Both say nothing during the round. Who wins? Due to the idea of presumption, the negative would win. In this scenario, the affirmative's burden is to prove that change is need. If no change is proven, people would go about their daily lives according to the status quo.

Applying this concept of presumption and fiat to traditional counterplan theory, if the negative is given fiat ability, this skews ground. With fiat ability, negative has two advocacies, two plans, in the round. Luong (2002) advocates that if negative access fiat by advocating a counterplan, presumption then switches to the affirmative. This still leaves the same problem, just in the reverse. Now the affirmative has two advocacies to use as a moving target during the debate. The only fair division of ground is to prevent access to negative fiat for purposes of a counterplan.

Counterplans As Tests

By no way is the author of this article advocating that counterplans should be forbidden as tool for the negative in competitive debate. However, we should understand how best to use them theoretically and to grant fair access to ground in the debate round. We do this by viewing counterplans as test to the advocacy. Just as debate scholars understood the problems with the affirmative advocating permutation theory as advocacy, so should we see counterplan theory advocated as advocacy. Tests are the only fair counter advocacies that the negative can access without abusing ground or mixing burdens.

Counterplans should be viewed as independent disadvantages to plan. Keeping the same understanding that counterplan advocates opportunity costs for the future, counterplans now act as deterrents to plan through an independent impact structure of that lost opportunity. With this view of counterplan, the negative can run multiple tests of the plan by running multiple test of the plan's opportunity cost. This view of counterplan

theory allows the negative to run multiple counterplans without abusing the affirmative by switching advocacies.

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